

CONNECT MAGAZINE

Issue 2020



WELCOME TO CONNECT MAGAZINE

Like many of you, our team began working from home when the Coronavirus Pandemic took its grip. This hasn't meant we've been any less busy. We adapted our services and are offering support and advice in different ways, all with the aim of ensuring that people living with diabetes can live well.



And this has never been more important. Coronavirus has lifted the

lid on the inequalities at the heart of our society. So, while you're no more likely to catch the virus if you have diabetes, you are more vulnerable to developing severe illness from Covid-19. Hence it is even more vital those with diabetes are living as well as possible.

To help to make that a reality we've been running a host of new online events; updated our website with tips on

Living Well; and added new content to our Learning Zone. We're now working on our priorities for 2021, and welcome your input on the issues you feel are most pressing (see page 7 on how you become involved).

We have missed seeing you all at our regular events but loved having some of you attend our online sessions, especially our virtual Inspire Awards. These recognise the invaluable contribution of the volunteers and groups that go above and beyond for people living with diabetes (you can read all about our

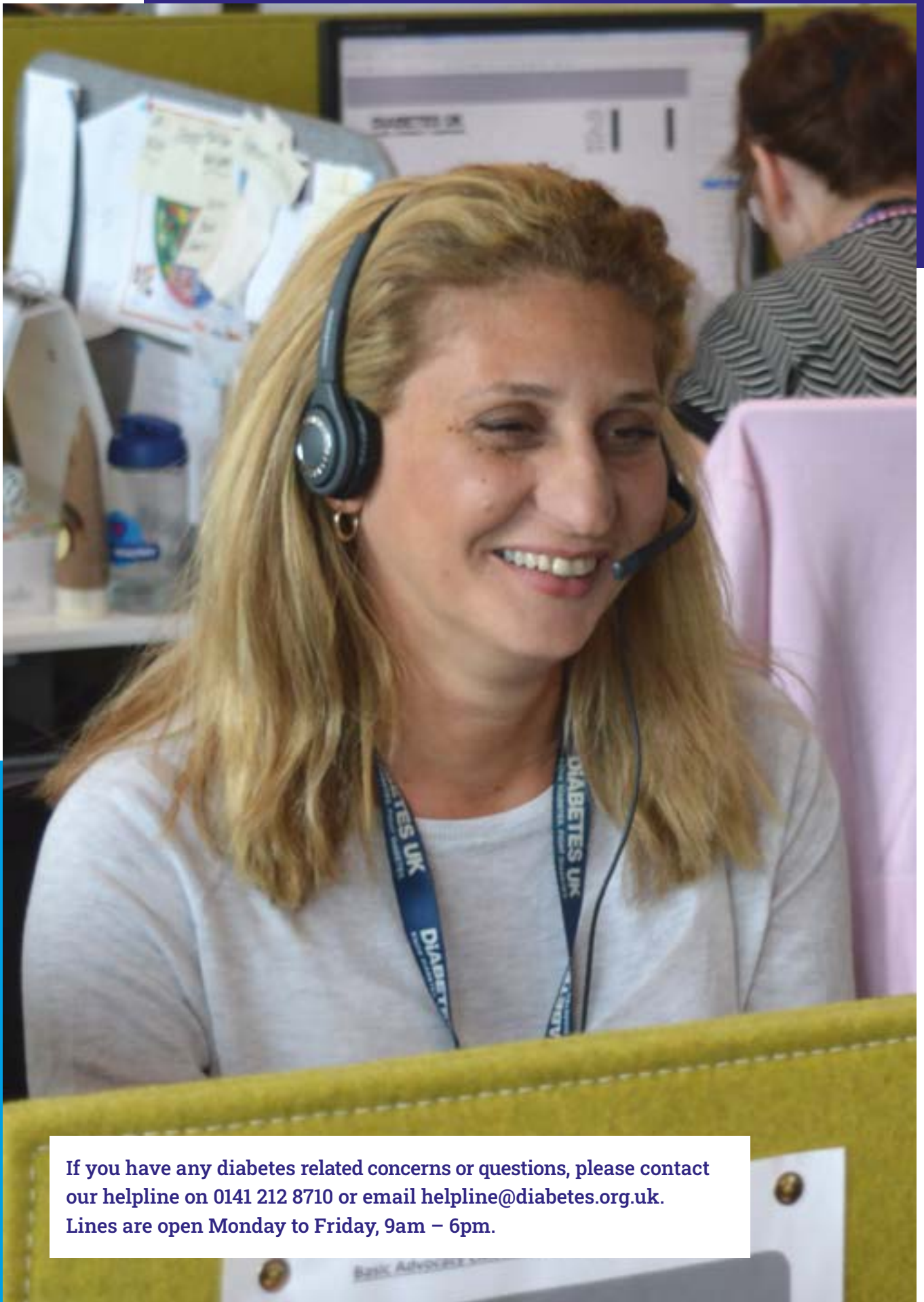
winners on pages 11-15). While it remains difficult to see each other in person, we wish you well during the coming months and hope to see you again soon in 2021

