

A Safer Ramadan: developing an integrated approach to supporting people with Type 2 diabetes and their healthcare professionals to experience Ramadan more safely

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Aim: The Safer Ramadan Collaborative undertook a 'whole systems' approach in developing a multifaceted intervention to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

Background: For the 1.6 million Muslims living in the UK, observing the holy month of Ramadan is in an important religious obligation. Key to the observance of Ramadan is the requirement to fast from sunrise to sunset.

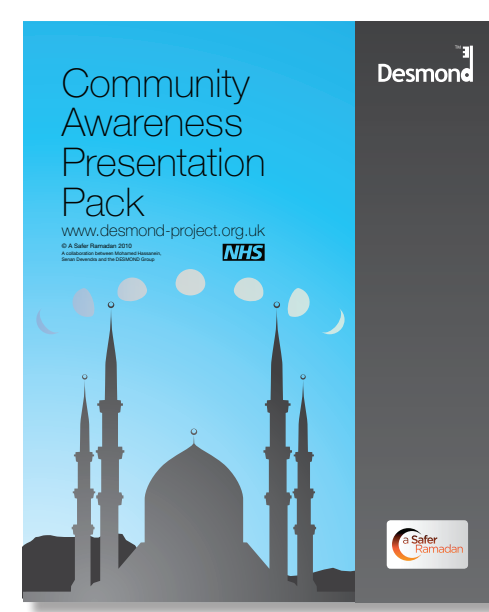
Clinical outcomes for individuals with diabetes choosing to observe the holy month of Ramadan are often poor, resulting in hospital admissions, deteriorating glycaemic control and weight gain. Previous studies have demonstrated that stand-alone patient education is insufficient for improved outcomes, when health care providers lack knowledge and competence to support patient choices for observing Ramadan.

Although many people with diabetes are exempt from the obligation to fast, the exemptions, especially in the light of diabetes risk, are often misunderstood. Health care professionals may advise people not to fast even when risk is low. People with diabetes, where the risk is high or low, may ignore medical advice and be led by a stronger sense of duty or spirituality over health needs. Both faith communities and health care professionals need to support patients' fasting choices, with all concerned having a more complete understanding of the potential consequences of those choices.

Method: A core multidisciplinary group of health care professionals developed an integrated model of three components (see across):

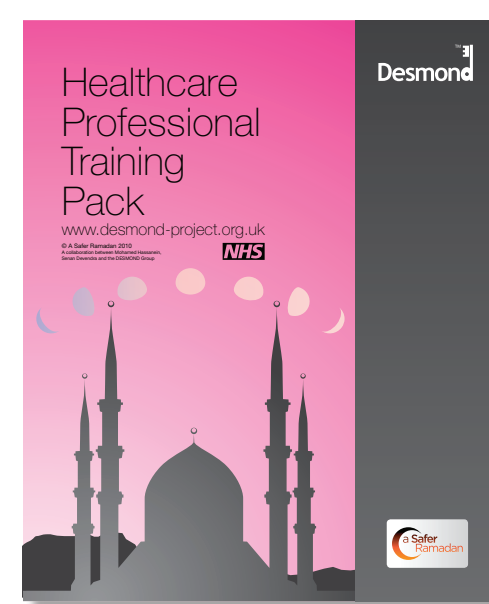
In 2010 we trained teams from 5 Primary Care Trusts (see below) to deliver all 3 components in their local areas. Personnel attended training, delivered the interventions, collected observational data and provided structured and anecdotal feedback.

Community Awareness:



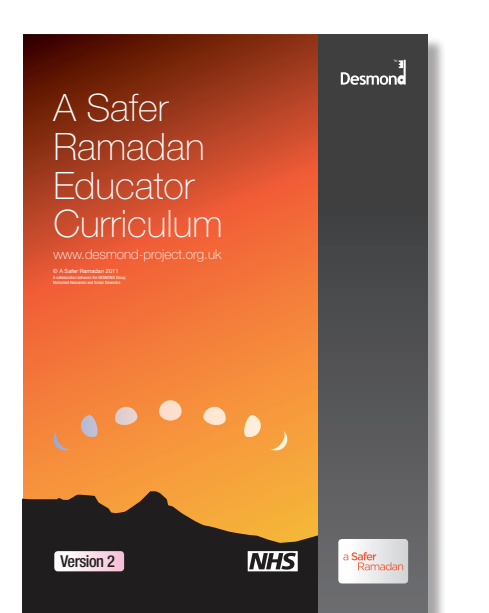
- Raises awareness of the impact of Ramadan and diabetes
- Slide set designed to be deliverable by local community leaders or local HCPs
- Suitable for widest range of audiences Potentially increases uptake of patient education programme
- Highlights importance of open discussion about the risks and options for people with diabetes observing Ramadan

Health Care Professional Training:



- Medicalised version of the community awareness package
- Training using group case study discussions
- Promotes discussion of treatment options
- Resources enable it to be deliverable to small or large groups of HCPs
- Facilitated by trained HCP

Patient Self Management Education:



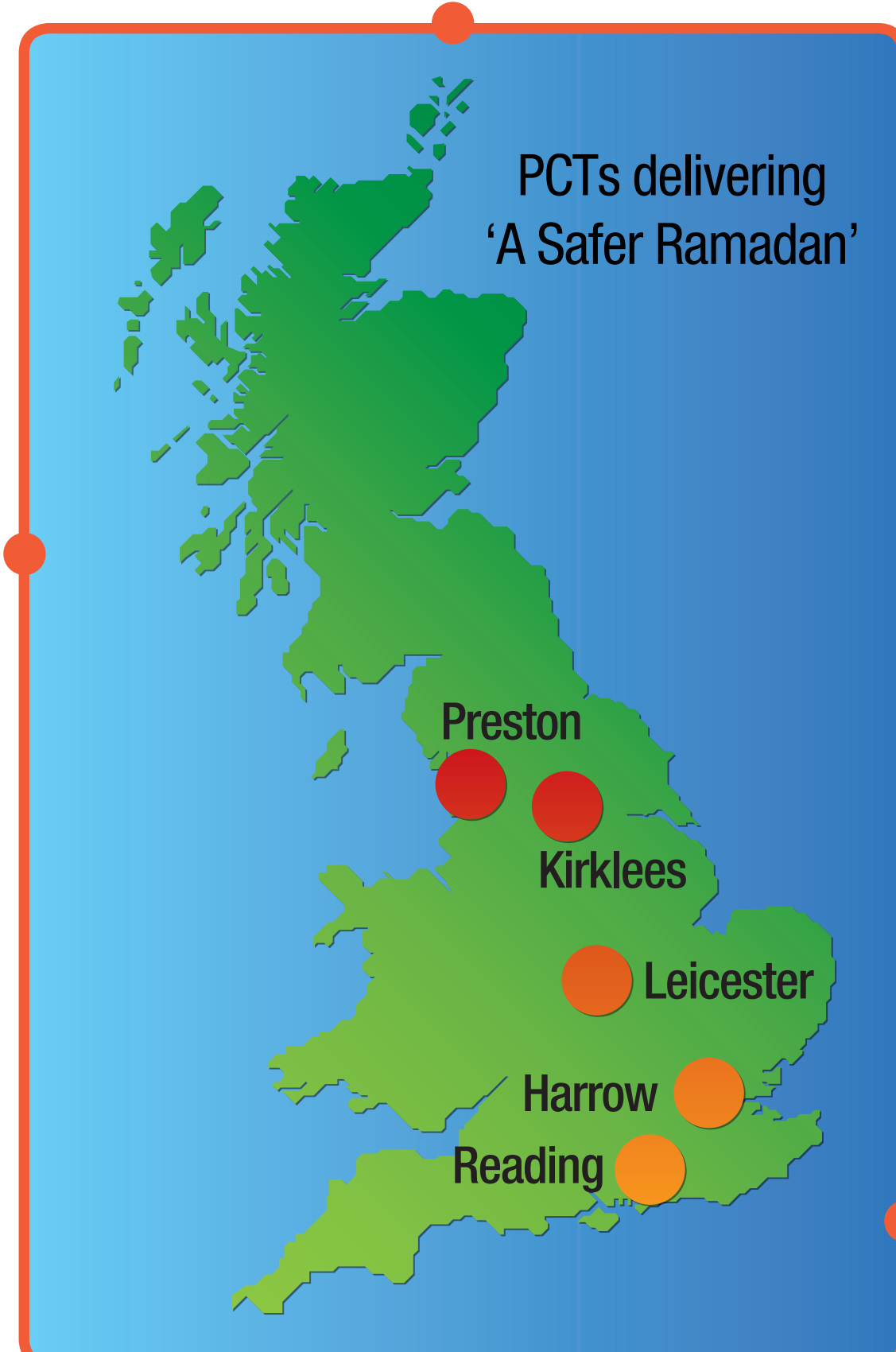
- A Safer Ramadan
- 3-hr group structured self management education
- Increases understanding of the impact of Ramadan on diabetes
- Promotes opportunities for informed choices regarding fasting/not fasting
- Uses curriculum and interactive resources
- Delivered by 1 or more trained health care professionals
- Suitable for delivery in local communities

What took place:

- 7 community awareness sessions delivered to groups of 12-20 attendees
- 7 training events for health care professionals
- 10 patient education courses for groups of up to 8 participants, some with accompanying family or friends

Feedback:

- Community awareness sessions improved awareness and knowledge of Ramadan for non-Muslims
- Issues around diabetes highlighted for faith communities
- Provision of patient education well received.
- Health care professionals reported increased understanding of the religious context and greater expertise in clinical management during Ramadan.
- Participants and patient education courses gave written and verbal feedback demonstrating increased understanding of their options for observing Ramadan



Resulting Actions for 2011

- More detailed information and references provided to health care professionals to support the basis of this intervention.
- A pre-course 'Understanding Diabetes for Ramadan' developed for patient participants who have not previously attended structured education to increase understanding of diabetes prior to attending 'A Safer Ramadan'
- Patient handbook produced
- New pictorial and 3D resources created
- On-site training planned for 2011 to support local teams
- Guidance for local teams on recruitment and logistics

Summary and next steps

This service development initiative demonstrates that a whole systems approach is achievable in a primary care setting. In this project, it has led to a more substantial pilot study to be carried out prior to Ramadan 2011. Our experience in the first year of this project emphasises the importance not only of a robust evidence based intervention, but also of good logistics, planning, and the building of relationships with the local community, to facilitate essential activities taking place in good time before the beginning of Ramadan.

With a view to a more robust trial in 2012/13, the team welcomes expressions of interest for participation. Please contact desmondweb@uhl-tr.nhs.uk in the first instance.

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