

# Specification for Patient-level information and costing systems (PLICS) Ambulance data set

DCB2123-02 Amd 38/2020  
Standard Specification 1.0



# Contents

Contents .....	1
Overview .....	2
Summary .....	3
Background.....	5
Purpose and scope.....	7
Guidance on the patient-level costing and information systems standard.....	8
Requirements .....	13
Implementation and use.....	20
Annex A: Glossary .....	22

# Overview

## Data Coordination Board

1. This information standard (DCB2123-02) has been approved for publication by the Department of Health under [section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012](#).
2. Assurance that this information standard meets the requirements of the Act and is appropriate for the use set out in the specification document has been provided by the Data Coordination Board (DCB), a sub-group of the Data Delivery Board.
3. This information standard comprises the following documents:
  - Standard Specification
  - Implementation Guidance.
4. An information standard notice (DCB2123-02 Amd 38/2020) has been issued as a notification of use and implementation timescales. Please read this alongside the documents for the standard.
5. 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.
6. Date of publication: 15 December 2020

Title	Specification for Patient level information and costing systems (PLICS) Ambulance Data Set		
DCB reference	DCB2123-02		
Sponsor	Chris Walters	Status	Final
Senior Responsible Officer	Helen Laing	Version	1.0
Author(s)	Sarah Williams	Version Date	23.11.2020

# Summary

7. The table below contains a summary of the information standard.

Standard	
<b>Standard Number</b>	DCB2123-02
<b>Standard Title</b>	Patient level information and costing systems (PLICS) Ambulance Data Set
<b>Description</b>	<p>Patient-Level Costing (PLC) is being rolled out across all sectors and services from 2018/19 to 2021/22.</p> <p>This standard covers the financial year 2019/20 ONLY, for which PLC data is being collected for Ambulance services from designated Ambulance providers. This information standard covers the creation of the PLC (Ambulance) Data Set (PLCAMDS). This contains activity and financial data for all incidents going through 999 call centres or dispatch centres within England.</p> <p>This standard follows a previous pilot PLICS Ambulance collection undertaken by NHS Digital along with other pilot/early implementer collections by NHS England and NHS Improvement.</p> <p>For financial year 2019/20 data, the PLCAMDS has had minimal change from previous pilots, but the design of the data set has taken the opportunity to address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alignment where possible with the new ambulance data set (ADS) being piloted by NHS Digital.</li> <li>• introduction of ANANA codes by NHS Digital with effect from FY 2020/21.</li> </ul> <p>The aim of 'minimal change' is to give ambulance trusts the best opportunity of success in the first year of mandation; financial year 2019/20 data.</p> <p>This data set replaces elements of the data collected as part of the reference cost collection for those designated trusts for ambulance activity.</p>
<b>Only applies to</b>	Ambulance providers: Designated Trusts as published in Annex B of the <a href="#">Mandatory Request</a> .
<b>Services covered</b>	<p>Providers are asked to submit activity and financial data for all incidents going through 999 call centres or dispatch centres.</p> <p>An incident within PLICS is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a discrete event where one or more responses are dispatched</li> <li>• clinical advice is given over the phone</li> <li>• an information only or no treatment required calls.</li> </ul>

	<p>Alongside in-house provision the collection includes the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• activity completed by third-party providers</li> <li>• activity completed by hazardous area response teams (HART)</li> <li>• medical emergency response incident teams (MERIT)</li> <li>• healthcare professional responses</li> <li>• air ambulance responses (staff only).</li> </ul> <p>The following services are out of scope of the collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other patient-facing services, eg GP out-of-hours, patient transport service and NHS 111</li> <li>• HART non-responding time.</li> </ul> <p>The collection year begins on 1 April 2019 and ends on 31 March 2020.</p> <p>All incidents that started within the collection year are in scope of this collection. For example, if an incident started on 31 March 2020 at 23:50 and ended on 1 April 2020, then all the resources and activities should be allocated, even though the incident ended outside the collection year.</p>
<b>Date</b>	Ambulance providers: From 1 April 2019 for collection in 2021.
<b>Implementation dates (start/end dates)</b>	<p>Start date – Timetabled for collection start date of 11 January 2021</p> <p>End date – Timetabled for collection end date of 29 January 2021.</p>

