North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance

Community Assets Mapping









START WELL

Children, Young People & Families

October 2021

North East Essex
Health & Wellbeing Alliance

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North-East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance

Community Assets Mapping Project Deep Dive

START WELL: Children, young people, and families

Introduction

The Community Assets Mapping refresh of North-East Essex was published in Spring 2021. One of the recommendations of the report was to explore key topics in greater detail. The Steering Group, which oversees this work and comprises membership from across the North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance, prioritised Children, Young People and Families as the first area for analysis by supporting commissioners and local organisations to build on the strengths of what already exists, and fill identified gaps in services. The scope was agreed in consultation with the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, the Start Well Domain Workstream and the Community Assets Steering Group.

Scope and methodology

It was agreed that the work would take into account key drivers and influences on children and young people and using learning from the last 12 months, gather information through a literature search and primary research which accurately reflects: -

- a deeper understanding of what facilitates and what presents barriers to access to services and how to address them
- key challenges facing children and young people, especially those at transition ages
- local cultural factors and limitations
- family challenges (particularly in Just About Managing families),
- impact on educational performance and young peoples' health and wellbeing.

It was agreed to focus the citizen's voice work in Harwich and Stanway as these are areas of specific interest. Harwich, where take up does not reflect the statistics available in terms of need and Stanway, an area of significant recent infrastructure development with a notable population of children and families.

The Citizen's Voice was captured from young people and families through surveys, interviews, focus groups and meetings with stakeholders – in many cases these extended beyond the target areas of Harwich and Stanway and therefore have helped to give a broader picture of North-East Essex. Our thanks to all the organisations, families and young people who took part in their primary research.

The membership of the Steering Group was widened to facilitate access to information and contacts and to provide reflective feedback on the process and findings of the project.

As the research progressed, the methodology and results were reviewed by members of the Steering Group and refined as appropriate.

The review of relevant literature included local and national sources of data listed in Appendix A. Our thanks to the many voluntary and community groups which provided essential access to data and local intelligence. This has contextualised the primary research conducted by Healthwatch and highlighted the role that assets play in supporting children, young people, and families in the area. It is important to acknowledge that many organisations that work with children, young people and families in North-East Essex did not have the capacity to provide in-depth information but still play a vital part in supporting residents of the area.

It was also agreed that it was important to understand the 'state of the sector' and any opportunities or challenges that may influence the delivery of activities in the future. This has been provided through a review of data available from the Charity Commission, 360 Giving and consultation/surveying of local organisations.

Reflection on the methodology - test and learn for later phases of research/deep dives

In reviewing the approach undertaken in this first deep dive, the authors have found that the relevance of a more intensive consideration of a topic is reinforced and brings benefits. It has also highlighted areas for development in later reports. They are summarised in the table below:

What has worked well	*What could be improved upon*
Ownership of the scope by involving the right people at the outset	Scoping was challenging – a large volume of information was requested but timescales are tight, indicates how many areas partners want to investigate
Community and voluntary groups generally helpful and keen to be engaged	Accessing scalable data has been difficult, particularly current data
Recent national/regional research due to Covid-19 was accessible	Citizen's voice will be enhanced by greater opportunities to meet people face-to-face
Serves as a benchmark from which to measure progress in future	

Background

The Community Assets Mapping Refresh published in 2020 highlighted the challenges faced by Children, Young People and families living in North-East Essex. This work took a more in-depth look at the community assets which fall within the Start Well Domain in Colchester and Tendring. The groups and organisations mentioned within the report are not an exhaustive list of services. There are many that exist on a smaller, more informal scale or from whom it has not been possible to gather information.

The report highlights the key challenges facing Children, Young People and Families in North-East Essex and the impact that Covid-19 has had. It also identifies some of the community resources that have been available and the impact they have had.

Recommendations offer practical suggestions which could be put in place to enable access to services, reduce inequalities and inform future funding and commissioning.

Key findings from the original report

- There are many organisations across North-East Essex which offer support to children and young people and families, including Extra, Families in Focus, YES (Youth Enquiry Service), Inclusion Ventures, Home-start Colchester, and Home-Start Harwich, TeenTalk, The Ark in Harwich and a wide variety of playgroups, nurseries, forest schools and outdoor play areas.
- There has been an increase in families accessing community level services, such as foodbanks, holiday hunger activities and school uniform provisions. For example, there are particularly high levels of free school meals in Tendring, and in parts of Colchester.
- Many peer-to-peer or 'in person' support services changed due to COVID-19. This includes recreational activities and home visits that would have previously been provided by key services and statutory providers
- SEND families described a complicated picture in terms of how they access services and what they may need

- Where take up was attributable, VCSE groups demonstrated higher levels of use in Tendring South, Colchester Central and Colchester North but it was acknowledged that further understanding of need and accessibility was required.
- Concern for children's and young people's mental health was noted by providers.

Context - What data tells us about Children and Families

In exploring available statistics, relative differences in age, prosperity and opportunity are discernible between parts of Tendring and Colchester and affect families and children. They are summarised in the tables below which focus on population demographics, income, and health indicators.

Population Health

Indicator	Tendring East	Tendring South	Tendring West	Colchester Central	Colchester North	Colchester South	NE Essex	England
Child Development Aged 5	58.26%	53.20%	64.95%	90.97%	63.30%	60.93%	59.20%	60.40%
GCSE achievement: 5x A* - C	48.15%	47.43%	61.61%	53.00%	57.75%	50.35%	52.70%	56.60%
Reception Age: Excess Weight	24.95%	23.80%	18.58%	20.08%	17.89%	21.20%	20.90%	22.40%
Reception Age: Obese	11.02%	10.51%	6.66%	7.76%	7.04%	8.42%	8.50%	9.50%
Year 6: Excess Weight	33.65%	36.50%	32.03%	28.94%	28.71%	31.20%	31.90%	34.20%
Year 6: Obese	17.89%	22.75%	18.50%	15.37%	14.68%	16.71%	17.70%	20.00%
Smoking prevalence aged 15	6.06%	4.62%	7.97%	6.50%	6.50%	5.92%	6.10%	5.40%
Unemployment upon working age	2.28%	4.20%	1.10%	1.32%	0.98%	1.07%	1.70%	1.90%

Other facts and figures

Indicator	Tendring	Colchester	Essex average
Hospital admissions – unintentional and deliberate injuries to children (0 – 14 years)	90.7	82.5	78
Hospital admissions – unintentional and deliberate injuries to children (0 – 4 years)	135.6	114.9	99.3
Under 16s in low-income families (2016)	24.1%	14.7%	14.4%
Children in low-income families - all dependents under 20 years (2016)	23.3%	14.4%	14.2%
Trussell Trust * figures- emergency food parcels delivered	3635	13510	-
Trussell Trust * figures - emergency food parcels delivered to children	5815	1384	-
People in receipt of child tax credits, income support or job seeker allowance (2017/18)	23% (highest in Essex)	14%	13%

*Note – these are only Trussell Trust recorded figures, many more food parcels were delivered through foodbanks in local venues and churches etc.

In 2020 Essex County Council undertook an in-depth study of children in care in North Essex, looking at Tendring and Colchester in comparison with Essex averages. Headline figures included:

Indicator	Tendring	Colchester	Essex average
% Early Years Foundations Stage - Good level of Development	69%	73%	74%
Rate/10,000 of children on a Child Protection Plan.	34	20	19
Rate/10,000 of Children in Care	58	32	35
Number of cases in Family Solutions	121 families 271 children	77 families 171 children	
Children Home Educated.	334	294	176
Percentage of children (<16) in low-income families	27%	17%	16%
Rate of under 18 conceptions/100,000 population.	26	19	20
Rate of infant mortality/100,000 population	26	19	20
Hospital stays (under 18) for alcohol-specific conditions/100,000 population	41	52	24
Number of young offenders 2018/19	14%	13%	548 – Essex total
Young people aged between 5-9 years old at the point of referral/10,000	11.6 (9 actual)	5.1 (6 actual)	

	North Essex	Mid Essex	South Essex	West Essex
17- to 25-year-olds receiving a Drug & Alcohol Service	56%	47%	14%	30%
Drug & Alcohol Service Users (Toxic Trio)	33%	20%	18%	33%
Heroin and Crack Cocaine usage of service users	13%	5%	6%	8%

Taken together, the statistics demonstrate some of the key challenges which can be understood in more detail alongside information about organisations and assets.

Non-profit organisations in North-East Essex

Children and Families Services

In Colchester, 237 registered charities designated that their activities would contribute to the lives of children and families. Many offer services to the wider population, i.e., community venues or sports sessions across a range of ages. Others are highly specialised and support families with identified or complex needs. They include:

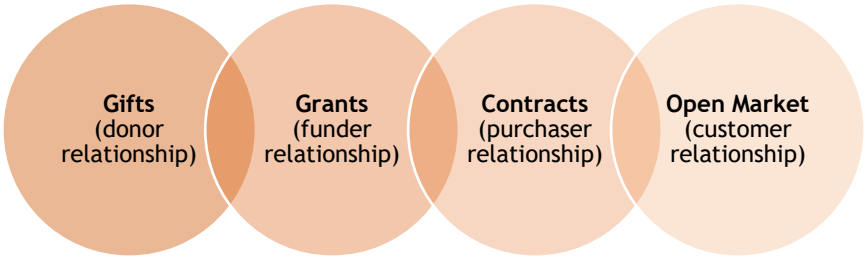
- Funding
- Uniformed groups
- Parenting

Many of the charities registered in Colchester and the surrounding areas also offer their services to the residents of Tendring – for example, Youth Enquiry Service (YES), Homestart Colchester and South Tendring, St Helena Hospice, Essex Families in Focus, CARA. There are 187 organisations which support children and families on the CVST database – this includes uniformed organisations, schools, churches, children and young people's support and activities, sports clubs, and health related organisations. Many are very local in character and others have a wider spread across Tendring and beyond.

In addition to registered charitable organisations, many activities that support families and young people take place informally, online or by unincorporated organisations. Acknowledging this diversity and the scale of delivery is important when considering the sustainability of assets.

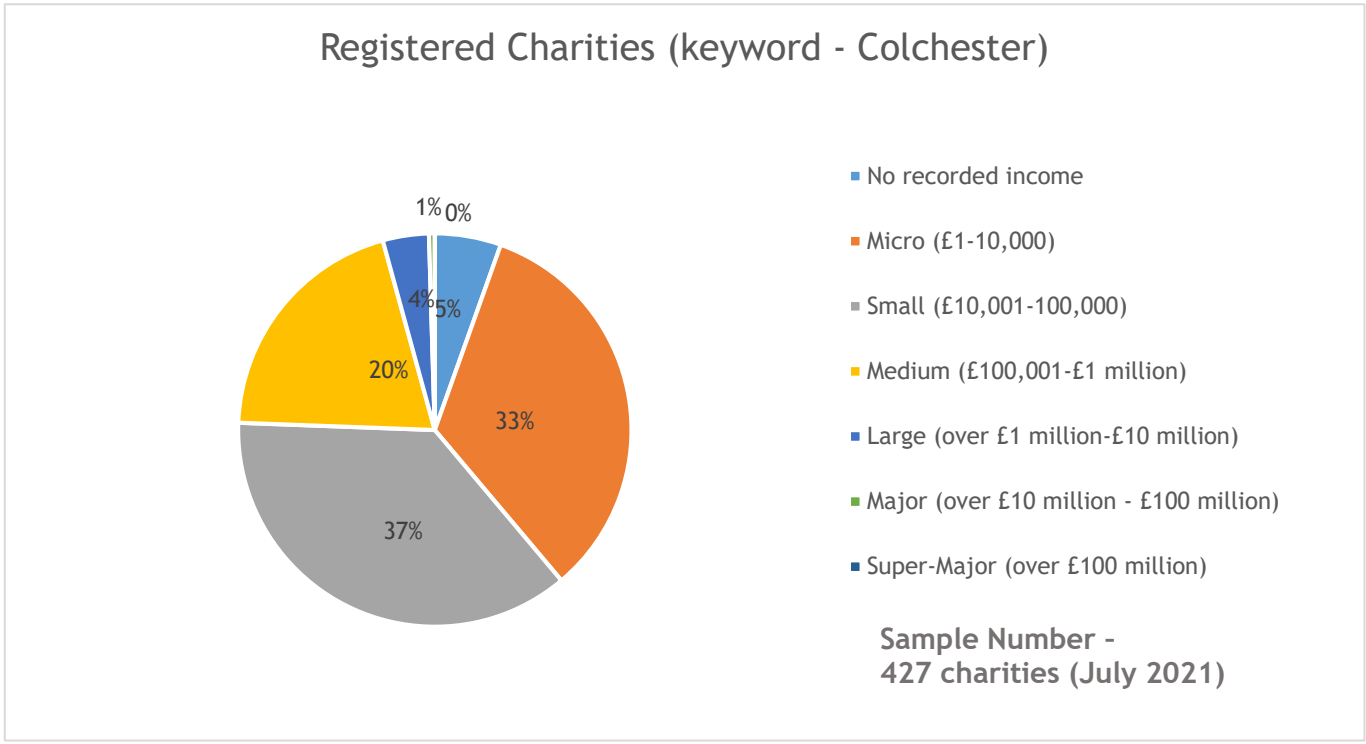
Sustainability and Scale

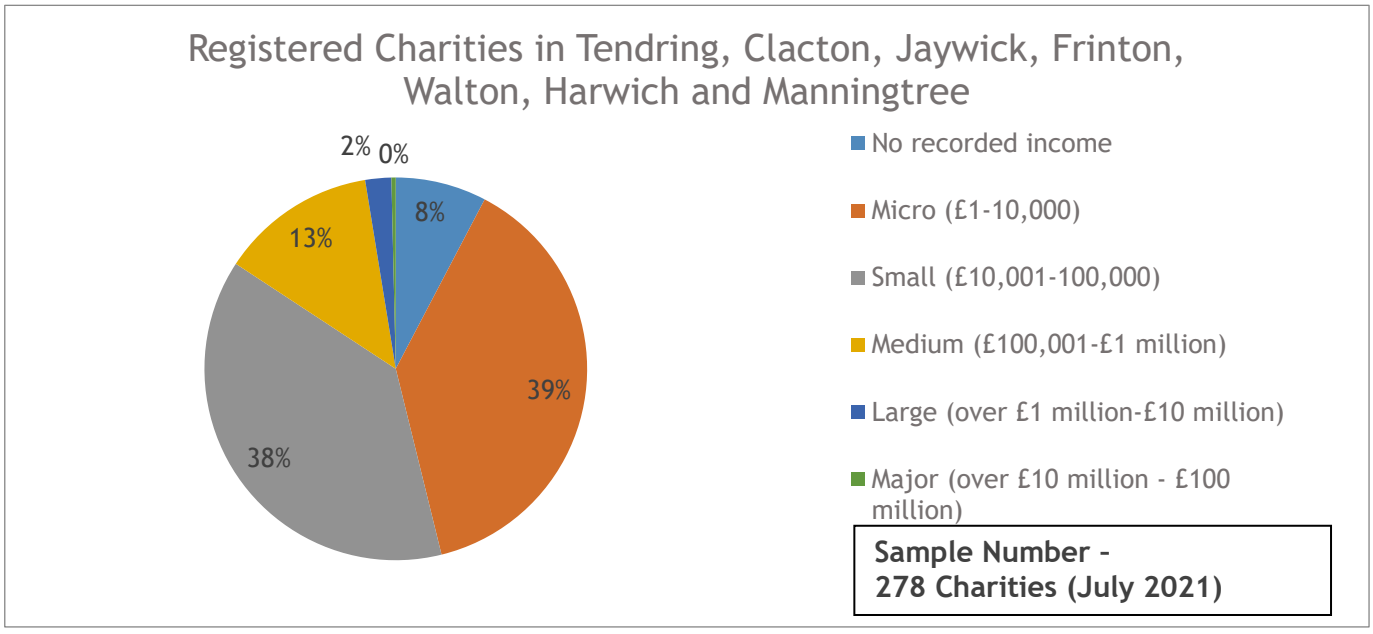
Most non-profit organisations based in Colchester and Tendring operate on a micro to medium scale in terms of their income. They draw their income from different sources which can be summarised under four headings from the NCVO income spectrum:



The full extent of the pandemic upon local partners' capabilities to deliver is yet unknown but indications have highlighted:

- Different non-profit groups, who utilise different parts of the spectrum, have been affected to differing degrees
- Gift and Open Market income streams notably affected by pandemic – i.e., redistribution of funds to specific causes or inability to generate income – some offset with Covid-19 response funding
- Accelerated trend of digital giving which is affecting how non-profit groups engage with donors
- Nationally and locally, there are calls from within the sector for a review of funding processes and best practice to offer more accessible, flexible, and supportive funding opportunities





Organisations have proven themselves to be adaptable and responsive during the pandemic, describing their achievements and activities as exemplified below:

"We have felt extremely well supported by our local community during the past difficult months with many eager to get back to their activities in a Covid secure environment. They tell us they have felt very safe, however, it has taken its toll on our volunteers and staff as they have had to manage new ways of working under quite challenging situations to keep people safe. We have lost several volunteers and I do not think they will be back (through age and health unfortunately). It appears that younger people are reluctant to come forward, so our committee is having to actively

seek new people willing to act as trustees and all that involves." *1st Lawford Scouts/Venture Centre 2000.*

"The pandemic has been a stressful, anxious time for people of all ages". *Tendring Community Transport*

"As an organisation we have experienced a significant increase in demand for specialist advice on immigration, housing and destitution. This is beyond the capabilities of most volunteers, so our caseworkers have had a significantly increased workload." *Refugee Action Colchester*

"Keeping in touch with our families, volunteers and supporters, even though we have not been able to run our core activity "camping" during the last year. We have used the time to fund-raise, buy more equipment, develop our website, employ a part-time administrator and launch our new pricing and bursary scheme for camps which we hope will take place in August 2021." *Camp JoJo*

They have faced challenges:

- Disruption to services
- Frequent changes to regulations and guidance
- Uncertainty around funding
- Closing venues and activities
- Redeployment/redundancy of staff
- Level of need
- Adapting services
- Making sure people know services are still available

The most pressing issues identified by local organisations through surveying are:

- Volunteer recruitment
- Funding
- Promotion and Marketing
- Strategic Support – i.e., policy development or partnership working
- Digital skills/social media
- Training

The responses reiterate the need for a strong infrastructure to support their aims and sustainability. Organisations are thankful for the assistance they are receiving from local agencies but also expressing how they are focusing on what is next.

"I feel that now is the time when whole communities need to face the future and continue to give the support to those who have been less fortunate and have experienced loss of family, loss of employment and have had to ask for help."

In this regard, they are also highlighting a desire for support to respond to the complex and varied needs identified when working with residents. Requests for training courses can be broken down into three main areas:

Internal Development	*Engagement and External Relationships*	*Citizen Support*
Planning and project development	Communication skills – for example when working with young people	Health and Wellbeing topics – i.e., dementia
Business planning	Motivational skills	Mental Health

Trustees' roles and responsibilities	Marketing	Professional Boundaries
Fundraising	Presentation skills	Mentoring and coaching
Partnership/consortia development	Media skills	
Change management		

Existent or emerging need: Under 5's and under 12's

Under 5's	Under 12's
Increase in SUDIs (common likely cause co-sleeping)	Deficits in preparedness to transition to secondary school
'Clingy' or less socialised toddlers	Fear of transition to secondary school
Deficits in preparedness for transition to primary school	Reduced social skills and awareness
Parental fear for transition to primary school	Anxiety and phobias
Reduced progress in attention and concentration	

Specialist Assets

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS)

Anecdotally, ECFWS staff have highlighted how resilient families have experienced little or no negative change during the pandemic and may have benefited from experiences including containment of anxiety/fear, stronger, more consistent and in tune parenting, greater sense of belonging to place or relationships, a slower and more mindful pace of life or increased, dedicated time for activities such as family walks has led to an increase in whole family physical activity. Concurrently, ECFWS staff also found anecdotally that the pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities and risks which include domestic violence, poverty, substance misuse, social isolation, educational attainment, anxiety, and conflict.

Youth Enquiry Service (YES)[1]

"YES" offers support to young people facing a range of challenges in their lives, including mental health problems. They offer mentoring, support with unemployment, teen pregnancy, physical activities, and counselling, as well as support to young parents and with homelessness and housing.

In North-East Essex from April 2020 to March 2021 YES provided housing, homelessness, and rough sleeping support to 227 young people. Of those 105 had mental health and/or learning difficulties; 43 had drug & alcohol issues; 42 were living with domestic violence; 64 were claiming benefits; 89 were NEET (not in employment, education, or training) and only 7% had no local connection.

Existent or emerging need: Under 15's and under 18's

Demand for

Under 15's	Under 18's
Post-lockdown new sense of freedom - Naïve and vulnerable to risk and inexperienced / unsupervised risk takers	Apathy and pessimism (loss of opportunity)
Loneliness and difficulty forming friendships	Depression and anxiety
Depression and anxiety	Drug and alcohol use
Drug and alcohol use	Increase in online gaming and gambling
Increase in online gaming and gambling	

parenting support provided by YES has escalated in the past 12 months. In 2019/20 YES provided parenting support to 406 young people in Colchester and 295 young people in Tendring. YES report that these numbers have doubled in the last year. In 2019/20 support was given as follows:

Age	Colchester	Tendring	Total
Under 16	14	15	29
16-17	119	94	213
18-19	178	126	304
20-21	46	28	74
22+ (mostly young fathers)	6	12	18

[1] Data provided by YES

Support is provided with young parent groups (parent and child), attendance at anti-natal clinic, positive parenting courses, issues with domestic abuse, sexual health, and teenage pregnancy prevention.

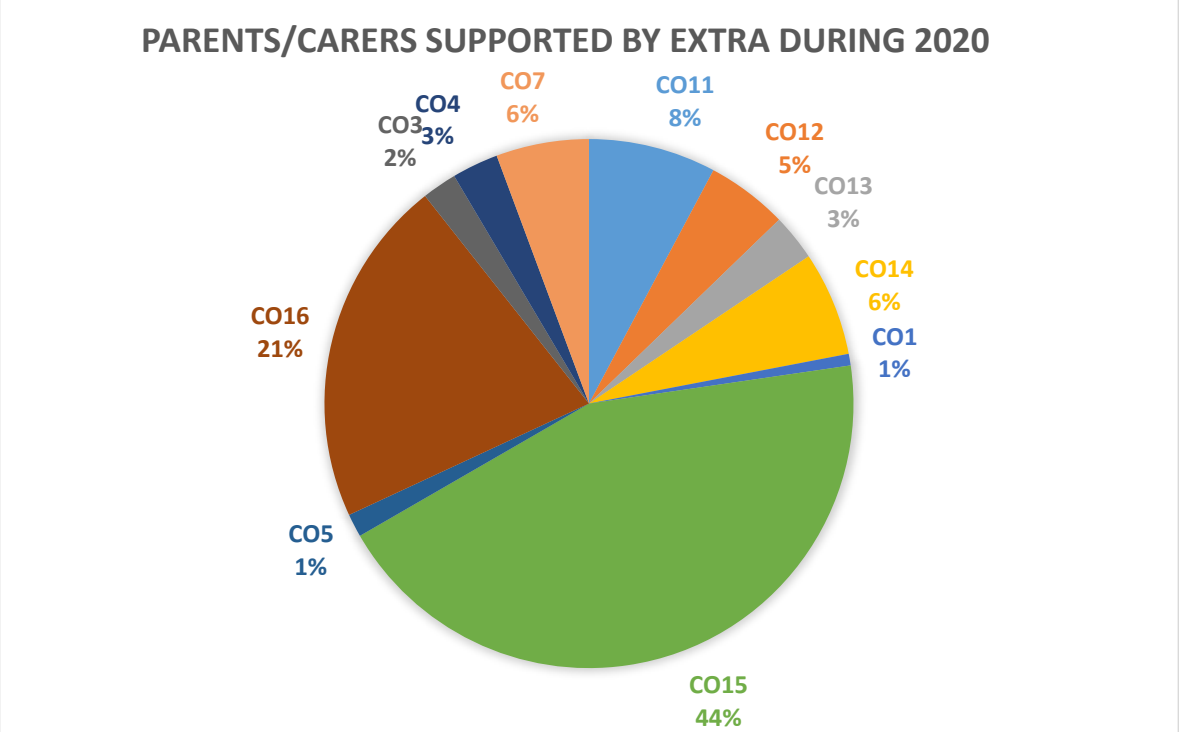
EXTRA[2] - support for families – is a training provider and central coordination agency which supports anyone caring for children to meet the challenges of parenting. It aims to help parents/carers develop their parenting skills to bring out the best in their children, reduce conflict in the home, improve family relationships and build their own confidence and emotional wellbeing challenges. In non-Covid times, it offers local opportunities across Tendring for parents/carers to meet at fun child/parent workshops, informal parent peer support groups and a range of parenting programmes.

During the pandemic EXTRA has continued to offer support to families through on-line courses, face-to-face courses when allowed, keeping in contact with parents/carers and working with other agencies.

From 01.01.20 to 31.12.20 EXTRA supported 133 people in North-East Essex, mostly in South Tendring but many from elsewhere

Essex Family Support Service (EFSS) - launched in April 2020, Essex EFSS is a programme managed by Community360 in partnership and collaboration with other Voluntary and Community Sector organisations across Essex to deliver this Service as part of the wider Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service.

The service provides support to families which include school-aged children and young people aged 8 – 19 years. This includes families who are not already receiving support from specialist and statutory services (for families with children under 8 years, support will be provided by other voluntary organisations).

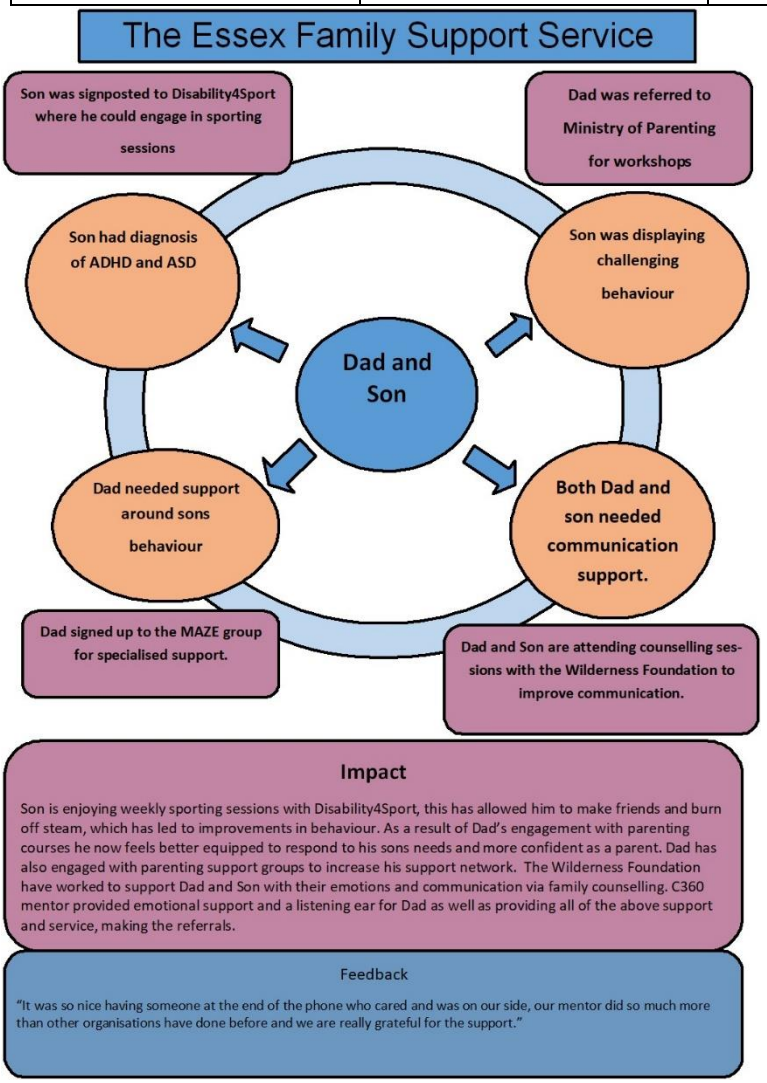


[2] Data provided by EXTRA

The aim of this service is to support families to work towards the following outcomes:

- Emotionally healthy, happy and resilient- supporting families to develop and retain positive relationships
- Behaviour choices that promote safety and wellbeing – including reduction in participation of risky behaviours
- Socially connected, resilient and resourceful families- supporting people to connect with peers and communities
- Healthy inter-parental/guardian and family relationships- effective communication and conflict resolution

Number of Referrals - North-East Essex July-Sept 2020	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Mar 2021	Apr-Jun 2021
82	93	45	31



The Service provides regular and personalised support to families and referral organisations.

'You have been the only real and consistent support I have ever received for my daughter. All the information you have shared with me and all the contacts you have made for us have been invaluable. I am so grateful for your support.' Parent#

"Thank you so much. I really appreciate all your help with this. The family were struggling with lots of things we were unable to help with that you have been able to, so thank you for supporting" Referrer

In addition to one-to-one support, the team provide group sessions. Building on that bond is a workshop approach where families focus on strengthening relationships between parents and children. This collaborative way of learning provides key benefits to recognising personal behaviour and peer support:

"I really enjoyed learning about how the teenage brain works, helped me understand what my daughter is going through"

"I have now started taking the time to read the situation before I jump in with a negative comment, explaining to my daughter why I feel this way and what I want to change about."

"It helped meeting other parents in the same situation, knowing I am not alone in this"

Across Essex, in the year to date:

- 94% of children and young people of secondary school age are making more positive choices after receiving support

- 78% of statutory school age children and young people identified by the Provider as being at risk of or experiencing poor emotional wellbeing have registered an improvement in emotional wellbeing
- 82% of primary care givers who were identified as being lonely, isolated, and having low resilience have reduced isolation or improved resilience after support

Furthermore, the EFSS programme facilitates partnership approaches to key themes; details below describe the role played in co-ordinating holiday activities between providers across the Borough. Their work has also extended to serving as a Single Point of Commissioning to prime local services with more than £15,000 to support families on low incomes. Recipients have included DAM Boaz Project, Tots2Teens, Citizens Advice Colchester, GO4 Café and AFiUK.

Homestart Colchester and South Tendring

Homestart Colchester and South Tendring supports children, young people, and families across North-East Essex, Homestart Harwich supports those in Harwich and Dovercourt, Manningtree, Mistley, Wix and surrounding villages. Homestart Colchester and South Tendring supports families with children

Over the past 12 months to June 2021 Homestart Colchester & South Tendring supported families in many ways with practical, emotional, nutritional and hygiene deliveries and activities.

A summary is as follows: -

- Delivery of food/ essential item packages - supported 398 families and delivered around **4,000** packages.
- Family support via **Warm and Safe** supported 425 under 5's
- In partnership with Virgin Care - Essex and Child and Family Welfare Service - supported100 families across North-East Essex (400 individuals)
- Lottery Project- 525 supported
- Workshops- 80 children from 5-11 years attended workshop activities
- Forest schools - 40 children benefited from outdoor Forest schools
- Baby groups - 85 parents attended
- Virtual cookery groups supporting 40 children
- £22,000 worth of shop vouchers were issued to local families due to crisis.
- In kind goods purchased and distributed to families, £25,000 spend on in kind goods to the street value of £62,000.

Case Study: Homestart Colchester and South Tendring

A young boy (we will call him Ben) aged 7, living in Tendring in a flat with his parents and his 2 younger siblings. His parents were receiving Home-Start support prior to Covid-19 as mum had struggled with mental health and had found it difficult to cope with a new baby with no family support. Dad worked self-employed and made just enough income to support his family. Ben's parents were making positive progress with the support of Home-Start providing regular practical and emotional support and after 3 months' mum's mental health was improved.

Then, because of Covid-19, the country went into lock down. Dad was no longer able to work self-employed and the much-needed income he received ended. The family went into crisis, mum worried about how to feed the children, manage the home of a confined flat with all the children, no income, no garden and lack of essential items and food. Both dad and mum's mental health began to suffer and as a result Ben and his family felt isolated and in crisis.

How did Home-Start help?



As a result of Home-Start receiving some council funding for hampers, we quickly delivered emergency food to the family and using our Warm and Safe grant we were also able to provide baby items such as nappies and formula. Our partnership with the foodbanks, enabled us to issue Food bank vouchers and collect and deliver food when needed. We also provided weekly Fare Share food that we collected from local supermarkets of fresh fruit and vegetables, we hand delivered this weekl

y, thus reducing stress and lack of food.

We provided cheer me up packs for Ben to keep him engaged and connected. And a Home-Start Volunteer was linked who wanted to contribute to supporting a family. They purchased Ben with a new iPad so he could continue home schooling. When the family struggled with the home-schooling, the volunteer helped Ben with his learning, and this improved his educational outcomes.

Home-Start offered regular befriending calls keeping mum connected and responding to need as it appeared. At Christmas we were able to deliver a sack of gifts for the children, donated by the community and our link with the John Lewis partnership. Reducing the stress and financial burden.

Ben was able to attend our workshops to reduce isolation and continue to build skills while mum was benefiting from parenting or peer support, advice, and friendship groups and would commence baby groups as soon as they reopen.

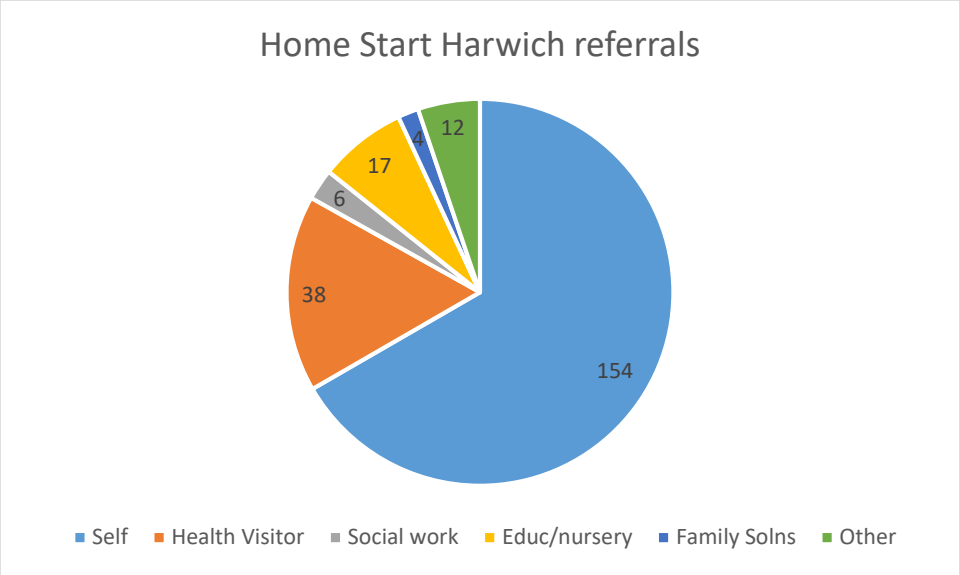
Due to small grants we had received, we were also able to provide coats for the children and a mattress all of which improved the wellbeing of the family.

The family with support were able to transition to Universal Credit until dad could return to his work.

The family feedback: *"Without Home-Start support I don't know what I would have done during lockdown? Just having someone there who would listen and care and offer practical support really helped my family at a time we went into panic and despair. Many occasions we had no food, Home-Start would respond quickly delivering bags to my door. You have helped so much, and I am forever grateful."*

HomeStart Harwich

During the past 12 months, HomeStart Harwich (HSH) has received referrals for reasons of poor mental health, anxiety, financial or economic hardship, isolation, parenting skills, behaviour management, relationship breakdown and/or conflict in the family. In many cases more than one issue presents itself.



1:1 support was provided either over the telephone, Facetime, Zoom or face to face outside. This is the core of Home-Start support with other projects and additional groups enhancing and complimenting support.

Other services began or were adapted to meet the needs of local families during the pandemic: -

- **Warm and Safe Project** supported families with food, utilities, household essentials – 65 under 5's have been supported. This project is on-going, funded until September 2021.
- **Individual tailor-made family activity packs** were made up and delivered to families to help manage behaviour and conflict in the home during lockdowns, when large families were in overcrowded housing due to children being home from school. The activities were specific and age appropriate to each family's needs. 92 families benefitted.
- **Outdoor activity packs** are an extension and adaptation of the packs above, to encourage families to go back outside as lockdowns lifted. Activities and resources were provided to give families confidence to go outside with their children. 68 families benefitted.
- **Bobbits Hole individual sessions** were set up to respond to parent's mental health needs. A number of HSH 1-1 supported families were not comfortable with phone support or in using zoom, so a safe outdoor space was devised where people could meet with their support worker to talk and receive advice face to face. 39 families accessed this support. As restrictions allowed this service was extended to allow 3 families in the nature reserve at a time. This has evolved into a weekly Stay and Play, with 25 families attending in a single week. This service will continue until all indoor groups are resumed.
- **August Adventures** - following the success of services being delivered outside, HSH Harwich set families a challenge throughout August 2020 (re-launched in 2021 by public demand). Families were given a diary for the month and challenged to do something different outdoors every day in August. There was a prize as an incentive for every family to complete the challenge. 71 children took part.
- **Walk and Talk sessions and Step it Out event** – Many families were not getting much exercise and not regularly moving. HSH combined a chat session with a walk. The step it out event included a walk and talk and ended with a free picnic for all attending, this supplemented the families which would normally get free school meals but were missing out due to schools being shut.

- **Outdoor Explorers Forest School** – 12 families took part in the 12-week course. The focus of this group was school readiness and helped children develop independence, communication, resilience, and the skills needed for starting school.
- **Children's online cookery sessions** with a trained chef. Children aged 5-11 were provided with all the resources to cook 2 meals for their family. Sessions were delivered over zoom and taught valuable life skills. 14 children took part.
- **The Great Home-Start Bake Off Competition** – HSH posted a recipe every day in December and encouraged families to try it out and send a photo. Families loved the idea and many entered. The final winners and 3 runners up were presented with cooking equipment and shopping vouchers donated by a local author.
- **Positive Engagement Events** – At Halloween, Christmas and Easter HSH delivered positive engagement events to bring people out, lift their mood and have fun. All these events were delivered outdoors in line with government guidelines. 140 families engaged.

