



Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust **Charity**

supporting excellence in treatment, care and research

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### **Manchester Diabetes Centre Transition Zone**

Across the country, and especially in the North West, men, women and children are being diagnosed with diabetes at an unprecedented rate. Too often diabetes is dismissed as being all about lifestyle, a damaging misconception about a widespread and devastating illness. Diabetes is as life-changing as cancer and can be every bit as devastating; its complications can lead to nerve damage, blindness, loss of limbs and even death. With 200,000 people in the North West now diagnosed, this is an epidemic that is at risk of becoming a crisis.

The treatment of diabetes can be complex, which poses particular problems for young people, especially as they transition to adult care. When a child in Greater Manchester is diagnosed with diabetes, they receive not just first-class treatment, but excellent care. Just imagine: It's a bit frightening at first, being poked and prodded by strangers, but the paediatric wards are bright and welcoming, your parents are there with you and you soon get to know everyone. Before long you start to feel at home, surrounded by other kids going through the same thing and in a fun environment designed for you.

Then, you turn 16. You're an adult now, and you have to transition to adult care. Your treatment is transferred to Manchester Royal Infirmary and you begin to attend the Manchester Diabetes Centre, which (in its current state) can best be described as dismal. It's dark and cramped, and the fact that it is in a port-a-cabin does not escape you. The tiny, overcrowded waiting room is a far cry from the welcoming space you are familiar with, this is cold and clinical. You don't know anyone, and the other patients seem so much older than you. You are uncomfortable and self-conscious. You hate it here.

Back home your friends are normal teenagers, and you just want to be normal, too. You know you need to continue your treatment, but you're 16 – you think you're invincible, and anyway, you feel fine. You cancel one appointment. Then another. Before you know it your diabetes is out of control, and so you finally go back to the Centre, but you still hate it. And so the cycle starts again.

This is a common problem in diabetes patients transitioning to adult care - 50% of young peoples' appointments at the clinic are cancelled because they reject their treatment regimes, and it is a known problem that both morbidity and mortality can increase during this transition. At first they may feel fine, but every time they fail to follow their care regime it takes a toll, and by the time they have gained the maturity to fully engage with their treatment it may be too late. The complications resulting from such neglect can be severe and lifelong, from nerve damage to loss of limbs to blindness. They may have damaged their kidneys to the point of needing dialysis. The fact is that their futures will be tragically altered, before they really have a chance to begin.

The Transition Zone in the new Diabetes Centre will change all of that. A space dedicated to helping young people make the transition to adult care, it will protect their futures by ensuring that they continue to engage with their care. The Transition Zone has been designed for young people. It will be a chilled-out space with a pool table and computers for doing homework and for downloading the newest care-related gadgets. Crucially, it will be filled with other young people

facing the same challenges, creating a sense of belonging at a time in their lives when young people just want to fit in.

The Manchester Diabetes Centre has world-class clinicians and undertakes cutting-edge research. We have a top-notch reputation and the talent and expertise to change lives. None of that matters when you're 16.

The Trust has committed £1.5m of the £2.1m needed to ensure that the Manchester Diabetes Centre remains a worldwide centre of excellence – but it can't do everything. The NHS will make the very best treatment in the world available to the young people of Greater Manchester. By helping us to finish the new Centre and create this Transition Zone, your donation will help ensure that they use it.