

4 February 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for your recent Freedom of Information request regarding the Trust's spend and policy regarding crutches.

The Trust can provide the following information:

How many pairs of crutches has the trust purchased in each of the last five years?

Year	Quantity
Year 2013-14	4960
Year 2012-13	3652
Year 2011-12	3216
Year 2010-11	3096

According to latest contracts, how much does the trust pay to purchase one pair of crutches? **We currently pay £7.33 per pair**

Does the trust allow old crutches given out to patients to be returned and re-used by other patients?

**Crutches that have been returned in clean and good condition are checked, cleaned and recycled for use**

What is done to clean and repair crutches and how much did this cost in each of the last five years?

**Equipment can be reissued provided that the equipment has been checked (5.6) and the following cleaning has been undertaken:**

- All equipment is cleaned using sanitising wipes over all surfaces. This is sufficient to remove all microorganisms with the exception of bacteria that produce spores such as clostridium difficile.**
- Spore producing bacteria must be removed by using a sporicidal solution. Each ward mixes up a daily solution for such cleaning purposes and equipment can be cleaned on the ward. Sporicidal cleaning solution can also be mixed up in the therapy department. This is kept by the sink in the stroke gym.**
- Additional low level soiling can be removed with soap and water and an abrasive pad.**
- Equipment that has grime that cannot be removed should be discarded.**
- Equipment that has been used by a patient in isolation must be cleaned at the ward level immediately after the patient is no longer using the equipment or it is being removed from the ward.**

Item	Checks to be undertaken	Actions
Ferrule(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure clean</li> <li>• ensure not worn and has good grip</li> <li>• ensure ferrule fits well</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• remove and replace worn/dirty ferrules</li> <li>• replace ferrules that are poorly fitting</li> </ul>
Height adjusting spring clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure clips are fully located in correct holes</li> <li>• ensure no sign of rust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dispose of all walking equipment with faulty or rusty clips</li> </ul>
Height adjusting holes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure holes are not occluded by foreign bodies</li> <li>• ensure no signs of wear and tear e.g. enlarged holes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dispose of all walking equipment with faulty holes</li> </ul>
Plastic sleeve between upper and lower part of crutch / tubing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure sleeve is in appropriate position to prevent excess play between the two parts of the crutch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relocate if possible otherwise discard</li> </ul>
Handgrips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure they are properly cleaned</li> <li>• ensure they are in the correct position</li> <li>• ensure they are not loose</li> <li>• ensure they are not cracked</li> <li>• ensure they are not worn through</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clean if possible</li> <li>• reposition if possible</li> <li>• discard and replace if not possible to clean, reposition or if faulty</li> </ul>
Cuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure no scuffing or splitting</li> <li>• ensure cuff hinge moves freely</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discard if signs of excess wear</li> <li>• discard if not free moving</li> </ul>

Trough pads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure trough gutter is clean and intact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discard if any split on surface of trough</li> </ul>
Metal framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure not bent or damaged</li> <li>ensure rust free</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discard</li> </ul>
Wheels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure wheels turn freely and without deviation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>replace faulty wheels if possible, if not replace entire frame</li> </ul>
Nuts and bolts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure not loose and frame does not wobble</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tighten if possible, if not replace entire frame</li> </ul>
Brakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure cables are moving freely and effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seek advice from technician</li> </ul>
Seats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure upholstery is intact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discard if there are any splits on the surface</li> </ul>

What is done to encourage patients to return crutches?

Patients are told that they can drop crutches back when they no longer require them to wherever is most convenient e.g. fracture clinic, plaster room, physiotherapy etc.

What is the trust's full written policy on the use of crutches?

A trust policy is being drafted but has not yet been finalised

If you have any queries about this response please contact the information governance manager at [foi@homerton.nhs.uk](mailto:foi@homerton.nhs.uk), in the first instance. If, following that, you still have any concerns, you may contact the Information Commissioner either by letter, FOI/EIR Complaints resolution, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SM9 5AF, or by email [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk) to take them further.

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Yours sincerely

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