stormid

Automate tasks, not jobs

The AI opportunity for Scotland's public services

Independent analysis identifying the highest value public sector workflows for AI driven productivity gains.

Contents

Introduction

Scotland's public services have a proud record of innovation and reform but they're now facing a defining period. As many papers and commentators have noted, demand is rising rapidly, while the recent Spending Review confirms that budgets will remain tightly constrained over the next few years.

We are therefore left with a stark choice to either accept a decline in the scope and quality of our public services or deliver a major improvement in productivity.

The reason for writing this paper is to make the case for AI adoption as a credible route to delivering these much needed productivity improvements.

The paper identifies the top 50 public services with the highest potential gain from AI adoption. We forecast the time that can be released across low, medium and high adoption scenarios. We also identify the common patterns across these services and outline how data sovereignty must sit at the heart of the delivery to preserve privacy across specific workflows.

The paper makes the case that AI can help reduce the administrative burden on professionals across the public sector - freeing up more time for doctors, teachers, social care teams and justice professionals to focus on what they are trained to do.

Our guiding principle is to use AI to automate tasks, not jobs.

AI is a general-purpose technology which will ultimately transform every knowledge intensive activity. But as with other general-purpose technologies the speed of impact will be governed by how quickly it is adopted and diffused throughout the economy.

While we must address AI safety, organisational change and process redesign, this paper makes it clear that the potential rewards are significant and where we should initially focus our efforts.

Ultimately, our conclusion is simple, we must use AI to automate the routine, so we can return valuable time to the work that only people can do.

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Co-founder and Chair
Storm ID

Executive summary

Scotland's public services face a defining moment. The 2026/27 Budget and multiyear Spending Review highlight the central challenge of the decade ahead: sustaining service quality in the face of demographic pressure and constrained resources. To meet this, the Scottish Government has mandated a significant focus on efficiency and reform across the entire public sector.

This is not simply a funding problem; it is also a capacity problem. Without releasing frontline time from administrative and coordination overhead, services will struggle to sustain access, quality and equity, particularly in health and social care, education and local government.

This paper sets out the case for adopting AI-enabled service redesign in Scottish public services to reduce administrative burden, improve responsiveness and protect frontline capacity guided by a clear principle throughout, **automate tasks, not jobs**. The objective is workforce enablement and better outcomes resulting in higher throughput, shorter backlogs, faster response times and more staff time for direct public value work.

What we analysed

We assessed 50 high-volume public sector services across Scotland with the strongest potential to release staff time through credible AI use cases, spanning:

- NHS Scotland
- Education
- Scotland's local authorities
- Police Scotland and justice-adjacent administration
- Other public bodies, including high-volume transactional services

Across these 50 services, we estimate a baseline of **~ 178 million staff hours per year**, distributed approximately as follows:

- NHS Scotland **~ 80m hours**
- Education **~ 37m hours**
- Local authorities **~ 32m hours**
- Police Scotland **~ 21m hours**
- Other public bodies **~ 8m hours**

Our modelling focuses on capacity release (time back) rather than assuming immediate cash savings. In practice, AI benefits in public services will typically show up first as improved throughput, reduced backlogs, and increased time for higher value work. Budget impacts depend on later workforce and service design choices.

Key quantified findings

Under three adoption and impact scenarios, the paper estimates annual capacity release across the 50 services of:

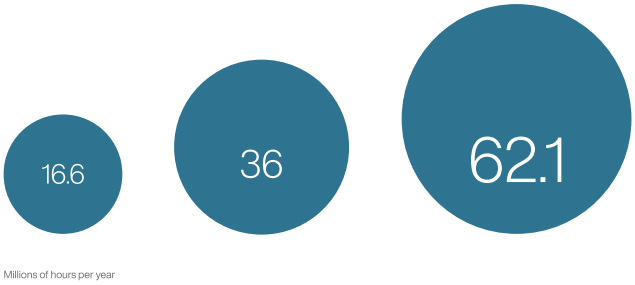
- Low (30% adoption, 50% productivity): ~ 16.6m staff hours/year (~ 9% of baseline)
- Moderate (50% adoption, 65% productivity): ~ 36.0m staff hours/year (~ 20% of baseline)

– Optimistic (70% adoption, 80% productivity): ~ 62.1m staff hours/year (~ 35% of baseline)

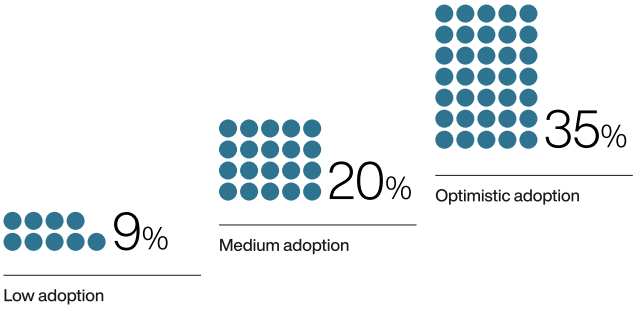
Sector-level implications (annual hours released by 2030):

– NHS Scotland **~ 7.3m to ~ 27.1m hours**
– Education **~ 3.7m to ~ 13.9m hours**
– Local authorities **~ 2.9m to ~ 10.8m hours**
– Police Scotland **~ 1.9m to ~ 7.0m hours**
– Other public bodies **~ 0.8m to ~ 3.2m hours**

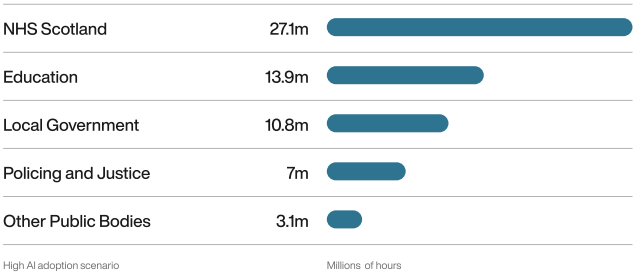
Up to 62.1 million staff hours per year released by 2030
Low, moderate and optimistic adoption and impact scenarios



Capacity release to absorb demand pressures and improve services
% of staff baseline hours per year



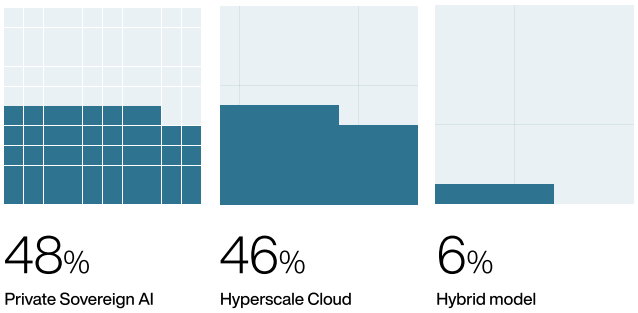
Annual time back for public sector workers by 2030
Potential sector-level implications



50 high-volume services prioritised for AI-enabled service reform
The route to scale is to build reusable and configurable AI components

5 repeatable service patterns
Operational workflows cluster into a small number of repeatable patterns

Data sovereignty is a requirement
Half of the top 50 services would likely require a private deployment



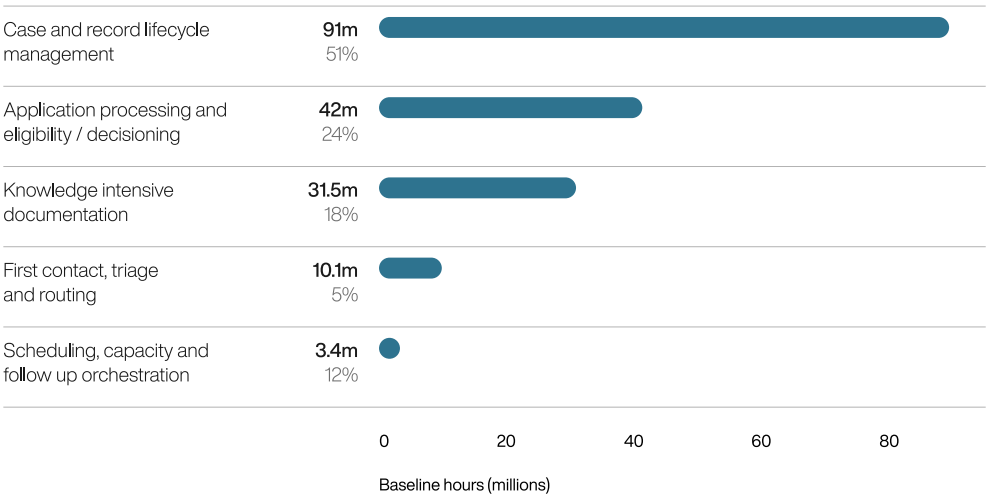
The paper also shows that demand and administrative load are set to rise over the next few years without reform. AI enabled redesign can do more than marginally improve today's position: it can help offset projected workload growth if implemented at scale with the right operating model and controls.

