

Guide to Streamlining UK Government Efficiency

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The UK's government was already on a path to digital transformation before the onset of COVID-19, but the need to optimize and automate public sector efficiency has been further solidified by the pandemic. The volume of incoming documents has skyrocketed, with companies applying for grants, furloughs, benefit claims, and more.

Additionally, this need is further compounded by the limitations of legacy automation solutions; rules-based solutions lack the flexibility required to implement automation initiatives on a wider scale, leaving current digital transformation aspirations slow to progress.

In September 2021, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy published its National AI Strategy¹. Its aim is to establish the UK public sector as a leading example of how advanced automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques can be deployed to enhance the health, wellbeing, prosperity, and security of UK citizens.

One such solution that will help the UK government bring about that transformation is a more advanced form of automation that leverages AI and Machine Learning (ML) to automate more complex processes and with greater accuracy.

This technology can help the UK public sector automate data-centric, mission-critical processes, enabling UK citizens to receive better, faster service. Further, government employees will spend less time on repetitive, mundane tasks—freeing them to engage in impactful decision making.

“The automation and optimization of document workflows lead to increased customer and employee satisfaction, increased productivity, and improved security.”²

In 2019, global consultancy and systems integrator EY conducted a survey of 1,312 government and public sector workers in the UK to better understand their attitudes towards automation³. It found that the top three issues faced involved:

- Meeting increasing demand for services
- Improving the way they serve citizens, partners, and communities
- Operating within a prescribed financial budget

Many UK government departments already use software tools like Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to help staff reduce the time they spend on data keying and other repetitive back office tasks, but when used in isolation, both have their limitations.

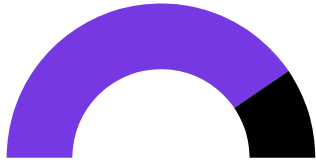
OCR struggles with the variability found in handwritten forms or other image degradations (such as scan lines), resulting in poor accuracy that causes additional delays. This renders it unsuitable for extracting sensitive, oftentimes personally identifiable data and processing large volumes of information.

And while RPA helps automate the same simple, well-defined tasks, it offers little room for variation and leaves valuable data trapped within unstructured document formats. When you consider crossed out fields, low-quality scans, and the diverse conditions citizen forms tend to arrive in, it's easy to see why RPA struggles to scale.

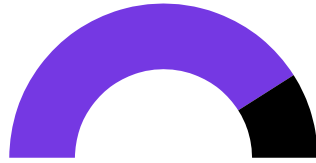
This patchwork of legacy technology may work for small pilots or discrete and non-complicated use cases, but when you consider the scale of the UK public sector, they fall short of delivering the needed transformation.

Digital Transformation demands a more flexible, modular, and intelligent platform.

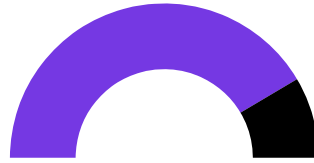
An EY survey of the UK's public sector reveals insights on intelligent automation⁴:



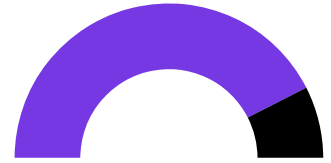
81% believe it helps their organization deliver more positive outcomes



82% think it frees up employee time for higher value tasks



83% believe it helps staff make better decisions



85% think it improves company performance & productivity

Automation helps government departments improve productivity while reigning in spending by automating repetitive tasks and manual processes—making it possible to collect and process data faster, at less cost, and with more accuracy.

Automation in the public sector can drive a broad range of benefits far beyond cost savings, including:

- 1 A better citizen experience and improved outcomes
- 2 Greater efficiency
- 3 Higher job satisfaction & more meaningful work
- 4 Data-driven decision-making

Respondents to the Dods Research survey also reported struggling to process higher volumes of data while meeting rising expectations of a 'seamless digital experience' from citizens and other stakeholders. Respondents identified increased operational efficiency and a simplification of existing infrastructure as two of their top three goals for the next five years.

The top priority for any UK public sector body is to provide a better service for its citizens- whether through access to online resources or through self-service capabilities, there are many areas to grant more control over user interactions with government departments.

Within UK government agencies, popular candidates for automation start with:

- Claims & benefits handling
- Accounts & payments
- Data capture & analysis
- Citizen interaction
- Contract centers

People today expect the same level of personalized and responsive service from government agencies as they get from the private sector, meaning customer experience, or CX, is top-of-mind for every organization.

