



Podiatry Consultation: Question and Answers

Please note this sheet will be updated during the consultation – the latest version will be available at www.cwp.nhs.uk/podiatry

1. Why are these changes being proposed?

There is growing demand for Podiatry Services in West Cheshire and changes are needed to improve access and frequency of podiatry appointments for patients with high medical and/or podiatric needs. Due to financial constraints within the NHS there isn't sufficient new money available to provide the same Podiatry Service that currently exists for more people, whilst ensuring people with high level medical/and or podiatric needs are prioritised. However, NHS West Cheshire CCG (the CCG) is protecting the existing investment (so there is no cut to funding for podiatry). More information is contained in the consultation document (insert web link).

2. Why is there such high demand for podiatry services?

An increasing number of younger people are developing diabetes and presenting with foot health problems, whilst at the same time the ageing population is increasing in size – with a higher than average number of 65 year-olds living in West Cheshire. Alongside this, the service needs to follow the latest advice for people with high clinical needs. Prioritising patients with high medical and/or podiatric needs will avoid more costly invasive surgery that carry greater risks, and will give patients a better quality of life for a longer period of time.

3. Why are patients with diabetes being prioritised?

People living with diabetes are up to 30 times more likely to have an amputation compared with the general population. The majority of diabetes related amputations are caused by a foot ulcer failing to heal and it is estimated that 61,000 people with diabetes have a foot ulcer at any given time. Regular appointments with the Podiatry Service ensure that foot ulcers are detected early or prevented. The Podiatry Service is not proposing to solely prioritise diabetic patients but is proposing to prioritise those with the greatest medical and podiatric need, whether that includes a diabetes diagnosis or not.

4. What if you need short term rehabilitation, have been newly diagnosed with diabetes and have problems with your feet, or have a terminal illness?

Under the proposed changes the Podiatry Service will provide a short term episode of care for:

- People undergoing short term rehabilitation with a nail deformity as well as painful heavy callus or corn formation with underlying blood vessel and tissue damage, which are limiting rehabilitation;
- Newly diagnosed diabetics who present with unkempt feet and therefore are at risk of developing a foot ulcer, who would benefit from a one-off treatment and specialised foot health advice and education;
- Patients who have a terminal illness.

5. How will you ensure the new proposed service is fair?

The proposed new model will be based on clearly defined eligibility criteria (based on clinical evidence) ensuring the service is fair.

6. What is the new eligibility criteria that is being proposed?

The proposed criteria means that only patients with moderate or high level medical and/or podiatric needs will be treated by the NHS podiatry service. Self-help and signposting information will be available for other patients to help them self manage their condition. Moderate or high level medical and/or podiatric needs include patients presenting with painful signs and symptoms in the feet and legs who may be at risk of amputation, developing limited mobility and/or limited functionality of their limb (this includes acute conditions such as in-growing toenails). All podiatrists employed by CWP are

members of the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) and are highly skilled and experienced in performing eligibility assessments.

7. How has scoring been devised?

The podiatry eligibility assessment criteria is based on a medical paradigm (model). It has been used in West Cheshire for at least 15 years and it is used nationally by all podiatry services and accepted as a benchmark for eligibility by clinical commissioning groups. The CCG has approved its use in determining eligibility and is satisfied that its use will ensure a fair and equitable provision of podiatry. The current and proposed assessment forms that podiatry staff use/would use in order to make an objective assessment are available on the CWP website at www.cwp.nhs.uk/podiatry.

8. Will people still be able to self-refer into the Podiatry Service?

No, unless they have diabetes and have a foot problem that requires urgent podiatric treatment. Referrals should be made by a GP or Practice Nurse when appropriate, by using the Choose and Book electronic referral system. All other Health Care Professionals will submit paper or electronic referrals via EMIS (Community).

9. Will people be able to appeal against their assessment?

As all assessments are based on the medical paradigm (model) to ensure fairness, consistency and quality assurance, appeals would not be progressed to reassessment unless a change in medical conditions is evidenced by your GP. You can contact the PALS team (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) at CWP on 0800 195 4462 or West Cheshire CCG on 0800 218 2333 if you would like to discuss any matter relating to your care.

10. What if it's an emergency? Do I go to A&E?

There is no need to go to A&E as our emergency care service remains unchanged. Patients with high level needs can access fast track referrals and emergency drop-in clinics.

11. How many patients may need to seek an alternative provider if these changes go ahead?

Following an assessment of their needs, a patients may be discharged with self-help information to enable them to self-manage their condition:

- We are estimating that approximately 500 people have basic nail-cutting needs and if they did require additional help they could access a non-NHS nail cutting service (for example at the Health Living Centres). They would need to self-fund this service.
- A further 2,500 patients have some low level podiatric needs and if they did require additional help to manage their condition they could access a non-NHS provider for treatment, which they would need to self-fund. A list of registered members of the Health and Care Professions Council would be provided.

12. How will you ensure that patients are signposted to reputable foot care providers/podiatrists?

CWP will provide all patients who will be discharged from the service with a list of non-NHS registered foot care providers who are members of the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) – the recognised governing body for podiatrists. The nail cutting service at the Healthy Living Centres in Ellesmere Port and Chester have also undergone quality assurance to ensure the care provided is of a good standard. Please note this service may not be appropriate for people with thickened toenails, who would need to seek the services of a state registered podiatrist who is a member of the HCPC.

13. How much do the Healthy Living Centres charge for their nail cutting service?

The charges are as follows:

- £20 for the first session which includes purchasing the instruments (i.e. nail clippers and files)
- £10 per follow up session.

14. How much does a typical private sector podiatrist appointment cost?

The cost can vary between £15 and £35. It is recommended that a fee is agreed before committing to an appointment.

15. I am concerned about the cost of seeking the service of an alternative provider. Is training available for my carer/partner/relative?

CWP is providing free nail cutting and basic foot health care training to all carers. Please contact the Podiatry Service for more information. Please note that the level of training does not cover podiatric needs i.e. corns and calluses.

16. Could I claim benefits to help fund an alternative provider of podiatry treatment?

Cheshire West and Chester Council can assist with a social care needs assessment and benefits advice, which looks at the whole person and not just foot health needs. You can contact them for advice on:

Cheshire West and Chester Council Adult Social Care Gateway Team

Telephone: 0300 123 7034

Website:

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/health_and_social_care/adultsocialcare/contact_adult_social_care.aspx

The Cheshire West and Chester Council benefits centre may also be able to help you to claim benefits you may be entitled to, to help with the cost of alternative podiatry treatment:

Telephone: 0300 123 7021

Website:

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/benefits_and_grants/benefit_advice.aspx

17. What self-help information will be available?

CWP is strengthening its patient education and self-care management suite of resources including leaflets and brochures, training and signposting available to current patients and their carers. In addition, as part of this consultation process, CWP is exploring the option of running a course for low risk patients when they are discharged and signposted to other services, this would include the following topics:

- Foot exercise programme
- A presentation on how to self-manage all aspects of foot health
- Stalls with examples of appropriate footwear with catalogues available
- An opportunity for attendees to have their feet measured
- An opportunity to meet other people and access other courses.

18. What is the Diabetes Essentials programme?

Diabetes Essentials is a specifically designed education programme for people diagnosed with diabetes. The Countess of Chester Hospital is running group sessions for people with Type 2 diabetes. These sessions give people the chance to learn more about diabetes management and will allow the time and opportunity to learn from a health professional specialising in diabetes who will present information in a simple and easy to understand way. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet other people with diabetes and learn from their experiences as well as ask questions to everyone present at the sessions. More information can be found here: <http://camcc.org.uk/2011/04/session-to-help-people-with-diabetes/> or by contacting the Podiatry Service.

19. What is the definition of:

Basic nail cutting need:

- **Providing a pedicure** – The cutting of normal (non-pathological) nails.

Podiatric need (requiring treatment):

- **Low level** – A patient has good general and foot health but has podiatric problems such as corns or calluses. Corns and calluses are most effectively treated by removal.
- **High level** – A patient has a medical condition and poor foot health (for example diabetes with loss of feeling in the feet) which puts them at risk of developing a foot ulcer. These patients may have had a foot ulcer in the past or may present with a corn or callus that could develop into a foot ulcer if not treated quickly.

Clinical need (a summary of a patient's overall medical and podiatric need):

- **Low** – A patient has good foot and general health with no or simple (e.g. slight callus) podiatric needs.
- **High** – A patient has a medical condition e.g. diabetes with loss of feeling in the feet and presents with corns and calluses.

Risk (a combination of foot and general health status and clinical need which is established by an assessment):

- **Low risk** – A patient has good foot and general health and is not at risk of developing a foot ulcer.
- **Moderate risk** – A patient has a medical condition e.g. diabetes with some loss of feeling and has the potential to develop foot problems which could develop into a foot ulcer.
- **High risk** – A patient has a medical condition (for example diabetes with loss of feeling in the feet) which puts them at risk of developing a foot ulcer and also has poor foot health for example poor circulation to the feet with a history of previous ulceration.

20. What about patients who have a combination of the above health problems?

Patients who are of 'mixed risk status' will need to have their clinical needs reassessed and will be invited to attend the Podiatry Service for an assessment appointment.

21. Who is NHS West Cheshire CCG?

NHS West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group (the CCG) is made up of 36 GP practices responsible for designing local health services for local people, covering a population of around 260,000 people. Each of the practices has an elected doctor on the Membership Council, which determines the CCG's priorities. The work of the CCG is overseen by a Governing Body, which is chaired by a local GP. The CCG's Clinical Senate has members that include senior doctors from local hospitals, nurses, allied health professionals, adult and children's social care and public health. The Senate reports to the Governing Body.

22. Who provides podiatry services in West Cheshire?

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (CWP) provides a wide range of community-based health services in West Cheshire, including podiatry services. The Trust also provides inpatient mental health and learning disability services in West Cheshire and beyond. The Trust has over 15,000 foundation trust members (members of the public who are interested in CWP's services and receive regular information/get involved in volunteering/events etc). It employs more than 3,400 staff across 65 sites, serving a total population of approximately one million people. If you would like to become a member of CWP (which is free of charge) please call 01244 397393 or visit the website www.cwp.nhs.uk