# UK workers lead Europe in AI awareness and workplace optimism



UK workers are among the most optimistic and informed in Europe about the impact of artificial intelligence on the workplace, according to new data from ADP Research. The study, which surveyed over 1,100 UK respondents from a global pool of 38,000, found that 88 per cent had formed clear views on AI’s effects, with 14 per cent strongly believing it will improve their jobs—outpacing the European average of 11 per cent.

Optimism is especially high in technology, finance and IT, where nearly one in five workers express positive expectations. In technology services, 19 per cent see AI as beneficial, with finance and insurance at 18 per cent and IT at 17 per cent. These figures suggest early success in AI adoption across key sectors.

Jeff Phipps, General Manager for the UK and Northern Europe at ADP, said UK workers demonstrate a “measured approach to AI that positions businesses for success.” While recognising AI’s potential, they remain realistic about its limitations. Only 9 per cent fear job loss due to AI—well below the global average—suggesting a strong foundation for adoption.

AI’s role is seen as augmentative rather than disruptive. Tools such as generative AI are automating time-consuming tasks, allowing workers to focus on complex, creative responsibilities. However, the study highlights the emotional complexity of adoption and stresses the importance of upskilling to ensure long-term resilience.

Globally, attitudes to AI remain mixed. While 17 per cent strongly believe it will benefit their roles, 44 per cent are unsure how AI will affect their jobs. Countries such as Egypt and India show both high optimism and high concern, reflecting the dual nature of AI’s psychological impact.

In the UK, younger workers tend to balance optimism with apprehension, while older employees express greater indifference, perceiving less impact on their careers.

AI adoption also enjoys support from frontline workers. A separate study found that 76 per cent of UK frontline staff trust AI to enhance safety by predicting risks and performing hazardous tasks. Similarly, a British Safety Council survey showed widespread optimism about AI and related technologies, though around a quarter remain concerned about safety risks.

From an employer’s perspective, a survey by Acas reports that 35 per cent of UK businesses expect AI to boost productivity, while 12 per cent see it as a competitive advantage. Yet skills and confidence gaps remain a challenge. Research from Attensi revealed that 58 per cent of employees hide their skill deficits, pointing to a need for discreet, AI-powered learning tools. ADP’s wider ‘People at Work 2024’ study found that just 47 per cent of workers believe their employers are investing adequately in skills development.

The Generative AI Susceptibility Index confirms that nearly all UK jobs are now exposed to tools such as ChatGPT, with roles already adapting to new technologies. Ongoing monitoring and support will be essential to ensure benefits are fairly distributed.

Overall, the findings reflect a workforce marked by informed optimism and cautious pragmatism. UK businesses that invest in training, communicate transparently and retain a human-centred approach will be best placed to lead in AI innovation—unlocking productivity, safety and inclusive growth across the economy.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.fmj.co.uk/uk-workers-lead-europe-in-ai-readiness-though-optimism-remains-selective-finds-research/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.fmj.co.uk/frontline-workers-trust-ai-and-automation-to-keep-them-safe/> - A study reveals that 76% of UK frontline workers trust AI and automation to enhance workplace safety. The research highlights optimism among workers, with many believing AI can predict and prevent accidents, identify risks, and perform hazardous tasks. Despite concerns about job losses, workers express curiosity and hope regarding AI's role in the workplace. The findings suggest that businesses can leverage this trust to accelerate AI and automation initiatives, provided they offer adequate training and support to their staff.
3. <https://www.fmj.co.uk/employers-and-staff-optimistic-about-impact-of-new-technologies-despite-some-safety-concerns/> - A YouGov survey commissioned by the British Safety Council indicates that both UK employers and employees are optimistic about the impact of new technologies like AI, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR) in the workplace. While 63% of employers and 41% of employees anticipate positive effects, concerns remain about safety, with 26% of both groups fearing potential risks. The survey underscores the need for balanced perspectives and proactive measures to integrate these technologies effectively.
4. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2507.22748> - This research introduces the Generative AI Susceptibility Index (GAISI), a task-based measure assessing UK job exposure to large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT. The study finds that by 2023-24, nearly all UK jobs exhibited some exposure to generative AI, though only a minority were heavily affected. The index highlights a significant rise in exposure since 2017, primarily due to occupational shifts, and suggests that displacement effects may already outweigh productivity gains.
5. <https://www.jobs.fmj.co.uk/blog/view/1709/index2/Research-Reveals-The-Hidden-Confidence-Crisis-Undermining-Workforce-Performance> - A study by Attensi reveals that 58% of employees engage in 'skill masking,' concealing skill gaps to appear more competent. This widespread issue suggests a hidden confidence crisis affecting workforce performance. The research highlights the need for confidential, AI-powered upskilling tools to address this challenge and support employees in developing necessary skills without fear of judgment.
6. <https://www.fmj.co.uk/a-third-of-employers-think-ai-will-increase-productivity/> - A survey by Acas reveals that 35% of UK employers believe artificial intelligence (AI) will boost productivity. The study also highlights that 12% of employers view AI as providing a competitive edge, while 11% anticipate it will increase knowledge and enable more work with fewer staff. The findings suggest a growing recognition of AI's potential benefits in the workplace.
7. <https://www.jobs.fmj.co.uk/blog/view/1489/index1/Skills-Confidence-Gap-Workers-Dissatisfied-With-Employer-S-Investment-In-Career-Development-> - According to ADP Research’s 'People at Work 2024: A Global Workforce View,' 60% of workers feel they have the skills needed to advance their careers, yet only 47% believe their employers invest in the necessary skills development. The study also highlights that 43% of workers view AI integration positively, anticipating assistance in various tasks, while 42% are concerned about potential job displacement due to AI.