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Experian's Data  
Governance Report

# DATA GOVERNANCE

From afterthought to  
competitive advantage





# INTRODUCTION

We're living through a breathtaking period of digital transformation, in which new technology facilitates incredible advancements in how we live, learn and work. One knock-on effect of this digital revolution is the vast proliferation of data.

This data is extremely valuable however, many organisations across all sectors are struggling to cope with it. Unfortunately, they either lack the means to break down silos and access these precious datasets in a consolidated way, or they lack the experience and resources to make the most out of them.

Meanwhile, governments and regulatory bodies have been stepping up regulatory oversight of the digital world: aimed at protecting the private and personal data of citizens. As well as ensuring that compliance to a raft of statutes is reported more accurately and more often. This has made compliance much more difficult for those organisations who wish to avoid the costly fines and potential impact on their brand and reputation incurred by breaching these rules.

As a result, data governance has become an essential topic for executives and industry leaders. But what exactly is data governance?

“In a world where everything is increasingly based on data, the importance of data governance is crucial. Our research shows that businesses understand that and, by leveraging data effectively, they can gain the competitive edge and ability to deliver better services as well as ensure they remain fully compliant and secure.”

**Andrew Abraham,**  
Global Managing Director, Data Quality,  
Experian

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# DEFINING DATA GOVERNANCE

Data governance is best defined as the comprehensive management of an organisation's data availability, usability, integrity, and security.

Encompassing the policies that ensure data is managed effectively and responsibly. Data governance allows organisations to define data-related roles, set data quality standards, and implement mechanisms for data stewardship.

Data governance provides a structured approach to handling data throughout its lifecycle; from creation and storage to utilisation and deletion. It democratises data across a business to maintain consistency and accuracy of data — ensuring that it is reliable and can be trusted for decision-making. It also includes measures to safeguard data against breaches and misuse, aligning with regulatory requirements and promoting organisational transparency.





# WHY DATA GOVERNANCE IS IMPORTANT

Effective data governance ensures that organisations can rely on high-quality data to make informed decisions and comply with stringent regulatory requirements.

It provides a systematic, organised and auditable approach to understanding data, identifying data problems, and prioritising data issues. And it helps businesses survey, monitor and understand their data to deliver effective data management and control. With data being such an integral part of modern business and virtually every organisation, it's clear why data governance is an incredibly important concept for any organisation, regardless of size or sector.



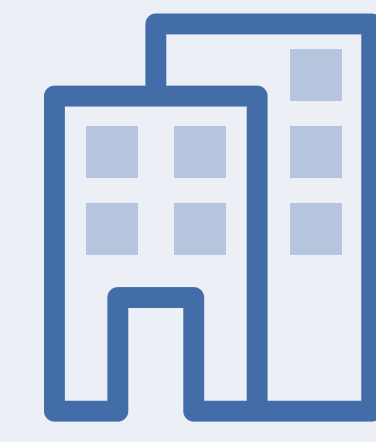


Below are just a few of the reasons why data governance is important:



## DATA CONSISTENCY AND QUALITY

Data governance is crucial for ensuring consistency and maintaining high data quality within an organisation. By implementing robust data governance frameworks, organisations can ensure their data is fit for purpose, has greater accuracy and reduces the negative affects of data silos.



## OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Understanding your whole data estate, having clarity about who owns the data, and implementing rules to govern its use, means being able to assess whether you can operate efficiently and identify where to drive operational improvements.



## STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

Companies are increasingly leveraging new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to gain a competitive edge. However, this pursuit of new technologies presents a critical challenge: the quality and integrity of their data. To address this, robust data governance practices are essential.



# EXPERIAN'S DATA GOVERNANCE REPORT 2024

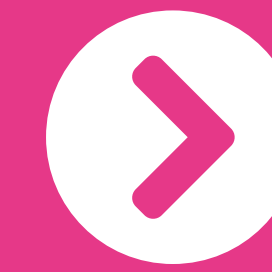
In April 2024 we conducted over 250 interviews with data governance decision makers and influencers in UK and Ireland businesses across a range of sectors where data governance is a priority.

We commissioned this research to find out what businesses really thought of data governance and to understand how we could help them, and their customers.

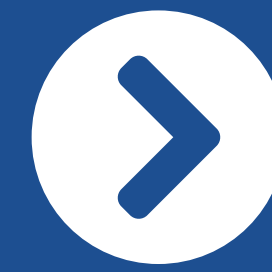
We asked a range of questions including how data governance is viewed within the business, how much they are looking to invest, and what are core barriers to good data governance.

We also asked how future technology such as AI will impact how they move forward. **Based on our findings we've split the report into four sections:**

