

What could AI mean in children's services?

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AI is going to transform society

"AI has the potential to be more transformative than electricity or fire."

Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google

Annual global investment in AI – c. \$1.5 trillion dollars

It is going to change society

It is going to change human beings

And... it is certainly going to change *children's social care*

Beyond children's services

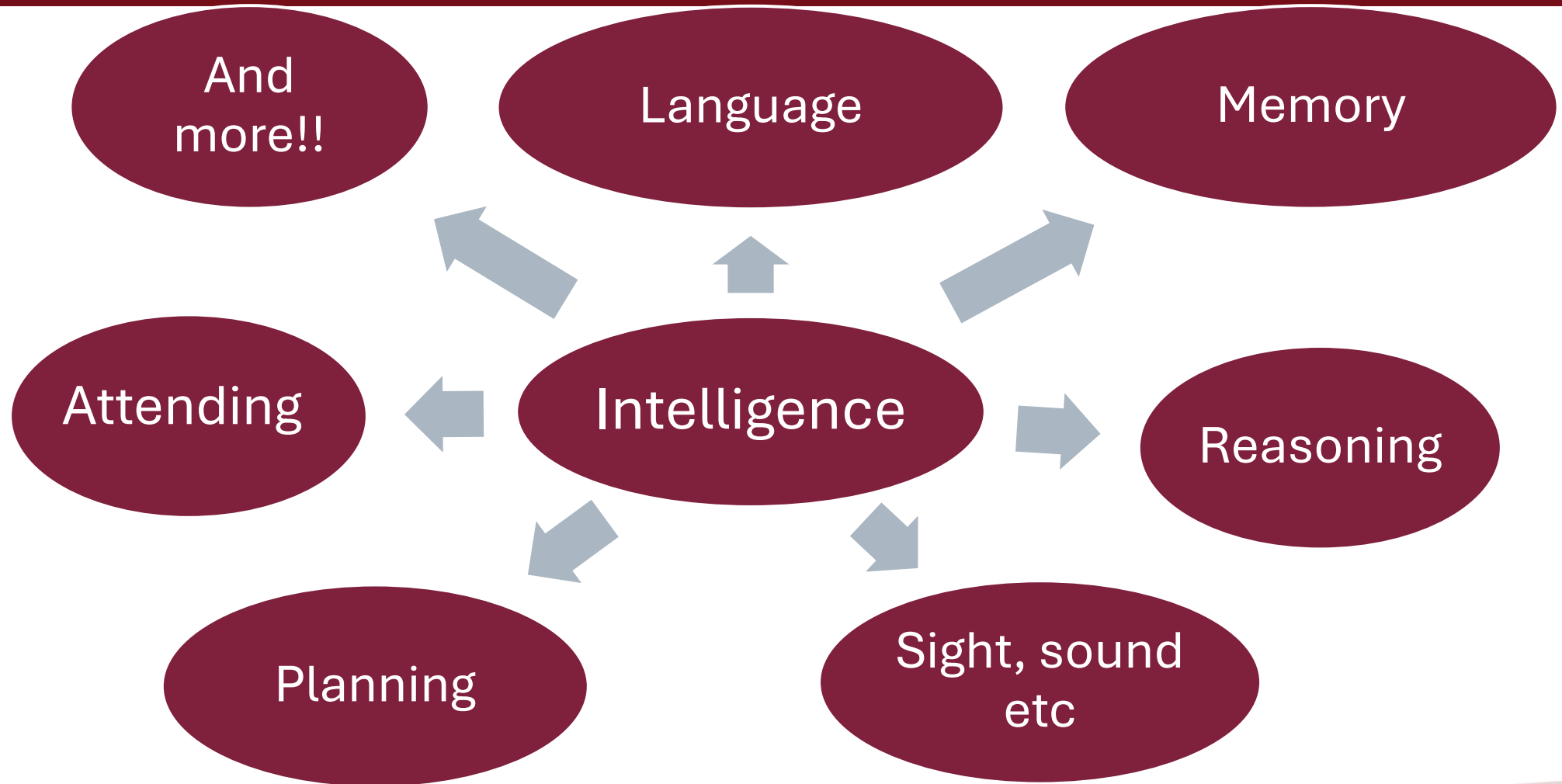
- Likely to create radical changes in society
- Many professions and jobs at risk
- Others will be radically changed
- But ... some good news:

*Social work is perhaps **THE** safest job*

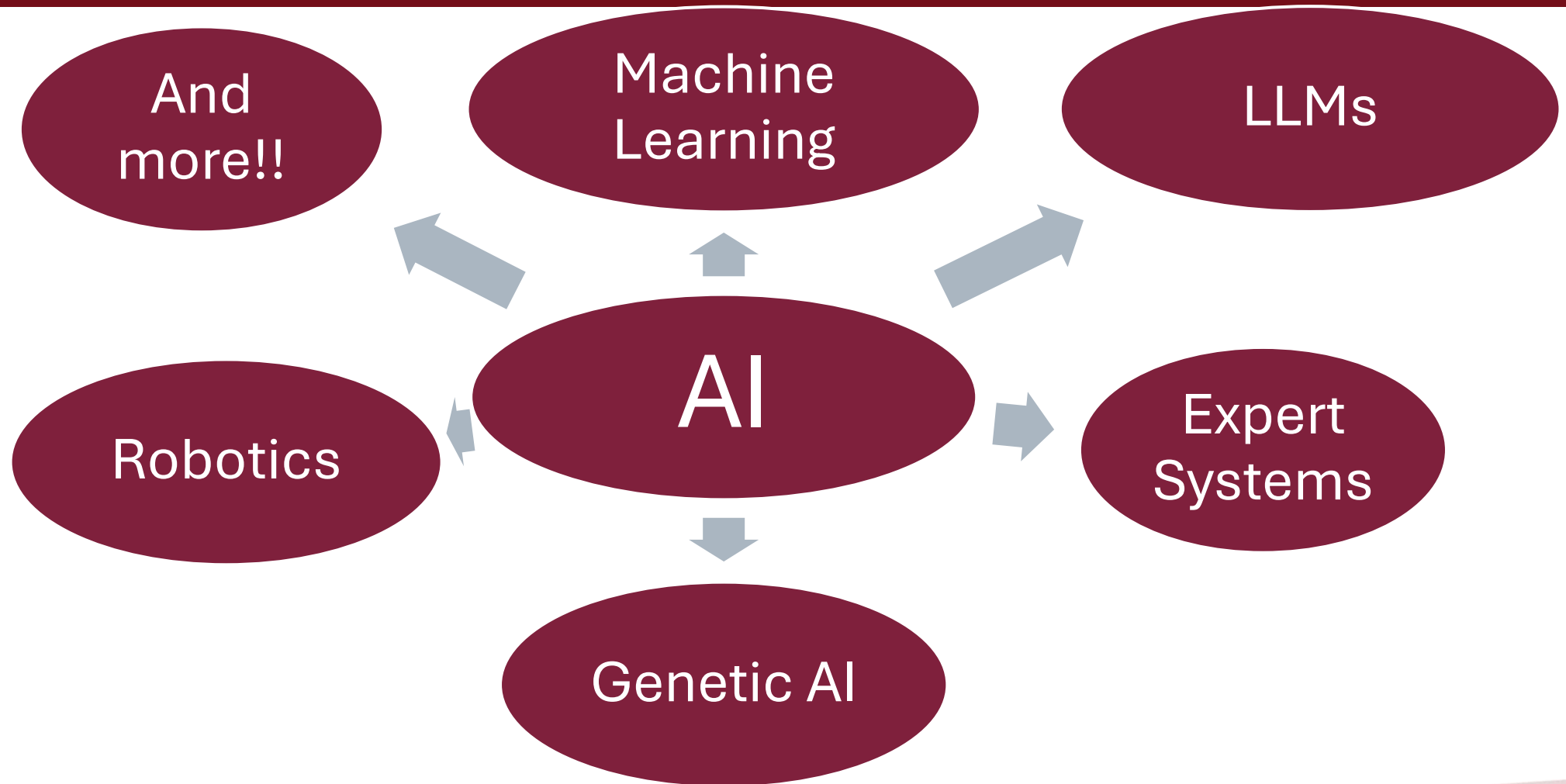
What I am going to cover

1. What is artificial intelligence (AI)? (simple version!)
2. Some ways it might change society and children's services
3. How we can ensure it has a positive impact in our sector

