



**Integrated Care  
Systems Network**  
NHS Confederation

# ICS Network Progress report

April – October 2021



# Introduction

2021 has been an important year for integrated care systems (ICSs) as they respond to immediate pressures on health and care services, work towards their longer-term ambitions for improving population health and reducing health inequalities, and put plans in place to deliver statutory establishment in April 2022.

Since its formal launch in March 2021, the NHS Confederation's Integrated Care Systems Network (ICS Network) has supported its members from across all 42 ICSs to exchange ideas, share experiences and challenges, and influence the national agenda. We have represented and influenced on behalf of our members through our policy work, media appearances and our work on the health and care bill. Our forums, roundtables and our annual conference have provided opportunities for ICS leaders to connect and share ideas and challenges. Our regular bulletins, WhatsApp group updates and website content have all helped to keep members supported and informed on the latest news, information and guidance that ICS leaders need to know.

As the only membership body for the whole health system, the NHS Confederation has a unique role to play in promoting collaboration and partnership working, bringing together all parts of the system to foster integration between services and leaders. Alongside their ICS Network member benefits, all ICSs can access a wider pool of NHS Confederation resources, publications, events and webinars, and have opportunities to address key system-wide themes and connect with wider NHS Confederation members to understand their experience and perspectives.

This report highlights how we have supported, represented, informed and connected our members throughout the past six months. We look forward to continue to work with ICSs as they strive to improve population health and transform delivery of health and social care across the country.

