

Name: Joanne Whittaker

Age: 22



Background:

Joanne grew up and lives in Manchester. She went to St. Alban's RC High School in Gorton and gained GCSEs in English, Maths, Science, Drama, Child Development, Food Technology, Religious Studies and Geography. During a school work-experience placement Joanne was offered a job as a Junior Hairdresser. Whilst working she has completed her NVQ Level II in Hairdressing, followed by NVQ Level III in Advanced Hairdressing. This took Joanne three years.

What sort of work do you do?

I am a Colour Technician, which means that I specialise in hair colour and tints. When I was a Junior there was a lot of cleaning up and making coffee, but once you gain your NVQ qualifications you move onto working with clients full-time. All clients who want their hair coloured have a consultation first. When I am deciding what products to use I have to consider what will suit their skin colour, how dramatic they want their colour to be, and how often they want to come into the salon. Some colours need touching-up more often, which is time-consuming and also more costly. Although I don't usually cut hair, I generally finish off the hair by blow-drying and styling

after the colour. I also advise clients on products to use at home to maintain their colour and style.

I didn't really like school much, but I did enjoy the experiments that we did in Science. I decided that I definitely wanted to do a practical job. During my NVQ training we had to learn about the science involved in perming and colouring hair. We also have to be able to use perming and colouring chemicals safely, and handling chemicals in science lessons was good experience for this.

What's the worst bit?

The days are long, and you can't finish until a client is happy with their hair. The pay is not very good. I take home £500 – £700 per month, depending on commission. As my client list grows, I should earn more commission.

What do you like about it?

Meeting people and getting to know them is the best part of my job. People talk to their hairdresser about their lives, and I see some of my clients every week. When someone first comes into the salon for a colour they can be quite nervous. I get a lot of job satisfaction when they leave afterwards really happy with the result.

What do you want to do in the future?

I keep up-to-date on new colouring products and techniques by going on courses run by major companies like Wella. I also visit hair shows to see new products and demonstrations from hairdressing companies like Vidal Sassoon. I would like to continue building up my client list, but at the moment I am not planning to run my own salon.