

Health Data Access – NHS England

Webinar for Researchers
November 2025



Welcome and Introductions



In case you missed the last webinar on 9th July...

Here's the link - [Research community information and events - NHS England Digital](#)

The webinar shared insights on how researchers can request access to data held by NHS England. Set in the context of improved NHS England data access request processes, with a wider range of data and data access services available, the webinar provided information on:

- range of data that NHS England holds which is available for researchers to request access to
- range of data access services that NHS England provides
- insight into the NHS England Data Access Request Service (DARS), including, what researchers should expect when making a DARS application, how to prepare applications, and the support and guidance available for applicants

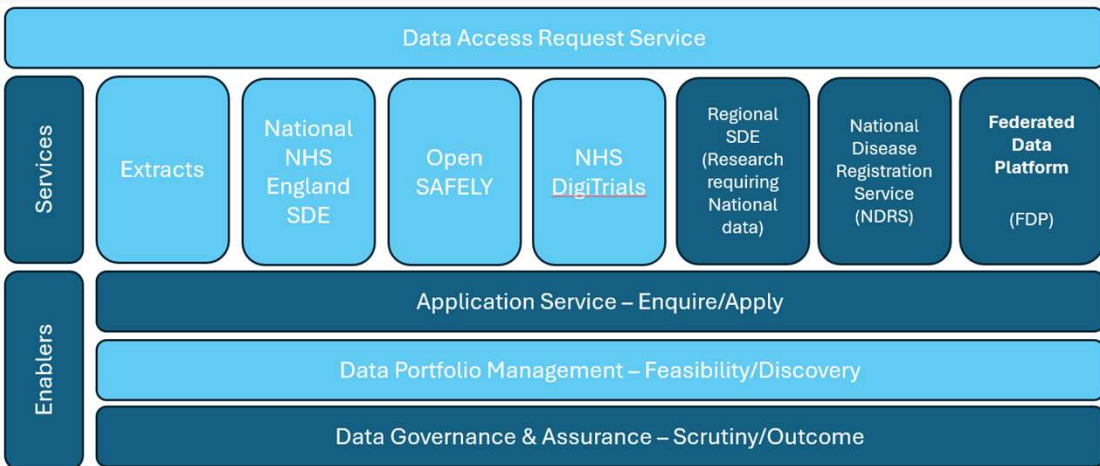


What is DARS?

The Data Access Request Service (DARS) is NHS England’s gateway to accessing NHS health and social care data.

DARS offer different ways to access this data depending on your needs, such as on the NHS England Secure Data Environment (SDE), OpenSAFELY and NHS DigiTrials

– [more about these services later.](#)



What we do

DARS enables the secure, transparent and ethical use of NHS England data.

How do we do it?

- Customer Enquiry** – team perform feasibility and discovery checks to ensure we can meet your needs in the desired timeframe.
- Apply** – Customer submits application.
- Scrutiny** – The organisation will review your application communicating any concerns back to you.
- Outcome** – Applicant will receive the result of the review.
- Approval** – **Agreement is not live unless you sign your agreement**



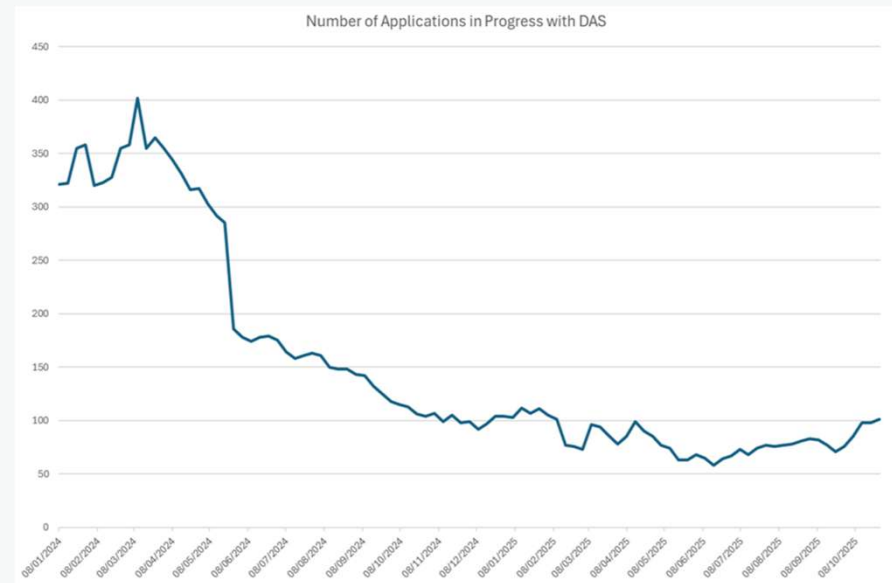
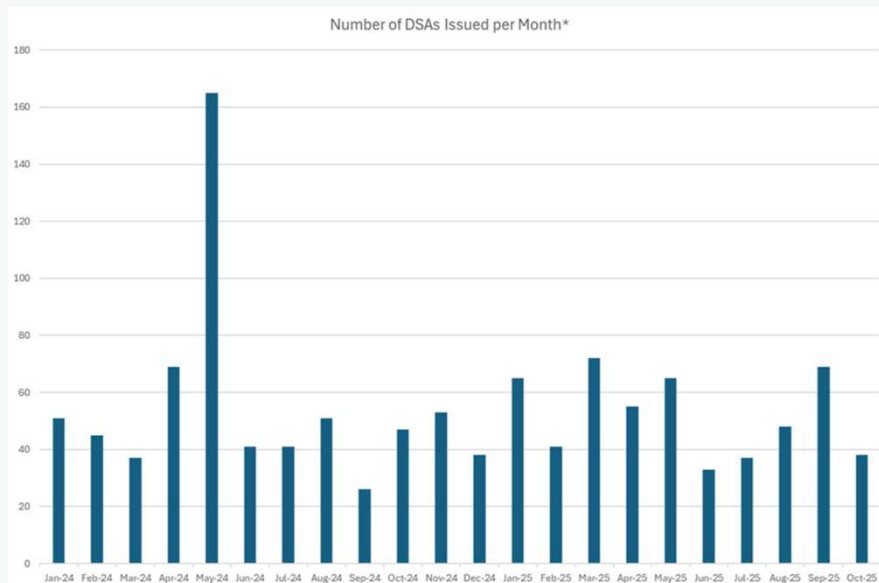
Team Performance

