# UK government and tech giants launch initiative to upskill 7.5 million workers in AI



In a bold move aimed at preparing the UK workforce for the burgeoning realm of artificial intelligence (AI), prominent tech companies have partnered with the government to develop plans to enhance the skills of 7.5 million workers. This initiative was a focal point during discussions held recently, led by Technology Secretary Peter Kyle, who engaged with senior representatives from industry giants such as Amazon, Google, and Microsoft. The ambitious programme is designed to equip a significant portion of the UK workforce with the necessary expertise to thrive in an economy increasingly driven by AI technologies.

During the initial meeting of this government-industry partnership, various companies outlined their commitments to providing comprehensive training resources. For instance, Microsoft has pledged to upskill one million workers by the end of this year, while IBM intends to leverage its SkillsBuild training programmes to roll out targeted training modules. This collaboration aligns with the government's broader strategy to enhance AI adoption and ensure that individuals across all demographics can benefit from new technological advancements. Speaking about the partnership, Kyle noted that preparing the workforce for the future of work is essential to realising AI's transformative potential for the economy.

The potential impact of this initiative goes beyond mere statistics. With forecasts suggesting that around 10 million workers will be using AI in their daily roles by 2035, the urgency of this training initiative is palpable. Many industry leaders expressed their belief that democratising access to digital skills is crucial for unleashing AI’s full potential across various sectors. For instance, Alison Kay, Vice President and Managing Director of AWS in the UK and Ireland, emphasised the importance of making AI skills accessible to everyone, thus contributing to a stronger digital economy.

Notably, this initiative is part of a wider landscape of government funding and guidance aimed at fostering AI skills across the UK. The government has recently published guidance to assist businesses in upskilling their employees, focusing on critical areas such as responsible AI usage, data protection, and ethical practices in AI implementation. Furthermore, an investment of £23 million has been designated for creating 2,000 scholarships for AI and data science conversion courses, aiming to encourage participation from underrepresented groups in the AI sector.

This multifaceted approach also includes a £6.4 million pilot scheme designed to subsidise AI skills training for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This funding initiative seeks to stimulate employer investment in AI training and bridge existing skill gaps within various industries. By making AI training financially accessible, the government hopes to drive increased productivity and innovation, thereby enhancing the UK's overall economic landscape.

Industry experts have echoed the government’s sentiments, highlighting the necessity of equipping the workforce with the relevant skills to face the new technological frontier. According to Debbie Weinstein, Google EMEA President, the benefits of AI could unlock significant economic gains, potentially adding £400 billion to the UK economy. The urgency echoed by key stakeholders emphasizes that enhancing AI skills is not merely an academic exercise; it is a critical component of the nation’s economic strategy moving forward.

