



AI and the future of social work one-day summit

May 2026, Birmingham



A Workforce Strategy
for Adult Social Care in England

Getting the most out of today

The programme

Thank you for joining us today. Whether you've travelled from near or far, you're a delegate, speaker, exhibitor or sponsor - we really appreciate your time and your contributions.

This one-day summit has been designed around you, so here's some tips to help you get the most out of your time.

We've got a packed programme for you today. Zones 1, 2 and 3 have different themes to help you with all that choice!

Come along to one of the roundtable discussions, where leaders from across the sector will be tackling those big issues that are at the heart of the summit.

Drop in

You don't need to book on any of the sessions - simply turn up. We've got presentations, panel discussions, workshops, demos - there's even a podcast recording.

Networking

Make the most of the many networking spaces across the event. Whether you're catching up over a cuppa in the Expo zone, or you want a longer conversation in room 501, we've got you covered.

If you're on social media, keep the conversations going with your networks. If you're on LinkedIn, tag event organisers Skills for Care and Social Work England and use #SocialWorkAISummit

Expo and demo zone

Make sure you check out the sector exhibitors and demos in the exhibition hall on the ground floor.

This is also where refreshments and lunch are, so mark this one on your map!

Getting around the venue

The summit is so big the sessions run across four floors! There is a lot of signage to help you navigate your way around – look out for the screens or the poster in the lifts. Colleagues are around the venue to help and there's a handy map.

Toilets are available on all floors.

A prayer room is available on Level 1.

A quiet space/sensory room is available on request. If you would like to access the space please ask at the registration desk.

Internet access

Please select ' _Edgbaston Free Wi-Fi' to gain access. Once selected you will need to either create an account or use your existing Sky Portal login credentials.

Sponsors

Thank you to all the sponsors who have worked with Skills for Care to support this event.

Dietary requirements

The venue cater for different dietary requirements through the choices offered at a buffet lunch. This menu information is provided to help you make an informed choice.

If you have any food allergies, intolerances, or dietary requirements, please tell your server before ordering.

Please scan the QR code to access the Allergen Menu.



Scan Me
Or visit this url:
mnu.mx/A160771
to see our allergen menus

Welcome

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the AI and the future of social work one-day summit here in Birmingham.

We are brought together by a shared commitment to support people, respect their rights, and work alongside them so they can live the lives they choose.

Technology, including AI, is part of how we do that. Its value will be shaped not by the tools themselves, but by the people who use them, the standards we uphold, and the outcomes we expect.

This summit brings together leaders, practitioners, people with lived experience, and partners from technology and education to explore what AI means for social work now and what we need to put in place now to make sure the workforce benefits. It is a space to share learning, to ask honest questions, and to build confidence.

We recognise the importance of getting this right. AI should support, not replace professional judgment. Trust, ethics and people must remain central to social work practice. As the use of AI grows, so too does our collective responsibility to ensure it is safe, fair, accountable and grounded in the values of social work.

The use of AI should help meet people's needs more effectively and efficiently, improve outcomes for individuals and enhance workforce wellbeing. Today is an important opportunity to come together to understand both the opportunities and challenges of AI in social work. It will help us continue to uphold professional standards, protect the public, and maintain confidence in social work in England.

Skills for Care play a unique role in bringing the sector together. As the national charity that supports workforce development across adult social care in England, we connect policy and practice and help translate ambition into action.

Our role at Social Work England is to protect the public and raise standards across social work in England. We regulate social workers in England so that people receive the best possible support whenever they might need it in life. We are committed to collaborating with everyone involved in social work in order for us to promote and maintain professional standards, maintain public health, safety and wellbeing and ensure public confidence in the profession.

Digital transformation is a key part of the Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy in England, recognising that a confident, capable workforce is essential to making the most of new opportunities. If AI is changing work, then workforce strategy is how we make sure that change happens with the workforce - not to it.

Today is about collaboration and momentum. By coming together, we can shape an approach to AI that supports our workforce and, most importantly, improves the lives of the people who draw on care and support.

Thank you for being part of this important conversation.

Oonagh Smyth CBE, Chief Executive, Skills for Care

Sarah Blackmore, Executive Director for Professional Practice and External Engagement Social Work England

Roundtable Zone

Chair's lounge | **Level 2**, head to reception and down the east wing, through door E3 and take the lift or stairs to level 2

Join our AI in social work roundtables – expert-led conversations exploring how AI is shaping practice, policy and the future of the workforce.

The future of social work: practice, AI and system readiness

10:45 – 12:15

Roundtable hosted by Skills for Care

Come along to listen and be part of the discussion as practitioners and partners share real insights, challenges and opportunities.

This roundtable will bring together a small group of leaders from government, social work, regulation, technology, academia and people with lived and living experience. In light of what we know about how social work practice may evolve over the next decade, our aim is to explore what realistic opportunities AI can offer, and what system conditions are needed to enable safe, ethical and person-centred innovation.

Sarah McClinton, Chief Social Worker, Department of Health and Social Care

Tommy Henderson-Reay, Implementation Programme Manager, Digitising Social Care Programme, NHS England

Sam Boyd, Deputy Director, Adult Social Care Workforce, Department of Health and Social Care

Sir David Pearson, Co-chair of oversight executive group, Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care in England

Daniel Casson, Oxford AI project/Casson Consulting

Debra Edwards, person with lived experience

Clenton Farquharson CBE, Think Local Act Personal

Charlotte Walker, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care Quality & Improvement, Trafford Council

David Williams, Principal Social Worker, London Borough of Enfield Council and Workforce Co-Lead, ADASS

Steve Peddie, Care and Health Improvement Adviser (CHIA) for the Southwest Region and national CHIA for Digital Technology in Adult Social Care

Angus Honeysett, Chair of TechUK's Social Care Working Group

Alyson Scurfield, CEO, TEC Services Association

Professor Tarsem Singh Cooner, Professor of Social Work and Digital Media, University of Birmingham

Lavanya Rangarajan, Policy and Strategy Manager, ITI and Health Team, Policy Connect

Jane Brightman, Director of Workforce Development, Skills for Care

James Freed, Deputy Director, The NHS Digital Academy, NHS England

How can regulation support safe, ethical and effective adoption of AI in social work?

