

A HIGHLY COMMENDED MAGAZINE

# Connect

WINTER  
ISSUE | 15

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Meet our Face  
of Connect, Phillipa!

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"I struggled a lot to accept how my  
body had changed"

Maryrose's body confidence experience

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# This is Rachel... She's Family.

**Rachel** has been using Respond for 6 years and is a family ambassador for Noah's Ark Children's Hospital. Her family are bakers, and she's recently run the Cardiff Half Marathon.

*"I have to remind myself that I'm not ringing a mate, and that I'm ringing Respond."*

Joining Respond has never been so easy,  
get in touch today and let us do the rest!  
#JoinTheRespondFamily



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0800 220 300

0800 028 6848 (N.Ireland)



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A message from

# the Editor



Natalie Jones

Marketing Coordinator

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Hello, and a very warm welcome to the Winter edition of Connect. We hope you have had a fantastic Autumn and enjoyed the cooler weather, and all things pumpkin-spiced!

As we prepare for the Winter season ahead, we bring you more updates of our 'It's a Family Thing' campaign with insight from our wonderful ambassadors, more real-life stories and mouth-watering recipes. We also chat to our Face of Connect, Phillipa, about her ostomy experience, head to page 21 to read.

We're also excited for our first installment of our Nutrition Corner with Sinead, who has some top tips to share with you on page 6-7, along with much more.

Farewell to our editor, Nic

We wanted to let our readers know that our wonderful editor, Nic, has started a new and exiting challenge in the care industry. We will miss Nic greatly and wish her all the best in her new chapter!

As always, on behalf of us at all at Respond, we hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoy creating this for you.

Thank you as always for taking the time to read,

Natalie

## We'd love to hear from you...

Do you have a question? Feedback? Have a story to tell? A subject you'd like to see covered in the next issue? – If this is the case, we'd love to hear from you!

**Get in touch with us today via one of the options below**



**Call:**

0800 220 300  
0800 028 6848 (N.Ireland)



**Email:**

[marketing@respond.co.uk](mailto:marketing@respond.co.uk)



**Or, write to us at:**

Freeport RTSZ-SLYE-EBTL  
Respond Healthcare Ltd,  
Greypoint Cardiff Business Park,  
Parc Ty Glas, Cardiff, CF14 5WF



# Letters to the Editor

We were thrilled to receive this wonderful feedback from our customer, Sandra, and couldn't wait to share it with our fellow readers...

Dear Natalie,

I just had to 'respond' straight away! I am so impressed with this magazine that arrived with my supplies today!...I have to say I loved the fact that it was there and about the size and the content! How excited I was to have a nice surprise in my box that brings my 'lifesavers'!

I have had a stoma due to Ulcerated Colitis for 25yrs now and along with other illnesses I am pretty much left to get on with it! This little book made me feel 'part of something' again!

I love the teddy and have a few tears over him! I would like to buy one for myself as my grandchildren have always helped me with my stoma until they got to about 5yrs then they decided it was all about pool!

I am also writing little stories for my grandchildren to help them understand why nanny has a stoma called 'Sadie'.

You have helped me so much over the years and this year you have been especially helpful when I was confronted with the dreaded words, we can't get supplies of your normal bag! You reassured me and helped me get to a conclusion of trying a different bag, which in hindsight was an excellent idea as when in hospital recently they didn't have any bags over the weekend which resulted me being stood in a hospital toilet with NO bags to use!!!! It was left to my sons to run around frantically trying to find some!!!! Now I know I can use at least 2 different bags in an emergency! All due to your expertise and help!

Always friendly and helpful and always phoning me back to make sure everything is ok!!!!

What can I say, an excellent service! Keep up the good work and God bless all of you!  
xxxxxx

Sandra

Keep an eye out in our next edition to read more about Sandra's 'Sadie Stories!'

As always, we appreciate hearing your thoughts on the magazine. It is extremely rewarding for us to create a magazine that helps others feel this way. Please keep the letters and e-mails coming.

# What's inside issue 15?

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## Service

Our Area Manager and registered dietitian, Sinead, is back for her first installment of our Nutrition Corner, answering one of our customers' questions about keeping hydrated.

We spoke with Rhys, our bilingual Customer Retention and Support Advisor, to find out about his hobbies and interests and learn more about his experience working with our amazing care teams so far. His Q+A is also available in Welsh for our Welsh-speaking customers!

**Pages 6-17**

## Events

We have been delighted to attend face-to-face events after such a long time. In this issue we update you on how the Annual Stoma Care Nurse (ASCN) conference went, and our recent trip to Taunton with our ambassador, Keith, who gave an insightful talk on his experience travelling with an ostomy. Head to page 19 to check it out.

**Pages 19-20**

## Real life

In our last issue of Connect our ambassador, Rachel, was getting ready to take part in the Cardiff Half Marathon. In this issue she shares with us an update on how it went, and her top tips for taking part in an event such as a half marathon with an ostomy.

We also share Respond service user Louise's stoma tips and her experience receiving her supplies from Respond. Find out more on page 23-24.

**Pages 21-27**

## Company news

In this section we are delighted to share with you the opening of our new Peterborough office event, where we were joined by the Mayor and Mayoress of Peterborough, and some of our local customers. It was great to celebrate it in person! Head to page 29 to find out more.

Our colleagues Rhys, Daniel and Alistair recently took part in a Fire walk challenge to raise money for Ty Hafan. Head to page 31 to read about their experience. Finally, we caught up with our colleague, Drew, who each year fundraises for the charity Movember. This year, he took it an extra step and decided to undertake a fitness challenge each day in November. Find out more on page 32.

**Pages 29-32**

## Product

In this section we continue to bring you a variety of products available from both Respond and Pelican Healthcare, including innovative REFRESH 3in1, Pelican's urostomy pouches, and eakin Cohesive Seals benefits and new design.

**Pages 33-37**

## Online

Catch up with our latest blogs, which for this issue have a focus on important health topics which we hope you will find useful.

Read about Maryrose's body confidence journey with her stoma, and how she learned to embrace her new body, on page 42.

**Pages 40-43**

# Nutrition Corner

with Sinead McParland



In our last issue we introduced our Area Manager and dietician, Sinead, who is available to answer any dietary questions you may have.

Respond customer, David, wrote in to us to ask Sinead regarding dehydration after the hot summer we experienced, Take a look below:

"Hi, Sinead, I am writing this e-mail on behalf of my wife who has had her Ileostomy since 1975. She has been using Dioralyte™ to keep herself hydrated since the hot summer period, but I have been finding it hard to find any stock lately as there seems to be a shortage. I am in the process of obtaining all the ingredients to make up St Mark's solution on a regular basis - is this the best option? Or would you recommend any other product that would do the job of keeping her hydrated? Thank you in advance for your help".

David

-----

Hi David,

Thank you for getting in touch with regards your wife.

I would first like to discuss hydration with you and how important it is to look out for the signs of dehydration. When your wife first had her surgery in 1975, with the removal of the colon your wife would have had increased risk of becoming dehydrated due to not being able to absorb the fluids and electrolytes, at this time an oral rehydration solution is usually required. Over time your wife's body would have adapted and risk of dehydration would have reduced. It is important to look out for sign of dehydration such as an increase in stoma output, feeling thirsty, strong smelling pee, feeling dizzy or lightheaded, a dry mouth and lips.

My recommendation would be even if no sign of dehydration it is still important to ensure your wife is having 1.5-2 litres of fluid per day. With regards to rehydration solution, this may be required if there is an increase in stoma output and as you mentioned in the summer months when the weather is warmer.

So, my advice is to always look out for signs of dehydration, if your wife is managing 1.5-2 litres of fluid per day and has normal stoma output she should not require a rehydration solution. If you feel your wife is not managing this amount of fluid and she is having a very high liquid stoma output with signs of dehydration, then the rehydration solution would be something that your wife would benefit from.

I have just checked with regard to the Dioralyte™ and as you say, this is currently out of stock, it seems to be a manufacturing issue and I cannot see if there will be any resolution to this soon. Offering the St Mark's Solution would definitely be recommended and in some cases, it is preferred over Dioralyte™ with short bowel syndrome or high output.

### St Mark's solution ingredients:

- 1.5ml teaspoon table salt
- 2.5ml teaspoon sodium bicarbonate or sodium citrate



So, to answer your question... it is important to look out for signs of dehydration and if your wife is drinking well then, I would not think she would require a rehydration solution. If you feel your wife does not drink well and has a high output stoma, or is showing signs of dehydration then offering your wife the St Mark's solution will reduce any risk of dehydration.

If you have any concerns or worries it is important to discuss with your wife's stoma team.

Thank you for your question, and I hope this is of some help.

Regards  
Sinead

Do you have a question for Sinead?

**E-mail: [marketing@respond.co.uk](mailto:marketing@respond.co.uk)  
and we will feature and answer this in our next issue!**



## A Day in the Life of Rhys Davies

Customer Retention and Support  
Advisor (Bilingual)  
Cardiff



### 1. How long have you been in your role?

2 months. I started in September.

### 2. What does a day in the life of a bilingual retention and support advisor look like?

#### What are your main responsibilities?

My main responsibility is speaking to patients and helping them with any issues that they may have. I also speak to surgeries to make sure the order process runs as efficiently as possible. As we are NHS providers we speak to surgeries and hospitals on a day-to-day basis. I'm also thrilled that I can offer this service through the medium of Welsh which I have been able to do and

building a relationship between the customer is exciting.

### 3. Tell us about your team?

Currently there are 6 of us working at the Respond customer service team in Cardiff. Everyone is very kind and help is always there if needed.

### 4. What's the best thing about your job?

The best thing about my job is speaking to new customers, and since I'm new to customer service, this is something exciting to me. Being able to speak Welsh to customers is also enjoyable and of course

the free coffee machine is also great!

### 5. ...And the biggest challenge?

Sometimes products can go out of stock, so I need to use my problem solving skills to ensure each customer is happy. As I'm new, I'm still learning all the different product types and what each product does.

### 6. What makes you feel proud about working for Respond?

One of the main things that I'm proud of is that we make a big difference to peoples' lives. I believe we offer great customer service and that the customer appreciate this. There is also a great community here at



departments, everyone is very friendly and kind.

## 7. What is the most important personal attribute that you bring to your job?

One of the most important personal attributes that I bring is that I'm a kind, friendly and patient person. Obviously being able to speak Welsh to patients is very important, especially for the customers that live in North and West Wales.

## 8. How would your friends describe you?

My friends would describe me as a good laugh, easy to get on with. They would also say that I'm a bit of a gym lad as I'm a bit obsessed with it.

## 9. What's your main hobby / interest outside of work?

I enjoy playing golf at my local golf club in Creigiau, I've been playing for around 11 years now and as they say practice makes perfect. I like to go to the gym regular and I also enjoy seeing my friends and girlfriend.

## 10. What does your perfect weekend look like?

My ideal weekend looks a little like this; catching up with my mates over a game of darts or a round of golf, going for lunch with my girlfriend and spending time with my family and of course couldn't forget my second home – the gym!!

## 11. Which famous person would you most like to meet and what would you ask them?

I'd definitely want to meet Tiger Woods, he's been my idol since I was young. Something I'd ask him is which tournament he believes he played best in and what is his greatest achievement in golf and why?

## We would love to hear from you...

Here at Respond, family is everything to us and we think of you as *part of our family*. To help us continue to deliver our award-winning prescription dispensing service, we would love for you to leave us a review.

simply scan the QR code or visit  
<https://healthcaredeliveryreview.co.uk/review-form/>  
 and help us to help others.  
 #RespondFamily



### Diwrnod ym mywyd **Rhys Davies**

Cynghorydd Cadw a Chefnogi  
Cwsmeriaid (Dwyieithog)  
Caerdydd



#### **1. Ers pryd ydych chi wedi bod yn eich rôl?**

2 fis. Dechreuais yn mis Medi.

#### **2. Sut ydych yn treulio eich diwrnod? Beth yw eich prif gyfrifoldebau?**

Fy mhrif gyfrifoldeb yw siarad â chleifion a'u helpu gydag unrhyw faterion a allai fod ganddynt. Rwyf hefyd yn siarad â meddygfeydd i wneud yn siŵr bod y broses archebu yn rhedeg mor effeithlon â phosibl. Gan ein bod yn ddarparwyr GIG rydym yn siarad â meddygfeydd ac ysbytai o ddydd i ddydd. Rwyf hefyd wrth fy modd fy mod yn gallu cynnig y gwasanaeth hwn trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ac wedi cael y cyfle i wneud yn barod.

Mae adeiladu perthynas rhwng y cwsmer yn gyffrous hefyd.

#### **3. Dywedwch wrthym am eich tîm?**

Ar hyn o bryd mae 6 ohonom yn gweithio yn nhîm gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid Respond yng Nghaerdydd. Mae pawb yn garedig iawn ac yn barod iawn i helpu bob tro os oes angen.

#### **4. Beth yw'r peth gorau am eich swydd?**

Y peth gorau am fy swydd yw siarad â chwsmeriaid newydd, a chan fy mod yn newydd i wasanaeth cwsmeriaid, mae hyn yn rhywbeth cyffrous i mi. Mae gallu siarad Cymraeg â

chwsmeriaid hefyd yn bleserus ac wrth gwrs mae'r peiriant coffi am ddim hefyd yn wych!

#### **5. ...A'r her fwyaf?**

Weithiau gall cynhyrchion fynd allan o stoc felly mae angen i mi ddefnyddio fy sgiliau datrys problemau i sicrhau bod pob cwsmer yn hapus. Gan fy mod yn newydd, rwy'n dal i ddysgu'r holl wahanol fathau o gynnyrch a beth mae pob un yn ei wneud.

#### **6. Beth sy'n gwneud i chi deimlo'n falch am weithio i Respond?**

Un o'r prif bethau rwy'n falch ohono yw ein bod yn gwneud gwahaniaeth mawr i fywydau pobl. Rwy'n credu ein bod yn cynnig gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid gwyb

a bod y cwsmer yn gwerthfawrogi hyn. Mae yna hefyd, gymuned wych yma yn Respond boed hynny'n dîm gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid neu adrannau eraill, mae pawb yn gyfeillgar a charedig iawn.

### 7. Beth yw'r priodoledd bersonol bwysicaf sydd gennych chi i'ch swydd?

Un o'r priodoledd personol pwysicaf sydd gennych yw fy mod yn berson caredig, cyfeillgar ac amyneddgar. Yn amlwg mae gallu siarad Cymraeg â chleifion yn bwysig iawn yn enwedig i'r cwsmeriaid sy'n byw yng Ngogledd a Gorllewin Cymru.

### 8. Sut byddai eich ffrindiau yn eich disgrifio chi?

Byddai fy ffrindiau yn

fy nisgrifio fel person llawn hwyl, hawdd bwrw ymlaen ag ef. Bydden nhw hefyd yn dweud fy mod i'n dipyn o fachgen yn y gampfa gan fod gen i obsesiwn braidd â mynd yno.

### 9. Beth yw eich prif hobi / diddordeb y tu allan i'r gwaith?

Rwy'n mwynhau chwarae golff yn fy nghlwb golff lleol yng Nghreigiau, rwyf wedi bod yn chwarae ers tua 11 mlynedd bellach ac fel maen nhw'n dweud mae ymarfer yn helpu perffeithrwydd. Rwy'n hoffi mynd i'r gampfa yn rheolaidd ac rwyf hefyd yn mwynhau treulio amser gyda fy ffrindiau a fy nghariad.

### 10. Beth mae eich penwythnos perffaith yn edrych fel?

Mae fy mhenwythnos delfrydol yn edrych ychydig fel hyn; Dal i fyny gyda fy ffrindiau dros gêm o ddartiau neu rownd o golff, mynd am ginio gyda fy nghariad a threulio amser gyda fy nheulu ac wrth gwrs methu anghofio fy ail gartref – y gampfa!!

### 11. Pa berson enwog yr hoffech chi ei gyfarfod fwyaf a beth fydddech chi'n ei ofyn iddynt?

Byddwn yn bendant eisiau cwrdd â Tiger Woods, mae wedi bod yn eilun i mi ers pan oeddwn i'n ifanc. Rhywbeth y byddwn i'n gofyn iddo ym mha dwrnament y mae'n credu y chwaraeodd orau ynddo, a beth yw ei gamp fwyaf ym myd golff a pham?

Byddwn wrth ein bodd i clywed oddi wrthwch chi

Yma yn Respond, mae teulu yn popeth i ni, ac rydyn ni'n meddwl amdanoch chi fel rhan o'n teulu. Er mwyn helpu i ni barhau i ddarparu ein gwasanaeth dosbarthu presgripsiwn arobryn, byddwn wrth ein bodd pe baech yn gadael adolygiad i ni.

Sganiwch y cod QR neu ymwelwch

<https://healthcaredeliveryreviews.co.uk/review-form/>  
a helpwch ni i helpu eraill



## Why use Respond?

We offer a reliable and convenient service putting you first and meeting all your needs, not just your prescription requirements.



### Confidence

No matter which products you use, we can dispense them



### Discretion

Discreet and unbranded packaging and delivery



### Dispensing your prescription

Making prescription ordering easy with local care centers across the country



### No queuing

We will call you in the comfort of your own home. Hassle free!



### Global Assistance

To help you with emergency stoma supplies when traveling away from home, giving you peace of mind



### Customisation

We machine cut your bags to the required size at our own premises, ensuring a 100% quality inspection



### Complimenting items

Dry wipes and disposable bags are provided as standard, with a wide range of other support items available to you



### Specialist after care education literature

We cover a wide range of topics such as ask our nurse, support garment, swimwear, sex and intimacy and more



### Specialist trained staff

Our friendly staff are trained and keep in touch with you every step of the way



### Multi-language support

If English isn't your first language we offer a wealth of support such as brochures and an interpretation service in over 200 languages



### Connect

We also produce a highly commended quarterly magazine for our customers



### 1-hour delivery slot

We offer a 1-hour delivery slot

**Recommend Respond today!**

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**hello@respond.co.uk**



# Starter

## Oxtail soup

**Prep time: Overnight**

**Cook time: 2 hours +**

**Serves: 4**

### Top tip

This delicious Winter warmer soup can be frozen for up to 3 months

### Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1.25kg/2lb 12oz oxtail, trimmed of fat and cut into pieces
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
- 1 large carrot, roughly chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 thyme sprigs
- 10 black peppercorns
- 2 tsp tomato purée
- 300ml/10½fl oz red wine
- 1.5 litres/2½ pints beef stock
- 1 tbsp plain flour



### Recipe card

via BBC Good Food:

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/oxtail\\_soup\\_71917](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/oxtail_soup_71917)

### Method:



#### STEP 1

Heat the oil in a large, flameproof casserole dish. Add the oxtail pieces and fry over a high heat until browned all over – you may have to do this in batches. Take the oxtail out of the dish and put it on a plate.

#### STEP 2

Add all the vegetables to the casserole and cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the herbs, peppercorns and tomato purée and cook for another minute. Pour in the wine and allow to bubble for a few minutes.

#### STEP 3

Return the oxtail to the pan and pour in the stock. Bring to the boil, then turn down the heat to a gentle simmer. Cover and cook for 2½-3 hours, until the oxtail is really tender and falling off the bone. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer the oxtail pieces to a plate and leave to cool.

#### STEP 4

Strain the cooking liquor through a sieve into a bowl and leave to cool. Shred the oxtail meat and discard the bones. Place in a bowl and cover. Cover the bowl of cooking liquor and leave in the fridge, along with the oxtail meat, overnight.

#### STEP 5

The next day, scrape away and discard the layer of fat on top of the cooking liquid. Spoon the remaining jellified soup into a pan and heat through until simmering. In a small bowl, blend the flour and three tablespoons of the hot soup until smooth. Whisk into the soup and simmer for two minutes. Add the oxtail meat to the pan and heat through for a minute or two before serving.

# Meet the Family...

We sit down with our ambassador, Ant, who has had his ostomy for 2 years, and shares with us his experience of using Respond...

### Tell us about yourself

So my name's Ant or Anthony, or as most people know @ibdlife. I'm thirty-two (I can't believe I'm thirty-two, it's gone far too quickly!). I'm from Reigate or Red Hill, which is near Gatwick and I have an ileostomy. I've had it for just over two years and I had it due to Ulcerative Colitis for around eleven years. I went through lots of drug trials and things didn't really work, so they said "Right, let's try and cut it out and give you a better quality of life." Now I'm part of the bag life crew, so couldn't be happier.

### What do you think makes a great service?

For me personally, it is about having a human conversation with the kind of people that understand you. The Respond customer service crew give me a call and say "Hi, Anthony, how are you? You were saying about work last week – how's everything?" For me, great service has that human element and someone on the end of the phone who's always there to help you out and answer any questions you have. And also just check up on you when needed.

### How long have you been using the Respond service?

About three or four months now. Prior to that, I was with another company that I was directed to from the hospital, and I had lots of issues and problems such as orders going wrong, not receiving the correct products and products going missing. Fortunately, I was having a chat with a few friends and they said "Have you heard about Respond?" I said that I hadn't, so I gave them a call. The rest is history!



### What is it about the Respond service you like?

What I really enjoy is I always get a call from a couple of people every month (like Julie, a lovely woman, and a few others) and they always say "Hi Ant, how are you? I'm just calling to check up and see if everything's all right. What do you need this month, is it the same as last month?" I never experienced this with other services.

I know it sounds a bit odd, but I look forward to those conversations. I think, being in this sort of space, you can feel quite isolated if you aren't necessarily on social media. I think some people may find a lot of comfort in having those conversations every few weeks, and you can always call them and say "I'm having problems, do you recommend any products?" It's perfect. It literally does everything I want it to do.

## What does it mean to you to be a part of the Respond ambassador programme and family?

It still hasn't sunk in. I was having a chat with a few people last night and explained "Two years ago I had surgery. I started creating campaigns and posting Instagram photos and videos. And now it's come so far that I'm now part of this incredible family." It's amazing to be a part of the ambassador programme, especially this whole experience that I've been a part of in the last couple of days. It's also been great meeting so many people I've connected with on Instagram but not met in real life.

It's quite humbling as well. Whilst I don't think it per se (I just feel like I'm creating little videos and things like that), I'm reminded by people that I'm actually making a difference. I absolutely love it. So, thanks very much, honestly. I'll keep saying thank you.

## What would you say to someone who was looking to change their service?

I could wax lyrical for so long about how good the whole Respond service is. The experiences I had with previous services were very frustrating – really complicated processes and having to make complaints along the way. If I'd known Respond was available straight from the hospital I would have said "Well, can I just go straight into this?"

Everything's taken care of. You don't have to worry about contacting your GP or updating your prescription as Respond do all of it. They'll regularly catch up with you to make sure you've got what you need and say things like "If you don't, no worries, we'll get a rush on that for you. You should expect to in a couple of days, if not, give us a call." There's constant feedback and it's very, very reassuring.

## Tell us three things we don't know about you?

Firstly, I used to be a police officer for a little while and I now work in learning and development which is enjoyable. Secondly, I'm a massive foodie, and I really enjoy cooking. The third thing is I'm a keen drummer. I miss it as I haven't drummed for ages but used to do it frequently as a child. My brother keeps asking if I'd join his band but it's not looking likely as I don't have the kit!



# Meet the Family...

We sat down with our ambassador, Billie, who has been using the Respond service for three years, to ask her how she finds the service and how it feels like one big family.

### **Tell us about yourself**

My name is Billie, I'm twenty-five years old and live in London. I have had my stoma for four years due to Ulcerative Colitis.

### **How long have you been using the Respond service?**

I have been using the Respond service for three years.

I found out about Respond through social media via people sharing posts about them. I clicked through a few links, visited their website, and decided to join the service!

### **What is it about the Respond service that you like?**

The customer service teams are just fantastic, and they make the whole thing so easy. When you go through the surgery, you come out the other side with something that you have not practiced previously, and when you meet with these people who know so much and can help you in so many ways, it is a huge relief. And that is really what got me through.

The Respond service is just so easy. It takes away the stress and anxiety that can stem from ordering items. If I have been really unprepared and completely forgotten to place an order, I can ring up the customer service teams and it's fine – they say "we can get it out of here in a couple of days, don't worry." It's seamless. And they focus on putting people first – putting the patients first – and taking that weight off your shoulders.



### **What would you say to someone who was looking to change their service?**

It's exactly what you need.

I think when you're switching a service, you've potentially had an original service for a while. You're changing because something is wrong or you're just looking for something different. And I think that you've got to have that confidence to make a change, be brave. I think change is very scary, especially when you've got medical supplies in there. But I think that when you find the right one that works for you and you've got people that are there to support you, it's so worthwhile.





**What does it mean to you to be a part of the Respond ambassador programme and family?**

It's everything. The Respond ambassador programme has been such a lifeline for me. I feel like I've followed these people that I've met over the last four years and it's amazing to actually meet them in real life. It's lovely and wholesome. We have so much in common but also so many differences. There is a part of us that unites us and Respond has brought us together from that. We're friends and that's really nice.

**Tell us something we don't know about you?**

My dream job when I was little was to be a Disney princess. I had really bleached blonde hair and I really wanted to be Belle from 'Beauty and the Beast' ...but she had brown hair, so I couldn't do that! My mum bought me a Princess Belle dress anyway and I wore that every day with pride until the dress was bursting at the seams.

My dream job now, which I do every day at home, would be a chef. I just love cooking. My Mum's a chef so I've grown up with food being a massive part of family life and being what really brings us together as a family. I know it's cliché, but it really is, eating dinner is such an event in my house. If I could cook for a living, I would! My favourite type of dish would be an easy pasta dish, something that reminds me of home.



# Back to Better Living

**Having a stoma or internal pouch doesn't mean you have to stay indoors.**

IA is here to support those who have been through surgery to get back to a full and active life.

From dog-walking to cycling, beach days to running, your fitness can enrich your life with your stoma or internal pouch.

Contact IA if you'd like to speak with someone.



Ileostomy & Internal Pouch  
Association

Registered Charity

T. 0800 0184 724  
E: [info@iasupport.org](mailto:info@iasupport.org)  
W: [www.iasupport.org](http://www.iasupport.org)



## "The sky's the limit" travelling with a stoma talk with Musgrove hospital

In October we attended the Musgrove hospital open day in Taunton, and were joined by our wonderful ambassador, Keith (@keiththom2014), who gave an insightful talk on his experience and tips on travelling with a stoma.

It was great to meet so many of our lovely customers, discussing our products and award-winning service.

**Are you travelling soon? Request your copy of our handy Travel Guide and Travel Certificate today!**



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## Upcoming Events

We're delighted to share with our readers any upcoming events, and in this issue, we'd like to let you all know about a regular event in Glasgow, see information and contact details opposite:

Are you a member of a support group or association and would like to share any upcoming events with our readers? Get in touch today at [marketing@respond.co.uk](mailto:marketing@respond.co.uk)

Glasgow Stoma Support Group  
Room 2  
The Adelphi Centre  
12 Commercial Road  
G5 0PQ

1st Tuesday of every month  
(except September and January)  
10 am - 12 noon

Contact details  
[jackie.mcchesney@gmail.com](mailto:jackie.mcchesney@gmail.com)

# Association of Stoma Care Nurses (ASCN) UK Conference 2022

From the 9th – 11th October 2022, we attended the Association of Stoma Care Nurses UK Conference (ASCN) in Harrogate. After two years of not being able to meet face to face due to COVID we were excited to meet again with stoma care colleagues and industry representatives from across the UK. The conference is the biggest stoma care event in the UK attracted an amazing attendance of 425 Delegates and 206 Exhibitors!

Over the few days, we spoke with nurses all over the UK to talk about our latest products and services, watched the influential Adele Roberts do a speech all about her journey with cancer and a stoma (which didn't leave a dry eye in sight!), and also met with our ambassadors, Ant (@ibdlife) and Rachel (@gutsy.mum), as they joined us on our stand to speak to the nurses all about the importance of the online stoma community and the power of social media. We also wanted to give a special mention to our Respond nurses Alison Roberts Nurse Team Leader who was selected to present at the conference and Community Stoma Care Nurses Claire Murphy, Helen Coulter and Kim Moxham whose research posters were selected for display.

You can view a few photos from the few days, including our stand, below and see if you spot anyone you recognise. We now look forward to next years conference in Brighton.





# Face of Connect

Phillipa

I'm Phillipa I am 26 from Merseyside in the UK. I have Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis and I have an ileostomy. I was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease at the age of 9 back in 2006 and at the age of 14 back in 2011 I was then also diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis. I've been in and out of hospital the majority of my childhood, teenage years and my early adulthood. The start of last year 2021 was possibly the worst time of my life as I almost lost my life to multiple organ failure whilst I was in a coma as well as having Sepsis, C.difficile and a perforation of my bowel. I had my stoma formed a month before this had happened but unfortunately had the perforation and then spent 2 and a half months in hospital where I had to learn to walk and sit up again. As well as that, I had lost so much weight due to malnutrition and weighed around 4 stone so I had to get that back to normal as well as getting my strength back. Luckily I was sent home after the 2 and a half months and I carried on my recovery at home and made that my main priority for a good year. Fast forward to now and I am currently in the best health I've been in in a long time I'm living my best life with a stoma bag and have had



Me last year in hospital learning to walk again

the most amazing experiences and opportunities the past year! I have met so many other ostomates and others with IBD who I can now call my friends for life! I got to go to the big Respond Get Together which was brilliant and I met all of the fabulous team and fellow ostomates, what an amazing start this was to 2022 for me!

I then got the opportunity this year to be chosen as one of the open casting ladies to be apart of Montana Browns Swimwear Brand Swim Society to be in their latest photo shoot for their Campaign! It was one of the most empowering experiences I have ever had and all of the girls were super lovely and made me feel confident as ever!



Getting engaged in Mexico with my Fiancée, Mike



Me with my bestie and stoma sister, Amy



Loving life on a Catamaran in Mexico

I am now currently at my best weight yet around 9st and am loving my curves and scars and obviously my stoma bag!

I have just been on an amazing holiday to Mexico with my partner which has been my first holiday in 3 years and my first one with Seb the Stoma. It has been so amazing! I haven't had to worry what so ever about my bag leaking or being on show or going into the pool or the ocean or people having a look, I've just embraced it and I think that's thanks to my confidence now! I also emptied my bag at 38000 feet on an airplane for the first time what a wild experience haha! But I can't forget the most amazing news that I need to share with you all.... I GOT ENGAGED!! I am a fiancé and I have a fiancé!! It was honestly the best day of my life and what a way to finish off this fantastic year! I currently feel like I'm in a dream but an amazing one!

I would just love to go and back and tell 2021 Phillipa what is about to happen in her life as I know I wouldn't believe all that has gone on and what amazing things have happened!

But for anyone that is going through it at the moment or is going through something similar to what I did last year, just know it will pass soon and you will be the best version of yourself in no time! You've got this!!