# Background

## Why is patient-level costing being mandated?

8. The level of data available in reference costs is not granular enough to easily identify potential efficiency gains. Such data is limited in its ability to reflect the complexity of patient care and identify cost variation between individual patients. By introducing a standardised method of reporting cost information at patient level this can be rectified. This will be produced by patient-level information and costing systems (PLICS).
9. The move to costing at an individual patient level was signalled as part of the Five Year Forward View and has become a core part of the NHS Long Term Plan. It was therefore necessary for NHS England and NHS Improvement's<sup>1</sup> costing transformation programme (CTP) to develop the mechanisms to support this. The CTP was established to implement patient-level costing across acute, mental health, ambulance and community providers. The programme entails:
  - introducing and implementing new costing standards for patient-level costing
  - developing and implementing one single national cost collection to replace current multiple collections
  - establishing the minimum required standards for costing software and promoting its adoption
  - driving and encouraging sector support to adopt patient-level costing methodology and technology.
10. NHS Improvement's [ambulance service impact assessment](#) (completed as part of the move to mandating patient-level costing) found there are significant benefits of collecting patient level costs using the costing standards.

<sup>1</sup> From 1 April 2019, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working together as a new single organisation to better support the NHS to deliver improved care for patients and so this document will refer to the organisation responsible for the costing transformation programme as 'NHS England and NHS Improvement.' Some references will remain to 'NHS Improvement' however (for example for historical or legal purposes where it is still appropriate to use 'NHS Improvement').

Producing information at a granular level, with all providers using the same costing method, will create benefits including:

- better benchmarking of costs and pathways, allowing trusts to identify and address unwarranted variation
- improving the accuracy of the underlying information as this is presented at a level clinicians and managers can validate and better understand their activity data, and
- support an improvement in the currency design and the accuracy of the tariff, which is based on cost information submitted by providers.

11. Understanding how providers spend money is essential in tackling short-term deficits, supporting the development of new models of care and reducing the variation in resource utilisation.

# Purpose and scope

12. The purpose of this document is to define the data to be collected and submitted for the patient-level costing submission. For the financial year 2019/20 this will only apply to the designated providers of ambulance activity. The intention is that this information standard will be updated annually, subject to a further Mandatory Request from NHS Improvement.
13. NHS England and NHS Improvement has published a mandation timetable. This identifies when it is expected individual trusts will be required to submit patient-level costing information for their services.
14. For financial year 2019/20 data, this information standard ONLY applies to Ambulance services provided by the designated NHS Ambulance Services<sup>2</sup>. As PLC is mandated for other types of services and providers, other PLICS information standards relevant to those services will be produced and/or updated accordingly.

<sup>2</sup> See [mandation timetable](#)

# Guidance on the patient-level costing and information systems Ambulance standard

15. Detailed instructions and guidance on patient-level costing is updated and published annually as part of NHS England and NHS Improvement's<sup>3</sup> [Approved Costing Guidance \(ACG\)](#). This includes:
- the approved methodologies and processes for costing – Approved Costing Guidance – Standards Approved Costing Guidance - Standards (the costing standards)
  - guidance on how to implement the costing standards
  - an [ambulance technical document](#) to complete and submit the patient-level costing return, and
  - the 2019/20 national cost collection guidance including:
    - Volume 1 - Overview
    - Volume 2 – National Cost Collection reconciliation and exclusions
    - Volume 4 – National Cost Collection – ambulance sector
    - Volume 7 – National Cost Collection – data submission

NHS England and NHS Improvement will review and publish the updated ACG annually, after a review and feedback process with stakeholders including NHS trusts, NHS Digital and other key organisations.

16. This will allow NHS England and NHS Improvement to update and make any changes to the costing submission process based on feedback from previous years' submissions from suppliers, trusts, NHS Digital and other interested

<sup>3</sup> Since 1 April 2016, Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority have operated as a single integrated organisation known as NHS Improvement. This document is issued in accordance with a duty to consult imposed on Monitor by Section 69(7) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012. In this document, therefore, 'NHS Improvement' means Monitor, unless the context requires otherwise.

parties. This information standard will also be reviewed and updated as part of the annual process.

