

Legs Matter awareness week: why it's important



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The first ever Legs Matter Awareness Week took place during 3–9 June this year, and what a week it turned out to be! A great number of clinicians, patients and corporate sponsors got involved and 'did their bit' to highlight the problems arising in the lower limb and foot, and the impact this has on individuals, health services and society itself. If you took part in the campaign, thank you so much for helping to spread the message — it makes a difference.

The Legs Matter Team had arranged for merchandise to be available to promote events and were inundated with requests. The creativity in the way people engaged with the campaign was truly inspiring. Many thousands of people 'Took the Pledge' to check their feet and legs — one step to take better care of themselves — and to encourage others to do likewise. Even if only a fraction of those maintain the good practice, we will have made an incredible difference in helping to prevent leg and foot problems, promote wound healing and resolve existing problems. It was both uplifting and exhausting trying to keep up with it all.

SELFIES WITH MEANING

Our patient video, which involved patients with a variety of lower limb problems taking 'selfie' films, talking about living with their particular leg or foot condition got over 7,500 views and that is still growing. If you have not seen this, it is still available at <https://legsmatter.org/legs-matter-week/watch-our-film/>

There were 50 pieces of coverage in the regional and digital press, with an estimate of 159,000 views. We are very grateful to our patient partner Tracy Goodwin who interrupted her holiday in Florida to be interviewed by the press (<http://bit.ly/2zoXThp>) about her experience of leg ulcer and the devastating impact it had on her and her young family. If you haven't seen this

it is still on the website and worth a look (<http://bit.ly/2HtVTJj>).

FEEDBACK AND HAVING A NATTER

We also had a fantastic response to our 'Host a Legs Matter Natter' initiative, with events taking place across all four countries. Many of these were supported by our industry partners. Highlights from these events can be seen on the website at <https://legsmatter.org/legs-matter--natter-highlights/>

Some individuals went further and organised conferences and other educational events or carried out leg and feet health checks in public places.

While the overall response was overwhelmingly positive, it also gave rise to an alarming number of questions and concerns from the public. These highlighted issues of poor public awareness about the seriousness of minor skin breaks, inflammation or swellings, and delays in seeking help. Some also reported poor assessments, delays in effective treatment initiation (especially appropriate compression), inadequate pain relief, support and advice, and persistence with ineffective treatments.

Of course, this feedback reinforces the need for the Legs Matter Campaign to go on — all year round. We hope many of you will be a part of the drive to change the landscape: by earlier identification and presentation of problems, prompt and consistent assessments and interventions, including appropriate compression, and a better understanding of the profound impact on those with lower limb wounds, ulcers, swelling or infection. Success in these areas would not only reduce unnecessary suffering, complications and the number of amputations required, it would make better use of professional resources, resulting in significant savings for the NHS.

If you haven't already done so already, take a look at the website at <https://legsmatter.org/> and follow us on social media to stay on top of what is happening, share your experiences and ideas. Above all, join us in helping to make a difference to this poorly recognised clinical area.

WUK



From left: Dr Leanne Atkin, Sarah Gardner, Alison Hopkin MBE, Dr Gemell Geraghty, Lorraine Brown



Many took the Legs Matter pledge