



GUILDFORD AND SOUTH WEST
SURREY VOLUNTARY GROUP
NEWSLETTER

November
2007

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ARE YOU CLEAR ABOUT YOUR EYES?

Every diabetes patient in Surrey over 12 years of age will be offered an appointment with the Diabetes Retinopathy Screening Service—the target is the end of March.

Plans are even in hand to offer some appointments for people in the Guildford catchment area over the weekends of 1st December to 16th.

Letters are going out in batches asking for people to contact the team to arrange an appointment. With only two phone lines they are constantly engaged—you might find it best to ring out of hours and leave a message and the team will ring you the next day.

If you haven't had a letter, it should arrive over the next few months.

It is critical that the screening is done once a year and the PCT is

investing a lot of time and money in the Service in order to catch up with where we ought to be. If you have been having the screening regularly you will be transferred to the new system at CEDAR after your next visit.

The screening involves dilating the pupils with drops in order for a photograph to be taken of the retina using a digital camera.

The photos are then assessed to see if there are any problems and your GP would contact you if there were.

This is different from the tests that an optician can do and you should not stop your regular eye tests.

In the meantime, it is important to be aware of your eyes and report any change of sight or feeling to your care team.

TIME TO SPEAK BLUNTLY — ABOUT SHARPS

Diabetes UK put out a 'position statement' in July 2007 on the *Safe disposal of needles and lancets (Sharps)*.

They are aware that people with diabetes across the UK are not all able to access safe and convenient sharps disposal methods and are calling on local councils, healthcare organisations and service commissioners to work together to

ensure that free, convenient and safe systems of sharps disposal are implemented locally.

A disposal box is available on prescription. In some cases the GP surgery will dispose of the contents for you. In others you need to request your local council to collect—they can charge you.

Let the editor know how you handle sharps.

Meetings are held on the first Monday of every other month.

Our venue for meetings is CEDAR, the Centre for Endocrinology, Diabetes and Research, at the Royal Surrey County Hospital.

Meetings start at 7.30pm. If there is a speaker, that part of the evening begins at 8pm.

If you come by car, parking for 2-3 hours is £2.50 in the hospital car park, but there are a number of parking places for blue badge holders right at the back of the Centre. And staff car parks are quite empty at that time of day.

If you come by train, there are regular buses from the Station.

If you have email?
Send me an email and you can have this Newsletter that way.

If you have items for the next issue please send them by the 11th January 2008 to:

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LOOKING AFTER ME

The Expert Patient Programme is now offering courses for carers as well as for the patient themselves.

The new courses are called *Looking after me* and are for people who care for someone living with a long-term health condition or disability.

Like the *Living well* courses for people who themselves live with a long term health condition or disability, they take place over 2½ hours per week for six weeks and are led by people who live with long term health conditions themselves.

If you are interested contact 01483 783100 or 01252 305855 for further information.

FUND RAISING SUCCESS

The street collection in Cranleigh raised £200.15. An excellent result. Thanks to all who helped.

As a result of this and other recent fund raising efforts we are sending another £1,000 to Diabetes UK to be split equally between research and their work with children.

AND THE NEXT THING IS ...

We will be having a jewellery and pewter stall at Godalming Town Fair on 1st December. It was a great success last year.

Please contact Hazel Barnby on 01483 566012 if you have any items of jewellery that you could spare.

Next Meeting

Monday, 3rd December 2007

Namibian Safari—a feast of photographs

Speaker: Shirley Hampson

Plus our Christmas Social



Future meetings

Monday, 4th February 2008

Blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar complications

Speaker: Gwen Hall, Diabetes Specialist Nurse

Monday, 7th April 2008

Insulin pumps

Speaker: Dr Moira Harrison.
plus AGM

Monday, 2nd June 2008

Report on regional eye screening unit. What is it all about?

Speaker: Reg Parsons

Monday, 4th August 2008

Social event
