

## Developing a position document on manual lymphatic drainage (MLD)

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**Introduction:** MLD is an acknowledged aspect of treatment for lymphoedema with varying techniques and approaches in application used within clinical practice. This may lead to a singular or blended approach with MLD, dependent upon training and patient need. Clinical guidance concerning its use is however, lacking. There is no clear guidance on when to use MLD, the type or frequency of movements, the duration of treatment or the long-term results. This has led to questions about the provision of resources when providing this treatment to patients and the commissioning of a position document by the British Lymphology Society (BLS) to support practitioners in their decision making around the application of MLD.

**Aims:** To outline current progress in the development of a position document on MLD. To reflect on the current progress of the position document.

**Method:** Considerations regarding the provision of MLD to patients with lymphoedema were explored through a debate at the British Lymphology Society Conference in 2022. This stimulated critical thinking and discussion and highlighted the need for further clinical guidance. A task and finish group of lymphoedema experts was proposed to develop the position document on MLD. A project initiation document provided the scope and aims of the group including a clear focus with identified roles and responsibilities. A proposed structure to the project then followed, with agreed terms of reference and the identification of key timelines. The group agreed individual areas to work on, supported by a purpose and scope document to ensure consistency in information retrieval. Agreed relevant databases were identified and guidance concerning the use of the mixed methods appraisal tool (2018) was provided. Document review was identified as an important aspect of development. Potential stakeholders were invited as reviewers and questions were developed to focus their review process.

**Results:** The position document being created is evolving within the agreed time frame. Regular on-line meetings continue to support all members of the group. Agreement of the final draft of the document will ensure it is ready for stakeholder review followed by creation of the final version for launch and publication.

**Conclusion:** The Task and Finish group was set up with a clear focus, aim and time frame in which to produce a Position Document on MLD to guide the application of MLD within clinical practice. The project continues to progress with launch of the position document due in October 2023.