

The Honorary Graduand: Jacqueline Clarke

The Orator: Kim Scarborough

Jackie Clarke is to be awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science.

Jackie Clarke trained as a professional dancer and singer.

She married and had two children. A girl came first, then a boy who had autism and complex needs.

This inspired her to change health and social care service for her son, to make them as person centred, responsive, and as safe as they could be. This was the first step on a long line of activities, always focusing on service improvement and sustainable change.

From Family support groups in the 1970s, to making innovations in respite care services, and driving home the need for further education opportunities for school leavers who had a learning disability, Jackie continued to identify a need or barrier and so something about it. As her son grew and her networks expanded she has moved focus a number of times. She was involved in the Action Group looking at the closure and resettlement of people with learning disabilities from Bristol's long stay institutions. She joined Boards where, as a family carer representative, she could ensure families voices were heard and new innovations could flourish.

In 2001 she decided that a good way to improve health and social care services was to directly influence the staff providing care and managing services and so her focus turned to UWE. Initially influencing one programme for Learning Disabilities Nurses Jackie has now influenced 21 programmes either through directly working with programme teams, supporting other to do so, or inspiring UWE academic staff through her presentations at conferences and sharing good practice days.

Jackie also seeks ways to influence government ministers making decisions about services for people who have a learning disability, either by being directly involved or by being involved through groups who share the voices of families about the current issues in health and social care and ways to improve services.

The Honorary Doctorate is awarded in recognition of Jackie Clarke's wide ranging and ongoing commitment to improving service for people with learning disabilities and support for their families.