



Inclusive Wellbeing Economies

“... a more deliberate and socially purposeful economy – measured not only by how fast or aggressive it grows; but also by how well wealth is created and shared across the whole population and place, and by the social and environmental outcomes it realises for people.”

June 2023

The following is a piece of work produced on behalf of the Association of Directors of Public Health in Yorkshire and the Humber to foster understanding of the links between the economy and health and support local public health teams to advocate for inclusive wellbeing economies as a way of reducing health inequalities.

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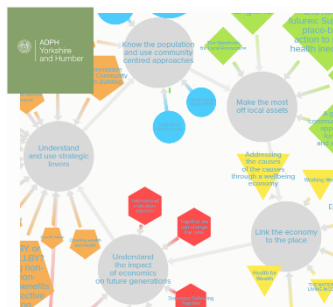
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This narrative is for Directors of Public health and their teams to begin, or continue the case for action at local, regional, and national levels to support the shifting of economies to become Inclusive Wellbeing focused .

This narrative is to be used ***in conjunction*** with the resources available below resource giving ways of working and local, regional, national and international examples of moving economies to be more inclusive wellbeing focused.



[START HERE](#)

[Policy Resources \(yhphnetwork.co.uk\)](http://yhphnetwork.co.uk)

[Tools for Local Authorities \(yhphnetwork.co.uk\)](http://yhphnetwork.co.uk)

[Data Resources \(yhphnetwork.co.uk\)](http://yhphnetwork.co.uk)

What are inclusive wellbeing economies?

An economy is the way that we produce and provide for one another. Economies operate at different geographies: global, regional, and local. The rules, social norms and stories that underpin our economies were designed by people and that means they can also be changed by people.

Source: (Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2023)

An Inclusive Wellbeing Economy is one that serves the wellbeing of people and the planet, making life better for all.

Not all resources produced and exchanged in an economy have a monetary value, for example social capital, informal caring and nature. An inclusive wellbeing economy values all these elements.

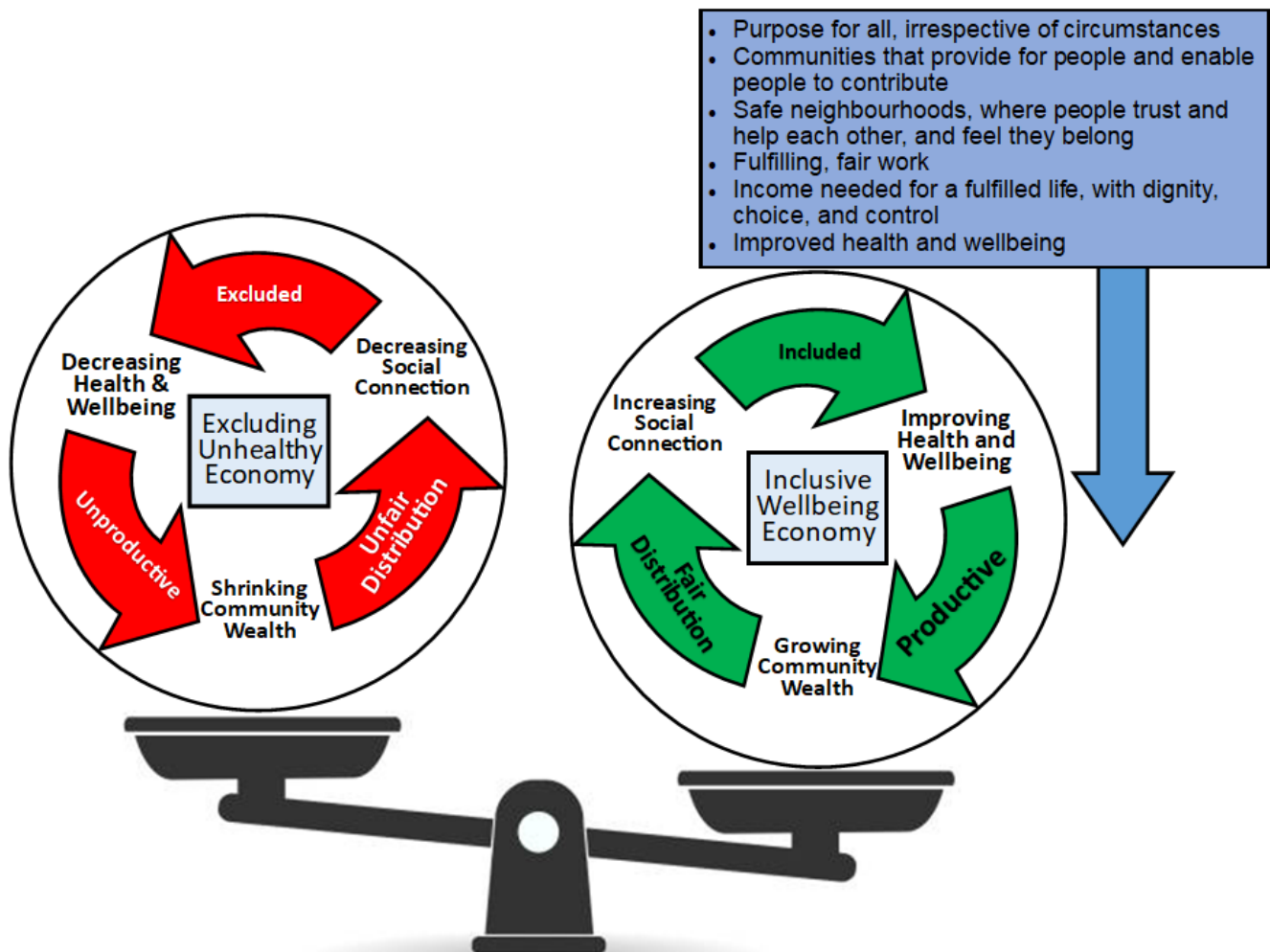
The benefits of inclusive wellbeing economies are broad and include:

