

Sharon Smith

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SUMMARY

I am currently undertaking a full-time PhD research study at the University of Birmingham, examining the subjectivity of parents of disabled children and its impact on educational inclusion. My broader research interests include the Philosophy of Education, parents, inclusion and SEN/Disability. I won BERA's Inaugural Doctoral Fellowship in 2019.

Prior to returning to study, I gained over 20 years' marketing and communications experience for a range of organisations including start-ups, large corporate organisations and the voluntary sector. This includes both strategy development and the implementation of marketing/communications projects. I have focused on various voluntary/part-time roles since having my children, due to the flexibility offered. This has provided me with additional experience in volunteer management, events, social media, training and fundraising.

I am particularly passionate about improving the support, services and education for children with additional needs/disabilities and their parents, and this has influenced both the paid and voluntary roles I have undertaken and my recent studies.

EDUCATION

PhD Research Student (full-time study)

University of Birmingham

10/2019 - Ongoing

- Researching the subjectivity of parents of disabled children and its impact on inclusion
- Expected completion date 2023
- Research training modules completed (for credit): Philosophy of Social Science Research, Research Methods, Qualitative Research
- Research training modules audited: Researching Disability, Policy Evaluation, Approach to Research on Discourse

MA Philosophy of Education

Institute of Education, UCL, London

09/2018 - 09/2019

- Awarded with Distinction

BA (Hons) Education Studies

University of Winchester

09/2014 - 06/2018

- Awarded with First Class Honours. Winner of Dissertation Prize
- Student Fellow 2015/16, researching the experiences of part-time students
- Invited to join the prestigious Winchester Scholar Programme in 2015/16, 2016/17 & 2017/18
- Student Academic Council Representative in 2015/16 & 2016/17
- Took part in the Winchester Research Apprenticeship Programme

Blue Coat C of E School

Coventry

1984 - 1991

- A-level Economics (Grade A), Pure Maths with Statistics (Grade B) and German (Grade D)
- 8 GCSEs grade A-C including Maths (Grade A) and English (Grade A)

STRENGTHS

- 🎓 Research and report writing
- 💬 Developing and delivering training/workshops
- ✉ Extensive marketing and communications experience including copywriting and online/social media
- 💡 Strategic planning and management
- 👥 Team working and leadership

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 🏆 Winner of BERA Inaugural Doctoral Fellowship 2019

Providing me with support for the duration of my PhD research

- 💬 Developing Hampshire's parent carer forum

Building and leading the organisation to the point where parents had the opportunity to have a voice in the design & delivery of services

- 🗣 Representing parents at the Education Select Committee

Providing the parent voice during the development of the Children & Families Act 2014 and subsequent SEND Code of Practice

- 👥 Co-founder of local Down syndrome support group

Offering vital support and services to over 100 local families

VOLUNTEERING

SEN Policy Research Forum

Lead Group Member

01/2021 - Ongoing

This Forum contributes intelligent analysis and the use of knowledge and experience to promote the development of policy and practice for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB)

Social Media team

02/2020 - Ongoing

Sharing news and information via social media to raise awareness and engagement with the Society

EMPLOYMENT

Parent Carer Participation Associate (freelance)

Contact (formerly Contact a Family) 06/2014 - Ongoing

- Working with/supporting parent carer forums to improve parent participation, including delivering training (face to face and webinars)

Workshop Programme Co-ordinator

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust 07/2018 - 11/2018

- Managing all aspects of the Holocaust Memorial Day national workshop programme, including logistics, marketing/promotion, delivery of the workshops and the evaluation of the programme

Research Assistant (temporary part-time)

University of Winchester 06/2018 - 09/2018

- Assisting Dr Wayne Veck at the University of Winchester with a research project related to Refugees and Responsibility/Ethics

Researcher (part-time)

Parent Voice 01/2017 - 09/2017

- Researching and producing information for families of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

Marketing Manager and Website Editor (freelance)

Best Bear Childcare 10/2002 - 01/2016

- Responsible for managing website content, development of online strategy, promotions, social media, PR and website rebuild/relaunch

e-Marketing Lead

British Airways 09/2000 - 09/2001

- Managed various online commercial projects, both B2B and B2C promotions/branding online campaigns, plus delivering staff training

Head of Marketing UK

Kelkoo.com 01/2000 - 09/2000

- Managing UK launch, website content and promotional activity

Account Manager

Storm Consultancy 05/1999 - 01/2000

- Account and project management for a range of retail & leisure clients

Account Manager

Creation Financial Services (formerly SearsCard) 1998 - 1999

- Development of store-card marketing strategy & 3rd party promotions, including delivery of staff training

Management training scheme and marketing

Barclays Bank PLC 1991 - 1998

- Joined Barclays on their A-level Accelerated Management Training Scheme, which entailed a range of short term banking roles in branches. Included day release for completion of banking examinations
- Subsequently moved to Head Office and worked as Senior Direct Marketing Assistant and then In-Branch Promotions Manager for Small Business Banking

VOLUNTEERING

CSIE

Trustee

04/2019 - Ongoing

The Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education is a national charity that works to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in education

IPSEA

Trustee

2018 - 2020

IPSEA offers free and independent legally based information, advice and support to help get the right education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Robert May's School

Local Authority Governor

2013 - 2017

Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN)

Chair/Trustee

2011 - 2014

Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN) is an independent parent carer forum

- Development and implementation of strategic planning, governance and budgeting
- Support, training and management of volunteers
- This role provided significant involvement as a parent representative with the SE7 pathfinder (testing the forthcoming Children & Families Bill reforms) and responses to local and national consultations
- Represented parent carers at the Education Select Committee in Parliament in November 2012

Stepping Stones DS (Down syndrome support group)

Co-Founder/Chair/Trustee

2006 - 2011

In November 2006 I co-founded Stepping Stones DS (www.steppingstonesds.co.uk) a local parent led Down syndrome support group/Registered Charity

- Event management
- Fundraising
- Marketing and communications to members and other stakeholders
- Support and management of volunteers

Hook Infant School

Parent Governor

2007 - 2011