

# A CHRISTMAS SPECTACLE

## ADVICE PACK



*"I realised I need to get my eyes sorted. I can't cope anymore and I knew I needed to get glasses. I went into an opticians but they wouldn't give me any because I don't have that kind of money and I'm not allowed free glasses. I don't know what I would have done without Vision Care. I've got glasses! This is the best thing that's happened to me for ages!"*

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## 1 WHY GET INVOLVED?

Vision Care for Homeless People's network of eight city centre branch clinics is helping around 10% of an estimated 20,000 homeless people across England. In the capital each year, we also partner with Crisis UK to run the Crisis at Christmas Opticians and Eye Care Service. In the course of a week, operating from 10 centres across London, we provide eye tests and glasses to around 300 people.

But what happens in your city? We know from our own research that homeless people are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to obtaining sight tests, glasses and eye care. Only a third of homeless people are eligible for a free NHS service when they visit the optician, so most of them cannot afford the glasses they need.

They also suffer a higher level of eye problems than the general population. They often find high street opticians difficult to access and are prone to losing or breaking their glasses through violence they suffer on the street. As a result, one third of homeless people has never had their eyes tested and a further third not for at least ten years.

Join us in reaching out to homeless people this Christmas. Your practice can partner with a local homeless day centre to provide eye tests and glasses. You could open for a special session and arrange transport to your practice. Alternatively, if you are a domiciliary provider you could take your testing kit into the centre. Many of them run special Christmas sessions.

This advice pack is a how-to guide to help you provide a service this Christmas.

## 2 MESSAGE FROM ELAINE STYLES – CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

“This is exciting. It's how Vision Care for Homeless People started. Back in 1997, I offered to go into one of the Crisis at Christmas Centres and do eye tests and provide glasses. The same service now uses 80 volunteers and helps over 300 people in London. I would encourage you to set up your own project this Christmas. It's a joy to see how grateful people are when we give them much needed glasses. In stark comparison to the commercialisation of Christmas, this is such a genuine opportunity to give a gift that really makes a difference to someone's life.”

## 3 MAIN REQUIREMENTS

As a practice, you will have most of what you need to set up a service already. However, it will still cost you something. We are asking you to waive the cost of your service for every homeless person you invite to this special clinic, as it's likely most of them will not be GOS eligible.

You may choose to cover the cost of glazing yourself, but you could ask your glazer if they would glaze free of charge.

Here is a list of the main additional things you will need to arrange. There is a full tick list for you to use at the end of the pack.

### 3.1 For a one off in-practice clinic for homeless people.

- Recruit a small team to organise the day, perform the eye tests and dispense.
- Find a local centre for homeless or vulnerable people to work with you to arrange the special Christmas Spectacle clinic.
- Organise transport to and from the day centre. Maybe a local taxi firm can help.
- Arrange a selection of frames and glazing.
- Arrange a collection day when you go to the centre to fit glasses.

### 3.2 For a one off clinic for homeless people in a day centre.

- Recruit a small team to organise the day, perform the eye tests and dispense.
- Borrow a domiciliary eye testing kit.
- Find a local centre for homeless or vulnerable people to work with you to arrange the special clinic.
- Arrange a selection of frames and glazing.
- Arrange a collection day when you go to the centre to fit glasses.

## 4 WORKING WITH YOUR LOCAL HOMELESS DAY CENTRE

Eye care is often overlooked by both homeless people and the agencies that help them. Take the opportunity to explain to them the importance of eye care. You can use our one-pager “Advice on Helping Homeless People to obtain glasses.”

- Find local centres on google, or search [Homeless Link's database](#).
- You may wish to link with your local Crisis at Christmas event. They are running in Edinburgh, Newcastle, South Wales, Birmingham and Coventry.
- Contact and visit the centre to see what services they are running at Christmas and whether you can work with them.
- Check out the facilities to see where you will be testing and/or dispensing.
- Assess the risks for your team and patients.

## 5 CLAIMING GOS FEES AND VOUCHERS

If you are a domiciliary provider and are going into a day centre to do sight tests, you are very unlikely to be able to claim NHS fees or vouchers because of the three-week notice rule and the requirement that the patient has a medical condition, which prevents them from attending a high street opticians unattended. Homelessness is not a medical condition. VCHP has trialled a mobile service going into a day centre and even with a lot of organisation only found 12% were eligible. You will find it much simpler to provide a free of charge private service.

If you are providing the service from your own practice and you have an NHS mandatory services contract, you should be able to claim from NHS England for eligible patients. Experience from VCHP's clinics would predict you will find between 17% and 66% are eligible.