The state of data governance



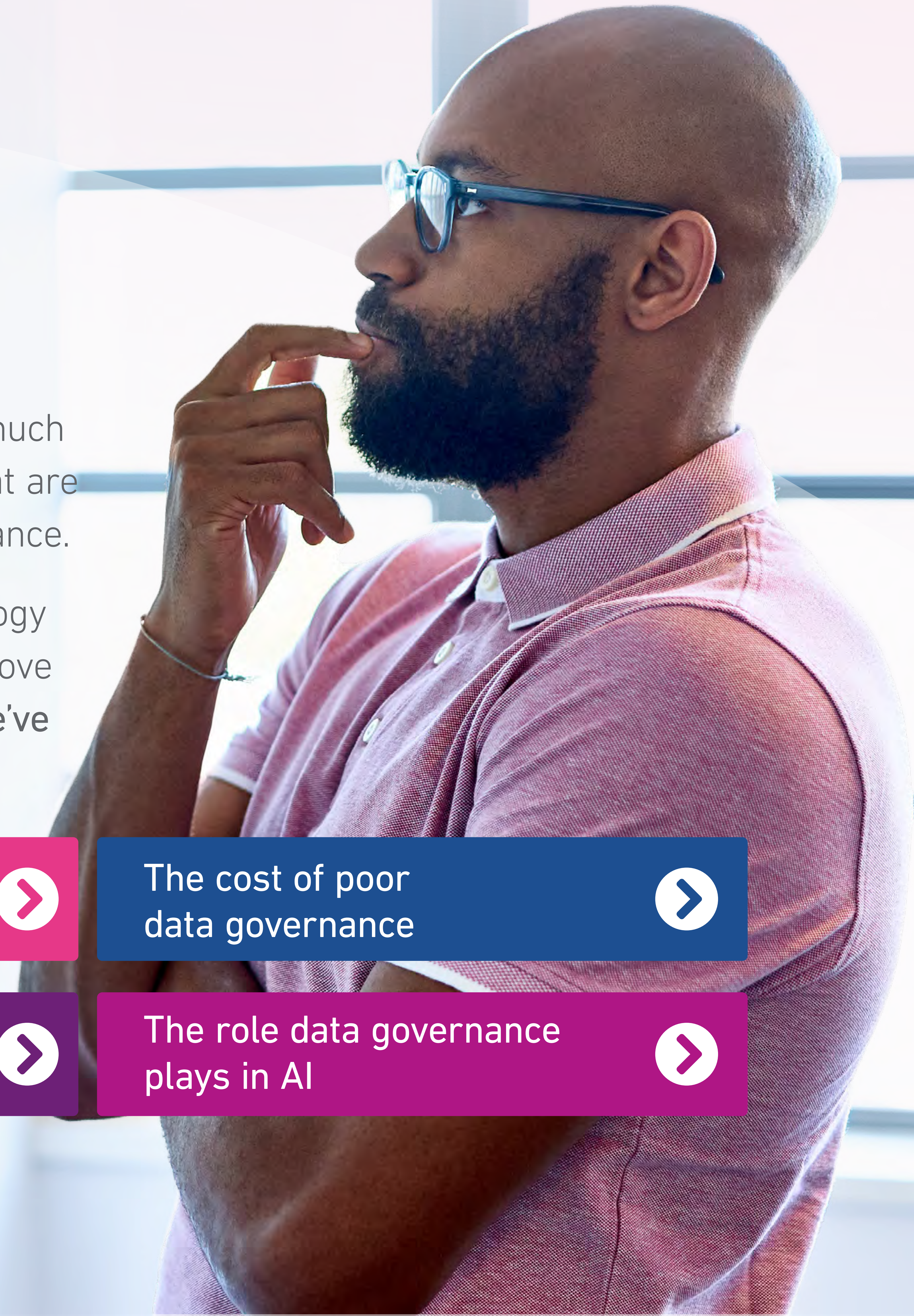
The cost of poor data governance



