



# **MAKING IT HAPPEN**

## **AREA SNAPSHOT**

Hailsham  
**Action in Rural Sussex**  
*Nov 2019 – December 2024*



# AREA SNAPSHOT

## What This Snapshot Will Cover

- **The aim of this Snapshot**
- **Introduction**
  - What is ABCD?
  - What is Making it Happen?
  - Links to wider health policy, strategy and guidance
- **Executive Summary**
- **2019 Insights**
  - The area rationale approach
  - Area background and context
  - 2019 data
  - Community Development Worker discovery reports
- **2024 Insights**
  - Community Development Worker reflections on key developments, challenges and learning
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  - Learning from the Making it Happen evaluation
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# AREA SNAPSHOT

## The Aim

The aim of this snapshot is to provide background information drawn from learning over the course of the Making it Happen programme to support deeper conversations about neighbourhoods in East Sussex where statistical data might suggest a challenging picture, while lived experience offers an alternative perspective. The snapshots add valuable qualitative insight to complement data about neighbourhoods in East Sussex.

Statistical data utilised in decision making about which areas to focus on at the start of the programme is revisited and reviewed in the context of development and learning gleaned from the programme over time.

The snapshots do not seek to provide a comprehensive profile of an area but draw on learning from and about the assets that are present, and developments which have occurred over time and reported on within the Making it Happen programme by local residents and by the Community Development Workers who work alongside them.

The aim of this snapshot is to start a conversation and to complement statistical data prepared through the Integrated Community Teams here: <https://www.eastsussexjsna.org.uk/resources/ict-profiles/>

This is to inform thinking about approaches and methods of engaging communities in addressing health inequalities.



# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **Introduction**

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## What is Asset-Based Community Development?

“Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions, **asset based community development** (ABCD) draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future” (*Asset Based Community Development Institute, DePaul University: <https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx>*)

“ABCD challenges the traditional deficit-based approach that tries to solve urban and rural development problems by focusing on the needs and deficiencies of individuals, neighbourhoods, towns, villages, etc. ABCD demonstrates that local assets (people, physical assets etc.) and individual strengths are key to ensure **sustainable community development**, and that people have a life of their own choosing.” (*Nurture Development, 2018*)

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## What is Making it Happen?

Making it Happen has adopted the principles and values of ABCD. Generic Community Development Workers (CDWs) work alongside communities in a neighbourhood context to identify, connect and build from the positive things that exist in a locality.

Because there is no set agenda other than positive action taken forward by the community, it has the potential to enrich every aspect of civil society and to feed into the whole range of local strategic priorities.

This enrichment is in part dependent on the willingness and ability of local institutions and organisations to flex and adapt in response to the broader and deeper engagement this can bring.

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## Relevant Health Policy, Strategy and Guidance

Making it Happen contributes to the delivery of numerous policy and strategy objectives and can assist in the fulfilment of a range of guidance around working with communities:

- [Mental Health](#) (World Health Organisation)
- [Community engagement: improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities](#) (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2016)
- [Fair Society Healthy Lives](#) – The Marmot Review (Marmot et al, 2010)
- [A guide to community centred approaches for health and wellbeing](#) (Public Health England and NHS England 2015)
- [Reducing health inequalities: system, scale and sustainability](#) (Public Health England, 2017)
- [Community Centred Public Health: Taking a whole system approach](#) (Public Health England 2020)
- [Working in Partnership with People and Communities](#) (NHS England, July 2022)
- [Improving Lives Together](#) (Sussex Health and Care, December, 2022)
- [Working with people and communities strategy](#) (Sussex Health and Care, 2022)

# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **Hailsham**



# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Area context

Hailsham is the district centre of Wealden, as well as one of the largest settlements in the district and county, with an estimated population of 20000. It is currently also part of the Wealden parliamentary constituency, but will become part of the new Sussex Weald constituency at the next election.

