



If you are a member of a local, national or international group that has a special interest in the care of people with diabetes and wish to notify our readers of your activities then please email submissions to:

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(Please include your name, title, position in the group and full contact details)

## NATIONAL DIABETES SUPPORT TEAM

The NDST have produced two supporting documents for the Commissioning Toolkit. *Developing a Diabetes Service: Using the Diabetes Commissioning Toolkit* provides a systematic approach for everyone on how to use the Diabetes Commissioning Toolkit and can be found at: [www.diabetes.nhs.uk/Developing%20Diabetes%20service.pdf](http://www.diabetes.nhs.uk/Developing%20Diabetes%20service.pdf) (accessed 16.10.2007). In addition, they have also produced *Learning the Lessons: Experiences of Using the Diabetes Commissioning Toolkit*. This reports on how it was used in practice at three sites around England and is available at: [www.diabetes.nhs.uk/downloads/Learning%20the%20lessons.pdf](http://www.diabetes.nhs.uk/downloads/Learning%20the%20lessons.pdf) (accessed 16.10.2007).

Skills for Health, in collaboration with the NDST, have produced a comprehensive Diabetes Workforce Strategy, which contains detailed guidance on developing and designing a diabetes workforce with practical examples of how people have implemented the core principles. For more information, visit: [www.diabetes.nhs.uk/workforce%20strategy.pdf](http://www.diabetes.nhs.uk/workforce%20strategy.pdf) (accessed 16.10.2007). The Workforce Strategy is supported by a supplement to the NDST's popular *Beyond Boundaries Network Guide. Workforce Planning and Design* offers step-by-step guidance for diabetes networks on workforce development: [www.diabetes.nhs.uk/downloads/workforce%20supplement.pdf](http://www.diabetes.nhs.uk/downloads/workforce%20supplement.pdf) (accessed 16.10.2007).

The Diabetes Data Directory ([www.yhpho.org.uk/diabetesdatadirectory/introddd.asp](http://www.yhpho.org.uk/diabetesdatadirectory/introddd.asp) [accessed 16.10.2007]) is

a new website that enables the diabetes community to have free and ready access to a wide range of information on diabetes. It provides information on everything from prevalence to prescribing.

*Bill O'Leary, NDST*

## DIABETES

### Specialist services are vital

In September, the Diabetes Specialist Services Liaison Group released *Diabetes in the NHS: Commissioning and providing specialist services*, a publication that spells out the challenges diabetes poses for the NHS and how specialist services can contribute to overcoming them.

Simon O'Neill, Director of Care, Information and Advocacy Services at Diabetes UK, commented: 'The UK's 2.2 million people with diabetes need expert support from specialist services to ensure they live as long and healthy a life as possible. This is why cuts to these services are so worrying – the number of people with diabetes is continuing to grow, and so is the pressure on the NHS to help them. If there are not enough specialists available across the country, it puts the lives of people with diabetes in real danger. Diabetes UK is calling on the NHS to recognise and address this need before it's too late.'

*Diabetes in the NHS: Commissioning and providing specialist services* was published by the National Diabetes Support Team and is available via: [www.diabetes.nhs.uk/diabetesinthenhs.pdf](http://www.diabetes.nhs.uk/diabetesinthenhs.pdf).

### Your Vision campaign launched

Diabetes UK's Your Vision campaign is warning that up to 470 000 people with diabetes in England are at risk of needlessly going blind because many PCTs are not meeting government targets of offering free digital retinal screening to everyone with diabetes by the end of 2007.

Douglas Smallwood, Chief Executive of Diabetes UK, said: 'The provision of free digital retinal screening services across the country can be patchy and it is a national scandal that one in four people with diabetes in England are needlessly being put at risk of losing their sight because they are not being offered screening. We have to make sure that all people with diabetes have appropriate access to digital retinal screening as a matter of urgency and encourage the under-performing PCTs to put in place the appropriate facilities and allocate the necessary budget to their screening programme.'

In addition, Diabetes UK is insisting that each PCT should have a systematic call and recall system to make sure that people with diabetes receive an annual letter inviting them for screening.

Retinal screening is one of the most cost-effective interventions known in medicine. In 90% of cases, retinopathy can be treated successfully if caught early. While a digital retinal screening test only costs around £21 per person to the NHS, statistics have shown that the lifetime costs of dealing with retinopathy can be up to £237 000 per person.

For more information about Your Vision, visit [www.diabetes.org.uk/yourvision](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/yourvision) (accessed 18.10.2007).

*Sarah Milsom, Diabetes UK*