MAKING IT
HAPPEN
AREA SNAPSHOT

Hollington, Hastings

**Hastings Voluntary Action**

*Nov 2019 – December 2024*

HVA
Hastings Voluntary Action

# 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
  - Grants awarded by theme
  - Equalities connections
  - Learning from the Making it Happen evaluation

- **Key insights**

- **Strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats**

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# 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 snap shot is to start a conversation and to complement statistical data prepared through the Integrated Communtiy 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.

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## 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.

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)

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## Hollington – Hastings

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# Area context

The **Greater Hollington** area is the northern part of St Leonards geographically, while politically forming the northwest boundary of the borough and district of Hastings, the borough council ward of Hollington, and part of the parliamentary constituency of Hastings & Rye.

Sitting at the border of the urban area, Greater Hollington is bordered on all sides bar the south by major roads. To the west and north, the A2690 on Queensway and B2092 on Crowhurst Road form hard boundaries. To the east, while Battle Road becomes more accessible and urban the closer it gets to the south-eastern corner of the area where it connects to Blackman Avenue, the more northern parts of the road are similarly difficult. As such, internally accessible resources and amenities are key.

The Church Wood part of the area includes a medical centre and large supermarket superstore, while educational provision to age 11, and green space are in generally good supply across the area overall, with three separate primary schools present, as well as the New Horizons special education school. The area also includes a number of community spaces: the Robsack Centre to the west, Hollington Community Centre to the east, and Tilekiln Community Centre in the centre. However, other provisions are more limited; the three mainstream secondary education facilities serving Hastings and St Leonards are all between 40 minutes and an hour away by foot, or at least 20 minutes away by public transport.

The nearest post office to the centre of the area, meanwhile, is 1.5miles south, and the nearest gym or leisure centres, and the Conquest Hospital are all similarly distant.

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# The Area
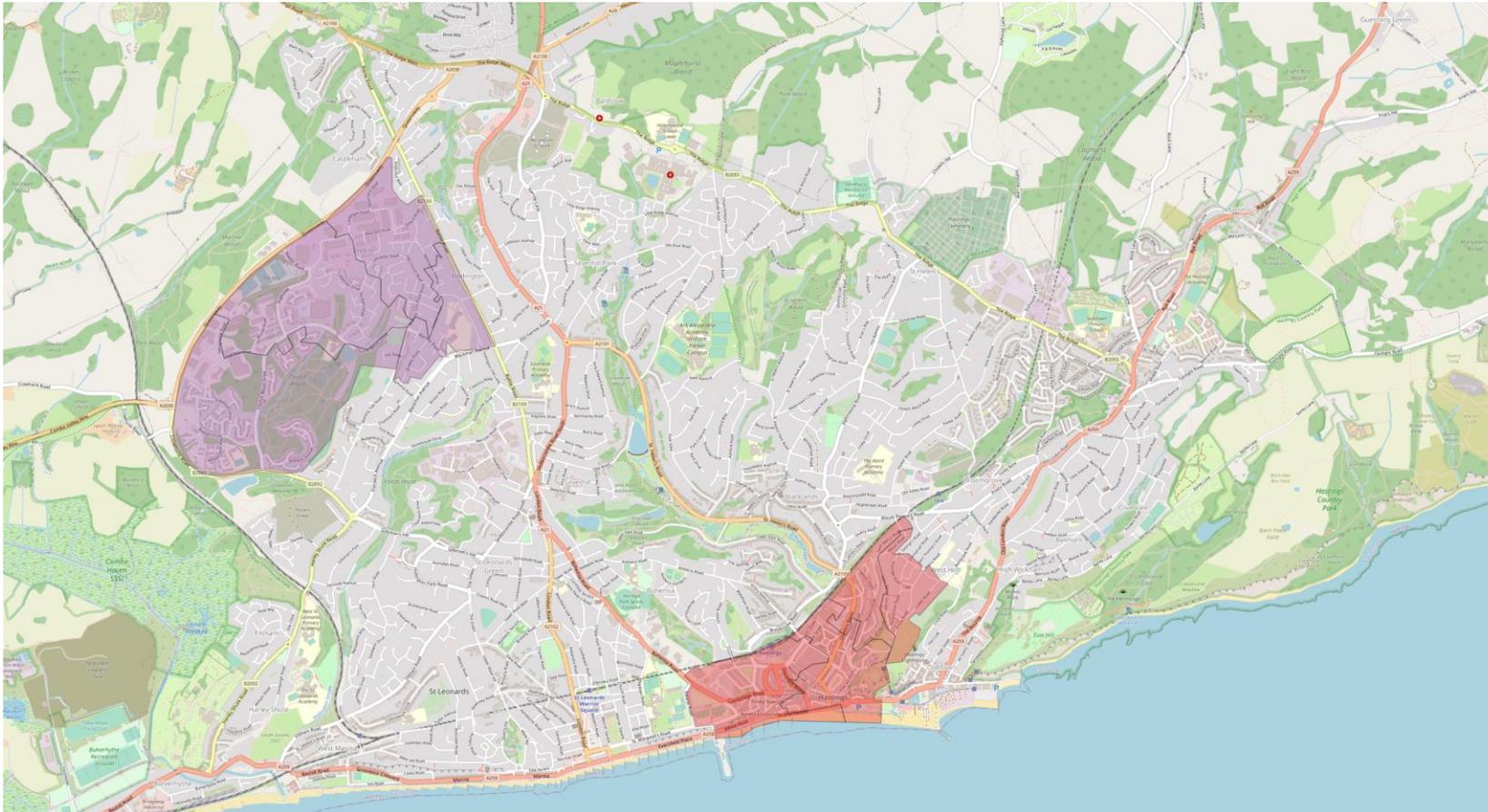


