Clearly identify and communicate which meetings or spaces are relevant for social care

Feedback from across social care partners in Northamptonshire who have engaged with the activity of the ICS has been that meetings often remain very health-focused even where integration is encouraged on a broader thematic level. Advance indication of the topics that will be covered at forthcoming meetings is therefore crucial. It allows social care partners to identify where their involvement will be relevant and could lead to meaningful action (e.g. for discussions on staff recruitment and retention, specific project work, and direct social care funding discussions). Embedding processes for sharing meeting agendas with potential invitees is thus a valuable way of allowing social care providers to plan their time and resources effectively.

Moving towards more integrated agendas for meetings, where social care is inherently built into thematic work, is an ongoing process across ICSs generally. Northamptonshire ICS continue to be open to understanding more about how to progress this partnership working.

They give us a useful example to help demonstrate this. A recent generous gift of event tickets to say 'thank you' to health and care workers from the NHS Charity was ultimately only able to be extended to staff across the region who are employed by the NHS. The issue of parity of reward initiatives such as this was raised with the ICS following feedback from care workers. This sparked a number of important conversations across the system about

the ICS are exploring follow-up support for social care staff to build their academic confidence and support them to maximise the full benefits of the available training.

Maintain social care specific spaces

Northamptonshire have achieved a good level of engagement between health and social care partners in the ICS and integration is beginning to grow organically. However, social care partners have identified the importance of maintaining social care-specific spaces, too.