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First NHS Trust Achieves Industry-Leading WQA Gold Standard

Doncaster and Maidenhead, United Kingdom, 4 April 2023 – The highest level of IAOCR (International Accrediting Organisation for Clinical Research) Workforce Quality Accreditation (WQA) for Clinical Research Sites has been awarded to Grounded Research, the research team at Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH). RDaSH is the first NHS Trust to achieve this standard.

The gold level achievement signifies an organisation that works consistently to the highest-global standards across the entire workforce with solid frameworks in place - it is awarded after an in-depth assessment, gap analysis and accreditation process. The assessment demonstrated that the Grounded Research Team's operations at RDaSH are underpinned with excellent workforce quality processes, both in terms of documentation and workforce's awareness of them. Key focus areas for the assessment were organisational competence standards, staff engagement, and mental health and wellbeing.

The WQA accreditation was selected as the assessment of choice by RDaSH because it is the only framework focused on robustly and independently determining whether a clinical research organisation has rigorous processes to ensure a positive culture for staff, whilst providing reassurance that clinical trial participants are in safe hands.

"We are thrilled to have achieved the gold award! It has been such a positive experience working with the IAOCR team" explains Jodie Keyworth, Head of Business Development, Grounded Research at RDaSH. "Having the quality of our workforce and processes externally assessed is really important to us – it's vital that we are open and that we hold ourselves up to scrutiny. We really wanted to show the positive culture at Grounded Research to the wider clinical research community - this Gold Accreditation award will help us do that, as well as recognising all the hard work and dedication of our team. Finally, the IAOCR process showed us the areas where we have the opportunity to improve - I know our team are keen to accomplish this so we can remain a provider of high-quality research for all of our communities and can continue to make a real difference to patients' lives."

The assessment process took three months and involved an in-depth analysis of the processes, plans and culture that Grounded Research operates within. WQA was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders from pharmaceutical companies, CROs, not-for-profit organisations and other leaders within the clinical research industry to help address the clinical research talent crisis and create a 'workforce of excellence' for the clinical research industry.

"From start to finish of the assessment process, RDaSH were very impressive and clearly operating at an excellent standard. There was a clear commitment to demonstrate the high-quality processes, standards and competent workforce," summarises Jacqueline Johnson North, CEO, IAOCR. "The RDaSH Grounded Research team recognises the positive values and environment that have been created by the leadership team, which demonstrates an exemplary work culture. This is why we run the WQA - to identify top performing clinical research organisations and set them apart as a benchmark; other organisations, both within and outside the NHS, should be aspiring to meet this standard."

The WQA Bronze, Silver and Gold Standards provide a structured pathway for organisational development. Any type of organisation can benefit from WQA, however the framework was developed in collaboration with clinical research industry experts from around the globe to address



IAOCR

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some of the specific challenges faced by the clinical research industry – staff engagement and retention, workforce competence at an organisational level, and mental health and wellbeing (the latter being added in response to changing ways of work necessitated by the pandemic). Solid foundations in these areas are key to the success of any organisation and help to ensure supply chain quality, workforce competence and engagement, and clinical trial participant safety. Ultimately a high quality workforce reduces risk to clinical trial patients and the research itself. Companies and sites achieving the WQA standard benefit from improved capacity, performance and more streamlined processes as a result of globally consistent workforce-quality processes that strengthen quality, efficiency and effectiveness.

To learn more about the Grounded Research team and portfolio please visit: rdash.nhs.uk/about-us/grounded-research or call: 03000 212 456

To learn more about IAOCR, the Workforce Quality Accreditation (WQA) and how we can support your business please visit iaocr.com; get in touch via email: info@iaocr.com or call:

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Notes to editors

About RDaSH and Grounded Research

The Grounded Research Team is the research team at RDaSH. It has dedicated research staff, including medics, nurses, pharmacy and clinical studies officers, with the skills needed for swift set up and smooth delivery of trials. The team are winners of the Nursing Times Clinical Research Nursing Award 2019 and Winner of 'Research Team of the Year' 2022, from the National Institute for Health and Care Research Clinical Research Network.

RDaSH provides a range of mental health, learning disability, drug and alcohol services and community health services across Rotherham, Doncaster and North Lincolnshire. Services include Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT). For further press information please contact: Matt Beer matt.beer@nhs.net

About IAOCR

IAOCR is the international accrediting organisation for clinical research. We are the only organisation in the world to Qualify Clinical Research Professionals to international standards. Through robustly accrediting competence IAOCR reduces risk - to patients, clinical research and professional reputations - whilst improving compliance and bringing valuable new treatments to market quicker.

IAOCR business processes and accreditations have been built specifically for the clinical research industry. They provide a quality standards and visible professional certification marks to organisations committed to globally consistent, high quality clinical trials workforces.

We believe that clinical trial patients anywhere in the world deserve the best protection in terms of rights and wellbeing. Therefore, in addition to providing accreditation, training and consultancy



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Organization for Clinical Research

services, IAOCR works with industry leaders and regulators around the globe to develop best practice guidelines. To find out more visit: iaocr.com/resources/

About Workforce Quality Accreditation (WQA)

The Clinical Research Workforce Quality Accreditation was developed in collaboration with industry experts in response to demand from CROs and pharmaceutical companies. Awarded at the organisational level, IAOCR Workforce Quality Accreditation delivers:

- A systemised approach to achieving employer goals through increased workforce performance & engagement.
- Differentiation for service providers.
- Transparency for clients.
- Independent verification of embedded workforce competence and engagement of best practices.
- Reassurance of workforce quality globally.
- Improved employee attraction, engagement and retention through an enhanced employer brand experience.
- Improved workforce effectiveness and efficiency leading to reduced costs and reduced risks.
- Embedding of a 'right first time' and 'quality built in' approach through workforce best practice processes.
- Expediting new treatments to market.
- A distinctive and clearly recognizable quality mark.

Learn more here: [Accredit Your Organisation](#)