

## Health and social care sector

### Joanna Dawes

Is in the first year of a BA (Honours) Social Work degree

Joanna wants to be a social worker, working with teenagers and families.

#### What are you studying?

BA (Hons) Social Work (first year) at Sheffield Hallam University.

#### What were you doing before this?

After leaving school, I worked in the family business in a shop. I also completed the Access to Higher Education at Chesterfield College.

#### What do you think of your course?

I am really enjoying the course, although it took a little time to settle down. It is quite intense study-wise, more so than I expected. I have a brilliant personal tutor who is extremely supportive and easy to talk to—as are most of the staff.



#### When did you first consider higher education?

I was already doing voluntary work at Homestart and in a youth club. I thought I would like to do a job in which I could give as well as receive. I found out more about being a social worker and the entry requirements. I spoke to a friend of my husband's who had done a social work degree at Sheffield Hallam University. He had been a mature student and was inspirational for me.

#### What were your concerns about starting a higher education course?

Money! I was really worried about debt, but actually I get my social work bursary as well as my student loan, so it is not too bad. Child care. Not being clever enough! I was the first in my family to do a higher education course, so it was all new, but now I am a role model for my children.

#### What will you use your qualification for?

I want to be a social worker! My preference would be to work with teenagers, especially those who are not attending school—so working with families as well.

#### What advice would you give to others considering higher education?

Learn to prioritise—make sure you keep time for yourself! I get a great sense of achievement knowing that I am managing the course alongside my family commitments and voluntary work.

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