

The Engagement Project



National Institute for Health Research

Clinical Research Network North West Coast

A Snapshot of Engagement in Research from Cheshire and Merseyside CLRN

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Abstract

Action Research was conducted to examine the extent of engagement for staff and patients in NIHR research at five Trusts within Cheshire and Merseyside. 'Engagement' refers to the integration of research related activity at all strategic, managerial and operational activities of the Trust. Baseline evidence from the study showed that research is not considered a priority in spite of an appreciation of its importance, and that there is considerable scope for increasing the awareness and accessibility to research for both staff and patients.

People in our region want to participate in clinical research. We need to ensure they are made aware of the research opportunities available to them

Aim & Background

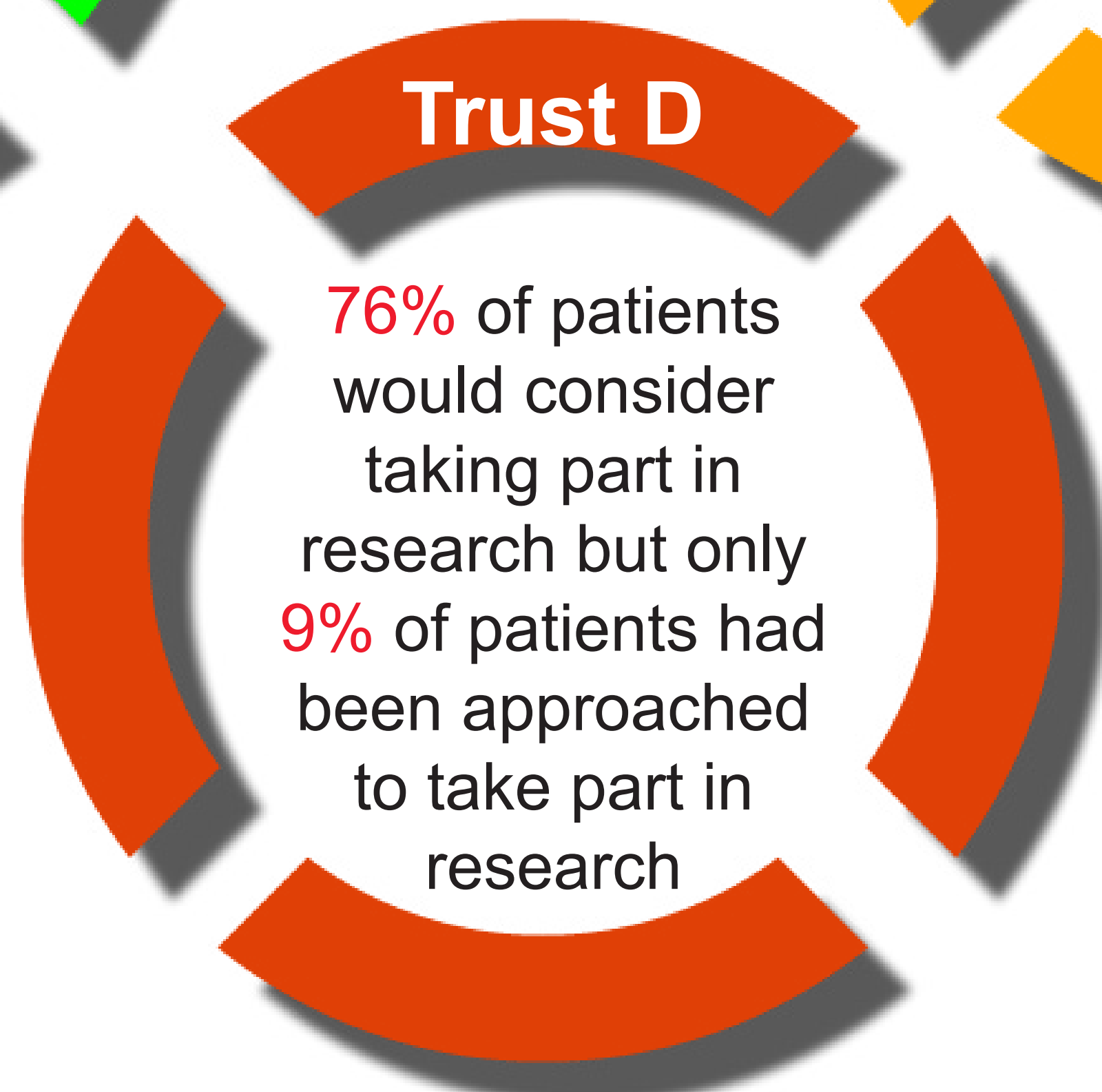
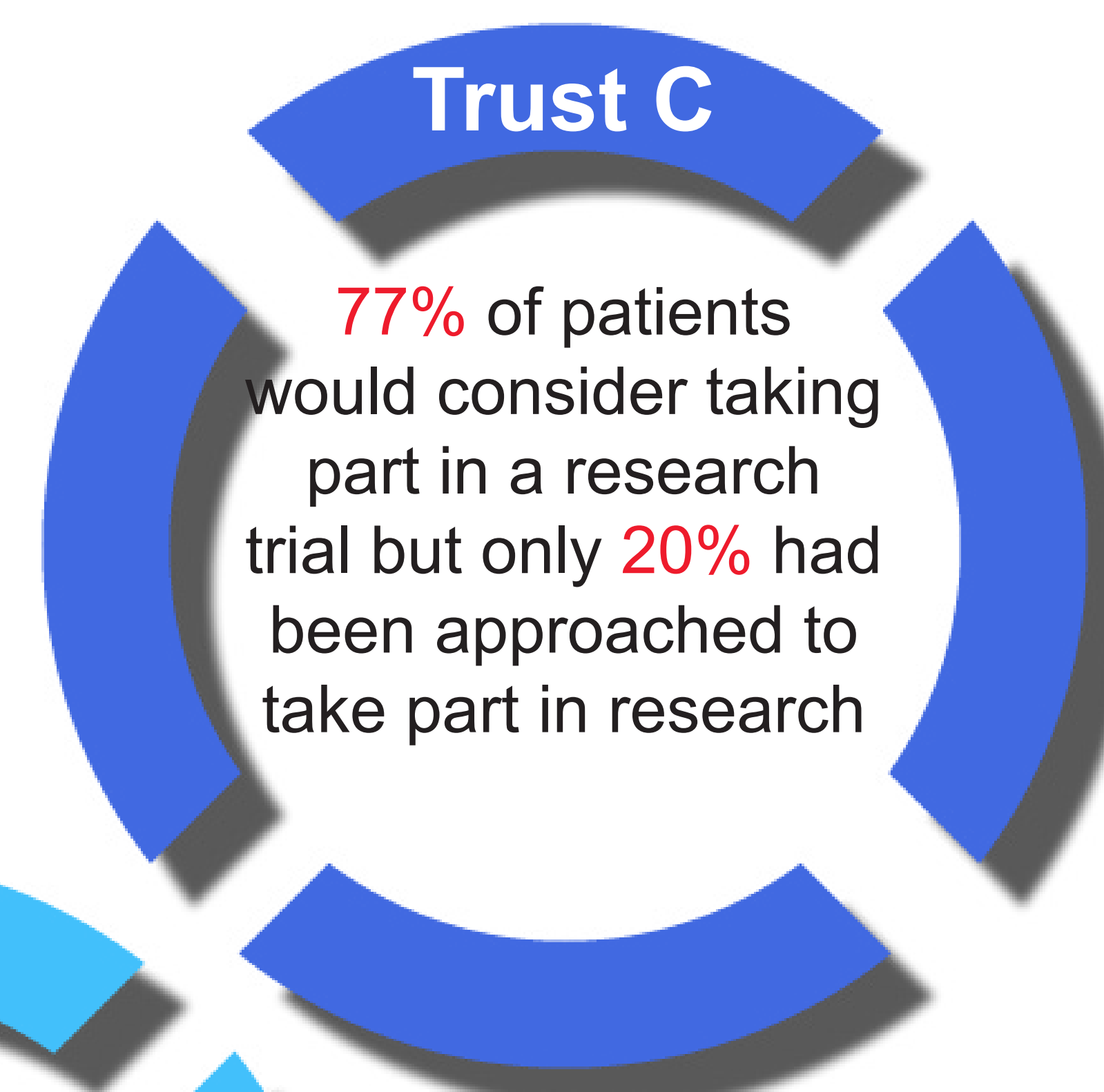
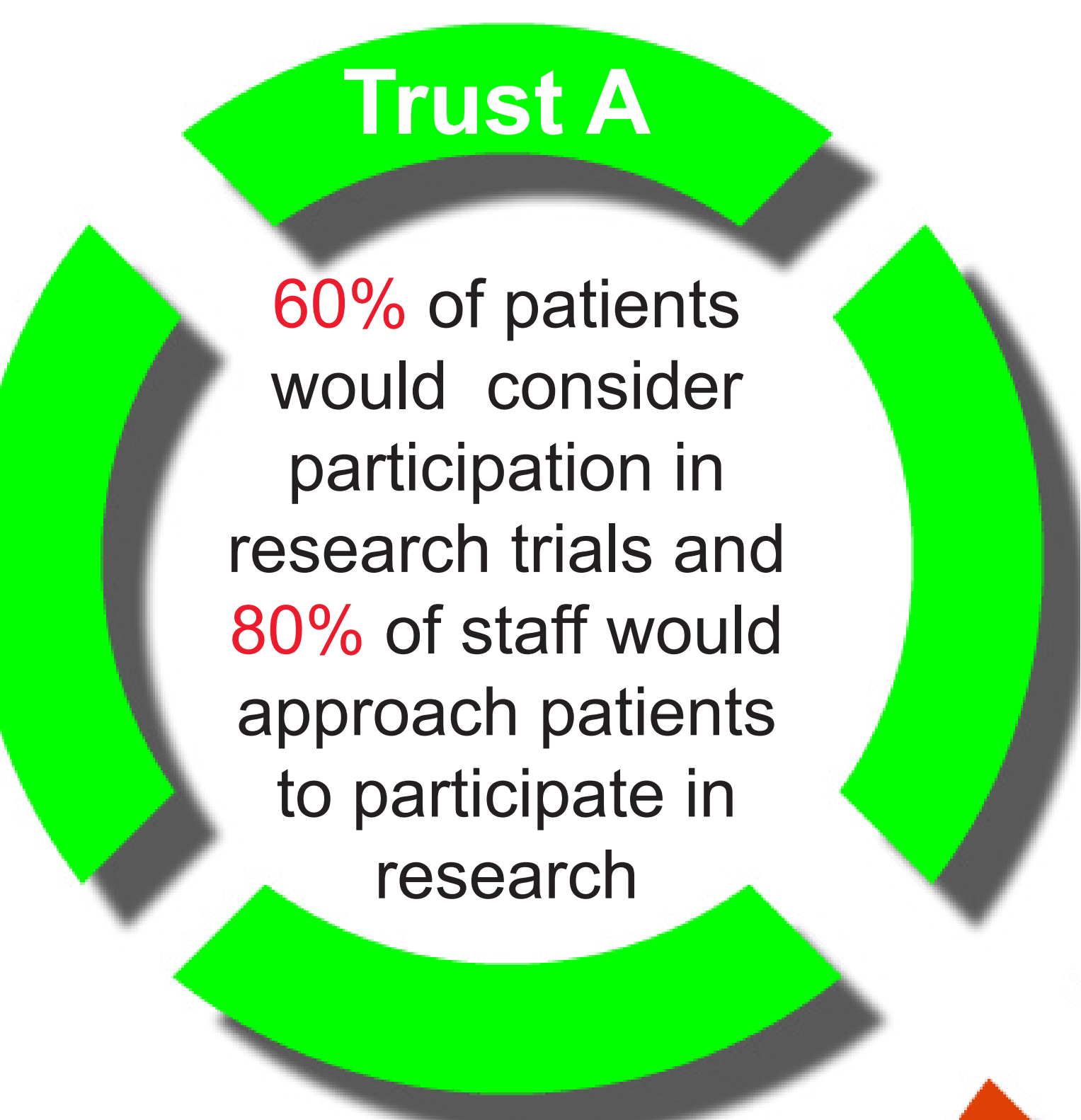
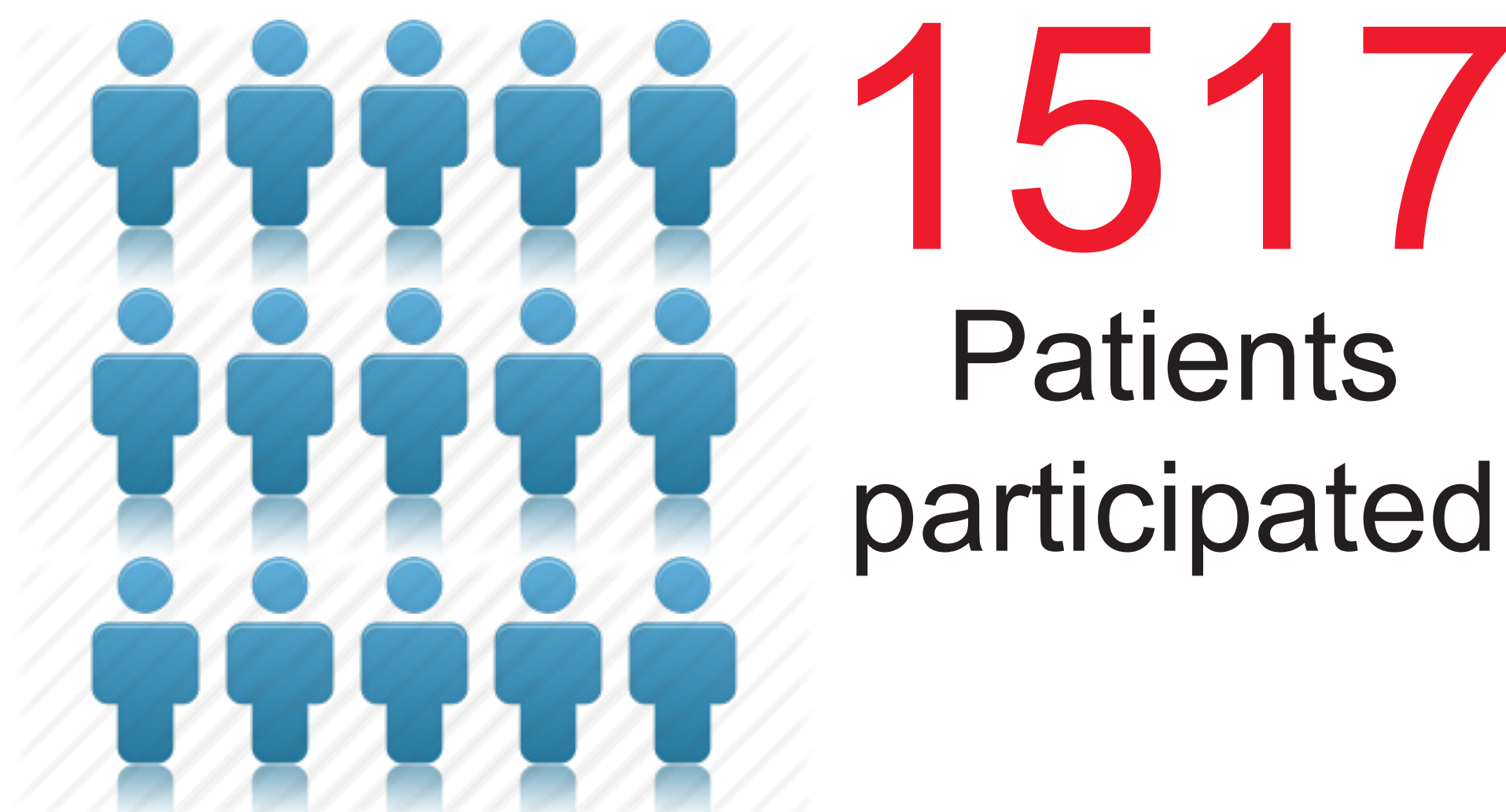
- To increase overall engagement in research activity at all organisational levels in Trusts from Cheshire and Merseyside Comprehensive Local Research Network (C&M CLRN).
- Engagement in research is a key performance indicator of the NIHR (1).
- Networks provide the infrastructure for conducting research in the NHS, allowing patients to benefit from new and better treatments, and giving them the opportunity to participate in studies (2).
- 'Research should be embedded as a core function of the NHS' (3)
- 'Patients should have an informed choice in their treatment options and healthcare decisions' (4)

