

Shahna Thwaites **Workshop Presenter** **Secondary Schools** **South East**

Shahna lives in West Sussex. She loves music, fashion, cooking and socialising. She also enjoys spending time with her dog, Doug and her cat Tinker.



What makes Shahna different?

With her whole life ahead of her, former Head Girl and straight A student, Shahna was involved in a very serious car accident at the age of 18 coming back from a weekend of music at Glastonbury Festival with friends. Two of her friends including the driver were killed and Shahna was rushed to hospital with very little hope of survival. In a coma for 23 days, her parents were asked if they wished for the life support machine to be switched off. Thankfully, they said no.

What you cannot see that is different

After her accident Shahna had to relearn even the most simple tasks, like learning to walk and to read. The affects to her memory are the biggest changes she has had to adapt to, in particular her short-term memory.

What you can see

Shahna's right leg has been left with limited paralysis, and a certain amount of muscle wastage. This means that she walks slightly unevenly with a heavy right tread and often loses her balance when walking down steps or kerbs.

The outer right side of her vision has gone, rather like a horse wearing blinkers.

Her new life - feeling good about being different

Shahna went back to studying and completed a part-time three-year NVQ, Level 2 and 3 course, qualifying in 2007 as a teaching assistant. She works as a part-time volunteer teaching assistant and loves working with children. Despite her busy life Shahna still finds time to work as a volunteer at her local Oxfam shop.

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