

# Press Release

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**Wound care experts call for patient rights charter**

A leading leg care charity is calling for the adoption of a universal charter of patient rights in a bid to improve care and understanding of chronic wounds.

The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation is calling for the development of an international consensus on a patient-centred approach for wound care, incorporating an integrated working approach between all health-care professionals and carers involved with the patient.

The foundation, in conjunction with the World Union of Healing Societies, has released a white paper which investigates the need for patient advocacy – not just through carers but also clinicians and other healthcare professionals.

The report: ‘Patient-centred care – A call to action for wound management’ hopes to develop a clear path for patient advocacy, kick-starting a process of patient empowerment within wound care that can help to transform policies at the highest level.

Ellie Lindsay OBE is founder and lifetime president of the Lindsay Leg CIub Foundation – a charity which provides care in non-medical settings for people with leg wounds and problems of the lower limb. Such treatment has helped to reduce healing times and provides a social aspect for patients to help alleviate the isolation and loneliness which often accompanies the condition. The charity also gives preventative advice and education.

She said: “Many of us have already been advocates for people we are close to. In doing this we may have had to challenge the system that is supposed to help and care for us. We are also highly likely to be bedridden ourselves at some point and we will want those who are close for us to advocate for us too.   
“How confident are we that the structures and policies for patient advocacy and empowerment will exist for us when the time comes?”

The report calls on healthcare professionals to collaborate with patients and their carers and to treat the patient as an individual, listening to their concerns and how they want to be treated. It also calls for more patients to be involved in research rather than just taking the views of professionals. It is the start of a series of projects intended to provide support and education on patient advocacy, not just for clinicians and healthcare professionals but also for patients and their carers.

Richard Lane OBE is ambassador and immediate past president at Diabetes UK.

He said: *“*As a Type 1 Diabetic and from my extensive work with people with diabetes and their various medical practitioners throughout the UK, I know the problems that patients have encountered and the often unsatisfactory treatment and attention they have received. I hope this document will have the impact and the desired effect that it deserves.”

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

1. Leg ulcers (and other chronic leg problems like lymphoedema) can affect people at any age, but are particularly common in people over 60. At present, over 80 per cent of all leg ulcers are treated in patients’ own homes by district nurses or by practice nurses in GP surgeries. However, patients often find it difficult to adhere to treatment plans, or to maintain the preventive measures needed to avert recurrence of the ulcer. Many leg ulcers consequently reoccur, or remain unhealed for many months or even years.
2. The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation exists to promote the national development of Leg Clubs. The Foundation also provides the necessary support and training for nurses to establish Leg Clubs and follow the Foundation’s guidelines, as well as on-going training in new developments in leg care.
3. The Leg Club is an innovative model of care that has been shown to improve the health and wellbeing of people with chronic leg conditions. By healing chronic leg wounds and keeping them healed, Leg Clubs also have the potential to save commissioners up to 80 per cent of their wound care budget in comparison with conventional leg ulcer treatment. A Leg Club is a local partnership between community nurses, patients and members of the community. Run by a committee of members and local people, each Leg Club operates according to strict guidelines of care, monitored by the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation. The Leg Club title, the wording and logo are protected by Registered Trade Mark in the UK and Australia.

**For further information about the Leg Club Foundation and Leg Clubs visit:** [**www.legclub.org**](http://www.legclub.org)

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