

Dr Sonya Hill has worked with zoos since the early 1990s, firstly as a volunteer gorilla keeper and then as a scientific researcher. She obtained a BA (Hons) in Anthropology from the University of Durham, UK, and went on to work with the conservation charity The Jane Goodall Institute, in Tanzania. In 2000 she completed an MPhil degree in Biological Anthropology (Durham), for which she studied various effects of captivity on great apes, and went on to obtain a PhD at the Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge, in 2005, for which she investigated behavioural and physiological indicators of welfare in gorillas at six European zoos.

She has worked at Chester Zoo since 2004, firstly as Research Assistant, then Research Officer, and now as the Applied Ethologist, setting up and running the applied ethology programme for the zoo. She is an active member of various professional bodies, including Chair of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (BIAZA) animal welfare auditing sub-group, Vice Chair of BIAZA's Research Committee, a member of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria's (EAZA) Great Ape TAG research sub-group, and a member of the Primate Society of Great Britain's Captive Care Working Party. Sonya holds an Honorary Lectureship with the University of Liverpool, and is a guest lecturer at several other universities in the UK. She has an evolutionary approach to animal welfare science and, as well as designing, supervising and carrying out behavioural research, she is also involved in training and capacity building. For this, she works with several external bodies, such as Animals Asia Foundation, the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens, and The Jane Goodall Institute, on issues relating to animal behaviour, welfare and conservation.