



Charmaine is getting stuck into a new job

By **CLAIRE BORLEY**
 claire.borley@mqe.com

Single mum-of-two proves it is never too late to change your career as she begins training to become a plumber

AS if she hasn't got enough to do being a mum and holding down an office job, Charmaine Warman has decided to take her life in a completely different direction.

The 36-year-old of Bournemouth Park Road, Southend is training for a new career, as a plumber.

She is proving you can do it all as she looks after her two sons and works as an admin assistant four days a week while training.

It might have made her busier, but for Charmaine the decision to retrain has been the turnaround she needed.

"I've been in my current job for 15 years and got divorced last year, which was a complete life change, so I felt I needed to do something more," she explains.

"I just fancied a change, but never really knew what I wanted to do."

Inspiration came thanks to some home improvements.

"In January someone came to do our bathroom at home and I thought, 'I can do that'," recalls Charmaine.

She decided to look into training as a plumber and came across the website for New Career Skills, which offers training for adults who want to make a change and get into the construction industry.

Charmaine says: "Because I've got children and I work, I needed something that would fit in with my spare time."

"Doing home study with New Career Skills meant I was able to keep working in my current job while train-

ing. It is the best option for me because it means I can fit my studies in around looking after the boys and working.

"Sometimes I find myself reading while I'm cooking their dinner and then when they go to bed I'll do a bit more."

Charmaine started her City and Guilds qualification in June and hopes to finish by next summer and go straight into plumbing.

She says: "In my opinion there's a gap in the market for female plumbers because I

can do it, younger men and women are more positive."

Charmaine relishes the opportunity to push herself and achieve something new.

"I'm just one of those people who can't stand around and do nothing," she admits.

work well under pressure."

And she is keen to get others to follow in her steel-toed footprints.

"My advice to anyone, male or female, who wants to take a new path is just to go for it."

"Think positive and as long as you have the right frame of mind there's nothing that can stop you," she insists.

Managing director of New Career Skills, Trevor Dornedy, backs Charmaine's determination.

"I agree wholeheartedly with Charmaine and applaud her motivation and dedication," he says.

"In these days of equal opportunities, diversity and choice, there is every reason for a woman to have a fulfilling and interesting career as a plumber."

The majority of the people we see here at New Career Skills come to us for a career where they are in control.

"When you spend so much time at work you might as well enjoy what you do!"

For more information on New Career Skills courses visit www.newcareerskills.co.uk

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think a lot of women would feel more comfortable with a female plumber turning up on their doorstep, rather than a man.

"It's something I've thought of as a mum, so I'm hoping I can fill that gap. I think more and more women are getting into the trade too"

Although friends and family have been supportive, others have been a bit more challenging.

Charmaine explains: "I've had mixed reactions and although some older men have said they don't think I

■ Proud of our mum – Connor, 11, and Owen, five, with Charmaine who is training as a plumber in her spare time
 Picture: ANNA LUKALA LDKWM9