13:30 – 15:00

Roundtable hosted by Social Work England

This roundtable will bring together social work regulators, regulators from other sectors, and sector leaders, to explore how regulation can support the safe, ethical and effective adoption of artificial intelligence in social work.

The discussion will examine shared regulatory challenges and opportunities, including accountability, transparency, risk management and public trust, and will draw on learning and practical experience from other regulated professions already engaging with AI.

We hope also that the discussions will include sharing perspectives on how regulatory approaches from across different sectors could inform proportionate, future-focused regulation of AI in social work, whilst maintaining high standards of practice and public protection.

Sarah Blackmore, Executive Director, Social Work England

Jenny Paton, Director of Strategy and Commercial, Skills for Care

George Burton, Learning and Development Manager (Digital Learning), Digital Learning Team, Scottish Social Services Council

Declan McAllister, Director of Registration and Corporate Services, Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC)

Dr Adi Cooper OBE, Deputy Chair, Social Work England

MJ Black, The National Advisory Forum Social Work England, Person with Lived Experience of Social Work

Hywel Dafydd, Social Care Wales, Assistant Director of Regulation

Dr Caroline Webb, Research Fellow: AI and Digital Health/Lecturer MScACPS, University of Birmingham

Dr Jeffry Hogg MBBS, PhD, FHEA, Clinician Scientist, University of Birmingham

Dr Colleen Simon, Head of Social Work, Social Care and Adult Safeguarding, Central & North West London NHS Foundation Trust

Mairi-Anne Macdonald, Deputy Director Development & Innovation, Research in Practice | National Children's Bureau

Andrew Reece, BASW, Strategic Lead for Wales & England / Arweinydd Strategol i Gymru a Lloegr

Dr Gillian Ferguson, DHSC Programme Leader, Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies, The Open University

Sarah McClinton, Chief Social Worker, Department for Health and Social Care

Developing a Digital Excellence Roadmap

15:15 – 16:00

Workshop hosted by Iris Care Group and Digital Care Hub

The purpose of this workshop is to share the work that has been carried out to date in developing a Digital Excellence Roadmap for working age adult care providers.

The purpose of the Roadmap is to provide both a clear definition of what excellence in digital care looks like and a clear “direction of travel” for care providers who want to develop and improve their use of digital technology to both improve outcomes for the people they support and the effectiveness and efficiency of their organisations.

The Roadmap looks at both processes within a care provider and how a care provider uses digital technology to enhance the quality of the support it provides and the communication with key stakeholders including families, commissioners and regulators. The workshop will form part of the consultation process that is being carried out as part of the development of the Roadmap. We are keen to hear from people being supported, families and other stakeholders.

Peter Kinsey, Chair, Iris Care Group

Peter has worked in health and social care for 40 years. He was a Director in the NHS for 7 years and has been Chief Executive of several national care providers for 18 years. He is currently Chair of Iris Care Group which supports people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. He has chaired the Care England Working Age Adults group for the last 10 years. Peter chairs the working group which is developing the Digital Excellence Roadmap for working age adult providers.

Katie Thorn, Director of Innovation, Digital Care Hub

Katie Thorn is the Director of Innovation for the Digital Care Hub. She has played a significant role in advocating for and implementing digital solutions in social care and is the co-convenor of the Oxford Project on the Responsible Use of Generative AI in Adult Social Care. Her work focuses on ensuring that digital innovations in social care are used ethically and effectively. Her background includes working in nursing homes as both a carer and in operations. For the past decade she has worked on national digitisation programmes focused on frontline adult social care in the UK and interoperability between the NHS and social care. Katie is a member of the UK Caldicott Guardian Council and sits on several academic advisory boards focussing on adult social care digitisation.

Demo zone

Exhibition hall | Ground floor

Enhancing, Not Replacing: Using AI and Virtual Environments to Strengthen Human-Centred Social Work Practice

11:00 – 11:30

Hosted by TSA

Delegates will leave with a clear, practical understanding of how AI can enhance—rather than replace—human-centred social work practice. We will showcase the TSA Virtual Home as a real example of an immersive learning environment, highlighting how AI can enhance the social care role, support ethical decision-making, and strengthen professional judgement. Participants will see how technology can build confidence in using technology-enabled care and improve learning and practice. The session will provide actionable ideas for safe adoption, while encouraging reflection on ethics and standards, leaving delegates empowered to use AI to improve outcomes and relationship-based care.

Meet your hosts

Julie Stone, MBA-qualified higher education consultant

Julie Stone is an MBA-qualified higher education consultant with over 30 years' experience leading transformational change and enhancing learner experience through service design. She has worked across Russell Group and post-1992 universities, as well as sectors including cyber security and adult social care. Julie led the University of Derby's Online Learning department, scaling it to over 130,000 CPD learners and 6,000 online degree students. She is currently working with TSA, leading workforce development initiatives, including innovative AI-enabled learning solutions to support professional development focused on technology enabled care.

Charles Shields, Director, Marked Improvement E-learning

Charles Shields is Director of Marked Improvement E-learning, a digital learning company specialising in workforce development. With over 30 years' experience in computer-based training and e-learning, he has worked across higher education, healthcare, local government, charity sector, and professional services. He previously spent seven years as Head of E-learning at Loughborough University. Over the past 18 months, Charles and his colleagues have supported development and rollout of the TSA Learning Hub, including workforce CPD modules.

Lancashire County Council

Learn how Lancashire County Council has embedded generative AI into frontline social work practice in a safe, ethical, and practitioner-led way.

Delegates will see real examples of how social workers are using AI to support tasks such as summarising cases, generating reports and assessments, and reducing administrative burden, freeing up time for direct work with people.

The session will also cover the governance and security arrangements required to deploy AI responsibly in adult services, alongside lessons learned. Delegates will leave with a clear understanding of what is possible, the safeguards required, and practical considerations for adoption in their own organisations.