570 DSAs live since Nov'24

320 research projects supported Jan–Nov 2025

13,635 files, data files provided Jan – Nov 2025

3566 queries responded to April – October 2025



Eye to the Future



We're going beyond our service to support you!

The more joined up the service, the better your experience.

We're working in partnership with other organisations to improve your journey.

How?

- Working with all stakeholders to simplify and streamline the researcher journey.
- Working with legislative partners to align our advice to you.
- Working with wider delivery partners to get you the data you need.



Data available for access from NHSE

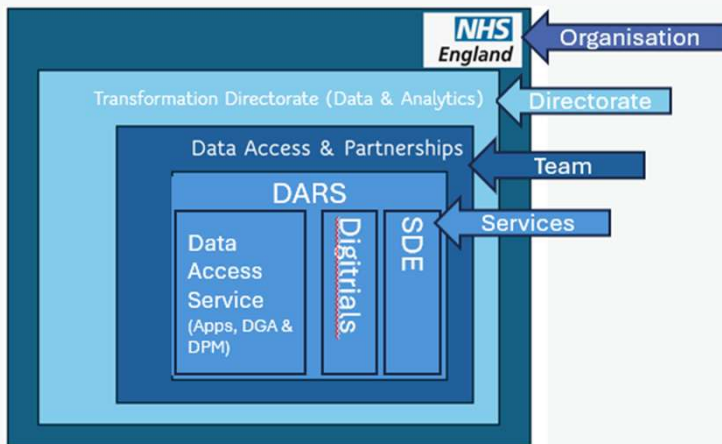
Bethan Thomas

Assistant Director of Data Portfolio Management (DPM)

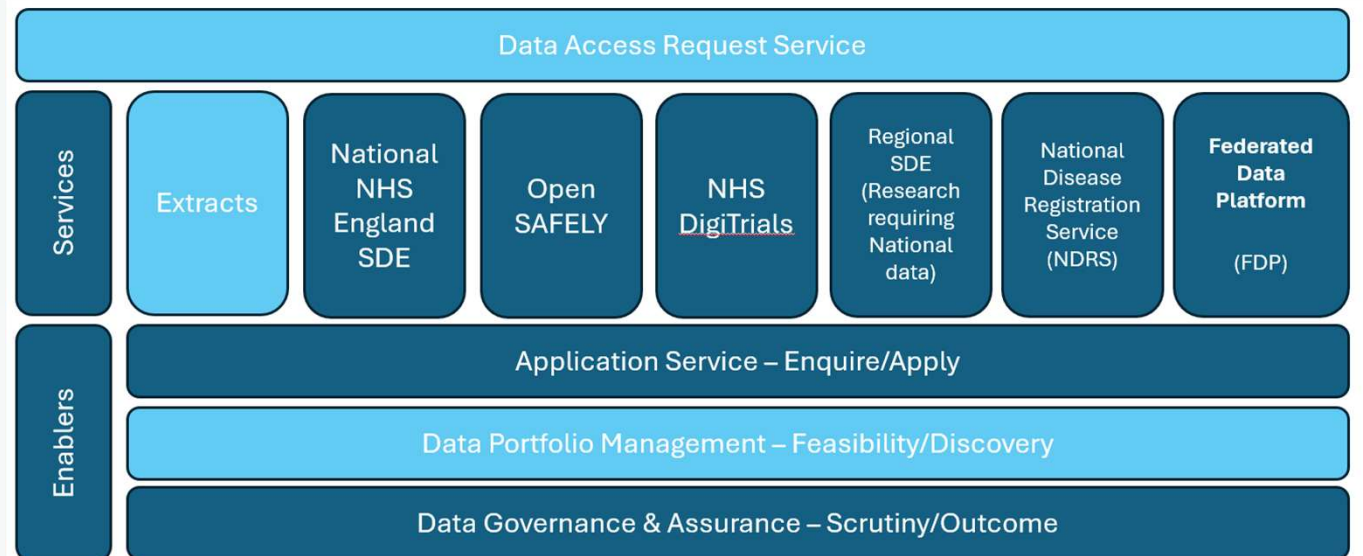


Background - Who are “DPM”?

First Webinar explained:



We are a small team of **15 people**



Background - How does DPM fit into the Journey

Data Acquisition aka “DARS Onboarding”

- Getting the right data, into the right part of the NHSE estate
- Working with wider delivery partners, such as regional SDEs, to get you the data you need
- Capturing metadata on fields and datasets