Groups were suspended from April 2020. However, from 21st June 2 groups Family Group (for HSH supported families) and Friday Friends (a peer support adult focussed group specifically to build resilience and to reduce isolation) re-started. 2 other HSH groups - Parkeston Stay and Play and FunStart Group - are scheduled to re-start in September along with a MAZE parenting course. Currently numbers remain limited at groups and booking is essential so that the safety of all participants is ensured.

Family Feedback: *'Thank you for all the support and reassurance…especially throughout the Covid-19 outbreak which left me and family feeling like we would be very isolated and not able to get help but E was always a phone call away and gave us so much support and reassurance.'*

Firstsite

Firstsite has been delivering a Holiday Fun programme since 2017 at its venue in Colchester Town Centre. The programme offers free sports activities, free art and creative activities along with a hot lunch. This runs across each school holiday. In 2019 it extended this offer to Harwich, delivering from the Harwich Arts and Heritage Centre. Delivery there had to stop last year when the pandemic began but restarted for May 2021 half-term.

Holiday Fun is designed to offer a holistic approach to family wellbeing, incorporating the Five Ways to Wellbeing across all elements and, where possible, Firstsite makes this available to any family that can benefit. The aspiration is that the programme feels like a god, fun-packed family day out, and not a 'hand-out'.

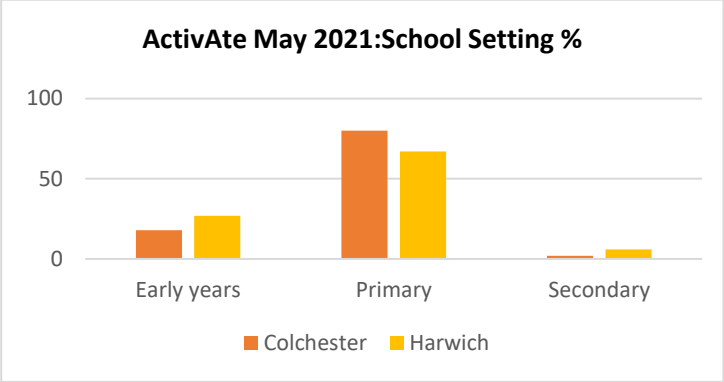
More recently Firstsite has worked with C360 so that wider support can be offered, and more complex needs can be addressed or appropriately signposted.

The past year of delivery has been different due to the varying levels of restrictions the service has been under, but it is now starting start to return to the full, on-site offer again.

Following a period where it has not been possible to deliver programmes, delivery of the ActivAte Programme took place across the 4 days of May half-term 2021 in Colchester and Harwich. In Colchester there were a total of 482 participants/meals provided and in Harwich there were 118.

Colchester	Number of individuals that took part	186
	Number of families that took part	61
	% of children eligible for free school meals	62%
	% of children attending that require additional support during school holidays	35%
Harwich	Number of individuals that took part	39
	Number of families that took part	15
	% of children eligible for free school meals	89%
	% of children attending that require additional support during school holidays	23%

The majority of young people taking part were from early years and primary age groups, with the majority being from the 5-7-year age group.



In Colchester most attendees were from Castle, Old Heath & The Hythe and New Town & Christ Church. In Harwich, the majority of attendees were from Harwich & Kingsway, Dovercourt Bay, All Saints and Vines & Parkeston. The employment status of participating families varied between Colchester and Harwich, which may represent differing marketing or referral pathways.

Employment Status	Colchester	Harwich
Full-time employed	21%	0%
Part-time employed	39%	5%
Self-employed	5%	15%
Unemployed	7%	57%
Long Term Sick or Disabled	2%	0%
Looking after home or family	21%	21%
Prefer not to say	2%	0%

Holiday Activities Steering Group

C360's EFSS programme works with providers, including Firstsite, to facilitate regular collaborative meetings. The group has been able to serve as:

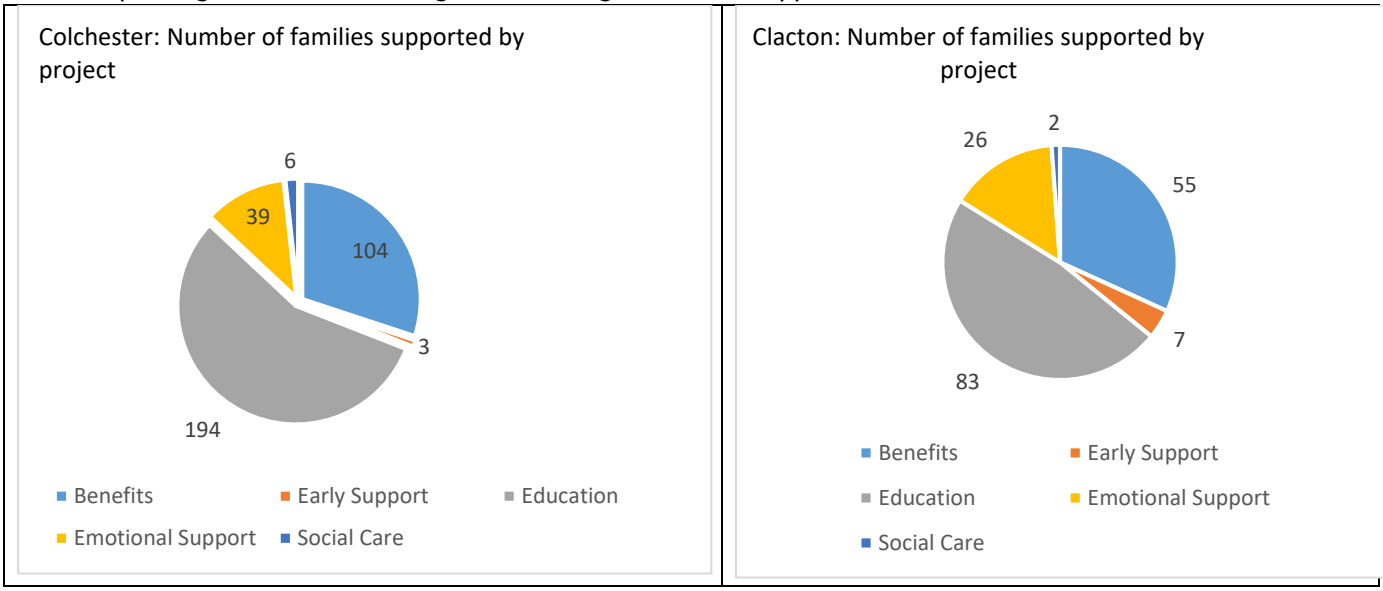
- A point of co-ordination to access information and funding to support their work with families
- Distribute vouchers for essentials (both to groups and directly to families)
- Identify barriers to accessing support – for example, food hampers proved challenging for some partners to collect (i.e., mum with no car who arrived with her children and a pram unable to carry the large box). Digital barriers were often described with some families unaware of what services are available and then how to access.

Families InFocus[3]

Families InFocus (FIF) provides a service to parents and family carers who have children (age between 0 and 25 years) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across Essex. It supports them through planning processes and meetings, understanding and applying for benefits entitlements and supporting the whole family with activities, information, and advice. This

[3] Data provided by Families InFocus, Essex

support is often sought at a time when the child has been diagnosed recently with SEND – a time which can be confusing and disturbing, when parent carers can feel disorientated, uninformed, stressed and sometimes physically, mentally, and emotionally unwell. It delivers positive outcomes for the parent carers, the SEND children, and siblings – giving the knowledge base to empower parents to get appropriate and relevant support for their child and family, as well as improving financial wellbeing and enabling additional support for the child to be secured.



In Colchester a total of 286 individual families with children with additional needs were supported by Families in Focus through 2020-2021. Total number of contacts between Family Support Advisers and families by text, phone, online meetings, etc. was 1157.

In Tendring (Clacton), a total of 143 families with children with additional needs were supported, and the total number of contacts between Family Support Advisers and families by text, phone, online meetings, etc. was 1151.

East Anglian Childrens Hospice (EACH)

In terms of EACH Hospice care, possible prevalence for Colchester and Tendring is about the same for each locality (69 children) so a total of about 138 at any one time who may need palliative or end of life care. While apparently a small number, this has a huge impact on families, carers and friends, especially during times when face to face contact is limited. The East of England has a network approach to delivery of end-of-life care among children and young people including EACH, specialist system management, specialist doctors and the NHS children's teams. EACH is heavily reliant on the community and voluntary sector for support.

EACH and St Helena Hospice offer mental health and bereavement support to families of the young people and adults who are at end of life in their care.

EACH's Mission is to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of every child and family under their care, by always providing individual and comprehensive services.
They provide a range of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual support services which are offered:

- holistically
- centred on the family
- to all eligible families in East Anglia with children and young people with life-threatening illnesses and complex health care needs
- across a range of settings, including the home, hospice and hospital
- by specialist staff
- with the engagement of the community

St Helena Hospice

St Helena Hospice supports young people where the death is related to care at St Helena, this support would be both pre and post end of life. At the moment the Hospice is are utilising some residual grant funding which it has been allowed to spend in a different way to the original proposal to offer some initial signposting to families where the death is not related to care at St Helena. The Hospice team has a list of national services, however unfortunately these are not often face to face services.

Extracts from St Helena Hospice's referral flowchart that the team use to guide the person they are signposting depending on the situation and age of child are listed below:

Family Operational Hub - 0345 603 7627-part of Social Care – 4 levels
Family Solutions - 0345 603 7627
ESSEX Child & Family Wellbeing Service - (ECC & Barnardos/Virgin) – 0300 247 0015

Teens (11-25):-
Y.E.S - Youth Enquiry Service – (11-25) – 01206 710771
TEEN TALK – (11-25) Tendring - 01255 504800
INSPIRE Suffolk – (11-25)- (new) 07743215616 or wellbeing@inspiresuffolk.org.uk
The MIX Counselling (11-25) – Helpline: 0808 808 4994 or chat-line www.themix.org.uk
GRIEF ENCOUNTERS – 6 virtual sessions www.griefencounter.org.uk or 0808 802 0111 - also run activities for bereaved children and their families on their Instagram page and offer support and guidance on their website.

National Grief Organisations (Help lines, on-line chat, apps for parents & YP):-
Winstons Wish -0808 802 0021 www.winstonwish.org
Child Bereavement UK - 0800 02 888 40 www.childbereavement.org
Nelson's Journey - Smiles & Tears App - www.nelsonsjourney.org.uk
Cruse bereavement Care have published resources to support families.
Hope Again Cruse Bereavement Care's website for young people with information, podcasts, videos and personal stories. Email: hopeagain@cruse.org.uk
Other useful information
"Apart of me" is an app for young people whose parent/relative has died. It provides young people with a safe place to grieve.
The Childhood Bereavement Network has published a guide on keeping connected with loved ones during these difficult times.
Childline- If you are under 19 you can confidentially call, chat online or email about a problem big or small. 24/7 Helpline: 0800 1111.
Scotty's Little Soldiers is a charity dedicated to supporting children and young people who have lost a parent who served in the British Armed Forces. Tel: 0800 092 8571

The Citizen's Voice

Introduction

Healthwatch Essex

Healthwatch Essex is an independent charity which gathers and represents views about health and social care services in Essex. Our aim is to influence decision makers so that services are fit for purpose, effective and accessible, ultimately improving service user experience. We also provide an information service to help people access, understand, and navigate the health and social care system.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Essex would like to thank the organisations & residents who participated in this citizen voice section of this report. This report can be made available as a stand-alone report if required.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings and observations carried out on specific dates and times, representing the views of those who contributed anonymously during the engagement visits. This report summarises themes from the responses collected and puts forward recommendations based on the experiences shared with Healthwatch Essex during this time.

Purpose of the Citizen Voice work

The purpose of this work is to gather another layer to the current Community Asset Mapping work taking place across North-East Essex. Citizen voice provides a platform for organisations & residents to express their thoughts in a non-judgmental way.

For the children & family's topic, Citizen Voice has been used to gather insight into asset usage from children/young people and also a snapshot of both Harwich and Stanway.

2.1 Engagement methods

To ensure that citizen voice could be gathered effectively and productively, a qualitative & quantitative approach was implemented via two different workstreams.



Survey
Our first method consisted of using a survey, which was shared with children & families across both Harwich & Stanway. The survey was shared with local schools, organisations, and members of the Community Asset Mapping steering group who helped disseminate through their appropriate networks. The survey consistent of 8 questions, of which respondents were invited to share their understanding of the assets within their local area, their usage of these assets and what they would desire to be made available local to them.



Interviews
In order to gain a more in-depth understanding of potential barriers, local factors & the impact of the pandemic, a number of 1:1 interviews were conducted. These involved speaking with local organisations based within the two areas & residents. Participants consented to taking part and having their conversations recorded. These conversations were then transcribed and analysed to produce key themes for both areas.



Case Study
Case studies are used frequently throughout this report to highlight good practice and understand the community response during the pandemic.

Through our engagement, the following themes were identified:

Harwich

- Mental Health among children & families
- Financial Struggles
- Asset Suitability for All Ages

Stanway

- Infrastructure & the changing face of Stanway
- Mental Health & The Community

Who did we receive responses from?

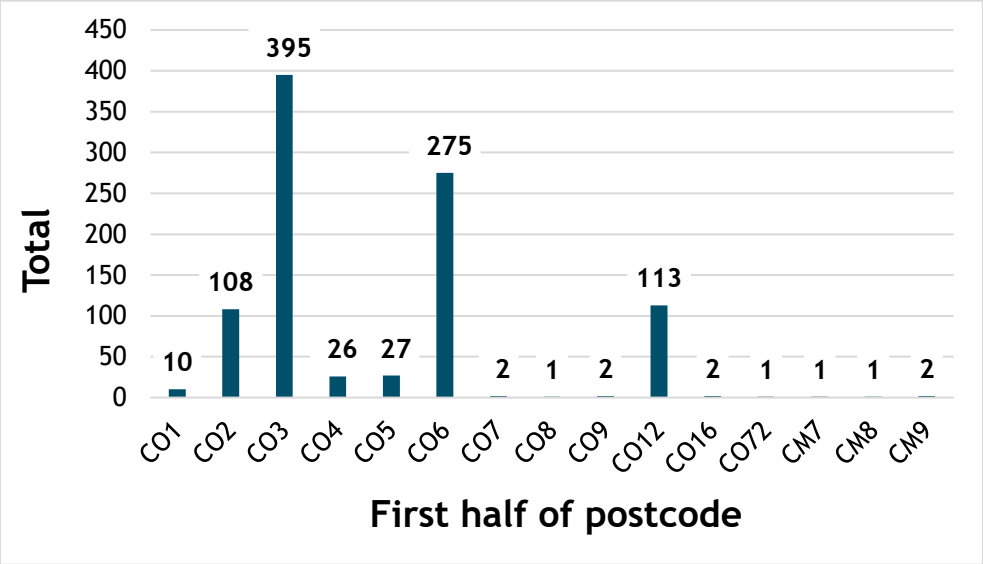
It was recognised from the beginning that not every student would live within our focused area therefore, the survey had to ensure data could be categorised accordingly. With support from the Sigma Trust, partners & local organisations, the survey was shared across schools & groups within both areas, gathering insight across North-East Essex (NEE).

In total, 986 responses were collected, with 966 being usable for analysis. We look at the breakdown of the 966 responses below.

Figure 1. A graph showing the distribution of postcode of 966 responses

Figure 1 displays the postcode demographic of respondents. The most common postcode was CO3 (41%), which Stanway sits within. The next biggest group was CO6 (28%) which was expected due to it bordering CO3. We can assume that children/teenagers access the schools within Stanway from this postcode.

Harwich, situated within CO12 had the 3rd highest response (14%). Although lower than the response from Stanway, we are still able to gain an interesting insight into assets within the area



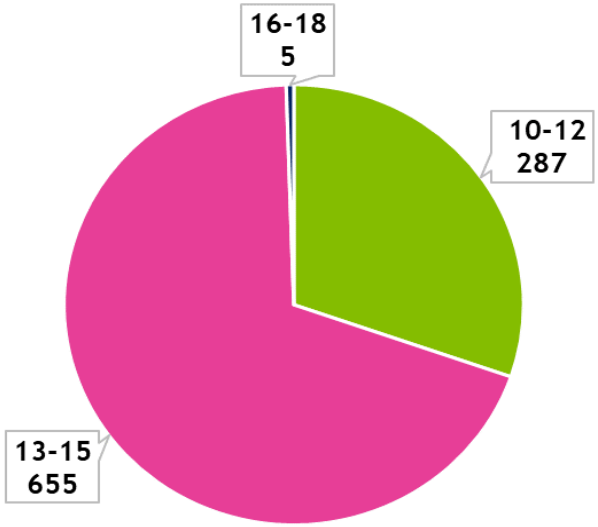


Figure 2 displays the age split of all 947 children/young people who took part. 19 parents/guardians participated but were not asked for their age. 69% of individuals across all postcodes were between 13-15, with 29% being between 10-12. The response from individuals aged 13-15 is representative of the survey being shared within schools across both areas.

Figure 2. A pie graph showing the age spilt of responses just from children/teenagers.

Survey Findings

For the purposes of this report, only data gathered from postcodes CO3 & CO12 will be analysed.

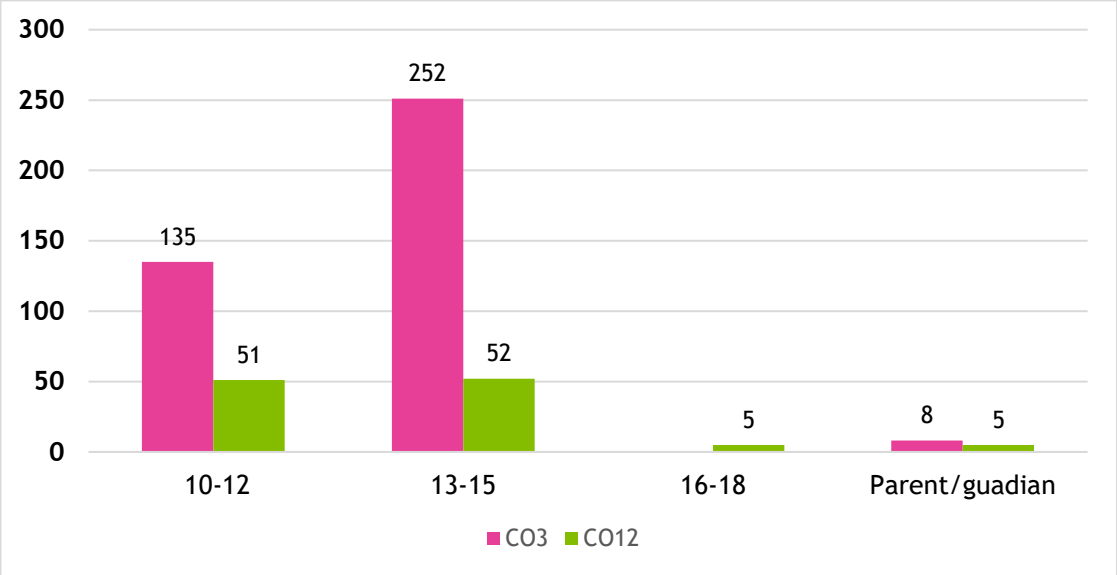


Figure 3. A bar graph showing the age spilt of participants across both CO3 & CO12

We can see from the bar graph that in total, 395 individuals took part who indicated they lived within CO3, which Stanway sits within. 113 individuals responded from CO12, which Harwich sits within.

