

European Social Services Conference **2025**

# Transforming Social Services

## Where Care Meets Tech

**CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

22-25 June 2025,  
Aarhus, Denmark

The background features a light blue city skyline silhouette. In the foreground, a white robotic hand on the left and a human hand in a blue suit sleeve on the right are shown holding two interlocking puzzle pieces. The red puzzle piece contains a white network diagram, and the blue puzzle piece contains a photograph of a city at night. A network of grey lines connects various points across the scene.

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## 1. ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The 33rd edition of the [European Social Services Conference \(ESSC\)](#) will be organised in Aarhus (Denmark) on 22-25 June 2025.

The ESSC is the annual flagship event of the [European Social Network \(ESN\)](#), the Network for Public Social Services in Europe. The ESSC is the largest public social welfare policy and practice forum in Europe, attended by almost 700 delegates in Antwerp in 2024.

The ESSC 2025 will be the opportunity for decision-makers in public authorities, third sector organisations, social services professionals, providers of technology solutions, and researchers to share and exchange their knowledge and experiences with peers from across Europe and other regions of the world.

Watch highlights from the 2024 Conference in Antwerp [here](#).

Read the 2024 Conference Report [here](#).

## 2. CONFERENCE THEME

### Transforming Social Services - Where Care Meets Tech

**Personalisation** and the development of **new technologies** and **digital transformation** are key drivers reshaping the landscape of social services including long term care, aiming to provide more tailored and effective support to people in need.

**Personalised care and support** represent a new relationship between people, professionals, social services and care organisations. It shifts power and decision making to give people a voice, to be heard, to be connected to each other and their communities. Personalisation converges in a quest for active citizenship through the participation of people who use social services, as well as embracing partnerships within public administration and communities.

However, this process still needs significant development across Europe; hence, **fostering human relationships** needs to be placed at the core of **social services transformation**. This should be done through the development of a **relational welfare approach**, which highlights that future social services cannot just focus on delivery but also on fostering meaningful relationships and building supportive communities.

**Technology and digital solutions** are an increasing part of almost every part of our lives. **Welfare technology** is used to maintain or increase security, activity,

participation or autonomy for people with a disability or the older people.

By leveraging technology, social services can provide tailored support that addresses the unique needs of each individual, ultimately leading to better outcomes and improved quality of life for people in communities across Europe.

At the **33rd edition of the European Social Services Conference** we will learn how **relational welfare approaches** on the one hand, and **welfare technology** on the other are major drivers of **social services transformation** to make them fit for the 21st century. The Conference will provide the platform to address how the combination of relational approaches and technology in social services creates a powerful synergy that enhances efficiency, accessibility, customisation, trust, and empathy.

### 3. CONTRIBUTE TO THE ESSC PROGRAMME

#### Who can apply?

The 2025 ESSC will bring together leaders in social services to inspire ideas on **relational welfare approaches** and **welfare technology** in the design and delivery of social services. Contribute to the Conference and make your work and experience part of the discussions.

Proposals are accepted for all population groups with whom social services work.

We encourage proposals from:

- Public authorities
- Universities and research centres
- Industry leads
- Professional associations
- Third sector organisations
- Innovators working with social services

#### How to apply?

You may submit an application form under:

1. **Theme 1: Relational welfare approaches**
2. **Theme 2: Welfare technology**
3. **A combination of themes 1 and 2** if you can demonstrate that your programme combines elements of the two themes - relational welfare approaches and welfare technology.

Please read the descriptions of the two umbrella themes and their subthemes carefully for more details and to find relevant examples.

## 1. Relational Welfare Approaches in Social Services

### 1. Integrated and Holistic Support

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- **Cross-sector collaboration**

Encouraging coordination of services across different sectors (e.g., social services working with education, employment, health, housing) to provide comprehensive care and support.

- **Family and community involvement**

Engaging civil society such as family members and community resources to create stable and reliable supportive networks around the individual(s) to enhance the support system.

### 2. Empowerment and Participation

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- **People's choice and control**

Empowering people to make decisions about their care and support, fostering a sense of ownership, self-determination and engagement.