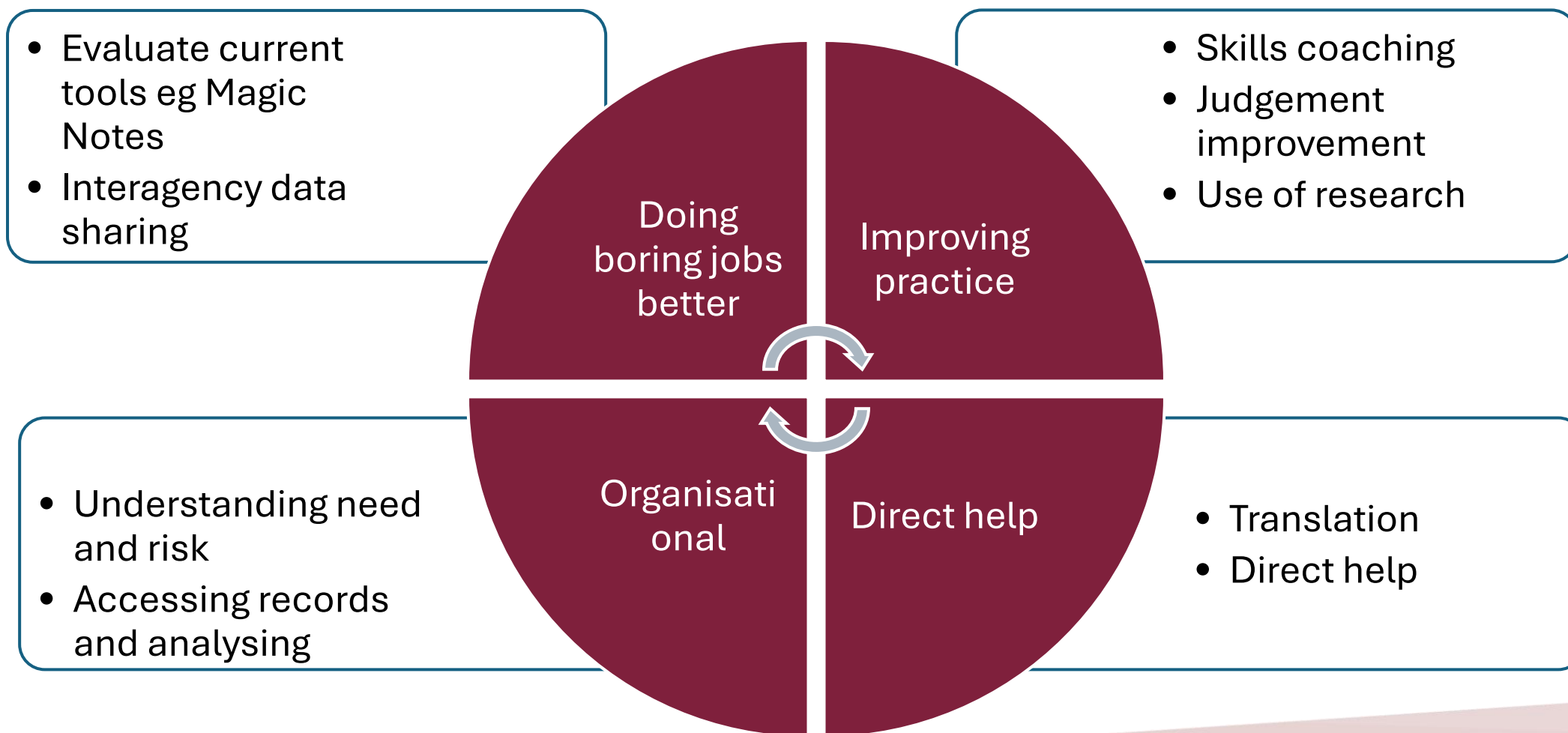
What is human intelligence?



AI is NOT just ChatGPT!!!



Some examples of current ideas from SCALE



The problems include...

“the benefits are so obvious – why evaluate?”

People are lazy

AI is credible

AI is not perfect

Services are underfunded



Example... Magic Notes

- BASW article: “AI note-taking: if you’re not already using it you should be”
- Reports huge savings of time, supporting person centred practice etc

Great! But...

AI is more than just AI...



Questions we might ask

AI:

- Do we know Magic Notes is the best way of doing this? Or how it works?
- Have we tested accuracy, hallucinations etc?
- Could we provide a free version that is just as good? Profit issues

People:

- How will it affect social worker's knowledge of families – their thinking
- Do we actually check outputs? (Humans are lazy and workers are busy)
- Does it in practice outsource decision making to AI?

Organisation:

- What will underfunded LAs do with all the saved time?
- More time for workers... or fewer social workers?

