

NHS Digital Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service

Annual Survey Report

September 2021

**Improving lives with
data and technology**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

We originally planned to open our 2020 survey in April last year but delayed the launch due to the effects of COVID-19 on the professional lives of so many of our customers. We continued to monitor the situation and eventually went live in December 2020. We kept the survey open until 31 March 2021 to allow longer than usual for customers to respond, considering the impact of the pandemic.

As always, we are very grateful to all who took the time to participate and who provided detailed and constructive comments about our products and services.

1.2 Scope of the survey

As in previous years, the survey sought feedback about our products, services and communications, and asked respondents for suggestions as to how we can improve. We also included a range of questions about how effectively we responded to COVID-19, plus a few questions designed to help us better understand how extensively – and the ways in which – the SNOMED CT UK Edition is used. A full list of survey questions, along with corresponding numerical responses, is included at Annex 1.

1.3 Response rates

Despite running the survey for longer than usual and making sustained efforts to promote and publicise it, we only received 57 responses, which is significantly fewer than in any previous year. We can't be sure, but think it is likely that the impact of the pandemic was a major factor in the unprecedentedly low response rate.

As this response rate casts doubt upon the statistical validity of the numerical ratings within the survey, we feel that it would be unwise to draw firm conclusions based on these ratings. We have not, therefore, conducted our usual rigorous analysis of – or provided commentary within the report about – numerical ratings. Instead, this report focuses on the comments we received and, where appropriate, sets out commitments we are making in response to these comments.

2. Analysis by subject area

This section summarises important themes highlighted within survey comments, along with our response, including – where appropriate - details of any action we have taken or plan to take.

Area	Feedback themes from survey responses	NHS Digital response and actions
Standards development	Lack of terminology resource for standards development and to increase the number of concepts which are modelled.	We have been through a very active and dynamic period responding to COVID-19 priorities over the last 18 months, as well as experiencing changes in resource levels. We are currently working through a recruitment campaign, to build greater resilience and enhance and grow our team.

National Interim Clinical Imaging Procedure	NICIP's enduring 'interim' status and the lack of adequate maintenance / governance.	NICIP is under review and we have provided this update about ongoing work to clarify the position.
Request Submission Portal	Complexity of the submission process / lack of clarity around why requests are declined.	We have recently updated our SNOMED CT UK Edition: Governance and Change Request process guidance . We are also in the process of updating the corresponding classifications guidance, which we aim to publish by 31 October 2021.
Query Resolution Database	Need for better resolution naming rules; concerns about multiple queries with the same name; apparent contradiction between different resolutions; old COVID-19 queries remaining on the QRD.	<p>We want the experience of using the QRD to be as helpful as possible for customers but it is difficult for us to investigate potential contradictory resolutions without relevant details. We plan to launch a new QRD-based survey in October 2021, seeking feedback about individual resolutions to help us identify areas where we can improve.</p> <p><i>To ensure that resolutions relating to the coding of COVID-19 are up to date, we have marked those that have been superseded by updates to the coding standards. This may not affect the coding service but may be useful for information analysts who access the database for coding guidance.</i></p>
ICD-10	Delay in adding ICD-10 to the Classifications Browser	ICD-10 will be added to the browser by 31 March 2022. We plan to share information on the user group page about this and will invite users to become involved in testing. We will also publish information about this work on Delen, along with details of plans for the eVersion. We are also investigating options for including a note-taking facility within the browser and will keep users updated on this.
ICD-11	The lack of clear information about ICD-11.	We will publish an update on Delen about the status of ICD-11 and ICD-10, along with future intentions. We aim to do this by 31 December 2021.
OPCS-4	Ambiguous and outdated nature of some OPCS-4 content.	We are currently undertaking development for OPCS-4.10 and will publish our plan and extend the deadline for requests for change, so

		that the service has longer to submit details of OPCS-4.10 areas which they regard as priorities to be changed.
COVID standards	Concerns about COVID-19 standards being published on Delen, rather than in the Coding Clinic.	The publication of these standards on Delen reflected a 'one-off' decision in response to the pandemic. The background to the decision was covered in our Newsletter in June 2020 and this blog in February 2021 . In March 2021 we published the COVID standards in a downloadable format. We are also currently considering the best future use of the Coding Clinic and will provide an update to the service.
Clinical coding training materials	Desire for materials to be updated to e-learning format.	We are continuing to review our national training (CCAP and CCTP) materials to assess the potential for conversion to e-learning and e-assessment formats. We are consulting approved clinical coding auditors as part of our sub-group work and will provide updates as this work progresses.
Trainer and Auditor programmes	Concerns about application stage being complex; lack of frequency of training events.	<p>Most applications are accepted on first submission and information - including examples - is available on Delen and in the relevant programme handbook. However, we will continue to explore the scope for simplification of the application process, potentially through further automation. We're also working with Clinical Coding Auditor sub-group members to develop an auditor competency framework and to refine the application criteria to better support applicants and their line managers from April 2022.</p> <p>On the frequency of events, we work hard to try to meet the needs of trainers and auditors but - as a small team - we are limited in terms of what we can deliver each year.</p>
Blended learning	The move to blended learning happened later than it should have; e-learning products are long overdue an update.	The pandemic accelerated our intentions to look at blended learning by around two years. Converting classroom materials into online training is a complex, time-consuming and costly task. Despite our limited

		resources, we have totally updated and refreshed Anatomy and Physiology e-learning for 1 April 2021. We hope to update other products and are working to secure necessary resources and extend our e-learning development skills. As an example, our two classifications specialist trainer developers are undertaking CDOL (Certificate in Designing Online Learning) training during 2021/22 to assist with this.
Digital Learning Solutions	Concerns about registration process for DLS to access auditor e-assessment and other materials.	We are conscious of users experiencing issues with registration / access, although our investigations confirm that the overwhelming majority of such issues are a consequence of instructions not being followed correctly. In an attempt to clarify the process, we have produced this guidance .

3. Conclusion

As mentioned at paragraph 1.3 of this report, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions based upon so few responses, but we have considered all of the comments which we received. As set out in the above table, we are committed to a range of activities with the aim of addressing a number of the key areas which respondents identified for attention.

We have updated our [Service Improvement Plan](#) to reflect relevant commitments we have made within this report.

Thank you again to all who participated in the survey.

**Terminology and Classifications Delivery Service
NHS Digital**