Meantime, stay safe and well and we wish you and your families a very happy and healthy new year.

Angela Mitchell, National Director, Diabetes Scotland

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If you have any diabetes related concerns or questions, please contact our helpline on 0141 212 8710 or email helpline@diabetes.org.uk. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am – 6pm.

DIABETES SCOTLAND: UPDATE

This year has not turned out as any of us expected. At the beginning of 2020 we were putting the finishing touches to our new workplans to coincide with Diabetes UK's new 2020-2025 Strategy. Just as we were crossing the t's and dotting the i's, we were all asked to work from home for what we thought would be a few weeks of lockdown...but we're all still here!

Support and advice news

Like everyone else, Diabetes Scotland has adjusted our work and activity to overcome the limitations of lockdown and ongoing restrictions. To meet the needs of the diabetes community, we seconded team members to support the Helpline, which in the early days of the pandemic had double the amount of calls as normal.

We have been working closely with Scottish Government to ensure the guidance produced meets the needs of people living with diabetes and we swiftly developed a series of online events and group sessions and promoted ways to live well with diabetes.

Online Group and Volunteer Chats

As local groups were no longer able to meet in person, we kicked off our weekly online chats on Zoom. This has been a great opportunity to catch up and talk about any issues that people were worried about.

We are still hosting a weekly volunteer meeting every Tuesday evening at 7pm on Zoom. If you are interested in joining us, please email Allan. Kirkwood@diabetes.org.uk

Online Events

As part of a new model of delivery, we've also been hosting online events with healthcare professionals, experts and researchers, joining us and the diabetes community to talk about a variety of topics and give people the opportunity to ask any questions.

We started them while people couldn't access their regular diabetes

appointments – but they have proven so successful we've kept them going.

72%

Across 9 events an average of 72% of attendees said they felt less anxious about managing their own or their family member's diabetes as a result of attending our online events.

So far, we have covered general clinic, footcare, oral health, emotional wellbeing and eye health. We've had tutorials for My Diabetes My Way and Diabetes UK's Learning Zone and hosted talks with Diabetes UK-funded researchers.

To find out about the online events, visit www.diabetes.org.uk/scotland and email scotland@diabetes.org.uk if there are any topics you'd like us to include for 2021.





Mindfulness and Yoga

Taking time to relax was especially important this year. We were pleased to work with Donna Booth of Vitality Retreat in Caithness to offer bi-weekly guided

meditation and seated yoga sessions over the summer.

Donna said: “Stress can affect your blood sugar levels. Mindfulness and yoga are one way to help lower stress levels. Mindfulness allows us to be in the present moment rather than worrying about the past or future which can make it easier to accept change and to make the adjustments necessary to feel well.”