17. The ACG is in three sections:

**Table 1: ACG contents**

Section	Summary	Financial year
<a href="#">Approved Costing Guidance</a>	Introduces the guidance and provides essential information, including the costing principles.	N/A
<a href="#">Costing standards</a>	Contains the <i>Approved Costing Guidance - Standards</i> as well as tools and templates to help trusts implement them.	For the next financial year (i.e. the costing standards for 2020/21 were published in January 2020)
<a href="#">National cost collection guidance</a>	Provides details of the national cost collections as well as tools and templates to help trusts implement them.	For the current financial year (i.e. the collection guidance published is for the financial year 2019/20)

18. All enquiries regarding implementation of the patient-level costing information standard should be directed to NHS England and NHS Improvement’s Costing Team - [costing@improvement.nhs.uk](mailto:costing@improvement.nhs.uk) - with the subject ‘Patient-level costing information standard’

## Legal framework

19. Trusts<sup>4</sup> submit cost data to fulfil NHS England and NHS Improvement’s (Monitor’s) requirements for the provider licence.<sup>5</sup> This covers all sectors (acute, mental health, ambulance and community), but excludes independent providers. The conditions require trusts to:

<sup>4</sup> The licence applies to NHS foundation trusts; NHS trusts are required to comply with equivalent conditions, including the requirements relating to pricing and costs.

<sup>5</sup> The NHS Contract requires all providers who are licensed to comply with the licensing conditions (as noted above).

- record cost information in accordance with cost allocation methodologies published by NHS England and NHS Improvement in its Approved Costing Guidance (condition P1)
  - provide such information, documents and reports relating to costs as NHS England and NHS Improvement may require for its pricing functions (condition P2).
20. The data collected will be used to create the data set Pseudo-PLCAMDS (A pseudonymised version of the patient level costing ambulance data set). NHS England and NHS Improvement intend to use this data in connection with any NHS England and NHS Improvement pricing or other functions for the purpose of:
- informing the national tariff
  - producing and distributing patient-level data in NHS England and NHS Improvement tools for use by NHS providers, e.g. national PLICS portal and PLICS data quality tool
  - supporting efficiency and quality of care improvement programmes e.g. Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) and operational productivity in NHS providers
  - informing and modelling new methods of pricing NHS services
  - informing new approaches and other changes to currency design
  - improving future cost collections
  - informing the relationship between provider and patient characteristics and cost
  - developing analytical tools and reports to help providers improve their data quality, identify operational and clinical efficiencies, and review and challenge their patient-level cost data.
21. As well as sharing the Pseudo-PLCAMDS data within NHS England and NHS Improvement, NHS England and NHS Improvement will (subject to approval by NHS Digital through the Data Access Request Service (DARS) process) share pseudonymised high level Pseudo-PLCAMDS patient-level data with participating trusts and with arm's length bodies using NHS England and NHS Improvement tools and reports.

22. Under section 259(1)(a) of the Health and Social Care Act (“the 2012 Act”), NHS Digital has the powers to require the submission of PLICS data. A Data Provision Notice will be issued for this data collection [here](#).
23. Under sections 255 and 256(2 (a) of the Act, NHS Digital has received a Mandatory Request from NHS Improvement (Monitor) to establish and operate a system for the collection and analysis of PLICS data for Financial year 2019/2020 from Ambulance providers, as follows:
  - Data collection - ability for Provider Trusts to submit PLICS data direct to NHS Digital;
  - Potential to link PLICS data with relevant activity and outcome data held by NHS Digital to be agreed between NHS Digital and NHS England and NHS Improvement via data specifications;
  - Data quality and validation, and
  - Data supply – the functionality to provide, where appropriate in accordance with NHS Digital’s functions, pseudonymised PLICS data to NHS England and NHS Improvement for onward processing and analysis to be agreed between NHS Digital and NHS England and NHS Improvement via data specifications.
24. The accepted Mandatory Request is available on the NHS Digital website: <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/corporate-information-and-documents/directions-and-data-provision-notice/mandatory-requests-from-nhs-improvement/plics-ambulance-plics-mental-health-and-plics-iapt-for-financial-year-2019-2020-data>.
25. In terms of disseminating the data once held by NHS Digital, the Data Access Request Service (DARS) process verifies that there is an appropriate legal basis for an applicant to access the requested data and that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure that the applicant will store and handle data safely and securely.
26. A signed Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) is in place between NHS Digital and NHS England and NHS Improvement, having been through the DARS process.

