

Research Champion: Role Description

Research Champions volunteer their time to help the NIHR Clinical Research Network spread the word about health and care research to patients and the public, and especially those groups who are currently less likely to take part in research. They also help research and healthcare staff understand more about the experiences of those who take part in research. Through their important work, Research Champions help us promote research in health and care services, and across society more widely.

Research Champions are from across England and include patients, carers, members of the public, and people who have taken part in a research trial before, as well as those who haven't. Something that they all have in common is that they are passionate about getting more people involved in research so that we can develop better care and treatment for everyone.

Research Champions are connected to one of the NIHR Clinical Research Network's fifteen Local Clinical Research Networks across the country, or to a Partner Organisation that delivers research, like a GP Practice or a hospital.

Who can be a Research Champion?

All Research Champions:

- Are passionate about improving health and care through research
- Are members of the public, including patients and carers
- Are keen to speak to members of the public to build their awareness of research
- Are willing and able to follow processes to help keep themselves and others safe and help us run the scheme in an organised way
- Are willing to attend an induction and ask their staff contact if they need guidance and support throughout their volunteering

In addition, sometimes Research Champions might be recruited from particular social groups such as young people or from specific ethnic groups in order to help build research awareness in communities where evidence has found awareness to be lower.

What do Research Champions do?

Research Champions may volunteer to do one or more activities from the list below:

- Talk to patients and the public about health and care research e.g. by giving talks, hosting coffee mornings, creating play events or hosting stands within the local community, visiting health services
- Promote the Be Part of Research campaign to patient, public groups and help people find out about research studies they can take part in
- Promote the Join Dementia Research website and the importance of dementia research to the public

- Co-design materials to raise public awareness of health and care research like posters and leaflets
- Collect general feedback about taking part in research from participants
- Visit local health and care organisations to tell people about health and care research and encourage them to connect with local research teams
- Take part in local actions to mark International Clinical Trials Day and health awareness days e.g. a good time to promote arthritis research would be during National Arthritis Week
- Write about their experiences of participating in health and care research for the NIHR blog or other platforms
- Speak to interest or patient groups about health and care research
- Raise awareness amongst friends and family about research and being a champion for taking part in health and care research amongst people you know

Support and development

- All Research Champions have a main staff contact locally who will be there to help you with any practical issues around your volunteering, and generally support you in your role
- Everyone who wants to become a Research Champion must complete a sign up form and attend a short induction. This will give you all the practical information you need to volunteer and it will also show you where you can learn more about health and social care research if you want to. If you are especially interested in promoting dementia research, you will also need to attend our Join Dementia Research induction module
- After your induction you will be able, if you want to, to join NIHR Learn, a dedicated online learning community to connect you with other Research Champions, as well as access to many more online learning resources to support you in your role
- You will be offered other activities to support your development as a Research Champion in your local network, and your point of contact will tell you about these. This could include regional forums to meet other Research Champions

Expenses

This is a voluntary role. Your travel and other reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Length of role

You can be involved for as long as you like but you will be asked every 12 months if you wish to stay involved to give you a chance to consider your volunteering.

Other opportunities

There are many ways you can get involved in health and social care research, in addition to being a Research Champion. You will be told about these opportunities. These could be one-off activities or other roles you could apply for in addition to being a Research Champion. You can also look out for other opportunities on the [People in Research website](#).

How to get involved If you want to know more or want to sign up, please get in touch with your [local Research Champion contact](#).