

# DSN Forum newsletter – April 2020

This month it's my turn for the DSN Forum newsletter. It only seems like 5 minutes since I wrote the last one – which was actually back in November! It's been a hard month; we witnessed mass flooding at the start and now we are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a worrying and stressful time for us all. As usual, there has been a lot of focus on negatives and the selfish behaviour that is, sadly, often a human trait. However, empathy and a sense of community is another behavioural trait we have witnessed in abundance. So, as I sit here typing this newsletter, I have decided it will be a positive one despite being written during a difficult time.

## The Forum turns 2

This month, the DSN Forum celebrated its second birthday! Unlike other 2-year-olds, we have been exceptionally busy (and hopefully with fewer tantrums and demands). During the past month alone, our open Facebook page has reached just under 100 000 people, with the closed Facebook group seeing a huge increase in reactions, comments and posts. It is humbling to see how the DSN community support each other to support the population in which they serve. Maybe next year we can hold a DSN Forum virtual party? As you would expect from us at team DSN Forum, we have created a picture collage of our first 2 years.

## @\_diabetes101

You may also have noticed that the DSN Forum Twitter feed has been slightly quieter, although amazingly we still managed to make 129 000 impressions. This is because we are proud to be part of the @\_diabetes101 Twitter account, which consists of 16 multidisciplinary diabetes healthcare professionals, and which has amassed nearly 1 million impressions in its first week. Take a look for evidence-based resources and up-to-date information relating to coronavirus and diabetes.

It is a signposting service which is being manned voluntarily between shifts by the dedicated team, to help ensure the correct information is shared easily and freely, hopefully providing some reassurance to the online diabetes community.

## Supporting the NHS

A touching moment occurred on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March, when the UK collectively clapped for the NHS and its carers. The NHS has its struggles but one thing is for certain: it is loved and its staff are at the heart of the nation.

There have been worries regarding accessibility of supplies, not just personal protective equipment for frontline staff but also supplies of medications, equipment and food – and toilet rolls! Throughout, there has been an overriding message NOT to stockpile, as there will be enough supplies for everyone provided usual shopping behaviours and demands apply. There is further support available for those who are self-isolating and some handy tips [from the NHS website itself](#).



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The pandemic has also highlighted the need for regular refreshers of sick day rules for those living with diabetes and other chronic conditions. A popular source that has been shared numerous times is the how-to guide on sick day rules [published here on DiabetesOnTheNet](#).

## Protecting mental health

There is increasing discussion regarding mental health during this time, with the potential for an increase in PTSD for frontline staff, in addition to an increase in depression and anxiety to which social isolation has contributed. It is important that we recognise the impact mental ill health can have on chronic conditions and, in order to provide effective care and support, we need to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental ill health. The DSN Forum would recommend refreshing yourselves with your Trust's policy on identifying and referring for mental health support.

Once we have recovered from this pandemic, I would also recommend having a look at a [Mental Health First Aid course](#). It is a 2-day course and is the mental health equivalent of first aid at work. It would be an excellent addition to your CPD and a valuable course. I have added the link below, in addition to some other information sources regarding mental health. ■

### Mental health resources

- [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\) England](#) – offers expert guidance and training to support mental health, in the workplace and beyond. Includes the Mental Health First Aid course
- [Mental Health Foundation](#) – *Looking after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak*
- [World Health Organization](#) – *Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak*
- [Public Health England](#) – *COVID-19: guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing*
- [Journal of Diabetes Nursing](#) – *Looking after your mental health during COVID-19: Six tips for healthcare professionals*



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