[The data strategy: a blueprint for the evolution of a trustworthy data system?](#)

I believe that our ability to successfully achieve better things through data and digital hinges on the strength of the relationships that will deliver this change. And whether it's ICSs working together to innovate well, or organisations looking at how best to engage the public on data matters, understanding, trust and respect are central to these relationships. It is with this belief in mind that I read and considered the government's new data strategy, [Data Saves Lives](#) — asking to what degree the commitments it makes provide a blueprint for the evolution of a trustworthy data ecosystem, and whether it provides for all of the conditions that must be met in order to create an environment in which innovation can flourish.

I had [advised on an earlier draft](#) that the importance of public trust needed a greater emphasis, and so was pleased by the strong focus it was given in the published version, alongside the recognition that "The data we talk about is not an abstract thing: there is an individual, a person, a name behind each piece of data." This is important. People need to know that the government understands just how unique this highly private information is — and that as such, commitments will be needed to demonstrate how confidentiality will be protected and respected. The data pact (or 'charter') it is proposing to co-author with the public will be a good start.

Also important was the government's admission that it made mistakes with the [General Practice Data for Research and Planning (GPDPR)](#) programme by taking people's trust for granted, and that it needed to do better to rebuild and strengthen that trust. The strategy outlines that to tackle this, it will:

- keep data safe and secure
- be open about how data is used
- ensure fair terms from data partnerships
- give the public a bigger say in how data is used
- improve the public's access to their own data

Maslow's 'hierarchy of need' is useful here. It is a concept from developmental psychology that describes the conditions needed for humans to reach their full potential. It is visualised as a layered pyramid: at the bottom are our most basic requirements (food and shelter) with successive layers incorporating more complex emotional and social needs. I found it helpful to think about the data landscape in these terms. What are the conditions that must be satisfied before our health and care data ecosystem can reach full maturity in terms of its trustworthiness to patients and professionals alike? And does what the strategy is proposing sufficiently meet them?

I would suggest that in this parallel, those conditions are:

- legal compliance
- strong privacy protections
- a commitment to transparency
- establishing and demonstrating public benefit
- ensuring appropriate mechanisms for choice
- sharing power with the public

Legal compliance

At the most basic level, a data system must demonstrate legal compliance. However, whilst lawful data use is a necessary foundation, it is insufficient alone. Previous failed national data initiatives have been lawful. To earn trust, organisations need to do more than not break the law, as the final version of the data strategy implicitly recognises.

Strong privacy protections

All health and care data is collected within a relationship of trust. Maintaining confidentiality is essential for people to feel able to share information with those caring for them; the consequences of not doing so are great. Given this, the strategy's commitment to privacy enhancing technology is reassuring.

In particular, the shift towards data access in secure data environments (SDEs) — of which trusted research environments (TREs) are a subset — and away from routine disseminations is a significant development and a move that I strongly support. The ethical framework that underpins the use of the SDEs through the use of the [ONS's '5 safes'](#) is also key. For those who haven't read it, what Professor Ben Goldacre says about TREs in his [recent review](#) is very informative. It is important that the government gets the governance wrapper and accreditation framework right for SDEs so that standards and safeguards are consistent, and what is in place as the 'gold standard' in the national SDE is scalable and achievable elsewhere.

A commitment to transparency

We know that whilst privacy remains a key concern, it is not the only concern that people have. There is good evidence, including from empirical research during the pandemic, that how data is being used and why, and who is making decisions about it — and what motivates those decisions — are also questions that matter. I'd therefore place transparency as the next condition to be met. This includes good public engagement and dialogue — providing people with clear, accessible information about who will be accessing their data and why, the safeguards that are in place and what choices they have about it. There should also be a commitment to working out in the open as all of these changes are implemented.

The strategy makes strong commitments in these areas. I was pleased to see pledges to make it clearer to people how and why data is being used, including the provision of information about the benefits and risks of use, the safeguards in place, and how people can opt out of sharing for purposes beyond than their own care if they choose. The plan for rebuilding public

trust will be a pivotal deliverable that I am keen to get into the detail of. I have also been asked to feed into work on the data pact, which the strategy says will "set out how we will use health and care data and what the public has the right to expect". As a product that will set the scene for the public in terms of their data, we need to get this right.

