

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, PARENTS, CARERS, GUARDIANS

### Ankle foot orthosis (AFO) - children

This leaflet is for parents, carers, or guardians whose child has been supplied with an orthosis that controls the position of the foot and/or ankle. An AFO is a close-fitting plastic support that goes into the shoe. This leaflet should be used as a general guide along with the specific advice provided by your orthotist/physiotherapist.

#### Fitting instructions

With your child sitting directly in front of you, open up all the straps and fasten them out of the way. With the AFO in one hand, hold the forefoot and push the big toe joint up so that you flex your child's knee.

Slide the AFO up the back of the leg until the heel makes good contact with the base - ensure the heel is firmly down before fastening the ankle strap - then proceed with the calf strap. Lastly, work the shoe on with a twisting motion and be sure you tie them securely.

It is recommended to use long socks. Plain cotton socks with no pattern are ideal. Ensure they are smooth and wrinkle free. Be sure to fasten the straps securely but not overly tight. Loose AFOs rub more frequently than tight AFOs. Never let a child walk in a splint without shoes on as the plastic on the bottom can be very slippery.

#### Wearing regime

Wearing the orthosis should not hurt but it may feel a little uncomfortable while they get used to it.

Whether this is the first or a replacement AFO you should build up the wearing time gradually.

If possible, wear for short periods, but often throughout the day. Any rubs or red marks should fade away after 15 minutes of removing the orthosis. If they do not fade, please contact the orthotic department for a review appointment and leave the orthosis off if safe to do so.

#### Maintenance

Due to the intimate fit of the AFO, it is very difficult to keep it absolutely clean. Never immerse in water. Plastic and foam components can be cleaned with a warm, soapy cloth and dried. Leather components should not be cleaned.

Allow to air dry if the orthosis becomes wet and do not wear until dry. Do not place on or near a heat source.

Moving metal components can be kept lubricated and rust free using WD40 or a small amount of mechanics grease or oil. Do not get these lubricants on other components. Do not attempt to alter, cut, or modify the orthosis in any way. If the orthosis needs repairing, please contact the Orthotic Department for servicing.

If you are experiencing any problems with the orthosis, please contact your therapy assistant practitioner. If you are concerned that the AFO does not help within six weeks of wearing it, please contact the orthotist or physiotherapist.

The Trust will not replace AFOs on a regular basis, only at the discretion of the orthotist.

Children are issued with one orthosis which will be replaced as they grow.

Please keep this leaflet safe for future use. You are now able to contact the department directly for orthotic care as required. If you need a review appointment, or if the orthosis requires servicing or replacement, you **do not** need to be referred again.

If there are new symptom(s)/condition(s) that are unrelated, a new referral will be required to be assessed for further orthotic management. If there are any problems with the orthosis after the initial trial period, please contact the orthotic department to request a review appointment.

### Eligibility

One AFO will be supplied initially. As this wears out, we will replace it. The life span of the AFO will depend on your child's activity level and the frequency of use. If there is a need to have more braces, please contact the department for a quote.

Leaflet printed for:

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Your orthotist is:

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Your therapy assistant practitioner is:

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### Contact details

Orthotics Department  
Clinic 2  
King's Treatment Centre  
King's Mill Hospital  
Sutton in Ashfield  
Notts  
NG17 4JL

### Clinics are held at:

- Clinic 2, King's Treatment Centre
- General Outpatients, Newark Hospital
- Neuro Rehabilitation, Mansfield Community Hospital.

The contact telephone number for **all** orthotic queries is 01623 676163.

### Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them. If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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