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Requirements Specification for NHS All Age Continuing Care (AACCC) Data Set

Document management

Revision History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	19/8/2024	Taken to final for publication

Reviewers

This document must be reviewed by the following people:

Reviewer name	Title / Responsibility	Date	Version
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Glossary of Terms

Term / Abbreviation	What it stands for
AACC	NHS All Age Continuing Care (NHS AACC) is a collective term for services provided by the NHS which assess and provide funding for the care of individuals of all ages to meet their ongoing health and care needs.
CHC	NHS Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC) refers to NHS funded Continuing Healthcare as per the National Framework for Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care.
Clinical Governance	Clinical governance is defined by the Department of Health and Social Care as describing “the structures, processes and culture needed to ensure that healthcare organisations - and all individuals within them - can assure the quality of the care they provide and are continuously seeking to improve it”.
CSU	Commissioning Support Unit.
CSV	Comma Separated Values. A file format suitable for national submissions accepted by MESH.
CYP	Children and Young People's Continuing Care. A package of care for persons under the age of 18, coordinated by NHS responsible commissioners, consisting of elements of NHS and local authority care, as defined in the National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care.
DARS	The NHS England Data Access Request Service (DARS) can offer clinicians, researchers, and commissioners the data required to help improve NHS services.
DAPB	Empowered by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Data Alliance Partnership Board (DAPB) has delegated responsibility for approving information standards for the health and social care system in England. The DAPB membership is drawn from a range of organisations operating within health and social care.
Data Group	A collection of data items that describe a distinct event or episode. This can also be referred to as a table of data. The Data Set is arranged by data groups.
Data Item	A single component of a data set that holds one type of information and relates to a specific record.
Data Set	The full collection of data groups. See ‘Technical Output Specification’, published as part of the Information Standard.
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
DSAS	Data Standards Assurance Service (DSAS) ensures that the Information Standard meets the requirement of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and is appropriate for the use specified in the specification document.
DST	Decision Support Tool. A structured assessment tool used to evaluate an individual's healthcare needs and potential eligibility for funded care. National DST forms are in place for NHS CHC and CYP.
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).
EMS	Electronic Management System (EMS).

ERG	The NHS England AACC Expert Reference Group comprises care provider, system supplier and NHS England representatives. Its main focus is contributing to the understanding of requirements and the development of viable solutions.
ETOS	The Enhanced Technical Output Specification (ETOS) contains all the information included in the Technical Output Specification, which will remain static as part of this Information Standard release. The Enhanced Technical Output Specification additionally includes information relating to the validations carried out at the data landing platform. The validations are not controlled through the DAPB process and can therefore be subject to change. This document should be referred to alongside the Data Model.
FNC	NHS-funded Nursing Care. NHS-funded nursing for individuals who reside in a care home. Eligibility for NHS-funded Nursing Care is decided as part of a CHC assessment.
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HSCA	The Health and Social Care Act 2012
Information Standard	An information standard is a formal document approved and issued by the Data Alliance Partnership Board (DAPB). It defines technical criteria, content, methods, processes and practices for implementation across health and social care in England.
ISN	An Information Standards Notice (ISN) is a notice of an Information Standard approved by the Data Alliance Partnership Board (DAPB). When a health and social care organisation in England receives an ISN, they will ensure that they and their contractors comply with the standard in a reasonable time (such time defined within the ISN).
NHS	National Health Service
NHS England	NHS England provides national leadership for the NHS in England. With effect from 1 February 2023 NHS Digital and NHS England have merged into a single organisation. NHS England has therefore assumed responsibility for all activities previously undertaken by NHS Digital.
ODS	Organisation Data Service (ODS).
PHB	Personal Health Budget. NHS funding provided under the NHS CHC or CYP framework, to an individual with specific healthcare needs.
Reporting Period	The period (usually a calendar month) for which a data upload refers.
Responsible commissioner	The body responsible for provisioning of health services over a geographical area. The term was adopted after Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were replaced with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).
Service Request	A request to a responsible commissioner to complete or coordinate an element of the CHC or CYP referral process. Service Request records are a fundamental component of the AACC data set.
Submission Period or Submission Window	The time period (usually approximately one calendar month) during which a data provider may submit data uploads for a given reporting period.
TRUD	Technology Reference Update Distribution (TRUD) . TRUD is an NHS England resource that provides XML schemas for a data set's input

	format (pre-deadline extract schema) and output format (post-deadline extract schema, including NHS England derived items).
TOS	The Technical Output Specification (TOS) fully defines each data item within the data set. This document splits the data set into a number of data groups (tables), each containing data items and values. The Technical Output Specification is further enhanced with validation and derivation information in the form of the Enhanced Technical Output Specification (ETOS) and forms part of the Information Standard.
XML	Extensible Markup Language. A file format suitable for national submission, accepted by MESH.
XML Schema	An XML Schema defines the XML document structure expected from providers by NHS England.