Pip x

# Respond medical supplies - my story

by Louise Lawson

My name is Louise Lawson. My ileostomy came about due to Ulcerative Colitis at the age of 36. It was made permanent when I was 42, and I am now 45 years old. I'm physically active, hiking most weekends in the Peak District and being a busy mum and nurse, writing when I get the time.

I've recently discovered that I'm Peri-menopausal (Men, don't stop reading at this point, just lighthearted ageing!) and for women with a stoma, we may need to be a bit more conscious of how we maintain our health through this stage of our lives.

These are just a few things I've discovered that may help in this unpredictable journey. Here are a few tips I found helpful to ease the process:

1. If you are experiencing any overwhelming symptoms, talk to someone. Several people can support you with how you are doing



both mentally and physically so reach out to partners if you can, friends, or your health professionals. If you have someone who takes care of your medical needs, get in touch. The team at Respond are also wonderful and having a chat with them is always recommended. If you feel that they can help in any way they are so easy to talk to.

2. The old Cliché of Staying Hydrated! I have found myself drinking far more fluids in recent months, never feeling hydrated, resulting in numerous bathroom trips, which as we know can have an impact on our fatigue. Don't worry if this happens, symptomatically you may have an electrolyte imbalance, which can easily be fixed. You can purchase a



tube of everescent Electrolyte tablets in packs of 12 from the supermarket, ranging in price from 99p to £4.99. Most also have added vitamin B12 which can also boost support feelings of fatigue. This brings me nicely to number 3.....

### 3. Fatigue and depleted energy.

Sadly fatigue is part of peri-menopause for most women, the bonus is, most of us already know what sudden onset fatigue feels like, so we're experienced coping with this aspect a little better than those women who have had no training. My take-home message on this is, to expect it, accept it, and try and accommodate it. There's only been a few occasions I've come to sudden exhaustion, but I've learned to prepare for the possibility that it may happen and try and plan with tips like; Asking others to drive if they are sharing a

journey with you. Learn to say no (or no thank you). Tiredness is overwhelming at times, don't feel guilty if have to say no thank you to meeting friends, going shopping, or chauffeuring the children around if you don't feel like it!

Give yourself the early night you deserve, winter is here, early nights and loungewear are what the season is all about!

Wishing you well, best wishes for the winter, and keep cosy!

Louise x





# Rachel's Cardiff Half Marathon

## update and tips

In October, I completed my toughest physical challenge to date - the Cardiff Half Marathon. I have always enjoyed fitness in all its forms whether it be a class, going to the gym, running outside or climbing a mountain. I wouldn't say I am a fitness fanatic, but I do enjoy the endorphins it gives and the benefits I get mentally. Things always feel so much better after, and that has never been more important since having my son.



Being born with the need for a stoma and the 3 years of intense medical intervention that followed meant my mental health took quite the hit. I couldn't exercise due to my own deteriorating health, which led to me having a stoma for the second time during the first Covid lockdown. This was following J-pouch surgery since the age of 2 which just didn't cut the mustard unfortunately! Having ostomy surgery as an adult finally gave me my life back. I waited the typical 6 weeks to recover and then started by running around our cul-de-sac for 5 minutes. I slowly built it up and started doing park runs. These are a great way to run in a supportive environment with people of all different abilities taking part. It's a lovely event whether you have a family and take them along for support to cheer you on, are an individual who wants to beat a PB, or simply going to take in the fresh air and know you have started your day accomplishing something!

For me low intensity exercise bores me. It obviously has its benefits, and I should really do some such as yoga or pilates for my core strength and flexibility as I get older. However, nothing beats a high intensity workout! I want to feel I have done something and see where my limits are. The Half Marathon was always something I watched others do in amazement. How could they run all that time? How could their bodies keep going with the high risk of dehydration of us ostomates, especially those of us without a colon?! When I passed the 5km mark in distance

during a run my running buddy the beautiful Nicola suggested we give it a go. I thought she was mad, but she gave me the confidence to sign up and make it my goal for the year. There was no question who I would run it for. Noahs Ark Hospital Charity in Wales have performed all my little ostomates surgeries, and it was the perfect opportunity to give back. I had to raise £250 in sponsorship which luckily during such difficult times I managed to surpass £385.

To prepare for the event I wanted to reach the 21k mark where I live but I didn't get that far. As always, life has a funny way of getting in the way. I got poorly, my boy was poorly, and after having covid my stamina took a massive hit. Nevertheless, I wouldn't let it stop me from trying. In the morning I knew I wouldn't be able to run it but my plan was to take it steady and just keep going for as long as I could. I prepared by drinking dioralyte the night before and in the morning to keep me topped up with electrolytes. For the run itself I packed:

- Isotonic drinks
- Energy gels
- 2 x 1 piece firm convex ModaVi bags cut ready
- Pack of tissues
- Black bag for disposal of bag change
- 50ml can of REFRESH
- Phone
- Good luck charm
- Radar key
- £5 cash just incase
- Wireless headphones

This sounds a lot, but I wanted to prepare for the worst as I had never run so far. I ran with Jo, one of the mums from my son's school. Thank god for her as she had done it before and it was a much bigger event than I expected! We both wanted to get it done in no longer than 3 hours. We were in the back pen to start and her strategy for us was to start slow and build up. I know I was guilty of starting too fast and burning out when I did my first 10k race, and like Jo said many others did the same on the day. The atmosphere was electric. A mixture of nerves, excitement and anticipation. A Lot of emotions with messages of loved ones lost and poorly, including my own of my boy Jake on the back of my running vest with whom I wanted to do it for in the name of Noah's Ark. It's so easy to just bolt out at the start. It was about 20 minutes of hanging around while the pros were setting off ahead of us in their thousands. Around 18,000 attended which just blew my mind seeing them all around us! When you can finally cross that starting line all you want to do is sprint off! It felt like everyone was passing us as we went steady, but sure enough Jo was right and we started passing those that had

passed us at the start and people were having a walk. I managed to keep running 15k in and then had to walk a bit before going again. My running partner Nic and her family were waiting for me at the start of the toughest part where there were a few unforgiving hills. I was so relieved to see her face I screamed! I gave her a big bear hug and I left with a new lease of life. She couldn't run it this time around but I was so grateful for her and the family to come out on such a crazy day to support me.

The hills that everyone warned me about were brutal, but ambassadors for Noah's Ark were out in force and cheered me on, what a boost it gives you. If any friends or family of yours are doing similar events and you can go to support them please do. When you feel like you have nothing left to give it makes such a huge difference and I couldn't have been more grateful for the support. Towards the end my main men Pete and Jake were there with their hands out. Hearing Jake shout Mummy and their high fives made me want to burst into tears. I was physically exhausted and really had nothing left. Seeing their faces made me determined to finish strong and I bolted as fast as my legs would carry me to the finish line. It was the most incredible feeling, everyone cheering their loved one and seeing that finish line felt like winning the lottery! I completed it in 2 hours, 42 minutes which I was chuffed to bits about!



I have signed up for next year with the aim of doing a full marathon the year after. Setting big goals and achieving them gives me something to focus on just for me. For everyone that raced that day you should be so proud and I hope you celebrated in style. I have enjoyed the week off following it but am eager to get back to training as soon as possible! But what about running with an ostomy? You may be wondering why I haven't mentioned it much and it is simply because it wasn't even a thought! Whilst running I forgot I even had one. I ate a banana an hour before the race and kept hydrated so hardly any output was created. All I would say is make sure you have run as far as you can to test the durability of your bag whilst sweating and you should be good to go with supplies on you for back up. A stoma bag shouldn't stop you from running. For me it was more of a motivation to prove I could and I did.

*Until next time, Rach x*

## Looking for online support?

Our private facebook group is a secure and supportive community of over 9,000 people where you can find support from others with a stoma, offer advice and, if you need it, just find someone else to talk to. It's not just for those with a stoma; friends and family are welcome too. Search for 'Colostomy UK support group' on Facebook and request to join.

