

The importance of team working in wound management



Meeting the clinical and psychosocial needs of individuals with chronic leg ulceration is challenging. Due to the nature and effects of chronic leg ulceration, individuals are often socially isolated. Hence, the concept of a non-medical community-based lower limb clinic was developed in 1995 to address social isolation, and since then it has grown into an international network of evidence-based lower limb clinics known as Lindsay Leg Clubs.

It must be acknowledged that to introduce a Leg Club into the community requires a restructure of an established service, as there is likely to be movement of staff used to working in the home or clinics and asking them to do slightly or substantially different work within an open non-medical environment in a communal venue. Community and practice nursing tends to be a solitary occupation with few occasions for team working. The skill of working collaboratively requires good leadership and vision, as collaborative working enables clinicians to form good working relationships with their multidisciplinary colleagues and the volunteer sector. As clinical teams have experienced, the social Leg Club model provides an ideal opportunity for nurses not only to work collectively with a common goal, but to truly 'get to know' the community they serve.

To address the introduction and change of working practice, one of the most crucial factors in collaboration is communication, which enables individuals to work together to achieve a defined and common purpose. This may be achieved through the application of appropriate skill mix within the Leg Club team, enabling the practice or district nurse to best utilise their skills, and those of each team member, to provide a quality service for the individual in the most cost-effective manner.

Advancement in providing holistic individualised care requires a collaborative process where individuals from a broad spectrum of organisations contribute to the creation, introduction and implementation of change when introducing a Leg Club within the community.

One outstanding example of cooperative team working was recognised at the 2017 Queen's Nursing Institute conference.

Clacton-on-Sea Leg Club won first place at the conference for its poster presentation. The poster, presented by Leg Club nursing lead Kelly Buxey, was entitled 'The Clacton-on-Sea

Leg Club journey'. To view poster, visit www.legclub.org.

Clacton-on-Sea Leg Club opened in May 2017 and Kelly had worked in community nursing for 15 years, but was inspired to set up a community-based Leg Club following the completion of her district nurse qualification in 2015. Kelly identified that a large part of her community nursing caseload involved recurring lower limb wounds and the improved healing rates recorded at Leg Clubs inspired her to apply for funding to set up one in her locality.

Naturally, the board of Leg Club Foundation Trustees are absolutely delighted and extremely proud of all Kelly and her team have achieved especially in such a short space of time. It is fantastic to see the hard work, drive and determination in setting up Leg Club in Clacton-on-Sea rewarded.

Clinical advisors and relationship

The Foundation receives many enquiries from the public. Therefore, it is important that we stay committed to our focus on their support. This is achieved through our board of consultant advisors who we call upon for advice and expertise. The Foundation is delighted to announce that Professor Mark Whiteley, Founder and Trustee of the Leg Ulcer Charity, and Infection Control Specialist Liz Grogan have joined our Foundation as clinical advisors. Their input and expertise will be without doubt hugely supportive and beneficial to the Foundation.

An educational partnership has been formed between the Foundation and Leg Ulcer Charity, which is committed to providing clinical education. An example of this collective educational partnership was the joint Collage of Phlebology congress in London, which the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation and the Leg Ulcer Charity held in early 2017 where, despite differences in approach, the two charities found the experience and exchange of ideas to be extremely useful. Consequently, Ellie Lindsay OBE and Professor Mark Whiteley decided to offer their skills and expertise to each other's organisation, forming a symbiotic relationship that would enhance everybody's understanding and practice for the benefit of patients.

World Union of Wound Healing Societies

The Foundation's Task Force Committee collaborated on a symposium at the World Union of Wound Healing Society (WUWHS) in September 2016. This work has culminated in a

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document entitled 'Patient Centred Care – a Call to Action for Wound Management', which is available to download on the Lindsay Leg Club (www.legclub.org) and WUWHs (www.wuwhs.org) websites.

The Foundation and the World Union of Healing Societies are calling for the creation of a universal charter of patient rights to be adopted by all clinicians and health care professionals involved in the very complex world of wound care. This will not only transform patient care but will also help to reform policies at the highest level.

The next phase of the Committee's work will be to produce targeted materials of a professional standard that highlight more specifically how patient advocacy can and should be implemented in the wound care arena.

Annual Leg Club conference 2017

Over the years, the annual Leg Club conference has grown into a resource for those developing and improving wound management. The Leg Club conference always aims to create and maintain a learning community by spreading and sharing important knowledge and creating a network opportunity for delegates to learn from others, and forge new connections. As in previous years the agenda was designed to be interactive as well as informative and, in the true spirit of the conference, has been designed around previous attendee feedback and training needs.

Yet again this year our conference was able to attract many world-class speakers. The popular first day comprising seven workshops was provided and supported by our Leg Club



The Leg Club Industry Partners and the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation board members

Industry Partners (LCIP). Once again, feedback from delegates suggested that our hands-on workshops proved very popular with nursing teams who deal with leg-related problems on a daily basis. The LCIP members are an outstanding example of a genuine collaborative working relationship. This philanthropic approach to educational strategies is clearly apparent as the LCIP members collaborate and actively participate in the generic Leg Club conference workshops. Over the past 12 months we have produced and delivered high quality public information and clinical education with our corporate partners, which is available on the website www.legclub.org.



From right: Prof Marco Romanelli (Patron), Dr Timothy Cutler (Patron), Clare Mechen (winner), Prof Mark Whiteley (consultant advisor), Jacqui Fletcher (Patron), Kevin McNab (medi UK) and Dr David Foster (Chairman, Lindsay Leg Club Foundation)

The second day had a truly international list of speakers who shared their knowledge and expertise producing a stimulating programme throughout the day!

Main day presentations and interviews were filmed and will be available to download on the Leg Club website www.legclub.org.

Volunteer and Leg Club Industry Partner Scholarship Awards

Leg Clubs are by nature social clinics based in the community, and volunteers are the driving force through fundraising, marketing and manning Leg Clubs, ensuring that the social model is maintained.

The annual Leg Club Volunteers Awards exist to highlight and celebrate this group of people whose sterling work keeps the Leg Clubs thriving and who do so with no reward or personal gain. To this end, the Foundation acknowledges their efforts with the presentation of an award. The overall winner of the 2017 volunteer award went to the Best Foot Forward Leg Club, Poole, and second place went to the Southend-on-Sea Leg Club.

A special award was presented to Linda Wood, Thetford Leg Club, to acknowledge her contribution in trailblazing the Foundation's electronic data collection system.

Proactive, committed nursing teams work in Leg Clubs across the country. In recognition of the exceptional commitment and dedication to their Leg Club and the outstanding work they do, the LCIP offers an annual scholarship award for a Leg Club nurse to attend the European Wound Management Association conference.

The LCIP 2017 Scholarship was jointly won by:

■ Clare Mechen (Best Foot Forward Leg Club)

Extracts from the international judges' comments include: *'Excellent demonstration of the Leg Club principles. Clearly demonstrates outcomes for the Club member. Excellent community engagement. Good to see more than 70% attendance for maintenance care. Excellent consideration for 'well foot' for people with diabetes. Excellent initiative.'*

■ Jessie Bergstrom (Llandrindod Wells)

Extracts from the international judges' comments include: *'Excellent social and emotional benefits. Toenail cutting service—great addition. GP referral pathway—very encouraging. Weekly audit system, important to have evidence. Excellent funding initiatives.'*

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