Document Control:

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Purpose of document

This document sets out the requirements (Requirements Specification) for the NHS All Age Continuing Care (AACC) data set and should be read alongside the

- [NHS All Age Continuing Care Directions 2024](#) issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (**AACC Directions**)
- [NHS All Age Continuing Care Patient-Level Data Set Information Standard – DAPB 3085 \(Amd 43/2022\)](#) (AACC Information Standard)
- NHS All Age Continuing Care Data Set Information Standard Notice
- Data Set Specification (Technical Output Specification), published as part of the Information Standard Notice.

This Requirements Specification replaces the NHS Continuing Healthcare Patient Level Data Set Direction requirements specification issued with the [NHS Continuing Healthcare Directions 2022](#) which was revoked and replaced by the AACC Directions.

Introduction / Purpose of data collection

The AACC data set is a patient-level data set that will cover all aspects of AACC, where AACC refers to the following commissioned services, as described in the [National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care](#)¹ and the National Framework for [Children and Young People's Continuing Care](#)²:

- NHS Continuing Healthcare (NHS CHC)
- NHS-funded Nursing Care (FNC)
- Joint packages of health and social care
- Children and Young People's Continuing Care (CYPCC)

Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and their associated sub ICBs (Responsible Commissioner) are the bodies responsible for submission of the AACC data set. Please see the Source section of this document for details of submitting bodies at time of publication of this document. The AACC data set User Guidance will be updated with the latest information regarding submitting organisations.

The AACC data set will capture the end-to-end commissioning of AACC services, from initial checklist through to assessment, to the commissioning and monitoring of individual care packages, regular and ad-hoc care package and eligibility reviews, and eligibility disputes.

Prior to the development of the AACC data set v2.0 in relation to the AACC Information Standard, continuing care data was gathered in accordance with the [NHS Continuing Healthcare Patient Level Data Set \(NHS CHC PLDS\) v1.0 information standard \(DCB3085\)](#)³

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-framework-for-nhs-continuing-healthcare-and-nhs-funded-nursing-care>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-and-young-peoples-continuing-care-national-framework>

³ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/dcb3085-nhs-chc-patient-level-data-set>

and through a quarterly aggregated return ([DCB2117⁴](#)), both submitted by Responsible Commissioners. The scope and potential for further development of the aggregate return is limited due to the practical size constraints of a template-based data collection, and the suitability of some data for an aggregated return.

The CHC PLDS v1.0 standard was based upon the National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-Funded Nursing Care, which applies to persons aged 18 or over only, and as such the v1.0 standard was designed to only accept data on patients of this age range and was submitted by responsible commissioners in accordance with the NHS Continuing Healthcare Directions 2022⁵ (Original Directions). The AACC data set v2.0 standard is expanded to include under 18s receiving continuing care under the National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care and replaces the CHC PLDS v1.0 and is collected in accordance with the new AACC Directions, which revoke the Original Directions.

This data set is being developed to support three aims of delivering:

1. better outcomes for patients,
2. better experience for patients, and
3. better use of resources,
4. by providing detailed evidence that is currently unavailable.

The enhanced data set will identify where patients are being placed out of area, where care packages are being changed frequently, and other evidence that may indicate poor outcomes for the patient that can be identified and addressed.

Patients going through local appeals processes will be monitored to ensure appeals are resolved in a timely manner, and that the rate of overturned or accepted appeals is within a typical range.

The data set allows linkage at patient-level to other data sets, so increased/reduced hospital admissions, medication and other important attributes are visible.

Development of this data set will align AACC data with the Digital Transformation area of the [NHS Long Term Plan⁶](#).

