

Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) response to:

Petition P-05-817 Specialist prosthetics for child amputees

Prosthetics limbs for children – Nov 2018

Why there appears to be a distinction made between upper and lower limbs

The WHSSC Specialised Services Service Specification for Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Services sets out the provision of prostheses for people with lower limb and upper limb amputations and absences for patients resident in Wales. It sets out how services must offer the prescription, provision and maintenance of partial limbs whether upper or lower limbs or both.

Whilst there is a section within the specification specifically on 'Provision of a Recreational Upper Limb for a Child' this is due to the low provision of upper limbs due to the fact that upper limb referrals across both adults and children account for only 10% of referrals to the Prosthetic services in Wales. The provision of lower recreational limbs is far more common within the three services.

We are currently in the process of updating our Prosthetic and Amputee Rehabilitation Services specification and will ask the Stakeholders who we consult with on the updated specification if there should be a distinction made between upper and lower limbs.

The volume of applications received for lower limb prosthetics under the IPFR process and an indication of the proportion approved

We have received less than five applications for lower limb prosthetics in the last two years and none of the applications have been approved. A number of lower limb prosthetics are provided within the Prosthetics budgets of the three centres across Wales and it is only devices such as sports blades that are not currently commissioned, that would be considered through the IPFR process.

The average additional cost associated with providing a recreational lower limb prosthetic to a child or a young person

Due to the way in which the budgets for Prosthetics are provided to the three centres across Wales, we are unable to provide specific

costs of a recreational lower limb prosthetic. This question would be most appropriately directed to the three Prosthetic services.

What use is currently made, or could be made in the future, of 3D printing for the production of prosthetics

3D printing is not currently used in any of our services in NHS Wales. Some of the Prosthetic students within the services have worked with Cardiff University on the use of 3D printing in Prosthetics and we welcome research in this area in order to understand where the technology can be best applied in terms of both clinically and cost effectiveness.