![Health & Social Care Information Centre (hscic) logo]

Update on Data Release Process

Progress update

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Background

In March 2014, the HSCIC undertook a review of Data Releases made by its predecessor organisation, the NHS Information Centre. The findings of this review were published on June 17th.

In response to the review, and specifically to recommendations made by Sir Nick Partridge, the HSCIC Board introduced a series of steps to guarantee greater openness and reassurance to the public, stricter controls over data use and better clarity for data users. A programme of work has been established to deliver these commitments. This paper provides an update to the board on significant areas of progress that have been made in areas relating to the release and sharing of data.

Data Access Request Service (DARS)

In line with one of the recommendations made by Sir Nick Partridge, the Data Access Request Service was launched on 31st July 2014. This service, delivered via a dedicated web page, provides HSCIC customers with a single point of access for all new data applications, operating a revised process which has been simplified into Application, Approval and Access.

Implementation of DARS is already delivering considerable benefit both internally and externally. The simplified process has greatly improved the efficiency with which requests can be managed and progressed by the HSCIC, and provides far greater clarity for customers in understanding the status of their requests. This will be further supported by the introduction of Service Level Agreements for each stage in November 2014.

 Further information on the processes are available on the DARS webpage here http://www.hscic.gov.uk/dars

All requests, including those currently in the backlog are being managed through the DARS processes. To ensure the most efficient delivery of service, additional resources have been temporarily engaged to support the applications stage. This will enable the formation of two separate teams, one to deal exclusively with new applications, and the other to process the backlog.

Service Level Agreements

Revised service levels will be implemented from November 2014. The target service level for simple requests will be 14 days; the service level for the most complex requests will be 60 days.

The HSCIC aims to achieve the Service Levels detailed below:

- Respond to all new applications within four working days. Where further information is required from the customer, a response as to the next steps will be provided within 4 days for receiving the information.

- Approve all simple requests within five days. An example of a simple request could be an extension to the period in which already supplied data can be accessed. Where requests are not approved, a response will be provided within 5 days.

- Applications which require review by DAAG will be processed within fifteen days. If applications are not recommended for approval, customers will be notified within fifteen days.

- For more complicated applications, such as a requirement for the HSCIC to seek guidance from the Confidentiality Advisory Group (CAG), approval is likely to take up to thirty days.

- Once approval has been granted and the data sharing agreement has been signed by both parties, the release of the data will take a maximum of fourteen days, depending on the amount of processing required.

More information about these SLAs can be found on the DARS webpage here http://www.hscic.gov.uk/dars

The HSCIC will publish its performance against these SLAs on a regular basis.

The diagram in Annex B demonstrates these service levels against the three process stages.

Backlog update

In response to the recommendation by Sir Nick Partridge that the HSCIC implement a robust record keeping approach, considerable work has been undertaken to ensure all requests are logged and managed through the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM), providing a 'single source of truth'. The dashboard in **Annex A** has been developed for tracking and monitoring progress against targets. To date the backlog continues to be cleared in line with the delivery forecast.

There remain significant numbers of requests in the backlog. To ensure targets continue to be met, the following steps have been undertaken:

- 10 additional resources have been engaged to support the applications process.

- The Data Access Advisory Group (DAAG) has been strengthened through recruitment and by convening on a more regular basis. This will ensure it can manage the backlog of requests through the approvals process whilst maintaining its independence.

- Documentation relating to Data Sharing Agreements are now all held centrally and linked backed to the CRM.

Data Deletion

A programme of work is ongoing to ensure data has been deleted appropriately for all data referenced in the PwC report on 'data releases by the NHS Information Centre'. The data deletion team has made significant progress with this action over the past few months with

542 out of 575 organisations having been contacted since May. The remaining 33 organisations are in the process of being traced.

139 certificates of deletion have been received as of 18/08/14, providing confirmation that expired agreements are properly terminated and data has been deleted safely and securely in line with governance controls.

The team continue to provide support to customers in carrying out the deletions and additional resources have been allocated to manage ongoing enquiries.

Audit function

Following the Review of Data Releases and in response to Sir Nick Partridge's recommendations, the HSCIC is in the process of implementing a robust audit function to enable ongoing scrutiny of how data is being used, stored and deleted by those receiving it.

The methodology and framework for audit have been created and the first wave of data audits of four organisations have been completed.