Overall, as the UK positions itself as a leader in the AI sector, the collaboration between government and industry could well serve as a blueprint for how countries can harness technology to improve workforce capabilities. By investing in training, diversifying the talent pool, and ensuring that all communities can participate in this transformation, there is a strong possibility of realising the vision of a thriving, AI-equipped workforce that drives innovation and economic prosperity.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.miragenews.com/tech-giants-gov-to-boost-uk-worker-ai-skills-1478060/), [[4]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/6-4-million-ai-upskilling-fund-launched-for-smes)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.miragenews.com/tech-giants-gov-to-boost-uk-worker-ai-skills-1478060/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-business-guidance-to-boost-skills-and-unlock-benefits-of-ai), [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/23-million-to-boost-skills-and-diversity-in-ai-jobs)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/23-million-to-boost-skills-and-diversity-in-ai-jobs), [[5]](https://www.turing.ac.uk/blog/demand-ai-skills-increases-were-helping-train-uk-workforce), [[7]](https://www.itpro.com/business/careers-and-training/800-ai-scholarships-to-be-created-with-pound8-million-in-uk-government-funding)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-to-train-in-future-tech-like-ai-as-government-unveils-over-gbp-1-1-billion-package-to-skill-up-uk)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.miragenews.com/tech-giants-gov-to-boost-uk-worker-ai-skills-1478060/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-business-guidance-to-boost-skills-and-unlock-benefits-of-ai), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-to-train-in-future-tech-like-ai-as-government-unveils-over-gbp-1-1-billion-package-to-skill-up-uk)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.miragenews.com/tech-giants-gov-to-boost-uk-worker-ai-skills-1478060/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-business-guidance-to-boost-skills-and-unlock-benefits-of-ai), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-to-train-in-future-tech-like-ai-as-government-unveils-over-gbp-1-1-billion-package-to-skill-up-uk)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.miragenews.com/tech-giants-gov-to-boost-uk-worker-ai-skills-1478060/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-business-guidance-to-boost-skills-and-unlock-benefits-of-ai> - The UK government has published new guidance to help businesses upskill their employees in artificial intelligence (AI). This initiative aims to equip workers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively use AI tools in their daily roles, thereby enhancing productivity and fostering economic growth. The guidance focuses on key areas such as data protection, responsible AI usage, and the safe management of sensitive data. Developed in partnership with Innovate UK and The Alan Turing Institute, the framework is intended to support businesses in harnessing AI's potential while ensuring ethical and secure implementation.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/23-million-to-boost-skills-and-diversity-in-ai-jobs> - The UK government is investing £23 million to create 2,000 scholarships for AI and data science conversion courses in England. This funding aims to support individuals from underrepresented groups, including women, Black people, and those with disabilities, in entering the AI sector. By offering these scholarships, the initiative seeks to diversify the AI workforce and ensure that the benefits of AI are accessible to a broader segment of society. The programme encourages industry participation to further strengthen the UK's AI talent pipeline.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/6-4-million-ai-upskilling-fund-launched-for-smes> - The UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) has launched a £6.4 million pilot scheme to subsidise AI skills training for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Professional and Business Services sector. Eligible businesses can apply for funding covering up to 50% of the cost of AI training. This initiative aims to stimulate employer investment in AI training, address skill gaps in the UK workforce, and increase business productivity. The programme is part of the government's broader strategy to enhance AI adoption across various industries.
5. <https://www.turing.ac.uk/blog/demand-ai-skills-increases-were-helping-train-uk-workforce> - The Alan Turing Institute is actively involved in developing frameworks to address the increasing demand for AI skills in the UK workforce. Since the launch of the AI Skills for Business Competency Framework in May 2024, the Institute has collaborated with various organisations, including the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's AI Upskilling Fund pilot and UK Research and Innovation's AI Skills Hub investment. These collaborations aim to ensure that apprenticeships and technical education programmes equip the workforce with the necessary skills for responsible and safe AI adoption.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/thousands-more-to-train-in-future-tech-like-ai-as-government-unveils-over-gbp-1-1-billion-package-to-skill-up-uk> - The UK government has unveiled a package of over £1.1 billion to upskill thousands of individuals in future technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI). This investment aims to position the UK as a leader in AI by training over 4,000 students across 65 Centres for Doctoral Training. The initiative seeks to ensure that the UK has a highly skilled workforce capable of driving economic growth and innovation in key industries. The majority of opportunities will be led from outside the south-east of England, with more than 350 places for students in Glasgow, over 300 in Edinburgh, over 250 in Bristol, and over 150 in Sheffield and Manchester respectively.
7. <https://www.itpro.com/business/careers-and-training/800-ai-scholarships-to-be-created-with-pound8-million-in-uk-government-funding> - The UK government has allocated over £8 million in funding to support regional innovation and create hundreds of AI scholarships across the country. A total of 800 AI-related scholarships will be awarded as part of the scheme, which builds on long-standing support for the sector. Eligible students will be able to apply for master's courses that teach practical AI and data science skills, including coding, programming, machine learning, and AI ethics. The courses aim to prepare the future workforce for AI and support the UK's ambition to position itself as a world leader in AI safety.