

CYPWDN Quarterly Newsletter

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING WITH DIABETES

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Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of the Children and Young People's Diabetes Network Quarterly Newsletter.

As we continue to work together across our network, this newsletter provides an opportunity to celebrate achievements, share learning, highlight innovative practice, and keep everyone up to date with developments in paediatric diabetes care.

Over the past few months, teams across the network have demonstrated outstanding commitment to delivering high-quality, person-centred care for children, young people, and their families. From service improvements and audit activity to education, technology advances, and collaborative projects, there is much to be proud of and plenty to inspire us all.

In this edition, you'll find updates from across our network and stories that showcase the dedication and expertise of our multidisciplinary teams.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed content and continues to support the network's shared vision of improving outcomes and experiences for children and young people living with diabetes. Your ongoing enthusiasm, collaboration, and commitment are what make this network so valuable.

We hope you find this newsletter informative, engaging, and useful in your practice. We encourage you to continue sharing your successes, ideas, and experiences for future editions.



WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CLINICAL LEAD – DR SIMON FOUNTAIN-POLLEY

We are delighted to welcome Dr Simon Fountain-Polley as the new Clinical Lead for the Children and Young People's Diabetes Network.



Simon brings with him an impressive 18 years of experience as a Consultant Paediatrician, working across west Wales. Based in Carmarthen, his clinical practice spans a wide range of services alongside diabetes care, including acute paediatric ward work, a rheumatology special interest clinic, general paediatric clinics, and the familial hypercholesterolaemia service.

His commitment to patient care takes him across the region, with clinics in Aberystwyth Haverfordwest, Milford Haven and Tenby—something, as he notes, made all the better when the Welsh weather is kind.

As Clinical Lead, Simon is keen to guide the network into its next phase of development. He is particularly passionate about strengthening how we work together to meet the challenges of delivering responsive, evidence-based diabetes care for children and young people. Central to this vision is a renewed focus on sharing best practice across our units in Wales, as well as learning from colleagues in the wider national network. Simon also emphasises the importance of aligning our work with the goals of the National Diabetes Plan, ensuring that everything we do supports improved outcomes for children, young people, and their families.

Under his leadership, the network will be building stronger structures and clearer governance, creating a more coordinated and effective approach to service delivery. A key priority moving forward will be to shine a light on the challenges faced by clinicians, ensuring these are clearly articulated and understood. By doing so, Simon hopes the network can play an important role in influencing how Welsh Government and health boards support the ongoing development of diabetes services.

We are excited about the direction the network will take under Simon's leadership and look forward to working together to continue improving care and outcomes for children and young people living with diabetes across Wales.

Please join us in warmly welcoming Simon to his new role.

Croeso Simon.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW NETWORK MANAGER – NECIA JONES

We are pleased to welcome Necia Jones to her new role as Children and Young People's (CYP) Diabetes Network Manager.

Necia brings over 15 years of experience in the NHS, having started her career in September 2009. Throughout this time, she has developed a strong and varied skill set, combining operational expertise with a passion for improving patient care and outcomes.



Prior to this role, Necia worked as a Network Support Manager for the Diabetes Network within NHS Performance and Improvement, where she gained valuable experience in risk management, data, and governance.

Her knowledge in these areas will be instrumental in supporting the network to strengthen oversight, enhance service quality, and drive continuous improvement.

Necia also has a strong background in person-centred care, ensuring that the needs and experiences of patients remain at the heart of service delivery.