27. A change to that DSA will require a further application through DARS and consideration by the Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data (IGARD)<sup>6</sup>.
28. NHS Digital may disseminate the data collected under the Mandatory Request, which may include dissemination to other organisations via the DARS process.
29. The data will be utilised by both NHS Digital and NHS England and NHS Improvement to produce an accompanying Official Statistic release in line with principles contained within the code of practice for statistics. The data will be subject to queries, for example to Freedom of Information requests and Parliamentary Questions.

<sup>6</sup> <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/corporate-information-and-documents/independent-ugroup-advising-on-the-release-of-data>

# Requirements

30. This section defines the requirements for the patient-level costing and information systems standard. There are five aspects to the requirements.
  1. High level processes for all trusts (Approved Costing Guidance)
  2. National cost collection guidance
  3. Data quality
  4. Technology and data structure
  5. Information governance
  
31. As part of the move to patient-level costing, NHS England and NHS Improvement works closely with system suppliers and trusts on the requirements of patient-level information and costing systems (PLICS). It is the responsibility of trusts to ensure that any costing system must fulfil the costing standards requirements. As part of this work, NHS England and NHS Improvement publishes [minimum software requirements](#). This supports:
  - costing practitioners to procure and implement costing software and
  - review software updates, and
  - software suppliers to develop their software.
  
32. NHS England and NHS Improvement will revise and reissue the minimum software requirements annually (early in each calendar year). The revisions will reflect changes to NHS England and NHS Improvement costing methodology and user needs.

## 1. High level processes for all trusts (Approved Costing Guidance)

33. The ACG sets out high-level processes that trusts are required to have in place to ensure their costing information is complete and accurate.
  
34. Table 2 below provides the requirements and conformance criteria for trusts.

**Table 2: High level conformance criteria for PLICS**

No	Requirement	Conformance criteria
1.1	The trust <b>MUST</b> record, and report cost information in line with the <a href="#">Approved Costing Guidance - Standards</a>	<p>The trust records all gaps in costing approaches in the costing manual and, where they vary from the costing standards, are agreed with NHS England and NHS Improvement.</p> <p>This will be reviewed as part of the costing assurance programme (audit of costing) and will form part of the trust’s own board assurance process.</p>
1.2	The trust <b>SHOULD</b> submit required supporting documentation, such as the costing assessment tool (CAT) and other documentation as requested by NHS England and NHS Improvement.	The trust produces and completes the CAT. This is submitted to NHS England and NHS Improvement by the date in the national cost collection guidance.

## 2. National cost collection guidance

35. The national cost collection guidance forms part of the ACG and details what is being collected, the format and when the collection will be made. The detailed information includes:

- the specification and format for the data collection (XML files)
- the batching and naming process of XML files
- the fields to be collected, and
- additional guidance to support the consistent allocation of costs.

36. The trust’s costing system needs to be able to produce the required output. The term “system” covers both an external company (which provides either an off-the-shelf or bespoke system) or an in-house developed solution. It also does not assume a single application; the system may comprise separate components. NHS England and NHS Improvement expects all trusts to have a

Service Level Agreement (SLA)/contract in place with their system supplier to ensure future development needs are sufficient to meet changes to the standard.

