



# DIABETES UK NORTHERN IRELAND

Newsletter - 2023 highlights



# WELCOME



It is my privilege to introduce the 2024 Diabetes UK Northern Ireland Newsletter for the first time as Interim National Director.

As we draw our work in 2023 to a close, I can't help but feel immensely proud of everything the team has achieved in the last 12 months. Recently, we spent some time reflecting on our highlights from the last year and it became apparent very quickly that we exceeded all expectations for 2023 and are moving into 2024 in a highly motivated and ambitious position with an exceptionally strong and experienced team.

Some of our highlights from 2023 included the launch of our monthly healthcare professional's mailout, the launch of our local podcast

'Let's talk Diabetes', and our whole team approach to events that are supported by a political, communications, volunteering, healthcare professionals, and staff perspective. We also welcomed the return of our family events including 'Let's Go Hydro' in the summer and 'The Ark – Open Farm' at Christmas time, and our significant reach of engagement in 2023. This included the attendance of our team at over 170 events, with an approximate engagement with over 66,000 beneficiaries.

A significant area of work for 2024 is our commitment to tackling inequalities for people living with, and at risk of diabetes. Whilst the concept of health inequalities is not new, the stark reality of disparity in inequality for some communities living with, and at risk of diabetes, has been collated and led to the development of the 'Diabetes UK Tackling Inequalities Commission Report: 2023'. The report provides seven calls to action that we have pledged to align across all our work for 2024 and beyond.

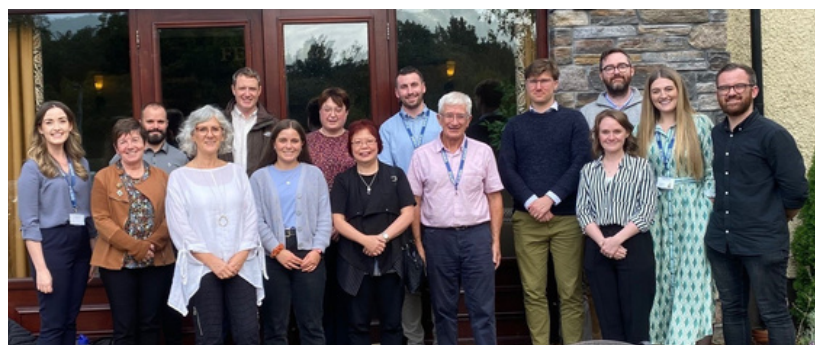
I hope you enjoy this newsletter and get a flavour of the work that has been happening, as well as some of our plans for 2024 – we're looking forward with determination and enthusiasm.

Roxanne Small  
Northern Ireland Interim National Director

## Introducing the Northern Ireland Advisory Council

In 2023 we welcomed the re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Advisory Council (NIAC).

NIAC is a group that draws together the insights and experiences of healthcare professionals and people living with diabetes to consult on our work, supporting our view that everything we do is informed directly by the diabetes community. We look forward to working with our members throughout 2024 and beyond.





# Connecting with communities and people living with diabetes

2023 was a big year for our team in reaching more communities across Northern Ireland than ever before.





**Northern Ireland Team**

The last year has marked an incredible year of growth for our team as we welcomed many new faces.

Working closely with one another, we continue to strengthen our support and resources for people affected by diabetes in Northern Ireland.

Scan the QR code to learn more about our team









## Northern Ireland Live Well Hubs

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the Live Well Hubs provide a one-stop-shop for diabetes related information, advice and support from both local healthcare professionals and members of the Diabetes UK NI team.

We're excited to see the Live Well Hubs grow as part of the five-year project and expand throughout Northern Ireland.

**2 HUBS LAUNCHED IN 2023**  
in **Belfast** and **Ballymena**

Read more about our Live Well Hubs and see upcoming dates

**84** participants registered

**40** attend regularly on a monthly basis

# SESSIONS INCLUDED



diabetes and diet



diabetes management talk with a diabetes specialist nurse



talk from a local pharmacist



looking after your eyes



looking after your feet



## Volunteering



Last year we launched our volunteers newsletter, keeping **46** in touch with volunteers

**19**

new volunteers joined us in 2023



If you would like to get involved in volunteering with Diabetes UK, please email [nivolunteering@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:nivolunteering@diabetes.org.uk)

Check out a spotlight with one of our volunteers, Jackie!





# Our Lives Our Voices

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, Our Lives Our Voices is a project for young people aged 11-25 living with type 1 diabetes in Northern Ireland.

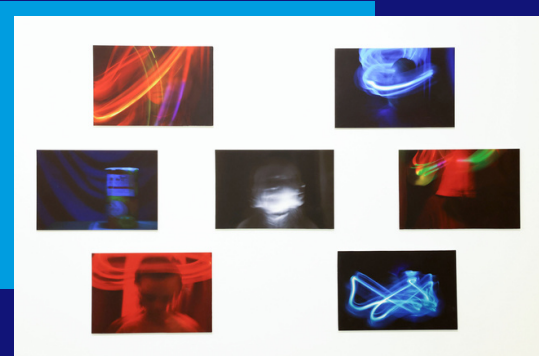
Designed and created by young people living with type 1 diabetes, this youth programme brings young people together to share their stories of living with type 1, improve their understanding of diabetes and its effects, and grow in confidence to better manage their condition.



## Type 1 Through the Lens

Marking World Diabetes Day 2023 on the 14th November, Diabetes UK Northern Ireland unveiled a unique photography exhibition which captured the views of children and young people living with type 1 diabetes.