Benefits of the data collection

AACC refers to a package of ongoing care that is arranged and funded solely by the National Health Service (NHS) where the individual has been assessed and found to have a 'primary health need' as set out in the National Framework for NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care (patients aged 18 and over) and the National Framework for Children and Young People's Continuing Care (patients under 18). These are referred to as NHS CHC and CYP continuing care respectively. Such care is provided to meet health and

⁴ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/information-standards/information-standards-and-data-collections-including-extractions/publications-and-notifications/standards-and-collections/dcb2117-nhs-continuing-healthcare-data-set>

⁵ [NHS Continuing Healthcare Directions 2022](#). The Directions were given by NHS England to the Health and Social Care Information Centre (NHS Digital) on 9 March 2022. NHS Digital was abolished, and its functions transferred to NHS England, with effect from 1 February 2023, by the Health and Social Care Information Centre (Transfer of Functions, Abolition and Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 2023/98). By virtue of regulation 3(1), the Directions are treated as if contained in a direction given by the Secretary of State to NHS England.

⁶ <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/areas-of-work/digital-transformation/>

associated social care needs that have arisen as a result of disability, accident or illness, as defined in the national frameworks.

Provided data covers the end-to-end commissioning of AACC services in England for each patient, including submission of the following activity carried out by, or on behalf of, responsible commissioners:

- Checklist activity, including receipt of checklist and recommendation
- Assessment activity, including receipt of assessment outcome and responsible commissioner eligibility decision
- Regular (3 month, 12 month) or ad-hoc care package review activity, including review outcome
- Changes to eligibility, either resulting from a care package review outcome or dispute decision
- Eligibility dispute activity, including receipt and decision.

As well as capturing AACC referral, assessment, and eligibility activity, the information standard also covers details of the type and cost of all care packages active within the reporting period. Analysis of this information is key in turning raw data into understandable intelligence on all aspects of performance, patient care, and efficiency relating to AACC including:

- where patients are being placed out of area
- where care packages are being changed frequently
- efficiency of local appeals processes
- number of eligibility decisions being overturned on appeal
- number of inappropriate referrals
- adherence to the regular review process
general adherence to the national frameworks; and
- other evidence which indicates poor outcomes for the patient.

The AACC data set will be used to generate key performance metrics for across the service and at the ICB level:

- Percentage Decision Support Tools Completed in Acute
- Percentage Referrals Completed Within 28 Days
- Referrals Exceeding 28 days
- New Fast Track Referrals
- New Standard Referrals
- Number Eligible for Fast Track
- Number Eligible for AACC.

Continuous monitoring of these metrics will allow for informed and targeted allocation of resources to improve service delivery. These metrics were previously unavailable for CYP continuing care.

AACC data and metrics will be used to check and monitor adherence to the National Frameworks, particularly in CYP continuing care where there is known to be more variation in local procedures.

The burden assessment for the quarterly CHC data collection (DCB 2117) estimated the annual cost of £200K, including 669 staff days. Submission rates and data quality improvements in the AACC data set will enable the retirement of this collection, saving the associated financial and staff burden.

Data collection

Scope

Each month, a comprehensive set of data (as set out in the Category section below) is submitted by Responsible Commissioners to support the delivery of NHS AACC.

Data collected covers the end-to-end commissioning of AACC services in England for each patient, including submission of the following activity carried out by or on behalf of responsible commissioners:

- Checklist activity, including receipt of checklist and recommendation.
- Assessment activity, including receipt of assessment outcome and Responsible Commissioner eligibility decision.
- Regular (3-month and 12-months thereafter) or ad-hoc care package review activity, including review outcome.
- Changes to eligibility, either resulting from a care package review outcome or dispute decision.
- Eligibility dispute activity, including receipt and decision.

As well as capturing AACC referral, assessment, and eligibility activity, the information standard also covers details of the type and cost of all care packages active within the reporting period.

Source

At the time of publication of this document, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are the statutory responsible commissioners of AACC services, with data to be submitted to the AACC data set at the Sub-ICB level, this being the level of granularity required to achieve the data set aims, and the lowest available level with allocated ODS codes.

Sub-ICBs should collect and compile information for inclusion in the AACC data set locally in an electronic system. Where some or all aspects of AACC services are delegated to CSUs, the CSUs may also collect and compile information for the AACC data set submission, however this is to be submitted against the Sub-ICB ODS code.

Category

The AACC data set compiles administrative data at the AACC service request level, where each service request relates directly to a patient.

