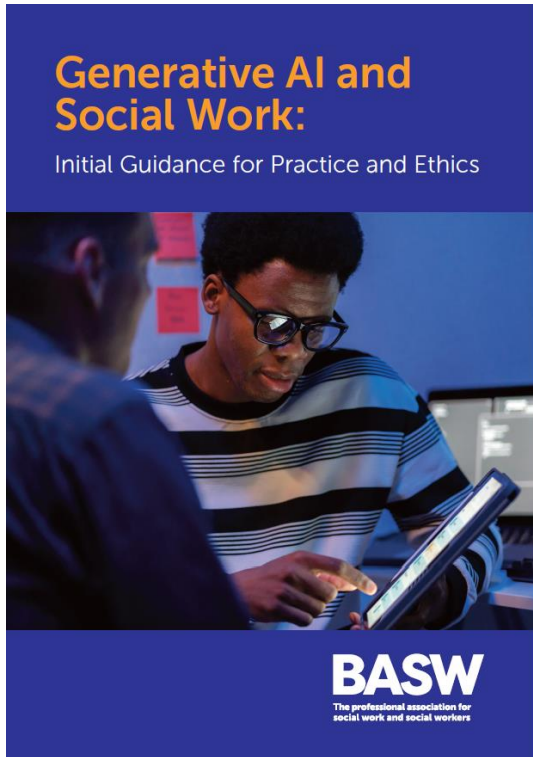
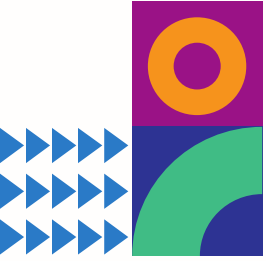


Using GenAI ethically in social work practice



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British Association of Social Workers

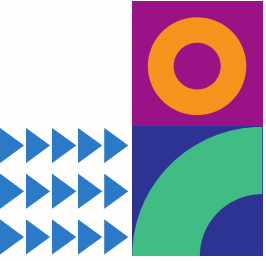




Introduction

- The core challenges of using Generative AI (GenAI) in social work practice
- How do we maximise the benefits of using GenAI whilst avoiding its potential pitfalls whilst acting with integrity?
- How do we use AI legally, safely and ethically?

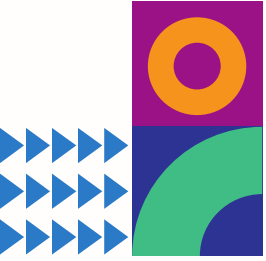




Background

- GenAI is changing the landscape of work
- It is evolving rapidly
- There is a lot of variation
 - Products being used
 - Speed of implementation
 - Extent of uptake by practitioners
- Uncertainty in the absence of regulation and guidance

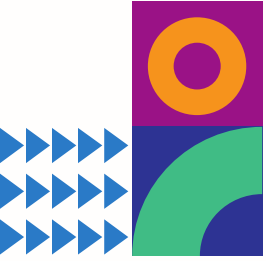




What is GenAI?

- AI is a broad term that can be used loosely
 - A range of developments that allow machines to learn and problem solve in a human-like manner
- No standardised definition of GenAI
- For the purposes of this session, we are defining it as
 - “a form of AI that can be used to create new content in text, audio or visual form in response to the prompts that it receives” (BASW, 2025).
- Can be bespoke or generic

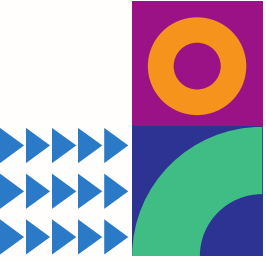




Why do we need to think about the ethics of using GenAI?

- GenAI sits in a ‘grey space’
 - It is not a human colleague accountable for its own output
 - Nor is it standard software that only receives and stores the input of the user
- The ability of GenAI to create new content makes it unlike other tools that are in use and throws up new considerations as to how it can be used effectively, safely, legally and ethically





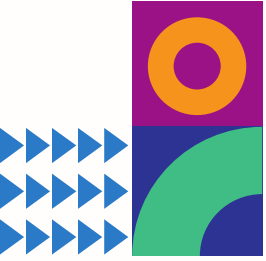
What frameworks do we have available to guide us?

