

**nuom**

Transforming Healthcare

# Trust and confidence in the application of AI

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**Artificial intelligence (AI) is poised to reshape lives across all sectors, and healthcare will be no exception.** From streamlining administrative processes to boosting diagnostic accuracy, AI is already making significant strides in the medical field and is set to become a defining feature of modern healthcare

## **Ignoring the rise of this evolving technology is not an option. In January 2025, the government committed to an [AI Opportunities Action Plan](#)**

A roadmap designed to accelerate AI development and adoption across the UK. Within it, they acknowledged the vital and innovative role AI will play in the NHS's future. This comes at a critical time – because the health service is in crisis. **Statistics** show a record **61,500 patients** were forced to endure **12-hour waits** for a bed in January 2025, and **treatments for serious conditions like cancer are being delayed** due to lack of capacity.



With over **360,000 patients attending A&E** more than five times a year and GP appointments increasingly difficult to secure, AI-driven solutions could be pivotal in ensuring people receive the proper care at the right time, while also easing pressure on overstretched providers and reducing costs



The healthcare sector appears ready to embrace this shift. A survey by the Health Foundation revealed **that 76% of NHS staff support AI's role in patient care.** However, while clinicians are largely on board, the question remains: is the public prepared to accept and trust AI in healthcare?

There's no doubt that the public's appetite for digital healthcare is growing. In 2021, 10 million more people in the UK used NHS websites and digital applications compared to the previous year, demonstrating a clear shift towards tech-enabled health management.

However, not everyone is keeping pace. A recent House of Lords report on digital exclusion warned that basic digital skills are set to become the UK's largest skills gap by 2030, making accessibility a serious concern. Without the right support, vulnerable groups, such as older individuals and those with disabilities, risk being left behind as tech, such as AI, becomes a bigger part of healthcare.



**Beyond accessibility, trust remains a major barrier. While people readily use digital tools like wearables and health apps, that confidence may not extend to AI-driven healthcare solutions.**

Do people understand what AI is and how it works? Do people feel comfortable with AI making medical recommendations? Would they trust AI with their personal health data? As AI-powered tools become more common, will certain groups struggle to keep up?

To explore these critical issues, nuom commissioned a survey amongst UK adults, uncovering public sentiment towards AI in healthcare. This report explores the opportunities and challenges of AI adoption, identifying where trust in technology thrives – and where scepticism remains.

# The key findings at a glance

In February 2025, a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults was surveyed by leading independent market research agency Opinium on behalf nuom. Here are some of the key findings at a glance:



## Public confidence in healthcare technology

- 65% believe that over the past five years people have become more conscious about managing their health.
- Over two-thirds of UK adults (**67%**) are happy for technology to be used more widely in healthcare if it frees up professionals to treat those who need it most.
- 65% think technology like wearables and apps can help people take responsibility for their health and wellness.
- 58% of UK adults are comfortable using digital healthcare tools (like health apps or video calls) for minor health concerns.



## Trust in AI remains low

- 50% of respondents are comfortable with AI managing appointments.
- 29% of UK adults stated that they would trust it to provide basic health advice.
- Only 19% would trust AI to provide personalised health advice based on their medical history.
- Just 14% would trust AI to replace a doctor's appointment for minor health concerns via a chatbot.
- 15% would trust AI to assist with mental health support through well-being tools and apps.
- 61% believe there's not enough evidence yet to determine if AI in healthcare is trustworthy or reliable.



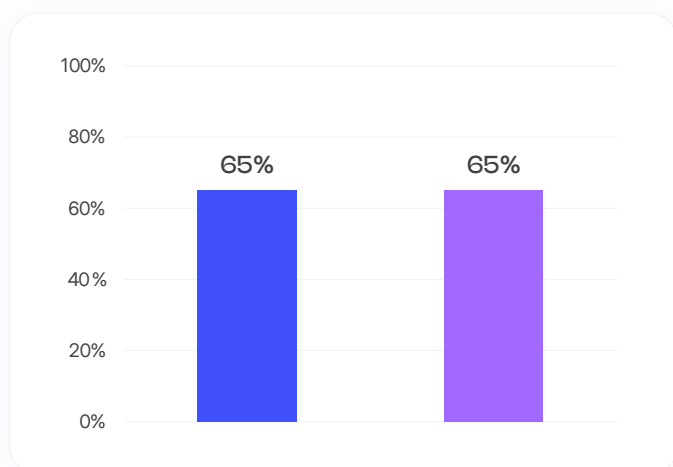


## Concerns about exclusion and accessibility

- **Two-thirds (66%)** are concerned that AI could exclude people who aren't confident using technology – rising to 73% amongst people with disabilities.
- **59%** are concerned AI could prioritise speed and efficiency over the personal care that some patients need, rising to 65% amongst respondents with a disability.
- **71%** of people aged 18–34 are comfortable using digital healthcare tools, compared to just **47%** of those aged 55+.
- **48%** of younger people understand how AI could be applied in healthcare, versus only one-in-four (21%) of those aged 55+.
- **36%** of people overall are worried they will get left behind as AI becomes more widespread in healthcare.
- **62%** think healthcare providers should offer education and support to help the elderly and people with disabilities understand AI tools.

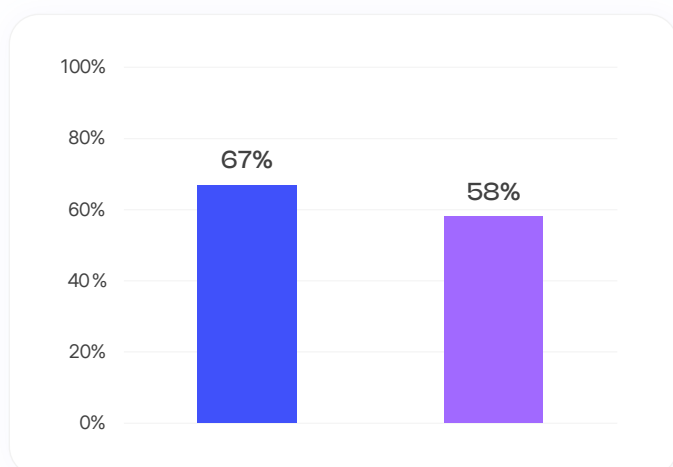
# Ready for technology but not AI

The public's appetite for digital healthcare is growing. nuom's research shows that over the past five years



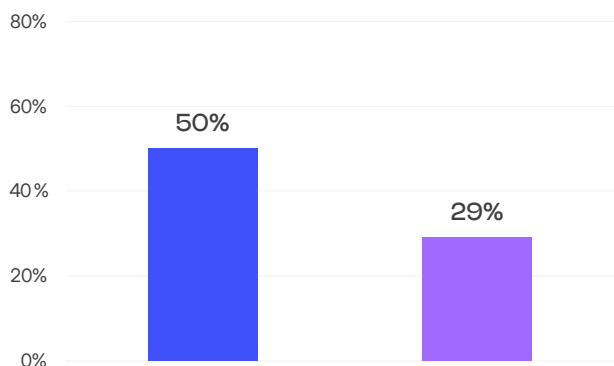
- There has been a noticeable shift towards self-management of health, with 65% of people becoming more conscious about managing their well-being.
- Wearables and health apps are an important tool here, with 65% believing they empower individuals to take responsibility for their health.

It's likely that the trend of using technology for managing their own health is encouraging people to embrace it in a healthcare setting.

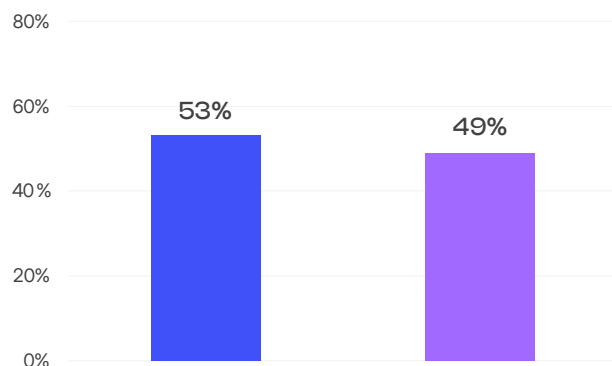


- Over two-thirds (67%) of UK adults supporting the wider use of healthcare technology if it allows professionals to focus on treating those who need it most.
- Likewise, respondents stated confidence in digital tools such as video calls and health apps for minor concerns, with 58% feeling comfortable using them.

However, trust in AI does not follow this same trajectory. While people are comfortable using digital tools for convenience and self-management, they remain hesitant about AI-powered healthcare solutions.



- While half of respondents (50%) are comfortable with AI managing appointments, confidence drops significantly when AI is introduced into decision-making
- Just 29% trust AI to provide basic health advice. This indicates an interesting divide; people are willing to use technology, but AI has yet to earn the same level of confidence.



- This hesitation comes despite the fact that AI is widely recognised for its potential benefits. Over 53% of respondents believe AI could relieve some of the pressures on the UK health system
- While 49% believe it can help healthcare professionals deliver services more efficiently. Yet, these advantages have not translated into widespread public trust in AI's role in direct patient care.

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“One solution for improving trust in AI should come from government communication and education initiatives. The NHS should spearhead clear, nationwide campaigns to demystify AI, using straightforward, non-technical language. This could showcase how AI genuinely benefits patients, reassuring them about safety and effectiveness.”

“In addition, dedicated workshops and in-person demonstrations in clinics and community centres could give individuals—particularly older adults and people with disabilities—hands-on experience of AI-driven health tools. The more exposure patients get to AI's capabilities, the more comfortable they become with this new technology.”

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Martin Sandhu, Managing Partner, nuom



## Trust in personalised AI health care is fragile

Although AI use cases are becoming prevalent in healthcare services, public confidence weakens when AI moves beyond administrative tasks and into patient care. When quizzed about which healthcare activities they would trust AI to do, **only 19% of respondents said they would feel confident relying on AI to deliver personalised health advice based on their medical history.**

15%

The resistance is even more pronounced when it comes to AI's role in mental health support. **Just 15% of respondents would trust AI-powered well-being tools and apps to assist with mental health** – one of the lowest levels of trust recorded in the research.

14%

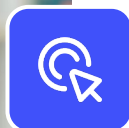
There is also a strong aversion to AI replacing doctor-patient interactions. When asked about AI-driven chatbots replacing GP appointments for minor health concerns, **only 14% of respondents said they would trust them.** These findings highlight a fundamental challenge – people may recognise AI's potential in making healthcare more efficient, but they remain deeply sceptical about its ability to provide personalised, sensitive, and human-centred care.

## Risks of exclusion

As AI adoption accelerates, concerns about accessibility and inclusivity are becoming more pressing. While younger generations are generally more comfortable using digital healthcare tools, older adults and those with disabilities risk being left behind. **The research found a clear digital divide, with 71% of 18–34-year-olds feeling comfortable using digital healthcare tools, compared to just 47% of those aged 55 and over.**



Understanding of AI follows a similar trend, with **48%** of younger people saying they grasp how AI could be applied in healthcare versus only **21%** of those aged 55 and over.



Beyond generational differences, accessibility concerns are particularly pronounced among those with disabilities. **66%** of respondents worry that AI could exclude people who aren't confident using technology – a figure that rises to **73%** among people with disabilities.



Further, **59%** of respondents worry that AI could prioritise speed and efficiency over personal care, with this concern increasing to **65%** among those with disabilities. While AI has the potential to improve healthcare delivery, many fear it could come at the cost of compassion, human interaction, and personalised support.

### A lack of transparency is also preventing AI from gaining full public confidence.

A significant **36% of people** worry that they will get left behind as AI becomes more widespread in healthcare, **while 61% believe** there is not enough evidence to determine whether AI in healthcare is trustworthy or reliable. People are recognising AI's potential, yet many feel uninformed about how it works, how decisions are made, and what safeguards are in place.

## Accordingly, education will be critical in shaping AI adoption

62% believe healthcare providers should offer education and support to help older adults and those with disabilities understand AI-powered tools. Without efforts to improve AI literacy and demonstrate its benefits, public confidence in AI-driven healthcare is unlikely to grow.

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*“The key to minimising exclusion in the use of health tech is to ensure that healthcare AI tools and apps are developed with accessibility in mind from day one. This could mean offering larger text options, screen readers, or easy-to-use interfaces that adapt to individual needs, so no one is left behind or relegated to second class quality treatment”*

*“NHS leaders should work alongside charities, local councils, and patient advocacy organisations to understand and address barriers to access. By meeting people where they are—through home visits, outreach events, or faith-based groups – providers can build genuine trust and deliver a service that works for everyone.”*

Martin Sandhu, Managing Partner, nuom



## Fixing AI's image problem in healthcare

Reflecting on the findings nuom's research, as outlined in this report, Managing Partner Martin Sandhu concludes.

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*“The way we think about healthcare is evolving. More people than ever are taking proactive steps to manage their health, with wearables, apps, and digital tools becoming part of daily routines. Meanwhile, technology is helping to make healthcare more accessible, giving individuals the ability to monitor their own well-being while easing pressure on already stretched services. Yet, while digital health solutions are widely embraced, trust in AI-powered healthcare is still a major sticking point.*

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*“At the same time, AI has an image problem. Despite its potential to enhance healthcare, many still associate it with complexity, impersonal automation, or overhyped promises. Our research shows that while people are comfortable using technology for basic healthcare interactions –like booking appointments or tracking their fitness – there’s far less confidence in AI when it comes to medical advice, personalised treatments, or mental health support. And it’s easy to see why. Healthcare is deeply personal, and people want the reassurance that AI will work alongside the human care they rely on, not replace it.*

*“The challenge now isn’t just about improving AI healthcare solutions; it’s about building trust in them. After all, AI has the potential to make healthcare more efficient, reduce wait times, and free up professionals to spend more time with patients who need them most. But if people don’t understand how it works or feel it lacks transparency, they simply won’t engage with it. The conversation needs to shift — away from AI as some futuristic, standalone system and towards AI as a tool that supports and enhances human expertise.*

*“Crucially, education and accessibility will play a crucial role. As AI becomes a bigger part of healthcare, we need to make sure it doesn’t exclude certain groups. Older adults and people with disabilities in particular, have real concerns about being left behind by AI systems. Addressing these worries through clear communication, inclusive design, and strong support from healthcare providers will be essential in making AI a trusted part of mainstream healthcare.*

*“Public attitudes towards technology have changed before, and AI is no different. With the right approach – one that prioritises clarity, accessibility, and trust — we can bridge the gap between innovation and public confidence, ensuring AI delivers on its promise to transform healthcare for the better.”*



**Martin Sandhu, Managing Partner, nuom**