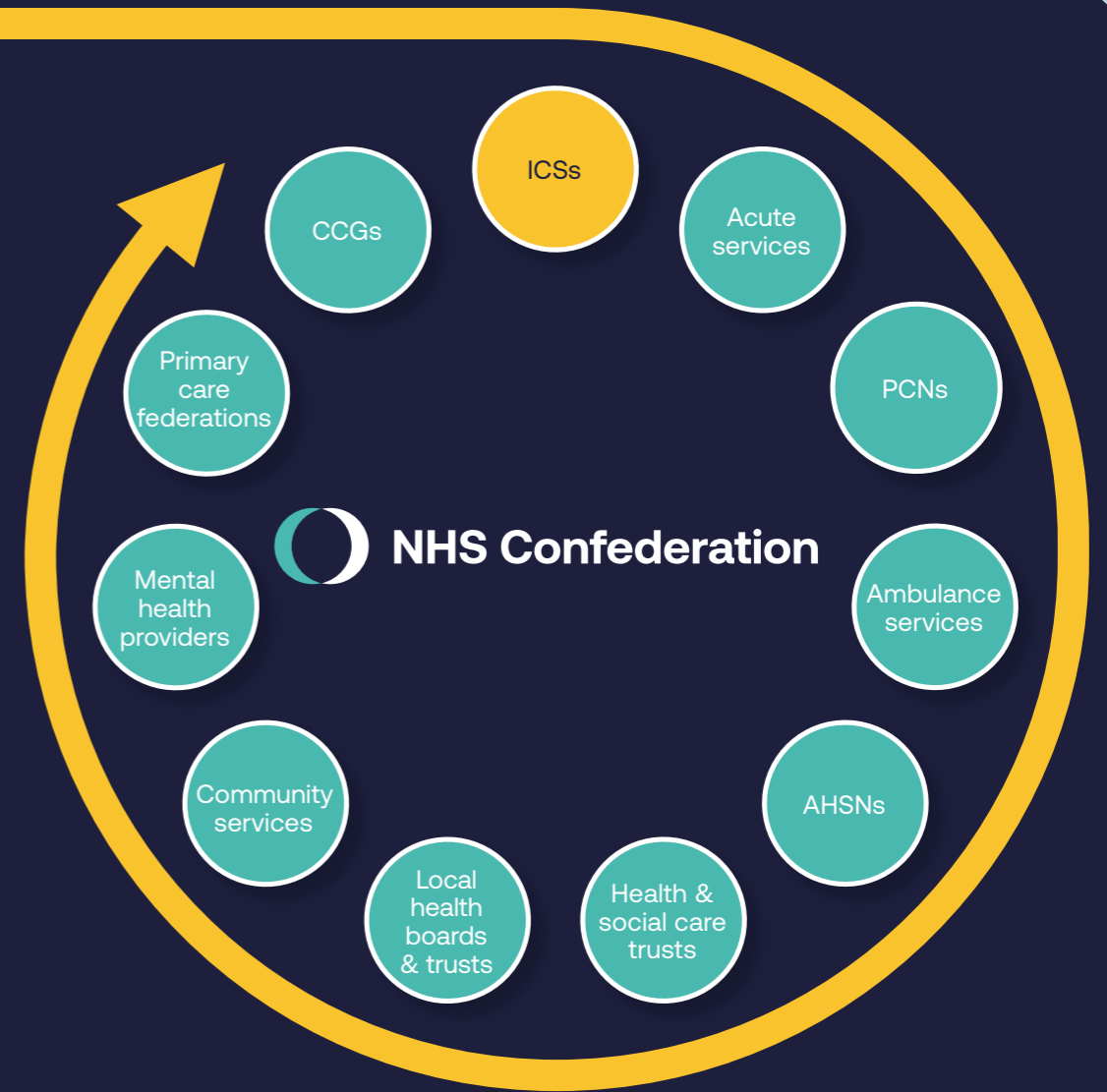


**Gill Morgan**  
Chair, ICS Network Advisorate



**Lou Patten**  
Director, ICS Network

## Bringing health and care together



“All ICSs can access a wider pool of NHS Confederation resources and connect with wider NHS Confederation members”

# Represent and influence

One of the key goals of the NHS Confederation's ICS Network is to influence national policy on key areas of interest to our members and to represent their views and voices on the national stage.

Over the past year, we have had a team dedicated to influencing the health and care bill. Lou Patten, director of the ICS Network and Dame Gill Morgan, chair of the ICS Network Advisorate, both gave evidence in person at the bill committee hearings, along with Matthew Taylor, the NHS Confederation chief executive and Danny Mortimer, deputy chief executive. We are engaged in the early discussions with ministers and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) about the forthcoming integration white paper.

We have engaged with ministers on key issues such as social care reform and elective recovery and convened roundtable discussions on issues including system regulation and public health reform. We have developed effective working relationships with colleagues in NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) and DHSC, which have allowed us to both inform and influence guidance on key topics such as provider collaboratives, ICS governance and system finance. Our close partnership with the Local Government Association has helped to reinforce the role of ICSs as a partnership of equals.

The NHS Confederation has also spoken out in the national media on behalf of ICS Network members, with statements on key issues including the health and care bill, NHS funding and the challenges facing the primary care sector.



# Support and inform


Our regular Spotlight sessions have helped to convene ICS leaders to discuss specific topics of interest, helping to support peer learning and sharing as well as drawing on expertise from other national partners such as Social Enterprise UK, the Independent Healthcare Providers Network, NHSEI and DHSC.

Our briefings on new pieces of national guidance help to bring out the main points that all ICS leads need to focus on, with recent publications including reports on integrated care boards and integrated care partnerships.

We ensure all members are kept updated with any news and announcements via our website, fortnightly ICS Leaders Bulletin, daily NHS Confederation bulletins and instant updates through our WhatsApp groups, which we use to share intelligence and seek real-time member feedback to support our influencing activities.

Our recent state of the nation survey captures the views from ICSs across the country on the major issues and challenges in the run up to April 2022. It will be shared as a public report later this year to ensure those voices are widely heard and influencing our national conversations.

We have also worked to support our ICS Network members by sharing and highlighting examples of best practice and have established a project to collate case studies from across the country on subjects facing all ICSs as they work towards April 2022.



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# Connect

Our regular ICS Network Advisorate and ICS Network Chairs and Leads meetings provide a dedicated independent space for ICS chairs and ICS executive leaders to exchange ideas, share experiences and challenges, and connect directly with policy makers to influence national thinking. This has included recent discussions with Health Education England, the Care Quality Commission and NHSEI.

Wider ICS members have been supported to connect with their peers through our dedicated forums, such as our system finance group and the ICS communications and engagement leads forum, helping to influence specific areas of work including ICS branding and naming conventions for ICSs and system finance policy. Alongside these forums, members can also connect to wider NHS Confederation activity and peer support on issues including provider collaboratives and place-based working, linking with peers from across the health and care sector. Members can also benefit from the NHS Confederation's leadership networks, including our Non-Executive Leaders Network, BME Leaders Network, LGBTQ+ Leaders Network and Health and Care Women Leaders Network.

The NHS Confederation's regional engagement team connects with their local ICSs as an additional form of support and advice, helping to support peer learning and sharing across the NHS Confederation's wider membership.

The ICS Network national conference provides a unique opportunity for ICS members to connect and engage in peer-to-peer discussion, learning and networking.



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# About

The NHS Confederation is the membership organisation that brings together, supports and speaks for the whole healthcare system in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The members we represent employ 1.5 million staff, care for more than 1 million patients a day and control £150 billion of public expenditure. We promote collaboration and partnership working as the key to improving population health, delivering high-quality care and reducing health inequalities.

The Integrated Care Systems Network is part of the NHS Confederation. As the only national network bringing together the leaders of health and care systems, it supports ICS leaders to exchange ideas, share experiences and challenges, and influence the national agenda.

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