

Appendix C: Community Assets Mapping excerpts for Safer Colchester

In June 2019, Community360 produced a report mapping Community Assets in Colchester Borough. In August 2020, Healthwatch Essex, CVST [Community Voluntary Services Tendring] and Community360 came together to co-design a Terms of Reference, intending to refresh the 2019 report and one produced for Tendring. They developed a three-year plan of research, with a partnership between CVST, Community 360, Healthwatch, Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council, One Colchester, Tendring District Council, NEE CCG [North-East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group] and/or the NEEHWA [North-East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance] and Essex Association of Local Councils. The first finding of their work will be published soon but sections have been extracted from the draft to inform the Crime and Disorder Committee of some themes and outcomes from consultation.

January 2021

One Colchester

Local communities rallied during lockdown and created new responses to local need. Examples include Wivenhoe Mutual Aid, a hot meals delivery service in Greenstead, food support in Highwoods led by local faith groups, the Fordham emergency response plan which recruited 22 volunteers, West Mersea community volunteers and BAME community WhatsApp groups.



Strategically, One Colchester responded rapidly to galvanise assets in March 2020 to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. One Colchester is a senior level partnership working together to facilitate a system wide approach to a Safer Colchester; a Prosperous Colchester and a collaborative approach to maximising the opportunities for good Health and Wellbeing across the Borough. Operating since 2014, the network had built up trusted relationships across the voluntary, public, and commercial sectors which could be called upon quickly to co-produce relevant solutions at a Borough-wide level but that could disseminate into local neighbourhoods where existing assets may need support.



The group adopted the function of the Community Hub, with individual partners taking on key responsibilities, such as Beacon House and Colchester Borough Homes supporting Homelessness provision and Community360 managing volunteer recruitment, deployment, and wraparound support for vulnerable and shielded people – be that food, prescription pick-ups, transport, or social isolation. The programme worked in tandem with the Essex

Wellbeing Services, receiving referrals directly and joining the developing Vulnerable and Shielded Taskforce to learn from and plan ahead for continuing to support at risk community members.

Within six weeks, partners had:

- Conducted 76,416 contacts with vulnerable people.
- Supported 2399 households to access food and medicines.
- Helped 39 rough sleepers to find accommodation – a figure that rose over the coming months to in excess of 50 people.
- Gave over £27,000,000 to businesses in grants

By the beginning of August, the partnership had also committed to activities that supported community safety and access to the Arts and Culture:

- 5,254 hours of High Visibility Patrol Police, supporting town centre safety
- 90,750 views of daily poetry project
- Over 1,000 people engaging in Essex Explores lectures

The Hub served as the central point for contacting Category A shielded patients in the Borough and called more than 4,419 people to offer support or information. Together with referrals from the wider community, the Hub supported by C360 and volunteers had (by end of October):

- Collected 1,894 prescriptions
- Issued 452 welfare parcels, delivered to individuals
- Provided resources, shared to 16 local community groups running their own neighbourhood programmes, including schools supporting key workers and parish-based groups
- Conducted 9,892 welfare calls made to local residents, including regular calls to more than 360 people, shielded patients and those with mobility issues



For local residents, the services proved vital.

Community Voices – Covid-19 Case Study – not being forgotten

At the core of much of the feedback received by the Community Hub was the fact that people were not missed, ignored, or left without help. One parent who is self-isolating is autistic with an autistic son and who has escaped domestic violence has received 4 parcels.

“Thank you so much for the food bag.

My son had some rolls cooked for lunch and is HAPPY

*Her son has autism and was unhappy because he enjoys “Plain” food and they had none.
He particularly missed plain rolls!*

KM is also a single parent with a long-term health conditions [Lupus]. She has a daughter who is autistic whom she was really worried about. She spoke to our team who then referred her for a Welfare Pack. We received the following feedback.

