

Use data to facilitate the conversation and prompt discussion



Gaining insight into the health and social care needs of your community through population health data is an effective approach.

Data comes in many forms and everyone will interpret the data slightly differently depending on their own experience and confidence with using it.

Each ICS is different with different populations and differing needs. Workforce data alongside population health data can help identify workforce gaps and prepare for future demand. Factors such as the presence of rural or coastal areas with high retirement populations may result in increased demand for care homes and hospital admissions for vulnerable patients. Alternatively, if your system consists of more urban areas with higher student populations, the demand for mental health services may be greater.

When we start digging, we can become overwhelmed by the volume of data available from different parts of the system or that some data isn't available or it's collected in different ways. There is value in collective discussion about what data we want and why, getting everyone around the table to have a conversation to increase people's understanding of the data.

When we expect people to give us data on a particular issue without explaining to them what we are going to do with it, this can lead to a reluctance to share and less effort being made to ensure the data is accurate.

“When we fail to explain what the data means to us and to understand how it may be interpreted differently by colleagues in other parts of the system, misunderstandings can arise, making the data less helpful than expected.”- focus group member

“Trusting relationships are essential for effectively sharing data, as they determine what data is shared, when it is shared, and how it is interpreted.”- focus group member

Case studies

NHS Black Country ICB

NHS Black Country ICB have developed their joint forward plan. [Access the plan on their website.](#)

Sussex ICS

The adult social care workforce data set from Skills for Care has been valuable in facilitating discussions among health and social care partners within the ICS in Sussex. Because of the different structures and funding sources involved, it can be challenging for those less familiar with adult social care to understand the wide range of individuals that comprise the social care workforce. Read about the case study on the [Skills for Care website.](#)

Further reading

- Take a look at the data section in our [integrated workforce thinking guide](#) for information and links to further resources on how to provide a shared understanding of the challenges across the system.
- Skills for Care workforce data [ICB area summary reports.](#)