Investment in data governance

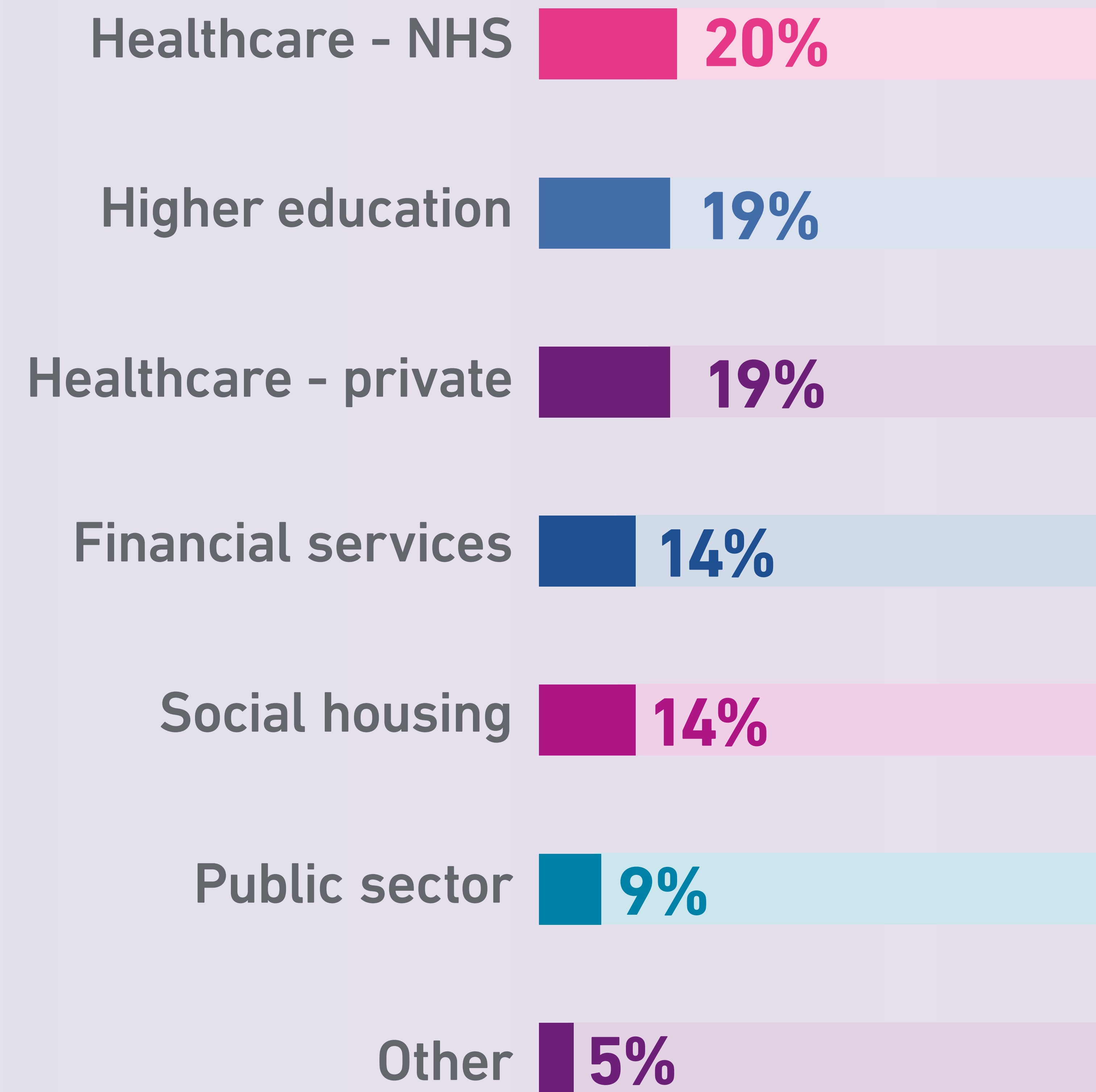
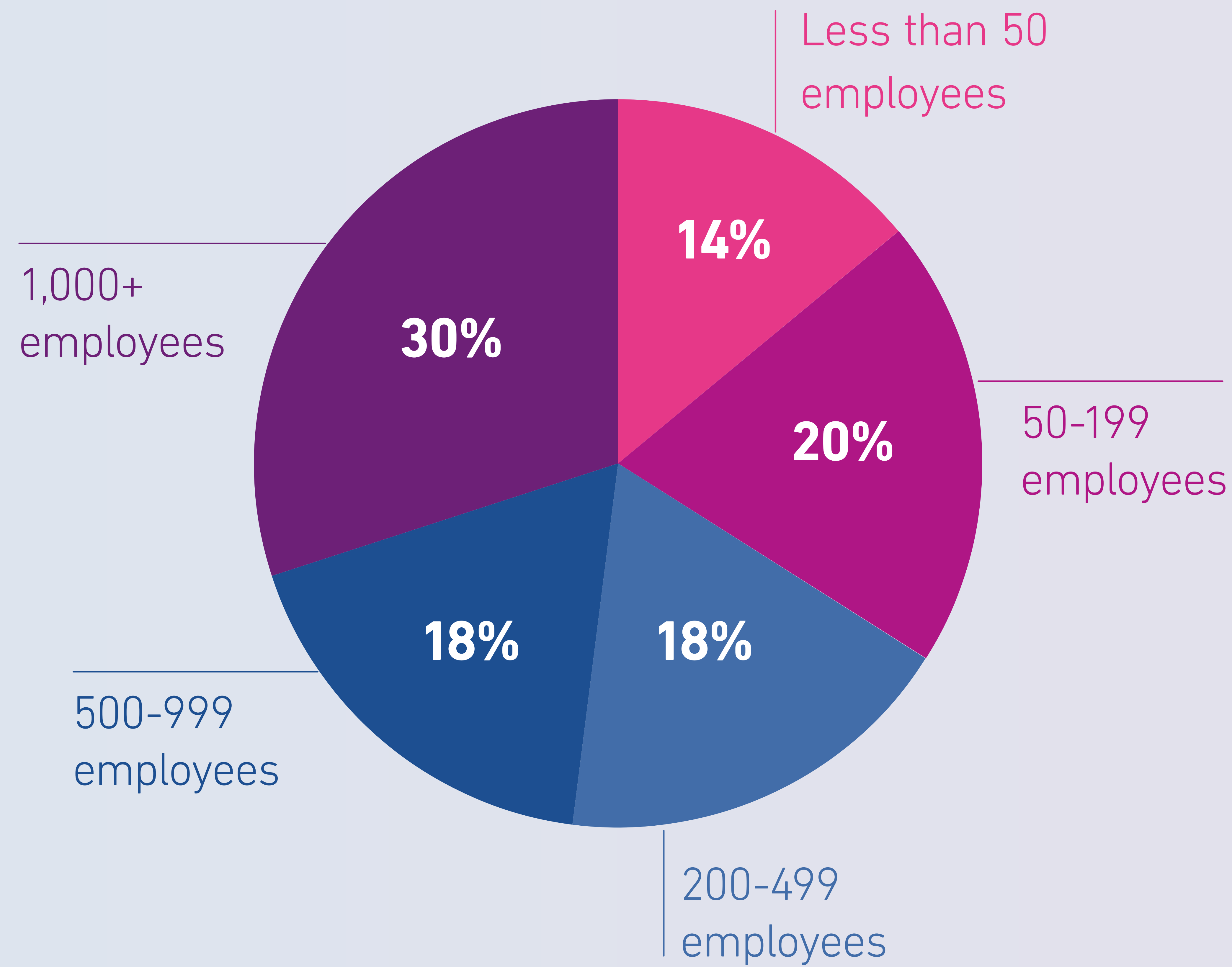