Meet your hosts

Mairead Gill-Mullarkey, Director of Operations (Adults Social Care), Lancashire County Council

With over 20 years' experience in local government, Mairead is a highly skilled director specialising in adult social care. She is renowned for her strategic vision, consistently championing innovative approaches to enhance the lives of both her workforce and Lancashire residents. Mairead has successfully led service redesigns that deliver positive, person-centred outcomes, adopting a collaborative style that involves partners, communities, and teams to create practical solutions supporting prevention and early intervention.

Ben Pierrie, Digital Innovation Business Analyst, Lancashire County Council

An experienced Digital Innovation Business Analyst, Ben is dedicated to driving transformation across Lancashire County Council's services. With a background in digital innovation and process improvement, Ben has led a range of projects focused on enhancing operational efficiency and service delivery.

Emma Burt, Approved Mental Health Professional and Mental Health Social Care Lead, Lancashire County Council

An accomplished Approved Mental Health Professional and Mental Health Social Care Lead at Lancashire County Council. With extensive experience in frontline social work, Emma is recognised for her commitment to supporting both colleagues and service users. Emma has led the adoption of Microsoft 365 Copilot within the Mental Health service, collaborating closely with the Digital Innovation team and Microsoft partners to embed digital tools into everyday practice.

West Midlands Association of Directors of Adult Social Services

This session will demonstrate the WM ADASS AI Playbook, a co-produced resource developed with people who draw on adult social care, carers, and practitioners.

The Playbook explores how AI is already being used in everyday life to support independence, communication, and organisation, while also addressing key ethical considerations such as bias, trust, and transparency.

Delegates will gain practical insight into how AI can be used safely and responsibly, both by individuals and within professional practice. The session will also highlight how co-production and storytelling can support more ethical and inclusive approaches to AI in adult social care.

Meet your hosts

Pete Jackson, Regional Improvement Director, West Midlands ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services)

Pete Jackson is Regional Improvement Director at West Midlands ADASS. He leads regional work on system improvement, innovation, and research across adult social care. Pete has a strong interest in the intersection of technology and humanity, with a particular focus on how digital tools can support independence and inclusion. He co-developed the WM ADASS AI Playbook, working closely with people who draw on care, carers, and practitioners to explore ethical and practical uses of AI. His work emphasises co-production, lived experience, and ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces human relationships.

Sandra Simpson, Research Engagement Lead, West Midlands ADASS

Sandra Simpson is a qualified social worker, WM ADASS Research Engagement Lead and doctoral researcher. She has a keen interest in artificial intelligence and its impact on social work practice. Sandra explores how AI is being adopted within adult social care, particularly in relation to ethics, human rights, and professional accountability. Sandra brings both practice experience and research insight, examining how AI tools such as transcription and generative systems are shaping decision-making and workload. She is committed to ensuring that AI is implemented responsibly, with appropriate safeguards, transparency, and a strong emphasis on protecting the rights and experiences of people who draw on care and support.

National Care Forum (NCF)

The Care Technologist programme creates a new professional role that bridges technology and compassionate care. This session will explore how the Internet of Things (IoT) and sentient AI are transforming social care by shifting from reactive crisis management to proactive, preventative support.

Through ambient sensing for falls prevention and data-driven predictive analytics, the care technologist tailors technology to the individual's needs. This approach emphasises human connection and dignity, using innovation to promote independent living while easing administrative tasks for frontline staff.

Meet your hosts

Professor Vic Rayner OBE is Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Care Forum, joining the organisation in 2016. She chairs the National Social Care Advisory Group on social care and technology and has been at the forefront of promoting digital transformation across care. She sits on a range of government and national specialist groups with a focus on the social care workforce, digital transformation, new models of care and regulation.

Zone 1 Responsible AI and regulation



Sponsored by Nourish Care | Banqueting suite | **Level 2**

Opening address and welcome

10:00 – 10:30

Meet the speakers

Sarah McClinton, Department for Health and Social Care

Tristram Gardner, Skills for Care

Sarah Blackmore, Social Work England

Using GenAI ethically in social work practice

10:45 – 11:15

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW)

In March 2025, BASW published both a policy statement on Generative AI and initial guidance on practice and ethics.

In this presentation, Dr Rosanne Palmer of BASW will speak to these ethical challenges of using GenAI in social work practice, highlighting key areas where the use of GenAI interacts with existing legislative and policy frameworks, such as data protection and informed consent, with the aim of enabling participants to reflect on key challenges based on an examination of how the use of GenAI interacts with the principles of the BASW Code of Ethics.

Meet the speaker

Dr Rosanne Palmer, Policy and Research Lead Officer, BASW

Rosanne is the BASW Policy and Research Lead Officer where, amongst other things, she has led BASW's work on the UK Covid-19 Inquiry and is the lead on the use of Generative AI in social work practice, being the principal author of BASW's position statement and its initial guidance on ethics and practice in the use of Generative AI.

Social Work England

This session explores recent research findings on the emerging use of AI in social work education and practice, with a focus on how it can be embedded responsibly, ethically and appropriately.

It will examine the types of AI tools currently used in social work, alongside the benefits and opportunities for practitioners, employers and people who use services. The session will also look at key challenges, including cost, resources, accuracy, decision-making and informed consent.

It will consider how employers and education providers can build essential skills and explore governance, leadership and the future implications of AI for the social work profession.

Meet the speakers

Natalie Day, Assistant Director for Policy and Strategy, Social Work England

Natalie Day is Assistant Director for Policy and Strategy at Social Work England, which includes oversight of education quality assurance and research. Prior to joining the regulator, Natalie was Head of Policy and Strategy at Sheffield Hallam University and has over 20 years of experience in government, think tanks, national academics, universities and regulation, working at the intersection of evidence, education and social policy.

Mairi-Anne Macdonald, Deputy Director of Development and Innovation, Research in Practice part of the National Children's Bureau.

