Wessex SDE PPIE Impact Overview

June 2026

Summary

PPIE continues to be embedded throughout the Wessex SDE rather than taking place as a standalone activity. During this quarter, public contributors increasingly influenced strategic communications, governance, artificial intelligence, and research design.

This report highlights the impact of Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) within the Wessex Secure Data Environment (SDE) between April-June 2026. Through our Digital Critical Friends (DCFs), members of the public play an active role in shaping how the SDE is governed, how it communicates, and how it builds trust in the responsible use of health data.

Public contributors provide insight, challenge, and lived experience across a wide range of activities. This work demonstrates our commitment to embedding public voices in decision-making and ensuring that the use of health data delivers clear public benefit, is well governed, and remains worthy of public trust.

DCFs worked alongside researchers and operational teams, their contribution has helped ensure that the SDE continues to evolve in ways that reflect public expectations while supporting innovative health research.

Activity and Impact

Between April and June 2026, PPIE continued to influence both the strategic direction and day-to-day delivery of the Wessex SDE.

Our DCFs contributed to governance through Board and Data Access Committee (DAC) membership, reviewed emerging AI-enabled research, co-designed communications and patient notification materials, and helped shape the SDE's Communications and Community Involvement & Engagement Strategy for 2026/27.

This quarter also saw an increasing focus on improving accessibility, public understanding of artificial intelligence, engagement with younger people and seldom-heard communities, and ensuring that public benefit remains central to how health data is used for research.

Month	Public engaged	Activity	Outcome / Impact
April	8 DCFs	Town Hall	Updates on Connect-D, Connect-C and national driver projects. DCFs reviewed the SDE Annual Report and organisational objectives, helping ensure future communications better reflect public priorities and impact.
April	2 DCFs	Board	Continued public representation within strategic governance and decision making.
April	3 DCFs	DAC	Public scrutiny of research applications continued through standing DAC membership.
May	9 DCFs	DCF workshop	Co-designed improvements to patient notification and transparency materials, recommending greater use of storytelling, simpler language, clearer explanations of public benefit and layered information for different audiences.
May	9 DCFs	Comms review	Helped shape future communications by recommending stronger branding, improved accessibility and greater emphasis on research impact rather than governance alone.
May	9 DCFs	Future work planning	Agreed priorities for AI, researcher guidance, GP engagement, impact case studies and recruitment of additional DCFs to improve diversity and representation.
May	2 DCFs	Board	Continued public representation within strategic governance.
May	3 DCFs	DAC	Continued public oversight of research governance and approvals.
June	9 DCFs	Town Hall	Reviewed the draft Communications & Community Involvement & Engagement Strategy (2026/27), leading to improvements in accessibility and greater emphasis on transparency, public benefit and engagement with younger people.
June	DCF subgroup	REAL-DERM protocol review	Detailed public review of an AI-supported dermatology study strengthened the protocol through recommendations on patient benefit, AI transparency and inclusion of diverse skin tones.
June	DCFs	AI engagement	Discussions on emerging AI capability helped identify priorities for future public involvement around AI governance, validation and maintaining clinical oversight.

June	2 DCFs	Board	Continued public representation within strategic governance.
June	3 DCFs	DAC	Continued public scrutiny of research applications and governance.

Key Impact This Quarter

Improving communications and transparency

Public contributors directly influenced the design of the new Communications and Community Involvement & Engagement Strategy, helping make public information clearer, more accessible and more focused on explaining why health data is used, not simply how it is protected.

Shaping AI-enabled research

DCFs reviewed the REAL-DERM protocol and emerging AI research capability, ensuring that patient benefit, transparency, fairness and inclusion remain central as AI becomes increasingly embedded within research.

Strengthening patient notification

Feedback has led to a redesigned approach to patient notification based on layered information, storytelling, consistent branding and clearer explanations of the public benefits of research.

Expanding participation

Plans were agreed to recruit additional Digital Critical Friends, improve onboarding through buddying and mentoring, and strengthen engagement with younger people and seldom-heard communities, including planned work with LifeLab.

Embedding public voices in governance

Public contributors continued to influence Board, Data Access Committee and strategic discussions, ensuring that governance decisions remain informed by public values alongside technical, legal and clinical expertise.