

Farewell to the UK Association of DSNs



Debbie Hicks

UKADSN, RCN (2005)
An Integrated Career & Competency Framework for Diabetes Nursing. SB Communications Group, London

The delivery of diabetes care has changed so much in recent years. It is now delivered by a range of healthcare professionals all with the shared vision of providing the most appropriate care, by the most appropriate healthcare professional in the most appropriate location for the person with diabetes. I recently attended a meeting for Community Diabetes Consultants (CDC) – this group has been in operation for the past three years and has had a network to support those healthcare professionals, both doctors and nurses, in providing specialist care in the community setting.

When I received an invitation to join the group I was taken back to a conversation that the Nurse Consultant group had with Dr Sue Roberts over a year ago. She questioned the validity of so many different groups within diabetes care that often failed to speak with one voice. While at the meeting I did discuss with one of the founder members the validity of the CDC group. She explained that different groups fulfil different needs for different individuals and was this a bad thing?

The same challenge was put to the new UK Association of DSNs (UKADSN) back in November 1997 when it was launched to support DSNs working whole-time in diabetes care as their

needs were not being met by the RCN Diabetes Forum. The steering group quickly became an elected committee with a constitution and paying members. All the committee members undertook work on behalf of the UKADSNs in addition to their full-time paid NHS roles.

Due to changes within the nursing workforce delivering diabetes care and employers becoming more reluctant to allow nurses to undertake non-NHS work within working time, the committee of the UKADSN came under pressure to perform as an organisation – it also became impossible to recruit new committee members to carry on the group for the same reasons. As a consequence, Phyllis Bushby, Chair of the UKADSN has announced the disbanding of the group (*Box 1*).

I share sadness with Phyllis as I was a founder member of the UKADSN, along with Pat Clarke. However, we can look back with pride at the contribution that this group made during its decade for specialist nurses working in diabetes care. We appreciate that one size does not fit all and that the diversity of people working in diabetes care now means that one group could never meet the needs of all. As long as each group has the interests of people with diabetes at heart and support those working in diabetes does it matter how many agencies we have? ■

Box 1. Phyllis Bushby announces the disbanding of the UKADSN.

‘It is with great sadness that I announce that as from the 1st January 2008 the UK Association of DSNs will cease to function as an organisation. However, I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the contribution to the professional development of DSNs throughout the United Kingdom that the UKADSN have provided. The UKADSN supported the following successful projects:

- *The Integrated Career & Competency Framework for Diabetes Nursing* (2005).
- Clinical supervision for DSNs.
- BSc in Diabetes piloted at the University of York which is now delivered at both the University of York and King’s College London.
- Two ‘Best Practice’ conferences.

The UKADSN has also been included in

stakeholder submissions to the DoH, NICE and Diabetes UK. The website which supported the work of the UKADSN has had many thousands of hits from the UK as well as Europe, Oman, Australia and New Zealand and has enabled DSNs to share best practice.

I would like to thank the outgoing committee: Louise Baker, Pat Clarke, Margaret Daley, Pat Hibbert, Debbie Hicks, Fiona Smith, Theresa Smythe, Grace Vanterpool and Maureen Wallymahmed; also a big ‘thank you’ to our administrator Karen Nunnick who kept it all together, and to all past members. I would also like to thank the Trustees: Jeff Goulder, Simon Breed and Robert Tattersall for their valuable support and guidance.

The UKADSN have donated any remaining funds in the UKADSN account to Diabetes UK.’

Debbie Hicks is Nurse Consultant – Diabetes at Enfield PCT.