

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS1289)

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

Written Statement made by: **Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for AI and Online Safety (Kanishka Narayan)** on 29 Jan 2026.

Lanarkshire AI Growth Zone Designation and Delivery Update on the AI Opportunities Action Plan

Today I am updating the House on a number of developments: the designation of Lanarkshire as the UK's newest AI Growth Zone, the establishment of the AI and the Future of Work Programme, the expansion of the AI upskilling programme, and progress on delivery of the AI Opportunities Action plan, one year on from its publication.

Lanarkshire AI Growth Zone

The Government is today designating Lanarkshire as the latest AI Growth Zone, marking a major step in our Modern Industrial Strategy and strengthening Scotland's position in the UK's growing AI economy.

The Lanarkshire site will be delivered by UK company DataVita, in partnership with CoreWeave. It will support more than 3,400 jobs over the coming years and will crowd in £8.2 billion in private investment, with a further £540 million committed over 15 years to support the local community. This will fund skills and training packages, after-school coding and digital clubs, and support for local charities and foodbanks.

The 9,000-acre site will be one of the most advanced AI campuses in the world, drawing on on-site renewable energy to power up to 500MW of compute and exploring how excess heat generated by data-centre cooling could support nearby facilities such as University Hospital Monklands, Scotland's first fully digital and Net Zero hospital.

Lanarkshire becomes the fifth AI Growth Zone announced since the launch of the Action Plan, joining Oxfordshire, North Wales, South Wales and the North East. AI Growth Zones are expected to support up to 15,000 jobs and at least £28 billion in private investment.

Establishment of the AI and the Future of Work Programme and Expansion of the AI Upskilling Programme

The Government is establishing a comprehensive AI and the Future of Work Programme to ensure the UK is prepared to benefit from and adapt to the profound changes AI will bring to jobs, workers and the labour market. This includes launching a new cross-government AI and the Future of Work Unit and appointing an independent Expert Panel drawn from industry, academia, civil society and trade unions to guide this work.

Building on last year's commitment to provide free AI training for all workers, the Government is expanding its national upskilling programme—delivered with major industry and now public sector partners—to equip 10 million workers with AI skills by 2030, up from the original 7.5 million

ambition.

This forms part of a wider effort to ensure that AI-driven transformation delivers opportunities, supports economic growth, and helps workers and communities benefit from technological change.

AI Opportunities Action Plan – Delivery Update

AI Growth Zones were a core commitment of the AI Opportunities Action Plan – which the Government published a year ago to ensure the UK leads in shaping the AI revolution.

One year on, we have moved decisively from ambition to delivery. We have now met 38 of the Action Plan's 50 commitments, and today we are publishing our One Year On Update. As per the Action Plan, we have focused on three goals: laying the foundations to enable AI, changing lives for the better, and securing our future.

Laying the foundations. We have designated five AI Growth Zones, accelerating data-centre build-out. We have expanded national compute capacity, with Isambard-AI switched on in Bristol and committed to procure to increase the supercomputer capacity at the University of Cambridge – already home to the DAWN supercomputer – sixfold by Spring 2026. We have also begun the biggest AI-skills drive in a generation: over 1 million AI training courses have already been delivered in just the last 6 months.

Changing Lives. AI is already delivering practical benefits for citizens. AI-assisted diagnostics are supporting one third of NHS chest X-rays, improving detection and treatment times. We have announced trials of AI tutoring tools to support learning and reduce teacher workload.

Securing our Future. UK AI companies raised more than £6 billion last year, and there are now over 185 UK tech unicorns valued at over \$1 billion. The Government has now established the Sovereign AI Unit, backed by up to £500 million, to invest in UK AI companies and support them to become world-leading in critical parts of the AI value chain.

There is much more to do to seize the opportunities of AI. Over the coming year we will continue to bring AI Growth Zones from designation to delivery, operationalising the Sovereign AI Unit – backed by up to £500 million in funding - and equip millions of workers with the skills they need for the AI age.

But our achievements over the last year show what is possible when ambition meets delivery. If we sustain this pace, Britain will continue not just adapt to technological change, but to shape it in the public interest.