

Crash payout led to success

Stockport mum-of-two Jennifer Wildblood, 34, is one of the new breed of landladies proving it can be the perfect career for a working mother.

She runs her own management and letting agency, Montrose Properties, in Didsbury with husband Rob, owning and letting more than 15 properties across Manchester.

She started out on the buy-to-rent ladder at just 19, using a £2,000 compensation payout after a road accident to invest in a two-up, two-down in Levenshulme to rent out.

It became such a success she gave up her job with a clothing company to become a full-time landlord.

She followed in the footsteps of her mum Joan Lucas, who was a landlord for more than 40 years.

Jennifer says: "My mum always advised me to get into property as a way to invest for the future.

"It is hard work and you can't worry about getting your hands dirty but it guarantees me quality time with my husband and young family. I can pick and choose hours that a 9 to 5 job doesn't offer."

But she adds that women still have to face outdated sexist reactions as landlords. "I don't tell a lot of people that I'm a landlord, but if I do they

usually assume that I pull pints. Even some of my male colleagues, before they know me, automatically assume I'm a secretary. It does rankle that good businessmen are generally considered astute while their female counterparts are referred to as tough-cookies or hard-faced."

Jennifer believes the benefits of buying-to-let are enormous, as landlords get the capital growth on the property itself, as well as a monthly income from rent.

She reckons the current buoyant housing market in Manchester also means more people than ever are looking to rent rather than buy at the moment.

"Lifestyles have changed so much," she says: "Once most of my tenants were in their early 20s. Now the age profile is higher and tenants, mainly professional people or co-habiting couples, are reaching well into their 30s before they can afford to buy their own place.

"And when couples divorce, women tend to stay in the marital home while men go into rented accommodation - with the kids visiting them at weekends.

"Generally speaking, tenants are getting older and landlords are getting younger."



■ Key to success . . . Jennifer Wildblood started playing the property market at 19 Picture: PAUL BURROWS