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and Innovation

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Developing UKRI's research data policy webinar

7 May 2025

Please ask your questions using the Zoom Q&A

Agenda

1 Welcome & introduction

Rachel Bruce, UKRI Head of Open Research

2 Introducing UKRI's research data policy

Dr Paul Richards, UKRI Open Research and project lead

3 Developing our social science data guidance

Richard Welpton, ESRC Strategic Lead for Data Services Infrastructure

4 Developing our environmental data guidance

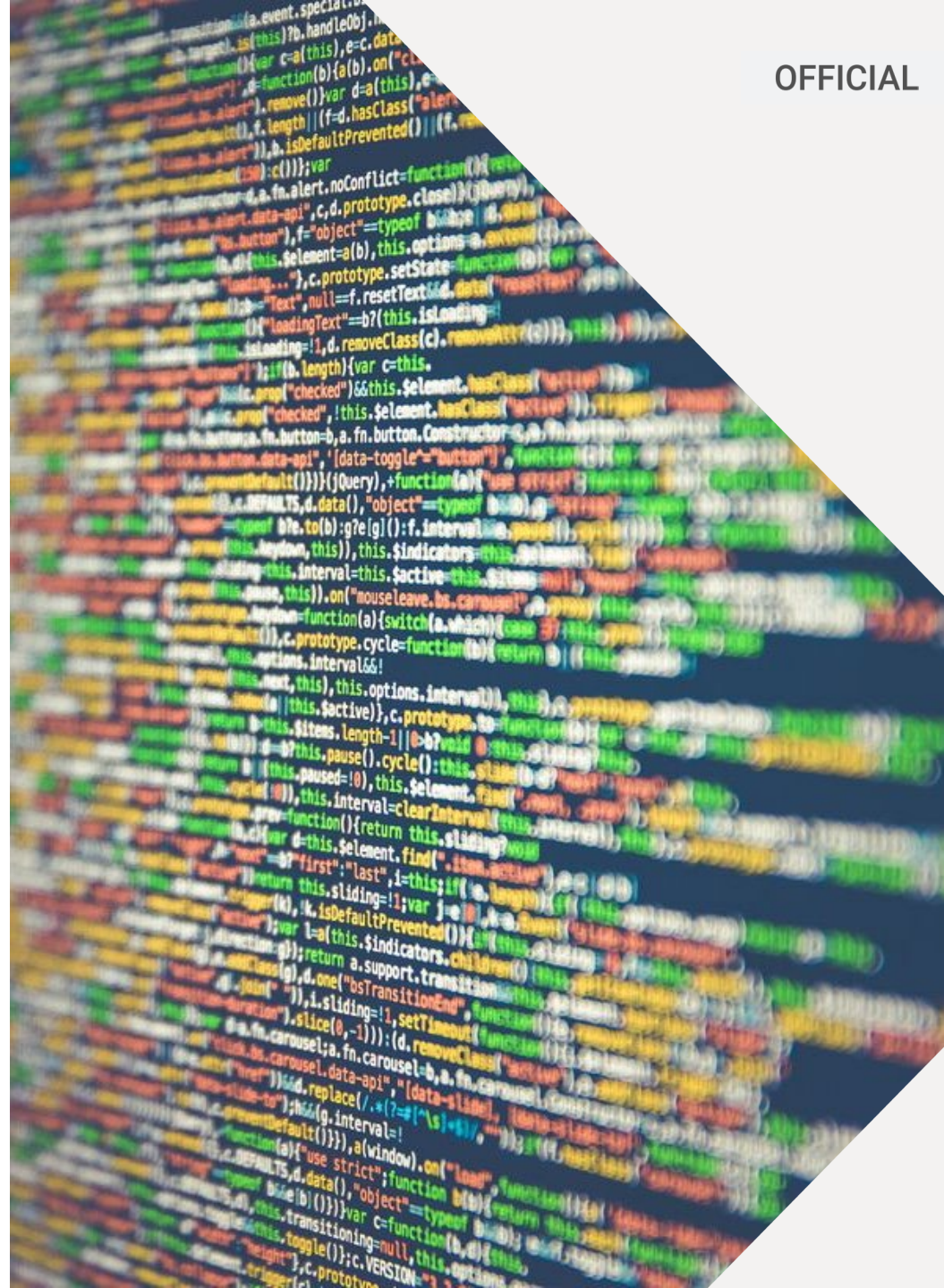
Dr Charlotte Clarke, NERC Senior Programme Manager, Digital Infrastructure and Data

