

# Six Years in Careers Chatbots: What have we learned?

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Co-Founder CareerChat UK Ltd

 **CDI**  
CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT  
INSTITUTE

**AI in Careers**  
**LIGHTNING**  
**CONFERENCE**

Wednesday 29 April  
9.30 am | Online

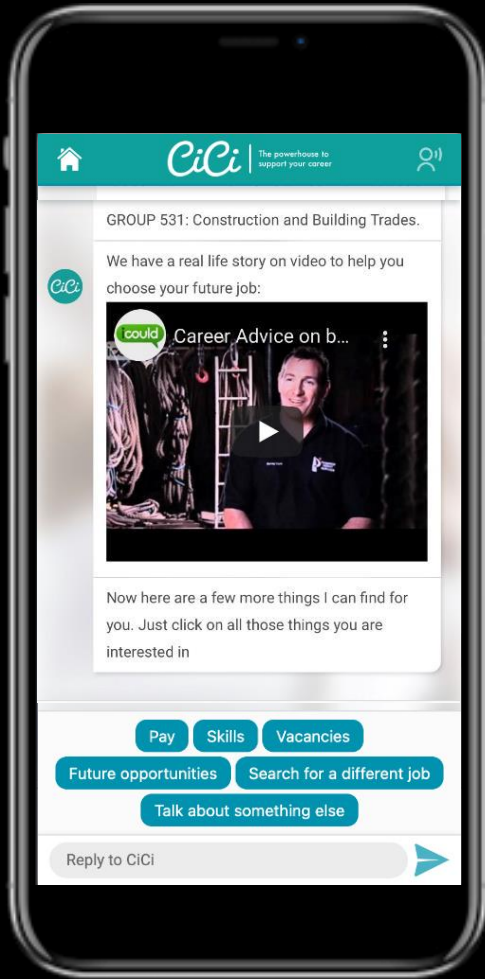
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**Morrisby**

Delivered in partnership with

 **CareerChat**  
PIONEERING INNOVATION

WARWICK INSTITUTE for  
EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH 



**Optional LLM capabilities**

**Curated and updated careers advice for 4x UK nations**

**Written/reviewed by qualified careers advisers**

**Integrated labour market data and course data from 10+ sources**

**Sector award winner CDI  
2024 UK Business Tech  
Finalist 2025 – AI and  
Innovation**

**R&D grants from Nesta / DfE /  
InnovateUK**



<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/03990896ab.html>

**ODiCY**

Observatory on Digital technologies in Career guidance for Youth



# Who are we?



Associate  
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Hughes OBE  
Founding director



Dr Chris Percy  
Founding director



Andy Coates  
Software developer



Lauren Croll  
Marketing and Sales  
Associate



Lee Johnson  
Senior Associate



Fineen Bradley  
Senior Associate



Sharon Walpole  
Senior Associate



Dr. Jennifer  
Mckenzie  
Senior Associate



Dr Emma Bolger



David Curran  
Senior Associate



Lienda Beale  
Senior Associate



Prof. Fusun Akkok  
Emerita professor,  
Middle East Technical  
University, Ankara,  
Turkey, Careersnet,  
CEDOFOP



Ladi Mohammed  
Chapman  
Senior Associate



Liz Reece  
Senior Associate

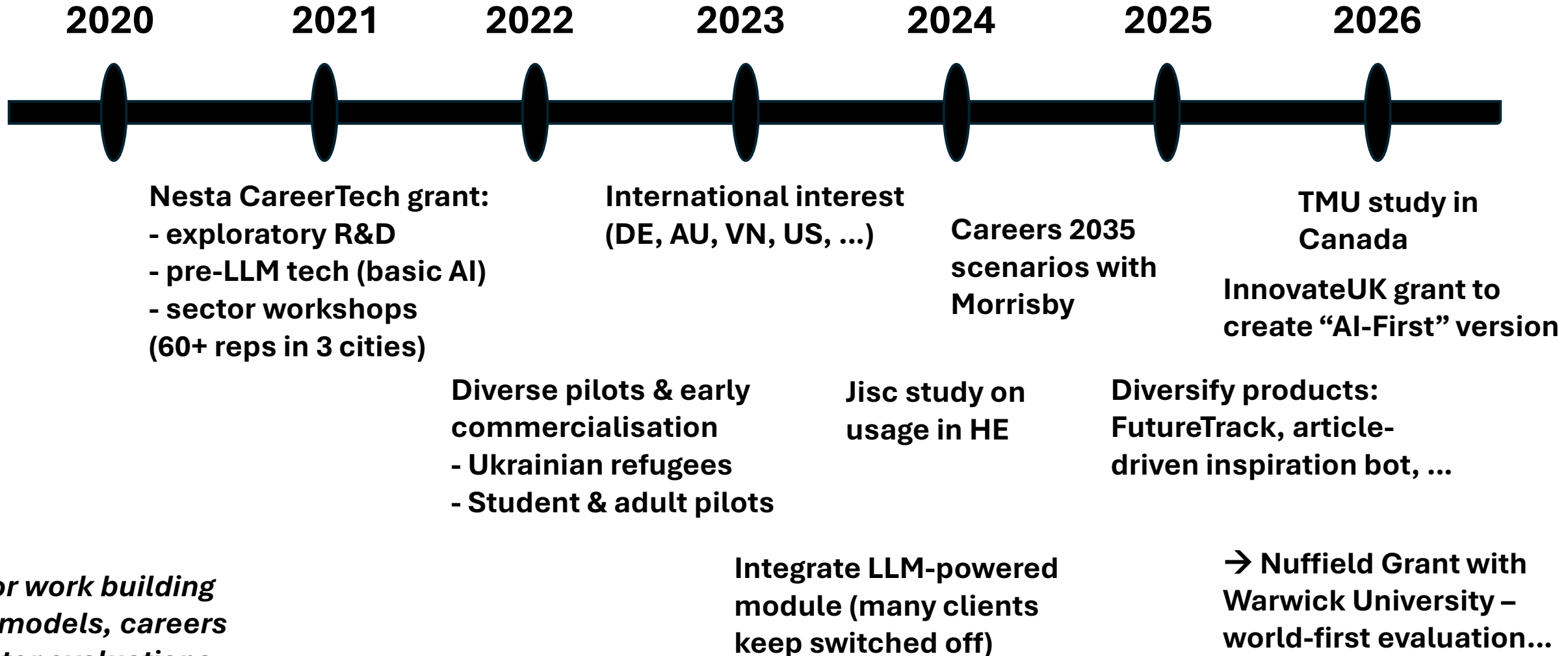
- **25,000+ Unique Users**
- **500,000+ User messages**
- **Almost £1m in extra value**

