

Adult Social Care Analytical Capability Roadmap

West Midlands Councils

Executive Summary

The West Midlands ADASS Adult Social Care Analytics Capability Development Roadmap sets out a shared strategic vision for strengthening data and analytics across adult social care. Developed collaboratively with councils across the region, it outlines how data can be used not only to meet national requirements but to actively improve outcomes for people and make better use of limited resources.

At its heart, this roadmap is about moving from retrospective reporting to proactive, insight-led decision-making, enabling social care teams to answer not just “what’s happening?”, but “why?”, “so what?” and “what now?”.

Why It Matters

The roadmap responds to growing demands on adult social care: increasing complexity, heightened scrutiny (e.g. CQC assurance), and the national push for better use of Client-Level Data (CLD), outcome frameworks like ASCOF, and linked Health and Social Care intelligence. It aligns with key national strategies such as DHSC’s Care Data Matters, the NHS population health agenda, and regional priorities set by WM ADASS and the LGA.

The goal is to ensure that every council can use data confidently and consistently to plan, prioritise, and evidence improvement with the right infrastructure, skills, tools, and culture in place to do so.

What is the Roadmap?

This document is a high-level roadmap meaning it sets the direction of travel for councils. It defines the vision, structure, and priorities for building analytics capability in adult social care. It lays out what needs to happen across the region to move from reactive reporting to proactive, person-centred insight. It’s not a technical manual or a checklist — it’s a scaffold that shows the major pathways of change and the relationships between them.

The roadmap is a strategic framework. It outlines five core capability areas, each essential for developing a mature and sustainable approach to social care analytics:

Good Data: Data Quality, Standards and Infrastructure

Good People: Workforce Skills and Data Literacy

Good Tools: Analytics Tools, Methods and Innovation

Good Governance: Governance, Ethics and Partnerships

Good Culture: Evidence-Based Practice and Continuous Improvement



Executive Summary

Next Steps: Shared Tools & Resources (Pick-and-Mix)

To turn the framework into day-to-day practice, WM ADASS will coordinate a live, modular library of optional resources. Councils can adopt, adapt, contribute to, or simply learn from any of these resources. Because every council starts in a different place, these resources are strictly “pick-and-mix” – there is no expectation of universal take-up.

Role-specific capability guides – concise “how-to” packs for analysts, commissioners, directors, operational managers, and people with lived experience

Self-assessment & maturity matrix – an optional tool to baseline current practice and plan local priorities

Reusable assets – shared dashboards, DAX measures, templates, and open-source code that save time and promote consistency

Training materials – bite-sized learning resources tailored to adult social care

Governance & ethics tool-kit – template DPIAs, data-sharing agreements, and ethical check-lists

Case studies & exemplars – real examples of data-driven improvement from across the region

How WM ADASS Will Support You

WM ADASS will facilitate a collaborative space for councils to co-create and share practical tools, case studies, and templates

Community of Practice & Data Hub – regular peer-learning sessions and a single place to share insight

Hosting shared tools and resources – e.g. including dashboards, code libraries, practical guides, and other templates that councils can easily adapt and adopt locally.

On-demand advice – access to regional subject-matter experts, support from academic institutions and plus sign-posting to national offers..

Investing in capability is a long-term, locally led journey. By collaborating and sharing resources, we go **further together** – turning data into a trusted enabler of better, more equitable adult social care.



West Midlands Adult Social Care Analytical Capability Roadmap

What Good Looks Like



**Good
Data**



**Good
People**



**Good
Tools**



**Good
Governance**



**Good
Culture**

**Strategic
Framework**



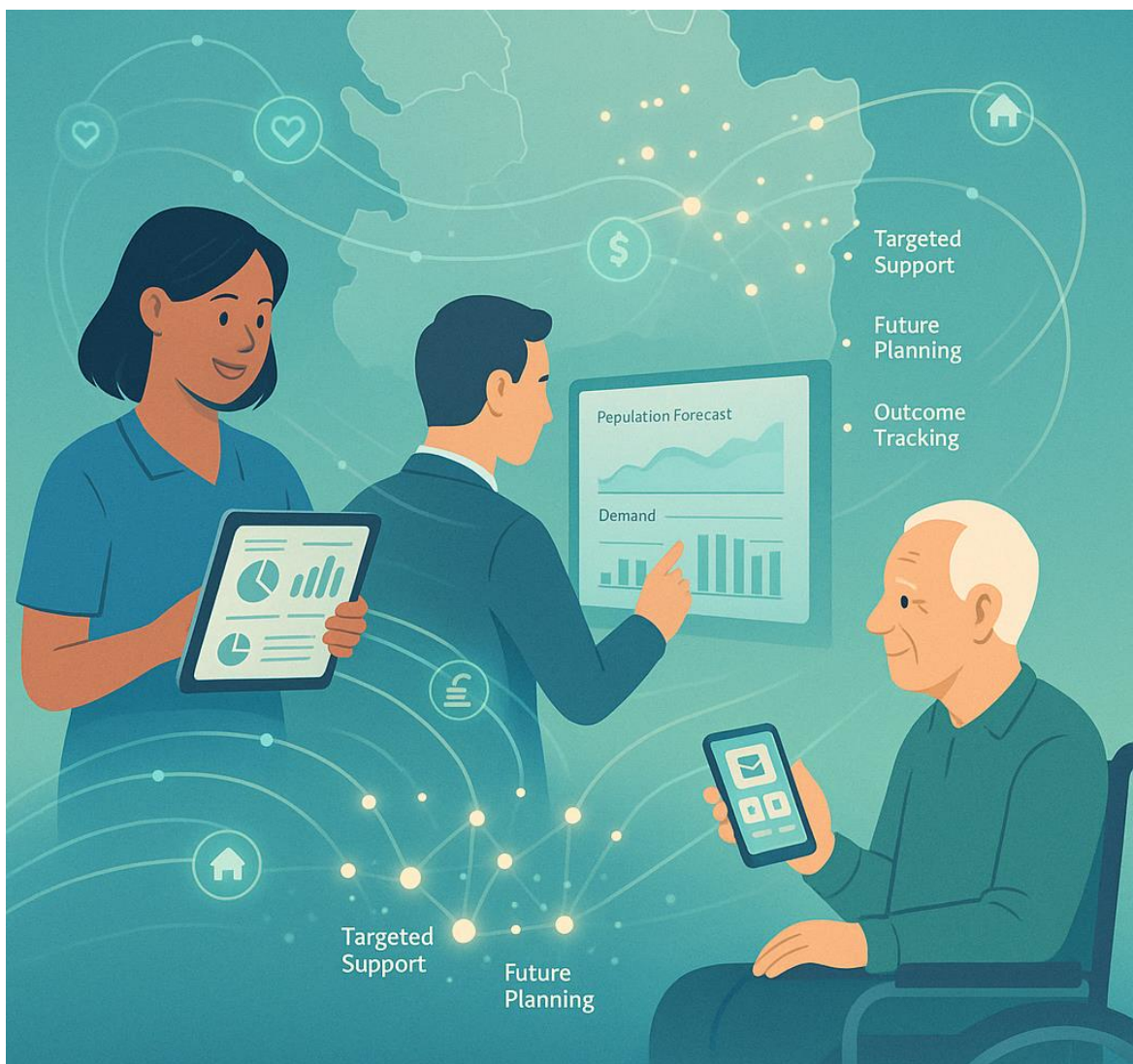
**Optional access to
shared tools and
resources**



**Better outcomes
for people who use
care and support**

“By embracing data and analytics, West Midlands councils will deliver more personalised, proactive, and cost-effective adult social care. Frontline staff and leaders will have the insights they need to target support, plan for the future, and demonstrate improvement against outcomes that matter to people”.

This vision is shared across the region and the roadmap outlined in this document is a step toward realising that vision, ensuring that by building analytics capabilities today, we lay the foundation for a stronger, more responsive care system for the future.



Using data to personalise care, improve lives, and shape the future of adult social care in the West Midlands.

Introduction

Adult social care is undergoing significant transformation, with increasing emphasis on data-driven decision-making to improve outcomes and efficiency. As outlined in [Care data matters: a roadmap for better adult social care data](#) the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of robust social care data, revealing that better data can literally save lives. Yet historically, the adult social care sector has lagged behind healthcare in its use of data and analytics.

In response, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and partners have launched ambitious reforms to increase the quantity and quality of adult social care data and to join up health and care records. For councils in the West Midlands, developing strong analytics capability is critical – not only to meet new national reporting requirements and regulatory oversight, but to ensure better care for residents through evidence-based practice.

This **Analytics Capability Development Roadmap** provides a strategic guide for West Midlands local authorities to build and enhance their data analytics capacity in adult social care. It aligns with national priorities and frameworks – from the updated Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) to the new Client-Level Data (CLD) collections – and with regional initiatives led by West Midlands ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services).

This roadmap is a comprehensive strategic framework designed to support West Midlands councils in building strong, sustainable adult social care analytics capability. It provides a clear, structured vision for moving from fragmented, retrospective data reporting toward a culture of proactive, person-centred insight, where data is routinely used to inform decisions, drive improvement, and deliver better outcomes for people. This is not a technical manual or one-size-fits-all checklist. Instead, it sets out the essential components of a mature and confident analytics environment: trusted data, skilled people, purposeful tools, strong governance, and a culture that values evidence. The roadmap recognises that different councils are at different stages and provides a direction of travel that all can align with, regardless of starting point.

By following this roadmap, councils can move toward a future where **every decision is informed by high-quality data and analysis**, enabling more integrated care with the NHS, more effective use of resources, and improved outcomes for people who draw on care and support



Introduction

This document is a high-level **strategic framework** that defines *what good looks like*, and why it matters. It articulates a shared vision for data and analytics in adult social care, aligned with national and regional priorities, including the CQC assurance regime, ASCOF, Client-Level Data, and the Care Data Matters strategy, as well as local realities such as workforce pressures and systems variation.

