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February 2017 Newsletter

Happy New Year Welcome to Newsletter for the Croydon Group of Coeliac UK.

Gluten Free Prescriptions – Croydon

A massive thank you to everyone who supported the campaign and attended one of the Consultation meetings. It is with regret that we inform you that Croydon CCG have made a decision to remove Gluten Free Prescriptions. As yet we do not have any further details as to when this is likely to happen and the GP Practices in Croydon as yet have not been given any guidance. The CCG have made no consideration for those who are vulnerable or at risk. If you consider yourself to fall into these categories please let me know and we as a group will do what we can to support you.

A message from Coeliac UK

Re: Removal of gluten-free food on prescription by NHS Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

We contacted you in November to notify you about Croydon CCG's consultation reviewing its gluten-free prescribing policy and to provide you with the opportunity to have your say. Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the consultation or attended the meeting earlier this month. We would also like to thank the Local Voluntary Support Group for all their support.

We are very disappointed to tell you that the CCG has announced the decision to stop prescribing gluten-free foods. We are also concerned that the CCG has made no reference to exceptions to this policy and we will be asking the CCG to provide further information on prescribing for patients when individual need is identified.

While the CCG has made this decision, we would like to stress that the final decision about what to prescribe lies with your GP. We would therefore encourage you to have a discussion with your GP about gluten-free food on prescription if you are concerned about the impact this may have on you being able to manage your gluten-free diet.

We understand the importance of access to gluten-free food on prescription for people with coeliac disease, particularly those on low incomes due to the higher cost of products or those only able to shop in small convenience stores which do not stock staple gluten-free foods. We are concerned that the measures taken by

the CCG to save money will affect people's ability to stick to the gluten-free diet and in turn increase the likelihood of complications of coeliac disease such as osteoporosis. As well as the suffering this may cause, it will also cost the NHS more in the long term.

If you would like to oppose the prescription cuts, there are several things that you can do:

- Contact the local Healthwatch by emailing (info@healthwatchcroydon.co.uk) calling on 020 8663 5648 or writing to Healthwatch Croydon, The Carers Support Centre, 24 George Street, Croydon, CR0 1PB
- Contact Croydon CCG by emailing, (getinvolved@croydonccg.nhs.uk), writing to Croydon CCG, Bernard Weatherill House, 2nd Floor, Zone G, 8 Mint Walk, Croydon, CR0 1EA or calling on 020 3668 1300
- Write to your local MP, we have a sample letter on our website (www.coeliac.org.uk/prescriptioncampaign) which you can use, or please feel free to write your own letter explaining how the changes will affect you
- Speak with your local GP about your individual case
- Watch out for more information on next campaign steps particularly on our website

As part of our work in opposing prescription cuts, we are looking for people affected by these cuts to act as case studies. This will enable us to give examples to the media of how this policy change has affected people with coeliac disease. To become a case study or to find out more about interview opportunities please call us on 0333 332 2033.

We will continue to make strong representations to the CCG on the issue and will seek the support of clinicians in the area. We will be asking the CCG how the impact of the change on the long-term health of people with coeliac disease will be monitored.

As a valued member, we will continue to provide up-to-date information to help you manage your gluten-free diet and coeliac disease. We will also keep you informed about our campaigns and research and let you know about developments in gluten-free prescribing in Crossed Grain magazine, our electronic newsletters and on our website.

Sarah Sleet,
Chief Executive

We apologise for not producing a newsletter in January but much of Jacqui's spare time has been taken up by communicating with Coeliac UK, Consultant Gastroenterologists at Croydon University Hospital and Chris Philp Local MP. I am hoping to have a face to face meeting with Chris Philp to address these issues further to watch this space.

Izzy's Blog (now aged 11!)

Even though it was a while ago and we have all probably forgotten about it, I am going to start with Christmas food. I had Christmas puddings, two types of stuffing and many types of different mince pies, including ones from Tesco's and Sainsbury's. It was brilliant that I had so much choice over the Christmas period and most of the food was delicious. I had some delicious gluten free Morrison's salted caramel biscuits, unfortunately they were only for Christmas- maybe they might bring them back.

My mum found in Sainsbury's this chilled Chocolate Tart and Apple Pie. They are not big and they cost about £2.00 each but they really are a lovely treat.



I have also tried Just Roll puff pastry (found in the chilled pastry section in Tesco) it is very good for sweet and savoury pies – especially my Nanny's egg, bacon, sausage and cheese pie. The secret is not to handle it too much!



The Committee will be meeting later this month to plan future meetings and events. If you have anything you would like us to discuss etc please do let us know ASAP. If you feel you will be at risk not being able to obtain gluten free prescriptions please get in touch and we will try to help you.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of information contained in this newsletter. Furthermore, any articles, contributions or opinions contained herein are printed in good faith. However Coeliac UK and the Croydon Group can accept no responsibility for any errors or items this newsletter contains.

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