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Case Studies

Outstanding regional learner, Claire Wright



Single mum with no qualifications at the age of 25; PhD student fighting superbugs in hospitals at 32. It has been a dramatic seven years for Claire Wright.

“Going back into education was almost accidental,” she says. “I did it because I didn’t know what else to do. It has turned out to be one of the best decisions in my life.”

Claire had left school at 16 and drifted into various jobs. But then, at 25, she became unemployed at the same time as becoming pregnant with her daughter.

“I hated the idea of being a single mum with no job and no home of my own,” she says. She applied for work but couldn’t even get interviews once she had declared she was pregnant. “I thought that going back into education and getting my GCSE maths would at least give me something to do and possibly open up some job opportunities.”

Her tactic worked. After her daughter was born she went to college to do her maths. Spurred on by her success in this, she went on to do A levels at night school. “I did better in these than I ever could have imagined and decided to apply for university,” she says. At 29 she was accepted at Bradford, where she got a first-class biomedical sciences degree. Now she has beaten tough competition to do a PhD at Bradford, researching new ways to control the spread of superbugs.