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Types of Surgical Skin Markers Used and Details of Procurement or Clinical Guidance on their Use

I am writing to request information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I am interested in the types and colours of surgical skin markers used within your organisation, and how procurement or clinical guidance decisions are made about their use. Please provide the following information:

1. A list of all surgical skin markers currently used in your organisation for:

- **Pre-operative site marking in theatres.**

Response from Trauma & Orthopaedics Theatres – Musgrave Park Hospital

Not applicable - all pre-operative site marking is done at ward level, as per Local Protocol No: 40 – Attachment 1. Patient is not admitted to theatre without the mark on their limb.

However, some surgeons mark the skin prior to making skin incision (Leonard Lang Surgical Skin Marker – see Question 2 below for details).

Paediatric Service / Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC)

Symmetry or Fannin (see Question 3 below for details) – intimate marking on induction re: non-compliant children

Anesthetics, Critical Care, Theatre, Sterile Services (ACCTSS) & Surgery Directorate

Not applicable - preoperative site marking is done at ward level. Patient is not admitted to theatre without the mark on their limb.

However, some surgeons mark the skin prior to making skin incision; therefore, skin markers are held in department (see Question 2 below for details).

Site markings for emergency patients requiring surgery in theatre can be done in the anaesthetic room. If not totally visible in anaesthetic room, may need remarked or when prepping or when marker is not clearly visible.

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Radiotherapy

The Radiotherapy Department in the Cancer Centre Belfast use permanent skin marks, these are very small tattoo dots placed on the skin to help the treatment team to position patients accurately for each treatment.

These tiny marks act as fixed reference points so that radiotherapy can be targeted at the same spot every time, ensuring the treatment is delivered safely and consistently. They are usually the size of a freckle and are a routine part of radiotherapy planning. They are used on all parts of the body for most treatment sites.

Marker pens are also used for clinical mark ups and to highlight the tattoos.

- **Marking the skin for bedside or ward-based procedures (e.g., central venous access, chest drains, skin demarcation, or similar).**

Response from Trauma & Orthopaedics Theatres – Musgrave Park Hospital

Not applicable.

Paediatric Service / Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC)

Leonard Lang surgical skin markers (regular)
Fannin (see Question 3 below for details))

Anesthetics, Critical Care, Theatre, Sterile Services (ACCTSS) & Surgery
Directorate

Not applicable

Radiotherapy

As at Question 1 above.

2. For each marker, please include:

Response from Trauma & Orthopaedics Theatres – Musgrave Park Hospital

- **Brand and product name.**

Leonard Lang Surgical Skin Marker

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- **Ink colour(s)**
Blue
- **Typical clinical area(s) where it is used**
Theatres

Paediatric Service / Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC)

See response in Question 3 below

Anesthetics, Critical Care, Theatre, Sterile Services (ACCTSS) & Surgery
Directorate

- **Brand and product name.**
EASI Mark Surgical Skin Marker
- **Ink colour(s)**
Gentain Violet
- **Typical clinical area(s) where it is used**
Theatres and Day Procedure Unit (DPU)

Radiotherapy

- **Brand and product name.**
- **Ink colour(s)**
- **Typical clinical area(s) where it is used**

Marker Pens:

Black and blue marker pens
Staedtler Lumocolor Permanent – Universal Pen

The permanent markers are ordered from Banner Online Ordering - UK
provider of contract office supplies – Trust non-stock order

Tattoo Ink:

Black Indian Kandahar Tattoo Ink

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- Ink made by Daler Rowney
- Ink vials packaged and sold by Huddersfield Pharmaceuticals.
- Purchased by BHSCT Pharmacy
(See information leaflet - Attachment 2)

RadSafe Ink (See information sheets – Attachments 3 & 4)

- Black
- Made by Biotec Phocea labs
- Supplied by OSL for use in Radiotherapy
- Purchased via procurement

Finishing touches: Areolar pigment

- Product is primarily for use in health settings
- We have purchased Blush, Cream and Peach for use on patients with darker skin tones
- Company was involved in clinical trial looking at semi-permanent markings in radiotherapy
- Purchased via procurement

3. Copies of any product specifications, catalogues, or procurement documents held by the organisation that describe available colours and intended use.

Response from Trauma & Orthopaedics Theatres – Musgrave Park Hospital

Two Contracted lines - Surgical Skin Markers Fine Tip and Surgical Skin Markers Regular Tip.

The Brands and Product Codes held on Framework are:

Fine Tip Brand and Product Codes: UNI7539C Unisurge, M257/010121 Medplus, SM0372 Skintact, SSM2001/Mediteq, PYNJSM03 Medline, 66.665.01.400 Dahlhausen, 25-F002S/GRI Alleset.

Regular Tip Brand and Product Codes: UNI753B Unisurge, UN65/Romsons, M256/010111 Medplus, SM0572 Skintact, 2710 BD, SSM3001 / Mediteq, DYNJSM01 Medline, 25-S002-S/GR1 Alleset.

