



Gabrielle Woodward  
Worcester College  
Oxford  
1 Walton St  
OX1 2HB

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The Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
Westminster  
London  
SW1A 2AA

### **More availability of diabetes technology on the National Health Service**

Dear *Prime Minister,*

I hope this letter finds you well in what must be a very busy time for you. Let me first say that as a young female student, it is inspiring to see you as our Prime Minister – leading our country through a very difficult and turbulent time. Growing up, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it was difficult to find leading female role models in public life.

By means of introduction, I am final-year undergraduate at Worcester College, Oxford, reading Music. I am involved in a variety of activities, but my passions are centred around the composition of music for productions and films – a profession I hope to pursue after University.

The subject of my letter today is more personal, however, and is also why you are one of my role models.

It is a matter that I would like to think that we are united by: type-1 diabetes.

I was diagnosed with type-1 diabetes ten years ago, and ever since I have never sought to become a victim of this “illness”. For example, when I came to Oxford, at the forefront of my mind was the opportunities in academia and my love for music. But, as I am sure you are aware, some people still don’t understand: type-1 diabetes is a chronic illness.

In my experience at the University of Oxford, diabetes can take its toll, causing me great stress and anxiety. There have been scenarios where I have become too ill to sit an exam and have been told that I don’t have to finish the paper. However, after committing many hours to study leading up to the exam, I try to finish. It is upsetting and demoralising.

Of course, as you will know, technology has developed to ensure people with diabetes can cope with the illness.

I now, for instance, have a pump attached to my skin all the time to give me insulin, where once upon a time I had an insulin pen. But there are technologies that are not available to me, and that would change my life. This is one of the latest developments I believe you have, the Freestyle Libre, which I have been desperate to receive through the NHS for months. I went to the consultants at Churchill Hospital, Oxfordshire, earlier this year asking about this. However, there is currently extremely strict



criteria meaning that only a small minority of type-1 diabetics are receiving the technology and I, despite my extreme fluctuations at university, was not able to receive it.

And this is why I write to you, today. Ten years after I was diagnosed with diabetes, I hope to change how much technology is on offer to those with type-1 diabetes, particularly those young people who are in desperate need of support.

I understand that some pieces of technology, such as yours, are not available universally on the NHS - which I assume, above all, is due to its cost. But, Mrs. May, how can we put a price on hundreds, even thousands of lives?

You will have seen a recent report by *The Daily Express* (29/10) which details how people are dying because of insufficient support to British diabetics. This is, as I am sure you agree, grossly unacceptable.

I cannot think of anyone better placed – both professionally and personally – to continue to make a difference to the lives of so many, whose experience you will understand through your own.

Therefore, I must urge you to change the way diabetic technology is distributed on the NHS. Most people cannot afford – or get access – to technology privately. This is why our NHS should be making these items available; it is, after all, why we as a British people pay for our National Health Service.

For me, who currently experiences blood sugars which fluctuate dramatically, the prospect of being able to have such an incredible piece of technology, which would possibly improve my life expectancy and change my day-to-day routine, is exciting.

I feel, in the privileged position I am in at Oxford, that I have a duty to ask for your help. If you are not able to help, I am not sure who will.

As has been reported, you have been inspired by one of our greatest ever Olympians, rower Sir Steve Redgrave, who has type-2 diabetes, who remarked that he ‘made the decision that diabetes was going to live with me — I wasn’t going to live with diabetes’. I share this sentiment: diabetes should not be an obstacle to success.

However, there comes a point where we have to support those by giving them the technology to be able to live with it.

While I understand the pressure you are under, I hope you can give the above due consideration with your team at the Department of Health, and any associated departments, and I would be delighted to discuss how we continue to improve awareness surrounding diabetes with you.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts on the issues outlined above, and how we can perhaps move forward to improve, and crucially prolong, the lives of many people with diabetes in the UK.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Woodward', with a horizontal line underneath.

Gabrielle Woodward