Access to assets in the last 18 months

Respondents were asked whether they had used any asset within the last 18 months, this being on their own or as a family.

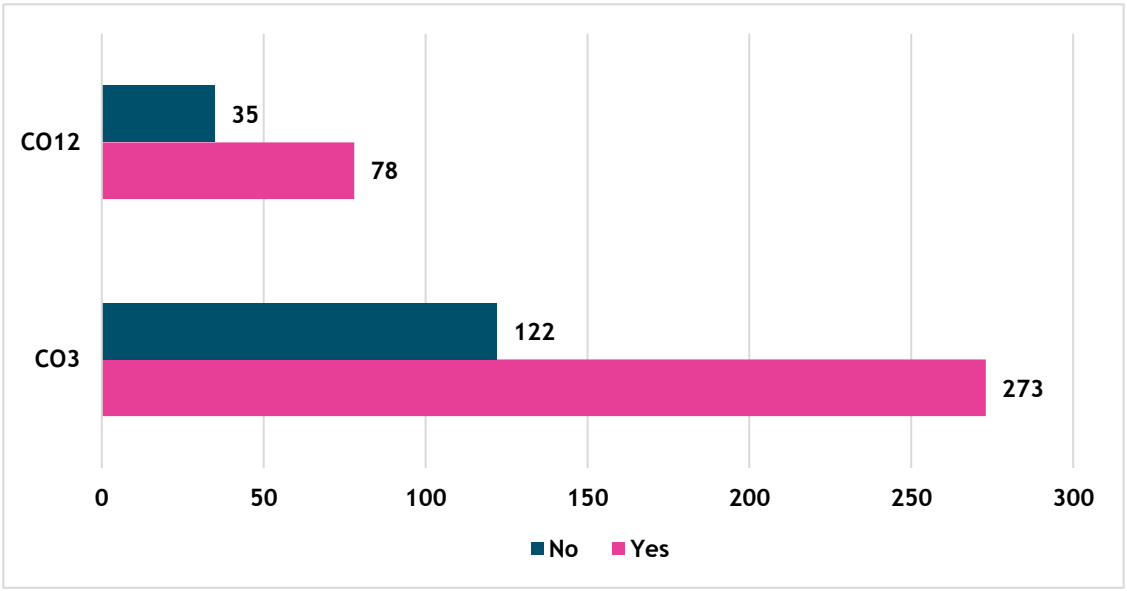
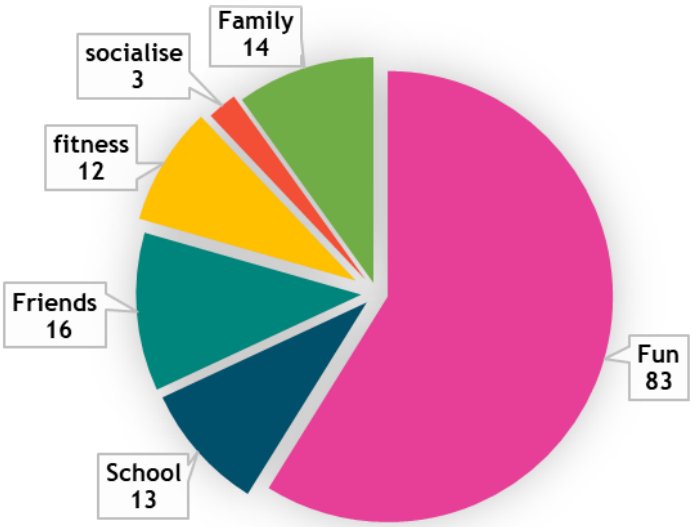


Figure 4. Graph showing participants' use of assets across the last 18 months

For CO3, 69% of respondents had accessed any type of asset within the last 18 months, with only 31% indicating they didn't. Interesting, this was the same result for CO12. Although a smaller sample was collated for CO12, we can assume that with a larger sample, the results would be similar.

To then understand the influences and highlight potential barriers which stop children & families accessing assets, we asked respondents to explain why they had chosen to access assets or if not, what stopped them from doing so?

Why have you chosen to use these assets?



The graph is a brief summary of the 273 individuals that responded 'yes' as to why they use assets within CO3. For most of this sample, using an asset that was fun was a real drive to get involved. Respondents also mentioned that school was an influence in providing a driver to take part. It was also recognised that using assets was a way to spend time together as a family.

Figure 5. A pie chart highlighting some answers as to why individuals use assets within CO3.

Similar with CO3, responses for this question on why you have used an asset have been selected into a sample. What's clear is that respondents from CO12 use assets at most, for the same or similar reasons as those individuals from CO3. It's clear that taking part in an asset that is seen by the individual as both fun and enjoyable is a big factor. Interestingly, in both CO3 & CO12 postcodes, the individuals who answered regarding fitness were most likely to fall into the 13-15 age category. We can make assumption that self-image and an understanding of health is more prevalent within this age group.

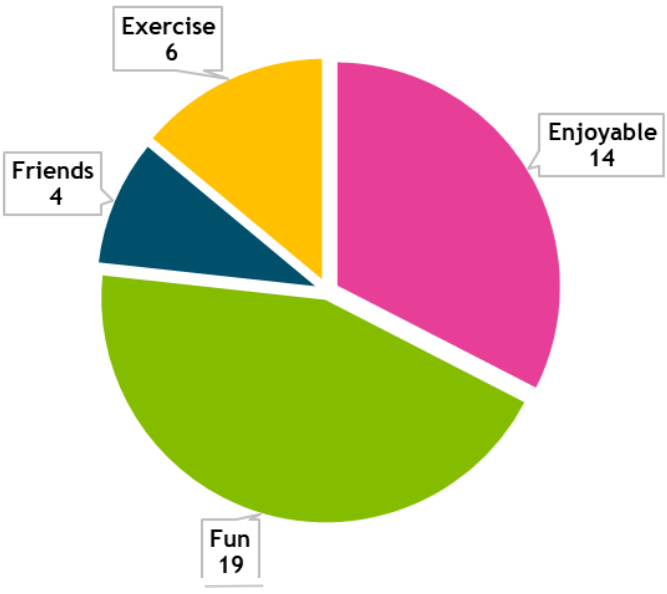


Figure 6. A pie chart highlighting some answers as to why individuals use assets within CO12

The comments below are just some of the responses from both CO3 & CO12. They provide a snapshot of reasons why individuals use assets.

CO3 responses to why have you chosen to use these assets question

‘Because they are helping me pursue my future career. It's fun and it breaks up my day’

‘Because they are enjoyable and get to spend more quality time with my family’

‘I have chosen to do this because it was right for me, and it looked fun, so I gave it a go I it turns out I love to go so I am now going every Saturday’

‘I have used them because I wanted to be active, help the community, and get involved’

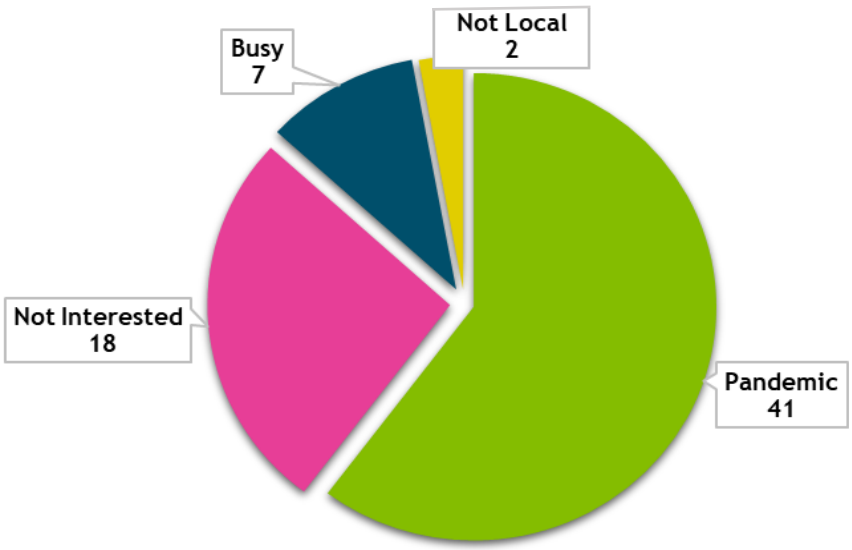
CO12 responses to why have you chosen to use these assets question

‘Because they encourage me to be more social and step back from schoolwork occasionally, and that break is nice as often it can get quite overwhelming’

‘I have chosen to use these services because I'm a member of the group and enjoy doing the activity and going every week’

‘Because I enjoy them, and my friends do them with me’

‘To get outside due to being stuck inside during lockdown’



It's clear that in CO3, the pandemic has had a real effect on the usage levels of assets during the last 18 months. This is due to some assets stopping because of the pandemic and some having to adapt their way of working. 18 individuals indicated that they had no interest in the assets available. This could be due to the pandemic or perhaps their interest is not met with assets available. 7 individuals indicated that they had been too busy with other priorities to use assets in this period.

Figure 7. A pie chart highlighting some of the answers to 'What has stopped you from using assets? 'question from CO3 respondents.

Although a small sample was gathered from individuals in CO12, we can start to paint a picture of why respondents haven't accessed assets. Much like CO3, the pandemic has had an impact, with assets having to respond just as they did in CO3. 3 individuals commented that they felt the area didn't have much to offer in terms of assets. We can also see this reflected in the 2 individuals who commented they were not interested, implying that people believe there isn't much available that is suited to their hobbies or interests.

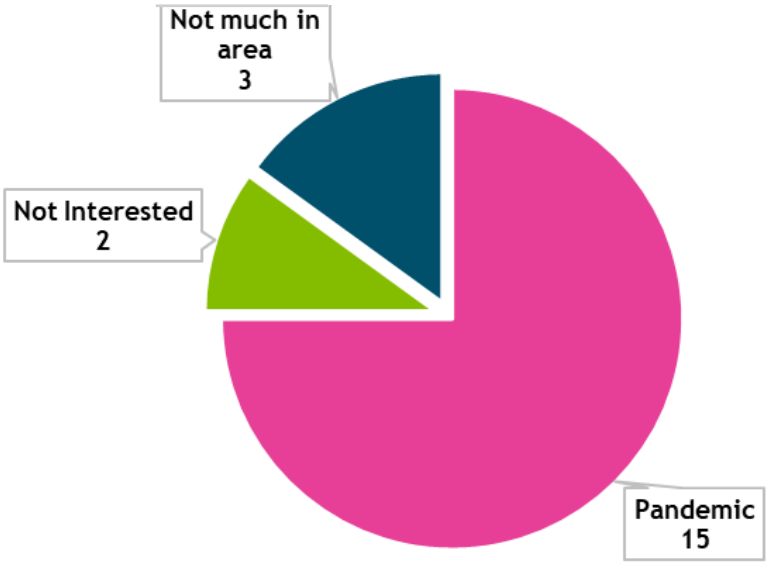


Figure 8. A pie chart highlighting some of the answers to 'what has stopped you from using assets' questions from CO12 respondents.

What has stopped you from using assets?

It was important to understand the potential barriers that might stop someone from accessing assets. Just like the last questions, a sample has been taken for both CO3 & CO12. Figure's 9 & 10 below capture some of the full responses to the 'What has stopped you from using assets' questions.

Figure 9. A snapshot of response's from CO3

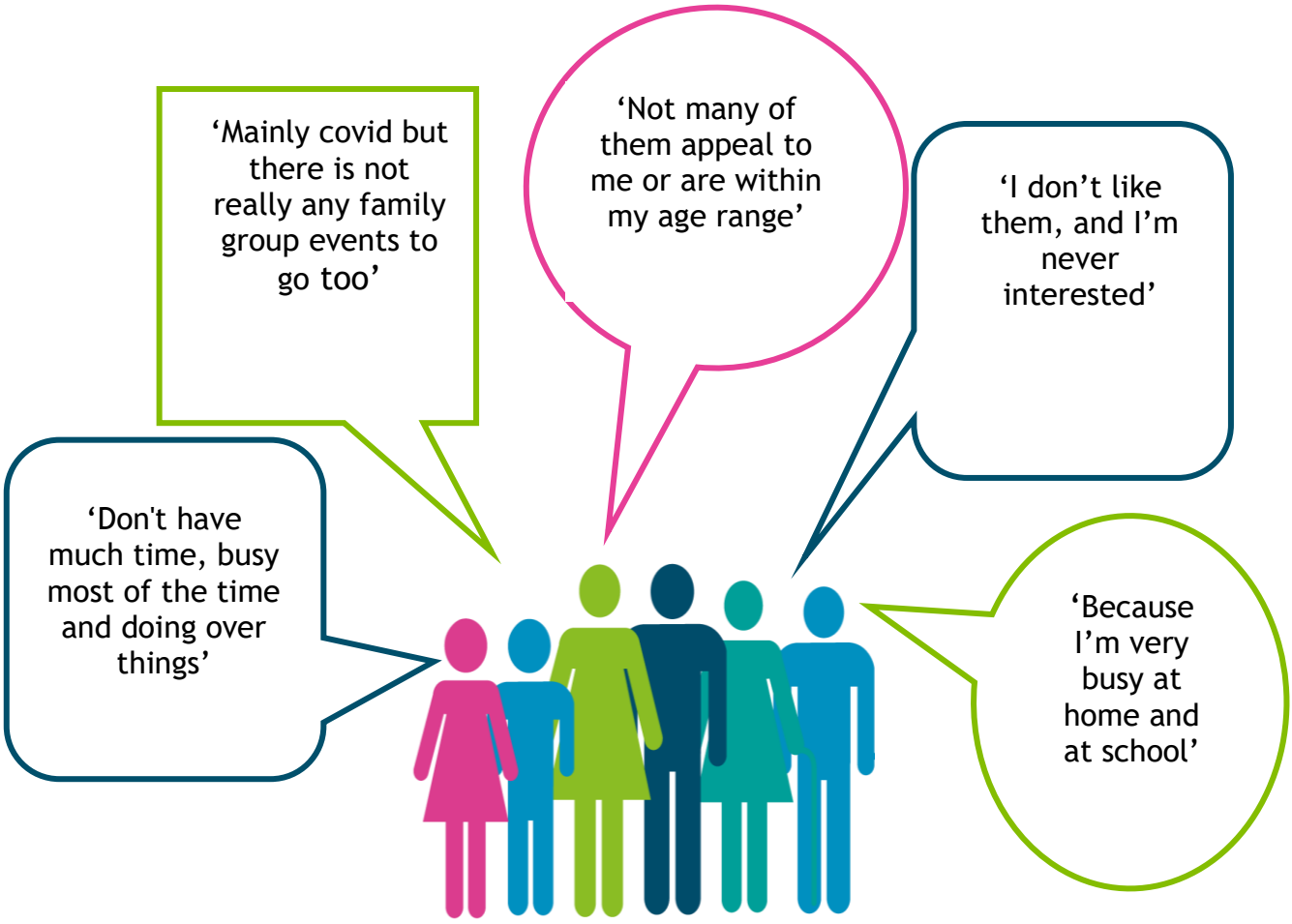


Figure 10. A snapshot of response's from CO12



What's positive to see from both CO3 & CO12 is that more individuals are accessing assets than those who are not. What's starting to emerge is that if an asset provides an element of fun for an individual, they are more likely to continue engagement. It also seems that assets enable people to spend more time with their friends, present within both CO3 & CO12. Its clear that assets for those aged 10-18 must be suited to someone's interest and hobbies. Interestingly, in both CO3 & CO12 when asked to name the assets within their local area, the respondents who indicated they had used assets within the last 18 months were on average, able to name more than 3 within their area, compared to the average of 1 from those who indicated no. This therefore highlights that continued engagement with assets creates an awareness in individuals to the wider offer available to them.

For the other 31% of individuals in both CO3 & CO12 who haven't accessed an asset, the pandemic has been the clear barrier. The pandemic has meant that many children/young adults must complete their education at home, which we can assume has now become 'normal'. Because of this 'new normal' we can assume that some individuals have become so used to staying at home, that accessing an asset could be a challenge. We will look to explore these factors further though the organisational & residents engagement section of this report.

Can you name one other asset that you would like to see available in your local area?

We wanted to see if given the opportunity, what respondents would like available in their local area. What this would help to see is potentially, if individuals are aware of what is available locally. In which case, could a campaign that highlights current assets be beneficial to increase usage?

CO3

In total, 72 different activities were mentioned across the 395 responses from both parents/guardians & children/young person (Figure 12), 80 individuals could not name an asset they

would like to see made available, potentially because it either already existed or did not fit their preference. The highest requested asset was a swimming pool, which does already exist within Stanway. However, this facility is smaller than an average pool but does offer swim lessons for all ages and abilities and free swim/inflatable sessions. 37 respondents out of the 41 were between the ages of 13-15, the stage at which they are comfortable and potentially wanting to improve their skills. Although First Strokes might not have the facilities of Leisure World in the centre of Colchester, it does provide opportunities for continued swim education.Every activity with 10 or more responses is heavily sport focused, indicating the need for sport-based assets among individuals in CO3. We can see that basketball is a popular activity, with football close behind. Stanway already has two football clubs Stanway Rovers FC & Stanway Villa FC potentially highlighting the need for an awareness campaign for already established assets.

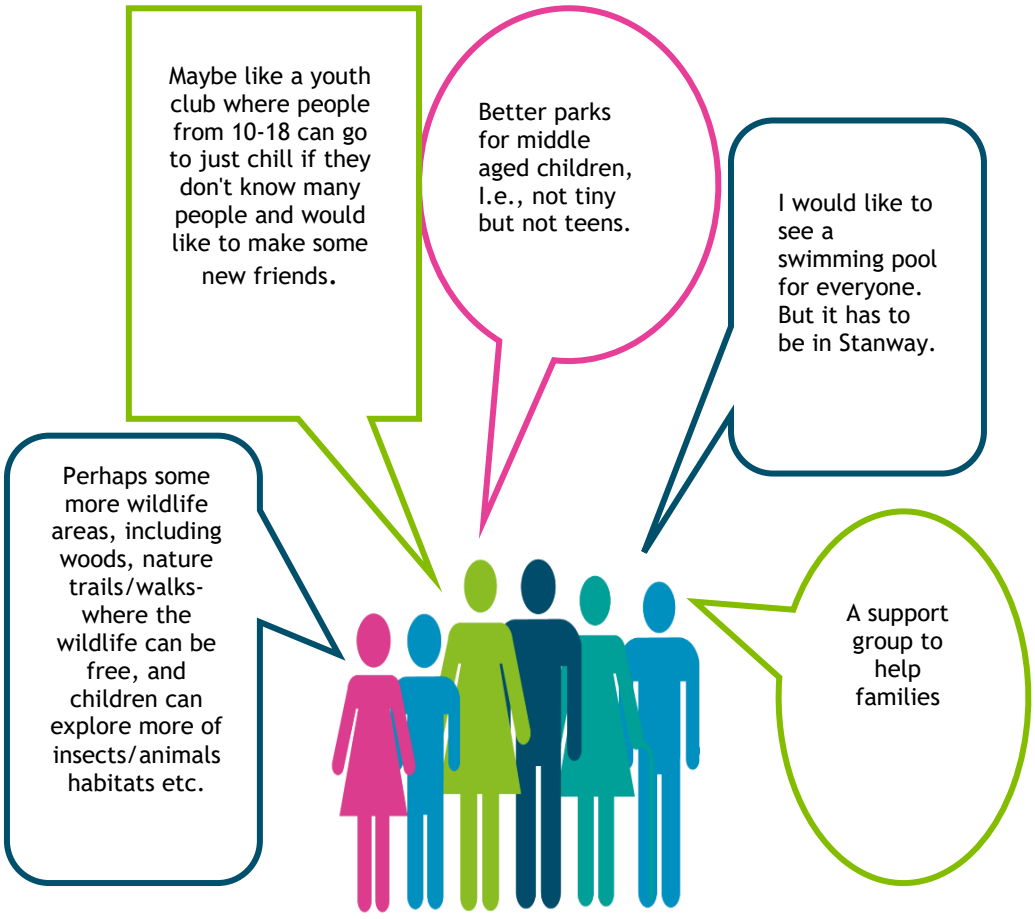


Figure 11. A snapshot from CO3 of the full answers from name 1 other asset you would like to see within your local area.

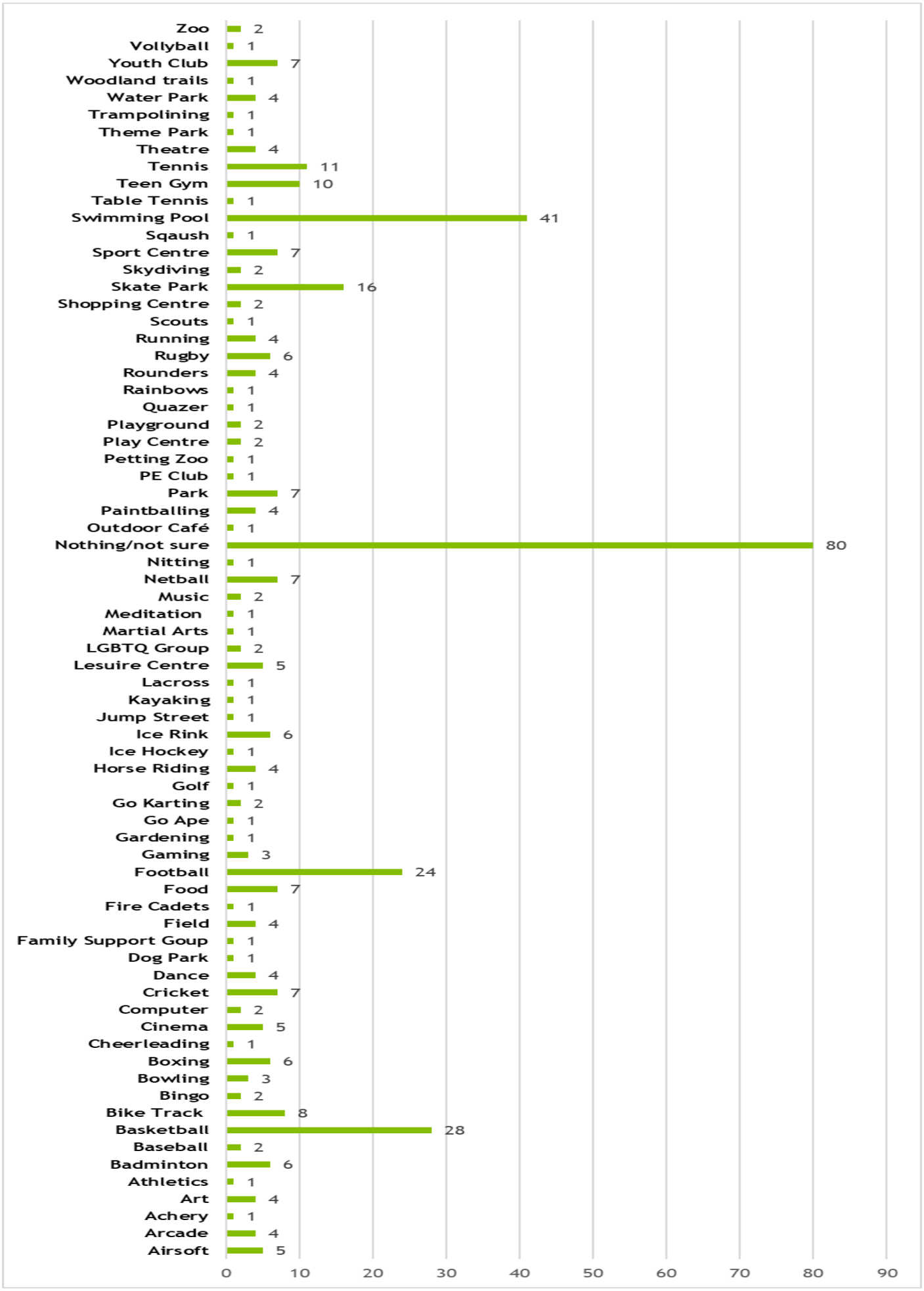


Figure 12. A bar chart of CO3 respondents' answers to 'Name 1 other asset you would like to see available within your local area' question.

CO12

Respondents from CO12 mentioned 46 assets altogether across all 113 individuals. Over a third of the respondents were not sure of any other assets they would like in the area, with over 2/3 of these having answered yes to having used assets within the last 18 months. This could therefore show that they are happy with the options already available within the area.

Responses across all mentioned assets were predominantly equal in their numbers, with no one asset standing out as being mostly desired. There is a real mix of sport-based assets and other recreational assets, with only 41% of asset sports based in CO12 compared with 53% in CO3. The higher scoring assets in CO12 look to be mostly focused around providing entertainment such as leisure facilities like bowling or mini golf.



Figure 13. A snapshot from Co12 of the full answers from name 1 other asset you would like to see within your local area.

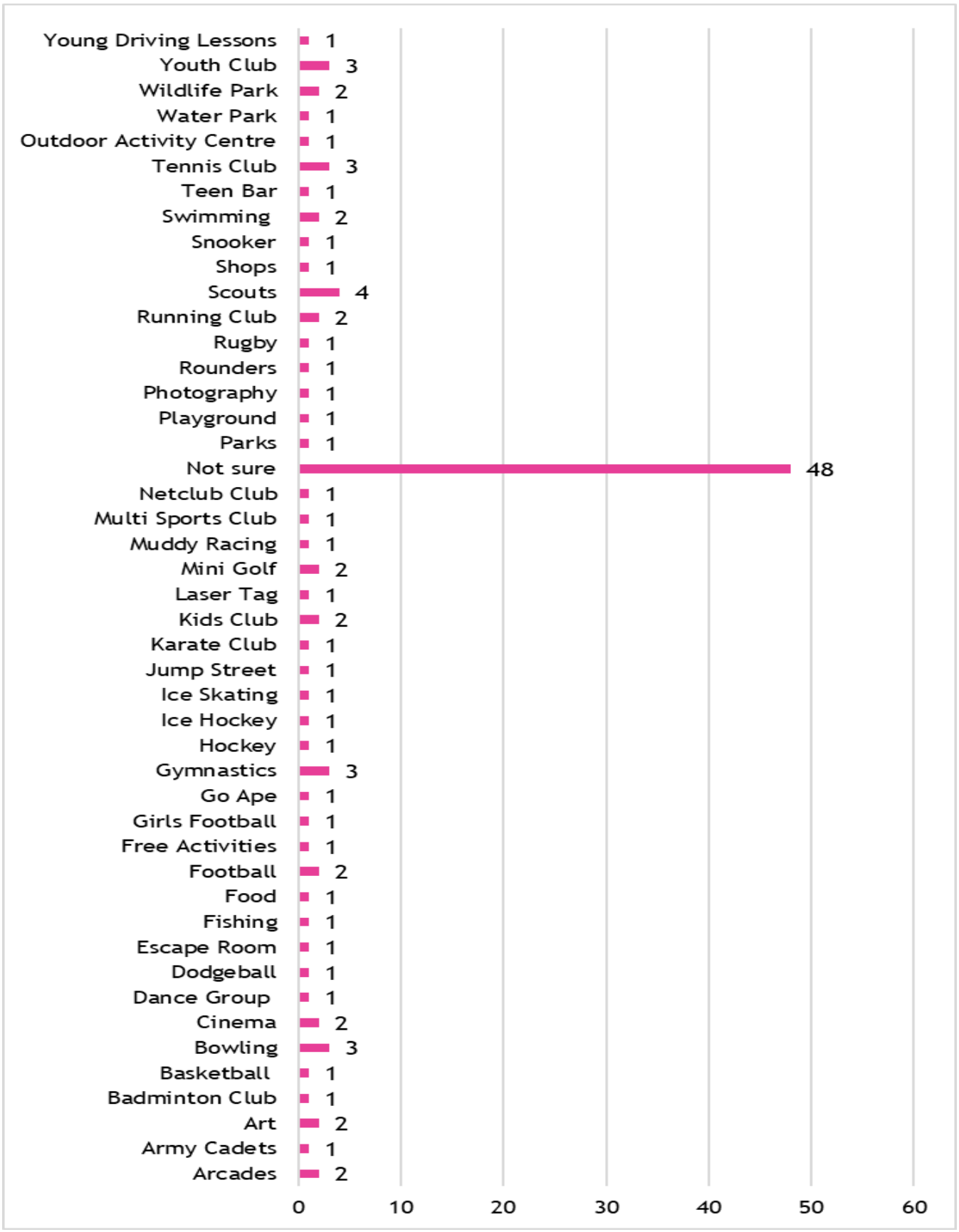


Figure 12. A bar chart of CO12 respondents answer to Name one other asset you would like to see available within your local area question.

Conclusion from Citizen's Voice survey exercise

This survey was intended to support the citizen voice work with children & families in Harwich & Stanway, capturing seldom heard voices within the community

The interviews in the 2nd half of this work were conducted with organisational representative or parents, so gathering responses from children/young people helps to broaden the lived experience voice and gain a deeper narrative.

We can see from the findings that both CO3 & CO12 share similarities with what encourages or discourages an individual from accessing an asset. There are clear barriers such as some lack of interest but mostly the pandemic, however time spent with friends and family was seen as a positive when using assets.

In terms of desired assets, responses differed slightly between the two postcodes, with sport being a stronger desire in CO3 compared with leisure/entertainment facilities in CO12.

Harwich

Situated within Essex, Harwich is the Northernmost coastal town within the county. As of 2019, the population was estimated to be over 21,000, with 24% of residents under the age of 20[4]. Harwich is predominantly known as a port town, considered one of the 8 Haven Ports. Labelled as a 'dead-end town' in a 2020 article from Essex Live[5], its reputation over the years has been quickly judged as one with little to offer. However, Harwich for many residents is seen as 'home' as well as a well-loved & valuable community to be a part off.

Mental Health amongst children & families

We are all aware of the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on well-being across the UK. When engaging with organisations & families in Harwich, the pandemics impact on mental health has created a prevalent barrier for families & children when accessing assets.

To understand the emerging problem, it's important to first highlight the complexity of emotions families have been feeling over the last 18 months, especially, from those assets who have been working with these individuals.

> **"What parents are saying to us and what the majority of our referrals are saying is that people are feeling very anxious, they're feeling very isolated because they haven't mixed with other parents."**

Multiple lockdowns have led to many assets having either stopped running or found ways to adapt by offering services online. For some parents, coupled with increasing anxiety & feelings of panic, they have stopped engaging with other parents and the local community, which has had a huge impact on loneliness and isolation. The fact that organisations have noticed the increased levels of anxiety in referrals, we can assume that this is becoming a cause for concern within the area.

> **"Its different levels, people's anxiety about going back out, people's anxiety about vaccines"**

It is assumed by many that parents would be keen to revert to their usual routine, however the level of raised anxiety has created a barrier in doing so. It's clear that this anxiety is due to a culmination of factors, and it is not only parents who are experiencing this but also children and young people.

[4] https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/eastofengland/essex/E35000402__harwich/
[5] The 8 reasons why Harwich is the 'worst place to live' in Essex - Essex Live

"Now children are coming in and have anxiety about school, depressed about family situations, like there isn't just one problem, but like 10 that link into a bigger problem".

Much like their parents, the mental health in children has been greatly affected by the pandemic and in some cases, it's a multitude of problems. We sometimes say that children learn from their parents and for some organisations, this has been evident when talking about mental health and well-being.

> **"Especially in Harwich, both the parents & child have mental health problems. The children have been escalated by the parents"**

The fact this has been picked up by organisations working with families in Harwich highlights the severity of the situation. Rather than criticizing the parents, there needs to be an understanding and support put in place to help both children and parent at the same time.

> **"If there is no support for the parents, then our work for the child is not going to be beneficial if those parents don't get support. There's a big link missing, and parents need to gain access to support at the same time as the child"**

Because families have now had to adjust to living within proximity of one another, at times working and attending school under one roof, situations have become stressful. This change in learning has impacted greatly on home schooling and resulted in some children reaching crisis point.

> **"There was a 10-year-old girl who picked up on the angst her mum was going though, went out onto the balcony and was going to throw herself off, said that she didn't want to live anymore"**

The above is a worst-case scenario, but what it highlights is the extreme situation some families have reached, and that support must be provided for both parent & children to ensure its effectiveness.

Harwich Helps

Harwich Helps was launched at the beginning of the first lockdown in March 2020. Organised by The Salvation Army and co-ordinated by 22 other local organisations, the scheme provides a helpline 7 days a week, between 9am-5pm for anyone living within Harwich and the surrounding villages. More than 120 volunteers also reached out to help offer support with over 100 calls taken within the first 4 days. The hotline provides support in multiple ways such as to individuals who might be isolated, those struggling for food due to financial reasons, someone to talk to or those who might need support in getting to shops etc. Harwich Helps represents the incredible work of the community within Harwich, with each organisations bringing their expert service and valuable volunteers at a time when the community is most vulnerable.



Aside from the community response, some assets have adapted their services to accommodate those families in situations of uncertainty. This has involved introducing outdoor sessions in local woods, keeping away from other families or busy spaces, slowly easing families back into society. For some children, this was needed to ensure their return to school was as relaxed as possible.

> **"I think some children have found it more difficult to be around other children or integrate around society"**

Children were expected to adapt quickly to the change from normal school routine to virtual classes. This became the 'new normal' for many but with schools returning to their previous way of working, we need to acknowledge that for some children & also parents, this is an extremely stressful process. Because of the complex nature of this situation, our conversations with locals highlighted how there has been a shift within mental health.

> **"The early mental health we are now seeing is a lot more complex than it was 25 years ago"**

If even at early intervention, some children & parents are seen as complex cases, then accessible, efficient mental health services are even more vital. The consensus was those organisations big & small need to work in partnership to ensure everyone has access to the correct support.

> **"The waiting list for higher up tier mental health are too high, and we aren't able to get them through the system. It's almost like you need to be able to pick up the phone, and have a person you could speak to "we've got this person identified, what's our best route"**

What's clear is that to support those assets who are dealing with the mental health crisis first-hand, there needs to be the support from, mental health services who deal with more complex needs.

Not every child, young person or parent will be facing the same experience within Harwich. However, support needs to be offered to smaller organisations who understand the community, are a friend to the residents & can ensure children & families grow with confidence once again.

Financial Struggles

According to neighbourhood Lower Layer Super Outlet Area data (LSOA), Harwich is spilt into three LSOA, sitting within the Harwich & Kingsway Ward. You can see from figure 1 that over a period of four years between 2015-2019, Harwich's level of deprivation increased. All three LSOA sit within the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods according to this data.

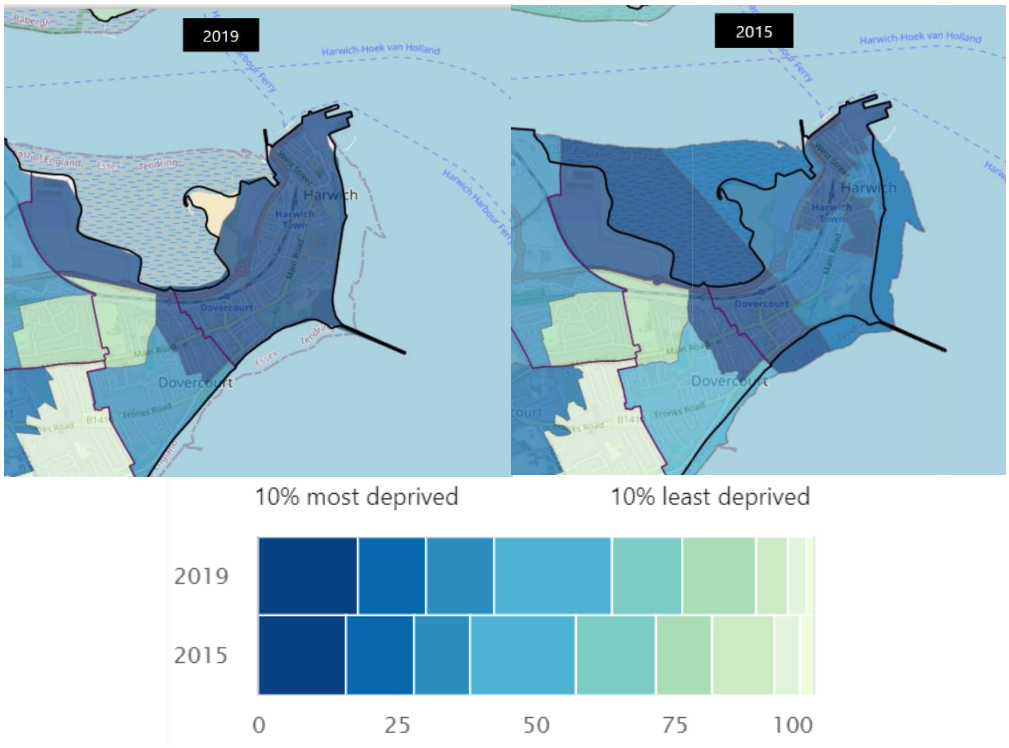


Figure 1. Comparison map showing the LSOA Index of Multiple Deprivation data in Harwich between 2015 & 2019.

Financial Difficulties

In a 2019 report from End Child Poverty, child poverty was the highest in Tendring for Essex, with Harwich having 3870 (24.2%) children falling into this category[6]. In further research in 2020, even before the coronavirus pandemic, poverty across the region was rising[7]. It's expected that this number will have risen even further due the pandemic, with many parents struggling financially.

"There has almost been a 50-60% rise in those 'Just about Managing families' who have come to us asking for help".

Just about managing families (JAM) refers to families who are in employment, but on very low income. For these families they just about make ends meet and have very little in the way of savings to cover for emergencies. We can see that during the pandemic, these families have struggled within Harwich, with nearly double the amount of people now reaching out for support.

'There's an awful lot of financial hardship, people not being able to feed their children, accessing food banks and the Salvation Army'.

Families facing situations like this, reaching out to organisations that do not judge and can offer support at no cost has been a real lifesaver.

North Essex Support Team (NEST) Slow Cooker Club

NEST was established in 2016 by Les Nicoll who, from his time working as a community builder for the fire service, witnessed the harrowing circumstances some people were experiencing.

Since 2016 the charity has grown, with its own base in Harwich & support from several volunteers. They offer a no judgement service, taking donations of furniture, bedding & other household items and passing them onto families and individuals. They recently organised the donation of prom dresses & accessories so that all young people could have the full prom experience.

