

DCB0084: OPCS-4.9 Change Specification

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Information and technology
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Data Coordination Board

This information standard (DCB0084) has been approved for publication by the Department of Health and Social Care under [section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012](#).

Assurance that this information standard meets the requirements of the Act and is appropriate for the use specified in the specification document has been provided by the Data Coordination Board (DCB), a sub-group of the Digital Delivery Board.

This information standard comprises the following documents:

- Requirements Specification
- Implementation Guidance
- Change Specification.

An Information Standards Notice (DCB0084 Amd 18/2019) has been issued as a notification of use and implementation timescales. Please read this alongside the documents for the standard.

The controlled versions of these documents can be found on the [NHS Digital website](#). Any copies held outside of that area, in whatever format (e.g. paper, email attachment), are considered to have passed out of control and should be checked for currency and validity.

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Glossary of Terms

Term / Abbreviation	What it stands for
T&CDS	Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service, part of NHS Digital
CDS	Commissioning Data Sets
DCB	Data Coordination Board
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
ICD-10	International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems - Tenth Revision
ISO 9001: 2015	An internationally recognised standard for the quality management of businesses
NHS Digital	Provides national information, data and IT systems for health and care services, previously The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC)
OPCS-4	The OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures - Version 4
TRUD	Technology Reference data Update Distribution Service
TSO	The Stationery Office
WHO	World Health Organization
XML	Extensible Markup Language

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Introduction

This document describes a change to the existing information standard: OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures, Version 4.8, also known as OPCS-4.8

The update to the standard is a continuance of the regular review and uplift of OPCS-4 in line with the recommended best practice of keeping clinical classifications aligned with advances in health care.

The NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service (T&CDS) has responsibility for the support, maintenance, development and licensing of OPCS-4 which is subject to Crown Copyright.

This document is part of the single stage submission to the Data Coordination Board (DCB) regarding the update to create OPCS-4.9 for NHS implementation on 1 April 2020.

Summary of the standard

Standard	
DCB unique identifier	DCB0084 Amd 18/2019
Title	OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures Version 4.9
Description	<p>The OPCS-4 Classification of Interventions and Procedures (OPCS-4) is an NHS fundamental information standard published under section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Ref DCB0084). OPCS-4 is updated every 3 years to reflect current NHS clinical practice to support aggregate data for statistical purposes and reimbursement.</p> <p>OPCS-4 is a statistical classification for clinical coding of hospital interventions and procedures undertaken by the NHS. The classification is mandatory for use by healthcare providers to support various forms of data collections for secondary uses.</p> <p>The classification comprises a list of alphanumeric codes organised into mainly anatomically based chapters. It is available to download as an eVersion and will be available online using the Classifications Browser. It is also published as a book set (Tabular List and Index) by The Stationery Office (TSO) for purchase by users.</p> <p>The Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service (T&CDS) has responsibility for the support, maintenance, development and licensing of the OPCS-4 which is governed by Crown Copyright.</p>
Applies to	<p>All Health Care Providers that are required to submit data on interventions and procedures for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admitted Patient Care Commissioning Data Sets (CDS) Other data collections as defined in the NHS Data Model and Dictionary. <p>Implementation of the change to this information standard impacts all health IT systems suppliers providing systems to the above providers; such providers should work with their suppliers to</p>

	determine necessary changes.
Release	
Release title	OPCS Classification of Interventions and Procedures Version 4.9 (OPCS-4.9)
Description	OPCS-4.9 contains updates released by the NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service and contains updates submitted by the NHS, NHS Digital, DHSC, NHS England and other organisations via the OPCS-4 Requests Portal.
Implementation Completion date	1 April 2020

Related documents

Ref #	Title
1	OPCS-4.9 Information Standards Notice
2	OPCS-4.9 NHS Data Model and Dictionary Change Request
3	OPCS-4.9 - Implementation Guidance
4	OPCS-4.9 - Requirements Specification
5	Summary of Changes from OPCS-4.8 to OPCS-4.9

Supporting Information

Ref #	Title
1	OPCS-4.9 Metadata Files Technical Specification with associated Technical Specification
2	National Clinical Coding Standards – OPCS-4.9 reference book

Related Standards

Ref #	Reference	Title
1	SCCI0021	ICD-10 5th Edition
3	SCCI0034	SNOMED CT
4	DCB0160	Clinical Risk Management: its Application in the Deployment and Use of Health IT Systems
5	DCB0129	Clinical Risk Management: its Application in the Manufacture of Health IT Systems

Regular updates to classifications

It is vital that classifications are updated regularly to reflect changes to clinical practice so that users of the data have access to new procedures as well as established procedures.

