

Data Provision Notice

Cancer Waiting Times (CWT)

Information Asset Owner: Lucy Elliss-Brookes

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Background

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 (the Act) gives the Health and Social Care Information Centre, now known as **NHS Digital** and hereafter referred to by this name, statutory powers, under section 259(1)(a), to require data from health or social care bodies, or organisations that provide publicly funded health or adult social care in England, where it has been directed to establish an information system by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care or NHS England.

The data, as specified by NHS Digital in this published Data Provision Notice, is required to support a Direction from NHS England to NHS Digital. Therefore, organisations that are in scope of the notice are required, under section 259(1)(a) of the Act, to provide the data in the form and manner specified below.

Purpose of the collection

Collection of Cancer Waiting Times (CWT) data has been running since 2001 with a number of changes and updates taking place since then which have received successive Information Standards Notices (ISN) 00147 and Data Coordination Board (DCB) accreditation.

The current version of the data set is version 2.1 (released in April 2020), the full specification can be found here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/dcb0147-national-cancer-waiting-times-monitoring-data-set>

The National CWT Minimum Data Set (NCWTMDS) collects and monitors data related to the measures set for cancer care in the 'Handbook to the NHS Constitution'. The data is collected directly from NHS providers in England by NHS Digital on a monthly basis. NHS Digital and NHS England are joint data controllers for the collection of data. NHS Digital is the sole data controller for any processing and dissemination of data. NHS Digital therefore controls the data flows to provider, commissioning, regional, Cancer Alliance and national users through the national CWT system. NHS Digital has full access to the data collected in order to carry out data quality assurance for all data submitted, prior to dissemination.

The NCWTMDS collects data which is used to monitor NHS providers' compliance with the government's operational standards for ensuring that cancer services are delivered to patients in a timely manner. In particular the data is used to:

- monitor timed pathways of care for cancer patients
- manage pathways of care for cancer patients
- performance manage elective services for cancer patients
- report against the requirements of the NHS Operating Framework for cancer waiting times
- support the right to access cancer services within the NHS Constitution
- produce National, Official and local statistics for cancer patients
- support investment planning for cancer services.

The NCWTMDS is managed by NHS Digital, on behalf of NHS England and NHS Improvement.

The data set may be used by:

- Cancer Alliances and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to monitor and manage timed pathways of care for cancer patients locally and regionally, and to inform commissioning decisions and priorities
- The National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service (NCRAS) in Public Health England (to 30 September 2021) and NHS Digital (from 1 October 2021) to enable comprehensive population registration and surveillance for everyone referred, diagnosed or treated for cancer in England.

Other organisations, such as Arm's Length Bodies, universities, research organisations and Regulators, may also use the data set, providing any applications go through the governance assurance processes provided by NHS Digital including the Data Access Request Service (DARS) and the associated independent assurance group, the Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data (IGARD)

In March 2019, NHS England published the Interim Report for the Clinically-led Review of NHS Access Standards (link in section 5 Parties Consulted). This document put forward proposals to reduce the number of cancer standards from nine (10 with the introduction of the Faster Diagnosis Standard) down to three, to ensure focus on diagnosis and treatment.

The final recommendations from the Review were set out in the Transformation of urgent and emergency care: models of care and measurement report, published in December 2020:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/transformation-of-urgent-and-emergency-care-models-of-care-and-measurement/>

This recommends the introduction of Critical Time Standards (CTS) which would incorporate the existing CWT standards. The proposed introduction of the Faster Diagnosis Standard for cancer was confirmed in the NHS Standard Contract for 2020/21. The approach and suite of cancer measures will be confirmed as part of the wider restoration and recovery programme to ensure people with suspected cancer come forwards for diagnosis, and that treatment plans are implemented for those with cancer.

Benefits of the collection

Shorter cancer waiting times can help to ease patient anxiety and worry, and may ultimately result in earlier diagnosis, quicker treatment, a lower risk of complications, as well as enhanced patient experience and improved cancer outcomes.

Overall, cancer waiting times standards have helped to drive service improvement and have been beneficial to patients. Benefits of the change in NCWTMDS v2.1 include but are not limited to:

- amending adjustments to allow recording of patients declining an appointment in outpatient settings, for fertility preservation and for clinically urgent treatment of another condition;
- updating the data set so it is applicable to modern diagnostic processes; and
- providing improved analysis of diagnostic and treatment pathways.