The opportunity. Repeatable service patterns

While Scottish public services are diverse in mission, their operational workflows cluster into a small number of repeatable patterns. Across the 50 services analysed, these can be grouped as:

- Case & Record Lifecycle Management **~ 91m hours (51%)**
- Application Processing & Eligibility / Decisioning **~ 42m hours (24%)**
- Knowledge Intensive Documentation **~ 31.5m hours (18%)**
- First Contact, Triage & Routing **~ 10.1m hours (5%)**
- Scheduling, Capacity & Follow Up Orchestration **~ 3.4m hours (2%)**

Service pattern distribution across the 50 workflows
Case and record lifecycle management represents 51% of total hours



Scotland does not need to build 50 bespoke solutions. The fastest, safest route to scale is to build reusable and configurable AI components aligned to these common patterns and integrate them into existing systems of record.

Automate tasks, not jobs

The paper is explicit that the aim is workforce enablement, not indiscriminate headcount reduction. In a system already under workforce strain, the intended outcomes are:

- More time for direct care, teaching and professional judgement
- Shorter waiting times and faster decisions by increasing throughput
- Improved consistency and quality in documentation, correspondence and case preparation
- Better staff experience by reducing duplicative admin work

Delivering this credibly requires making the approach operational through workforce engagement in the design of new AI services, training on how to adopt new workflows and ongoing monitoring and continual improvement. This will ensure that time saved translates into better outcomes and is not simply absorbed again by unmanaged demand.

Infrastructure and data sovereignty

The paper compares infrastructure models for hosting AI services, including UK based cloud services appropriate for many transactional and administrative workloads, and private / sovereign environments suited to higher sensitivity contexts such as clinical and criminal justice data, where additional privacy, security and access controls are required. The analysis indicates that around half of the top 50 services assessed would likely require a private deployment model based on data sensitivity and risk.

Call to action

To turn opportunity into outcomes by 2030, this paper argues Scotland should:

1. **Prioritise high-volume, lower-risk services first** to demonstrate value quickly and build institutional capability.
2. **Build shared, reusable AI components** mapped to common service patterns, avoiding duplication across NHS boards, councils and public-sector bodies.
3. **Establish robust governance and assurance** as a prerequisite for scale: clear accountability, audit trails, cyber controls, testing and monitoring and defined human oversight which is consistent with Scotland's commitment to trustworthy, ethical and inclusive AI.
4. **Adopt a mixed infrastructure strategy** combining UK public cloud for suitable workloads with private AI infrastructure for high sensitivity services.
5. **Treat workforce enablement as a core deliverable** with training, role redesign and staff engagement throughout.

Scotland cannot bridge its structural capacity gap through incremental digitisation alone. This analysis demonstrates that if implemented safely, transparently and in partnership with the workforce, AI has the credible potential to release tens of millions of staff hours from current administrative burdens by 2030 and help contribute to meeting the £1.5bn of efficiency savings targeted over the Spending Review period.

Rising demand, static budgets

Why Scotland must improve public sector productivity

The Scottish fiscal context

Scotland faces a widening gap between rising service demand and static public budgets. Audit Scotland's latest review highlights intensifying fiscal pressures, noting that growing structural costs are leaving limited room for investment in transformation [1]. Similarly, the Scottish Fiscal Commission warns that sluggish productivity, weak revenue growth and long-term commitments are tightening the fiscal envelope further [2].

These pressures are amplified by an ageing population. Increasing demand for health and social care, combined with workforce shortages and pandemic-driven backlogs, has created a delivery model that is no longer sustainable [3]. Independent analyses argue that without major productivity gains, Scotland risks being locked into a cycle of rising need and shrinking capacity [4].

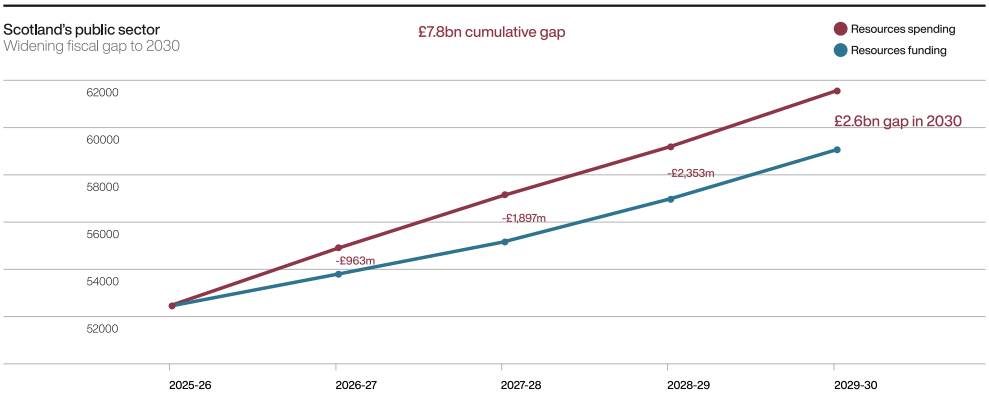


Figure 1 - Scottish Government (2025): Scotland's fiscal outlook: medium-term financial strategy. [5]

Scotland's digital ambition

The Scottish Government's Digital Strategy sets a clear ambition to deploy advanced technologies, strengthen cyber resilience, scale shared services and leverage automation to modernise service delivery [6].

Excellent progress to date includes national shared services for identity, pay, mailbox, licensing and forms and the opportunity now is to leverage digital and AI for deeper automation and efficiency drivers [6].

How AI can contribute to efficiency challenges

AI presents the most credible route to the productivity uplift Scotland urgently needs. The OBR forecasts that AI could raise UK productivity by up to 0.8% annually within a decade, with the greatest potential in public-sector roles dominated by administrative and customer-service tasks [7]. OECD analysis shows that automating repetitive, rule-based tasks can free staff for higher-value frontline work, reduce errors and significantly improve service quality [8].

How Governments are adopting AI

The UK Government AI 2030 Scenarios Report stresses that while exact capability timelines are uncertain, all plausible scenarios show significant increases in

automation potential by 2030, especially in text, reasoning and information-intensive domains concluding that public services should prepare for rapid capability improvements. It notes that governments that adapt early will secure productivity gains, while those that delay face the risk of falling behind technologically and economically [9].

The UK's AI Exemplars programme is part of initiatives targeting up to £45 billion in annual efficiency gains [10]. Norway aims for 80% of public bodies to use AI by 2025 and full integration by 2030. Estonia plans for 90% of citizen queries to be handled by AI by 2026, cutting administrative burden by 70% by 2030 [11].

By acting decisively now Scotland can also become one of the leading countries in applying AI to public service work.

