

11 June 2023

Peer Support for people with Diabetes

For Diabetes Week, Ian blogs about how peer support helps him deal with his diabetes in every day life and at work.

What is diabetes?

Being Type 1 Diabetic means that my pancreas has given up, it doesn't produce enough insulin by itself. If I don't take over and give myself just the right amount of insulin then I can either hyper (too much sugar) or hypo (not enough).

Trying to replace one of the vital organs of my body can be a strain both physically and mentally. It is estimated that Type 1 Diabetics make an additional 180 decisions per day due to managing their condition. Doing this alone is a real strain and so for me the support of others with the condition has really helped me to get to grips with the emotional and psychological side of having come out of hospital aged 36 and having to live my life in a totally new way.

Peer Support

Having a group of people who share how they get through the every-day has been really helpful to me in learning to live with #t1d. When I shared my diagnosis with a work colleague who was also diabetic, I learned of a few others who also had the condition. We created a closed Yammer group (now Microsoft Viva). We share about how each of us copes with Diabetes in the workplace and in life. From something as simple as where to safely store our medicines in work to our relationship with the stewards at the Principality Stadium who now carry hypo treats to help treat a person with #t1d. Our group is still growing as more people with #t1d join and we now advertise ourselves as a support group within the Senedd Commission.

I am also active in the online #PeerSupport world for #t1d as a member of the [Great Britain Diabetes Online Community](#), which brings together people from across the UK to share their experiences. Finding that there was a community meant that a load my wife and I had been sharing alone could be shared and

spread. Learning from the experiences of others and starting to understand which bits of medical advice were more important to us than others.

Your trade union can help you find that #PeerSupport in the workplace to celebrate with people who understand the highs and the lows in your blood glucose and emotionally! And of course your workplace rep will help with any reasonable adjustments that you need to carry out your job.

Find out more information about peer support groups on the [Diabetes UK website](#).

Search for [#GBDoc](#) or [#PeerSupport](#) on Twitter and Facebook and find accounts such as [@GBDocInfo](#) and [@GBDocQuiz](#) - these accounts can also point you to access the #GBDoc WhatsApp group.

[Men's Type 1 Diabetes Support Facebook Group](#)