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The International Accrediting
Organization for Clinical Research

Midlands Strives to Elevate Standards for Clinical Research as NHS Foundation Trust Achieves Globally Recognised Industry-Leading WQA Standard

Maidenhead, United Kingdom, 15 June 2023 – Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has achieved the Bronze standard of the globally recognised IAOCR [Workforce Quality Accreditation](#) (WQA). This achievement demonstrates an organisation working consistently to industry-leading global best-practice standards across their workforce and creates a benchmark in elevating standards for clinical research through this formal acknowledgement from [IAOCR](#) (International Accrediting Organisation for Clinical Research). IAOCR accredits clinical research sites and organisations internationally, by independently quality assuring both people and processes to the highest standards that have been developed by the industry, for the industry.

The WQA accreditation was selected by the Sherwood Forest Hospitals' Research and Innovation department because the assessment framework is designed to robustly and independently determine whether a clinical research site has the required industry-leading workforce processes and practices in place to ensure engaged, motivated and competent staff, clearly defined frameworks for staff development and retention, and the safe, efficient delivery of clinical trials. Furthermore, the WQA assessment process verifies and celebrates what an organisation is already doing well and identifies where improvements can be made. The gap analysis and action plan provide a route map for continuous improvement and the ability to build a high-quality workforce infrastructure underpinned with efficiency, quality and performance.

“This accreditation is extremely important to us because it evidences the results of our dedication to work to the highest standards of practice, as well as demonstrating our drive, commitment and enthusiasm for delivering the highest-quality clinical research in our locality, both for our patients and sponsors” explains Alison Steel, Head of Research & Innovation, Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. “We wanted to have our internal efforts independently validated, but also thought this would be a good exercise to bring the team together, demonstrate we are open to challenge and making improvements, show the team how valued they are and provide them with the opportunity to have their say in a confidential and safe space. Research staff are often the unsung heroes of healthcare and being able to showcase this achievement across the organisation, the CRN region and the wider industry will help to solidify our position as a clinical trial partner of choice.”

The assessment process took around three months and involved an in-depth analysis of the processes, plans and culture that Sherwood Forest Hospital's Research and Innovation team 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.

WQA provides a clear benchmark of the highest standards for both those working within the organisation to pride themselves on, as well as for sponsor's looking to partner with an organisation who want to see formal evidence of the workforce standards that are being delivered. The WQA Accreditation Mark provides reassurance for all stakeholders that the delivery of a clinical trial, and the clinical trial participants are in safe hands.

“Sherwood Forest Hospitals' rationale for the assessment really exemplifies the purpose of the WQA standard; their focus on outputs was to ensure workforce processes were optimum, identify areas for improvement, ensure happy and engaged staff, provide a validation for future business partners and deliver the best experience for patients – and this is why it was so impressive working with the Trust,”



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acknowledges Sarah Everitt, VP Operations, IAOCR. “From the outset their motivation made them an exemplary working partner. The entire team showed enthusiasm for the process, from all levels of the organisation, which is why their Bronze accreditation is so well deserved and why they are a Trust that others should aspire to replicate in both working standards and ethos.”

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 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 both 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 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 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 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.



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- 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](#)