

Independent prescribing by podiatrists during COVID

NHS England has provided The College of Podiatry with the following guidance:

Facilitating AHPs to work at the top of their licence and back fill some duties with un-regulated support workers

AHPs are expected to work within the limits of their skills, knowledge and experience. Therefore, training and support should be offered to AHPs being asked to undertake new roles to enable the individual to practise safely and effectively.

In an emergency scenario, such as COVID-19, we recognise that AHPs may be asked to work in situations they may be unfamiliar with. HCPC standards need to be read in the round. How to meet them, and what is and is not appropriate, will depend on the full circumstances of an individual's practice. Working in a pandemic may give rise to particular challenges that are uncommon in everyday practise. HCPC would still expect registrants to use professional judgement to assess what is safe and effective practise in the context in which they are working during the pandemic.

The HCPC has issued a statement of comfort to registrants to reassure them of the above.

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org/registrants/updates/2020/how-we-will-continue-to-regulate-in-light-of-novel-coronavirus/>

In light of this advice, and in conjunction with the statement issued by the HCPC, The College of Podiatry advises that:

Podiatrists who are annotated by the HCPC as independent prescribers are expected to use professional judgement to assess what is safe and effective practise in the context in which they are working during the pandemic. If they are being asked to prescribe a drug with which they are familiar, for example, antibiotics normally associated with a foot infection, for a part of the body other than the foot, ankle and associated structures, this is deemed acceptable, as long as:

sound clinical judgement is used and demonstrated and

no training need is highlighted and

it is not a drug with which they have no prior experience of prescribing under their P-formulary

This aligns with, and conforms to, the advice given by NHS England and the Health and Care Professionals Council.