To find out more about how diabetes can affect your emotional wellbeing visit our website www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/emotions

“ I just wanted to say I have loved every minute of seated yoga with Donna Booth from Vitality.

“ I have diabetic neuropathy in both feet and struggle to perform full yoga without being fearful of falling over or experiencing painful feet after a session but with seated yoga I was not afraid to get involved and felt secure and happy throughout.

“ The mindfulness sessions too were very relaxing and I felt every benefit of this.”

Campaigns news

Since the Spring, our policy team has been focused on ensuring that people with diabetes receive the support they need to live well during lockdown and beyond.

While no more likely to be infected, people with diabetes are clinically vulnerable to the effects of Covid-19. Diabetes was not deemed a reason to shield, however the diabetes community voiced serious concerns about safety at work. Where employers were not – or could not – offer working from home, we heard real concerns that people felt they had to decide between their health and their livelihood.

The government advice is that people should work from home if possible. If you're not able to work from home and still need to go to your workplace, your employer needs to take the

right steps to make the workplace safe. We've got more information about your rights on our diabetes and work webpage. www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/life-with-diabetes/employment

We are also raising these issues with both UK and Scottish Governments and continuing to campaign for additional protections for people with diabetes in the workplace. To make our voices heard we've joined forces with over 10 charities, including Age UK, Macmillan and Parkinson's UK.

For more information and to keep up to date on any changes to government advice impacting on people living with diabetes, visit our Covid-19 webpages here. www.diabetes.org.uk/in_your_area/scotland/covid-19

WE'RE STILL HERE FOR YOU!

While parts of society shut down due to the global pandemic, we are very much still here for you. Our local volunteer led groups are working hard to continue to provide support to the newly diagnosed and people living with this long-term condition and their families.

For a full list of our local groups visit www.diabetes.org.uk/in_your_area/scotland/local_groups/listing-of-local-groups.

Many of them also have a Facebook Page, so do search for them on there. If you can't find them, please email the Scotland Team at scotland@diabetes.org.uk

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers who continue to provide support to others.



Spotlight

If you live in Fraserburgh, make sure you spread the word of Broch T1 Group. They are currently meeting online and have active Facebook and WhatsApp groups so that members can reach out at any time if they need support.

Group Secretary, Lianne Innes, said:
“We set up the group because nobody

knows what life with diabetes is like unless you have the condition. It doesn't matter how supportive or understanding family and friends are unless they have diabetes, they don't quite get it. In our group, we all know what it's like! With our group there is always someone around to offer support and no judgement. We are one big diabetes family.”

DIABETES SCOTLAND: NEWS

Next May, we head to the polls for the Scottish Parliamentary elections. This is an opportunity for us to get issues that are important to the diabetes community high on the agenda.

Scottish Elections

COVID 19 has both exposed and exacerbated health inequalities in Scotland. None more so than the inequalities attached to diabetes. It shouldn't be the case that your age, gender, ethnicity, postcode or income dictate your health outcomes. Unfortunately, when it comes to diabetes, it still can.

We know that access to tech and care that could mean the ability to effectively manage your diabetes is often unequal. We also know that those at highest need are often the least likely to access and receive care.

312,000

**People in Scotland
living with diabetes**

We believe that for the more than 312,000 people in Scotland living with diabetes, and the hard-pressed front-



line healthcare teams that strive to get the best outcomes for them, we need to see real changes to how care is delivered.

As part of Diabetes Scotland's election ask, we will be focusing on **reducing inequalities and variations in care**. We want everyone to access the right care and support they need to live healthy, happy lives, from access to technology to improved access and provision of emotional, psychological, and mental health support. As part of this, we will continue our campaigning for the introduction of a national

standard which will ensure that support for emotional wellbeing is an integral part of diabetes care.

The election is a key opportunity for us to raise the profile of diabetes and secure commitment from politicians to reduce variations in care.

We are always keen to hear from people who are interested in getting involved in our campaign work.

