

# Managing with Learning Disability and Diabetes: OK-Diabetes – a case-finding study and feasibility randomised controlled trial

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## Plain English summary

### OK-DIABETES: feasibility study and RCT

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## Plain English summary

People with a learning disability are more likely to be obese (very overweight) and do little exercise; as a result they often suffer from diabetes. Diabetes as a result of being overweight is called type 2 diabetes. Most people with type 2 diabetes do not need insulin. General practitioners (GPs) encourage people to manage their own type 2 diabetes by eating healthily, losing weight and doing regular exercise, but it is not known if this works for people with a learning disability.

We aimed to find out about the health and lives of people with a learning disability and type 2 diabetes living in Leeds, Wakefield and Bradford. We wanted to find out if it was possible to involve them in a research study to see if supported self-management (SSM) would help.

We recruited 147 people. Over 80% had some support with their diabetes. Many people reported eating an unhealthy diet and doing little or no exercise. Blood tests [glycated haemoglobin (HbA<sub>1c</sub>) level, which is a measure of how well sugar is controlled] were reasonable but 65% of participants were obese, which is high compared with people without a learning disability living in the same cities.

In total, 82 people then entered the trial. The SSM group had sessions with a nurse and were given an easy-read booklet on managing diabetes. Overall, 35 out of 41 people attended some or all of the sessions. People in the comparison group only got the booklet and usual care from their GP. We were able to collect blood tests and weight measurements from nearly everybody after the trial.

A full trial is possible and would need to recruit 388 people to show a difference in blood HbA<sub>1c</sub> levels between groups. It was difficult and time-consuming to identify participants and get medical information from GPs. Many participants found answering questions about their health difficult and this would be a challenge in a full trial.

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