# A few examples Who do we work with?



Can we help you?

# Six years on a slide



*Prior work building ML models, careers sector evaluations, LMI analyses, adviser training, ...*

**Integrate LLM-powered module (many clients keep switched off)**

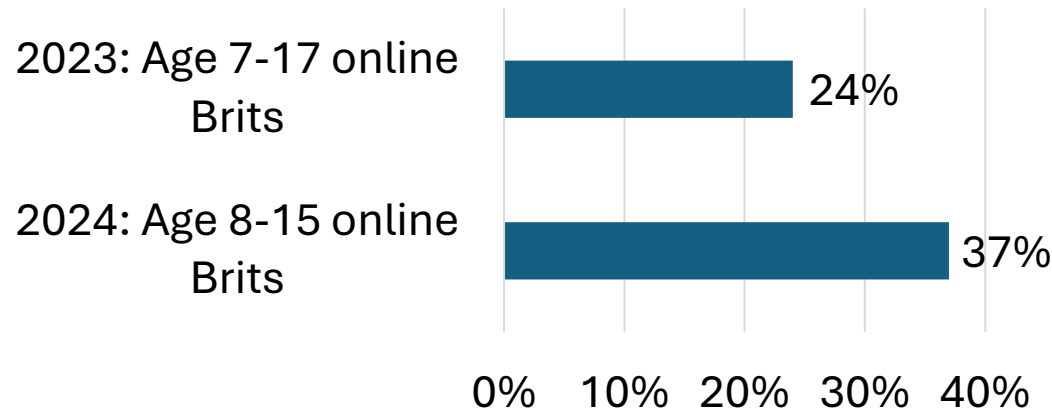
**→ Nuffield Grant with Warwick University – world-first evaluation...**

# Key learnings to share today

- 1 Unlike 2020, chatbots are happening – sector can choose to lead, but not prevent**
- 2 Usage at all times of day – everything from short checks to long discussions**
- 3 Permanent start-up mode: Constantly changing expectations and capabilities (amid slowly changing usage norms – a sector still figuring out what to do)**
- 4 Users will tell you what they want and you can build better models**
- 5 Unlocking benefits will take substantial sector-wide training**
- 6 Unmet need for evaluation – still unmet, but watch this space...**
- 7 Growing existential anxiety: Jobs transformation, disempowerment, uncertainty, ...**

# 1. Chatbots are happening

ChatGPT usage "over the last year"



