

PHAROS

A beacon of hope in the darkness

Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)

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THE MAY 2024 MEETING

The meeting was one of our Open Meetings at which there is no guest speaker but is a great opportunity to chat to anyone. These Open Meetings are very much appreciated by our members and the May meeting was well attended.

THE JUNE 2024 MEETING

The June meeting had a guest speaker Cristina Marinoni, who is a member of the Macmillan Benefits Team. The Benefits Team has four members, one full time and three part-time people. They have a partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau. The team is based at the Royal Berkshire hospital where they offer support for cancer patients and their families in claiming benefits that they are entitled to. They support patients receiving treatment at the Royal Berkshire and who live in Berkshire.

We hope to be able to put Cristina's slides on our web site so that you can view the full detail, but in the meantime there follows a summary of the information that Cristina presented.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is available dependent upon how your disability or illness affects you and is a points-based system. PIP is paid every four weeks and the rates are:

	<u>Lower rate (weekly)</u>	<u>Higher rate (Weekly)</u>
Daily living	£72.65	£108.55
Mobility	£28.70	£75.75

Attendance Allowance is paid every four weeks and depends upon the level of help that you need but do not get. It is for daily living such as washing, dressing, and moving about. There is no separate mobility section. There is a lower rate of £72.65 if you need help or supervision during the day or night, and a higher rate of £108.55 if you need help or supervision during the day and night.

Carer's Allowance is for someone who is looking after a person with a disability benefit. It is for care given for 35 hours per week and is £81.90 per week. You cannot earn more than £151 per week.

A Blue Badge for parking needs medical evidence to support a claim.

Cristina then described benefits available to people who are working:

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is a payment of £116.75 per week paid for for 28 weeks. Company sick pay usually includes SSP.

New Style Employment and Support Allowance (NS ESA).

Entitlement to NS ESA is available for people who are ill and unable to work. The payment depends upon your National Insurance contributions. Medical evidence is needed.

For the initial 13 weeks the amount paid is £90.55. Then a health assessment will determine the amount of further payments.

Universal Credit is means tested and provides an income if you are not entitled to sickness benefits. The standard allowance is £393.45 per month but long term ill health may result in an additional income. There are some additional benefits for low income.

Pension Credit is a means tested award as a top-up to low pension, even if you have some savings. The minimum guarantee is single person £218.15 weekly, couple £332.95 weekly.

Even a small amount of pension credit will enable you to qualify for additional benefits.

Macmillan Grants are means tested and available for things related to your cancer. You can be referred for Macmillan benefits via a nurse or hospital doctor, or a Macmillan Information Centre.

Finally Cristina said that Macmillan offers free confidential advice.

Cristina was thanked for her informative presentation and was presented with a gift of appreciation.

RPCSG WALKS AND COFFEE MORNINGS

The walk in Silchester was most interesting. 11 people took part for a walk around the site of the Roman settlement. The weather was perfect and a refreshment stop was made in the grounds of a church.

Photographs during the walk:



Part of the Roman wall



Peter with site information



The site of the amphitheatre

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