

# Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Use Policy 2026

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Hardscape Group Ltd, incorporating Hardscape Products Ltd, Hardscape Surfaces Ltd, and Hardscape Warehouse Ltd (furthermore known as Hardscape) is aware of the increasing availability, integration, and use of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) in many aspects of the digital world.

This policy outlines the responsible use of A.I. technologies within the organisation, in alignment with UK regulatory principles and data protection laws. It aims to mitigate risks related to privacy, ethics, and compliance while fostering innovation.

This policy works alongside our General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy which supports our compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (Act) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation. We are committed to complying with our legal obligations under Data Protection Legislation.

### Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to our employees, contractors assigned to do work on our behalf, and personnel or companies involved in the creation, modification, or maintenance of our digital and data systems, and the control of the tools and systems we use to carry out both our regular duties and project work.

### Ethical Considerations

In line with UK government guidance and CIPD principles, Hardscape supports the restriction and management of A.I. use to ensure that the following considerations are met:

- A.I. must be used to enhance human decision-making, not replace it
- A.I. systems should be explainable and auditable
- Bias and discrimination must be actively monitored and mitigated
- Employees should be trained on ethical A.I. use and data protection

### Acceptable Use Guidelines

Where A.I. use is deemed appropriate and beneficial, employees must:

- Use only approved A.I. platforms vetted and authorised by the IT Department
- Avoid sharing confidential, proprietary, or personal data with external A.I. tools
- Conduct a DPIA before deploying A.I. systems that process personal data
- Ensure A.I. systems meet UK principles of fairness, accountability, transparency, and contestability
- Follow the ICO's guidance on fairness, bias mitigation, and automated decision-making

### High Risk A.I. Usage

We aim to avoid or limit High-Risk A.I. tools or manage their use to mitigate those risks. The definition of High-Risk includes:

- Inputting personal or sensitive data into public or unapproved A.I. platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard)

- Using A.I.-generated outputs for automated decision-making (e.g., recruitment and performance reviews) without human oversight
- Training A.I. models on internal datasets without a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)
- Deploying A.I. tools that lack transparency, fairness, or explainability
- Using A.I. for surveillance, profiling, or behavioral analysis without legal basis or consent

### How we will monitor and enforce A.I. use

The organisation uses Microsoft Purview to enforce this policy through:

- Data Loss Prevention (DLP) rules to block or warn against sharing sensitive data with known A.I. platforms
- Information Protection labels classify and restrict data used in A.I. workflows
- Insider Risk Management to detect anomalous A.I.-related behaviour
- Communication Compliance to monitor discussions around A.I. in Teams, Outlook, and SharePoint

This will be monitored by the Group I.T. Manager and regularly reported to the Director and Management Teams where necessary.

Ultimate accountability will be with the Group Finance Director, who will ensure we have sufficient and suitable resources, strategies, and support to achieve the aims described in this policy.

Further development of the processes, training requirements, and policy will be the responsibility of the group I.T. Manager who will also review this policy annually to ensure we maintain robust controls through a fast-developing sector.



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Dated: 18th February 2026



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