

Women's reproductive health at work: Newsletter One

September 2025



Co-investigators; Dr Ruth Abrams (University of Surrey) and Dr Lilith A. Whiley (University of Sussex)

Welcome

Women's reproductive health is finally having a moment. We have a powerful Government led women's health strategy, there are conversations happening around menstruation and menopause at work as well as possible changes to the Employment Rights Bill, and across our society, we are seeing movement in longstanding structural inequalities including extended leave for miscarriages and stillbirth as well as the decriminalisation of abortion. Amidst this progress, we welcome you to our first newsletter where we introduce our National Institute of Health and Social Care Research (NIHR) funded study: Supporting the health of women at work: A realist review of pregnancy, postnatal, and menopause workplace interventions and their effectiveness.

Why our study matters

Women continue to face unique health challenges at work that affect well-being and performance at work. Currently, 54,000 women consider leaving work per year due to pregnancy-related discrimination. Existing research shows that only a small percentage of women return to full-time work after having children, and more than half ultimately leave due to the challenges of balancing a full-time job with childcare. One in three women experiencing menopause consider reducing their hours or leaving work altogether. Organisations need to reduce these inequities to retain talent.

What we're doing

Our NIHR-funded review of existing evidence will identify what workplace interventions are available to support pregnancy, postnatal return and menopause at work, as well as how successful they are, and for whom. Working with expert stakeholders, including the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) and the Department of Work and Pensions, we will co-produce evidence-based recommendations for employers, HR professionals, and managers across a range of workplace settings.

Find out more about our study [here](#).

Meet the project team

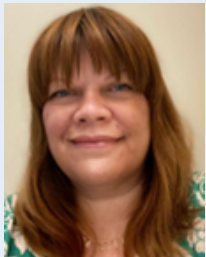


Dr Ruth Abrams, Senior Lecturer, University of Surrey, is an organisational psychologist and workforce scholar. She is the Principle Investigator leading this project alongside Dr Lilith Whiley.

Dr Lilith A. Whiley, Associate Professor, University of Sussex, is an interdisciplinary researcher and psychologist in gender, health, and inclusion at work, co-leading this work.



Dr Andreia Paiva, Research Fellow, University of Surrey, is an interdisciplinary researcher with a keen interest in promoting health and well-being and supportive approaches across the lifespan.



Prof Cath Taylor, Professor, University of Surrey, is a professor of healthcare workforce organisation and well-being, whose work focuses on improving NHS workforce well-being and enhancing multidisciplinary teamwork.

Dr Elizabeth Bailey, Associate Professor, Birmingham City University, is a midwife and director of the Elizabeth Bryan Multiple Births Centre. Her research focuses on complex pregnancies and maternity service organisation.



Judy Wright, Senior Information Specialist, University of Leeds, is a chartered librarian who leads the Leeds Institute of Health Sciences team, managing literature searching, reference management, and methodological support for systematic reviews and research proposals.

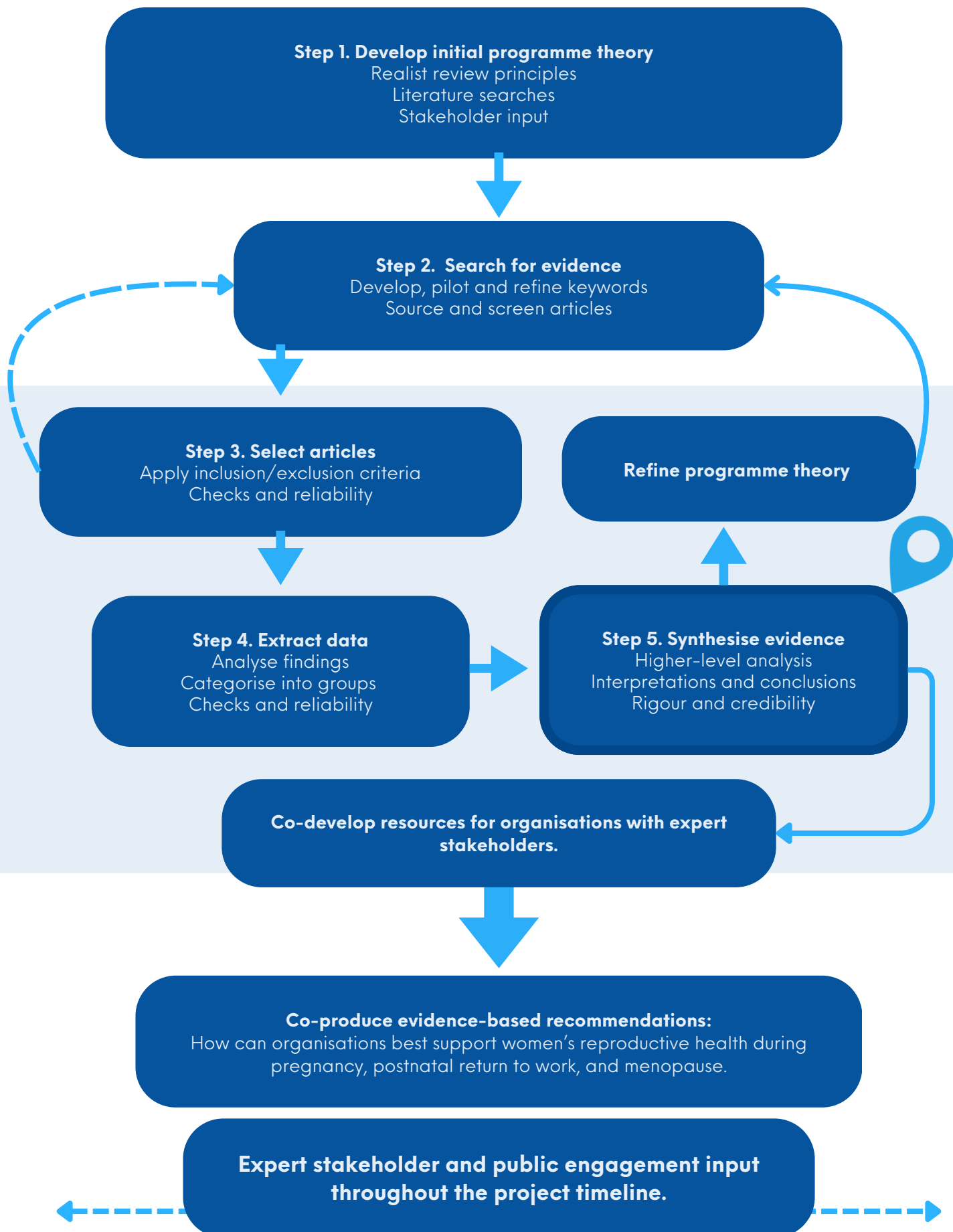
Dr Hema Mistry, Associate Professor, University of Warwick, is a health economist in the Clinical Trials and Health Economics in the Clinical Trials Unit at Warwick Medical School (WMS).



Vivan Patel, Research Associate, University of Warwick, is a health economist applying quantitative methods to real-world challenges in healthcare.

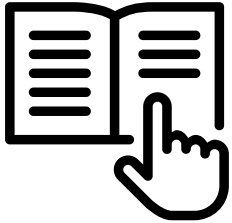


Project spotlight

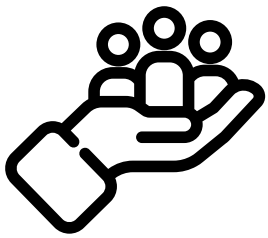


Project outputs

Recent Publications

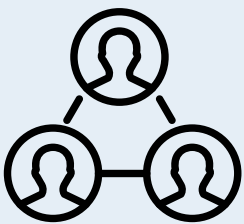


1. Read our editorial on women's workplace health [here](#). This is an adapted keynote speech delivered by Dr Ruth Abrams in March 2025 at the Westminster Employment Forum policy conference: Next steps for women in the workplace in the UK.

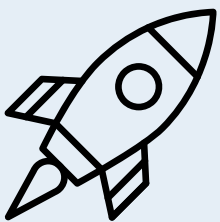


2. Read our piece for HR managers in People Management, a CIPD led publication, [here](#).

Opportunities for involvement



If you would like to discuss your organisation's needs, please contact Ruth (r.abrams@surrey.ac.uk) and Lilith (l.whiley@sussex.ac.uk).



If you would like an invite to our launch webinar where we will discuss our project findings, resources and next steps, please contact Andreia (a.fonsecadepaiva@surrey.ac.uk).