5 Question and answer session

Please ask your questions using the Zoom Q&A



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Introducing UKRI's research data policy

Dr Paul Richards

Open Research and UKRI Research
Data Policy Project Lead, UKRI



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Championing open research

Supporting research data sharing is part of our broader mission to enhance the UK's research and innovation landscape



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Why update our policy?

- **Maximising value:** sharing research data maximizes its value, enabling more collaborative, efficient, and trusted research and innovation
- **Open research culture:** it supports an open research culture, making data widely and freely available in a responsible manner, enhancing transparency, trust and impact
- **Advances in technology and practice:** we want to ensure our policy aligns with the latest technological advances, good practices and other policy developments

Building on a strong foundation of existing UKRI policies and investments, as well as national and international community initiatives and practice

Our research councils' research data sharing policies and guidance:

- [AHRC research funding guide](#), including guidance on research data
- [BBSRC data sharing policy](#)
- [EPSRC policy framework on research data](#)
- [ESRC research data policy](#), [ESRC data citation: what you need to know](#) and [submit datasets if you have funding from ESRC](#)
- [MRC research data sharing and management policies and guidance](#)
- [NERC data policy and guidance notes](#) and [NERC data management plan guidance](#)
- [STFC scientific data policy](#) and [STFC guidance on data management plans](#)

Common principles on research data

To bring these policies together and help you understand our expectations of you, we have also established a set of seven common principles.

They apply to all research funding opportunities.

1. Publicly funded research data are a public good of interest. They should be made openly available in a timely and responsible manner.
2. Any organisational and project-specific data management plans should be developed in a way that ensures data are accessible and reusable.

Concordat on Open Research Data


The Concordat on Open Research Data has been developed by a UK multi-stakeholder group. This concordat will help to ensure that the research data gathered and generated by members of the UK research community is made openly available for use by others wherever possible in a manner consistent with relevant legal, ethical, disciplinary and regulatory frameworks and norms, and with due regard to the costs involved.

Published 28th July 2016

Realising the potential
Final report of the
Open Research Data Task Force



Intelligent open science

A case study of viral genomic data sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic

Prepared on behalf of The UK Government Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
November 2022

Policy objectives

The policy aims to promote a research culture and environment where:

- good data sharing and management is an expected and normal part of the research process, and there are activities and resources in place to support this
- publicly funded research data is made as open as possible, maximising its value for research, innovation and wider society
- data sharing is conducted fairly, safely, transparently and in accordance with applicable ethical standards, policy, security and legal requirements
- everyone involved in the research process can adopt, develop and implement good research data practice and receive recognition for doing so
- barriers that unnecessarily prevent or restrict data sharing are recognised and appropriate steps are taken to mitigate these

Supports implementation of e.g. concordat on open research data, OECD recommendation concerning access to research data from public funding



Taking a joined-up approach

This integrated policy is being collectively developed and implemented by all of UKRI's constituent councils

Aiming for a policy that is:

- easier to navigate and use
- consistent across our funding and grounded in best practice for the given research being undertaken and data it involves
- joined up with other relevant UKRI policies, priorities and investments (e.g. digital research infrastructure, talent and skills, research culture, trusted research and innovation, net zero, AI)



