



Strengthening our Anchor

Our work in 2023/24



Introduction

2023/24 has been an important year for MSE Anchor.

We have considered and updated the programme to take account of national guidance ([How Strong is Your Anchor: A measurement toolkit for health anchors](#)). We also ran a major event that brought together people from every sector across Mid and South Essex wanting to improve health outcomes.

Looking forwards to 2024/25, we are looking to refresh our system's Anchor Charter. This involves reaffirming our commitment to Mid and South Essex Anchor principles and outcomes, including measuring the collective achievements of all our partners against our shared goals.

Through the Charter, organisations are committing to individual and collective action to improve population health through a focus on the following five areas:



The MSE Anchor programme is structured around these themes, with work in each area set out in this report.

What is an anchor institution?

Anchor institutions are large, often public-sector, bodies that are 'anchored' in place – in other words, unlikely to move – and linked to their local community.

Anchors use their assets to improve the health, wealth and wellbeing of their local population and reduce inequalities. They also have multiple opportunities to do this, by managing their resources and operations strategically and intentionally.

Anchors can have a positive impact on the social determinants of health by shifting and targeting the way they employ staff, procure goods and services, use their land and buildings, contribute to environmental sustainability and work in partnership.

How anchor complements our ICS priorities

As Mid and South Essex ICS moves into our second year, what has MSE Anchor brought to the system?

Integrated care is about seeing the bigger picture around the individual and building connections across the system. Anchor's aims – considering organisations' broader contribution to the economy and to society in general – also support these goals.

The two have different but complementary perspectives. Anchor focuses on the intentional, organisation-led actions that larger institutions can take – in addition to their traditional roles – to support specific populations and neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, the integrated care system aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the population – with a focus on prevention, better outcomes and reducing health inequalities.

They both have effectively the same goal, but each supports it in different ways.

The anchor approach has helped build shared understanding between partners across the integrated care system, from local authorities to the voluntary sector. Many of these players are not healthcare providers. They promote good health through active travel, healthy lifestyles, and work with education, veterans and others.

Working alongside them has helped many providers think differently about our civic responsibility.

Anchor is especially effective at building connections across and within sectors and organisations to tackle common issues. This enables partners to use their combined strengths to create value across the whole system, focusing on population health and social determinants of health.

It's early days. But MSE Anchor's role in making this happen is widely recognised as an example of good practice. And over time, our local residents will see organisations creating more opportunities for local people.



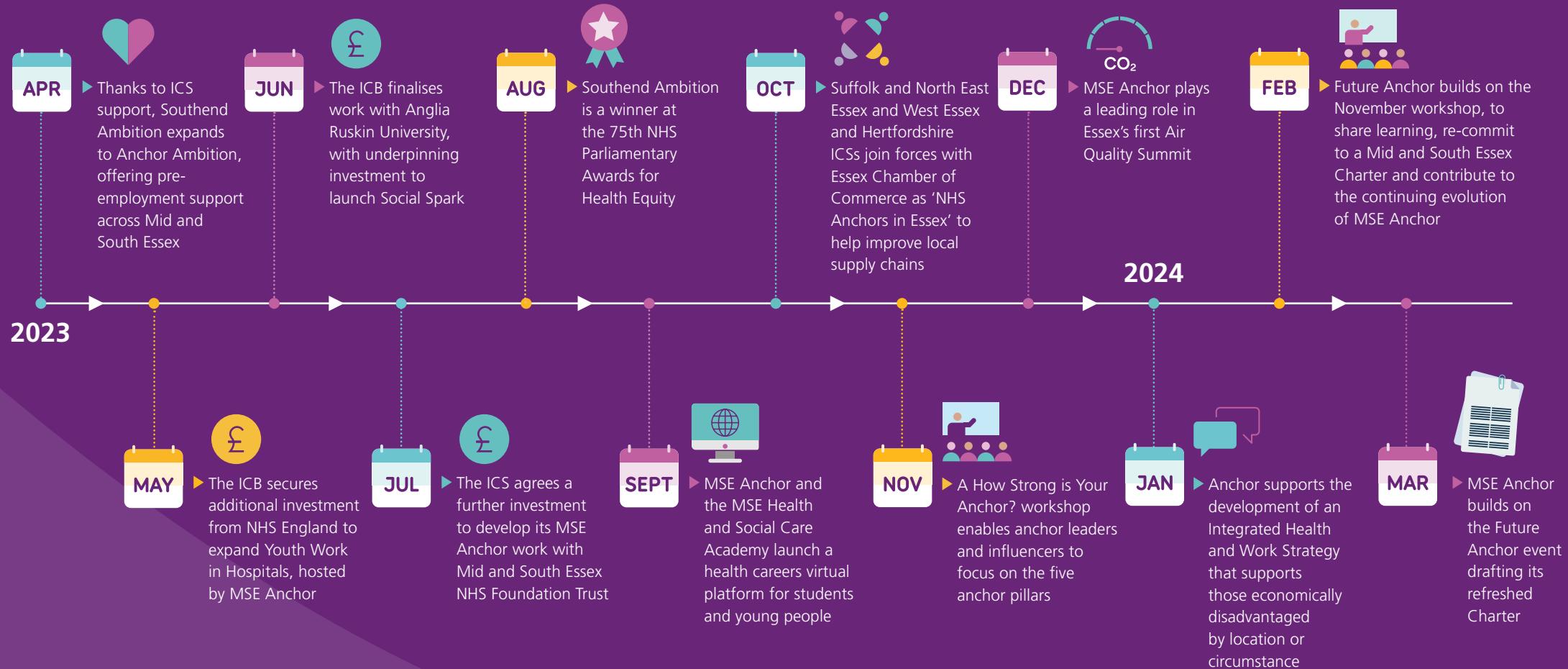
By harnessing our combined efforts and financial resources at the local level across our health and care system, we have the potential to make significant strides in supporting our most at-risk residents and communities.

