

# Foot Care Interventions: Podiatry, Laser, Injections and Surgery Surgical Threshold Policy

## This policy covers

The criteria for consideration of podiatry, foot surgery and laser treatment of the feet. It includes services provided in the community and secondary care; for adults, children and young people; and covers treatments for primary and recurrent conditions.

## The Policy does not apply in the circumstances below:

- Treatment following malignancy, sepsis, acute charcot or acute trauma.

Referring and treating clinicians should ensure compliance with this policy.

Referral proforma MUST be attached to the patient notes as evidence of compliance.

If criteria not met, use the exceptional funding section of the [referral proforma](#) to apply for funding.

**Laser treatment and Plasma Rich Platelet (PRP) injections are not funded for any foot condition.**

## CCG funding criteria for referral for Podiatry/Chiropody

Patient has a high<sup>I</sup> podiatric need.

OR

Patient has a moderate<sup>II</sup> podiatric need **AND** a medical condition that increases their risk<sup>III</sup>.

**Patients should not be referred for routine NHS funded podiatry for minor treatments (such as nail cutting) where risk is low<sup>IV</sup> regardless of underlying medical condition.**

### Risk levels

- I Ulcerations, infection, complex musculoskeletal problems causing foot deformity and pain.  
**Note:** Patients with cellulitis and acute charcot foot should be referred directly to secondary care.
- II. Symptomatic (painful): corns, callus, nail pathology or non-complex musculoskeletal problems.
- III. Peripheral neuropathy, peripheral vascular disease, diabetes, previous digit or limb loss, scleroderma, rheumatoid arthritis, neurological disorders, previous stroke, end stage renal failure, or patients on chemo/radio therapy or immunosuppressants.
- IV Normal sensation, palpable pulses and no deformity.

## CCG funding criteria for referral for referral through the MSK service pathway for Foot Surgery

This applies to all foot surgery for chronic conditions of the foot – including bunions, toe deformities, acquired flat foot, osteoarthritis of joints of the foot, metatarsalgia and soft tissue and bony lesions or tendon repair. They do not apply in cases where there are recurrent ulcers and/or infections due to the foot deformity.

Treatment is NOT for cosmetic purposes. **AND**

Persistent symptoms despite at least six months of conservative management.

Symptoms should include:

- a. significant persistent pain **preventing activities of daily living<sup>I</sup>**; OR
- b. severe deformity <sup>II</sup> leading to inability to wear appropriate shoes:

- <sup>i</sup> Activities such as meal preparation, laundry, housekeeping, shopping, using the phone, driving or using public transport.
- <sup>ii</sup> Hallux Valgus angle greater than 25 degrees (bisection of longitudinal axis of the hallux and longitudinal axis of the first metatarsal).

Prior conservative management should include **ALL** of the following:

- a. modification of footwear: avoidance of high-heeled shoes, appropriate fit and design; **AND**
- b. externally fitted devices, eg orthoses, strapping, toe separators, braces; **AND**
- c. exercises to improve/maintain strength and joint flexibility; **AND**
- d. ice and elevation for pain and swelling; **AND**
- c. optimum analgesia.

### Smoking

Advise people who smoke to attempt to stop smoking and refer to stop-smoking services – [see stop smoking policy](#).

## Expectations of surgery

Patients should be counselled that they will not be able to drive for up to 8 weeks depending on the nature of the operation or the foot operated on, they will not be able to return to work for a period of time up to 3 months depending on the operation undergone and the nature of their work, and they may have recurrence.

Glossary	
<b>Acute charcot foot:</b>	Disruption of the bones in the foot, sometimes due to repeated small traumas or an injury, and often associated with damage to sensory nerves.
<b>Cellulitis:</b>	Bacterial infection of the skin.
<b>Gout:</b>	Type of arthritis in which small crystals form inside and around the joints, resulting in sudden attacks of severe pain and swelling
<b>Hallux rigidus:</b>	Latin term for stiff big toe. A condition caused by arthritis at the base of the big toe.
<b>Hallux valgus:</b>	Bunion – bony deformity of the joint at the base of the big toe.
<b>Immunosuppressant:</b>	A drug that reduce the body's resistance to infection and other foreign agents by suppressing the activity of the immune system.
<b>Metatarsalgia:</b>	Pain in the ball of the foot.
<b>Morton's neuroma:</b>	Condition that affects the nerves between the toes
<b>Orthosis:</b>	A brace, splint or other artificial external device designed and fitted to the body to control biomechanical alignment, correct deformity and improve foot mechanics.
<b>Peripheral neuropathy:</b>	Damaged or diseased nerves in the body's extremities, such as the hands, feet and arms.
<b>Peripheral vascular disease:</b>	Build-up of fatty deposits in the arteries (other than those of the heart or the brain) that may cause leg pain, ulcers or poor nail growth.
<b>Planta fasciitis:</b>	Pain on the bottom of the foot, around the heel and arch.
<b>Podiatry:</b>	Branch of healthcare that diagnoses and treats abnormal conditions of the feet and lower limbs. Podiatrists or Chiropodists treat and alleviate day-to-day foot problems, including toenail problems, athlete's foot, bunions, etc.
<b>Scleroderma:</b>	An uncommon condition that results in hard, thickened areas of skin and sometimes problems with internal organs and blood vessels.

Evidence and references to support this policy are available in [Part 2](#) of this policy.

<b>Policy effective from:</b>	Policy ratified by CCG Governing Body 3 November 2020 Policy approved by IPAC 27 October 2020 Policy approved by CPF 8 September 2020 November 2020
<b>Policy to be reviewed:</b>	November 2022
<b>Reference:</b>	onedrive\CPF Pols & Working Area\Surgical Threshold Pols\CCG Policies\Foot Care\Agreed\FOOT CARE NOV 2020 V1 – CRITERIA PART 1