How can we address the issues in foot care which lead to people with diabetes developing foot conditions?

The Diabetes Research Steering Group (DRSG) focussed on complications has been working to identify under-researched areas of clinical importance around diabetes foot care and drive research into these areas since its creation in 2017.

Alongside this, The Dr William M. Scholl Unit For Podiatric Development (now known as "Great Foundations") recently funded the first Foot Health Priority Setting Partnership, in which people living with and HCPs working on foot health problems identified the top ten priorities for future foot health research. The results are available here, and many of the questions which were identified overlap with the work of the DRSG.

Now, together Diabetes UK and Great Foundations are inviting proposals which address questions in this overlap, focussed on addressing the issues which lead to people with diabetes developing ulcers or other diabetes-related foot conditions and these then progressing further.

Application assessment process

All applications received under this highlight notice will be assessed through the Diabetes UK standard assessment procedure for Project grants and will be considered in competition with all applications submitted.

Applications will be assessed by the **Scientific Panel** on following criteria:

- Potential difference the research will make to the lives of people with diabetes.
- Scientific excellence.
- Track record of the applicants.
- Value for money.

Applications will be assessed by the **Grants Advisory Panel** on the following criteria:

- Relevance to people with diabetes and its potential impact.
- The timescale on which the project could make a difference to people living with diabetes.
- The extent of involvement of people with diabetes in the development and the management of the study.

Click here for more information about the administrative process.

Applications submitted to this highlight notice will be assessed by both funders and will be funded jointly by Diabetes UK and Great Foundations, provided they fall within the remit of the priority.

Priority Research Area

Preventing foot ulcers, amputations and other severe foot complications in people with diabetes is a key priority for the Diabetes Research Steering Group focussed on complications and relates to several of the Foot Health Priority Setting Partnership's top ten research questions (e.g. 2, 9 and 10).

There is a clear need for innovative approaches to do this, but these need to consider the findings of previous studies and address factors in foot care which may have previously not been subject to research. These include social factors which present significant barriers to care or treatment, the difficulty people with neuropathy have in detecting and adapting to foot conditions and the need for effective and rapid referrals for foot care when it is needed.

The problem identified is also driven by how people with diabetes experience foot care at present. This means that it is critical that applications are meaningfully co-produced with people with diabetes who have experience of foot conditions or foot care services, to understand what stops people who need it from accessing the care they need.

There are many approaches to addressing these issues, and applications incorporating one or more of the following methodologies would be particularly welcomed:

- Behavioural or psychological approaches
- Health services design research
- Qualitative or mixed methods research
- Better use of technology
- Screening and interventions to identify and help those at high risk
- Health services delivery research to evaluate interventions including people with diabetes in preventing foot problems

Deadline

1 December 2021 (Committee meets in May/June 2022)

How to apply

Apply for a Diabetes UK grant through our online portal and select "*Highlight notice: diabetes and foot care*"

For further details please contact the Diabetes UK Research team at research@diabetes.org.uk.