

Obesity, Diet and Lifestyle Theme

Case Study



Background

In the UK, someone is diagnosed with type 2 diabetes every 2 minutes.

Recent research shows that the condition may be improved by an intensive weight loss programme. Total diet replacement (TDR) programmes are one way to achieve this weight loss, providing about 800 calories per day in soups, shakes and bars, but minimal 'real' food.

GPs and patients asked us whether, instead of TDR, a food-based low-carbohydrate diet could be used for managing diabetes in GP surgeries and in everyday life.

We decided to prioritise research in this area.

What we did

Researchers set up discussion groups with people living with type 2 diabetes, some of whom had tried a low-carbohydrate diet.

These groups helped researchers understand the lived experience of the condition and what is important for patients discussing weight and diet with a clinician.

What difference did it make

- The groups helped design the “intervention”- the diet and support programme tested in the study.
- They suggested ways of making the diet easier to follow – for example, showing what to look for on food labels and increasing people’s motivation, by monitoring their blood glucose at home to track their progress.
- The groups ensured study materials were clear to people with different dietary patterns and preferences, resulting in faster recruitment to the study, reliable contact with participants, and clearer results.
- One group member joined the study team and became an active member throughout the study.
- He has continued to work with us on our next project, to test this programme in a large-scale trial, making sure that patient priorities remain central to the research.