

Education and Training Committee, 23 November 2017

Annotation of podiatrists practising podiatric surgery

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

In 2012, the Education and Training Committee and the Council agreed to annotate qualifications in podiatric surgery on the HCPC Register.

This project has not yet been completed owing to issues including the future of the existing training route in England and how best to manage the annotation of the existing workforce.

The attached paper provides information about our work in this area and an update about recent progress.

Decision

This paper is for discussion; no decision is required.

Background information

As outlined in paper.

Resource implications

None as a result of this paper

Financial implications

None as a result of this paper

Appendices

None

Date of paper

6 November 2017

Annotation of the Register of podiatrists practising podiatric surgery

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In 2012, the Education and Training Committee and the Council agreed in principle to annotate qualifications in podiatric surgery on the HCPC Register.¹
- 1.2 This project has not yet been completed owing to issues including the future of the existing training route in England and how best to manage the annotation of the existing workforce.
- 1.3 In 2014, the Committee agreed that it would consult on and publish standards, and would then proceed to approve programmes before considering how best to manage the annotation.² In 2015, the standards for podiatric surgery were published.³ In Scotland, in 2016, we approved full time and part time podiatric surgery programmes delivered by Queen Margaret University. In England, two programmes are now due to be visited in 2018.
- 1.4 The attached paper provides information about our work in this area and an update about recent progress. No decision is required at this stage; this paper has been included in the 'discussion' part of the agenda to allow Committee members to ask any questions.

2. Annotation of the Register

About annotation of the Register

- 2.1 To date, the only annotations that exist are related to medicines and are required in other legislation, so this is the first occasion when the Council has agreed to exercise its discretionary powers under the Health and Social Work Professions Order 2001 to annotate the Register.
- 2.2 Annotation involves setting standards; approving programmes that deliver those standards; and annotating the Register entries of podiatrists who have successfully completed those programmes.
- 2.3 Whilst we have powers to annotate qualifications on our Register, and to describe how those annotations are described, we do not have powers to protect a title or function linked to that annotation. This would require a change in legislation and those decisions are therefore a matter for government.

¹ Education and Training Committee paper (March 2012). Annotation of the Register – qualifications in podiatric surgery

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/100038FD10-annotationoftheregister.pdf>

² Education and Training Committee paper (June 2014). Annotation of the Register of podiatrists practising podiatric surgery

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10004646Enc05-AnnotationoftheRegisterofPodiatristspractisingpodiatricurgery.pdf>

³ HCPC (2015). Standards for podiatric surgery.

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/publications/standards/index.asp?id=1060>

Policy on annotation of the Register

- 2.4 In 2012, the Committee and the Council agreed a policy statement on annotation of the Register. In summary, this sets out that in general we will only annotate the register where legally required or in exceptional circumstances where we consider that annotation is necessary to protect the public and that annotation would improve public protection.⁴

3. Podiatrists practising podiatric surgery

What is podiatric surgery?

- 3.1 Podiatric surgery is the surgical management of the bones, joints and soft tissues of the foot and its associated structure. Normally, surgery is performed as a day case procedures and often but not always under local anaesthetic. Conditions can include problems caused by bunions, arthritis, toe deformities and inflammation of the tissues of the foot.
- 3.2 This model of surgical care is most well developed within the NHS in England, but is relatively less developed in the other countries. Scotland has relatively recently developed its own training programme for podiatrists practising podiatric surgery.

Training in podiatric surgery

- 3.3 In England, the current route leading to qualification to practice podiatric surgery involves the following:
- an HCPC approved programme in chiropody and podiatry leading to eligibility to apply for registration, normally a three year BSc degree with honours;
 - at least one year's post-registration clinical practice;
 - a master's degree in the theory of podiatric surgery;
 - a minimum of two years surgical training to achieve fellowship of the Directorate of Podiatric Surgery of the College of Podiatry;
 - competitive entry into specialist Registrar training posts; and
 - normally a further three years of surgical training, leading to successful award of the Certificate of Completion of Podiatric Surgery Training (CCSPT) by the College of Podiatry.

⁴ See page 14:

<http://www.hcpc-uk.org/assets/documents/100038FD10-annotationoftheregister.pdf>

- 3.4 The Committee and Council have previously agreed to set the point of annotation at the level of completion of the CCPST or its equivalent – the standards of proficiency were developed at this level.
- 3.5 In Scotland, the equivalent of the CCPST is the approved programmes awarded by Queen Margaret University.

Use of titles

- 3.6 Podiatrists practising podiatric surgery have traditionally used the title ‘podiatric surgeon’ and many of those working within the NHS in England will be employed under titles such as ‘Consultant podiatric surgeon’.
- 3.7 The use of the term ‘surgeon’ has been the subject of some debate in the past – including national media coverage and correspondence to the General Medical Council and HCPC. Concern has been expressed by some about the potential for this title to imply a medical qualification.
- 3.8 In 2013, the Committee and the Council agreed that the annotation, once implemented, should be described as ‘podiatric surgery’ (this is consistent with existing annotations such as ‘supplementary prescribing’). We use the phrase ‘podiatrist practising podiatric surgery’ in any written documents.

4. Implementing the annotation

Progress to date

- 4.1 The following steps have already been completed.
- **Set standards for the annotation.** The standards for podiatric surgery were published in 2015.
 - **Approve the education programme(s) linked to the annotation.** There are two approved programmes in Scotland. A visit is scheduled to programmes in England.
 - **Amend our registration process and system to allow us to record the annotation.** The registration system has been updated to allow chiropodists / podiatrists to be annotated. The functionality will need to be made accessible to users at the appropriate time.
 - **Communicate the annotation to stakeholders.** Numerous meetings have taken place with stakeholders before and since the decision to annotate was made, and the standards were developed in partnership with a group of stakeholders.

Annotation of the existing workforce

- 4.2 For any annotation to be meaningful, it is necessary to annotate the Register entries of those podiatrists who are already in practice in this area having completed what was considered recognised training in the past.

- 4.3 At the outset of this project, it had been anticipated that the Committee might agree to approve the existing and historic programmes in this area before visiting open programmes to quality assure them against the standards. This is similar to how we have managed the regulation of new professions in the past.
- 4.4 However, the College of podiatry subsequently expressed potential concerns about the ability of the CCSPST qualification to meet the standards for podiatric surgery and about its longer term viability. This raised doubts about how appropriate it would be to proceed in the way anticipated above. The possibility of some kind of AP(E)L type arrangement which might verify the standard of existing practitioners was discussed with the College of Podiatry as a possible solution. A proposal was made by the College but this was not considered suitable by the Executive or Committee.
- 4.5 In 2014, having considered this issue and a range of options in response, the Committee agreed to progress its intent to annotate by consulting on the standards for podiatric surgery. However, it decided it would not make a final decision about annotation (for the existing workforce or newly qualified practitioners) until it had visited the training programmes and approved them against the standards. Proceeding in this way would ensure, as far as possible, the ongoing sustainability of the annotation before considering an appropriate mechanism for annotating the existing workforce.

Approval of programmes in England

- 4.6 We have recently received a visit request from the University of Huddersfield seeking approval of two programmes:
- A 'prospective' route (which will replace the College's existing CCPST).
 - An 'equivalence' route through which the existing workforce can gain annotation (e.g. those that hold the CCPST or predecessor qualifications). (It is anticipated that there are approximately 125 podiatrists practising podiatric surgery in practice who might need to access this route.)
- 4.7 This is a positive development. If approved, these programmes would indicate (as far as is possible) a sustainable annotation and would provide a means through which the existing workforce can be annotated.
- 4.8 At the time of writing, a visit was provisionally planned to take place in June 2018 with the programmes scheduled to commence (subject to approval) in September 2018.
- 4.9 Subject to the above, we may be able to have an annotation in place in late 2018 or early 2019.