



THE NIHR EXETER CRF TEAM

WHAT DO THEY DO & WHO ARE
THEY?



What is a Clinical Research Facility?

A clinical research facility (CRF) is a purpose-built building with wards, offices and laboratories and support staff (nurses, health care professionals, laboratory technicians & administrators) who are trained in research.

Volunteers and patients with or without health conditions visit with nurses, health care professionals, scientists, doctors who are trying to find out more about health conditions in order to develop better diagnosis, treatment and prevention of common & rare diseases.

What is the role of the CRF?

The role of the CRF is to support researchers

Research Projects have a principal investigator (PI) - usually a specialist consultant/doctor or scientist from a university) The PI is responsible for overseeing research but can ask appropriately trained staff to do some tasks for them – forming a team to undertake the research.

A research team may include research nurses, health care practitioners, research technicians, laboratory assistants, laboratory managers, study managers, study coordinators & administrators who all work in the CRF.

What do the CRF Research Teams do?

- Make appointments, check to see if volunteers/patients are right for a study, help participants understand the research project and get them to sign a consent form
- Take blood or other tissue samples, administer investigation drugs, monitor trial participants during infusions, obtain vital signs (eg. temperature, blood pressure) & measurements
- Write protocols (instructions for how to do the research) and communicate any changes, prepare documents for review boards, manage study paperwork
- Submit safety data, assess potential problems
- Community engagement, recruitment, coordinate patient and public participation groups (PPI)
- Train new staff, oversee quality assurance, staffing, budgeting, site audits, monitor off site research
- Process/examine/store blood and tissue samples
- Input/manage/analyse data, write results for publication.

Interested in a Career in Research?

Our team come from different career & educational pathways. Some of us are clinically trained, some of us are university educated, some of us are not. Yet we all play an important role in research.

Some of us are employed by the University of Exeter & some of us are employed by the Royal Devon University Healthcare Foundation Trust

One thing we all have in common is the satisfaction of working in a team that makes a difference!

Our Path to Research

Have a click through the next slides and get to know our team!

My Path to Research: Rob

Clinical Research Nurse

What sorts of things to you do?

setting up studies, creating arrangements, recruiting and consenting research volunteers. All kinds of clinical measurements and specialist study related activities, data entry and study follow up. Safety checks and calibrations



Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

After school, I did a general care college course, registered nurse training, then selected where I wanted to work and have done related courses since.

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

1 year in day surgery; 8 years in renal nursing; 14 years outpatient haemodialysis

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

Being involved in prevention, looking at long term answers and pre-emptive strikes against illnesses and diseases.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Patience and teamwork will bring you satisfaction

What is the best thing about your job?

'Making a difference'

My Path to Research: Maggie

Lead Nurse for Research/NIHR70@70 Senior Nurse Research Leader/ Honorary Clinical Professor

What sorts of things to you do?

- Research, clinical care & advice for patients with rare genetic types of diabetes
- National and international education in monogenic diabetes
- Supporting nurses & midwives to engage with research & develop their own research projects through a range of initiatives



Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

Registered General Nurse training, BSc(Hons) in Health, Diploma in Specialist Nursing (Diabetes), Certificate in Genomic Medicine, Certificate in Genetic Counselling, Certificate in Medical Education, PhD in Medical Science

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

Diabetes Specialist Nurse - 8 years, prior to that a range of both medical & surgical nursing

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

Moving to Devon, looking for any role in diabetes and finding the role in Genetic research in diabetes fascinating. It's enabled us to transform the lives of those with monogenic diabetes

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Go for it ! There are a whole variety of opportunities in research and the potential to really make a difference for patients which can be hugely rewarding

What is the best thing about your job?

'Being able to ensure patients with monogenic diabetes are identified and get the best treatment and care for their condition and also being able to provide opportunities for other nurses to develop and progress their careers'

My Path to Research: Sam

Laboratory and Clinical Research Assistant



What sorts of things to you do?

I am part of the technical team where we process the samples, typically blood and urine, that the nurses have taken from the participants of various clinical trials, before sending them off for analysis. We also look after different appliances across the CRF, for example the freezers ensuring that they keep the samples stored at a stable low temperature.

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

I have an undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences.

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

This is my first job since leaving university. However, as part of my course at university I had a year in industry where I worked in a lab in Cambridgeshire analysing samples in clinical trials.

