# ICO launches AI and biometrics strategy to regulate high-risk tech uses



The UK Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has published a landmark strategy to regulate artificial intelligence and biometric technologies, with a sharp focus on high-risk applications in recruitment, public services and law enforcement. The strategy sets out a path to balance innovation with accountability, reinforcing the UK’s leadership in ethical AI governance.

Central to the ICO’s plan is a forthcoming statutory Code of Practice for organisations using AI and automated decision-making (ADM) systems. This Code will define clear legal standards for the responsible deployment of AI, including algorithms used in CV screening, video interview analysis and facial recognition. It responds to growing public concern about transparency, data protection and fairness in decisions that shape lives and livelihoods.

The ICO has said the highest regulatory scrutiny will apply where risks to individuals are greatest. Recruitment is one such area, and the strategy is informed by qualitative research with job seekers from diverse backgrounds. Participants expressed frustration with a lack of transparency in AI-driven hiring—often identifying impersonal rejection emails and rapid responses as signs of automation, yet receiving little to no explanation from employers.

The study revealed strong expectations around transparency, human oversight and fair treatment. Job seekers supported limited AI use to streamline early-stage assessments but opposed fully automated final decisions. Many also highlighted the need for greater empathy and communication in hiring processes increasingly shaped by opaque technologies.

In response, the ICO is urging employers to update internal AI and ADM policies, provide clear disclosures to candidates and ensure meaningful human review in hiring decisions. Responsible use also includes bias auditing of AI tools, supplier accountability and staff training to build robust governance frameworks.

The strategy’s scope extends beyond recruitment. It sets expectations for fairness in the use of facial recognition by law enforcement and outlines principles for the development of AI foundation models. These measures form part of a broader push to embed proportionality and dignity into the digital systems underpinning public life.

Recent legislative changes have eased restrictions on ADM in certain cases, but only where strong safeguards are in place. The ICO’s approach reinforces that ethical responsibility must accompany technical advancement. Published in June 2025, the strategy is a clear signal that UK regulators intend to support AI progress without compromising rights. Through ongoing engagement and updated guidance, the ICO aims to foster a climate where trust, accountability and innovation can coexist.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ukemploymenthub.com/the-uks-new-ai-and-biometrics-strategy/?utm_medium=email> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/our-information/our-strategies-and-plans/artificial-intelligence-and-biometrics-strategy/> - The UK's Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has unveiled a new AI and biometrics strategy aimed at balancing innovation with accountability. The strategy outlines how the ICO plans to guide the development and deployment of artificial intelligence and biometric technologies, particularly in high-stakes areas such as recruitment and public services. The ICO seeks to support innovation while ensuring public protection, emphasizing transparency, fairness, and responsible data use in sectors like recruitment, public services, and law enforcement.
3. <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/media-centre/news-and-blogs/2025/06/information-commissioner-people-must-trust-their-data-is-protected-in-the-age-of-ai/> - The UK Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has launched a new AI and biometrics strategy to support further innovation while protecting the public from potential harms. The strategy establishes how the ICO will develop a statutory code of practice for organizations that develop or deploy AI and ensure that police use of facial recognition is fair and proportionate. It also sets expectations for using automated decision-making (ADM) systems and lays out the expectations for ensuring AI foundation models are developed lawfully.
4. <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366625476/UK-ICO-publishes-AI-and-biometrics-strategy> - The UK Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) has launched an artificial intelligence (AI) and biometrics strategy, which the regulator says will support innovation while protecting people’s data rights. Published on 5 June 2025, the strategy highlights how the ICO will focus its efforts on technology use cases where most of the risks are concentrated, but where there is significant potential for public benefit. This includes the use of automated decision-making (ADM) systems in recruitment and public services, the use of facial recognition by police forces, and the development of AI foundation models.
5. <https://www.biometricupdate.com/202506/new-ai-and-biometrics-strategy-launched-by-uk-ico> - The UK Information Commissioner’s Office has launched a new AI and biometrics strategy to support further innovation while protecting the public from potential harms, along with research on public impressions of the technologies. The strategy establishes how the ICO will develop a statutory code of practice for organizations that develop or deploy AI and ensure that police use of facial recognition is fair and proportionate. It also sets expectations for using automated decision-making (ADM) systems and lays out the expectations for ensuring AI foundation models are developed lawfully.
6. <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/our-information/our-strategies-and-plans/artificial-intelligence-and-biometrics-strategy/what-we-have-achieved-so-far-on-ai-and-biometrics/> - The UK's Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has unveiled a new AI and biometrics strategy aimed at balancing innovation with accountability. The strategy outlines how the ICO plans to guide the development and deployment of artificial intelligence and biometric technologies, particularly in high-stakes areas such as recruitment and public services. The ICO seeks to support innovation while ensuring public protection, emphasizing transparency, fairness, and responsible data use in sectors like recruitment, public services, and law enforcement.
7. <https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/our-information/our-strategies-and-plans/artificial-intelligence-and-biometrics-strategy/why-we-need-to-act/> - The UK's Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has unveiled a new AI and biometrics strategy aimed at balancing innovation with accountability. The strategy outlines how the ICO plans to guide the development and deployment of artificial intelligence and biometric technologies, particularly in high-stakes areas such as recruitment and public services. The ICO seeks to support innovation while ensuring public protection, emphasizing transparency, fairness, and responsible data use in sectors like recruitment, public services, and law enforcement.