GUIDELINES FOR WOUND PHOTOGRAPHY

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1. INTRODUCTION

Wound assessment is an important process that allows clinicians, patients and carers to monitor the stages of healing, detect the presence of complications and assess the effectiveness of treatment.

These observations of the wound can then form the basis for clinical decisions including the selection of a suitable wound care regime.

Digital photographs are an important component of effective wound management. Digital photography in wound management adds objective visual confirmation to the written record. These guidelines have been prepared to ensure best practice and standardisation of digital wound photography across the Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

Clinical photography of patients’ wounds is useful in providing an objective assessment of wound healing. Appropriate choice of equipment and technique will aid standardisation, which is the key to successful wound documentation (IMI 2007).

Photographs still remain the principal and favoured assessment tool of those specialising in wound care. (Hampton and Collins 2004). However photography alone is insufficient as a wound assessment tool.

2. DEFINITIONS

NHFT  Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Wound. A wound is a breakdown in the protective function of the skin; the loss of continuity of epithelium, with or without loss of underlying connective tissue (i.e. muscle, bone, nerves) following injury to the skin or underlying tissues/ organs caused by surgery, a blow, a cut, chemicals, heat/ cold, friction/ shear force, pressure or as a result of disease, such as leg ulcers or carcinomas. (Leaper and Harding 1998)

Digital device. A digital device with a camera will record and store photographic images in digital form. These stored images can be uploaded to a computer or shared electronically across the secure NHS network.
3. GUIDELINE PROCESS

3.1. Assessment
Patients with wounds will have an initial and on-going assessment of their wound using an appropriate wound assessment tool. This assessment should be supported by photography. Minor wounds and grazes do not necessarily need photographing unless there are complications. All grade 2, 3 & 4 pressure ulcers should be photographed. Photographs will be taken on initial assessment or as soon as possible if the digital device is not available on the day.

The wound should be re-photographed:
- If there are any significant changes or concerns regarding the wound
- To show the patient their wound in order to promote compliance with treatment
- For evidence when there are safeguarding issues.

3.2. Risk Management
Clinical staff will not use their own photographic equipment to take photographs of patients

Only trust approved devices can be used for taking photographs. All trust approved devices and new processes must be privacy impact assessed by the Information Governance Team.

Precautions are required to reduce risk of cross infection caused by using digital devices in multiple care settings (Refer to ICPg006 Infection Control Policy Guidance 2011)

Digital photographs will not be used for any other purpose other than the monitoring of patients wounds without written consent from the patient.

All photographic equipment will be stored securely at all times when not in use or transit.

Digital devices will not be stored within community staff vehicles when not on duty.

Patient’s confidentiality will not be compromised. Identity will be protected at all times.

3.3. Consent
This section should be read in conjunction with the Government Reference Guide to consent for examination and treatment (2nd edition) as follows: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reference-guide-to-consent-for-examination-or-treatment-second-edition
The healthcare professional is responsible for ensuring the patient has given informed consent before any photography takes place. This consent will be documented in the patient’s clinical record.

Photographs will not be used for any purpose other than health records without the express verbal consent of the patient. The one exception to this principle is in relation to photographic and video recordings, made for treating or assessing a service user and from which there is no possibility that the service user might be recognised, that may be used within the clinical setting for education or research purposes without express consent from the service user, as long as this policy is well publicised. However, express consent must be sought for any form of publication.

If patient refuses or is unable to give consent advice will be obtained in the link above.

The Trust is obliged to ensure that alternative and appropriate means of gaining consent are established, for example with the use of an interpreter or written evidence where a service user or patient has an additional need based on their protected characteristics.

3.4. Equipment
Each clinician will have access to a digital device which can take photographs.

All digital devices will be owned by NHFT.

All equipment will be purchased, stored and maintained in accordance with CLP009 NHFT Medical Devices Management Policy (2012).

3.5. Taking Photographs
Ensure the digital device is pre-set to record the date and time picture is taken (if this function is available).

Patient consent will be obtained before taking the photograph and this will be recorded in the patients’ notes.

Care will be taken to protect patient identity by ensuring that faces or any other obvious features are obscured.

Patient dignity and modesty will be protected by ensuring minimum patient skin exposure. Genitalia will be covered to preserve dignity. If damage is around or on genitalia and safeguarding is a concern, clinical judgement will be used.

The wound and surrounding skin (in particular the perineum) will be cleansed if indicated prior to the photograph being taken.
Follow up photographs will be taken with the patient in a similar position to previous photographs.

Follow up photographs will be taken from similar angle and distance so that photos can be compared objectively.

Visual measurement scale will be used in each photograph. This will be placed next to the wound. Paper sterile ruler supplied in dressing pack will be used for this purpose. The patient’s identification initials can be added to the sterile ruler.

