Annual Report 2025/2026 – Member Society Report

BCS The Chartered Institute for IT, United Kingdom

Overview of Society

Society's vision/mission statement

The BCS purpose is rooted in our Royal Charter: "To promote and advance the education and practice of computing for the benefit of the public".

Our vision is for everyone in society to benefit from good IT; they need a profession that will champion and deliver access to the right technology, knowledge and skills required for all of us to be resilient and thrive in our digital world.

That vision requires a diverse and inclusive IT profession that truly represents all the needs of society. It needs to be plentiful in talent and demanding of itself the highest standards of professional competence, ethical thinking and practice. Only then can it truly make IT good, for everyone.

We are the UK's professional body for computing, with a global relevance and impact. We help make IT good for society through the incredible work and support of our members, volunteers, staff, partners and like-minded organisations who share our vision.

Link to Website

https://www.bcs.org

Which Technical Committee Working Groups do your members participate in?

There are UK representatives on all but three of the IFIP Technical Committees (TC2, TC6 and TC10), although there are representatives from the UK in the working groups in those technical committees. This is the same situation as for 2025. We will endeavour to encourage representation for the UK on the membership of these TCs moving forward. Currently the UK does not chair any of the Technical Committees, although Professor Don Passey has recently stood down from chair of TC 3 to take up his IFIP role as Chair of IFIP Technical Assembly and Chair of IFIP Activity Management Board. Two of the Technical Committees currently have a UK vice chair, TC9, ICT and Society and TC13, Human Computer Interaction.

The UK currently provides the chair for a number of the Working Groups across the Technical Committees including: 1.3; 1.11/2.17; 2.9; 3.4; 3.9; 7.7; 8.2; 8.6; 9.1; 9.2; 9.5; 11.2; 11.14; 12.9; 13.3; and 13.8.

One of the items on the General Assembly Agenda for 2026 is the "Working relationships of MSA national representatives with TCs". Currently, there is no official process involving the BCS in the selection or election of colleagues from the UK to be the UK representative on the Technical Committees, although this remains something we are in the process of actioning. The purpose is to ensure a clear and fair process for representation, but also to ensure that work from the Technical Committees is fed back into the BCS committee structure and vice versa. This will be a key action for 2026/2027. It was planned to review this situation in 2025/26, but internal restructuring at the BCS

took priority. In the first instance colleagues from the BCS Academy Board will invite current Working Group chairs to a workshop to discuss pragmatics and protocol for the working relationship with not only the MSA national representative but also the professional body and the working group membership.

Colleagues from the UK, including the former CEO of BCS and former Vice President of BCS have been instrumental in developing the proposal for a new working group on responsible computing which will hopefully become a working group in TC9.

Key activities this year

Leading the UK government's AI Assurance Stakeholder Consortium

BCS was appointed by the UK Government to lead the AI Assurance Stakeholder Consortium, announced on 8 June as part of a wider package of government AI measures. This represents a material step in the Institute's long-term authority on AI governance and professional standards, reflecting sustained investment in this agenda over the year. Discussions with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology on BCS's role progressed through the spring, moving toward final ministerial approval ahead of the June announcement.

Driving professional registration for digital health and care staff

A landmark development was NHS England's announcement, in March, that Digital, Data and Technology staff should be professionally registered. The announcement generated immediate commercial and engagement momentum: a dedicated webinar attracted strong registrations, new memberships were taken up, and a structured outreach programme to NHS Chief Information Officers and national NHS events followed. This built on continued engagement with NHS England, civil service digital teams and MPs on trusted digital professionalism throughout the year.

Shaping the national computing curriculum in England

BCS was appointed by the Department for Education to lead the drafting of reforms to England's National Curriculum for Computing, strengthening the Institute's authority as AI and data literacy move to the centre of national education policy. A public consultation on the reforms was scheduled to follow in September.

Growing education and public benefit reach

The BCS' AI Confidence Module launched in May, attracting around 300 enrolments in its first fortnight, with most participants reporting improved AI skills. The Barefoot AI Explorers programme reached over 150 teachers and around 4,000 primary-aged pupils in its first week, growing to around 6,000 pupils reached through Live Lessons later in the period.

Continued influence on how the UK can transform society with ethics, education and equity in technology

The Institute has continued to influence and lead calls for three key tech priorities to be firmly embedded in the UK government's policies and plans:

1. Anyone with a significant role in IT should prove their accountability by being professionally registered. This includes leaders who use technology in critical national infrastructure like health, defence and other public services.
2. Every child and adult must have access to a world class computing and digital literacy education; we need qualifications that reflect this.
3. Closing the diversity gap in information technology can solve many of its issues around trust, bias and safety – over 500,000 women are 'missing' from the profession in the UK.

In its continued presentation of these priorities, BCS has been widely sharing its view that UK government has a unique opportunity to take a positive view of AI and high stakes technologies, making sure they transform the lives of everyone in the UK. Reflected in key outcomes such as the AI Assurance Consortium.

It continues to present its case that by setting high standards for those who direct and develop computing in areas like health, security and other vital public services, the UK can be an example to the world.

Events

BCS continues to run a wide and varied event programme, delivering over 400 events per year through our network of branches, international sections and special interest groups. Our full calendar of events can be accessed at https://www.bcs.org/events/

Professional Development

BCS continues to support the professional development of its members and the wider community of students, apprentices and professionals. In the last year it has awarded more than 15,000 professional certifications and more than 17,000 digital literacy exams. It has also assessed more than 40,000 digital apprentices since 2017.

Projects

Our activities are aligned to three strategic pillars.

- **Growth** – Expanding our community by attracting, upskilling and developing talent
- **Trust** – Building demand for trusted professionals and practices that uphold ethics and excellence
- **Influence** – Advocating for and shaping the future of the profession and its impact on society

Social Responsibility

The BCS Code of Conduct serves as a unique and powerful endorsement of somebody's integrity and as a code of ethics for IT professionals. Observed by every BCS member, it defines the characteristics we share as practitioners serious about building a responsible computing profession.

BCS members show their commitment to working in the public interest - they accept their professional duty. It's the very foundation of our profession, built upon every day by the competence, integrity and diversity of our members.

The BCS Codes of Conduct and Ethics align with the IFIP Code of Ethics

Thought leadership

BCS thought leadership and policy seeks to debate, promote and uphold the highest ethical standards and practices in a rapidly changing digital landscape. We are an influential voice in the tech sector, listened to by government, industry, and the wider society.

Discover more by browsing our articles, opinion and research here: https://www.bcs.org/articles-opinion-and-research/

Policy and influence, including Government engagement/projects

BCS policy continues to seek to uphold the highest ethical standards and practices in a rapidly changing digital landscape. We continue to be an influential voice in the UK tech sector, listened to by government, industry, and wider society.

Our activity is supported by a particular focus in key domains for our profession and wider society:

Artificial intelligence (AI)

The Institute wants to see the creation of a diverse ethical AI workforce, as we believe this is central to reducing machine learning bias. This continues to take on urgency with the continued developments in generative AI, machine learning and large language models.

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Cyber security

As the professional body for information technology we are committed to making the digital world secure for everyone and the Institute is working with a range of agencies nationally and internationally to address cybersecurity challenges.

Education

We support the teaching of rigorous and relevant computer science across the academic spectrum, from primary schools to universities. The uptake of Computer Science GCSE, A-Level and degree is increasing and it is also worth noting that there has been significant movement on balancing gender diversity in Computer Science Education.

Health and care

Digital health is undergoing rapid change. The Institute remains committed to supporting the establishment of regulated professional standards in this sector.

Examples of some of the underpinning consultations and research that have supported our policy and influence in this last period are below. More information and a full list at https://www.bcs.org/policy-and-influence/consultations-and-research/

- Response to the UK Government's consultation: 'Growing up in the online world – a national conversation'
- Response to the UK Government's consultation on Key stage 4 performance measures and targeted RISE extension
- Response to the call for evidence on building a future tech sector that works for everyone
- Response to the UK House of Lords inquiry into personalised medicine and AI
- Evidence to the Business & Trade Select Committee inquiry on AI and the future of the workforce
- Evidence to the UK Government's calls for views on early years screen time and usage
- Evidence to the National Commission into the regulation of AI in healthcare
- Response to the UK Government's consultation on the proposed AI growth lab
- Response to the UK Government's consultation on post-16 level 3 and below pathways
- Evidence to the NHS 10-year workforce plan consultation

Professor Alastair Irons, FBCS, CITP

August 2026