# NCVO

**Making Open Data work for the voluntary sector**

Posted on [January 27, 2015](http://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2015/01/27/making-open-data-work-for-the-voluntary-sector/) by [David Kane](http://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/author/david-kane/)

David Kane

I have recently been appointed as a member of the Open Data User Group (ODUG). ODUG is an independent body advising the Cabinet Office and the Public Sector Transparency board on open data – its aim is to make sure that user’s views are represented when the government is making decisions around open data, and that the data sets that users need are open.

My aim as a member of ODUG is to represent the needs of the voluntary sector – but to do that I need your help. I’d love to hear your open data issues – are there datasets that government produce that would help you but which you can’t get hold of at the moment?

A great place to start is the [data requests process](http://data.gov.uk/data-request) on data.gov.uk. This is where you can request access to datasets that aren’t currently open – they’ll be looked into by the team at the Cabinet Office and ODUG will also keep an eye on the process. You can also get in touch with me directly if you have any questions or comments about open data.

**National Information Infrastructure**

Something that ODUG members have been working hard on recently is a response to the government’s proposals for a National Information Infrastructure (NII). This [ODUG paper](http://data.gov.uk/blog/national-information-infrastructure-nii) published today sets out what we believe a National Information Infrastructure should look like, and how it is as important for the country as a physical infrastructure such as Crossrail.

You can read more in the paper itself, but it’s worth considering the implications for the voluntary sector. While many of the implications are based on how an NII can provide a foundation for economic growth, there are important ways in which a consistent infrastructure can provide a foundation for achieving social change too. There are some examples based around healthcare data in the paper which I think show what is possible.

At the end of the paper I’ve suggested what a voluntary sector component of a National Information Infrastructure might look like. It’s a hypothetical attempt to apply the framework of the NII to data about the voluntary sector, with the aim of ensuring that the data resources the sector needs are available. I’d be really interested in your thoughts – should data about the voluntary sector be part of the NII? Are the right datasets listed?

Please comment/contact me with your ideas or email them to [nii@odug.co.uk](mailto:nii@odug.co.uk).