

## **Accreditation of the Standards of the Foot Health workforce**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

After “The Standards of the Foot Health Workforce” were published in 2021, there was a recommendation from that work to explore how we can apply the standards to practice.

This included devising a system to level up training standards examined on courses to create a threshold of acceptable practice. It also included creating a system to recognise those individuals already working who met the standards in their clinical practice. The Royal College has achieved this by developing accreditation processes for both educational providers and individuals. The work that relates to the proposed accreditation processes is included in this consultation and it is important to get your views on the documents.

At the halfway house of the consultation we are already starting to see some themes and the following may clarify some of the queries we have had.

#### **Q - What has already happened?**

A- The Standards for the Foot health Workforce (the Standards) were published in September 2021 following an open consultation that ran for 12 weeks. Amendments were made to the Standards following the consultation and the final version of the Standards, alongside the consultation findings, were published in May 2022 .The standards provide a clear understanding of the footcare treatments that the NHS podiatry support workforce and foot health practitioners can safely perform. The needs and safety of patients is central in this work. Employers and managers can use the Standards to effectively plan, develop, and deploy their support workforce.

#### **Q - What is happening now?**

The next stage is how to apply those agreed standards to clinical practice. The current proposal within the consultation is a mechanism to;

1/ accredit education providers who deliver courses that meet the standards

2/ give an opportunity to those individuals already working within the foot health workforce to reflect and look at how their work meets the standards. This will give a standardised benchmark to roles for foot health support workers.

#### **Q – What do I need to do?**

A- Firstly, please read the documents on accrediting educational providers as well as portfolios for individuals. Then answer the questions relating to the documents giving suggestions and comments about the process. Submit the form and the project team will collate all responses at the end of the consultation and make amendments and recommendations for the next phase, which will be implementation.

#### **Q – What Does it mean?**

A- Assessing and accrediting an education programme against the standards will mean that there is assurance to others that there is a threshold level of practice provided to those people completing

the course. Similarly, for individuals in practice, the recognition from demonstrating through accreditation that you have met the standards will assure patients and employers on the level of practice you are capable of.

**Q – As a Foot Health Practitioner will I have to apply for individual accreditation?**

A – No, this process is aimed at those Foot Health Practitioners who wish to apply to join the NHS in the support workforce. If you wish to continue in independent practice then you will not need to complete the accreditation process, although there are recognised benefits for professional development in doing so.

**Q – What if I don't live in England?**

A – The project and the implementation of the two processes do not currently apply to Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The Royal College is a four-nation organisation and therefore it is important to us that we hear your feedback and we greatly value your input into this project.