

THE PROGRAM OF APPLIANCES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE (PADP)

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To whom this may concern:

I was diagnosed some ten years ago with a rare condition known as yellow Nail Syndrome of which a component is lymphoedema. Due to the lymphoedema my entire lymphatic system collapsed necessitating me to have to wear compression garments to most of my body. For some years now I have been using PADP to supply me with two sets of compression garments for which I am most grateful, however as these only last between 4 and 6 months before they must be replaced and this time at my own cost. For people who are still able to work and are generating some income this may not be such a burden but for someone like myself whose income is a government pension, the cost of these garments is very difficult to accommodate.

Without these garments my condition would deteriorate and ultimately cost the government more money in hospital and doctors fees, a situation I am obviously desperately trying to avoid.

I would submit that as they are a prescription recommended by a specialist/doctor then these garments should be treated the same as prescription drugs for the benefit of not only myself but for all lymphoedema sufferers throughout the state.

I would also state that I currently and for the last 8 years run the Lymphoedema Support Group New England Upper Hunter North West and in that capacity come into contact with many people suffering from lymphoedema who require compression garments and many of these people are people who have had and are in remission from one form of cancer or another and as a result now have lymphoedema.

It would appear that there is quite some confusion from one PADP office to the next as to whether these people are entitled to assistance in getting compression garments or not as some seem to be approved whilst others are knocked back being told there is no money available for this purpose.

There also seems to be confusion as to whether there is a means test or not and if so what the criteria is.

A major problem that does come up quite often with people applying for assistance through PADP for their compression garments is a delay at times due to funds not being available at that time, however unfortunately once a person suffering lymphoedema has undertaken treatment to get their oedema down and they are measured for their garments by a physiotherapist these must be supplied as a matter of urgency as the oedema will re-establish itself quite rapidly in most cases and a further complication is that the manufacturers of the garments will not supply once there is a substantial gap from the date of the person was measured up and the date of approval from PADP. This refusal is based on the fact that the manufacturers know that then for the most part garments that would be supplied then would not fit the client and not do the job for which they were designed. For the afore mentioned reasons it is vital that once a sufferer of lymphoedema has been measured and details supplied by the health professional to PADP that an approval should the applicant meet the criteria (if any) be granted without delay.

Whilst there are some young people with lymphoedema by far the majority are more mature people with a lot being of pension age who are finding it impossible to afford their compression garments without some assistance and to compound their problems once one lives outside the metropolitan areas treatment for their condition is almost non-existent but that is not PADP's problem.

I would finally submit that there needs to be a more liberal attitude to applicants seeking assistance for compression garments for a condition which is non curable and most debilitating and a clearer and more consistent policy regarding who qualifies and who doesn't, as running a help line from home I field many enquiries from doctors, district and community nurses and sufferers as where they can go for treatment and where can they get assistance with their compression garments. It would be nice to be able to answer them with some conviction.

Thanking you for the opportunity to voice my opinion to your enquiry however should you have the need for clarification on any of the points raised above I may be contacted

Yours truly,
Barry Bryan