

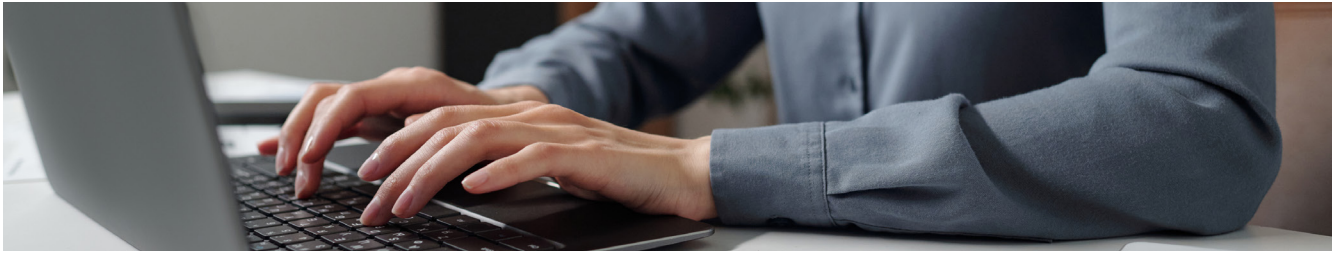


# Making sense of AI in public services:

## public services:

A practical guide for UK public sector leaders choosing between generative AI tools, chatbots, and agentic AI





## Executive summary

From central government departments and local authorities through to NHS providers, blue-light services, and arm's-length bodies (ALBs), AI is becoming integral to how UK public sector organisations deliver their services. Yet with the proliferation of so many AI tools, leaders face uncertainty about which best support internal teams versus those that best support the public.

**This guide explains three key categories of AI:**

» **Generative AI/AI assistants** designed for staff

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» **Traditional chatbots** designed for simple Q&A

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» **Agentic AI** designed to complete tasks, integrate with systems, and support end-to-end service delivery

**When providing support to the public, residents, patients, service users, businesses, visitors, or citizens, organisations need solutions that:**

» Use **verified organisational content**

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» Operate **24/7**

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» Support **multiple languages**

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» **Execute workflows** and update back-office systems

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» **Offer robust guardrails** for data protection, accuracy, and security

This eBook outlines a practical, risk-aware approach to selecting AI for public service delivery and explains how **agentic AI solutions** like **Granicus Experience Agent (GXA)** offer secure, action-driven service automation at scale.



## CHAPTER 1:

# The AI landscape across the UK public sector



## Three categories of AI tools

### 1. General-purpose AI productivity tools (Copilot, ChatGPT, etc.)

- Designed for staff: policy teams, communications, operations, and administrative roles
- Ideal for summarising documents, drafting content, or answering knowledge queries
- Not designed for public-facing service delivery, transactional workflows, or case management

### 2. Traditional chatbots

- Provide FAQ responses
- Limited to scripts and simple decision trees
- No workflow execution, limited multi-language capability, and no integration with operational systems

### 3. Agentic AI (e.g., GXA)

- Designed for the public (residents, patients, visitors, users, etc.)
- Designed for executing routine tasks and workflows across departments
- Supports action-oriented journeys (e.g., submitting an issue, checking eligibility, updating records)
- Works across websites, messaging channels, and forms
- Integrates with back-office systems
- Provides auditability, guardrails, and policy alignment



# What public users actually need

Across sectors – health, local services, policing, national councils – users' needs are consistent:

- ✓ **24/7 self-service access**
- ✓ **Task completion**, not just information
- ✓ **Clear guidance**, even for complex processes
- ✓ **Multilingual support** for diverse and vulnerable groups
- ✓ **Secure handling** of personal information
- ✓ **Visibility** into progress and outcomes

Public expectations have evolved beyond chatbots and require reliable, actionable digital support.





## CHAPTER 2:

# Why “one size fits all” doesn’t work in public services

## Risks of misapplying generative AI/Al assistants

Generative AI/Al assistants are not engineered for public engagement.

### They lack:

- ⊗ Workflow orchestration
- ⊗ Integration with case management, patient systems, or operational platforms
- ⊗ Consistent guardrails for public use
- ⊗ Structured escalation paths or identity verification

Using them for public-facing interactions introduces accuracy, security, and operational risks.