Methodology

- C&M CLRN Clinical Director & Senior Network Manager met with CEO at Trusts to gauge interest in Engagement Project.
- Discussion between Project Team (PT), R&D staff and Clinical Research Leads at Trust sites to agree approach, ownership, design and timescale for study
- Observational Exercise conducted by PT to determine the extent of visual research information (Mystery Shopper); the awareness of research activity throughout the Trust, and accessibility of information on research information on Trust website.
- Trusts conducted Patient and Staff surveys of research awareness.
- PT provided support with communication and data analysis.
- Trusts collated a report of initial baseline analysis to help inform the development of an Engagement Strategy.

Observational Exercise (Mystery Shopper)

- Overall, very little visible information on research in communal areas
- Little or no information on research accessible on Trust websites
- Front line staff did not know how to refer queries from patients about research studies
- Frontline staff were unaware of R&D department or contacts



Discussion

- Few patients were offered research opportunities in spite of an interest in more information regarding research.
- Staff were unaware of the extent of research activity in Trusts although they appreciated the importance of research
- Many were unaware of key research contacts.
- There is a huge untapped potential for recruitment into research trials

References:

1. Department of Health (2011) The Plan for Growth. HMSO. London.
2. Department of Health (2010) Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS. HMSO. London
3. Health and Social Care Act (2012) HMSO London
4. NHS Constitution (2009) HMSO London

Whose responsibility is this?

How can this be addressed?

What role should the Local Clinical Research Network play?