WELSH INFORMATION STANDARDS BOARD

DSC Notice:	DSCN 2015 / 06
Date of Issue:	6th November 2015

Welsh Health Circular / Official Letter: WHC (2015) 049	Subject: NHS Number Operational Standard
Sponsor: Dr Sally Greenway Head of Information Standards Digital Health and Care Welsh Government	
Implementation Date: New Procurements – Immediate Effect National Applications and Patient Administration Systems by April 2018 Remaining NHS Applicable Systems: April 2020	

DATA STANDARD CHANGE NOTICE

A Data Standard Change Notice (DSCN) is an information mandate for a new or revised information standard.

This DSCN was approved by the Welsh Information Standards Board (WISB) at its meeting on 20th August 2015

WISB Reference: ISRN 2015 / 001

Summary:

This standard provides the specification for use of the NHS Number by NHS bodies and by other organisations providing health and care services in Wales.

It defines how the NHS Number must be used in identifying people receiving health and care services, and in locating and communicating their health and care records and other information pertaining to the planning and provision of their care.

The standard sets out how information systems must accept, store, process, display and transmit the NHS Number, and what organisations must do to ensure that they use the NHS Number correctly.

Please address enquiries about this Data Standard Change Notice to the Data Standards Team in NHS Wales Informatics Service

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The Welsh Information Standards Board is responsible for appraising information standards. Submission documents and WISB Outcomes relating to the approval of this standard can be found at:

http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=742&pid=24632

DATA STANDARD CHANGE NOTICE

Introduction

The NHS Number is the national unique identifier that makes it possible to share patient information across the whole of the NHS safely, efficiently and accurately.

In Wales various Welsh Health Circulars have been issued that relate to the use of the NHS Number:
- WHC (98) 60 mandated the use of NHS Number in all minimum datasets from April 2009
- WHC (90) 80 set out the Caldicott requirement to use the NHS Number as the coded identifier
- WHC (2007) 074 provided a reminder of the vital role the NHS Number plays in improved data quality and record linkage and that required that proposals relating to its wider use should be taken through the Wales Information Standards Board.

This DSCN introduces the NHS Number Operational Standard which aims to:

- Ensure that there is a means to create and maintain an accurate and reliable link between a patient/ service user and the records of their care.
- Enable patient/ service user records to be safely transferred across organisational boundaries.
- Facilitate electronic referrals and prescription activity.
- Facilitate requests and reports for tests and investigations.
- Accurately and safely identify patient/service users in all communications with tertiary, primary, secondary, community and social care teams.
- Help to create a complete record, enabling the linkage of every episode of care across organisations.
- Encourage or ensure the use of the NHS Number (where appropriate) and contribute to an improved service provider and receiver culture.

Scope

Implementation is in three phases:

1. The first phase includes implementation of the NHS standard for all new NHS Wales procurements.

2. The second phase of the implementation includes the six major NHS Wales Informatics Service Systems and Cardiff and Vale Patient Management System, namely:

- Myrddin Patient Administration System
- TrakCare Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS)
- Radiology Management System (RadIS)
- Hospital Pharmacy System
- Welsh Clinical Portal (WCP)
- Canisc
- Cardiff & Vale PMS

3. The third phase will cover all remaining applicable systems. These are defined as:

- All information systems supporting the commissioning or provision of NHS services that hold patient / service user demographic data

- All information systems supporting the commissioning or provision of health and care services that are used to transfer or otherwise communicate patient / service user information with other bodies that commission or provide health and care services in Wales in partnership with the NHS
- All new information systems procured after this standard comes into force

Phase one has immediate effect.
Phase two should be completed by April 2018.
Phase three should be completed by April 2020.

Actions for Information Systems and Communications

1. All new systems that support the delivery of NHS services or communications between NHS and social care services and contain patient identifiable data / service user information MUST comply with this standard.
2. Existing systems that support the delivery of NHS services or communications between NHS and social care services and contain patient identifiable data / service user information MUST comply with this standard; those that do not presently do so MUST have plans for enhancement, replacement or deprecation.
3. The NHS Number **MUST** be used and referenced on all relevant patient and service user records and communication documents between organisations supporting the delivery of NHS and social care services.