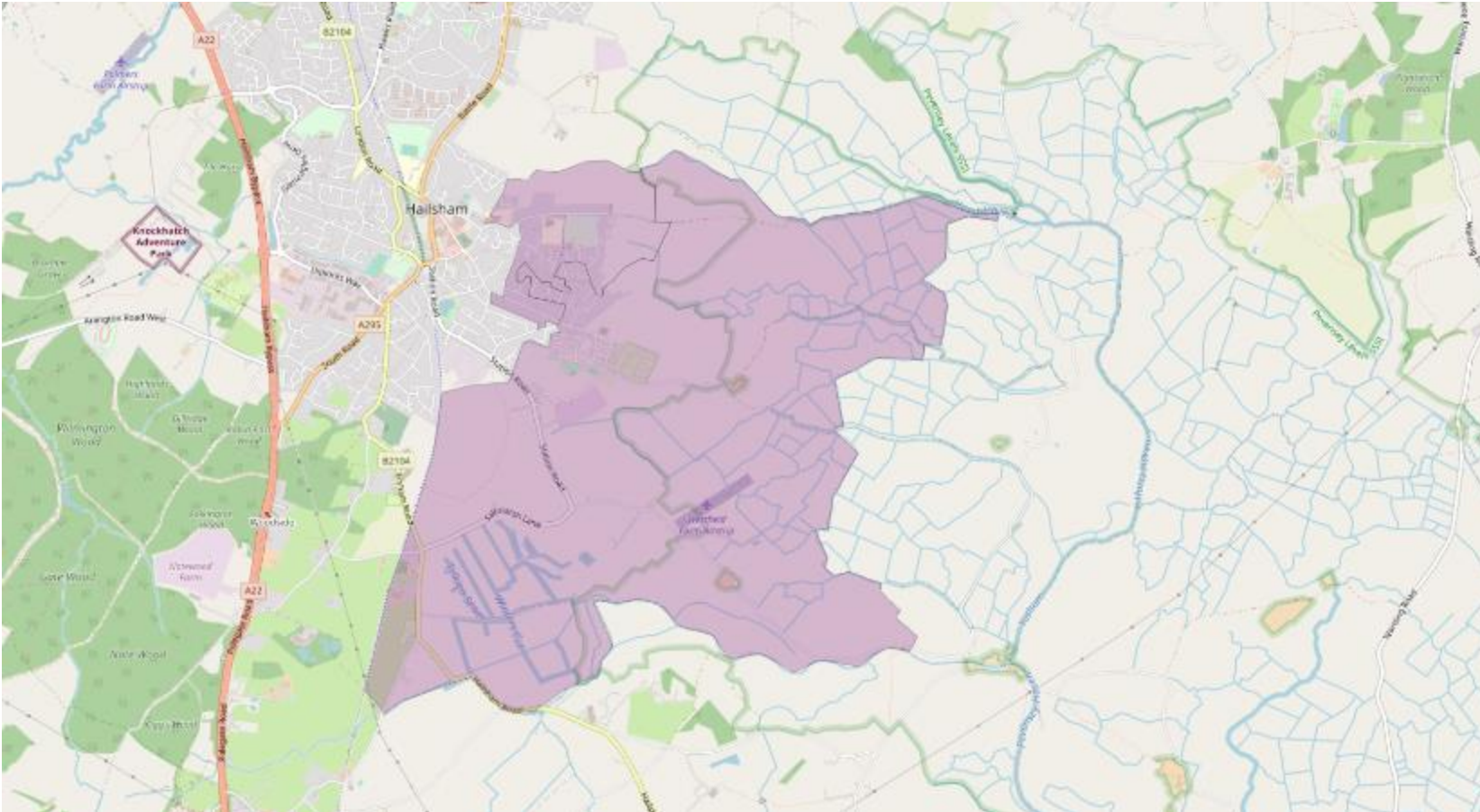
While Making it Happen works across the entire town, it is particularly focused on work in the eastern part of the town, the area forming the district council ward of Hailsham East, where approximately 4500 of the town's residents are located. Hailsham has a number of strong central provisions, including three large supermarkets, a range of primary healthcare facilities, community spaces, independent and chain stores, a public library, and the Hailsham Pavilion cinema, as well as a number of green and leisure facilities. As a result, a key issue for the east and south of the town is access – for many living towards the outskirts, these resources are at least 20 minutes away by foot, with bus services such as the Hailsham Circular routes provided by Cuckmere Buses running no more than once an hour.

There are some educational and community facilities more locally available to the east of the town through Hailsham East Community Centre, Marshlands Primary School, White House Primary Academy, and the nearby Maurice Thornton playing fields and playground, but 11+ education is centred around Hailsham Community College just north of the town centre, and other key green spaces such as Hailsham Rec are also located elsewhere.

The lack of access to immediate healthcare facilities is particularly noteworthy in the context of the area's level of deprivation, with Hailsham East, as well as the southern part of the town, significantly more deprived than Hailsham North, and with significantly less immediate access to amenities than the town centre.

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## The Area



Making it Happen works across the entire town, but is particularly focused on work in the eastern part of the town, the area forming the district council ward of Hailsham East

# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **Executive Summary**

Hailsham

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Executive Summary

- In 2019 Hailsham was selected as an area of focus for Making it Happen based on a range of data. Key issues for Hailsham related to income deprivation, particularly in relation to children, children with learning disabilities and SEND, and mental health.
- Opportunities flagged by the team at that time related to existing relationships between AIRS and local groups and volunteers, the Community Centre, close proximity of the town centre and amenities, and an active community forum and food bank.
- Since that time, existing groups have strengthened and new groups have emerged, with key themes reflecting arts, and mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Peer support and friendship groups have also developed.
- Food projects which existed at the start of the project remain, but have begun to participate in informal collaboration with other groups working to the same ends.
- The Kinship Carers group is proving a valuable project highlighting the challenge for kinship carers (people who find themselves responsible for the care of extended family members) and is proving a powerful force to highlight the extent of kinship caring, but also the high levels of special needs and mental health challenges for these children.
- There is key learning around the value of small, intimate groups who meet over a shared interest but also act as invaluable peer support. It is important that groups like this are supported and not pushed to expand or grow – their super power is the intimacy, relationships and trust.
- There are significant challenges around the lack of community spaces and basic community infrastructure, only exacerbated by new building developments which also fail to address these basic needs.
- There are some great opportunities to learn from local examples that have made the best of the assets they have to encourage wider community engagement, activity and voice. These include Hailsham Boxing Club, which is expanding activities to create a community gym for families, and the Kinship Carers Group, whose members have built their confidence and skills to engage in wider opportunities to shape policy and strategy, including at a national level.

# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **The Picture in 2019**

**Summary of the 2019 area rationale:**

Hailsham

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## 2019 Area Rationales

In 2019 ahead of the launch of the Making it Happen programme, delivery partners reviewed existing data about East Sussex to inform decisions about which areas to focus activity.

Areas were selected based on relative deprivation and health inequality evidenced by 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and 2018 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). 2016-17 WARM ward and 2018 Co-op wellbeing index data were also considered. These illustrated indicators such as confidence, quality of local services, employment, experience of isolation, crime and unemployment. Broadly, the areas selected showed relative dissatisfaction with key themes in relation to living in the area and general quality of life.

Crucially, the area rationales also drew on CDW learning from previous Public Health programmes including Chances for Change, which provided a much more nuanced picture than the statistical data alone might suggest. CDWs sought to highlight the presence of local assets and opportunities to build from. They were able to highlight key connectors, appetite and ideas as well as potential challenges and blocks to community engagement.

A summary of the area rationale produced at that time is shared in the following slides.

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## Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2018

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) identifies the current and future health and wellbeing needs and strengths of local communities. These resources help to inform decisions and plans to improve local people's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in East Sussex.

### **Hailsham - worse than East Sussex average in rates of:**

- Ratio of working age to non-working age people
- Lone Parent Households
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children
- Fuel Poverty
- Early Years Development
- Key Stage 2 Development
- GCSE Attainment
- Adults with No/Low Qualifications
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Socially Rented Households
- GP-reported Obesity in Adults
- People self-reporting bad or very bad health
- People self-reporting a long-term health condition or disability
- Adults with Depression
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services caseloads
- Adults claiming ESA due to mental health.
- GP-reported Hypertension

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## Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019

**Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD):** The English indices of deprivation measure relative deprivation in small areas in England called lower-layer super output areas. The Indices provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas across England, based on seven different domains, or facets, of deprivation. IMD's score areas between 0-5 based on levels of deprivation, with 5 representing the least deprived and 1 the most deprived. A score of 0 is registered where no data is available.

### IMD scores for Hailsham:

- Income deprivation – 2
- Employment – 2
- Education, skills and training – 1
- Crime and anti-social behaviour – 3
- Barriers to social housing – 2
- Geographical barriers – 2

	Income deprivation
	Employment deprivation
	Health deprivation and disability
	Education, skills and training deprivation
	Barriers to housing and services
	Crime domain
	Living environment deprivation



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## Co-Op Wellbeing Index: 2018 WARM Ward Data: 2016-17

### Co-op Wellbeing Index

<https://communitywellbeing.coop.co.uk/>

The index provides an insight into what is important to people in a local community. The following themes were highlighted as priorities for Hailsham:

- Economy work and employment
- Housing, space and environment
- Relationships and trust

### WARM Ward data

WARM provided a way of understanding and identifying an area's strengths, such as levels of social capital, confidence amongst residents, the quality of local services or proximity to employment; as well as vulnerabilities such as isolation, high crime, low savings and unemployment.

#### Red

- Life satisfaction
- Education
- Material wellbeing
- Strong & stable families

#### Amber

- Health
- Belonging
- Local economy
- Public services
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Infrastructure

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Discovery Activity 2019

In each of the areas, Community Development Workers undertook discovery activity to establish whether the conditions for Asset Based Community Development were present. This involved drawing on existing local knowledge and relationships (their own and that of their organisation), and mapping of other local assets to connect with and build from.

### Hailsham

- AIRS relationship to the area with existing links and relationships
- Key volunteers although a lack of new people donating their time
- New volunteer hub
- Community centre, children's centre and playing fields
- Walking distance to town centre with shops, supermarkets and services
- School
- GP surgery
- Active foodbank
- Active community forum

# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **The Picture in 2024**

### **Hailsham**

Reflections on developments and change over time

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## 2023 Reflections

In June and December 2023 Community Development Workers from the five Making it Happen Teams that work in each of the Districts and Boroughs came together at two away days to reflect on developments, challenges and learning over time in each of the neighbourhoods where they have been working.

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Development

- In October 2021 the patch was extended to include the whole of Hailsham, whilst retaining a particular focus on the original patch to the East of the town.
- **Collaborations**
  - Areas of more collaborations. One centred around Foodbank/Christchurch in central Hailsham – this has developed some joint activity including via a Next steps grant; One that is centred more around the Hailsham East Community Centre – this slowly rebuilt after Covid but is beginning to dissipate again due to costs to the community for venue hire plus it is being re-branded as a family hub; the other collaboration is around the allotment project, Plot 50 and other groups who are using it as a base (eg Power of plants). At the moment, these areas are fairly standalone, the overall community cohesion is not as tight as it could be, especially with the loss of the Community Hub and also the less community led community forum.
- **Family Hub/Youth Hub**
  - The Children's Centre at Hailsham East is re-branding into a Family Hub as per ESCC strategic development. MIH working with the FH team in supporting community connections and trying to build a more community led approach within its service. There are parent panels sitting around the hubs, on a district level at the moment, but with the aspiration that this becomes more localised. The Youth Hubs are in development too, but as yet, how this will look in Hailsham is unclear.
- **Christchurch Community Projects**
  - Supported by MiH and the Foodbank, these are building local services, building on the interests and aspirations of local volunteers and groups. Including advice around debt, pregnancy, refugees and a global café and other social activity, they completed mental health first aid training to be able to offer appropriate support when needed. This has increased their confidence when dealing
- **Circus School**
  - A good example of a business asset who wants to support community and those from disadvantaged backgrounds through a CIC which is supported by the commercial business. This asset is based in Hailsham where it works with schools etc but also extends its offer throughout the area and even further afield. Includes some foreign students so increases diversity of the area.
- **Specialist groups**
  - There have been a few small groups emerging with a focus (eg crochet, crafting, Kinship) where the support and benefit gained by participants goes hugely beyond the activity and basic social nature. These groups tend to be small and close knit and want to expand slowly and organically so have limited numbers, but the impact on mental health and peer mentoring is great. It is a model of community activity that could get missed as they don't tend to advertise a lot, however, it is of huge value to those that attend

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Key Challenges

There is some friction between particular groups and venues, which exacerbates siloed ways of working. Groups and individuals tend to connect only with those they know and there is a reluctance at times to widen their connection outwards.

There have been some personality clashes that have affected the progress of some projects which has also undermined the confidence of some key volunteers. While this is resolving, this kind of relationship challenge can cause distress and requires CDW support at quite an intensive level.

An individual who had a great idea and was keen to develop it led to quite a bit of work supporting this and working towards a Small sparks grant. Twice this was put on hold due to her ill health or that of her husband and eventually this has now completely hit a brick wall.

Supporting the small groups who don't want to increase in size to find a balance between being open to new people whilst maintaining the integrity of the group.

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## ABCD Learning Reflections

### **What have you learned?**

- Community activity can happen at different levels and on different scales, and all have immense value and impact but in different ways

### **What do you want to share with others?**

- There are some good 'hubs' of collaboration that are strengthening the community assets and knowledge base in the area. MiH have been involved in most of these in some way.
- The value of the small, intimate groups where large expansion is not wanted but that can have huge impacts on attendees' mental health and isolation.



# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **Grant Funding**

Hailsham

(Between April 2020 and December 2024)