If you would like to be kept up to date on our campaigns and opportunities to take action, visit here <https://campaigns.diabetes.org.uk/page/70347/petition/1>

DIABETES SCOTLAND: NEWS

Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund

We were delighted to be awarded £89,000 from the Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund in the Spring.

The grant was awarded to support people living with diabetes during the Coronavirus pandemic. It is greatly appreciated given many of our usual fundraising initiatives had to be cancelled or postponed.

We used the award to support the delivery of our online events and support sessions. To read more about these, see page 4.

£89,000
Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund in the Spring.

New Youth Programme

We were also successful in our bid to The National Lottery Community Fund Scotland. This, plus funding

from Scottish Government, allows us to build on the success of the Young Leaders project and deliver a new project for teenagers and young adults aged 13-25 who are living with type 1 diabetes.

After a few Covid-related delays, we are pleased to welcome Youth Co-ordinator, Iain French, to our team, to run the project which will be gearing up in December 2021. If you're interested in finding out more about the project and how to get involved, email scotland@diabetes.org.uk or message us on Facebook.

 @DiabetesScot

Non-Communicable Diseases Coalition

We have joined forces with nine other key organisations including British Heart Foundation Scotland, Scottish Obesity Alliance, Cancer Research UK, Alcohol Focus and Stroke Association to call for all political parties to commit to taking actions that could save thousands of lives from preventable diseases.

Evidence shows the environment around us heavily influences whether we smoke, the amount of alcohol we drink and what we eat.

The visibility of products on our high streets and the way they are marketed all contribute to Scotland having one of the lowest healthy life expectancies in Western Europe.

This is particularly true in our most deprived communities, with a range of societal and structural factors meaning that preventable disease is often higher. We believe that the key actions the coalition is calling for are an important step toward reducing unfair health inequalities in Scotland.

Find out more about the coalition here.

www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/news-from-the-bhf/news-archive/2020/september/global-week-non-communicable-diseases-bhf



DIABETES SCOTLAND: NEWS

We've formed a coalition – called Movement for Health – with fifteen of Scotland's leading health charities with the aim of increasing physical activity levels of people living with long term conditions.

The new coalition focuses on the role of physical activity in preventing many common diseases and improving the health and wellbeing of people living with health conditions.

There is significant evidence showing that physical activity can help us all to lead happier, healthier lives. Being regularly active has

been shown to help reduce the risk and manage over 20 chronic conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity, mental health problems and arthritis.

As we head into a difficult autumn and winter, being active is more important than ever to boost our resilience.

For useful resources specifically aimed at increasing physical activity for people living with diabetes, see the Diabetes UK website here www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/exercise and the Movement for Health website here www.movementforhealth.scot/



Movement in West Lothian

Helping people with diabetes live well through movement during the Coronavirus Pandemic secured one local diabetes group a nomination for a Diabetes Scotland Inspire Award.

The West Lothian Diabetes Group replaced monthly meetings with weekly Zoom chats and offered specialist online sessions with exercise, including seated Tai Chi and relaxation, nutrition and other

activities. Members can also speak directly to trainers for personal advice on diet and nutrition.

Angela Mitchell, National Director of Diabetes Scotland said: “The long-standing efforts and dedication of the West Lothian Diabetes Scotland Group and its voluntary members is tremendous.

“Peer support and exercise and nutrition advice is proven to be a massive support for people with diabetes and we are hugely grateful to the group for providing this to people living with diabetes across West Lothian. The move to offering this support online to people during the current pandemic is to be applauded.”

GUEST VOICE: DR BRIAN KENNON

Living with diabetes: our new normal in healthcare. Written by Dr Brian Kennon MD, FRCP, Consultant in Diabetes & Endocrinology, National Lead for Diabetes.



COVID 19 has resulted in unprecedented disruption to healthcare services and life in general.

