

Peke Waihanga
Artificial Limb Service



Amputee Care in New Zealand



Contents

Why this information is important	3
Who we are	4
What NZALS provides	5
The amputee journey	6
A national provider for amputee care	7
Access to different prosthetists	8
Pain after amputation	9
Appointment timeframes	10
NZALS amputee care performance	12
Summary	14
Amputees Federation of New Zealand	15

Why This Information Is Important

Amputee care is a complex and constantly evolving part of healthcare, driven by rapid advances in technology. It goes far beyond simply fitting someone with a prosthetic limb.

This booklet explains the different stages of care after limb loss, the healthcare and prosthetic services involved, and how the New Zealand system supports people who need a prosthetic limb.

Who We Are

Peke Waihangā (New Zealand Artificial Limb Service (NZALS)) is an autonomous Crown Entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004 and Artificial Limb Service Act 2018* and is required to comply with the Public Finance Act 1989.

Peke Waihangā delivers prosthetic, orthotic, rehabilitation, peer support and coordination of care service. We do this based on the following legislated functions:

- To manufacture, import, export, market, distribute, supply, fit, repair, and maintain artificial limbs (defined as artificial limbs and other similar devices)
- To provide rehabilitative and other services to persons in connection with artificial limbs
- To carry out research and development in relation to artificial limbs
- To advise the Minister on matters relating to artificial limbs

*The Artificial Limb Service Act 2018 can be found at:

🖨 www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2018/0034/latest/whole.html

What NZALS Provides

NZALS provides personalised care for each amputee's journey after limb loss. Care is tailored to individual needs and usually includes several stages, such as:

1. Support in hospitals before surgery and during post-operative recovery.
2. Peer support before and after amputation.
3. Residual limb healing and shaping.
4. Assessment to see if a prosthetic limb is suitable, based on mobility goals and overall health.
5. Use of mobility aids like crutches and wheelchairs to support recovery or long-term mobility.
6. Fitting and manufacture of a custom-made prosthetic limb (a specialised medical device)
7. Ongoing rehab, including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and training to support daily activities.
8. The regular review, maintenance, and replacement of the prosthesis, as well as care of the contralateral limb, on an ongoing basis.

The Amputee Journey

What role do prosthetic limbs provide?

A prosthetic limb can help restore a person's mobility and confidence, but it is only one part of New Zealand's publicly funded amputee care system.

Prosthetic limbs can significantly enhance mobility and confidence for many individuals, although they may not be suitable for everyone. For example, *"...86 percent wear their artificial limb every day, while 6.4 percent never wear it."*

Also, a prosthesis may not be a lifelong solution, people's needs can change over time. Prosthetic care includes both clinical support and technical services to make sure each device fits well, functions safely, and can be adjusted as needed over time.

NZALS's dedicated team of experts includes surgeons, rehabilitation doctors, prosthetists, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, engineers, industrial designers, product engineers, technicians, and peer support volunteers.

What makes NZALS different from many other health providers (like dentists or physiotherapists) is that it both designs and builds custom prosthetic limbs (which are medical devices). It provides **an integrated model of care** – bringing together rehabilitation, technical expertise and peer support all in one coordinated service.

A National Provider for Amputee Care

Having NZALS as a national provider means people receive continuity of care – consistent, connected care through their journey from planning before amputation, through rehabilitation and reintegration back into everyday life.

This joined-up approach avoids gaps in service, reduces unnecessary costs and ensures high clinical standards across the country. In a small country like New Zealand with a spread-out population, a national service is the best way to maintain specialist expertise, invest in new technology and ensure affordable access to high-quality prosthetic components.

NZALS is committed to supporting patient choice, offering flexibility and options for personalised amputee care, this is done via our Clinical Allocation Policy which allows patients to:

- Get a second opinion from a ‘buddy’ prosthetist.
- Be transferred to other prosthetists within the centre.
- Move to another prosthetist in a different centre.
- In special circumstances, access independent opinions from international experts.

This gives people real options—without compromising on safety, quality, or fairness and without risking the introduction of multiple disconnected providers.

A national, integrated service such as that provided by NZALS ensures coordinated and consistent care, which is crucial for the well-being of amputees. This provides a strong national buying power, reducing overall costs and resulting in equal access, independent of where patients live.