- A sense of purpose for all, irrespective of circumstances
- Communities that both provide for people and also enable people to contribute to their community
- Safe neighbourhoods where people trust and help each other and feel a sense of belonging
- Fulfilling, fair work
- The income needed to live a fulfilled life, with dignity, choice, and control
- Improved health and wellbeing.

Shifting the balance to Inclusive Wellbeing Economies

The balance of local, regional and national economies is set to exclude by design. It does this by extracting wealth from our communities. Wealth is concentrated in international companies and in economic centres. There is competition between our towns and cities. This has a negative impact on people's wellbeing and subsequent ability to work (ONS, 2023). Cutting people off from their communities, resulting in a deteriorating spiral, as shown in red on the left pan below. Shifting the balance, putting more weight into economies that promote wellbeing creates more health and wealth in our communities.

Figure 1 Balance of Inclusive Wellbeing Economy diagram



Why is developing inclusive wellbeing economies a public health priority?

Inclusive wellbeing economies are important for health and health inequalities for a number of reasons:

Work and employment

The jobs in our economy are increasingly bad for people's health and wellbeing. There is an increase in roles (e.g. in the gig economy) that are characterised by zero hour contracts, a lack of job security and shift working. Employees are treated as on demand, disposable inputs, and a cost to be minimised. This increases pressure on employees to increase the pace of work at the expense of their wellbeing, their ability to enjoy family and community life, the quality of outputs they produce and ability to exert control on their lives. We know that people in this type of work are at increased risk of ill health and live shorter lives. The health of the population is a key input to an economy as well as a key output from it and should be seen as equal value.

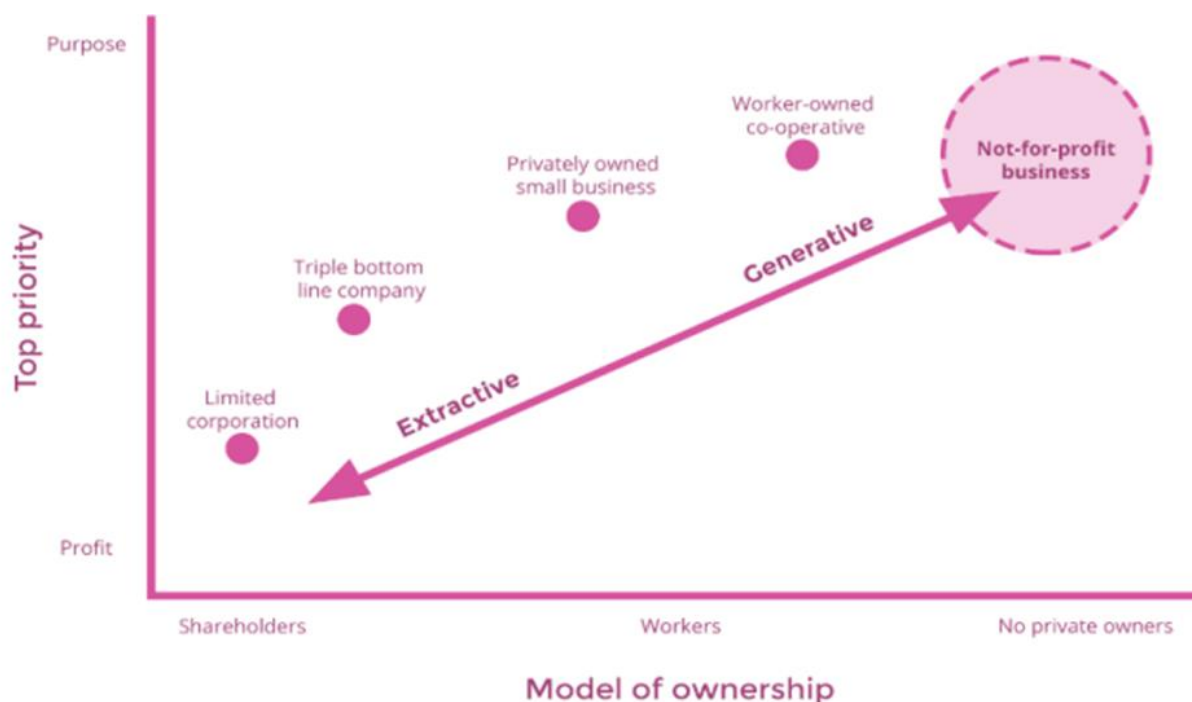
Inclusion for all

There are some groups who are at increased risk of not being served equally by the economy and this impacts negatively on their physical and mental health. For example, throughout their lives women are more likely to be excluded from work due to pregnancy and childcare responsibilities, caring responsibilities, and menopause. There are also groups for whom work can transform their lives and their health, but who are excluded from work, for example ex-offenders, people recovering from drug and alcohol addiction and refugees and asylum seekers.

These features allow generative organisations create a local economic “multiplier” effect – meaning that the money they spend creates more wealth locally, through jobs, income and demand for local goods and services.¹⁴ The graph overleaf shows the spectrum of organisational forms – from extractive to generative – by illustrating the relationship between who owns the organisation and its priorities (profit vs social purpose).

To thrive, local economies need lots of these generative organisations, including worker-owned businesses, community organisations, charities, social enterprises, locally rooted SMEs and municipal enterprises. All these types of organisations allow the wealth they create to circulate around their local economies. Those with shared ownership structures – such as worker-owned co-operatives, mutuals and community businesses – have the added advantage of widening ownership of wealth even further, by passing profits directly on to workers, consumers or citizens

Figure 2 Extractive / generative spectrum



Source CLES

Participation and power

Inequalities in the distribution of power in society lead to those with less power having fewer opportunities to access and contribute to the economy. Equitable participation in the economy can benefit health by increasing the power people have to control their lives, for example, enabling people to have the freedom to choose what they do and have influence over decisions. Social enterprises, credit unions and cooperatives provide empower communities, helping to keep wealth local and improve health.

Power is known to be an important determinant of health. Power exists in relationships between people, communities, businesses, and the state. It's often intangible and hidden and is routinely found in economic institutions locally, regionally, and nationally (Public Health Scotland, 2023). Inclusive wellbeing economies work to redress this power imbalance.

Better value, reducing reactive spend on failure

When the economy doesn't work for people, harm is caused to both people and the planet. This harm may be in the form of ill health, climate breakdown or economic inequalities and insecurity. The response of the government is to spend money to respond to these harms, and so we become trapped in an expensive cycle of spending money to fix what was broken.

Most of health spending goes on treating people when they get ill. The later we treat people, the more advanced and complex their health issues are, and the more expensive they are to treat. Investing in the interventions and policies that create health and wellbeing, preventing ill health at its earliest stage are much better value for money than the treatment of ill health. A failure to invest properly in prevention leads to greater long-term costs for the NHS and the public purse.

An inclusive wellbeing economy which focuses on prevention, people, and the planet, saves money by reducing avoidable reactive spending to preventable harm.

How do we create inclusive wellbeing economies?

Directors of Public Health and their teams can support action to develop inclusive wellbeing economies at several geographical levels: in their local authorities, working sub-regionally with combined authorities, and regionally and nationally in collaboration with others. This framework sets out the ways in which Directors of Public Health and their teams can support the creation of inclusive wellbeing economies on these different geographical levels.

