

Getting to know your practice staff - Practice Nurse Sue Harden

1. What inspired you to become a Nurse?

I went for 2 weeks work experience to Preston hospital through college and really enjoyed it

2. What is the best thing about your job?

Meeting people

3. What advice would you give to someone who wanted to become a Nurse?

Good if you like variation

4. What would you have done if you hadn't become a Nurse?

Shorthand Typist

5. What were you like at school?

Quiet

6. What book/film/song do you wish you had written?

Any Beatles Song

7. If you could learn to do anything, what would it be?

Tap Dance

8. What music do you listen to in the car?

Radio 2 or Disney songs with my Granddaughter

9. When you have 30 minutes of free time what do you do to pass the time?

Do Exercise

10. Food is becoming obsolete tomorrow, what would your last meal be?

Poached eggs on toast



4 IN 10 CANCER CASES CAN BE PREVENTED...



●●● Larger circles indicate more UK cancer cases

Circle size here is not relative to other infographics based on Brown et al 2018.

Source: Brown et al, British Journal of Cancer, 2018

LET'S BEAT CANCER SOONER
cruk.org/prevention



Announcement..... We are delighted to inform our patients that Dr Kathryn Johnston will now be known as Dr Kathryn Graham after her marriage at the start of Autumn. We wish Dr Graham and her family all the very best for the future.



Healthwatch Northumberland Annual Conference

Carole Pitkeathley, Chair of Marine Medical Group PPG, spoke at the recent Healthwatch Northumberland Annual Conference. Carole spoke about the work of the Patient Participation Group and how it represents the interests of Marine Medical Group patients. If you want to know more about the PPG or are interested in getting involved in our work please contact us. Email us at mmgpatientparticipation@gmail.com

Suzanne Doney Community Cancer Awareness Coordinator for Northumberland, talks about her work in the Community.



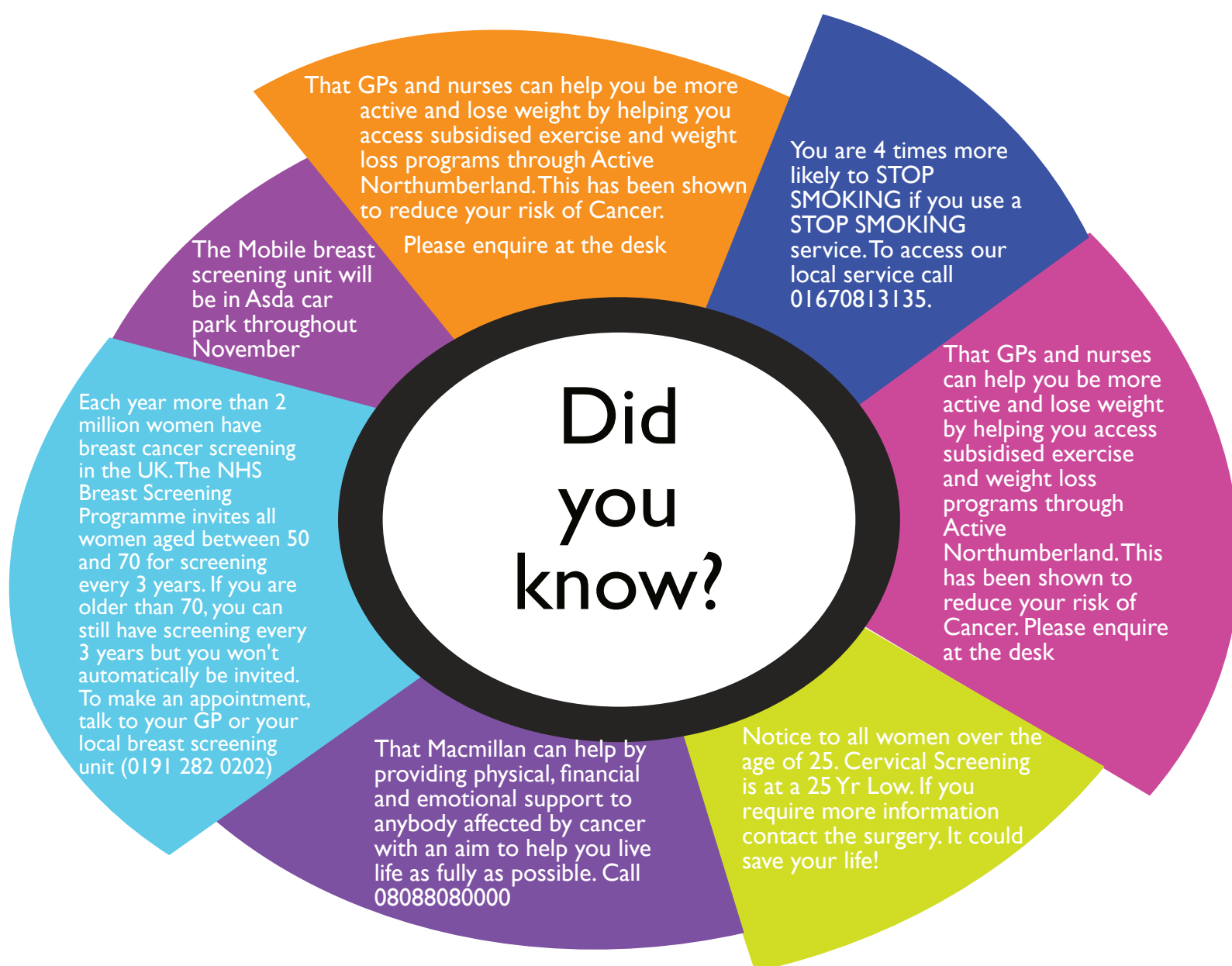
Suzanne's role is to raise awareness of the symptoms of cancer. Suzanne talks to community groups, patient groups, etc. about ways they can look after themselves to help prevent cancer and what to do if they suspect something may be wrong.

