

## **Diabetes service: a Guide for Patients**

### **What is diabetes?**

Diabetes is a lifelong condition that causes a person's blood sugar level to become too high. There are two main types of diabetes, referred to as type 1 and type 2. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body does not produce enough insulin to function properly, or when cells in the body fail to react to insulin. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't produce any insulin at all.

Please see [NHS Choices](#) and [Diabetes UK](#) for up to date information.

### **How will my diabetes be managed by health services in North East Essex?**

The North East Essex Diabetes Service (NEEDS) was introduced in April 2014 to improve the quality of care for ALL adults living with diabetes locally.

Since then, there has been a dramatic improvement in the level of diabetes care in the region, with over 4,000 more patients receiving eight recommended health checks from their GP. According to figures from the 2014/2015 independent National Diabetes Audit (NDA), 50.5% of people with type 1 diabetes and 67.9% of people with type 2 diabetes in the Colchester and Tendring areas are now receiving all eight health checks, greatly exceeding the national averages of 39.6% and 59% respectively.

The service provides a diabetes specialist team that supports GP practices to provide more services in a local community setting, reducing the need for hospital visits. GPs and practice nurses are being provided with incentives, support and diabetes training from the specialist team in order to provide most of the care in their local GP practices, including an annual review.

The 'Year of Care' system has been introduced to all practices across North East Essex to support patients to understand what care they should be receiving and encourage ownership of your diabetes management. This process will include monitoring of the important checks for diabetes called the 8 care processes which monitors any development of complications. The practice can still refer to the diabetes specialist team. Once the diabetes is stable, patients are discharged back to their GP practice with a plan of care.

The diabetes specialist team runs community clinics which are led by either a Consultant, Dietitian or Nurse. These take place in various settings across Clacton, Colchester and Harwich. Podiatry clinics are also run in community venues.

### **What education and support is available?**

Patient education is very important to the NEEDS service and you are encouraged to develop your diabetes awareness so you feel more in control of your condition.

Diabetes courses and a variety of less formal ways to learn are on offer and you can book a course at any time, either through your GP practice or by contacting NEEDS direct.

You are also encouraged to get involved with the NEEDS service and there are a variety of ways to do this. There are currently two Diabetes Patient Forums in Tendring and Colchester who meet regularly. They welcome people with diabetes and their carers to attend.

The NEEDS service in conjunction with Diabetes UK has also created 9 new local support groups in other areas across Colchester and Tendring including Walton and Dovercourt, as well as involving patients in other ways such as surveys and focus groups.

For more information on the support available locally for people newly-diagnosed with diabetes, download the NEEDS [Diabetes Education Leaflet](#).

### **How to contact NEEDS**

**Website:** [www.diabetesneeds.org.uk](http://www.diabetesneeds.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0845 2413313 or 01473 344930

**Email:** [info@diabetesneeds.org.uk](mailto:info@diabetesneeds.org.uk)

### **Other useful websites**

**NHS Choices:** <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Diabetes-type2/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

**Diabetes UK:** <http://www.diabetes.org.uk/>