PLANNING

your career

shaping developing delivering FUTURE COMMUNITIES
What kind of future do you want?

Do you want a diverse career in which no two days are the same?

Do you want the opportunity to work at home or abroad in different sectors, with the chance to specialise?

Do you want to make decisions that affect how people live in a positive way?

Do you want to join a profession where caring for the environment will be an important part of your work?

As a town and country planner you’ll have the potential to build such a career. If, like a lot of people, you think it’s just about buildings, think again! Get involved in planning and you could find yourself:

• tackling the effects of climate change
• helping to protect our countryside, waterways and shorelines
• finding sustainable transport solutions
• promoting energy efficiency
• helping to create new job opportunities
• planning where future housing should go
• engaging with people about how their communities are developed
• developing plans for your future community

In this brochure you’ll find out more about the many different aspects of planning. We hope you’ll discover a career that can be both personally and professionally rewarding, and one in which you can make a very real and lasting impact on peoples’ lives.
How much variety is there in a career in planning?

There’s far more to planning than dealing with applications for extensions and conservatories. In fact, you’d be surprised just how many different options you can choose from.

Sarah Foster, a development manager for the Peak District National Park Authority, agrees that diversity is very much what planning is about:

“Planning is such a broad profession that it can appeal to many different people. I work in development management but others work in policy, transport planning, urban design, environmental planning, minerals, waste and energy planning, regeneration or heritage and conservation.”

Whatever type of person you are, there’s a role in planning that will suit you. If you’re analytical and like dealing with detail, you might enjoy a job in planning research. If you work well with people and want to get involved with your local community, a role in community engagement could be for you. Or if you’re into design and making things work better, maybe urban design’s the right choice. You may get involved in some of these areas, or you might decide to focus on one specialist area, like transport planning or heritage. But one thing’s for certain: there’ll be a whole range of stimulating challenges ahead of you.

Planners work in all kinds of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors, or as self-employed consultants. They can also become involved in major projects throughout the world, so you may even get the chance to work overseas.

Jayshree Patel, a graduate planner with Savills, says:

“It’s an excellent career path to go down. Think carefully about what interests you as planning is extremely varied, but there’s definitely something for everyone.”

You can find out more about the different aspects of planning on the following pages.
A role in this field of planning puts you right at the heart of policy-making at a national, subnational or local level. You'll help set the strategies that shape the future of places, determining how an area is developed, how land is to be used and what infrastructure is needed to support it. This involves writing new planning policy documents, as well as reviewing and monitoring those that exist already.

You wouldn’t only be concerned with where houses can be built, but with a whole range of other considerations including transport, the local economy, jobs, green infrastructure, renewable energy, climate change and the historic environment.

Policy planners usually work in local, subnational or national government organisations, although private consultancies often provide policy advice as well. At the national level you’ll usually focus on a specific policy area such as housing, transport, flooding or conservation, and your input will inform and direct policy at regional and local levels. Locally, you would present policy documents to the general public, interpreting policy and providing guidance on specific issues to guide new development.

Kath Haddrell, a senior planner for the Planning Inspectorate, explains her role:

“My team works on planning policy at local authority and subnational level once plans have been submitted to the Secretary of State. I enjoy working on the bigger initiatives, such as a power station and the Eden Project. Making a difference is important to me; seeing good development being delivered and, where necessary, stopping poorly devised plans moving forward.”
As a transport planner you’d be responsible for linking together all the various modes of travel and creating efficient networks for the public. Operating nationally, subnationally or locally, you’d prepare and implement the transport policies, strategies and plans that help meet an area’s social, economic and environmental needs.

This means that if you specialise in this field you could be looking at the impact of a major airport expansion, planning new rail networks, designing routes to make sure children can cycle and walk to school safely, or helping to increase safety for road users.

**Simon Bradbury** works for Transport for London (TfL), where he is the Smarter Travel 2012 Games Manager.

“My role is to act as the TfL representative assisting in the development of the travel demand management strategy for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

One of the most enjoyable aspects is that I get to work with so many different people, working in such a variety of fields across the organisation. The opportunity to learn from and be involved in collaborative working with such an array of transport planning professionals is unusual and makes the role even more satisfying.

Of course, being involved in transport planning for the Olympics gives the job that glamour factor and makes the context in which I work that much more unique and original.”
As an urban designer, you’d be working at the point where planning meets architecture. Urban design looks at the design of individual buildings, how buildings relate to the street, and beyond that to the space between buildings where everyday life takes place.

You’d help ensure areas are attractive, safe and pleasant to live, work in or visit. Closely involved in policy-making, you’d also focus on how to bring life to places that have become run-down, while finding ways to conserve historic buildings and make the most of the landscape.

