AI Readiness Assessment Checklist

A comprehensive assessment of your organisation's readiness to adopt artificial intelligence — covering data infrastructure, technical capabilities, governance, security, and cultural preparedness across 50+ evaluation items.

6	50+	Score	Free
ASSESSMENT SECTIONS	ITEMS TO CHECK	EACH SECTION OUT OF 10	PRINT & USE NO STRINGS

How to Use This Checklist

Work through each section with your senior leadership team and IT department. Score each item honestly — overestimating readiness leads to failed AI projects. Any section scoring below 5 should be addressed before committing to an AI initiative. Use the results to build a prioritised readiness improvement plan.

1 Data Infrastructure & Quality

AI is only as good as the data it learns from. Assess whether your organisation's data foundations are strong enough to support AI workloads.

- [ ] Your organisation has a **centralised data catalogue** documenting all major data sources, formats, and ownership across departments (including legacy systems)
- [ ] Data is stored in **structured, accessible formats** rather than trapped in spreadsheets, email inboxes, or paper-based filing systems
- [ ] You have **at least 12 months of clean historical data** available for the business processes you intend to apply AI to (more is better for training models)
- [ ] A **data quality framework** is in place with defined rules for accuracy, completeness, consistency, and timeliness of business-critical data
- [ ] Your databases and data warehouses have **sufficient storage capacity and compute performance** to handle the additional load that AI model training and inference will generate
- [ ] Data from different departments and systems can be **linked and joined reliably** using consistent identifiers such as customer IDs, product codes, or employee references
- [ ] You have **automated data pipelines** that regularly cleanse, transform, and load data rather than relying on manual exports and imports (ETL/ELT processes)
- [ ] There is a **documented data retention policy** that complies with UK GDPR and defines how long different categories of data are kept and when they are purged
- [ ] Your organisation regularly **audits data quality metrics** and has a process for identifying and correcting errors, duplicates, and missing values

Section Score: ____/10

2 Technical Capabilities & Skills

Evaluate whether your team has the technical skills and infrastructure to build, deploy, and maintain AI solutions effectively.

- [ ] Your IT team includes staff with **experience in Python, R, or similar languages** commonly used in data science and machine learning (or you have a plan to acquire these skills)
- [ ] At least one team member understands **machine learning concepts** such as supervised vs unsupervised learning, overfitting, feature engineering, and model evaluation metrics
- [ ] Your organisation has access to **cloud computing resources** (Azure ML, AWS SageMaker, Google Vertex AI) or sufficient on-premises GPU capacity for model training
- [ ] You have a **development and testing environment** that is separate from production, allowing safe experimentation with AI models without risking live systems
- [ ] Your team is familiar with **API integration patterns** and can connect AI services to existing business applications such as CRM, ERP, and customer service platforms
- [ ] A **version control system** (Git or similar) is used for code management, and your team follows structured development practices (code review, testing, documentation)
- [ ] You have identified whether your AI approach will be **build, buy, or integrate** — custom model development, pre-built AI services, or embedding third-party AI into existing tools
- [ ] Your network infrastructure has **sufficient bandwidth and low latency** to support real-time AI inference if your use cases require it (e.g., chatbots, fraud detection)

Section Score: _____ /10

3 Business Process Analysis

Identify which business processes are suitable candidates for AI and whether they are well-defined enough to benefit from automation or augmentation.

- [ ] You have **mapped your core business processes** end-to-end, identifying inputs, outputs, decision points, and bottlenecks in each workflow
- [ ] At least three **specific use cases for AI** have been identified with clear business value — not vague aspirations but defined problems with measurable outcomes
- [ ] The identified use cases have been **prioritised by business impact and feasibility** — quick wins that demonstrate value are scheduled before complex, high-risk projects
- [ ] You have quantified the **current cost and time** associated with the processes you intend to apply AI to, creating a baseline for measuring ROI after implementation
- [ ] Process owners and **subject matter experts** have been identified and are willing to collaborate with the AI team to define requirements and validate outputs
- [ ] You understand which tasks within your processes are **repetitive and rule-based** (suitable for automation) versus those requiring **nuanced judgement** (suitable for AI augmentation)
- [ ] There is a **clear definition of success** for each AI use case — specific metrics, target improvements, and acceptable error rates have been agreed with stakeholders
- [ ] You have assessed whether your **current process volume** justifies AI investment — some processes are better served by simple automation or improved workflows rather than AI
- [ ] A **pilot project** has been selected that is low-risk, high-visibility, and will generate measurable results within 3–6 months to build confidence and momentum

Section Score: _____/10

4 Governance & Ethics Framework

Responsible AI adoption requires clear governance structures, ethical guidelines, and accountability frameworks before technology is deployed.