Establishing and demonstrating public benefit

Taking us to the next level is how a system ensures, evaluates, and demonstrates, the public benefit from data use. Society's familiarity with the beneficial uses of data has improved thanks to its prevalence in conversations around the pandemic. However, this does not mean that an enduring trust can be presumed which grants a social licence for all future uses of data collected in providing care for other purposes that may benefit the public. Trust is context and use-case specific. The likely public benefit of any new data use needs to be established. This must include demonstrating credible, authentic engagement with potential risks and their mitigations, as well as the exciting opportunities from data use.

When it comes to public benefit, transparency remains key. There must be clarity about the role of third-party data access, including by profit-making commercial companies. The strategy speaks simply of 'innovators' which masks the complexity; it is important to be clear about who may benefit from any data use in addition to the public, whether that is a commercial company or an academic institution — and also why that may be necessary and justifiable. The system must be straight about the 'who' if it is to develop the maturity for more complex discussions about 'how, when, what and why' of fair data partnerships.

Also of note here is the reference in the strategy to the [Centre for Improving Data Collaboration's](#) work on a value-sharing framework to support good data partnerships. I hope to see this framework evolve in a way that will support better conversations with the public about the value of data and what 'fair' terms for the NHS might look like in practice.

Ensuring appropriate mechanisms for choice

As public sector organisations and systems evolve and become more complex, with increasing ambitions to deliver public good, the rights, agency, and experiences of individuals — both the professionals within it and the public it serves — can get lost as the system strives to 'deliver'. In this context, actively maintaining individual choice regarding how data about them is used is an important ethical safeguard.

It was reassuring, therefore, to see opt-out, which was absent from the draft strategy, now included in it. I am looking forward to hearing more about, and getting involved in, the plans for ensuring that the opt-out landscape is simplified. Opt-out choices need to be clear, coherent, simple to action and — perhaps most importantly — authentic: we need to ensure that they are doing what people expect them to do. There is work to be done with the public to navigate the tension between providing for the common good (through more efficient and safe individual care, planning, research, and innovation) and

establishing what people should have a right to determine for themselves regarding when and how their confidential data is used.

Sharing power with the public

Finally, I'd propose for any organisation or system to reach full maturity it needs to develop the capacity to be self-reflective about how power is exercised and experienced, both by those working within it and receiving its services. I was very struck by the repeated use of the word power in the data strategy. But what does a mature exercise of power look like? It is demonstrated by a system confident enough to genuinely engage, listen and respond to what it hears, and strong enough to think how power can be meaningfully shared. This has to involve independent scrutiny and challenge, and public involvement in decision-making.

I was therefore pleased to see the strategy commit to undertaking in-depth public engagement, including working with seldom-heard groups, to consider policy questions such as the delivery of SDEs and the future of opt-outs. I was also delighted to see the commitment to a statutory safe haven for health and care data in NHS England, where data access decisions will be subject to independent scrutiny, as well as the commitment to the sharing of decision-making power with the public in the strategy's draft guidelines for SDEs: "secure data environments must ensure that patients and the public are actively involved in the decision-making processes to build trust in how their data is used".

These are good examples of how systems can improve and strengthen trust by being open to challenge. There is much that can be learned here from the experience and expertise within existing independent bodies such as the Independent Group Advising on the Release of Data (IGARD) and the Confidentiality Advisory Group (CAG). If delivered well, these commitments will demonstrate system maturity in action: transforming words around power to meaningful deeds.

Some final thoughts

Some of the strategy's commitments have very ambitious delivery timescales, which I hope are achievable. As the strategy now transitions into delivery, much detail still needs to be worked through around many of the commitments. This includes the sizeable pledge to engage with the public to build trust. It is important to move at pace where this is practical and achievable, but some things will take time to get right, and I think working with the public, and working out how best to involve and engage them, is one of those things. Equally, determining the nature and intent of any legislative changes concerning identifiable data will also be critical.

This is an exciting time to be NDG. My panel and I are hopeful for the future as outlined in the strategy, and we look forward to supporting all those working hard to improve health, care and treatment experience and outcomes through better use of one of our most valuable national assets: our health and care data.

[G7 conference one year on: 26 ways Cornwall has been made greener](#)

The first year of the 5-year G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery ends in June 2022 and funding has been secured for more exciting new projects and to progress the ambition of Natural England, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and other partners to continue transforming Cornwall.