For approximately two thirds of the patients at your in-practice special clinic, essentially, you will be providing a private optician service with a difference – you will not be charging the patients but covering the cost yourself somehow. Gifts in kind and fundraising can help offset the cost to you.

We recommend you notify your NHS Area Team of what you are planning, if it involves a temporary alteration of the time you provide GOS services.

Homeless people do not need a permanent address to be eligible. They can put the address of a day centre, a temporary day centre or even the practice address on the GOS form, with a note alongside saying “No Fixed Abode”

## 6 EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

### 6.1 Supplies and services

We have found the optical industry to be very generous in giving supplies for a Christmas Service. You can but ask. You will need:

- Glazing – ask you usual glazing lab or an optician that glazes in-house.
- Frames – we use a simple selection of 12 frames to choose from.
- Cases and cloths
- Ready readers

### 6.2 Kit for testing in a homeless day centre

You can ask optometrists to bring their own (but check if they have them):

- Oph and ret
- Cross cyls
- Flippers

Domiciliary opticians will often lend their eye test kits to use for a Christmas Service. You will need:

- Tonometer – an i-Care tonometer or Perkins
- Trial frame
- Test chart
- Trial lenses

You will also need to take with you:

- Hand mirror
- PD rule
- Extension Lead
- Tape measure
- Medications. A means to dispose of used medications and tonometer heads.

- Hand disinfection and surface wipes
- Stationary – record cards, GOS18 pad, patient information leaflets, clinic activity log, glasses order form etc.

In the appendix, there are checklists of the equipment, supplies, forms, and notices you will need to take with you.

When you notify us of your planned clinic, we will give you access to a DropBox folder of sample policies, instruction and forms. Excel versions of the appendices are available on the DropBox.

### **6.3 Kit for distributing glasses on a collection visit to the day centre**

On your collection day, you will need to take everything you need to fit glasses.

- Glazed spectacles
- Frames heater
- Px. Record cards
- Cases and cloths
- Dispensing tools

See the full list in the appendix.

## **7 PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY**

### **7.1 Promoting your practice**

A Christmas Spectacle is a great opportunity to shout about your practice.

- Please tell us when and where you are running your special clinic.
- Tell us why you are doing it, who is involved and send some pictures. We can shout about it too.
- Tell your local press, do posts on your social channels, get on local radio

### **7.2 Recruiting homeless patients**

You will need to agree with your local day centre how you will promote the service to their clients. Talk about potential numbers and how they will be managed.

- Will you or the centre promote the service beforehand?
- Will the centre make appointments with clients just on the day, first come first served?
- Could you or they do a triage? When was your last eye test? Eye problems?
- Could you help any that are disappointed another time?



### 7.3 Fundraising

You can fundraise to pay for any expenses you incur in running your Christmas Spectacle event. Here's some ideas:

Apply to local charitable trusts.	Set up a fundraising page on GoFundMe	Engage with local faith and community groups.
Get on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked-In, and local media.	Ask local companies to donate or to do a staff event	Hold a dress down and non- uniform day
Wash cars, cut lawns, bake cakes, paint pictures, knit hats, make cards	Gigs, street parties, garden parties, parades, street theatre and flash mobs.	Sponsored group event: walk, cycle, swim, sing, litter-pick or dance.
Get your mates to pay you to be the driver so you are Today's Tea Totaller.	Make an Amazon wish list of the supplies you need.	Organise a casino evening, a snail-racing event or a barn dance.
Donate the proceeds of your car boot or eBay sale	Apply to local supermarkets' donation schemes	Open your house or garden, ask for donations then sell tea and cakes
Organise an open day at your clinic	Have a Collection in your practice.	Hold a bake sale at your practice

If you end up making a profit, you can promise to donate the balance to a very close cause – VCHP!

### 7.4 Filming and photography

As some of the patients will be vulnerable, you will need to be especially careful to maintain confidentiality and ensure any patients who do appear in photos have understood the permission they have given. We have a template Interview and Filming Consent form we can share with you via DropBox. It is often useful to agree a joint permission form with the clinic venue, allowing both parties to use any resulting publicity.

Here are some guidelines on how to take good pictures suitable for a press release:

- At least 300dpi and that normally means the file will be at least 400kB
- Crisp, in focus, and taken in good light
- Shot in colour
- Normally contain no more than four people
- Have a very clear message with a sign/pop-up/branding
- Remember that the shot will be used quite small and so faces are key – don't need to see legs and feet
- Always consider: can I tell what this picture is about without reading the caption?

