FLASH REPORT

New Competencies and Skills for Healthcare Professionals in Integrated Long-Term Care

Date: 26 November 2025

Organiser: Eurocarers & EHTEL / Laurel

Participants: Approximately 27 attendees from across Europe

1 Overview

Integrated long-term care (I-LTC) has emerged as a key response to these challenges, aiming to connect health, social, and community services around the needs of the person. The shift toward integrated, community-based, and digitally enhanced long-term care requires new competencies and skills from healthcare professionals.

On **26 November 2025**, **the Laurel webinar *"New Competencies and Skills for Healthcare Professionals in Integrated Long-Term Care"*** explored the skills and training pathways needed to enable professionals—and health and care systems—to deliver integrated, digitally enabled long-term care across Europe. In particular, the webinar examined the evolving competencies required of healthcare professionals delivering person-centred care to people with long-term care needs, **stimulating discussion and fostering valuable knowledge exchange to inform Laurel's policy work.**

The session addressed the following topics:

• Interdisciplinary collaboration and care coordination

• Use of digital tools and data for remote monitoring and communication

• Culturally competent and relational care

1.1 Speakers & Moderators

Three European experts shared their perspectives and visions on the future skills required for integrated long-term care:

- **Orazio Fiorini** — Senior Project Officer, **EASPD / Care4Skills:** Leads the Care4Skills Partnership for Integrated Long-Term Care, developing EU-wide training curricula on digital competence, person-centred care, and risk management under the European Commission's Pact for Skills.
- **Jorge Alfonso Kurano** — Researcher, **Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM):** AI and health data expert working on digital maturity assessment for health and care services, with experience across EU projects including LAUREL, GenoMed4ALL, and ProCare4Life.

- **Selma Kadi** — Researcher, **European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research:** Specialist in diversity-sensitive care, informal caregiving, and LTC systems; co-author of *Improving education and training for health and social care staff to provide person-centred, diversity-sensitive care*.

Two partners from the Laurel Consortium moderated the discussion:

- **Giulia Lanfredi, Eurocarers**
- **Sara Canella, EHTEL**

1.2 Speakers' Talking Points

The first speaker, Orazio Fiorini opened the webinar by situating HCP skills development at the heart of Europe's long-term care transformation. Drawing on the **Care4Skills** Erasmus+ Blueprint project, he outlined how workforce shortages, high turnover, and uneven access to training threaten the sustainability of integrated care models. A flagship output of the project is the **Rapid Response Training**, developed in the aftermath of COVID-19 to tackle the need for immediate response and solutions during the pandemic. Indeed: shortages, staff fluctuation, difficulties in recruiting, retaining, motivating essential staff are striking similarities between LTC and COVID challenges. So one of the focus themes of RRT is upskilling and reskilling of human resources for long-term care.

It's worth noting how curricula and training offers are being redesigned to quickly respond to deepening skill gaps in long-term care: **MOOCs can go a long way**: So far, Care4Skills has developed **four online rapid training modules in ten languages**, teaching values and technology in digital care, built around four topics:

- **digital competences** for care professionals,
- safe and meaningful use of digital care tools and assistive technologies,
- person-centred care based on dignity, autonomy, participation and quality of life, and
- **risk management and safety** in increasingly complex long-term care settings,

The trainings reached more than **1,500 care workers in under a year**. While not a formal qualification, it provided immediate, practical support in contexts where structured training was often absent.

Looking ahead, Fiorini highlighted Care4Skills' work on **skills intelligence, future scenarios, and workforce personas**, ranging from rights-based, community-driven care models to more cautionary technocratic futures. He stressed that digital skills will be required in *all* scenarios but must remain embedded in human-centred values. Finally, he presented the **Large-Scale Skills Partnership for Long-Term Care** under the Pact for Skills, which brings together public authorities, providers, social partners, and civil society to align training strategies, strengthen advocacy, and build a shared skills ecosystem for the sector.

"Digital skills should support human-centred care, not replace it." Orazio Fiorini

The second speaker, Jorge Alfonso Kurano reframed digitalisation in long-term care as a **systemic and organisational challenge**, rather than a purely technological one. Health and long-term care professionals, informal carers, and older people already use digital tools daily (from messaging apps and portals to electronic records and teleconsultations). The challenge thus, he argued, is not adoption, but **fragmentation and lack of strategic coordination**.

Poor interoperability, duplicated data entry, and complex dashboards place heavy burdens on professionals and undermine continuity of care. These issues are compounded by uneven digital confidence and training across roles and sectors. Kurano proposed a layered view of digital skills, all of which need to be addressed properly:

- **Basic digital literacy** for carers, families, and users
- **Workflow and data interpretation skills** for professionals
- **Advanced capabilities** around analytics, AI-supported decision-making, and data governance for system-level actors

Central to his contribution was the **Laurel Digital Maturity Assessment Toolkit (DMAT),** a digital readiness framework co-developed by UPM and EHTEL. The DMAT provides I-LTC implementers with a self-assessment toolkit to evaluate their level of digital maturity across key dimensions, including governance, healthcare professionals' skills, interoperability, ethics, and sustainability. It supports organisations in identifying gaps and prioritising investments when implementing digital solutions for integrated long-term care.

In addition, the aggregated data collected through the DMAT will be made accessible to policymakers, providing an evidence-based overview of digital maturity levels across integrated long-term care systems.

Drawing from his advisory expertise in other sectors – i.e. mobility -, Kurano noted that digital transformation consistently proves to be **20% technology and 80% organisational redesign**.

> *"These are people problems with technical consequences — not technical problems with people consequences."*Jorge Alfonso Kurano

The third speaker, Selma Kadi focused on the often-overlooked dimension of **diversity-sensitive care**, particularly in relation to older migrants. She outlined the multiple barriers this group faces when accessing health and social care, including language barriers, lack of trust, limited health system literacy, and services insufficiently adapted to (trans)cultural, belief, or language needs.

Kadi traced the evolution from *transcultural care* to *cultural competence* and, more recently, to **diversity-sensitive care**, which recognises super-diversity, intersectionality, and the role of power and systemic discrimination. Importantly, diversity-sensitive care does not replace person-centred care; it **deepens it**, addressing blind spots where "one-size-fits-all" approaches fail. She presented outputs from the **DISCO Erasmus+ project**, including a modular training handbook and free e-learning course available in six languages. Rather than focusing on static cultural knowledge, the materials emphasise **reflection, self-awareness, cultural humility, and experiential learning**, equipping professionals to question assumptions and adapt care practices collaboratively.

> *"Diversity-sensitive care is not an alternative to person-centred care; it is a refinement of it."* Selma Kadi

2 Poll & Q&A Wrap Up

Following the three keynotes, a live poll was conducted, consisting of three questions, and leading into an audience Q & A based on further questions raised by webinar attendees clarifying the speakers' messages:

- **Most urgent competencies** for integrated LTC were identified as *interprofessional collaboration* and *person-centred communication*, ranking even higher than technical digital skills.
- **Biggest barriers to digital and data-driven care** Poor usability and lack of interoperability emerged as the main obstacles, followed by insufficient training and low digital confidence.
- **Culturally sensitive care priorities** Participants highlighted the need for better diversity training, language support, community engagement, and co-design with care recipients.

The Q&A further explored the role of informal carers, the risk of technocratic care models, and the importance of modular, accessible training pathways that fit real-world care settings.

3 Take-Home Messages

- Integrated long-term care depends on **aligned skills, systems, and values**, not technology alone.
- **Digital skills are core care skills** and must be embedded in everyday practice and organisational design.
- Experiences from other sectors that went digital show that **successful digital transformation depends 20% on technology and 80% on organizational processes.**
- **Speed matters.** Given the increasing staff shortages and a rapidly widening skill gap in LTC, **the quick development of rapid response curricula and training opportunities** is of the essence to meet the moment.
- **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are available to support** professionals and informal carers to acquire and practice the complex skills needed to use digital tools.
- Workforce strategies should combine **rapid upskilling** with long-term planning and policy coordination.
- **Access barriers for older migrants persist and remain a major challenge.** Their specific needs and values require specific, culturally sensitive, interprofessional, person-centred skills. Technology is an enabler, not a substitute for care relationships and human-centric services.
- **A person-centred skill scenario** combines **interprofessional, seamless collaboration** and **cultural competence.**
- **Diversity-sensitive education** strengthens person-centred care and **improves equity** across systems.
- **Professional and informal carers' readiness matters.** Digital skills, training, and the involvement of informal carers are essential components of successful I-LTC innovation.
- Tools such as the **Digital Maturity Assessment Toolkit** help organisations self-assess where they stand and advance practical, scalable solutions.
- **Policy and system alignment are critical.** Without appropriate policy frameworks, financing models, and evidence base, digital solutions will struggle to deliver at a scale.
- **Sustainability and equity must be baked in from the start.** Digital transformation in I-LTC must avoid widening inequalities and ensure inclusive access with a particular view to vulnerable populations such as older people and older migrants.

Resources

https://laurelproject.eu/webinars/

https://vimeo.com/1141384473