

NHS Information Standards Board	Subject: Outpatient Attendance Commissioning Data Set (CDS) Data Flows and the NHS-wide Clearing Service (NWCS).
	Implementation date: 01 October 2001

DATA SET CHANGE CONTROL PROCEDURE

This paper gives notification of changes to be included in the NHS Data Dictionary, the NHS Data Manual and the NHS CDS Manual in due course.

Summary of change:

The mandating of Outpatient Attendance CDS dataflows between NHS organisations via NWCS and the use of the Out of Area Treatments (OATs) indicator.

Summary of impact:

Many NHS Trusts are already using the NWCS to extract outpatient data. Trusts inexperienced in this type of data collection and CDS transfer will require support.

<i>Change Proposal Reference No: 01/01</i>

The NHS Information Standards Board (ISB), established by the NHS Information Authority, is responsible for approving information standards. The NHS ISB is supported by the Management Information Standards Board, Clinical Data Standards and Technical Standards sub-boards.

*The DSCN Number Format has been changed to denote the new arrangements as follows: sequence number/year of issue (ccyy). The service identifier and service sequence number are redundant owing to changes in practice and have been removed.

The packaging of standards documentation is under review. Any changes will be notified in due course.

Please address enquiries about this DSCN to the Data Standards Team, NHS Information Authority, Aqueous II, Aston Cross, Rocky Lane, Birmingham, B6 5RQ Tel: 0121 333 0237 or to the nominated enquiry point.

Data Set Change Notices are located on the Internet in the Electronic Library at <http://www.standards.nhsia.nhs.uk/library/index.htm> and on the NHSnet at <http://nww.standards.nhsia.nhs.uk/library/index.htm>

DATA SET CHANGE NOTICE 05/2001

- Reference:** CP01/01
- Subject:** Outpatient Attendance Commissioning Data Set (CDS) Data Flows and the NHS-wide Clearing Service (NWCS).
- Type of Change:**
- (i) A requirement for all NHS healthcare providers in England to send, and for Health Authorities and Primary Care Groups/Trusts to receive, Outpatient Attendance CDSs via the NWCS.
 - (ii) A requirement to identify Out of Area Treatments (OATs) cases separately within the Outpatient CDS Commissioning Serial Number field.
- Reason for Change:** To increase use of 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 Plan.
- Effective Date:** 1st October 2001

Introduction:

1. 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 NHS organisations have been using the NWCS routinely, and voluntarily, for the transmission of the other data sets to meet local business requirements. For example, the NWCS received and processed 8.5 *million* Outpatient Attendance CDSs in the quarter period 1st July to 30 September 2000. Records were received from NHS Trust providers in 7 out of the 8 NHS regions.
2. The Department of Health has also 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 Review of Central Returns (ROCR) Committee.

Background:

3. As demonstrated above, the NWCS already supports the flow of Outpatient CDSs and is doing so for an increasing number of NHS providers to certain Health Authorities. The mechanisms for use of the NWCS therefore already exist, but changes to some local

systems 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. It is expected that Primary Care 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:

4. The new arrangements are that all NHS providers should use the NWCS for the exchange of 100% of Outpatient CDSs relating to attendances occurring on or after 1st October 2001. This date allows for the minimum of six months notice to be given prior to the implementation of this change. In addition, the change requires that Outpatient Out of Area Treatment cases should be identified within the CDS Commissioning Serial Number field.

National application

The "information infrastructure" required to support national implementation of the change already exists. The definition of Outpatient Attendance: Consultant is published in the NHS Data Dictionary and the content of the data set is specified in the NHS Data Manual. The associated EDIFACT message used by the NWCS is described in the NHS CDS Manual. Additionally, DSCNs 07/ 2000 and 08/2000, which aligned the CMDSSs with the CDSs and introduced the functionality to support HRGs (and the National Schedule of Reference Costs), should be actioned.

