

A day in the life of the Leg Club: the importance of informatics



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With the increased exposure of the Leg Club model comes the greater need to demonstrate its effectiveness, and the Foundation is now focusing on producing evidence in outcomes, recurrence and cost effectiveness.

Building an evidence base is one of the key priorities for the Leg Club Foundation as this demonstrates to the clinician and NHS provider how basic digital information-sharing can provide evidence and bring change within a Leg Club. Currently, the board of Trustees are now starting to obtain good evidence since the introduction of digital technology within the Leg Club network. To help ensure the implementation is successful and how best to get value from the Leg Club data system a training process is currently underway with the clinical and volunteer teams. Also, along with a data visual element process flow diagram and process charts, the revamped Leg Club eLearning package now has a link to the data training

A trial was undertaken at Theford Leg Club to debug and refine the process. In response to user feedback, efficiency and quality of results was undertaken with the next phase of automatic error checking for data introduced and manually entered into a database. Dr Robert Bawden and Dr Neil McIntyre (Trustees) are now working with the University of Canberra analysing the data findings.

There are parts of the Leg Club network that perhaps have not yet quite engaged with the opportunities of the data entry system and in many ways, due to geographical logistics, this is the biggest challenge. Building an evidence base is one of the Foundations key priorities, to reassure clinicians and demonstrate to them and their NHS provider how basic digital Leg Club information sharing services can really transform lower limb healthcare in a positive way.

LEG CLUBS COMMENDED IN HOUSE OF LORDS DEBATE ON NHS WOUND CARE

The psychosocial Leg Club model was commended in a House of Lords debate on NHS wound care. The debate highlighted the impact of leg ulcers which affect around 700,000 people in the UK and cost just under £2 billion in treatment and management.

Baroness Masham, a patron of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation, took part in the debate and explained how Leg Clubs help to reduce social isolation while enabling leg ulcers to heal more quickly.

Baroness Watkins of Tavistock said she was delighted to see a Leg Club in Barnstaple, Devon. "Leg Clubs are built around the notion of promoting people's independence and wellbeing," she said. Baroness Watkins, a Professor of Nursing, also said that had she been aware of the Leg Club model as a nurse it would have benefited her patients more cost effectively than the intervention she undertook in terms of productivity in nursing time.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health Lord O'Shaughnessy encouraged fellow Lords to find out more about Leg Clubs because they provide "just the kind of activity and intervention that we want to see. It is not just about good care; it is also about individual psychosocial needs and health beliefs."

During the debate, there were calls for proper diagnosis and classification of wounds and an increase in tissue viability nurses and investment in products that are available. Earlier this year, the Foundation released a white paper, calling for a national strategy to improve care for leg wound patients www.legclub.org.

FINLAND SET TO GET ITS FIRST LEG CLUB

Espoo in Finland is set to be the home of the country's first Leg Club. Staff from Espoo Hospital Ward 1, which specialises in wound care put forward a proposal to the city's Innovation Competition to create a Leg Club in their community, or as they are called in Finnish a Jalkaklubi and won the Potential Innovation category, securing €3,000 to launch the project.

Espoo Jalkaklubi offers holistic treatment in a non-medical setting through a partnership of nurses, members (patients) and volunteers of the third sector and community. It is hoped that Espoo Jalkaklubi will encourage its members to care for their own wellbeing, reduce their social isolation and promote wound care and prevention. It is also anticipated that the Club will result in associated cost savings by reducing the number of hospital days and health centre visits by those with lower limb conditions. [WUK](http://www.uk)

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