

Improving diabetes inpatient services: the successes of the Diabetes Accreditation Programme

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) Accreditation Unit and Diabetes UK set up the Diabetes Care Accreditation Programme (DCAP) to provide assurance that national standards for diabetes care in hospital are being met equally across hospitals in the UK.

The programme officially launched in May 2023, with the aim of improving inpatient care for people living with diabetes – ensuring that all inpatient services are meeting excellent standards of care. The pilot programme showed that DCAP helped teams review their services and identify gaps in care provision, further developing collaborative working and increasing their ability to evidence the care they provide.

There have been 14 participating services across England and Wales, with three having achieved level 1 accreditation so far. To achieve level 1 accreditation, each team must follow certain standards within different areas, or ‘domains’; these include leadership and operational delivery, clinical effectiveness and clinical processes, person-centred care, safety and risk, improvement and workforce. While achieving level 1 accreditation, the St Helens and Whiston Hospital team were congratulated on having an exceptional operational policy for their service, while the Princess Royal University Hospital were congratulated on having an e-prescribable hypo bundle and hypo simulation training.

Now 2 years later, our clinical leads had this to say about the programmes progress and our aims going forward. Dr Daniel Flanagan, DCAP clinical lead said:

‘We are at a very exciting point in the development of the accreditation programme. We are starting to see hospitals completing the work for level 1. After so much work by the departments, it is great to see real improvements in the care of people with diabetes in hospital. I would strongly encourage other hospitals to sign up and start the journey with us.’

Esther Walden, senior clinical adviser, said:

‘It has been both rewarding and deeply motivating to witness – and be part of – the development of the

DCAP programme, from its initial launch to the first trusts achieving level 1 accreditation. This milestone is a true testament to the dedication and passion of our diabetes inpatient teams.

‘Together, we’ve built robust standards, trained a committed pool of assessors, piloted both the standards and the remote assessment process, and created resource materials to support teams in streamlining their evidence submissions.

‘The collaboration and generosity shown by inpatient teams – sharing ideas, paperwork and processes – has been genuinely heartwarming. Highlights of this journey include the resource development workshops, the pilot assessments, and the opportunity to provide positive feedback. Seeing the first services reach level 1 accreditation is a proud and inspiring moment for us all.’

This feature was produced for the August 2025 edition of *Commentary*, the RCP’s membership magazine. You can read a [web-based version](#), which includes images.