

YORKSHIRE CHAMPIONS GROUP



Sarah Butters JP

Magistrate/ Student Support/Media Training

Background Information:

Sarah comes to the Yorkshire Champions with a background in journalism, presentation and most recently criminal justice. Raised in Lancashire, Sarah went to the University of Stirling to study English before completing a postgraduate qualification in Broadcast Journalism at the University of Central Lancashire. That course led her to BBC Radio Leeds and a move to Yorkshire where she has lived ever since.

Sarah's broadcasting career saw her employed in a number of roles across BBC radio and television in the north of England. In addition, she had the opportunity to take part in national broadcasting events for both TV and radio.

"I am hugely proud of my time as a broadcaster. The people and presentation skills I developed during my years at the BBC gave me a great foundation for the careers that have followed"

After leaving the BBC, Sarah moved into print journalism, launching a magazine aimed at supporting parents in Yorkshire. Families Leeds was the leading publication in the area during Sarah's five year editorship. The bi-monthly publication tackled subjects from fighting for a dyslexia diagnosis to choosing the right high school; from study support methods to championing the power of sport among young people.

"It was an honour to work with parenting communities across the Leeds area," says Sarah. "Knowing that parents looked forward to reading the magazine and found support from it was something incredibly rewarding. However, it taught me that not everyone has the same parenting journey."

Life changed for Sarah and her family in 2012.

"My younger brother Paul was killed by a hit and run driver back in September 2012. It was a devastating time," shares Sarah. "However, that experience lit up a different life path for me. I chose to not let that tragedy erode my belief in the good there is in the world. I chose to allow that experience to take me in a different direction."

That direction was a return to university. Sarah won a place at the University of Leeds studying Criminal Justice and Criminology as a mature student. The three year course allowed Sarah time to explore the challenges facing criminal justice and the pathways people take into that system. It also allowed her the chance to study with a group of like-minded, passionate young people.

"It was a real privilege to return to University as a mature student," she explains. "I learnt so much about the lived realities of the people who find themselves in contact with criminal justice agencies. In addition, I also enjoyed spending time with and supporting the young people I studies alongside during the challenges of pandemic."

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From informal peer support, Sarah went on to work in the School of Law at the University of Leeds as a Student Support Tutor, helping the Criminology students with their studies. It was an opportunity Sarah says that made her feel she made a real difference to the lives of the students she supported and their experience at university during lockdown learning.

“The role was a mix of pastoral and academic and I know I helped some of the young people I came into contact with. The challenges they faced studying at university during a global pandemic were unique, unprecedented. Some did not have a support system at home to help them through. The opportunity to provide some support and be a small part of their success was very special indeed.”

Since leaving that role, Sarah has become a Magistrate, working in West Yorkshire. In addition, she works with young people from a range of backgrounds in assisting them with progression to further education; offering practical support with subject selection and personal statement preparation for university applicants.

“I’m excited to use my background in supporting students with the Yorkshire Champions network,” Sarah says. “It is vital that young people, whatever their background, feel supported to find their own path and make informed choices. Young people need to know there are people out in the Yorkshire community who want them to succeed; that there are people who will give up their time to help them find their passion; that there are people who care. I am one of those people and I look forward to sharing my skills and time with the young people of Yorkshire.”

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Mentoring (Primary/ High School/ University)

Motivational Speaking

Study Skills

UCAS support: Personal Statement development and course selection support

Presentational Skills

Sectors worked in and routes taken:

Journalism	Work Experience and degree
Criminal Justice Student Support	Degree Work as Student Support Tutor at University of Leeds

What I would like to get involved in: (please tick)

Inspirational Talk	Visits to my place of work	Mentoring / Coaching young people	Other (please state)
✓		✓	I can also help support 6th form student in subject selection for university and personal statement development. Also I can help with presentation skills.