How do people feel about AI?
Two waves of a nationally representative dataset

Data Resource Training Network

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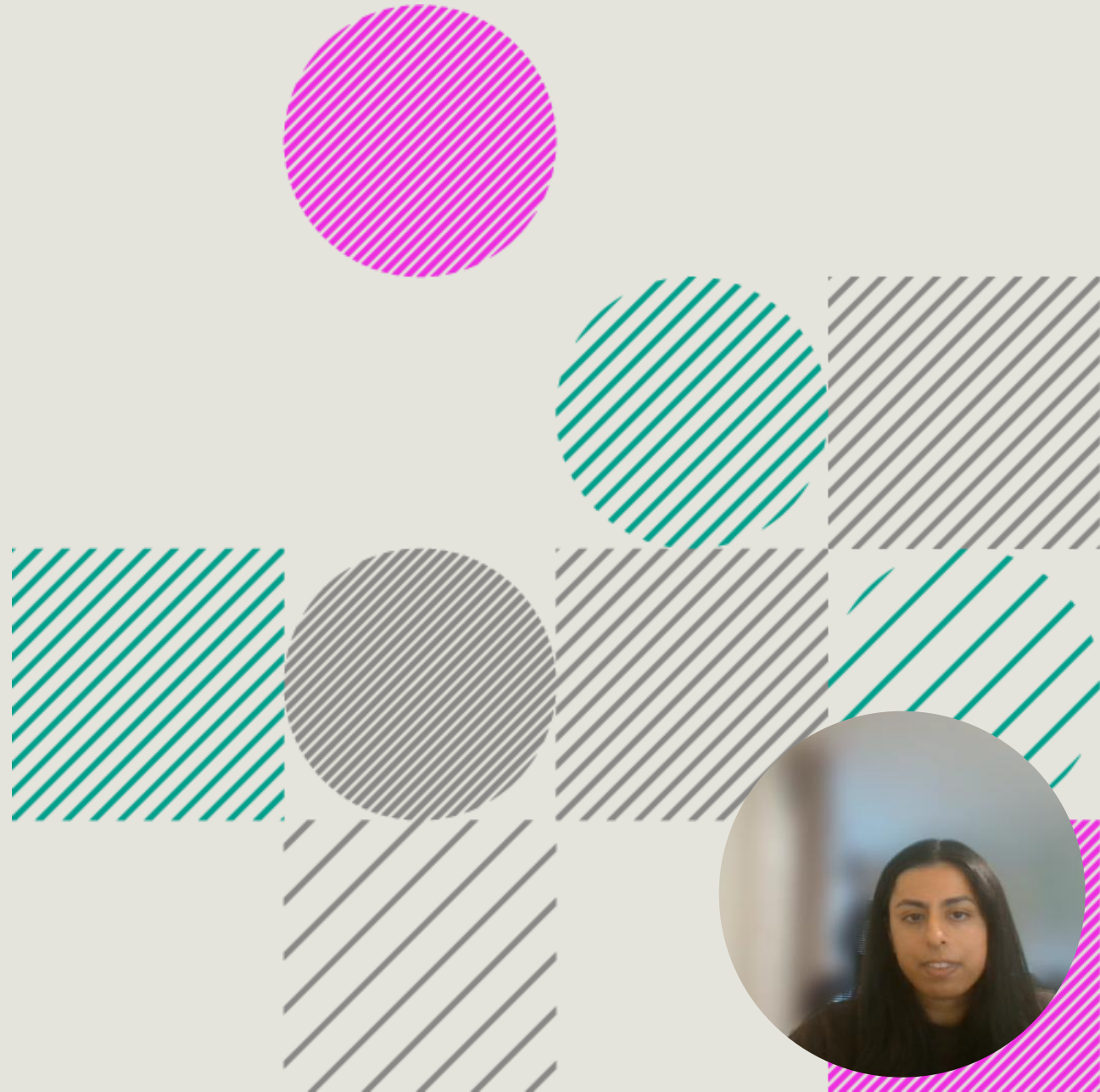
On the agenda

- Context

- About these datasets

- Lessons from the ecosystem

Context

Google Image search on 21 October 2025

The landscape pre-2022/3 survey

- AI in general

- Self-driving cars

- Facial recognition

- Automation in general

Dichotomies:

AI is

Helpful --------------------- Harmful

The spine of the datasets

Specific AI uses

Awareness and experience

Level of benefit *and* concern

Key advantages *and* disadvantages

Governance, regulation, trust in institutions

GB sample (wave 1)
UK sample (wave 2)