AI in public services

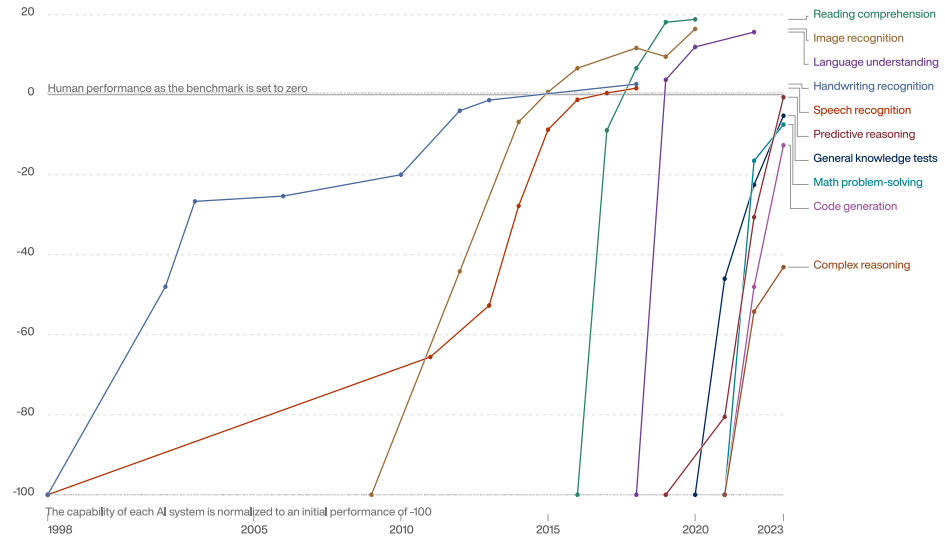
Present capabilities and evidence based forecasts to 2030

What AI can do now in operational tasks

AI in public services is no longer hypothetical. Across 47 operational use cases, UK government departments are already reporting average time savings of 30 to 40% on administrative tasks [12].

Today's systems demonstrate broad utility in language and information processing, making adoption in operational workflows economically justified immediately. [14].

Test scores of AI systems on various capabilities relative to human performances
Within each domain, the initial performance of the AI is set to –100. Human performance is used as a baseline, set to zero. When the AI's performance crosses the zero line, it scored more points than humans.



Data source: Kiela et al. (2023)
Note: For each capability, the first year always shows a baseline of –100, even if better performance was recorded later that year.
OurWorldinData.org/artificial-intelligence | CC BY

Figure 2 - Our World in Data (2023): Tests scores of AI systems on various capabilities relative to human performance [15]

What AI will be capable of by 2030

AI capabilities are advancing rapidly. Powered by new models and increased compute, the technology is evolving from assisting with discrete tasks to executing complex workflows. By 2030, AI will move beyond simple prompts (e.g., summarise this) to completing end to end administrative workflows in controlled settings, while professionals retain oversight and final accountability [16]. Alongside this AI's capacity to manage long-duration tasks is expanding. With the complexity AI can handle doubling every seven months, systems may soon manage workflow that spans days or weeks. [17].

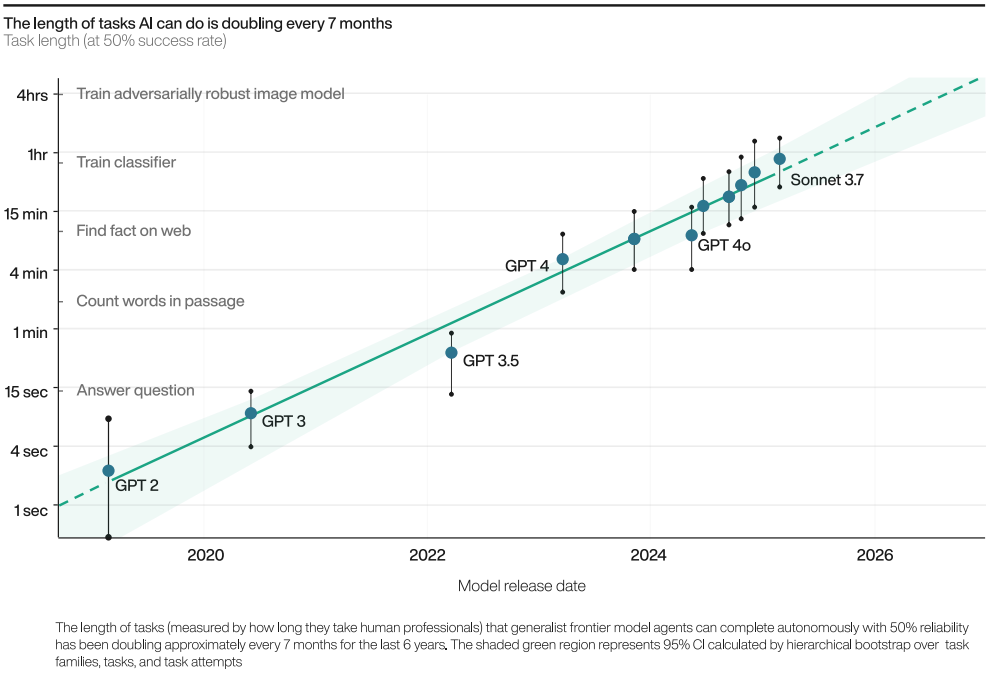


Figure 3 - METR (2025): Measuring AI Ability to Complete Long Tasks [17]

Frontier models are already highly capable and have rapidly saturated existing benchmarks, achieving near-human or expert-level reasoning in many domains which can in turn unlock automation in complex decision-making environments [18,19].

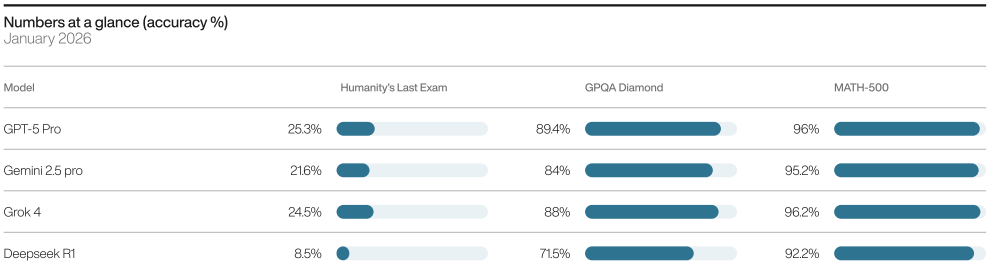


Figure 4 - AGI Safe (2025): Humanity's Last Exam; Vellum (2025): LLM Leaderboard; Composio (2025): Grok 4 vs. Claude 4 Opus vs. Gemini 2.5 Pro: Better coding model; Tech Crunch (2025): OpenAI's GPT-5 is here; Vals.ai (2025): MATH 500 [18, 20, 21, 22, 23]

AI driven service reform

Scotland's public service reform

Scotland's Public Service Reform Strategy sets a clear expectation: public services must be redesigned with unnecessary complexity removed and frontline capacity released to focus on outcomes rather than administration [24]. The January 2026 Scottish Budget and Spending Review confirms that reform, efficiency and productivity are now central to fiscal sustainability, with every portfolio required to deliver recurring savings while protecting frontline services [25].

Yet across health, education, justice and local government, delivery remains constrained by heavy administrative overhead. Manual data entry, duplication, fragmented systems, document handling and summarisation continue to consume scarce professional time. In a context of workforce constraint and rising demand, this is no longer simply inefficient, it is unsustainable. Unless administrative burden is systematically reduced and automation embedded at scale, public services will be unable to meet the reform, savings and delivery commitments that have been set by Scottish Government.

Automating tasks not jobs

AI offers a practical and responsible route to relieve administrative drag by automating tasks, not jobs [14].

