



# | Press Release

## Press release from **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service** and **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Authority** **Making Derbyshire Safer**

### **Derbyshire Firefighters to support national research response by delivering research kits to Derbyshire Patients: COVID-19 patients in Derbyshire among first to take part in urgent research study**

- New study for older people tests effectiveness of existing drugs in treating COVID-19
- Patients receive drugs and study information at home
- Fire Service in Derbyshire mobilised to deliver research kits to patients
- COVID-19 research is taking place in hospitals and GP practices in every county in the East Midlands.

COVID-19 patients in Derbyshire are amongst the first in the country to take part in a new research study, as part of the national research response to the ongoing pandemic.

Research into COVID-19 is helping experts to learn more about the disease and to explore the effectiveness of different treatments, as well as to enable the development of a vaccine.

The PRINCIPLE study has been established to rapidly evaluate the effectiveness of different treatments that could stem the progression of COVID-19 symptoms in older people and help ease the burden on hospitals.

The study, managed nationally by Oxford University's Primary Care Clinical Trials Unit, is one of 32 that has been given urgent public health research status by the Department of Health and Social Care and is now being supported by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The study is also jointly funded by NIHR and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) as part of £20 million of funding made available to researchers to understand more about the disease, test the effectiveness of treatments and develop a vaccine.

GP practices in Derbyshire will be supporting patients to take part in the study, which is currently investigating whether an existing drug, hydroxychloroquine, can prevent the disease from progressing.

email: [enquiries@derbys-fire.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@derbys-fire.gov.uk)  
[www.derbys-fire.gov.uk](http://www.derbys-fire.gov.uk)

Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive  
Sean Frayne  
MBA GFireE



The drug has previously been used to treat conditions such as malaria and arthritis, and this study will soon test the effectiveness of other drugs.

The following GP practices in Derbyshire will be taking part:

- Somercotes Medical Centre
- The Valleys Medical Partnership
- Sett Valley Medical Centre

The study takes place in the community, with patients receiving the drugs and vital study information at home. As COVID-19 patients are being asked to isolate, Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service is delivering the necessary items to patients to enable them to take part. This activity is being coordinated and led by the Clinical Research Network (CRN) East Midlands Primary Care Research team, part of the NIHR.

PRINCIPLE is focusing treatments on those who are most at risk from serious complications from COVID-19, with the aim of finding existing drugs that can help them to get better sooner at home and ease the pressure on hospitals. The study is open to people aged 65 or over, or 50-64 with an underlying health condition.

Dr Simon Royal, CRN East Midlands Specialty Lead for Primary Care research, said:

“We’re delighted that GP practices and patients across the East Midlands are involved in vital research into COVID-19. It is only by conducting research that we can properly understand COVID-19, which will enable us to develop treatments and vaccines for it.

“We need as many people as possible to take part in COVID-19 research and we are incredibly grateful to all patients and healthcare professionals for their commitment to research at this extraordinary time.

“I also want to thank the fire service for going above and beyond and helping us to deliver this research, which shows how people and organisations across the county are coming together to support each other.”

Station Manager Nathan Stevens from Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service, said:

“We are really pleased to be able to support this valuable work by delivering research kits to patients. These will hopefully prove invaluable in helping to further the research studies as part of the national response to COVID-19.”

**ENDS**

## Notes for Editors

1. For further information please contact Steve Clapperton, Communications and Engagement Lead, CRN East Midlands at [steve.clapperton@nihr.ac.uk](mailto:steve.clapperton@nihr.ac.uk) or on 07812 268 230

2. PRINCIPLE study full title: Platform Randomised trial of INterventions against COVID-19 in older people (PRINCIPLE)

3. More information about the PRINCIPLE study can be found at: [www.principletrial.org](http://www.principletrial.org)

4. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is the nation's largest funder of health and care research. The NIHR:

- Funds, supports and delivers high quality research that benefits the NHS, public health and social care
- Engages and involves patients, carers and the public in order to improve the reach, quality and impact of research
- Attracts, trains and supports the best researchers to tackle the complex health and care challenges of the future
- Invests in world-class infrastructure and a skilled delivery workforce to translate discoveries into improved treatments and services
- Partners with other public funders, charities and industry to maximise the value of research to patients and the economy

The NIHR was established in 2006 to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research, and is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care. In addition to its national role, the NIHR supports applied health research for the direct and primary benefit of people in low- and middle-income countries, using UK aid from the UK government.

*Please visit <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/covid-19/> to learn about other studies that have been given urgent public health status and the single, national prioritisation process that has been established to prevent duplication of effort and to ensure that the resources and capacity of the health and care system to support COVID-19 research are not exceeded.*