directors of adass
adult social services

Membership Pack

2026/27



Everything you need to know about your ADASS membership

Table of Contents

A warm welcome 1

Who we are 2
Membership categories 5
Full membership 5
Extended membership 6
Principal Social Workers 7
Associate membership 8
Membership fees 9
What you get for your membership 9
ADASS Regions 15
Partners in Care and Health 15
National and regional interface 16
ADASS policy network structure 17
ADASS policy cycle 18
ADASS Board and Committee structure 19
Our President 20
Board and policy roles 21
Events 23
Surveys 25
Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 26
Co-production 26
Care Can't Wait campaign 27

A warm welcome

from ADASS CEO, Sally Burlington



On behalf of the ADASS national team, I am delighted to welcome you to our membership. As a member, you may have questions but rest assured, we're here to help.

ADASS (the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) is a national voice for adult social care in England. Our members are dedicated professionals passionate about shaping adult social care at local, regional, and national levels. We hope you find ADASS to be a valuable network where you can connect, learn, and contribute with like-minded peers.

This membership pack provides an overview of ADASS, the benefits of your membership, and how you can get involved. You can also visit our website for further resources and insights into the work we do.

As a member, you have access to a range of opportunities, including but not limited to:

- The weekly bulletin, sent every Tuesday, keeping you informed on key updates, news, and opportunities.
- Invitations to key events such as the Spring Seminar and National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC), which are fantastic resources for members to network and collaborate, hear about innovation and priorities in the sector, and learn and share with others, including key providers and collaborators.
- Contributing to and learning from a wide ranging ADASS policy network framework and cycle.

Explore your full list of membership benfits on page 9.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or need support, our team is here to assist. We look forward to your involvement in ADASS and once again, welcome.

Media & Campaigns: mediaenquiries@adass.org.uk
Events: events@adass.org.uk
Membership: ADASS_Admin@adass.org.uk
Development Programmes: programmes@adass.org.uk
Anything else: team@adass.org.uk

directors of adass adult social services

Who we are

ADASS is a membership organisation for adult social care leaders in England.

As a charity, we work with professionals, partner organisations and people with lived experience to improve social care services, influence policy and decision-makers and advocate for a society where everyone who draws on care and support can live the lives they choose regardless of age, disability and background.

Our objectives

- To promote the education of the public in matters of social policy, social organisation and social problems
- To promote the relief of those needing care, support or safeguarding and the preservation of physical and mental health for the benefit of the public
- To promote the preservation of family, friendship and community life for the benefit of the public
- To promote inclusion of older, disabled and mentally ill people in all aspects of society

Our core values

Impact



We are ambitious about improving adult social care, taking a proactive, solutions-focused approach.

Collaborative



We give a voice to our members and share their expertise, connecting across the sector and beyond.

Inclusive



We value and respect difference and diversity, striving to promote equality in all we do.

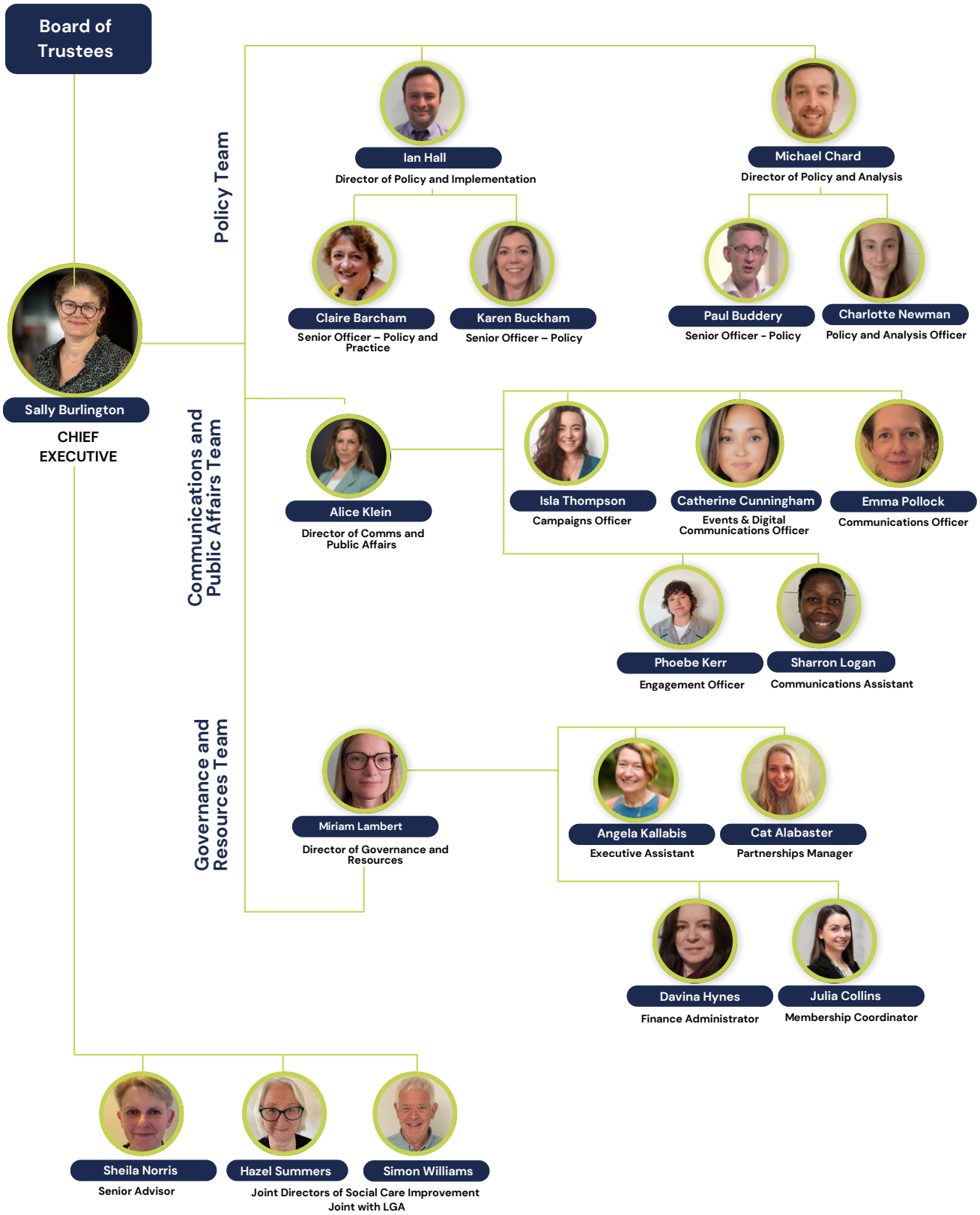
Integrity



We stay true to our principles and aims; we bring challenge when needed.

Meet the National Team

Not only does each member of the ADASS team bring a wealth of experience and passion for the sector, working collaboratively to ensure we meet the needs of members across the country, we are also based across the country! We have people in the South East, North East, East, South West, London and up in Scotland. Feel free to get in touch, we're a friendly bunch.



How we work

Our Board of Trustees

The ADASS Board of Trustees provides strategic leadership and oversight, ensuring the charity meets its governance obligations, operates effectively, and delivers meaningful impact in line with its objectives. Trustees are collectively and individually responsible for upholding the highest standards of governance, acting in the charity's best interests, and complying with all legal requirements. The Trustees are responsible for the appointment and appraisal of the Chief Executive, who will oversee the management and administration of the organisation. Working closely with the Chief Executive, the Board helps shape the organisation's long-term strategy within a financially sustainable framework.



Phil Holmes
President 2026/27



Rashpal Bishop
Vice President 2026/27



Richard Parry
Chair of the Board



Helen Charlesworth-May
Honorary Treasurer



Martin Samuels
Regional Lead Trustee



Nick Presmeg
Policy & Practice Trustee



Jess McGregor
Immediate Past President



Fazeela Hafajee
Extended Member Trustee



Richard Humphries
Associate Member Trustee



Steph Downey
PSW Member Trustee



Stephen Taylor
Trustee

Membership categories

We currently have 800+ members across four categories of our membership.

Full Membership

The Directors of Adult Social Services (the DASS) in each local authority, including interim or acting, are full members.



A warm welcome to Directors of Adult Social Services

from ADASS Regional Trustee, Martin Samuels

Hello and welcome. I'm Martin Samuels, Regional Trustee and Chair of the Membership Committee at ADASS, as well as the Executive Director of Adult Care and Community Wellbeing at Lincolnshire County Council.

ADASS membership offers a valuable platform for Directors of Adult Social Services (DASS) to connect, collaborate, and support one another across the country. It provides an opportunity to share insights, address challenges, and exchange practices. Our strength lies in collaboration, and I encourage you to get involved in ways that best align with your interests and needs to fully benefit from this membership.
Your membership includes a wide range of benefits, from leading and influencing ADASS policy positions and contributing to campaigns to accessing professional development opportunities, such as becoming an ADASS trustee or mentor. Learn more about these benefits.

We are also pleased to share the West Midlands ADASS DASS Guide, a compilation of practical content on delivering effectively against the statutory requirements of the role of DASS, written by Directors for Directors. This resource is maintained by West Midlands ADASS.
Explore the DASS Guide

Extended Membership

Our extended members are senior managers reporting directly to the DASS and/or those to whom the DASS reports. Each full member (the DASS) can nominate up to four extended members, which can also include your Principal Occupational Therapist. Full members can nominate additional extended members at an additional charge.



A warm welcome to extended members

from ADASS Extended Member Trustee, Fazeela Hafejee

Hello and welcome to ADASS extended members space.

I, Fazeela Hafejee, am the extended member Trustee in ADASS, the Assistant Director in Bradford and the Policy Lead for the ADASS Learning, Disability and Autism Policy Network. I am keen to hear from more of you across the country so please get in touch if you are interested in getting more involved as an extended member.

Extended members have access to a number of benefits by virtue of being nominated to be an extended member by your DASS. Learn more about these benefits on page 9.

Whether you are keen to develop in your career or simply have access to information and networks to support you in your current role, being an extended member has benefits and a chance to shape as well as give back.

Principal Social Workers

Principal Social Workers (PSWs) have been included as a separate category of the membership since 2019. Each full member (the DASS) can nominate one PSW, allowing for one per local authority.



A warm welcome to extended members

from ADASS PSW Member Trustee, Steph Downey

A very warm welcome to all Principal Social Workers joining the ADASS membership! We aim to provide a dedicated space for collaboration, learning, and influence within adult social care, locally, regionally and nationally.

Myself and the Co-Chairs of the National Adult PSW Network warmly welcome you to the membership.

With over 100 PSWs currently registered with ADASS and numerous PSWs actively engaged in various networks, this is a thriving community where members bring a wealth of experience and expertise. Myself and Claire Barcham (Senior Officer in the ADASS national team with responsibility for PSWs as well as policy and practice) meet with regional PSW chairs on a monthly basis to make sure what's happening at the front line can influence national work.

If you're not yet part of your regional network, joining is simple - details on how to connect are available from your regional ADASS team.

As a member, we encourage you to engage in ways that align with your interests - whether that's networking, shaping ADASS policy, or exploring professional development opportunities to maximise your membership experience. Learn more about the full range of membership benefits on page 9.

Welcome—we're delighted to have you on board!

Associate Members

Associate membership is open to all former DASSs (Full Members), Extended Members or Principal Social Workers once they have moved on from their substantive posts and are now retired, consulting, or working in interim roles. It is membership of the individual, not of any organisation.



A warm welcome to associate members

from Keith Skerman, Co-Chair of the Associates Network

As co-chairs of the Associates Network, we, Carol Tozer and Keith Skerman, along with Sheila Norris, Associate Network Secretary and Richard Humphries, the Associate Trustee of ADASS, are your main points of contact.

Associate membership offers former ADASS members the opportunity to remain part of the ADASS community after retirement or a move beyond local government. It's a way to stay connected to a network of experienced senior leaders, continue to play a voice in the national discussions influencing adult social care, and retain membership benefits such as the weekly bulletin and invitations to ADASS events.

Associates engage in a variety of roles (some paid, others voluntary) - from consultancy opportunities to joining ADASS policy networks. Many also take part in our Associates Mentorship Programme, generously supporting current ADASS members with leadership development, career transition and professional reflection. The programme continues to expand year on year, making a meaningful contribution to the personal and professional development opportunities that ADASS offers.

