

The **Volunteer-Centric Model** How-to Guide



'A **volunteer-centric** nursing model to promote excellence in the delivery of research. This model **facilitates engagement** of a diverse population, increases accessibility to research and **standardises practice**; whilst ensuring **appropriate and sensitive use of research funding**.'



1. Successful delivery of research

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Research should be: delivered on time, per protocol and scientifically sound. Encourage a culture of practice where volunteer advocacy and a good working relationship with researchers is key.

HOW-TO

Timely

- At study set up, liaise with re-searchers to establish and agree clear study objectives and time frames.
- Advocate for volunteers by considering anonymity, the manner of sample/measurement collections, working to suit volunteer commitments and ensuring volunteer safety.

Per Protocol

- Prior to studies starting, review protocol, ethics and study paperwork for feasibility.
- Question any aspect that you are unsure of.
- Consider any issues that may arise or if study is 'doable' e.g. times of appointments/visit locations/study requirements.

Scientifically Sound

- Work within agreed protocol, Good Clinical Practice and local policy to ensure that the research undertaken is scientifically sound.



2. Standardise practice

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Standardise practice to ensure consistently high standards of service delivery. Facilitate positive engagement of volunteers, with research delivered in a way that is considerate of funding.

HOW-TO

Disseminate Best Practice

- Recommend sharing of processes, experiences and ideas with colleagues, either via informal meetings/networking or organised forums.

Quality Care

- Encourage an environment of critical thinking and reflective practice, to ensure that the care provided is exemplary.
- Take a role in developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and study aids to define interactions with volunteers and improve standards of practice.
- Consider using surveys to collect feedback on service provided.

Considerate of Funding

- Value the contribution of all volunteers.
- Be aware of financial implications of research participation for volunteer and researcher.

Positive Organisational Culture

- Foster an environment where nurses play an active role in the development of research practice and positively implementing changes.



3. Collaborative working

Ensure good communication and fully engage with all stakeholders e.g. Principal Investigator, Researcher, Research Co-ordinators and Volunteers.

HOW-TO

Liaise with Stakeholders

- Discuss the logistics of the study with the researcher e.g. consider sample collections, appointment timings, fasting requirements and visit locations.
- Effectively communicate within research nursing team to distribute workload, share good practice and ensure timely and cost effective working.
- Collaborate with multi-disciplinary team to maintain links and support cross-sector working.
- Share policies and procedures.

Volunteer Advocate

- Ensure practicalities of research protocols consider volunteers needs e.g. visit times and locations.
- Within each study prioritise the volunteers' needs as equal to those of the researcher.



4. Promote autonomy

Promote nurse-led research practice. Encourage research nurses to make decisions within their scope of practice and knowledge base.

HOW-TO

Leadership

- Co-ordinate and lead on the delivery of research studies.
- Act as mentor/resource for less experienced colleagues.
- Encourage continuing professional development in the workplace.
- Actively increase knowledge and expertise of research methodology.

Lone Working

- Facilitate lone working through nurse-written SOPs and risk assessments.
- Encourage and support research nurses to make clinical judgements in line with their scope of practice.
- Build research nursing network for support.

Decision Making

- Informed decision making requires a good knowledge base of both the science and nursing practice.
- Be aware of individual scope of practice and seek advice when needed.
- Take ownership and responsibility for the decisions made.



5.
**Maximise
engagement &
accessibility**

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Proactively recruit and retain as many suitable volunteers as possible through a personalised, flexible and positive approach.

Diverse Recruitment

- Consider multiple and alternative communication methods to reach as wide a population as possible.
- Contact volunteers when it is most convenient for them e.g. evening or weekends, and be considerate of their time.
- Clarify study criteria with researcher when needed to minimise unnecessary exclusions.

Flexibility

- Maximise participation by offering a wide choice of appointment times and locations, where protocol allows.
- Many people will volunteer if appointments can be arranged to fit in with their normal routine.
- Seek management support to facilitate flexible working patterns for staff.

Outreach Visits

- Consider whether study visits can be undertaken within a home or work environment.
- Be aware of any protocol or ethics limitations and any requirements for amendments.
- Seek advice and resources from other teams undertaking outreach visits.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to ensure volunteer and staff safety.



6.
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Provide the volunteer with a positive research experience to encourage future participation and promote research within the wider community.

Volunteer Approach

- Demonstrate an approach and attitude with volunteers that is caring, supportive and flexible.
- Instil confidence in volunteers by having the knowledge to answer questions concerning each study.
- Make the volunteers aware of any feedback that you may be able to give them.

Professionalism

- Be punctual to the appointment.
- Be respectful towards volunteers and their surroundings (workplace/home).
- Approach each visit positively and aim to re-engage each volunteer.

Health Awareness

- Be aware of the exclusion criteria of the study.
- Act as resource for health information.
- Ensure that each nurse is appropriately trained and feels confident in managing emergency situations.

For further information, or to contact the NIHR Cambridge BioResource Nursing Team, please visit our website.



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Nursing Times Awards 2015 Winner

The **NIHR Cambridge BioResource** provides a unique resource of local volunteers, both healthy and patient populations, who are willing to be approached to participate in research studies investigating the links between genes, the environment, health and disease.

The **NIHR Cambridge BioResource** the tool to new research discoveries

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Cambridge BioResource is one of eight BioResource centres across England, and is the coordinating centre for the NIHR BioResource.

Volunteers have provided samples of either blood or saliva and agreed to be recalled based on their genotype and/or phenotype and the lifestyle data they have provided.

The aim of the BioResource is to support academics, clinicians and industry partners in recruitment and delivery of medical research studies and clinical trials that

otherwise would not have been possible. The BioResource supports a range of studies such as in cardiovascular disease, type 1 diabetes, mental health and inflammatory bowel disease.

The BioResource is fundamental to researchers, providing access to thousands of volunteers who are interested in taking part in research. This tailored approach to volunteer recruitment results in the timely completion of research studies and a shorter route to improvement of treatments and care within the NHS.

