

Sponsoring Organisation:	Implementation Date:	Immediate	
NHS Connecting for Health	Subject: Patient Identifiers for Identity Bands		
DATA SET CHANGE NOTICE			
<p>This DSCN informs users of the approval of a new information standard by the Information Standards Board for Health and Social Care (ISB HaSC).</p> <p>This was approved by ISB HaSC on 18 March 2009.</p>			
Summary:			
<p>The standard specifies the four identifiers that must be included on NHS patient identity bands (for example wristbands) and the format for presenting these so that identity information is clear and unambiguous. The standard is required to support the safe identification of patients, in line with guidance from the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA).</p> <p>In July 2007, NHS organisations were recommended to review their identity band policies as advised in Safer Practice Notice 24 issued by the NPSA. The Safer Practice Notice specified the identifiers that are to be used for patient identification and provided guidance on design and use of identity bands. Suppliers of systems that support production of patient identity bands now need to review the systems' capability against this standard and initiate appropriate action.</p> <p>Implementation of this standard is dependent on implementation of the NHS Number Standard.</p> <p>Developers of other standards that include patient identifiers should take account of the specifications in this standard.</p>			
Related DSCNs:			
31/2008 - NHS Number Standard for General Practice (England) 32/2008 - NHS Number Standard for Secondary Care (England)			
Impact of Change:			
Service:	Dependent on current conformance	System Suppliers:	Dependent on current conformance
<p>The Information Standards Board for Health and Social Care (ISB HaSC) is responsible for approving information standards. Submission documents and the ISB HaSC Board output relating to the approval of this standard can be found at:</p> <p>www.isb.nhs.uk/docs/patient/</p>			

DATA SET CHANGE NOTICE

Reference No:	DSCN 04/2009, ISB/0099-00[S]
Version No:	0.4
Subject:	Patient Identifiers for Identity Bands
Type of Change:	Introduction of a new approved information standard
Implementation Date:	Immediate
Business Justification:	Universal use of consistently and safely presented patient identifiers will support elimination of errors in matching patients with treatment and care, ultimately improving patient safety. System support for production of standard identifiers on identity bands is required so that staff and organisations can conform to safe practice for patient identification.

Introduction

The Patient Identifiers for Identity Bands standard and associated guidance has been developed by the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA). It will enable systems to be designed to support staff with best practice for patient identification in all settings where identity bands are used. Implementation of the standard will help reduce the risk of confusion with other patients and prevent incorrect care and treatment being given; it will have major benefits in relation to improved patient safety.

The standard specifies the four identifiers that must be included on NHS patient identity bands and the format for presenting these so that identity information is clear and unambiguous. All suppliers of healthcare systems which produce identity bands for use in the NHS are required to comply with the standard.

This standard covers patient identification throughout NHS care and treatment in settings where identity bands are used. Whether identity bands should be used is not in scope of the standard; this is subject to NPSA, Department of Health, professional and local guidance.

Conformance to the standard is required of:

- all healthcare staff (this includes clinical, managerial, administrative and support staff) who play any part in obtaining and using patient identifiers and
- providers of healthcare systems which support production of identity bands.

Developers of other standards that include patient identifiers should take account of the specifications in this standard.

Implementation of the NHS Number standard is essential for implementation of this standard.

See related DSCNs 31/2008 and 32/2008 and

<http://www.connectingforhealth.nhs.uk/systemsandservices/nhsnumber>

Background

The development of this standard is part of a wider programme of NPSA work on safer patient identification and matching patients correctly with samples, specimens, records and treatment. This work includes:

- Publication of *Right patient – right care* in December 2004, which summarises research on manual checking and the use of technologies for safer patient identification;
- Publication of a Patient Safety Alert on *Correct site surgery* in March 2005 on ways to minimise the risk of surgery on the wrong part of the body.
- Publication of a Safer Practice Notice (SPN) on *Wristbands for hospital inpatients improves patient safety* in November 2005 on ensuring acute hospital inpatients wear wristbands
- Publication of a SPN “*Right patient – right blood*” recommending both high and low-tech solutions for making blood sampling and transfusions safer (November 2006)
- Publication of a SPN *Standardising wristbands improves patient safety* (July 2007) on standardising wristband design, patient identifiers, colour, processes and printing from the Patient Administration System or equivalent
- Publication of a SPN “*Risks to patient safety of not using the NHS Number as the national identifier for all patients*” in September 2008; developed and issued jointly with NHS Connecting for Health and Informing Healthcare recommending use of the NHS Number as the national identifier for patients to ensure greater patient safety; action by NHS organisations required by 18 September 2009.

The NPSA believes that the NHS needs a standard on patient identifiers on identity bands to reduce, and where possible eliminate, errors in matching patients with care. This requirement was established from evidence from research commissioned by the NPSA, backed up by patient safety incident reports made to its Reporting and Learning System (RLS). Over the 12 month period February 2006 to January 2007, the NPSA received into the NRLS 24,382 reports of patients being mismatched to their care. It is estimated that more than 2,900 of these related to wristbands and their use.

