Lothian NHS Board

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Date 11 September 2026
Your Ref
Our Ref 11848

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PROSTHETICS

I write in response to your request for information in relation prosthetics.

Question:

1. Current eligibility and prescribing criteria

'Please provide the current SSPS clinical eligibility and prescription criteria for:

- *specialist foot and ankle joints;*
- *self-aligning ankle-feet;*
- *hydraulic ankle-foot systems;*
- *microprocessor-controlled ankle-foot systems;*
- *powered or electronically controlled ankle-foot systems.'*

Answer:

The term "walking trial" will be used throughout – this refers to the patient trialling the foot and ankle (F+A) in the prosthetic centre and/or taking this home for an extended period if required.

The eligibility criteria for all prosthetic F+A provided through SSPS are as follows:

Self-aligning ankle-feet (F+A) Unilateral limb loss

- Patients who have unilateral transtibial limb loss and are established prosthetic users who encounter stairs and slopes on a regular basis and are able to demonstrate the following, may be considered for SSPS F+A –
- Walk unaided or with 1 walking stick for balance only
- Able to do stairs step-over-step
- Capable of completing a 6-minute timed walking test (TWT) with no rests
- Can manage an outdoor walking loop that encompasses kerbs, uneven ground, cambers, grass, slopes, gravel; to better understand current limitations
- Identify their own limitations with current prescription
- AMP Pro Score >39/47 (K3 minimum)
- No active medical issues with their contralateral limb
- Aware that they have an alternative to SSPS from their own NHS Centre which addresses their needs if they do not wish SSPS
- Committed to a walking trial if necessary to ensure weight of SSPS F+A is not an issue

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Self-aligning ankle-feet (F+A) Bilateral limb loss

- Patients who have bilateral transtibial limb loss and are established prosthetic users who encounter stairs and slopes on a regular basis and are able to demonstrate the following, may be considered for SSPS F+A
- Walk unaided or with 1 walking stick for balance only
- Able to stand unaided and maintain balance both static and dynamic
- Capable of completing a 6-minute timed walking test (TWT) with no rests
- Can manage an outdoor walking loop that encompasses kerbs, uneven ground, cambers, grass, slopes, gravel; to better understand current limitations
- Identify their own limitations with current prescription
- Bilateral AMP Pro Score >39/47 (K3 minimum)
- Aware that they have an alternative to SSPS from their own NHS Centre which addresses their needs if they do not wish SSPS
- Committed to a walking trial if necessary to ensure weight of SSPS F+A is not an issue

Contraindications to SSPS F+As

- SSPS F+A is not their main prosthesis for daily use
- Limited walkers- indoor use and only outside for short distance
- Reliant on >1 Walking stick for outdoors e.g. 2 Crutches, Zimmer
- Repeatedly breaking current F+A
- High impact ADLs e.g. jumping from height, heavy lifting
- Hyperextension at knee that persists once physio input has been exhausted
- Body weight must not exceed the prosthetic componentry limit and should ideally remain at least 5% below the maximum threshold, based on recorded measurements over a one-year period
- Poor balance and lack of hip and knee control despite physio input
- Unable to tolerate weight of F+A- consider patients stature, especially more slight frame and tall

Current prescribing criteria - Once a patient's referral has been approved it is for the individual prosthetist to determine, with the patient and physio input, which are the most appropriate prescriptions for the patient to trial or be provided with from the pre-agreed SSPS equipment list.

Question:

2. Devices available through SSPS

'Please provide the current list, formulary, prescribing matrix or schedule of ankle-foot devices which may be funded or supplied through SSPS.

