



June 12th, 2017

## Diabetic screening appointment plea

Patients in South Tyneside and Sunderland are being reminded in Diabetes Week (June 11th to 17th) of the risks of not attending for diabetic screening.

The diabetic screening team at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust is responsible for screening approximately 24,000 people at various community health locations across both areas and, in 2016, 2,857 patients failed to turn up for their appointment.

Diabetic screening service manager Helen Bone said: "That equates to approximately 140 whole days of clinics where the equipment was set up and the staff were ready but nobody came. Missing out on diabetic eye screening increases the risk of sight loss and unused appointment slots are a costly burden on precious NHS resources."

The eye disease Diabetic Retinopathy, a complication of diabetes, is one of the leading causes of blindness in the working population in the developed world. If left untreated, it can lead to sight loss, which can have a devastating impact on individuals and their families.

Mrs Bone added: "Non-attendance for screening reduces the chances of detecting disease early. Left unchecked, Diabetic Retinopathy can reach an advanced stage without the person being aware of symptoms."

The screening test involves taking high quality digital photographs of the retina in order to detect any changes or damage to blood vessels. People with diabetes in South Tyneside and Sunderland also receive a full check of their feet as part of the screening visit. Diabetes can reduce the blood supply to the feet and cause a loss of feeling known as peripheral neuropathy, which can mean foot injuries do not heal well and go unnoticed.

This year, the theme for Diabetes Week, June 11th to 17th, is Know Diabetes. Fight Diabetes. People with diabetes are being urged to share their knowledge to help others with the condition and everyone is encouraged to fight the challenges that diabetes presents.

South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's diabetes screening staff will be among those giving presentations at an 'Action on Sugar' event organised by the South Tyneside Diabetes UK group on Wednesday, June 14th, at Hedworth Hall, Dean Road, South Shields, from 10am to 2pm.  
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*Pictured above: Russell Martin, deputy lead for South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust's diabetic screening service*

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by Kay Jordan

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