

Inclusive Lifestyle Interventions for Type 2 Diabetes

Reflections from a Service Learning Project with Public Health Collaboration

The Public Health Collaboration (PHC) is a UK-based charity focusing on **lifestyle interventions**, particularly low-carbohydrate diets, to **improve health** and address chronic conditions like Type 2 Diabetes. PHC's mission focuses on **empowering individuals** and communities through evidence-based dietary guidance, **reducing medication reliance** and addressing **health inequalities**.



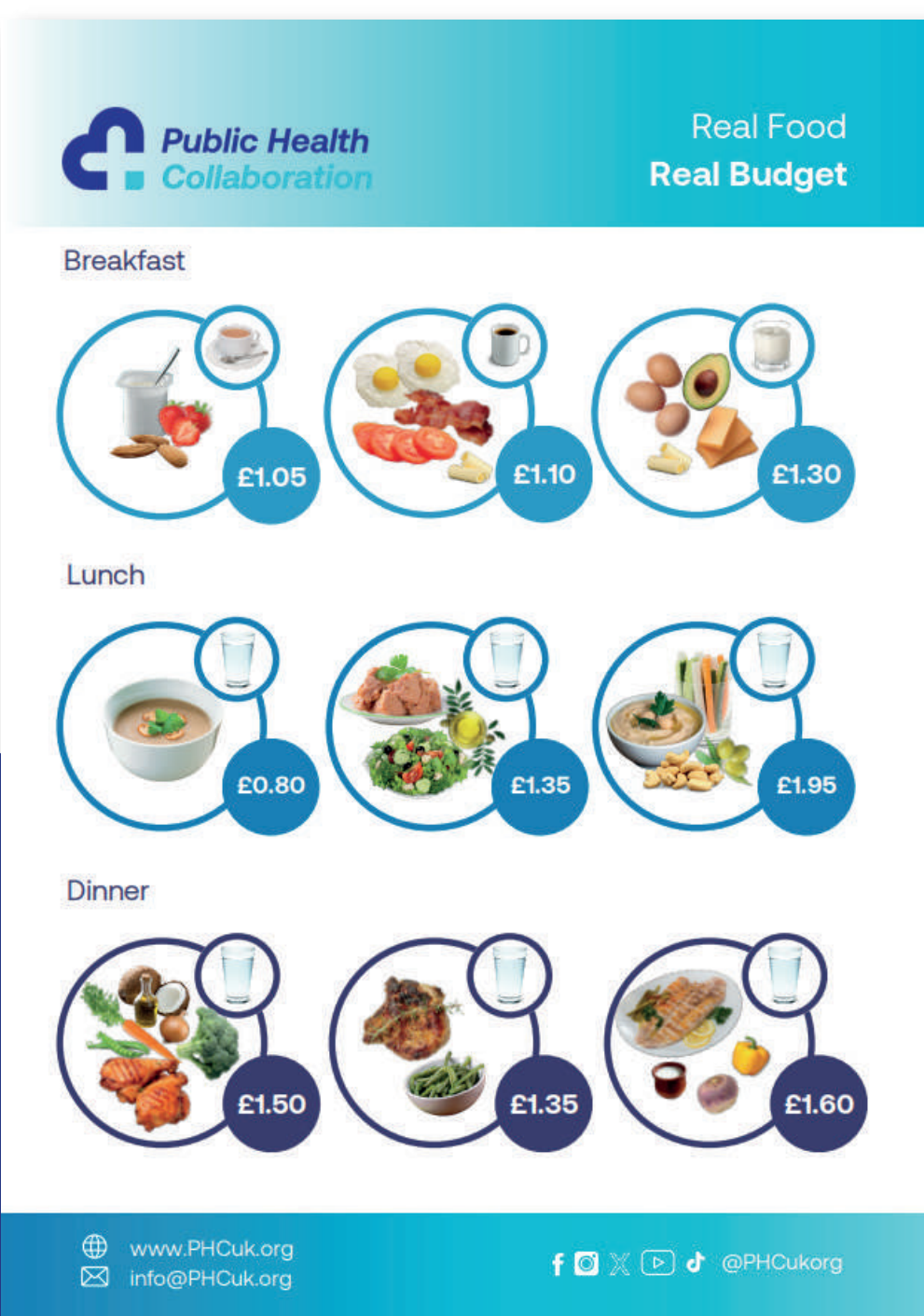
Public Health Collaboration's approach aligns with **Good Medical Practice** principles of patient-centred care¹ and **NICE Guidelines** on lifestyle interventions for Type 2 Diabetes management². These frameworks reinforce the need for **evidence-based, inclusive and sustainable** healthcare strategies, indicating the organisation model as an **innovative response** to public health challenges.

Key PHC Initiatives:

- Ambassador-led Community Support:** Localised groups empowering individuals with accessible guidance.
- Free Resources:** Online tools, weekly support meetings, and educational materials.
- Evidence-Based Interventions:** Proven success at GP practices like Norwood Surgery, with 46% drug-free remission for Type 2 Diabetes in three years and 93% remission for prediabetic individuals³.

