
Zoom On: Shirley Cramer, Royal Society for Public Health CEO



Shirley Cramer

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This week we meet Shirley Cramer, the CEO of the UK's Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH). RSPH is an independent, multi-disciplinary charity organisation which protects and promotes collective human health and wellbeing. It was founded in 1856 and has more than 7,000 members.

We posed our Seven Questions to Ms. Cramer:

1. What are your key areas of interest and research?

Finding innovative ways to improve the public's health by building the capacity and capability of the wider workforce and measuring the impact of community based preventative work so that the best practice can be easily disseminated.

2. What are the major challenges in your field?

- a) Getting prevention to the the top of the healthcare policy agenda; until we do life will only get more challenging for those in healthcare management.
- b) Developing a holistic healthcare system which is patient centric.
- c) Motivating and supporting the health care workforce.

3. What is your top management tip?

Always ask the frontline workforce what works and what doesn't; too often they are left out of the decision making process with resulting poor outcomes.

4. What would you single out as a career highlight?

Initiating a national US Summit on Learning Disabilities in Washington DC which led to positive long term effects for vulnerable children (the No Child Left Behind Act).

5. If you had not chosen this career path you would have become a...?

I was always interested in people and issues so possibly politics.

6. What are your personal interests outside of work?

Hiking, skiing, theatre, spending time with friends which usually involves good food.

7. What is your favourite quote?

Margaret Atwood, the Canadian writer, said in one of her books that 'potentiality has a shelf life'; this always reminds me of the urgent need to make sure that all our young people are given the education, help and support that they need to succeed.

Cramer is the Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Society for Public Health and Institute of Healthcare Management. She currently chairs the Equality and Diversity External Advisory Group at the Department of Business Innovation and Skills. She is also serving as Chairman of the think tank British Future.

An experienced leader in the voluntary sector, Cramer has held a number of executive and non-executive position in both the UK and the US.

In the UK, Cramer has worked on the 'Dementia Challenge' as the interim Chief Executive of Alzheimer's Research UK from 2012 to 2013. From 2000 to 2011, Cramer was the Chief Executive of Dyslexia Action, the UK's leading independent provider of services for people with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. From 2002 to 2008, she was a national council member of the Learning and Skills Council, chairing two of its subcommittees.

While in the US, Cramer was involved with Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital in Ohio as a board member. In Washington DC, she directed the Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities from 1995 to 1999. The organisation ran a national public service campaign on the topic.

Cramer earned a degree in social work from the University of Bradford in the UK, and has an MSc degree in Social Administration from Columbia University in New York City.

References: Royal Society for Public Health, LinkedIn

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