Prosthetic Service
Information for patients with lower limb amputation or limb deficiency
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>020 3049 7700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>020 3049 7700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prosthetics</td>
<td>020 3049 7681</td>
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<td>Physiotherapy</td>
<td>020 3049 7724</td>
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<td>Occupational therapy</td>
<td>020 3049 7775</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>020 3049 7726 / 27</td>
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Lifestyle information & healthy living

What you want to achieve?
Please use this space to write down examples of what you would like to achieve, for example

- mobilise indoors and/or outdoors
- answer the door
- gentle exercise
- independant toilet transfers.
1 Your Prosthesis
Socket comfort score

To allow us to find out how satisfied you are with your prosthesis we might ask you to assess and give us your “Socket comfort score”

The following scale may be used to help you determine your socket comfort score before each appointment:

### Before treatment

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<tr>
<th>1</th>
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<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<td>most comfortable</td>
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</table>

It is beneficial to have two scores, one before treatment and one following treatment.

This will allow us to determine if any adjustments are needed.

### After treatment

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<td>most comfortable</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2 Prosthesis Care
What to expect when visiting the centre

Your appointment
As part of your treatment at the centre, you may benefit from seeing other members of staff within the same appointment. These appointments are difficult to arrange, so it is important to give us prior notice if you are unable to attend.

Consultant
All new patients are given an appointment with our consultant. Their role is to examine you and liaise with your GP, surgeon, the team at Bowley Close and any other appropriate staff who look after you. We recommend that you see our consultant once a year, but you can request an appointment at any time.

Physiotherapy
A physiotherapist will be involved in your assessment and rehabilitation. You will need to have physiotherapy before being given a prosthesis and afterwards to teach you to use it correctly. This may take place in the centre or at your local hospital if you live further away. The physiotherapist will work with you to decide what goals you would like to work towards.

Your physiotherapy rehabilitation will be tailored to your individual needs which may include learning how to:
- transfer safely
- don (put on) your prosthesis correctly
- walk with the prosthetic limb
- get up from the floor if you have fallen and coping strategies if you can’t get up
- complete exercises for strengthening, stretching and balance.

If you are a new amputee, your prosthetic limb will be kept at the centre until you are able to use it safely on your own at home.
Consultant
The consultant will liaise with your GP and other consultants and staff looking after you.

Prostheses
Your prosthetist is responsible for the design and upkeep of your prosthetic limb, including how well the socket fits.

Physiotherapy
The physiotherapist’s role is to work towards your mobility and functional goals – focusing on strengthening muscles, keeping your joints loose and improving the way you walk with your limb.

Occupational therapy
The occupational therapists are involved in helping you with activities of daily living.

Rehabilitation engineer
Our rehabilitation engineers work closely with all members of the prosthetic team, giving technical advice and monitoring the works in progress. Sometimes your clinician will involve the rehabilitation engineer as part of your treatment.

Orthotics
The orthotic service provides orthoses (surgical appliances) to help treat a wide range of problems. Orthoses have a variety of functions including supporting unstable joints, reducing pain, compensating for weak muscles, maintaining function, reducing risk of deformity, redistributing weight in a limb and limiting movement to protect healing body structures. An orthosis can encompass any part of the body but the majority of the work is involved with the lower limbs.
Counsellors
There are two counsellors at the centre and they are available to you or anyone close to you. Please see page 21 for further information.

Healthcare assistant
The healthcare assistant (HCA) is available for you to talk to and provide you with tea and coffee. The HCA also provides support for therapists during your treatment, and they can help escort you to the toilet and to and from the waiting room.

Technicians
The centre has an on-site workshop and employs prosthetic and orthotic technicians. The technicians are responsible for the manufacture, repair and maintenance of your artificial limb.
Residual limb care

- The residual limb, or stump, should be washed daily to avoid irritation and infection. Mild soap and water are recommended.

- Check your residual limb (stump) every day for skin breakdown or redness. Any redness that disappears after 5–10 minutes is fine. If redness remains, please contact your prosthetist, as changes to your prosthesis may be required.

- You should wear a newly fitted prosthesis for short periods at first and gradually increase the amount of time. Your physiotherapist will give you advice on how long to wear your prosthesis for.

- Regular exercise and stretches to stop your knee and hip joints getting tight are important. Your physiotherapist will give you an exercise programme to do at home.

- Moisturise the skin daily, as dehydrated skin can get dry, crack and break down. You will then be more prone to infection. Speak to the healthcare professional treating you, for advice.
Prosthetic socks must be put on carefully to avoid wrinkles, which can cause skin rubs.

Reductions in stump size can be accommodated by adding one or more prosthetic socks.

