

22nd March 2007



To whom it may concern:

Dr Gillian Pugh OBE, Chair
Mary Crowley MBE, Chief Executive

Marilyn Smyth

I have known Marilyn Smyth for 10 years both in my previous employment as Director of the Adult Education Service in the London Borough of Waltham Forest and in my current position as Chief Executive of Parenting UK.

I have the highest regard for Marilyn's ability and character. She is a highly intelligent creative loyal and dedicated worker. She has outstanding management skills including in project management, where she can continue to see the bigger picture while ensuring that the crucial details are attended to. She is committed and very hard working. She is creative, resourceful and determined, and applies herself to finding solutions to difficult issues, determined that there is no problem without a solution. It is important to make clear that Marilyn is unusual in that she can function equally effectively at a policy and implementation level.

It is striking how many different areas of expertise Marilyn can offer. She is a highly effective and organised manager. She is qualified and experienced in all aspects of personnel work and can function from the highest level from designing a strategy to implementing structures and dealing with specific staff issues and has undertaken challenging (and sometimes potentially difficult), investigations. She is also a qualified mediator.

Marilyn is also an experienced, enthusiastic, and effective trainer. She can carry out everything a manager or policy-maker could require from designing a training strategy, writing and delivering actual courses, to implementation and recruitment (including being qualified in psychometric testing), and making recommendation for follow-up.

She is confident and effective in discussion or negotiations with managers or fund-holders at the highest level. She is persuasive and clear in putting her point of view across.

Despite her high level of skills and qualifications, Marilyn does not hesitate to get involved in practical details where necessary to ensure the quality of the final products or outcomes. She has exceptionally high IT skills, and has assisted us many times. She is also flexible and ready to adapt ideas and timings to suit new requirements.

She is a friendly and good-natured individual to whom colleagues warm. They want to do their best to gain her approval.

She will go the extra mile working exceptionally long hours to deliver urgent tasks on time and to the highest standard.

I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending Marilyn to anyone who wants the services of someone of the highest calibre. I would be pleased to elaborate on any aspect of this statement by phone or email.

Mary Crowley

Mary Crowley MBE
Chief Executive

Promoting and developing parenting education and support
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