Aims The Joining Up Care initiative seeks to improve collaboration between acute, general and community child healthcare providers across a specialist NHS Children’s Trust. It further involves networking with other health, education and social sectors within the associated boroughs.

Objectives were to:

1. Design educational events to promote learning and communication across a range of professionals involved in delivering healthcare and education to children and young people (CYP).
2. Develop an online directory of services to host information about local, regional and national services that may benefit CYP.
3. Nominate ‘Theme Leads’ to act as professional experts for a range of specialist fields related to Joining Up Care.

Methods A core team of professional representatives from the Trust’s acute, general and community paediatric services were brought together to design, co-ordinate, implement and advertise themed educational events. An online platform of services/resources was created on NHS Futures. A call out invite for expert Theme Leads for a range of specialist fields was delivered to staff through the Trust internal email system.

Results From January 2021-2022, nine educational events were delivered (MS Teams) based on three different Joining Up Care themes: (i) Migrant Health, (ii) Nutrition, Feeding and Obesity, (iii) Mental Health. Twenty speakers from a range of professional backgrounds (across health, education, social and third sector) contributed. Each event was attended by between 15 and 105 people. Feedback following the most recent event (via SurveyMonkey) noted 27/30 respondents (90%) found the content to be ‘excellent’ or ‘very good’. 28/30 (93%) noted that the sessions had increased their awareness about services/resources to signpost patients to and 29/30 (97%) reported that an online local directory of services would be helpful in everyday clinical practice.

An online directory of services/resources has been created (NHS Futures) with sections relating to eight Joining Up Care themes: (i) Migrant Health, (ii) Nutrition, Feeding and Obesity, (iii) Mental Health, (iv) Domestic Violence, (v) Sexual Health, (vi) Poverty, (vii) Children and Young People’s Wellbeing and (viii) Violence Reduction and Exploitation. To date, information relating to c. 200 services are hosted under respective themes on the platform.

In January 2022, eight Theme Leads were nominated from across the Trust to act as professional experts on each of the eight named themes.

Conclusion Delivering integrated care is key for improving CYP’s overall health and wellbeing. It requires combining expert knowledge with understanding and experience of relevant local, regional and national resources and services. The Joining Up Care initiative has driven the delivery of inter-professional learning through themed educational events and establishing an online directory of services. Nominating Theme Leads is promoting peer support and wider networking.

Future aims are to build upon this network through broadening the delivery of educational themed events and launching the NHS Futures platform amongst health and related professionals working locally. This will further strengthen inter-professional communication and potentially facilitate the delivery of holistic care.