

# System Leader Connect Programme & Community

## 2026 Cohort

### Why System Leader Connect?

We know that effective collaborative working and leadership across and between organisational and sector boundaries in ICSs, especially at a senior level, is increasingly key to enabling the health, care and wellbeing of our local population – as is investment to enable this:

*Realising the potential of ICSs - and the neighbourhood teams, place partnerships and other structures within them - needs substantial, sustained investment in organisational development, collaborative leadership and team working across different professions, sectors and organisations*

An Independent Review of Integrated Care Systems (Hewitt Review) 2023

Our System Leader Connect community represents part of this investment in collaborative leadership for our ICS, and aims to provide a regular, proactive space and opportunities for you to come together with other senior leaders from all sectors and organisations in our integrated care system – to explore and take action around the topics that matter to you and that will make a difference for the people of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Our aim is:



**“To establish a community of engaged, committed and proactive system leaders focused on the priorities and activities that are ‘better done together’”**

### What is System Leader Connect?

- At its core, System Leader Connect is a growing community of senior leaders across Herefordshire and Worcestershire who want to work together across the system to improve the experience of those engaging with our health, care and wellbeing related services and organisations

- Our aim is to facilitate this through:
  - Giving you regular, dedicated development & thinking time and space to come together with senior colleagues
  - Bringing in key expertise from within and beyond our ICS on key leadership and system related topics – to prompt thinking and discussions around what this means and how we could apply this locally
  - Enabling opportunities for discussion, shadowing, networking & wider relationship building with colleagues who work in many different interconnected parts of the health, care and wellbeing system
- All new successful applicants will complete an initial two-day induction to enable you to then join the wider System Leader Connect community. Within these two days you will have exclusive opportunity to:
  - Hear from a nationally recognised expert on effective approaches to system leadership
  - Explore what this might mean for us in Herefordshire and Worcestershire
  - Network with a range of senior colleagues from across organisations and sectors
- Below is an outline of the induction you can expect:

Day 1 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb 2026 (9.30-4.00)	Day 2 – 9 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2026 (9.30-4.00)
<b>Making connections, finding our purpose and making our system work better for us</b>	<b>Recap on our working in a system: how we take people with us and how we can deal with the rocks in the road</b>
Led by Debbie Sorkin - <i>National Director of Systems Leadership - The Leadership Centre</i>	Led by Debbie Sorkin - <i>National Director of Systems Leadership - The Leadership Centre</i>
Venue – The Co-Lab Digital Innovation Hub, Kidderminster Hospital	Venue – The Co-Lab Digital Innovation Hub – Kidderminster Hospital

- The topics we explore and focus on beyond your induction will emerge and evolve – and you will help to shape these – to make it meaningful, relevant and applicable to the challenges and opportunities you have now. Examples could include e.g. Accelerating Inclusion; Leading Change; Compassionate Leadership – and all with a system working lens

### Who is System Leader Connect for?

- This community and opportunity is aimed at senior leaders:
  - working in any and all parts of the health and care system in Herefordshire and Worcestershire (including social care, local authorities, NHS Trusts, ICB (including Coventry & Warwickshire ICB colleagues), public health, university, GP & primary care settings, voluntary, community & social enterprise sector, care homes, hospices etc). *NB We anticipate it will be of particular value to senior leaders involved with Neighbourhood Health programmes of work.*
  - whose roles involve collaboration across the wider integrated care system and organisational boundaries

## System Leader Connect

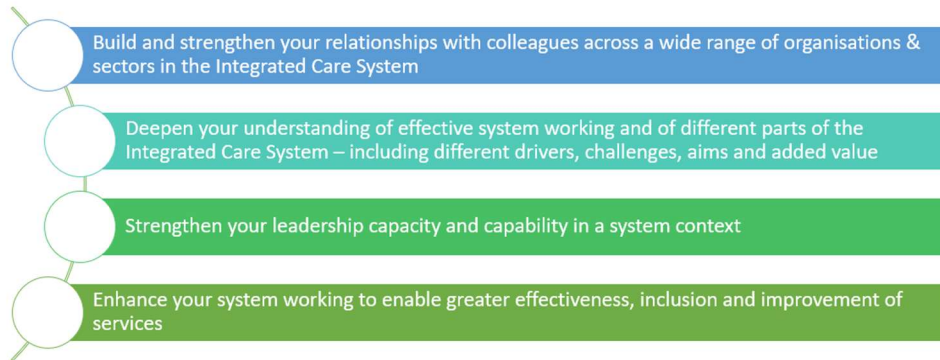
- who are decision-makers in their organisations and who can and want to actively work together with colleagues to influence change and improvements
- Example roles could include (although this is not exhaustive):
  - Directors, Deputy Directors, Heads of Service, Senior Consultants and Professional Leads in health, social care, public health, university, primary care, local authorities etc.
  - Chief Executives and Directors of VCSE or charitable organisations; hospices; care homes etc

### How do I join the System Leader Connect Community?

- If you're keen to join the system leader connect community as a new member, the first step is to complete an application on the [ICS Academy Exchange](#). The deadline for completion is by **9am on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026**. There are 20 places available on our upcoming new cohort starting in February 2026 and places are competitive – shortlisting will be based on your application.
- Successful shortlisted applicants will join two full-day face-to-face induction workshops on **2<sup>nd</sup> Feb & 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026** - led by keynote speakers and experts in the field of system working and leadership. Both dates to be attended.
- Upon successful completion of these two workshop days, colleagues will become members of our System Leader Connect community and be able to engage in a range of ongoing opportunities to build and strengthen system working and leadership – examples could include:
  - Workshops facilitated by leading thinkers on relevant 'hot topics'
  - Q&A panel with members of the ICB Board
  - Opportunities for visits and shadowing in different parts of the system
  - Virtual connection with fellow participants via the ICS Academy Exchange
- As members of the system leader connect community, you will also help to shape future workshop topics and opportunities, to enable a focus on 'hot topics' and current priorities for you and the system.

### What benefits can I expect?

- By joining the System Leader Connect community you will have opportunities to:



### Ready to apply?

You can apply for a place on System Leader Connect via the [ICS Academy Exchange](#). Applications are competitive and the deadline for receipt is **19<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 9am**.

### Still got questions?

- Please contact Abby Oates (ICS Leadership Development & Talent Management Programme Lead) [abigailoates@nhs.net](mailto:abigailoates@nhs.net) with any questions