

VANGUARD: Better Care Together

Case study: Millom Type two diabetes support group



Purpose:

Better Care Together and the Millom Health Action Group (representatives of Millom community) came together to launch a local type two diabetes **community-led** support group called '**2s R Us**'.

Supported by Better Care Together, community member Karen Jackson-Smith set up the type two diabetes support group following her own diagnosis in August 2015. Following this it was discovered that 10 per cent of the town's population also had the condition. The community expressed a need for a local support network after finding out that the nearest meetings were held in Lancaster, Preston and Penrith (all more than 50 miles away).

The community-led support group is an opportunity for those living with type 2 diabetes and their friends/families to **support each other to live healthily**.

How it works:

Sponsored by Better Care Together, the community-led diabetes support group **meets once a month** at the 'Tin Chapel' which is a community hall in Millom.

Members of the community and their family and friends are welcome to attend the group at **no cost** where they can get to know others in a similar situation, **share stories/advice and offer each other support**. This includes passing on resources that individuals have found useful including books, websites and recipes useful for those living with diabetes.

The meetings **allow attendees to express their concerns** and share what they believe would benefit the group such as requests for guest speakers and topics for discussion. **Better Care Together work with Millom Health Action Group to meet these**

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| | <p>requests ensuring that group members are getting the support they feel is important.</p> |
| <p>Success so far:</p> | <p>The first two diabetes support group meetings have successfully taken place in Millom with approximately 20 attendees overall.</p> <p>A Facebook page for the type two diabetes support group has been created which offers the group a point of contact and is a place to share advice including national resources.</p> <p>Articles promoting the diabetes support group have been published in the community magazine ‘Around the Combe’.</p> <p>Article on the diabetes support group appeared in the North West Evening mail.</p> <p>A successful engagement session gave the attendees an opportunity to input what they would like from the group going forward.</p> <p>The group has welcomed various guest speakers at the meetings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local fitness instructor Sheila Ellwood who spoke about how diabetes can be controlled and improved though regular exercise and healthy eating • A dietician from Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust who specialises in type two diabetes who led an interactive discussion on food and diabetes • Stuart Vaughan from Diabetes UK who discussed where the group fits into the wider picture and how Diabetes UK can offer support. <p>Plans for future meetings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local pharmacist to attend the group to discuss blood glucose levels and managing medication • Discussions surrounding the possibility of group activities such as planned walks • Healthy recipe swapping/sharing sessions <p>The local Tesco in Millom donated vouchers so that healthy ‘diabetic friendly’ snacks could be provided at the meetings.</p> <p>The diabetes support group has now become a part of the diabetes UK family of groups and communities, giving them access to a portal of resources and promotion tools.</p> |
| <p>Lessons learnt:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to what the community wants/needs and working collaboratively with the community is key to success • There are many assets to utilise within local communities including existing exercise groups • This group is an example of how communities can be empowered to lead on their own health initiatives |

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