



## The Expert Patients Programme

### From patient to person

A programme to help people self manage their long-term health condition has been launched in west Kent by Kent Community Health NHS Trust.

The Expert Patients Programme is a self-management course, which gives people the confidence, skills and knowledge to self manage their condition and be more in control of their lives. A long-term health condition is anything which you will have for life; and can range from Asthma and Diabetes to Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Fibromyalgia.

The courses offer techniques to support people living with long-term health conditions, improving their quality of life, providing greater control over their conditions and increasing their confidence. Courses are aimed at a wide range of people, reflecting diversity in terms of different health conditions, age groups, geographical locations and ethnicity. The course is led by trained volunteer tutors, who themselves live with one or more long-term health conditions, with each session lasting 2½ hours.

A course will be delivered in Maidstone, starting on Friday 2 March for six sessions. It will be held at the Lenham Community Centre, Maidstone from 1.00pm to 3.30pm.

Claire Doran, Expert Patients Programme Co-ordinator (west Kent) said: “We are delighted that we are now able to offer this course in west Kent. Evidence shows that GP visits, A&E attendance and outpatient visits all decrease as a result of a person attending an EPP course. But more importantly, the individual feels more confident in managing their own condition, with research showing that it can improve diet, help to meet new people, gain better control of one’s emotions and have improved self-awareness and self-worth.”

People who have attended the course have said:

'I really enjoyed doing the course, it has enabled me to look at certain aspects of my life – before I did the course I felt like a hamster on a wheel just going round in circles.'

'I have found the course I attended to be of such great value. In fact for me it was a life changing experience'

Should you want to know more or if you know of anyone who could benefit from the course, please contact Claire Doran:

[Claire.Doran@kentcht.nhs.uk](mailto:Claire.Doran@kentcht.nhs.uk) or call 01233 667810

See the DVD describing the Programme on our website: [www.kentcht.nhs.uk](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk) and click on the 'video' link.

Supporting people with long-term conditions to self manage is a national objective of the NHS and the Expert Patients Programme is a key aspect of this strategy.