



Integrating health and social care across the UK: toolkit for nursing leaders

Start

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The RCN integration toolkit for nursing leaders

Who is this toolkit for?

The RCN supports the broad aim of providing quality health and social care that is fully integrated from the point of view of people using services and those who are important to them. But we also know the hard work that nursing staff have to put in behind the scenes to deliver quality, seamless care for people.

This integration toolkit is designed to be a personal support for senior nurses and RCN representatives working in strategic decision-making roles or forums around integrated care. For example, you might be a nurse on a board that is commissioning services, or a nursing leader overseeing a service transformation, or an RCN member with a role in shaping local integrated changes on behalf of other members. **If you are involved in decisions about integrated care, this toolkit is for you.**

It is intended to support you to provide confident nursing leadership as you shape, deliver and monitor safe, quality and local integrated services. It has been developed by RCN members and staff working across the UK, drawing on their expertise, their learning and their lived experience of integrating care.

Across the four countries of the UK, the integration of health and social care looks quite different. Even within each country there is not always a single approach to integrating care. Instead, nursing staff are in the midst of an ever-shifting landscape requiring new ways of working with many partners who may have different priorities, cultures and ways of doing things. The toolkit is not specific to any particular service user community nor any particular form or stage of integration.

Whether you have been integrated for some time or are just in the process of discussing what the future should look like, we hope that this will be a practical tool to help you negotiate the complex landscape of integration.

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How to use this toolkit

The toolkit offers you a series of themed prompt questions for your own reflection and action, which you can mix and match as you see fit. Use as many or as few of the questions as are relevant, whenever you think they could help you in your decision-making role.

You could use this toolkit as you consider a new proposal for integrated services, or as you prepare for an important meeting, or as you start to consider your own personal and professional development plan.

We have made suggestions throughout for how questions could be linked to the NMC Code. We have done this because the Code is, of course, central to every decision that affects registered nurses, but also because we hope this will help you to relate your use of this tool to your own revalidation.

The prompts are intended to help you reflect on your own role and to set out actions that you might want to pursue or to support further discussion with colleagues.

Not every question will be relevant to you at every point in time. In fact, we recommend that you don't try to use the whole toolkit at once, as the scope of the prompts is very wide. Choose those questions that matter most in the circumstances you are in. We won't have covered everything in this series of prompt questions; there will be other things you think of that are relevant to you, or questions you want to adapt to fit your context. We have left space for you to add in such questions for yourself.

If you find this toolkit useful, please do share it with other colleagues who are involved in strategic decision-making roles around integrated care.

Language

Finally, a word on language. As we developed this tool it became clear that, even within our own profession, we use language quite differently. Words like “commissioning”, “patient”, or even “integration” can unintentionally result in confusion or frustration when assumptions are made about meaning. When using this toolkit in practice, we urge you to remain alert to the words being used around you and to ask questions – however basic those questions may sound – to make sure you really are talking the same language with colleagues and partners.

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1. Reflections on effective influence

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Can I articulate what I think a confident and effective influencer looks like in an integrated world?					9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues
Have I set myself clear influencing priorities over the next six months?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people's wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Can I evidence that I have challenged or provided feedback to others within the last six months?					9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues
Do I have sound evidence at my fingertips to help me influence this discussion/ decision?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
Am I always confident in how to interpret and interrogate data and evidence accurately and effectively when engaged in debate?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
What assumptions do I hold that may be underpinning my contribution to this discussion/ decision?					1 Treat people as individuals and uphold their dignity

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2. Building a secure ground in integrated structures

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
<p>Could I explain to frontline nurses and health care assistants (HCAs) the strategic vision for integrated care in my area, and its potential benefits to people using services and the people who are important to them?</p>					7 Communicate clearly
<p>Am I clear why I have a seat at this table and what my accountabilities and responsibilities are?</p>					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
<p>Am I clear about how any group I am engaged with fits within a wider decision-making/ governance structure?</p>					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
<p>Could I draw a map for colleagues of all the decision-making and governance groups on integration in my area?</p>					9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues

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3. Working with integration partners to build influence