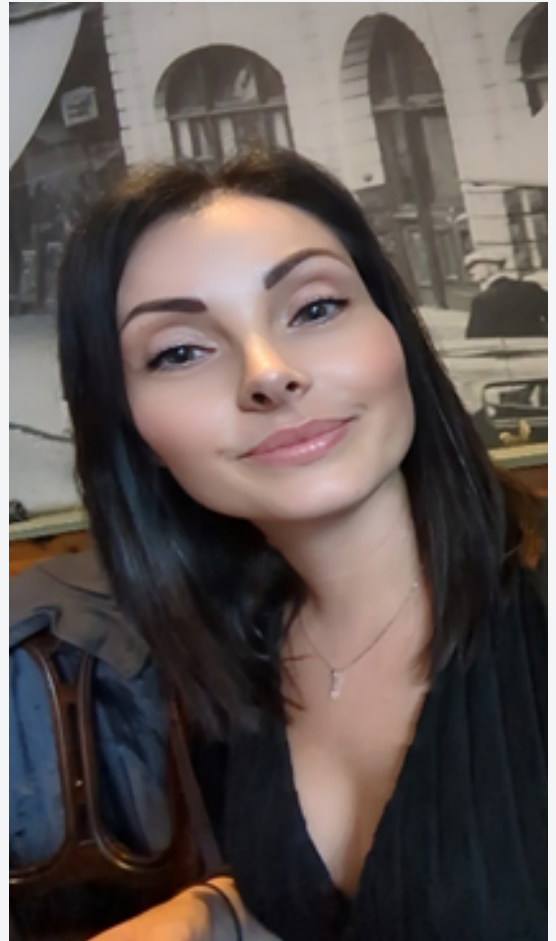
She has been involved in developing digital patient stories, using real experiences to help shape services and inform meaningful improvements across healthcare systems.

In her new role, Necia is looking forward to working closely with colleagues across the network. She is committed to building strong partnerships and fostering collaboration to support the shared goal of improving outcomes for children and young people living with diabetes, as well as their families and carers.

Please join us in welcoming Necia to the team

INTRODUCING OUR NETWORK INFORMATION SUPPORT ANALYST – RHIA WILLIAMS

Rhia joined the Children and Young People's Wales Diabetes Network (CYPWDN) as an Information Support Analyst in March 2023. She was drawn to the role through both personal and professional experience, following her daughter's diagnosis with Type 1 diabetes in March 2016. Having also grown up alongside a close friend living with the condition, Rhia developed an early understanding of its complexities and challenges. This personal connection, combined with the outstanding support her family received from the CTMUHB diabetes team, particularly from Geraldine Phillips at diagnosis, inspired her to contribute to the Network.



Rhia was keen to play an active role in supporting others while further developing her knowledge and expertise in paediatric diabetes.

Rhia's role includes providing ongoing support to all Network workstreams and groups, including organising meetings, and coordinating minutes and actions. She is responsible for planning and delivering the annual face-to-face meetings for both the Brecon Group and the wider Network. In addition, she maintains and updates the Brecon Group Register, ensuring data accuracy to support reporting, audit, and research activities.

Prior to joining the NHS, Rhia worked for Lloyds Bank as a Complaints Analyst for 13 years, working 12 hour night shifts, specialising in large PPI redress calculations, data analysis, and decision-making across complex financial products.

She later joined Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW), working in Service Management Development and on the Service Desk. Her role included implementing ITSM processes in line with ITIL, maintaining risk registers, supporting service improvement initiatives, and providing first-line user support while contributing to ongoing service enhancements.

CO-PRODUCING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS WITH FAMILIES

**DR JOHN CONNOLLY- SENIOR CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST
AND HEALTH PSYCHOLOGIST**

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Bangor University have been working together to explore how participatory action research (PAR) can help improve the experiences of children and families at the point of diagnosis.

PAR is a research methodology that actively involves service users and professionals as co-researchers, rather than treating them as subjects of study.

In this project, parents and clinicians came together to share their experiences of the Type 1 diabetes diagnostic journey.

Focus groups were held separately and then jointly, with participants helping to shape the analysis and co-develop an action plan for improving how diagnosis is communicated and supported. The work produced findings that were both clinically meaningful and practically grounded.

Themes included the emotional impact of diagnosis on families, the systemic pressures on clinicians, the role of early information, and the conditions that help families begin to adjust.

The joint reflective sessions gave parents and professionals a shared space to make sense of these experiences together, and to identify changes that would make a real difference in practice.

The study has recently been published in Psychology & Health (Shaw, Connolly, & Piggin, 2025: A participatory-action research exploration of parent and clinician experiences of type-1 diabetes diagnosis) and was presented at a national conference.

A recording of the presentation is available at {2><https://youtu.be/rFJLpUeJNgO<2>} Following the positive reception of this work, the approach is now being replicated within the specialist paediatric epilepsy service at Ysbyty Gwynedd, exploring parent and clinician experiences of the epilepsy diagnostic journey using the same PAR methodology.

