



Doctors' Support Network

Chair Report 2016-7

DSN started in January 1996 as a small, informal self-help group for doctors with mental health concerns. DSN was registered as a charity in 2004 and has continued to grow since then.

DSN has had three main functions:

1. Peer support via the email forum and support groups.
2. DSN aims to raise awareness of mental health problems amongst doctors and reduce the stigma attached.
3. DSN aims to help improving the working conditions of doctors to support them in looking after their mental health, improve the support and services available for doctors and encourages doctors to look after their mental health and ask for help as early as possible.

Following the last AGM there have been some changes to the committee

Susan has joined the committee and we would like to warmly welcome her.

Howard and Roberta have decided to leave the committee and I would like to thank them both very much for all their hard work on behalf of DSN and we would like to wish them all the very best for the future.

Cross border charity registration

The process of registering DSN as a charity in Scotland was completed after the required constitutional amendment at the AGM 2016. The new Scottish charity number has been added to our promotional material and online presence.

&me anti stigma campaign with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons



Our major anti stigma campaign - &me - with the Mind Matters team from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons started in January 2017 with a launch event at the House of Commons. The idea of the campaign is for senior health professionals, who are currently well, but have experience of mental ill health, to share an outline of their story and thereby reduce the stigma of mental health problems in the health professions.

The campaign has been well received so far and our thanks go to all our senior volunteers.

Events and consultations undertaken since the 2016 AGM

Fundraising: Mallorca Iron Man Challenge



At the end of 2016, Dr Edward Gomm and Laurie raised nearly £2000 for DSN by taking part in the Mallorca Iron Man challenge! This money covered our costs for the &me anti stigma campaign launch event.

Figure 1 Ed and Laurie after their efforts!

&me anti stigma campaign launch 31st January 2017



Our &me anti stigma campaign with the RCVS was launched at the House of Commons with an afternoon tea. The campaign was introduced by Kevan Jones MP and supported by several organisations including the leading mental health trust - Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust – one of their medical directors – Dr Jonathan Richardson spoke as one of the first &me volunteers.

DSN talk for Oxford University Medical Students' Society 9th February 2017



Membership secretary, Dr Mahomed Saleh spoke at a welfare symposium for medical students at Oxford University. His talk was well received with excellent feedback from attending students. In particular, they commented that the talk had challenged their views of mental illness and reassured them that it is possible to experience a mental health problem and work in medicine.

'Rounds' by Resuscitate Theatre 24th March 2017

Resuscitate Theatre have developed a play 'Rounds' based on the experiences of junior doctors and contacted us to supply leaflets for distribution at the event. Dr Louise Freeman also represented DSN in a question and answer session after a performance of the play.

GP Health Expert Advisory Group, London 6th April & 4th October 2017

DSN was asked to take part in the newly formed Expert Advisory Group for the NHS GP Health Service. Dr Louise Freeman represents DSN in this group.

Fundraising: Virgin Money London Marathon 23rd April 2017



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GP, Dr Kerrie Wallis, raised over £2000 for DSN by running the Virgin Money London Marathon! This money has enabled us to purchase a logo'ed tablecloth for events and to commission a marketing workshop to redefine DSN's key messages. We also plan to purchase a further supply of promotional pens for events.

Figure 2 Dr Kerrie Wallis

European Association for Physician Health conference, Paris 24/25th April 2017



DSN vice chair, Dr Louise Freeman, attended the biannual EAPH conference in Paris. Over 150 clinicians from all over Europe took part in this event which was notable for the discussion on personality traits of medics who become sick concluding with the everyone agreeing that such work was best used to focus support rather than select out!

Royal College of Psychiatrists' Congress, Edinburgh 26-29th June 2017

DSN member, Dr Caroline Ritchie, initiated and organised a DSN stand for the annual Royal College of Psychiatrists' Congress. A display banner featuring our newly acquired Scottish charity registration number was purchased in time for this event.

Visit to Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service, Manchester 26th September 2017

DSN was invited to meet Dame Caroline Swift, the head of the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS). Dr Louise Freeman and I met Dame Caroline and her team and observed a few tribunals in action. We hope to liaise further with the MPTS who are keen to reduce stress as much as possible for doctors with health concerns.

World Psychiatry Association Congress, Berlin: symposium on doctors' mental health 9th October 2017



DSN was delighted to be asked to collaborate with a German doctors' group – Selbst Betroffene Profis - in delivering a very successful symposium on the role of peer group support in physician health at the WPA Congress in Berlin. Over eighty delegates attended and filled our allocated room. The discussion and questions at the end of the symposium were only curtailed by the arrival of the next speakers.

Figure 3 Louise, Angelika and Astrid in Berlin

British Medical Journal Careers Fair, London 20/21st October 2017



DSN always runs a stand at the annual BMJ Careers Fair in London. We meet many doctors and medical students as well as representatives from other organisations and employers.

This two-day event is one of DSN's best opportunities to increase our profile both to individuals and to other organisations.

New Statesman and University of Buckingham round-table, London 1st November 2017

'Nurturing Sustainability: How can the university experience be transformed to improve the British medical workforce?'

Dr Louise Freeman represented DSN at a round-table discussion on improving the mental health of UK medical students. A summary of the discussion will be published in the New Statesman magazine at the end of November 2017.

Training on doctors' mental health provided for South London and the Maudsley (SLAM) child and adolescent mental health trainees London 29th November

Dr Louise Freeman led a training session on doctors' mental health for the SLAM psychiatry trainees.

Membership 2016-17

In 2017 so far, DSN has acquired 55 new members and 86 people have asked to join our mailing list. We do not share our contacts with third parties and keep our mailing lists securely within an email marketing platform.

Regular communication with our members and the mailing list is via our newsletter.

Publicity

The new website is currently receiving 800 user visits per month with additional traffic to our social media including our Facebook page and group and our Twitter feed.

We ordered new DSN leaflets and A5 posters earlier this year and have been supplying them to a variety of doctors' health related events during the year.

Overall, we are in an excellent place to work towards our goals and take DSN forwards into the future.

Louise Freeman and Angelika Luehrs
Vice chair and chair Doctors' Support Network
2nd December 2017

www.dsn.org.uk

Registered charity: England & Wales 1103741 Scotland SCO46980