# AI Acceptable Use & Governance Policy

A one-page template for UK businesses. Updated June 2026 for the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

**Organisation:** *[Company name]* · **Policy owner:** *[Name / role]* · **Effective date:** *[Date]* · **Next review:** *[Date — we suggest every 6 months]*

## 1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how everyone at *[Company name]* may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools at work. It applies to all employees, contractors and temporary staff, and covers public AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini and Claude), AI features built into the software you already use, and any custom or private AI models we operate.

## 2. Approved tools

You may only use AI tools on this approved list for work: *[list your approved tools and accounts]*. To request a new tool, contact *[owner]*. Do not sign the business up to new AI tools, or connect them to company systems, without approval.

## 3. What must never go into a public AI tool

Unless you are using an approved private or enterprise deployment with contractual protection, never enter:

- client or customer confidential information;
- personal data about identifiable people — and never special category data (health, ethnicity, beliefs, biometrics and similar);
- passwords, API keys, financial details or trade secrets;
- anything you would not be comfortable sending outside the business.

## 4. Data protection (UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025)

Personal data may only be used with an AI tool where we have a lawful basis and an appropriate contract in place, the provider does not train its models on our data unless we have agreed it, and the use is covered by our privacy notice. Special category data requires additional safeguards and will usually need explicit consent. If in doubt, ask *[DPO / data lead]* before you proceed.

## 5. Automated decisions about people

Where AI makes — or materially influences — a *significant decision* about a person (for example shortlisting candidates, credit or pricing decisions, or eligibility for a service), the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 safeguards apply. We must: tell the person a significant automated decision is being made; let them make representations and challenge it; and provide a genuine human review. Significant decisions based on special category data need explicit consent and stricter controls. Map any such use with *[owner]* before it goes live.

## 6. A human is always accountable

AI output is a draft, not a decision. A named person must review and approve anything produced with AI before it is relied upon, sent to a client, or published. The accountable owner for each AI-assisted workflow is *[role]*.

## 7. Accuracy, disclosure and professional duties

AI can be confidently wrong. Always check facts, figures, citations and code before use. Be transparent about AI use where your customers or a regulator would expect it. AI must never be used in a way that breaches our professional or regulatory obligations — for example SRA duties for legal work, FCA rules for financial services, or CQC and safeguarding duties in care.

## 8. Security

Use only approved accounts with multi-factor authentication. Never share logins. Report any suspected data exposure or AI-related incident to *[contact]* immediately.

## 9. If you sell into the EU

The EU AI Act can apply to UK businesses whose AI systems are placed on the EU market or whose output is used in the EU. Prohibited AI practices are already banned; obligations for high-risk AI systems apply from 2 December 2027. If this may affect us, flag it to *[owner]*.

## 10. Breaches and review

Breaching this policy may lead to disciplinary action. This policy is owned by *[owner]* and will be reviewed at least every six months, or sooner if the law or our tools change.

**How the law stands (June 2026).** The UK has no single "AI Act" — AI is governed through existing law and sector regulators. The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 came into force on 5 February 2026 and updated UK data-protection and automated-decision rules. The EU AI Act applies extraterritorially, with high-risk obligations deferred to 2 December 2027. Check the ICO and your sector regulator for the current position.