

Podiatrist

Podiatrists assess, diagnose and treat damage, infection or disease of the feet and lower legs of their patients. If there is a medical problem, they refer the patient to a doctor. They are also known as chiropodists.

The Work

You could be:

- treating feet for skin problems, such as corns, athlete's foot or verrucas; joint problems such as bunions; or problems such as ulceration caused by diabetes or poor circulation
- assessing and diagnosing conditions such as: diabetes, rheumatism, musculo-skeletal and neurological disorders, bad posture, sports injury
- analysing how a patient walks using a treadmill or video film
- applying exercise and massage
- applying creams or other medication
- putting on dressings to relieve pain
- fitting aids such as insoles or orthotics
- advising individuals or groups on foot care, in order to prevent damage
- referring patients where necessary to other professionals, such as physiotherapists or orthopaedists.

After extra training, you might do minor surgery, using scalpels and drills, such as removing damaged or ingrowing toe nails, under local anaesthetic given by injection.

Pay

Pay rates can vary depending on whether you are working with the NHS, with a private practice, or are self-employed.

Within the NHS Agenda for Change scales podiatrists' salaries are on Band 5, £34,494 to £42,977 a year. A specialist podiatrist is on Band 6, £43,169 to £52,603 a year. An advanced podiatrist is on Band 7, £52,769 to £61,377 a year.

The current pay scales are from April 2025.

Conditions

- You might work in a hospital, clinic, health centre, residential home or in a patient's home.
- If you are self-employed you might work from a room in your own home.
- You may need to travel to patients' homes.
- Hours are usually regular if you work in the National Health Service (NHS).
- In private practice you might work evenings and weekends to suit your clients needs.
- You could work part time.

Getting In

- You need a degree (SCQF Level 10) in podiatry.
- Both Glasgow Caledonian University and Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh offer BSc degrees in Podiatry.
- Entry requirements are 4 good Highers.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.
- You must provide evidence that you do not have, and have been immunised against, Hepatitis B.
- When you complete your course you gain UK state registration with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). You must have this to work in the NHS.
- Relevant experience is helpful, for example, getting a work shadow placement.
- A driving licence is useful.

Most podiatrists start off working for the NHS, treating those who are eligible for podiatry on the NHS: older people, diabetics, children or pregnant women. You might also work in sports clubs, the armed forces and even high street shops. A large proportion eventually set up in private practice.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to get on well with people from all backgrounds and of all ages
- accurate, precise and careful
- good with your hands – you must carry out delicate procedures on patients' feet
- able to explain medical terms clearly
- confident in making decisions
- able to work under pressure
- able to keep accurate patient records.

You should have:

- good listening and communication skills
- patience and empathy
- good problem solving skills
- the ability to work as a team
- business skills if you plan to work in private practice.

Training

- During your first year as a qualified podiatrist with the NHS you would get extra support and guidance through the [Flying Start Programme](#).
- Once you have gained state registration, training is on the job, with short courses to keep you up to date.
- With specialist training podiatrists will soon be able to prescribe medication for certain foot and ankle conditions.
- You could undertake a postgraduate qualification where you could focus on a specialist area. Queen Margaret University has relevant courses.

Getting On

- You might move into a senior post or into management.
- You might specialise in a particular area of practice such as sports injuries, critical care, care of the elderly or working with children or cancer patients.
- The HCPC requires you to keep up your continued professional development (CPD) to remain on the state register.
- You could become self-employed and open your own practice.
- You could go into teaching podiatry.

More Information

Visit this great resource [NHS Education Scotland Virtual Tour](#) to learn more about this job.

Contacts

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

Tel: 0300 500 6184

Email: education@hcpc-uk.org

Website: www.hcpc-uk.org

X: @The_HCPC

Facebook: www.facebook.com/hcpcuk

NHS Scotland Careers

Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Royal College of Podiatry

Website: rcpod.org.uk

X: @RoyColPod

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RoyColPod

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.