



## **Putting Patients First: Royal Berkshire NHS Receives Accolade for Commitment to Patient Engagement**

Maidenhead, United Kingdom, 8 August 2023 – Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust Research and Innovation department has been awarded [GCSA](#) accreditation for demonstrating global best practice standards in ‘Patient Engagement’ for their Cancer Centre. The internationally recognised GCSA (Global Clinical Sites Accreditation) evidences that the Royal Berkshire (a District General Hospital) can deliver successful, high quality clinical trials, positioning them as a ‘Clinical Trial Partner of Choice’ and showing that clinical trials are not just for larger teaching hospitals.

GCSA, (part of [IAOCR](#)), conducted a robust evidence-based assessment of the patient engagement processes for clinical research, within the Royal Berkshire Trust’s Research and Development’s Oncology specialism. The assessment framework and consultative process not only assesses the levels an organisation is currently operating at against global best practice standards, but also identifies any areas for further development, providing a route map for continuous quality improvement and elevated standards. The accreditation for Patient Engagement is the start of the GCSA accreditation journey as the Trust now looks to become fully GCSA accredited.

“This assessment stood out for us due to the openness, honesty and enthusiasm of all the staff. The engagement levels with the process exemplified the engagement ethos that is at the heart of the Royal Berkshire Research and Innovation team and has been a significant contributing factor to their accreditation in Patient Engagement,” explained, Jacqueline Johnson North, Founder and CEO of GCSA. “As a general hospital Royal Berkshire has a number of roles that add significant value to the community, and this accreditation has demonstrated how committed the Trust is to clinical trials; something which will only serve to benefit the community and beyond in the future.”

The comprehensive accreditation assessment included a detailed review, gap analysis and consultation process, and saw an elevation in standards across all seven assessment areas of patient engagement: Networking; Patient Surveys; Cultural Diversity; Patient Support; Social Media; Patient Involvement; and Patient Experience. The accreditation report noted that “to the organisation’s credit, there is an incredibly positive attitude overall within the department, to perform the trials to the best of everyone’s capabilities...It was evident that staff are extremely well supported in their roles.”

“Clinical research is an important part of our operation and to have our commitment to Patient Engagement ratified to an international standard exemplifies how important this is to us,” commented Prof. Atul Kapila, Director of Research and Innovation. “We focused on getting our Patient Engagement accredited by GCSA because patients are at the centre of everything we do throughout the hospital, including clinical trials. We are actively running clinical trials to support the journey for better, more advanced treatments to improve patient lives, and we are delighted to have undergone this motivating and engaging accreditation process which solidifies a truly important area of the business; and we’re keen to secure our GCSA accreditation in the other areas of the business as well.”

Whilst clinical research is a highly-regulated industry, until now there have been no established standards by which sites can demonstrate that they are able to meet the expectations of sponsors, CROs and patients, and no way for sponsors or CROs to select clinical research sites based on clear quality standards which have been independently assessed at the organizational level. GCSA sets this much-needed industry standard for research sites to strive for and achieve; allowing sites to evidence and communicate their capabilities and differentiate in a crowded and increasingly competitive marketplace. GCSA quality standard can be achieved in the following seven key business areas: Workforce Quality Accreditation (WQA); Patient Engagement; Feasibility; Study Start Up & Initiation;



Study Management & Closedown; R&D Business Strategy and Governance. Beyond the assessment and accreditation process, where required, GCSA will deliver individual, practical support on the areas for development to meet the standards and will work collaboratively with sites to achieve accreditation.

To learn more about GCSA and how we can support your business please visit [gcsaaccredited.org](https://gcsaaccredited.org), get in touch via email: [info@gcsaaccredited.org](mailto:info@gcsaaccredited.org) or call:

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## Notes to editors

### About GCSA:

GCSA, part of [IAOCR](https://iaocr.com), is a global quality standard for clinical trial sites set across seven key areas. It ensures clinical trial sites are working to robust and effective processes so that they can deliver first-class services to patients and sponsors. The GCSA framework was developed over 4 years with industry research and engagement. It has been ratified by a Global Advisory Board of leading industry representatives from the not-for-profit and commercial sector, including the NHS and other leading healthcare organizations.

The standard has been built to address key industry challenges and facilitate synergistic working between sites and sponsors to enable better patient outcomes. It provides potential sponsors with an assurance of capability through passing independent assessment based on standards and expectations specified by sponsors. Furthermore, GCSA aims to increase clinical research through alignment with commercial requirements.

### 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/](https://iaocr.com/resources/)