

# **SW M8 | How to become a family support worker**

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# Index

**By the end of this module, you will be able to**

- Explain the role of the family support worker
- Define the legal framework in which family support workers function



# Definition of Family Support

Family support can be defined as a group of activities that display practical social networks. This is demonstrated through a combined number of programmes. Such programmes include voluntary, community and private services. There is a strong focus on the health and wellbeing of various individuals within families.

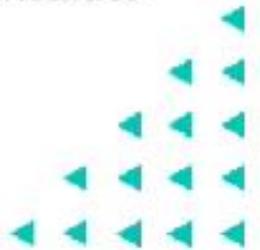




## Principles of Family Support

There are **ten principles** often used when discussing **family support**. These can ensure the support worker provides the right care.

1. **Child-centred:** this principle requires a strong focus on the **feelings** and **safety** of children.
2. **Needs-led:** these are based on the needs of the family mainly.
3. **Strengths-based:** this perspective considers the resilience of the lives of children and families.
4. **Socially inclusive:** aims to champion the social inclusion of all groups, including problems around disability, ethnicity, and different communities.
5. **Partnership-based:** a crucial part of family support includes communities, professionals, families, and children.



## Principles of Family Support

- 6. Informal network-focused:** the perspective that the most useful methods are those which strengthen support networks.
- 7. Easily accessed:** this principle claims family are meant to refer themselves, and multi-access referral paths will be facilitated.
- 8. Responsive and flexible:** family support, in this case, can include out of home care. Support is also flexible in time, location and more.
- 9. Collaborative in development:** this principle promotes the involvement of external bodies, e.g. service users in the planning, execution, and assessment of family support services.
- 10. Evidence-informed:** the way success is measured using this principle is by facilitating evaluation focusing on the results service users produce. Services provided are based on best practices.



# Functions of A Family Support Worker

The functions of a family support worker are as follows:

- Families with complex needs require focused tailored help. The function of a family support worker is to provide this help.
- The aim of the help provided by the family support worker is to ensure any behaviours which could cause risks to children who are assessed and eradicated.
- The role also requires **working together with parents and children** to provide the best outcomes.
- At times, this may be outside of office hours, and an overall aim is to **increase confidence in parenting abilities**.





## Duties & Responsibilities of A Family Support Worker

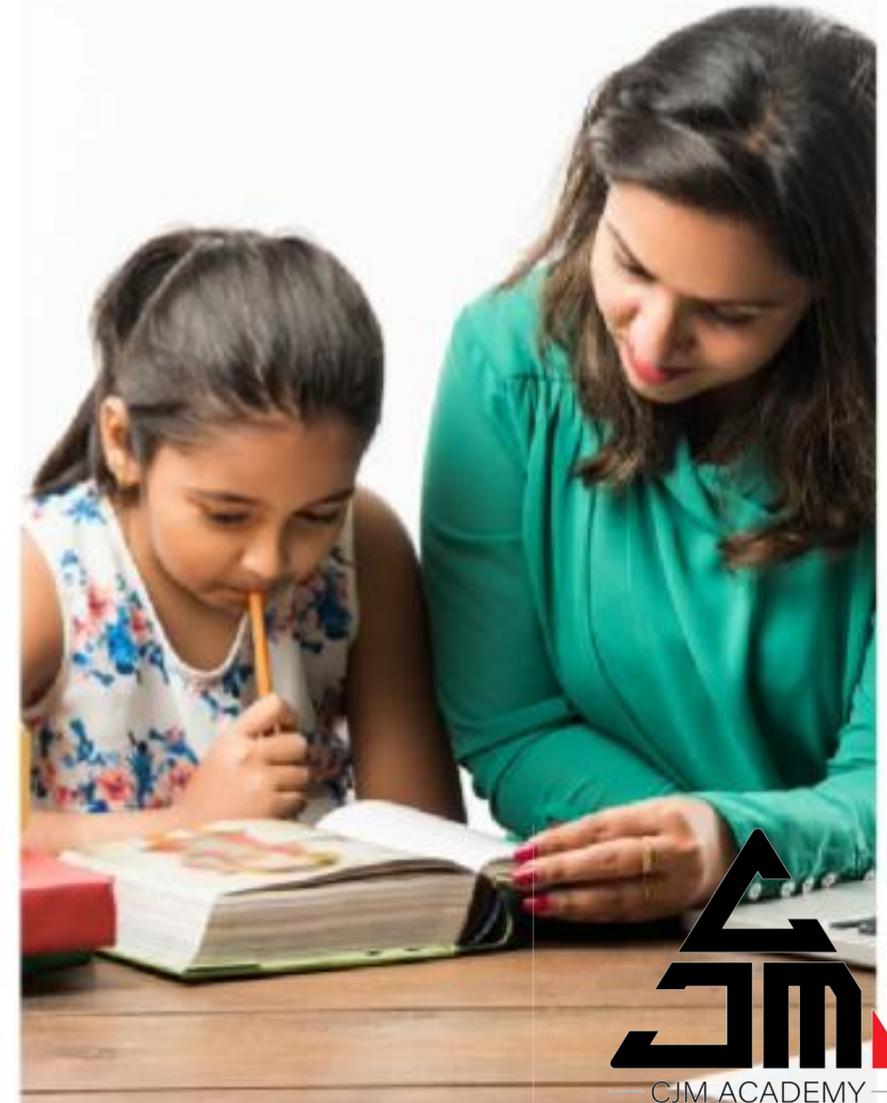
There are several essential duties and responsibilities that a family support worker must uphold. These will include:

