

# A new approach to accessing dietetic support in a primary care network (PCN): Does it enhance the care of those living with type 2 diabetes

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**Background:** In Newcastle-upon-Tyne traditionally patients would only gain access to a Dietitian when referred to their specialist diabetes centre. PCN's have recently been able to directly employ dietitians and other allied healthcare professionals. This has been initiated via the Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service: Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme.

**Aim:** To evaluate the new PCN dietetic service focusing on the patient experience.

**Methods:** Patients were sent a text message with a link to an electronic questionnaire via accuRx. Data was collected between February to September 2021. Participants were asked 15 questions, requesting they rate their experience and to make comments. This included what they had found positive and if there were any areas of improvement. Crowdsignal was used to collect data with the support of Newcastle Hospitals.

**Results:** 49 of the 318 patients who had a consultation completed a questionnaire. Patients were seen in 14 GP surgeries from three PCN's...



## What were the positive aspects of your dietetic treatment? (patient feedback):

- 'Being advised on all aspects of diabetes (HbA1c, driving rules, hypo's, carbohydrate awareness/diet, physical activity)'
- 'I came away feeling more positive about my diet and my new diabetes medication. She listened to my every need and was so empathetic when I got upset, really looking forward to our next visit'
- 'I appreciate her knowledge of our Africa cuisines and their carbohydrates challenges'
- 'Clear understanding of how important diet, weight loss and exercise are in lowering diabetes under a target of 48'
- 'Better understanding about eating fruit even if it has sugar content'
- 'I felt I was listened to'

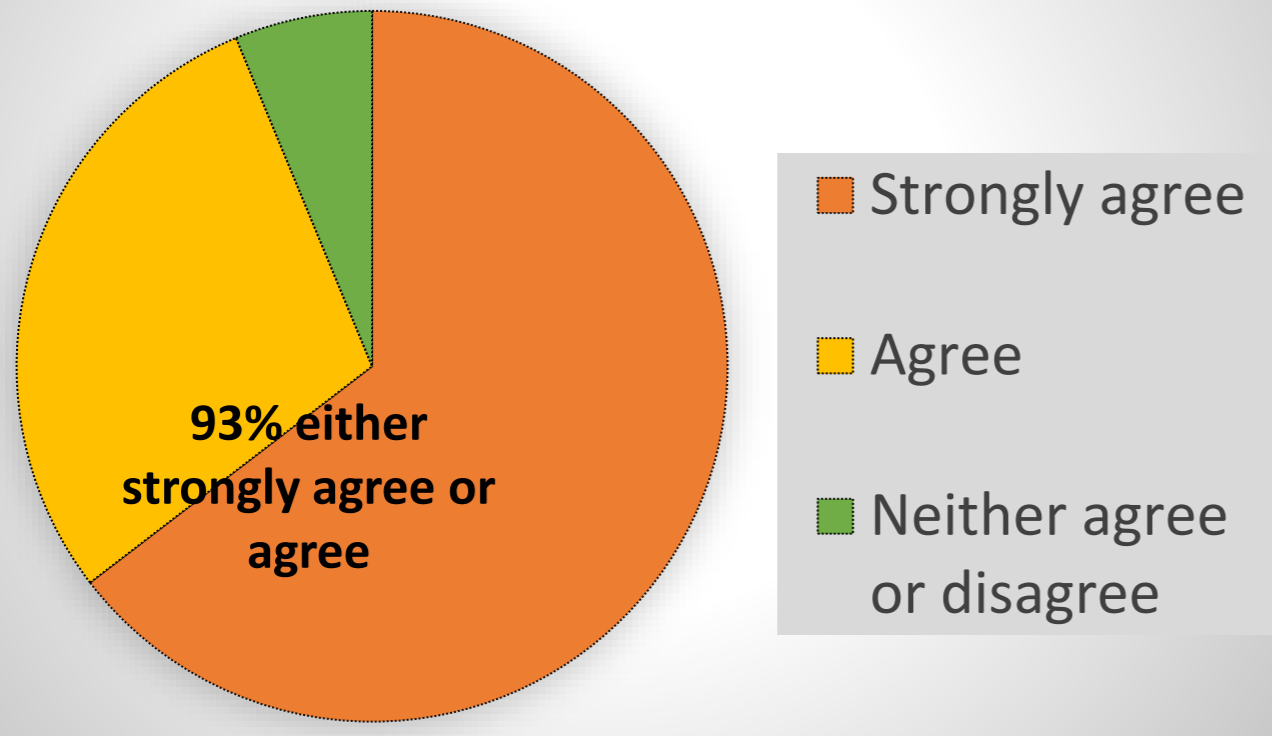
## What, if anything, could we have done better?

The main theme commented on was those contacted via telephone (due to Covid-19 restrictions) would have preferred a face to face consultation.

**Conclusion:** PCN dietitians provide quality personalised diabetes support to people in their immediate locality. Patients find this a positive option in accessing diabetes care.

Since the data was collected the role of the dietitian in primary care has started to evolve. The BDA released the dietetic roadmap in Nov 2021 which supports dietitians in the development of first contact practitioner and advance practitioner roles. To find out more please visit: [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com)

## Your dietitian helped you get a better understanding of your condition?



- 90% strongly agree or agree that the **dietitian treated them as an individual** and tailored advice to their needs
- **97% would recommend the service to a family member or a friend**
- Of those seen face to face (n=37), **76% felt it was useful seeing a dietitian at their local surgery** (12 participants were unable to comment due to telephone consultations linked to Covid-19)