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Do I understand the priorities, language and cultures of partner organisations and professions?					8 Work cooperatively
Do I know how partner organisations do business and make decisions?					8 Work cooperatively
Are there people in other professions or organisations it might be beneficial for me to shadow to improve my understanding of, and engagement in, an integrated world?					8 Work cooperatively
Am I confident that I fully understand the issues and concerns of other professions and organisations in this discussion/decision?					8 Work cooperatively
Am I confident that I am having the right conversations with the right people outside of meetings to allow me to be an effective influencer?					9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues
Do I know who my influencing allies from other professions or organisations are in this discussion or decision?					9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues
Am I clear that, in choosing my allies, I am not creating a conflict of interest in any decision making role I have?					21 Uphold your position as a registered nurse or midwife

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4. My leadership support

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Could I draw myself a map of the people who currently support me in my integrated role?					8 Work cooperatively
Have I received and acted upon challenge or feedback on my role within the last month?					9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues
Am I genuinely given enough time and resource to provide leadership in the development and/or implementation of integration in my area?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people's wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Are my own development needs being considered and met?					22 Fulfil all registration requirements
Are there areas where I would benefit from coaching or mentoring?					22 Fulfil all registration requirements

1. Having the evidence to demonstrate value

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Do I have the evidence to demonstrate the value of nursing in integrated teams based on improved outcomes for people?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
Am I setting up robust evaluation from the start of any new integrated service to demonstrate the value of nursing in improving outcomes for people?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
Do I know who could help me set up a robust evaluation of any new integrated service?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
Do I know the areas in my patch that may require improvement support to demonstrate nursing value within multi-agency and multi-professional teams?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people's wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I aware of any best practice examples of integrated care in my area that I could promote to support wider improvements?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence

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2. Valuing the expertise and experience of nursing staff

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Could I do more to support nurses and HCAs in my area to profile their skills, ideas and experience to those in positions of influence and power?					8 Work cooperatively
Am I always asking the right nurses and HCAs with expertise for advice and challenge to help me in my decision making role?					8 Work cooperatively
Am I confident in challenging those who are not convinced about the value of nursing in an integrated world?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Is the title of “nurse” being protected in this proposal/discussion/decision?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system

3. Building an effective nursing voice

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Am I doing enough, within the limits of my role, to nurture the confidence of nurses and HCAs in my area to engage robustly and respectfully in discussions and decisions about integrated services?					8 Work cooperatively
Can I provide evidence to colleagues that the voice of nursing is being both heard and acted upon in decisions being made?					8 Work cooperatively
Am I satisfied that appropriate nursing representation is embedded in every group that will influence the quality of integrated care, the future of the workforce and/or the allocation of resources?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I satisfied that nursing is engaged in reviews or reforms to other parts of the multi-disciplinary or multi-agency team that may impact on nursing care and/or roles?					8 Work cooperatively
Am I content with the succession planning in my area for nursing staff to move into strategic/decision-making roles in integrated services and organisations?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Have I acted on any evidence that nursing staff have been disadvantaged in taking on any strategic, management or developmental roles within integrated teams?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I satisfied that nurses and HCAs in integrated services across sectors have an opportunity discuss workplace and workforce issues with employers, either directly or through trade union representation?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system

4. Other questions

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code

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1. People come first

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Am I keeping the needs and aspirations of people using services, and the people who matter to them, at the centre of decisions being made about integrated care?					2 Listen to people and respond to their preferences and concerns
Do I know if people using services in my area experience them as seamlessly integrated?					2 Listen to people and respond to their preferences and concerns
Am I satisfied that services are being commissioned /designed to meet assessed needs from robust analysis of the local population?					2 Listen to people and respond to their preferences and concerns
Does the way we do integrated assessment and care planning support people in my area to receive safe, quality integrated care?					2 Listen to people and respond to their preferences and concerns
Are there different thresholds or criteria for accessing different services in my area that could negatively affect the overall quality of integrated care for people?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I supporting the empowerment of local people in making decisions about their care and their integrated services?					2 Listen to people and respond to their preferences and concerns

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2. Ensuring quality drives decision-making

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Am I fully involved in setting the outcome measures for integrated services?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Can I confidently assert that issues of quality and safety are driving decisions about integration in my area?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I satisfied that the resource/financial discussions I am involved in include consideration of the impact on quality and safety of integrated care?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Can I evidence that investment decisions in my area are delivering to improve quality outcomes?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Do I have access to robust and accurate data, in a timely way, to assess the quality of nursing care within integrated services?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
Am I satisfied that data on the quality of nursing care is being used appropriately to inform decisions?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence

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3. Clarity on accountability

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Am I clear about the limits of my accountability in commissioning services (including in procuring nursing services from third parties)?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I clear about the extent of my accountability in monitoring the quality, safety and performance of commissioned services?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system

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4. Focussing on the formal supports for quality

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Could I draw a clear map of the clinical and care governance structures and processes in place in my area?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I satisfied that our care and clinical governance standard is understood and owned by all members of the integrated service?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Does integration require us to review our clinical standards and guidance to support nursing staff to deliver quality, safe care within integrated teams?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Are professionals and organisations working in integrated teams able to share data about people using services appropriately to ensure quality and safety?					5 Respect people’s right to privacy and confidentiality
Do information sharing protocols need to be reviewed in light of integrated ways of working?					5 Respect people’s right to privacy and confidentiality
Do frontline integrated teams have access to the right data to enable them to continually improve practice?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
Am I satisfied that we are only collecting the data we really need to ensure quality of care?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence
Am I confident I know where the quality data gaps are in my area?					6 Always practise in line with the best available evidence

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5. Reflecting on my professional advice

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
<p>Could I demonstrate to nurses and HCAs on the ground that my advice about nursing and quality is being heard by those making decisions about integrated care?</p>					<p>9 Share your skills, knowledge and experience for the benefit of people receiving care and your colleagues</p>
<p>Am I recording my decisions/ professional advice as a matter of course?</p>					<p>10 Keep clear and accurate records relevant to your practice</p>
<p>Do I know my options for escalation if my professional advice on quality and safety in integrated care is ignored or over-ridden?</p>					<p>16 Act without delay if you believe that there is a risk to patient safety or public protection</p>

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6. Risk management and service improvement

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Are robust risk assessments for quality and safety are drawn up, and acted upon, in any decision about future integrated services (including decisions to do nothing)?					16 Act without delay if you believe that there is a risk to patient safety or public protection
Are risks to people using services safety being regularly reported and acted on by nursing staff within integrated teams?					19 Be aware of, and reduce as far as possible, any potential for harm associated with your practice
Are equality impact assessments drawn up that have a clear impact on service design and delivery?					1 Treat people as individuals and uphold their dignity
Am I confident that, in my area, nursing staff are all working within a culture that supports them to learn from mistakes?					19 Be aware of, and reduce as far as possible, any potential for harm associated with your practice
Can I demonstrate that effective improvement action is being taken where issues with care quality and safety have been identified?					16 Act without delay if you believe that there is a risk to patient safety or public protection

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1. Supporting nursing to flourish in integration

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Could I explain the professional nursing structure in place in my area to a nurse or HCA on the ground?					7 Communicate clearly
Am I confident that this structure supports nursing staff to deliver safe, quality care within integrated teams and to escalate concerns appropriately?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people's wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Do all nursing staff have access to clinical supervision?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people's wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I clear that all nursing staff, at all levels, understand their role and responsibilities in relation to delegation within the integrated landscape?					11 Be accountable for your decisions to delegate tasks and duties to other people
Am I assured that nurses and HCAs in my area have access to the right CPD/development opportunities to allow them to develop their practice within an integrated service?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people's wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I doing enough to support nursing staff to work effectively with partner professionals and organisations in an integrated way?					8 Work cooperatively

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2. Securing a strong and effective nursing workforce

Question	Yes	No	Partially	My reflections/My actions	A link to the NMC Code
Am I involved in workforce and workload discussions and decisions from the start?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Are there any areas where I need to rethink how to plan and resource the nursing workforce to improve or meet patient/client outcomes under integration?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I satisfied that work is being distributed equitably across the multi-disciplinary team?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I satisfied that nursing skill mix is being set appropriately within integrated teams to improve outcomes for the local population?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Am I confident that nurses across all integrated services – whoever their employer – are being supported to meet their regulatory requirements under the NMC, including revalidation?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system
Do I understand the impact of regulation on the HCA workforce in my area and am I satisfied this is appropriate in the nursing team?					25 Provide leadership to make sure people’s wellbeing is protected and to improve their experiences of the healthcare system

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3. Other questions

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