



23 Social care interview questions

Resilience

Resilience allows us to respond constructively to setbacks and failures. A lack of resilience could make somebody more likely to feel overwhelmed, or less able to picture a positive future beyond their current setback.

These questions can help you understand your candidate's resiliency, as well as what they might need from you, as their manager, in times of adversity.

1. Tell me about a time when something went wrong at work because of something you did. What did you learn?
2. How do you manage day-to-day stress and pressure at work?
3. What do you do to look after your emotional wellbeing?
4. Describe a time when you had to deal with a difficult or challenging service user.

Adaptability

As any social care worker knows, the average day can quickly go 'off-script'. Being able to embrace change and think your way out of a problem are essential.

These questions can shine a light on your candidate's adaptability, revealing interesting insights into their ability to stay calm under pressure – and take action when needed.

5. Think of a time when you had to re-plan your shift because something unexpected happened. What was your process?
6. Can you recall a situation where you encountered an unexpected challenge or obstacle in your work? Describe how you approached and resolved the issue.
7. Can you describe a time when you had to quickly learn a new skill or piece of technology to meet the needs of a service user? How did you approach this challenge, and what did you learn from the experience?

Patience

Lots of people never have to experience conflict at work. But in social care, it's a routine part of the job.

Patience is the ability to remain calm, composed and in control of your emotions. Being able to take a breath and keep a clear head is an important part of good decision making, where moving fast is not always moving smart.

These questions can help reveal someone's ability to stay patient and in control when emotions are running high. What can you learn about their ability to negotiate and compromise?

8. Tell me about a difficult experience or relationship you had with someone at work. How did you resolve the situation?
9. Tell me about a time when you lost your patience at work. What happened, and what did you learn from the experience?
10. What strategies do you use to remain calm and composed under pressure?

Teamwork and communication

Social care often involves working in teams with a variety of professionals. Effective teamwork and clear communication are both essential for building relationships and providing comprehensive and coordinated care.

These questions can help you assess a candidate's ability to work effectively in a team and communicate clearly.

11. How do you work effectively as part of a team?
12. Describe a time when you had to resolve a conflict within your team.
13. Tell me about a time when you took the initiative to improve team morale or collaboration?
14. How do you communicate effectively with service users, their families, and colleagues?
15. Can you recall a time when you had to deliver difficult news or feedback to a service user or colleague? How did you approach the conversation, and what were the outcomes?
16. Have you ever experienced a misunderstanding or disagreement in your work? How did you resolve the issue and prevent similar misunderstandings in the future?

Empathy

Person-centred care is based on watching, listening and responding. A strong and decisive carer is inspiring; but one who can't accept when they're wrong would be cause for concern.

These questions can help you understand your candidate's ability to actively listen and empathise, as well as to accept when they're wrong and change their approach.

17. Give me an example of when someone else's perspective or opinion changed your mind about something at work.
18. How do you demonstrate empathy and understanding towards service users?
19. Can you recall a personal connection you've formed with a service user? What made this interaction meaningful, and how did it impact your approach to their care?
20. How do you recognise and respond to the emotional needs of service users and their families?

Time management

Time management is a critical skill in any workplace, but it's especially vital in the care sector.

Few care providers are over-resourced. In a sector that's notoriously short on budgets and people, it's critical that your team members know how to use the time they have to maximum effect.

These questions can shed light on how your candidate prioritises and communicates with colleagues. You might learn about their attention to detail and use of digital tools, too.

21. Imagine your shift is ending in one hour, and you have more jobs left than you can complete. How will you use your remaining time?
22. Describe a time when you had to balance multiple responsibilities and deadlines.
23. How do you ensure that you are meeting the needs of all service users?

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