

Shoulder prosthetic

Summary

Radical surgery for cancer is bad enough, without being left self-conscious by your physical appearance. But Ena lost the confidence to go out in public after part of her shoulder blade was removed in major surgery; her clothes no longer hung properly and she felt very low.

In stepped Alan Hart, a volunteer with Remap. He made her a prosthetic shoulder that she could fit herself and the change was instant and dramatic. "I'm so grateful, I can't believe it!" declared Ena, who is now out and about again with her confidence restored.

The challenge



Following a diagnosis of bone cancer, Ena had surgery to her left shoulder. This left her feeling self-conscious in public as part of her shoulder-blade, collarbone and humerus had been removed. The NHS had been unable to provide her with any off-the-shelf aids other than an uncomfortable pad and unsightly sling to compensate for the loss of her shoulder. What was needed an artificial shoulder or similar prosthetic.

The solution



Remap Isle of Wight's volunteer Alan Hart took on the challenge and decided that the best option was to make an artificial shoulder from fibre-glass and resin materials. A three-dimensional pattern of Ena's good shoulder was made from a cut-down manikin and lots of putty-filler. Fibre glass cloth was then moulded over this and covered inside and out with a soft lining to cushion the edges. Finally, this was fitted with Velcro strapping to enable Ena to fasten it tightly at her waist and chest level without discomfort.

The benefits

Despite limited use of her left arm and hand, Ena soon learned how to put on the false shoulder by herself and it successfully gave back her confidence to go out and about.