Our **Live Chat support** is available on our website 09:00–17:00 on weekdays. Chat with members of our team and volunteers who will be able to answer any questions you have and offer support and advice.

[www.ColostomyUK.org](http://www.ColostomyUK.org)





### Respond Peterborough

# New office opening

We recently celebrated the opening of the new Peterborough office. We were joined by the Mayor of the city of Peterborough, Councillor Alan Dowson and Mayoress Councillor Shabina Qayyum who kindly agreed to cut the ribbon to mark the official opening. Despite dreadful weather on the day we managed to get a few great pictures and keep everyone dry. The investment in new office space has also led to 2 new staff joining the team. Commenting on the move, Stuart Welland, Chief Commercial Officer, Ostomy Division, Eakin Healthcare said: "We have a long-standing history in Peterborough and feel part of the town. This office move and recruitment of two new members of staff reinforces that and means we can continue to deliver support to people that genuinely changes lives and improves people's wellbeing.

Cllr Dowson said:

*"I am delighted to be here today to officially open Respond Healthcare's new office which will make a huge difference to both staff and customers. This office opening is important on a number of levels. Firstly, it reinforces Respond Healthcare's commitment to Peterborough. An award-winning company with a UK presence choosing to invest and continue its work in the town is a huge statement."*

*"Secondly, the work Respond Healthcare undertakes from this office in the stoma and continence sector is crucial to Peterborough, Cambridgeshire and the surrounding communities and genuinely changes lives. The dedication of its staff, from R&D through to the community nurses out meeting and supporting people every day is unmatched. Their passion to help our communities, to support them in leading fulfilling and active lives is something they should be extremely proud of, I know I am."*

Here are photos of the opening event:





# Do you need to access the toilet urgently? Our Just Can't Wait card can help.

Gives access to toilets not normally available to the general public.

## How do I order a card?

- 1 Complete the web form at: [www.bbuk.org.uk](http://www.bbuk.org.uk)
- 2 Send a stamped address envelope to: Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street. Manchester, M8 8QA
- 3 The Bladder & Bowel UK team will post your card as soon as they can

Although access is not guaranteed, the cards are widely accepted and acknowledged.



[www.bbuk.org.uk](http://www.bbuk.org.uk)



[bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk](mailto:bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk)



0161 214 4591



# Fire Walk

## 30 toes went in, and 30 toes came out!



On Sunday 23rd October our colleagues, Rhys, Daniel, and Alistair went to Cardiff City Stadium to take on a firewalk, raising money for Tŷ Hafan. Here is their account of their experience:

Tŷ Hafan is a charity that offers comfort, care and support for children and young people with life-limiting conditions. They offer a range of services to children and their families across Wales and rely on donations to deliver their incredible work.

Almost 80 people took part in the walk and raised over £12,000 as a result – a fantastic achievement.

The evening started with a coaching session to get our minds in the zone, and involved a few volunteers breaking arrows using their necks, and walking barefoot on shards of broken glass (don't try that at home!). It highlighted how firewalking is very much 'mind over matter'.

With everyone confident in the principle of walking across 1264 degree burning wood embers, we headed down to the pitch to take a fiery stroll.

In groups of 10 we walked with purpose across the burning embers until everyone had gone around once. Then, we did it again.

Despite walking twice across the heat everyone was OK and there were smiles all round.

Thank you to all our colleagues who donated, we know Tŷ Hafan are incredibly grateful.

We caught up with our colleague, Drew, to chat to him about his fundraising efforts for Movember, take a read below:



My name is Drew, and I work in the Quality Assurance department at Pelican Healthcare. Every year, I take part in Movember which is essentially a month of male mental health and suicide awareness. Every year from the start to the end of November I grow a mo', but this year I fancied doing something a little different to make my fundraising more worthwhile.

According to official statistics, 60 men per hour commit suicide across the world and with this statistic in mind, I decided to do a fitness challenge. I decided to climb 60 floors on the Stair-Master every day for 30 days with no breaks or days off, which amounted to 1,800 floors by day 30.

I set myself a target of raising £250 for Movember, and with the support of my colleagues, friends and family, I am delighted to say I completed that goal by day 16, and have raised a total of £650 for Movember (at the time of writing). I am very grateful for all the support I have received in fundraising for this worthy charity, and I look forward to next year's mo'!

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At Pelican & Respond, part of the Eakin Healthcare Group, we believe the solution can be a simple adjustment to your stoma care routine. If you are experiencing problems due to any of the following, an eakin Cohesive® seal may be the answer you have been looking for:

- Worry about leaks affecting your confidence
- Leaks occurring leading to sore skin
- Unable to create a consistently secure fit between your pouch and stoma
- Loose or watery output
- Uneven skin due to skin folds, crevices, or scar tissue around your stoma
- Stoma changing shape and size

Using an absorbent ostomy seal as part of your regular stoma routine helps prevent leaks leading to healthy skin and a happy you, every day.



## But why eakin®?

- eakin **Cohesive**® seals are designed to prevent and protect against leaks better than any other seal by absorbing more output. In fact, they **absorb up to 4x more than competitor seals**.<sup>1</sup>
- eakin **Cohesive**® seals transform into a **protective gel**, a sign they are absorbing and this gel continues to protect your skin<sup>1</sup>
- eakin **Cohesive**® seals **easily moulds** to suit any stoma shape or size and there is a range of 4 to suit your needs.
- eakin **Cohesive**® seals are **skin friendly** even for sensitive skin

Plus, have you seen the new eakin **freeseal**®? All the same great benefits of the well-loved **eakin**® seals but only 1.8mm thin for a discreet and comfortable feel with convex pouches.

And new for 2022, eakin **Cohesive**® seals have been given a fresh new look – no change to the seals themselves, but a design upgrade that makes the cartons easier to use:

Greater discretion, with a fresh, simple and modern look

Simple, clear information on both cartons and instructions.



Internal seal gauge for small and slims variants - allows the user to know how many seals remain in the carton

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Easy to lift peel tabs on all blisters.



So what are you waiting for? Make every day a good day and add an eakin seal to your regular stoma care routine today. Let us know how you're getting on!

To find out more or to order a sample visit [www.pelicanhealthcare.co.uk/eakin-cohesive-seals/](http://www.pelicanhealthcare.co.uk/eakin-cohesive-seals/)

<sup>1</sup> Mc Grogan G, Haughey S and McDowell K (2018) An absorbent, enzyme-inhibiting seal reduces peristomal skin complications. *Gastrointestinal Nursing* 16:1 42-4

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<sup>1</sup> Mc Groggan G, Haughey S and McDowell K (2018) An absorbent, enzyme-inhibiting seal reduces peristomal skin complications. Gastrointestinal Nursing 16:1 42-4



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# MORE THAN A BEAR

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[www.buttonybear.org.uk](http://www.buttonybear.org.uk)



Supporting children and  
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Registered Charity

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# Main

## Winter vegetable pie

Prep time: under 15 mins

Cooking time: 45 mins

Serves: 4

### Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onions, sliced
- 1 tbsp flour
- 300g (about 2 large) carrot, cut into small batons
- ½ cauliflower, broken into small florets
- 4 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 1 rosemary sprig, leaves finely chopped
- 400g can chopped tomato
- 200g frozen pea
- 900g potato, cut into chunks
- up to 200ml/7fl oz milk



### Recipe card

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/winter-vegetable-pie>

### Method:



#### STEP 1

Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a flameproof dish over a medium heat. Add the onions and cook for 10 mins until softened, then stir in the flour and cook for a further 2 mins. Add the carrots, cauliflower, garlic and rosemary, and cook for 5 mins, stirring regularly, until they begin to soften.

#### STEP 2

Tip the tomatoes into the vegetables along with a can full of water. Cover with a lid and simmer for 10 mins, then remove the lid and cook for 10–15 mins more, until the sauce has thickened and the vegetables are cooked. Season, stir in the peas and cook for 1 min more.

