

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](#) (<3 mins)
[How does the NHS in England work and how is it changing? - The King's Fund](#) (<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](#). To understand ICSs, think about each letter:

- **I**ntegrated: Joining up NHS organisations, social care, local authorities, voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations and other partners to work together collaboratively
- **C**are: To deliver social and health care, including physical and mental health
- **S**ystem: 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](#). For a breakdown of some of the [key characteristics of each ICS](#) see this article. For [a list of each ICS and the organisations in each one, click here](#).

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](#) 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](#).

Further reading

Explainers

[Integrated care systems: what do they look like?](#) (Health Foundation, June 2022)
[Integrated care explained](#) (Nuffield Trust, Dec 2021)
[Integrated care systems explained: making sense of systems, places and neighbourhoods](#) (Kings Fund, May 2021)
[Integrated care systems - BMA Briefing](#) (BMA, May 2022)
[NHSEI Integrated Care Homepage](#) (NHSEI)
[System working glossary of terms](#) (NHS Providers)

For local government & social care:

[Must Know: Integrated health and care](#) (Local Government Association, Oct 2021)
[Achieving integrated care](#) (Local Government Association, Oct 2021)
[SCIE Integrated Care Homepage - for social care](#) (SCIE)
[SCIE Social Care Jargon Buster](#) (SCIE)