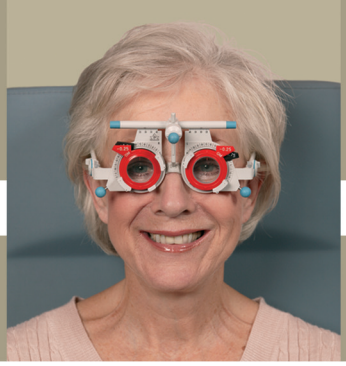

NATIONAL eye WEEK

10 - 16 DECEMBER 2007

Project : National Eye Week 2007
Funding : £30,000

The Central Fund sponsored National Eye Week 2007 (10 - 16 December). The Sight After Sixty - It's your right campaign was fronted by the actress and author, Nanette Newman, and provided a great opportunity for the profession to work together to demonstrate how poor vision is not an inevitable consequence of ageing.

The sponsorship funded a survey into attitudes and behaviour towards eyecare and a public information campaign designed to educate older people about the importance of good eyecare, the choices that are available to them and the benefits of entrusting their eye health to registered professionals.

Some key results from the Sight after Sixty research...

- One in three OAPs who miss out on regular eye examinations say the quality of their vision causes them to feel depressed and vulnerable.
- Thirty per cent of those who miss out on regular sight checks think eye care 'costs a lot of money' despite eye examinations being free on the NHS since April 1999.
- A quarter of those surveyed said the quality of their vision restricts their daily routine.
- Fifty eight percent of over 60s said they had trouble reading books and magazines.
- Only six per cent of respondents were aware of low vision services in their area and just one in ten knew about the provision of domiciliary eyecare.
- One in three people aged 75+ has impaired vision as a result of wearing the wrong glasses, or no glasses at all!
- Seventy five per cent of older people who suffer a fall as a result of poor vision had a visual impairment that was easily correctable.

Public information campaign

A series of news releases based on the 'Sight after Sixty' research results generated more than 68 million opportunities for the public to see positive eyecare messages.

National Eye Week 2007 cont'd...

More than 160 pieces of coverage across national and regional print and broadcast media provided advice and information on the over 60's entitlement to free NHS sight tests and the important role early diagnosis plays in the effect treatment of age- related eye conditions.

Radio coverage accounted for a significant proportion of the National Eye Week press coverage – 65 per cent. Radio is a key medium for communicating with the grey market which accounts for more than 21 per cent of all radio listeners.

During the radio coverage Nanette Newman urged everyone aged 60 plus to take advantage of their entitlement to free sight tests paid for by the NHS. She also shared her own eyecare experiences and explained how much she had benefited from actively taking care of her sight and having regular eye examinations.

An outdoor poster campaign promoting regular eye examinations was run in 20 UK towns and cities identified as 'pensioner hot spots'. *See example below.*

The outdoor poster campaign reached more than 4.5 million people over a two week period starting 10 December 2007. Whilst a promotion directed at 2,000 care homes and GP surgeries ensured that the campaign reached even the most vulnerable OAPs.

To help the profession participate in the week, marketing toolkits (inc. fact sheets, template press releases event ideas and photo libraries) and promotional material featuring the face of National Eye Week, Nanette Newman, were sent to more than 3,500 optician practices.

A website was also published (www.nationaleyeweek.co.uk) providing advice and information on common age-related eye conditions.

The site included interactive vision simulators illustrating how conditions such as glaucoma, AMD and cataract can affect your vision.

Outdoor poster campaign

In conclusion

The Central Fund's sponsorship of National Eye Week 2007 helped the Eyecare Trust (the charity responsible for managing the awareness week) to clearly and effectively communicate the importance of regular sight tests and the benefits of entrusting your eye health to registered professionals to a wide-reaching audience.

It also provided the profession with a set of valuable tools designed to enhance patient care and assist in the promotion of eye health issues to their local community.