Patient Research Stories – Raising Awareness about Research

The Clinical Research Network West Midlands (CRN WM) embarked on its Patient Stories initiative as it is one of the Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement in research (PPIE) objectives for the Network. The aim of the initiative is to raise awareness of research by allowing the patients themselves to have an opportunity to voice their experience of research and to share how research has made a real difference to their lives. It has enabled NHS Research & Development (R&D) Departments and the CRN WM, working together with patients, to raise awareness of research opportunities amongst all patients.

Initial stages of the project involved creating a Patient Stories Pack for use by research teams. This includes:

- Information about the initiative
- An example of a patient story
- Consent/assent forms for participation
- Photography, filming and audio recording consent/assent forms
- Example questions for collating the stories

Consequently, the CRN WM has produced patient stories in the format of posters, postcards, pull up banners, short films and audio recordings, and both the Network and R&D Departments have been disseminating these stories.

Finally, a training session about patient stories has been incorporated into the CRN WM PPIE Training (Building Research Partnerships) that is delivered to research professionals. Consequently, many research professionals have pledged to work with the team to produce patient stories.

This initiative is an excellent example of how R&D Departments can engage patients in research, with a view to not only raising the profile of research through dissemination of patient stories, but also offering past and present participants of research the opportunity to give something back.