

# Transforming Community Care

European Social Services Awards

2020



## About the European Social Network (ESN)

The European Social Network (ESN) is the independent network for local public social services in Europe. It brings together the organisations that plan, deliver, finance, manage, research, and regulate local public social services, including health, social welfare, employment, education and housing. We support the development of effective social policy and social care practice by exchanging knowledge and expertise.

## Acknowledgements

This report has been written by ESN's Programme Officer Alessandra Perna and edited by ESN's Chief Executive Alfonso Lara Montero. With thanks to Cosmina Gantner, Communications Manager, and Thomas Stevens, Junior Communications Officer, for the production and dissemination of the report.

Published: February 2021

Copyright © The European Social Network 2021

The overall copyright of this publication is held by the European Social Network (ESN). The European Social Network retains editorial responsibility for any inaccuracy or inconsistency the report may contain.

ISBN: : 9789463880732

Royal Library of Belgium | Legal Depot: D/2021/14.711/7

# Contents

<b>About</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>ESSA 2020 Theme: Transforming Community Care</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>ESSA 2020 Ceremony</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>ESSA 2020 Winners: Their Stories</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>ESSA 2020 Finalists</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Transforming Community Care, Celebrating Excellence</b> .....	<b>33</b>

# About the Awards

## The European Social Services Awards

The European Social Services Awards (ESSA), led by the European Social Network (ESN), recognise innovation and excellence in social services in Europe, shining a spotlight on successful new approaches and the extraordinary ongoing work done by public social services managers, funders, planners and providers.

### The Awards aim to:

- identify and promote **best practice** in social services;
- recognise **excellent work** done in the field;
- **encourage peers** to work with and support each other in improving their practice;
- **promote innovation** in social services in Europe.

The ESSA are pioneers in bringing people from across Europe to celebrate social services' achievements and the passion and dedication of those who work in social services to make a difference for the most vulnerable in our societies.

The entries are submitted in the **five categories**, which highlight different aspects of social services work:

### Social Service Innovation

Practices that show initiative in creating, implementing or promoting a new approach to delivering social services in the community.

### Outstanding Team

Groups of people who have made an outstanding contribution to the provision of social services or social care in the community.

### Collaborative Practice

As a social services network, ESN believes strongly in the importance and value of collaboration between organisations and sectors. This award recognises such collaborations and is jointly awarded to organisations or teams who have collaborated across agencies and sectors.

### Technology Tool

This award recognises the tools' contribution to help decision-makers and professionals shape and improve the services they provide or how technology and IT can help deliver specific policies and services.

### Research Project

Excellence in social services practice and research are mutually dependent. The research project award recognises a research team's contribution that created knowledge in community care/community social services in a range of populations.

Award-winners are selected in a two-step process, combining an expert panel's selection with an online community vote.

In line with ESN's ethos of promoting peer relationships and a social service community, the final decision on the headline award, the **ESN Excellence in Social Services Award**, is made by all those gathered at the annual awards ceremony from across the social service community. The Excellence Award recognises a stand-out project or team working in the area of the annual theme.

## Excellence

Public social services are the cornerstone of social welfare systems. We have been working for many years studying and proposing ways in which public authorities may invest in quality social services. Thematic reports on [Contracting for Quality](#), [Putting Quality First](#), [Investing in Children's Services](#), [Towards more independent lives for people with disabilities](#) underscore specific quality principles and practice for older people, children and disability's services. [Striving for Quality](#) proposes to review the EU framework for quality in social services to integrate a Care Guarantee for All as well as newly added principles related to transparency and governance, service commissioning, regulation, data and technology, and the workforce.

# ESSA 2020 Judges

## Transforming Community Care

Each year, the European Social Services Awards are held under a particular theme. The first edition of the ESSA took place in 2019, and coincided with 20 YEARS of ESN as a network, building and exchanging knowledge in social services across Europe. The Awards were held under a subject central to ESN's work, **Celebrating Quality in Care**, also a key theme of the [European Social Services Conference 2019](#) in Milan. The goal was to honour the efforts of measuring, managing and improving quality in services for different populations, from research to practice, childcare to elderly care, and management to provision.

In 2020, the second edition of the European Social Services Awards focused on the way social services have transformed how they provide care in the community to support the most vulnerable. The Awards honoured efforts to come up with innovative models of care in the community for all population groups: children and youth, families, adults with dependency needs, informal and formal carers.

With a goal of improving people's quality of life, community social services support people in need taking account of their wishes, needs and assets, giving them the chance to be fully included in society. Policies are increasingly aiming to transform health and social care services in people's homes and communities. The focus has also shifted to early, effective intervention for children and their families, young people, and proactive support for people with long-term health conditions and their families. **Transforming community care** is also the overarching theme of the [28th European Social Services Conference](#). Rethinking planning, implementation and evaluation of community care, the conference aims to inspire with examples, aspire for change, and dare for better outcomes for children and families, young people, older people, migrants, and people with mental health problems or disabilities.



**Christian Fillet**

ESN Chair and Director  
in Bruges



**Ann Buchanan**

Professor of Social  
Work, University of  
Oxford



**Veerle Miranda**

Senior Economist,  
OECD



**Delphine Lemarinier**

Head of EU Affairs,  
Edenred



**Chiara Crepaldi**

Head of the European  
Social Policy Research  
Unit, Italian Istituto per  
la Ricerca Sociale



**Andreas Gollner**

Public Employment  
Service Leader, IBM  
Watson Health



**Aleksandra Posarac**

Lead Economist, World  
Bank



**Jose Manuel Fresno**

Director, Fresno the  
right link



**Andrzej Klimczuk**

Assistant Professor at  
the Warsaw School of  
Economics

# ESSA 2020 Ceremony

The second edition of the European Social Services Awards gathered many outstanding entries and a great level of interest, with 25,000 people voting for the Awards over the three weeks that the public vote was open. The six winners were announced at the Awards Ceremony on 4 December, held online due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Awards Ceremony is the opportunity to celebrate the tireless effort and great work done by social services and showcase projects, teams and organisations as well as the extraordinary commitment of social services to support the most vulnerable in their communities. This has been especially the case in these difficult times, where continuity of care has been endangered significantly by the Covid-19 pandemic.

ESN had the honour of welcoming MEP Dragoş Pîslaru and Nicholas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights as keynote speakers at the Ceremony. The winners were announced by representatives from ESN Board, the judging panel and ESN partners.

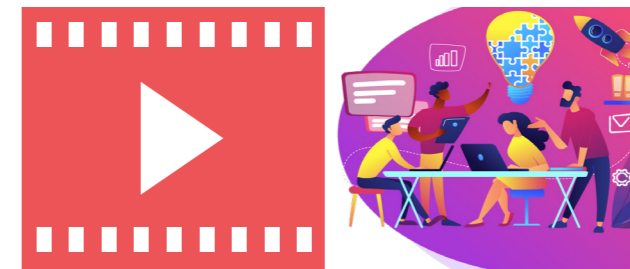
A panel of 9 experts selected the shortlisted 30 candidates from more than 80 entrants. As highlighted by Commissioner Schmit.

*“The shortlisted projects contribute directly to the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, helping improve living conditions, health and inclusion of individuals and families from all ages and backgrounds.”*



*“Who better than the European Social Network to know that sharing is caring. These Awards should finally be a moment for hope and optimism. A moment to celebrate every man and woman for whom social work is a vocation and the public services are calling”*

Nicholas Schmit, European Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights



[Click here to see the video highlights of the European Social Services Awards second edition!](#)

## Our partners

IBM Watson Health



# ESSA 2020 Winners

## Their Stories

“

*You are the real heroes  
of our society*

”

Dragoș Pișlaru, MEP



# Excellence Award Winner

Ending rough sleeping during lockdown



## Why did you choose to apply for the European Social Services Awards 2020?

We applied for the European Social Services Awards because we wanted to showcase the amazing work that our teams had achieved working in partnership to end rough sleeping in the pandemic's early days. We were new to the ESN network but impressed by the breadth and reach of the membership, the diversity of members and the incredible work taking place across the social care sector in Europe. We had little expectations of winning but wanted to share and be part of a bigger network. We were sad that everyone missed out on the hugely valued opportunity to connect in person at the Ceremony. Winning the Excellence Award was fantastic as it was surprising knowing how many amazing projects were on the finalists' list.

## Why is it important to share practice and projects with other organisations across Europe?

Most of the people in Scotland are saddened by the UK's withdrawal from the EU so more than ever we need to take the opportunity to maintain, build and grow connections. Our systems and structures may differ, but often the experiences, challenges and aspirations of people are similar. Sharing learning, approaches and innovation is hugely beneficial not just for organisations, but for the citizens we support. We are proud of our staff and volunteers who do a remarkable job, but we always want to do more, learn from others, and try out new or existing ideas to benefit everyone.

## What makes your project stand out?

More than anything, it was our staff and volunteers who, when many others retreated to safety, pushed forward putting themselves in harms way to support the most vulnerable in our society. The speed of response and adaptation was remarkable. We opened the first emergency hotel accommodation in the UK and supported over 1,000 people off the streets, through the hotels and onwards to more secure accommodation. The scale of partnership working was immense, and it was a time when we could act together and make things happen.

## How does your project provide community care?

Most of the people we support have experienced trauma in their lives. Homelessness is a consequence of a life journey challenged by addiction, mental illness, risk-taking and repeat trauma. Our teams are trauma-informed and take a uniquely personal and compassionate approach working in partnership with many other agencies to ensure people access income, housing and healthcare. Our teams are out on the streets seven days a week, and our accommodation teams support people to be safe and find their own place in the world. We believe recovery is possible, for everyone.

*Lorraine McGrath, Chief Executive,  
Simon Community Scotland*



# Innovation Award Winner

Fablabteka,  
digital fabrication laboratory for young people



## Why did you choose to apply for the European Social Services Awards 2020?

Cultural Association La Kalle has been working for over 30 years on the integral development of people at risk of social exclusion in Vallecas and other neighbourhoods in Madrid. We make it possible with this project, using digital fabrication, digital tools and technologies linked with it. We applied for The European Social Services Awards because they showcase where social workers' work across Europe is valued and recognised. Receiving the Innovation Award is an honour. This recognition makes all the team involved proud of our work and makes us feel recognised.

## Why is it important to share practice and projects with other organisations across Europe?

Being part of an event of the scope of the ESSA has given our organisation recognition and visibility. It is also an excellent way to discover other projects and learn how social agencies across Europe provide community care and support their efforts by giving them a well-merited recognition. It is also an opportunity to share and learn. Sharing and learning allow us to innovate, which is a must for us. And to foster innovation, it is essential to be aware of the trends and latest tools other organizations use to provide community care.

Getting an Award at European level also ensures that our voice is now heard all over Europe. Thanks to this, we can continue our mission to use manufacturing tools and digital technology to serve people.

