



Learning Network: Case Study

A 'one workforce' approach: Lincolnshire Integrated Care System

Introduction

Lincolnshire health and social care partners looked at workforce planning on a joint basis, but quickly decided that all partners needed more staff with better opportunities to develop. Therefore, they focused on growing the workforce rather than focusing on exactly how many of what kind of worker they needed.

Background

The health and care sector in Lincolnshire is one of the county's largest employers, with around 32,000 staff currently employed. With such a large workforce there are many opportunities for careers in the sector. Reaching the widest population to attract people into roles is always a challenge – particularly in the more rural and coastal areas. Retaining people is also a challenge, particularly in the current financial climate.

Lincolnshire Care Association – known as LinCA - is a not-for-profit organisation supporting adult care providers of domiciliary care, end of life care, learning disabilities, mental health, nursing homes, residential care homes, and supported living within the independent and voluntary sectors in Lincolnshire.

Joint ways of working on workforce issues – such as the Care Certificate and Nursing Associates - were already well-established in Lincolnshire prior to the creation of the ICS. Health and care partners came together to consider how these arrangements could benefit all of those involved. As a result, the Care Certificate in Lincolnshire is now portable, and they have agreed standards for assessment. Care providers were also part of the initial bid to be a pilot site for Nursing Associates – so they were involved from the start.

Actions

Nursing Associates

The [Nursing Associates](#) programme covers both health and care sectors. In Lincolnshire, health and care partners worked together at the start of the pilot programme, with a single cohort of associates training and rotating around the whole system. Local authority investment at the start of the programme was crucial. The local authority matched the HEE funding so that small social care providers could afford to take part in the programme initially. Once they saw the benefits of investing in the development of nursing associates, these providers continued to pay towards the programme. The programme also strengthened the relationship between the university training the nursing associates and care providers. As a result, there are increased placement opportunities for pre-registration nurses within local nursing homes – and many of those trainees come back to work in those homes after registration.

Many of the original nursing associates have gone on to become nursing apprentices and they are able to continue to work within the social care sector and achieve their registration.

Progress continues to be made, as Lincolnshire now has an apprenticeship provider that works across the whole system.

Working with schools

The Lincolnshire ICS is working together to engage with schools and colleges to inform them of all the different pathways into the many careers they have in the county. This includes the apprenticeship routes and many other entry points to attract people into the sector. There has also been a focus on the east coast - encouraging the local population to consider a career in health and social care. Using the approach of *Get Ready, Get In, Get on, Go Further*, the ICS is demonstrating to prospective employees that they have a lifelong learning approach that will support them throughout their time in health and social care.

Structures and plans

Lincolnshire has strong integrated health and social care structures and plans in place, including a People Plan, and a People Board which is county-wide and focused on transformation and delivery across all areas in the sector.

The People Board has a strategic focus and there are other forums that drive transformation in key areas such as attraction, retention, learning etc.

The county's first People Plan was launched in 2020/2021 and set the scene for future working. Lincolnshire has now developed a People Team and a [People Hub](#) which work with wider system partners, including the Lincolnshire Care Association (LinCa), Primary Care and the voluntary sector.

Together, they are prioritising:

- Attracting more people into health and care careers
- Workforce planning
- Supporting staff health and wellbeing
- Supporting staff inclusion and belonging
- Retaining the workforce
- Lifelong learning and talent management.

While joint workforce planning is challenging, Lincolnshire has used funding from NHS England and HEE to progress work across health and social care. For example, a funded technical workforce planning tool is being introduced in phases: phase 1 will focus on NHS Trusts; phase 2 on primary care partners and phase 3 on adult social care.

Lessons learned

- Have something tangible to work on. It is much more productive than abstract discussions about how partners will work together.
- Consider the health and care workforce as one workforce. Health and care employers face the same issues and opportunities so it makes sense to work together. The idea that everybody else has all the really good staff and all you need to do was to get them to move to your part of the system is simply not the case.
- The key issue is that there are not enough good, well-supported and retained staff in the whole system – so you have to change the way you work as part of that whole system.
- Don't be afraid to admit that an approach you have started is not working and try a different tactic. You need to trust each other and be able to admit this to partners.
- Make sure you understand the structure for engaging partners (e.g. a People Board with all workforce leads from ICS partners represented).
- Relationships, leadership and behaviours are key.

- Ensure all parties have a shared understanding of the lived experience of people using and working in health and care. Make time to develop this understanding.
- Focus on shared endeavours, rather than differences.
- Acknowledge each other as equal partners with parity of esteem, regardless of any differences in terms and conditions. This is not about the NHS helping out adult social care, but mutual shared learning. For example, social care has a great deal of experience in recruiting and supporting a diverse and dispersed workforce, particularly in rural areas.
- Accept tension and work with it. For example, there may be an inevitable drift from adult social care because of, for example, progression in a registered profession or because of terms and conditions. Rather than working against that, consider are there ways of working with it – for example, how can we attract people into social care who have an aspiration to move into the NHS, and how could we encourage them to return to social care after they retire from the NHS – for example as a registered manager in a care home.
- Be at each other's tables in order to work through the challenging issues.
- Present as one. Lincolnshire talks about One Workforce – not about the NHS.

Links and contacts

[Lincolnshire ICB](#)

[Lincolnshire Care Association](#)

[Lincolnshire People Hub](#)

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