At the Future Anchor event, it was clear to see how partners across the system are using the anchor approach to actively address inequalities, bolster economic development and enhance overall health, well-being and sustainability.”

Nigel Beverley, Chair, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Highlights

Our MSEICS Anchor Year 2023/24



Working to tackle inequalities across mid and south Essex

Employment

- **Conducting outreach and partnership work to increase awareness of healthcare careers and support education and training**

Through its Health and Social Care Academy, the ICB has strategically communicated its pre-employment offers to support people into work.

- **Employment focused participation programmes and support**

Anchor institutions across the ICS have developed a system-wide Pre-Employment Advisory Group. The network brings together organisations across the system to coordinate delivery activity and ensure that good work opportunities reach the people who will benefit most.

- **Developing recruitment policies, processes and programmes to help people into work**

North East London Foundation Trust embarked on a project to test out a better way of reaching local people, through adapted communication, application and recruitment processes. It reached local people in Basildon and helped fill several 'difficult to fill' positions.

Procurement

- **Embedding anchor priorities into social value requirements**

The MSE Anchor team worked alongside colleagues from MSE NHS Foundation Trust's sustainability team to deliver a series of webinars on social value and its development in mid and south Essex.

- **Developing partnerships at place, system, regional and national levels**

MSE Anchor has worked with local partners and national support to meet its obligations to its armed forces community, upskilling 200 members of staff and creating a Service Champions Network to support its 38,000 veterans.

- **Building partnerships with other health anchors, at multiple levels**

National numeracy support programme Multiply has brought ICS anchors work together to develop Every Carb Counts. The programme helps people with type 1 diabetes calculate their carbohydrate intake.



Sustainability

- Supporting estate, fleet and waste to deliver sustainability programmes**

Two MSE anchor organisations (Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust and Essex Partnership University Trust) have jointly procured a linen and laundry service that will aim to reduce existing emissions by 80 per cent in 2032.

- Supporting staff, patients and communities and being a good employer**

MSE Anchor and Essex County Council are supporting Essex Pedal Power to test an E-bike loan scheme to support staff with commuting and outreach, resulting in reduced emissions, cost savings, and improved physical and mental wellbeing.

- Creating green spaces for Southend's Victoria Ward residents**

Greening Southend Queensway is a new programme improving the outdoor green spaces on the Queensway estate and providing targeted support to improve the health and care of local communities. The project is delivered by charity Trust Links and funded by the South East Essex Alliance Health Inequalities Grant.

Partnership

- Partnerships and programmes reaching young people in schools and colleges**

MSE Anchor has worked with further education colleges and Essex County Council (themselves anchor institutions) to deliver a gamified approach to support young people's work ambitions in health and care.