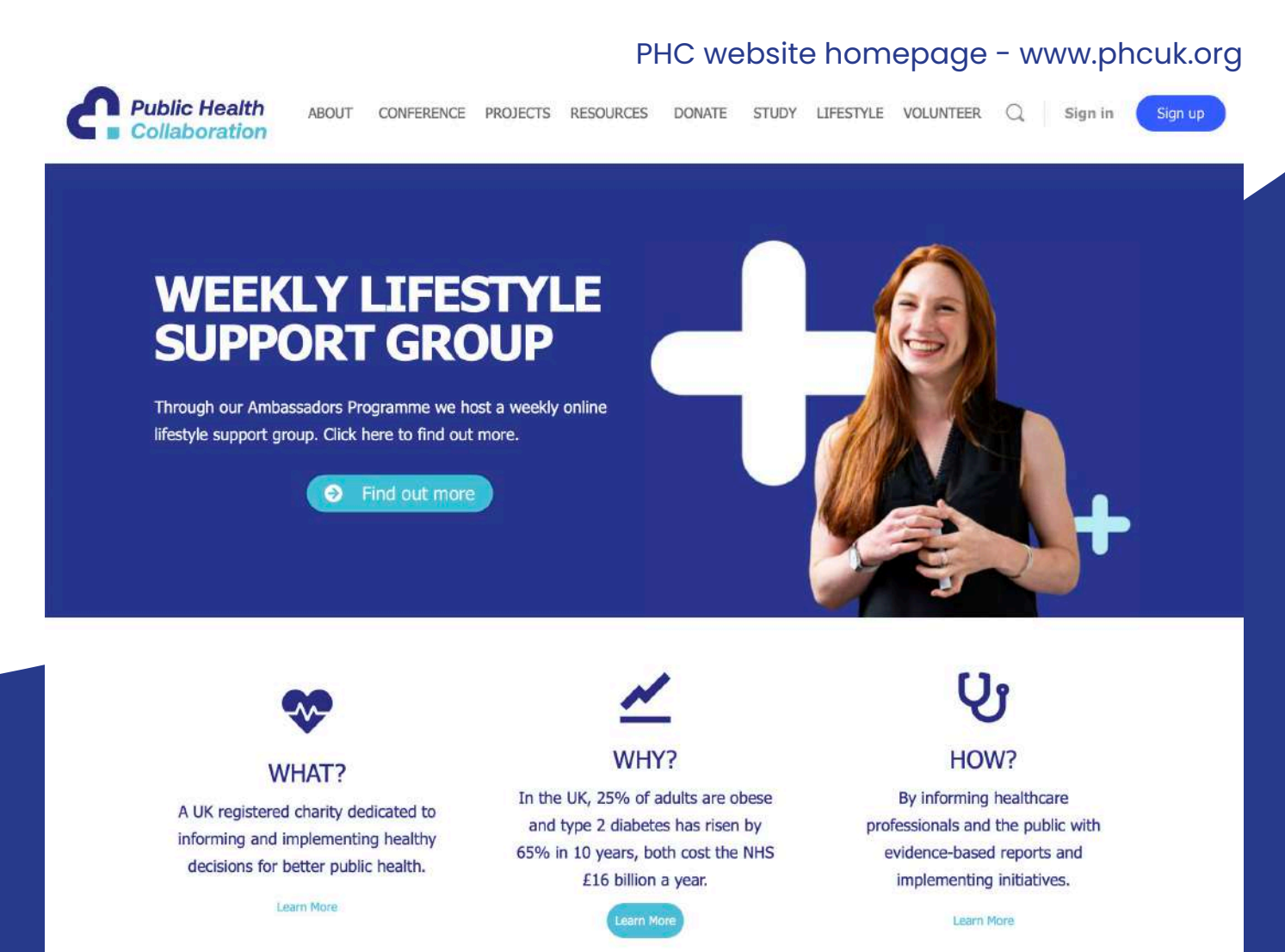
PHC Impact on Public Health:

- Empowers individuals to make sustainable dietary changes through education and support.
- Promotes health equity through inclusive and budget-friendly programmes.
- Saves NHS costs by reducing medication dependence.



One of the resources available on the PHC website is a booklet with suggestions for affordable and nutritional dietary choices.

Some of the resources available on the PHC website:



My Service Learning Experience

As part of this project, I:

- Conducted desk research on the organisation's mission and programmes.
- Attended Public Health Collaboration Second Annual Scottish Conference, engaging with the director, ambassadors and experts.
- Learned from conference sessions on topics like low-carb diets, continuous glucose monitoring, and addressing ultra-processed food addiction.
- Completed the RCGP-accredited eLearning module⁶ "Type 2 Diabetes and the Low GI Diet," authored by Dr David Urwin and linked to the PHC website.