Mairi-Anne Macdonald has previously worked as a social worker in local authority services, holding a range of practitioner and management roles, and later served as Director of Development at the Scottish Social Services Council. With 30 years' experience across local authority, regional and national social work contexts, she is committed to ensuring that the voices of people with lived experience meaningfully inform social work practice.

Pipsa Software

AI in social work should strengthen thinking, not replace it. This session explores what responsible, practice-led AI design can look like built from the ground up with social workers, not handed down to them.

PipsaFlow is due to be piloted with five local authorities, where front-line practitioners and supervisors will be using the system in live practice. Structured feedback, reflective sessions and independent evaluation are built into the pilot from the start, ensuring the tool is tested and iterated against the realities of practice, not theoretical assumptions.

The session also offers a model of co-design where practitioner wisdom shapes the technology itself and what that process may reveal about the ethics, risks and possibilities of AI in social work.

Meet the speakers

Liz Bosanquet, CEO, Pipsa Software

Liz Bosanquet is a social worker and has spent over 20 years working in and alongside children's services across the UK, training and supporting practitioners in more than 30 local authorities to practise in ways that are systemic and relational. She founded Pipsa because she kept seeing the same gap: brilliant practitioners, let down by tools built for compliance rather than thinking.

Jouko Kuisma

Jouko Kuisma has spent 25 years building technology for health and social care. He understands the weight of the work and is committed to building something that genuinely serves the people doing it.

Timo Railo, Pipsa Software

Timo Railo has over 30 years in software development. He brings the technical architecture that makes PipsaFlow possible built from the ground up around the needs of practitioners.

Together, they are building a tool designed not to replace professional judgement, but to protect the space where good thinking happens.

Artificial intelligence in social work – deskilling or skilling differently?

14:00 – 14:30

Peterborough City Council

This session explores whether artificial intelligence is deskilling in social work or whether, instead, it challenges us to apply critical thinking and analysis skills in new and necessary ways.

Delegates will gain a clear ethical framework for responsible AI use grounded in social work values, alongside examples of practice guidance and tools that can be applied in their own organisations.

The session will strengthen delegates' critical AI literacy, sharing insights from reflective practice discussions with Peterborough's social work practitioners.

Participants will be invited to reflect on their confidence in both using, and recognising the use of AI, reframing AI as an opportunity to enhance critical thinking rather than diminish it.

Meet the speaker

Christa Farwell, Deputy Principal Social Worker, Peterborough City Council

Christa Farwell is the Deputy Principal Social Worker based within the Centre for Professional Excellence at Peterborough City Council. She has a particular professional interest in the ethical and evidence-informed use of artificial intelligence in social work practice, recognising both the dilemmas and opportunities it brings to social work practice.

Christa supports practitioners and leaders to critically understand how AI enabled tools intersect with social work values. Her work emphasises transparency, accountability, and the responsible integration of technology to enhance - not replace - relationships, reflective practice and outcomes for children and families.

Who thinks when the machine writes? Retaining professional judgement and anti-oppressive practice in AI-assisted Care Act assessments

14:45 – 15:15

TESSA Tools Ltd and Nottingham Trent University

When AI drafts a Care Act assessment, who is actually doing the thinking? This panel examines what happens to professional judgement, accountability and anti-oppressive practice when generative AI enters the assessment process. Drawing on frontline experience, practice education and doctoral research into ethical AI, we will explore how social workers can use these tools without outsourcing critical analysis, relational practice or the voice of the person. Delegates will leave with a practical framework for designing AI prompts to support AOP values and building the reflective habits needed to keep human judgement at the centre of statutory practice.

Meet the speakers

Nadia Hajat, Adult Social Worker, Director of TESSA Tools

Nadia is an Adult Social Worker and Director of TESSA Tools, which delivers non-generic AI training to practitioners. She is completing a Professional Doctorate at Nottingham Trent University, researching ethical AI and anti-oppressive practice in social work. Nadia has used AI on the front line of statutory adult services and works at the intersection of practice, research and workforce development. Her focus is on building practitioner confidence to use AI critically, transparently and in ways that protect professional judgement, accountability and the people social workers serve.

Joanne Preston, Social Worker, Nottingham City Council

Joanne is an Advanced Social Worker and Practice Educator with extensive experience across statutory adult services. She is practice education qualified and supports students and qualified social workers to develop safe, reflective and legally literate practice. Her focus is on strengths-based practice, critical thinking and workforce development, ensuring technology enhances rather than replaces professional judgement, accountability and human decision-making.

Beyond chatbots: the future potential of generative AI to scale expertise in complex social care settings

15:30 – 16:00

Iris Care Group

This talk explores how AI-powered tools are moving from chatbot functionality towards systems that could deliver real quality and productivity gains in social care settings. Using the “Aetios Praxis” platform as a case study, we will examine how multi-agent AI systems can support services to undertake complex case formulation, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) planning, and intervention planning. Crucially, as demand for PBS expertise continues to grow, this technology may offer a powerful means of scaling specialist knowledge safely — supporting consistent practice even where experienced practitioners are scarce, as well as reducing administrative burden and freeing practitioners to focus on human contact.

Meet the speaker

Dr. Andrew Hider, Consultant Clinical and Forensic Psychologist

Dr. Andrew Hider is a Consultant Clinical and Forensic Psychologist and mental health act approved clinician. Since qualification he has worked exclusively with people with severe and complex mental health problems, alongside offending behaviour. Since 2012, he has worked as Clinical Director for Iris Care Group. In this role he is accountable for strategic leadership of clinical services across both inpatient and community services. He has a longstanding interest in AI following training in neural network architecture in the early 1990s.

Zone 2 Leadership - Putting AI into practice and looking into the future

1882 | Level 2

Saving time, losing reflection: leadership choices in AI integration for social work

10:45 – 11:15

Tavistock Consulting

A socio-technical approach to AI integration is essential. Socio-technical thinking insists that any technological change reverberates through the social system, affecting relationships, culture, identity and the quality of thinking.

Without this lens, AI implementation focuses on what the technology can do, while leaving unexamined what it does to the people and practice around it.

