

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Reference: | FOI.19596.26 |
| Subject: | Surgical skin markers |
| Date of Request: | 13 February 2026 |

Requested:

1. A list of all surgical skin markers currently used in your organisation for:
 - Pre-operative site marking in theatres.
 - Marking the skin for bedside or ward-based procedures (e.g., central venous access, chest drains, skin demarcation, or similar).
2. For each marker, please include:
 - Brand and product name.
 - Ink colour(s).
 - Typical clinical area(s) where it is used.
3. Copies of any product specifications, catalogues, or procurement documents held by the organisation that describe available colours and intended use.
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.
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).
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.)

Response:

Hywel Dda University Health Board (UHB) does not hold all the information requested for questions 2 and 3 as the contract is managed on an All-Wales basis by the Procurement Services in NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP). We therefore recommend that you contact the Freedom of Information team in NWSSP who may be able to assist you further with the product names for question 2 and the information for question 3. Contact details are as follows:

shared.services@wales.nhs.uk or alternatively in writing to: NWSSP, Information Governance Manager, 4-5 Charnwood Court, Heol Billingsley, Parc Nantgarw, Cardiff, CF15 7QZ.

1. & 2. The UHB provides the information it holds within the table below.

| Description | Brand | Colour | Clinical area |
|--|----------|--------|----------------------|
| Skin marker pen; Broad tip (Box 50) (SM0672) | Skintact | Violet | Emergency Department |
| Skin marker pen; Regular tip (Box 50) (SM0572) | Skintact | Violet | Emergency Department |

| | | | |
|--|----------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Skin marker pen; Regular tip (Box 50) (SM0572) | Skintact | Violet | Sexual Health |
| Skin marker pen; Regular tip (Box 50) (SM0572) | Skintact | Violet | Theatres |
| Skin marker pen; Super fine tip (Box 50) (SM0472) | Skintact | Violet | Pembroke Dock Health Care Centre |
| Surgical skin marker pen - Fine tip with ruler (Pack 50) (SM0372) | Skintact | Violet | Sexual Health |
| Surgical skin marker pen - Fine tip with ruler (Pack 50) (SM0372) | Skintact | Violet | Wards |
| Surgical skin marker pen - Regular tip with ruler (Pack 50) (SM0572) | Skintact | Violet | Same Day Emergency Care |
| Surgical skin marker pen - Regular tip with ruler (Pack 50) (SM0572) | Skintact | Violet | Sexual Health |
| UHS skin markers fine/bold unsmk (Each) (UN65-B) | Dermark | Unknown | Surgical Appliances |
| UHS skin markers fine/bold unsmk (Each) (UN65-B) | Dermark | Unknown | Wards |

3. Not held. Please contact the FOI team in NWSSP on the details provided above.
4. & 5. The UHB confirms that it does not use designated colours for site marking in its theatres, indelible marker pens are used. A copy of the UHB's Policy 1201 - Safety Standards for Invasive Procedures, has been provided at Attachment 1. Details on site marking and the markers used is detailed in Appendix 1:- Procedure for Consent, Procedural Verification and Site Marking.
6. The UHB has no incidents relating to skin markings recorded on its Datix incident reporting and risk management system, during the 2019 to 2025 calendar years and the period 1 January to 31 January 2026.