Safe Data Access Professionals Quarterly Meeting

11th December 2018

HMRC, London

Minutes

Attendees (in person)

Richard Welpton, *The Health Foundation* (Chair); Yannis Kotrotsios, *Cancer Research UK*; Carole Morris, *National Services Scotland*; Joshua Symons, *Imperial College*; Simon Parker*, UK Data Service*; Tony Stone, *Connected Health Cities*; Carlotta Greci, *The Health Foundation*; Emily Griffiths, *Connected Health Cities*; Richard Green, *Office for National Statistics*; Anthony Macken, *Central Statistics Office Ireland*; Mari Crotty, *University of Manchester*; James Scott, *UK Data Service*; James Dainty, *HMRC*; Alistair Currie, *HMRC*

Attendees (dial-in)

Cuna Ekmekcioglu, *University of Edinburgh*

1) Introduction

The Chair thanked everybody for attending this December meeting of the Safe Data Access Professionals and welcomed new participants. The Chair also thanked James Dainty and Alistair Currie for their kind and generous help making the local arrangements for the meeting, and to HMRC for agreeing to host.

2) Introduction from new participants

Mari Crotti introduced herself as the manager for the Trusted Research Environment (TRE) at University of Manchester. New to the role, Mari will be supporting users of this service. A key feature of the TRE will be the provision of access to health data images for research purposes.

3) Round-table updates (all services)

Office for National Statistics

- ONS are continuing to work on their Secure Research Service 'shop front': an online platform for accessing information about, and applying for, data available from the service. This is due to be launched in March 2019.
- The Safe Researcher Training continues to be developed, and some small changes suggested by the SRS team may be adopted in the New Year.

Edinburgh University Data Safe Haven (DSH)

- The build of the lab is now complete and has five pilot projects underway.
- Preparation for ISO27001 accreditation is underway, and due in 2019.

- Some data from NHS Lothian is now available in the Data Safe Haven and further data from, NHS Digital and EDRIS will be received by the end of January.
- The DSH is not currently a recognised 'safe haven' under the Scottish Government 'safe haven accreditation' scheme but we are considering applying for the process while working towards the ISO 27001 certification in 2019.

HMRC Datalab

- Move to the new offices in Canary Wharf complete
- Work is underway on how new applications will be processed under the auspices of the Digital Economy Act

UK Data Service

- Further small additions have been added to their equivalent Safe Researcher Training
- Researchers now routinely include data citations when requesting outputs (including DOI references), which will enable monitoring of use of data sources

Imperial College

- More staff will be joining the Big Data Analytics Lab soon
- Imperial College is looking into consolidating its secure data environments
- The lab continues to grow, and the scalable nature of its IG policies has enabled this

The Health Foundation

- In process of moving its Secure Data Environment facility into a government-accredited secure cloud facility
- Completed ISO27001 accreditation without any non-conformities or observations for the second time in a row

National Service Scotland (ISD)

- Imaging data will be available in the not too distant future, the team are currently testing these data with cohort extraction and linking
- Scottish Government is to begin a review of IG arrangements for data held by the public sector
- A 'self-build' service to enable researchers to create their own virtual machines is being trialled. Essentially this allows researchers to use their own computing environments for accessing sensitive data if approved by the data controllers. Testing and security are being finalised.

Cancer Research UK – Cancer Intelligence

- Submitted evidence for the new NHS Digital Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT). Replaces the IG Toolkit.
- Considering developing 'refresher training' to ensure staff remember key elements of IG training
- Looking into commissioning a secure cloud server
- Safe Haven to be established at new Stratford HQ
- Process for ISO27001 accreditation to begin in 2019

Central Statistics Office, Ireland

- Researcher Coordination Unit (RCU) recommendation to establish a centralised output SDC checking team was rejected by CSO and each data owner will continue to undertake this. RCU investigating the centralisation of other parts of the RMF process
- More data becoming available in secure data environment due to change in SDC policy

Connected Health Cities, Manchester

- Series of public engagement events managed between Manchester and Leeds
- Staff beginning to use the SDC Handbook for managing releases of statistics produced with confidential data

Other developments:

- Public Health England have released synthetic data pertaining to Cancer Registration data
- SDAP will be assisting NHS Digital with the testing of its new Data Access Environment (dates to be confirmed)

4) Focus session: connecting to the Health and Social Care Network (HSCN). Led by Emily Griffiths (Connected Health Cities)
- HSCN is the new NHS network (it was formally known as N3)
- Manchester University moved from N3 to HSCN recently, and it is used extensively by Connected Health Cities
- BT or other service provider opens a gateway to the HSCN for the institution
- Manchester University completed the move from N3 to HSCN in 26 steps: requires coordination between network engineers, university estates staff and IT etc.
- Procurement for provider works through a competitive marketplace, managed by NHS Digital (previous, it was supplied solely by BT)
- Unique code for organisation and location assigned (ODS code)
- NHS Digital assesses the application to gain HSCN connectivity (DSPT required, but assessed separately)
- Instant access to data (from the health service) is the key reason for gaining connectivity. In addition, connection to the HSCN provides assurance (e.g. GP practices) that data haven't left the NHS
- **AP: Emily has a list of steps for connecting to the HSCN, and will make this available to the group.**

5) Focus session: **archiving projects undertaken with sensitive data in a secure data environment**. Led by Yannis Kotrotsios (Cancer Research UK)

- Presentation provided about archiving and data destruction activity following the end of the life of a project using data in a secure data environment
- Group raised the issue concerning replication of results following the destruction of data, and that no facility seems to exist for securely storing such data. **AP: group to consider advocating a position on this issue.**
- Presentation slides accompany these minutes.

6) Focus session: **input and output control**. Led by Simon Parker (UK Data Service)

- The presentation detailed the processes and activities undertaken by UK Data Service staff when importing data into the Secure Lab on behalf of users; and the output control process (statistical disclosure control of results and management of release of results).
- Presentation slides accompany these minutes.

7) Update on SDC

The Chair provided an update on the SDC Handbook:

- The authors met in October to discuss further refinements, and these are in progress. In particular, Emma and Richard are working on a section to clarify how the 'risk' or re-identification could be realised. Carlotta will compile a list of useful resources.
- Further offers of funding to publish the SDC Handbook (in different forms) have been made, Richard to investigate these further.

8) Other items

Owing to time, outstanding items will be carried forward to the next SDAP meeting,

9) Meeting closed

The meeting was closed at 16:00, and the Chair thanked everybody for their attendance and contributions.