



Integrated Care  
Systems Network  
NHS Confederation

# Connected Leadership

A unique learning community for ICS leaders

In partnership with



**FORWARD**  
INSTITUTE

# Foreword

Since joining the NHS Confederation, I have been clear about how essential strong leadership is to the future of health and care. We know, for example, of the link between quality of leadership and outcomes. Cultures of respect and compassion toward staff have been shown to correlate with increased performance and quality of care.

With this in mind, we have partnered with the Forward Institute and together we offer ICS leaders a unique opportunity to develop through a learning community built around peer-to-peer collaboration: Connected Leadership.

I have been lucky enough to see first-hand many inspirational examples of good leadership across health and care. In the face of significant challenges – financial uncertainty, severe workforce shortages and overwhelming operational pressures to name a few – the best leaders have been resolute and reassuring. They have set bold ambitions for their organisations, developed clear strategies to achieve them and united staff behind the direction set.

Yet with the advent of statutory integrated care systems (ICSs), a new type of leadership is required. If systems are to achieve significant improvements in population health, then those leading them will need to look beyond the NHS. They will need to harness the experience and expertise of partners such as local authorities and the innovative organisations across the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. And they will need to foster meaningful ongoing co-production both between partners and with the communities they serve.

I know from close engagement with ICS leaders that, first, you are ready for this challenge and, second, you want the NHS Confederation to help you thrive in the new world of collaboration. We have listened carefully to your requests and now have a unique support offer for you.

This brochure outlines what Connected Leadership will offer you. While it is included as a benefit of ICS Network membership, the success of the programme will rely on close and trusting relationships between cohort members and this will in turn require commitment.

We hope you will be as excited about it as we are and I look forward to seeing how it supports you as leaders over the coming years.



**Matthew Taylor**  
**Chief Executive,**  
**NHS Confederation**

<sup>1</sup><https://bmjleader.bmj.com/content/3/4/129#ref-1>

# The ambition

Fulfilling the potential of ICSs and delivering the four ICS strategic purposes will require a type of leadership that we have not seen in health and care before.

By harnessing the opportunities presented by integration, and with radical thinking, meaningful collaboration and bold action, system leaders have an opportunity to bring about long-lasting change for the populations you serve.

The Connected Leadership programme has been co-created with system leaders to achieve this ambition, and will further develop your leadership capabilities at this time of intense transition.



If you think competition is hard, you should try collaboration.

**An ICS chief executive**

## What you have told us, and why a different approach is needed now



Many ICS leaders have worked in the NHS for most of their careers with colleagues who have only ever known the purchaser-provider culture. Changing these embedded ways of working will require space to establish a new way of thinking, so you can become enablers and facilitators to collaboration.



This extensive level of change will require energy, ingenuity and resilience, and is most likely to be achieved through working together with a trusted and committed group of peers, sharing your experiences and learning.



Strong, inclusive system leadership will be essential for strengthening local relationships and agreeing system goals. Establishing your system leadership style will set the tone for everything else. Having time out for reflection, developing tools to think differently and having some mutual support will therefore be important for you and for your system.

# What is Connected Leadership?

**Connected Leadership is based upon an approach to leadership development led by the Forward Institute.**

This development approach will see each cohort of leaders become a dynamic and consistent learning community that evolves together over time, through a demanding yet ultimately rewarding shared journey.

The critical component is peer-to-peer learning and collaboration, which maximises interaction and exploration. The programme will facilitate a safe space for reflection on current leadership challenges and use peer insight to help you overcome these more effectively.

It will bring perspectives from beyond the world of health and care to inspire fresh thinking and to inspire cross-sector collaboration.

ICSs are at very different stages of evolution and have radically different needs depending on their context. The programme will be sensitive to these differences to help you get the most from the experience.

Working with participants, the programme will be continually reviewed and iterated to meet the specific needs of each cohort.

