



Open data policy

Background

This policy is for anyone interested in how the WCIT Charity produces, publishes and uses open data.

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Open data context

What is open data?

We subscribe to the following definition of open data:

- Open data is data that can be freely used, reused and redistributed by anyone.
- It is subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and sharealike.
- Open data is the building block of open knowledge.
- Open knowledge is what open data becomes when it's useful, usable and used.

Why open data?

We are committed to using IT for good within the UK, and we believe one way we can do this is by making our actions transparent when we publish our activities as open data.

Our open data goals

When publishing data about our work, we have three main aims:

- That our data is open, useful, meaningful and accessible.
- That we publish data that brings value, provides ongoing dialogue and discussion to those building stronger communities.
- That we provide regular narrative and understanding to stakeholders.

In this context, we aim to operate an open data practice that is robust, and leads to greater engagement on the issues faced by the charitable sector in the UK.

Our open data commitments

When considering open data, we commit to the following:

- We will publish data openly.
- We will publish data on key aspects of our activities in an open and accessible manner.
- We will update this data regularly and in a timely manner.
- We will provide documentation and descriptions of the data we publish, including a licence.

We will use open data

- We will analyse, use and discuss our own data.
- We will use other openly available datasets to provide insight into the UK charity and voluntary sector.

We will support those using our data.

- We will be open to queries and feedback.
- Where appropriate, we will respond accordingly.

We will support the sector with open data

- We will provide advice and guidance on publishing and using open data to peer organisations.
- Where possible, we will champion the publishing and use of open data in the grant making sector.

This policy provides information relevant to each of these commitments. We describe the key aspects, actions and mechanisms that we use to deliver our open data policy.

Our open data principles

The act of providing open data is to publish and share. We understand that this involves responsibility and due diligence. When we publish data openly, our aim is to ensure it is of a high enough quality to be accessed, used and understood. It is the intention of this policy to reduce potential issues that make data less useful.

Note: these principles should be read alongside our open data workflows and checklists. Together, these describe our expectations and methodologies.

Privacy

Principle: Our open data will respect individual's privacy

Best practice: We will ensure our open data is free from information that can be used on its own or with other information to identify a living person, as outlined in the [ICO code of practice](#).

Quality

Principle: Our open data will be comprehensive for the subject.

Best practice: We will always check the quality of our data and will not knowingly publish data that is incomplete for the time period.

Principle: Our open data will use commonly available references where applicable.

Best practice: We will always provide codes and references for our data, particularly in terms of administrative geography. We will publish data that is free from jargon and document any acronyms and abbreviations used.

Principle: We will take down inaccurate open data.

Best practice: We will act to remove or replace published open data where mistakes have been identified in a timely and considerate manner.

Clarity

Principle: Our open data will be relevant and succinct for the subject.

Best practice: We will always consider the scope of our data to make it useful for those who may want to access it.

Principle: Our open data will be well documented.

Best practice: We will always provide notes and guidance with our datasets. We will always detail the nature, scope and purpose of our open datasets in a release document, available to all. We will not purposefully provide data that is poorly described, or requires sector knowledge to comprehend.

Accessibility

Principle: Our open data files will be a workable size that can be used on a personal computer.

Best practice: We will always consider the size of our data to make it usable for those who may want to access it.

Principle: Our open data will be presented in a common technical file format.

Best practice: We will publish data in common, accessible and standard formats such as CSV, JSON and XML. We will not publish open data in bespoke, redundant or proprietary formats.

Principle: Our open data will be accessible and consistent.

Best practice: We will always publish data consistently, making it accessible to all. We will not publish data that needs passwords or put other access restrictions in place, unless these are signposted.

Licensing

Principle: Our open data will be appropriately licensed.

Best practice: We will always issue an open licence with our open datasets. Our default is Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0). We will not publish data that is subject to a restrictive licence.

Relevancy

Principle: Our open data will be timely.

Best practice: We will always provide regular and timely updates to relevant open datasets. We will not miss updates to our relevant datasets, or let our data go stale.

Principle: We welcome feedback and discussion about our open data.

Best practice: We will always make it clear how to provide feedback on our open data, and where appropriate, publicly document our actions. We will not publish data without a feedback mechanism.

Principle: We will use other relevant open data.

Best practice: Where relevant, we will use other openly available datasets in our work. We will always provide clear attribution and guidance to the source of the data, and any actions we may have taken.

Principle: We will use our own open data.

Best practice: We will use our own datasets in internal and external channels - providing commentary, analysis and insight.

Our expectations of you

Our open data policy provides a framework for our practice. When using our open data, please consider the following:

Accessing our data

According to our principles, the datasets we publish are succinct and easily available for download. When accessing our data, we request that you do not place unnecessary burden on our servers by making repeated data requests over a short period of time.

Feedback

If you spot any mistakes, errors or points for clarification, please contact charity@wcit.org.uk. We also encourage requests and ideas for new data that we may publish. Again, please do so via charity@wcit.org.uk.

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Approved by the Chair of WCIT Charity on behalf of the trustees.

Signed:



Stefan Fafinski, Chair of WCIT Charity

Date: 6 September 2023

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice **annually**.

This policy statement was last reviewed on 6 September 2023.

Appendix 1: WCIT Charity open data workflow and checklist

The following checklists are used by the WCIT Charity in in the preparation, publication and update of open data. These are linked to our open data best practices, detailed in our open data policy.

Consideration: Privacy	Action
Does the data contain names of individuals?	If yes, then remove.
Does the data contain any unique identifiers that can be used to retrieve personal information from external systems?	If yes, then remove.
Consideration: Quality	Action
For data that is aggregated, check the results for any outliers.	Check source data / reports to validate figures.
For any dataset, check for any blank fields or zero results.	If numerous, check source data. If acceptable, then record in data release table.
For geographic areas used within datasets, provide the code alongside the name.	Code list sources published in the metadata.
Consideration: Clarity	Action
Notes, guidance and code lists must be provided with data.	Relevant code lists and other information to be detailed in the metadata.
Consideration: Accessibility	Action
For any dataset, consider the overall physical file size.	If over 10MB, check contents and consider segmenting.
For any dataset, check the column headers and data labels are legible.	If not, adjust them.
For aggregated datasets, check that aggregations are explained and logged.	Ensure these are documented in the metadata.
For any dataset, check that time periods used are in accordance with common standards (eg: financial quarters, calendar months).	If there is a bespoke date range, then detail in the metadata.
For spreadsheets and tabular data, release in a standard open format.	For spreadsheets, publish in .xml.
Consideration: Licensing	Action
Creative Commons licence. Attribution http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/	Ensure attribution is provided on the WCIT website, on the open data policy and on the metadata.
Consideration: Relevancy	Action
Keep data updated each quarter in line with grant funding schedule.	Publish new grants data within two months of every grant decision.
Ensure there are mechanisms to receive feedback on data.	Provide a contact email on the metadata and on the WCIT Charity website.