The G7 Legacy Project is about reconnecting habitats and ecosystems throughout mid-Cornwall, conserving and even reintroducing rare species, while improving water quality and capturing carbon.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

> The delivery of 26 projects to boost nature recovery across Cornwall is a fitting legacy of our G7 presidency.
>
> We have already improved access to green spaces at Woodland Valley Farm and restored habitats for rare species at Goss Moor. In the next year, Cornwall will continue to lead the way in supporting nature with projects including the restoration of woodland and tackling invasive species.

Projects vary wildly in scope but each has the common theme of improving a location in Cornwall, ranging from a few square feet to thousands of hectares. Highlights include:

- Imerys, which extracts China clay from the ground and has 10,000 acres of land within Cornwall, has recovered acid grassland, improved and restored rare heathland areas and introduced conservation grazing. Habitat creation and nature recovery continues into year 2.
- Better access to nature for all including wheelchair users at Woodland Valley Farm where a boardwalk made of recyclables allows viewing of the Cornwall Beaver Project. Beavers were released here 5 years ago, the first in Cornwall for over 400 years.
- The Marsh Fritillary butterfly was once widespread in Britain and Ireland. Now it is threatened, not only in the UK but across Europe. Improvements have been made to Luxulyan Valley, Molinnis nature reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest that will also benefit the endangered willow tit.

Habitat creation and nature recovery will continue at land owned by Imerys, where invasive gorse has been removed and the area reseeded

Wesley Smyth, Area Manager of Natural England, said:

> The G7 conference was an ambitious event so it is only right that the legacy be equally ambitious and create a lasting legacy for Cornwall.
>
> The variety of projects means there is something for everyone, from investing in people like apprentices to advisors, investing in better access to nature through improved nature trails and car parks to investing in recovery and habitat recreation to bring vulnerable species back from the brink.

The legacy project is now entering its second year and will continue developing mid- and long-term projects as well as creating news ones like:

- Restoring 6.5 hectares as part of the Bokiddick wet woodland restoration scheme by connecting a stream to the floodplain plus repairing a 1 kilometre trail upstream of the Luxulyan Valley.
- Improving access and management of invasive species at Par Sands with Cornwall Council.
- Carrying out baseline surveys to check the status of blue carbon sources like seagrass, algae and other underwater plants.

The G7 Legacy Project is also one of Natural England's Nature Recovery Projects which deliver nature recovery at a landscape scale helping to tackle biodiversity loss, climate change and improve public health and wellbeing.

Transforming 10,000 hectares of land under the G7 Legacy Project will see 440,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide captured as well as improvements to water quality and reduced flood risk. Ultimately, the project ambition is to see more than 21,000 hectares of land regenerated for nature in mid-Cornwall.

Natural England

- Natural England is a non-departmental public body, set up under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and is the government's statutory adviser for the natural environment in England.
- Natural England plays a key role in delivering the government's environmental priorities, including the 25 Year Environment Plan. Its general purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust

- Cornwall Wildlife Trust is one of 46 [Wildlife Trusts](#) working across the UK.
- With the invaluable support of our volunteers, members and corporate supporters we manage over 50 [nature reserves](#), including an island for wildlife and people in Cornwall.
- We also work with other organisations and landowners to protect and connect wildlife sites across the county and inspire local communities

and young people to care for wildlife where they live.

The G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery

The G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery is expected to take five years to complete depending on future funding and will contribute to the UK's target to legally protect and improve 30% of land for nature by 2030.

Natural England, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Defra in partnership with others are aiming for the G7LPNR to deliver a lasting legacy for nature and people by:

- Restoring land through nature recovery and recreating scarce habitats through sustainable farming. Natural regeneration will be used to create scrub and woodland communities; scarce habitats such as heathland and wetland will be created, as well as the development of meadows and pasture, and the restoration of peat mires in the River Fal headwaters.
- Providing opportunities to reintroduce lost species and improving resilience for key species including dormice, Marsh Fritillary butterflies, and willow tit.
- Sequestrating approx. 440,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide through forest growth and wetland restoration, including peat habitats, improved soil condition and the recovery of marine blue carbon habitats.
- Improving water quality, encouraging fish diversity and abundance, and reducing flood peaks to reduce downstream flooding.
- Improving access to green space and green social prescribing so people across the county can enjoy the wellbeing benefits of contact with nature.
- To enable transformation at this scale, the programme will employ skilled staff, develop a green jobs apprenticeship scheme and involve extensive community engagement to kickstart the development of nature's recovery in Cornwall.

