

Parent Information

Transition to adult diabetes service:
what's it all about?



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Introduction

As a parent/carer of a young person under the care of the Paediatric Diabetes Service, your child will eventually be transferred (i.e. move) to the Adult Diabetes Service. The process that supports this transfer is called transition. This information leaflet explains about the transition process your child's diabetes team follows and what you can expect.

What is transition?

As your child gets older they will be asking for more freedom and independence and therefore with this the management of their diabetes will naturally become more and more their responsibility. This can be both an exciting and daunting time for all. Transition is the process whereby you and the diabetes team help your child to develop independence and responsibility for their own diabetes care and general health. This involves teaching your child to develop their skills in communication, decision making and assertiveness. It is hoped that this will help to improve their sense of control and independence in regards to their diabetes management so that they can make the best informed choices about their health.

When will the move to adult services happen?

There is no exact time or age that is right to move to adult services but the majority of young people move between 16 and 18 years of age.

The purpose of this information leaflet and the initial discussions the diabetes team will now start to have with you and your child is to get you thinking about the move and preparing them for adulthood and care under adult services.

The preparation for the move to adult services will be gradual and aims to help your child to develop their confidence to independently manage their diabetes. There will be plenty of time and support to make sure that you all feel ready for this change. And of course, support will continue in the adult service too.

What are some of the challenges of the transition process?

Every family is individual. We appreciate that moving to adult services can be a daunting time for some, and it can take time to adjust. Some will have worries about the move to adult services whilst others may feel they are ready. Everyone is different!

We recognise that as a parent/carer you have played a big part in looking after your child's diabetes and will continue to do so for some time yet. You are their current main source of support and have lots of experience and knowledge to offer. So it may help to start to talk together about how you can help your child to gradually take more responsibility for their diabetes and its treatment.

Although your child is the central person in the transition process, we know that they are not the only person that can be affected by the changes to come. As a parent/carer it is understandable if you:

- Find it hard to adjust to how your role and involvement is changing;
- Feel excluded or out of the loop as your child takes on more responsibility;
- Worry about whether your child is ready to transfer to an adult service;
- Feel apprehensive about your child's new medical team.

You may find it helpful to talk about how you feel and any worries or questions you may have, as well as ask them about their own concerns so you can understand each other's point of view.

The diabetes team is here to help all of you with any concerns or questions you may have. We aim to provide you with all the relevant information about the adult service, including contact details, how the service is structured and some of the common differences between paediatric and adult services.

What might help?

To help with the transition process your child may need your support to explore the following questions:

- What are my strengths, what can I do well?
- What gaps are there in my knowledge and skills?
- What do I need to do to address these gaps?
- What supports do I have and where can I find the right support?
- Who can I talk to or where can I go to find out more information?
- What do I expect out of my child's transition process?

From now on the diabetes teams will ask your child (with your support) to complete a Transition Questionnaire at each clinic appointment to support them to explore their knowledge and skills. This will also help their diabetes team to learn what advice and support they need to offer you and your child in order to help you better. The first questionnaire your child will be asked to complete at your next clinic appointment is called 'Set Up!'

What can I do to make the transition process easier?

It may help if you:

- Are informed of what to expect when your child is transferred to the adult service – talk to the diabetes team and ask them any questions you may have about transition and the move to adult services. Remember, there is no silly question!
- Support your child in a gradual way to develop their self-management skills. This typically includes learning about their medicines - why they take them, when and how they take them (including dosages), as well as carbohydrate counting. The diabetes team will support you all with this.
- Educate your child about the supports and resources available to them, including who they contact in an emergency. They may find it useful to keep important phone numbers saved in their phone as well as save appointment dates on calendar(s).
- Encourage and support your child to ask and answer questions during appointments with any member of their diabetes team. Some young people even find it helpful to see a member of team without parents/ carers for part of the appointment - but only when they are ready to do so.

All of this and more will be covered in the Transition Questionnaires your child will be asked to complete at each clinic appointment.

Any questions?

Use the space below to write down any worries and/or questions that you have about transition and moving to adult services. And don't forget to bring these with you to your next clinic appointment!

