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I studied Politics at the University of Exeter and Political Philosophy at York, before going to work in user representation in the NHS and social services. This was where my interest in social work began and I took the plunge and trained at Oxford. After qualifying I worked in community mental health teams in Hampshire and Wiltshire, where I also completed my ASW training; I then worked as a forensic social worker at Rampton Special Hospital. From Rampton I joined the staff at Oxford Brookes University in my first academic post, while maintaining my experience of practice teaching by supervising a group of placement students at MIND.

Since then I have worked at York, Southampton and Warwick universities, where my teaching has focused on mental health and community care, reflective practice and social work skills, and research skills. Alongside teaching I've developed my research interests, focusing on the organisational context of practice and discretion, where I've looked at the impact of managerialism on professional practice. (I did my PhD at Warwick looking at social work discretion in local authority social services.) Other aspects of my research include service-user views of professional practice and qualitative evaluation of service provision. I'm currently involved in a project with colleagues from Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Russia and the UK, looking at the way theories of social work practice circulate and are translated in different cultural contexts. I am also interested in practice research—in the sense not only of research to inform practice, but also of looking at the way research methods can learn from practice and be adapted to engage with practitioners better.

