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General Counsel Forum

A conversation with The Rt Hon Kanishka Narayan MP

Wednesday 4 November 2026

For organisations and government alike, the challenge is to support ambitious, rapid AI development while doing so responsibly. At our final General Counsel Forum of 2026, General Counsel and policy leaders came together to discuss that challenge after hearing from the Rt Hon. Kanishka Narayan MP, Minister for AI. Below are six key takeaways from the event, held on 4 November 2026.

The UK will be selective about where it builds sovereign AI capability. The public will seek greater protection over sensitive data (e.g., healthcare data) being controlled entirely by foreign companies or stored overseas. The Government is therefore seeking greater control over compute and the wider AI technology stack, with plans to increase capacity from approximately 2GW to potentially 6GW over the coming years, while concentrating investment where it has leverage.

The Government's Core Priorities. The UK's AI strategy rests on four priorities:

1. building foundational infrastructure;
2. developing sovereign strength in areas of the AI stack that give the UK leverage, including chips, quantum technologies, robotics, as well as AI applications in sectors like legal services and life sciences;
3. using AI to support organisational reform and improve public-service delivery; and
4. deepening trust and safety.

Organisations should focus on AI's long-term durable value. Organisations should first establish secure foundations, including properly governed and curated data, to retain agency and resilience as AI develops. Organisations should then introduce secure deployment guardrails and identify where AI can become embedded in internal workflows to deliver lasting value.

AI regulation will remain largely sector-specific. The Government is expected to continue with an industry vertical approach to AI regulation. Existing sector regulators will address harms arising within their respective sectors, as they are best placed to do that with their deep industry and sector knowledge, supported by a limited horizontal framework addressing risks that cut across the economy, such as cyber security and loss of control.

As traditional sector boundaries become less distinct, regulators will need to coordinate their expertise more closely. This will be particularly important for organisations operating across several sectors, such as AI platforms combining legal, technological and professional services.

The Government's stated focus is on outcomes - legislation should be used where it provides the most effective means of achieving those outcomes, while avoiding rules that unnecessarily prevent the UK from taking advantage of new opportunities.

Data centre growth. Public and investor concerns about infrastructure development stem from a perceived lack of control and confidence in delivery promises. Giving the public a sense of control and ensuring that investment strengthens domestic supply chains and sovereign capability will be essential. At the same time, the Government intends to use every available lever to support investors, recognising the urgency of infrastructure delivery.

Speakers



Vinod Bange
Partner

+44 20 7919 1480
vin.bange
@bakermckenzie.com



The Rt Hon Kanishka Narayan MP
Minister for Artificial Intelligence

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