



# Community Asset Mapping Refresh North East Essex 2020



## Foreword

The intention of the North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance has always been to be community focused, ensuring the citizen is front and centre. As partners working together in a wider health and social care system, we rely on the invaluable community assets and resources to help us all to achieve the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of people in Colchester and Tendring.

Community assets are far reaching and are so much more than known community and voluntary groups. They include informal networks like Facebook groups and friendship circles; faith groups and services; charities, CICs and not for profit organisations; volunteers, friends, and neighbours; local businesses with social responsibilities as well as events and seasonal activities, all which pull people together.

The first Community Assets Mapping reports, one for Colchester and one for Tendring, were published in January 2019. This most recent report was commissioned again to look at community activities, strengths, and challenges. It covers all north east Essex and draws upon local data from voluntary and community groups, case studies and consultation, to contextualise our place within the context of reports, including the Index of Multiple Deprivation update in 2019 and the Marmot Review 10 years on (which looked at progress made on prevention and tackling health inequalities).

The report also explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our communities, the way they work, their resilience and sustainability.

Thank you to colleagues in C360, CVS Tendring and Healthwatch Essex for bringing this together and to all who gave their time and information to inform this report. As Chair of the Alliance Board, I will do my best to facilitate changes needed and calls to action resulting from this research.



**Mark Jarman-Howe**

Chair, North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance

## Contents

Foreword .....	2
Executive summary .....	6
Key findings .....	7
Methodology .....	7
Live Well and cross-cutting themes .....	11
The Neighbourhoods Model .....	11
Wider determinants of health .....	12
COVID-19 impact .....	13
Neighbourhoods – COVID-19 .....	14
Community engagement through the pandemic .....	15
Tendring .....	15
Colchester .....	16
Coastal towns .....	19
Marmot 10 years on .....	19
What does the situation look like since the last community assets mapping exercise? .....	21
Overview of Tendring and Colchester .....	25
Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities .....	26
Armed forces and veteran communities .....	27
Financial capability and benefits .....	28
Indices of Deprivation .....	28
Sensory impairments .....	29
Community safety .....	29
An overview of community assets across our Neighbourhoods .....	32
Tendring .....	32
Tendring South .....	33
Tendring West .....	33
Tendring East .....	33
Colchester .....	34
Colchester North .....	35
Colchester Central .....	35
Colchester South .....	36
Education .....	36
Faith Groups .....	37
An overview of community assets by type .....	37
Village halls and community centres .....	38
Cross cutting themes .....	40
Transport .....	41



Carers .....	44
Advice and Information .....	46
Volunteering .....	48
Voluntary and community sector sustainability .....	50
Digital Services and Inclusion .....	52
Seven day – weekend evening services.....	55
Live Well Domains .....	55
Start Well – giving children the best start in life.....	56
Community level services .....	57
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provisions .....	59
Feel Well – supporting mental wellbeing.....	61
Suicide and self-harm .....	62
CAT mental health hub .....	63
The Haven project.....	64
Befriending.....	64
Independent Age.....	65
Be Well – empowering adults to make healthy lifestyle choices .....	65
Physical activity.....	65
Drug and alcohol dependency .....	66
Financial capability, housing, and income .....	67
Employment .....	71
Stay Well – supporting adults with health and/or care concerns to access support to maintain healthy and fulfilling lives.....	72
Safeguarding Adults.....	72
Dementia and Community Voices .....	73
Age Well – supporting people to live safely and independently as they grow older .....	76
U3A .....	77
Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex .....	77
Die Well – giving people nearing the end of life the choice around their care .....	78
Recommendations .....	79
Focus on the strengths .....	79
Gaps in knowledge .....	80
Volunteering key to keep assets working .....	80
Digital inclusion.....	81
Neighbourhood level engagement .....	81
Corporate social responsibility .....	81
Prevention.....	82
Caring for carers .....	82
Wider determinants of health.....	82

Social connectedness.....	82
Longer term strategies.....	83
Colchester Specific.....	84
Tendring Specific.....	84
Appendices .....	85
Appendix A – Examples of assets.....	85
Appendix B – Councillor questions.....	88

## Executive summary

There is little argument against the importance local groups and organisations have and the role they play in the day-to-day functioning of local communities. However, although we speak about how critical and integral, they are, we do not often look at them in a collective calculable manner. This could be either across the whole of a county, or down to a local and neighbourhood level. We do not allow ourselves to consider exactly the unmet need that would be left if they did not exist.

Research conducted by Community 360 and Community Voluntary Services Tendring (CVST) back in 2019 endeavoured to do just this to show how community assets are part and parcel of the communities that exist in Colchester and Tendring. North East Essex was divided into six neighbourhoods, three in Colchester and three in Tendring (see page 9 for the geography) – this is known as the 'Neighbourhood Model', reflecting the neighbourhoods identified for primary health and social care services.

The key findings were:

- There is a significant variation in the type and quality of information available, and it is often difficult to find services or sufficient detail about them
- There are strong and varied community assets out there
- Transport into and around Tendring is variable; in Colchester and Tendring accessibility to transport was vital to community members to access therapy and support
- Providers of the services report that the social aspect is as, if not more, important than the type of physical activity
- Services are abundant in towns and villages, but not necessarily matching population need
- Partnership working is essential – a joined up approach
- The need to investigate further the support required by all communities
- The need to invest in community assets if they are to continue to provide preventative support and promote independence to enable people to live well at home, as recommended later in this report.

This refreshed report seeks to bring together the excellent work that had previously been completed. It will also consider what has been achieved since and what has changed, building further on the neighbourhood model. This includes looking at how COVID-19 has and will affect the community assets that exist as well as look at the new assets that have launched. It will strive to shine a light on good practice and emphasise the important role that the community assets of north east Essex have had in the pandemic and how we can take these forward and replicate them. It also shows detailed recommendations drawing on the gaps that have been identified. It also considers the support and funding that is needed to make sure the community assets can continue to be at the forefront of the neighbourhoods and areas they provide for. Therefore, investment is key.

Several crosscutting themes came to light during the research and these are reflected upon for both the Colchester and Tendring communities. Also considered are how the different community assets work within the six Essex-wide Live Well domains; Start Well, Stay Well, Feel Well, Be Well, Age Well and Die Well. This has been important as not only does it show what is working well, but it has also highlighted important areas that are severely lacking organisations and support.

## Key findings

This report observes that across the board community assets are often looked upon as a first port of call for people in the community and that without them they would not know where to turn. Other key findings and points are shown below:

- Technology – this can be both a barrier and a well-used tool to break down barriers
- Knowledge is golden – people need to be empowered to have the information they need and know where to find it
- It is not a one size fits all – it is important to use neighbourhood and local knowledge of what is needed to plan for services
- There are plenty of community assets but are they the right ones? And are they in the right place? Make sure services feed into local needs
- Trusted / leading the way – there is a need to utilise the important role the current assets have within the community and learn from them
- Ownership within the community – importance of giving the communities the opportunities and support to create and run their own. Assets need time – they cannot just be expected to work straight away

Overall, this report demonstrates the benefits that community assets have for the residents of Colchester and Tendring, and how there is a huge desire from local people to have ownership in what is available to them. It also shows how often the assets cover the shortfall from other funded initiatives that are not providing what is needed and wanted. COVID-19 and the situation we have all found ourselves in since March 2020 has highlighted this even more. The assets help with general wellbeing, give communities resilience against both social and economic problems and help give people a sense of identity.

This report does not come without its limitations, community assets by their very nature are always evolving and changing. Therefore, the information in this report can only be a snapshot in time and continued frequent updating of research must be considered to truly understand community assets across north east Essex.

## Methodology

Throughout the document an asset will be used to describe ‘any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, groups, communities, populations and/or institutions to maintain and sustain health and wellbeing and to help reduce inequalities’.

Following the publication of the asset maps in 2019, Community360 and CVST proposed to:

- Share the findings of the report widely and update periodically – C360 did this by circulating the report to stakeholders and CVST to their members and presenting the programme to partnerships, the local strategic partnership. Asset mapping has remained a regular agenda item and been embedded in COVID-19 response plans. C360 co-facilitated a network meeting with the NCVO (National Council of Voluntary Organisations) in February and spoke about the potential of continued asset mapping.
- Continue to consult with community members and review relevant data sources – fundamental to keeping the work of the asset maps pertinent has been acknowledging that the data is subject to change. Prior to the decision to formally refresh the report, both organisations have maintained a listening approach and targeted hearing from groups and individuals. This has included hosting events with Dementia Voices, information gathering

and literature reviews. The work laid the foundations for this new report.

- Establish benchmarks which use local intelligence to assess community assets and needs – a great part of this process has been keeping place at the forefront of our considerations. Together with public sector partners, C360 and CVST have taken opportunities to connect data to wards, establish baselines to identify trends and isolate ‘neighbourhood hotspots’ of activity. Now the work is being renewed from 2019, the partnership is seeking wherever possible, to use comparative data to monitor change over time.
- Prioritise Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles in all that we do to deliver our recommendations – throughout the last eighteen months, a focus has been placed on showcasing what is working well and extending knowledge of ABCD principles. Training has been offered across the sector and regular news and information bulletins have helped to maintain this profile.

In August 2020, Healthwatch Essex, CVST and Community360 co-designed a Terms of Reference outlining the intended approach to refreshing the 2019 reports. This included a three-year plan, with a partnership between CVST, Community 360, Healthwatch, Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council, One Colchester, Tendring District Council, NEE CCG and/or the North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance and Essex Association of Local Councils.

Healthwatch Essex is an independent champion for people using local health and social care services across the county. They help citizens find out about local health and social care services and listen to what they think of services. Healthwatch Essex help improve the quality of services by letting those running services, and the government, know what people want from care and by encouraging those people running services to involve citizens in changes to care.

The methodology retained ABCD principles. ABCD focuses on what is working well and learning lessons from it to apply to existing or future activities. ABCD encourages innovation and partnership working, to manage resources to their greatest potential. It empowers individuals to take charge and determine change. Nurture Development, a leading agency in implementing ABCD, cites five core principles<sup>1</sup>:

1. Citizen-led – residents must drive change and be active participants in making change in their communities
2. Relationship oriented – by working together, residents and organisations can maximise their potential and utilise the skills and assets they have
3. Asset-based – identifying ‘what’s strong, not what’s wrong’
4. Placed-based – surveying assets and opportunities at a neighbourhood level
5. Inclusion focused – being flexible with our concept of boundaries that may exist

Initially, a steering group was set up to oversee the mapping exercise and coordinate research activity and this has been meeting throughout the project. Progress against the last assets mapping recommendations was reviewed. A literature review was carried out to determine current thinking and to identify any relevant information and experience elsewhere which would support research. The neighbourhood model (which groups health, social care and community services by area) and use of Live Well domains and cross cutting themes were prioritised.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/blog/asset-based-community-development-5-core-principles/> (29 May 2019)



A review of all available data took place. Voluntary and community sector partners shared reports (both unpublished and published) for consideration. Public sector partners provided links to relevant data sources or similarly completed bespoke searches on key themes. Up to date data could be difficult to come by, especially from public sector sources and was certainly not available on a neighbourhood level. However, the information provided offered a telling insight into our local communities and further questions for research in the future.

During the process, and towards the recommendations stage, key personnel attended voluntary sector forums and Tendring Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing Board. Discussions were held with Tendring District Council to consult on emerging themes and issues, test findings and to encourage more data. C360 worked within the One Colchester partnership, alongside Colchester Borough Council, to engage with local representatives and test findings as they emerged.

Discussions and updates took place with community groups and leaders to learn first-hand experience of the challenges facing local communities. In particular, participants were invited to discuss how the pandemic has impacted on the community and voluntary sector services and operations. C360 partnered with the University of Essex to conduct interviews with community leaders – a piece of work which is ongoing but has been referenced in the report. The interviews will form an oral history archive and include voice recordings for review. They cover:

- Their account of how they/their organisations responded to the threat of COVID-19
- The story of if and how any partnership working with other groups emerged
- How they developed solutions or encountered challenges along the way
- Their sense of whether these adaptations were short-term or whether they envisage longer-term impacts; their feelings about the future more broadly (the second 'lockdown' may offer a useful departure point here)
- Their reflections on how their lives have changed and the lives of people they interact with as part of their community organising work
- How they feel about their own role and position in managing and responding to change

Tendring District Council has a Memorandum of Understanding with the university and it is envisaged that this work could extend into Tendring.

Two surveys of community and voluntary sector groups in Tendring took place – one during the pandemic and the second as restrictions were lifting after Lockdown 1.0. to establish impact and expectations of the future. C360 issued a survey across Colchester through the summer and followed up with non-profit organisations through the autumn at relevant meetings and networks – i.e., befriending network. CVST held a focus group with a range of organisations as a reality check of findings and to consider options for change.

Citizen's voices were captured through reviews of work, including Dementia Voices and those supported at community hubs. A survey was issued to local councillors in Colchester and Tendring.<sup>2</sup> Case studies and good practice examples were sought where they had been identified during the refresh.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B

We also note that this document is produced within the context of Michael Marmot's review of his 2010 report to produce 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives', to outline proposals for strategies to tackle and reduce health inequalities in England. Much of the analysis of the following pages and the recommendations align to those made in 2020 by Marmot.

We acknowledged that the report would be published in a new context which included complimentary research programmes. In summer of 2020, Anglia Ruskin University produced *Overcoming Barriers to Health and Wellbeing: Community Assets in North East Essex* by Dr Oonagh Corrigan, Dr Shannon Doherty, Dr Suzanne Hughes, and Dr Russell Kabir. The document undertook a detailed, independent investigation into the value of local assets in Colchester and Tendring. In particular, it looked at 'how assets are perceived to benefit (or not) the wellbeing of vulnerable populations including citizens in socially deprived areas.'<sup>3</sup> The authors were able to identify many advantages for people accessing voluntary and community assets. Their work will continue with further research planned. Taking this into account, it was agreed that assets would be defined using Corrigan (et al) designation:

A community asset is defined as "any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, groups, communities, populations and/or institutions to maintain and sustain health and wellbeing and to help reduce health inequities (Morgan and Ziglio, 2007). Community assets can take a variety of forms including activities, support groups, social networks, and community spaces/places. A defining feature is that they have their roots in the community with the aim of benefiting community members."

COVID-19 has had a massive impact on local populations and on community and voluntary sector assets and activities. Some organisations have ceased to be viable and new ones initiated. The population profile has changed, and new or more complex needs have emerged, especially around social isolation and support with daily living and the rate of deterioration in long term conditions.

This report presents the findings and recommendations as of November 2020. Further refreshes and deep dives into specific areas of health and wellbeing in north east Essex will follow. It is intended that the document will be refreshed bi-annually.

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<sup>3</sup> Overcoming Barriers to Health and Wellbeing: Community Assets in North East Essex p.3

## Live Well and cross-cutting themes

The NEE Alliance has adopted the Essex-wide Live Well approach and its six key themes; this report has attempted to present issues by domain and neighbourhood where appropriate and possible.

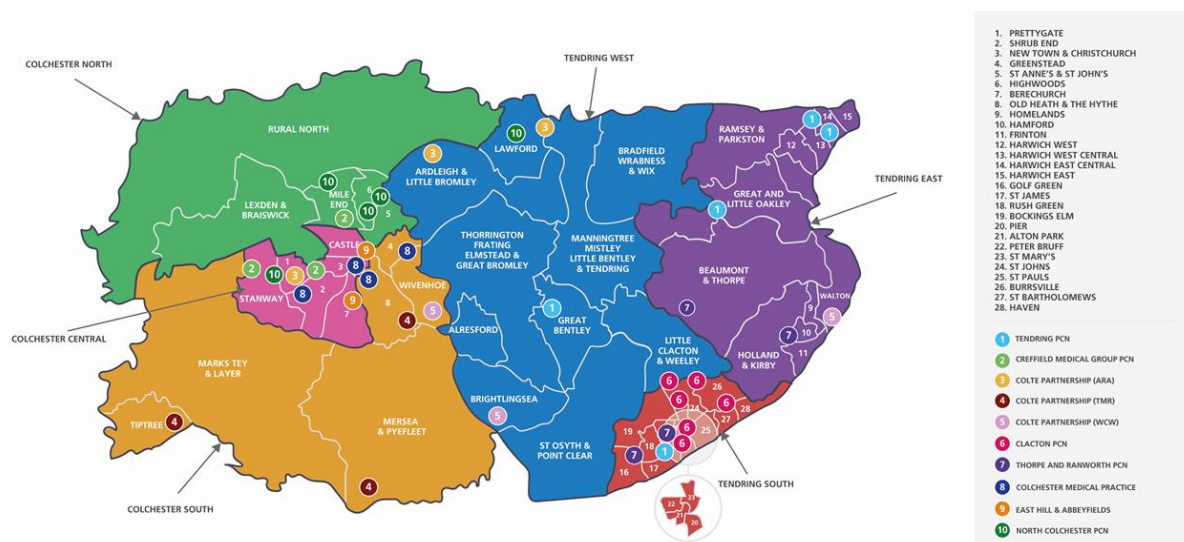


There are also a number of cross-cutting themes emerging from the research carried out to produce this report:

- Access to services
- Digital platforms and inclusion
- Isolation and loneliness
- Physical activity
- Advice and information
- Transport
- Volunteering
- Carers
- Employment/financial hardship

## The Neighbourhoods Model

In 2019, the reports referenced North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance's community model to create six 'functioning, multi-agency/multi-disciplinary teams in north east Essex – who are empowered and supported to deliver the Live Well outcomes in their neighbourhood'. The neighbourhoods model as it is now known, continues to form a structure for the analysis of the report.



The six neighbourhoods have been reviewed and the Colchester Neighbourhood boundaries have been redefined as shown below:

**Colchester North** consists of Rural North, Lexden & Braiswick, Mile End, Highwoods, and St Anne's & St John's.

**Colchester Central** includes Castle, Stanway, New Town & Christchurch, Prettygate, Shrub End and Berechurch.

**Colchester South** is comprised of Tiptree, Marks Tey & Layer, Mersea & Pyefleet, Wivenhoe, Old Heath & The Hythe, and Greenstead.

The Tendring Neighbourhoods were also redefined and are shown below:

**Tendring South** consists of Bluehouse, Burrsville, Cann Hall, Coppins, Eastcliff, Pier, St James', St Bartholomew's, St John's, St Pauls, West Clacton & Jaywick Sands.

**Tendring West** encompasses Alresford & Elmstead, Ardleigh & Little Bromley, Bentley's & Frating, Brightlingsea, Lawford, Manningtree & Mistley, Little Clacton, St Osyth, Stour Valley and Weeley & Tendring.

**Tendring East** comprises Dovercourt Bay, Dovercourt All Saints, Dovercourt Tollgate, Dovercourt Vines & Parkeston, Frinton, Harwich & Kingsway, Homelands, Kirby Cross, Kirby-le-Soken & Hamford, The Oakleys and Wix, Thorpe, Beaumont & Great Holland, and Walton.

## Wider determinants of health

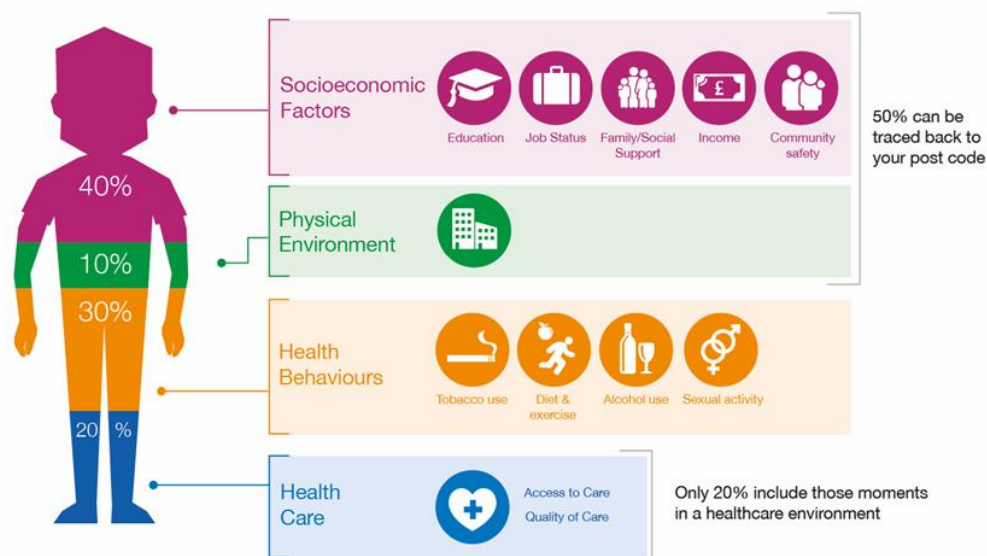
The vision and aim of the Alliance are:

**Vision** – for everyone at all stages in their life to be able to Live Well in north east Essex.

**Aim** – to work together to offer the people of north east Essex the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes, meeting both immediate and longer-term needs.

In order to achieve this aim, the Alliance recognises the importance of a wide range of factors in affecting the health and wellbeing of residents. The wider determinants may include income, good quality housing, education and health behaviours to name a few. Whilst researching and reviewing our local assets, this has remained at the forefront of the process and is reflected in the data gathering and engagement undertaken by partners in the production of the report.

The impact of these factors can be illustrated in the image above:



## COVID-19 impact

Throughout the course of the pandemic, Colchester and Tendring have, relatively speaking, experienced lower than average levels of infection compared to national statistics. At the time of producing this report, 3964 cases had been confirmed across north east Essex, with 319 deaths recorded, concurrent with a positive COVID-19 test within 28 days.

Essex County Council has drawn up a COVID risk and vulnerability dashboard<sup>4</sup> which indicates that if the virus continues to spread in Tendring then Tendring's population of older people, age 65+, is at risk. Colchester ranks less highly, with a comparatively younger population but combined, there are more than 76,000 people over the age of 65 living in both districts.

Looking at vulnerability indicators, in brief, Tendring has the highest, and Colchester the third highest, number of people age 65 and over in Essex who have: -

- had a fall
- had a heart attack
- had a stroke
- live with diabetes
- have mobility issues
- have life limiting long term conditions
- live alone
- need help with domestic tasks
- live in a care home

<sup>4</sup> <https://data.essex.gov.uk/dataset/2ydz7/covid19-risk-and-vulnerability-mapping-dashboard>



The dashboard presents a wider 'vulnerability' index, which covers the whole population. This index combines around fifty indicators reflecting both the health of local populations and the wider (non-health related) characteristics that might leave households vulnerable through the crisis. Again, by these indicators, Tendring has a high level of vulnerability in the general population. It has the highest prevalence of many conditions, including diabetes, asthma, coronary heart disease, cancer, COPD, atrial fibrillation, stroke, heart failure, dementia and epilepsy. Colchester sits at varying levels within many of the conditions but has the highest number of people diagnosed with depression and has the third highest the third highest prevalence for mental health conditions overall.

Colchester and Tendring are also ranked first and second respectively by the prevalence of adults living with learning disabilities in the county. Modelled predictions have been developed by POPPI/PANSI to estimate that 3660 people of whom 2947 people are aged 18-64 and 713 people are aged 65+ live in Colchester with a learning disability. In Tendring, levels could be around 2747 people of whom 1828 people are aged 18-64 and 919 people are aged 65+. <sup>5</sup>

Essex County Council is supporting economic recovery as highlighted in their '[Back to Business](#)' report. Back to Business is funded by Essex County Council to support businesses to grow during COVID-19 and beyond.

We are also now starting to see the potential impact of long-tail COVID-19. <sup>6</sup> 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.

## Neighbourhoods – COVID-19

One of the most striking reactions to the pandemic has been the utilisation of data and its influence in understanding vulnerability to COVID-19. <sup>7</sup> The British Red Cross (BRC) hosts a data dashboard which analyses vulnerability based on health statistics, demographics, and assets. The index rates risk out of five (with five being the highest risk rating).

In Colchester, no area is rated at the greatest risk level but three are rated at level 4 – Greenstead, St Anne's and St John's, and West Mersea. Greenstead is also designated as the only ward with low community assets or engagement in the borough. The methodology for this designation is yet to be fully described by BRC and should be reviewed in the future. When compared to the information gathered in the process of developing this report, we have identified many positive assets in Greenstead, with examples including the Boaz Project, Munch Club and Tots2Teens.

In Tendring, many wards are registered at the highest risk level, reflecting the data shown within the county dashboard. The vulnerability decreases towards the north and west of the district. However, the report also suggests a lack of community assets and 'left behind areas' in many of the wards along the coast, an assumption which should be mitigated against through this report.

This fact understandably raises a concern about national research without local input.

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<sup>5</sup> JSNA 2019 Colchester and JSNA 2019 Tendring

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.post-covid.org.uk/2020/10/29/mapping-the-experiences-of-people-with-long-tail-covid/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://britishredcrosssociety.github.io/covid-19-vulnerability/>

## Community engagement through the pandemic

Despite the impact of the pandemic, work was still able to continue. Below are some examples of this community engagement which has been broken down into Tendring and Colchester.

### Tendring

The Tendring Hub was set up and coordinated by Tendring District Council (TDC), Operation Shield, to provide an integrated response and to safeguard vulnerable and shielded people in the district. This required the dynamic set up of some virtual teams, new IT solutions to support their work and redeployment of officers. All the time maintaining an understanding of what was required at a government, county wide and local level to ensure the support and associated measures (including the delivery of urgent food parcels) were there for those who needed it most.

Significant effort was invested in coordinating volunteers. The team, with assistance from CVST, identified around 70 local groups, capturing what support they could offer, setting up a two-way system of information sharing, and tapping into a rich talent pool that in turn could be deployed when requests for assistance were received. Volunteers and staff from the local groups were supplemented by Essex Welfare Service volunteers (circa 100) and Tendring's proportion of the 400K national NHS volunteers. There was more than enough assistance to meet the requests for help received.

The TDC team under Operation Shield worked on helplines, handling incoming calls from people who needed support; the lines are still staffed from 9am – 4pm during the week. Over 1000 calls for support were taken in the first 10 weeks. Initially 500 people in Tendring were identified as especially vulnerable, expanding (following information from Public Health England and the NHS) to 8000 community members. There were approximately 1300 requests for food parcel support which were delivered directly via the government process.

The Hub has made over 3000 outgoing calls to these vulnerable residents to ensure they had the basics at hand in the shape of food, medicine, and other household essentials. Over 50 physical visits to people's homes were made to check on welfare when telephone calls were unsuccessful.

Two Hubs were set up, one in Dovercourt, the other at Clacton Leisure Centre. Both received an initial delivery of food, which they repackaged and in liaison with charities and community groups organised local distribution. These became sites where the army set up temporary COVID-19 testing facilities.

Supported by donations from local supermarkets the Hub team continued to work closely with a number of food banks, assisting them with a variety of measures to retain their capacity, including assistance to secure additional grant funding. It was heartening to see examples in Jaywick where up to 60 free hot meals were delivered and in Harwich 100 meals were supplied to residents who were shielding.



## Case Study - Tendring Hub

"I spoke with a gentleman who had been identified as having a need for food, he was having trouble accessing the national website. His food stocks were running low, so I registered him, with his permission, on the .gov website so he could receive weekly food parcels.

I arranged a food parcel from Tendring Eldercare with a special request for some boiled sweets and shaving equipment, as this was very important to him. He was very upset on the phone as he had very recently lost his wife of 50 years.

Although he has carers in to assist him, I didn't feel that they could give him the time he needed to talk. Therefore, I referred him to United in Kind who could invest the time he needed to give him the support throughout his difficult period, preventing him from further isolation. Had I not phoned him, he wouldn't have asked for help."

One of the services in Tendring is Care Line. It is used in many ways by over 3000 Tendring residents, all geared to facilitate a better quality of life. In the autumn of 2020, the team moved Care Line to a new digital platform. This improved the call waiting times and ensured the service was as flexible as possible.

Since the start of pandemic CVS Tendring has responded to thousands of calls, emails and enquiries and the following activities have been carried out: ...

- 7,660 welfare calls have been made
- 566 prescriptions have been delivered
- 263 hot meals organised
- 222 food parcels supplied
- 211 shopping deliveries carried out
- 92 dog walks undertaken

### 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 was led by local faith groups
- Fordham emergency response plan which recruited 22 volunteers
- West Mersea community volunteers
- BAME community WhatsApp groups



**Colchester**

Community in Action

Strategically, One Colchester reacted 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 has built up trusted relationships across the voluntary, public, and commercial sectors. All of whom could be called upon quickly to co-produce relevant solutions at a borough wide level and 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 community hub programme worked in tandem with the Essex Wellbeing Service by receiving referrals directly. They also joined the developing vulnerable and shielded taskforce to learn from and plan for the continuing support of those at risk community members.



Within six weeks, partners had:

- Conducted 76,416 contacts with vulnerable people
- Supported 2,399 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
- Given 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 police patrols, supporting town centre safety
- 90,750 views of daily poetry project
- Over 1000 people engaging in Essex Explores lectures

The hub served as the central point for contacting clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) 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 September):

- Collected 1,894 prescriptions
- Issued 452 welfare parcels and 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 to local residents, including regular calls to more than 360 people, shielded patients and those with mobility issues



For local residents, the services provided were vital.

### Community Voices – COVID-19 case study – not being forgotten

Thank you so much for the food bag. My son had some rolls for lunch

At the core of much of the feedback received by the community hub was the desire to ensure that people were not missed, ignored, or left without help.

One parent, who is self-isolating is autistic with an autistic son, has received 4 parcels. Her son was unhappy because he enjoys *plain* food and they had had none. He particularly missed plain rolls!

KM is also a single parent with a long-term health condition [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 at the moment ...

I had a call from a lovely lady called Amanda, 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 compassionate people you are.



## Coastal towns

"In 2007, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee ..... launched an inquiry into coastal towns. It concluded that many coastal towns share common factors including physical isolation, significant levels of deprivation and transience, and low-waged, low-skilled, seasonally dependent economies. As older – and in some cases vulnerable – people move in, young people tend to leave. There is a lack of affordable, suitable housing, with large former hotels and guest houses often converted for multiple occupancy. All these problems are exacerbated by the declining and seasonal nature of the coastal economy. None of these characteristics are unique to coastal towns; but the combination of them, together with the particular environmental challenges, led us to conclude that these communities face significant and specific challenges that warrant government action."<sup>8</sup>

This reflects many of the challenges seen in Tendring, a peninsula district on the East Coast of England.

In August 2019, the Social Market Foundation (SMF) published a report entitled "Falling off a cliff?"<sup>9</sup>. It stated that more than 30 coastal areas still have economies smaller than before the financial crisis that began in 2007 and that "people in coastal areas can now also expect to die earlier than those elsewhere, with the latest data showing a growing "death gap" between seaside populations and the rest of Britain." The figures showed that many coastal towns have "missed out" on much of the economic growth Britain has experienced since the financial crisis and need government support.

In analysing official statistics, it found that the gaps between local authority areas on the coast and the rest of the country are widening significantly. While most of the country saw wages rise from 2017 to 2018, the SMF calculated that coastal workers suffered falling incomes. In 2017, non-coastal workers had an average salary of £29,291. In 2018, that was £30,592. For coastal workers, the average wage was £26,098 in 2017, falling to £25,906 the following year. That means the coastal wage gap rose from £3,193 to £4,686. The SMF calculated that long-term economic decline means that many coastal towns are still poorer than they were before the 2007 financial crisis hit. A total of 32 local authority areas with significant coastlines, including Tendring, had smaller economies in 2017 than in 2007.

## Marmot 10 years on

In 2010, Michael Marmot led a review team to produce 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives'<sup>10</sup>, to outline proposals for strategies to tackle and reduce health inequalities in England. The report set out 6 key priority objectives to improve health and wellbeing and tackle inequalities, which illustrate the importance of starting with the social determinants of health, these were:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people, and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
- Create fair employment and good work for all
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities

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<sup>8</sup> 2010 Coastal Regeneration Handbook, Coastal Communities Alliance

<sup>9</sup> Social Market Foundation, Scott Corfe, August 2019

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/research-for-development-outputs/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review-strategic-review-of-health-inequalities-in-england-post-2010>, January 2010

- Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention

In 2020, Marmot led a team to review progress against these strategic objectives and this review culminated in the report 'Health Equity in England, the Marmot Review 10 years on'. This report shows that, in England, health is getting worse for people living in more deprived districts and regions, that health inequalities are increasing, and, for the population, health is declining.

The report uses a strong evidence base to show that for almost all the recommendations made in the original review, health inequalities in England has been moving in the wrong direction. It particularly demonstrates that for those from more deprived areas and 'for people towards the bottom of the social hierarchy', lives have been made more difficult. It concludes that this is for several reasons, including government policies and failure to address adverse trends such as increased economic inequalities or market failures, and that action is needed in all six objectives outlined above to improve the peoples' achievement of more health equity and better health and wellbeing for all.

Among its key messages the 2020 report includes the following:

- The more deprived the area the shorter the life expectancy, inequalities in life expectancy have increased. This may relate to income levels, financial hardship, mental and physical ill health
- There has been no decrease in mortality for people under 50, mortality rates have increased for those 45-49
- People in more deprived areas spend more of their (shorter) lives in ill health than those in less deprived areas
- Since 2010 people have spent more time in poor health
- Funding cuts have affected social determinants of health England-wide and particularly in deprived areas

In December the report was published [Build Back Fairer](#) which will have implications for this work moving forward.

A fair start in life – good progress has been made in early years development. This progress is more noticeable in areas of higher deprivation. Intervention in these areas achieves more results; rates of child poverty have increased; child poverty rates in workless families are highest (c70%); there have been significant cuts to funding for children's centres and other children's services; even as need has increased, more deprived areas have lost more funding and children and young peoples' services, than less deprived areas.

Educational attainment - the socioeconomic inequalities in educational attainment remain; exclusions from school have risen in primary and secondary schools; pupil numbers have increased and per pupil funding has reduced (by 8%), with steeper reductions in post-16 and FE funding. Children entering secondary schools from primary schools located in the most deprived areas have not achieved as well as pupils from other primary schools meaning that they are immediately at a disadvantage at the start of their secondary education.

Employment and work - employment rates had increased (*but they have now reduced again because of the COVID-19 pandemic*) but there has been an increase in poor quality work seen in part-time, insecure employment e.g., zero hours contracts and the gig economy; stress at work has increased, real pay has decreased and there are more people in poverty even though they are living in a working household.

Healthy standards of living - inequalities persist - wage growth has been low and wage inequality continues; in-work poverty rates have grown; incomes have risen slowly; wealth inequalities have

increased; child poverty has increased with more families falling below the minimum income standard; food insecurity has increased.

Healthy and sustainable living and communities - government spending has reduced and cuts in services outside health and social care have hit more deprived communities hardest; the cost of housing has increased, including social housing; homelessness has increased significantly (including more children in homeless families living in temporary accommodation) and there are still problems with damp and unhealthy living conditions, even though the number of non-decent standard homes has decreased.

The report sets out new recommendations, which are consistent with some of the findings in this report. It states that the objectives should be for all to experience good health and wellbeing in life, wherever they sit in the 'social hierarchy'. That investment should be directed towards those most in need first, with strategies and policies driving effort proportionate to need, and the public engaged in discussions about healthy living and outcomes for them.

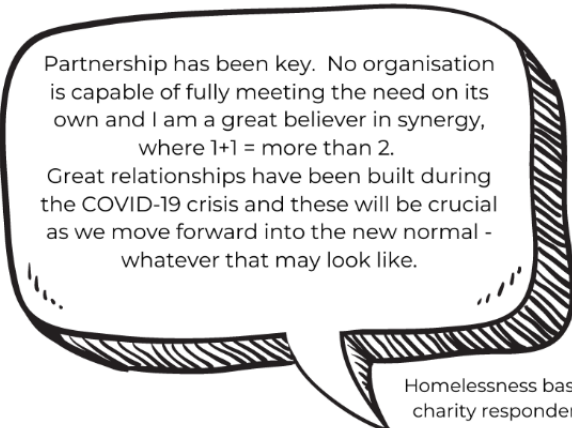
Here are a few examples of recommendations:

- Money should be directed to reducing poverty, improving life chances, and achieving a better paid and qualified children's workforce
- There should be investment in preventative services to try and avoid some of the inequalities that exist – reduce the educational attainment gap and avoid exclusions – and that per-pupil funding for secondary schools should be restored to its earlier levels
- Everyone should have a minimum income for healthy living. Health equity and wellbeing should be at the heart of local and national economic strategies, with health and wellbeing being valued as economic efficiency as well (or even more than) investment in the development of social, cultural, and economic resources in the most deprived areas. Target 100% of new housing being carbon neutral by 2030 – with more affordable and social housing
- "Grandparents need to have an income high enough to afford to purchase treats for their grandchildren, that's all it takes to aid their wellbeing". Professor Marmot, Clacton, February 2020

## What does the situation look like since the last community assets mapping exercise?

Community leaders continue to work well together and during the pandemic have shared resources and used them flexibly to meet community needs. Groups of stakeholders are brought together to address specific issues such as COVID-19 response and bereavement.

Voluntary and community sector surveying across both the district and borough has brought to the fore the value of partnership working. When asked by C360 to identify opportunities following the pandemic, 'partnership work' was cited as a key opportunity. Importantly, this was a multi-agency approach with partners cited including NHS, community leaders and local infrastructure.



Partnership has been key. No organisation is capable of fully meeting the need on its own and I am a great believer in synergy, where 1+1 = more than 2. Great relationships have been built during the COVID-19 crisis and these will be crucial as we move forward into the new normal - whatever that may look like.

Homelessness based  
charity respondent

### The **Tendring Voluntary Sector Forum**

continues to be well supported and social prescribers, community agents, and community development staff work well together with statutory partners such as Adult Social Care, Tendring District Council, Job Centre Plus, Health, Fire and Police representatives to share information. The community and voluntary sector is well represented by a variety of organisations on Tendring's Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing Board.

**One Colchester** has continued to grow and develop to provide community support, strategic direction and engage the wider voluntary and community sector in partnership working to tackle shared goals and aims. The group has undergone a review of its governance and identified an even wider remit to include prosperity within its overarching aims to support good quality of life for local residents. Delivery Board membership has expanded through COVID-19 to include representatives from learning disabilities support services, housing associations and local funders who engage as stakeholders.





## Case Study - Together We Can Awards

Residents recognised the impact for one another of neighbourly and community responses. The 'Together We Can' awards scheme continues to recognise and celebrate community pride in neighbourhoods across the borough. Launched in the summer, it is a way to offer thanks to individuals and community groups who have given their time and efforts to create a lasting impact within their communities.

The awards, which are open to residents and community groups, recognise great ideas and initiatives in the community. Nominations can be made by anyone and are submitted to the council's communities team, through the on-line nomination form.

Nominees receive a signed certificate from Councillor Robert Davidson, the Mayor of Colchester, in recognition of their efforts. To date, 101 certificates have been issued.

As well as celebrating residents' efforts, time and inspiration within their communities, the award scheme aims to support local COVID-19 recovery initiatives. This could be through improving mental health, tackling isolation and loneliness, increasing physical activity and wellbeing by encouraging more outdoor activities. It hopes to support communities further, by helping to identify residents who may need additional support, for example, with cutting their lawn.

Award recipient Amy Widdowson, Rowhedge Sunflowers said:

"When I heard that I had been nominated for the community recognition award I was very shocked. I had delivered the seeds to help people feel less lonely while we were all in lockdown and I wasn't expecting anything in return, but the fact that people took the time to nominate me was lovely.

"I now have a Rowhedge Sunflowers Facebook page for people to post photos of their flowers on and have continued supporting our village with paper sunflowers that I have just delivered until we are safe to see our loved ones again."

Community transport, while being very strong, will always be a challenge in Tendring due to rurality. A significant need for community transport still exists in Colchester. It continues to be a lifeline for accessing services, supporting good health, and reducing loneliness and social isolation.

**Tendring Community Transport** and **Harwich Connexions** have worked together to extend the reach of community transport for the vulnerable or isolated right across Tendring, an area identified as an issue in the previous mapping exercise. **Community360 Transport** has seen an ever-growing link with Colchester Hospital to facilitate effective discharge for patients. Since the start of the pandemic and through into the autumn, greater numbers have been supported to reach home safely and received wrap around support through befriending or resource packs.

With the emergence of new schemes to support admission avoidance, such as the Urgent Community Response Service which will tap into the experience of social prescribers, we have an opportunity to build resilience and prevent admission as well as sustain discharge.



There has been an increase in the level of social prescribing, including attendance at GP surgeries. Social prescribers are community connectors, linking people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support. They can give people time and focus on what is important to them, taking a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing and encouraging people to reach their potential through pathways to employment. The My Social Prescription™ programme has been operating in Colchester since 2014 and had its busiest year of referrals in 2020. CVST and C360 are now working in partnership with GP Care Advisors to ensure access at every GP Practice. They are also based at Colchester hospital, as well as working in the community with Essex Wellbeing Services and community agents.

Information continues to be varied, but the significantly increased use of Facebook for community support has given better access to information, volunteering, and mutual support. Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council developed community response packs and resident's information packs to support access to these services online. They have been very well received and were supplemented by local guides to access other online or cultural activities – i.e., Active Essex, Firstsite or Colchester and Ipswich Museums.

Public and voluntary sectors have benefited from responsive and effective communications networks. Residents have gained from local groups of volunteers and neighbours, examples include Harwich Helps in the East, Manningtree Shout Out, Tiptree Volunteers, Thorington Friends in the West, Wivenhoe Mutual Aid and Jaywick Community Resource Centre – these enable 24/7 or tailored access to information relevant to where people live.

**Colchester Dementia Action Alliance** welcomed its 70<sup>th</sup> member in 2020 and renewed its Dementia Voices programme. **Tendring Dementia Alliance** has gained pace. The number of dementia friends has grown considerably across all neighbourhoods in Tendring.

The **Essex Family Support Service** (EFSS) launched and has been working in partnership across north east Essex. Additionally, whilst emotional and social support for children and young people exists, it has been acknowledged that child and adolescent mental health continues to be a challenge and more easily accessible community services, without waiting lists, are needed.

North East Essex CCG has worked with a cohort of voluntary sector providers to offer additional emotional and wellbeing support for children and families through the pandemic. Essex County Council Family Solutions has a dedicated officer in Tendring providing holistic support to families with a range of needs who require support.

Foodbanks have expanded their reach both in capacity and geographic location. They have been very well supported by local communities with small, local services developing in response to economic difficulties brought on by COVID-19. Food poverty is in evidence and vouchers and food parcels have been made available across the district. Local social media, poster campaigns and parish-wide publicity has helped people to recognise where the services are.

There are a number of directories in existence and new ones coming on stream. Healthwatch Essex, CVST and C360 hold directories of service and have worked with public sector partners to disseminate up-to-date information to the sector throughout the pandemic, this has included the Healthwatch Essex accessible COVID-19 information guides for those with: learning disabilities and autism, mental health conditions, carers, sensory impairment and physical impairment and long term conditions. The Essex Map, Healthwatch Essex and community agents have provided specific

directories at a county level. Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex is in the process of developing a neighbourhood directory for older peoples' services and interests.

Building further on work to educate children, schools, parents, and services about the dangers of knife and gun carrying and gang behaviour, UTURN has been established to help children and young people and statutory and voluntary agencies working with them to understand the impact and face the challenges of knife and gun crime, and gang culture.

Funding for the Wrap Project run by SUMMIT came to an end having been very successful in supporting people with mental health problems to access GP and health appointments etc. However, a new project called SHELLS (Shelter and Health Enlisting Local Support) has started, based in Clacton, supporting people who are homeless, or at risk of losing their home, to address health inequalities and attend health related appointments.

All transformation projects in Tendring delivered expected outcomes, making a positive difference in all domains, more information about these projects can be found on the Tendring District Council website. Over 220 individuals were engaged with - supporting carers, children, parents, people with mental health problems and older people.

The **Crisis Cafés** in Colchester and Tendring are active and supporting people experiencing mental health crisis out of hours.

The CQC carried out a weeklong review of the SNEE (Suffolk and North East Essex) Urgent Care system and its learning from COVID-19, in the form of a provider learning review in October 2020. To undertake this review, the CQC team spoke with a range of health and social care staff, senior managers and leaders including from voluntary community services across SNEE, and specifically within the NEE Alliance.

The report from this review is expected to be published early in 2021, however during the review the CQC team noted and fed back to the those being interviewed, that they recognised our local voluntary community services played a pivotal part in supporting services within NEE both prior to, and during the COVID-19 response. They acknowledged the innovative way we work together as a system to support our localities; it is an area of good practice.

## Overview of Tendring and Colchester

Tendring covers approximately 130 square miles<sup>11</sup> and is situated in Essex, on the eastern coast of England. Tendring comprises 32 wards and is largely rural and coastal, characterised by small, widely distributed villages. There are six main settlements of Clacton, Harwich & Dovercourt, Manningtree, Brightlingsea, Frinton and Walton.

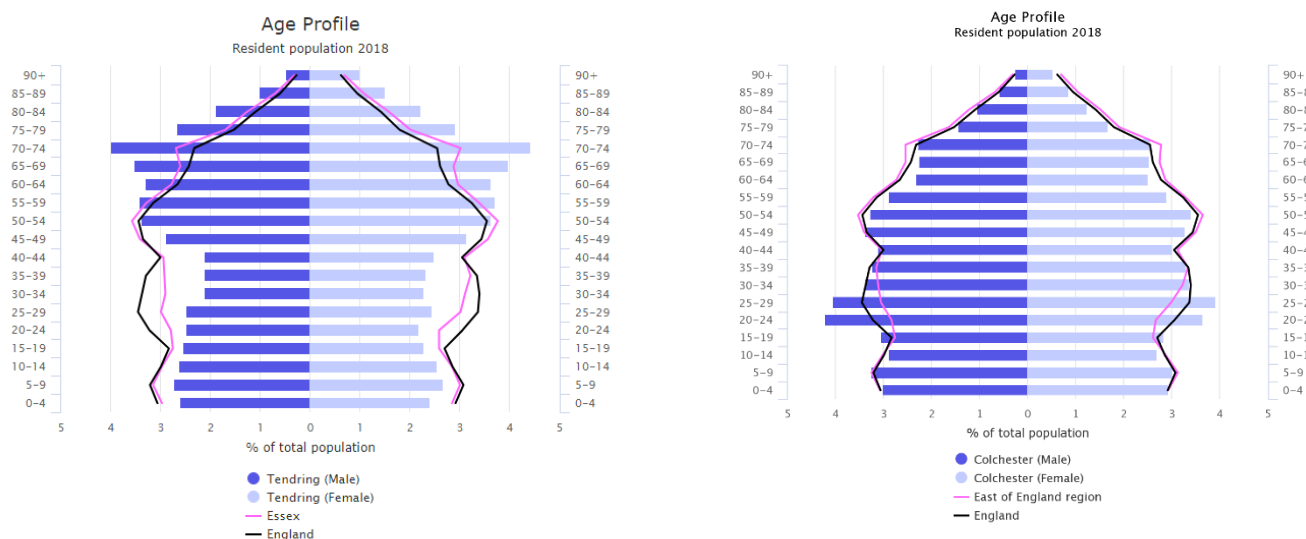
Colchester borough is comprised of 17 wards across rural, coastal, and urban centres. Approximately two-thirds of the population is concentrated in the urban/suburban centres, with several large villages and towns situated in the rural parishes. It covers an area of roughly 127 square miles.

The total population of the Tendring district in 2019 was 146,561 people, an estimated increase of 3205 people since the 2011 census (a rise of 2.25%). Tendring district has the highest percentage of residents aged 65 and over in Essex (29.5%), 9% higher than the Essex average (20.5%) and higher than the England average.

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<sup>11</sup> Tendring District Council Website, 2019

The projected population in Colchester in 2020 is 197,000 people.<sup>12</sup> It is the largest local authority area in Essex and is on a trajectory of steady growth. The population increased by over 1% between mid-2018 and mid-2019.<sup>13</sup>



14

64% of the population in Colchester is working age, this is a higher rate than the Essex average, and 17.2% of the population is over the age of 65.<sup>15</sup> At the time of the 2011 census there were an estimated 71,634 households in the Colchester area, of which 22.3% contained dependent children. This was just below the average for Essex (22.8%) but higher than the average for England (21.9%).

### 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, but there is a growing BAME population in both areas. NEE 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 census<sup>16</sup> 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 has increased. In 2016, 14.8% of school children in Colchester were from BAME communities

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

<sup>12</sup> Local Authority Profile: Colchester (July 2018)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=colchester-statistics&id=KA-01631>

<sup>14</sup> Fingertips, Local Authority Health profiles, PHE, 2019

<sup>15</sup> JSNA Local Authority Profile – Colchester 2019 p.4

<sup>16</sup> [www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=census&id=KA-02616](http://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/cbc-article/?catid=census&id=KA-02616)

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 BAME communities can be very small, and consequently isolating. For example, there are just 34 people who describe their ethnicity as Pakistani in the district.