This collaboration demonstrates what is possible when NHS services and universities work together with families to shape practice from the inside. We hope it may be of interest to other networks considering similar approaches.

NRO POVERTY PROOFING®:**IMPROVING ACCESS TO DIABETES CARE IN WEST WALES*****DR SIMON FOUNTAIN-POLLEY – CLINICAL LEAD***

A recent NRO Poverty Proofing® case study highlights how the Paediatric Diabetes Team at Hywel Dda University Health Board is working to reduce inequalities and improve access to care for children and young people with diabetes across West Wales. Led by Consultant Paediatrician Dr Simon Fountain-Polley, the service supports over 200 children across a large rural area, where travel difficulties, digital exclusion, and financial pressures can affect access to healthcare.

Through the Poverty Proofing® programme, delivered by Children North East, the team explored how poverty can create hidden barriers to diabetes care. Workshops encouraged staff to reflect on assumptions about families' circumstances and develop a deeper understanding of the challenges many face, including transport costs, access to technology, and the additional financial burden of managing Type 1 diabetes.

As a result, the team identified several practical actions to improve equity. Community-based clinics have been established in locations such as Milford Haven and Tenby, reducing travel demands for some families while maintaining flexible care options. The service is also developing a diagnosis care bundle that includes routine questions about digital access and support needs. Recognising that continuous glucose monitoring relies on smartphone technology, the team has partnered with a charity that provides reconditioned smartphones to eligible families.

The initiative has reinforced the importance of routinely asking families about barriers they may face and embedding poverty awareness into service planning. By taking small but meaningful steps, the team is helping ensure that all children and young people can access high-quality diabetes care, regardless of their circumstances or where they live.

The CTM Paediatric Diabetes MDT would like to extend its thanks to Lisa and Ambika for their support in organising and delivering this successful event.

Education & Awareness

CWM TAF MORGANNWG (CTM) GP PROTECTED TIME FOR LEARNING EVENT

AIMEE GRIMWOOD LEAD PAEDIATRIC DIABETES SPECIALIST NURSE

Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) GP Protected Time for Learning Event – Aimee Grimwood Lead Paediatric Diabetes Specialist Nurse.

On 21 May 2026, Lisa Daniels, Ambika Shetty and Aimee Grimwood delivered a presentation on the Early Diagnosis of Diabetes in Children at a Cwm Taf Morgannwg GP Protected Learning Time event.

The session marked the beginning of what is hoped will become a regular collaboration between the Paediatric Diabetes MDT and Primary Care colleagues, supporting shared learning, increased awareness, and the identification of future training needs.

This work forms an important part of ongoing efforts to reduce rates of Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) at diagnosis across CTM through earlier recognition of the signs and symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes.

Feedback from attendees was extremely positive, with one delegate commenting: 'A very enjoyable session'.

SEREN MOVING TO YEAR 7 EVENT ***CTM PAEDIATRIC DIABETES TEAM***

The CTM Paediatric Diabetes Team and Year 6 children with Type 1 Diabetes enjoyed a fantastic day at this year's SEREN Moving to Year 7 event, held at Infinity Park Cardiff on 12 June 2026.

The event was organised and delivered in partnership with DUK Together Type 1, whose generous funding made the day possible.

While the children enjoyed the trampoline facilities and opportunities to connect with peers, parents and caregivers took part in a dedicated support and education session covering topics including:

- Connecting with other parents and caregivers
- Looking after your own wellbeing
- Parenting a teenager with diabetes
- Understanding the teenage brain
- Body image and relationships with food
- Family relationships

Feedback from attendees was incredibly positive.

The CTM team hopes to continue delivering the Moving to Year 7 event on a centralised basis, bringing families from all units together in future years.

CTMUHB PAEDIATRIC DIABETES SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS FOR DIABETES WEEK 2026

The CTM Paediatric Diabetes Team has been working closely with the Health Board's Communications Team to raise the profile of paediatric diabetes across both the organisation and the wider community.

As part of Diabetes Week (8–14 June 2026), the team participated in a social media campaign focused around the 'Strike out Stigma' theme.

Through a 'call to action' video, members of the public were invited to submit questions about diabetes, the team then responded to these questions in a dedicated social media feature designed to educate, engage and raise awareness.

The campaign was very well received, generating positive engagement and being widely shared across social media platforms, helping to extend the reach of key diabetes awareness messages within the community.

Please see the youtube video link at the foot of this page.

Coming soon...

The team is currently finalising a Diabetes Symptom Awareness video for release across CTMUHB social media platforms.

Featuring contributions from multidisciplinary team members, children, young people, and parents, the video aims to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes and promote earlier diagnosis.

This initiative supports ongoing efforts to reduce the number of children and young people presenting in Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) at diagnosis, addressing concerns around delayed presentation within the CTM area.

Community & Schools

YSGOL GYMRAEG BRYNSIERFEL SUPPORTS DIABETES UK DURING DIABETES AWARENESS WEEK *MRS ZOE JERMIN-JONES*

During Diabetes Awareness Week, learners, families and staff at Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel came together to raise awareness of diabetes, challenge stigma and promote healthy lifestyles whilst supporting Diabetes UK.



**Children from Ysgol Gymraeg
Brynsierfel**

The initiative began when a Year 5 learner and Headteacher, Mrs Zoë Jermin-Jones, who both live with diabetes, discussed ways of supporting the charity's "Strike Out Stigma" campaign. Their idea quickly grew into a whole-school community event.

Learners took part in a sponsored walk tailored to their age. Nursery and Reception pupils completed laps of the school playground, Years 1–3 enjoyed a 2km community walk, while Years 4–6 challenged themselves with a route of almost 8km through the local area.

Throughout the week, learners also learned more about diabetes and the importance of understanding and supporting those living with the condition.

To conclude the week, families were invited to take part in the Llanelli Junior Parkrun at People's Park. Staff, pupils and parents came together to run, jog or walk the 2km course, celebrating both physical activity and community spirit.

ISLA ROSE-BRIGDEN , YEAR 5 PUPIL A T1D. ISLA AND MRS JERMIN-JONES CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF THE SPONSORED WALKS AND JOINING THE PARKRUN.

The events reflected the school's commitment to promoting health and wellbeing while encouraging learners to become compassionate, informed citizens. Most importantly, the week provided an opportunity to raise awareness of diabetes, challenge misconceptions and show support for the millions of people affected by the condition.

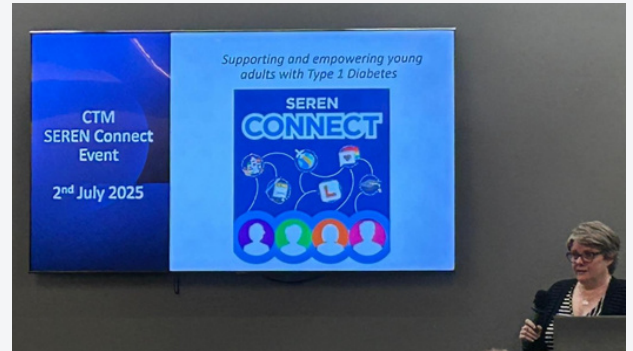


Ysgol Gymraeg Brynsierfel would like to thank all learners, families and staff for their enthusiasm, generosity and support throughout the week.

Diloch to Mrs Jermin-Jones and Isla for their hard work promoting Diabetes Week 2026.

WAND CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Network previously featured a news article by Sara Crowley, highlighting the success of CTM's innovative, centrally delivered SEREN Connect event held in July 2025. The article showcased the positive impact of bringing young people from across the Health Board together for education, peer support, and shared experiences.



Jo Lloyd-Jones (CTM PDSN)

Read the news piece here:

[“Fun and Diabetes in the Same Sentence”](#)

Following the success of the event, Jo Lloyd-Jones (CTM PDSN) presented the project at the Welsh Academy for Nursing in Diabetes (WAND) Conference in October 2025, where she was awarded the **Celebration of Excellence Award**.

The presentation showcased CTM's first centrally delivered event, which brought young people from across the Health Board together at the Cardiff Marriott Hotel for SEREN Connect education, followed by an interactive afternoon at Escape Rooms Cardiff.

