

Guidewires, Introducers and Stiffeners - Summary Clinical Guideline

Reference no.: CG-TRUST/2023/001

1. Introduction

Never Events are serious incidents that are entirely preventable because guidance or safety recommendations providing strong systemic protective barriers are available at a national level and should have been implemented by all healthcare providers., One such event is an inadvertently retained guidewire or introducer (or similar e.g. stiffener) following a procedure. Despite numerous published evidence of guidewire retention, there is no national guidance on management of guidewires – guidewire removal is currently reliant on the memory of the operator. In the interests of readability, the term 'Guidewire' is used throughout this Guideline, but relates to, and not limited to Guidewires, Introducer, Stiffeners or other similar object that is used in any surgical or invasive procedure.

2. Guidelines

Required Actions for all procedures using a guidewire, stiffener, introducer or similar

Please use a Guidewire/introducer removal sticker to document practice

- Two person process (operator and observer);
- Visual confirmation of guidewire removal and completeness by both persons;
- Verbal confirmation of guidewire removal and completeness by both persons; and
- Documentary confirmation of guidewire removal by both persons

If unable to remove, please document and discuss with a senior clinician.

If no sticker available, please document the procedure, including the actions above.

Exception for NG Feeding Tubes – complete Trust NG Feeding tube insertion sticker documenting as above re: removal of guidewire.

Exemption for Interventional Radiology where guidewire removal is recorded on the Interventional Radiology Procedure Record.

Following any procedure where a guidewire is used, visual and verbal confirmation of removal and completeness needs to be recorded in the patients' medical notes – either via local computerised system, a patient sticker or local checklist agreed by Patient Safety. The patient sticker, (see Appendix A) should be completed and fixed in the patient records. This does not replace the WHO Surgical Checklist.

All staff should have appropriate training and supervision on the use of the device they are using, prior to carrying out the procedure.