All areas of our society have been affected and yet as individuals and communities we have adapted to meet those challenges. The Scottish diabetes community is no different and although many services underwent significant changes at the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, all are now developing services that are safe and supportive for individuals with diabetes their families and carers. Social distancing and limiting face to face contact means that a significant amount of diabetes care will now be provided virtually.

In our personal lives Facetime and Zoom have become the 'new norm' and healthcare also needs to adapt. As such diabetes care will have more reliance

on telephone and video consultations. There are obvious benefits to this approach in that virtual care ensures social distancing and limits direct contact. It also avoids hours of looking for a car park space or sitting in diabetes clinic waiting areas!

Many services are also trying to ensure that the 'processes of care' such as blood tests, weight, blood pressure and foot screening are performed before a 'virtual' consultation. This information can be accessed via online patient portals such as My Diabetes My Way allowing individuals the opportunity to review things in advance of their consultation with their diabetes team. This is something we would encourage as there is evidence that sharing this information in advance of clinics improves the quality of the discussion and as a result the care planning.

We need to be mindful of the unintended consequences of virtual care and ensure that individuals and groups, who are often the most vulnerable aren't left behind and inequalities widen. Involving people with diabetes, understanding and mitigating against the risk of digital exclusion and offering services that adapt to individual need is key to improving the care and outcomes for all.

2021-2026

Early next year the Scottish Government will publish the refresh of the Diabetes Improvement Plan. This document details the significant progress that has been made against the priority areas in the 2014 Diabetes Improvement Plan and sets out new commitments for 2021 – 2026.

INSPIRE AWARDS: 2020

During the summer, volunteers from across Scotland were honoured with Inspire Awards in recognition of their dedicated support to diabetes community.

Sadly, we could not host our usual celebration event this year, but we tried the best we could to capture the magic in online ceremonies held over four evenings. We were delighted that over 100 people

joined us for at least one of the events, with several people joining us every night.

There were 59 nominees across eight different categories, with judging taking

place by an independent panel. Every person was nominated in recognition of the valuable support they give to people living with diabetes across Scotland.

“I am extremely honoured that my work in the charity both locally and nationally has been recognised with the John Ireland award.”

“I’m incredibly proud of our group and how it has grown in the two years that Julie and I have been running it. It’s lovely to be recognized for the work we have put into making the group what it is today.”

“I feel very privileged to be in a position to offer support to families and I am extremely grateful to have been nominated for an award let alone to win one.”

“Congratulations to all of the Inspire Award nominees and winners. Our volunteers are out there working hard in the community day in and day out and we could not work towards a world where diabetes can do no harm without your incredible support. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of our volunteers who make an enormous positive difference to the lives of people living with diabetes.”

Angela Mitchell, National Director of Diabetes Scotland

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Young person's outstanding contribution award



Emma, 12, is an active volunteer in her local family group, attending and supporting all of their events.

She has demonstrated real confidence and maturity in dealing with her diabetes and is dedicated to helping other people to understand the condition including by delivering a presentation at her school during Diabetes Week.

She is also very keen to support others who have been diagnosed and help in any way she can.



Harris, 11, has been very involved in his local group since it launched.

He wants to make sure that other children feel less lonely on their diabetes journey so he welcomes them to the group and really makes them feel included.

He has also been involved in many fundraising activities, including a bucket collection, sponsored cycle and getting his school involved in fundraising.

In addition, he has taken part in research projects including a recent photovoice project about letting the world see through your eyes.

Supporting Diabetes UK

Joint winners, Joy Iheobi and Becca Prinn



Joy is secretary of the Aberdeen and District Local Diabetes Group and is a committed fundraiser and motivational speaker.

Last year Joy gave a talk at the Diabetes UK colleague conference and spoke with passion about her and her family's journey with diabetes and her personal volunteering journey. It is fair to say she engaged with every member in the audience who found her very motivating.

She is always happy to support in any role asked of her and often speaks out about her experience to support the charity's work.



Becca has been a very active volunteer for Diabetes Scotland for several years.

She has been involved in many roles including Tesco big collections, office volunteering, admin at volunteer conferences and helping (often at short notice) with children's programmes.

Additionally, for the past five years Becca has created the inspirational video which is shown at the Inspire Awards. This involves a great deal of work and coordination of inputs from local groups and individual volunteers.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Fundraising



Colin Rodger and Martin Higgins (Pearl Jam Scotland) are huge fans of the US Grunge Band Pearl Jam and have used this passion and their own musical talents to raise awareness and raise over £11,500 so far for Diabetes UK.

They have done this through a combination of organising music events for grunge music lovers, raffles and the sale of Pearl Jam Scotland merchandising (their own idea and a huge success).

They have used their love of music and their fellow music lovers and networks to create something amazing which continues to grow!

Local groups and communities



Ayrshire Families with Diabetes only launched in 2018 but it has already had a great impact on the local community.

The group is committed to fundraising which enables them to run free, fun activities every six weeks for the whole family.

Additionally, the group works with the local healthcare team to distribute information packs to families of children who are newly diagnosed with type 1 diabetes.

The Facebook page has over 140 members and is a platform to provide support and information at any time of the day.

Ayrshire Families with Diabetes have created a space where no family affected by type 1 diabetes ever needs to feel alone.

Reaching out and connecting



Vicki Kitson is Chair of the Glasgow Family Group and gives up a lot of her time to organise and attend the group's drop-in sessions, activities and events including cycling trips, pantomimes and basketball tournaments. Vicki is also a passionate advocate for improving care and services and she is currently involved in campaigning for a specialist diabetes clinic in Glasgow which would support children and young people up to the age of 25.

Supporting others



Gemma Shilton has undoubtedly been the driving force behind the success of Type 1 Warriors events in Fife in the last year. Her quiet focus and determination have kept the group on track and have led to two successful events for families taking place in Fife since the new committee came on board.

Campaigning and influencing



Aileen Hilis has been campaigning for improved services and access to diabetes technology for over 15 years. A key advocate in the campaign for access to insulin pumps, Aileen attended meetings with politicians and charities and used her Facebook pages to help others strengthen their own advocacy skills and get involved. As a result, many people on pumps, continuous glucose monitoring or Libre have Aileen to thank.

AWARD WINNER: DAVE DUFF



Congratulations to Dave Duff, from Elgin, who was presented with The John Ireland Award for 'serving the diabetes community with distinction' and over 12 years volunteering to support people living with diabetes.

As well as being the chair of the Diabetes Scotland Moray Group for several years and helping the group to raise over £50,000, Dave has been involved in several other roles. He served for two terms on Diabetes UK's Council of People with Diabetes, as well as on Diabetes Scotland's Advisory Council and he is currently a member of the charity's research grants panel. Dave is also a regular participant at the Cross Party Group on Diabetes at Scottish Parliament.

In his time as chair of the Diabetes Scotland Moray Group, Dave was instrumental in building up relationships with local healthcare professionals and administrators to supply many thousands of

information packs to be available to people in the area when they were diagnosed with diabetes.

Dave said: "I am extremely honoured to win The John Ireland Award in recognition of my work in the charity both locally and nationally. However, I have not been a one-man band; I'm part of a great team of people who are all working towards a world where diabetes can do no harm."

Dave and his wife, Anne, also volunteered at many Diabetes UK family weekends and supported local families to attend.

These residential events are for children who have been diagnosed with type 1 diabetes and their families to learn more about living with the condition and meet other families to share experiences.

"We were delighted to present Dave with the John Ireland Award in recognition of his many years serving the diabetes community with distinction. His contribution over the years has been invaluable and we would like to express a heartfelt thanks for all he has done and continues to do to support people living with diabetes."

Angela Mitchell, National Director of Diabetes Scotland

FOOD IS ONE OF LIFE'S PLEASURES

But if you have diabetes, it can be tricky at times.



