

Volunteer Strategy

2019–2021





Welcome to volunteering at Diabetes UK

At Diabetes UK, we're a community of people who donate their money and give their time all in the name of making a difference and creating a world where diabetes can do no harm.

Volunteering is woven into the fabric of everything we do – from the huge number of local support groups across the country, to our campaigners, fundraisers, research groups and everything in between. We couldn't do the work we do, and wouldn't be the organisation we are today without the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of our amazing volunteers.

In the UK, 4.7 million people are living with diabetes, and an additional 12.3 million people are at increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. To achieve our ambition of a world where diabetes can do no harm, we need that ongoing support from volunteers more than ever and equally we must also support those people who volunteer for us. We must provide guidance and resources to help our volunteers be as effective as possible. We must do more to help our volunteers do those things they are passionate about.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life. Some have diabetes themselves, others have friends or family members who have been affected by diabetes. Some simply wish to develop their skills whilst doing something for other people.

At Diabetes UK we recognise that our community wouldn't be the same without the time and effort given by our volunteers – something we're incredibly thankful for. The impact they have is felt throughout the organisation and by people living with diabetes all over the UK – there is no question of that.

We also know that many of those who volunteer with us support Diabetes UK in more ways than one, often donating not just their time and effort, but their money as well. We know that volunteers are fiercely committed to raising awareness and supporting people with diabetes in whatever ways they can, and we want to build on that drive and determination in the years to come.

We've developed this strategy to ensure we can continue to welcome, and support everyone who chooses to volunteer at Diabetes UK, and that volunteers continue to be at the heart of our community in the future.

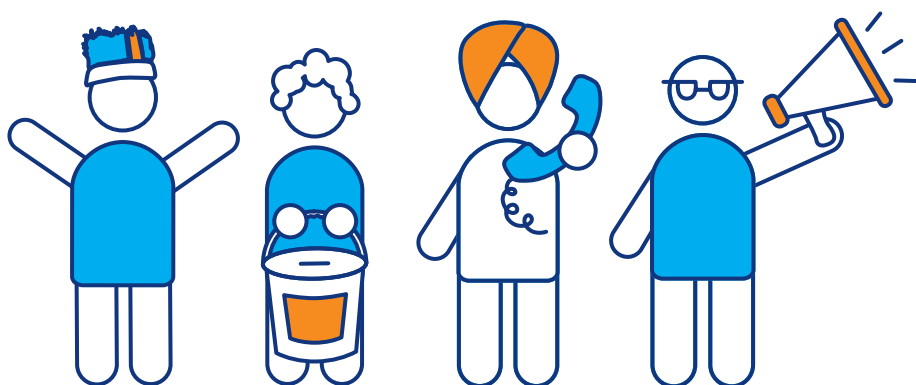
This volunteer strategy sets out our objectives and commitments to our volunteers over the next three years, including how we'll keep them at the heart of everything we do and develop roles to adapt to the changing needs of our strategy and volunteers.

Providing a robust framework to ensure our volunteers and staff can work side by side is fundamental to our success as a charity. Together we can create a world where diabetes can do no harm.

Thank you for volunteering.

Andy Broomhead

Andy Broomhead,
Head of Volunteering



A word from some of our volunteers



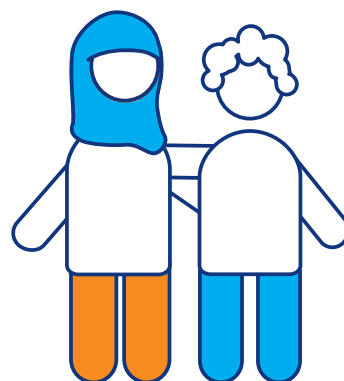
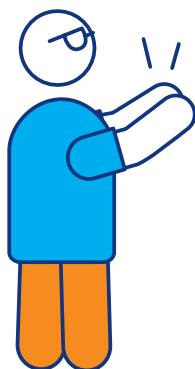
“I thoroughly enjoy the social interaction, meeting so many different people and making new friends. One of the things is how much I’ve learnt from others. I didn’t talk about having diabetes until my mid to late 30s, it’s personal and I didn’t want to tell other people. The stigma is something that we’re tackling as well, it’s a huge issue that we’re challenging.”

Sandra Tweddell,
Service Champion volunteer



“If you’re even considering getting involved then that’s a sign that you’re ideally suited to join as a volunteer. As well as the satisfaction of making a positive impact to other people’s lives with Type 1 diabetes, our volunteers also take away huge benefits in terms of personal growth and development, so it’s a real win win.”