For more including a summary of all the projects delivered so far see [G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery](#)

Nature Recovery Projects in England

The other nature recovery project areas include:

- The Somerset Wetlands — the largest of the projects, which includes the new super National Nature Reserve, will enhance nature recovery across 60,000 hectares through habitat creation and investing in strategic solutions that make the wetlands more sustainable and the landscape more resilient to climate change.
- Purple Horizons, Walsall — extending across 10,000 hectares on the fringes of the West Midlands conurbation, Purple Horizons is restoring and connecting fragmented nationally and internationally important heathlands to create a mosaic of heathland-wetland-woodland-grassland, vital for the recovery and long-term resilience of the area's reptiles, birds and pollinators.
- Cambridge Nature Network, Cambridgeshire — covering 9,200 in and around

the City of Cambridge, linking the inner city to rural countryside across a range of priority habitats and landscapes including chalk grassland, fenlands and ancient woodlands.

- Wye Valley, Peak District – covering 10,000 hectares, the project is conducting pioneering investigations on how an investment model can be created to generate funding for habitat restoration and creation, providing multiple nature recovery benefits.
- Wendling Beck, Norfolk – the Wendling Partnership has come together to embark on an ambitious and inspiring nature restoration project linking initiatives around the Upper River Wensum and 10,000 hectares in the surrounding farmed countryside of mid-Norfolk.

We must ignore the defeatist voices who propose to sell out Ukraine: joint article by Liz Truss and Dmytro Kuleba

The United Kingdom stands side-by-side with Ukraine on its path as a free European democracy. We strengthened this through our trilateral partnership with Poland. Now more than ever, we stand together.

President Zelenskyy and Prime Minister Boris Johnson are united in defence of Europe's security and freedom. The two of us have struck up a close friendship as Foreign Ministers, seeing eye-to-eye on Russia and many other issues.

The partnership between our great nations is based on the fundamental principle that people should be free to choose their own future. Yet this is anathema to Vladimir Putin. He feels threatened by the prospect of neighbouring free democracies like Ukraine succeeding as it risks exposing the failures of authoritarianism. So he is now hell-bent on snuffing out the flame of freedom in Ukraine through all-out war.

To get peace and protect our way of life, Ukraine and the free world need to stay strong and united. We must ignore the defeatist voices who insist people are beginning to tire and who propose to sell out Ukraine for a quick end to the unrelenting horror.

The Ukrainian people do not have the luxury to feel fatigued. Nor can the rest of the free world. The evidence of heinous war crimes continues to mount, from the bombardment of innocent Ukrainian civilians to rape, torture and abduction.

Russian forces are weaponising global hunger by stopping Ukrainian grain exports and stealing harvests. Russian proxies have breached the Geneva Convention in the way they treat prisoners of war, including British citizens

serving in the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

It is therefore imperative that the G7 and NATO this week demonstrate that their commitment to Ukraine will never be surpassed by Putin's determination to seize it. That means increasing and speeding up their supply of heavy weapons, continuing to sanction all those colluding in Putin's war, and cutting off imports of Russian energy completely.

Every weapon delivered will help the people of Ukraine repel Russian forces, retake cities currently under fire like Severodonetsk and those controlled by Russia like Kherson. Every sanction will help starve Putin's war machine of funding and save more innocent civilians from further barbarism. The Ukrainian people are fighting fearlessly for their homeland. They can win this battle, and will win it with the free world's unyielding support.

That is why the UK is at the vanguard in supplying heavy weapons. [British M270 multiple-launch rocket systems are on their way to help Ukraine](#) defend against Russian long-range artillery. The UK has already provided £1.3 billion in military aid, including anti-tank missiles, air defence systems, armoured vehicles and training. The people of Ukraine will forever remember what the UK did in its darkest hour.

The UK is increasing its sanctions, with further legislation this week on a range of trade bans, and more to come over the next month. The free world, collectively, needs to bear down harder to cut Russia off from its key sources of foreign income: energy and [other exports such as gold](#).

We cannot be cowed by Putin trying to gas-light the world with lurid threats. Whenever NATO has stood up to his bullying, he has been forced to back down, not double down. His aggression is only succeeding in encouraging more nations to join the world's most successful defensive alliance.

There will come a time for peace. But it needs to be a good and lasting peace. Putin's path to the negotiating table runs through the battlegrounds of Ukraine. He will only be serious about negotiations once the Ukrainian people have pushed his troops back.

Ukraine's supporters need to all play their part in ensuring President Zelenskyy can negotiate from a position of strength by facing a weakened Putin. That is essential for peace to endure.