Whether you're newly diagnosed, looking for exciting new recipes or just in need of practical advice, **Enjoy Food** is here to help.

www.diabetes.org.uk/bal-enjoy-food

FUNDRAISING: FAMILY STEP UP THEIR FITNESS

A Renfrewshire mum and daughter took big strides towards improved personal fitness over the summer by taking on Diabetes UK's One Million Step Challenge.



Dianne Mathieson from Elderslie began the challenge in July and inspired her daughter, Kay, to join her.

Dianne said: "I am living with type 2 diabetes and I have many family and friends who are living with both type 1 and type 2 diabetes. I have seen and experienced the impact of living with the condition, so I wanted to do something to help raise awareness and money, particularly to support research towards

new treatments and medical advances.

"I am also delighted that by taking on this walking challenge, I have benefitted from a personal health improvement with my diabetes becoming more controlled so that I no longer have to take as many medications."

Wanting to support her mum with the challenge for Diabetes UK, Kay also saw the opportunity to boost her own fitness levels which she feels have suffered since becoming a mum herself.

Kay said: "Like many parents, I've dedicated all of my time in my daughter's early years to her. I recently realised I hadn't included much time for myself, particularly to looking after my health. When I had to

go for blood tests recently, I was fully expecting there to be a positive result for type 2 diabetes. I am very thankful that the test came back negative. However, it gave me the impetus I absolutely needed to realise that my body deserved more respect than I was giving it. The healthier I am, the happier I'll be, and the more I can offer to my little girl and all other aspects of my life."

Dianne added: "We'd like to thank everyone who supported with encouragement and donations. We really appreciate all the support we've received in donations, particularly as this is such a difficult time for so many people."

Dianne and Kay have raised over £1,000!

Thank you to everyone who has taken part. Just over 22,000 participants have raised £1,956,581M (with gift aid)

To find out more about all our fundraising activities visit www.diabetes.org.uk/get_involved/raising_funds



FAREWELL: LONG-TIME SUPPORTER JANET RAE

We were saddened to hear our long-time supporter, Janet Rae, passed away at the end of 2019.

Janet had lived with type 1 diabetes for almost 90 years! Diagnosed when she was a year and nine months, Janet was first put on insulin at the age of two. At the time type 1 diabetes was a relatively unheard of condition and so naturally, Janet's diagnosis was a difficult adjustment for her and the family. There was also the added complication of it being pre-NHS so having to pay for Janet's lifesaving insulin.

Surviving those early traumatic months of diabetes treatment indicated an early strength that carried her throughout her lifetime.

Speaking to Connect magazine previously,

Janet said: "My mother was hanging out the washing one day and on looking in the pram discovered I was limp. She was aware that our GP called at the local newsagents regularly, and my mother went there immediately. I was prescribed a sugarless diet and admitted to Yorkhill Hospital where I

remained for three months until stabilised."

Janet defied the odds to live as normal a life as possible whilst dealing with her condition. She was a lifelong support to other families when their children were diagnosed with diabetes and also to Diabetes UK.