Next Steps: Access to Shared Tools and Resources

Alongside this framework, WM ADASS will coordinate an **optional library of practical tools and resources** to help councils translate the strategy into action. These will include:

Role-specific capability development guides for analysts, managers, commissioners, and directors

Training materials and resources to support workforce-wide upskilling

The LGA data maturity matrix and self-assessment toolkit, with opportunities for peer-to-peer challenge and closed benchmarking

Shared Power BI templates, code libraries, and practical examples

Case studies and evaluation frameworks to support local learning

This is not a prescriptive programme. Councils can **“pick and mix”** the tools that meet their needs while contributing to a collective regional offer that strengthens analytics capability for everyone.

Core Capability Areas

At the heart of the roadmap are five interdependent capability areas that are referred to as “pathways” throughout this document. These are the key enablers that councils must develop to realise the full potential of their data:

Good Data – Ensuring that data is accurate, timely, standardised, and joined-up.

Good People – Developing confident analysts and data-literate leaders who can interpret and apply insight in context.

Good Tools – Providing the right platforms and analytical techniques to unlock value from data.

Good Governance – Embedding ethical, lawful, and collaborative approaches to data use and sharing.

Good Culture – Fostering a learning environment where data is trusted, insight is valued, and continuous improvement is the norm.

These five pathways are not steps to be followed in sequence, but rather **mutually reinforcing elements**. When developed together, they enable councils to use data more confidently, make better decisions, and ultimately improve the lives of those who draw on care and support.



Introduction

What Good Looks Like and Why It Matters

This roadmap is not just about building a better data system — it’s about achieving better outcomes for people who draw on care and support. Each pathway contributes to that goal. But without a culture that values and uses insight, the others will not deliver lasting change.

Pathway	Why it matters	What it enables	How it leads to better outcomes
Good Data	Good data leads to good decisions.	Reliable evidence for planning, performance and assurance.	Ensures that support is based on up-to-date, accurate understanding of need.
Good People	Skilled staff give data meaning.	Insightful conversations, confident challenge, shared understanding of impact.	Helps teams target the right support, reduce inequalities and improve equity.
Good Tools	Good tools empower everyone to use data.	Faster, clearer, and more user-friendly ways to access and apply insight.	Supports earlier interventions, smarter commissioning, and reduced delays.
Good Governance	Trust is essential — without it, insight is ignored or misused.	Clear standards, safe data sharing, and responsible analytics.	Builds public and professional confidence in the system and its decisions.
Good Culture	Culture is what turns insight into action or stops it.	Routine use of evidence, learning loops, and inclusive evaluation.	Drives meaningful change, continuous improvement, and better lived experiences.

Why Culture Comes First

You can have the best data, tools, and technology in the world, but if the culture isn’t there, they won’t be used or used well. Culture is the multiplier. It shapes whether insight is welcomed or resisted, whether data is seen as helpful or punitive, and whether decisions are grounded in values or assumptions. That’s why this roadmap begins and ends with culture.



National Priorities (DHSC, CQC, LGA)

- Aligning with these strategies helps councils meet regulatory expectations, prepare for inspection, and unlock future investment.

- Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are now the central organising structure for health and care integration. Councils are expected to work with ICS partners to pool intelligence, identify shared priorities, and deliver more proactive, preventative support.
- The abolition of NHS England and transfer of functions to DHSC in 2025 further embeds the expectation of shared, place-based intelligence functions. Councils must be ready to lead, not just contribute.
- National guidance calls for linked person-level datasets spanning health, social care and wider determinants. Population Health Management (PHM) depends on high-quality social care data and a confident, capable analytics workforce.

Engagement in ICS intelligence ensures that social care insight shapes health strategy — not the other way around.



Regional Collaboration (WM ADASS and Partners)

This roadmap directly supports West Midlands ADASS digital and data priorities, including the development of the WM Data Hub, shared Power BI templates, CLD benchmarking models, and the regional Community of Practice.

The region has a strong track record of sector-led improvement, and this roadmap reinforces that by providing shared tools, peer-to-peer challenge, and role-specific capability guidance. It also supports broader ambitions set out by WMCA, ICBs, and the LGA/NHS Transformation team around digital inclusion, co-production, and insight-led integration.

Regional collaboration supports local efforts, accelerates improvement, and ensures we're building capability together, not in silos.

By aligning with national and regional priorities, the West Midlands roadmap ensures councils aren't working in isolation. It helps meet regulatory demands (like CQC assurance and DHSC data standards), unlock support and funding (from digital programmes to LGA improvement offers), and enables shared innovation across the region. This alignment provides the solid foundation every roadmap component builds upon.



Roadmap Components for Building Analytics Capability

To develop a high-performing analytics function in adult social care, West Midlands councils should focus on several key capability areas. Each component of the roadmap represents a route to success, and together they form a comprehensive development path. Below, we outline each component, the goals to achieve, why it matters, what it enables, and how it links to better outcomes.