Standardising identifiers will assist in ensuring that all wristbands have the same information about patients, presented in a format that ensures readability, which will in turn assist staff and reduce the risk to patients. Consultation carried out by the NPSA with NHS staff, professional bodies and patients has been supportive of standardisation of identifiers on identity bands.

Details of Change

The four core identifiers that uniquely identify a patient when used in combination and which must be present on the identity band are: Last Name, First Name, Date of Birth and verified NHS Number.

The format for display and printing has been informed by relevant Common User Interface standards currently being developed by NHS Connecting for Health.

- First and last name must be clearly differentiated by using lower case letters for first name (with upper case first letter) and UPPER CASE for last name, and must be presented in the order: LAST NAME First name e.g. SMITH John
- Date of birth must be recorded in the short format: DD-Mmm-YYYY e.g. 07-Jun-2005
Where:
DD is the two-digit day
Mmm is the abbreviated month name (e.g. Feb)
YYYY is the four-digit year

Day values less than 10 must appear with a zero in the first position e.g. 08
Month names must be abbreviated to the first three letters
Day, month and year separators must be hyphens.

- Systems must only display and print the NHS Number in 3 3 4 format (e.g. 123 456 7890).

Guidance on all other aspects of identity band production and management including layout, font size, how to manage missing information etc is available at <http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/nrls/alerts-and-directives/notices/wristbands/>

If any additional identifiers are thought to be necessary, these must be formally risk assessed in terms of why they are necessary, how they are distinguishable from the four specified identifiers and how they are located on the identity band so that the four identifiers remain clear and unambiguous.

Timescales for Implementation

Timescales for implementation and conformance reflect those for implementation of the NHS Number standard in secondary care (DSCN 32/2008).

FRAMEWORK	Health and Social Care Personnel	Organisation ¹	IT Suppliers ²
Effective Date³ "may use"	Recommended from July 2007	Recommended from July 2007	December 2008
Implementation Date⁴ "must use"	Immediate		
Conformance Date⁸ "must be used effectively and assessed for use"	One year after implementation of NHS Number conformant system	One year after implementation of NHS Number conformant system	31 December 2010
Superseded Date (of prior standard)⁹ "stop using prior standard"	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Conformance to the standard can be assessed by reviewing identity bands against the specification above and against current best practice as recommended in the NPSA guidance. In the case of newborn infants or where identity information is missing, conformance to the guidance for these situations would be equivalent to conformance to the standard.

Effects on Other Information Standards

A number of Common User Interface (CUI) standards in development have informed and/or may be affected by this standard but note that input and screen display standards may differ from the printed display required on identity bands. These are:

- Patient name input and display
- Date input and display
- NHS Number input and display.
- Patient Banner (Part 1 – Patient Identification) for Clinical Systems within the NHS in England.

Sponsor Details

Professor Michael Thick,
Chief Clinical Officer,
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Further Information and Support

For further details about this standard, including design guidance and FAQs, please see www.npsa.nhs.uk/nrls/alerts-and-directives/directives-guidance/patient-identification/

Contact: spn@npsa.nhs.uk

Appendices

none

Notes:

1. Relevant organisations are those organisations as defined in the standard who must take direct action to implement the standard
2. IT Suppliers are all suppliers to the organisations listed at ¹ who supply functionality pertinent to that standard
3. **Effective Date** is the date from which a new standard can be used but may not be mandatory. This might facilitate piloting, for example, or enable time for system functionality development. At this point, **you “may use” the standard.**
4. **Implementation Date** is the point from which the new standard becomes mandatory. Ideally, it inherently implies organisations use appropriate systems i.e. the date is the same for organisations and suppliers. However, there may be circumstances where interim workarounds are required i.e. the date is different for organisations and suppliers. At this date, **you “must use” the standard.** Where the standard demands data is submitted centrally, sub components of implementation date (and possibly 'effective date') are:
 5. **Collection Start Date** – this is the date collection of data must begin
 6. **First Submission Date** – this is the date of first submission of data centrally
 7. **Reporting Period / Submission Cycle** – If the standard calls for further collection and submission at defined intervals, this cell provides text of the reporting period (e.g. calendar month, financial year) and the submission cycle (e.g. submit data monthly on the 10th working day of the subsequent month).
8. **Conformance Date** is the date from which the service and IT system suppliers must use the standard as envisaged i.e. using appropriate IT solutions rather than interim workarounds and, if the standard requires it, an independent, authoritative body or legitimate internal audit would conduct a conformity assessment with the expectation of full conformance by all relevant parties. It is the **“must use standard effectively and assessed for use”** date
9. **Superseded Date** of the prior standard sets the date at which the prior standard is replaced by the new standard i.e. the prior standard must no longer be used. This date will apply only where there was a pre-existing standard made redundant by the new standard. It might be different from preceding dates in the framework if, for example, a new and old standard run in parallel for a period. It is the date from which you **“stop using the prior standard”.**