



The Rt. Hon. Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Minister for Implementation
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London, SW1A 2AS

Cc. John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service and Cabinet Office

15th February 2018

Dear Minister,

Re: Progress with implementing the UK's Open Government Partnership commitments

On behalf of the Open Government Network, we write to congratulate you on the government's progress with implementing Commitment 6 of the current UK National Action Plan (NAP).

The commitment made in the NAP includes collecting and publishing more granular data on grantmaking in line with the 360Giving Standard. The timeline for implementing the commitment is March 2018; but due to the hard work of your departmental staff – in particular, Penny Horner-Long, Wasim Akhtar and David Wilks in the Grants Efficiency Programme team – we are pleased to note that some initial data was released for the Ministry of Justice and the Department for Transport on 9th December 2017. The data includes information on grants totalling £4 billion.

As the data has been released in open, comparable format it means that – for the first time in the UK – we can easily compare central government grants with those being made by local government and by charitable trusts and foundations. This makes it possible to follow the flow of grant funding to the same organisations, sectors and regions.

We hope other departments will follow the example set by the Ministry of Justice and the Department for Transport and make their grants data available in an open, comparable way so that everyone can find out who is funding what, where and what for. This will help grantmaking organisations with making better-informed decisions about where to allocate their resources, and it will help us to obtain a more complete picture of funding to the charitable sector.

As noted in the new government anti-corruption strategy, grants represent £130 billion of government spend annually. This is equivalent to the UK's healthcare spending and highlights why it is important that this information is published in an open, standardised way. The anti-corruption strategy commits to the use of unique identifiers. This would make it possible to easily identify individual organisations receiving contracts and grants from across government and from other providers, making it easier to follow the money through the delivery chain. We look forward to seeing this information included for the grants data that has recently been released and for any future data released by your department.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We will continue to work with your department to improve the quality of the dataset, and to encourage other departments to share their grants data using the 360Giving Standard during the course of 2018.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Rank
CEO, 360Giving

Jeni Tennison OBE
CEO, the Open Data Institute

Sir Stuart Etherington
CEO, NCVO

