

# DSN Forum newsletter – September 2020

Welcome to August's newsletter. What a month it has been! Everyone has been enjoying some annual leave, it would seem, and had some time off to chill. We have all been doing some bits and pieces over the summer to highlight important news from the ADA and upcoming EASD conferences.

Firstly, we wouldn't be British if we didn't complain about the weather. August has provided us with the full range of meteorological conditions. Friday 7<sup>th</sup> August was the hottest day this year, with temperatures reaching 36.4 °C in parts of London, and we were all struggling to work in the very hot hospital settings. This then led to some spectacular thunderstorms around the country, which appeared to rumble on for days, and now Autumn seems to have arrived early, with wet and windy weather.

The lockdown restrictions are slowing easing, and being able to eat in a restaurant is a nice change – especially if you have been able to use the Government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme. In some areas of the country, however, they are still experiencing local restrictions due to outbreaks of coronavirus. In Stoke-on-Trent, we have an area of the town where numbers have doubled in the last week and we have been warned that a local lockdown could be imminent. So it's important to remember to maintain social distancing, wear a mask/face covering when needed and wash your hands regularly.

## Nursing Times Award finalists

We are super-proud to have been shortlisted for the Nursing Times Award 2020, in the Technology and Data in Nursing category. This is for our work within the @Diabetes101 Twitter team, which was set up to provide support to people living with diabetes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with all of the DSN Forum UK admin team having been involved at some point in the last 5 months.

Ultimately this was a multidisciplinary team initiative, involving GPs, consultants, DSNs, dietitians, pharmacists and psychologists, all specialists in diabetes, to provide a holistic approach. However, from a nurse perspective, there were nine DSNs, from adult and paediatric specialities and from both primary and secondary care settings, who were part of the team. The team was set up by Professor Partha Kar and our own Amanda Epps and Beth Kelly. After recruitment, the Twitter account went live on 16<sup>th</sup> March, just as the Government announced plans for a potential UK lockdown and highlighted people with diabetes as a vulnerable group.

The aim was to provide consistent, reliable and peer-reviewed sources of information and support for people with diabetes during the pandemic, and this was deemed necessary due to the overwhelming, confusing and rapidly changing amount of information coming from multiple sources. Information was emerging on the potential impact that COVID-19 could have on people with diabetes and there were also concerns amongst diabetes healthcare professionals that people would have reduced access, when they needed it most, to their local diabetes teams for support during this uncertain and stressful time. This was largely due to redeployment to help other acute services as well as the restrictions imposed by the pandemic on outpatient face-to-face appointments. The team ran a series of 11 education sessions – “tweetorials” – and three Bank Holiday quizzes which gained peak engagement. A *COVID-19 and Diabetes* fact sheet was also put together and shared widely by the team in response to the NHS England data on diabetes and COVID-19.

The team has since organised and run the online #101downloaded conference for people with diabetes and also hosted an online education session about injection technique in response to Insulin Safety Week.

## Amanda Epps

Adult Diabetes Specialist Nurse, Medway NHS Foundation Trust

## Beth Kelly

Community Diabetes Specialist Nurse, Southampton City – Solent NHS Trust

## Vicki Alabraba

Adult Diabetes Specialist Nurse, Liverpool Diabetes Partnership, Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

## Tamsin Fletcher-Salt

Clinical Diabetes Nurse Specialist, Royal Stoke University Hospital

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There was no cost associated with the use of Twitter for this initiative and all members of the team have volunteered their own time alongside their clinical work during what has been a very difficult and pressurised time in their careers. Fingers crossed for us!!!!

The @\_Diabetes101 account now has over 5000 followers and the team can be followed here:

[https://twitter.com/ diabetes101](https://twitter.com/diabetes101)

### Upcoming events

As schools return and we all start getting back to some sort of normality, this month we will see the beginning of the conference season. Even though most conferences will be virtual this year, they are still worth attending, and better still you don't even have to commute or get dressed to be involved!

Here's a list of recommendations if you are a healthcare professional working in diabetes.

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| ● 17 September: <a href="#">PCDS Northern Ireland Conference</a>   | ● 20 October: <a href="#">PCDS Scottish Conference</a>       |
| ● 21–25 September: <a href="#">EASD Annual Meeting</a>             | ● 5–6 November: <a href="#">PCDS National Conference</a>     |
| ● 6 October: <a href="#">PCDS Welsh Conference</a>                 | ● 11–12 November: <a href="#">Diabetes Professional Care</a> |
| ● 2, 9 October: <a href="#">TREND Diabetes National Conference</a> | ● 21 November: <a href="#">PCDS All-Ireland Conference</a>   |

### Fond farewells

We end this month's newsletter with a fond farewell to two of our super-amazing admin team. Firstly, the caring and just all-round lovely Susan Mason-Cave. Susan has decided to retire from the DSN Forum team due to many other commitments that she has, including her running, her dogs, her job and other bits. We will miss her so much!! Susan will always be a huge part of the team's memories and history, as she was one of the originals. She has been there from the start, making the Forum what it is.

And last but certainly by no means least, another fond farewell to Zoe Sherwood. Zoe has been there through many of our ups and downs and was the host of the Birmingham arm of our first DSN Forum tour across the country. We will miss you both very much and we will most certainly keep in touch! ■