



Releasing staff for research-related activities.

NHS R&D NW delivers several programmes and support packages to increase the capability and capacity of the health and care workforce to support, deliver and lead research and related activity. Releasing clinical and care staff to take part in research-related training continues to be a challenge for employers in the current climate. However, there are a number of added benefits in both the short-term and long-term that should be considered when educational research leave is requested.

Health and care organisations release staff to do research primarily to improve care by generating new knowledge and evidence-based practices through clinical trials and studies, which can lead to earlier diagnosis, more effective treatments, and better system designs, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes and experience. Additionally, research involvement can contribute to staff career development, workforce satisfaction, and a positive reputation for the NHS itself.

Key reasons to support staff research involvement:

- **Improved patient care:**

Research directly informs better treatment options, diagnostic tools, and healthcare practices, leading to improved patient health and quality of life.

- **Evidence-based practice:**
By actively participating in research, clinicians can ensure their practice is based on the latest scientific evidence.
- **Career development:**
Research experience can enhance a healthcare professional's career prospects, providing opportunities for promotion and recognition.
- **Innovation and advancement:**
Research can lead to breakthroughs in treatments, technologies, and healthcare delivery systems.
- **Workforce satisfaction:**
Engaging in research can be personally fulfilling for staff, boosting morale and motivation.
- **Recruitment and retention:**
A strong research culture can attract and retain high-quality healthcare professionals.
- **Reputation enhancement:**
Health and care organisations can gain recognition as leading centres for healthcare research, attracting funding and collaborations.
- **Addressing healthcare challenges:**
Research can help identify and tackle emerging health issues and inequalities.

Important considerations when releasing staff for research:

- **Balancing workload:**
Ensuring that clinical responsibilities are adequately covered while staff are engaged in research activities.
- **Training and support:**
Providing appropriate research training and mentorship to staff involved in research projects.
- **Funding and resource allocation:**
Securing sufficient funding to support research activities and infrastructure.
- **Clear expectations and career pathways:**
Establishing clear expectations for research involvement and integrating it into staff career development plans.

If a member of staff has requested leave or permission to take part in research-related activity with NHS R&D NW and clarity is needed on how this would work both for the individual and the organisation then please contact NHS R&D NW for further advice and information at Joanne.simpson@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk, Leanne.gregory@researchnorthwest.nhs.uk