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The volunteer-centric model of research nursing: An innovative nursing model to support recruitment, re-engagement and retention of research participants

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At the NIHR Cambridge Bio Resource (CBR), our volunteers are our priority. We have engaged over 10,000 biobank participants in translational research studies since 2008, and are continually looking for ways to improve how we interact with volunteers and how to make research more accessible to all. To support these aims the CBR nursing team has developed the volunteer-centric model, to guide research nursing practice. This model defines our organizational culture and acts as a resource for researchers looking to replicate the success of the CBR. The model describes six underpinning principles that encourage excellence in practice whilst allowing protocols and processes to be challenged. The aim is to provide flexibility and choice to the research participant. Creativity and a solution-focused approach when considering where and when research happens are implicit. For our volunteers, applying the volunteer-centric model allows us to prioritise their needs when taking part in research. This ensures a positive experience that encourages re-engagement. For researchers, our model facilitates efficient and effective delivery of recruitment targets with appropriate consideration of funding and resources. In a global research environment, increasing numbers of researchers are seeking to recruit and engage patient and public groups in research. Adopting a volunteer-centric approach becomes our professional responsibility, as the participant's research experience informs their future participation. The model guides facilitates this approach. The model has now been disseminated widely in the UK, and the CBR Nursing Team received The 2015 Nursing Times Award in clinical research nursing for this work.

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