

AI Data Centres Resource Sheet

Source A: News article

Data centres to be expanded across UK as concerns mount

The number of data centres in the UK is set to increase by almost 100, as the growth in artificial intelligence (AI) increases the need for processing power.

Data centres are giant warehouses full of powerful computers used to run digital services from movie streaming to online banking. As of 2025 there were an estimated 477 of them in the UK.

Most of the new data centres are due to be built in the next five years. However, there are concerns about the huge amount of energy and water the new data centres will consume. Some experts have warned it could drive up prices for both electricity and water paid by families.

More than half of the new data centres would be in London and neighbouring counties. A further nine are planned in Wales, one in Scotland, five in Greater Manchester and a handful in other parts of the UK.

Biggest data centre

The biggest data centre planned won't start to be built until 2031. The £10 billion AI data centre in Blyth, near Newcastle, is planned to be built for the American private investment and wealth management company Blackstone Group.

It will involve 10 giant buildings covering 540,000 square metres – the size of several large shopping centres – on the site of the former Blyth Power Station. Work is set to begin in 2031 and last for more than three years.

Environmental impacts

There are growing concerns about the environmental impact of these enormous buildings. Data centres need large quantities of water to prevent them from overheating, and most current owners do not share data about their water consumption.

The impact that ever larger data centres could have on water supplies is unknown, but the UK has areas with limited water like East Anglia and the south-east of England. The demand for water for cooling could increase water prices for households.

Increasing demand for electricity might also lead to fossil fuels being used to power data centres rather than clean energy such as wind and solar.

Source B: Map of planned data centres in the UK

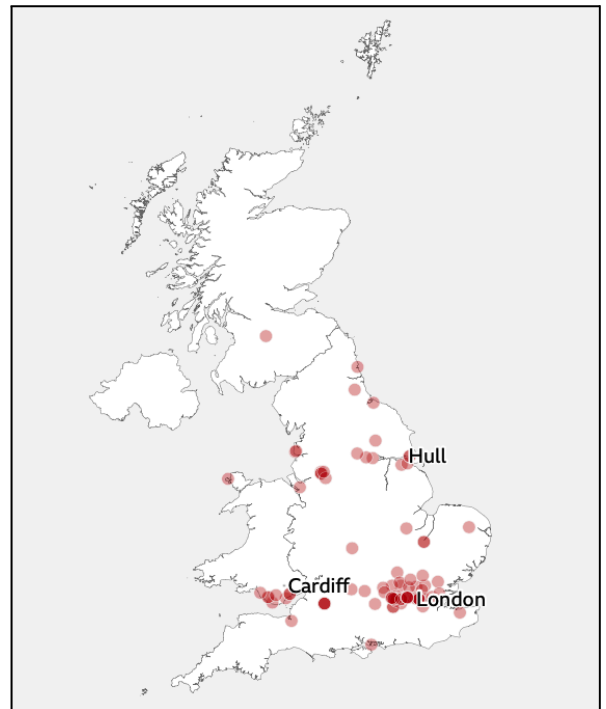
Source C: Information about data centres

Data centres are the buildings that hold the computers that store, process and run large amounts of data and software which power the internet and, increasingly, artificial intelligence applications.

Many of us use a data centre hundreds of times of day, such as when we use a bank card, stream a film or video game, shop online, send emails and texts, or use an app to control our central heating.

Every time someone saves a document to the cloud, it is stored in a data centre.

The increase in the use of artificial intelligence is leading to a rapid increase in demand for data centres as more and more data is processed.



Source D: Photograph of a data centre being built in the UK

