



PHOTOS: (Top) A celebration was held in Paisley on October 11 for the presentation of certificates to those who passed the CDMP examination in 2017. Also in attendance was Graham Halsey (far right) and Dr. Friedrich Mehrhoff (not pictured).

(Bottom) On October 27, a second event was held in Leven to recognize new CDMPs. Joining the celebration were Graham Halsey (far left) and Wolfgang Zimmermann.

Committed Professionals Meeting Societal Challenges in Scotland



In October, two events were held to recognize dedicated disability management professionals who passed the seven-hour examination to become Certified Disability Management Professionals (CDMPs). The celebrations were held in the Scottish towns of Paisley and Leven. Dr. Friedrich Mehrhoff, Director of Rehabilitation for the German statutory accident insurance (DGUV), congratulated the new designation holders in Paisley, and Wolfgang Zimmermann of NIDMAR participated in the Leven celebration.





October 2017 – NIDMAR's Executive Director, Wolfgang Zimmermann, told the group in Leven: "Scotland, like many other jurisdictions around the world is facing the inevitability of too many individuals staying in the social security system for prolonged periods of time, with system outflow rates of between 0.65 and 0.85%. Eighty-five percent of impairments, whether of a mental or physical health nature, occur during an individual's working life. Fortunately, dedicated workplace-based job retention strategies and programs have shown the greatest amount of evidence-based results with individuals who acquire an impairment.

Employers and society are seeing major win-win-win outcomes: the individual affected continues to remain as a fully contributing member of society, the employer retains valuable workers, and the social security system inflow is significantly reduced. And, it is important to acknowledge that it is the very committed disability management professionals working on the front line who are out there making a difference every day."

The celebration for the event in Leven was organized by Duncan Mitchell, the General Manager for the Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT)* who was also instrumental in obtaining the funding and working with Graham Halsey with Working Well Matters to deliver the NIDMAR modules. "There is no question that the NIDMAR courses led our people through a journey of understanding the benefits of returning individuals to work after a disabling illness or injury, and equip them with the skills to work with employers to discuss reasonable adjustments as well as help develop absence policies that are beneficial to all parties," Mitchell explained.

This sentiment was echoed by Michelle Austin, former Chair and current HR advisor to FEAT, in her valedictorian address to the group of new grads. "The NIDMAR training built on our existing skills and professional knowledge required to do our specialist roles, giving us a common language to use and helping us work more efficiently together for the benefit of the individual clients assisting them to retain their employment or make a successful transition to a new one."

Austin went on to describe an incident that happened shortly after writing the CDMP exam. A client called her in

a panic asking for help to bring an employee back to work who had been off long term following an illness. Drawing upon her recent studies, she quickly described a return to work process that would include working with the union which was a concern her client had expressed.

At the end of the phone call, Austin says, "The client took a deep breath and said, 'Thank you Michelle. I know exactly what we need to do now and why we need to do it. You have filled me with every confidence that we will achieve the best outcome for all.'"

Graham Halsey, Director of Working Well Matters who facilitated the training of the NIDMAR modules, says that working in Scotland was a great opportunity to see how the public and private sectors of health and employment services can and do work together. "The individuals on the courses brought with them a wealth of knowledge and were keen to take things to a new level. In the UK, working with employers is a relatively new concept and we spent many hours looking at the benefits to all parties," he said. "It would be fair to say that some found this easier than others, but eventually they got the message, and it truly was a 'light bulb moment'. The value of working as a team gave everyone a newfound confidence to go out and try it."

One of the new CDMPs in Paisley, Jay Reid, an Occupational Therapist for Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board, says that since taking the training, she has discovered, "Just as Graham [Halsey] taught us, often the solution is something fairly straightforward. Using the AHP advisory fitness for work report allows me to create a detailed and robust return to work plan which can be passed on to employers when appropriate. The difference you see in someone's health and wellbeing when you support them back into work is wonderful, especially in mental health, as work provides so much positivity. Employees and employers alike are always very grateful for the advice and help given. The training will be something that will shape my career for years to come."

Another of the Paisley graduates, Nicola Lindsay, Lead Occupational Therapist, with Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership, says that as an occupational therapist she thought she knew a bit about return to work, but on taking the courses, realized there was much more to it. "The main points for me," she explained, "were discussing



return to work as soon as possible with someone, and keeping in contact with them on a regular basis, ensuring communication with all parties involved, and having a good understanding of what the job entails. It is amazing how often a simple adaptation to a work station can make a huge difference. The cost effectiveness for a company of getting an employee back to work is much more beneficial as opposed to recruiting a new staff member. As a line manager I have reflected a lot on return to work with my staff and have changed practices to incorporate what I've learned."

Graham Halsey says he finds that health professionals, as a result of taking the training, are more comfortable writing return to work plans in conjunction with fit notes. "In particular, mental health is seeing a transformation in services, and more and more people are using the CDMP approach as a basis to their practice, and individuals are benefitting."

On a final note, Duncan Mitchell wanted to be sure to acknowledge Wolfgang Zimmermann who travelled from Vancouver Island to present the CDMP certificates in Leven. "People were hugely impressed that he travelled so far, it made the occasion feel important; all the candidates and the representatives from our funders were overwhelmed by their thoughtfulness!"

For further information on the professional certification, please visit the NIDMAR website at: www.nidmar.ca

For information on the education program referenced, please visit the following website: <https://www.pcu-whs.ca/programs/continuing-professional-education/dmpc-program/>

For further information on the UK offerings of training and certification, please visit the following website: <https://www.idmsc-uk-ireland.org/becoming-certified/>

** The Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT) was established in 1994 by a group of people concerned about the lack of employment opportunities for people in Fife who had experienced mental health problems. The group, some of whom had personal experience, were very aware of the problems of finding a job and the stigma that prevails. FEAT's vision is to enable and support individuals to reach their full positive mental wellbeing in a culture where there is no stigma.*