



ata Ethics Case Study - Camden Data Charter

The London Borough of Camden have created a [Data Charter](#) through a deliberative engagement process with residents over 2020 and 2021, which was then [voted on by the Cabinet](#) in January 2021.

- The deliberative process both helped communicate to residents how the borough is using data and might in the future;
- The Charter is a set of principles created by citizens for Camden to adhere to;
- The Citizen Jury also recommended follow up actions for the borough to take that they will then assess in an annual reconvening of the citizen jury.

Origins

The origin of the Data Charter stems from both an articulation of why it is needed, and an understanding of why it should be designed deliberately by citizens. First of all, Camden realised that the unknown, complex potentials for how data of their residents might be used was a significant future challenge for public trust. Camden wanted to “show how a public organisation can engage with data in a spirit of openness and transparency”. As such, a deliberative approach that invites citizens to have more meaningful engagement with the policy-making process made particular sense. This further follows in the spirit of [Camden 2025 and the Camden Plan](#), which gave Camden the experience to be confident that a deliberative approach would be suitable.

Description of the Approach

The Data Charter was delivered over the course of 2020 and 2021 with the assistance of Involve, as well as the Alan Turing Institute. The citizen consultation phase took place in 2020, which included a large questionnaire as well as some online workshops, during which time the Resident Panel was also designed and planned. It was through this first stage that residents indicated if they wanted to be part of the second stage, the Residents Panel, and the council could get feedback about resident’s attitudes towards how the Council was using data. That information was then published as a [Report](#), which in turn helped inform the next steps of the deliberation: the 2021 Residents Panel.

Involve helped design the participatory elements, such as running the lottery to recruit residents for the panel, who were selected to match the demographic makeup of the borough residents. The Alan Turing Institute helped create the education materials for the citizens to understand how data is and might be used, with a key challenge being explaining data to residents who might not be tech-savvy.

The charter had two purposes: first, to raise awareness about the use of data itself in the borough. Second, when residents had a better understanding of how data



was used and the debates around it, what charter could they design with recommendations for the borough.

It was noted that the residents learnt very effectively. To help the residents to learn, the Alan Turing Institute and organisers pulled together a number of case studies of where data is used, for example with electric vehicles and charging points, assessing rental arrears, and test and trace for the Covid-19 pandemic. There were also expert speakers invited in, who citizens could question. These included people from Transport for London, Brent's Data Ethics Committee, and from the Ada Lovelace Institute.

The principles of the Data Charter are:

1. Build trust through transparency
2. Provide accountability and oversight
3. Make sure data is secure, safe and ethical
4. Make sure data is used for public good and be mindful of residents' data
5. Be beneficial for all by using an outcomes-based approach
6. Be clear about how we use residents' data
7. Protect individuals' rights and privacy

Some of the [commitments](#) that Camden have made as a response include:

- For the Resident's Panel to meet again annually to understand the progress on the commitments.

In the short term:

- For the Cabinet to agree to the Data Charter and commitments in January 2022;
- To create a Data Sharing Register to publish all data sharing agreements;
- To publish all Data Privacy Impact Assessments;
- Camden Council commits to creating an area on opendata.camden.gov.uk to publish the number of complaints received about data protection and data breaches, to show the number over time.

In the long term, or as an ongoing commitment:

- Camden to appoint a Data Charter Officer, who has a specific mandate to oversee the ethical use and management of data within the Borough;
- Camden Council commits to identifying individuals who will be responsible for ensuring the Data Charter is adopted across the Council and responding to public queries about the Data Charter;
- Camden Council commits to transparency through understanding by publishing accessible materials to familiarise residents with the different ways the Council uses data. We commit to publishing more case studies annually;



- Camden Council commits to encouraging partners and other organisations across the public and private sectors in Camden to pledge to the principles of the Data Charter.

Camden will also “create a framework to work in an outcomes-based methodology to ensure that all the consequences, intended or otherwise, are outlined from the start of a project and made transparent to the public.”