

Commissioning and adoption stage

# Understanding the NHS guide

Downloaded on January 15th, 2025

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To understand more about the NHS and its ongoing development, read the [NHS Long Term Plan](#). Find out more about [how the NHS works from The Kings Fund charity](#) which works to improve health and care in England.

To have your innovation adopted into the NHS you need to understand the complexity of the NHS and the related barriers this creates to procurement. [Integrated care systems \(ICSs\)](#) are partnerships that join up the care provided by local councils, the NHS and other partners. There are 42 regional ICSs covering England. They embed collaboration between care providers with a regional focus, to ensure that communities receive joined up support from local health and care providers.

ICSs comprise two components:

- Integrated care boards (ICBs) - statutory bodies that are responsible for planning and funding most NHS services in the area
- Integrated care partnerships (ICPs) - statutory committees that bring together a broad set of system partners (including local government, the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE), NHS organisations and others) to develop a health and care strategy for the area.

Working through their ICB and ICP, ICSs have four key aims:

- improving outcomes in population health and health care
- tackling inequalities in outcomes, experience and access
- enhancing productivity and value for money
- helping the NHS to support broader social and economic development.

ICSs have a statutory duty to support innovation adoption and spread. The Accelerated Access Collaborative (AAC) has co-developed a [series of case studies](#) with AAC partners on the implementation approaches taken in local integrated care systems (ICS) to promote the adoption and spread of proven innovation.

[Find out more about ICSs](#) from The Kings Fund.