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# Launching the Pilot

Clinical Research Practitioner Directory Bulletin | Issue 06 | November 2020



*“I am delighted that the Professional Standards Authority has now approved registration for Clinical Research Practitioners within the Academy for Healthcare Science Accredited Registers Programme.*

*There has never been a more important time for CRPs to bring their skills and knowledge*

## Are YOU ready for take-off?

As Director for Workforce, Learning and Organisational Development at the NIHR Clinical Research Network National Coordinating Centre, I am delighted to know that piloting of the CRP Register is underway. CRPs are already a recognised and valued part of the clinical research and healthcare delivery team, currently working to deliver COVID-19 research and through the first wave of Covid supporting those on the NHS front line. CRPs are making a significant contribution to the coronavirus vaccine trials that are in progress currently, and in the face of workforce shortages, CRPs provide a welcome source of highly trained personnel to help deliver outstanding results, as for example in the RECOVERY study. Understanding CRP registration and the added value it will bring, both for individuals and to the wider research community, are key to lasting success for this emerging profession.

The CRP Register pilot is pioneer territory for everyone. We are at the key stage of defining a robust process that can add value and be trusted as registration rolls out. Thank you to all the CRPs who have come forward with their portfolio of evidence to get this ball rolling!

Line managers and professionally registered team colleagues have been essential to supporting applicant participation in the CRP Register Pilot. In parallel, a national panel of verifiers have received and reviewed this precious documentation to agree on thresholds for evidence to demonstrate that the CRP Register Standards of Proficiency are met. While a launch in itself, the CRP register pilot is essential in preparing the launch pad for open registration from 2021, when all eligible CRPs can bring themselves forward for professional registration. First step: encourage all your CRP colleagues to join the CRP Directory and let's get ready together now to prepare the ground for that take-off.



*Anthea Mould | NIHR CRN Director of Workforce, Learning & Organisational Development*

## Register Launch 2021

The Register pilot provides the opportunity to test and evaluate all aspects of the application process and make improvements. This process is well underway and we are

take a step into the unknown and contribute to this vital stage in our journey to launch.

We are mindful that we can only work at a pace that fits with capacity in this year of challenge. The timeline is to spend the remainder of 2020 on evaluation, improvement and supporting the pilot applicants to join the shadow register. We are expecting to open the Register for the first applicants in early 2021 after releasing guidance and making sure everything is in place.

We will take a phased approach in order to manage capacity using the Directory as the application gateway. This means the Register will open for a defined number of applicants at set times during the year. We will publish these times in advance to help planning.

Applications will be limited to those who have a degree or equivalent until the equivalence pathway opens later in the year. We will only accept applications from applicants who are already members of the CRP Directory. The Directory will remain free to join until April 2021.

If you are planning on joining the register in 2021 there a number of steps you should consider to help you prepare:

- Discuss your intention with your line manager and colleagues and integrate with your annual development process
- Look at the documents and templates on the Directory web site and plan how you will capture the evidence required (NB We expect templates to change and there will be clearer guidance after the pilot, however, it is not expected there will be significant changes to the range of evidence required)
- Think about how you will evidence your practice in relation to a named Competency Framework and Integrated Workforce Framework
- Make sure your Statutory and Mandatory and GCP training is up to date
- Get in touch if you have any questions

Finally, a reminder to make time to ensure you are looking after your own health and well-being. CRPs made good use of the virtual staff commons rooms and we will let you know when these are available again. There are many helpful resources on this site:

<https://people.nhs.uk/>

Thank you for all your continued hard work and contribution to the national research effort.

*Fiona O'Neill | AHCS Head of Registration Services for  
Clinical Research Practitioners*



## Integrated Workforce Framework Tool Redevelopment

The Integrated Workforce Framework (IWF) tool has recently undergone a huge transformation, including new features, a brand new look and much-improved usability and accessibility.

For those of you unfamiliar with the IWF, it is an overarching framework and national resource developed by the NIHR Clinical Research Network. Initially launched in May 2017, the IWF supports informed and productive conversations about the clinical research delivery workforce using a common language. Building on this framework, the IWF digital tool helps you quickly articulate your skills and knowledge mix and identify learning and development needs.

**To access the IWF tool, or for more info about its background, please follow this [link](#).**

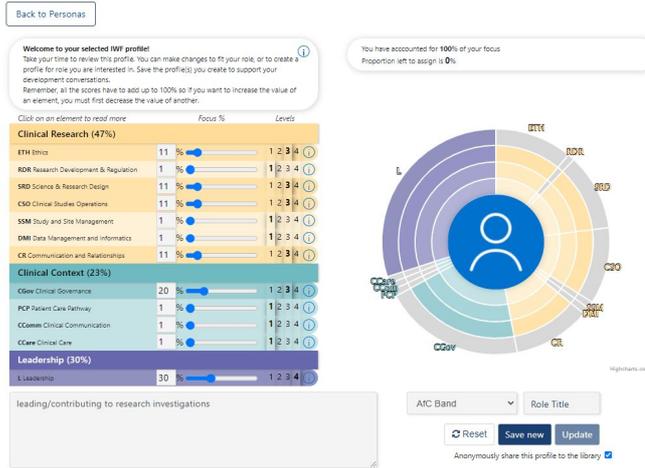
The redevelopment work was commissioned in response to the feedback we've received about the IWF digital tool. As a responsive, innovative team and organisation, we sought to solve the issues identified and to optimise the features already working.