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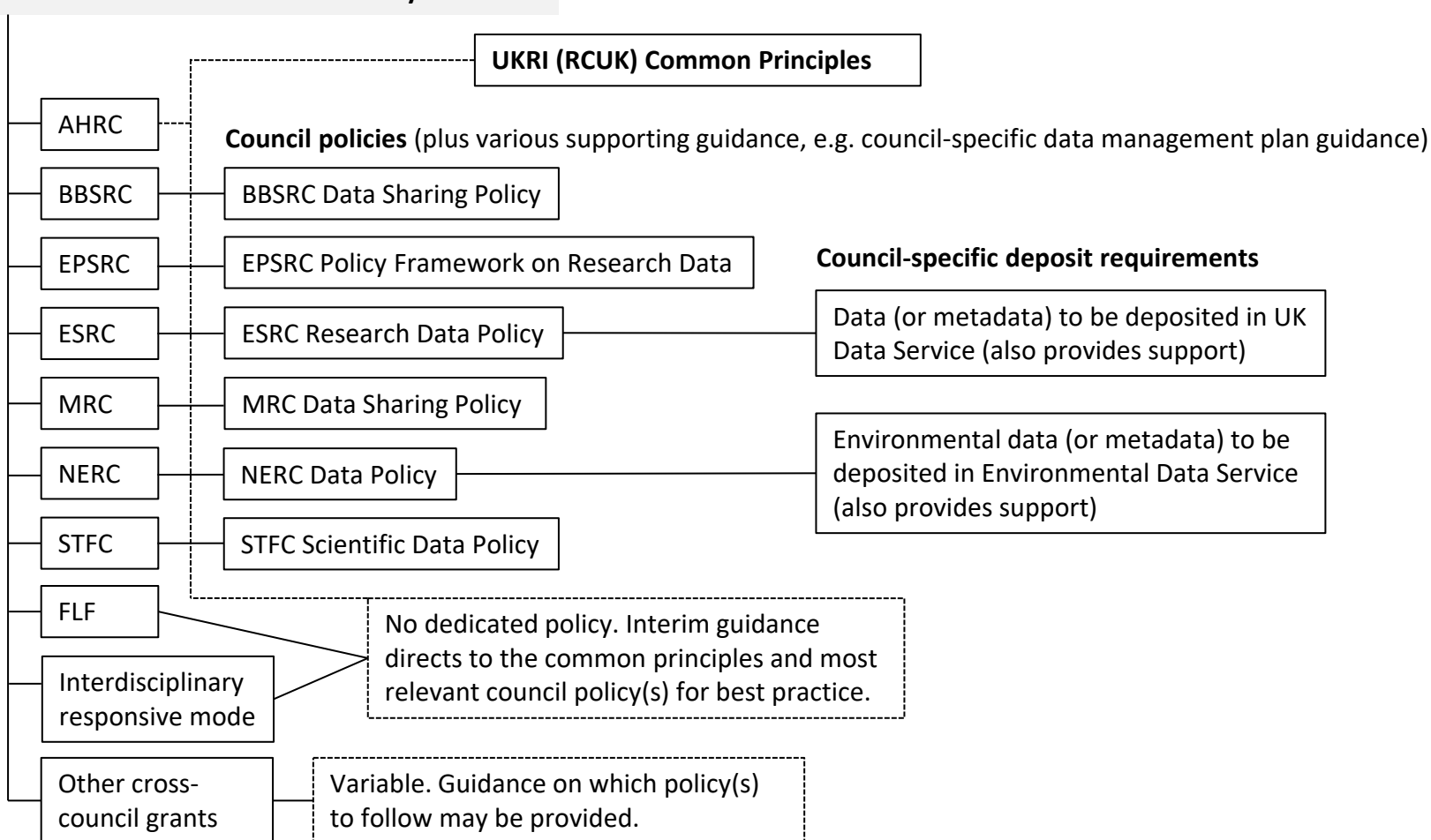
Transitioning from a patchwork of policies...

