

NHS Diabetes: Supporting diabetes care into 2011



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It seems hard to believe that of the 61 million people living in the UK almost 3 million have diabetes. Another 500 000 people have diabetes, but are unaware of it. Even more surprising, in England 23 000 young people under the age of 17 years have diabetes (Diabetes UK, 2008; 2010).

We all know that diabetes is a complex, chronic and potentially life-threatening condition. In England, people with diabetes aged between 20 and 79 years are around twice as likely to die as people without diabetes (Yorkshire and Humber Public Health Observatory, 2008). We also know that diabetes can lead to serious complications such as blindness and amputations, yet it is estimated that up to 85% of diabetes-related amputations are preventable (International Diabetes Federation, 2005).

In early 2009 the National Diabetes Support Team morphed into NHS Diabetes, with a mandate from the government and a 5-year plan linked to the National Service Framework for diabetes (Department of Health, 2001). Dr Rowan Hillson MBE was appointed as National Clinical Director for Diabetes with Anna Morton as the Director of NHS Diabetes.

NHS Diabetes has the responsibility to raise the quality of health services for all people with diabetes in England to enable the best international outcomes, cost-effectively, by 2013, and to make it easier to live with diabetes. The organisation has four main aims:

- To support a patient-centred NHS by improving outcomes in diabetes care.
- To help develop and support the implementation of national clinical strategies and guidelines.
- To support commissioners to get the best services for their patients, with best value for money.
- To use networks to empower clinically led change and to drive up standards in the quality of care.

NHS Diabetes has been working closely with groups representing all stakeholders in diabetes care, including people with diabetes, to initiate a number of projects, including the Year of

Care programme, a range of commissioning resources, and an online learning course on the safe use of insulin:

- Year of Care: NHS Diabetes launched the Year of Care programme in 2008. The idea behind it is to “learn how routine care can be redesigned and commissioned to provide a personalised approach” for people with long-term conditions, starting with diabetes (NHS Diabetes, 2008). Year of Care is a partnership initiative between the Department of Health, Diabetes UK, The Health Foundation and NHS Diabetes.

- Commissioning resource: This range of commissioning tools aims to offer practical support, templates, information and case studies for healthcare professionals and diabetes commissioners, with the aim of producing consistent service delivery models across England.

- Safe use of insulin (e-learning course): In June 2010, NHS Diabetes launched a new online training course on the safe use of insulin. The course is aimed at healthcare professionals and is available free of charge on the NHS Diabetes website. The National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA, 2010) rapid response report identified over 5000 insulin errors that had occurred in both primary and acute settings. The NPSA now requires all healthcare professionals who care for people with diabetes to undertake training on the safe use of insulin, such as the NHS Diabetes course, by 16 December 2010. Have you completed this course yet?

- NHS Diabetes is also currently working to develop a comprehensive model of care for emotional and psychological support for people with diabetes.

As we move into 2011 it is key that we all keep up-to-date with what's going on in diabetes, to maintain and progress diabetes care. NHS Diabetes is integral to this, so I urge you to visit its website (www.diabetes.nhs.uk) and make use of the available resources. Moreover, don't forget to visit the TREND-UK website (www.trend-uk.org) to download *An Integrated Career and Competency Framework for Diabetes Nursing* (TREND-UK, 2010). ■

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