5. The change does not, therefore, require any amendment or alteration to the current structure of the Outpatient Attendance Data Set or CDS message used by the NWCS to enable the mandatory flow of Outpatient data. It does, however, require NHS healthcare providers to create the data set and populate the message sent to the NWCS to the fullest extent possible; in accordance with the NHS Data Manual and NHS CDS Manual. The requirement, therefore, is to make use of the Outpatient data set and CDS message (NHS003) available at 1st October 2001.

Out of Area Treatments (OATs) Identifier:

6. The Commissioning Serial Number in the Admitted Patient Care Commissioning Data Sets (CDS) has been used to identify Out of Area Treatments (OATs). See DSCN 17/2000. 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 CDS records immediately. The OATs identifier will be mandatory for national Outpatient flows from 1 October 2001.

Local arrangements relating to non-Consultant activity:

7. The NHS Data Dictionary and NHS Data Manual 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 CDS. 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:

9. The time has come to exploit the opportunities created by having the NWCS as part of the NHS IM&T infrastructure. The new arrangements for central funding of NWCS core services has encouraged an increasing number of NHS organisations to make more use of the NWCS for the routine exchange of outpatient data to support local business requirements. At the same time, the Department of Health Finance Directorate has been asked to advance a proposal to mandate Outpatient data flows via the NWCS on behalf of the Regional Directors of Finance Technical Issues Group.

In addition, the routine flow of this data will facilitate the use of the PCG/T Toolkit to assist these organisations in their commissioning roles as well as the central development of performance management. It will also support HM Treasury's Resource Accounting and Budgeting Initiative in the Department of Health, through the development of resource profiles for conditions and diseases without adding to the burden of financial returns.

10. The issue surrounding this requirement is the need for all providers to collect and record outpatient data in line with the NHS Data Dictionary and NHS Data Manual, 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 CDSs addressed to them.

Clearance:

11. The NWCS National User Group, which comprises representatives from provider Trusts and Health Authorities across England, has been consulted on the change. This followed

a national survey of all NWCS users which concluded that the current Outpatient Attendance Data Set, whilst not perfect, was useful for meeting information requirements related to attendances. The view of the National User Group was that the exchange of Outpatient information via the NWCS, using the current data set and CDS message, was possible (as clearly demonstrated by current practice). It should be noted though that there were reservations about the ability of providers to populate all of the data fields by October 2001.

12. Regional Heads of Information have also been consulted on the change, and the target for all Outpatient CDSs to be transmitted via NWCS from 1st October 2001 has been included in the guidance on updating Local Implementation Strategies and plans due in March 2001. It is recommended that the intervening period - from the issue of the Data Set Change Notice arising from this change and the implementation date - be used to ensure that the completeness and quality of Out-Patient data flows are improved.

Future Developments:

13. Currently, the inclusion of "Did Not Attends and Cancellations" are not a mandatory element of the outpatient data flow. Likewise, Outpatient waiting times and nurse attendance data sets are not specified. The intention is to review outpatient information requirements in the context of "Building the Information Core – Implementing the NHS Plan." 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:

14. This DSCN mandates that all Outpatient CDSs relating to attendances on or after 1st October 2001 be sent to the NWCS for onward transmission to Health Authorities and Primary Care Groups/Trusts, and that Out of Area Treatments be separately identified within the Outpatient CDS.
15. The Outpatient data structure should be that which has already been agreed nationally, and is specified in the NHS Data Dictionary, NHS Data Manual and the NHS CDS Manual. The change therefore relates to the mandating of the data flow via the NWCS from 1st October 2001, and the need for NHS providers and commissioners' information systems to be capable of supporting this requirement.

Additional Information:

For further information please contact:

Anne Arnold
Costing and Staff Development Branch
Finance Directorate
Department of Health
Room 3W27
Quarry House
Leeds
LS2 7UE

Tel: 01962 810738

Fax: 01962 844711

Or

Roger Bachelor
MISB Secretariat
NHS Information Authority
Aqueous II
Aston Cross
Birmingham
B6 5RQ

Tel: 0121 333 0237

Fax: 0121 333 0334