

DRAFT Concept Note Event AI in Social Services: Opportunities, Skill Investments, and Regulatory Frameworks

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Event Title:

AI in Social Services: Opportunities, Skill Investments, and Regulatory Frameworks

Date and Time:

27th November 2024, 10.00-12:30, 2.5 Hours, Online

Overview:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds significant promise for transforming social services, enhancing efficiency, and improving outcomes for communities. AI's predictive analytics, machine learning, and natural language processing capabilities have the potential to enhance service delivery, improve efficiency, and provide personalised support to those in need.

According to the way the European Union (EU) approaches AI, to help building a resilient [Europe for the Digital Decade](#), people and businesses should be able to enjoy the benefits of AI while feeling safe and protected. Accordingly, the [European AI Strategy](#) aims at making the EU a world-class hub for AI and ensuring that AI is human-centric and trustworthy.¹ In this regard, Human-centered AI (HCAI) refers to the development of AI technologies that prioritise human needs, values, and capabilities at the core of their design and operation. This approach promotes the creation AI systems that enhance human abilities and well-being rather than replacing or diminishing human roles. It addresses AI's ethical, social, and cultural implications and ensures these systems are accessible, usable, and beneficial to all segments of society².

¹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence>

² <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/human-centered-ai>

The potential use of generative AI can play a crucial role in improving the personalisation of care and support, improving the allocation of resources to make social care and support more accessible, efficient and person-centered, as well as improving the quality of social care and support jobs. However, these changes might bring with it many critical challenges and pressing issues that social services are not prepared to adequately address. The main issues include lack of well-trained staff, digital infrastructure, technical know-how, data privacy risks, etc. The social services sector must also be mindful of the possible ethical risks that arise. AI's dependence on machine learning, which draws on large volumes of data that may not be entirely representative of the people social services support, care, and work with³, comes with a risk that algorithms used to assess service users will incorporate significant bias and inequalities.

The European Commission, therefore, aims to address the risks generated by specific uses of AI through a set of complementary, proportionate and flexible rules. These rules also provide Europe with a leading role in setting the global gold standard through the [AI Act](#)⁴.

The integration of AI in the field of social protection and social integration may result in enhanced efficiency and timeliness, improved service provision to individuals, and better resource management. Nevertheless, despite its widespread adoption, there remains a nebulous understanding of the specific implications of AI on social inclusion by several stakeholders such as service providers, public authorities, politicians, employers, etc. This ambiguity requires a structured dialogue to acquire a clearer understanding of this solution's impacts and to examine strategic pathways for innovation among organisations.

Moreover, the collaboration between social services, people who draw on care and support and the technology developers is of vital importance at every phase of planning, delivery and evaluation. Together social services professionals, people with care and support needs and technologists can harness the full potential of AI to create meaningful positive impact in our communities.

This event aims to explore the opportunities AI presents within the social services sector, identify the critical skills required for its effective deployment, and discuss the regulatory frameworks within Member States and at the EU level needed to ensure its ethical use in the

³ Some possible ways in which AI could be used in social work include: predictive modelling and data analysis, decision support, real time information, administrative tasks, chatbot support, virtual assistance, etc.

⁴ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/european-approach-artificial-intelligence>

social services sector. By bringing together experts from various fields, the event seeks to foster a collaborative approach to leveraging AI for the betterment of social services.

Objectives:

1. Highlight the transformative opportunities AI offers for social services.
2. Discuss the critical skills and investments needed to develop and sustain AI capabilities in social services.
3. Explore regulatory frameworks to ensure ethical and responsible AI use in social services.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of AI's potential and challenges in social services.
- Identification of key skills and educational investments needed for AI in social services.
- Recommendations for regulatory frameworks within Member States and at EU level to guide AI development and implementation in social services.

Draft Agenda

Opening Remarks (10 minutes)

- **Speaker:** SSE President
- **Content:** Welcome attendees, outline the event objectives and ambition.
- **Keynote speaker:** EC Head of Unit

Session 1: Opportunities of AI in Social Services (40 minutes)

- **Moderator:** Policy Expert
- **Panelists:**
 - AI Specialist from a technology company focused on social services
 - 1 Representatives from social service providers utilising AI
 - 1 Representative from a people's network
 - Academic researcher in AI and social work
- **Content**

- Overview of AI advancements and potential applications and challenges in social services
- Case studies showcasing AI's transformative impact on social services, focusing on how AI can improve the support provided, the quality of services and its organisational processes.
- Q&A session with the audience

Session 2: Investing in Skills for AI in Social Services (40 minutes)

- **Moderator:** Educational Leader
- **Panelists:**
 - VET Provider
 - Government representative in charge of education and skills development
 - Employers
 - Trade Unions
- **Content:**
 - Discussion on critical skills needed for AI in social services
 - Extent to which current educational and training programmes are tailored to social services and needs for adoptions or changes
 - Strategies for bridging the skills gap in social services
 - Q&A session with the audience

Break (10 minutes)

Session 3: Responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in social services (40 minutes)

- **Moderator:** Advocacy/Legal/Regulatory Expert
- **Panelists:**
 - AI ethicist with experience in social services
 - Representative from a regulatory body overseeing social services
 - Industry leader involved in AI policy advocacy
- **Content:**
 - Overview of current AI regulations and ethical considerations in social services
 - Best practices and recommendations for applying AI regulatory frameworks to social services
 - Discussion on balancing innovation and regulation in social services

- Q&A session with the audience

Closing Remarks and Future Steps (10 minutes)

- **Speaker:** SSE President or Board Member
- **Content:** Summary of key points discussed, outline future steps and collaboration opportunities.