Clinician will ensure gloves are removed and hand washing undertaken between dealing with the patient/wound and using the digital device.

3.6. Storage of Photographs

This section should be read in conjunction with NHFT IGP 004 Confidentiality, Data Protection and Information Sharing Policy and IGP 107 Health Records Management Policy.

All Trust staff will be professionally accountable for the correct storage of all images that they have taken. They will be responsible for erasing images from the device immediately after use.

Photographs will be stored in the patients’ main clinical record. This will be the Electronic Patient Record whenever possible. The photograph will be uploaded at the earliest opportunity. Photos should be deleted from the camera device as soon possible after the picture has been added to the clinical record.

The photograph will be stored within the patient’s clinical record in the appropriate folder e.g. On SystmOne records add the photograph as an attachment in the communication folder (See Appendix 1).

Photographs must not be stored on laptops or computers.

No other record of the photograph will be retained unless there is a specific intention to use the photograph for educational purposes as stated in section 6.3.

3.6.1. Paper Records (only to be used if electronic system not available)

The photograph will be printed in colour as soon as possible.

The patient’s name, date of birth and NHS number will need to be recorded on the photograph.
The photograph will be deleted from the device immediately after printing.

The photograph will be stored and be secured within the patients notes. This should be done as soon as possible to prevent loss, unauthorised viewing or damage.

No other record of the photograph will be retained.

4. MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT

The table below outlines the Trusts’ monitoring arrangements for this document. The Trust reserves the right to commission additional work or change the monitoring arrangements to meet organisational needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of compliance or effectiveness being monitored</th>
<th>Method of monitoring</th>
<th>Individual responsible for the monitoring</th>
<th>Monitoring frequency</th>
<th>Group or committee who receive the findings or report</th>
<th>Group or committee or individual responsible for completing any actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with this guideline including:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Timeliness of photographs</td>
<td>Monitored as part of Pressure Ulcer Prevention Audit</td>
<td>Service Managers/ Operational Managers/ Team Leads</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>Infection Prevention &amp; Control Assurance Group</td>
<td>Service Managers/ Operational Managers/ Team Leads Pressure Ulcer Prevention Lead Nurse</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Completion of risk assessments</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consent</td>
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Where a lack of compliance is found, the identified group, committee or individual will identify required actions, allocate responsible leads, target completion dates and ensure an assurance report is represented showing how any gaps have been addressed.

5. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Permission was sought from NHS Citi Health Nottingham to adapt their existing guidelines for photographing wounds.
APPENDIX 1: ATTACHING PHOTOGRAPHS FROM AN IPHONE OR CAMERA INTO SYSTMONE

When photos are taken using the iPhone, they should be emailed (using the iPhone) to the clinicians own email address. Once the photo has been successfully emailed, it should always be deleted from the device (iPhone).

The next stage is to upload the photograph to the patients SystmOne record. In order to do this, the photo would need to be saved to their computer in readiness for uploading in to the patient record.

If you are using a camera, the photo should be saved to the computer prior to uploading to SystmOne.

When connecting a camera to the PC for the first time the PC should automatically download the software required. However each camera is different and operating systems on PC’s in the Trust can vary. If you experience any problems with this contact IT service desk.

Once the photo has been entered in to the patient record, it should be deleted from the computer.

The topics covered in this appendix are as follows:

- Taking a Photo on the iPhone
- Retrieving Photos to be Uploaded to SystmOne
- Attaching Files to SystmOne
- Deleting Photos from the iPhone
- Deleting Files from the Computer
# Taking a Photo on the iPhone

When you are ready to take the photo, you need to be aware of a few points including only taking the picture of the wound and not the whole patient and ensure you try to avoid capturing any surroundings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
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</table>
| 1 | From the iPhone Home screen  
   - Touch 📷 to open the Camera Application |
| 2 | From the Camera Application screen  
   - Touch the white circular button at the bottom of the screen to take the photo  
   - Touch the picture that appears on the bottom left corner to review it  
   - Press the Home button on the phone to return to the main screen |
| 3 | From the iPhone Home screen  
   - Touch 📷 to open the Photos screen |

You can also use the ‘Up Volume’ button on the side of the camera as an alternative way of taking the photo.
4. From the Photos screen
   - Touch to select
   - Touch the photo(s) that need to be sent via email
   - Touch to mark the photo with a
   - Touch

5. From the Photo screen
   - Touch to open the Mail screen

6. From the Mail screen
   - Enter the email address of where you are sending the photo
   - Enter a subject heading e.g. Date of visit and Patient initials
   - Touch Send

   This will bring up a screen giving you the option of choosing a size to send the photo.
From the Message screen
- Touch **Medium**
  
  *This will send the photo to the chosen email address.*

Additional Information
- Only send one email per patient. DO NOT combine photos from different patients as there would be a risk that the wrong photo is attributed to the wrong patient.

