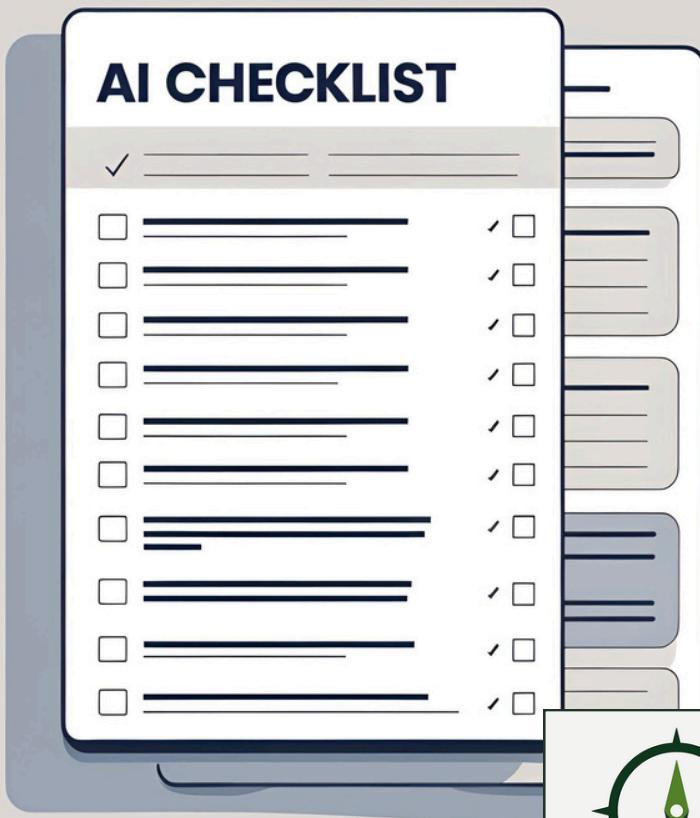


A SIMPLIFIED GUIDE FOR UK ORGANISATIONS

AI Readiness Checklist



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Introduction

Across the UK, organisations are harnessing AI to unlock faster insights, automate repetitive workflows and deliver truly differentiated customer experiences. Yet recent research—such as Deloitte's 2024 State of AI report—finds that more than half of UK IT leaders allocate under 5 percent of their annual tech budget to AI, and too many projects stall for lack of a clear strategy and robust preparation.

To help you break through, I've distilled our proven methodology into a concise, high-level checklist. It's designed for rapid alignment: spot readiness gaps, prioritise your next steps and kick-start the right conversations. Think of it as your fast-track primer—ideal for board briefings and initial planning—before you dive into the deeper diagnostic workflows and mapping tools within the full WaiFinder Adoption ecosystem.

Simon Foote
Managing Director



CHAPTER I

The Eight Pillars of AI Readiness

1. Strategic Alignment & Leadership

Objective:

Secure executive sponsorship and tie AI goals to business outcomes.

Key Questions:

- Is there a clear AI vision endorsed by the C-suite?
- Which financial or customer metrics will AI improve?

Action Items:

1. Establish an AI steering group with business and IT leaders.
2. Define 2–3 target outcomes (e.g., reduce processing time by 20%).
3. Communicate the roadmap in leadership meetings and internal updates.

2. Data & Technology Maturity

Objective:

Verify that your data and platforms can support AI pilots.

Key Questions:

- Are key datasets catalogued, cleaned and accessible?
- Do you have cloud or hybrid infrastructure in place?

Action Items:

4. Inventory structured and unstructured data sources.
5. Set up basic data governance: roles, access controls, lineage.
6. Pilot a small ETL workflow onto a cloud service.

3. Talent & Skills

Objective:

Understand and bridge the AI skills gap.

Key Questions:

- Which roles do you need (data engineer, ML analyst, product owner)?
- What learning programmes exist for upskilling staff?

Action Items:

1. Map current team skills against AI roles.
2. Organise introductory AI workshops or MOOCs.
3. Appoint an external mentor or consultant for early projects.

