**Integrated Care Systems (ICSs): A primer**

**What is changing?**

To get an overview of what ICSs are and what it means, check out these two videos:

[Strong Integrated Care Systems Everywhere - NHSEI](https://youtu.be/mz4FFE2y8PM) (<3 mins)

[How does the NHS in England work and how is it changing? - The King's Fund](https://youtu.be/blapgFKXv0I) (<6 mins)

**What is an Integrated Care System (ICS)?**

ICSs are all about collaboration at a local level to provide the best possible joined up services to local populations. The vision and drivers for ICSs are [here](https://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/integrated-care-in-somerset/all-about-integrated-care-systems-icss/). To understand ICSs, think about each letter:

* **Integrated:** Joining up NHS organisations, social care, local authorities, voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and other partners to work together collaboratively
* **Care:** To deliver social and health care, including physical and mental health
* **System:** To meet the needs of a specific population, area or ‘system’

**How many ICSs are there?**

There are 42 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) across England. Each ICS covers a population of between 0.5 – 3 million people. For a [map of all 42 ICSs click here.](https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/integrated-care-boards-map-may-2022-v1.2.pdf) For a breakdown of some of the [key characteristics of each ICS](https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/integrated-care-systems-what-do-they-look-like) see this article. For [a list of each ICS and the organisations in each one, click here](https://www.england.nhs.uk/system-and-organisational-oversight/system-directory/).

**When?**

ICSs started life several years ago as Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships or STPs. However, they had no formal powers. As a result of the [Health and Care Act 2022](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/31/contents/enacted) which was passed in April 2022, from 1 July 2022 ICSs are statutory bodies with formal powers and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are abolished. To understand more about the [history of ICSs click here](https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/how-did-we-get-here/).

**Further reading**

***Explainers***

[Integrated care systems: what do they look like?](https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/integrated-care-systems-what-do-they-look-like) (Health Foundation, June 2022)

[Integrated care explained](https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/integrated-care-explained) (Nuffield Trust, Dec 2021)

[Integrated care systems explained: making sense of systems, places and neighbourhoods](https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/integrated-care-systems-explained) (Kings Fund, May 2021)

[Integrated care systems - BMA Briefing](https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/nhs-delivery-and-workforce/integration/integrated-care-systems-icss) (BMA, May 2022)

[NHSEI Integrated Care Homepage](https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/) (NHSEI)

[System working glossary of terms](https://nhsproviders.org/media/691164/system-working-glossary-for-governors.pdf) (NHS Providers)

***For local government & social care:***

[Must Know: Integrated health and care](https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/must-know-integrated-health-and-care-how-do-you-know-your-council-doing-all-it-can) (Local Government Association, Oct 2021)

[Achieving integrated care](https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/our-improvement-offer/care-and-health-improvement/integration-and-better-care-fund/achieving-integrated-care) (Local Government Association, Oct 2021)

[SCIE Integrated Care Homepage - for social care](https://www.scie.org.uk/integrated-care) (SCIE)

[SCIE Social Care Jargon Buster](https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/_assets/AIJargonBusterFINAL.pdf) (SCIE)