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Skills and Innovation for Adult Social Care

PROMOTING INNOVATION LEADERSHIP IN CARE: DIGITAL LEARNING PROGRAMME

MODULE 2: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSING AND
ADOPTING INNOVATIONS IN SOCIAL CARE AND EVALUATING AND
DISSEMINATING INNOVATION

LAPIS RESEARCH PROJECT
LEARNING FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE INNOVATIONS AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT
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Learning objectives

This module will run you **through two peer concepts related to social care; one addressing effective dissemination of innovative approaches and one focusing on their evaluation.** At the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Understand some key concepts that must be observed when **disseminating information on innovative social care approaches**
- Understand the approaches that can be pursued in **evaluating and assessing innovation in social care.**
- Understand how these two terms, **'evaluation' and 'dissemination' interlink, i.e., how you communicate results of the evaluation of innovative approaches**

To a large extent this module is based on experiences accumulated during the LAPIS project and during the innovative case study development and their uploading in the LAPIS app. Around 110 such stories are accessible in the app, based on information collected in all participating countries, the LAPIS app can be viewed at the [following link](https://sc.leiminte.com/):
<https://sc.leiminte.com/>.

Introduction: The importance of evaluating and disseminating innovation in adult social care

Innovation in adult social care is crucial to improving the quality of care and support provided to individuals. However, it is not enough to simply implement innovative ideas and solutions. It is also important to evaluate the effectiveness of these innovations and disseminate the findings to ensure that others can benefit from these experiences.

Why Evaluate Innovations?

- To identify strengths and weaknesses: Evaluating innovations can help to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken. This can help to refine the innovation and improve its effectiveness.
- To assess impact: Evaluating the impact of an innovation can help to determine whether it has achieved its intended outcomes. This information can be used to make decisions about the continued use of the innovation.
- To improve quality of care: By evaluating innovations, we can identify which approaches work best and make evidence-based decisions about how to improve the quality of care and support provided.
- To demonstrate effectiveness: By evaluating innovations, we can provide evidence of their effectiveness to stakeholders, including patients, families, staff, and funders.

Why Disseminate Findings?

- To share knowledge: Disseminating findings from evaluations can help to share knowledge and best practices with others who may be interested in implementing similar innovations.
- To promote wider adoption: By disseminating findings, we can encourage wider adoption of effective innovations, improving the quality of care and support provided to individuals.
- To inform policy and practice: Findings from evaluations can inform policy and practice decisions, supporting the development of evidence-based approaches to care and support.

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- To promote accountability: By disseminating findings, we can promote accountability and transparency, ensuring that stakeholders are aware of the impact of innovations and how they are being used.

SECTION 1 - Disseminating innovative practices in social care:

What is the purpose of innovation dissemination in social care?

The goal is to exchange knowledge and create a broader awareness of new and value-adding practices in social care. We emphasise the term **'value adding'** to highlight that 'newness' is not always a requirement for innovation. For instance, it can be that a well-known approach in country 'x' is transferred to country 'y' where it is not yet used. According to our approach this is well classified as an innovation in the sense that there is new value emerging in country 'y'.

Are there any tangible examples of such 'value adding' innovation?

Take for example, the case of work-based learning (WBL). The concept is by no means new, as it has been practiced and mentioned in the literature for a long time. However, the uptake of this promising training approach has been found to vary widely from country to country. The LAPIS project has found this term and concept to be almost completely unknown in some social care settings.

Thus, the introduction of specific WBL case studies from mature and knowledgeable settings to other, less aware ones, is a classic example of innovative practice. Of course, the true uptake of WBL is not just a matter of awareness creation. But this is indeed a decisive first step.

In other cases, we found that some practices were simply not known in some specific settings. It was not a matter of immaturity as in the above WBL case. It was just a matter of simply not knowing some specific practice. In this case, **uptake could be far more swift resulting in tangible and near-term benefits.**

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These two examples highlight the two key directions of awareness creation that have been mostly achieved in LAPIS.

Quiz: Check your understanding

1. What is the purpose of innovation dissemination in social care?
 - a) To create new practices
 - b) To exchange knowledge and create awareness of new and value-adding practices in social care
 - c) To promote innovation only in countries where it is not yet used
2. What does the term "value-adding" mean in the context of innovation?
 - a) It means that innovation is only considered valuable if it is completely new
 - b) It means that innovation is only considered valuable if it is already established in a particular country
 - c) It means that innovation can also be the transfer of an established approach from one country to another, creating new value in the latter country.
3. What is an example of a "value-adding" innovation in social care?
 - a) A completely new approach to social care that has never been tried before
 - b) Work-based learning (WBL), a training approach that is completely unknown in social care settings in all countries
 - c) The transfer of WBL case studies from mature and knowledgeable settings to less aware ones, creating new value in the latter settings.
4. Why is awareness creation important in innovation dissemination?
 - a) It is the only step needed to ensure the uptake of new practices
 - b) It is a decisive first step towards the uptake of new practices, but it is not always sufficient on its own
 - c) It is not important at all in the dissemination of new practices.