- Supporting community co-production to design, deliver and evaluate anchor**

Basildon and Brentwood Alliance carried out an asset-based community mapping exercise. This identified the importance of prioritising mobility, community cohesion, opportunities for young people and making the most of local space.

- Developing participation programmes and support to local and target populations**

Thurrock Alliance's tobacco control strategy and smoking cessation implementation plan is focusing on Thurrock's small businesses, providing training, stop-smoking packs and ongoing support to 16 participating companies.

A common challenge for anchor programmes is devising ways of working with small businesses. This project is a good example of work with businesses on specific health initiatives.

Leadership

- Developing strong place-based partnerships with other local organisations**

Mid Essex Alliance Thriving Places work has generated place-based common outcomes and indicators and, importantly, two demonstrators: wealth creation and respiratory illness and incidence.

- Supporting partnerships, informing delivery and sharing learning**

MSE Anchor plays a prominent role in the Essex Anchors Network – bringing individuals together across boundaries of profession, organisation and sector. Its anchor institutions membership includes 133 individuals from 39 different organisations.

- Co-creating anchor projects alongside local and target communities**

Community Connectors is a programme working to build a better understanding the lived experience of support and daily life for people living with COPD, to improve support and recognise what works. The programme is delivered with Healthwatch Southend and Southend Association of Voluntary Services and funded by MSE ICB with support from Southend City Council.



Showcasing activities from across the five anchor pillars



Good employment



Procurement



Sustainability



Land and buildings



Leadership and partnership



Supporting Mid and South Essex's response to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan

Forging links between local communities and health and care employers opens up new possibilities in which everyone's a winner.

"When I was at school, careers days were spent sitting in a hall, listening to someone delivering a talk," says Rachel Sestak, Head of Systems Workforce at MSE ICS. "It's not like that now. At our events, you'll see young people wearing virtual reality goggles, taking part in online quizzes, or doing hands-on tasks with people from clinical backgrounds."

She continues: "Our community outreach work is important, partly because it helps us recruit and retain much-needed staff, but also because it changes lives. There are people within our local populations who would never think of working in healthcare if we didn't show them what's possible. We can broaden their horizons."

As well as students, Rachel and her team support care leavers or adults who have been unemployed and need to build their confidence to get back into work.

The Anchor Pre-employment Programme (in line with the anticipation of the [NHS Long Term Workforce Plan](#)) plays a specific role in broadening participation.

Applications for health and social care involve a lot of form-filling and checks – and not everyone finds that easy. This programme offers advice and support to steer people through the process.

"Our approach is closely aligned to anchor principles – providing health and care staff while levelling the playing field," says Rachel.

"Helping somebody into employment can transform other parts of their lives too, including their physical and mental health, lifestyle choices and economic wellbeing. This, in turn, affects their families, friends and wider communities – creating a positive cycle. It's very rewarding."



By harnessing our combined efforts and financial resources at the local level, across our health and care system, anchor offers the potential to make significant strides in supporting our most at-risk residents and communities."

Alan Tobias, Non-Executive Director and Anchor Champion, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust



Good employment

Introducing our pre-employment schemes

Halo is a four-week programme delivered by Southend Council to help people prepare for healthcare work. It has supported 380 participants, of whom 165 have secured work.

MSE Prince's Trust programme has worked with 140 young people, securing 96 job offers.

Anchor Ambition supports unemployed people into health work. Of the 179 people who found work through the project in 2023/24, 21 identified as having a disability.

Over the same period, MSEFT increased the proportion of its employees from the most disadvantaged areas by 2%.

This work aligns with findings of a recent HSJ survey that asked ICB leaders about their priorities for transforming services. One of the key priorities highlighted was 'inclusive recruitment' to get long-term unemployed into stable jobs.

What else has been happening?

- **The College Enrichment Programme** runs regular events to recruit level 2 and 3 NVQ students for volunteering roles, building a pipeline for entry-level healthcare support workers.
- **The Healthcare Assistant Academy** is designed to tackle the high percentage of healthcare assistant candidates who drop out during the recruitment process – supporting them along the way and offering longer-term career advice.





Embedding social value principles into all purchasing and procurement

How Strong is Your Anchor clearly states the links between anchor activities and economic and social wellbeing. But it goes beyond this too – setting out how institutions can go beyond that – drawing on legislation, regulation and financial constraint to stimulate community wealth building and diverse supply chains.



