The Isle of Wight...

A great place to work and live
The Isle of Wight lies off the south coast of mainland England and covers an area of 147 square miles, with a beautiful coastline that runs for 57 miles.

Slightly more than half, mainly in the west, is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with 28 miles designated as Heritage Coast.

In addition, the Island also includes a very high number of internationally, nationally and locally important nature conservation sites.

While the overriding character of the Island is rural, about 60% of the Isle of Wight’s population live within the main towns of Newport, Cowes, East Cowes, Ryde, Sandown and Shanklin. Newport is the county town of the Island and is the main employment centre.
The local population is approximately 140,000 but that can double in the summer months with the influx of tourists. Houses and other property prices are, on average, lower than most of the south coast, as are rental prices.

The Isle of Wight is well known for the quality of its environment, with its landscapes and coastlines enjoying a high level of special designation and protection.

While this helps to give the Island its unique character, it also presents us with the challenge of protecting, conserving and enhancing the environment, alongside our ambition to facilitate regeneration and development.

Cowes and Ryde are the principal points of entry, linking Southampton and Portsmouth respectively.

Crossings can take as little as ten minutes for passengers using the hovercraft service to Southsea, Portsmouth, alongside other fast routes from Ryde to Portsmouth and Cowes to Southampton. Vehicle ferries run from Fishbourne to Portsmouth, East Cowes to Southampton and Yarmouth to Lymington, all in under an hour.
Getting to the Isle of Wight

Car ferries
- Lymington to Yarmouth: 30 minutes
- Southampton to Cowes: 1 hour
- Portsmouth to Fishbourne: 45 minutes

Passenger ferries
- Southampton to East Cowes: 30 minutes
- Portsmouth to Ryde: 20 minutes

Passenger hovercraft
- Portsmouth to Ryde: 10 minutes

Island Line railway
- Ryde to Shanklin: 30 minutes

Airport

Railway connection
Situated off the south coast of England, the Isle of Wight boasts multiple connections ensuring it never feels disconnected, with journey times across The Solent starting at just ten minutes. In no time at all you can be in the heart of one of two major UK cities, Portsmouth and Southampton. From there excellent road, rail and air links mean that the rest of the UK, and the world, is always within reach.
The Isle of Wight Council was created in 1995 as a unitary authority, which employs about 2,000 staff and holds responsibility for virtually all local government activities on the Island.

The council has in place an ambitious corporate plan\(^1\) with a vision for the “Isle of Wight to be an inspiring place in which to grow up, work, live and visit.”

At its heart, the plan is committed to:

- create opportunities for all;
- deliver economic growth and prosperity;
- preserve our environment;
- protect our community;
- plan for our future needs;
- provide sound financial management.

Why become a social worker on the Isle of Wight?

**Children’s services – at a glance**
- A welcoming service, delivering positive team support to you, from our social work PAs and committed social workers to our experienced management team.
- Opportunities to develop and enhance your social work knowledge and skills through our extensive workforce

development programme, including a guaranteed five days of CPD per annum.

- Access to expert practitioners, including adult mental health and substance misuse workers to help you achieve the best outcomes for the children and families you work with.
- Flexible working arrangements to allow you to achieve a good work life balance-in the beautiful Isle of Wight.
- A commitment to creating the conditions to allow social work to thrive, providing high quality supervision, freeing you up from administrative work, making the best use of new technology and creating more time for you to spend working with children and families.

**Adult services – at a glance**

- Be part of a team that puts the strengths of individuals, families and community at the heart of care and wellbeing.
- Work where your skills are valued and where your passion to promote, improve and protect well-being is encouraged.
- Benefit from heavy investment in continuing professional development where colleagues feel they are offered the necessary training to do their jobs well.
- Work within a team which understands the demands of the job and recognises your hard work.
- Join a team where innovation and ambition are actively encouraged.
The Isle of Wight attracts around 2.4 million visitors every year and tourism is a key part of its economy. It also means the Island has many attractions and places of interest for its residents to enjoy time and time again.

Some of the most popular include:

- **Alum Bay** – famous for the many different colours of sand which appear naturally on the beach. A traditional souvenir of the Isle of Wight is a picture or glass paperweight filled with the different colours.

- **Blackgang Chine** – formerly a dramatic gorge through which it was once possible to walk to the sea. Following a catastrophic collapse, the chine ceased to exist some decades ago, but it’s now home to what’s thought to be the world’s first and oldest theme park.
• **Osborne House** – officially the summer home of Queen Victoria, but which was used as her main residence for some time after the death of Prince Albert. Most of the well-preserved house and grounds are open all year round.

• **Carisbrooke Castle** – Charles I was held prisoner here. The castle appears in the popular children’s story ‘Moonfleet’ and it’s also popular for its battle re-enactments and jousting events.
• **Shanklin Chine** – a smaller gorge with much charm and which can still be visited.

• **The Needles** – a very famous headland and offshore rocks at the extreme western end of the Island. There are early sea defences such as the Needles Old Battery and Tennyson Down, the national memorial to Alfred Lord Tennyson, and the sight of spectacular sea and land views.
If you were to ask anyone why they relocated to the Isle of Wight, they would all have a different reason.

What drew them here? What made them stay?

Everyone’s circumstances are different but one fundamental factor will entwine every story; the Isle of Wight is a beautiful, calm, interesting and inspiring place to be.

While we love the tranquil surroundings, we are an innovative, forward thinking and dynamic council.

We trust in our staff to make a difference on the Isle of Wight – and we want people to join us who share those values.

In the last two years we’ve made some great strides and our outlook is very much onward and upward.

The opportunities ahead of us are vast and you could be a part of that, helping our fantastic teams in children’s and adults’ services to continue to make our home a great place to grow up, live, work and visit.

Working for the council means being a real part of our community, delivering services that people want and need and being at the heart of the Island’s future.

We aspire to be great – and we want you to help.
The Isle of Wight is an inspiring place and we have a clear vision for how the council can continue to improve outcomes for our community.

The opportunity to live in such a glorious location is only one of the benefits of Island life.

Working for the council will enable you to truly make a difference. As a council we want to create opportunities for everyone; deliver economic growth and prosperity; preserve our environment; protect our community; plan for our future needs, and most of all provide sound financial management.

We expect our staff to be professional, ethical and act with integrity, giving clear leadership and direction for the community we serve.

Our ambition is to ensure the Island is truly an inspirational place in which to grow up, work, live and visit.

And my aim is to continue to lead a council that works in the best interests of all Islanders.
The Isle of Wight Festival – one of the first major festivals in the UK summer calendar every year, with a history reaching back over 45 years. The event emerged from a series of festivals between 1968 and 1970, widely acknowledge as Europe’s equivalent of Woodstock. Since 2002, when the festival was revived, it has gone from strength to strength, with some of the biggest names in the industry performing on the famous stage.

Cowes is considered by many to be the UK’s home of sailing. Cowes week in early August is the town’s main sailing event with about 8,000 sailors and another 90,000 people who come along as spectators or to just enjoy the ambiance of the event.

The Round the Island race in late June/early July is also worth watching, with over 1,500 yachts competing in various classes.
Walking is promoted by an annual walking festival. There is a superb and extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. There are a number of ‘long distance trails’ of which the coastal path is the longest, at approximately 73 miles.

Meanwhile, cycling on the Island is a fantastic way to get around and keep green. The Island has over 200 miles of cycleways, much of which can be enjoyed by families off road. Major trails to note are ‘The Sunshine Trail’ which incorporates Sandown, Shanklin, Godshill and Wroxall in a 12-mile circular route. ‘The Troll Trail’ leads from Cowes to Sandown or vice versa (90% off road) and ‘Round the Island Cycle Route’ circumnavigates the Isle of Wight on a 62-mile ride (not for the amateur or faint hearted).
While our focus is always on further improving outcomes for children, by making changes in our practice our social workers are also seeing the personal benefits.

We are committed to promoting working conditions that are safe, supportive and encouraging; with positive team support and regular supervision, including peer supervision.

Although keen to attract experienced social workers, this is not at the expense of creating opportunities for newly-qualified social workers.

The quality of our frontline staff has been crucial in making sure we secure the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children.

We’re delighted to be back at Community Care Live London and are looking forward to meeting and talking with you.
I’ve had the privilege of working with children and families on the Isle of Wight for the past ten years, five of those working in a children’s services partnership with Hampshire County Council. This unique partnership has delivered significant improvements across children’s social care services, combining high quality strategic management with excellent relationships. These relationships, with the children and families we serve, as well as with colleagues across the council and partner agencies, are at the heart of what makes the Island a special place to live and work.

The Isle of Wight’s social workers are dedicated, hardworking and committed to our children and families. My colleagues say they work in a safe and supported environment, which allows them to focus on delivering support to families.

As a leadership team we are committed to ensuring our social workers have the space to deliver high quality support and interventions. One of the ways we have achieved this is through the piloting of PAs for social workers, as part of the Department for Education’s Innovation Programme.

This approach has now been mainstreamed across our social care teams and has successfully freed up social workers from many administrative tasks, allowing them to dedicate their efforts to improving outcomes.

Our management team provide strong oversight of social work practice, supporting and encouraging staff, promoting workforce development opportunities and regular supervision, including peer supervision sessions. The approach we have taken has led to a high retention rate and a much lower than average reliance on agency social workers. That stability is important for children and families but also in terms of our managers, who have been supported in developing their careers across
the partnership and understand the challenges that social workers face.

To ensure we are able to put the right support around families, we have
developed a multi-agency approach with mental health and substance
misuse workers based within social care teams. This is the start of a radical
and innovative programme in delivering children’s services differently –
making the best use of the collective resources available to children and
families, through a strengths-based approach.

While I certainly work hard – and expect the same from my team –
there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy Island life. For me, one of the
main benefits of living on the Isle of Wight is the lifestyle. My children
have grown up five minutes’ walk from the beach, we live in a lovely
community and enjoy the wide variety of outdoor activities the Island
has to offer – from sailing, surfing and cycling to music festivals and
carnivals.

High quality social work is crucial to children’s services in order to
safeguard the Island’s children. We want the best for our children and
families and that means recruiting social workers who are as committed
as we are to delivering sustained change, improving outcomes and
keeping children safe from harm and abuse.

We want to hear from good social workers like you to come and join
us in keeping children safe and supporting families on the beautiful
Isle of Wight.
I have been a social worker for over ten years and I am currently a senior practitioner in the disabled children’s team. I always remember people talking to me about ‘burn out’, but I have never felt remotely close to this.

Yes there are definitely some difficult days, and almost every day will be filled with a variety of challenges, but never once I have I ever been bored, or felt like giving it all up for something else.

I’ve never looked back and have never regretted being a social worker.

The Isle of Wight is a beautiful therapeutic place to live and work, even after a really hard day at work you can head to the beach and jump in the sea!

There is consistency here with clear policies and procedures, a good system of regular supervision and you will always be supported by anyone at work, including our approachable and supportive managers.

The thing I love the most is working directly with children and families and fortunately we get the space to do this here on the Isle of Wight.

Everything we do is about moving forward, creating positive change. There will always be someone that knows something you don’t, no matter how experienced you are, and you will never stop learning, never stop being challenged, and hopefully never stop feeling passionate about what you do.

Whatever has happened in a child’s life and unfortunately sometimes really bad things do happen, you can make a difference.
Help to Buy South is a Help to Buy agent for the south of England offering affordable options to purchase or rent a home. The Isle of Wight is among the areas covered by the scheme. To register and apply for properties, visit: helptobuy.gov.uk.
The Isle of Wight is fast becoming the foodie capital of the south coast and it is easy to see why!
Exploring the great places to eat is one of the highlights of living on the Island, which offers a fabulous array to cater for all tastes and appetites.
The diversity of the landscape is reflected in the quality and choice of local produce on offer in many of the eateries or from local farmers markets.
We are spoiled for choice, with an abundance of afternoon tea rooms, country pubs, quality restaurants and beachside cafes.
Or, if you’d rather pickup or get food delivered to your door there are also plenty of takeaways and fast food outlets to choose from.
Every town and village across the Island will have places to tempt you. Whether you are looking for family friendly or gourmet dining, the Isle of Wight is truly unique in what it can offer.
Garlic has been produced on the Island for centuries and is one of its most important exports.
Islanders are so besotted with their crop of this wonderful superfood that they created the Isle of Wight Garlic Festival; a celebration of all things garlicky.
We are changing things – at pace – in adult social care on the Isle of Wight.

