

ICSs, ICPs and anchor institutions

GGI webinar

Wednesday 2 December 2020

Briefing paper to prompt discussion

The value of anchor institutions has been explored well by the Health Foundation in recent months. Its report, *Building healthier communities: the role of the NHS as an anchor institution*, sets out the positive social and economic impact of large, public sector organisations.

'Anchor' refers to the permanence of these organisations and their significant stake in a geographical area, linked to the wellbeing of a local population.

These 'big beast' organisations by their very scale can leverage employment, skills, local goods and services and the use of estate and land. In the current climate they can also be anchors for hope and opportunity, connecting people and growing local resilience.

In a note of caution, at one GGI event a CEO dismissed anchor as being an unhelpful metaphor as it was associated with not moving anywhere rather than moving with agility, and with creating a negative drag along the bottom, rather than positive forward momentum.

At the same time, community anchor organisations, which are led, governed and run by local people, have also established themselves as creating real value in the place landscape, especially in the last nine months. These smaller beasts rely on community assets rather than state resources and require leadership skills based on deep connectivity to communities and knowledge of local citizens.

As ICSs and ICPs of all shapes and sizes start to emerge, the following anchor-related questions are worth considering:

- Is the primary role of an ICS to create social and economic value through anchor organisations of all sorts, and to measure its own impact accordingly, from the outset?
- Are new arrangements about bringing together anchor institutions, or about creating the ICS or ICP as a new anchor institution in its own right (potentially combining the different values of big beast and community anchors)?
- What will make listening with humility to citizens have real consequences in the new world?
- How can NHS board members and the NHSE/I be better equipped to ensure they possess the right levels of local knowledge and connectivity to enable system understanding that respects and enhances community anchors?
- What are the best ways of bringing big beast and community anchors into a common generative space, given local legacies and histories?

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