I am isolated for 3 months on the government advice. I am a single parent with an autistic daughter. The first couple of weeks of shut down I had no help or support, so I had to go to the shops myself, of which is a big risk for me and my health issues. My autistic daughter offered to go for me being scared I might catch the virus and herself would not be able to cope with the shopping experience as it is atm. ... I had a call from a lovely lady called Amanda Finley wow what a lovely lady, so kind/ empathetic and lovely natured lady. I received a call within a couple of hours to place my food order within an hour my food was on the doorstep and my prescription a day later. The help and prompt response were overwhelming it reduced me to tears for the relief that I finally had help and didn't have to endure the shops anymore; you even gave my autistic daughter an Easter egg wow what companionate people you are.

We are now starting to recognise the potential impact of long tail COVID-19.¹ The British Lung Foundation and Asthma UK has begun the process of mapping people's experiences and this will be an important resource alongside local people's voice.

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Communities

Across Colchester and Tendring, BAME population density varies significantly from ward to ward. Overall, less than 5% of residents in Tendring represent BAME communities, with over 10% in Colchester, where there is a growing BAME population in both areas. It has traditionally been the home in the UK of the Gurkhas and has welcomed the resettlement of refugees including from Afghanistan and Syria.

The 2011 census² showed that:

- In Colchester there were 14,000 BAME citizens; in Tendring there were 5,000 BAME citizens.
- The proportion of young people who are from BAME communities is higher. In 2016, BAME schoolchildren were 14.8% of the population in Colchester.

The largest group within Colchester's BAME population is those describing themselves as British Asian. However, there are one hundred nationalities represented and so some groups are relatively small. BAME citizens live throughout the Borough but are not equally represented in all wards. The ward with the highest BAME population is Greenstead. Wivenhoe also has a relatively large BAME population. The ward with the lowest BAME population is Tiptree (just 106 people). In Tendring, the size of local communities can be very small and consequently isolating. For example, there are just 34 people who describe their ethnicity as Pakistani in District.

Indices of Deprivation³

In 2019, The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) was updated. The IMD covers 7 categories - income, employment, education, health, crime, barriers to housing & services, living environment.

¹ <https://www.post-covid.org.uk/2020/10/29/mapping-the-experiences-of-people-with-long-tail-covid/>

² www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=census&id=KA-02616

³ JSNA 2019 Colchester and Tendring

It is recognised that Colchester has pockets of deprivation that continue to impact on the quality of life of local residents and are not improving. The Borough has 27 LSOAs that fall into the top 40% of most deprived LSOAs in the county. These LSOAs are largely concentrated in the wards of Berechurch, Greenstead, New Town & Christ Church, Old Heath & The Hythe, and St Anne's & St John's. Colchester has 1 LSOAs in the 10% most deprived in the country, found in the ward Greenstead.

