

Women GPs Thrive

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

Newsletter 2: Meet our Stakeholder group

Dr Ruth Abrams, Principal Investigator



Involving stakeholders, patients and the public (PPI) is an essential part of an evidence synthesis. This is particularly the case with a realist review (the approach we are taking in our project), which aims to produce action-oriented statements as a core output. Stakeholders, and PPI really help to ensure these ultimately make sense and translate into language that is not only accessible, but also useful for those it applies to.

The stakeholders and PPI involved in our NIHR funded study have been integral critical friends throughout. We have been challenged, supported, stretched and celebrated as we've navigated our way through the project findings together. However, it can be hard to really recognise the input of stakeholders and PPI. Their input can so easily be subsumed into a project without due consideration. That's why we've chosen the focus of our second newsletter to really spotlight both our process for recognising this input, and to show who our members are.

Ruth

[VISIT OUR WOMEN GP THRIVE WEBSITE](#)

Spotlight on: Our Stakeholders

Working with our Stakeholders and PPI:

We have so far hosted two out of four online stakeholder meetings. Prior to each meeting, reading materials (e.g. interim findings, artwork etc.) are circulated with our members in advance. This provides the opportunity for members to digest the contents of what will be the primary focus of our meeting.

Recognising Stakeholder and PPI input:

Following each meeting, member feedback is collated and shared with the group alongside a 'you said, we did' infographic. This details how their reflections and feedback have been implemented into the project. See the infographics from our first two meetings below.

You said, we did...



Meet: Our Stakeholders

We invited our Stakeholders and PPI to comment on why they felt this project mattered.
Here's what they said...

"In the context of women in primary care and thriving, General Practice is challenging as it's not standardised, there is no HR or occupational health, your clinical colleagues and practice manager who are often shareholders, are your go to for support and it's often difficult for them to be objective. There is a colossal workload that feels like you're firefighting on a daily basis. Having worked in partnership with predominant male and female partners consecutively, I don't think it's as simple as men not understanding the pressures on women. It's more complex as I have experienced discrimination from women and men at work. There is a tendency to rose tint the past but actually the workload, societal expectations and perfectionism pressures now are unique and compounded in particular for women GPs, and we need to professionally work to support each other more if we are to thrive in general practice."

Radhika Vohra,
GP & Trustee - The Menopause Charity

"There is a **colossal workload** that feels like you're **firefighting on a daily basis.**"

"I have spent my career working to make sure we recognise healthcare users as individuals - people, not diseases, who are living with illness in context. My goal is to bring that same thinking to how we understand individual GPs in this, the Women GPs Thrive project. To ensure that GPs, like me, are known for who they are and what they do, not by any one defined characteristic."

Joanne Reeve,
Director of the Academy of Primary Care at Hull York Medical School and Professor of primary care

"It can be easy to forget that **doctors are also humans.**"

"As someone navigating the NHS right now and finding it very tiring, it's important for me to hear about the challenges female GPs are facing and women working in healthcare in general. It can be easy to get caught up in your own frustration and forget that doctors are also humans with incredibly high workloads too, it's nice to be with so many people who obviously care. Not only does it put things into perspective for me, it restores my dwindling faith in the system a little!"

Danni Whiteside,
Patient and Public Representative

Meet: Our Stakeholders



**Clare Searle,
GPwSI
Gynaecology**

"I worked as a partner in a large practice for thirty years. Overall, I felt that my well-being was high throughout this time, and I reflect that much was accomplished for the practice and patients during these years. Towards the latter years of the partnership, I had dependent care and felt I was trying to meet conflicting demands. This did impact my style of practice and led to high workload and to some element of burnout."

Stakeholder and PPI feedback was instrumental in updating our **Initial Programme Theories**.

Read our working paper [here](#).

Abrams and Williams. Initial Programme Theory (IPT) conceptualisation and development. OSF. 2025.

"I've really enjoyed participating in the first two online meetings. It's a great opportunity for people to interact with others who might view the topics under discussion from a different angle."

Susan Neave, Public representative



"Not every GP's path looks the same - when healthcare systems recognise that differences can be strengths rather than complications to manage, that's when we all flourish."

**Zen Goh, Assistant Professor,
Founder of Multidisciplinary
International Network
on Thriving (MINT)**



This project aims to identify and investigate **the conditions in which women GPs thrive at work**, to more effectively recruit, support and retain this staff group.

"I was one of relatively few women in medical schools in the 1970s, and was immediately aware of issues of hierarchy and gender bias across health care settings. As a woman GP who also became a social science researcher, I spent time in professional groups trying to address our challenges, and also did some research which contributed to the evidence that the current project is now using. Gender and clinical practice are global issues which affect both men and women in most workplaces, through multiple complex mechanisms. Trying to summarise these into recommendations that can be practically addressed is a really important step."

**Amanda Howe, Emeritus Professor of Primary Care,
University of East Anglia**



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

Meet: Our Stakeholders

Acknowledgements: We are grateful to the individuals and organisations, listed below, who are offering their time and expertise in this project.

Stakeholder Name	Job Title	Affiliation
Katie Barnett	GP & PPI representative	NHS
Liz Brewster	Non-Clinical Senior Lecturer in Medical Education	Lancaster University
Zen Goh	Assistant Professor	Monash University
Sarah-Jane Grace	PPI representative	
Amanda Howe	Emeritus Professor of Primary Care	University of East Anglia
Nada Khan	NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer	Exeter University
Laura Kudrna	Assistant Professor in Health Research Methods	University of Birmingham
Jean Ledger	Head of Research	Adora Digital Health
Ellen MacIver	GP & NIHR In-practice Fellow	University of Oxford
Nuala Maginn	Medical Doctor	NHS
Karen Mattick	Professor of Medical Education	University of Exeter
Susan Neave	PPI representative	
Seema Pattni	GP & Doctors Career Coach	
Emma Persand	Director	Lemur Health
Joanne Reeve	Professor of Primary Care Research	Hull York Medical School
Clare Searle	GPwSI Gynaecology	NHS
Gill Towler	GP & PPI representative	NHS
Radhika Vohra	GP & Trustee - The Menopause Charity	NHS and Private
Jennifer Voorhees	GP & NIHR Clinical Lecturer	University of Manchester
Jessica Watson	NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer	Bristol University
Danni Whiteside	PPI representative	
Carol Woodhams	Professor of Human Resource Management	University of Surrey
Louise Younie	Professor of Medical Education/GP	Queen Mary University of London

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

Spotlight On: The Project

What's happening next?

- In November 2025, we are hosting an **in-person pop-up event to engage with the public** as part of the ESRC Festival of Social Science. We'll be showcasing our findings whilst welcoming feedback from the public. Find out more [here](#).
- Early 2026, watch this space as we collaborate with Nifty Fox to create an **online exhibition** for the project.
- In March 2026, we're hoping to attend the **BJGP conference** and are waiting to hear back on whether an abstract submitted to present has been successful.



Recent Publications

1. Read Ruth and Victoria's *BJGP Life* opinion piece: **Women GPs and the NHS Ten-Year Plan: Is now the time to thrive?** [here](#).
2. Read Ruth's *BMJ Opinion* piece: **General practice must be the foundation of primary care reform**, [here](#).

Opportunities for Involvement

If you would like to join our launch webinar where we will discuss our project findings, resources and next steps, **please contact Victoria: v.williams@surrey.ac.uk**