Whether you're looking to stay connected with peers, give back to the sector, or help shape the future of adult social care, Associate membership offers a rewarding and flexible way to remain involved.

In addition to the valuable connections you'll make, being part of the network comes with a host of benefits. Learn more about these benefits on page 9.

If you think you are eligible, we warmly encourage you to explore becoming an Associate and we look forward to welcoming you to the network!

Membership Fees

For DASS, extended and PSW members, ADASS operates a tiered approach to fees based on the size of the local authority. As the size of authority can be subjective due to the differing structures of local authorities, this approach uses population to measure size. Full members can request additional extended members to join, this is charged at 1/6 of the membership fee for each additional member.

Associate membership is pro-rata and is eligible for Gift Aid, which means that as long as the member is a UK taxpayer and has paid enough tax to cover the Gift Aid claimed, ADASS can boost the fee paid by 25% at no additional cost to the member.



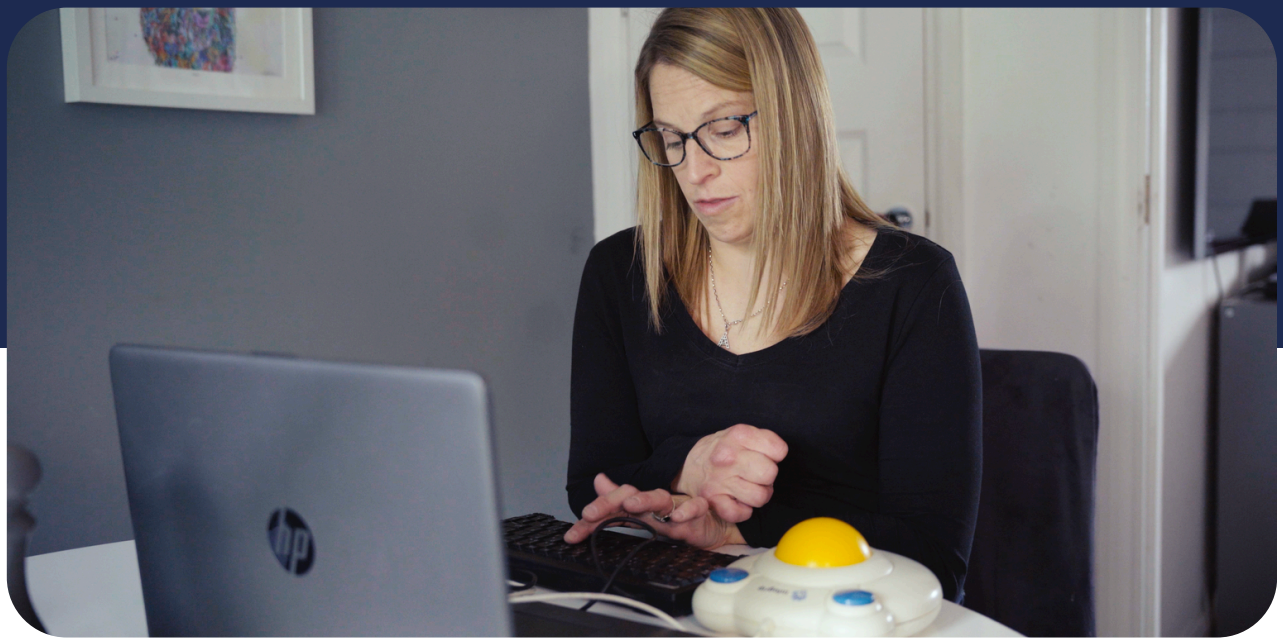
ADASS Membership Offer

What you get for your membership fee

As part of our membership you get a variety of benefits.

The next section outlines these in detail for you.

Communications



Weekly news

Weekly ADASS bulletin by email with information about ADASS's work, campaigns, news, new guidance from DHSC and other sector organisations, policy digest, opportunities to contribute to ADASS work and learn from peers and partners. A one-stop shop for information and news for members.

Website

National website with links to regional sites, where available. Access our work here such as submissions to consultations, reports and briefings, read our blogs, press releases and more. The Supporting Carers Hub holds great practice examples. Access to a resources library on our website.

Content

Content to support our Public Affairs activities, such as the briefing for new MPs about adult social care. You may also be able to contribute content, such as blogs.

Campaigns

Opportunities for you to contribute to further campaigns like the Supporting Carers Hub with case study examples – look out for this in the future!

Events

Spring Seminar

An annual event in the Spring for ADASS members only. Attend the ADASS AGM in person and witness the inauguration of the new President (online option also available). Our members get together to hear from key speakers, share and learn from peers and network and socialise in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

Drop-in sessions

Monthly drop-in sessions with our President and Chief Executive to discuss the issues of the day. These virtual sessions are an opportunity for our President to update on recent presidential work at a national level. There is time for a Q&A so that members can bring any burning questions or issues to the table. As Chief Executive, Sally also updates on the work of the national team in support of the President and our members.

NCASC

Joint event with LGA and ADCS, this is a key annual event for those with responsibilities for children and adult services in the statutory, voluntary and private sector and for people with lived experience of adult social care.
Hear from health and social care experts and colleagues with the opportunity for informal networking.

Webinars

Exciting webinar series running throughout the year covering specialist topics. It will include a Spring Survey pre-brief for members.

Plus..

Ad hoc workshops, webinars, roundtables - learn from and share experience with peers, partners, experts, people with lived experience. Hear from government and other sector leaders.



You can find out more about our events on page 23.



Shaping ADASS policy positions

- There are opportunities at regional and national level to help shape our policy positions, through joining policy networks, communities of practice and taking on different roles within ADASS, such as being a policy lead – you can view our policy cycle within this pack.
- Access to a monthly policy digest covering policy developments in social care, as well as parliamentary business.
- ADASS policy is rooted in evidence and intelligence from members via your responses to surveys, research, providing data, input into regional and national networks and the role of the Regional Chairs. As well as consultation on and access to policy positions developed by ADASS on key social care issues.
- Online pre-briefing for members ahead of publication of ADASS work e.g. spring and autumn surveys.

Advice, support and guidance

- Ad hoc support is available – if a member is seeking guidance, help or facing particularly difficult circumstances, we can offer moral support and practical help, connecting to others where possible.
- Good practice examples, guidance and top tips regularly produced and shared. Resources online, in weekly bulletin and showcased at events.
- Peer support through networks, regional branches, ADASS events promoting networking and information exchange.

directors of adass adult social services

Campaigning and influencing

- Campaigning and influencing publicly and privately with Ministers, government officials, other decision makers in NHS and other social care organisations etc, connecting the relevant people and voices so that the sector speaks with one voice.
- Opportunities both regionally and locally to be involved in and contribute to the development of campaigns, and campaign lines which can be used nationally.
- Reports and press releases on issues pertinent to the sector available via the weekly bulletin and on the website.
- ADASS survey results that can be used locally as well as regionally, including spring and autumn surveys.
- Building and maintaining pro-active relationships with national media outlets to amplify our messages in support of our influencing work.



Peer connection & Professional development opportunities

Local authority members

- **A warm welcome**: All new members receive this membership pack with valuable member resources and insights. If you are a new DASS, you will be contacted to receive a personal welcome call from the ADASS Chief Executive. If you are an extended member or PSW, you will also receive a warm welcome message from the National ADASS Team.
- ADASS regions also welcome new DASSs.
- Become an ADASS National Policy Lead or Co-Lead.
- Become a regional representative on national policy networks - via ADASS regional team.
- Speaking for and representing the sector at conferences, events and roundtables.
- Become a mentor to other DASSs or members.
- Access a mentor through the Associates Mentoring Programme.
- Opportunity to put yourself forward for election as Vice President or as a trustee of ADASS.
- Access to a national WhatsApp community with exclusive member sub-groups for peer-to-peer support and focussed discussions.
- New comprehensive media and communications training offer available across all regions, generously supported by the Rayne Foundation.
- Access to the ADASS Accelerate programme. This is a bespoke programme helping ADASS members to develop the skills to lead large-scale transformation programmes. Aimed at meeting the strategic needs of members working at DASS/AD level. Find out more about Accelerate.

Associate members

- **A warm welcome**: All new members receive this membership pack with valuable member resources and insights. As a new associate member, you will also receive a warm welcome message from the national ADASS Team who will then connect you with the Associate Network.
- The Associate Network shares opportunities for paid or unpaid roles, including project specifications from ADASS and other organisations.
- Become an ADASS National Policy Lead or Co-Lead.
- Speaking for and representing the sector at conferences, events and roundtables.
- Become a mentor through the Associates Mentorship Programme.
- Opportunity to put yourself forward for election as a trustee of ADASS.

ADASS Regions

There are nine ADASS regions in England (North West, North East, Yorkshire & Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East, South East, South West and London). These regional ADASS branches have a close link to the national ADASS team, but each region manages its own work programme based upon regional priorities and requirements.

Regions are essential to the wider work of ADASS and provide critical links between ADASS members locally, regionally and nationally. They also provide infrastructure for the gathering of intelligence from local areas to inform policy and for the delivery of national responses and programmes, both internally and via contracts with partners or government. The regions are part of ADASS's constitution, and more than that, they are integral to ADASS's ways of working.

Every ADASS region has a Regional Chair who is a serving local authority Director of Adult Social Services, they are nominated within the region, and each serves a regionally agreed term of office. Regional Chairs from across the country come together monthly as a group to share what discussions are taking place regionally and nationally and provide a strong forum for regional views to influence national discussions and wider policy discussions.

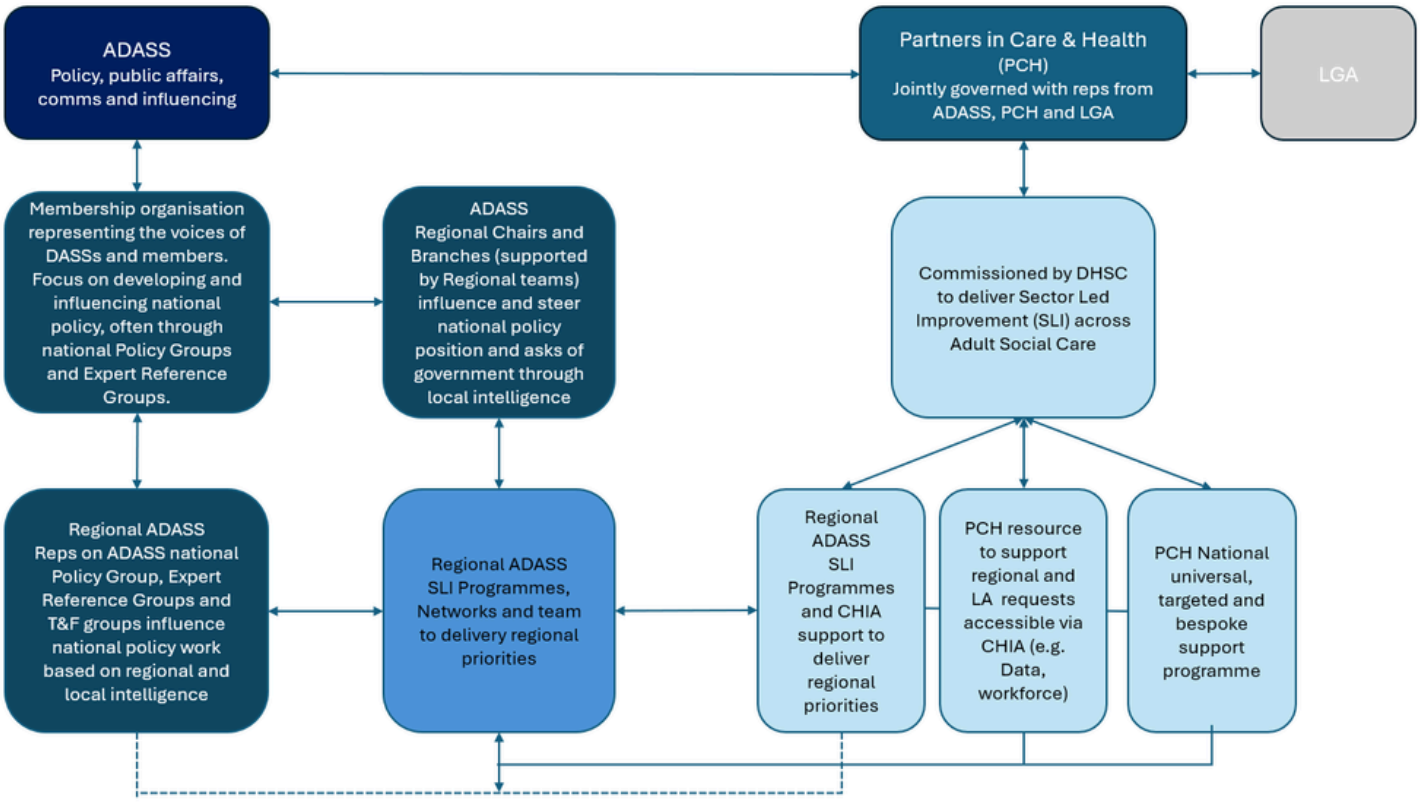
Partners in Care and Health

ADASS and the Local Government Association (LGA) are Partners in Care and Health (PCH), working with other well-respected organisations. PCH helps local authorities improve the way they deliver adult social care and public health services and helps Government understand the challenges faced by the sector. The programme is a trusted network for developing and sharing best practice, developing tools and techniques, providing support and building connections. It is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care and offered to local authorities without charge.



National and Regional Interface

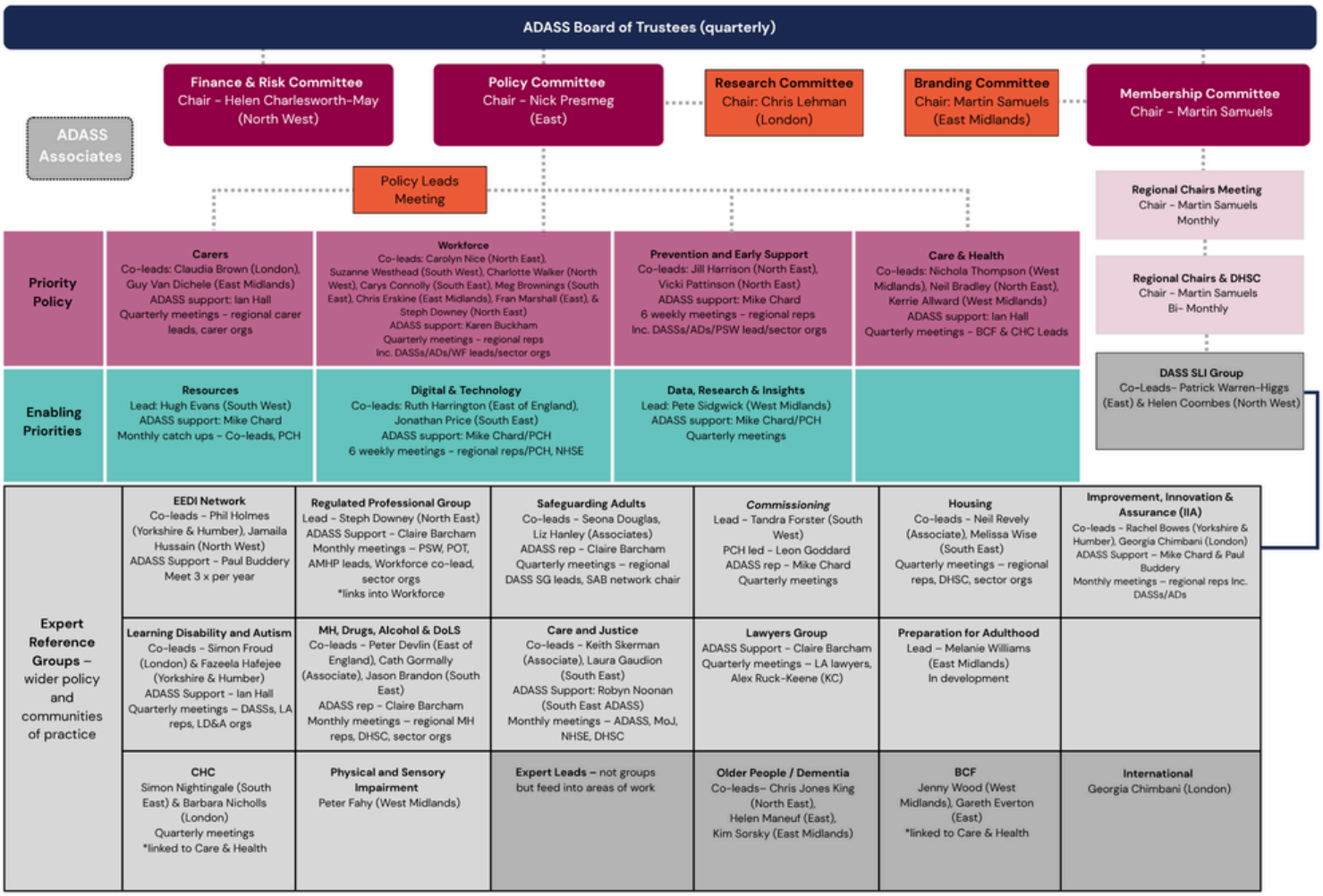
The diagram below sets out the relationship between ADASS and Partners in Care and Health (PCH) and how the partnership aligns with the work of ADASS. It shows the interface between the national work and regions.



ADASS Policy Network Structure

Nationally ADASS have several policy networks and groups which either align with our overall ADASS Priority Policy areas, Enabling Policy areas or come together as Expert Reference Groups which focus on wider policy areas. These networks and groups are led and chaired by members of ADASS and the networks are made up of our members, regional colleagues and wider partners.