Bruce Smith,
member of Young Leaders Project in Scotland and inventor of the T1 buddy system





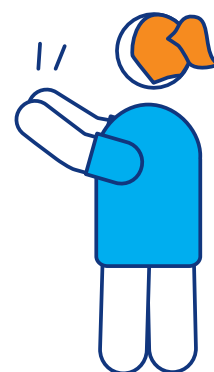
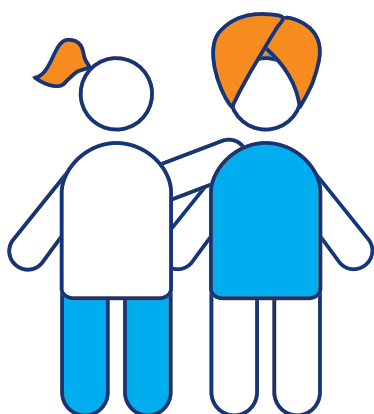
“In a nutshell, it means such a lot to me. It’s a way of feeling useful and fulfilled and of making a difference. If I can impact the lives of others for good, arm them with bits of knowledge and understanding which may help them to make changes in diet or exercise, then I’ll do this for as long as I can.”

**Robert Stevenson,
Speaker volunteer**



“Volunteering is in my blood. Being a Community Champion gave me the confidence to get out there and talk to people. You just feel so good that you’ve helped even one person.”

**Rohit Patel,
Community Champion and
Events volunteer**





Our mission

Whilst our mission of a world where diabetes can do no harm is a simple one, delivering that mission requires a huge amount of effort from everyone committed to this cause. As a charity with 400 staff but over 4,000 volunteers we know that only by working together will we achieve that world where diabetes can do no harm.

We need volunteers that bring dedication, passion, enthusiasm, experience and a desire to make a difference with them, because we know how important all those things are to our mission. Being the face of the charity in communities across the UK highlights the seriousness of diabetes time and again. Speaking up with a collective voice to campaign for changes in the law or for access to new treatment makes a real difference to people's lives. Sharing your experience of living with diabetes helps others who need that support and to hear that they're not alone.

Together, we can make that vision of a world where diabetes can do no harm, a reality.

Our values

We have four organisational values which guide us, and the way we all work – volunteers and colleagues alike.

They are a statement on who we are, who we want to be, and how we should behave. It's important that we live these values through all our work.

We've set out below how our values link to the work our volunteers do, and how we support those volunteering – giving their time to help us.

We're driven to know more

We know volunteers bring huge amounts of experience and expertise to Diabetes UK and we listen to your voice to make sure volunteering meets your expectations.

Diabetes care is changing rapidly and we'll evolve our volunteering offer to make sure we meet the needs of people affected by diabetes in the future.

We make change happen

We communicate with volunteers about the difference their work makes, from local communities to national changes.

We recognise the power of local impact and we make sure our volunteers are able to make a difference in their communities.

We put people first

We recognise that volunteers are individuals with different backgrounds, skills and abilities and we take this into account when we recruit volunteers.

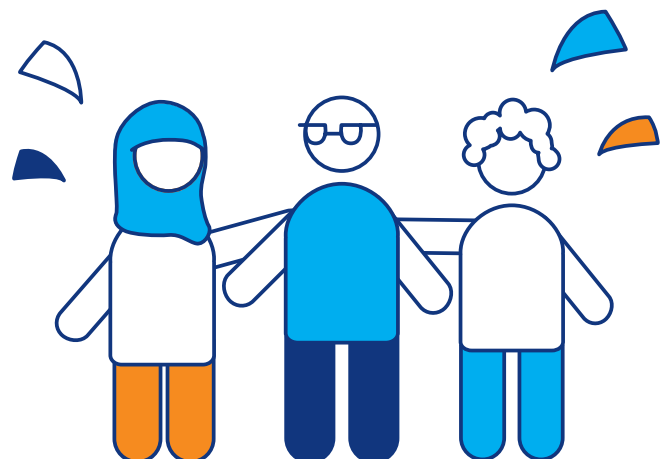
We make sure that volunteering is inclusive and reflective of society.

We promote independence for volunteers in their roles, trusting them to carry out their roles professionally.

We keep things simple

We offer volunteering roles that clearly set out what's expected of volunteers, and what they in turn can expect of us.

We have simple policies and procedures that make it easy to find all the information you need about your volunteering.

