Using personal mobile devices to take photos TOP TIPS

Use of a mobile device is a pragmatic tool to take clinical dermatology images in primary care and community settings. If they are used, **clinicians must follow clear guidelines** to ensure that images are captured and transferred in a confidential and secure manner, meeting the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018,(1) and EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).(2) UK guidance has been produced on the use of mobile devices in Dermatology.(3)

**Every practice should have a policy on ‘bring your own device’ (BYOD).** The practice may consider buying a device or using an old one purely for medical use i.e. no SIM or account, to act solely as Wi-fi device with no further connectivity or backup storage.

If you are going to use your OWN device the following steps should be taken:

1. **Securely configure your mobile device:**
   - Passcode protection (6+ characters) and auto locks after 5 minutes
   - Check data encryption is enabled in the security settings of the device
   - Check operating systems are fully updated
   - Turn off any default settings including global positioning satellite (GPS) location services which are linked to photographs, and any setting that automatically uploads or backs up photos to cloud storage

2. **Add NHS.net account onto mobile device**
   - [i. setting up NHS e-mail on android device](#)
   - [ii. setting up NHS e-mail on IOS device](#)
   - [iii. Mobile configuration guide for NHS Mail](#)

3. **Obtain Consent**
   - **Informed consent** must be obtained before capturing any images
   - **Written consent is best,*** with completion of a standardised consent form which must then be scanned to the patient record.
   - An **example consent form** can be found as Appendix A (p30) of the [British Association of Dermatology UK Guidance on the use of mobile photographic devices in Dermatology](#)

4. **Take a Photo**
   - Always take a **Macro (distant) image** as well as a **Dermoscopic image**
     **
   - Either use:
     - i) **Camera on mobile device** with Bluetooth, cloud-based backup system, location settings and social media switched off
     - OR
     - ii) **Dedicated GDPR compliant APP on your mobile device.** Several APPs are in existence and more are likely to be developed.

   An example of a freely available APP which could be used is [PANDO](#). Images can be captured and transmitted securely to an NHS.net account.
If the patient has a mobile device, consider **TAKING PHOTOS ON THEIR DEVICE AS WELL** so they have a record.

5. **Transfer (e-mail) the image securely using NHS.net account (which is an encrypted platform)**
   - In the ‘to’ field type nhs.net account (your own)
   - In the ‘from’ field scroll down to select your nhs.net address
   - In the ‘subject’ field patient data needs to be **anonymised (no patient identifiers)/pseudo-anonymised** e.g. initials of clinician who saw patient together with date and time of appointment that patient was seen.
   - Click ‘send’ and choose a file size of ‘small’ or ‘medium’ so that the image can easily be e-mailed or uploaded for Advice and Guidance/dermatology referrals. Smaller file sizes also facilitate faster viewing of images in the patient record.
   - Login to your nhs.net account on a work PC
   - The image can then be **downloaded onto work PC and then attached to the patient’s electronic medical record, with a copy of consent.**

6. **Delete all patient images** from mobile device, e-mail account, and PC once photo has been taken, e-mailed and stored in patient’s electronic medical record.

Note that outside the patient record, images should only be stored under access-controlled conditions e.g. in a folder on an PC shared drive which is access controlled via password protection or encryption. This is acceptable if using the images for teaching purposes.

* Individual clinicians are also advised to ensure that they are **acting in accordance with any local information governance policy.**

** Refer to How to take good dermatology/dermoscopy photos TOP TIPS
Summary Flowchart for the use of images for clinical purposes

Available on p2 of the British Association of Dermatology UK Guidance on the use of mobile photographic devices in Dermatology

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY for healthcare professionals using mobile devices

References
1. Data Protection Act (2018) available
2. EU GDPR 2017/679, Article 4/5. Available
3. UK Guidance on the use of mobile photographic devices in Dermatology