Dear Ms Lang

Our Chief Executive, Annette Bruton has asked me to contact you to help with your query. I have reviewed the letter from Angela Worth but do not see the detail you refer to in your email. I may be missing another letter perhaps? As I don't have your telephone number I will attempt to respond to what I think your queries are by email but would also be happy to discuss direct with you.

The Health Professions Council (HPC) regulates all registered Chiropodists and Podiatrist. The terms 'Chiropodist' and 'Podiatrist' are protected titles. This means that you cannot call yourself a chiropodist of a podiatrist unless you are qualified and registered with the HPC.

However, HPC do not regulate people who call themselves 'Foot Specialists', 'Foot Carers' or similar. These terms are not protected titles and as such people using these titles do not require to be registered with HPC. Indeed, some qualified chiropodists choose to practice as foot specialists or similar as they do not wish to be registered with the regulatory body.

The Care Inspectorate does not regulate foot specialists and has no powers to advice or instruct them. However, we do regulate and inspect registered care services and use the National Care Standards doing this. They detail the level and quality of care people can expect from their service. For example, the standards for Care Homes for Older People state:

Standard 14 - 'if you have been receiving community healthcare services (for example, physiotherapy, chiropody or advice on your diet) and still need them, you will continue to receive them in the home. Otherwise the staff will make new arrangements for you'.

Standard 8 - ‘You can expect staff to be aware of issues around the assessment and management of any symptoms you may have, including pain, and how to access any specialist service

Standard 5 - 'You experience good quality support and care. This is provided by management and staff whose professional training and expertise allows them to meet your needs. The service operates in line with all necessary legal requirements and best practice guidelines.'

I am not aware of any specific national best practice guidance about general foot care but there is information available from a variety of sources about foot care for people with medical problems such as diabetes for example.

It is correct that nail problems, corns, foot ulcers etc should be treated by a qualified, registered podiatrist. However, providers of care services can and do employ foot specialists to carry out simple foot care related tasks such as nail clipping as part of everyday personal care. Individuals should have a choice about who provides this care and they may choose a foot specialist to deliver this, however they should also be well informed.

We would expect providers of care homes have in place good recruitment procedures for all staff providing care to people, including independent specialists/professionals. This should include carrying out an enhanced disclosure check, checking references, proof of qualifications and proof of registration with any relevant professional body if appropriate.

The provider should also ensure that people using the service are provided with clear, accurate and full information about any independent service introduced to them - and given a choice about whether or not to use them. This information should include prices and treatment offered and should also detail the role of the specialist/independent professional. The person using the service should receive a copy of the information in writing and a copy should be provided to their relative/