Patient information collected includes:

- local patient identifier,
- organisation identifier (organisation that generated the local patient identifier),
- NHS number,
- NHS number status,
- person birth date,
- postcode of usual address,
- [person stated gender code*](#),
- [person stated sexual orientation code*](#),
- [ethnic category*](#),

- religion or belief system affiliation [code](#)*
- person death date; and
- disability indicator.

*as defined in the NHS Data Dictionary, November 2023 release. See links above for details.

Medical information such as patient condition and diagnoses information are not collected in this data set.

Please refer to the DAPB3085 All Age Continuing Care Data Set Technical Output Specification for a complete list of collected data items.

Frequency

The AACC data set comprises ongoing, monthly submissions of AACC activity. At the start of each calendar month, a system-level reporting window opens in which providers can submit data for any month prior to the current calendar month, and within the same financial year. Providers are instructed to only submit data for the month immediately prior to the current calendar month. Where multiple submissions for the same month are made, the latest submission supersedes any previous submissions. Previous submissions are deleted in the process.

Data will be submitted via the NHS England Message Exchange for Social Care and Health (**MESH**) service.

It is intended that AACC collection will commence on 1st April 2025, with the first submission window opening on 1st May 2025 and closing on the 31st May 2025. CHC PLDS submissions will continue to be accepted up until the commencement of the AACC data set collection.

NHS England will issue a Data Provision Notice (DPN) under Section 259 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to require data from the Responsible Commissioners. This DPN will replace the NHS Continuing Health Care Patient Level Data Set DPN published on 11 March 2022.

Historical CHC PLDS data

To note, the NHS CHC PLDS data gathered by virtue of the Original Directions, may continue to be used under the AACC Directions.

To note, the [NHS Continuing Healthcare and NHS-funded Nursing Care \(CHC\) Quarterly Return \(CHC Quarterly Return\)](#) aggregate collection (DCB2117) undertaken by virtue of [the migration and continued operation of the Unify2 collections through Strategic Data Collections Service Direction 2017](#) is out of scope of the AACC Directions and will continue until there is satisfactory reconciliation and compliance with the AACC Collection.

Analysis

Internal processing

Standard validation routines are applied at the record value level to check the submission meets the required mandate and format, as defined in the Technical Output Specification.

Further custom validation routines are applied at the record value level to check that expected values are present and correct based on the context of the record. These are defined in the Technical Output Specification.

A pseudonymisation process is applied at the record level to item values that could conceivably identify a patient (e.g. PersonBirthDate, PostcodeOfUsualAddress), prior to entry into the NHS England National Commissioning Data Repository (NCDR) (see Data Linkage section below), for use by internal teams.

The AACC Data Team within NHS England, part of NHS England's AACC Business Unit, and AACC Strategic Improvement Programme, are responsible for carrying out analysis of the AACC data to fulfil the data set purpose in accordance with directions, using the NCDR data to realise the benefits described in Directions Requirements Specification, to support their legal function and to carry out their roles effectively. The AACC data team also produce and disseminate aggregated data dashboards for consumption by responsible commissioners (see Dissemination section).

Data linkage

Intended linkages are for the derivations of MPS (Master Patient Service) ID and Registered GP using the Patient Demographic Service (PDS), and geographies using corporate reference data. These links are made using identifiable data.

There is potential for AACC data sets to be linked to other data obtained by NHS England under other directions made under section 254 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, which could provide richer information, enable enhancement of existing publications and the development of new publications. If there is a proposal to link AACC data with other data that NHS England has obtained, this Specification will be reviewed in line with the Change Control process to ensure the linkage is aligned with the purpose of the AACC Directions. Where the linkage is approved, this Specification will be updated. More information about the data sets and collections that NHS England holds and that may be used for linkage can be found on the [NHS England Data Collections and Data Sets webpage](#).

It is also anticipated that data obtained under the AACC Direction may be analysed under the NHS England De-Identified Data Analytics and Publication Directions 2023⁷ (Data Analytics Direction). Any analysis under the Data Analytics Direction will only occur where approved in accordance with Information Governance procedures and controls, including where required in accordance with the statutory guidance issued under s274A of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and advice from the Advisory Group for Data.

Consultation

Consultation has been conducted in three phases with external organisations, involving:

- General awareness raising prior to the commencement of the project.
- Engagement exercise to agree the data set content and specification.
- Ongoing engagement to keep internal and external stakeholders informed of the progress of the data set development.

