

# speaker biographies



Royal College  
of Midwives

## Speaker biographies

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**Dr. Shamaila Anwar,  
Project Lead – Medical  
Directorate, NIHR**

Shamaila specialises in leading, managing and overseeing projects that require access, use and analysis of data to help

steer research into areas of greatest need. She has a PhD in epidemiology and a background in health research and is interested in understanding health inequalities. Outside of her role at the NIHR, Shamaila is a Science Communicator and works with organisations such as Team Halo and WHO raising awareness and understanding of tailored health messaging and improving health and science literacy through community-focussed science communication and engagement. Her work during the COVID pandemic focused on understanding societal views about vaccines, the impact of misinformation and disinformation and how to effectively communicate health messaging amongst different communities. She is active on social media and has a Tik Tok account which she uses to raise awareness of health issues, the contributions that different cultures have made to science, technology and the progress of humankind as well as tackling health-related misinformation.



**Sheona Brown,  
Lecturer, University  
of the West of Scotland  
and a trustee of  
the Iolanthe  
Midwifery Trust**

Sheona is a lecturer in the School of

Health and Life Sciences at the University of the West of Scotland. In addition to her wealth of clinical midwifery experience, Sheona also has a strong background of project management and implementing new models of midwifery practice, and is herself a previous Iolanthe Award Winner. Sheona has won numerous awards, including the 'Philips Avent Award for Innovation in Midwifery,' (alongside Dorothy Finlay) for their Maternity Telehealth project, (RCM Awards 2014.) Sheona was also part of the steering group for 'The Midwives Role in Public Health' project, which was short listed for a Royal College of Midwives Excellence in Leadership Award (2004.)



**Dr Kirstie Coxon,  
Associate Professor  
in Midwifery Research  
at Kingston University  
and on the Research  
Advisory Committee  
of the Wellbeing of  
Women charity**

I have been a researcher for over twenty years, and my maternity care research is focused on evaluations of complex interventions, models of care, understanding risk and shared decision making. I am an active researcher, lecturer and PhD supervisor. Within my research work, I have been invited to sit on funding panels for NIHR and also for Wellbeing of Women. I'm looking forward to the RCM Education and Midwifery conference, and I hope that sharing information about the process of applying for funding will encourage more midwives to come forward and successfully apply for research grants.



**Jenny Cunningham,  
Research Advisor, RCM**

I am one of the part time Research Advisors at the RCM. Prior to this I was a clinical midwife, a research midwife, and a midwife researcher

in the south west of England. I was also an RCM activist and Learning Rep at my local hospital Trust. Since working for the RCM, I have led on the development of the RCM's Research and Development strategy and am really motivated to help midwives get involved in research and for the RCM to be able to support them on their journey. I started a part time PhD at Kingston University in 2020 and am focusing on weight stigma in pregnancy.



**Jude Field, Research  
Advisor, RCM**

I am a RCM Research Advisor and work with my colleagues to implement the RCM Research and Development Strategy. There are many benefits

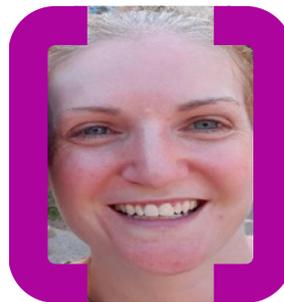
for all who use and work within the maternity services when midwives are involved in research and I am very motivated to support midwives in this area of our practice. My role with the RCM is part-time, and I am also employed as a midwifery lecturer at Bangor University. Prior to my current roles I worked as a clinical midwife and undertook a research study and then a PhD exploring decision making around planned home birth.



**Judith Cutter,  
Consultant Midwife,  
Public health and  
Vulnerable families**

I am the strategic and professional lead for Public health and vulnerable families

including obesity in pregnancy, perinatal mental health, Female Genital Mutilation, asylum seekers, Human trafficking, modern slavery and honour-based violence, breastfeeding, Stillbirth, Smoking, Sexual Health and the implementation of Long Acting Removable Contraception (LARC). I am the chair of Consultant midwives Cymru which led on the Welsh Government and RCM commissioned Your Birth, We Care (2017) and Midwives Voices Wales (2019). During the past two years I have been involved in two research applications to explore the uptake and effectiveness of the postpartum family planning service. I was successful in the wellbeing of women first into research scholarship to evaluate the postpartum family planning service which have been published in the BMJ (2018) and MIDIRS (2020). I am now currently undertaking a PhD exploring the barriers and facilitators to the uptake of early postnatal contraception.



**Ruth Hadebe, Senior  
Registrar in Obstetrics  
and Gynaecology,  
Queen Elizabeth  
Hospital, London**

Her work in various units in the UK and abroad have given her a passion

for improving the standard of Women's experience in pregnancy, and promoting equality in access to care and birth outcomes. Ruth's recent research interests include continuity of antenatal care and management of Sickle Cell Disease in pregnancy.

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**Dr Freda McCormick**  
Research Fellow,  
School of Nursing  
and Midwifery in  
Queen's University  
Belfast (QUB)

Dr Freda McCormick was awarded her

Doctorate of Education in 2016 at QUB. Freda supported the development of the Regional HSC hospital passport for people with learning disabilities. Her research interests include learning disability, LGBTQ+ and later life learning. Recent publications focus on LGBTQ+ in nursing and midwifery education programmes, and experiences of adults with intellectual disability accessing acute hospital services. Freda's background is in Human Resource Management. She is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD and a Fellow of the ILM.



**Patrice McKenna,**  
Midwifery Practice  
Educator, Royal Jubilee  
Maternity Services

Trained as both a nurse and a midwife I completed my midwifery training in 2009 from Queens

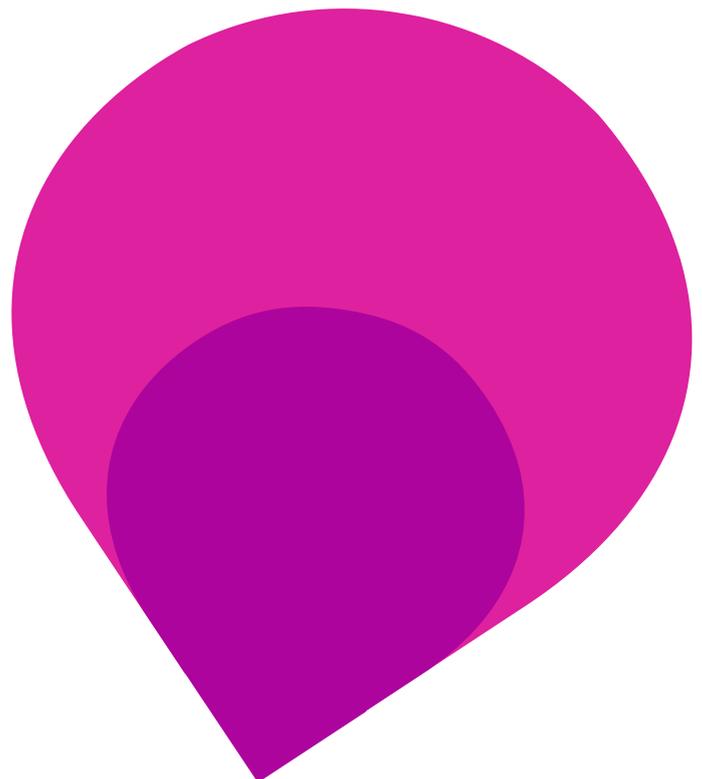
University Belfast. I have practised as a midwife in Royal Jubilee Maternity Services since 2009 in all areas of midwifery care. I am an RCM steward within the Award winning Belfast Branch. Having recently joined the Midwifery Education Team as a Practice Educator I have a keen interest in the development of staff, especially newly qualified Midwives. We use a robust and supportive preceptorship programme within RJMS. I am passionate about supporting positive service change and the development of women centred, high quality care. Mother to 3 beautiful children.



