

Patient Information

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



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Introduction

Over the last few years, you will have been learning about how to manage diabetes with the help of your parents/ carers and the Paediatric Diabetes Team. As you get older and have more independence, the management of your diabetes becomes more and more your responsibility.

What is transition?

As a young person under the care of the Paediatric Diabetes Service, your care will eventually be transferred (i.e. move) to the Adult Diabetes Service. The process that supports this transfer is called transition. During this time you will be helped to develop independence and responsibility for your own diabetes care and general health. The information and teaching you will be provided with along the way is aimed at helping you to develop your skills in communication, decision making and assertiveness. It is hoped this will help to improve your sense of control and independence in regards to your diabetes management so that you can make the best informed choices about your health.

When do I move to adult services?

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 your diabetes team will now start to have with you is to get you thinking about the move and preparing you for adulthood and care under adult services.

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



What are some of the challenges of the transition process?

Everyone is an individual. Some young people will have worries about moving onto adult services and others may feel they are ready. Everyone is different!

Here are some of the challenges and worries that other young people have had, when faced with transferring from the paediatric service to the adult service:

- “My current paediatric team feels familiar and comfortable; the adult team is unknown to me”.
- “Who will I actually see in the adult service? Will I know anyone there?”
- “What will actually happen and where do I go?”
- “I don’t fully understand the differences between paediatric and adult services”.
- “Will there be any difference in the involvement of my parents/carers in my diabetes care and their contact with adult services?”
- “Will the adult service have different expectations about my role in my diabetes care?”
- “How can I be independent and fit the management of my diabetes in with being a young adult?”

What might help?

To help with the transition process it may help if you to start to ask yourself 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 transition process?

From now on your diabetes teams will ask you to complete a Transition Checklist at each clinic appointment to support you to explore your knowledge and skills. This will also help your diabetes team to learn what advice and support they need to offer you in order to help you better. The first checklist you 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 you transfer to the adult service – talk to your diabetes team and ask them any questions you may have about transition and moving to adult services. Remember, there is no silly question!
- Gradually develop or build upon your self-management skills. Ask your diabetes team to help you to learn about your diabetes and its treatment.



- Know your supports and resources, including who to contact in an emergency. You may find it useful to keep important phone numbers saved in your phone as well as save appointment dates on a calendar.
- Practise asking and answering questions during appointments with any member of your 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 you will be asked to complete at each clinic appointment.

You are not alone.

Your parents/carers have played a big part in looking after your diabetes and will continue to do so for some time yet. They are your current main source of support. They have lots of experience and knowledge and so it may help to start to talk together about how they can help you to gradually take more responsibility for your diabetes and its treatment.

Although you are the central person in the transition process, it is important to remember that your parents/carers will also go through some challenges of their own that they might need help to manage. These can include:

- Adjusting to how their role is changing.
- Feeling excluded or out of the loop as you take on more responsibility.
- Worrying about whether you are ready to transfer to an adult service.
- Adjusting to adult services.
- Building confidence in your new medical team.



