

# Anchors in a Storm: lessons from anchor action during Covid-19

On 17 May 2021 we held an event in partnership with the Health Foundation to build on learning from the [report](#) they produced after holding conversations with anchor leaders and partners from eight local areas across the UK. The aim was to better understand the opportunities, challenges and priorities for anchor action.

We were joined by speakers from Dorset County Hospital, North Ayrshire Council and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. They shared practical examples and learning from their anchor action during the pandemic.

 Watch the recording on [YouTube](#).

 View the slides on [FutureNHS](#).

For more information about how to join our FutureNHS online collaboration workspace, visit our [website](#).

## 7 top tips for practical anchor action

*Building on the key lessons from 'Anchors in a Storm'.*

1

### Identify your 'hook'

For Dorset County Hospital, talking about the hospital's role in supporting sustainability was a good starting point as people were already familiar with the concept.

2

### Measuring business as usual

Start with a baseline analysis to be able to later on tell the story of what has changed. North Ayrshire used an [Inclusive Growth Diagnostic](#) to understand their starting point.

3

### Combine your existing activities with your future plans

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust developed a 'driver diagram' to show how areas of focus link together. It includes existing activities to show that working as an anchor is within reach.

4

### Embed your principles into everything

Embedding anchor action into business as usual requires a significant change. North Ayrshire have developed an [anchor charter](#) to show how they're embedding principles across the region.

5

### Spend time nurturing individual and collaborative relationships

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's community engagement process for developing the [Compassionate Communities](#) grant funding programme involved 1-1 conversations and '[co-production huddles](#)' which brought people from different sectors together to design the fund.

6

### Making space for feedback and challenge

North Ayrshire council wanted an independent perspective on how they're progressing. They appointed an expert panel of leading economic experts to assist them with their Community Wealth Building plans.

7

### Demonstrating vulnerability, humility and honesty

The speakers shared the importance of acknowledging that the NHS hasn't invented this way of working and is new at the table. Health anchors should respect and support the work that is already underway, build trust and relationships and amplify the existing assets in a local area.

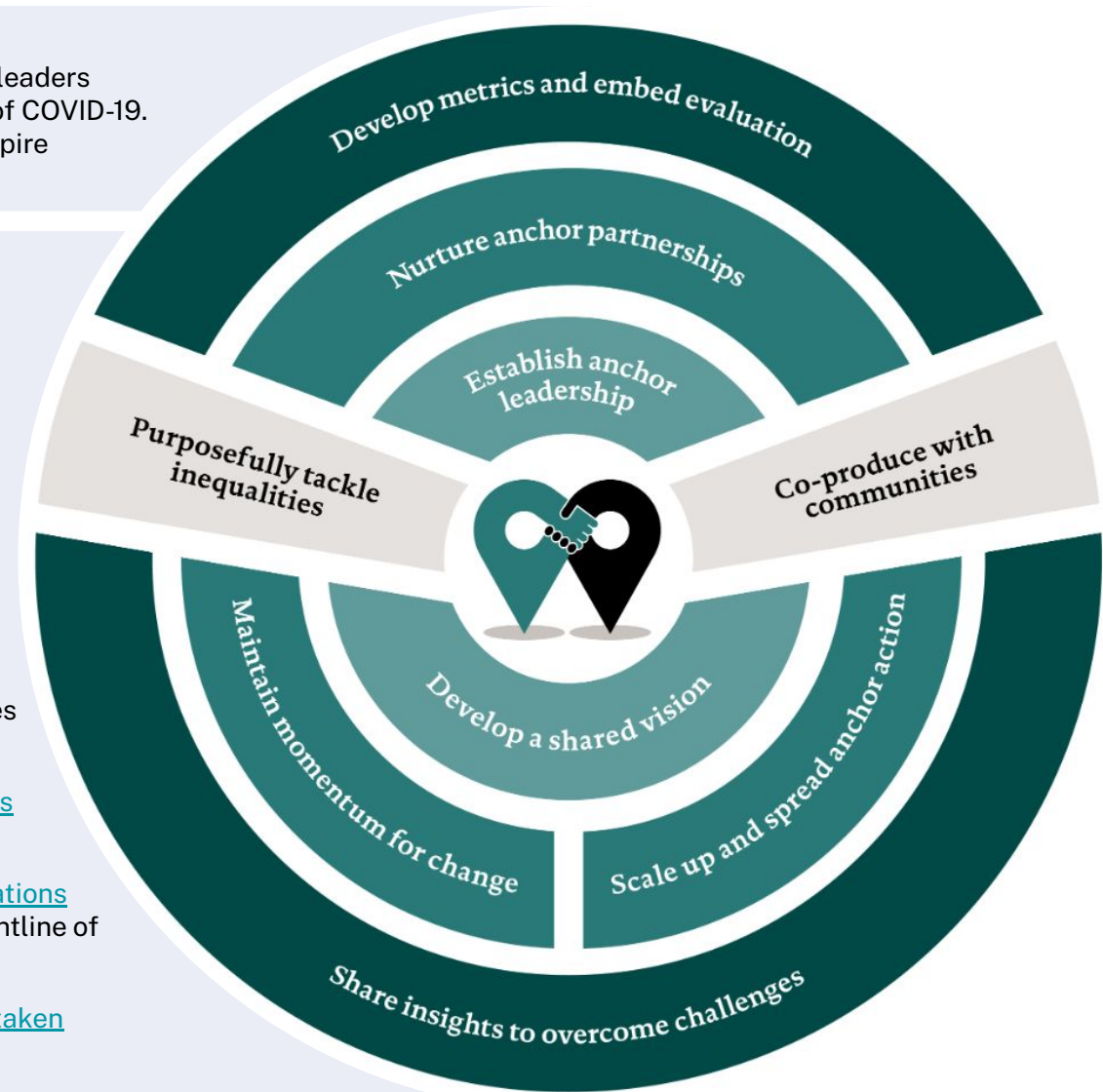
# Key Resources

## Anchors in a Storm: lessons from anchor action during Covid-19

[Long read](#) by the Health Foundation which summarises insights from local leaders around the UK who are engaged in anchor action to respond to the impact of COVID-19. By sharing insights, lessons, and examples the report aims to guide and inspire existing and emerging local anchor leaders.

## Resources and examples crowdsourced during the event

- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's work on [directly employing 1,000 outsourced workers](#) and their [Green Plan](#).
- North Ayrshire's [Community Wealth Building strategy](#).
- Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust's [Social Value Pledge](#).
- Toolkit: A [Progression Framework](#) to help organisations to capitalise on their power and role as an anchor institution.
- The [Civic University Network](#) who support universities to develop and access practical approaches in relation to the role of universities and place-based agendas.
- New Economics Foundation's report on [Commissioning for outcomes and co-production](#).
- National Housing Federation's web page about [how housing associations are working with the NHS](#) and other health organisations on the frontline of the country's response to the coronavirus crisis.
- Our previous event about how anchor institutions in the U.S.A have [taken action on racial inequalities](#).



**With thanks to:** **Simon Pearson** (Head of Charity & Social Value, Dorset County Hospital), **Julie McLachlan** (Senior Manager - Economic Policy, North Ayrshire Council), **Hannah Fontana** (Programme Manager - Strategy, Research & Innovation at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust), **Bob Klaber** (Director - Strategy, Research & Innovation at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust), **Dominique Allwood** (Assistant Director of Improvement at the Health Foundation), **Mimi Malhotra** (Clinical Fellow at the Health Foundation) and **Matilda Allen** (Public Health Specialty Registrar) for making the event possible.

The Health Anchors Learning Network is supported by:

