

New North East and North Cumbria Patient Recruitment Centre to improve patient access to commercial clinical research

- Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are one of five hospitals across England chosen to host a new regional Patient Recruitment Centre
- The new research centre, part of £7m Government investment, will help people across the region to take part in important late-phase commercial clinical research
- Throughout the pandemic, centres will also help local patients take part in cutting edge COVID-19 treatment trials

Patients across the North East and North Cumbria will benefit from easier access to clinical research opportunities, after Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust was selected as one of five NHS trusts in England to host a new Patient Recruitment Centre (PRC) for late phase commercial clinical research.

Based at the Campus for Ageing and Vitality site in Newcastle, the new PRC will enable local patients to take part in late-phase commercial clinical research - studies funded by the life sciences industry - through which participants can access potentially cutting edge new drugs and treatments before they become widely available within the NHS.

During the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the new research centres will also increase opportunities for patients across the region to access trials assessing the latest potential treatments against COVID-19.

The new centre, which will serve patients across the North East and North Cumbria, is one of five being set up across the country, to provide opportunities for patients in regions across England who may not previously have been able to take part in cutting edge clinical studies.

Under the management of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and run locally by the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the new Patient Recruitment Centre will provide dedicated space, purpose-designed facilities and medical expertise to deliver clinical research within a convenient local NHS hospital location - with the aim of increasing the number of studies being run across the region. By working closely with local NHS trusts and stakeholders, the centres will provide new opportunities for local patients to take part in important health research studies and trials.

Professor Yan Yiannakou, Clinical Director for the PRC in North East and North Cumbria, said: "Our priority is to put our patients and research participants at the centre of everything we do; to ensure they have a rewarding experience, while maximising safety and helping to answer important questions about new treatments.

National Patient Recruitment Centre

“We want to really connect with our local community to empower as many people as possible to be involved in research and have access to the latest treatments. By focussing on conditions that affect many people here in the North East we hope to make a real difference to the health and well-being of our local population.”

The five new centres across England have been made possible through a £7 million Government investment as part of the [Life Sciences Industrial Strategy](#) and [Life Sciences Sector Deal 2](#), which sets out a series of measures to strengthen the UK environment for clinical research, while ensuring the country is at the forefront of medical science and the development of innovative new treatments for years to come. The centres will increase the NHS’s capacity to deliver vital research for patients, while decreasing the time it takes to set-up late-phase commercial trials within the NHS - improving the UK’s competitiveness in the global market and providing opportunities for patients to benefit from early access to innovation.

Dr William van’t Hoff, Chief Executive of the NIHR Clinical Research Network, said: “I am delighted to see funding awarded to these five centres across England. They will really increase opportunities for patients in the NHS to take part in research, will benefit the NHS and provide important investment to the country.

“The importance of clinical research has never been more evident than in the COVID-19 pandemic. The NIHR has been able to help fund and to support key research studies and trials into the basis, genetics, prognosis and, critically, to offer potential treatments, including the largest global clinical treatment trial in COVID-19. These centres now give us a further dimension and opportunity to offer large scale trials, for instance in treatment for COVID-19, and to help deliver those at pace and scale.”

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Notes to editors:

NIHR Patient Recruitment Centres (PRCs)

- The NIHR Patient Recruitment Centres will operate under a franchise-like model - providing the rights to use NIHR CRN brand and national systems to five NHS trust hosts

National Patient Recruitment Centre

- The five NHS host sites were identified and awarded through a NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) competition
- The total amount allocated for the set up seed funding of the five new Patient Recruitment Centres across England is £6,925,980.00
- Each centre will be required to demonstrate the means of becoming self sufficient within three years.
- A national programme office within the NIHR CRN Coordinating Centre will ensure the rapid adoption of clinical trials through provision of CRN Study Support Services, perform central contracting for qualifying commercial studies and ensure transparency of funding flows to the five PRCs. The programme office will ensure the franchise-like model operates uniformly across all five sites and adopt the use of the NIHR Hub to enable rapid communication and sharing of study protocols.

The five new Patient Recruitment Centres have now been selected and will be based within the following NHS trusts:

- Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust
- The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust

Life Science Industry Strategy

- The [Life Sciences Industrial Strategy](#) provided recommendations to the government on the long term success of the life sciences sector. The Life Sciences Sector Deals are an important part of the Government's modern Industrial Strategy and demonstrate the UK building on its strengths to implement the bold vision of the Life Sciences. [Life Sciences Sector Deal 2](#), published in December 2018, included a commitment for the NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) to:

"Establish five purpose- designed centres dedicated to late-phase commercial research in 2019/20. Identified through NIHR Clinical Research Network (CRN) competition, the centres will offer rapid set-up of late-phase commercial research, standardised contracting and delivery approaches where appropriate, and dedicated facilities and staff. They will increase the NHS's capacity to deliver research, enabling significant growth and opportunities for patients to benefit from early access to innovation."

Late phase clinical research

- As part of the development of new medicines or treatments, drugs are put through a series of clinical trial phases to ensure they are safe and effective. Late phase clinical research - the type supported by the new Patient Recruitment Centres - includes trials in phases 2-4.

National Patient Recruitment Centre

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the nation's largest funder of health and care research. The NIHR:

- Funds, supports and delivers high quality research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care
- Engages and involves patients, carers and the public in order to improve the reach, quality and impact of research
- Attracts, trains and supports the best researchers to tackle the complex health and care challenges of the future
- Invests in world-class infrastructure and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services
- Partners with other public funders, charities and industry to maximise the value of research to patients and the economy

The NIHR was established in 2006 to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research, and is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. In addition to its national role, the NIHR supports applied health research for the direct and primary benefit of people in low- and middle-income countries, using UK aid from the UK government.