**Retrieving the Photos to be Uploaded to SystmOne**

When you have returned to your desk or you have received pictures that need to be added to the patient record, the pictures need to be saved to a location on the computer or network before they can be uploaded to SystmOne. For ease of use, it would be best to create a separate folder for the photos so there is only one location to consider. For the purposes of this process, we shall call our folder “Photos for SystmOne” and locate it on the computer desktop (although you may have an alternate name and/or location which will work just as well). If you have already got a folder in place, please go to step 1.

**Creating the Folder**

1. From the Computer Desktop
   - Right click away from any icons
   - Select
   - Click

2. From the New Folder Icon
   - Enter the name “Photos for SystmOne”
   - Press on your keyboard

**Moving the Picture to the Folder**
From the email containing the picture

3. Right click on the attachment
4. Select

From the Save Attachment screen
5. Locate the Folder to save the photos to
6. Enter the name of the photo including a description and patient ID details e.g. ED Left leg wound
7. Click

The photo is now ready to be attached to the SystmOne patient record. Please see Attaching Files for further details. Once attached to SystmOne, the photos must be deleted from the folder. Please see Deleting Files from the Computer for further details.

Additional Information
- If your email has multiple photos, you could use the right click option to save all the attachments at once. However, you will only have the option to save the files to the folder keeping the original name e.g. IMG_0164. This would then need to be renamed to reflect the photograph details.
**Attaching Files to SystmOne**

In addition to scanning documents into SystmOne, you can also attach files saved on the network. These files can be anything from Word documents to pictures to emails. It is essential to ensure that any file that is to be attached is saved as a file in a secure location prior to starting this process and that all appropriate Information Governance policies are upheld.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| 1. | From the Patient’s Record screen  
- Right Click Record Attachments  
- Click Attach File |
| 2. | From the Select File screen  
- Locate the file to be attached to the patient record  
- Click Select |
| 3. | From the New Attachment screen  
- Confirm the file name is correct  
- Click Add Files if you wish to add any extra files  
- Add any comments if appropriate  
- Click |
| 4. | The record will now show the details of the attachment on the right hand side |
From the Patient Record screen
- Click on the Save icon at the top of the screen

*See Saving the Patient Record for further details*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- To view the attached file, right click on the file and select <strong>View in Windows</strong> from the drop down box.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Deleting Photos from the iPhone

Once the photos have been emailed from your iPhone, they need to be deleted permanently which is done in two steps in the same way you would use the Deleted Items folder on your computer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | From the iPhone Home screen  
- Touch 🎨 to open the Photos screen |
| 2    | From the Photos screen  
- Touch Select  
- Touch on the photo(s) that need to be deleted  
This will mark the photo with a 📫  
- Touch 🗑 |
| 3    | From the Message screen  
- Touch Delete Photo |
| 4    | From the Photos screen  
- Touch 📚  
- Touch Recently Deleted |
5 From the Recently Deleted screen

- Touch the picture that needs to be removed
- Touch Delete

If you have selected more than one picture to delete, touch “Delete All”.

When the picture(s) have been deleted, you will see a message showing “No Photos or Videos” to confirm that the deletion has been completed.

Additional Information

- If you have only deleted the selected pictures (steps 1 - 3), they will remain on the phone for 30 days or until you permanently delete them.
Deleting Files from the Computer

If you have downloaded files to the computer for uploading to SystmOne, it is ESSENTIAL that the original file is deleted from the computer to maintain confidentiality and comply with relevant Information Governance policies. If the original file was saved from an email, the email would need to be deleted as well. Either way, you would need to delete the original and permanently remove it from the appropriate recycle bin.

### Deleting the file from the Computer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | From the Location where the file is located  
      - Click the file(s) to be deleted  
      - Press on your keyboard |
| 2    | From the Delete File screen  
      - Click Yes  
      This will delete the file from the folder but will place it in the Recycle Bin where it can still be accessed.  
      Repeat steps 1 and 2 to the file in the Recycle Bin to permanently delete the file from the Computer. |

### Deleting the file from the Outlook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3    | From the Inbox  
      - Click the email to be deleted  
      - Press on your keyboard  
      This will put the email into the Deleted Items folder where it can still be accessed |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4    | From the Outlook screen  
   - Right click Deleted Items  
   - Click Empty Folder |
| 5    | From the Microsoft Outlook screen  
   - Click Yes |

**Additional Information**
- It is vitally important that when deleting information from the computers, both steps, whether relating to emails or individual files, are completed. If both steps aren't completed, the files and/or emails could remain on the computers.