



**WHC (WHC/2026/002)**

## WELSH HEALTH CIRCULAR

**Status:** Compliance – must be complied with by the recipient.

**Category:** Performance / Delivery

**Title: Modernised Outpatient Dataset Phase 2: Planned Care activity.**

**Date of Expiry / Review:** No expiry date.

**Action by:**

- All NHS health boards and trusts

**Required by:**

- Immediate

**Sender:**

Lesley Law

Head of Planned Care

NHS Delivery & Performance

Health Social Care Early Years Group

Welsh Government.

**Welsh Government Contacts:**

Lesley Law, [Lesley.Law@gov.wales](mailto:Lesley.Law@gov.wales)

**Enclosures:**

- Letter from Lesley Law
- DSCN (Data Standard Change Notice) WHC/2026/002

# Implementation of the Planned Care Activity DSCN: WHC/2026/002

Chief Executives NHS health boards and trusts  
Chief Operating Officers NHS Health boards and trusts  
Chief Executive NHS DHCW

04 March 2026

Dear Colleagues,

This Welsh health circular is being published to provide all health boards and trusts with notice of the requirement to comply with the following published Data Standard Change Notice (DSCNs) Phase 2 of planned care/outpatients minimum dataset modernisation:

## Rationale for developing the new DSCNs

The existing Outpatient and Outpatient Referral Data Sets were introduced in 1999 and 2008 respectively. These are no longer fit for purpose and required redevelopment to reflect the new ways of delivering planned care in line with ministerial commitments and:

- [\*Our programme for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists in Wales APRIL 2022\*](#)
- [\*The role of outpatients in transforming planned care in Wales: A three-year strategy and action plan 2023 to 2026\*](#)
- [\*Planned care waiting times guidance: April 2025\*](#)
- Other new policy such as the 3Ps Waiting Well Policy [\*Promote, prevent and prepare for planned care\*](#) published in August 2023.

In recent years there has also been an increase in the collection of aggregate data through electronic proforma directly from health boards/trusts to Welsh Government. These new datasets will dispense with the need for aggregate proformas and provide a more sustainable and coherent solution to collecting quality patient-level planned care information to support service planning, delivery and improvement in line with the duty of quality published in 2023 as part of the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

## **Approach to developing the datasets**

A phased approach has been adopted in approaching this work to allow for manageable and effective monthly submissions:

Phase 1: Planned Care Referrals (see WHC/2025/031)

Phase 2: Planned Care Outpatient Activity

Phase 3: Planned Care Outpatient Waiting List: News

Phase 4: Planned Care Outpatient Waiting List: Follow ups.

## **Phase 2: Planned Care Activity DSCN (WHC/2026/002)**

The Planned Care Activity DSCN was published on 19 February 2026 following approval by the Welsh Informatics Standards Board. The data set has been developed to capture the national data requirements which reflect the new and transformed ways of delivering planned care services in Wales.

To ensure that health boards commence reporting in line with this DSCN by 1st July 2026, the following is expected:

All health boards and trusts:

- Update local processes and systems to comply with the Information Specification outlined in the DSCNs.
- Collaborate with the DHCW Data Acquisition team to agree and establish processes for data submission in preparation for collection.

Digital Health and Care Wales:

- Ensure that all national systems have been updated to comply with the standard set out in the Information Specification within this DSCN.
- That the Data Acquisition team coordinate with each Health Board individually to discuss the details of data submission and offer any necessary support.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been approved to enable the secure and efficient flow and management of patient identifiable information in line with governance requirements.

All members of the health boards and trusts' executive teams have a responsibility for the submission of accurate and timely reporting in line with all DSCNs. A WHC will be published providing notice of our intent to publish DSCNs for Phases 3 to 4 and the actions required by all health boards and trusts to implement the changes. Further instruction and guidance will

be issued to support health boards to comply with the requirements set out in the DSCN.  
This will include submission dates and processes.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Law  
Head of Planned Care  
Delivery & Performance  
Health and Social Services Group  
Welsh Government

CC:

Jacqueline Totterdell, Director General Health and Social Services / NHS Chief Executive  
Nick Wood, Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Wales  
Jeremy Griffith, Director of Operations, WG  
Andrew Sallows, National Director - Planned Care, NHS Performance and Improvement  
Philip Barry, Director of Operational Improvement, NHS Performance and Improvement  
Liz Davies, Planned Care Policy Lead, NHS Performance and Improvement  
Helen Roberts, NHS Wales Performance, Welsh Government  
Alex Percival, Head of Planned Care Programmes, DHCW  
Kimberley Chapman, Programme Manager, DHCW  
Emily McCloskey, Standards Lead Specialist, DHCW