

## **Covid-19: How the AI Council responded**

At the end of March 2020 the work of the UK Government pivoted to focus on the Covid-19 crisis response. Seeking to support this response and to highlight and explore the implications for the AI ecosystem, the activity and priorities of the AI Council were similarly refocused.

In practical terms this meant pausing the on-going work of the Data, Narratives, and Skills AI Council Working Groups. There remains a long term intention to re-initiate this work as soon as practical, while noting the possible need to reshape priorities due to the COVID crisis and depending on the future environment.

The Council stood up weekly crisis response meetings to ensure it was able to respond to a rapidly changing situation in real time. Members updated on their individual activities to support Covid-19 efforts and opened up opportunities for collaboration among members. The rhythm of these meetings reduced to bi-weekly as of 7<sup>th</sup> May and as of 1<sup>st</sup> June have reverted back to a quarterly schedule.

### **Areas of focus during crisis response**

- Highlighting the needs of the tech sector and specifically the AI start-up ecosystem in the immediate aftermath of Covid-19, i.e. implications for R&D;
- In conjunction with the Robotics Growth partnership and other stakeholder groups, exploring the role that synthetic environments, including digital twins, could play in enabling AI to optimise complex systems of systems;
- Exploring how the AI ecosystem could support the immediate crisis response;
- Advising on requirements for access to finance for start-ups affected by Covid-19;
- High level engagement with a range of expert stakeholders across government, including Secretaries of State, advisory boards and senior officials, on a range of relevant topics covering AI and data;
- Advising on the role of AI and data technologies and the broader ecosystem in the post-crisis recovery;