

The ICS Network – supporting integration across health and social care

Overview

The Integrated Care Systems (ICS) Network is an independent national network which supports ICS leaders – including leaders of Integrated Care Partnerships (ICPs) – to exchange ideas, share learning, provide peer support and challenge, and influence the national agenda. It is the only national network supporting the leaders of all 42 integrated care systems in England.

Our role

The ICS Network helps systems to achieve their four purposes by providing two core services: 1) influencing the national context, by convening leaders and calibrating their views, to help to create an environment in which ICSs can successfully deliver on behalf of their population; and 2) enabling systems to deliver improvement impact through peer support, challenge and learning among its members and with wider system partners.

The ICS Network works predominately with ICS leaders, including local government leaders through ICPs, by coordinating several forums to facilitate peer support and learning, such as our ICB Chief Executives and Chairs Forums, ICP Chairs Forum, Health Inequalities Reference Group, and Public Health ICS Forum. A crucial aspect of our programme is working closely with other NHS Confederation networks and our wider national partners including the LGA and national VCSE partners to ensure we have a holistic offer for our members. We are working with national partners to establish a National ICP Forum that will provide a two-way exchange between ICS leadership, ministers, and wider Government departments. The ICS Network is complemented by wider leadership activities led through the NHS Confederation, including support for the development of place-based partnerships as well as integrated neighbourhood working.

Our unique value is in providing thought leadership and enabling and convening leaders to support one another, learn and improve as a collective, to help them perform to their best ability.

The NHS Confederation

While members of the ICS Network receive the benefits of our bespoke ICS programme set out in our strategy for 2024/25, they are also beneficiaries of wider NHS Confederation membership, where we consider ourselves the membership body for integration, convening all parts of the sector, including primary care, acute, community, mental health, and ambulance leadership.

No other organisation provides the same breadth and depth in membership across the NHS as the NHS Confederation, and that allows us to deliver powerful influencing and improvement work that spans the whole sector.

The future of the Network

In a crucial year with a new government appointed, one of our key aims is to continue making the case for the key role of ICSs in improving population health and health outcomes, enhancing productivity and value for money, supporting economic growth and assessing the quality and effectiveness of care provided. We will continue to advocate for integration across partnerships, patients and communities and ensuring that our members have the necessary support they need to transform the lives of their populations. In the long term, led by our ICS Network Board and membership, we aim to expand our role as a partner in delivering sector-led improvement programmes to help systems collectively tackle wicked problems and pursue solutions that make a genuine impact for their populations.