Actions for Organisational Processes and Behaviours

1. All relevant staff are aware of their responsibilities for recording, using and sharing the NHS Number, as and when appropriate.
2. All patients and service users will be made aware of their NHS Number, encouraged to reference it, understand the importance of it and how it contributes to the delivery of their care.

SPECIFICATION

Key Word Definitions

- ***MUST*** - This word, or the terms "***REQUIRED***" or "***SHALL***", means that the definition is an absolute requirement of the specification.
- ***SHOULD*** - This word, or the adjective "***RECOMMENDED***", means that there may exist valid reasons in particular circumstances to ignore a particular item, but the full implications must be understood and carefully weighed before choosing a different course.
- ***MAY*** - This word, or the adjective "***OPTIONAL***", means that an item is truly optional.

The following are **APPLICABLE SYSTEMS**:

- All information systems supporting the commissioning or provision of NHS Services that hold patient/service user demographic data.
- All information systems supporting the commissioning or provision of health and care services that are used to transfer or otherwise communicate patient/service user information with other bodies that commission or provide health and care services in Wales in partnership with the NHS.
- All new information systems procured after this standard comes into force.

Information Specification

All access to patient or service user identifiable data including the NHS Number must comply with confidentiality and data protection requirements.

Organisations using the NHS Number should conform to this standard Organisations using the NHS Number should conform to this standard

Ref	Requirement
	The following requirements apply to Applicable Systems (see key words for definition):
01	**MUST** be capable of storing the NHS Number as described in the NHS Data Dictionary2 on patient/service user records.
02	**MAY** indicate whether/when the currently stored NHS Number has been verified by checking against the Personal Demographics Service
03	**MUST** allow users to find a patient/service user record using the NHS Number as the only search criterion.
04	**MAY** allow users to find a patient/service user record using the NHS Number as part of the search criteria in conjunction with other demographic information.
05	**MUST** allow users to find a patient/service user record without using the NHS Number as part of the search criteria.

06	**MUST** include the NHS Number in any patient identifiable data/service user information sent electronically, with the following exceptions: • The NHS Number is not available at time of transmission. • The use of the NHS Number is in conflict with other requirements, standards, legislation, common law duty of confidentiality or policies.
07	**MUST** display the NHS Number on every screen showing patient identifiable data/ service user information (if available). The verification status of the NHS Number **SHOULD** also be displayed if maintained.
08	**MUST** include the NHS Number on all hard-copy outputs containing patient identifiable data/service user information (if appropriate and available at time of output).
09	**MUST** display and print the NHS Number for people to read in 3 3 4 format (e.g. 123 456 7890).
10	**MUST** allow the NHS Number to be input into the appropriate data input field on the screen as 10 digits with or without spaces.
11	**MUST** validate (both format and check-digit) the NHS Number when input.
12	**MUST** be capable of reporting where the same NHS Number (verified or not) is recorded on more than one patient/service user record.
13	**SHOULD** be capable of reporting all patient/service user records without an NHS Number recorded.
	The following requirements apply to the **use** of Applicable Systems by commissioner and provider organisations, and to their communications, processes and behaviours
14	When a system user uses the NHS Number to retrieve an electronic record other demographic information supplied **MUST** be used to confirm the patient's/service user's identity and that the record retrieved belongs to that patient/service user.
15	When supplied, the NHS Number **SHOULD** be used instead of demographic data as the patient/service user identifier.
16	Data quality processes **SHOULD** be in place to resolve electronic patient/service user records where the same NHS Number (verified or not) is recorded on more than one record.
21	The patient's/service user's NHS Number **SHOULD** always be included as part of all communications, correspondence and filing systems involving patient/service user identifiable data/service user information. Additional patient/service user demographic information **MUST** also be included with the NHS Number.