

The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation: reflections as Outgoing Chair



In March of this year I will step down as Chair of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, after holding this post for 3 years. To be honest I have no idea why this would be of the slightest interest to anyone. All I can say is that maybe a short description of the past 3 years might resonate with those of you who have dedicated yourselves to wound care, which seems to me to be one of the most difficult, unrecognised, unglamorous, under-funded and under-appreciated fields in health care, but in some strange way at times the most rewarding.

It was 6 years ago that I met Ellie Lindsay on a plane to a conference in Cape Town and became, shortly afterwards, a trustee of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation. I worked on a number of diverse projects (many of them new experiences for me) and after a couple of years the opportunity to chair the Foundation came at the same time as I decided to take some time out of business.

So what did I find 3 years ago, and what did I learn? As many of you know, the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation supports the Leg Club model, and the network of over 30 Leg Clubs that exist in the UK (along with 1 in Germany and 10 in Australia), which provide treatment for people suffering from leg ulceration and associated conditions within a social model of care. The Leg Club network has more than 10 500 registered members in the UK alone.

Effectiveness

Each Leg Club has its own unique atmosphere but you only need to walk into one to see the positive impact that it provides to its members, and the dedication of the nurses and volunteers who want to make a difference to their lives. That was the first thing that I found as I started to visit Leg Clubs, and I was very keen that in some way we could quantify the different ways that the model had an impact on its members and other stakeholders.

A lot of this work had been done already, through retrospective analyses and the introduction of a new outcomes database within Leg Clubs, and it became clear to us that just the recurrence rates of leg ulcers for members attending Leg Clubs were much lower than the national average. As

chair, I was very keen to make this public, and I have tried to communicate, present and publish this information as often as I could over the past 3 years, as the implications for members' lives (and indeed, the burden on the NHS) are very significant. We have now started a programme of research on clinical outcomes and will be publishing information this year on healing rates and healing times for simple and complex leg ulcers – we have the largest database on leg ulceration in the world.

Again, I was keen to communicate the potential cost savings incurred through the model, as a study in Powys had demonstrated considerable savings in district nursing time. A project recently completed by the University of Swansea provided some cost modelling and suggested that the savings to the NHS (excluding those to be gained by superior clinical outcomes) would be in the region of £150 million if the model was adopted nationally. Thanks to our excellent fundraiser we were able to invest in this review and we expect a paper to be published very soon.

Patient satisfaction and wellbeing are popular concepts these days and we were keen to demonstrate how the Leg Club model impacts on its members in this way. Work produced prior to my chairmanship highlighted the very high levels of member satisfaction through an audit conducted by Professor Mike Clark, and two papers were published by Dominic and Penney Upton on the concept of wellbeing as applied to leg ulceration and the positive impact on wellbeing that Leg Clubs clearly have. I have spent much of the past 3 years shouting about this to whoever was prepared to listen, hopefully with more work to come in this field.

Department of Health

Our relationship with the Department of Health (DH) has deepened over the past 3 years. Again, a lot of ground work done by others enabled us to receive a very generous grant from the DH which produced a raft of materials for Leg Club volunteers, nurses and members to understand and share best practice. I hope that I was able to steer this project through in its initial stages, much improved and built upon by my fellow trustees as it developed.

Strategy

As a Foundation, it was important for us to develop a concrete and enduring strategy and I think that we managed to achieve

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this over the past 3 years. Our final strategic plan, completed last year, describes in detail our strategy for growth, sustainability, education, communication with Leg Clubs and raising funds, hopefully a template which the Foundation will be able to follow over the coming years.

Partnerships

Building relations with our stakeholders is the most important objective for us and coincidentally I think we managed to do this very successfully over the past 3 years. I say coincidentally because this had little to do with me directly, it just happened that I was able to see the bonds strengthen between the Foundation and fellow wound care groups in this country

and abroad, and also with industry, with government, with commissioners and with healthcare professionals generally. It's been great to see us all realise our shared goals and objectives, all centred around improving the lives of wounded people.

My hand on the tiller has in fact been very light over the past three years, more a little finger than anything else. As with the past 11 years at least, the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation continues to be managed by our board of trustees but also driven by our President, Ellie Lindsay OBE and supported by her extremely able, hard-working and always good humoured colleague Lynn Bullock. It's been a genuine pleasure to work with them I hope that my successor Dr David Foster will enjoy the experience as much as I have.

CWC

The LCIP comprises a group of commercial organisations working together in a spirit of cooperation and with a sense of common purpose to raise awareness of the Leg Club model and the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation. It provides support for the implementation of best practice for the benefit of Leg Club members, volunteers and their communities, which contributes greatly to the successful realisation of the Leg Club concept. The Leg Club Industry Partners are offering an educational grant for a Leg Club nurse to attend the 2017 European Wound Management Association conference. The award winner's work must have had demonstrable positive outcomes. For example, setting up a Leg Club, auditing outcomes and member (patient) feedback, continuing service provision in the changing NHS landscape, or ensuring that the member's voice is heard and wellbeing maintained within the Leg Club service.

This award is open to the profession at all levels: Leg Club TVNs, nurses, and all those involved in the provision of wound management.

Entry requirements: Provide a statement of no more than 500 words outlining your achievements at your Leg Club and how you think that the sponsorship will help improve the work you do. In addition, you will need to supply: name, job title, place of work, contact details and supporting references.

Entries are welcome direct from the candidate or nurses can be nominated by anyone who believes they merit this recognition.

The winner will be chosen by an international panel of judges and the award will be announced on Friday 31 March 2017.

Helpful hints: Preparation is the key – allow yourself plenty of time to develop and submit your entry – make a note of the deadline.

- Make the judges' job easy – write in clear, plain English, avoid jargon and use bullet points where appropriate to break up the text
- Pay attention to grammar and spelling – poorly presented entries lack credibility
- Use the option to attach documents to support your entry with useful information such as audit data, cost analyses, members experience survey results, documentation you have designed or anything that will help the judges to understand the impact of your work
- Ask someone else, such as a colleague or manager, to look through your entry before you submit. It can be helpful to ask someone who was not directly involved in the work you are entering – like the judges they will not have detailed knowledge so they may suggest ways to clarify the entry

**Educational Grant
for the EWMA 2017 Conference,
3–5 May 2017
Amsterdam**

For further information please visit the LLC website: www.legclub.org. or contact Lynn Bullock for details Tel: 01473 746595 Email: lynn.bullock@legclubfoundation.com

