



CROYDON EPILEPSY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2017

The year has nearly come to the end and the society would like to wish all its members a **Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.**

During the year I had a number of conversations with members about how they had been personally affected by changes in benefits since the **Disability Living Allowance** has gradually been phased out.

In November there was some **changes in Personal Independence Payments (PIP) Assessor Guidelines.**

Both the **Universal Credit** and **PIP benefits** were introduced in 2013.

Universal Credit aimed to bring together a range of working-age benefits into a single payment. The PIP benefit was brought in to replace the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people aged 16 to 64.

PIP helps towards some of the extra costs because of a long term ill-health condition or disability. It's based on how a person's condition affects them, not the condition they have. It's designed to be a more sustainable benefit and make sure support continues to reach those who face the greatest challenges to taking part in everyday life. However, people with epilepsy were more adversely affected than any other disability group. Please refer to the article below for further details.

In the Autumn Newsletter we mentioned a local support group called **Croydon People First** which is attended by a couple of our members. The group provides support for those with learning disabilities including those with epilepsy. We were informed in December that the monthly meeting hub including a coffee bar which they have run for the last two years, has currently been put on hold, subject to receiving the necessary funding and support for 2018. It ran on the first Wednesday of the month at St Michael's All Angels Church Hall, Poplar Walk, Croydon. However, in 2018 Croydon People First are introducing "**Make it Happen**" which will provide day out activities. If you are interested in attending these or if you can want to support the group's campaign to continue the monthly meeting hub please contact Croydon People First on 020 8253 7096 or

Email: info@croydonpeoplefirst.org.uk .Web:www.croydonpeoplefirst.org.uk



At the end of November I visited Kew Gardens to see the Gardens light up for an unforgettable after-dark festive trail of lights. See photos below. It runs from 22nd November 2017 to 1st January 2018. For further details refer to <https://www.kew.org/kew-Gardens/whats-on/Christmas-at-Kew>.

Please continue to contact us if you have any questions relating to epilepsy and we will endeavour to answer them.

Both Marco, our Chairman and myself wish all our members all the best for 2018.

Dawn Gibbons
Honorary Secretary



Changes in Personal Independence Payments (PIP) Assessor Guidelines.

New government changes in November to PIP assessor guidelines may improve the claims process for people with epilepsy and could help more people with epilepsy get access to this benefit.

The government's update to the guidance should help assessors better understand how epilepsy affects people's daily lives. This move follows criticisms of the current system, calling the PIP assessment process 'not fit for purpose'. Epilepsy Action has also been campaigning for improvements and urging MPs to fight for a fairer system.

Ms Mordaunt, the Minister of State for disabled people, health and work quoted:

"This will increase entitlement for a number of both new and existing claimants, largely those with conditions such as epilepsy, which affect consciousness.

"Epilepsy Action is in the process of getting more details from the government about how these changes will affect people with epilepsy who receive or have applied for PIP. Please refer to <https://www.epilepsy.org.uk> for further details.

PIP is designed to help disabled people with the extra costs of their condition.

As mentioned the government introduced this to replace the Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

In October, DWP data showed that 3 in 5 people with epilepsy who received DLA had their PIP award refused or reduced. The rate of reduced or refused award was higher for epilepsy than for any other condition. This recent legislation will hopefully help to address this imbalance.



A Christmas poem to get you in the mood

The Joy of Giving

Somehow, not only for Christmas,
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others
Is the joy that comes back to you;
And the more you spend in blessing
The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing
Returns to make you glad.

By John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)

John Greenleaf Whittier was an American Quaker poet and advocate of the abolition of slavery in the United States. Frequently listed as one of the Fireside Poets, he was influenced by the Scottish poet Robert Burns.



Useful Information:

Croydon Health Services Neurology Department:

If you are a local support group requesting more information on epilepsy and for a speaker to come to your group to talk about epilepsy and the support available to those who may have epilepsy or be a carer for someone who has the condition. Please email for general enquiries ch-trspecialistmedicine1@nhs.net. The Neurology department includes providing support to those with epilepsy. There are two epilepsy nurses working in the department and they be able to visit your group and provide such a service.

There is a Epilepsy Nurse Hotline/Advice telephone number which is open to GP's and patients (who are already known to the Epilepsy Service). If you are registered with a Croydon GP and under the care of a Croydon Neurologist and feel this service would benefit you please discuss with your GP who would be able to provide you with the number.

Croydon Age UK offer a range of practical home services for everyone living in the local area, especially those in later life. These include : Handy person, Home Help, Trades Persons List and Nail Care. Charges do apply. Tel no: 0208 683 7120, email homeservices@ageukcroydon.org.uk, www.ageukcroydon.org.uk



Croydon Epilepsy Society Contact Details

Please contact us by phone or email as we no longer have a Day Centre on a Wednesday morning. Please leave a message on our mobile no or text us and we will get back to you asap.

Further information can be provided by the following national support groups if you need urgent support:

Epilepsy Action www.epilepsy.org.uk Helpline 0808 800 5050
Epilepsy Society www.epilepsysociety.org.uk Helpline 01494 60140

Address: 64 Newlands Woods, Bardolph Avenue, Croydon CRO 9JR.
Mobile No: 07926372711

Email Address: croydonepilepsy@gmail.com

Visit our Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/croydonepilepsysociety

Web Site: www.croydonepilepsysociety.org

Twitter: Follow us @croydonepilepsy (<https://twitter.com/croydonepilepsy>)

Elected Members

President

Professor F M C Besag, FRCP, FRCPsych, FRCPCH.

Vice - Presidents

Rev G Derriman
Gavin Barwell
Yvonne Green

Honorary Vice - Presidents

Dr P B C Fenwick
Mrs Rosemary Aselford
Mrs Rita Richmond

Committee Members

Mr Marco Valencia Chairman
Ms Dawn Gibbons Honorary Secretary
Mr Richard Ruffell Honorary Treasurer
Mr Stephen M Marshall