- [ ] Your organisation has appointed an **AI governance lead or committee** responsible for overseeing AI strategy, ethics, risk, and compliance across all initiatives
- [ ] A formal **AI ethics policy** has been drafted covering fairness, transparency, accountability, and the boundaries of automated decision-making within your business
- [ ] You have established **clear criteria for when AI decisions require human oversight** versus when fully automated decisions are acceptable (risk-based approach)
- [ ] There is a process for conducting **AI impact assessments** before deploying new AI systems, evaluating potential effects on customers, employees, and other stakeholders
- [ ] Your organisation has reviewed guidance from the **UK AI Safety Institute** and the ICO's AI and data protection guidance to ensure alignment with current best practice
- [ ] A **model documentation standard** is in place requiring all AI models to be documented with training data sources, performance metrics, known limitations, and update history
- [ ] You have a **process for handling AI errors and complaints** — when AI makes a wrong decision, there is a clear escalation path and a human review mechanism
- [ ] Your governance framework includes **regular review cycles** (at least quarterly) to assess whether deployed AI systems continue to perform as expected and remain aligned with business objectives

Section Score: ____/10

5 Security & Compliance

AI systems introduce new security risks and compliance obligations. Assess your readiness to manage these before deployment.

- [ ] You have conducted a **data protection impact assessment (DPIA)** for any AI use case that involves personal data, as required by UK GDPR and recommended by the ICO
- [ ] Your **data processing agreements** with third-party AI vendors clearly define data handling, storage locations, retention periods, and sub-processor arrangements
- [ ] AI model training data is **classified and protected** according to its sensitivity level, with appropriate access controls and encryption at rest and in transit
- [ ] You have verified that any **cloud-based AI services** you intend to use store and process data within jurisdictions acceptable under UK data protection law
- [ ] Your organisation has a **policy on using generative AI tools** (ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) that defines what data employees may and may not input into these services
- [ ] There is a **security review process** for AI models before they are deployed to production, including testing for adversarial attacks, data poisoning, and prompt injection
- [ ] Your **cyber insurance policy** has been reviewed to confirm it covers incidents arising from AI system failures, data breaches involving AI, or AI-related liability claims
- [ ] You have established **audit trails for AI decisions** that affect customers or employees, ensuring you can explain and justify outcomes if challenged (explainability requirement)
- [ ] Regular **penetration testing and vulnerability assessments** include AI-specific attack vectors such as model extraction, training data leakage, and inference manipulation

Section Score: ____/10

6 Change Management & Culture

Technology is only half the challenge. Assess whether your people and culture are prepared for AI-driven change across the organisation.

- [ ] Senior leadership has **publicly endorsed the AI strategy** and communicated a clear vision for how AI will benefit the organisation and its employees
- [ ] You have conducted a **skills gap analysis** identifying which roles will be most affected by AI and what training or reskilling is needed to prepare your workforce
- [ ] An **AI training programme** is planned or underway to improve AI literacy across the organisation — not just the IT team but all departments that will interact with AI tools
- [ ] There is a **clear communication plan** addressing employee concerns about job displacement, explaining how AI will augment rather than replace their roles (where applicable)
- [ ] You have identified **AI champions** within each department — enthusiastic individuals who will advocate for AI adoption and support colleagues through the transition
- [ ] Your organisation has a track record of **successfully adopting new technologies** (cloud migration, digital tools, remote working) that gives confidence in your ability to manage AI change
- [ ] A **feedback mechanism** exists for employees to raise concerns, report issues, and suggest improvements related to AI tools they use in their daily work
- [ ] Your change management plan includes **realistic timelines** that acknowledge AI adoption is iterative — expecting transformational results in the first 3 months is a common cause of disappointment

Section Score: _____ /10

7 Audit Summary & Action Plan

#	AUDIT AREA	SCORE	PRIORITY
1	Data Infrastructure & Quality	/ 10	H / M / L
2	Technical Capabilities & Skills	/ 10	H / M / L
3	Business Process Analysis	/ 10	H / M / L
4	Governance & Ethics Framework	/ 10	H / M / L
5	Security & Compliance	/ 10	H / M / L
6	Change Management & Culture	/ 10	H / M / L
TOTAL SCORE		**/ 60**	

Score Interpretation

80–100: Excellent. Your IT setup is well-managed. Focus on continuous improvement and emerging threats.
60–79: Good foundation but gaps exist. Prioritise areas scoring below 6 and create an action plan.
Below 60: Significant gaps that put your business at risk. Consider an urgent review with an IT specialist.

Top 3 Priority Actions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Additional Notes

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Audit completed by: _____ Date: _____ Next review due: _____