

# Education moving forward – workforce development initiatives on the NIHR/Wellcome Trust Cambridge Clinical Research Facility

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## Background

Healthcare professionals working in a Clinical Research Facility (CRF) are responsible for providing safe, caring, ethically sound and scientifically robust practice to research participants and research teams. They not only need the clinical skill and knowledge relevant for their respective medical field, but must also be 'clinical research competent'. It is therefore considerably complex to plan, implement, evaluate and ensure delivery of ongoing training and education that prepares and develops CRF staff.

With consistently expanding research capacity and subsequent increasing workforce in numbers and professional range, in 2009, the CRF Cambridge introduced the role of a full-time Education & Training Manager. In 2012, a part-time Clinical Research Development Nurse was added to form a Clinical Research education team on site.

## The aim for the CRF education staff

- To ensure systematic, reliable and quality provision for the complex education and training needs of the CRF staff
- To develop and deliver relevant research-related education (and events) for the extended healthcare community (where appropriate)

## Workforce development

### Layers of training and education for the Cambridge CRF workforce

- Implementing reliable systems for staff training, training compliance and training records
- Enabling individual professional development by identifying, encouraging and developing staff - relevant to their job roles and talent
- Finding and offering relevant educational opportunities to enhance staff knowledge and skill
- Preparing staff to provide enhanced CRF services

### Enhancing educational provision for the clinical research workforce

- in the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust
- in the Cambridge Biomedical Research Centre
- in the East of England region
- in the UKCRF Network

## Leading the workforce development on the 3 units of the Clinical Research Facility

### Training

### Education

**Induction programmes**  
tailor-made to staff group, job description and depending on prior knowledge and skill

**Overseeing mandatory training**  
meeting Trust requirements as well as CRF and study specific requirements

**Competency training**  
e.g. venepuncture & cannulation, laboratory competencies, skin biopsy competency

**Developing research knowledge and skills**  
e.g. safety reporting, data governance

**Emergency Scenario Simulation Training**

**Training of adult branch nurses to look after paediatric research participants**

**Writing and implementing education strategy**

**Higher Education development for staff**, e.g. PhD, M Clin Res, nursing degree pathways

**Unit Away days** twice a year, covering pertinent topics and issues, e.g. PPI, genetics, research design

**Mentorship support:**  
a. staff mentoring staff  
b. staff mentoring student nurses on placement in the CRF

**Regular staff seminars**  
twice a month, delivered by staff from the unit, research teams & external speakers

Sourcing and coordinating **relevant education opportunities for staff**, e.g. updates, study days, conferences, leadership courses

## Developing and delivering research education for the extended healthcare community

**Mandatory introduction course** for staff new to working in a non-medical clinical research post in the NIHR Biomedical Research Centre (3 x a year)

**'Research Skills for Clinicians' course** - for medical trainees in the Eastern Region  
2-day course (twice a year)

**Research Nurse Rotation**  
12 months across a range of local research organisations (NIHR funded)

**Clinical research 'shadowing'**  
experience for external staff

**Student nurse placements**

**Presenting at conferences, posters, workshops**

**Collaboration with Hospital Trust and NIHR supported organisations on non-medical education & training provisions**

**Contributing to the output of the UK Clinical Research Facilities Network**  
Led the development of UKCRF Network 'Induction Framework for Clinical Research Staff' (2011 & 2012) and Competency Assessment Template (2014), represented UKCRF Education Workstream internationally and in recent publication

## Discussion

The introduction of a full-time Education & Training Manager has proven very beneficial for the workforce of the Cambridge CRF. Key is the coordination and enhanced development of training and education across the three different units of the Cambridge CRF.

CRFs intersect with a range of external research and other healthcare professionals. CRF education staff are therefore well placed to offer and provide education & training to the wider healthcare community. The Cambridge CRF education team have moved forward on this agenda, leading and delivering on training and education initiatives for the wider healthcare community.

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