



# THE HEALING FOUNDATION

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*Rebuilding the bodies, minds and lives of people with disfigurements*

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **UK to host world-beating burns research centre**

#### **Funding will bring hope to thousands of burns survivors**

The Healing Foundation, a UK charity, has announced £5 million funding for a Chair of Burn Injury study within the UK. This will be the largest single amount ever awarded to a British project of this type and the post will be the only one of its kind in the UK. It is an ambitious project that will emulate the work of the prestigious Shriners Units for Burned Children in the USA. The research centre will be established at a leading University, in partnership with a hospital that has a major Plastic Surgery Burn Centre. Institutions interested in hosting this post are currently being invited to submit a formal application to the Healing Foundation, with the deadline for receipt of proposals being the end of March 2006. A decision will be reached regarding the successful applicant by November 2006.

The Burn Injury Centre is likely to develop into the most important single influence in burns in the UK, setting international standards of excellence for the enhancement of burn care, particularly in children. Around 14,000 patients are admitted to hospital with serious burns every year. Around ten times as many with lesser burns are treated in hospital or as outpatients. However, the largest single group suffering burns is children under five, around two thirds of whom will need treatment for serious scarring. All burns leave scars; they shorten and tighten, thereby restricting function and, in the long term, adversely affect growth in children. Currently, a good clinical outcome is not assured and so a focus for excellence and research in the area of burn care, including prevention, is essential.

#### **Hope for a better future**

“At nearly two years old, my daughter Terri was involved in a serious house fire. She suffered burns to more than 85% of her body” commented her father, Paul Calvesbert. “One of the hardest things to come to terms with was the way people looked at us. They seemed to see only her scars. People with burns can become outcasts just because they look different and it can be difficult to convince others that, whatever a burns victim looks like, they are still normal inside. This new post

will hopefully provide new solutions for burns victims, lessening scarring and ultimately improving people's quality of life, so that fewer people will have to go through the trauma that my daughter has."

Peter Dziejwski, Chairman of the British Burn Association, commented, "This announcement of funding by the Healing Foundation marks a watershed in burn injury research in the UK. It will provide a national focus for research into our cellular understanding of burns, new surgical treatments, the psychology of living with burn scars and issues such as nursing care and other burn care therapies. It has the potential to place the chosen University, and the UK, on the international map of research and deliver practical benefit to the many thousands of people affected by serious burns every year."

The Chair of Burn Injury Study will provide a national centre for scientific and clinical related research, fulfilling a pivotal role in facilitating the introduction of new technology and ensuring its successful clinical application in burn care. It will provide leadership in research and training across all areas of burn treatment as well as fostering collaboration and co-ordination across different burn injury studies. Research is needed in three main areas: acute care (resuscitation, inhalation injury, infection etc), wound healing (development and application of new skin, scar development, gene therapy) and rehabilitation (maximising function, psychological intervention and improvement of quality of life). £5million is being provided by the Healing Foundation, with a further £5 million being sought from match funding sources.

The Healing Foundation is a new organisation that provides funds for research into disfigurement and visible loss of function.

#### **Notes to editors**

**The Healing Foundation** is a new national fundraising charity established in 1999. Their objects are for the relief of sickness and for the preservation and protection of public health by:

- Carrying out and funding research into the improvements of treatments for the benefit of people who suffer from physical, psychological, social, or emotional disadvantage as a result of physical disfigurement or functional impairment present at birth or acquired through accident, disease, or illness and into the prevention of accidents which may cause such conditions
- Disseminating the results of this research and helping to train health workers in appropriate treatments throughout the world
- Informing people about the availability of treatments both new and in development

For more information please visit: [www.thehealingfoundation.org](http://www.thehealingfoundation.org)

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### **Burn Injury Case Studies**

#### **Louise Barry**

Louise Barry was travelling on the Number 30 bus, in Tavistock Square, on Thursday 7 July when the suicide bomber struck. In hospital, surgeons removed the toggle switch from the bomb's detonator which had embedded in her thigh. Louise also suffered a broken neck, burns and blast wounds to her arms and legs. Welcoming the Healing Foundation's announcement, Louise comments, "Each day I look at my face and my legs and compare them to what they were. I am grateful that the Healing Foundation is doing so much to develop new surgical treatments to treat such wounds and to better understand the effects scars have on people."

#### **Tim Streatfeild**

Tim Streatfeild was traveling in the now infamous Carriage H of the Great Western train which was involved in the Paddington Rail Crash in October 1999. He suffered 45% burns, 40% of which were classed as deep or 3rd degree and his face was badly scarred. Tim endured five operations, the first lasting nine hours, with his legs being harvested for donor skin. He also contracted both MRSA and VRE, causing partial kidney failure and internal bleeding.

Commenting on the Healing Foundation announcement, Tim said, "The surgeons, nurses and other staff who cared for me at Chelmsford were all wonderful, I cannot thank them enough. I am delighted that funds are being raised for research in this area. The Healing Foundation's focus is very welcome indeed. New research in burns will offer already excellent and dedicated staff the chance to provide new and improved treatments to their desperately ill patients."

#### **Terri Calvesbert**

At nearly two years old, Terri Calvesbert was involved in a serious house fire. She suffered burns to more than 85% of her body. Her father, Paul Calvesbert, remembers the time of Terri's accident vividly; "Being in hospital for eight months with her, I saw many people admitted with burns. I did not realise until then just how many people suffered burns, or that half of them were young children.

One of the hardest things to come to terms with was the way people looked at us. They seemed to see only her scars and Terri is obviously sensitive to this. People with burns can become outcasts just because they look different. It's difficult to convince others that, whatever a burns victim looks like, they are still normal inside! Perhaps, above all else, new research is very important. The doctors tried a new 'skin' on Terri and it really improved her scars."