Allan Kirkwood, Volunteer Development Manager, at

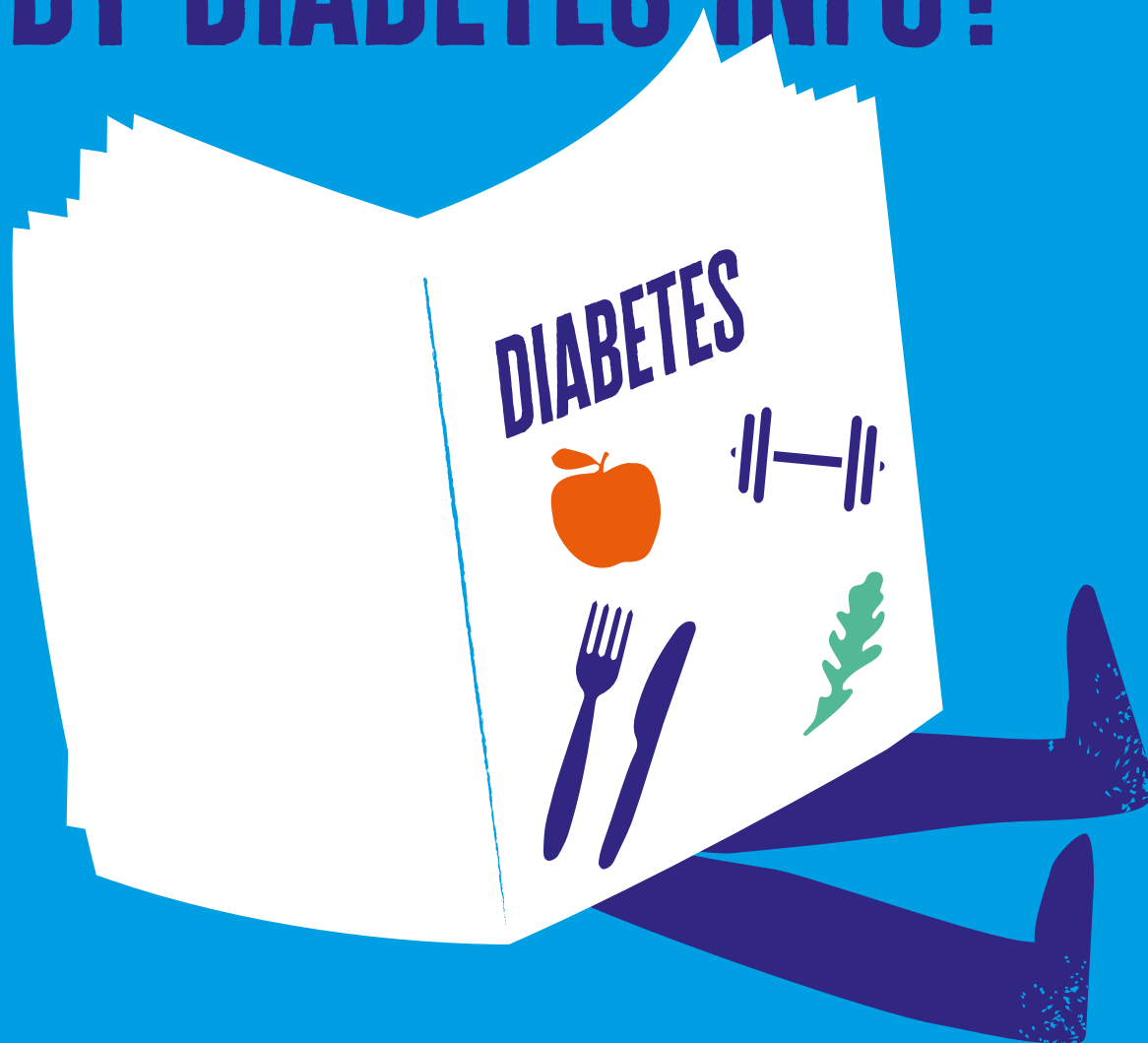
Diabetes Scotland, said "Janet was truly inspirational, I met her when I started at Diabetes Scotland in 2007 when we were setting up a local family group in Ayrshire. She chatted with

families present and you could see parents become less tense and fearful when she spoke of her experiences. Throughout the next 12 years Janet never failed to respond when asked to support an event, travelling the length and breadth of Scotland to do so. She popped into the office whenever she was in Glasgow to make a donation to our cause. A living example of how she never let diabetes hold her back and used her experiences positively to help others."

Janet died in Biggart Hospital in Prestwick in December 2019.



OVERWHELMED BY DIABETES INFO?



Join the 80,000 people already using Learning Zone to manage their diabetes with confidence.

It's free to sign up and you'll get practical tips on what to eat, how to stay safe through coronavirus and coping with stress.

Explore for yourself at
www.diabetes.org.uk/learning

DIABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.