# UK launches Open-Source AI Fellowship to boost public sector innovation



The UK government is launching the Open-Source AI Fellowship, a 12-month initiative that will embed 10 top AI engineers and developers in public sector departments to co-develop practical tools using open-source models. Backed by a $1 million grant from Meta and administered by the Alan Turing Institute, the programme will begin in January 2026.

The Fellowship marks a shift from academic AI research to real-world deployment. Participants will work on projects such as enhancing national security language translation, speeding up housing approvals, and improving public-facing services including “Humphrey,” an AI summarisation assistant, and “Caddy,” a chatbot used by Citizens Advice.

“This is AI in action – open, practical, and built for public good,” said Peter Kyle, Technology Secretary. He emphasised the government's intent to move beyond theory towards deployable tools that improve efficiency and responsiveness. The programme also aims to strengthen the UK’s AI sovereignty by reducing reliance on proprietary US technologies.

Meta’s involvement goes beyond funding. By providing access to its Llama 3.5 model, the company is expanding its collaboration with UK public institutions. Meta stated that only publicly available, adult-only data is used, with users given opt-out options. The company underscored its compliance with UK data protection standards amid ongoing scrutiny of big tech’s role in public infrastructure.

The Fellowship supports broader government efforts, including the forthcoming AI Bill and the work of the AI Safety Institute, which independently assesses AI model safety. However, the participation of firms like Meta and Google continues to raise concerns about corporate influence over national digital policy. Kyle has acknowledged the need for a new kind of diplomacy to manage these complex relationships.

The programme has three main objectives: to foster in-house AI expertise, support talent development through direct government placements, and promote transparency via open-source tools. “Humphrey” and “Caddy” will be expanded and refined, reflecting the government’s preference for practical, user-focused AI applications. Applications are expected to open in late 2025, with fellows selected by Meta, the Alan Turing Institute and government representatives. The initiative runs in parallel with a separate Google Cloud partnership aiming to train 100,000 civil servants in cloud and AI technologies by 2030.

While the initial funding is modest, the Fellowship is a strategic step towards embedding AI capabilities in government. If successful, it could serve as a model for how to modernise public services with open and trustworthy technology.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://vocal.media/01/uk-partners-with-meta-to-build-ai-fellowship-aiming-for-public-sector-transformation> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-best-ai-engineers-can-apply-now-to-build-tech-for-public-services-in-1-million-fellowship> - The UK government, supported by a $1 million grant from Meta to the Alan Turing Institute, is launching a 12-month Open-Source AI Fellowship. This initiative aims to integrate top AI experts into government departments to develop open-source AI tools that enhance public services, boost productivity, and support national security. Fellows will work on projects such as language translation for national security and accelerating housing approvals, using Meta's Llama 3.5 models. The programme underscores the UK's commitment to building sovereign AI capabilities and modernising essential infrastructure systems.
3. <https://about.fb.com/news/2025/07/meta-backs-1-million-initiative-to-get-uks-best-ai-talent-to-build-tech-for-public-services/> - Meta is funding a $1 million initiative to bring the UK's top AI talent into government through the Open-Source AI Fellowship. Organised by the Alan Turing Institute, the programme places AI experts within government departments to develop open-source AI tools for public services. Fellows will work on high-security applications like language translation for national security and using construction data to expedite housing approvals, leveraging Meta's Llama 3.5 models. This partnership aims to establish the UK's sovereign AI capacity and reduce dependency on proprietary systems.
4. <https://www.itpro.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/the-uk-government-is-working-with-meta-to-create-an-ai-engineering-dream-team-to-drive-public-sector-adoption> - The UK government, in collaboration with Meta and the Alan Turing Institute, is launching a $1 million AI initiative called the Open-Source AI Fellowship starting in January 2026. This programme will recruit engineers and developers for a 12-month assignment to create AI tools to enhance public sector services. The focus will be on developing practical, open-source AI solutions, such as language translation tools and housing development accelerators, using Meta's Llama 3.5 models. Participants will also support and expand tools like 'Humphrey,' an AI suite used by civil servants, and projects like Caddy, an AI customer service assistant already improving support services at Citizen's Advice centres.
5. <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/366627613/Meta-and-Alan-Turing-Institute-back-open-source-AI-fellowship> - The UK government has unveiled a $1 million fellowship grant, backed by Meta and the Alan Turing Institute, to build technology for public services. The 12-month secondment in government will see fellows use open-source artificial intelligence (AI) models such as Meta’s Llama 3.5 to help create new tools to deliver Labour’s Plan for Change. According to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), rolling out open-source AI models widely could reduce costs to the taxpayer, improve speed and consistency, and deliver value for money.
6. <https://news.sky.com/story/government-to-announce-new-scheme-as-it-ramps-up-ai-adoption-with-backing-from-facebook-owner-meta-13395191> - The funding for the roles is coming from Meta, through the Alan Turing Institute. Adverts will go live next week, with the new fellowships expected to start at the beginning of 2026. Technology Secretary Peter Kyle said: 'This fellowship is the best of AI in action - open, practical, and built for public good. It's about delivery, not just ideas - creating real tools that help government work better for people.' He added: 'The fellowship will help scale that kind of impact across government, and develop sovereign capabilities where the UK must lead, like national security and critical infrastructure.'
7. <https://techinformed.com/whitehall-launches-1m-ai-engineer-program/> - Whitehall launches $1m Meta-backed AI engineer fellowship. The UK government has announced a 12-month initiative designed to embed top-tier AI engineers from other organisations within Whitehall departments to build deployable, open-source tools for public service use. Funded by a $1m grant from Meta and delivered in partnership with the Alan Turing Institute, the new Open-Source AI Fellowship aims to create transparent, sovereign AI infrastructure that can scale across departments while reducing costs and enhancing productivity.