## What makes your project stand out?

In Fablabteka, we take a high-level technology like digital manufacturing and bring it to people who otherwise would not have access to it. Young people at risk of social exclusion develop technical and social skills through the practical learning of new, state of the art, demanded technologies. We work on areas such as 3D printing, CNC milling, computer-aided design or laser cutting. These technologies are often restricted to large companies or people with a strong technological background. We use these technological tools to work on skills such as teamwork, creativity, communication or autonomy. The real innovation comes from the fact that we do this with a social perspective.

## How does your project provide community care?

At a community level, we give social agencies the opportunity to use our tools and machinery in social projects. We link different organisations and allow them to share practices and learn from each other while working on their projects with our digital laboratory tools. Moreover, we provide digital manufacturing training with a series of courses and workshops, ranging from a few hours to several months. In a space like Fablabteka, our participants work in an attractive environment with a high technological level, allowing them to assert themselves, take the initiative of their own lives and have the opportunity to change their future.

*Bernardo Cerdán, Fablab Manager Fablabteka, Cultural Association La Kalle*





# Outstanding Team Award **Winner**

Digital Resources to Support the Social Care Workforce During Covid-19



## Why did you choose to apply for the European Social Services Awards 2020?

In 2019 the Northern Ireland Social Care Council was shortlisted in the collaborative practice category for a project designed to support the transformation of Care at Home through enhanced training. This experience showed us the Awards' value in sharing our work and learning about innovative projects and approaches across Europe. We looked at the 2020 categories and reflected on the digital resources we had developed to support the workforce in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This could only be achieved through a large number of organisations and individuals working together as one team towards a common purpose. We share our delight in winning the 'Outstanding Team' Award with our many partners who worked with us to develop digital resources to support the social care workforce during Covid-19.

## Why is it important to share practice and projects with other organisations across Europe?

Quite simply, none of us has all the answers. European Social Network members work from a shared value base to improve the social wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. The quality of our work is stronger when we place at the centre those we work with and it is founded in shared learning from practice and research. Membership of the European Social Network provides an invaluable means of sharing this learning.

## What makes your project stand out?

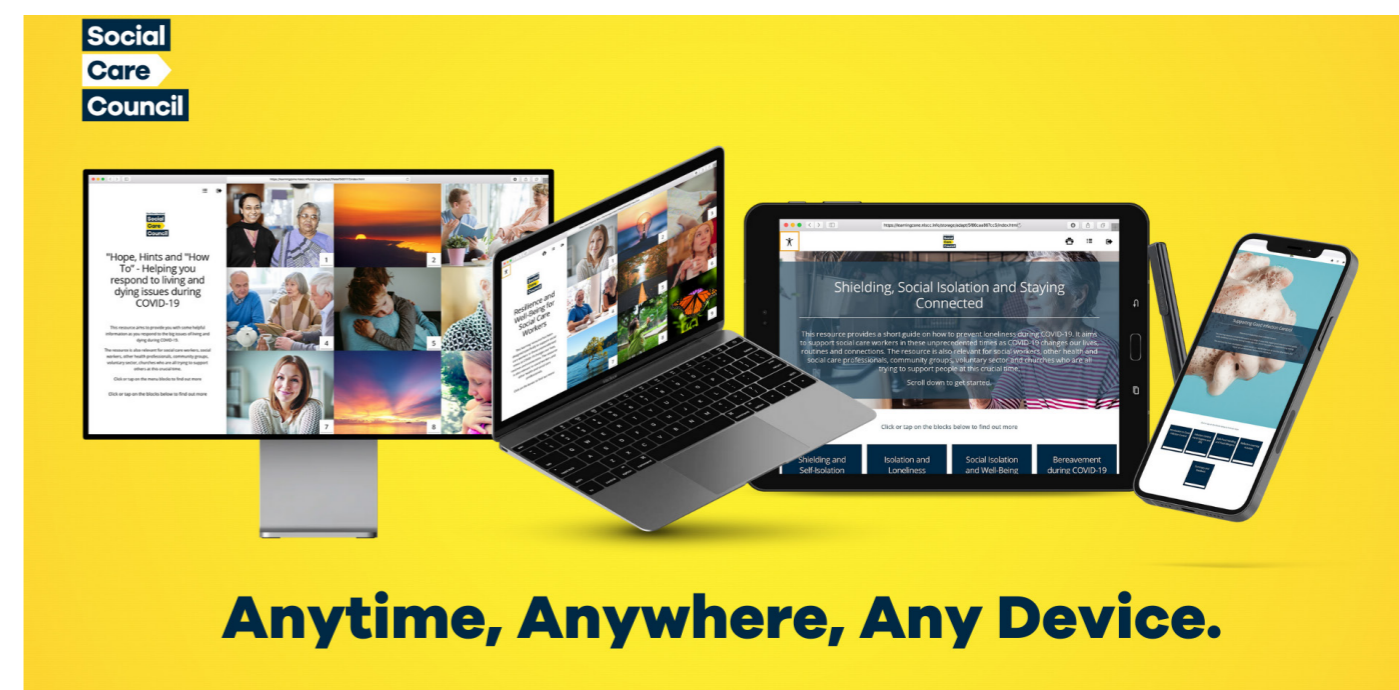
As the regulator for social work, social care and social work education in Northern Ireland, we are uniquely placed to connect with its 50,000 strong workforce. Our focus is on supporting the workforce to be safe and competent practitioners. Over the last seven years, we have developed in-house expertise in digital learning development – using evidence-based solutions and research to design for how people learn today.