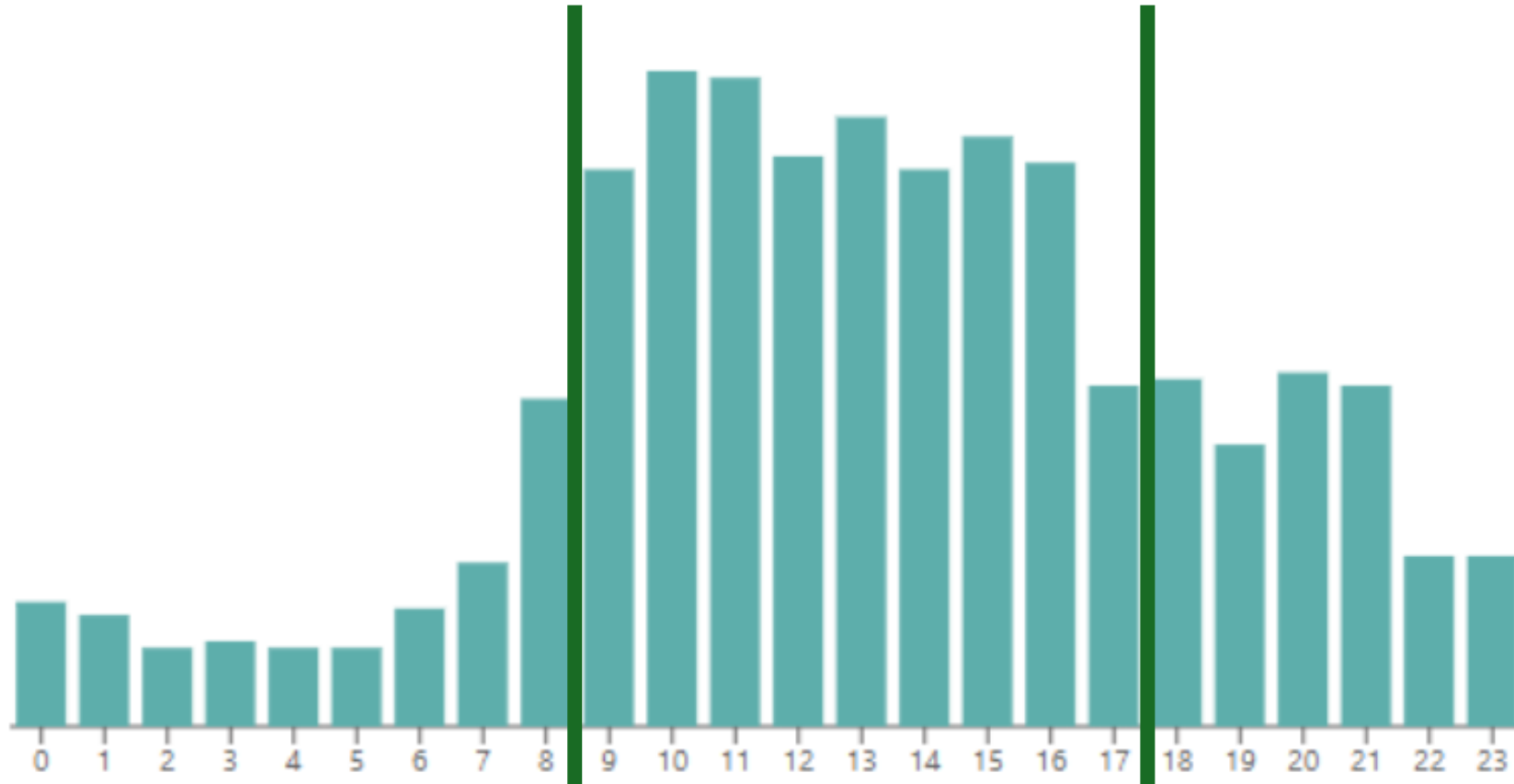
2025 UK

- 46% weekly usage (vs 31% in 2024)  
67% usage 2025 (vs 77% 2024)  
(National Literacy Trust)
- 9% of 8-14 year olds visit just ChatGPT in a single month  
(Ofcom passive monitoring)

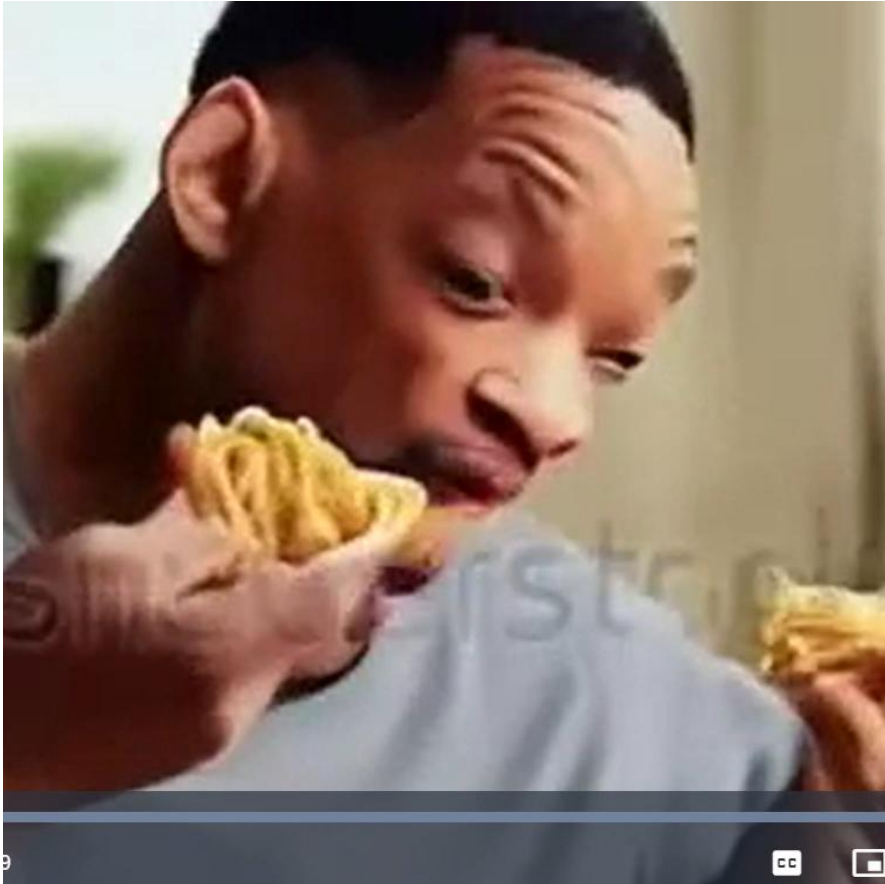
## ***Students also turning to AI for careers topics***

- 17% of A-level students actively sought careers advice from AI tools (Prospects survey, 2024)
- 43% of 8-12 year olds GenAI users use it “to find out information or learn about something” (Turing)
- Careers advisers in an HE context had far less visibility of AI usage for careers support than students report, esp. for guidance type questions (Hughes et al., 2024)
- Pearson, TBI, Teacher Tapp polling all point to significant usage in secondary school

## 2. Usage at all times and diverse durations



### 3. Capability storm – birfurcating norms



**Mid-2023**

#### At the same time:

- Hallucinations reduced but not removed
- Different answers given question phrasing
- US-bias in careers thinking
- Safeguarding duty of care increasing

**Mid-2025**



## 4. User feedback on AI-first inspiration bots

### Did they get it?

- **91%:** understood questions mostly/really well (70% understood 'really well')
- **67%:** learned something new about careers/options (vs. 38% in Phase 1)
- **59%:** feel more inspired about their futures (vs. 20% in Phase 1; nb. 16% 'much more inspired')

### Who

N=88 phase 1  
→ N= 76 phase 2  
Mostly aged 13-16  
4 nations

### What they wanted

- Longer conversation history - more personalised & intelligent
- Provide more insight in the bot (without need for 3<sup>rd</sup> party links)
- More fun: short form, emojis, multi-media
- Response scrolling and speed control...
- Links that are pre-checked, curated, and high-quality, ...

## 4. User feedback on AI-first inspiration bots

*“Lucy's story was really inspirational. It tells you the skills you need and the things I could put on an application. I thought this was quite useful. I asked it about options for career progression in childcare and it told me about being a nursery manager or running my own nursery which I liked.”*

*“Asked questions which the AI provided useful answers towards with asking about computing science to which it gave potential jobs and what qualifications you could need along with some links to pages about the field of work.”*

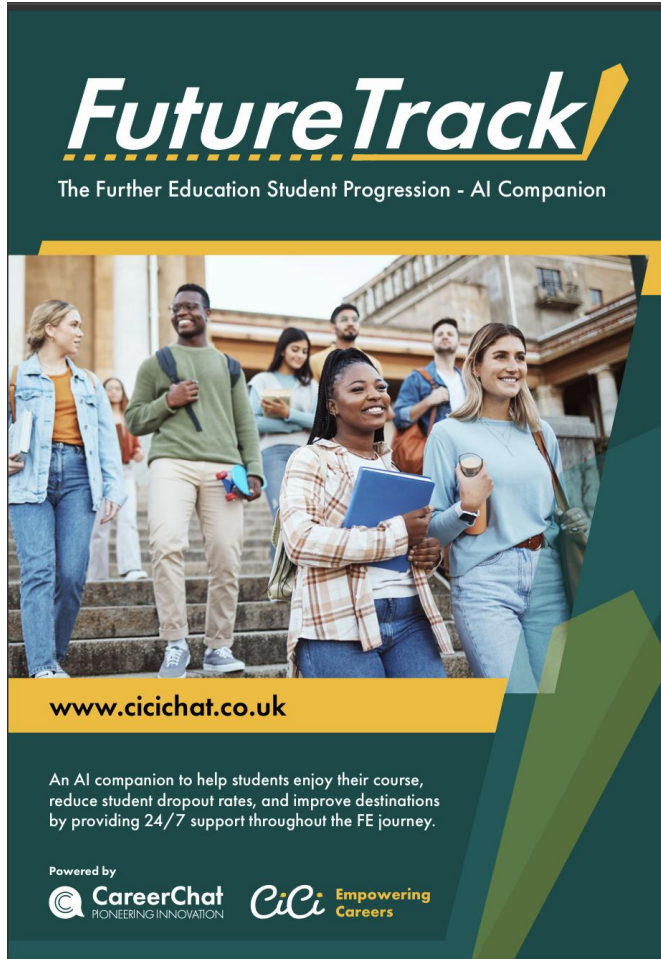
*“It helped me learn the difficulties of working with animals at most levels as it's very expensive and difficult.”*

*“I didn't know you could do a child development or health & social care GCSE. This was interesting to find out.”*

*“Actually, pretty good. I told it I didn't know what I wanted to do for a career, told it my interests and it actually gave me some good advice and some really good examples.”*

*“I told it I didn't know what GCSEs to pick and it gave a good answer. I told it I liked English and music best and it told me about lots of jobs that use both. I never thought of being a music journalist. I followed a link to a video of someone who writes about music. I think this could be a really fun job for me.”*


# 4. FE clients/students feedback: Want more structured progression & retention support




**FutureTrack**  
The Further Education Student Progression - AI Companion

[www.cicichat.co.uk](http://www.cicichat.co.uk)

An AI companion to help students enjoy their course, reduce student dropout rates, and improve destinations by providing 24/7 support throughout the FE journey.

Powered by  
 **CareerChat**  
PIONEERING INNOVATION

 **Cici Empowering Careers**

FutureTrack - AI Companion

## The Further Education Student Progression - AI Companion

An AI companion designed to reduce student dropout rates and prevent NEET outcomes by providing 24/7 student support throughout the further education (FE) journey.

### The Challenge

**The dropout crisis is real:** National statistics show that one in three Level 2 learners in Further Education fail to complete their courses - compared with one in five at Level 3.<sup>1,2</sup> Similar retention challenges persist across other qualification levels. This highlights the urgent need for targeted, early-intervention support to improve learner retention and progression outcomes.

**Government response:** In December 2025, the government announced an £820 million Youth Guarantee funding package, recognising that "too many young people fall out of education unnoticed, crippling their life chances and denting the economy".<sup>3</sup> The government has committed to improved attendance tracking and early-warning systems to identify young people at risk of dropping out and enable timely intervention.<sup>4</sup>

**The progression support gap:** Students face critical moments of doubt during their studies, at evenings and weekends when traditional support isn't always available. Tutors and Careers Advisers can't be there at 10pm when uncertainty sets in.

### The FutureTrack Solution

**Building understanding, one conversation at a time:** Through ongoing conversations, FutureTrack creates a comprehensive picture of each student's, interests, motivation, goals, and challenges. Students gain self-awareness for their own planning; tutors and careers advisers gain the context needed for truly personalised support.

**24/7 AI-powered support** that catches the wobble before it becomes a withdrawal.

**Continuous accessible support** from course doubts to career motivation and confidence - keeping students engaged and on track.

**Human-enhanced support** that scales your team's impact without replacing the personal touch from a tutor and/or expert career guidance adviser.

**Aligned with national priorities:** FutureTrack directly supports the government's commitment to early intervention and risk prevention.

### The Evidence Base

**Retention impact:** Colleges face significant financial pressure from student withdrawal, with the 16 to 19 funding formula providing only 50% of programme funding for learners who do not complete their studies.<sup>5</sup>

**Return on Investment:** High quality careers and employability interventions consistently deliver positive return on investment (ROI) for both student and employers.<sup>6</sup> Comprehensive early intervention approaches - combining holistic support and timely identification of at risk students - have proven effective in reducing dropout and NEET rates.<sup>8</sup>

**When students need support most:** Research shows critical support moments occur during evenings and weekends - times when traditional services are unavailable but when student doubts intensify.<sup>9</sup>

**Policy alignment:** The government has invested £34 million in a new "risk of NEET indicator tool" (RONI) to give local areas more accurate insights into youth unemployment and provide targeted support.<sup>10</sup> FutureTrack provides real-time early warning capability.

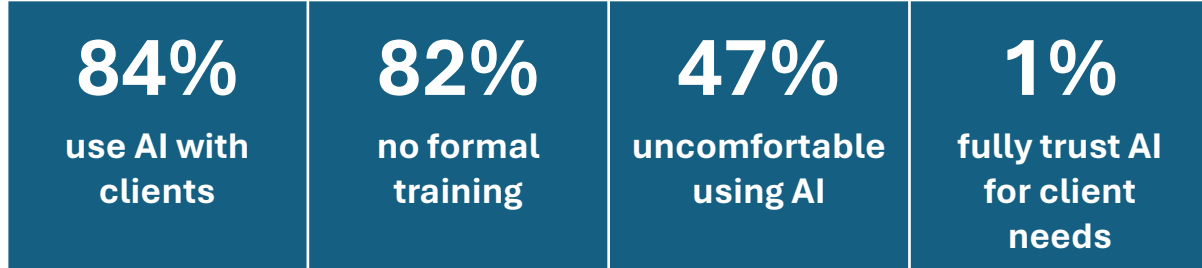
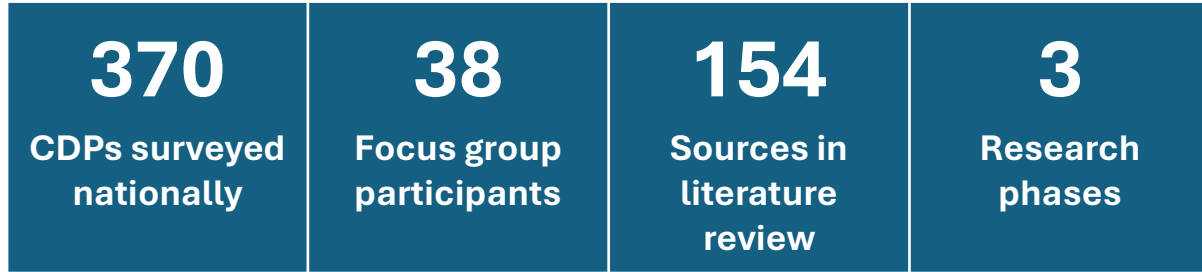


**Book a demo:**  
<https://cicichat.co.uk/book-a-demo/>



<sup>1</sup> 16 to 18 school and college performance data in England, 2022 to 2024 - GOV.UK  
<sup>2</sup> Further education and skills, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK  
<sup>3</sup> Further Education and Skills - Government Response  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/820-million-young-people-to-benefit-from-expanded-support-new-training-and-work-experience-opportunities>  
<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-ambitious-plan-to-back-16-to-19-education-leaders-to-deliver-real-life-apprenticeships>  
<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-ambitious-plan-to-back-16-to-19-education-leaders-to-deliver-real-life-apprenticeships>  
<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-ambitious-plan-to-back-16-to-19-education-leaders-to-deliver-real-life-apprenticeships>  
<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-ambitious-plan-to-back-16-to-19-education-leaders-to-deliver-real-life-apprenticeships>  
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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-ambitious-plan-to-back-16-to-19-education-leaders-to-deliver-real-life-apprenticeships>

## 5. Need for training to get impact



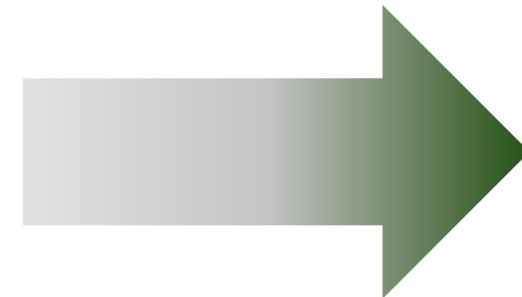
### *Want training that:*

- Is careers tailored – not AI generic like vast majority out there
- Covers prompt-engineering on diverse use cases (examples that fail + good practice)
- Cultivates AI mindset – sceptical but sophisticated user who knows pitfalls and can check/curate
- Hands-on, practically-grounded, role-specific
- Living handbook & resources – not just one day in a classroom
- Community of learners/experts interacting over time (Slack? SM Groups?)

## 6. Unmet need for evaluations

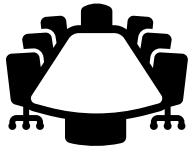
<i>How important to you is it that a careers chatbot driven by LLM has been evaluated before being encouraged for use?</i>	<i>Advisers</i>	<i>Students</i>
<b>Not important</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Quite important</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Very important</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Unsure</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Specific comment (overwhelmingly pro-evaluation)</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>4%</b>

**Late 2025 lit review**  
**→ still very weak in careers**  
**(weak but improving in health and education)**



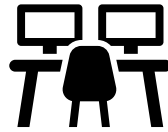
## 6. Nuffield Foundation project 2026-27

### Panel review



- 2x advisers
- 2x students
- 1x tech expert
- Assess bot vs formal rubric for a use case

### Case study comparison



- 3x client scenarios → generate transcripts via 4x interventions
- Each transcript scored by 2x advisers vs rubric

### Randomised field trial



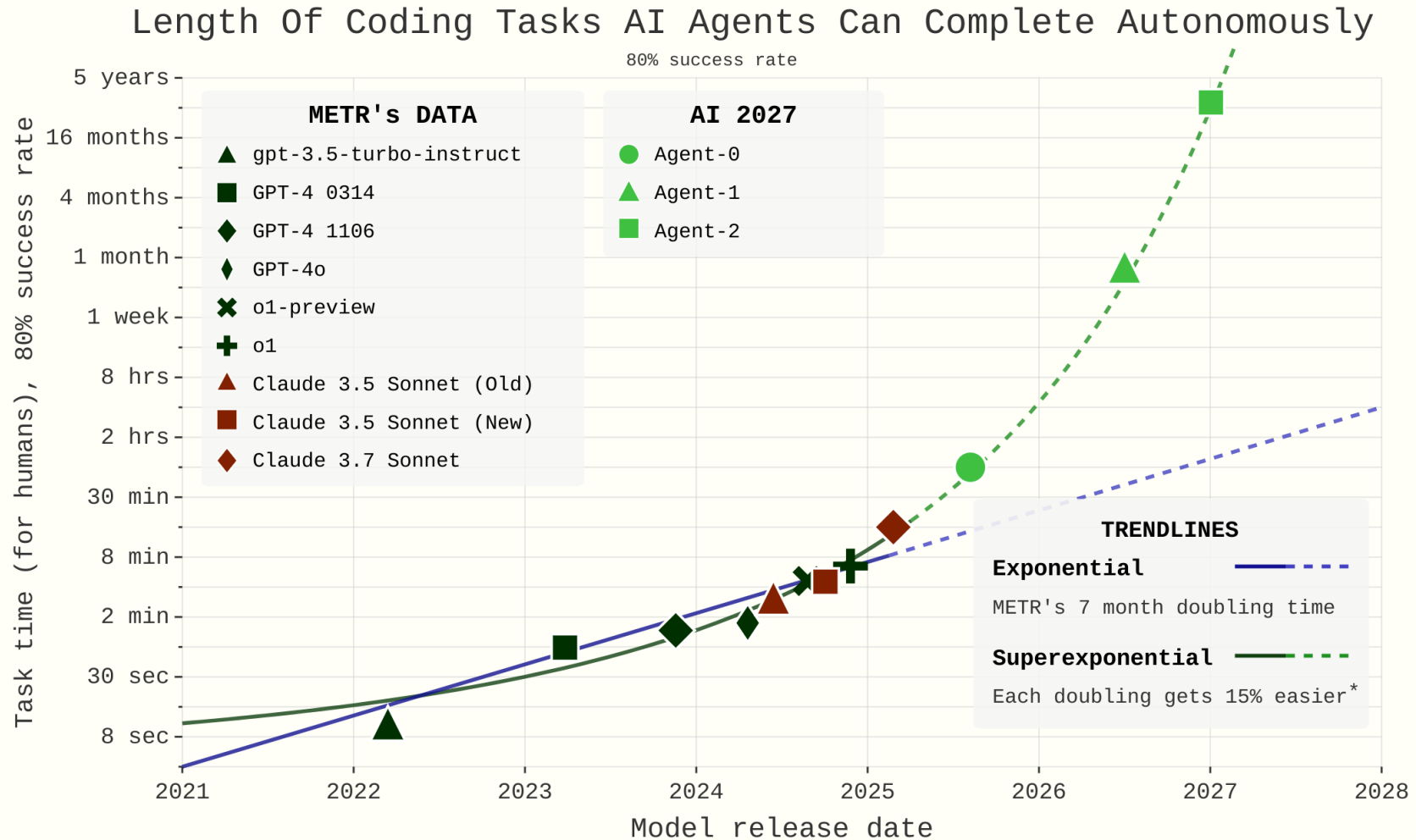
- 120 students aged 16-19 with a careers question to explore
- Random assignment across 4x interventions
- Pre/post survey + 10-12 week follow-up

### Which interventions?

- Off-the-shelf AI tool that is commonly used by students today (e.g. ChatGPT free tier)
- Sector-specialised tool (to be chosen in the summer)
- Professional careers adviser via webchat (to maintain approximate blinding)
- ‘Hybrid’ – careers adviser with access to a sector-specialised tool

*provisional  
tbd*

# 7. Growing existential anxiety



Forecast: Doublings may get faster due to fewer new skills being needed at higher timescales, and automation of AI R&D. The green curve is essentially a simplified version of the full AI 2027 timelines model. Upon AI 2027 release, our full model did not "backcast" previous data points as well as this curve. As of Jul 2025, we're working on updates.

# Thank you! Stay in touch:

<https://cicichat.co.uk/>

- **Webinars**
- **Newsletter**
- **New resources planned for 2026....**

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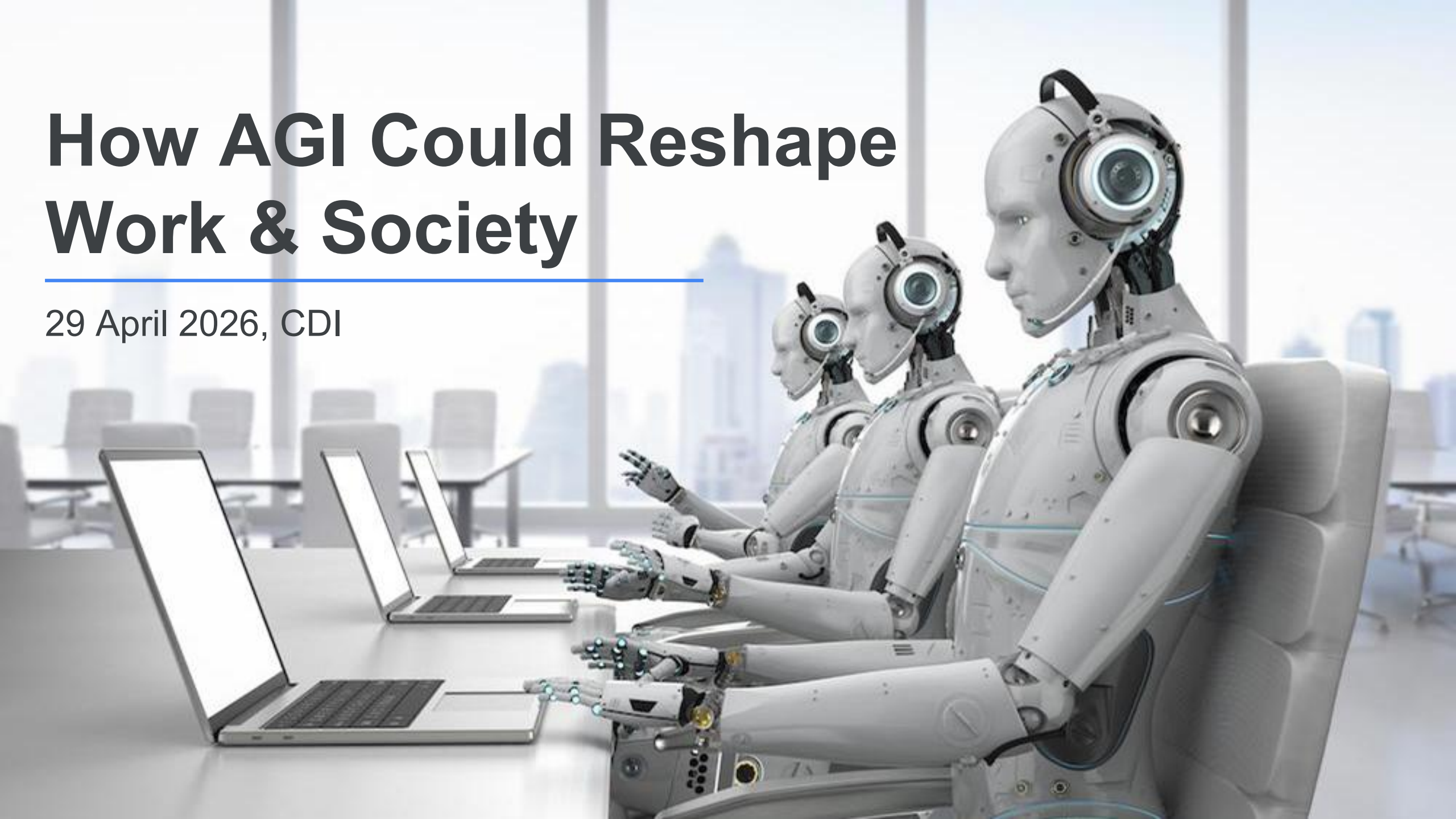
Dr Chris Percy

Email: [chris@cspres.co.uk](mailto:chris@cspres.co.uk)

# How AGI Could Reshape Work & Society

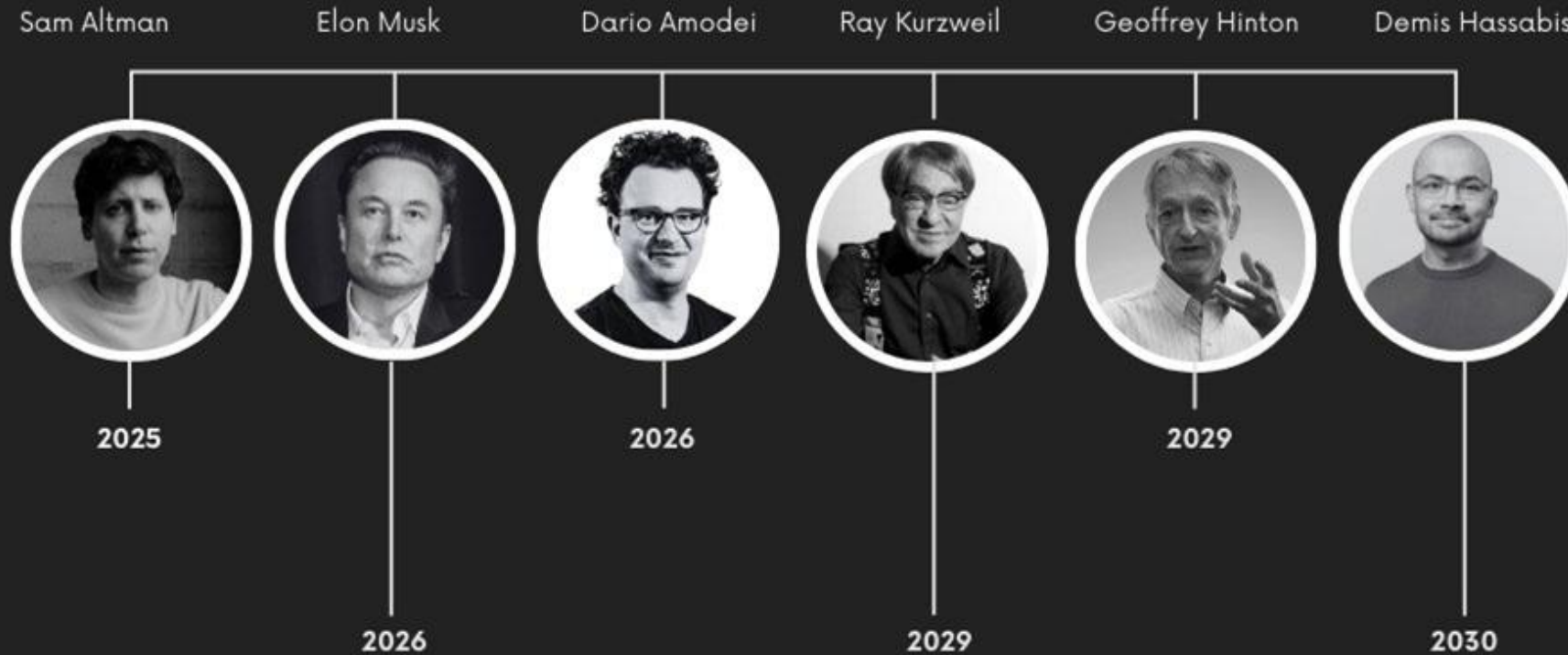
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29 April 2026, CDI



**Imagine that as you are boarding a plane, half the engineers who built it tell you there is a 10% chance the plane will crash. Would you still board?**

# AGI Timeline



# OpenAI Imagines Our AI Future

## Stages of Artificial Intelligence

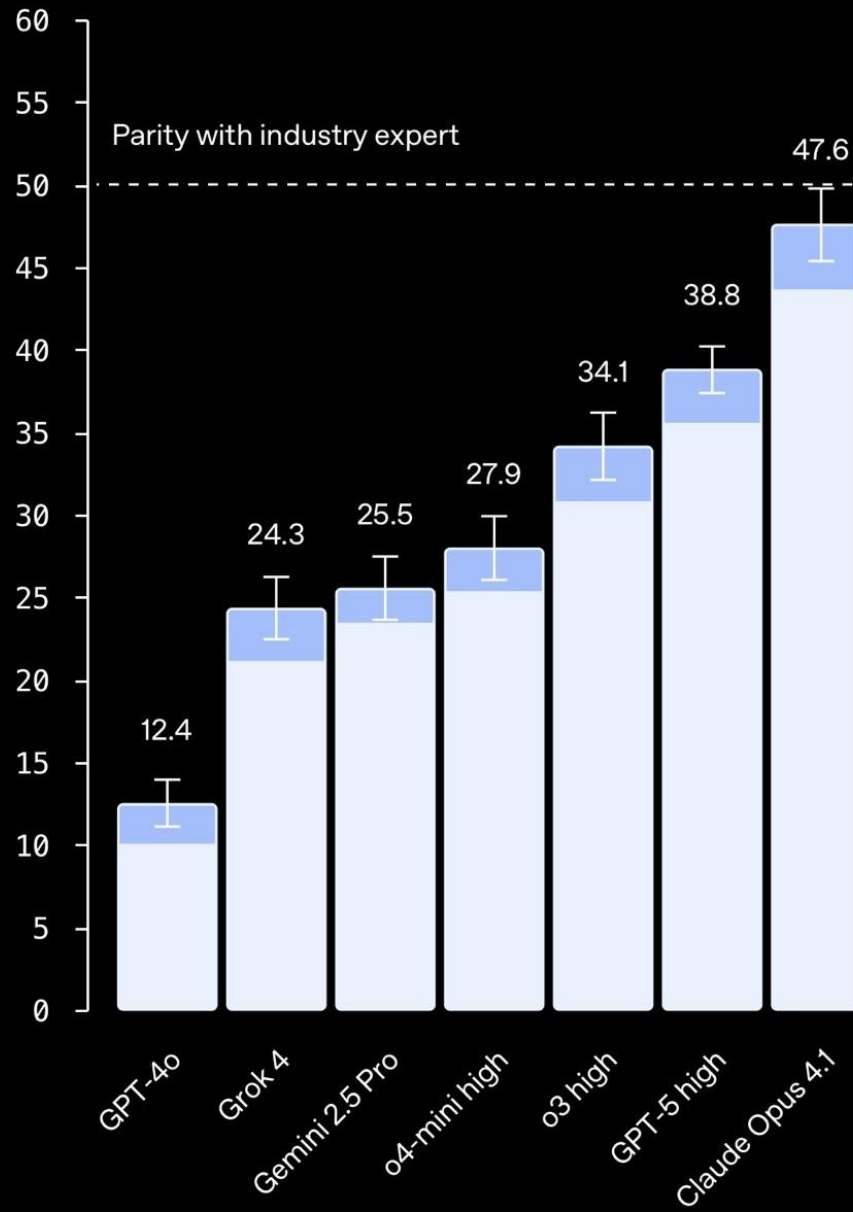
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Level 1	Chatbots, AI with conversational language
Level 2	Reasoners, human-level problem solving
Level 3	Agents, systems that can take actions
Level 4	Innovators, AI that can aid in invention
Level 5	Organizations, AI that can do the work of an organization

Source: Bloomberg reporting

**Bloomberg**

● Wins ● Ties



**Artificial General Intelligence systems capable of directly replacing human labor could cause massive shocks to global societies and economies.**



AGI could lead to *massive labor displacement*, as studies estimate that between 30% - 47% of jobs could be directly replaceable by AI systems.



AGI could lead to *skyrocketing wealth inequality*, as profits becomes concentrated among a few corporations and capital owners.



AGI could lead to *stagnating or falling wages* for the majority of workers if AI technology replaces people faster than it creates new jobs.

**To solve these challenges, we need to rethink our assumptions on the roles of governments, corporations, and civil society in a flourishing economy.**

# Labor Market Transformations



Which jobs and sectors are most at *risk of displacement* by AGI, and how quickly will these transformations occur?



What kinds of *new jobs* might emerge? Will they be sufficient to offset jobs lost to automation?



How should *education and training systems* be reformed to help displaced workers transition into new roles?

# Taxation Policy



Could a substantial shift of income from human labor to capital create a potential *collapse of governmental tax revenues*?



What are viable *taxation mechanisms* to increase revenue from increasingly profitable AI corporations?



How should international tax policy be redesigned to ensure that countries receive a *fair share of the profits* created by AGI corporations?

# Economic Justice and Inequality



How should our concepts of *economic justice* be redefined when human labor is no longer the primary source of value?



What types of *safety nets* can protect workers from temporary labor displacement?



What *alternative corporate structures* could align AI technologies with more equitable outcomes?

# Legal Rights



Should advanced AI systems have any form of *legal economic personhood* akin to corporations?



What types of *decision-making roles* will we determine to be off-limits to AI systems?



How will *AI liability* work? Who will be responsible for negative consequences caused by AI systems?

**If Europe wants to shape the future of AI, it must evolve from governing today's AI to actively engaging in the conversation around how AGI could reshape work & society.**