

Connect



A team of supporters from Cricket St Thomas Golf Club put the fun in fundraising by entering the Red Bull Soapbox Race in aid of Diabetes UK. Read more about our fabulous fundraisers on page 4.



Hello



More and more of us are being affected by diabetes, either because we have it ourselves or because we care for someone else who does.

Here in the south west office, this drives us to work ever harder to help all people with diabetes manage it more

effectively, help prevent those at risk of Type 2 diabetes from developing it and ensure that doctors and healthcare commissioners provide the best possible care.

As a result we have been putting feet first in the second half of 2017. We have staged events that allowed people with diabetes to tell health commissioners how they feel foot care could be improved locally. Meanwhile, our patient education days aimed to equip people with diabetes with the information they need to look after their own feet.

Now that we have a full team once again, we have also been making it our priority to engage with volunteers, local groups and our fabulous fundraisers. We want you to know that we are here to support you and are so grateful for the work you do. We are in total admiration of your energy and dedication.

Annika Palmer
South West Regional Head

Team update



Annika Palmer, Regional Head (second from left): "I lead and support the south west team, and work with healthcare commissioners and providers to make sure diabetes is at the top of the healthcare agenda regionally and locally."

Matt Robert, Improving Care Manager: "I started at Diabetes UK in October after working in health and social care, and my job is to help the NHS improve care for local people with diabetes."

Paula Wilson, Regional Support Officer (second from right): "I ensure the smooth running of our office, assist other team members with projects and provide support to the regional head with conferences and event organising."

Susannah Hickling, Regional Media Officer (far right): "My job is to raise Diabetes UK's profile in media across the south west and raise awareness of a condition that affects nearly 300,000 in our region."

Verity McLelland, Volunteering and Outreach Manager (third from right): "I joined in June after working in a hospice, and my job is to manage our wonderful team of volunteers across the south west."

Gemma Jackson, Volunteer Support Officer (third from left): "I work with our volunteers across the south west, helping them to raise awareness of diabetes in their local communities and support those affected by it."



Louise Trott, Regional Fundraiser: "My job is to support individuals, companies, schools, community groups and volunteers who are raising funds and awareness for diabetes, from sponsored walks to glitzy balls and everything in between."

Volunteering **update**

Successful networking days

We recently held three networking events in Exeter, Bristol and Salisbury for volunteers who are part of local support groups.

Volunteers and staff got together in an informal atmosphere to hear about the incredible work that people are doing in their communities to support people with diabetes. They also discussed challenges, for example, recruiting new

volunteers, and looked at ways to try to resolve them.

Fitness trainers from local gyms – Snap Fitness in Bristol, and Parkwood Health and Fitness in Salisbury – got volunteers moving after lunch. And at the Exeter event, Dr Kim Gooding, a diabetes researcher from Exeter University, talked about her work.



Verity McLelland, our regional volunteering and outreach manager, said: “The networking days were a wonderful opportunity for the team of volunteers running our local groups to get together to discuss and share good practice. We’re already planning our 2018 events and dates will be announced soon.”

Focus on: Taunton group

In November our Taunton local group celebrated its tenth birthday. Since its launch, the group has been a strong and supportive presence for Somerset people with diabetes.

Still run by two founder members Bridget Clark and Sue Ingham (pictured), the group meets five times a year.



They now hope to add some walks and a visit to a café in other months

after their successful Diabetes Week walk with staff from the South West Office. Over the years their speakers have ranged from dietitians and podiatrists to hand-bell ringers and even an astrophysicist. In 2018, they have lined up a fire officer and an alpaca farmer!

But there’s also a focus on fund- and awareness-raising, whether running a stand at local surgeries and in the town centre, or taking part in collections.

RIP Norman Holland

Earlier this year we were saddened by the death of Norman Holland, our long-time Diabetes UK Service Champion for Wiltshire. Norman was also a Know Your Risk, Big Collection and Speaker Volunteer.

He helped establish the groups in Wiltshire and supported the development of a number of policy initiatives such as the self-administration of insulin in hospital and medicines optimisation in the diabetes care pathway.

He was a truly wonderful individual who was actively involved with our charity for a number of years and is greatly missed.

Technical issues

Our Warminster group held a well-attended Diabetes Technology and Health Management Event in September. Lesley Jordan, chief executive of diabetes technology charity Input explained about the recent NHS announcement that Flash Glucose Monitoring will be funded for some people with diabetes, while Beverley Salter, a Wiltshire health trainer, helped people find out about healthy eating and lifestyle.

The Warminster group committee was also on hand to offer information and support.

There are so many different ways you can help support the work we do at Diabetes UK.

Whether it’s putting posters up in your area, giving time to a local group, spreading the word on social media or helping with fundraising, you can really make a difference.

We offer training and the chance to build new skills, as well as meet new people.



Visit our volunteering pages at www.diabetes.org.uk/in_your_area/south_west or call Verity or Gemma on **01823 448260** to discuss how you can get involved.



Putting the fun in fundraising



Having a ball

Pooler fundraiser Iris Board organised her eleventh Pop4Diabetes ball in Bournemouth in October 2017.