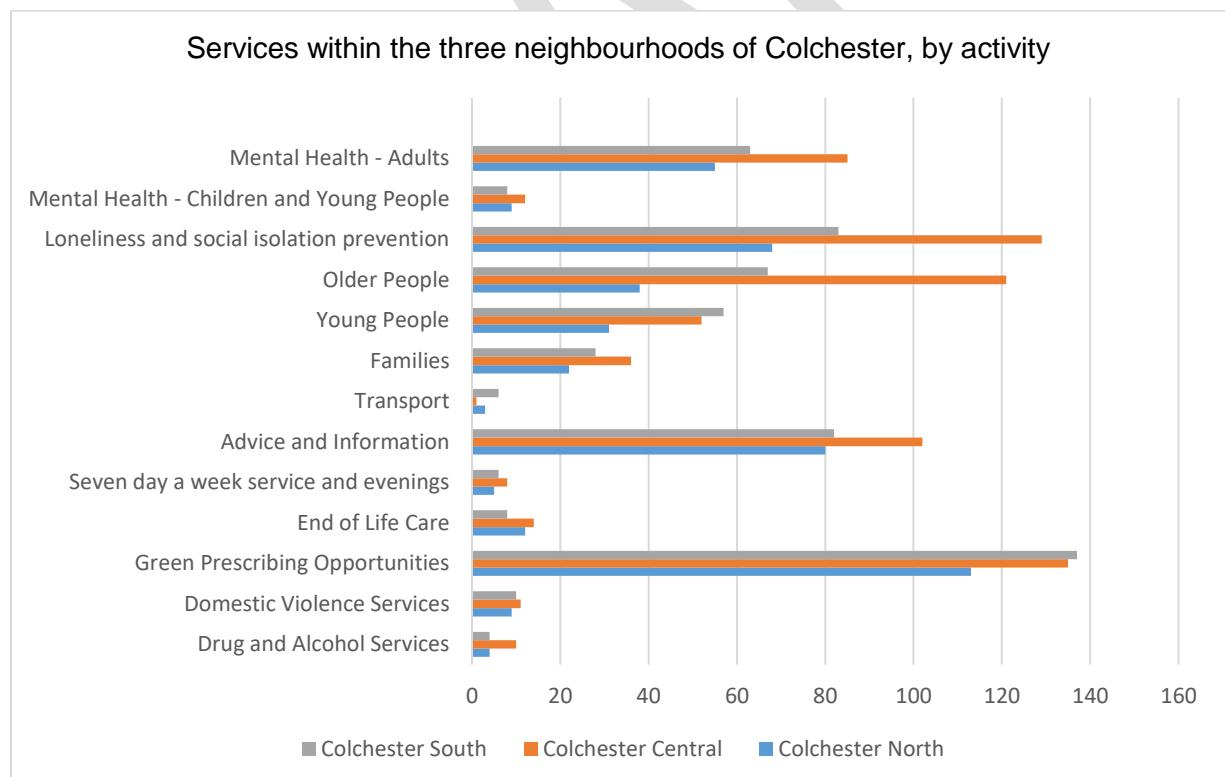
The average life expectancy at birth for a child born in Colchester (2015-2017) was 83.2 years for females and 80 years for males. This is just above the average for England for both sexes (Females = 83.1, Males = 79.6).

Life expectancy at age 65 in Colchester (the number of additional years a person could expect to live) was 21.1 years for females and 18.8 years for males, the same as the England average for both sexes (Females = 21.1, Males 18.8).

Sensory Impairments

In Essex, 53,800 people are estimated to be living with sight loss (second to Kent nationwide), but this is the largest percentage nationally based on population. Also, 10,300 people who are deafblind.⁴ Across the county, 286,796 people live with hearing loss.⁵ Across North East Essex alone, 68,089 people are believed to be living with hearing loss of 25 dBHL or more.

Colchester



Colchester North

⁴ <https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool>

⁵ Hearing loss data tool

Colchester North includes contains the majority of CO4 postcodes in the Borough, as well as CO3, CO6 and a small number of CO7 postcodes. Colchester North includes Rural North, where many smaller villages and less densely populated parishes are located but with this comes a strong sense of identify associated with the area (we see this replicated in Colchester South which contains towns and villages such as Tiptree or Mersea). However, more community-based Facebook or online groups have been catalogued in both rural and urban areas of North Colchester than either Colchester South or Central. In practice, there are more than double the number have been active locally through the pandemic.

Colchester North is the location of some of our most significant sites for physical activity, especially sport, notably Colchester United, Colchester Golf Club and Colchester Rugby Club.

Within the 2019 asset report, we identified that a notable proportion of our community centres and halls are based in Colchester North, in part as a response to the rurality of parts of the Neighbourhood. This represents a strength, but the long-term impact of prolonged closure is yet to be determined.

Consultation with local people has suggested that another strength in this area is engagement with the infrastructure of agriculture, i.e., Farmers networks.

