

# Diabetes Awareness in Brent



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## Introduction

Healthwatch Brent is an independent local organisation funded by the London Borough of Brent and part of the national network led by Healthwatch England. Healthwatch aims to help local people get the best out of their health and social care services, to enable residents to contribute to the development of quality health and social care services, and to provide information on local services in Brent. It is the independent voice for Brent residents using health and social care services.

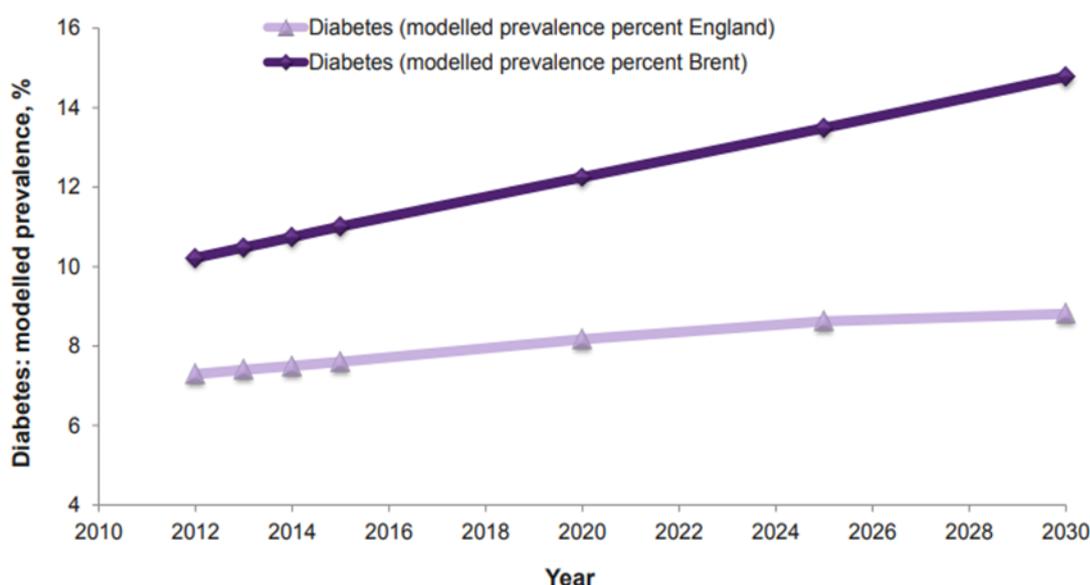
It was formed in April 2013 in response to the Health and Social Care Act (2012). Healthwatch Brent (HWB) listens to people's views about Brent health and social care services. We listen to individuals of all ages and from all of Brent communities. We visit community groups, public events, hospitals and health and social care venues to tell local people about Healthwatch. We listen to what they say about health and social care – the good and the bad. If there are concerns about the quality or safety of services, or there are unmet needs, we feedback patient's experience, to local commissioners and decision makers, in order to improve the service.

## Background

Diabetes is a chronic long-term condition that causes ill health, premature death and disability. Diabetes may be closely related to poor health and the most significant factors for onset of Type 2 diabetes are age and excess weight.

Type 2 diabetes rates in Brent are particularly high compared to other parts of the UK. In 2013/14, the average recorded prevalence of diagnosed diabetes on GP registers in England was 6.2%. Over the same period, 8.2% of people on GP lists in NHS Brent CCG were recorded as having diabetes. This equates to 23,079 recorded cases in people aged 17 years and over.

The prevalence of diabetes is projected to rise in Brent, fuelled by the ageing of the population, increasing numbers of people who are overweight or obese and the high proportion of black and south Asian ethnic groups in the borough who are more at risk of diabetes. By 2030, it is estimated that nearly 15% of people aged 16 and over in Brent will have diabetes compared to the England average of about 9%.



Source: Public Health England (national cardiovascular intelligence network - NCVIN) Diabetes Prevalence Model for Local Authorities and CCGs 2012 to 2030

Modelled estimated prevalence of diabetes in Brent versus England, 2012-2030. Source of data: Public Health England (national cardiovascular intelligence network (NCVIN)),

Diabetes Prevalence Model for Local Authorities and CCGs Estimates show that around 17% of all deaths in Brent are attributable to diabetes. People with diabetes are at risk of a range of complications, including heart disease, strokes, foot disease, which may necessitate amputation, kidney disease and loss of sight. Early diagnosis, good diabetic care and self-management can reduce the risk of complications. Rates of diabetes complications are low in Brent compared to the national picture.

## Research Methodology

The demographic profile of Brent shows a significant proportion are of south Asian and Caribbean heritage. These communities have been identified as having a higher risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. HWB assisted by supporting the provision of diabetes awareness events with representatives from these communities living with or at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

The objective of the workshops was to discover the personal and systemic barriers to healthy eating and physical exercise by obtaining feedback on the tools and information available via a survey that Brent Council was consulted on and HWB devised.

The surveys were used to determine what barriers- personal or system that prevent these communities from the uptake of Brent Council's offers.

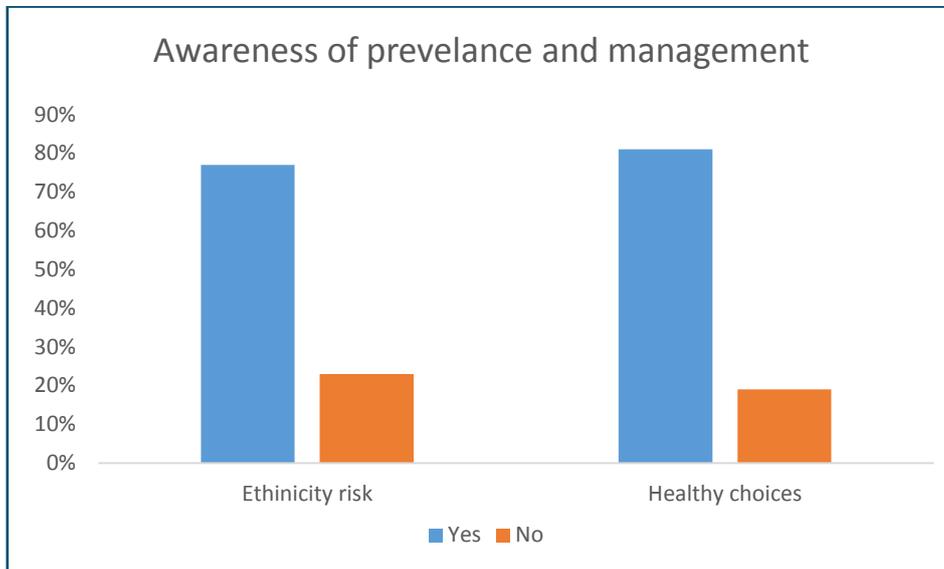
Two community organisations, the Asian Peoples Disability Alliance (APPDA) and West Indian Self Effort (WISE) group serving the south Asian and Caribbean populations respectively, hosted a diabetes awareness event with their community and wider membership to support those living with or at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Brent Council Diabetes Champions presented at the event and provided information and material on the services available in Brent.

HWB obtained feedback on the tools and information available in Brent via a questionnaire that was collected after the event. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix I.