The aim is not workforce reduction but workforce enablement - freeing up professional capacity in a system facing persistent workforce shortages, high vacancy rates and rising demand. This directly supports the Public Service Reform Strategy's commitment to empowering staff, reducing unnecessary administrative burden and enabling a sustainable public service workforce [24].

This methodology provides the practical approach to deliver the Scottish Government's vision of a service landscape that is 'efficient, good quality and effective' [24].

Analysing the top 50 priority services for AI driven service reform

Methodology

This analysis estimates the potential time savings from AI automation across Scottish public sector services, with cost impacts calculated as a secondary output. Time savings are the primary measure because they represent freed staff capacity, which can be reinvested into higher-value work, service quality, throughput, or demand pressures.

We selected 50 services using three criteria:

1. High volume services with substantial annual staff time
2. High automation potential, using the Alan Turing Institute exposure framework
3. Sufficient published data to calculate credible baselines

We excluded work where automation potential is low or outcomes depend heavily on physical activity, or high levels of human judgement (e.g. clinical diagnosis, safeguarding decisions, counselling/crisis response).

Baseline time and activity estimations

For each service, we estimate time per transaction/activity and scale this to annual volumes to calculate total annual hours. Hours are converted into Full-Time Equivalent (FTE).

The ONS Public Sector Time Use Survey (2024) provides empirical evidence on how public sector staff spend time across 91 activities grouped into 20 categories, including sector-specific and common tasks. Each service is broken down into the main tasks that represent most staff time (e.g. intake, assessment, processing, completion). We further refined this using Scotland-case studies or data where available.

Estimating automation time savings

Each task is scored using the Alan Turing Institute exposure rubric (2024), which allowed us to estimate the share of task time that AI could reduce under realistic conditions:

- E0: not suitable for AI support (physical work, high interpersonal need, or high-risk errors)
- E1: limited support; substantial human input remains
- E2: partial automation with significant oversight
- E3: most of the task automated with minimal oversight
- E4: fully automatable to equivalent quality

For each service, we calculate a weighted average exposure score based on task time shares to avoid unrealistic assumptions that whole services can be automated end-to-end and reflects that most gains come from automating specific tasks within a workflow.

Scenario modelling

We model outcomes using three adoption scenarios:

- 30% (Low)
- 50% (Moderate)
- 70% (Optimistic)

These are informed by public sector evidence (e.g. current integration levels and the proportion of organisations piloting/planning AI).

We applied productivity realisation rates to reflect the gap between theoretical automation potential and real-world delivery:

- 50% (Low)
- 65% (Moderate)
- 80% (Optimistic)

Time savings are calculated as:

Time Saved = Baseline Hours × Weighted Exposure × Adoption Rate × Realisation Rate

The 50 priority services for AI driven productivity gains

Baseline capacity: 177.8 million hours annually

We have modelled potential capacity release under three scenarios, using explicit assumptions for adoption rates and task-level efficiency. These figures are structured estimates designed to bound plausible outcomes rather than certain forecasts.

Our analysis focuses on Scotland's top 50 high-priority services, selected based on three criteria:

- High Volume: Services with substantial annual hours
- High AI Potential: Processes with significant exposure to automation
- Data Availability: Services with robust published statistics for accurate baselining

The opportunity by sector

Collectively, these 50 services represent a baseline of 177.8 million hours of work. The opportunity is distributed across five key sectors:

- **NHS Scotland** The largest opportunity, with 80.2m baseline hours and potential annual savings of 7.3m – 27.1m hours.
- **Education** 36.6m baseline hours (potential savings: 3.7m – 13.9m hours).
- **Local Government:** 31.5m baseline hours (potential savings: 2.9m – 10.8m hours).
- **Policing & Justice** 21.1m baseline hours (potential savings: 1.9m – 7.0m hours).
- **Other Public Bodies** 8.4m baseline hours (potential savings: 0.8m – 3.2m hours).

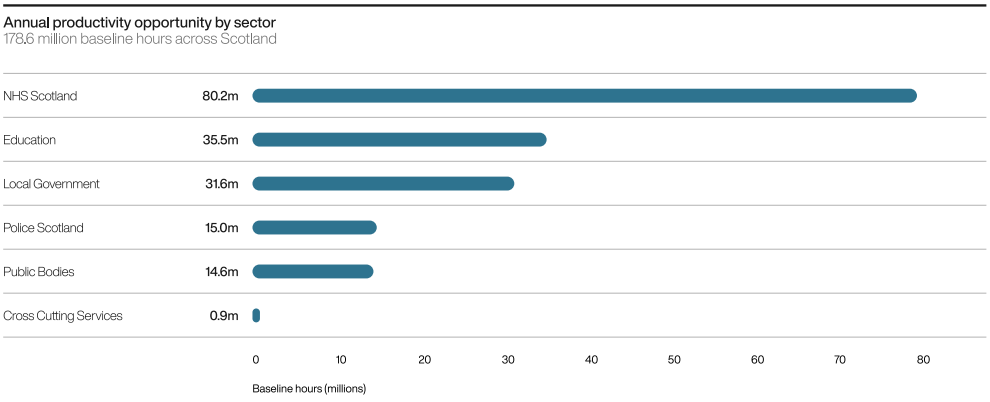
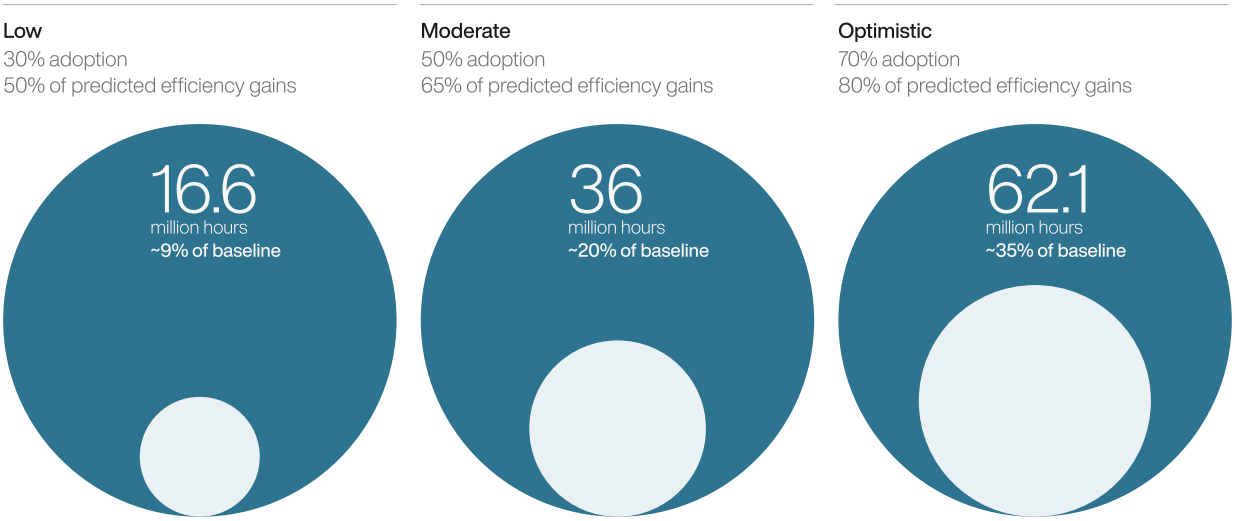


Figure 5 - Annual productivity opportunity by sector

Overall potential: Releasing 9% – 35% of capacity

Across the three scenarios, these services could release between 16.6 million and 62.1 million hours annually. This represents a productivity gain of approximately 9% to 35% and is equivalent to tens of thousands of staff-years of capacity that can be reinvested into reducing backlogs, improving responsiveness, and protecting frontline quality without requiring additional budget growth.