Local

Understand and use strategic levers

- All Directors of Public Health and their teams know how to talk about inclusive economies and why they matter for people's health – be prepared and be able to tell your local wellbeing story.
- Link local health and wellbeing strategies with local inclusive economy strategies.
- Expose the trade-offs and consider all of the options for economic design, challenging assumptions about standards, cost and the purpose of the economy.
- Build relationships with the strategic economic functions of your organisation and political portfolio holders.

Know the population and use community centred approaches

- Understand the local community and its relationship with the economy and the economic determinants of health.
- Involve the community in the development and delivery of economic strategies and regeneration programmes.
- Support and Promote community wealth building – social enterprise, community economic development, alternative economic models, co-operatives, and wellbeing budgets.
- Use the appropriate participation methods for the issues (e.g., citizens assembly, participatory budgeting, coproduction).

Make the most of local assets

- Consider social value programmes focused on contribution to local health and wellbeing strategy outcomes and fulfilment of anchor organisation social value responsibilities.
- Understand local anchor institutions and bring them together in your place (including schools).
- Understand the value of community anchors – develop a community anchor policy which gives parity of esteem to other anchors.

Link the economy to the place

- Where there is a capital/physical element of the delivery of an economic strategy, embed public health design principles; this includes access to nature, active travel, and access to local services.
- Promote local employment support initiatives. Local partners are ideally placed to develop and implement locally tailored employment support programmes for groups at increased risk of exclusion from work, focused on the local economy, connecting people with support needs linked to local employers.
- Promote and partner with social enterprises, community interest companies, and voluntary and charitable organisations which are valued by residents, allowing people to give back to *their* community. The public sector and business partners must explore ways of growing the number and type of these whilst simultaneously supporting scalability of the sector.
- Grow community wealth, through increasing the number and diversity of community banks, cooperatives and credit unions that holds wealth in communities and reinvests in the local economy and local people.

Understand the impact of economics on future generations

- Link the economy, health and wellbeing, and sustainability. Ensure that climate impact is considered in all policies.
- Recognise, value, and support local organisation's contribution to carbon neutrality; promote circular economy principles, including local skills development for green jobs.
- Ensure that short term economic outcomes are not achieved at the expense of the health, wellbeing, and other outcomes of future generations.
- Recognise that for future generations holding wealth locally will allow for flexibility and for community led prioritisation of where it invests and in what industries. It also provides opportunities for increasing levels of intergenerational wealth over time.

Sub regional & regional

Understand and use strategic levers

- Understand the opportunities that devolution deals bring for places and promote social devolution (for example argue for more focus on social powers and resources).
- Grow understanding and look for opportunities to influence employers and industry to support them to be wellbeing focused.
- Bring local perspective and evidence to the development of sub-regional and regional policy making e.g., transport and economic strategies.

Know the population and use community centred approaches

- Understand the local economy and flows of people, and their impact on health across boundaries.
- Advocate for community involvement in sub regional and regional policy making, ensuring that policies consider the economies that people relate to, rather than those defined by parliamentary or geographical boundaries.

Make the most of local assets

- Make the most of our regional assets, promoting inclusive wellbeing economies (including AHSN, Minding the Gap, Northern Powerhouse, Integrated Care Partnerships, and the local authority chief executives and leaders' groups).
- Understand the value of and work with sub-regional and regional anchors, e.g., police, fire, ambulance.
- Explore opportunities to work with Local Enterprise Partnerships/Combined Authorities Inward Investment and Economic Development teams.

Link the economy to the place

- Understand and show the links between improvements in wellbeing and economic activity at a regional level.
- Social value is recognised, promoted, and valued in regional work and policies.
- Where there is a capital/physical element of the delivery of a regional economic strategy, use public health design principles (see above).
- Demonstrate and promote the links between transport, health and wellbeing and the economy. This can be through good, skilled jobs that support workplace wellbeing, and through growing industries that do not harm the population or environment.
- Work with Local Enterprise Partnerships and Combined Authorities to promote understanding of the links between wellbeing and prosperity. Support them to develop the economy in a way that meets the principles of inclusive wellbeing economies.

Understand the impact of economics on future generations

- Support preparations for the (health) impacts of the changing economy (e.g., automation, artificial intelligence, net zero) on local populations, support local skills development, and advocate for equitable redistribution of jobs to address inequalities.
- Work with the Yorkshire and the Humber Climate Commission to make the links between economic strategies and net zero, including opportunities to grow 'green jobs.'

