



# Tower Hamlets Foot Health Service



## What is the Foot Health Service?

The Foot Health Service provides care and treatment for a range of foot and lower limb problems. The team is formed of podiatrists and trained foot care assistants working together to provide advice and clinical expertise for patients experiencing foot problems.

## Prioritising high risk patients

The service aims to support those with the greatest clinical need. Patients who have conditions such as diabetes, rheumatoid conditions, conditions where people have reduced sensation or feeling in their feet, or who have a reduced blood supply to their feet have an increased risk of developing foot complications. The service also provides foot care to people with a mental health condition, children and housebound patients. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommends that foot care services for people with these long term conditions should be available on the NHS. Tower Hamlets commission services based on the latest clinical guidance from NICE. Access to regular appointments is vital to ensure that serious issues are detected early to prevent the development of further complications or need for surgery.



## People who can receive an assessment for NHS podiatry in Tower Hamlets

All patients who are referred to the service will receive an assessment.

The service will treat:

- Anyone with 'at risk' or 'high risk' feet
- People who are identified as being vulnerable
- Those with serious issues that affect their foot health such as
  - Peripheral arterial disease (reduced blood supply to the foot)
  - Peripheral sensory neuropathy (reduced sensation in the feet)
  - Adults and children who require footwear will still be able to access the service
  - Patients who have previously had foot ulcers
  - Significant foot deformity assessment

## Patients who will not be seen by the service

- Those who have low risk podiatric needs such as verrucae, dry skins, corns and fungal infections
- Patients who have no health issues
- Patients who have biomechanical problems, musculoskeletal problems, sport injuries and conditions such as plantar fasciitis (heel pain)

- People who have mobility issues which mean they have trouble reaching their feet but have no other medical or foot conditions
- Patients with biomechanical problems, musculoskeletal problems and sport injuries will not be seen.

## How do I access the Foot Health Service

Patients must be referred to the service by their GP; every patient who is referred will receive an assessment. Patients who fit the eligibility criteria will be treated by the service; individuals who have good foot health and low level needs will be discharged from the service with self-care options.

## Who can provide private podiatry and foot care and where can I find them?

Podiatry is offered by a range of different people with varied qualification and job titles.

However any professional that is calling themselves a Podiatrist or Chiropodist must be registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC). When choosing a podiatrist you can check if they are registered with the HCPC by visiting [www.hcpc-uk.org/check](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/check) or by calling 0845 300 6184.

# What is the best way to look after my feet?

Looking after your feet correctly is an important way to help prevent many common foot problems from developing in the first place.

- **Wash your feet** – Keep your feet clean by washing every day in soapy water.
- **Dry your feet well** – Dry your feet thoroughly after washing them, especially between toes where fungal infections can develop.
- **Cut toenails carefully** – trim your toenails regularly using proper nail clippers, prevent ingrowing toenail by cutting straight across, never at an angle or down the edges.
- **Footwear** – wear shoes that provide the right amount of support to help prevent arch and heel pain.
- **Take care with flip flops** – when in communal areas wear flip flops to stop the spread of verrucae and athlete's foot.

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**The Foot Health department can provide training workshops to carers and individuals on foot care and toenail cutting.**

**A list of accredited podiatrists will be available for people who do not qualify for an NHS service. For others with no underlying health condition, regular visits to a nail technician can keep feet in tip top condition.**

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**Tower Hamlets Foot Health Service  
Mile End Hospital  
Grove Building  
Bancroft Road  
London  
E1 4DG**