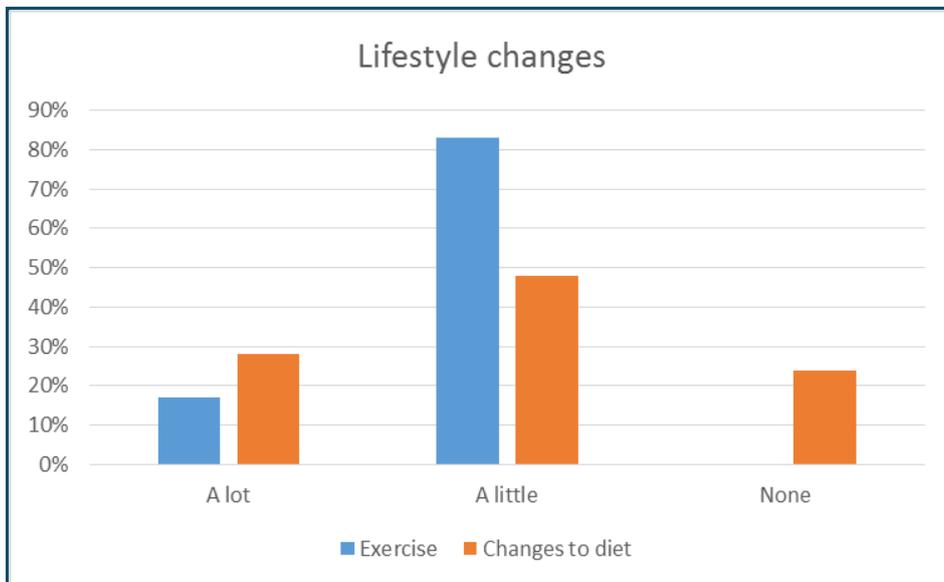
Although the presentation was delivered to 55 people, a total of 26 questionnaires were collected at these two events and analysed.

## Analysis and Findings

The workshop participants were asked about their awareness of some of the issues surrounding type2 Diabetes:

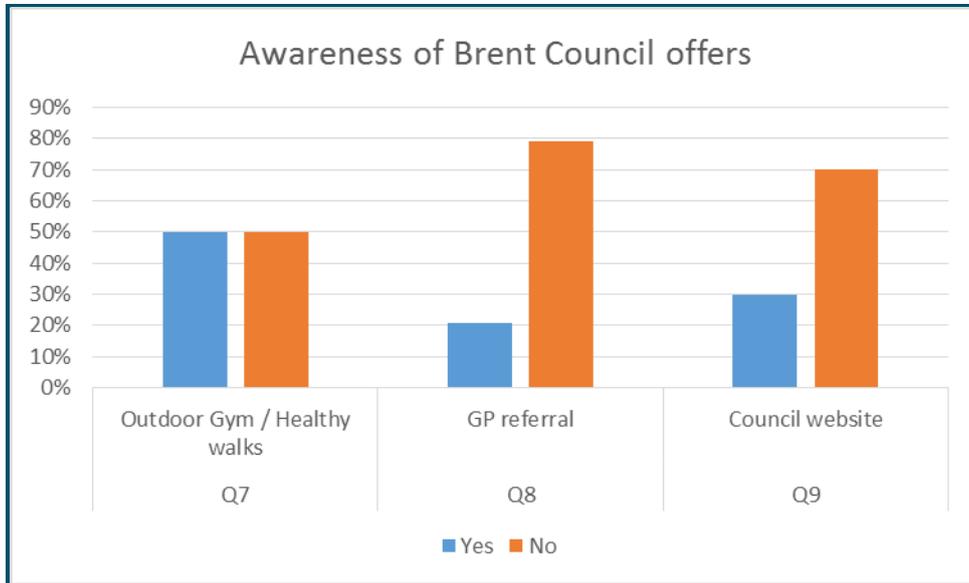


75% of survey respondents were aware that people from African-Caribbean communities are 3 times and South Asian communities are up to 6 times more likely to have diabetes compared to white members of the population, and that 80% are aware that exercising and healthy eating reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes.

