

Jennie and family: The poverty trap

[Redbridge, Outer London]

Jennie: I'm just looking at my appointment time, 11.35 to go job centre, go there and have a look to see if there's any other jobs.

[Jennie as a teenager at school]

Jennie: Even before I left school I actually went and got a job. I started working the same day that I went and found a job. Which made me very happy, very proud because I was earning. I gained my City and Guilds in my hairdressing.

I loved working. It gave me satisfaction. I was earning my own money, anything that I needed, my travelling, expenses, food that I wanted, you know, and the clothes that I wanted.

[Jennie as a teenager at school]

Jennie: To be able to look nice, and to be able to be presentable, to go to work and feel proud of what I have actually achieved. Everyone has ambitions and dreams.

[Jennie is seeking part-time work.]

Jennie: I am looking to work with children with disabilities and special needs, cos it's what I like to do. Obviously cos I've got children with disabilities myself, that's the type of work I want to get into now.

Obviously I would lose benefits like income support.

But it is a kind of trap because they say single mothers that are on benefits they don't want to go to work. I *do* want to go to work but it's finding that right job and the right hours to suit me and to suit my children. You know it's hard but I'm determined to do it in the end. No matter how long it takes me, I want to change my situation. I want to be able to do the right thing for my children, have the right things for my children and for myself.