



My Life, My Choice

'improving services for older people'

New foot care and toe nail cutting services being set up across Devon

In recent surveys of older people's concerns, undertaken both nationally and locally, it emerged that a major worry was around maintaining healthy feet - how to get toenails cut and feet looked after. The impact of uncomfortable or painful feet on an older person's mobility, confidence and safety from falls was considerable. As part of the My Life, My Choice project foot care and toe nail cutting services are being set up across Devon.

Who is the new service for?

The new service is for older people who cannot care for, or possibly even reach, their own feet. If they have no relatives or friends willing or able to help their only option at the moment is to buy private podiatry which is often too expensive. This means that their toe nails may not get cut causing them discomfort and pain. This can lead to more serious problems such as infections or falls.

How will the foot care services be set up?

Initial funding will be granted to each of the ten new schemes to help set up and recruit volunteers. The scheme will charge a minimal fee for the service which will provide the scheme with an income. External support from the NHS will also be provided in the first year free of charge.



What will the service cost?

The proposed cost for toe nail cutting is £5.50 per treatment.

What options are there for foot care services in Devon?

Devon Primary Care Trust buys podiatry services from NHS providers or specialist podiatry

services. These services are currently being reviewed to ensure that they are more consistently delivered across Devon.

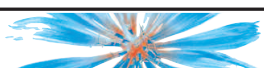
These higher level podiatry services are delivered by professional NHS Podiatrists and are for people who have health difficulties such as diabetes, are at risk of infection or have compromised health problems.

The foot care services that will be set up through the My Life, My Choice project will offer straight forward foot care and toe nail cutting, which the older people of Devon have told us they need.

The third option is for people to use a private podiatrist which are available in most areas.

Who will carry out the My Life My Choice toe nail cutting?

Specially trained volunteers will carry out the toe nail cutting. To support the development and monitoring of high quality training of volunteers we have recruited four Podiatrists who will each work one day week during the first year. They will work collaboratively with voluntary agencies, older people and other appropriate health and social services personnel and be an important focal point for





general public information about the service. The volunteers will also hand on cases they see, that might need more complex foot care services.

How often will I need to get my toe nails cut?

Most peoples nails grow more slowly as their age increases. Generally once every 8 weeks is usually enough.

What about infection control?

Infection control is very important. People using the toe nail cutting service will have their own kit and case that they will take home and clean and bring back with them on their next appointment. With the pack will be instructions on how to clean the instruments properly and how to carry them around safely. All users will be given their first pack which should last for five years if looked after properly. If a user needs another pack it will cost about £13.00.

What will happen in the future?

We believe that the schemes will be very strongly supported by local people and we are sure they will prevent many older people's feet deteriorating and leading to more serious and complex problems. We hope that this evidence will ensure that the schemes continue to be supported after April 2009 and will make it essential to set up more schemes. Our plan is all the schemes we set up are sustainable in the longer term.

When and where will the new services be available?

Our first two schemes will be up and running soon in Exeter and Mid Devon. We are looking for further voluntary sector

organisations across Devon to set up schemes in East Devon, West Devon and North Devon.

● **Exeter:**

Estuary League of Friends -

will be providing the foot care services in Exeter. They cover the areas of Topsham, Countess Wear, Clyst St Mary, Clyst St George, Ebford and Exton. They are looking at offering the scheme at 7 venues across Exeter and hope to do home visits to offer the service. This scheme will be offering hand nail cutting as well as toe nail cutting.

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● **Mid Devon:**

Mid Devon Healthy Living Community -

will be providing the foot care services in the Mid Devon area, stretching from Crediton to the Blackdown Hills.

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Further Information

If you know of a voluntary organisation that may be interested in setting up a scheme or if you would like further information on the new foot care services please contact:

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