



# Eye Health Programme



Trying to inform over 54 million people about the threats of glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy is not easy, but that is exactly what the Lions Eye Health Programme [LEHP] is attempting to do. And it is succeeding.

**As a community-based awareness-raising project**, LEHP is a Lions Clubs International sight saving initiative. The programme, a partnership between the Lions Clubs of the British Isles and Ireland, the International Glaucoma Association and Diabetes UK, was launched with clubs in Britain and Ireland about 6 years ago. There are now about 500 clubs actively instituting the campaign through its volunteer members.

**Lions Clubs play an active role in almost every community** and LEHP material is often found in libraries, shopping centres, GP surgeries, hospitals and high street opticians.

**At a country-wide level**, LEHP attempts to implement ideas that are far-reaching and will affect the public at large. To date, the LEHP videos have been aired on SKY TV's Community Channel, and two Keep Your Eye On The Ball posters featuring tennis and golf respectively have been distributed to member sport clubs by the Lawn Tennis Association and the English Golf Union.

**Those most at risk of developing glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy** are people over the age of 40, those with a family history of glaucoma, diabetics, people of African Caribbean origin and those with high myopia (very short sight). Only people with diabetes are at risk of developing diabetic retinopathy.



**People with diabetes** are 25 times more likely to suffer from sight loss than the rest of the population and the longer a person has diabetes the greater the risk of retinopathy. There are approximately 1.8 million people in the UK (3% of the population) with diabetes and about half again are undiagnosed and unaware they have the disease. About 2% of the diabetes population will become blind each year.



**Glaucoma** is the leading cause of preventable blindness in the UK and Ireland. It affects about half a million people in the UK but it is estimated that as many as 2.2 million people are at increased risk of developing the condition.

**Low vision** is a term to describe visual impairment that cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses or surgery. As the population ages it is estimated that the number of adults with low vision is likely to double over the next 30 years.

**Age-Related Macular Degeneration** is the most common cause of poor sight in people over a 60. It is estimated it affects up to 500,000 people in the UK.

A Cataract is a cloudy or opaque area in the lens of the eye. This affects the passage of light into the eye and as a result your sight will become blurred. The most common type of cataract is related to aging.