

The **DWELL (Diabetes and Wellbeing) Project** was co-created by people affected by Type 2 diabetes, and professionals working with them, to increase self-management of the condition, improving health and wellbeing measures and providing economic benefits to health services.

Diabetes is a long-term non-communicable disease of huge societal & economic concern. As of February 2025, approximately 4.6 million people in the UK have been diagnosed with diabetes. Type 2 diabetes, which affects 90% of those with diabetes, is acquired later in life and can be successfully controlled through healthy lifestyle choices, and it accounts for about 90% of UK cases: around 4.14 million individuals are living with diagnosed type 2 diabetes. Additionally, it's estimated that 1.3 million people have undiagnosed type 2 diabetes, bringing the total number to approximately 5.44 million. On average, 10% of public health expenditure goes on treating it, and its related complications. Whilst intensive self-management is known to be required, there is a lack of standard, effective, low-cost approaches, which are essential to sustainable treatment.

DWELL produced a non-clinical, holistic 12-week patient support programme covering education, nutrition, physical activity and wellbeing. Motivational interviewing and peer support are at the centre of the programme, empowering patients with Type 2 diabetes to self-manage their condition, improve their wellbeing, lose weight, reduce medication and enjoy a better quality of life. Alongside this, DWELL created a training programme for staff to ensure they are able to deliver the patient support programme effectively.

DWELL's robust evaluation demonstrated that the programme led to reduced weight, BMI, waist circumference and HbA1c; decreased negative feelings associated with diabetes, and eating in response to external food cues; and increased empowerment, perceived personal control, and understanding of the condition in its participants.

The direct costs of diabetes for 2021/22 in the UK were estimated at £10.7bn, with an additional £3.3bn of indirect costs. Diabetes is responsible for more than 180 amputations per week in the UK which are extremely costly for the healthcare system. Up to 80% are preventable with proper foot care, blood sugar control, wound care, and regular monitoring. Programmes like **DWELL**, which focus on holistic care, lifestyle changes, and patient education, can directly reduce the risks that lead to amputations. As a result of improving patients' long-term health and wellbeing, it is estimated that the project led to a per-person reduction in health service spending, potentially at the level of over £1m per thousand patients per year.

As one participant noted, 'It has changed my life completely...I have taken control – I am now looking after myself'