



AI IN ACTION

Insights from Media Trust's AI Bootcamps



BACKGROUND

In 2025, with support from the Google AI Opportunity Fund and in partnership with NCVO, Media Trust provided AI Essentials training to 125 charities across a series of online Bootcamps that combined live, expert-led workshops, self-paced eLearning and peer collaboration.

The programme delivered strong, measurable impact. Confidence in using AI for everyday tasks increased significantly, with the proportion of participants feeling confident or very confident rising from 31% before the programme to 86% afterwards. Participant satisfaction was also exceptionally high, with an average rating of 4.8/5, and 100% of participants said they would recommend the programme to others in their network.

HOW CHARITIES ARE APPLYING AI

The following case studies draw on insights from two focus groups involving 19 charities that participated in the Bootcamps. The aim was to measure the long-term impact of the programmes, identify barriers to adoption, and highlight AI use cases.

Across both groups, organisations consistently described AI as a practical capacity-building tool rather than a replacement for staff. Participants highlighted AI's role in increasing confidence, improving efficiency, and supporting more informed strategic decision-making. Importantly, charities emphasised that AI is only effective when used within a framework of clear governance, strong values, and robust human oversight.

For most organisations, AI is not being adopted because it is new or innovative, but because it enables them to stretch limited resources further, particularly across administration, fundraising, service delivery and planning.

CASE STUDY

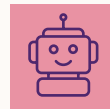
HOW AI IS SUPPORTING OPERATIONS IN BRISTOL AUTISM SUPPORT

Bristol Autism Support (BAS) is a charity that provides information, support, and training to parents and carers of autistic children across Bristol and the surrounding areas.



THE CHALLENGE

When the organisation lost a major funding stream, an already small team - some working just 7–11 hours per week - faced an overwhelming administrative burden. Routine tasks such as notetaking, reporting, and data analysis consumed valuable time, limiting capacity to focus on delivering services to families.



THE AI SOLUTION

After taking part in Media Trust's AI Bootcamp, staff developed the skills and confidence to integrate AI tools into their day-to-day work.

They began using AI to:

- Automate meeting notes and summaries, reducing lengthy follow-up work.
- Draft reports and communications, enabling staff to refine rather than start from scratch.
- Clean and analyse attendance data, identifying trends by time, geography and age group.
- Digitise and analyse qualitative feedback, converting handwritten feedback cards into structured text to surface recurring themes.
- Prioritise funding opportunities, extracting deadlines and assessing strategic fit in minutes rather than hours.



THE IMPACT

AI quickly became embedded in day-to-day operations. The team significantly reduced time spent on routine administrative tasks, freeing up limited working hours for higher-value activities.

Improved data analysis led to more informed decisions, including pausing three under-attended sessions and refining others to better meet demand.

For a small charity these efficiencies were transformative. The AI Bootcamp did not simply introduce new tools - it enabled staff to work more strategically, make informed programme decisions, and redirect precious time toward supporting families.



Something that literally took me 15 minutes was pulling all of those links into AI and saying: here's our mission, which ones do we prioritise?



CASE STUDY

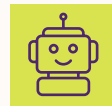
HOW DISABILITY POSITIVE USES AI TO STRENGTHEN BID WRITING AND FUNDRAISING

Disability Positive is a charity and Disabled People's Organisation based in Cheshire. The organisation provides services, opportunities and a voice to people with lived experience of disability and long-term health conditions, and their families.



THE CHALLENGE

Producing high-quality funding applications was time-intensive and placed significant pressure on senior staff. Reviewing years of previous tenders to find relevant material could take days or even weeks, while drafting responses from scratch reduced capacity for strategic oversight.



THE AI SOLUTION

After taking part in Media Trust's AI Bootcamp, Disability Positive built a 'tender agent' in partnership with Be Green AI. Rather than generating answers, the tool searches previous tender responses and pulls together relevant material. It can quickly identify useful content and create an initial draft structure in hours instead of days. Staff then rewrite and tailor content in their own words to meet each funder's requirements. The tool continues to be refined to ensure reliable and consistent data retrieval.



THE IMPACT

AI has significantly reduced the time required to develop first-draft frameworks for funding applications.

The additional capacity has enabled Disability Positive to pursue more ambitious partnership bids involving multiple organisations - opportunities that would previously have been difficult to manage alongside restrictive funding timescales and day-to-day responsibilities.