The workshop offers participants an opportunity to reflect on their own relationship to AI and what is happening beneath the surface of its adoption. Delegates will leave with greater insight into the risks and opportunities AI poses to practice, and a clearer sense of the leadership choices available to them.

Meet the speaker

David Sibley, Organisational Consultant, Tavistock Consulting

David Sibley is an organisational consultant and executive coach at Tavistock Consulting, working with leaders, teams and organisations in high-demand public sector contexts. Using a systems psychodynamic approach, David examines what lies beneath the surface of organisational life including the unconscious dynamics of technological change. His current work examines how AI is reshaping the socio-technical systems of organisations and what this means for how authority, judgement and reflective practice function.

From algorithms to authenticity: Collective social work in an age of artificial intelligence

11:30 – 12:00

University of Warwick

As human relationships are increasingly shaped by digital systems and algorithmic decision-making, this presentation examines the ethical and practical challenges and opportunities posed by artificial intelligence (AI).

It focuses on how social workers can engage with AI in ways that strengthen, rather than erode, authentic human connections, trust, and solidarity. As practitioners committed to social justice, social workers have a responsibility to advocate for ethical, inclusive, and critically informed uses of technology.

Drawing on cutting-edge research, this presentation explores how AI can be harnessed to advance social justice, while actively resisting its dehumanising and exclusionary effects.

Meet the speaker

Dr Gurnam Singh, Professor of Sociology (Hon), University of Warwick

Dr Gurnam Singh is an activist researcher, writer, educator, columnist, and broadcast journalist. He entered the Social Work profession in 1982. Driven by a natural passion for learning, he transitioned into practice education and eventually academia in 1993. He is currently (Hon) Professor of Sociology at the University of Warwick and Visiting Professor of Social Work at Liverpool Hope University. His extensive body of work spans a wide range of themes including anti-racism, decolonisation, ethics, pedagogy and social work. More recently he has focused on the impact of artificial intelligence in relation to Higher Education and Social Work practice.

From tool to teammate: Embedding AI in safeguarding without losing professional judgement

12:15 – 12:45

This workshop equips safeguarding professionals to move from uncertainty to confident, ethical use of AI in practice.

Framed as “tool to teammate,” the session explores how AI can reduce administrative burden, support structured thinking, and enhance rather than replace professional judgement.

Through real-world safeguarding examples, live demonstrations, and guided reflection, delegates will identify practical use-cases, establish clear ethical boundaries, and develop a simple, team-ready integration plan.

Participants will leave with actionable prompts, a decision-making framework for responsible use, and the confidence to lead AI adoption within their teams while preserving accountability, relational practice, and human dignity at the centre of their work.

Meet the speaker

Abimbola Oliyide, Social Worker

Abimbola Oliyide is a safeguarding social worker and AI champion within adult social care, working at the intersection of frontline practice, systems thinking, and emerging technology.

She is actively involved in piloting new AI tools across social services, translating their application into ethical, practical use for practitioners. With a background spanning social work, leadership, and strategic development, her work focuses on reducing cognitive overload, strengthening professional judgement, and improving service delivery through responsible AI integration.

Abimbola is also the author of *Finding the Equilibrium*, a framework for aligning human insight with systemic transformation in complex environments.

Hartree

This session will introduce delegates to the capabilities, facilities, and applied AI expertise available through the Hartree Centre and explore how these resources can support innovation within social work and wider public services. Through real-world case studies, the presentation will demonstrate how artificial intelligence, advanced computing and data-driven technologies are already being used to improve efficiency, insight, and service delivery. Delegates will gain a practical understanding of how organisations can access support, develop AI readiness, and identify opportunities for technology adoption. The session will also highlight collaboration pathways for future projects, skills development, and innovation partnerships.

Meet the speaker

Abbie Turner, Business Development Executive, Hartree Centre

Abbie Turner is a Business Development Executive at the Hartree Centre, where they support organisations in adopting advanced digital technologies including artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, and data analytics. Working at the Hartree Centre for almost two years, Abbie works across a range of sectors, with a strong focus on health and social care. Working with industry and public sector organisations, Abbie helps translate emerging technologies into practical solutions that deliver operational and societal impact. Abbie has also supported strategic programmes and partnerships that enable responsible adoption of AI, Quantum, and advanced computing technologies to improve services, productivity, and decision-making outcomes.

Ethics in AI and the need for coproduction to be at the heart of development

14:15 – 14:45

Casson Consulting, OneAdvanced and Carers UK

This session explores the ethical foundations of AI in social care, drawing on the work of the Oxford Initiative for the Ethical Use of AI in Social Care.

We will look at how trust, transparency and accountability shape the safe use of AI, and why co-production needs to sit at the heart of development. Real progress happens when people who draw on care and support, tech solutioneers, care workers and care organisations work together to imagine the future of care.

The session will show that the care sector has learnt some of the lessons from the past on how it has implemented technological development.

Meet the speakers

Daniel Casson, Independent Consultant

Daniel Casson is an independent consultant specialising in digital transformation across health and social care. He helps providers, public bodies and technology companies apply practical innovation, with experience spanning digital strategy, DSCR adoption, data security and implementation. He has authored national reports, co-chaired policy work and founded Care England's Digital SIG. He directs the Care Perspective Series (sponsored by the Access Group), directs the LaingBuisson Social Care Summit and co leads the AI in Social Care Alliance. He is working on how AI and technology can drive value in social care for people who draw on care and support, for care workers, for care organisations and for the health and care system.

Madalina Cristea, OneAdvanced

Madalina is a dual-qualified lawyer (Solicitor in England & Wales and Romanian Qualified Lawyer) specialising in data privacy, cyber investigations, major incidents, and artificial intelligence (AI). Holding the IAPP CIPP/E and AI Governance Professional (AIGP) certifications, Madalina is passionate about the intersection of law and technology, delivering tailored legal advice on emerging issues. OneAdvanced is a leading UK technology company providing software solutions across sectors including social care, health and care, and education. Since joining OneAdvanced in 2022, Madalina has been actively involved in the responsible development and deployment of AI, helping shape ethical and legally compliant AI adoption across these critical sectors.

