

AI Strategy Public Consultation

Terms of Consultation

- **Purpose:** To gather views on Northern Ireland's draft cross-departmental AI Strategy, which aims to establish a responsible, ethical, and coordinated framework for AI adoption across public services.
- **Scope:** Open to stakeholders across government, industry, academia, voluntary and community sectors, and members of the public.
- **Platform:** Consultation will be hosted on **NI Direct** using the **Citizen Space** platform and promoted through departmental channels.
- **Engagement Approach:** Combination of online consultation and targeted stakeholder engagement. To support inclusive engagement, the Strategy will be published in accessible versions, with alternative formats will be available on request.

Launch Date and Timeline

- **Launch Date: 29 July 2026**
- **Close Date: 25 September 2026**
- **Consultation Duration: Eight weeks**
- **Objective of Timing:** To allow sufficient engagement and finalise the strategy within the current Programme for Government period.

Consultation Details and Period

- The consultation will run **29 July to 25 September** (total eight weeks).
- Responses will inform the final AI Strategy before submission to the Executive for approval and publication.
- Accessible versions and targeted outreach will ensure engagement with equality groups.
- Costs will be met from existing resources, and no legislative changes will arise from consultation at this stage.

Context

Artificial Intelligence is transforming how societies function, with profound implications for public services, economic growth, health, education, and citizen engagement. While AI can revolutionize service delivery and drive innovation, it also carries risks around ethics, transparency, and trust. This

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consultation is critical to shaping a responsible, coordinated approach for Northern Ireland.

The draft AI Strategy proposes:

- **Vision:** AI as a force for good – promoting **Positive Use, Positive Inclusion, and Positive Outcomes**.
- **Core Principles:**
 1. Human Oversight
 2. Accountability & Redress
 3. Data Governance
 4. Technical Safety & Security
 5. Fairness & Transparency
 6. Sustainability
 7. Societal Benefit
 8. Training & Literacy
- **Key Aims:**
 1. Deliver better public services through responsible AI adoption.
 2. Build public trust through strong governance and ethical guardrails.
 3. Strengthen data foundations and digital infrastructure.
 4. Develop skills and literacy to address inclusion and upskilling needs.
 5. Coordinate a holistic system-wide approach across government, industry, academia, and citizens.

Your feedback will be instrumental in ensuring the final strategy is inclusive, practical, and aligned with Northern Ireland's ambitions for safe and ethical AI implementation.

Consultation Approach:

Have Your Say on the Draft AI Strategy for Northern Ireland

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is already changing how we live, work and access public services. Used well, it can help improve outcomes for citizens, support economic growth and make public services more efficient. Used poorly, it risks undermining trust or creating unintended harms. That is why Northern Ireland is developing a cross-departmental AI Strategy to set a clear, responsible and joined-up approach to how AI is adopted across the public sector.

The draft AI Strategy for Northern Ireland sets out a proposed vision, principles and priority actions for the safe, ethical and effective use of AI. It has been developed collaboratively with input from a range of partners, and we are now seeking views to help shape the final version.

We would welcome your views on the draft Strategy, which is available here:

<https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/teo/artificial-intelligence-public-consultation/>

Please take a few minutes to review the draft and share your views by responding to the consultation questions set out in the document. Your feedback will help ensure the Strategy is practical, inclusive and reflects the needs and concerns of citizens, public sector staff, businesses, academia and the wider community. All responses will be analysed and will inform the final Strategy.

Thank you for taking the time to contribute your input will play an important role in shaping how AI is used responsibly for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

1. Name:

2. Email Address:

3. I am responding as:

An individual

Y/N

On behalf of an organisation

Y/N

Name of organisation:

4. Gender:

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M F Other Prefer not to say

5. Age group:

16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75-84 85 or over Prefer not to say

6. Sector:

NICS, HE, FE, Industry, Voluntary & Community, Other (please specify)

free text box for specification of what sector if 'Other' is chosen.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The AI Principles for NI

1. To what extent do you agree with the proposed AI principles for NI?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree
OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

2. To what extent do you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 1: Human Oversight)?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree
OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Creation of Human Oversight Teams

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Framework for operation of Human Oversight Teams