Urban designers’ understanding of how people interact with places helps them pinpoint exactly what features make a good place ~ and how to ‘design out’ those that create bad or unsafe areas. Working for either a local council or a private consultancy, your strong communication skills will help you negotiate confidently with developers, land owners, planning officers and the general public.

Lindsay Whitley, an urban designer working for Salford City Council’s Design and Heritage team, explains why urban design attracted her:

“I was attracted to planning as a career because I was passionate about geography and architecture, and wondered why all places couldn’t be great. I enjoy the fact that each project is different and brings its own design challenges. Every day you learn something new.

The best advice I got as an urban design student was always to look up. This makes perfect sense. Next time you walk around a village, town or city, make sure you take a look above the ground floor of the buildings and gaze in wonder ~ or sometimes in horror ~ at the different styles of architecture. It will always make you appreciate the rich and varied world of planning, and the challenges it presents.”
As a planning specialist in this field, you’d focus on the environmental factors that contribute to creating sustainable places. That means analysing how we manage resources, and covers a vast number of areas that are becoming increasingly important in today’s world. These range from adapting to climate change to protecting against flooding and creating more environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient developments.

Environmental planners have to balance the needs of a growing population for more homes and more travel with the impact on the environment. They’re also involved in how we manage our waste and how, as a society, we can reduce the amount of waste we produce.

Hannah Brumfitt is currently working as a planning officer as part of Lancashire County Council’s Waste and Minerals Policy Group. Here, she describes her role:

“I get out of the office on a regular basis to see landfill operations, emerging waste technology facilities and quarries. Experiencing the sheer size and scale of these places is incredible, and I now have much more of an appreciation of just how important minerals and waste developments are to our everyday lives.

I’m involved in a broad spectrum of activities ~ from drawing up policies and liaising with stakeholders in producing site allocations and development management policies, to providing expert planning advice in line with the Council’s role as a Waste Disposal Authority. I also oversee and support the Council’s waste contractor when preparing planning applications for new facilities.

I particularly enjoy meeting and sharing ideas with consultants, colleagues from other authorities and disciplines, and members of the public.”
If you work in development management you’ll be at the front line of decision-making in planning. Operating at a local level, you could handle the entire application process for anything from a new house to an industrial or office development, a mobile phone mast, a wind farm or works to listed buildings and protected trees.

Development management is mainly about getting the right development in the right place. But it can also include planning enforcement where unauthorised development has taken place, such as when a building is completed without permission. Expect to conduct plenty of site visits and provide clear guidance to homeowners and builders, as well as gathering evidence and presenting it to planning committees or even public inquiries.

You’ll need to be a clear and diplomatic communicator to work with and reconcile the interests of all types of people. These could include local residents, business operators, developers, architects, surveyors and representatives of national bodies such as the Environment Agency.

Most development managers work for local authorities, but there are opportunities to join other types of organisation. Sarah Foster is a development manager who works for the Peak District National Park Authority. Here, she describes what she likes most about her job:

“I ensure that decisions are balanced and take account of the needs of local communities and farmers while respecting the Park’s statutory purposes. I love the problem-solving aspect of the role. Sometimes a planning application won’t be acceptable as it stands, but with a few minor changes it can be approved. I like to identify what can be altered to improve these proposals.

I deal with planning applications for the south of the Park, which covers about half its area. That means I’m making decisions that influence one of the country’s greatest natural assets, and, of course, apart from a really interesting variety of professional challenges, I regularly get out and about on site visits in one of the most beautiful areas of the UK.”
As a planner working in regeneration you’d focus on changing places to address environmental, social and economic disadvantage.

Regeneration officers see that proposals for new development really do breathe life back into an area, while taking account of the local community’s needs. Basically, the role is all about making sure that each new development not only looks good on paper, but is also liked and used by the people who live and work there.

Bethan Jackson is on the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Graduate Programme. She gives her early impressions of life as a regeneration planner:

“As the government body for housing and regeneration, the HCA has proved to be a great place to start my career, offering a unique opportunity for exciting hands-on experience in the housing and regeneration industry. Even at this early stage of my career it’s clear that the industry is very dynamic, and I’m developing a whole host of important skills: technical, practical, innovative and strategic.

So far I’ve been involved in a number of projects, including the Affordable Housing Programme. I enjoy working in the regeneration sector as it aims to improve the built and social environment to help people live in the kind of places that they want and can afford to live in.”

Regeneration planners can be involved in a varied range of projects. These could include the re-use of individual buildings, creating street improvements or making sure a new business facility is located in the right place.

You’ll need a good understanding of planning processes and sources of funding and incentive schemes that can attract new businesses to the area. Strong communication skills are also important when liaising with community groups to set up projects with colleagues within your organisation or external partners such as Chambers of Commerce. Successful regeneration may also require promoting the area locally, nationally and even internationally; think of the London 2012 Olympic Games. This may mean being involved in improving public transport or promoting tourism.

The historic environment is everywhere around us, above and below ground. It has shaped the places in which we live, work and move through. As a planner in heritage and conservation, you’d protect and enhance these places ~ both now and for the future.

Working with historic maps, drawings, photographs and other archive sources, you’d develop a clear understanding of how current environments have been created, and how they define our sense of place. This understanding will be vital to your role in shaping the future. It will help you to change places so they can grow and meet the needs of future society, while allowing the past (and the buildings, spaces and areas that represent it) to live on and be enjoyed by everyone.
At a national level, heritage and conservation planners work for bodies like English Heritage, Natural England, national parks and the National Trust; and at a local level for councils or private practices. They balance today’s development requirements (for example a new, extended or altered building, more housing or better streets) with the need to protect and enhance buildings, spaces and places of heritage importance. You could find yourself preparing policy or guidance documents on how we manage historic environments such as World Heritage Sites, advising on the refurbishment or re-use of listed buildings, or considering the impact a development proposal may have on the special character of a conservation area or protected landscape.

Graham Saunders, a senior planning advisor for English Heritage in London, talks about why he loves working in this specialist field:

“My role places me at the forefront of key planning policy discussions on how London’s world class heritage will be managed. My overarching aim is to promote a greater understanding of our historic environment, and how our heritage can actively help define and shape London’s future. It is a thoroughly challenging and rewarding role that builds on my experience as a planner and urban designer as it draws upon my personal passion for the historic environment.”

What other kinds of opportunities are there?

Many people work in other aspects of planning that you may not have thought about. For example, there are qualified solicitors who specialise in planning law, academic planning researchers, and people who teach and lecture in planning. Planners also work in areas including housing, transport, education, health and science, alongside other professionals like engineers or public health specialists.

Working closely with fully qualified professional planners are also planning technicians, enforcement officers and planning administrators. Each of these has specialist knowledge and supports the planning system. Planners often start their career as a technician or administrator and decide to study for a professional qualification at a later date.

While planning systems vary internationally, UK-trained planners frequently have the chance to work abroad. Here Chris Ferrary describes some of his achievements as a planner in Malaysia:

“Planning has not only offered me a huge range of intellectual challenges, but a fantastic opportunity to see the world too. Some personal highlights of my career so far? One was working on re-building Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Another was spending a weekend on an idyllic Malaysian tea plantation evaluating the potential for them to market bottled water from their spring.”

“Planning offered me the opportunity to see the world.”
GCSEs
Apart from good grades in English and maths, you won't need to have specific GCSE (or equivalent) subjects. But if you're choosing your options, subjects like geography, social studies, citizenship, science or ICT may be useful.

A levels
If you're choosing your A levels (or equivalent), the following subjects will be useful: art and graphic design, business studies, economics, English, environmental studies, geography, history, ICT, psychology and politics.

Degree
To become a Chartered Town Planner you must study for an undergraduate or postgraduate course accredited by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). There are various undergraduate degrees in planning that are accredited by the RTPI, which you can find at <www.rtpi.org.uk/education> under Accredited Qualifications. However, if you study for a non-accredited undergraduate degree or a degree in an unrelated subject, it won't be a problem. You can always take an RTPI-accredited postgraduate degree later. To find out more, visit <www.rtpi.org.uk/education>

If you think you might be interested in a career in planning but don’t want to specialise yet, undergraduate degrees in the following subjects could help you prepare for it: built environment, economics, engineering, environmental studies, geography, law, politics or social studies.

Vocational qualifications
If you’re working towards a planning-related vocational qualification such as an NVQ HND or HNC, this could qualify you for work as a planning technician or enforcement officer. If you then want to take a planning degree you’ll need to check the entry requirements of individual universities or look at the UCAS website <www.ucas.ac.uk>. Alternatively, you may want to try and get some work experience in a planning department at a local council or private consultancy. See the following page for some ideas that could help you.

There is also a Diploma in Construction and the Built Environment. To find out more, see <www.direct.gov.uk> under Education and Learning.

RTPI membership
The RTPI is the professional body for people working in planning (like the Law Society is for solicitors). Our fully-qualified members are known as Chartered Town Planners and can use the letters MRTPI after their name.

You can become a student member as soon as you start an RTPI-accredited university course. Once you’ve completed this and have worked for a period of time you can apply to become a full member of the RTPI ~ a Chartered Town Planner. But to become a full member you’ll need to satisfy the RTPI that your knowledge of planning and the experience you have gained is of a high standard.

