

Tattoo Removal Policy

Prior Approval

Before consideration of referral for management in secondary care, please review advice on the Remedy website (www.remedy.bnssg.icb.nhs.uk/) or consider use of advice and guidance services where available

Tattoo Removal

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.

For more guidance please see <https://remedy.bnssg.icb.nhs.uk>

Notes:

1. Funding will not be approved where a patient is looking for tattoo removal due to cosmetic concerns.
2. Funding approval will only be given to treat the areas of the tattoo with an intractable significant allergic reaction.
3. Complete tattoo removal to provide an improved cosmetic outcome is NOT funded.

BRAN

For any health- related decision, it is important to consider “BRAN” which stands for:

- **B**enefits
- **R**isks
- **A**lternatives
- **D**o **N**othing

Benefits

- Removal of infection, with associated risks alleviated.

Risks

- Some colours not completely fading – yellow, green and purple ink requires more sessions to fade than black, blue and red.
- A small chance your skin may become temporarily darker or paler than the surrounding skin.
- A slight chance of permanent scarring (3 in 100 people develop a scar)

Alternatives

- Over the counter medications: Tylenol and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).
- Antihistamine medications: Benadryl, for instance, can reduce symptoms of a minor allergic reaction, such as small, red bumps or a faint rash around the tattoo site.
- Topical creams: A hypoallergenic, fragrance-free cream can stop the skin from drying out.
- Keeping the site clean by gently washing with soap and water
- Covering the tattoo site with a fresh, sterile gauze or bandage
- Wearing gloves while sleeping to avoid scratching a new tattoo

Do Nothing

Remember, you always have the option to do nothing. Doing nothing is an equally reasonable option to doing something. Sometimes “not yet” is a good enough answer until you gather more information.

Tattoo Removal – Plain Language Summary

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.

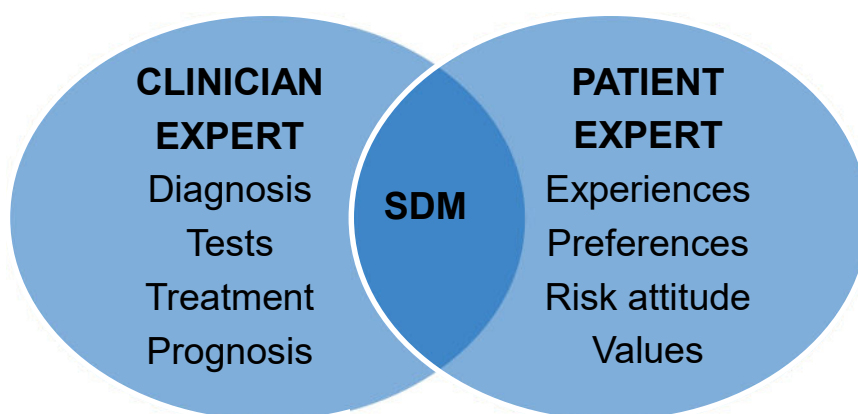
When using laser, single colour black or red tattoos usually respond well to laser treatment. Other colours do not usually respond as well.

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.

Shared Decision Making

If a person fulfils the criteria for Tattoo Removal it is important to have a partnership approach between the person and the clinician.

Shared Decision Making (SDM) is the meeting of minds of two types of experts:



It puts people at the centre of decisions about their own treatment and care and respects what is unique about them. It means that people receiving care and clinicians delivering care can understand what is important to the other person.

The person and their clinician may find it helpful to use 'Ask 3 Questions':

1. What are my options? (see sections above)
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for **me**?
3. How can I make sure that I have made the right decision?

Connected Policies

- Cosmetic Surgery or Treatment
- Skin Camouflage Services

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

1. National Health Service (2019) Health A to Z: Tattoo Removal [online] www.nhs.uk/conditions
2. Mayo Clinic (2022) Cosmetic Surgery (21666541) www.mayoclinic.org

3. Changing Faces (2022) Skin Camouflage Service [online]
www.changingfaces.org.uk

Due regard

In carrying out their functions, the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Commissioning Policy Review Group (CPRG) are committed to having due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This applies to all the activities for which the ICBs are responsible, including policy development and review.

Document Control

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Governance

Commissioning policies are assessed for their likely level of impact on BNSSG ICB and the population for which it is responsible. This determines the appropriate level of sign off. The below described the approval route for each score category.

Policy Category	Approval By
Level 1	Commissioning Policy Review Group.
Level 2	Chief Medical Officer, or Chief Nursing Officer, or System Executive Group Chair
Level 3	ICB Board

OPCS Procedure codes

Must have any of (primary only):

Support

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.