

“From small seeds, great things grow”: how one leprosy charity’s Memorandum of Understanding with Rotary International is changing the fight against leprosy

Embargoed until 21st of October

On the 21st of October, Lepra signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the rotary clubs of Delhi South, New Delhi and Delhi Southend. These clubs are members of Rotary International, an organisation that boasts more than 35,000 clubs in over 20 countries.

Geoff Prescott, Lepra CEO, Nayan Patel, Trustee of Lepra and Charles Bland, Chair of Trustees attended the historic signing event in New Delhi.

The Memorandum of Understanding is focused on leprosy control programmes and continued awareness raising campaigns about leprosy.

Disease eradication has been a core mandate for Rotary International since the organisations formation in 1905. Rotary International and its members have donated over 65 million dollars to fight various diseases across the world.

Leprosy is a neglected, often misunderstood disease that can cause debilitating side effects. Despite being curable, leprosy can have a negative impact on people’s lives. People affected by leprosy are sometimes left with disabilities, shunned from their communities and isolated from friends and families.

The Memorandum of Understanding will create awareness about leprosy among the public, reducing transmission and aiming to make leprosy a disease of little consequence over the next three years.

Geoff Prescott, Chief Executive of Lepra, says the memorandum is a significant development in the fight against leprosy.

He says, “Leprosy is not going away; we need to work with partners like Rotary, who can help spread the word. We may be starting small, but from small seeds, great things grow. We hope for other rotary clubs to join in the battle.”

With the support of the Delhi South, New Delhi and Delhi Southend Rotary clubs, we hope to build on our robust active case finding model so that the incidence of untreated and undiagnosed leprosy decreases significantly across India.

Currently, there are over 3 million people in the world living with undiagnosed leprosy. More than 600 people are diagnosed a day, with just over 50 of these being children. This partnership with the rotary clubs of Delhi South and New Delhi will deliver some much-needed worldwide attention to leprosy.

Last year, Lepra screened, diagnosed and treated 40,546 people with new cases of leprosy. It is Lepra’s intention to increase this figure through its new partnership with the Rotary clubs of New Delhi, Delhi South and Delhi Southend.

It is Lepra's hope that this Memorandum of Understanding with three Rotary international Clubs will encourage English based Rotary Clubs to get involved in the mission to beat leprosy.

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Notes for Editors

About Lepra and leprosy

Lepra is a UK-based international specialist charity that has been working to beat leprosy since 1924. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II became Patron of Lepra in 1952, shortly after the death of her father King George VI, who had been Lepra's Patron since the charity was founded in 1924.

Leprosy affects over 7 million of the most vulnerable people in the world, causing life-changing disabilities and attracting terrible prejudice and discrimination. **But there is a cure.**

Lepra works to beat leprosy in India, Bangladesh and Mozambique by finding, diagnosing and treating people affected by the disease. By raising awareness, pushing for early detection and supporting people living with disabilities caused by leprosy, Lepra works towards a day when this disease no longer destroys lives.

Last year, the charity reached 301,000 people through diagnosis, treatment and care. It reached a further 1.7 million people through health education and events to raise awareness of leprosy and other neglected diseases.

Find out more about Lepra on its website and social media channels:

Website: www.lepra.org.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LepraUK>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LEPRAUK/>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LEPRAHinA>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/LepraUK/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/lepra/>