A host of television stars turned out to support the James Bond-themed event which brought together families and others affected by diabetes from across the UK.

EastEnders actors Harry Reid – Ben Mitchell in the soap – and Jamie Borthwick, who plays Jay Brown, joined John Middleton, who played vicar

Ashley Thomas in *Emmerdale* until earlier this year, and *Can't Pay We'll Take It Away's* Paul Bohill at the glittering gala evening. But arguably the real stars were the two recipients of the Pop4Diabetes Child of Courage awards, Lillie Dodd, age 13, from Conwy and Toby Thomas, five, from Halifax.

Organiser Iris Board, whose son

Shane, 29, has Type 1 diabetes, has raised about £75,000 for diabetes charities, including Diabetes UK, over the years.

She said: "The main aim of Pop4Diabetes is to raise money to search for a cure for Type 1 diabetes, but the ball proves how much fun we can have along the way."



Stepping out

From 1 July to 30 September, Diabetes UK challenged people to complete our One Million Step Challenge.

In the south west, as elsewhere in the country, intrepid fundraisers signed up to walk at least 10,000 steps a day with the aim of notching up a million paces over three months. Among them was Geoff Davies, who is treasurer of our Forest of Dean group. He raised £650.

Meanwhile, Paul Sweet from

Lostwithiel in Cornwall, took on the challenge for the second year to help him control his Type 2 diabetes. Not only did he finish a month early, but his new-found love of walking has so far kept him from starting on insulin.

Dee Mason from Bristol has also used the One Million Step Challenge as part of

a campaign to bring her blood glucose levels back within the normal range. Dee, an accountant, discovered she had non-diabetic hyperglycaemia (pre-diabetes), putting her at risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. But she has now lost seven stone and dropped seven dress sizes thanks to her exercise regime and a healthy diet.



Soapbox stars

A group of golfing buddies from Cricket St Thomas in Somerset dedicated their summer to raising money for Diabetes UK.

Their first fundraiser was to enter the international Red Bull Soapbox Race in July. Held at Alexandra Palace in London, this wacky race saw amateur drivers hurtle at breakneck speed on a downhill course in non-motorised homemade soapbox vehicles.

Clive Fisk, 74, whose son has Type 1 diabetes, piloted his team's entry, Golf's Trolley Dollies. He was accompanied

by a pit crew comprising fellow golfers Andy Beale and club pro Liam Clarke, and Daniel Pugh from London. The four dressed as air stewardesses with wings and Clive Fisk completed the course in 51 seconds

The crazy golfers' second event was a golf day in September, dubbed the Red Bull Soapbox Competition. In all they raised £4,500.

Meanwhile, Roger Stone, Cricket St Thomas Golf Club seniors' captain, chose Diabetes UK as his charity of the year and made a further £5,250. This brings the total amount raised by Cricket St Thomas golfers in one year to close to £10,000 – an amazing achievement!



Other donations

A big thank you to all our generous supporters who have raised funds over the past few months. They include:

- £1,000 from the North Devon local group who were Barnstaple store Banbury's charity of the year.
- £2,000 from Roger Weeks, a speaker volunteer from Gillingham, Dorset, who raised funds through the Kings Court Masonic Lodge when he was Grand Master.

If you would like to fundraise for Diabetes UK, please contact our regional fundraiser Louise Trott at louise.trott@diabetes.org.uk

Celebrating World Diabetes Day

Diabetes UK chose World Diabetes Day on 14 November to release the findings of our Future of Diabetes survey. This canvassed the views of nearly 9,000 people with diabetes, including in the south west.

It revealed that two thirds of people with diabetes felt down at least sometimes as a result of their condition and wanted more psychological support.

Addressing this will be a priority. Various events across the south west celebrated World Diabetes Day. These included a coffee morning organised by the paediatric team from Poole Hospital, a cycle challenge run by the diabetes research team at Musgrove Park Hospital, which the Taunton local group supported with a stand, and a fundraising healthy lunch organised by Gloucestershire CCG.

The West Cornwall group held an awareness day in Camborne, while Sandra Tweddell, co-ordinator of the Bristol Diabetes Support Network, gave a presentation at a Diabetes Open Evening organised by the North Bristol Trust Diabetes Research Team.

Also in Bristol, the south west regional office organised a Feet4Life foot care education day.

To read the Future of Diabetes report, go to:
[www.diabetes.org.uk/
Future-diabetes-news](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/Future-diabetes-news)



Research **update**



Meanwhile, Dr Hanieh Yaghootkar, who works at Exeter University Medical School, received £362,337. Dr Yaghootkar will study genes which influence the way we store fat in order to understand why some obese people are protected from developing Type 2 diabetes.

Dr Hanieh Yaghootkar said: "I hope that finding genes involved in reducing the risk of Type 2 diabetes will provide useful insights into how to treat or prevent the condition in the future."

The Diabetes UK R D Lawrence Fellowship programme supports early-career diabetes researchers.

