



Sam Davies

Head of Philanthropy & Alumnae Engagement

Girls' Day School Trust (GDST)

Sam's first foray into fundraising came whilst a final year undergraduate at University of Warwick as a caller for their first-ever telephone campaign in 1997. Following graduation, she spent two years managing telephone campaigns at 22 institutions (universities and schools) as a consultant. She then returned to Warwick full-time to run their campaigns and later became responsible for all other annual giving activities.

In 2008, Sam took on the challenge of establishing a sustainable fundraising and alumni engagement operation from scratch at the University of Brighton. During her tenure, the team won a national award for fundraising progress, an international award for alumni engagement and built up an alumni community from just 20,000 to 150,000 members globally. In 2015, Sam was awarded the CASE Crystal Apple Award for Teaching Excellence in recognition of her outstanding performance as a sector volunteer speaker/tutor.

Sam is now Head of Philanthropy & Alumnae Engagement at the Girls' Day School Trust (GDST), the UK's leading family of independent girls' schools and is leading on achieving a major step change in bursary fundraising. Taking up this role in April 2019 was personally significant given that Sam received a full bursary award to attend Portsmouth High School – one of the GDST family – from age 11 to 18. It was this experience of transformative philanthropy that led Sam to pursue a career in educational fundraising.

In addition, to leading on central fundraising and alumnae engagement, Sam and her small team provide tailored support to colleagues across the GDST who are responsible for driving forwards fundraising and alumnae activities locally.