



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Children and young persons diabetes psychology service

Paediatrics  
(Part of the Paediatric Psychological  
Support Service, or PPSS)

**Patient information**

## **What is this information about?**

This information is about the psychological support that you, or your child, can get when you (or they) are diagnosed with diabetes.

‘Psychological’ means anything to do with how we think, feel or act.

This information describes what a psychologist does, who the service is for, and what happens during and after an appointment with a psychologist. It also includes some useful resources and websites to look at for more help.

## **Why have I been given this information?**

You have been given this information because you, or your child, has been diagnosed with diabetes. It can feel overwhelming when you first get the diagnosis, but by talking about what is happening, you may find it easier to cope.

Keep this information in a safe place so you can share it with other people in your family if you want to.

## **What do the Children and Young Persons Diabetes Psychology Service do?**

We work closely with nurses, dieticians and consultants to give psychological support to young people with diabetes and their families.

You may be referred to us if you are struggling with a new diagnosis of diabetes, or if you need some extra support to deal with the daily challenges of the condition and the impact this can have in other areas of life.

## What can the psychologist help with?

A psychologist can help with a lot of problems, such as:

- Supporting you to live with and manage your diabetes.
- Coping with treatments that you feel worried about (such as a fear of needles).
- Trying different strategies for treatment management.
- Social issues such as problems at school and feeling 'different' to others.
- Dealing with upsetting news and managing strong emotions.
- For parents to have a space to think about their self-care and acceptance of diabetes.
- Issues around sleep and eating.

## Who is the team?

Dr Alice Alberici, Senior Clinical Psychologist

Dr Kerry Lum, Practitioner Health Psychologist.

At times, you may also see a trainee clinical psychologist.

## Who is this service for?

This service is available to the families of all children and young people aged 0 to 19 who have diabetes and are seen by the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital Diabetes Team.

The psychologists aim to meet all patients with diabetes and their families after a diagnosis of diabetes or after a referral.

After this first meeting you may be offered further appointments.

## How do I access the service?

Young people and their parents can speak to any member of the diabetes healthcare team at one of your appointments or email the team:

[uhsussex.diabteam.alex@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.diabteam.alex@nhs.net)

## What should I expect?

First appointments typically last 1 to 1.5 hours. The family may be seen all together to start with, or the young person or parents can be seen alone if they prefer. The psychologist will want to ask about:

- You
- Your family members
- School
- The impact diabetes is having on your life
- How you are feeling
- What is or is not going well.

This information will be used to decide if more appointments will be helpful, and who needs to be involved.

## Where to find us

**Level 10, The Paediatric Diabetes Team**

Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital, Eastern Road BN2 5BE

**Contact number** [01273 523140](tel:01273523140)

## **Do I have to have more than one appointment?**

No. You will be given a choice about whether you want to get help, and this will be discussed in the first appointment.

You may be seen for just one session, or you could be offered more appointments. It is also possible that you may be signposted to another service if necessary.

## **What is goal setting?**

At some point during your psychology sessions you may be asked to set some goals you would like to work on. These might include improving on any difficulties you have around your diabetes in everyday life, or the way you cope with these issues.

These goals will then be used as things to work towards. They will help guide future psychology appointments towards making specific improvements.

## **What happens afterwards?**

After your assessment, we will write to you with a summary of our discussion. A plan of support will also be included. This plan may involve waiting for the right person, or the right group, for your treatment.

It is also possible that you may be signposted to a different service based on this assessment.

## Why do we need to talk about diabetes?

Millions of people in the UK have been diagnosed with diabetes, and there are lots of resources out there to help you cope, and to share your experiences with others.

By offering a space to talk about wellbeing and the challenges of diabetes we are actively opening up conversation about the condition.

Please see the online support section for links to resources.

## Online Support

**Diabetes UK Support** (for parents)

<https://bit.ly/2J8cl1k>

**Diabetic Diet Guide** advice about diets and exercise, recipes, and managing symptoms.

[www.diabetes.org.uk/living-with-diabetes/eating?](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/living-with-diabetes/eating?)

**Digibete** Our clinic code is 1S6LA for Type 1 Diabetes and K5MYS for Type 2 Diabetes.

[www.digibete.org/digibete-app](http://www.digibete.org/digibete-app)

**Children and Young Peoples East of England Diabetes Network**

[www.eofediabetesnetwork.co.uk](http://www.eofediabetesnetwork.co.uk)



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This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care  
in Brighton and Hayward's Heath.

Ref. number: 2656  
Publication date: 11/2025  
Review date: 11/2028

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