# Starmer uses London Tech Week to launch £1bn AI skills and infrastructure drive



The UK’s £10 billion science and technology investment ecosystem is entering a new phase, as Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer this week announced a £1 billion push to scale AI skills and infrastructure. Speaking at London Tech Week, Starmer set out plans to expand the country’s AI compute capacity twentyfold by 2030 and deliver training to more than seven million workers.

The announcement comes as early-stage ventures mature into global players, supported by a strong venture capital market and a consistent pipeline of research talent from UK universities. London remains a key tech hub, attracting 175 new companies in 2022 and ranking second globally for foreign direct investment in digital technology. The value of its tech ecosystem rose from $70 billion in 2014 to $621.5 billion in 2023.

Starmer’s plans include a national AI curriculum for secondary schools and the launch of TechFirst, a new initiative to equip one million pupils with digital skills. Partnerships with major employers aim to integrate AI training across sectors, addressing a persistent skills gap as only half of the workforce report receiving any AI-related training.

The push to widen access reflects a broader trend. Outside London, regions such as Yorkshire and Humber reported a 20 percent rise in venture capital investment during a global slowdown, while Welsh tech firms saw an 8.7 percent increase. The UK Innovation & Science Seed Fund has now backed more than 90 early-stage businesses and drawn £700 million in private investment.

Government support is concentrated through the UK Research and Innovation Technology Missions Fund, which will invest £320 million over three years into AI, quantum computing and engineering biology. The fund focuses on long-term capability in areas such as disease diagnosis, sustainable manufacturing and healthy ageing.

Starmer said the goal is to match innovation with public benefit, using AI to strengthen public services and economic resilience. With a blend of targeted investment, expanded training and strategic partnerships, the UK is positioning itself not just to compete in AI, but to lead.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.tuko.co.ke/business-economy/592064-uk-boost-homegrown-talent-ai-skills-drive/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-sets-out-blueprint-to-turbocharge-ai> - On 13 January 2025, Prime Minister Keir Starmer unveiled a comprehensive plan to harness artificial intelligence (AI) for national renewal. The strategy includes implementing all 50 recommendations from the AI Opportunities Action Plan, aiming to boost growth and living standards. Key initiatives involve establishing AI Growth Zones to expedite planning for AI infrastructure, increasing public compute capacity twentyfold, and creating a National Data Library to unlock the value of public data. The plan also focuses on recruiting elite AI talent and fostering AI adoption across various sectors to position the UK as a global leader in AI.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/e91e2eb8-4530-4fb4-8d2d-474c04312722> - In July 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced the formation of Skills England, a new body aimed at addressing the UK's fragmented training system. This initiative seeks to collaborate with various stakeholders, including the government, councils, businesses, trade unions, and training providers, to tackle the country's skill gaps and ensure proper funding for adult training courses. The goal is to reduce reliance on foreign workers and foster domestic talent, with a focus on invigorating young people's careers and supporting local economies.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-sets-out-blueprint-to-turbocharge-ai> - On 13 January 2025, Prime Minister Keir Starmer unveiled a comprehensive plan to harness artificial intelligence (AI) for national renewal. The strategy includes implementing all 50 recommendations from the AI Opportunities Action Plan, aiming to boost growth and living standards. Key initiatives involve establishing AI Growth Zones to expedite planning for AI infrastructure, increasing public compute capacity twentyfold, and creating a National Data Library to unlock the value of public data. The plan also focuses on recruiting elite AI talent and fostering AI adoption across various sectors to position the UK as a global leader in AI.
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