Current UKRI research data policies

Please note: UKRI funded researchers & applicants must continue to follow our current policies, while we develop our new policy

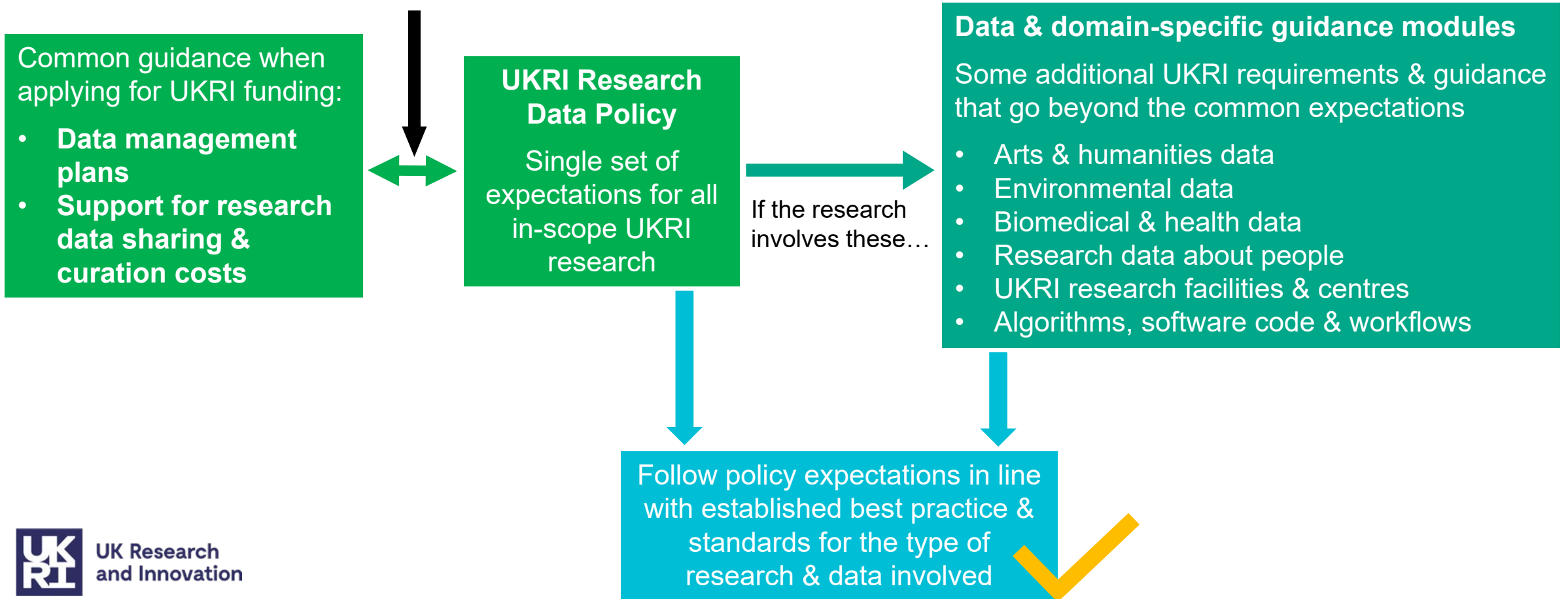
Making your research data open – UKRI

Which Research Council funded my research?



...to an integrated policy

UKRI funded project or funding opportunity?
What is the research and what data will it involve?



Data and domain-specific and guidance

- Over 2025, we are developing supplementary guidance and requirements for some types of data and research domains
- Building on disciplinary expectations and guidance in research council policies
- Aiming to set consistent expectations across UKRI that support best practice for the given data/research
- Aiming for simpler and clearer presentation, integrated with our core common policy
- Developing in consultation with our communities, including some focused events



- **Arts and humanities data**
- **Environmental data**
- **Social science data**
- **Biomedical and health data**
- **Research data about people**
- **UKRI research facilities and centres**
- **Algorithms, software, code & workflows**

Policy elements being developed over 2025



Algorithms, software, code and workflows – develop dedicated expectations and guidance



Costs for data management and sharing – understand current costs associated with data management and develop clearer, more harmonised guidance



Data management plans – a holistic review of requirements and approach to DMP, to ensure they are clearer and as harmonised as possible



Compliance, monitoring and evaluation – developing a more harmonised and holistic approach to policy monitoring

