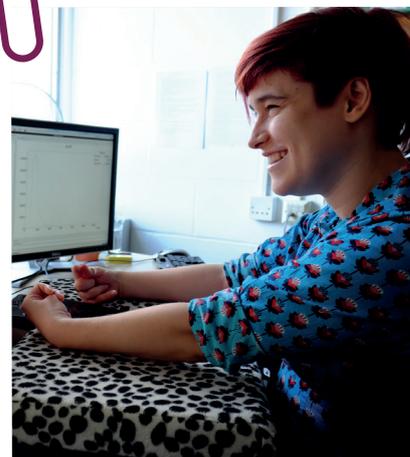


making physics matter



Phizzi professionals

Claire Malone: physicist at Cambridge University and CERN

School

At school I was the archetypal geeky kid and just wanted to get the other lessons done so I could get into the science lab. I was born with cerebral palsy, but finding out that I could look at problems in different ways helped me to find the determination to persevere rather than letting physical limitations stop me.



What next?

I did a master's degree in physics at Imperial College London. Due to my cerebral palsy, I don't have enough control of my hands to use lab equipment, so I effectively had to borrow someone else's hands and give them really detailed instructions so I could complete the practicals and show that I understood the physics. After my master's I went on to do PhD research at Cambridge University, with a long-term placement at CERN.



Why physics?

When I first heard about the Standard Model, I was intrigued that the behaviour of every particle we know about could be described by a single model. This gave me the passion to focus on my studies in physics.



And now?

My work with CERN now focuses on the Standard Model which I truly believe is one of the greatest achievements of scientific research in the last century. I analyse data from the Large Hadron Collider, investigating the behaviour of the basic building blocks of our universe. I have developed techniques to help me navigate my physical working environment, overcoming any restrictions of my cerebral palsy through the use of technology.



Physics in practice

There is a staggering 96% of the universe that we know nothing about – so I have realised that my favourite model is not as all-encompassing as I first thought! I look for evidence of these 'missing' particles in the data collected from CERN. I think this is perhaps one of the most exciting times to be conducting experiments on fundamental physics as we have so much left to discover.



Advice for young scientists

Always be open to seeing situations from a different perspective – use it to bring out your own potential and that of those around you. This mindset got me where I am today, and it keeps me going. By embracing a new way of thinking, by being truly open to other people who don't share our perspective, we might just be able to discover new solutions to the different problems we are all facing.

