



# Top tips for 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.**

We have pulled together a series of top tips from a range of people across health and social care with some experience of integrating their workforce thinking.

## Governance

It is important that the people responsible for integration set out governance arrangements to ensure collaborative working across the system.

### Top tips



**1** Agree and model the behaviours of integrated thinking and working.

**2** Set and agree a transparent framework and system governance that incorporates risk share and clear ownership.

**3** Think about how to incorporate checks and challenges to ensure agility in the process.

**4** Do not overcomplicate decision-making. Agree how you will prioritise as a team by concentrating on something that is

important to everybody, for example, getting people home.

**5** Consider pooling funding to bring in external expertise, to maximise resources to achieve the desired outcomes.

**6** Consider identifying a cross-sector project team to lead development of the thinking and planning.

**7** Consider how digital solutions such as virtual wards and digital care plans can support the development and implementation of the workforce plan.

## Changing cultures

Culture is an integral part of establishing an integrated working environment. Historically, organisations within systems have been working in silo, so it is important that culture change is addressed from the offset when beginning to integrate workforce thinking.

### Top tips

**1** Focus on culture change in systems by listening and engaging with leaders from each organisation to agree how integration can be achieved at a system level.

2

Understand systems' ICS strategy and population health data to understand how this can impact ways of working.

3

Take time to build relationships to understand who is who, what each other's contributions are and how organisations can work together best to deliver better quality care and support population health.



To help build relationships, encourage proactive contact between colleagues across the system who have similar roles, rather than waiting for formal meetings to begin.

Systems need to invest time in creating a culture to support integration across services. To help systems, we have identified ‘six ways to create a culture for integration’:

1. Be prepared to experiment and learn together by having a test-and-learn mindset.
2. Have a clear shared vision of the aims that your system wants to achieve.
3. System leaders need to set the tone by fostering a shared sense of belonging and holding systems to account.
4. Get to know each other and understand each other's worlds. You will need to understand each other's knowledge and perspectives to be successful.
5. Use data on population health to facilitate conversation and prompt discussion.
6. Bring people together from different parts of the system to share challenges and strengths.

For further information, please read our [Six ways to create a culture for integration](#) resource.

# Communication

Communication is key to developing a shared understanding of what an integrated working looks like. We are all new to this way of working so it is important that learning is shared continuously.

## Top tips

**1** Communicate across the system at every stage of the process, internally and externally.

**2** Celebrate success and share learning from what has worked locally, within the system and nationally.



# Data

Data is crucial to integrating workforce thinking, to provide a shared understanding of the challenges across systems.

## Top tips

**1** Ensure a clear understanding of the current and future health, care and support needs of your local population through Projecting Older People Population Information (POPPI) or Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI).

**2** Identify where the local workforce demographics can be obtained and analysed along with any other complementary data sources, such as the Office of National Statistics, ESR system, NHS Digital, Workforce

Disability Equality Standard (WDES),  
Workforce Race Equality Standard  
(WRES), NHS Staff Survey and the Adult  
Social Care Workforce Data Set (ASC-  
WDS)

**3** Consider having a data lead to collect information and share across all partners within the system.

**4** Demonstrate how data analysis has informed any decisions, and particularly potential biases of the data sets, to ensure any data gaps. For example, make sure geographical or ethnic indicators are noted and considered during decision-making.

