

30 March 2026

Workforce Planning Arrangements for Prosthetic and Orthotic Services

The questions below are designed to establish whether your organisation provides or commissions Prosthetic and / or Orthotic services, how these services are delivered, and whether workforce planning is being carried out to ensure adequate staffing levels now and in the future. Please provide responses to each of the following questions. Where a question is not applicable to your organisation, please state “Not Applicable” and briefly explain why.

Definitions and Clarifications

For the purposes of this request:

- **Prosthetic service** refers to the provision of artificial limbs and associated clinical rehabilitation services to patients following amputation or with limb absence.
- **Orthotic service** refers to the provision of orthoses (external devices such as braces, splints, and insoles) and associated clinical services to patients with musculoskeletal, neurological, or other conditions.
- **In-house** means the service is delivered by staff directly employed by your Trust / Health Board.
- **Contracted** means the service is delivered under a contract with an external provider (e.g. a private prosthetic or orthotic company) who directly employ the prosthetists and/or orthotists.
- **Workforce planning** refers to any systematic analysis of current and future workforce requirements, including assessment of vacancies, skill mix, succession planning, retirement profiles, and demand modelling.
- **WTE** means Whole Time Equivalent, reflecting the proportion of full-time hours worked.

1. Does your Trust / Health Board currently provide or commission a Prosthetic service? Yes / No

Yes - all Prosthetists working in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust are contracted through a private sector provider to deliver a service in the Amputee Rehabilitation Service in Belfast Trust.

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2. Does your Trust / Health Board currently provide or commission an Orthotic service for patients? Yes / No

Allied Health Professions (AHP)

Yes - Orthotists are contracted through a private sector provider to deliver a range of services in Belfast Trust.

3a. If you answered Yes to Question 1: Is your Prosthetic service delivered in-house (i.e. directly employed NHS staff) or is it contracted out to an external provider? In-house / Contracted / Mixed (please specify) / Not applicable

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Mixed - Prosthetic Services contractor and NHS Multi-Disciplinary Team for amputee rehabilitation.

Allied Health Professions

Contracted - Orthotists are contracted through an external provider to deliver a range of services in Belfast Trust, including with Podiatry

3b. If you answered Yes to Question 2: Is your Orthotic service delivered in-house (i.e. directly employed NHS staff) or is it contracted out to an external provider? In-house / Contracted / Mixed (please specify)/ Not applicable

Allied Health Professions

All Orthotists are contracted through a private sector provider to deliver a range of services in Belfast Trust.

4. Does your Trust / Health Board carry out workforce planning analysis for your Allied Health Professional (AHP) workforce? Yes / No

Yes - the AHP Workforce Review Programme Steering Group in the Department of Health oversaw a number of AHP workforce reviews considering how the Allied Health Professions were likely to develop in the period 2019-2029

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5a. If you answered Yes to Question 4: Does your AHP workforce planning specifically include your Prosthetic service workforce (whether in-house or contracted)? Yes / No / Not applicable

Yes - the Department of Health undertook a Prosthetics workforce review as outlined above – see link:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/prosthetics-workforce-review-2019-2029>

5b. If you answered Yes to Question 4: Does your AHP workforce planning specifically include your Orthotic service workforce (whether in-house or contracted)? Yes / No / Not applicable No. Question Response Format

There is no published specific Department of Health Orthotist workforce planning paper.

6a. If your Prosthetic service is contracted out (as indicated in Question 3a): Does your Trust / Health Board carry out workforce planning for the contracted Prosthetic service? Yes / No / Not applicable

Response as per answer to 5b

6b. If your Orthotic service is contracted out (as indicated in Question 3b): Does your Trust / Health Board carry out workforce planning for the contracted Orthotic service? Yes / No / Not applicable

Response as per answer to 5b

7a. If you answered Yes to Question 6a: How does your Trust / Health Board collate workforce planning data from the contracted Prosthetic service provider? Please describe the process, including the frequency of data collection and what data is gathered. Free text

Allied Health Professions:

As per DoH Workforce review for Prosthetists

Amputee Rehabilitation Service - Prosthetic Services

We do not get data from the contracted prosthetic service provider.

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- 7b. If you answered Yes to Question 6b: How does your Trust / Health Board collate workforce planning data from the contracted Orthotic service provider? Please describe the process, including the frequency of data collection and what data is gathered. Free text**

Not applicable.

- 8. If your Trust / Health Board does not carry out workforce planning for its Prosthetic and / or Orthotic services (whether in-house or contracted), please explain what steps you are taking to secure the prosthetic and / orthotic workforce pipeline. Free text**

Workshop took place several years ago to discuss workforce requirements. Review undertaken by Department of Health – see link [prosthetics-workforce-review.PDF](#)

The Department of Health has begun work on drafting a paper examining the potential for an in-house orthotist service

- 9. Does your Trust / Health Board include data from its Prosthetic and / or Orthotic services (whether in-house or contracted) in any workforce returns submitted to NHS England, NHS Wales, NHS Scotland, or equivalent national workforce planning bodies? Yes / No / Don't know – please specify which returns**

No - there is no return on workforce to the Department of Health for either prosthetists or orthotists.

- 10. Please provide the current whole time equivalent (WTE) staffing establishment for your Prosthetic and / or Orthotic services, broken down by: (a) Prosthetists, (b) Orthotists, (c) Prosthetic / Orthotic Technicians, (d) Prosthetic / Orthotic support workers (e) Please indicate whether each figure relates to in-house or contracted staff. Numerical breakdown with in-house/contracted designation**

Amputee Rehabilitation Service - Prosthetic Services

Answer for Contracted Prosthetist Services:

Prosthetists	6
Prosthetic Technicians	8
Prosthetic Support Workers	1

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Allied Health Professions

Contracted provider for Belfast Trust provides 9.7 WTE Orthotists who cover clinics for Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT), Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) and Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT).