**Hospital researchers in South West call for public to become patient ambassadors**

Hospital researchers across the South West are encouraging interested patients and members of the public to fly the flag for clinical research and sign up as ambassadors.

The Clinical Research Network South West Peninsula (CRN SWP) part of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) – the research arm of the NHS –will be hosting a free-to-attend event for interested members of the public to find out how they can support, promote and get involved in research at their local hospital as Patient Research Ambassadors.

A Patient Research Ambassadors (PRAs) is someone who promotes health research from a patient point of view. They could be a patient, service user, carer or lay person who is enthusiastic about health research and is willing to communicate that to other patients, the public, as well as other healthcare professionals.

Ambassadors will be asked to help their local hospital become more research-active through a range of different activities – from championing local public access to research; improving signs and advertising, and helping doctors, nurses and other health professionals to come up with patient-friendly research studies through to becoming joint applicants on a research project and identifying research priorities.

Professor Anthony Woolf, Clinical Director at the CRN SWP, said: “It has always been our aim to help develop a patient-centred research culture in all of the organisations we support in the South West.

“People who have taken part in research, or who have witnessed their family member or a friend participate in research, are often best placed to be research ambassadors. We hope they can now help to ensure people using local services have the best opportunities and choices about taking part in research studies. Most importantly they can help us ensure we are researching the things that matter to them, and that the information we are publishing makes sense to everyone, not just medical professionals.”

The information event, being held on Thursday March 14th at Buckerell Lodge Hotel in Exeter, will include talks from clinicians across the region as well as from representatives from the award-winning Patient Research Ambassador group from Portsmouth. It will provide an insight into what the role entails and how the role can benefit patients and the NHS.

The CRN SWP hopes to be able to work with people from across the region to develop Patient Research Ambassadors in every hospital in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset.

To register for the event please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/weareresearchsw-opening-the-door-to-research-involvement-tickets-54845028958>