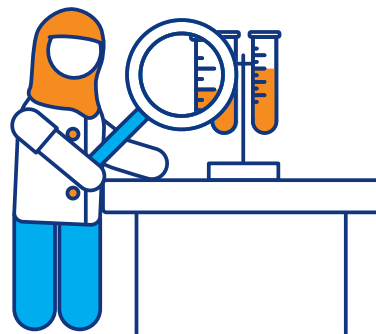


What we do

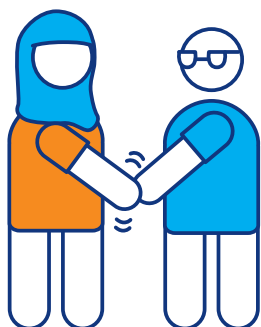
At Diabetes UK we do a lot to help people affected by diabetes, and volunteers freely give their time, energy and passion for 80 years in support of this.



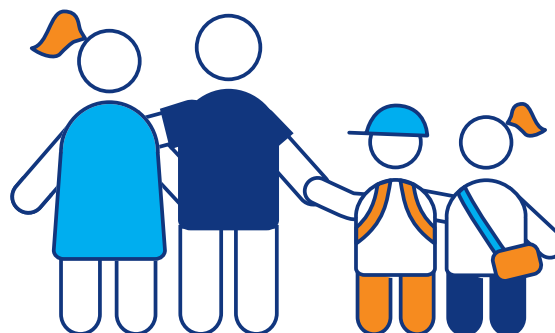
We campaign for change so that children aren't excluded from activities at school just because they have diabetes and we fight for access to life changing technology on the NHS so that people can manage their diabetes more effectively. These things, and many more, have happened as a result of the tireless work of volunteers.



We support ground breaking research that's fundamentally changed how people with diabetes are treated. We pioneer ideas that have made huge differences in the early detection of diabetic eye disease and we support ground-breaking research on the potential remission of Type 2 diabetes. Volunteer groups including healthcare professionals and people with diabetes steer our research priorities so that they have the maximum impact.



We raise awareness of the seriousness of diabetes across the UK, we influence local healthcare systems to improve outcomes for people living with diabetes and we talk about prevention of Type 2 diabetes in communities across the country.



Through our Type 1 Events, we support children and families living with diabetes to learn more, and through our online forum we help thousands of people across the country to have access to a community that's always there to support them.



Our huge network of volunteers and local groups play a pivotal role in their communities, providing information, support, and guidance to people affected by diabetes, so they can gain the confidence to live well with diabetes.

The dedication of volunteers means we're able to reach so many more people across the country and make a huge difference to people's lives. The passion and energy they show as part of our diabetes community makes real change happen for real people.



Our journey so far

In late 2016 we launched our Volunteer Journey – a framework that makes sure we give our volunteers a consistent and high quality experience when they choose to work with us.

The Volunteer Journey aims to sure all our volunteers have a proper induction, receive the appropriate levels of support and protection throughout their time with us and, crucially, are recognised and appreciated for what they do.

We celebrate the outstanding work our volunteers do through our Inspire Awards, as well as hosting volunteer conferences and networking days across the UK each year. At the end of 2018 we launched our Spotlight programme, telling in depth stories

about what our volunteers do, and why being part of Diabetes UK is so important to them.

In 2019 Diabetes UK celebrates its 85th birthday, coinciding with the 80th anniversary of our Local Groups who have supported people living with diabetes up and down the country, remaining a constant in a changing world.

As we move forward, we want volunteering at Diabetes UK to continue to be a great experience where everyone can see how their volunteering makes a difference to people affected by diabetes. We are now excited to launch our first Volunteer strategy 2019–2021, which provides the next step in ensuring a positive, consistent and impactful experience for all our amazing volunteers.

Our vision for volunteering

We live in an ever-changing world, and we need to be able to adapt to allow us to meet new challenges and continue to be able to support volunteers and people affected by diabetes.

We want Diabetes UK to be the charity of choice for people who want to see a world where diabetes can do no harm, and we know that's not possible without the incredible effort and commitment volunteers give us. We want our volunteers to feel inspired, to be clear about what's expected, to feel recognized and valued for being part of Diabetes UK and to enjoy what they do – all so that we can achieve change together.

