

Learner Case Study

Health, Social Care and Early Years

Joanne's Story

A few years ago, Joanne a mother of three young boys went through a difficult divorce and was declared bankrupt and became homeless. At this stage of her life she was depressed and her self-esteem was very low. Working at Garforth Community High School as a Teaching Assistant, she was determined to become financially independent and achieve a degree, something she has always aspired to.

As a single parent with a demanding full-time job and in the second year of a Foundation Degree, balancing home, work and study requires high levels of motivation and organisation, but the quality of academic work completed by Joanne is consistently very good. Her commitment to work-based research and reading is reflected, not only in the quality of her assignments, but also in the high level of informed support for her students and other adults within her study group and her work department.

Joanne chose this course so that her studies would have a direct influence on her work with pupils with additional needs, particularly in the area of Social Skills and developing life skills. There is evidence that Joanne has improved the life chances of numerous young people through the courses she has developed, especially many young people with Down's Syndrome. Through funding she obtained, at-risk students attend homework club and return home safely in taxis and SEN students have learning support in holiday playschemes. Colleagues mentored, children and fellow students have found Joanne a constant source of inspiration and an excellent role model.

In June 2009 Joanne was awarded a Highly Commended Learner Status at the West Yorkshire Adult Work-Based Learning Awards.