

Dear Colleague

CEL 24 (2008)

17 June 2008

NHS Research Passports

This circular brings to your attention the NHS Research Passport. The Research Passport is an application pack for an NHS honorary research contract (HRC) which includes all necessary supporting documentation, checks and employer confirmation. It is a new approach to issuing NHS Honorary Research Contracts.

Background

In October 2007, the Research Passport system was launched nationally because:-

- to date there had been no practical guidance for use of honorary research contracts in the NHS
- there was an inconsistency of approach between Boards, and
- there was inappropriate use and duplication of HRCs.

The Passport

There are two types of NHS Honorary Research Contracts – a three year NHS Honorary Research Contract and a Project Specific Honorary Research Contract. The Research Passport system has two major advantages:-

- the requirement for only one standard application for NHS HRCs or letter of access, and
- one set of checks on a researcher conducting research in the NHS.

As such, the costly and time consuming process of researchers being checked by each NHS Board will be avoided and should facilitate an earlier start up of studies.

The Research Passport system gives clear guidance to all involved in the process of issuing an HRC. The application form is completed by the researcher and employer and validated by a lead NHS organisation. There is no need to repeat checks for the duration of the Passport but additional checks are required if there are changes to research activities or situations. There is an obligation on researchers to inform the employer and NHS organisations of any change – but that has always been the case.

Addresses

For action

Chief Executives, NHS Boards &
Special Health Boards
Directors of Human Resources, NHS
Directors of R&D, NHS
Higher Education Principals
Higher Education RCC Members
Deans of Health & Medical Schools

For information

Chairs, NHS Boards, Special Health
Boards

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Further details on the research passport system can be found at www.ukcrc.org/activities/regulationandgovernance/researchpassport.aspx. The Research in the NHS – Human Resources Good Practice Resource Pack has the endorsement of the UK Health Departments.

The Pilot Phase

The Research Passport was developed by a working group operating under the auspices of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration. The group brought together representatives of UKCRC partners and stakeholders from the UK Health Departments, NHS R&D and HR and the University sector to ensure that the suitability of the Research Passport for national roll out.

A pilot of the Research Passport system was conducted between September 2006 and April 2007. The findings from the research passport pilot conducted in London, Trent, Tayside, South Coast, Staffordshire, Shropshire and North Wales led to a further programme of development and engagement with stakeholders.

Implementation

The Management Steering Group of NHS Scotland considered the Research Passport System on 9 April and endorsed its implementation throughout Scotland. In doing so it recommended that it should also be formally approved through the Chief Scientist Office.

The Chief Scientist Office therefore recommends the implementation of the Research Passport system to the NHS and to Higher Education Institutions. The effective date for implementation is 1 September 2008 (with the system being active from 1 July 2008). Its general adoption is expected to facilitate improved efficiency of clinical research across Scotland.

The actual implementation of the Passport across Scotland is being dealt with at individual Health Board level with associated partner Higher Education Institutions. NHS R&D offices are working with their HR departments and partner institutions to implement the scheme locally.

Implementation of the research passport system in Scotland is being co-ordinated by Ms Liz Coote, R&D Manager of NHS Tayside. She would be happy to help with any enquiries; her contact details are:

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Yours sincerely



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