# Women's reproductive health at work: Newsletter Two

November 2025

## Meet our stakeholder group

Welcome to our second newsletter. In this issue, we wanted to create some space to recognise the valuable input from our stakeholder group, including our public representatives. All of our stakeholders have lived experience of one or more of the reproductive life stages we are seeking to improve and we recognise their considerable expertise. Having critical friends throughout our research process is integral to our outputs making sense, and for them to be both useful and useable by those who need them most.

Collaboration and input with stakeholders are integral to the research process. We are fortunate to be working with such an amazing team, whose contributions have shaped the study in meaningful ways. Whether it's spotlighting a salient priority, recommending a hard-to-reach report, sharing examples of organisational good practices, or affirming an emerging insight – stakeholder input is invaluable to the co-creation of knowledge.

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

**Find out more about our study here.**

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# Spotlighting our process

## Collaborating with our stakeholders and public representatives

To date, we have successfully hosted three of the four planned stakeholder meetings. In these meetings we share our findings, and seek feedback from our group. Prior to each meeting, stakeholders receive preparatory materials, including the agenda and interim findings to digest ahead of time.

## Acknowledging stakeholder and public representative contributions

Following each meeting, we collate all the feedback we have received from our members and find a way to action it. To show the impact this feedback has on the research, we present back a "You said, we did" infographic. This visual summary emphasises how their valuable contributions and insights have been incorporated into the project. See below for examples from two of our previous stakeholder meetings.



This study is funded by NIHR PHR:159142

# Spotlighting our stakeholders

Here is what our stakeholders have to say about why our research matters...

Championing women's health—including menopause, pregnancy, postnatal and broader wellbeing needs—is a strategic imperative for any organisation committed to equity and excellence. When we design workplaces that support these experiences, we're not only addressing health and inclusion – we're actively closing pay gaps, retaining talent, and fostering higher engagement**.** True inclusion means recognising the full spectrum of life's transitions and ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to thrive. By embedding this understanding into workplace strategy, we create stronger, more innovative, and more excellent institutions.

**Jo McCarthy-Holland, Head of EDI, University of Surrey**

It is essential to provide interventions in the workplace to support women who are going through key stages in their reproductive journey, such as pregnancy and menopause. Top of the list is education, not just for women, but for all.

**Joyce Harper, Professor, EGA Institute for Women's Health, UCL**

I was invited to come on board with this project by our EDI manager. I hope that in our project discussions, I have highlighted concerns for women in the workplace from not only a minoritised background such as myself, but for women full stop who have gone through the menopause with not all the support that they would have liked in place. I have been heartened to know that there are women from a wide range of backgrounds that want to change what is sometimes a very substandard offering in work. I am very interested to see the outcomes of this project and how it is incorporated in work. Thank you for involving me in this. It's passion, drive, and anger at inequality that made this project so worthwhile and interesting for me at a very personal level.

**Serge McQuillen, PPI member, Senior Faculty Administrator, University of Surrey**

When it comes to women's health, most organisations focus on maternity leave policies and return to work. This research is integral for understanding the ways in which organisations can support women's health in a much more holistic way. So that instead of stigma and taboo, women are empowered and equipped through all the transitions or life events that may occur during their employment.

**Rachel Childs, Founder, Parents that Work**

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# Spotlighting our stakeholders

The work that this NHIR study is doing is vital in tackling the inequalities that women suffer in the workplace throughout their reproductive life cycle. By understanding what works for women, employers can better support their staff, leading to increased retention and attraction of women to the workforce, which makes clear business sense.

**Natalie Sutherland, Partner, The International Family Law Group LLP**

Improving women's health at work isn't just about addressing individual experiences; it is about rethinking the systems, cultures and policies that shape them. When research, leadership and lived experience come together, we can create workplaces where women are supported and valued, improving health outcomes and sustaining good work across all life stages.

**Professor Jo Yarker, Co-Managing Partner, Affinity Health at Work and Professor of Occupational Psychology, Birkbeck, University of London**

It is wonderful to see growing interest in women's reproductive health in the workplace, with more employers investing in policy and practice. We urgently need a robust evaluation however, of what works, for whom, and in what contexts, to ensure efforts and resources are directed appropriately. This realist evaluation project, led by Dr Abrams and Dr Whiley, will provide valuable insights for practice and set a clear agenda for future research and evaluation.

**Krystal Wilkinson, Reader, Manchester Metropolitan University**

The breadth of expertise and lived experience have provided me with a real insight and greater understanding of the varied experiences of half the population and has highlighted how under-researched this field really is. I have found the researchers to be professional, supportive and very well organised with effective communication and dissemination of findings. I would be delighted to be involved in any future research carried out by this team into such a vital area of study.

**Harriet Brown - Patient and Public Involvement member**

**The project has been immensely engaging and feels like it has uncovered the tip of a very large iceberg.**

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# Our stakeholders in full

**We are grateful to all our stakeholders, public representatives and organisations for offering their time, experiences and insights to this project.**

| Stakeholder name | Job Title | Affiliation |
|---|---|---|
| Ann O Neill | Co-Founder | Adora Digital Health |
| Anne Howard | Deputy Director of Nursing | Peppy Health |
| Carol Atkinson | Professor | Manchester Metropolitan University |
| Claire Hardy | Senior Lecturer | Lancaster University |
| Claire Ingle | Co-founder and Head of Partnerships and Social Impact | Fertility Matters at Work |
| Georgette Eaton | Clinical Academic Consultant Paramedic | Nuffield Department of Primary Care, Health Sciences, University of Oxford |
| Harriet Brown | Public representative | |
| Jean Ledger | Head of Research | Adora Digital Health |
| Jessica Scott | Academic Fellow | University of Exeter |
| Jo McCarthy-Holland | Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | University of Surrey |
| Jo Yarker | Managing Partner | Affinity Health at Work |
| Joanne Smithson | Head of Implementation & Learning | What Works Centre for Wellbeing (until 2024) |
| Joyce Harper | Professor | EGA Institute for Women's Health, UCL |
| Krystal Wilkinson | Reader | Manchester Metropolitan University |
| Laura Kudrna | Associate Professor in Health Research Methods | Department of Applied Health Sciences, University of Birmingham |

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| Stakeholder name | Job Title | Affiliation |
|---|---|---|
| Libby O'Brien | Public representative | |
| Natalie Sutherland | Partner | The International Family Law Group LLP |
| Rachel Childs | Founder | Parents that Work |
| Rachel Suff | Senior Policy & Practice Adviser - Employee Relations | Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) |
| Rebecca Peters | Senior Policy and Practice Adviser | Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) |
| Serena Sabatini | Visiting Lecturer | School of Psychology, University of Surrey |
| Serge McQuillen | Public representative | Senior Admin, University of Surrey |
| Steph Moakes | Health, Wellbeing & Engagement Lead | Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust |
| Victoria Williams | Research Fellow | University of Surrey |

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# Spotlighting the project

## Menopause Awareness Month

During Menopause Awareness Month, Dr Ruth Abrams and Dr Lilith Whiley shared emerging findings from the project.

Click in the image to download the infographic.


## Project launch webinar

In **June 2026**, we will host our project launch webinar, where we will discuss project findings and other dissemination materials.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact Andreia at **a.fonsecadepaiva@surrey.ac.uk**

## Publications

1. Editorial: **Supporting women's reproductive health at work**
2. Briefing: **Why HR should make women's reproductive health a priority**
3. Protocol: **Available to access via NIHR**

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