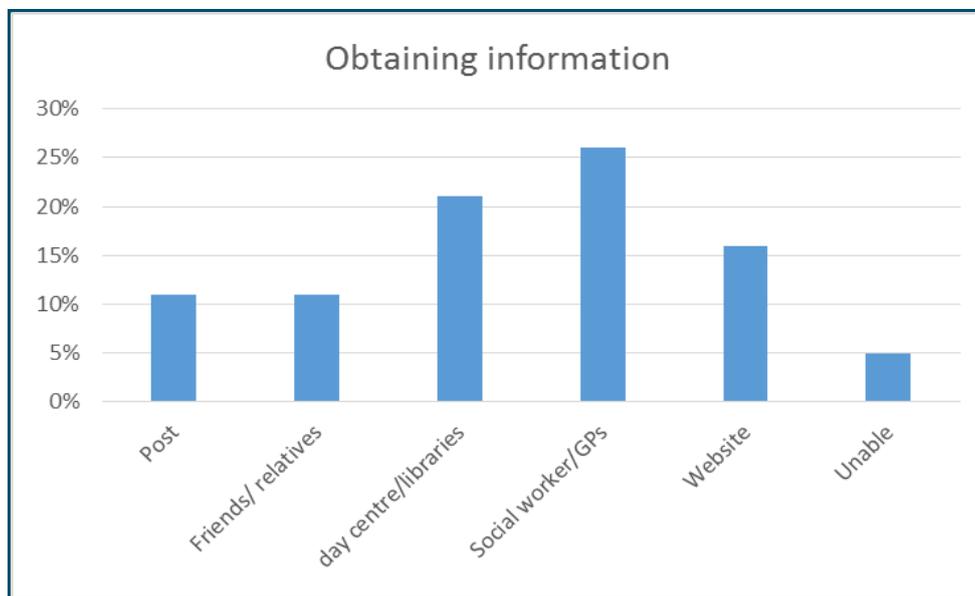


Three quarters of the responses received said that they did make some changes to their diet as a result of the information that they had previously received, 28% made a lot of changes while 48% made a little change to their diets.

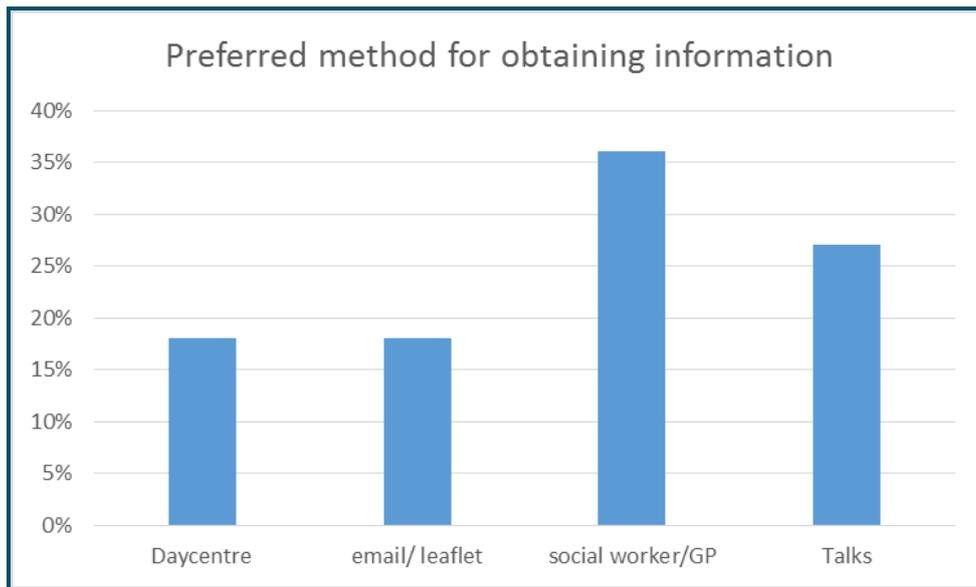
However, only 17% do a lot of exercise while 83% said that they did little exercise, none admitted to doing no exercise. However, their awareness of the different support offers available from Brent Council including their website is sketchy, as shown in the graph below:



Participants were asked how they generally get information about the services available in Brent:



Of those that responded 26% received information about services and support from either their GPs or social worker, 21% received information from libraries and the day centre. 16% obtained information from the internet and 11% were informed by family and friends. The remainder did not receive any information or were unable to access the information sources or because they were either infirm or were disabled.



When asked about how they would like to hear more about opportunities to be more healthy, the majority had a preference for information being delivered by social care workers (36%) at the care centre and with similar presentations (45%). The remainder were content to receive either leaflets or emails.

