



Two London PCTs meet national targets set for Diabetic Retinopathy Screening

In April 2006, NHS Westminster (formerly known as Westminster Primary Care Trust), in conjunction with NHS Kensington and Chelsea, introduced a population-wide Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Programme. Paul Crooks, a Public Health Commissioning Manager at NHS Westminster explains how the service is implemented and the results achieved.



Before the new Diabetic Retinopathy Screening programme started not all people with diabetes registered with GPs in the two boroughs were being screened. Under the new programme, all people with diabetes registered with GPs in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea are being invited to attend for screening once a year - unless they are already under the care of an ophthalmologist for diabetic retinopathy.

Screening is being provided by 1st Retinal Screen (a private company) and is the first arrangement of its kind for the PCT. Screening is provided at five sites including the Westminster Diabetes Centre, which opened in November 2005 as a community-based one-stop shop for people with diabetes. Previously these patients would have been treated in hospital. PCT staff work alongside 1st Retinal Screen to ensure that people who have sight-threatening retinopathy are promptly referred for further treatment at a local specialist hospital – either the Western Eye Hospital run by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust or Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.

NHS Westminster's Director of Public Health, Dr Margaret Guy, is pleased with the results. She says:

“We are now meeting the targets that were set by the Department of Health for retinopathy screening. All people aged 12 years and over who are known to have diabetes are offered an eye screen every year using digital photography. This is having a big impact on the quality of life of our patients, helping reduce long-term complications associated with diabetes such as blindness. All our GP practices in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea - have signed up to the programme.”

In January 2009, NHS Westminster and NHS Kensington & Chelsea extended their DRS contract with 1st Retinal Screen for a further five years.

**For further information on Diabetic Retinopathy Screening contact:
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