Jacqui Darlington, Carers UK

NHS England, Department of Health and Social Care, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

The discussion around social work and AI tends to focus on the social work profession itself. But what about the people we support? How can social workers support people who use AI as part of their care and what do social workers need to know? Hear from people who draw on support as well as senior social work leaders on how social work values link to training, education, leadership, digital literacy and advocating for person-centred practice - all playing a pivotal role in the debate around the future of social work practice and AI.

Meet the speakers

Tommy Henderson-Reay, Implementation Programme Manager - Digitising Social Care Programme, NHS England

Tommy is the lead social worker in the Digitising Social Care programme, working across NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care. He brings over 15 years' experience spanning local authorities, housing charities, and the not-for-profit care provider sector. His work focuses on supporting the ethical, practical adoption of digital tools in social care, with particular emphasis on building social workers' confidence and digital literacy. Tommy also leads the BASW Technology and AI Special Interest Group and is a trustee of youth engagement charity Grow UK in Sheffield.

Sarah McClinton, Chief Social Worker, Department of Health and Social Care

Sarah is the Chief Social Worker for Adults at the Department of Health and Social Care. She started her social work career working with people with HIV/AIDS in West London and has worked for more than 30 years in social care. She was Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Health and Adult Services at Greenwich Council. Previously, she was DASS in Camden and President of ADASS. Sarah also worked as a civil servant, leading national policy for mental health, dementia, and disabilities.

Colleen Simon, Head of Social Work, Social Care and Adult Safeguarding, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

Colleen is Head of Social Work, Social Care and Adult Safeguarding at Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and National Co-chair of the Principal Social Worker and NHS Social Work Leads Networks. A practising social worker since 2003, her career spans mental health, substance misuse and criminal justice. She is a lecturer/practitioner on the Bournemouth AMHP qualifying course and delivers specialist training for Edge. Colleen is a committed advocate for minoritised and disadvantaged communities, with a strong focus on mental health, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, and the role of social work in ethical, inclusive innovation.

Zone 3 The role of AI in education and training of social work

Warwickshire | Level 3

Practice Education: Teaching reflective practice when AI is at play

10:45 – 11:15

London Borough of Islington

This practical session explores both the opportunities and challenges AI brings to critical reflective supervision in social work. Using fictional scenarios and live AI responses, participants will consider how digital tools can support reflection while staying clear about where professional judgement remains essential. The focus is on the quality of reflective conversations — exploring bias, assumptions, ethics, and decision-making in practice.

Attendees will leave with greater confidence to approach AI thoughtfully in supervision and assessment, strengthening critical thinking, protecting reflective space and maintaining sound professional judgement across different practice settings.

Meet the speakers

Naomi Soetendorp FHEA, Practice Education Manager, London Borough of Islington

Naomi Soetendorp FHEA, is a registered social worker with over 20 years' experience across statutory children's services and is currently Practice Education Manager at the London Borough of Islington. Her work focuses on early career workforce strategy and practice standards, including establishing Islington's ASYE Academy and supporting social workers from student to NQSW, practice educator, and ASYE assessor.

Claire Bendjillali FHEA, Step Up to Social Work Programme Manager, London Borough of Islington

Claire Bendjillali FHEA, qualified as a social worker from the University of East Anglia (UEA) in 2009. She has worked in frontline child protection and court teams across Norfolk and Surrey. Since 2015 she has been with the London Borough of Islington, initially in the Disabled Children's Team and since 2018 as the Step Up to Social Work Programme Manager, leading the programme across North, Central and East London.

Ready or not: What does AI readiness in social care look like?

11:30 – 12:00

University of Birmingham

AI is already entering social care - but are we ready for it? This session introduces the AI Readiness Checklist, a practical self-assessment tool developed by the University of Birmingham and funded by NHS England and the Health Foundation.

After a quick temperature check on your own organisation's readiness, we will break into groups to explore the framework's five risk control categories: Organisational Structure, Human Capital, Problem Formulation, Adoption & Integration, and Evaluation & Monitoring. Each group will think about their own organisational context to identify what is already in place and where the gaps lie. Delegates will leave with the AI Readiness tool in hand alongside a clearer picture of what "ready" actually looks like.

Meet the speakers

Dr Caroline Webb, Assistant Professor of Social Work, University of Birmingham

Dr Caroline Webb is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Birmingham (UoB), and a qualified social worker with experience in statutory children and families work and child protection. Caroline is currently based in the AI & Digital Health Research and Policy Group at UoB where she is developing valuable cross-sector insights in the use of AI across both health and social care settings. Her research focuses on the integration of AI into social work education and practice and she advocates for ethical, inclusive technology use which aligns with the values of the profession.

Dr Jeff Hogg, Clinician Scientist, University of Birmingham

Dr Jeff Hogg is a clinician scientist leading responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) innovation in healthcare through practice, education and research. He is programme lead for the MSc AI Implementation (Healthcare) at University of Birmingham and Clinical Innovation Officer in AI at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust.

Digital Care Hub and NHS England

Join us for a live recording of the CTRL+Care podcast as co-hosts Katie and Michelle dive into the fast-moving (and sometimes slightly baffling!) world of AI in social work, joined by special guest Tommy Henderson-Reay.

Expect an open, curiosity led conversation exploring real, practical use cases of AI in day-to-day social work - what's genuinely helpful, what raises eyebrows, and where caution is essential.

We'll chat through key considerations and concerns and share useful resources for anyone keen to build their confidence and skills. The focus will be on what this means for people who draw on care and support and social workers. Thoughtful, practical, and refreshingly honest - with a few laughs along the way.

Meet the podcasters

Katie Thorn, Director of Innovation, Digital Care Hub

Katie Thorn is the Director of Innovation for the Digital Care Hub. She has played a significant role in advocating for and implementing digital solutions in social care and is the co-convenor of the Oxford Project on the Responsible Use of Generative AI in Adult Social Care. Her work focuses on ensuring that digital innovations in social care are used ethically and effectively. Her background includes working in nursing homes as both a carer and in operations. For the past decade she has worked on national digitisation programmes focused on frontline adult social care in the UK and interoperability between the NHS and social care.