This approach recognises that there is no single solution — building analytics capability is as much about people, culture, and collaboration as it is about data and tools. Councils operate in diverse contexts, with different starting points and pressures, so the roadmap provides a flexible yet structured guide. Whether strengthening data quality, upskilling analysts, embedding insight into commissioning, or aligning with Integrated Care Systems, each pathway is designed to support practical improvement. The shared goal is clear: to create an environment where better insight leads to better decisions, and ultimately, better lives for people who draw on care and support.

GOOD DATA

Data quality and data standards

GOOD PEOPLE

Empower teams at all levels to engage with data in meaningful ways

GOOD TOOLS

Meet statutory and regulatory expectations (CQC, ASCOF, CLD, Use of Resources)

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Collaborate across boundaries, particularly with Health and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners



- Integrated services (as data bridges gaps between social care and health)
- Smarter investments (as analytics pinpoint what yields best value)
- Improved lives (as we identify and scale up approaches that work best for people)

GOOD CULTURE

Create a learning culture, where data drives reflection, evaluation and improvement



Good Data

Data Quality, Standards and Infrastructure

A solid data foundation is a priority. Councils must ensure that the data they collect and use in adult social care is accurate, consistent, and accessible.

Why it matters:

With reliable data, we make reliable decisions.

What it enables:

Consistent metrics and shared definitions

Clearer performance stories

Data that flows smoothly across systems



So what?

- ✓ Builds a single version of the truth
- ✓ Enables benchmarking, targeting, and tracking progress
- ✓ Helps services meet regulatory requirements with confidence
- ✓ Leads to better planning and fewer blind spots in care delivery
- ✓ Enables clear and confident self-assessment
- ✓ Supports fair and accurate CQC assurance ratings

Adopting Common Standards: Use the standard definitions and data models provided by national frameworks. For example, fully [implement the Client-Level Data \(CLD\) standards](#) so that local data on care packages, assessments, services, and outcomes align with the national dataset. This not only satisfies the mandatory returns but also means local systems can easily feed into or draw from national analytical tools (like the CLD insight dashboard provided by DHSC). It also ensures that new [ASCOF metrics](#) derived from CLD can be calculated accurately, allowing benchmarking against other areas.

Modernising Case Management Systems: Many councils rely on legacy social care case management systems which can make data entry and extraction cumbersome. As part of the national drive, specifications of “what good looks like” for [case management systems](#) are being defined. Councils should work with their IT providers to upgrade systems for better data capture. Critical data (on assessments, care plans, reviews, finance, etc.) should be recorded in structured formats that lend themselves to analysis. System upgrades should also support integration with health records (for example, adopting NHS numbers as unique identifiers to enable data matching across health and care).





Good People

Workforce Skills and Data Literacy

Developing analytics capability is as much about people as it is about technology. Councils need to cultivate a workforce that has the skills and confidence to use data effectively at all levels – from front-line managers to senior leaders. Key actions include:

Why it matters:

Insight only happens when people know how to work with data, not just crunch it.

What it enables:

Confident analysts who add value, not just report numbers
Leaders and managers who ask the right questions
Conversations that connect data to practice

So what?

- ✓ Unlocks the full potential of existing data
- ✓ Builds shared understanding across teams
- ✓ Sparks curiosity and reflection at every level
- ✓ Leads to more targeted support and smarter decisions
- ✓ Empowers frontline teams to recognise patterns and act on them
- ✓ Builds trust between analysts and decision-makers
- ✓ Promotes reflective supervision and strengths-based practice
- ✓ Makes sure co-production isn't tokenistic, it's informed
- ✓ People get support that reflects what matters to them, not just what's easy to measure



Good
People

Training and Upskilling Programs: Establish a structured training program for adult social care staff on data and analytics. This roadmap encourages analysts to undertake the **WM ADASS MS Power BI Applied training course** and anticipates the development of **role specific guides for advancing the use of data**. For analysts and data specialists, more advanced training in statistical methods, data visualisation, and predictive modelling should be provided. Importantly, training should also target managers and practitioners – focusing on building **data literacy** (the ability to understand and question data). A data-literate workforce can engage with analysts, interpret findings, and apply insights to practice. Given that an [LGA survey of data capacity and capability](#) many councils reported a lack of skilled data professionals as a barrier, creative approaches may be needed: for example, cross-training interested social workers or commissioners in analytics, or rotating staff through analytical roles to build experience. Partnerships with academic institutions (for instance, local universities or the NHS Analytics Unit) could support specialist training or secondments.



Leadership Development in Analytics: Building capability requires buy-in and understanding from the top. Directors and senior managers should be supported to become **data-driven leaders**. This might involve tailored workshops on how to use analytical insight in strategic planning or mentoring from other localities that have had success with data. The goal is to ensure leaders set the expectation that decisions will be guided by evidence. As noted in national guidance on [Digital working in adult social care](#), strong leadership is a common factor in successful digital transformation (“Well Led” is the first success measure in the WGLL framework). Leadership can foster a culture where data is valued – for example, by regularly reviewing performance dashboards in management meetings, celebrating teams who use data to improve services, and investing in analytics projects. A data-informed leadership will also advocate for necessary resources and break down silos (for instance, encouraging IT and social care teams to work together on data issues).