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## The Grant Programme

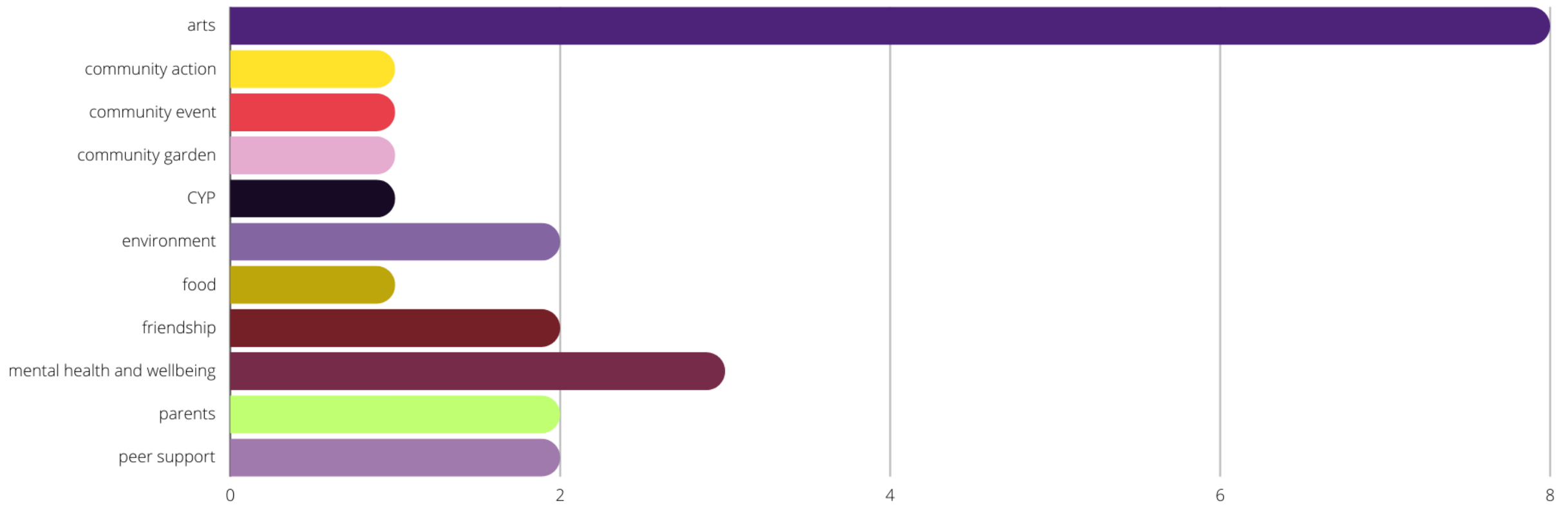
The making it Happen grant programme was designed to be flexible and offer a range of funding options to reflect the needs of different projects of different sizes. The broad aim was for projects or activity that would build from the positive things that are already present, involve local people, benefit the wider community, and encourage community led development. There were three levels of funding:

- Small Sparks – grants up to £500 for individuals or groups
- Next Steps – grants of between £501 and £3000
- Grow Grants – grants of between £3,001 and £15,000

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## Grants Awarded in Hailsham

Number of grant-funded projects/activities in Hailsham by primary theme between April 2020 and December 2024:

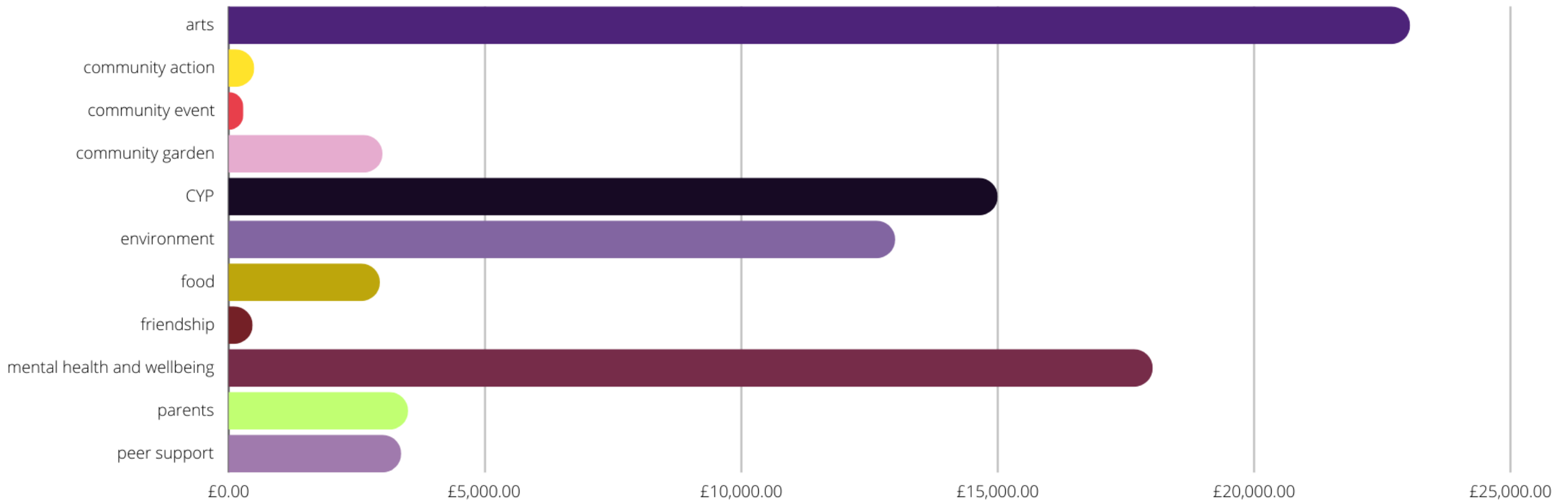


*NB: It should be noted that many projects relate to more than one theme. This graph draws on the central project intention.*

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## Grants Awarded

Total sum invested in Hailsham by primary theme:



*NB: This graph draws on projects local to the area in addition to county wide initiatives which may benefit local residents.*

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## Impact and Outcomes

*“Boxing was something I found that gave me the discipline and dedication to thrive every day in so many different aspects... I feel like I’ve improved in everything – in my mindset and mentality. Just every day, wake up and take over the day, learn improve, listen to the people around me who care”  
(Hailsham Boxing Club young boxer)*

*“The social side of it has helped me in many ways. Knowing I have someone to talk to as can be lonely without these group meets, I’ve made blankets head bands and even a Covid mask and so enjoy making things keeps my mind going thank you ladies.” (Crochet Group member)*



*Crochet and Chat and Hailsham Boxing Club*



# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **Broader Context**



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## Addressing Health Inequalities

Making it Happen adds value to initiatives, such as the [NHS Core 20 plus 5](#) programme, in effort to reduce health inequalities whilst also encouraging individuals and communities to take positive action for themselves.

The focus is on the role that community building plays in addressing the **wider determinants of health** by “drawing on existing human and material resources to enhance self help and social support, and to develop flexible systems for strengthening public participation and direction of health matters” (WHO Ottawa Global Conference)

In this way, Making it Happen is working with communities to develop solutions that intersect the wider determinants of health to encourage **social connection, build resilience and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing**. These outcomes are being reported across the whole range of projects which communities are driving, regardless of their original intention.

# AREA SNAPSHOT

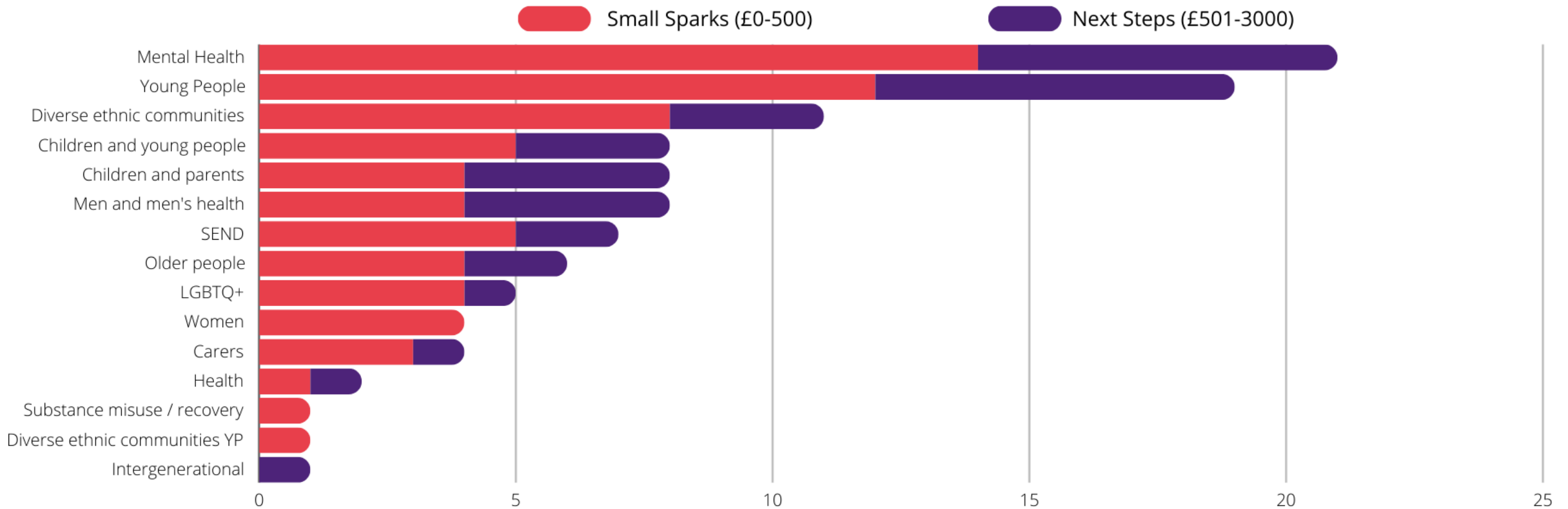
## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Through the Making it Happen programme we have sought to ensure that we are maximising opportunities to engage with those least likely to be heard. Our goal is to add additional value to more targeted health and wellbeing programmes, services and interventions by encouraging relationships, connections and trust within communities and by supporting a ripple effect of positive action, engagement and collaboration. A central objective is to build on and support positives and opportunities that already exist, and to avoid duplication. This includes working alongside individuals, groups and organisations who represent or work with those individuals and communities who are marginalised or have least access to power.