- Low Scenario (16.6m hours): Assumes 30% adoption and 50% of predicted efficiency gains.
- Moderate Scenario (36.0m hours): Assumes 50% adoption and 65% of predicted efficiency gains.
- Optimistic Scenario (62.1m hours): Assumes 70% adoption and 80% of predicted efficiency gains.

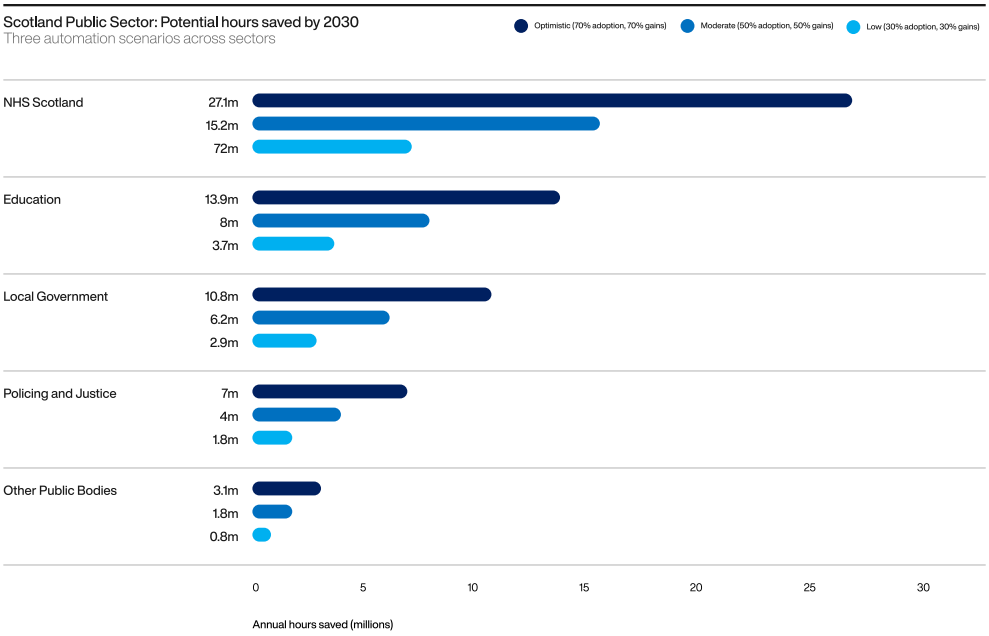


Figure 6 - Scotland Public Sector. Potential hours saved by 2030

NHS Scotland

Potential annual capacity released by 2030 through AI

Low scenario	Moderate scenario	Optimistic scenario
7.3	15.7	27.1
million hours per year	million hours per year	million hours per year

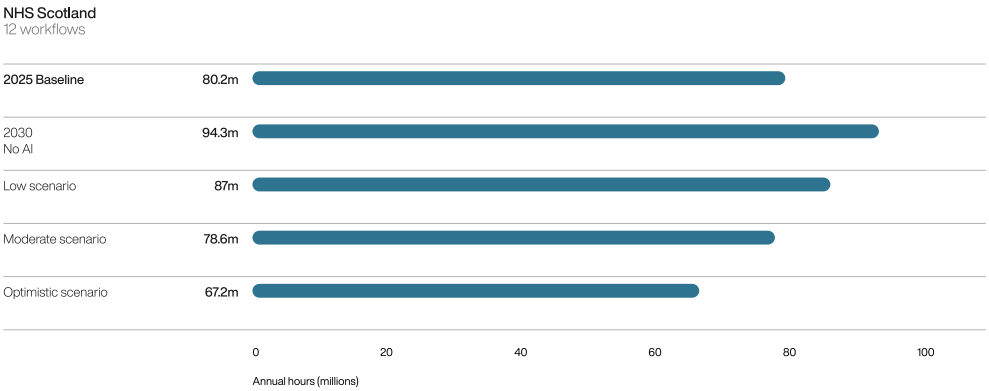


Figure 7 - Potential annual capacity realised across 12 services

NHS Scotland services demonstrate the highest automation potential across all sectors, dominated by clinical documentation tasks that represent 68.2 million baseline hours annually and account for over 80% of NHS Scotland automation opportunity. The sector's services span clinical documentation, appointment scheduling and patient administration, patient-facing services and clinical support functions. Implementation must carefully address clinical safety requirements including medical device regulation, clinical liability and integration with existing NHS Scotland clinical systems.

NHS Scotland – 12 services drawn from the Top 50

- Nurses Clinical Documentation
- Doctors Clinical Documentation
- Allied Health Professionals Clinical Documentation
- Prescription Processing
- GP Appointment Scheduling
- NHS24 Call Triage
- Clinical Coding
- Outpatient Appointment Scheduling
- Ward Clerk: Patient Record Management
- GP Patient Registration
- Referral Letter Vetting
- DNA (Did Not Attend) Follow-Up

Education

Potential annual capacity released by 2030 through AI

Low scenario
3.7
million hours per year

Moderate scenario
8.1
million hours per year

Optimistic scenario
13.9
million hours per year

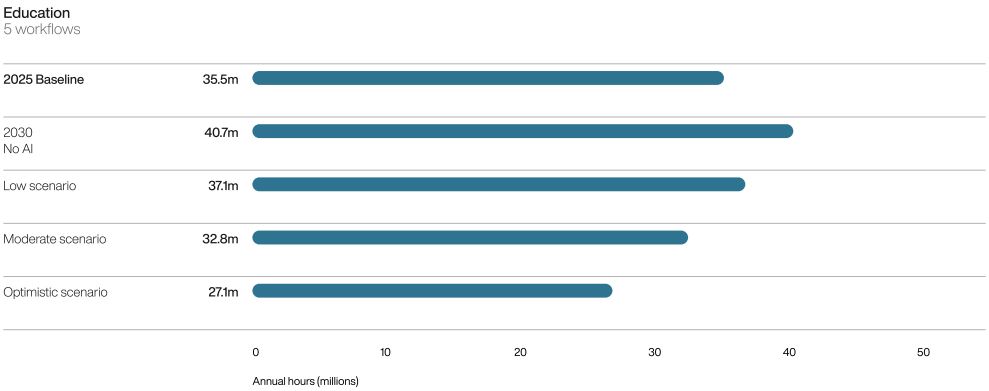


Figure 8 - Potential annual capacity realised across 5 services

Education services represent the second-largest automation opportunity, with teaching and education administration consuming 36.6m baseline hours annually across schools, further education and qualifications processing. The sector demonstrates a clear pattern of content creation and assessment activities that are highly amenable to AI assistance.

Five core teacher services (lesson planning, marking, resource creation, administrative communications and data input) account for over 90% of education sector potential at 35.5m hours. Further education student admissions and SQA exam processing provide additional opportunities for standardised automation across Scottish educational institutions. Lower data sensitivity allows deployment on UK-based hyperscale cloud infrastructure, reducing implementation barriers.