Helping people understand the importance of knowing what is normal for them and encouraging people to see a doctor if they are concerned their symptoms maybe cancer related is an essential part of the work Suzanne does. Suzanne says: "The chances are your symptoms won't be cancer but it's important to have them checked out as treatment is more likely to be successful when cancer is diagnosed at an earlier stage."

4 in 10 cancers cases in England could be prevented and Suzanne has advice on how we can all make changes to help reduce our risk of cancer. She has information on stop smoking services, as well as advice on diet, weight, keeping active, alcohol and staying safe in the sun. The NHS also has 3 free screening programmes, for bowel, breast and cervical cancer. Cancer screening tests can help detect cancer at an early stage before there are any symptoms, and often when it's easier to treat. She is keen for as many people as possible to access this advice.

With so much information out there it is important that people get accurate and up to date information. Alongside the information Suzanne can provide the Cancer Research UK and NHS websites have more information on specific cancers or you can telephone the Cancer Research UK nurse helpline on 0808 800 4040. The overarching advice is simple though - if you believe you have any symptoms related to any type of cancer you should speak to your GP.

Recently Suzanne has been visiting community centres and other venues in Blyth, chatting to groups and sharing information. She is keen to reach out to more groups in Blyth. Suzanne told the PPG, "I really enjoy coming out to meet people and always get a lovely warm welcome. In the last year I've been everywhere from sheds and craft groups to bingo halls, offices and toddler groups. If anyone would like me to visit their venue, group or workplace they can contact me on 01670 704840



Dystonia is something most people will not have heard of but it affects at least 70,000 people in the UK. At least 8,000 of these are children and young people. Here is one of our patient's story.

When I was around 45, I had a really busy life, I worked full-time as a chartered engineer, I ran a Beaver Scout group and had a husband and two teenage sons. I began to suspect something was wrong with my health when my eyes became sensitive to light. I had my eyes tested, bought new sunglasses and was forever putting the visor down on my car windscreen, even on a dull day.

After a few weeks my eyelids began to clamp shut and the only way I could open them was to prise them open with my fingers. I became what I now know is called 'functionally blind'. I had to take time off work and, of course, visited my GP. I was fortunate in that my GP recognised the symptoms immediately and referred me to a neurologist who instantly diagnosed Dystonia, in particular Blepharospasm. This was a difficult time for me and my family, I had always been outgoing, enjoyed doing things with my family, enjoyed my work (most of the time!) and socialising. I very quickly became almost housebound, I certainly couldn't work, go out of the house alone, read, watch TV, use a computer, drive etc., all the things I had taken for granted.

Over the next few months my symptoms got worse and spread to my jaw and neck. Eventually, after about 18 months I had fully developed dystonia in my eyelids, jaw, neck and shoulders, known as Mieges syndrome (each different type of dystonia has its own name). I had begun to go out on my own but it was very difficult, I had to hold one eyelid open with my fingers, but the spasms were so strong that my eyelid would still close and of course having my hand so close to my eye restricted my vision when my lids were open. I tried my best to remain positive and I had a great deal of support from my husband, sons, extended family and my friends. I was receiving treatment of botulinum toxin injections (Botox) and I would typically have around 20 injections every 12 weeks. However, they were doing nothing for me, in fact sometimes the side effects were making me worse.

After a while I realised that I had to accept that my dystonia was not going away and would not be relieved by treatment. That was when I began to get my life back again, socialising etc. Around five years later my eyes began to stay open naturally and my consultant told me I am one of the lucky few as my eyes had gone into remission hooray! I still have dystonia in my jaw, neck and shoulders which is called Oromandibular dystonia. I get Botox every 12 weeks, 20 injections each time.

My dystonia is about as good as it is going to get, I don't get complete relief, my spasms never go away but the toxin does reduce them which reduces the pain. I have had complications, unfortunately for me my larynx spasms closed which means I can't breathe, terrifying! I was hospitalised with it once, but now I have learned to control it myself. During all this time I left work which was a huge decision but honestly it has been one of the best decisions I have made.

Today I volunteer with 2 dystonia charities, look after my grandchildren, give care and support to my elderly Mam and Aunt as well as socialising and doing various crafts. My life today is as full and as satisfying as it was before Dystonia.

If you know someone affected by Dystonia, ADDER may be able to help you. There is also The Dystonia Society is based in London but with a North East Branch.

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THE DYSTONIA SOCIETY
www.dystonia.org