Michelle Corrigan, CEO, Digital Care Hub

Michelle Corrigan is the CEO of Digital Care Hub, where she leads national work at the intersection of cyber security, digital transformation, and adult social care. She is recognised for delivering large scale, high impact programmes that improve resilience, trust, and safety across complex systems. Michelle is the recipient of the Most Inspiring Woman in Cyber award and the NHS Cyber Leader award, reflecting her leadership in translating cyber strategy into practical change. Alongside her executive role, she is Chair of Girls Friendly Society and a Trustee of Camphill Village Trust, contributing board level leadership focused on governance, inclusion, and long-term sustainability.

Tommy Henderson-Reay, Implementation Programme Manager - Digitising Social Care Programme, NHS England

Tommy is the lead social worker in the Digitising Social Care programme, working across NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care. He brings over 15 years' experience spanning local authorities, housing charities, and the not-for-profit care provider sector. His work focuses on supporting the ethical, practical adoption of digital tools in social care, with particular emphasis on building social workers' confidence and digital literacy. Tommy also leads the BASW Technology and AI Special Interest Group.

Fair AI, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and ethical assessment practice

13:30 – 14:00

Buckinghamshire New University

Social Work England emphasises that the use of AI in social work must uphold professional judgement, ethics and human rights. This session responds to those principles through the lens of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities. Drawing on my lived experience as a Romany woman, trained social worker and academic, it explores how GRT people are marginalised not only socially but informationally: dominant narratives are often framed as negative or high risk, while cultural understanding and accurate knowledge may be lost within AI systems. At a time of productivity pressure, this session invites critical reflection on how fair, ethical AI can support advocacy and ethical assessment, rather than embedding shortcuts and potential for systemic bias.

Meet the speaker

Esther Stubbs, BSc (Hons) Open, MA Social Work, Associate Lecturer, GTRSB into Schools and Higher Education Pledges Lead, Buckinghamshire New University

Esther Stubbs, Romany Gypsy, is a registered social worker and academic focused on equality of opportunity and inclusion for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller people.

University of Sheffield and Univolv Partners

This workshop explores why structured internal workflows are essential for effective AI use. While AI can boost productivity, accuracy challenges often arise when processes are unclear or inconsistent. In this session, participants will examine their current manual workflows and identify opportunities where AI can meaningfully reduce routine tasks.

The workshop provides practical insights to help attendees conceptualise AI ready processes that improve efficiency while maintaining quality. Key takeaways:

1. Understand how workflow design influences AI accuracy.
2. Identify manual processes suited for AI support.
3. Generate practical ideas for integrating AI effectively.
4. Recognise how AI can free time for higher value work.

Note: Participants will need to have access ideally to a laptop, tablet (or mobile phone) for this session.

Meet the speakers

Dr Ron Dyer, Data Strategist, University of Sheffield

Dr Ron Dyer is currently a Learning Simulation Strategist focused on utilisation of technology for human performance improvement in organisations. In this role, he helps organisations train staff effectively to get the best out of current and emerging technologies. Previously, he was Academic Lead of Digital Innovation at the University of Sheffield, where he led the Faculty of Social Sciences Digital Transformation Initiatives.

Andrea Ward, Founder, Univolv Partners

Andrea Ward supports leaders when strategy, people, and delivery have lost connection. Over 30 years across higher education, public sector, and industry, she's helped organisations create alignment, strengthen capability, and deliver sustainable change.

Cumberland Council

Led by the lived experience of a social worker, this session shares learning gathered before any AI tool was built or tested. Drawing on focus groups and reflective conversations with practitioners and managers, Chantahl explores what people said about workload fairness, emotional labour and where trust in professional judgement felt most at risk.

The session examines how ethics, governance, IP and assurance requirements quickly became central, exposing limits and tensions that shaped what could progress beyond early exploration.

Delegates will leave with practical questions to ask before pursuing AI, confidence to involve the workforce early, and a clear understanding of why, in practice, progress sometimes needs to pause while ethical and governance questions are worked through.

Meet the speakers

Chantahl Rodwell, Co Production Lead for Adult Social Care and Housing, Cumberland Council

Chantahl Rodwell is Co Production Lead for Adult Social Care and Housing at Cumberland Council and a qualified social worker. She brings lived experience of frontline practice alongside system leadership and developed the original concept for exploring AI in caseload management through reflective work with practitioners and managers. Chantahl is supporting a regional, ARF funded exploration into whether AI could support fairer conversations about caseload allocation, with a strong emphasis on co-production, workforce wellbeing, professional judgement and ethical assurance.

Daniel Gibbons, Research Officer, Cumberland Health Determinants Research Collaboration

Daniel Gibbons is a Research Officer at Cumberland HDRC, supporting applied public health and social research focused on health inequalities, digital inclusion, mental health, and tech-enabled care. He is a fourth-year part-time PhD researcher at University of Cumbria, specialising in identity formation and discursive methodologies. His background combines academic and applied research experience across psychology, social care, and public health, with a strong interest in research governance, interdisciplinary collaboration, and the role of AI in social research.

University of Birmingham

This session argues that AI literacy should be treated as a core professional competence in social work education, not a technical add-on. Using practical teaching examples, delegates will explore how educators can use AI productively while staying aligned with social work values and ethics. A tiered continuum for acceptable AI use in assessment is introduced to help institutions move beyond binary “AI versus no-AI” rules.

Delegates will leave with strategies to embed AI criticality in teaching, redesign assessment for GenAI, and support students to use AI ethically, transparently and reflectively across academic and practice contexts.