1. **Undertaking an initial assessment** to identify the specific needs of one's family by the family support worker. Issues which can be prevented from escalating should be taken care of.
2. **Carrying out caseload meetings regularly.** This is another duty which can improve the role of a family support worker. These can be carried out with families, and new methods of improvement for the families could be discussed.
3. **Cooperating and communicating with other healthcare professionals** such as health and social care workers, colleagues and more. This will help with the handling of varying workloads.



# Duties & Responsibilities of A Family Support Worker

4. **Ensuring policies and practices** are enforced, including working in line with safeguarding policies line with safeguarding, diversity, and inclusion.
5. **Making sure to manage workload commitments as well as staying organised** with meetings, admin, and appointments.
6. **Assessing and evaluating parenting styles and providing practical assistance** for parents who struggle when necessary.
7. **Monitoring children** who may require further assistance with learning and development so family support workers should help them when needed.

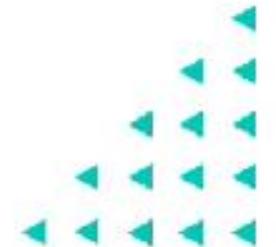




## The Key Qualities of A Family Support Worker

There are some qualities that a family support worker will need to possess to provide adequate care for families. These include:

- **Good communication:** Support workers must listen well and provide excellent communication.
- **Building relationships:** Building relationships with families will help ensure that their health and safety is being upheld.
- **Remaining calm under pressure:** Instances may occur where family support workers have to deal with challenging behaviour.



# The Key Qualities of A Family Support Worker

- > **Good teamwork skills:** Family support workers will often need to collaborate with several colleagues or industry professionals. This means that the ability to work well within a large team is required.
- > **Being empathetic, sensitive, and non-judgemental:** Being able to sympathise and understand clients is a significant skill needed when handling families in crisis. The more sensitive a case is, the higher the risk of emotional trauma.
- > **Resilience:** when dealing with traumatic situations, knowing how to cope is key.



# How to Become A Family Support Worker

## Professional Development

Continuous learning is required to improve the skills of a family support worker. Additional training can be taken in any of the following:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- First aid
- Equality and diversity
- Legal frameworks and procedures
- Signs of substance misuse and domestic violence

There are always opportunities for further development through study. You can also specialise in a particular area and gain postgraduate degrees.

