AFD SOFTWARE

Prescribing Data Accuracy

Last October, The NHS recorded 2,079,492 attendances to hospital A&E departments in England.

In this Autumn edition of Postcode News, we explore the challenges the Health Sector faces around patient data quality and how NHS Trusts are overcoming these challenges with AFD's data validation solutions.

Eircode, Eire's postcode, is now four years old. We look at how well the new system has been adopted and some of the address-related problems it has helped overcome. We also look at our new Eircode engine, which significantly speeds up the searching and return of addresses in Ireland.
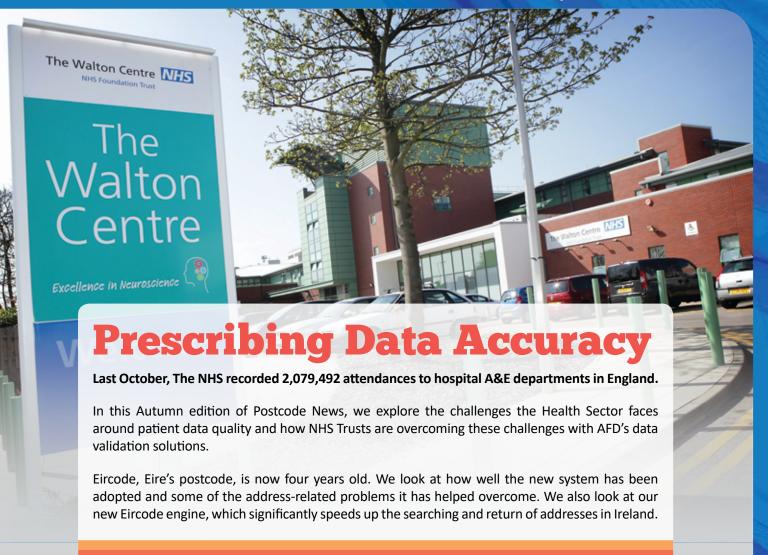
CLINICAL ACCURACY

Data quality is always important, but it can be literally of life or death importance in the Health Sector. Patient care, confidentiality, performance monitoring and correct funding are all impacted by data accuracy. To ensure correct care and confidentiality, patient data needs to be accurate, complete and valid. Any staff member inputting data will need the tools in place to achieve this.

Incorrect patient information can detrimentally impact levels of care. Imagine the scenario of a patient attending hospital. Diagnosis and notes are passed to the patient's registered GP and information regarding next steps, appointments, and treatment are sent to the patient. If information within the Patient Administration System (PAS) is incorrect then notification of appointments could be missed, or the GP may be unaware of their patient's diagnosis and treatment, leading to a compromise in care.

Now picture the scene where confidential results of a medical test are sent to someone other than the intended recipient. That would be a very serious breach of data security. Or if someone received an incorrectly addressed embarrassing invitation to a clinic? What if it was your neighbour and it was meant for you? One wrong number being entered in an address can easily lead to such situations.

Certain data items are used in activity and performance measurement; any compromise in quality here will provide false information and affect plans of improvement to levels of care. As NHS organisations are naturally required to report patient activity accurately, if there is any question mark around quality of data, a trust could see a reduction in funding.

Understanding Accurate Patient Data

The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust is the only specialist hospital trust in the UK dedicated to providing comprehensive Neurology, Neurosurgery, spinal and pain management services. With one of the biggest and busiest Neurosurgery departments in the UK, they serve a catchment area of 3.5 million people across Merseyside, Cheshire, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, the Isle of Man, North Wales and beyond.

We caught up with Val Hayden, Patient Administration System & Data Quality Manager at The Walton Centre, to understand the critical importance of data accuracy within the sector.

"The Centre has a data quality policy in place, part of the outworking of this policy is validating patient details within the PAS. This means any staff at The Centre who use the PAS and register patients requires the functionality to validate contact data at the point of entry.

Specifically, we use property level address validation from AFD Software and have had the solution in place for the past six years. We have over 500,000 patient records on the database and making sure all details of the patient's full address are accurate is essential.

Along with accuracy, speed of data entry and the format it is stored in are also important for the Centre. Staff and patients alike benefit from faster data entry as time can be better spent on making patients feel comfortable and providing the correct level of care as opposed to filling out and double-checking each part of their address. Storing data in the correct format means that addresses are more easily searchable, retrievable and reportable, further enforcing the data quality policy."

Why AFD?

Customer feedback helps AFD continually improve our services and better understand the data-related pains specific to each industry. In the Health sector for example, ensuring patients are invited to receive essential care in a timely fashion via appointment letters in the post, and that private correspondence is sent to the right person.

When asked why AFD Software was chosen to replace their incumbent supplier Val answered;

"AFD simply offered more value than our incumbent supplier. Plus, we had a huge issue with data updates, our previous supplier used to produce quarterly CDs which were easily mislaid! We would have periods where staff would be manually inputting addresses which led to data quality issues and slowed the data entry. With AFD's solution, the quarterly updates are applied automatically so we know we always have the latest data and aren't subject to any interim periods of resorting to a slow, error-prone manual alternative.

AFD's licensing of our requirements was clear and more competitive when we considered all the problems the AFD solution was overcoming.

Integrating within our PAS was remarkably quick and easy to setup – it took only a couple of hours, and caused us no headaches. Any planned upgrade can be met with hesitation when a business-critical system is being altered, but, having experienced how smooth the transition was for us, we would recommend other trusts to sit down with AFD and see how they can improve their data quality processes."

For over 36 years AFD Software has been trusted by thousands of organisations across almost every sector to get their data right. Our solutions help ensure that your organisation is built upon the strong foundation of an accurate customer database. Specifically, we validate name, address, bank, email and telephone data.

To discuss your challenges around data and find out how AFD can help overcome them, call Joel Miller on **01624 811709** or email **joel.miller@afd.co.uk**

www.afd.co.uk/pcp   **www.afd.co.uk/health**

EIRCODE – IRELAND'S POSTCODE
… FOUR YEARS ON

In July 2015, Eire's (southern Ireland's) new postcode system "Eircode" was launched - which gave every single one of the 2.2 million letterbox addresses in Ireland its own unique Eircode. Prior to the introduction of Eircode, over 35% of addresses were not uniquely identifiable, making deliveries and identification of individual properties difficult.

Previously, organisations and people sending mail and parcels were entirely reliant on the local knowledge of the postie or courier. In addition, insurance and financial institutions had been unable to specifically identify an individual's address, exposing themselves to expensive risks from potentially fraudulent house insurance claims and financial applications for loans, credit cards and mortgages. Even if no fraud was intended, the margin for error and potential for confusion was huge with many individuals (including some possibly with the same name) often sharing the same address.

Coinciding with the launch of the new system, AFD added Eircode data validation to its range of solutions, allowing organisations to validate and lookup Irish* addresses with an Eircode (*Northern Irish addresses have always been an integral part of AFD's products based on the United Kingdom Postcode Address File).

Continual development and improvement are core to AFD's success and maintaining and satisfying high customer expectations. Our Eircode solution has recently been rebuilt from the ground up to significantly speed up the time it takes to find and return every single one of the 2.2 million letterbox addresses in Ireland, and improve the speed with which vital data updates can be provided. Improvements have also been made to make the quality of data even better and search capabilities have been enhanced, making Irish addresses easier to locate.

Growing popularity

Eircode use has increased following a series of TV advertisements emphasising how Eircode can make life easier (see an amusing example at our website link below), and as household brands have requested an Eircode to complete an order that requires a delivery address. Tesco, Domino's Pizza, Curry's PC World and Boots are just a few of the retailers who now require an Eircode. A recent survey to understand Eircode usage showed that since its introduction in 2015, 72% of Irish homeowners have now used their Eircode, 76% know what their Eircode is, and 69% said Eircode's are useful.

To understand how we can help your organisation quickly find and accurately enter Irish addresses, book a software demonstration today on **01624 811 709** or email **joel.miller@afd.co.uk**

www.afd.co.uk/eircode

EIRCODE Approved Provider

Between July and September 2019 there were significant updates to data on The Royal Mail Postcode Address File (PAF). These included 16 new localities; 8,067 new postcodes; 103,095 new delivery points and 17,807 delivery point changes.

Postcode	Double Dependant Locality	Dependant Locality	Post Town
BH21 6	DEERS COURT	THREE LEGGED CROSS	WIMBORNE
BH24 2	SILVER MIST PARK	MATCHAMS	RINGWOOD
CH3 8	OLD MOSS	TARVIN	CHESTER
EH22 1		NEWTON VILLAGE	DALKEITH
EX3 9		ROCKBEARE	EXETER
HA9 7		EAST LANE BUSINESS PARK	WEMBLEY
HS6 5		GRIMSAY	ISLE OF NORTH UIST
HU20 3		ROWLEY	COTTINGHAM
IM9 5	BALLAKILLEY	PORT ERIN	ISLE OF MAN
NE66 2		PETERS MILL	ALNWICK
PE7 8		HAMPTON HEIGHTS	PETERBOROUGH
RG6 6		EARLEY GATE	READING
SO21 3	POPHAM	MICHELDEVER	WINCHESTER
ST20 0	HIGH ONN	CHURCH EATON	STAFFORD
TN23 8		CHILMINGTON GREEN	ASHFORD
TN24 0		WATERBROOK PARK	ASHFORD

The most up-to-date PAF data is available now in our latest Q.4/19 update. You can order updates for any AFD Software solution by calling **01624 811711** or email **postcode@afd.co.uk**

Amber Garrett
Head of Quality Assurance

Fast approaching her two-year mark within the organisation, Amber joined in November 2017 as a Quality Assurance (QA) Team Leader. We wanted to find out what attracted her to the role…

After leaving school Amber worked with databases and management information which taught her the analytical skills and accuracy needed for QA. Her previous role was in the Finance Sector with a structured regulatory background where Amber soon began to feel like just a number herself!

In discussing the change in culture Amber says "Making the change to working for AFD, a company with a real sense of community and caring, has allowed me to flourish and grow as an individual, which is a great feeling. This job excites me: every day there's a new challenge or something new to learn and I always feel like I'm being given the opportunity to reach my full potential."

AFD has a real commitment to personal growth, as Amber illustrates: "Through colleagues and training that has been provided I have been able to continue to grow and develop into my new role as Head of Quality Assurance. People-management was new to me but I have been given the tools, training and support to grow into the role and improve the team."

Outside of work Amber has two children, a husband and a puppy to keep her busy. All (except Ralph the Pug) are big BMX fans which takes care of many evenings and weekends and burns physical energy. Rather than tear up the track herself, Amber prefers escaping into Marvel comics and movies, binge-watching Netflix oh, and Llama trekking around the Lake District!