



Flash Glucose Monitoring for people with diabetes and a learning disability – communications plan

Note
Some activity will be joint activity on the CGM for pregnant women with Type 1 diabetes work.

Background

The NHS Long Term Plan made a commitment to “*ensure that, in line with clinical guidelines, patients with type 1 diabetes benefit from life changing Flash Glucose Monitors from April 2019, ending the variation patients in some parts of the country are facing.*”

The original roll out of Flash only applied to select patients with Type 1 diabetes. The vast majority of people with diabetes and a learning disability have Type 2 diabetes. The NHS is now going to offer all patients with a learning disability and Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, using insulin to manage their condition, a Flash Glucose Monitor (or Flash for short).

Further, in 2019 a third of deaths of people with a learning disability were shown to have been due to treatable causes, compared with 8% in the general population. A recommendation specific to diabetes from the Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) Programme reviews related to appropriate provision of support for people with diabetes, particularly in community settings.

Flash uses a sensor that is placed on the back of the upper arm and worn externally by the user, allowing glucose information to be monitored using a mobile app. This information helps the user and their clinical team to identify what changes are needed to insulin administration to achieve optimal glucose control, and therefore reducing the risk of adverse outcomes.

The pioneering technology should ultimately help people with a learning disability achieve better health outcomes. The benefits for patients include:

- Not having to do finger-prick checks
- Making it easier to check glucose levels, so action can be taken earlier
- Giving patients, their families and carers more confidence in managing the condition

The NHS @home programme – a range of initiatives providing better connected, more personalised care in people’s homes, including care homes - is supporting this initiative as part of its remit to enable people to better self-manage their conditions with remote clinical support as the pandemic has necessitated. Appropriate technology is being made available to monitor conditions and share that information with GP Practices without having to visit. It should also help address health inequalities.

Objectives

- Inform healthcare professionals about the benefits of Flash to patients with a learning disability

- Inform patients with a learning disability, their families, carers and other associated stakeholders – such as voluntary sector partners, advocacy groups, charities etc - about the benefits of Flash, how they can access it and how to use it
- Drive patient and healthcare professional traffic towards online training and learning resources

Aims

- All people with diabetes and a learning disability who use insulin to be offered Flash
- Increase in completions of the new carers module / people accessing Easy read information on Flash training (Abbott website data)

Key messages

For patients using insulin with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes and a learning disability, their families and carers

- If you have diabetes and use insulin it is important to understand your blood sugar levels so that you can stay well.
- A Flash glucose monitor, or Flash for short, comes with a small sensor which you stick to your skin. It doesn't hurt and it means you can check your sugar levels using an app on your phone. If you have a Flash Glucose Monitor you won't need to use a finger prick test.
- All the information the Flash monitor collects can be shared with the people who support you to keep you well.
- The information Flash collects can be used if you have an appointment online or on the telephone instead of face to face. This is important because of the coronavirus outbreak.
- You can ask the diabetes team who care for you about Flash and they can help you use it.
- You can also access Frequently Asked Questions about Flash at: <https://freestylediabetes.co.uk/freestyle-libre/faqs>. Easy read information about how Flash works will be available at the following link from mid-November 2020: <https://freestylediabetes.co.uk/easyread>.

For healthcare professionals

- In 2019 a third of deaths of people with a learning disability were from treatable causes, compared with 8% for the general population. A recommendation specific to diabetes from the LeDeR reviews related to appropriate provision of support for people with diabetes, particularly in community settings.
- Healthcare professionals can now prescribe Flash Glucose Monitors (or Flash for short) on the NHS to people with diabetes and a learning disability who use insulin to treat their diabetes.
- People with a learning disability are particularly susceptible to poorer glycaemic control and hypoglycaemic unawareness. A recent study has shown that Flash glucose monitors significantly improve HBA1c results, hypoglycaemic control, resulting in reduced ambulance call out and hospital admissions.
- The Flash glucose monitor, or Flash for short, comes with a small sensor which sticks to the skin. It measures glucose levels and can be read using a mobile app.

Information collected about a patient's glucose levels can be shared with their diabetes team so that they can review and adjust care appropriately. It also means that the information can be shared easily during virtual appointments, which is particularly important during the COVID19 pandemic.

- In addition, Flash Glucose Monitoring has proven to be successful in reducing the need for face to face contact for consultation and management and both the GP / clinical care provider and patient (and their care team) has access to online results fed by the system remotely. This has helped clinicians to support patients through the COVID pandemic without the need to increase risk of infection.
- Training on Flash is available for healthcare professionals at <https://progress.freestylediabetes.co.uk>, or alternatively through your local Abbott representative. Your local diabetes specialist team will have access to these contact details and will also be able to advise on existing Flash pathway. Easy read information to support training will be available at <https://freestylediabetes.co.uk/easyread> from mid-November 2020. You can also access Frequently Asked Questions about Flash at: <https://freestylediabetes.co.uk/freestyle-libre/faqs>.
- Healthcare professionals will need to make appropriate reasonable adjustments for people with a learning disability who are being prescribed Flash.

Pro-active media

- National news story – joint tech story. Date tbc w/c 9 November

Social media

- Twitter, Facebook and Instagram: patient-facing graphics and posts [some joint graphics and messages and some Flash/CGM specific]
- Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn: healthcare professional-facing graphics and posts [some joint graphics and messages and some Flash/CGM specific]
- Learning disability-specific EasyRead versions for NHSEI and stakeholder use
- Video content – Partha Kar

Stakeholder comms

- Diabetes UK, ABCD, JDRF and other relevant charities (i.e. Learning Disability England, Mencap, etc) will be encouraged to support the roll-out via their channels and networks using the communications pack. We will engage with learning disability charities through the learning disability comms team.
- NHS.uk Type 1 diabetes page – link to Flash and CGM info
- Diabetes clinical networks – send info via email
- Local/regional diabetes teams – send info via email
- Royal colleges – bulletins and news pages
- Community Learning Disability teams in NHS Trusts and local authorities – via David Harling
- Regional Learning Disability Leads/ CCG Learning Disability and Primary Care Leads/TCPs/ Regional MH Commissioning Colleagues – via learning disability comms team
- GPs via Primary Care Bulletin/webinar/Nikki Kanani/Ed Waller
- Local Authorities – including Social Care/DPHs/Association of Directors of Social Services – via learning disability comms team

- Other stakeholder groups will be informed of the availability of CGM and Flash via the NHSE stakeholder team

Internal comms activity

- NHS Diabetes Programme bulletin entry – w/c 2 Nov
- Primary Care bulletin entry – date tbc
- CCG bulletin entry – date tbc
- In Touch (patient bulletin) – date tbc
- Mental Health and Learning Disability bulletin – date tbc (Every Friday, deadline for content on Wednesday)
- Blog on the NHSE/I website

Other comms activity

- A communications pack to support communications professionals and healthcare professionals to communicate about Flash. The communications pack will include:
 - FAQs for healthcare professionals
 - Template patient letter/email from relevant department
 - Patient FAQs (to accompany patient letter)
 - Template healthcare professional letter/email from local implementation team
 - Copy for patient-facing newsletter or bulletin
 - Example text message to patients/carers from relevant department
 - Social media posts
 - Social media graphics
 - Patient information including links to resources developed by Freestyle Libre
- Case studies
- Diabetes Professional Care 2020: 11-14 November – sessions on CGM and Flash