Access to Different Prosthetists

Amputees can access different prosthetists but it's important to understand the options and what this means for care.

NZALS provides amputee care across the country through national contracts with ACC and Health New Zealand. This care is part of the public health system and is built around a coordinated, multi-disciplinary team-based approach that supports amputees from the time of surgery through to rehabilitation.

As with other areas of healthcare in New Zealand, people can choose to see a private provider if they wish. This is a personal decision, but it's important to be fully informed.

Best practice in amputee care includes comprehensive support, such as clinical assessments, custom prosthetic fitting, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and long-term follow-up. This wrap-around model is supported by both ACC and Health NZ, and it helps ensure the best outcomes for patients.

While a small number of private prosthetic providers operate in New Zealand, we encourage anyone considering this option to make sure the provider can offer the full range of services needed for safe, effective, and ongoing prosthetic care.

Pain After Amputation

Many people experience pain after an amputation. This is common and can include:

- Residual limb pain (in the remaining part of the limb)
- Phantom limb pain (feeling pain in the part that's no longer there)
- Discomfort from wearing a prosthetic limb

The type and level of pain can vary from person to person, but it can affect mobility, how well a prosthesis fits, and overall wellbeing.

Managing pain is an important part of amputee care. We are continually improving access to proper assessment, support, and pain management options for everyone who needs it.

Appointment Timeframes

For our scheduling process, urgent appointments are typically offered within one working day, and standard appointments are usually available within six to seven working days. These timeframes reflect the next available appointment with a qualified clinician and are not specific to any one prosthetist. While we do our best to accommodate clinician preferences wherever possible, our focus is on ensuring timely access to care based on clinical need and availability.

We recognise that many amputees develop strong, ongoing relationships with their prosthetist and we support this continuity of care. When a patient prefers to see a specific clinician, appointment timing may be influenced by that prosthetist's schedule e.g. if they are on leave, attending professional development, supporting regional clinics, unwell, etc. At times, their availability may also be impacted by a higher volume of urgent assessments or repair needs from other patients they support. We'll always aim to provide care that balances both individual preferences and timely access.



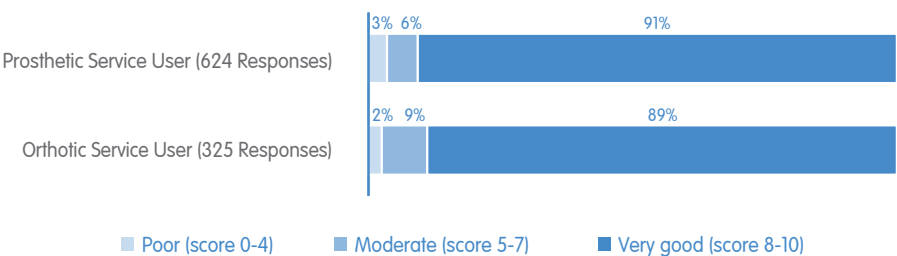
NZALS Amputee Care Performance

As part of the public health system, NZALS provides amputee care under national contracts with Health New Zealand and ACC. This means we must meet strict service standards and NZALS is regularly audited to ensure quality and accountability.

1. NZALS continuously strives to meet and exceed national contract requirements set by Health NZ and ACC.
2. NZALS has passed key independent audits, including.
 - The Allied Health Standards – audited by DAA Group
 - The WHO Orthotic and Prosthetic Service Specification – audited by Health NZ with the notable comment “...exceeded in regarding to the facilitation of staff training and education”.
3. According to the NZALS’s 2024 Annual Report (audited by Audit NZ), service users report high levels of satisfaction and high levels of trust/ confidence in the expertise of the NZALS.

Results for "Rate how trusting and confident did you feel with staff providing your care?"

