



**Tower Hamlets**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

# **Dermatology Advice and Guidance with a Photo**

A Guide for GP's in Tower Hamlets

# Introduction

- The Barts Health dermatology service at the Royal London have opened up Advice and Guidance with a photo to GP practices in Tower Hamlets. Practices in Tower Hamlets are incentivised to use this pathway via the NIS.
- Advice and Guidance (A&G) is a function in ERS which enables GP's to contact consultants for advice. The consultants respond back to the GP with either advice on how to manage the patient or a recommendation for the GP to refer the patient for an outpatient appointment.
- The benefits of this pathway include reduced waiting times for patients with less complex skin conditions to receive a treatment plan, improved communication and learning between primary and secondary care, high quality advice from consultant dermatologists in a timely manner that supports GP learning and patient self-care.
- This guide provides information on the process, inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as tips on how to take and send photos via Advice and Guidance efficiently.

# Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- All A&G requests **must include a photo or they will be rejected** to enable the consultants to make a diagnosis and suggest a treatment plan. Patients should be encouraged to take and submit their own photos to the practice.
- A&G should be used as the first option for patients who meet the inclusion criteria below rather than making an automatic referral.
- The dermatology service will aim to respond to all A&G requests within 5 working days.

INCLUSIONS	EXCLUSIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients aged 16 and over</li> <li>• Inflammatory skin disease (acne, eczema, psoriasis) unresponsive to GP treatment</li> <li>• Premalignant skin lesions such as solar keratosis or Bowen's disease</li> <li>• Low risk BCCs on trunks and limbs in line with NICE guidance</li> <li>• Diagnosis, investigation and management of other chronic rashes in adults</li> <li>• Diagnosis, investigation and management of mild-moderate dermatoses and skin lesions</li> <li>• Conditions of hair, scalp, and nails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients who are under 16 years of age</li> <li>• Any lesions where there is any suspicion of skin cancer</li> <li>• Lesions suspicious of melanoma</li> <li>• Lesions suspicious of Squamous cell carcinoma (SCC)</li> <li>• Suspicious skin lesions falling under the 2WW pathway</li> <li>• Dermatological emergencies e.g. Exfoliative Dermatitis or blistering skin disorders</li> <li>• Patients already under the ongoing care of a secondary care dermatologist e.g. taking immunosuppressive drugs</li> <li>• A suspicious change in a mole or melanocytic lesion</li> <li>• Lesions that are on parts of the body where it would be deemed inappropriate to take images (unless the patient provides consent).</li> </ul>

# Information to Include in the A&G Request

**The following patient demographic data should be included in the A&G request (this should be auto-populated by the template):**

- Date of birth
- Gender
- Ethnic group
- Address and contact telephone number

## **Additional information to include in the A&G referral**

- Date of onset/duration
- Whether single or multiple
- Location/s on body
- Changes in size, shape, colour
- Any bleeding and/or ulceration
- Symptoms
- Any personal and/or family history of skin cancers
- Other risk factors, i.e.- excessive sun exposure, fair skin, large number of naevi, immunosuppression, outdoor occupation etc.
- Repeat and recent medications
- Other medical conditions

# Image size and format

- Cameras used to capture images should be a minimum of 3 megapixels
- We suggest that photos are sent as JPEG images – these are suitable quality for viewing and appropriately sized
- The maximum combined size for attachments on e-RS is 5MB
- Further information can be found in the British Association of Dermatologists Quality Standards for Teledermatology - <https://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?itemtype=document&id=794>

# Consent

- Patients should be given the Teledermatology Patient Information Form before the referral is made.
- Patients will need to give consent for their images to be used. This can be given verbally, and should be indicated on the referral form.
- To continue to develop resources for audit, education and training, GPs should advise patients that their photos may be used for these purposes. If patients do not wish for their photos to be used in this way, they should inform their GP, and this should be indicated on the referral form.

# Advice and Guidance Screenshots

- For the Referral to be made in eRS – the Request Type must be “**Advice**” and the speciality to select should be “**Dermatology**” – the clinic type can be selected as “**Not Otherwise Specified**”

The screenshot shows a search form titled "Search By". It includes a "Request Type" dropdown menu with "Advice" selected, a "Priority" dropdown menu with "Routine" selected, a "Clinical Term" text input field, a "Specialty" dropdown menu with "Dermatology" selected, a "Clinic Type" dropdown menu with "Not Otherwise Specified" selected, and a "Named Clinician" text input field. Red circles highlight the "Request Type", "Specialty", and "Clinic Type" fields.

The clinic to select is the General Dermatology Clinic at Barts Health NHS Trust:

The screenshot shows a table of search results with 84 results returned. The table has columns for "select", "Miles", "Service Name", and "Indicative Appoint Wait". The first row is circled in red.

select	Miles	Service Name	Indicative Appoint Wait
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	1	General Dermatology - Dermatology (RLH) - Barts Health NHS Trust - R1H	5 Days
<input type="radio"/>	2	St John's Adult Dermatology (Exclusions Apply), Guy's site, Dermatology - St John's - St Thomas - R11	110 Days
<input type="radio"/>	4	Dermatology - Advice Only @ Lewisham Hospital for Lewisham & Greenwich Trust-RJ2	N/A

# Options for Taking and Sending Photos via Advice and Guidance

The process to use this service is as follows:

1. Patient attends with a skin condition that falls within the inclusion criteria
2. GP decides to refer
3. A photo needs to be added to the EMIS record.

There are several ways of taking and sending photos via A&G, each option is listed below.

## **Option A) AccuRx**

Send an AccuRx SMS to the patient (an example template is on the next slide and can be adapted for your practice). This will give the patients the link to a website form, eConsult (see option B below) or an email address to send in their photos.

1. GP will then complete the referral form and task admin to refer via A&G when photos are uploaded.
2. Reception / Admin uploads photos when received to the clinical record and when the referral is complete informs the referring GP via a task.

# Options for Taking and Sending Photos via Advice and Guidance

**AccuRx Example Template-** the text below can be copied into AccuRx and adapted for your practice.

Dear Miss T.H. Patient,

Following your GP consultation, we would like to get further advice from a skin specialist. Please send us photos of your skin:

- by email to < insert practice email address> OR
- upload via our website <insert practice website URL> OR
- via an e-consult <insert practice e-consult URL>

Follow the link to get some tips on taking useful photos: <https://bit.ly/2vl4Hoz>

Thanks, Dr. Blackwell  
Blackwell Medical Centre

## Option B) eConsult

1. Another option for patients to send in photos is via eConsult. Patients can add photos and a description of their skin issue into eConsult (especially if a remote consultation).
2. The information and photos that patients add to eConsult can then be extracted into a PDF and sent through A&G.

# Options for Taking and Sending Photos via Advice and Guidance

## Option C) Use Practice Camera or iPad

1. Find camera or iPad
2. Gain and record patient consent
3. Take photo
4. Download photo onto desktop or email to self or admin staff
5. Delete from camera or iPad
6. Task admin to complete the referral via A&G

## Option D) GP Smartphone

1. The GP needs to ensure that photos will not be saved to the cloud – consent with patients that it is a personal phone
2. Record that patient gave consent on referral form
3. Email to self or admin via NHSMail
4. GP or admin to upload photos to patient record
5. Delete photos from phone
6. Task admin or secretary to complete the referral via A&G

# Top Tips

## Tips for taking good quality photos

1. Chrisp Street Health Centre put a short guide on their website for patients explaining the process, what to expect and a quick guide on how to take high quality images:  
<https://www.chrispstreet.org/index.php/telederm>
2. The British Association of Dermatology also has a useful guide on taking photos of skin conditions:  
<https://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?itemtype=document&id=794>  
<http://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?itemtype=document&id=5774>

## Time saving tips

1. Split up the steps between staff members- involve secretaries and admin staff where possible to help complete the process.
2. Encourage patients to take and send photos of skin conditions into the practice, this will save practice time.
3. Map out the steps involved for your practice and allocate staff roles.
4. If patients are taking their own photos, ask them to send them in either a small or medium file size in order to make transferring the image easier.
5. Consider doing a QI project to look at ways of saving time and improving the process, involve your practice QI coach who can support with setting up a successful project.

# QI Projects at CSHC and BBB

Chrisp Street Health Centre and Bromley by Bow carried out QI projects in early 2019 to pilot Advice and Guidance with a photo for Dermatology.

Please see below for results and learning from the pilot period.

- All Advice and Guidance requests from Chrisp St. and Bromley by Bow were responded to in **5 working days**.
- The conversion rate was **11** managed in primary care and **2** converted to an emergency appointment
- In most cases apart from one, the photos and history sent by GP's were clear enough to provide guidance on how to manage the patients.
- A&G was particularly useful for inflammatory intermediate care dermatology
- Some cases required immediate investigation, and those patients were able to be seen in the emergency clinic within one week
- The consultant was also able to identify patients eligible for clinical trials and to be involved in Barts research much quicker than normal routes

## GP feedback

- 'The quality of the advice is extremely high. I have received sensible, pragmatic guidance each time'
- 'Please continue to offer your service it is really very helpful, and superior to that provided by DMC'
- 'I feel the quality of advice has been better than we have received before from other services and found the process easy to use.'

## Patient feedback

- 'It was very quick and efficient, I would like to use this option in the future'

## Key learning from QI projects

- Divide up the steps involved between staff members
- Encourage patients to submit their own photos to the practice

# Further Information

Guides to common dermatological issues can be found on the GP website: <https://bit.ly/2HFSpUf>  
These guides include options for treatment as well as information that can be given to patients.

A guide on taking high quality photos can be found here: <https://bit.ly/30zb4J1>

A guide for patients on what to expect and how to take high quality photos can be found here:  
<https://bit.ly/2vI4Hoz>

A referral form that includes patient consent information can be found in Resource Publisher and the GP website.

For any questions please contact Tower Hamlets CCG:

**Email:** [thccg.info@nhs.net](mailto:thccg.info@nhs.net)

**Phone:** 020 3688 2500