



Royal College  
of Physicians

# Emerging Women Leaders Programme

Breaking through the glass ceilings in  
the healthcare setting

**2019/20 yearbook**



# Foreword



It gives me great pleasure to introduce the yearbook for our 2019/20 cohort of emerging women leaders. This newly established leadership scheme generates great pride across the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) as we say farewell to 24 dedicated and accomplished doctors who are developing their leadership skills as consultants.

We awarded 12 fellowships, generously funded by the Lord Leonard and Lady Estelle Wolfson Foundation, to female doctors who are starting on their consultant level leadership journey, at whatever stage in their career this may be. Doctors undertook a programme of leadership, reflection and peer support to develop their leadership awareness and networking opportunities. Our main aims were to raise the profile of female leaders, develop a strong programme of peer support and mentoring, to nurture female leadership in healthcare and to encourage each other to the next steps in leadership – what I often refer to as the leadership ‘nudge’.

It has been a pleasure to observe the cohort of emerging women leaders develop. The RCP is incredibly proud of their involvement and commitment to the fellowships and are delighted that every participant has taken further leadership roles as a result of the support that they have received from both the college and their peers.

We wish them the very best for the future and look forward to hearing about their leadership journeys in the years to come.

**Dr Emma Vaux**

Senior censor and immediate past vice president,  
Royal College of Physicians



## The Emerging Women Leaders Programme

The Emerging Women Leaders Programme is a development programme designed specifically to address the under-representation of women in leadership roles within the RCP and the wider medical profession.

The programme aims to develop the essential leadership knowledge, skills and behaviours to support participants in growing capability, capacity and credibility in order to be successful in future senior leadership positions within the NHS.

The programme achieves these aims through interactive workshops, access to mentoring from senior medical leaders, access to support from programme alumni, peer group support and through opportunities for professional networking.

## Dr Jennifer Beynon

**Diabetes consultant and clinical director for Urgent Care, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

‘Without a doubt the most enduring positive part of the programme has been meeting other female leaders (all at different stages in their leadership journey).

The structure given at the beginning of the course was really helpful in making me understand the type of leader I was and how I need to work to get the most out of all my colleagues.’

### Leadership success

‘Having spent a few months exploring what medical leadership was and how I could fit into that (with all my strengths and weaknesses), meant I had the courage to apply for the new role.

I have now been clinical director for 10 months, starting in March 2020, just as the first lockdown hit. It has given me some of the hardest yet most rewarding times as a leader and I am very glad I took the decision to apply. Being in a position to effect change has felt like a real privilege this last year. The course has taught me that leadership is about more than the tasks, it’s about keeping your team together, valuing all and helping others shine. These have been vital elements in supporting my colleagues through the challenges brought by the global pandemic and I do believe that it would have been harder to do my job well without having been part of the EWL group.’





## Dr Nazia Chaudhuri

Deputy clinical director, Manchester University  
NHS Foundation Trust

### Outcome

‘Gained excellent peer support, particularly during pandemic - peers help guiding leadership during this, with forum to discuss issues.’

### Leadership success

‘The programme has helped me to be more confident in my role and learning from others. Particularly during a very busy pandemic, with a need to be communicative, joint decision making but assertive at times.’

## Dr Marie Condon

Consultant nephrologist and head of specialty renal  
directorate, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust

### Outcome

‘I have gained knowledge around the role of individual and organisation in leadership; reflection on my own leadership style and ways in which it can be developed, but above all I met an amazing group of women leaders who inspired me in my own role and career progression.’

### Leadership success

‘Since joining the programme I have been appointed as Head of Specialty within my directorate since December 2019 and I have become much more involved in organisation and service delivery within my Trust – with all the challenges involved! The programme definitely gave me confidence in my abilities to perform and deliver this role, but also the network of other leaders to go to for advice and support.’





## Dr Maria Debattista

Consultant and clinical director in palliative care,  
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### Outcome

‘Completing the Emerging Women Leaders Programme has helped me gain more confidence in my leadership abilities. Hearing from very experienced women leaders in medicine on the programme has been extremely inspiring to me. I have learnt to value, reflect and learn from the challenges I continue to come across in my leadership journey.’

### Leadership success

‘The programme has also provided me with great support, both through the shared experience of my peers on the programme, as well as my mentor. This has been invaluable to me as I have taken on the role of clinical director for our department.’

## Dr Shahida Din

Consultant gastroenterologist, NRS clinician and honorary  
senior clinical lecturer, Western General Hospital

### Outcome

‘Meeting an inspirational group of colleagues who have gone through similar experiences and can provide advice, mentorship and support in the toughest times.

Appreciating how to use leadership skills to drive forward change, improving patient care and reduce variation in care.’

### Leadership success

Opportunity to shadow the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the British Society of Gastroenterology from December 2019 – December

2020 providing an intense experience of different leadership styles through the pandemic.

Led an observational cohort study supporting trainees to become leaders.

Co-led a consensus-based approach using RAND methodology resulting in guidance during the pandemic with a high impact publication, gut blog and international presentation.

Continued to work more effectively in developing research roles which has resulted in an invitation to lead a working group to improve care in inflammatory bowel disease in Scotland.’





## Dr Ruth Dobson

**Clinical senior lecturer and honorary consultant neurologist,  
Queen Mary University of London and Barts Health NHS Trust**

### Outcome

‘Having a group of like-minded women, going through similar experiences has been a remarkable source of support. Aside from this, the mentorship from an extraordinary female leader, who has pushed me to put myself out there, has been a real opportunity.’

### Leadership success

‘During this year, I put myself forward for a number of leadership roles that I wouldn’t have considered otherwise. I have felt more equipped to take these on, and to manage at least some of the challenges these have thrown up. It has also helped me to try to have more confidence in my leadership skills - just because I don’t shout about them the loudest doesn’t mean I don’t have them.’

## Dr Randa Abasaeed Elhag

**Consultant in acute medicine and medical high dependency unit, and internal medicine training and simulation lead, the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

‘Leadership has rarely been advertised as a possibility for me, but having a programme on leadership directed solely at women stimulated my pursuit in a way that other leadership programmes did not.’

The programme inspired me to look at empowering my female juniors to develop and aspire to higher leadership roles and start projects that interest them and reflect the programme’s values.

It has also given me the confidence to initiate and drive change within my organisation.’

### Leadership success

‘I have now been appointed to the post of internal medicine training and simulation lead. My priority is to develop a teaching programme for our cohort of Medical Training Initiative trainees.’

Another initiative that I am leading is on patient safety which is a top priority. After sitting this year in the Deteriorating Patient Group, witnessing the need to develop an enhanced unit within acute medicine, we are now in the process of opening our own.’





## Dr Dera Eruchie

**Consultant in respiratory and general medicine, interstitial lung disease lead, Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

‘As a new consultant this programme has been beyond beneficial. Key gains have included a greater insight and understanding of pertinent issues such as impostor syndrome and its ubiquity, personality traits and their impact on leadership and workplace dynamics. The honest discussion and exploration of issues in a safe environment during course days often provided plenty of food for thought and personal development. Furthermore, the course provided mentorship in a variety of forms. Our course trainers were always happy to facilitate and guide us through leadership difficulties past and present, and approaches to resolution.’

### Leadership success

‘The programme has given me a greater appreciation of the fact that leadership IS a journey. It’s rarely perfect and can and should adapt. I am far less critical of myself and my leadership styles and far more confident and involved in my department.’

Despite my programme and progress being interrupted by maternity leave, I feel much more ready to take on my intended service development and medical education role.’

## Dr Samantha Fitzsimmons

**Consultant cardiologist in adult congenital heart disease, honorary clinical senior lecturer, and lead clinician for the adult congenital pulmonary hypertension service, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

‘The greatest accomplishment from the programme was meeting the most inspirational and like-minded group of women from across the UK, practicing in a variety of areas of medicine. Their support and advice during the most challenging 2020 has been invaluable.’

The programme also empowered me to seek out more leadership roles and equipped me with the skills to understand the different personality traits of my team members and how to adjust my leadership techniques.’

### Leadership success

‘The programme has affected my leadership style, enabling me to understand different personality types in my team.’

The programme empowered me to investigate more leadership roles within my Trust and at a National Level.

I have taken on the Lead Clinician role for the Adult Congenital Pulmonary Hypertension Service within our Trust.’





