

Our Ref:

January 2011

To: All GP Practices

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Dear Colleague,

**SOMERSET DIABETES SERVICE
UPDATE FROM SOMERSET INTERIM DIABETES GP LEAD – JANUARY 2011**

I am writing this letter firstly to introduce myself as the new Interim Diabetes GP Lead and secondly to update you on the implementation of the Somerset Diabetes Service.

About me

I am a GP partner at Springmead practice and the Interim Diabetes Lead GP for level 1. In July 2009 I was elected as a member of the WyvernHealth.Com Board and in this capacity was given the lead for diabetes, working alongside PCT commissioners to support the implementation of the new diabetes model of care.

Following the resignation of Dr Andrew Dicks in the Autumn of 2010 as the PCT Lead GP for level 1, I have temporarily taken on this role to provide continuity and stability during the phasing in of the new service and hope to be a champion for our new diabetes service. I am working closely with the diabetes consultants who will provide leadership for us within the community and maintain a flow of information and best practice between primary and secondary care as all successful commissioning projects should aim to achieve.

The Somerset Diabetes Service - 6 months on

Implementation of the new model of care for diabetes commenced in April 2010. Progress over the first 6 months has been very encouraging with intermediate diabetes clinics now operating across the county (over 1400 referrals received) and around twice as many patients attending DESMOND and DAFNE structured education courses compared with 2008/09 (over 300 newly diagnosed type 2 and 50 type 1 patients). The number of DESMOND venues has also been increased from 8 to 12.

The Insulin Initiation LES was also made available to practices in the Summer of 2010 and an initial cohort of practices is now initiating insulin having attended a 3 day MERIT training course in the Autumn.

Prior to the introduction of the new Somerset Diabetes Service, diabetes control had worsened, inpatient lengths of stay had increased and undiagnosed rates were rising. Early data for 2010/11 appears to be showing initial signs of a reversal of these trends.

Data is showing that HbA1c levels and cholesterol are coming closer to levels that will have better outcomes for patients although it may be some years before we see figures for amputation rates in our county changing. We should be optimistic but realistic.

What the data has revealed is significant variation between the clinical outcomes achieved by individual practices and in levels of estimated undiagnosed which need to be looked at. One of our main aims of redesigning the service was to standardise care for all patients in Somerset and we have therefore attached comparable practice data with this news letter for your practice teams to discuss and think about ways to approach these problems. At a recent countywide diabetic education day there appeared to be genuine disbelief that we calculated an undiagnosed prevalence for the county of 21% and I thought the best way for you to let this sink in is to see the figures for yourselves. We are also sending a copy of Dr John Horne's suggestions from 2008 of which patients you may wish to think about screening.

My priorities for 2011

My main priority in the coming weeks and months will be to work with the clinical leads for levels 2 and 3 to produce a comprehensive set of clinical guidelines to support practices in their diabetes care. We are aiming to have the guidelines completed and through the necessary approval process by the end of March 2011

The work on the clinical guidelines is progressing in tandem with the development and introduction of a programme of education courses and events for practice staff, designed to support the universal delivery of core diabetes care and the implementation of the Insulin Initiation LES. This education programme is being developed by WyvernHealth.com PBC Consortium, in conjunction with Somerset Community Health, and with the helpful support of the Somerset GP Education Trust through the Diabetes Education Needs Analysis undertaken earlier in the year. I will be meeting with Dr Paul Lambert and Su Down, Diabetes Nurse Consultant the other leads regularly to review evaluation of the courses and how we can develop them further.

Details of courses held in 2010 and those planned for 2011 are attached. Updates on diabetes courses and events available will be posted on the WyvernHealth.Com website at <http://www.wyvernhealth.com/pathways.htm>. The Diabetes Specialist Nurses will start visiting individual practices in the New Year starting in West Somerset and rotating around the county.

We are also working with the Nuffield trust, a charity organisation, that has identified Somerset as a county which has commissioned successfully in Long term conditions .They have been carrying out research in our county over the past 6 months and wish to help us with further data collection over the next 12 months and I will be developing this relationship further.

Other help available to practices

The Specialist Nursing and Dietetics Service is there to support practices in their diabetes care as well as run clinics for patients that require specialist care. If you would like advice about an individual patient's care or feel you need some tailored training over and above the generic programme being offered, you can get in touch with your locality DSN (contact details for locality DSNs can be found on the WyvernHeath.Com website at <http://www.wyvernhealth.com/pathways.htm> under the Service heading) who will either personally provide the support required or signpost where it is available.

Want to know more?

You will find all the key reference documents for the Somerset Diabetes Service on the WyvernHealth.com website at <http://www.wyvernhealth.com/pathways.htm>. We are collating

FAQs on the Somerset Diabetes Service on an ongoing basis, and aim to keep you briefed of any changes or updates.

Finally may I wish you all a happy New Year and look forward to hearing from anyone who wishes to become involved or hearing of any suggested improvements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Pearce'.

Dr Sarah Pearce
Interim GP Diabetes Clinical Lead for Level 1

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Enclosures: Comparative practice data on clinical outcomes
Comparative practice data on estimated undiagnosed
Education events and courses

Copied to: Pathway Management Group
David Slack
Su Davies