Volunteering Data Standards Working Group 2
26 November 2025

Documents

- Slide Deck: 🟧 Volunteering SWG 2 - 25/11
- Whiteboard: Miro board (This board is now open for comments only)
- Terms of Reference:
  📄 #SHARED Developing an Open Data Infrastructure for Volunteering and Social Ac…

Agenda

1. Welcome & project overview
2. Data model update
3. Q&A
4. Workshop: Data access requirements
5. Workshop: Considering open data
6. Next Steps

Attendee profile

The working group was attended by 26 people, including 3 members of the ODI project team (Andrew, Mathieu and Camilla).

13 people provided introductory information:

- 4 indicated holding executive roles
- 4 indicated holding volunteering management roles at VIOs
- 8 indicated holding data / tech roles
- 2 indicated holding a policy role
- 1 specifically identified as a volunteer (although we know there were more volunteers present!)

There was representation from a range of organisation types including:

- National volunteering involving organisations
- Local and national volunteering infrastructure organisations
- Central government
- System vendors and advisory firms

Welcome and Project Overview

Andrew Newman presented an overview of the project and the role of the standards working group.

Data model update

Matthieu Bosquet (ODI) provided an update on work to develop the data model. Matthieu outlined how the model had been developed to incorporate feedback received at the prior meeting.

There was a discussion about mandation within the data model, what data must be provided when describing an organisation or activities. The current version of the model only mandates that an organisation must have a label and an activity and that an activity must have a label, description and organisation.

The group were asked if it should be possible to to publish data about an organisation without linking the organisation to 1 or more specific activities?

Decision: The group directed that it should be possible to publish data about an organisation without activities. (15/26 agreed)
Action ODI: to ensure this decision is represented in the data model

Q&A

Please note some answers have been clarified after the working group meeting.

Is the model only for service delivery or also for things around it such as fundraising?
- The current focus is on simply describing opportunities to volunteer. There may be fundraising uses for such data. Further work would be needed to build understanding of fundraising use case.

Does this proposal assume all volunteering activity can be related to a 'service' and is that realistic?
- Volunteering activities deliver services to communities, these services may be formal (youth leader) or informal (supporting a neighbour with shopping) the presentation sought to clarify that existing standards such as Open Referral exist to describe services and that our volunteering standards need to interoperate with these.

Should there be a time dimension for the activity?
- This is included in the data model simplistically at the moment, we know there is a need to enable the recording of session data (EG: activity occurs every wednesday at 7pm).

Action ODI: ODI to explore options for modelling session

We have Fellows volunteering in many different charities, would that data set help to give them a cross-org Counters of Hours that we can convert into Full Time or Part Time volunteer Status?

The UK doesn't differentiate between Part Time and Full Time volunteering. There is campaigning for it to be recognised for expenses and other purposes. However, this status is not recognised, and there is not a volunteering ID.

- The current focus is on simply describing opportunities to volunteer. There may be time recording uses for such data. Further work would be needed to build understanding of the use case.

- The ODI, though its [SOLID programme](), is aiming to deliver a volunteering wallet pilot in the new year this may provide a mechanism for volunteer IDs.

Action ODI: ODI to engage SWG is SOILD Pilot as appropriate.
Action ODI: ODI to note importance of time recording for future work.

Are AI readability or training of LLM's and access to data been considered?
- Yes the approach to data we are taking is designed to be AI ready

A working group member suggested considering some work undertaken on apprenticeships They (?) developed a system (not sure if live) for matching employers and potential apprenticeships using WWW and making AI ready from day 1.

A working group member suggested engaging with health services where volunteering can be socially prescribed to ensure the standards met their needs.

Action ODI: ODI to consider apprenticeship and social prescribing infrastructures.

Workshop: Data access requirements

The ODI are commencing design of an API to support querying of volunteering data, to inform this development the working group were asked to suggest queries that they would expect the data and API to be able to support.

A simple interactive session was used to capture queries pertaining to encouraging volunteering, Improving the volunteer experience and evidencing impact.

The queries can be found on the [Miro Board]().

Workshop: Considering open data

The ODI are assuming volunteer opportunity data should, in most cases, be open data.

However this is an assumption and it needs to be tested.

The working group was asked to identify attracting forces that draw them towards open data being the best approach and restricting forces that prevent open data being the best approach.

A simple interactive session was used to capture queries pertaining to encouraging volunteering, Improving the volunteer experience and evidencing impact.

The forces can be found on the [Miro Board](#).

The ODI will review the forces identified and in the next working group explore if/how the restricting forces can be mitigated.

Action ODI: To review forces input prior to next working group

Next steps

- Hackathon 3/4 December, to test our data model and API

- The third Volunteering Standards Working Group meeting will be discussing learnings from the hackathon.

- In the next meeting, we will discuss how to mitigate restricting forces, and analyse it on the Miro Board.