In 2011 the Payment by Results Programme Board approved a three-year release update cycle to ensure the classification kept pace with clinical practice whilst maintaining stability to support statistical analyses.

The table below lists the OPCS-4 versions and the financial year in which they were mandated for use:

Financial Year	Version of OPCS-4
Up to 31 March 2006	OPCS-4.2
1 April 2006 - 31 March 2007	OPCS-4.3
1 April 2007 - 31 March 2009	OPCS-4.4
1 April 2009 - 31 March 2011	OPCS-4.5
1 April 2011 – 31 March 2014	OPCS-4.6
1 April 2014 – 31 March 2017	OPCS-4.7
1 April 2017 – 31 March 2019	OPCS-4.8
1 April 2020 - until further notice	OPCS-4.9

Predecessors of OPCS-4 go as far back as 1944 when the Medical Research Council published a classification of surgical operations.

Change to the standard

Generally, a change to the standard may entail the addition and retirement – in exceptional circumstances - of codes and associated descriptions and modifications to existing OPCS-4 code descriptions. Coding directives, such as, includes, excludes and notes may be added, modified or retired.

The Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service publishes the *Summary of Changes from OPCS-4.8 to OPCS-4.9* to support implementation. The summary lists the Core changes made to OPCS-4.8 to produce OPCS-4.9 in the following areas:

Tabular List, Volume I

- Codes and descriptions at three-digit categories and four-digit subcategories
- Three-digit category and four-digit subcategory Notes, Inclusions and Exclusions

Alphabetical Index, Volume II:

- Section I Alphabetical Index of Interventions and Surgical Procedures
- Section II Alphabetical Index of Surgical Eponyms
- Section III Alphabetical Index of Surgical Abbreviations.

The new entries fall within existing chapters. There is no change to the architecture of OPCS-4.

The summary is included within the OPCS-4 data files available via the Technology Reference data Update Distribution ([TRUD](#)) service.

Volume of changes

The table below lists the number changes made to OPCS-4.8 to create OPCS-4.9.

Change type	Number	Total	Grand Total
New three-character category code	28		
New four-character subcategory code	223		
Retired (four-character subcategory code)	5		
Changed three-character category code description	1		
Changed four-character subcategory code description	33		
Change to three-character category code involving change to note only (new, deleted or changed includes, excludes and notes)	65		
Change to four-character subcategory code involving change to note only (new, deleted or changed includes, excludes and notes)	83	438	
New Index Entry	352		
Deleted Index Entry	43	395	833

OPCS-4.9 Data files and format

The following data files are released to support the implementation of OPCS-4:

- OPCS-4.9 Codes and Titles file (text file)
- OPCS-4.9 Metadata file and associated specification (Fixed length text file)
- OPCS-4.9 Table of Coding Equivalences (ToCE) and associated specification (excel spreadsheet)

The above files are also released in Extensible Markup Language (XML)

There is no change to the format of the OPCS-4 data files. However, the Sex (absolute) field will no longer be populated; it will be left blank. This is in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010 to ensure equal treatment of patients regardless of a chosen gender.

Where a code in OPCS-4.8 had a Sex (absolute) flag assigned in the Metadata file this has been changed to a Sex (scrutiny) flag.

This will ensure that a record will not be rejected where a procedure that is appropriate to the anatomy of the patient but does not match with their chosen gender. E.g. orchidectomy in a patient who has chosen to have a female gender.

This should not impact data quality because the Sex (scrutiny) flag will still provide a warning to check the correct record is being coded for that episode of care, if appropriate.

The data file specifications are provided with the release data files via [TRUD](#).

Tables of Coding Equivalence

The Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service release Tables of Coding Equivalences. The tables provide backward equivalences from the new version - OPCS-4.9

- to previous versions. Specifically, for every new code a suitable equivalent to the old version is provided, or no equivalent where one is not available.

Users of the equivalence tables will wish to note version changeover dates. The implementation date of 1 April 2020 requires all consultant episodes that end on or after 1 April 2020 to be coded to OPCS-4.9. All episodes that end on or before 31 March 2020 must be coded to the correct previous version(s). This synchronisation of cut-off dates and implementation dates supports comparative analyses of historical data.