The role data governance plays in AI





### Breakdown of sample



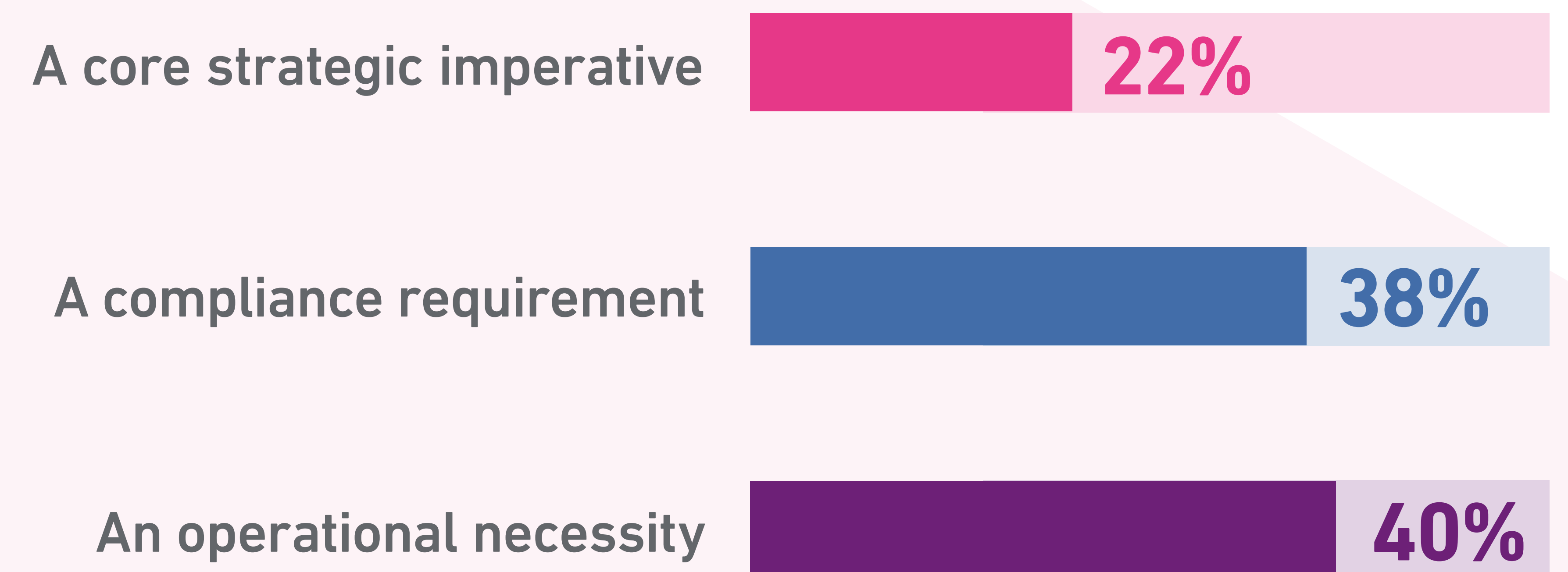
# 1 STATE OF DATA GOVERNANCE

We found the purpose of data governance ranges from a compliance requirement to an operational necessity and, less commonly, a core strategic imperative.

Most (78%) currently have a senior executive who oversees their data governance programme and 69% have a specific data governance team. Over half the organisations we spoke to had other representatives from business operations or a steering committee involved in data governance.

The research identified almost three quarters of organisations are managing data governance in house (particularly in healthcare, and in the “compliance requirement” segments) whilst 28% manage it externally. 84% have a specific data governance budget (37% expect it to increase in the next 12 months, 47% don't expect it to increase). Data governance approaches are typically reviewed annually (46%) with another 47% reviewing it more frequently than this. 6% have it under continual review.

Organisations vary in what they consider to be the primary purpose of their data governance activities:





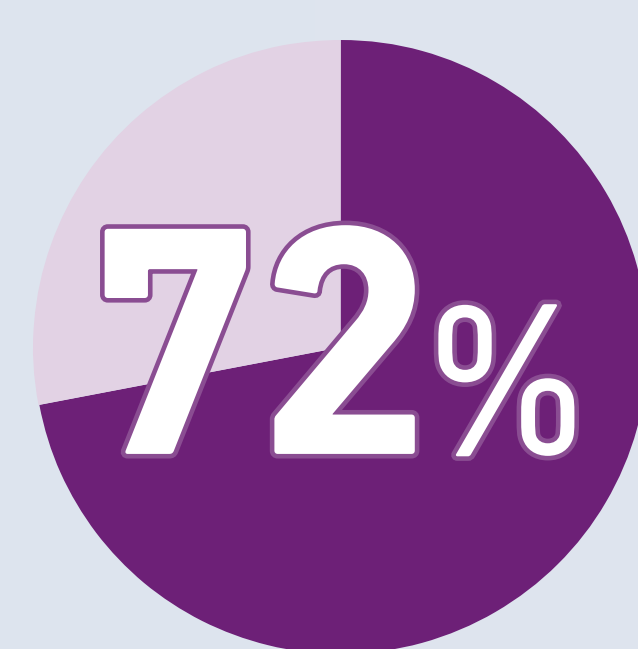
## 2 THE COST OF POOR DATA GOVERNANCE

Earlier we outlined the business benefits of good data governance. In our research we asked what cost poor data governance has on business.