Peer Learning and Knowledge Sharing: Encourage the sharing of best practices and lessons learned across the West Midlands and beyond. This could include participating in WMADASS Performance and Knowledge Network, the Analyst Community of Practice, LGA/ADASS networks or workshops on data (the CHIP programme often facilitates regional learning sessions), as well as internal seminars where staff who attended a training or conference share their learnings.

Case studies of analytics in action can be powerful educational tools – the roadmap’s next phase will compile case studies of how councils have tackled specific challenges (e.g. using data to identify care gaps, or predictive modelling to understand key drivers of social care expenditure).

By learning from each other’s successes and failures, councils can accelerate their progress and avoid reinventing the wheel. The [West Midlands ADASS Data Hub](#) and associated user group is one platform for such exchange, as it brings together data leads from all councils to discuss findings and improvements.

In summary, investing in people – through training, hiring, leadership engagement, and peer support – is fundamental. An empowered workforce will not only execute the technical aspects of analytics but will also drive a cultural shift where decisions are routinely backed by data (detailed more under the culture component below). This human capital development will be supported by continuing the regional MS Power BI training offer for social care analysts and role specific resources in the next phase of work.

*Developing the right people is central to the analytics capability strategy — the role of the **Analytics Business Partner (ABP)** is becoming increasingly vital. Traditional data analyst roles often focus on technical tasks like producing reports, maintaining datasets, and responding to requests. While these skills remain important, the future demands more. Analysts need to be both more efficient by using tools like AI and automation to streamline routine work and more effective by building broader capabilities: Insight, Influence, and Impact. This means translating data into clear, meaningful narratives (Insight), building strong relationships and credibility with decision-makers (Influence), and ensuring that data leads to tangible changes in practice and outcomes (Impact). The ABP model is about embedding analytics into the heart of adult social care. Alongside this roadmap WM ADASS Analyst Community of Practice will explore this model in depth, providing councils with a template job description, person specification, and development pathway — helping to build future-proof roles that reflect both the technical and strategic demands of modern social care.*



Good Tools

Analytics Tools, Methods and Innovation

With quality data and capable people in place, the next element is equipping the team with the right tools and analytical methods. The aim is to move from basic reporting to more advanced, predictive, and prescriptive analytics.

Why it matters:

Even the best analysts can't work without the right tools.

What it enables:

Dashboards and visuals that speak to different audiences
Predictive models that surface risk and opportunity
Shared regional templates that save time and raise standards

So what?

- ✓ Makes insight accessible and timely
- ✓ Helps spot trends before they become crises
- ✓ Supports smarter commissioning and investment decisions
- ✓ Leads to more proactive, person-centred services
- ✓ Flags risk early so services can intervene sooner
- ✓ Shows where to invest for greatest impact
- ✓ Turns siloed data into joined-up insights
- ✓ Brings lived experience and data into the same conversation
- ✓ People avoid crisis through more proactive, preventative care



**Good
Tools**

Business Intelligence (BI) and Dashboarding: Establish robust BI tools that turn raw data into accessible information. Many councils already use software like Power BI, and Tableau, to create dashboards for adult social care. The roadmap calls for expanding and standardising these efforts: for example, developing a core set of regional dashboards aligned to ASCOF outcomes and key operational metrics. These might include dashboards for safeguarding, assessments and reviews, service user demographics, and finance/utilisation (expenditure vs budget, projections, etc.). The [West Midlands Data Hub](#) provides some shared visualisations and could be built upon. Dashboards should be designed with end-users in mind (managers, commissioners, practitioners) and be updated regularly (preferably with automated data pipelines). Interactive tools enable users to slice data by locality, time period, or cohort, thus promoting a deeper understanding of performance. As noted by DHSC, several areas are “developing [interactive analytical tools](#) to strengthen monitoring of performance and outcomes”, demonstrating a commitment to change in the sector. Councils in the region should learn from these pioneers and adopt similar tools.



Advanced Analytics and Data Science: As capability grows, councils can leverage more advanced analytical techniques to glean insights that traditional reporting might miss. This includes predictive analytics, using historical data to predict future events or needs. For instance, predictive models might estimate which individuals are at higher risk of needing intensive support (allowing early intervention) or forecast demand for different types of services in the coming years (to inform market shaping and budgeting).

In line with [NHS England's push for population health analytics](#), councils could work with health partners to predict outcomes like hospital admissions or care breakdowns using combined data. Another area is geospatial analysis, mapping data to understand geographic variation in service provision or to target community resources. Machine learning techniques could also be explored for complex problems (e.g. clustering to segment clients by need, or NLP to analyse free-text case notes for themes). The roadmap encourages a “start small and scale” approach: pilot one or two advanced analytics projects (perhaps supported by external experts or academic data science programs) to prove the concept, then scale successful models into regular use. All advanced analytics must be done ethically – ensuring algorithms do not inadvertently discriminate and that predictions are used to support, not replace, professional judgement.

