



Little Bleeders: encouraging young people with haemophilia to move more, be more

When young people with haemophilia are empowered with the right education and support, they can aim to lead healthy, active and sporty lives

Sports are a big part of many young people's lives and for most, it's often just a matter of choosing the activity they like the best. However for young people with bleeding disorders like haemophilia, this decision becomes a little more complicated.

Little Bleeders, a charity dedicated to supporting young people with bleeding disorders, believes that when young people with haemophilia are empowered with the right education and support, they can take control, and aim to lead healthy, active and sporty lives.

Unfortunately in the UK, not all younger people living with haemophilia are getting the best support and advice they need to be active, particularly from services like physiotherapy and mental health support. Having access to the right

expert care means that a life without severe bleeds is not only possible, but could be the new normal for these young people.

"The range of treatments has improved massively and health-care professionals work tirelessly to provide exceptional care to young people with bleeding disorders here in the UK," said Alex Dowsett, professional road racing cyclist and chairman of Little Bleeders. "But, there are inequalities across the UK and often families still feel isolated. There's a real need to empower families to challenge the current stigma of these young people participating in physical activity."

Alex is a prime example of what can be accomplished by someone with a bleeding disorder. By taking the right precautions and taking

control of his own treatment, including learning how and when to inject a clotting factor into the veins of his arms from the age of nine, Alex has excelled in sport and even turned it into a successful career.

"Not every child will reach Alex's extraordinary level of achievement, but our goal has to be about minimising the marginalisation of children with bleeding disorders. Alex and others are now showing us what's possible. We need to focus on inclusion, not exclusion," explained Dr Dan Hart, consultant haematologist at The Royal London Hospital Haemophilia Centre.

Little Bleeders is working hard to ensure that haemophilia doesn't have to be a scary prospect for the families of young people living with the condition. The charity recently



participated in a major report called 'Haemophilia 180', which was presented to parliament in late 2018. Given the recent advances in haemophilia care, the report calls for a 180-degree review of the treatment goals for all, towards a more positive, empowering future for young people with haemophilia.

Little Bleeders also wants to raise awareness and empower young people with haemophilia and one way it can do that is by asking them to show how they're living their best lives and getting out to 'move more and be more', which is the charity's motto. Little Bleeders will be holding its second annual photo competition this year, encouraging young people with blood disorders to capture themselves participating in their favourite sport

or activity. The winners will have a chance to meet Alex and become a Little Bleeders ambassador to inspire their fellow Little Bleeders across the UK!



To get involved visit:
littlebleeders.com,
 E: info@littlebleeders.com
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