**Children’s Activity Prosthetic Fund** **explained with a Question & Answer Section**

Many of you may be aware that in early 2016 the Chancellor George Osborne made an announcement that £1,500,000 would be released for children’s activity prosthetic devices, for both upper and lower limb differences.

£750,000 has been released to provide children who have suffered limb loss or were born with a limb deficiency an activity prosthetic device, to enable them to engage in physical activity.

The remaining £750,000 will be used to research the benefits of the use of activity prosthesis, as there has been very little investigation into children’s use of activity prosthesis.

**Can my child apply now?**

Yes. The Department of Health is managing the fund and has asked LimbPower to help with the administration.  We are delighted to be part of this exciting trial fund and we are available to health professionals and families to help with any administration queries.

The fund is now available to NHS Limb Centres, to pay for sports or activity prostheses where suitable. Contact your NHS Limb Centre and your prosthetist will be available to advise you on the criteria and if your child is eligible for a physical activity prosthesis as well as the correct prosthetic device for your child. The Limb Centre obtains the funding direct from the Department of Health.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-sports-prostheses-funding-how-to-apply>

**For how long is funding is available?**

Funding is available until March 2018; depending on demand, The Department of Health would be seeking funding to extend for future years.

**Eligibility criteria:**

Funding will be provided to NHS Limb Centres if the following criteria are met.

* The child or young person is under the age of 18 when assessed for their prosthesis.
* The child or young person has suffered limb loss or congenital limb deficiency. The prostheses can be for any limb (or limbs if the child has multiple limb loss or deficiency). Upper and lower limb components can be included.
* In the opinion of the NHS Limb Centre professionals, the child or young person will benefit from the prosthesis by engaging in physical activity – which could include PE, sport, recreation, dancing, or playing with friends.
* The prosthesis is appropriate for the child or young person, and the activity for which it is intended. The Limb Centre will make this assessment.
* Where a specialist limb is requested for a more specialised activity (e.g. canoeing, rock climbing), the Limb Centre should be confident that there is a need for the prosthesis.

**Making a claim:**

NHS Limb Centres in England may request funds from the Department of Health for individual children’s activity prostheses they have prescribed, up to the value of £5000 (per limb not per child), including all the associated costs of fitting the new limb, such as a new socket or liner). This is a limited fund and is available between November 2016 and March 2018.

Claims may only be made which meet the above eligibility criteria.

For anything of a greater value than £5,000, an application must be made to the advisory group for approval. Applications to the panel should meet the criteria and the application form is designed to secure evidence to ensure this is the case.

Payments will be made within 30 days to the NHS Limb Centre.

**Seeking advice:**

If you are unsure about the eligibility criteria, the process for making an application, or you would like to speak with a clinician with experience of fitting a children’s prosthesis please contact Carly Bauert at LimbPower who will be able to assist.

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**Frequently asked questions:**

**What is a sports prosthesis?**

A sports prosthesis is used for competition and high level sporting activities.

**What is an activity prosthesis?**

An activity prosthesis is used for recreational activities, including dancing, instrument playing, participating in PE lessons or even just running around with friends. This funding is for prostheses for sports and activity.

**What is a silicone cosmesis and is it recommended with an activity prosthesis?**

A cover made from silicone, which is usually bespoke hand sculptured, although some suppliers make a standard mold. Silicone covers have been fitted to blades for recreational activities e.g. dancing. However, the covers can add up to 1kg and can be torn so are not generally recommended for sports.

**Who do I speak to about applying to the fund for an activity prosthesis for my child?**

You should make an appointment at your NHS Limb Centre to speak with your prosthetist who will have all the information for you. Any questions you have regarding the administration of the fund can be directed to carly@limbpower.com

**Will every child get an activity prosthesis?**

Every limb impaired child or young person up to the age of 18 can approach their NHS Limb Centre for an assessment.

**Does my child have to be involved in competitive sport or belong to an official sport club to qualify?**

No, there is no requirement to belong to a club or other organisation.

