

National awareness campaign: the Legs Matter initiative



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Many of you are already aware of the Legs Matter campaign, and to help with this important awareness drive we are partnering with the *Wounds UK* journal, not only to provide the readers with regular updates but also outline how you can get involved.

It is important to remember that lower limb conditions, including leg ulceration, are at least four times more prevalent than pressure ulcers (Guest et al, 2015), yet receive much less attention. There are unwanted national variations in the care of patients with lower limb wounds, which leads to elongated healing times and results in increased patient suffering and unnecessary spending. Reported healing rates for venous leg ulcers in community settings are as low as 47% at 12 months (Guest et al, 2017a), which varies greatly from the healing rates that have been reported in many randomised control trials (Franks et al, 2003; Moffatt et al, 2003; Ashby et al, 2014). The NHS needs to better understand the barriers to patients receiving high-quality care when they have a lower limb ulcer and must actively strive to ensure equitable services are commissioned nationally that are linked to the best evidence/guidelines to eliminate unwanted variations in care and patient outcomes.

Inspired by the 'Stop the pressure' campaign, the Legs Matter campaign was launched in April 2018 to promote good-quality care of the lower leg in the UK. The Legs Matter campaign seeks to raise awareness and understanding of conditions of the lower leg and foot to ensure timely and effective care. In particular, it seeks to make the public more aware of conditions of the lower leg and foot, the importance of seeking out the right treatment in a timely manner and what care they have the right to expect from healthcare professionals.

Since its launch, positive progress has been made. We now have a website that offers high-quality, unbiased information for patients and clinicians. It was developed through consultation with patients and the public and covers a wide range of common conditions that affect the lower leg and foot. It

provides evidence-based information and signposts to other trustworthy resources. Legs Matter has four outstanding patient representatives helping to shape this crusade. They provide a true insight into what it like to live day-to-day with a lower limb condition, I encourage you all to read their blogs on the website — they truly are inspiring (<https://legsmatter.org/updates-events/>).

PATIENTS — THE CORE OF THE CAMPAIGN

The Legs Matter campaign is ultimately a patient's awareness campaign and we would love you to help share our message by directing your patients to our website where they can find out more about their condition, read accurate information and learn to better understand their conditions. The website continues to evolve and we are in the process of adding more content so patients will be able to gain hints and tips about living with their condition, learn about what to expect and how to cope with the changes to their lifestyle. All of this content is being written by our patient members. We sent out over 200 information packs to nurses, clinics, GP services, which includes posters for waiting rooms, business cards to give to patients with details of the website. The information packs are free to all — just contact us via our website if you wish to receive one. In addition, this summer we are planning an amazing awareness week — so watch this space.

HELP US TO RESHAPE CARE TOGETHER

Professionals in the field of lower limb conditions are only too aware that patients are being let down by the service they receive; either through a lack of evidence-based care or a delay in referral to a vascular centre. Through eliminating national variations in the way services are commissioned and set up, we want to empower patients to know what needs to happen if they have a venous ulcer and to recognise if their care is not appropriate, signposting them on how to change this. So let's continue to raise awareness of Legs Matter as we look to 'reshape care together.'

WUK