

Case study: Michelle



Context

Momenta Newcastle are delivering a group-based Diabetes Remission Programme (DRP) virtually over Zoom in Birmingham & Solihull CCG as part of the NHS England Low Calorie Diet Programme pilot.

Michelle's background

Michelle works full-time for a bank supporting vulnerable clients and those with special needs. Her work is rewarding but busy and at times stressful - her home life is no more restful. Michelle lives with her partner, children and her ageing parents and on many an occasion she is cooking for nine people! She is very much looking forward to her wedding later this year after inevitable rearrangements and delays due to COVID. Michelle's 'me time' is limited but she has good friends and dog called Rocco and together they have embraced an active lifestyle as part of her journey towards diabetes remission.

Life before the programme

Michelle knows what is like to suffer from Type 2 diabetes as it runs through her family. She was diagnosed in December 2019 and 'simply hated it', reacting badly to medication and feeling poorly. She was aware that she was at her heaviest when she was diagnosed and knew that she had to do something to change as her health was deteriorating:

*'Life was **awful!** You can live with diabetes, but it totally changes your **lifestyle**'.*

It was Michelle's 73-year-old Dad who spotted the press coverage about the programme whilst browsing on his tablet. Recognising that she would be an ideal participant he encouraged her to approach her GP. Michelle describes pestering her GP 'like a dog with a bone' to get assessed and referred onto the programme.

Michelle's journey

*'I really **need** to do this for **me**'.*

Michelle was excited and determined but open-minded about the programme:

*'It's **up to me** whether I make a **success** of it or not'.*

She considers that the timing was right for her and that being in lockdown and working from home has helped her to keep focused and on track. She describes the support from her Coach and the other members of the group as invaluable – enjoying the opportunity to chat and meet up regularly.

*'The **tools** and **support** are all in place (on Momenta)'.*

Phase 1 – Total Diet Replacement (TDR)

Michelle didn't feel great in the first week on the TDR products, but she soon adapted, taking full advantage of the programme tools and group support throughout this phase. When it got tough, she would remember her goals, refer to her Workbook and make good use of the High Performance Toolkit - reminding herself that *'It's for only 12 weeks'*.

Attending every virtual group meeting has given her support and motivation to keep on track with her goals:

*'If I was feeling low or **demotivated**, I came out of the meetings **feeling positive**'.*

Michelle stresses the importance of **planning** to get off to a good start in Phase 1 'Reboot' and throughout the programme. She emphasises the importance of carefully planning which TDR products to order and when to have them throughout the day and drinking plenty of water at regular intervals.

Her starting weight was 97.5kg. During the TDR phase Michelle lost weight steadily, finishing the 12 weeks at 82.9kg – **nearly 15kg or 2 ½ stone lighter** – having lost 15% of her starting body weight in just three months.



Phase 2

Michelle describes feeling a little apprehensive about coming off the TDR products and to start with she missed the 'sweet fix' of the bars and shakes which she enjoyed. But this soon passed as she embraced the next phase of the programme, enjoying her new approach to healthy eating and active lifestyle, losing a further 1.5kg to reach 81.5kg.



Phase 3

Michelle is now in the Phase 3 'Retune' and she is totally committed to achieving her lifestyle goals, stressing the importance of regular exercise with 3 daily dog walks –

*'I'm **smashing it** - clocking up at least **15,000 steps every day**'.*

Having recently gone on holiday she has gained a little weight. However, she is determined to continue to keep on track and so started a Reset package of TDR products for a month.

How did the programme fit into Michelle's life?

Michelle fully admits that her work and family commitments could have been very real barriers to success, but her family have helped her by being caring, positive and supportive. Her working week is relatively well-structured and during the TDR phase she would choose to eat mainly bars and shakes at regular intervals and found this pretty straightforward. Michelle thinks that working from home and being out of the office made this easier for her.

Knowing that weekends and family meals would be most challenging, she ordered dahl pots and pancakes as weekend treats so she could eat with her family. She took a break off the TDR for a couple of days over Christmas but felt so uncomfortable that she couldn't wait to get back fully on to the bars and shakes! Michelle really likes the Exante range:

*'The products are **good and tasty** and the breakfast berry yoghurt is **simply beautiful and a treat**.'*

Michelle loves attending the group meetings for support and encouragement and considers that the virtual programme has fitted into her lifestyle really well. She is used to using Zoom for work and knows that attending group sessions in-person would have been very difficult to fit into her already busy week.

*'Zoom's **brilliant** – easy to use and access. Especially with a **busy life**, it would be hard to get home and then drag yourself out somewhere.'*

How has the programme improved Michelle's health and life?

Michelle is now off all medications and her blood glucose readings are normal. Her highlights have been watching her weight come off, dropping 2 dress sizes and feeling confident to wear shorts! She is enjoying her dog walks, increasing her step count and knows that her healthy lifestyle is not only positive for her diabetes management but for her mental health too.

Conclusion

Michelle is fully committed to the programme and recognises the importance of attending all the group sessions. She is determined to continue to lose weight and put her diabetes into remission by working on her goals – to keep eating healthily, to walk each day and to achieve a healthy BMI.

Her advice to others starting the programme is that planning is key – planning of meals and drinks throughout the programme, planning activity and planning how you will manage at difficult times and who will support you and how.

*'**Stick at it**, the first few days are really hard... ..I am proof that it **does work**.'*

NOTE: The Momenta DRP has 20 group sessions and one individual phone-call in three phases over 12 months, including an initial 12 weeks of Total Diet Replacement (TDR) products including shakes, soups, bars and pot meals. Referred participants must meet NHSE eligibility criteria and comply with medication adjustment advice given by their GP at referral.