ORDNANCE SURVEY GB

OS OPEN NAMES™ – OVERVIEW

Version history

Version	Date	Description
2.0	07/2019	New format release.
2.1	10/2019	Amendments to 'Purpose of this document' section.
2.2	01/2023	Document name change from User Guide to Overview. Formatting and structure improvements to the document. New 'Product Supply' Section added plus an Annex containing links to additional resources.

Purpose of this document

This document provides information about and insight into the OS Open Names product and its potential applications. For information on the contents and structure of OS Open Names, please refer to the Getting Started Guide and Technical Specification.

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Contact details

OS website 'Contact us' page (https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/contact-us).

Contents

1. Introduction to the product

OS Open Names is a geographic directory that contains basic information about identifiable places (i.e. named places). The content of the product is divided into themes based on type and local type classification values. The data contains accurate and current settlement names, road names and numbers, postcodes and their locations, with additional contextual information and links to other datasets. It is designed for use across all market sectors and can be used for web service and mobile development.

In addition to the data product, OS Open Names content is available through the OS Names API (application programming interface), which is accessible via the OS Data Hub (https://osdatahub.os.uk/).

The primary use of the product is to provide the location for a named place to support a wealth of activities such as discovery, identification, visualisation, geocoding, routing and navigation, and linking diverse information.

The name of the place is the key property used for querying. It is also recognised that a place may have multiple names as its official name may be defined in multiple languages (English / Welsh or English / Gaelic), for example, Cardiff (English) and Caerdydd (Welsh). Where relevant, we give a second name, with the language being specified.

Names are not unique, so additional location information is provided to enable users to refine their query to select the named place they are interested in. Additional location information includes postcode district, populated place, district / borough, county / unitary authority, European region, and country.

The OS Open Names specification will extend the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) Geographical Names theme to ensure that it is compliant with European open data initiatives.

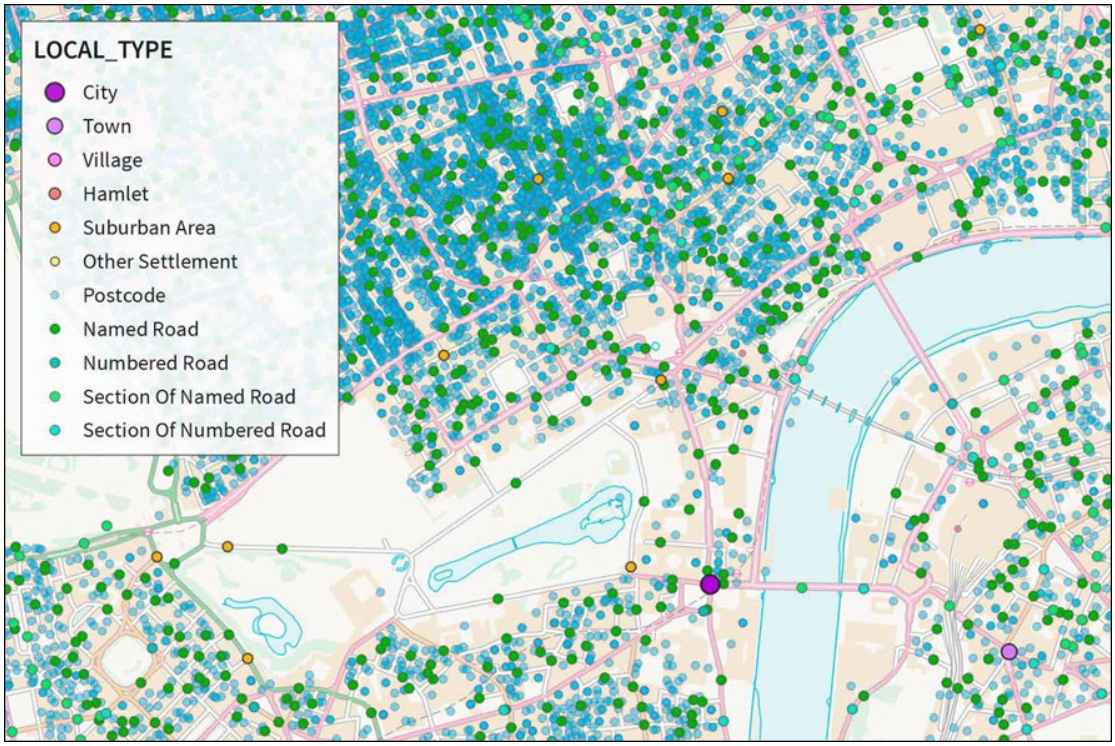

Figure 1: The range of features included in OS Open Names.