Fine Tip Surgical Skin Marker Specification: Surgical Skin Marker
Fine Tip
Violet
Low Smell
Non-toxic
Non-tattooing ink for all skin types
Individually packed

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Single Use

Sterile to come with separate 15cm ruler

Suppliers or double-ended marker – you will need to apply for both Fine Tip and

Regular Lots if you wish to be considered and evaluated for both Lots

Packaging must include - Sterile, Single Use, Product Code, Lot No, Expiry date
and Conformity Assessment Marking

Regular Tip Surgical Skin Marker Specification: Surgical Skin Makers

Regular Tip

Violet

Low smell

Non-toxic

Non-tattooing ink for all skin types

Individually packed

Single Use

Sterile to come with separate 15cm approx. ruler

Suppliers of double-ended marker – you will need to apply for both Fine Tip and
Regular Lots if you wish to be considered and evaluated for both Lots

Packaging must include - Sterile, Single Use, Product Code, Lot No, Expiry date
and Conformity Assessment Marking

Paediatric Service / Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC)

Brand:	Leonard Lang
Product Code:	FBU000109 SMO572
Ink/colour:	Violet
Typical clinical area used:	Bedside/wards
Supplier:	

Product specifications

- Individually packed
- Sterile
- Single Use
- Non-Toxic Gentian Violet Ink
- Latex free
- Fine/ Regular tip
- Flexible ruler and labels

Brand:	Fannin
Product Codes/Name:	SM0372 Surgical Skin Marker
Ink Colours:	Violet
Typical clinical areas used:	Wards
Supplier:	Fannin Healthcare NI Ltd

Product specifications:

- Individually packed
- Sterile

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- Single Use
- Non-Toxic Gentian Violet Ink
- Latex free
- Fine/ Regular tip
- Flexible ruler & labels

Brand:	Symmetry
Product Codes/Name:	43-1032 Micro Skin Marker
Ink Colours:	Violet Ink
Typical clinical areas used:	Theatre
Supplier:	Lynch Medical Supplies

Product specifications:

- Individually packed
- Sterile
- Single Use
- Packaged with a flexible, plastic ruler
- Standard tip or micro tips
- Non-toxic, skin-friendly ink

Anesthetics, Critical Care, Theatre, Sterile Services (ACCTSS) & Surgery
Directorate

The full specification, including details of colour and intended use were published as part of the tender documentation for CfT 4526698 accessed through the Department of Finance eTendersNI – see relevant information in Attachment 5 (BSO Medical and Surgical Sundries)

Radiotherapy

See attachments 2, 3 and 4

4. Copies of any current Organisational policies, protocols, guidelines, or training materials that:

- **Refer to the choice of surgical skin marker colour.**
- **Refer to visibility of markings in different clinical contexts or patient groups.**
- **Address this issue within equality, diversity and inclusion, patient safety, or clinical governance documents.**

Medical Director's Office/Risk and Governance Division

The Belfast Trust "Correct Patient, Correct Procedure and Correct Site" Policy, which is currently undergoing internal review, describes the Trust process for preoperative skin marking. This policy states the requirement for the skin to be marked in permanent black marker - see Attachment 6.

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Response from Trauma & Orthopaedics Theatres – Musgrave Park Hospital

Not applicable - no specific policy, as this is part of normal surgical practice.

Paediatric Service / Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC)

Part of normal surgical perioperative practice - no specific policy. Site marked documented via Epic

Anesthetics, Critical Care, Theatre, Sterile Services (ACCTSS) & Surgery Directorate

No specific policy held.

Radiotherapy

See Attachments 7, 8, 9 and 10

- 5. Information on whether any additional or alternative marker colours (beyond standard ones) are available within the organisation (e.g., for use in clinical areas or patient groups where standard markings may be less visible).**

Response from Trauma & Orthopaedics Theatres – Musgrave Park Hospital

Not applicable

Paediatric Service / Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC)

Not applicable

Anesthetics, Critical Care, Theatre, Sterile Services (ACCTSS) & Surgery Directorate

The full specification, including details of colour and intended use were published as part of the tender documentation for Cft 4526698 accessed through the Department of Finance eTendersNI – see relevant information in Attachment 5

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Radiotherapy

As above:

Finishing touches: Areolar pigment

- Product is primarily for use in health settings.
- We have purchased Blush, Cream and Peach – for use on patients with darker skin tones.
- Company was involved in clinical trial looking at semi-permanent markings in radiotherapy
- Purchased via procurement

6. Anonymised, aggregated incident reports, risk assessments, or patient safety reports (1 January 2019 to present) where visibility of skin markings was identified as a contributory factor, (No patient-identifiable information is requested.)

Medical Director's Office/Risk and Governance Division

The Belfast Trust electronic management system for incident information, Datix, is currently not configured to capture contributory factors such as visibility of skin markings. Therefore, we are unable to provide the data requested.

Anesthetics, Critical Care, Theatre, Sterile Services (ACCTSS) & Surgery Directorate

Not applicable

Radiotherapy

See Attachments 11 and 12