Our sights are set on being a national exemplar of innovation and excellence, delivering the very best person-centred outcomes for those we serve.

We are passionate in our belief that our residents have the right to expect no less.

We introduced our new strategy, Care Close to Home, in April 2017, and its impact over the past 15 months has been significant. For instance, we have seen a 39 per cent reduction in the rate of permanent admissions into care homes among those people aged 65 and older.

We’ve gone from being the local authority with the highest rate of delayed transfer of care in January 2016 to being the second most improved nationally by September 2017.
We’ve also been identified by the National Hospital to Home team and Local Government Association as a site of national good practice. We know the outcomes we deliver for those we serve are correlated directly to how well we are supporting our people to be competent, confident and critical thinking.

We have invested heavily in continuing professional development as part of Care Close to Home and my colleagues’ reactions to this investment speaks for itself, with more than 90 per cent of staff stating we were offering the necessary training to do their jobs well.

We are nowhere near finished yet, as Care Close to Home is a three-year turnaround programme.

We need social care professionals to join us who are equally ambitious about the outcomes delivered to those they serve and their own career development.

Yes, the Isle of Wight is a beautiful island with relatively cheap housing – its outdoors lifestyle offer, both on and off the water, is literally world class and I have loved living here since I joined in December 2016.

But be under no illusion, we are no backwater of professional ambition and our pace is not slow. In fact, we are just getting going and we need hard working, ambitious people to join us.
I am a newly-qualified social worker nearing the end of my assessed and supported year in employment with the Isle of Wight Council’s adult services. I became a social worker, foremost, to work with individuals who require support.

As I progressed through my first year in practice, I was able to utilise my knowledge and skills to empower individuals to become an agent for change in their own lives. Working for the council on the Isle of Wight has allowed me to put my studies into practice enabling individuals to recognise the role they have in achieving their own outcomes.

I received support with my ASYE year from the workforce development team. Support has been tailored to my needs as a practitioner to develop skills and enhance knowledge as required.

They have enabled and encouraged me to continually use reflection as a tool to inform my practice and maintain my values, which I feel has allowed me to develop in the role I do.

Regular peer supervision sessions provide a platform to discuss challenges with colleagues from both adults and children’s services – invaluable as a newly-qualified worker. In my working environment there is always someone around to provide support where it is required.

The Isle of Wight is a unique place to live; we have an eclectic mix of workers and this is also true for those we serve.

Working as a social worker here allows you to work towards improving wellbeing for those we work for, and provides the opportunity to enhance your own personal wellbeing. Sandy beaches provide some time for reflection; there is a wealth of history to explore, which ranges from the keep at the castle, to the field of dreams at the Isle of Wight festival. I came to the Isle of Wight at a young age and I’ve not yet found a reason to leave.
The Isle of Wight Council’s children’s services team has recently joined Hampshire County Council’s Graduate Entry and Training scheme (GETs). This is an entirely new way of supporting people like you through your Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).

You will spend four weeks with the Hampshire cohort together on a bespoke induction programme before joining our children’s social care to complete our highly regarded and successful ASYE programme.
Thank you for your interest in working for the Isle of Wight Council. We hope we’ve given you an insight into how we can help you take the next step in your career.

Please take every opportunity to find out more by visiting our website: iwight.com/jobopportunites

and see our video: youtube.com/watch?v=KPoGnUvCiv4
For more information about careers with the Isle of Wight Council, please visit iwight.com/jobopportunities

If you have difficulty understanding this document, please contact us on 01983 821000 and we will do our best to help you.

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