

Information about being a member of the Research Advisory Group for the project: 'Codesigning a perinatal walking group for Muslim women' May-December 2025.

SUMMARY

Our study will codesign a perinatal walking group for Muslim mothers. The study will run from April 2025-December 2025.

The Research Advisory Group will meet online three times between June and December 2025. Meetings will last between 1-1.5 hours. We will try to organise meetings at times that best suit the group. Prior to the meetings, you will be sent information to review.

If you are interested, please read on.

About the study

If a woman has a mental illness during pregnancy or up to 2 years after childbirth, it is called perinatal mental illness. This can have a long-term effect on children and has a high cost to society. Mental health support can help, but women from religious and ethnic minorities use mental health services less often than other women. Sometimes they find the support isn't suitable or easy to find. We need better ways to reach and support these women.

The focus of the study will be on reducing loneliness. Loneliness can cause perinatal mental illness or make it worse. Loneliness means having fewer people to spend time with or talk to than you'd like. Some people feel lonely even if they have lots of family and friends because they don't feel comfortable talking to them about difficult topics. Sometimes people feel lonely if they feel different to others.

Previous research found that perinatal walking groups could help reduce loneliness. Consultation has shown that Muslim women would be interested in taking part in walking groups. However, we don't know how these walking groups could be designed to make them as useful and enjoyable as possible for Muslim women in the perinatal period. This is because Muslim communities have been overlooked in research.

This study aims to ask these communities how perinatal walking groups could work for them. We will then co-design a walking group to test out in research in the future.

Here is the plan for our research:

We will talk to 32 Muslim women in Sheffield and London in four focus groups (group research interviews) to hear what they think would help them. We will also talk to up to 20 local professionals who support Muslim women (practitioners) in two focus groups. This will be separate to this advisory group. We will ask them what they would need to help run walking groups.

Based on their thoughts, we will hold workshops to create a perinatal walking group intervention using a method called the Person-Based Approach. This method has been used before to design a similar intervention for women experiencing perinatal mental health difficulties.

An online Research Advisory Group (RAG) will guide every part of our study. This group will be made up of practitioners and professionals who support Muslim women, and/or deliver nature-based interventions. If you agree to take part, this is what you will be part of.

Who is leading the research?

The research is led by Dr Ruth Naughton-Doe (Principal Investigator) and based at Centre for Mental Health Social Care at the University of York. The Co-investigators are Dr Kate Fryer and Dr Elizabeth Taylor Buck (University of Sheffield), Dr Katie Hall (University of Bristol), and Professor Josephine Ross (University of Dundee). Sara Metz is a Co-Investigator and will be leading the advisory groups.

We are also working with Light Peer Support and Blaze Trails Parent and Baby Walking Network.

The research is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research Three Schools Mental Health Programme.

What is the role of the Research Advisory Group?

The Research Advisory Group will help to:

- design materials to reach a wide range of Muslim mothers
- plan questions to ask parents about their preferences
- reflect on research findings
- codesign the walking group in an online session

Who will be involved in the Research Advisory Group?

A wide range of different people including:

- Community leaders
- Support workers
- Social prescribers
- Social workers
- General practitioners
- Peer support workers

People working in:

- Services that support Muslim parents
- Perinatal Mental Health Services
- Voluntary Sector Organisations that support new parents
- Representatives from national campaigning organisations
- Academics with specialist knowledge of perinatal mental health and/or supporting perinatal young women
- People delivering nature-based interventions to parents

What do I have to do?

The Research Advisory Group will meet online. You will be invited to participate in three meetings lasting between 1-1.5 hours each. We will try to organise meetings at times that best suit the group. Prior to the meetings, you will be sent information to review. You will sometimes be sent invitations to review information in between meetings, but this is optional.

How will the group be run?

The meeting will be facilitated by a team member Sara Metz. It is important that group members

feel comfortable sharing opinions and perspectives on the research. Everything you share will remain confidential within the group.

Research Advisory Group meetings (exact dates and topics TBC)

1. Reviewing recruitment materials and planning questions (June 2025)
2. Looking at our data and developing the walking group (October 2025)
3. Finalising the ideas (November 2025)

How do you choose who becomes a member?

Due to limited funding, there are limited places on the Research Advisory Group, so if there is a lot of interest, not everyone interested will be able to participate. However, there will be other opportunities for you to be involved and share your valued expertise throughout this project, so if you are interested, Ruth will contact you about these in the future.

The decision about who is invited to participate in this group will be made based on an effort to represent diverse perspectives.

If you are interested in taking part, or have any questions, please let us know. Please let us know your name, organisation, what experience you bring, and why you want to be involved.

Text/WhatsApp Ruth on

07355 624309

Or email

Ruth.naughton-doe@york.ac.uk

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Your responsibilities

We'd like you to be able to:

- *Attend and contribute to meetings*

There will be up to three meetings where you will be asked to offer your professional perspective on our study methods and results. This is very important to the success of this work.

You will be expected to prepare for meetings by reading documents sent in advance.

You can also send information before the meeting, such as questions or suggestions for discussion points.

- *Input on other research activities*

You may also be contacted between meetings for your input on matters related to the research. This additional work is optional.

Our responsibilities

At our end, we will commit to:

- arranging an initial meeting to discuss any questions you may have, and to be fully briefed about the project
- offering you mentorship and training in research if you want it
- answering any questions in confidence or at the team meetings
- providing opportunities to contact a member of the study team before and after each meeting.

Person specification

We are looking for people who have experience of, or knowledge about, supporting Muslim parents AND/OR facilitating/supporting nature-based interventions.

You will enjoy working as part of a team.

You will be interested in research.

You must be reliable and trustworthy.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality policy of the group will be discussed at the first meeting. However, topics and research documents discussed in the group will be assumed to be confidential unless specifically stated otherwise.

All confidential information must be treated with strict confidence both during the time that a member is involved with the panel as well as after their involvement ends.

In line with the Data Protection Act 1998, members must not remove, destroy, share or discuss any confidential information inappropriately unless specifically requested to do so by the University of York.

The University of York will keep members' personal information secure and confidential at all times in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Your data will be encrypted and held on a system restricted to just the people that need access to it.

Thank you for reading. We look forward to hearing from you.

