

## Age UK Islington Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes Workshops



### OVERVIEW

Age UK Islington social prescribers, working in close partnership with London Met Dietitian students and Islington GP surgeries designed and delivered a series of workshops over the past three years - to help address health inequalities amongst Islington patients diagnosed with diabetes or identified as being pre-diabetic.

These sessions aimed to empower patients with the knowledge and tools to better manage their condition, or to reduce the risk of developing diabetes - inspiring them to make simple but important changes to their diet and to try local, affordable exercise options.

### CHALLENGES

- Scale of people living with prediabetes or diabetes; 1 in 15 Londoners have diabetes
- Pressures on GP surgeries
- Time pressures on working people
- Cost of living squeezing food budgets
- Lack of culturally sensitive and relevant dietary information
- Levels of depression amongst people living with diabetes

### WHO ENGAGED

- Diverse audience
- Range of ages, in 2025 from 20 to 70yrs
- 28% attendees identified themselves to be white; 66% identified as being from ethnic minority groups.

### WORKSHOPS DELIVERED

- Two workshops a year over three years
- Innovative programme developed in partnership
- Achieved good levels of engagement
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees
- Practical applied learning for London Met students
- Workshops built on learnings over the 3 years

*"How can I afford to cook two different meals for me and the rest of my family? The dietitian information session made me realise that I could make little changes to some of the things that I cook and this can make a massive difference to my diabetes."*

### FUTURE POTENTIAL

Praised by GPs, the programme is an example of a successful model that could be replicated in other boroughs or to tackle health inequalities amongst other groups of Islington residents.

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### **An example of innovative working to reduce pressures on the NHS**

Given the scale of the number of people who are at risk of diabetes and approximately one in fifteen Londoners living with diabetes [Diabetes UK], Age UK Islington social prescribing link workers collaborated with London Met Dietitian students and Islington GP surgeries to develop and deliver an innovative health educational project. The aim of the project was to empower patients, either at risk of type 2 diabetes or living with diabetes, to better understand and self-manage their condition.

### **An example of innovative working to reduce pressures on the NHS**

2025 is the third year of the project, working with two further Islington GP surgeries. This year the Age UK Islington social prescribers supported and guided students to make multiple calls to a total of 832 patients - to invite them to the workshops.

They supported the students in the design and delivery of the sessions, and in the creation of comprehensive information packs. The 2025 workshops, attended by a total of 91 patients, were held at London Met in June and August. There was also a presentation at Age UK Islington's monthly Let's Talk peer event in August to over 50 Islington residents.

The diabetes workshops helped patients to better understand the condition. Patients were also equipped with practical guidance about how to make simple, everyday changes to meals, alongside information and support to try free and affordable ways to stay active locally.

### **Working with partners**

Partner organisations More Life, Champions 4 Change No Contact Boxing and Arsenal in the Community, inspired attendees to sign-up for exercise and weight management programmes.

Whittington Health's Expert Patient Programme shared details of their continued learning opportunities and peer support, and NHS health checks were also provided.

### **The benefits of the community programme**

#### **Increased capacity for community health**

**initiatives:** SPLW's community knowledge and networks, combined with students' fresh ideas, improved creativity, reach, and impact.

**Bridging gaps in health service delivery:** The partnership ensured health information reached underserved communities, building trust and supporting better health management and outcomes.

**Enhanced learning opportunities:** The project enabled students to apply theory in a real-world setting, gaining practical skills in communication, public health and teamwork.

### **A community-based programme successful in engaging 'harder to reach' patients**

*Dr Lucy Bradbeer, Islington South PCN: Health Inequalities Lead, said "The diabetes programme run together with the Age UK Islington Social Prescribing Link Workers has been invaluable to reach out to patients who are less inclined to get in touch with their GPs and those who may not be engaging as well as possible with the management of diabetes..."*

*Having information sessions...in a more relaxed, less formal medical environment can be more inviting and help to make people more at ease and receptive to the guidance that's being shared. Putting this information and guidance into practice every day at home can make a significant difference to the outcome of the patient's condition."*



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### Engaging a diverse audience of patients

The patients that engaged with the programme were from a diverse audience - patients were represented from age groups 20yrs through to 70yrs with the majority of patients being 50-59yrs. 28% identified themselves to be White, 26% of Black ethnicity, 21% as South Asian, 10% Middle Eastern and 9% Other.

The Dietitian students with the support of Age UK Islington social prescribing link workers worked directly with patients, many of whom were managing difficult life circumstances.

### Overcoming budget constraints and tailoring support to cultural sensitivities

The team included culturally inclusive recipes in the workshops and information packs, as well as ways of eating healthily on a limited budget.

### Valuable NHS Health Checks

During the event, NHS Healthcare Assistants supported patients by measuring their weight and blood pressure, updating their health records and providing clear explanations about the results. They also highlighted the importance of regular self-monitoring and offered guidance on how patients could do this independently.

### Attendee feedback was very positive

- 95% reported that the session was very helpful in supporting them to better manage their prediabetes or type 2 diabetes.
- They noted a greater awareness of which foods to limit and which to eat more of.
- Participants reported that they felt more motivated and confident to make lifestyle changes.

### The value to student dietitians

Conor Murray, Senior Lecturer in Dietetic Practice Based Education at London Metropolitan University said that "The student dietitians were able to see that sharing just a small amount of information with patients could be effective in helping patients to identify small changes to what they ate day to day and that this in turn could have a big impact on the management of their diabetes and their overall health.

As well as seeing the added value that they were able to provide to patients, they were also encouraged to see first-hand how engaged and willing to learn and help themselves the patients were."

### Future opportunities for the programme model for other health inequalities

This project is an example of how Age UK Islington's social prescribers can achieve improved outcomes and efficiencies through the delivery of group-based information sessions, focused on a particular cohort of patients, combined with individual support, to encourage residents to take steps to meet personal goals.

Age UK Islington has recognised that this model of continuous testing and refinement of such programmes can be applied to other health inequalities. It also demonstrates the value of integrated, collaborative working between GPs and the VCS sector – helping GPs to address health inequalities and easing pressure on the NHS and statutory services.

### To discuss potential future partnerships

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