

Referral for Limb Fitting at the Douglas Bader Rehabilitation Centre

This leaflet explains more about your first visit to the Douglas Bader Rehabilitation Centre at Queen Mary's Hospital. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is the Douglas Bader Rehab Centre?

At the centre we offer rehabilitation for both adults and children and for upper and lower limb amputees.

Facilities include a rehabilitation gym, a prosthetic manufacturing facility, men's and women's fitting rooms, restaurant, coffee bar, waiting area and the Vitali clinic where patients are assessed by the medical team.

For children and their families there are specific fitting and treatment facilities and a children's play area.

Who will I meet at my appointment?

You will meet a wide range of healthcare professionals to help with your rehabilitation including:

Consultant in rehabilitation and team

The consultant is responsible for your overall clinical care, working closely with other members of the team.

The doctors in the team are experts in amputation surgery, pain management, diabetes and other general medical problems to do with your rehabilitation.

The doctor will see you on your first visit, examine you and discuss the best possible course of action for your rehabilitation. We have facilities at Queen Mary's Hospital to carry out most investigations, prescribe medications and request opinions from other specialists when needed.

Specialist nursing staff

The nursing staff is responsible for running the outpatient clinics and giving nursing care to patients attending them. On your first visit the nurse may take and record your blood pressure, weight and height.



The nurses also provide education and advice on stump care and the management of any stump wounds. The nurses work as part of the multidisciplinary team and can liaise and refer to other members of staff including district nurses and diabetic specialist nurses.

Prosthetists and limb manufacturing

The limb manufacturing company based at Queen Mary's has all the clinical and technical expertise needed to fit your new artificial limb (prosthesis).

Your prosthetist will make and fit your prosthesis. They have extensive knowledge of fitting techniques and components and will give you a limb which is as comfortable as possible and which meets your mobility needs.

Once you are allocated a prosthetist, you will remain under their care for as long as you are attending Queen Mary's. They will try to help you solve any problems and meet your mobility needs as you progress through your rehabilitation.



Amputee therapy team

Physiotherapists, occupational therapists (OTs) and the rehabilitation assistant make up this team. Physiotherapy focuses on exercise, strength, balance and mobility. Occupational therapy can help with functional tasks and the home setting. Most of your time will be spent in the rehabilitation gym with the physiotherapists. If you have concerns about functional tasks or your home environment, please ask to speak to an OT.



Other professionals you may meet

Your physiotherapist may refer you to a **fitness instructor** working in the Bader gym, a purpose built facility within the rehab centre. It has full disabled access for clients with any disability to enable them to use exercise equipment. The fitness instructors will work with you to promote a healthy lifestyle through a personal exercise programme.

The team **clinical psychologist** can help with the emotional adjustment to amputation. You can talk to them in confidence about any psychological or emotional issues that are worrying you. Such issues may be to do with the amputation itself and the change it has made, such as feelings of loss, anger or anxiety. They may also be to deal with things from the past that have risen to the surface since your amputation, such as previous bereavement or trauma.



The **orthotist** can help with splints, braces or special footwear to support or control a part of your body. This may be to aid movement, correct deformity or to relieve pressure, pain or discomfort. Your doctor will refer you to the orthotist if needed.

A medical social worker may be available to give information and advice about benefits or community care services.

When can I attend / receive the service?

You should be ready for the rehabilitation clinic when your stitches are out, your stump is healing and the swelling is going down.

You will also need to be able to wash and dress yourself and to have started to be independent in your wheelchair. This means being able to move around the ward or your home easily and to transfer from your wheelchair on to different surfaces such as your bed or the toilet.

If you are a single amputee you should be able to stand up unaided in the parallel bars and should have tried to walk using an aid such as the PPAM aid in the parallel bars.

It is important to be able to do these activities first as much more energy is needed to walk with a prosthesis:

- if your amputation is below the knee, walking will take up to 20% extra energy
- if it is above the knee, walking will take up to 50% extra energy
- if your amputation is bilateral, walking will take up to 280% extra energy.

Using an artificial limb can be much harder than people think, particularly for amputations above the knee, so it is important to gain as much independence and physical strength as possible first to help you use a prosthesis.

How much you achieve with a prosthesis will also depend on how well you were and the level of walking you could do before your amputation. We will factor this in to planning your rehabilitation with a prosthesis.

Patients will be assessed on a case by case basis for their suitability for a prosthesis. Sometimes a wheelchair may be better for you than using a prosthesis, as it may be more energy efficient.

Where do I need to go?

The Douglas Bader Rehabilitation Centre is in Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, on the lower ground floor. It is fully accessible to disabled people and people in wheelchairs.

There is a pay and display car park next to the hospital. Disabled badge holders can park free of charge in any of the designated parking bays on the ground or lower ground floor levels.

Does it cost anything?

Parking is charged at £2 per hour with a maximum of £8 for the day.

How do I get to my appointment?

Please arrange your own transport for your first appointment.

Hospital transport is only provided to patients if their medical condition or mobility requires the skills of ambulance staff and if they would be unable to access healthcare without it or if it would be detrimental to their health to travel by any other means, according to Department of Health guidelines.

You will be assessed at your first appointment for future transport needs.

What do I need to bring with me?

Wear comfortable clothes that will make it easy for your stump and remaining leg to be examined. Please also bring:

- a list of your current medication
- any medication you need to take that day
- a pair of shoes you can currently wear
- a packed lunch, including a drink. You can also buy food and drinks at the hospital.

What will happen at my appointment?

At your first appointment you will be examined by the doctor and assessed by other members of the team, the physiotherapist, the prosthetist and, if needed, the occupational therapist.

The appointment should last approximately one hour.

Your previous fitness level and any conditions such as arthritis or heart disease will be taken into account.

At the end of the appointment you will be told whether you are ready to start prosthetic rehabilitation and if this will be best as an out-patient or in-patient. You will also be able to discuss the stages of your rehabilitation.

If your wound is not ready for you to start, you will need to come back for another appointment before your rehabilitation can begin.

Starting your rehabilitation with your prosthesis

If a prosthesis is right for you, you will be sent some appointments in the post to start the rehabilitation process.

There are lots of different types of prostheses. The doctor and the prosthetist will prescribe the best one for you using our prescription guidelines and taking into consideration your level of amputation, functional needs and physical ability.

Measurements/casting

The first stage in making your prosthesis will be to take either measurements or a plaster cast of your stump. These will be used to make sure the socket of your prosthesis fits your stump. You will need to come for a fitting one or two weeks after your prosthesis has been started.

Fitting

At this appointment your prosthetist will make sure the socket fits properly and that all the parts of the prosthesis are well-aligned. Sometimes a second fitting is needed.



Walking

When you and the prosthetist are both happy with the fitting, you will start daily prosthetic rehabilitation in the therapy department. You will be assessed for future transport needs.

You will be taught to put your prosthesis on and take it off and learn how it fits with prosthetic socks. You will start to learn to walk with the prosthesis in the parallel bars and the physiotherapist will give you exercises and advice for a good walking pattern.



As you gain confidence and ability, you will start using walking aids, assessed for your ability and needs. Your rehabilitation should take five or six weeks, but this can vary.



Once you have started rehabilitation, you will be given a booklet containing further advice and information to help.

Useful sources of information

Frimley Limb-Impaired and Amputee Group

The group aims to bring amputees, the limb-impaired, their families, friends and carers together to provide support, share information, advise on benefits and daily life and provide social activities. The group meets at Frimley Park Hospital.

For more information contact - Tracey Craig – Vascular Clinical Nurse Specialist

Tel: 01276 526302

Email: Tracey.craig@nhs.net

Limbless Association

Tel: 01277 725182/4/6

www.limbless-association.org

RLUG (Roehampton Limb User Group)

RLUG is a limb patient user group run by service users and partners. We welcome limb inpatients and outpatients to our social events and bimonthly meetings with expert speakers. The group is a relaxed way to meet together and become better informed on living with limb loss. It also gives you a voice on the issues that affect the NHS service we receive for our prosthetics and orthotics. Look out for dates of meetings and events on our posters and website.

Tel: 07713 357410

STEADY (Sharing The Epsom Amputees Daily Yomp)

Steady is a local amputee support group based in Epsom. We meet locally several times a year and are a small friendly sociable group that do trips and lunches nearby. We also meet three times a week at The Rainbow Leisure Centre, Epsom, to swim and afterwards to have a coffee and chat. Do come and join us, we can offer support and shared experiences for amputees, their carers, partners and families. We look forward to meeting you.

Tel: 01372 739233

Email: steady@geniums.co.uk

Queen Elizabeth Foundation (QEF), mobility centre

The QEF mobility centre gives advice on driving, adaptations to cars and purchasing outdoor electric buggies and wheelchairs.

Tel: 020 8770 1151

<https://qef.org.uk/our-services/qef-mobility-services>

For information on specific national organisations please talk to your treating therapist.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about limb fitting and rehabilitation, please contact us using the following numbers:

Vitali clinic and clinical nurse specialist (Caroline Thomas)

020 8487 6030

Physiotherapy (amputee gym)

020 8487 6041/2

Occupational therapy 020 8487 6139

Prosthetic department 020 8487 6045

Most appointments will be made for you. If you need to change or make an appointment yourself please contact the Rehabilitation Centre reception on 020 8487 6001/2/3 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm). Out of hours, please leave a message on the Vitali clinic answerphone and a member of staff will return your call as soon as possible.

If you are unable to come for your appointment please let reception know as soon as possible so your appointment can be given to another patient.

It is important to tell us of any changes of GP, address, telephone number, or other contact details as soon as possible to make sure we have up to date details for you.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones. **Tel:** 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

