

# The continuous evolution of a person-centred charity



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The Lindsay Leg Club Foundation (CRN 1111259) is an evidence-based psychosocial prescribing initiative providing community-based treatment, health promotion, education, and ongoing care for people of all age groups who are experiencing leg-related problems. As a third sector “not for profit” organisation, the Foundation’s role is to ensure that both the resourcefulness and the uniqueness of the charity remains person focused, working in partnership with multidisciplinary/multiagency, academia organisations, patient and industry groups, volunteers, and local communities.

Leg Clubs are run by a committee of volunteers recruited from the community to work alongside clinical staff from local NHS GP surgeries or integrated community nursing teams. The volunteers create the Club’s social environment by organising refreshments and activities that promote interaction. This relaxed atmosphere provides a forum for peer support and experiences to be shared, enabling the lower limb conditions, which unite them, to be destigmatised. As a result, Leg Clubs observe increased treatment adherence, achieve improved healing rates, and maintain high levels of attendance. All of which reflect the value of social interaction in the therapeutic journey.

## ACHIEVING PRAGMATIC GOALS

For an initiative that promotes social interaction, the distancing measures necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic were devastating and made it necessary for both the Foundation and its Leg Clubs to reimagine their service delivery. It was imperative to maintain the social dimension and find alternative channels to engage with Leg Club members, healthcare professionals and our Leg Club Industry Partners (LCIP) who support them.

The Leg Club Foundation realised it needed to transform and increase its digital presence to meet the short-term goal of maintaining social interaction during the pandemic, and also the longer term goal of reaching as wide an audience as possible to promote best practice in lower limb care delivery and raise awareness of preventative lower limb condition measures.

To successfully form a strategy to implement these changes the founder and life president Ellie Lindsay OBE with support from international colleagues created a Social Media and Communications Committee (SM&CC) to ensure both a team and time was dedicated to identifying ways to digitally maintain social support and improve the spread and dissemination of information.

## OUTCOMES

The SM&CC was convened in June 2021 with six initial members who met monthly to set out a strategy and roll-out the Leg Club digital transformation. The existing Leg Club social media policy was reviewed and updated to include the formation of the SM&CC and the additional platforms identified as potential digital communication resources.

The SM&CC then took the following steps to deploy its digital strategy:

- ▶ Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages, which had already been set up but were largely dormant, were allocated a member from the SM&CC team to manage each platform and increase followers
- ▶ A YouTube channel was setup to disseminate the significant content already available and new content added
- ▶ The Leg Club Network joined Health-Shared.com an Imperial College online platform for sharing information from healthcare providers, but also from people who have lived experience of a condition
- ▶ The website, which is a central resource for Leg Clubs, their members, and other interested parties was updated to make it more accessible, intuitive, and user-friendly
- ▶ Paper resources were turned into downloadable pdfs, which included a series of easy reading tips and guidance to help people with lower limb conditions during the pandemic. These covered topics such as loneliness, exercise, and photographing wounds for remote monitoring. However, perhaps the most significant step was to

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Leg Club conference 2022 will instead take place on September 28 and 29 2022. For more information, visit our website:  
<https://www.legclub.org/>

introduce Leg Club podcasts. Clinicians, members of the LCIP, academics, and non-medical colleagues were contacted and asked to speak on a range of holistic topics relating to the whole person. The podcasts had three objectives:

- ▶ To replicate the peer support offered within Leg Clubs as a tool to destigmatise lower limb conditions whilst also offering supportive non-medical content
- ▶ To be an informative resource for healthcare professionals involved with or interested in wound care
- ▶ To address public health, the importance of preventative care, mental health, and general wellbeing.

The uptake, interest and support for this project was extraordinary and the podcast episodes recorded are made available and viewed internationally via the YouTube Channel, Shared-Health, Spotify and Apple.

Since the SM&CC began the team has increased its core membership to eight to increase its capacity. The impact of this digital transformation has been significant. It has enabled the Leg Club Foundation to successfully maintain a social dimension for its Leg Clubs during the pandemic and beyond while also generating enduring channels of communication for the LLCF to increase awareness of lower limb conditions.

#### **BUILDING ON THE RESULT**

The SM&CC meets monthly to reflect on progress, ensure its digital channels have consistent output, and follow the SM&CC policy. It continues to identify ways to increase its scope, range and reach.

The team has built on its expertise and uses its new digital skills to support and share content with associated organisations. For example, in April 2022 the International Leg Club Committee (ILCC) was a partner at the vWIN International Vein Week. The SM&CC was able to support this initiative by providing the infrastructure for the ILCC's video and podcast creation and to then share content for Vein Week across its rejuvenated social media channels.

An exciting initiative from an external project consultant in partnership with the university is currently in the planning stages to create a mobile

application to link Leg Club volunteers and/or members across the UK. This communication tool will enable individuals in the Leg Clubs to support each other, share fundraising ideas, and generate best practice.

The Leg Club Foundations SM&CC has worked relentlessly to upskill themselves and update the Leg Club's social media and digital communication offer. In doing so it has rolled out, managed, and continued to expand on an ambitious project that meets the needs of its key stakeholders.

Through these partnerships the aim being to raise awareness of all aspects of preventative management and health promotion to as wide an audience as possible while providing guidance, expertise, and knowledge to support and ensure good practice in lower limb care delivery. Meeting these goals while maintaining the fundamental principles of equity and ease of access to healthcare resources, represents a significant challenge.

#### **SUMMARY**

Continuous evolution is a goal for the Foundation with a commitment through a structured methodology to ensure the charities 'Articles' of the organisation are maintained as we reshape care delivery, harness technology, to address variations in the quality and safety of the care we deliver and the general public's changing needs in a productive way.

Having recognised the importance of providing a social media channel that would dramatically enhance our engagement a more effective platform for health promotion internationally both the SM&CC and ILCC committees are continuously striving to produce media challenges by exploring as many opportunities as possible to have a presence and reach across the healthcare domain. Alongside developing our educational and social media strategies, and in tandem with the LCIP the SM&CC provide relevant online platform information from global healthcare providers, but also from people who have lived experience of a condition. This empowers us to create and share content internationally with our core demographics: healthcare professionals, public and patient groups while maintaining the fundamental principles of equity and ease of access to healthcare resources.