

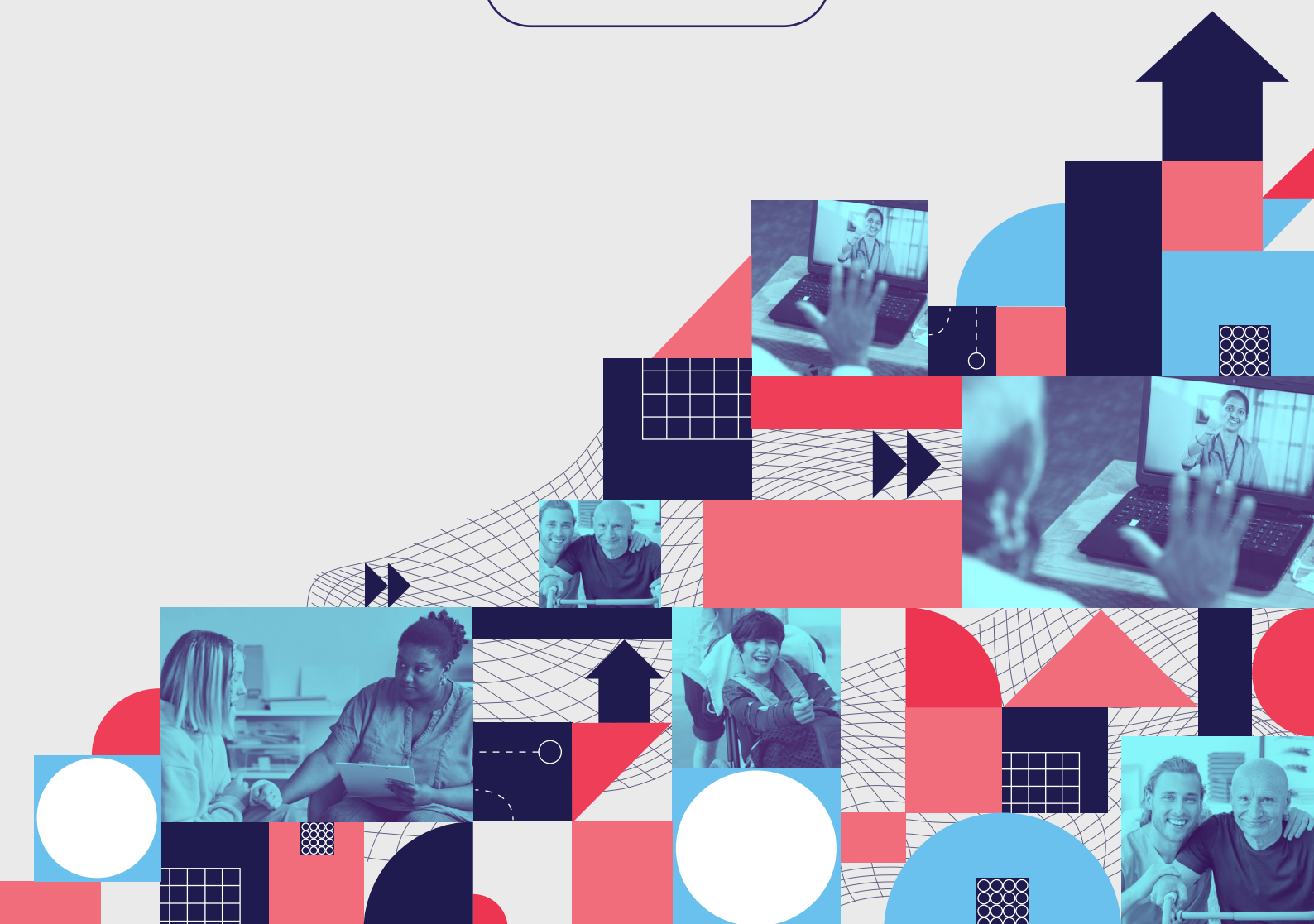
31st European Social Services Conference

Advancing Social Services

The role of technology in promoting autonomy & inclusion

14-16 June, Malmö, Sweden

REPORT



About the ESSC 2023

The European Social Services Conference (ESSC), the annual flagship event of the European Social Network (ESN), is the largest forum for public social policy and practice in Europe. ESN is the independent network for local public social services in Europe. It brings together 174 organisations from 34 countries that plan, deliver, finance, manage, research, and regulate local public social services, including health, social welfare, employment, education and housing. ESN supports the development of effective social policy and social care practice through the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

The mission of ESN is to inspire social services leaders to improve the lives of people in the community. The ESSC achieves this by providing a platform for

social services leaders from across Europe and other regions of the world to exchange knowledge and inspire one another to implement innovative new ideas and solutions in their own work. Delegates who attend the ESSC leave the conference with new connections, perspectives and knowledge.

The 31st edition of the conference took place in Malmö, Sweden between 16-18 June 2023 and welcomed 681 delegates from 39 countries. The conference was hosted by the City of Malmö, with the support of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR), the Swedish Association of Social Services Directors (FSS) and 12 industry partners. It was held within the framework of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which supported the conference through the Ministry for Health



Conference Programme

The conference theme, 'The role of technology in promoting autonomy and inclusion,' aimed to focus discussions on how technological advancements can help to improve the delivery of social services by making access and sharing of information simpler, improving coordination between services, encouraging early intervention, supporting decision making, and promoting people's autonomy and choice.

Each element of the 3-day conference programme was designed to engage delegates on the topic and was composed of:

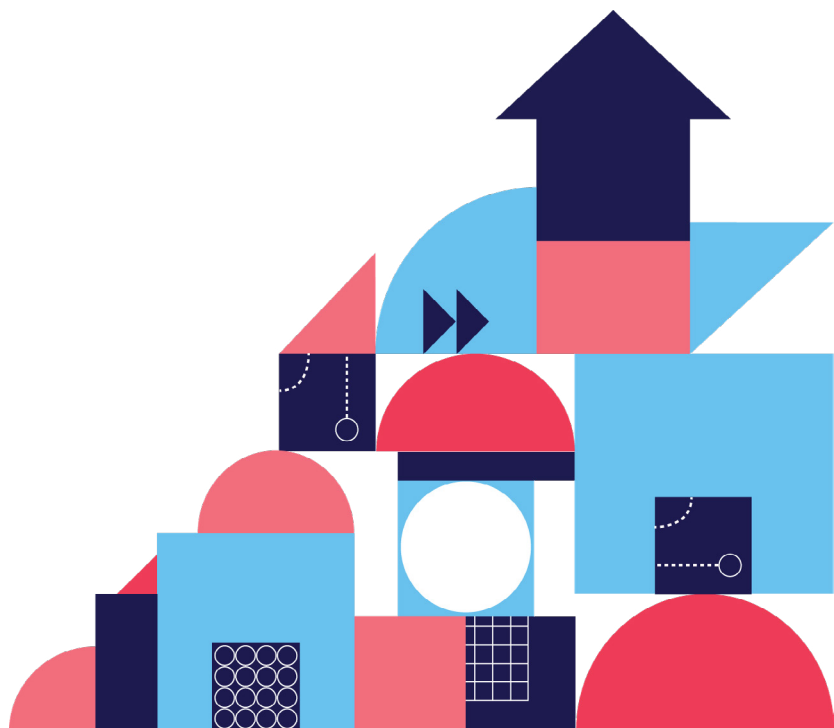
- 5 plenary sessions
- 9 thematic panel discussions
- 18 interactive workshop & case study sessions
- 6 innovation zone presentations
- 2 project forums with 10 elevator pitch presentations
- 1 practice fair with 15 projects

During the plenary sessions 24 keynote speakers from around the world shared their expertise and knowledge on the digitalisation of social services.

The basis of the programme was shaped through a Call for Contributions process where organisations were invited to submit a proposal to be included in the programme. From the over 100

applications received, 69 contributions were selected across the various formats described above. There were 132 presenters from 23 countries that presented these at the conference.

The presentations and discussions throughout the conference highlighted how technology and digital tools have the potential to transform social services. Delegates learnt about the increased use of larger amounts of data to support decision making, about connected data and case management systems, the potential of technology to support independent living and harnessing the power of AI in social services.



Digitilisation of Social Services

A key takeaway from the conference was the importance of establishing robust, integrated digital public social services systems. Examples of successful projects highlighted how increased digitalisation and standardised data-sharing had the potential to facilitate the establishment of transparent and secure processes, establishing trust and empowerment for citizens navigating social services.

The Potential of AI

AI has the capability to anticipate and mitigate potential risks and enable seamless connection between individuals and precisely tailored resources and interventions. Discussions about AI highlighted its potential to transform social services delivery. However, it was also noted that AI is a tool that cannot be trusted blindly as it has been shown that AI systems can show certain biases against different population groups.

Data for independent living

Many case studies presented at the conference showed how the use of technology in the home can lead to increased autonomy for older people and people with care needs. Various examples of using sensors and remote monitoring to detect unusual patterns and alert social services of any problems or signs of deterioration were presented.

Improving Case Management

It was highlighted how through digital case management, different services can be connected allowing integration of data. It also makes it simpler for users of social services to access their own data. Both social workers and people accessing social services can have seamless access to the person's data, preventing them from having to repeat their story over and over again.

Data Driven Decision Making

The digital collection of data makes larger amounts of data available to decision makers, who can support their actions with assessments made through algorithms, unlocking the potential for large scale planning.



A more detailed analysis of the topics discussed, important case study examples, and key conference learnings can be found by clicking the links below:

- [Digitalisation and tech transform social services](#)
- [Transforming social services and social care systems](#)
- [Using data and AI for good](#)
- [Leveraging technology for social inclusion](#)

Technology and the digitalisation of social services is still a relatively new topic and is sure to be a permanent feature of the changes and improvements made in the social services sector in the coming years. Reflecting on this, a key objective of the ESSC moving forward, will be to continue

including a special focus on technology in future conference editions, whether as a subcategory or as an overarching theme, as was the case this year.

Delegates

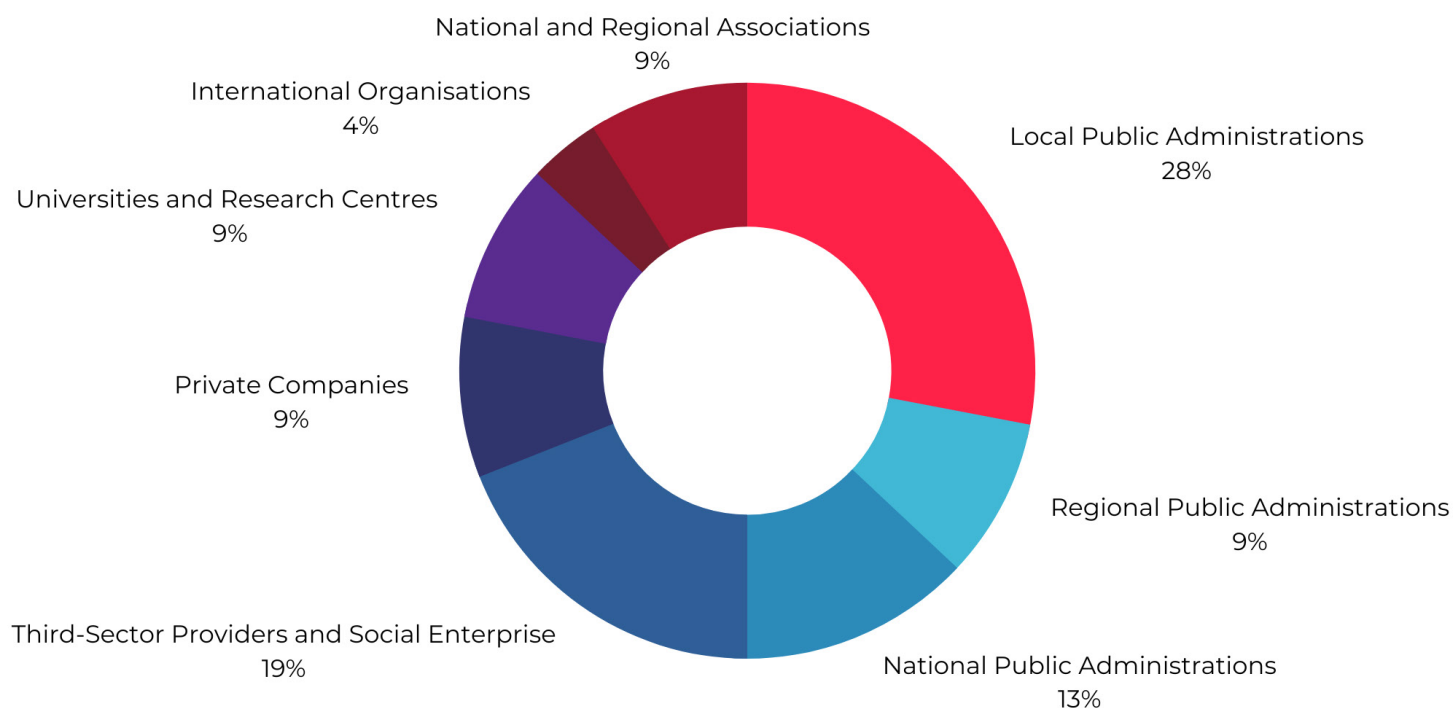
- 681 delegates
- 39 Countries

Most Represented Countries: Sweden, Belgium, Spain, United Kingdom, Malta, Denmark.

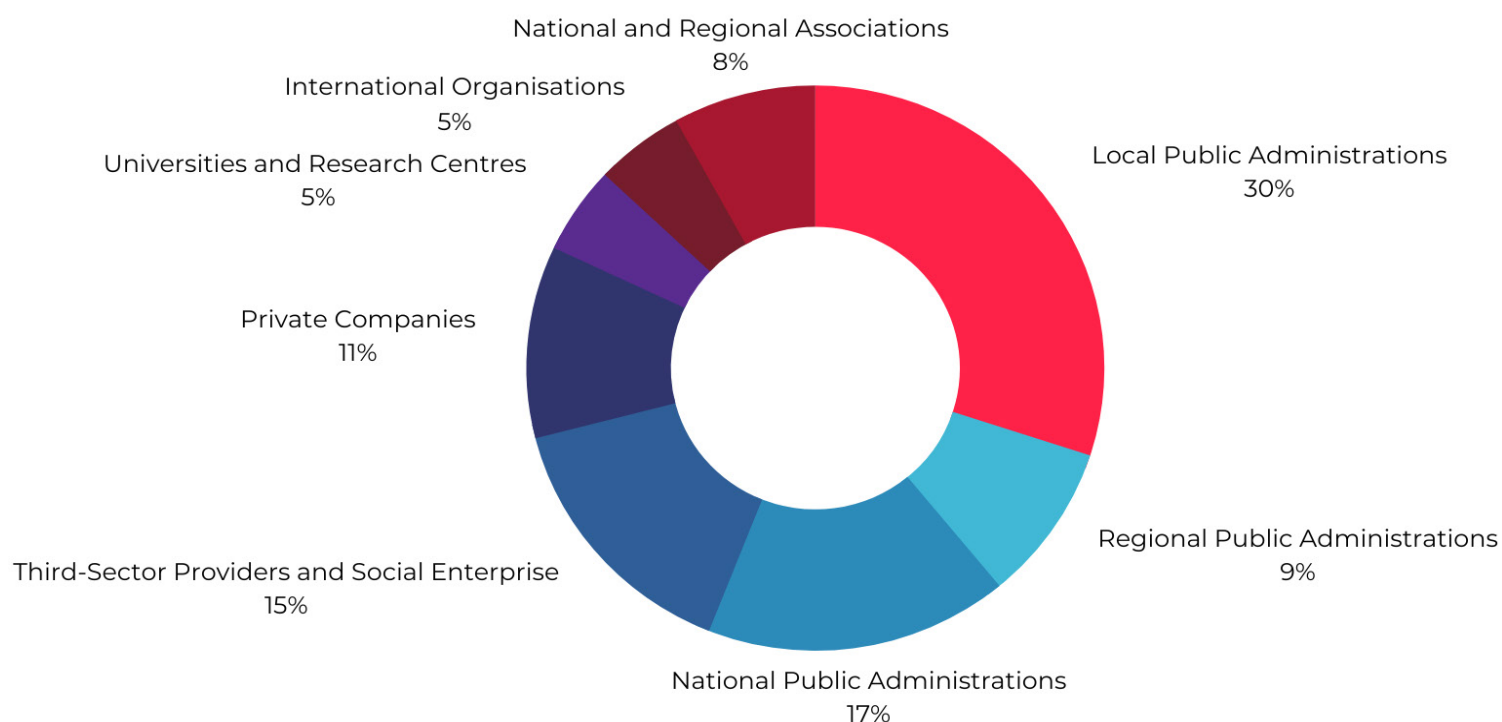
265 organisations attended the event:

- 99 ESN Member Organisations (57% of ESN members)
- 54% of delegates were members of ESN.

Type of organisations



Delegates per organisation



Delegates' Job Roles

- 56% were directors or managers
- 39% were specialists
- 4% were elected representatives

The delegate statistics show that the majority of conference attendees (56%) worked for a public authority, with 56% of all delegates holding a decision-making position in their organisation. The ESSC continues being an important meeting place for ESN members, with over half the membership (57%) having a representative in attendance. The geographical diversity of delegates was evident with 39 different countries represented at the conference. Most delegates came from Europe, but also represented were the United States, Canada, Australasia, China, and the Middle East.

The Delegate Experience

To allow delegates to fully engage with and appreciate the different conference elements, facilities and services of the highest standard are required.

The Venue

Finding a large venue with space for exhibition, breakout rooms, main plenary room & rooms for meetings is key to the success of the conference. The conference is held at venues that provide the space for delegates to engage and learn during the conference sessions in the main plenary hall, 5 breakout rooms and connect and exchange during networking breaks in common area spaces.



