

Job Profiles

Animal Care Worker

The Work

As an animal care worker you could look after animals in a range of animal care environments. You will also be completing tasks such as:

- Retail work such as selling products to customers for their animals
- Training animals tricks or acts otherwise possibly training working animals
- Preparing food and feeding the animals
- Keeping animals clean and grooming them
- Exercising dogs in a yard or taking them for walks
- Cleaning out kennels, pens and cages and changing bedding
- Looking after animals who become ill or distressed
- Looking after animals and their young
- Checking for signs of distress, disease or injury in animals, general welfare of the animals
- Checking enclosures, cages and barriers for signs of wear or damage
- Answering visitors questions and sometimes giving talks or lectures
- In some jobs you may also have to keep records, take bookings and advise owners on looking after their animals

Hours and Environment

You would usually work around 40 hours a week. As animals have to be looked after seven days a week, around the clock you are likely to work on a shift system, often including early starts, weekends and sometimes evenings.

Although working with animals can be very rewarding, it can also involve physically hard work. You will need to be prepared for some unpleasant tasks – for example cleaning out animal pens, and cages can be smelly and dirty! You are also likely to be outside in all weathers.

Skills and Interests

- A real interest/passion for animals
- The ability to handle animals patiently, gently and confidently
- The ability to cope with upsetting situations like working with animals who have been ill treated or injured
- Willingness to complete dirty or unpleasant tasks
- Good observation skills
- Awareness of Health & Safety
- Stamina and physical fitness
- Good people skills for working with the public



Keeping Excellence in
Training Standards

Getting into the Industry

You may not need any particular qualifications for most animal care jobs, although individual employers may ask for GCSE's or previous experience.

Volunteering is a useful way to gain experience and shows employers that you are enthusiastic and interested in working with animals. Zoos often run these schemes but these can be popular and you may need to join a waiting list. Animal charities, such as Blue Cross and the RSPCA, are often looking for volunteers as well.

If you want more information about volunteering then it is worth looking on www.do-it.org.uk

In this sector you can also do Customer Service, Business Administration and Management.

Animal qualifications, further information & useful contacts

Please note KEITS does not take responsibility for the content of external sites.

- 1) BTEC Level 2 Certificate/Diploma in Animal Care
- 2) BTEC Level 3 Certificate/Diploma in Animal Management
These qualifications might be something you could undertake at college to get some experience before applying for your first job. You will need to check with your local colleges for entry requirements.
- 3) Intermediate & Advanced Apprenticeships in Animal Care – to find out more www.keits.co.uk. You could also do qualifications such as Awards/Certificates/Diploma in Work-based Animal Care at levels 1, 2 and 3. Level 1 is a general basic qualification. At levels 2 & 3 you can follow a general option, or specialise in one of the following: Pet Care and Retail, Zoos/Wildlife Establishments, Dog Grooming, Animal Care and Welfare Animal Training
- 4) Foundation Degrees in Zoo Management – Sparsholt College www.sparsholt.ac.uk
- 5) Foundation Degrees in Zoo Resource Management – Reaseheath College www.reaseheath.ac.uk
- 6) Degree in Animal Management – Contact Lantra for more details www.lantra.co.uk

Further information and contact details

- 1) Lantra, Lantra House, Stoneleigh Park, Nr Coventry, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG
[Tel:0845 707 8007](tel:08457078007), www.lantra.co.uk
- 2) KEITS, Unit C, Houndswood Gate, Harper Lane, Radlett, Herts, WD7 7HU,
[Tel:01923 854586](tel:01923854586) www.keits.co.uk
- 3) PDSA, Whitechapel Way, Priors lee, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9PQ, Tel: 0800 917 2509,
www.pdsa.org.uk
- 4) RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 9RS, www.rspca.org.uk
- 5) Volunteering England – www.volunteering.org.uk
- 6) www.ajobin.com
- 7) www.afuturein.com
- 8) Association of British Wild Life Keepers (ABWAK) – www.abwak.co.uk
- 9) National Apprenticeship Service – www.apprenticeships.org.uk
- 10) Medivet – www.medivet.co.uk
- 11) The Royal Veterinary College – www.rvc.ac.uk