In 2018, McKinsey launched a customer experience benchmarking survey⁵ of more than 20,000 citizens across 140 government services in seven countries, including the UK. It found that when government agencies offer a better customer experience, they deliver measurable impacts across multiple priorities, like speeding up applications and handling complaints.

The majority of information collected by government departments is unstructured in free form text. Without a proper solution, it becomes difficult to analyze the collected data and use it for decision making.

Timely, accurate analysis of digital data offers crucial advantages to any organization looking to improve its decision making at a large scale.

How Intelligent Automation Improves The Citizen Experience

Intelligent automation reduces the administrative burden on public sector workers, leaving them free to focus on high impact work—such as serving the needs of UK citizens directly.

Machines simply can't replicate the intrinsic and invaluable human qualities like empathy and judgment—crucial attributes in frontline public sector roles ranging from blue light services to benefits, healthcare, and education. At the end of the day, a social worker or benefits officer is better employed to help someone on a personal, face-to-face level. Freeing up staff time through the elimination of manual data keying also helps to improve morale and job satisfaction amongst workers.

It's Time To Choose A Platform

Complexity leads to confusion, so it's imperative that the UK public sector focuses on evolving its patchwork of legacy solutions to a simplified, streamlined automation platform that can flexibly adapt to current systems and future adaptations.

The Hyperscience Platform can be seamlessly integrated into public sector workflows to reduce data extraction times and validate incoming documents before the information is processed, further decreasing data entry times. This includes the classification, extraction, validation, and enrichment of data from messy documents and low resolution images.

In doing so, Hyperscience goes beyond the limited scope of OCR and RPA in order to understand intent and deliver high-quality data outputs. This deeper level of understanding facilitates faster decision making and better business outcomes. The system is also self-learning, with a built-in quality assurance mechanism that trains the ML models over time to deliver:

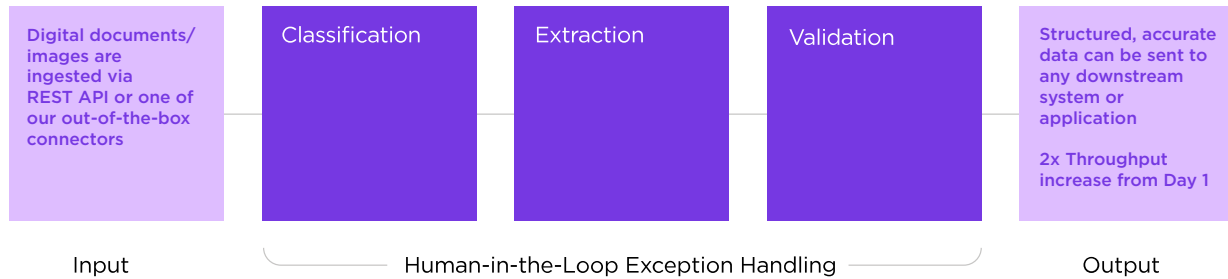
- **Lower error rates**
- **Higher levels of accurate information**

**“The accuracy of reading freeform
joined-up handwriting was close
to 99%.”**

UK Government Department via [CX Today](#)



Simple, Seamless Document Processing



Targeted automation projects are more likely to deliver measurable and sustainable success.

Embedding trust in automation is key to unlocking its value, as is directing its application to specific operational pain points. McKinsey also determined that the projects most likely to succeed are those that focus on a small, precise set of priorities that deliver measurable outcomes for frontline staff.

Gaining the ability to accurately extract data from handwritten forms proves the worth of automation systems that can be scaled out across larger central and local government departments. Additionally, scaling automation across organizations lightens the manual burden on employees, empowering them to provide better service to the UK's citizens.

By implementing intelligent automation, public sector organizations can:

- ✓ Accelerate digital transformation programs
- ✓ Increase productivity and efficiency
- ✓ Lower error rates to aid regulatory compliance
- ✓ Improve customer and employee satisfaction ratings
- ✓ Empower staff to focus on analysis and decision making
- ✓ Implement cost effective, centralized document processing

Fast, efficient digital transformation is critical to making government services fit for purpose in the 21st century. Learn how the Hyperscience Platform can deliver immediate efficiency and cost saving returns.

See Hyperscience in action