

Wessex Data Access Committee: Minutes

Date: Friday 31st July 2026
Time: 14:00-15:00
Location: Virtual via TEAMS (meeting recorded for training and reflection)

Chair: Dr Rachel Chappell
Secretariat: Laura Fletcher

Present: Rachel Chappell (Chair) RC; Mark Heffernan (Managing Director, Wessex SDE) MH; Lindsay Anderson (Digital Critical Friend) LA; Michael George (Clinical Digital Research Fellow) MG; Keith Gomes Pinto (NHS Dorset) KGP; Will Jennings (Associate Dean Research & Enterprise) WJ; Sandra Hall (Digital Critical Friend) SH; Andy Taylor (Digital Critical Friend) AT; Lisa Ballard (Observer) LB; Laura Fletcher (Minutes) LF.

Apologies: Heather Case, Nicholas Fuggle, John McBeth, Patricia Fuller and Sam Fortune.

	Item
1.	Welcome and Administrative Business • Chair welcomed attendees to the Wessex SDE Data Access Committee meeting. • Apologies were noted. • A prospective new professional member attended the meeting as an observer. Members introduced themselves and welcomed the observer, with the Chair advising that a further round of introductions would take place at the following meeting when additional members were expected to attend. • No declarations of interest were raised. • The minutes of the previous meeting (Paper A) were approved. The Chair advised that attendance at forthcoming meetings would become increasingly important as the volume of studies presented to the Committee was expected to increase. Members were asked to confirm their availability for the August meeting as early as possible to ensure the meeting remained quorate. The Chair also proposed moving the October meeting to Friday 6 November 2026 due to annual leave and the October half-term period. Members raised no objections to the proposed change. Under matters arising, the Chair noted that following the Committee's previous recommendation of the Arcturis application several complexities had arisen and the Chair had requested a review by the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). The Chair advised that, SRO recommendations were expected to strengthen wider understanding and would be presented to the Committee once the review was complete. The Committee discussed the value of using the learning from this to inform future governance arrangements for complex and commercial partnerships in recognition that future applications were

	likely to involve increasingly complex areas such as data intermediaries, genomic data, and artificial intelligence. Members suggested that a review of applications considered by the Committee could help identify emerging governance themes and support future decision-making. The Chair confirmed that an annual review of the Committee's work would be presented to the Wessex SDE Programme Board later in the year and agreed to share the presentation with the Committee. Actions: • Members to confirm their availability for the August Data Access Committee meeting at the earliest opportunity. • The October Data Access Committee meeting to be rescheduled to Friday 6 November 2026. • The outcome of the Senior Responsible Owner review to be presented to the Committee at a future meeting. • The Chair to share the annual review of the Committee following presentation to the Wessex SDE Programme Board.
2.	National User Organisation Validation Service The Chair provided an overview of the National Organisation and User Registration Service, which has been established to provide a consistent national process for registering organisations and users seeking access to Secure Data Environments. It was explained that the service is operated nationally and supports organisational assurance by assessing compliance with information governance, legal and security requirements before organisations are granted access to SDEs. The Committee was advised that organisations are required to demonstrate appropriate governance arrangements, including compliance with relevant information governance standards, staff training requirements, and organisational policies. The Chair also outlined several declarations organisations are required to make as part of the national registration process, including confirmation that they only undertake activities considered compatible with NHS principles. The Chair explained that the National User Organisation Registration Service provides high level assurance however responsibility for reviewing individual research applications and proposed uses of data remains with the local DAC. Members welcomed the update and noted the additional assurance that the national registration process would provide when considering applications involving external organisations, including commercial partners. The Committee recognised that the service represented an important element of the wider governance framework supporting the secure use of health data and welcomed continued updates as the national process develops. Action • The Chair to share the slide deck with the Committee.

3. Study 1: Using PRANA data to assess the relationship between survivability and pre-hospital blood product administration in major trauma patients

The Committee considered the PRANA Pre-Hospital Bloods application, which seeks approval to undertake a short-term feasibility study using data already held within the PRANA registry in the Wessex Secure Data Environment.

Discussion:

- The Committee received an overview of the PRANA registry and the purpose of the proposed feasibility study. It was explained that the study would use data already held within the Wessex Secure Data Environment and would not require the ingestion of additional datasets.
- Members noted that the PRANA registry had been established to develop the evidence base for interventions delivered in the pre-hospital setting and the proposed study focuses specifically on the administration of pre-hospital blood products and whether their use is associated with patient survival.
- It was explained that the study represents a short-term feasibility exercise to assess feasibility of the PRANA dataset to support a larger doctoral research project. The work would also provide an opportunity to assess the clinical validity and quality of the available data.
- Members discussed classification of 'major trauma' in the dataset. This is a structured field within the available dataset, dependent on information entered by ambulance staff and may therefore involve some subjectivity. Members noted that the study may provide useful learning regarding data quality and coding, which could be fed back to ambulance services.
- The Committee discussed if the proposed six-week duration of the study would provide sufficient time to generate meaningful insight. It was noted that the purpose of the work was to establish feasibility and identify any limitations in the data before a larger research project was developed.
- The Committee discussed the applicant's reference to 'gender' within the proposed demographic variables and noted that 'sex' may be the more appropriate variable for the physiological analysis proposed. It was clarified that the underlying ambulance dataset was likely to record 'sex' and that the wording may reflect a difference in terminology.
- Members acknowledged that, should the research ultimately demonstrate improved outcomes, there could be wider benefits for service delivery and resource requirements.
- The Committee was satisfied that the study would be undertaken using data already held within the Wessex Secure Data Environment and that disclosure controls would continue to apply to all outputs prior to release.

Decision: Approved with Recommendations

The Committee approved the application and agreed that the following recommendations should be provided to the researcher for consideration.

- potential impact of the short six-week timeframe on the scope and delivery of the study; and
- whether sex, rather than gender, is the appropriate demographic variable for the proposed analysis.

	The recommendations were provided for consideration only and did not require a formal response or further review by the Committee.
4.	Precedent and Setting Criteria The Chair invited members to reflect on the study considered during the meeting and discuss whether any precedent could be established to support future Data Access Committee decision-making as the volume of applications increases. Discussion • Members noted that, as the Committee continues to mature, many future applications are likely to share common characteristics, particularly where they involve established research datasets or existing data repositories. It was noted that identifying similarities between applications could help support efficient Committee discussions whilst maintaining appropriate governance oversight. • Members noted that other research ethics committees utilise a model where nominated members undertake a detailed review of individual studies before presenting key issues to the wider committee. Whilst no changes were proposed at this stage, it was agreed this may be a useful approach to consider in the future. • Members agreed that it would be beneficial to continue concluding meetings with a short discussion on precedent setting to help develop the Committee's approach as new study types and governance considerations emerge.
5.	Close of meeting The Chair thanked the Committee for their attendance and contribution to the discussions.