OS Open Names has a resolution of 1metre. The definition of how the locations are generated is outlined in the product's Technical Specification, which is available from the OS Open Names Product Support page on the OS website (https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-government/tools-support/open-map-names-support).

The persistent unique identifier enables features to be quickly and easily identified and can be used for better data management. The exceptions to this are Section of Named Road and Section of Numbered Road, which don't have a persistent identifier. More information on this can be found in the product's Technical Specification.

The links to other gazetteers, such as DBpedia and GeoNames, encourage wider use of the product and enable users to embed it more easily into their systems and processes if they already use one of these gazetteers.

The contextual geography attributes, such as DISTRICT_BOROUGH, enable features with the same name to be identified quickly through enhanced querying for greater accuracy of results.

Bounding boxes, or Minimum Bounding Rectangles (MBR), are given for roads and settlements. These can be used to quickly zoom to the extent of a feature in a GIS (geographic information system) map widow, application or web service.

1.1 How to use the data

For guidance on using the data, please refer to the product's Getting Started Guide, which can be found on the OS Open Names Product Support page of the OS website (https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-government/tools-support/open-map-names-support).

1.2 Product applications

OS Open Names can be used across all sectors of industry for a wide variety of purposes (only a few of which are shown in the following examples). Primarily, it can be used to identify and locate named places; however, when combined with other Ordnance Survey products, the range of uses for the product increases.

Public sector

Some Public Sector services rely on accurate and up-to-date road names and numbers. Having access to a product that's maintained quarterly is a huge advantage to delivering efficient services.

Emergency services

As an emergency services planner, you want to allocate your resources in the most efficient way when an emergency is reported. OS Open Names can be used as part of the process to quickly identify the location of an emergency and your resources to therefore determine the most efficient way to manage them.

Land and property

As a land and property manager, you want to assess the suitability of potential sites for a new building. Using OS Open Names you can quickly identify the settlements and roads in an area as part of the assessment.

Banking, finance and insurance

As a senior analyst for flood risk modelling for an insurance company, you may need to identify the settlements, roads and postcodes affected by a flood. OS Open Names can be used to quickly identify a list of named places, roads and postcodes in an area at risk of flooding.

Figure 2: OS Open Names being utilised for flood risk analysis purposes.

Utilities

As a planner for a utilities company, you need to act quickly to deploy your resources following an incident. OS Open Names can be used to determine the location of the incident and to assist with the management of resources. When linked with the OS MasterMap Highways Network – Routing and Asset Management Information product, routing around incidents becomes possible.

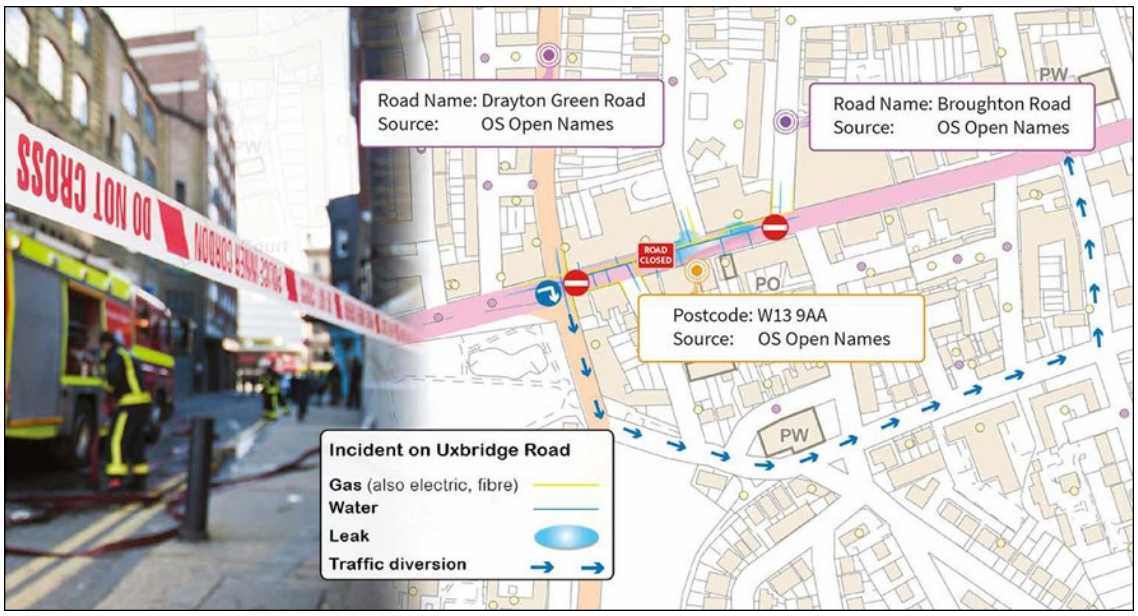

Figure 3: OS Open Names being utilised for incident management by the utilities sector.

Leisure

As a tourist new to an area, you may want to discover places of interest or activities to take part in. OS Open Names can be used to locate named places, and you can gain additional information by linking to Ordnance Survey data.

Figure 4: OS Open Names being utilised for leisure purposes in locating named places of interest in the Lincolnshire Wolds.

Table 1 gives some further uses and applications for OS Open Names:

Table 1: Further uses and applications for OS Open Names by sector.

Sector	Uses
Central and Local Government	• Locating where a person is, allowing nearest services to be matched to them. • Improving local planning capability and analysis. For example, journey information, patient transport, and traffic management. • Linking and collaborating with other departments through data sharing. • Enabling citizens to search for their location to manage tasks such as planning applications. • Also used in interactive maps for planning and for citizens reporting problems back to a council.
Land and property	• Quicker, more accurate location searches for site analysis, planning applications and conveyancing.
Emergency services	• Emergency planning. • More accurately identifying locations to help improve response times. • Recognising different names for the same location.
Web services	• Location look-up for routing. • Location of a named place. • Where is someone or something?
Leisure	• Outdoor leisure activities. • Where's my nearest? • Where am I? • Where do I want to go?
Insurance	• Desktop evaluation of locations for initial risk analysis.

2. Product details

2.1 Feature type

OS Open Names is comprised of a single feature type: Named Place.

The data provides a nationally maintained view of named places for Great Britain containing the following types of named places:

- Populated place, including cities, towns, villages, hamlets, other settlements and suburban areas
- Transport network, including named and numbered roads, and section of named and numbered roads
- Postcodes

The product represents named places as point geometries primarily for the purpose of naming and locating these features. Additional contextual location information is provided to aid with the identification of features. Links are also given to other gazetteers, including DBpedia and GeoNames.

2.2 Standards

The named places are discussed in this document and in the Technical Specification in INSPIRE-compatible terms with reference to the INSPIRE Data Specification on Geographical Names (https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/id/document/tg/gn). INSPIRE is the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe; the INSPIRE Directive is designed to ensure that the spatial data infrastructures of the Member States of the European Community are compatible and usable between member states to improve decision making and operations.

For consistency, the attribute naming convention used in OS Open Names takes into consideration the attribute names in other Ordnance Survey products.

2.3 Coordinate reference system

The dataset uses the British National Grid spatial reference system. The National Grid coordinates are to a resolution of 0.1metre. This is the resolution of the source data. Positions are described as Easting and Northing coordinates in units of metres.

3. Product supply

3.1 Available formats

OS Open Names is available in the following formats:

- Comma-separated values (CSV)
- Geography Markup Language (GML) 3.2.1
- GeoPackage

3.2 Supply mechanism

OS Open Names is supplied as an online download from the OS DataHub (https://osdatahub.os.uk/).

In addition to the data product, OS Open Names content is available to PSGA (Public Sector Geospatial Agreement) Members and OS Partners through the OS Names API, which is accessible via the OS Data Hub (https://osdatahub.os.uk/).

3.3 Product update schedule

OS Open Names is updated from Ordnance Survey's data content stores and released to customers every three months (in January, April, July and October) to ensure the latest named features are published.

3.4 Coverage and file sizes

Coverage for OS Open Names is Great Britain.

File sizes for the formats are as follows:

- CSV: 96MB
- GML 3.2.1: 184MB
- GeoPackage: 256MB

Annex A: Additional resources

You can find further information about the product and how to use it on the OS Open Names Product Support page of the OS website (https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-government/tools-support/open-map-names-support).

We recommend you read the following:

- *Getting Started with GeoPackage*
- *OS Open Names – Technical Specification*
- *OS Open Names – Getting Started Guide*