

Public invited to learn about NHS research in Berkshire

The public will be able to find out about research taking place in Berkshire's NHS and how they can get involved at an information event on 12 September.

The drop-in event at Reading Town Hall will enable people to talk to NHS nurses and other staff about research.

They will be on hand to discuss research trials into areas including dementia, heart disease, diabetes, stroke and mental health.

The public will also be able to learn about how they can participate in research trials taking place in Berkshire's NHS.

Research helps develop better tests and treatments to improve NHS care to save lives and improve peoples' quality of life.

This could be trials of a new drug in hospital or something as simple as a patient completing a questionnaire about their condition.

Healthy people are also often needed to take part in trials so they can be compared to people with a condition that is being studied.

Trials and initiatives supported in Berkshire's NHS include:

- A genetic study to help understand more about the processes in the body that cause Alzheimer's disease which will hopefully lead to new treatments and methods of diagnosis in future.
- A study in children with a kidney condition called nephrotic syndrome, to see whether a short course of daily steroids at the time of a viral, upper respiratory infection (head-cold) can prevent the condition from flaring up again, once symptoms have settled.
- A study that aims to estimate the prevalence of neuronal membrane autoantibodies – which may attack brain cells - in psychiatric illness.
- A study to improve the diagnosis and treatment of children with rare hip diseases by recording their symptoms and different treatments prescribed. This is also studying the effects the disease has on the child's daily activities.
- A trial in women who may be having difficulty in delivering the placenta (afterbirth) following the birth of their baby. It is looking at whether a drug may help the placenta to deliver without the need for an operation, which is the normal practice for this condition.

Patients are encouraged to ask their doctor about research opportunities and view trials seeking volunteers at The UK Clinical Trials Gateway www.ukctg.nihr.ac.uk.

The event has been organised by the NIHR Clinical Research Network Thames Valley and South Midlands (CRN), an NHS organisation which provides support to enable trials to take place in the NHS.

Clinical director Prof Belinda Lennox said: "Clinical research is vital for the NHS, to develop and test new treatments for the biggest health problems that we face today.

"This event will showcase the exciting range of research currently taking place right here in Berkshire, and provide opportunities to get involved."

The drop-in event will be held from 1.30pm to 5.30pm on 12 September in the Victoria Hall at Reading Town Hall, a three minute walk from the train station. No booking is required.

For further information email comms.crnthamesvalley@nihr.ac.uk or call 01865 227252.