

CCG briefing

SNOMED CT in Primary Care - Nov 2016

SNOMED CT is the clinical vocabulary chosen to replace Read codes within the NHS. Coded information that is currently received from GP systems in Read codes will change to SNOMED CT and CCGs need to be ready for this.

Why are clinical codes changing?

- Currently there are two versions of clinical codes (Read v2 and CTV3) in existence within general practice, so not all GP systems use the same coding system and they do not provide the sophisticated features now expected from a clinical coding scheme.
- The NHS needs a single clinical terminology (SNOMED CT) in order for clinical data to be exchanged accurately and consistently across all care settings; this will enable better patient care and improve how clinical data can be analysed and reported on.
- SNOMED CT is also an international terminology and this will enable the UK to participate more effectively in research and analysis of health information to support national and global health care improvements, as well as improve healthcare solutions.

When will it happen?

- SNOMED CT must be adopted by all general practice service providers before 1 April 2018, (the rest of the NHS to move before 1 April 2020).
- The Principal Clinical System (PCS) suppliers (GPSoc) are currently designing their systems for the use of SNOMED CT in general practice and are developing their deployment schedules.
- Not all GP practices will move to SNOMED CT at the same time and the estate will transition carefully across a number of months.
- Secondary Care, Acute Care, Mental Health, Community systems and other systems used in the direct management of care of an individual are to move to SNOMED CT before 1 April 2020, although a number already do use SNOMED CT.

How will it affect me?

It depends what your role is.

- Those who add data into the clinical system will be able to do so in a very similar manner in which they are used to, although they will select SNOMED CT terms.
- SNOMED will offer users an improved selection of terms to choose from, this will enable clinical information to be captured in more detail, and reduce ambiguity.
- For users who need to extract data e.g. CCGs, NHS Digital are currently working with GP system suppliers to understand the level of change needed.
- NHS Digital is working with other national organisations and system suppliers to help minimise disruption to daily activities as part of the transition to SNOMED CT.

What Training and Support will be Available?

- Suppliers of the clinical system will provide end user system training using their preferred training tools (as they currently do). Any queries regarding this should be directed to your GP system supplier.
- If the CCG has a direct access to a supplier clinical system, GP PCS suppliers will provide end user training for their system functionality using their preferred training tools (as they currently do).
- NHS Digital will provide general awareness sessions on SNOMED CT e.g. how to find content, developing reports etc. [Sessions](#) will run throughout 2017.
- Additionally, there are [monthly webinars](#) that provide an overview of SNOMED CT including an opportunity to look at the SNOMED CT content in more detail; these are not tailored to general practice.
- A discussion forum is also available on [NHS Networks](#), where you can exchange ideas, questions and more, with other system users.
- A list of [FAQs](#) is available to assist organisations and suppliers with the transition.

What Can CCGs Do Ahead of the Transition?

- Ensure that NHS Digital has an accurate contact for your CCG to issue similar future communications for the transition to SNOMED CT. Email snomedprimarycare@nhs.net
- In the meantime, CCGs may wish to consider completing an element of “housekeeping of their reports or reviewing the quality of data available within patient records.
- Additionally, CCGs may wish to engage in conversations with any organisations that provide reports for them, regarding their plans to transition to SNOMED CT.
- CCGs should ensure that any training delivered or commissioned to GP Practices that involves the use of READ codes, is updated to incorporate SNOMED CT.

Look out for...

- Guidance for CCGs will be developed and communicated throughout the transition period from NHS Digital as the supplier plans are developed.
- NHS Digital training webinars to help individuals learn more about SNOMED CT <http://systems.digital.nhs.uk/gpsoc/snomedct>
- Updates from your clinical system supplier.

Further Information:

Visit: [The Snomed CT website](#)

Email: snomedprimarycare@nhs.net

Training: [Dates](#) for a general awareness of SNOMED CT in general practice.

FAQs: Can be found [on the Snomed CT website](#)

Other SNOMED links

[Distribution site](#) for SNOMED CT including [mapping tables](#) from Read to SNOMED CT:

SNOMED community on NHS Networks: www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/snomed-ct

IHTSDO [information](#) on SNOMED CT and [browser](#) to view SNOMED CT content.