Data Visualisation and Communication: Even the best analysis has limited impact if it's not communicated well. A key skill to develop is creating clear, compelling visualisations and narratives around the data. This might involve training analysts in data storytelling – how to present insights in reports or presentations that resonate with stakeholders (using visuals like charts, infographics, or even interactive stories). Councils should adopt visualisation standards (e.g. consistent chart styles, color-coding, plain-English explanations) so that outputs are easy to interpret. Consider developing an open data portal or public-facing dashboard for adult social care, as some councils have done, to share key statistics with citizens and increase transparency (while of course protecting personal data). Public-facing visuals can help demonstrate accountability and the value of services provided.

Technology and Tools Innovation:

Keep abreast of new technologies that can enhance analytics work. For example, explore the use of **AI tools** in assisting data preparation or analysis – such as AI for data matching or anomaly detection to spot data issues, or conversational BI tools that allow users to ask questions in natural language.



Additionally, ensure the IT infrastructure (hardware, software, cloud services) can support big data processing as data volume grows (the CLD returns and digital social care records expansion means far more data to handle than before). The [Adult Social Care Technology Fund](#) and other initiatives may provide funding for innovative tech projects, which councils should leverage.

However, technology must be evaluated for suitability – “shiny” tools are only useful if they solve a real problem. The roadmap suggests establishing a small innovation fund or sandbox in the region where new analytic technologies or methods can be tested safely, and successful innovations can then be rolled out widely. By progressively adopting more sophisticated tools and methods, councils will enhance their ability to turn data into actionable insight. Early wins (like well-designed dashboards that quickly flag areas of concern) will build confidence and demand for analytics. Over time, advanced analytics can shift adult social care from a reactive stance to a more predictive and preventative approach, identifying issues before they escalate.

Good Governance

Governance, Ethics and Partnerships

Analytics in adult social care must operate within a framework of strong governance, ethical practice, and partnership working. This component of the roadmap ensures that as data use increases, it is done responsibly, securely, and collaboratively:

Why it matters:

People need to trust how we collect, use and share their data.

What it enables:

Ethical analytics with human impact in mind

Legal compliance across all levels of data use

Safer collaboration with health, VCSE and provider partners



**Good
Governance**

So what?

- ✓ Makes data sharing lawful and ethical, not optional
- ✓ Ensures insight is used legally, fairly, and responsibly
- ✓ Enables safe, effective data-sharing across systems
- ✓ Builds public and professional confidence
- ✓ Leads to more joined-up services and a stronger social care voice in place-based planning
- ✓ Gives assurance that privacy is protected, even as insight grows
- ✓ Builds partnership with providers, health and VCSE based on shared understanding
- ✓ Enables place-based planning based on collective intelligence
- ✓ People experience smoother transitions between services and fewer gaps in support



Data Governance and Security: As mentioned under data quality, having formal data governance is non-negotiable. Councils should either expand existing corporate data governance to specifically cover social care or set up a dedicated governance group including the DASS (Director of Adult Social Services), Caldicott Guardian, information governance (IG) leads, and IT leads. This group would oversee policies on data sharing, retention, and access.

With more person-level data being used (and shared, for example with [NHS Digital's secure data environments](#)), ensuring compliance with data protection laws and NHS IG standards is critical. The introduction of [Secure Data Environment \(SDE\)](#) for social care data means councils will likely interact with a highly governed national platform – local IG leads should stay involved in those developments.

Ethical Use of Data and Analytics: Beyond legal compliance, there are ethical considerations. Social care data often involves vulnerable individuals; analytics should respect their rights and dignity. Develop an **ethical review process** for new analytics projects, especially those using AI or predictive models. This can draw on frameworks like the UK's Data Ethics Framework. Key principles include transparency (be clear what data is used and why), fairness (check for biases in data or algorithms that could lead to unfair decisions), and accountability (maintain human oversight over automated recommendations). Engage with people who use services and carers when developing analytics that might impact them – for instance, co-designing what outcomes to measure or how to present data about service quality. By involving stakeholders, councils can ensure the insights produced are meaningful and address real concerns. It also builds trust; people are more likely to consent to data sharing if they see it's used for their benefit in an ethical way.

Policy and Regulatory Compliance: Following this analytics roadmap should support councils in meeting regulatory requirements. In April 2023, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) introduced a new assurance regime for local authority adult social care duties. Data and evidence will feed into [CQC's assessments](#) (e.g. outcomes achieved, efficiency, etc.) Councils should align their analytics to produce the evidence CQC will look for – for example, demonstrating progress against the four quality statements – working with people, providing support, ensuring safety, and leadership. Along with, benchmarking spending and use of resources, and showing trends over time. This will involve creating specific reports or datasets for regulatory inspection purposes. Additionally, analytics should help satisfy the **Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework reporting** (now an annual publication each autumn and the annual statutory returns like ASC-FR (finance) and SAR (Safeguarding Adults Return)). The roadmap ensures that by improving internal data capabilities, councils can respond efficiently to these external demands with minimal burden (ideally, once data is well-managed internally, extracting it for any given return or inspection should be straightforward).



Partnerships and Data Sharing: Adult social care does not exist in isolation – partnership is vital, especially with the health service and the voluntary/community sector. The roadmap promotes establishing data sharing agreements and collaborative analytics projects with key partners:

- With **DHSC/ICS**: for example, linking data with NHS partners to track outcomes for social care clients who go into hospital, or jointly identifying people who frequently attend A&E and also draw on social care, to design targeted interventions. [NHS England's guidance](#) provides a toolkit for building such cross-organisational intelligence functions. West Midlands councils should engage actively in their ICS's analytical forums or population health management groups to represent social care data and needs.
- With **other Councils**: through West Midlands ADASS and LGA networks, share data and intelligence regionally. The WM ADASS Data Hub is one mechanism where councils already contribute data for collective insight. Additionally, consider code sharing or co-developing analytic tools – for instance, if one council develops a useful script or model (say, a predictor for care demand), it can be shared and reused by others, saving time and fostering standard approaches. This resonates with a principle from the [ICS intelligence model](#) where analysis is “*replicable, with code shared across partner organisations*” to avoid duplication.
- With **providers and communities**: explore ways to share appropriate data or analysis with care provider organisations and community partners. For example, sharing aggregated data on levels of need or demand trends with provider forums can help them plan and respond (this could be an extension of market position statements, made more dynamic and data-rich). Similarly, collaborating with universities or research institutes on evaluations can add analytical weight and independent perspectives – there is a growing research focus on adult social care data which councils can tap into (West Midlands ADASS's partnership with University of Birmingham and NIHR for research champions is one such example ([Plan 2023-24 | WMADASS](#))).

By embedding strong governance and forging partnerships, councils will ensure their analytics efforts are sustainable and credible. Stakeholders – from regulators to the public, will have confidence in the insights produced. Moreover, working collaboratively across boundaries will amplify the impact of local analytics and contribute to the “joining up” of health and care that national policy envisions



Good Culture

Evidence-Based Practice and Continuous Improvement

The final, but perhaps most critical, component of the roadmap is fostering a culture that values and uses data at all levels and committing to continuous improvement. Technology and tools alone will not create impact unless there is a cultural embrace of **evidence-based practice** in adult social care.

Why it matters:

Culture is the multiplier. It determines whether insight is used or ignored.

What it enables:

Everyday use of data in practice
Curiosity, challenge, and learning loops
Evaluation that drives improvement, not just compliance

So what?

- ✓ Turns data from a tick-box into a tool for change
- ✓ Creates a feedback culture where insight is expected
- ✓ Leads to better, more personalised outcomes for people
- ✓ Normalises the use of evidence in everyday decisions
- ✓ Encourages learning from what works and what doesn't
- ✓ Helps staff see the impact of their work in real time
- ✓ Inspires continuous improvement, not blame
- ✓ People see better, more consistent outcomes – not by luck, but by design



Embedding Data in Decision-Making: Councils should integrate analytics into the regular management and practice of adult social care. For example, team managers might start their weekly meetings by reviewing key metrics (number of new referrals, assessments completed on time, people currently waiting for services, etc.) and using that to prioritise actions. Senior leadership meetings should consider strategic dashboards – e.g. examining ASCOF outcome trends or budget forecasts – as a core part of performance management. Commissioners should routinely consult data on population needs, provider quality, and unit costs when designing or reviewing services. The goal is for data to become a natural part of the conversation when discussing any issue. To facilitate this, analytics teams need to produce user-friendly reports and ensure stakeholders understand how to interpret them (linking back to the skills component). Over time, as people see the value (e.g. a data analysis that helped identify a service gap which was then addressed, improving outcomes), they will increasingly pull on the analytics function for insight.



Outcome-Focused and Person-Centred Approach: Keep the focus on outcomes for people, not just performance for its own sake. A data culture in social care must remember that **behind every data point is a person**. The updated ASCOF, for instance, is oriented around what matters to individuals (e.g. quality of life, safety, ability to live independently).

Councils should use analytics to answer questions like: *Are people living the lives they want? Is our support helping them achieve their goals?* This might mean complementing quantitative data with qualitative insights (from surveys or co-production forums). A good practice is to use the data as a starting point for deeper inquiry: for example, if metrics show low satisfaction in a particular area, engage with service users there to understand the story behind the numbers. By keeping analytics person-centred, the workforce remains connected to the purpose of the data, which sustains motivation and ethical practice.

Maturity Model and Self-Assessment: To track progress and target improvement over time, this roadmap recommends that each council adopts the national Local Government Data Maturity Model developed by the LGA. This tool provides a consistent, sector-recognised structure to assess strengths and gaps across key areas including leadership, culture, data governance, tools, and workforce capability.

Councils are encouraged to complete this [assessment tool](#) annually and then map the results to the five West Midlands capability pathways set out in this roadmap (Good Data, Good People, Good Tools, Good Governance, Good Culture). This dual approach offers both national alignment and regional relevance.