Development and testing of data files

An electronic classifications editor is used to create and validate the new content and to generate the necessary data outputs to support the NHS and NHS system suppliers. The editor also produces the output files for the Classifications Browser and eVersion and the OPCS-4 books which are passed to the TSO for publication.

The editing tool enforces OPCS-4 constraints such as field width and composition of code. Point of entry validation helps to prevent data entry errors. All data files are quality assured by classification experts before they are released to licence holders.

UK metadata parameters, such as age and classification code scrutiny checks and Tables of Coding Equivalences are developed by classification experts in line with classification principles. Clinical input was sought as necessary.

Distribution of data files

The updated OPCS-4 data files are licensed and distributed via the Technology Reference data Update Distribution (TRUD) Service subject to registration and acceptance of the terms and conditions.

Costs

OPCS-4 is an existing information standard used to support the classification of interventions and procedures in mandatory and other data collections for secondary uses as described in the NHS Data Model and Dictionary. It is managed by the NHS Digital Information Representation Service within the Data, Insight and Statistics Directorate and specifically the Terminology and Classifications Development Service within that Directorate.

Overhead costs for the implementation of the new version within NHS organisations are catered for in the NHS Standard Contract.

Trusts need to ensure that resources are available to meet implementation costs which will include the necessary updating of IT systems and the cost of staff training and may include the purchase of OPCS-4.9, if a trust chooses to purchase hard copies, rather than use the free NHS Digital Classifications Browser or eVersion.

NHS Digital provides the funding for the development, maintenance and resources to support the implementation of updates to OPCS-4.

The OPCS-4.9 volume set will be available from the TSO should trusts wish to purchase them for clinical coders. The cost has yet to be decided. A discount will be available to the NHS. Currently the OPCS-4.8 volume set costs £150 without discount (a 70% discount is available for NHS staff). Further details will be published on [Delen](#).

Mapping from terminologies to classifications

The NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service provides the national maps from SNOMED CT to the classifications (ICD-10 and OPCS-4). The maps make it easier to use these standards together and support interoperability across the health system. The maps support the standard and are distributed as part of the regular terminology releases to appropriately licensed NHS suppliers and other users via [TRUD](#).

The maps adhere to the national clinical coding standards and guidance. The application of the national standards, as part of the mapping process, is pivotal to users of SNOMED CT in order to meet the mandatory requirement to provide consultant episodes coded to the OPCS-4 and ICD-10 standards.

The cross-maps from SNOMED CT to OPCS-4.9 will be available to the NHS in the mid-March 2020 terminology release for 1 April 2020 implementation and thereafter as part of the usual terminology releases.

Change implementation plan

All consultant episodes that end on or after 1 April 2020 must be coded to OPCS-4.9. This requires national and local computer systems to be updated to accept the code changes. The early release of the OPCS-4 data files and file specifications are essential to enabling the NHS and NHS system suppliers to implement the code changes and to engage with key stakeholders. Following early release of the data files, clinical coding materials are provided to help the clinical coding community and analysts to understand and apply the changes in readiness for use from 1 April 2020.

Implementation of the OPCS-4.9 updates is supported by the well-established infrastructure put in place by the Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service. The quality management system governing the provision of the Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service is ISO 9001:2015 certified.

A high-level release timeline is provided below.

OPCS-4.9 Release Products	Release date*
Notification of change published	28-Feb-2019
Provide Draft Summary of updates from OPCS-4.8 to OPCS-4.9	Jul-Aug 2019
Submission to DCB to approve implementation of updates and consequent release of Information Standards Notice (ISN) and supporting documentation.	11-Sep-2019
Information Standards Notice Publication	08-Oct-2019
Publish final Summary of Changes from OPCS-4.8 to OPCS-4.9	Oct-2019
Release of OPCS-4.9 Codes and Titles file, Metadata file and Table of Coding Equivalence via TRUD	04-Nov-2019
Release Key Learning Points	Jan/Feb-2020
OPCS-4.9 Volumes 1-2	Jan/Feb-2020

OPCS-4.9 available in the Classifications Browser and eVersion	Jan/Feb-2020
National clinical Coding Standards - OPCS-4.9 reference book	Jan/Feb-2020
All associated training materials and guidance	Jan/Feb-2020
SNOMED CT to OPCS-4 and ICD-10 Cross-maps	Mid-Mar-2020
Implementation of OPCS-4.9 All consultant episodes that end on or after the 1 st April 2020 must be coded to OPCS-4.9	01-Apr-2020

* Subject to the necessary approvals