4. Ethics, Governance & Compliance

Objective:

Ensure responsible, transparent and lawful AI use.

Key Questions:

- Do you have a Responsible AI policy aligned with UK GDPR?
- How will you document and audit algorithmic decisions?

Action Items:

4. Download and review the GOV.UK Responsible AI Toolkit **B**.
5. Draft a one-page AI ethics charter.
6. Assign an oversight owner for periodic algorithm reviews.

5. Use-Case Identification & Prioritisation

Objective:

Pick high-value, feasible AI pilots.

Key Questions:

- Which processes yield the biggest ROI if automated or predicted?
- What pilot can be completed within 3–6 months?

Action Items:

1. Brainstorm 5–8 potential use cases.
2. Score each on Value, Feasibility & Urgency **C**.
3. Select one primary pilot and one quick-win experiment.

6. Partnerships & Ecosystem Navigation

Objective:

Map collaborators and resources without deep vendor evaluations.

Key Questions:

- Which universities or research centres specialise in my area?
- What funding or accelerator programmes can I tap?

Action Items:

4. Identify and locate relevant R&D institutions and funders.
5. Flag 3 potential collaborators for discovery calls.
6. Track application deadlines for Innovate UK or sector grants.

7. Security & Risk Management

Objective:

Guard data and services before scaling AI.

Key Questions:

- Are you aligned with the NCSC Cloud Security Principles?
- How will you detect and respond to AI-specific incidents?

Action Items:

1. Run a basic security posture review—focus on data at rest and in transit.
2. Draft a simple incident response playbook for AI tools.
3. Plan annual penetration tests on AI endpoints.

8. Change Management & Culture

Objective:

Build an innovation-friendly environment.

Key Questions:

- How will you reward experimentation and share learnings?
- Do you have “AI champions” to evangelise projects?

Action Items:

4. Launch an internal newsletter or forum for AI updates.
5. Recognise pilot team successes in all-staff meetings.
6. Rotate an “AI talk of the month” slot in your learning programme.

CHAPTER II

Applying the Checklist

1. **Quick Self-Audit:** Rate each of the eight readiness pillars on a simple 1–5 scale.
2. **Gap Analysis:** Flag any pillar scoring 3 or below for immediate action—whether that's sharpening your data hygiene, formalising an ethics charter or up-skilling frontline teams.
3. **Roadmap:** Assign each pillar to a named owner, set clear milestones and schedule monthly progress reviews in your executive dashboard.

This high-level approach primes your organisation for the deeper diagnostic workflows and tailored guidance available in WaiFinder Adoption—so you can move from quick wins to sustainable, enterprise-wide impact.

CHAPTER III

Next Steps

- Review & score each of the seven readiness pillars this week on a 1–5 scale.
- Prioritise the top two gaps identified and tackle them over the next 30 days.
- Engage at least one AI research partner or potential funder to bolster your project roadmap.
- Pilot one quick-win AI use case within the current quarter to demonstrate value and build momentum.

CHAPTER IV

Case Study: A Midlands MSP

A regional MSP used this checklist to:

- Win board approval for a £30k AI pilot (Strategic Alignment).
- Clean six months of ticket data in Azure (Data Maturity).
- Enrol two service-desk leads in an AI fundamentals course (Talent).
- Adopted a one-page ethics charter (Governance).
- Launched a chatbot triage pilot in eight weeks (Use-Case).
- Identified three local AI research partners (Ecosystem).
- Drafted a response plan for data incidents (Security).
- Named an "AI champion" to drive internal engagement (Culture).

They achieved a 35% reduction in triage time and expanded to a second pilot within four months.



References

1. ANS AI Readiness Report (UK IT survey) **A**
2. Responsible AI Toolkit (GOV.UK) **B**
3. Example use case scoring framework **C**

Use Case	Value Score	Feasibility Score	Urgency Score	Total
Chatbot automation	8	9	6	23
Predictive analytics	7	7	8	22