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## press release

### **Leicester to become first UK city to join global initiative against urban diabetes**

**Gatwick, UK, 14 November 2017**– Leicester will join the likes of Copenhagen, Mexico City, Rome and Shanghai in becoming part of the Cities Changing Diabetes programme to tackle the dramatic rise of type 2 diabetes in urban areas.

An overwhelming two-thirds of people with diabetes worldwide live in urban areas<sup>1</sup>, complex environments in which a variety of nutritional, demographic, social, cultural and economic factors impact the health of their inhabitants<sup>2</sup>. In the UK, Leicester is home to one of the largest populations of people with diabetes – almost 9% of its residents – well above the national average of 6.4%<sup>3</sup>. Living with type 2 diabetes can reduce life expectancy by as much as 10 years and can double an individual's risk of stroke within the first five years of diagnosis compared with the general population<sup>4</sup>. Joining a network of global forerunners to explore ways of encouraging healthy lifestyle habits in cities will help the approximate 26,500 people already living with diabetes in Leicester and thousands more at risk of developing the disease<sup>3</sup>.

Professor Kamlesh Khunti, Professor of Primary Care Diabetes and Vascular Medicine at the University of Leicester and Director at Leicester Diabetes Centre (LDC), commented: "Type 2 diabetes represents a significant challenge, especially in our multi-ethnic city, but a challenge we are committed to meeting. The launch of the Cities Changing Diabetes programme here in Leicester will be a major boost to help us drive positive environmental changes that could reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, as well as ensure those with the condition have the right level of support and education to manage it properly."

Launched in 2014, Cities Changing Diabetes is a partnership programme initiated by Novo Nordisk, University College London and Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen to innovate new approaches to the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes. Examples of community, urban planning and health promotion activities pioneered by programme partners include:

- Group 'healthy cooking' sessions among middle-aged men in Copenhagen
- The creation of a 'Rome Passport' to map walking and running routes through the city
- A door-to-door doctor and diabetes screening service in Mexico City

Professor Melanie Davies, Susan Enright and Joanne Atkinson from the LDC, attended a dedicated global summit on the Cities Changing Diabetes programme in Houston last

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week, which brought together clinical and policy leaders from the partner cities to discuss the global pandemic of 'urban diabetes' and how we can 'bend the curve'. Bending the curve means holding the rise of diabetes at a ceiling of 1 in 10 adults living with the condition. To do this, ambitious action is needed on the single biggest modifiable risk factor for diabetes: obesity. Obesity must be reduced by 25% globally by 2045, from today's level of 26% of the UK population in order to bend the curve<sup>5</sup>.

Professor Davies CBE, Professor of Diabetes Medicine at the University of Leicester and Director at LDC said:

"Cities Changing Diabetes is a once in a generation opportunity to address the complex challenge of type 2 diabetes. The programme will allow the city to work together and tackle important issues such as obesity and physical inactivity particularly in our young people."

"If our football club Leicester City can win the Premier League, then we can work towards a city with reduced levels of type 2 diabetes as well as ensuring those with the condition have the right level of support and education to manage it properly."

"Let's get the best out of Cities Changing Diabetes and harness its full potential. We already have close links across the city but welcome this opportunity for Leicester to work as one on our own very local version of a global campaign."

Adam Burt, Director of Public Affairs for Novo Nordisk UK, added:

"Leicester's globally-renowned diabetes centre is the ideal partner to develop a forward-thinking action plan for the city to tackle risk and management factors for type 2 diabetes. Novo Nordisk UK welcomes Leicester joining our global programme and we look forward to building a city-led approach to this public health priority in the coming months."

Councillor Manjula Sood MBE, Assistant City Mayor of Leicester, added:

"As someone who was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes only six months ago, this is a subject very close to my heart. People are finding it increasingly difficult to take care of their health and if they are careful and take control of their diet and lifestyle it can be prevented, or at the very least controlled. I welcome the fact that LDC is taking the UK lead in this project. This initiative is important for people who don't know what the risk of a type 2 diabetes diagnosis can mean for their health. The impact if they develop the condition can be devastating if it's not controlled and must not be ignored."

**-ENDS-**

**Disclaimer: Cities Changing Diabetes is a programme initiated by Novo Nordisk**

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About Cities Changing Diabetes**

*Cities Changing Diabetes is a partnership programme to address the urban diabetes challenge. Initiated by Novo Nordisk, the programme is a response to the dramatic rise of urban diabetes and has been*

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developed in partnership with University College London and Steno Diabetes Center, as well as a range of local partners including the diabetes and health communities, city governments, academic institutions, city experts from a variety of fields and civil society organisations. The aim of the programme is to map the problem, share solutions and drive concrete action to fight the diabetes challenge in the big cities around the world. Today, the programme represents 75 million citizens in nine cities worldwide: Copenhagen, Houston, Mexico City, Johannesburg, Rome, Tianjin, Shanghai, Vancouver and Xiamen.

### **About Cities Changing Diabetes Global Summit**

The 2017 Cities Changing Diabetes Summit, which took place in Houston Texas, marks a turning point where impactful actions will set a new course for the fight against urban diabetes. The Cities Changing Diabetes Summit provides a unique occasion for global, local and future partners in the programme to connect across cities and sectors, to inspire and be inspired by others on effective and sustainable intervention strategies across political, social and cultural contexts.

### **About Novo Nordisk**

Novo Nordisk is a global healthcare company with more than 90 years of innovation and leadership in diabetes care. This heritage has given us experience and capabilities that also enable us to help people defeat other serious chronic conditions: haemophilia, growth disorders, and obesity. Headquartered in Denmark, Novo Nordisk employs approximately 42,000 people in 77 countries and markets its products in more than 165 countries. For more information, visit [novonordisk.co.uk](http://novonordisk.co.uk).

### **About Leicester Diabetes Centre**

Leicester Diabetes Centre is an international centre of excellence in diabetes research, education and innovation and is led by Professor Melanie Davies and Professor Kamlesh Khunti. Hosted at Leicester General Hospital, Leicester Diabetes Centre is a partnership between the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust and the University of Leicester, working with the city and county Clinical Commissioning Groups. It is a leading applied health research unit committed to improving the lives and care of people with diabetes and other long-term conditions. For more information about Leicester Diabetes Centre, visit <http://www.leicesterdiabetescentre.org.uk>.

### **Further information**

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