

The Prosthetic, Orthotic and Limb Absence Rehabilitation (POLAR) Day Programme

Information about the Prosthetic, Orthotic and Limb Absence Rehabilitation Day Programme





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The National Rehabilitation Hospital has developed a specialist limb absence rehabilitation service for patients who have undergone amputation or have congenital (present at birth) limb absence. This is known as the Prosthetic, Orthotic and Limb Absence Rehabilitation (POLAR) Programme and it includes the following services:-

- The POLAR Comprehensive Integrated Day Patient Programme
- The POLAR Comprehensive Integrated **Inpatient** Programme
- The POLAR **Outpatient** Rehabilitation Programme
- The POLAR **Satellite Clinics** based in four regional centres

This range of care ensures that all patients can receive the most suitable programme of care based on their injury and their individual rehabilitation needs.

The POLAR Programme at NRH receives medical referrals from hospitals, doctors (GPs), and other HSE services nationwide.



Each Programme aims to discharge all patients after they have achieved their rehabilitation goals and gained maximum benefit from their treatment programme at the NRH.

The POLAR Day Programme offers patients the opportunity to remain at home whilst receiving their prosthetic rehabilitation, therefore causing as little disruption to their home life as possible. The service provides treatment for seven Day Patients at any one time, with access to all rehabilitation services and therapies.

This includes:

- Medical Care
- Nursing Care
- Prosthetic & Orthotic Service
- Physiotherapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Clinical Psychology
- Social Work

Where appropriate, patients are also referred to:

- Sports and Exercise Physiotherapy
- Therapeutic Recreation
- Relaxation Therapy
- Aquatic Physiotherapy
- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Driving Instruction

Each patient referred to the POLAR Day Programme (along with their family or carer), is offered education about the prevention of complications and management of risk factors such as diabetes and vascular disease.

Pharmacy, laboratory services and diagnostic imaging are available on site. Further information will be made available to you if required during your admission.

Following admission to the Day Programme, the Rehabilitation Team, led by the Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine, will work in partnership with each patient and their family or carer to develop a personalised treatment plan.

The POLAR Day Programme at the NRH is designed to assist each patient, along with their family or carers, in achieving the following aims:

- to adjust to their injury
- to achieve the safest possible level of independence
- to participate socially and in family and community life



Intensity of Services at the NRH

Intensity of services means how much, and how often services will be provided to patients within their Rehabilitation Programme. This will vary depending on each individual's assessment and rehabilitation goals.

On average, patients attending POLAR Day Programme will receive 2 to 3 hours of services up to 4 days per week.

Frequently Asked Questions By Patients Coming To The NRH

What makes the NRH different from other hospitals?

Other hospitals treat medical conditions or illnesses and aim to discharge patients within a short time following treatment. At the NRH, the focus is to provide personalised treatment plans dedicated to patients achieving the safest level of independence possible. Patients being admitted to the Day Programme must be medically stable. Each person referred is assessed to ensure that participating in an intensive rehabilitation programme is suitable treatment for them, based on their clinical need.

How long before I can get in?

Your admission depends on a number of factors including your diagnosis, your readiness to undertake rehabilitation and the availability of a place in the particular service you require. At times there can be significant waiting lists.

The average waiting time for admission to the POLAR Day Programme in 2025 was 30 days.

Please be aware that if you are being admitted for rehabilitation requiring a new prosthetic limb, we first need to apply to your local HSE area for funding (also referred to as 'sanction') to manufacture your limb.

Once we have received confirmation of the funding from the HSE, you will be placed on our waiting list for admission. The funding or 'sanctioning' process is outside of our control.

How long will I attend for?

A Consultant or member of your treating team may be able to give a broad indication of your length of rehabilitation. However, during the initial stages of your rehabilitation your team will assess you and aim to answer this question as accurately as possible. Usually at around two weeks after your admission, you will be given a discharge date.

The average length of rehabilitation for patients in the POLAR Day Programme is 52 days.

What recovery can I expect to make?

It may be that life into the future is different for you and your family, but the expertise of the rehabilitation team at the NRH will help you and your family in adjusting to that changed future. Staff at the NRH will take every opportunity to make the most of all possibilities for you to achieve health and social gain. The most effective way to reach your rehabilitation goals is by participating in your scheduled treatment and education sessions.

Do I have to organise my own transport?

Transport to access the POLAR Day Patient Programme is not provided by the NRH. Patients are therefore requested to provide their own transport, and there are a number of options which you may wish to consider:

- If you can attend by car, parking is available on site and assistance can be provided to help you transfer to and from the car if required.
- The NRH can be accessed by public transport (further information can be found on our website - www.nrh.ie - or can be provided to you on request). This can often be a good option if you have a Free Travel Pass.

In instances of low-income, a letter can be provided by the POLAR team Social Worker, which you can then present to your local Community Welfare Officer (CWO).

This letter supports your application for Supplementary Welfare Allowance to assist with your transport costs, however it is important to note that the granting of this allowance is entirely at the discretion of the CWO.

What should I wear?

When attending the Day Programme, please wear comfortable loose clothing so that you can dress easily with your prosthetic limb fitted. Please bring spare prosthetic socks with you if they have been provided. Be sure to wear the same footwear as that on your prosthetic foot. Patients are also encouraged to bring a towel and deodorant as exercises during therapies can often be strenuous, and you may want to wash or freshen up afterwards.

What should I bring?

We encourage you to bring a back pack or bag each day to carry personal belongings.

Medications

On the day of your admission please bring the following with you:

- A recent list of prescription of all the medicines you take at home including the full name of each medicine, the strength of each medicine and how often you take it. Your GP or Pharmacy will be able to provide this list for you.
- Medicines include tablets, liquids, inhalers, injections pens, creams or ointments, eye drops, ear drops or any remedies you bought in your local pharmacy or health food shops.
- Details of any allergies you have to medicines or if there are medicines in the past that did not suit you.