## Case Study - Refugee Action Colchester

Since April 2020, client numbers for Refugee Action have increased, as has the complexity of their issues. This means that the amount of time they spend with each client is increasing and putting more strain on their already limited resources. Many of their clients are hidden; some have no recourse to public funds and are destitute. Refugee Action makes destitute payments to cover rent, travel and food.

Support from partners, such as the Clinical Commissioning Group, has been essential. Other funders have offered funding on short term basis, but this can be difficult to manage, especially if you are trying to hire case workers; limited short term contracts can be hard to fulfil.

Mental health is an ongoing concern and they have funded 2 councillors for children and refugees, and very low fees for those who do not qualify for free support. Mental health is becoming a huge issue. They also have good relationships with the psychosis team and psychiatric teams.

At the moment, they are busier than they've ever been, not helped by the fact that clients cannot access group activities. The team have found themselves stepping in when other agencies will not meet face to face to support clients. They are undertaking Freedom of Information requests to ensure they can access accurate information. They are also receiving referrals from outside of the area from public sector partners when the referral is not appropriate.

Once people engage with the group, they build trust and with that, connections into communities. Engagement with one man has now resulted in 47 referrals through his network.

Relationship building is fundamental.

### Armed forces and veteran communities

As a garrison town, Colchester retains a substantial armed forces community and veteran population. As of the end of March 2020, 2,605 people were in receipt of a veteran's pension in CO1-7 postcodes under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS 75 and 05), the War Pension Scheme (WPS) and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS).<sup>17</sup> 45% of the total number were based in CO2, including over 300 serving personnel. This figure will not include all veteran armed forces personnel, only those who have served for a minimum number of years; therefore, we can anticipate that the total number of veterans is higher.

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<sup>17</sup> Location of UK Armed Forces Pension and Compensation Recipients published 27<sup>th</sup> August 2020

### Financial capability and benefits

Tendring has the lowest figure for job opportunities per head of working age population in Essex. The four largest sectors in Tendring's employment are retail, accommodation, education and health. Together these sectors represent 22,500 jobs comprising 58% of the district's total employment. This is a greater concentration than Essex (46%), and the east region and England (44%). Information and communication, finance, and insurance, professional scientific and technical, and administrative and support are the four sectors with lower concentration of jobs than elsewhere. These account for 4,650 jobs (12% of all jobs) compared with 24% in Essex and 26% in both the east region and England. Over the period 2011 to 2015, employment in Tendring (5%) grew more slowly than in Essex (7%), the eastern region (9%) and England (8%).<sup>18</sup> The average weekly income for a Tendring resident working full time in 2018 was £543.90, this is £74.70 (-13.7%) below the average for Essex and £31 (-5.7%) less than the average for England. This was the second lowest average income out of 12 districts.

The number of residents claiming out of work benefits has increased to its highest level in 5 years from 2.6% in April 2015 to 4% in April 2019. This is higher than the averages for Essex (2.1%) and England (2.6%), is the highest claimant rate in Essex overall.<sup>19</sup> This figure will increase significantly with the impact of COVID-19 on employment.

Within Colchester there were 15,106 people on Universal Credit (UC) in October 2020. Every month since the start of the pandemic has seen rise in the number of claims. In March 2020, there were 7,172 UC claims within Colchester but only 6,061 in December 2019. There were 394 people within Colchester on job seekers allowance in November 2019; as of May 2020 this number had risen to 783.

As of May 2020, within Colchester there were 2,164 people on carers allowance which was similar to the number of claimants in November 2019.

There were 4,431 people in Colchester claiming employment and support allowance in May 2020, which was similar, although slight reduced, to November 2019 when there were 4,506 claims.

### Indices of Deprivation<sup>20</sup>

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.

Tendring's national ranking fell from being the 49<sup>th</sup> most deprived district in the country to being the 32<sup>nd</sup> most deprived – moving the area into the most deprived 10% in the country, and the most deprived area in Essex, the only one in this decile. 16 (18%) of the 89 lower super output areas (LSOA) in Tendring are in the bottom 10% of the IMD 2019 deciles. This means, since 2015, two more wards have regressed in their ranking to the bottom decile.

It is recognised that Colchester has pockets of deprivation that continue to impact on the quality of life of local residents and they 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

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<sup>18</sup> Tendring Creative and Cultural Strategy 2019-2024

<sup>19</sup> JSNA 2019, Tendring Local Authority Profile

<sup>20</sup> JSNA 2019 Colchester and Tendring



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 of Greenstead.

The average life expectancy at birth for a child born in between 2015 and 2017 is:

AREA	AGE – FEMALE	AGE – MALE
England	83.1	79.6
Tendring	81.7	78.2
Colchester	83.2	80

Tendring is below average whereas Colchester is just above average.

Life expectancy, in terms of the number of additional years a person could expect to live at age 65 is:

AREA	FEMALE, YRS	MALE, YRS
England	21.1	18.8
Tendring	20.6	18.2
Colchester	21.1	18.8

Colchester has the same average as the England but Tendring is lower and is the (joint) lowest life expectancy at 65 in the county for females, and the lowest for males.

### 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 are deafblind.<sup>21</sup> Across the county, 286,796 people live with hearing loss.<sup>22</sup> Across north east Essex alone, 68,089 people are believed to be living with hearing loss of 25 dBHL or more (which require adaptive listening strategies).

### Community safety

COVID-19 has impacted upon issues of community safety in different ways. Nationally, a telephone survey suggested a 32% reduction in total crime (excluding fraud and computer misuse) during April and May 2020 compared with a two-month average in the pre-lockdown period, with significant falls in theft offences, particularly domestic burglary, and other theft of personal property. Police recorded crime levels are consistent with this: 25% less crime in April 2020 and 20% less crime in May 2020 compared with the same months in 2019.

An exception were trends in drug offences, where levels rose by 22% in April 2020 and 44% in May 2020 compared with April and May 2019; this may reflect proactive police activity during lockdown. Police recorded crime increased by 12% from April to May, as the easing of lockdown restrictions began.<sup>23</sup>

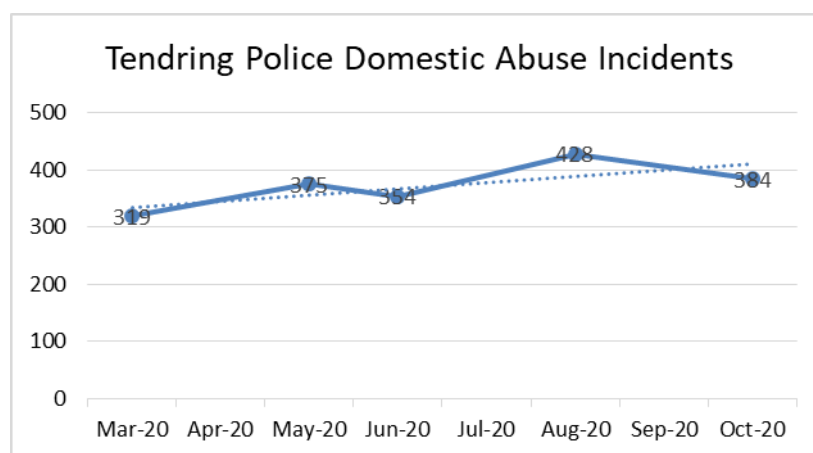
<sup>21</sup> <https://www.rnib.org.uk/professionals/knowledge-and-research-hub/key-information-and-statistics/sight-loss-data-tool>

<sup>22</sup> Hearing loss data tool

<sup>23</sup>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/coronavirusandcrimeinenglandandwales/august2020>

Domestic abuse, as mentioned above, has been widely reported in the media to have increased during lockdown. Not all police data, including local Colchester data (see below), reflects this to the same extent. However, it is likely that many incidents are not reported to the police. National figures suggest that there was a significant increase in domestic abuse during lockdown 1.



Tendring police statistics show that there is an upward trend but that it varies month by month.<sup>24</sup> By drawing upon UK crime statistics, engaging with local police and borough statistics, Colchester is broadly in-line with national crime trends including an overall drop in all crime apart from anti-social behaviour (ASB) during the period of peak lockdown. ASB rose dramatically from start of lockdown, presumably because of crimes related to lockdown regulations; violent crime is the single biggest category. This dropped during lockdown but by the end of July was back at or above pre-lockdown levels.

Woman who organises a community group for Muslim women



Chief Inspector Huddleston reports that Colchester is one of three Essex districts showing a reduction in reported crime, and solve rates are improving. However, he also says that there is likely to be underreporting in some areas, for example hate crimes and domestic abuse, and is keen to encourage reporting in these categories. Yet the pandemic has also potentially encouraged some positive behaviour.

<sup>24</sup> From Tendring Police District Commander Partner Briefings 2020

Tendring has the highest level of reported crime in Essex. Analysis of overall recorded crime, together with an evaluation of responses from public engagement, identified the key priorities for the Tendring Community Safety Partnership, as follows:

- Tackling and enforcement of ASB issues:
  - Identifying and supporting repeat and vulnerable victims
  - Identify hotspot locations and / or increases in ASB trends
  - ASB affects families and communities and by addressing these activities we can help improve the quality of life in the community
  - Improve perceptions and facilitate local problem solving to address issues
- To reduce harm to and safeguard vulnerable victims (including children) from:
  - Domestic abuse, sexual offences incl. rape, child sexual exploitation, gang related violence, hate crime, cyber bullying / grooming, serious organised crime to include modern day slavery, human trafficking and violent extremism with a specific emphasis on:
    - Tackling the root causes of domestic abuse and reporting of hate crime
- Reducing violence and knife crime
  - Identifying hotspot locations, and / or increases in crime trends
  - Work with partner agencies to raise awareness of knife crime across the district. The fear of crime, whether real or perceived, can also have a very serious impact upon people and communities. With a specific emphasis on County Lines, violence with injury and drug / alcohol related violence.
- Reduce youth offending and re-offending of adults and young people<sup>25</sup>

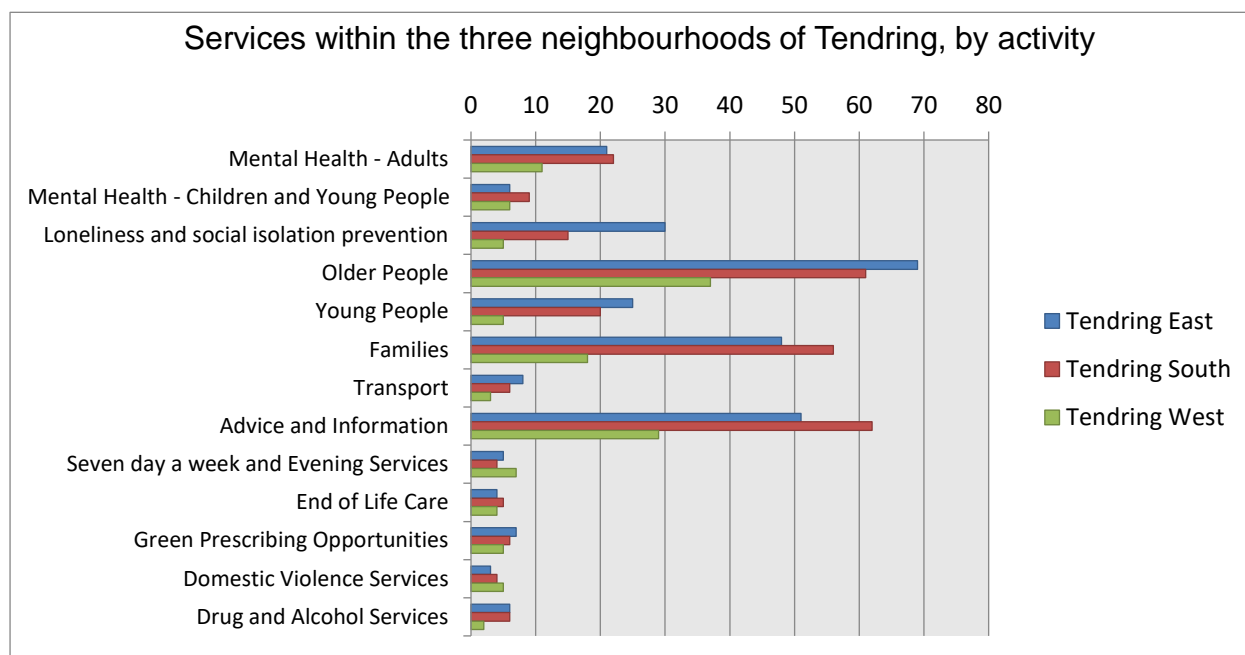
Healthwatch Essex Information & Signposting Service has been accredited as a hate crime reporting centre and a J9 (domestic abuse) reporting service in relation to domestic abuse. This supports victims to access low level support and is vital due to the circumstances of the pandemic during lockdown.

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<sup>25</sup> The Tendring Community Safety Partnership, 2019-2020 Strategic Priorities, Delivery Plan

## An overview of community assets across our Neighbourhoods

### Tendring



It has been identified during the research of this report, that the biggest health and social challenges exist in South Tendring. Although the majority of services are in this area, it suggests that capacity outstrips demand or that people are not sufficiently aware of them. This highlights a need for further investigation in this area. Only in-depth consultation and engagement with trusted community representatives will help to understand this in depth.

What is clear, is that mental health services for adults, and children and young people, are in short supply. Mental health still carries a stigma and community-based services offer a way to support which can be preventative and stops people waiting until they are in crisis before seeking help.

At present, data is only available on a district-wide level and support needs to be given to organisations to gather information on a neighbourhood level going forward.

Local communities are strong, particularly in rural villages, where mutual support has shown itself through recent lockdowns. Parish and town councils vary in strength, but they are key catalysts for local action and local knowledge and largely maintain the community assets of playing fields, village halls and recreation groups. Many have been active and instrumental in coordinating the response to COVID-19 on a local level.

[Breaking Barriers](#) innovation, led by Lord Patel, is due to commence research across Tendring in 2021 with an aim of analysing the wider determinants of health across the district. This research is also the council's ambition with partners, including health, to encourage a central government department to consider a relocation to the district of Tendring.

### Tendring South

Tendring South is the most deprived area in Tendring. Clacton, the main urban centre, is at the end of the A133 on the coast. It is the largest town by population and is the core economic centre in the district. Historically the town has been a thriving seaside resort, with a strong visitor economy, but it is no longer seen as a tourist destination. Clacton provides 37% of Tendring's jobs and largely performs a role as a local service hub, with sector strengths in retail, education, health, and public administration.

There is a high concentration of services, particularly in and around Clacton, supporting a wide range of vulnerable groups, including children and young people, people with mental health problems, older people, and people feeling lonely and isolated. Clacton is quite built up, with a range of housing from large seafront properties (many of which have become homes of multiple occupation), flats and smaller houses. Housing is relatively inexpensive, so more attractive to other boroughs having to re-house people.

Tendring South has the highest number of households with no car, meaning that there is a higher dependency on infrequent public transport and community transport. This can lead to an even greater feeling of isolation. In Pier ward 49% of households have no car and in Alton Park ward the figure is 41%. Services therefore need to be accessible in terms of physical distance as well as approachability. Clacton is the base for the main office of CVST, an umbrella group supporting the local community and voluntary sector, providing advice, information and support as needed. Despite a wide range of community-based support, deprivation levels in Tendring South exceed those of most of Essex. There has been significant investment in services so more work needs to be done to involve and understand the community, its needs and how best they can be met. This need to be done by trusted partners.

### Tendring West

Tendring West covers the area to the North and West of Tendring and meets the borders with Colchester. There are two urban centres, Brightlingsea and Manningtree. Brightlingsea is a historic port town in the south west of Tendring, near the mouth of the river Colne. Manningtree is a small town located in the north west of the district at the very north of north east Essex, on the banks of the river Stour.

Tendring West is the most rural area of the district and as at the census in 2011 only 11.5% of households had no car, so most people have their own transport. Transport links to Colchester, Ipswich, London, and Harwich are good, giving strong links with neighbouring areas. Buses and trains serve many villages in between. In general, the population is healthier, and deprivation is less prevalent. Local community transport from Manningtree Community Bus has been a mainstay for local residents for shopping trips and outings but now the service has been cancelled until further notice, due to COVID-19.

Brightlingsea and Great Bentley offer transport support through volunteer drivers, but this would have been compromised during lockdown.

There are fewer services in Tendring West which reflects the fact that deprivation levels are much lower, and the general health of the population is better.

### Tendring East

Tendring East covers the far eastern section of north east Essex and, like Clacton, faces many of the challenges identified in coastal communities studies. Harwich is an urban centre located at the end of



the A120, near the mouth of the river Stour and opposite the Port of Felixstowe. A branch line runs from Manningtree and links to Ipswich and Colchester. Bus routes are infrequent. In the most deprived areas car ownership is low, with 38% of households in Harwich East having no car. Accessibility of services is therefore important. Services are often seen as Colchester or Clacton centric and therefore difficult to get to without making a significant journey.

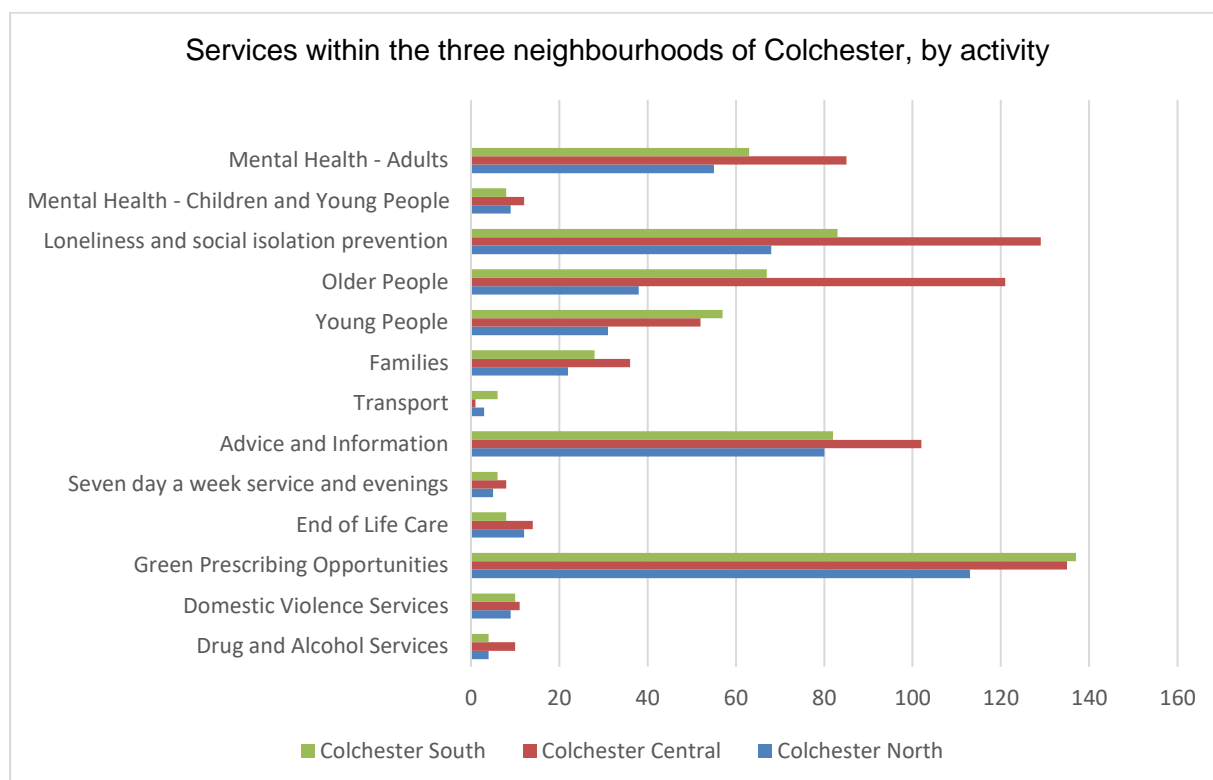
The town has historically played a major role in the Tendring and regional economies because of its international passenger, cruise, and freight ports (Harwich International Port and Harwich Navy yard). It is noticeable for its ports and logistics activities (16% of Tendring's jobs).

Dovercourt sits next to Harwich and was a flourishing seaside resort. It still has a good seafront which is well used by residents and visitors to the area. Harwich and Dovercourt have a strong community feel and a broad range of assets including community halls, the Harwich Society, lunch clubs, support to teenagers and a CVST hub which offers space to local groups and a variety of advice, information, and activities.

Frinton and Walton are these two small neighbouring towns to the north of Clacton have historically performed roles as seaside resorts. Both have strong communities and a range of services supporting those who need it, including community centres. Frinton and Walton both have a relatively high population of older people.

All along the east coast the coastal towns have suffered as they are no longer holiday destinations. Harwich benefits from the port and the employment it provides, but the hospitality and tourism trades have suffered. Regeneration is needed to bring vibrancy back to these towns and the Tendring District Council 'Back to Business Strategy' may help with this following COVID-19.

## Colchester



### Colchester North

Colchester North includes the majority of CO4 postcodes in the borough, as well as CO3, CO6 and a small number of CO7 postcodes. This neighbourhood has many smaller villages and less densely populated parishes but with this comes a strong sense of identity associated with the area. Lots of community-based Facebook / online groups have been catalogued in both rural and urban areas of North Colchester, more so than either Colchester South or Central. In practice, there have been more than double the number of active online groups 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 some 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. 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. Welfare services for veterans could be explored in Tendring.

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.

Healthwatch Essex is engaging with military veterans running a project entitled 'What Matters to Veterans'. This project allows veterans to have their voices heard around the lived experience of military veterans during transition. The project has links with several military charities and the findings will be launched in May via a report which will have a set of recommendations to take forward by decision makers who influence positive change. Healthwatch Essex hopes to launch an event near to Remembrance Day in November 2021 pending COVID-19 restrictions.

### Colchester South

Colchester South has a mixed character as a neighbourhood. It contains the wards which access Citizen's Advice support in both the highest (Greenstead) and the lowest (Wivenhoe) numbers. 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 (LSOA) 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 this 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 that through lockdown people, not just place of worship, drives activity and can continue whether people are able to access a physical space or not. Like many groups, technology has been essential, but they have developed outreach programmes for food delivery and social support that requires direct contact.

## An overview of community assets by type

Although many assets were identified during the completion of this report (see appendix A), this is not an exhaustive list. These 'hidden partners' such as Harwich Hub, provide vital services and are often harder to identify. In 2019, we identified more than 2000 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 2000+ assets and compared this list with new services that have emerged (services that have been captured in valuable research conducted during the pandemic, such as the production of 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 the 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 that 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 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

There are 79 known village halls, scout huts and community centres across Tendring, all of which serve as hubs for the local community. In Colchester we have identified 57 halls, community centres and faith centres serving as wider community facilities along with other sites (bringing numbers to more than 65) all of whom are 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.

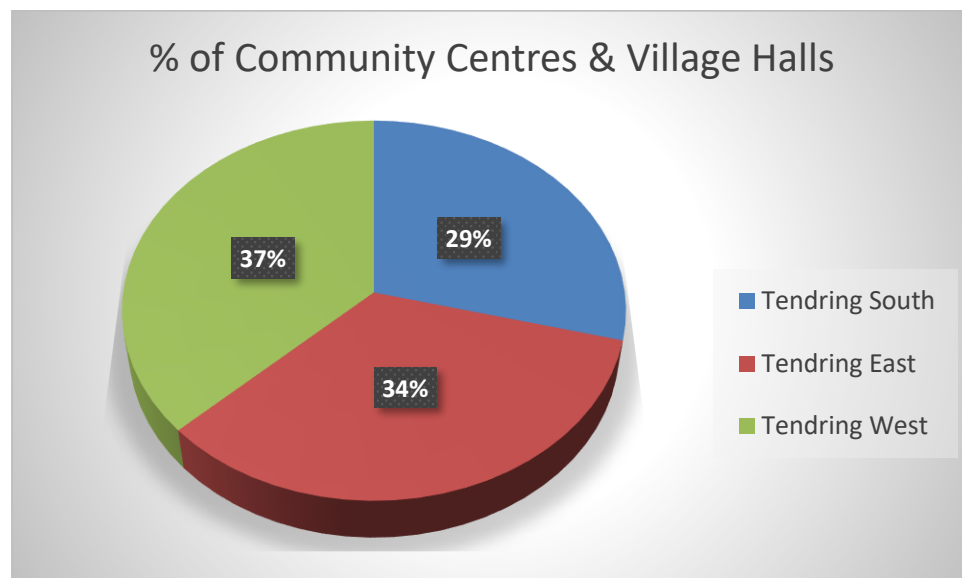
In Tendring, despite support given in grant funding to help venues survive through COVID-19, and comply with the COVID-19 restrictions, halls are losing income and, in many cases losing volunteers who are shielding or vulnerable. This may affect their sustainability. Of these, over 15% are owned by Scouts and Guides and another 17% are owned by churches.

Survey participants in Colchester had divided opinions regarding venues. For some they were seen as a key strength but to others they were less relevant due to capacity and/or accessibility issues.

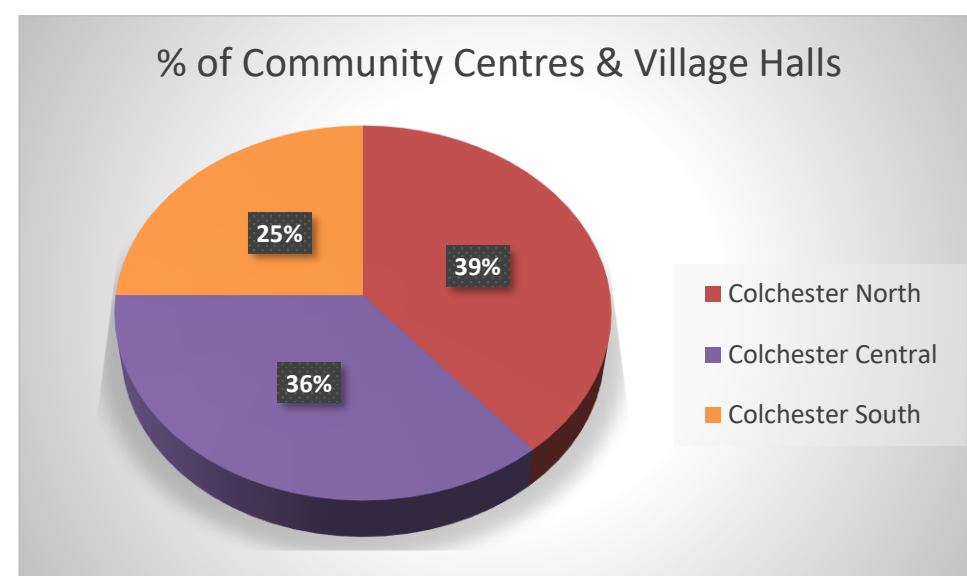
At the end of 2020 we have heard of the closure of the Coastal Community Centre - people have been made redundant. This is a key resource in that area, in addition there has just been a big fire at Coppins Hall Community Centre, which is in one of the most deprived areas of Tendring, and now it is not clear whether it will be able to re-open.



### Tendring



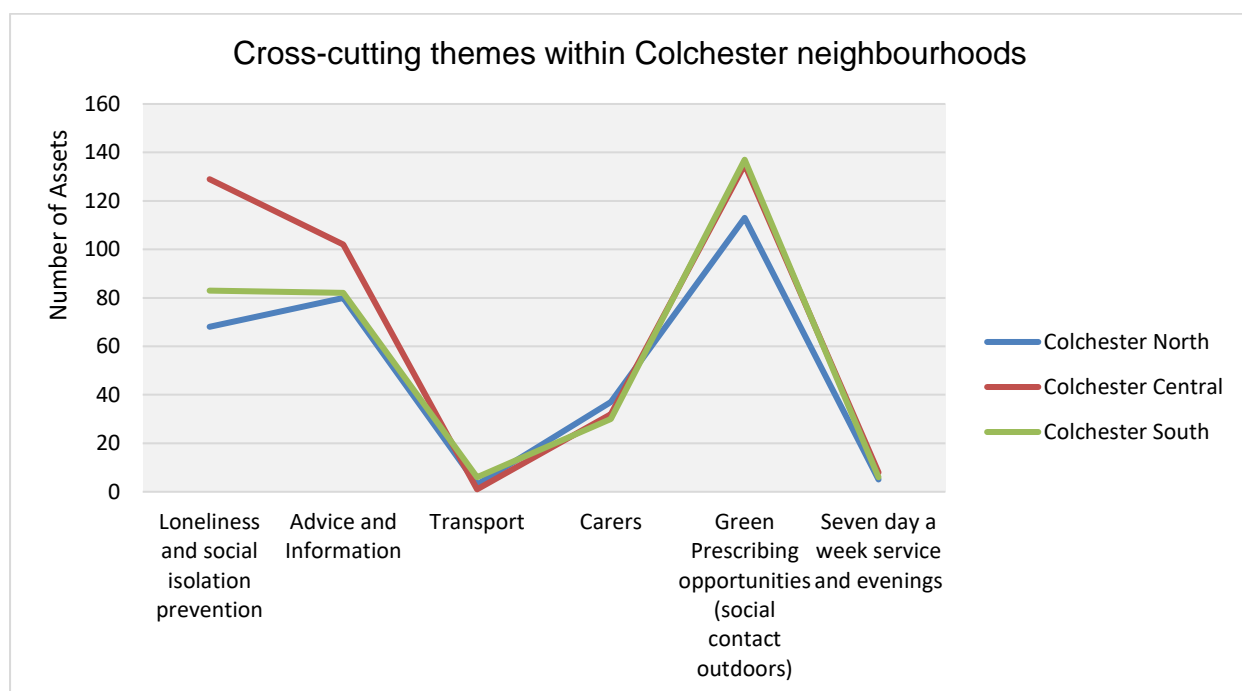
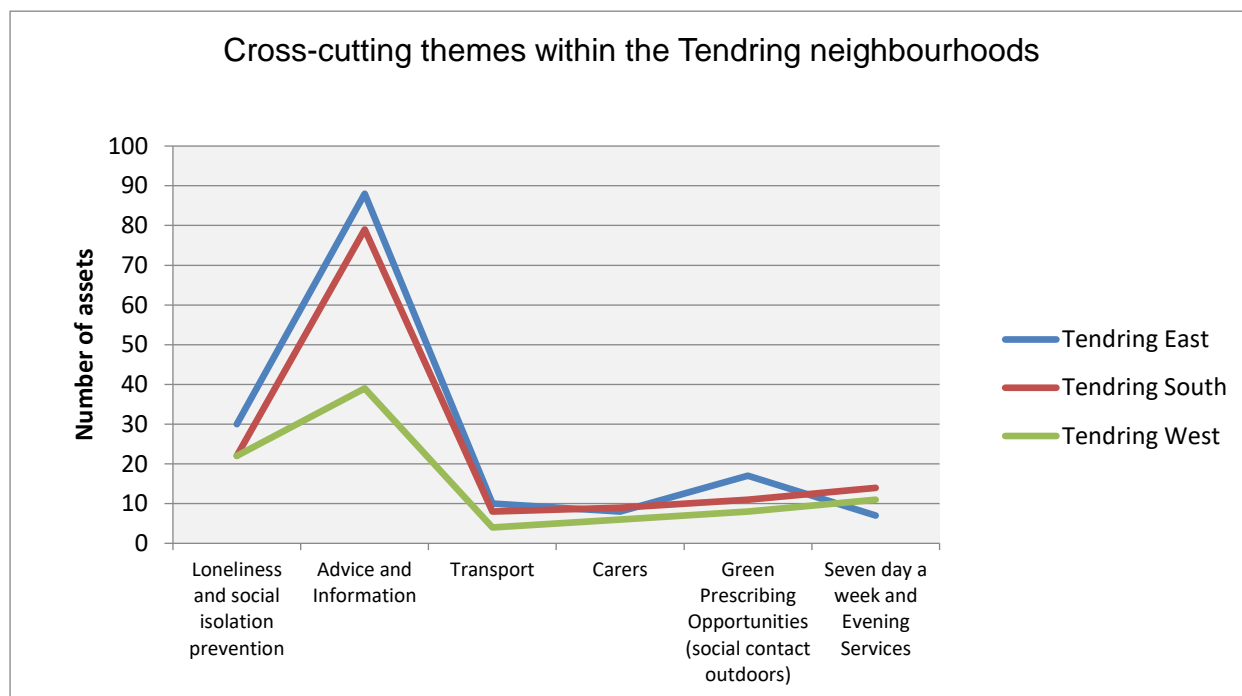
### Colchester



It is important to make sure that these assets are sustainable and able to accommodate a variety of classes and activities.

## Cross cutting themes

Community assets were grouped in to 6 categories, a description of each is given below.



The graphs give a snapshot of the number of organisations working in cross-cutting areas in each neighbourhood across NEE. Although transport organisations seem low, their impact is significant but there is also unmet demand.

In addition to those shown on the graphs, other cross cutting themes have been referenced in the following domains:

- Isolation and Loneliness (Feel Well)
- Physical Activity (Be Well)
- Employment/financial hardship (Be Well)

Other areas identified include:

- Volunteering
- Voluntary and community sector sustainability
- Access to services
- Digital platforms and inclusion

## Transport

### **Tendring**

Tendring is poorly served by public transport, due to its location and blend of rural communities and urban centres. There are infrequent bus services to parts of the district and train services between London and Norwich, stopping at Manningtree with branch lines serving villages between Harwich and Manningtree, and Colchester and Clacton and Walton on the Naze. Tendring has a range of community transport schemes which are well used by residents. Most are dependent on volunteers and the larger ones have paid staff. Throughout the pandemic larger scale community transport has continued to run, with COVID-19-friendly transport protecting passengers, volunteers, and staff. There is mixed success with recruiting volunteers.

During lockdown Harwich Connexions and Tendring Community Transport (TCT) continued to provide the Hospital Hopper service enabling people to get to vital hospital appointments. Instead of running on a timetable, services were operating a demand response service, ensuring service users got to their appointments on time. They offered additional support to their service users by providing click & collect shopping pickups, connecting service users with volunteers providing shopping/prescription pick-ups and carrying out weekly welfare checks on services users.

After the first lockdown they re-started dial-a-ride services as well as the Hospital Hopper. In September, the new Clacton/Harwich services started, with Harwich Connexions Transport and TCT working in partnership to cover the whole district, including outlying villages. TCT continued to provide click & collect shopping pickups and introduced volunteer shopping buddies for people who wanted to go out again but had lost their confidence. In lockdown 2.0, TCT offices remained open and continued to provide dial-a-ride and hospital hopper services as well as the new Clacton/Harwich service. TCT has provided 55,229 passenger journeys between October 2019 and October 2020, despite the impact of lockdowns. It is a very sought-after and valued service.

The knock-on effect from the challenge of poor infrastructure, in terms of road links and public transport, makes access to education & training, employment and community activities more difficult.

### *Tendring West*

Manningtree community bus supports people to have social outings and undertake shopping trips. Brightlingsea and Great Bentley both have a support network of car driver volunteers to transport people to and from appointments.

### *Tendring South and East*

Tendring Community Transport and Harwich Connexions launched a new door to door service on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. It runs between Clacton & Harwich and the outlying villages in the Tendring area, providing a door-to-door service to enable people to access local amenities, GP appointments, Harwich and Clacton hospitals, social and leisure activities, visit friends or even have a trip to the seaside eventually. Transport has been made COVID-19 secure with plastic screens and reduced capacity.

### *Tendring South*

The head office of Tendring Community Transport (TCT) is based in Clacton. It provides wheelchair accessible, door-to-door transport, for people of all ages, including dial-a-ride, community transport for groups and the Hospital Hopper bus. TCT provides, under normal circumstances, over 145,000 passenger journeys per year, and is a lifeline to enable movement around Tendring.

### *Tendring East*

Well supported by Harwich Connexions, a not-for-profit transport cooperative which operates community transport for residents of Harwich, Dovercourt, Parkeston and the surrounding villages. They have a simple membership scheme for those who need transport due to disability, ill health, or geographical isolation. The Hospital Hopper is a direct bus service from Harwich to the Colchester hospital sites for patients and hospital visitors. Passengers need to pre-book their seats before the day of travel. This is an initiative by Harwich and District Fellowship for the Sick in partnership with Harwich Connexions. This enables people to get to GP and hospital appointments.

Other smaller scale transport schemes exist but have not been able to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Colchester**

Run by Community360, Community Transport is an established service with a core membership of over 700 people and a history of regular group hires, bespoke excursions and timetabled routes reaching into rural communities or supporting accessibility to therapy centres. Between October 2019 and October there were 17,252 trips, however, pre COVID-19 restrictions, the service supported in excess of 36,000 trips per year.

Community Transport supports some of our most vulnerable residents to remain independent and self-manage their conditions through access to therapy, essentials and social contact. Over 70% of the membership of Colchester Community Transport are people 60 years old or older, and 12.7% use a wheelchair. They constituted many of those who were shielding or self-isolating through each lockdown and benefited from wraparound support. Unable to continue to operate weekly excursions, a new timetable of 'virtual' excursions was introduced. Participants were able to opt in to receive a two-course meal and take part in an online activity – such as poetry reading with Colchester Arts Centre.

The service operates in partnership with ESNEFT to enable timely discharge from Colchester general hospital. In the last financial year, the scheme facilitated 539 hospital passenger trips to enable discharge and has seen an ever-increasing demand since June 2020 having already supported 600 hospital discharge trips since April 2020. The service operates seven days a week and provides accessible minibus transport across north east Essex, and when required into Suffolk and Braintree district to transport patients home. They are also matched, when identified as appropriate, with volunteers who offer a period of support and stabilisation at home.



## Case Study - home from hospital

Mrs 'E' is a 72 year old lady living in a warden controlled flat who was referred to the Home from Hospital service by the IRAS team at Colchester hospital. The referral form stated that she had once a day care but was an anxious lady who would also benefit from a befriending service, as at times she felt lonely.

One of our experienced befrienders, 'Brian', noted that:

'Mrs 'E' suffers from anxiety which has affected her for the last two years after the death of her partner. She has no remaining family relatives alive and she came across as very quiet but would answer clearly any questions that I put to her.'

Brian organised for a time and day to come and visit again and the following week they went for a coffee in the town centre and had a 10 minute walk. He discovered that she enjoyed bingo and did a little local shopping.

Mrs 'E' had been receiving daily visits from social care but the plan was about to finish and she was unsure what would happen next. Brian reported back his on-going concerns about her well-being and mental health and another call was put into the adult social care team where Mrs 'E' was then referred to the mental health service which resulted in a mental health worker supporting her.

Alongside this, the befriender suggested that Mrs 'E' applied for Attendance Allowance as her only income was her government pension. Brian helped by writing her Attendance Allowance application which was successful.

After 6 weeks the befriender had supported Mrs 'E' to the point where she was receiving Attendance Allowance, had on-going support from the mental health service and was taking part in a wider cross section of local offerings, giving her social opportunities within the her community and improving her all round confidence and wellbeing.

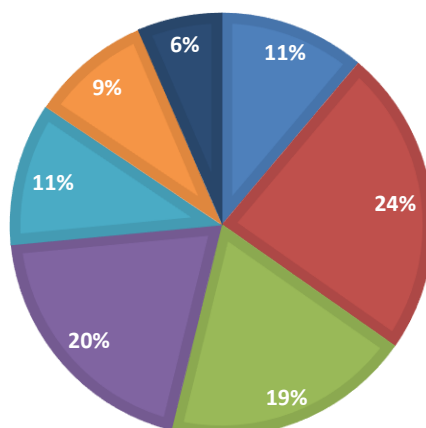
Community Transport has continued to operate throughout lockdown but experienced a drop in direct transport trips with existing members. The impact in the reduction of take up or attendance at therapy sessions is yet to be determined but is noticeable when reviewing a year-on-year comparison. This is due to the disruption of existing therapy services and reticence of members to undertake additional trips with the same frequency. They are also supported by at home delivery services and as a result are not as mobile as often as they were in March.

Most members live in north or central Colchester but with good membership levels from rural pockets in CO5 and CO6 aligned to Colchester South.



## COMMUNITY TRANSPORT MEMBERSHIP NOVEMBER 2020

CO1 CO2 CO3 CO4 CO5 CO6 CO7



## Carers

### Good Practice – Essex Carers Support, Time 4 You



A young male carer spoke to the Time 4 You project worker about the impact of his caring role on his social connections and extended relationships. His housing circumstances mean that he has no opportunity for time away from the person he cares for in the course of the day and he acknowledged the pressure this was placing him under.

He used his Time 4 You grant to pay for rail tickets to enable him to travel to spend time with his family; this provided him with an opportunity to connect with relatives, receive support from them and reduced his feelings of isolation.

**Essex Carers Support** is an independent charity working to promote and advocate for carers and support them to improve their lives and outcomes. They connect with community groups to identify and reach out to people who may not identify themselves as a carer and/or be connected to support services. They identify that there is generally a greater demand for their services in Tendring than Colchester and focus their resources accordingly.

**The Community Outreach Project** (NEE) engages with 355 carers in Tendring and a further 46 community leaders/volunteers, with 6 more covering Colchester and Tendring.

**The Carer Respite Break Scheme** was set up in partnership with Colchester Catalyst Charity (NEE) to help carers who live in the CO postcode area to access grants of up to £600 to arrange a break from caring, specifically where assistance is not available from statutory organisations. 85 eligibility assessments have been carried out in Tendring and 66 respite breaks have been provided through

grants from this scheme. (NB: this scheme was led by Tendring, there are no equivalent figures for Colchester).

**Carers First** is commissioned by Adult Social Care in Essex County Council to provide advice, information, and guidance to carers across Essex. They meet carers in their own homes or in the community. They have 719 carers from Tendring on their register, 383 of those live in Clacton. 568 carers are registered in the Colchester district. These carers are all adults, but some may be providing care for children, partners, or parents. Others support friends and neighbours.

Prior to COVID-19, Carers First ran monthly groups across both districts in central and rural locations. There are currently between 8 and 16 carers attending the online generic local groups – Carers First Carers Virtual Cuppa from across north east Essex.

'At My Bedside' is a project launched by Carers First following a successful pilot in Suffolk. They work with people whose loved one is admitted to Colchester hospital, helping them to keep connected and offer advice and support.

Carers First referrals come from many organisations including social care, health, mental health services, DWP, voluntary organisations, family, and friends and directly from carers themselves. Carers First refer to other organisations including voluntary sector support, adult social care, GP care advisors, community agents and mental health services.

The online potential means that more specific groups of carers can be targeted in future.

**The Time 4 You Project (T4U)** offers grants up to £100 to carers for bespoke breaks.

To date, 185 Tendring carers have engaged with the T4U project and have had a self-care discussion with the project worker. Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 has slowed the project down considerably, with an increase in activity between lockdowns. Most of the remaining carers are due to receive their T4U grant in the coming weeks/months.

**Action for Family Carers** work across the county including in Colchester borough. Their range of services includes counselling for carers, assistance for young carers and support to improve employability. Through the pandemic they were unable to open their Tiptree Day Centre but did add a new online chat facility for carers via their website and online cafes. They will also be setting up online carers' cafes via Zoom e.g., for parent carers or carers for those caring with someone with dementia.

It is acknowledged that the pandemic has placed an additional pressure on carers, both those living with their loved one, and those living at a distance. Anecdotally, we have been informed by a large provider of support services to older adults that they have experienced an increase in requests for support from families outside of Essex. Living at a distance and unable to travel, they have been seeking local help to support their loved one.

Carers Week 2020 research identified that the number of people adopting a caring role increased from 1 in 6 to 1 in 4 this year.<sup>26</sup> They were also taking on more care, with less respite, and the stress

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.carersweek.org/images/CW%202020%20Research%20Report%20WEB.pdf>

and pressure of doing so impacts upon the health of the carer too. For those living with loved ones in care homes we have been hearing statements such as:

And whilst coping at home:

Trying to motivate myself is my biggest problem'

My fear is she won't remember me. She won't know who I am

## Advice and Information

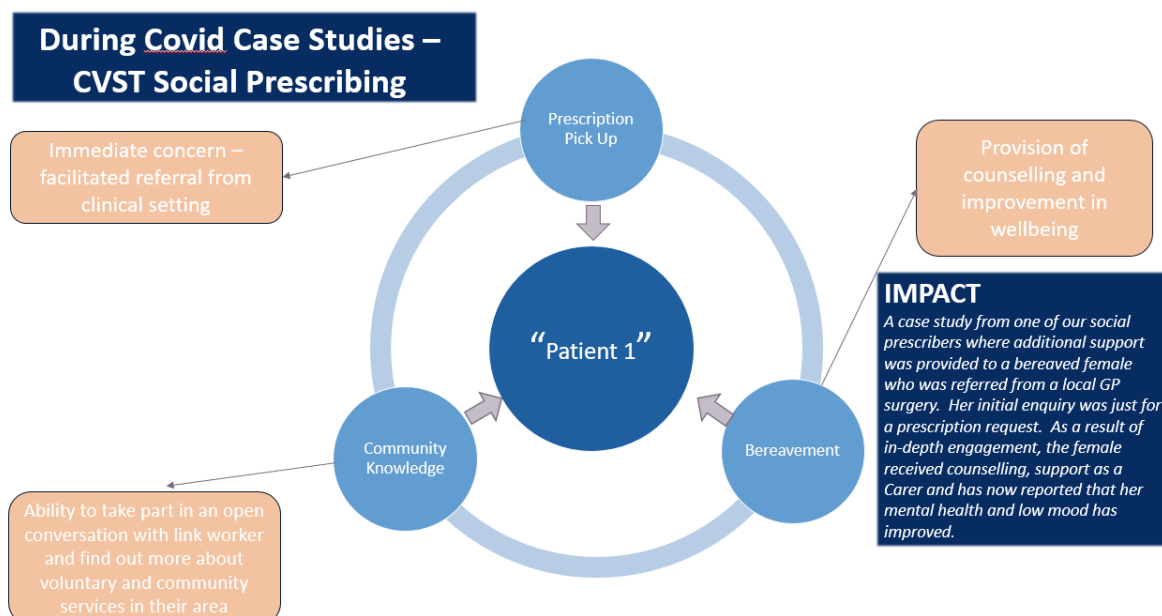
Many community groups and services in north east Essex provide advice and information to their service users. This includes signposting to other services and referring to other agencies for support. There are strong relationships and partnerships within Colchester and Tendring and across both areas for joint north east Essex working. Healthwatch Essex Information & Signposting service also play a huge part in helping the community of Essex navigate through the health and social care system via their help line, webchat and WhatsApp and also during their outreach events.

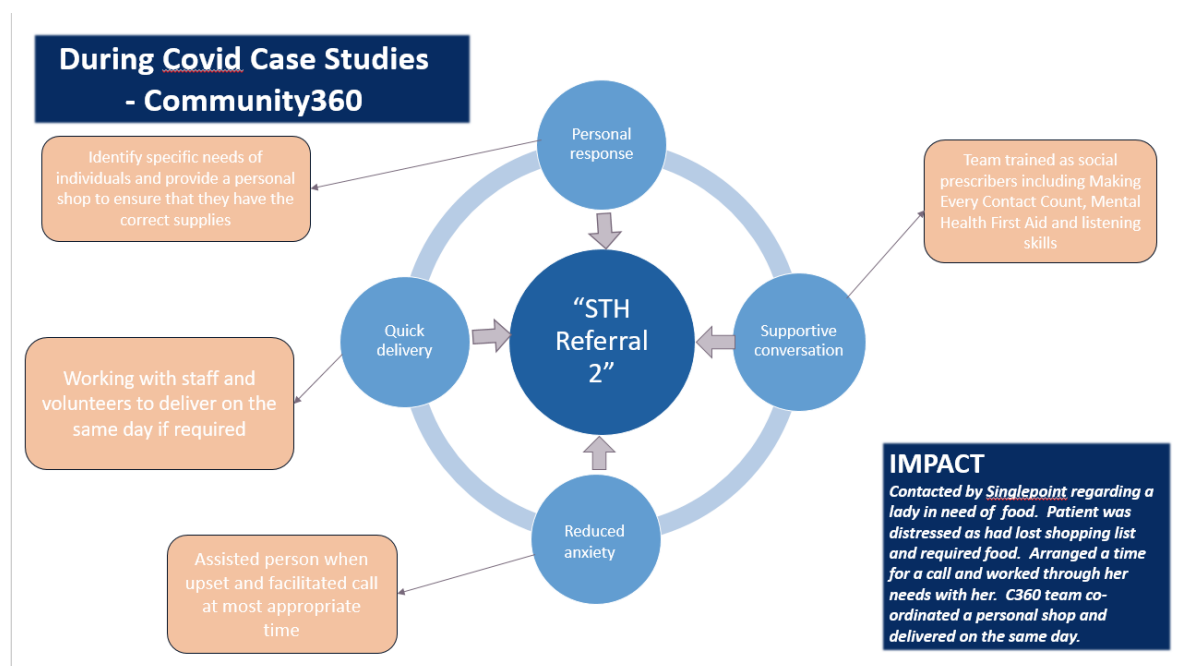
Social prescribing works for a wide range of people, including people:

- with one or more long-term condition,
- in need of support with their mental health
- who are lonely or isolated
- with complex social needs which affect their wellbeing

Referrals come from people themselves, local agencies, including GPs, pharmacies, multi-disciplinary teams, hospital discharge teams, health professionals, fire service, police, job centres, social care services, housing associations and voluntary and community organisations.

