



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Chief Executives – Health Boards
Chief Executives – NHS Trusts
Chief Executive – HCW
Director, Delivery and Support Unit
Regional Directors

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Director General, Health & Social Services
Chief Executive, NHS Wales

Eich cyf/ Your ref:
Ein cyf / Our ref: PMW/THOMAS/BS

9 March 2010

Dear Colleagues

Outpatient Referrals Data Validity Standards

This letter formally mandates the introduction of the Outpatient Referrals (OPR) Data Validity standards for NHS Wales.

OPR data are submitted monthly to the national database at Health Solutions Wales (HSW) by Local Health Boards (LHBs) Trusts. The data are used to support the planning and management of healthcare services through the ongoing monitoring of demand for new outpatient appointments at both a local and national level. High quality data are essential if it is to be relied upon to support such processes in NHS Wales, as emphasised in the EH/ML/007/08 - Corporate Health Information Programme (CHIP) Data Quality Site Visits Review Recommendations. Furthermore, the lack of reliable information has been cited in a number of reports over the last 5 years, including (but not limited to):

- Review of Health & Social Care (Wanless Report)
- Designed for Life
- Spending by Design

These criticisms imply that the data are of insufficient quality to produce reliable information.

In order to help address issues of data quality across Wales, a Data Quality Improvement Project was established through the Corporate Health Information Programme (CHIP) in March 2007, which had the overall objective of raising the profile of data quality and implementing a revised approach with a view to securing demonstrable improvements.

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Over the past two years, new data quality standards have been introduced for Admitted Patient Care (APC) activity data via WHC (2008) 007 and EH/ML/005/09. These have been crucial in helping to improve the quality of reported APC activity data across Wales.

In order to ensure similar principles are applied to other national data sets, a new set of data validity standards are to be introduced for OPR data, effective 1 April 2010. These will check submitted OPR data to ensure submitted data is provided in the agreed format and is populated with a nationally agreed value, as defined in the NHS Wales Data Dictionary.

It is firmly believed that the addition of these standards to those that already exist for APC activity data will improve the basis on which data quality performance is monitored across NHS Wales. Similar standards will be introduced across other national data sets, such as the Emergency Department Data Set (EDDS).

The proposals have been developed following consultation with the service, including all Local Health Boards, Trusts and end users of OPR data.

The full set of OPR Data Validity Standards are outlined in **Appendix A**.

For further detail, readers should refer to the 'Outpatient Referrals – Data Validity Standards' report, which is available via the CHIP website at <http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/pmuw/chip> or by contacting the Corporate Health Information Programme on 029 2020 7606.

Actions Required

Each Local Health Board and Trust is required to:

- Ensure all OPR data submissions conform to the OPR Data Validity Standards.
- Ensure the targets are achieved or exceeded for each standard outlined in Appendix A, taking appropriate corrective action when performance falls below the agreed criteria.
- Make use of the HSW Validation at Source Service (VASS) and any other local processes to improve the quality of the monthly OPR data submissions, taking appropriate action where possible to correct incorrect data.

Health Solutions Wales (HSW) is required to:

- Ensure the continued functionality of Validation at Source Service (VASS) to allow Local Health Boards and Trusts to identify any data validity errors in their submitted OPR data.
- Produce the Outpatient Referrals Data Validity Performance Monitoring Report every month from 1 April 2010 onwards, to be made available on the Health of Wales Information Service (HOWIS) intranet.

Monitoring Arrangements

Compliance with these standards will be monitored through a series of online data validity reports, which will be produced and maintained by Health Solutions Wales and made available on the Health of Wales Information Service (HOWIS) intranet.

A quarterly data quality report will be prepared by CHIP for the Welsh Assembly Government.

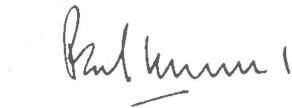
Any queries relating to the review and its recommendations should be directed to:

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Yours sincerely



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APPENDIX A – OUTPATIENT REFERRALS DATA VALIDITY STANDARDS

#	Data Item / Quality Indicator	Target (% Valid)
1	Administrative Category	98%
2	Birth Date	98%
3	Clinical Referral Date	100% [L]
4	Code of Registered GP Practice	98%
5	Date of Patient Referral	98%
6	Local Health Board of Residence	95%
7	Main Specialty (of Consultant)	98%
8	NHS Number	95%
9	NHS Number Status Indicator	95%
10	Valid NHS Number & Traced	95%
11	Postcode of Usual Address	98%
12	Provider Code	100% [L]
13	Referrer Code	98%
14	Referring Organisation Code	98%
15	Referrer Priority Type	98%
16	Sex	98%
17	Source of Referral: Outpatients	98%
18	Treatment Function Code (Specialty of Treatment)	100% [L]

A data validity indicator will check whether submitted data is provided in the agreed format and is populated with a nationally-agreed value, as defined in the NHS Wales Data Dictionary.

* The target refers to the percentage of patient records on the outpatient activity national database that should be correctly populated with an acceptable value for the associated data item at any point in time.

[L] indicates that the data item will also be classed as a Load Error within VASS. A Load Error is a distinct VASS check that detects key data integrity errors in submitted activity. The presence of a load error on a submitted record results in the rejection of the whole record from the data upload.