**Professor Eugene Oteng-Ntim, Consultant Obstetrician at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust**

Professor Eugene Oteng-Ntim is also an honorary academic at London

School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on Population Health and honorary professor at Kings College London. He Trained in Medicine at United Medical and Dental School of Guy's and St Thomas' now part of Kings College London . His Obstetrics and Gynaecology training was in West London including Queen Charlotte's and Chelsea and Westminster Hospital. Professor Eugene Oteng-Ntim research interest is in Inequality at birth, sickle cell disease and obesity in pregnancy. He is due to start a national role as National Maternity advisor with a focus on safety. He is a lead investigator on A Better Birth (ABS) fund provided by big lottery to address inequality at Birth. It is through this work that this publication came into fruition.





**Dr Sally Pezaro PhD  
MSc FRCM BA (Hons)  
PgCAPHE SFHEA  
Assistant Professor,  
Coventry University**

Dr Pezaro is a Fellow of the Royal College of Midwives, a Senior

Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and an editorial board member of the British Journal of Midwifery, Evidence Based Midwifery, MIDIRS and the International Journal of Childbirth. She is also a mentor of Mary Seacole Leadership Awardees and the Council of Deans of Health 150 Leaders, and a panellist on the Nursing and Midwifery Council's fitness to practise Investigating Committee. Furthermore, Dr Pezaro is the lead midwife for [www.hEDSTogether.com](http://www.hEDSTogether.com) and an invited member of the Ehlers-Danlos Society's International Consortium. Dr Pezaro has experience working as a midwife clinically in the United Kingdom, the Gambia and Ethiopia. In 2021, Dr Pezaro won a 'Partnership Working' Award from the RCM and a 'Midwives Award' from the Iolanthe Midwifery Trust. In 2019, she won first prize from the Royal Society of Medicine in 'Leading and inspiring excellence in maternity care'. The overriding vision for Dr Pezaro's ongoing work is to secure psychologically safe professional journeys and excellence in health care.



**Dr Juliet Rayment,  
Re:birth Research  
Fellow, RCM**

Juliet is a sociologist and qualitative researcher in UK maternity services. Her research work

has mostly looked at how organisational and birth culture – 'the way we do things round here' – influences how maternity policy plays out in real life. Juliet has carried out ethnographic fieldwork and other types of qualitative research across the UK, with women and families from many different communities. This has included work on the barriers for women's access to midwifery units, experiences of infant feeding in Tower Hamlets and inclusion in Public Patient Involvement. Juliet now coordinates the Re:Birth project at the RCM and works as a freelance research consultant.

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**Professor Julia Sanders**  
FRCM, RN, RM,  
ADM, LLM, MPH, PhD,  
**Professor of Clinical  
Nursing and Midwifery,  
Cardiff University**

As a clinical academic  
Julia is involved in many

clinically focused maternity research studies and spends much of her time encouraging and supporting other midwives to do the same. Julia is lead or co-investigator on current and completed grants with a value of over £20m, including funding from the NIHR, Department of Health (England), charities and industry. Julia currently leads the £1.1m NIHR funded POOL study investigating the safety of waterbirth for mothers and babies using routine NHS data. Julia has many years' experience on funding panels including the funding panel of Wellbeing of Women and the pre-doctoral NIHR panel.



**Professor Jane Sandall**  
CBE PhD MSc BSc RM

Jane Sandall is Head of  
Midwifery and Maternity  
Research at NHS England  
and Improvement and  
a Professor of Women's  
Health at King's College

London. She is an adjunct professor at University of Technology Sydney and La Trobe University, Melbourne. She is an NIHR Senior Investigator and has a clinical background in nursing, health visiting and midwifery and an academic background in social sciences. Her research has investigated innovations in how services are delivered to improve safety, quality, and women's experience, and clinical decision tools to prevent maternal and perinatal mortality and morbidity in high and low income settings. She co-leads leading research on implementation of open disclosure in perinatal care, and research looking at impact of models of midwife continuity of care for women at higher risk of pre-term birth and reducing inequalities in care and outcomes for women and babies. Her research findings have informed English, Scottish, US, Brazilian, Irish and Australian reviews of maternity services and WHO. [kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/jane.sandall.html](http://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/jane.sandall.html)