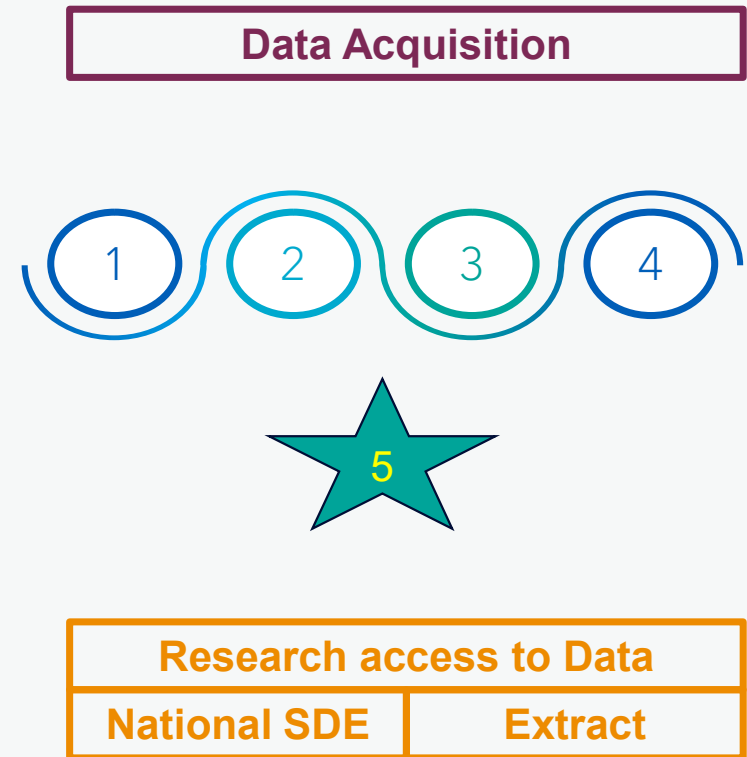
Also do this for ICBs, LAs, Statutory Functions etc across other external access routes such as FDP, UDAL & OpenSafely.

Step 1 - Customer Enquiry – Data related discussions

- Do we have the data you need?
- What’s the right way to access the data?
- What’s the best solution to meet your needs?

Access to Data – DPM produce Extracts.

Extract team is 7 engineers who deliver 12k files referenced on Team Performance slide.





What data is available?

- Approx 40 different datasets available to researchers across SDE and Extract service
- Some are restricted to Extract, or specific use cases such as COVID-19 only
- All designed for other purposes, such as statical purposes or performance monitoring or commissioning. DARS is rarely the primary purpose
- We don't own any of the datasets but do work closely with NHSE colleagues to feed in requirements

- [Data Access Request Service \(DARS\) products and services - NHS England Digital](#)

Finding out about the data (1)

[Data set catalogue - NHS England Digital](#)

NHS Digital > Services > Data Access Request Service (DARS) > DARS products and services > Data set catalogue

Data set catalogue

Data sets are readily available to request through Data Access Request Service (DARS). These may be provided either in the [Secure Data Environment \(SDE\)](#), as an extract, or through the [DigiTrials Outcomes service](#).

A [Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey \(APMS\)](#)
Provides data on the prevalence of both treated and untreated psychiatric disorder in the English adult population (aged 16 and over).

[Adult Social Care Client Level Dataset](#)
The Adult Social Care Client Level Data Set (ASCCLDS) collects Adult Social Care activity on requests, reviews, assessments and services at a client level from local authorities in England

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Data set versions as presented in the DARS online system

Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS) v1.5

Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS) v2.0

Access method

Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS) v1.5 - service and extract.

Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS) v2.0 - service and extract.

Data set available in packages

Packages are pre-defined groups of field list that best meets their needs. Packages are available for table selection.

Finding out about the data (2)

[Data set catalogue - NHS England Digital](#)

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Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS) guidance hub

The maternity services dataset guidance hub is a collection of documents, videos and useful links to support providers and users of Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS) data.



ARTICLE

Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS)

Information about the Maternity Services Data Set (MSDS) including an overview of the data set and information for maternity service providers and their system suppliers to implement the MSDS and submit maternity services data.



ARTICLE



British Heart Foundation Data Science Centre Dataset Dashboard


The British Heart Foundation Data Science Centre (BHF DSC) have created a dashboard that relates to this data set. Contact them at bhfdsc@hdrum.ac.uk, if you have any questions or issues relating to the dashboard.



The BHF Dashboard shows data completeness for some of our datasets.

Finding out about the data (3)

Metadata dashboard - NHS England Digital

←
Available Data Set Metadata
?


Selected Data Set:

Click on an available data set in the table below

Field Name	Database Field Name	Field Type	Identifiable Field	Start Date	End Date
All	All	All	All	31/12/1899	22/09/2022
Field Description					
All					

Available Data Sets

- Alcohol Dependency Dataset
- Breast and Cosmetic Implant Registry (BCIR)
- Bridge file: Hospital Episode Statistics to Diagnostic Imaging Dataset
- Bridge file: Hospital Episode Statistics to Mental Health Minimum Data Set
- Cancer Registration Data
- Civil Registrations of Death
- Civil Registrations of Death - Secondary Care Cut
- COVID-19 Ethnic Category Data Set
- COVID-19 General Practice Extraction Service (GPES) Data for Pandemic Planning and Research (GDPPR)
- COVID-19 Sentinel Stroke National Audit Programme (SSNAP)
- COVID-19 SGSS First Positives (Second Generation Surveillance System)
- COVID-19 UK Non-hospital Antigen Testing Results (Pillar 2)
- COVID-19 Vaccination Adverse Reactions
- COVID-19 Vaccination Status
- Demographics
- Diagnostic Imaging Data Set (DID)
- Emergency Care Data Set (ECDS)
- General Practice Workforce
- Hospital Episode Statistics Accident and Emergency (HES A and E)
- Hospital Episode Statistics Admitted Patient Care (HES APC)
- Hospital Episode Statistics Critical Care (HES Critical Care)
- Hospital Episode Statistics Outpatients (HES OP)
- Medicines dispensed in Primary Care (NHSBSA data)
- National Diabetes Audit
- Personal Social Services - Adult Social Care Survey (ASCS)
- Personal Social Services - Survey of Adult Carers in England (SACE)