Social prescribers can also support existing community groups to be accessible and sustainable, and help people to start new groups, working collaboratively with local partners.





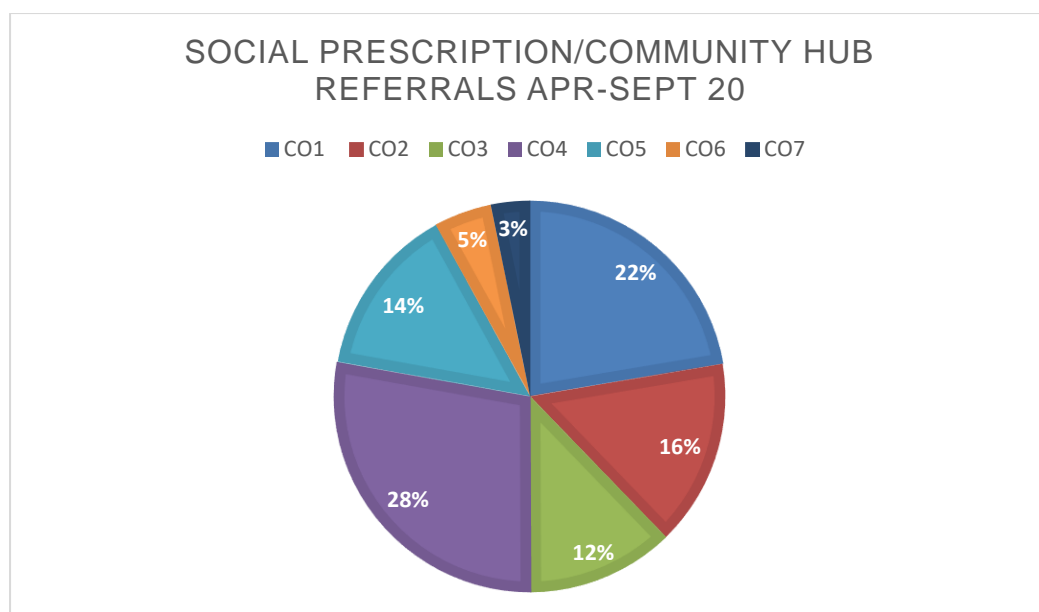
GP Care Advisors (GPCAs) are working in partnership with C360 and CVST to deliver social prescribing through primary care. In the last financial year, more than 8000 first referrals were received across north east Essex by GPCAs. More than 2000 sign-postings were made to the third sector from this route and more than 6600 conversations offering benefits advice. The top three referrers to GPCAs in Colchester were practices based in Colchester Central, with a significant number thereafter representing Colchester South residents. In Tendring, Colne, Crusader and St James refer in larger numbers.

## Colchester

Community360 received 4908 referrals for social prescribing in the last financial year (19/20) and have exceeded 3000 referrals since the start of April to the end of October. They include direct referrals from the Community Hub and targeted support to vulnerable residents through emerging population health management programmes – identifying a cohort of patients who can be contacted for proactive support – i.e. falls prevention.

By comparing data on level 2 referrals, the most complex referrals we receive (and may require ongoing support over several conversations) we can see that since April the biggest single area of referral is CO4, which includes some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in north and south Colchester. We have identified even more localised referral areas within Greenstead, Old Heath, and the Hythe and Castle.

There has also been a noticeable increase in referrals from CO5 postcodes (Marks Tey and Layer; Mersea and Pyefleet, Old Heath and the Hythe, Tiptree, parts of Castle and Berechurch).



There are specific organisations – such as Citizens Advice Tendring and Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex – which have a core offer of advice and information and support people to access services, information, and benefits. We reference Citizen's Advice data in more detail below. However, most organisations would say that they offer advice and information relevant to their sphere of activity and connect well with other organisations. Their service users benefit from their knowledge of the area and where people go.

For example, CVST's survey of community and voluntary groups found that 65 organisations in Tendring South have advice and information as part of their service offer, 48 organisations in Tendring East and 28 organisations in Tendring West. Reviewing all the assets in Colchester has revealed more than 100 advice giving agencies, ranging from debt, and housing, to employability skills and health information. If people know where to go, the information is there for them. Not all this information is quality marked, but it is clearly informed about local support networks and access to services.

## Volunteering

Many volunteers are of the older generation and with long-term health conditions, who have been shielding through the first wave of COVID-19; which could present a significant problem in the future. For many, conducting services online or by telephone has been a challenge and while local organisations report keeping in contact with volunteers, there is a risk that many may decide not to return. Similarly, respondents to Community360's VCSE survey highlighted concern for older volunteers to offer time safely but also for those with families to access childcare which would facilitate their availability.

In June 2020, CVST asked 50 local voluntary organisations for their experience of COVID-19 and the impact it had on their organisations and those whom they support. At that time, the voluntary sector lost 80% of volunteers. There are various reasons for this, for some it may have been temporary whilst they were vulnerable and shielding, but what it did do was give people the window to think about whether they wish to continue volunteering. Efforts are being made by voluntary organisations to ensure motivation to volunteer is not lost.

Even by October, 42% of groups stated that less than 50% of their volunteers were working while COVID-19 was prevalent. Yet, there are also potential opportunities, as participants also felt that they



could expand their volunteer base but working with more younger volunteers and capitalising on the community spirit engendered by the pandemic.

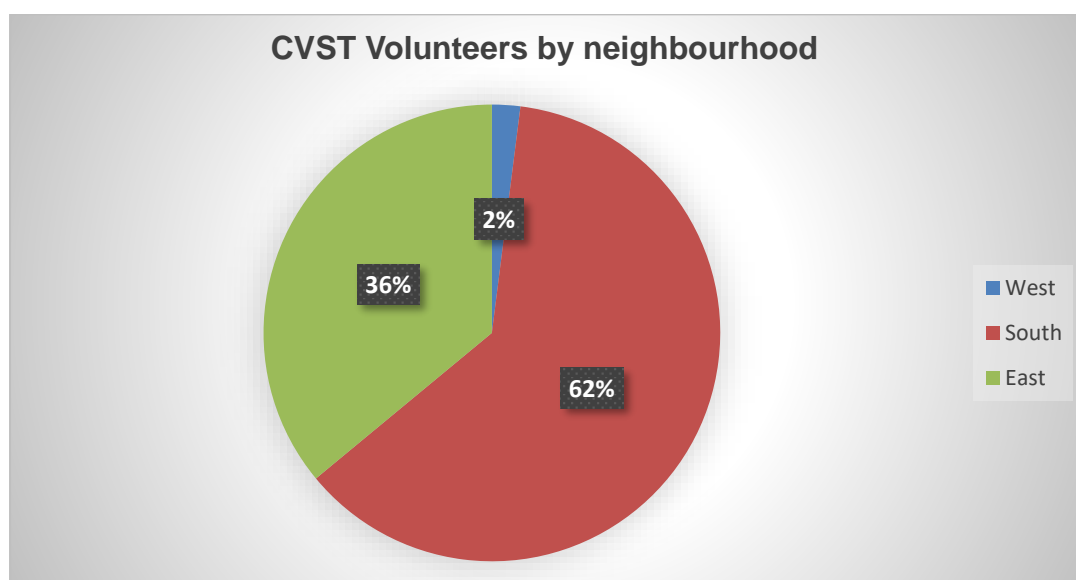
Many churches across Tendring and Colchester, particularly in rural areas but with some excellent examples in towns (e.g., Trinity Methodist Church, Clacton, and St Mary's Parish Church, Frinton) formed welcome hubs in the community and they and their volunteers have been pivotal in providing support during COVID-19.

Communities have looked after their own residents. By way of example, the strength of the community was evident in Harwich through the 'Harwich Helps' project, which brought together a wide range of organisations and volunteers to coordinate food drops, essential items delivery and provision of meals for delivery to the town's most vulnerable and isolated residents. This very local support adds richness to the response received and builds community resilience.

CVST is not able to precisely identify the number of volunteers in all registered charities in Tendring. However, it does ask affiliated members how many volunteers they have and, according to CVST's database, there were some 24,501 recorded volunteers for those organisations that reported this information prior to the pandemic. This means that this is a minimum figure and there are many more who do not report such information. With a population of 144,705 in Tendring, it therefore known that *at least* 17% of residents actively volunteer, which is a significant number of people. Most people volunteer with organisations close to their home, or with who they have a connection.

Taking CVST's volunteer base of 150 volunteers as a sample:

- 63% of volunteers are female
- Volunteers vary in age range from 24 to 85 years
- They come from a range of towns and villages although most are from the south and east of Tendring, from where CVST runs most of their services



- **Tendring West** – average age of CVST volunteers is 67
- **East** – average age of volunteers is 62, but they range in age from 32 to 81
- **South** – average age of volunteers is 61 but they vary in age range from 24 to 85

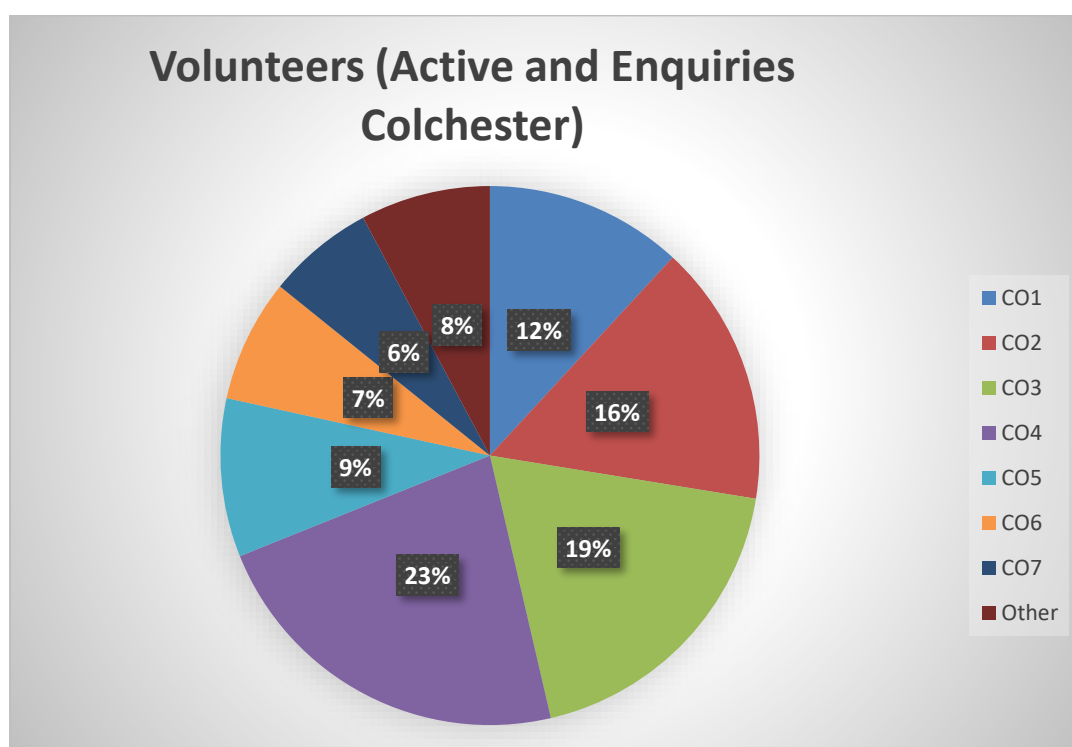
In Colchester, we have combined data from Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) and the Colchester Volunteer Centre to review a sample of more than 900 volunteers in placements or with active

enquiries, taken over the last twelve months. Colchester Volunteer Centre, Time Banking and Essex Wellbeing Services have facilitated substantial volunteer programmes in the area and this data reinforces the reach that they can have – exclusive of people's connection to localised volunteering activities – the reach of which will be even farther.

8% come from outside of the borough to volunteer. This raises questions about the appeal of local opportunities for volunteers living away from the borough and the potential catchment area that the sector could draw from (something that comes to the fore in Age Concern's work with St Helena later in this report). The prevalence of enquiries from CO4 requires some further investigation. This may be affected by the higher student population, seeking work experience or to people wishing to develop employability skills.

In Colchester, several large volunteer co-ordination programmes exist to galvanise activity in specific areas and communities and contribute to the overall impact. The 'vteam' is a great example of this based at the University of Essex. They have banked 32,167.5 hours in the last financial year generated by 1,317 active volunteers working with more than 60 organisations, including voluntary sector and schools.

In autumn 2020, it was planned for student volunteers to help provide a programme of science experiments via weekly webinars for staff, schools, and community partners. On campus and remotely, Wellbeing Ambassadors hold social hours in SU Advice, they offer a listening to service by students to students. The potential to draw on similar resources, large scale employers and institutions is important for the sector. This was impacted by the extended lockdown.



## Voluntary and community sector sustainability

Voluntary and community sector leaders worked with the statutory sector and a range of partners to deliver their services, adapting as the pandemic progressed and the need for contact increased. One

of the key strengths of the voluntary and community sector is the rapid rate at which it can adapt to its external environment and change to meet needs. Discussions were had with funders as funding was reorganised to meet this change in need and demand.

Groups reorganised their resources and technology to enable homeworking, putting in place policies and procedures to support the overall effort. In many cases, support teams were mobilised over a 7 day a week rota. 40% of surveyed groups had seen an increased demand on their services in Colchester and looking ahead in Tendring 45% expect to continue at current service level, 21% to increase their service offer and 29% to decrease their service substantially.

Surveyed groups described some of the new activities they offered. They included:

1. Personal support services (prescription collections, food deliveries, shopping, dog walking)
2. Befriending services
3. Employability services
4. Medical services
5. Outdoor programmes
6. Youth support services

Overall, the responses from both Colchester and Tendring present a mixed picture. Some will maintain higher demand; others are on hold pending continued changes to restrictions.



### Quotes - from local community & voluntary sector ...

... demonstrated their mixed experiences during COVID-19:

"The voluntary sector will look very different, it might be the change we need for a joined-up approach to help our most vulnerable, those with mental health issues, the homeless and addicts."

"The highest point we saw was a reduction of 50% of our staff members; currently we are operating at a reduction of approx. 38%."

"The benefit of this crisis is that we now know the difference between the words want and need. We all have a better knowledge of how to support people with what they need in a crisis and sometimes that need, is to find the tools within themselves to build up their resilience. This crisis must not disempower people."

"We aren't doing online as groups are diverse and then older population do not have the tech to do this or indeed know how to use it."

Video chats are being used rather than telephone contact, as we can monitor people's physical appearance, are they looking well? This can be a good indication if they are struggling?"

"There has been room for more transparent grant making where groups have been honest about what they need...Honesty rather than playing the game which was refreshing."

"Loss of membership is making the Society unviable. Inability to offer a social network to combat isolation. Loss of tradition and skills"

"We have had to reprioritise the most urgent needs of those people who used to come to our centre, we need to keep in touch with them to provide emotional support and to ensure they are maintaining their mobility and health and have systems in place to respond to their most urgent needs."



In tandem with the production of the report, Community360 has partnered with the University of Essex to capture interviews with community leaders. The interviews will allow us to explore their work and priorities in more detail. Trends from the interviews reinforce responses gathered through wider surveys to date. For example, partnerships have been strengthened and, in some cases, expanded. There are concerns about what happens next.

The interviews will be held as an oral history record of the experience of the voluntary and community sector during the pandemic. Interviewees have described to the research team how the opportunity to talk about their experiences is itself a 'therapy', as well as a chance to inform future strategies.

Many fear the funding future. In Tendring, 80% anticipated a decrease in core funding in the summer; reinforced in Colchester where groups felt that financial hardship was the biggest concern because of loss of income, as well as concerns about funding streams and additional expenses to embed COVID-19 measures into their activity. In Tendring 42% of survey participants accessed COVID-19 related grants. In Colchester, 44% of respondents had not accessed funds at all and the remainder were awaiting outcomes or had been successful in securing grants.

Many funders reacted quickly to support the voluntary sector through the COVID-19 crisis. The National Lottery established a fund with clear overarching aims that was indicative of the reaction of many funders:

- To increase community support to vulnerable people affected by the COVID-19 crisis, through the work of civil society organisations
- To reduce temporary closures of essential charities and social enterprises, ensuring services for vulnerable people impacted by COVID-19 have the financial resources to operate, and so reduce the burden on public services
- Grants will allow organisations to meet service costs, where they are experiencing increased demand and/or short-term income disruption. Grants will also allow organisations to refocus services to address more immediate beneficiary needs in light of COVID-19.

Nine grants were made in Tendring and 16 in Colchester through the fund.

The Essex Community Foundation (ECF) has multiple grant funds and released COVID-19 response funding. Colchester Catalyst Trust also adapted and utilised some of the annual budget, of over £400,000, to respond to the needs and divert a substantial amount of their grant-funding towards projects that required new help due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They also changed their meeting structure so they could be more flexible and respond more quickly to requests like these. Grants given included communications for those with sensory impairment, dementia, equipment, and respite. We await the longer-term impact of the financial consequences upon endowed funds and the ability of trading charities to begin to support their own activities.

## Digital Services and Inclusion

"In an increasingly digital age, those who are not engaging effectively with the digital world are at risk of being left behind. Technological change means that digital skills are increasingly important for connecting with others, accessing information and services, and meeting the changing demands of the workplace and economy. This is leading to a digital divide between those who have access to information and communications technology and those who do not, giving rise to inequalities in

access to opportunities, knowledge, services, and goods”<sup>27</sup> This particularly applies to people over the age of 65, and even more so over the age of 75, which is very relevant to Tendring’s population and many Colchester residents.

In both Colchester and Tendring, 7.6% of the adult population (aged 16+) have never used the internet.<sup>28</sup> With regards to digital exclusion infrastructure, access, skills, and use - Colchester came out higher than Tendring, this may in part be due to the rurality of the area.<sup>29</sup>

It is acknowledged that several people have fallen out of contact with services due to their lack of confidence or access to services which are now being delivered online. A review of all active assets shows the shift to online provision – with more than 40% of researched assets in Colchester accessible online before the November lockdown which curtailed face to face contact even more. For example, Essex Integration trained 45 volunteers to deliver activities via Zoom. Essex Law Clinic quickly shifted its communication channels to be able to meet demand and support local people.

Healthwatch Essex has been working in partnership with Healthwatch Suffolk and the Integrated Care System (ICS) to explore digital literacy, digital poverty, and digital inclusion. This included interviews or focus groups with adults who have an experience of disability and focused on their experience of using digital during the pandemic and issues they encountered.

#### **Healthwatch Essex digital literacy**

Whilst collectively the respondents understood the need to offer digital services within health and social care, their engagement with it due to personal skills and abilities varied greatly. Much of this was dependent on their health conditions and means of communication.

#### **Essex Law Clinic**

“Technology has ... provided the opportunity for another major expansion in the way clinics work, though this time caused by necessity due to the lockdown. Thus, the Essex Law Clinic quickly replaced face to face interviews with those via video conferencing and in this way was able, from April to November, to serve 33 clients who would not otherwise have been assisted.”

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Evidence from several organisations indicates that service users and, in some cases, volunteers, have not felt comfortable adapting to online services or just telephone contact. The cohorts that are particularly affected are people on a low income, people over 70 years and people with learning disabilities. There are, however, projects which are aiming to address this lack of confidence and connect people who would not usually use technology with services and groups, friends, and family.

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<sup>27</sup> Exploring the UK’s digital divide, ONS, March 2019

<sup>28</sup> Office for National Statistics (Internet Access Quarterly Update)

<sup>29</sup> GoOnUk (Digital Skills Unlocked)

<sup>30</sup> Essex Law Clinic Annual Report 2020, University of Essex



Surveys of local organisations demonstrate how the majority moved quickly towards digital platforms and telephone contact to be able to continue to provide services. It was the highest-ranking opportunity identified by VCSE groups in the Colchester survey. Digital platforms have been valuable to all the organisations but do not necessarily provide solutions to service delivery challenges. Putting documents online and shifting meetings to Zoom brings some business continuity.

For particularly vulnerable groups, where access to devices and internet and physical safety are issues, face to face is essential. Leaders interviewed by the University of Essex have acknowledged value in keeping (some/most) meetings online in the future for the wider networking and more effective coordination they offered but some organisations will need to expand their capacity for in-person activities and services to address not only increased demand during the pandemic but the longer-term impacts. Emotional well-being emerged as a theme in all interviews.

Interview responses have also described how digital platforms for multi-organisational meetings supported work with people able to attend from across the county, fostering new connections and support and even collaborative funding bids.

Tendring District Council and local providers across Colchester and Tendring are working with Essex County Council (in partnership with Alcove and RETHINK Partners) to roll-out a new technology-enabled solution as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It enables continued delivery and care and supports residents with needs through a video care phone while they are isolated from their daily support. It also facilitates contacts with their friends and families at this difficult time, particularly when they are shielding.

The Lottery funded Healthier Independent Technology project (CVST) was set up during COVID-19 when, through operational activities, it became clear that a large proportion of Tendring's population was excluded from services due to lack of IT skills and/or access and depended heavily on others for their shopping. A simple questionnaire was used over the phone when people were calling for support to identify potential beneficiaries who were at risk of isolation and could enjoy more interaction with digital skills. The project is funded to support 30 people towards digital inclusion. To date the project has matched 21 beneficiaries and 9 volunteers have been involved in trying to develop skills and confidence in the vulnerable and shielding to use technology to support social interactions and access to services and facilities. The project has provided digital equipment to those who have none, as well as to complement existing equipment (e.g., tablets, data cards, Wi-Fi, phones).

Two beneficiaries have now completed their time on the project. One of whom has overcome a 20-year fear of computers and is now using their laptop to keep connected including weekly zoom meetings with family. Another had a new phone in a drawer and now has 70 contacts, has taken out a mobile contract and is keeping in touch with family and friends through mobile phone calls and text messages (using stylus pen provided). This person can participate in video calls, and recently whilst caught out in a rainstorm was able to order a cab, receive message to say it had arrived and got home safely and dry! She said ' *What a lift it gives you. It felt that good to be included*' (she feels this as she is now able to use her mobile phone). This beneficiary has also renegotiated her home telephone contract to a more reasonable rate.

## Seven day – weekend evening services

Most community and voluntary sector organisations are not funded to provide 24/7 services. We highlighted in our 2019 reports that very few services could offer this level of flexibility or accessibility, especially face to face.

Where this does occur, often there is a connection to a partnership or nationwide support network, as with the Samaritans who manage calls across districts. Others offer emergency support, such as homelessness/housing provision or Community First Responders. A key local example of 24/7 working is SinglePoint.

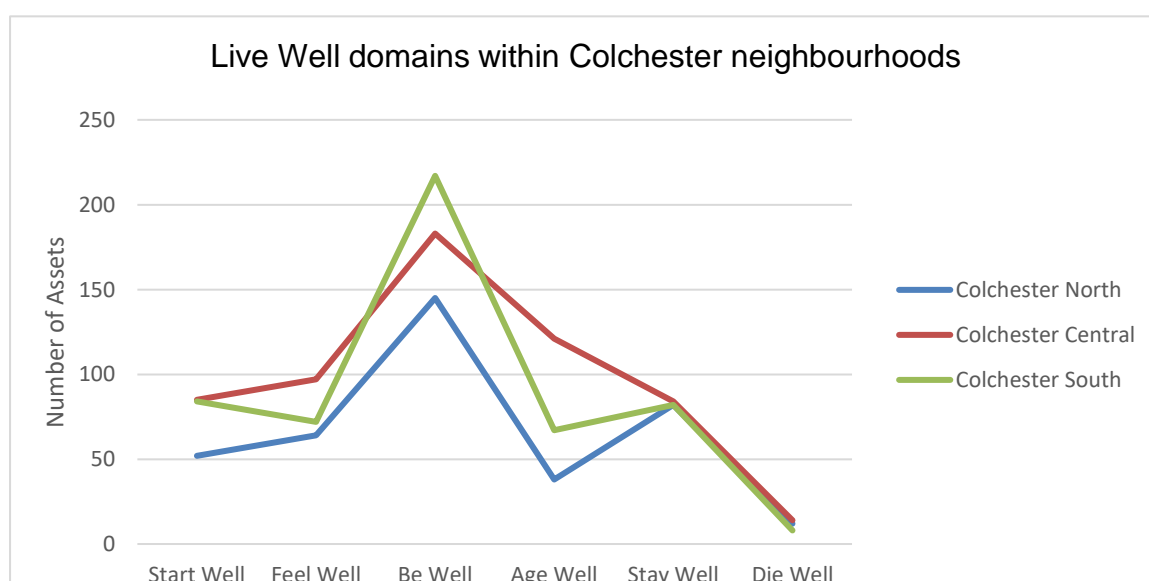
SinglePoint is a 24/7 advice and support helpline, provided by St Helena Hospice, which helps to coordinate care for those who may be in the last year of life or who have specialist palliative care needs. It enables people to call for help, information or for support to coordinate other health and social care services or to refer into St Helena services.