To add rigour, insight, and shared learning, the roadmap recommends that councils participate in a peer-to-peer self assessment process facilitated through the West Midlands Analyst Community of Practice. Councils can take part in closed benchmarking discussions, using scorecards to compare progress, share ideas, and highlight local innovations. The aim is not league tables or compliance but collective improvement and mutual support.



Continuous Improvement Cycles: Treat the development of analytics capability as an iterative process. This means regularly reviewing what is working and what is not, then refining approaches. Establish feedback loops where users of analytics (e.g. social work teams or service managers) can provide input on the usefulness of dashboards or reports – and use that feedback to improve those tools. Similarly, evaluate the impact of analytics projects: did a predictive model actually help reduce crises? Did a new dashboard lead to action? If not, adjust the methodology or try a different approach.

Embrace a fail-fast mentality for innovation – small pilots that fail are acceptable (even useful) as long as lessons are learned and shared. Over time, build a “*learning organisation*” ethos in adult social care, where data is central to learning. This could be supported by the **WM ADASS Analysts community of practice**, where staff discuss findings and brainstorm solutions collectively.

Recognition and Incentives: To solidify a data-driven culture, recognise teams and individuals who effectively use data to improve services. This could be through internal awards or simply highlighting “success stories” in staff newsletters or meetings. For example, if an analyst and a social work team collaborated to identify a trend (like increasing needs in a certain community) and addressed it by reallocating resources, celebrate that as an example of evidence-based practice making a difference. Such stories, possibly turned into case studies, will be part of the follow-up phase to inspire further adoption.

Cultivating this culture is an ongoing journey – there may be resistance or uncertainty at first, especially if staff are not used to working with data. But with persistent leadership support, open communication about the purpose and benefits of analytics, and investment in making tools user-friendly, the culture will shift. The outcome will be an adult social care service that continuously learns and improves, guided by data but always focused on human outcomes.



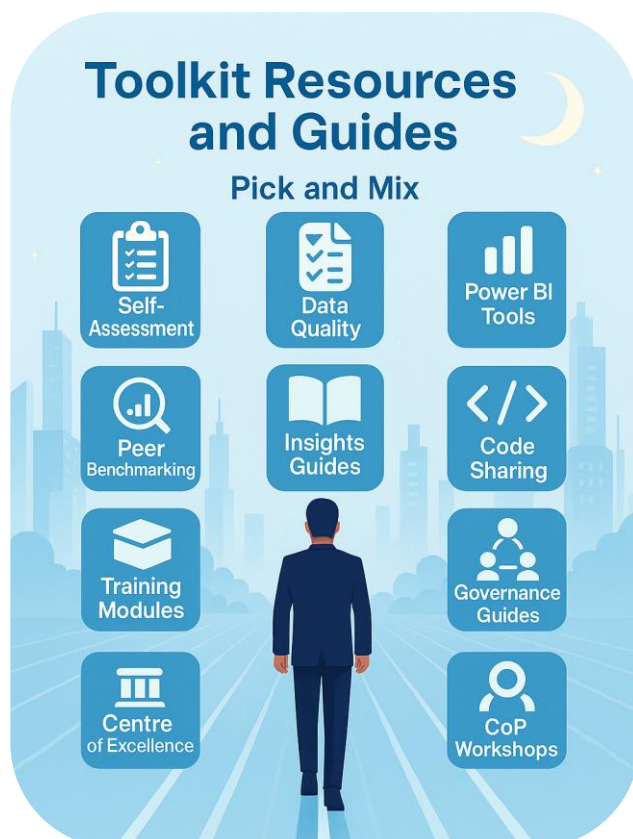
directors of
adass
adult social services
West Midlands

The five capability pathways — Good Data, Good People, Good Tools, Good Governance, and Good Culture, offer a common structure, but there is no single route. Councils are encouraged to assess where they are, build on what’s already working, and use the roadmap as a practical guide to deepen their use of data and insight in a way that fits their local context.

- Role-specific capability guides and training resources
- Shared dashboards, code libraries, and templates
- Practical guidance on governance, ethics, and data quality
- Case studies and peer-led learning through the Community of Practice

This is not a mandate. Each council can “pick and mix” the elements that add the most value locally, while contributing to a **collective regional resource** that benefits everyone.

By accessing and shaping this shared toolkit, councils will accelerate their own capability while helping build a stronger, more connected analytics community across the West Midlands.



A horizontal row of black silhouettes of people walking from left to right. The group includes a person with two shopping bags, a person with a cane, a person carrying a child, a person with a large bag, a pregnant woman, a person with a cane, a person with a bag, a person with a cane, a person in a wheelchair, a person carrying a child, a child, and a person.

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6. ASC-FR (Adult Social Care Finance Return)
7. Use of Resources Toolkit
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9. Digital working in adult social care: What Good Looks Like (WGLL)
10. UK GDPR and NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT)
11. NHS England's ICS Intelligence Model and Population Health Management guidance
12. NHS England » Building an integrated care system intelligence function
13. National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) – co-production and research partnerships
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