Diabetes UK is the leading charitable funder of diabetes research in the UK, investing around £7 million a year. In the summer, we awarded two R D Lawrence Fellowships worth nearly £1 million to two south-west based researchers.

We awarded Dr Emma Vincent at the University of Bristol £587,237 to investigate why people with Type 2 diabetes are more likely to develop some cancers, including pancreatic, liver and endometrial cancers. Dr Vincent hopes this will lead to ways to protect people with Type 2 from developing these cancers in the future.

Dr Emma Vincent, whose own family has been affected by diabetes, said: "Diabetes affects so many - people living with the condition and those who are close to them. We need to find new ways to prevent and treat not only the condition itself but the health complications arising from it."

Interested in raising money for a research project? Find out more about our Adopt a Project scheme on:
[www.diabetes.org.uk/research/
our-research-projects](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/research/our-research-projects) or email
louise.trott@diabetes.org.uk

New clinical champion

A diabetes specialist nurse at Dorset County Hospital, Dorchester has been selected as a Diabetes UK Clinical Champion thanks to her commitment to excellence in diabetes care.

As a Clinical Champion, Agnieszka Graja will join a two-year leadership development programme, supported by Diabetes UK.

Agnieszka Graja said: "I hope that the Clinical Champion role will help me to create opportunities for diabetes nurses across the county to build effective working relationships. Working together could help the focus on prevention, as well as keeping patients well, educated, engaged and successfully self-managing their condition, receiving care close to home when it is required."

Diabetes UK launched the Clinical Champions programme in 2014 in partnership with Novo Nordisk. There are now 65 champions across the UK.



Improving care **update**

Regional Head Annika Palmer gives a round-up of some of the highlights of our recent campaigns in the south west.

There has been much positive change over the last six months in the world of influencing and campaigning.

In particular, Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in Cornwall has become much more engaged with us and we are starting to see some real progress in terms of collaborative partnerships.

We are also actively involved in complex service redesigns in Kernow, Northern, Eastern and Western Devon, Dorset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, Somerset and Swindon so that diabetes services are fit for the future.

To highlight the importance of looking after your feet, we held foot care education days across the region. These were supported by local podiatry services, public health, CCGs and by people living with diabetes who shared their experiences - in some cases, of amputation. We are planning events for 2018 and always appreciate the support of local groups and volunteers in promoting them.

We also held patient engagement sessions in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire on behalf of the CCG. These were a vital opportunity for people to share their experiences of diabetic foot care during the planning stages of service redesigns.

The voice of people with diabetes is essential to ensuring diabetes services meet their needs. If you would like to be involved, please let us know.

Somerton Primary School makes the grade



In July our volunteering and outreach manager Verity McLelland (pictured left) presented King Ina Church of England Academy in Somerton, Somerset with Diabetes UK's Good Diabetes Care in Schools Award. Following a rigorous assessment process, the award was made in recognition of the care and support the primary school offers to one of its pupils who has Type 1 diabetes.

King Ina is one of 18 schools in the south west to have won the award.

To find out more about applying for a Good Diabetes Care in Schools Award, go to: www.diabetes.org.uk/school-award

“My life has been transformed”

Mark Butterfield reveals how a Diabetes UK local group helped him.



In 2015, I was told I had Type 2 diabetes.

I did not take care of my health. I weighed 21 stone and had difficulty in moving around. I drank up to nine pints of beer a day, and knew little about eating healthily. This lifestyle had contributed to the diabetes and I was determined to take myself in hand.

My doctor gave me metformin, I stopped drinking, gave up chocolate and began to eat more healthily.

I came across a leaflet from the Bristol Diabetes Support Network and noticed that meetings of one group were held close to my home. Although nervous, I took the plunge. People were very friendly and it was good to see many living successfully with diabetes, so I began to attend regularly. The topic at one meeting was exercise and I was given a leaflet about a walking group. I joined.

It was hard work but a year later I had lost five stone and was able to walk longer distances. I had a follow-up appointment with my doctor on 1 August 2016 - a memorable date because the news she gave me was absolutely amazing. My blood glucose was back in range and I could come off the tablets. My diabetes was in remission!

Not only that, but I have made many friends and am an active Diabetes UK volunteer. I am a walk leader and am studying to become a health champion in the local area. I also am on the committee of the Bristol South Diabetes Support Group and I use a range of digital tools to monitor my health and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

My life has been transformed!

Diabetes Digital Coach

update



Service Champion Sandra Tweddell, who runs the Bristol Diabetes Support Network, recently starred in a video to promote Diabetes Digital Coach.

This new digital approach to managing diabetes will be launched on 31 January 2018 and people with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are invited to help test it out.

Diabetes Digital Coach is an easy-to-use online service available on computer, smart phone and tablet. It is backed by NHS England and Innovate UK, who are keen to understand if and how digital technology can make a positive difference to the lives of people with diabetes.

Watch the short film featuring Sandra Tweddell on www.vimeo.com/237071012

For more information and to register your interest in trialling Diabetes Digital Coach, visit www.diabetesdigitalcoach.org



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