## Recommendations

From our survey results, when asked about the personal barriers that these communities face, many of the participants did not answer these questions. We also spoke to the Brent Integrated Diabetes Services (BIDS) about their work and used their culturally focussed and appropriate, pictorial booklet to provide dietary information at the workshops and these booklets and leaflets were well received.

Although aware of the increased risk of developing Type2 diabetes due to their community profile, most said they are uncertain on how to help themselves or where to go to find out more information about the support available.

We have developed a set of recommendations based on the survey and workshop responses for consideration:

1. The majority of the clients in these two community groups were unaware that Brent offers exercise referral schemes through their GP. This could be publicised and incorporated in the portfolio of services available through social prescription which could be captured on a poster displayed in GP surgeries.
2. Brent Council Public Health could work with HWB to promote its messages linking the importance of undertaking physical exercise will help to reduce the risk or delay the onset of Type 2 Diabetes.
3. Develop a targeted offer to high risk communities which draws together the expertise and experience of Brent Council Public Health and the Integrated Diabetes Team with support from HWB.
4. Both the members of the South Asian and African-Caribbean communities we spoke with said that they prefer to receive information about service provision through engagement and face to face contact as it enables them to ask question about the services and options available – the approach taken by the borough’s Diabetes Champions was cited as a preferred approach as well as hearing from someone living with diabetes. Whilst this is a resource intensive approach its potential impact on supporting people to live more confidently and independently with diabetes is worth exploring.
5. Most of the guidance focuses on physical exercise – however there is little advice for people with physical disabilities on how they can increase their physical activity to better manage their diabetes. This is something that can be developed with the borough’s leisure providers.

## Response

The Public Health team in Brent Council responded to this report. Their response is as follows:

1. The Council's public health team works with Council leisure services, private providers of leisure services and GPs to promote the exercise referral scheme. We would be glad to produce a poster if GPs were willing to display this.
2. The Council's public health team will be continuing to support the Diabetes Champions to promote awareness of how the risks of developing diabetes can be reduced. We would welcome any support which HWB are able to provide
3. The Council's public health team believe this is provided by the work of the Diabetes Champions who have strong links with Brent Integrated Diabetes Service (BIDS). We would welcome any offers from community groups which would enable the Champions to access new high risk communities
4. Recommendation 4 is probably best directed at the Brent NHS CCG or BIDS. The Diabetes Champions can only offer general lifestyle advice not support or advice on the management of diabetes which is the remit of health professionals
5. The Council's leisure providers are able to provide advice on physical activity for those with a pre-existing health condition, this is a requirement of the exercise on referrals schemes but such advice is not dependent on a GP referral

## Appendix I

### Type 2 Diabetes Awareness Questionnaire

New research findings have shown that approximately half of all South Asian, Black African and African Caribbean people in the UK will develop Type 2 diabetes by the age of 80, compared to only one in five people of European descent. [Diabetes Care 2012]

(For each of the question, draw a ring round either 'Yes' or 'No')

1. Did you know that Afro-Caribbeans are 3 times and South Asians is up to 6 times more likely to have diabetes than white members of the population?

Yes /No

2. Did you know that exercising and healthy eating reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes?

Yes /No

3. Do you know what weekly exercise/healthy eating is recommended?

Yes /No

4. What weekly exercise do you do?

None / A Little / A Lot

5. Do you think you have a healthy diet? **Yes /No**

6. What changes have you made to your diet as a result of information you have been given or found out yourself?

None / A Little / A Lot

7. Did you know that Brent Council has Outdoor Gyms in various parks and Healthy Walk sessions for physical exercise?

Yes /No

8. Did you know that Brent offers exercise referral schemes through GPs?

Yes /No

9. Did you know that information on healthy living can be found on Brent Council Website? <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/healthy-living/>

Yes /No

If YES

Have you taken these up?

Which offers?

How often?

Other feedback?

If NO

What stops you taking up the offer available?

What could Brent Council do to encourage you to take up the offers??

10. How do you generally get information about the services available in Brent? Briefly explain in the box below.

Please hand in your completed questionnaire at the AGM – thanks.