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Dear [name]

The impact of the Liverpool Care Pathway on care at the end of life

My name is [name] and I am a researcher employed by the University of Liverpool. I am writing to make you aware of an important piece of research that we think you may find is of interest to your organization. I enclose a document that provides a fairly comprehensive summary of the proposed research for your information.

In short, we have been funded by the National Institute for Health Research, Service Delivery and Organisation Programme to undertake a qualitative case study that will involve 24 sites in total, 12 Nursing Homes and 12 Intensive Care Units in 2 distinct geographical areas. Half of the Nursing Homes and Intensive Care Units will be using the Liverpool Care Pathway for the Dying Patient to support the delivery of care in the last hours or days of life and half will not. Sites that do and do not use the LCP will be 'matched' on various pertinent criteria and the care 'observed' in each will be described and compared in order to assess the impact of the LCP on care at the very end of life. Various data collection methods will be used including: documentary analysis of organizational policies and procedures; interviews with staff; interviews with bereaved relatives; non-participant observation at the bedside of patients in the last hours and days of life and case note analysis. The Principle Investigator for the Study is Professor John Ellershaw, Director, Marie Curie Palliative Care Institute, University of Liverpool. The study has recently been rigorously reviewed by the North West Wales Research Ethics Committee and has been granted ethical approval.

Based on limited, publically held information about your service, for example type of care delivered, number of beds, we have identified your (home/unit) as being potentially eligible for recruitment to this study. We would, therefore, welcome the opportunity to visit you to give you more information about the study and to find out if you would be interested in taking part, subject of course, to appropriate consent /approval from relevant stakeholders within your organization/trust.

If you would be interested in meeting the researcher and receiving more information about participation in this study, please contact:

[name] on [telephone number; email].

If we have not heard from you with 2 weeks of receipt of this letter, I will telephone you to offer further information about the research and the opportunity to discuss your thoughts about potential participation.

Yours sincerely

[name]

Researcher