#### STEP 3

Meanwhile, boil the potatoes for 10–15 mins until tender. Drain, then place back in the saucepan and mash. Stir through enough milk to reach a fairly soft consistency, then add the remaining olive oil and season.

#### STEP 4

Heat the grill. Spoon the hot vegetable mix into a pie dish, top with the mash and drag a fork lightly over the surface. Place under the grill for a few mins until the top is crisp golden brown.



# Latest blogs...

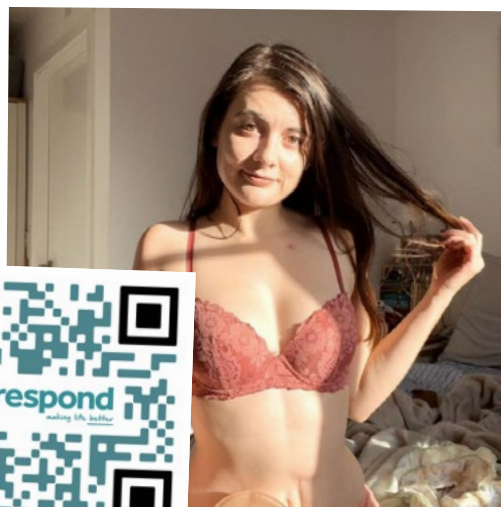
Our digital team has been busy collaborating with our amazing brand ambassadors once again, to bring you insightful blogs covering a wide range of topics over on our blog section of the website. For this issue, we've handpicked some which cover important health issues, which we hope will be helpful for you:

## Gynae talk: Periods, Less Organs & Having No Bum After Surgery

by Amy

[@ibdwarriorprincess](#) talks all things gynae & female health with a stoma - from phantom rectum, contraceptives, periods to Barbie butt surgery.

Scan the QR code to the right or visit <https://www.respondco.uk/2022/11/15/gynae-talk-periods-less-organs-having-no-bum-after-surgery-by-amy/> to read.



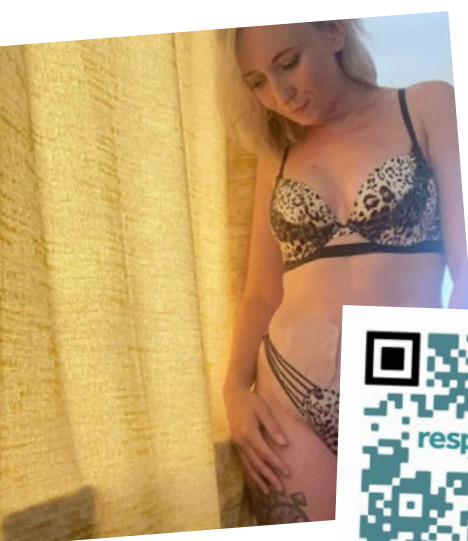
## Men's Mental Health Month

by Keith

[@keiththom2014](#) shares his thoughts and reflections on mens mental health, role models and the importance of raising awareness.

Scan the QR code to the left or visit <https://www.respondco.uk/2022/11/15/mens-health-month-by-keith/> to read.

# Latest blogs...



## Stoma Surgery & Mental Health by Charlotte

@char.crohnsftwilson opens up about  
mental health struggles with a stoma

Scan the QR code to the left with your  
smartphone or visit  
[https://www.pelicanhealthcare.co.uk/stoma-  
surgery-mental-health/](https://www.pelicanhealthcare.co.uk/stoma-surgery-mental-health/) to read.

We hope you've enjoyed reading our brand ambassadors' blogs.  
More are available to read on our websites [respond.co.uk/blog](https://respond.co.uk/blog) and  
[pelicanhealthcare.co.uk/ostomate-blog](https://pelicanhealthcare.co.uk/ostomate-blog).

Do you have a question for one of our ambassadors or would  
you like to tell us about your story or experience? If so,  
please send an email to

**marketing@respond.co.uk**

and a member of our fantastic digital team will contact you!

# Body confidence with a stoma

by Maryrose

As the saying goes.. the best weight you will ever lose is the weight of other people's opinions of you! Others opinions have a lot to do with how we feel about ourselves and with social media on the rise what people think is 'normal' can highly impact how we feel about how we look.

With airbrushing, sucking in, picture perfect bodies all over the internet and magazines it can be tough to accept the 'not so normal' image. Due to my surgeries, I have been left with heavy scarring and a stoma bag. On top of this I have stretch marks and sagging skin in areas. Am I in perfect shape? No! Have I accepted my body for all it has been through? Yes!



## Changing my way of thinking

When I first had my stoma bag surgery, I struggled a lot to accept how my body had changed. I hated the stoma bag and the scars and everything else that came with it. I hid myself away from everyone and wore pyjamas all day everyday as the thought of even getting dressed and going out to face the world with how I looked was to over whelming but deep down I knew I wouldn't be here today without any of this. Each day as I got stronger and learned my way with my stoma bag and watched as the scars healed, I began to change my way of thinking towards my body and how it looked. I

learned how my scars had reminded me of wars I had won, cancer being the biggest, and slowly but surely, I realised that there were so many others out there with the not so perfect image that we have been programmed to think is 'normal'. As I have grown more confident in myself and have accepted how I look it's like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. When I realised, I could wear all the things I wanted to wear such as a bikini, and I didn't have to hide away in baggy clothing my confidence grew even more but this was a process and has taken a lot of work mentally and physically to get to where I am today.

### Embracing my flaws

Embracing myself, flaws and all has been so empowering. We all have lumps and bumps and things we don't necessarily love about ourselves but by accepting this as part of you and learning to love yourself flaws and all will not only improve your mental health but also lift so many barriers that prevent you doing the things you love, wearing the things you want and being your true self.

Maryrose @big\_c\_stomaandme



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# Dessert

## Jam roly-poly

**Prep time:** Under 30 mins

**Cook:** 30 mins - 1 hour

**Serves:** 6

### Ingredients:

- softened butter, for greasing
- 200g/7oz self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
- 100g/3½oz shredded suet
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- good pinch salt
- 150ml/5fl oz semi-skimmed milk or water
- 6–7 tbsp raspberry or strawberry jam



### Recipe card

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/jam\\_roly\\_poly\\_36901](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/jam_roly_poly_36901)

### Method:



**STEP 1** Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6. Butter a large sheet of baking paper and set aside.

**STEP 2** Stir the flour, suet, sugar and salt in a large bowl until fully combined. Slowly stir in the milk to form a soft, spongy dough.

**STEP 3** Tip the dough out onto a floured surface and knead for a few minutes. Roll the dough out to a 22cm x 32cm/8½in x 13in rectangle.

**STEP 4** Spread the jam onto the dough, leaving a 1.5cm/½in border. Gently roll the dough up from the short end and transfer to the greaseproof paper, seam-side down. Wrap the roly poly in the baking paper, making a long pleat in the paper to allow the pudding to expand as it cooks. Twist the ends of the paper like a Christmas cracker and tie tightly with kitchen string, to seal the pudding inside. Repeat the process with a large piece of kitchen foil.

**STEP 5** Place the pudding onto a roasting rack set on a deep-sided roasting tin. Pour boiling water halfway up the roasting tin and cook in the oven for 30–35 minutes.

