

THE FREE FOUNDATION

MAKING A WORLD WITHOUT SCARS A REALITY

Bim and Padeep Sandhu
The Sandhu Charitable Foundation
First Floor
Santon House
53-55 Uxbridge Road
London
W5 5SA

25 February 2022

Dear Bim and Pardeep,

It's a pleasure to enclose for you and the Trustees our latest Update Report featuring some of our latest highlights and introducing you to our Ambassadors.

Thanks to your support over the last year, our research programme has forged ahead despite the challenging circumstances in clinical settings. We're very proud of our researchers for the ways they have adapted and continued to ensure that people with scarring are still the centre of everything we do.

A great example of this is the BIOface project you generously supported through the Big Give, which is developing innovative new treatment options for people with facial scarring. We're excited to be launching this in Swansea next month, with the support of our Royal Patron, HRH The Countess of Wessex and I'd love to let you know more about that in due course.

If its appropriate, we would delighted if you would consider the attached update as an appeal to your generosity for another year. I would be delighted to provide more information on any aspect of the work described. A further grant of £10,000 could be used towards the cost of early career researchers, buying essential kit used in our trials or hosting our Ambassador sessions and would make a real difference to our work.

Your support enables our research to flourish despite the external circumstances. We've used this time to start refreshing our research strategy, to embed the voice of people with lived experience of scarring throughout our communications, and to support and manage complex and impactful research programmes. We're so grateful for your support and please do let me know if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Amy Ingram

Amy Ingram
Senior Trusts and Foundations Manager

The Royal College of Surgeons of England
38 - 43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London, WC2A 3PE
Tel. 020 3958 5800
Email. info@scarfree.org.uk
Web. scarfree.org.uk
Twitter. [@scarfreeworld](https://twitter.com/scarfreeworld)

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UPDATE REPORT

The Sandhu Charitable Foundation

February 2022



Jaco Nel
Scar Free Ambassador

I still can't believe that a tiny scratch while playing with my dog, changed me forever. I survived sepsis but lost both my legs, all my fingers on one hand and part of my face.

I'm incredibly proud to be an Ambassador for The Scar Free Foundation – our vital research is improving life for millions of people. Thanks to your generosity, we're uncovering exciting clues to the causes of scarring and opening new doors to life-changing treatments. Because of you, we have invested £50million in groundbreaking research. Your support is bringing research breakthroughs closer - so we can achieve scar free healing within a generation.

I experienced life-changing injuries that resulted in the loss of my limbs and an altered appearance. Modern technology help me to overcome some of that, but the scars – visible and invisible – remain with me. We can't turn the clock back, but the vital research you fund is making a difference now and for future generations. Thank you for your kindness and continued commitment.

AFTERNOON TEA WITH HRH THE COUNTESS OF WESSEX



Scar Free Young Ambassadors: Elizabeth, Emily, Delilah and Abi with our patron, HRH The Countess of Wessex

Four of our Young Ambassadors visited St James' Palace to meet our wonderful patron, Sophie, Countess of Wessex for afternoon tea. Her Royal Highness heard our Young Ambassadors' stories about what it's like to live with scarring.

Delilah explained to the Countess how her fingers haven't fully formed due to her burns injury. This makes everyday activities tricky. While Elizabeth shared how her burns injuries have left her without fully formed fingers or fingerprints so – when she is old enough – she won't be able to use a mobile phone or a computer at school. Emily and Abi, who have scarring from being born with cleft lip and palate, told the Countess how they enjoy being Ambassadors and are passionate about our work to achieve scar free healing within a generation.

SCAR FREE VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE



Scar Free Ambassador, Lottie Pollak watching 'Karl's Story' on a virtual reality headset

The Scar Free Foundation is using virtual reality to bring the research we do and the experiences of our Ambassadors to life. We recently marked the three-year anniversary of The Scar Free Foundation Centre for Conflict Wound Research in Birmingham and Bristol with the launch of 'Karl's Story'.

Viewed through a virtual reality headset or mobile phone, the film recounts how Karl Hinett was injured while serving in Basra and his long road to recovery. In the film, Karl meets Scar Free researchers who are investigating the effect of laser treatment on historic scars and will soon begin clinical trials of a battle-ready dressing which actively prevents scar formation. 'Karl's Story' provides a unique experience and really brings to life the pioneering work we do and the stories of those we aim to help. You can read more about Karl in our 'Profile'.

AMBASSADORS' EVENT

“Scarring can change a person’s life. But it does not have to ruin it.” Scar Free Ambassador



Scar Free Ambassadors, Justyn Hollett and Marian Adejokun, talking about the physical and mental impact scarring has on their lives

The strength and determination of people living with scarring drives our mission. In October, we hosted an exclusive reunion for our Ambassadors at our Annual Update event.

After months of lockdowns, 30 of our Scar Free Ambassadors came together to celebrate our successes, share our news and contribute to our plans for 2022 and beyond.

Our Ambassadors participated in roundtable discussions on the daily struggles of their scarring and the problems that scientists, surgeons and clinicians need to urgently address in order to drive better treatments and care.

The voice of people living with scarring lies at the heart of all that we do. The feedback and experience of our Ambassadors - and those with a lived experience - will shape the development of The Scar Free Foundation’s refreshed Research Strategy, which will be published in early 2022.

TEACHING OLD CELLS NEW TRICKS!

