

'No two days are the same and you can make a real difference': social workers reflect on their careers

Level 1: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the following questions in pairs.

1. What skills and abilities do you think a social worker needs to have?
2. Would you like to be a social worker? Why or why not?

2 Key words

a. Write a word in bold from the article next to the correct definition.

1. able to do things alone without help _____
2. having the skills to do a job _____
3. to stop before you do something because you are nervous _____
4. children under the age of 18 who have committed a crime _____
5. studies or practises so you can do a job well _____
6. a person who helps people with the problems they have in life _____
7. suggestions about how something should be done _____
8. feelings or sadness about something you did or didn't do in the past _____

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity in the correct form.

1. I don't have any _____ about moving to the countryside.
2. Most young adults want to leave home and become _____.
3. Anna is a(n) _____ and helps old people live at home safely.
4. The new _____ will help teachers prepare students for exams.
5. Aiden is _____ to be a nurse at the moment.
6. I would like to become a(n) _____ airline pilot one day.
7. I didn't _____ to help my friend when she lost her job.
8. Some _____ get help and change their life for the better.

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- 1 There are many ways to become a **social worker** – here's a look at some of the main ones, and how different people who changed careers found them.
- 2 Clare Guiry remembers the first time she realised she made the right decision to give up her job to become a social worker. She was working with a 96-year-old woman who wanted to be more **independent**. "Everybody thought it wasn't a good idea but I helped her move into a flat where she had people to help her," says Guiry. "Now she's so happy."
- 3 Guiry, 44, says helping people to get what they need to have a better life, or continue the good life they already have, is part of being a social worker.
- 4 Emily Bell, another social worker, agrees. "I think a lot of people who go into social work would describe themselves as 'fixers' – we want to help people." Bell **qualifie** as a social worker last July after doing an apprenticeship. This is when a person works and **trains** for a job at the same time.
- 5 A professional social work qualification gives you different career options. For example, you can work with **young offenders** or help people with health problems. Rasheed Pendry, who started working as a social worker more than 20 years ago, says: "There are so many more career paths now compared to when I qualified."
- 6 Pendry is director of children's social care at Wandsworth council, which last year was recognised for the excellent support it offers its social workers. Pendry says one of the reasons for its success is the number of social workers who stay in the same job for a long time. Pendry believes that new government **guidelines** that mean people see the same social worker over time will have a positive effect. "Children and families don't want to have to tell their story again and again," he says.
- 7 Pendry's has worked in adult social care for many years. Does he have any **regrets** about the decision he took in the 1990s to become a social worker? "No," he says. "I wouldn't **hesitate** for a second to make the same career choice today. It's the best job in the world, where no two days are the same and you can make a real difference."

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions with information from the article.

1. Why did Clare Guiry feel happy about her decision to become a social worker?

2. What did Clare do to help the 96-year-old woman to live more independently?

3. What does Emily Bell say about people who work in social work?

4. What is an apprenticeship?

5. What kind of people can social workers help?

6. Why does Rasheed Pendry think it's a good idea for families to see the same social worker over time?

4 Key language

a. Fill in the rules of reported speech.

Reported Speech

- Reported speech is used to tell someone what another person said without quoting them directly. We use it in spoken language more than direct quotes.

Example:

Direct speech: He said, 'I'm hungry now!'

Reported speech: He said (that) he (1) _____ hungry at that moment.

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- When changing from direct to reported speech, you usually:
 - change the verb (2) _____.
 - change (3) _____ as needed. For example, *I* to *he*.
 - change (4) _____ expressions if relevant. For example, *now* changes to *at that moment*.

Direct Speech	Reported Speech
present simple →	(5) _____
<i>will</i> →	(6) _____
<i>can</i> →	(7) _____

- a. Rewrite these direct quotes from the article in indirect speech. Choose a suitable reporting verb from the box.

admitted

explained

noted

said

1. 'I helped her move into a flat where she had people to help her,' – Clare Guiry

2. 'I think a lot of people who go into social work would describe themselves as 'fixers'.' – Emily Bell

3. 'There are so many more career paths now compared to when I qualified.' – Rasheed Pendry

4. 'Children and families don't want to have to tell their stories again and again.' – Rasheed Pendry

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- Why do some people decide to change careers?
- Pendry says that being a social worker is 'the best job in the world'. Can you think of any negative points to being a social worker?

6 In your own words

- a. Write a personal statement outlining the reasons why you would or wouldn't want to work as a social worker. Include reasons and examples to support your opinion.
- b. Share your statements with your classmates.