Nationally representative

Random probability sampling

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Wave 1

17 uses of AI: split survey design

Face recognition

- Unlocking a phone
- Border control
- Policing and surveillance

Risk and eligibility

- Social welfare
- Job applications
- Cancer risk
- Loan repayment

Targeted advertisements

- Political advertisements
- Consumer products

Virtual assistants

- Smart speakers
- Healthcare chatbots

Robotics

- Driverless cars
- Robotic care assistants
- Autonomous weapons
- Robotic vacuum cleaners

Simulations

- Climate research
- Education

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Perceived benefits outweigh concerns for 10 of the 17 technologies we asked about

Overall concern for each use of AI subtracted from overall perceptions of benefit (positive scores indicate that benefits outweigh concerns, while negative scores indicate that concerns outweigh benefits)

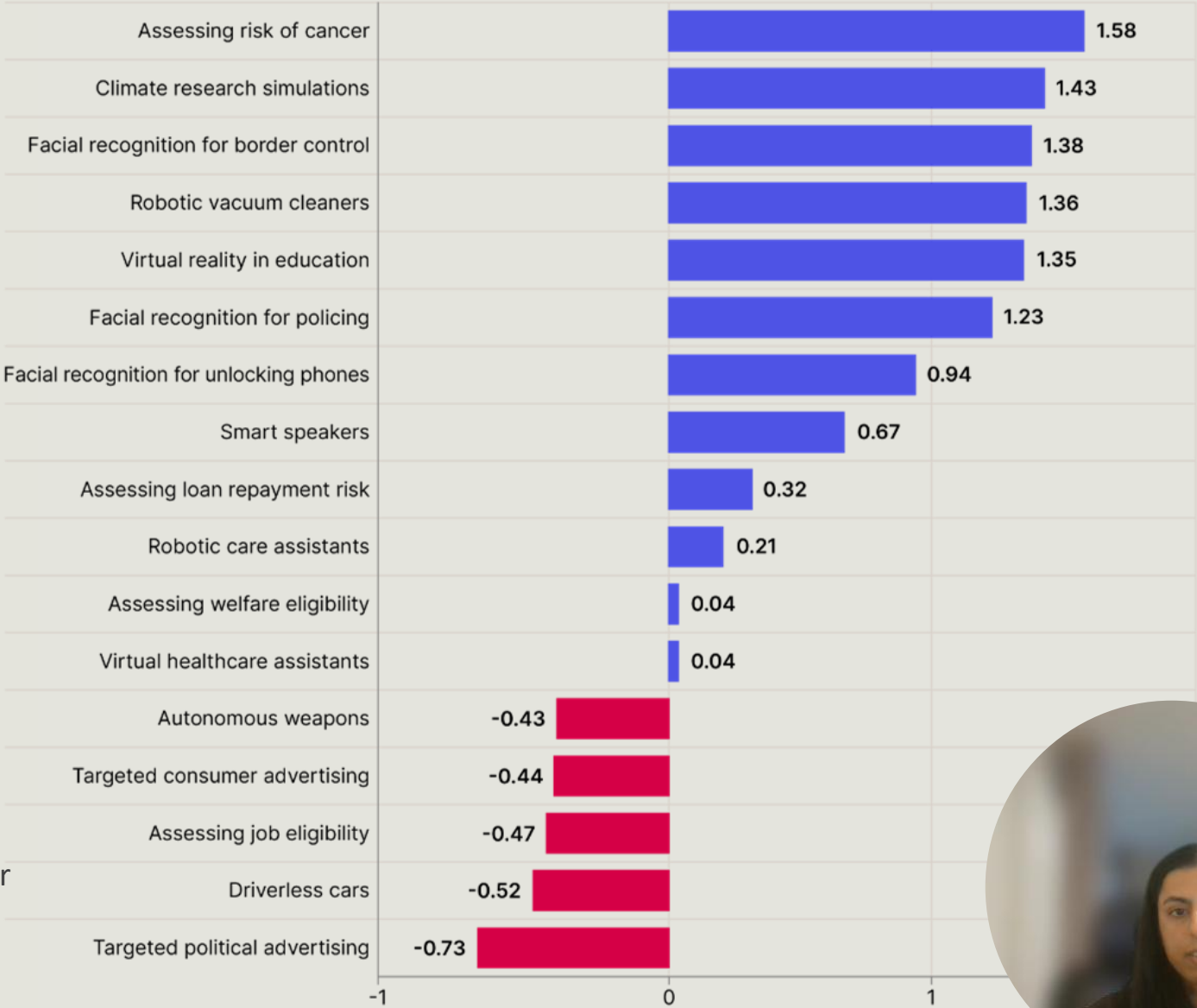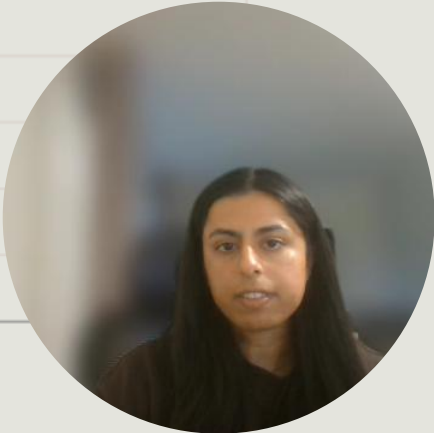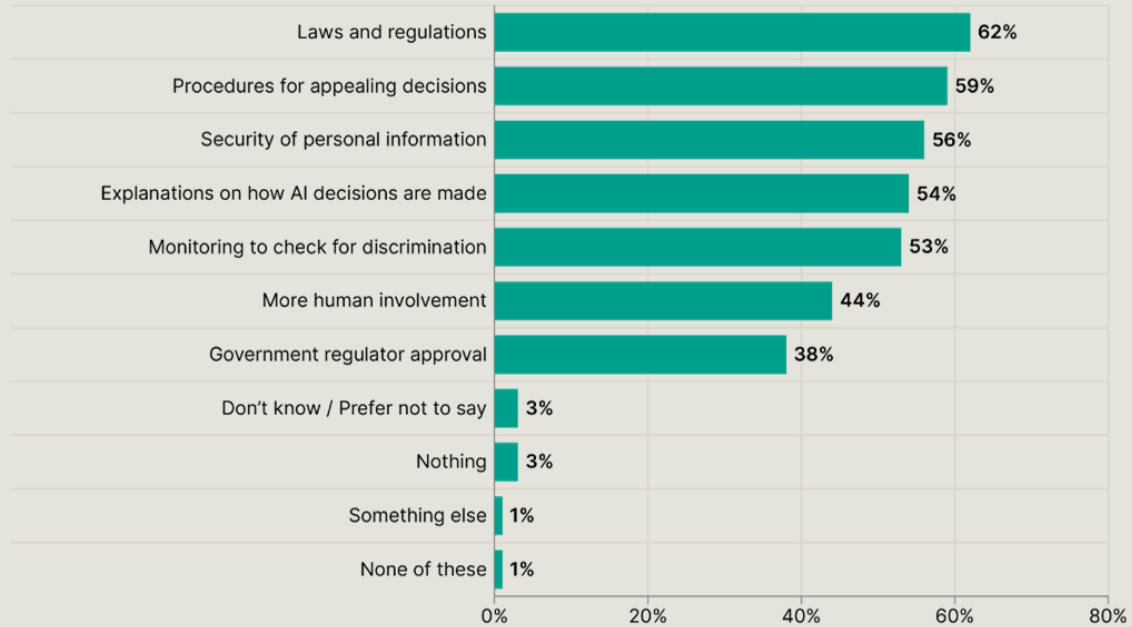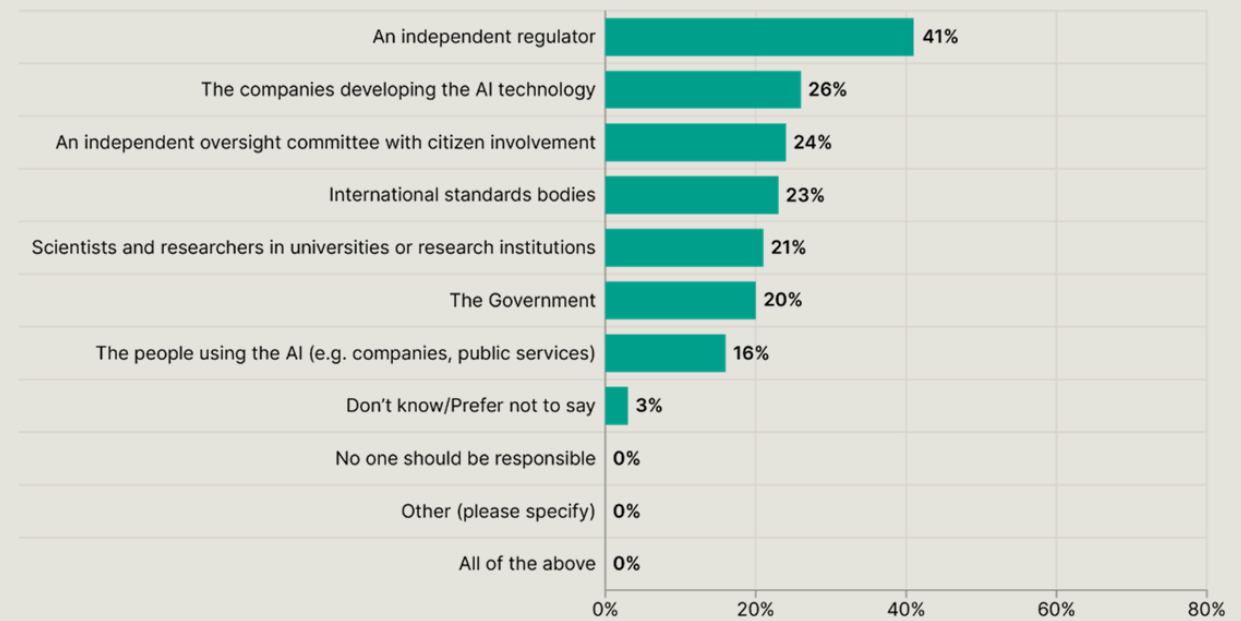|	
Assessing risk of cancer	1.58
Climate research simulations	1.43
Facial recognition for border control	1.38
Robotic vacuum cleaners	1.36
Virtual reality in education	1.35
Facial recognition for policing	1.23
Facial recognition for unlocking phones	0.94
Smart speakers	0.67
Assessing loan repayment risk	0.32
Robotic care assistants	0.21
Assessing welfare eligibility	0.04
Virtual healthcare assistants	0.04
Autonomous weapons	-0.43
Targeted consumer advertising	-0.44
Assessing job eligibility	-0.47
Driverless cars	-0.52
Targeted political advertising	-0.73