INSIGHTS LEARNED FROM PUBLIC HEALTH COLLABORATION AND HOW THIS WILL APPLY TO MY FUTURE PRACTICE:

Leadership and Team Working

GMC Outcomes for Graduates⁴ addressed:

- 8a:** Describes principles for effective teamwork and shared purpose in healthcare teams.
- 8c:** Emphasises recognising the impact of behaviour on team dynamics and relationships.
- 8c:** Stresses respect for the roles of diverse professionals in multidisciplinary care.

Attending the conference and observing how PHC facilitates collaboration between diverse individuals allowed me to witness the value of multidisciplinary teamwork between 3rd sector organisations, as well as the public and healthcare professionals. Moreover, I gained insight into how clear leadership and shared goals can align such diverse teams to improve public health. The **NICE Community Engagement Guidelines**⁷ advocate for involving local groups in health initiatives, a principle I saw being applied during my project activities and one I aim to integrate into practice. The **UN Sustainable Development Goal 17**⁸ further emphasises cross-sector collaboration and reinforces the value of shared health goals between diverse teams.

FUTURE PRACTICE

Moving forward, I plan to:

- Foster collaboration** between healthcare professionals and community organisations to create integrated care pathways, inspired by PHC's ambassador-led programmes.
- Recognise and leverage** the diverse skills of team members, ensuring all contributions are valued and aligned with shared public health goals.
- Promote a culture of inclusivity** by actively engaging with local groups, mirroring PHC's model of community-driven initiatives.
- Set clear, actionable objectives** for projects and encourage team participation to achieve shared outcomes, similar to PHC's goal-oriented approach.

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

GMC Outcomes for Graduates⁴ addressed:

- 10a:** Highlights the importance of clear, empathetic communication tailored to patients and colleagues.
- 10b:** Emphasises effective communication for discussing sensitive topics like diet, weight, and lifestyle behaviours.

By engaging in the project activities, I developed more awareness of cultural and socioeconomic barriers to health behaviours, which improved my understanding of different communication needs to diverse patient populations. I also improved my ability to describe medical concepts such as Type 2 Diabetes, to non-medical audiences. Moreover, my engagement in the project highlighted the importance of active listening in creating collaborative environments. In addition to addressing the GMC Outcomes for Graduates above, the experience also aligned with **NICE Guideline NG282**², which emphasises patient-centred communication and the value of empathy and trust in constructing collaborative relationships.

FUTURE PRACTICE

Moving forward, I plan to:

- Use accessible and straightforward language** to explain medical concepts, adapting to the patient's cultural and health literacy level.
- Incorporate visual aids**, such as infographics and booklets, similar to PHC resources, to simplify complex information for patients.
- Proactively address sensitive topics**, such as diet and weight, with empathy and non-judgmental dialogue, reflecting the respectful and supportive approach championed by PHC.
- Use active listening techniques** to fully understand patient concerns and adapt advice to their specific needs, fostering trust and collaboration.

Promoting Wellness and Preventive Care

GMC Outcomes for Graduates⁴ addressed:

- 14m:** Emphasises motivating patients toward self-care and healthier lifestyles
- 25a:** Focuses on promoting wellness and enabling individuals to achieve their best health
- 25c:** Highlights the importance of evaluating social, environmental, and cultural factors influencing health

This project deepened my understanding of how preventive care, such as PHC's low-carb interventions, addresses chronic conditions like Type 2 Diabetes, strengthening my commitment to incorporating evidence-based preventive strategies into clinical practice. I also learned the importance of empowering patients through education and practical approaches to drive behavioural change. In addition to addressing the GMC Outcomes for Graduates above, those understandings also align with **Goal 3 of UN Sustainable Development**⁵ (Good Health and Wellbeing), which prioritises reducing health inequalities, and reflects **NICE Guideline NG282**² focus on evidence-based preventive care.

FUTURE PRACTICE

Moving forward, I plan to:

- Integrate evidence-based preventive strategies**, like PHC low-carb dietary approaches, into routine care advice for patients with or at risk of chronic conditions.
- Actively involve patients in their care** by providing them with educational materials and practical tools to empower lifestyle changes, inspired by PHC's community workshops.
- Advocate for community-driven preventive programmes**, like PHC, in NHS services to address health inequalities in underserved areas.
- Collaborate with schools and community groups** to promote wellness from an early age, encouraging healthy behaviours in line with PHC's focus on education.

NOURISHING MINDS



Image extracted from a conference video available at PHC website - www.phcuk.org/resources



The **Public Health Collaboration** demonstrates how third-sector organisations can address public health inequalities through **inclusive, community-driven, evidence-based** interventions.

This project reinforced the importance of **interdisciplinary collaboration, preventive care, and effective communication**. By integrating these principles into my practice, I aim to promote **health equity** and **empower patients** to achieve **sustainable wellbeing**.

References:

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