

The ‘Best Foot Forward’ Leg Club



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The ‘Best Foot Forward’ Leg Club was conceived after urgently wanting to help people with leg ulcers at our practice and discovering the Leg Club Foundation. A trip to Bradford upon Avon Leg Club with a GP colleague turned out to be inspirational; we talked for 2 hours on the way home about how we could start our own Leg Club. Our idea started to take shape.

WHERE DO YOU START?

Our idea to form our own Leg Club was supported by our practice partners and business manager, and our proposal to the CCG Locality to help us with the set-up costs was successful.

Next came the most daunting part of the development: how to form a volunteer committee? Thanks to a number of coffee mornings, we were able to enthuse a fantastic group of volunteers, who formed our Leg Club committee. The patient participation group were asked to come up with a catchy name and ‘Best Foot Forward’ (BFF) was voted the most popular name for our Leg Club.

After a busy few months finding premises, purchasing equipment, sourcing transport (vital for our area) and meeting Ellie Lindsay, everything seemed in place. Thanks to hard work from the Adam Practice clinical staff and the BFF Leg Club committee, we finally opened on 29th October 2015.

Within a few weeks, members called the Leg Club “our club”, developed new friendships and got actively involved in fundraising for the Leg Club. We started to refer to this as the ‘ripple effect’ and it has continued to grow over the last 6 months.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

There are many examples of how the BFF Leg Club has helped people: one lady, who walks with an aid and who had not been out of the house for over 3 months, now comes every week thanks to Mike, our minibus driver, who collects her. She is able to sit with her new group of friends, chatting and drinking tea, with a smile on her face.

Another example are the two brothers, who used to describe themselves as “grumpy, miserable old men.” Within a few weeks, they

turned up shaven, freshly washed, wearing clean clothes. They have become a centre point of the club, offering to beat anyone at the board game ‘Connect 4’ and coming up with many ideas for further social activities. We have even been at risk of needing to buy wedding hats with a prospective new relationship at BFF Leg Club.

CLINICAL IMPACT

The Adam Practice nursing team, along with the District Nurse teams, now deliver weekly care, sharing their expertise in lower limb wound management and encouraging patient self-help. Some patients, who had previously attended surgeries 3–5 times a week for approximately an hour each visit, are now typically seen once a week at the Leg Club and once in the surgery. Their compliance has greatly improved and their keenness to keep the BFF Leg Club going is voiced to anyone who visits.

After 6 months of being open, the BFF Leg Club feels firmly established, has 96 members and is starting to demonstrate improved healing rates. We are currently looking for larger premises to offer further opportunities to improve members’ health, such as offering a weekly armchair exercise class.

Another exciting opportunity has arisen for the BFF Leg Club to participate in a research project to review strategies to improve health and wellbeing. This research project is intended to be an exploration to improve compliance and wound healing and how it can reduce low mood/depression and medication interventions. All findings would be published, hopefully, highlighting the qualitative aspect of Leg Clubs.

With continued investment in the BFF Leg Club, we can further evolve the different elements of the BFF, passing on any improvements to our members/local area. We have a vision of the BFF Leg Club becoming a centre of excellence for lower leg care in our local area. The success of the BFF Leg Club shows that we in primary care can change and improve service provision, helping patients to improve their quality of life, making it fun for all involved.

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