

UK Government publishes response to AI White Paper consultation

17 April 2024

The question

What approach has the UK Government's adopted in its response to the consultation on the AI regulation White Paper (the **White Paper**)?

The key takeaway

The UK Government has published its [response](#) to the consultation on the White Paper. The response focuses on the sector-specific regulation of AI, with the aim of making the UK a world leader in both AI safety and development. In support of this goal, the Government has committed over £100 million in funding towards the new AI regulation proposals.

The background

On 29 March 2023, the Government published its [White Paper](#) entitled: "A pro-innovation approach to AI regulation" (see previous coverage in our [Summer 2023 Snapshots](#)). The White Paper outlines the "pro-innovation" proposals regarding the regulation of AI, centring around empowering existing regulators to create new, sector-specific rules. In doing so, regulators ought to consider five principles in the context of responsible AI innovation, which require that:

- AI systems are "safe, secure and robust";
- information concerning the decisions made by AI is "transparent" and "explainable";
- AI systems are "fair";
- those that supply and use AI have sufficient "governance and accountability"; and
- decisions and outcomes produced by AI are "contestable" and "redressable".

The public consultation of the White Paper ran from 29 March to 21 June 2023 and received 409 written responses and 33 questions from a wide range of interested parties. The Government also engaged with 364 individuals through roundtables, technical workshops, bilaterals and a programme of regulator engagement to evaluate the views of relevant stakeholders.

The development

On 6 February 2024, the Government published its response to the consultation on the White Paper. This came further to both the evidence drawn from the public consultation, as well as the key achievements of the AI Safety Summit, which was held in November 2023 (see previous coverage in our [Winter 2023 Snapshots](#)). Michelle Donelan MP, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, states in the Ministerial Foreword to the response to the White Paper that her "ambition is for us to revolutionise the way we deliver public services by becoming a global leader in safe AI development and deployment".

The key points from the Government's response, which takes an "agile, sector-specific approach", include:

- a package of over £100 million will be invested in new innovations and used to support existing sectoral regulators (including the Information Commissioner's Office (**ICO**)) to build their technical expertise and capabilities;
- the Government has asked a number of regulators (including the ICO) to publish an update setting out their strategic approach to regulation by 30 April 2024;
- new guidance has been published to support regulators to implement the five cross-sectoral principles, as detailed above, effectively;
- the Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum (comprising Ofcom, the Competition and Markets Authority, the Financial Conduct Authority and the ICO) will manage the AI and Digital Hub, a pilot scheme for an advisory service to support innovation;
- the Government will establish a new central function to bring coherence to the sectoral regulatory regime by tracking technological progress and addressing regulatory gaps;
- a steering committee will be established by Spring 2024 to support knowledge exchange and AI governance coordination;
- businesses developing highly capable general purpose AI systems will be subject to targeted binding requirements; and
- the Government recognises that legislative action will be required at some point, but notes that "we are going to take our time to get this right".

Why is this important?

Given that the UK's AI market is expected to grow to over \$1 trillion (USD) by 2035, as noted in the Ministerial Foreword to the response to the White Paper, it is of unequivocal importance for the UK Government to take a serious and proactive approach to the regulation of AI. The response provides a welcome approach to the regulation of AI in the UK, with particular emphasis placed on ensuring safety through AI development. Additionally, the fact that over £100 million has been committed by the Government also highlights that AI regulation ranks high on the UK Government's agenda.

Any practical tips?

Any company which uses or develops AI should keep up-to-date with the Government's plans, especially within the coming months. The planned activities to support regulator capabilities and coordination are set to be fully established in the near future. Likewise, stakeholder engagement findings will be published and new targeted consultations held, which will highlight common themes and specific areas to be addressed. Companies should also think about their own AI and risk management frameworks and consider best ways to align with the proactive and pro-innovation approach taken by the Government – much of course as they will need to keep a keen eye on the more stringent requirements of other jurisdictions' regulation, such as the EU's new AI Act. After all, AI systems are unlikely to be built in a way which will be constrained to the UK's borders...

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