## 7.5 Case histories

One of the best ways to see the importance of your work is to collect patient histories.

- If you have had an interesting conversation with a client, you can jot it down afterwards but make sure it is anonymised to maintain patient confidentiality.
- However, aside from general comments, having attended a one-off clinic will likely make the patient identifiable if they are linked to your Christmas Spectacle. You can send such stories to VCHP where they will be used for evaluation and communication of results from the Christmas Spectacle but not associated with your practice.
- You should use identifiable material only with the patients consent. See the template Interview and Filming Consent form in the appendix.

## 8 ADVICE, FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

### 8.1 Further advice

VCHP has run the Crisis at Christmas Opticians and Eye Care Service in London for many years, so we have accumulated considerable practical experience. If you would like any advice in running your Christmas Spectacle, please do contact [david.brown@vchp.org.uk](mailto:david.brown@vchp.org.uk).

### 8.2 Feedback

We are keen to learn as much as possible about the barriers that homeless people face in getting the eye care they need. We use what we know to speak with the NHS about improving access for homeless people.

If you wish to collect evaluation information about how useful your Christmas Spectacle was to homeless people, you may use our anonymous feedback form available on our DropBox. For question 1, tick the box next to “Nationwide – A Christmas Spectacle “

Please enter the data on-line [here](#) so we can use it in our evaluation of the Christmas Spectacle service.



### 8.3 Evaluation

We would like to collect data from all the practices that provide this special service for homeless people over Christmas.

Please inform [david.brown@vchp.org.uk](mailto:david.brown@vchp.org.uk) if you are taking part. Include the practice name, the date and location of your Christmas Spectacle and contact details for the lead organiser.

After Christmas, we will email you asking you to complete an evaluation form. Please record the following data so you can complete the form.

- No. of NHS Eye Tests
- No. of Non NHS Eye Tests
- No Px prescribed glasses
- SVN prescribed
- SVD prescribed
- BIF prescribed
- No. referrals
- No. volunteers involved.
- How did your Christmas Spectacle go?
- Any case histories, unusual pathology, patient stories
- What would you do differently another year?
- What should VCHP do differently another year?

We will send a copy of our evaluation report to all practices that provide us with their evaluation data.

### 8.4 Disclaimer

Vision Care for Homeless People has considerable expertise and experience in running Christmas Opticians services for Homeless People. However, we cannot warrant that this advice will be correct, comprehensive nor appropriate in all circumstances. Vision Care for Homeless People is not running any Christmas Spectacle events and will not be held responsible for any Christmas Spectacle event you organise using this or any other advice provided by Vision Care for Homeless People, its staff or volunteers.

## 9 APPENDICES

### Tasks Checklist

Category	Task	Notes	Priority	Who	Done
0 Venue	Find homeless centre to work with		1		
0 Venue	Decide between in-practice or at-centre		1		
0 Venue	Risk assess both sight testing and collection day venues	Check suitability with Mobile Clinic Room Requirements doc	2		
0 Venue	Complete H&S and Clinic Info one pagers		2		
0 Venue	Agree transport arrangements for volunteers and/or patients with venue		1		
2 Volunteers	Recruit volunteers	Colleagues, Local LOC. Which individual/practice is taking responsibility.	1		
2 Volunteers	Vet volunteers	Check optoms and DOs GOC registration	2		
2 Volunteers	Train volunteers	Suggest a training meeting two weeks before. See PowerPoint	3		
2 Volunteers	Deploy volunteers	Inform volunteers of where and when	2		
3 Kit and Supplies	Borrow eye test equipment	See kit and supplies list	1		
3 Kit and Supplies	Gather donations of supplies needed	See kit and supplies list	2		
3 Kit and Supplies	Purchase supplies needed	See kit and supplies list	2		
3 Kit and Supplies	Arrange glazing	Ask your lab or a local practice that glazes in-house	1		
3 Kit and Supplies	Arrange packing, assembly and transport	Suggest a suit case for test kit and roller tool box for dispensing	2		
4 Documents & forms	Decide procedures and document	Will you triage?	2		
4 Documents & forms	Print documents and forms needed	Suggest using an expanding file to contain	3		
5 Compliance	GOS Compliance	Notify Area Team, if offering Mandatory Services GOS.	1		
5 Compliance	Insurance - equipment	Ask your insurer to extend equipment insurance to loaned/transported kit	2		
5 Compliance	Insurance - public and employee liability	Temporarily extend insurance to include homeless patients and volunteers.	2		
5 Compliance	Insurance -professional liability		2		
5 Compliance	Policies and Procedures	Have volunteers adopt those on VCHP's DropBox	3		
6 Communications	Stakeholders	List them and decide what and how you will	2		
6 Communications	Outreach	Will you need to reach out to find enough patients?	2		
6 Communications	Publicity	Facebook, local radio, in-store etc.	3		
6 Communications	Fundraising	In-store, sponsorship event, ask local groups and	2		
7 Collections	Glazing queries and follow up		4		
7 Collections	Arrange Collection Day Equipment and		4		
7 Collections	Collection Day volunteers	Inform volunteers of where and when	4		
7 Collections	Collections after Collection Day		4		
7 Collections	Arrange Px feedback and story gathering	Appoint some volunteers to complete surveys with Px and others to gather photographs and stories	4		
8 Close Down	Celebrate	Volunteer meet up event with feedback/lessons learned	5		
8 Close Down	Feedback	Take feedback/lessons learned at volunteer event	5		
8 Close Down	Data and statistics	Gather your statistics and evaluation data and submit to VCHP	2		
8 Close Down	PR	Communicate your success	5		

