Elimination of government restrictions and its impact within Leg Clubs®

Ellie Lindsay, OBE, FQNI
Life President, The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, Ipswich, UK
ellie.lindsay@legclub.org

Since Covid-19 impacted our lives in March 2020, it has been a worrying time for many volunteers and members within their Leg Clubs; imposed restrictions have meant either suspending their operations or significantly changing their operational policies to adhere to NHS directives during the Covid-19 crisis.

In essence, Leg Clubs are a face-to-face service where social relationships are formed between persons in physical proximity to one another. However, the global Covid-19 crisis had an impact on how healthcare was delivered to curb the spread of the virus. The imposed social distancing regulations on public venues led to the temporary suspension of many Leg Clubs. Hence the news of Covid-19 restrictions finally being lifted in the UK were met with mixed feelings by some, as people volunteering and socialising in Leg Clubs continue to have concerns regarding these changes, and how it might impact them. To compliment the NHS provider policies, revised 'Tips' were produced on how Leg Clubs can safely reopen, with appropriate NHS and Government website links provided.

While this is good news, for many individuals the lifting of restrictions could feel like a dramatic change to their way of life and may lead to feelings of anxiety and/or stress related emotions. Regardless of age, many people have been worried about the virus for a long time, and it is hard to switch off such feelings overnight. Thus, it is a positive move that the government's easing of restrictions has allowed us to get back to delivering treatment and care within the Leg Clubs. However, one must acknowledge that it would be challenging to immediately get back and reintegrate into the community and to undertake things we used to enjoy. Ultimately, there is no denying that even volunteers will face many challenges and will have to readjust to how they delivered care.

For this reason, the priority of the Leg Club clinical team is to support their volunteers and members – that being worried about the speed of lifting restrictions and the accompanying changes, or the apprehension of returning as a Leg Club volunteer or member (patient) while not knowing what the future may hold, is an accepted emotion. Utilising the clinical skills of communication, many Leg Club teams reassured their volunteers and members that feelings of anxiety are likely to pass with time as one gets used to the 'new normal', whilst stressing the importance of, and providing advice on how to take care of their physical health and general wellbeing.

To regain an individual's confidence, mental health, and overall wellbeing, the clinical teams provided outstanding commitment and support towards their volunteers and members by reassuring and encouraging their volunteers and members to reintegrate back into their local Leg Club and begin socialising again. As Leg Clubs have started to reopen, many members and volunteers have found it helpful to gradually ease back and start small social areas again. However, they acknowledge that some things may be different in the future – like people shaking hands or hugging each other.

The Leg Club Foundation is very aware that for many individuals, returning to their Leg Club may feel more problematic as some might have concerns over rising cases or new variants. However, we have Leg Clubs in England, Wales, and Scotland and each nation has specific rules in place around face masks, and different arrangements around when and where they will no longer be required by law. The wearing of face masks has played an important role in reducing the spread of Covid-19. As they become voluntary in different parts of the UK, it will be up to each Leg Club team to consider the risks and benefits of wearing them, but each team has a professional duty to adhere to their local NHS providers' guidelines.

2022 Journal of Wound Care Awards evening

A well-deserved congratulations on an outstanding achievement for Legs Matter

The ethos of person centred care, public health and clinical education is at the heart of the Leg Club Foundation charity, so we were naturally delighted to be invited to support and actively participate with the Journal of Wound Care and the World Union of Wound Healing Societies (JWC WUWHS) awards held in Abu Dhabi, March 2022.

It was a privilege and joyous moment to announce the nominations and overall winner for the 'Contribution to

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Education in Wound Care' JWC Award category. More so, it was a great pleasure to announce Sarah Gardener, Chair of Legs Matter as the winner. It was a fantastic achievement and well deserved, as receiving the award recognised the hard work, time, and commitment of the collaborative societies involved. The collaborative organisations have made considerable progress by transforming the level of awareness of its Legs Matter activities within the NHS circles and with the public at large.

The accolade of receiving the award acknowledged the exceptional contributions the Legs Matter campaign has achieved since its inception by providing patients and their families a voice through public health and education. Hence, it was an honour to contribute and represent all that is best in the healthcare profession.

2022 WUWHS meeting, Abu Dhabi

Advocating for leg health within a social model of care

As a Sister Associate (non-voting), the Leg Club movement was again delighted to collaborate with the World Union of Wound Healing Societies (WUWHS) chaired by Professor Keith Harding and Ellie Lindsay. The Club actively participated through a symposium programme representing the WUWHS advocacy panel and organised presentations addressing person centred care.

The International Patient and Carer Advocacy Panel (created by Ellie Lindsay (chair) and Roland Renyi (secretariat) on behalf of the International Leg Club scientific committee) believes that a multi-faceted approach that empowers those experiencing leg and foot related problems, along with those who care for them, is the only way to ensure that effective treatment is provided. Our international symposium at WUWHS focused on ways to bridge the gaps between those providing healthcare and those receiving it, so that treatment can always be a partnership between healthcare providers and healthcare users. The joint vision of this international consensus group is to empower and improve quality of life for individuals receiving wound care in the following ways:

- Develop a practical algorithm for practitioners and easy to read public information literature
- Disseminate information to support individuals and their families from admission to pre-discharge
- Develop a programme to educate and involve physicians more proactively in the wound management process
- Ensure the pre-admission and post discharge assessment process is interactive.

These resources were officially launched and presented in March 2022 at the WUWHS Congress and are freely available for health professionals and consumers.

As a global society we are navigating through challenging times and together we want to ensure that, when it comes to the long-term care of those who are suffering from long term chronic conditions such as leg ulceration, no-one gets left behind. Symposium videos and IPCAP leaflets are available on the Leg Club website: www.legclub.org

Ellie Lindsay presenting the JWC WUWHS Award for 'Contribution to Education in WoundCare'

The International Society of Paediatric Woundcare (ISPeW) Sister Society

Taking care of a child / young person with an illness or a wound is a difficult and challenging task a parent can face; for this reason, the ISPeW was created as an organisation dedicated to caring for and supporting children who need specialist wound care http://www.ispew.org/. By building strong relationships with the child and their family, ISPeW helps both the child and family to make changes which, in some cases, can be life-changing.

As a Sister Associate, the ISPeW board held their international symposium chaired by two board members - Professor Marco Romanelli and Ellie Lindsay. The central theme of the ISPeW symposium was outlining the importance of communication between healthcare professionals, children, and their families. Presentations by the board of trustees were eclectic and central to the multidisciplinary team's decision-making regarding navigating referral pathways, treatment and care. The wide range of topics covered all aspects of care ranging from dermatology to issues relating to trauma of children in war-torn regions. Symposium videos are available on the Leg Club website www.legclub.org WUWHS general programme.

Also featured in the WUWHS conference programme was the work of the psychosocial Leg Club model confronting issues relating to person-centred care. The presentations addressed the broader influences on health, social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors as opposed to just disease and injury. As

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the Leg Club model continues to grow and gain recognition internationally, with almost 17 000 members worldwide and approximately 200 volunteers at our fifty UK Clubs, we are seeing concrete evidence of the clinical effectiveness of this model, where volunteers, members and healthcare professionals all collaborate within a social model of care (McIntyre et al, 2020).

McIntyre N, Galazka AM, Lindsay E, Bawden R, Renyi R. A relational database within the Leg Club Network: an audit. Int Wound J. 2020;1–9. https://doi.org/10. 1111/iwj.13522

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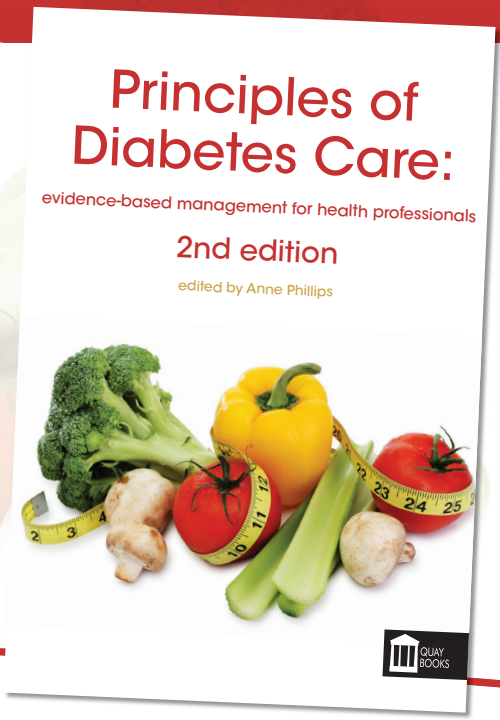

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