Breakdown of answers:

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1. b) To exchange knowledge and create awareness of new and value-adding practices in social care.
2. c) It means that innovation can also be the transfer of an established approach from one country to another, creating new value in the latter country.
3. c) The transfer of WBL case studies from mature and knowledgeable settings to less aware ones, creating new value in the latter settings.
4. b) It is a decisive first step towards the uptake of new practices, but it is not always sufficient on its own.

Key recommendations when disseminating innovative practices in social care:

The LAPIS project has found the following points important when disseminating information on social care innovation.

- **Concise and graphics/image intensive communication:** Dissemination should be done in a clear and concise manner, using language that is easily understandable to the intended audience and using images to the maximum possible degree to get the intended message across. In LAPIS, we have designed it as mandatory to enter images when uploading an innovative case study. We have also set limits to the textual description so that the innovation stories' (the term used for case studies in the app environment) editors and publishers do not engage in lengthy and eventually tiresome descriptions that eventually fail to really deliver the target.
- **Targeted and segmented audience:** Innovation dissemination should be targeted to the specific audience that the information is relevant to. Understanding the needs, interests, and preferences of the audience is important to ensure effective dissemination. In LAPIS we have created specific categories, (training, patient care, staff care, etc.) and placed the specific stories within them. The classification used has been dynamically highlighted by the roll out of the project and is designed to be flexible enough as new categories can be easily set up if the need for a finer segmentation arises.
- **Contextualisation of the information, in time and place.** The dissemination should always disclose the time and the location of the story, to ensure that the information

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is useful to the audience. Indeed, this information is critical in how the audience will approach and receive a specific study. For example, the more recent a story, the greater interest it will naturally receive.

- **Accessibility of information:** Dissemination should be accessible to all members of the intended social care audience, regardless of their background. In LAPIS we have responded to this via an intuitive, graphical and map driven interface that allows one to track, view and comment on story content.
- **Privacy and Ethical considerations:** Dissemination should always be conducted in an ethical manner, respecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals and groups, and ensuring that the information is accurate and reliable. The privacy policy document published on line is GDPR compliant and ensures all the above.
- **Support of two-way and interactive communications:** Dissemination should always be a two-way process, allowing for feedback and discussion with the users passing by or consciously visiting. This ability is also fully supported in LAPIS.
- **Maintenance and accuracy:** Dissemination should be sustainable over time, with ongoing efforts to maintain and update it, if so required. For example, In LAPIS, we have opted in the design for *national administrators that control the information uploaded from specific countries* that can be also split to regions, if the need arises. In this way a closer follow-up of the information published and disseminated can be achieved.

Quiz: Check your understanding

1. In the LAPIS app, what is mandatory when uploading an innovative case study?
 - a. Including the time and location of the story
 - b. Using concise language
 - c. Including textual descriptions
 - d. Including graphics/images

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2. Why is it important to understand the needs, interests, and preferences of the audience when disseminating innovation?

- a. To ensure effective dissemination
- b. To create lengthy and tiresome descriptions
- c. To deliver the target
- d. To make the information accessible to all

3. How does LAPIS ensure accessibility of information to all members of the intended social care audience?

- a. By providing a detailed classification system
- b. By using concise language
- c. By using an intuitive, graphical and map driven interface
- d. By respecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals and groups

4. What is the importance of maintaining and updating dissemination over time?

- a. To ensure GDPR compliance
- b. To create an ethical dissemination process
- c. To support two-way and interactive communications
- d. To achieve closer follow-up of the information published and disseminated

Breakdown of answers:

1. d) Including graphics/images
2. a) To ensure effective dissemination
3. c) By using an intuitive, graphical and map driven interface
4. d) To achieve closer follow-up of the information published and disseminated

[Strategies for disseminating innovation in adult social care:](#)

Disseminating innovation is the process of sharing and spreading new ideas, practices, and technologies to a wider audience. In adult social care, it is important to disseminate innovations to ensure that they are implemented widely and that they have a positive

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impact on service users and staff. Here are some strategies for disseminating innovation in adult social care:

- **Develop a dissemination plan:** A dissemination plan should be developed before implementing an innovation. The plan should outline the target audience, key messages, dissemination methods, and evaluation methods.
- **Involve stakeholders:** Stakeholders should be involved in the dissemination process. This can include staff, service users, their families, and other relevant organisations. Involving stakeholders can help to increase buy-in and reduce resistance to change.
- **Use a variety of dissemination methods:** There are many different methods for disseminating innovation, such as training sessions, workshops, conferences, webinars, and social media. Using a variety of methods can help to reach a wider audience and increase the chances of success.
- **Tailor dissemination to the target audience:** Dissemination should be tailored to the target audience. This can include using language and terminology that is appropriate for the audience, and using examples that are relevant to their context.
- **Use opinion leaders:** Opinion leaders are individuals who are respected and influential within a particular community. Using opinion leaders to disseminate innovation can help to increase adoption rates and reduce resistance to change.
- **Provide ongoing support:** Ongoing support should be provided to those who are implementing the innovation. This can include training, mentoring, and troubleshooting support.
- **Evaluate the dissemination:** The dissemination process should be evaluated to determine its effectiveness. This can include measuring adoption rates, impact on service users, and staff satisfaction.

Activity: Disseminating an innovation plan in adult social care

Complete the table below to develop an innovation dissemination plan for your own workplace:

	Instruction:	Your notes:
Stage 1	Choose an innovation that has been successfully implemented in your workplace.	
Stage 2	Develop a dissemination plan for the innovation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the target audience • key messages • dissemination methods • evaluation methods 	
Stage 3	Identify the stakeholders that should be involved in the dissemination process.	
Stage 4	List at least three different dissemination methods that could be used to share the innovation with a wider audience.	
Stage 5	Describe how the dissemination should be tailored to the target audience.	
Stage 6	Identify any opinion leaders who could be used to disseminate the innovation.	
Stage 7	Outline the ongoing support that should be provided to those who are implementing the innovation.	
Stage 8	Identify how the dissemination process will be evaluated to determine its effectiveness.	

Summary of learning:

Evaluation and dissemination are critical components of innovation adoption in adult social care. Evaluation involves systematically collecting and analysing data to determine the effectiveness of an innovation, while dissemination involves sharing information about the innovation with others who may benefit from it. These processes are important for several reasons. First, evaluation helps to ensure that the innovation is effective and safe. By collecting and analysing data, organisations can determine whether the innovation is achieving its intended outcomes and identify any potential risks or unintended

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consequences. This information can be used to make any necessary adjustments to the innovation to improve its effectiveness and safety. Second, evaluation helps to build the evidence base for the innovation. By collecting data on the effectiveness of the innovation, organisations can contribute to the knowledge base of best practices in adult social care. This information can be used to inform policy and practice at a national level, ultimately improving the quality of care provided to patients. Finally, dissemination is important for ensuring that the benefits of the innovation are shared with others who may benefit from it. By sharing information about the innovation with other organisations and stakeholders, innovations can be replicated in other settings, ultimately improving the quality of care provided to patients across the broader healthcare system.

Evaluating and disseminating innovation in adult social care is crucial for ensuring that innovations are effective and can be replicated in other settings. Evaluation helps to determine the success or failure of an innovation, identify areas for improvement, and refine the innovation to better meet the needs of patients and staff. It also helps to justify the investment in the innovation and provide evidence to support further adoption. Dissemination is important because it allows successful innovations to be shared and adopted by others, ultimately improving care quality and patient outcomes. By disseminating innovation, best practices can be shared, and healthcare providers can learn from each other's successes and failures. This can also help to reduce duplication of efforts and ensure that resources are used effectively. Together, evaluation and dissemination of innovation in adult social care can help to drive continuous improvement in care delivery and ultimately improve the quality of life for patients and their families. It is important for healthcare providers to prioritise the evaluation and dissemination of innovation as a key part of their practice to ensure that they are providing the best possible care.

In summary, evaluation and dissemination are critical components of innovation adoption in adult social care. By systematically collecting and analysing data, organisations can ensure that innovations are effective and safe, build the evidence base for best practices in adult social care, and share information about effective innovations with others who may benefit from them.

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Section 2 - Assessing the innovation of innovative practices in social care

What is the purpose of innovation assessment in social care?