£100 million

Mid and South Essex's Anchors social (local) value expertise has provided end-to-end support for the procurement of more than £100 million of outsourced contracts.

1 Making sure social value is an important and prominent component in the way goods and services are purchased

Since April 2021, all relevant NHS procurements have been required to include a minimum of 10 per cent social value weighting. Mid and South Essex's Anchors social (local) value expertise has provided end-to-end support for the procurement of more than £100 million of outsourced contracts – from support services to digital and clinical testing.

This includes framing the social value questions: most often, support for economic development and wellbeing and then supporting the process assessor with expert opinion.

Submissions have focused on:

- apprenticeships, training, work experience and support for basic skills
- avoiding modern-day slavery in supply chains and staff benefits
- support for community organisations, schools and mentoring local residents.

Mid and South Essex Anchor will continue to work with its supplier base to help localise, tailor and deliver successful proposals.





2 Welcoming small social business into the local health economy and investing their wealth locally for stronger, more diverse economies

In Basildon, the Social Spark healthcare innovation incubator is supporting residents, healthcare staff, students and local businesses to develop social and economic innovations that will benefit the local community. It assesses local need, delivers training and builds connections. Its ultimate goal is to build local capacity and harness ideas that will provide long-term solutions to local problems.

Building on ARU's NHS Clinical Entrepreneur Programme, the scheme is a collaboration between Basildon Council, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, Essex County Council, Mid and South Essex ICS and Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), along with other higher education institutions.

- Social Spark and Anchor activities are perfectly aligned with the ICB's objective to support broader social and economic development.
- Social Spark is a place-based, multi-sector partnership that embraces and articulates many of the concepts of At the Helm to address the social determinants of health.



Drawing on her experience in youth and community work, local resident Miriam Chalkley identified a local need for an ethnically diverse youth organisation and founded a volunteer-led organisation Flex. Today, Flex reaches around 200 young people through weekly youth sessions, 'Mumma and Me' groups, tutoring and a teen café.





Reducing poor air quality-related illness among staff, patients and community

Anchor is supporting the ICS to meet its environmental and sustainability targets, through projects ranging from Pedal Power to advocating to improve air quality.

Many of the actions that reduce carbon emissions also strengthen communities, such as investing in local providers or encouraging walking or cycling, which also improve physical health.

One example is Essex Pedal Power and its Anchor-led work with Basildon Hospital. The initiative provides free bikes to people across Basildon, focusing on disadvantaged communities. In collaboration with Essex County Council, the Active Wellbeing Society and other partners, the project is improving people's physical and mental wellbeing, helping people commute affordably and improving air quality.

Overall, the scheme has distributed 620 bikes across Basildon, including 150 for Basildon Hospital staff on lower pay bands, alongside free learn-to-ride sessions, bike maintenance support and group bike rides.

The scheme has attracted the support of Olympic cyclist and Chair of Sport England Chris Boardman, who visited in October 2023.

Air quality is closely linked with health inequalities, deprivation and the wider determinants of health, so this is a key focus. Improving air quality – both outdoors and within the home – is an important way of improving health outcomes and reducing costs.

Staff travel is one of the biggest contributors to NHS emissions, so changing staff perceptions and enabling active and zero-emission travel is a focus to tackle hospital hotspots – particularly at points where there is greatest staff, patient and visitor exposure. Find out more at [Essex Air](#).



“Across our health and care systems, there is so much we can do to boost sustainability and social value.

Becky Jones, Head of Sustainability, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust



What's been happening on air quality?

- In December 2023, anchor representatives from across Essex came together for the first Essex Air Quality Summit.
- A new working group (part of the Essex Anchors Network's climate action working group) is taking the programme forward, such as supporting schools to reduce school-gate drop-offs.
- MSEFT is currently trialling a testing regime in its loading bays to monitor the impact of engines left running, site congestion and below-standard vehicles on site.



NHS land and buildings are being used by local organisations such as community groups and creative industries

Integrated work is never more evident than in our Youth Worker in Hospitals project, run by Essex County Council Youth Service in A&E departments and for long-term conditions.

Young people attending A&E often have underlying social needs, but they don't always find it easy to engage with healthcare professionals. Going to A&E can provide a 'reachable moment' when a youth worker can make a connection with them.

"This idea was at the heart of this work," explains senior youth and community worker Helen Newman. "The project was originally funded by the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, but most of the people we see are attending with mental health needs. Many are on waiting lists for CAHMS or don't quite meet their thresholds."

She continues: "Our staff are stationed either in A&E or at our desk space near the unit.

We've worked hard to build relationships with the A&E, CAMHS, crisis and children's play teams and they will refer a young person they feel could benefit from our support."

The service is tailored to each young person. Importantly, some are signposted to community or youth services, but it also runs weekly groups and some have regular one-to-one sessions at school or a local café. The team also carry out advocacy work – for example, attending multi-disciplinary meetings with other providers.

Results have included improvements at home and school, including better ability to manage anxiety and stress and less risky behaviour such as drug use and self-harm. In 2023/24 the service supported 168 young people at Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital A&E.

"It's a really fabulous project," says Helen. "Before, I worked in education, as a deputy head and SENCO, so I've seen the level of need from the other side, too. Every young person needs someone in their corner."



168 young people supported

In 2023/24 we supported 168 young people at Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital A&E.

What else is happening?

- Mid and South Essex ICS is developing an infrastructure strategy that will need to consider the role of the NHS as an Anchor through its buildings and spaces.
- Mid and South Essex Foundation Trust is reviewing the current use of its land and buildings by the voluntary and community sector. For example, for many years the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity operated from a standalone site at Broomfield Hospital.

The work will explore how far its land and buildings are used by the voluntary and community sector and whether increasing co-location will reduce admissions and length of stay and expedite discharge.





Anchor action is supported and sustained at an organisational level

In February 2024, MSE Anchor hosted people working across the health and care system from around mid and south Essex, at Chelmsford's Hylands House. The event, called Future Anchor, was funded by the ICS and brought together people across sectors and organisations.



Shammi Jalota
Head of Partnerships and Equalities, Essex County Council

The Essex Anchor Network faces some challenges – not least, because of the geography of Essex. In cities like Leeds, Bradford, Luton and Manchester anchor plans can be fairly contained. But in a wider geography, such as Greater Essex, it's hard to think about the system response and collective goals. For me, the next step is taking a strategic, system-wide approach so we can add up to more than the sum of our parts.

Liesel Kennedy

Intelligence and Research Programme Manager, Suffolk and North East Essex ICP Secretariat

I work closely with Anchor in Suffolk and North East Essex. In the spirit of sharing learning and good practice, it is really helpful to learn and share with other systems, particularly with our immediate neighbours. At the event, it was gratifying to see how similarly our ways of working and thinking are evolving, and how many opportunities there are to continue to share our learning and practice



Adam Seomore

Lead Nurse for Safeguarding Children, Provide Social Enterprise

I've been looking to create a role within our organisation for a care leaver. My colleague told me about the anchor programme so I wanted to come here and find out more. Anchor is definitely a different way of doing things. It feels more organic – that collective approach.



Toni Parrish

Employer Engagement, ACL Essex County Council

As an adult education provider, we have clear social development goals, so we're very aligned with anchor. For example, recently we've collaborated with community engagement and transport colleagues to help people in coastal communities gain qualifications. We've come here to spread the word about our work and find out what's needed and how to join it all together.





Anna Bokobza
Director of Strategy, EPUT

We look at the whole life experience for the Learning Disability and Autism community, so we work across all key themes of the Anchor programme. It was really refreshing to hear that the programme had teeth and was willing to challenge thinking. The learning was not about process or programmes: it was about ethos and the willingness of the programme to embrace partners, innovation and wider thinking, and deliver structural change.

Ru Watkins
CEO, Hamelin Trust

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David Slatter
Public policy and strategy manager, Essex County Council

I'm part of the levelling up team within Essex County Council. We tackle the underlying barriers to economic or personal development across Essex – so quite a similar mission to anchor. I have experience in education, skills and employment so I'm here to find out how these link with health-related wider determinants and how to bring them together.



Grant Taylor
Assistant Director for Communities and Health, Basildon Council

I'm working alongside the Anchor partnership on the Social Spark programme to enhance community enterprises and close the gap of active travel inequalities, through Pedal Power. Future Anchor delivered a chance to learn, collaborate and re-set our work together for the betterment of the place. It was an excellent opportunity to meet and collaborate with system partners who are driven to effect positive change with, and for, our communities.





For further information:

Go to our website at:

www.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk

Watch our short film at:

tinyurl.com/MSE-Anchor

Contact us at:

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 Mid and South Essex
Integrated Care System