For us, this must be done in partnership, and these partnerships must inform the content of our resources, ensuring it is relevant and accessible. When the impact of the Covid19 pandemic began to unfold, we reached out to our partners to help us understand how we could best support the workforce to continue to deliver quality and responsive services in such exceptional circumstances. It was the generosity of partners and their willingness to work together as one team that stands out. It truly was a team that that was not limited to any one agency, location or sector.

## How does your project provide community care?

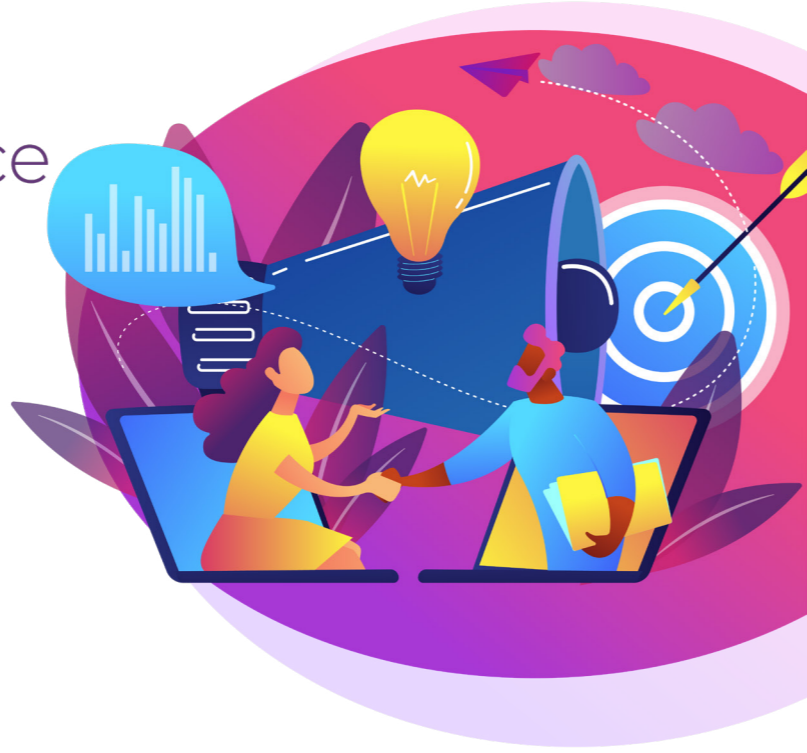
The Social Care Council works to build public trust and confidence in the social care workforce. Our social care workforce provides community care across a diverse range of settings. We aim to ensure that practice is safe and that the workforce has the right skills, knowledge and values to deliver high-quality services in response to need. One example of how we do this is through the development of accessible digital resources. Community care services have come under exceptional pressure during the pandemic. Our work in developing Covid specific resources has helped to support the workforce to respond safely and effectively with confidence and compassion.

*Catherine Maguire, Head of Workforce Development, Northern Ireland Social Care Council*



# Collaborative Practice Award **Winner**

Housing Solidarity Network



## Why did you choose to apply for the European Social Services Awards 2020?

We believe the European Social Services Awards offer a unique opportunity to present our project among different public and private stakeholders, with shared interests in the fight against social and residential exclusion. In addition, this Award helps us fulfil one of our organisation's main strategic objectives: to transfer to public policies innovative and effective intervention methodologies to respond to people's needs in vulnerability and social exclusion situations.

We are very grateful for this recognition, particularly valuable in the current great difficult scenario due to the international health crisis. This current context shows that social inequalities have a profound impact on health and that adequate housing is one of the main pillars in the fight against the illness.

## Why is it important to share practice and projects with other organisations across Europe?

Inequality, poverty and social and residential exclusion are common phenomena throughout the world and in Europe. The territory is particularly decisive in these phenomena (the development of welfare states and social protection systems, labour and housing markets, legislation and others). Therefore, it is essential for our organisation to be part of networks to share experiences and contrast methodologies and practices in different places with similar problems. Furthermore, developing these dynamics within a European relational framework allows advancement in constructing a 'European social model' based on human rights and the richness of social and cultural diversity.

## What makes your project stand out?

In our opinion, the strongest point of our project is that we have managed to form a solidarity network among various agencies to put an end to the great problem of homelessness and housing exclusion. Private companies provide the homes, public administrations, Cepaim and the third sector organisations developed the comprehensive programme of support, advice, training, mediation, and follow-up mobilising the specialist resources according to families' needs. Public administrations in the regions of Murcia and Valencia also provide funding to cover the implementation costs partly. We also have a network of volunteers and families themselves contribute financially to supporting the project through the payment of social rents.

*Nacho Hernández, Coordinator of the International Dimension Department, Cepaim Foundation*

## How does your project provide community care?

Housing and families are scattered in different municipalities and neighbourhoods. Hence to provide a comprehensive response to their needs, it is essential to facilitate access to community and neighbourhood social support resources.

Cepaim Foundation's technical team is the link between the family and all these local resources. Cepaim collects access applications, maps existing resources, carries out the families' assessment, and develops the itineraries for their social integration together with the families themselves, including follow-up. At present, the team comprises a mobile intervention unit, which regularly travels to the municipalities to carry out this work.

*Diego Pascual López Carmona State Coordinator of the Housing and Residential Exclusion Area of the Cepaim Foundation*

Fundación Cepaim  
**SOLIDARITY HOUSING NETWORK**  
LIVING A LIFE IS INHABITING A SPACE



# Research Project Award **Winner**



Rethinking Social Services Research from Professionals: The Social Services Laboratories

## Why did you choose to apply for the European Social Services Awards 2020?

Participating in the European Social Services Awards represented an ideal opportunity to highlight the new Valencian social model's development process. The recognition from the European Social Network, which shares our model's mission, vision, values, and philosophy, underlines our actions on people and communities' empowerment.