Education – 5 services drawn from the Top 50

- Lesson Planning and Preparation
- Marking and Feedback
- Resource Creation and Preparation
- Administrative Communications
- Data Input and Analysis

2 additional cross cutting services drawn from the Top 50

- SQA: Exam Results Processing
- Further Education: Student Admissions

Local Government

Potential annual capacity released by 2030 through AI

Low scenario	Moderate scenario	Optimistic scenario
2.9	6.3	10.8
million hours per year	million hours per year	million hours per year

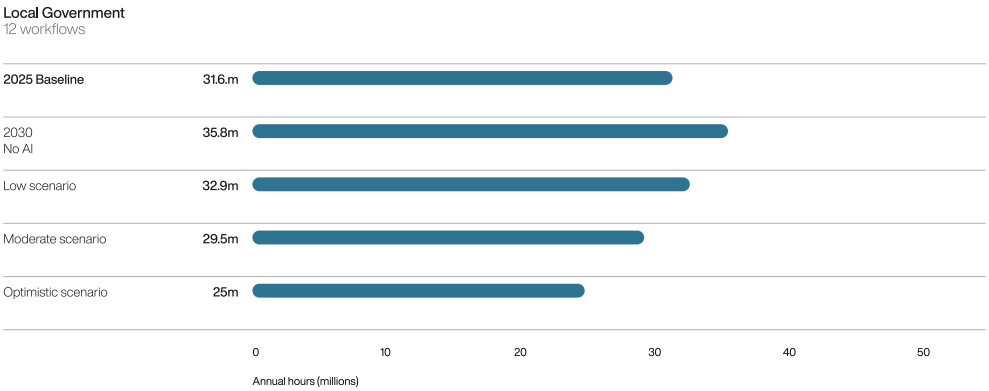


Figure 9 - Potential annual capacity realised across 12 services

Local government services demonstrate significant diversity across 12 distinct service areas, with 31.5 million baseline hours annually distributed across Scotland's 32 local authorities. The sector exhibits recurring case management patterns requiring initial assessment, eligibility checking, routine correspondence and status tracking.

Local Government – 12 services drawn from the Top 50

- Housing and Homelessness Services
- Customer Contact and Triage
- Social Care Administration
- Children's Services
- Support for Schools and Education (transport, meals, etc.)
- Safer and Stronger Communities Services (incl. community safety)
- Council Tax Administration
- Benefit Application Processing
- Planning Applications
- Blue Badge Application Processing
- Licence Application Processing
- Complaint Handling

Policing and Justice

Potential annual capacity released by 2030 through AI

Low scenario
1.9
million hours per year

Moderate scenario
4.1
million hours per year

Optimistic scenario
7.0
million hours per year

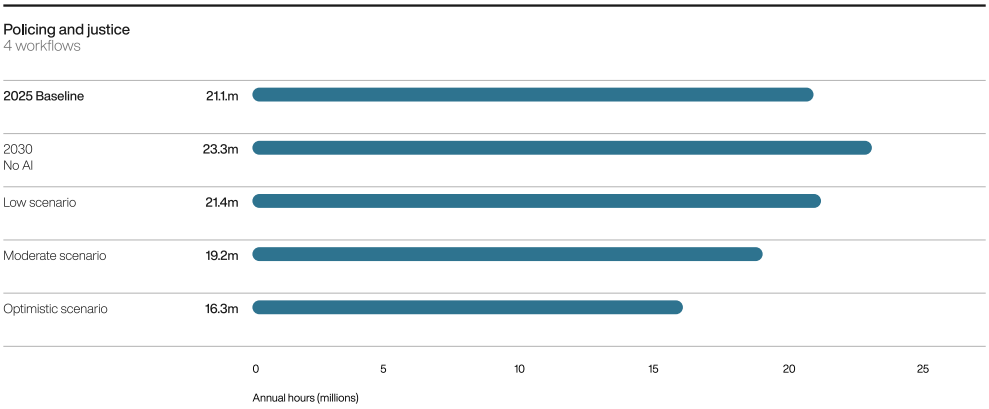


Figure 10 - Potential annual capacity realised across 4 services

Policing and justice services encompass 21.1 million baseline hours annually across Police Scotland, Scottish Prison Service, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service. Police Scotland's non-frontline administrative work represents the largest single opportunity at 9.9 million hours, with case record management adding 4.6 million hours. The Scottish Prison Service contributes 2.4 million hours in record management, whilst Crown Office case processing adds 2.1 million hours. Criminal and civil case processing through courts and tribunals represents 1.7 million hours combined.

Successfully automating administrative burden could enable redeployment of officers to community policing whilst supporting justice system efficiency and prisoner rehabilitation outcomes.

Policing & Justice – 4 services drawn from the Top 50

- Non-Frontline, Administrative Policing Work
- Case Record Management
- Online Report and Form Handling
- 101 Call Handling

Other Public Bodies

Potential annual capacity released by 2030 through AI

Low scenario
0.8
million hours per year

Moderate scenario
1.8
million hours per year

Optimistic scenario
3.2
million hours per year

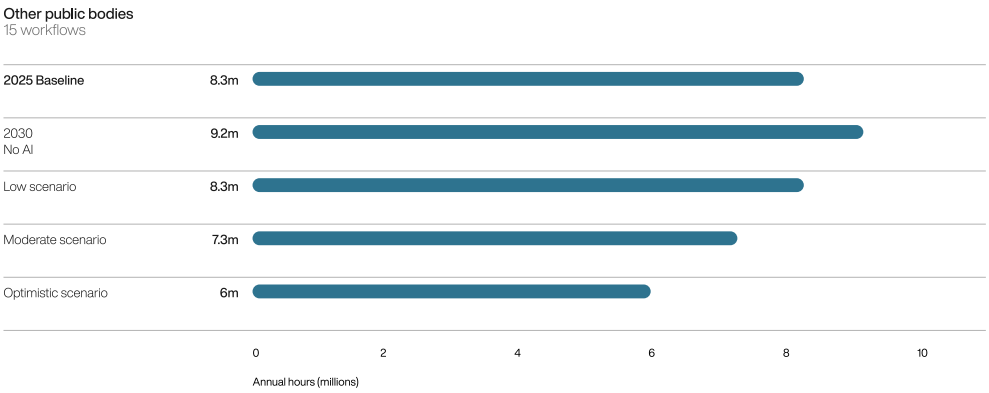


Figure 11 - Potential annual capacity realised across 14 services

Other public bodies encompass eleven organisations with diverse missions but shared administrative patterns, totalling 8.4 million baseline hours. Social Security Scotland represents the largest opportunity within this category, with benefit application processing contributing 3.6 million baseline hours and appeals processing adding a further 355,000 hours. Registers of Scotland land register and landlord register applications total 979,000 hours of property transaction processing and validation. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service customer service contributes 1.5 million hours, whilst Disclosure Scotland application processing adds 347,000 hours. National Records of Scotland births, deaths, and marriages registration (400,000 hours) and Student Awards Agency Scotland application processing (231,000 hours) complete the operational services.

Cross-cutting information rights requests include Freedom of Information requests (568,000 hours), Subject Access Requests (255,000 hours) and Environmental Information Regulations requests (108,000 hours), which apply across all Scottish public bodies under Scottish Information Commissioner oversight.

Other Public Bodies – 15 services drawn from the Top 50

- Social Security Scotland: Benefit Application Processing
- Social Security Scotland: Appeals Processing
- Scottish Prison Service: Record Management
- Crown Office: Case Processing
- Courts and Tribunals Service: Criminal Case Processing
- Courts and Tribunals Service: Civil Case Processing
- Registers of Scotland: Land Register Applications
- Registers of Scotland: Landlord Register Applications
- National Records of Scotland: Births, Deaths and Marriages

- Disclosure Scotland: Application Processing
- SAAS: Award Application Processing
- SFRS: Customer Service and Support Services
- FOI Requests
- Subject Access Requests
- EIR Requests

Service patterns

Making the case for reuse across the public sector

While Scottish public services appear diverse, their underlying workflows such as applications, citizen contact and case assessment follow consistent patterns. Our analysis of the top 50 high-volume services confirms they generally fit into a small set of repeatable service patterns. Recognising this point is key to unlocking AI productivity.

Rather than designing bespoke automation solutions for every organisation, a whole-system approach allows Scotland to develop reusable components across health, justice and local government. This will reduce duplication and costs while de-risking and potentially accelerating adoption. By grouping similar workflows, we can map AI capabilities directly to task types, targeting high-volume opportunities with scalable solutions that meet the needs of multiple services at once.

