



Innovating responsibly with Data and AI Summary

**Workshop 1: What's good, bad and missing from
existing guidance**

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Brent Council, Engineers Way, HA9 0FJ

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Workshop background

On 14 February, LOTI held the first in a series of three workshops with boroughs, academics, and other public and private sector organisations, to explore how London local government can innovate responsibly with data and AI. View the workshop slides [here](#).

Objectives

The objectives of this workshop were to:

1. Explore existing guidance, tools and resources for how data and AI can be used responsibly in public sector organisations;
2. Understand which of these resources are most helpful and where there are gaps by working through some practical examples;
3. Agree on what actions need to be taken to address the gaps.

Attendees

The workshop was attended by participants from the following organisations:

- London boroughs of Brent, Barnet, Barking and Dagenham, Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Hounslow, Lambeth, Richmond and Wandsworth, Southwark, Tower Hamlets,
- MOPAC
- Open Data Institute (ODI)
- Greater London Authority (GLA)
- Alan Turing Institute
- University College London (UCL)

Key takeaways

- **No need to re-invent the wheel** - there is already a rich ecosystem of organisations and academia actively thinking about and working to develop guides and tools that can help inform how to innovate responsibly with data and AI.
- **Tools need to work within other, existing processes** - to be effective, some of the tools need to be integrated into other processes councils already follow, for example, the completion of Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIAs).
- **Tools needed to be used from the very earliest stages of a project**, with multi-departmental involvement.
- **Explainability is important** - being able to clearly explain decision-making remains an important consideration for local government, which is not fully addressed by a single tool or framework.
- **Each tool has a different purpose** - different tools can be used in different parts of the decision-making process.
- **You only learn from doing** - Testing using real-life scenarios is valuable.
- **Transparency and effective public communication are vital.** The ODI's Data Ethics Canvas was praised for its guidance on that front.
- **Data Insights are not enough without resources to act differently.** Many participants noted that, even though AI might reveal more cases that they could intervene in, boroughs do not always have the resources to move to a more preventative model.

Rapid Presentations: exploring existing tools

The day started with five speakers presenting different tools that can help organisations innovate responsibly with data and AI. The tools and guidance we explored were:

1. [UK Statistics Authority's Data Ethics Self Assessment](#) presented by Paul Hodgson, Greater London Authority (GLA).
2. [Data Ethics Canvas](#) presented by Violeta Mezeklieva, Open Data Institute (ODI).
3. [Understanding Artificial Intelligence Ethics and Safety](#) presented by David Leslie, Alan Turing Institute.
4. [AI Impact Assessment Canvas](#) presented by Adriano Koshiyama, University College London (UCL).
5. [Nesta's 10 Questions to answer before using AI in the public sector](#) presented by Eddie Copeland, LOTI.

Exercise 1: Testing the tools

In this exercise, participants worked in groups to test the tools against [five different scenarios](#). These included:

1. Supporting Children's Safeguarding
2. Creating a smart chatbot to handle residents queries
3. Identifying rogue landlords
4. Young people at risk of joining gangs
5. Analysing sensor data from social housing to enable predictive maintenance

Exercise 2: Addressing the gaps

Participants were invited to provide feedback on their experience of using the tools, highlighting where they may need to be adapted or added to in order to meet the needs of local authorities. See below for the main points on each document presented.

UCL's [AI Impact Assessment Canvas](#), which is designed to be used in projects involving machine learning, is an important tool for ensuring data scientists don't miss ethical considerations at each stage. Participants noted that the canvas is likely to provide rich information that could help inform the nature of a service intervention.

UK Statistics Authority [Data Ethics Self Assessment](#)

Participants liked the structured scoring approach of this tool, which they said makes the ethical assessment quick and easy to undertake, albeit not at the same level of detail as the UCL canvas. Participants also highlighted potential overlap with questions that would be asked as part of Data Privacy Impact Assessments (DPIAs), suggesting it could be designed into information governance processes.

ODI [Data Ethics Canvas](#)

Participants reported that being able to start anywhere on the template is useful and more suited to the reality of local government, which typically operates in a

complex, non-linear fashion. Its guidance on public engagement was also praised. ODI mentioned that they are able to provide facilitation and training in how to use the canvas.

Alan Turing Institute [Understanding Artificial Intelligence Ethics and Safety](#)

Participants reported that this tool is helpful for informing an organisation's overall strategy towards the use of data and AI, including high-level principles, and works well with the DPIA process. Participants liked the way it prompted them to ask ethical questions at each stage of the project lifecycle, similar to issues and risks logs.

Nesta - [10 Questions to answer before using AI in the public sector](#)

Participants suggested that using a combination of the Nesta questions and the ODI canvas could work well for prompting organisations to think through the key questions they should consider when designing a new project. It was noted that the current 10 questions do not cover how to engage the public or other stakeholders. These aspects are covered by the ODI framework.