We want to honour all the organisations and professionals involved in drafting the law of inclusive social services in the region of Valencia. We are convinced that this participatory strategy has been vital for the drafted law, granted enormous strength and provided great satisfaction for all participant agencies.

This Award encourages us to take further steps in the new Valencian social model supporting public social services, focusing on people and practice, research, and public policies favouring citizens' social justice and dignity.

## Why is it important to share practice and projects with other organisations across Europe?

Being part of the European Social Network would provide the Vicepresidency and the University of València with a valuable opportunity to acquire experiential, practical, and intellectual knowledge gathered from ESN members' social and territorial realities.

Knowledge and dissemination of good practice, innovative projects and academic and institutional responses improve social services quality, maximising benefits while generating synergies that strengthen the workforce and the knowledge networks. It also develops solidarity between people, countries and entities of the Network and promotes the search for best solutions to common problems.

Nurturing the European social protection systems that serve people with social innovation and good experiences is a way to guarantee public and essential social services, continuous improvement and commitment to the adaptation of public policies to people's needs.

## What makes your project stand out?

The meaningful assurance about the value of participation during the knowledge construction process and the creation of the public realm in social services makes the project stand out. In fact, among the four pillars of the Welfare State, social services are the only shaped by the transversal participation between citizens, entities, professionals and political actors. The participation and collective work bring results in legislative development, social services professionals' training, investigation, innovation, and quality. The social services labs are areas of dialogue, learning, innovation and proposals between the regional administration, professionals, universities and local authorities. They represent an innovative networking model and collaborative governance between policy, practice and research.

## How does your project provide community care?

The project is a commitment to community participation, cooperative work and bottom-up collective development. The project results impact not only the work with individuals and families but also with communities. The innovation of Social Services Laboratories goes further the empirical research on population's social services and needs: the innovation introduced implies the co-responsibility between Public Administration plus actors to provide, protect and guarantee individual rights to Social Services in Valencian Region. Likewise, the bottom-up methodology was considered according to the new view of municipalism and co-production of public policies as principle, value, and way to improve Valencian social care systems' quality.

*Mónica Oltra Jarque, Vice-President and Councillor for Equality and Inclusive Policies of the Generalitat Valenciana*



# Technology Tools Award **Winner**



Social network for community service and care

## Why did you choose to apply for the European Social Services Awards 2020?

We applied for the Awards because we believe that engaging and activating citizens at local level is one of the biggest challenges local authorities will be facing in the coming years. Therefore, we are convinced that local community building is essential to anticipate tomorrow's societal challenges such as social cohesion, inclusion, aging, citizen engagement, and community care. We would like to thank ESN for this recognition and the excellent organisation. We feel proud and honoured for receiving the European Social Services Award for best Technology Tool.

## Why is it important to share practice and projects with other organisations across Europe?

Hoplr works together with more than 100 municipalities and social departments in Belgium and the Netherlands. Being part of the Awards initiative fits our European ambitions of becoming a 'thought leader' in community building, social cohesion, citizen engagement and community care. We also look forward to supporting more professionals and organisations across Europe with our social network for local community care in the coming years.

## What makes your project stand out?

Hoplr boosts citizen engagement by combining the power of a social network for local communities with tools for local authorities and the public sector, shifting the focus from individual to local community. Our social network brings together people linked through their neighbourhood. This way, we connect people of different backgrounds, origin, culture, language and age, uncovering the local community's true potential.

From connecting online to meeting offline: we stimulate offline encounters in the neighbourhood through neighbours help, activities and circular economy. Like this, we manage to bridge social capital and have it activated. This capital includes nearby resources such as material, volunteers, knowledge, time and infrastructure, perhaps without knowing that they are available. Only this way, we can evolve towards more caring and sustainable smart cities.

## How does your project provide community care?

A community takes care of its members in need, both online and offline. Once the local community is established and trusted, people will automatically involve neighbours in need. On the other hand, citizens with ideas can access the social capital and engage within the local community by themselves. By lowering the threshold to request help, the local community evolves into a caring community. This is based on two psychological aspects:

1. Observational learning: every single one of us needs help from time to time.
2. Reciprocation and 'sense of belonging': people in need also offer help to others.

Second, Hoplr also provides municipalities tools to stimulate social cohesion and community care. At this point the linking social capital gets activated. Community workers or professionals can use verified accounts to engage with one or multiple local communities. Social organisations can share information, services and receive bottom-up help requests from citizens through a service dashboard.

*Jennick Scheerlinck, Founder of Hoplr*



# ESSA 2020 Finalist Projects

“ I am glad that the European Social Network provides this opportunity to award you and I have to say that for me, regardless of the distinctions you receive, you are all winners ”

Dragoş Pişlaru, MEP



# Innovation Award Nominees

## OKencasa, Spain

OKencasa, which means OK at home in Spanish, is a programme that supports family caregivers of older relatives. The programme aims to prevent the early use of residential long-term care by supporting family carers with their care responsibilities in their own homes. They use 'Zaindoo', a mobile app where family carers log their daily care activities. The app analyses the data and proposes customised psycho-educational support for each caregiver, including recommendations, organisational tools, training and psychosocial help to improve the quality of carers' self-care and the care they provide. Public authorities also have access to the app data and can decide to provide additional support.

