

SNOMED CT UK Edition Release Notes: UK Refsets

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Purpose of this document

This document provides information relating to the Reference Sets (refsets) provided with the UK Edition of SNOMED CT¹. Further information on SNOMED CT and refsets can be found at: [SNOMED CT Release Information - Delen: Home - NHS England \(kahootz.com\)](#)

For a full description on the use, technical structure and implementation of SNOMED CT and refsets; please refer to the [Practical Guide to Reference sets](#), the [SNOMED International Starter Guide](#) and the [SNOMED International Technical Implementation Guide \(TIG\)](#) provided within the [Document Library](#) on the SNOMED International website.

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1. Introduction

This document is provided for those who may wish to use the SNOMED CT refsets provided with the release files of the UK Extension; this document covers Release Format 2 (RF2). Artefacts previously referred to as subsets in RF1 are referred to as reference sets or *refsets* in RF2 (see [Reference Set Release Files Specification](#) for further information).

SNOMED CT refsets have a range of purposes and vary in size from a single member to ones with over 100,000 members. The common uses of refsets in systems include:

- To simplify the user interface
- To improve data quality
- To maintain consistency between different organisations
- To enable interoperability between different clinical systems
- To support statutory reporting requirements
- Any combination of the above

This release document provides a summary of the changes that can be found within the November and December 2020 release. A brief description of the UK refsets included in the release of the UK Clinical Edition of SNOMED CT can now be found within the on-line Data Dictionary for Care ([Data Dictionary for Care \(DD4C\) - Delen: Home - NHS England \(kahootz.com\)](#)), together with links to the relevant packs; information on international refsets can be found within the international release.

Refsets are a derivative of the UK Edition of SNOMED CT and should be used in conjunction with the main release files. A human readable version of the contents of most refsets are available via the NHS Digital SNOMED CT browser (<https://termbrowser.nhs.uk>) under the refset tab.

The subsets members in spreadsheet view were previously available on [TRUD](#), however as this was a product derived fundamentally from SNOMED Release Format 1, this is no longer possible to produce in exactly the same form. Ultimately, we hope to be able to make such content available via a terminology server. Until then, and from the 28.0.0 and 28.1.0 releases, we will make a similar product derived from RF2 data available. Although the filenames, exact column order, content and overall presentation are changed, this is with the intention of making the product more suited to its original primary purpose of supporting human review of refset content.

1.1. Scope

The scope of this document is the SNOMED CT UK refsets (RF2) released in the UK Clinical Edition. Except where otherwise specified, all UK Edition refsets are of national use rather than local use and of potential relevance to all health professions, system suppliers, record and messaging designers.

1.2. Out of scope

The dm+d, DMD Realm, Drug, Drug Language and e-Prescribing refsets have not been included in the Biannual SNOMED CT Clinical Release since April 2010. These refsets are supplied as part of the SNOMED CT UK Drug Extension and are updated and released on a

4 weekly basis. Details are found in the Data Dictionary for Care ([Data Dictionary for Care \(DD4C\) - Delen: Home - NHS England \(kahootz.com\)](#)).

1.3. Release Formats

The UK SNOMED CT Edition is now released in Release Format 2 only. Within RF2, subsets are referred to as Reference sets therefore the term used throughout this document is Refset. Please refer to the [SNOMED CT Starter Guide](#) and the [SNOMED CT Technical Implementation Guide](#) by SNOMED International to aid further understanding of the structure and content of SNOMED CT and the specific detail regarding subsets and Refsets. The Refsets are provided in the Refset folder within the terminology folder in RF2.

1.4. Management, quality assurance and validation

Many refsets are dynamic (intensional, based on a query specification) and both the definitions and the final refset memberships can vary from release to release, except where specified as static (extensional, based on a specific hand-picked set of concepts). Future releases of refsets are subject to iterative refinement both as a result of end-user feedback and upon review at each subsequent SNOMED CT release in relation to the original specification. Refsets may need to change in both size and range if underpinning policy is revised or underlying SNOMED CT content changes.

Named refset owners are responsible for the quality assurance and maintenance of their refset and for managing changes to the refset which may result from the content changes in the SNOMED CT UK clinical extension releases. The four refsets to support General Practice data sharing exclusions (Assisted Fertilisation / Gender-related Issues / Sexually Transmitted Diseases / Termination of Pregnancy) are subject to a 'best endeavours' review by NHS England clinicians, however, those using these Refsets must undertake their own clinical review. The details of who owns each refset is provided in the [Data Dictionary for Care](#).

The [IReS Terminology Product Development Lifecycle](#)² is used to guide product status and notice periods. Where refsets have no current owner or specific use case defined, they are only maintained using a technical process for applying SNOMED CT content updates; i.e. there is no clinical effort applied over and above re-running the refset specification and reconciling any retirements to their replacements.

2. General information in relation to the national refsets

2.1. NHS Realm Language Refset

In an implementation using the RF2 files, the Realm Language Refset should be used to provide the UK FSN, Preferred Term and Synonyms. It should be noted that this contains content from the UK Drug Extension as well as the UK Clinical Extension. Please find further information regarding the NHS Realm Language Refset in section 2.5.2 of the SNOMED CT General Overview document ([doc_UKSnomedCTGeneralOverview_Current-en-GB_GB1000000_YYYYMMDD](#)).

² IReS – Information Representation Services

2.2. Editorial policy of refsets and the use of exclusion refsets

As a matter of general policy, refsets are developed to exclude:

- Inactive content
- Default exclusion filter

This default exclusion filter refset is designed for use by the refset service in the maintenance of refsets to filter concepts from refsets that are unlikely to be of utility in the health record of an individual. Typically this includes:

- Structural concepts in SNOMED CT e.g. Navigational concepts and concept modelling concepts
- Grouping concepts, e.g. finding of ability of... andstatus (but not the concepts intended for the record)
- And/or and Or concepts, where the meaning would not be clear in the record. Some exceptions exist, particularly where a concept describes an untoward incident

There are a small number of concepts that are included from this exclusion refset for operational reasons, to suppress duplicate concepts identified during the refset development process. These will be resolved in the usual way in a later publication of the terminology.

From release 27.0.0, the current enumerated membership of the Default Exclusion Filter is explicitly published (refsetid 999002571000000104).

2.3. Requests for change

Unless stated otherwise (for example where requests go through the owner of the refset), requests for changes to refsets will be handled via the Request Submission Portal. Any requests for change can be submitted to <http://isd.digital.nhs.uk/rsp> which is also able to handle multiple request submissions. Other enquiries in relation to refsets should be submitted to information.standards@nhs.net.

2.4. Refsets containing UK Drug Extension members

There are no longer any refsets containing UK Drug Extension members that are published as part of the UK Clinical Edition.

Previously the Device type simple reference set (999000401000000107) was published in the Clinical Edition but almost all of its content was drawn from the Drug Extension. As of the 28.0.0 Clinical Edition (2019-10-01) and the 28.1.0 UK Drug Extension release (2019-10-02) the active membership of this reference set is now maintained and published solely in the UK Drug Extension.

Note that the refset in the 28.0.0 and future releases of the UK Clinical Extension full file will still list numerous entries against this refset, but in the snapshot the active membership will be zero.

3. Changes to refset distribution

It was proposed that from October 2018, refsets would be separated from the main release. Work is still ongoing in this area as we migrate to new authoring tooling and release production platforms.

4. Refset list and metadata

A full list of refsets and associated information is now published on the Data Dictionary for Care available at [Data Dictionary for Care \(DD4C\) - Delen: Home - NHS England \(kahootz.com\)](#)

This information includes:

- Subset Name; Subset Original Id; Subset Type; (historical reference)

- Refset Fully Specified Name; Refset Id; Refset Type;

- Subset Description: A simple textual description

- Viewable At: A link to where the content can be viewed. By default this will be the SNOMED International web browser, using the refset Id, where the full membership list is displayed under the 'Members' tab

- Subset Status; Subset Status Date;

- Owner (Organisation name)

- Purpose and Scope

- Usage Description: Text description of intended use.

- Geographic Usage

- Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria by sex and age

- Subject Category

This metadata catalogue is scheduled to move by the end of December 2020 and some changes are anticipated in the metadata available. More information will be made available with subsequent releases.

4.1. Metadata Download

The entire list of refsets can be downloaded as an Excel file from the [Data Dictionary for Care](#). Select 'Subset Metadata' in the drop down box on the upper left of the page, then below the Refset id box, select the 'SEARCH' button. This will return a full list. The 'Export to Excel' button will appear at the top right of the resulting list.

For any queries relating to the Data Dictionary for Care, please contact information.standards@nhs.net.

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