One of their success stories is their Slow Cooker Club (SCC). This aims to teach families how to cook healthy meals on a budget, by getting parents & children involved. Families take part 1 day a week for 8 weeks, receiving a slow cooker, ingredients & essentials such as tin openers, seasonings & tea towels in their first week. The following weeks they receive ingredients and a recipe card.

The scheme originally started in Harwich but has now branched out into other areas of Tendring, made possible by the collaborative effort of organisations.

For many, the scheme has allowed families to try new recipes, use equipment they thought they would never have afforded, and create delicious meals together as a family.



[6] Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs 2018/19, Loughborough University, Donald Hirsch and Juliet Stone

[7] https://www.harwichandmanningtreestandard.co.uk/news/north_essex_news/18824547.shocking-study-finds-third-kids-town-living-poverty/

The cost of assets

For some families, it can be difficult to know where to reach out for help in times of need. Many families instead struggle though times of crisis, managing as best they can, meaning accessing certain assets is their last priority.

> **'The fact you are not sure how you are going to pay rent, or top up your gas & electric, the thought of going out to do something with your children is not up there'.**

Families are having to make these difficult decisions through no fault of their own, prioritising paying the bills over doing something together as a family. Even going to the beach can become expensive, as this might involve purchasing food, buckets/spades etc which can become costly.

"It's not necessarily that it's unaffordable, it's that it could be two or three night's dinner. It's a huge difference".

For some families, extra purchases might not be an issue but for others, it could be a financial strain. This in turn, changes their perception and takes away the enjoyment when the focus is on finance.

"It's supposed to be this fun thing, you don't want it to become about money"

Therefore, having provisions in place that break down the barriers created by finance and allow families to come together as equals will reduce the pressure on parents, especially in an area such as Harwich with a higher level of deprivation.

Rugby families Summer Activity Programme



The summer activity programme is a great initiative that utilises the current assets available within Harwich, encouraging families to enjoy the facilities and resources that are available on their doorstep.

The free 12-week programme, funded by Active Essex and happening every Saturday, centres around two main activity themes. The first is sports & exercise, run by Darren Blewitt and then wildlife exploration with Seaside explorers, run by Libby Scarfe. The programme is supported by volunteers from the youth rugby club, who in turn receive experience and certification for their future CV's.

One parent commented that their child had become less confident during the pandemic and that being a part of this programme allowed the child to re-gain confidence while being supported by his parents and sibling. They also went onto comment that a free activity took the pressure off finance wise and made the activity more enjoyable as a family.

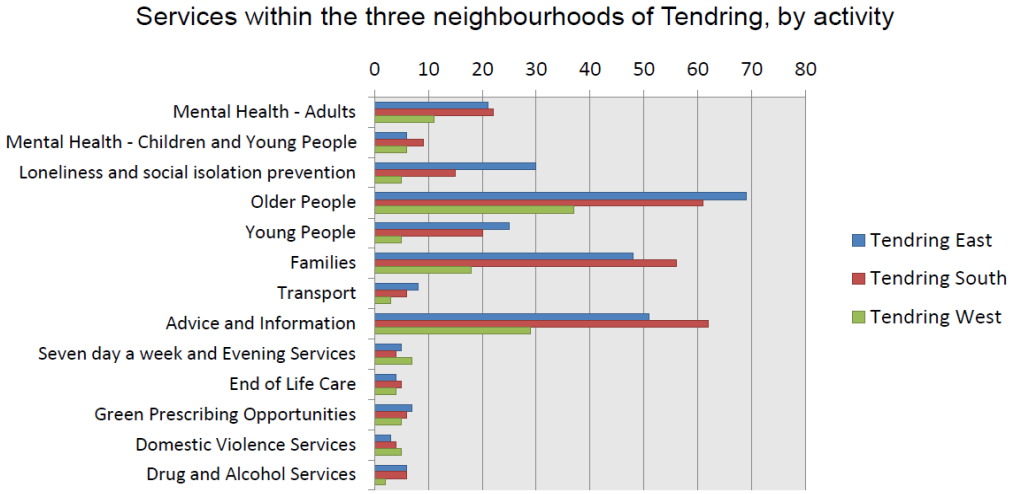
The sports activity encourages family fitness but also highlights the potential for continued social engagement when getting to know other families. For some, it might also mean the chance to use equipment they might not have access to.

Seaside Explorers inspires parents & children to appreciate the natural beauty that's available round the corner by using the rich environment of the beach. With continued exposure, learning and appreciation of a beach habitat, it is hoped that the children within Harwich will grow to be future caretakers of the beach and consider their environmental impact. It's also hoped that parents will feel more confident in bringing their children to the beach.

Programmes such as this allow for assets to emphasise the activities on offer and families to try new and exciting activities, without the stress of finances. Especially for the Rugby Club, it helps to break down the barrier that Rugby is a 'rich man's club' and that everyone is welcome to be a part of a friendly & encouraging club.

Asset Suitability For All Ages

There are over 6000 residents living in Harwich under the age of 25, with an equal spilt between those who are male & female. Drawing on data from the first Asset Mapping report, Tendring East which Harwich sits within, has the highest available assets for young people.



However, when engaging with local organisations & residents, there was an agreement that asset suitability for teenagers & young adults was lacking through a number of different factors.

During the lockdown in 2020, specific crimes in Harwich rose significantly, especially during the summer holidays. According to data, drug related crimes rose nearly 500% in August 2020, alongside public order, possession of a weapon & anti-social behaviour, which all showed increases[8]. When engaging with the local community, it was acknowledged that younger individuals were responsible.

> **"We heard that teenagers are out and about, getting into low level bother because there isn't anything really for them, there isn't enough for them"**

You can assume there is a connection between the rising numbers of crime and anti-social behaviour with the summer holidays due to children not being occupied with school. However, some organisations are quick to not point the finger and believe there could be more engagement with young people by local authorities.

> **"I think a lot of the crimes young people get blamed for. You get a lot of councillors saying young people are the problem, but they don't actually sit there and talk to the young people".**

What we can start to see is that potentially a rise in crime has been down to teenagers/ young people being bored and not feeling like they are listened to. One participant highlights how some young people have not even explored what's available locally.

> **"80% of the kids here have never seen the beach. But we are surrounded by water on three sides"**

> **"Some children in Harwich have never been to the beach and it breaks my heart when you get to bring them down and they're like this is so much fun. They don't know how to go to the woods and have imagination"**

For young children, playing in the woods and using your imagination is a thrilling experience, especially if this is something you have not grown up doing. However, what we can see is that this lack of education carries on into their early adult life.

[8] Harwich Crime and Safety Statistics | CrimeRate

"An issue is a lot of young people ask for stuff that's already in the area. They just need guidance & support to get them to place because their parents don't take them. There is nothing in Harwich that keeps them up to date"

What's becoming clear is that for some teenagers and young people, being continually kept up to date with what's on offer would help increase use of assets. Furthermore, organisations highlight that this continued engagement should also be considered when coming up with new ideas for the area.

> **"Organisations come up with ideas about what is good for young people, but it turns out they have never spoken to them. Young people like their voices to be heard, and they like to be involved".**

It's clear that young people want their voices to be heard and to be acknowledged. To ensure young people are kept off the streets, not engaging in crime, providing services suited to all ages might be key in ensuring steps are taken to achieve this. However, participants highlighted that what needs to be considered is the change in attitudes & trends in children/young people.

"Young people grow up quickly. Those young people you asked 4 years ago and the funding doesn't come through for 4 years, the minds of those young people can be completely different to what it was 4 years ago"

This is why consistent engagement is key to ensuring that children/young people engage with assets. If you want to ensure that assets are suitable for this age group, keeping them informed and in control of decision to a degree is a must. Decisions based on the assumptions is not strong enough to ensure engagement.

Stanway

Located near Colchester, Stanway is a small village, although some have started to call it more a suburb in recent times. With records dating back centuries, Stanway has been home to some interesting history, most recently the discovery of the Druids of Colchester in 1996.

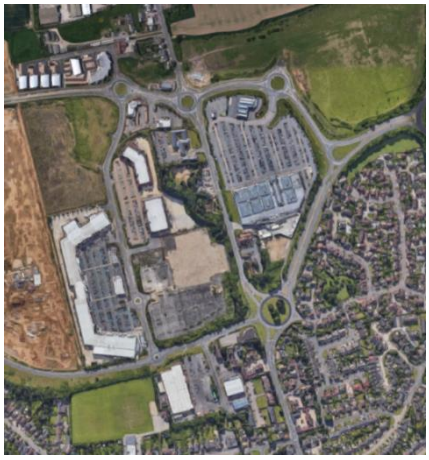
However, the last 15 years the village has expanded rapidly, especially with housing and local amenities. According to the 2011 census, the population of Stanway was over 8000 however, this number is expected to have risen to over 10,500 once the 2021 census data is released. There is no denying that Stanway is rapidly changing, bringing with it many new families into the area.

Infrastructure & the changing face of Stanway

Compared with the way it looked 10-20 years ago, Stanway has come a long way from its roots. What were once gravel pits, stands new shops, restaurants, houses & future development plans.



Stanway Circa 1979



Stanway in 2020

In the next 5 years, 125 million pounds will be spent on two separate developments, Stane Retail Park[9]& Tollgate Village[10].Tollgate Partnership Limited currently manages the existing Tollgate Village, centre, business park and new Sainsburys stores. 'Tollgate Village 2:0' costing 65million pounds, will see an 8 hectare site developed in 4 stages, delivering 'new retail, leisure & employment facilities to create a heart for the expanding community'.

For some, the continued developemnt has been a draw to move to the area, with many more families calling it home. One individual I spoke with highlighted the competivness of the market.

"I would say from a family's perspective, this is the desirable side of Colchester. It took us over 3 years to purchase a property"

House prices in Stanway rose 11% during the last 12 months, with Colchester now the faster growing town within the East of England[11]. Although development is good, we must remember that for some residents, Stanway has been home for over 20 years.

"Stanway, instead of being a lovely little village, has now turned into a town/city".

<u>The impact on green space</u>

When any new development is built, the number of cars, people & need for local amenities increases. For some long-term residents in Stanway, the development has become overwhelming.

"The housing is ridiculous. I'm looking at moving out because it's getting so bogged down with houses"

Residents also expressed concern around the growing number of houses and the potential impact on green spaces.

"It's like they are closing in all the open spaces, and I think people need open spaces"

One particular area highlighted was Silver Witch Green. Commonly used by the public, the recent introduction of an outside gym has been met with some hesitation.

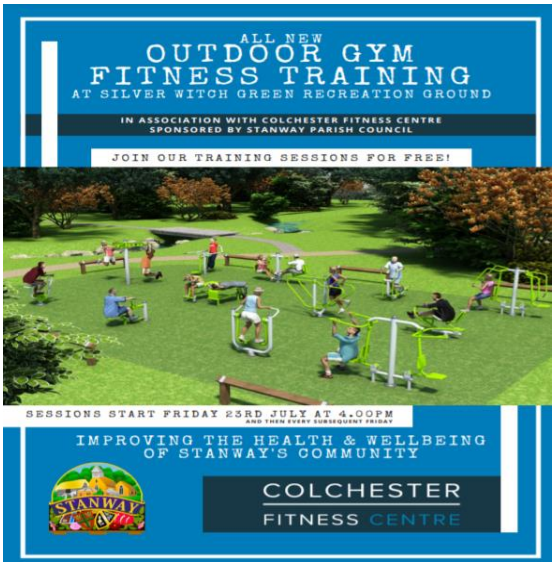
"The outside gym I think it's a novelty and nobody did their research. It looks like its empty, but on a lovely day, families go there to Silver Witch Green to have picnics but now they have plonked the gym there".

Other residents, however, feel the gym has been a useful asset for the area and the Parish Council are working hard to ensure the space is used accordingly.

[9] HOME | Stane Retail Park Tollgate (stanepark.com)
[10] https://www.tollgatevillage.uk/#about
[11] https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/17689075.new-figures-show-colchester-fastest-growing-town-east/

Silver Witch Green Outdoor Gym Training Sessions

To ensure residents are encouraged & also equipped with the confidence to use the new outdoor gym, Stanway Parish Council, in association with Colchester Fitness Centre, have organised for free training sessions. Taking place every Friday at 4pm, the sessions are open to anyone who is interested. This initiative is a great example of promoting health & wellbeing in the community, encouraging residents to use local provisions. With continued training & guidance, it's hoped that residents will continue to utilise the equipment but also help those who are unable to pay for a gym membership. Assets such as this break down the financial barriers that some gyms can pose for families.



Required Infrastructure

It was highlighted earlier that with new houses brings the need for more amenities. When speaking with individuals who managed assets within the area, available spaces local to use had become competitive.

"The infrastructure for schools, social club, community halls, there's not enough to go around for the number who want to access them"

We can see that assets are keen to provide provisions in the local area, but because physical infrastructure has struggled to keep up with the number of houses & therefore new residents, the services are not capable.

"I'm forever having to beg, borrow or steal for another night in a venue but it's always 'no you can't'. It's like you are juggling so you have to go somewhere else"

This individual highlighted the infrastructure competitiveness within Stanway, but also states services are eager to provide more provisions for residents, but finding the space is incredibly difficult. Furthermore, individuals highlighted that infrastructure contributed to at times, the difficulty for families who use services.

"Lots of mums have tried to get the bus with buggies and there is literally one pedestrian crossing. These are really easy fixes, quite simply, zebra crossings all along London Road"

Interestingly, crossings & pathways etc would be something we would fail to consider, but participants highlighted this as a barrier, especially for those living on the new build estate behind Stanes Park. For families living locally **"We would really like to go with our prams, pushchairs and children"** but to ensure this happens, the infrastructure needs to be safe, secure, and family friendly which also in turns, encourages families to walk & explore the local area. For those families who have moved to Stanway in recent years, the area is the perfect fit.

"I wouldn't move from here because it's such a great area for families, kids and everything happens in Stanway"

Of course, some residents have expressed a discomfort at the new developments but for others, it became the pull that bought them to the area. There will always be some resilience to any change within an area, but those involved in the development of Stanway must work with the local community, understanding who lives within the area, what they desire and what would be beneficial.

Mental health & the community

Similar to Harwich, the community in Stanway has experienced the effect covid-19 pandemic has had on mental health, especially within children & families.

The impact on current assets

The current assets in Stanway faced a challenge over the last 18 months, with some continuing to offer their service virtually or choosing to not run at all, due to Covid restrictions. Through conversations with participants, services have understood the effect mental health will continue to have on the community.

"I think there is more mental health coming out of this covid thing than ever"

Individuals highlighted that a change within some of their service users, especially children, is unlike something they have experienced before. Some children are returning to activities, with much less physicality than before.

"Once we could return after the pandemic, we found children were very unfit. Their fitness levels had gone straight down"

We can contribute children's decreased fitness levels to a combination of lockdown measure, attitude changes & fear of the pandemic stopping them from being outside. With schools having taken place virtually for months & physical assets either adapting or choosing not to continue, some children have had fewer active minutes than they are used to. Participants further contributed that this decrease in fitness was down to confidence levels.

"The confidence has been a big issue. I reckon if you spoke to every football, theatre etc coach, they would say the same"

For some children, their fitness & confidence have come hand in hand, as they are not at the same ability as before the pandemic. However, assets have worked hard to slowly ease children back into their activity, by gradually re-introducing them.

"We have been doing more stamina training, psychical strength, flexibility and we have noticed each week that the kids are not only improving physically, but also mentally".

It's clear that decreased fitness levels have affected children and their mental health and assets have been working hard to ensure children feel as comfortable as possible moving forward. However, some children have also been affected by the pandemic to the degree where their feelings and emotions have been very inconsistent.

"A lot of kids are very paranoid about getting ill. We have kids coming in for no reason, they don't know why, just bursting into tears"

We can see how overwhelming for children the pandemic has become but also, it's apparent that an understanding of their own mental health is complex. The asset who has worked with or dealt with these children felt their role had changed.

"That transition period coming back after lockdown, I felt like a counselling service because the parents would want them to offload about their home lives etc"

Those individuals who operate as self-employed businesses have struggled to support the children properly due to their own personal situations. Because a level of trust exists between the service & child, there is comfort in knowing you can return to a safe environment. However, assets would like this responsibility eased.

"I feel like what's been lacking in society is a counselling service for people to offload because they have been using us"

Participants have expressed the need for a counselling service that they can easily signpost children & their parents to, ensuring each individual receives the most beneficial support. This would help to ease the pressure on services which in turn, will help them focus on providing a fun and comfortable activity to support their mental health.

Family collective

We can see that there are definite parallels between Harwich & Stanway in regard to the impact the pandemic has had on mental health among residents, especially for children & families. During the first few months of lockdown since March 2020, divorce searches increased, with citizen advice predicting a post-lockdown divorce boom. In September 2020 compared with the same date in 2019, divorce webpage searches increased 25%[12]. Stanway like other areas, has fared no different.

"There's been a lot of family break ups. I've seen kids in terrible states"

It's understandable that family breakdowns would have a devastating effect on the entire family. Living under one roof at times, 24/7, is sure to have been difficult. For some families, this put a strain on their finances, with some unable to afford the cost of previously attended assets. This has caused some families to step away from accessing these services.

"Some families, especially those just about managing families (JAM) have stepped away due to pride"

For some families, it can feel like a shameful experience to admit to having financial difficulties. In some cases, this has acted as a barrier for families accessing old assets. One participant highlighted the value of support networks, especially during the pandemic.

"I think that's a good thing about the lockdown, before we would have said we'll do it my way but now we are looking out for each other"

We can see how the pandemic has made some residents within Stanway more community aware. People were looking out for one another, supporting with various day to day activities. This participant highlighted the importance of continuing this initiative.

"We need to help families and young people build their support networks, creating resilient communities. Children & families can then know that they're not alone and can reach out"

StanWell Hub- Thriving Together

The StanWell Hub is a new initiative for Stanway, ran by the Stanway Pioneering team. The hub is supported by volunteers who might live & work in Stanway, providing a space for the community to listen and connect with each other. The pandemic has left some individuals isolated, others vulnerable and going through some difficult times. The StanWell Hub can provide advice or signpost individuals to expert services. The hub will be available outside the food bank located in Stanway every Tuesday & Saturday.

StanWell Hub
thriving together

[12] https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/divorce-advice-covid-19-relationship-breakups-644107

For anyone in the community, but especially for the families who have separated due to the pandemic, the need for a community hub is imperative in strengthening valuable support networks.

The position of schools

For some children, school provided respite from life at home, enjoying time to spend socialising with friends. However, some children have struggled to adapt to returning after lockdown.

> **"It's' been a mixture really; some young people have enjoyed being back at school but some of them have got used to being at home"**

What's apparent is that children are feeling a mixture of emotions when it comes to school. Those working with students suffering from mental health have experienced how valuable their support has been.

> **"Some young people don't bother reaching out to mental health services because there is a 5-month waiting list. We need to get more people on the ground level, even just to get the conversation going"**

It's these conversations within schools, in a comfortable environment that's provided a needed platform for children/young people to discuss their mental health. What's needed though, is more of these conversations which in turn, would support struggling mental health services.

What was also highlighted in conversation was the effect of friendships within school in Stanway. The variety of responses from multiple postcodes received from the survey highlighted the geographical spread of children who access the schools within the area.

> **"Because Stanway School is a feeder school, we see the knock-on effect on children. When we talk to them about friendships, it's like I have friends, but they live here in Stanway and I like in another village"**

We know from the survey that most children/young people access assets for fun with their friends, therefore, individuals who have friends in the smaller villages might access services less, as they spend more time talking through social media. School for some could have been the only time they would have seen friends therefore, the pandemic stopping this could have had a detrimental effect. The impact is felt across all ages within the schools.

> **"I've looked for services and they are all 14-19 years old but the children I am speaking to are under 14 and they are struggling. I think the biggest mental health challenge is self-harm. Even before the pandemic it was bad, but it's really bad now"**

It's clear that all ages now need to be considered when it comes to mental health support. To continue to understand the effect of mental health, continuous engagement with the services working first-hand in schools is needed. We can see that the levels of self-harm have increased therefore, this must be addressed as a concern. Improvement of a child/young person's mental health is for some, the first step needed to regain confidence, reignite passion, and recover from the pandemic.

Conclusions from Citizen's Voice work

The engagement conducted across Harwich & Stanway, through both the survey & 1:1 interviews highlighted different local/cultural factors but, when it came to barriers, there are similarities.

Although both areas are at opposite ends in terms of deprivation, there are similarities when talking about the barriers in accessing support for mental health.

The following recommendations are made by Healthwatch Essex as ways to increase engagement with local assets.

Harwich Specific

- **Increased funding for the local organisations**- Harwich as a community was impacted hard by the pandemic. Already struggling with high levels of deprivation, the pandemic didn't help to improve this outcome. The organisations that stepped up to deliver support are keen to deliver more services that will have a positive impact. The community is very strong within Harwich, so utilising trusted & already established organisations will help to improve children & families physical & mental wellbeing.

- **Free Activity Opportunities-** Some families within Harwich have struggled financial during the pandemic, with this number expected to rise. An opportunity to provide families with a chance to try new activities without the pressure of finance, would allow children/young people to help find what they enjoy taking part in. Also, activities which highlight the natural beauty that Harwich has on offer would encourage residents to explore their community, which perhaps they haven't experienced before.

- **Young persons need a voice-** Teenagers/young people are keen to have a voice within Harwich and this needs to be encouraged. An available platform which allows their voices to be heard in a safe environment would be beneficial. We saw from the survey that leisure assets were popular among this age group, so providing them with the opportunity to discuss how this could be addressed is crucial.

Stanway Specific

- **Greater infrastructure needs**- With the increasing family demographic in Stanway, the need to not only understand accessibility in the new developments but also in the current village is vital. Consideration needs to be taken to see if current infrastructure such as crossings and village halls are keeping up with the need of the community. A forum discussing this topic would be a good starting point, involving citizens of Stanway who have key individual networks within this area.

- **Community Togetherness**- Stanway has gone through a major re-development over the last 20 years. For those residents who have lived in the area for a long time, the change may not be seen by all as the most popular. Bringing together new & older residents would help to create a united community who can share their thoughts and feelings as one.

Combined recommendations

The pandemic has affected mental health within both Harwich & Stanway areas. Therefore, the following recommendations are as follows.

- **Parent/child support-** Providing mental health services for both parent and the child / young person is vital. If a child is identified as needing mental health support, the parent should also be contacted and included within the same case.

- **Mental health signposting service-** Signposting services could be improved for organisation's who might not specialise in mental health support or high-level mental health. Providing a document listing that is updated routinely which contains clear contact details and pathways to get support would allow for organisations to signpost families quicker & effectively.

- **Confidence needs to be improved-** Confidence is the biggest barrier in preventing some children & families from accessing assets. Because confidence has taken a major knock, some families attitude & behaviours have changed and this needs to be considered when we move forward post the pandemic.

Literature Review – relevant reporting

In light of a primary focus of the review in understanding barriers and enablers of access to services, a number of complimentary sources of research were identified. These are listed in Appendix A. In general, research supported the evidence found through primary and local research and identified the key challenges facing children and young people through the pandemic and in trying to access help and support.

One key document was very relevant to findings within North-East Essex and outlines the barriers faced by children and families in accessing services. **Sure Start Folkestone** carried out a local evaluation in 2002[13] looking at the Barriers to Service Inclusion faced by parents. In many ways the area was like North-East Essex in terms of the IMD, relative deprivation and geography. Unsurprisingly, many of the barriers identified have also emerged through this work.

Barriers	How manifested
Awareness	If unaware of service, families are unlikely to access them except by accident. If they are aware of them, information should ensure they know enough to make an informed decision. Wording of information is key and needs to be clear, easy to understand and application forms, if needed should be as easy to complete as possible.
Feeling uncomfortable asking for support	Parents/carers do not want to be a burden. Some see stigma attached to asking for support. Services need to be welcoming and easy to access.
Timing of services and accessibility	Timing of services can be a barrier, especially where families are dependent on public transport. Location and accessibility are important in designing services. Lack of motivation easily emerges when location and travelling distance arte a challenge.
Personal organisation and conflicting priorities	Again, this is tougher for those who do not have their own transport to get there or those who have several conflicting timings to manage. Flexibility is key to promoting inclusion and enabling people to take control within the constraints of their lifestyle.
Finance	Parents may be excluded where a fee is required, especially when the cost of public transport has to be added. Self-esteem issues come with debt. There is a need to have transparent pricing and training in life skills – such as that provided by EXTRA.
Training & employment	There are opportunities to increase access to services, personal capacity, financial wellbeing and likelihood of employment through training parents and carers, bearing in mind the need to support the transition to training and work means reorganising family agreements. It can feel very lonely re-entering the world of training and employment so sensitive training – such as that provided by the Health & Care Academy - provision of crèches and employment or training-based child care support this transition.
Helplessness	Parents/carers/children/young people can feel very isolated, unsupported and lacking in confidence when accessing services they are not familiar with. A positive welcome and supported induction is key when new people attend services and activities.
Informal support	For many people in need, informal networks can be the first port of call – family, friends, partners, trusted organisational links and increasingly, social media-based groups. Services should make an effort to engage with these forms of support to increase awareness, access, ability to receive support, personal organisation etc., strengthening personal capacity and ties within the community

To address some of the issues outlined, and those which emerged through the citizen's Voice exercise (detailed above) services and activities should consider increased, targeted and relevant PR, joint working to share knowledge of support that is available through partners services and in wider, more informal community settings and decentralisation of services to where people go. A good example of this is the Open Road SOS bus, which is in the community and includes partners who can support people using the service. In providing a series of recommendations, we will draw on specific evidence and suggest actions for the future.

[13] Sure Start Folkestone, Local Evaluation Summary, Understanding Barriers to Service Inclusion faced by local parents, Andy Simpson, 2002

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Improve access to opportunities, services and information through engagement and communications

The evidence told us…

That the way in which people source information is inconsistent. The pandemic has highlighted changes that have impacted upon vulnerable groups and exposed barriers to access.

The Children's Society gave us some feedback from young people and practitioners as follows:-

"Our young people have fed back that their hope for the future has dwindled as a result of the pandemic. Some are angry at the impact the restrictions have had on their future; they feel that they have abided by these for the protection of older generations and that Covid was unlikely to affect them

Virtual support has been welcomed by some young people, particularly those that work as they can receive support in their own environment after a day at work, rather than having to attend an office. This has also been proven as a more effective way to engage parents.

From a practitioner point of view the lockdown has increased our ability to engage as our offer has been extended, so not only do we continue to offer face to face and telephone support, we can now offer support over virtual means."

Young people often seek help from each other and online, rather than from traditional services, so it is important that they are equipped with the most accurate information available. All organisations have a responsibility to make sure that information they provide is accurate and well informed and it is clear that they take this responsibility seriously. Social media is often the 'go to' place for advice and information when it is difficult to ask parents or teachers. This can result in misinformation.

Young people can also be powerful advocates for changes and identifying solutions. Their insight must be drawn upon.

Research shows young people are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse. They see it at home and in their own relationships. According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales, 14% of women aged 16 to 19 reported experiencing some form of domestic abuse in the last year. This is 40% higher than the next age group (20-24). The website 'Your Best Friend' https://yourbestfriend.org.uk/ has been developed to reach young people and empower them with the knowledge and confidence to spot abuse in relationships and support their friends.

Young people's voices and experiences are shaping the solution. 11 organisations are working with them from different angles: young people, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, culture and religion and digital impact. Recent research revealed that children and young people don't identify with the term 'domestic abuse', do not always know what is and isn't acceptable in their relationships, and do want help but do not always feel that services are designed with their needs in mind. The Your Best Friend project aims to address these gaps.

Engaging with people using services gives a quality of feedback and enables services to respond to the issues which matter most. User and carer representation in design, development and personalisation of services makes them more relevant.

Good practice: EACH – involvement of Children and Families – hearing the Citizen Voice

EACH believes that service users have a right to be involved in decisions that directly affect their care and support and are engaged in shaping and influencing EACH care services. The skills and wealth of experience that service users can bring to the organisation are recognised and positively valued by EACH. Acting on service user feedback is important to EACH and the principle of 'you said, we did' is built into service user engagement strategy.
We seek feedback from and involve the children, young people and families in several ways including family forums and having a Trustee who was a user of EACH services. Families are encouraged to give feedback via a range of means including the family section on the website, surveys, comments slip in the family newsletter and Facebook and twitter.

Families views are sought in the development of EACH services, for example families were invited to complete an online family survey to gain their feedback on the services EACH provided during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure we were continuing to meet their needs.

All families engage in a holistic needs' assessment following their referral to EACH to identify their goals for involvement with EACH and to consider their different areas of need. Families identify what is most important to them and their priorities for care and support which would make the most difference to them. An EACH family co-ordinator, who is a member of the team, is allocated to every family. They contact the family every 3-6 months to check how well the family feel their goals and outcomes have been achieved, and their level of satisfaction with the service they have received. It is also an opportunity to learn if needs and goals have changed.

Conclusions

- Current communication methods are not peer led
- Communication can be very linear, mixed method approaches are required to reach the widest target audience
- Communication in digital formats is not accessible to all. Investment in a paper copy document listing assets for children, young people and families would be beneficial
- Use of language can exclude people – it is not always appropriate to the target audience it is trying to reach (e.g. use of the word 'assets' when talking about community activities, places, services and spaces)
- Trusted partners can be used successfully as advocates, more of this would benefit children, young people and families
- There is not enough engagement of participants in solution design

Recommendations

a) The Start Well Domain should commit to developing a Children and Young Person's Voice mechanism which sits with the Children and Young Person's Partnership Board, crossing boundaries and enabling general conversations to take place about a range of issue, including language and formats used for communications
b) Use the above as an opportunity for CYP personal growth and development and acknowledge the contribution and skill though certification
c) Start Well and Neighbourhoods to require use of paper-based information about services available, as well as social media, website and digital information to promote inclusion
d) NEECCG should undertake an exercise to review how information is circulated and received to adopt the most inclusive approach
e) Start Well and Neighbourhoods to consider best communication methods and language *working with young people* and plan to use them to promote assets.
f) C360 Winter Resilience programme to produce an advice booklet, cross-referenced with the local Holiday Activities steering group and their members, to ensure family services feature strongly enough. The booklet will then have a circulation to family services

Recommendation 2

Increase provision of Mental Health support to children, young people and families

The evidence told us…

That managing mental health is a primary concern for communities and providers.

Young Minds has undertaken a series of surveys throughout the pandemic with young people age between 13 and 25. The fourth survey took place between 26th January and 12th February 2021[14], during a new period of national lockdown, when schools, colleges and universities were closed to most students. 2,438 young people who have looked for mental health support at some point in their lives took part. This included 1,817 young people who say that they have needed mental health support since the beginning of the pandemic.

75% of respondents said they were finding the current lockdown harder to cope with than the previous ones; 67% believed that the pandemic will have a long-term negative effect on their mental health and 79% believed that their mental health will improve once most restrictions are lifted. When asked what the main pressures were during the current lockdown, the most common answers were: 1) Loneliness and isolation; 2) Concerns about school, college or university work; 3) A breakdown in routine ("not being able to do the things you usually would").

Among young people who believe they have needed mental health support during the pandemic, 54% said that they have received some form of support (e.g., through NHS mental health services; school or university counsellors; helplines; charities); 24% said that they have looked for support but not accessed any; 22% said that they had not looked for support. Among respondents who are at school or college, 55% said that there was a counsellor or mental health support team available in their school, 23% disagreed. Among respondents who are at school or college, almost half (48%) did not think that their school was focusing more on wellbeing and mental health than usual.

When asked what had been most helpful for their mental health during the current lockdown 65% said speaking with friends; 55% said exercise, such as walking or running; 54% said listening to music; 45% said that having a routine; 40% said watching TV or films; 35% said speaking to family; 18% said meditation and breathing exercises; 18% said gaming; 17% said doing a job; 13% said doing something new and 12% said school or university work.

The survey also sought information about barriers to services and support. The main issues identified were stigma about looking for support; not knowing where to turn – and being too nervous to make that contact; the type of support available during lockdown (i.e., struggling with online counselling; phone difficult for those with phone anxiety); long waiting lists and difficulty accessing mental health services and lack of money to pay for good private counselling support.

Rollout of Primary School-based Wellbeing Hub model.

Alongside officers of the Council, the Executive Head Teacher at Gt Bentley Primary School set up a pilot Wellbeing Hub in April 2017, operating as an after-school facility. Children with mild to moderate mental health issues were organised in groups and supported around the themes of play, art, construction, and science, gaining a "*rucksack of skills*" to take them forward into secondary school and beyond. In addition to this, the Hub offered information sessions for parents and carers covering topics such as sleep, nutrition, and behaviour management.

Evaluation was completed in October 2017, and outcomes showed very positive early signs of improvements in the children. The concept was presented to the Strategic Transformation Partnership Leaders Event in April 2018. The Council was successful in a bid to the Health Alliance

[14] Coronavirus: Impact on young people with mental health needs. Survey 4: February 2021; youngminds.org.uk;

Investment Fund to support the rollout of the Wellbeing Hub model in 21 primary schools across Tendring & Colchester.

Despite some delay due to the pandemic, the project is making progress with the rollout, which started in April 2021, and online training for all identified staff due to be involved with their school hub was launched in March 2021.The pandemic has revealed an increased level of mental ill health among children and young people and this initiative is a strong early intervention model, adapted to suit the needs of each school and its population, giving some strength and resilience and helping to remove the stigma around mental health by being open and transparent about it.

The University of Essex have been identified as evaluation partners for the project rollout and baseline data on the whole school wellbeing in all 21 schools will be collected prior to commencement of the Hub (April 2021). Evaluation will take place over a two year period and will include feedback from all parties.

Anecdotal evidence is highlighting how some families and young people are potentially normalising the levels of anxiety they have experienced during the pandemic, bypassing early help services and only reaching support at the point of crisis. Families with pre-existing vulnerabilities, who may have shielded or whose personal circumstances are complex can be considered particularly at risk.

When considering mental health services, the impact of bereavement and living with life-limiting conditions must also be acknowledged. Data in Appendix B shows the prevalence per 10,000 of children (aged 0-19) with life-limiting conditions by Local Authority in East of England Government Office Region for 2017. This indicates that the number of children/10,000 in Colchester (69.3) and Tendring (68.4) with such conditions is higher than average for the East of England (59.7) and in the top quartile.

The demand for mental health interventions is growing and a funding stream is needed to support this and fund counsellors, therapists and family therapists at a time when children are in greatest need for it – whether a patient, sibling or friend at end of life and for age-appropriate bereavement support. One of the barriers to making this happen is a general lack of knowledge about what services are in the community or how to refer to them.

Conclusions

- Early help services are not promoted enough, or accessible. This is true of all services, no just mental health
- There is a shortage of locality based mental health support. This is the most accessible for children, young people and families
- There is still a stigma attached to mental ill health. Conversations about mental health need to be opened up through community networks

Actions

a) Schools, GPs and community-based organisations to ensure that information about early help, social prescribers and direct access services are shared with children, young people and families in a way that meets their needs and removes stigma
b) Start Well Domain to include early help services as part of their future planning
c) Local Councils (CBC and TDC) to lead work with partners (particularly Neighbourhoods) to establish open up conversations about mental health through community networks.

Recommendation 3

Value and recognise the breadth of activities that are available, whether specialist or more generalised, whilst adding new activities within local neighbourhoods

The evidence told us…

That the activities people seek can be very simple – such as access to green space - or more tailored. Group and individual activities are essential.

Lads Need Dads [15] is an award-winning, independent not for profit Community Interest Company based in Tendring and operating across Tendring and Colchester. It was set up to prevent potential problems and address existing ones where boys are missing a father figure in their lives. It is the only project in the UK that works proactively to address the impact of the absent father on boys age 11-15 and whose approach is both early intervention and long-term. This is achieved through a male-led group mentoring programme, bush-craft survival training and outdoor activities, on-going support and life-skills training, volunteering opportunities, Leadership and Peer mentoring. Referrals are made through schools.

With support from the Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot, Lads Needs Dads is now being extended into Harwich.

Innovative approaches allow for the use of assets in new ways.

Marathon Kids[16] and Street Tag –

TDC Officers worked with the charity Kids Run Free to bring Marathon Kids to primary schools within Tendring. Kids Run Free had secured funding to launch and support 12 primary schools in the district over two years, with a view to getting children more active, improving their health & wellbeing, to challenge and inspire.

Marathon Kids challenges children to run or walk up to four marathons over an academic year by running laps of a course on either the school field or playground. The programme focuses on personal achievement rather than competition and is fully inclusive regardless of fitness or ability. Using the Marathon Kids 5 Pillars schools can set goals, track performance and reward effort.

To date 9 schools have signed up and 3 more are in discussion. By May 2021, evaluation showed an 89.5% participation rate amongst students and that average distance run in total per child was 24.3km. One child had completed a total of 4 marathons. Positive feedback has been received from schools who are taking part.

In Colchester, Street Tag has been motivating schools as communities to take part in greater levels of physical activity. Street Tag gamifies physical activity by applying a point scoring structure to the local landscape. Whether, running, cycling or walking, players score points through an app.

Launched in March 2021, 19 schools had engaged by June and 1034 individuals within the schools had travelled 71 million steps for a total of 80, 041 miles. Competing via a leader board, which also extended to the community where 161 organisations were taking part.

[15] www.Ladsneeddads.org
[16] https://www.marathonkids.co.uk/

Conclusions

- Our understanding of assets and how they can be combined to reach positive outcomes (i.e. schools, green spaces and technology) needs to be broadened; there should be more local communication about what exists
- The wider infrastructure of the community plays a pivotal role in enabling community activity - for example, village halls are hubs of activity, local social media sites are strong communicators
- Specialist organisations bring innovation and accessibility in its widest sense to children, young people and families.
- Activities can seem expensive if families have to invest in a 'course' or group of sessions – this can deter involvement

Actions

a) The Children and Young Peoples' Partnership Board to work with the local voluntary sector, community-based and statutory-run organisations to encourage opportunities to be developed for children, young people and families to 'test and trial' activities, giving risk-free opportunities to find out whether activities are right for them and their lifestyles.
b) ECC, TDC and CBC to explore how they can speed up the process of responding to proposed developments which are supported by and support Children and Young people - so that they see the change materialise while they are still able to benefit from it.