## Fostering First, Ireland

The project is a forum for young people in foster care with Fostering First, an independent fostering agency. The forum, called Chatter Matters, consists of a group of 8 young people who are currently in foster care with Fostering First or have previous care experience to promote young people's participation and involvement in decision-making within the organisation. Fostering First promotes the child's right to be heard by establishing regular meetings between young people and management to discuss and share views on the service provided. Through these meetings, young people acquire soft skills and a sense of empowerment through participation.

## Szeretet Szocialis Otthon of Somogy County, Berzence, Hungary

Szeretet Szocialis Otthon is a community-based social services programme for adults with mental health issues implemented in Berzence. The patients with mental health issues were moved out of a closed institution to single-family homes designed for 12 and 6 people, where they are not living any longer as patients, but as residents, and take part in the local community's life. Besides the family homes, a service centre provides daily workshops, therapy, and development programmes. With the help of this programme, people with mental health issues have become independent citizens, part of the society they live in, and able to work and develop themselves with the professionals' support.

## 'La Quinta Cocina', Spain

The project 'La Quinta Cocina' is a cooking school for children and young people managed by Madrid City Council. The aim of the programme is the social integration of young people aged 16 to 23 at risk of social exclusion by providing them with a traineeship in the catering sector. Every year, 120 young people receive traineeships of up to four months. During this period, young people learn social skills, English, Spanish, and job guidance to search for employment through digital means.

## Forget-me-not House, Slovakia

The Forget-me-not House provides complex day-care for children and young people with mental and physical disabilities. It is the first in the country, and still the only day-care centre in the Bratislava and Trnava region for children with severe disabilities from age three to adulthood. The centre provides families with disabilities with a safe place and an educational and professional environment where their children can receive adequate day-care and therapy. Families and children are given advice and support through consultation services regarding their condition, how to manage it, where they can find support, what type of support they can request, and the help from the government they may be entitled to.

## Innovation

At ESN we are constantly promoting innovative ways of finding new solutions to common social problems. We run a peer programme where members interested in implementing a service back home are supported in a learning and implementation exchange with peers in other countries. We gather innovative practice through our activities assessed through a template and populate an [online practice library](#). We bring our members together to share innovations in social services, such as [inclusive activation](#) to support the furthest to reach into the labour market, or co-production in service planning, delivery, and evaluation. By promoting the capacity of social services at local level to innovate, we contribute to European level objectives from the bottom-up.



# Outstanding Team Award Nominees

## Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland (YAP Ireland), Ireland

YAP Ireland aims to change the lives of children, young people and families in need of support by providing community-based, strengths-focused, inclusive, flexible services empowering them to achieve their own goals. Funded through TUSLA -the Child and Family Agency, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the project reaches approximately 500 young people across 22 counties. Through the single-minded determination of the YAP Ireland team, during Covid-19 contact was maintained with young people through a range of different approaches, all of which required the team's expressed commitment and dedication to work. So much so that 95% of regular services were provided by the end of June.

## Valakampiai Social Support Facility, Lithuania

Valakampiai Social Support Facility provides long- and short-term social care and accommodation in independent living homes as well as social skills development, support and (or) rehabilitation services for people with mental health problems and intellectual disabilities. They work with 63 partners and a team of 101 employees to further expand the development of community services in Vilnius. Each resident has a chosen social worker and an individual care plan jointly set up between the professionals and the residents, including the services they need but most importantly, the wishes they wish to fulfil.

## URIHO, Institution for vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities, Croatia

URIHO developed a training project for trainers of persons with disabilities (PWD) employed in sheltered and integration workshops. The programme is focused on strengthening their skills to ensure adequate PWD's participation in the work process. The programme, developed by psychologists and educational rehabilitators, some of them PWDs themselves, consists of three modules and provides theoretical knowledge and practical skills for ensuring that PWDs live up to their full professional potential. Since 2017, 299 persons with disabilities received this support per year, enabling URIHO to continue increasing the number of PWD employed.

## Foundation for Social Welfare Services, Malta

Teen Outside the Box implements life-skills based sessions for all students aged between 12 and 13 to help them go through life situations by adopting positive coping strategies. The project in this format also aims to decrease the occurrence of early experimentation with alcohol and drug abuse amongst other addictive patterns, since the early exposure to addictive substances increases the risk of students developing addictions later on. Professionals from the prevention team of Sedqa Agency, the national agency against drug and alcohol abuse and gambling, advisers from the anti-substance abuse team and schools come together to provide workshops, which help reflect better the realities of today, such as making healthy choices, the dangers of addictions, and wise use of technology.

## Outstanding Team

ESN undertook one of the very few international studies on the composition of the social services workforce. Investing in the social services workforce describes similarities and differences between the social services workforce of several European countries and reviews qualifications and skills, recruitment and retention, workforce mobility and workforce planning and management. Among others, ESN recommends the European Commission and national authorities to advance towards mutual recognition of qualifications and joint training. This message is underlined in our response to the Commission's Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, where we propose a European social care workforce strategy.



# Collaborative Practice Award Nominees

## Regional Health & Social Care Board, Northern Ireland

The Department of Health for Northern Ireland produced a report in 2018 that made 11 recommendations to transform the way the health and juvenile justice systems respond to children whose needs are of such complexity that their liberty may require them to be restricted in secure care. The overall objective was to combine the accommodation resources available in both children's healthcare services and children's juvenile justice services. As a result, the Regional Children's Multi-Agency Secure Care Panel was set up with the inclusion of senior representatives from all the key statutory agencies. Since September 2019 the Secure Panel has met on 36 occasions along with Emergency Panels and 63 children have been presented to date.

