

DSC Notice: 15/2001(W)
English DSCN Equivalent: 05/2001
Date of Issue: August 2001

IRSS Information Requirements and Standards Sub Committee	Subject: Outpatient Attendance Minimum Data Set (MDS) Data Flows and the NHS-wide Clearing Service (NWCS) for English Patients treated in Wales
	Implementation date: 01 February 2002

DATA SET CHANGE CONTROL PROCEDURE

This paper gives notification of changes to be included in the NHS Wales Data Dictionary.

Summary of change:

The mandating of Outpatient Attendance MDS dataflows for English patients treated in Wales between NHS organisations via NWCS using the Out of Area Treatments (OATs) indicator.

Summary of impact:

NHS Wales Trusts inexperienced in this type of data collection and MDS transfer will require support.

Change Proposal
Reference No: 01/01

The Information Requirements and Standards Sub Committee (IRSS) is responsible for approving information standards.

Please address enquiries about this DSCN to the Data Standards and Information Quality Team, HSW, Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff CF24 0HA Tel: 029 20502463 or E-mail Alison.Jenkins@hsw.wales.nhs.uk

Data Set Change Notices are available at request from the above address. In the near future they will be available on the Intranet Service HOWIS.

DSCN numbering format = sequence number/year of issue, (W) for Welsh DSCN's.

DATA SET CHANGE NOTICE 15/2001 (W)

Reference: CP01/01

Subject: Outpatient Attendance Minimum Data Set (MDS) Data Flows and NHS-wide Clearing Service for English patients treated in Wales.

Type of Change: (i) A requirement for all NHS healthcare providers in Wales to send, and for Health Authorities and Local Health Groups/Trusts to receive, Outpatient Attendance MDSs for English patients treated in Wales via the NWCS.

(ii) A requirement to identify the Out of Area Treatments (OATs) cases within the Outpatient MDS Commissioning Serial Number field.

Reason for Change: To use the NWCS in support of NHS planning and commissioning, and provide opportunities for central performance management purposes in supporting the implementation of several aspects of the NHS Wales Plan.

Effective Date: 1st February 2002

Introduction:

1. Within England, the NWCS, which has been operating since 1996, is capable of supporting the exchange of data sets relating to Admitted Patients, Outpatients, Elective Admissions (Waiting List) and Accident & Emergency activity. Although only Admitted Patient CDSs are mandated to be exchanged, an increasing number of English NHS organisations have been using the NWCS routinely, and voluntarily, for the transmission of the other data sets to meet local business requirements.
2. The Department of Health has recognised that mandating the exchange of Outpatient CDSs via the NWCS provides opportunities for the NWCS database to be used for a range of national analyses, not possible with current centrally-received data, but without imposing either new data collections or locally-generated central returns. Any new Outpatient activity based central return becoming possible from the NWCS database as a result of this change will be subject to the usual clearance with the Information Requirements and Standards Sub Committee.
3. In order that a full and complete picture is obtained for all English patients treated within Outpatients, the Welsh Trusts will need to comply with this DSCN.

Background:

4. As demonstrated above, the NWCS already supports the flow of Outpatient MDSs and is doing so for an increasing number of NHS providers to certain Health Authorities in England. The mechanism for use of the NWCS therefore already exists in England.

Changes to some local systems in Wales may be required to ensure that in future **all** NHS healthcare providers and commissioners' systems used to support Outpatient activity commissioning, send or receive the nationally-agreed Outpatient Attendance Data Set via the NWCS for their English patients. It is expected that Local Health Groups/Trusts will routinely access this data through Health Authority systems in the same way as accessing inpatient information to support them in their commissioning role, where no individual systems exist.

New Arrangements:

5. The new arrangements are that all Welsh NHS providers should use the NWCS for the exchange of 100% of Outpatient MDSs for English patients treated in Wales relating to attendances occurring on or after 1st February 2002. This date allows for the minimum of six months notice to be given prior to the implementation of this change. Records are to be identified as Out of Area Treatment cases using the Outpatient MDS Commissioning Serial Number field.

Out of Area Treatments (OATs) Identifier:

6. The Commissioning Serial Number in the Admitted Patient Care Minimum Data Sets (APC mds99) has been used to identify Out of Area Treatments (OATs). See DSCN 18/01(W). This requirement should be similarly applied to Outpatients to ensure consistency in the identification of Out of Area treatments for local agreements and to facilitate the funding of these services through the annual adjustment to Health Authority allocations. Where possible, providers are encouraged to record the OATs identifier within Outpatient MDS records immediately. The OATs identifier will be mandatory for national Outpatient flows from 1 February 2002.

Local arrangements relating to non-Consultant activity:

7. The NHS Wales Data Dictionary defines Outpatient Attendance commissioning data flows for Consultants, but not other professionals. This change does not prohibit or prevent the exchange of non-Consultant Outpatient data via the NWCS, by local agreement between the NHS healthcare providers and commissioner(s), using the NHS CDS EDIFACT message. It is recognised, however, that the NWCS database will not hold comprehensive national information on non-Consultant Outpatient activity as a result of this change.

Related Issue:

Clinical Coding

8. Clinical Coding is optional, as specified in the current Outpatient MDS. Work to further develop and facilitate the transfer of clinical data through Outpatient data flows is ongoing and may be subject to a proposal in the future.

Argument:

The time has come to exploit the opportunities created by having the NWCS as part of the NHS IM&T infrastructure.

The routine flow of this data will facilitate the use of the LHG/T Toolkit to assist these organisations in their commissioning roles as well as the central development of performance management. It will also support the Department of Health through the development of resource profiles for conditions and diseases without adding to the burden of financial returns.

9. The issue surrounding this requirement is the need for all providers to collect and record outpatient data for English patients treated in Wales, in line with the NHS Wales Data Dictionary and to send the data through the NWCS using the electronic CDS message developed for this purpose. As recipients of data transmitted via the NWCS, all Health Authorities need to be able to receive and handle the Outpatient MDSs addressed to them.

Future Developments:

10. Currently, the inclusion of “Did Not Attends and Cancellations” are not a mandatory element of the outpatient data flow. Likewise, Outpatient waiting times are not specified. The intention is to review outpatient information requirements in the context of “Improving Health in Wales – a Plan for the NHS & its partners.” Guidance/national standards, where required, will be issued in due course. Further developments of the Outpatient data set, e.g. to include information about future or booked appointments, will also be considered and approved through normal change control arrangements.

Conclusion:

11. This DSCN mandates that all Outpatient MDSs relating to attendances on or after 1st February 2002, for English patients treated in Wales, be sent to the NWCS for onward transmission to Health Authorities and Local Health Groups/Trusts, and are identified as Out of Area Treatments within the Outpatient MDS.
12. The Outpatient data structure should be that which has already been agreed nationally, and is specified in the NHS Wales Data Dictionary. The change therefore relates to the mandating of the data flow for English patients treated in Wales via the NWCS from 1st February 2002, and the need for NHS providers and commissioners’ information systems to be capable of supporting this requirement.

Additional Information:

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