

Chair of Scottish Diabetes Group submission of 24 August 2022

PE1920/B: Introduce more thorough follow-up care for women with diabetes

Thank you for your letter dated the 28th July 2022 in relation to the above petition. I am replying in my role as national lead for diabetes, on behalf of the Scottish Diabetes Group (SDG).

The petition raises a very important issue and the commitments within the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021 aims to ensure that all individuals with diabetes have thorough and appropriate care. We are keen to ensure that policy and clinical care models mitigate against any inequality and in relation to this petition the impact of gender.

The Scottish Diabetes Group and its subgroups were key stakeholders in informing the content and commitments within the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021. The SDG and its subgroups have widespread representation from across the entire diabetes community in Scotland including the 3rd sector and most importantly individuals with lived experience of diabetes. As such, we have tried to ensure widespread representation across all aspects of our work including policy development and the ongoing work plans for the SDG. It is worth highlighting that in Scotland we have an excellent national diabetes dataset, SCI-diabetes, and this has informed several publications from the NHS Research Scotland (NRS) Diabetes Epidemiology group on the impact of inequalities on diabetes care. National data on pregnancy outcomes and mortality in those under the age of 50 with type 1 diabetes helped inform the content of the DIP 2021 and the ongoing commitments to improve outcomes.

The SDG, working with the wider diabetes community, have also been keen to ensure that the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021 aligns to other policy areas such as the Mental Health Strategy. We have a focus on improving access to Mental Health services for individuals with diabetes as well as developing care models where collection of Patient Reported Outcome Measures becomes a routine part of clinical care. We feel that this will be another key aspect in mitigating against the impact of inequalities and ensuring the ongoing development of truly person-centred care.

Although the SDG were not directly involved in the Woman's Health Plan 2021 there are key issues highlighted within this policy that are relevant to the care of women with diabetes. For example, the significant impact that menstruation and the menopause can have on diabetes control. As such, we will discuss the Woman's Health Plan at our forthcoming SDG and national Diabetes MCN meetings to ensure widespread awareness of this policy. We will also ensure that the recommendations are considered as we look to progress diabetes care models across Scotland and implement the commitments within the DIP 2021.

We note and welcome a specific focus on heart health within the Woman's Health Plan. This is particularly relevant to woman with diabetes as they are at increased risk of cardiovascular disease. As a result, we have been developing strengthening links with policy colleagues leading on Heart Disease as ensuring cross-policy working and addressing multi-morbidity will be key to improving early identification of heart disease and in turn improving outcomes.

As detailed above, we are very fortunate in Scotland to have a national diabetes IT system, SCI-diabetes, which captures information in over 99% of individuals with diabetes. We have developed a 'diabetes dashboard' which can be used at national, regional, local and individual level to assess processes and outcomes of care. It can also be utilised to drive an improvement agenda. We are currently focusing on deprivation however the inclusion of gender would also be a welcome addition. As such, I will liaise with colleagues leading the ongoing development of SCI-diabetes to ascertain if we can incorporate within our diabetes dashboard the ability to examine the potential impact of gender on the process and outcomes of diabetes care.

I trust this gives an overview of the Scottish Diabetes Group involvement in the Diabetes Improvement Plan 2021 and also the impact that the Woman's Health Plan has had and will have in developing care models to mitigate against the impact of gender on diabetes care and outcomes.

If you require any additional information or would like to discuss further please get in touch.