## Kit and Supplies Checklist

Category	Item	Qty	Essential Y/N	Have
Test Kit	Amsler Grid	1	Y	
Test Kit	Clip boards	1	Y	
Test Kit	Container for used tonometer probes	1	Y	
Test Kit	Cross Cyls set	1	Y	
Test Kit	Distance Fixation Disparity Test 1	1	Y	
Test Kit	Extension Lead	2	Y	
Test Kit	Flippers	1	Y	
Test Kit	Focimeter with Guide Bar hand Held	1	Y	
Test Kit	Fresh Teonometer Probes in container	1	Y	
Test Kit	Op and Ret	1	Y	
Test Kit	PD Ruler	2	Y	
Test Kit	Sample Frames Set of 12	1	Y	
Test Kit	Small Sharps bin 0.25 – 0.6 litres	1	Y	
Test Kit	Tape measure	1	Y	
Test Kit	Test Chart plus Remote	1	Y	
Test Kit	Tonometer (I-Care)	1	Y	
Test Kit	Tonometer Probes unused in Box	20	Y	
Test Kit	Trial frame	1	Y	
Test Kit	Trial Lens Set	1	Y	
Stationery	Biros	1	Y	
Stationery	Envelopes - C5	1	Y	
Medications	BioGlo or BioFluoro (1mg)	1	Y	
Medications	Cyclopentolate 1%	1	Y	
Medications	Saline 0.9% Minims	1	Y	
Medications	Tropicamide 1%	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Fine Non-Permanent Marker for heights	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Frame Heater	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Hand Mirror	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Handwash anti - bac	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Lens cloth	20	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Ready Readers +1.0	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Ready Readers +1.50	2	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Ready Readers +2.0	3	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Ready Readers +2.5	4	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Ready Readers +3.0	3	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Ready Readers +3.5	2	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Ready Readers +4.0	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Screw Driver set (different heads)	1	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Spectacle cases (35% of larger size)	20	Y	
Dispensing Kit	Surface Wipes	1	Y	

## Forms and Documents Checklist

Category	Item	Qty
0 Instructions	I-Care Tonometer Quick Guide	1
0 Instructions	Training PowerPoint	1
2 Venue	Contacts and Info Sheet	1
2 Venue	H&S Info and Directives Sheet	1
2 Venue	Sign - Sight Testing Room	1
2 Venue	Sign - Glasses Dispensing Room	1
3 Equipment and Supplies	Mobile Kit Inventory	1
4 Appointments and Testing	Amsler Grid with Instructions	5
4 Appointments and Testing	Appointments List	2
4 Appointments and Testing	Clinic Activity List	2
4 Appointments and Testing	Ethnicity Codes	1
4 Appointments and Testing	Record Card A5	20
4 Appointments and Testing	Rx Form	20
4 Appointments and Testing	Triage Form	30
4 Appointments and Testing	GOS 18 Referral Forms	6
5 Patient Information	Blepharitis	2
5 Patient Information	Cataract	2
5 Patient Information	Diabetes	2
5 Patient Information	Floater and Flashers	2
5 Patient Information	Glaucoma	2
5 Patient Information	Eye Drops	2
5 Patient Information	Macular degeneration	2
6 Dispensing and Ordering	Collection Day Letter	20
6 Dispensing and Ordering	Glazing Order Form	5
7 Miscellaneous	Advice on obtaining glasses	1
7 Miscellaneous	Anonymous survey	1
7 Miscellaneous	Publicity Consent Form	10