Recommendation 4

Tailor support to families

The evidence told us…

That personalised assistance is most effective.

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service has managed to maintain face to face contact with families throughout the pandemic, working closely with other community and voluntary sector organisations in both Tendring and Colchester. In this way, they have been able to deliver positive outcomes for families at times when they have been particularly vulnerable. They have provided food parcels and delivery, undertaken intensive health visiting, started walking groups for young parents and distributed food vouchers.

The service reports an increase in mental health problems among adults and children and rising anxiety about spread of the virus, home schooling, returning to school and going outside again.

Stigma about accessing services can be an issue for families, causing embarrassment when seeking support. People rely heavily on community connectors and leaders for information and advice. Anecdotal evidence suggests that self-referrals are much more ready and willing to engage than referrals from other services – it can take weeks to establish a positive relationship.

In the 6 months to Autumn 2020 **EXTRA** supported 91 parents – 63.5% from Clacton (Pier, Bluehouse, Gt Clacton and St James wards), 11% from Frinton/Walton ward, 8% from Jaywick (Jaywick Sands and Golf Green wards) and the remainder from Harwich, Brightlingsea, Manningtree, Colchester, Wivenhoe and Tiptree.

EXTRA report that barriers to attendance at parenting and support courses were sickness and self-isolating (COVID-19), having children at home, timing of sessions and anxiety. Enablers to attendance were staff helping parents/carers to gain access to zoom on a session by session basis, providing childcare (even for those on zoom calls where necessary) , transport for face-to-face courses where necessary, working with partner agencies to encourage and assure parents/carers and, importantly, keeping in regular contact with parents/carers and listening to their concerns.

EXTRA offer a range of courses and support types including Heroes, a weekly support group for all parents/carers; Jaywick young parents group, groups for parents of children with additional needs, Courses including How to have a happier, calmer child, Managing Anxiety, Positive behaviour management, positive parenting, Building Confidence and a workshop on resilience. All these have helped parents/carers to cope with pressures of daily life and managing the additional challenges during the pandemic.

Many organisations work to empower families to resolve their challenges together through understanding, listening and hearing. This can take time and needs bespoke support but it can prevent crises emerging.

YES' mediation service provides families with someone impartial to listen and maybe determine if there are any solutions to help the family.

This was a school referral due to concerns about this young person's emotional wellbeing and home circumstances. He struggles with his emotions, and this has affected the dynamics of the home and education, resulting in him being thrown out of the family home. The first mediation meeting was attended with his mother, who has mental health needs and has recently been diagnosed with adult ADHD. He spoke very openly in the mediation meeting and said that he thought his opinions did not matter, that he struggles in the family home due to other sibling's behaviors and how he has followed them in displaying negative behaviors. His mother felt unable to cope with his outbursts and lack of attendance at school and sought some help through YES mediation service.

It was obvious that he was struggling with home life and his relationship with his parents, was very low in mood and displayed anxious behaviors. His mum often spoke for him, which he found uncomfortable at times, but this allowed the Mediator to control the meeting and hear from both sides and enable CH to have a voice, which empowered him.

He has come to YES weekly for follow up discussions on his situation at home and to explore strategies in ways of coping with anger and low self-esteem. He enjoys his time 1-1 and says that he feels listened to and this helps him. He has started to work on improving on his health by running and taking daily exercise when he feels anxious or angry. He calls his grandmother twice weekly to make sure she is fine. He is spending less time on the computer and interacting more with his family. School attendance has also improved.

He now attends the go green project at YES and says he feels more relaxed and less anxious and has a willingness to socialize with other people, he feels that staying in his room for long periods of time is now unhealthy and can see a big change in the family home with a more positive relationship with his mother and siblings. They now communicate more openly and honestly and listen and hear each other.

The mediation service has worked with numerous families that have struggled with difficult situations regarding housing issues threat of becoming homeless or even losing their home due to relationship breakdowns and lack of finances. YES has worked with numerous families experiencing homelessness due to Covid pandemic, high anxieties, and depression due to lack of work and money. There are many aspects of family crisis seen and managed through YES Mediation, including from young people worried about their parents and maybe separation due to family breakdown – it all impacts on young people. Education is also a key factor where they are refusing to attend any form of learning and education because they have lost all confidence in themselves through negative family issues. The Mediator is highly skilled in approaching families in a calm way and putting them at ease so they can be open about what is really happening in their lives and how they can learn to communicate with each other, listening and taking on board other feelings, working together as a family unit. This service has been very effective and has achieved positive feedback.

Conclusions

- A blended approach to delivering services which allows for personalisation of approach is most successful. More of this is needed.
- Evidence points to community advocates, trusted connectors (including schools) and word of mouth being the most trusted sources of information. This could facilitate conversations and spread of information if recognised and enhanced.

Actions

- Service Providers and Commissioners should work to develop opportunities for families to learn and work together, including support with activities and experience. There are good models in the community which can support this.

- Start Well and the Neighbourhoods should recognise the value of communication through community advocates and trusted connectors and work with C360, CVST and HWE to identify them.

Recommendation 5

Invest in voluntary and community infrastructure

The evidence told us…

It was difficult to find information about overall funding and/or investment in children, young people and family services. It is therefore impossible to report on impact relative to investment. While it is understood that some of this information will be commercial in confidence, or will be 'start up' or 'seed' funding, it should be possible to maintain a broad overview across the CCG area.

The infrastructure of communities underpins accessibility to opportunity. This was showcased in the 2020 asset mapping refresh and has been reinforced in this deep dive. Volunteer numbers are still fluctuating, and the financial impact of the pandemic is yet to be fully felt.

A 'State of the Sector' snap survey was carried out to determine the current environment for community and voluntary organisations and their sustainability. As detailed above, groups are facing ever more complex referrals and are prioritising a need for funding advice/support, skills and volunteers.

A snap survey of Community Halls and Venues was carried out in the Tendring area to try to establish the sustainability of venues to accommodate community assets. There is a risk that venues may have to close due to loss of volunteers, financial sustainability and ability to keep users safe from the spread of Covid-19.

A brief overview of the results shows that over 30% are in need of additional trustees and volunteers; 69% have training needs – mainly around funding, mental health, social media and general first aid and risk assessment in the Covid-19 environment; 77% wanted information about potential funders and funding opportunities and 50% need some form of capital investment.

85% of community halls and venues use social media to promote activities and services, so some common standards may be helpful to support good public access to information. Just under 50% would seek help with funding applications, or at least someone to proof-rad and critique before submission.

Conclusions

- There is a lot of investment already in community assets but this is not brought together to maintain an overview of investment levels and activity so it can be difficult to determine or monitor, locally or across the CCG area. Benchmark levels of investment through One Colchester and Tendring Together to monitor impact.
- Many community assets exist which do not receive any funding or are self-sustaining – e.g. play groups, parent and toddler groups
- Opportunities for collaboration and funding are not maximised to secure maximum social value, remove duplication and minimise gaps.

Actions

a) Tendring Together and One Colchester to take into account asset mapping when considering hyper local funding opportunities and development of local strategies and to benchmark levels of investment and impact across their area.
b) Start Well and Neighbourhoods to hold an overview of investment and impact in Children, Young People and Family Services to inform commissioning and decision-making.
c) Continue to support sustainability of community spaces and venues as local hubs for support to children and families

Recommendation 6

Develop a shared data set which is current and relevant to neighbourhoods and funders.

The evidence told us

Relevant data which is up to date and identifiable by neighbourhood and shows to what extent outcomes are being met is still presenting a challenge. This is recognised by all parties involved in this study. Unless they have a specific framework for data, it is difficult for voluntary organisations to process data in a consistent way, as the requirements change from funder to funder and for each project. Gathering a processing data is labour intensive any many organisations do not have the resource or capacity to provide what is needed.

The Children and Young Person's Partnership Board for North-East Essex and the Start Well Domain workstream understand the difficulties from lack of available data. They are actively working on developing a data dashboard to work as a tool to help them to:

- Constantly identify opportunities for value improvement; and
- Continuously monitor the impact of interventions
- Support the identification of gaps in service provision

At time of writing, they are trying to secure a partner to support them with the development of a data dashboard which combines the data available to track progress on a range of measures including those which demonstrate that:

- **Start Well** - Children are ready for school.
- **Feel Well** - Children, young people and families, have positive emotional & social wellbeing, mental health, self-esteem, confidence and resilience.
- **Be Well** - Children, young people and families understand why and how to keep themselves safe, and healthy.
- **Develop Well** - Children, young people are ready for life.
- **Stay Well** - Children, young people can care for themselves, or can access support allowing them to lead fulfilling lives.
- **Die Well** - Children, young people and their families have choice around their care and support when nearing the end of life or dealing with bereavement.

In the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report, 2021, which focuses on coastal communities, data challenges and limitations at a granular level are identified as an issue which needs attention, so this is not just an issue for North-East Essex. It states *"A key challenge for this report has been the minimal research and limited data available at small area geographies. Several key public health indicators were not available or accessible for analysis at lower level geographies. The Directors of Public Health and chapter authors clearly highlight that the granularity of analysis makes a major difference, and that health outcomes in coastal communities can be significantly masked when analysis is at a wider geographical footprint, such as local authority or CCGs,"*

The data gathered for this report is very much on the basis of what is available at the time of writing. It is by no means exhaustive and is based on what is available at the time of writing. The primary data gathered through Healthwatch Essex adds a richness and reality check to the statistical data and presents information very much through the eyes of children, young people and families. This ensures the citizen's voice is heard and recorded. Both the hard and soft data informing this work serve as a valuable benchmark from which progress can be measured in future strategic reviews.

Conclusions

- The challenge is to secure data on a neighbourhood, postcode or ward level to enable genuine targeting of resources and monitoring of outcomes from prevention and early intervention.

- A meaningful dashboard, the development of which has input from all key partners from across the Start Well domain, including the community and voluntary sector, is needed to facilitate informed decision-making

- Monitoring information sought from community and voluntary sector assets which are receiving funding (often regardless of level of funding) can be excessive and not indicate impact. Monitoring data should be consistent, easy to gather, relevant and understandable to all partners.

Actions

a) Neighbourhoods should work to develop and support local shared data sets which can be used by all partners.
b) Start Well should maintain an overview of the combined data to inform service development and investment decision-making
c) Where possible, commissioners and funders should request a standard set of monitoring information from voluntary and community organisation which would contribute to the children and young people's dashboard, once it becomes available.

Appendix A

Secondary Data Review

Essex County Lines film

The LGBTQ+ youth homelessness report 2021, akt

Children & young people who die by suicide, British Journal of Psychology, 2020

Preventing suicide in England: Fifth progress report of the cross-government outcomes strategy to save lives; HM Government, 2021

Into University; Lockdown Impact Report.

Making Health Services More Accessible to Young People; DH and AYPH

Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020 NHS Digital

Involving children and young people in health services; RCPCH, OPM and NHS Confederation, 2010

Schools Health & Wellbeing Surveys, Colchester & Tendring, 2019, Essex Open Data

Childcare Survey February 2021, Essex Open Data

Health Inequalities and Covid-19, 2020, Essex Open Data

Research with working families, 2021, Essex Open Data

Children with Disabilities, Short breaks and Activities for Children with disabilities, 2021, Essex open Data

Community Development & Safeguarding Team Evaluation Report 2018/19 – 2019/20, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service

The Active Essex Foundation and Holiday Hunger: Evaluation Report October 2019

Improving Access to Greenspace a new 2020 review – Public Health England

To Bridge the Gap? 2016 report

ONS Coronavirus and social impacts on Great Britain: Home-schooling, 19 February 2021

ONS Young people's well-being: 2020 October 2020

https://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/CASE/_NEW/PUBLICATIONS/abstract/?index=7264

http://www.cpc.ac.uk/docs/2020_PB54_How_has_the_Covid-19_crisis_impacted_parents.pdf

Webinar: A Healthy Recovery: action on findings from the COVID-19 impact enquiry

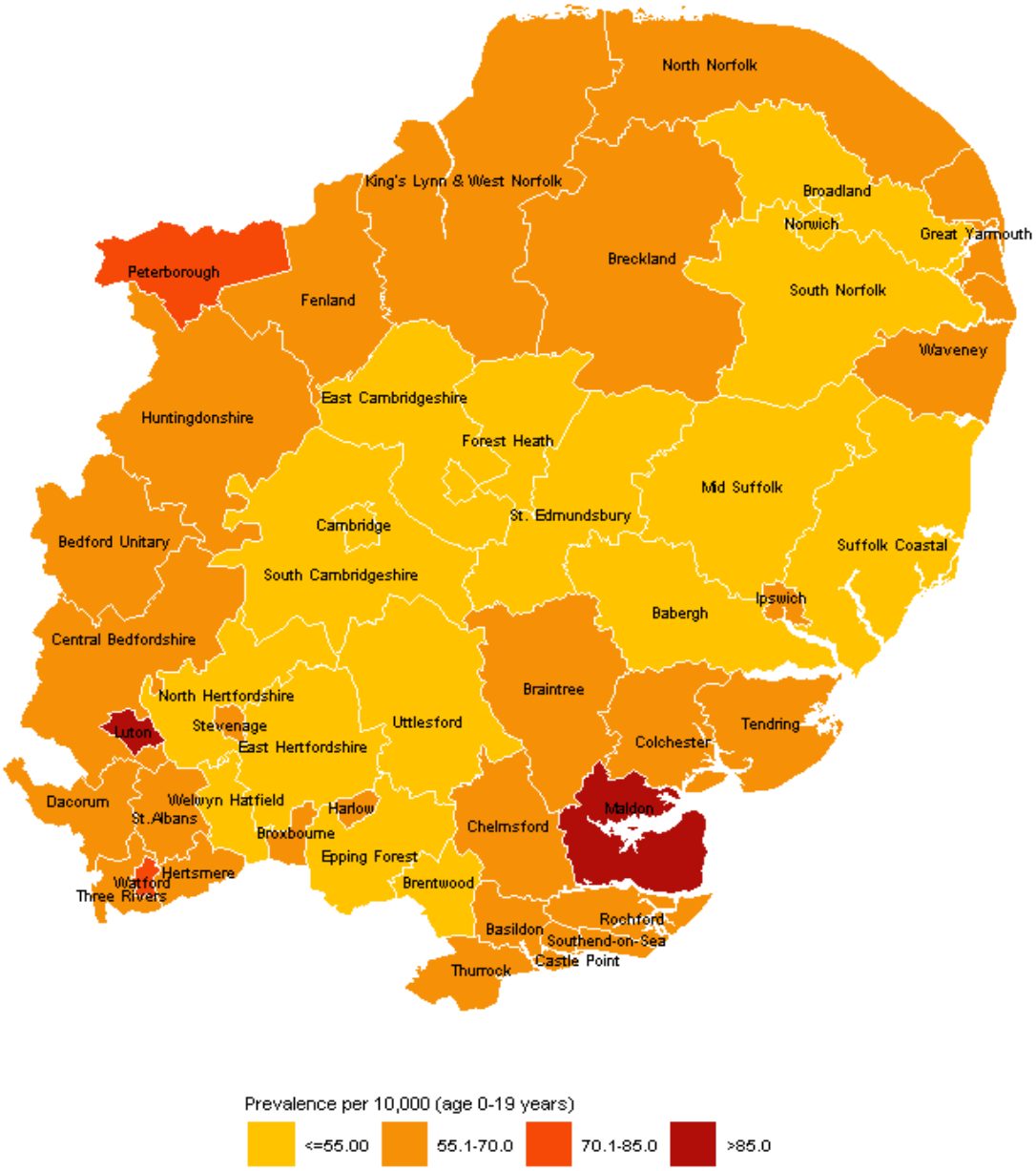
Charity Commission Records of VCSE activity in the region

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Report June 2021

Prevalence per 10,000 of children (aged 0-19) with life-limiting conditions by Local Authority in East of England Government Office Region for 2017

Local Authority	Number of cases	Total population	Prevalence per 10,000	95% Confidence intervals	
Babergh	93	19878	46.8	*37.3*	*56.3*
Basildon	288	43211	66.6	*59.0*	*74.3*
Bedford Unitary	273	40757	67.0	*59.1*	*74.9*
Braintree	236	36772	64.2	*56.0*	*72.3*
Breckland	168	29771	56.4	*47.9*	*64.9*
Brentwood	92	17251	53.3	*42.5*	*64.2*
Broadland	120	25563	46.9	*38.6*	*55.3*
Broxbourne	141	24217	58.2	*48.6*	*67.8*
Cambridge	130	28472	45.7	*37.8*	*53.5*
Castle Point	114	18186	62.7	*51.2*	*74.2*
Central Bedfordshire	394	62804	62.7	*56.6*	*68.9*
Chelmsford	272	40392	67.3	*59.4*	*75.3*
City of Peterborough	417	52597	79.3	*71.7*	*86.9*
Colchester	**293**	**42289**	**69.3**	***61.4***	***77.2***
Dacorum	252	36687	68.7	*60.2*	*77.1*
East Cambridgeshire	96	21849	43.9	*35.2*	*52.7*
East Hertfordshire	179	34668	51.6	*44.1*	*59.2*
Epping Forest	154	29145	52.8	*44.5*	*61.2*
Fenland	128	21814	58.7	*48.5*	*68.8*
Forest Heath	70	15025	46.6	*35.7*	*57.5*
Great Yarmouth	143	22131	64.6	*54.1*	*75.2*
Harlow	137	21336	64.2	*53.5*	*74.9*
Hertsmere	154	26236	58.7	*49.5*	*67.9*
Huntingdonshire	260	40101	64.8	*57.0*	*72.7*
Ipswich	214	34096	62.8	*54.4*	*71.1*
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	190	31960	59.4	*51.0*	*67.9*
Luton	636	66110	96.2	*88.8*	*103.6*
Maldon	109	12684	85.9	*69.9*	*102.0*
Mid Suffolk	119	22410	53.1	*43.6*	*62.6*
North Hertfordshire	159	31423	50.6	*42.8*	*58.4*
North Norfolk	102	18489	55.2	*44.5*	*65.8*
Norwich	163	30590	53.3	*45.1*	*61.4*
Rochford	102	18444	55.3	*44.6*	*66.0*
South Cambridgeshire	191	38119	50.1	*43.0*	*57.2*
South Norfolk	155	29435	52.7	*44.4*	*60.9*
Southend-on-Sea	257	41828	61.4	*54.0*	*68.9*
St. Albans	241	38393	62.8	*54.9*	*70.7*
St. Edmundsbury	129	26756	48.2	*39.9*	*56.5*
Stevenage	150	21831	68.7	*57.8*	*79.7*

Local Authority	Number of cases	Total population	Prevalence per 10,000	95% Confidence intervals	
Suffolk Coastal	142	28032	50.7	*42.3*	*59.0*
Tendring	**193**	**28223**	**68.4**	***58.8***	***78.0***
Three Rivers	135	22334	60.4	*50.3*	*70.6*
Thurrock	268	44568	60.1	*53.0*	*67.3*
Uttlesford	89	20394	43.6	*34.6*	*52.7*
Watford	187	25566	73.1	*62.7*	*83.6*
Waveney	142	24934	57.0	*47.6*	*66.3*
Welwyn Hatfield	155	28526	54.3	*45.8*	*62.9*



Prevalence per 10,000 of children (aged 0-19) with life-limiting conditions by Local Authority in East of England Government Office Region for 2017