“

AI has sped up how quickly we can get a first draft framework together, enabling me to concentrate on the sign-off and last line of defence, rather than spending large amounts of time drafting responses from scratch.

”



CASE STUDY

HOW NCVA USES AI TO STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC DECISIONS

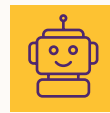
Northumberland Community and Voluntary Action (NCVA) is one of Northumberland's long established local infrastructure organisations, supporting community groups, charities, volunteers and social enterprises across the county.



THE CHALLENGE

Following rapid growth and increasing demand, the organisation faced complex strategic and operational decisions - particularly around internal systems, digital infrastructure and governance support for community groups.

The organisation needed a way to strengthen strategic thinking, simplify complexity, and support clearer decision-making - while maintaining its strong human centred ethos.



THE AI SOLUTION

After taking part in Media Trust's AI Bootcamp, staff began using AI as a strategic companion rather than a content generator. **They applied AI to:**

- Break down complex system and infrastructure decisions.
- Analyse software features and surface risks.
- Present findings in clear, accessible summaries to support trustee discussions.
- Summarise dense legal documents into plain-language guidance.
- Compare outdated governing documents against current good practice.



THE IMPACT

NCVA experienced a marked shift in how it approaches strategy and organisational development. Trustees and volunteers were able to engage more confidently in digital investment discussions, supported by clearer and more structured information. Complex governance material became more accessible to frontline groups, improving the quality and speed of support provided.

AI now supports staff to get '90% of the way there', enabling them to focus their time on the final 10%, which involves applying lived experience, place-based knowledge and relationship centred judgement.



AI helps me break down complicated information - whether it's software options, risks, or dense voluntary sector legislation - into clear, plain language summaries so we can understand what needs updating and make confident decisions.



REAL WORLD EXAMPLE



When a long-standing community group needed to update a constitution written more than a decade ago, AI analysed the original document and generated a draft highlighting areas requiring modernisation. Staff then refined this draft, applying local context, knowledge of group dynamics and community insight.



CASE STUDY

HOW AI TOOLS ARE STRENGTHENING SERVICE DELIVERY AT THE PURFLEET TRUST

The Purfleet Trust is a homelessness charity supporting more than 1000 people each year across King's Lynn and West Norfolk.



THE CHALLENGE

As demand for services grew, staff faced ongoing capacity pressures. Administrative tasks such as producing lesson plans, structured documents and reports reduced the time available for direct support.



THE AI SOLUTION

After taking part in Media Trust's AI Bootcamp, the organisation rapidly and organically integrated AI tools into everyday practice. **AI is now used to:**

- Generate first drafts of lesson plans, freeing staff time for frontline delivery.
- Create tailored fitness plans more efficiently.
- Support kitchen teams to design nutritious menus using donated food.
- Strengthen written communication by helping staff structure content and refine spelling and grammar.
- Analyse project data to identify opportunities for efficiency and service expansion.



THE IMPACT

AI has significantly reduced administrative burden, allowing staff to focus more time on service users. Tasks that previously took hours can now be completed in minutes, improving efficiency without compromising quality.

Frontline services have benefited from more personalised fitness plans, improved kitchen planning, and clearer communication with service users. Staff confidence - particularly among colleagues with lived experience - has increased, contributing to more consistent and professional written materials across the organisation.



We've given it all the data and asked it to think of ways we could improve the efficiency of the project and what other things we could add into it.



REAL WORLD EXAMPLE

When reviewing the House to Home project - which furnishes first homes for people moving into independent living - staff input project data and web content into a Large Language Model and asked it to suggest improvements and potential additions. This supported fresh thinking and forward planning.



We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the charities who generously took part in this research.

Below is the full list of the 19 participating organisations.

Bristol Autism Support
Bromsgrove and Redditch Network
Carers Support West Sussex
Disability Positive
Healthwatch Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Heaven's Playground Org
Kids Club Kampala
Mind in Harrow
Northumberland Community & Voluntary Action
Open Rights Group
Project Food
Purfleet Trust
Sandwell Council for Voluntary Organisations
Sustainable Merton
Thrive
Under the Stars
Voluntary Action North Somerset
Watford Citizens Advice
WILD

