

Appendix: Expert Patients Programme

– Details

This is a **NHS** service that you can attend, without any referral from your GP, and usually without long waiting lists.

The **NHS Expert Patients Programme** is a government initiative to help people living with chronic or long term health conditions, to maintain their health and improve their quality of life through self management courses led by people like themselves. It is special in that it is conducted and attended by people sharing skills and experience with other people who are having to deal with similar matters to ourselves. Some attendees go on to become trained volunteer course leaders.

It is a course designed to help us take control of our condition and make a difference in our lives.

It is for anyone who is living with a long term health condition, regardless of what it is. People with conditions, such as arthritis, heart disease, asthma, MS and liver disease have all benefited.

The course is structured and offers skills to:

- Manage the symptoms.

- Deal with secondary anger, fear, frustration and depression.

- Manage pain.

- Develop coping skills.

- Relax.

- Eat healthily.

- Work more closely with those caring for us.

- Plan for the future.

It is free and costs nothing, except for the commitment to attend regularly, the six weekly sessions, which each last two and half hours (including breaks). It is varied and enjoyable. There are brief talks, discussions and thought provoking sessions.

The course adds to, and complements, the important information that may already have been supplied to you by medical personnel, about how to cope with your medical condition. It does this, by giving you the chance to find out what you can do for yourself. The training is led by people who themselves have a long term condition.

Contacts for the nearest and next available course are:

NHS Expert Patients Programme - Hampshire

Expert Patients Programme Co-ordinator: Tina Coulter

Fareham & Gosport NHS Primary Care Trust

Unit 180, Fareham Reach, 166 Fareham Road, Gosport, PO13 0FH

Tel: 01329 226 110

Email: tina.coulter@ports.nhs.uk

Web Site: www.expertpatients.nhs.uk

NHS Expert Patients Programme – Southampton & Isle of Wight

Expert Patients Programme Co-ordinator: Bev

Newman

Southampton NHS Primary Care Trust

Unit 418a, Solent Business centre, Millbrook Road West,
Millbrook,

Southampton, SO15 0HW

Tel: 02380 777 608

Email: beverley.newman@nhsepp.org

Web Site: www.expertpatients.nhs.uk

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