

PQ Rep IEHG  
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**8<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

Deputy Pauline Tully T.D.,  
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**Re: PQ 34664/22 – Suppliers of prosthetics, NRH**

**“To ask the Minister for Health if engagement takes place between rehabilitation consultants employed by the National Rehabilitation Hospital with suppliers of prosthetics and orthotics; if so, the extent of this engagement; and if he will make a statement on the matter.”**

Dear Deputy Tully,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question seeking an update on engagement between suppliers of prosthetics and the National Rehabilitation Hospital (NRH), which has been referred to the Ireland East Hospital Group for direct response.

I have had this matter examined and am advised that the National Rehabilitation Hospital delivers the only consultant-led interdisciplinary prosthetic rehabilitation service in Ireland. The service is provided in conjunction with a strategic partner, Ability Matters, as part of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the HSE. Ability Matters was selected as the Strategic Partner, following international tender, to provide prosthetic services and clinics around Ireland.

The Ability Matters Group is an international group of companies, Ability Matters Ltd is part of the Assistive Technology Group which is an Irish registered division of the parent company.

All patients who require NRH rehabilitation services must be referred to the NRH by their consultant or general practitioner to the Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine at the NRH. Following an interdisciplinary assessment process involving rehabilitation consultant, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, medical social work, psychology, specialist nursing and prosthetist, a clinical decision is taken as to whether the services delivered at the NRH are suitable based on the patient's clinical need.

All prosthetists from Ability Matters work under the clinical governance of an NRH employed Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine supported by an interdisciplinary team.

The Mercy University Hospital (MUH), Cork runs a consultant led Interdisciplinary team (IDT) Outpatient Rehabilitation Programme for primary and established patients. All patients who attend for rehabilitation services must be referred by their consultant or general practitioner to the Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine at MUH. Following an interdisciplinary assessment process, a clinical decision is taken as to whether the services delivered at the



MUH are suitable based on the patient's clinical need. Under a service level agreement, a prosthetist from Ability Matters works under the clinical governance of an MUH employed Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine supported by an interdisciplinary team, comprising nurse, occupational therapist and physiotherapist.

Following an interdisciplinary assessment process involving rehabilitation consultant, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, medical social work, psychology, specialist nursing and orthotist, a clinical decision is taken as to whether the patient requires an orthosis.

Should an NRH/MUH patient require an orthosis it is provided in conjunction with a strategic partner, Ability Matters, as part of a Service Level Agreement with the HSE.

All orthotists from Ability Matters work under the clinical governance of an NRH employed Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine supported by an interdisciplinary team.

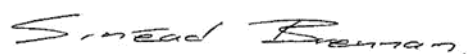
There are continuous ongoing clinical discussions between the Ability Matters prosthetist/orthotist and treating rehabilitation consultant to ensure that the best clinical care and appropriate prosthesis/orthosis is provided to each patient. Following the assessment/input the appropriate orthosis/prosthesis is prescribed by the consultant in rehabilitation medicine. The treating Prosthetist/Orthotist will continue to treat the patient under the clinical governance of the treating consultant in medical rehabilitation until their final discharge.

It is important that all members of the clinical team keep themselves apprised of clinical developments and new prosthesis or orthosis development to ensure that their clinical skills are maintained. Attendance at clinical conferences/exhibitions and engagement with suppliers is part of keeping abreast and apprised of current developments in the provision of prosthetic and orthotic care.

Members of the NRH management team including the Medical Director of the NRH Prosthetic, Orthotic and Limb Absence Rehabilitation Programme and the MUH Prosthetic, Orthotic and limb absence rehabilitation Consultant meet with members of Ability Matters team on a regular basis at least bimonthly to discuss service provision.

I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Ms. Sinéad Brennan,  
Director of Quality, Clinical Governance & Patient Safety

