

OUR TACKLING INEQUALITY PLAN 2024

What's our ambition?

Over the next 10 years, we'll work together with community organisations, healthcare professionals, policy makers and people living with diabetes, to reduce inequality in diabetes so that ethnicity and levels of deprivation will have less impact on the health outcomes of people living with, or at risk of diabetes.

We will track gaps in health outcomes through our work with people living with and at risk of diabetes experiencing inequality.

Our journey so far

We recognise that as a charity we've not always done enough to tackle inequality that is so prevalent in diabetes. Our 2020 strategy [A generation to end the harm](#) identified the need to address inequality if we are to have a world where diabetes can do no harm. It showed clearly that our work for people with and at risk of diabetes needed to focus on tackling inequality if the outcomes we identified were to be achieved equitably for all.

In 2021, we launched our [Tackling Inequality Commitments to Action](#), in which we recognised the vital importance of partnership with decision-makers, providers of care and support, and communities, and set out our future commitment to drive our charity's work forward through a tackling inequality lens, building on our work over many years to support ethnic minority communities with diabetes.

DiABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

We recognised that there was a lot we didn't yet know about how to tackle inequality. We need a clearer understanding of the nature and impacts of inequality and a framework that will allow us to accelerate our work and intention in this space.

In 2023, we set up a commission bringing together people with lived experience, community organisations, experts and decision makers from health, research and other fields to fully explore what is needed to tackle diabetes inequality. The commission's first goal was to research, collaborate on and produce its first [Tackling Inequality Commission Report](#), which we launched in November 2023.

Tackling inequality in diabetes can often feel insurmountable. However, learning and recommendations gained through our consultation with professional experts and experts by experience for this report and beyond demonstrates clearly that **Diabetes UK has a role, both on our own and in partnership with others, in reducing inequality and in guarding against inadvertently widening inequality in what we do.** We know this will take time and we are committed to our vision of a world where the conditions in which someone is born, lives and works do not have a bearing on their ability to live well with diabetes.

Our key areas of work in 2024

In 2024 we will focus our tackling inequality work with people from Black African, and Black Caribbean backgrounds. We will also look at the intersection with deprivation where we know health outcomes are poorest. Through all our work we will ensure that the people who guide us are representative of the diabetes population and include people from all ethnicities, as well as people across all levels of deprivation.

We will offer multiple different ways to be involved in our work, ensuring that involvement opportunities for people with lived experience are accessible for everyone.

We will monitor the demographic details of people living with diabetes in our volunteer and lived experience groups, to ensure that the opinions we hear are from a representative sample of the diabetes community.

Supporting people with or at risk of diabetes

To ensure that we concentrate our efforts on really tackling inequalities, we will:

- Focus our resources on ensuring that people experiencing the greatest inequalities understand their risk of developing diabetes, know what care to expect and are supported to access this care.
- Engage people with lived experience to inform how we adapt and develop the ways we work, and our resources and support, to overcome the barriers people face in accessing information, care and support.
- Collaborate with trusted community organisations and networks so that we can work with and through them to reach people who are most likely to experience inequality.

Supporting healthcare professionals

To ensure that the health service is focussed on and supported to reduce diabetes-related inequality. We will...

- Include a focus on tackling inequality in all aspects of our education offer for clinicians
- Ensure our clinical involvement opportunities are accessible to people from all ethnicities and backgrounds, particularly encouraging applications and providing support for those from racially minoritised ethnic groups for our leadership development programmes.

Influencing policy

To enable people to live affordable, healthy lives free of discrimination and stigma, we will:

- Continue to influence political party manifestos for an upcoming general election so that people with diabetes and at high risk of type 2 diabetes can live longer and healthier lives. We are calling for:
 1. Bold fiscal measures which enable healthier diets via reformulation and reduction of consumption of unhealthy products. This must consider inequalities in access to healthy food by making sure healthier options are affordable and accessible
 2. An end to people from the most deprived backgrounds missing out on routine care and experiencing worse outcomes by increasing access and uptake of routine diabetes appointments to reduce diabetes complications
 3. Create communities in which people living with diabetes can thrive. This includes ensuring everyone has enough money in their pockets to meet their needs and manage their condition, whether in work or on benefits.
- Use the opportunity of a general election to highlight the need to bring forward an effective cross-government strategy to reduce health inequalities, including wide-ranging measures to reduce poverty and recognising diabetes as a major driver of health inequity.
- Continue working in coalition with other charities and organisations across sectors such as welfare, poverty, and race equity to share expertise and lived experience. We will form a united front for shared policy campaigns which enable people to live healthy lives, and which tackle the drivers of health inequalities.
- We know that our analysis of key data releases such as NHS diabetes prevalence statistics is valued by policymakers. We will investigate ways to make sure that the way we present and analyse this data demonstrates the role that health inequalities play.
- We will ensure all our policy calls are deliberately designed to reduce inequalities, and do not inadvertently uphold them.

Research

To build the evidence base on diabetes and inequality we will ...

- Encourage more research on interventions to address health inequality in diabetes by opening a highlight notice on our grant round which opens in June 2024.
- Launch new research internships in diabetes for UK undergraduates of black heritage with the aim of making the first awards in 2025. This will be followed by PhD studentships, based in the UK, for graduates of black heritage.
- Collect demographic data from grant applicants to Diabetes UK's funding schemes so that we can identify and remove barriers.

Workplace culture

To become an equitable, diverse and inclusive charity, we will ...

- Review our approach to recruitment including:
 - Using data and feedback to identify and remove barriers in the selection process
 - Ensuring diversity of perspective on selection panels
- Launch and embed the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) assessment tool to support colleagues to review existing and new work and ensure tackling inequality and equity, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of their thinking
- Support and collaborate with flourishing colleague networks, providing dedicated time and budget so they can continue to provide peer support, raise issues and ensure our EDI work is informed by their lived experience
- Bring colleagues together regularly to learn and have open, supportive conversations about EDI topics through our 'Let's talk about' series
- Develop and launch a mandatory learning module about EDI so all colleagues have the awareness and skills to contribute to our inclusive culture.

Get involved

For further information about the Diabetes UK Tackling Inequality Commission, including requests for a presentation or discussion at a meeting, contact us at inequalitycommission@diabetes.org.uk.

If you are living with diabetes and would like to be involved in guiding our work through projects like this join our communities in action group where you will have regular opportunities to tell us your views. Find out more [on our website](#).