**Protocol for the Disclosure of Research Findings to GPs**

For any research project that includes screening tests or study procedures of potential research participants, it is an absolute given that informed consent is the only way to recruit and enrol participants. At the same time, researchers have a duty of care to inform GPs about anything that is found in a screening test or study procedure. But individual autonomy and freedoms to make decisions about their own bodies are paramount.

During the recruitment and enrolment process, the following rules of best practice will be followed:

1. Participants must fully understand, before they have given written consent to take part in the study, that once they have signed up they are empowering the researchers to conduct screening tests or study procedures that may bring to light some previously unknown medical issue. Once they have provided written consent it must be made clear that they can withdraw consent and take no further part in the study at any time. Where any issues arise, the affected participant will be fully informed by the researchers about what those issues might be, and the researchers will strongly advise the participant to raise the issue with their GPs.
2. There must be clear statements on the participation information sheet and consent form that explains the process of disclosure to potential participants, e.g. “In the event of researchers becoming concerned for your health from data gathered during screening or study procedures researchers will discuss this with you and strongly advise you to contact your medical physician or GP”, and “I also understand that if any serious underlying health problem is discovered as part of the screening the researchers will discuss it with me, but I am responsible for taking the matter to my medical physician or GP”.
3. Researchers need to ensure they debrief participants who have issues that emerge in screening tests or study procedures, whether those issues are serious enough to exclude them from the research or not. Researchers have a duty of care and a duty of respect to everyone involved in the research process.
4. All research will be compliant with the best practice and ethics policies of relevant learned societies and health organisations (e.g., the NHS).
5. Where participants are also members of staff, researchers will also advise the participants to discuss any issues that have arisen with Occupational Health.