Diabetes matters
It’s time for action

We’re calling for MPs to put diabetes at the top of the health agenda

Diabetes UK 2019 election manifesto
One in 15 people in the UK now has diabetes. It’s a tough, complicated condition to live with and can lead to devastating consequences. The way we care for and treat diabetes, and prevent Type 2 diabetes, has to change. Here’s why:

- Diabetes causes more than 680 strokes, 530 heart attacks, and 500 early deaths every week.
- Every hour, the NHS spends £1 million on diabetes, most of it treating complications.
- Every two minutes someone is diagnosed with diabetes.
- Around one in five adults are at increased risk of Type 2 diabetes in the UK.

It’s time for action. We need:

1. Recognition of the emotional impact of diabetes.
2. Fair access to diabetes technologies.
3. Action to fight the rise in Type 2 diabetes.

These three changes will reduce the harm diabetes does. People with diabetes have told us these are the changes that matter to them. We know how we can achieve these aims. We just need your support.

1. Recognition of the emotional impact of diabetes

**Diabetes doesn’t just affect someone physically.** 7 in 10 people feel overwhelmed by the demands of living with diabetes, while someone with diabetes is twice as likely to suffer from depression.

The right emotional and mental health support can help people better manage this draining and isolating condition, preventing complications.

Despite this, the support people need to cope with diabetes often isn’t there. Three quarters of people who needed specialist emotional support couldn’t access it.

“I told my consultant I felt horrendous, he replied ‘I’m not here to talk about your emotions’.”

We want national standards for diabetes emotional and mental health services developed, funded and adopted in every area.

2. Fair access to diabetes technologies

**Diabetes is relentless.** But people with diabetes only spend around three hours a year with a healthcare professional. For the remaining 8,757 hours they must manage it themselves. What works one day, might not the next. It’s a life of trying to understand your body, of finger pricks, using insulin or taking medication. There is never a break.

Exciting new technologies have transformed the way people can treat and monitor their diabetes. Not only can these new technologies improve people’s management and reduce long term complications, they can make the lives of people living with diabetes easier.

But more than a quarter of people have problems getting the technology or treatment they need to manage their diabetes, including insulin pumps, flash glucose monitors and continuous glucose monitors. Some people don’t even get basic but vital devices like blood glucose monitors and test strips.

This is unfair and short-sighted. It means people’s access to this technology depends on where they live or their ability to pay for it themselves.
And we know there are also concerns of possible disruption to the supply of existing diabetes technologies and medicines in the event of a no-deal Brexit which must be addressed.

“I am only given one pack of test strips per month. I have to pay for the others I need myself.”

We want a national diabetes technology fund to guarantee fair access to new and existing technologies.

3. Action to fight the rise in Type 2 diabetes

More than half of all cases of Type 2 diabetes could be prevented or delayed. We also know some people with Type 2 diabetes can put the condition into remission through significant weight loss. But the society we live in makes doing this – staying a healthy weight, eating well and being active – too difficult for too many people. With obesity responsible for 80 to 85% of someone’s risk of Type 2 diabetes and 12.3 million people in the UK at increased risk of the condition, this has to change.

There’s no single answer to addressing obesity. But we know the NHS will only be sustainable if we create a healthier environment.

A society where easy to understand nutritional information is available on all foods. Where people have access to a variety of affordable healthy options, and children are free from the negative influence of advertising and promotions of unhealthy food. Where manufacturers are required to reduce added sugar and calories in products, so that the food we eat is healthier. Where health services are equipped to help people manage their weight.

“The traffic light system should be used more, and foods with hidden sugars should be labelled more clearly.”

We want a minister for obesity to lead action across government departments, including measures like:
- mandatory clear and consistent front of pack and out of home labelling
- further restrictions on advertising and promotions of unhealthy food and drinks
- new financial measures targeted at companies who don't reduce fat, sugar, salt and calories in their products
- investment in weight management and remission services in every area.

What you can do to make this a reality

You can help us create a world where diabetes can do no harm by working with Diabetes UK to secure these changes in your local area and across the UK.

1. Tell your constituents why diabetes matters to you and what you will fight for in parliament
   "#WhyDiabetesMatters #GeneralElection and tweet us @DiabetesUK"

2. Contact us for more tailored information about your constituency and opportunities to support our work.

3. Commit to join the All Party Parliamentary Group for Diabetes when elected.