This approach marked a move away from unit-based delivery in CTM and combined education with a fun, engaging off-site experience.

The team was delighted with the success of the event and is incredibly proud of Jo for receiving the WAND Celebration of Excellence Award.

Family Fun Day

FAMILY FUN DAY – RHIAN EADES LEAD PAEDIATRIC DIABETES DIETITIAN



**The Gwent Team at
Greenmeadow Farm**

On 14th June 2026, The Gwent Children's Diabetes Team in ABUHB successfully delivered a Family Fun Day at Greenmeadow Farm in Cwmbran for children and families living with Type 1 Diabetes.

The event aimed to provide an enjoyable, supportive environment while offering access to information and peer support.

The event was very well attended by over 45 families from across the health board.

The families had free access to the farm which allowed families to enjoy a relaxed, informal day together.

The setting supported social interaction, helping families connect with others and sharing experiences.

Healthcare professionals were present to provide advice, also present were some of the Insulin pump and CGM company representatives who updated the families on the latest technology and products.

Families most valued the opportunity to meet others, share experiences, and build supportive networks.

The day was funded by the Gwent Children's Diabetes Charitable Fund, along with sponsorship from the companies who attended (Medtronic, Insulet, Abbott and Dexcom).

The team were overjoyed to see so many families come together to enjoy the activities, see the farm animals and meet new people, It was a fantastic success!



They hope to make it a yearly event.

It sounds minor but seeing E's face when she had an experience of hearing others' alarms - it was the realisation that she's not alone.

"Thank you so much for organising this day"

It sounds minor but seeing E's face when she had an experience of hearing others' alarms - it was the realisation that she's not alone.

"Thank you to all the team for organising and all the helpful information we had"

If you would like to donate to the charity to help with future events, this can be done via the following link: Gwent Children's Diabetes Team F436

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Gwent-Childrens-Diabetes-Team>

Patient Stories



LUC'S STORY – "THE WARNING SIGNS WERE THERE FOR MONTHS. WE HAD NO IDEA HOW ILL OUR SON WAS"

Two years ago, 10-year-old Luc from Aberdare was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes after becoming critically ill with Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) while on a family holiday to Kos.

In the months before the trip, Luc had experienced several classic symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes, including tiredness, excessive thirst and weight loss. Like many families, his parents attributed these changes to warm weather, a growth spurt and the end of the school year.

Soon after arriving in Greece, Luc's condition rapidly deteriorated. He became confused, struggled to focus and developed breathing difficulties. He was rushed to hospital, where doctors diagnosed severe DKA. His condition was so serious that he required transfer by military aircraft to a specialist intensive care unit, leaving family members separated across different islands during the ordeal. Thankfully, following treatment, Luc recovered and returned home two weeks later, where he is now supported by the Paediatric Diabetes Team at Prince Charles Hospital.

Now in Year 7, Luc is thriving, enjoying football and learning karate. Reflecting on their experience, his family recognise how different the outcome could have been. "We were a slower taxi ride away from losing him and we completely missed the signs his body was giving. It was a terrible time but could have been avoided."

Luc and his family are passionate about raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes, hoping that greater awareness will help other families avoid a similar diagnosis journey. His story has been widely shared across CTMUHB and Wales Online and has attracted interest from the BBC for a future news feature.

Read Luc's Story here: CTM News:

<https://ctmuhb.nhs.wales/news/latest-news/the-signs-were-there-we-just-didnt-know>

Wales Online

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/the-warning-signs-were-months-33727893>

Appreciation



**THANK YOU, DR. DAVIDA HAWKES
FORMER CLINICAL LEAD FOR
CYPWDN**

**A LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO
CHILDREN'S DIABETES CARE**

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Dr Davida Hawkes for her dedication and leadership in her role as Clinical Lead for the Children and Young Person's (CYP) Diabetes Network as she hands over the baton to Dr Simon Fountain-Polley.

Throughout her time in this role, Davida has provided invaluable clinical guidance and strong, compassionate leadership. Her support during the COVID-19 pandemic was instrumental in helping the network navigate an exceptionally challenging and uncertain period. The pandemic brought significant disruption to services, alongside increased pressures on staff, patients, and families. Despite these challenges, Davida helped ensure continuity of care and supported teams to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances with resilience and professionalism.

