

Podiatry- Profession specific descriptor for registered professionals and support workers

A Podiatrist's primary aim is to improve the mobility, independence and quality of life for their patients. They have an important role in the whole patient journey. Although Podiatrists specialise in the foot, ankle and leg, they lead the patient care through the whole journey including prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Wider Determinants

Podiatrists design and deliver care for specific population, for example "forgotten feet", a foot care service to the homeless, socially isolated and vulnerable people. Podiatrists work alongside a wider team, including homeless charities to access individuals in need of care, The main objective is to alleviate pain and suffering.

Safeguarding (supporting vulnerable communities) is a significant part of a Podiatrist and Podiatry support worker's work. This often involves partnerships with other agencies e.g., Occupational Therapists and GPs to ensure service users are safe and aware of the procedures which they are about to undergo, but also includes monitoring of general service user health or being aware of other signs of poor self-management or neglect when carrying out domiciliary visits or following up on missed appointments to see if the service user is at risk.

Health Improvement

Podiatrists incorporate Make Every Contact Count (MECC) into practice. They don't just focus on feet but look at the service user holistically and talk about their wider health and lifestyle to identify other areas that may benefit from intervention. MECC checks are integrated into assessment clinics.

Podiatry support workers provide information about smoking cessation, they give information leaflets about health areas such as pressure ulcer prevention, and guidance for chairs/seating within the home. They also offer footwear advice for people who contact the clinic and have footwear brochures that signpost service users to good manufacturers for appropriate footwear. Podiatry teams also signpost service users to wider services that might be of benefit such as weight management programmes, smoking cessation schemes, fall prevention teams, local counselling services for long term conditions, and orthopaedic services for specific needs.

Podiatrists also adopt social prescribing, utilising community services to enhance the service user's health and wellbeing.

Population Healthcare

Podiatrists are trained to assess, diagnose, treat, prevent and rehabilitate complications of the feet, ankles and associated structures. With an ageing population, with people living longer and experiencing multi-medical conditions there is an associated demand for podiatry services and a critical role in the prevention and rehabilitation of complications of the feet.

Health Protection

Podiatrists were called to work as vaccinators for the COVID-19 vaccine.

There is a strong safeguarding element to Podiatry. Podiatrists monitor individuals during appointments, particularly where there are cases of missed appointments. If there are signs of neglect, Podiatrists can liaise with social services to establish safeguarding plans.

Podiatry – Wider Reading and Case Study Examples

Health Protection	Wider Determinants <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forgotten Feet – Helping Homeless Feet
Population Healthcare	Health Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saving more lives and limbs: applying a cardiac rehabilitation model of structured exercise to symptomatic peripheral arterial disease• MSK Toolkit – Case Studies