The Scar Free Foundation Burns and Conflict



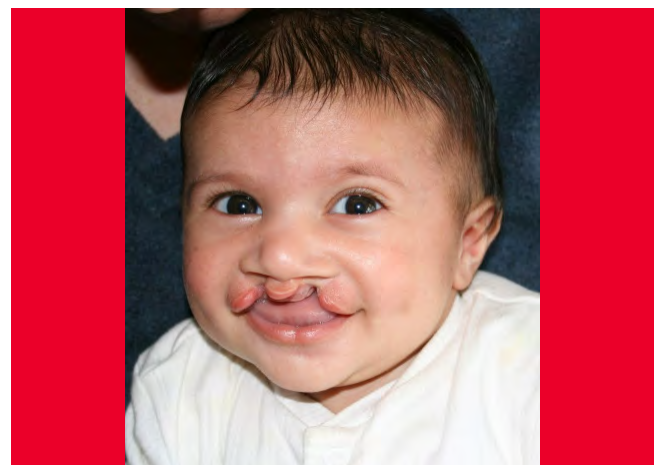
Scar Free Researcher, Professor Janet Lord talking about how scars are formed and healed

At our Annual Update event, Professor Janet Lord presented new and exciting thinking on scarring and ageing. She described how ‘old’ (or senescent) cells build up with age and are important for scarring. Despite being old, these cells produce molecules and compounds that are actually good for healing. By understanding the biology behind ‘old cells’, scientists can find ways to reduce the impact of scars.

The Scar Free Foundation is partnering with Professor Lord’s Institute of Inflammation and Ageing in Birmingham to unlock the role inflammation plays in scarring. The current SMOOTH trial is treating patients with laser therapy and looking for biological changes in skin cells. Professor Lord’s team will also explore whether lasers could be used to deliver anti-scarring creams. We’re excited to announce that a new research project will be starting in 2022, which will investigate scars, cellular ageing and physical activity.

GENETICS AND CLEFT

The Scar Free Foundation Cleft Gene Bank & Cohort Study (The Cleft Collective)



Baby with an incomplete bilateral cleft lip, who is part of The Cleft Collective study

Every three minutes, a baby is born with cleft. Despite being one of the most common birth defects, little is known about why cleft happens. The Cleft Collective is one of the largest cleft lip and palate research programmes in the world. Today, 9,500 participants have been recruited to the study and their biological samples are being investigated in 40 projects.

At our Annual Update, Professor Jonathan Sandy presented a fascinating talk on how genetic tools are being used to discover the causes and best treatments for cleft. Research has revealed that there are three different forms of cleft. Furthermore, there is no evidence that cleft genes increase the chance of developing head and neck cancer or cause low intelligence and poor educational attainment. These findings are important for family counselling, improving learning and social development at school, and changing the public’s perception of people born with cleft.

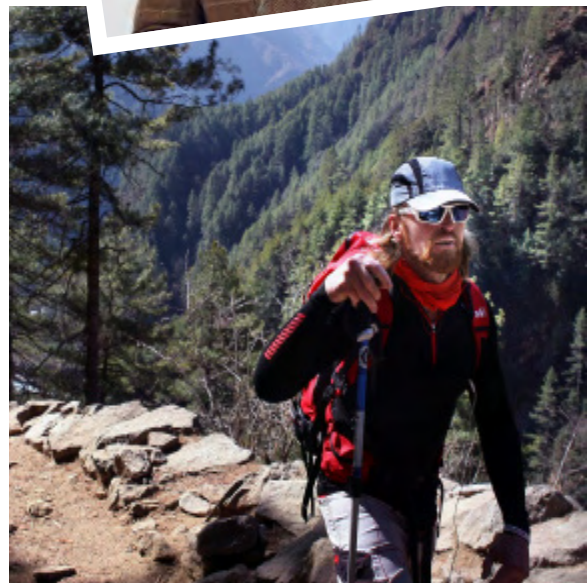
PROFILE

SCAR FREE AMBASSADOR AND CASEVAC CLUB MEMBER, KARL HINETT

A soldier in the Iraq War, Karl was just a teenager when he survived 37% burns to his body.

“When I was 18 years-old, I was deployed to Basra to support a mission to rescue two British Special Forces soldiers who were captured in a police station. As the mission progressed, a riot broke out and a petrol bomb was thrown into my tank.

My hands and fingers were very badly burned. As my scars healed, the skin tightened and contorted my hands into fists. I had surgery to relieve the tightening but this caused more scarring. My recovery included 25 operations over five years. And I still have treatment to this day.”



“I found that to get better mentally, I needed to get better physically - which has made me challenge myself. I began running as part of my recovery and have now completed over 100 marathons. I am also proud to say that I’m married and have the most beautiful wife and little boy!

If you had told me after I got burnt in Iraq that scar free healing was possible, I would never have believed you. But it is – the science is within our grasp and The Scar Free Foundation can make scar free healing a reality. That is why I am working with the charity - to help others in the future live without the long-term pain and discomfort caused by scarring.”

FUTURE PLANS

- Following extensive and collaborative work over recent months, The Scar Free Foundation will launch our refreshed Research Strategy in 2022. Our new strategy is more ambitious than ever, building on previous successes, the latest research developments and shaped by people living with scarring.
- Thanks to our amazing supporters including the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, we are investing in a new research project at the University of Birmingham. The Scar Free Foundation Centre for Conflict Wound Research accelerates pioneering research to help veterans who have been injured in service to our country and save future casualties. Professor Janet Lord’s new project will investigate whether major trauma speeds up ageing and if the ageing process could be slowed down by physical activity. If successful, this research could pave the way for new and better treatments for the survivors of trauma.

THANK YOU

Our national programme of scar free research is transforming the lives of all those affected by scarring and we are extremely grateful for your support in helping to make this possible. Please do get in touch if you would like more information on our pioneering projects, our inspiring Ambassadors or our scar free researchers. We look forward to our next contact with you, in person or otherwise and, from all of us at The Scar Free Foundation, we thank you for your support.

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