

West Herts Diabetic Eye Screening Programme

For further information please contact eye.screening@hct.nhs.uk

Hertfordshire Community Trust - Our core values

Care - We put patients at the heart of everything we do
Respect - We treat people with dignity and respect
Quality - We strive for excellence and effectiveness at all times
Confidence - We do what we say we will do
Improve - We will improve through continuous learning and innovation



What is the approach?

The West Herts Diabetic Eye Screening Programme offers digital photography to the back of the eyes once a year to all patients diagnosed with diabetes, age 12 and over, registered with GPs in West Hertfordshire. The programme is in its 10th year and serves a diabetic population of circa 26,000. Screening is performed Monday to Friday at eleven venues across West Hertfordshire to ensure ease of access for patients.

The eye screening team, both clinical and administrative, are dedicated to ensuring patients feel comfortable and are kept fully informed at each stage of the screening process. At every stage of the pathway, patients are followed up to ensure their eyes are checked for diabetic retinopathy.

What are the aims?

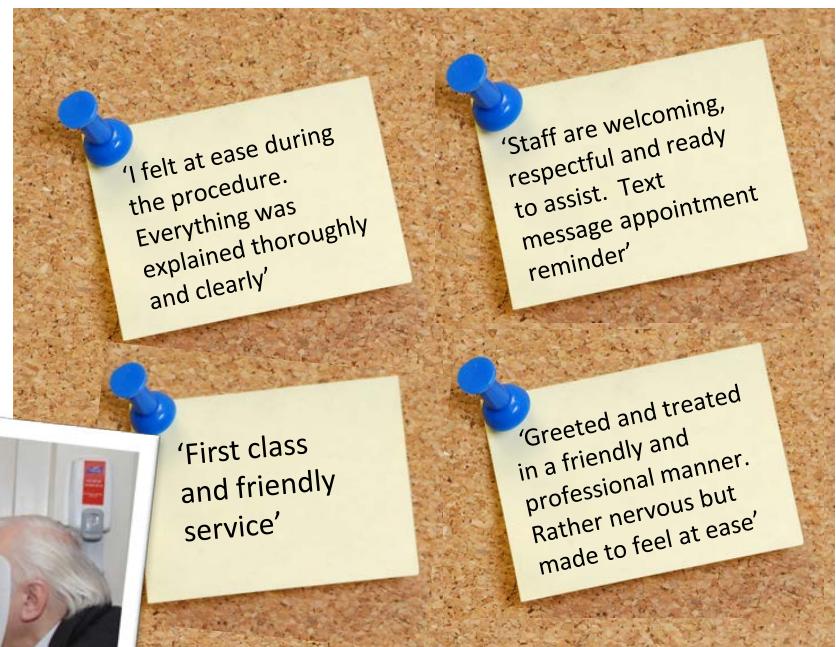
Diabetic eye screening is a national initiative which aims to screen all eligible patients to prevent loss of sight due to diabetic retinopathy, a known complication of diabetes. Patients with diabetic retinopathy may not experience any symptoms in the early stages. However, when symptoms do present treatment may only halt the progress of the condition and it may not be possible to restore a patient's sight.

Regular annual eye screening enables the screening team to identify and monitor diabetic changes in a patient's eyes. If necessary, patients are referred to their local hospital eye service for further investigation and treatment to prevent worsening of the condition, or potentially, significant loss of sight.



What are staff and users experiences?

“ Thank you so much for the exceptional service you gave to my mother. You couldn't have been more helpful in ensuring she was given an appointment to suit her as well as allaying her fears. Your team were professional, knowledgeable and very kind. ”



What are the costs?

The West Herts Diabetic Eye Screening Programme supports nearly 24,500 diabetic patients; approximately 2,500 new referrals are received each year. Records show that in 2011 there were circa 299,00 partially sighted or blind patients in England; the cost to the NHS was @ £1.93 billion, an average of £64,500 per patient per year.

It has been estimated that partial sight and blindness in adults costs the UK economy in the region of £22 billion per year, however it costs just £35 to screen a patient each year which includes administration costs, photographing the eyes, grading the images and issuing results.

What are the benefits?

Until recently diabetic retinopathy was the leading cause of blindness in the adult population in the UK, however the impact of regular eye screening has successfully reduced the incidence of loss of sight due to diabetes.

Abnormal screening results can also alert a patient's GP and diabetologist that their patient's diabetic control may not be optimum; early intervention could prevent other life changing complications associated with the disease, eg neuropathy which can result in lower limb amputation.

What are the impacts?

When someone loses their sight there is significant impact on their quality of life, as well as those of their partners and carers.

If diabetic retinopathy changes are detected in the early stages the patient can be referred for effective intervention and treatment, enabling them to maintain their lifestyle, their employment and independence.

Sight threatening retinopathy is a known complication of diabetes and the benefits of regular eye screening cannot be emphasised enough