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

I wanted to be involved in the development of novel treatments for disease.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Get work experience to see what area of research you are interested in

What is the best thing about your job?

‘Being involved in making a difference’

My Path to Research: Tina

Research Administrator

What sorts of things to you do?

I Coordinate further research mailout, keep our gateway studies updated and current, cover reception duties, create monthly graphs from our booking systems, and general office administration duties.

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

High School and College

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

I arranged student nurse placements within the South West.

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

For future generations healthcare



What Is the best thing about your job?

‘Helping improve future healthcare’

My Path to Research: Jo

CRF Manager



What sorts of things to you do?

Day-to-day management of the CRF ensuring the availability of resources to facilitate research studies, working closely with the clinical research nurses, administration, & technician teams.

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

Registered General Nurse (RGN), BSc (Jt Hons) Anthropology and Geography, MSc Health Promotion, Introduction to Research Awareness, Certificate in Management Studies, Certificate in Clinical Research, Mentorship in Practice.

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

Qualified General Nurse then university. Department of Clinical Pharmacology, in human studies, experimental medicine research in Cardiovascular & Respiratory Medicine. Since, working in many different areas, supporting neonatal research through to end-of-life care.

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

Various members of my family have benefitted from health care improvements resulting from research. I was fascinated by the research process that enabled those improvements & the roles involved in delivering high quality life changing health improvements.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Talk to someone working in a research & find out what they enjoy about their role. Think about what you want to get out of the role. Be open minded, it is a great career, with many different opportunities!

What Is the best thing about your job?

‘I work with a great team, and I love the fact that everyone is valued. No day is the same. We get to work across therapeutic areas and there is something new to learn and embrace every day’

My Path to Research: Marcus

RILD Technical Manager

What sorts of things to you do?

My role is focused on facilities management for the RILD Building and supporting the technical teams that work at the RILD site.

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

In short an odd one!

I left school at 16 years old and aged 22, I secured a trainee role in a clinical biochemistry laboratory and studied via day release and night school.

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

Trainee Scientific Officer at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, conducting routine and emergency analysis of clinical samples. Research Technician at the University of Sussex working in Neuroscience. Technical Manager at the University of Nottingham. Research Technician at the Exeter Clinical Research Facility before moving into a management role

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

Initially the prospect of doing or supporting something novel and in later years the applied nature of clinical research and the positive impact it can have.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Find out more, get involved!

What is the best thing about your job?

There's still variety and opportunity, and I like to turn the accepted on its head - I may be older but I can still learn new tricks!



My Path to Research: Claire

Research Administrator



What sorts of things to you do?

I ensure all admin duties are completed accurately & comply with R&D/Governance guidelines. Set up, day-to-day running & archiving of studies, as well as ensuring that all data entry on study specific databases is accurate. I liaise with administrators, nurses & doctors at other sites to oversee the smooth running of studies. I also help out on the CRF Reception from time to time, which is a great way to meet other researchers as well as participants.

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

I left school with 10 GCSE's before taking my Professional Banking exams

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

18 years in Banking, break to raise my family, NHS Temporary Admin Bank 1 year - where my first role was in the CRF (formerly the Peninsula Medical School). A role was advertised within the University for an admin assistant for a new study. I applied, got the job, and I'm still loving the role 10 years later!

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

In all honesty, I fell into my career in research, but I'm so pleased I did.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Go for it, it's so rewarding!

What is the best thing about your job?

'It's amazing to be part of a team that's changing the future of medicine and healthcare'

My Path to Research: Migaila

Senior Research Nurse (Diabetes)



What sorts of things do you do?

My role includes recruiting & supporting patients participating in clinical studies, assisting in the development of new medications, treatments, care pathways or regimens for patients, preparing trial protocols & other trial-related documentation, submitting study proposals for regulatory approval, dealing with data collection, management and peer support to provide an effective research service, & completion of research studies within a team.

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

I trained as a nurse under the project 2000 programme & qualified with a diploma in nursing. I completed a BSc (Hons) in Health Studies to include a module on the management of diabetes practice. I became a non-medical prescriber, after the successful completion of an accredited Independent and Supplementary Prescribing course.

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

Community nurse, Diabetes Specialist Inpatient Nurse which involved identifying patients who were interested in research. Thenm Diabetes Research Unit Manager & Research Team leader.