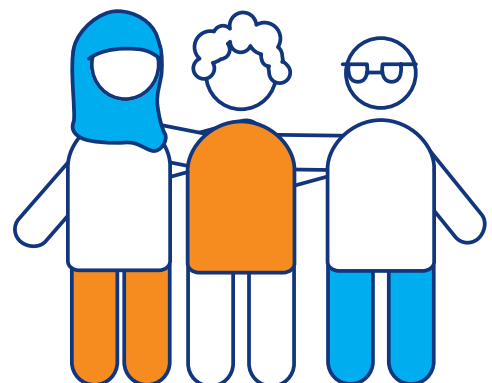
All Diabetes UK volunteers should understand the seriousness of diabetes and what's available to them to help us in our mission to achieve a world where diabetes can do no harm. We want people to feel compelled to take action in joining our fight, and bring with them their skills, knowledge, experience and desire to help us make that mission a reality.

Volunteering already plays such a huge role in all aspects of our work at Diabetes UK and it's something we're absolutely committed to in the future. We want to set out a clear vision of how we see that volunteering impact continuing into the future, what we'll do to stay relevant in a changing world, and how we'll continue to support the army of people who support us. Being clear about the challenges we may face in the future means we're better prepared to tackle them.

In the next three years we want to:

- Strengthen and empower our local groups so that the local communities they serve across the UK are able to support those affected by diabetes. We'll use the 80th anniversary of the founding of the first local group to show why local support and community action is so vital, we'll increase the number of awareness and support events across the UK from more than the 800 per year we currently hold.
- Fully integrate the insight that our Local Groups offer us further into our work so we're able to work closely together and bring about real change in communities up and down the country. We'll also set up new groups where we recognise we don't have close enough links to the people we need to support, including support models for people managing remission of Type 2 diabetes.

- In campaigning we want to mobilise more people to ensure we have an equitable of provision of services and treatment for people with diabetes right across the UK, and integrate our influencing work more into campaigns. We also want to build on our recent campaign successes and continue to drive forward change for people with diabetes.
- Make prevention an integral part of our volunteering work. We know that people at risk of Type 2 diabetes listen to the powerful testimony of those now living with the condition, but that healthcare systems don't always reach those in more disadvantaged communities. By raising awareness and targeting our approach to those in need through our volunteer speakers, Community Champions and Local Groups we'll help to reduce the number of people developing Type 2 diabetes.
- Continue the work we've started in co-creating services and programmes of work for people with diabetes, and bring that vital lived experience into more of our own work, as well as helping others to provide a better digital experience for people with diabetes. Growing the impact and reach of digital tools and services such as our Learning Zone will make a real difference for people affected by diabetes.
- We want to respond to trends in volunteering to offer volunteering opportunities that will help us create a world where diabetes can do no harm and continue to make our community at Diabetes UK one that people are proud to be a part of.





Our commitment to you

Volunteers come to Diabetes UK to achieve something and make a difference.

- We will ensure that changes to regulations don't make volunteering too difficult or inflexible to those wanting to support people affected by diabetes.
- We will be more responsive and supportive to our volunteers by changing some of our systems and processes to match your ambition.
- We will think more innovatively about how we respond to the availability of volunteers and the needs of people affected by diabetes by considering the fact that the way in which people volunteer is changing, as people look for shorter, more accessible ways to make a difference.
- We can and should do more to talk about the huge difference that volunteers, so that we can show those who give up their time why volunteering with Diabetes UK is so important, and what the difference is to people living with diabetes.
- As diabetes unfortunately affects people in communities in every town and city in the UK, we need to ensure our volunteer community reflects our diverse society so that we can tackle the diabetes crisis effectively.
- We will improve our methods of communication so that we be as reactive as we should to changes in the external environment, and provide volunteers with timely information and resources.

Roadmap to 2022 and beyond

Our community of people who give their time and money to support us are incredibly valuable, and we want to make changes in the coming years so that we're best able to tackle the diabetes crisis together.

2019

Enhancing our approach

- Review our high volume volunteering roles and opportunities to make sure they are consistent and focused on the work the charity is doing. We want to fully embed the Volunteer Journey, making sure appropriate levels of support are in place for all volunteers and local groups.
- We'll scope a Volunteer Management System that will allow colleagues and volunteers to have more control over the volunteer experience, including induction, training and ongoing support.
- We'll identify all key colleague roles who support volunteers across the organisation and ensure they are all trained and equipped to be able support volunteers as part of their role, learning from and sharing our existing good practice.
- Develop more flexible and accessible volunteering opportunities and build assets to ensure our community is more inclusive, enables more people to join our cause and reach out to their own local communities.
- Deliver our 2019 charity-wide priority impact areas of Prevention of Type 2 diabetes, Digital Learning, Remission of Type 2 diabetes and Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing for people with diabetes, with the support of volunteers.
- Finalise our online Volunteer Hub, creating a protected area for volunteer resources, and review our digital offering to volunteers and groups, including local group websites.
- Share more of the work that volunteers do through our Spotlight scheme and celebrate the successes we have more widely.
- Understand the current diversity in our volunteer community and develop plans for how we tackle parts of our work that are not representative of local communities.