- **Goal setting in life plans**

Working with people using services to set personal goals and developing plans to achieve them, ensuring the support is aligned with their aspirations.

- **Strengths-based approach**

Relational approaches focus on recognising individuals' experiences, strengths and capabilities rather than just their needs and deficits.

### 3. Professional development

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- Ongoing training and continuous education for social service professionals through innovative ways in personalisation and relational approaches.

## 2. Technology in Social Services

### 1. Welfare Technology

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- **Safety systems**

Security alarms, mobile phones, GPS-functions, video entry systems and scrutiny systems can increase the sense of safety for people with care and support needs and their relatives.

- **Assistive technology**

Rollators, electric wheelchairs, hearing aids, vision aids, medication reminders, lifts enable people with decreased functionalities to engage in everyday life, be independent for longer, or access services in multiple languages and culturally relevant formats.

- **Remote consultations** and follow-ups, which are especially vital in rural or underserved areas.

### 2. Digital Platforms and Tools

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- **Case management systems**

Streamlining workflows and information sharing between social services and other sectors professionals, providers and people using services.

- **Electronic records**

Professionals and people using services can access and use them, ensuring people in care are informed and involved in their care.

- **AI and automation**

To gather and analyse data, facilitate communication, and provide services in a more accessible and convenient manner.

- **Mobile apps**

Providing professionals and people using services with easy access to services, appointment scheduling, real-time support.

- **Using sensor-based technologies**

For example, to track biometric data and assist social care professionals in providing the best care possible.

### 3. Data Analytics

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- **Predictive Analytics**

Leveraging data to predict trends, identify at-risk individuals, and proactively address potential issues.

- **AI Chatbots and Virtual Assistants**

24/7 support, answering queries, and guiding users to appropriate resources

### 4. Legal and Ethical Standards

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- Legal and policy guidance on the use of technology and securely managing data within relevant legislation frameworks like EU AI Act, GDPR, responsible procurement.

### 5. Professional Development

Examples that may be included under this sub-theme:

- Online training and continuous education for social service professionals through e-learning platforms, VR or AI-led training simulations.

## 3. Combination of relational welfare and welfare technology

**The combination of relational welfare and welfare technology** ensures that people receive not only the practical support they need but also the human connection and relational support essential for their overall resilience and wellbeing while also securing their sense of ownership and self-determination. By leveraging the strengths of these elements, we will analyse how social services can provide more effective, comprehensive, and compassionate support to individuals and communities as part of their transformation process.

### Types of Sessions

A maximum of **2 proposals<sup>1</sup> per organisation** can be submitted for the following types of sessions. If you submit more than one proposal, please send each proposal for a different type of session.

<sup>1</sup> Proposals can be sent in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Interactive Session: Case Study or Training Workshop	Thematic Panel Discussions	Project Forum	Practice Fair
<b>AIM</b>			
<p><b>Case Study</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present the learnings from a practice, service model, project, or new idea (already implemented with some form of evaluation) that the audience can learn from and stimulate discussion.</li> <li>- Must include an interactive component, such as group discussions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Training Workshop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interactive meeting or educational session designed to create a specialised result, for example a guidance or learning that participants can use afterwards.</li> <li>- Must include some form of training and/or group work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discussion on a specific theme or topic with peers from across Europe</li> <li>- Your proposal is matched with 1 - 3 other similar proposals to form a moderated panel on a theme.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Short dynamic presentations that outline the main points of project</li> <li>- After this session, presenters will have the opportunity to discuss their project with colleagues during the break.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present your project (e.g. tool, research or practice) at your stand in a specially designated exhibition space and directly engage with all participants.</li> <li>-The practice fair does not involve a formal presentation. It takes place at the exhibition area in the form of a conversation between delegates.</li> </ul>
<b>FORMAT</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total time of session: 60 mins</li> <li>-Two presenters on stage</li> <li>- Maximum time for presentation is 20 minutes</li> <li>- Remaining time should involve an interactive component with delegates</li> <li>- Up to 6 Interactive Sessions will be running in parallel in different streams</li> <li>- 80-150 delegates per session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total time of session: 60-90 minutes</li> <li>-1 presenter on stage per organisation</li> <li>-Max. 15-20 minutes presentation per organisation with PowerPoint followed by moderated discussion</li> <li>- Up to 6 sessions running in parallel</li> <li>- 80-150 delegates per session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total time of session: 30 - 60 minutes</li> <li>- 1 presenter on stage per organisation</li> <li>- 5-minute 'elevator pitch' style</li> <li>- 5 slides maximum</li> <li>- 5-8 projects from different organisations per session</li> <li>- 1 or 2 sessions</li> <li>- All conference delegates can attend</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total time of session: 60-90 minutes</li> <li>- At least one presenter per stand</li> <li>- High-table provided and space for your own roll-up, brochures, reports, posters, a laptop to showcase information, merchandise, or other relevant material.</li> <li>- All conference delegates can attend</li> </ul>