37. Table 3 provides the requirements and conformance criteria with the national cost collection guidance.

**Table 3: Conformance with national cost collection guidance**

No	Requirement	Conformance criteria
2.1	The quantum of costs submitted <b>MUST</b> be reconciled to the audited accounts, with appropriate adjustments made in line with the national cost collection guidance.	<p>There is a rigorous process for review of the cost quantum, including review as part of the Board Assurance process and reconciled to the audited annual accounts.</p> <p>Accurate completion will be checked post submission and any material issues reported back to the trust by NHS England and NHS Improvement.</p> <p>Further review will be undertaken as part of the CAP.</p>
2.2	The trust <b>SHOULD</b> ensure that their systems are and remain compliant with the <a href="#">minimum software requirements</a> to enable all specified data items to be captured and extracted in compliance with the Information standard specification and implementation guidance.	<p>The output from the PLICS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• passes the Data Validation Tool (DVT) mandatory checks (submission failures) to create the require data output XML files, and</li> <li>• the review of the Costing Assessment Tool (CAT) is found to be satisfactory by NHS England and NHS Improvement.</li> </ul>
2.3	Services outside the scope of this collection <b>SHOULD NOT</b> be reported in the patient-level cost collection extracts and <b>SHOULD</b> be costed and reported in the reconciliation tables by the trust to	The requirements of the national cost collection guidance should be followed, and a process put in place to accurately identify and exclude services outside the scope of the collection. This should be reviewed and signed off as part of the Director of Finance and Board Assurance process.

No	Requirement	Conformance criteria
	ensure the correct quantum is generated.	

### 3. Data quality

38. Each trust is responsible for ensuring the data submitted is of the highest quality and completeness possible, and accurately represents the cost of the service provided. NHS England and NHS Improvement expects organisations implementing this standard to be consistent. Therefore, [Implementation Guidance](#) has been produced as part of the suite of documentation to support this information standard. This sets out how the standard should be implemented, to help recording and support data quality.
39. As with reference costs, there are a number of data validation checks in place. These are contained in the Data Validation Tool (DVT). Data validations are split into two groups:
- **submission failure** - these are validations which result in the data being rejected and so must be addressed before files can be submitted to NHS Digital. They cover the validity of the data submitted and file structure<sup>7</sup>; and
  - **warnings** - highlights fields which need to be reviewed as part of the submission sign-off process but may not require action.
40. NHS Digital will also validate the data for submission failures when it is submitted to them.
41. Table 4 provides the requirements and conformance criteria for data quality.

<sup>7</sup> If A trust fails a mandatory validation, this will be followed up by NHS England and NHS Improvement and a resubmission requested.

**Table 4: Conformance criteria for data quality**

No	Requirement	Conformance criteria
3.1	Information in the costing submission made by the trust <b>MUST</b> be consistent with other financial and activity information.	As part of the internal review process and formal sign-off, there should be a process for the trust to assure itself that the cost information reconciles to the audited accounts, and the activity is consistent with that used for contracting and reporting purposes. This will be reviewed by NHS England and NHS Improvement as part of the Costing Assurance Programme (CAP) and review of the Board Assurance process.
3.2	The costing system <b>MUST</b> produce data which will pass the Data Validation Tool (DVT) checks and create XML data files for submission to NHS Digital.	The output passes the Data Validation Tool (DVT) mandatory checks (submission failures) to create the require data output XML files.  These XML files submitted to NHS Digital must pass the validation checks at NHS Digital.
3.3	Where resubmission of costing data is requested by NHS England and NHS Improvement, the trust <b>MUST</b> address the issues raised and resubmit the data per the national cost collection guidance.	Where resubmission of costing data is required, NHS England and NHS Improvement will contact the trust with details of the issues found. Having addressed the issues, the trust should re-perform the submission process and resubmit on the agreed date.

42. Conformance with these criteria will be reviewed as part of NHS England and Improvement’s review of submission, compliance and enforcement policy and the Costing Assurance Programme.

## 4. Technology and data structure

43. Patient-level costing data is to be submitted to NHS Digital (in XML file format) using Secure Electronic File Transfer (SEFT). SEFT allows an NHS Digital

business team to collect and transfer data to and from any external organisation electronically and securely.

44. SEFT can only be accessed by registered and approved users. NHS Digital will issue communications and guidance on the SEFT process. A [quick help guide](#) is available for users.
45. Table 5 provides the requirements and conformance criteria with technology and data structure.

