

LIONS EYE HEALTH PROGRAMME

It is now more than 12 years since the beginning of the Lions Eye Health Programme and much exceptional sight-saving work has already been done by Lions clubs across the Multiple District. The original programme was designed to harness the incredible power of Lions, working in their own communities to make a difference to public awareness and ultimately to the amount of unnecessary blindness resulting from the two leading causes of preventable blindness – glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy - suffered in MD 105.

Over the years the programme has grown and developed to cover macular degeneration and low vision services and Lions have made a significant and important difference in all these areas. Nevertheless, the need is still great and there are still hundreds of thousands of people in the UK and Ireland who are at risk of losing their sight, quality of life and independence simply because they are not aware of the need for regular routine eye testing. Many more who suffer from the uncontrollable causes of blindness are needlessly living limited lives where a professional low vision assessment and provision of appropriate aids to living would make all the difference.

We have a number of Partners (International Glaucoma Association, Diabetes UK and the Macular Disease Society) with whom we have worked in the preparation of literature and posters and a sample pack will be issued to you as soon as the reprinting of the literature is completed. Clubs are able to order the literature and posters and an order form is attached for information. This order form is to be made available of the MD 105 website shortly and is on an Excel spreadsheet that calculates the costs.

Lions Clubs are certainly able to make a difference with the Lions Eye Health Programme, not just to those people at risk of preventable blindness, but also to those who are suffering impaired vision and reduced quality of life due to vision losses they have already suffered.

This is the easiest of programmes to deliver, as there are no presentations to give or difficult questions to answer. It really is as simple as handing out leaflets and making sure that your local optometrist (optician) practices, GP surgeries, pharmacies, hospitals and libraries have stocks of the leaflets and posters on the walls.

Lions have always had a commitment to prevent blindness and to alleviate the effects of unavoidable blindness. This is one of the best and most effective programmes for these purposes ever developed for this Multiple District. It is also a great way to raise the profile of Lions Clubs and to recruit new members.

Remember: If the loss of sight is preventable, let us continue to prevent it.

August 2011.

I call on you to be Knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness' (Helen Keller – 1925)