Arts and humanities data guidance

- AHRC is funding a suite of data repositories under its Infrastructure for Digital Arts and Humanities Programme(iDAH), as well as the Heritage Science Data Service as part of RICHes
- As part of the UKRI Research Data Policy, AHRC will be leading the development of supplementary expectations and guidance for arts and humanities data
- Will include new requirements for research data generated by AHRC projects and other UKRI-funded AH research to be deposited with the Heritage Science Data Service
- Developing over 2025, including targeted engagement with arts and humanities communities later in the year



Heritage Science
Data Service



UK Research
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Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

Consultation approach

- Over April-July 2025, we're inviting a diversity of experts, organisations and representative bodies, from across our council and cross-sector stakeholder communities, to a series of roundtables and workshops. These engagements will be our core consultation mechanism for this policy
- Anyone can share their views, using the feedback form on UKRI's engagement hub until 9 July 2025:
<https://engagementhub.ukri.org/ukri-openresearch/developing-ukris-research-data-policy/>
- We'll give all feedback, received both in writing and via engagements, due consideration in informing our final policy and supplementary guidance



Development and implementation timeline

UKRI working group
established



July 2024



Targeted cross-sector & domain-specific
consultation events



April-July 2025



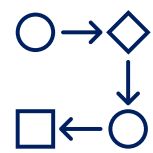
April 2025



Draft policy published
for consultation

Feedback form open
until 9 July

June 2025 –
January 2026



Develop, iterate & finalise
core policy & guidance

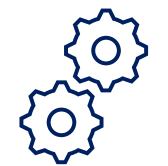
Publish final policy &
guidance



Q1 2026



2026 TBC



Implementation
period & new policy
applies

Draft policy overview



Scope & key principles

1. Purpose
2. What this policy covers
3. Definitions
4. Key principles

Common requirements & expectations

5. Planning research
6. What data to share
7. Where to share data
8. Implementing FAIR data
9. Acknowledgement & recognition
10. Citing and reusing data
11. Data retention and preservation
12. Responsible data sharing

Scope

- Will apply broadly to most UKRI funded research (with some exceptions and variations e.g. only specific Research England and Innovate UK funding)
- Covers all research data arising from and/or underpinning published research findings from in-scope research funded by UKRI and its councils
- Final policy will include expectations for algorithms, software, code and workflows
- Some scope details and guidance to be further developed (e.g. UKRI facilitates and institutes)

Key principles

- Making data as open as possible
- Responsibly sharing and managing data
- Making data FAIR
- Appropriately preserving and retaining data
- Acknowledging and recognising contributions
- Planning for data sharing and management
- Resourcing data management and sharing

Planning research

- Data sharing and management must be considered from the outset when planning research
- Final policy will include updated UKRI expectations and guidance for data management plans (at a minimum where councils currently request, this is expected to continue)
- Final policy will include updated and more harmonised guidance about support for costs
- Data reuse encouraged, where appropriate

What data to share

- Key expectations for:
 - research data and associated metadata necessary to understand and validate published findings (or other forms of research output)
 - research data and associated metadata with identified long-term reuse value for research and innovation (as identified by UKRI or in line with established domain specific practices and standards)
- Exact expectations to be determined based on established standards and practices for the research data (and supplementary guidance where provided)
- Recognises that some data needs to be shared in a more secure way or restricted, but aim is for as open as possible

When to share data

- Data necessary to understand and validate published findings (or other types of research output) must be shared no later than the time of publication.
- For all data that needs to be shared, default maximum of two years from the end of UKRI funding (recognise there may be exceptions to this and will be looking to provide further guidance).
- Recognises the research team should normally be entitled to a limited period of exclusive use to publish or otherwise exploit the results of the data.

Where to share data

- Default expectation for data to be shared via an appropriate subject-specific, institutional or third-party generalist repository
- For some data types, UKRI will require use of specific services (e.g. Environmental Data Service, UK Data Service, Heritage Data Service)
- Will be further considering any additional guidance on choosing and appropriate repository

Implementing FAIR data

- Global persistent identifiers (PIDs) must be used
- Clear accessible licence should be used
- Encourages use of open data formats, where appropriate
- Data must be shared with adequate contextual documentation and metadata (includes some expectations for FAIR metadata)
- Data access statement required in publications (as per UKRI open policy)

Acknowledgement and recognition

- The contributions of those who are involved in generating, processing, curating and analysing data should be acknowledged and recognised.
- To increase visibility and recognition, and support citation, these contributions must be appropriately acknowledged and recorded in research publications and datasets.
- Adequate and permanent references to contributions should be provided in publications (for example **Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT)**).
- The metadata record for a dataset should include persistent identifiers for individual contributors and organisations, where available (for example **Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID)**, **Research Organization Registry (ROR) IDs**).

Citing and reusing data

- Data users must appropriately cite data sources using citation information provided by data providers, including persistent identifiers.
- Data users must follow legal, ethical or regulatory frameworks and observe any other policy or licensing restrictions that apply to data they are using.

Data retention and preservation

- Research data should be subjected to an appropriate risk- and value-proportionate assessment to determine if they need to be retained and for how long.
- Applicable requirements in this policy and its guidance, and any legal requirements for data retention (for example data protection law and Clinical Trials Regulation), must be followed.
- Data needed to validate published findings must be accessible for at least ten years after publication of those findings, or last known reuse of the data (whichever is later).
- Data that cannot be, or are hard to reproduce, and that are of acknowledged value for future study and reuse (for example observational and time-series data) should be curated to remain accessible for future research and may warrant indefinite storage and preservation.
- UKRI recognises that it may not be cost-effective or environmentally sustainable to (indefinitely) preserve all research data. Provided there is due assessment, UKRI considers a deliberate decision to dispose of research data at an appropriate time as acceptable.
- Metadata records referring to deleted data must be retained, ideally with a note explaining that the data has been deleted and why.

Responsible data sharing

- Applicable legal, regulatory, security, ethical and intellectual property requirements and standards must be appropriately planned for, managed and adhered to throughout the research/data lifecycle
- Includes some specific requirements and guidance about **partnerships and collaborations, trusted research and innovation, legislation and regulation, intellectual property and ethics**
- **Managing restrictions on data sharing** – recognises that that for e.g. legal, ethical, security or contractual reasons some data needs to be more secure or restricted, but data should still be made as open and FAIR as possible in these contexts



Economic
and Social
Research Council

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UKRI research data policy: developing social science guidance

