



Good Podiatric Surgical Practice

Standards of professional practice for podiatric surgeons in the UK

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Version control

Version	Date	Lead author	Description of changes	Committee approving/ratifying change
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Foreword

As podiatric surgeons, we occupy a unique and vital role in the healthcare system - combining medical, surgical, and rehabilitative expertise to restore mobility and quality of life. In the UK, our profession has evolved into a regulated, annotated, and well-established pathway, grounded in clinical excellence, patient-centred care, and multidisciplinary collaboration.

This document, *Good Podiatric Surgical Practice*, is a benchmark for professional behaviour, values and standards. It draws on the principles of *Good Medical Practice (2024)* and *Good Surgical Practice (2025)*, contextualised to the scope and expertise of podiatric surgery.

In an era where patients rightly expect the highest standards of surgical care and communication, this document reaffirms our collective commitment to excellence, integrity, compassion, accountability, and leadership. It is more than a code of conduct - it is a statement of identity and pride for the podiatric surgical profession.

We invite all podiatric surgeons - whether in training, in practice, or in leadership - to embody these standards and contribute to a culture where excellence thrives and public trust is honoured.

Good Podiatric Surgical Practice (GPSP)

Sets out the professional values, standards and behaviours expected of podiatric surgeons registered in the UK. It is a companion to the Good Medical Practice (2024) and Good Surgical Practice (2025) documents, tailored specifically to the scope and responsibilities of podiatric surgery.

These standards reflect principles of professionalism, patient-centred care, collaboration, and clinical excellence. They apply to all contexts in which podiatric surgeons work - whether in the NHS, private sector, education, research, or leadership roles.

The Duties of a Podiatric Surgeon

To justify the trust placed in you by patients, colleagues and the public, you must:

- Make the care of your patients your first concern
- Ensure your practice consistently meets the standards set by regulatory and professional bodies to ensure safe and lawful practice
- Demonstrate high standards of knowledge, clinical skill, judgement, and communication
- Work within your limits of competence and maintain your surgical and professional development
- Promote a culture of safety, openness and accountability
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and contribute to training and leadership
- Act with honesty, integrity and respect for others at all times.

Domain 1: Knowledge, skills and development

1.1 Maintain competence and surgical development

- Keep up to date with podiatric surgical standards, guidelines, and innovations
- Undertake regular CPD and surgical audit, including outcomes and complications
- Reflect on performance using patient feedback, peer review, and appraisal
- Engage in structured learning
- Maintain detailed logs of clinical activity across both NHS and private practice.

1.2 Deliver safe and effective surgical care

- Offer treatment within your scope of practice, referring when appropriate
- Prioritise patient safety and clinical need when planning procedures
- Ensure theatre environments are adequately resourced and safe
- Record surgical findings, decisions and outcomes clearly and promptly
- Advocate for appropriate perioperative environments and team support.

1.3 Contribute to research and innovation

- Where appropriate, participate in clinical audit and surgical research
- Ensure ethical approval and informed patient consent
- Disclose conflicts of interest and adhere to legal and professional standards
- Embrace data-driven practice to support innovation and evidence-based care.

1.4 Introduce new techniques responsibly

- Follow governance processes when introducing or adopting new procedures
- Obtain appropriate training and audit early outcomes
- Communicate transparently with patients regarding innovations
- Seek guidance from professional bodies and regulatory authorities where necessary.

Domain 2: Patients, partnership and communication

2.1 Respect and compassion

- Treat every patient with dignity, kindness, and cultural sensitivity
- Respect patient autonomy, values, and right to a second opinion
- Support patients in caring for their feet and general health
- Recognise vulnerability and make reasonable adjustments.

2.2 Informed consent and shared decision-making

- Provide clear, evidence-based information about risks, benefits, alternatives, and likely outcomes
- Ensure consent is an ongoing conversation, not a one-time event
- Document key aspects of the consent process and allow time for patient reflection
- Avoid pressurising patients and acknowledge their right to decline treatment.

2.3 Effective communication

- Tailor communication to individual needs, using interpreters or accessible formats when needed
- Communicate clearly with patients' families, carers, and referring clinicians
- Provide information following surgery regarding aftercare, outcomes and follow-up
- Utilise digital platforms securely to enhance accessibility and engagement.

2.4 Confidentiality and record keeping

- Maintain accurate, contemporaneous, legible records
- Keep patient information secure and disclose only in accordance with law and guidance
- Adhere to data protection law and professional confidentiality standards.

Domain 3: Colleagues, culture and safety

3.1 Teamworking and leadership

- Work effectively within multidisciplinary teams across all settings
- Promote respectful, inclusive, and psychologically safe environments
- Be accessible to junior colleagues and contribute to surgical training
- Set an example in professional behaviour and surgical conduct.

3.2 Delegation and supervision

- Delegate appropriately and supervise where necessary
- Provide clear instructions and ensure those undertaking tasks are competent

- Ensure induction, supervision and escalation pathways are in place.

3.3 Raising concerns and safeguarding

- Act promptly when patient safety, dignity or rights are at risk
- Follow safeguarding procedures and support patients at risk of harm
- Document concerns and escalate when necessary.

3.4 Sustainable practice

- Use surgical and clinical resources responsibly
- Support environmentally sustainable healthcare where it does not compromise outcomes
- Engage with initiatives to reduce the carbon footprint of surgical practice.

Domain 4: Trust and professionalism

4.1 Honesty and integrity

- Be honest and transparent in all professional interactions
- Declare and manage any conflicts of interest
- Uphold the reputation of the profession through ethical behaviour.

4.2 Professional boundaries

- Maintain appropriate relationships with patients and colleagues
- Avoid behaviour that could reasonably be seen as exploitative or inappropriate
- Refrain from discrimination, harassment, or abuse of professional privilege.

4.3 Public communication and promotion

- Provide honest, clear information about your services
- Ensure advertising, websites and media content are accurate and not misleading
- Uphold professional standards when using social media.

4.4 Accountability and regulatory duties

- Co-operate fully with governance, regulatory and legal processes
- Participate in appraisals, audit, and regulatory required renewal
- Be open and honest when things go wrong, fulfilling the duty of candour
- Maintain up-to-date indemnity and comply with Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) registration standards.

Further reading and additional resources

To support the implementation of the standards in this document, the following resources are recommended:

- General Medical Council. (2023). *Good Medical Practice 2024*. [online] London: GMC. Available at: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/good-medical-practice>
- Royal College of Surgeons of England. (2025). *Good Surgical Practice*. London: RCS England. <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/standards-and-research/good-surgical-practice/>
- Royal College of Podiatry. (2022). *Faculty of Podiatric Surgery Governance Overview*. London: RCPod.
- Health and Care Professions Council. (n.d.). *Standards of Proficiency: Podiatric Surgery*. London: HCPC. Available at: <https://www.hcpc-uk.org/globalassets/resources/standards/standards-for-podiatric-surgery.pdf?v=636784126930000000>
- General Medical Council. (n.d.). *Consent: Patients and Doctors Making Decisions Together*. London: GMC. Available at: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/decision-making-and-consent>
- General Medical Council. (n.d.). *Openness and Honesty When Things Go Wrong: The Professional Duty of Candour*. London: GMC. Available at: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/ethical-guidance/ethical-guidance-for-doctors/candour---openness-and-honesty-when-things-go-wrong>
- HM Government. (2004). *Human Tissue Act 2004*. [online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/30/contents>
- HM Government. (2005). *Mental Capacity Act 2005*. [online] Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents>