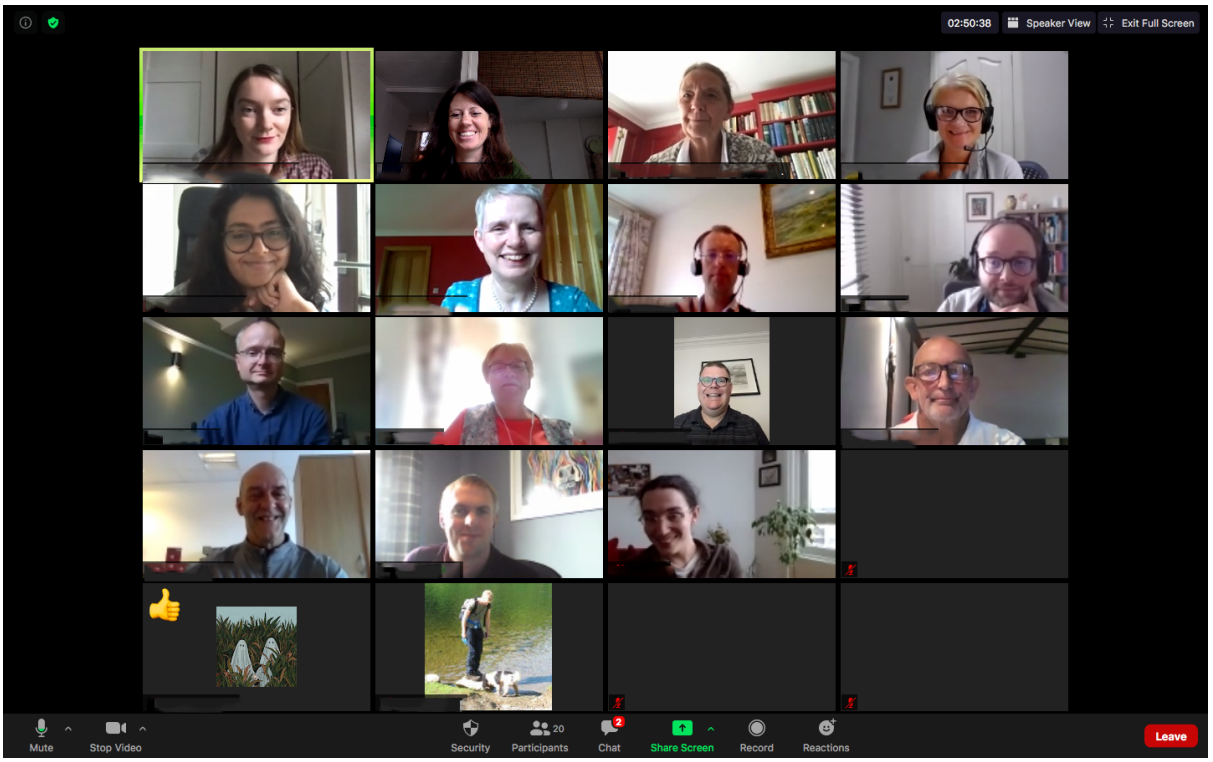
Scotland Open Government National Action Plan - Data, digital & technology

August 2021



Content

1. Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgments p. 3
1.2 Context & Purpose p. 3
1.3 Agenda and questions of the workshops p. 4

2. Outcomes

2.1 Description of Participants and Selection criteria p. 5
2.2 Outcomes and notes p. 6

3. Feedback by participants p. 12

4. Appendix p. 14

1. Introduction

1.1 Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the active presence of **21 participants** for bringing their insights, knowledge, experience and contribution to the Scottish Open Government National Action Plan in a fruitful, constructive and open exchange of perceptions, opinions and ideas about data and digital.

We would like to acknowledge the organizing team, consisting of Doreen Grove, Amy Watson, Maddie Fleming, all working for Scotland Open Government. And Anthony Zacharzewski, Annie Cook, Sophie Kiesouw and Saha Balaganesh of Democratic Society, as facilitators of the team that contributed to the organisation, implementation, selection of participants and carrying out of the workshops.

We would like to thank the contribution of the senior government officials, Martin Macfie and Albert King.

We are thankful for all the help from every individual and organisations that supported us in preparing and reaching out to participants.

We would like to give a special thanks and gratitude to all participants of the workshops, for their time, contribution, ideas and inspiration.

1.2 Context & Purpose Scotland Open Government National Action Plan

The Scottish Government is working with civil society to write a new National Action Plan for Open Government. In five 'idea generation events' in July 2021, a broadly representative group of volunteers will help shape the new plan with their ideas and ambitions on open government.
The input will lead to making the Scottish Government more open, transparent and accountable to its citizens and communities.

The workshops are happening online via a Zoom video conference call and take about 2.5 hours. Part of the workshops have been organized in the morning, part

of them in the evening to ensure people have other commitments during daytime could make it to the evening sessions.

Workshop dates

- Health: 20 July, 9.30 - 12.00, all ages welcome
- Climate: 20 July, 18.30 - 21.00, all ages welcome
- Financial Transparency: 29 July, 9.30 - 12.00, all ages welcome
- Participation: 29 July, 18.30 - 21.00, all ages welcome
- Data: 30 July, 9.30 - 12.00, all ages welcome
- Special event for young people under 18, all 5 themes: 2nd August 6pm-7.30pm

1.3 Agenda and questions of the workshops

Agenda for the workshops

09:40 Scotland Open Government introduction

09:50 Introduction in break out rooms

10:00 Digital & data: what has happened & what could we do (Learning)

10:15 Q&A - clarifying questions

10:25 Coffee break

10:40 Idea generation round one (30 min)

11:15 Idea feedback/cross fertilisation (10 min)

11:25 Idea generation second round (25 min)

11.50 Next steps, how to stay involved

Framing questions

1. How do you feel about the way you are currently involved in decisions and/or how they are made by the government around data & digital? (open, accountable, participatory, using data ethically)

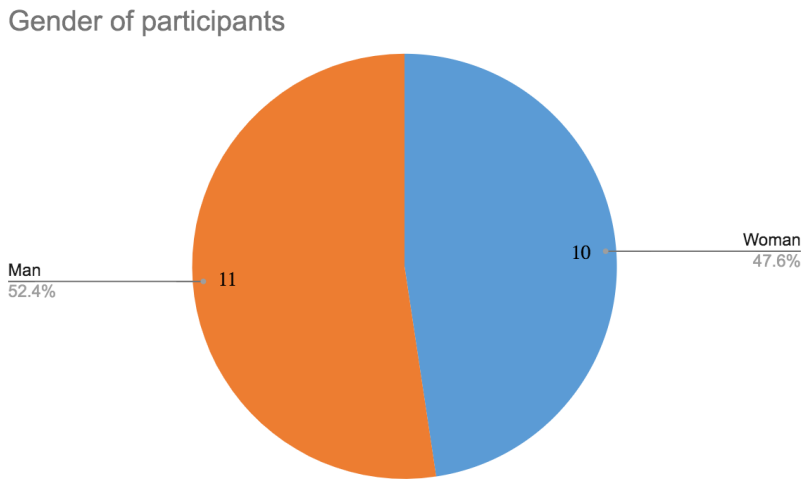
2.What would be the most important ideas for you to take forward in Scotland's new Open Government National Action Plan, considering how we can work together to improve outcomes using data?

How do we create more capacity in communities to engage with data as a driver of economic growth, engagement, and empowerment?

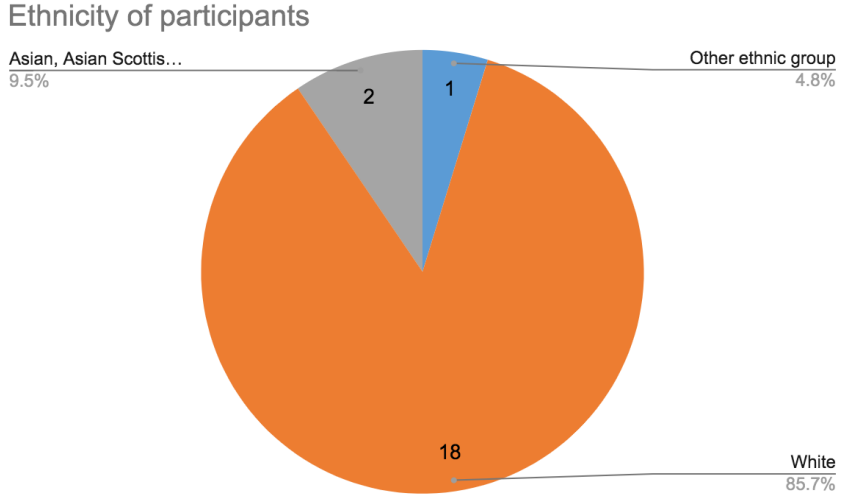
2. Outcomes

2.1 Description of Participants and Selection criteria

A total number of 47 participants have registered to the Data & digital workshop, among the total number of participants, **21** participated in the event.
Participants were recruited through promoting the events on social media through Democratic Society's channels, as well as through direct mailing done by Open Government Scotland and Democratic Society.
Participants were located in, amongst others, the following areas: Clydebank, Glasgow, Avoch Ross-shire, Renfrewshire, Cambuslang, Edinburgh, Arbroath, Angus, Orkney, Isle of Arran, Musselburgh.

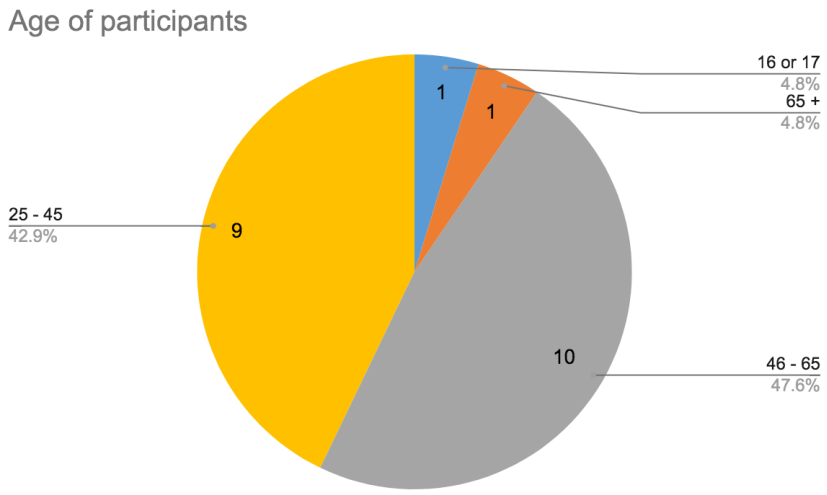


The gender split of participants was rather equal, with 10 women and 11 men participating.

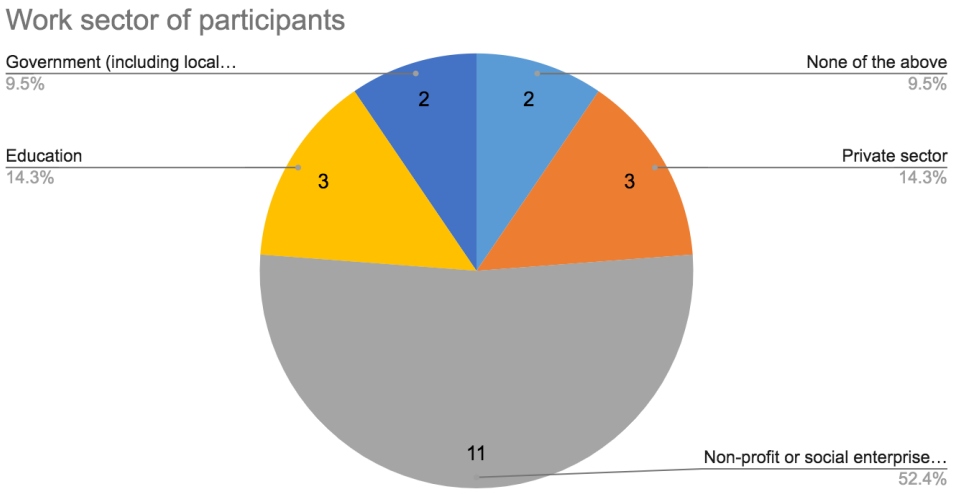


Most participants in this workshop were white (85,7%), two participants Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British, one participant of other

ethic group (not specified).



With the majority (10) being aged between 46 - 65 years old, while the second age group is a similar size (9 participants), they were aged between 25 and 45 years old.



The majority of participants work in the non-profit or social enterprise sector (see diagram).

2.2 Outcomes and notes

Data, Digital & Technology Summary Overview

Participants had a variety of interesting questions and discussions. The next paragraphs will summarize these discussions, while the raw data of the break-out room discussions can be found on the jamboards (screenshots included in Appendix).

Overall, participants felt the most important ideas to take forward in Scotland's Open Government National Action Plan around **data, digital and technology** were around making data more effective, findable, accessible and usable. Participants felt that race inequalities are proven by data and this in effect needs to be addressed to save people's lives, currently there is a difficulty in understanding where and how to find and use data and there were questions around whether Scottish Government/Open Government have the **infrastructure, resources, budget and capacity** in place to create and maintain a database with a list of its data, **including enabling requests and search** for non-personal data. For example, if this were to be put in place this could be a **uniform way of capturing and presenting data** that asks other organisations to keep up to the same standards.

These data standards would include being **understandable for everyone including young people** as currently people feel they don't have a clear route into finding data or finding data that is understandable. In order for this to happen, people should be involved more in influencing these decisions which would help build trust. Currently there is a **lack of trust** with the feeling that personal data might be being sold by the UK Government and so building trust with the Scottish Government on data management is really important. Also, there's a need for safe sharing of personal data by offering the right tools. It was also mentioned there could be made use of **community data**; data that is meaningful and of value, can be trusted, is current and up-to-date. By creating Data Libraries people have better access and there is more transparency on policy. There's a need for more **data literacy** and this should be a skill adopted by many, also in **schools**.

Q&A

- **Q:** How independent is the reporting done?
  A: Reporting for Open Government is done by an independent consultant who knows the context. The government has high standards on quality and transparency of data. The type of data we produce is aligned to professional standards, meeting a broad range of needs.
- **Q:** Could we find ways for citizens to donate data with a view to creating social good?
  A: There's an opportunity for citizens to become **creators** of the data that can be used for public good - which they already do through the 'data

tailpipe'. There's a need for a **data trust** which people are comfortable with.

- **Q:** How do you ensure **privacy** with data that's being collected particularly in relation to sensitive health data?
  A: There are a range of conversations happening on this, the data department is fairly strongly critical on privacy, especially around health, our stance point is it should be anonymised; and the government never sells health data.
- **Q:** Fundamental question about **privacy** before we even start talking about data and how it is harvested?
  A: It's about ensuring privacy, this requires **strong governance**, it compromises people's privacy, there's a need for strong control. But also not all data is personal data, there is also data on places, on the environment and financial data - there's a **range** of different data we are using.

Discussion in break-outs

Race inequalities are proven by data, government needs to act

- Race inequality needs information data - needs to be more resourced, capacity for data to save people lives
- There are ethnic inequalities, Scotland government promised an equality commitment of health records - NHS reminded them, but still not done
- Expert reference with recommendations on covid-19 data: https://www.gov.scot/publications/expert-reference-group-on-covid-19-and-ethnicity-recommendations-to-scottish-government/

Making data better findable

- Challenge is understanding what data we have + where it is
- Lack of finding data, need of uniform way of capturing and presenting data
- Infrastructure problems - Are these problems related to a lack of gov budget?
- Have different org up to same standards
- Problem of finding data - CivTech challenge in Scottish Government to improve findability. How could this be expanded?
- Data need to be understandable for young people

Need for list of data sources that people would like to see

- Data mine and make it more accessible

- Curation of list of data sources by government (was also needed in 5G network topic)
- Global partners are completely uncontrolled - we need to set an example with baseline how we take this forward
- If OG doesn't have capacity to create a 'list' of its data, could it create and maintain a wikipedia that data users can register to contribute to?

How can we make it easier for citizens to ask for data freely?

- Qualifications people can follow (job interviews) - opportunity to build a much smarter skill system
- Government holds data on residence status, hard to get authenticated data
- Data gives more priority, patients waiting long for appointments - adverse incentives needed
- For non-personal data: Enable requests and search

Understanding data & decision making

- Difficult to understand data/data policy as a private citizen
- As a citizen, I don't feel I am involved in government decisions around data at all. Professionally, what I know of how the government uses data is good, but how to help the public understand what the government does?
- Essentially, my immediate reaction, I can only speak from a citizen perspective is that I don't feel I have a clear route to decision making and influencing decision making in this area
- Hard to find the data from just Google etc., (i.e. as a private citizen without institutional access)
- Turning the question around - what about what the Government does to publicise what routes are available to citizens to influence and contribute to decision making - how do they get this message out and to what audiences at what levels in society?

Lack of trust by citizens

- Citizens have no visibility and do not appear to be invited to participate. Perhaps that does not matter if there is TRUST.
- There is a huge mistrust of UK Government on data and concerns about it being sold for profit. Building trust for ScotGov data management is really important.
- Ability to connect data from national and more local sources should be easy.

- Scotland's 'Rich and heterogeneous open data ecosystem'.
- How do we get Politicians and MSM to embrace the value of open data and use it to improve debate and improve Scotland rather than point scoring?
- Trust is an issue- people need training to raise confidence to use data effectively
- We will build Trust if we can share good outcomes that arise from using data insights well. "Bright spots".
- Trust is generated through relationships, which, with data, are defined by the particular socio technical frameworks we use to manage data.

Save sharing of personal data

- Integrate data with the individual so data gets to the right place at the right time, as they'll choose where it needs to go (to senior government official point about frustration over data sharing)
- For personal data: Enable citizens with tools that mean they know who is using which data for what purposes, enabling them to see the benefit of that more balanced relationship.
- People are often concerned about data not being shared (when it would help them). Rather than it being shared.
- Might be that people are wary of sharing because they don't know how much personal data will be divulged but also don't know what value is to be had from data sharing - they don't see/ understand the full picture. - Highlights and reinforces the need for transparency
- Organisations are not clear about what data they can share, and may be over-cautious
- How do we communicate that better - what's the ground rules/ where can they get the right guidance?

Create community data

- Community Action Research is a way to help to collect data locally and maybe there could be a portal or registry to collect data in one place
- Scotland government invests in community engagement to form policy, but not followed-up, leads to consultation fatigue - need for re-evaluated policy process
- Communities use of data. Start with "what problem are we trying to solve" or what process are we trying to improve?
- Create the curiosity in communities to look at data that is meaningful and of value, can be trusted, is current and up-to-date

Data Libraries - not a new idea and common in research

- Data libraries are common in academia and are in fact required for research. If the public sector had to file the data not only that they collect but create, this would be one element of developing a data library. Similarly existing registers could be mined and improved (with suitable resources) to connect data and make it easier to find.
- There are loads of register problems, people don't know how to find them
- Implement data library in high schools
- Literacy and knowledge about what the government does with data and the difference personal and non-personal data
- Data as a skill is difficult for people to access, create a portal which is validated which they could use for employers
- Scottish national level to a localised level and then further segmented by l/a areas e.g. education, transport, health, leisure - Scotland all has the same framework - create data dictionary of what data is available and where it can be accessed and share how it can be used - e.g. case studies of use and value
- Organisations and skilled individuals will want open access to raw data. Citizens will be interested to see data with the insights already visible.

Data for policy making

- Maybe the government is not producing data policymakers need
- Each policy process needs to include consideration of how data can be used to measure impact - this is usually poorly bolted on once policy is implemented, doesn't lead to usable findings and results in replication of ineffective policy. Just completed a study of 20 years of race equality policy for SG and this was very evident throughout.
- Evidence based data needed

Watch over what's happening: lack of transparency

- Need for a common process (processes) for policy work - data management plans as a start - would help consistency, quality and findability.
- Be more transparent about data collection, scope and use - could this be a commitment?
- Policy process lacks framework for using data, on poverty no targeted action on increasing poverty
- So would accountability for data collection be something that could be explored e.g. how do you follow datasets creation and management to note changes in collection, use (and in fact record use cases?)

Understand audiences better

- Understanding the audiences that data could be presented to and in what easily-understandable formats based upon their skill sets- allow more to achieve 'penny-drop' moments - that I get it and understand and want to know more
- A 'Personal Data Store' would enable individuals to see which data is used for what and by whom. This would anonymise it whilst generating trust and empowerment.
- Integrate data with the individual it's about so data gets to the right place at the right time, as they'll choose where it needs to go (to Helen's point about frustration over data sharing)
- Recognise the difference between personal and non-personal data.
- Data is related directly to people. If we make this explicit in our technical and governance systems they will become more data literate and empowered, benefitting everybody
- At the moment we have an organisation-centred management model. We need to move toward a person-centred management model.

Links shared in chat

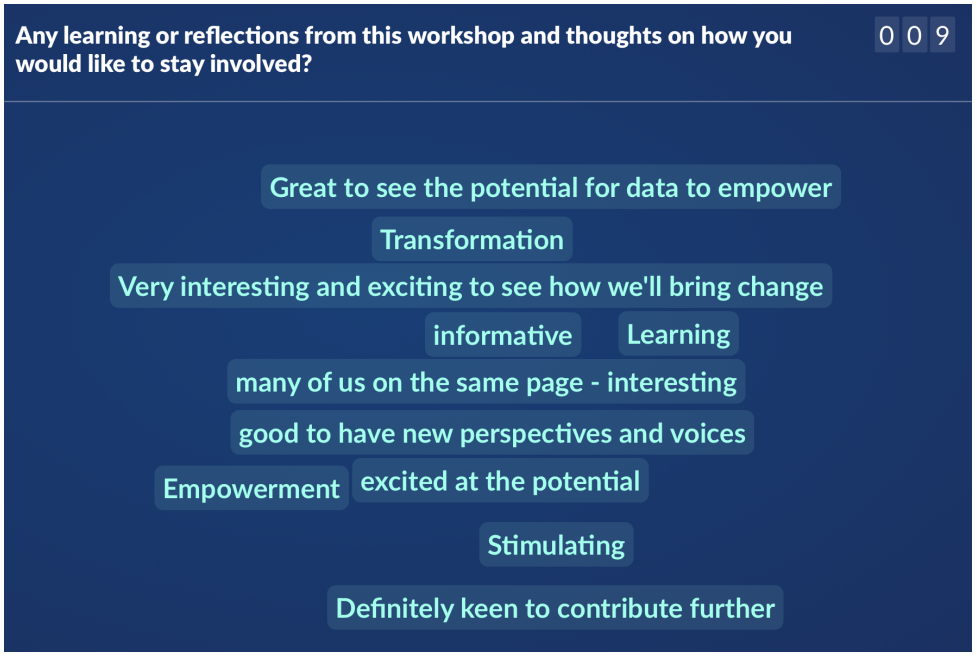
Participants and senior government officials shared different links with each other in chat, hereby a summary of those links:
https://www.gov.scot/policies/digital/digital-identity-scotland
https://algoritmeregister.amsterdam.nl/en/ai-register/
https://blogs.gov.scot/digital/2020/02/04/digital-identity-scotland-working-towards-a-prototype/
https://mydex.org/resources/papers/AchievingTransformationAtScale/

3. Feedback by participants

To conclude the workshop we asked participants through sli-do ***"Any learning or reflections from this workshop and thoughts on how you would like to stay involved?"***
9 participants completed the sli-do whilst some left some feedback in the chat.

- Great to be able to engage with senior people and share experiences in accessing and using data
- informative

- Great to see the potential for data to empower
- Very interesting and exciting to see how we'll bring change
- Transformation
- Learning
- good to have new perspectives and voices
- excited at the potential
- I will follow up with Sam and Michael to find out more about each initiative
- Empowerment
- many of us on the same page - interesting
- Definitely keen to contribute further
- Stimulating



Overall the session was perceived as interesting. Participants felt energised and that there was a good mix of people and ideas, they found the discussions useful and insightful. Participants appreciated the presentation by Albert and the use of jamboards for reading others' thoughts and contributions. A participant suggested that we commit to follow-up sessions, to prevent this from being a one-off event.

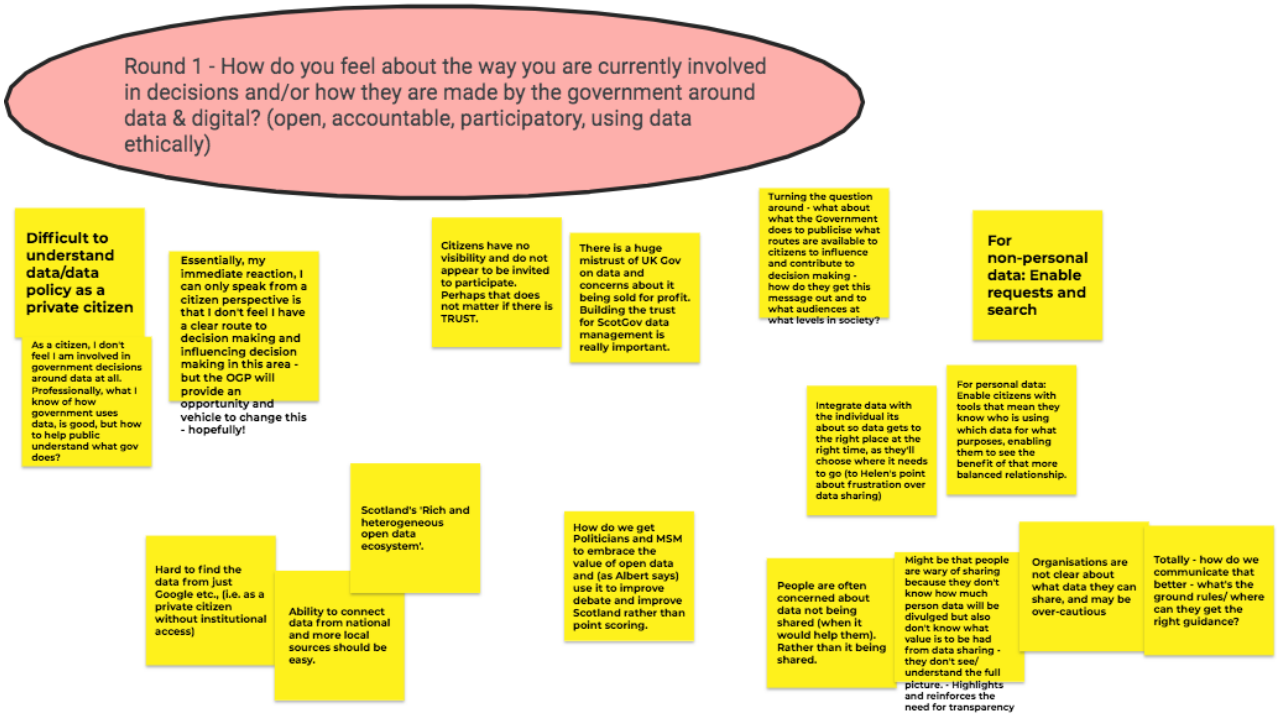
Feedback for improvement included the language which was used; it was mentioned by one participant as 'excluding'. Another participant commented the content was more about data than digital and that this would not meet the participants needs, however as the session continued this participant felt more

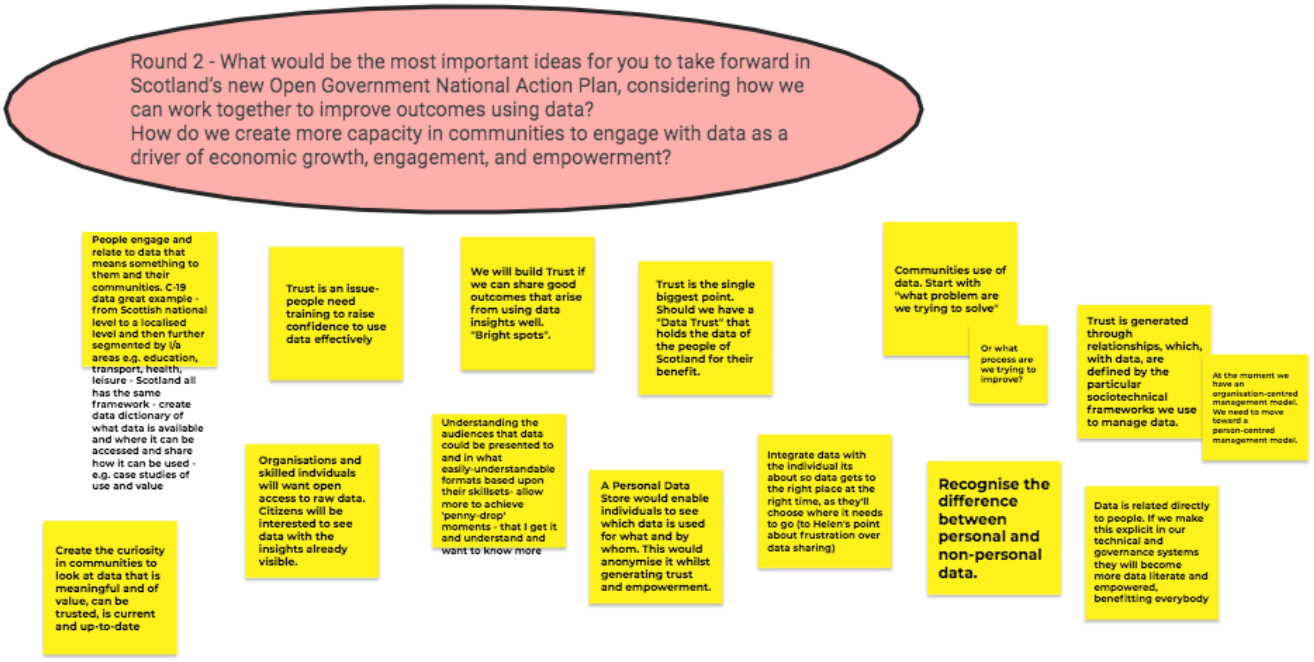
involved. Also, some preparation information was lacking now; one participant mentioned the need for this to be more informed on the topic. Some participants highlighted the importance of structuring the meeting into key themes to make it more effective. Even mentioning now the discussion questions were 'poorly defined', as data and digital are 'overused buzzwords', there is need for more concrete policy topics such as public sector information, service delivery and digital identity.

4. Appendix

Group A Jamboards

Group B Jamboards




Round 2 - What would be the most important ideas for you to take forward in Scotland's new Open Government National Action Plan, considering how we can work together to improve outcomes using data?
How do we create more capacity in communities to engage with data as a driver of economic growth, engagement, and empowerment?
People engage and relate to data that means something to them and their communities. C-19 data great example - from Scottish national level to a localised level and then further segmented by l/a areas e.g. education, transport, health, leisure - Scotland all has the same framework - create data dictionary of what data is available and where it can be accessed and share how it can be used - e.g. case studies of use and value
Trust is an issue- people need training to raise confidence to use data effectively
We will build Trust if we can share good outcomes that arise from using data insights well. "Bright spots".
Trust is the single biggest point. Should we have a "Data Trust" that holds the data of the people of Scotland for their benefit.
Communities use of data. Start with "what problem are we trying to solve"
Or what process are we trying to improve?
Trust is generated through relationships, which, with data, are defined by the particular sociotechnical frameworks we use to manage data.
At the moment we have an organisation-centred management model. We need to move toward a person-centred management model.
Create the curiosity in communities to look at data that is meaningful and of value, can be trusted, is current and up-to-date
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