## Municipality of Esbjerg, Denmark

United in Psychiatry aims at improving the efforts to support vulnerable people and people with mental health issues from the age of 20 by bridging the gap between psychiatric hospitals and municipalities. The project is led by social services directors in 22 municipalities and the Regional Psychiatric Hospital of the South Denmark region. The programme addresses specifically some of the most complex cases in the 22 municipalities involved. Professionals from different sectors together with a key manager develop action plans, map challenges and opportunities, agree efforts and actions as well as follow-up arrangements to support people's progress. This coordination has resulted in more stable collaboration between people and professionals and fewer hospitalisations.

## Counselling Centre for Migrants in Vienna, Austria

The Counselling Centre for Migrants in Vienna provides advice to migrants on different topics, such as migration law, recognition of foreign qualifications, training and employment. The centre is part of an Austrian-wide network of contact points for people with a migrant background. It consists of six departments specialised in different issues and collaborates with different local and regional authorities and NGOs to provide migrants with the multi-lingual information and support they need. The multiple collaborations allow the centre to find individual solutions for most issues.

## CRESCER, Portugal

The project 'É um restaurante' aims to improve the living conditions of people who have experienced homelessness by providing training and employment as a cook in Lisbon. The project is carried out through a collaboration of a network of 29 public and private partners. The traineeship has a duration of 6 to 9 months. Each project beneficiary goes through four phases: 25 hours training in personal, social and relational skills; 75 hours professional training aimed at technical and professional skills; three months training in a real work context as part of a restaurant team; trainees who complete the traineeship are then referred to partner restaurants for employment.

## Third Sector Platform of Catalonia, Spain

Collaboration between the Third Sector Platform of Catalonia and Enginyers Voluntaris (a network of volunteer engineers) promotes innovation and digital transformation of third sector organisations. Skilled volunteers co-create a digital transformation strategy to improve the social impact of non-profit organisations. The first step is for the non-profit organisations to assess needs, create a roadmap and a technological infrastructure list. Then, volunteers co-create in collaboration with teams from non-profit organisations their digital transformation strategy.

## Collaboration

The ways in which social services provide integrated support with other public services, namely education, employment and health has been an area of work at ESN for years. Our publication Integrated Social Services in Europe is a review of literature and a 44-practice assessment that helped us to come up with key messages for policy-makers and practitioners. Collaborative forms of social service delivery may be implemented in various forms, such as case management and multidisciplinary teams consisting of professionals from different sectors. Examples of service cooperation and integration are also identified and discussed in the framework of our working group on integrated care and support.





# Research Project Award Nominees

## Welfare Department, Riga City Council, Latvia

The Welfare Department of Riga City Council carried out a research that evaluates the effectiveness of their social rehabilitation programme for young people with behavioural problems implemented in Riga since 2016. The programme is based on resilience's psychological intervention, which promotes adolescents' social integration at risk. The research's main objective was to determine through different methodologies if the implementation of the programme improves the social functioning of young people with behavioural problems. The evaluation research helped to understand what components of the social programme work better and have to be improved or changed.

## National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Cymru, UK

A 5-year Cardiff University project has informed the development of NYAS's Unity Project, which provides holistic support, advice and information to care experienced young mothers and expectant mothers. With the ultimate aim of reducing the risk of their children going into care, tailored one-to-one support allows care experienced young women to access support with budgeting, housing, independent living skills and parenting, allowing mothers to overcome barriers, eradicate risks/concerns identified by Children's Services and become active citizens within their community. The Unity Project has also facilitated the creation of peer support networks to enhance social support for care experienced parents, reduce isolation and build resilience.

## Boeblingen County Youth Welfare Service, Germany

The project 'The voice of care leavers – Improvement strategy for community services' aims to enhance youth welfare services through continuous feedback from former service users. The objective is to determine the potential that former service users can have in the quality development of youth welfare services and each professional (frontline workers and management). The feedback data consists of qualitative interviews for care leavers and their parents run six months after leaving care.

## Network of European Foundations, Belgium

The Transnational Forum on Integrated Community Care (TransForm) is a coalition of Foundations in Europe and Canada. The overarching aim of the forum is to foster integrated community care. It seeks to achieve this by finding and analysing promising practices in integrated community care and learning from their experiences and impact. In 2020, TransForm published the paper 'ICC 4 all. New Principles for Care. A strategy Paper to move ICC forward'. The strategy paper wants to illuminate both the distinctiveness and diversity of Integrated Community Care (ICC). The narrative and effectiveness principles presented in the paper are the result of two-days expert workshops to consolidate the learnings from the three TransForm conferences held in Hamburg (2018), Turin (2019) and Vancouver (2019).

## School of social workers of Peru region – Lima, Peru

The social educational project proposed by the Indigenous Committee of the Team of Social Workers of FITS – ALC, is directed to the indigenous population and native people in 18 countries: Panama, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Uruguay, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Cuba, Nicaragua, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Grenada, and Netherlands Antilles. This project develops experiential research in the indigenous communities of Latin America and the Caribbean. It implements a social educational project as a model applied to work with the indigenous populations, gathering the experience of the inhabitants and testimonies of stakeholders in these communities.

## Research

ESN is very much aware of the importance of reinforcing links between research, policy, and practice. Several of our members are applied research centres who run studies for and advise public authorities. We work with researchers in the formulation of questionnaires and research questions for our activities. Over the years, we have promoted a better understanding of new methodologies such as evidence-based practice to innovate in social services. Our [toolkit Evidence-based social services](#) proposes questions that social services professionals may ask themselves when they are planning and evaluating social services.



