Category
Mental Health

Project title
Where do symptoms come from?

Associated Researcher(s)
Amy Orben, Camilla Nord, Tamar Makin

Project details
Our subjective experience of a symptom arises from a combination of physiological signals in the body and neurocognitive processes in the brain. Unexplained physical (‘somatic’) symptoms are common, disabling, and costly, accounting for 10% of NHS expenditure for the working-age population. This PhD will focus on building an experimental model investigating neurocognitive influences on somatic symptoms, which could include one or more of the following approaches: (1) computational learning models of somatic symptom experience; (2) cognitive or imaging studies of the placebo/nocebo effect or side-effects of common drugs; (3) brain stimulation of regions involved in bodily perception/experience; (all the above in collaboration with Prof Tamar Makin); and/or (4) data science of so-called “sociogenic” symptoms, investigating whether symptoms can actually be spread via social media (in collaboration with Dr Amy Orben).