

WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Issue Date: April 2022

STATUS: COMPLIANCE / ACTION

**CATEGORY:
PERFORMANCE / DELIVERY**

Title: Prioritisation of COVID-19 patient episodes by NHS Wales Clinical Coding Departments

Date of Expiry / Review: 28/02/2023

For Action by:

Clinical Coding Managers of Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts

Action required by: (insert date)

As soon as possible.

Sender:

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Enclosure(s): None

Clinical Coding of COVID-19 in Admitted Patient Care data set (APC ds) Episodes

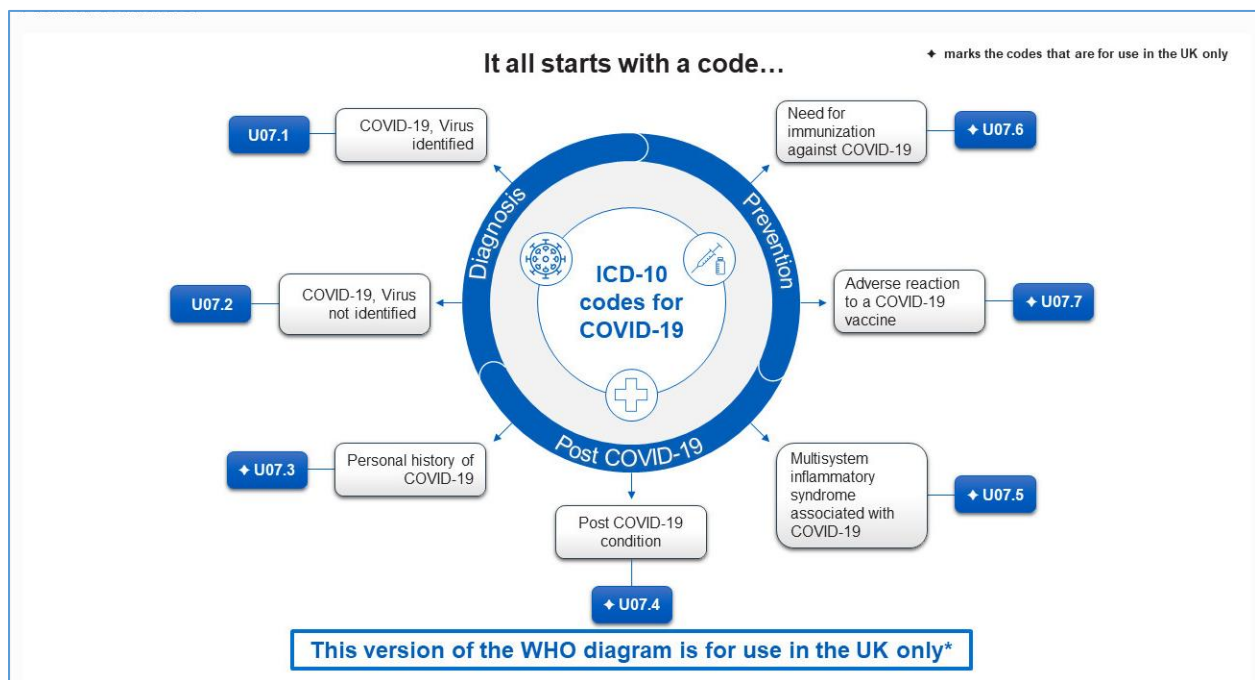
Current Position

The clinical coding service in Wales is mandated to assign classification codes to all inpatient Finished Consultant Episodes (FCEs). These codes record both clinical conditions affecting the patient and surgical/medical procedures undertaken during the episode.

The classification currently in use within NHS Wales for the recording of patient diagnoses for secondary uses is the 'International Statistical Classification of Diseases and related Health Problems 10th revision, 5th edition (2016)'; commonly referred to as 'ICD-10'.

Clinically coded data is an important source of management information within NHS Wales, and the provision of timely, accurate data supports decision-making processes.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 the WHO released additional specific codes to allow the identification of COVID-19 as a condition in patient records and within data sets using classifications coding:



Additionally, specific information/coding standards were implemented regarding the sequencing of classifications codes recording COVID-19, to show how COVID-19 relates to other conditions. The intention was to be able to identify the following information:

- Where COVID-19 is the main condition treated or investigated during an episode of care
- What symptoms of COVID-19 inpatients are displaying
- Where COVID-19 is the cause of other conditions (such as pneumonia)
- Ongoing conditions related to a previous COVID-19 infection

Given the rapidly changing nature of the situation during the pandemic, all information on COVID-19 cases needs to be recorded as promptly and accurately as possible. To support this, in the 2020/21 financial year the frequency of submission of APC ds Episodes data was increased from monthly to weekly to ensure data relating to inpatients with COVID-19 was available as soon after patient discharge as possible.

Due to the need for COVID-19 information to be as real-time as possible all NHS Wales Clinical Coding departments are asked to ensure that processes are put in place as soon as possible to ensure the following:

- All FCEs for patients with COVID-19 are identified upon discharge and prioritised by the Local Health Board/NHS Trust for the assignment of codes
- Such episodes of care are coded within the first week following discharge to allow for an accurate view of COVID-19 inpatient data on a weekly basis
- Each Local Health Board and NHS Trust to report their current numbers and percentages of uncoded COVID-19 and non COVID-19 episodes to Welsh Government (HSS.Performance@gov.wales) on the last day of each month.