

Dr Claire Farrow

What is your current position?

Senior Lecturer, Aston University

Could you say a bit about your career trajectory so far? How did you get to be where you are today?

I completed degree in psychology with first class honors at the University of Birmingham, and was asked if I would consider studying for a PhD. I was delighted at this opportunity and upon completion took up a post-doc at Birmingham followed soon after by a lectureship at Keele. I remained at Keele for 2 years and then was approached to apply to work at the Centre for Research into Eating Disorders at Loughborough University where I remained for 7 years before relocating back to Birmingham and now work as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Life and Health Sciences at Aston University.

When did you decide to be an academic? What was it that prompted this decision?

I used to want to be a clinical psychologist, but I had an amazing final year project supervisor (Dr Jackie Blissett) who asked me if I would take up a PhD. I was hesitant at first but have never looked back. I love learning new things and challenging myself, so academia suits me well.

What have been the challenges so far in your career in academia?

Balancing work and home life can be very difficult indeed. For me it is important to work at a research-led university and so I have always had to commute quite significant distances to work as my family base is fixed. This was tiring before I had a family but becomes a significant juggling act when you add children into the mix. Balancing work life and family life has been a challenge, but has been rewarding and I am glad that I have been able to do it in the way that I have.

What advice would/do you give to other female academics?

Believe in yourself and go for it! Don't be afraid to put yourself forward for things. Don't be afraid, the worst that can happen is someone says no.