Data Set Name	Field Name	Database Field Name	Field Description	Field Type	Identifiable Field	Start Date	End Date
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	ACT PREVENTED INPATIENT EMERGENCY ADMISSION INDICATOR	IP_EMERGENCYADMISSION PREVENTED	Whether the ACT intervention has been deemed to have prevented an inpatient emergency admission for the patient	Boolean	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	ACTIVITY DATE AND TIME	ACTIVITY_DATETIME	The date and time of the activity for the current episode of care (i.e. the one which lead to the patient's inclusion in this submission)	DateTime	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	ALCOHOL RISK ASSESSMENT OUTCOME	ALCOHOL_RISKASSESSMENT	Whether the patient was assessed for alcohol risk using a validated tool: such as AUDIT/AUDIT-C, FAST	String	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	CCG of registration	CCG_OF_REGISTRATION	Clinical Commissioning Group covering the area in which the patient's GP Practice falls. ODS code format.		No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	CCG of residence	CCG_OF_RESIDENCE	Clinical Commissioning Group covering the area in which the patient's postcode falls. ODS code format.		No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	COMMUNITY ALCOHOL SERVICES - PATIENT REFERRAL STATUS	CAS_REFERRAL_STATUS	For patients formally referred to continue treatment in community alcohol services, whether this was their first referral and if not if they are already on the caseload	String	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	COMMUNITY ALCOHOL SERVICES - REFERRAL INDICATOR	CAS_REFERRAL_INDICATOR	Whether the patient was formally referred to continue treatment in community alcohol services	Boolean	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	DATE OF FIRST CONTACT WITH THE ALCOHOL CARE TEAM	FIRSTCONTACT_DATE	The date on which the first contact was made with the ACT	Date	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	DATE OF REFERRAL	ACT_REFERRAL_DATE	The date on which the patient was referred to the ACT	Date	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	ETHNIC CATEGORY	ETHNICITY	The ethnic identity of a person as reported by them	String	Yes	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	HOSPITAL SITE CODE	SITE_CODE	The ODS code of the hospital site where the service is being delivered	String	No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	ICS of registration	ICS_OF_REGISTRATION	Integrated Care System covering the area in which the patient's GP Practice falls. ODS code format. This will be null until at least April 2022 when ICS organisations are rolled out.		No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	ICS of residence	ICS_OF_RESIDENCE	Integrated Care System covering the area in which the patient's postcode falls. ODS code format. This will be null until at least April 2022 when ICS organisations are rolled out.		No	21/10/2022	
Alcohol Dependency Dataset	LA of registration	LA_OF_REGISTRATION	Local Authority covering the area in which the patient's GP Practice falls. ODS code format.		No	21/10/2022	



Changes to the Data Offering (1)

- Changes to the datasets
 - New versions e.g. Maternity Services V1.5 and V2
 - Uplifts to existing collections e.g. ECDS (Emergency Care Data Set)
 - Fixes and fault resolution
 - Annual refreshes

[Data set additions and improvements report - NHS England Digital](#)

Changes to the Data Offering (2)

Recently retired/ restricted/ consolidated datasets: 11 datasets	In Progress: New/ Change in Use case/ Removing Restrictions: 28 datasets	
Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Data Set (MHLDDS)	Ambulance Dataset	NICOR Cardiac Rhythm Management Devices
Mental Health Minimum Data Set (MHMDS)	Breast and Cosmetic Implant Registry	NICOR Cardiac Rhythm Management EPS
Summary Hospital-level Mortality Indicator (SHMI)	Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration in Secondary Care (ePMA)	NICOR Heart Failure V5_Full
Uncurated Low Latency Hospital Data Sets - Admitted Patient Care	e-Referrals	NICOR Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project v10.3.2
Uncurated Low Latency Hospital Data Sets - Critical Care	Major Trauma Registry	NICOR National Audit of Percutaneous Coronary Interventions (NAPCI) V5.6.6
Uncurated Low Latency Hospital Data Sets - Emergency Care	Medical Device Outcome Registry	NICOR National Congenital Heart Disease
Uncurated Low Latency Hospital Data Sets – Outpatient	National Diabetes Audit	NICOR The UK Left Atrial Appendage Occlusion (LAAO) Registry
CV19 - NICOR Heart Failure V5.0	National Joint Registry (feeds into Orthopaedic Trauma Registry)	NICOR The UK Patent Foramen Ovale Closure (PFOC) Registry
Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Audit (CVD Prevent Audit)	National Registry for Hearing Implants	NICOR The UK Transcatheter Mitral and Tricuspid Valve (TMTV) Registry
National Cancer Registration Data Set	National Vascular Registry	NICOR Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) V4.09
Rapid Cancer Registrations Data Set	NDRS Congenital Anomalies	Orthopaedic Trauma Registry
	NDRS National Radiotherapy Data Set (RTDS)	Pelvic Organ Prolapse and Stress Urinary Incontinence (part of Medical Devices Outcomes Registry)
	NDRS Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy Data Set (SACT)	SLOANE Breast Screening dataset
	NICOR Adult Cardiac Surgery	Tobacco Dependence

Changes to the Data Offering (3)

[Data set additions and improvements report - NHS England Digital](#)



DARS Data set additions and improvements

This report shows a summary of DARS Data set Onboarding work, status definitions are below:

- **In progress:** One or more teams is working on one or more deliverables relating to this change.
- **Planning:** One or more teams is planning an element that is required for this change.
- **On Hold:** Work was started on one or more deliverables but has temporarily been stopped for some reason (e.g. staff sickness) although it is expected to resume soon
- **Not Started:** Resources haven't yet been allocated to work on any part of this work, but there is no material reason why work could not be started once resources are available.
- **Blocked:** Onboarding work cannot be progressed for some reason beyond our control.
- **Complete:** Items that are complete will remain on the report for one month for visibility and will then move to the complete tab.

