

G-Cloud 15

Service Definition for Primary Care Clinical Data Specification (January 2026)

1. Service Definition

This service consists of the development of data specifications for implementation within a data warehouse, clinical information system or software solution containing, or based on, primary care coded data. A data specification is a series of linked documentation that defines the clinical code groups and the logical business rules for any given clinical concept or defined indicator. It is a guideline to ensure a comprehensive and consistent data definition, for implementation within a data warehouse and/ or software solution for the purpose of data reporting, extraction, analysis, and messaging.

For over twenty-five years, PRIMIS has developed considerable in-house expertise in primary care health informatics. Our team of clinical advisers work in general practice and bring insight, based on their experience, into the development of data specifications.

Thanks to the wealth of experience that the PRIMIS team holds, we are well positioned to provide data specification services to a wide range of organisations, such as national NHS organisations for large-scale national data reporting activities, and commercial partners and research teams. Our portfolio of work includes the development and maintenance of data specifications on behalf of the UKSHA for the prioritisation of patients for vaccination and monitoring of vaccination uptake among the at-risk groups. We also work closely with all GP System Suppliers in the UK on the implementation of our national data specifications.

Overview

The development of a data specification is by its nature an iterative process and requires regular review with the customer. As part of initial scoping exercise, PRIMIS works with the customer to define and agree:

- The timescales for the project;
- The outputs to be delivered;
- The number of review iterations (there is a presumption that data specifications will need to be reviewed and updated at least twice a year, however this will be dependent on the purpose and scope of the specification and the frequency of code updates by UK Terminology);
- Our responsibilities; and
- The customer responsibilities (e.g., to sign off specifications, any Information Governance (IG) actions, any internal approval processes).

Our team of experts take account the way that data are entered, used, and stored in general practice, regardless of the GP clinical information system in use. If the data are not available (e.g., not entered routinely by practices), the customer will be advised, including whether it might be possible to collect data in the future.

Once the requirement is clear, a non-ambiguous, structured Plain English Definition (PED) is prepared. This definition ensures that non-programmers can understand what will be extracted in a precise way. This is signed off by the customer and forms the basis on which the technical specification will be developed.

A data specification in the form of clinical codes and logical business rules is then developed. A detailed understanding of SNOMED CT and legacy terminologies is required, in addition to an appreciation of how different terminologies map to one another. PRIMIS maintains in-house tooling to aid this process.

2. Development Process

Data specifications are developed in consultation with customers to understand their data collection requirements, including specific inclusion and exclusion criteria.

PRIMIS assesses the feasibility of the request providing the following insights:

- Clinical implications of the requirement;
- The extent to which data recorded in GP clinical systems meets the requirements;
- Whether terminology exists to represent the required concepts;
- What percentage of information would be extractable;
- Information Governance advice if appropriate.

This information is translated into a Plain English Definition (PED). This will be subject to the agreed number of iterations and the customer approval process. At this point it will be signed off by the customer as a clear representation of their requirements.

The PED is then converted into a technical specification. It encompasses the entire requirement for an efficient query. This includes terminology content (SNOMED CT, RV2 and CTV3) and a formal description of the rules involved in the data extraction process (logical business rules), e.g., included age and date ranges, and in defining the data items to be collected. The PRIMIS team is also able to convert other terminologies into SNOMED, such as ICD-10.

As part of the development, we will assess the potential application of the specification, whether its intended use is to support the development of a medical device and the extent to which a Clinical Safety Case or Review is required.

This process conforms to the requirements of our ISO 9001 certified Quality Management System (QMS).

3. Information Governance

PRIMIS works within the guidelines set for NHS information governance and applicable data protection legislation. PRIMIS satisfies itself that these guidelines and legal obligations are met when carrying out data extraction activities. PRIMIS published its NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit assessment in May 2025, measuring its performance against the National Data Guardian's ten data security standards and providing assurance of good data security and handling practice.

PRIMIS specifications ensure that only the minimum required volumes of data are extracted. PRIMIS can provide specifications which include patient identifiable data fields where customers have appropriate information governance procedures in place. PRIMIS does not directly extract, handle or process patient identifiable data.

All members of the PRIMIS team undertake regular Information Governance/Security training.

4. Security Policies and Procedures

The University of Nottingham is certified under Cyber Essentials Plus.

PRIMIS information systems and servers are protected and managed by the University of Nottingham's Digital Technology Services. PRIMIS/the University of Nottingham (UoN) have the following information security policies and procedures in place:

- UoN Information Security Policy
- UoN IT Network Security Policy
- UoN System Configuration and Management Policy
- UoN Access Control Policy
- UoN Anti-Malware Policy
- PRIMIS Information Security Management System (ISMS) Risk Register
- PRIMIS Information Governance (IG) Policy

5. Service Management

Each contract will have a nominated PRIMIS Project Manager who will coordinate the input from the clinical and technical teams. Regular meetings are held internally to monitor progress of the customer's requirements. The Project Manager will agree a reporting schedule with each customer and will involve the appropriate members from the clinical and technical teams as required. Each customer will have a named team of experts working with them.

6. Contract Management

The nominated PRIMIS Project Manager is responsible for contract management, responsibility for monitoring internal the performance of PRIMIS teams to ensure that contract targets and milestones are achieved, take remedial actions as and when required, ensure compliance with the terms and conditions, and document any changes or amendments arising during the contract.

7. Ordering and Invoicing Process

Email: Service requests should be sent to: enquiries@primis.nottingham.ac.uk and will be directed to a member of the Business Implementation team. Any service request will go through an initial feasibility assessment as described above.

Invoicing: An invoicing schedule will be agreed with individual customers to take account of the service requirements. Invoices will be payable within thirty (30) days of the University of Nottingham's invoice and will generally be submitted on or shortly after completion of services. In addition, where applicable, the Customer will reimburse the University for reasonable, necessary, and verifiable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the University in connection with the Services upon submission of receipts or other evidence of the same.