Figure: Net benefit scores for each AI use

'Which of the following, if any, would make you more comfortable with AI technologies being used?'

Laws and regulations	62%
Procedures for appealing decisions	59%
Security of personal information	56%
Explanations on how AI decisions are made	54%
Monitoring to check for discrimination	53%
More human involvement	44%
Government regulator approval	38%
Don't know / Prefer not to say	3%
Nothing	3%
Something else	1%
None of these	1%

'Who do you think should be most responsible for ensuring AI is used safely? (choose up to two options)'

An independent regulator	41%
The companies developing the AI technology	26%
An independent oversight committee with citizen involvement	24%
International standards bodies	23%
Scientists and researchers in universities or research institutions	21%
The Government	20%
The people using the AI (e.g. companies, public services)	16%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	3%
No one should be responsible	0%
Other (please specify)	0%
All of the above	0%

Governance and regulation

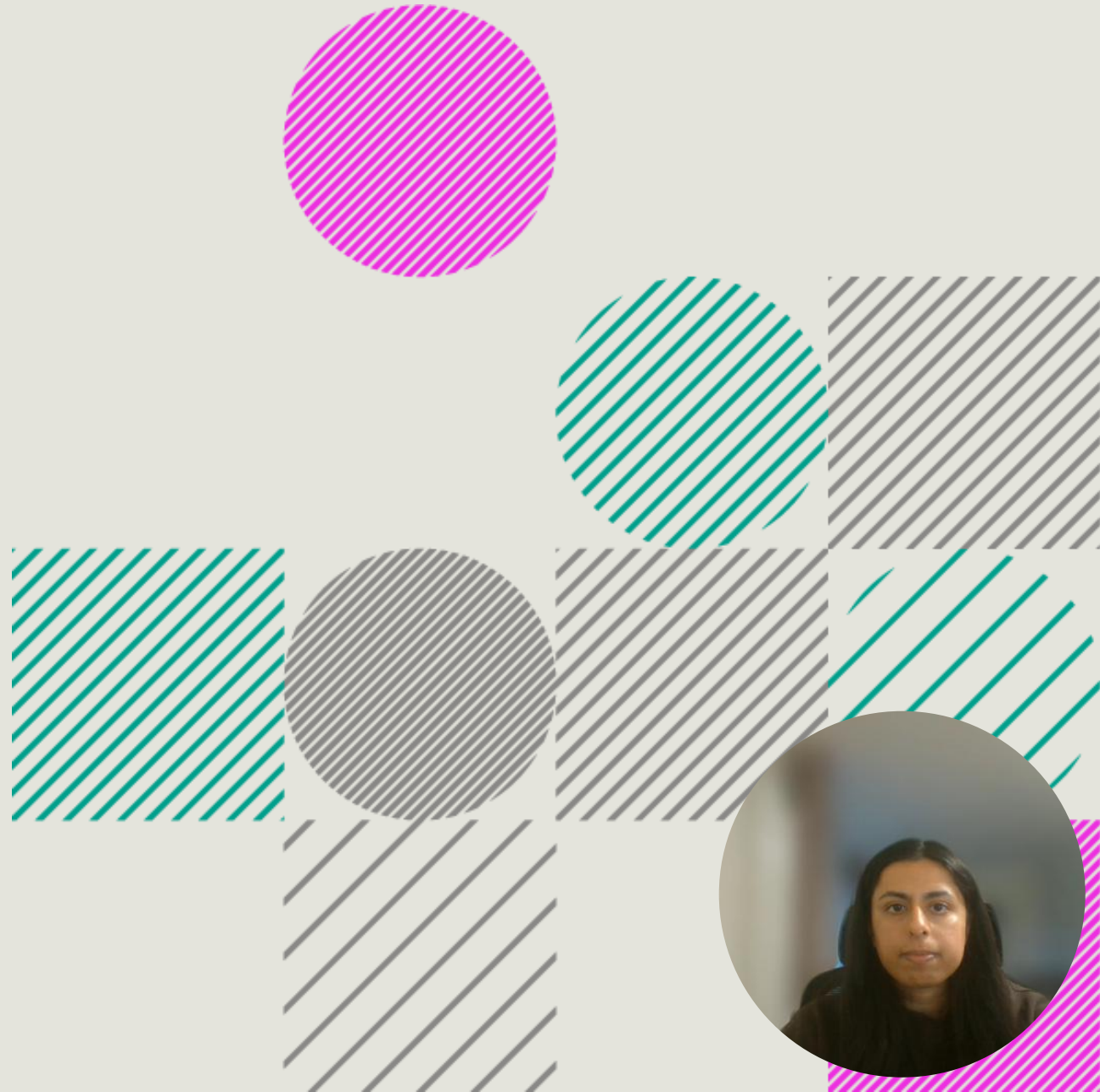Ada Lovelace Institute   The Alan Turing Institute

- Voices getting lost within a nationally representative framing

- Split survey design heightening this challenge

- Wanting to explore additional aspects of governance and regulation

Wave 2

Sample

Nationally representative sample of **3,513** people from NatCen Opinion Panel

Boost: ethnicity
433 Asian/Asian British
198 Black/Black British

Boost: low income
1,319 monthly income < £1,500

Boost: digital skills
962 with low levels of digital skills

8 uses of AI: no split survey design

Face recognition

- Policing and surveillance

Risk and eligibility

- Social welfare
- Cancer risk
- Loan repayment

Chatbots

- LLMs (general purpose)
- Mental health chatbots

Robotics

- Driverless cars
- Robotic care assistants

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There are distinct concerns across publics

Minoritised ethnic groups

57% of Black people and 52% of Asian people are concerned about facial recognition for policing.

This is compared to 39% of the general public.

People on low incomes

People from low income backgrounds are significantly more concerned than the general public about all technologies surveyed

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People see benefits in AI uses, but concern is increasing

Attitudes vary by application

86% see benefit of AI to detect cancer risk

75% concerned about driverless cars

People can see both the benefits and risks

Even though majority see benefits of AI in cancer detection, **64%** still worried about relying too heavily on technology rather than professional judgements
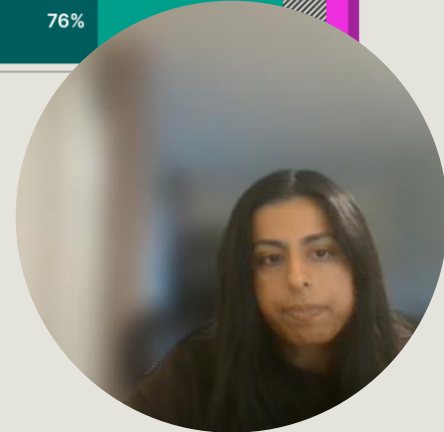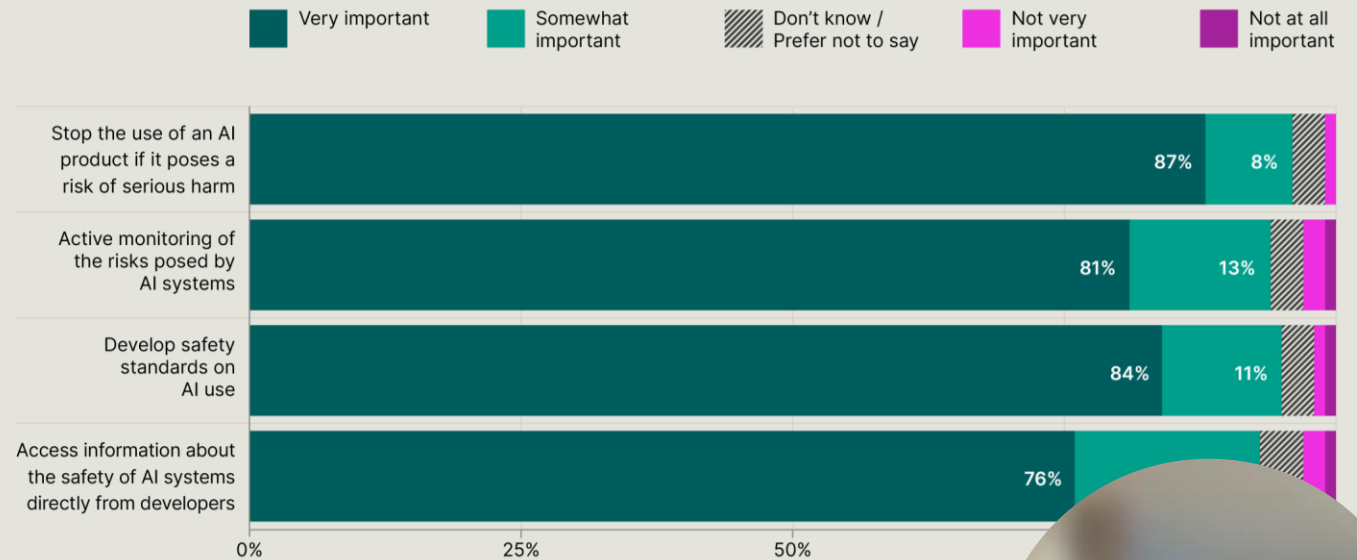
Concern is rising

59% are concerned about the use of AI to determine eligibility for welfare benefits such as Universal Credit. This figure was **44%** in 2022/23

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The public self-reports high exposure to AI-generated harms and expects the government to be equipped in relation to AI safety

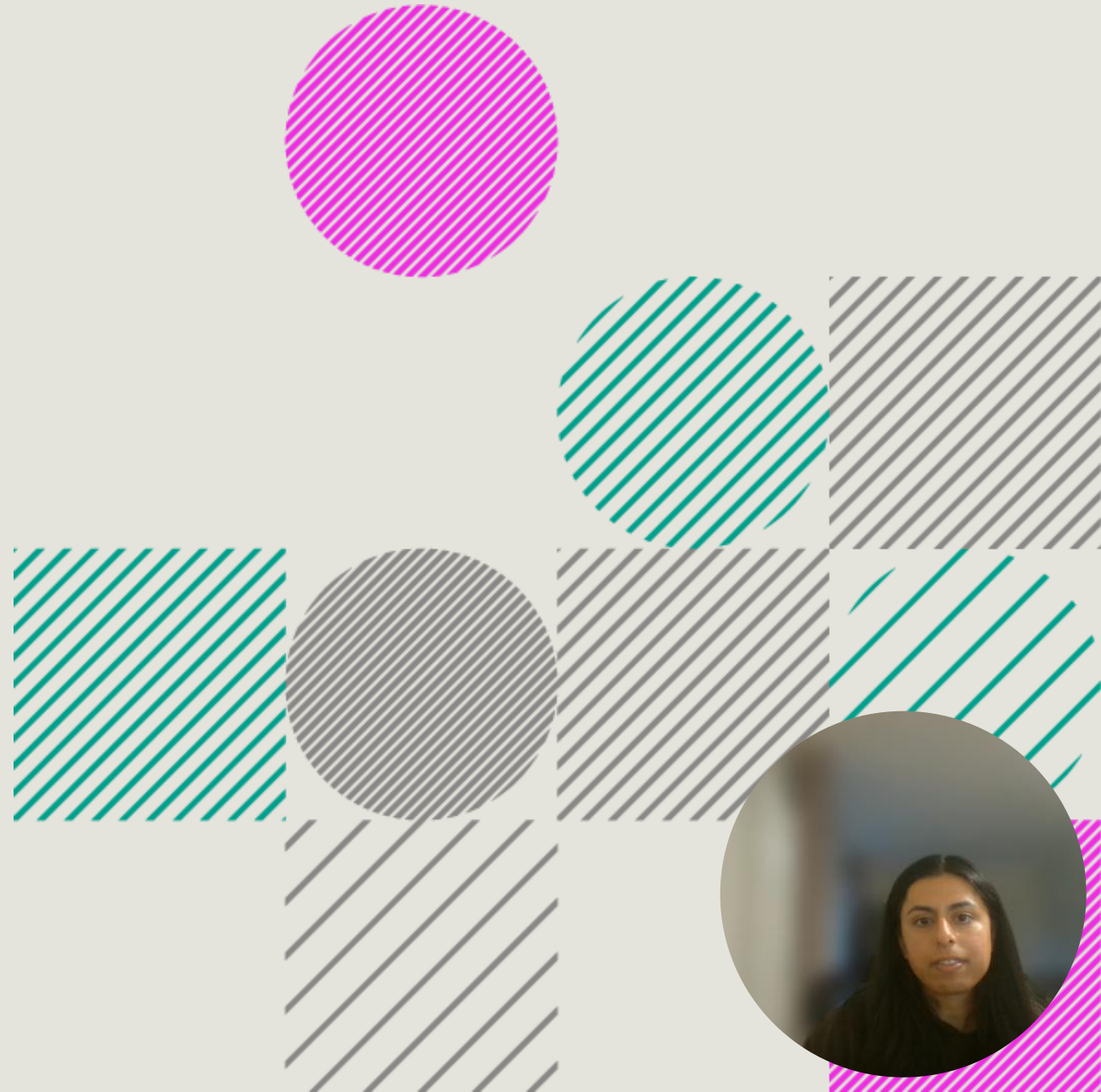Figure 17: Importance of the Government or regulators having powers around the use of AI

