



British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists

GUIDELINES FOR BEST PRACTICE

No 5:

*The Clinical Environment
(Orthotics and Prosthetics)*

BEST CLINICAL PRACTICE IN ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS

General Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to reflect current best practice in clinical orthotics and prosthetics in order that the individual practitioner achieves and maintains the highest standards of professionalism and effectiveness in patient care. They are intended to be a general guide to recommended professional behaviour in all routine daily employment activities.

Your professional body has a vital role in setting and promoting standards that must have quality at their core. With healthcare standards subject to continuous quality improvements these guidelines will undergo monitoring and periodic revision.

The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO) is committed to the following quality principles in professional practice:

- The pursuit of evidence-based practice.
- Involvement in quality improvement processes (e.g. clinical audit).
- Professional development programmes which reflect clinical governance principles.
- Dissemination of (evaluated) good practice ideas and innovations.
- The systematic learning of lessons for clinical practice from patient complaints.
- The promotion of universal validated clinical guidelines and their systematic controlled implementation.

BAPO, in liaison with appropriate bodies, will approve the development of the guidelines to produce national or local standards. The Association may also issue individual Guidelines or Recommendations on specific areas of prosthetic and orthotic practice.

These guidelines are critical to current arrangements which allow BAPO to build on and strengthen the existing system of professional self-regulation.

This document is subject to revision by the Professional Affairs Committee of BAPO and enquiries regarding its contents should be addressed in the first instance to its chairperson.

Other Guidelines in this Series:

1. The Role of the Prosthetist/Orthotist
2. Communication and Teamwork
3. Clinical Records
4. Assessment and Review
5. The Clinical Environment
6. Clinical Effectiveness

The Clinical Environment (Orthotics and Prosthetics)

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1. Statement

The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists supports the view that a physical environment suitable and appropriate to the needs of both the patient and the prosthetist/orthotist is an integral part of effective treatment. The prosthetic/orthotic clinic should have adequate space, facilities and equipment in which good and safe clinical practice can take place.

2. Introduction

These guidelines are intended for use by service providers, service managers and professionals concerned with the delivery of safe and effective healthcare. To facilitate safe best clinical practice the following suitably equipped areas should be made available to the prosthetist / orthotist / clinician.

3. The Clinical Environment

(a) Main Building/Entrance Area

Functional design requirements: -

- Should enable safe access to the main building
- Should conform to the recommendations set out in the Disability Awareness Act
- Should conform to necessary fire regulations

Recommended contents: -

- Suitable secure parking facilities for patients / ambulances / staff
- Entrance / access adequately signposted
- Wheelchair and stretcher access to building
- Wheelchairs and walking aids available
- Suitable transfer facilities available
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation

(b) Reception Area

Functional design requirements: -

- Confirmation of identity for security
- Checking in of patients
- Holding of patients' notes for daily clinic
- Making appointments
- Arranging transport
- Administrative duties

Recommended contents: -

- Appropriate signage
- Manned by appropriately trained staff
- Counter at an appropriate height for wheelchairs
- Telephones available for patient use
- Location of master display for emergency call buttons

- Panic/emergency buttons for reception staff only
- Contains necessary administrative hardware – filing cabinets, desks, etc
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation

(c) Waiting Area

Functional design requirements: -

- Waiting area for patients pending call for treatment
- Waiting area for patients awaiting transport home
- Should be overlooked by reception

Recommended contents: -

- Should be of an appropriate size for the clinic
- Safe/comfortable seating of appropriate height provided
- Display of a personnel board
- Refreshment facilities available
- Suitable reading matter available
- Notice board displaying relevant material
- Access to nursing assistants/ support staff – and how to contact them
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Play facilities for children – with appropriate toys for amusement

(d) Toilet Facilities

Functional design requirements: -

- WC facilities for wheelchair users
- Handwashing facilities for wheelchair users
- Baby changing facilities
- Toiletry changing facilities

Recommended contents: -

- WC assisted high seats
- Emergency call button
- Wash-hand basin at appropriate height
- Mirror
- Coat hooks
- Appropriate grab rails
- Hand drying facilities
- Soap dispenser
- Pedal bin/ waste bin
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Appropriately signed as to its location
- Non-slip flooring

(e) Consulting/Examination Room

Functional design requirements: -

- Access for patient on foot or in wheelchair
- Privacy for patients to undress
- Facilities for clinical examination
- Viewing of x-rays

- Hand washing
- Administrative work

Recommended contents: -

- Facilities to ensure privacy e.g. one-way glass, curtaining
- Patient / nurse call button / system
- Suitable furniture – desk, chair
- X-ray viewer
- Examination couch - adjustable in height
- Necessary manual handling equipment
- Wash basin
- Hand washing facilities
- Infection control facilities
- Clinical waste bin
- Mirror
- Facilities to hang clothing
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Appropriately signed including a free / engaged sign on entrance

(f) Prosthetist/Orthotist's Office

Functional design requirements: -

- Administrative duties
- Notification to clinician of the arrival of a patient for treatment

Recommended contents: -

- Suitable area for administration work
- Suitable desk and chair
- Area for storage of reference material e.g. library of catalogues and journals
- Telephone access – internal and external lines
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Appropriately signed as to its location
- Access to IM&T systems where appropriate e.g. RIS, OPAS, Internet
- Suitable method of notifying the arrival of patients e.g. notification board

(g) Cast/Measure Rooms

Functional design requirements: -

- Taking of plaster of paris casts
- Clinical measuring of patients
- Privacy for patients to undress

Recommended contents: -

- Plaster sink with integral plaster trap and hot/cold water
- Cupboards for storage of relevant materials – POP, tapes, etc
- Casting chair / plinth - adjustable
- Wall bars
- Measuring equipment
- Calibrated weighing scales
- Access to manual handling/ transfer facilities
- Emergency / call button