**Table 5: Conformance for technology and data structure**

No	Requirement	Conformance criteria
4.1	Patient-level costing data <b>MUST</b> be submitted by the Trust to NHS Digital using Secure Electronic File Transfer (SEFT).	<p>PLICS XML files are received at NHS Digital via SEFT.</p> <p>The (PLICS) data submitter at a trust shall read and adhere to the SEFT user guidance on the NHS Digital website at:</p> <p><a href="https://digital.nhs.uk/services/transfer-data-securely/secure-electronic-file-transfer-seft-users-quick-help-guide">https://digital.nhs.uk/services/transfer-data-securely/secure-electronic-file-transfer-seft-users-quick-help-guide</a></p>
4.2	The trust's software <b>MUST</b> produce data at the required level, in the mandated format.	<p>The output passes the Data Validation Tool (DVT) mandatory checks (submission failures) to create the required XML data output files.</p> <p>These XML files submitted to NHS Digital pass the validation checks at NHS Digital.</p>

## 5. Information governance

46. Information governance is extremely important, and trusts **MUST** ensure that the arrangements in place comply with legislation and guidance on patient data.

47. Table 6 provides the requirements and conformance criteria for information governance as part of the national cost collection guidance.

**Table 6: Conformance for information governance**

No	Requirement	Conformance criteria
5.1	Trusts <b>MUST</b> make available information and guidance to patients stating that their clinical care data may be re-used for the purpose of data analysis and reporting.	Relevant information and guidance made available
5.2	Trust Data Controllers for this PLICS data <b>MUST</b> ensure that their staff involved in the PLICS process are fully conversant with the PLICS Implementation Guidance for this standard	Staff have read and understood the PLICS Implementation Guidance
5.3	Trusts <b>SHOULD</b> ensure the Caldicott Guardian is informed about the PLICS collection and has read the Implementation Guidance for this standard	Caldicott Guardian has read and understood the PLICS Implementation Guidance

48. For information on information governance arrangements at NHS Digital for patient level costing see - <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/our-work/keeping-patient-data-safe/gdpr/gdpr-register/patient-level-information-costings-system-plics>

# Implementation and use

49. As part of the Approved Costing Guidance in previous years, NHS England and NHS Improvement has provided details on how trusts should implement and produce their patient-level cost data compliant with the costing standards. Guidance includes:
- [Quick start guide](#)
  - [How to implement the standards](#)
  - [Ambulance Technical Guidance](#)
  - [open learning platform](#)
  - webinars on costing – for costing staff and clinicians (available via the ACG)
  - [costing assessment tool \(CAT\)](#), and
  - [national sector forums](#)
  - regular implementation workshops.
50. NHS England and NHS Improvement has also produced [national cost collection guidance](#) which includes the required information for producing and submitting the costing data file.

## Process overview

51. Data from a trust's costing system will be produced at an incident level with some information included on response(s) and patient(s) and submitted to NHS Digital via SEFT. The PLICS files submitted are then validated at NHS Digital.
52. NHS Digital then pseudonymises the data, before it is provided to NHS England and NHS Improvement via SEFT in accordance with the DARS process and the data sharing agreement. NHS Digital may link the PLICS data to other activity and outcome data. Other organisations may request the data, subject to the DARS process.

## Additional guidance and information for producing patient-level costing

53. As part of the Approved Costing Guidance, NHS England and NHS Improvement have provided detailed guidance, by sector and service, to support providers to produce and submit patient-level cost data. This is listed in the Implementation Guidance for this standard.

# Annex A: Glossary

Acronym	Term	Description
<b>ACG</b>	Approved Costing Guidance	NHS England and NHS Improvement's main policy documents for costing healthcare services in England, which describe the process of producing and collecting costs, both patient-level and average (reference) costs. <a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/approved-costing-guidance/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/approved-costing-guidance/</a>
<b>ACG Standards</b>	Approved Costing Guidance - Standards	The approved approaches and methodologies for calculating costs, published in the Approved Costing Guidance.
<b>ANANA</b>	A unified identifier structure of 5 alternating alphabetic and numeric characters (ANANA)	ANANA codes are the new organisation codes which will replace ODS codes. Further information is available - <a href="#">Information Standards Notice (ISN) DCB0090</a>
<b>CAP</b>	Costing Assurance Programme	This programme reviews and assesses the accuracy of the costing information produced by trusts. It also identifies trusts that need support and the outcome is used to improve the guidance available to trusts. <a href="https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/costing-assurance-programme/">https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/costing-assurance-programme/</a>
<b>CAT</b>	Costing Assessment Tool	An improvement tool developed by NHS England and NHS Improvement to allow costing practitioners to record and measure their progress against the costing standards. Scores from the CAT will be included in the national PLICS portal for benchmarking as well as identifying productivity opportunities and the development of the national tariff. The CAT may also form the basis of providers assessment under the costing assurance programme.
<b>CTP</b>	Costing transformation programme	NHS England and NHS Improvement's programme to move from reference costs collection to patient-level cost collection. This will improve the quality of costing