Innovation is critical in the field of adult social care. As the needs of the aging population change, innovative practices are essential in ensuring that high-quality care is delivered to individuals. However, assessing the innovation of innovative practices in adult social care can be a challenging task. The rationale of social care innovation assessment is the same as essentially any assessment exercise: **to create more interest and attention and potentially reward**. It is the same reason that we practice assessment of movies, educational institutions, etc. Thus, assessment can provide a better insight to the value of a specific innovative practice. An innovation ranked highly will naturally **stir more interest and replication efforts among the audience it is communicated with**. This will prompt benchmarking, competition and eventually will result in an increase in quality.

Activity: Reflection assessing the innovation of innovative practices

Assessing the innovation of innovative practices in adult social care is essential in ensuring that high-quality care is provided to individuals. By following the steps outlined in this reflective activity, you can evaluate the impact, degree of innovation, and sustainability of innovative practices in the field. This will allow you to make informed decisions about which practices to implement in your organisation and how to assess their effectiveness. This reflective activity aims to explore how you can assess the innovation of innovative practices in adult social care.

For this activity you will need to identify an innovative practice to complete the reflective evaluation on, some examples of innovative practices in adult social care include using technology to enhance communication between caregivers and care recipients, providing care in non-traditional settings, and implementing person-centred care plans.

	Explanation:	Personal Reflection:
Step 1: Identify Innovative Practices	The first step in assessing the innovation of innovative practices in adult social care is to identify the practices that are considered innovative. This can be done by researching best practices in the field, attending conferences, and engaging with colleagues who are involved in innovative practices.	
Step 2: Determine the Impact of the Innovative Practice	Once you have identified an innovative practice, the next step is to determine its impact. This can be done by analysing data such as client satisfaction surveys, staff turnover rates, and care quality indicators. For example, if a care provider implements a person-centred care plan, you may want to analyse data on client satisfaction to see if the care plan has improved the quality of care provided.	
Step 3: Assess the Degree of Innovation	The next step is to assess the degree of innovation of the identified practice. This can be done by comparing the practice to existing practices in the field. For example, if a care provider implements a technology-based communication system, you may want to compare it to other communication systems currently in use in the field to determine its level of innovation.	
Step 4: Evaluate the Sustainability of the Innovative Practice	The final step is to evaluate the sustainability of the innovative practice. This can be done by analysing factors such as the cost of implementing the practice, staff training requirements, and the long-term impact on the organisation. For example, if a care provider implements a non-traditional care setting, you may want to evaluate the cost of the facility, the training required for staff to work in the new setting, and the impact on the organisation's overall budget.	

Approaches to assessing innovations in adult social care:

Evaluating innovation is an important process to determine whether a new technology, intervention, or process is effective and efficient in achieving its intended goals. There are many methods for evaluating innovation in adult social care, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. It is important to carefully consider the most appropriate method for

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evaluating a particular innovation based on its goals, resources, and context. The following chart will introduce you to some common methods for evaluating the effectiveness of innovations, providing a brief overview alongside the strengths and limitations of the approach.

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Approach	Overview	Strengths	Limitations
Randomised control trials	A study in which participants are randomly assigned to either an intervention group or a control group, with the intervention group receiving the new innovation and the control group receiving standard care. The outcomes of the two groups are then compared to assess the effectiveness of the innovation.	Provides strong evidence of causality and effectiveness, minimising the potential for bias.	May not reflect the real-world context of the innovation's implementation and may be expensive and time-consuming to conduct.
Case studies	An in-depth examination of a specific case, typically including detailed information about the innovation's implementation and its outcomes.	Provides rich, detailed information about the innovation and its context, and can be useful for generating hypotheses for further research.	Limited generalisability to other contexts and may be subject to bias due to the subjective nature of case studies.
Expert opinions	Gathering the opinions of experts in the field, such as clinicians, researchers, and policymakers, on the potential effectiveness and feasibility of the innovation.	Can provide insights into the potential benefits and challenges of implementing the innovation and can be useful for generating hypotheses for further research.	May be influenced by individual biases or interests, and may not reflect the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as service users.
Surveys and interviews	Gathering the perspectives of service users, caregivers, and other stakeholders on the innovation's impact and feasibility through structured surveys or interviews.	Can provide valuable insights into the user experience of the innovation and can be useful for identifying areas for improvement.	May not reflect the perspectives of all stakeholders and may be subject to biases due to the subjective nature of self-reported data.
Programme evaluation	A systematic assessment of the innovation's implementation, outcomes, and impact, typically involving the use of standardised measures and comparison to established benchmarks.	Provides a comprehensive assessment of the innovation's effectiveness and can be useful for identifying areas for improvement.	May be expensive and time-consuming to conduct and may be subject to biases due to the selection of measures and benchmarks.

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What are the issues to be aware of when engaging in assessment of innovation?

