One of the key ways of improving patient safety in the NHS is to reduce and, where possible, eliminate errors that mismatch patients to their care. In blood transfusion the greatest risk of death or serious morbidity comes from receiving blood intended for another patient. It is therefore imperative that patients are correctly identified.

Photo identification (ID) cards are a method of checking patients’ identity. Patients are issued with a photo ID card that contains all the details that would normally be on a wristband. They are asked to bring this card with them each time they have a blood transfusion; thus replacing the requirement for a wristband.

**Inclusion criteria**

Transfusion-dependent patients can be offered a photo ID card if:

- they have regular blood transfusions (at least once every three months);
- they (or their parent or carer) have given their consent for a photo ID to be issued;
- they (or their parent or carer) understand how the photo ID card system works.

Patients who have been issued with a photo ID card should be reviewed at regular intervals. If a patient no longer meets the inclusion criteria, their card should be withdrawn. If a transfusion is needed after a card has been withdrawn, the trust’s existing policy on blood sampling and administration should be followed.

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Photo identification card system

Does the patient meet the inclusion criteria (see box below)?

- Yes: Invite the patient to participate in the photo ID system and discuss it with them. Does the patient agree to participate?
  - Yes: Produce a photo ID card and give it to the patient to keep
  - No: Patient to take their photo ID card with them when they attend hospital for a blood transfusion
- No: Follow trust’s existing policy on blood sampling and administration

Are the details on the patient’s photo ID card the same as the details on the blood to be transfused?

- Yes: Proceed with the transfusion
- No: Regularly check the photo ID card to ensure the photo is a good likeness and that the inclusion criteria are still met

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- No: Regularly check the photo ID card to ensure the photo is a good likeness and that the inclusion criteria are still met