If your socket feels loose try adding another sock to improve fit. If it feels tight try removing a sock. We can provide you with thick and thin stump socks.

Frequent adjustments are often required in the first year. If the prosthesis does not feel comfortable during standing and walking, it should be removed and put back on again. Arrange a review appointment if discomfort persists.

Stump socks will be issued when you are fitted with your prosthesis.

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**Common problems**

**Rubs and sores**
It is common when wearing an artificial limb that at some stage you may experience a rub or sore on your stump.

**What causes them?**
The rub may be caused from excessive movement inside your socket.

**What to do?**
Contact your prosthetist immediately.

**It may be necessary for you to limit the use of your prosthesis until your stump heals. Adjustments can be made or a new socket may be necessary to avoid further skin breakdowns.**
Our prosthetic service provides an emergency walk-in clinic.

If you think you need an emergency appointment, please call **020 3049 7681** or **020 3049 7741** and our duty prosthetist will triage by phone and advise if an emergency appointment is appropriate.

Please be aware that you may have to wait until our duty prosthetist is available to see you. You might not be seen by your regular prosthetist.
The prosthesis should be kept in good condition. The socket can be kept clean by wiping it as required with warm water and mild soap then leaving overnight to dry. Use of detergents should be avoided at all times.

Note: if your prosthesis is considered unhygienic, you may be asked to clean it before any work is carried out.

Socks should be replaced daily with newly laundered ones. Most prostheses are water resistant but few are waterproof.

The inside of liners should be washed at the end of each day with either soapy water (and rinsed), or baby wipes. Wipe the liner dry and return the liner to its normal position. Do not put the liner on a radiator or heat source. Tell your prosthetist about any damage to the liner as soon as possible.

If the foot becomes wet the shoe should be removed as soon as possible so it can dry.

Do not get your prosthesis wet or submerge it in water, especially sea water, as this can cause rust and damage to the inner components.

You must have a review appointment at least every twelve months.

Never attempt to adjust the prosthesis yourself
Extra care should be taken of your remaining lower limb

- It is important that you check your remaining foot every day for a change in colour, skin breakdowns, callouses, and/or any cuts or problems.

- Wash feet daily in warm mild soapy water. Dry your feet carefully, especially between the toes.

- Wear appropriate and comfortable footwear and check shoes before putting them on.

- Have your toenails cut regularly by a podiatrist. This is particularly important for people who have a diagnosis of diabetes, renal failure or HIV, as your remaining foot will be at high risk of developing foot ulceration.

- If you require more information please ask your treating clinician for High risk feet leaflet.

If you are concerned about the condition of your remaining limb, please contact your GP.
Changing your shoes can have a significant effect on your prosthesis and alignment. The alignment of your artificial limb is incredibly important and has a significant effect on your balance and walking.

Diagram A – Incorrect Limb leaning forward
Diagram B – Correct Limb upright
Diagram C – Incorrect Limb leaning back

Ideally the alignment of the artificial limb when standing in your shoe should be upright with a straight line falling down between the hip, knee and ankle (Diagram B).

If you change shoes to ones with a lower heel, you may notice that the artificial limb is leaning back in the shoe (Diagram C), leading you to feel like you are walking uphill.

If you change shoes to ones with a higher heel, you will notice that the artificial limb is leaning forward in the shoe (Diagram A) and this can lead to you feeling unbalanced and ‘falling forward’ while you walk.

The heel height of the shoe is a very important factor in the alignment of the limb. If shoes are changed it is important that the heel height is the same.
A cosmesis is a cosmetic covering on your prosthesis. It is entirely your choice if you would like one of these.

For a primary prosthesis or when fitting a new prosthetic socket, you will be provided with a temporary cosmesis. This can be easily removed to enable any adjustments required to be made quickly and easily without damaging the cosmesis.

Once you have been wearing your limb for a longer period of time without adjustments, it is possible to have foam added which can be shaped for a more improved cosmesis.

A higher level of cosmetic covering can be achieved by using special PVC or silicon skin covers. They come in a variety of skin tones. If you would like to know more, please discuss this with your prosthetist.
Phantom limb pain and sensation

**Phantom limb pain** is when you feel pain in the absent limb, for example cramping or burning feelings.

**Phantom limb sensation** is when you feel the absent limb but it is not painful. For example, you might feel an itchy hot hand or your foot resting on the floor.

Some patients feel ‘telescoping’, this is the feeling that the phantom limb is gradually shortening over time.

There are a number of different treatments for phantom limb pain, including:

- medication
- relaxation techniques
- graded motor imagery
- acupuncture
- exercise and stretching
- keeping your residual limb warm or cool, depending on your symptoms.