'How important is it to you that the Government or regulators, instead of only private companies, have the following powers?'

Legend: Very important | Somewhat important | Don't know / Prefer not to say | Not very important | Not at all important

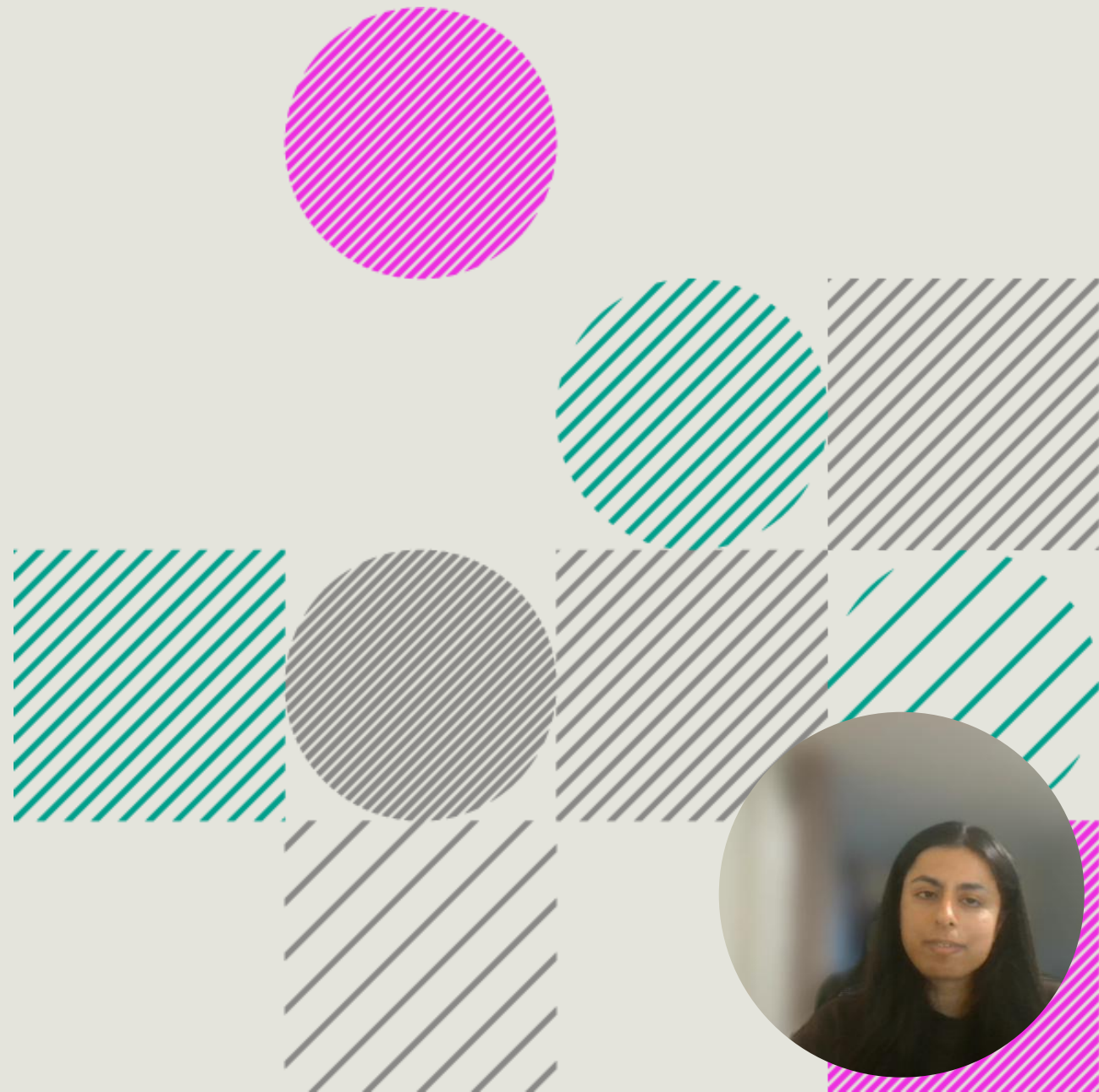|	Very important	Somewhat important
Stop the use of an AI product if it poses a risk of serious harm	87%	8%
Active monitoring of the risks posed by AI systems	81%	13%
Develop safety standards on AI use	84%	11%
Access information about the safety of AI systems directly from developers	76%	

