

**Appointment letter / frequently asked questions documents**

Dear Patient

This letter is to invite you for an assessment of your podiatry needs.

We are piloting a new way of delivering podiatry services in [west Cumbria]. This is to make sure that those with the highest needs are prioritised.

In some cases the changes may mean that you will be referred to another provider for your podiatry service, such as Age concern or NHS choices for a private practioners.

We are also going to provide much more information to our patients about how you are able to take steps yourself to improve and maintain the health of your feet.

These changes will enable the podiatry service to deliver high quality, timely and accessible podiatry care to patients who are at most risk of serious foot health problems.

We are assessing all our patients and would like to invite you to our clinic on **Details of appointment.**

At the appointment our clinicians will speak to you about any changes that may affect you and you will be able to ask questions and raise any concerns that you have.

If this appointment is not convenient for you please contact the number below to rearrange as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

Zoe Larmour  
Team Lead Podiatrist – Copeland and Allerdale.

## **FAQ document:**

Frequently asked questions for changes to podiatry services

### **1. Why are these changes being proposed?**

In recent years the podiatry teams have seen an increase in patients with higher needs particularly associated with diabetes and older age. Teams are now carrying out much more complex work than they traditionally would. Those patients with high level podiatry needs can experience delays because of the limited capacity of the podiatry teams.

A pilot project has been proposed [for the west of the county] to address this and ensure that the NHS service only deals with high medical needs and those with lower needs are supported by organisations outside the NHS or given information about self-care.

All affected patients will undergo an initial assessment to determine the best service for their needs.

### **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 Cumbria. 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 Podiatry treatment and you don't think you have high risk feet?**

The podiatry services will determine if you are high risk or not. Under the proposed changes the Podiatry Service will see all patients registered with a Cumbria GP for an initial assessment and from that give advice. If a short term course of treatment would be helpful this would be offered and once complete and successful the patient would be discharged to self-care or be signposted to other services. Patients who have conditions which require ongoing care will be offered it.

### **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. As this is a pilot we will work with patients, GP and our other partners to ensure that patients receive high quality care in the most appropriate setting and that patients understand how to escalate any concerns.

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

During the pilot all patients will be fully assessed by the NHS podiatry team. Following this, patients will be either admitted onto the NHS podiatry service or discharged and referred to receive treatment from a non NHS Service (for example age concern).

The NHS podiatry service will treat those patients who are at a higher risk of complications all other needs will be directed elsewhere – which could be another organisation or self-help.

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

**7. Will I need to pay for the service if it isn't delivered by the NHS?** Yes our signposting leaflet /letter has multiple ways to find an alternative carer at various prices. Age UK for example is £12 for nail care.

You may be eligible for an Attendance Allowance if you're 65 or over and the following apply:

- you have a physical disability (including sensory disability, e.g. blindness), a mental disability (including learning difficulties), or both
- your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or someone to supervise you, for your own or someone else's safety

It's very important that you give details of everything that your relative struggles with. Think about all the little daily tasks that they might have difficulty with: getting up from the toilet; preparing food; getting dressed; getting around indoors or getting to hospital appointments

You can also get claim packs from the Attendance Allowance helpline.

#### **Attendance Allowance helpline**

Telephone: 0345 605 6055

Text phone: 0345 604 5312

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

How much is attendance allowance?

There are two rates of payment (2016-2017):

- £55.10 a week for people needing help for only/either day or night.
- £82.30 a week for people needing help both day and night

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form>

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

Yes, unless they are diabetic in which case a GP referral is required.

#### **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. If you are unhappy with the clinical decision you can contact PET on 01228 602020 if you would like to discuss any matter relating to your care.

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

We have a leaflet/ poster which signposts to alternative providers who are appropriately registered.