

EAST SUFFOLK BUSINESS PLAN 2015 - 2023



CASE STUDY

ENABLING COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY-LED HEALTH INITIATIVES

One of the ambitions in our East Suffolk Business Plan is to fund and support more community-led initiatives to improve health and well-being among our residents.

eastsuffolk.gov.uk/east-suffolk-business-plan



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Beccles Library, Blyburgate, Beccles
Felixstowe Library, Crescent Road, Felixstowe
Marina Centre, Marina, Lowestoft
Woodbridge Library, New Street, Woodbridge

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-LED HEALTH AND WELL-BEING INITIATIVES IN EAST SUFFOLK



WHAT WE DID?

Our East Suffolk Communities Team currently focuses on 5 key areas where communities have a role to play in improving health and well-being; mental health, carers, dementia, social isolation and fit & active. Within mental health, we have provided support and funding for the 'Inside Out' project in Beccles, which seeks to remove the stigma attached to mental health issues and connect people with local support groups. We have also supported the establishment of the Communities Embracing Mental Health initiative in Lowestoft which attracted £10,000 of funding through Lowestoft Rising, including a new Mental Health Ambassador role. We also provided support to establish the 'Embracing Difference' project to raise awareness and understanding amongst communities, voluntary organisations, town/parish councils and businesses about mental ill health, dementia, learning and physical disabilities. For carers, we have funded 5 projects including Suffolk Family Carers projects in both Lowestoft and Felixstowe, Art Branches in Suffolk Coastal and a Topcats project aimed at parents/carers of those under 5 with a recent autism diagnosis. We have funded 9 projects to support those with dementia (and their carers) including Dementia Cafés in Oulton Broad and Southwold, Lofty Heights to provide practical support to enable people with dementia to have safer, healthier homes, the Felixstowe Dementia Action Alliance and the Leiston Dementia Support project. For activity, we have supported 6 projects including a Lowestoft Dance initiative for older people, Lowestoft Town Sport Academy to promote the inclusion of girls in football and ActivLives projects in Bungay, Beccles, Halesworth, Southwold and Felixstowe which motivate people to improve their own health and well-being, keeping them connected with their communities and providing access to learning and volunteering opportunities. (continues)

WHAT WE DID? continued

To reduce social isolation, we have supported 4 projects including Saxmundham Town Council for their Men in Sheds project and Community Action Suffolk's volunteering event in north Lowestoft to bring together event organisers who need volunteers, and those who want to volunteer their time. We have also supported Men's Sheds in Beccles, Halesworth, Southwold, Lowestoft and Leiston.

A number of Social Prescribing pilots have also been established across East Suffolk including Lowestoft, the rural South Waveney GP practices covering Kessingland, Beccles, Bungay, Southwold and Halesworth, and Leiston.

Through Felixstowe Forward, we have developed a timebanking pilot where people can help others and receive help in return.

Other projects funded include the Deben Community Farm, Pathways Care Farm and Access Community Trust to deliver mindfulness-based courses for those in recovery.

WHY WE DID IT?

The Councils have a significant role to play in terms of supporting the wider determinants of health. Many of the services we provide, such as Housing, Leisure, Revenues & Benefits and Environmental Health, all impact on health and well-being, as do our place-based initiatives (Lowestoft Rising, Leiston Together and Felixstowe Forward). We also play a key role in supporting individual, family and community resilience, encouraging people to look after themselves better, to develop strong social networks that reduce social isolation and loneliness, use community assets to their maximum potential and engage in volunteering.



100+ LOWESTOFT RESIDENTS
SUPPORTED THROUGH
SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

THE DIFFERENCE THIS MADE?

In 2017, the Inside Out project started its own allotment intended for use by anybody who feels the need for some space, peace and quiet or for small groups of like-minded people to meet and share issues.

In Lowestoft, businesses and organisations were asked to make simple changes to make life a little easier for people with mental health issues, such as agreeing to turn down music at certain times and creating quiet zones.

Suffolk Family Carers, who were awarded funds to address the impact of trauma on carers, has engaged those caring for a family member who has experienced trauma, as well as carers who may themselves be affected by secondary trauma. Sessions were facilitated by trauma specialised trainers to help family carers cope with the impacts of self-harm, suicide attempts and substance misuse.

Art Branches set up creative expression workshops in coastal areas. By being outdoors and exploring the coast, the project encourages participants to engage with their natural environment and discover different ways of creating and expressing themselves.

Over 200 council officers have received Dementia Friends training and the Community Action Suffolk Lowestoft volunteering event created a network of 450 volunteers. Funding was secured through the East Suffolk Partnership and Suffolk County Council for two Local Area Coordinators covering Saxmundham/Leiston and Beccles/Worlingham who, between them, worked with over 200 people with different levels of need over 2 years.

In Lowestoft for the first 100 patients supported through Solutions (social prescribing), there has been a reduction of 44% in GP appointments and 21% in attendance at A&E in the six months after support by the Link Workers (compared to the six months before).

"Social prescribing helps those who are struggling with issues which are not medical but can still significantly impact on their daily lives. The service also helps those who are feeling socially isolated and vulnerable by introducing them to a range of community groups who may be able to help."

Cllr Mary Rudd
Waveney District Council