- Adequate patient washing facilities
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Appropriately signed as to its location

(h) Fitting/Treatment Rooms

Functional design requirements: -

- Privacy for patients to undress
- Walking practice area
- Assessing adjustments required to prostheses / orthoses by clinician

Recommended contents: -

- Appropriate seating
- Walkway of appropriate length, with/without parallel bars (recommended minimum 10 metres)
- Appropriate flooring material – non-slip etc.
- Emergency call button
- First Aid equipment
- Access to manual handling equipment
- Curtain tracks / cubicles for privacy
- Wash basin
- Towel dispenser
- Clinical waste bin
- Full length mirror
- Facilities to hang clothing
- Information board
- Suitable reading material
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Appropriately signed as to its location

(i) Workshop Area

Functional design requirements: -

- Manufacture of prostheses / orthoses
- Adjustment of prostheses / orthoses
- Designed in conjunction with Health and Safety regulations

Recommended contents: -

- Appropriately signed as to its location
- Health and Safety at Work Act must be displayed
- Personnel protective equipment must be available
- Appropriate safety systems – e.g. electrical circuit breakers
- Appropriate extraction
- First Aid equipment
- Wash basin
- Towel dispenser
- Clinical waste bin
- Information board
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Cupboards / drawers for tool storage - lockable
- Suitable equipment for the storage of hazardous materials

- Eyewash facilities
- Relevant machinery / workbenches – routers/grinders, vices, etc
- Appropriate tooling

(j) Rest Area

Functional design requirements: -

- Should be separate from the main activity of the clinic
- Consumption of food
- Social activities
- Lockers available for secure storage of personal items
- Separate male/female changing areas available within area

Recommended contents: -

- Appropriate seating
- Tables
- Fridge
- Hand washing facilities
- Lockers - lockable
- Drinking water

(k) Cast Rectification Area

Functional design requirements: -

- Facilities to aid the rectification of plaster of paris cast
- Designed in conjunction with Health and Safety regulations

Recommended contents: -

Appropriately signed as to its location

- Plaster sink with integral plaster trap and hot/cold water
- Cupboards for storage of relevant materials – POP, tapes, etc
- Necessary dust extraction equipment
- Measuring equipment
- Appropriate safety systems – e.g. electrical circuit breakers
- Wash basin
- Towel dispenser
- Appropriate workbenches for rectification
- Appropriate tooling
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation

(l) Nursing Treatment Room

Functional design requirements: -

- Privacy for patients to undress
- Examination of patients
- Dressing of wounds

Recommended contents: -

- Appropriately signed as to its location
- Appropriate safety systems – e.g. electrical circuit breakers
- First Aid equipment

- Wash basin
- Towel dispenser
- Clinical waste bin
- Worktop with lockable cupboards / drawers for storage
- Examination couch
- Necessary manual handling equipment
- Examination lamp
- Curtain tracks / cubicles for privacy
- Facilities to hang clothing
- Appropriate seating
- Emergency call button
- First Aid equipment
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation
- Information board
- Telephone

(m) Storage Area

Functional design requirements: -

- Storage of prostheses/orthoses
- Storage of positive casts

Recommended contents: -

- Necessary shelving
- Necessary racking
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation

(n) Decontamination Room

Functional design requirements: -

- Safe decontamination of prostheses/orthoses
- Storing of cleaning materials and equipment
- Filling and emptying of cleaning equipment and containers
- Disposal of waste and soiled materials
- Compliance with local Infection Control Policy

Recommended contents: -

- Domestic sink unit
- Adequate shelving
- Necessary cleaning materials
- Necessary cleaning equipment
- Clinical waste bin
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation

(o) Infection Control Room

Functional design requirements: -

- The ability to see patients in a safe isolated environment
- Storing of materials and equipment consistent with infection control
- Disposal of waste and soiled materials
- Compliance with local Infection Control Policy

Recommended contents: -

- Domestic sink unit
- Working surfaces capable of being cleaned
- Necessary cleaning materials
- Necessary manual handling equipment
- Clinical waste bin
- Appropriate flooring
- Appropriate lighting, heating and ventilation

(p) Access to Other MDT Environments

In addition to the above, it is recommended that adequate access is available to the following multidisciplinary team environments: -

- Physiotherapy
- Counselling
- Occupational Therapy
- Information Services
- Nursing Services

4. Further Information

We hope that you have found these guidelines helpful and that they will aid your own assessment of your current practice. The guidance is regularly reviewed and we welcome your comments.

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Glossary of Terms

The following definitions are taken from international standard **ISO 8549-1 : 1995**

- **prosthesis: prosthetic device:** Externally applied device used to replace, wholly or in part, an absent or deficient limb segment. (Note: It includes any such device having a part within the human body for structural or functional purposes.)
- **orthosis: orthotic device:** Externally applied device used to modify the structural or functional characteristics of the neuro-muscular and skeletal systems.
- **prosthetics:** Science and art involved in treating patients by the use of *prostheses*.
- **orthotics:** Science and art involved in treating patients by the use of *orthoses*.
- **prosthetist:** Person who, having completed an approved course of education and training, is authorised by an appropriate national authority to design, measure and fit *prostheses*.
- **orthotist:** Person who, having completed an approved course of education and training, is authorised by an appropriate national authority to design, measure and fit *orthoses*.
- **prosthetist/orthotist:** Person who, having completed an approved course of education and training, is authorised by an appropriate national authority to design, measure and fit *orthoses* and *prostheses*.

Note: State registration in the UK requires the practitioner to be registered with the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine.