Dear Ms Lang,

Thank you for your recent enquiry related to the provision of Podiatry/chiropractic services within registered care home services.

We have had previous correspondence with the Health Professions Council (HPC) around the matter that you raise. The HPC are aware that people are practising as "Foot Specialists" (or such titles) that do not require registration with them. They are also aware of qualified Chiropodist or Podiatrist who do not wish to be registered with the HPC describing themselves as a "Foot Specialist" therefore removing themselves from the requirement to be registered with the HPC but they continue to practice using non-protected titles.

We are also aware that some NHS boards who offer foot health course for carers working in care homes for older people and it is our understanding that these courses have both theory and practical components and have a qualification at the end of it that permits them to undertake simple tasks related to foot care and/or elements of foot care that you would normally do to yourself. For example, nail filing, trimming but where it is identified there is more complex issues the service user may require a podiatry assessment in the first instance.

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 places the onus on service providers to employ suitably qualified and competent staff to undertake the individual care needs of their service users but unfortunately we cannot insist that private care home providers use staff registered with the HPC. However, we would expect the provider to make sure that these practitioners like any other private practitioner they engage have the necessary skills and competence to carry out the role for which they are employed.

You may wish to consider raising your concern with the HPC also.

I'm sorry I can't be of more help at this time.

Jacqueline Dennis
National Complaint Team Professional Adviser, Health

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