Becoming a Chartered Town Planner will mean you’re recognised as a professional; it will enhance your credibility among colleagues, customers and clients and could positively influence your future earning potential.

See <www.rtpi.org.uk/membership> for more information.

Both full and student members of the RTPI can benefit from joining the Young Planners’ Network ~ a community of young professionals that can help you make contacts and develop your interest in planning.
There’s a broad spectrum of opportunities in planning from assistant/support roles right up to manager and director level, but a typical entry level salary would be around £15,000 - £20,000. As in any profession, career progression is possible for those who work hard and show enthusiasm and an aptitude for the work. A director of planning can earn up to £100,000. Salaries depend on factors such as the level you’re working at, the size and location of the organisation, and the sector. Those who become Chartered Town Planners can usually command higher salaries.

See the job board below for a range of jobs that were advertised recently in Planning magazine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Salary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of Regeneration and Development</td>
<td>£75,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Solicitor (Planning)</td>
<td>Up to £52,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Urban Design and Conservation Manager</td>
<td>£39,030 - £41,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Planner with a planning consultancy</td>
<td>£30,000 - £40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development Manager</td>
<td>£38,603 - £46,127</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assoc. Conservation Planner (private consultancy)</td>
<td>c. £50,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport Officer (Policy)</td>
<td>£15,153 - £30,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Planner, consultancy</td>
<td>Up to £30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Assistants</td>
<td>£15,153 - £18,907</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Planning Adviser, charity</td>
<td>£20,000 - £26,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minerals and Waste Policy Manager</td>
<td>£28,172 - £34,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casework Officers, charity</td>
<td>£22,000 - £32,000</td>
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Planners work in both public and private sectors, and salaries for graduates are similar in both. It’s possible to move between the two sectors, as well, as between departments within the same organisation or into managerial posts.

Having started his career in local government planning, Sean Taylor then moved into private practice. He describes what his new role involves:

“I decided to look for a position within the private sector to broaden my experience. Since moving, I’ve prepared and managed environmental statements, large-scale planning applications and appeals.

A particularly interesting example was when I took responsibility for the planning application and preparation of the environmental statement for a redevelopment proposal of a former swimming pool to a new mixed use scheme. The proposed land uses included a new pool, restaurants, bars, hotels and retail units, and the site development will do much to support the future growth, regeneration and prosperity of the local area.”

Planning not only offers a wide range of opportunities to suit your interests and skills, but also gives you the flexibility to move during your career. There are jobs in planning in all sorts of different areas, from city to country to coast, in different sectors and different specialisms. It’s a career that enables you to keep learning, changing and developing.

You can see the full version of all the personal profiles in this brochure, and many more, on our website at www.rtpi.org.uk/careers
If planning sounds interesting and you want to find out more, here are some useful tips:

- If you’re keen to start working, you could take an administrative job in a planning department (your local council might be a good place to start). This can help you gain some useful skills and experience.
  
  For more information, see the section titled Where Do Planners Work? at www.rtpi.org.uk/careers

- Find out which organisations have planning departments and contact them to see if they can offer you some voluntary work, work experience or a placement. Employers in your area should be a good place to start, and local newspapers might be another useful source of information.
  
  Also check out www.work-experience.org (the National Council for Work Experience).

- The Environment Agency is one of the largest employers of planners in the UK. Visit its website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk

- Speak to a Personal Adviser at your local Connexions (www.connexions-direct.com). They’ll be able to help you if you need to put a CV together or get more information about applying for jobs.

- Contact your local council to find out if there are any voluntary projects going on that you could take part in.
  
  Alternatively, look at www.do-it.org.uk, the national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK. These are the types of projects that employers will look at positively.

- If you know someone who works in planning, speak to them about their role and find out if you can shadow them or one of their colleagues. This is a good way of finding out what goes on in a planning department at first hand.

- Visit www.rtpi.org.uk to find out what’s going on in the planning community, or take a look at Planning magazine, issued weekly and available at larger public libraries. You can also view it online at www.planningresource.co.uk

- If you’re particularly interested in urban design, visit the Urban Design Alliance website www.udal.org.uk. Or if you’d like to find out more about transport planning visit the Transport Planning Society website at www.tps.org.uk

- Other useful websites include:
  
  - www.groundwork.org.uk
  - www.housingnet.co.uk
  - www.communities.gov.uk - the Communities and Local Government (CLG) website
  - www.planningportal.gov.uk - The Planning Portal
  - www.pas.gov.uk - The Planning Advisory Service

Visit www.rtpi.org.uk/careers for lots more tips.