The purpose of the audit is to ensure compliance with the obligations contained within Data Sharing Agreements and to determine the level of control of data received from HSCIC in recipient organisations. The audit includes, but is not limited to, such elements as:

- Access control
- Information transfer
- Disposal of data
- Risk assessment and treatments
- Operational planning and control

The output from the audits will be a report containing a set of key findings to which the audited organisation will be required to provide an appropriate management response. The outcomes of the audits and any follow up associations will be published on HSCIC website.

Communications

In recognition of the scale of change that these new initiatives are bringing about, considerable effort has been devoted to improving communications.

A regular 'Data Insight' bulletin has been developed to provide updates to partners, customers and stakeholders on progress in key areas and to better enable two way communications.

A series of stakeholder events have been set up to provide stakeholders with the opportunity discuss areas of concern and provide feedback. The first event was held was held on 21st July with further events planned for November.

Account managers have been identified for each of the key customer areas and are actively working with customers to keep them aware of the latest progress and ensure the HSCIC continues to meet their needs.

Annex A

The Data Access Request Service (DARS) provides customers with a single point of access for all new data applications. To provide greater visibility of the type and volume of requests that are processed, an information dashboard has been created.

The dashboard shows the number of data requests being managed and the proportion of these that are in the Application, Approval and Access stages. It also shows how the volume of requests changes over time. This dashboard is updated regularly on the DARS webpage here http://www.hscic.gov.uk/dars-dashboard

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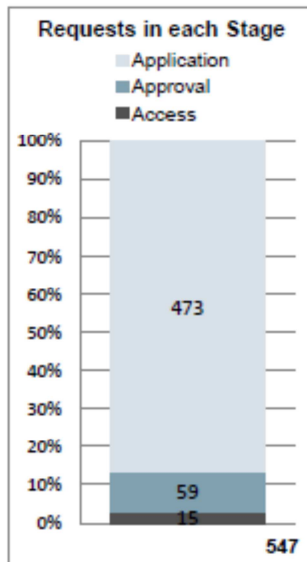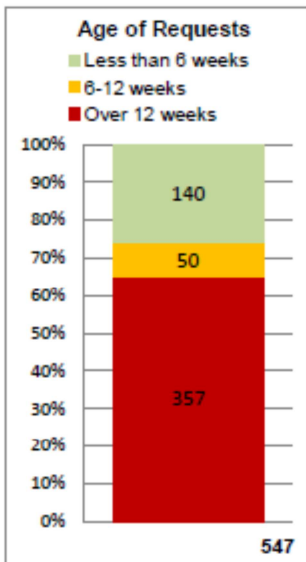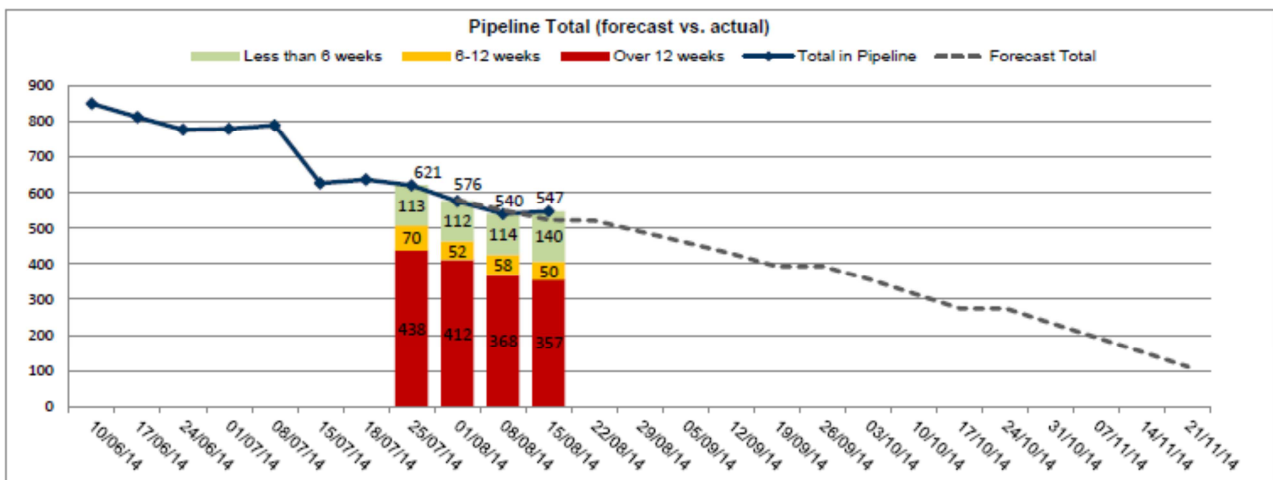
Annex B

Data Access Request Service – high-level process