

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
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Title: Introduction of SNOMED CT as an Information Standard in NHS Wales

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For Action by:
Local Health Boards and Trusts
General Medical Practitioners
NHS Wales Informatics Service

Action required by: See below

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Enclosure(s): None

Introduction of SNOMED CT as an Information Standard in NHS Wales

In recent years data from patient consultations with GPs have been captured in systems using the clinical terminology Read Codes. This is clinical record level patient data. In secondary care, the clinical notes are turned into administrative data by the clinical coders using classification codes. A clinical terminology has not existed which is capable of being used across all healthcare settings.

SNOMED CT has been evolved from the College of American Pathologists SNOMED (Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine) and the UK's Clinical Terms (Read Codes) Version 3. It is designed as a global language for health and care terms. To ensure its global use, the International Health Terminology Standards Development Organisation (IHTSDO) was established in 2007. The UK was one of nine Charter Members. There are now almost thirty members across North and South America, mainland Europe, Scandinavia, Asia and Australasia and the membership is steadily expanding. The IHTSDO owns, administers and develops SNOMED CT and distributes the international core to all member countries and affiliates. <http://www.ihtsdo.org/snomed-ct>

The UK member organisation is, effectively, the UK Terminology Centre (UKTC). It contributes to the international core, adds UK-specific content and distributes the product throughout the UK. The UKTC also maintains and distributes the Read Codes.

In NHS England the decision has been made to adopt SNOMED CT as the single clinical terminology. It has published a roadmap for its adoption and the associated withdrawal of Read Codes support.

UKTC has announced that the last release of Read Codes Version 2 will be the April 2016 release. Further details on the product withdrawal programme can be found in Appendix 1.

To facilitate the transition from Read Codes to SNOMED CT in GP systems, a UK programme board for SNOMED CT in Primary Care has been established. This has Welsh Government and NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) membership. NWIS is expected to programme manage this implementation in NHS Wales.

Although there is no implementation programme for acute and community care, colleagues are expected to use the SNOMED CT clinical terminology in relevant programmes and projects. NWIS is developing its expertise and support functions in this area and considering the use of SNOMED CT in a number of its developments. It will release specific communications on these developments.

If you have any queries regarding this policy, contact Sally Greenway in Digital Health and Care, Health and Social Services Group, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ.

Email: DHSS-DigitalHealthandCareCentralMailbox@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

Yours sincerely,



Peter Jones
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Appendix 1

UK Terminology Centre

For the attention of Senior Management and users of products detailed below:

This briefing is intended to ensure that organisations are not dependant on products that are outdated or out of licence. Senior management who may wish to ensure due process is followed in their organisation. The detail in the briefing is primarily aimed at all those who manage or use systems which utilise the code schemes detailed.

This is to inform you of some important forthcoming dates in relation to products that you may have in use in your organisation. It is critical that any dependencies on these are addressed over the next 12 months. While the notification of these dates has been public for some considerable time, some systems are still using some of these products. As these products are often embedded in systems, it may be that you are not fully aware of your dependency on these. It is recommended that you obtain assurances from your supplier(s) that they have plans in place to migrate to a current standard (if not already) within the required timeframe.

For information the products on notice for withdrawal are:

- The Read Codes Version 2, often known as 'Read v2'. The last release of Read v2 will be the April 2016 release.
- Read v2 drugs, often known as the v2 DAAD. The last release of all DAAD products will be April 2016. After this time there will be no monthly updates and all content in biannual releases will be static (no updates).
- CTV3 drugs/DAAD has not been maintained since 2006 and should no longer be in use; there may be clinical safety risks if any organisation is still using these.
- SNOMED RT and previous versions known as SNOMED II, SNOMED v3, SNOMED v3.5. These have not been maintained for almost 10 years and are declared by the product owner (IHTSDO) to be clinically unsafe to use. On April 26th 2017 these will be out of license and any usage after that date could have legal implications as it will be unlicensed use. I am aware that a number of labs systems still use the antecedent versions of SNOMED but should be migrating to

SNOMED CT before April 26th 2017. More information can be found via the [IHTSDO news page](#).

Please note. Any historical data recorded using one of these products can be retained under the license.

For information, the migration path is as given below:

- Anyone using DAAD or CTV3 drugs should be planning migration to the NHS dictionary of medicines and devices (dm+d) or the SNOMED CT UK drug extension (which is an added value transform of the dm+d)
- Anyone using the Read codes or an antecedent version of SNOMED should be planning migration to SNOMED CT.

If you have any questions in relation to this briefing, please contact information.standards@hscic.gov.uk