

**DiABETES UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.



A guide for young people  
moving into adult care

## What is transition?

Everyone with Type 1 diabetes needs a team around them to make sure they're happy and healthy. At the moment that team should include the doctors and nurses at your clinic, your family, and some members of staff at school.

As you get older this team will change as you move over into adult care. This is called transition.

No one expects you to transition from children's care to adult clinics overnight. In fact, you should carry on seeing the team you already know whilst you get used to the new faces and clinic you'll be dealing with in the future.

This leaflet explains what you can expect to happen during your transition and the care and support you should get from the NHS.

It might also be useful if you're moving to a new city for uni or work.



## The basics

- It's really important that your transition to adult care suits you. Everyone has their own needs, and your care must be flexible enough to work for you and fit into your lifestyle.
- You should have the chance to get to know the doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals who will help you build up your confidence to look after your own diabetes.
- They should start getting you ready for transition as early as possible so it doesn't come as a sudden change.
- They should listen to you and give you advice and information on the things that you want help with.
- They should work with other doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals as well as your school or university when needed.
- All these things will make sure you can manage by yourself in the adult clinic and will help you look after your diabetes confidently.



## Why is a good transition important?

Diabetes can have a real impact on your life, and your family's. For a healthy and happy life, it's really important you get good support around both the practical parts of managing your diabetes (like carb counting and working out your insulin dose) and also dealing with the emotional side of having diabetes. This is especially important when you're moving from one service to another, because it can be hard getting used to different people or new ways of doing things.

To make transition as easy as possible for you, any new service you're moving to needs to offer you support and encouragement and make sure you can work together with your doctors, nurses and other healthcare staff while you are moving into adult care.



# Diabetes care and all the other bits of your life

As well as dealing with diabetes, as you get older you might also be finishing school, moving away from home, starting university or work, experimenting with alcohol, sex and drugs or even becoming a parent yourself. So your diabetes care needs to take into account all the other changes in your life.

Transition covers people up to the age of 25 so both your children's clinic and the adult clinic you move to will have to work together to make sure you can look after your diabetes throughout all of this.

## The emotional side of looking after your diabetes

Living with Type 1 can be tough. Everyone has bad days and a lot of people get really fed up with having diabetes at some point in their lives. Because it can be so difficult, people with diabetes are more likely to get depression or have problems with anxiety. Eating disorders and other issues around eating are also more common.

But if you have good emotional support from your diabetes clinic and friends and family you're generally much more able to cope. Don't be afraid to ask for extra help. Part of your transition service includes being able to see a mental health professional when you need to.



## Your family and transition

Your parents or carer will have spent a long time looking after your diabetes. As you get older they have to come to terms with changes to your care and the way they support you. So your transition service should understand their needs, and support them through your transition too.

Your clinic should stay in touch with them and give them the information they need about the issues they are likely to face.

At the moment you'll be going to appointments with your parents or carers. Eventually you'll probably want to go to appointments on your own. Clinics who introduce these changes gradually tend to get good results. You get the opportunity of individual sessions with your diabetes team, while your parents or carers get the support they need as well.



# What should my transition look like?

All the people who look after you should work together to help you move away from children's care and into adult services.

Some hospitals have a special clinic for young people aged 18–25 with the same staff as the adult clinic. These really help moving into adult care. Not all hospitals have them but ask to if yours does.

Here's a few things your transition should do:

- Treat you as an individual with your own needs and wants.
- Be flexible enough to meet your needs.
- Allow you to move through transition at your own pace, based on your confidence rather than your age.
- Offer you appointments at times and places that work for you, wherever possible.
- Use social media, email, texts, apps or Skype to make it easier for you to contact clinic staff without missing work or education, wherever possible.
- Link with any other health services who are looking after you, and your school or university when needed.

## What the doctors, nurses and other staff looking after you should be doing:

- Give you the chance to build up a relationship with them and build up your confidence with them.
- Respect you, listen to you and not judge you.
- Be flexible about how, where and when you see them.
- Help you if you are struggling with any emotional issues like eating disorders, depression or anxiety.
- Recognise that you have your own experience in looking after your diabetes and work with you to agree on your own care.
- Educate you about your diabetes so you understand it and can look after yourself confidently.
- Give you clear information which you can understand.
- Refer you to other health services at the right time if you need help that they can't provide.
- Start to prepare you for transition as early as possible, so it doesn't come as a sudden change.
- Work with you to write your own individual plan for how your transition will work. It should be based on what you need and build on your strengths and knowledge.
- Make sure there is one named person to support you through transition, and you know how to contact them if you need to.
- Agree with you a target for your HbA1c, explain why you should try to meet this target and how they are going to help you to meet it.
- Refer you on to the adult clinic when you are ready, and make sure that the move goes smoothly.



## What if I'm not getting the care I think I should be?

If you're not happy with the service that you're getting, you have the right to complain. We've got the information you need to make a complaint on our website.

### Find out more

We've got more information about moving into adult care and transition on our website. Visit **[www.diabetes.org.uk/transition](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/transition)**

The NHS has a whole series of guidelines around transition to make sure everyone receives the right level of support as they make their way into adult care. They're available online and called the Diabetes Transition Service Specification.

You can read more about transition in general (not just diabetes-related) in a document called Guidance from NICE about transition.

# Diabetes UK Helpline

## We're here for you if you need us.

We know diabetes can be rubbish. We know it can be hard work. And we know there's a never ending list of questions about stuff like driving, exams, school, uni and jobs.

So, that's why we have the Diabetes UK Helpline. We have trained counsellors who really know about diabetes. They'll take the time to talk things through with you. They can chat about any emotional, social, psychological or practical difficulties you might be having. And it's all confidential.

If you need us give us a ring or drop us an email.

We'll be here.

**Call:** 0345 123 2399\* Monday to Friday, 9am–7pm.

**Email:** [helpline@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:helpline@diabetes.org.uk)

**[www.diabetes.org.uk/helpline](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/helpline)**



## You can also get in touch with us through social media.

 /diabetesuk

 @diabetesUK

 @diabetesUK

#Type1Uncut are videos made for young people with Type 1 by young people with Type 1.

 #Type1Uncut

\*Calls may be recorded for quality and training purposes.

[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

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