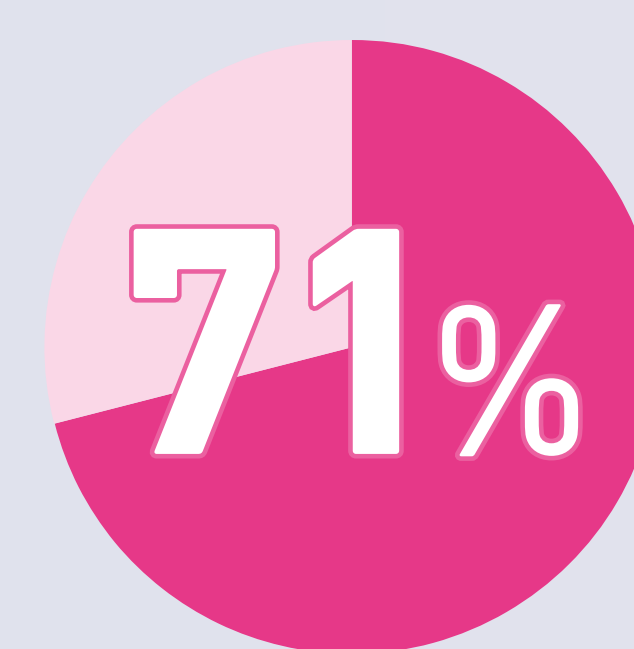
We found the most serious consequences are compliance failures (**56%**) and security breaches (**56%**), followed by reputational damage (**51%**) and poor data quality / eroded trust in data (**51%**). Also mentioned are missed business opportunities / operational inefficiencies (**37%**) and an inability to leverage data for innovation (**29%**).

As more regulations are being set across different industries, we asked whether current data governance processes are meeting expectations. Only **15%** of organisations think data governance efforts are fully meeting expectations and delivering the outcomes they need. **62%** think they do to a degree but there is still scope for improvement and another **22%** see their efforts falling short and considerable scope for improvement.

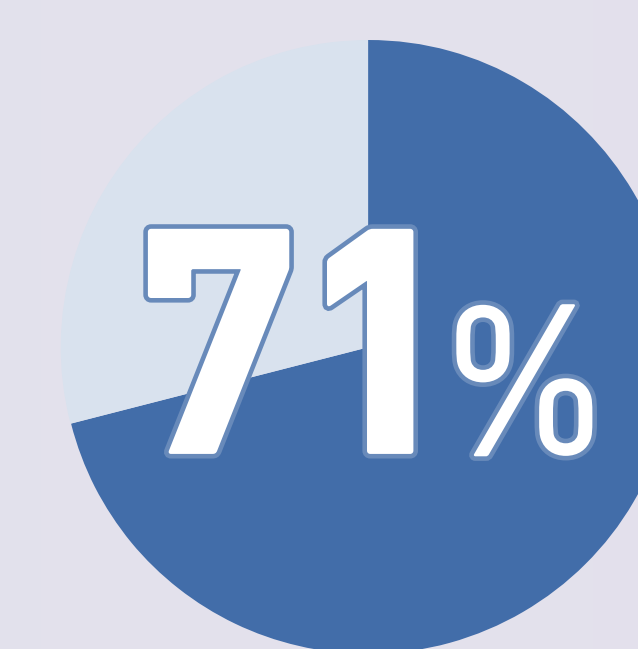
Organisations cite many barriers to good data governance, these include:



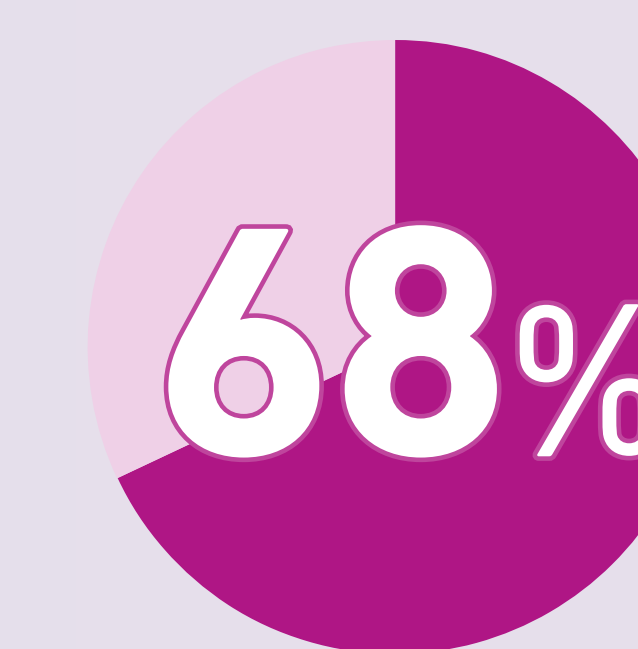
Embedding data governance into existing workflows and core business processes



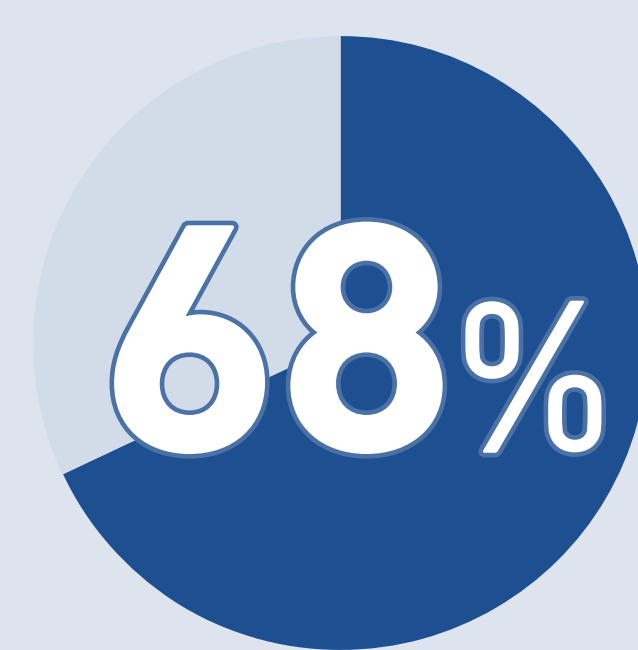
Improving data quality



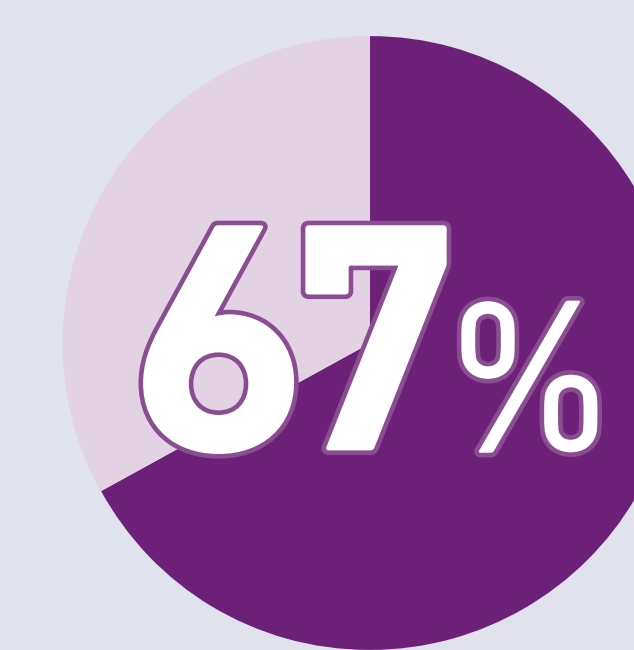
Ensuring data governance scales with existing technology and business models



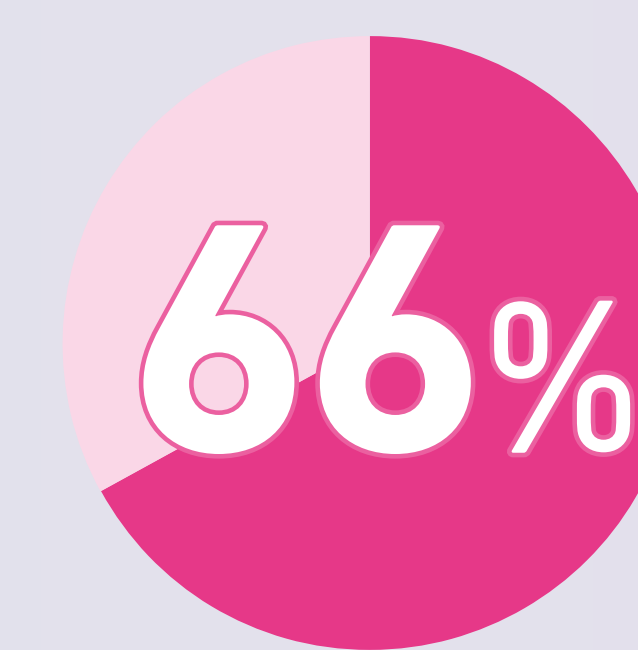
Having a clear data governance vision and being able to measure success



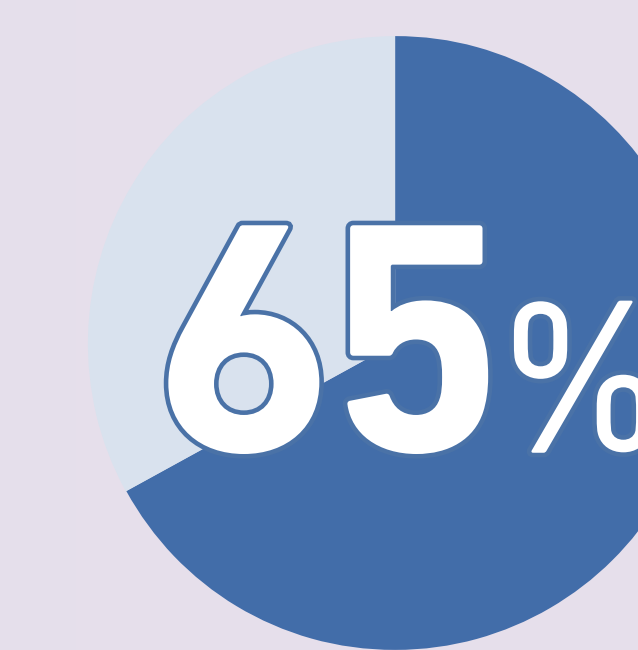
Identifying and establishing data governance roles and responsibilities



