



Department for  
Science, Innovation  
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6 January 2025

Dear Viscount Camrose,

## **Public Authority Algorithmic and Automated Decision-Making Systems Bill – Second Reading Debate**

I am writing in response to the important questions you raised during the debate on Lord Clement-Jones' Public Authority Algorithmic and Automated Decision-Making Systems Bill on Friday 13 December. I will also place a copy of this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

I would like to thank you for your thoughtful contributions and hope you will be pleased to note that we published 14 new records on the Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (ATRS) [online Hub](#) on Tuesday 17 December. More should follow in the coming weeks. As I stated during the debate, we are confident that the ATRS policy mandate, delivered from the new digital centre of government, is sufficient to deliver meaningful transparency in government algorithmic tools which affect members of the public.

You asked what consideration will be given to ensure that public authorities can remain agile and responsive given the rapid rate of technological change, a challenge which the government takes very seriously. You also referenced the principles-based approach set out in the AI White Paper, and suggested that they provide a flexible means for achieving the goals of Lord Clement-Jones' Bill (that is, transparent and trustworthy uses of algorithmic and automated tools in the public sector). Finally, you asked what measures will be considered to build public trust in AI systems, ensuring that the public understand both the decisions made and the safeguards in place around them.

### **Supporting the public sector**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is at the heart of the UK Government's plan to kickstart an era of economic growth, transform how we deliver public services, and boost living standards for working people across the country.

Where public bodies are concerned, we are guiding the responsible development, deployment, and use of these technologies through a range of policies, frameworks and standards. This includes the Generative AI Framework, the Data Ethics Framework, the Model for Responsible Innovation, and the Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (ATRS), all of which reflect principles set out in the AI regulation whitepaper.



The Central Digital & Data Office (CDDO), published the Generative AI Framework at the beginning of 2024 to support both decision makers and implementation teams as they examine AI and conduct their proof of concepts, potentially leading to scaled adoption in a safe, secure and ethical manner. CDDO also worked with Treasury to develop assessment criteria for the spending review that helped departments to create bids that meet their AI adoption strategies. Its AI and Automation team has continued to work with i.AI (the government's AI incubator) and departmental colleagues across government to manage the community of practice and help draft a future update of the Generative AI Framework.

The government will soon publish its plan to support further the effective, safe and ethical adoption of AI that will dramatically increase the efficiency of public service delivery and contribute to the government's five missions in the new year.

### **Building public trust**

Transparency is a key driver of responsible innovation and improved public trust in governments' use of data and algorithms. It is also one of the core data protection principles, along with other principles such as fairness and accountability which apply to all processing of personal data, including in AI systems, and must be adhered to by public and private sector organisations.

The Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard (ATRS) delivers this transparency by establishing a standardised way for public sector organisations to publish information about how and why they are using algorithmic tools in decision-making with impact on members of the public. It enables these organisations to proactively publish details about the algorithmic tools they use, including the associated risks that have been identified and how these have been mitigated, and the governance mechanisms and safeguards that have been put in place. This information is made freely accessible to the public on GOV.UK together with contact details to get in touch with the team responsible for the tool.

The ATRS is mandatory for government departments and ALBs, for algorithmic tools which have a significant influence on a decision-making process with public effect or directly interact with the public. This policy mandate is currently being implemented, and we have just added 14 new records to the online repository. Many more records will be added over the coming months.

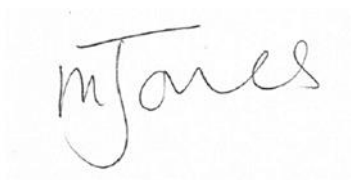
There are also specific safeguards set out in the UK's data protection framework where individuals have been subject to solely automated decision-making (ADM) with a legal or similarly significant effect on individuals, to ensure that they are aware of, understand, and can challenge such decisions if needed. These rules apply to public and private sector organisations alike.

UK GDPR already requires organisations to provide data subjects with privacy information about the existence of solely automated decision-making, including profiling, meaningful information about the logic involved, and the significance and envisaged consequences of such automated processing for the individual

Following a significant decision based solely on automated processing, the safeguards in Article 22 of the UK GDPR apply. These safeguards include notifying data subjects of decisions and providing information on the solely ADM that has been carried out, and the right to contest those decisions and to obtain human intervention. Human intervention should be carried out competently and by a person with the authority to correct a wrongful outcome. This would ensure that under such circumstances, organisations can review the decisions in question and take suitable measures to correct them if they have produced a wrongful outcome. Existing guidance by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) seeks to assist individuals with exercising their rights in relation to solely automated processing.

As you are aware, the government has introduced reforms to this provision under the Data (Use and Access) Bill to allow for the responsible deployment of solely automated decision-making, and I look forward to continuing our discussions on this topic during the upcoming Report stage.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm Jones', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'm'.

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch  
**Minister for the Future Digital Economy and Online Safety**