

# National Spinal Injuries Centre (NSIC) Orthotics Clinic

## **Information for users of the NSIC Orthotics clinic**

If you require a translation or an alternative format of this leaflet please call the Orthotics Clinic on 01296 315863

**Safe & compassionate care,**

**every time**

## Introduction

This guide provides information about the National Spinal Injury Centre (NSIC) Orthotics Clinic, what it can provide and what to expect if you attend the clinic as part of your on-going spinal cord injury (SCI) management.

## General Information

The Orthotics clinic assesses supplies and fits externally applied orthotics. Orthotics are devices used to modify or enhance the structural and functional characteristics of the body i.e. ankle splints, leg callipers, abdominal braces and specialist footwear.

An Orthotist is a registered health care professional who assesses the need for, designs, measures and fits orthoses / orthotic devices. The services of the orthotists are provided to the Trust by **TayCare Medical Ltd**. TayCare are an orthotics manufacturer and supplier based in Leeds.

The NSIC Orthotic clinic is held once a week (Thursday) in the NSIC Physiotherapy Gymnasium. It is managed by a lead NSIC Physiotherapy clinician. A Physiotherapist and Orthotist are both present at each clinic session.

## New Patient Referrals

While you are an **in-patient** at the NSIC, referrals are accepted from any NSIC treating clinician (Physio/OT/Nurse/Medic). Referrals for in-patients form part of the in-patient episode of rehabilitation. The Physiotherapy team running the NSIC Orthotic clinic make the appointment to be seen by the Orthotist. Your appointment will feed into your rehabilitation programme timetable.

When you become an **out-patient** and you remain under the care of an NSIC medical consultant, an appointment to the Orthotic clinic must be supported by a referral letter from a healthcare professional i.e. Physio, OT, GP. This requirement is separate from your continuing care under your NSIC Consultant, which will continue unchanged.

You or your local services may prefer you to be referred to an Orthotic clinic closer to your home address. This may be more convenient for standard or stock orthotics items, i.e. insoles, ankle splints, abdominal binders or footwear, or for repeat appointments. Being referred locally will minimise the need to travel back and forth to Aylesbury. Clinic appointments for outpatients are informed by letter or telephone call. Referrals should be forwarded to:

Orthotics Clinic, Physiotherapy Department  
NSIC  
Stoke Mandeville Hospital  
Mandeville Road  
Aylesbury, Bucks  
HP21 8AL

Tel: **01296 315863**

**If you are NOT under the care of an NSIC Consultant or have NOT been referred by a healthcare professional you cannot be seen within the NSIC Orthotic clinic.**

## Appointments

Planned appointments for **inpatients** are either morning or afternoon each Thursday – the last appointment being 3.30pm. Planned appointments for **out patients** occur between 1pm - 3.30pm. Appointment duration is usually 30mins, but this is based on clinical need and may be shorter or longer. Following assessment by the Orthotic clinic team, they will advise you of the likely duration of your follow up appointments.

Some patients may require items to be custom made, on occasion a plaster cast and body measurements may be taken. To achieve a correct fit, most orthoses require a number of alterations to be made; this will require repeat appointments for fitting prior to the orthosis being issued. Return appointments are provided at the time of the initial appointment; you will be advised of the number of repeat appointments you are likely to need.

If you are not able to attend for repeat outpatient appointments speak to your GP about referral to an orthotics team closer to your home address.

## What to bring with you

Bring any orthotics / splints you already have, or are having problems with. Wear suitable clothing; loose enough to move from the area the Orthotist may require to see. Full supportive footwear should be worn if you expect to trial ankle splints or insoles. Bring any supporting information.

## Re-Referral or Returning Patients

Some NSIC outpatients attend the clinic for regular review or as part of their on-going clinical need and functional ability.

A letter of referral for orthotic review is needed for **each new appliance request** (i.e. provision of a new orthosis). However for repair/replacement/review of an **existing orthosis** provided by the NSIC, patients under the care of the NSIC can self refer themselves to clinic. The only exception to this is if you have not been seen by your treating NSIC consultant in the last 4 years. In this case the orthotics clinic would request you are reviewed by your consultant initially to make sure no changes to your condition have occurred that may contraindicate orthotic provision.

## Patients who fail to attend for appointments

If you are not able to attend a planned appointment, please contact the Orthotics clinic to inform the team and rearrange a new and more suitable time to attend. **01296 315863.**

If you do not attend (DNA) for an appointment please contact the clinic as soon as possible to rearrange an appointment.

The Trust's Access Policy will be followed regarding offering further appointments if you repeatedly do not attend for appointments.

# Guidelines for on-going Orthotic provision for NSIC patients

## **Footwear for Adults (those 19 years or older)**

NSIC patients may require specialist footwear due to consequences of paralysis and absent sensation, or the need to have specialist footwear adaptation due to use of other orthoses.

One pair of prescribed footwear will be issued on the basis of clinical need and the failure of an ordinary shoe to fit. This is likely to be due to swelling, deformity or pressure areas. A second pair of shoes will be provided when the first pair has been tried and found to be satisfactory and without problems. This is usually within six months.