#	Application	Description
1	**Application processing and Eligibility / Decisioning**	AI automates intake and assessment of applications, validates evidence, checks eligibility/policy rules/guidelines, requests missing information and drafts decisions with reasoning summaries and confidence scores to support professional judgement.
2	**Scheduling, capacity and follow up orchestration**	AI identifies slots, optimises scheduling, sends reminders and handles cancellations to reduce administrative burden.
3	**Case and record lifecycle management**	AI summarises notes, extracts data, codes documentation and updates records for accurate, timely record-keeping.
4	**First contact, triage and routing**	AI ingests enquiries from multi-channels, identifies intent, urgency, maps to a business process and routes to the correct queue/ team.
5	**Knowledge intensive documentation**	Producing, improving, and standardising documents and automation of the classification/coding of documents.

Service pattern concentration: 51% is Case & Record Lifecycle Management

The dominant automation pattern is Case & Record Lifecycle Management, accounting for 91 million baseline hours (51% of total opportunity). This encompasses clinical documentation, case records and administrative record-keeping.

Additional patterns include Application Processing & Eligibility/Decisioning (42 million hours), Knowledge intensive documentation (31.5 million hours) and First Contact, Triage & Routing (10.1 million hours).

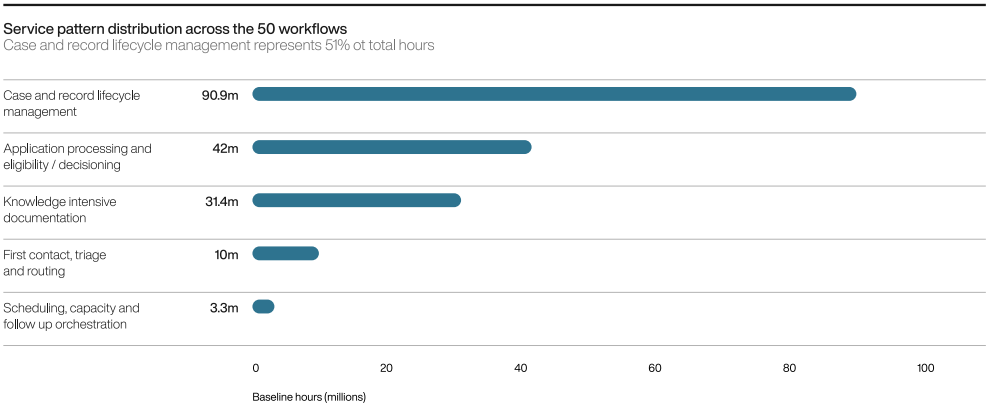


Figure 13 - Service pattern distribution across the 50 services

The case for sovereign compute in Scotland

Our analysis of 50 high-volume services across health, justice, education, local government and national bodies shows that AI-driven productivity gains will only be realised with the right combination of private AI infrastructure, hyperscale cloud capacity and hybrid approaches.

Private AI refers to AI applications and infrastructure managed entirely within an organisation's own secure environment, typically on-premise or in a private cloud. This approach ensures that sensitive corporate data, proprietary models and insights remain completely under the organisation's control, maximising data privacy and security by preventing any exposure to third-party services.

A core part of this assessment involved determining where AI automation can safely run on UK public cloud platforms such as AWS UK, Azure UK or Google Cloud Platform and where it requires sector-controlled private AI infrastructure with strict data governance. This distinction reflects both technical constraints and essential policy considerations around data sovereignty, operational control and public trust.

Infrastructure Split

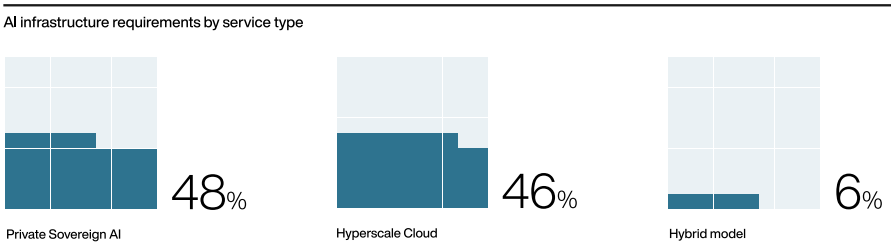


Figure 14 - AI infrastructure requirements split

We estimate that 24 services (48%) totalling 120.5 million baseline hours require private AI infrastructure with sector-specific governance. These services predominantly serve NHS Scotland, Police Scotland and justice bodies where clinical safety requirements, criminal justice data protection and vulnerable persons safeguarding necessitate organisational control beyond standard commercial cloud protections.

Clinical documentation, policing systems and criminal and civil case processing exemplify services requiring secure, sector specific platforms fully controlled by the respective public bodies due to safety, privacy and legal obligations.

Meanwhile, 23 services (46%) representing 56.5 million baseline hours can operate on UK-based hyperscale cloud infrastructure with appropriate data protection controls. The remaining 3 services (6%) representing 0.9 million baseline hours cut cross all public bodies and therefore span both infrastructure types depending on the organisation.

Increasing compute demands

The UK Government's Compute Roadmap highlights the urgency of planning this infrastructure. As AI adoption scales across health, justice, and local government, public sector compute demand is projected to surge. Optimistic modelling suggests a potential 22-fold increase in requirements by 2030, transforming AI from

a niche capability into an operational dependency as critical as networking or storage [29].

Scotland's green AI advantage

Scotland is uniquely positioned to meet this demand sustainably. The nation generates a surplus of renewable electricity and benefits from a cool climate that significantly lowers data centre cooling costs [30]. These structural advantages, combined with land availability for secure sites, are already attracting major investment, including sovereign cloud projects powered by Scottish renewables [31,32,33]. By leveraging this green energy baseline, Scotland can secure essential digital infrastructure while mitigating the environmental impact of the AI boom.

Conclusion

Turning AI opportunity into public service capacity by 2030

AI and the decisive decade for Scotland's public services

Scotland's public services are entering a decisive decade. Rising demand, demographic pressure and constrained budgets mean that sustaining service quality will depend less on new funding and more on Scotland's ability to release capacity from within the system.

Across health, education, local government and justice, the central constraint is time. Skilled frontline professionals are spending a growing proportion of their working hours on administrative tasks that do not require their expertise, judgement or specialist training. This is limiting throughput, increasing backlogs and contributing to workforce strain.

This paper shows that AI capabilities are already mature enough to deliver real productivity benefits in public services. The near-term opportunity is clear and practical: reduce administrative burden and return time to frontline staff. This is not about replacing jobs. It is about automating tasks, not roles, freeing clinicians, teachers, social care teams and justice professionals to focus on decision-making, care, safeguarding, teaching and complex casework.

A quantifiable opportunity at national scale

Across 50 high-volume services spanning NHS Scotland, education, councils, policing, justice and other public bodies, we modelled a baseline of approximately 177.8 million staff hours per year. The purpose of this modelling is not to claim guaranteed savings, but to provide a realistic, evidence-based view of where capacity could credibly be released by 2030, measured first as 'time back' rather than immediate cash savings.

Under three adoption-and-impact scenarios, the analysis shows Scotland could release between approximately 16.6 million and 62.1 million staff hours per year across these services by 2030, equivalent to around 9% to 35% of the baseline hours assessed. In public services, the first-order value of this productivity is improved throughput, reduced backlogs, faster response times and better staff experience. Financial savings may follow later, but only if time release is deliberately converted into workforce and service redesign.

Scale through repeatable patterns, not fragmentation

While public services differ in mission, many workflows share common operational patterns. The greatest concentration of effort sits in repeatable activities such as document and record management, assessment and decision support, content creation, triage, scheduling and information retrieval. These patterns account for the majority of the hours analysed.

This reframes the delivery challenge. Scotland does not need dozens of bespoke AI strategies or disconnected pilots. The fastest and safest route to scale is to build reusable, configurable AI components aligned to these common patterns and integrate them into existing systems of record. This reduces duplication across NHS

boards, councils and public bodies, strengthens assurance and accelerates adoption by making AI repeatable rather than experimental.

