PICANet ongoing data anonymisation.

PICANet will from the 27th of October 2017 begin to anonymise data held in our database on an ongoing basis, when a patient reaches the age of 18 years and has not been the subject of a PICANet event (referral, transport and admission) for over 5 years then all records associated with them will be anonymised.

Why is the anonymisation needed?

The approvals held by PICANet to hold identifiable patient data are only a temporary provision and we are required to have an 'exit strategy'.

PICANet are required to anonymise data held when it is no longer likely to be needed. As such we have identified a group of patients for whom it is considered less likely that the participant's identity will be used and will be proceeding to anonymise these patient records.

Which patients will be anonymised?

All Patients who are over the age of 18 years who have not been the subject of a PICANet event (referral, transport or admission) for over 5 years will be anonymised. Each day the PICANet dataset will be checked against these conditions and any new records will automatically be anonymised.

What data will be changed?

The process will delete the following values supplied to PICANet:

- NHS number
- Case note number
- First name
- Family name
- Family name 2
- Address 1
- Address 2
- Address 3
- Address 4
- Address 5

The process will also delete the following fields calculated from the supplied data by our address validation software:

- Validated address 1
- Validated address 2
- Validated address 3
- Validated address 4

The process will retain the following supplied values:

- Date of birth set to the first day of the month effectively only retaining the month and year of birth
- The first 5 characters of the postcode

The process will retain the following calculated values:

- The first 5 characters of the validated postcode
- Lower Layer Super Output Area – LSOA, a geographical area derived from the patient's full postcode.
- Age group years
- Age group months
- Age group days (unless <1 in which case the value will be recorded as unknown)
- Country of the patients home address
- SHA -Strategic authority of the patients home address
- PCO - Primary care organisation of the patients home address
- CR – Commissioning region of the patients home address
- CCG – Clinical commissioning group of the patients home address

When will it happen?

On the 27th of October all data held will be tested and the initial anonymisation will occur. From then on, on a daily basis, all records will be checked and any that meet the criteria will then be anonymised.

What issues may it present?

If a patient is again admitted after all historical records are anonymised then they will be considered a new person by the PICANet database. If a previously anonymised record is re-uploaded to PICANet Web in un-anonymised form then it will be anonymised when the next patient identification process runs overnight.