



Supporting patients to stay healthy in the community

Dr Lisa Harrod-Rothwell, Deputy Chief Executive of Londonwide LMCs, looks at how practices can use sign-posting to community groups to encourage and support patients to fulfil their New Year's resolutions.

January is the time of year where many patients chose to adopt positive lifestyle changes, be it via incorporating more exercise in their daily routine, eating healthier or taking up a new hobby.

On average, 70% of Britons have vowed to either exercise more and/or eat healthier in the new year with now one in seven having a gym membership. Now is a good time to encourage your patients to fulfil their New Year's resolutions, and there are many health initiatives dotted across the Capital that they may not be aware of that can help.

As healthcare professionals, providing the best care we can give to our patients with the resources we have available can be challenging. You do not have to wait for an official social prescribing scheme, have a look around at what is going on in your area.

For instance, the Family Healthy Weight Care Pathways and Toolkit, located in Hammersmith and Fulham, provides aid for healthcare professionals and people who work with children around obesity prevention and weight management support. Similarly, if you're based in wider North West London Healthier North West London has launched a campaign to encourage residents to improve their physical and mental health by making a #MyJanuaryPledge. If your patients are attempting dry January, trying to stop smoking or trying to eat healthier, campaigns like this can provide support.

If your patients are attempting to eat healthier this year there are many healthy food services that can provide guidance and advice about changing diet. Bags of taste is a health food service that provides nutritional tips that supports people to eat well for less in North East London. They also do cooking classes based all around London and offer healthy recipes designed to cost less than £1 per head. The OneYou campaign provides options across for people who want to adopt a healthy lifestyle in their daily routines yet may not have the capacity or the funds to do so.

We have collected some examples here and it's always worth looking at what is available in your area, familiarising practice staff and signposting to services via waiting room posters and other resources.

Pan London groups

City LivingWise – This is a free healthy lifestyle supports service for people living and working in London. They provide:
12-week weight management course.

Personal exercise programme (exercise on referral).

Free NHS Health checks for 40 to 74-year olds.

They have courses based all around London.

Change4Life and One You offer advice about healthy eating and the importance of having a healthy eating, including advice and support on food, diet and healthy recipes. Change4Life has advice about how to lower sugar intake, including sugar swaps, suggestions for snacks that are lower in sugar and using the Food Scanner App to help people identify the amount of sugar you have in your favourite foods and drinks.

Health and Wellbeing – Shoreditch Trust's Health and Wellbeing programme helps people to make positive life choices and take up opportunities to improve emotional, physical and social wellbeing.

North East London

Bags of Taste – An organisation that provides free cooking lessons on how to cook good food on a budget with recipes for under £1 a meal. They have courses in City of London, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and Wandsworth.

North West London

MEND programmes – (Mind, Exercise, Nutrition & Do it!)

Is an obesity prevention and treatment programme for children and adults.

Organised by Mytime Active which is a scheme intended to improve the wellbeing of their customers and their communities through well managed,

accessible and good value health services. They believe everyone has the right to a healthy lifestyle.

Mytime Active works with local authority environmental health departments to increase the number of local food businesses that achieve the Healthier Catering Commitment.

The Family Healthy Weight Care Pathways and Toolkit – This is an aid for healthcare professionals and those who work with children to provide obesity prevention and weight management support to those aged 19 and under in Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster.

NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme – A programme developed to support people who are at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

The programmes are part of the national scheme which is expected to provide support to 100,000 individuals each year by 2020.

The programme is free to those at risk of type 2 diabetes, who are registered with a GP in one of their supported locations.

They are based in various locations around London: Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Ealing, Hounslow, Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon.

One You Hounslow – A free single point of access health improvement service that provides information and friendly support to help Hounslow residents eat well, move more, drink less and stop smoking. They endorse a lot of social physical activities for the community including Parkrun (a free weekly 5km event for runners of all standards), Couch to 5k and

South London

Wandsworth has a variety of weight management programmes for its residents, programmes are provided by Slimming World and Weight Watchers.

Residents are offered free weight loss vouchers for 12 weeks of a programme. They are available for those who are aged 18 or over, above a healthy weight and meet the eligibility criteria.

Kick the fat - Is a 7 a-side football league for players who want to lose weight. The league is only for people with a BMI 30+.

Eating – WW Health Solution's Flex programme helps deciding what to eat easy. This programme has expert coaches available 24/7 and has over 200 healthy recipes the residents can access via the app.