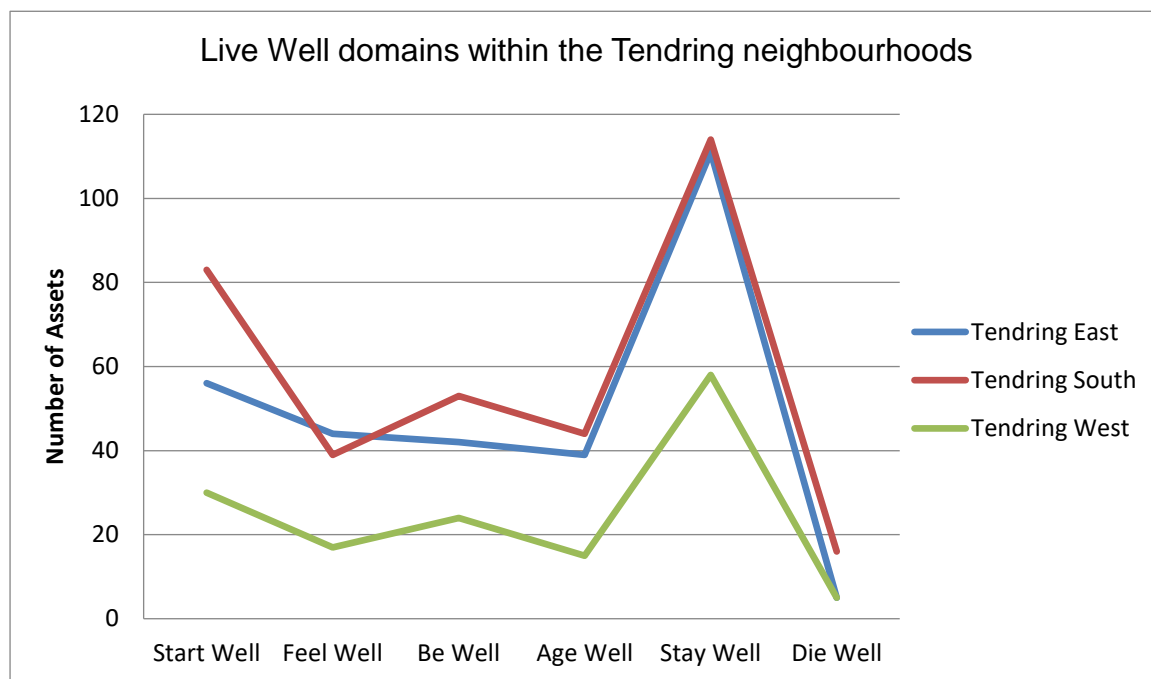
The SinglePoint team make an assessment over the phone and help people access the support they need when they need it. They work closely with the GP, community nurses, out of hours doctors and hospital specialists as needed to manage the situation. In a crisis, expert nurses or other professionals may visit at home to respond. The service works closely with St Helena Hospice in the Home services and guides those who need it to help people stay at home when that is what they choose.

In the period April 2020 – September 2020 SinglePoint supported over 1,600 individual people in north east Essex. Whilst SinglePoint has maintained services that are accessible by phone and are supported by professional face to face support if needed, accessibility remains a challenge for other assets.

## Live Well Domains

The NEE Alliance has adopted the north east Essex-wide Livewell approach and its six key domains; 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.





### Start Well – giving children the best start in life

Whilst reviewing the assets available to families, children and young people, the following themes were very prominent during this period:

- There has been an increase in families accessing community level services, such as foodbanks, holiday hunger activities and school uniform provisions
- Many peer-to-peers or ‘in person’ support services have changed due to COVID-19. This includes recreational activities and home visits that would have previously been provided by key services and statutory providers
- SEND families have provided a complicated picture in terms of how they access services and what they may need

There are many organisations across north east Essex which offer support to children and young people and families, including Extra, Families inFocus, YES (Youth Enquiry Service), Inclusion Ventures, Home-start Colchester, and Home-Start Harwich, TeenTalk, The Ark in Harwich and a wide variety of playgroups, nurseries, forest schools and outdoor play areas.

During lockdown services have not been able to do home visiting and have relied on phone contact and group chats using online resources. This means that it has been difficult to check in on the most vulnerable children. Outdoor play areas have been closed and parents, family carers and carers have had to find alternative resources. For some it has been an opportunity to go out to exercise as a family and enjoy the outdoors for a while each day – for others it has presented significant challenges.

Across Tendring, the Education Strategic Board comprises all secondary school heads, with cluster representation from primary schools, Essex County Council, Tendring District Council, post-16 providers and other educational organisations. Current priorities are recruitment and retention of head teachers and teachers, pupil attendance and post 16 provision. This should help to drive up

educational attainment, alongside support to families. The Board membership will flex, as priorities change or need additional support.

In April 2020, Community360 launched the Essex Family Support Services in partnership with providers across Essex. The service provides support to families of school-aged children and young people aged 8 – 19 years. This includes families who are not already receiving support from specialist and statutory services.

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

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

Since April 2020, the service has supported 183 referrals (for the period April – October 2020) of which 47 (26%) have requested support for emotional health and wellbeing in some form. Whilst emotional and social support for children and young people exists, and we have seen some short-term investment in services to support low level mental health needs in north east Essex, it is widely acknowledged that child and adolescent mental health continues to be a challenge and more accessible community services, without waiting lists, are needed.

### Community level services

Children living in families on low incomes have been supported by localised programmes of activity but the take up of these programmes demonstrates significant need. Essex Integration's School Uniform project provided an average of 700 items (more Secondary School uniform than Primary) a month between June and September 2020, due to people being furloughed, losing their jobs, extra expense of children being home.

Within the last 6 months EXTRA has supported 91 parents - 63.5% Clacton (incl. Pier, Bluehouse, Great Clacton, St James); 11% in Frinton/Walton ward; 8% in Jaywick. (Jaywick Sands and Golf Green) and the remainder in Harwich, Brightlingsea, Manningtree, Colchester, Wivenhoe, and Tiptree.

During the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period, parents/carers whom EXTRA were supporting via telephone calls and parent peer support groups, were telling the organisation that they were mentally and physically exhausted. All reported that they were very anxious (with some reporting suicidal thoughts). They also reported many children suffering from high levels of anxiety and self-harm. Activities such as their managing anxiety course supported at risk groups - 100% of those attending the online course felt better about themselves and knew more people in the same situation as themselves after the courses.

In Colchester, 13% (3838) of children are eligible for free school meal provision. We have seen a national spotlight on family food poverty and the provision of 'holiday hunger' activities for children and families. Across Colchester and Tendring, a number of community led initiatives support this theme, many of which were in existence before the Marcus Rashford campaign, although without

doubt, we have seen an increase in demand and activities from both the voluntary sector and local businesses.

For the October 2020 half term, 29 community activities and businesses were highlighted as providing food support across Colchester, one of those being the Firstsite art gallery, where throughout the school summer holidays and October half term 1422 meals were provided to 275 families. As with many of the community provisions, creative and sport activities take place alongside access to meals which also enables low income working families the opportunity to leave children with the activity coordinators and to go to work.

The national average is 26% free school meals, in Tendring some schools have up to 70% eligibility.

Research cited by IntoUniversity<sup>31</sup> on their website and widely understood by academics, schools, and policy makers, shows that young people from disadvantaged postcodes are nearly 5 times less likely to go to university than those in the most advantaged areas<sup>32</sup>.

IntoUniversity have set up a centre in Clacton. The aim is to provide young people who face challenges with a programme of support to help them succeed in school, improve their employability, and achieve their ambitions. In 2019, IntoUniversity worked with 1245 students across the Clacton area. When surveyed 71% felt they had increased their knowledge of university.<sup>33</sup> The number of IntoUniversity students who are unemployed, or undecided was less than 20% in Clacton in 2019. IntoUniversity students are more likely to go to higher education than the national average (over 50%, compared with approximately 25%). If not accessing university, most students achieve positive outcomes and go on to university access courses, further education, apprenticeships, or employment.

Early analysis of data from the Essex Family Support Service highlights more referrals from CO1-3 postcodes (north/central Colchester) and several from CO15 (Tendring South). We will continue to monitor the flow to see how this relates to complexity of need, position of families on the effective support windscreen, or the influence of other factors. (The effective support windscreen is a shared understanding across all services and partnerships', ensuring a consistent approach is applied. It illustrates how we will respond to the requirements of children and families across four levels of need (universal, additional, intensive and specialist)<sup>34</sup>. Essex Family Support Services assist at universal and additional needs levels and offer mentoring, parenting support and assistance to families who require practical, social or community support).

During COVID-19 Home-Start Colchester & South Tendring reshaped their service to offer families in Colchester and South Tendring support online, by phone, text and in person where possible. Parents who had not needed help in the past now needed help, including working parents who have experienced salary cuts. For some parents it was easier for them not to get up and get children to school. Safeguarding has been difficult as services can no longer check on children in the home.

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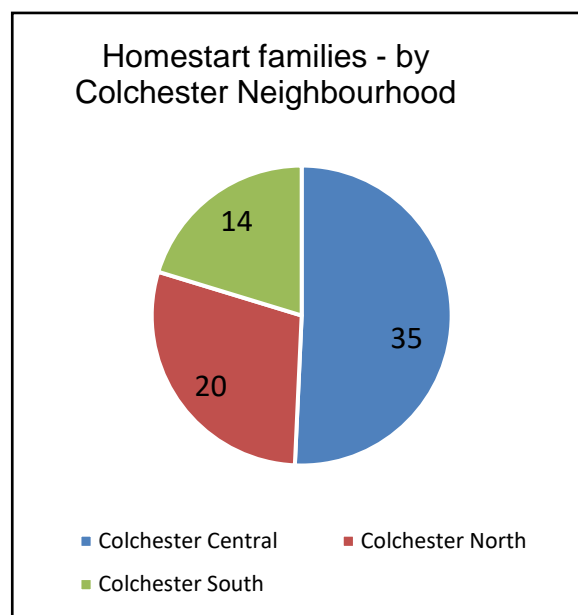
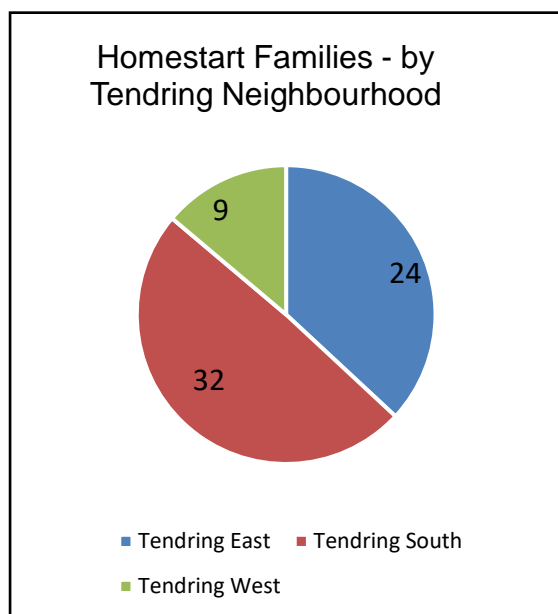
<sup>31</sup> [www.intouniversity.org](http://www.intouniversity.org)

<sup>32</sup> HEFCE POLAR report 2005

<sup>33</sup> IntoUniversity Impact Report for Clacton-on-Sea, 2019.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.essexeffectivesupport.org.uk/media/1087/practitioners-guide-effective-support-windscreen-aug-18.pdf>





Food has been the main issue along with parenting. Home-Start has offered:

- parenting programs online and on phone
- respite holiday clubs to support children
- befriending calls
- signposting to health services and information
- food bank vouchers and collecting food, fare share food
- forest schools (a new addition)
- detached youth work
- a support group for separated parents

Loneliness is the biggest need. Home-Start has seen no demonstrable increase in domestic violence, but they have seen more disagreements over custody and shared rights of children. They have seen an increase in families losing their homes due to debt.

Social media has increased, new community groups are emerging to help themselves and the community, with varying effects. Some groups feel resentful of charities who have paid staff and feel they can provide a more cost-effective service, but adequate policies or guidelines are essential. New referrals are coming through social media.

Overall, current safeguarding numbers for children and families in Colchester and Tendring are keeping pace with comparative figures for 2019. Whilst there were fewer reported cases during lockdown, there was an increase in the summer before levelling off in October.

### Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provisions

We are seeing the emergence of new voluntary and community services in Colchester, led by parents of children with learning or physical disabilities.

The motivation for establishing peer to peer groups is in addressing a need that they have felt unable to identify a solution for. Additionally, we can highlight some established community groups, such as **MAZE** who offer an important service for children and families:



Demand for one-to-one support has increased; some families have really struggled during lockdown, being confined to home while schools were closed with escalation in emotional/mental health difficulties, less structure, social isolation, and OCD associated with illness.

“Our offer has adapted, as we are unable to meet face to face, we have taken as much as we can online. Our observation is that for some families, life has become incredibly difficult, living confined together in an anxiety provoking pandemic, where jobs/income/health is affected it is especially hard.

Conversely, we have also seen a lot of children/young people doing so much better due to not having to attend school where their needs are not met well, or contribute to their anxiety and social difficulties. For others life was simpler during lockdown as social expectations / connections are reduced there was a liberation for some families.

For lots of SEND families being socially isolated was their normality pre-COVID-19 so actually had more resilience to deal with it.”



**Families InFocus** is an Essex-wide charity, with its head office in Chelmsford, which works in Colchester and Tendring to support families with children & young people with special educational needs. The organisation provides free support to families with children aged 0 to 25 with disabilities and/or special needs who require advice, information, and support, particularly at times of change, challenge, and crisis. Since October 2019, they have provided support to 352 families, had 464 referrals (including 112 families in more than one project).

Most referrals have been for benefits and education-related support. Families InFocus dealt with 67 benefit claims during this time, supporting families to secure approximately £275,760 in benefits. Colchester and Tendring have traditionally been very high need areas for Families InFocus support and demand levels tend to be consistent. There was no significant increase in requests during the early stages of the pandemic, but recently there has been a large increase in new referrals coming through, many for education.

The caseload is becoming much more complex (some with more than 21 contacts with the charity) often involving multi agencies (mental health teams, police, social workers etc.). Anxiety and mental health have increased significantly, along with associated issues that come with this (e.g., self-

harming, school refusal, behaviour issues). There is an increase in parents who have mental health and learning difficulties themselves, so require more support.

**Lads Need Dads** – *pictured* - (LND) is an independent not for profit Community Interest Company based in Tendring and operating across Tendring and Colchester. It was set up to prevent potential problems and address existing ones where boys are missing a father figure in their lives. It is the only project in the UK that works proactively to address the impact of the absent father on boys age 11-15 and whose approach is both early intervention and long-term. There are 20 mentors in total across Tendring and Colchester, supporting 40 young people at present and with new cohorts coming through.

In Tendring and Colchester LND is working with boys from several local schools.

#### **Good Practice - Lads need Dads, during lockdown**

A lot of the work we do with the lads is practical and hands-on, so in line with this, our mentors were encouraged to be creative. One mentor, Brett, ran an on-line video cook-off whereby he taught his mentees how to cook a meal for their family.

Lads Need Dads sourced, purchased, and delivered the ingredients and the boys cooked the meal, guided remotely step by step by their mentor who also cooked the same meal.

We have encouraged and signed up five boys to complete level 2 food hygiene course on-line and funded ingredients for those who want to cook and bake for their families independently, with some scrumptious results.



#### **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 Home-Start 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.



Healthwatch Essex has recruited and trained some Young Mental Health Ambassadors (YMHAs) who have co-produced work including events, meetings and projects. YMHAs share their lived experience in relation to them all living with various mental health issues or being a young carer of somebody who has a mental health issue. The YMHAs range from 11 years old to 21 years old and have run social media takeover events, discussions around the pandemic and other tasks working with partner organisations.

### 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 Café's, 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 highlight how often they ultimately use the training (in some cases daily) and the reach that it can have.

#### Suicide rate (Persons)

[New data](#)

2017 - 19

Directly standardised rate - per 100,000

[Export table as image](#)
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Area ▲▼	Recent Trend	Count ▲▼	Value ▲▼		95% Lower CI	95% Upper CI
England	–	14,788	10.1		9.9	10.3
Torbay	–	64	19.0		14.5	24.3
Tendring	–	67	18.8		14.4	24.1
Colchester	–	94	18.5		14.9	22.6
Harlow	–	40	17.6		12.5	24.0
Bassetlaw	–	50	16.9		12.5	22.4
Barrow-in-Furness	–	30	16.9		11.4	24.2
Norwich	–	59	16.6		12.5	21.7
Chorley	–	51	16.4		12.2	21.6
Lincoln	–	39	16.2		11.4	22.3
Scarborough	–	44	16.0		11.5	21.7

Summit provide a variety of services for vulnerable people with disabilities ranging from advocacy, support groups and community navigation which help people to access the services they need. Since April 2020 they have experienced a significant increase in contacts from adults who are experiencing poor mental health. Many have been unable to access crisis intervention and therapeutic services, such as counselling.



Most of these services are in huge demand and do not have the capacity to meet the growing need, and the pause in face-to-face support has served to deepen the crisis.

Over the last six months they have served the local community by delivering wellbeing checks, person centred listening sessions, virtual appointment support and online mindfulness and wellbeing sessions. Where appropriate and safe to do so, they have met with the most vulnerable and isolated. For some, lockdown has been a positive experience. It has given the opportunity to work from home, to enjoy peace and solitude, to re-connect with their children and re-evaluate their lifestyle choices. However, the vast majority of vulnerable people have become more isolated during this time and have more reliant on charities and the voluntary sector.

The diversity of people's COVID19 experience is nicely summarised by the following remark passed to SUMMIT from a Tendring resident when asked about their COVID19 experience; *"We might be in the same storm, but some people are in luxury yachts and some of us are in rowing boats"*.

During April to July SUMMIT experienced a 300% increase in people accessing their services overall. This is a 258% increase from the previous year. From April to July 2019 the number of male clients was 12.5%, this rose to 37.5% in the same period in 2020.. The increase is overwhelming for a small charity. More to the point the reality is that this figure is actually higher, as they have spoken and provided support and guidance to many adults who did not wish to provide their name or details, they just wanted to talk to someone.

Stress, anxiety, and depression featured amongst males with root cause and emerging themes as financial stress, social disconnect, anxiety over perceived future loss e.g., business, employment, lifestyle, health, relationship. Also the loss of routine and structure have all been significant factors *"I have nothing to get out of bed in the morning for"* has been a common expression of hopelessness and lacking a sense of purpose. SUMMIT's data shows that locally there is a marked increase in males over 45 years of age seeking support for their emotional wellbeing.

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 therefore able to access support through this means, however, many were struggling with technology and lacked confidence.

#### [CAT mental health hub](#)

The hub is a part of Citizen's Advice Tendring, based in Clacton. It is a mental health recovery programme which supports volunteers in recovery from mental health problems to gain shop/retail skills in a charity shop run by Citizens Advice. Volunteers can gain social skills and are helped to move on to other placements in either voluntary roles, training, employment, or self-employment for up to a year.

The hub runs an activity programme to encourage physical activity and promote exercise and wellbeing from being outdoors. The programme includes a cycling group and nature walk group on a



weekly basis for volunteers and a gardening project will be starting in the very near future. There is also a singing group and book club.

There is a cohort of 12 volunteers at any one time, referred by health and social care organisations or self-referral when visiting the shop or the advice service. The hub supports approximately 40 volunteers in a year.

### 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 appointment also available twice a week. They are also piloting in-reach groups in Ardleigh Ward at the Lakes and are running 4 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 is 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 & North East Essex, 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.

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. C360 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 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, C360 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".

## Be Well – empowering adults to make healthy lifestyle choices

Within the Be Well domain the wider determinants of health are considered, these include issues such as access to housing and income, as well as positive behaviours to support healthy lifestyles, i.e., smoking cessation, exercise, and fitness. Local joint strategic needs assessment data for both districts highlights some of the challenges in detail and overall, the health of people living in Tendring is worse than the England average, whilst in Colchester, the prevalence of specific conditions impact upon health and wellbeing. Many of these are summarised earlier in relation to COVID-19 risk factors.

Healthwatch Essex has been capturing lived experience as part of a piece of research relating to obesity in men. This research project entitled Weight of Stigma (WoS) looks into the issues men face trying to access support services for weight loss. Assets including My Weight Matters, Slimming World and Weight Watchers, but also participants were involved in local support agencies such as Man v Fat. Early indications from this research highlight that isolation and mental health were a huge impacting factor in weight gain and the ability to maintain weight loss.

## Physical activity

Before the COVID-19 lockdown Colchester and Tendring were two of three areas in Essex targeted with Sport England funding, under the Local Delivery Pilot (LDP) to improve its levels of physical activity. Reasons for not engaging vary – it may be cost, lack of time, motivation, and the environmental factors. In addition, people with a disability were more than twice as likely to be inactive than those without, and people with poor mental health were less likely to engage in physical activity especially when living in a deprived area.<sup>35</sup> 30.5% of people in Tendring are inactive (i.e., have less than 30 minutes of activity per day) this is compared with 23.9% across Essex and 24.8% across England.

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.activeessex.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Essex-LDP-Chapter-One-Report-FINAL.pdf>

In Essex, 63% of adults are overweight or obese, just above the national average of 62%.<sup>36</sup>

During the lockdown there were reports of increased levels of physical activity: "Walking and cycling have proved to be the most popular forms of outdoor activity during the initial lockdown phase, with people walking for exercise up from 59% in week one to 63% in week six, and cycling increasing from 8% to 13%."<sup>37</sup>

However, ongoing analysis through the State of Life survey shows that the proportion of inactive respondents seems to be increasing and levels of activity and wellbeing remain lower within deprived areas of north east Essex.

Excluding formal sports groups, which may be supported by national bodies i.e. the Football Association, we have tracked over 100 local groups and sessions in Colchester which support physical activity. Physical activity groups will encompass gardening, walking, and travel. Some have moved or emerged online. Carers First offer access to Pilates for carers. The Dance Network Association runs several one-off programmes and regular activities which may be facilitated online. The Active Tendring Network support a range of activities across Tendring including all-age park runs, in Harwich and Clacton, the Marathon kids programmes (across Tendring), Sport for Confidence and Move it Mumma in Harwich have helped to promote physical activity.

The ability to continue to operate each activity face to face, responding to restrictions and maintaining capacity levels pre-COVID-19 is not consistent across the sector. Colchester Ramblers is hosting two walks a week. Stanway U3A hosts 24 groups which include a form of physical activity. They supported group leaders to risk assess outdoor activities to continue if possible. Other activities were curtailed as halls hosting them could not open or volunteers were unavailable. Linked activities are similarly affected - such as My Weight Matters weigh-ins which have not taken place in the community since March.

In 'normal' times, there are many vibrant and well supported activities taking place in every type of centre, church, or village hall with some being set up as charities or community ventures to purposefully meet specific community needs, e.g., Jaywick Community Resource Centre, the Venture Centre in Manningtree, Walton Community Centre and Dovercourt and Harwich Hub.

There are activities available for all age groups, interests, and physical abilities. Many more formal activities are centred on urban areas, these are predominantly run or supported by organisations, registered charities, or local authorities. Lifestyle advice e.g., weight management, nutrition, smoking cessation is given through local pharmacies, the HILL project and as part of advice and information offered by a range of community organisations. Citizens Advice Tendring includes a cycling project, gardening, and walks as part of the recovery programme run from the mental health hub.

### Drug and alcohol dependency

Open Road is an established Drug and Alcohol Recovery support charity in Essex and Medway - with centres in Clacton and Colchester. Open Road provides services to support individuals on their

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<sup>36</sup> Public Health England data profiles: obesity, 2018-19, <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/search/overweight#page/0/gid/1/pat/6/par/E12000006/ati/302/are/E10000012/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/ovw-do-0>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.stateoflife.org/2020tracker>

journey to recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. Open Road also offers help to individuals in the criminal justice sector.

They have developed a new family support service, open to anyone with a relative in addiction. The service offers an initial phone consultation with the family member to determine the scope of the issues facing the family, what they hope to gain from contacting family support and a clear pathway to further support if required. Referral to the service is through email or text. In Tendring, 75% of new starts in the first half of the year come from Tendring South.

In 2019, we highlighted the localised timetables of Alcoholics Anonymous groups reaching into every Neighbourhood in Colchester and seven days a week. Local groups are not meeting in as many locations or as frequently. An online group has been formed but the reach is not as broad. Online information enables provision of some services throughout the week but not with the same level of personalised support.

#### Financial capability, housing, and income

Citizen's Advice Colchester (CAC) and Citizen's Advice Tendring (CAT) have provided data comparing client numbers and locations pre-pandemic and from April 2020. In Colchester, we can see the change in wards requesting support.

Local Authority Ward	2019/20	2020 (Apr-Sept)
New Town and Christchurch 📍	#2	#1
Greenstead 📍	#1	#2
Castle 📍	#3	#3
Mile End 📍	#9	#3
Berechurch 📍	#4	#5
Old Heath and The Hythe 📍	#5	#6
Highwoods 📍	#7	#7
St Anne's and St Johns 📍	#8	#8
Marks Tey and Layer 📍	#12	#9
Shrub End 📍	#6	#10
Prettygate 📍	#11	#11
Tiptree 📍	#10	#12
Rural North 📍	#14	#13
Stanway 📍	#13	#14
Mersea and Pyefleet 📍	#16	#14
Lexden and Braiswick 📍	#15	#16
Wivenhoe 📍	#17	#16
Colchester <b>South</b>		
Colchester <b>Central</b>		
Colchester <b>North</b>		

Through the pandemic, Citizen's Advice Colchester has reported a 'substantial increase' in requests for support across all age ranges and genders. In the last financial year, they supported 14,868 clients. They found that clients were almost five times as likely to be on a low income when compared to the population. More than 1000 people sought support in Colchester Central. People from Greenstead and Old Heath and the Hythe presented with some of the most complex, multiple issues. Mile End has jumped up to the third most common area of enquiry since April and may relate to the further trends seen from April to September.

### Citizen's Advice Colchester

	1 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020	1 APRIL 2020 – 30 SEPT 2020
TOP 3 ISSUES	Universal Credit, debt & employment	Employment, Universal Credit & housing
GENDER	56% female, 44% male	58% female, 42% male
ETHNICITY	82% white	84% white
LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITION	34%	35%
PRIME AGE GROUPS	30-34 & 40-44	30-34 & 25-29

This compares with data gathered by Colchester Borough Council's welfare benefits team, where under 35's, particularly those who rent, have been accessing support more since the pandemic, reinforcing the downward age trend at CAC and increasing housing as an issue. A year-on-year comparison of data from the CBC team also highlights that by mid-September 2020 welfare benefits enquiries were 64% higher than at the same time in 2019. Enquiries for discretionary housing payments (DHP) and exceptional hardship fund payments (EHP) were similar in number.

Tendring District Council reports a significant increase in housing benefit claims since COVID-19 began. As can be seen in the chart below:

	2019 FROM 1 <sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO 30 <sup>TH</sup> SEPT	2020 FROM 1 <sup>ST</sup> APRIL TO 30 <sup>TH</sup> SEPT
DHP	490	414
EHP	15	8
HOUSING BENEFIT CLAIMS	193	256

Citizens Advice Tendring has three offices, one at Carnarvon Road in Clacton, one at the Mental Health Hub in Old Road, Clacton and one in Harwich JobCentre+ and 4 Outreach posts – at Holland-on-Sea, Brightlingsea, Manningtree, Walton and Frinton. The Carnarvon Road Office tends to be characterised by people calling in person for face-to-face advice, mainly from the Clacton area. Since COVID-19, advice channels have shifted from face-to-face to online (email) and telephone. The number of clients seeking advice from the Clacton area has dropped dramatically.

Last year CAT saw a 40% increase of clients contacting the service for detailed advice and support and a further 54% increase in those with quickly resolved queries. This is even though the service channels have moved from significantly face to face to 100% telephone and email requests for support. There has been a 700% increase in employment queries and an increase in benefits

enquiries of approximately 35%. More concerning is that debt enquiries have reduced by approximately 250% - this may be due to people having concerns that are more critical, combined with the government stopping bailiffs from visiting and evictions being suppressed. CAT considers that these issues are likely to re-emerge in the coming months.

There has been an increase in younger working age adults accessing the service with credit card debt, loans and overdrafts taking on a higher profile than Council Tax. This may reflect that people have been borrowing due a change in circumstances.

Ethnicity figures show an increase in BAME clients from 5% to 13%. More work is needed to understand this trend, but it is likely that people have needed CAT support for the first time.

Demand for CAT services comes from all areas of Tendring. The differing levels of need are evident across Tendring with a greater level of demand in Tendring South and Tendring East.

Issues are recorded by ward when advice requirements go beyond a phone call. Generally, cases have become much more complex. In addition to this, there has been a huge increase in simple enquiries (3-4,000) on the telephone for which ward data is not recorded. This is where clients may just need a weblink/contact number or some one-off advice.

The number of volunteers able to respond to requests for advice has diminished during COVID-19 from 26 to 4, so the capacity to respond is reduced at a time when people really need it. CAT is working on bringing volunteers back as soon as it is safe to do so.

### Citizens Advice Tendring

Rank	Apr to Oct 2019	Issues		Apr to Oct 2020	Issues	Pre-C-19 rank
#1	Coppins	610		Coppins	278	#1
#2	St Johns	518		Lawford, Manningtree & Mistley	252	#15
#3	St James	511		West Clacton & Jaywick	252	#6
#4	Bluehouse	482		St Johns	228	#2
#5	Pier	468		Bluehouse	210	#4
#6	West Clacton & Jaywick	377		Brightlingsea	210	#13
#7	Harwich & Kingsway	340		St Osyth	200	#9
#8	Cann Hall	326		Cann Hall	190	#8
#9	St Osyth	318		Kirby Cross	180	#28
#10	Dovercourt All Saints	274		St James	175	#3
#11	St Bartholomew's	268		Dovercourt All Saints	148	#10
#12	Burrsville	233		Burrsville	138	#12
#13	Brightlingsea	227		Pier	132	#5
#14	St Pauls	195		Homelands	130	#19
#15	Lawford, Manningtree & Mistley	183		Harwich & Kingsway	128	#7
#16	Alresford and Elmstead	169		Alresford and Elmstead	123	#16
#17	Frinton	169		Kirby-le-Soken & Hamford	94	#29
#18	Walton	116		Dovercourt Tollgate	92	#21
#19	Homelands	112		Stour Valley	76	#32
#20	Dovercourt Bay	108		Frinton	76	#17



#21	Dovercourt Tollgate	106	Walton	75	#18
#22	Eastcliff	102	Dovercourt Vines & Parkeston	74	#23
#23	Dovercourt Vines & Parkeston	99	St Bartholomews	73	#11
#24	Thorpe, Beaumont & Gt Holland	97	Little Clacton	63	#26
#25	Weeley & Tendring	95	Dovercourt Bay	61	#20
#26	Little Clacton	66	The Bentley's & Frating	56	#27
#27	The Bentley's & Frating	63	Weeley & Tendring	51	#25
#28	Kirby Cross	62	Ardleigh & Little Bromley	46	#30
#29	Kirby-le-Soken & Hamford	62	Thorpe, Beaumont & Gt Holland	35	#24
#30	Ardleigh & Little Bromley	59	St Pauls	34	#14
#31	The Oakleys & Wix	57	The Oakleys & Wix	27	#31
#32	Stour Valley	55	Eastcliff	12	#22
		6927		3919	

Green is Tendring East  
Blue is Tendring West  
Yellow is Tendring South

### Citizen's Advice Tendring

	1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020	1 April 2020 to 30 Sept 2020
<b>Top 3 issues</b>	Benefits & Tax Credit, Universal Credit & Debt	Universal Credit, Employment, & Housing
<b>Gender</b>	61% female, 39% male	55% female, 45% male
<b>Ethnicity</b>	95% white	87% white
<b>Long term health condition or disabled</b>	45%	34%
<b>Prime age groups</b>	50-54 & 55-59	30-34 & 25-29

Tendring District Council's Housing Solutions and Allocations team report that homelessness applications are continually rising. In 2018/19 there were 708 applications for homelessness and between April and November 2020 there have already been 1041, with the current trend leading to an annual total of over 1600. It is a growing issue and with the impact of COVID-19 on personal financial capability and (reportedly) breakdowns in relationships this may be even greater. Data is not available to explore where the peaks of homelessness are, but it is clearly an area which needs focus in the future.

Colchester Borough Homes leads collaborative responses to supporting those at risk of homelessness in the borough alongside essential partners including Beacon House. Year on year, Colchester Borough Homes has been supporting over 1300 people at risk of homelessness with case management, and between April and August this year, had already worked with 620 citizens.

They also support over 7,000 residential and public or commercial properties in the borough, as well as managing tenancy support and homelessness services. 32% of their tenants are over the age of 65 and 33% aged between 35 and 54 years of age. Over 66% are female. 25% of tenants have a disability.

SUMMIT is one of the partners in a new service 'SHELLS' – Shelter and Health Enlisting Local Support – based in Clacton. This is a local partnership of providers, alongside CVST, with the aim of supporting residents that are without a home or at risk of homelessness. Healthwatch Essex has been supporting this by providing an information and signposting officer and the contact details for the service to support people who need signposting on to additional services.

The health advocate is there to address health inequalities and ensure access to good healthcare by supporting people to attend all health-related appointments. Since the start of this service in September 2020 the health advocate has provided an independent voice to over 75 marginalised people, assisting them to obtain medical interventions and appointments, essential medication, and the treatment they need to stay well.



## Case Study - SHELLS

Health Advocacy Project Tendring - at a local drop-in for people who are vulnerable, homeless or at risk of homelessness the health advocate met a vulnerable older person at risk of homelessness. She explained there had been a fire in the home, and they had lost their possessions. Her partner was very ill with cancer; they were sleeping on floorboards. The tenancy was fragile, she was worried they could be asked to leave. A range of other issues were impacting on their health and wellbeing. They have literacy difficulties and were unable to order essential medication and were struggling to find agencies to help.

Intervention - the health advocate contacted the NEE support team. That afternoon two orthopaedic beds were delivered to their home. The health advocate set up a repeat prescription facility for essential medication. They have been connected to other local organisations that can provide them with specialist help. The health advocate continues to provide ongoing support to address the health inequalities being experienced.

**Feedback from the adult: "You are a Godsend, a miracle. The Angel that got us beds!"**

### Employment

Recognising that unemployment and access to employment is a significant concern for people living in Tendring and parts of Colchester, Signpost runs projects such as HeadsUp. This supports people to find their way to work, or back to work with practical skills such as writing a CV and practicing interview techniques. A good example of partnership working is the joint project which Signpost is running with Citizens Advice Tendring, supporting people who are volunteers at the mental health hub with their employment-readiness. Tendring District Council has its own nationally registered learning provider that provides apprenticeships in both Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council, as well as local businesses.

Volunteering is an essential opportunity to improve employability and many of the assets identified explicitly support this agenda with placements. Life skills, employability skills and confidence building run through programmes offered by groups such as Brightlives or link with the educational assets noted above.

In response to Marmot 10 years on and a renewed focus on the priorities outlined in the report, in Spring 2020 the Suffolk & North East Essex Integrated Care System (ICS) began implementing the

Health & Care Academy model. The programme is designed to raise awareness of the range of careers available within the health and social care sectors and to provide localised information on how people can access these varied pathways and related education/training opportunities. A longer-term aspiration of the “enhanced” Tendring programme is to explore how the model could be expanded to include other local sectors such as education and construction. The objectives of the Tendring programme are to increase:

- Accessible employment opportunities in health & social care and other local industries
- The local population in employment, training & education
- The supply of workforce within health & social care and other industries
- The long-term aspirations of the local population and improve health inequalities

Stay Well – supporting adults with health and/or care concerns to access support to maintain healthy and fulfilling lives

Condition specific organisations, such as Arthritis Care, Alzheimer’s Society, MS UK, Diabetes UK, Tendring Stroke Services, Essex Sight and Royal Association for Deaf People continued to offer advice, support and emotional support with understanding conditions, everyday tasks and access to equipment, aids, and adaptations where relevant. With a range of condition specific groups this is the area with the most dedicated assets tracked against Live Well Domains in Tendring and more than 150 assets in Colchester.

### Safeguarding Adults

In order to keep safe and well in the community, vulnerable people and those with social care needs rely on those they come into contact with to keep them safe.

Safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect must remain a priority for everyone. People may be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect as others may seek to exploit disadvantages due to age, disability, mental or physical impairment or illness.

Safeguarding adults’ cases and concerns recorded by ECC indicate that there were 818 safeguarding adults enquiries and 1760 safeguarding concerns raised in north east Essex between April and October 2020. This compares with 1187 and 1684 respectively over the same period last year. The figures saw a reduction of 10%, which is comparable with other boroughs. These figures started to recover as lockdown eased. It is vital that all community assets recognise the need to safeguard vulnerable adults and know what to do should they have any concerns.

### **Collaborate Essex Disability & Carers Forum**

Healthwatch Essex is working in partnership with Essex County Council to run a disability & carers forum which consists of adults with experience of disability. These range from physical impairment, sensory impairment, LD, autism, long term health conditions and carers of adults with disabilities. The forum allows voices to be heard in front of senior commissioners and other decision makers who can influence positive change, local to Essex.

Topics discussed at each forum include experience of lockdown, transport, GP accessibility, care in the community; mental health and highways are to be discussed soon. Communication methods used by Healthwatch Essex with this unique group, were used to help implement information guides during the pandemic to enable individuals with certain needs, access to information, advice or support in an easily accessible format.

### **Dementia and Community Voices**

We know that people with dementia – and their carers – have experienced a range of challenges because of the pandemic.

Some of these are the same problems that society in general has been dealing with: frustration, isolation, bereavement. For those living with dementia, these problems have been magnified. Other issues are specific to this community: people losing condition and cognitive ability through lack of stimulation and social contact; reduced access to vital health care. C360 undertook a listening exercise with a group of 60 people with dementia and their carers, in the Colchester area, between 23 March 2020 (when lockdown began) and 8 July 2020. We compared this to feedback received from Admiral Nurses, the pan-Essex Dementia Action Alliance and working Dementia Action Alliance partners.

It identified that residents were frustrated by a lack of normal routine, boredom and fear and anxiety about the virus:

- The absence of a routine was highly disorientating; many of those we spoke to would normally attend support services and social groups. Others relied on family visits, for practical assistance and social interaction. With these all on hold, there was little available, leading to increased isolation and a decline in wellbeing
- With home visits stopped, there was an extra burden on family carers. Aside from the absence of practical support, there was simply no respite – especially for the many carers who themselves are over 70, so were advised to stay at home
- It was a challenge for many people with dementia to understand and adhere to rules around shielding and social distancing. Access to medical care was increasingly difficult, not least due to a fear of infection. Visiting loved ones in a home was impossible; the prospect of being taken – or having a loved one taken – into a home unbearable





## Quotes - Dementia voices

"The neighbours keep checking in.  
Everyone has been so kind." Person with  
dementia

On PPE - "X wouldn't go near ....  
It looked like a spaceman."  
[hospital appointment] Carer

"I get so low. There's nobody to talk to or explain  
my feelings." Person with dementia

"I lost all respite care during lockdown. Most  
days it's a struggle to stay positive." Carer

We also spoke to representative from communities supporting people living with sensory impairments, especially ECL. They raised concerns for:

- Increase in deterioration of mental health due to social isolation affecting hard of hearing, deaf, visually impaired, and deafblind people. This impacts on rehabilitation times as mental health support must be administered first
- Lack of access to health appointments means people have gone without sight saving eye treatments and without hearing aid maintenance leaving them with barriers to communication
- Importance of accessible locations – i.e., easy read or large print signage where there are changes to layouts
- Loss of mobility which has deteriorated and consequently impacts on time needed to help people regain strength and mobility before undertaking rehab

- Loss of mobility and physical health was also a concern for the wider voluntary and community sector – highlighted through surveying in Colchester. The need to monitor this situation will be fundamental through the winter and as public spaces are accessed more regularly in the future.

### **Sensory Awareness Campaign**

The Collaborate Essex Disability & Carers Forum highlighted an issue during the pandemic in relation to social distancing and the difficulties faced by someone with a sensory impairment. There were concerns raised around lack of social distancing due to being unable to read signs, arrows or 2 metre lines.

Guide dogs are not trained to social distance and members of the public are losing patience with individuals who have a sensory impairment because of this. The deaf or hard of hearing community are struggling to understand people wearing face masks and were also in some cases unable to lip read due to this.

Healthwatch Essex worked in co-production with the forum members to launch and create a film which raised awareness, providing education on the importance of being kind, tolerant and patient for somebody who has a sensory impairment during this pandemic. The link to this film is [here](#)

Maintaining meaningful engagement with activities is key and facilitated by groups such as Abberton Rural Training (ART). ART is an educational charity providing practical and land-based skills training alongside therapeutic support and mentoring to the residents of Essex and surrounding areas. The courses develop life skills and employability skills to help participants access jobs, self-employment, further education and training, or become involved in the local community by volunteering.

ART now operates in 6 districts of Essex, including Colchester and Tendring, with over 1000 households involved across Essex. In the past year ART has supported 79% moving to employment/self-employment, further education, or volunteering; 75% students have a diagnosed medical condition/disability, 11% of students are under 25 years; 61% are between 25 and 49 years old and 21% are over 50 years old, so it spreads across a wide range of vulnerabilities and focuses on achievement. This encourages self-care and self-management.

The HILL project started in 2013 and works with residents living in Jaywick (Golf Green ward), Clacton (Pier ward, extending to wards surrounding Pier ward), Walton and Harwich & surrounding areas. Activities are targeted towards:

- Older people living alone
- Adults who are isolated and cut off from services
- Adults with little or no access to a computer and people who do not know how to use a computer
- Adults who are unemployed
- Adults with no qualifications
- Adults with long-term health conditions, including physical and mental health problems
- Adults who participate in very little or no physical activity

The lunch club in Clacton usually meets weekly. It is now offering meal deliveries with 30 volunteers available to assist and is supporting 40-45 people with a hot meal delivered to their door once a week. There is a walking group which is well attended and offers an opportunity to walk, talk and be with other people, whilst getting fresh air and exercise. With restrictions on numbers of people meeting outside the home, there are currently 8 registered beneficiaries who are using the 'walk buddy' group, with 22 volunteers registered as available for walks. During COVID-19 two buddy walks have been



offered allowing people to walk 1:1 with a volunteer; in between lockdowns, walks were organised in groups if 6.

A new Cancer Care Navigator Service has launched at East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust to provide people recently diagnosed with cancer with the practical, emotional, and physical support and financial advice they need to live well at every stage of their cancer. The team of eight cancer care navigators, who play a crucial role in helping meet demand for more specialist cancer support, is jointly funded by the East of England Cancer Alliance and Macmillan Cancer Support.

## Age Well – supporting people to live safely and independently as they grow older

In Tendring, the population of older residents aged 65 years and over, is the highest in Essex and is forecast to grow to 38 per cent by 2038 (ONS, 2019). Whilst Colchester contains an ageing population and supports areas with more than 40% of the residents over the age of 65, the demographics are not as pronounced. However, this age group has been severely affected as it contains the highest proportion of people who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) and who were self-isolating over the age of 70.

Whereas this cohort may have traditionally volunteered, lived independently or with limited support, they have been required to adapt their lifestyles significantly and the assets that exist to support them have either been placed on hold (especially where this requires outside activity), reduced in demand i.e., leisure/social travel such as excursion trips, or moved online.

During COVID-19 many lunch clubs have had to close, leaving people without that social contact, or guaranteed nutritional meal. Some clubs do deliver pre-cooked meals but may have been hampered by the fact that their own volunteers are older and were shielding, leaving a shortage of resource.

Befriending has become a lifeline for people and many organisations offer telephone support and check-ins, in addition to what is available through Essex Welfare Service and the Tendring Hub. Most of those in need of support are older people or those living with long-term conditions, making them more vulnerable to infection. Community360 supported over 350 people by the end of lockdown with regular welfare calls and continue to contact over 100 citizens a week. Colchester Borough Council and partners mobilised 250 activity packs to support vulnerable residents.

Local communities were also quick to adapt and find volunteers to support local activity such as shopping, dog walking and collecting prescriptions as well as telephone support, some providing food for those who cannot afford it. Examples of this include:

<b>Tendring West</b>	<b>Tendring South</b>	<b>Tendring East</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brightlingsea foodbank and village support</li> <li>Dedham and Ardleigh helpline</li> <li>Elmstead mutual aid</li> <li>Manningtree Shout Out</li> <li>Tendring Village support network</li> <li>Thorrington Friends</li> <li>Bradfield Parish Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foodcycle</li> <li>CVST</li> <li>Jaywick Post Office delivery service</li> <li>Prescriptions to you</li> </ul>	<p>Frinton &amp; Walton Churches Working Together</p> <p>Harwich Helps</p> <p>Great Oakley &amp; Wix Comm Care Initiative</p> <p>Ramsey Parkeston Parish Council</p> <p>Residents Association &amp; Church</p> <p>Weeley Parish Council</p> <p>CVST</p> <p>Walton &amp; District Community Foodbank</p>

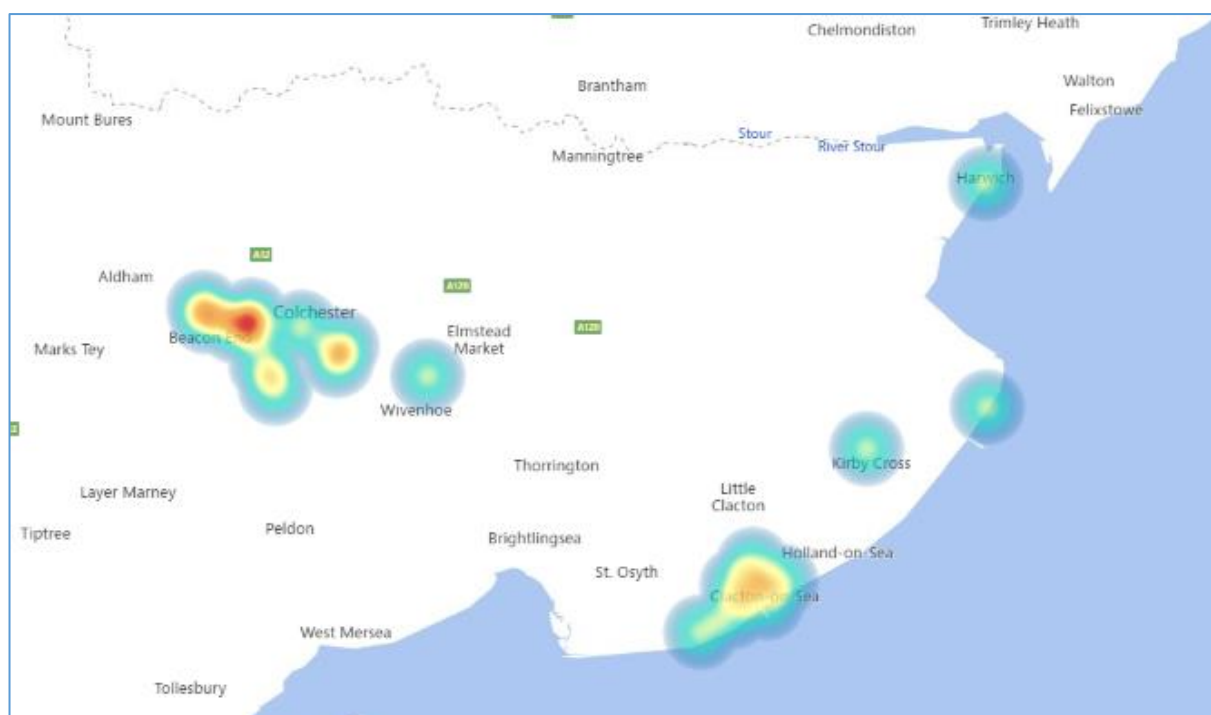
## U3A

U3A's are operating in some areas and on hold in others. During COVID-19, U3A branches have provided updates and contact through newsletters, with some outdoor group (e.g., walkers) resuming in between the two lockdowns. The social network has been very helpful for maintaining social contact by phone, email, or online meetings. By way of example, Stour Valley U3A has identified people require additional support and monthly lectures are moving online. However, the personal contact, which is so valued, has been missing during COVID-19. There are U3As in Stour Valley, Tendring District (Clacton, Frinton, Walton and nearby villages), Brightlingsea and Harwich Peninsula.

## Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex

Since COVID-19 the coverage of befriending cases across north east Essex has widened and clients are emerging from more parts of NEE. The map below highlights the highest concentration of befriending matches for Age Concern's clients. There are particularly clear alignments to Greenstead, Prettygate and Shrub End. In Tendring, this is focussed in the urban/suburban centres of Harwich, Clacton and Holland-on-Sea, Kirby Cross and Kirby-le-Soken and Walton.

- 96 Befrienders this year – supporting people with telephone calls (and before lockdown 2.0 started) garden befriending to offer some face-to-face support, this has reverted to telephone for the time being. There are still several people waiting for a befriender, but volunteers are being recruited at a fast rate
- 10 counsellors recruited this year
- 116 new volunteers since April
- 380 people received the Age Concern newsletter, which was also translated into Nepalese



Prior to lockdown, Age Concern was seeing 8000 visitors per annum at its centre in Colchester. 'The Veranda' project, based on delivering a face-to-face befriending service provided by Age Concern, aims to remove the barriers to social isolation and financial stress, with a view to connecting people with their communities and peer support. More information can be found here [The Veranda @ Age Concern Colchester - Project | The National Lottery Community Fund \(tnlcommunityfund.org.uk\)](https://tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

## Die Well – giving people nearing the end of life the choice around their care

Die Well remains the domain with the smallest number of directly assigned assets, although the assets it retains are significant in size. Those that can be attributed are often faith based and/or link to bereavement. They may be very localised - the HILL project supports are several volunteer-led friendship and bereavement groups with between 24 and 35 members in Jaywick, Clacton, Walton, Dovercourt and Harwich. Christian Youth Outreach supports children who are bereaved in schools in Colchester and two compassionate friends groups are based in the borough.

This domain is an area where overlap with business is particularly pronounced – for example, through care services, care homes, legal advice or support and funeral directors. Many of the assets within our communities which would support the domain are potentially profit making.

Where we are seeing change from our 2019 report is in the increased contact with the wider sector and correlations with other domain areas – i.e., St Helena working with Barnardo's to access activity packs for bereaved families in Colchester. A challenge is placed before the wider voluntary sector to continue to identify how it can better engage with end-of-life care services and support Die Well.

In the last eight months, there has been wider engagement through a joint programme, collaborating with C360, CVST, Colchester Borough Council, Tendring District Council and Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex. Lessons can be learnt from this. Case studies show how support can be wrapped around individuals.

At the start of the pandemic, St Helena's SinglePoint team expanded with additional medical and senior specialist nurse support, to maximise the availability of rapid response end of life care in the community.

The bereavement service continued with telephone and virtual support and counselling and St Helena has worked with Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex to increase capacity. In the first 2 quarters of 2019/20 there were 603 calls for bereavement support, compared with 709 in the same quarters of 2020/21 – a considerable increase of 17.5%.

The Virtual Ward capacity was increased from 4 beds to 8 beds and St Helena partnered with Bluebird to offer additional capacity. In quarters 1 & 2 of 2019/20 the virtual ward supported 54 patients in Colchester and 43 patients in Tendring, compared with 75 and 93 patients respectively in 2020/21. Over the same period inpatient admissions have risen from 75 to 87 admissions of Colchester residents 63 to 67 Tendring residents. It appears that the virtual ward is extending its reach in Tendring.

A Compassionate Companions service was launched with Age Concern and St Helena working in partnership. The purpose of this project is to provide well-trained practical and emotional support to people who live alone and have no additional support or companionship at the end of their life.



## Good practice - Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex

40 bereavement volunteers have been recruited and have provided 587 volunteer hours of bereavement befriending since April, using phone contact and regular check-ins. 41 new bereavement cases since COVID-19 commenced – most are in and around Colchester and Clacton, with others in Harwich and Walton areas; 2 are waiting for volunteers.

As most contact is virtual, Age Concern has been able to recruit appropriately trained and qualified volunteers beyond the NEE area. “The bereavement support service is currently being delivered remotely by phone. A clear advantage of this is that we have been able to recruit skilled volunteers from a much wider geographical area, due to the fact that they have not needed to be geographically matched to local clients. Although the majority of our client referrals have been within our geographical remit, we have the advantage via remote mechanisms, of being able to offer wider support, referral and signposting to family members and friends in other locations. Many of the clients who are now receiving emotional and bereavement support, will by nature also be approaching end of life themselves and so may well become natural clients for our Compassionate Companions end of life support project. This demonstrates our growing ability to offer a joined up ‘journey of support’ for clients.

Likewise, many of our volunteers are keen to expand on their existing skills and offer additional support to clients - so are choosing to undertake additional training to enable them to become specialist volunteers. In this way we are expanding the support journey for our volunteers too.”

Emma Baum, Operations Manager, Emotional Support Services



## Recommendations

We hope that the below recommendations will be taken forward by local commissioners, providers and contractors who will engage with others to embed community asset approach<sup>38</sup>. The Asset Based Community Development approaches should be used within design and delivery of services and support.

### Focus on the strengths

Research has shown the breadth and depth of assets that remain or have been formed over the last eight months in response to the pandemic. The voluntary sector should respond quickly, efficiently and effectively to support the needs of communities. Good examples are the formation of groups like the Anti-loo roll brigade or case studies from the community hubs or groups such as Age Concern Colchester, Tendring and Witham.

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<sup>38</sup> [ABCD Training and Resources - Nurture Development](#)

Approximately 41% of Colchester assets were available online (moved to or existing). Yet many are operating knowing they may face future changes – such as volunteer retention.

**Call to Action:**

Build on the value of information sharing:

- Community response and residents' packs
- Embed routine research and knowledge gathering
- Reinvest in infrastructure support and promote programmes
- Maintain high profile of VCSE and support it as it transitions into the next phase of activity

### Gaps in knowledge

There remain further questions which are yet to be answered through the process to date. They include:

- Size, scale and needs of veteran communities (limited data available but research ongoing)
- Future for arts/culture sector which is affected by continued restrictions
- Ongoing mental health needs of people, including those who are shielding or affected by restrictions – suicide rates in working age men and increased demand on services from over 70's.

**Call to Action:**

Work on data gathering, especially in areas of deficit:

- Identify how we can help smaller organisations to gather data in a neighbourhood level
- Monitor and share data
- Explore consistent approaches across community assets for data recording

### Volunteering key to keep assets working

Nationally and locally an unprecedented number of volunteers have stepped forward to support neighbours, friends, and strangers during the pandemic. This creates a higher profile of volunteering. However, not all offers have been mobilised quickly enough and groups are concerned about medium to long term engagement from volunteers.

For example, we see this in some reduction in volunteer numbers from VCSE survey data, and conversely the scale of localised responses.

Creative solutions to volunteer recruitment should be explored. Volunteers need to be supported with training, personal support, information, awareness, and recompense for expenses so volunteer coordination is a key role which needs investment.

**Call to Action:**

Embed volunteering within system wide response work:

- Develop system-wide recruitment/retention campaign
- Review neighbourhood level activity
- Develop targeted actions

## Digital inclusion

The shift to digital for many services, GPs, hospital appointments etc. exacerbates the challenges that people with no digital access or experience face. Further work is needed to establish how widespread a problem this is, especially in times when face-to-face access is not available, and what can be done to promote digital inclusion. Data above and feedback from the sector highlights possible levels of exclusion. In contrast VCSE survey data has shown that digital accessibility has been a bonus for many groups.

Healthwatch Essex is currently looking at digital inclusion using different engagement methods such as surveys, interviews and focus groups with participants from different cohorts of volunteers working in collaboration with Healthwatch Essex. This work will look at issues around digital inclusion, poverty and literacy continuing from phase one.

### **Call to Action:**

- Prioritising digital accessibility and skills development across the area, as well as innovation to utilise increasing reliance on online solutions which improve speed of access
- Review the results of work undertaken by the University of Essex in conjunction with C360 to identify ways in which we can effectively measure impact of online services, such as Facebook groups
- Sharing the learning across north east Essex

## Neighbourhood level engagement

Clear differences are being identified across the neighbourhoods in access to services (i.e., local responses in parishes versus centralised support in towns) and take up of services and needs. Factors influencing inequalities are also variable.

We need to truly engage with communities – different areas of NEE have very different characteristics and one size will never fit all. There are reasons why change does not happen. Local people should be able to lead community development and work with partners to identify what would work where they live. This will take a significant resource but if it delivers positive results it is worthwhile. Language, approach, understanding, and listening are keys to lasting change.

### **Call to Action:**

- VCSE data sources should be integrated into the mainstream
- Cross comparison of different types of data would benefit planning and development
- There should be greater leadership through the neighbourhoods programme and multi-disciplinary teams
- Local leadership needs a better understanding of 'culture' place and identity

## Corporate social responsibility

Business engagement is an integral part of system wide working and has been influential in response to programmes like Holiday Hunger, COVID-19 shopping, and winter planning. Strategic work is underway with activities like Anchor Project, Town Deal, Dementia Action Alliances and Business Improvement District.

### **Call to Action:**

- Work more closely with local businesses



- Further explore lessons learnt from work already carried out with local businesses

## Prevention

Overcoming barriers to health and wellbeing, community interviews and VCSE survey data shows the power of sector to contribute to prevention but some resourcing, commissioning and planning structures do not enable effective investment of time or resources to support this.

### **Call to Action:**

- Review of current working practices
- Increase length of funding
- Allow assets time to consolidate

## Caring for carers

National statistics show that most carers identified that their caring role increased through the first stages of the pandemic and with ongoing pressures on time, respite and resources, carers are under pressure. This also extends to childcare and the responsibilities placed on parents with homeworking or limits to contact with extended families and friends.

VCSE groups have recognised the impact of travel restrictions and anecdotally identified calls from carers outside of the county who are seeking local support for relatives. Care homes are also a priority for many groups, including people living with dementia as identified by Dementia Voices.

### **Call to Action:**

- Review carers' strategy locally and respite opportunities, including overnight or custom breaks
- Look at increasing support for those that need it most and develop solutions with communities

## Wider determinants of health

The health and wellbeing of local people is influenced by economic, social, and cultural factors which have contributed to inequalities and challenges. For example, BAME community groups have identified changes which must be implemented. In Tendring, there is concern for neglected coastal communities. Here, we also consider community safety, environment, and financial capability – such as foodbanks, housing, and employment.

### **Call to Action:**

- Embed a high value BAME action plan
- Assess risks and opportunities for other vulnerable groups/places which may include lack of activity, falls and mobility
- Effective co-ordinated collaboration across support groups (i.e., advice, foodbanks) in those identified areas where this is not already in place
- Focus on support for younger people (especially those in rented accommodation).

## Social connectedness

Demand on befriending services and activities is very high. Services report low confidence of some volunteers and service users, concerns for mental health and mixed capacity levels across agencies. Evidence highlights that good physical and mental health are affected by isolation and shielding.

**Call to Action:**

- Extend reach of services, especially across age ranges and offer mixed access points (face to face requested to return as soon as possible, where possible at increasing scale)

Longer term strategies

Need to look beyond short-term responses or solutions to be able to embed traceable and sustainable change. Reframing of conversations (i.e., between funders and fundraisers) has been welcomed through the pandemic because it encouraged open conversations. We have also seen that the voluntary and community sector can operate at scale with localised and district wide programmes. However, sustainability is a concern, both for funding, maintaining physical assets such as buildings, and membership.

**Call to Action:**

- Encourage a review of longer-term funding relationships, pooling, and a periodic capacity review of sector with a NEE VCSE strategy linked to One Colchester Community Strategy and Tendring Health and Wellbeing Board.
- Consider the format of the asset map – how it can be accessed, searched and developed.

Innovation should be organic – assets need time to settle and establish themselves and not just end after one year of funding and another asset created.

Increase the capacity and extend the reach of services in specific areas, where there are still shortfalls:

- Child & adolescent mental health – build resources that young people have confidence and trust in using; listen to the young peoples' voices, share knowledge within existing resources and encourage partnerships to expand the service available. The Young Mental Health Ambassador programme at Healthwatch Essex helps allow the patient voice to be heard and impact positive change across NEE.
- Adult mental health and suicide prevention – need to boost resources to meet the aftermath of the pandemic. Loneliness and social isolation may result in loss of confidence so we need to strengthen befriending and buddying services, building on what works now. The stigma surrounding mental health still exists, and work needs to be done to address this. Further work needs to be done to investigate, understand and address the significantly high and rising suicide rate in Tendring. NEECCG has just announced that it is setting up a task and finish group to look at this issue, the group will include the community & voluntary sector and will hear the user voice.
- Transport – to promote access and inclusion. There is still widespread demand and services will need support to continue at pre-COVID-19 levels.
- Seven day working – availability of services outside the working week is hard to find. There are some evening groups and more have evolved since COVID-19. With the increased use of digital platforms support and access to information can be developed further.
- End of life care – there is still a disparity in where people die in NEE. Tendring has disproportionately high levels of deaths in hospitals, but there is evidence of an identifiable shift where people have completed a 'My Care Choices' Record. There is still a taboo about

talking about and planning for death and a positive shift could be from a medical model of death to a more social one.

- Advice and information – there is a tendency for people not to look for advice and information, or to take notice of where it is, until a need arises. Then it is often seen as hard to find. Standards for advice and information and a more integrated response will help residents to get the information they need at point of access. There are a plethora of databases including the Essex Map, an online platform featuring a wide range of organisations operating across the county. A project to bring them together across NEE could represent good value. Healthwatch Essex Information & Signposting Service provide a support helpline to assist with the navigation of the health and social care system.
- Employment – Tendring has relatively high rates of unemployment compared with the rest of Essex and the impact of COVID-19 will create further challenges – this will impact on family relationships, housing, and mental health.
- Carers – there needs to be recognition for the enormous financial and social impact of the support that informal carers give their loved ones allowing them to maintain some independence and preventing dependency on statutory services. Recognising and understanding the challenges and need for different types of support is necessary and could be achieved through consultation which is community led. This could develop workstreams that could support this community enabling them to continue their contribution of care without impacting our health and social care services.

### Colchester Specific

**Financial capability** – we have referenced the importance of the wider determinants of health within our general aims. Still, the demand on Holiday Hunger activities and additional evidence of increased access to support services highlights an increasing need. This especially highlighted the necessary support needed for single men and for younger adults, suggesting that we must continue to address inequalities.

**Greater work with faith organisations** – we can see the strength of assets tied to faith based organisations within our neighbourhoods but both through the BAME action plan and work with the Essex Faith Covenant, we anticipate an opportunity to do more and develop.

**Role of One Colchester** – we have a proactive partnership which has been fundamental through our collaborative COVID-19 response. We must integrate our activities into this asset and continue to enhance representation at a Delivery Board level to the advantage of neighbourhoods and communities.

### Tendring Specific

**Prevention of homelessness** – the economic climate and fragility of the living arrangements of some Tendring residents is likely to cause continuing growth in the number of people who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness. Further work is needed to develop homelessness prevention strategies as a whole system and to support those already homeless or at risk. Tendring council has adopted a 'draft homelessness reduction and rough sleeping strategy 2019-2024' which is available on their website.

**Community halls** – in many villages community halls are the hub of village activity, but with a lack of bookings they have a challenging long-term financial viability. CVST is currently undertaking an in-depth study with the aim of strengthening this vital community resource. What is clear is that work needs to be done to explore how the community and voluntary sector can work together with statutory partners, to avoid closure of these vital community assets and support those, in many cases few people, who are keeping them going.

**Greater work with faith organisations** – we can see the strength of assets tied to faith based organisations within our neighbourhoods but both through the BAME action plan and work with the Essex Faith Covenant, this is equally as important on a local level in Colchester and Tendring.

**Deprivation** - Tendring South has increasing levels of deprivation, despite having a large number of community assets in terms of organisations it is recommended that this area is the focus of a deep dive moving forward.

## Appendices

### Appendix A – Examples of assets

1st Holland-On-Sea Scout Group	Holland Community Association
4 Youth Brightlingsea	Holland Football ClubHolland Residents Association
AARCA (Assisting Adult Recovery from Childhood Abuse)	Holland Shore Amateur Boxing Club
Acorn Villages Ltd	Home Start Colchester
Action For Family Carers	Home-Start Harwich
African Families in the UK	Inclusion Ventures
Age Concern Colchester & North East Essex	Inner Wheel Club of Clacton on Sea
Age UK - Essex	Interact Chelmsford Ltd
Alzheimer's Society	Jaywick 60 Plus
Anglian Community Enterprise CIC	Jaywick Community Resource Centre
Autism Anglia	Jaywick Sands Community Land Trust
Baby Bank Tendring	Ladies Friendship Club Clacton
Beacon House Ministries	Ladies Friendship Club Holland
Bereavement & Friendship Cafe	Lads Need Dads
Birch Hall Adventures	Leisure Hour Club
Boas Project	Little Clacton Carpet Bowls Club
Boxted Community Hub	Little Clacton Village Hall
Breathe Easy Colchester	Little Pals Children's Centre Nursery
Brightlingsea Lido	Macular Society
Brightlingsea Town Council	Mad About Theatre Company
Bright Lives Social Enterprise CIC	Manningtree & District Dementia Support Group
British Red Cross	Manningtree Town Council
Brotherhood Community Hall	McGrigor Hall Management Committee
CARA (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse)	Mersea Island Film Club
Carers First	

<p>Catch 22 Colchester</p> <p>CHAPS</p> <p>Christians Against Poverty</p> <p>Citizens Advice Bureau Tendring</p> <p>Clacton &amp; District Local History Society</p> <p>Clacton &amp; District Table Tennis League</p> <p>Clacton Amateur Dramatic Society</p> <p>Clacton Carnival Association</p> <p>Clacton Choral Society</p> <p>Clacton Concert Orchestra</p> <p>Clacton Constituency Conservative Association</p> <p>Clacton Debating Society</p> <p>Clacton Lions Club (CIO)</p> <p>Clacton Musical Theatre Society</p> <p>Clacton on Sea Bowling Club</p> <p>Clacton on Sea Carpet Bowls Club</p> <p>Clacton on Sea Unite Community</p> <p>Clacton Sea Cadets</p> <p>Clacton Victoria County History Group</p> <p>Coastal Community Centre</p> <p>Coffin Club Colchester</p> <p>Colchester and District Talking Newspaper</p> <p>Colchester and Tendring Athletics Club</p> <p>Colchester and Tendring Youth Enquiry Service</p> <p>Colchester Archaeological Trust</p> <p>Colchester Arts Centre</p> <p>Colchester Buddhist Centre</p> <p>Colchester Chinese Cultural Society</p> <p>Colchester Gateway Club</p> <p>Colchester Islamic Community Centre</p> <p>Colchester Foodbank</p> <p>Colchester In Bloom</p> <p>Colchester MS Society</p> <p>Colchester Nightshelter</p> <p>Colchester Ramblers</p> <p>Colchester Sea Cadets</p> <p>Colchester Toy Library</p> <p>Colchester YMCA</p> <p>Coppins Hall Community Association</p> <p>Corner House Care</p> <p>Crossroads Tendring and Colchester</p> <p>Disability4Sport</p> <p>Divorce and Separation Solutions Ltd</p>	<p>Mid and North Essex Mind</p> <p>Mistley Kids Club</p> <p>MS UK</p> <p>Multiple Sclerosis Society Clacton &amp; District</p> <p>Neighbourhood Watch Tendring</p> <p>Next Chapter</p> <p>One Housing Group</p> <p>Open Door</p> <p>Open Road</p> <p>Parkeston Residents and Welfare Park Association</p> <p>Parkinson's UK Clacton &amp; District</p> <p>Pier Avenue Baptist Church</p> <p>Point Clear &amp; St Osyth Disabled Persons Club</p> <p>Point Clear and St Osyth Horticultural Society</p> <p>Point Clear Community Association</p> <p>Princes Theatre</p> <p>Ramsey and Parkeston Parish Council</p> <p>Ranworth Surgery Patient Participation Group</p> <p>Recovery Support Team</p> <p>Remap NE Essex Panel</p> <p>RNID</p> <p>Rock and Mineral Society</p> <p>Rotary Club of Clacton-on-Sea</p> <p>Royal British Legion Clacton on Sea Branch</p> <p>Royal British Legion West Bergholt</p> <p>Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)</p> <p>Rush Green Allotment</p> <p>Sailship Training &amp; Learning For Life</p> <p>Signpost Tendring</p> <p>Solely Reflexology &amp; Relaxation Centre</p> <p>Sonny's Army</p> <p>Sport for Confidence</p> <p>St Helena Hospice</p> <p>St John's and Highwoods Community Centre</p> <p>St Osyth Parish Council</p> <p>St Osyth Village Hall</p> <p>Students Union – societies including</p> <p>Anime and Manga Society</p> <p>Summit</p> <p>Tendring Careline</p>
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<p>Dovercourt Art Club</p> <p>East Anglian Railway Museum</p> <p>East of England Co-operative Funeral Services Bereavement Support Group</p> <p>Edensor Care Centre (Diagrama Foundation)</p> <p>Emmanuel Church (Walton)</p> <p>Epilepsy Action Tendring</p> <p>Essex Blind Charity</p> <p>Essex Carers Support</p> <p>Essex Wildlife Trust</p> <p>Essex Voluntary Blood Service</p> <p>Extra Support for Families</p> <p>Family Support – Brightlingsea</p> <p>Firstsite</p> <p>Foodcycle</p> <p>Frating Parish Council</p> <p>Frinton and Walton Heritage Trust</p> <p>Frinton Christian Community Care</p> <p>Frinton Literary Festival</p> <p>Frinton on Sea Cricket Club</p> <p>Frinton Residents Association</p> <p>Futures In Mind</p> <p>Girlguiding Essex North East</p> <p>Good Gym</p> <p>Grand Theatre of Lemmings</p> <p>Grassroots</p> <p>Great Bentley Good Neighbours</p> <p>Great Bentley Parish Council</p> <p>Great Clacton Methodist Church</p> <p>Greenland Grove Animal Sanctuary</p> <p>Greenpath Ventures</p> <p>Greenstead Community Centre</p> <p>Guardian Angels - Mersea</p> <p>Harwich &amp; District Community Crime Prevention Panel</p> <p>Harwich Connexions Transport</p> <p>Harwich Town Council</p> <p>Headway Essex</p> <p>Health In Mind</p> <p>Heart Mind &amp; Soul</p> <p>Hindu Culture Heritage Centre</p>	<p>Tendring Community Transport</p> <p>Tendring Diabetes Group</p> <p>Tendring Hundred Model Railway Club</p> <p>Tendring Older People's Forum</p> <p>Tendring Specialist Stroke Services</p> <p>Tendring Talking Newspaper Association</p> <p>Tendring Time Bank</p> <p>Tendring Tool Refurb</p> <p>Tendring Twinning Association</p> <p>The Ark Centre</p> <p>The Harwich Festival</p> <p>The Harwich Society</p> <p>The Haven Project</p> <p>The London Bus Theatre Company</p> <p>The Marketeers</p> <p>The Salvation Army</p> <p>The Tendring Furniture Scheme</p> <p>the-lightworks</p> <p>Thorrington Parish Council</p> <p>Tiptree Choral Society</p> <p>Tiptree United Reformed Church</p> <p>Together We Grow</p> <p>Universities of the Third Age</p> <p>Volunteer Bureau For Tendring Helping Hands</p> <p>Walk Colchester</p> <p>Walton Community Centre</p> <p>Walton Feel Good Choir</p> <p>Walton on the Naze and District Sea Cadets</p> <p>Walton Preschool</p> <p>Warm and Toasty Club</p> <p>West Mersea WI</p> <p>Weeley Parish Council</p> <p>Weeley Residents Association</p> <p>West Cliff (Tendring) Trust</p> <p>Winsley's Charity</p> <p>Wivenhoe Methodist Church</p> <p>Workers Educational Associations</p> <p>Vteam – University of Essex</p> <p>Young Children's Festival Colchester</p>
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## Appendix B – Councillor questions

Across NEE we received 29 responses from local Councillors whose comments have been referenced or reviewed in relation to the report. We asked them to consider the questions below in relation to community activity:

- How were they operating before the COVID-19 lockdown? What were their strengths and needs?
- How did they respond to COVID-19? Did anything new emerge?
- How are they recovering now? Are you seeing any opportunities or challenges locally?
- If you could change one thing to support residents in your local area, what would that be?
- Who are your local community connectors?
- Would you like to take part in a more in-depth discussion about your area?