



# WORK PLAN

## 2025/26

This year we will continue our core work of helping create the conditions for great social work and social care support to flourish.



# What you told us



Last year we asked you about your needs and priorities and how you thought we could help. You told us about four areas that get in the way of social work and social care supporting people to live their best lives:

- **Lack of capacity:** This includes constraints on budgets; having to do more with less; and having less time to reflect, learn and improve.
- **Struggles with staffing:** It is difficult to attract enough people to work in social work and social care support, retain them and ensure their wellbeing.
- **Feeling valued:** People working in the sector don't feel valued, or that their work is recognised. This includes value through fair wages and also through other types of recognition.
- **Changing practice:** You told us you want to create more user-led and person-centred services; lead real change and collaborate effectively to get things right for everyone.



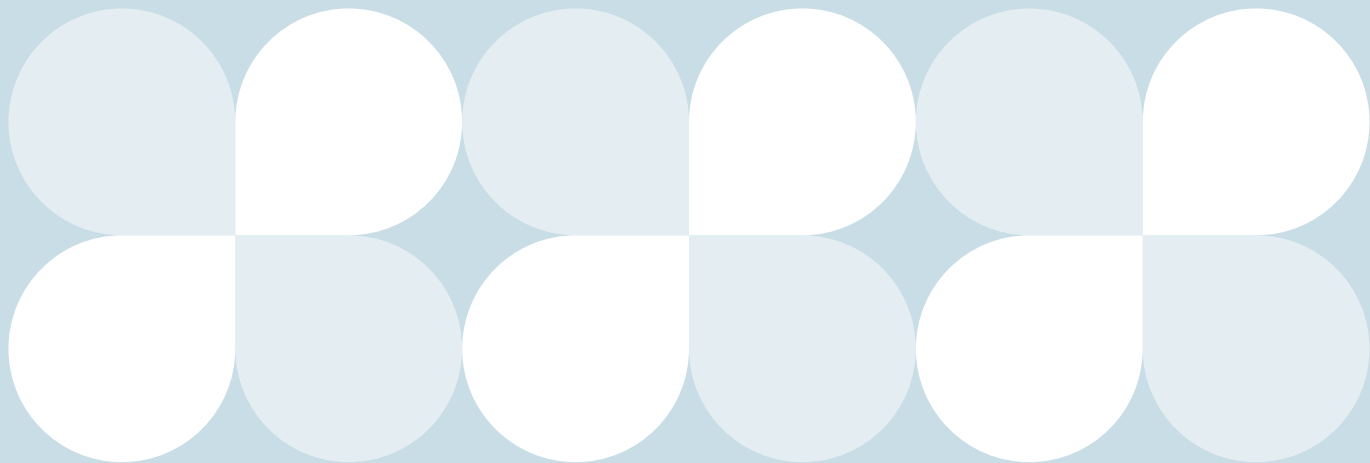
# How Iriss can help



In 2025/26 we will provide:

- Support for innovation in social work and social care.
- Improvement support for Adult Support and Protection through our core and data work and hosting the NASPC.
- Targeted support for ethical commissioning.
- General support to improve social policy through evidence, research and implementation minded policy making.
- Support the sector through our networks and services offer including bespoke coaching, workshops and training.
- Spaces to develop real thinking about how social work and social care support could move on from the current crisis of scarcity, inertia and under-investment.