## 4. APPLICATION PROCESS

Case Study, Thematic Panel Discussion, Project Forum, Practice Fair		
Selection Criteria	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Relevant to the theme of the ESSC	✓	
Innovative	✓	
Been initially evaluated and shows initial results. Or Will be evaluated	✓	
Interactive & engaging (e.g. group discussions) <sup>1</sup>	✓	
Co-presented with person with lived experience <sup>2</sup>		✓
Involves cross-sector and/ or cross-border approach		✓
Transferable and could be implemented elsewhere		✓



1 Case Study proposals  
2 Case Study proposals

Workshop format <sup>1</sup>		
Selection Criteria	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Relevant to the theme of the ESSC	✓	
Relevant and deliverable to an international audience	✓	
Demonstrates a clear and achievable educative or training goal(s)	✓	
Demonstrates that it is run by an experienced trainer or facilitator	✓	
Interactive & engaging (e.g. training, group work)	✓	
Employs visual tools (e.g. whiteboards, flipcharts, 2D and 3D objects) and uses multi-media	✓	
Co-presented with person with lived experience		✓

## Languages

There is the possibility for interpretation to and from French, German, Italian and Spanish if you wish to present in these languages.

## Deadline

Proposals can be made in **English, French, German, Italian and Spanish**.

**12 November 2024:** for proposals submitted in French, German, Italian, Spanish

**19 November 2024:** for proposals submitted in English

Confirmation of acceptance or rejection will be sent **by 14 February 2025**.

<sup>1</sup> Only applicable for those applying for workshops

## 5. CONFERENCE FEES

### Thematic Panel Discussion, Project Forum, Practice Fair

Selected organisations to contribute to the ESSC programme **must register one presenter and at least one additional delegate**, each paying the **full delegate fee** for the conference.

### Interactive Sessions: Workshop and Case Study

Selected organisations to contribute to the ESSC programme must register **at least two presenters paying the full delegate fee** for the conference.

ESN MEMBERS	NON-ESN MEMBERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard members €660</li> <li>Members from EU-14/neighbouring countries €565</li> <li>Members from Denmark €610</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private companies €1,100</li> <li>Public organisations €775</li> <li>NGOs/ Voluntary sector €625</li> <li>Organisations from EU-14/neighbouring countries €595</li> <li>Public and Third Sector Organisations from Denmark €625</li> </ul>



### EU-14 Countries

Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

### EU neighbouring Countries

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine.

Included in the fee	Not included in the fee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All plenary and parallel sessions</li> <li>• Lunch on day 1 and on day 2</li> <li>• All coffee breaks</li> <li>• Networking Dinner</li> <li>• Institutional reception<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel accommodation</li> <li>• Travel to venue</li> </ul>

### NETWORKING DINNER FEE

€38

*Please ensure the availability of funds from your organisation for delegate fees, travel, and hotel before submitting your proposal.*



<sup>1</sup> A nominal fee is charged for attendance to this social event.

# European Social Services Conference

A stylized, light blue silhouette of a city skyline, including various buildings and spires, positioned in the lower half of the page. A network of thin lines connects various points across the skyline, creating a web-like pattern.

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