National

Understand and use strategic levers

- The Yorkshire and Humber region has a national profile in this area. Support regional leaders in national conversations and through organisations such as Solace and the Local Government Association.
- Be aware of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities priorities and use this to draw in investment to communities whilst promoting an inclusive wellbeing economy approach.
- Recognise the role of regions, especially those with devolution deals. Consider and support collaboration.

Know the population and use community centred approaches

- Encourage and support local and regional engagement and contributions to national consultations and strategies, inputting into policy development where opportunities arise.
- Share experience and learning from the creation and influence on policy or projects that has shifted places/regions to a more inclusive wellbeing economy.

Make the most of assets

- Build relationships between the Association of Directors of Public Health, Faculty of Public Health, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and other government departments, such as the Department for Business and Trade, to promote understanding of the benefits of inclusive wellbeing economies for health.
- Explore and develop partnerships and alliances with others working in this space across the UK to maximise our voice and share learning e.g., the Wellbeing Economies Alliance.

Link the economy to the place

- Understand and be able to describe the relationship between growing community wealth and how this benefits the nation's health and wellbeing.
- Understand the benefits and learning from nations such as Scotland and Wales, taking a wellbeing economies approach to their respective nation's economies.

Understand the impact of economics on future generations

- Disseminate learning and best practice from local and regional activities and policy to support the scaling up of what works across the country.

Getting started – building blocks

What to do.

There is no one route to create more inclusive wellbeing economies, but the first step is the same in all approaches; engagement with the community about what matters as the starting point. What will transpire and, therefore, what approaches will be needed to get there, will vary based on what matters to local communities.

Public Health teams have a lot to offer in terms of skills around engagement and coproduction approaches to health creation which is readily transferable into things like community and neighbourhoods plans as well as investment strategies. Taking a public health approach to speaking to the community will allow for better informed local economic plans as well as presenting the opportunity for consideration of health, wellbeing, and inclusion.

Set your vision.

Public Health serve the people to improve health for all in its fullest holistic definition, complete physical, mental, and social well-being. Therefore, an inclusive wellbeing economy will need some goals reflecting this breadth and the inequality faced by the populations in reaching them. What to do crafted in a coproduced manner will give the activity being achieved in communities' logic modelled to the inclusive wellbeing goals. Key will be a tight narrative to articulate this in areas which this document will aid along with the examples included in the resource sections from places already on this journey that have already begun in other areas.

Find the teams and build the relationships.

Having exposed the trade-offs moving to an Inclusive Wellbeing Economy in your area you need allies. Finding the teams in the local authority, combined authority and/or local enterprise partnership is key. They will be a mix of economic development, strategy, inward investment, and business support teams tasked with setting policy and attracting business and public sector investment to the region.

Get community wealth building going.

Whatever type of economy and industries communities decide upon, having more money anchored to the community is vital for places to thrive and people to be healthier.

Public sector insourcing, municipal enterprises, worker ownership, co-operatives, community ownership and local private ownership. These models enable wealth created by users, workers, and local communities to be held by them, Community wealth building seeks to increase flows of investment within local economies. It does this by harnessing the wealth that exists locally, rather than by seeking to attract national or international capital. For example, local authority pension funds are encouraged to redirect investment from global markets to local schemes. Mutually owned banks are supported to grow, and regional banking charged with enabling local economic development are established.

Curate the policy context.

Take every opportunity to lever our investment in public health services to grow social value.

Influence the ICS to use its new duties around community development and economic development to maximise the benefits to the population.

Lean on the anchor institutes as part of this pushing for inward investment. This can be achieved over time by synergising the health and wellbeing board strategy and ICB place strategy with the economic and local/combined/mayoral authorities' strategies and/or development plans.

Monitor the goals

Related to what is set out in the vision, measuring wellbeing and the inequality within, are key to understanding any improvement inclusive wellbeing economic approaches are having on the population. Traditional measures such as Gross Value Added (GVA) if used alone, are likely to be less useful in understanding inclusive wellbeing economic approaches, compared to measures like inward investment or disposable income or locally determined ways of similar economic value being spent/held in the local area. A basket of key measures like that of ONS Wellbeing Subnational population dataset, reflecting the shift of a similar size local economy from an extractive to an inclusive one would be of great use. The ONS basket measures economic change whilst measuring other key determinants of improved health and wellbeing.

Approaches to help talk about inclusive wellbeing economies in places using the building blocks of health

The following frameworks have been developed using the Framework Institute's building blocks for health approach, to support DsPH and their teams talk about the different elements of inclusive wellbeing economies, and how these relate to health and inequalities.