Legal basis for collection, analysis, publication and dissemination

Collection

NHS Digital has been directed by NHS England under section 254 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to establish and operate a system for the collection and analysis of the information specified for this service. NHS Digital has received a Direction from the Secretary of State concerning the handling of patient objections. The Direction references the collections for the National Cancer Registry (now NCRAS) which Cancer Waiting Times is part of. A copy of the Directions is published here:

[National cancer waiting times monitoring \(SCCI0147\) Directions 2016 - NHS Digital](#)

This information is required by NHS Digital under section 259(1) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

In line with section 259(5) of the Act, all organisations in scope, in England, must comply with the requirement and provide information to NHS Digital in the form, manner and period specified in this Data Provision Notice.

This Notice is issued in accordance with the procedure published as part of NHS Digital duty under section 259(8).

NHS Digital has been Directed by NHS England to carry out this work, NHS Digital and NHS England are joint Data Controllers determining the purpose of the processing. NHS Digital is the sole Controller that processes personal data under the direction and is the sole Controller for any dissemination

NHS England and NHS Improvement – Commission this work in line with the Direction and act as Joint Data Controller regarding the purpose of processing. Through agreement with NHS Digital it continues to produce and publish Official Statistical outputs for this data.

NHS Digital – Joint Data Controller for the purpose of processing and sole Data Controller for the processing and dissemination of data. Responsible for the collection, delivery, service management and technical infrastructure elements.

Dissemination

NHS Digital, via the national CWT system, will continue to provide standard reports to an agreed design with NHS England and NHS Improvement to specific named user groups, such as Cancer Alliances.

The host business function within NHS Digital will have access to and ability to analyse and assure the data, to support the end-to-end process and undertake activities that will support improvement to the utility and quality of the data

NHS Digital may utilise this data through linkage with other data sets and make that data available through the NHS Digital Data Access Request Service (DARS). Data may be made available via a disseminated extract or through access in the Trusted Research Environment (TRE) within NHS Digital.

The TRE service provides approved researchers from trusted organisations with timely and secure access to health and care data. Researchers are given access to their approved data (in

accordance with their Data Sharing Agreements), enabling them to collaborate, link data, share code and results within the same research projects. Further detail regarding the Trusted Research Environment can be found here:

[Trusted Research Environment service for England - NHS Digital](#)

Publication

NHS Digital will publish Official Statistics and other reports to support implementation and monitoring of service provision.

Transparency

NHS Digital is collecting personal data from Trusts and Providers of Cancer Care Services through this collection. NHS Digital has a legal duty to provide transparency information under GDPR about the data collected under this data provision notice. Requests for data dissemination will be evaluated based on purpose, legal basis, cyber security, and other considerations set out in the transparency notice. NHS Digital may also seek advice from the Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data (IGARD).

Parties consulted

Following receipt of a direction to establish a system to collect Cancer Waiting Times (CWT), NHS Digital has, as required under section 258 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, consulted with the following persons:

A public consultation on the national collection of CWT data was undertaken to collect responses between 13 July to 7 August 2017. 50 responses were received from 38 cancer service providers, 3 IT system suppliers, 4 CCG representatives and 5 other organisations. A consultation report was developed based on the feedback given, and actions were agreed to mitigate concerns raised. The findings of the consultation are set out in “National Cancer Waiting Times Monitoring Data Set v2.0 (NCWTMDS): Consultation Report”, published in August 2017:

<https://nhs-digital.citizenspace.com/standards-assurance/cancer-waiting-times/results/2017-08-17-consultation-report-v1.0.pdf>

In June 2018 the Prime Minister asked the NHS National Medical Director to review the core set of NHS access standards, including the national CWT standards, in the context of the model of service described in the NHS Long Term Plan and informed by the latest clinical and operational evidence, to ensure that they measure what matters most both to patients and clinically:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/clinically-led-review-nhs-access-standards/>

NHS England published the Interim Report for the Clinically-led Review of NHS Access Standards in March 2019:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/clinical-review-nhs-access-standards/>

The interim report put forward proposals to reduce the number of cancer standards from nine (10 with the introduction of the Faster Diagnosis Standard) down to three, to ensure focus on

diagnosis and treatment. The report also stated an ambition to reflect modern clinical practice and increasing personalisation of treatment.

