



Trial of welfare advice for older general practice patients (the Do-Well study)

Information about the research

We would like your help

We are carrying out a research study to test out a new service delivered to patients registered with your doctor's surgery.

What is this study about?

A lot of older people do not get the state welfare benefits that they should. We are testing out a new way of giving advice about welfare rights and state welfare benefits. We are trying to find out whether this advice helps people get the state welfare benefits they should and whether there are any health benefits for them when they do. We are inviting you to take part in this study.

What does this involve?

If you decide to take part in this study, a researcher will come to your home to ask you some questions about your health and circumstances in a private interview. This will probably take about an hour. After this you will be given an appointment to see a Welfare Rights Advisor from your local social services department, who will give you confidential advice about your rights to State and other benefits, and offer you help with making claims if appropriate. If you have difficulty filling out forms, help will be provided. The Welfare Rights Advisor can come to your home or meet with you at another location if you prefer.

We would like to recruit 750 people into this study. One group of 375 people will be given an appointment with the welfare advice service straight away and another group of 375 people will be given an appointment around 24 months later. The group you are put in will be decided by chance, like tossing a coin. However, everyone will get an appointment within 24 months.

Approximately 12 months after you enter the study, our researchers will send out a questionnaire (similar to the one you answered at the beginning of the study) to your home for you to complete and return by post. About 24 months after you join the study, you will be asked to take part in a second interview about your health.

Some people taking part in this study may also be approached to take part in an in-depth interview with a member of the research team. If you are interested in taking part in these interviews, you can tell the researcher when you meet him/her. These interviews may be audio-recorded.

In the future, we may try to get funding for further research on the long-term effects of this service. This would involve a researcher coming to your home to carry out another interview about your health. This would let us see if there have been any changes since your last interview. You do not have to agree to us contacting you in the future if you do not wish to do so.

How did you get my name?

Your name was selected randomly from among those aged 60 and over on the patient register at your doctor's surgery.

What about confidentiality?

All the information we collect will be kept in complete confidence. Your name will never be passed to any third party. No names will appear on any reports and no one will be able to identify you or anything you have said in any reports or other publications.

What are the benefits of taking part?

If you are already claiming the highest rate for benefits that you can, there may be no direct benefit for you from taking part. However, all participants get a free, confidential assessment of their right to state and other benefits and help with applying for any benefits that they deserve. Many people aged over 60 are entitled to benefits that they do not claim and our advisor can help you to find out if you are eligible. Even if you think you are currently claiming all the benefits you are entitled to, you may be eligible for a higher rate or for other benefits.

If the study shows that welfare advice provided to patients registered at your doctor's surgery is of benefit to people's health, more services may be set up as a result.

How is the research funded?

The research has been funded by the National Institute for Health Research, Public Health Programme. The NIHR has been referred to as

the research arm of the NHS. The researchers will not get paid anything other than their normal salary and travelling expenses for working on this study.

Has the research been approved?

The research has the support of your GP, other doctors in the area (through the Primary Care Trusts), social services departments throughout the North East, and has been reviewed and approved by South West Research Ethics Committee.

Is there anyone I can talk to about this further?

Yes. You can telephone the researchers from Newcastle University who are working on this study, on ([REDACTED]). If you wish to complain about the study, please contact [REDACTED], Head of Research & Development, North Tyneside PCT on [REDACTED].

What should I do now?

Please think about the information you have just read and decide whether or not you wish to take part in the study.

If you would like to be contacted by the researchers to take part in this study, you do not need to do anything. A member of the research team will be in touch with you shortly. You will be asked to sign a consent form if you take part in the study, and you will be given a copy of the signed form to keep.

If you do not wish to take part in this study, it is important that you complete and return the attached 'opt-out' form in the stamped addressed envelope provided, to ensure that you will not be contacted again about this study

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

[REDACTED]