Richard Welpton

Strategic Lead for Data Services Infrastructure, ESRC

ESRC research data policy

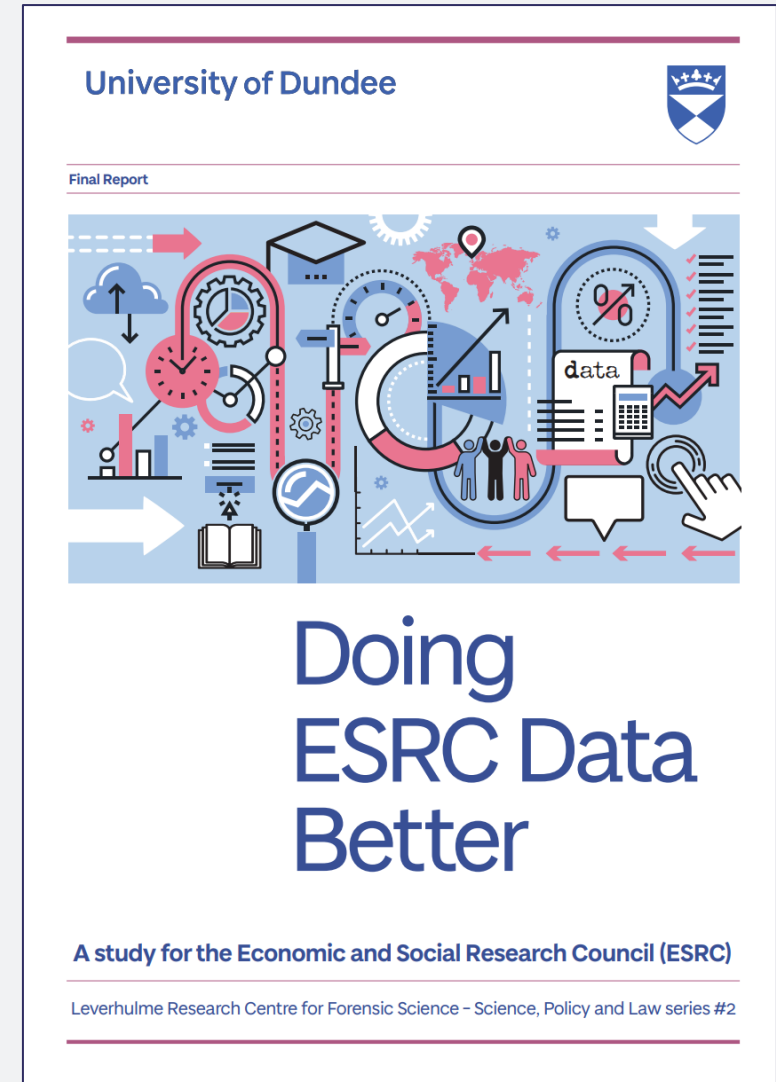
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- Sharing research important for ESRC (and contributes to the wider ESRC Data Infrastructure Strategy)
- ESRC has had a policy and required deposit in UK Data Service for many years; current policy developed in 2014 before changes in the social science data landscape
- General success: many in the social science research community advocate the need for FAIR data
- ESRC, working with UKDS, leading on the development of supplementary requirements and guidance for social science data
- The final UKRI research data policy, including the social science data guidance will replace the current ESRC data policy in 2026



ESRC data policy review

- In 2024, commissioned Prof Angela Daly and team at Dundee to review ESRC's data policy
- One key recommendation:
 - **coordinate and align with UKRI**
- Considering the recommendations in developing the UKRI research data policy and supporting guidance for social science.
- Read the report:
<https://www.ukri.org/publications/independent-review-of-the-esrc-research-data-policy/>



Developing social science data guidance

- Over 2025, developing guidance as part of the UKRI research data policy, working across UKRI and with UK Data Service
- Will build on ESRC's current data policy, including retaining the expectation to deposit data (and/or metadata) in UK Data Service
- Aiming for the guidance to apply to any relevant social science research in scope of the UKRI Research Data Policy
- Will be developing in consultation with economic and social science community, including a workshop in June and further engagement as we develop the policy
- Get in touch if interested to be involved

Research data about people

- Research across different councils and schemes can involve collecting, using and sharing data about people
- Overlap in best practice, expectations and legal, ethical and regulatory considerations
- In developing the UKRI Research Data Policy will be looking at how we can provide more consistent and harmonised guidance
- For example, MRC and UKDS publish guidance pertaining to handling and sharing data about people: sensitivities, anonymisation, curating data





Natural
Environment
Research Council

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UKRI research data policy: developing environmental data guidance

