

## Enclosure E

## Wessex Academic Health Science Network Board

27<sup>th</sup> January 2022

## Board action Update – Data assurance process for evaluation

Insight team

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**1. Purpose**

This paper updates the Board on an action from the previous Board meeting to clarify Wessex AHSN's data assurance process for evaluation.

**2. Recommendation**

The Board is asked to note the contents of the report and comment as necessary.

**3. Introduction**

At the November 2021 AHSN Board meeting, the AHSN Chief Executive briefed Board members on progress on the AHSN Network SIM review and flagged an issue that was raised by Wessex AHSN's own review of the chronology relating to SIM. This concerned the actions we took to ensure proportionate due diligence was undertaken on third party data that we were asked to analyse. Board members may recall that, in 2016, the AHSN was asked by the Hampshire Constabulary and the Isle of Wight NHS Trust project team running SIM to undertake a health economic analysis of the SIM pilot. Subsequently, in 2018, the AHSN learned that Hampshire Constabulary had questioned the accuracy of the police data in the project that had, in part, informed the health economic analysis. Even prior to this coming to light, the AHSN's Insight team had established a process to provide clarity around data access, availability, accountability, and analysis. This annex provides an overview of the process.

**4. Detail**

Insight processes for ensuring the quality and provenance of data used in evaluation projects:

<b>How we assure data quality</b>	<p>We have a systematic process for specifying the requirements of an evaluation. The design of the evaluation defines the quantitative and qualitative data, not the other way around.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A <b>scoping meeting</b> to understand the nature of the request, where the Insight Team can add value and what the evaluation questions might be</li> <li>b) A <b>proposal</b> for the work which includes a statement on governance – "It is the responsibility of the commissioner to</li> </ul>
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	<p>undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment and to provide a Data Processing Agreement and/or Data Sharing Agreement before WAHSN commence data processing.”</p> <p>c) Once commissioned to do the work, a <b>specification</b> for the work which is clear about the data requirements, who provides this data, a named senior data sponsor and the information governance requirements.</p> <p>d) An <b>evaluability assessment</b> (in some cases) to understand what data is available and whether this is sufficient to answer the evaluation questions.</p> <p>e) All outputs are <b>quality assured</b> by the Senior Programme Manager and AD, and in complex projects, the Insight Director.</p>
	<p>We will undertake a risk assessment of available data.</p> <p>This asks the following questions and RAG rates the risk:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Accessibility:</b> are we able to access the data sets either directly or indirectly?</li> <li><b>Quality:</b> will the data sets be robust i.e. from recognised and trusted sources</li> <li><b>Completeness:</b> will the data sets include all the expected data fields, and will they be well populated?</li> <li><b>Volume:</b> is there a sufficient quantity of the data to be of analytical value?</li> </ol> <p>These risks are discussed at the project steering group with the client. Mitigating actions, and the responsible owner, are agreed and documented.</p>
	<p>We rarely consider one source of quantitative data in isolation. Mixed methods designs, with synthesis of multiple sources of data, are generally preferred and are more robust. Data is synthesised as a team, and we would interrogate any anomalies in the data.</p>
	<p>We state data limitations in our reports.</p>
	<p>Our contractual agreements, signed by senior representatives, specify information governance requirements, data flows, and data management responsibilities of each party. This includes acceptance of responsibility for data quality and completeness by all data providing organisations.</p>
	<p>Data quality checks that are routinely undertaken include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Querying anomalies/outliers</li> <li>• Checking for possible duplication</li> <li>• Querying blank records/fields</li> <li>• Sense-checking against other data sources</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checking for consistency i.e. data is in a valid and consistent format</li> </ul>
<b>How we understand data sources/provenance</b>	IG requirements include specification of data flows and sources of data.
	We work with 'trusted' partners in most of our engagements (Trust data analysts, CSU for example).

Areas for development:

1. To embed evaluability assessment and risk assessments into all relevant projects.
2. To set out processes for assuring the quality of App Data, provided through a third party, given that we are handling more and more of this data.
3. To develop a set of prompts/checklist that can be used by all teams to ensure that we do not take any data, provided by an external party, at face value.