60

Total Work Items

High
Confidence
Date

Low
Confidence
Date

Work Item Name

Work Type

Summary Status

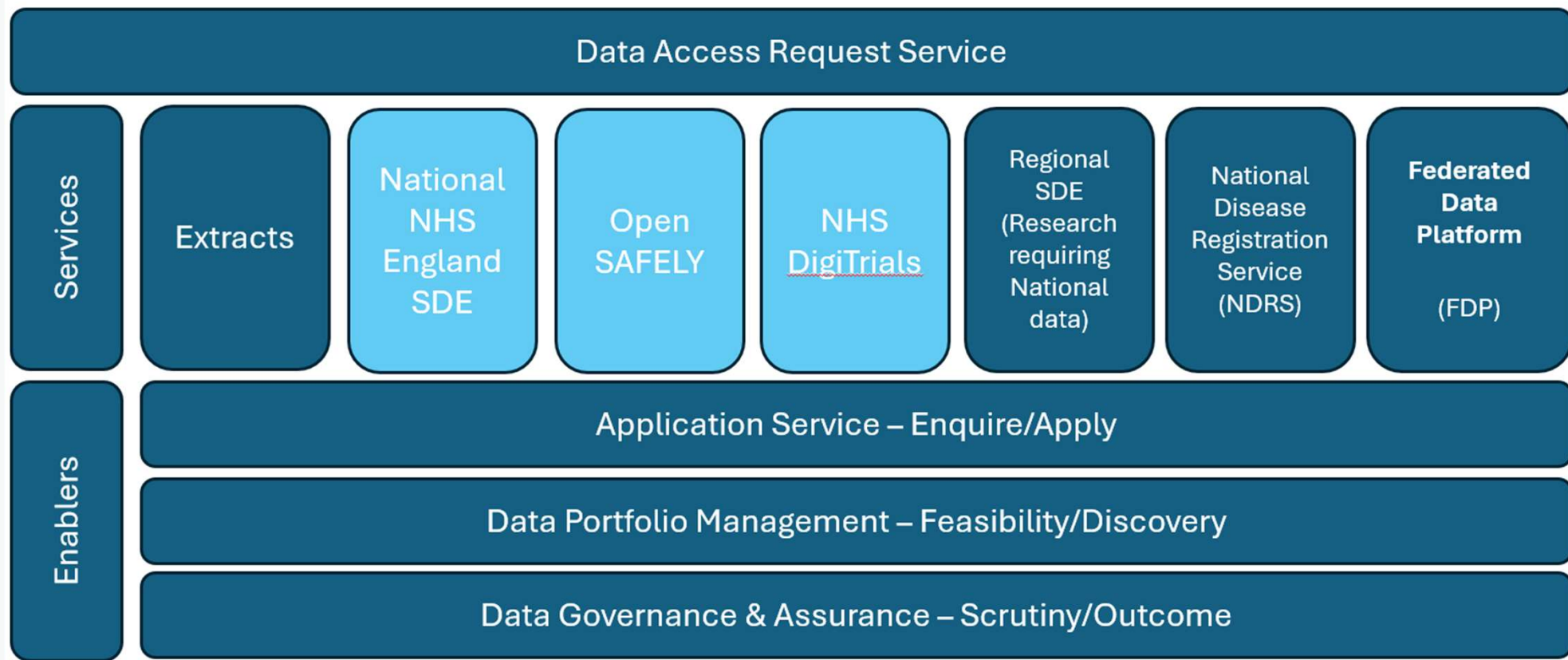
Priority	Work Item Name	Work Type	Data Set Name	Work Description	Summary Status	Start Date	Estimated or Actual Completion Date
1	Emergency Care Dataset (Strategic Version)	Change	Emergency Care Data Set (ECDS)	Migration of the Full strategic version of ECDS to DPS for both SDE and Extract customers.	In Progress	22 August 2023	28 November 2025
2	Full Onboarding of NICOP Adult Cardiac	Change	NICOP Adult Cardiac Summary	Full onboarding for all users	Not Started		



Planned Improvements

- SOC Index (Subject of Care Index)
 - Key demographics in one place
 - 1 data set to uplift rather than 40
- Improved metadata
- Improved reporting on the website: Manual -> Automated
- Data SME delivered videos
- Improved communication on problems
- Improved mechanism to raise data related requirements or questions

Until then, data.applications@nhsdigital.nhs.uk



NHS DigiTrials

Presented by:
Laura Hobbs



DigiTrials: Services Overview

Access to the full DARS catalogue. Currently accessing:

- Personal Demographics Service (PDS)
- Hospital Episode Statistics – Outpatient (HES OP)
- Hospital Episode Statistics – Admitted Patient Care (HES APC)
- Primary Care Prescribing Dataset
- Civil Registration of Births and Deaths / Mortality Data (civ reg)

Our Vision

To improve the **nation's health** by **enabling** world leading research, powered by **NHS Data**

→ *Scope: England only*

Key Objectives

- ✓ Make good use of the **data we have** - safely and securely
- ✓ Accelerate research
- ✓ Improve participant diversity and representation
- ✓ Improve population health & care
- ✓ Reduce burden on the NHS

Feasibility

Finds suitable participants

Speeds up planning by seeing if there are enough potential people available in England for a clinical trial without identifying individuals

Find

Recruitment

Recruits the right participants

Uses patient information to identify people who might be suitable for a certain trial - and contacts them to see if they would like to take part

Recruit

Communications

Keeps participants informed

Keeps trial volunteers, who have consented to receive this information, updated about the progress and results of their trial

Follow-up

Outcomes

Shows long-term impact

Provides routinely collected patient information to show the long-term impact of treatments and demonstrate that they are safe and effective.

