



What is integrated workforce thinking?

Improved outcomes in population health and healthcare is one of the fundamental purposes of integrated care systems (ICSs). To achieve this, partners from across both health and social care must come together to plan and develop a workforce that integrates and connects across all parts of the system to deliver personal, person-centred care to their local populations now and in the future. We understand that this is a new way of working for some in health and social care, so this guide builds on emerging lessons to support you to do this successfully across sectors and within multi-agency services.

Integrated workforce thinking is when leaders across systems work together to consider population health, health and care needs and their system strategy, so they can plan a workforce that delivers population health and person-centred care within their communities.

However, integrated workforce thinking is more than just about bringing together what different organisations are already doing; it recognises the complexity of the health and social care system, the challenges, and the need to build on strengths so that new and creative solutions can be formulated through joint working.

The current capacity pressures in the system mean that new ways of working will be paramount to delivering health and social care across our communities. Building relationships across partners within systems, where there is a shared understanding of each organisation's strengths, is key to successful future delivery.

Successful workforce integration provides a positive experience for people who draw on care and support. This is achieved when health, social care, voluntary sector, unpaid carers and local partners work across systems, to assure that people in their communities are always at the centre of their care in the context of their whole lives.

This joined-up way of working is achieved through leaders building strong relationships across systems to create a culture and workforce that champions integration and the opportunities that it provides for both the people who draw on care and health and staff.

Integrated thinking should always ensure that the person-centred principles of autonomy, choice, self-determination, freedom, and responsibility are at the forefront of every decision made for delivery of care.

Any service redesign that informs a reorganisation or reskilling of workforces across systems should be informed by population health and person-centred care. It can be supported by taking into consideration the social and environmental factors that influence our health, such as education and income, and the strengths talents and assets within individuals and in communities.

Personalised care means that people have the resources and information to look after their own health as well as having control over the way that their care is planned and delivered when needed. Preventative support to maintain the wellbeing and independence of individuals in the community must also play a part in decisions made about use of resources. These person-centred principles will help people live the lives they choose based on what matters to them.

For example, a person living with dementia, learning disability or autism should be encouraged to make decisions about their own care, based on what matters to them. Care plans should be created with the individual and a health or care professional so that they can decide how they want to receive their care, should they need to access emergency treatment. Through doing this, staff have an instant understanding of what care that person

needs as well as learning about their life and what matters to them in their care. The person receiving care has confidence that they are going to get access to the best care for them as an individual.

Changing the way that systems work and think to become more integrated can be a challenge at first. However, by understanding what each sector can bring can significantly improve outcomes for people in our communities and the experience and opportunities for the workforce.