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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Blackpool and Fylde residents get a valuable insight into the benefits of clinical research**

An event giving people an insight into the growing importance of clinical research proved to be a great success.

Blackpool Victoria Hospital played host to an open evening organised by the Cumbria and Lancashire Comprehensive Local Research Network with those attending able to speak to research staff and patient volunteers to discuss current research in Blackpool and beyond and to see how they too could get involved in the future.

Visitors also had the chance to get their blood pressure and lung health checked as well as viewing poster displays.

Michelle Stephens, Head of Research and Development at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "Clinical research is extremely important for all NHS Trusts and the event was to let people know what clinical research entails and how they can get involved today to help improve the care patients receive in the future

"The feedback was excellent with those attending said it gave them a much better understanding of research and stimulated a lot of debate."

She added: "More than 80% of those attended said they were more likely to be involved in research in the future, which is a fantastic response. One of those attending thanked us for giving them more insight into the research at their local hospital."

Patient Representative and former cancer patient Bill Ryder spoke about the benefits of research and said any patient could get involved in one way or another.

He said: "research is not all about clinical trials and new drugs. It can be about gaining the benefit from your experience as a patient. All experiences can have a positive effect and help improve the treatment patients are given in the future."

Jane Pearson, Acting Senior Manager of the Cumbria and Lancashire Comprehensive Local Research Network, said: "This event will hopefully go some way to demystifying research.

“Some people see it as patients being guinea pigs and clinical staff experimenting on them but that is an idea we want to dispel.

“Research is extremely safe and we want it to become a core part of NHS business. In the last four years we have made huge strides in terms of recruiting people to research studies. We are now on course to have more than 14,000 people involved this year and we want that number to continue.”

A recent MORI poll showed that 72% of people would want to be offered the chance to take part in a clinical trial if they had a health condition that was affecting their daily life.

Blackpool Victoria Hospital will open a new Clinical Research Centre in April this year, improving research facilities for the Fylde Coast and beyond. If you would like to know more about research please contact the Research & Development Team on 01253 655547.



**Caption: Jane Pearson, Acting Senior Manager of the Cumbria and Lancashire Comprehensive Local Research Network, speaks at the open event.**

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