2020

Embedding the change

- Implement a Volunteer Management System that allows us to support those volunteer with us in the best way possible.
- Develop an evaluation framework and measures for success to talk more coherently – both internally and externally – about the difference that volunteering with Diabetes UK makes in line with our new organisational strategy.



- **Create a dedicated forum to ensure we regularly meet with volunteers to understand how they feel about volunteering at Diabetes UK and act on this information to provide the best volunteering experience possible.**
- Identify targeted areas across the UK where volunteers are able to make an impact and ensure we're able to grow the number of volunteers in the right places to support people affected by diabetes, or campaign and influence on their behalf.
- Develop relationships with commercial partners and other organisations to allow us to target certain populations and increase the impact we have via joint working at a local level.

2021

Demonstrating the impact

- Publish our first 'Volunteering Impact' report to show what difference volunteers have made to people affected by diabetes, highlighting how we are tackling the diabetes crisis together and create compelling stories for volunteering a Diabetes UK.



- **Create specialist volunteer roles that provide targeted support to those people affected by diabetes who are most in need to ensure nobody gets left behind.**
- Develop a formal Volunteer Shared Practice network, where volunteers can easily access good examples of local impact and tailor them to their needs.
- Benchmark our volunteering programme against other charities to understand where we can learn from others and better support our volunteers.

2022 and beyond

Looking to the future



We'll ensure we adapt to meet the needs of people affected by diabetes by keeping up-to-date with changes in research, technology and best practice in volunteering. Our ability to react to the future is hugely important for all our volunteering work across campaigning, influencing, peer support, events and more.

Reviewing our progress will mean we're clear about how we are improving the experience for all Diabetes UK volunteers, as well as for people living with, and at risk of diabetes.

When supporting volunteers, these are the principles we use to guide our work





Keeping volunteers at the heart of everything we do

We want to make sure our volunteers continue to be at the centre of our work and feel confident in helping us to deliver the key messages of our strategy.



For volunteers, by volunteers

We'll make sure we involve volunteers them in all aspects of our volunteer training, support and development. Volunteers know what works and what doesn't, what people need and where our support is already making an impact.



Developing volunteering roles to meet both the needs of our organisation and our volunteers

Develop volunteering roles/opportunities that fit with our aims as a charity and that meet the needs of volunteers, to give us the maximum impact in communities across the UK.

This also includes reviewing existing opportunities and volunteer roles and making sure they're aligned to what we want to deliver as a charity.



Grow the number of people choosing to volunteer with us

We have the opportunity to develop volunteering roles to allow us to engage with new volunteer audiences. Younger volunteers (16–35) are under-represented at present, and increasing the number of engaged BAME volunteers is also a priority.



Developing the skills of our volunteers

Volunteers come to us with a variety of skills and experience, all of which can be vital to help us to fight diabetes. Being a volunteer does not mean being an amateur and we must be able to train our volunteers and offer them opportunities to develop their skills.



Volunteers are appropriately recognised for the work they do

Having an appropriate recognition scheme in place ensures our volunteers feel motivated to continue working with us, and improves our volunteer retention. Having an engaged and receptive audience who are willing to advocate on our behalf is key to our volunteering future.



Build trust and lasting relationships with volunteers

Being part of our community means we there is trust, communication and respect from everyone, and that those who choose to stop volunteering at Diabetes UK know how to find opportunities with us in the future.



Making it simple to be a Diabetes UK volunteer

In line with our organisational values, we'll make volunteer easy. You'll always have clarity about what's expected in your role, who you need to talk to and where to find all the information you need.



Towards a world where diabetes can do no harm

Volunteers play an important role in all the work we do to create a world where diabetes can do no harm. To find out more about this strategy, how we're transforming volunteering or to become part of our volunteer community, go to

www.diabetes.org.uk/volunteer

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 volunteering@diabetes.org.uk

www.diabetes.org.uk

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