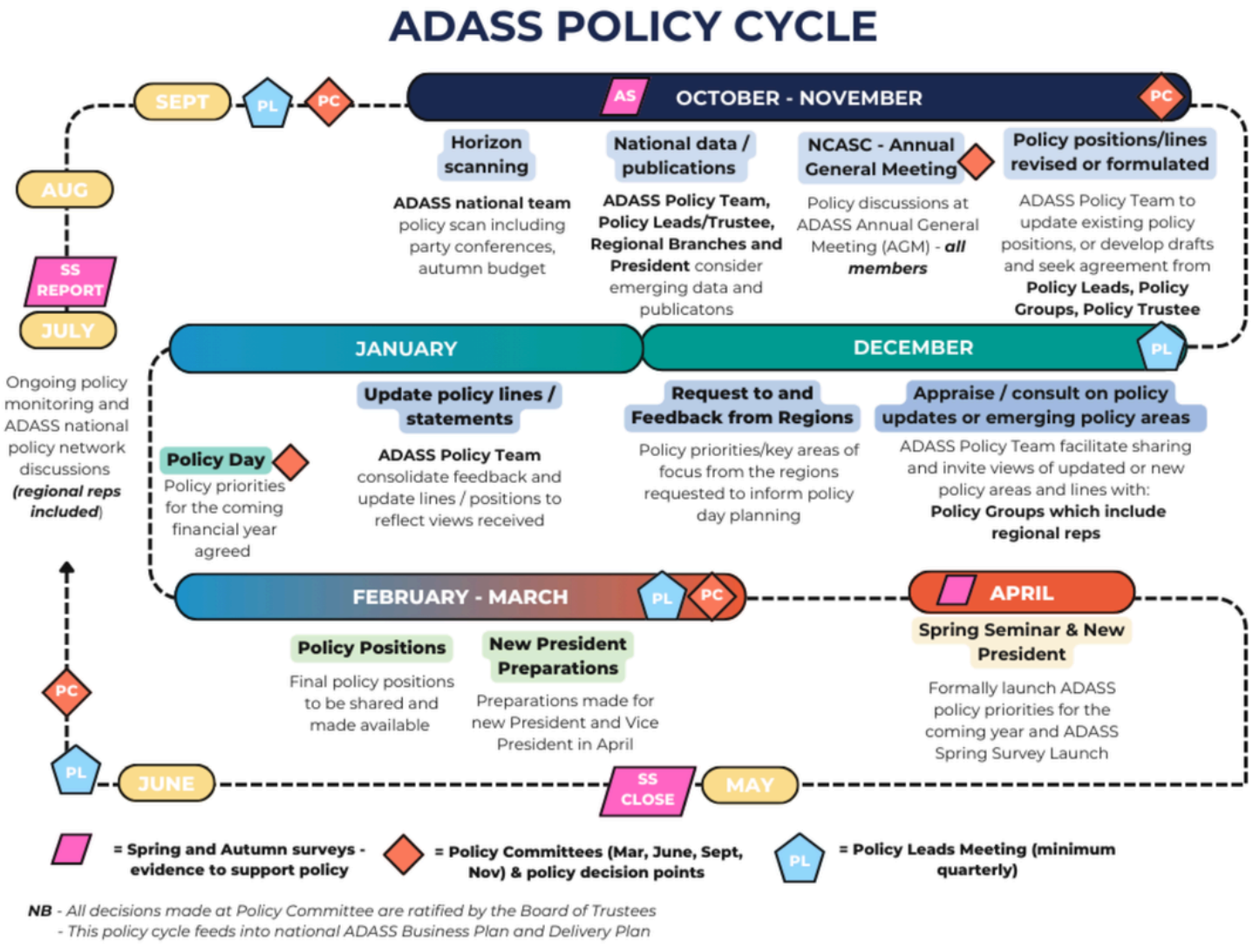
We encourage and welcome leads from across all areas of the membership ehether you are a DASS, Extended Member, PSW or Associate.



Download PDF version

ADASS Policy Cycle

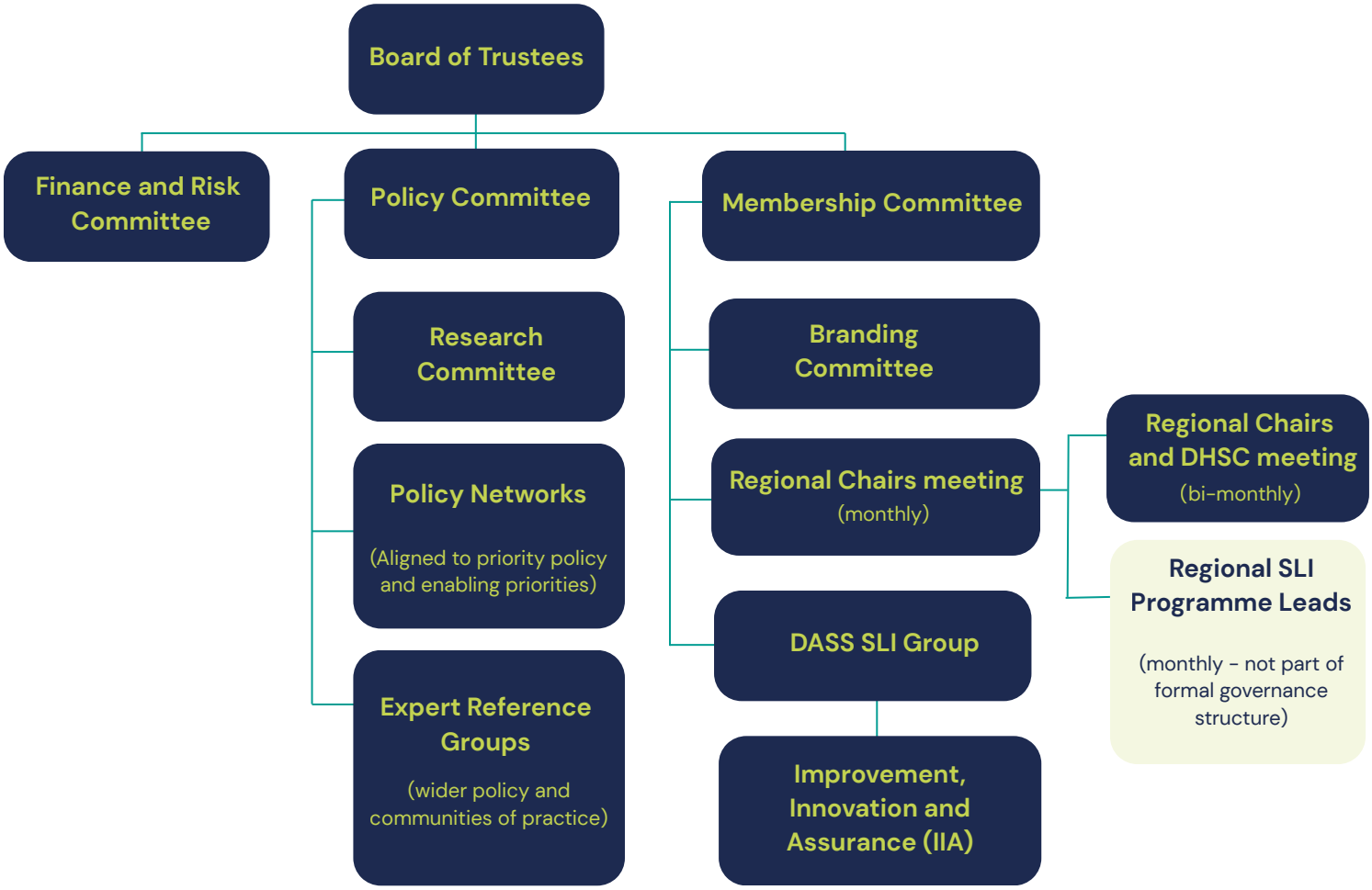
The ADASS policy cycle has a number of key dates and events which take place throughout the year. This includes the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Policy Leads meetings, Committee meetings, the Spring and Autumn Surveys and the National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC). The diagram below outlines when these take place.



NB - All decisions made at Policy Committee are ratified by the Board of Trustees
- This policy cycle feeds into national ADASS Business Plan and Delivery Plan

ADASS Board and Committee Structure

The diagram below outlines our Board and governance structure which supports collaboration and decision making.



ADASS President

The President's team consists of the President, Vice President (VP), and Immediate Past President (IPP). Led by the President, this team works collaboratively to advance ADASS's strategic aims, with responsibilities shared based on availability, expertise, and interest.

The President serves for a year as the lead spokesperson for ADASS, representing the charity at the highest level and supporting the delivery of its vision and objectives in collaboration with the Chair, Trustees, staff team, and key stakeholders. The President reports directly to the Chair of Trustees, works closely with the ADASS Chief Executive and is supported by the ADASS Director of Communications in relation to media, events and comms. They also build strong relationships with the wider ADASS Directors and their teams agreeing how to collaborate on policy priorities and being prepared for discussions with up-to-date positions and views.



ADASS President 26/27, Phil Holmes



ADASS President 25/26, Jess McGregor

Board and policy roles

ADASS Vice President

The Vice President (VP) role is open only to full, interim or acting DASS members of ADASS. They work alongside the President, gaining experience and building relationships with key stakeholders in preparation for their presidential year. Becoming VP is a three-year commitment, covering the VP year, the presidential year, and the Immediate Past President year (IPP). The IPP supports the President and provides continuity for a year following their term. Formally the handover from one President to another happens during Spring Seminar in April.



ADASS Chair

The Chair of ADASS is the lead accountable officer, ensuring the charity meets all governance requirements, is well-led, and delivers its strategic objectives. The Chair leads the board and supports the Chief Executive in providing strategic direction and operational oversight, ensuring financial sustainability and overseeing the charity's development in a changing social, economic, and political landscape. This voluntary role has a three-year term, with the potential for extension. The ADASS Chair is chosen from the group of trustees and does not necessarily have to be a serving DASS.

Honorary Treasurer

The Honorary Treasurer oversees the Association's finances, ensuring they are managed in line with the highest standards of probity. Responsibilities include overseeing the receipt and payment of all monies due to and from the Association, overseeing income arrangements such as sponsorships and grants, and advising Trustees on financial matters. The Treasurer also ensures the annual Statement of Accounts is prepared, audited, and included in the Annual Report. This voluntary role has a three-year term, with potential for extension. The Honorary Treasurer must be a current ADASS member and does not necessarily have to be a serving DASS.

National Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the charity's governing body. Trustee duties include public benefit, resource management, exercising care and skill, acting in the best interest of the Association and complying with law and governing documentation. This voluntary role has a three-year term, with the potential for extension. Trustees report to the Chair.

All Trustees must be members of the Association. There are up to eleven in number and consist of at least the Chair, the President, the Immediate Past President, the Vice President, and the Honorary Treasurer.

Policy Lead or Co-Lead

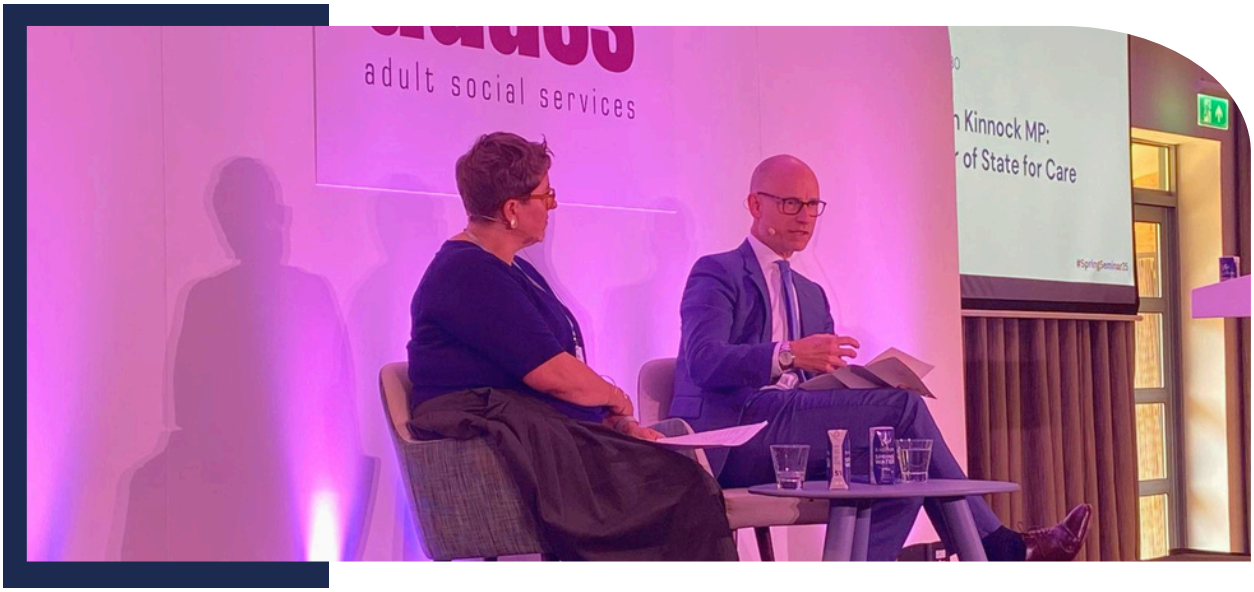
The Honorary Treasurer oversees the Association's finances, ensuring they are managed in line with the highest standards of probity. Responsibilities include overseeing the receipt and payment of all monies due to and from the Association, overseeing income arrangements such as sponsorships and grants, and advising Trustees on financial matters. The Treasurer also ensures the annual Statement of Accounts is prepared, audited, and included in the Annual Report. This voluntary role has a three-year term, with potential for extension. The Honorary Treasurer must be a current ADASS member and does not necessarily have to be a serving DASS.