For example, we have improved the sliders used to determine the user's 'focus' by including an alternative typing box, as well as the option to use the 'tab' key to move to each element, making the navigation much more accessible. We've also updated the design to incorporate the NIHR's existing branding and to create a more engaging and intuitive experience.

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Furthermore, we've added the new feature of 'Personas'. These personas are representative of our research delivery roles across health and social care settings. Users can select a persona that they identify with to create a draft profile, rather than starting from scratch. This makes the tool much quicker for (very busy) research delivery staff to make use of and also gives better visibility to the more niche or less known roles within our workforce.



Qualified/Early Career



Experienced/Senior



Enhanced/Expert



As we move forward with this tool, we welcome your feedback as vital members of our research delivery workforce and encourage you to complete this [form](#) if you wish to.

If you have any questions regarding the IWF tool, please contact us via [iwf-queries@nhr.ac.uk](mailto:iwf-queries@nhr.ac.uk)



*Stephen Burrows | NIHR CRN Workforce & Clinical Specialty Engagement Coordinator*

## 'Patients you must have...'

*A day in the life of a Clinical Research Practitioner by Leigh Franks*

Luke, I am your Father... OK, so my name's not Luke, it's Leigh Franks and I am not your father, or your mother, but I do have a very important role...I am a Clinical Research Practitioner (CRP).

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...I began my career with the NIHR.

I first started working as a Clinical Research Practitioner (then named Research Studies Officer) in the Heart of England Mental Health Research Network (HOE MHRN). Over the years the job role has changed considerably. Back in 2007 the structure of the Network was very different. The team I worked in covered 10 Mental Health Trusts, which meant a lot of boundary spanning leadership and lots of travelling up and down motorways to ensure patients had the opportunity to take part in the mental health studies that were recruiting in our region. Over time people began to become employed within Trust R&D departments. This meant our small team grew, as we welcomed the expertise of the now named Clinical Research Practitioners and Research Nurses embedded within the different Mental Health Trusts.

"Patience you must have my young padawan"

Although there have been many changes to the job over the years, a golden thread that continues to run through the Clinical Research Practitioner role today is that we support high quality and ethical NIHR portfolio research with patients, staff and the general public. We ensure people are made aware of the research opportunities that are available to them by working closely with clinicians and stakeholders. So, it turns out Yoda is right (although his spelling of "patients" is off)...without patients and other people taking part in research, we would not be able to answer the important questions that help us improve the health and wealth of the nation. Today's research is tomorrow's care!

Read more [here...](#)

*Leigh Franks | Clinical Research Practitioner |  
[@LeighFranks18](#)*



## ***Practitioner proud to be helping people through COVID-19 research***

A CRN South London funded Clinical Research Practitioner (CRP) has spoken about her pride in being able to help people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jennifer Irons, 25, is working on the Diagnosis and Management of Febrile Illness using RNA Personalised Molecular Signature Diagnosis (DIAMONDS) study within Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust's Evelina London Children's Hospital's Paediatric Research Team.

The DIAMONDS study is aiming to design new diagnostic tests that can tell quickly and accurately what illness a patient has when they come to hospital with common symptoms such as fever.

The 25-year-old urged people to consider participating in research studies supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). She said:

“We cannot make any progress in medicine without research. I'm proud to be involved in supporting the work of the team on the DIAMONDS study, which will help to diagnose patients quickly and potentially save lives.

“We have seen young people presenting with Paediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Syndrome, which is an inflammation, irritation, pain or swelling, associated with the COVID-19 disease. It is a privilege to be playing my part in the national effort in trying to find the answers about this virus. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in the DIAMONDS study so far.

“My message to others is: please consider getting involved in research, we cannot do anything without willing participants volunteering their time to help us in improving patient care and treatments for all through research.”

Jennifer's varied role involves supporting clinicians in ensuring that all regulatory and ethical research standards are met on all studies. She also helps with consenting patients, general administration, processing of laboratory samples, coordination between the different teams and organisations working on paediatric trials and much more.

