

## ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN DIABETES

### Background

Research shows that diabetes does not affect everyone equally. Health inequalities, defined as “unfair and avoidable differences in health status between different groups of people or communities”<sup>1</sup>, have been widely reported in diabetes care for those from ethnic minority groups, for those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and for those with other protected characteristics<sup>2</sup>. In 2022, Diabetes UK held a workshop focused on understanding how research could help address these inequalities and published a report with a series of recommendations<sup>3</sup>. Since then, we’ve been working with communities affected by health inequality and this highlight notice is issued in response to the recommendations published in the workshop report along with additional insight from people with lived experience who have highlighted their priorities for research.

Diabetes UK welcomes all applications for research which address the issue of inequality in diabetes (all forms). We encourage a focus on applications addressing health inequality in **Black African, Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities** (as these represent the South Asian Communities experiencing the greatest health inequality) and/or those experiencing **poverty** and we particularly welcome applications focused on issues of **intersectionality**.

We strongly encourage applications which are co-led by people with diabetes/community organisations/researchers from underserved groups, and applications should cost in their time based on guidelines set by community organisations or using the [NIHR cost calculator](#). Applications must be submitted, administered, and hosted by an academic institute. We strongly encourage research located geographically in areas of high health inequality.

### Specific research priorities

#### Research which facilitates innovation to drive improvements in health systems for underserved communities.

- Evidence syntheses of local innovation/improvement projects to support the future case for uptake by other health systems/communities in a sustainable way.
- Research seeking to support equitable access to diabetes innovations, novel therapies, and technologies for underserved groups, this could include interventions testing the provision of education.
- Research which builds on positive outcomes from prior studies and seeks to apply and test findings using innovative models of care.

#### Research focused on poverty and diabetes.

- Research focused on understanding the impact of poverty, including fuel and food insecurity, on people living with diabetes and the development and piloting of sustainable interventions.
- Research which explores further the mechanisms by which poverty impacts (through realist synthesis/evaluation approaches).

**Research focused on the complications of diabetes and multiple long-term conditions.**

- Research which seeks to better understand, and improve care for, people living with diabetes and the concurrent health conditions experienced by underserved groups e.g., sickle cell trait/disease, depression, kidney disease and dementia.

**Research focused on ethnicity, sex and gender.**

- Research which seeks to further understand experiences (including current treatment approaches) of diabetes alongside menstruation, sexual health and menopause particularly in underserved communities such as ethnic minority and LGBTQI+ communities and in different age groups.
- Research which answers questions prioritised through the James Lind Priority Setting Partnership on pregnancy and diabetes<sup>4</sup> particularly in relation to underserved communities.
- Research which seeks to understand the barriers to diabetes screening, prevention, and self-management education/support services in men at risk of/men with type 2 diabetes from underserved groups and development of strategies to improve access.

**Research which increases the involvement of people experiencing health inequality in diabetes research.**

- Research to explore strategies for increasing the involvement and active participation of underserved communities in diabetes studies, particularly targeting historically neglected groups such as people living in poverty, ethnic minority populations, LGBTQI+ communities and those with severe mental illness or intellectual disabilities.

<sup>1</sup>Khunti K, del Prato S, Mathieu C, Kahn SE, Gabbay RA, Buse JB. Covid- 19, hyperglycemia, and new-onset diabetes. *Diabetes Care*. 2021;44(12):2645- 2655 <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc21-1318>

<sup>2</sup>Public Health England. Health profile for England: 2018. Health Profile for England: 2018. Public Health England; 2018. Accessed February 2, 2024 [Chapter 5: inequalities in health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-profile-for-england-2018)

<sup>3</sup>Chan J, Blane D, Choudhary P, et al. Addressing health inequalities in diabetes through research: Recommendations from Diabetes UK's 2022 health inequalities in diabetes workshop. *Diabet Med*. 2023; 40: e15024. doi:10.1111/dme.15024

<sup>4</sup>Ayman G, Strachan JA, McLennan N, Malouf R, Lowe-Zinola J, Magdi F, Roberts N, Alderdice F, Berneantu I, Breslin N, Byrne C, Carnell S, Churchill D, Grisoni J, Hirst JE, Morris A, Murphy HR, O'Brien J, Schmutz C, Shah K, Singal AS, Strachan MWJ, Cowan K, Knight M. The top 10 research priorities in diabetes and pregnancy according to women, support networks and healthcare professionals. *Diabet Med*. 2021 Aug;38(8): e14588. doi: 10.1111/dme.14588. Epub 2021 May 6. PMID: 33949704; PMCID: PMC8359941.

## **Funding**

Diabetes UK invites research proposals that address these knowledge gaps in line with our project grant scheme which provides funding of up to £500,000 over five years.

Acknowledging this is an understudied area, we are keen to provide seed funding for early-stage research including pilot, feasibility, and qualitative studies, as well as for efficacy and implementation trials, where evidence from early-stage research indicates they are appropriate.

We welcome applications using a wide range of approaches.

Applicants are encouraged to show evidence of substantial patient and public involvement in all stages of the development and delivery of their project.

## **Deadline**

2 December 2024 17:00 hrs (Committee meets May/June 2025)

## **How to apply**

Apply for a Diabetes UK grant through our online portal and select “*ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN DIABETES*”

For further details please contact the Diabetes UK Research team at [research@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:research@diabetes.org.uk)

## **Application assessment process**

The highlight notices form part of the project grant funding scheme which provides funding of up to £500,000 over five years. Note they do not have ringfenced funding, and these applications are in open competition with all the other applications we receive.

Applications will be assessed by the scientific panel on the following criteria:

- Potential difference the research will make to the lives of people living with and at risk of diabetes.
- Scientific excellence and potential impact.
- Track record of the applicants.
- Value for money.

Applications will be assessed by the Grants Advisory Panel of people with lived experience of diabetes on the following criteria:

- Relevance to people with diabetes and its potential impact.
- The projected timeframe for the research project to start delivering benefits to people living with or at risk of diabetes
- The extent of involvement of people with diabetes in the development and the management of the study.

**Partner funders:**



**Supported by:**

