

Open Referral UK Team Away Day: Visioning Workshop documentation

Shared Outcomes and Vision

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Purpose of this Report

This iStandUK report summarises the shared outcomes and impacts identified from the Visioning Workshop during the Open Referral UK (ORUK) Away Day held on 27 March 2026. The focus of the day was not to define ORUK for its own sake, but to articulate the real-world value created when high-quality, standards-based service information is shared openly and consistently across places.

The outcomes set out below reflect collective input from delivery partners, funders, policy leads, and sector representatives, and form a foundation for ORUK's future direction under iStandUK stewardship.

The Central Question

Rather than asking "What is the vision for ORUK?", participants explored a more fundamental prompt:

What better outcomes are achieved when we share high-quality, standards-based service information?

The outputs of the day are therefore framed as outcomes for citizens, practitioners, services, places, and the wider system.

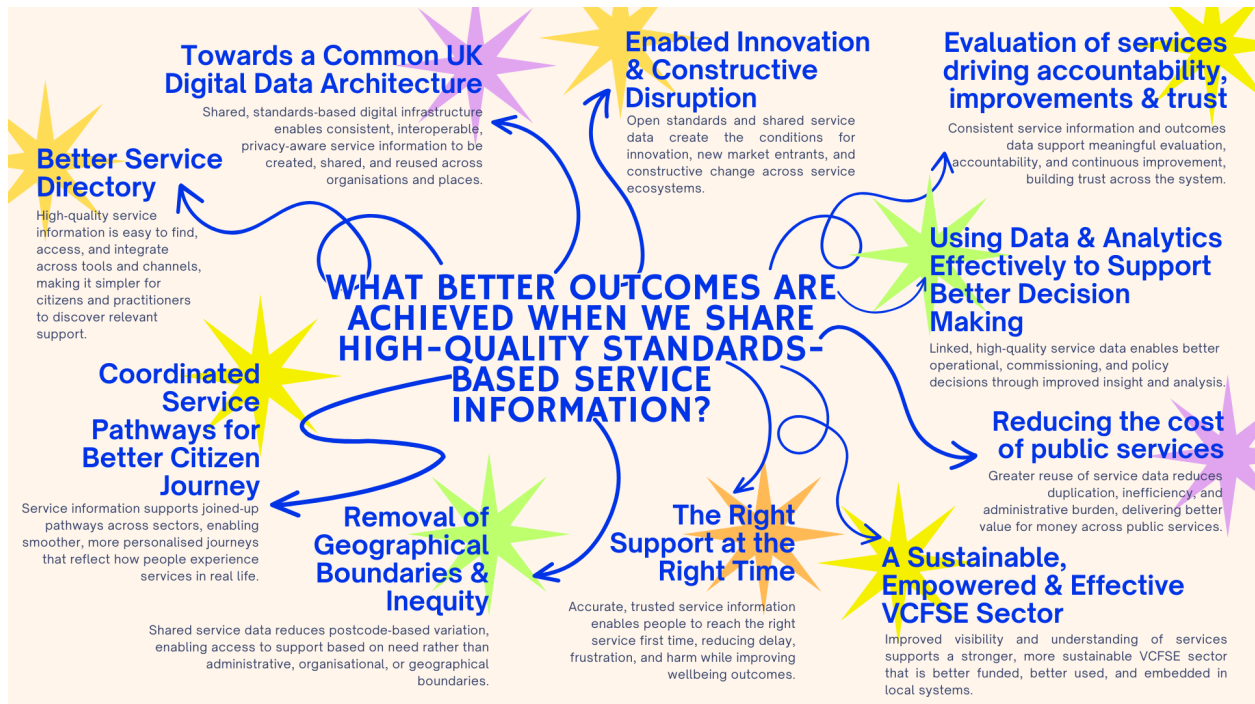
A Collective Answer to the Central Question

During the visioning workshop, participants worked together to respond to the question:

What better outcomes are achieved when we share high-quality, standards-based service information?

Through individual reflection, discussion, and collaborative sense-making, ideas were generated and grouped into ten key clusters. Each cluster represents a named theme that captures a set of outcomes the group believes become possible through open, interoperable, and trusted service information.

Taken together, these ten clusters form a collective answer to the central question, reflecting a shared understanding of the impact of shared service information for citizens, practitioners, services, places, and the wider public sector.



- **Common UK Digital Data Architecture**

Shared, standards-based digital infrastructure enables consistent, interoperable, privacy-aware service information to be created, shared, and reused across organisations and places.

- Services stop collecting information captured better elsewhere
- Privacy by design
- Data standards embedded in data infrastructure in UK
- Effective services are scaled geographically by place type
- Product, price, promotion, place
- Integrated local & national services by design

- **Better Service Discovery**

High-quality service information is easy to find, access, and integrate across tools and channels, making it simpler for citizens and practitioners to discover relevant support.

- Service info appears on many channels (Alexa, AI, etc.)
- Customer journey is personalised
- Integration into tooling
- People can access quality services when they need them
- Services stop collecting info captured better elsewhere
- Removal of friction to identify services
- Reduce duplication & friction of data sharing
- Single language across org & services

- **Coordinated Service Pathways for Better Citizen Journey**

Service information supports joined-up pathways across sectors, enabling smoother, more personalised journeys that reflect how people experience services in real life.

- Reduce stress & frustration for practitioners
- Joined up health, mental & social care
- Better interoperability between health & social care
- Better care plans
- No one left behind as access to data is consistent
- People don't fall into cross-sector service gaps
- Understand gaps or overprovision of services

- **Remove Geographical Boundaries & Inequity**

Shared service data reduces postcode-based variation, enabling access to support based on need rather than administrative, organisational, or geographical boundaries.

- Better experience & consistent offer for our citizens
- Referrals based on need, not admin boundaries
- Creates cross-sector, regional & national collaboration opportunities
- Out of area referrals (less wasting)

- **The Right Support at the Right Time**

Accurate, trusted service information enables people to reach the right service first time, reducing delay, frustration, and harm while improving wellbeing outcomes.

- Better linking of people's needs to services
 - Accurate service data leading to the 'right front door first time'
 - Equitable access to services
 - People stop wasting time accessing the wrong service
- **Sustainable, Empowered & Effective VCFSE sector**
Improved visibility and understanding of services supports a stronger, more sustainable VCFSE sector that is better funded, better used, and embedded in local systems.
 - Realistic funding of VCFSE sector
 - Use of VCFSE sector reduces statutory service demand
 - Expose non-public funded services
- **Reducing the Cost of Public Services**
Greater reuse of service data reduces duplication, inefficiency, and administrative burden, delivering better value for money across public services.
 - Reduce the cost of managing service catalogues
- **Using Data & Analytics Effectively to Support Better Decision Making**
Linked, high-quality service data enables better operational, commissioning, and policy decisions through improved insight and analysis.
 - Improved comparisons of care/service provision
 - Linking between data sets for inventive analysis
 - Good outcome data leads to personalisation & the right decisions
- **Evaluation of services driving accountability, improvements & trust**
Consistent service information and outcomes data support meaningful evaluation, accountability, and continuous improvement, building trust across the system.
 - Measurable improvement in wellbeing scores
 - More capacity to understand impact of funding policy
 - Better accountability for service providers
- **Enabled Innovation & Constructive Disruption**
Open standards and shared service data create the conditions for innovation, new market entrants, and constructive change across service ecosystems.
 - Suppliers adopt standards leads to new market entrants

What Happens Next

The shared vision set out in this report represents the outcomes that participants believe become possible when high-quality, standards-based service information is shared effectively. It is not intended as a final or closed statement. Instead, it provides a starting point for wider conversation, challenge, and refinement.

Testing and Expanding the Collective Vision

The workshop brought together a broad range of national, regional, and delivery perspectives. However, it is recognised that important voices were not represented, including parts of the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector and other frontline and place-based communities.

The next step is therefore to share this collective answer more widely, particularly with sectors and groups whose experiences are most directly shaped by service information, and to invite them to test it against their own realities. This will help to:

- Validate whether the articulated outcomes resonate across different contexts
- Identify gaps, tensions, or unintended consequences
- Strengthen and iterate the vision based on lived experience and delivery insight

This phase is about listening as much as sharing, and ensuring the vision continues to be shaped collectively.

Clarifying ORUK's Role in Achieving the Vision

Alongside broader engagement, ORUK will bring its community together to reflect on a critical question: **What is ORUK's role in enabling and supporting this shared vision?**

The vision describes system-level outcomes that no single organisation can deliver alone. ORUK's role is therefore not to own the outcomes themselves, but to understand where it can add the greatest value as a standard, a community, and a piece of shared digital infrastructure. This next phase will focus on:

- Clarifying ORUK's purpose and priorities in relation to the shared vision
- Understanding which outcomes ORUK can most directly influence
- Identifying where partnership, alignment, or advocacy are required rather than direct delivery
- Ensuring ORUK's evolution under iStandUK stewardship remains grounded in shared need and collective benefit

Both strands of work, wider engagement and internal reflection, will be iterative and mutually reinforcing. As this shared vision is tested, challenged, and enriched by broader participation, ORUK's role and priorities will continue to be clarified in response. This report therefore marks a milestone, not an endpoint.

The Participants

The visioning workshop brought together a diverse group of participants representing delivery partners, central and local government, the NHS, and the wider digital and service data ecosystem. Their collective experience and perspectives were essential in shaping a shared answer to the central question and in grounding discussions in real-world delivery, policy, and place-based contexts.

With thanks to the following Participants:

iStandUK (Host and Delivery Team)

- Shelley Heckman, iStandUK
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- Mike Thacker, iStandUK
- Russell Bloore, iStandUK
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Sector, Standards, and Ecosystem Partners

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