

# News story: NHS can move towards more coordinated and continuous care

Setting up ICPs will allow primary medical services to be run through the same contract as other health and care services such as social care for the first time.

ICPs are designed to:

- bring care services together through a single contract, so patients' care is coordinated around them
- deliver more care in the community and patients' homes, improving access to services and reducing trips to hospital

At the moment it is complicated for different NHS organisations to deliver integrated care while each organisation holds its own independent contract with commissioners.

The changes to the law introduced by the government today will make sure ICPs have to follow the same rules as other NHS or care organisations, for example around complaints procedures and the reimbursement of travel expenses.

GPs who wish to integrate with an ICP can easily transfer their services from previous contracts to a new ICP contract, if they choose to do so.

The participation of any individual practice or GP is entirely voluntary, and their role in an ICP will be for them to decide.

The NHS Long Term Plan confirmed that NHS England would make the ICP contract available for use from 2019. The contract is expected to be held by statutory providers, such as NHS foundation trusts.

Any bids for the contract will be reviewed by local clinicians and NHS staff to ensure it is the most effective and beneficial organisation for the local area.

Before the first contracts are awarded, proposals will be scrutinised through the integrated support and assurance process.

Minister for Health Stephen Hammond said:

As part of our Long Term Plan for the NHS, which is backed by £20.5 billion extra a year by 2023 to 2024, we want to make sure care fits around patients and not the other way round. These new regulations are a crucial step towards more integrated care for patients in England.

Integrated care providers will give local areas the power to integrate care by bringing all the different healthcare services

provided to local residents into a single contract.

For patients it should mean fewer trips to hospital and more care in the community, and allows health and care services to work together seamlessly with a greater focus on preventative, proactive and coordinated care.