A key highlight of her contribution has been her work alongside Jon Matthias former Network Manager, on communication initiatives for schools, particularly in raising awareness of the "4 T's" of Type 1 diabetes. This work has played an important role in improving early recognition and understanding of diabetes in educational settings, helping to support better outcomes for children and young people.

Davida's commitment to collaboration and service improvement has left a lasting positive impact across the network. Her expertise, insight and dedication have been greatly valued by colleagues and partners alike.

We are grateful that Davida continues to support the network while carrying out her role within Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB).

Diolch Davida



A BIG THANK YOU TO LISA DANIELS

PAEDIATRIC EDUCATION LEAD FOR DIABETES

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Lisa Daniels for her outstanding contribution while serving as Interim Network Manager. Stepping into the role following the post being vacant for over two years. Lisa brought stability, direction, and renewed momentum to the Network, ensuring progress continued at pace.

Lisa is a highly experienced Paediatric Diabetes Specialist Nurse within Swansea Bay University Health Board. In July 2024, she moved into a role within Performance and Improvement as Paediatric Diabetes Education Lead, focusing on the development and delivery of the SEREN programme.

Alongside this significant responsibility, Lisa was asked to take on the additional challenge of Interim Network Manager – a testament to her expertise, commitment, and leadership.

During her time in the interim role, Lisa worked tirelessly to drive the Network forward, strengthening collaborative working, maintaining focus on key priorities, and supporting teams across Wales. Her ability to balance strategic leadership with her education role has been invaluable, and her impact has been widely recognised and deeply appreciated.

Although Lisa is now stepping back from the Interim Network Manager position, we are delighted that she will continue to work closely with the Network. She will play an ongoing role in supporting the Transitional Workstream, alongside her continued leadership of paediatric diabetes education and the SEREN programme. She will play an ongoing role in supporting the Transitional Workstream, alongside her continued leadership of paediatric diabetes education and the SEREN programme.

Lisa's dedication, professionalism, and passion for improving outcomes for children and young people living with diabetes have made a lasting difference. We are incredibly grateful for her contribution and look forward to continuing to work with her in the future.

GOODBYE TO SARA CROWLEY FORMER TRANSITIONAL CARE CO-ORDINATOR

It is with great pride, admiration, and some sadness that we share Sara is leaving her role as Transitional Care Co-ordinator after being elected as a Member of the Senedd for Plaid Cymru. While we will miss her leadership and dedication, we know she will continue to champion children, young people, and families living with diabetes on a national stage.



Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of three, Sara's lived experience shaped her passion for improving care and ensuring no one feels alone. Her impact across Wales has been profound.

She opened the first Children and Young People's Diabetes Network Day in 2016 and played a key role in embedding lived experience into network meetings. That same year, she became Transitional Care Co-ordinator with the All-Wales Diabetes Implementation Group, where she thrived.

Sara helped shape All-Wales transition standards and co-developed SEREN Connect, an award-winning programme supporting young people moving into adult services. Launched in 2019, it later received national recognition for innovation and education. She also introduced youth workers into multidisciplinary teams, now a permanent and valued role.

Her advocacy extended nationally, giving evidence at Westminster and the Senedd, and speaking at major conferences. She recently contributed to Diabetes UK programmes and professional conferences, continuing to amplify young people's voices.

Sara leaves a legacy of compassion, innovation, and lasting change. Her work has empowered young people and strengthened services across Wales. While we will miss her greatly, we are incredibly proud of her next chapter and wish her every success.

Upcoming Events

EVENTS FOR 2026:

- BSPED Conference – 8-10th December 2026, Bristol Beacon
- Childhood Obesity Management National Network Forum – 24th September 2026, Watford
- Brecon Group Meeting – 27th November 2026, Village Hotel Cardiff
- Type 2 National Conference – 25th November 2026
- Safeguarding Conference – 22nd October 2026

Contact the Network

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Network Website

<https://www.cypdiabetesnetwork.nhs.uk/wales>

Contributions Welcome

Would you like to feature in the next newsletter?

Send your stories, achievements and updates to the Network Team.