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Oxford to host directorate for next £30m phase of the NIHR School for Primary Care Research

Healthcare researchers across Oxford and seven other universities across England are to deliver a five-year national programme of research and training aimed at improving healthcare delivery in general practice.

The University of Oxford will continue to host the directorate for the next five-year phase of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) School for Primary Care Research (SPCR) research and capacity programme, supported by funding of over £30 million.

The NIHR SPCR provides answers to practical and important health issues, informing NHS policy and clinical guidance, and aims to improve the experience of illness for patients.

From October 2015, membership of the England-wide school includes the Universities of Bristol, Keele, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford, Southampton and University College London, with the addition of the Universities of Cambridge and Newcastle.

Professor Richard Hobbs, Head of Department at the University of Oxford's Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, has been re-appointed as Director.

"I am delighted to be re-appointed as Director of the School for Primary Care Research and would like to extend a warm welcome to colleagues at the Universities of Cambridge and Newcastle. Over the next five years, I look forward to seeing existing and new members develop innovative collaborations and excellent research, continuing to provide impact and inform the development of improved primary care practice across many areas of proficiency."

The School's current research mandate is to increase the evidence base for primary care practice through research, and support the multi-disciplinary training and professional development of early-career researchers, across five main research themes:

- long-term condition management,
- methodological innovation,

- multi-morbidity and ageing
- patient-centred care,
- prevention and diagnosis.

Over the next five years, the School will award around £22 million of NIHR funding for primary care research, with a further £10 million awarded to support training and capacity development.

Since its 2006 launch, 252 research projects and 85 trainees have been funded by the SPCR. Its funded research influences GPs and other primary care practitioners, informs policy and NHS guidelines and impacts areas of secondary care beyond GP surgeries.

Recent School-funded research by local GP and Academic Clinical Lecturer Dr Kay Wang at the University of Oxford is helping to inform the debate for the need to introduce an additional pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine for adolescents. The study looked at the number of instances that 279 children aged 5–15 visited their GP with persistent cough and found pertussis infection in one fifth (20%), including in 18% who had previously received a pre-school vaccine against the infection.

Other SPCR-funded research has investigated the rising number of A&E admissions, studied the needs of carers of domestic violence victims, strategies to reduce antibiotic prescriptions and resistance, and the effect on the NHS of an ageing population.

In September 2015, the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences is due to relocate into the old Radcliffe Infirmary Outpatient's Building, which is currently undergoing a £14m restoration as part of the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter development.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

For interviews or comment with local GP Professor Carl Heneghan, Board Member NIHR SPCR and Oxford Professor of Evidence-Based Medicine, contact:

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About the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, University of Oxford:

The Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences undertakes internationally acclaimed teaching and research that improves the primary care that GP practices deliver. It has been one of the world's most important primary care centres for the past 15 years. The department was ranked the top centre for primary care research in the UK in the 2008 national Research Assessment Exercise and was similarly judged a top centre on the 1996–2001 assessment. The department teaches elements of the University of Oxford undergraduate programme in Medicine including

arranging placements for medical students in GP practices. Research is led by internationally renowned scientists, many of whom are practicing GP's, and covers a broad range of primary care issues including behavioural medicine, cancer, cardiovascular disease, childhood illness, infection, international health and health experience. www.phc.ox.ac.uk www.twitter.com/oxprimarycare

About the NIHR

The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is funded by the Department of Health to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. Since its establishment in April 2006, the NIHR has transformed research in the NHS. It has increased the volume of applied health research for the benefit of patients and the public, driven faster translation of basic science discoveries into tangible benefits for patients and the economy, and developed and supported the people who conduct and contribute to applied health research. The NIHR plays a key role in the Government's strategy for economic growth, attracting investment by the life-sciences industries through its world-class infrastructure for health research. Together, the NIHR people, programmes, centres of excellence and systems represent the most integrated health research system in the world. For further information, visit the NIHR website (www.nihr.ac.uk).