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A peek in the life of...a plumber

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Pink plumber: Jo Lawrence, 38, runs her own company

Jo Lawrence, 38, runs her own plumbing company, Pink Plumbers. Divorced, she has two children, Zak, 16, and Hazel, 13, and lives in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire.

When I say I'm a plumber, you can almost guarantee it will lead to a long conversation. People seem genuinely interested to know why I chose it for a career.

I began training in occupational therapy and soon realised it wasn't for me, but then I met my ex-husband and spent the next eight years raising a family.

When the children started school full-time, I began thinking about a career. I wanted to do something practical and after fixing my friend's toilet she suggested I become a plumber. It felt like divine intervention, I knew that's where my future lay.

It was before the rush in terms of women joining the profession, so I think they would have paid me to go on the course.

Over the years, I've built up my confidence and skills to the point that it's now rare that I can't cope with a job.

Fortunately, I've only had three nasty customers in seven years as a plumber. The last one was intent on trying to prove I didn't know what I was doing because I was a woman. And some people expect me to be cheaper, but I do a great job and like to get paid for it.

More often, people feel they can trust me because I'm a woman. A lot of my work is for the elderly and single women; I also had a guy who didn't hire a male plumber because he was embarrassed to show another bloke he couldn't do the job.

I love being a plumber, because I enjoy working with people. There's nothing better than resolving someone's problems. I feel lucky to be so happy in my career.

INTERVIEW: RICHARD WEBBER

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Good for her - it's nice to see women doing these jobs.

- JW, Spalding, England, 22/4/2010 11:06

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