

## **Anthony Kelly, Hon DSc**

Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025

Orator: Eleanor Hoverd, National Institute for Health and Care Research Clinical Doctoral Research Fellow, Warwick Medical School

Vice-Chancellor

In the UK today, over 4.4 million people have type 2 diabetes, with a further 1 million unaware that they have the condition. Our honorary graduand this morning/afternoon has devoted himself to raising awareness of this condition, its prevention and management. I am delighted to introduce: ANTHONY KELLY.

Since taking early retirement from the probation service, Tony has worked voluntarily, primarily addressing the Caribbean and Black African communities, who are particularly prone to develop type 2 diabetes. Diagnosed himself with the condition, he has filled a void as a patient expert, explaining how to access information, and promoting healthy eating, physical exercise and lifestyle changes to prevent, manage and control the condition. He has undertaken a remarkable schedule of community engagements in Britain (averaging over 140 sessions per year), in the Caribbean and Canada; he has run free workshops, made videos, given TV and radio interviews, and participated in research projects. From 2012 until 2020, he was a Diabetes UK Community Champion; since 2020, he has been the Diabetes Strategic Patient Partner in the National Diabetes Prevention Programme, enabling him to influence local healthcare strategy in the West Midlands. He has also contributed to wider healthcare studies: he is a member of the Clinical Research Network –West Midlands Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Public) Research Champions Group; he was one of two public members of the Scientific Advisory Board, UK – Coronavirus Immunity Consortium; he was a public contributor to the 2022 Joint Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review, and has recently featured in a prostate cancer video, again targeting the Black community.

Through his hard work, enthusiasm and empathetic approach, Tony has achieved positive change in groups that are often underrepresented and underserved. He has shared his own life experience – successfully living with type 2 diabetes for around 20 years, growing up in Jamaica and seeing relatives there succumb to the illness (described simply as ‘a touch of sugar’). So, with a similar cultural heritage and background, he is able to engage completely with his audience, never coming across as alienating, belittling or patronising. He is clearly an accomplished educator – he trained as a teacher in Jamaica and taught in Kingston high schools for several years. And, of course, in the words of his wife, he undoubtedly has ‘the gift of the gab’!

And at Warwick Medical School, we have benefitted hugely from Tony’s experience and expertise, and his knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion within the West Midlands region by health care professionals, health care researchers, policymakers and Black African Diaspora communities.

He is a patient expert by experience with three universities, of whom Warwick is one. He has contributed to our teaching, bringing the patient public perspective to our students. He is a Patient Public Mentor on an ongoing project with the Black African Diaspora communities to make health and care research more inclusive, and has acted as a Patient Public Mentor to an NIHR Clinical Doctoral Research Fellow.

Tony has won numerous awards, including the British Citizen Award for Health (2021) and the 2022 Black Honours Award. We are delighted to welcome him for the award of his honorary degree today.

Chancellor: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*, ANTHONY KELLY.