

# DOT.dig garden workshop – reimagining children’s diabetes outpatient care

NT Conway\*, S Graham, H Thom, C Webster, V Alexander  
Diabetes Out There (DOT) Tayside, NHS Tayside.

## Introduction

Diabetes Out There (DOT) Tayside provides regional specialist services to young people with diabetes.

Glycaemic control and clinic attendance is suboptimal.

This abstract describes our experiences in trying to improve both by providing workshops within a hospital community garden (“DOT.dig”).



## Methods

The DOT team have previously delivered clinics aimed at young people and parents in alternative settings (e.g. community centre), as a test of change.

DOT.dig was informed by these experiences, in addition to co-design events involving service users.

The garden workshops were held as an alternative to traditional face-to-face clinic appointments. Sessions consisted of group educational and gardening activities aimed at improving diabetes self-care. Feedback was sought via evaluation forms.

## Results

Five DOT.dig events have taken place over the summer months, delivering two-hour workshops to ~30 young people and parents.

All children have height/weight and HbA1c measured on arrival.

Educational topics included:

- Data uploading/interpretation
- Exercise
- Carbohydrate counting.

Garden activities included path building and the planting and harvesting of fruit/veg.

Informal discussions provide peer support, facilitated by a team member (with the option for one-to-one discussion).

Feedback has been favourable from parents, young people and staff. The workshops replace “normal” clinic sessions and are cost-neutral in terms of staff time – see box.



Figure. Snapshots from the various garden activities and educational sessions

### What went well?

*Everything. Planting and hands on gardening was fantastic!*

*Meeting new friends. I enjoyed the planting.*

*X enjoyed planting his potatoes, strawberries and sunflowers etc. Meeting other people.*

### What did not go well?

*X was happy with everything*

### What would you change about the session?

*Play some games!*

*X would have liked it to be longer*

### Any other comments?

*He is looking forward to coming back*

*Good for the parents to meet with each other*

*Definitely better than the clinic environment*

*Great being with other kids*

Box. Free text responses from attendees

## Conclusion

The Scottish Government’s *Natural Health Service* initiative promotes the use of outdoor spaces within health/social care via green health partnerships between health and local authorities.

DOT.dig is an exemplar of this approach and has been met with enthusiastic feedback. The DOT service will continue to provide monthly workshops during the temperate months.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the volunteers and staff of the Ninewells Hospital Community Garden who have given up their valuable time to assist us with this project.