Meet the speakers

Professor Tarsem Singh Cooner, Professor of Social Work and Digital Media, University of Birmingham

Tarsem Singh Cooner is Professor of Social Work and Digital Media, Professional Standards Lead, and Academic Integrity Officer in the Department of Social Work and Social Care at the University of Birmingham. His work examines the ethical, pedagogical and professional implications of AI for social work education and practice. He has led sector-recognised initiatives on AI literacy, assessment design in the age of GenAI, and responsible technology use grounded in social justice and relationship-based practice. He works with regulators, employers and universities to support workforce readiness, and has contributed to national guidance and summits on AI and social care education.

Dr Caroline Webb, Assistant Professor of Social Work, University of Birmingham

Dr Caroline Webb is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Birmingham (UoB), and a qualified social worker with experience in statutory children and families work and child protection. Caroline is currently based in the AI & Digital Health Research and Policy Group at UoB where she is developing valuable cross-sector insights in the use of AI across both health and social care settings. Her research focuses on the integration of AI into social work education and practice and she advocates for ethical, inclusive technology use which aligns with the values of the profession.

Level 3



Zone 3

The role of AI in education and training of social work

Warwickshire suite

Programme Map

Level 2



Zone 1

Responsible AI and regulation

Banqueting suite

Zone 2

Leadership - Putting AI into practice and looking into the future

1882

Roundtables

Chair's lounge



Level 1



Networking space | 501

Ground floor



Expo and demo zone

Exhibition Hall

Main entrance reception sign in

East wing for the chair's lounge only

*Head through the east wing to door E3. Take the lift or stairs to level 2



Drop in to any session, visit the expo and demo zone or catch up with colleagues in the dedicated networking 501 room.

Demo zone

10:00 – 10:30

**Opening address
streamed on
screens**

11:00 – 11:30

**Enhancing, not
replacing: Using AI and
virtual environments
to strengthen human-
centred social work
practice**

The Technology Services
Association (TSA)

11:45 – 12:15

**Lancashire's
GenAI journey:
Empowering
people, enhancing
services**

Lancashire County
Council

12:30 – 13:30

Buffet lunch

Zone 1

10:00 – 10:30

Opening address

DHSC, Skills for
Care, Social Work
England

10:45 – 11:15

**Using GenAI ethically in
social work practice**

The British Association of
Social Workers

11:30 – 12:30

**AI in social work -
understanding the
evidence**

Social Work
England

Zone 2

10:00 – 10:30

**Opening address
streamed on
screens**

10:45 – 11:15

**Saving time, losing
reflection: Leadership
choices in AI integration
for social work**

Tavistock Consulting

11:30 – 12:00

**From algorithms
to authenticity:
Collective social
work in an age
of artificial
intelligence**

University of
Warwick

12:15 – 12:45

**From tool to
teammate:
Embedding AI
in safeguarding
without losing
professional
judgement**

Independent Social
Worker

Zone 3

10:00 – 10:30

**Opening address
streamed on
screens**

10:45 – 11:15

**Practice Education:
Teaching reflective
practice when AI is at
play**

London Borough of
Islington

11:30 – 12:00

**Ready or not:
What does AI
readiness in social
care look like?**

University of
Birmingham

12:30 – 13:00

**CTRL+Care: Live
podcast recording
- AI in social work**

Digital Care Hub
and NHS England

Roundtable Zone

10:45 – 12:15

**The future of social
work: Practice, AI and
system readiness**

Hosted by Skills for Care

Demo zone

13:30 – 14:00

AI Playbook: Co-producing ethical AI for adult social care

West Midlands ADASS

14:30 - 15:00

Care Technologist - Building the workforce of the future

National Care Forum (NCF)

Programme sessions

Speakers and sessions may be subject to change.

Zone 1

13:15 – 13:45

Designing AI with social workers: Ethics, practice and reflective innovation

Pipsa Software

14:00 – 14:30

Artificial intelligence in social work – deskilling or skilling differently?

Peterborough City Council

14:45 – 15:15

Who thinks when the machine writes? Retaining professional judgement and anti-oppressive practice in AI-assisted Care Act assessments

Tessa Tools Ltd and Nottingham Trent University

15:30 – 16:00

Beyond chatbots: the future potential of generative AI to scale expertise in complex social care settings

Iris Care Group

Zone 2

13:30 – 14:00

“Spooky actions at a distance”: Blending HPC, AI and quantum case studies

Hartree

14:15 – 14:45

Ethics in AI and the need for co-production to be at the heart of development

Casson Consulting

15:00 – 15:45

Lived experience meets AI: What social workers need to know

NHS England and Department for Health and Social Care

Zone 3

13:30 – 14:00

Fair AI, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and ethical assessment practice

Buckinghamshire New University

14:15 – 14:45

AI for productivity enhancement

University of Sheffield

15:00 – 15:30

Learning from practice before using AI in adult social care

Cumberland Council

15:45 – 16:15

AI literacy in social work education

University of Birmingham

Roundtable Zone

13:30 – 15:00

How can regulation support safe, ethical and effective adoption of AI in social work?

Hosted by Social Work England

15:15 – 16:00

Developing a Digital Excellence roadmap workshop

Workshop hosted by Iris Care Group and Digital Care Hub

Meet our sponsors

Nourish Care | Zone 1

At Nourish we understand quality care and support is a journey, not a destination. That's why we are not simply a technology company; we are a digital partner. One rooted in human connections, and with the person being supported at its core. This ethos shapes our approach to AI applications. We build models that augment, rather than automate decision-making. Co-produced with providers to ensure that our focus is always in the most important place, the people utilising support.

Our technology impacts one million people every day, across a range of services and specialisations. We believe that in order to support people effectively, we must build functionality that reflects and elevates lived experiences. 'Pushing' important insights to providers, while keeping decision-making firmly in their hands. There remains a way to go, and we are excited to develop solutions, improve outcomes and build for tomorrow alongside providers, people and their communities.

Contact: www.nourishcare.com / 023 8000 2288 / hello@nourishcare.com



AI and the future of social work

May 2026, Birmingham

Keep the conversation going

#SocialWorkAISummit



visit skillsforcare.org.uk



visit socialworkengland.org.uk



visit ascworkforcestrategy.co.uk

Read more about the speakers, hosts and today's sessions.