**Professor Hora Soltani**  
PhD, MMedSci, BSc,  
RM, PGDip, PGCert,  
MBE, Professor of  
Maternal and Infant  
Health, Sheffield  
Hallam University

Hora leads the Maternal and Infant Health Research (MIHR) theme which includes several interdisciplinary researchers and PhD students in Sheffield Hallam University. With over 100 peer reviewed publications and a similar number of conference presentations; she is an internationally recognised figure in her area of research. Hora was listed in the Elsevier top 2% cited scientists in her field in 2020 with a field adjusted impact of 2.4 according to SciVal 2021. She has also been acting as Editor/Senior Editorial Board Member for journals (e.g. BMC Pregnancy & Childbirth) and an expert advisor for organisations such as WHO and Public Health England. Her research is of a collaborative nature, focusing on care models reducing health inequalities for mothers and babies from the most disadvantaged and vulnerable backgrounds specifically related to maternal nutrition and obesity, infant feeding, perinatal mental health, adolescent pregnancy and migration. Hora was awarded an MBE in the Queen's new year honour list (Dec 2020) for her services to higher education and impact on maternal and infant health, guiding maternity policy development at national and international levels.



**Tomasina Stacey**  
Senior lecturer,  
Midwifery and  
Maternity Care  
Research, Kings  
College London

Tomasina is a Senior Lecturer in Midwifery and Maternal care research at Kings College London. She has previously been employed in various clinical academic roles both in the UK and in New Zealand and is passionate about supporting the integration of clinical practice, research, and education.



**Dr. Asmat Syed MBBS,  
MSc, Community  
Engagement and  
Nutrition Expert,  
Social Researcher**

For the last 12 years I have worked on engaging local women and families to research (REACH pregnancy programme, Low Birth Weight Babies in Newham, Well London, ROSHNI2) and family health projects (Maternity Mates, HENRY – Health Exercise for the Really Young) and promoting health services (Antenatal care, Healthy Start scheme, Vitamin D awareness) to the communities. I am passionate about improving the health of BAME mothers and children facing health inequality due to lack of information and awareness about health and support services. If we can support mothers to adopt healthier lifestyle, they can give the very best start of life to their children. (Healthy Mums = Healthy Babies).

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**Susanne Thomas O'Boyle, Midwifery Practice Educator, Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital**

Susanne is a registered nurse and midwife. She is currently working

within the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust (BHSCT) as the Intrapartum Midwifery Practice Educator. Susanne has attained highly developed specialist knowledge in intrapartum care underpinned by theory and experience. She is passionate about intrapartum care and Interprofessional simulation. She has completed her Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Education and is currently completing her Masters in Midwifery. Her work has been presented at conferences both locally and nationally and she has received many awards for her contribution to the development and support of staff within the service, especially Newly Qualified Midwives (NMQs). Susanne is a transformational leader, embracing and influencing change through service development and quality improvement. Susanne has recently taken up a Lead Midwife post for the Implementation of Continuity of Midwifery Care within the BHSCT.



**Dr Jacqui Williams MA, BSc(Hons), RM ADM, Dip AppSS Senior Midwifery Advisor (Education), Nursing and Midwifery Council**

Jacqui Williams is a very

experienced midwifery academic and practising midwife with over 30 years involvement in pre- and post- registration midwifery programmes. As an academic, Jacqui has continued to keep strong links with midwifery practice and is passionate about the unique role of the midwife and women centred care. She is a Senior Fellow with the Higher Education Academy. She has particular area of expertise in quality assurance. Her education interests are in open and distance learning and she has created resources for open access repositories including developing a unique midwifery repository. Jacqui is also an experienced midwifery expert witness. Her doctoral work researched whether resilience develops or not in student midwives as they navigate the undergraduate midwifery programme. Jacqui's current role is to support the implementation of the new midwifery education standards and the wider work on midwifery matters across the NMC.