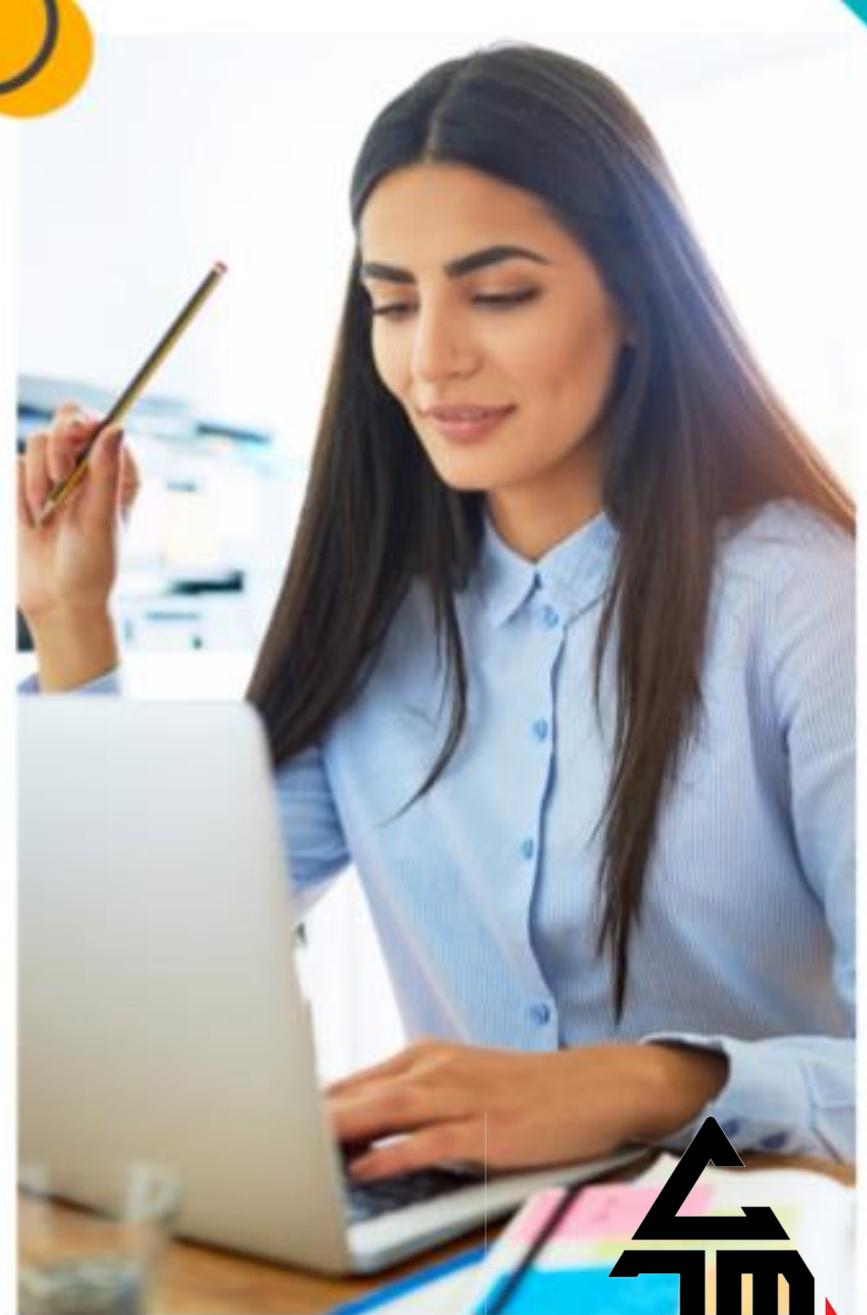


# How to Become A Family Support Worker

## Career Prospects

Various areas of work are available to experienced and qualified family support workers. These areas include:

- **Working with people with disabilities** – Such as children with special needs and those with permanent mental and physical disabilities
- **Being a team leader** – Performing resource planning and employee engagement are much-needed traits
- **Becoming manager of a family centre or refuge** – Helping those in crisis and in need of support
- **Managing a support group**
- **Move to other support work**



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