# Technology Tools Award Nominees

## Regional Ministry of Social Rights and Welfare, Asturias, Spain

The SisVAT- Covid-19 (Monitoring and Early Detection System for Asturias' care homes) is an information system to obtain real-time data on the impact of the crisis in each of the care homes located in the region to control the spread and the impact of Covid-19. SisVAT-Asturias has contributed to Asturias being recognised as one of the Spanish regions with the highest transparency level during the crisis. The tool has resulted in controlling the pandemic and low rates in Asturias care homes. Knowing every care home's updated situation allows for isolation of centres and set up of bubbles in emergency contexts.

## Department of Social Services, Faroe Islands

The project 'The complete interface' involves the inclusion of all financial social benefits in one system. 'Almannaverkið', The Department of Social Services, has developed an IT-system that integrates social welfare administration, record keeping and payments. The same IT-system automatically validates information towards the tax authorities and national registers. For social services, this means that the welfare advisor and other relevant staff can visualise all the relevant information needed for a general assessment of any citizen. This digitalisation process will provide citizens with the opportunity to carry out all their social welfare applications in one place, track their progress and gain insight into their data records.

## Agency for Sustainable and Operative Social Provision (DOST Agency), Azerbaijan

The aim of the project is to ensure universal access to labour and social protection services. The management of DOST centres and the organisation of services are carried out online, based on the principles of 'social justice', 'one-stop-shop' and 'people's satisfaction'. The project is currently developed in eight administrative districts of Baku. By the end of 2023 it will cover the whole country and services provided in 31 centres; 132 employment, disability and children's accredited services; social services; call centres; mobile services and online activities.

## mPower NHS NSS, UK

mPower NHS NSS created a cross-border service for older people living with long-term conditions in rural border areas across Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. Its beneficiaries receive personalised wellbeing plans, including social prescriptions, connecting people to local activities and services, and digital health interventions including integrated home and mobile monitoring solutions, apps and video enabled care solutions. For instance, NHS Near Me is a secure video calling platform for digital doctor consultations and families' meetings. During April and May 2020 NHS Near Me rolled out into all care homes in the Western Isles as a response to Covid-19 restrictions for residents of care homes to retain vital human contact with friends and family.

## Research & Development Centre in Care and Social Work, Linköping, Sweden

Evikomp is a project funded by the European Social Fund in the Region of Ostergotland in Sweden with the aim of improving dementia care by training staff in the social care sector. Though the project only started two years ago, it has already trained 2,200 professionals in 13 municipalities in Sweden, through their IT-platform that contains 60 lessons. Recognition of the project's effectiveness and its results is best captured in its transferability to other countries. Spain, Scotland, Romania, and Latvia are already in the process of applying the learning methodology through their Erasmus+ funded projects.

## Technology

We run a working group on the use of technology for the digitalisation of social services. The aim is to reflect on how the increasing role of technology impacts social services delivery and management, and understand the challenges that the use of technology may bring for the adaptation of social services organisations. We have documented examples of electronic case management and social records including early warning systems, platforms connecting facilities or care services. Other areas of work include the use of data to support decision-making and the implementation of technology to support independent living.



# Transforming Community Care Celebrating Excellence

“

*At a time of unprecedented challenges for Europe's social services, these awards are a fantastic chance to celebrate the dogged determination, the innovation and the outstanding care for others that represents the very best of the sector*

”

Jane Dudman, Public Leadership Editor, The Guardian

“

*I am very happy to have the opportunity to be one of the judges of the European Social Services Awards. These Awards are an important recognition of the role that social services and social care play in society, both as a safety net and as an economic investment*

”

Chiara Crepaldi, Head of the European Social Policy Research Unit at Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale, Italy

On 4 December 2020, we held the annual edition of the European Social Services Awards against the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which has threatened continuity of care across Europe. Social services have heroically jumped into action making sure that they cared for those in need. They did it because of their commitment to supporting the most vulnerable in our communities despite the many challenges they have been facing, particularly lack of resources, protective equipment, and insufficient staff.

The 2020 edition of the European Social Services Awards celebrated the indefatigable work of innovative public servants, social service practitioners, and programmes involving community care. The awards showcased projects, teams and organisations that have put people using services, residents, or clients at their heart.

An audience of 80 guests, including applicants, shortlisted candidates, judges, and partners joined our virtual ceremony to celebrate quality in community care. Opening the event, European commissioner for jobs and social rights, Nicolas Schmit, underlined that ESN awards were crucial in “supporting the public sector to innovate, learn from each other and promote best practice”.

In my role at ESN, I have met with many ESN members who work tirelessly to improve the quality of life of the most vulnerable people in our communities. I have learnt to admire their work supporting children and young people at risk, helping adults to maintain or recover their independence, and caring for older people in need of long-term care. MEP Dragos Pislaru described those working in social services as heroes and called for the need to strengthen social services particularly in light of significant under-investment over the past years.

At a very special afternoon, all the winners of the second edition of the European Social Services Awards were revealed. We were impressed to learn about digital training for vulnerable youth, developing training materials for the workforce, investing in housing solidarity, leading co-production in social service design, promoting technology for neighbourhood-oriented care, or helping people off the streets during lockdown. They have all come up with innovative and fresh ways of delivering quality care in the community.

These Awards demonstrate how public social services are making a real difference to people's lives in our countries. We are proud to have been able to pay tribute to the social care and social services workforce who have continued to support people in extremely difficult and often heart-breaking situations in local communities across Europe.

Alfonso Lara-Montero, Chief Executive Officer, European Social Network



## European Social Network ASBL



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



Tel: + 32 (0) 251 110 93  
info@esn-eu.org  
www.esn-eu.org



@ESNsocial



european-social-network

