

# Impact of digitalisation on social services

Presentation to EP Employment and Social Affairs Committee

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# How is digitalisation applied to social services?



## Along three vectors of change:

- **Automation of work tasks and occupations:**  
advanced robotics (e.g. lifting in care), AI and machine learning
- **Digitisation of processes:**  
telepresence, Internet of things, virtual, augmented reality –  
applications in care, wearable devices; handling of benefits, employee monitoring
- **Coordination by platforms**  
mainly home care and childminding

*Impacts are different, therefore the policy action has to be targeted*

## Who addresses digitalisation in social services at EU level:

- **Research** - such as by JRC on ICT-led innovation in social services, Eurofound on working conditions and on platform work
- **Social partners** – such as in case of FSE-EPSU 2019 Joint paper on Digitalisation in the Social Services Sector
- **Providers** – such as ESN 2021 ‘Transforming social services through digitalisation’

# The potential and space for policy-led improvement

*Eurofound's research helping to assess current and future trends:*

## **ANALYSIS:**

- 34% care workers in healthcare and social work are 50-64 year old

## **MONITORING AND REPORT SERIES:**

- New forms of employment; platforms
- Game-changing technologies
- Use and delivery of public services

## **SURVEYS:**

- ECS asks about how the enterprises use data analytics
- EQLS asks about service user satisfaction
- EF COVID survey asks about use of care services during pandemic

Expand knowledge on scale and take-up of digitalisation in social services

## **GOVERNANCE**

Tackle **fragmentation**: linking public administration databases; linking provision of health and social care

## **WORKFORCE**

Digital infrastructure has to be followed by the **skills upgrade**: take the services staff along the technological progress – the change is fast, an ageing workforce needs support; involve users in co-designing services

## **SERVICE USERS**

Develop regulation on:

**transparency of algorithms**

**opportunities to redress decisions based on algorithms**



# Limitations of digitalisation as experienced during the pandemic

- The technologies **are** vital in ensuring the continuity of care, tackling social isolation and meeting spikes in the demand of care.
- The pandemic encouraged to maximise the potential of digital technologies, but also disclosed where the **limitations** can be. Organisational innovation necessary along the digitalisation.

In progress: Eurofound 2021 project

## **Adapting to a new reality – provision and use of public services in COVID19 times:**

- Events and services online enhanced participation by people with mobility limitations and those in active ageing activities, which was a positive development
- Coverage by outreach services for at-risk groups decreased due to skill/technology barriers
- Participation in informal education and social work with young people decreased over time due to online fatigue

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