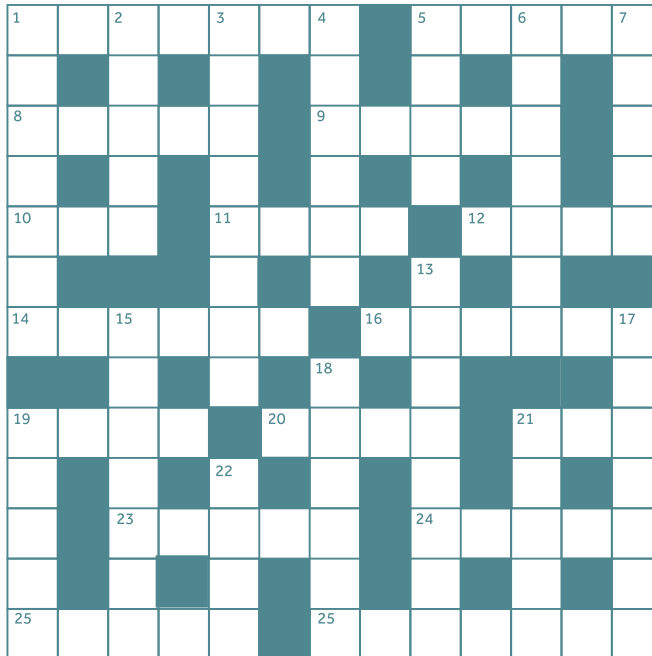
**STEP 6** Remove the pudding from the oven, unwrap the kitchen foil, then snip the string and unwrap the paper.

**STEP 7** The pudding should be well risen and lightly browned in places. Don't worry if the jam has made its way through to the outside of the pudding a little – it will taste all the more delicious.

**STEP 8** Put on a board or serving plate and cut into thick slices. Serve with lots of hot custard or cream.

# Puzzle page

## CATCH WORDS



### Across

1. An \_\_\_\_ illusion (7)
5. Full of \_\_\_\_ (5)
8. The \_\_\_\_ of reason (5)
9. Heads or \_\_\_\_ (5)
10. The mighty \_\_\_\_ (3)
11. Fly the \_\_\_\_ (4)
12. Look before you \_\_\_\_ (4)
14. \_\_\_\_ of influence (6)
16. \_\_\_\_ for courses (6)
19. His bark is worse than his \_\_\_\_ (4)
20. Over the \_\_\_\_ (4)
21. Vanished into thin \_\_\_\_ (3)
23. \_\_\_\_ and doves (5)
24. All to no \_\_\_\_ (5)
25. \_\_\_\_ pole (5)
26. Snakes and \_\_\_\_ (7)

### Down

1. Stating the \_\_\_\_ (7)
2. \_\_\_\_ and thin (5)
3. Taken to the \_\_\_\_ (8)
4. The \_\_\_\_ news (6)
5. Take the \_\_\_\_ (4)
6. Questions and \_\_\_\_ (7)
7. Counting \_\_\_\_ (5)
13. A \_\_\_\_ spiral (8)
15. Bury the \_\_\_\_ (7)
17. \_\_\_\_ to requirements (7)
18. \_\_\_\_ fuel (6)
19. Beauty and the \_\_\_\_ (5)
21. Wide \_\_\_\_ (5)
22. Sink or \_\_\_\_ (4)

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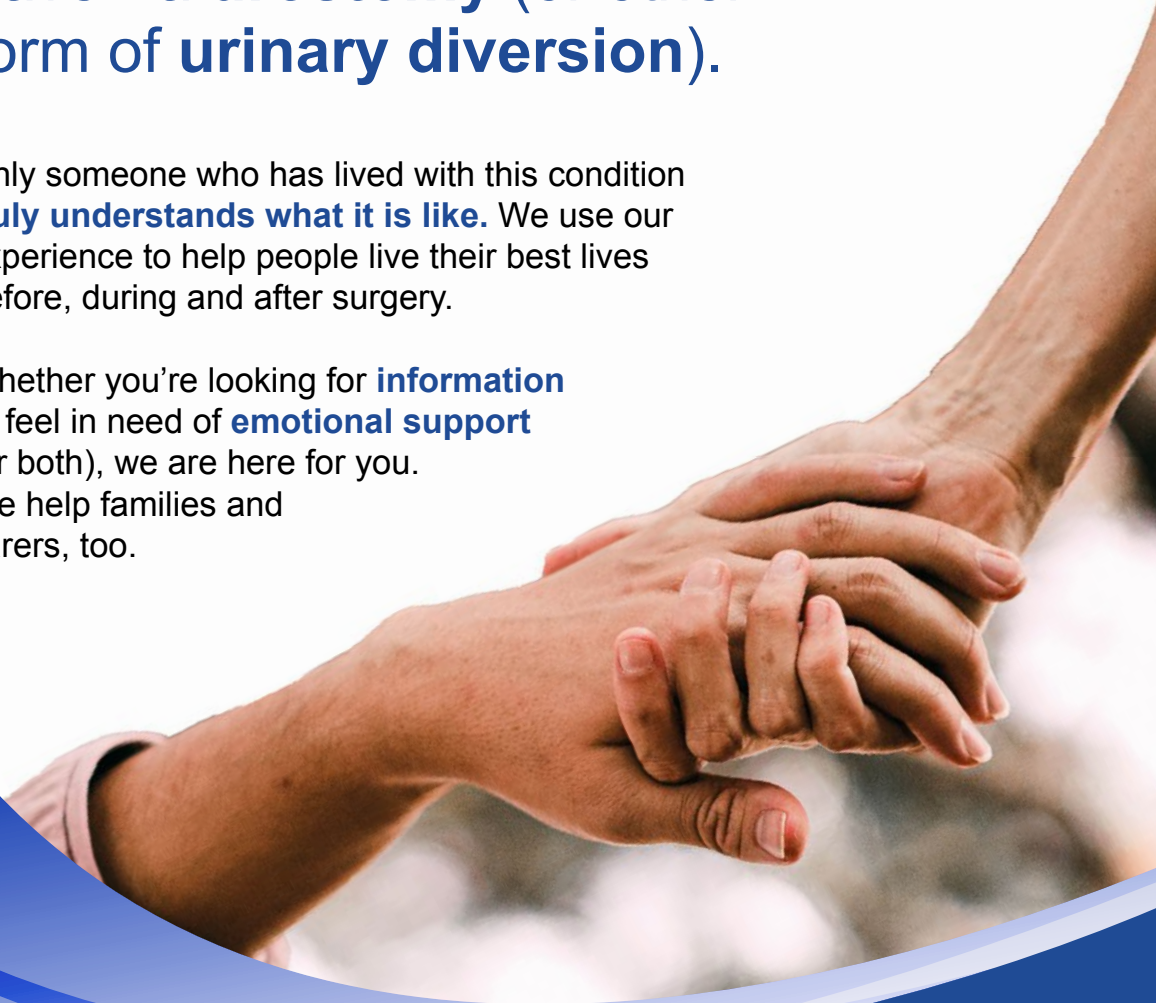




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# Puzzle page

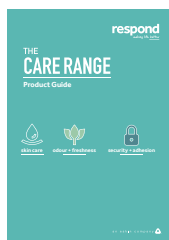
## CATCH WORDS

# Answers

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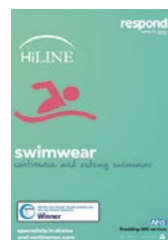
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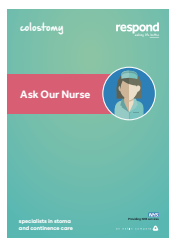
MENTALHEALTHBOOK ☐



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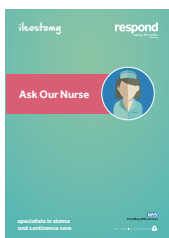


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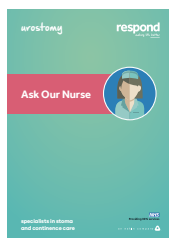
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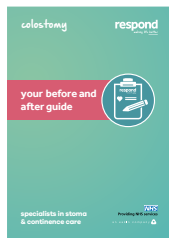
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ENGLISH ☐

WELSH ☐

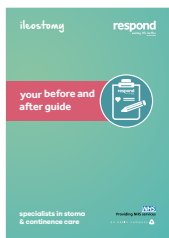


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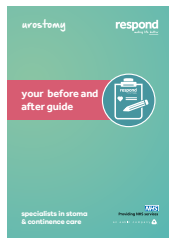


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