There can be no negotiated settlement which replicates the Minsk Agreement, which came at the expense of Ukraine's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity.

Those who propose sacrificing Ukraine's land are actually proposing paying in Ukrainian blood for the illusion of peace. It will be a mirage unless accompanied by the restitution of Ukrainian territory and the containment of Putin's imperialism.

Putin has made clear he will not stop at Ukraine in his ambitions, but go further by targeting other sovereign nations — especially those he believes perniciously are part of Russia. That is why no one can feel secure until

Russia retreats from Ukraine and is never able to perpetrate such aggression again.

The Ukrainian people are not just fighting for their future but also the future of freedom and democracy across Europe and the wider world. This is everyone's war because Ukraine's victory is in all our interests, however long it takes.

Together, we can secure Ukraine's future in a Europe whole and free, where peace prevails once again.

[Fiona MacGregor to step down as Chief Executive of the Regulator of Social Housing](#)

News story

Her decision to leave in the new year is due to family circumstances.

The Regulator of Social Housing has today confirmed that Fiona MacGregor plans to stand down as Chief Executive due to family circumstances.

Fiona has served as CEO since the inception of the RSH in October 2018 and prior to that as Executive Director of Regulation within the Homes and Communities Agency on an interim and then permanent basis since July 2015. The chair of the RSH, Bernadette Conroy, will now work with colleagues in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to appoint a successor.

Fiona will continue as Chief Executive until the new year supported by Jonathan Walters, Deputy Chief Executive, who has assumed some additional responsibilities.

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[Foreign Secretary: Bill will fix practical problems the Protocol has created in Northern Ireland](#)

- Bill to fix the Northern Ireland Protocol and protect Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement returns to Parliament for second reading
- The legislation will fix the practical problems that parts of the Protocol have caused in Northern Ireland
- Government to launch intensive engagement process with businesses on Bill

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, will tell Parliament today (Monday 27 June) that new legislation will fix the problems that parts of the Northern Ireland Protocol have created and help uphold the [Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement](#).

At the second reading today, Parliament is set to debate the Government's Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, which introduces solutions in four key areas: burdensome customs processes, inflexible regulation, tax and spend discrepancies, and democratic governance issues. This will change parts of the Protocol, while leaving the rest intact.

Truss will tell MPs that the Bill is a basis for a durable and sustainable solution that protects the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, avoids a hard border, safeguards the EU Single Market and ensures the integrity of the UK. It also allows the UK to implement a negotiated solution in the event that one can be reached with the EU.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, said:

> Our overriding priority is protecting the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, the bedrock of peace and stability in Northern Ireland – as it stands the Protocol is undermining this delicate balance.
>
> This legislation will fix the problems the Protocol has created, ensuring that goods can flow freely within the UK, while avoiding a hard border and safeguarding the EU Single Market. A negotiated solution has been and remains our preference, but the EU continues to rule out changing the Protocol itself – even though it is patently causing serious problems in Northern Ireland – which therefore means we are obliged to act.

Following 18 months of discussions with the EU, the UK's preference remains for a negotiated solution to fix the problems which are baked into the Protocol. But the EU must be willing to change the Protocol itself.

Ministers believe that the serious situation in Northern Ireland means they cannot afford to delay.

Alongside the second reading, the Government is launching a series of structured engagements with the business community, to discuss and gather views on the detailed implementation of the Bill. The Foreign Office is hosting the first roundtable event today with businesses and business groups from across Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. This builds on years of intensive engagement to date, where ministers have heard first-hand from business the problems the Protocol is causing on the ground.

Today's event brings together more than a dozen major UK businesses and representative groups including the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, Asda, John Lewis and the Dairy Council NI. Truss will address the gathering held at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in London, where businesses will have an opportunity to discuss the solutions to ensure the best possible outcome.

The legislation will implement durable solutions in each of the four key areas:

- Green and red channels to remove unnecessary costs and paperwork for businesses trading within the UK, while ensuring full checks are done for goods entering the EU
- Businesses to have the choice of placing goods on the market in Northern Ireland according to either UK or EU goods rules, to ensure that Northern Ireland consumers are not prevented from buying UK standard goods, including as UK and EU regulations diverge over time.
- Ensure NI can benefit from the same tax breaks and spending policies as the rest of the UK, including VAT cuts on energy-saving materials and Covid recovery loans.
- Normalise governance arrangements so that disputes are resolved by independent arbitration and not by the European Court of Justice