Typically, assessment can be of a qualitative, quantitative or hybrid nature. Quantitative approaches are gaining momentum, however there are some issues to be aware of and cautioned against. The trickiest aspect of quantitative approaches is that they will require measuring **or at least classifying the result of a specific innovative approach**. While this may be quite straightforward in other domains, it is more difficult in social care. For example, innovation metrics, such as the number of patents granted or revenue from new products will be difficult to apply in the social care sector where they are important aspects that cannot, or even should not be monetised. Additionally, qualitative factors such as enhancement of organisational and work culture, collaboration, and creativity are also critical aspects of innovation success and also hard if not impossible to quantify.

Additional issues to be aware of prior to considering quantitative assessment of innovation in social care are the following:

1. **Focusing on the short-term result:** Innovation in social care can take time to bear fruit, and focusing only on short-term outcomes can lead to an under-appreciation of more long-term aspects of the specific approach, which are very hard to assess at a given point in time but that may well result in time.
2. **Ignoring the context and the incremental nature or social care innovation:** Indeed, innovation does not happen in a vacuum, and external factors such as the regulatory context, the economy strength and economic trends can strongly influence the course of innovation and its eventual success. Thus, one will have to model and consider such aspects, making the quantitative exercise extremely difficult and unlikely to reveal some truth one can confide in. In other words, one could say that **social care innovation is often of an incremental nature** involving making small improvements to practices which may be difficult to recognise and measure, leading to possible skewed or erroneous perception of the innovation performance.
3. A typical pitfall in the assessment exercise is **neglecting to involve the full range of the stakeholders addressed:** failure to involve these stakeholders in the assessment

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process can lead to a distorted and essentially wrong understanding of innovation and its impact.

Although the third issue (stakeholders) applies quite broadly as well as in social care, we do not see this as a key difficulty in the social care sector. Unfortunately, the first two issues highlighted above are far more pertinent to the social care sector; they are the key reason why the issue of quantitative approaches has received no true interest in the sector.

After all potential pitfalls are taken into account, what would be the steps for an evaluation scheme of social care innovation?

- **Definition of the innovation inputs/ drivers:** To assess innovation, you need to understand the inputs that contribute to it. We have briefly highlighted above that these can include a wide diversity of aspects pertaining to spending, context maturity, level of staff training, etc. One needs therefore to select these input drivers and feel confident that those selected really make the difference and that nothing omitted really matters, to any significant extent. It is not difficult to see, even from the input point of view how complex this task may be
- **Definition of the innovation outcomes:** Once you have evaluated the inputs, you need to assess the outputs of innovation, whatever these may be; e.g., an improvement in products or quality of the social care services offered, human capital, productivity, improvements, increased revenue streams, etc. All this is again a daunting task
- **Measuring the outcomes:** The impact is even more difficult to define and measure than the drivers. We have highlighted above several aspects of this paramount difficulty.

Should one feel confident that he can run through this process and collect all the respective data then he will be able to **develop very elaborate models, including AI ones, that would issue innovation classifications and related prescriptive advice**. However, results will not be determined by the sophistication of the models **but by the quality of the data that they**

will be built on. This point is extremely valid and explains why systematic quantitative assessment has not been applied in the social care sector.

What is then the recommendation as regards assessment of innovation in social care?

Qualitative approaches hold the best possible potential when it comes to social care innovation assessment. This approach ideally set up in a **co-creative, multistakeholder and brainstorming context can yield important insights** on the quality and potential of innovations. Qualitative approaches will still need to clearly

- **Identify the innovation** and the underlying problem it is attempting to solve.
- **Analyse the market** for the specific innovation and how it fits within the competitive landscape.
- **Assess the impact** in all its social, economic, and environmental aspects.
- **Identify all potential risks** that may arise from implementing the innovation.
- **Evaluate the technology constraints** of the innovative solution, if any.
- **Analyse the human requirements and the key team skills** required for the delivery of the innovation including training.
- **Address the funding requirements** and the availability of funding sources

As said above, this process should take place in a co-creative context, engaging staff, patients as well as experts whose input and feedback and additional insights and perspectives should be sought to clarify the many aspects of the evaluation exercise. Last, the evaluation exercise should be well documented, and recommendations should be drawn up and a time and action plan constructed.

Toolkit for assessing innovation in adult social care:

By following the steps below, you can develop a robust and effective assessment process for innovations in adult social care.

1. **Identify the innovation:** The first step is to clearly define the innovation and its intended outcomes. This may involve reviewing existing literature, consulting with stakeholders, and conducting a needs assessment.

