

# Integrated Care

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) has defined integrated care as ‘The management and delivery of health services so that clients receive a continuum of preventive and curative services, according to their needs over time and across different levels of the health system.’<sup>1</sup> WHO also recognises that ‘integrated’ means different things to different people within the health system.

‘For the user, integration means health care that is seamless, smooth and easy to navigate. Users want a coordinated service which minimizes both the number of stages in an appointment and the number of separate visits required to a health facility. They want health workers to be aware of their health as a whole (not just one clinical aspect) and for health workers from different levels of a system to communicate well. In short, clients want continuity of care.

For providers, integration means that separate technical services (and their management support systems) are provided, managed, financed and evaluated either together, or in a closely co-ordinated way’

WAPHA believes it is uniquely positioned to empower individuals and organisations to provide more integrated services for patients by piloting new models of co-ordinated and comprehensive care that bring together health and social care professionals from a range of organisations – community based services, hospitals, the private sector, local authorities and others, depending on local needs. The ultimate aim of these new models of primary care is to achieve more personal, responsive care in the community, and the delivery of better health value for a local population.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.who.int/healthsystems/service\\_delivery\\_techbrief1.pdf](http://www.who.int/healthsystems/service_delivery_techbrief1.pdf) [accessed January 2017]