**My child doesn’t compete in sport but enjoys dancing, will they qualify?**

All activity is considered and dancing would be included, as would running in the park and playing with friends.

**Who will make the decision whether my child would benefit from an activity prosthesis?**

The team at your NHS Limb Centre will make the decision on whether an activity prosthesis is suitable for your child, in the same way they would make a decision on any prosthesis.

**Can I use the fund at a private clinic for my child?**

No. This fund is intended to make sports and activity prostheses available on the NHS. If your child currently uses a private clinic – and is not under the care of an NHS Limb Centre, you should see your GP who will be able to refer you to a NHS Limb Centre.

**Will my child still have an everyday leg issued by the NHS?**

Every child or young person issued with an activity limb will continue to be issued with an everyday leg as before.

**How long will it take for the funds to be released to my NHS clinic?**

It is expected that the funds will be released within 30 days of your NHS Limb Centre placing their invoice with the Department of Health.

**I have heard that the cut off point for each application is £5,000, is this true?**

No. An NHS Limb Centre can automatically receive funding for a prosthesis costing up to £5000(per limb, rather than per child). More expensive prostheses need to be agreed with the advisory panel. It is unlikely however that there will be very many of these.

**How can I learn to support my child with their activity limb?**

Your NHS Limb Centre will be able to advise you on use of an activity limb and should be able to put you in contact with other organizations. Some of the manufacturers are offering to run workshops around the country with the limb centres.

**My child is 18 in a few months time can I still apply?**

A child or young person must be under 18 at the time of the application.

**What happens when the fund runs out of money? Will it be extended?**

This project is a new initiative, and depending on demand, we would be seeking funding to extend to future years.

**My child swims and runs for the school, can they apply for two separate activity prosthesis?**

At present it would be possible for your NHS Limb Centre to apply to the fund for two prostheses, as long as both were prescribed by your prosthetist.

**Can I change centre for an activity prosthesis if I choose to, while still using my current centre for an everyday limb?**

Yes; it is. However, it is expected that where a child or young person is already under the care of a specific NHS Limb Centre, that is where they should start.

**If my child meets the criteria and their prosthetist agrees to apply for an activity prosthesis, how long will it take from application to my child receiving their activity prosthesis?**

This could be different depending on many factors such as which centre the child attends, the need to provide a new socket or a new prosthesis and the condition of the residual limb which might require the making of check sockets first. Most limb centres prioritise children’s prostheses to avoid the psychological harm of immobility.

**I want to apply for my child to have an activity prosthesis, I have read the criteria but would like to know what is meant by medically fit?**

Your clinical team will be able to advise you on this. This part of the criteria will be met if your child’s clinician confirms that the child has the potential to use the activity prostheses effectively and without harm to their development.

**What do I do if my NHS Limb Centre consider that my child would not benefit from an activity prosthesis. Is there an appeal procedure?**

There is no appeal process, but you can ask your GP to facilitate a second opinion at another NHS Limb Fitting Centre.

**I have read the cut off point for application to the fund is 18, is there an earliest age that a child would be successful in applying for an activity prosthesis?**

In theory there is no minimum cut-off point, however activity limbs are not made for very small legs/arms. Your child’s suitability will depend on your child’s size and desired activity. Your limb centre team will be able to discuss the options with you.

**Should my child wear a blade all the time? Is there any research into possible complications?**

No prosthesis should be used all the time, as they should be taken off in the same way that non-disabled people need to take off their shoes for example. Anyone fitted with an activity prosthesis must follow the advice of their NHS Limb Centre. Some blades could be used for walking and running, and therefore could be the main day-to-day walking prosthesis as well as the activity prosthesis. Many new blades have a foot plate so as to allow a normal walking pattern, other do not and are set up slightly long to allow for compression when the force of running is put on the blade. This can lead to feeling like having a long leg with a difference of up to 2cm which is not advisable for symmetry or back development.