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Human Oversight Disclosure Plans

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Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

3. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 2: Accountability & Redress?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Definition of redress mechanisms

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Designation of accountable officers

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Process for identification and disclosure of errors

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

4. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 3: Data Governance?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Amendment of DPIAs to integrate AI principles

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Requirement for data governance logs

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Agree Disagree Don't know

- Visibility of organisational DPOs

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Document validation and verification

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Public-facing database of FAQs

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

5. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 4: Technical Safety & Security?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Embedding of deep technical expertise in oversight teams

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Adoption of appropriate public sector standards

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Design and declaration of consistency testing

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Implementation of approaches for verification of AI systems

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

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6. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 5: Fairness & Transparency

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Ensuring bias detection methods are built into AI models

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Creation of a repository for all AI projects

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Design of comms materials for AI projects

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

7. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 6: Environmental Sustainability

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Requirement to detail how AI projects contribute to a sustainable future

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Disclosure of energy source and usage for all AI projects

Agree Disagree Don't know

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- Reporting of mitigations to support environmental sustainability

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

8. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 7: Societal Benefit?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Integration of a cost-benefit matrix into all AI projects

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Inclusion of metrics to measure efficiency, experience and outcomes for AI projects

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Production of impact summaries at project completion

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

9. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for Principle 8: Training & Literacy?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions?

- Training for all public sector staff on AI basics

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Agree Disagree Don't know

- Development of AI-specific career pathways within the public sector

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Integration of training development leads and trainees into Human Oversight Teams

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Inclusion of training assessment and development plan into all public sector AI projects

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Establishment of a Public Sector Skills Academy

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Establishment of AI Workforce Impact Observatory

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

AI Governance

10. To what extent do you agree with the overarching vision for AI Governance?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions?

- Development of a governance framework and tool for public sector use with AI projects

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Establishment of a cross-sectoral AI governance board for public sector projects

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Agree Disagree Don't know

- Production of internal inventories of AI projects across all public sector bodies

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Delivery of bite-sized AI governance training for public & private sector leaders

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

AI & Infrastructure

11. To what extent to you agree with the overarching vision for AI & Infrastructure?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree
OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions?

- Development of an integrated data strategy for NI including data-sharing infrastructure

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Identification of high value datasets across sectors for open publication

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Legislation for sharing datasets across sectors

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Development of a regional data centre

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Provision of sufficient high-performance compute facilities

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Agree Disagree Don't know

- Creation of a central unit to enhance AI capability across the public sector

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

AI & Skills

12. To what extent do you agree with the overarching vision for AI & Skills?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions?

- Audit of educational provision across the region

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Scoping of AI needs for community and voluntary sector

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Further integration of AI use into teacher training provision

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Development of region-wide guidance for use of AI in schools

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Roll-out of public awareness campaign promoting access to freely accessible basic skills training

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Integration of basic AI training into new staff inductions across sectors

Agree Disagree Don't know

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- Creation of mechanisms for mentorship, sharing best practice, and peer advocacy for organisational leaders

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

AI & Public Sector Transformation

13. To what extent do you agree with the overarching vision for AI & Public Sector Transformation?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Use of a Citizens' Panel for feedback and positive change

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Identification of potential use cases and targets for public sector AI transformation

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Provision of guidance on quantifiable measurements of success or failure

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Publication of quarterly registry of all AI projects across the public sector

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Establishment of CAIR establish 'CAIR' (Collaborative AI Resource) to provide training across government departments

Agree Disagree Don't know

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free text box for further comments

AI & Citizens

14. To what extent do you agree with the overarching vision for AI & Citizens?

1-10 scale with 1 as Strong Disagree and 10 as Strongly Agree

OR

Do not have the expertise to respond

free text box for further comments

Specifically, what is your opinion of the following priority actions for the public sector?

- Development of an awareness-raising campaign to showcase public sector AI projects and benefits

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Creation of a publicly available AI Register of Systems

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Establishment of an AI Citizens' Panel

Agree Disagree Don't know

- Evaluation of benefits of an AI Charter

Agree Disagree Don't know

free text box for further comments

15. Do you have any further comments?

free text box for further comments