Guidelines for the Blood Transfusion Services

25.1: Introduction

http://aws-lon-jpac.targetservers.uk/red-book/chapter-25-standards-for-electronic-data-interchange-within-the-uk-blood-transfusion-services/25-1-introduction

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UK Blood Establishments and hospital blood bank computer systems have developed to provide sophisticated control of information on donors, blood components and patients, with secure methods of information transfer utilising barcodes and electronic data capture. However, secure information transfer between Blood Establishments and their customer hospitals has been limited to the barcoded information incorporated on the blood packs, and is of restricted scope.

In the future it is hoped that international electronic data interchange standards such as HL7 (not for profit organisation setting standards for healthcare IT communication in UK – www.hl7.org.uk) will be developed and adopted by Blood Establishments. The Joint UKBTS/HPA Professional Advisory Committee (JPAC) Standing Advisory Committee on Information Technology (SACIT) will continue to monitor developments by special interest groups in this area. Currently the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) Working Party on Information Technology has established an Interface Task Force to look at setting standards between laboratory instruments and Blood Establishment computer systems based on HL7 and LIS2 (EC programme promoting the information society in Latin America). The development and implementation of these international standards will take many years and SACIT has long recognised the desirability of developing UK standards for data transfer. The messages defined in this document are well established in the UK and should continue to be used.

This document describes a standard for messages used in communication between Blood Services and their customers. Each message comprises a standard envelope and a message content. The envelope specifies the overall structure of UKBTS messages and identifies the specific message content included inside the envelope. The message content will comply with one of the message protocols defined in this document. Each message protocol defines the content and format of a specific type of data transaction.

The standard does not address the delivery mechanism, or any surrounding envelopes. Thus, it provides a standard which is relevant to delivery mechanisms as diverse as e-mail messages, web page downloads, ftp transfers, or ASCII text files.

At the same time it retains a standard presentation of messages which readily identifies them as belonging to the UKBTS set, and allows a general process to identify the type of message received, the source and the destination.