Want to find out more?

If you would like to find out more about any of the roles outlined above, please get in touch with us via team@adass.org.uk

ADASS Events



Spring Seminar

The Spring Seminar is our annual event for ADASS members with over 300 attendees each year. It takes place at Wyboston Lakes Conference Centre for 2.5 days in the last week of April and provides members with the opportunity to hear from key speakers, discuss shared priorities, and share practice.

Members pay to attend, stay on-site, and enjoy dinner and social activities after the main programme. The event begins with the ADASS AGM and is followed by a members-only policy session. The programme includes plenary sessions planned by ADASS and workshops organised by regions and sponsors. External speakers include sector leaders, researchers, Ministers, and individuals with lived experience. Most dinners and evening activities are exclusive to delegates.

The event also marks the official handover to the new ADASS Presidential team, with the new President opening the second day and the new Vice President closing the event. Journalists also attend, and a small exhibition, usually featuring 8-10 stands, is set up in the foyer.

Policy Day

This is a key in-person event for ADASS policy leads.

This away day provides an important opportunity to engage in discussions on setting priorities for the upcoming year's delivery plan, addressing key policy issues and developing tactics and key stakeholders to advance our influencing goals effectively.

National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCASC)

The National Children and Adult Services Conference is a key annual event for councillors, directors, senior officers, directors of public health, policy makers and service managers, and any individuals or organisations with responsibilities for children and adult services in the statutory, voluntary and private sector.

The conference is an annual must-attend opportunity for those with an interest in social care, children's services, education, health and related fields to network with peers and hear the very latest thinking on key policy and improvement agendas. Organised in partnership by the Local Government Association (LGA), Association of Directors of Social Services (ADASS) and Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS), this vital conference and exhibition is regularly attended by more than 1,000 people. In recent years we have also worked with colleagues with lived experience to change the way in which NCASC is planned and delivered to ensure that co-production is now a key theme running throughout the conference in terms of speakers, delegates, plenaries and workshops.

The programme consists of a mix of keynote and other significant plenary sessions by leading experts in the adult, children, health and education sectors. There will also be opportunities to take part in a variety of participatory breakouts and networking sessions and to talk to hundreds of exhibitors.



ADASS Surveys

ADASS conducts two major surveys each year—the Spring Survey and the Autumn Survey. These surveys gather vital data from councils, providing insight into key pressures and emerging trends in the sector.

The Spring Survey typically launches in April and the Autumn Survey in September. With consistently over 90% response rate, these surveys are a very significant collective activity which helps individual directors locally and ADASS (regions and nationally) to articulate the key challenges and opportunities facing councils (and therefore older and disabled people, carers, providers and others). It is influential both for now and the future. It is also a key platform of communication with civil servants, Ministers and MPs and an important interface with journalists and the public. We rely on Directors to continue submitting their returns to ensure these surveys remain a powerful tool, so thank you in advance for your contributions!

You can view all past surveys on our website.

Our most recent surveys



View Spring Survey 2026



View Autumn Survey 2025

Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI)

We are committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse environment where every individual - regardless of background, identity, or circumstance - feels valued, respected, and empowered. Our vision is to lead the sector by example, promoting fair opportunities and ensuring that the views of everyone, including those from marginalised communities, are recognised, valued, and actively involved in shaping our work and policies.

As part of our commitment to EEDI we ask our members, trustees and employees to complete an EEDI survey. This allows us to understand our membership more so we continue to learn, reflect and identify areas where we need to improve.

Explore our EEDI commitment in more detail here.

Co-production

In April 2025, we published our co-produced Co-production Vision, our commitment to making co-production part of ADASS culture—starting from where we are, and working together to go further.

It was shaped by the voices of people with lived experience, ADASS staff, trustees and members, and colleagues in ADASS regions. You can read more about our mission and the actions we're taking to achieve it on our website. The work continues to be led by the ADASS Co-production Steering group and if you're interested in learning more, please get in touch with charlotte.newman@adass.org.uk.



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Care Can't Wait

Realising the potential of social care so that everyone can live a good life

In April 2025, we launched 'Care Can't Wait', a bold new public awareness campaign.

At its best, adult social care enables hundreds of thousands of us to live meaningful lives at home and in our communities. But it isn't always there for everyone who needs it.

Care Can't Wait is a platform for people who rely on care and support to share their story. Together, we're calling for the care everyone deserves — so that it can work for all of us.

The campaign features powerful short films and photography from people across England whose lives have been transformed by high-quality adult social care.

If you would like to support the campaign or share your story, please contact ADASS Campaigns Officer Isla Thompson: Isla.Thompson@adass.org.uk

Explore Care Can't Wait here: https://www.adass.org.uk/care-cant-wait/



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Contact Us

If you have any questions or need support, our team is here to assist.

Media & Campaigns

mediaenquiries@adass.org.uk

Events

events@adass.org.uk

Membership

ADASS_Admin@adass.org.uk

Development programmes

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Anything else

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This membership pack is updated periodically. If you want an updated copy please email team@adass.org.uk

Last updated October 2026

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