What is an Achilles tenotomy?
This is a small surgical procedure performed as part of the Ponseti method after the weekly casts. The tendon at the back of the heel is surgically cut to bring the ankle up.

Why is it done?
To lengthen the Achilles tendon (heel tendon) - allowing the ankle to flex up. This allows the heel to be placed flat on the floor.

When is it done?
The procedure is performed on children with clubfoot deformity that have been treated by the Ponseti method. It is usually performed after approximately 6 – 8 weeks of serial plaster casts. The consultant will advise when your child’s feet are ready for this stage of the Ponseti programme.

How is it done?
The surgical procedure is performed under a local anaesthetic. You will be asked to bring your child to clinic at an appointed time. Ametop cream (a local anaesthetic), will be applied the heel’s where the procedure is to be performed. The local anaesthetic takes at least half an hour to work and then Julia or Liz (nurse practitioners) will take your child to the treatment room.

For reasons of infection control, parents are not allowed to accompany their baby. The tenotomy is performed by the consultant and plaster is applied from the toes to the groin, as before. The cut tendon heals in its new stretched position.

The procedure takes approximately 15 – 20 minutes.

If your child is bottle fed it is useful if you can provide a feed to be given during the procedure. Or if breast-fed, it is helpful if they are fed as near to the procedure time as possible. As with the plastering this helps to keep your baby calm. A spare nappy is also useful.

What next?
The plaster/s will stay on for 3-4 weeks. We will then see you and your child in clinic, remove the plasters and commence with the boots and bar.