

The VCFSE Sector's Access to the Health and Social Care Research Infrastructure across Lancashire and South Cumbria



Blackpool

CONAL LAND

VCFSE Research Co-ordinator
Lancashire & South Cumbria
Based at Citizens Advice Blackpool
Contact: conal.land@blackpoolcab.org.uk

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[**NIHR NORTH WEST REGION**](#)

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NIHR NORTH WEST REGION



NIHR NORTH WEST REGION

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) - North West Coast (NWC).

The ARC will only support, develop and do research which is **co-developed** with members of the **public**, and involves collaboration across a number of partners.

The research must have an **equity lens** and address **health inequalities**, whilst being applied and implemented to improve health outcomes.

What is the Applied Research Collaboration (ARC)?

The ARC North West Coast is part of the NIHR. It covers parts of both the Lancashire & South Cumbria and Cheshire & Merseyside ICB areas. The ARC exists to support **applied health and social care research**, with its priorities influenced by what is happening within our population. It aims to improve outcomes for the public through **collaboration**, bringing together academics, health providers, members of the public, VCFSE organisations, universities, and local authorities.

Applied Research Collaboration (ARC)

To discuss membership of the ARC, becoming a public advisor or to know more about the Seldom Heard Forum, contact arcnwc@liverpool.ac.uk in the first instance.

The four main themes of the ARC

1. Improving Population Health

Addressing health inequalities and developing ideas for how population health can be improved.

2. Equitable Place Based Health and Care

Supporting local systems to integrate health and care so it is receptive to the needs of each community within a place.

3. Person-Centred Complex Care

The delivery of care in complex environments for people with chronic conditions.

4. Health and Care Across the Life Course

This theme considers health across the whole life span.

The ARC works on a membership model, with over 50 member organisations including universities, local authorities and NHS trusts.

VCFSE organisations can become members of the ARC, but the **benefits** of membership need to be **balanced** against the **commitments**.

The main benefit is that payments can be made directly to members by the ARC, so they can be the **financial lead** on research projects. Members can also be part of the **internship** and **PhD programme** delivered by the ARC, and members get to vote on the eventual **prioritisation** of research ideas within the ARC.

However, there are also commitments to membership such as a **formal contract** with liabilities and being expected to contribute **time** to the ARC.

Memberships are decided on a case-by-case basis, but it's worth considering from a VCFSE perspective whether ARC membership is required.

For example, non-members can influence ARC research priorities throughout the process by coming to **ARCFESTs** or **theme meetings**. Non-members can also work with ARC staff and members to develop, design and do research projects .

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Applied Research Collaboration (ARC).

Community Research & Engagement Network (CoREN)

The Community Research and Engagement Network (CoREN) is part of the ARC architecture.

It is a hub which **brings together key partners** from across health and social care, including statutory organisations, researchers and ARC staff but particularly focusing on the VCFSE sector, in an **innovative collaborative network**.

The **CoREN Leadership Group**, which guides the work of the CoREN, consists of commissioned VCFSE organisations and representatives from the wider health and care system.

The CoREN is open for anyone to join, as an organisation or an individual, with no fees or commitment to contribute.
The CoREN holds regular events and programmes which are open to any CoREN members.

The CoREN members work together to **develop, conduct, disseminate, and implement** health and social care research that has the potential to **reduce health inequalities**.

The wider purpose of the CoREN is to provide a space for members to **exchange knowledge and expertise** and to learn from each other through sharing good practice.

**If you are interested in becoming a member of the CoREN, you can contact the ARC-
arcnwc@liverpool.ac.uk**

NIHR NORTH WEST REGION



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Clinical Research Network (CRN)

You can email the CRN with queries relating to any of this information at crnnwcoast@nihr.ac.uk

The CRN is due to change its name in April 2024 to **Regional Research Delivery Network (RRDN)**.

What is the CRN?

The Clinical Research Network covers the same geographical area as the ARC. It is the **research-delivery arm** of the NIHR research infrastructure.

The CRN assists research design by recruiting into the research and ensuring, where possible, that research achieves its goals. In the current system, clinical research needs are often identified prior to reaching the CRN, and the CRN shares these portfolio studies to professionals within health services or key contacts within social care or public health for support with delivery, and to the public for participation.

Anyone in the community could be offered a study to take part in that may benefit their health. Studies sometimes try to understand certain conditions in order to find better tests to help diagnose. They can also offer trials for medicines, treatments or other technology which can improve health and social care outcomes.

Bringing under-served communities into clinical research

VCFSE involvement is crucial in recruiting participants for trials. It is important that all of our community know how to access getting involved with studies. They need to be performed with populations that have most need not populations that are easiest to recruit. Many under-served communities lack representation in these studies. The **"Research Ready Communities"** programme is connecting the CRN and the VCFSE sector and research champions are being created to encourage participation in under-served communities. The programme has recruited individuals granted asylum in Merseyside and those with addiction issues in Morecambe Bay and South Cumbria.

Improving inclusion in underserved groups in clinical research (INCLUDE)

This provides national guidance to delivery teams to support engaging with and improving the inclusion of underserved groups in health and care research. The NWC CRN have named their approach ReALL (Research for All). As many VCFSE organisations are supporting underserved groups in the community, the CRN would like to continue enhancing and building relationships with the sector. These collaborations with the CRN can improve the access to research for communities.

The CRN NWC's mission is to meet the needs of the local population and wider society of the region it serves. By improving the health, wealth and lives of the region's patients and the public through research that matters to and includes our local population.

Where can the VCFSE sector engage with the CRN?

The CRN has **national research priorities**, but local CRNs can also set some local priorities. The CRN's **PPIE team** often reaches out to partner organisations to influence research priorities. Many projects are led by academics or are pre-determined portfolio studies. There is a need for more VCFSE and community involvement in project design. Research funding bids through the CRN are mostly received by academics or health practitioners. The CRN assists with conducting research. It helps with recruitment to clinical research, which the VCFSE can support with. The CRN has collaborated with VCFSE organisations in the past to co-develop research ideas.

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The NIHR Research Support Service (RSS) provides free and confidential advice to researchers developing funding applications within the remit of the NIHR funding streams and some other funders (eg. National charities) for clinical, applied health and social care research.

There are RSS Partnership Hubs across the country which specialise in certain things (see the website <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/explore-nihr/support/research-support-service/>)
Researchers can go to any of the **national RSS Hubs** to access the speciality expertise.

The Hub can support with **all stages** of the research process, as well as offering **methodological expertise**.
The Lancaster Hub Partners' research strengths lie in health inequalities, palliative care, ageing, sexuality, neurology, mental health, vulnerable people, social care and social work.

Research Support Service (RSS)

To get support from the hub, you can complete the following form: <https://forms.office.com/e/sM0LFRFCHe>
For general enquiries, you can contact nihr-rss@lancaster.ac.uk

In our area, there is an RSS Hub based at Lancaster University which is delivered in partnership with Liverpool University, Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University
The Hub is passionate about supporting research which is:
Inclusive by embedding equality, diversity and inclusion
Shaped by diverse public involvement
Environmentally sustainable
The Hub particularly welcomes research in underserved communities

LANCASHIRE AND SOUTH CUMBRIA INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM (ICS)

Integrated Care System Definitions

Integrated Care System (ICS)

The integrated care system (ICS) for Lancashire and South Cumbria is a partnership of organisations that come together to plan and deliver joined up health and care services, to improve the lives of people who live and work here.

Integrated Care Board (ICB)

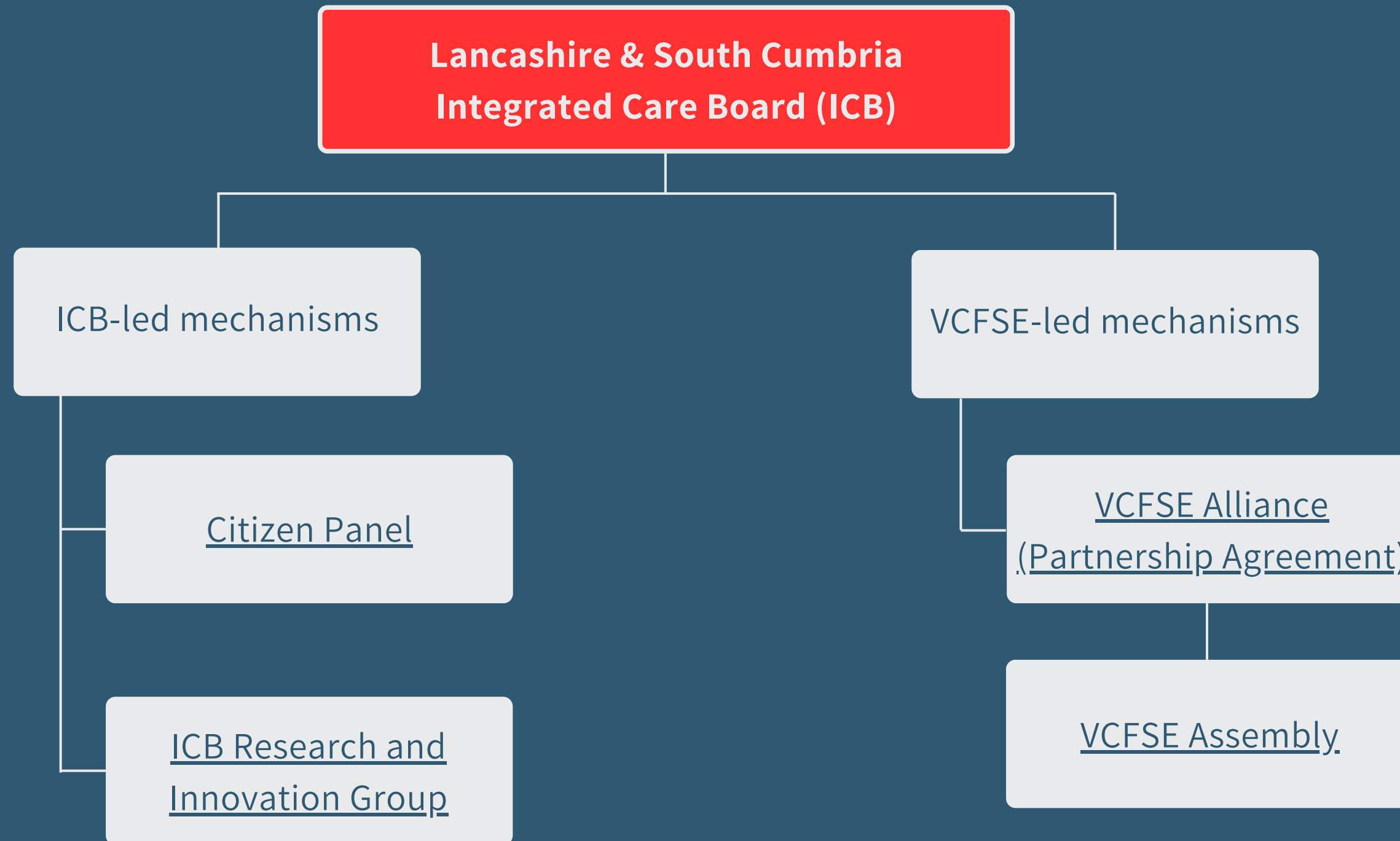
The role of the ICB within the ICS is to join up health and care services, improve people's health and wellbeing, and make sure everyone has the same access to services and gets the same outcomes from treatment. They also oversee how money is spent and make sure health services are working well and are of high quality. Community involvement is very important to the ICB.

Integrated Care Partnership (ICP)

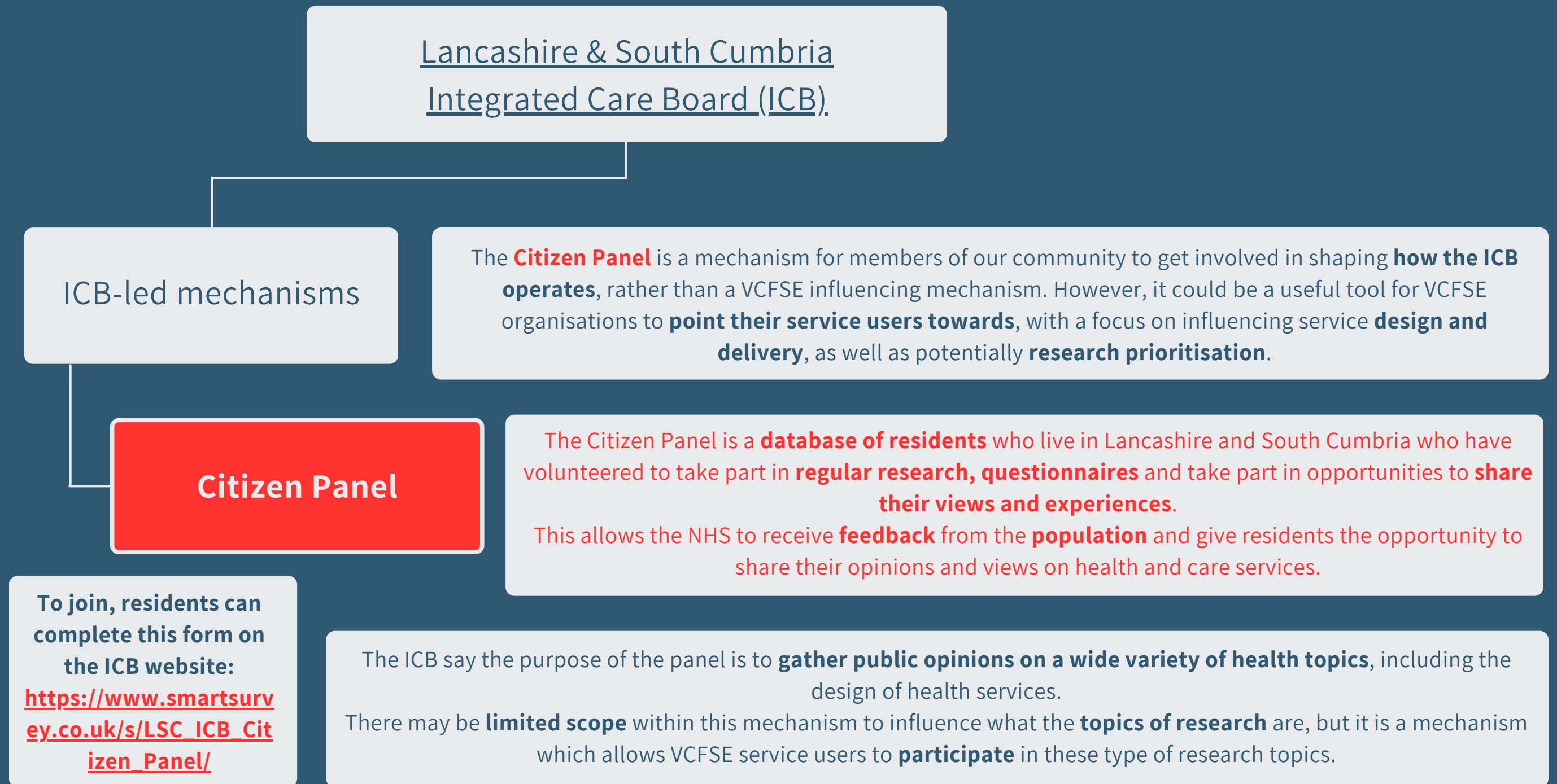
The ICP is a statutory committee formed between the ICB and all upper tier local authorities within the ICS region. Partners include: NHS, local authorities, VCFSE, hospices, public health, universities and Healthwatch. The ICP has developed a five year strategy to address the complex issues that cannot be solved by one individual organisation.

Integrated care is about giving people the support they need, joined up across local councils, the NHS, and other partners. It removes traditional divisions between hospitals and family doctors, and between NHS and council services. The integrated care strategy was developed by communities and members of the ICP.

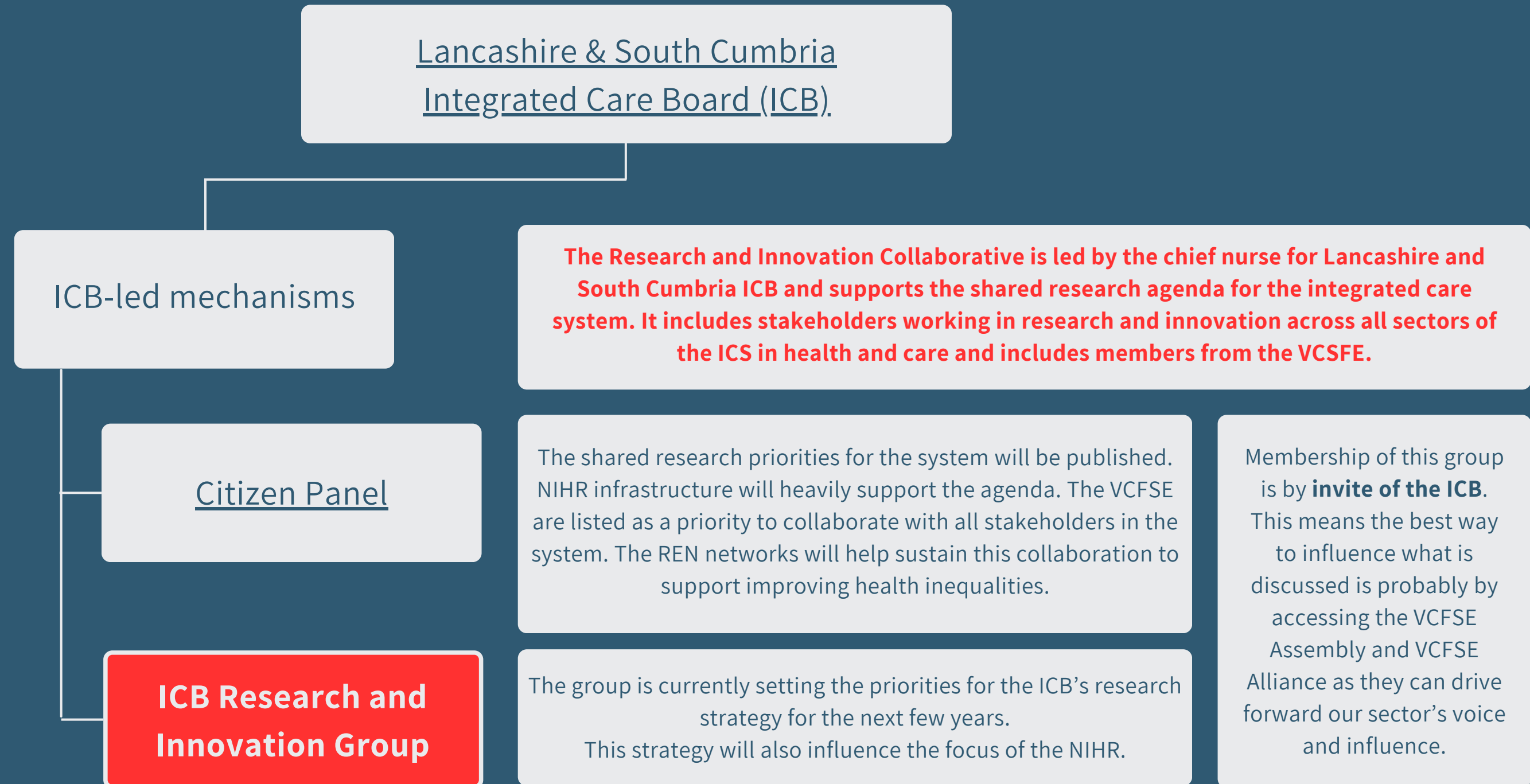
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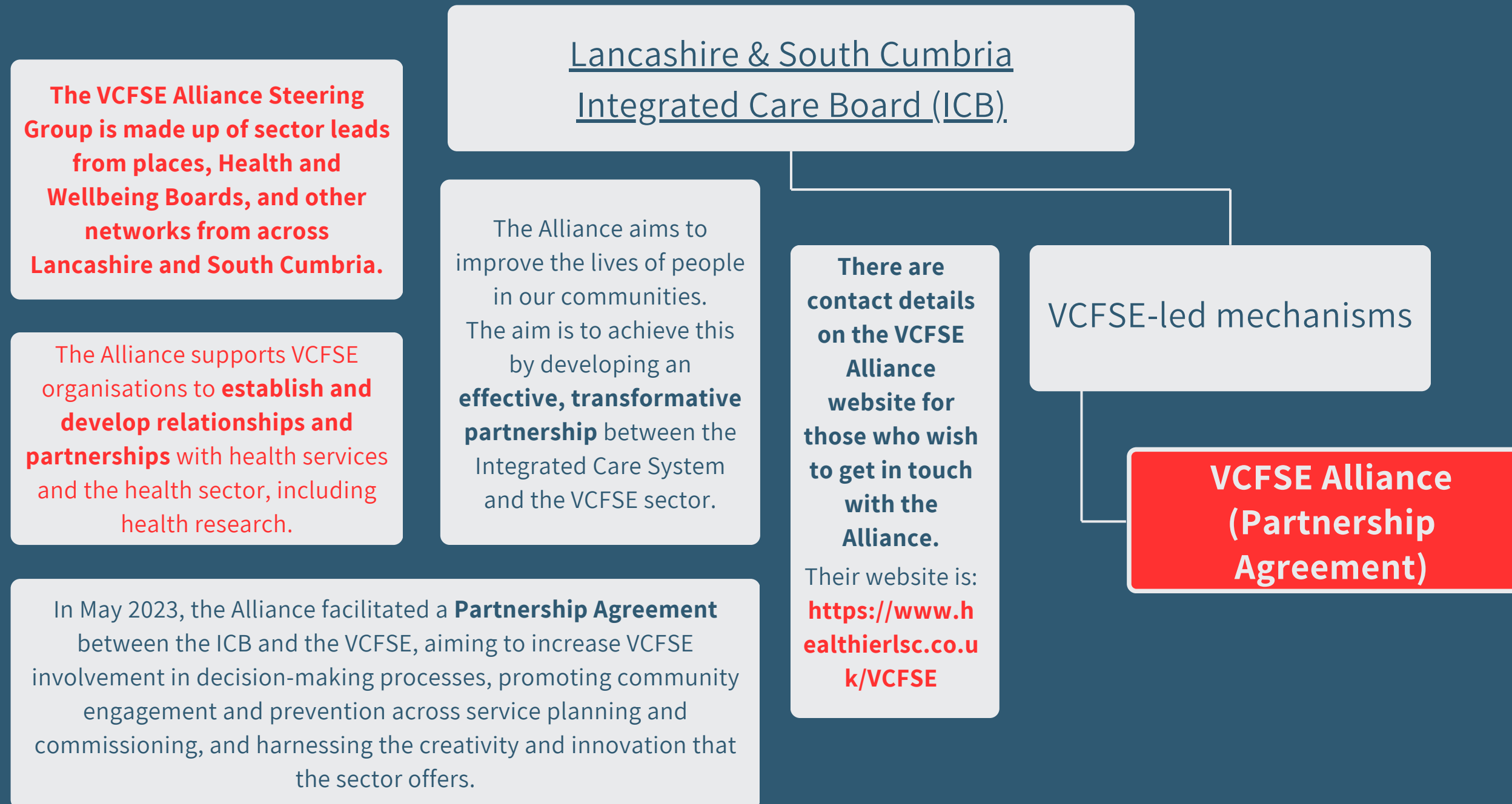
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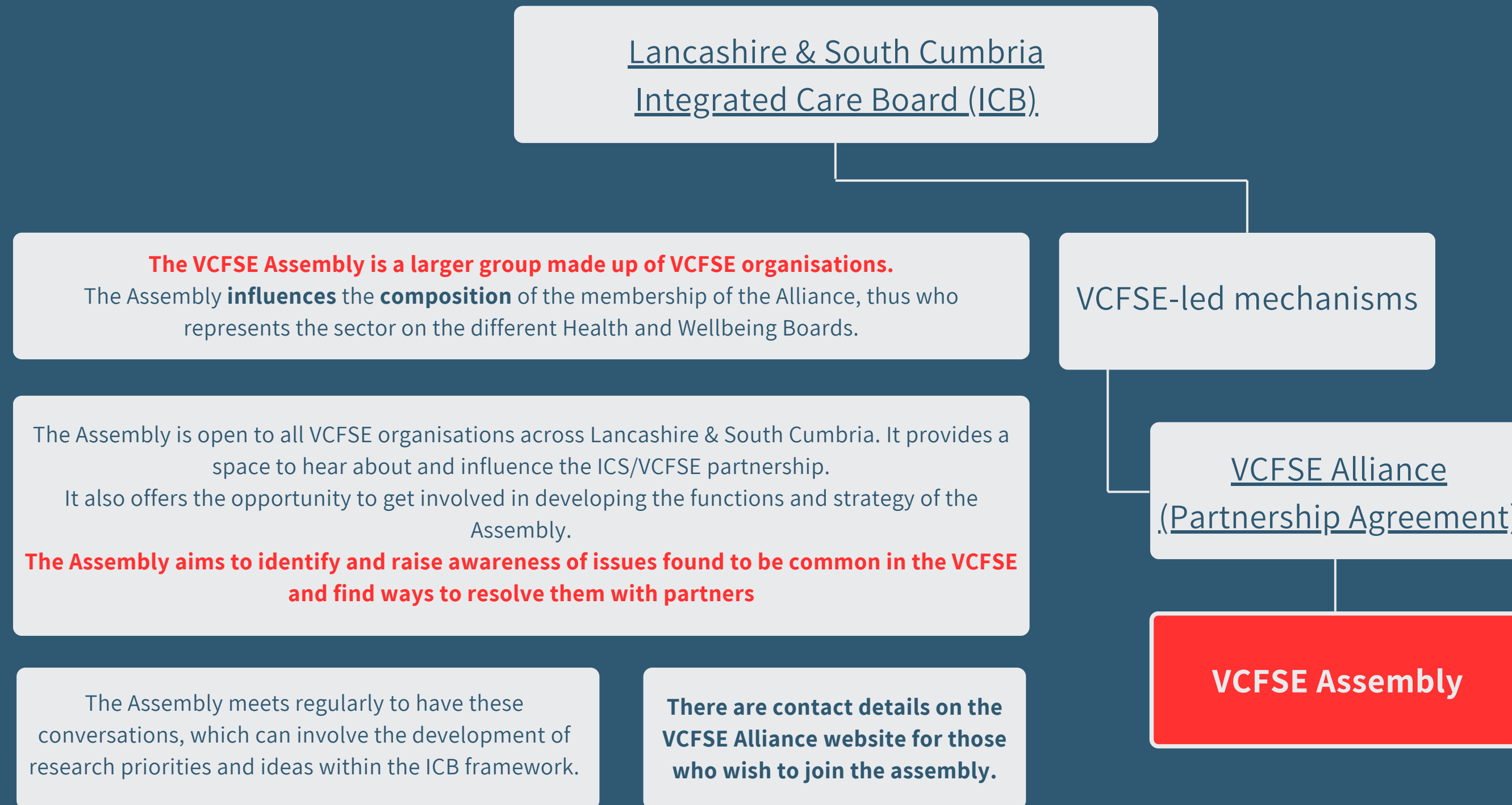
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HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

In Lancashire and South Cumbria, we have four universities: **Lancaster University, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), Edge Hill and Cumbria University.**
The best way to access these Higher Education Institutions to participate in health research is probably through the **NIHR infrastructure** as set out earlier.
Other than that, you can look on the websites of the following universities to find academics who you may wish to reach out to for collaboration on health research:

Lancaster University

University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)

Edge Hill University

Cumbria University

The **Health Partnerships Team** brings people and organisations together to work on a wide variety of projects in health and care. Their contact details can be found here: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/health-innovation/meet-the-team/>

You can access the contact links and areas of research for staff in the Division of Health Research here: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/health-and-medicine/dhr/people/>

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You can find out about research with the Edge Hill Medical School on their website here: <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/departments/academic/medicalschoolorresearch/#:~:text=The%20key%20people%20working%20in,Service%20User%20and%20Carer%20Council.>

Edge Hill also has the **Health Research Institute**. Full information and contact details can be found here: <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/research/healthresearchinstitute/>

Cumbria University has the **Centre for Research in Health and Society**. There are active research groups which can be joined. Full information and contact details can be found on their website here: <https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/research/centres/cris-research-centre/>