## Dr Rachel Foster

**Consultant in infectious diseases and acute medicine,  
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

‘The programme has connected me with other women with whom I can learn, take encouragement from and benefit from peer support in our general lives as well as our leadership journeys. We have learned about our own personalities, our innate leadership styles and ways we might adapt and expand those styles to suit different situations.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting and curtailing the programme, I still feel to have benefited enormously from being part of it.’

### Leadership success

‘At the very first meeting we did an action learning set which helped me see clearly how to take the next steps towards a leadership role within my Trust which I’d been wanting for some time.

I’m building a team in the ‘Sepsis Big Room’ where we’re making improvements to the delivery of care to deteriorating patients.

I’m also leading an initiative of contact tracing inpatients, collaborating with the local city council and community groups. I’m not sure I’d have made it this far without the benefit of the Emerging Women Leaders programme.’

## Dr Elaine Hui

**Consultant in endocrinology, diabetes and acute medicine,  
assistant training programme director Northwick Park Hospital,  
London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust, and RCP  
regional adviser in north-west London**

### Outcome

‘Peer support from our group of Emerging Women Leaders has been invaluable.

Better understanding of different leadership styles and personality types has changed my thinking on leadership.’

### Leadership success

‘Our group is instrumental in giving us confidence and avoiding ‘impostor’ syndrome. It has allowed me to take up roles as RCP Regional Adviser in North West London, and assistant Training Programme Director for our core medical trainees. It also enabled me to lead on challenging clinical projects including expansion of digital support for patients with Type 1 diabetes.’





## Dr Tehmeena Khan

Consultant in acute medicine, and same day emergency care lead, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

### Outcome

'Participating in this programme has allowed me to join a network of inspiring women leaders across the country.'

The programme has provided me with knowledge and skills that I can utilise in my current role and to take forward with me to other leadership roles I may take up in the future.'

### Leadership success

'Towards the end of the programme I was asked by my department to take up the role of Same Day Emergency Care lead for my Trust. The skills and knowledge from the programme supported me in initiating this national NHS programme at my Trust and helped me participate in setting the regional agenda.'

## Dr Claire Lawless

Consultant respiratory physician and clinical lead in respiratory medicine, Airedale NHS Foundation Trust

### Outcome

'I was initially interested in the programme because I was at a stage in my career where, like most relatively new consultants, I had a lot of 'on the job' leadership experience, but little formal training to give structure and meaning to my leadership style.'

The peer support gained has been really valuable when facing the various challenges that leadership has thrown up along the way. The tutors on the course were fantastic and really got us thinking, in an interactive way, about how we lead and manage our teams. I will carry the insight gained from this through the rest of my career.'

### Leadership success

'The course made me look differently at the way I see leadership and has given me the confidence to use my skills to the best of their advantage. I have learnt how important it is to be sensitive to how colleagues respond to challenges differently based on their previous experience and their personality type, as a female leader I now feel more confident leading in my natural style. As a respiratory consultant, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown up a number of challenges over the past year but I feel that the knowledge I gained from the course has given me a solid base from which to face them.'





## Dr Sabina Moolla

**Consultant acute physician, and clinical lead, Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust**

### Outcome

‘The networking opportunities have given me an eye-opening insight into the world of leaders and the peer support from my fellow Emerging Women Leaders has been amazing. We have bonded as a group and helped each other through what has been an incredibly tough year. I found the action learning sets and mentor scheme particularly useful in helping me to think through and overcome problems.’

### Leadership success

The programme has helped me to develop and consolidate leadership skills which I have applied to my day to day working life. Over the last six months, I have been acting as Joint Interim Lead for Acute Medicine and have had the opportunity to work as part of the Divisional Management Team in this role. This has given me a welcome appreciation of the challenging yet rewarding managerial aspects of leading a team. I have just been successfully appointed as Clinical Lead and look forward to the challenges this will bring.’

## Dr Helen Morgan

**Consultant palliative medicine, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

‘The learning and support I received as part of the Programme were invaluable when I was at a crossroads within my career. Support from an experienced mentor, peers from different specialties and facilitated action learning sets helped clarify some of the decisions. It gave me greater insight into the importance of shared organisational values and team dynamics and the impact on service development and patient care.’

### Leadership success

‘I have increased confidence in decision-making and my abilities, and have focused upon aligning my goals and interests.’

Since being part of the programme, I have been appointed to a NICE Committee developing guidelines on shared decision-making and was appointed a lead role shared between the trust and university. Obviously, with the impact of COVID-19, there were different challenges than I had anticipated, but the support and shared learning from peers has made me more adaptable.’





## Dr Jaita Mukherjee

**Consultant rheumatologist and general medicine physician, and training programme director, Northwick Park Hospital, London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust**

### Outcome

‘The opportunity to meet and learn from other consultants working in similar environments has been incredible. Sharing our achievements (as well as our less successful endeavours) has been invaluable, highlighting that success takes many forms. Having the additional support from a mentor was also an incredibly positive experience. I am passionate about the many benefits of mentorship, and I hope to inspire and encourage other doctors to achieve their leadership potential.’

### Leadership success

‘Since starting the programme, I became a Training Programme Director (TPD), a role that has shaped my own leadership skills. I have identified and adapted to a style that focuses on my strengths and transferable skills. These strategies have not only facilitated my role as TPD but have also enabled me to support colleagues within my department, with the ultimate goal of providing quality care for patients. I highly recommend the Emerging Women Leaders Programme.’

## Dr Mary O’Driscoll

**Consultant in clinical genetics and clinical service lead, Birmingham Clinical Genetics Unit**

### Outcome

‘Confidence is probably the most obvious answer. The confidence that I have the requisite skills, that as clinical lead I don’t need some magical extra string to my bow, that I by myself am enough. The course helped me to understand what I need to develop and to recognise what I already had. The wisdom to know the difference is the work in progress. But given all of that, by far the most unexpected and welcome benefit has been the support from the faculty and most of all from my peers.’

### Leadership success

‘When I set out on the Emerging Women Leaders course and subsequently took on the role of clinical lead, like most others, I couldn’t have predicted what was ahead. Even working in a non-acute specialty the challenges have been extraordinary. I may not always have known what was around the corner but understanding what kind of leader I want to be gave me the courage to act and to delegate, and to see what was possible and necessary amongst the uncertainty and endless change. I didn’t always get it right but that was ok too.’





## Dr Rina Patel

**Palliative medicine consultant,  
Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust**

### Outcome

‘2020 has been a crazy year with more challenges than any other, but a pandemic also comes with leadership opportunities and being a fellow of the Emerging Women Leaders Programme during this year was fortuitous. I was exposed to some inspiring talks, workshops which further polished me as a consultant, not to mention the women on the programme who are a great support.’

### Leadership success

‘I feel more prepared than ever to step out of my comfort zone and take on roles/opportunities I previously would have passed up. This year I was the Principal Investigator for a Palliative Care research study at our Trust – something I never would have considered. And I’m also very proud of a difficult Business Case I wrote for our department which will help further our service and improve care for patients.’

## Dr Paarul Prinja

**Consultant acute and obstetric physician, RCP college tutor,  
and BAME voice group chair at New Cross Hospital,  
Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust**

### Outcome

‘Having an allocated mentor allowed me the space to discuss my own personal leadership challenges and we talked a great deal about how to influence and work towards change. The action learning sets facilitated by the RCP education team were a great opportunity to work through problems and reflect on my own leadership style in a psychologically safe environment. One of the highlights of the year was speaking at the RCP new consultant’s conference about my work as an obstetric physician and developing the speciality.’

### Leadership success

‘Having the opportunity to understand my leadership style and be aware of my own strengths and weaknesses has been the main success for me. I have also worked on gaining a greater understanding of others and hope to inspire other female leaders in the future. This year, more than ever, I have had to adapt to deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. I have had the confidence to apply for roles and have recently been appointed RCP college tutor at my trust. I also chair the trust’s BAME employee voice group. Going forward I hope to be doing more work regionally with NHSI to develop maternal medicine networks.’





## Dr Mridula Rajwani

**Consultant in acute medicine and ambulatory care,  
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

As a group, we have been together during challenges, triumphs and everywhere in between.

The sessions at the RCP have been eye-opening and the mentorship has been a very strong aspect of the programme. Being able to discuss situations and professional challenges with experienced leaders in the one-to-one sessions, RCP workshops and focus group discussions has helped me understand and work through areas that I was having particular challenges with.'

### Leadership success

'The programme has been great in allowing me to work on my leadership style and skills. I led on the formation

of a Quality Improvement Hub at my organisation, launching an improvement programme and developing an in-house community of QI skilled professionals.

I have taken opportunities that I would have hesitated to in the past and approached problem solving with confidence and clarity. I mentored junior colleagues and was able to encourage improvement within my department despite the global pandemic and bring about positive changes.

The skills and personal growth acquired during this last year on the programme have not only helped me professionally but also personally as I dealt with the significant personal impact of the pandemic.'

## Dr Nadia Raza

**Consultant in acute medicine,  
Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

### Outcome

'The programme has been a great mix of formal teaching, peer support and mentorship. I am particularly grateful to my mentor for the advice that she gave me just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning. I have learned that systemic change is possible even in these difficult times, and that service improvement is an iterative process often with many setbacks along the way.'

### Leadership success

'As a woman of colour, I have been very fortunate in being able to pursue a rewarding and enjoyable career in Medicine, and I have been well supported in my workplace. This programme has encouraged me to speak up about issues around structural prejudice and intersectionality in the NHS, and to support doctors in training. I recently joined my British Medical Association regional BAME network and I hope I will be able to contribute to the debate, and support colleagues who are experiencing discrimination.'





## Dr Genevieve Robson

Consultant geriatrician, Royal United Hospital, Bath

### Outcome

‘Meeting with a group of peers in a supportive environment who are all going through similar experiences developing leadership skills; this network has been invaluable during what has been an extremely challenging year.’

### Leadership success

‘Sharing our different experiences and gaining tools to support me as a leader has given me confidence to take on new projects such as developing our Acute Frailty Service into a national exemplar.’

## Dr Cara Saxon

Consultant and clinical lead in genitourinary medicine at Withington Community Hospital, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

### Outcome

‘When I started the programme I was already in post as clinical lead of our department and facing a number of challenges. Hearing from speakers and peers about how they overcame various leadership challenges in their career, including the importance of managing work-life balance, was inspiring and motivating. The programme enabled me to work through each of our local service challenges with a better understanding of my leadership style and the fantastic support of my mentor and action learning sets. The continued support

of my mentor and Emerging Women Leader peers, both informally and formally (through virtual RCP-facilitated action learning sets), was invaluable during the unexpected leadership challenges brought by the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020.’

### Leadership success

‘Although I still have goals I would like to achieve in my current tenure as clinical lead, the programme has helped me to feel ready to start thinking about the next phase of my leadership journey.’





## Dr Claire Stark Toller

Consultant in palliative medicine, Mountbatten Hampshire and University Hospital Southampton NHS Trust

### Outcome

‘What was most inspiring was my colleagues on the course – learning, and being encouraged by them.’

### Leadership success

‘What was helpful about the course was time out from busy clinical practice to have some excellent teaching and discussions that enabled me to reflect on how to manage myself and others in challenging circumstances.’

## Dr Hilary Tedd

Consultant in respiratory medicine, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and support lead for the School of Medicine

### Outcome

‘The peer-to-peer support has been incredibly helpful, especially during such a challenging year. We have been able to share clinical expertise, protocols and also, most invaluable, provide each other with emotional support during this unprecedented year.’

### Leadership success

‘The programme has also encouraged me to apply for leadership positions and believe in my own leadership skills. This has resulted in me applying for and being appointed as Support lead for the School of Medicine. It has also provided me with the skills to be a more confident leader.’



# Afterword

This programme was designed to address the under-representation of women in senior leadership roles within the medical profession. Following on from the success of the inaugural year, it was with great pride that the RCP expanded this programme to Liverpool as well as London, with 12 fellows in each. We are indebted to Lady Estelle Wolfson for her interest and generosity in funding 12 of the fellowships.

This course was designed for those within 10 years of starting a consultant job, to use mentorship from within the RCP, with networking, role modelling and leadership development to give a professional 'nudge' to the next step.

And what a year it has been! Despite unexpected COVID-19 restrictions, the fellows have grown in confidence, named their achievements in leadership locally and nationally, and have actively supported each other. I hope that they will continue this support and to their local peers in the future. We wish them the very best for the future and look forward to hearing about their leadership journeys in the years to come.

## **Dr Harriet Gordon**

Emerging Women Leader ambassador,  
consultant gastroenterologist at  
Royal Hampshire County Hospital

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