Monday 16 May 2011

Dear Andrew

Diabetes is one of the biggest health challenges facing the UK today. Over 3.6 million people in the UK now have diabetes and it is the fastest growing condition in the country. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of blindness, amputation, kidney failure, stroke and heart disease.

As you know, with good care pathways in place, underpinned by the skills of Diabetes Specialist Nurses (DSNs), we can reduce the human and economic costs of this serious condition.

Diabetes UK is concerned that DSN posts are being cut or frozen. We are publishing a report next week that shows the numbers of DSNs across the UK are falling – with an estimated shortfall of over 200, twice the figure reported in 2009.

At a time when prevalence of the condition is increasing, any reduction in DSN posts will harm patient care and increase costs to the NHS. Diabetes already costs 10 per cent of NHS resources.

DSNs are crucial in supporting independence and in helping people self manage their diabetes more effectively. They play a vital role in preventing expensive complications, in supporting people with complex needs and, critically, in providing primary care teams with specialist expertise that reduces emergency hospital appointments.

We urge you to intervene and question Trusts who are cutting these vital posts. We need to work together to tackle the challenge of diabetes for the sake of people with diabetes and for the future viability of the NHS.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Young
Chief Executive
Diabetes UK