

Care in Scotland it's life changing work

Eleanor (Lenny) Curin, Social Worker

"I like supporting service users and their families."

Lenny works with older people, aged over 65, with mental health problems (mostly dementia).

Have you always worked in social services?


No. I worked for the civil service in what is now known as the Benefits Agency, when I started it was the DHSS.

What made you choose the career you have now?

I did a degree in food, health and welfare and a post graduate qualification in social work. I felt I could use my knowledge and skills in food, health and welfare into social work where a job was almost guaranteed.

Can you tell us more about your job?

We are a multi-disciplinary team. Most of the people we work with are referred by their GP and probably have used health services before social work becomes involved.





At the moment...

I am working with a man who has dementia. He believed he was managing fine but his self-care was poor and he would not accept help in the community. My role has been crucial in ensuring he was admitted to hospital and his family obtaining guardianship. He is now awaiting a care home placement.

What qualifications do you need to do your job?

I need to be a qualified and registered social worker.

Who else is in your team?

We have support workers, team managers, community mental health nurses, occupational therapists, dieticians, pharmacists, consultant psychiatrists and psychologists.

Do you work with other professionals in other sectors?

We are a health and social work team and we work collaboratively.

What part of your job motivates you and why?

I like supporting services users and their families.

What are the best bits about your job?

Seeing service users looked after and the burden of care being shared.

What are the challenges that you face in your job?

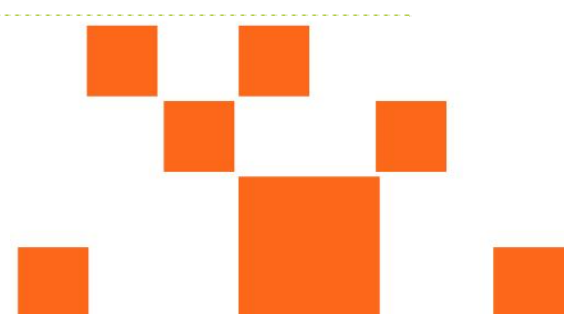
Some service users are difficult to work with because of personality or cognitive impairment.

In what way is your career in social services rewarding?

You know you have been productive in enhancing some people's lives.

Can you explain the skills and qualities you think are needed to do the role you're doing?

You need an understanding of other people's roles and the way other disciplines operate. You also need good planning and communication skills.





Has your job opened up new learning and development for you?

Yes. I knew very little about dementia and medicines before I started in this job.

How do you see your career progressing?

I will probably remain in this job until I retire.

What would you say to someone thinking about a career in social services?

You really have to be physically and mentally well and able to 'switch off'. While the job can be rewarding it can be quite harrowing at times. If you find one area of social work doesn't suit you try another, you will normally find a role that fits.

Is a career in care the career for you?

Try our interactive resource, **A question of care: a career for you** to see what a career in care is like. At the end you'll receive a detailed personal profile that tells you if you've got what it takes to join us!

You can hear from people already working in social care, early years or social work as they talk about why they love their job and what a difference they make to someone's life. And find out about the many different types of jobs and areas you can work in.

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