

## Women GPs Thriving

**Project title:** “Investigating the conditions in which women GPs thrive in General Practice: What works, for whom, how and in what circumstances?”

## Welcome to our first newsletter

Ruth Abrams, Principal Investigator



Welcome, dear colleagues, to our first newsletter. It is with delight that I write to you, to bring you into the fold of our project.

I have long been interested in how we engage with our work, and how our work shapes us. Particularly so as women. Given that the NHS is one of the largest UK employers, and that this workforce is predominantly comprised of women, researching this group is important. Women GPs are having a particularly difficult time in the current system. This project, identifying the conditions in which women GPs can thrive, is funded by NIHR HSDR, started in November 2024, and will continue until May 2026. Our research aims to identify strategies that may help women GPs to thrive in order to better recruit, support, and retain them. We will produce recommendations for how women GPs, managers, employers, policy makers, and training providers can more effectively support this staff group to thrive at work.

At a time when it still feels as if we have to fight for equality, I'm hopeful that the findings from this review may go some way to alleviating the challenges currently faced by women GPs, here in the UK.

In this newsletter you will find more information about our team, and key achievements so far. Please spread the word about this project, and thank you for your support.

Regards,  
Dr Ruth Abrams

# Meet: Our Team



Dr Ruth Abrams is an organisational psychologist whose research focuses on the primary care workforce, and primary care service design, delivery and evaluation. Ruth is particularly interested in the organisation of General Practice, and women in healthcare. She uses qualitative research methods and undertakes evidence syntheses, often using realist approaches. Her current projects are funded by NIHR Public Health Research and NIHR Health and Social Care Delivery Research. Ruth established and co-leads the Realist Health and Social care workforce Special Interest Group (SIG). She sits on the Editorial Board for BJGP, and is a Fellow of the RSA.

Dr Laura Jefferson is an Associate Professor of Health Policy at the University of York, specialising in general practice workforce and exploring gender differences in medical careers. Her research uses mixed methods approaches, including novel qualitative methods to support rapid responsive health policy research to inform emerging policy decisions and research needs.



Dr Lilith A. Whiley is a psychologist and an inter-disciplinary researcher in gender, health, and inclusion at work. Her research often brings together psychology, sociology, and management and organisation studies to explore the intersections of marginalised identities and health in the workplace.

Dr Su Golder is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health Sciences at the University of York. Her professional expertise spans multiple research domains, including information retrieval, systematic reviews, and research methodology. She has experience in developing and applying different search and review methods.



Dr Aaliya Goyal is a GP with a special interest in Occupational Medicine, and expertise in health and workforce inequalities. She is a nationally elected RCGP Council member, and sits on the NHS Health at Work Network Board.

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Professor Sophie Park, Primary Care and Clinical Education in the Nuffield Dept. of Primary Care Health Sciences at the University of Oxford, is a GP in Hertfordshire and Honorary Professor of Primary Care and Medical Education at University College London. Her research explores workforce sustainability across clinical education, organisation and delivery of primary healthcare, to support equitable and effective patient care, healthcare services and learning systems.

Dr Ruth Riley, Senior Lecturer, University of Surrey, is a medical sociologist who uses qualitative and inter-disciplinary approaches to investigate the contexts/causes of distress and suicidality, including workplace injustices, working conditions and cultures, experienced by healthcare professionals. She is the current holder of a Wellcome Trust Discovery Award (2024-2029) for a project titled: 'Revisioning distress and nurse suicidality through a feminist, critical suicidology lens', to explore contexts contributing to the higher rates of suicide in women nurses.



Dr Victoria Williams, Research Fellow, University of Surrey, is an organisational sociologist. Her research focuses on gender, health, disability and inclusion at work, specialising in endometriosis and employment. Her research has so far advised parliamentary debates on supporting endometriosis in the workplace as well as the Women and Work APPG. Vickie also sits on the Menstruation Friendly Accreditation Independent Panel of experts accrediting organisations who support menstrual health at work.

## Recent Publications

1. Read our research protocol [here](#). Abrams et al. Investigating the conditions in which women GPs thrive: a realist review protocol. BJGP Open. 2025.
2. Read Ruth's editorial about women GPs in BJGP [here](#). Mind the (expectation) gap: the double bind for women GPs. BJGP. 2025.
3. Read our updated (following Stakeholder/PPI feedback) Initial Programme Theories working paper [here](#). Abrams and Williams. Initial Programme Theory (IPT) conceptualisation and development. OSF. 2025.

# Spotlight on: The project



If you would like to hear more, or have an interest in becoming a stakeholder on this project, please contact Ruth: [r.abrams@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:r.abrams@surrey.ac.uk)