Community Wealth Building 1

Wealth is being extracted from our communities in Yorkshire and the Humber.

National and international companies are concentrating wealth into fewer and fewer people and contributing little to local, regional, or national economies.

Control of redistributing wealth is beyond regional hands and it does not follow where wellbeing need is.

Without this wealth, health and wellbeing is stalling in most of our communities across Yorkshire and the Humber.

Democratising the ownership of the economy via social enterprises, cooperatives, employee led mutuals promotes empowered communities and inclusive, healthy, and well communities.

Community Wealth Building 2

Opportunities to create and recognise social value in our communities are being missed.

The narrowness of organisation type is restricting the community wealth building opportunities and lack of recognition of social value.

Diversifying organisation types will increase the social value that communities create and need to thrive.

Cooperatives, social enterprises, and anchor institutions can all promote workplaces which enhance wellbeing, meaning that more individuals are fulfilled and supported and are then able to give back to communities, further improving wellbeing and inclusivity.

Community Wealth Building 3

Poverty, ill health, and inequality are all increasing in Yorkshire and Humber.

The distribution of economic and health resources is not equitable across the region.

This is leading to more and more people struggling to cover the basic costs of living.

This is causing stress, anxiety, impacting on both the mental and physical health of the population.

Community wealth building initiatives bring people into the economy who would otherwise be left out, keeping money available for communities to invest in places, growing sustainably and improving health and wellbeing.

Economic Inactivity 1

Absence from work due to sickness has grown since the beginning of the pandemic, particularly in those aged 50 and older.

Interruption to routine treatment and care has caused greater levels of ill health in our communities.

People are waiting longer in poorer circumstances, and their health and wellbeing is suffering.

It is our poorest communities who are feeling the brunt of this.

Investing in health and the recovery of the NHS, supporting people to get better, is therefore an investment in the economy, as people's health improves, and they are supported back into work.

Economic Inactivity 2

More and more people are unable to work due to poor mental health and musculoskeletal problems in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Being unable to work is bad for health, it can drive people into poverty and it is bad for the economy.

Investing in the health of our communities will reduce the number of people out of work because of poor health and it will help more people to return work.

More people in good jobs is good for health, taking people off from welfare and benefiting all of society.

Economic Growth 1

Growth at all costs can be harmful to health and wellbeing.

Growth in industries such as those like pollutive industries which drive climate change and environmental damage, or promote harmful activities such as problem gambling, can cause further harm to the health and wellbeing of the population.

Some growth is needed like in much of the north of England- which has traditionally been left behind- to redress the economic and health and wellbeing imbalances seen between the north and south.

Good growth needs to be sustainable, regenerative, inclusive, and distributive, putting people and the planet at the heart.

Anchor Institutions 1

International and national supply chains for anchor institutions fail to realise the benefits for local communities from public expenditure and the opportunities spending locally can create.

Locally anchored institutions are big local employers and have significant buying power through their supply chains.

Locally anchored institutions care about and are invested in their communities.

Investment by anchor institutions in communities creates local wealth and more opportunities for local people, which in turn helps to improve the health of our most disadvantaged communities.

Anchor Institutions 2

We are missing chances to ensure that everyone in our community benefits from the economy.

Consistent recruitment processes often unconsciously reinforce structural racism, cultural bias, and keep out disadvantaged groups such as those with disabilities or those where English is not their first language from roles.

Developing local approaches to employment and recruitment, and strengthening the making every contact count approach, will help places reach the communities that are too often excluded from the economy.

Using our anchor institutions fantastic reach in a coordinated holistic manner will mean that our most disadvantaged communities can benefit from local jobs which promote health and wellbeing.

Opportunities through Devolution 1

Limited investment in communities and low levels of local control over spend and policy is excluding people from the economy and causing harm to health and wellbeing.

The community's voice is too often left out of the decisions that most affect our communities.

The voices of those excluded from the local economy are missed, misinterpreted, or offered up tokenistically diminishing opportunities for individuals and communities alike to have a say about what affects them.

Communities stagnate or deteriorate leading to disempowerment and disengagement.

More power and wealth in local places will help communities to be heard about what affects them and draw in investment to affect change in the place they live, improving health and wellbeing for all.

Useful Links

For more resources in this area [Y+H ADPH Inclusive Wellbeing Economies](#)

What Works in Yorkshire and Humber <https://www.yhphnetwork.co.uk/links-and-resources/adph-priorities/inclusive-wellbeing-economies/what-works-in-yorkshire-and-humber/>

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