Undertaking research

Are you thinking about or actively involved in research?

Do you require some basic information on what it involves and how to get started?

If you do, this leaflet is for you.

Why do research?

Research is essential for the future development and improvement of care within our society.

What is research?

Research can be defined as the attempt to create new knowledge by addressing clearly defined questions with efficient and accurate methods. Research should take full account of disability, gender, sexual orientation, age and ethnicity in its design. It should be open to critical examination and accessible to all those who could benefit from it.

Did you know?

All staff undertaking or planning research must comply with the requirements of the Research Governance Framework.

What you need to know about Research Governance?

- All research commenced within health and social care must be undertaken in accordance with the Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (2007).
- The framework sets out key issues and broad principles applicable for all those involved in research.
- The Framework applies to all levels of research, including staff, students and independent contractors who wish to carry out, manage or host research.
- Proper governance in research is essential to ensure the public have confidence and trust in Health and Social Care research.

What are your responsibilities?

- If asked to help in any research, ensure it has appropriate approval from the Research & Development Committee.
- If you have any concerns relating to a research project, report these to your manager or someone in the Trust Research & Development (R&D) Office.
- You are responsible for the highest quality of research within the Trust.

Staff involved in carrying out research must:

- Secure ethical approval from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Secure approval from the host organisation.
- Apply for Research Governance approval.
- Contact the Trust R&D office for assistance.

The purpose of the Research Ethics Committee in reviewing the proposed study is to protect the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all research participants and patients in the NHS. The research undertaken must follow the protocol or proposal submitted and approved by the Research Ethics Committee (ORECNI).

- As a researcher it is your responsibility to ensure the participants welfare whilst in the study, this includes protecting the integrity and confidentiality of records and data generated by the research.
- Ensure participants are fully informed about the research before deciding to take part.
- On completion of your research participants should be sent feedback of the completed report.

Why is Research Governance important?

Research Governance is key to ensuring that Health and Social Care research is conducted to a high scientific and ethical standard.
How is research governed in the NHS?

In February 2007, the DHSSPSNI introduced a set of standards for research to take place in Health and Social Care. This framework proposes to improve research quality and safeguard the public by implementing the following ethos:

- Promoting good research practice.
- Enhancing ethical and scientific quality.
- Minimising adverse incidences.
- Promoting responsible management of research.

What if you wish to undertake research?

- Turn your idea into a research question and outline what you plan to do.
- Contact the Trust R&D Office for support as soon as possible.
- Use Integrated Research Application System (IRAS) for all submissions.
- Get approval from the R&D Committee.

Help and support can be obtained from:

Margaret Smyth  
Research Governance Manager  
R&D Office  
Governance Department  
Bush House  
Bush Road  
Antrim BT41 2QB  
Tel: 028 9442 4653  
Email: margaret.smyth@northerntrust.hscni.net

Mary McDonald  
Research Governance Administrator  
Tel: 028 9442 4441  
Email: mary.mcdonald@northerntrust.hscni.net

Marian McConway  
Research Governance HCO  
Tel: 028 9442 4751  
Email: marian.mcconway@northerntrust.hscni.net

Useful contacts and publications

Research Governance Framework Document  
www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

ORECNI (Office for Research Ethics Committees in NI)  
www.orecni.org.uk

www.myresearchproject.org.uk

www.crsc.n-i.nhs.uk/innovations

email: info@northerntrust.hscni.net

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