Interpretation

Interpretation into English, German, French, Italian and Spanish is provided during all plenary sessions and in the sessions where presenters' first language was not English. A velotypist provided live subtitling during the main plenary sessions. These services gave presenters and delegates from across Europe the opportunity to attend and engage with the topic, encouraging a greater diversity in geographical representation at the conference. ESN always strives to provide the option of the local language for delegates. However, this was not required by the host this year.

Social Events

The city hosting the conference welcomes delegates at an official reception while on the second evening, delegates attend a dinner in a historical site of the city.

The City of Malmö hosted delegates in the City Hall for an Official Reception on the first evening of the conference. Delegates

were welcomed by the Mayor of Malmö, Carina Nilsson, and the Chair of ESN, Christian Fillet.

On the second evening of the conference, delegates attended a Gala Dinner in the Slagthuset. This unique venue originally was built as a slaughterhouse in 1904 but since the 60's it has been transformed and now plays an important role in Malmö's event life.

The social events are an important opportunity for delegates to connect in a relaxed setting.

Communication

Delegates were kept abreast of conference updates through the monthly newsletter, mailings, the conference website and the app. A newly-developed Event Networking Area allowed delegates to make updates to their registration choices and connect with each other ahead of the conference.

Partners

The support of both Institutional and Industry Partners is essential to the success of the ESSC. First and foremost, the conference was supported by the close cooperation between ESN and the host city, Malmö. The host city performs an important role in the organisation of the conference, and their involvement is interwoven throughout, from collaborating on choosing the overarching theme, to sourcing speakers and providing on the ground support in the form of conference volunteers and local entertainment.

ESN strives to partner with local organisations and groups to ensure the ESSC promotes policy and good practice from the country in which the conference is hosted. The conference was supported by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKR) and the Association of Directors of Social Welfare Services (FSS) in Sweden. The final conference Institutional Partner was the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs which supported the conference under the EU Swedish Presidency.

Twelve conference Industry Partners brought knowledge, insights, innovations and new technologies. A particular focus of this conference was the promotion of innovative solutions developed by companies based in Sweden, such as JP Infonet, Tietoevry and Boet. The conference's Global Industry Partners Deloitte, EY, Accenture, Edenred, Binti, Microsoft, Merative, KPMG the WCC Group showcased leading digital tools and software.

Delegates had the opportunity to learn about the latest developments and innovations in social services digitalisation through the Innovation Zone, Exhibition Area and through sessions hosted by Partners. Sessions hosted by Partners also included testimonials directly from representatives of Public Authorities implementing their solutions.

Hosted by:



Supported by:





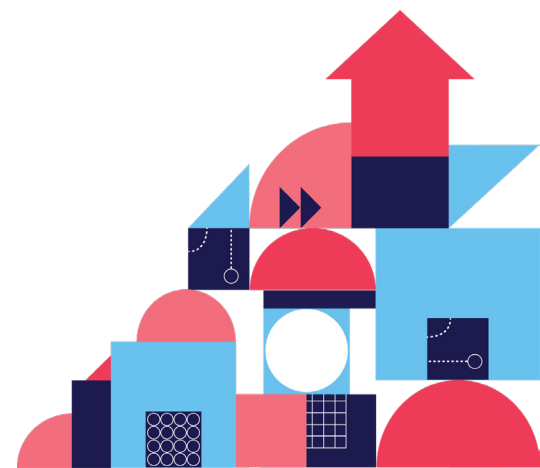
ESSC 2024

The 32nd European Social Services Conference will take place in Antwerp, Belgium on 26-28 June 2024. ESSC 2024, 'Co-Creating Future Social Services: Community-Based Planning for Sustainable Social Welfare,' will serve as a launchpad for discussions on how we can co-create community-based social services, with a specific focus on innovating for cities' social inclusion; the requirements for, and the extent of, workforce reform; as well as the opportunities provided by new technologies.

The ESSC team are also looking into ways to improve the delegate experience in 2024. The feedback of the 2023 conference emphasised that networking with delegates from other countries is the primary reason for people to attend the ESSC. The 31st ESSC saw the introduction of an online networking area for delegates. For the upcoming edition, the conference team are looking into how the area can be

better utilised by delegates to encourage bilateral exchanges in the lead up to the conference. The organising team are also going to make improvements to the chat function in the app to improve connection opportunities during the conference.

ESN and the [City of Antwerp](#) look forward to welcoming you to the 32nd ESSC which will bring together leaders in social services to inspire ideas on co-creating the future of community-based social services.



European Social Network

8th Floor
Avenue des Arts 3-4-5
1210 Brussels
Belgium

conference@esn-eu.org

+ 32 (0) 251 110 93

