

# **DataFest explores real world examples of AI**

**A conference being held in Assembly Rooms continues until Tuesday afternoon is centred on discussion of data, AI and tech. The theme this year is exploring real world examples of the application of AI.**

Graeme Dey MSP, Minister for Higher and Further Education, visited the conference on Monday to attend the launch event of DataFest 2025 of a Data and AI Skills Framework. The Data Lab is Scotland's innovation centre for data and AI, and has identified a way of filling the skills gaps in this area. The organisation has devised a framework to create training routes both in education and employability. The framework emphasises the importance of "foundational skills in establishing a strong baseline in data and AI. These skills equip learners to navigate and leverage data effectively, setting the stage for more advanced studies and professional roles".

Mr Dey said: "This is an exciting time to be involved in the world of data and AI and the impressive programme for this year's DataFest is testament to the vitality of the sector here in Scotland.

"It is clear that technological advances are transforming how we live and work, driving growth and innovation across a range of sectors.

"The Data Lab's Data and AI Skills Framework will be a vital

asset across sectors and communities, driving the knowledge and learning needed to shape Scotland's future – setting the course for success and a future built on the talent that surrounds us.”

Anna Ashton-Scott, Head of Skills at The Data Lab, said: “It can be daunting to know where to get started with data and AI skills, so we created our skills framework to make it easy for people to chart their learning journey and know what skills to build next, for themselves or for their employees.

“Foundational data and AI literacy is becoming essential across job roles in every sector, regardless of seniority, but we know that there are still significant gaps. We hope our updated framework will be a powerful tool to help individuals and organisations progress across foundational, intermediate and advanced literacy levels to ensure no-one is left behind.”

The Data and AI Skills Framework builds on the work of the Data Skills for Work project, part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Data Skills Gateway Programme. The Framework aligns with Scotland's Digital Economy Skills Action Plan (2023-2028), which emphasises the importance of equipping the workforce with the necessary digital competencies to support Scotland's economic vision. Despite advancements in digital education, challenges persist, particularly concerning data skills, the adaptation of AI technologies, and regional disparities, which the Skills Framework hopes to address.



Photo of Anna Ashton-Scott, Head of Skills at The Data Lab and Graeme Dey MSP, Minister for Higher and Further Education and at the launch event at DataFest yesterday.



The 80+ strong audience at the launch event at DataFest



Photo of the DataFest exhibition hall with (l-r) Fash Fasoro, Founder and CEO of DataKirk, Heather Thomson, CEO of The Data Lab, Louise Meikleham, Senior Data Policy Officer at the Scottish Government and Graeme Dey MSP, Minister for Higher and Further Education.