



# Doctors' Support Network

## Chair Report 2017-18 AGM 10th November 2018

Dear DSN member,

### **DSN's key messages:**

- Since 1996, the Doctors' Support Network has independently championed positive mental health within our profession.
- We are a confidential peer support network for doctors and medical students with concerns about their mental health.
- As a registered charity, we aim to raise awareness, reduce stigma and influence the agenda regarding physician health.

The most important aspect of DSN is that we are stronger together – we can give confidence to each other simply by supporting DSN and gradually changing attitudes to physician health in the UK. (You may be aware that DSN has recently had more engagement with the media than in the past, but please be assured that DSN members (including committee) are **not** expected to do this!)

### **DSN committee:**

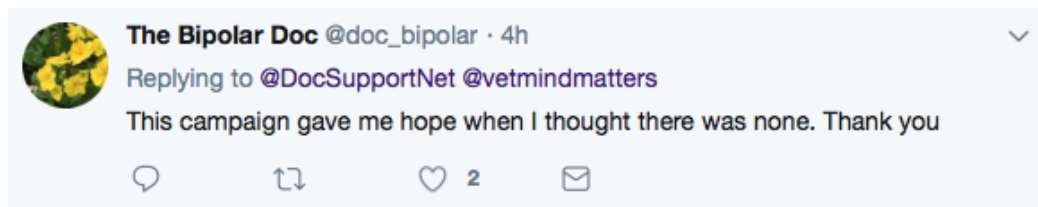
We have warmly welcomed Dr. Kaman Hansford who was co-opted during the year and Dr. Mahomed Saleh has decided to step down at this AGM.

Please find below a summary of DSN's activities and focus during the last year:

### **&me Anti Stigma Campaign:**



Our [&me anti stigma campaign](#) with [RCVS's Mind Matters](#) project is ongoing and is having an effect – see the tweet below:



DSN and Mind Matters are extremely grateful to all of our senior volunteers for their support.

During the year, Dr. Louise Freeman was interviewed for an RCVS podcast about the &me campaign – download the podcast [here](#). Louise and Dr. Angelika Luehrs also took part in &me LIVE at the British Small Animal Veterinary Association congress in Birmingham. This was well attended and very positively received.

### **Support Forum:**

The committee identified that we needed to move the DSN Support Forum onto a different platform as we were having problems with the Yahoo hosted forum. We investigated available options – thanks to DSN member Dr. Sarah Brookes for her help - and decided that a Google group was the best choice. At the same time, the committee decided to add DSN student members to the group, after polling our members on this question. DSN full and student members can ask to be added to this forum. There are now over forty people on the newly located forum.

### **Policies:**

The DSN committee has agreed the following policies (all available on the [About DSN](#) page of the website):

[Complaint policy](#)  
[Conflict of interest policy](#)  
[Expense policy](#)  
[Investment policy](#)

[Privacy policy](#)  
[Register of interest form](#)  
[Trustee code of conduct](#)  
[Volunteer policy](#)

### **Fundraising:**

DSN was honoured to receive a substantial donation from the family and friends of anaesthetist Dr. Richard Harding who died by suicide in 2017.



Dr. Jenny Holmes will run the **2019 Virgin Money London Marathon** in aid of DSN.  
Please sponsor Jenny [here](#)

### **Great South Run**

Dr. Matthew Christie was planning to run the Great South Run in aid of DSN but has unfortunately had to defer his attempt due to injury.

### **Consultations / working groups**

**[NHS GP Health](#) - Expert Advisory Group and Volunteer Network Meetings** - DSN continues to participate in six-monthly meetings re. both of the above.

DSN has contributed to the new BMA working group on well-being support for doctors and medical students.

DSN has expressed interest in participating in the forthcoming GMC review of medics' wellbeing.

### **Conferences and events - highlights**

**New Statesman** January 2018

**'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 in late 2017 on improving the mental health of UK medical students. A

[summary](#) of the discussion, including a quote from DSN was published in the New Statesman magazine in January 2018.



**General Medical Council conference,**  
London March 2018  
Dr. Jackie Haworth and Dr. Louise Freeman looked after the DSN stand at the GMC 'Together' conference.



**BMA Doctors with Disabilities event,**  
Birmingham March 2018  
Dr. Susan Atcheson represented DSN at this event.

**Return to Emergency Medicine** Scottish Centre for Simulation March 2018 and **NTW Stress & Resilience in Doctors CPD event** Newcastle upon Tyne May 2018 - Dr. Louise Freeman represented DSN by speaking at these events.

[Surgery & Emotion](#) 'Operating with Feeling' event, London June 2018

Read a summary of discussions on the Surgery & Emotion blog [here](#).

**Royal College of Psychiatrists' Congress,** Birmingham June 2018  
DSN member, Dr. Caroline Ritchie, again ran the DSN stand at the annual Royal College of Psychiatrists' Congress.

**BBC2 Victoria Derbyshire programme – film and studio discussion on physician suicide,** September 2018

DSN contributed to a special film and discussion about UK physician suicide on the BBC Victoria Derbyshire programme. Dr. Louise Freeman was interviewed for the [film](#) and Dr. Angelika Luehrs took part in a panel discussion in the studio.

**Forthcoming events:**

[International Physician Health Summit](#)

London 4-5<sup>th</sup> October 2018

DSN stand & presentation re. the &me campaign

[British Medical Journal Careers Fair](#),

London 19-20<sup>th</sup> October 2018

[BMA Docs with Disabilities event](#), Glasgow, 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018

## Membership 2017-18


In 2018 so far, DSN has welcomed 47 new members and 58 more 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 online marketing platform. DSN has a new [privacy policy](#) to support GDPR compliance.


Regular communication with our members and the mailing list is via our [newsletter](#).

## Publicity

Read the full report from our professional marketing workshop [here](#). The committee subsequently reviewed DSN's marketing. Printed material will be updated with our new key messages when we need to reorder.

[Website](#) is currently receiving 1300 user visits per month (compared to 800 visits per month last year).

 page - 314 'likes' and reached over 4000 people in the month when we contributed to the Victoria Derbyshire film.

 – 1292 followers and reached >27,000 people in the month when we contributed to the Victoria Derbyshire film. Top 2018 tweet seen by >11,000 people – BMJ latest shared our tweet about Matt Christie's BMJ Opinion [article](#) - 'Medics and mental health—the disclosure delusion'.

 – DSN now has a company page on LinkedIn.

Please 'like' and 'follow' the DSN social media pages!

## Future plans

We hope to arrange a stand and, if possible, present at the [EAPH](#) (Oslo) conference next year as well as undertaking our usual commitments.

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

Louise Freeman and Angelika Luehrs  
Co-chairs Doctors' Support Network  
10<sup>th</sup> November 2018