

Participant Information Sheet

This is an official notification by a student of the University of Hertfordshire in respect of a study involving human participants.

Title of study: The Experiences of Black Women Entrepreneurs in the south of England.: Understanding the Impact of Intersectionality on Entrepreneurial Success

Protocol Number: 1609 ST SSAH 2026

Approving Committee: Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (SSAH) Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority

If you have any queries concerning this document, please contact me (**Principal Investigator**), Carlene Nisbett, Doctoral Researcher, Hertfordshire Business School, University of Hertfordshire (c.v.nisbett@herts.ac.uk) or my Supervisors, Judy Willetts (j.willetts@herts.ac.uk) or Dawn James (d.j.james2@herts.ac.uk).

You are being invited to take part in a doctoral research study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If anything is unclear or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to ask. Take time to decide whether you want to take part.

This Participant Information Sheet has been prepared in accordance with the University of Hertfordshire's regulations governing the conduct of studies involving human participants (UPR RE01).

What is the research about?

This research is part of a doctoral thesis that aims to understand and amplify the voices of Black women entrepreneurs in the south of England. While ethnic minority entrepreneurship is rising, Black women remain significantly underrepresented and face a distinct set of interlocking challenges that are currently overlooked in UK policy and academic theory. By participating, you are helping to bridge this critical gap, informing the development of more inclusive entrepreneurship practices and ensuring that the unique navigational strategies of Black women are no longer invisible.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited because your perspective as a Black woman who owns and runs a business in the south of England is invaluable. Your firsthand experience is essential for this study to gain a deep and authentic understanding of this topic. We are hoping to speak with approximately 10-20 entrepreneurs

like you.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose is to move beyond existing research and create a nuanced picture of what it is truly like to be a Black woman in business today. The study aims to identify the specific challenges you face, celebrate the resilient and creative strategies you use to overcome them, and develop a new understanding that can help inform more effective and inclusive support for Black women entrepreneurs in the future.

Do I have to take part?

No, your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw, you can request for your data to be removed from the study, as long as this request is made before the final thematic analysis is completed. Your consent will be formally documented on a separate consent form before the interview begins.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Once you have signed and returned the consent form via email, you will be invited to participate in a semi-structured interview about your experiences, lasting approximately one to two hours. This will be conducted via Microsoft Teams at a time that is convenient for you. With your explicit permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure your words are captured accurately.

To ensure the highest level of academic rigour, the researcher may contact you briefly following the interview to clarify specific points, ask follow-up questions, or to discuss emerging themes identified across the wider study. This is not a requirement for a second full interview; it is an invitation to stay involved in the conversation. These brief follow-ups may be conducted via email or a short call at your convenience. This process, known as 'member checking,' ensures that the final research model truly reflects the lived realities of Black women entrepreneurs like yourself.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

The interview will involve discussing personal and potentially sensitive topics, including your experiences of racism, sexism, and other business challenges. It is possible that reflecting on these experiences may cause feelings of discomfort, sadness, or frustration.

Please be assured that you are in complete control of the interview. You can choose to skip any question you are not comfortable with, ask for a break, or end the interview at any time without needing to give a reason. Your wellbeing is the priority. To support you, a list of free and confidential professional support services is provided at the end of this document, should you wish to access them.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

While there are no immediate direct benefits to you, many participants find that taking the time to reflect on their journey can be a valuable and empowering experience. By sharing your story, you will be making a vital contribution to a body of research that aims to make the experiences of Black women entrepreneurs visible and understood. Your insights will help challenge stereotypes and could inform the development of better, more inclusive policies and support systems in the future.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Yes. All information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidence. To protect your identity and your business, the following measures will be taken:

- All identifying information (such as your name, your business's name, and any other specific details) will be removed from the interview transcripts.
- Pseudonyms will be used for you and your business in the final thesis and any future publications.
- Your data, which includes information about your racial and ethnic origin ("Special Category Data" under GDPR), as well as business turnover and household income will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality and stored securely on a password-protected University of Hertfordshire OneDrive account.
- Only the principal researcher and her direct supervisory team will have access to the original, identifiable data.
- All data will be retained for three years after the study is complete, after which it will be securely destroyed.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be written up in a doctoral thesis. The findings may also be published in academic journals and presented at conferences to share the insights with a wider audience. If you wish, a summary of the key findings can be sent to you once the research is complete.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being conducted by Carlene Nisbett as part of her doctoral programme at the University of Hertfordshire.

Who has reviewed the study?

This research protocol has been reviewed and approved by the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (SSAH) Ethics Committee with Delegated Authority at the University of Hertfordshire. This ensures the study meets the university's high ethical standards for research involving human participants.

Contact for further information

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact:

Carlene Nisbett (Principal Researcher) Doctoral Researcher, Hertfordshire Business School

Email: c.v.nisbett@herts.ac.uk

Although we hope it is not the case, if you have any complaints or concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please write to the **University's Secretary and Registrar** at the following address:

Secretary and Registrar

University of Hertfordshire

College Lane

Hatfield

Herts

AL10 9AB

Support Services

Your wellbeing is very important. If any of the topics discussed in the interview bring up difficult feelings, the following organisations offer free and confidential support from professionals who understand your experiences.

- **The Black, African and Asian Therapy Network (BAATN):** The UK's largest community of therapists of Black, African, Asian, and Caribbean Heritage. They offer a directory of therapists and free resources.
 - **Website:** <https://www.baatn.org.uk/>
- **Black Minds Matter UK:** Connects Black individuals and families with free mental health services.
 - **Website:** <https://www.blackmindsmatteruk.com/>
- **The Empowerment Group:** supports people of Black African and Caribbean heritage aged 14 and over in the UK facing mental health challenges.
 - **Website:** <https://www.theempowermentgroup.co.uk/>

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for considering taking part in this important study.