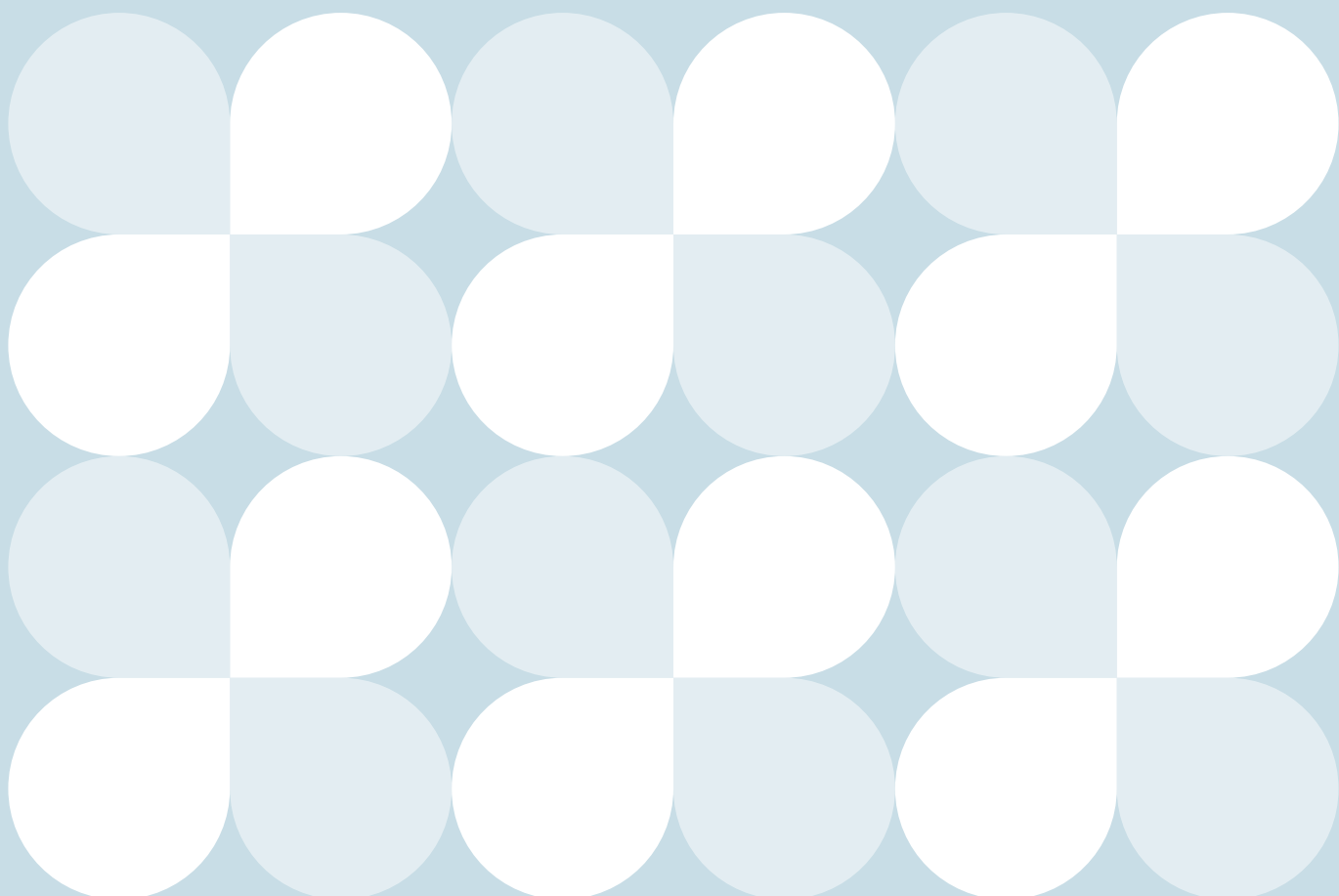




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# Our work in more detail

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## **Our work supporting innovation**

Our innovation support projects work across social work and social care at people, worker and systems level. This year's innovation projects include:

- Continuing our work in understanding and responding better to hoarding and hoarding behaviour.
- Continuing our work to build better placement experiences for student social workers, universities and hosting organisations.
- Assist with the development of Local Learning partnerships at a local level with a particular focus on third sector agencies and rural areas.
- Continuing our work on redesigning the front door to social work and our work on changing writing culture.

## **Our work supporting better practice in Adult Support and Protection (ASP)**

- Improving the use of chronologies (a timeline of significant events used to identify and understand patterns in a person's life) in protection practice.
- Developing and maintaining key resources, guidance, and courses in ASP.
- Embedding new approaches to ASP data (ASP minimum dataset).
- Providing analysis on a range of ASP data returns to understand current practice and identify areas of both positive practice and improvement.
- Hosting the National Adult Support and Protection Coordinator (NASPC) and supporting her work to improve practice and policy in ASP.

## **Our work developing better ethical practice in commissioning**

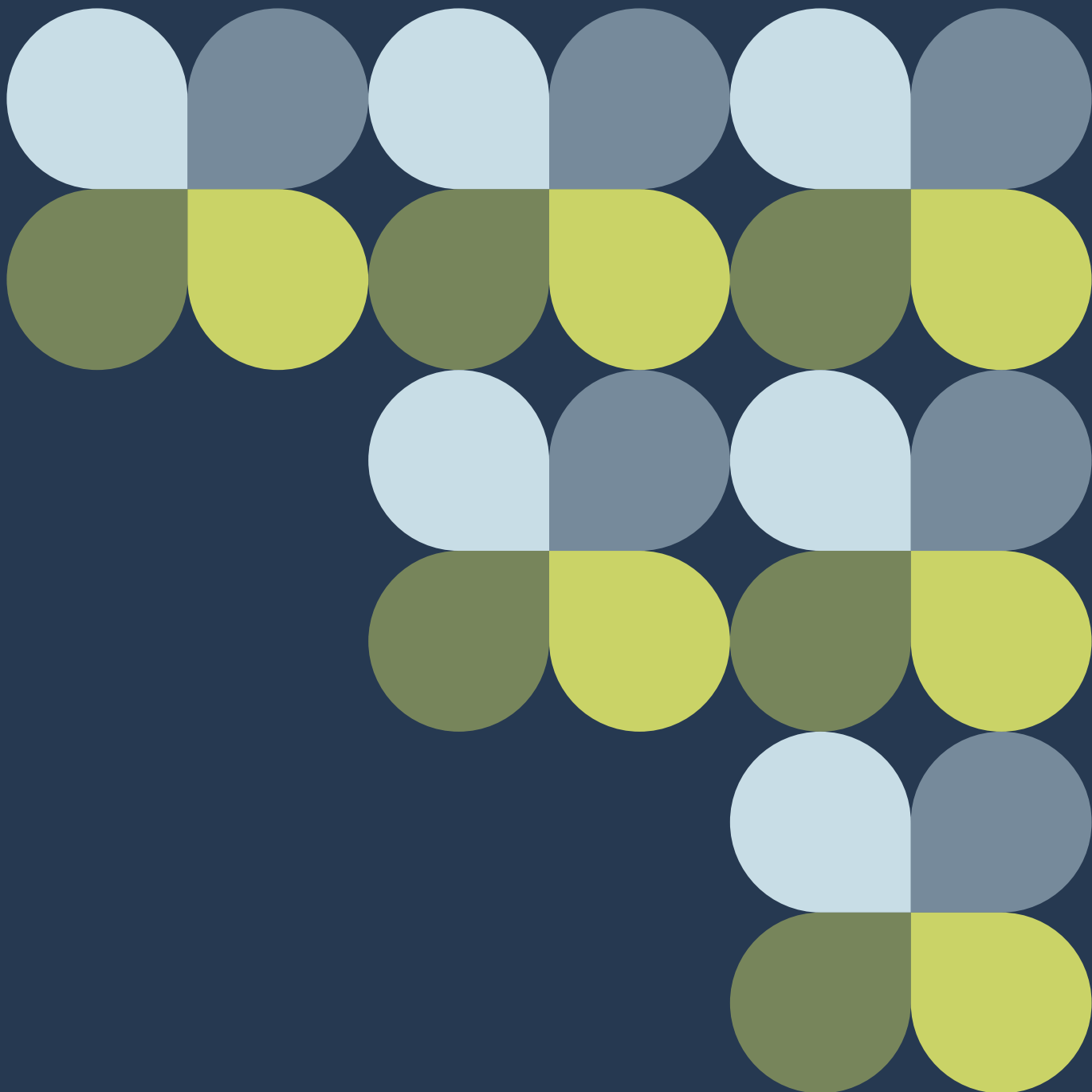
- Continued policy and practice support for the ethical commissioning implementation plan, with a focus on the development of national guidance.
- Collaborative workshops for a range of stakeholders on making ethical commissioning a reality by supporting cross sector collaboration and involvement of individuals with lived experience.
- Action Learning for commissioners, providing support with ethical commissioning implementation to different local authority roles.
- Share learning and develop resources and learning reports.

## **Our work supporting better social policy**

- Design and produce a new National Risk Framework for the Scottish Government Child Protection Unit (CPU).
- Build on the findings from last year's anti-racism findings and work with the Anti-Racism Oversight Group and to inform and develop actions to create change that the survey highlights as needed.
- Contributing to the development of the National Social Work Agency (NSWA) using what we know about innovation and improvement to make this as effective as possible.
- Analysing CSWO reports to build a picture of the current challenges for the social work profession.
- Using our Iriss Insights to start conversations about evidence and research in social work and social care practice and identify areas for change.
- Focusing on employing Professional Curiosity to support those that use services and the relationships built there.
- Working with the Scottish Government across public protection activity.
- Facilitate learning workshops amongst the Scottish Government team and their four trauma programme early implementation sites.

## **Our work supporting the wider sector**

- Continuing our support of the Rural Social Work Network which brings together practitioners from remote and rural areas around issues of common interest and important.
- Delivering our services offer to the sector including:
  - Developing an open workshop programme.
  - Offering bespoke coaching.
- Delivering our Iriss Skillset Sessions.
- Growing our available courses.



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