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2. **Select the appropriate assessment approach:** Consider which assessment approach is most appropriate for your innovation, based on its nature and scope. Some examples include randomised controlled trials, case studies, expert opinions, surveys and interviews, and program evaluation.
3. **Develop a plan:** Develop a detailed plan for the assessment process, including timelines, resources, and roles and responsibilities. Identify any potential challenges or barriers that may need to be addressed.
4. **Collect data:** Collect data using the chosen assessment approach, ensuring that data collection is systematic and rigorous. Use standardised measures and protocols where possible.
5. **Analyse data:** Analyse the data collected using appropriate statistical or qualitative methods. Use the analysis to draw conclusions about the effectiveness and feasibility of the innovation.
6. **Communicate results:** Communicate the results of the assessment to stakeholders, including service users, caregivers, and other relevant parties. Use the results to inform decision-making around the innovation.
7. **Continuously improve:** Use the results of the assessment to continuously improve the innovation, making adjustments as necessary. Conduct ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the innovation is achieving its intended outcomes.
8. **Reflect and learn:** Reflect on the assessment process and learn from any challenges or limitations encountered. Use this learning to inform future assessments and improvements to the innovation.

Section 3 - Communicating the evaluation results of innovation in social care

Communication approaches not for innovation at large but for specifically the innovation assessment exercise, can typically include the following:

- **Written and short reports (e.g., SWOT)** summarising the overall approach pursued, the key results reached and potentially the next steps and the related action plan.

Presentations or other visual aids may be particularly useful for sharing results with

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large groups or stakeholders who may not have the time to read a lengthy report. Alternatively, **infographics can be used** presenting data and information in a clear and engaging way in less technically sophisticated audiences.

- **More advanced approaches** will also include more structured information via checklists and other weighted selections where **specific criteria pertaining to the innovation are ranked and weighted by participants and expert stakeholders.**

Example of a SWOT analysis for assessing innovation in adult social care:

SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that helps organisations or individuals to identify their internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats in the environment. For example, in the context of assessing innovation in adult social care, we would use SWOT analysis to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our innovation, as well as the opportunities and threats that may arise from implementing it in the broader context of adult social care.

Strengths may include aspects of the innovation that make it effective or efficient in improving social care, while weaknesses may include challenges or limitations that could hinder its effectiveness or implementation. Opportunities may refer to external factors, such as changes in policy or funding, that could support the innovation, while threats may refer to potential obstacles, such as competition or regulatory barriers.

By conducting a SWOT analysis, we can better understand the factors that may impact the success of our innovation and develop strategies to address them. We have completed an example below:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes for service users • Increased efficiency and productivity for care providers • Improved staff satisfaction and retention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resistance to change from staff or service users • High cost of implementing new innovations • Limited resources for training and support

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quality of care • Enhanced reputation for the organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and regulatory barriers to implementation • Limited evidence base for the effectiveness of new innovations
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding opportunities for innovative projects • Partnerships with technology vendors or other organisations • Collaboration with research institutions to gather evidence on the effectiveness of new innovations • Growing demand for innovative solutions in the adult social care sector • Potential for competitive advantage over other care providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited funding for innovation projects • Potential for negative impact on service users if new innovations are not implemented effectively • Legal and ethical concerns around data privacy and security • Competition from other care providers or innovations in other sectors • Resistance to change from staff or service users

We have provided a blank SWOT analysis template for your personal use:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Section 4 - Managing risks and benefits in innovation:

Risk taking is essential to innovation: anyone developing a new product, service, or idea has to consider the possibility that it will not work, that someone else will get there first, or it will be met with disinterest. Risk taking is becoming a core skill. However, despite the

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demand for skills of innovation and enterprise, and despite recognition of the value of invention and original thinking, the role of risk taking is still seen as largely negative, linked to danger, and regarded as something to be avoided. In reality, risk management can help to evaluate alternative courses of action and can build confidence. The experience of failure, as a result of risk taking in a safe environment, can help to build resilience to setbacks and help to manage risk better in the future.

Main barriers to risk taking:

There are several barriers affecting risk taking, and they can be generally summarised into two main categories:

- **Pressure on achievement** – there is a growing requirement of quick and certain achievements in our society, which often push deciders to disregard ‘innovative’ solutions and to favour easy-winning decisions; this leads to a ‘risk-avoiding’, rather than a ‘risk-taking’ mind-set.
- **Fear of failure** - Taking risks can result in success or failure, and there is no doubt that failure can be disappointing and discouraging; however, at the same time, it can help to build resilience. Experiencing failure in a supportive environment may help you to learn how to cope with failure and to move on.

