

Croydon Diabetes Community Champions: Project Update

Introduction

The Lake Foundation teamed up with [Diabetes UK](#) in early 2017 to deliver a Diabetes Community Champions project in Croydon aimed at the black community.

Diabetes affects 1 in 13 people in Croydon with over 19,000 affected and an additional 6400 people who don't know they have it. Diabetics are three times more likely to develop renal failure, 2.5 times more likely to develop heart failure and twice as likely to develop stroke. Additionally, in Croydon, 38% of amputations are in diabetics and 14% of sight loss occurs in diabetics.

There are a number of high risk groups in Croydon. These include South Asians, those who are obese, deprived communities, pregnant women and the black community, our main target, who are three times more likely to develop diabetes than their white counterparts and hence there is a need to focus on this community.

Diabetes costs Croydon £123.7M per year, these costs are related to treatment, management of complications and wider societal costs such as informal care, social care and lost productivity.

Diabetes UK run Diabetes Community Champion programmes in Brent, Newham, Wandsworth and Leicester and preliminary results have been very positive.

As Croydon is the borough with one of the highest prevalence rates for diabetes and diabetes costs Croydon a significant amount of money there is a need for this work. Croydon CCG is also in agreement of the need for this project saying:

“There is a need to focus on the high incidence and prevalence of diabetes in the black African and Caribbean communities” – Croydon CCG

Project Update

Our Croydon Diabetes Community Champions project started in January 2017 with a recruitment drive. We engaged with a large number of local organisations to recruit community champions and by March 2017 we had 17 volunteers registered.

In April, Diabetes UK delivered a comprehensive two-day training session which was attended by all community champions and this was followed by a planning meeting with The Lake Foundation to consolidate the learning from the training and to plan the first few events.

In May our champions teamed up with representatives and other volunteers from Diabetes UK to deliver a series of awareness sessions with the bus company Arriva. Arriva has a large number of African and African-Caribbean employees making them a perfect target for our project. Over three

days our champions engaged with hundreds of Arriva employees at the Croydon Bus Garage, the Norwood Bus Garage and the Thornton Heath Bus Garage, all locations in Croydon.

Following this event, in June, during Diabetes Awareness Week our champions organised a couple of events in the community. This included a diabetes workshop in Crystal Palace and then a diabetes awareness day at Croydon College.

At all these events our champions performed the Diabetes UK [‘Know your Risk of Type 2 Diabetes’ test](#), spoke to the public about how to reduce their risk of developing diabetes and signposted people to Diabetes UK if they needed further information.

The work of our champions has been very successful thus far at reaching the black community and as The Lake Foundation has moved to the Caribbean the project will continue with just Diabetes UK, a full report will be available in 2018.

We’d like to thank Croydon Council for funding this work and Diabetes UK for partnering with us.

References

1. Croydon Annual Public Health Report (2015)