Colchester Central

Colchester Central draws in the greatest number of CO1, 2 and 3 postcodes of any area, with very small numbers of CO4-7 postcodes included in its catchment area. As we analyse data under the Live Well Domains, many voluntary and community sector partners identify a greater take up from people living in CO1-4 postcodes.

For example, more areas in Colchester Central access support from Citizen's Advice at a higher level than in any of the other Neighbourhoods.

The Neighbourhood is strengthened by many active faith groups who have co-ordinated responses to the pandemic but also maintain an ongoing commitment to reducing social isolation, ensuring that inequity is challenged, and that vulnerable people have access to necessary resources including food.

Stanway, previously included in Colchester North (2019 Community Assets Report) is a site of continued development. This is both housing and retail. This affords opportunities and is impacting upon the infrastructure of the Neighbourhood. School catchment areas have extended or altered in the last two years, with Home Farm Primary School (based in Prettygate) doubling in size to accommodate growing numbers of families entering the Prettygate and Stanway areas. This is both because of development, but we are also acknowledging the changing demographics of the area. Prettygate has been evolving since its foundation in the late 1950's/60's and many residents who had been living in the area for decades have been downsizing or leaving the area, introducing opportunities for families, attracted by the proximity to schools.

A continued review of the changing demographics and the influence of length of occupancy in areas across the Borough would be beneficial in the future to continue to predict trends that may require a review of the existing assets to determine if they meet changing demands.

Good transport links into Colchester Central encourage activity here and the location of many public spaces only contributes further.

Armed Forces Personnel are served by several bespoke services in the area. The Community Support Development Workers for the Army Welfare Services facilitate a varied programme

of activities for families. They have continued remotely and are integrating with wider networks, such as Essex Family Support services. We have sought to uncover more information about the size and scale of veteran communities based here. No single database of all veterans exists for the area. The figures cited earlier in the report will only include personnel who have served 12 years or more. However, this data shows more than 1000 people based in CO2 postcodes.

The area does host several venues for localised groups and sessions, but consultation with community leaders demonstrates a desire to extend this in areas including Berechurch and Stanway (where conversations are already underway). This would respond to increasing populations and updating existing facilities.

Colchester South

Colchester South has a mixed character as a Neighbourhood. It contains the wards which access Citizen's Advice support in the highest numbers (Greenstead) and the lowest (Wivenhoe). It hosts the two areas with the most significant BAME populations, again Greenstead (17.4%) and Wivenhoe (15.8%), but also the lowest with Tiptree (1.4%) and Marks Tey (2%). Like Colchester Central, it includes postcode designations from CO1-7 but notably the largest groupings are CO2, CO4 and CO5.

The extremes which are noted above reflect some of the unique assets and challenges affecting the area. It contains some of our most deprived Lower Super Output Areas in Greenstead but also has one of our most asset rich areas in Mersea.

The presence of the University and its influence upon the surrounding environment is evident in the diversity of local communities neighbouring Wivenhoe Park. It also affects our population demographics, highlighted earlier, with a higher proportion of adults aged 20-29 living in the Borough. Yet, Mersea, again providing contrast, has a larger proportion of older adults living within its boundaries.

The type and number of assets in the area is similarly varied. It includes some unique and interesting examples, such as the Student's Union RPG and Tabletop Society, community run Colne Radio and Bus Pass Safari Tiptree U3A group, although all U3A groups are suspended until further notice.

Engagement with local councillors (through surveys and discussions) has brought to the fore a question of the possibility of seeking to extend the provision of youth services in parts of the Neighbourhood.

Education

Adult and Lifelong learning is available from at least 20 public, commercial and voluntary services in Colchester Borough. They range from informal to postgraduate degree level. They offer courses in industry specific skills and personal interests. Most are based centrally at hubs in the Borough but the Universities of the Third Age (Colchester, Stanway and Tiptree) and WEA's (West Bergholt, Tiptree, Mersea, Dedham, Colchester) are based in localities.

