

MPS OPEN DATA STRATEGY

PRODUCED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OPEN DATA INSTITUTE



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INTRODUCTION

Executive summary

This strategy is the outcome of a collaborative effort between the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Open Data Institute (ODI).

The strategy begins by outlining the purpose of this document and why it is essential for us to continue to strive to be collecting, using and sharing data in as open and responsible manner as possible. This is imperative for a modern organisation such as the MPS, particularly due to the role that it plays for the public. This strategy directly supports our New Met for London plan which sets out how we will deliver better policing as we radically transform the organisation, and where, through an open data approach we'll increase transparency and trust, generating community dashboards and infographics about what we do, and why we do it.

It details research undertaken to inform the identification of actions that the MPS will take to achieve the aims of the strategy. This includes the findings of comprehensive research that included analysis of the existing site and data made available by the MPS, in-depth internal and external interviews with individuals working with MPS-published data, as well as a public facing survey run in 2022. This considers fundamental aspects of how we currently collect and publish data, such as findability, accessibility, and data quality.

The actions that we intend to carry out following the publication of this strategy are included in detail. This is not a static list. This is the beginning, as we look to build on the foundations of this first iteration of our Open Data Strategy. We will address these actions through focusing on our people, foundations, technology, and governance.

We have also considered the possible benefits that can be realised, as well the challenges we will likely face in implementing this strategy. A well-executed Open Data Strategy can have many benefits for both the public, as well as the MPS, including greater transparency, efficiency and trust. The progress we make as we look to increase the volume and quality of data we make publicly available will not always be linear, so we have identified some of the most immediate challenges we are likely to face, however this will be revised as we move forward.



With this strategy, our ambition is:



We are committed to ensuring the Met is transparent about what we do to keep people in London safe and how we do that. We believe being transparent is crucial to ensuring we have the trust of the people we serve, and there are already numerous ways the public can access information and data about the Met, including on its website and through Freedom of Information Act requests.

In the future, our aim is to enable the public, academics and our partners to access more of the data we collect – where it is ethical and lawful to do so – to better support us in understanding how we can improve the service we give to London delivering more trust, less crime and higher standards.

As outlined in our New Met for London plan that sets out how we will deliver better policing as we radically transform the organisation, our ongoing commitment to be even more transparent, we have worked with the Open Data Institute to help us identify what additional information people would like to see and how they would like to access this information, with the ultimate aim of developing ways to make more information more readily available.”

The Metropolitan Police Director of Data, Aimee Smith

Why does the MPS need an Open Data Strategy?

The MPS is the largest police service in the country, accounting for approximately 25% of all recorded crime in England & Wales. This generates a lot of data, for example the MPS received approximately 4 million 999 and 101 calls during the financial year 22/23, an increase of nearly a million calls compared to financial year 20/21. The public rightly has an interest in the data we hold, which is reflected in the increasing volume of data requests under the [Freedom of Information Act](#) (FOIA). For example, on average we received 420 requests per month Jan – Nov 2022, an increase of 10 requests per month compared to 2021 (FOIA).

The MPS collect and use a vast amount of data across the organisation – uses include but are not limited to:

- Solving Crimes
- Identifying victims and offenders
- Identifying hotspots for offending
- Looking at performance across departments to identify learning
- Identifying and understanding gaps in our performance or knowledge
- Providing information for oversight (e.g. MOPAC, Home Office); scrutiny boards and local ward panels
- Providing data to the public (e.g. FOIA's, Mayor's Questions)

As in many organisations that provide an essential public service, we recognise that the data we hold as a result of our responsibilities and activities is one of our most valuable assets. Meanwhile, we know that public trust is at its lowest. This was evident in the Public Attitude Survey where 41% (21/22) of people surveyed believed the police were doing a good job in London. This is the lowest it has ever been since the question was added to the survey back in 2014/15 within MOPAC public voice reporting. In 2022/23 this improved by just 1% point to 42%.

Publishing more data is one way we can be more transparent with the types of data we hold, providing context to some of the issues that we face; and the critical issues that the public care about, such as how our police officers behave and whether there is fairness in the tactics used. While data is already published via the MPS Website, we have worked with the ODI to further understand the requirements of the communities we serve, and third parties such as journalists and academics who use our data to report on events or develop research into topical areas.

What is the MPS trying to achieve?

The requirement to have an Open Data Strategy is a core requirement within the MPS Data Strategy 2019, with the guiding principle to be as open and transparent as we can with the data we hold. It has three aims in mind:

- 1. To create as broad access to the data we collect as possible – increasing the transparency of data with the aim of rebuilding trust.**
- 2. To enable others to derive value from our data for a wider benefit (including greater insight and sharing with the police).**
- 3. Reduce the volume of data requests from the public by providing data proactively.**

In developing this strategy, we have stayed true to our Strategic Digital Enabling Framework, 2021-2025, which included the overarching aim to:

“ give every customer the best possible technology experience, from our Police Officers and staff working in stations and on the street, to our partners that rely on our support and data to support safeguarding, crime prevention and investigation, to members of the public who want to engage with us in new ways, through a channel and at a time that suits them”

Data is an integral part of modern-day policing. It is critical to every decision we make, and it is therefore as critical to use and to help the public of London. It is part of the complexity of what we do. In publishing this Open Data Strategy, we are committing to improve the accessibility, quality and volume of data that we can make available to partners and the public in the most effective and efficient way possible. Where possible, we are looking to make more MPS data available in order to reduce the timelines that people have experienced when trying to access this in the past. The strategy will be a central document, which sets out how we intend to use open data to increase transparency of the data assets we hold, improve the process of obtaining data; and how this will benefit both the MPS and the public.

We believe that a good Open Data Strategy is one that is ambitious, while realistic, and is ultimately aimed towards generating benefits both for the MPS and the communities it serves. We believe that what we have set out in this document is achievable and are looking to use this as the first step in the process on the MPS journey towards working in as open a manner as possible.

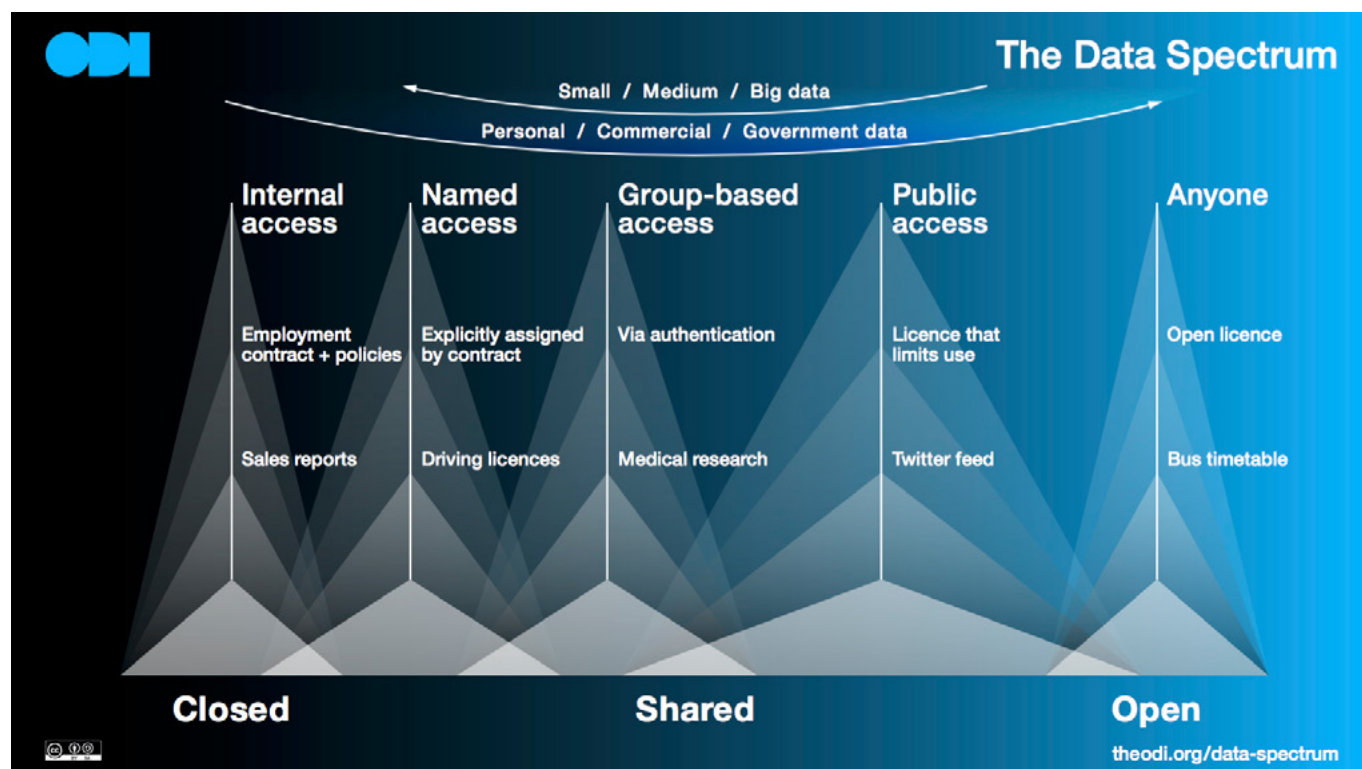
What open data is the MPS allowed to provide?

As the MPS is a law-enforcement agency we are able to collect data under Part 3 of the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, this means information we are processing for a law enforcement purpose(s).

Because this data is collected for a policing or safeguarding reason, we are not allowed to provide that data to any other public body, service or public unless there is a justified and legal gateway for doing so, likely with a covering data artefact (data sharing agreement); the only exception to this would be for an imminent threat to life rationale. Under the UK-GDPR we are also not at liberty to provide personal data to a level where an individual can be identified, therefore, the data we are able to publish is aggregated by some characteristic to eliminate personal identification and the mosaic effect – the joining or overlapping of datasets to seek to identify an individual.

While our aim is to be as open as possible, due to the sensitive nature of much of the information that we hold, there will inevitably be instances where we cannot make data open, and will instead either look to share this in a more limited way but in some cases, it will be necessary for us to keep certain data closed.

To articulate this, it can be helpful to consider how access to data exists on a spectrum, from **closed** to **shared**, to **open**, as shown by the Open Data Institute (ODI)'s [Data Spectrum](#) below.



Open data refers to data that anyone can access, use or share¹.

Such data should be published with an open licence², for example the UK's [Open Government Licence](#), or those available from [Creative Commons](#). Catalogues of data can also be created and opened, and used to request access to the underlying datasets themselves.

A lot of the data that the MPS has can be considered as shared data.

This is generally understood to be data that is accessible beyond where it was collected or created, but is not published with an open licence. Shared data has the widest range on the Data Spectrum – from data provided by one entity to another under a named or group-based access arrangement, such as through a data sharing agreement or commercial data portal, to data published on the web under licences that limit use, such as [non-commercial](#) or [no-derivatives](#) licences.

It is important that some data remains closed, (for example, closed – specific investigation details, shared – bespoke investigation intelligence and open – overall investigation statistics), meaning not shared outside of the organisation that collected it. This is to protect privacy, commercial interests or national security, as well as complying with regulations such as GDPR, as and where relevant. However, even if the raw data itself remains closed, in some cases, aggregated or anonymised versions of it can still be shared or made open.



¹ODI (2022), "Glossary", <https://theodi.org/knowledge-opinion/glossary>

²ODI (2013), "Publisher's Guide to Open Data Licensing", <https://theodi.org/article/publishers-guide-to-open-data-licensing>

What is the MPS already doing?

There are a number of ways in which data is already requested and shared currently within the MPS. This include direct requests under the FOIA, requests from partners and 3rd party agencies where Data Sharing Agreements are in place; or requests from academics and journalists where the lawful framework is put in place to protect the data.

Data already provided

Met.police.uk	Police.uk	MOPAC.gov.uk	London Data Store	Office for National Statistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime data over time • Trend data • Crime within your local area • Demographic data • Data relating to tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime data over time • Trend data • Demographic data • Call wait times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data relating the Policing Crime Plan, including Violence Against Women and Girls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All underlying datasets that are used to provide dashboards within met.police.uk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Comparison Data for crime volumes, outcomes

The type of data the MPS holds relates to criminal activity, incidents, tactics, demographics and geographical information, data relating to our workforce, business data such as finance, estates and fleet. Much of this is already publicly available on the [Met Police website](#). Data published in MPS dashboards is also available on the internet and downloaded and accessible in the [London Data Store](#). Some of this data is published in [Police.uk](#).

When FOIA requests are made and data is provided, the response (including the data) is published on the [Met Police website](#). This allows for previous requests to be searched prior to new requests being made. Where multiple requests are made for the same topic, a dashboard is created to allow for greater transparency of the subject for example the '[stolen animals dashboard](#)'.

FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH

Internal insights

Research was carried out by the ODI to identify the current needs of the MPS and staff to inform the creation of the ODS. Some of the main findings which have informed the actions included in the strategy are:

- **Improve signposting and clarity on the MPS site:** this can help users who are trying to navigate the MPS website to find sources to access data in a more intuitive manner and reduce the need to make specific requests for data that is already available.
- **The ‘Stats and data’ section of the site could be better utilised** as the focal page for MPS data, this can be made much more accessible to facilitate the user experience as they try to access MPS data. While improving this will benefit from user testing, a starting point could be to clearly describe the other mechanisms available for a user to be able to access data.
- **More comprehensive explanations of the processes by which the MPS collects, records and publishes data,** the current page on “[How we collect our data](#)” should be used to much greater effect in informing users, particularly in regards to changes and updates to the way in which the MPS is stewarding data.
- **Have a designated generic email address to which requests can be sent,** it was found that a contact email address was only present on one page. A generic address should be available on each page for requests that can be triaged and responded to. Regular requests can also then be considered for publication in an FAQ style on the “[How we collect our data](#)” page.

The MPS is already publishing much of the data that many people who submit FOIA requests are looking for. The table, below, includes the top 5 most common themes of data that are requested by the public based on analysis of requests received over the period December 2019 – January 2022. As the table notes, data on these themes is already being published on various existing MPS dashboards, as well as individually in the case of FOIA requests relating to MPS processes.

Theme	Published data
Hate crime	Hate crime dashboard
MPS – misconduct/complaints/disciplinary	Individually published
Domestic Abuse/Violence	Crime data dashboard
Sexual Offences	Crime data dashboard
Children/under 18/youth	Crime data dashboard

External insights

The second phase of research carried out to inform this Open Data Strategy involved a public survey and interviews with individuals from local authorities, academia and the media. Some of the main general takeaways are:

- There is a general impression that the MPS holds an abundance of very rich data, however the extent to which people are aware of what this data is varies.
- The MPS has plentiful data that could possibly be used to greater effect.
- Signposting practices, are not uniformly applied across the MPS website at present.
- External users have particular difficulty in finding data on FOI requests and misconduct hearings. Some users of MPS data are still currently using FOI requests as a first resort, rather than a last.
- There is a lack of awareness surrounding what data assets the MPS holds. This has implications for the level of confidence in what the MPS can and is willing to share.

The following sections dive into some greater detail of the findings, which are particularly relevant to the Open Data Strategy.

Accessing Information

- There is an impression that **MPS datasets are being structured in a way they are not easy to either interrogate or make available to those outside of the MPS**, giving the impression that the MPS is engaging in deliberate obfuscation.
- There is an assumption that **the MPS has a significantly greater number of data assets** that could be made openly available but have not, due to the contents of the datasets.
- There is **generally an appreciation for the [MPS crime dashboards](#)**, however some users found them difficult to navigate.

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Search

Report Tell us about Apply or register Request Thanks and complaints Your area

Stats and data

We're committed to transparency and, as such, we wish to give you as many tools as possible to help you to not only see what your local police force is doing to combat crime but also to be able to identify the different types. And, by being able to see crime stats mapped out, you can be better prepared to protect yourself.

Crime, Stop & Search and Taser data

Please note that the dashboards on this page are designed for larger screens, so we would recommend viewing them on a desktop computer rather than a mobile phone or tablet.

Dashboards below or full data and accessible versions are available to download from the [London datastore](#)

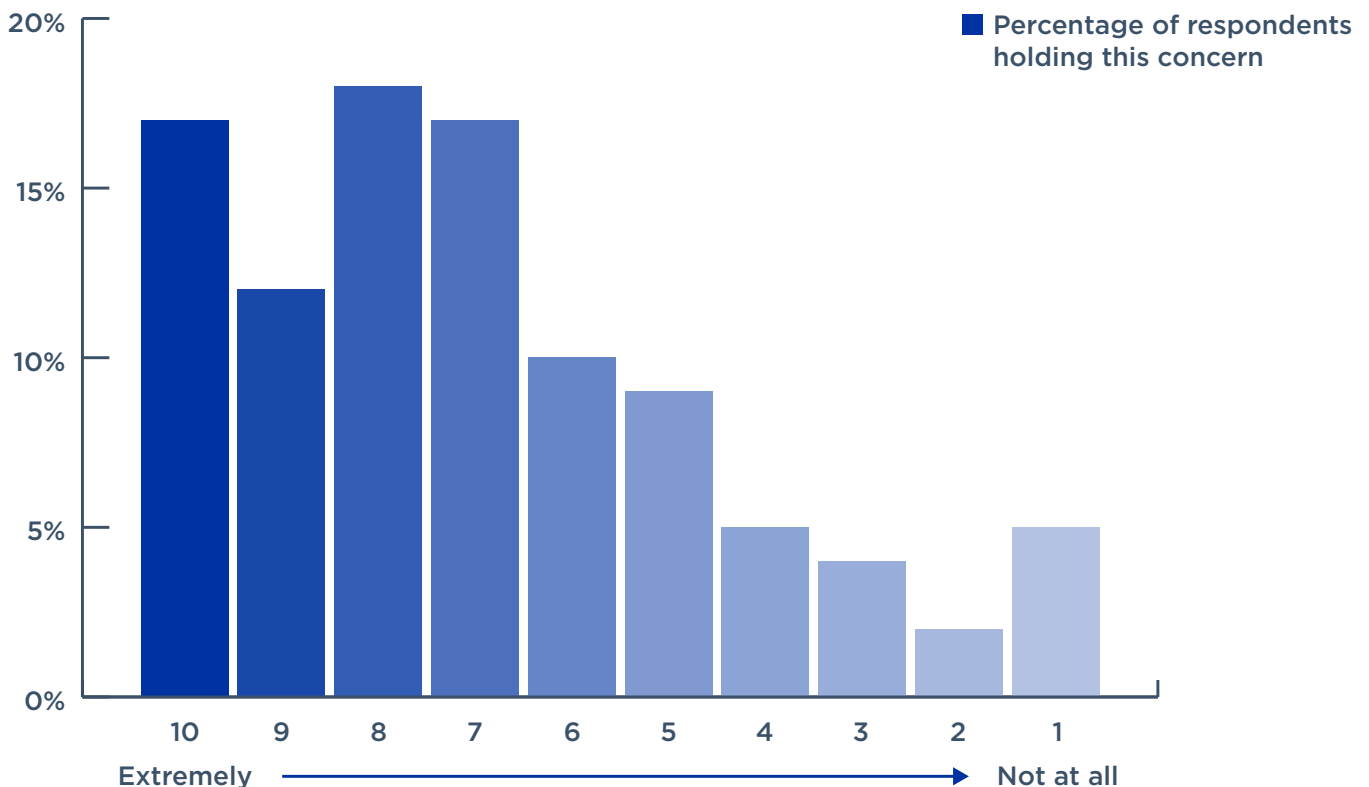
- Business crime dashboard
- Crime data dashboard
- Stop and search dashboard
- Stop and search data dashboard - more thorough searches (intimate parts exposed)
- Custody dashboard - arrests, disposals, strip searches
- Taser data dashboard - historic (not updated)
- force dashboard

Leave this site

Trust and data quality

- **The public currently has a favourable impression of the trustworthiness of the data published by the MPS**, with the vast majority of respondents ranking their trust in the data published by the MPS as 6 or above, where 1 = not at all and 10 = extremely (trustworthy).

To what extent do you trust the data published by the MPS?



- However, **low levels of trust for other reasons across the MPS has - by extension - impacted upon levels of trust in the MPS collecting, processing and publishing data.** This was reflected by 62% of survey respondents saying their main concern when using MPS data was data quality.
- **Inconsistencies in MPS data** were also brought up as an issue, both in the collection and publication of data.

Usefulness of Data

Responses to the survey also raised important issues around the usefulness of the data that the MPS is currently publishing that are helpful to us in improving the data that we are already making available, as well as what data users would like to be able to access. Some of the primary findings include:

- **MPS data is not published in a queryable manner.** Examples include respondents noting that they have difficulty finding the number of arrests per borough. Ward-level data is even more difficult to accurately query, if not impossible to use in comparison with borough-level data.
- **Timeliness of the data and the length for which data is kept was also raised as an issue.** Respondents expressed frustrations that it can take the MPS a long time to publish data, particularly in reaction to events where the public and media are interested in learning more.
- **Granularity of the data was cited by most respondents as the most significant obstacle to usability of data published by the MPS.** Specifically, this included: crime categories were cited as being too generic; location of offences could be improved upon – for example including longitude and latitude; data is not cross-tabbed against characteristics such as age or ethnicity.

There were also a number of requests within the survey responses for specific additional data sources or adjustments to the current data published. It is important to note that not all of these are practicable (or ethical) to publish:

- More detail on victims and offenders (survey response)
- Repeat offender data (multiple survey responses)
- Historic crime trends and filterable by time (multiple survey responses)
- Police stop data (race and ethnicity) (survey and civil society organisations)
- Calls for service data (survey response)
- Policy and procedure documents, police complaint data (survey response)
- Financial data for operational activity (multiple survey responses, media, academia and civil society)
- Unit call sign data (survey response)
- Workforce data, such as injuries in the line of duty (multiple survey respondents, media noted they can already get this)
- Workforce deployment across London (academia)
- What resources are being used (multiple survey responses, academia)
- How MPS money is being spent (multiple survey responses, academia)

WHAT THE MPS WILL DO

Through this Open Data Strategy, the MPS is committing to addressing the issues identified within the research, while concurrently looking to increase efficiencies, accessibility of data and the experience of users while using MPS data.

To do this, we are focusing on carrying out activities that we have grouped under four themes: **Data People**, **Data Foundations**, **Data Tools & Tech**, and **Data Governance**.

Requirements to deliver an ODS

Data People	Data Foundations	Data Tools & Technology	Data Governance
Data Analysis	Data Quality	Data Analysis	Data Ethics
Data Engineers	Data Standards	Data Extraction	Data Policy
Data Owners	Data Value	Data Mining	Data Security
		Data Visualisation	Data Sharing
		Data Infrastructure	



People

- Data Engineers to extract and structure data from across the organisation, to publish dashboards and maintain data feeds and routine updates.
- Data Analysts to provide analysis and insight of the data and create dashboards.
- Data owners to agree publication of all data.

Foundations

- To agree the governance process to agree new publications.
- To put a process in place for maintaining and updating regular data feeds.
- To develop the process for monitoring external queries.
- To understand how reliable the data is and assess the quality of the data.
- Data standards need to be agreed and embedded to enable consistency in utilisation.

Tech

- Create data visualisation tools to enable dashboard and datasets to be created.
- Work to improve the infrastructure to host datasets and dashboards.
- Use skilled technical people to mine, extract, analyse and visualise the data.

Governance

- Ensure that the public, communities and employee's personal details are protected and not identifiable through mosaic data layering.
- Methodology for communications to signpost and inform public of new datasets/updates.
- Design a process for checking the data is lawfully compliant to publish and adheres to policy.

Activities for delivery

- 1 **Apply the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#)** where practicable – to provide users of MPS data with the confidence that the data is high quality and trustworthy.
- 2 **Communicate changes** – a lot of what people are hoping and expecting from us can be addressed through better communication, whether that is of the data we release, where we are releasing it and in what formats; or if there are changes we are bringing in to the way we collect and use data. This is something that we intend to address through measures such as the introduction of a release and data update calendar and communicating changes in our data practices that are based on changes in UK data legislation.
- 3 **Improve signposting on the website and give clear links to other data sources – such as the [London Data Store](#) and [Police.uk](#)** – we are going to work with colleagues at the Single Online Home (SOH) to improve the signposting of MPS data sets across our website. The aim is to make datasets more findable for both internal and external users and increase their ability to identify the resources they need without needing to make individual requests for data.
- 4 **Record version histories and include dataset context** – another practical step that we will take in order to increase user confidence in the data they are accessing is by including version histories on cover sheets to datasets, which can help provide greater context to the dataset.
- 5 **Continue to improve via Shared Learning** – we already work with other forces across the UK to share our learning as we improve access to our data and strive to make this suitable for comparative analysis between forces.
- 6 **Publish definition documents so people understand the data** – The MPS is bound by Home Office crime categories, we will publish the definitions to ensure people know what is included in each crime grouping. We will also provide videos of how to use the dashboards we publish.
- 7 **Review data aggregation** – while complex, we feel this is vital to address the issues raised in the research relating to the available granularity of data. We plan to conduct this review and apply it to all new data. Once we are confident with our new approach, we will then look to review historical data sets.
- 8 **Create standard data request form** – we intend to introduce this for internal use across MPS departments, in order to streamline processes and reduce repeated data requests.

- 9 **Look into open vs shared data** – we are committed to taking a more proactive approach to identify what types of datasets we are currently sharing, even in limited ways, that we can make available in an open fashion and what this will entail for us to do so. As noted in the challenges section of the strategy, we appreciate that this might lead to an increase in requests for further data, or data that we are unable to make open. This is why it will be important for us to carry out some of these actions in sequence, such as determining and adding cover sheets to datasets to explain why it is not possible for additional information to be included in a particular dataset.
- 10 **Create a public facing data list** – we will look to improve the search facility for FOIA requests published on the intranet. We will also publish a publication timeline so people can see when the next update is due as well as when.
- 11 **Introduce an external open data board** – we believe strongly in the role an external open data board can play, particularly in identifying and encouraging more data to be published in a shared, or open fashion. We also hope that the formation of an external open data board can play a critical role in the scrutinisation of efforts, such as those listed above, that we have committed to, and help with the identification and prioritisation of MPS data assets that are suitable for making available openly. Forming the external open data board will, however, be a complex and time intensive process, as it is important for us to ensure that there is a diversity of perspectives on this board, so that it can contribute constructively to our efforts to improve internal processes and publish more and better data for users.
- 12 **Explain about data sharing agreements** – While the research conducted by the ODI identified that interviewees and respondents were keen to have greater visibility of data sharing agreements (DSA), these are internal documents that are generally not published. While it is not possible to provide greater visibility of individual DSAs, we will look to explain this on the MPS website.
- 13 **Embed a governance process for sharing open data** – This will ensure that the data is approved by the data owner and will have the right data governance principles applied, prior to publication.

Timescales for delivery

Quick Wins

Small interventions required for delivery
Small tweaks to existing processes.

Medium interventions required for delivery
New processes required

Longer-term

Large interventions required for delivery
Changes to working practices & policy required
Technical solution/resources required

0-2 Months	3-4 Months	5-7 Months	7-9 Months
2 Communicating changes	1 Code of practice for statistics	7 Review data aggregation	5 Shared learning
3 Signpost data sources on Website	4 Signpost versions	12 Explain about Data Sharing Agreements	9 Open vs shared? Additional datasets
6 Publish data definitions	8 Standard data request form/FOIA request system/tracker (public)		10 Public facing data list/legislation explained
13 Governance for publishing data			11 External open data board



Anticipated benefits for MPS from the Open Data Strategy

Beyond being a requirement of the 2019 MPS Data Strategy, the actions in this document will help us create broader access to the data we collect. Our Open Data Strategy enables others to derive value from this data and generate wider benefits. In time, it is hoped that it will also reduce the volume of data requests we receive from the public by proactively providing data. The following sections outline additional anticipated benefits from undertaking these actions as part of the Open Data Strategy.

Reduce the number of FOIA requests

We hope that through identifying existing data assets that are suitable for making openly available, combined with improved signposting and communication of how and where users might be able to find these assets, that there will be less need for users to make FOIA requests for general data queries.

Greater research insights

Another expected benefit of these actions is that MPS data is more easily findable for users conducting research. As part of efforts to increase the number of datasets that are made openly available, rather than on a shared basis, it is hoped that researchers will be able to identify and explore more MPS data. Based on existing experiences with research institutes, we are conscious of the insights that can be generated when MPS data is made available to researchers, which can prove integral to delivering better, more efficient policing.

Communicate MPS limitations and manage user expectations

Implementing this strategy can afford us the opportunity to clearly communicate the limits to what we are able to make publicly available under data legislation, such as GDPR. In doing so we hope that this will provide an opportunity for us to have more transparent dialogues with

data users and develop trust that efforts are being made where possible to make MPS data more accessible and open.

Greater clarity of data owners and roles

As part of related efforts to the Open Data Strategy, we have been working on having clear owners of data and relevant roles. These efforts are already underway and will contribute to the successful implementation of the actions included in the strategy, as well as the broader aims to make more data publicly available where possible.

Improve maturity

A Data Maturity Assessment was carried out by Carruthers & Jackson in March 2022, to baseline the MPS data maturity across a range of areas. By implementing the activities described above we anticipate that this will improve our maturity in the following areas: strategy, governance, skills, behaviour, framework and policies, all of which currently score between 2-3, out of 5. This will be done by increasing our communication and engagement, reviewing our processes, increasing resources to deliver the Open Data Strategy, quality assuring and providing routine datasets, scanning for repeat requests and setting data standards for how the Open Data Strategy is delivered across the MPS.

Anticipated benefits for society from the Open Data Strategy

Providing benefits to broader society is equally important to us in adopting this strategy. In this section, we outline some of the immediate benefits that we are hoping that the public will be able to gain as a result of our adoption of this strategy.

Facilitating research

Making more data openly available should equip researchers in both personal and professional capacities to carry out analysis that they had not been able to do previously. This can apply to interested individuals who are keen to explore crime related data, to institutional research. We appreciate the position that we play as an important publisher of crime related data and the impact and collaborations that this might enable through making more of this openly available.

Greater public confidence

Through implementing our Open Data Strategy, we are confident that this will help affirm our commitment to working in a more transparent manner with data. This will incentivise us to ensure that we are maintaining high standards when releasing additional data assets, which should have a knock-on effect of better quality data being made available for the public to access. Over time, it is hoped that this should engender greater public confidence in using the data that we publish.

Findable and accessible data

One of our primary intentions behind adopting this Open Data Strategy is that users and organisations will be able to access what they need without having to submit requests. Where possible, this will take into consideration the types of data that were identified in the research that was conducted to inform the strategy. It is anticipated that the user experience of accessing our data will be improved as a result of more data being made available and better signposting on our site, to aid navigation.



CHALLENGES OF AN MPS OPEN DATA STRATEGY

Anticipated challenges for MPS in implementing the Open Data Strategy

In this section, we have sought to acknowledge some of the most salient challenges that we anticipate could arise as a result of Open Data Strategy. However, the Open Data Strategy will likely signal the beginning of an iterative evolution in the way that we handle data.

Meeting users' expectations

By developing this Open Data Strategy, it is important that the timeframes for implementing actions as part of the strategy are either adhered to, or we communicate when they diverge from expectations. It is essential to note that the actions included in this strategy will require significant staff time, not only to implement, but also to maintain once they have been put into place. While these pose challenges to the successful implementation of the Open Data Strategy, a strong culture and appreciation for the importance of responsible data practices and the value of data to MPS activities already exists.

Generating greater demand

One aim behind making additional data available, where possible, is to reduce the number of FOIA requests we receive as a result of users having greater access to more data. Conversely, this may encourage even greater demand for more data and FOIA requests and potentially leading to the submission of more complex FOIA requests. A consequence of such a scenario might be that it is not possible to respond to these more intricate or complicated requests, as these cannot be carried out if it is deemed that providing responses will take greater than 18 hours of police staff time.

Particularly when considering the time-intensive nature of processing FOIA requests, an increased number of rejected requests could reflect negatively on the MPS and the efforts that we are making as part of our commitments to providing more data. One measure that could potentially counteract this challenge is the publication of the number of FOIA requests that have been refused as a result of the nature of the data being requested, as well as the number of requests that are refused due to exceeding the time threshold.

Responding to scrutiny

There is the risk for the MPS that, in making more data available, instances in which the data quality is poor may be exposed. This is something that we are aware could impact on public trust towards wider MPS data practices and assets. We will, however, make efforts to minimise the need for post-publication action or communication. This will include developing a checklist of considerations that needs to be completed before a new or updated data asset is made available.

Working within existing parameters

Though securing the resources and staff time required to implement, maintain and build on the actions included in this strategy will present perhaps the most substantial challenge, the MPS will also have to contend with implementing these changes while working within the parameters afforded by the current website, that is hosted nationally. At times, this might limit the extent to which data can be presented in ways that are suitable for interrogation of the data. This is one representation of the challenges that we face in this regard, that there will be limits to what can be done based on the underlying infrastructure that MPS data is being drawn from and presented on.



CONCLUSION

In a modern organisation people should be able to find, search and understand data. This strategy was created to ensure the MPS is as open and transparent as possible with the data that it holds, to address the increasing demand for access to MPS data, and to help improve the current levels of public trust. We want to enable others to derive value from our data, while also improving efficiency within the MPS, with a reduced volume of FOIA requests to process.

We have worked with the ODI to look at what we have already made available either as open or shared data, and aim to not only release more data where possible, but to improve current access to and findability of our data, and to improve the information supporting it. We have engaged with internal and external stakeholders throughout the process of developing this strategy. Stakeholders have included the public, local authorities such as MOPAC and the GLA, academics, the media and civil society organisations. Through interviews, surveys and desk research, this has helped us to prioritise the most valued activities we can complete following the publishing of this strategy.

Alongside providing our stakeholders with more consistent data, we see a myriad of potential benefits as a result of this work. We will gain greater clarity around our data owners and roles, and improve our own data literacy and quality. We will be able to continuously improve our processes with learnings from improved public feedback loops, which will allow the public to better communicate with us as to what they need and are interested in. With more findable and accessible data, of greater consistency and quality, with additional contexts, we will be able to facilitate more external research, which we anticipate will lead to greater insights for our organisation, understanding of

law enforcement, and increase efficiencies with an expected reduced demand via FOIA requests. Ultimately, we hope that by articulating a greater openness to criticism and willingness to improve, increasing transparency of our data practices, and showing how we are already trying to improve, that this will lead to greater public confidence in us.

We do not expect this process to be easy however. We know there will be challenges and obstacles in responding to greater scrutiny, but that this is important if we are to build better trust. We know it will be critical for us to clearly communicate our limitations and manage user expectations so that this doesn't lead to greater frustrations and further breakdown of trust, especially as we have to work within existing limitations and parameters.

We will be making improvements to our foundations, technology, our staff expertise, and our data governance, and will work to keep all stakeholders informed of our progress.

In order to deliver this strategy the following metrics will be monitored to ensure we are meeting our commitments detailed throughout this document.

- Increase data published on the MPS website to be updated monthly
 - % of that published regularly
- We aim to publish a definition for all our data published
 - % of data published with a definition
- We will ensure relevant contact points are available to the public for the Data Office and aim to increase public feedback
- Monitor all engagement we receive to see how we can enhance our data availability
- Measure changes made by public feedback
- Continuously strive to improve our data maturity assessment

If you have any questions or feedback regarding this strategy, please contact us via met.police.uk and click 'Contact us'.

As we work through these objectives we are keen to hear how we are doing, what we are doing well and where we can improve, and look forward to hearing from you.