Be prepared to experiment and learn together

1 ICSs are still evolving; therefore it is important to be open to new ideas to find what is going to work for your system. All ICSs vary in population size, health needs, and geographical scale, as well as in rural, coastal, and urban challenges. This means that what works for one ICS might not work for another. Bearing this in mind, it is important to adopt a test and learn mindset, as what works for your system may take some time to achieve. To do this, we must ensure that we move away from a historical way of thinking to become more innovative in ideas and how we work.

It is important that we work together, learn from our mistakes, and share what we do and how it went, to enable others to build on this and make further improvements. Innovation often happens when there's no budget, where leaders encourage staff to risk trying new things, even if they fail. Being part of a learning community enables us to avoid some of the pitfalls and achieve more than we can on our own. This test-and-learn and share mindset should still be developed on sound governance, but not on restrictive compliance.

"Current policies make people anxious about who is responsible for risks, especially in a crisis. We need processes that encourage shared responsibility instead of shifting blame." – focus group member.

"During stressful times, people tend to stick to familiar methods out of fear and lack of time, which limits creativity and trying new things."- focus group member.

"There's a training gap in how workers and partners see and handle risks, especially during busy times. This includes understanding unusual risks."- focus group member.

Top tips

- Share best practice across the system through innovation champions, community of practice, peer group coaching and mentoring, sharing and learning sessions and training and development opportunities.

- Implement joint training in risk management.

- Enhance risk management training - shared ownership of risk: current policies make people anxious about who is responsible for risks, especially in a crisis. We need processes that encourage shared responsibility instead of shifting blame.

- Foster creativity and collaboration in multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) meeting to discuss the impacts of risk decisions.

- Team understanding and trust: MDTs help members understand each other's roles and perspectives, fostering diversity, mutual respect and trust.

Case studies

Humber and North Yorkshire ICB

Find out how Humber and North Yorkshire ICB integrated their health and social care services to establish a centre for frailty to meet the needs of their population in this case study: A place to meet the needs of people living with frailty: Jean Bishop Integrated Care Centre. This idea was born from the team agreeing to test a new way of working to meet the needs of their elderly population. This model around frailty has been recognised as a great piece of work that is being adapted in other areas across Hull and North Yorkshire.

Surrey ICB

Surrey ICB has created a clear shared vision for health and social care integration, focusing on ICS and digital/data initiatives with a strong emphasis on collaborative workforce strategies. They developed a three shifts model for preventive care to address workforce and budget challenges.

To do this, an innovation fund was secured and supported by the council, which facilitated the development of a co-created strategy with equal input from various sectors. They launched this in July 2022, and since then, the strategy has seen mostly positive outcomes from 32 pioneers. Key learnings highlight the importance of cross-sector collaboration for cultural change, the impact of small funding on innovation, and the need to scale successful initiatives.

One of the most successful pioneer programs in Surrey involves the use of acoustic monitoring in care homes. This non-intrusive digital system enhances resident safety by using sound detection to alert carers when a resident moves or makes noise, allowing staff to respond quickly to potential issues like falls without needing regular checks. Since implementing this technology, falls have been reduced by 50 per cent, lowering hospital admissions, improving safety, and allowing for more efficient care by freeing up time for personalised attention. This system has significantly

improved fall rates within Surrey, alleviating pressure on the wider system.