

Insulin dose adjustment by DAFNE educators during DAFNE courses and in follow up of DAFNE graduates – guidance (February 2024)

The Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) definition of prescribing is to have legal authority to issue prescriptions by completing an approved education programme in prescribing, that is, authorises a patient to be given a medicine.

The DAFNE educator programme is not an approved education programme in prescribing. The person has already been prescribed insulin as treatment for diabetes.

DAFNE educators hold a competency in insulin adjustment in line with the DAFNE principles and this is evidenced by passing assessments in their DAFNE educator training and through DAFNE revalidation every 104 weeks.

DAFNE courses and follow up are based on self-management education. Insulin adjustment is a facilitated discussion between the course participant and educator where the participant decides any adjustments to their insulin based on what they have learned.

The educator and peer group support individuals to make decisions about their diabetes management, through application of DAFNE principles.

This type of discussion is different from prescribing, small adjustments to medication do not require re-issue of a prescription.

If nurses and dietitians who do not hold a prescribing qualification are not able to have these discussions, then service users are likely to experience delays and outpatient services would not be able to function efficiently.

All centres should have at least one DAFNE trained doctor. Educators can seek support and guidance from their DAFNE doctor on an appropriate insulin regimen, which would be prescribed by the doctor, on the understanding that the DAFNE trained diabetes specialist team will work with the person to adjust their insulin as appropriate.

Adjustment of medication to accommodate lifestyle factors such as carb intake, exercise and illness has been accepted practice in diabetes services for over 20 years whether they are a DAFNE centre or deliver a locally designed programme and has not required prescribing training. To date over 60,000 people living with type 1 diabetes have completed a DAFNE course under the guidance of trained educators.

In a similar way medication adjustment in the management of long term conditions is accepted practice in other specialties, a gastro specialist nurse or dietitian may support a person to make decisions about adjusting Creon doses for pancreatic exocrine insufficiency according to what they are eating, symptoms etc., people living with asthma are supported to adjust medication to accommodate seasonal changes or illness.

Dose adjustment is a key aspect of the role of diabetes educators, and DAFNE trained educators are supported to develop and maintain these skills to enable people living with diabetes to self-manage effectively, as demonstrated by year on year improvements in HbA1c and reductions in severe hypoglycaemia and diabetic ketoacidosis.