

# Amputee rehabilitation unit (ARU)

**This patient leaflet explains more about the amputee rehabilitation unit, what will happen there, and what you can expect during your stay. If you have any further questions, please speak to the nurse or therapist caring for you.**

## What is the amputee rehabilitation unit?

The amputee rehabilitation unit (ARU) is a 12-bed centre providing amputee specific rehabilitation for up to seven weeks. It is located at Lambeth Community Care Centre in Kennington, London. The unit provides specialist rehabilitation for adults who have undergone major amputation including upper limb, lower limb and multi-limb loss. We accept patients who are new amputees, as well as those who are already amputees and are experiencing difficulties managing their loss of limbs.

We treat patients with stable, non-infected open wounds on their stumps. Our aim is to enable you to return to an independent lifestyle. Therefore you will be challenged daily to meet goals set for you by members of the multi-disciplinary team.

The ARU works with amputee patients with different levels of functional ability. Your rehabilitation may or may not include the use of a prosthetic limb. This will depend on the results of your assessment by the team.

In agreeing to transfer to the ARU, you are agreeing to take part in a rehabilitation program tailored to your individual needs. With this in mind, you will be expected to take responsibility for your rehabilitation and will be asked to complete rehabilitation tasks in your own time to maximise your independence.

## Who are we?

The team is led by the Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine and includes:

- Medical Consultant
- Clinical Lead
- Nursing staff
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Prosthetist
- Discharge Coordinator
- Counsellor
- Rehabilitation Assistants
- Pharmacist
- Vascular Nurse Specialist
- Chaplain

The team have close links with amputee outpatient services at the local Amputee Rehabilitation Centres (outpatient amputee hubs) such as: Prosthetic workshop, Rehabilitation Engineer, Wheelchair Service and Orthotics. When you are discharged from ARU, it is likely your amputee care will continue at your local Amputee Rehabilitation Centre. If you live in our local area this will be Bowley Close Rehabilitation Centre.

Additionally we work together with the Diabetic Foot Service, Podiatry and Tissue Viability Nurses for high quality patient care.

Surgery is not carried out on site but we do have close links with Vascular and Orthopaedic surgeons at our referring hospitals.

## **Am I eligible to be referred?**

- You must be over the age of 18. There is no upper age limit.
- You must be medically stable, needing no other medical intervention.
- You should be prepared to cooperate with rehabilitation.
- You will be assessed by therapists as ready to actively participate with rehabilitation.
- Your wounds must be sufficiently healed for amputee rehabilitation to commence, e.g. compression sock, early walking aid and prosthetic rehabilitation (if appropriate).
- On your referral, there must be a plan of a suitable place for where you will be discharged to when you have completed your rehabilitation (within seven weeks).

## **What will happen at the unit?**

You will be given a timetable for rehabilitation sessions Monday to Saturday, between 8am and 4.30pm. You will also be expected to continue with your rehabilitation outside of these hours and at weekends. In addition to your daily sessions, you will have access to specialist medical and nursing care, as well as counselling professionals.

Rehabilitation sessions will sometimes take place on the ARU ward. During these sessions, we may need to turn off televisions, radios, mobile phones and computer technology, so that these don't interfere with your rehabilitation.

For some patients, weekend leave might form part of your rehabilitation. The team will assess this on an individual basis and it may not be possible in all cases. Weekend leave cannot take place on the first weekend of your admission. You must request weekend leave by a Monday for the following weekend so that the team can prepare for this, for example by making sure your medications are ready. If more than two other patients have requested the same weekend leave it may not be possible to agree to all requests. Weekend leave is scheduled to start after your Saturday morning therapy session until Sunday evening, returning by 7pm.

Initially all medication is given to patients by clinical staff until a time when you have an assessment to check if you are suitable to take your medication on your own.

## What is expected of me during my time on the ARU?

In addition to being actively responsible for your own recovery and rehabilitation, we expect you to respect the following house rules:

- It is essential that patients do not disturb or interrupt other patients' rehabilitation sessions.
- An atmosphere of respect between staff and patients is expected at all times.
- Alcohol and illegal substances are not permitted at the ARU or the surrounding grounds/balcony. There is a zero tolerance policy on patients returning back to the ARU under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.
- Smoking is not permitted at the ARU. This includes the balcony areas and the garden. All patients will be offered smoking cessation advice and support during their stay.
- Visiting hours are 11am–8pm, however if visitors arrive during therapy sessions or nursing duties, they will be asked to wait in the family waiting area. We are aware that some visitors may travel from far away. Therefore if sufficient notice is provided, the therapists will try to timetable your rehabilitation programme to accommodate your visitors. Protected meal times operate from midday–1pm and from 5pm–6pm, so that patients can enjoy their meals without interruption.
- An evening curfew of 7.30pm is in place at the ARU. Please be sure to keep an eye on the time, as you may not be allowed to re-enter the premises after this time.

## When will I be ready to go home?

The amount of time spent at the unit varies from patient to patient, but we aim to help you return to a normal life as soon as possible. When it is time for you to leave the unit, we will transfer your care to the outpatient amputee rehabilitation service in your area, where you will be provided with life-long prosthetic and medical care, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and counselling. This is an outpatient service, which means that you will be able to go home at the end of each of your sessions.

You may find that being back at home restricts what you are able to do. Your home environment will be assessed to ensure that you will be able to manage once you leave the unit. This will include a home visit with your occupational therapist. This may include providing you with equipment and/or the recommendation of carers to assist in your needs being met. It is likely that when you go home, you will not be able to access all areas within your property. If appropriate, we can support you in your re-housing application. However, this is a lengthy process, which may not be resolved during your stay at the ARU therefore an interim plan of returning to your current home will be made.

## Patient agreement to rehabilitation contract and expectations

Patient Name	Patient Signature	Date
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Staff Name & Position	Staff Signature	Date
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## Where is the ARU?

Amputee Rehabilitation Unit  
Lambeth Community Care Centre  
Monkton Street  
Kennington  
SE11 4TX  
Ward Telephone number: 020 3049 6912

Closest tube stations: Lambeth North (10min walk) or Elephant & Castle (10min walk).  
Local buses: 3, 159, 59 (Kennington Road), or multiple buses stop at Elephant & Castle

### Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your stay at the ARU, please contact the Clinical Lead or the Ward Manager on 020 3 049 6912 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours, please ask for the nurse in charge.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets)

### 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](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk)

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

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