



DIABETES UK NORTHERN IRELAND

Spring Newsletter Edition 2024

WELCOME



I'm pleased to welcome you to the spring edition of our newsletter.

Over the last few months, we've seen some significant progress locally, most notably the return of the Northern Ireland Executive. We are pleased to welcome the Health Minister back to post and will be continuing our work with him and other elected representatives on the pressing issues that impact people living with diabetes in the region.

Recently we also flagged our support around the implementation of NICE guidelines in NI, which would offer access to hybrid closed-loop systems. We look forward to further updates from the Department of Health on this life-changing technology.

In this edition, you will see some of the latest news updates from our team including the launch of our new Live Well Hub in Lisburn, as well as the exciting transition of Our Lives Our Voices to Together Type 1. We know these services will continue to offer invaluable peer support and advice.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition and welcome you to get in touch with our team if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

R. Small

Roxanne Small
Northern Ireland
Interim National Director



HYBRID CLOSED LOOP TECHNOLOGY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

You may have recently heard us discussing hybrid closed-loop systems and how access to this technology will be rolled out across England over the next five years. We welcome Health Minister Swan's decision to endorse the NICE guidelines and his Department's ongoing work to consider the commissioning and implementation of this in Northern Ireland.

Whilst we recognise that significant investment is needed to support this work, we know that the impact this could have for people living with type 1 diabetes in the region is immeasurable. Long-term, hybrid closed-loop systems offer the potential for improved outcomes, reduced complications, and ultimately, greater peace of mind to support health and wellbeing.

Diabetes is an incredibly tough and relentless condition, but having access to this technology would be an amazing step forward which we fully support.

DIABETES WEEK 10-16 JUNE 2024

Diabetes Week is right around the corner. This is an important time of the year where we shine a light on diabetes to generate as much awareness and increased understanding as possible.

Keep an eye on our social media channels @DiabetesUKNI for local activity happening during the week. Updates will also be available at www.diabetes.org.uk/NorthernIreland.



ENSURING DIABETES IS ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA

After two years of no government, we recently saw the return of the Assembly and the Executive in Northern Ireland, with Robin Swann re-appointed as Health Minister. As he returned to post, we called on local supporters to sign a 'welcome card', and asked them to tell the Minister what good diabetes care looks like and why diabetes should be a priority for the Department of Health.

We were so pleased to see nearly 100 people signing the card, with a variety of messages on the relentless nature of diabetes, access to diabetes tech and what matters most to them in their care.

We're incredibly thankful to everyone who took the time to sign and share the welcome card. We were delighted to present this to the Health Minister in March, joined by our fantastic volunteers Jean, Peter and his granddaughter.

"Diabetes should be a priority because the more support and help we get, the less likelihood that those living with it will get long term health problems."



OUR LIVES OUR VOICES JOINS TOGETHER TYPE 1



In April, we were excited to see the Our Lives Our Voices youth project join the wider Diabetes UK programme, Together Type 1.

Locally our team will continue to support young people aged 11-25 who are living with type 1 diabetes, connecting them with other young people across England, Scotland and Wales.

To learn more about upcoming events, email the team at TogetherType1NI@diabetes.org.uk.

LISBURN LIVE WELL HUB NOW AVAILABLE!

We were delighted to launch our brand new Live Well Hub in Lisburn at the start of April. Taking place at the Laganview Enterprise Centre in Lisburn, the new Live Well Hub will offer members of the local community a one-stop-shop for diabetes-related advice and support.



Members will have the opportunity to connect and share experiences with others and hear directly from local healthcare professionals and members of the Diabetes UK Northern Ireland team. The hub is part of a five-year project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund and is the fourth of its kind in Northern Ireland. Other hub locations include Bangor, Ballymena and Belfast.

Why not stop by one of our upcoming hubs?

Learn more about the Live Well Hub dates and locations by scanning the QR code with your phone's camera or visiting our website [here](#).

DIABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.
NORTHERN IRELAND

LIVE WELL HUBS
SUPPORTING YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING



ONLINE PEER SUPPORT FOR ADULTS LIVING WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES



On the 28th of May we're holding our next online peer support group session via Zoom. Here you can have an informal chat with members of our team and connect with other people living with diabetes in Northern Ireland.

Find out more information by contacting our team at n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk

BALMORAL SHOW 2024 15-18 MAY

Our team is looking forward to the return of the Balmoral Show very soon. If you're planning to attend the show, make sure to stop by our stand #65 in the Eikon Shopping Village.

We look forward to seeing you there!

GET INVOLVED!

If you would like to get involved in volunteering with Diabetes UK, please email nivolunteering@diabetes.org.uk



AMY - A DAY IN THE LIFE AS A DIABETES EDUCATOR

Amy McIlhatton is a Diabetes Educator within the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. In her day-to-day role, she is a facilitator for the DESMOND (Diabetes and Self-Management for Ongoing and Newly Diagnosed) course and is currently undergoing post-graduate study to then be able to educate healthcare staff who care for those with diabetes in the community.

“A good portion of my role involves the delivery of the DESMOND course which aims to support individuals with type 2 diabetes, both newly diagnosed and longer-term cases.

“This course takes place over one day in a group setting (9:30am-4pm) and over the six hours attendees get the opportunity to learn from other participants’ experiences and through the content we provide. The sessions tend to be quite interactive but in a relaxed and informal setting. The courses tend to take place in different venues within our Trust area.

“DESMOND topics cover introductions, hearing participants’ stories, the glucose story, monitoring, carbohydrates, reflection, possible long-term effects and how to reduce the risks. We also cover physical activity, a section on the food group FATS, producing self-management plans and then finally looking ahead to future care and any questions the participants may have. A diagnosis can feel overwhelming, but with knowledge and empowerment, you may feel more confident and positive in managing your condition. We always say, small steps make a big change.”

To learn more more about the DESMOND course and to learn more about Amy’s role as a Diabetes Educator, scan the QR code with your phone’s camera or visit our website [here](#).



A graphic for a podcast. At the top left, it says 'DiABETES UK' in white on a dark blue background, with the tagline 'KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.' and 'NORTHERN IRELAND' below it. The main title 'LET'S TALK' is in white on a light blue banner, with a microphone icon to its right. Below that, 'DIABETES' is written in large, bold, blue letters on an orange banner, with a speech bubble icon to its left. At the bottom, it says 'In Northern Ireland' in white.

CATCH UP ON THE LATEST EPISODES



Recently on our podcast we heard from members of the Diabetes UK Northern Ireland team, chatting all about local volunteering opportunities!

We're excited to soon launch our women's health series, focusing on advice and support for women balancing their health while managing diabetes.



Learn more about the podcast and where to listen by scanning the QR code or visiting our website [here](#).



A LANDMARK CHALLENGE IN SUPPORT OF MY SON

Richard Whiteside, a GP based in Comber, Northern Ireland, recently set his sights on the London Landmarks Half Marathon in support of his son who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes in 2021. To date, Richard has raised an incredible £4,900.

Chatting about why he took on the challenge, Richard said, “My son ventured across the water to Exeter for his studies, and after his first term, I was picking him up from the Airport. He had been home just six weeks prior and was fit and well, but as soon as I saw him I knew something was wrong and recognised he was displaying symptoms linked to diabetic ketoacidosis – most noticeably - remarkable weight loss.

“After the initial devastation at the realisation of the new diagnosis, Adam has been truly amazing in how he has handled it all. He never once let it overcome him. His positive attitude and perhaps more than anything, his resilience, have truly humbled both his mother and me. His outlook has been an absolute inspiration to us and his younger siblings, helping us all adjust so well to supporting him with his diabetes.”

**Read more about
Richard’s story here
by scanning the QR
code with your
phone’s camera or
visiting our website
[here.](#)**



CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYERS FEDERATION

Selects Diabetes UK Northern Ireland as Annual President’s Dinner Charity Partner



A special thank you to the Construction Employers Federation for selecting Diabetes UK Northern Ireland as charity partner for the Annual President’s Dinner in March. It was a fantastic success and raised £3,500 which will help fund local research projects in Northern Ireland.

If you would like to take on a fundraising challenge or are from an organisation that would like to support Diabetes UK, our team would love to hear from you!

[Email fundraising@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@diabetes.org.uk)

KEEP IN TOUCH



n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk



diabetes.org.uk/NorthernIreland



Follow us @diabetesukni

NI Office: 028 9066 6646

Diabetes UK Helpline: 0345 123 2399 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)