



Dr Helena Gleeson
AHP National Champion

Since qualifying as a doctor in 1993, from Newcastle University, I have trained in adult medicine in the specialty of diabetes and endocrinology. My research post at the Christie Hospital, Manchester, highlighted the challenges of delivering age appropriate health care for adolescents being diagnosed in childhood with cancer and growing up into adulthood with the late effects of cancer therapy. After this experience I resolved to focus my attention on working to improve health care for young people.

Until recently I worked for the Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust increasing awareness of the needs of adolescents accessing health care in the wider trust and also in paediatric endocrinology. I am now looking forward to taking up a post at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust to continue this work.

A turning point for me in my understanding of the health needs of young people was having specific training in adolescent health care, by attending a MSc module run by Janet McDonagh at University of Birmingham and also through EUTEACH, European Training in Effective Adolescent Care and Health. Following on from this I was clear that to provide age appropriate adolescent health care, that is understanding the psychological, social and educational aspects of adolescence as well as the physical, specific training was essential.

The Adolescent Health e-learning Programme is an excellent flexible way for all health care professionals working with young people to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary. For those with responsibility for training it provides a much needed resource to use as part of undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. I have been inspired by the response, similar to my own, of consultant paediatricians, adult consultants, paediatric trainees, medical students, nursing staff and allied healthcare professionals to material from the Adolescent Health E-learning Programme. I am therefore proud to be National Champion for the Adolescent Health E-learning Programme as I believe that it is an essential tool to enable us to provide quality age appropriate care for adolescents accessing our services and to ensure that those currently training maintain this high standard.