Phantom limb pain sometimes reduces over time but if yours does not, please make an appointment to see our consultant or your GP.

Phantom limb pain may also increase over time.

It is often helpful to keep a diary to detect patterns to your pain, so that you can discuss what may be the best treatment for you.

**Mechanical causes of stump pain**

Prosthetic sockets are made of firm materials and can sometimes cause rubs or blisters. This is especially true in the first year of the amputation surgery when the stump changes shape significantly, meaning the socket can become ill-fitting. You will be taught how to achieve a well-fitting socket.
Psychological well-being after amputation

Having an amputation is a life-changing experience. As you adjust to the change it is normal to have a range of emotional reactions that come and go.

Early on you may have feelings of shock, disbelief, bewilderment or perhaps relief. Many people feel sadness; for some the sense of loss can be quite strong. You may experience anger about what has happened and/or frustration as you begin to adjust to doing things in different ways. You may have anxieties about how you will cope and about how your life will be from now on. It is also possible and natural that for a time you may experience reduced self-confidence and self-esteem. However, everybody is different and your reactions and concerns may not necessarily be the same as these.

You may find that how you feel about intimacy, sexuality and having sex is affected by amputation. A person’s sexuality is a unique part of who they are. It includes how they feel about their body, how they relate to others and how they feel about physical contact with another person and with themselves. Feelings or concerns about these aspects of yourself are natural following amputation.

Making sense of your own practical reactions and concerns can be difficult. They may feel very personal and you will have only your own experience to go by. It can help to talk to your partner if you are in a relationship, or to a close friend or family member. You may find it helpful to speak to one of the clinicians caring for you. If you wish to discuss your concerns in more detail you can do this with one of the specialist counsellors at the centre. Your clinician will be happy to arrange this.
Counselling service

Who is the counselling service for?
Our counselling service is available to all users of the Bowley Close Rehabilitation Centre. Your family member or carer may also use the service.

What is counselling?
Counselling provides:

- a safe supportive space to explore issues and problems
- a confidential therapeutic relationship with someone who is trained to listen
- an opportunity to understand more about yourself and your relationships
- an opportunity to identify any services available to you, and make life changes.

The counselling sessions
The number and frequency of sessions is agreed between you and your counsellor. We offer an initial appointment to talk about your concerns and whether counselling can help. If you then wish to continue we will offer an initial series of six sessions. An interpretation service can be arranged.

Contacting the counsellors
If you would like to book an initial session you can contact the counsellors on 020 3049 7727 or 020 3049 7726. Alternatively, please speak to any one of the clinicians or receptionists about our service when you are at the centre.
Driving after amputation

If you drive you must tell DVLA (the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) that you have had a limb amputated.

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you do not tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving. You may be prosecuted if you are involved in an accident as a result.

**Car or motorcycle licence**
Fill in Form G1 and send it to DVLA (the address is on the form).

**Bus, coach or lorry licence**
Fill in form G1V and send it to DVLA (the address is on the form).

Download the forms and find out more about driving with a medical condition at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).
3 Useful Information
Useful information when visiting the centre

**Hours**
The rehabilitation centre’s opening hours are 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. There is no out-of-hours service but we do run an emergency appointment system Monday to Friday if your prosthesis is broken.

**Interpreters**
If you need an interpreter, please tell us at the time of making your appointment or call us to let us know.

**Children’s facilities**
The centre has a room for children. This is a clinical room, so we ask parents and carers to help keep the room tidy after your children have enjoyed playing in there.

Children must be supervised by an adult at all times. We have a high chair in the children’s room and there is a baby changing station – please ask a member of staff for details.

**Refreshments**
The WRVS sells sandwiches and drinks. Opening hours vary. We advise you to bring any food, drink or medication you may require during your appointment, as you may be at the centre for a long time.

**Mobile phones and other electronic devices**
Please be respectful to staff and other patients by keeping calls to a minimum and the volume of your devices low. It is important not to take calls while being treated by your clinician.

**Changing address or details**
Please inform the reception staff when you arrive of any changes to your address, phone numbers, email address or GP details. If we are not kept up to date, letters may be sent to the wrong address.
Appointment times
If you are late for your appointment, we may not be able to see you, as our appointments are at set times. We understand that there can be unavoidable delays, so please contact us if this happens.

Unable to attend your appointment?
If you are unable to attend your appointment, please contact the department who you are seeing as soon as possible (see phone numbers). If we need to cancel your appointment, we will try to give you as much notice as possible.

Prosthetic emergency appointments
Whenever possible please contact your prosthetist if a problem arises with your prosthesis so an appointment can be booked. If your prosthesis is broken or damaged and needs urgent attention please phone and we will try to see you on the same day.

Prosthesis and orthotic user group (POUG)
The user group is open to patients receiving treatment at the centre and also their carers and family. The group meet quarterly with senior clinicians and managers. This provides an excellent opportunity to discuss service provision and to support the development of services.

Buddy service
A buddy service is available to all amputees. Please speak to your prosthetist for more information.

Smoking
 Patients and visitors are not able to smoke anywhere on our premises including the grounds and gardens.

If you would like to give up smoking, please speak to your therapist or call the Trust stop smoking service on 020 7188 0995, or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0300 123 1044.
How to find us

Bowley Close Rehabilitation Centre
Bowley Close
Farquhar Road
London SE19 1SZ
By train
There is an overground train service from London Bridge or London Victoria to Gipsy Hill station or Crystal Palace Station. It is approximately a 15 minute walk from either station to the centre, however it is a steep hill, so you may choose to take a taxi or bus.

By bus
The centre is a short walk down the hill from the bus terminus on Crystal Palace Parade. Check routes and timetables with Transport for London on 0343 222 1234 or visit www.tfl.gov.uk

By car
Entrance to the centre is off Farquhar Road and there are free car parking facilities at the centre.
Useful organisations

**REACH**
The Association for Children with Hand or Arm Deficiency
c/o TEH Pearl Assurance House
Brook Street
Tavistock PL19 0BN

**t:** 0845 130 6225  
**or** 020 3478 0100  
**e:** reach@reach.org.uk  
**w:** www.reach.org.uk

**STEPS**
National Association for Families of Children with Lower Limb Abnormalities
The White House
Wilderspool Business Park
Greenalls Avenue
Warrington
Cheshire WA4 6HL

**t:** 01925 750271  
**e:** info@steps-charity.org.uk  
**w:** www.steps-charity.org.uk

**BLESMA**
The Limbless Veterans
185–187 High Road
Chadwell Heath
Romford
Essex RM6 6NA

**t:** 020 8590 1124  
**e:** ChadwellHeath@blesma.org  
**w:** www.blesma.org

**Diabetes UK**
Wells Lawrence House
126 Back Church Lane
London E1 1FH

**t:** 0345 123 2399  
**e:** info@diabetes.org.uk  
**w:** www.diabetes.org.uk

**RUNG and Sub Groups**
Rehabilitation User Network
Group Crystal Palace
Speak to your prosthetist or healthcare assistant if you wish to attend regular user group meetings
Disability Rights UK
Ground Floor
CAN Mezzanine
49-51 East Road
London N1 6AH

\textbf{t:} 020 7250 8181  
\textbf{e:} enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org  
\textbf{w:} www.disabilityrightsuk.org

Limbless Association
Unit 10
Waterhouse Business Centre
2 Cromar Way
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 2QE

\textbf{t:} 01245 216670  
\textbf{e:} enquiries@limbless-association.org  
\textbf{w:} www.limbless-association.org

Southwark Disablement Association
Southwark Resource Centre
10 Bradenham Close
Walworth
London SE17 2QB

\textbf{t:} 020 7701 1391  
\textbf{e:} sda@sdail.org  
\textbf{w:} www.sdail.org

The Patients Association
PO Box 935
Harrow
Middlesex
HA1 3YJ

\textbf{t:} 020 8423 8999  
\textbf{w:} www.patients-association.org.uk

Disability Advice Service Lambeth
‘We are 336’
(formerly the Accord Centre)
336 Brixton Road
London SW9 7AA

\textbf{t:} 020 7738 5656  
\textbf{e:} enquiry.line@disabilitylambeth.org.uk

Healthwatch Southwark
\textbf{t:} 020 7358 7005
\textbf{e:} info@healthwatchsouthwark.co.uk  
\textbf{w:} www.healthwatchsouthwark.co.uk
Useful organisations

Healthwatch Lambeth
First Floor
336 Brixton Road
London SW9 7AA

**t:** 020 7274 8522  
**e:** info@healthwatchlambeth.org.uk  
**w:** www.healthwatchlambeth.org.uk

Motability the Car & Scooter Scheme
Motability Operations Ltd
City Gate House
22 Southwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HB

**w:** www.motability.co.uk

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

**t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

**t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS)  
**e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

**t:** 020 7188 3514 (complaints)  
**e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

**t:** 020 7188 8815  
**e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk
**NHS 111**
Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

*t*: 111

**NHS Choices**
Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

*w*: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust**

Members of Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, and to become a member:

*t*: 0800 731 0319
*e*: members@gstt.nhs.uk
*w*: [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership)