

Musculoskeletal skill levels (Podiatry)

ALL HPC registered Podiatrists should possess a level of skill in assessment and treatment of musculoskeletal foot and ankle conditions, and MSK skills should form part of the KSF and CPD competencies. However this level is highly variable and there is a growing tendency to consider MSK to be so specialist that it has become a post graduate speciality, therefore moving out of the remit of general Podiatry practice.

However this is NOT the case (see HPC outline for Podiatry). The following skill sets are intended to give an outline of the skill levels in MSK that should be expected from Podiatrists within their Agenda for change bandings:

Band 5-6/ (No post graduate specialist training or education in MSK foot and ankle)

1/ To recognise foot and ankle alignments, deformities and features and the compensations thereof that may be associated with or contributory to foot and ankle conditions.

2/ Ability to design and prescribe simple insoles and orthotic devices to both accommodative and functional prescriptions.

A thorough knowledge of the properties of orthotic materials and how they are best employed.

3/ To give appropriate advice on footwear styles, types and fittings appropriate to the patients needs and requirements while considering the effect of footwear on 1 & 2.

4/ To carry out an effective review of 1, 2 & 3 and to make a subjective judgement based on the outcome and decide whether to continue to treat or to refer.

5/ Working knowledge of foot and ankle musculoskeletal anatomy and function.

6/ Ability to communicate effectively the findings of MSK assessment and the outcome of any interventions.

Band 7 (Specialising in MSK), post graduate training or education in MSK foot and ankle working up to PGC/PGD. Band 7 specialist in other areas see band 5-6 skill set)

All the above

In addition:

7/ Knowledge and understanding of the accepted (Root, Danenberg, Kirby) Podiatric biomechanical theories and how these may apply to cases presented.

8/ An understanding in conjunction with the theories on the effects of intervention and how this may be best applied to particular pathology.

Ability to design and prescribe functional orthotic devices in line with the biomechanical theories.

9/ Knowledge of the proximal effects of foot and ankle alignments and compensations and the association with proximal pathology.

10/ Knowledge and ability to advise and prescribe simple stretching exercises and topical therapies to be used in isolation or as part of a treatment regime.

11/ Advanced knowledge of foot and ankle anatomy and function. Ability to carry out subjective gait assessment.

12/ Appreciation of the MSK effects of systemic conditions.

Band 8a Extended scope practitioner in Foot and Ankle MSK (Post graduate training and education to “M” level, MSc or PGC/PGD working up to MSc)

All the above.

In addition:

- 13/ Advanced knowledge and understanding of the accepted biomechanical theories, knowledge and understanding of the lesser well known biomechanical theories, up to date knowledge of “work in progress” and current trends and opinions.
- 14/ Knowledge and experience of specialised orthotic interventions and materials.
- 15/ Knowledge and experience of appropriate imaging modalities. Ability to interpret and act upon reports, and understand the connotations of these proposed interventions.
- 16/ Basic understanding of investigations other than diagnostic imaging e.g. blood tests.
- 17/ Prescribe effective stretching exercises to achieve a specific outcome.
- 18/ Apply appropriate taping, strapping and bracing.
- 19/ Administration and clinical application of injected cortico steroids and local anaesthesia in foot and ankle MSK.
- 20/ Ability to objectively critique published research and apply this to clinical practice with a view to providing evidence based intervention.
- 21/ Advanced knowledge of foot and ankle anatomy and function, with understanding of the implications of dysfunction and its effects on more proximal function and gait.
- 22/ Understanding and appreciation of the scope of practice of a range of professions, medics and consultants.
- 23/ Advanced knowledge of the MSK effects of systemic conditions.
- 24/ Recognition of the signs and symptoms of “yellow and red flags” of serious conditions and the ability to refer accordingly.
- 25/ Advanced “clinical reasoning” skills, retained within community services.
The ability to incorporate foot and ankle MSK into an overall package of care in conjunction with other services and professions.
- 26/ Comprehensive experience and knowledge of the operative management of MSK/orthopaedic foot and ankle conditions.

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