A Particular Challenge: Timescales

- AI is developing at high speed
- Leaders and workers will be offered answers to pressing problems
- Implementation will be far faster than we are used to



So what is to be done? Five Key Points

First – adopt, share and understand a framework for ethical use eg

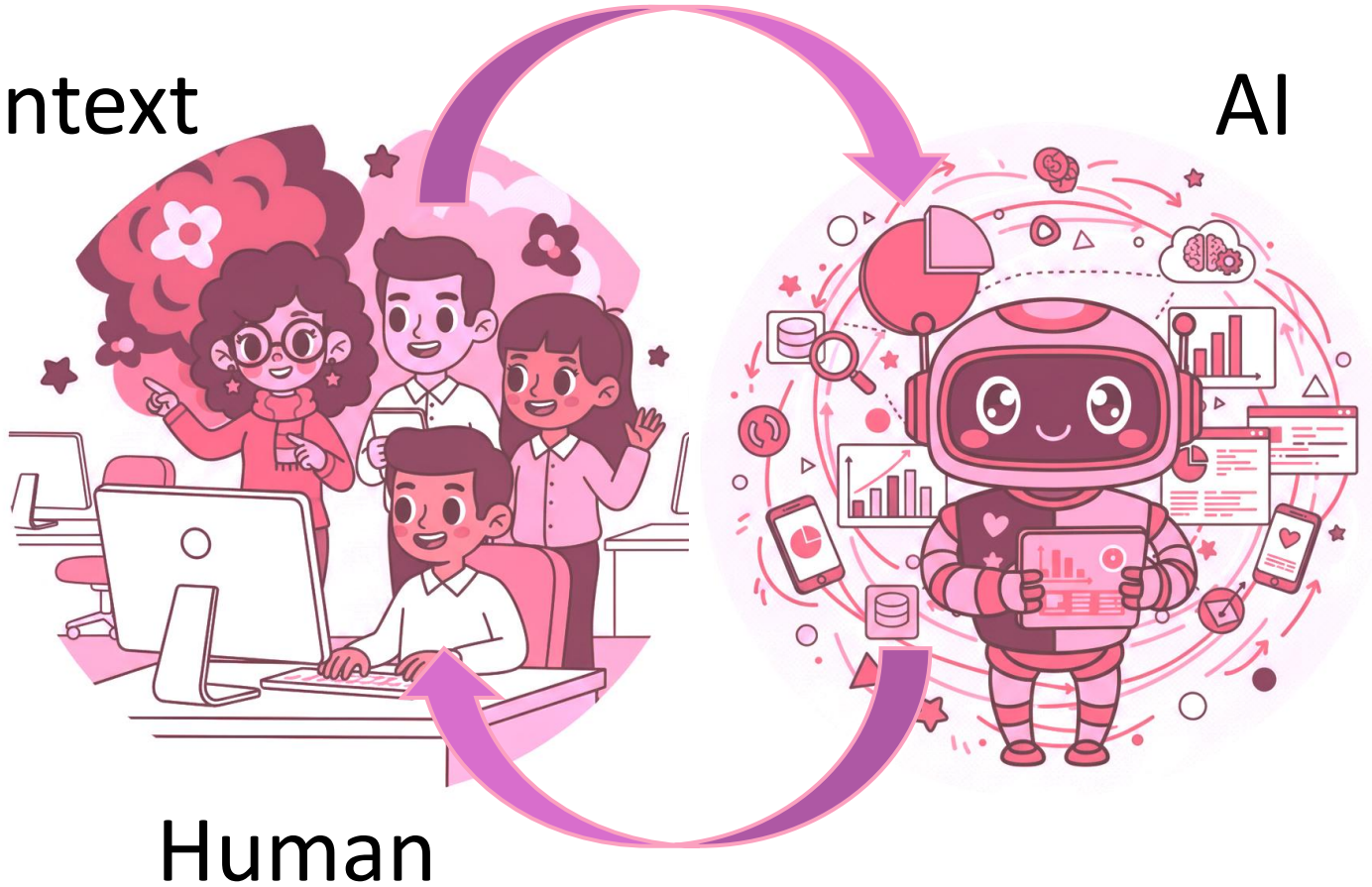
- Fairness
- Privacy
- Explainability
- Transparency
- Governance
- Regulation