Alignment with government policy and strategy



Life Sciences Vision 10-year cross-govt. strategy to **accelerate delivery of new treatments** to patients by **streamline regulatory processes** and ambitions to **make the UK a Global Leader for Research**



NHS 10-year plan Includes ambitions to **expand trial participation** and to **accelerate trial setup** and **promote inclusivity and diversity**, making access simpler including **Digital access NHS App**



Government response to the **Lord O'Shaughnessy review** - with commitments to establishing a **common approach to contacting patients to take part in research**



The Sudlow Review "Uniting the UK's Health Data" – recommendations for **DigiTrials to be part of the National Health Data Service (HDRS)**, and using our service to simplify access to health data

Examples of NHS DigiTrial Supported Projects

Trial Name	Study Type	Sponsor Type	Recruitment Target	Description	Intervention & Outcome
Protect-C	Population-based study	Academic (QMUL), Charity (Yorkshire Cancer Research)	5,000 participants (50,000 invitations)	Genetic testing for cancer risk	Saliva-based genetic test; aims to identify risk and enable prevention
REGAIN	Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) Phase III	Academic (University of Warwick), NHS	535 participants (30,000 invitations)	Rehabilitation for Long COVID	8-week online exercise & support vs single advice session; measures quality of life and fatigue
MyMelanoma	Cohort Study	Academic (University of Oxford), Charity (Cancer Research UK, Melanoma Focus)	20,000 participants (170,000 invitations)	Melanoma patient data collection	Recruitment of 20,000 participants; aims to improve treatment and predict recurrence
Our Future Health	Prospective Cohort Study	Mixed (UK Government, Life Sciences Industry, Charities)	5m participants (30M+ invitations)	Healthy cohort; largest UK health research programme	Collect health data and biosamples; enable disease prevention and early detection
NHS Galleri	RCT (Phase III)	Commercial (GRAIL Inc.), Academic (CRUK, QMUL)	140,000 participants (1.5M invitations)	Blood test for multi-cancer early detection	Galleri blood test alongside NHS screening; aims to reduce late-stage cancer diagnoses
BEST-4	RCT (Phase III)	Academic (University of Cambridge), Funded by CRUK & NIHR	120,000 participants (~4.5M invitations)	Screening for Barrett's oesophagus	Capsule sponge test vs usual care; aims to reduce oesophageal cancer mortality
ASCEND PLUS	RCT (Phase IV)	Academic (University of Oxford), NHS	20,000 participants (~1M invitations)	CVD prevention in Type 2 diabetes	Oral semaglutide vs placebo; aims to reduce major adverse cardiovascular events
ASPIRING	RCT (Phase III)	Academic (University of Edinburgh), Funded by Medical Research Future Fund	2.8k in the UK (~50k invitations)	Secondary prevention after intracerebral haemorrhage	Aspirin/clopidogrel vs no antiplatelet; aims to reduce strokes and heart attacks
Global Minds	Longitudinal cohort	Mixed (Akrivia Health, Wellcome Trust, Johnson & Johnson)	50,000 participants	Builds large-scale dataset for mental illness and dementia research	Collects biological samples and health data; aims to improve diagnostics and treatment
DMAPP	RCT (Phase II)	Academic (University of Leeds), funded by NIHR and Versus Arthritis	500	Develops digital rehab programme for upper limb musculoskeletal disorders	Digital app with tailored exercise and education; improve pain and function

Yellow: V. large scale (population based) **Green:** Large-scale **Amber:** medium-sized **Red:** Small scale trials

Feasibility Service “Plan with confidence”



Our Feasibility service helps researchers assess whether their trial is viable before it begins. Using NHS data, you can explore the size and characteristics of a target population in near real time, strengthening trial design and funding proposals.

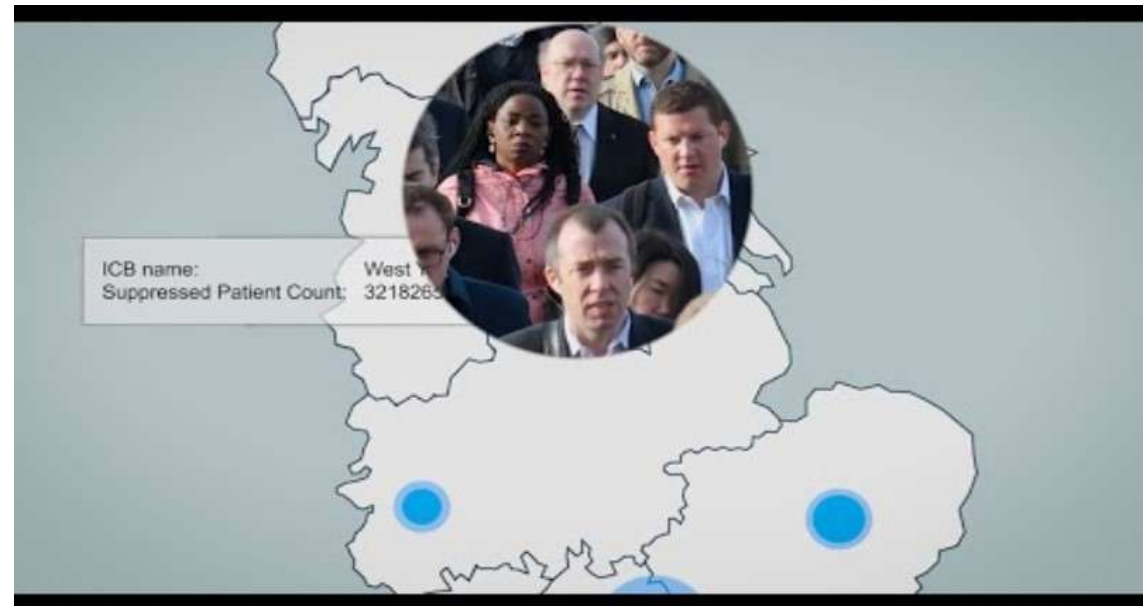
With Feasibility you can:

- Access **national-level patient data** via a secure self-service tool
- View population **location** and **demographics**, including **deprivation** and **ethnicity**
- Filter results by **clinical codes**, **medications**, and **procedures**
- Generate clear, **tabulated outputs** to support funding and protocol decisions
- Speed up feasibility assessments from weeks to minutes

Subscription costs:

3 months: £2,035 (ex. VAT) ~£2.26 per query

6 months: £2,469 (ex. VAT) ~£1.37 per query



Recruitment + Comms service

- ✓ **Identifies people** potentially suitable for a trial & contacts them to see if they would like to take part
- ✓ **Sends invites** (letter, SMS, email*, NHS App*) to eligible participants minimising need for patient data to leave NHS
- ✓ Manages **end-to-end invite process** using tested mailing providers
- ✓ Enables **direct to patient approach** using Section 251 under NHS Act 2006
- ✓ Improves potential **participant diversity**
- ✓ Leverage **behavioural science** expertise to tailor messages for **optimal engagement and enrolment** and ensure diverse & representative recruitment
- ✓ Keep participants informed and engaged with timely updates, reminders, and study materials.
- ✓ Leverage the best communication channels and design impactful materials.
- ✓ Support broader trial communications (e.g., newsletters, study outcomes) without sharing individual-level results.
- ✓ Maintain accurate participant details with Participant List Update Service (PLUS).

Interested?

Scan the QR code to find out more and apply by **28 March 2025**



Need help recruiting participants for your FY 25/26 clinical trial?

If you are planning a clinical trial or health research that will benefit public and social care, **NHS DigiTrials Recruitment Service** has pilot spaces available.

Build cohort of potential participants



Patient Centred Model

Existing model built from PDS, HES APC, HES OP and Primary Care MEDS – criteria is applied later (STATIC)



Clinical Criteria

Agreed, hard-coded clinical criteria is stored in a separate table which feeds into DigiTrials (STATIC)



Batch Criteria

Customer submits demographic criteria for a batch as CSV file via SEFT (DYNAMIC)



Removals

Remove opt-outs (National Data Opt-Out and Trial Specific) and known trial participants



Reduce by sampling

Reduce the cohort to specified size by random sampling and add customer-friendly unique references



Store

Store the remaining cohort as a table, ready to invite to participate in the trial

Data Application, Governance and Legal Basis Overview

- All customers entering into a **Data Sharing Agreement** with the Recruitment Service must first enter into an overarching **Data Sharing Framework Contract** – this forms the basis of the ongoing relationship with NHS England.
- The **Data Access Request Service** (DARS) provides a governance framework for approval of requests to use the Recruitment service and defines the standards any applicants need to meet.
- The process is independent reviewed by the **Advisory Group for Data** (AGD).
- The process is currently run under a **Pilot Direction** established in 2021 (amended in 2023) to support a pilot for the Recruitment Service
- These Directions specifically place a legal obligation upon NHS England to link and analyse data to support the creation of a cohort.
- Each customer will also have a **Service Agreement** that defines the wider recruitment service (beyond data access) and terms by which it will be operated under.
- Full Service Directions from Secretary of State will enable service scaling and changes to some existing governance arrangements



NHS DigiTrials – possible future data sets



Digital

Services Data Cyber Developer News About



NHS Digital > Services > Data Access Request Service (DARS) > DARS products and services > Data set catalogue

Data set catalogue

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Provides data on the prevalence of both treated and untreated psychiatric disorder in the English adult population (aged 16 and over).

[Adult Social Care Client Level Dataset](#)

The Adult Social Care Client Level Data Set (ASCCLDS) collects Adult Social Care activity on requests, reviews, assessments and services at a client level from local authorities in England

[Alcohol Dependency Dataset](#)

The Alcohol Dependence dataset is required to monitor the impact and clinical outcomes of alcohol dependence treatment services, as well as the impact on reducing health inequalities. It will also contribute to the evaluation of the programme and drive future policy decisions in terms of further roll out.

2025/26 Road Map

**Mental Health Services
Data Set**

NDRS Cancer Data

Subject of Care Index

**Diagnostic Imaging
Dataset**

[Data set catalogue -
NHS England Digital](#)



Outcomes service

- ✓ **Track progress** of trial participants
- ✓ Understand **the longer-term outcomes** of trial treatments and interventions
- ✓ Uses national, routinely collected datasets from various healthcare settings – **application via DARS** with service ‘wrapper’
- ✓ **Linked data** to better explore and assess trial outcomes
- ✓ Provides compelling evidence of treatment impact on real-world health
- ✓ Ability to deliver for large-scale cohort outputs
- ✓ System investments to deliver more bespoke requirements e.g. delta file generation to support secure use data minimisation best practices.

How NHS DigiTrials Outcomes works

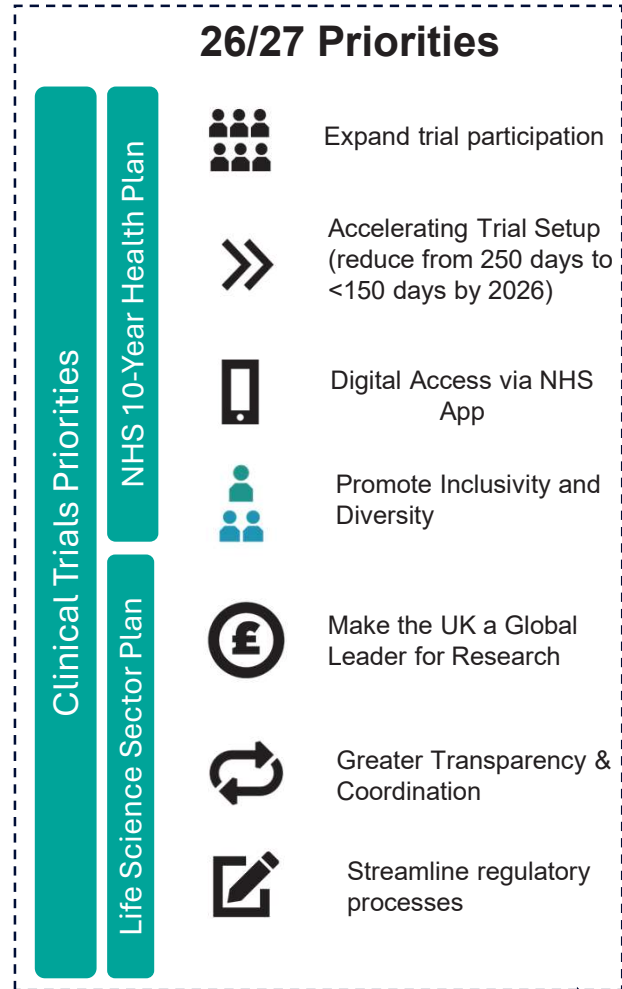
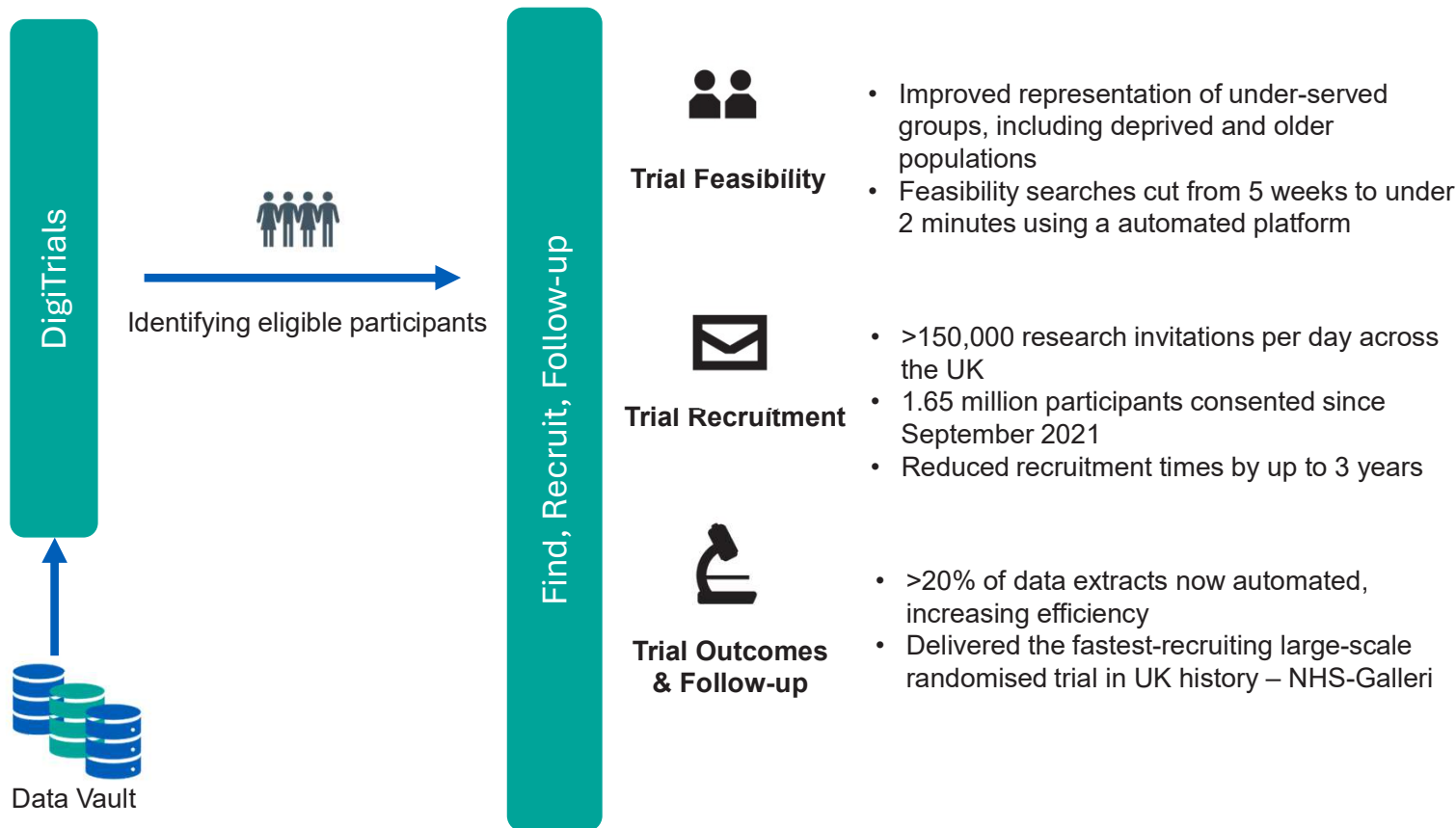
By requesting data from NHS England, you can follow up with participants who have consented to share their information. We'll securely handle the data sharing process, ensuring your trial has the necessary legal basis.

How it works:

1. **Share participant details:** Provide us with a list of participants who have consented to data sharing.
2. **We'll do the rest:** We'll securely link your participant data to our national datasets and extract the relevant information.
3. **Access your data:** Your team can then securely retrieve this linked data for analysis.

We can help you determine if your trial meets the necessary requirements.

DigiTrials Successes & 26/27 Roadmap



Supporting the NHS 10-year plan & Life Sciences Sector Plan

Thank You

 @nhsengland

 company/nhsengland

 england.nhs.uk