

During 2005 Breast Cancer Care asked people who have had breast cancer about their experiences of NHS/private and other breast prosthesis fitting services. We also asked them to identify the essential features of a good quality fitting service.

From this we have produced *Standards of care for breast prosthesis fitting services* which have been developed with people with breast cancer, breast care nurses and others who fit prostheses. We hope the standards will help people understand what they can expect from a prosthesis fitting service, and be a useful guide for prosthesis fitting providers in developing and evaluating their services.

standards of care

for breast prosthesis fitting services

- 1.** People who have had surgery for breast cancer, other breast surgery, or whose breasts differ naturally from each other in size or shape **should be entitled to be fitted with an appropriate prosthesis.**
- 2.** All women should have the choice of seeing a **female fitter.**
- 3.** The fitting environment should be **welcoming, accessible, private and comfortable.** The room should have disability access, suitable seating for those with mobility problems, appropriate lighting and temperature, a mirror for the upper body and seating for any companion.
- 4.** People should be entitled to **see and try a range of prostheses** (including partial prostheses) to find one that offers a balanced shape and as close a match for skin colour as possible.
- 5.** All fitters should be **well trained** in prosthesis fitting, and should be sensitive to people's specific needs and concerns.
- 6.** During the fitting people should feel they have **time and opportunity to discuss** any feelings they may have about the change in their body.
- 7.** People should be informed **how long they may have to wait** to receive their prosthesis if it is not available on the day.
- 8.** Fitters should explain and provide written information on **how to care for the prosthesis** according to manufacturers' instructions.
- 9.** People should receive impartial information about buying **alternative breast prostheses** from other providers and **other relevant products** such as bras, pockets for bras, swimwear, prosthetic nipples, as well as general advice on clothes.
- 10.** All fitting services should supply **clear guidelines for prosthesis replacement.** People should be informed that they can be reassessed for a new prosthesis if they experience problems due to, for example, manufacturing fault or significant change in breast size.

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What Breast Cancer Care offers

- Our booklet **A confident choice** gives a comprehensive overview on breast prostheses, bras and clothes for women who have had surgery for breast cancer
- Two-day residential prosthesis fitting **training courses**
- Free **prosthesis fitting services** in London, Glasgow and Edinburgh to enable people to see and try a range of prostheses and bras before deciding on the best choice for them
- Free **consultancy** for people interested in setting up a new fitting service or looking at ways to develop an existing one
- Our **helpline** and **Ask the Nurse** email service offer confidential support and information about prostheses and bras
- Over 500 **trained volunteers** nationwide, many with direct experience of breast cancer, offering practical support to people affected by breast cancer
- A comprehensive **training programme** for bra fitters in high street shops on breast cancer, the use of prostheses after surgery and the importance of a supportive bra
- **Lingerie evenings** held at high street shops to enable people to try a range of bras and clothes in a familiar setting
- Opportunities for people to **share their feelings** about changes in their body with others through our Living with Breast Cancer courses, Younger Women's Forums and online website forums

For more information please contact Breast Cancer Care's helpline, website or national and regional centres – details below.

Breast Cancer Care is the UK's leading provider of information, practical assistance and emotional support for anyone affected by breast cancer. Every year we respond to over two million requests for support and information about breast cancer or breast health concerns. All our services are free.

We are committed to campaigning for better treatment and support for people with breast cancer and their families.

For more information visit www.breastcancercare.org.uk or call the Breast Cancer Care helpline free on **0808 800 6000** (textphone **0808 800 6001**). Calls may be monitored for training purposes. Confidentiality is maintained between callers and Breast Cancer Care.

This leaflet has been produced by Breast Cancer Care's Policy & Research team and reviewed by healthcare professionals and people affected by breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Care is committed to equal opportunities and access for all.

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