

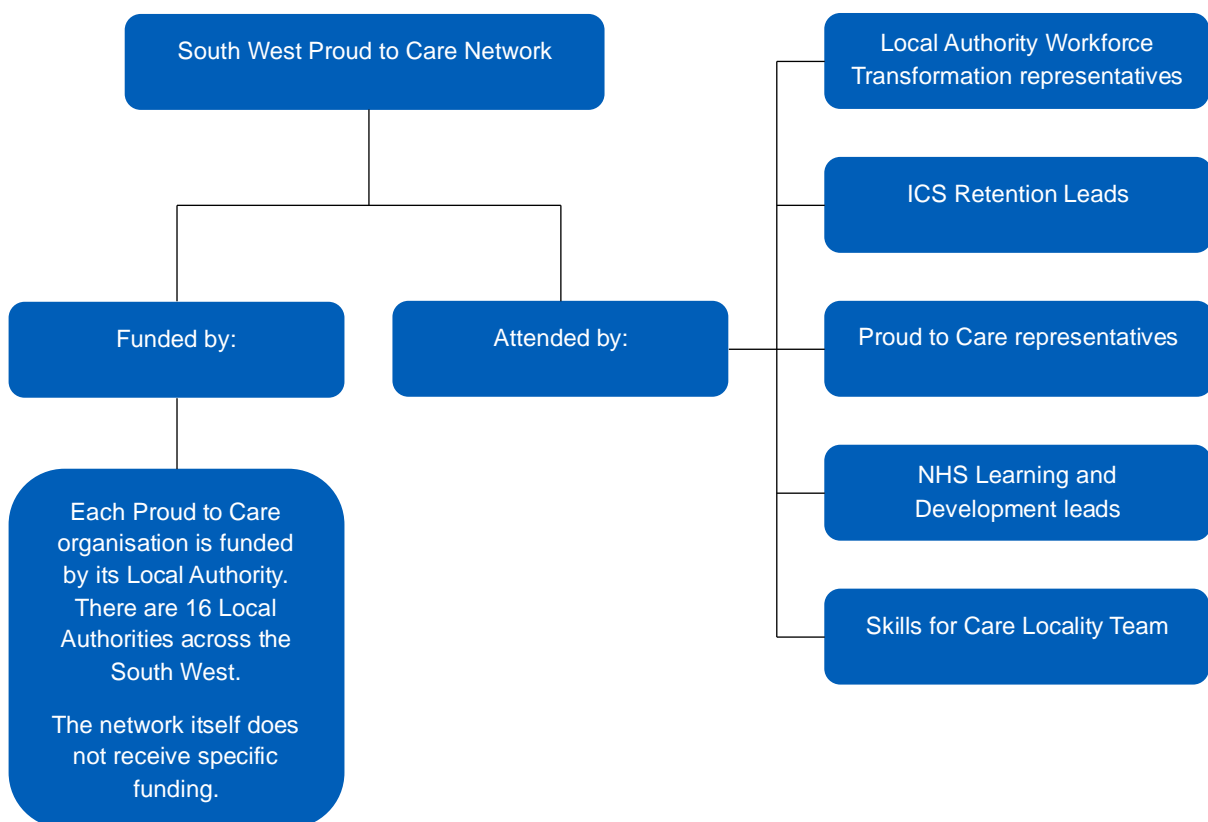
Supporting Cross-Regional Integration and System-wide Thinking with the South West Proud to Care Network

Proud to Care is a partnership of local authorities and healthcare organisations (including the NHS) working together across each region in the South West to raise the profile of careers in health and social care.

Now, with the support of Skills for Care, the 16 Proud to Care initiatives across the South West have established one network. It aims to support the sharing of best practice with regards to workforce recruitment and retention. Representatives from ICBs across the region are involved in the establishment and direction of the network.

This case study:

- demonstrates the impact of sharing good work between areas across a wide region
- demonstrates the role of Skills for Care in supporting and amplifying existing initiatives, and bringing people together to support integration
- is based on conversations with Skills for Care Locality Team members Christiana Evans and Keryn Morris, who have led the project.



Establishing the network

After identifying a need for greater connection between Proud to Care across the region, and between recruitment and retention work happening across the System, Skills for Care

Locality Managers decided to convene an initial meeting of the Proud to Care South West network.

Skills for Care locality managers across the region engaged ICS retention leads and Proud to Care representatives via email.

The Proud to Care network held an initial meeting of 22 attendees from across the South West, including:

- Proud to Care representatives from a number of local authorities
- ICS retention leads
- NHS learning and development leads
- HR and workforce transformation representatives from local authorities.

After the initial meeting, every attendee voted in favour of forming a network, and quarterly meetings have been arranged.

Feedback has shown that people don't want the network to serve the same purpose as other groups and networks. They want it to be ideas and solutions-focused, and as a result:

- a purpose statement has been drawn up and agreed amongst the group to establish the distinct remit, scope and mission of the group
- the group will remain collaborative, with agenda contributions and a heavy focus on discussion rather than individual presentation.

The impact and significance of the Proud to Care South West network

The Proud to Care South West network is in its early days of existence. However, it has already provided a space for engagement, collaboration, and identifying opportunities to boost integration. It has created an equal space to share efficiencies and tried-and-tested means of boosting engagement with social care careers.

Sector recruiters and employers are too often isolated and feel unconnected to the wider sector, including the ICB. The network will allow people to join up, work together, and even merge the work they are doing on recruitment and retention. For example, if a healthcare recruitment fair is planned, through the network they may be able to include social care recruiters in the planning and delivery.

Ultimately, ICBs have a system-wide remit, and the Proud to Care South West network provides a space for system-wide thinking and collaboration. Similarly, recruitment and retention remains a huge focus for the NHS and for social care providers and employers, and is embedded in the NHS long-term workforce plan. The network is therefore an important space for ICB and social care partners right across the South West to share good practice when it comes to recruitment and retention.

Next steps

Engagement with the network has been strong so far, and the group aim to increase attendance among core roles with relevant responsibilities.

In the face of local authority budget restrictions, the Proud to Care network hopes to remain an important source of identifying innovation and sharing good practice, including with the ICS Retention Leads who attend. Their ethos remains flexible and collaborative, and they hope to create and share creative responses to challenges as well as foster deeper system-wide integration across every area in the South West.

“The Proud to Care South West Network is an equitable space where real collaboration can happen between health and social care voices – sharing thoughts and ideas. We’re excited for the future of the network and what we can achieve by linking people together at system level across the region.”

- Keryn Morris, Skills for Care Locality Manager