Managing risks – overall strategies

There are many available tools and methods of Risk Management which can be learnt and applied in different contexts, and in social care too. Our aim is not to make an extensive manual of each available tool for Risk Management (which would be beyond the scope of the Lapis project); instead, we will draft a common strategy to afford Risk Management and to choose the most proper tool to implement it in each specific context.

Risk Management vs. Impact Management

Managing risks is a contradictory statement, as nobody can manage what is not predictable (which is exactly what a ‘risk’ is); therefore, rather than managing a risk itself, it’s highly recommended to consider and assess the potential impacts arising from the scenarios a risk could imply. Any decision will cause good and bad effects, without exceptions; the key

question is which impacts these effects will generate? How to mitigate the worst scenario,

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and how to benefit from the best one? This approach is exactly what a SWOT or a FMEA analysis is aimed at: identifying all possible effects (scenarios) and assessing their impact afterwards.

Activity: Reflection exploring attitudes towards risk taking and identifying barriers

Reflecting on your attitude towards risk taking and identifying barriers in your work environment is an important step towards promoting innovation and effective risk management in health and social care. By understanding your own perspectives and the challenges faced by others, you can contribute to creating a supportive and forward-thinking culture that benefits both professionals and the individuals you serve.

Take some time to reflect on your own attitude towards risk taking and identify any barriers you may have faced or observed in your work environment. Use the following prompts to guide your reflection:



Prompt	Your Experience
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Personal attitude towards risk taking:	
How do you perceive risk taking in your role?	
Are you generally open to taking risks or more risk-averse? Why?	
Reflect on a specific situation where you took a risk in your work. What were the outcomes? How did you feel about the experience?	
Barriers to risk taking:	
What barriers have you personally faced when it comes to taking risks in your work?	
Have you observed any common barriers among your colleagues or within your work environment?	
How do these barriers impact the willingness to innovate and drive positive change in the health and social care sector?	
Fear of failure:	
Reflect on your own fear of failure and its influence on your decision-making process.	
How has the fear of failure affected your willingness to take risks in the past?	
In what ways can experiencing failure in a supportive environment help you build resilience and learn from mistakes?	
Pressure on achievement:	
Explore the impact of pressure on achievement in your work environment	
How does the focus on quick and certain achievements influence the willingness to take risks?	
Reflect on any instances where you or your colleagues opted for easy-winning decisions over innovative solutions due to this pressure.	
Strategies for overcoming barriers:	
Based on your reflection, identify strategies that can help overcome the barriers to risk taking in health and social care.	
How can you create a supportive environment that encourages risk taking and learning from failures?	
What steps can you take to challenge the prevailing mindset and foster a culture of innovation and continuous improvement?	

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Final step:

Take the insights gained from this reflection and consider how you can apply them in your daily practice to embrace risk, manage its impacts, and drive positive change in health and social care.

Summary of learning:

Innovation and progress in health and social care require embracing risk taking. However, barriers such as pressure on achievement and fear of failure can hinder our ability to take risks. By understanding the importance of managing risks and impacts, and implementing effective risk management strategies, professionals in health and social care can navigate uncertainties, learn from failures, and drive positive change.

Remember, risk management is not about controlling risks, but rather assessing and managing the impacts that may arise. By utilising tools like SWOT and FMEA analysis, and implementing a context-specific strategy, you can contribute to creating a safer and more innovative environment in health and social care.

Remember, taking risks and managing their impacts is a continuous process that requires ongoing evaluation and adaptation. Embrace the opportunity to learn from failures and cultivate a culture of innovation in your professional journey.

Section 5 - Overcoming barriers to innovation adoption in adult social care

Main barriers to innovation in social care

Many research papers have analysed the barriers to innovation in social care, they can vary Country by Country, but some common themes run throughout:

- Lack of resources (financial resources but also infrastructures and manpower)
- Internal resistance to change (poor networking and poor key competences can cause a very conservative mind-set)

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- Bureaucracy (very tight rules could affect innovation to be scaled up; different rules are applied in different contexts, such as in private and in public sectors)

Key strategies to overcome barriers to innovation in social care:

This is one of the biggest challenges, as barriers can vary so much from one context to another. For instance, lacking resources could be scarce funding in one Country, whilst another could lack manpower; the mind-set can be more or less conservative, depending on the local context; bureaucracy can assume different meanings in different areas. For these reasons, a large number of policies have been adopted to overcome barriers to innovation in Europe:

- EU level - facilitating discussion among member states on innovation and risks related to its realisation; facilitating access to finance; adopting scoreboard and innovative evaluation systems.
- National level - facilitating access to finance; promoting networks and exchange boards; increasing awareness among entities and stakeholders.