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## Grants Awarded

### Allocation of smaller grants by protected characteristic across the MIH programme:

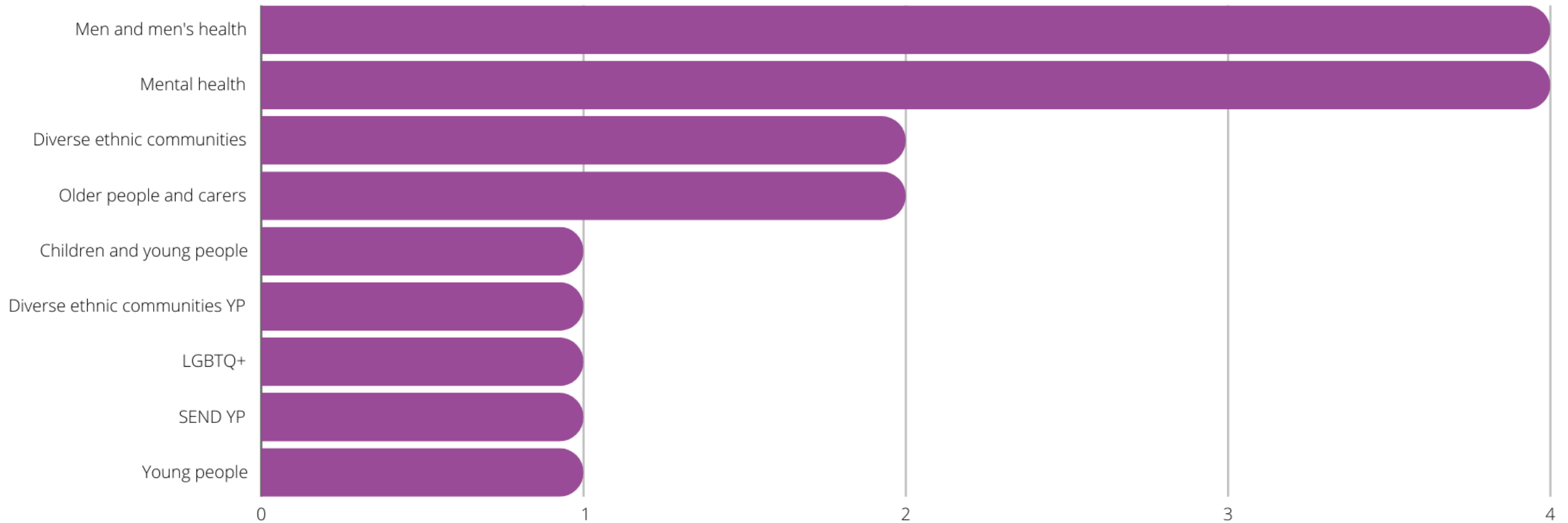


- It is important to note that many projects will have more than one core beneficiary group. Those detailed here are those that are focused on a particular group.

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Grants Awarded

### Allocation of larger grants by protected characteristic across the MIH programme:



- It is important to note that many projects will have more than one core beneficiary group. Those detailed here are those that are focused on a particular group.

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## Hailsham: Protected Characteristics

Making it Happen does not collect personal information or data. However, some groups are set up for a specific purpose, or for a specific community of identity. Broadly, in Hailsham, the MIH Development workers work with people who have identified as having the characteristics detailed opposite.

It is important to note that each of the MIH priority areas is in an area of relatively low income. Therefore, socio economic inequality is likely to be a theme running across the majority of projects supported through the programme.

- **Mental Health**
- **Families / parents**
- **Carers**
- **Children and young people**
- **Socio economic**

# **AREA SNAPSHOT**

## **Stage Two Evaluation**

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Evaluation Reflections

[making-it-happen.org.uk/stage-two-report](https://making-it-happen.org.uk/stage-two-report)

### MAKING IT HAPPEN **REPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### Building A Better ABCD Movement

##### 1 IDENTIFY

Identify learning about successful approaches and processes from the programme and make them accessible, to allow them to be replicated across the wider system.

##### 2 EMBED

Embed Making it Happen more effectively into the fabric of the wider VCFSE sector.

##### 3 DEVELOP

Develop a direct strategy for enabling the wider system and sharing learning.

##### 4 BUILD

Build a movement, not just a collection of projects.

