

# theQ&A

This month *PSW* finds out all about Bridget Betts, an independent social worker based in Nottingham, with 26 years experience of life in the profession

## PSW:

**Why did you become a social worker?**



**Bridget:** I just sort of fell into it. I was at Lancaster University, having applied to do Social Administration, and an offer of a place on the new social work course seemed an escape from complete boredom, although to this day I don't know why. Little did I know at the time but frying pan and fire comes to mind. Thinking about it, I always wanted to be an architect!

**What is it about the job that gets you out of bed in the morning?**



Meeting new people – every day is so completely different.

**...and what tempts you to just stay in bed?**



A long journey, especially in the dark.

**Why did you choose to work as an independent social worker?**



Because I wanted the freedom to choose the type of work that I do, and the opportunity to use a range of skills – for example, training, assessment – and undertake direct work with children. I increasingly felt 'boxed in' in the jobs I was doing before.

**What has been the defining moment of your career?**



Going independent – I have never looked back. And finally launching *My Life Story* [an interactive CD ROM Bridget co-produced with Afshan Ahmad, designed for professionals to use with looked-after children] in 2003, after so many years, a dream really became a reality.

**What advice would you offer a new social worker?**



Don't lose your humanity and the capacity to stand in someone else's shoes.

**How well did your training prepare you for the job?**



I honestly can't say that it did at all. I can remember as an infant social worker in Birmingham knocking on the door of a young lad I was meant to be supervising and being told to "f\*\*\* off" by his father. It was then I realised I knew nothing at all...except how to run away!

**Finally, away from work, what helps you to unwind?**



I play golf – it takes your mind off everything, trying to get a stupid little ball down a tiny hole in as few shots as possible, and without losing the thing in the process. What a challenge.

**NAME:** Bridget Betts  
**AGE:** 49 'ish'  
**LIVES:** Nottingham  
**EMPLOYER:** Me or rather my company  
**CAREER:** I've been a social worker for 26 years

**FAVOURITE FILM?**  
Birdcage

**FAVOURITE BOOK?**  
*The first 50 – Munro Bagging without a Beard* by Muriel Gray

**FAVOURITE HOLIDAY?**  
Cornwall

**FAVOURITE FOOD?**  
A good steak

**FAVOURITE DRINK?**  
Toss up between a pint of Timothy Taylor's Landlord or a single malt

