



Monitor

Welcome to *Monitor* Issue 64



Nicky Gibbens
Manager, Personal Dosimetry Services, UKHSA

Hello, and welcome to Issue 64 of *Monitor*, the twice-yearly newsletter of the UK Health Security Agency's Personal Dosimetry Service (PDS).

We enjoyed a bit of an Indian summer – perhaps replacing the summer which we all should have had, but which turned out to be rather changeable (at best). Indian summer or not, this is the Autumn 2023 issue of *Monitor*, in which you will find news of some of the key developments within PDS over the last few months or so including:

- The PDS Technical Manager, Kinga Zmijewska, provides a report of PDS's attendance at EURADOS 2023 in the summer.
- I have written an overview of intercomparison work that we have undertaken recently with the Canadian Nuclear Laboratories in Ontario.

- We held our first ever PDS Open Day on Monday 23rd October in the UKHSA Training Centre in Chilton, Oxfordshire; now to be an annual event!
- PDS's Project Co-ordinator, Paul Wells, provides a short overview of the recent extensive expansion and refurbishment work being undertaken in the PDS Lab and Offices in Chilton.
- Earlier in 2023, and as part of our science outreach work, PDS supplied TLDs to Francis Holland School, a girls' academy in London, for the school's first venture into space; Hugh Schoenemann, PDS Customer Services Manager, provides a report.
- There is a short announcement of new starters who have joined us here in PDS throughout the year.
- Whilst things have improved dramatically post-pandemic, there is a short reminder of the importance of returning your dosimeters to us after their allotted wear period.

I trust that you find the articles in this issue of interest and, as usual, please let us know if your organisation would be interested in submitting a small piece for publication in a future issue of *Monitor*.

EURADOS Annual Meeting - Porto, Portugal 12th to 15th June 2023

The European Radiation Dosimetry Group (EURADOS) is a non-profit association for promoting research & development and European co-operation in the field of the dosimetry of ionising radiation. The aims of EURADOS are to increase the scientific understanding of the dosimetry of ionising radiation, and to harmonise the dosimetric procedures used within the EU and their conformance with international practices. EURADOS is made up of nine Working Groups with each one focusing on a different aspect of dosimetry. Once a year EURADOS organises an Annual Meeting where the members have a chance to meet within their Working Groups to network, discuss intercomparison results, and work together in specialist groups to solve problems or promote research identified by EURADOS.

This year the EURADOS Annual Meeting took place in Porto, Portugal, with more than 300 scientists participating in the conference, making it the best-attended so far. Nicky Gibbens, Head of Service at PDS, and Kinga Zmijewska, PDS Technical Manager, both attended the conference this year; Nicky is an associate member of Working Group 2, *Harmonisation of Individual Monitoring*, and is also involved in specialist task groups. Kinga was a first-time attendee, having won a Young Scientist Support grant for the conference,

using the opportunity to present some recent work at the Working Group 2 meeting. There was plenty of opportunity to network and share experiences with colleagues from across Europe. The EURADOS school was held on the final day of the conference, this year's topic being *Contribution of Dosimetry in the Field of Nuclear Emergency Preparedness & Radiological Accident Management*, which was both interesting and a great way to conclude the conference.

Next year's Annual Meeting will be held in Oxford and will be hosted by UKHSA colleagues.



UKHSA/PDS, Francis Holland School and the Field of Space Exploration



Hugh Schoenemann
PDS Customer Services Manager

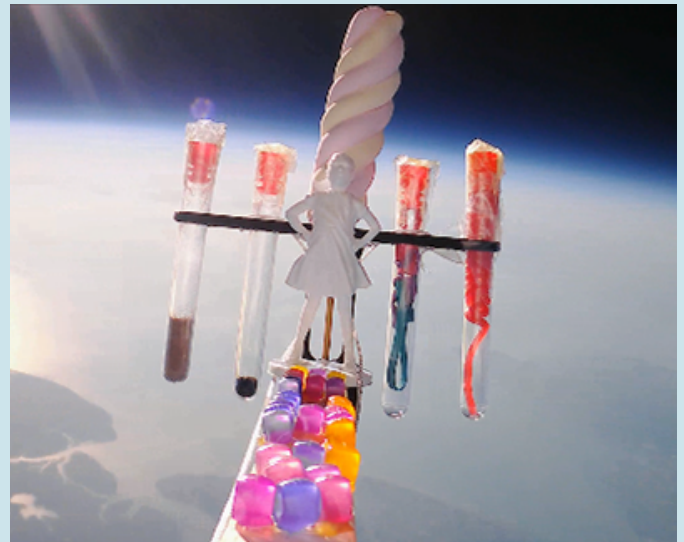
On Sunday 25th June 2023, UKHSA/PDS assisted Francis Holland School (FHS), a girls' academy in London, in taking their first step in the field of space exploration; PDS provided the school with several experimental TLDs – a move that demonstrates the importance placed by us on our continued science outreach work with schools and colleges.

A team of FHS Year 12 students were all raring to go by 3:30 that morning to launch a payload that they had spent months designing and building themselves; the payload was designed to be lifted using a high-altitude helium balloon measuring a few metres across, much like those used by organisations such as the Met Office. Having received clearance from UK air traffic control at Swanwick in Hampshire, FHS were “Go for Launch”, at which point the balloon was expertly inflated with helium, its buoyancy was tested by the team, and the 15-metre line between the balloon, its parachute and the payload was double-checked before countdown and release.

Following its launch at 5:45am from Vincent Square in central London, the balloon soared to a maximum height of 28,583.7 metres and experienced temperatures as low as -48.6 degrees Celsius, before finally going “pop” (*a technical term? – Ed.*) and parachuting back to Earth. FHS's tracking technology and the expert map-reading skills of school staff indicated that it had landed near Thaxted in Essex. The landing site proved to be an idyllic wheat field so, anxious to avoid making their own crop circle, staff and students took great care in looking for the probe which, when finally found, turned out to be almost completely intact.

As well as PDS's TLDs, the balloon transported cargo including cameras, data loggers, GPS trackers, Radio Frequency transmitters and other experiments that will be used to help students carry out tests to understand how different materials respond to atmospheric conditions. FHS's space camera captured some incredible footage of the balloon's journey; the picture at right shows the students' test-tube assembly and *Fearless Girl* mascot juxtaposed against the Earth's curvature and atmosphere – a thin, blue line contrasting against the blackness of space.

Francis Holland School obtained a treasure trove of physics data to analyse, the students involved having experienced a real-world challenge and then delivered a solution on time and on budget – quite an achievement in this modern day and age. Congratulations and well done from all at PDS!



STOP PRESS – THE PERSONAL DOSIMETRY SERVICE HOSTED ITS FIRST OPEN DAY

On Monday 23rd October 2023, PDS hosted its first ever Open Day at its premises in Chilton, Oxfordshire, the day being a great opportunity for PDS customers, prospective customers and other stakeholders to meet the PDS team.

As some of you may know, the PDS Lab and office spaces in Chilton have undergone a program of expansion and refurbishment over recent months, the intention being that this work will position PDS to deliver two things:

- To provide even greater levels of service to our customers and other stakeholders, over and above the quality of service for which PDS is renowned;
- In part driven by UKHSA experiences during the recent pandemic, to better position the department to be able to offer a full Emergency Response function in the event of a radiation incident.

We ran four sessions on the day as follows at 10:00am, 11:00am, 2:30pm and 3:30pm with a tour of our refurbished facilities plus visitors were able to attend short presentations on our new customer portal, and other work the group are currently involved in. Members of our Radon and Radiation Metrology groups were also on hand to answer questions on their services.

PDS Refurbishment

UKHSA PDS has been going through an extensive refurbishment program during 2023, work that has included renovating office space for our Customer Services-, Dose Records- and Operations teams. As well as this refurb work, we have also had extensive work completed in creating a brand-new Laboratory, allowing us to cater for increased dosimeter volumes for our customers.

Within the newly refurbished rooms will be several new and upgraded pieces of equipment, including a brand-new wrapper machine which was delivered in October; this new

piece of kit is both faster and more efficient than the existing wrapper that we have.

This essential refurbishment work has allowed us to increase capacity and improve the whole department, which we believe will allow us to continue providing our customers with this essential service.

The images show how the works and equipment are coming along and were all available to be viewed at our first PDS Open Day on Monday 23rd October (see elsewhere in this issue for an event article).



Please Return Your Dosimeters

We mentioned it last time in the Spring 2023 issue of *Monitor* (Issue 63), but please remember to return your dosimeters to us here in PDS at the end of their wear period.

Events during the last three years or so, including the pandemic and postal strikes, led to many dosimeters not being returned to us or their being delayed or lost in transit. Without doubt things have improved since our short reminder to this effect back in the spring, so we are taking this final opportunity to remind you to keep those dosimeters coming!

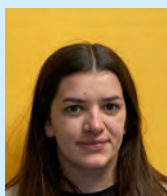
This is the friendly way we do things here in PDS, because the alternative, as you can see on the right, is just not the way we work

Judge Dredd® Copyright © Rebellion 2000 AD Ltd. Used with permission. Artwork by Brian Bolland. We in PDS are indebted to Rebellion 2000 AD Ltd. in Oxford for their kind permission to use the image above.

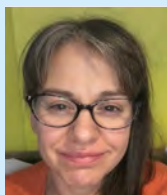


Say “Hello” to Our New PDS Staff ...

As some of you will know, PDS has an ever-increasing workload as we grow our customer base and as our customers’ needs also change. In this issue of *Monitor* we have described already our Lab refurb and expansion work to allow for this growth, but it is also worth noting that PDS has also taken on some new staff this year in order to assist with our increasing workload.



Charlotte Lawrence joined us in February this year as part of our Customer Services team.



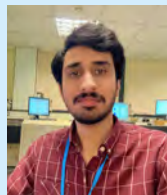
Kate Prince came on board in the spring as part of our Dose Record Keeping team.

Martina Foy joined PDS in September, again as part of our Customer Services team.

Tabitha King came on board back in the summer to take on the role of Lab Supervisor.



Joe Foy joined us in August - yet another member of our Customer Services team.



Muhammad Masood joined PDS in the summer as a Lab Technician.



Deanna Beech who has joined our Operations team.



Emma-Rose Bouffler joined the Dose Record Keeping team in September this year.

Stay connected with the Personal Dosimetry Service (PDS)

Contact

Prefix 01235 (unless*)

Nicky Gibbens, PDS Manager	825334	Laboratories: –	
Christina Hoddinott, Co-ordination & Records Manager	825337	TLD & Extremity	825353
Kinga Zmijewska, Technical Operations Manager	825178	Neutron (Leeds)*	0113 267 9041
Richard Burkett, Dosimetry Manager	825349	Customer Services (CS): –	
Hugh Schoenemann, Customer Services Manager	825412	CS Team (NB: All calls are rotated)	825240
Dosemeter Logistics Office	825339	Please note, all email addresses have now been migrated to @ukhsa.gov.uk although our old PHE emails will continue to work for some time.	
Dose Records Office (NB: All calls are rotated)	825230		
Dose Records e-mail:	doserecords@ukhsa.gov.uk		
Customer Services e-mail:	customerservices@ukhsa.gov.uk		
General PDS e-mail:	personaldosimetry@ukhsa.gov.uk		

A REMINDER THAT, IN KEEPING WITH ITS CONTINUED “GREEN AGENDA”, PDS NOW SENDS OUT PAPERLESS REPORTS ONLY AS A MATTER OF ROUTINE. THE AIM IS TO HELP PRESERVE OUR ENVIRONMENT BOTH THROUGH REDUCTION IN PAPER USE AND THE ASSOCIATED REDUCTION IN TRANSPORTATION. FOR THOSE CLIENTS STILL WISHING TO RECEIVE REPORTS IN PAPER FORM, A FLAT FEE OF £100 PER ANNUM APPLIES.