Acronym	Term	Description
		information throughout the NHS and support providers to deliver more effective and efficient outcomes. For more background information see the NHS England and NHS Improvement website.
<b>DARS</b>	Data Access Request Service	A service managed by NHS Digital that allows clinicians, researchers and commissioners access to data required to help improve NHS services subject to meeting strict data governance standards.
<b>DPN</b>	Data Provision Notice	This provides information on the data collection including the purpose, benefits, how NHS Digital intends to collect the data, form, manner, frequency and from which organisations.
<b>DSA</b>	Data Sharing Agreement	A formal agreement for the routine sharing of data sets between organisations for an agreed purpose.
<b>DVT</b>	Data Validation Tool	This tool is used to prepare Costing Transformation Programme (CTP) PLICS submission files. It assesses the data quality of the cost collection files to identify any areas that require attention, providing the opportunity to improve data accuracy before submission
<b>HSCA</b>	The 2012 Act	The Health and Social Care Act 2012. <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents">www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/7/contents</a>
<b>IGARD</b>	Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data	Group that considers all requests for dissemination of confidential information, as defined in section 263 of the Health and Social Care Act, through the Data Access Request Service (DARS). Also makes general recommendations or observations to NHS Digital about their processes, policies and procedures, including transparency measures such as registers.
<b>NCC Guidance</b>	National Cost Collection guidance	Guidance, updated annually, which describes the requirements for the national cost collection. It covers the mandatory cost collection for all NHS providers and is part of the <a href="#">Approved Costing Guidance</a> .
<b>NHS E &amp; NHS I</b>	NHS England and NHS Improvement	Refers to NHS England and NHS Improvement, which since 1 April 2019 has been working together as a new single

Acronym	Term	Description
		organisation to better support the NHS to deliver improved care for patients. As local health systems work more closely together, the same needs to happen at a national level. Our new single operating model has been designed to support delivery of the <a href="#">NHS Long Term Plan</a> .
<b>PLC</b>	Patient-level costing	Calculating and collecting data at an individual patient level.
<b>PLCAMDS</b>	Patient-Level costing (Ambulance) Data Set	The PLICS Ambulance data that NHS Digital collects from the relevant NHS providers
<b>PLICS</b>	Patient-level information and costing system	The system used to record and report the patient pathway and costs at an individual patient level.
<b>Pseudo-PLCAMDS</b>	Pseudonymised Patient-Level costing (Ambulance) Data Set	The data set created when NHS Digital processes and pseudonymises the PLCAMDS data from Ambulance providers (before providing Pseudo-PLCAMDS to NHS Improvement).
<b>RC</b>	Reference costs	The average unit cost to the NHS of providing secondary healthcare to NHS patients.
<b>SEFT</b>	Secure Electronic File Transfer	The system that allows the transfer files securely into and out of NHS Digital, providing data security during transmission using a 256-bit AES encryption mechanism. The data are held in secure containers at NHS Digital and only people who are authorised to process the data are allowed access.
<b>XML</b>	Extensible Mark-up Language	A computer language that defines a set of rules for encoding documents in a format that is both human-readable and machine-readable.

Contact us:

**[costing@improvement.nhs.uk](mailto:costing@improvement.nhs.uk)**

**NHS England and NHS Improvement**

Wellington House  
133-155 Waterloo Road  
London  
SE1 8UG

This publication can be made available in a number of other formats on request.