

The State of Independent Practice 2025



Executive Summary

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Date	February 2025
Project	Review of Independent Practice
Version	1

Executive Summary

A significant number of podiatry treatments are delivered in Independent Practice (IP) providing a comprehensive foot care service to patients. However, there is limited knowledge around the scope of care or the contribution this sector has on the foot health economy of the nation. The last detailed review of IP was in 2009 with the PARN report, where the provision of private podiatry was reviewed to document the current practices available at that time. The IP group committee have highlighted significant changes and adaptations to practice since this report was completed with service demands altering as patient healthcare needs evolve. To gain a detailed understanding of IP podiatric RCPod reviewed the current provision of services in this sector. A survey of 1273 members was completed with an additional 40 participants being interviewed across all 4 nations. The results of which led to content being analysed and grouped into 3 main themes (Clinical Practice, Public-professional collaborations and Health and wellbeing). This information highlighted areas of best practice, improvement and development as well as opportunities.



Clinical practices

There are a broad range of services available in IP which provide patients with care for routine or complex podiatric problems. Additional to core services practices provide specialist and advanced care in musculoskeletal conditions (MSK), dermatology, nail surgery, injection therapy and acupuncture. Practices are well equipped with services ranging from one practitioner to multiprofessional care. From the data provided in the full report an average fee structure pricing allows for benchmarking in geographical locations. This information details the scope of services available that can be used to inform and promote podiatric practice and how IP contributes to the wider foot health needs of patients. Additionally, the data provides a representation of current practice for the time frame the review was conducted allowing for reflection and development.

Public-professional collaborations

There was strong evidence from the review that there is a need to improve collaboration with NHS services. This is necessary for co-creating and sharing patient care, accompanied by clear referral pathways between sectors. Building links, creating partnerships and improving communication will align service provision for podiatry practices improving patients care and choice.

To support IP going forward the review identified the need for business development training. Many practices are set up as sole traders with limited peer support or guidance on running the business. Provision of relevant CPD will enhance service provision enabling confident growth and collaborations with other professionals.

Health and well-being

Independent practice provides a flexible, fulfilling career choice with scope for unlimited professional development, defined specialism and tailored working practices. Providing wellbeing support for those working alone could enhance retention and reduce feelings of isolation and burnout. Increasing awareness of investing in pensions, personal development opportunities and wellbeing support groups will favourably promote independent practice as a career choice.



This review gives valuable insights into the current provision and scope of podiatric practice in the independent sector. It has highlighted development opportunities including, focused collaboration with NHS providers and business development for practitioners, both of which will improve patient care, public engagement and clinical practice. The broad provision of care provided in IP demonstrates an open access model of patient choice available to all who require it. The scope of practice is an attractive podiatric career pathway that can be confidently promoted and supported by RCPod.