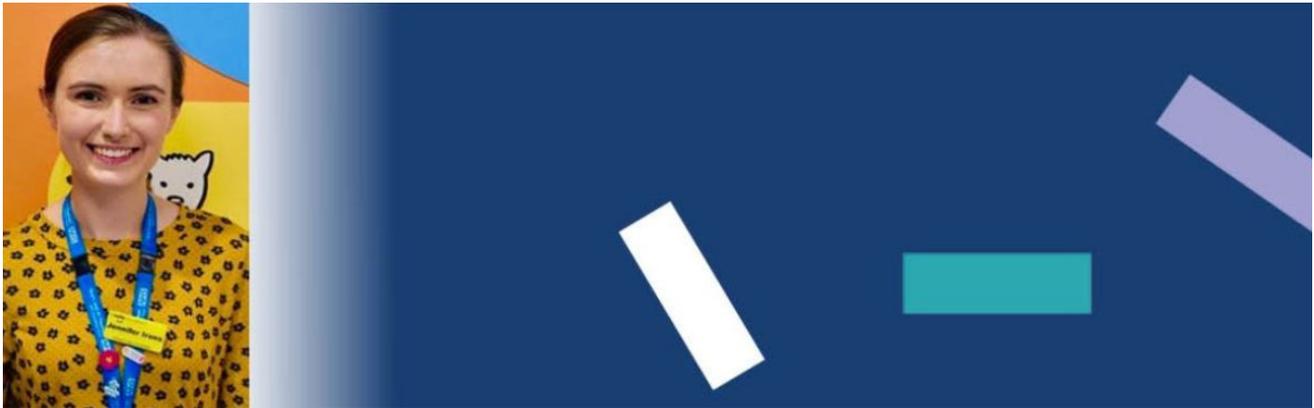
CRN South London's Deputy Chief Operating Officer Dawn Beaumont-Jewell said: “We are proud to be supporting the research response in south London to the COVID-19 pandemic.

challenging times.”

The DIAMONDS study is sponsored by Imperial College London. You can find out more about the study [online](#).

You can find out more about the work of CRN South London by watching this [video](#).

More information about the work of CRPs is available [online](#).



Jennifer Irons | Clinical Research Practitioner

# Research Delivery Learning Community: Engaging with your NHS

Welcome to the Research Delivery Staff Learning Community: Engaging with your local NHS!

An interactive environment that aims to support research engagement in local NHS organisations by providing a platform for networking and learning.



### Success Stories

Discover a range of success stories that showcase examples of successful practice in promoting and engaging with research in order to embed research as a core component of clinical care.

[Access the Success Stories](#)



### Toolkit and other Resources

Click on the Toolkit to access resources to support your development in clinical research.

Manage your own learning by taking the self-assessment quiz.

Follow the link to DeLVE to access carefully curated learning materials from a range of sources.

[Access the Toolkit](#)



### Forums and Expert Blogs

Use our forum to share top tips or to ask fellow community members a question.

Read through Expert Blogs and share your thoughts or questions on the forum using the links provided.

[Access Forums](#)

[Expert Blogs](#)



### News and Helpful Links

Keep up to date with the latest research news, developments and information via our useful links.

[NHS R&D Forum News](#)

[NIHR News](#)

[Twitter feed: #WheWeDoResearch](#)

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employees to stay connected, share stories and explore more ways for research staff to embed research within their local NHS organisations.

With collaboration in mind, we've made the decision to include the CRP learning community space within this research delivery community space. The CRP resources and forums will still be accessed only by CRPs and NIHR CRN staff but with the added benefit of being in one easy to access place. More details will follow soon!

Please click [here](#) to get involved! You can login using your chosen professional email address. For access support please visit this [site](#).

If you have any questions or would like to share any feedback, please email the NHS Engagement Team via [lucy.gallagher@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.gallagher@nihr.ac.uk)



*Stephen Burrows | NIHR CRN Workforce & Clinical Specialty Engagement Coordinator*

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## Tell us about your journey into research

We would love to hear about your journey into research. Why research? What's a typical day for you? What's the best part of your job? What will CRP Registration mean to you?

[Complete our Q&A](#)

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## Twitter



Follow the hashtag [#crpractitioner](#) on twitter to follow conversations and connect with other CRPs. Here are some recent tweets you may have missed

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**Natalie Long**

[@natalie\\_long\\_](#)

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of adaptable resilient people [#CRP](#) [#CRPPractitioner](#).

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## Martin Booth

[@martinbooth6](#)

Been on the directory since it's launch in West Midlands and happy to hear the road to my professional recognition & registration is coming soon [#crpractitioner](#) shaping the future [#research](#) workforce

[@UHNM\\_NHS](#)

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## NIHR CRN WLOD

[@NIHRWorkforce](#)

We now have over 600 CRPs on the CRP Directory! Why not join them? it's currently free to sign up to the directory. [#crpractitioner](#) [#AHCS](#)



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## Sign up to the Directory

**The Clinical Research Practitioner Directory will continue to support the community during these challenging times.**

Remember to encourage all CRPs interested in seeking registration to join the CRP Directory. There is no fee to join, or to rejoin, the CRP Directory.

[CRP News](#) | [CRP Development](#) | [Join the CRP Directory during Covid-19](#)

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Individuals and organisations who want to know more can go to [bit.ly/CRPdirectory](https://bit.ly/CRPdirectory) or contact:

Janice Paterson (NIHR)

e: [crpdirectory@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:crpdirectory@nihr.ac.uk)

t: 0113 343 0083

Carly Allen (AHCS)

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