Much work being done on these principles beyond our sector

AI can be a fantastic tool but to do that

We need
to keep
the
humans in
the loop

Context



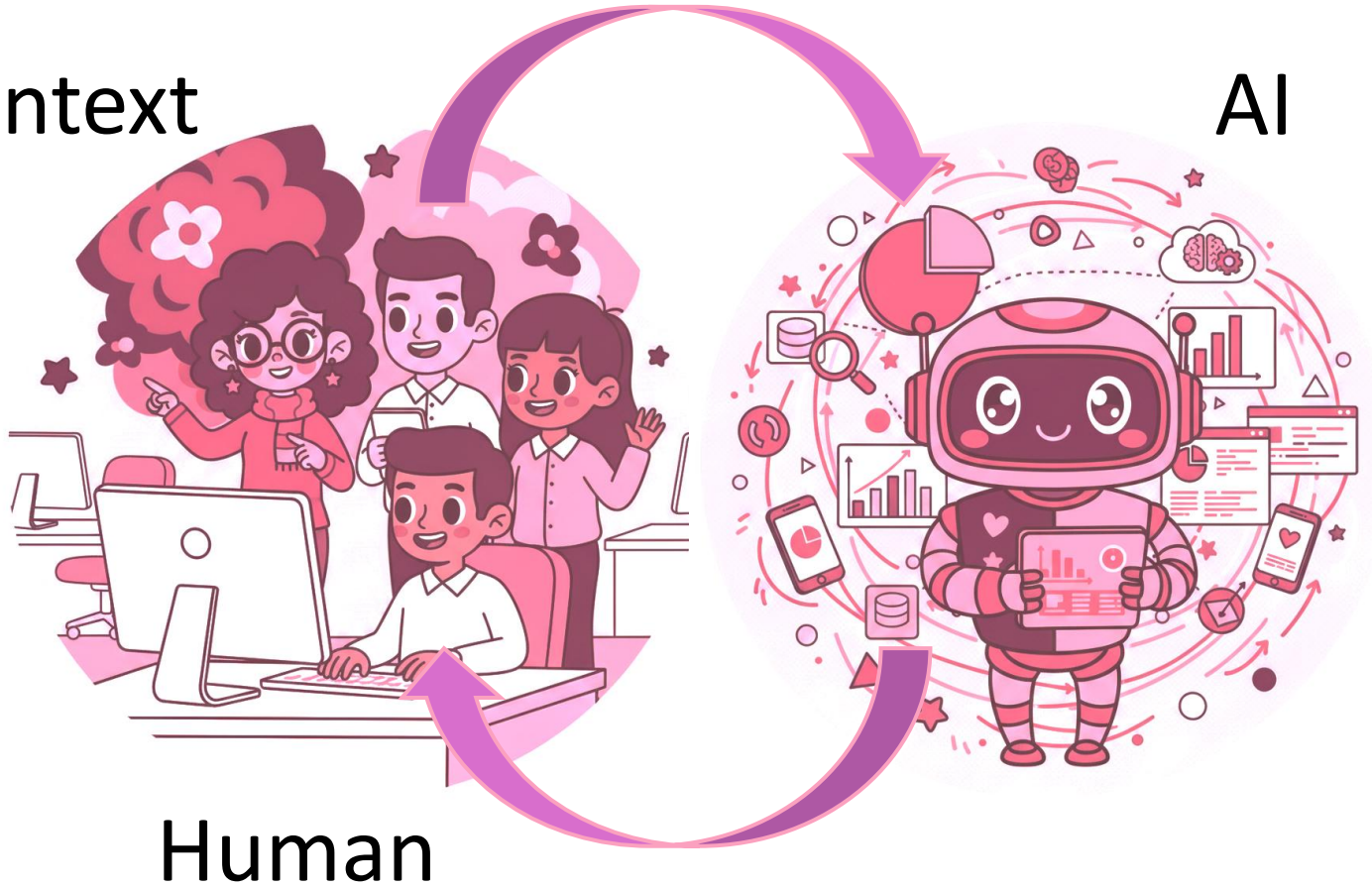
AI

And ensure
professional and
political control
of a powerful but
dangerous set of
technologies

2. and 3. Develop organizational and professional readiness

- To get best out of AI
- Understand limits
- Take responsibility for addressing those limits

Context



Human

AI

- Governance and trusted advice
- New research funding mechanisms and approaches?

4. Lead don't follow the use of AI

Work out what WE want from AI

- Not (just) the uses AI developers suggest
- Develop an agenda for AI to help

5. An interdisciplinary approach



Conclusion

The challenge is to ensure these exciting possibilities are developed:

- Ethically
- Collaboratively
- By and for the sector
- With interdisciplinary expertise
- Putting what will help children, families and workers at the heart of what we do