



Integrated Care Systems in England: What SLTs Need to Know

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What is an integrated care system?

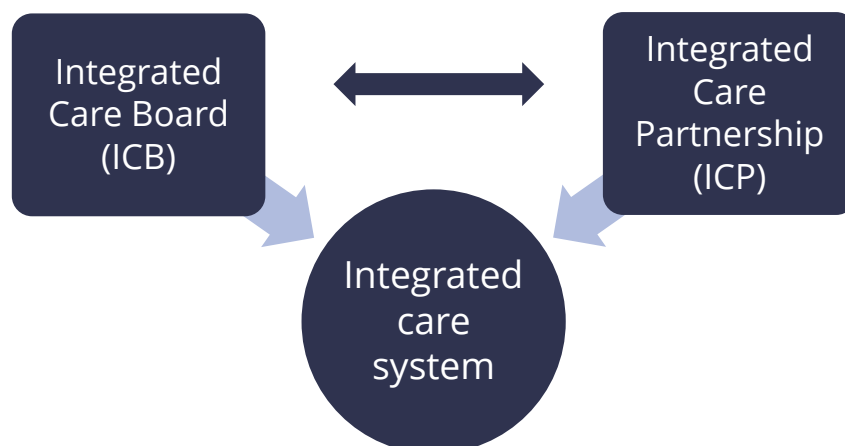
“Integrated care systems are partnerships that bring together providers and commissioners of NHS services across a geographical area with local authorities and other local partners to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their population.”

- The King’s Fund

There are 42 integrated care systems (ICSs) for the whole of England. This compares to more than 200 clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), so they will be covering a much larger footprint. The ICSs are formed around populations and resources allocated by head of population.

How will they work?

Each ICS is made up of two bodies – the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP).



The ICB takes on the responsibilities for planning and commissioning services that were previously held by the clinical commissioning group (CCG). All areas are required to have an ICB in place by 1 July 2022. Each ICB will produce a five-year plan (updated annually) for how NHS services will be delivered to meet local needs.

The ICP is a partnership between the NHS and local authorities within the ICS area. The ICP will develop an integrated care strategy, which sets out how the wider health and care needs of the local population will be met.

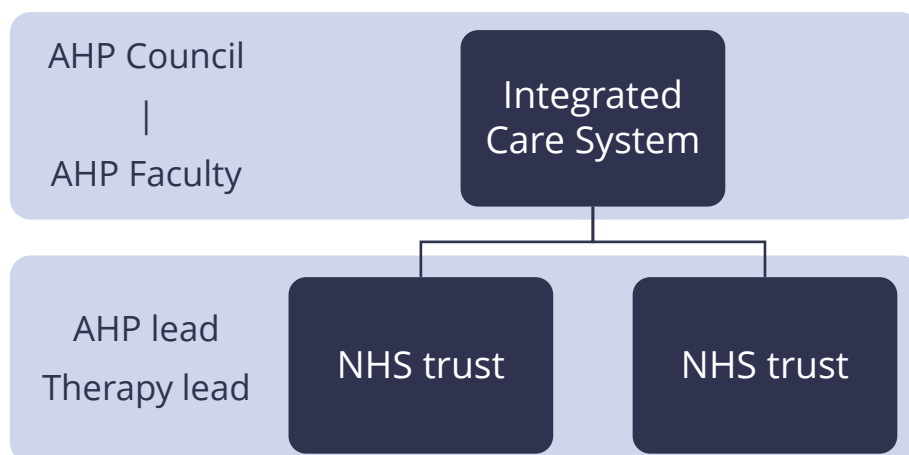
Services will be delivered by provider collaboratives – partnerships between a number of different NHS providers across an ICS. This may also include local authority, social care, private, voluntary and independent sector providers.

[Find out more about integrated care systems](#)

How are AHPs represented in ICSs?

Each ICS has, or will be in the process of developing, an AHP Council, which brings together chief AHPs from local providers across the system. Their purpose is to ensure a strategic, system-wide approach to service priorities. Councils aim to create a culture to support collaboration and the delivery of integrated care pathways, and raise the profile of the AHP workforce to maximise their contribution to the delivery and transformation of health and care services

Each ICS should also have an [AHP Faculty](#) – this is a sub-group of the AHP council, with a focus on workforce. Their purpose is to work together to address and coordinate AHP workforce supply, education and training across an ICS.



Each NHS trust should also have an AHP Lead, who usually sits under the Chief Nurse, and may be the first point of contact with AHP Councils. Trusts may also have a Therapy Lead that has responsibility for three or four therapies, including speech and language therapy.

Some systems have appointed a Chief AHP to lead the AHP workforce across their system – but not all ICSs have this role.

There are also [important regional structures](#) – each of the seven NHS regions has a regional AHP board made up of senior strategic AHP representatives from NHS England and Improvement, ICS AHP councils, higher education institutes, Health Education England (HEE), and Local Authorities.

Why should I get involved?

The development of ICSS provides an exciting opportunity for speech and language therapists to influence the development and direction of new structures, plans and priorities, including around service models and workforce delivery.

By making connections with the right leaders in your local system, sharing the evidence base and convincing them that speech and language therapy can help them to deliver on their priorities, you could make a real difference to the services that are available for the people in your local area in line with the ambitions outlined in the [NHS long term plan](#).

What should I do next?

1. **Research your ICS** – each ICS is different. They vary in size, complexity and maturity. [Find out more about your ICS](#).
2. **Investigate your AHP Council and find out who is on it.**
3. **Find out if your ICS has a Chief AHP.**
4. **Find out who your AHP Lead and Therapy Leads are within your local NHS trust.**
5. **Find out if and how speech and language therapy is involved in the AHP structures and represented on the AHP Faculty.**
6. **If speech and language therapy isn't involved, then make contact** – share the document [Delivering Integrated Care: How Speech and Language Therapy Can Help](#).

The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) is the professional body for speech and language therapists in the UK. As well as providing leadership and setting professional standards, the RCSLT facilitates and promotes research into the field of speech and language therapy, promotes better education and training of speech and language therapists, and provides its members and the public with information about speech and language therapy.

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