



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

Policy for the Use of Patient / Client Identification Band

July 2008

Policy Title: **Policy for the Use of Patient /
Client Identification Band**

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Responsible Officer: **Assistant Director of Nursing
for Governance, Quality &
Performance**

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Introduction & Rationale

The Western Health and Social Care Trust advocates the use of a patient identification (ID) band for the identification of patients although there are exceptions (see page 6 of policy).

Over the 12-month period February 2006 to January 2007, the NPSA received 24,382 reports of Patients being mismatched to their care. It is estimated that more than 2,900 of these Patient identification incidents related to ID bands and their use.

Standardising the design of Patient ID bands, the information on them, and the processes used to produce and check them, will improve Patient safety.

This policy directs staff in the use of a uniform patient identity band for all patients in all healthcare settings across the Trust in compliance with Medicine Governance and National Patient Safety Agency (2004); Use and Control of Medicines, DOH, (1004); Guidelines for the Administration of Medicine (2004), Guidance for Record and Record Keeping NMC, (2005).

Aim

To reduce the likelihood of risk of misidentification that could lead to a patient/client receiving the wrong treatment.

Scope

This policy is relevant for all staff caring for patients in any Western Health and Social Care Trust in patient facilities. Within this document the word 'patient' is used also to denote 'client.'

Policy Statement

- All patients receiving treatment within any healthcare setting (including outpatients, treatment facilities, i.e. Sperrin Room) in the Western Health and Social Care Trust, must have attached on their persons, a verified 'Trust Patient Identification Band' that is used to validate the correct identity of the patient before the provision of any treatment or care. This ID band must be worn throughout the patient's hospital stay.
- The Patients Identity Band must contain the patient's:
 - Identification number
 - Surname
 - First name
 - Gender
 - Date of Birth

- The Nurse should where possible prior to applying the ID band, verify the details with the patient or if this is not possible with the patient 's family or relatives
- Members of staff must clearly identify the Patient using the ID band and if possible verifying with the Patient before any treatment or care can be carried out.
- Any staff member that discovers a Patient that does not have an ID band or finds that the details are not legible has to assume responsibility for correctly identifying them and applying an ID band before treatment or care can be given.
- A verified 'Trust Patient Identification Band' must be sourced from central supplies WHSCT and must be identical for use with patients in all settings across the Trust.
- These procedures will be audited on a regular basis in compliance with the Trust risk management and governance arrangements.

Specialist Area

In specialist areas e.g. maternity services it is necessary for armbands to be applied to both mother and baby, the following process must be followed:

- The patient ID band must be applied to the mother as per the instructions above and following the practice included within this document
- An ID band must be applied to the baby, which includes information relating to the mother's details including the mother's hospital number as soon as possible after birth
- A second ID band must be applied to the baby with the baby's own hospital number and including date and time of birth as soon as possible after birth
- These ID bands must remain on both the mother and baby until discharge from hospital
- If in any circumstances there are concerns about the identity of a mother and/or baby then an investigation must be initiated immediately, concerns must be reported and an untoward incident must be completed

Exceptions

In certain clinical settings, it is not always appropriate to use ID bands – i.e. Dermatology where there is a heightened risk of allergy and in long-term facilities, which are seen as 'home' for the Patient.

In these cases, alternative means of identification must be sought, i.e. photograph ID. Consideration should be given to a yearly renewal of photograph ID.

In circumstances whereby the use of an ID band may pose a risk to the patient e.g certain patients with learning disabilities or severe physical disabilities then alternative means of identification i.e photographic ID must be used.

References

Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety (1004) Use and Control of Medicines. Guidelines for Safe Prescribing. Administration. Handling, storage and custody of medicinal products in the Health and Personal Social Services. DOHSSPS Belfast.

Guidelines for the Administration of Medicine (2004), Guidance for Record and Record Keeping NMC, (2005).

National Patient Safety Agency. Medicine Governance. Northern Ireland.
www.npsa.gov.uk

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2005) Guidelines for Records and Record Keeping Nursing and Midwifery Council. London. www.nmc.uk.org