

10 TIPS

on starting insulin delegation



There are real benefits to implementing insulin delegation to non-registered healthcare workers. But there are also challenges to overcome.

Guidance on how to set up an insulin delegation programme was published in 2021, created by the [NHS, Diabetes UK and other stakeholders](#). This provides sample policy documents, competency checklists and frameworks to support community teams. It is recommended that organisations who want to start insulin delegation follow the guidance on the key steps and make use of these resources.

For those ready to take the next step, this guide provides some key tips from organisations who have started this journey on the ways they found to overcome common challenges, such as addressing staff concerns, gaining buy in and creating safe working practices. This guidance was developed by [the Community Insulin: Nurse Delegation of Injections \(CINDI\) research project](#), based at the University of Surrey.

1 AGREE ON SHARED GOALS

Local context can shape how you go about implementing a new initiative. Agreeing on what you want to achieve as a team allows everyone to coordinate their efforts and work together on priorities that are of mutual benefit to the service, staff and patients. It is important to decide at the start how you are going to measure success so that outcomes are clear and can be recorded appropriately. Once measured, you can then champion your achievements.



2 ENGAGING ALL THE TEAM

Diabetes UK suggest a range of stakeholders to involve. Gaining buy-in, engagement and approval from trust executives, local governance groups and other stakeholders can be a long process. Taking time and holding discussions early in the planning process helps clarify benefits and address common concerns about patient safety. Early involvement helps to secure senior management approval and buy in from registered and non-registered staff.

3 START SMALL

A cautious approach, such as starting with a pilot in one team, allows teething problems to be ironed out. Building in time and resources for project management and evaluation can help demonstrate success and ease concerns. This provides a solid foundation to build and expand the programme.



4 TAKE TIME TO GET IT RIGHT

Setting up a delegation programme can be time-consuming, but it is vital that time and resources are right to support staff through training, mentoring and supervision. This time helps to build relationships between staff and increases confidence in the delegation process. It may not be possible to train all staff at the same time, this may need to be staggered, and arrangements made for backfill.

5 CHAMPION SUCCESS

Encourage team members who have been through the process to champion the successes. Non-registered workers often enjoy learning and expanding their skills sets and there are lots of benefits for registered nurses, patients and services.

Champions help address long standing concerns and fears that colleagues and senior managers may have.

6 INVOLVE DIABETES SPECIALIST SERVICES

Successful delegation is boosted by the involvement of diabetes specialist services, e.g. checking that patients are on appropriate insulin regimes, planning and running diabetes training and providing ongoing specialist support to community nursing teams.

This helps teams to manage change, maintain standards and ease concerns of clinical safety from all stakeholders.

7 ESTABLISH AND MONITOR COMPETENCIES

Research has shown that involving the multidisciplinary team in agreeing protocols helps instil confidence and demonstrates to managers that processes are in place to protect patient safety. To maintain confidence, it is good to plan on-going and regular monitoring of competencies, plus refresher training for all staff.

It can be a huge benefit to have a project manager or learning and development facilitator to drive the programme forward.



8 REVIEW BANDING FOR NON-REGISTERED WORKERS

Organisations may need to review and clarify responsibilities for different bandings. Organisations that have been able to upskill staff and demonstrate a clear pathway to progression found this helped address concerns about pay.

9 IN IT TOGETHER

Registered nurses often need refresher training to feel confident to delegate and some non-registered staff are anxious about administering insulin. Organisations that train registered and non-registered staff together found that this helps to create a bond between supervisor and supervisee. Getting to know each other and how each other works can instil confidence in delegation and improve communication.

Knowing you are working together as a team builds mutual trust.



10 DEMONSTRATING BENEFITS

Research shows a range of benefits, including: increased service capacity, freeing registered nurse time for more complex patients, a more varied and progressive role for non-registered healthcare workers, stronger team working, and timely care for patients. Consider ways to capture and demonstrate these benefits in your service.



While the process is challenging, many healthcare organisations have long standing insulin delegation programmes that can be learnt from. For more information go to diabetes.org.uk