The final recommendations from the clinically-led review of NHS access standards for urgent and emergency care, supported by key clinical groups, patient groups and hospital leaders, were set out in the Transformation of urgent and emergency care: models of care and measurement report, published in December 2020:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/transformation-of-urgent-and-emergency-care-models-of-care-and-measurement/>

The consultation responses are set out in the Clinically-led Review of Urgent and Emergency Care Standards: measuring performance in a transformed system report, published in May 2021:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/clinically-led-review-of-urgent-and-emergency-care-standards-measuring-performance-in-a-transformed-system/>

The proposed introduction of Critical Time Standards (CTS), which would incorporate the existing CWT standards, received extensive support, with 83.4% of respondents rating them as Important or Very Important.

Scope of the collection

Under section 259(1)(a) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, this Notice is served in accordance with the procedure published as part of the NHS Digital duty under section 259(8) on the following organisations:

- NHS Trusts and Providers of Cancer Care Services within England.

Under section 259(5) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 the organisation types specified in the above Scope must comply with the Form, Manner and Period requirements below.

Form, manner, and period of the collection

Form

Version 2.1 of the National Cancer Waiting Times Monitoring Data Set (NCWTMDS) is detailed in the Requirements Specification found here:

[DCB0147: National Cancer Waiting Times Monitoring Data Set - NHS Digital](#)

Details of how removals from the waiting list are managed for this standard are captured in the National Cancer Waiting Times Monitoring Data Set guidance.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections/cancerwaitingtimescwt>

The national CWT system enables NHS Trusts to upload a locally generated report to a central system, which then generates key data reports against specific performance measures.

Manner

The national CWT system www.cancerwaitingtimes.sdcs.digital.nhs.uk is only accessible within the N3/HSCN network and utilises HTTPS to secure the transfer of uploaded data from the Trust equipment to the NHS Digital server. Security authentication is provided by the certificate authority DigiCert and uploading is not allowed from Trust equipment which only supports older and weaker security protocols.

Period

The schedule of collection deadline dates is on a continual basis and is published at least 6 months in advance by NHS England, and the report generation is done on the next working day. The following collection deadline will be 23 working days from this point after the preceding upload (occasionally 22 days in shorter months and around bank holidays). Report generation dates and submission timetable can be found here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections/cancerwaitingtimescwt#launch-and-submission-dates>

As well as periodic bulk uploads, the system offers additional functionality to allow the updating of an individual record into the system at any time.

Data Quality

Trusts can access the functions that deal with data set creation and amendment. This includes access to file upload functionality, on screen record creation and/or record editing. In addition, users are granted access to the data extraction function in order to undertake data quality activities and can access person identifiable data where appropriate (e.g. in shared care scenarios) which will be in line with business need and comply with information governance requirements. Trusts can also download aggregate reports on performance and compliance for dissemination within their organisations.

Both simple and complex cross field validation checks will be performed on uploaded data and trusts will receive notifications where parts of the upload have failed to pass these checks.

Data quality (DQ) checks including local and automated single and cross field checks will be undertaken pre and post submission. Inbuilt validations will occur prior to the submission portal which may result in record level rejections at point of submission of which the provider is notified. Subsequent DQ checks are then undertaken to help improve the accuracy and utility of the submitted data. Such activities may occur on data being interrogated outside the system itself if appropriate. Details of these pre and post submissions data quality and validation rules are described in documentation found here:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-collections-and-data-sets/data-collections/cancerwaitingtimescwt#guidance>

Burden of the collection

In discharging its statutory duty to seek to minimise the burden it imposes on others, NHS Digital undertook a separate and specific consultation and burden assessment between June and August 2017 which indicated that there would be some increase in burden associated with the collection of new data items. While the new data items had been designed to create the smallest burden possible, and where applicable, use well-established data dictionary items, changes were made in response to the consultation and burden assessment to reduce burden further. These included making all free text 'delay reason

comment' fields optional, as well as aligning national codes for CWT102 ("PRIMARY CANCER SITE (CANCER FASTER DIAGNOSIS PATHWAY)") more closely with existing codes.

In seeking to minimise the burden it imposes on others, in line with sections 253 (2a) and 265(3) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, NHS Digital has an assessment process to validate and challenge the level of burden incurred through introducing new information standards, collections and extractions.

This assurance is carried out by the Data Standards and Assurance Service (DSAS) which assures burden assessment evidence provided as part of the overarching Data Coordination Board (DCB) process. The DCB, acting under authority of the Secretary of State, oversees the development, assurance and acceptance of information standards, data collections and data extractions for the health and social care system in England.

For further information

www.digital.nhs.uk

0300 303 5678

enquiries@nhsdigital.nhs.uk

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