

An introduction to social work

SPEAKER 1: Why did you become a social worker?

SPEAKER 2: In my old job, I was working alongside social workers and I really started to appreciate how they help people reach their potential.

SPEAKER 3: It was something I'd wanted to do for years, but I was working, so there was just no time to study.

SPEAKER 4: I had thought social workers are so authoritative and come in with their own agenda. But I realised the role is a lot more holistic and a lot more caring and nurturing. They make a real difference in a really hands-on way.

SPEAKER 1: Why did you choose The Open University to study social work?

SPEAKER 2: I realised it could be a good career for me. I've got a background in psychology and felt I could pursue my interest in mental health and make a positive difference. I took The Open University degree in social work through my local authority. The course was really flexible. I could plan when to study. My partner works shifts, and I didn't have to travel to University. I could spend time with her and have a good work-life balance.

SPEAKER 3: The Open University course was a fantastic discovery. Being able to access modules on the go and balance the course with my life has been a great help.

SPEAKER 4: I needed to keep working and paying the bills while I studied, so I chose to do the course at The Open University. The thing is, I already work in social care, so being able to work flexibly and to study from home was what really won me over.

SPEAKER 1: How do you find being a social worker?

SPEAKER 2: Now, as a social worker, I'm often in challenging situations. I have to build rapport quickly with clients who sometimes have different values to me. I have to respect people and their choices. I have to work with them while respecting their autonomy.

SPEAKER 3: There's a lack of funding and we can be stretched to deal with the cases, so it can be hard. Overall though, I know I'm making a difference. To be a social worker is to advocate on behalf of and work to empower people who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances. And I just think that's really valuable.

SPEAKER 4: I was right to reconsider just what it means to be a social worker and working face-to-face with people. Supporting them to make their own changes in their own lives. It's not easy, but it's really fulfilling.

SPEAKER 1: These stories are based on the experiences of real social workers. If you'd like to find out more about training to be a social worker at The Open University, follow the link below.