



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

Introducing ONS geographic codes for use as standard in NHS Wales (WHC/2024/014)

We are mandating the Office for National Statistics' (ONS's) codes for geographic data in all NHS Wales IT and digital systems or services.

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Details

Status:

Compliance.

Category:

Data standards.

Title:

Introduction of the Office of National Statistics' (ONS) Register of Geographic Codes (RGCs) as a foundational standard for use across NHS Wales Bodies.

Date of expiry / review:

30th April 2027

Action by:

NHS health boards, NHS trusts and NHS special health authorities.

For information:

Digital Health and Care Suppliers

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Action required by:

With immediate effect.

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Enclosures:

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Guidance document

Dear Colleagues,

Welsh Government recognises the need to implement a standardised coding structure for geographic data.

The Office of National Statistics implemented a coding and naming policy on 1st January 2011 in the form of its register of geographic codes. This register consists of a simple nine-character alpha-numeric coding structure at its centre. The register of geographic codes, coding structure and policy are designed so that codes cannot be re-used or changed solely because of a name change.

As such, Welsh Government is formally mandating the use of the register of geographic codes across NHS Wales bodies as a structural standard for coding geographic data in all IT and digital systems/services.

Adoption of the register of geographic codes provides a definitive list of UK geographies used for official statistics. The Office of National Statistics maintains this listing of geographies, coordinates the issue of new codes, and maintains the relationship between active and archived code ranges on behalf of the Government Statistical Service. The register of geographic codes should be used in conjunction with the code history database.

The use of this standard will improve the consistency and reliability of held geographic data as well as interoperability improvements with the sharing of geographic data in Wales.

Adoption of the register of geographic codes as a foundational standard aligns NHS Wales bodies strategically with partners across the UK.

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Yours sincerely,

Mike Emery,
Director for Digital and Technology,
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