During your admission:

- You will continue to take your medicines as usual at home.
- If you are due to take any medicines during the hours that you are in the hospital please bring these with you in the morning and take them at the prescribed time during the day.

If you have any questions or concerns about your medications please ask a member of the hospital team. Please be aware we may need to contact your retail pharmacy or doctor to confirm what medicines you are taking.

If you have a medical condition that requires regular monitoring (for example diabetes), please remember to bring the necessary medical instruments, (for example glucometer), and recommended food and drink with you in order to manage your medical condition during therapies.

What do I do in between therapies?

There may be some gaps in your timetable between therapy sessions. During these times, you have access to the coffee shop and courtyard. Often gaps between sessions can be of benefit to avoid fatigue, while also allowing you the opportunity to socialise with other people on similar programmes.

Can I get lunch in the NRH?

As a POLAR Day Patient, you will receive a green wrist band on admission that you are required to wear each time you attend. This allows you to avail of lunch if you arrive for therapies before 12.30pm.

Can my family be part of my rehabilitation?

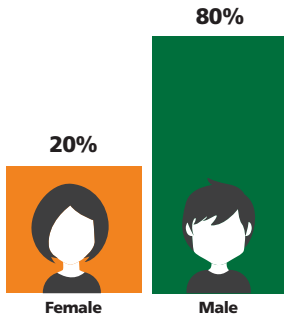
The NRH warmly encourages families of patients to participate in their rehabilitation. During your admission, the team will hold a review family meeting whereby you can invite family members to attend. The POLAR team can also offer training and education to family members in relation to prosthetic rehabilitation. If you wish to have a family member attend your therapies with you, any member of the team will be happy to discuss this with you.



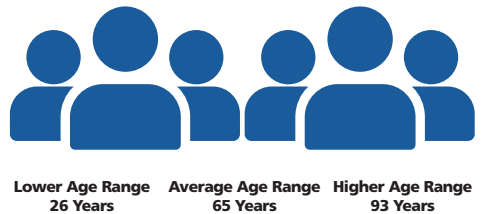
What is the typical age range and gender of people admitted to the POLAR Day Programme?

In 2025 the breakdown of patients admitted to the POLAR Day Programme was **20% female** and **80% male**. The age range was **26 - 93** years old.

Gender of Patients admitted to the POLAR Programme in 2025



Age Profile of Patients admitted to the POLAR Programme in 2025



What should I do if I am unable to attend the programme on a particular day?

If you are unable to attend the programme on a particular day, or are unable to attend specific therapies on particular days, please let staff know the week before, or as soon as is possible, and this can be accommodated in your timetable. Please contact the POLAR team administrators so that they can notify the relevant team members.

Tel: 01 235 5262 or 01 235 5263.

Patient Satisfaction - Your Opinion Matters

Feedback provided by patients, families, carers and visitors is valued and appreciated as it helps us to continually improve our services. There are various ways to give us feedback about your experience of the NRH, including:-

- **Comments & Suggestions** forms which are available throughout the hospital. Patients, families and visitors are encouraged to give their feedback. Please ask any staff member if you need any assistance in finding or completing the forms
- Feedback may be given verbally to any member of staff.
- The **Monthly Patient Forum** is an opportunity for patients to connect with others and stay updated on the latest developments at the NRH. It is also an opportunity for patients and family members to give feedback and suggestions or voice concerns about any aspect of our services. The forum is held once a month. Please ask a member of staff for more information.
- Information leaflets explaining our **Comments and Complaints Procedure** are available throughout the hospital.
- An independent consumer survey (uSPEQ) is sent by post to all patients approximately 3 months following discharge from the Inpatient Programme.
- Feedback may be given by visiting '**Have your Say**' on our website www.nrh.ie or sending an email to patientexperience@nrh.ie.

If you would like to raise a concern, or need assistance with the Comments and Complaints Procedure, ask a member of your rehabilitation team to contact the Patient Experience and Healthcare Data Manager on your behalf or email patientexperience@nrh.ie.

The NRH Values Your Health

In line with Government Policy, the National Rehabilitation Hospital is a smoke free campus.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is a HSE Programme which is available to all NRH Patients and is delivered by NRH staff who have been trained in the programme.

The MECC programme:

- Focuses on chronic disease prevention
- Supports patients in making positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing

The programme will offer you supports in the following areas and in line with your health needs and goals:

- Tobacco use
- Alcohol and drug use
- Health eating
- Physical activity
- Overweight and obesity
- Mental health and wellbeing

Please ask your nurse or therapist if you are interested in any of these topics. You may ask to speak with a 'Stop Smoking Advisor' for support. Information sessions will also be available for patients to attend.



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Effectiveness, Efficiency and Access to the Day Patient Programme

Through seeking CARF* international accreditation, the NRH has shown its commitment to steady and continuous improvement in its service delivery. It puts in place various improvement plans which allow us to measure the access to, efficiency and effectiveness of the POLAR Programme.

* Commission for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities

For patients admitted to the POLAR Programme, a measure of their independence is taken at both the start and end of the Programme. This enables the Rehabilitation Team to measure the improvement that patients have made in their functional ability during their rehabilitation (for example, practical skill and ability to manage their needs and care, or ability to direct a carer to do so).

Activity and Outcomes for Day Patient Services

A total of 60 patients were discharged in 2025 from the NRH POLAR Day Programme.

The NRH is a fully publicly funded voluntary hospital and operates under its mission and ethos of providing high quality care and treatment to patients irrespective of background or status, but on the basis of clinical need.





Contact details for: The POLAR Day Programme

Administration:

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