

North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance Community Asset Mapping



Ageing Well in North East Essex June 2023

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Introduction

The Age Well Deep Dive is the fifth in a series of reports published as companions to the Community Asset Mapping refresh of North-East Essex, originally published in Spring 2021. Using the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance domains as a framework for each report, there will ultimately be a library of six reports:

- Start Well - published Summer 2021
- Feel Well - published Autumn 2021
- Be Well
- Age Well - this report
- Stay Well - published Spring 2023
- Die Well - published Winter 2022

The report has been produced by Healthwatch Essex, Community Voluntary Services Tendring (CVST) and Community360 (C360), working in partnership, and collaborating with a Steering Group, which has included the Age Well Domain Leads, representatives from District and County Councils, Essex Fire and Rescue, the Local Delivery Pilot, Integrated Care Board, ESNEFT and Age Well East.

Scope and Methodology

A clear outline for the report was shaped through consultation with the Steering Group and Age Well domain and involved topic specific specialists and relevant organisations.

It was agreed that the work would take into account key drivers and influences on people in later life and their carers, using learning from the last 12-18 months and gathering 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 older people and their carers, with a focus on physical health and wellbeing - to include ageing people with learning disability
- local cultural factors and limitations

It was agreed to focus the citizen's voice work in Colchester South in Tiptree Ward and in Tudor Estate in Jaywick and St Bartholomew's Ward in Tendring, as these are areas of specific interest due to demographics, mortality and levels of deprivation.

There was a focus on the following issues:

- community assets supporting older people to be healthier and more active
- ensuring that carers know where and how to access information, advice and support relevant to them and the person they care for
- supporting carers to be fully involved in decisions about the health and social care needs of the person they care for
- services rooted in the community which support older people's mental health.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed towards this report formally or informally, and hope that the content offers further insight into the experiences of local

people and organisations working in the voluntary and community sector. Data gathering and consultation was conducted between January and May 2023.

The review of relevant literature included local and national sources of data, and these are referenced within the text. Appendix A gives an overview of engagement activity carried out to support this work.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Essex, C360 and CVST would like to thank the organisations and residents who participated in all sections of the report, and notably as citizens' voices. Their experiences and data help to improve the understanding of this area of work.

Overview:

Ageing Well in North East Essex is supported by a breadth of voluntary and community organisations committed to enabling people to maintain their quality of life for longer, engage in purposeful activity and connect into local networks. The examples, drawn together below, offer an opportunity to reflect on what is working well, and also what could be improved upon to reach those facing challenges to accessing available programmes. It highlights the varied nature of provision and the importance of this work to people in specific communities.

The report provides case studies and spotlights examples of good practice. It has a particular focus on people in later life and their carers, including informal carers as well. Collectively, with the invaluable 'Citizen's Voice' gained from one-to-one discussions, focus groups and interviews with people living in Tiptree in Colchester; Holland-on-Sea and Jaywick in Tendring, there are a number of enablers and barriers identified that affect accessibility to opportunities. They provide an important context for the detail that follows:

Enablers to accessing services - what works for residents of North East Essex

- Feeling connected, having access to opportunities for social resources, digital help and support, self-worth and motivation, and broader social engagement options. Ways to engage with new opportunities, physical and social activities, more taster sessions and one-off participation (e.g. litter picks; events)
- Knowing more about community centres and hubs, libraries, social groups, and faith groups
- Understanding the advocacy support through knowing where resources are and how it all comes together, particularly for unpaid carers. Age Well East highlighted the need and opportunity to strengthen the role of the user voice within physical and mental wellbeing services through empowering people to have their say on the shape and design of wellbeing interventions in a more active way
- Getting involved in volunteering opportunities. Statistics show that people are more likely to volunteer when older
- Understanding, inclusion and enjoyment via the celebration of international cultural days and events which offer meaningful interactions with older people
- Promoting the role of Community Connectors, Social Prescribers, local Facebook groups and social media, Transport schemes and day excursions
- Fostering respect and harmony between people and communities by creating positive contact between members of different social groups, including those from younger and older age groups
- Extending Care homes' activities to the wider community and encouraging social harmony, reducing prejudice and preconceptions of age.
- Offering community-based integration programmes, forming more diverse relationships, extending education about various health needs, understanding adaptive lifestyles and increasing sensory awareness

- Increasing awareness of activities which promote wellbeing - e.g. cooking programmes in community; places of faith and allotments
- Maintaining engagement of some people at an early (rather than acute) point of intervention through promoting access and timeliness. For example, Age Well East explained that the NHS Talking Therapies are seeking to have first contact calls prior to engagement to assure clients that they will receive a service, and this is valued by people
- Joint working between community-based services and providers of mental and physical wellbeing services are also enablers to assist people to access the wellbeing services where they may feel stigmatised or worried about the delivery of the latter services
- Using wider available resources such as Alexa, rather than introducing new apps and different devices. The Carers network group reported that Alexa is one of the most useful devices because it successfully facilitated several daily tasks, such as medication and appointment reminders, turning lights on and off using smart home technology via Alexa and adding items to shopping lists
- Promoting resources, for instance North East Essex Alliance recently published 'A practical guide to help you age well in Colchester & Tendring' the guide provides information on the support available in Colchester and Tendring to help the ageing well natural process and remain healthy and independent for longer¹.

What could be developed to overcome barriers to accessing services

- Fostering a positive way of responding to complexity of circumstances, e.g. multiple health conditions, restricted income, dislocation from interpersonal networks
- Reducing the stigma of psychological and sociological effects of the ageing process. The perception of inflexibility, resistance to change and the decline in physical, mental and social functioning can be huge barriers. There are stereotypes about ageing with a disability and becoming helpless and dependent (economically, physically, socially or emotionally)
- Tackling poor digital skills, for some there is a lack of opportunity to access digital support (e.g. lack of smart phone, tablet or PC) as well as possible resistance to 'new' technology
- Challenging negative reflections and personal perception. Some older people perceive themselves as a burden to society, with little recognition of their past contributions
- Addressing the lack of acknowledgement of current contributions, for instance in relation to unpaid care

¹ <https://sneeics.org.uk/resources/flipbooks/aging-well-in-colchester-tendring/>

- Developing local initiatives to minimise the impact of the lack of local opportunities, community groups and/or transport to amenities in some areas. There are differences between urban areas and rural areas in terms of forming friendships, attending social activities, availability of activities/support
- Understanding the complexity of risk factors such as unemployment, geographical location, poverty and patterns of social relationships which could create more significant hardship
- Addressing geographical mobility. Unpaid carers are often remote and feel detached/uninformed about their loved ones: this includes generational issues (e.g. older carers left isolated from children/children isolated from parents) and the flow of people retiring to places like Tendring area
- Enhancing engagement with carers of people with LD, PD and MH who are concerned about their loved one's wellbeing in case of their own illness or death
- Exploring the fear of crime or threats to personal safety - e.g. street crime, scams - with a view to managing down that fear
- Increasing the provision of sufficient nutritious food as a direct result of the cost-of-living crisis
- Expanding the focus of Care planning, not only on commissioned services and adaptations but to include social/emotional needs and resources.
- Accessing some services creates a barrier, for example wait times for Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression (formerly IAPT), NHS acute services (including pain management) for treatment and difficulties in accessing some GP services. All create a delay which can affect an increase in need whilst people are waiting.

Ageing Well Literature Review

In the 2021 census, over 11 million people - 18.6% of the total population - were aged 65 years or older, compared with 16.4% at the time of the previous census in 2011. This included over half a million (527,900) people who were at least 90 years of age.² In 10 years' time, this will have increased to almost 13 million people or 22% of the population. Frailty is more common as people become older, with 10% of people over 65 years living with frailty.

Angele Storey, head of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Ageing Analysis team, said *"While living longer is something to be celebrated and our ageing population presents opportunities, it also has implications for the economy, services and society. Knowing the size and structure of the population is fundamental for decision makers and policy makers in the UK."*

The Centre for Ageing Better was launched in 2015. Dr Aideen Young, Senior Evidence Manager at the Centre, says: *"Older people are a highly diverse group in terms of health and wealth, and within that group there are people very much in need - who are living in poverty, in poor housing and in poor health. Their precarious situation has been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. They are the people that we really need to pay attention to."*

"We have the oldest housing stock in Europe so there are many people living in non-decent and inappropriate homes. These homes are simply not suitable for people who are older or who have disabilities."

Age UK's Dr Webb said: *"Our responsibility at Age UK is to be there for the older people who need us. We know there are an awful lot of older people who don't need us. There are plenty of people aged over 65 who are in great health, have excellent incomes and good housing. Everything is working well for them. These people often are our volunteers or donors but at some point, later in their life, they may become our service users."*

State of Ageing 2022³

The report states that while the state pension age has risen to 66, employment rates among people approaching retirement age have fallen to their lowest levels since 2016 and the number of older people renting rather than owning their homes is at its highest. Taken together, these have major implications for people's financial security and for the quality of their homes as they age. The number of people in mid and later life who live alone - many without the traditional family structures our approach to ageing has historically relied on - has been increasing steadily, with 1.3 million men aged 65 and over living alone today, up 67% between 2000 and 2019. This has **implications for housing and for health and social care**. These trends confirm that England is becoming a more challenging country to grow old in. Action is needed to address this now. (additional info is attached in Appendix B).

²

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/article/s/voicesofourageingpopulation/livinglongerlives>. Article prepared in partnership with Age UK, The Centre for Ageing Better and the International Longevity Centre UK.

³ The State of Ageing 2022: Centre for Ageing Better: March 2022

There is a significant body of literature which demonstrates that older people's health and wellbeing is improved through feeling connected to their communities, having access to appropriate activities and exercise and being supported to manage their own long-term conditions or to care for a loved one to live at home. This section just provides a few examples which are relevant to this Asset Mapping exercise.

Tackling inequalities

A project undertaken by MacMillan Cancer Support in 2012 opened with the statement: *“The Government has set out ambitious plans to improve cancer survival rates in England, and it has recognised that it will not deliver on those plans unless it tackles inequalities in terms of access to and outcomes from treatment.”*⁴

In 2017, more than half of people over 65 (3.8m) lived alone. Older people were and still are more likely to live alone than other age groups, therefore ease of access to a hospital for regular treatment, having access to an appropriate level of care in the home and the presence of other or multiple health conditions facilitate better health. Where older people do not live alone, the burden of care is usually placed on a relative who may also have other medical conditions and may need additional, shorter-term, more intensive support to be able to uphold the caring role.

The Chief Medical Officer's report 2021⁵ health in coastal communities stated that both current and future demographic and migration patterns have public health implications for the burden of disease and service provision in coastal areas. Given the older population in coastal areas, considering their needs is essential. PHE highlighted this in their commissioned evidence review of health inequalities in older populations in coastal and rural areas. The review found a paucity of research on coastal communities. As a result, they are due to publish a further report, in partnership with Age UK, to assist those working in coastal communities to understand the issues affecting older people in previously under-recognised groups, including older men, older people from ethnic minority and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Local context for report

Within North-East Essex:

- 23% of the local population is currently age 65 or older, this is projected to rise close to 26% by 2033
- The number of people aged 85 and over has increased by 4% in the last 4 years
- Over 30 % of people over 65 years of age live alone
- There are 169 care homes across North East Essex, providing 3686 bed places
- The average life expectancy in North East Essex is 79.26 years for men and 82.76 years for women
- The number of people over 85 is set to increase by 49% across Suffolk and North East Essex in the next ten years, compared with a projection of 33% for England

The support of the community and the assets therein is essential to enable people to live independently for as long as possible and to prevent increased frailty and need. For most

⁴ Cancer Services Coming of Age: Learning from the Improving Cancer Treatment Assessment and Support for Older People Project; Macmillan Cancer Support December 2012;

⁵ Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2021 Health in Coastal Communities

people who have needs there is a carer, often with their own long-term conditions, who enables them to remain at home and independent.

This graphic gives an overview of older people statistics underpinning the priorities for the Age Well Domain:

Indicator	Tendring	Colchester	England
Life expectancy at birth (males - 3 year range)	78.2 years	80.3 years	79.4 years
Life expectancy at birth (females - 3 year range)	82.0 years	83.6 years	83.1 years
Inequality in life expectancy (males)	9.3 years	7.8 years	9.7 years
Inequality in life expectancy (females)	7.7 years	5.7 years	7.9 years
Population living in most deprived quintiles (1-2)	30.8%	10.1%	Not applicable
Physical activity in adults	61.0%	64.1%	65.9%
Smoking prevalence in adults (18+ years) current smokers	18.8%	15.4%	15.9%
Alcohol related conditions admissions	520/100,000	479/100,000	456/100,000
% of cancers diagnosed at stage 1 and 2	55.4%	57.8%	55.0%
Cancer screening coverage - breast cancer	71.5%	50.0%	64.1%
Cancer screening coverage - bowel	65.5%	67.8%	65.2%
Travel time to hospital (average)	64.3 minutes	36.3 minutes	Not applicable
Travel time to GP services (average)	10.2 minutes	11 minutes	Not applicable
Travel time to 8 key services (average) walking or public transport	21.5 minutes	18.7 minutes	
Loneliness (adults)	17.07%	22.99%	22.26%
Fuel poverty (low income/high cost methodology)	16.5%	13.4%	13.2%

2021 Census headlines for this domain give us the following data:-

Household Size and Age

Value	Colchester	Tendring
Total Population	187617	146637
65 and Over	33401	42705
One person household (65 and over)	10195	13335
* % of over 65 living alone	30.52%	31.23%

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/create/filter-outputs/d46116be-1564-49cd-9c25-6a5fbc1dbc7e#get-data>

*This is a key statistic, highlighting that a third of the population over 65 lives alone in NEE. The implications of living alone at an older age are not only related to the more significant individual needs for support in the home, but also have a negative impact on their health and wellbeing. Some other implications that we have followed in the report

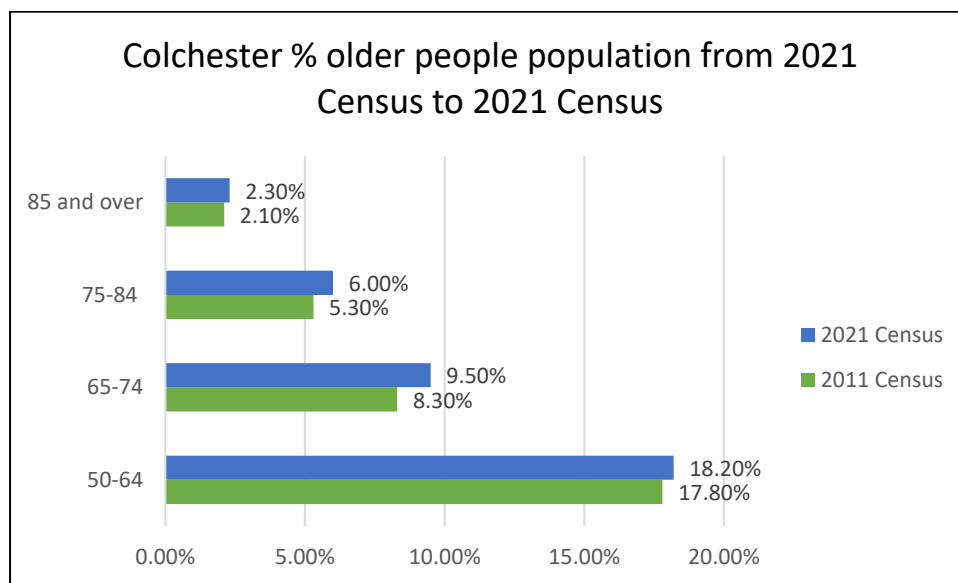
related to this critical data are addressing difficulties with mobility, self-care and independent living.

Living alone does not in itself cause loneliness, however through our engagement activities, we have gathered that older single people were more likely to report feeling lonely. This is particularly highlighted in the citizen’s voice part of the report, where social engagement in the community demonstrates that social groups are a significant asset. Living in places where social connections are more difficult to access, for example, where transportation is an issue, could be a real challenge for people accessing these services.

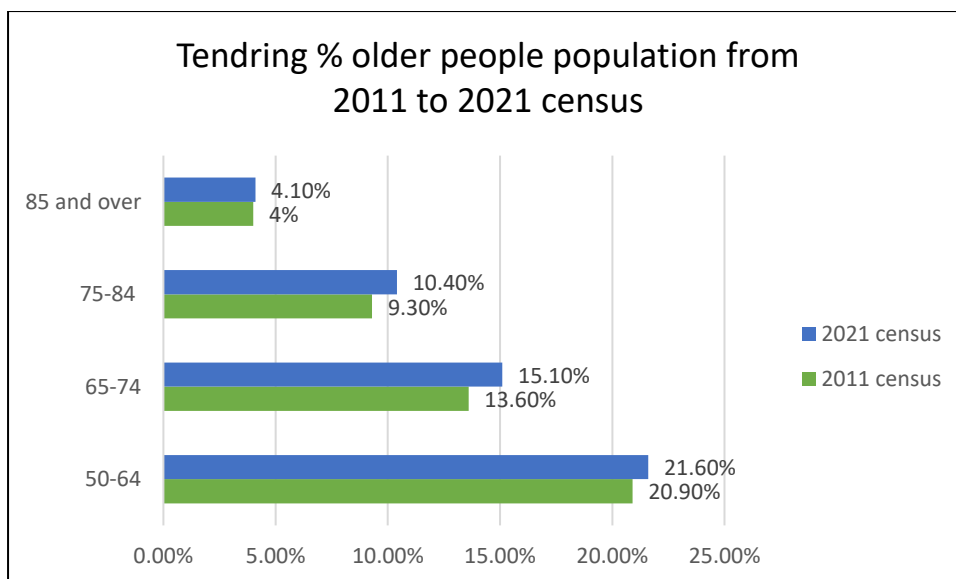
Technology can address some social issues and help with health (for instance, setting a reminder medication should be taken). While fast moving technology development means access to resources, being unable to use it independently may be a barrier.

Older people population data

Between the last two censuses (in 2011 and 2021) the population of Colchester increased by 11.3%, from just under 173,100 to 192,700. This is compared with a 6.6% increase in England and an 8.3% increase in the East of England. Percentage changes in age-related demographics for those age 50 and over is indicated in the graph below. There is an increase in the number of older people as a percentage of Colchester’s population.



Over the same period, the population of Tendring increased by 7.4%, from around 138,000 in 2011 to around 149,300 in 2021. As above, changes in the proportion of older people compared with the whole population show that there is an increase in the number of older people, particularly in the 65-84 age group. The number of people aged 65-74 years rose by just under 3,600 (an increase of 19%) while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by just over 3,000 (a 12% decrease).



Unpaid carers

On Census Day 2021 there were approximately 4.7 million unpaid carers in England; when age-standardised this equates to 8.9% England’s usual resident population, aged 5 years and over.⁶

In England 10.3% of females provided unpaid care compared with 7.6% of males. There was a higher percentage of people providing unpaid care in the most deprived areas in England (10.1%) compared with the least deprived areas, which had the lowest percentage of people providing unpaid care (8.1%)

Unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting people who are frail, ill, disabled, or who have mental health or substance misuse problems.⁷ However, carers have needs too, and the evidence suggests that their work is undervalued. Many are particularly vulnerable to emotional stress and burnout. About 32,000 are estimated to deliver for more than 50 hours per week. 43% of people caring for an older person are themselves aged over 65.

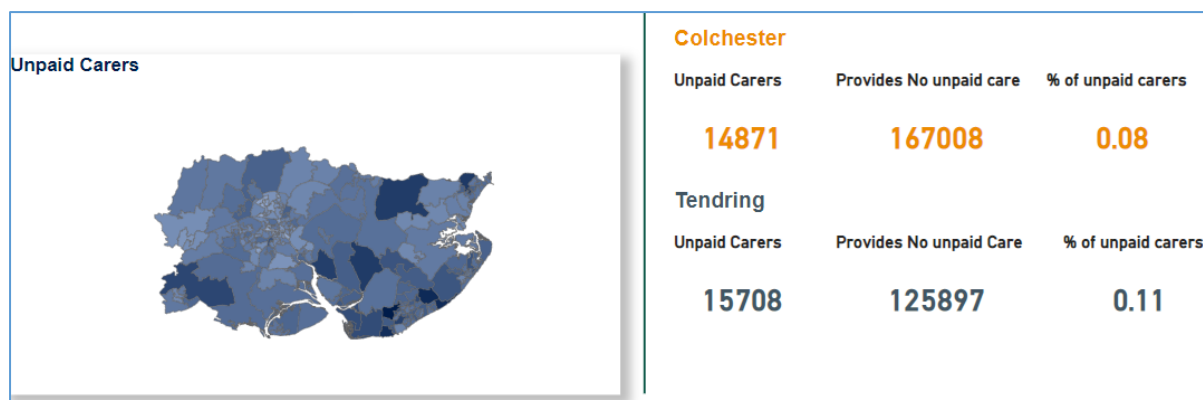
⁶

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/socialcare/articles/unpaidcarebyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=On%20Census%20Day%202021%20\(21,over%2C%20in%20each%20country%20respectively.](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/socialcare/articles/unpaidcarebyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=On%20Census%20Day%202021%20(21,over%2C%20in%20each%20country%20respectively.)

⁷<https://assets.ctfassets.net/knkzaf64jx5x/6k71TuiQFI8oo4oDCO8uQQ/6b3f4e0deebec1055db863c460be77a0/Essex-All-Age-Carers-Strategy-2022-2026.pdf>

Essex Unpaid Carers

The heat map below shows the number of carers and intensity of unpaid caring across North East Essex.



The number of usual residents aged 5 years and over who provide unpaid care, and how many hours they provide in a typical week, Census 2021 data. The darker the spectrum the larger the number.

Usual Residents, Unpaid Carers

Value	Colchester	Tendring
Total Population	192713	148292
65 and Over	34313	43872
Unpaid Care: 20 + Hours (65 and Over)	2128	3462
% of people Over 65 providing 20 hours or more of unpaid care	6.20%	7.89%

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/datasets/RM113/editions/2021/versions/1>

Caring is not just something that adults do. An estimated 10,000 carers across Essex are aged between 11 and 18.

Carer Health and Wellbeing

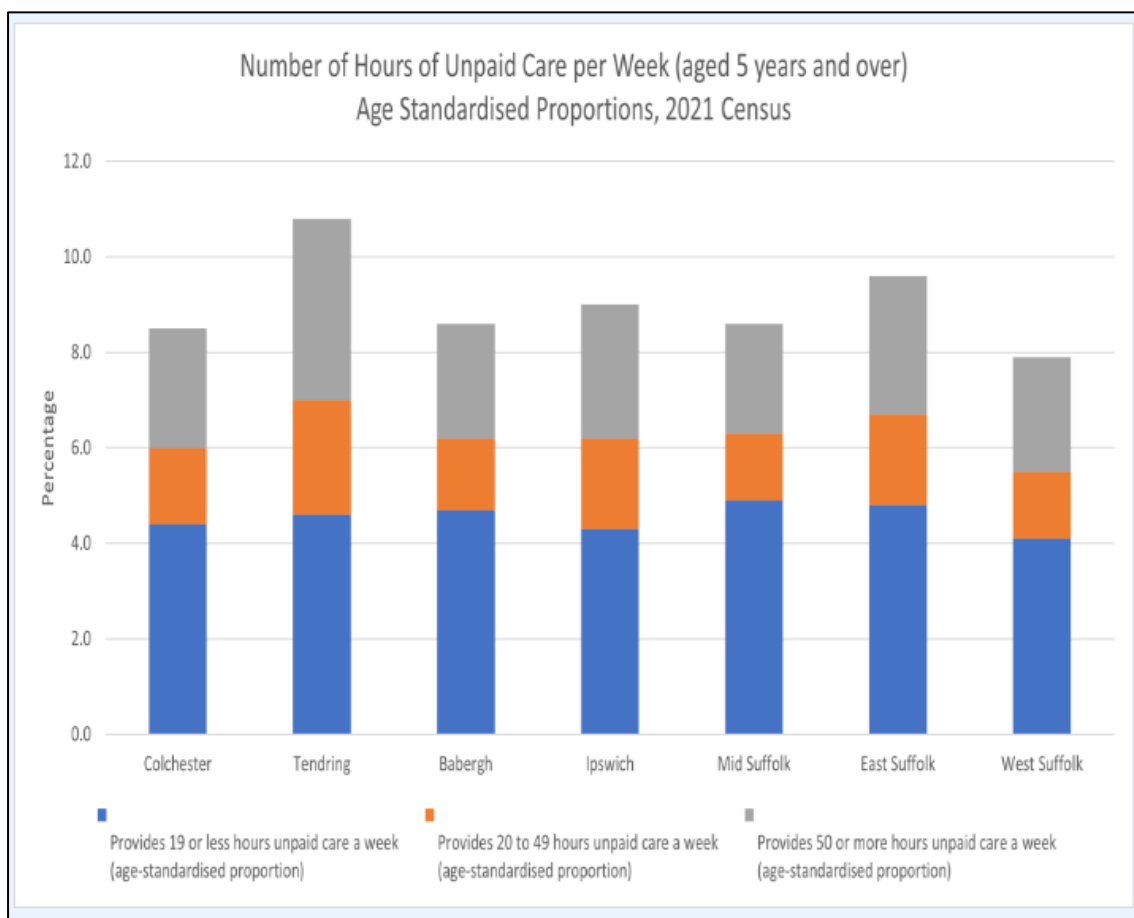
- Nearly half of older carers reported high blood pressure or hypertension, cholesterol and arthritis. Around 20% of older carers experienced self-care difficulties themselves; for example, as many as 13% reported difficulty dressing.
- 58% of carers said that their mental health had been adversely affected by being a carer
- 27% said that caring had a negative impact on their physical and mental health.
- Substantial numbers of young carers report stress, anxiety, low self-esteem and depression.

Social Challenges

One of the most difficult challenges carers have to cope with is the impact on their relationships, with two thirds (66%) saying their relationships had suffered as a result of their caring responsibilities. The same percentage said they felt a loss of identity as a direct result of their caring role. Three-quarters had not had a regular break from caring in the past 12 months and 38% had not had a single day off.⁸

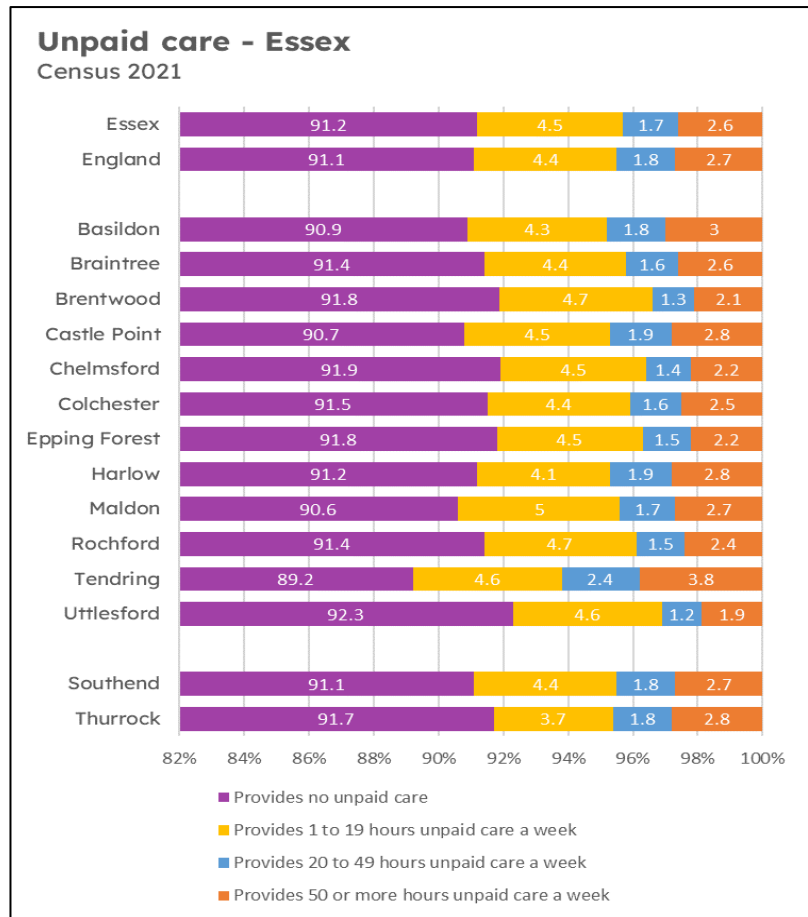
The charts below show age standardised breakdowns of unpaid care that respondents (aged 5+) carry out each week.

The first compares Colchester and Tendring with the rest of Suffolk and North East Essex and the second compares with the rest of Essex. This allows comparisons between local authority areas, without the impact of the age population of residents within that area.



⁸ <https://cmis.essex.gov.uk/>

Compared with England overall the proportion of Essex residents providing unpaid care (8.8%) is less than the England average (8.9%). Tendring has the highest proportion of residents reporting any unpaid care (10.8%), followed by Maldon (9.4%) and Castle Point (9.2%). Tendring has the highest proportion of residents reporting 50 hours plus of unpaid care (3.8%).



Essex Carers Support has provided support and training for staff in Colchester Hospital around carer identification and understanding the need to involve carers. In 2022 a legal duty to involve and include carers in discharge planning was brought in. The whole system needs to consider how to do this in a meaningful way. Carers should know about this duty and understand what they can do if the duty is not met - with advocacy, empowerment and information they can play a much more positive, relevant and proactive role. By having honest conversations, carers and health professionals can work together to meet the patient's immediate needs on discharge and ensure that the carer gets the support needed too.

Planning ahead at any stage in our lives is critical - as we get older it becomes more pressing and often more tense. Essex Carers Support challenges the system to work differently. North East Essex is a leader in community relations and has the opportunity to be culturally different - the impact for individuals at any stage in life would be huge - for older people the stress would be reduced at a time of concern for wellbeing. The challenge is to lead with a 'big, brave campaign' - supporting people to plan ahead and give their loved ones the right to make decisions through Lasting Power of Attorney, encouraging and enabling people to identify caring roles (health and financial) much earlier in life and will making to help with any issues after end of life. The outcome would be a better prepared population and less tension and conflict in already difficult situations.

In their report ‘Caring about Older Carers: Providing Support for people caring in later life’⁹ the Carers Trust identifies some of the challenges with identifying older carers from diverse communities and those with protected characteristics. In particular, this section of the report focuses on:

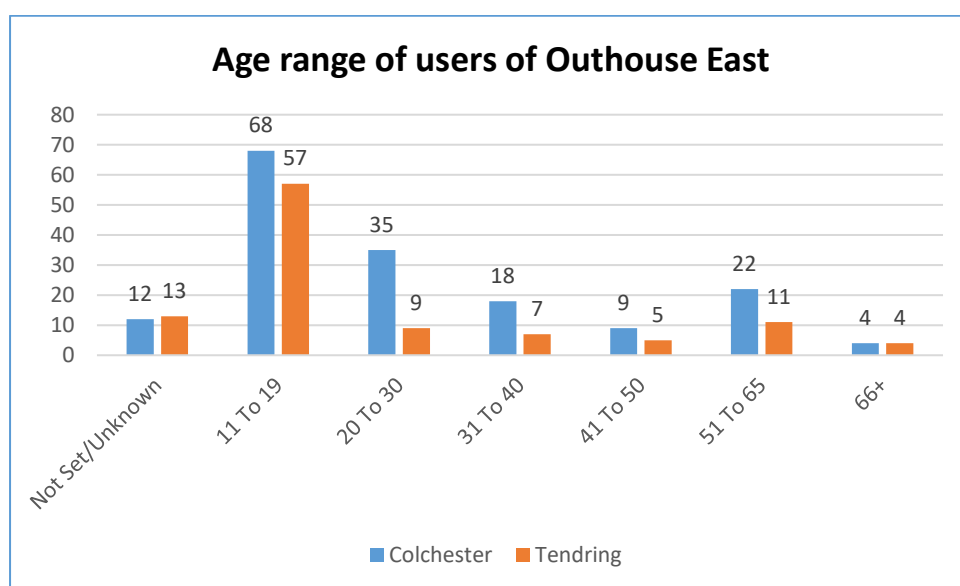
All carers, in particular:

- Older carers from the LGBTQIA+ community
- Older carers from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Carers with communication difficulties or whose first language is not English.
- Carers of people with long-term degenerative conditions, for example dementia.
- Older carers new to a caring role.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender carers

The report points to research which shows that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQIA+) carers may be less likely to be identified by social care professionals than other carers and therefore less likely to receive support and be involved in the decisions of those they support. In addition, they may have concerns that services or workers may not be LGBTQIA+ friendly, or they may feel uncomfortable about coming out to people who can help. With LGBTQIA+ people making up 5-7% of the older population this is a significant issue.

Outhouse East¹⁰ were able to provide us with an age breakdown of their service users, this is represented in the chart below:



This indicates that there are a significant number of people (at least 41 using this service, with an assumption that there are many more who do not) across North East Essex who may need specific account to be taken of their sexuality to enable them to grow older and care for their loved ones in a safe and welcoming environment where they feel confident.

⁹ Caring about older carers: Providing support for people caring in later life; Carers Trust, in collaboration with Jennie Chapman Consultancy and Training Ltd, 2015

¹⁰ Data received from Outhouse East

RAMA (Refugee Asylum Seeker and Migrant Action)

For asylum seekers who identify themselves as LGBTQIA+ it may be particularly dangerous, as they have to live in shared accommodation in hotels or HMO's and often with people from countries where it is illegal to be identified that way. RAMA had had some instances where people have been beaten up and they are working with the Rainbow Trust who help them get people moved on.

RAMA runs an LGBTQIA+ group which is very discreet so that clients who do not feel ready to attend Outhouse or similar charitable groups have a place to go where nobody else knows why they are there. Below is a feedback form one of the clients at the hotel who is collected every week:

“Every Tuesday, I meet at the park with my friends, I feel very good with them, I feel comfortable. Thank you again for this service you have rendered me by finding me friends who are like me. We get on very well. We have a great time, it really makes me happy when I'm with them, I feel really safe”.

This discrete group is open regardless of age.

For RAMA is important staff to wear Pride badges, stickers, etc., to declare openness. It does help people know when they are safe to speak to staff.

Carers from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

Carers from ethnic minority backgrounds (Gregory, C, 2010) were identified as less likely to take up services or be recognised and involved as carers. All organisations can and should be responsive to the specific needs of the ethnic minority carers, but the low take up of mainstream services is often seen as the carers not taking up what is on offer, rather than thinking through institutional barriers or whether the support is culturally appropriate. Some examples of the impact and understanding of cultural norms are given later in this report.

Research shows that unless specific provision is made to engage marginalised groups, user and carer involvement will continue to reflect broader social divisions and exclusion (Beresford, P, 2007).

How Services can help

Examples of conditions in which services can identify and therefore support older carers and narrow inequalities gaps include:-

- Good links between primary care and community services and local carers organisations to identify and refer carers.
- Staff in hospital-based and community services are trained in carer identification and referral.
- Targeted work to reach and support marginalised carers (links with duty under the Care Act for local authorities to identify carers and for the NHS to co-operate).
- Joint work with local voluntary groups supporting people from different parts of the community to reach carers from diverse backgrounds - there are many community assets across North East Essex who can facilitate such work

Carers need and want to keep themselves well, but often put their loved ones' needs ahead of their own. The **State of Caring Survey 2021**¹¹ reported that 25% of carers report bad or very bad physical health and 30% report bad or very bad mental health (over 8,500 existing or former carer completed the survey). Statutory Carers Assessments, access to GP services and those in the local community can support carer wellbeing. It was reported that there are vast differences in Carers Registers across different GP services, clear standards may help to bring in more equality of support.

Physical Activity and Older People

Age UK was awarded £15.1 million by the Big Lottery Fund to deliver the “fit as a fiddle” portfolio across the 9 English regions from 2007 until 2012, as part of the Big Lottery Fund’s wellbeing programme. It targeted people aged over 50 across England and delivered a range of activities to help improve healthy eating, levels of physical activity and mental wellbeing through locally led projects. A national programme used a cascade training model to help volunteers to deliver activities with specific target groups including BME and faith communities and older men. Overall, “fit as a fiddle” supported 375,392 older people. In addition, 252,370 older people have become better informed from using fit as a fiddle resources. The “fit as a fiddle” project was evaluated independently and some of its findings are captured below¹².

Benefits of ageing well

There are many benefits of maintaining physical activity throughout life; regular exercise, of at least moderate intensity, five times per week can prevent a number of non-communicable diseases including diabetes (type 2), various forms of cancer, mental health problems and musculoskeletal conditions. Physical activity can:

- reduce the risk of cardiac death by 25% amongst people with diagnosed health disease
- strengthen and reinvigorate age-related muscle tissue weakness
- impact on depression and in helping to maintain mental health and wellbeing in later life

A planned and appropriate programme of physical activity has been demonstrated to reduce the risk of falls by nearly 30% amongst a population of older people at risk of falling.

Physical activity has also be shown to improve confidence, reduce anxiety and improve sleep, not least because it is likely to promote and support social contact. The English Longitudinal Study on Ageing (ELSA) 23 identified a lack of physical activity as a significant factor in three of the seven domains of social exclusion, with a particular emphasis on exclusion from social relationships.

Volunteering has been identified as having a number of positive impacts on physical and mental wellbeing as evidenced by a wide range of researchers and organisations, including the Department of Health, WHO, Welsh Assembly Government, Marmot et al., Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) through, for example, continued participation in civic life;

¹¹ Carers UK, State of Caring Survey, 2021

¹² Fit as a fiddle, final evaluation report; Ecorys UK with Centre for Social Gerontology, University of Keele; 2013

sharing skills; making new relationships; mental stimulation and encouraging physical activity.

Current challenges for ageing well

Current data suggest that in the United Kingdom, physical activity declines significantly as people age and sedentary activity, such as watching the television, increases with age. There are a number of factors that impact on older people's ability or motivation to take part in regular physical activity which include a decline in health, difficulties accessing forms of exercise and lack of understanding of the positive impact of physical activity. Similar challenges face older people in achieving and sustaining a healthy diet; factors such as disability and co-morbidities may reduce ability and motivation to obtain food and cook; difficulties in obtaining and affording healthy food as well as a lack of awareness of the impact of poor diet can have an effect on physical and mental health. The issue of loneliness and social isolation in older age is a significant concern and one that is fundamental to the notion of 'ageing well'. The 'oldest old' are most likely to experience loneliness given the greater likelihood of social and support networks reducing through bereavement and ill health.

UK Active; Life in our Years; 2021¹³ looked at the challenges and barriers to getting older people more active and identified themes and recommendations to improve activity levels:

Key themes and recommendations highlight that older adult's decisions to engage in physical activity through offerings is impacted by:

- How accessible activities are and how much they cater for older people's physical needs and goals
- How it feels to attend them
- How many opportunities there are for social interaction
- How they are led or instructed
- How they are categorised and promoted
- How they support physical health and integrated health care systems long-term following the pandemic.

It highlights the benefits of physical activity in later life, as follows:

- Good physical and mental function,
- Reduction in falls and fall-related injuries,
- Improved sleep
- Opportunities for social interaction and reduced loneliness,
- Helping people to deal with their mental and physical health and long-term conditions or disease through feeling in control and responsible for their own health and wellbeing

The report identifies that physical activity also promotes positive economic and social outcomes, which can be achieved through the prevention of 900,000 cases of type-II diabetes and 1.5 million back pain cases every year, generating a total of £4.1 billion in healthcare savings every year as well as prevention of 30 million GP visits, reducing pressures on an already overstretched NHS. There is benefit across the health, social care and community economy from promoting and enabling physical activity.

¹³ Life in our Years Unlocking physical activity participation for older adults: UK Active

The NHS publishes physical activity guidelines¹⁴ for older adults which can help to guide bespoke activity programmes, to ensure that activity and intensity of activity is appropriate for the fitness level of each individual. It states:-

Adults aged 65 and over should:

aim to be physically active every day, even if it's just light activity

- do activities that improve strength, balance and flexibility on at least 2 days a week
- do at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity if you are already active, or a combination of both
- reduce time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity

If you've fallen or are worried about falling, doing exercises to improve your strength, balance and flexibility will help make you stronger and feel more confident on your feet.

It then goes on to give examples of light, moderate, intensive and muscle strengthening activity, with links to helpful resources.

Pensioner poverty

There is an increasing trend of older people living in relative poverty. Almost 1 in 5 people of pension age were living in relative poverty in 2019/20, following a sharp increase (of 200,000 people) over the previous year. This worrying trend first emerged in the middle of the last decade and means more than 2 million people of state pension age in the UK were living in poverty in 2019/20. It comes after a long period of widening wealth and income inequalities among people in their 50s and 60s. The net (non-pension) wealth of the richest 20% of people in this age group doubled between 2002 and 2018, while that of the poorest 20% fell by 30%. With declining home ownership, this age group will face even larger financial challenges in retirement.¹⁵

The Cost-of-Living Crisis is having a significant impact on older people's health and wellbeing. Keeping physically active, particularly in the winter months, helps to offset ill-health and gives an opportunity for social interaction, if wanted. The Winter Warmth and Winter resilience programmes provide access to a wide range of support from clothing, fire safety checks and information about local activities, as well as a 'check in'.

The table below identifies the level of deprivation affecting older people across North East Essex, from 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation figures. This demonstrates the particularly high levels of income deprivation in Tendring and the pockets of deprivation (at LSOA level) in Tendring and Colchester.

¹⁴ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults/>

¹⁵ State of Ageing Report; Centre for Ageing Better, 2022

2019 Indices of Deprivation - Income Deprivation affecting Older People

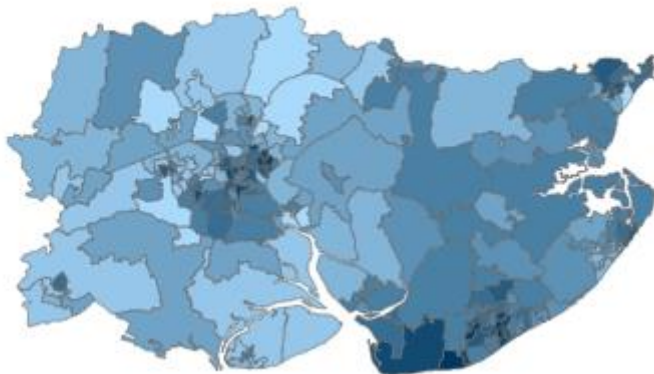
Local Authority District name (2019)	IDAOPi - Rank of average rank	IDAOPi - Rank of average score	IDAOPi - Proportion of LSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally	IDAOPi - Rank of proportion of LSOAs in most deprived 10% nationally
Colchester	203	192	0.950%	175
Tendring	75	99	4.490%	110

On each measure, the LA district with a rank of 1 is the most deprived, and the area ranked 317 is the least deprived.¹⁶

A new Index of Multiple Deprivation is due this year, it will be important to review the statistics at that time.

The heat map below indicates the level and location of income deprivation in older people across North East Essex. The darker the area, the greater the income deprivation.

Income Deprivation affecting Older People



¹⁶ www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019

Ageing well and the power of volunteering

Volunteering has many positive benefits, from improving physical health to offering fulfilling and enjoyable experiences and a sense of purpose and belonging.

The latest NCVO Almanac reported that in 2020/21, people aged 65-74 were the most likely to formally volunteer. 22% volunteered at least once a month, and 32% at least once a year. This was down from 31% and 40%, respectively, from the previous year, before the pandemic.¹⁷

In less than 20 years, one in four people in England will be over 65, and older people's lives will be increasingly complex.

From these findings, NCVO has identified five fundamental principles for age-friendly inclusive volunteering.

- Connect and listen
- Focus on what matters to people
- Play to people's strengths
- Remove barriers
- Be flexible

NCVO findings highlight that the proportion of the UK population who had volunteered at least once a month in 2021/22 was 16%. This was down from about 23% in 2019/20, reflecting the impact of the covid-19 pandemic. Volunteer participation has yet to recover fully since then.¹⁸

Additionally, among recent volunteers, the likelihood to continue volunteering declined slightly from 80% in 2018 to 77% in 2022.

Most people said less time due to changes in circumstances is the main reason they're stopping. Being unhappy with how their volunteering group is managed and organised is much less common (10%).

This data suggests we need more focus on retaining volunteers, as well as recruiting them.

The extract below is taken from Volunteer Essex's website, and describes how volunteering can really make a difference to volunteers, organisation and the communities people live in.

¹⁷ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/exploring-approaches-to-age-friendly-inclusive-volunteering/#/>

¹⁸ <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/key-findings-from-time-well-spent-2023/#/>

Volunteer Essex¹⁹

Volunteering is an excellent way to contribute to your community, gain new skills and experiences, and make a difference in the lives of others. It involves dedicating your time, effort and skills to a cause you believe in, in a flexible way - you can choose where you volunteer and when.

Here are some of the reasons why you should consider becoming a volunteer.

1. Make a positive impact on your community

Volunteering is a powerful way to create a positive impact on your community. It allows you to give back to society by supporting causes and organisations that align with your values. Whether it's working at a food bank, helping out at a shelter, or cleaning up a local park, your efforts as a volunteer can help improve the lives of those around you.

2. Develop new skills and a gain valuable experience

Volunteering can also be an excellent way to develop new skills and gain valuable experience. Whether you're looking to build your CV, explore a new career path, or simply learn something new, volunteering can offer a range of opportunities. For example, if you're interested in pursuing a career in healthcare, you might consider volunteering at a hospital or clinic to gain experience and make valuable connections.

3. Expand your network and meet new people

Volunteering can also be a great way to meet new people and expand your network. By working alongside other volunteers and staff members, you can build relationships and make connections that may be valuable in the future. Additionally, volunteering can expose you to people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, helping you broaden your horizons and gain new insights.

4. Improve your mental health and well-being

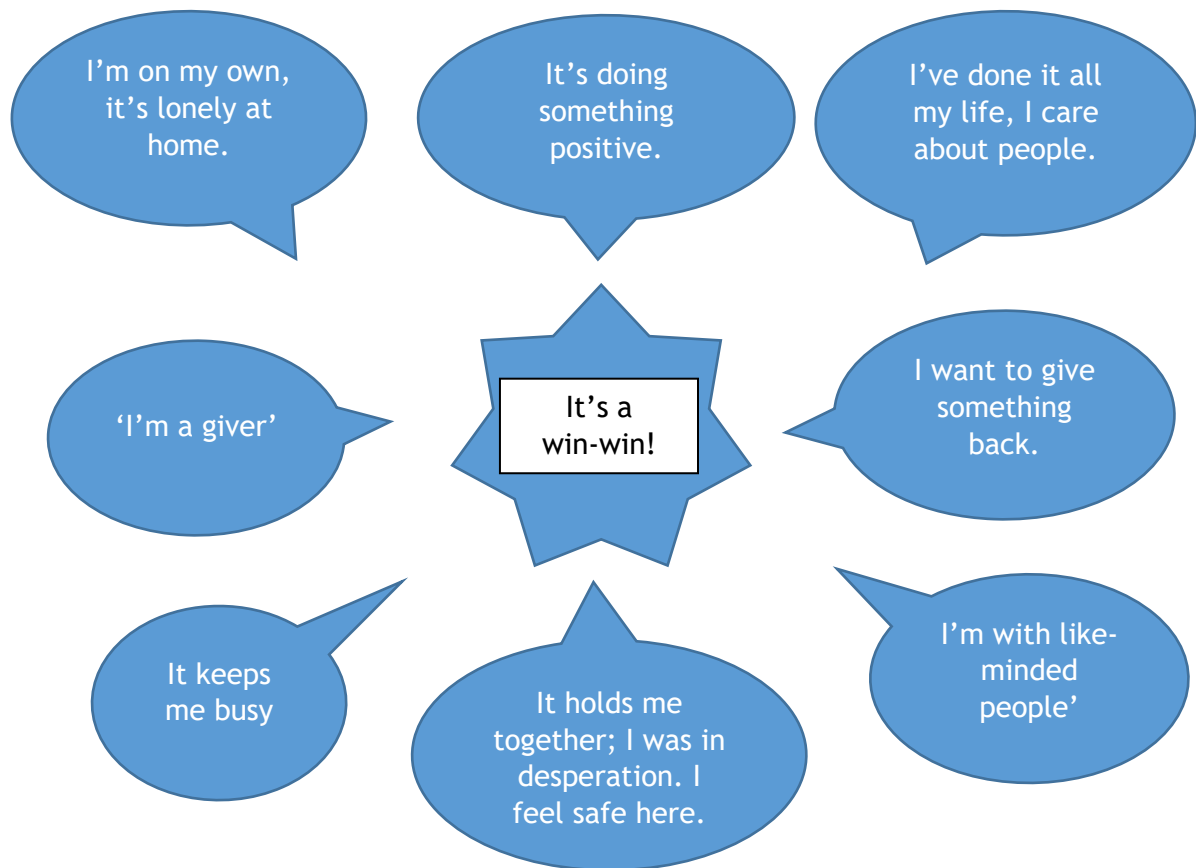
Volunteering has been linked to improved mental health and well-being. Studies have shown that volunteering can reduce stress, improve mood, and increase feelings of happiness and satisfaction. Additionally, volunteering can give you a sense of purpose and fulfilment, which can be particularly beneficial if you're feeling stuck or unfulfilled in other areas of your life.

Volunteering is a rewarding and beneficial experience that can offer a range of personal and professional benefits. Whether you're looking to make a positive impact on your community, develop new skills and gain valuable experience, expand your network and meet new people, improve your mental health and well-being, or make a difference in your own life, volunteering can be an excellent way to achieve your goals.

For all the above reasons, volunteering offers opportunities for people to stay fit, active, connected and have a sense of purpose while helping their community.

¹⁹ <https://www.volunteeressex.org/volunteering/>

At a meeting with volunteers in Tendring, there were a wide range of reasons why people chose to volunteer, as follows:-



Volunteers had been given a variety of opportunities and were able to try them out, without judgement or expectation, until they found the role which suited them best. Since volunteering, many have made good friends and meet outside of the volunteering role. One said 'I felt welcome, included'.

75% of those present at the meeting said that volunteering had improved their mental health; 50% said it had improved their physical health. For those in caring roles, volunteering offered an opportunity to have time for themselves and reduce their loneliness. People had very different pathways to volunteering - some finding out about opportunities through a Residents' Association meeting, some being directed away from the job centre; some from local magazines, some from posters in their GP surgery and some from word of mouth at other groups they attended. All felt well supported and trained and some had multiple volunteering roles.

We reached out to some of the Community 360 Volunteers to seek their views:-

Volunteer 1

My choices are that I make the decisions where and when I volunteer. I volunteer because I enjoy helping and meeting people. I volunteer at C360 and St. Helena Hospice. It sounds a bit corny, but I am nothing special and enjoy people.

I also volunteer for the RSPB at Old Hall Marshes Tollesbury, which is pretty remote and has beautiful scenery, which is good for my well-being, as the pure pleasure I get from helping people benefits me.

Volunteer 2

I started volunteering about a week after I went to university in London. I did various things while working, but following retirement took time off to relax and move house. When settled, I decided to volunteer as I had free time; I wanted to do something for the community and do something other than read and do puzzles!

I am helping people to get to where they want or need to be at a low cost. I have met some lovely people (and a few whom I would not describe like that but who need help to get around), and I get a sense of achievement (if also exhaustion) after a day in the van. It makes me feel both wanted and needed.

Volunteer 3

I love volunteering. I have learned about the volunteering opportunity as my mother used community transport for her appointments in the hospital. The people who were helping were fantastic, so I wanted to do the same.

The most significant barrier for older volunteers is the online application process, finding out what roles are offered and what is expected from a volunteer. I believe that the expectation from the volunteers is very high, which could be another barrier to people volunteering. We are lucky to have many community groups in Tiptree, and St Luke is a hub for different groups and initiatives.

I like talking to people; I prefer face-to-face conversation, then emails. The connection with people is very rewarding.

Volunteer 4

I look forward to my volunteering days when I volunteer at the One Colchester Hub at the reception desk. I wish we had more information about volunteering opportunities. After I retired, I wanted to do something meaningful, and a friend suggested volunteering at C360. I wish there were a marketplace for volunteering where we can access more opportunities once we retire. It is essential to know what to expect from the volunteering role.

I love meeting different people and helping others.

Volunteer 5

I am more than happy to help others when I can. Having been a teacher all my working life I understand how tricky it can be to be under constant pressure from people, their views, and government targets etc. I have sympathy with the NHS staff and their similar situation. I appreciated volunteer help when I was working and am happy to 'give a little back' now I am retired.

I am limited in the time I can offer so only wish to support the vaccination programme on a Saturday. My choice has been respected fully by C360.

I have been made aware by email of other volunteering opportunities should I have wished to help with them. I get a feeling of 'job well done' after a busy clinic morning where my assistance has been appreciated by the centre staff. However, I am lucky in that being a 'busy person' my well-being is usually ok anyway, so it's doesn't really change it.

Voluntary and Community Sector Assets

With the complexity of factors influencing the potential for people to age well, local VCSE groups have developed a range of responses to some of the persistent challenges and opportunities that present in Colchester and Tendring.

Spotlight: Age Well East

Driven by main vision that everyone deserves to *Age Well*, Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex, have become one organisation Age Well East in 2022. The services that Age Well East provides include advice and information about pensions, benefits, housing, blue badge applications and keeping people safe from cybercrime and fraud.

The popular community friendship services offer one to one volunteer friendship, pen friending and groups and activities. Further, the emotional support services provide crucial wellness support for people living through loss, bereavement, mental health struggles and end of life care. A specialist team is available to guide people through a dementia diagnosis and provide ongoing support to people and their carers through specialist groups and services.

Age Well East is currently working through a research project with University of Essex, focussing on volunteers. The aim of the organisation is to build a programme for recruitment and retention of volunteers, as the number of volunteers has significantly dropped following the pandemic, and this remains a priority area.

Age Well East has received anecdotal reports that the navigational aspect of their services are for example are significant enablers in helping people to access different kinds of services through guidance and low-level representation - particularly at a time of pressure for NHS and social care services.

Spotlight: Vision in Song

The Vision in Song Community Choir has been serving members of Blind Veterans UK and recently members of Age Well East for just over five years. Visually impaired members predominantly attend the choir. Some members also live with Parkinson's and Dementia. The average age of the choir members is 87. Currently, the group has 15 members, with another possible six joining shortly. One of the members commented: *Being part of the choir means much more than singing, it gives me an identity and a chance to socialise on a regular basis.*

The leader of the group commented that there are not many veterans' activities in the community other than coffee mornings and breakfast clubs, mainly held monthly. The choir is a unique opportunity to support veterans' mental health and emotional well-being, prevent isolation, and offer a sense of belonging and camaraderie that those who have served hold so dear. Singing brings the veterans together, but this activity means so much more in many ways for them. The group is inclusive of all disabilities and needs.

The leader of the group shared that the choir has changed significantly recently, as their long-time musical director has decided to leave. The choir has managed to secure a suitable replacement, however the dates they are currently meeting will most probably change from a Thursday to Mondays.

The group meets at St Alban the Martyr Church on St Michaels Estate in the garrison. The group leader said they had been well supported by the garrison commander and padre, and they allowed them to use the church on alternate weeks for free.

The choir have a small activity budget from the Blind Veterans UK, but the most considerable cost for the group is the transport and the provision of a musical director. The choir has several volunteer drivers, but they are not always available, which forcing the choir members to rely heavily on taxis. Most of the members live in North East Essex. However, the choir is open to any members of the Blind Veterans, Essex-wide.

Management of Care

Care Homes Team

There are 169 care homes across North East Essex. The Care Homes Team works across Suffolk and North East Essex, liaising with partners across the NEE Alliance on the development and implementation of the Care Homes Team Strategy.

The Team supports care homes with advice, training, new projects and innovations and workforce development.

There are Activity Coordinators in all care homes. The Care Homes Team identifies and shares good practice and supports use of resources in homes such as the Golden Carers Resource packs, strength and balance programmes, access to Talking Therapies and recognises good practice through the Prosper Awards.

The Activity Coordinators have a network where they can share good practice. Practice varies across the area - there are no set standards, and some need more training, but the network enables coordinators to share what works, as well as discussing challenges and exploring possible solutions. Some notable successes include Pets as Therapy, music (particularly good for dementia patients but everyone enjoys a singsong), the 'raise a chair' project (which has reduced ambulance call out), use of telecare, promotion of wellbeing and self-care, 'My best brush' oral hygiene assessment.

The team would like to see more in-reach and outreach - bringing different activities and services into care homes and enabling people to get out into the community to enjoy the activities which are important to them.

Barriers to support identified by the team include inequity across care homes; lack of knowledge and training; whether workforce supports people to go out and attend sessions in the community; physical inability to attend; limited activity for people who are bed ridden; toileting needs; being able to change batteries in hearing aids to enable participation; hearing aids/spectacles getting lost; ill-fitting dentures and poor oral hygiene and the impact they have on wellbeing in terms of comfort and nutrition; lack of family and/or friends to visit, resulting in feelings of isolation.

Looking more positively, the enablers which support people living in care homes to keep well in that environment include a good Activities Coordinator, creating bespoke activities for all which reflect likes, dislikes, past occupations, hobbies, preferences etc.; care home awareness of what they can use within the community - either to bring activities in or

support people to go out; the Care Home team - in that they go out to care homes and see what's happening, opening opportunities for sharing.

Spotlight: Foxburrow Grange Dementia singing group

Foxburrow Grange Care Home provides residential, nursing and dementia care in Colchester. This extends to people needing nursing care, ranging from those with dementia, including early onset Alzheimer's, to a wide range of health conditions, such as diabetes, epilepsy, stoma care, stroke, and heart conditions.

The care coordinator described the role as essential for providing activities that benefit the wellbeing of every resident, ensuring their emotional, intellectual, spiritual and physical wellbeing is considered. They also offer opportunities for everyone to take part in activities that are meaningful to them. Whenever possible, they are trying to engage family and friends to be involved in these activities as well. The care coordinator explained that the Covid experience helped them to build a good relationship with their residents and an opportunity to understand them better. All their activities are planned around the interests and the wishes of the residents. The most successful event is the Dementia Singing Group, because music is very engaging. The care coordinator explained how the music evokes emotion and stimulates their resident's memory.

When planning activities, it is important to consider accessibility, not only for people with limited mobility but also for those with sensory impairments so they can participate. The care coordinator also highlighted the importance to get to know all resident's hobbies and interests, when planning the activities to ensure what is being offered is appropriate and of interest.

Some other activities that they offer include gardening, animal therapy, drawing, art sessions, and cooking, just to name a few. The care home also facilitates regular visits from the library.

Social care and the role of the Community micro-enterprises

Social care is a significant economic sector. There are over 35,000 people working in the care sector in Essex, making it one of the county's biggest workforces.²⁰

ECC is encouraging and supporting the set-up of community micro-enterprises to increase choice for people in terms of the support they receive. The council provides information and signpost to advise and ensure the enterprises follow and maintain the quality of provision. Community micro-enterprises are very small organisations set up by people looking to provide care and support.

They are intentionally small businesses, set at the heart of the local community, with a vested interest in providing good quality support.

Community micro-enterprises can support people that either receive Direct Payments funding from Essex County Council or that use their own money to pay people to support them.²¹

The main benefits of the Community micro-enterprises are²²:

²⁰ <https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/start-your-career-in-care#:~:text=There%20are%20over%2035%2C000%20people,of%20the%20county's%20biggest%20workforces>

²¹ <https://www.essex.gov.uk/personal-budgets-and-direct-payments/help-to-find-your-own-care-and-support>

²² <https://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Community-micro-enterprise2.pdf>

- **accessible to and benefit a wide range of people**, above all, older women looking for rewarding, flexible work
- **creating roles that offer more autonomy and control than a typical care job** (61% of the micro-entrepreneurs surveyed feel less stressed and anxious since setting up their micro-enterprise)
- **supporting recruitment and, above all, retention in social care** (35% of the micro-entrepreneurs surveyed would be unlikely to be working in social care if they had not set up a micro-enterprise)
- **enabling more personalised care**, by devolving decision-making to people needing, and those providing support
- **building social connectedness**, by helping people to participate in their communities and to develop and maintain relationships with others
- **growing resilience, creativity and diversity** in the social care sector, and in local economies more widely

As market shapers, local authorities have a crucial role to play in setting a direction for social care and strengthening local economies. As such, every month, ECC updates the list of care and support providers that have gone through the Community Micro-enterprise programme. The list of the providers is also available on the Tribe App.²³ In total, 68 Micro Enterprises have been set across Essex, of which 23 are in North East Essex. The core of the offer in NEE is home help, which enables people to live at home independently. For example, help with personal care, shopping and meals, cleaning, going out, companionship, paperwork, building new skills, etc.

There are also other types of enterprises offering a wide range of services like cleaning, trades, therapies, activities, peer support or advice.

Assistive technology

Assistive technology enables independence and promotes inclusion, especially for people with disability, long-term health conditions and older populations.

Essex County Council launched a new countywide care technology service in July 2021. The service is delivered by two partners, Millbrook and Provide CIC.

Millbrook delivers an end-to-end technology service which is the procurement, installation, maintenance, decommissioning and recycling of Care Technology and also focuses on culture change and innovation. While Provide CIC delivers a monitoring and response service, they monitor the care technology equipment and respond accordingly. They also have a focus on prevention calls. For instance, if someone usually wakes up between 8 am and 9 am every day and one day they don't, then they can check that they are ok and avoid a crisis.

Care technology is a broad term that includes assistive technology, telecare and other technology promoting health, well-being and independence. All equipment is free. However, there is a process by which the social prescriber makes referrals.

²³ [Find a Community Micro-enterprise on the Tribe app.](#)

Telecare - devices in the Service Users' homes which monitor the resident's safety and well-being, including personal sensors, devices to control access to premises and sensors to promote a safe environment (e.g. room temperature, blinds, light bulbs and plugs).

Assistive Technology - a wide range of other technologies that allow people with impaired mobility, disabilities (physical or learning), and sensory impairments to live as independently as possible daily. This might include reminders for medication etc., accessible phones, smart home hubs, virtual personal assistants (e.g. Alexa) and support for people with communication difficulties (e.g. Image, Go Talk, LightWriter).

Remote monitoring and virtual solutions - for social interaction and to connect with professionals virtually (e.g. video/virtual calls for social purposes and with the Authority's other commissioned services through tablets or screens).

Apps for mobile devices that promote independence, health and well-being may also be provided by the service to target particular needs.

The Google speech-to-text app, *spoonzy*, helps simplify meal planning and grocery shopping. Headspace, which is for mindfulness.

Keeping Fit and Active

Clacton Leisure Centre

Clacton Leisure Centre has a Fitness Instructor who specialises in supporting people needing extra help to stay active. The Active for Life group of over 50s meets twice a week; it was three times a week before Covid and has had to build up again. It is a 'Club within a Club' with its own Chair, which coordinates holidays, days out, wine tasting sessions, evenings out and trips to Potters in Norfolk, an all-inclusive holiday destination, which offers an age appropriate range of sports (including bowls), activity and entertainment. There is a yearly fee of £6 which is paid to the club and enables discounted trips and events.

Twice a week there is a gentle circuit training course, the average age is 60+, participants can buy a package of class and racket sports or class and swim.

A Back to Health scheme is supported by a Fitness Instructor and offers 12 weeks of fitness activity in 1:1 or group settings, due to diverse needs; any people need 1:1. Referrals are made to the scheme by GPs or other health professionals and social prescribers. If after 12 weeks a participant has attended at least once a week, then the centre offers a reduced cost package for a further 9 months to enable fitness to be maintained. If people turn up seeking access to this package, they are assessed against a Health Commitment Statement and may be sent back to their GPs to get a referral to the scheme.

The services cover South Tendring mainly. Analysis of participant data shows that there is very little take up (4 people) from the Harwich area.

The Back to Health Scheme funds gym based Cardiac Rehabilitation, working with the clinical teams at the hospital, with the same activities. In addition, the Cancer Rehabilitation is working with the Cancer Wellbeing Centre, providing 15 classes of weekly circuit training without charge. These activities need continued funding to be sustained and have measurable benefits for participants.

Below is a snapshot of the back to Health Scheme at Sept 2022-Mar 2023²⁴:

GP Surgery:

Old Road	Kennedy Way	St James	Cardiac Rehab	Gt Bentley Surgery	East Lynn	The Hollies	Ranworth	Green Elms	Social Prescriber
3	2	4	15	2	4	2	6	2	8
Mayflower Surgery	Carrodoc	Unknown							
1	2	6							

Age Groups:

16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	81-90
2	2	3	15	11	15	7	2

Social Prescribers

Social prescribing is a key component of the action plan for the Universal Personalised Care across England. It is designed to connect people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing.

The social prescribers in Colchester and Tendering offer people the support to focus on ‘what matters to me’, as part of the personalised care plan.

They undertake a preliminary holistic assessment to try and establish each individual’s interests, their concerns (e.g. loneliness and/or isolation, lack of fitness affecting health), their hobbies and have an open conversation about what would help them to move forward. The Social Prescribers then look at assets within the individual’s local community and may refer to cycling groups, walking groups, friendship and bereavement cafes, digital support, seated yoga, strength and balance, community Facebook groups and offer support with finding equipment and aids for daily living.

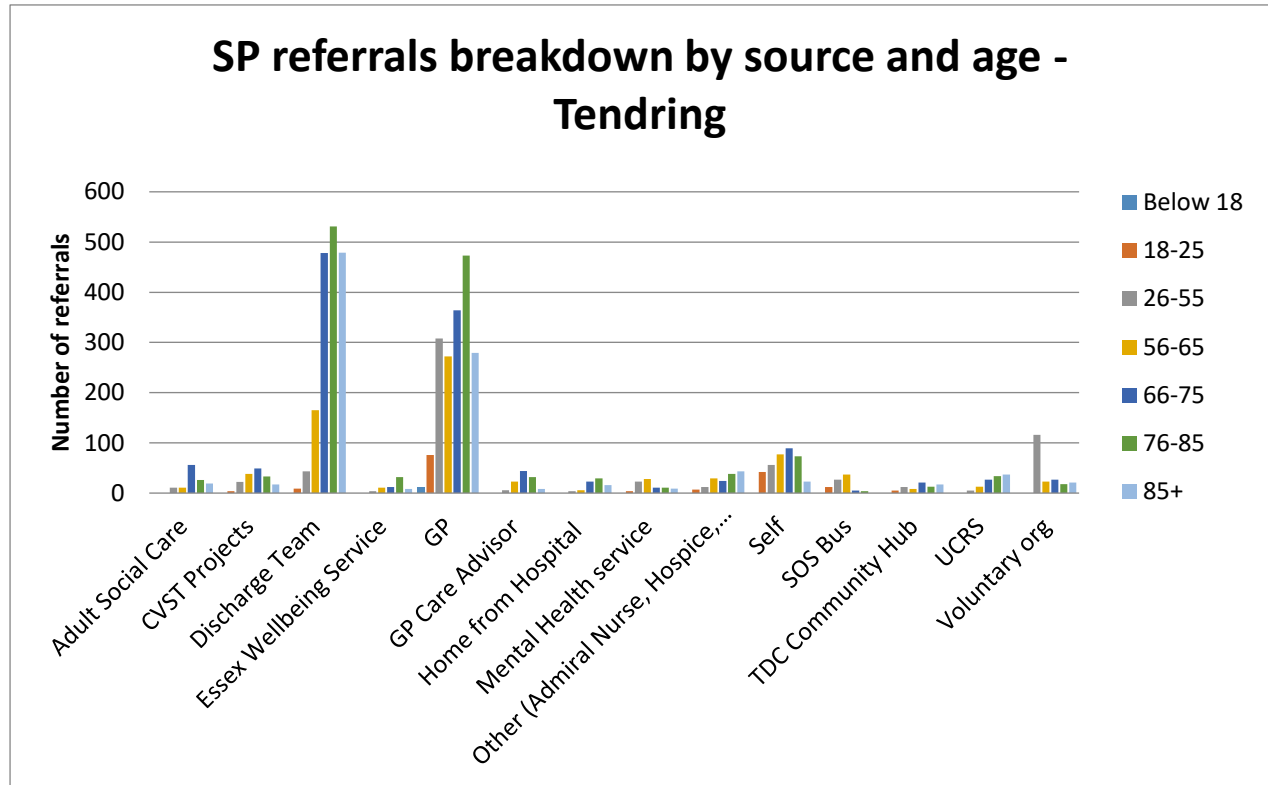
Hospital Social Prescribers facilitate early discharge and are now funded to support reablement and virtual wards. There is a pod at Clacton in the diagnostics centre, so easy to access for people attending. Transfer of care referrals support with issues like befriending. There is enough demand to set up a befriending group and there is a waiting list for Essex Health and Wellbeing Service befriending, so this is an opportunity to consider.

Social prescribing aims to build up trust and encourage people to have a purpose in life, a reason to get up in the morning. The focus not on doing it for people but facilitating them to do things for themselves - empowering them to feel part of something and connected. Social Prescribers will meet someone at home and accompany them to an activity, stay and introduce them, help develop their confidence and then gradually withdraw support

²⁴ Figures provided by TDC

when the person is ready. There is a very high percentage (approx. 90%) continuation from such introductions.

Social prescribers receive referrals from a number of different sources - including GPs, health professionals, self-referrals, families, community and voluntary sector assets, as indicated in the chart below.



Social Prescribers in Tendring run the My Weight Matters Clinics and often identify other areas of life that people need help with. Past MWM successes could be recruited as volunteers to support MWM all over Tendring - another significant opportunity that has been identified by them. This would provide Peer Mentors, experts by experience.

Social Prescribers offer advice, support and information for unpaid carers - checking that they are registered as a carer with their GP, following the same holistic assessment and linking up with Carers Support across North East Essex.

Community360 has four teams of social prescribers providing a golden thread service from a team based in the hospital transfer of care hub, a team supporting home from hospital wrap around support, a team based in five primary care networks covering 20 surgeries across Colchester and a community team supporting community referrals, events and walk in self-referrals.

The hospital discharge team provides any non-medical health and wellbeing support that may aid quicker discharge such as having key safes fitted at people's homes, moving furniture in the home, deep cleans, support with food, bedding, clothing etc. The wrap-around support is a 6-week programme with an additional 4-week ad hoc support for those recently discharged who require additional help, such as befriending, support calls, picking up prescriptions, etc., - for example, if a person had had a fall and were admitted to hospital they may be lacking in confidence when they get home.

The PCN team provides face to face support from the GP surgeries and manages any non-medical referrals that come through the clinical systems and healthcare professionals, for example falls, social isolation, tasking GP Care assessments for mobility issues. There are several programmes of targeted work running from the GP's such as Over 75's welfare calls, where a person may not have visited a surgery in 12 months; Bereavement support, Carer support, Cancer diagnosis support, New parents, Frailty and Falls, Personalised Care and Support Plans and Veteran support amongst others. All our teams link in with green space social prescribing such as community gardens and walks around Colchester. The team also supports Dementia Cafes at different surgeries each month.

Digital skills

Older people who need digital skills risk losing access to critical services such as banking, shopping and health services, as well as communications platforms that keep people connected. 25% of people aged 65 and over in the UK don't use the internet.²⁵ Age UK report highlighted the three main reasons why people aged 65 and over not using the internet were:

1. A lack of skills.
2. A lack of trust in the internet.
3. A lack of access to good enough equipment and/or broadband access.

Both areas Colchester and Tendring have good assets of well-established local support groups that address the common barriers to digital inclusion.

Digital access support

The North East Essex Digital Access Support Team (NEE DAST) is ready and able to offer additional digital access support to any individuals and groups across North East Essex who may find this useful. It offers a free service that helps residents to gain essential skills and confidence using technology. Although based within Colchester City Council, the team serves the whole of North East Essex, including Tendring.

The DAST team hosts virtual and community-based events, offers 1-2-1 sessions, Digital Chat & Support Sessions, other community learning opportunities and regular partner activities as well as in person 10-week workshops, along with digital chat and support sessions within the DWP job centre in both Colchester and Harwich and support at local surgeries.

Between January and March 2023 140 people completed 1-2-1 sessions. 30 want to be contacted when necessary for new learning or in case they have ad hoc queries and the remaining 110 will contact the DAST team if they need any further assistance.

The Colchester City Council website has an interactive map that allows filtering and finding a Fixed Digital Access Point (FDAP) location. These are placed in the community to provide an easy and convenient way of accessing council, surgery and community services. They include tiles for local surgery websites, bus timetables, local pharmacies, community groups and other health and wellbeing, council, and social sites. The map also helps with finding the location details for the team's digital chat and support sessions within the community.

²⁵ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/programmes/digital-skills/>; 2023

Further, there are resources to help with ongoing learning within various online skills, from staying safe online to online shopping and communicating with friends and family.

TEC Mates sessions Colchester

The One Colchester Hub offers free sessions every Tuesday and Friday between 10 am and 1 pm to help anyone who wishes to gain and increase their digital skills and knowledge. These sessions are delivered by volunteers who can demonstrate how Technology Enabled Care can help. The volunteers also offer 1 hour 1:1 pre-arranged individual sessions in a public setting.

The HILL project Tendring

The HILL project runs weekly drop-in IT sessions, such as help for beginners and job seekers, or IT opportunities for volunteers at Imperial House in Clacton and the Dovercourt and Harwich Hub in Harwich. Trained volunteers run and support the sessions on a drop-in, first come first served basis. Attendees are encouraged to either bring their own laptop, tablet or mobile phone or to use HILL devices, which are available on site. People can get help with using the internet on their phone, tablet or computer. With the increase in smart phone use, people can learn more about their mobile phone, including mobile functions, messaging, emergency and safety information, or attend a digital workshop.

Two IT workshops in Harwich each ran for 4 weeks, each week 20 people attended, and the age range was from 55- 90 years. The Clacton sessions run weekly with an average of 12 people attending and ages of participants range from 50 - 85 years.

Case Study: IT for beginners

Pauline has been attending the IT group and has said that she has learnt so much in just a few weeks. She feels much more confident in going back to work now she has a clearer understanding of Windows 10 on her laptop. She says " I love the IT group, everyone is so friendly, and I don't feel patronised I feel supported to learn. It has made so much difference in my confidence to return to work. I can't thank the staff and volunteers enough for helping me. I really look forward to coming each week and really missed the group over Christmas. It is a great community resource and I have been telling all my friends to come along".



Volunteer Kevin, helping a member at Clacton IT group

Cultural norms

Colchester Nepalese Society Cultural Norms

It is estimated that over 80,000 Nepalese people live in the UK. Approximately 1500 are in Colchester area. Most Ghurkha and Nepalese families have set up homes in towns with strong ties to the army.²⁶

In May 2009, the Government announced that any Ghurkha who had served in the British army from July 1948 to July 1997 could apply to live in Britain indefinitely. This right also extended to spouses, widows, dependents under the age of 18, and dependent adults aged 18 to 30 if they met specific criteria.

The Colchester Nepalese Society was established in January 2006 to fulfil many new challenges and opportunities and to preserve Nepalese Culture, tradition, ethos and identity. The society is enabling members to enjoy their rights and develop their full potential, lead a respectful life while integrating harmoniously and becoming a vital part of mainstream British society, especially for future generations.²⁷

Spotlight on: The main objectives of the Colchester Nepalese Society are to promote the social inclusion of its members living in Colchester and the surrounding area for the public benefit and to assist them in integrating into society. The Society provides regular English language classes and well-being classes, such as yoga and Tai Chi. Organises cultural events, helping its members during hardship and offers peer-to-peer support.

The most distinct characteristic of the Nepalese community in comparison to many other migrant populations is that the Nepalese community have a far higher average age on arrival in the UK, which presents specific challenges relating to their health and social care needs, and access to services.

The Chair of the Colchester Nepalese Society, Udai Gurung, explained that English is the most significant barrier to accessing services in his community. About 50 adults over 65 attend his language classes at the One Colchester hub weekly. The other significant barrier is the lack of privately own cars within the Nepalese Community.

Udai shared that the Nepalese people are always delighted to share their friendships. They are loyal, reliable and obedient. The Nepalese culture makes all people around them feel very welcome and inclusive. There is a sense of belonging that comes with sharing the company of the Nepalese members. However, they feel at ease if a member of their community delivers the English classes, which has limitations, as the Chair of the society is currently providing the lessons.

The Nepalese members always reach out for support of the group. Also, members rely on Udai to book appointments and attend GP Surgeries along with them. Another distinctive trait of the Nepalese community is that members feel more comfortable being accompanied in their activities.

Udai explained that he also delivers regular talks to all senior citizens from his group about life in the UK, traffic discipline, and individuals' responsibility as a citizen and gaining access to government benefits.

²⁶ <https://healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk/sites/healthwatchgreenwich.co.uk/files/The-Nepalese-Community-and-Health-Care-November-2018-Final.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.colchester-nepalese.com/>

Below is a picture of Nepalese's women celebrating their traditional September Festival (Photo: Colchester Nepalese Society).



It is crucial to understand how different members of society perceive age, how their attitudes differ, and how older adults are treated. Further, we reached out to other local ethnic groups.

*'Little culturally-appropriate help available.'*²⁸

The Needs Assessment of the Bangladeshi and Wider Muslim Community report published by the Bangladeshi Women's Association Essex in 2022 highlights the lack of culturally appropriate support for carers. Although carers value the support they receive, some do not know where to get help: 'I have no idea how to access services, where do I go? Many barriers too.' 'Lack of reliable support.' They also found it difficult to get information on allowances.

Some of the feedback cited in the report states: 'Little culturally appropriate help is available.' Others spoke of the impact of caring: 'It takes time and energy to look after someone.' 'There is no respite service care for our community. It is very difficult to find access to home care. Within our community, we like to look after our own people at home; however, this can get difficult, and we need support from the service providers.'

²⁸ https://www.bwae.co.uk/_files/ugd/1126ab_05c436ce03e648ebb9087cc043f9fb05.pdf

It appears, that many within this community are carers, starting from relatively young ages and caring for people across the full age span from children to older adults. Carers need information on the support available, and they need support that is both reliable and culturally competent.

East Anglian Indian Association

Satish Thaker, the chair of the East Anglian Indian Association, whose aim is to promote the Hindu culture, described that older adults in his community are well-respected, and older members in his culture are perceived as conduits between the generations to educate and promote local traditions and knowledge. Satish shared that his group meets every Wednesday afternoon at the One Colchester Hub, and he often sees young members attending; for instance, a young gentleman attends the meeting, as his wife is a student at the local university, and he wishes to keep close to his culture. The group is open to all religions and beliefs. One of the main principles of the group is to promote knowledge and mutual understanding. Respect for the beliefs and practices of different religious faiths is paramount. Satish explained that in the Wednesday group meetings, members enjoy talking, laughing, joking, sharing stories and feeling connected. Everyone can talk about anything because they are not going to be judged.

Satish explicated that the most significant barrier to ageing well is loneliness. This is why his group has a mutual understanding of each other needs. His ultimate wish is to promote his group far and wide and to reach more members looking for a safe place where they can belong and be valued.

Culturally appropriate meals

Using Winter Resilience funding during the winter of 2021 the Colchester Chinese Community Association provided culturally appropriate meal deliveries to the home of older and vulnerable Chinese people across Tendring. Cooked by a Chinese master chef and delivered by volunteers, individuals were provided with a healthy authentic Chinese meal three times a week along with a friendly visit. This need was identified through community representation from the local Chinese community that older Chinese individuals were experiencing mental health issues through loneliness and isolation.

Intergenerational Projects

An example of bringing different age groups together is the Essex Dementia Intergenerational Programme which focuses on young and older shared activities to create age-friendly generations delivered by Essex County Council Adult Social Care.

The Archie Project is an intergenerational dementia awareness project that links local primary schools care homes, memory cafes and other community-based places. It is based on the knitted character of Archie, who is a scarecrow with Alzheimer's. His colours begin to fade as he becomes forgotten in his community. The story focuses on inclusion, kindness and empathy.



The project focussed learning outcomes to increase children's awareness and to decrease the apprehension and stigma often associated with dementia to create more dementia-friendly communities.

The pilot included 3 x Primary Schools (Jan-July 22) Lexden Primary School, Colchester; Great Bentley Primary School, Great Bentley and St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Harwich; with children aged 8-9 years.

- 3 Classes - 68 pupils in total
- Project includes teachers and wider staff having dementia training to run the project at the outset. The project includes an Archie storybook, activity workbooks, banners, badges, and board games and includes both class and whole-school elements, i.e. assemblies.
- When pupils have learnt about dementia, the children will visit a local care home and/or memory cafe, engaging with older people who have memory loss or dementia and being part of shared activities together.

With the increased awareness of ageing and dementia, and opportunities to develop and harness children and young people's attributes and skills in citizenship, kindness and compassion in the future social legacy of caring in our communities. Some of the findings from the ECC North Essex Archie project are below:

- 65% increase seen in children's awareness levels through their reading/learning on dementia
- 67% increase shown in how a child felt they could help someone with dementia in their community

- 30% increase in children feeling less worried about talking to someone with dementia

The project is developing spaces for enabling environments drawing on strengths and all-age assets that bring young and older together, increasing social connections to promote positive health and well-being outcomes from the early years to further years.

There are plenty of activities that are happening in North East Essex promoting intergenerational support. Essex County Council also delivers three library memory cafes which take place at the same time as the 0-5 rhyme time groups, and local schools visit the café (Harwich / West Clacton / Manningtree).

(Photo of a young girl visiting the Harwich Café, which is part of the Essex Year of Reading, photo ECC.)



Singing, Drumming and Fun

An interesting and stimulating way of bringing different generations together is the Feelgood Drumming CIC, a not-for-profit group which provides health and wellbeing support through music, dancing and drumming. It is led by Lisa Strong, an Occupational Therapist who works part time in the NHS. The committee, with Lisa's skills, runs intergenerational singing, drumming and companionship groups across Tendring.

Walton Feelgood Choir - open to all and welcomes carers with their loved ones - is a light-hearted singing group which treats everyone fairly and enables equal access and is all about helping people to feel good. There is a considerable barrier with transport, but it is provided where needed through lifts from other members and taxis. Events and fundraising activity keep the choir going. There is a suggested donation of £4 per session if this is affordable for participants.

Feelgood drumming runs two dementia choirs in Frinton, funded by Home Instead. On a Tuesday afternoon once a month people can attend for singing, movement and memory, with dancing, maracas and fun-based activity. All activity is OT based. There is potential for outreach for this work if funding is available. The choir engages about 40 people some come with their carers. Access Dignity is on Fridays in Frinton, following the same model as the Frinton choir.

There is a drumming session held once a week on Thursday evening, reaching a good spread of ages and demographics, including older people and people with long-term conditions and the whole family in some cases.

Active Essex funds a Drum, Fun & Soup session, giving free access to people of all ages. It is a high energy session and includes about 25 people at each session. Participants feel good, make some noise, make connections, and experience no discrimination.

On Friday mornings at St George's Hall in Walton there is a women's singing group - the session includes a health breakfast, acapella, harmony and music. It offers women mutual support is intergenerational, powerful, and uplifting.

As with all community activities, funding is needed to enable these popular groups to continue the current funding barely covers costs.

Lads Need Dads

Lads Need Dads (LND) is a multi-award winning not-for-profit CIC which aims to equip and empower boys aged 11-15 with absent fathers or limited access to a male role model to become motivated, responsible, capable, resilient and emotionally competent. This will prevent them from becoming at risk of under-achieving at school, offending, exclusion or dropping out of education.

The Engage programme is a six-month practical life-skill training and community volunteering programme teaching boys via fortnightly workshops such as D.I.Y, car maintenance, bike repairs, painting and decorating, how to plan and cook a three-course meal etc, soldering, plumbing, self-protection, first aid and more. Over the course of the programme, boys and their mentors go out into the community and put their practical training into practice by volunteering for local-residents, with priority going to lone parents, the elderly or people with additional needs or ill-health and local community groups. Jobs carried out include painting and decorating, gardening, D.I.Y, woodwork, patio jet washing, community litter picks etc. The volunteering fosters a sense of responsibility, confidence and personal sense of achievement within the boys and strengthens community links and cohesion. Their Engage programme won the Community Improvement award (Tendring Youth Awards) in 2019 in recognition of the services provided to the community and the vulnerable people they assisted.

FREE HELP FOR OUR COMMUNITY

LADS NEED DADS Engage Programme teaches secondary school age boys with absent fathers or limited access to a male role model, practical life skills via a series of workshops run over 6 months and incorporates community volunteering. Our Engage community volunteering programme is coming to Colchester from November 2022 and we are open to referrals from residents who might be in need of some gardening work, DIY, painting, flat-pack building, shed building, patio jet washing etc.

Boys escorted and supported by trained police checked male mentors will be available on various Saturdays over the next six months to come and assist local residents at **NO COST!**

Priority will be given to pensioners, lone parents, and people with a disability. A risk assessment will need to be carried out before any job is accepted which entails a home / garden visit. Please note, we do not do electrical work, plumbing, roofing, plastering etc. We leave that to the professionals!

We are looking for opportunities for the boys to practice their skills alongside their mentors, all who come with a variety of knowledge and experience and will be matched to the jobs accordingly.

We are now taking bookings and this service is offered on a first come first served basis and is subject to availability so please do not hesitate to get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you.

Tel: 07834 402017
or email info@ladsneeddads.org
We carry public liability insurance.

AWARD WINNING



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 Lads Need Dads is a Not-For-Profit Community Interest Company, Company No. 8628824.

AB4D - (Ability Before Disability)

Based in Summit House in Clacton, AB4D is commissioned by Essex County Council (ECC) to gain the views, experience of disability and issues from people with learning disabilities and/or autism and family carers. From the organisation's point of view, there is a key issue with use of health and community passports - it is deemed to be very 'hit and miss', with health and social care professionals sometimes not thinking to proffer or ask for a community passport and therefore not always understanding communications, support and general needs, having the right resources available.

It was also noted that Learning Disability and Autism awareness is still lacking in some places in the community. It is important that people understand communication, priorities, processes and social needs to be able to interact effectively and inclusively.

A survey of people from 18 to over 60 with learning disability and autism was undertaken for this review delivered the following responses:

How do you keep healthy, safe and independent?

My mum and dad look after me so I am ok; don't smoke or drink lots of alcohol; staying active, I join the local walking group on a Friday which really helps my wellbeing.

I have good support staff who sit with me and help me plan my future; eating well, my carers help me meal plan so I don't eat rubbish; finally having the right support, my carers are great now, and I am doing really well.

I have a good doctor who listens to me but finding one that listens isn't easy and I hope they don't leave; having regular check-ups at the GP and dentist and my eyes checked every 2 years. I think this is important to looking after yourself and aging well: not getting stressed, when I was younger I found that when I got really upset and stressed out I would become unwell; I have hand rails and a ramp which really helps me get around my home; sleeping well.

What stops you getting the support you need?

Not being listened to, I find this very frustrating as I know me best!!

I don't know who to ask; can never see a doctor when I need to

Money! People don't always give me time to understand information. Not all information is easy to read - too much jargon, print too small and it's not easy to get an accessible version.

What 3 things would make a difference to you to age well?

Knowing I will have the support in place to let me carry on living my life how I want to; having a plan; knowing who to ask

Build a good social network; being told what to expect as I get older;

Being part of my aging process; having a sight impairment - I just need people I can trust to help with my reading letters, opening my post and I am not eligible for any support from social care.

Spotlight: Growing older with Learning Disability and/or Autism

There are a large number of adults with learning disability and/or autism who live comfortably at home with their ageing parents. It is easy for them to feel safe and comfortable in their family 'bubble', thinking nothing will change.

There is not enough discussion/awareness of the potential changes - even in a generalised way - which occur as the person and their parents get older. This works both ways, for the carer and the person with learning disability and/or autism.

Discussions and conversations should take place early, before challenges set in, so that the carer and their loved one are aware of how changes will be managed, what will happen next and what their expectations should be.

This planning could include hospital/GP passports; community passports (indicating what support comes from where and contact details) and planning around care and accommodation.

It is important to recognise that many people live in families in this way, with no contact from social services. There is no way of knowing how many there are.

An awareness campaign in libraries, post offices and GP practices, for example, could be very beneficial to support people to start thinking ahead before a crisis moment is reached.

AB4D (Ability before Disability)

Based just outside of Colchester, **KTM Care Limited** is a 'Care for All Service' specialist in Autism providing care for individuals with a learning disability and/or on the autistic spectrum. This includes 24-hour support within the home, respite support and employment service. Support is given for finding and moving into a new home and accessing the local community also ensuring the that correct welfare benefits are being accessed. Referrals can be made via their online form found on their website.²⁹

²⁹ [KTM Care Ltd](#)

Citizen's Voice

To ensure that the citizen's voice could be gathered effectively and productively, the engagement method we used was a qualitative approach, implemented via two different work streams. We would like to extend our gratitude to the participants who kindly gave up their time to take part in the project. We hope you found it empowering to have your voice listened to.



Interviews

In order to gain a more in-depth understanding of barriers, cultural factors and to hear more detail about people's experiences, a number of 1:1 interviews were conducted. These involved reaching out to various organisations and individuals within the intended areas. Participants consented to taking part and having their conversations recorded. These conversations were then transcribed and analysed to produce some key themes for both geographical areas.



Case Studies

Case studies are used frequently throughout this report to spotlight services and understand community response to ageing well.

Through our engagement, the following themes were identified:

- Physical health and wellbeing
- Caring for the carer
- Combating social isolation
- Support for those with a learning disability

Who have we engaged with?



Our engagement areas for the Age Well domain are Tiptree, Jaywick and Holland-on-Sea. Tiptree is a large village, 10 miles south west of Colchester. Jaywick, a coastal village is two miles west of Clacton-on-Sea and Holland-on-Sea is a seaside town located directly north of Clacton-on-Sea.

Physical health and wellbeing

Every year more than one in three people over 65 suffer a fall, which can cause serious injury. The costs to the NHS and social care from hip fractures alone are an estimated £6 million per day or £2.3 billion per year. Falls are the main cause of a person losing their independence and going into long term care. After a fall, the fear of falling can lead to more inactivity, loss of strength, loss of confidence, greater risk of further falls and a greater risk of death.³⁰ Many of our project participants agreed that they would be grateful to be signposted to a resource to support them with making their homes ‘fall-proof’. Age UK offer a service for people aged 65 and over who have difficulty carrying out small jobs around the home. Residents in social housing or a care home are not eligible for this free service.

GP Care Advisors facilitate people to access social care, welfare benefits and self-help support to maintain their independence at home, listen to patients, carers and their families. For those living within the Colchester and Tendring districts their GP will have at least one dedicated GP Care Advisor. Their role includes:

- To provide advice, support, information and assistance in obtaining services from other agencies and where appropriate, make initial contact on the patient’s behalf.
- Provide assistance in particular to carers of patients with dementia.
- To help with the completion of welfare benefit claims forms.
- To provide assessment of needs for Telecare equipment and services in the patient’s home.

As worn-out slippers have been proven to contribute to falls in older people, Community360 offer a Slipper Exchange for the elderly in Colchester and Tendring. Qualifying recipients need to be living within the CO postcode and have a health condition that affects balance or mobility. Those identified to be at risk of falls are provided with a free new pair of slippers.

Tiptree

Tiptree Medical Centre has a designated section to carers within the wellbeing section of its website, signposting to a selection of agencies including Community Agents Essex, Carers First, Carers UK, Essex Carers Support and Support for Carers.

“In the last year of my wife’s life I became her primary carer. Friends told me that I’d need help, but I just got on with it especially as I wasn’t informed as to what I was entitled to and what was available to me in terms of support.

I would have appreciated if the authorities had reached out to me.”

Project participant

³⁰ [NHS England » Frailty resources](#)

“While I am active it’s okay, but it would be reassuring to know that should there come a time when I can’t manage on your own, that there is a form of care backup. I don’t think I should have to rely totally on voluntary organisations. I feel insecure about my next life stage, which for me isn’t far away unfortunately.”

Project participant

Now part of the Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) and part of the Live Well partnership, Community Agents Essex support individuals who are older, have learning disability or Autism and their informal carers to maintain or regain their independence. Referrals can be made to EWS by email or phone. This service continues to:

- Promote health and independence.
- Reduce social isolation.
- Find practical solutions to daily living.
- Provide confidential trusted information.
- Inform choice and reduce confusion.
- Increase individual and community resilience.

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf People (RNID) works with communities to improve audiology services for those whose lives are impacted by hearing loss, deafness and tinnitus. Their service includes maintenance and re-tubing of NHS hearing aids; replacement batteries issued; support & advice on coping with hearing loss; assistive equipment & communication tips; signposting to other services that will provide support; otoscopy; hearing checks.

RNID offers a hearing aid support service every Friday of the month from 1pm-3pm in the Tiptree Community Centre. For those living in our other engagement areas of Jaywick and Holland-on-Sea, their nearest RNID drop-in services are in Clacton and Brightlingsea.

Case study

Social Prescribing received a referral for a person with a sight impediment received following a stroke, and so was unable to drive any more. Due to loneliness CVST referred him to Age Well East befriending.

CVST spoke about getting him in touch with community activities and made him aware of Tendring Community Transport. He decided to join the Wednesday Clacton walking group and has been for a walk with the group.

Case study

A home visit with the RNID was arranged for equipment options, and the GP Care Advisor assessed the patient's eligibility for benefits and a Blue Badge. The Practice Manager was informed about the incident, requesting improved consideration for patients with hearing difficulties. The patient now feels more confident and less isolated with her deafness, with ongoing exploration of options through Audiology and future appointments scheduled.

Essex Library Service offers a variety of library card products including a Memory Support card for adults who have memory problems, perhaps due to Dementia, learning difficulties and mental health issues. This card doesn't incur any fees, so if a person forgets to return their items on time, they won't be charged; Book Group card allows several copies of the same book to be ordered which is useful for book club members.

'Reading Well' from The Reading Well Agency, a programme supported by leading health experts³¹, helps people to understand and manage their health and wellbeing using helpful reading. The books are all chosen and recommended by health experts and topics include pain; sleep problems; mental health and wellbeing; arthritis; bowel conditions; breathing difficulties; diabetes; heart disease; stroke; support for relatives and carers. Additional services that the Essex libraries offer include free Wi-Fi; free use of internet via public computers; printing facilities; Ancestry UK Library Edition; many libraries have rooms for hire; book groups both in and running from homes; community teas to come and have a chat; craft-based clubs like Knitter Natter; language groups; jigsaw clubs; volunteers to deliver books to people's homes. Tiptree library is open three days a week, including Saturday.

Combating social isolation

U3A, the University of the Third Age is a countrywide non-profit organisation and registered charity, Tiptree's branch is one of over 1,040 U3A groups in the country spread throughout cities, towns and villages. The U3A is for people who are no longer in full-time employment and have more available spare time and an interest to learn. It is not age restricted, as they have several members in their twenties. Tiptree U3A boasts 400 members, several from the wider locality i.e. Tollesbury, Witham and Kelvedon, though members are mostly from the Tiptree area. Their ethos of 'Learn, Laugh, Live' offers the opportunity to bring people together for learning, fitness, leisure, and fun, whilst enjoying the camaraderie and friendship of other similar minded people. In addition to offering new interests and learning opportunities, the U3A approach provides mutual support and companionship which many members value greatly.

"Feeling isolated at home, I'm so pleased I now attend U3A meetings. The group is very welcoming. The 'meet and greet' members were wonderful and there to answer my questions."

Project participant

Tiptree U3A currently has nearly 40 interest groups covering a wide range of interests, clubs include Art Appreciation; Ballroom Dancing; Beading; Birdwatching; Book Club; Bookworms; Bridge; Chess; Coffee & Social; Creative Writing; Discussion Genealogy;

³¹ [Reading Well \(reading-well.org.uk\)](http://reading-well.org.uk)

Knitting & Crochet; Line Dancing; Local History & Buildings; Long and Short Walks; Musicals; Paper Craft; Photography; Sewing & Patchwork; Shakespeare for pleasure; Solo Sundays; Theatre Trips; Tiptree U3A Singers; Woodturning; Wood Carving - some groups have a restricted membership due to space limitations. Monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month in the Tiptree Community Centre and generally include an external speaker covering any subject, from sailing barges to the history of Harrods! Refreshments are available at the end of the session.

Case study

D has been a member of U3A for one year, and prior to her partner's diagnosis of both Alzheimer's and diabetes, they both enjoyed active hobbies such as boating and walking. D was very interested in continuing with work outside of her role as her partner's carer so as to support her own wellbeing. Skilled in digital media D became an active volunteer, supporting the group's website, emails and social media accounts. She really enjoys this role and is aware of the importance and benefits of keeping mentally active. Being a U3A member, D has the opportunity to socialise and keep active by regularly attending both the long (six miles) and short (three miles) organised monthly walks - activities that are valuable to her. D enjoys regular yoga and pilates sessions, providing a relaxing opportunity in contrast to the challenges faced by someone caring for a person living with Alzheimer's - though appreciates the resources, online advice and home visits given to her by the Alzheimer's Society.

In addition to the Tiptree Community Centre other local venues that make their space available for U3A groups include St Luke's Church, the library and Perrywood Garden Centre.

A bi-monthly newsletter keeps members informed, sent by e-mail, paper copies are available at the monthly meeting. The annual commitment is a £15 membership fee which allows access to monthly meetings and refreshments, and there's only an additional charge for groups that require hall hire, e.g., Line Dancing costs £2 per session. Membership services from the National U3A organisation including the Third Age Matters magazine sent five times a year and third-party liability insurance for organised U3A activities. Limitations to members attending may include the venue size, if unable to accommodate for safety reasons on occasions when the monthly meeting is full, so members are turned away.

There is a wealth of useful and supportive resources within their 'News' section of the U3A website - signposting to Essex Police, Cyber Crime; Report a Crime Online; Protect your E-mail Password; Scam Energy Bill Support - reassuring to particularly vulnerable older people.

Case study

W, aged 78, is a U3A member and very active within the Tiptree community. She has Tinnitus and lives with her son. Her regular activities include weekly walks, volunteering with the food bank twice a week, attending church and facilitating the U3A coffee club at Tiptree's United Reform Church. Also attending the less physically active groups such as Shakespeare and Musicals at members' houses. The additional appeal of these home-based groups is that they come at no additional cost, though proving very popular as are both are at full capacity. Those with mobility issues and/or are wheelchair users may be unable to attend these groups if member's home is inaccessible. There is a demand from the community for these groups to grow but the restriction of venue sizes is proving a barrier.

W and many other project participants agreed that an accessible swimming pool would be very welcomed and well received as an ideal way of supporting their physical health and mobility. There is a private swimming pool in Tiptree available on a member only basis which comes at a significant cost especially during recent times with the cost-of-living crisis.

W is concerned that there are no longer any high street banks open in Tiptree, the Post Office and online banking are the only alternatives. Though having a basic understanding of online banking, she relies on the help and support of her son with the more complex banking issues.

“We now have triple the number of people living in our village with less and less services available.”

St Luke's Church in Tiptree facilitates a vast selection of community groups to support socialisation and combat people feeling isolated. Led by the Tiptree Volunteers, coffee mornings are held twice a month in St Luke's Hall, a building adjacent to the church. The Exchange Café, located centrally in Tiptree, has teamed up with St Luke's Church to offer refreshments on the third Monday of every month - an opportunity for the community to enjoy company and conversation.

I&S Care based in Tiptree is a domiciliary care agency for adults, the elderly and those with learning disabilities, supporting people in the community to avoid them having to use residential services and hospital and keeping them safe and comfortable in their homes. I&S Care's services range from welfare checks through to end-of-life care.

Silver Spiral Holistic Health based in Tiptree offers a selection of yoga classes, workshops and holistic treatments, including Chair Yoga classes three times a week. The venue is easily accessible by public transport and offers free parking.

“I joined the chair yoga classes when I retired and had more time. Due to severe arthritis I cannot do any other sport.”

Yoga practice gives people an awareness about their body which can be translated to other aspects of an older person's life, i.e. gardening, knowing their capability in doing a task so as to prevent an injury.

“A 90 year old man who attends Chair Yoga class weekly has really felt the physical benefits because by mobilising his shoulders he is now able to reach items in the cupboards at home. He’s generally finding it physically easier at home.”

Arthritis can cause a lot of pain and knee issues prevalent amongst the older people - this class incorporates non-weight bearing knee work, supporting those rehabilitating having undergone surgery. In addition to the physical benefits of yoga, the community aspect is also very noticeable, and for elderly people to have a weekly commitment in their diary is very powerful. Friends coming together to connect and share their health experiences and worries can be mutually supportive, particularly important if people do not have their families living in the local area. People come from surrounding areas to attend these yoga classes, often making a lengthy journey by public transport. Another person is solely reliant on the community bus to attend the yoga classes.

The Tiptree Community Hub was opened to the general public in 2023 with the aim of developing a place where unwanted food could be redistributed, supporting food waste reduction and social isolation by providing a warm and safe space for locals at the hub’s community café. It is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, currently overseen by five Trustees who work alongside 20 volunteers. In just six months, with the help of Tiptree residents, the group has grown and now has 515 members. Many residents have continued to raise funds and donations have been made for items and equipment to support the running of the service. The group hopes to be able to open for six days a week for at least four hours a day and needs volunteers to collect food and meet and support residents.³²

Tiptree Meals Service, a family business established 35 years ago, offers a vast variety of quality meals at reasonable prices delivered directly to a customer’s door 365 days a year. With the high demand of this service - especially given that several competing companies closed during \covid - being given an opportunity to expand their premises so as to accommodate more customers would be greatly welcomed.

“My mother looked forward every day to her meals arriving. Despite the number of meals, the distance covered to deliver the meals, time was always spent with Mum for a quick chat and her meals served on a plate with her favourite drink poured out for her, so kind and thoughtful. Nothing was too much trouble whatever the weather or road conditions the team always arrived, what a truly amazing service. Thank you for playing a large part in my Mum being able to stay in her own home.”³³

Tendring district

Advice and guidance

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service offer free home safety and ‘Safe, Well, Secure’ visits to any Essex resident. Whether a person’s smoke alarm is working or not, these safety visits can offer more information about how to live safely and securely at home. The service offered includes smoke alarms; sensory smoke alarms for the hearing impaired; advice on home fire safety; health & wellbeing check & referral if required; electrical hazards, kitchen safety & safety in the home; advice around cost of living; crime prevention advice; advice around carbon monoxide & gas safety; fire retardant bedding; assessment for a Portable Misting Unit for most ‘at risk’ & vulnerable residents; training

³² [Home - Tiptree Community Fridge \(tiptreecommunityhub.co.uk\)](https://www.tiptreecommunityhub.co.uk)

³³ [Home - Tiptree Meals - Delivered To Your Doorstep \(tiptree-meals.co.uk\)](https://www.tiptree-meals.co.uk)

for carers. Visits can be booked using their online booking form, email, or phoning their Home Safety Team.

Some outreach work has been done at the library at Holland-on-Sea as well as facilitating a training session to promote fire safety to the parents at Little Pals Nursery based in Tendring Education Centre, located on Jaywick Lane. In conjunction with CVST, a three day public engagement event will be held in Holland-on-Sea in August 2023, consisting of door-to-door knocking and speaking to residents, offering safety messages and literature.

Project participants agreed that they felt unsafe when out after dark, poor pavements and road maintenance and faulty street lighting contributing to them feeling vulnerable.

“As the streetlights weren’t working and some have even been removed, my wife and I were forced to walk in the centre of the road so we didn’t trip on the dangerous pavements.”

Project participant

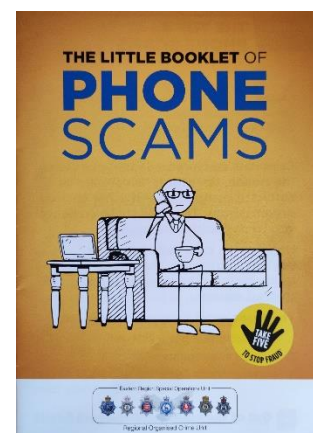
“I rely on people leaving their front door lights on to help me see the raised paving slabs and potholes.”

Project participant

Jaywick Sands Neighbourhood Wardens are responsible for reporting and helping to resolve any issues/complaints in the area. They have close relationships with local statutory agencies such as Social Services, Essex Police, The Environment Agency and Essex Fire Services. Over the course of time the Neighbourhood Wardens have developed a good rapport with many residents and older people feeling supported with the wardens regularly patrolling the area, visiting vulnerable residents and offering assistance when required. There are occasions where the wardens are a first response in vital situations such as when first aid is required, or an emergency service needs to be alerted.³⁴

In October 2022 officers from the Community Policing Team joined CVST for a Winter Warmer Action Day in Jaywick. They held a ‘Street Meet’ stall outside the Community and Resource Centre in Brooklands Gardens, along with different partner agencies offering keep warm items and offering help and support to residents.

Given that almost a third of all fraud is committed over the telephone³⁵, the Metropolitan Police Service has produced a resource ‘The Little Booklet of Phone Scams’ detailing a number of phone scam scenarios including a computer problem, a fraud investigation, an investment opportunity and details of who to contact when reporting scams.



³⁴ [Tendring District Council | Jaywick Sands Neighbourhood Team \(tendringdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/)

³⁵ National Fraud Intelligence Bureau

“Space is now a real issue at home. There are piles all over the house and no room to move.”

Hoarding advice guide, Independent Age

The charity Independent Age, founded over 150 years ago, offers free advice on care, support, money and benefits, health and mobility. As seeking help does not come naturally to many people of the older generation, it’s so important for them to know how the system works. As seen below, a selection of resource booklets has been produced and additional free advice guides include: If you’re feeling lonely; Living well with long-term health conditions; Coping with bereavement; Getting help at home.

“We had a free alarm and safety check from a fire safety officer. He replaced our outdated alarm and helped us plan our escape route. It was very informative.”



Advice and guidance

Jaywick Sands Community Forum, funded by the National Lottery, supports the vulnerable in the area, bringing local community groups together through programmes such as the winter warmers and slow cooker events. Being a registered food bank, they receive referrals from a number of agencies, i.e. Citizens Advice; CVST; The Harwich Hive; Home Start; Sure Start; Royal British Legion. Citizen’s Advice use their premises every Tuesday.

Tendring Careline, based in Clacton-on-Sea, are part of Tendring District Council, offering a community alarm service in cases where a person is unwell, has had a fall, if they are injured in some way or if there was an intruder in a person’s property or garden. The alarm comes in the form of a pendant that can be worn either around the neck or wrist. Tendring Careline’s mission is to ‘enable service users to maintain independent living with dignity and peace of mind’. Providing a 24 hours a day, 365 days a year answering service there is always someone available to talk if a problem arises. Emergency help can be called for or one of their Mobile Support Officers will attend. Installation, monitoring, and response services are offered to all those living in the Tendring area. Their small booklet is a useful resource with clear detailing.

Transport

Dial-A-Ride is a wheelchair accessible, door-to-door transport service tailored to meet the needs of Tendring District's residents enabling people to access vital health and social activities, education, training, volunteering opportunities, shopping and visiting friends. Service users are able to book their pickup and return times to fit around appointment times. This community transport service operates Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and is free to those with a valid bus pass.

Tendring Community Transport Hospital Hopper Service is available for people to access hospital and medical centres. This daily service picks up from both Jaywick and Holland-on-Sea and is free to those with a valid bus pass.

Physical health and wellbeing

The majority of U3A groups are held in the Clacton area, though Scrabble Clacton takes place in the Tudor Estate, Jaywick, held on the third Monday at 10am. This group offers a fun, non-competitive opportunity to socialise and engage with others.

Weekly croquet sessions take place at the Frinton-on-Sea Tennis Club, who have spent the last three years developing a full-size croquet lawn. It is open to U3A members and a free taster session with some coaching is available. Subsequent sessions cost £4 per person each week.

“You need a strong committee and so we'd welcome being able to secure additional committee members.”

Members facilitate the activities, i.e. a Music Playing Group who normally meet in the Frinton and Kirby Scout Hut have members who live in Holland-on-Sea.

Three miles from St Bartholomew's ward a U3A Country Dance is held twice monthly on the first and third Thursday of the month at Great Holland Village Hall. Other U3A groups held in Great Holland are Lace Making and Writing for Pleasure. The walks are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month and car sharing is available for those without transport. For those with an interest in gardening, a Gardening Matters group is held on a Wednesday afternoon at 2pm in the Assembly Room at the Holland Public Hall. DVDs are available which can be borrowed monthly at no extra charge.

Right Balance is a community weight support group in Jaywick Sands, funded by the Jaywick Community Forum, offering members free weekly weigh in sessions, receiving healthy eating tips, sharing advice, and discussing different topics each week sourced from the British Heart Foundation publications. Weekly meets are followed by an optional Ramblers wellbeing walk. Given the declining uptake of the group, the group's facilitator - a resident of the Tudor Estate, welcomes support in raising awareness of this asset. The low uptake may be attributed to a community who cannot afford to follow a healthy diet. CVST run weekly My Weight Matters sessions that take place in the Jaywick Community and Resource Centre.

“We have tried to open groups in Jaywick and Holland-on-Sea but these have been challenging. The feedback from community groups has been that there are a number of groups already running, by people within the community, so the Age Well East groups were not well attended. Jaywick residents told us that they have a number of groups and that their needs were elsewhere and not in community groups.”

Age Well East

The cycling project, Essex Pedal Power, has a base in Jaywick. This scheme aims to improve links between Jaywick Sands and Clacton, by launching a community bike scheme where residents can loan bicycles to use to travel to work or college in a healthy, green and cheap way. Recipients of these free bikes agree that it supports their good mental health and the opportunity to be able to socialise and meet new people. So far 200 bikes have been given out by Essex Pedal Power.³⁶

Caring for the carer

Located ten miles away from Jaywick Sands is ECL Clacton - Millicent's Day Centre, a day centre for older people providing care in a friendly and safe environment with a focus on building confidence for independent living. Activities are suitable to a person's needs and these stimulating and social activities include Chair-Fit; arts & crafts; cookery; IT; music and drama clubs; lunch clubs; shopping trips; gardening. Customers are allocated a Key Worker who is a point of contact offering full support with any requirements. It is worth noting that the Tendring Cost of Living Group has feedback that people would also welcome classes on cooking meals on a budget

³⁶ [Tendring District Council | Jaywick Sands \(tendringdc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk)

Case study

A request was received for social activities for K, a carer, who lives with her 93-year-old mother. K was extremely nervous about going out and was spending all her time at home with just her mother. She also had additional needs and was living with long-term medical conditions.

K was signposted to the Walton Café and travelled with her support worker for the first few times, but soon found people whom she felt comfortable to chat with and began attending the café alone. She used the community bus for transport to and from the group but if it wasn't available, swapped contact numbers with three ladies so a taxi could be arranged for them to share. Support received also included winter items and a plug-in radiator from the Resilience team.

K later shared with a volunteer about finding life very challenging with her mum, that they were struggling to live together, and it was becoming extremely difficult and upsetting and so help was needed. She was referred to and contacted by the Social Prescriber who was able to make a referral to Adult Social Services with consent regarding getting some support for both her and mum. Following on, a full assessment of needs was carried out and K reported feeling much happier as social care had visited and assessed both her and mum, it was now in the consultation process and that support was to be given.

KT continues to attend the weekly group and engages with lots of activities within the group's sessions.

ECL Clacton's approach to wellbeing activities at their day centre focusses on maintaining independence and improving wellbeing both onsite and out amongst the local community. Recognising that carers need support too they tailor the needs of carers providing respite time.

"I can relax and feel at ease knowing my husband is being supported by such a wonderful group of people. He enjoys every activity that is available including a gentle programme of exercise, music, games, puzzles, artwork. All his needs are catered for. A very healthy fresh cooked hot dinner is supplied. I could not wish for more. Thank you Millicents."

Project participant

"I live in Jaywick but there is very little support available for me. I have learning difficulties and am living with a long term medical condition and in need of back surgery. I'm the main carer for my husband who has a physical disability and am very worried about who will care for my husband whilst I'm in hospital."

Project participant

Combating social isolation

Loneliness and isolation can have a very negative impact on a person's health and wellbeing and many project participants reported feeling lonely daily. Connecting with others can be difficult to achieve if living alone or further away from family. Men perhaps

find it more difficult to build social connections than women, not having a network of friends and rarely sharing personal concerns about their health. Some men, when nearing retirement ages, can feel like personal identity and purpose is lost.

Jaywick Men's Shed, located in Jaywick Sands, is a community space where men can enjoy practical hobbies and is often run by volunteers. The purpose is centred around social connections, friendship building, learning, and sharing skills and knowledge. Offering the opportunity to meet like-minded people and having someone to share your worries with and gaining a renewed sense of purpose and belonging. In turn, they reduce isolation and feelings of loneliness, supporting men to deal with mental health challenges more easily and remain independent: they rebuild communities and, in many cases, they save men's lives. Jaywick Men's Shed is open on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 10am-4pm.

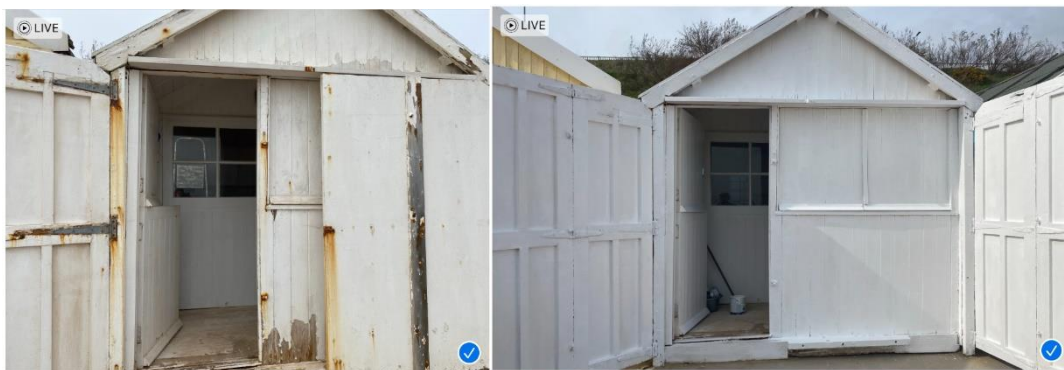
The Silver Line charity supports and uplifts older people experiencing loneliness. Their helpline is a free, confidential telephone service just for older people, providing friendship, conversation and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*"I used The Silver Line every night for about three weeks, and it really kept me going. They're lovely, I've not spoken to anybody that I haven't felt has been listening or engaging. I can put my hand on my heart and say I don't think I'd be here without them."*³⁷

As previously cited in this report Lads Need Dads CIC has a significant impact within communities as statistics show that young boys who have no appropriate male role model, can struggle as teenagers and are at a higher risk of low self-esteem, dropping out of education, engaging in anti-social behaviour, substance abuse and crime.

The impact of the absent father on boys follows them into adulthood. These boys are at risk of growing into men who have problems with behaviour, emotional stability, relationships with significant others and even their own children.³⁸

Below is an example of a project based in Jaywick, showing both the before and after photos of the renovated shed.



³⁷ [The Silver Line Helpline](#)

³⁸ [Our Impact - Lads Need Dads - Supporting and Guiding Boys with Absent Fathers](#)

By bringing people together, building strong relationships in and across communities, via community volunteering, it improves the places and spaces that matter to communities. It also helps break down the social isolation that some vulnerable members of the community feel. Lads Need Dads works closely with local community groups such as the Fire-Service, the Community Safety Partnership in Tendring, CVST, Family Solutions in Colchester and Tendring and schools across Tendring and Colchester. They have an informal partnership with the army - they have both employed veterans and have volunteer mentors on their team, an example of intergenerational work whereby men mentor and support the boys. Their oldest mentor volunteer is aged 75.

For those members of the community who may already feel marginalised and unsupported, where there are high levels of unemployment and deprivation in an area, this will exacerbate a person's feeling of isolation, negatively impacting their mental health. The OutHouse LGBTQIA+ Centre is a Colchester-based charity offering a range of services from free counselling to education workshops, information and support groups. OutHouse's most popular social group, and most diverse in terms of ages, is the 'Saturday Socials', held on the first and third Saturdays of the month, 10.30am-1pm, a coffee morning and opportunity to socialise, but people need to be able to travel to the Colchester city centre to attend. Currently, the only service available in the Tendring area is a LGBTQIA+ youth group which runs in both Clacton and Harwich on alternating weeks. Funding isn't currently available for any additional outreach work within communities.

CVST facilitates a weekly Bereavement and Friendship Club in the Community and Resource Centre in Jaywick and within their Clacton office, each session costing £2. Fundraising supports the organised day trips, e.g. a canal trip to Maldon - activities that people may not ordinarily attend alone. Traditionally the nature of this club may not have been accessed by men, but these warm and welcoming groups are proving popular and more men are now attending. These clubs are helping to combat loneliness, lifting people out of depression.

“Having felt so low this group gives me, a bereaved person, a new lease of life.”

Project participant

Bfriends is community befriending, mentoring and peer support in Essex for adults with learning disabilities or autism, helping people with similar interests widen their social network both as volunteers and participants. The project delivered by the Hamelin Trust and Essex County Council is currently offered in the Chelmsford and Braintree areas.

The Community and Resource Centre, located in Brooklands Gardens, is open four days a week offering a community hub with a variety of clubs and groups. The hall has been recently refurbished and there is free onsite parking available.



Community and Resource Centre, Jaywick



Painted mural, Community and Resource Centre, Jaywick

The Sight Centre provides a regular drop-in service at The Jaywick Community and Resource Centre. They provide advice and information on eye conditions and a range of services/benefits for people with visual impairment. They also share advice on other local organisations and demonstrate small pieces of equipment to support people to maintain their independence. A home visiting service is available to support peoples' independence. Their trained Eye Clinic Liaison Officer can assess a person's needs and provide information and practical advice to help them in their home. Their adjustments may include replacing main lighting with LED daylight bulbs, positioning of furniture and the removal of trip hazards. Task lighting is often best demonstrated at home to cater for the person's needs. Small gadgets can be demonstrated to help people with everything from preparing food to signing letters. Smart TVs can be optimised for audio description. Home visits are arranged via their helpline.



“X has not taken the loss of her sight very well but staying in familiar surroundings has made it so much easier for her. Advice from your team has given her hope that she can continue to lead a useful and enjoyable life.”

Project participant

Golf Green Community Hall houses a community-led library where members can swap books, socialise and access computer facilities. Clubs occupy this hall five days a week which include: Leisure Club; Quiz Night; Knit and Natter; Full Circle Over 50s; Keep Fit; Handicraft; Bingo; Lunch Club; Country Dancing; Kurling; Good Companions. As this community hall is self-funded, their fundraising is an important aspect.

Support for those with a learning disability

Located within the Tudor Estate area of Jaywick, the Bluebird Resource Centre provides a day care service supporting adults with learning and physical disabilities. The building is a bungalow allowing easy access for all and which can accommodate up to ten people per day and three per night for respite.

The centre is open from 9.30am-3.30pm and transportation is available to and from the centre. The day price is £85 which covers all expenses including food, drink and transportation though an extra charge of £20 is applied for those requiring transport outside the 20-mile radius. An overnight 24-hour respite service is provided every weekend for any service user that does not require any assistance with personal care. The overnight price is £200. A tribute to its success is that people who attend the centre continually return. Cooking sessions are plentiful so there's the opportunity to sell cooked produce to members of the public, thus enabling intergenerational engagement with the elderly in addition to connecting with Shorefields School, a special needs school in Clacton.



“Our son has been a service user at Bluebird for many years now and he loves every minute of it, the care team are so kind, caring and considerate to his needs. We have total confidence in the care team who provide excellent care and protection whilst doing activities and workshops of which there are many.”

Project participant

Being active is part of their ethos and so encourage all their participants to join in with their daily group exercise and yoga classes. They attend a weekly ‘Sport For Confidence’ class at Clacton Leisure Centre, run by occupational therapists. It

offers the opportunity to learn and gain new skills as well as socialising and making new friends. They attend weekly gym and swimming classes with a personal trainer who specialises in physical disability training for those who would like to attend. Each activity is adapted to individual abilities. Weekly ‘Seated Social Sports’ and ‘Love to Move’ sessions, lasting 45 minutes, are aimed at older adults and people living with dementia, costing £3.50 per session.



**Bluebird
Resource
Centre**

Several of those engaged with expressed their interest in swimming as an activity to support their physical health, attending a pool in Walton as “it’s easier to get in and out of the pool”. They agreed that a hydro pool (which would offer a therapeutic whole-body treatment involving moving and exercising in the water) would be a great benefit in the Jaywick area especially for members with physical disabilities. The nearest hydro pool can be found at Willow Park Lifeskills Centre, Clacton, a facility offering a creative learning environment and social network for people with autism, learning disabilities, physical and or sensory impairment. Several participants agreed that it’s challenging

booking sessions for this hydro pool as slots rarely become available. Responses from our participants regarding the local area include:

“There are three parks in the Jaywick area, but none of them are set up for disabled people, unlike the park at Walton which has a wheelchair swing.”

“I would like bigger (adult sized) apparatus at the play park because I get stuck on everything and need rescuing!”

“The paths in our parks here in Jaywick don’t go up to the play area, it’s grassed which the wheelchair can’t be pushed over. It’s not accessible for everyone.”

“I would really like the pavements to be improved. At the moment it’s very difficult to push a wheelchair along them.”

“It feels as though all the investment and money has been spent in surrounding areas outside of Jaywick.”

“There’s such a lack of facilities in Jaywick, excluding the Bluebird Resource Centre, there’s nothing set up for those with learning difficulties.”

“The Bluebird Resource Centre itself is not big enough. We’ve added buildings and an art centre in the garden but it’s not big enough to take too many service users.”

“Jaywick is predominantly a white community though I’d welcome more diversity so as incorporate different cultures into our work.”

“A lot of areas within Jaywick are not disabled friendly. The roads and the pavements are awful, especially around here trying to push people in a wheelchair around this Tudor Estate is very difficult. We’ve complained to the authorities that there are seventeen potholes in this road!”





“The pavements are all cracked, and we’ve even approached our MP advising them that it’s dangerous - there are times (as pedestrians) when we’ve had to use the road because we can’t manoeuvre the wheelchairs around the pavement’s potholes. Walking to the park is horrendous, I can’t do it to be honest.”

Case study

N, aged 71, has lived in the St Bartholomew ward in Holland-on-Sea for seven years and is an active member of the community. They engage with the Kennedy Way Community Garden, Men's shed, Public Hall, library, a member on the committee for the Holland Residents Association and actively involved in producing their quarterly magazine. She is the primary carer for her daughter H, aged 47, who has a learning disability.

N lives with multiple long term medical conditions and hasn't yet received an NHS annual health check and H, who is entitled to yearly NHS health checks, has only received two health checks in the last seven years. As N is still active, she is able to walk to her nearest doctor's surgery, Kennedy Way in Clacton, though is aware that many elderly people aren't in the same position and walking that distance isn't an option. There are no buses from St Bartholomew to the Kennedy Way doctors surgery and so people have to rely on taxis. The hopper bus has to be booked at least one day in advance, but GP appointments are same day appointments with no option for pre-book appointments.

N has applied for Attendance Allowance and was advised by the DWP that she does not qualify. On days when N's medical conditions flare up, she's unable to get dressed due to the pain but is concerned about challenging the decision of the DWP as being H's registered carer, what might the impact be on her daughter.

“For people with disabilities there is nothing locally that she can attend, so my daughter is stuck at home for a lot of the time.”

“Previously I tried to access local authority services for those with a learning disability and it was such a minefield that we gave up trying.”

“I don't feel involved in my daughter's care, and have previously felt dismissed especially by the DWP.”

“I think doctors' surgeries and social prescribers are the best people to offer advice on the care services available. Older people are used to not having services available to them and often do not complain enough.”

SNAP is an Essex charity for families with children who have an additional need or disability. They facilitate Rock it Club, at The Crown pub in Thorpe Le Soken, from 7pm-9pm every Monday evening, which is the place for people with learning disabilities to socialise, have a good night, with a disco, raffle and theme nights throughout the year. N would like to take H to this regular event but as unable to drive, is reliant on a friend for transport or alternatively incurring a taxi cost.

The charity 'Wheels for All' collaborates with occupational therapists, sports and leisure development, local councils, Primary Care Trusts' care support staff, as well as the support staff and parents of those pre-existing services users. The goal being inclusive cycling for all, embracing disabled people who would otherwise not be able to cycle, providing all the physical and mental health benefits being out on a bike - using their

range of specially adapted cycles. A Bluebird Resource Centre service user thoroughly enjoyed this experience at their nearest centre, which is Colchester Sports Park.

Acorn Village, a charity based in Mistley, Essex, supports adults with learning disabilities providing residential and supported living facilities. Their daytime activities encourage social interaction, learning new life skills, crafting, gardening, education, active leisure and entertainment.



At their purpose built Creative Craft Centre activities such as art and textiles can be enjoyed. Media, photography, drama and poetry groups are well attended. The centre encourages active interests such as bike riding, cookery, carpet bowls, gardening and off site sessions such as swimming and horse riding.

A coffee shop is available on site, a service also to the general public thus offering a further opportunity for integration. Their two charity shops, one on the Acorn main site and one in Manningtree, give an insight to others about Acorn Village whilst helping to raise funds. A resident from Jaywick has used Acorn Village.

“Our daughter X has lived at Acorn Village for over 20 years. The staff in the house and around the Village are always aware of her needs. She enjoys life and likes to be fully occupied. She goes swimming, horse riding and trampolining and is always eager to join in activities around the Village”



“Acorn Village has enriched X’s life in many ways, mainly giving him more freedom. He can safely walk around the Village, visit the coffee shop, the charity shop, walk through the pretty gardens to Mistley Hall to have a chat with people or ride on his bike. Acorn Village has opened up his world.”

Colchester Gateway provides social clubs, activities, advocacy and support to people with learning disabilities in North East Essex by hiring venue spaces for their sessions. Their weekly Clacton Wellbeing Group is currently free to service users but must be prebooked. This session provides the opportunity to meet friends, socialise and enjoy different activities each week. Many residents of Jaywick and Holland-on-Sea access this group. They don’t currently run groups specifically within our engagement areas but if there were a need, Gateway would welcome the opportunity to accommodate - approximately ten service users are required to start up a new group. Their advocacy support service covers this report’s engagement areas. It is identified that for middle-aged people with a learning disability who live with their elderly parents there’s a concern about what is going to happen to this person when parents suddenly find themselves ill or have passed away. The carer may not be known to social services and so may be faced with homelessness as they may not be financially stable, never having had their own benefits. Gateway work with their service users around future planning. They have five advocates

and one support worker and endeavour to find a solution to any problem so to give their client the best possible outcome.

“A client who has Down Syndrome was suddenly placed in residential care when her parents died, somewhere she’d never been before as had always been looked after by her parents.”

Project participant

Case study

M is terminally ill with a lung condition. She looks after her son who has a severe learning disability and autism who has also had his leg amputated. M asked for help in ensuring that her son is well cared for in a residential setting when she is no longer alive. Colchester Gateway visited M and identified that she was attached to a 15 metre oxygen cable which was trailing down the stairs creating a trip hazard and further dangers. Working with the fire brigade they did an assessment and found that the cable had a hole in it, likely to have been punctured by the cat in the house. M was referred back to the oxygen providers who have changed the whole system in the house and there is no longer a lengthy cable.

With limited mobility and unable to walk very far, M remains housebound and left feeling very isolated. Following a successful referral to Catalyst, M now has a foldable mobility scooter and is able to go out and enjoy short journeys. She says that this has changed her life.

As the house was in a very bad state of repair, caused by her son punching the walls and windows, there was a further successful application to Catalyst and arrangements have been made to replace the back door with toughened glass. This has significantly reduced further risk of injury to family members.

Colchester Gateway have also met with the care home staff and discussed the needs of both M and her son. Several meetings have resulted in improved communication, reduced medication for her son and more activities have been made available to him. This has greatly improved the mental health and wellbeing of both mum and son.

Case study

J is 83 years old and he has been caring for his neighbour, M in her late 50s, for three and a half years. M has cerebral palsy and J's life revolves around her. Following a referral to Colchester Gateway, a visit was made to J and M in their respective homes. M's house is hoarded and unsanitary and she is very unkempt. J has turned off all of the utilities in his own home and flushing his toilet with collected rain water. J eats miniscule amounts of food and is extremely thin. Together they both make daily visits to the shops. Being left to their own devices has led to a significant deterioration in mental and physical health for both adults. M is having daily nose bleeds, is incontinent and has developed a stress habit of teeth grinding which has left her teeth in very poor condition.

Colchester Gateway referred J and M to the fire service's Community Builder and both organisations have collaboratively worked on this case. Following Colchester Gateway's safeguarding concerns raised with social care, a social worker was appointed. With joint working with the social worker, a thorough assessment has been made of M's mental and physical needs. Following several meetings, visits and interventions, M is now in residential care and being supported but this has left J alone and bereft. Following concerns for his mental health, Colchester Gateway have referred him to a Community Agent in his local area who has specific experience in mental health. They will work together to ensure that he now also receives support and help around his health needs.

Green Elms Health Centre in Jaywick offers an annual health check to patients with a learning disability. Their website has signposting to the Sound Doctor, a web-based library of 300 film and audio patient information videos designed to help people understand more about some long term conditions i.e. COPD, diabetes, dementia, heart failure or back pain. You can also hear from other patients who are facing the same conditions. This is now freely available to North East Essex residents. A local GP adds: "Whether you have a long-term condition or caring for someone who does, it's important to feel confident and informed. The Sound Doctor offers high-quality information to help give you the confidence to manage your own health allowing you to continue your day-to-day life as much as possible."³⁹

Dentistry

People with learning disabilities may often be unaware of dental problems and, with a reduced ability to cope independently, may be reliant on their carers/paid supporters for oral care and initiating dental visits. People with Down's Syndrome are particularly susceptible to poor oral health as well as people who are unable to co-operate with routine dental care. Dental teams need to be alert to the larger number of people who have mild to moderate learning disabilities whose GP may not have recorded this. They are still entitled to support, both in their treatment and understanding of their personal dental care requirements, and in managing the administrative aspects of claiming exemption from payment for treatment.

³⁹ [Green Elms Health Centre](#)

Reasonable adjustments must be made by organisations which can include alterations to buildings by providing lifts, wide doors, ramps, and tactile signage, but may also mean changes to policies, procedures and staff training to ensure that services work equally well for people with learning disabilities. For example, people with learning disabilities may require clear, simple, and possibly repeated explanations of what is happening, and of treatments to be followed, help with appointments and help with managing issues of consent.

Support for good oral and dental care is an essential part of promoting good health and quality of life for people with learning disabilities. However, national, and international research, including systematic reviews⁴⁰, consistently shows that people with learning disabilities have:

- higher levels of gum (periodontal) disease
- greater gingival inflammation
- higher numbers of missing teeth and increased rates of toothlessness (edentulism)
- higher plaque levels
- greater unmet oral health needs
- poorer access to dental services and less preventative dentistry

Community Dental Services CIC, established in 2011, is an employee-owned social enterprise. A referral only dental service they deliver oral health care to people who cannot be treated in general dental practice, their patients typically have learning disabilities, mental health issues or severe anxiety, or are in situations or locations that traditional dental services cannot reach. Within our engagement areas they offer clinics one day a week, every other Monday, at Clacton Hospital and five days a week at the Colchester Primary Care Centre. Their Norfolk Oral Health team have worked with learning disability social enterprise, Leading Lives, to create an oral health toolkit for people with additional needs which can be accessed online free of charge.⁴¹

Holland-on-Sea

There's a strong sense of community within this seaside town where people engage and are sociable, recognising its importance for general wellbeing.

“And that's what I love about this community, you do literally just muck in together and you've instantly got that sense of belonging, and that purpose.”

Project participant

Though participants agreed that face-to-face connections in the wider community are very important to people, as local amenities and services are disappearing from the high street these opportunities are being significantly reduced. Of great concern to the community is the possibility of losing their Public Hall, all agreeing it would be a great loss to the community. Their concerns centre around the proposed new lease of the Public Hall and its impact on the running of the Hall.

⁴⁰ [Oral care and people with learning disabilities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

⁴¹ [Oral Health Toolkit - Community Dental Services](#)

“It would be quite a travesty if we lost our Public Hall as it’s used every single day, morning and afternoon, many people use the clubs there. We’re very much in need of it because that’s what keeps people healthy and a hub for so many to interact.”

Project participant

Participants agreed that public services are important in order to be able to live safely, i.e. having an available police force. They would be very grateful for additional support check ins from medical providers i.e., a clinician offering a hearing test during one of our club events.

The Holland Residents Association was set up to ensure that the needs of the residents were acknowledged and acted upon by the local and county councils to achieve what is best for Holland-on-Sea and its residents. Regular communication and social activities feature in the Association's work assisted by a quarterly magazine and website - a page from the magazine seen below.

HRA Community Pages

Kennedy Way Community Garden

New compost bins, a ramp to the Men's Shed and outdoor exercise equipment have all been installed at Kennedy Way Community Garden.

Community Voluntary Services Tending (CVST) has unveiled the additions to the garden, which were all part of the first phase of work at the site.

Members of the public, patients, volunteers and anyone in the community can enjoy the green space, which is also now home to Abberton Rural Training's (ART) Rural Skills Course - part of the Seeds4Growth Project.

CVST is working in partnership with ART, Paragon Care, Colne Radio, and Colbea on the Seeds4Growth Project, which is funded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities from the Community Renewal Fund through Essex County Council.

Nicola Vella, volunteer co-ordinator at CVST, said: "The community garden has grown hugely in popularity and is really becoming a buzzing place for community activity."

"We are now looking forward to starting Phase 2, which will include a new community building, vegetable planters and a sensory garden."

The community garden officially opened in October 2021 and is a result of a unique collaboration between the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System Local Estates Forum, the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance, site owners NHS Property Services and CVST.

A compost toilet is the last piece of equipment to be installed at the site under Phase 1 and already CVST has received hints and tips from a guest horticulturalist from the RHS for Phase 2.

For more information visit www.cvstending.org.uk.

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“I was reading Holland Residents Association newsletter and saw an advert about volunteering. I came to give a talk - people did not know about the community garden (at Kennedy Way).”

Project participant

To help people with their physical and mental wellbeing Kennedy Way community garden allotment opened in October 2021.



It provides additional facilities for the town’s social prescribing programme, and is ideally located in the centre of the patient and staff car park at the new medical centre. CVST are the service providers, managing the garden with a team of volunteers. The garden hosts raised beds, grasses areas with benches, refreshment facilities and a ‘Men’s Shed’. Open four days a week, one of the gardening sessions also offers a free outdoor gym instruction event. ⁴²

⁴² [Kennedy Way Community Garden - CVS Tending](#)

The Bowls Club has existed since 1949, and now boasts more than 160 men and women members. Costs are kept to a minimum as members voluntarily maintain the club's facilities, e.g., green-keeping, grounds improvement, catering and social gatherings. A programme of carpet bowls is available during winter months, along with a good calendar of social events. A full membership which includes use of all the club facilities costs £100 per year. Members agree that this is a warm, welcoming and all-inclusive club. Members feel much less socially isolated as there is the opportunity to visit the club daily with breakfast and lunch available.

“I joined one day in 2013 and the next day I had lots of new friends. The club goes from strength to strength, with great enthusiasm throughout. Moaning is banned!!”

Project participant

“I’m recently widowed and this club has been my salvation. Being able to interact with others has literally saved my life.”

Project participant

Combating social isolation



Aspired Assistance Limited in Holland-on-Sea was established in 2017 to help combat social isolation, loneliness and to support people to live in their own homes for longer. Help may come in the form of housework, transport and support to appointments, support to access the community or simply just companionship.

“My mum wouldn’t be able to leave the house without your support. It has meant she has kept her independence with your help.”

Project participant

To help people with their physical and mental wellbeing Kennedy Way community garden allotment opened in October 2021. It provides additional facilities for the town’s social prescribing programme, and is ideally located in the centre of the patient and staff car park at the new medical centre. CVST are the service providers, managing the garden with a team of volunteers.



Summary

The voluntary sector is an indispensable and integral part of the wider NHS and a key strategic partner. However, voluntary services are also ever-changing environments that need to sustain and support community assets to be able to deliver recommendations and contribute to improving wider determinants of health.

An ‘At a Glance’ information sheet (see Appendix B) produced by SCIE⁴³ explores the interconnection between loneliness and the emotional, psychological and social components of mental health that should be taken into account in the design of interventions.

The recommendations state: *The voluntary sector delivers the majority of the interventions which tackle loneliness and social isolations among older people. Health and social care statutory services need to work alongside community assets provided by the community and voluntary sector to help tackle the problem successfully. Voluntary organisations and community groups can only continue to provide and expand services for older people in communities if they are adequately resourced to do so.*”

An example of the need for adequate resources and also of the fragility of the voluntary sector is the announcement that Independent Age will cease its Essex Community Services in Autumn 2023. After conducting a fundamental review of its strategic focus at a national level, it has been decided that Independent Age will no longer continue to have a local delivery team based in Essex from the Autumn. Support will be provided for existing service users to ensure they are signposted to local services and that they are unaffected by this service change. At a national level, the charity will be focusing its activities on improving the lives of older people facing financial hardship.

The development of a strong community ecosystem is important to sustain and maintain the strengthening of the local communities, where people can age happily and enjoy good health. Colchester and Tendring have some great assets to offer local people to live for longer than ever before while keeping their health physically and mentally and ensuring that the extra years of life are spent in good quality. This report has highlighted the need to raise awareness of the importance of health-conscious choices, backed up by a coherent multidisciplinary structure and the enormous power of the community spirit.

⁴³ **Combatting loneliness in older people, SCIE:** At a glance 60: Preventing loneliness and social isolation among older people, May 2012

Recommendations

Information and Communication

1. **Building Community Safety Environments** - information, advice and signposting more relevant to the person and where they live.

Call to Action: Local Independent advisory groups (IAGs) to be encouraged to understand/explore personal perceptions of safety based on newsfeed, fear of digital platforms, hearsay about street crime through increased door-to-door knocking service, recognising the value of the service and promoting safety, via a multi-agency approach. This should include taking into consideration sensory loss and telecare service information, both indoor and outdoor. Offering sensory friendly spaces in buildings.

2. Improve communication to support better access to information language and sensory support.

Call to action: To consider in full communication needs, taking into consideration sensory impairment and learning disability. Explore physical safety of the street, wheelchair access, disabled parking options.

3. Look at alternative options for communicating with older people who may not have access to or choose not to use social media etc.

Call to action: Alliance Communications Group to explore options for communicating with those who may be housebound or have inadequate access to local information - to include using free newspapers and magazines, parish magazines etc and word of mouth.

Transport

4. Improve access to community transport, as well as addressing the length of journey and waiting times for transport, recognising that the bus companies are businesses and may not be able to improve services

Call to action: Promote community transport and volunteer driver schemes, day excursions, hospital transport, etc. provide accessible restroom facilities and review parking payment options.

Supporting and Including Carers

5. Improve support for carers through better information and advice about navigating the system and managing at home. Encourage GPs and hospitals to identify and support carers and support carers to recognise their own health and wellbeing needs.

Call to action: Geographical mobility has resulted in carers often being remote and feeling detached/uninformed about their loved ones, therefore part of care planning should include identification of carers and how/when they should be communicated with.

Call to action: More care homes encouraged to make activities accessible to the wider community.

Call to action: Closely link into what is happening and planned to support carers through the new carers offer in ECC, where carers are a priority.

Call to action: A big grassroots campaign promoting the role of carers, supporting people to plan ahead and giving their loved ones the right to make decisions through Lasting Power of Attorney, encouraging and enabling people to identify caring roles (health and financial) much earlier in life and will making to help with any issues after end of life.

Promoting intergenerational and diverse volunteering opportunities

6. Promote positive contact between members of different social groups, including those from younger and older age groups through inter-generational projects, can foster social harmony and reduce prejudice and preconceptions, especially in care homes. Intergenerational projects can be a good way of protecting children, provided that safeguarding is put in place around the activity and that all those engaged know how to deal with any safeguarding issues that arise.

Call to action: Offer creative engagement opportunities, for example micro volunteering, sampling multiple volunteering opportunities and a chance to volunteer for longer periods, especially where friendships are established.

Call to action: Taking into consideration complexity of circumstances, e.g. multiple health conditions, when developing volunteering roles.

Call to action: Develop clear policies to underpin safeguarding of children and adults into the intergenerational work.

Offer digital literacy confidence and support

7. Support digital literacy in the home or in local facilities by extending the number of digital support groups available and training befrienders to support improvement of and confidence in digital skills.

Call to action: Promoting local groups, offering digital support; encourage increased awareness and strategies to protect against social media scams, cloning of bank details etc. Trading standards to be encouraged to join the winter resilience teams.

Growing and sustaining Community Assets; increasing 'neighbourliness'

8. Offer more information about local surgeries, for example the role of community connectors, social prescribers, community pharmacies in promoting activities, screening and wellbeing.

Call to action: Set up drop-in sessions at local surgeries, offering to 'meet the practice manager' to promote services and allow residents to put forward

recommendations, suggest improvements, etc., being invited to give constructive criticism.

9. Set up Cultural Awareness, mental health awareness, drugs & alcohol awareness etc days, to promote understanding of various cultures and issues and how much support they get from within the community

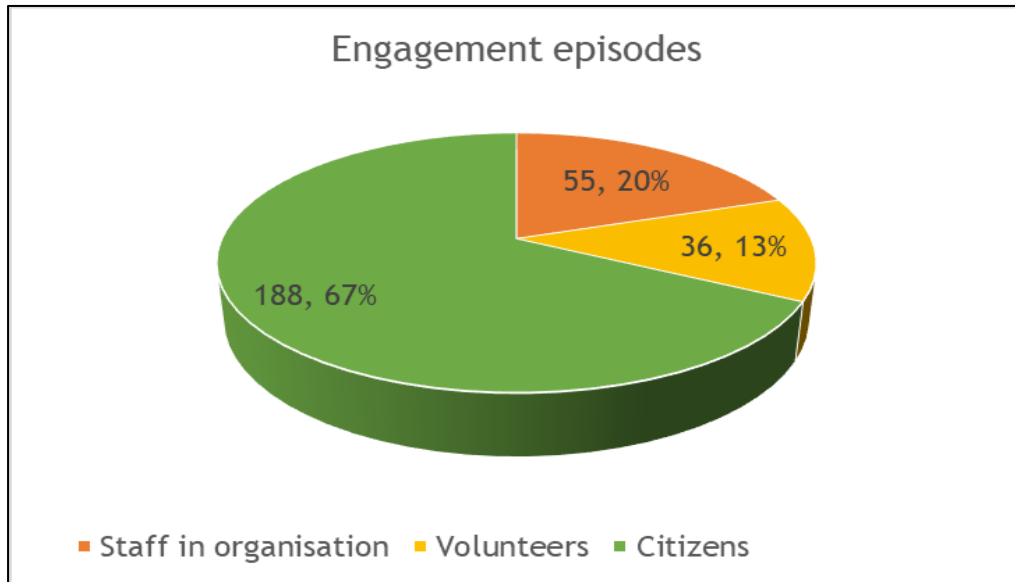
Call to action: Widening understanding of cultural norms, sexuality, mental illness etc. by more generally recognising key cultural days, showcasing good practice to keep identity etc. This may support increased tolerance, valuing of diversity, and enabling inclusiveness.

Call to action: Encourage social and sheltered housing providers to promote neighbourliness and connections among tenants and residents.

Appendices

Appendix A - Engagement Reach

Engagement episodes were primarily in the two focus areas of Tiptree and Tudor Estate/Holland on Sea. However, there were a number of broader interactions across Colchester and Tendring with both organisations and individuals.



Appendix B - additional relevant information from reports

High level recommendations from 2022 State of Ageing report

Health	Housing	Work	Communities
Concerted action from across government to reverse trends in stalling life expectancy and increasing amounts of time spent living with illness and disability. Co-ordinated action from across government to address stark and growing health inequalities.	Focused action from across government to tackle the national crisis that is our poor-quality housing stock. Introducing regulations to ensure that all new homes are fit for the future.	Targeted, individualised back-to-work support for over 50s to address the particular challenges this group faces in the labour market, including ageism. The creation of workplaces that support longer working lives.	The creation of communities that enable older people to be active, participate in and shape the places in which they live. Recognition of and support for the role that community services and the voluntary sector play in health and wellbeing of people as they grow older

SCIE, combatting loneliness in Older People

An 'At a Glance' information sheet produced by SCIE⁴⁴ focused on how to combat loneliness in older people. Many community assets are in a trusted and accessible position to be able to support older people and make them feel more connected with their community. The paper summarises the effect and impact of loneliness and isolation as follows:

- older people are particularly vulnerable to and from loneliness and isolation owing to loss of friends and family, mobility or income.
- being lonely or isolated can impact on blood pressure and is closely linked to depression, so can have a detrimental impact on wellbeing. This has cost implications for health and social care services. Investment is needed to ensure that voluntary organisations can continue to help alleviate loneliness and improve the quality of life of older people, reducing dependence on more costly services.
- The range of interventions for alleviating loneliness and social isolation can be grouped into one-to-one interventions, group services and wider community engagement. The most effective seem to include befriending, social group schemes and Community Navigators.

⁴⁴ **Combatting loneliness in older people, SCIE:** At a glance 60: Preventing loneliness and social isolation among older people, May 2012