Activity: Reflection

By examining how these barriers were overcome in other settings, you can gather insights and strategies to implement innovative practices more effectively in your own work. Complete the tables below to identify the barriers to innovation and how they have been overcome in each case study. We have completed the first one for you as an example.

Case study 1: Lack of funding and resources

In a local adult social care organisation, there was a significant barrier to innovation due to a lack of funding and resources. The organisation had limited financial resources allocated to research and development, hindering their ability to invest in innovative technologies, training programmes, and new approaches to care. As a result, they struggled to keep up with the evolving needs and demands of the adult social care sector, leading to stagnation and an inability to provide optimal care.

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 1	Lack of funding and resources	Seek external funding or partnerships with organisations/investors.
		Allocate budget specifically for research and development initiatives.
		Prioritise innovation within the organisation’s strategic objectives.

Case Study 2: Resistance to Change

Another barrier to innovation in adult social care was resistance to change among the staff and management. In this case, the organisation had identified the need for adopting digital technologies to streamline administrative processes and enhance communication between caregivers and service users. However, many staff members were resistant to learning new technologies and felt overwhelmed by the potential changes. This resistance to change created a significant barrier to the implementation of innovative solutions and limited the organisation's ability to improve efficiency and quality of care.

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 2		

Case Study 3: Regulatory Constraints

In a regional adult social care agency, regulatory constraints posed a significant barrier to innovation. The agency operated within a strict regulatory framework that dictated the

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standards and procedures for service delivery. While these regulations were put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of service users, they also restricted the flexibility and adaptability needed for innovation. The agency found it challenging to introduce new approaches or technologies that deviated from the established protocols, thereby impeding their ability to explore and implement innovative solutions.

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 3		

Case Study 4: Fragmented Information Systems

In an adult social care organisation with multiple service providers and stakeholders, fragmented information systems were a significant barrier to innovation. The organisation had different databases and record-keeping systems across various departments, resulting in challenges in data sharing, collaboration, and coordination. The lack of a unified information system hindered the organisation's ability to gather comprehensive data, conduct meaningful analysis, and develop evidence-based innovations in care delivery. The absence of integrated systems limited their potential for technological advancements and hindered the overall innovation process.

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 4		

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Remember to consider the unique context and needs of your organisation when developing your innovation strategies, what worked for one organisation, may not directly copy to your own setting.

Breakdown of answers:

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 1	Lack of funding and resources	Seek external funding or partnerships with organisations/investors.
		Allocate budget specifically for research and development initiatives.
		Prioritise innovation within the organisation's strategic objectives.

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 2	Resistance to change	Explore cost-effective solutions and prioritise resource allocation
		Develop comprehensive change management strategies and plans.

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		Communicate the benefits and value of innovation to staff and management.
		Provide training and support to help staff adapt to new technologies.

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 3	Regulatory constraints	Involve staff in the innovation process and address their concerns
		Advocate for regulatory changes or waivers to promote innovation.
		Engage with regulatory bodies to understand the boundaries and seek clarity.
		Collaborate with regulatory authorities to develop innovative frameworks.

	Barriers to innovation	Overcoming the barriers
Case Study 4	Fragmented information systems	Pilot test innovative solutions within regulatory boundaries
		Invest in integrated information systems to ensure data sharing.
		Establish data governance and standardisation protocols.
		Implement interoperable technologies and platforms.
		Encourage collaboration and information sharing across departments.

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Summary of learning:

The main barriers to innovation in adult social care are lack of resources, internal resistance to change, and bureaucracy. These barriers can vary across countries but are commonly observed in social care settings internationally. To overcome these barriers, several strategies have been adopted. At the EU level, discussions among member states on innovation and associated risks are facilitated, along with efforts to improve access to finance and the adoption of evaluation systems. At the national level, access to finance is facilitated, networks and exchange boards are promoted, and awareness among entities and stakeholders is increased.

Additionally, education plays a significant role in promoting innovation by addressing various barriers and providing necessary resources. It helps address barriers such as societal resistance to change, underdeveloped consciousness and responsibility, conservative thinking, passivity, and a lack of proactive thinking. Education contributes by identifying issues, providing human resources for innovation, and offering new opportunities and perspectives.

In summary, overcoming barriers to innovation in adult social care requires a multi-faceted approach involving political, financial, organisational, and educational means.

Understanding the specific barriers in each context and implementing targeted strategies can help foster innovation and improve social care practices.