

# Five-year strategy 2022-2026

The AGM heard of ambitious plans for the future, but these are all dependant on funding and staff. **Deborah Condon** reports

**A**t the 2021 AGM, details of the charity's exciting new five-year strategic plan, Changing Lives 2022 – 2026, were presented.

This plan was developed following a strategic review to assess and agree how the charity should move forward.

Presenting details of the plan, Diabetes Ireland CEO, Kieran O'Leary, highlighted that this is the only national charity dedicated to helping people with diabetes and their families, but "with this comes enormous responsibility".

"It makes reaching our mission to provide quality services and improve quality of life for people living with diabetes even more important," he insisted.

The main aims of Diabetes Ireland are to:

- Provide support, education and motivation to those with diabetes and their loved ones
- To raise awareness of diabetes in the community and foster programmes for early detection and prevention of diabetes complications and its burden
- To support and encourage advances in diabetes care and research that improves both quality of life and standards of care.

In order to achieve these, Diabetes Ireland is committed to certain values, including always striving for excellence, while being transparent, accountable and trustworthy.

Following the strategic review, the charity has highlighted two specific areas to focus on. The first is the provision of high-quality services. Over the



next five years, Diabetes Ireland will work to "drive funding for improved access to care, education and support in a meaningful way for all people living with diabetes in Ireland".

The second is the ability to inform and influence. The charity wants to "proactively build relationships, collaborations and alliances with those who share our mission to provide a high-quality and equitable service for all people with diabetes".

In relation to providing high-quality services, the charity has a number of key projects in mind. These include:

- Evaluating current services in order to ensure that they are meeting the needs of members
- Expanding membership in order to increase support for the charity
- Identifying new funding grants and other revenue opportunities to support service delivery and new education programmes
- Building marketing capability, including promoting the charity's services to

a wider audience in order to highlight the importance of its ongoing work, developing a new website and increasing the number of media awareness campaigns.

When it comes to informing and influencing, advocacy is key, with the charity building on its '8 Actions for Change' contained in its pre-budget submission earlier this year. Diabetes Ireland wants to provide programmes that deliver specific and tailored support for people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

An example of this is a programme that offers support to people when they are diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes.

"People who are diagnosed with Type 2 feel that they aren't getting enough information. They don't have a treatment plan and there is nobody dealing with the emotional element of the diagnosis. And while they are told that they must change their diet, get more exercise, reduce their HbA1c or they may suffer complications such as heart disease or blindness, there is nobody telling them how to change," Mr O'Leary pointed out.

However, while the strategic plan is ambitious and could have a major impact on those with diabetes, he highlighted that it comes with a caveat – it is dependent on funding and staff.

"We have these plans but unless we get funding support, they are not going to materialise. The programmes that we want to develop, unless we get sustainable funding support, they may not materialise," he added.