

Wessex Data Access Committee: Minutes

Date: Friday 29th May 2026
Time: 13:00-15:00
Location: Virtual via TEAMS (meeting recorded for training and reflection)

Chair: Dr Rachel Chappell
Secretariat: Rebecca Wood

Present: Rachel Chappell (Chair) RC; Keith Gomes Pinto (NHS Dorset) KGP; Will Jennings (Associate Dean Research & Enterprise, UoS) WJ; Nicholas Fuggle (Associate Professor in Rheumatology, UoS) NMF; Patricia Fuller (Research Fellow, NIHR ARC Wessex) PF; John McBeth (Professor of Health Data Science, UoS) JM; Andy Taylor (Digital Critical Friend); Sam Fortune (Digital Critical Friend) SF; Sandra Hall (Digital Critical Friend) SH; Lindsay Anderson (Digital Critical Friend) LA; Mark Heffernan (Director of Operations, Wessex SDE: Presenter) MH; Michael George (Clinical Digital Research Fellow) MG; Rebecca Wood (Minutes) RW; Laura Fletcher (Observer), Kate Toomey (Observer).

Apologies: Heather Case

	Item
1.	<p>Welcome and Administrative Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair welcomed attendees to the Wessex SDE Data Access Committee meeting. • Apologies were noted. • Members and observer introductions. • The Chair apologised for the late circulation of the meeting papers. • No declarations of interest were raised. • Previous minutes (Paper A) were approved. • The Chair thanked the committee for returning their Confidentiality agreements. • An update was provided on the revised process for decision-making when meetings are not quorate. • The Chair advised that two professional members will be stepping down in the coming months and invited recommendations for potential new members ahead of re-advertisement.
2.	<p>Review of TOR</p> <p>Updated TOR (Paper B)</p> <p>The Chair presented updates made to the TOR including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording updates: Revised terminology to reflect the SDE as a formal, live service and clarify the role of the SRO in governance.

- Membership terms: Changed from a fixed 2-year term to a 1-year term, renewable annually up to 3 years, to support turnover and continuity.
- Working groups/subcommittees: Added provision to establish working groups or subcommittees if required in future.
- Deputy Chair: Updated to confirm the Deputy Chair will be nominated from within the existing committee membership.
- Quoracy: Revised to require a minimum of 5 members including at least 1 public and 1 professional member, improving flexibility.
- Decision-making process: Replaced email-based approvals with the option to convene an extraordinary meeting to ensure decisions are discussion-based.
- Governance practices: Reinforced annual processes such as review of conflicts of interest and related declarations.

The updated TOR was agreed by the committee and will be worked to in the coming months.

Proposed precedent setting paper (Paper C)

The Chair introduced a proposed paper on developing a precedent-setting pathway to support more efficient decision-making for lower-risk or repeat study types.

- It was noted that precedent decisions would only be established following full committee review and agreement.
- Members discussed potential use cases, including low-risk, repeat or descriptive studies, though acknowledged that many applications still involve sufficient variation to require full review.
- Concerns were raised about ensuring appropriate oversight and avoiding over-reliance on precedent, particularly where study context or methodology differs.
- Suggestions included developing clear criteria or principles to guide when precedent may be applied and considering its use for study amendments or similar repeat applications.
- The committee agreed that further consideration is required and that the concept should be kept under review and developed over time, rather than implemented immediately.

3. CAG Applications

MH provided an update on amendments to the Wessex SDE’s existing CAG approvals, noting that three amendments have been submitted over the past year to support evolving operational requirements.

- The first amendment enabled the inclusion of additional NHS England datasets, beyond those originally specified, to support broader research capability.
- The second amendment supported data sharing between SDEs.
- The third amendment introduced a more flexible data processing environment, including use of an additional secure infrastructure to support storage and processing of structured and unstructured data.

It was noted that amendments are made as required to ensure the SDE remains responsive to research needs while maintaining compliance and transparency.

4. Study 1: REAL DERM

Study presented by MG.

The REAL DERM study is a proposed project aimed at supporting the evaluation of an artificial intelligence NICE approved tool to autonomously assess and triage suspected skin lesions. NICE approved the tool last year with the condition of an early value assessment. At this stage, the work is limited to preparatory data collection and feasibility analysis within the SDE.

Discussion:

- The documents lack of clarity on what data is being collected, where it originates, and how it flows through the pathway, the committee requested data flow diagrams.
- The committee raised questions on how secondary care data will link with AI tool outputs and whether the dataset will support robust evaluation of outcomes.
- Concerns were highlighted as local clinical pathways may not be captured in coded data, potentially affecting interpretation of results.
- Clarification requested on whether all study aims (e.g. cohort discovery for trials) align with the NICE Early Value Assessment.
- Discussion around diagnostic accuracy, bias across skin tones, and the need to ensure equitable performance of the tool.
- Agreed to defer decision and request further clarification, with the study to return to a future DAC meeting before approval.

	<p>Decision: Deferred. Study to return to a future DAC meeting following clarification.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Study 2: The Arcturis Real-World Data Network Research Database</p> <p>Study presented by MH.</p> <p>This study proposes to bring a dataset from Hampshire Hospitals into the SDE, where Arcturis researchers can access and analyse data quality in readiness for future research. The dataset has been developed with external commercial funding. Arcturis have their own CAG and REC approvals and could use their own database to review the data but would like to bring it into the SDE. Any future use of the data would require further DAC approval, and the current request is limited to exploratory analysis and preparation of the dataset.</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification required on scope and use of the dataset, including whether it represents a defined cohort and how it will be utilised within the SDE. • Concerns raised regarding governance and oversight, particularly ensuring all future research uses and outputs are subject to DAC review. • Need for greater transparency on data content and outputs, including what data will be included and how results (client-facing reports) will be used and shared. • Discussion highlighted public benefit and social licence, with concern about balancing commercial use with clear, demonstrable benefit to the public. • Committee noted insufficient detail to approve at this stage, particularly around data flows, outputs and use of approvals. • Agreed to defer decision and request further clarification, with the study to return to a future DAC meeting before approval. <p>Decision: Deferred. Study to return to a future DAC meeting following clarification.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Final Plenary Discussion: Conclusions and Next Steps</p> <p>The Chair thanked the committee for their attendance and contribution to the discussion.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Close of meeting</p>