Evaluation by our Partners  
Collaborate CIC produced  
reflections on the programme  
overall through the Stage Two  
Report:

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Evaluation Reflections

**MAKING IT HAPPEN**  
STAGE TWO EVALUATION

[making-it-happen.org.uk/  
stage-two-report](https://making-it-happen.org.uk/stage-two-report)

### How community projects have impacted communities

#### INDIVIDUALS HAVE

Reported an increase in  
**self-confidence** and **self-esteem**

Reported improvements in  
**physical and mental wellbeing**

Developed new **skills** and **capabilities**

#### PEOPLE COMING TOGETHER HAVE

Felt **deeper connections with others**

Become more likely to **reach out** to others  
to **learn, work,** and **take action** collectively

A key aspect of this was reflections on the impact projects can, and have had on communities:



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## Evaluation Reflections

[making-it-happen.org.uk/stage-two-report](https://making-it-happen.org.uk/stage-two-report)

### **MAKING IT HAPPEN**

The Asset-Based Approach to  
Community Development:

Why it Works

**BUILD ON LIVED EXPERIENCE**

**FOCUS ON COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE**

**TURN DEFICITS INTO STRENGTHS**

**ACCESSIBLE AND FLEXIBLE GRANTS**

**LEARN FROM SETBACKS**

The evaluation also reflects on why the ABCD approach is working:

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## Insights

Hailsham

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## Insights: Changes Over Time

There is correlation between issues flagged by the data from 2019, and development which has built over time.

At the start of MIH IMD and JSNA data flagged issues around income deprivation generally and particularly in relation to children, including high levels of one parent families. The Food Bank is now busy, and MIH support to develop an informal collaboration between groups trying to offer help, advice and support in response to the cost of living crisis, combined with Mental First Aid training, illustrate how concerns about these issues have influenced community activity. A uniform bank has evolved, providing support to families experiencing financial hardship.

JSNA and WARM ward data, illustrated high concern around children's mental health, children with learning disabilities and children with special needs. The Hailsham Kinship Carers group offers opportunities for children to meet, highlighting the number of children in kinship care. Many of those have special needs and / or trauma related mental health issues. Empowering this group to find their voice, including through a visit to Parliament, has been a significant development supported by the MIH team.

Hailsham Boxing Club have created a safe space for children and young people to come for physical activity, and also a space to feel valued. The Club is now creating a community gym to create more opportunities for families and young people.

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## Insights: Changes Over Time

In 2019 there were also above average levels of adults with depression and claiming ESA for their mental health. Calamity Crafting and the Crochet Club both have reported real impact on members with significant mental health issues. Participants to the Crochet Club have the impact of the group as 'life support' and as 'respite' from challenging life circumstances.

Christchurch Community Activities, alongside the foodbank, provide opportunities for those with a variety of issues. They undertook mental health training, supported by MiH, in the light of the number of clients attending activities who displayed mental health symptoms.

There have also been challenges. There are good connections and collaborations which underpin much of the work, but there have also been divisions due to relationship breakdowns or local politics within groups which have created or exacerbated silos.

These Silos can mean that effort is duplicated at times, although, as there is not a limit on those needing support, the effort rarely goes to waste, but does contribute to a culture of competition and entrenched silo working.

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## Insights: Changes Over Time

Hailsham is growing with many new build estates. These often lack good local assets (meeting spaces, shops etc) and can feel devoid of character. Lack of bumping spaces in the original area (and in many of the new housing areas) exacerbates this challenge.

It proved hard to generate activity directly in the original Eastern Ward neighbourhood where MIH began. Most residents go into town for their needs, especially since the Community centre took a long time to re-open after COVID. The minimal local bumping spaces reinforce this sense of this part of town as having no life of its own, which is illustrated by the lack of people out and about when CDWs sought to engage. There was minimal response to leaflet drops, making it difficult to make informal connections.

This became easier to do once the patch opened up to include central locations which might also benefit people from the Eastern reaches of the town.

The issues facing the Hailsham community as a whole are quite deep and far reaching. Income deprivation, lack of employment and poor mental health mean that there are many who struggle to engage in community initiatives unless they directly affect their needs.

Supporting groups that did directly offer support to meet basic needs (Foodbank, Uniform Bank etc) was important, but in some ways limited, as some of these had to be more service driven.

# AREA SNAPSHOT

## Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

- **Strengths**

- Informal collaboration between groups seeking to address challenges caused by the cost of living crisis
- Examples of groups that have built confidence and skills to engage more widely in opportunities to influence change, such as Kinship Carers
- Groups that are quietly addressing the mental wellbeing of their members through crafting activities and peer support
- Local assets including Hailsham Boxing Club and Christchurch Community Activities

- **Challenges**

- Lack of bumping spaces in the Eastern part of the town
- New build estates that are exacerbating this challenge by not factoring community spaces, shops and infrastructure into developments
- A culture of competition which breeds mistrust and lack of willingness to collaborate
- Deep seated issues around income deprivation, employment and poor mental health.

- **Opportunities**

- Hailsham Boxing Club and its focus on development of wider community activities and engagement with families
- The small scale success of effort to encourage greater collaboration as an opportunity to share learning about benefits
- Learning from examples like Kinship Carers who have successfully engaged in wider opportunities to raise awareness and be heard

- **Threats**

- New programmes and initiatives that don't build from learning from Making it Happen, which risk relationships and undermine opportunities for collaboration and co-creation with communities
- Funding landscape