



# **THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN DATA ETHICS**



# WHAT IS DATA ETHICS?

*"A cross-cutting discipline that assesses the wider societal impact of technology, producing recommendations for technologists and data professionals. It involves thinking about **fairness, accountability, the law, moral dilemmas, and the risks** involved in creating technology and data products and policies."*

*UK Government, 2021.*



# WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY?

## Individual

*"Existing and considered separately from the other things or people in a group."*

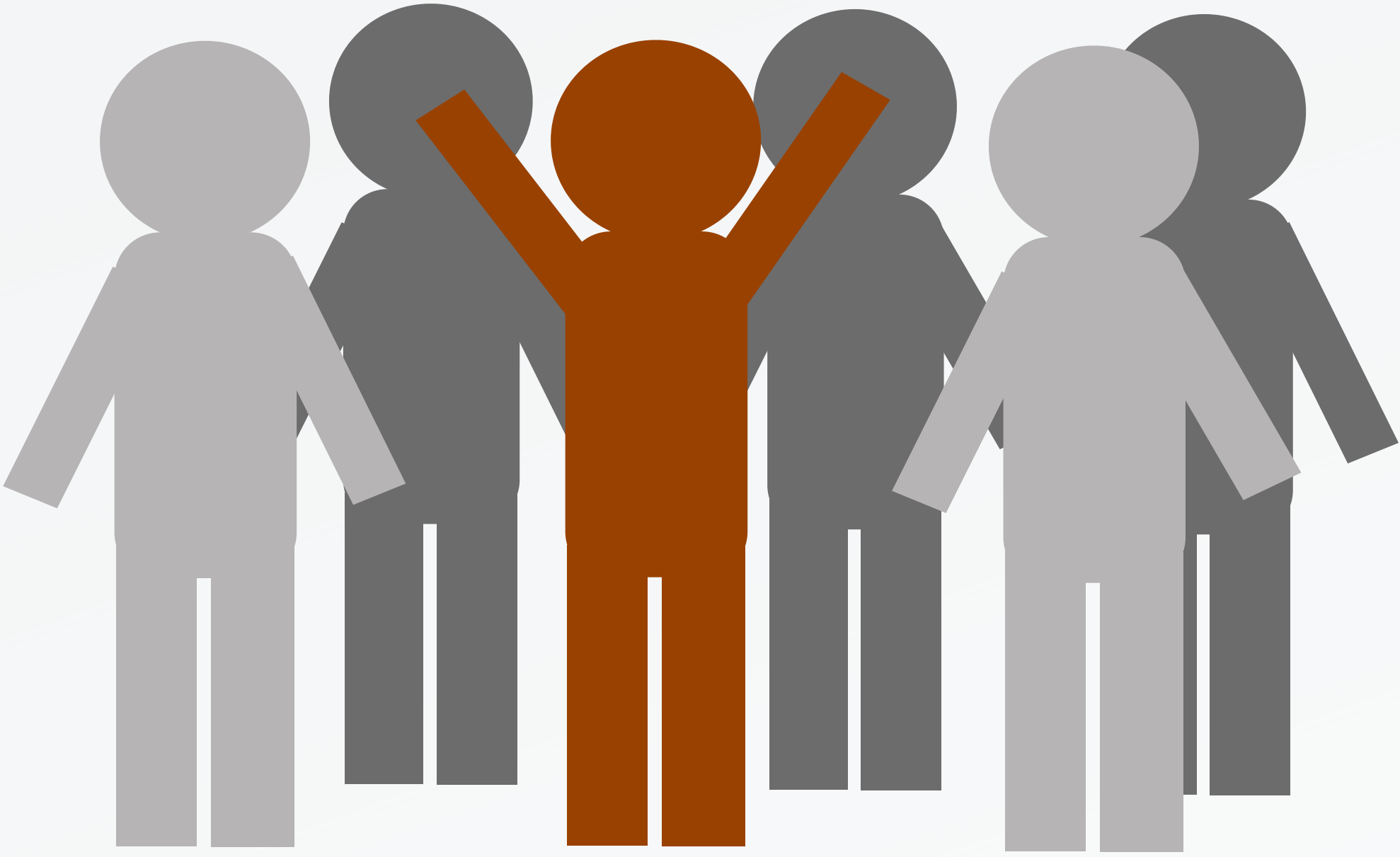
*Cambridge Dictionary*

## Accountability

*"The fact of being responsible for what you do and able to give a satisfactory reason for it, or the degree to which this happens."*

*Cambridge Dictionary*

# WHY THE INDIVIDUAL?





***"There is no silver bullet that's  
going to fix that. No, we are going  
to have to use a lot of lead bullets."***

*Ben Horowitz*



## WHERE MIGHT INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY BE NEEDED?

Imagine yourself employed as a junior data analyst and being asked by your employer to:

- Gather, use and/or share personal data without consent.
- Use data in a way that is going to cause harm (eg. in relation to an individual's privacy or relating to businesses, animals or the environment).
- Use data to train an algorithm which has errors or elements of bias.



# SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

## Tools:

- UK Government: Data Ethics Framework.
- Open Data Institute: Data Ethics Canvas Tool.
- UK Statistics Authority: Ethics Self-Assessment Tool
- Danish Design Centre: Digital Ethics Compass

## Training:

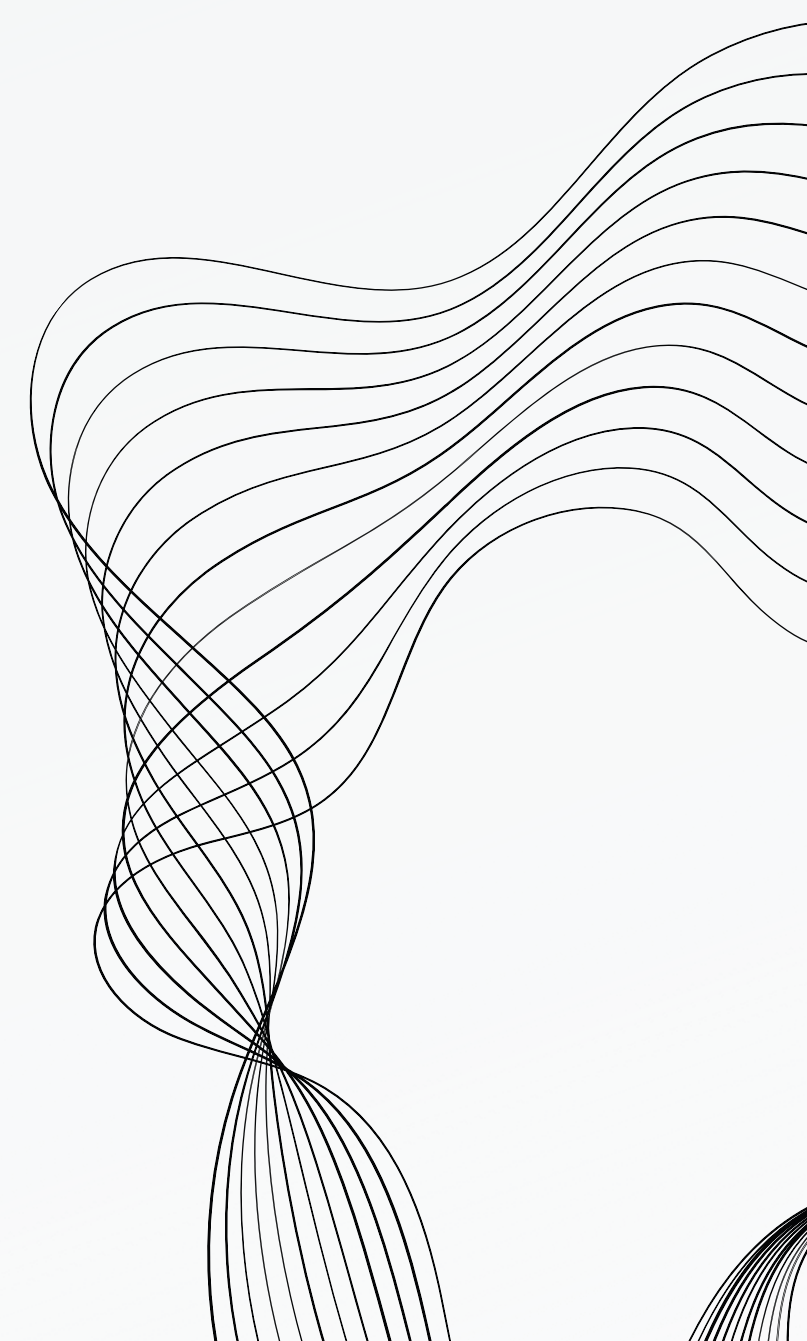
- Open Data Institute
- Office for National Statistics

## Misc:

- Using effective communication to explain and raise awareness of data ethics
- Empowering others to implement data ethics best practice.



# CHALLENGES

- 1.The pace of technological change.
  - 2.Employer cooperation.
  - 3.Financial.
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# POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

## 1.Pace of Change

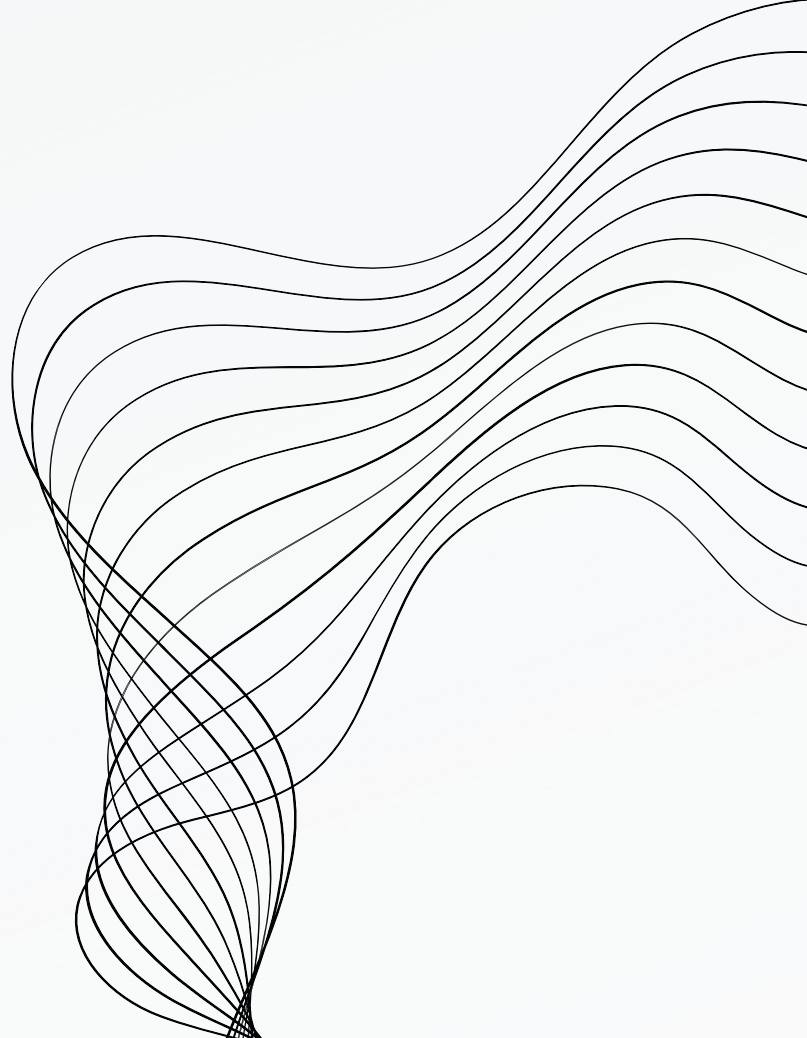
Development of existing membership organisations and codes of practice, introducing 're-validation' requirements (eg. Required CPD hours and reflective practice to evidence ethical practice).

## 2.Employer Support

Employers would benefit from being able to identify individuals who are committed to practising ethically.

## 3.Financial

Financial support should be made available for companies and staff to complete training and integrate appropriate tools within their workplace.



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