Commissioning Policy

Tattoo Removal

Prior Approval

Date Adopted: 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2019
Version: 1819.2.00
### Document Control

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>IFR Manager</td>
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### Version control

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<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reviewer</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1819.1.00</td>
<td>01/06/2018</td>
<td>IFR Manager</td>
<td>Revised to clarify that only the affected area of the tattoo will be removed NOT the whole tattoo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1819.1.00</td>
<td>25/06/2018</td>
<td>IFR Coordinator</td>
<td>Amendment made to clarify criterion – two episodes of infection.</td>
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<td>DRAFTv4</td>
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<td>01/10/2018</td>
<td>IFR Coordinator</td>
<td>Smoking and BMI references updated following Sept CPRG and PALS info updated</td>
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TREATMENT UNDER THIS POLICY REQUIRES PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE ICB’S EXCEPTIONAL FUNDING TEAM

THIS POLICY RELATES TO ALL PATIENTS

Tattoo Removal

General Principles

Funding approval will only be given in line with these general principles. Where patients are unable to meet these principles in addition to the specific treatment criteria set out in this policy, funding approval will not be given.

1. The ICB does not commission surgery for cosmetic purposes alone (Cosmetic Surgery NHS Choices).

2. Funding approval must be secured by the patient’s treating clinician prior to referring patients for surgical opinions. Referring patients to secondary care without funding approval having been secured not only incurs significant costs in out-patient appointments for patients that may not qualify for surgery, but inappropriately raises the patient’s expectation of treatment.

3. On limited occasions, the ICB may approve funding for an assessment only in order to confirm or obtain evidence demonstrating whether a patient meets the criteria for funding. In such cases, patients should be made aware that the assessment does not mean that they will be provided with surgery and surgery will only be provided where it can be demonstrated that the patient meets the criteria to access treatment in this policy.

4. Funding approval will only be given where there is evidence that the treatment requested is effective and the patient has the potential to benefit from the proposed treatment. Where it is demonstrated that patients have previously been provided with the treatment with limited or diminishing benefit, funding approval is unlikely to be agreed.

5. Patients with an elevated BMI of 30 or more may experience more post-surgical complications including post-surgical wound infection so should be encouraged to lose weight further prior to seeking surgery.

6. Patients who are smokers should be referred to smoking cessation services in order to reduce the risk of surgery and improve healing. (ASH, 2016)

7. In applying this policy, all clinicians and those involved in making decisions affecting patient care will pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, etc., and will advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. In
particular, due regard will be paid in relation to the following characteristics protected by
the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage or civil
partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Background/Purpose and Scope

A tattoo is a mark made by inserting pigment, through a tiny needle, into the skin. People
choose to be tattooed for various cosmetic, social or religious reasons. It carries certain health
risks and can result in an allergic reaction.

Tattoos are intended as permanent, so removing them is difficult. Complete removal is not
always possible. Tattoos can be removed by laser, surgical excision or dermabrasion. When
using laser, single colour black or red tattoos usually respond well to laser treatment. Other
colours do not usually respond as well.

Laser treatment is an effective way to break up the ink, thereby allowing it to be absorbed and
discarded by your body. This is considered safe and harmless. There are also many brands
of skin cover-up available which can be used to cover up and conceal tattoos. (Tattoo
Removal - NHS Choices)

Changing Faces

Alternative services are provided in the community by charitable organisations such as that
provided by Changing Faces at local clinics in Bristol and Taunton as well as other centres
close to the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) area. Changing
Faces supports people who have any condition or injury that affects their appearance by giving
advice on camouflage products. Patients from the BNSSG area can self-refer themselves to
the service to seek an appointment which would be funded by the NHS.

Further information, including details of the services offered, clinic locations and how to make
an appointment, are available on their website at: https://www.changingfaces.org.uk/Home

Patients can also self-fund support at North Bristol Trust as an alternative to accessing
treatment from Changing Faces.
POLICY CRITERIA – COMMISSIONED

PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED

Requests for the removal of tattoos may be considered if the following can be clinically evidenced:

- Where the dye has caused a significant allergic reaction resulting in skin changes and/or two or more episodes of infection

AND

- All alternative treatments to manage the allergic reaction and/or recurrent infections have failed.

A copy of the patient’s clinical records should be supplied to evidence these criteria.

Exclusions:

Funding will not be approved where a patient is looking for tattoo removal due to cosmetic concerns.

Important information:

Funding approval will only be given to treat the areas of the tattoo with an intractable significant allergic reaction.

Complete tattoo removal to provide an improved cosmetic outcome is NOT funded.

Patients who are not eligible for treatment under this policy may be considered on an individual basis where their GP or consultant believes exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the rule of this policy.

Individual cases will be reviewed at the ICB’s Individual Funding Panel upon receipt of a completed application form from the patient’s GP, Consultant or Clinician. Applications cannot be considered from patients personally.

If you would like further copies of this policy or need it in another format, such as Braille or another language, please contact the Customer Services Team on: 0117 900 2655 or 0800 073 0907 or email them on BNSSG.customerservice@nhs.net
Connected Policies

- Cosmetic Surgery or Treatment
- Skin Camouflage Services

This policy has been developed with the aid of the following references:

Bibliography


OPCS Procedure codes – For completion at a later date

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