Footwear will be replaced on the basis of clinical need. This may require an appointment for this to be reviewed and assessed. New shoes will only be issued to replace worn out footwear that cannot be refurbished and will not be issued automatically.

A maximum of two pairs of prescribed footwear (and any one time) can be provided based on clinical need.

## **Footwear Repairs**

If the NSIC Orthotic team deem repairs to footwear are necessary, these will be undertaken by the NSIC Orthotic clinic; in order to keep the footwear in functional condition.

## **Adaptation to Patient's Own Footwear (e.g. raises, supportive straps)**

Adaptations will be made to your own footwear to support your clinical needs. These footwear adaptations will be replaced by the NSIC Orthotic clinic as they wear out. Advice may also be given for the replacement or purchase of new footwear if repairs to these adaptations are felt to be inappropriate or the adaptation is no longer required.

A maximum of three adaptations (at any one time) can be provided based on clinical need.

## **Insoles for Adults**

One pair will be provided and replaced on the basis of clinical need. This will be determined by the NSIC Orthotics clinical team .

## **Footwear & Insoles Children and Young People (0-18 years)**

Children are supplied with one pair of footwear / insoles determined by clinical need. These are replaced / repaired as growth occurs, or when clinically indicated.

Provision of footwear to wear over an ankle splint (AFO) is NOT a clinical indication, the Orthotics clinic can provide advice if suitable footwear cannot be found via conventional shoe shops.

## **Corsets and abdominal binders**

These will be provided on the basis of clinical need assessed by the NSIC Orthotic team. Indications for provision are primarily for cardiovascular postural hypotension and skeletal support. Replacement takes place dependent on clinical need and repairs will be undertaken as necessary. An appointment for review of frequent corset or binder provision will be necessary. An appointment will also be required if frequent repairs are required within a short period or if your shape has changed.

A maximum of 2 corsets/binders will be provided at any one time.

## **Bespoke Items**

Bespoke items are provided when a made-to-measure fit based on clinical need is required. Examples of bespoke items include: AFO (ankle/foot orthosis), KAFO (knee/ankle/foot orthosis / calliper), MLJ (moulded leather jacket), fabric abdominal corset, knee braces/supports, collars, lycra garments, elbow splints.

Bespoke items will only be provided following assessment by the NSIC Orthotics team. Indications will be based on musculoskeletal support/control and function, i.e. ambulation and mobility.

Replacement will take place based on clinical need and repairs will be undertaken as deemed necessary by the NSIC Orthotics team. When the device is required for mobility and the individual is dependent on it for function, consideration will be made to provision of a second device to use as a backup. This will only be undertaken following successful fit and use of the initial orthosis.

## **Children and Young people (0-18 years)**

Bespoke orthoses will be provided following assessment of clinical need. Indications will be based on musculoskeletal support/control and function. The additional requirement of orthotic support for the growing skeleton will be a major consideration. This may involve the combination of several orthoses.

Review of orthotic requirements and the need for replacement will form part of the young person's comprehensive annual review at the NSIC. Replacement at other times will take place dependent on clinical need and repairs will be undertaken as necessary.

## **Stock Items**

If the orthosis supplied is a stock item, requiring no alteration or adaptation for use, advice may be provided to access its on-going provision with a more local supplier (via your GP). Provision of stock items will be based on clinical need assessed by the NSIC Orthotics team.

Replacement of some stock items may be carried out without the need for a clinic appointment however this still requires provision of a referral letter directed to the clinic .

If you have not been seen by the NSIC Orthotics clinic in the last 12 months replacement of stock items may still require a review appointment by the NSIC Orthotic team to ensure the stock item continues to best meet your clinical needs.

### **Private Purchases**

If you wish to be provided with an orthosis that is not within the NSIC NHS service specification or wish to have duplicate items not covered by the service specification, advice will be given on how this can be purchased privately.

### **Delivery of Items**

Collection in person of your orthoses from the clinic is the preferred method of provision of an orthosis that does not require a fitting. Due to the distance of the population served, posting of items may be undertaken. This can influence the time of receipt due to delays incurred from postage and packing. Postage direct from the BHT Contractor, TayCare Medical Ltd, is undertaken when clinically appropriate.

**Postage will only occur to addresses in the UK. Please ensure the clinic has your current address.**

### **Sharing or personal information**

The Trust uses a number of suppliers and manufacturers to either make, adapt or supply the appropriate appliance for your condition. This involves the sharing of certain patient information between the Trust and manufacturers/suppliers.

By continuing with treatment the Trust presumes consent for the sharing of your personal information. Please contact the NSIC Orthotics team if you have queries relating to this.

### **New and Emerging Technologies**

Developments in rehabilitation, design and mobility are on-going. This will also occur in orthotic provision. Emerging technologies that may promote function will be addressed and reviewed in regard to an individual's clinical benefit, followed by liaison with the NSIC divisional budget holder. Consideration for funding and its implications will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## **How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?**

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the entrance to every ward before coming in to or after leaving the ward. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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