Reflections

- 'Tracking' attitudes while remaining responsive and timely

- Identifying participants for oversampled groups

- Gaps in representation within the ecosystem

- Funding landscape and limitations in time

- Breadth vs depth

Resources

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How do people feel about AI?

Findings ⌄   About the survey ⌄   Comment & context ⌄

How do people feel about AI?

Wave 1

Github:

https://github.com/AdaLovelaceInstitute/how-do-people-feel-about-ai

- Raw data (.csv / .dta)

- Data tables

- Codebook

Wave 2

Github:

https://github.com/AdaLovelaceInstitute/wave-2---how-do-people-feel-about-AI-

- Raw data (.csv / .dta)

- Data tables

- Codebook

Contact me

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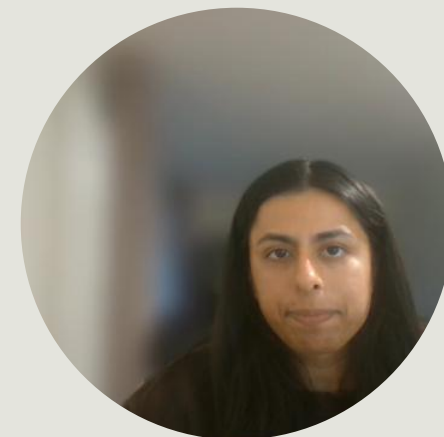
Octavia Reeve
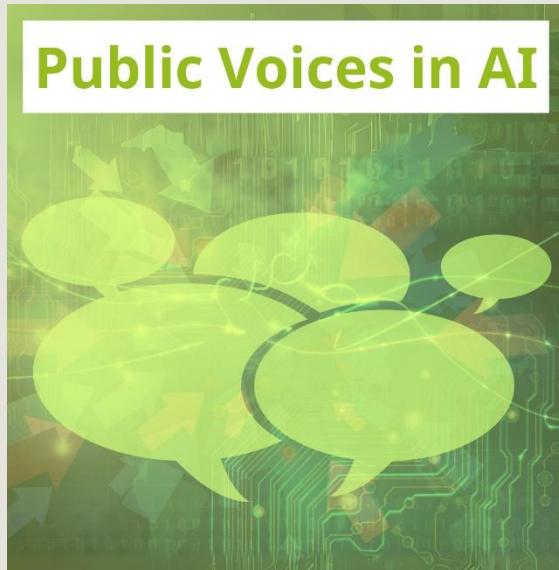
Dr. Florence Enock

Miranda Cross

Prof. Patrick Sturgis

Oriol Bosch-Jover

Katya Kostadintcheva

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Public Voices in AI

RAi

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