

Reflection, community and change: The founder's perspective on the Leg Club year

Christmas is perhaps one of the most familiar times of the year, yet for many it can also be the loneliest. Over the years, I have been privileged to see how the Leg Club community quietly, but powerfully, addresses isolation not only at Christmas, but also throughout the year. I begin this update with a simple reminder: there will almost certainly be someone close to you, physically or emotionally, who may be feeling very alone. A few kind words, a small gesture, or a short conversation can make a greater difference than we sometimes realise.

The past year has brought further change for the NHS, with the introduction of the Ten Year Plan: Fit for the Future reminding us that change itself is inevitable. However, what has remained constant is the need for care that is shaped around people rather than systems. The renewed emphasis on a person's choice, consultation, and community involvement strongly reflects the principles on which the Leg Club model was founded and opened its doors in 1995.

The latest changes to the way healthcare are provided through integrated care systems (ICs) presents new challenges for the NHS. The restructuring of clinical services and a new pattern of provision organised around the concept of progressive patient empowerment could result in service provision being further fragmented.

Representing Leg Clubs nationally

Social media offers widespread access to health information, bringing with it the advantages of interactivity, information and anonymity. It is attracting a great deal of attention, given its impact on individual healthcare decisions, such as where to go for care and what services to seek out. The evolution of technology and electronic devices have greatly influenced the way we communicate today, improving the speed and ease of reaching out to others. As an increasingly technological society, we rely more on innovation, but alongside technology advances we need to consider preventative health promotion and education.

During MedTech Week, I was proud to see

the Leg Club Foundation represented at the annual Medical Technology Group reception at the House of Commons, hosted by Kevin McKenna, MP. The event highlighted how medical technology can transform lives, when accessible and appropriately used.

Our stand generated considerable interest, particularly around ankle-brachial pressure index and toe pressure measurement as part of early vascular assessment. Frazer Brown and David Hutchinson shared their expertise generously, reinforcing the importance of timely, accurate assessment in everyday clinical practice.

What resonated most strongly for me were the patient stories. Linda Griffiths from Colostomy UK spoke openly about the difficulties she faced accessing a simple but life-changing medical device – an experience that will feel very familiar to many of our members.

We also heard from Olympian Roger Black, MBE, who described how an artificial heart valve now enables him to live an active life despite being diagnosed with congenital heart disease as a child. His words were a powerful reminder that innovation must always be matched by equitable access.

Building meaningful partnerships

The past year has been marked by the strengthening of partnerships that I believe will have lasting value. I am delighted to confirm that we have formally established an alliance with Wounds Australia. Australia is internationally recognised for excellence in wound care and nursing practice and, with Leg Clubs already established there, this collaboration feels both natural and exciting. I am confident it will support further research into the effectiveness of the Leg Club model and encourage continued growth.

I am also pleased to welcome new associations with:

- The British Association of Prosthetics and Orthotics.
- The British Association of Sclerotherapists.
- The Lymphedema Warriors Association Uganda.



Ellie Lindsay

Life President and Founder of the Lindsay Leg Club Foundation; Honorary Professor, The College of Phlebology, London; Independent Specialist Practitioner; Visiting Fellow, Queensland University of Technology; Visiting Senior Fellow, University of Suffolk; Associate Lecturer CRICP, Thames Valley University, London

Each of these organisations shares our commitment to improving quality of life through education, prevention, and effective long-term management of lower limb conditions. By working together, we can offer better joined-up support and ensure that people living with chronic wounds and related conditions are not overlooked.

Highlights from our Leg Club community activities

Nailsea Leg Club

Nailsea Leg Club truly knows how to celebrate. At their tenth anniversary party it was a joy to see members, volunteers and clinicians coming together to mark the occasion. Thanks to a grant from Alliance Homes, members enjoyed a wonderful celebratory lunch complete with a few well-earned treats and, of course, cake. Carole Brooke, Club Chair, captured the mood perfectly: "The whole event was most enjoyable and very well received by everyone."

Trustees Dr Neil McIntyre and Carol McIntyre attended on behalf of the Foundation. The presentation of the LCIP Volunteer Award by medi added further significance. The presence of the BBC helped share the warmth and vibrancy of the Club with a wider audience.

Brecon District Leg Club

The Brecon team were invited to take part in the *Keeping Healthy in Brecon* community campaign, organised by Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board. These events aim to bring services together, strengthen community connections, and support people to make informed choices about their health.

The Leg Club's involvement sparked interest from a range of organisations, including the Fire Service, Falls Prevention Team, and Care and Repair Team, many of whom are keen to attend the Leg Club to offer advice and support directly to members. This is a wonderful example of the Leg Club model acting as a genuine community hub.

Only Legs Allowed, Llanidloes

Over the years, I have been fortunate to attend the Llanidloes *Only Legs Allowed* Christmas celebration and it never fails to lift the spirits. Led by District Nurse Lindy Jones and supported by an intergenerational volunteer team, the Club welcomed 69 members to this year's festive gathering.

One of the highlights for me was the presentation by Gavin Dummett (Huntleigh) of the 2025 Leg Club Volunteer Award to the Llanidloes volunteer team, followed by a stirring

performance from an all-male Welsh choir an emotional uplifting and memorable way to end the afternoon.

Using informatics to strengthen care

Once again, Trustee Dr Neil McIntyre devoted considerable time to analysing Leg Club data and sharing key findings with the Foundation board, NHS England, and the Department of Health and Social Care. I am deeply grateful for his commitment, which continues to strengthen our evidence base and inform future development.

A personal call to action

As we move into 2026, we have a real opportunity and a professional responsibility to do better for people living with chronic wounds and lower limb conditions. Inconsistent care and outcomes are not inevitable. They reflect systems we can influence, standards we can raise, and voices we can amplify. The hidden burden of lower limb conditions deserves the same urgency, investment, and consistency as any other long-term condition.

Across the Leg Club network and the wider wound care community, we know what good looks like. Now is the time to stand together, lead with evidence and compassion, and champion equitable, person-centred care for everyone who needs it. Add your voice. Support the petition and be part of the change for individuals requiring healthcare as opposed to a post code lottery!

Conclusion

Over more than two decades, and with the valued support of an occasional contributing author, I have had the privilege of producing articles each year for the *British Journal of Community Nursing*, *Wounds UK* and *Journal of Wound Care*. This has been both a responsibility and an honour.

Writing these regular updates for the Leg Club community has given me the opportunity to reflect, to report, and to share developments as they unfolded. The discipline of deadlines, the ever-evolving evidence base, and most importantly the stories from practice have shaped every piece. What began simply as a commitment became a constant thread running alongside the growth and influence of Leg Clubs, both nationally and internationally.

However, as Alastair Cooke so memorably concluded in his *Letters from America*, there comes a time when it feels right to step aside. For me, that time has now arrived.

From the middle of this year, responsibility for providing the Leg Club updates will pass to the Foundation Board. This transition reflects



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Scan the QR code above to find out how to support the petition



Save the date:
2026 conference
being held in June.
Scan the QR code
above for more
information.

a continued evolution of the Leg Club model itself. I firmly believe that fresh perspectives and shared authorship will ensure these updates remain relevant, authoritative, and inspiring.

A very special and heartfelt thank you to Sylvie Hampton for her years of unwavering commitment and unfailing support. Through every update, she has been there with insight, generosity, and consistency, always providing case studies that added depth and meaning to our work. Her dedication has never wavered, and her support has meant more to me than words can fully express.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who has

supported, contributed to, edited, and read these articles over the years. It has been a true privilege to document the journey of Leg Clubs and to play a small part in sharing their impact with the wider clinical community. Like all good letters, these now end not as an ending, but as a handover to the next chapter.

As I reflect on the year behind us, I feel both gratitude and optimism. Despite the many challenges facing today's NHS, I continue to be inspired by the compassion, commitment, and generosity shown by Leg Club teams and volunteers across the community and international network.