



Royal College of  
General Practitioners

RCGP CASE STUDY

# The RCGP Active Practice Charter

NAME

Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi

ORGANISATION

Clarendon Lodge Medical Practice

## SUMMARY

**Clarendon Lodge Medical Practice**, a GP surgery in the north of Leamington Spa was one of the first surgeries to become an RCGP Active Practice thanks to their commitment to reduce sedentary behaviour and increasing physical activity amongst their staff and patients. They have really pushed the boundaries on what a practice can do for their patients to become more active and have committed to build upon their efforts in the future.

The RCGP Physical Activity and Lifestyle team interviewed Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi to find out more about the drive for change in the practice. We hope that Clarendon Lodge Medical Practice serves as inspiration to all the practices in the UK that are committed to get people more active.

## OVERVIEW AND REASON FOR CHANGE

The focal point was Clarendon Lodge Medical Practice Fitness Club (CLMPFC) which is an online community created to support and encourage one another in personal fitness pursuits.

The driving force behind this was to promote physical activity as an invaluable therapeutic tool for both mental and physical well-being. With the ever-growing use of social media, it also provided an innovative way for the practice to connect with their patients.

The club rapidly gained popularity soon attracting interest from local and national media outlets including the BBC. We have since built on these foundations with the hiring of a social prescriber and co-working closely with a wellness coach.

"Our aim in applying for the charter was to gain national recognition for their work in the field of general practice. Ultimately inspiring other practices through the RCGP to also pursue projects focussed on physical activity. Given the benefits for wellbeing as well as economic benefits for the NHS in the long term through improved general health amongst the population, they felt that this is a resource that should be utilised to its full potential".

Through the service, patients see a GP for an extended consultation to learn, plan and implement ways to improve their health without further reliance on NHS services. They are then linked with local health and social activities and empowered to change their daily behaviours to improve health. This was done in a radically different way, using behaviour change theory and Nishkam's experience of meaningful community engagement as a trusted organisation that is passionate about selfless service for people from all walks of life.

## WAS IT A CHALLENGE TO MEET THE APC CRITERIA?

"The practice discovered the Active Practice Charter relatively late having already made a commitment as a practice to push physical activity to the forefront. At this stage we were pleased to see that our ambitious ventures had already exceeded the expectations required.

It took dedication from numerous staff members whose enthusiasm pushed the project forward. Some of the highlights included the creation of a Dr's Fitness blog, a social media club, a weekly walk and delivering a 'festival of fitness' on national fitness day. Our challenge now is to continue to sustain and build on the progress we have made thus far with the same energy and commitment."



## WHAT DO YOU HOPE HAVING ACTIVE PRACTICE CHARTER STATUS WILL MEAN FOR THE PRACTICE?

"The recognition gained for the efforts put in by staff and patients will hopefully inspire further aspirational projects. One project in the pipeline is called 12/12/12. This will combine research, group consultations and health promotion. Two sets of

Twelve patients will be selected based on recent high cholesterol results. Together they will attend group consultations promoting the benefits of physical activity to help reduce their cholesterol and associated risk factors. During the project half the group will be given wearable technology to track their progress and we will look to assess what impact this has on uptake of physical activity and if this physical activity does in fact correlate with improved biochemical and health measurements. We will be working in collaboration with the sport technology brand Polar during this project."

## HAVE YOU SEEN ANY CHANGE IN ACTIVITY LEVELS FOR STAFF/PATIENTS AS A RESULT OF YOUR PLEDGES?

"During the last 6 months we have witnessed a fantastic response by both staff and patients. On the 25th September 2019, to coincide with national fitness day we set our patients and staff the goal of covering 10,000 km by Christmas. This could be via running, swimming, cycling or walking and they were then invited to share their experiences on our social media platforms (Strava, Facebook, Instagram & Twitter using [#pledge10000](#) [#clmpfc](#)). We were pleased to announce this goal was achieved well before the deadline.

There has certainly been a notable increase in physical activity from both individuals beginning their journeys to those who are already active to set new personal challenges going forward. CLMPFC are now regularly visible at running events across the county including weekly parkruns where our distinctive royal blue T-shirt can be spotted, spreading our message and encouraging discussions.

I myself had never partaken in any regular physical activity prior to the launch of our fitness club. I am now addicted to the tri athletic disciplines of swim, bike, run and am proud to have completed 2 marathons and a 100km cycle. Incorporating regular exercise into my week has improved my energy

levels and added balance to my work-life. Cycling to work had also helped to improve my productivity and resilience to stress.

Above all it has been overwhelming to see the positive support exchanged amongst staff and patients and the formation of new or stronger relationships.



### WHAT 3 TIPS WOULD YOU OFFER GP PRACTICES THINKING OF APPLYING FOR THE CHARTER?

"Aim high! (I had far rather start with a big idea in a small way than a small idea in a big way: John Hunt).

Teamwork makes the dream work. Involve as many different staff members as possible. It can also work to strengthen team bonds and morale.

Lead by example. As one of the leads for the fitness club it was important, I set a good example for other staff members and patients."

### REFLECTIONS: TOP TIPS FOR OTHER GPs CONSIDERING SETTING UP SOMETHING SIMILAR:

- **Learn lifestyle medicine.** Numerous courses exist from different providers and there is always something to be learned from people with experience in this field. There is much more to lifestyle medicine than "eat less, move more".
- **Learn motivational interviewing** as a way to empower people and overcome barriers to behaviour change.
- **Taking the time to listen** and show genuine respect for someone's experiences and ideas about their health is therapeutic time well spent.
- **Groups** are an efficient and effective way of empowering individuals where their goals are similar. This is remarkably straightforward to set up in primary care and is being done in many GP surgeries across the country.
- **Collaborate** with patients, colleagues and anyone else who has a passion to make lifestyle medicine work in your area. There are multiple ways to implement lifestyle medicine at different scales and what you do will be based on the assets available to you and the needs of your population.