

## A community approach to Diabetes in Wester Hailes

### The approach

Dr. Noble, a GP in Wester Hailes Medical Practice, understands the many challenges patients in her practice with type 2 diabetes/those with prediabetes face. However, with only 10 minutes per appointment, it's difficult to provide the in-depth support they need. To address this, Dr. Noble offered patients the opportunity to attend a 6-week course, offered in partnership with The Health Agency. This programme is designed to equip patients with the education, training, and practical skills they need to implement realistic, sustainable changes that will significantly aid in the management of their diabetes or prevent prediabetes patients developing diabetes.

This proactive group education approach has many benefits; reduced need for appointments, and potentially reduction in medications, better diabetes management reducing complications and subsequent cost savings. Patients also have access to other local support and existing programmes after the 6-week course concluded.

NHS Lothian Charity supported the project by funding kitchen items for the 'goody box' each participant received at the end of the course. This ensured they had the tools to implement new cooking skills and recipes at home. This project supports NHS Lothian to improve health in the Lothians aligning with the Charity's priority objectives of 'Improved community health/reduced health inequality', 'Improved clinical outcomes for patients' and 'Enhanced patient and carer experience.'

### How patients got involved

Wester Hailes Medical Practice reached out to its Type 2 diabetic and prediabetic patients (many of whom are marginalised and vulnerable) via text message, sharing details of the course. Understanding that local, accessible support is crucial for many who lack online resources due to the inability to fully engage with the online world because of a lack of access to necessary technology, skills, or connectivity. The course took place in a room in Wester Hailes Medical Practice and patients booked their place directly with staff at The Health Agency in person or via email.



24 hours of support delivered to 22 diabetic/prediabetic patients over 6 months.

### Impact on patients

"I found the package label session helpful, I thought I understood the labels on packing but have much more of an understanding now which will help me make better choices."

"I want to control my diabetes, I want to come off my tablets and this course is a good starting point for me."

"I've learned how to incorporate more veggies into my diet, I made a veggie curry the other day which I would never have done before and I really enjoyed it. I am now batch cooking soup and putting it into my freezer so that is stopping me going for foods that not are good for me."

"I am now cutting out biscuits, crisps and takeaways."

"I liked the group format, it's been relaxed and I have been able to pick up tips from what other people have been doing, it's much better than having this info given by the doctor. I feel I can be a bit more open."



Kitchen items provided in 'goody box'

## Spotlight on – Andrew’s journey to make changes

At a recent GP appointment, Andrew was told that his blood sugar levels were elevated and that he was at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Concerned about his health, he decided to take action and enrolled on the 6 week course.

Throughout the course, Andrew engaged with the group sessions and began to make meaningful changes to his daily habits. He started eating more vegetables, reduced his intake of snacks like biscuits and crisps and incorporated more walking into his daily routine. One of the most significant changes he made was cutting out late-night snacking, which he credits with helping him develop a better sleep routine. Over the duration of the course, Andrew lost 7kg!

Reflecting on his experience, Andrew said: “The course facilitators explained things in a way that was easy to understand. I got advice on what foods to buy and what to limit, and now I understand the traffic light system on food packaging. I got into a routine – and it’s all down to the course. I don’t snack late at night anymore and I don’t have any cravings. I looked forward to being able to share my progress with the group each week. Without the course, I wouldn’t have made any changes.”

Since finishing the course, Andrew shared that has lost even more weight and has gone from 83 kg to 71 kg and his blood sugar level is on its way down and he is now able to walk 15,000 steps a day. He shared: “I am even considering taking part in a community fun run which I would never have dreamed of or been able to do before attending the course.”

Andrew’s story highlights the powerful impact that practical education, support, and small, consistent changes can have.



Participants cooking in the class



Participants happy with the end result!



Participants with food to take home



In a healthcare system where health inequalities are still a stark reality, we will not find the answers to the vast majority of health problems in our consultation rooms, we will find them in the community and in projects like this. As a healthcare professional, we often give the answers we have rather than the answers our patients need, which normally is a yearly blood test and a monthly prescription. Courses like this are the seed for real lasting change, and I as a GP am so grateful that they can provide what I haven't got capacity for, walking with our patients on a path to true and lasting change.”

– Dr Noble, GP, Wester Hailes Medical Practice



Healthy foods for recipe

Click the link below to find out about [Small Grants or other funding available from NHS Lothian Charity.](#)

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