Podiatry Assistant

Introduction

Podiatry assistants help podiatrists to treat patients. They give clinical support, such as making sure equipment is sterilised and ready, applying dressings and cutting nails. Assistants also have a clerical role, for example, writing patients’ notes and looking after equipment stocks.

Also known as

- Chiropody Assistant
- Footcare Assistant

Work Activities

As a Podiatry Assistant, you will work under the supervision of Podiatrists. You will see patients after they have been seen and assessed by the Podiatrist.

Podiatry Assistants give clinical support to the Podiatrist, so you will make sure they have all the equipment they need to treat patients.

This means setting up the treatment room, passing equipment and instruments to the Podiatrist and clearing them away at the end of the treatment.

In-between treatments, Podiatry Assistants clean and sterilise equipment ready for the next patient.

When patients first arrive, you will greet them and bring them into the treatment room. This is a good opportunity to reassure anxious patients, for example, by explaining what is about to happen.

Once in the treatment room, you will help the patient to get comfortable. You will prepare them for treatment, for example, by cleaning their feet.

When a Podiatrist has seen a patient and assessed their foot problem, you can give them simple treatments. These include applying dressings and cutting toenails.

You might have your own caseload of patients, seeing people regularly for simple treatments and giving ongoing advice.

Podiatry Assistants also have a clerical role. You will keep records of the equipment in the surgery and order new items when necessary. You are involved in writing patients’ notes, bringing them to the Podiatrist for them to sign.

You might also help the Podiatrist to assess the patient’s problem, by doing things such as asking the patient questions and taking notes.

While most of your work is in local clinics, you might go out with the Podiatrist to treat patients in their own homes.

You can also progress to Assistant Practitioner roles, with responsibility for more advanced work.

Being able to read, write and speak Welsh may be an advantage when you’re looking for work in Wales.

Personal Qualities and Skills

To become a Podiatry Assistant, you'll need:

- to be friendly, caring and sympathetic
- communication skills to reassure and get on with patients
- English language skills to write notes
- practical hand skills to do simple treatments such as applying dressings and cutting nails
Pay and Opportunities

Pay

NHS employees are paid on a rising scale within defined pay bands, according to their skills and responsibilities. The pay rates given below are approximate.

- Starting: Band 2 pay of £17,460 - £18,702
- With experience: Band 3 pay of £17,787 - £20,448

Hours of work

Podiatry Assistants work 37.5 hours a week.

Where could I work?

Employers include the NHS, private sector podiatry practices and the retail sector, such as department stores.

Opportunities for Podiatry Assistants occur in towns and cities throughout the UK.

Where are vacancies advertised?

Vacancies are advertised in local/national newspapers, at Jobcentre Plus, on the Find a Job website, on the NHS Jobs website and on job boards.

Entry Routes and Training

Entry routes

An Advanced Level Apprenticeship is a great place to start. Take a look at our information article 'Apprenticeships – How do I apply', for more details about applying for apprenticeship positions.

Entry is directly into a post, followed by on-the-job training.

There are no set entry requirements, although some employers ask for qualifications such as four GCSEs (A*- C or 9 - 4), including English, maths and a science subject.

Training

Training is on-the-job, involving clinical work, and practical, theoretical and oral assessments. You will learn about topics such as skin and nail pathology, microbiology, anatomy, foot conditions and nail operations.

Depending on your employer, you might work towards a certificate of competence from the The College of Podiatry or another relevant qualification such as a level 3 diploma in allied health profession support.

Work Experience

Some employers prefer entrants to have gained skills and knowledge during relevant work experience, for example, with older adults in a social care role.

Progression

Podiatry Assistants can progress to become Assistant Practitioners, with more advanced responsibilities. Training to become an Assistant Practitioner could involve taking a level 3 qualification, a higher national qualification or foundation degree.

A career as a Podiatry Assistant can give you valuable experience if you want to become a Podiatrist, although it is not in itself a route to this.
There are some part-time degree courses in podiatry, which may enable Podiatry Assistants to continue working while training to become Podiatrists, depending on the employer (NHS Trust) and region of the country. Universities might ask you to have certain qualifications for entry to a degree course in podiatry.

**Rehabilitation of Offenders Act**

This career is an exception to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that you must supply information to an employer about any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, if they ask you to.

This is different from other careers, where you only have to reveal information on unspent convictions if you are asked to.

**Qualifications**

To get onto an Advanced Level Apprenticeship, you'll usually need 5 GCSEs at grade C/4 or above, including English and maths, or to have completed an Intermediate Level Apprenticeship.

Some employers prefer applicants to have gained skills and knowledge through relevant work experience, for example, in a health or social care role.

**Adult Opportunities**

**Age limits**

It is illegal for any organisation to set age limits for entry to employment, education or training, unless they can show there is a real need to have these limits.

**Skills/experience**

Some entrants have experience of working with people, for example, as a care assistant.

**Training**

You might be able to enter and train through an Intermediate or Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Health - Clinical Healthcare Support, or an Advanced Level Apprenticeship in Health - Allied Health Profession Support.

**Statistics**

- 6% of people in occupations such as podiatry assistant work part-time.
- 6% have flexible hours.
- 7% of employees work on a temporary basis.

**Further Information**

**Contacts**

- **Apprenticeships: Get In. Go Far**
  National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)
  Tel: 0800 015 0400
  Email: nationalhelpdesk@findapprenticeship.service.gov.uk
  Website: [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

- **Skills Development Scotland - Modern Apprenticeships**
  Tel: 0800 9178000
  Email: info@skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
  Website: [www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/modernapprenticeships)

- **Health Careers**

- **NHS Wales Careers**
  Publisher: National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare
Email: abm.wedsteam@wales.nhs.uk
Website: www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/829/page/36090

• **NHS Jobs**
  Website: www.jobs.nhs.uk

• **Step into the NHS**
  NHS careers
  Tel: 0345 6060655
  Website: www.stepintothenhs.nhs.uk

• **Skills for Health**
  Skills for the health sector
  Address: Goldsmiths House, Broad Plain, Bristol BS2 0JP
  Tel: 0117 9221155
  Email: office@skillsforhealth.org.uk
  Website: www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

• **Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists (SCP)**
  Address: 1 Fellmongers Path, Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 3LY
  Tel: 0845 4503720
  Email: enq@scpod.org
  Website: www.scpod.org

• **Careers in Podiatry**
  Publisher: Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists (SCP)
  Email: careersinpodiatry.com
  Website: careersinpodiatry.com

• **Careers Wales - Welsh Apprenticeships**
  Tel: 0800 028 4844
  Website: ams.careerswales.com/

**Related Careers**

• Podiatrist
• Dietitian
• Physiotherapy Assistant
• Speech and Language Therapy Assistant
• Physiotherapist
• Speech and Language Therapist
• Sports Therapist
• Art Therapist
• Dramatherapist
• Music Therapist
• Occupational Therapist
• Occupational Therapy Assistant
• Genetic Counsellor
• Myotherapist