



The Urgent Need for UK AI Legislation - Now

Since 2016, consecutive Governments have concluded that the UK does not need any specific sector and economy-wide AI legislation. The latest Labour administration, no different, caps a decade lacking clarity, consistency, and coherence, when it comes to AI from any perspective: whether innovator, investor, creative, consumer, and most important, citizen.

The current approach

The UK Government has stated they view AI as a critical driver of economic growth, productivity, and public service reform. They have asserted 'AI superpower' ambitions, have responded to the 50 recommendations of the [AI Opportunities Action Plan](#), yet have introduced no draft AI legislation or consultation documentation in support.

Why a Bill is required even by their own ambitions

Ministers have acknowledged that AI creates **new and systemic risks** which existing laws may not fully address. Government has indicated that **targeted legislation** may be required for, amongst others:

- ["frontier" AI](#)
- [IP and copyrighted works](#)
- [AI growth lab](#)
- [AI chatbots](#)

And yet a 'domain specific' piecemeal, partial approach is still presented and preferred.

AI - Already Impacting

AI legislation is not a future concern. The technology is already bumping into individuals across our economy, across our country. The lack of Government AI legislative action starkly set out in my 2025 '[8 Realities](#)' report, demonstrated that for scam victims, benefit claimants, job seekers, teenagers, creatives, transplant patients and more, AI is already having real and tangible impact.

Mind the Gap: why the current approach falls so far short

While held out to be 'flexible', the reality of the existing approach leaves significant gaps unaddressed:

- **Fragmentation and uneven application:** multiple (domain specific, non-AI expert or experienced) regulators (or no competent regulator at all).
- **Partial or non- adherence** as core principles remain voluntary not statutory.
- **Public redress:** limited, unclear, non-statutory and in certain instances, non-existent routes for explanation, challenge, or redress for those affected by AI-driven decisions, with concerns about transparency, accessibility, and affordability highlighted by organisations including [Ada Lovelace Institute](#) and [Demos](#).
- **UK AI sovereignty:** lack of clarity on definition of UK AI sovereignty and UK data sovereignty.
- **Public trust:** lack of clarity around AI safety, lack of transparency, lack of meaningful public engagement and participation, all negatively impacting public trust at a time when it is in decline across society. Additionally changing **UK AI Safety Institute** to [UK AI Security Institute](#) not helpful.

The case for an AI Bill

The Prime Minister has identified artificial intelligence as the "**defining opportunity of our generation**" and a tool to "**turbocharge**" the British economy.

What greater reason for an AI Bill by his own assessment?

I introduced the [AI \[Regulation\] Bill in 2023](#). The aims, to strengthen not stifle innovation and investment, empowerment for **Creatives, Consumers** and **Citizens** through **Clarity, Consistency** and **Coherence** - **3C's to AI confidence**.

The Bill:

Adopts a principles-based (rather than prescriptive), outcomes-focused, inputs-understood (and where applicable always consented and remunerated) approach.

- Establishes a **statutory, horizontally focused AI Authority** to coordinate regulators, identify gaps, and monitor systemic AI risks (89% public support for an independent regulator [Ada Lovelace Institute 2025 research](#))
- Places **core principles** of safety, transparency, fairness, accountability, contestability, and inclusion, **on a statutory footing**.
- Strengthens obligations **around transparency, labelling, auditing, and use of IP and copyrighted works**.
- Enables legal clarity and fosters public trust by threading **Accountability, Assurance and Accessibility**, throughout the Bill and enshrining meaningful public engagement in statute.

Conclusion

A wait and see, voluntary, partial domain-specific approach can no longer be accepted. It fails to enable, empower, and optimise the UK AI opportunity. As the Ada Lovelace Institute perfectly puts it, the current approach is "**increasingly out of step with public attitudes.**"

There is an economic, a social, and a psychological imperative to act. We need a cross-cutting, principles-based, outcomes-focused AI Bill.

It's time to legislate, together on AI, it's time to human lead. Our data, our decisions, our AI futures.

Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE, 3 February 2026

Scan QR Codes below for full Bill text and supporting evidence:

AI Regulation Bill (2023)



<https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/53068/documents/4031>

AI 8 Realities report (2025)



<https://lordchrisholmes.com/ai-regulation-report/>