**The programme will help leaders deliver the four ICS strategic purposes by:**



## **Building a Learning Community**

Fostering trusted relationships between ICS leaders to share support and expertise.



## **Igniting Collaboration**

Tuning up the mindsets, behaviours and deep relationships needed to enable distributed leadership.



## **Spreading Innovation**

Helping ICS leaders share innovations and best practice and translate them back to their own systems.



## **Growing Networks**


Connecting with wider system players beyond health to stimulate fresh thinking and collaborate on system challenges.

# Who is the Connected Leadership programme for?

Connected Leadership is available to all integrated care board (ICB) chief executives, ICB chairs and integrated care partnership (ICP) chairs as a benefit of your ICS Network membership.

The programme will start with a 'pioneer cohort' of leaders from across different systems. While progressing through this first learning programme, members of the pioneer cohort will be asked for input into shaping the full programme on behalf of the whole ICS leadership community.

System leaders from ICSs outside this first cohort may be asked to participate in specific elements of the programme, and subsequent cohorts will begin later in the year.



Connected Leadership is available to all ICB chief executives and chairs, and ICP chairs as a benefit of your ICS Network membership.

# How will Connected Leadership run?

Provisional dates for the eight programme days are listed below and a commitment to attending all of these is a key requirement.

**Exact dates will be confirmed with cohort participants in due course.**



Each cohort will meet four times a year in person, for an initial period of two years, to build a cohesive group with a collective mission and the skills needed to deliver it.

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Eight programme days will blend external speakers, peer action learning, deep dives into participant-chosen issues, and foundational skills for system leadership.

3

Experiential learning through two Leadership Exchanges will provide an immersive opportunity to observe other leaders within their roles and hone your own leadership.

We will support you to commission small groups within your own organisation to undertake 'field visits' to gain insight and inspiration from innovation across your system.

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You will be provided with resources and exercises for teams (made freely available under a Creative Commons licence) so you can keep your organisation with you as you develop your leadership.




# About the Forward Institute

The Forward Institute is a non-profit organisation committed to building a movement for responsible leadership.

It works with leaders committed to tackling the most important and complex challenges faced by society. The organisation's focus is cross-sector learning and collaboration, creating space for challenging conversations and exploring the real dilemmas leaders face.

The work brings perspectives from beyond the world of health and care, to inspire fresh thinking and to ignite cross-sector collaboration. Guided by the lived experience of over 500 Fellows in senior leadership roles within private and public sector organisations, the Forward Institute's 'Creative Commons' philosophy ensures resources are available to your wider team, so your system shares this development journey.



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# Feedback on the Forward Institute's programmes



“Put simply, it has been one of the most professionally rewarding activities I’ve undertaken in 20 years. The programme brought me together with a stellar cast of public and private sector leaders, all cohered by the superb team at the Forward Institute. I learned a lot through the programme, about myself and about the institutions I visited. The experiences have unquestionably made me a better leader and the network I’ve built will undoubtedly help me in the future. The programme was a source of inspiration.”

**Jon Townrow**  
**Lieutenant Colonel, British Army**



“Meeting and collaborating with such a broad and talented group of senior leaders has been exceptionally rewarding. The whole experience has been invaluable.”

**Chris Bird**  
**General Counsel and Company Secretary,**  
**Wellcome Trust**



“One of the most remarkable things about the programme was watching people change in front of you - seeing the changes they were making in their organisations and in their overall approach was inspiring.”

**Suhaila Harji**  
**Chief of Staff, PGIM Investments**

More views about programmes run by the Forward Institute can be found on the Forward Institute website.





# Next steps

If you are interested and available to take part in all dates of this programme, or have any other questions, please contact

✉ **[William.Pett@nhsconfed.org](mailto:William.Pett@nhsconfed.org)**

Further detail about the programme will be made available in due course. Those who are not shortlisted for the pioneer cohort will be added to a waiting list for the next cohort.

18 Smith Square  
Westminster  
London SW1P 3HZ

020 7799 6666  
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@NHSConfed

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