Scale: 0 being the worst and 10 being the best possible

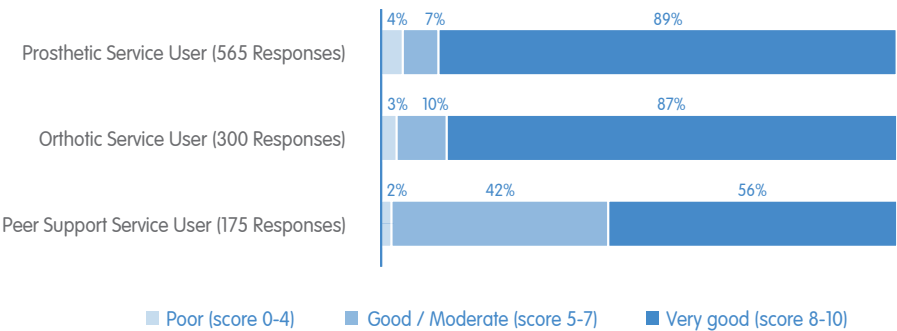


Data from an independent survey of NZALS patients.

- 4. NZALS is committed to culturally respectful care and values feedback from the people it supports. There are clear policies in place which make it easy for people to give feedback, make a complaint or take part in regular satisfaction surveys. This feedback is an important part of how NZALS continually improves its services.
- 5. New Zealand’s prosthetic services align well with international standards and is highly rated by patients.

Results for "Rate the overall service you received for the job we have undertaken for you?"

Scale: 0 being the worst and 10 being the best possible



Data from an independent survey of NZALS patients

Summary

Amputee care is a specialised service which is focused on each person's unique needs – both physical and emotional. It combines medical care, advanced technology, and long-term support. By understanding the full care journey and not just focusing on the prosthetic limb, we can better appreciate the care and complexity involved in supporting amputees across New Zealand.

Sean Gray

Chief Executive Officer, NZALS (Peke Waihangā)

✉ sean.gray@nzals.co.nz

Amputees Federation of NZ Inc.

The Amputees Federation of New Zealand Incorporated (AFNZ) is a nationwide, non-governmental, non-profit voluntary organisation that has been supporting amputees and their whānau across Aotearoa since 1947.

Our mission is to empower and advocate for all amputees and limb difference individuals by providing information, peer support, and access to resources that enhance quality of life. We work in close partnership with health providers, clinicians, and government agencies to ensure amputees' voices are heard and their unique needs are met.

The Federation is made up of eight regional amputee societies that operate independently but are united under the national umbrella of AFNZ. These societies are based in:

- Northland/Auckland
- Waikato, Bay of Plenty & Districts
- Hawke's Bay/East Coast
- Manawatu & Districts
- Greater Wellington Region
- Top of the South/Marlborough
- Canterbury & Westland
- Otago & Southland

Each society provides localised support, including peer visits, advocacy, education, and social connection. They also organise regional events and are a first point of contact for new amputees navigating life post-amputation.

As a Federation, we advocate at a national level for equitable access to prosthetic care, funding, and rehabilitation services. We also publish resources, host national conferences, and ensure the amputee voice is represented in conversations about limb services, accessibility, and disability rights in Aotearoa.

For more information about the Federation and how we can support you, please visit:

🖥️ www.amputee.co.nz

✉️ coordinator@amputee.co.nz



Contacts

Auckland Centre

7 Horopito Street, Mount Eden
Auckland 1024 New Zealand

☎ 0508 630 630

✉ auckland@nzals.co.nz

Hamilton Centre

222 Pembroke Street
Hamilton 3204 New Zealand

☎ 0508 838 838

✉ hamilton@nzals.co.nz

Tauranga Centre

160 Fraser Street
Tauranga 3112 New Zealand

☎ 0508 434 434

✉ tauranga@nzals.co.nz

National Office

☎ (04) 385 9410

✉ info@nzals.co.nz

Wellington Centre

42-46 Mein Street, Newtown
Wellington 6021 New Zealand

☎ 0508 389 389

✉ wellington@nzals.co.nz

Christchurch Centre

330 Burwood Road
Christchurch 8083 New Zealand

☎ 0508 383 383

✉ christchurch@nzals.co.nz

Dunedin Centre

464 Cumberland Street
Dunedin 9016 New Zealand

☎ 0508 474 474

✉ dunedin@nzals.co.nz

Learn more about Peke Waihangā

💻 www.pw.co.nz

💻 www.orthoticservice.co.nz

💻 www.peersupport.nz

Find Peke Waihangā online

Follow Peke Waihangā on social media for the latest news, stories and events:

📘 Peke Waihangā

📷 @pekewaihangā

🌐 Peke Waihangā

📺 Peke Waihangā