In particular, please provide the recorded status of:

- *Blatchford Elan / ElanIC;*
- *Blatchford Echelon;*

- *Blatchford Echelon VT;*
- *Ottobock Meridium;*
- *Ottobock Empower;*
- *Össur Proprio Foot;*
- *any other microprocessor-controlled, powered, electronically controlled or self-adjusting ankle-foot system.*

Please indicate, where recorded, whether each is:

- *routinely available;*
- *available subject to clinical criteria;*
- *restricted;*
- *exceptional funding only;*
- *available for clinical trial;*
- *or not available.'*

Answer:

These terminologies are not used in SSPS - if a patient is approved for trial +/- provision it is because they meet the eligibility criteria as noted earlier. The patient then has an opportunity to trial the F+A and if of benefit and accepted by them they are provided with this through SSPS which is a separate fund from the regional prosthetic centres.

Supplier	Model	SSPS Provision	Comment
Blatchford	Elan/IC	Yes	Not available from 2026/27 Existing users maintained
Blatchford	Echelon	Yes	Available subject to clinical criteria
Blatchford	Echelon ER	Yes	Available subject to clinical criteria
Blatchford	Echelon VT	Yes	Available subject to clinical criteria
Ottobock	Taleo Adapt	Yes	Available subject to clinical criteria
Ottobock	Empower	No	Not available
Ottobock	Meridium	No	Not available
Ossur	Proflex Pivot	Yes	available subject to clinical criteria
Ossur	Proprio	No	Not available from 2026/27 Existing users maintained
RSL Steeper	Odyssey K3	Yes	Available subject to clinical criteria
RSL Steeper	Kinterra	Yes	Available subject to clinical criteria

Question:

3. Devices actually provided

'For each of the following financial years, please provide the number of devices approved, funded or supplied through SSPS, broken down by model where this information is held:

- *2023/24;*

- *2024/25;*
- *2025/26;*
- *2026/27 to the date of this request.*

In particular, please provide figures for:

- *Elan / ElanIC;*
- *Meridium;*
- *Empower;*
- *Proprio Foot;*
- *Echelon / Echelon VT;*
- *other advanced electronic or microprocessor ankle-foot systems'*

No patient-identifiable information is requested.'

Answer:

The following are for SMART / NHS Lothian only. SMART / NHS Lothian do not hold data for SMART / NHS Lothian only for NHS National Services Scotland or WestMARC / NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Supplier	Model	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27 (P4)
Blatchford	Elan/IC	5<	5<	5<	0
Blatchford	Echelon	9	5<	5<	0
Blatchford	Echelon VT	11	14	8	0
Blatchford	Echelon ER	5<	0	0	0
Ottobock	Taleo Adapt	0	0	7	5<
Ottobock	Meridium	0	0	0	0
Ottobock	Empower	0	0	0	0
Ossur	Proflex Pivot	16	11	11	5<
Ossur	Proprio	0	0	5<	0
RSL Steeper	Odyssey K3	9	5<	8	5<
RSL Steeper	Kinterra	5<	7	4	5<
TOTAL		56	41	44	8

Question:

4. Applications and outcomes

'Please provide the number of applications or referrals for specialist ankle-foot technology during the above periods which were:

- *approved;*
- *declined;*
- *deferred for further assessment;*
- *approved following a clinical trial'*

Answer:

This information is not broken down into Lothian and GGC; nor is it categorised by type of device for SSPS from these years, therefore cannot be given.

Question:

5. Clinical criteria

'Please provide any written criteria used when considering a patient for specialist ankle-foot technology, including any recorded consideration of:

- *bilateral lower-limb amputation;*
- *falls risk;*
- *slopes, stairs and uneven terrain;*
- *restricted knee function or other joint impairment;*
- *pain or abnormal joint loading;*
- *energy expenditure;*
- *community mobility;*
- *employment or occupational requirements;*
- *rehabilitation potential'*

Answer:

Eligibility criteria are noted earlier for unilateral lower limb and bilateral lower limb referrals. Any other considerations are for the prosthetists to individually consider in addition to this and not written into SSPS criteria.

