

NEWS RELEASE

Devon GP surgeries praised for contribution to health research

A South Devon practice is one of the best GP surgeries in the region for recruiting people to take part in health research studies.

The achievement of the Bovey Tracey and Chudleigh Practice has been commended as the National Institute for Health Research celebrates the enrolment of the one millionth person through primary care onto a clinical study in England.

The South Devon team at Riverside surgery in Bovey Tracey and the Tower House surgery in Chudleigh has recruited 145 people to participate in clinical research studies already this financial year. This was the highest number of people recruited in Devon through their GP practice to research trials and the whole of the Clinical Research Network South West area from Somerset to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. (Data cut January 2017)

Dr Daniel Thomas, the practice research lead, said: "Medical research is essential for us to continue to learn how to provide the best quality medical care. Being a Clinical Research Network Practice gives our patients the opportunity to be part of this exciting work. It allows patients a chance to make a valuable contribution to advances in their own health and that of other people. It empowers people to be part of the wider healthcare community and be involved in making a real difference to future patient care.

"Being involved in research at the surgery helps us as clinicians to keep up to date with the leading advances in medical care. This helps us provide the best quality healthcare to our patients and the local community. The vast majority of patient contact in the NHS is in primary care, and the work we do means that the findings of research are directly relevant to our own practice population. We would like to say thank you for all the hard work and commitment from patients and staff in helping us become the highest recruiting surgery in Devon in the last year."

Local patient Mrs Gail Banham wholeheartedly supports clinical research. Having worked in the pharmaceutical industry Mrs Banham said she knows the advances in medical treatments can only be achieved with people taking part in research studies.

Mrs Banham visited her GP at the Riverside Surgery because she had a persistent cough for a prolonged period of time. It was during her consultation that Mrs Banham was offered the opportunity to participate in a study which is looking at early detection and diagnosis of specific cancers in people who may be at risk.

Mrs Banham added: "All I have had to do was give a blood test and answer a questionnaire so taking part in this study hasn't been onerous or taken up a lot of my time. The results of this study could help other people in the future. I think we should all do our bit for research of any kind."

Dr Paul McEleny, NIHR CRN Clinical Research Lead (Cluster 5) for the South West, said: “The contribution that GP practice teams across the region have made to clinical research is very worthy of celebration because it gives patients access to the latest treatments and technologies available for a broad range of health conditions.

“In the South West 4,228 people have been recruited by over 150 research-active practices so far in 2016/17. This achievement is testimony to the hard work and commitment of practice staff and the trust and goodwill from our patients who agree to take part in the research studies as part of their care and treatment. It is a powerful partnership which benefits people on an individual basis as well as universal health benefits for future generations.”

NIHR National Director for Patients and the Public in Research, Simon Denegri said: “This is fantastic news. The nature of the health challenges facing the UK means that GPs, in partnership with patients and carers, have a crucial role to play in developing treatments of patient benefit. That over one million people have volunteered to participate in clinical studies is a mark of how successful this partnership has become. The NIHR hopes that many more people and their families will be encouraged by this to also come forward and help us do more life-saving work. Research cannot happen without them.”

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