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

Working as a diabetes research nurse & having a husband diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, I wanted to become more involved with the development of new treatments & devices, to improve the quality of life of those diagnosed with diabetes.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Research allows you to pursue your interests, to learn something new, to hone your problem-solving skills & to challenge yourself in new ways.

What Is the best thing about your job?

‘Making significant contributions to the quality of peoples' lives’

My Path to Research: Anna

Senior Research Nurse



What sorts of things to you do?

Manage clinical aspects of the CRF including the actual facility & the studies. I assess & consider studies that come to the CRF particularly early phase studies & experimental medicine. I support the nursing team who lead on these studies whilst managing & maintaining my own caseload of studies in respiratory disease, endocrinology, addictions, hepatology, dementia, cardiology plus others! I line manage some of the nursing & administration team.

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

Diploma in nursing & general nurse training, BSc:Open University, Masters: University of Exeter & PhD: University of Exeter. Other relevant nursing courses have been undertaken along the way.

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

Band 5 (D and E grade nurse) nurse in cardiology including the path lab, Sister:Diabetes Ward which led to my role in diabetes research. I have also had a secondment into Primary Care as a Diabetes Practice Nurse. From this, research into many disease areas has followed.

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

While training, it became clear that my passions were in diabetes & cardiology & I was extremely interested in research – I wanted to help get the answers that would make people better & to help prevent diseases in the first place. I am fortunate to have been able to follow all 3 of my career goals.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

Go for it! A genuine interest is important – if you have that then there is no stopping you.

What Is the best thing about your job?

Making a difference and learning new things for patient benefit.

My Path to Research: Michelle

Clinical Research Administrator

What sorts of things to you do?

I ensure all admin duties are fulfilled during the set up, running and close out of mainly commercial studies ensuring compliance with ICH-GCP at all times. I am also involved in data entry of study data on study specific databases as well as the NHS database.



Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

I have a degree in Physiology.

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

I worked as a Medical Research Officer specialising in Sleep research at the University of Surrey. I then pursued a career as a Clinical Research Associate and worked in the Pharma Industry for 5 years. Following this, I took time out as a full-time Mum. Upon my return to work I was keen to continue in the field of clinical research and started my career working at the R&D for the NHS in an administrative role.

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

I have always been interested in science especially in the physiology of the body and how illnesses can be treated.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

If you have an interest in this field, then definitely pursue it. There are lots of different roles and opportunities which will ensure a rewarding job with a great team of people.

What Is the best thing about your job?

‘Being part of a team that is making a real difference to people’s lives’

My Path to Research: Louisa

Personal Assistant

What sorts of things to you do?

Diary management for CRF Manager. Project set up on CRF project portfolio.

Organising study days for nurses

Collating data for NIHR Exeter CRF annual report, Finance- setting up purchase orders, receipting invoices, etc

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

BSC (Hons) Psychology

Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

PA roles

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

Its the future of healthcare

What Is the best thing about your job?

‘Teamwork’



My Path to Research: Karen

NIHR Exeter BioResource Coordinator

What sorts of things to you do?

Organise engagement events; Communications; Website updates; Recruitment; Manage project paperwork; Supporting nurses; Data Inputting; Electronic Patient Record system support

Educational Pathway: What educational pathway did you follow?

BA Sociology & Art History; Graduate Diploma in Social Research; Multivariate Statistics

Career Pathway: What roles did you have leading to this?

Research Assistant (Social Research) Research Associate (Social Research); Trainer for Qualitative Research Software: Nvivo; Tutor: Communications Research Methods; Lecturer: Communications Research Methods; Tutor: Sociology; Break to Raise Children; Preschool Assistant; Book Keeper; Volunteer Research Administrator; PA; Research Administrator

Why Research: What made you interested in a career in research?

Working in social research was really interesting & stimulating then my husband and my daughter developed Type 1 Diabetes & I wanted to support the amazing work that goes on behind the scenes to continually improve health care for people all over the world.

What would you say to someone interested in a career in research?

If you're interested in a job where you are continually learning, being inspired, amazed by the complexity of the human body & you really want to work in a job where you are making a difference then this is the place to be!

What Is the best thing about your job?

Being part of a team of fabulous people, working towards one goal – improving peoples' lives through research.





If you're interested in Work
Experience or interested in
participating in research please
contact the team on
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