

Learning from practice before using AI in Adult Social Care

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Introduction and Context

- Pressure
- Fairness
- Emotional labour



Pre-build learning at proof of concept stage, no tool to demo

Why This Question Emerged in Practice

“The pressure never stops. There’s no time to reflect, just an endless cycle of cases.”

Local indicator: stress related absence of 350 days in a year

Exploring Traditional Approaches

- Manual tools exist
- Evidence based and detailed
- Hard to sustain in live practice

Green – 2 points

Amber – 4 points

Red – 6 points

Purple – 8 points

How We Approached The Learning

This work was deliberately qualitative

Focus groups with practitioners and managers

Designed to explore workload, judgement and fairness in practice

Sessions structured but open to challenge and disagreement

Ethics, consent and psychological safety built in from the start

Sense-Making

We looked for patterns, not soundbites

Sessions recorded and transcribed

Themes across groups, not individuals

Practitioner and manager perspectives compared

Clear limits acknowledged

Emergence of AI as a Possibility

AI entered the conversation gradually

Seen as a possible support, not a solution

No assumption it was the right answer

Avoided the hype

Listening First: A Co-Production Approach

Direction shaped by lived experience

No promise of tools or delivery

Space to surface limits as well as ideas



Understanding Fairness in Practice

“I don’t feel I have any say in what’s allocated to me. It just appears in my tray.”

Fairness as lived experience

Emotional Labour and Invisible Work

**“I go home every night exhausted,
knowing I haven’t done enough.”**

Relationship holding

Moral distress

Guilt under capacity pressure

Professional Judgement Under Pressure

- Judgement is contextual
- Risk is relational
- Pressure removes space to reflect
- False certainty is a real concern



Early Reactions to AI

Curiosity

Cautious

Concern

Governance Considerations

Governance didn't slow the work down. It clarified it.

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Trust

Impact of Early Learning

Restraint is a valid outcome

Not everything should be automated

Not everything is ready

Learning Questions When Considering AI

What problems in adult social care are we trying to understand or improve?

How might AI influence professional judgement across roles?

What must remain human in care and decision making, and why does that matter?

What would harm look like in practice and in people's experiences of services?

How do we keep accountability and challenge clear and human?

What you'll take away from this session

- Clearer boundaries and questions
- Stronger protection of professional judgement
- Reflective learning you can evidence

Learning before building is a result