Setting up and maintaining processes, policies, and documentation



Ensuring compliance with current and emerging regulations



Knowing where and how to use data governance technology and tools



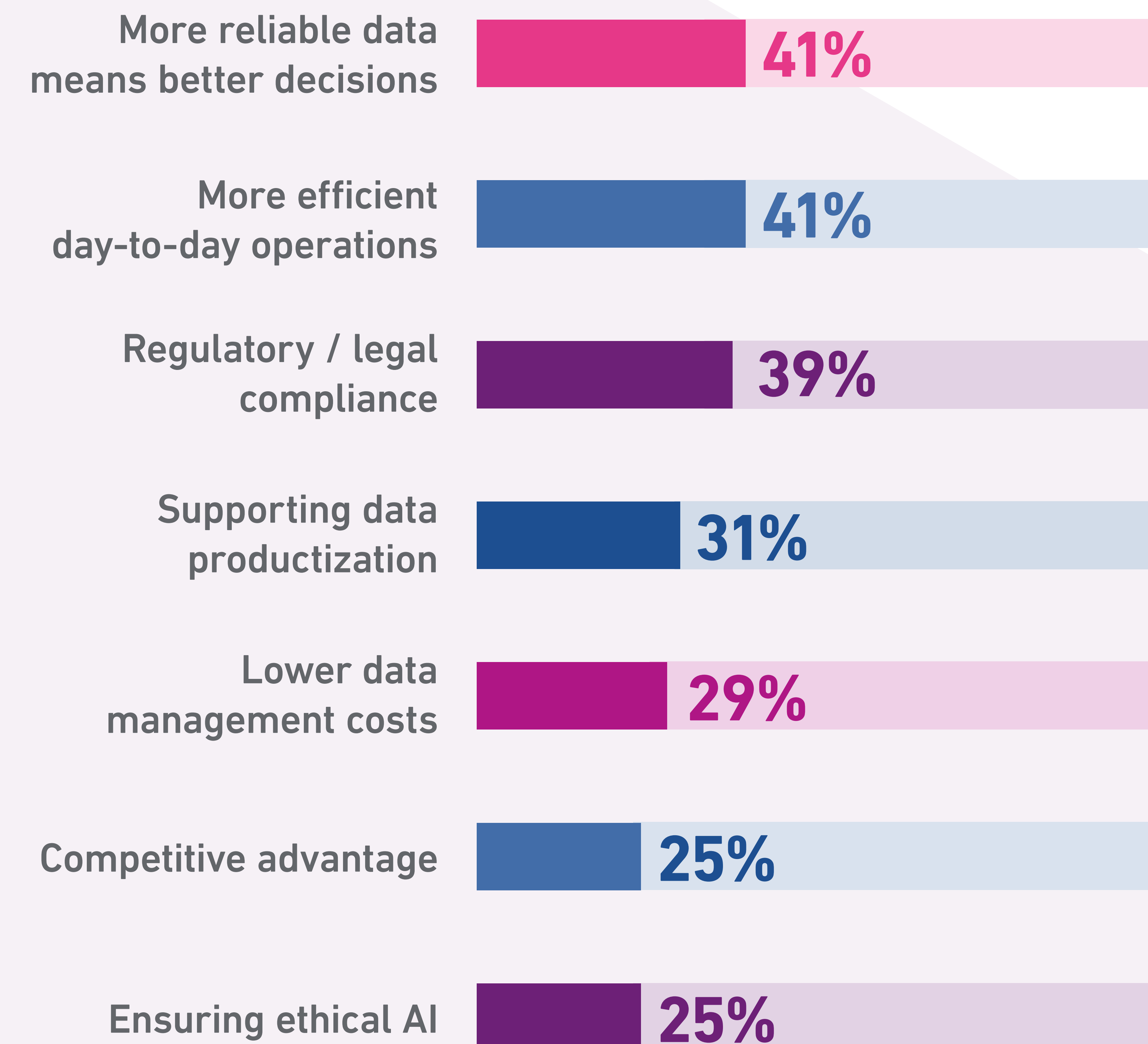
### 3 INVESTMENT IN DATA GOVERNANCE

**84%** of people we interviewed said that data governance is the backbone of effective data management.

Therefore, it's unsurprising that **97%** said they are investing in and improving their data governance approaches within the next two years. There are many ways companies are doing this **which includes:** integrating data governance into core business processes (**41%**), improving data literacy and skills of end users (**40%**) and investing in high quality data governance technologies and tools (**36%**).

**37%** said they currently use automated tools or technologies for data governance, **48%** said they are exploring options and **15%** said they have no plans. Whilst there is a clear appetite for data governance investment particularly in automated tools and new technologies **59%** think that changing data governance provider would be difficult and **58%** say it is difficult to know what to prioritise when it comes to data governance.

