



LEICESTER **COMMUNITY** **CHAMPIONS**

The Empowering Communities programme in Leicester draws on champions from community organisations, workplaces and houses of faith to spread type 2 diabetes awareness among the city's more vulnerable communities.

Partners*

- Leicester Changing Diabetes
- Centre for Ethnic Health Research
- Leicester Diabetes Centre
- Novo Nordisk



Local champions empower vulnerable communities

Pandemic reduced access to prevention programmes

With a type 2 diabetes prevalence of 9%, the culturally diverse city of Leicester is home to one of the largest populations of people living with diabetes in the UK¹. Local evidence suggests that ethnic minority groups in Leicester have limited awareness of type 2 diabetes, which affects their ability to manage their risk of developing the condition.

This situation has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic reducing access to medical centres and prevention services. As such, more people may be unaware that they are now at risk of developing diabetes.

The Leicester Diabetes Risk Score tool

The Leicester Diabetes Risk Score is a useful tool to help individuals understand their risk of diabetes and what they can do to reduce the risk. The tool is available in English, Punjabi, Gujarati and Bengali, which increases its accessibility for those in minority ethnic groups in Leicester. One of the challenges for the Cities Changing Diabetes team in Leicester was to increase awareness of the tool among at-risk individuals.

Healthy role models in the community

The aim of the Empowering Communities programme is to enlist the help of local champions to raise diabetes awareness in harder-to-reach communities.

The role models are invited to attend training workshops at the Leicester Diabetes Centre to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to:

- Spread information about healthy habits and how these habits can prevent diseases
- Help prevent and raise awareness about type 2 diabetes and its risk factors
- Guide others through the process of using the Leicester Diabetes Risk Score tool
- Direct peers to the relevant external resources or services.

The champions are trained to have meaningful conversations with their peers by asking the correct questions to understand concerns and to know where to signpost their peers for help.

At the end of the training, champions are given a practical handbook with resources to help them share health and wellbeing messages with their peers.

The handbook includes information about local health services, useful websites and a map of outdoor gyms in the city.

A network of community champions

The Empowering Communities programme has already trained almost 30 champions, including employees from Leicester City in the Community, the outreach arm of the Leicester City Football Club, who independently launched initiatives to encourage community members to exercise and learn about the risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Through funding from the local health service, a network was created to allow the champions to interact with one another and share their ideas.

“We hope that Empowering Communities will establish a network of community champions that can learn from and support each other and help peers with their health and wellbeing.” – Kerry Hulley, Research Project Manager



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