

# Derbyshire General Practice Champions

## Dr Gail Allsopp

### GP, Author, Actor & Academic

*General Practice can be whatever you want it to be.....*



I fell into general practice and cannot believe I didn't find it sooner. Having trained as a surgeon, converted to radiology and found myself in a dark room for most of the day drinking coffee, I took time out of my training to work out what I really wanted to do. I followed my dream of becoming an actor and went to drama school at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. For a few years I performed on stage, in TV studios and on tours across the UK and Europe, but the pull back to medicine was too strong to ignore.

What career in medicine could offer me everything I was looking for? Independent working, the ability to innovate and change, the option of using my acting skills, academic ability and medical skills all in one job.....? There is only one. General Practice.

After building my own training scheme, I found myself in North London as a GP registrar. Once qualified, I was one of the first ever portfolio GPs. Something that now most newly qualified GPs strive to be. But at that time, most GPs were expected to be full time partners. Instead, I worked as a part time partner in practice but also in secondary care, where I ran a "2 week wait" breast clinic to utilise my surgical skills. In 2011, I moved from London to Derbyshire working as a locum for a while, before becoming a salaried GP. I made a positive choice at that time to not to become a partner again, for me, this allows the flexibility I *need* to be everything that I *want* to be.

I spend half my week in general practice working as a GP consultant. This is an innovative approach to primary care that means instead of seeing 40 patients a day, I supervise a team of advanced clinical practitioners, teaching, training and supporting them to see most of our acute presentations and long term conditions. This leaves me time to think, plan and to see those patients who really *need* to see a doctor, rather than a full clinic of those who simply *want* to see a GP. For me, this is the way forward in primary care. It is better for us as doctors, better for the team and therefore better for the patients.

The other half of my week is spent as an Associate Professor of Primary Care and careers lead for General Practice at the University of Nottingham. Here I teach students, innovate within the medical school curriculum, use my acting and artistic skills by teaching and writing about the health Humanities and perform research. An amazing job which allows me to use all of the talents I have, over and above my medical skills. I also write for a regional newspaper and now am commonly called upon to give opinions on stories relating to primary care. Over the years I have taught thousands of GPs on national courses, written many text books, lead on the first ever national urgent care course for primary care, worked for the RCGP and in collaboration with NHS England. So many wonderful things from one brilliant career.

Who knows what I will be doing in 5 or 10 years time..... The joy of general practice for me is that I can change and adapt my career as I want to, when I want to, and that General Practice can be whatever I want it to be. I hope it will be for you too.