Others offer bespoke training for mental health support (Interact), youth (YMCA), adults with learning disabilities (Brightlives) and the voluntary sector (C360).

Faith Groups

Faith groups are key assets within our local neighbourhoods, operating within defined boundaries and reaching across communities and ages, although some congregations have

a significantly older population – in one church 80% of worshippers are over 70 years of age. Engagement with faith groups has highlighted through lockdown that people, not just place of worship, drives activity and can continue whether people are able to access a physical space. Like many groups, technology has been essential, but they have developed outreach programmes for food delivery and social support that requires direct contact.

Overview of assets in North East Essex

In 2019, we identified more than 2,000 assets and over the course of the year have continued to add examples of new, emerging and amended assets to the list.

The influence of Covid-19 has been profound upon the direction of services, mode of delivery and continuation of them in local communities. We have taken our original asset map as a starting point. We have reviewed the original 2,000+ assets, compared this list with new services that have emerged and been captured in valuable research conducted during the pandemic (such as the production Community response and residents' packs). We have monitored news feeds through September, October, and November to capture as much information as possible about existing assets. However, this is a changing picture with introduction of revised restrictions and a second lockdown during the research period.

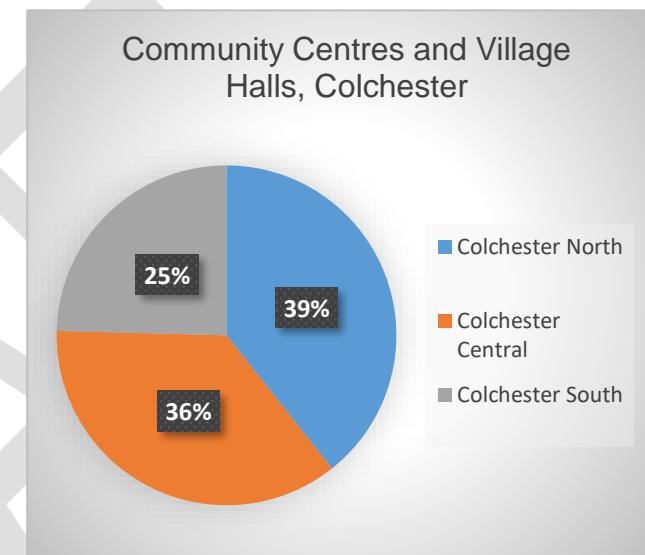
Analysis of those active, inactive, and newly formed assets raises considerations for:

- Community Events/Activity Timetables – our assets are not just our services, but our celebrations, memorials, community schedules and events, be it carnivals, community fayres, air shows, fundraising drives or exhibitions. Whilst many activities have moved online, for example, Remembrance Sunday commemorations, the cohesion created at public events in shared, physical spaces is in deficit and needs to be reinvigorated for the future.
- Hub/public spaces – consultation with local leaders praised the role of existing facilities, such as community centres, but expressed concerns in the short and medium term about the ability of some spaces to continue to operate after the impact of the pandemic and the need for adaptable/extended spaces to reach more people. Green spaces have been cherished throughout the pandemic and green activities were some of the first to return for use or develop after the end of the first lockdown. This did not include formal sports teams but alternative forms of physical activity and informal sports-based groups. Over 200 different opportunities – ranging from gardening programmes, to U3A groups, to walking football, walks to Tai Chi – and now Boccia leagues in Care Homes, are supporting the wider agenda of reducing physical inactivity. The capacity to reach people at scale face to face will be the ongoing challenge.
- Communications – the power of local neighbourhoods to communicate, organise and be agile in responding to need has been demonstrated this year. This has been an informal and formal activity. The desire exists within some wards to build on this or learn from others, in neighbouring wards to improve communications networks.
- Community Resilience – not only were many people and groups mobilised at a local level, but by reviewing the asset map, we can see many assets who support community cohesion and accessibility through community cafes, places of faith, social groups and communities of special interest. This contributes to the high figure of Be Well assets, alongside green prescribing.
- VCSE [Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise] support – over 100 of the assets identified, be they church halls, grant makers, trainers, or advice services, renew and support local assets.

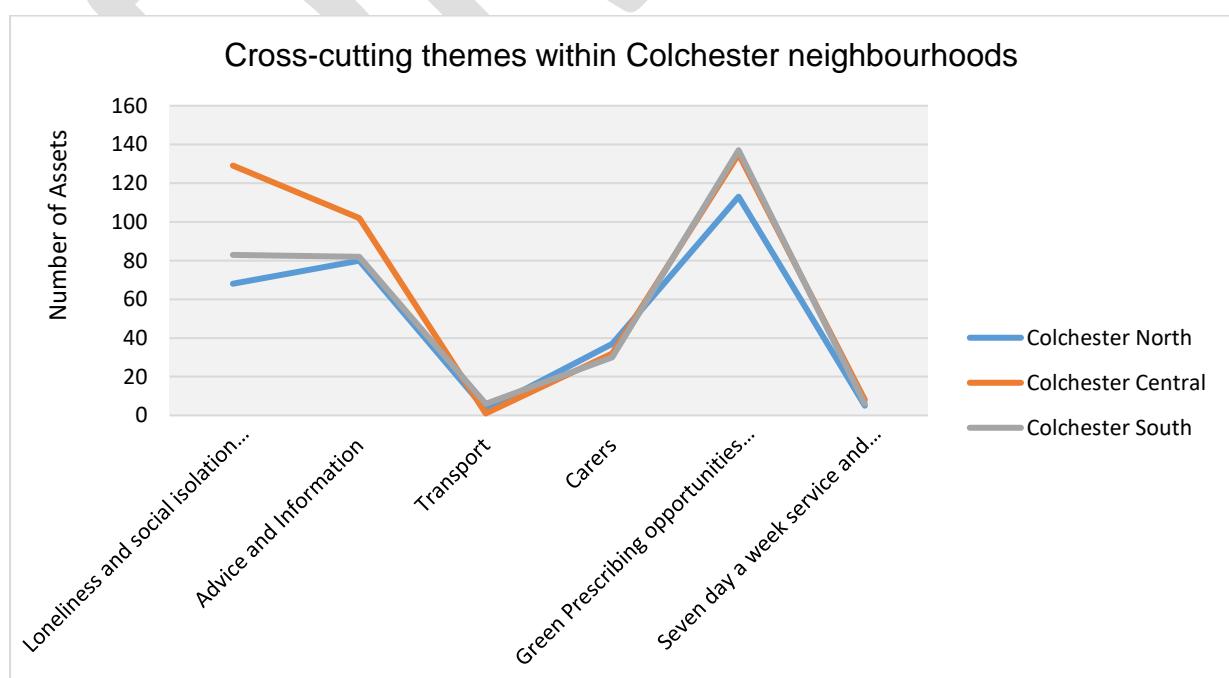
- Assets outside of the area – we cannot ignore the importance of assets based outside the area but that offer outreach. This will often be at people's homes or through virtual means – i.e., Seafarers Links. Therefore, they will not be identified on Neighbourhood maps but will influence local lives.

Village Halls and Community Centres

In Colchester we have identified 57 halls, community centres and faith centres operate serve as wider community facilities with other sites (bringing numbers to more than 65) managing a diverse timetable of activities in-house. They are well-distributed across North East Essex and are often run by willing volunteers. Colchester Halls in Partnership brings together five of our community centres into a shared administrative booking network to improve sustainability and increase income generation with locations across South, Central and North Colchester.

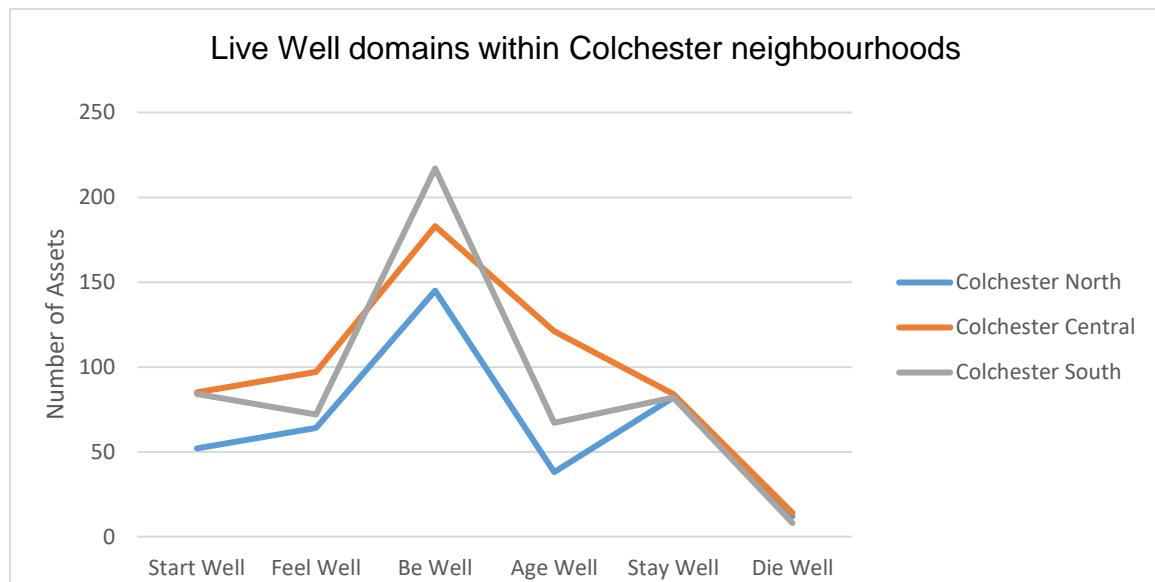


Cross Cutting Themes



Live Well Domains

The NEEHWA Alliance has adopted the Essex-wide Livewell approach and its six key themes; this report has attempted to present issues by domain and neighbourhood where appropriate and possible. What must be noted is that the placing of the assets under certain domains is subjective as they could be interpreted in different ways by different people depending on what the focus is upon.



Feel Well – supporting mental wellbeing.

When surveyed, voluntary and community groups in Colchester overwhelmingly registered that their greatest concerns for residents were in relation to mental health and loneliness. Both were registered by over 80% of respondents. This relates to all ages, as noted above by Homestart for example, and across communities. BAME listening events brought concerns about mental health to the fore as well.

There are a range of services within across North East Essex offering support to people with mental ill health. These include Haven, Summit (*pictured*), the Citizens Advice Tendring Mental Health Hub, Mid and North-East Essex MIND and Samaritans in Essex – Colchester, Tendring and Suffolk Borders. Loneliness and social isolation are tackled by many organisations and communities in different ways, from formal befriending to special interest groups, drop-in sessions to timetabled activity.

Suicide and self-harm

According to the latest data from Public Health England, Tendring now has the second highest suicide rate in the country, at 18.8 / 100,000, while Colchester has the third highest rate in England at 18.5 /100,000 (the highest in England is Torbay at 19 /100,000). The average for England is 10.1 /100,000.

The development of the Crisis Cafes and roll out of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Suicide Prevention training is essential as a response to this need and the voluntary and community sector has taken the opportunity to heart. C360 and CVST facilitate and promote MHFA training which is well attended and followed up. Feedback from those who complete the course highlights how often they ultimately use the training (in some cases daily) and the reach that it can have.

The importance of support for men, especially single men, is also presenting anecdotally within support services for some of the stressors noted by Summit. In Colchester, emergency support – including food and financial capacity – is being sought by more single and younger men, as are the services of Refugee Action Colchester.

For those engaging with services, the transition to new ways of working will be a challenge. Mid and North East Essex Mind have commented on how some clients became very anxious over lockdown and through the Summer, struggling with going outdoors again to attend sessions. Responses to technology were mixed with some clients able to manage it and were therefore able to access support through this means however, many were struggling with technology and lacked confidence.

The Haven Project

The Haven Project supports the treatment of adults living with a personality disorder across North East Essex. Since lockdown, the recovery programme is facilitated by Zoom groups several times a week with individual one-to-one appointments also available twice a week. They are also piloting in-reach groups in Ardleigh Ward at the Lakes. They are running four recovering groups which are both self-directed and social networking groups.

They are also finding that clients are encountering more complex issues affected by the continuation of Covid-19 restrictions. For some people, good mental health is deteriorating, and they are finding they are delivering more crisis calls each week. Some clients are in higher states of anxiety, lower states of depression and may be using unhealthy coping strategies such as self-harming.

The Haven are facilitating some social contact and are aware of the impact that lack of physical contact is having on clients.

Befriending

Befriending is a lifeline for people living alone and for carers who are feeling isolated and tired. Organisations such as Independent Age, Age Concern Colchester, and North East Essex (ACCNEE), Essex Befriends, Re-engage, United in Kind, Community Transport, SUMMIT, Essex Carers, Carers First, CVST, C360 have regular 'check -ins' with people and give them some time to chat and offload some of their concerns. Most organisations offer a social environment within which people can feel a sense of belonging. Sometimes a buddy or friend is needed to help people grow the confidence to access services.

Yet, demand is high and the impact of the pandemic on usual social patterns is being felt in the voluntary sector as people are seeking ways to keep connected. C360 received more than 900 requests for referrals into befriending services in the first seven months of this financial year. The figure already exceeds the number of enquiries taken in all the previous twelve months. We maintain a network of 10 local befriending agencies who meet quarterly to provide peer support and update on the status of services. Their feedback has been essential in understanding more about the reach and demand:

- One countywide provider has taken on additional staff to meet need.
- Providers spoke of increasing anxiety amongst older adults and referrals on to mental health services.

- One provider had supported isolated adults by incorporating volunteers into their 'bubble' to allow for contact.
- Another provider had reduced the lower age limit to support more people at younger age range.

Monitoring and maintaining capacity is essential, with some providers managing waiting lists and others holding referrals with demand outstripping the supply of volunteers. With the large number of enquiries, we also wish to identify any potential hotspots of need. Pre-COVID-19 research indicated that those living in the centres of estates may be vulnerable and with less travel out for work and leisure, the impact on former commuters and younger people should be taken into consideration.

Independent Age

Before the lockdown in March, Independent Age focussed on supporting their socially isolated clients through face-to-face volunteer visitors' telephone befriending calls and small book club groups held via a telephone conferencing platform. When the lockdown started and the face-to-face visits had to stop, the organisation began to receive an increasing number of calls from lonely, socially isolated people who were becoming more and more anxious. Independent Age knew a response was needed and so set up small virtual Coffee Morning groups over the telephone. Initially 7 groups were set up with 35 people taking part. By September, this number had grown to 27 groups with 126 people participating every week.

"I had my first conference coffee morning call this morning and it was great. Thanks for asking me and could I ask you to pass on my thanks to the woman who rang me/organised it, I have forgotten her name. The facilitator of the group was a lovely man and the group seemed to gel very well on a first footing. We seem to be a group of characters and have led interesting lives and have lots of things in common as well as interests which we can share too. I didn't realise how good it would be, it was if we were in a café or round a table. I have always been impressed with Independent Age and you have helped me very much. This is a great innovation and I look forward to it continuing. [...] It was so interesting and more than a call for me to a phone buddy which are very good, it opened up my social life! You are a great bunch".