Adoption must enable the workforce

The guiding principle of this paper is: automate tasks, not jobs. AI will only deliver sustainable benefit if implemented transparently, with workforce engagement and a clear focus on service outcomes. In a system already under strain, the goal is not indiscriminate headcount reduction, but improved resilience and performance through:

- more time for direct care, teaching and professional judgement
- faster decisions and improved throughput
- higher quality and consistency in documentation and case preparation
- reduced duplication, error and administrative friction
- improved staff experience and retention

If released time is not actively translated into redesigned workflows, it risks being absorbed by unmanaged demand. Training, role redesign, governance and continuous improvement must therefore be treated as core deliverables, not optional extras.

What Scotland should do next

To turn opportunity into outcomes by 2030, Scotland should:

- start with high-volume, lower-risk services to demonstrate value quickly
- build shared, reusable AI components aligned to common service patterns
- establish robust governance and assurance as a prerequisite for scale
- adopt a mixed infrastructure strategy for differing risk profiles
- treat workforce enablement as central, investing in training and service redesign

If Scotland commits to this approach, AI can become a practical tool for sustaining a responsive, trusted and human-centred public service model, returning capacity to the outcomes that matter most: timely healthcare, better-supported teaching, safer communities and faster decisions.

About Storm ID

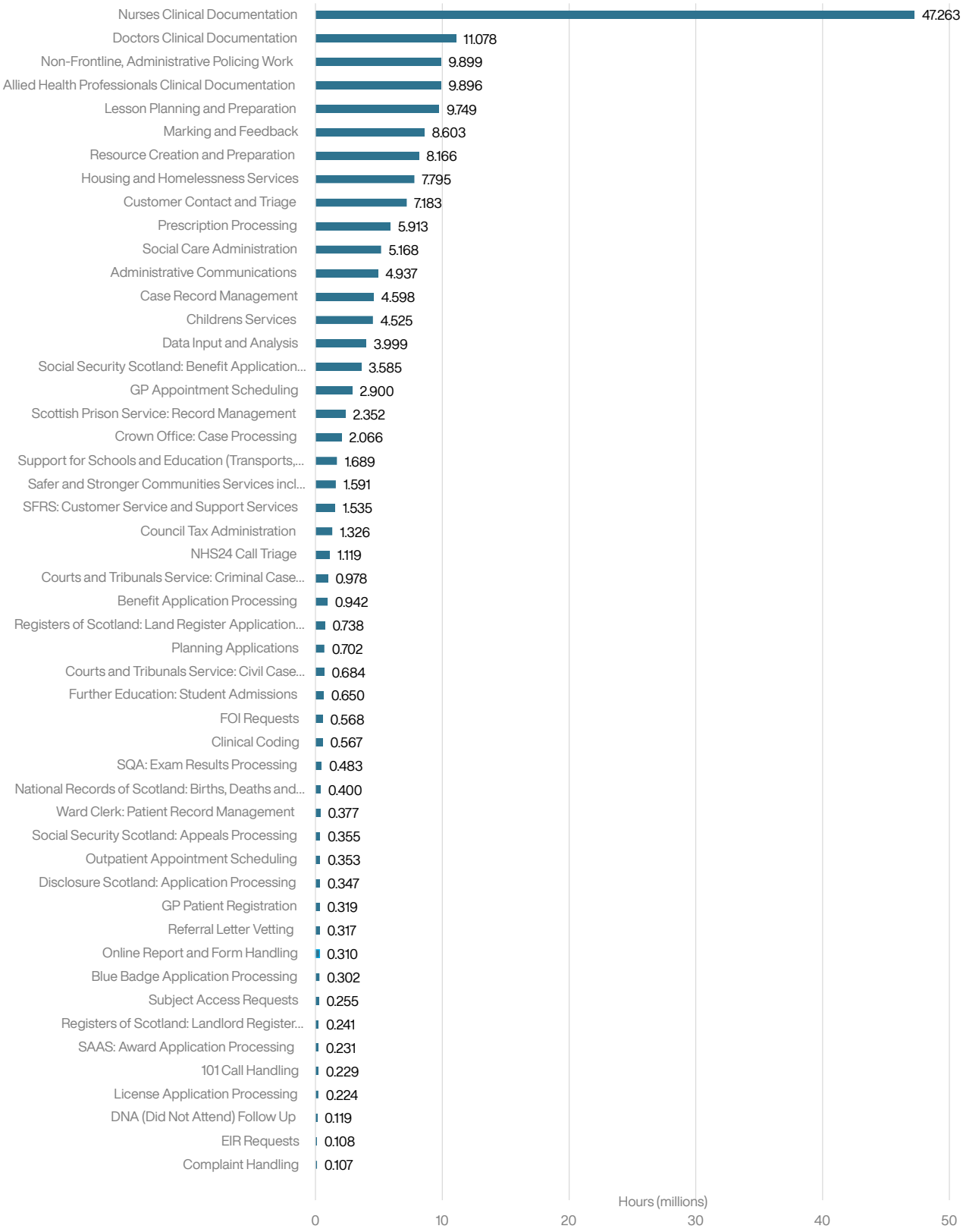
Storm ID is a leading digital, data and AI consultancy, celebrating 25 years of helping organisations deliver better outcomes through technology.

Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Edinburgh, it works with public sector bodies and enterprise organisations, often in highly regulated sectors to design, build and run digital services that are user-centred, data-driven and built to last. Its teams bring together deep expertise in service design, software engineering, cloud, data, analytics and applied AI.

It specialises in tackling complex challenges where trust, scale, security and reliability matter. From national digital platforms and mission critical services to data led decision making and AI enabled solutions, they help clients move from ambition to delivery, safely, pragmatically and with measurable impact.

Over the past year, Storm ID has continued to invest heavily in data and AI capability, supporting clients to unlock value from their data, improve operational efficiency and enhance user experience. They place a strong emphasis on responsible and ethical AI adoption, ensuring AI innovation is transparent, explainable and aligned to real world needs.

Top 50 services



Top 50 services by sector

NHS Scotland

- Nurses Clinical Documentation
- Doctors Clinical Documentation
- Allied Health Professionals Clinical Documentation
- Prescription Processing
- GP Appointment Scheduling
- NHS24 Call Triage
- Clinical Coding
- Outpatient Appointment Scheduling
- Ward Clerk: Patient Record Management
- GP Patient Registration
- Referral Letter Vetting
- DNA (Did Not Attend) Follow-Up

Education

- Lesson Planning and Preparation
- Marking and Feedback
- Resource Creation and Preparation
- Administrative Communications
- Data Input and Analysis
- SQA: Exam Results Processing
- Further Education: Student Admissions

Local Government

- Housing and Homelessness Services
- Customer Contact and Triage
- Social Care Administration
- Children's Services
- Support for Schools and Education (transport, meals, etc.)
- Safer and Stronger Communities Services (incl. community safety)
- Council Tax Administration
- Benefit Application Processing
- Planning Applications
- Blue Badge Application Processing
- Licence Application Processing
- Complaint Handling

Policing & Justice

- Non-Frontline, Administrative Policing Work
- Case Record Management
- Online Report and Form Handling
- 101 Call Handling

Other Public Bodies

- Social Security Scotland: Benefit Application Processing
- Social Security Scotland: Appeals Processing
- Scottish Prison Service: Record Management
- Crown Office: Case Processing
- Courts and Tribunals Service: Criminal Case Processing
- Courts and Tribunals Service: Civil Case Processing
- Registers of Scotland: Land Register Applications
- Registers of Scotland: Landlord Register Applications
- National Records of Scotland: Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Disclosure Scotland: Application Processing
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