Organisations consulted:

- Secretary of State for Department of Health and Social Care
- Integrated Care Boards
- Commissioning Support Units

⁷ [NHS England De-Identified Data Analytics and Publication Directions 2023](#)

- NHS England AACC Programme Delivery
- NHS England AACC Data Team
- NHS England Data Set Development Service
- Local authorities (England)
- System suppliers
- Third sector organisations.
- An online public consultation, open for anyone to participate. Feedback was received from 20 ICBs, 5 system suppliers, 2 local authorities, a CSU, the CHC Alliance and Dementia UK.

Information has been published on the NHS England website for patients in relation to the AACC data set to ensure fair processing. Note that the AACC data set relates to finance packages associated with patient support and does not collect any medical information.

The AACC data set was developed in consultation with the NHS England Data Standards Assurance Service for approval by the Data Alliance Partnership Board (DAPB). The DAPB has been established as part of a system-wide information and technology governance model. The DAPB acts with delegated authority from the Secretary of State as the main governance route through which all data collections and standards requirements are agreed and priorities assigned.

Dissemination/Sharing

Regular Dissemination/Sharing

The following aggregate reports are made available to ICB submitting organisations:

- A data quality report is provided to submitters on receipt of submission to the MESH platform consisting of any errors or warnings raised by the standard and custom validations (see Technical Output Specification).
- Two dashboards are provided to submitters by the NHS England AACC Data Team via the NHS Futures online platform.
 - The Reconciliation Dashboard aggregates data from all providers' AACC data set submissions and shows figures alongside equivalent aggregate data from the separate NHS CHC Data Set aggregate submission.
 - The Data Receipt and Errors dashboard shows counts of records submitted by all providers and counts of records that raised errors or warnings according to standard and custom and validations (see Technical Output Specification).

Note that small number suppression is not applied to these dashboards, as the selectable categories and metrics are not sufficient to identify individuals. Access to the dashboards is controlled centrally by the AACC Data Team and is granted to all providers of AACC data. Aggregated metrics relating to all providers are visible.

Additionally AACC flows update the existing CHC flows to ICBs for commissioning purposes and is part of the suite of commissioning data products approved to flow to ICBs under an existing Data Sharing Agreement and for transparency noted here

<https://digital.nhs.uk/services/data-services-for-commissioners/commissioning-datasets>. The flows are provided under s261(5)(d) of the 2012 Act.

Data Access Request Service (DARS)

Data will be made available via the NHS England's [Data Access Request Service \(DARS\)](#), including through the NHS England secure data environment where relevant and in line with

national policy guidelines. NHS England will use its discretionary powers under section 261 of 2012 Act and under any other statutory powers to disseminate data. Organisations will be able to apply to the DARS and on approval, with the appropriate legal basis, have access to data obtained under the Direction.

Any dissemination will be subject to organisations applying to access the data having a lawful basis to process it, NHS England having a lawful basis to disclose it, successful applications being made to the DARS and the organisations entering into a data sharing agreement.

External requests for data from the AACC data set will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis through **DARS**, with oversight and advice from the Advisory Group for Data (AGD) where appropriate. This may include, but not be limited to, applications made by

- Arm's Length Bodies,
- NHS-funded AACC service providers and commissioners,
- the third sector community organisations; and
- organisations to support research and innovation and to understand the impact of AACC on patient outcomes and experiences. This may include commercial organisations who will need to meet the DARS published commercial standard⁸.

Publication

Data to be published

NHS England will publish information it has obtained under these Directions in line with its duty under section 260(1) of the 2012 Act unless data falls within section 260(2) of the 2012 Act.

NHS England do not intend to make any publications until data submission rates and data quality present an accurate reflection of all provider activity as it would not meet the requirement of the AACC Information Standard. This would therefore fall within s260(2)(c) of the 2012 Act and could not be published. NHS England will continue to publish data from the separate CHC Quarterly Return until such times as this new AACC collection publication can replace that return.

Change control process

Changes to this Specification will be managed by NHS England in conjunction with the Department of Health and Social Care to ensure such changes are aligned with the AACC Directions. Changes may also be subject to approval of any changes to the associated Information Standard by the Data Alliance Partnership Board (DAPB).

⁸ Data sharing standard 5e - Commercial Purpose