Dr Charlotte Clarke

Senior Programme Manager, Digital Infrastructure
and Data, NERC

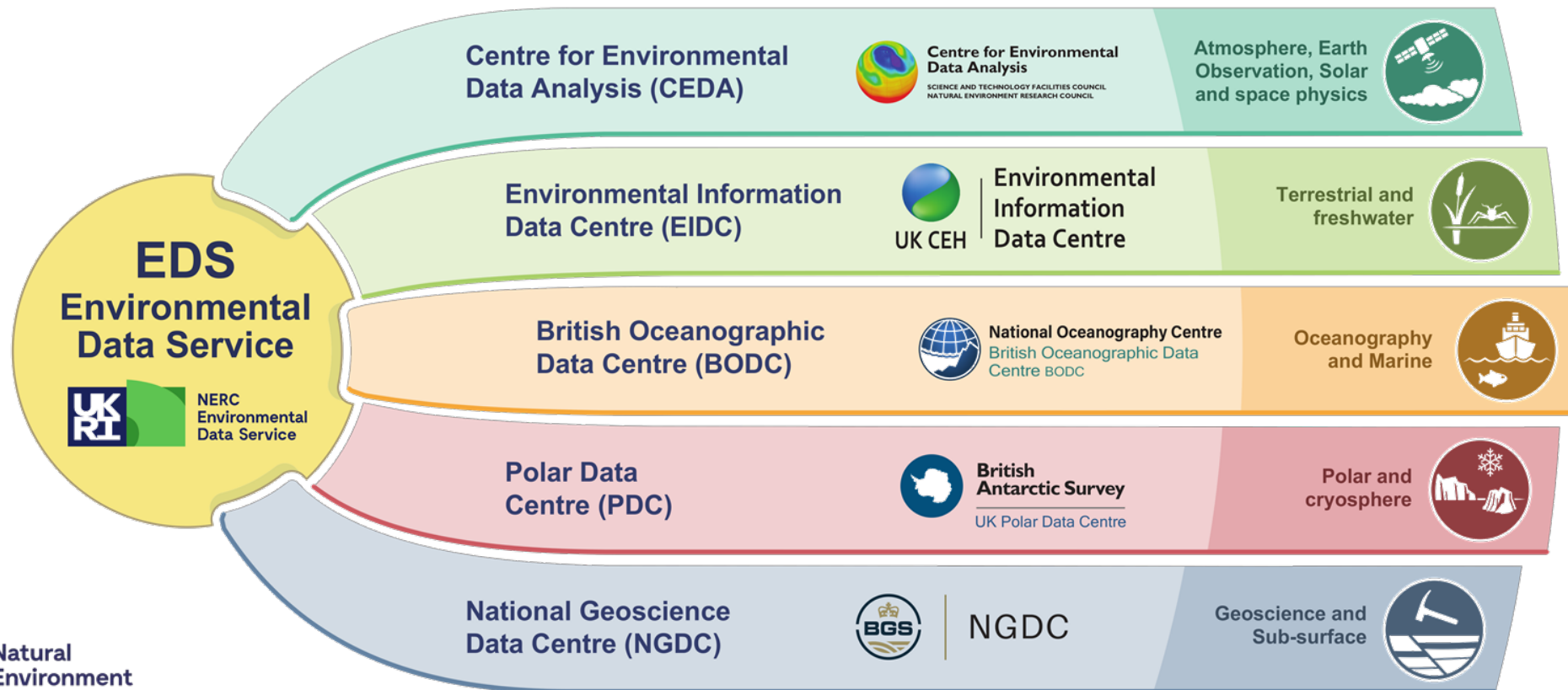
NERC data policy

- NERC has a well-established data policy which dates back over 40 years; current version was last updated in 2019
- It details NERC's commitment to the long-term management of environmental data for the public good
- Building on the existing policy and working across UKRI, NERC will be leading on guidance for environmental data
- The final UKRI research data policy, including the environmental data guidance, will replace the current NERC data policy in 2026



Developing environmental data guidance

‘Guidance’ in this context refers to requirements that go above and beyond core UKRI policy;
NERC has specific data-deposit requirements



Developing environmental data guidance



Building on NERC's existing policy

Including retaining the expectation for NERC-funded researchers to deposit data in NERC EDS



Consultation and engagement

Working across UKRI and in consultation with environmental data community and relevant UKRI facilities



Applicable UKRI-funded research

Where possible, aim to provide consistent expectations for applicable in-scope UKRI-funded research; recommended places of deposit



Environmental data workshop in Summer 2025

Get in touch if you're interested
datamanagement@nerc.ukri.org



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Questions?

Please ask your questions using the Zoom Q&A



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Thank you

Visit UKRI's engagement hub for more information and to share your feedback on the policy (until 9 July 2025):

<https://engagementhub.ukri.org/ukri-openresearch/developing-ukris-research-data-policy>



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UKRIforResearchers

Contact: researchdatapolicy@ukri.org