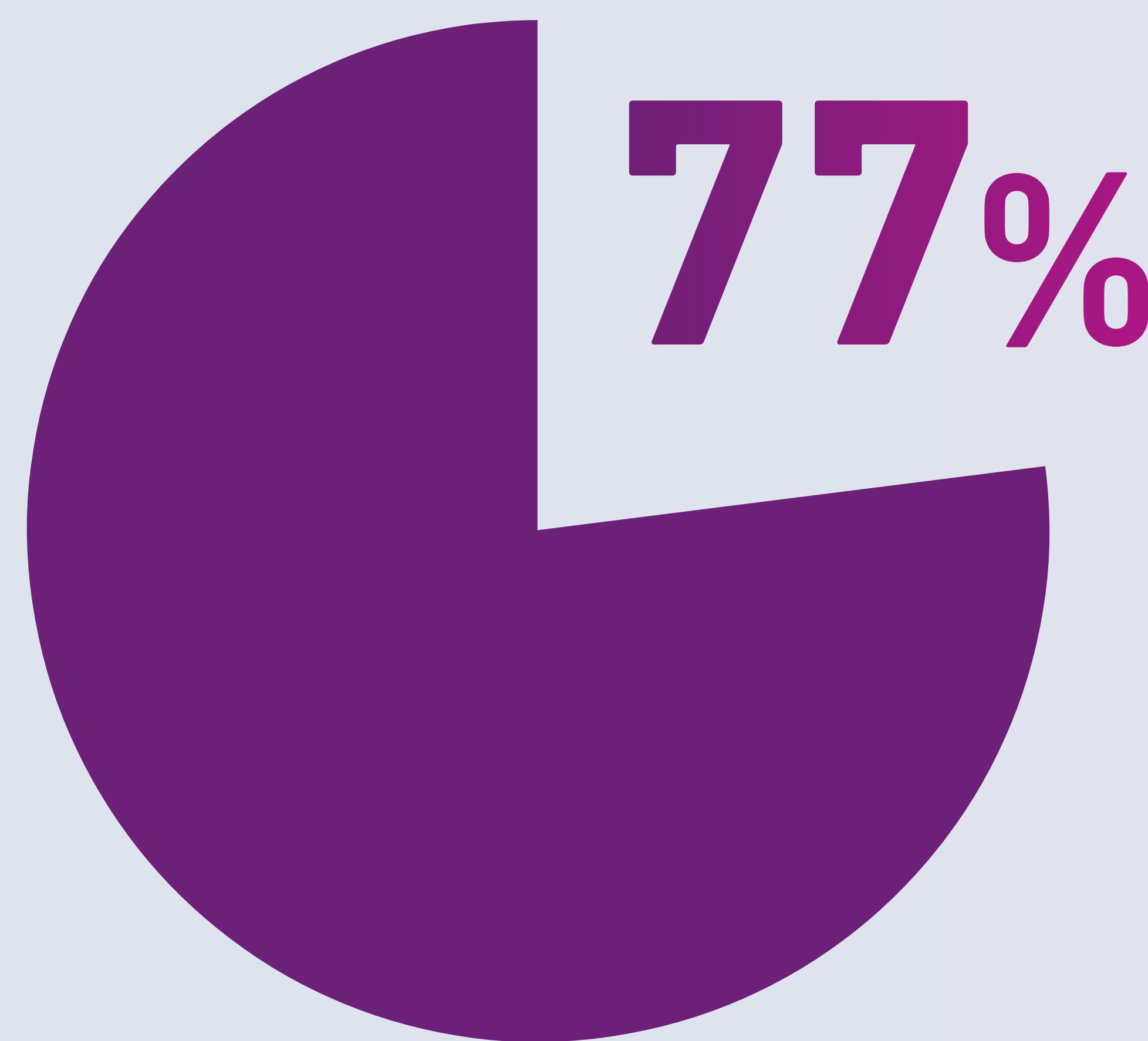
Compelling benefits associated with investing in data governance include:





## 4 THE ROLE DATA GOVERNANCE PLAYS IN AI

With all technology advancements comes an influx of data and this is no different for AI. As AI continues to be a focus for most companies, we wanted to explore how data governance can impact this.



of people said data governance is under the spotlight as they look to take advantage of AI and 73% agree that better data governance is the doorway to better AI.

The likely impacts of AI on data governance vary from improved data quality **(34%)**, automated access control and policy monitoring **(32%)**, more efficient metadata management and data mapping **(32%)** better forecasting of governance risks / supporting governance planning **(32%)**, enhanced data security **(31%)** and increased data integration **(31%)**.

It's clear to see the impact AI will have on data governance and this is shown in the previous section with the investment companies are putting into data governance over the next 12 months.



## EXPERIAN VIEW POINT

### KEY TAKEAWAY

**86%** say data governance is becoming more important in their organisation over the next five years. **83%** say they recognise that data governance should no longer be an afterthought and can give them a strategic advantage.

The purpose of data governance ranges across different industries, some seeing it as a compliance requirement whilst others view it as an operational necessity. Most companies we interviewed have a specific data governance budget, a senior executive sponsor and a specific data governance team. This aligns to the feedback around high investments planned for data governance over the next two years. It shows companies know they need to act now and act quickly to gain the competitive advantage, impact their bottom line and drive their business forward.

Relatively few organisations think data governance efforts are fully meeting expectations and delivering the outcomes they need – most acknowledging there is scope for improvement. Only around a quarter think their company complies to a great extent with the data governance regulations that are relevant to their sector, again seeing scope for improvement. However, the research showed many companies don't know where to start or what to prioritise when it comes to data governance, this is where Experian can help. Our experts will understand your challenges and what you are trying to achieve before working with you to find the best solution.



Barriers to good data governance include embedding data governance into existing processes, improving data quality, scalability and keeping pace with technology. The most serious consequences of poor data governance are compliance failures, security breaches, reputational damage and poor data quality.

There is currently more interest in the use of automation for data governance. Important factors sought in a data governance solution provider include an end-to-end solution, seamless integration, being simple and intuitive to use and support in building an effective data governance strategy. Investment is planned and companies can see many benefits associated with investing in data governance.





# EXPERIAN'S APERTURE GOVERNANCE STUDIO: WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Our Aperture Governance Studio is a highly intuitive data governance solution that works across all sectors. It's easy and fast to implement, it brings clarity and understanding to an organisation's data estate in days, not months, with a simple user-friendly interface that makes sense of data for users at all levels whether they are technically minded or not.

## KEY FEATURES:

**Business Glossary:** set an agreed definition for all data items and build a glossary of key terms.

**Data Policies:** set and store all policies in a single go-to repository.

**Data Ownership:** see clear multi-level ownership of data across your business.

**Data Automation:** assign tasks and monitor progress.

**Data Events:** record breaches and data protection issues in a single, auditable location.

**Impact Analysis:** identify the impact of data quality on business processes.

Data Governance has been a game changer for our organisation. Partnering with Experian to increase our Data Governance efforts has improved the ownership of our data whilst creating a more data-focused culture at Wessex Water. It has also enabled improved business outcomes and allowed us to implement more efficient processes.

**Jon Weeks**

**Head of Performance and  
Information Management**

Wessex Water

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To find out how **Experian Data Quality** can support your data governance needs please **[click here to contact us.](#)**



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