Question:

6. Component trials

'Please provide any current policy concerning clinical trials of advanced prosthetic ankle-foot components, including:

- *manufacturer demonstration devices;*
- *loan components;*
- *comparative component trials;*
- *trials prior to a final funding decision.'*

Answer:

Arrangement are made for manufacturers demonstrate any new or upgraded technologies to the clinical team often with their own demonstrator models when they come to market.

Loan components are requested if patient is trialling more than one F+A and then returned as per manufacturer protocol.

There is no policy on comparative component trials.

Funding is allocated at point of National MDT and then if the F+A trial is successful can be provided.

Question:

7. Financial criteria

'Please provide any:

- *financial threshold;*
- *price ceiling;*
- *additional approval procedure;*
- *exceptional funding mechanism*

applicable to specialist ankle-foot prescriptions.'

Answer:

SSPS has a financial envelope and a service level agreement to provide a specific number of new (n=50) and replacement (n=65) F+A devices per annum. This is the financial threshold and there is no price ceiling. There is no exceptional funding mechanism in NHS Scotland and no additional approval procedure.

Question:

8. Reviews of advanced ankle technology

'Please provide copies of any product evaluations, technology reviews, committee papers, formulary reviews or policy reviews produced since 1 April 2023 concerning:

- *Elan / ElanIC;*
- *Meridium;*
- *Empower;*
- *Proprio Foot;*
- *microprocessor ankle-foot systems generally;*
- *powered ankle-foot systems;*
- *self-aligning ankle-feet.'*

Answer:

There are no committee papers, product evaluations, technology reviews or policy reviews documentation concerning Elan / ElanIC; Meridium; Empower; Proprio Foot; microprocessor ankle-foot systems generally; powered ankle-foot systems; self-aligning ankle-feet.

Question:

9. Referral and cross-border access

'Please provide the current referral pathway to the Scottish Specialist Prosthetics Service, including:

- *which clinicians may refer;*
- *whether referral must originate from a Scottish prosthetic centre;*
- *residency requirements;*
- *whether cross-border NHS referrals from England, Wales or Northern Ireland can be accepted;*

- *whether a patient ordinarily resident in England can be assessed or treated by SSPS where their English NHS commissioner agrees to fund the assessment or treatment.'*

Answer:

Which clinicians may refer - Referrals to SSPS are made by prosthetists within NHS Scotland on behalf of patients who are ordinarily resident in Scotland

Whether referral must originate from a Scottish prosthetic centre - Referrals would normally originate from a Scottish prosthetic service. However, where a patient is ordinarily resident in Scotland but receives prosthetic care from an NHS prosthetic centre in England due to geographical circumstances, that centre may also make a referral to SSPS. In such cases, referrals are submitted directly to the SSPS Clinical Coordinator rather than through the SSPS referral portal.

Residency requirements - Patients must be ordinarily resident in Scotland to be eligible for referral to SSPS.

Whether cross-border NHS referrals from England, Wales or Northern Ireland can be accepted;

Referrals can be accepted from NHS prosthetic services out with Scotland only where the patient is ordinarily resident in Scotland. Patients who are ordinarily resident in England, Wales or Northern Ireland are not eligible for referral to SSPS.

Whether a patient ordinarily resident in England can be assessed or treated by SSPS where their English NHS commissioner agrees to fund the assessment or treatment - No, patients who are ordinarily resident in England are not eligible for assessment or treatment through SSPS, including where funding is offered by an English NHS commissioner.

Question:

10. Which organisation holds the information?

'Where different elements of this request are held separately by:

- *NHS National Services Scotland;*
- *WestMARC / NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde;*
- *SMART / NHS Lothian,*

please identify which body holds the relevant information rather than treating those portions simply as unanswered.'

Answer:

The data provided is for SMART / NHS Lothian only. SMART / NHS Lothian do not hold data for SMART / NHS Lothian only for NHS National Services Scotland or WestMARC / NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

I hope the information provided helps with your request. I am sorry I cannot help further with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, \you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive