Introduction
Delivering high quality care requires staff at every level to continually review how well their service is doing, identify their priorities for improvement, and then test ideas to make care better. Individuals, teams, organisations and systems need to develop cultures and infrastructures for continuous learning. The concept of a learning system sits at the core of the Healthcare Improvement Scotland Quality Management System (QMS) Framework.

The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the need for organisations to learn and adapt quickly.

We set out to improve understanding of the concept of a learning system and to support teams and organisations with a practical approach to effective learning systems.

Method
To develop our learning system resources we:

- Conducted an evidence scan of all relevant publications on the subject.
- Gathered and reviewed a wide range of practical examples.
- Convened an organisational working group to agree the definition and core components of a learning system.
- Undertook an iterative process with our working group and Senior Management Team to refine our approach.
- Tested this with a range of external partners.

Results
- We developed an agreed standardised definition of what is meant by “learning system”.
- We have also produced a website resource to help services think about how they might establish an effective learning system and outlined the core components for use at any level of the health and care system (Fig 2).

Learning System – Definition
Enables a group of people to come together to share and learn about a particular topic, to build knowledge and speed up improved outcomes. It connects and influences people and develops their understanding.

Conclusions
We have set out a practical approach to support teams implement consistent and effective learning systems tailored to their own context.

To help health and social care organisations redesign and continuously improve services, the ihub supports a wide range of national learning systems, e.g. SPSP Acute, SPSP Mental Health, Essentials of Safe Care, Frailty, amongst many others.

For more detail and access to a range of additional resources, please check our webpages.