- The regulator's professional standards
- BASW's Code of Ethics
- Existing legal and policy frameworks
- Our own internal compass

BASW

The professional association for
social work and social workers

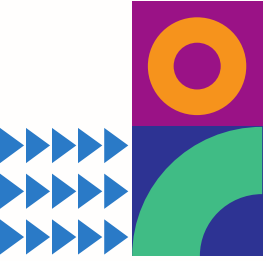




Potential benefits

- Time-saving
- Reducing administrative burden
- Assistive use cases – reasonable adjustment
- Examples might include generating information, transcription, summarising key information or assisting with communication

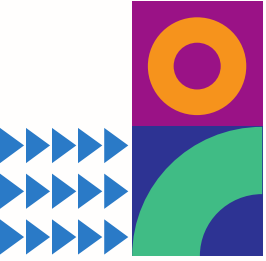




Responsibility for content

- Maintaining clear and accurate records (BASW Code of Ethics 3.10)
 - GenAI gets things wrong – with confidence
 - Potential for bias
 - Hallucination
- The risks of deskilling and/or over-reliance
 - Need to retain critical thinking and reflective skills (BASW CoE 2.3.4)
- Being able to understand, clearly explain the contents of output and defend any decisions made or actions taken (BASW CoE 2.3.2)

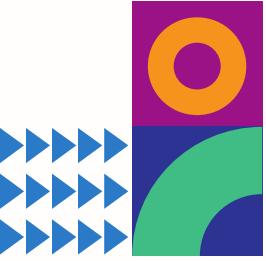




Align with existing legislative and policy frameworks

- UKGDPR applies
 - Sensitive personal information
 - ICO guidance on the use of AI
 - Sharing information appropriately (BASW CoE 3.5)
- Informed consent
 - Acting with informed consent (BASW CoE 3.3)
 - Being trustworthy (BASW CoE 2.3.2)
 - Being able to clearly explain roles, interventions and decisions
- Using GenAI in an unauthorised way
 - Greater liability

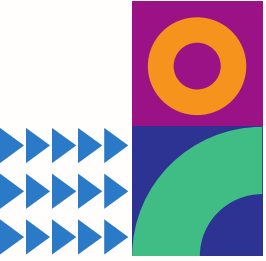




Transparency

- Being able to defend and explain content (BASW CoE 2.3.2)
- Being able to provide information to people affected by social work decisions (BASW CoE 3.4)
- “Social workers need to take steps to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge of technology to protect themselves and the people they work with.” (BASW CoE 3.5)
- Declaration of use?

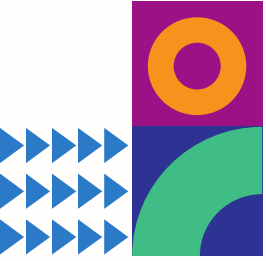




Sustainability and environmental impact

- The datacentres supporting GenAI are both power and water-intensive.
 - The chips providing compute are power-hungry
 - Water is required to cool the datacentres that are using so much power
- With the convenience of GenAI, we don't always think about this additional dimension
- But it is a further ethical consideration

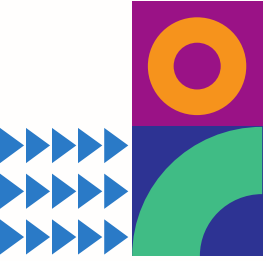




Concluding remarks

- Not about whether GenAI is introduced – it is already here
- But how we use it
 - How can we make the most of this new technology in an appropriate way
 - Level of comfort probably different for each practitioner
- Need for clear guidance on what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate use





For further information on upcoming training opportunities on using GenAI effectively, safely and ethically in practice, please contact:

profde@basw.co.uk

The BASW Statement on Social Work and Generative Artificial Intelligence



BASW
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