Data trust: UK calls for 'public good' test in landmark study

A [cross-party think tank](#) Policy Connect and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Data Analytics in the UK, have called for a 'settlement' on **public data between the citizen and bodies** which provide public services.

The parliamentary group met at Westminster this week to present their findings in their report ' Trust, Transparency and Tech: Building Ethical Data Policies for the Public Good'. The presentation followed seven months of research and discussion.

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The inquiry and presentation were held in cooperation with [Policy Connect](#), a not-for-profit cross-party think tank that works with Government and Parliament across the public, private and third sectors to help shape policy in health, education and skills, industry, technology and innovation and sustainability.

A growing ageing population, rising patient mobility and a steady drop in the number of healthcare personnel mean that **digital solutions and data leverage are increasingly necessary** to ensure smooth-running health systems.

But **[public trust in data sharing](#) and use needs to be developed** for optimal leverage across public services.

As well as healthcare, education, police and transport need to operate to **standardised, ethical data rules and regulations** to build public confidence.

"Our Inquiry addresses the concern that **data capture and use is out of control.** We need to put ethics into black-box algorithms so that it's the norm for decisions based on algorithms to pass the 'common good' test," said Jonathan Shaw, Chief Executive of Policy Connect. "Our findings are clear that government can lead the way on **empowering citizens** to know where their data is used, what is collected, and how algorithms arrive at decisions."

The report said that parliamentarians should establish a **committee to control and monitor the data environment** and ensure public protection. Such a unit could be set up under the Science & Technology or Digital, Culture, Media & Sport committee or independently.

The APPG report suggested the following steps for [building public confidence](#) in accountable data and technology roll outs:

· Organisations providing public services should have a **license to operate**, displaying high standards for how they use and apply data-intensive technology.

· Users that engage with data collection and machine learning should know up front when they are engaging with AI and sharing their data.

· Ensure that **meaningful user ethics and consent** are built into the design stages of technology, data handling and regulation from the start.

· Establish Parliamentary oversight for the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation to **ensure citizens' rights are protected.**

According to the report, the **British digital industry is worth £184 bln** and London is second only to Silicon Valley for inbound global connections. The APPG settlement proposal provides a framework to support the UK in becoming a world leader in **ethical data innovation**.

"With such governmental clarity and backing, the booming British tech industry can grow in a way that is safe for users and gives tech engineers a clear path to AI innovation," said Shaw.

Public trust in data usage is a worldwide obstacle to full and effective digitalisation in healthcare. Scandinavian states show some of the highest successes in onboarding digitalisation and **gaining patient trust for data usage** in healthcare.

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Source: HealthManagement.org, PolicyConnect
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Published on : Thu, 23 May 2019

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