



The Funny Thing About...

The Funny Thing About Social Workers

Nikki Whatmore:

Generally portrayed as being, kind of, out of touch...
old fashioned, wearing cardigans, socks with sandals, kind of a busy body, coming to interfere in people's lives.
Music: out.

Social worker:

I really think this is not a very suitable environment for a child.

Wayne:

Well, it's her fault, she's a slob.

Waynetta:

You're the slob.

Wayne:

You're the slob. Every time I go for a piss, the sink's full of washing up. And you never Hoover the carpet.

Waynetta:

How can I Hoover it? I ain't seen it in three years.

Wayne:

Good point. Blimey. Either Frogmella needs her nappy changed or you've just dropped one.

Waynetta:

Can you change her please? Only he won't do it and I want to watch 'Home and Away'.

Social Worker:

I'm afraid I'm going to have to take this child into care.

Nikki Whatmore:

The Harry Enfield sketch isn't realistic in the sense that she just goes in there and takes the child away. She doesn't go in there to explain why she's calling. The best way would be working with the parents and explaining that together you need to make this better for the child and you do learn that on your course.
(explosion noise)

Wayne:

Alright lover. Did you get her purse?

Nikki Whatmore:

There's not that much truth in the portrayal of social workers. Social workers do have some fashion sense. Where I work it's a mixed age range, it's not just middle-aged women, there's younger women who work there as well. There are some men but I still would say it's predominantly female. I'd say that child protection figures quite predominantly in the media.

Social worker:

I'm investigating a report that children are being kept in drawer behind this desk.

Receptionist:

That's right yes.

Social worker:

I know it doesn't sound very likely but I have to...What did you say?

Receptionist:

I said yes.

Social worker:

You're keeping three children in drawers behind the desk?

Receptionist:

Well there's only one in the drawer at the moment. She's been having some rather bad nightmares and she's having a lie down.

Social worker:

And the others?

Receptionist:

Well, they are in the cupboard. I don't know what they're doing. Oh Ben is watching the television and Emily is doing some colouring. Please mind the walls sweetie.

Social worker:

May I see the child in the drawer?

Receptionist:

Yes but you have to be quiet, she's a very tired little girl.

Social worker:

You just leave her there in the dark?

Receptionist:

You can't put a light bulb in there. It cooks them. It's not the sort of mistake you make twice, I can tell you.

Nikki Whatmore:

Advocating and championing people's rights is a big part of social work. It could be advocating for the child's right so it'd be important to do some direct work with the child to understand the child and their views and what they want and in the Brittas Empire clip, the child may not want to sit in the cupboard. Obviously social work isn't just about child protection. It's about working with adults or working with people with a learning disability... or people at a difficult time in their life and trying to help them.

I want to make a difference in people's lives. Whether that's just a small difference or I wrote a court report for a child to be adopted by their step parent and when that went through...the child came up and thanked me so that kind of made me feel, like, really warm inside
(laughter)