

NEWS FROM NEEDS

NEEDS helping families regain control - A relatives perspective on caring for someone with Type 1 Diabetes

Those living with diabetes are often supported in the background by a relative or spouse. This support can include practical help with medications, appointments and emergencies or with ongoing emotional needs, perhaps just by listening.

The following is a direct account, providing insight into the experience of a person supporting their partner who has Type 1 diabetes, and the benefit of care provided by NEEDS.

Richard, who lives in Colchester, was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes about 20 years ago. For many years he struggled to manage his blood glucose levels. His attempts at carbohydrate counting and adapting insulin doses led to hypoglycaemia (hypos/ low blood sugar), especially at night. These had a significant impact on both him and his partner Clare. Clare was the person who gave the support required when he was unable to help himself.

Clare said -

"The fear of severe hypos (where the person becomes unable to treat themselves), can also have a very significant impact on their partners. I became very worried about Richard going out without me. I was worried that he would be found unconscious by someone who would not know how to help him." Richard became fearful of going to sleep at night, sometimes he would be awake until four or five o'clock in the morning. I would also struggle to sleep, waking to check on him at regular intervals. Diabetes was having a huge negative impact on both our lives. The stress and anxiety of it all was taking over, and taking its toll. Then two things changed:

Firstly, Richard started using a Freestyle Libre Flash Glucose sensor. For the first time he was able to have a full and constant picture of his blood glucose levels. This took away the guesswork involved and revealed the true profile of his blood-glucose levels.



Secondly, he was referred to NEEDS for extra support. The expertise provided by the NEEDS practitioners enabled Richard to interpret the glucose readings, to stabilise his blood-glucose levels and have confidence in making insulin adjustments.

"After a period of adjustment, it was like a huge weight had been lifted from both our shoulders. I no longer worry all the time; I no longer feel like his carer. I am very happy to simply be his partner again"

"As Richard has been able to take control of his diabetes (rather than diabetes controlling us), the relief to us both has been enormous. Our health and well-being, both physical and emotional, have greatly improved."

"I would advise anyone who is struggling to manage their diabetes to seek advice from NEEDS whether it be the information sessions or 'education', or clinic support. Having the information and tools to be able to take control has changed both our lives and we have not looked back."

Nursing Excellence award for Emma Birbeck

Congratulations to NEEDS practitioner Emma Birbeck, who has just been presented with this prestigious award for Nursing Excellence. Ruth May, from NHS England, presented Emma with her award at Ipswich Hospital.

She is one of just two nurses to be receive this.

Very well deserved!



Emma Birbeck with her award!

Flu season is fast approaching!

The flu jab is one of 15 healthcare essentials that every person with diabetes is entitled to through the NHS every year. These include having your blood pressure measured, having your eyes screened for signs of retinopathy (disease) and having your feet and legs checked.

Each year the NHS prepares for the unpredictability of the flu as the influenza virus can change rapidly year-on-year. They recommend that everyone who is eligible for the flu jab gets vaccinated as soon as possible to avoid getting the illness.



'Living with Diabetes' Days - Type 1 and Type 2

In 2018 NEEDS held a large event at Weston Homes Stadium for all those living with any type of diabetes in North East Essex. Feedback from this event highlighted that the day was more suited to people living with type 2 rather than type 1 diabetes. We have taken that on board and are now planning separate days for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. The day for people with type 1 diabetes will be held on 9th November 2019. More details will follow but the draft agenda includes:

- DAFNE taster session
- Interpreting data from freestyle libre
- Sick day rules and hospital stays
- Latest updates in the world of type 1

The date for people with type 2 diabetes has not been arranged yet, but is expected to be in early 2020 – further information in the winter edition of this newsletter.

At this stage if you are interested in attending please contact info@diabetesneeds.org.uk to register your interest.

Diabetes UK East of England Inspire Awards

The incredible work of the volunteers and fundraisers across the East of England was celebrated with a fantastic lunch and Inspire Awards ceremony in Colchester recently.

One of the amazing winners is former nurse Stephanie Norman.

Stephanie, who lives with Type 2 Diabetes, runs numerous peer support groups in North Essex and also battles to ensure access to vital eye screening.

Congratulations Stephanie!

If you are interested in finding out more about these peer support groups, please visit:

<http://diabetesneeds.co.uk/uncategorized/north-east-essex-local-peer-support-groups/>

NEEDS research:

For Type 2 Diabetes Patients: Pilot of the 'Changing Health' App

As part of our transformation work supported by funds from NHS England & NEE CCG (North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group), we have started a pilot of an app called 'Changing Health'.

This is a clinically proven digital education resource providing personalised advice on diabetes, food and exercise. Patients in the Pilot also get the benefit of a Coach, qualified in 'behaviour change', to support them to make positive changes to their lifestyle. Current evidence shows that the app helps people lose weight, have more energy and better manage their diabetes so they can live healthier, more fulfilling lives. We will use the data from this Pilot to decide if the Changing Health app should become a routine part of care for those living with type 2 diabetes in North East Essex.

We have a limited number of GP Practices signed up to take part in the Pilot - ask at your Practice to find out if you can take part.

For Type 2 Diabetes Patients: GLoW to evaluate two programmes to support Type 2 Diabetes Patients

GLoW will trial and evaluate two programmes which have been shown to support people with type 2 diabetes. The aim of the programmes is to help support people to improve their diet, raise their physical activity and improve their health. NEEDS have signed up as a recruitment centre for 'The GLoW trial'.

The first programme is a diabetes education programme called 'DESMOND', which involves attending a one-day group diabetes education session. The second is a diabetes education and weight management programme called 'Live Well With Diabetes'. This involves diabetes education from a registered dietitian over the phone and gives patients access to weekly Weight Watchers meetings (free of charge).

If you are interested in taking part in diabetes research look on the website below for more information. <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/research/take-part-in-research>

Have you booked your eye screening appointment?

If you suffer from Diabetes, eye screening is important for you, regardless of the type of diabetes you have. Diabetes means you are more at risk of eye problems and this can lead to loss of sight.

Retinopathy for example, does not show any symptoms in the early stage. That is when screening could help identify problems and prevent serious damage to your eyes. Retinopathy can be spotted and treated early by having regular eye screening. This should prevent it from progressing to a stage where it is more difficult to treat.

Visit the Essex Diabetic Eye Screening Programme website www.essexdesp.co.uk for details of clinic locations and how to book an appointment.



Contact Us

If you have any questions about the NEEDS service or any of the topics covered in this newsletter please contact us:

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