Read more about the exhibition here



Working alongside

**10** YOUNG LEADERS

We delivered

**49** EVENTS both on and offline

Attended by

**130** YOUNG PEOPLE



## Campaigning for change



### Turning Northern Ireland blue for World Diabetes Day

On World Diabetes Day, nine out of the 11 councils answered our call to turn their civic buildings blue, while the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Council held a reception for our supporters and volunteers in the local area. At Belfast City Hall, Diabetes UK Interim Assistant Director for Local Impact, Tina McCrossan, and Chief Executive, Colette Marshall, were joined by Deputy Lord Mayor Áine Groogan and Diabetes Network lead, Joanne McKissick.



### In 2023...



The All Party Group on diabetes met twice and re-elected Stewart Dickson MLA and Deborah Erskine MLA to serve as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for another year. The group heard updates from the Diabetes Network and Young Leaders involved in the Our Lives Our Voices programme.



We were pleased to continue our role in the Obesity Prevention Project Group, along with other charities, healthcare professionals, academics and led by the Department of Health to develop a new Obesity Prevention Strategy for NI. A draft is currently out for consultation until the 1st of March.



We attended all

**4 PARTY  
CONFERENCES**

And met with

**32 MLAS  
AND  
11 MPS**



# Supporting Healthcare Professionals



In 2023 we developed a new monthly mailout for healthcare professionals where we share upcoming events and information happening in Northern Ireland, as well as wider updates from Diabetes UK.

From April to December, we increased our engagement with healthcare professionals by approximately **57%**

If you are a healthcare professional and would like to learn more about the support we can offer you, please email [n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk)

We've engaged with many healthcare professionals through the year including

**CONSULTANTS**  
**DSNs**  
**DIETICIANS**  
**Psychologists**  
**COMMUNITY NURSES**  
**and GPs**

**420**

healthcare professionals attended group meetings, sessions and events across the region, specifically held to **raise awareness, engage and update** a range of specialist and non-specialist healthcare professionals about diabetes, Diabetes UK and the team at Diabetes UK Northern Ireland.



## University and healthcare development courses

We focused on increasing the face-to-face connection and information sharing for universities and development courses. Through this piece of work we have engaged with at least 250 healthcare professionals and look forward to developing our relationships further throughout 2024.



## Podcast connections

Last year we worked closely with 4 healthcare professionals to support the introduction and development of 6 episodes in Diabetes UK Northern Ireland's podcast 'Let's Talk Diabetes'.



## We also...

Had conference exhibition stands at local healthcare professional events across NI reaching approximately **750** attendees in total

## Expanded our support

Healthcare professional and lived experience insight in 2023 supported the development of a **gestational diabetes** support pilot which launched in September 2023

## Engaged with

healthcare professionals through the Network and associated working groups to improve care and services for **people living with diabetes**



## Driving awareness

Despite being the third most prevalent health condition in Northern Ireland, diabetes is often very misunderstood. As a team we're dedicated to not only providing support to people affected by diabetes, but also to generating greater awareness within the general public.

Over the last year, we've been honoured to work alongside individuals, families and healthcare professionals as they share their own personal experiences and are very grateful for their support. At the end of 2023, Claire and her family shared their story, supporting the launch of the ELSA study in Northern Ireland. ELSA is a UK wide study which screens children aged between 3-13 to assess their likelihood of developing type 1 diabetes in the future. Read more about Claire and Enda's story and learn about the ELSA study here



If you would like to share your story, drop our team an email at [n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk)

**DIABETES UK**  
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.  
NORTHERN IRELAND

**LET'S TALK**



**DIABETES**

In Northern Ireland

## Sharing your experiences and connecting with healthcare professionals

Last year we launched Diabetes UK Northern Ireland's first ever podcast 'Let's Talk Diabetes'. You can hear first-hand from people living with diabetes, local healthcare professionals and members of our team.



over **1,000**  
listens to date

Whether you or someone you know is living with diabetes, you'll find lots of helpful information, resources and advice to support you and your loved ones.

Read more and listen here



Our website had over

**16,111** **VEWS** 

Keep up to date with the latest news from Diabetes UK Northern Ireland here



We were mentioned in

**251** **PRINT**  
**ARTICLES**  
**58** **ONLINE**  
**ARTICLES**  
**23** **BROADCAST**  
**PIECES**

On the Diabetes UK NI and Our Lives Our Voices social media channels we achieved

**274,000**  
impressions

**90,000**  
people reached

**20,000**  
people reached





## All with your support

All of our work is made possible through your fantastic support. In 2023 we saw lots of great events raising funds to support Diabetes UK and local research projects taking place in Northern Ireland.

From tackling marathons and holding quiz nights, to braving the ocean for cold water dips and fundraising in schools, your efforts are amazing and we're incredibly grateful for your kind generosity.



If you would like to get involved in fundraising for Diabetes UK, send our fundraising team an email at [fundraising@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@diabetes.org.uk)



### 20 year fundraising milestone for Harry

Last year, local Parkgate man Harry Irvine and his family completed their last Parkgate Donkey Day and Vintage Gathering after an incredible 20 years of fundraising in support of Diabetes UK Northern Ireland, raising over £100,000 during that time. Read more here



## KEEP IN TOUCH



[n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk)



[diabetes.org.uk/NorthernIreland](https://diabetes.org.uk/NorthernIreland)



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