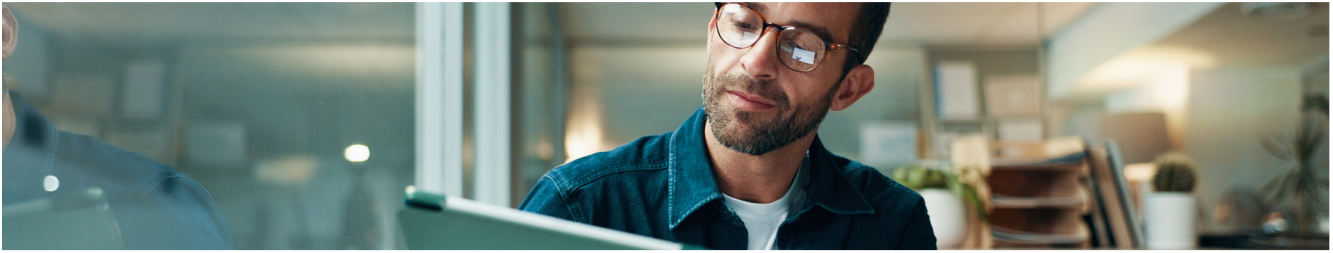


## Limitations of chatbots

### While helpful for basic Q&A, chatbots:

- Fail on multi-step or unpredictable user journeys
- Cannot complete actions or update systems
- Require constant maintenance
- Underperform in health, policing, or regulatory contexts where accuracy is critical

**Outcome: Users end up calling, emailing, or escalating unnecessarily.**



### CHAPTER 3:

# What “Agentic AI” means for public services

Agentic AI is action-oriented. It:

- ✓ **Understands intent**, nuance, and complex queries
- ✓ **Captures missing details** through natural conversation
- ✓ **Executes workflows** across systems
- ✓ Handles **multi-language interactions**
- ✓ Operates with **policy-driven guardrails**
- ✓ **Supports accessibility** and inclusion requirements



## Use cases across the public sector

Sector	Example agentic journeys
Local Government	Reporting issues, parking enquiries, waste requests, service applications
Central Government	Licence applications, guidance triage, enquiry support routing
NHS & Healthcare	Pre-appointment triage, service navigation, patient information capture
Police & Blue-Light	Non-emergency information capture, incident triage, reporting support
Public Agencies & Regulators	Application intake, eligibility flow, compliance guidance
Tourism & Culture	Visitor services, event access, multilingual information support

## CHAPTER 4:

# Governance, security, and guardrails for public-facing AI

Public sector AI must meet strict standards. **Key areas include:**

- ✓ **Data protection:** UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018
- ✓ **Security:** Role-Based Access Control (RBAC), encryption, audit trails
- ✓ **Content assurance:** Verified organisational sources only
- ✓ **Accuracy controls:** Confidence thresholds, fallback rules
- ✓ **Inclusive access:** Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliance, multilingual capability
- ✓ **Operational assurance:** Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) readiness, onboarding governance, SLAs

Agentic AI like GXA is designed to meet these public sector-specific requirements.





## CHAPTER 5:

# Evaluation framework for AI in UK public services

A structured procurement and decision framework:

## Strategy

- Internal efficiency vs. public self-service
- Prioritisation of services (volume, impact, vulnerability)

## Capability requirements

- Workflow execution
- Integration readiness
- Multi-language support
- Content governance
- Guardrail coverage
- Omnichannel delivery

## Operating model

- Ownership of updates
- Analytics and optimisation
- Scalability across services

## CHAPTER 6:

# GXA as an agentic AI solution for the UK public sector

With agentic AI, your operations become:

- ✓ Action-driven
- ✓ Capable of multi-language conversations and content handling
- ✓ Secure, policy-aligned guardrails
- ✓ Easily integrated with back-office solutions
- ✓ Operationally auditable
- ✓ Publicly accessible 24/7

The benefits of AI, from sector to sector:

- **Local government:** Waste requests, street issue reporting, revenues and benefits triage
- **Central government agencies:** Licence applications, information routing
- **NHS:** Service navigation, pre-appointment data capture
- **Police:** Non-emergency triage, information capture
- **Tourism and culture:** Visitor support and guidance



## CHAPTER 7:

# 90-day roadmap for deploying agentic AI

Use the following timeline to smartly integrate agentic AI into your operations:

- 1 **Weeks 1–2:** Define scope, guardrails, Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)
- 2 **Weeks 3–6:** Build workflows, integrate systems
- 3 **Weeks 7–8:** Test, train teams, accessibility checks
- 4 **Weeks 9–12:** Public launch, optimisation cycle

## CHAPTER 8:

# Risks, mitigations, and continuous improvement

As with any new technology, there are certain risks associated with the adoption of agentic AI.

**These include:**

- ✓ Inaccurate outputs
- ✓ Content drift
- ✓ Integration delays
- ✓ Low public adoption

**But these can be mitigated by implementing the following actions:**

- Ensuring confidence scoring
- Establishing content governance cycles
- Taking a phased pilot approach to agentic AI
- Offering clear signposting across channels

## APPENDIX

# AI Comparison Table

Capability	Generative AI tools (Internal)	Chatbots (FAQ)	Agentic AI (GXA)
User	Staff	Public (limited)	Public
Value	Productivity	Q&A	Task completion
Workflow execution	Limited	No	Yes
System integrations	Manual	Rare	Native patterns
Guardrails	Generic	Minimal	Public sector aligned
Multilingual	Limited	Basic	Built-in
24/7 public use	Not designed for it	Partial	Yes

## See how agentic AI can transform your public services.

Book a 30-minute discovery session to explore feasibility across your highest-impact service areas.

[Contact us](#)