There are two Making it Happen areas based in Hastings.

**Hollington** is shown here on the outskirts to the northwest of the town in purple.

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- In 2019 Hollington was selected as an area of focus within Making it Happen. Indices of Multiple Deprivation placed the area within the lowest 10% in terms of deprivation. Challenges were flagged in relation to relationships, trust, and sense of belonging according to Co-op Wellbeing and WARM ward data.

- The CDW highlighted opportunities and assets to build from including local green spaces, community groups and community buildings as well as targeted youth provision.

- Since 2019, activity has evolved which correlates with the challenges and opportunities flagged at the start.

- Projects focused on grass roots peer support to encourage better mental health and well being have evolved, frequently with a focus on encouraging people to spend time outdoors, or through engagement in arts and creativity.

- Community gardens and environmental initiatives are common themes, often also interconnected with peer support and mental wellbeing activities.

- Community events have also been extremely valuable, often requiring minimal resource, but contributing to community building by encouraging neighbours to connect with each other and leading to a greater sense of belonging.

- Ongoing work with the Youth Centre and support from the CDW to encourage connection to the wider Hastings Youth Partnership have proved valuable.

- Challenges exist around the time required to become embedded within some communities where wariness of 'officialdom' is deeply engrained.  Authority figures or even just those from established organisations who work closely with local authorities are viewed homogenously and negatively, often as a result of poor experiences and a sense of neglect.

- There are genuine opportunities to build from, including the ongoing development of networks of people and groups for peer support and to share learning and resources, perhaps particularly in relation to green and environmental activities, but also arts, mental health and wellbeing and in relation to young people.

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# The Picture in 2019

**Summary of the 2019 area rationale:**

Hollington - Hastings

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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.

**Hollington - worse than East Sussex average in rates of:**

- 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

- Adults in Alcohol Treatment
- 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.

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**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 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 Hollington:

- Income – 1
- Employment - 1
- Education skills and training – 1
- Health deprivation - 1
- Crime - 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

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 Hollington:

- Health

- Economy, work and employment

- 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**
    - Education
    - Health
    - Material wellbeing
    - Belonging
    - Crime and anti-social behaviour
    - Infrastructure

- **Amber**
    - Life satisfaction

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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.

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## 2019 Discovery Report Summary

**In Hollington:**

- People who are already active connectors within the residential community – (key volunteers)
- Several community centres and community spaces within other buildings.
- Green spaces / woodlands
- Community groups that are already running – (links to wellbeing hub activities)
- Good links with local social housing provider
- Targeted Youth Service based in locality with some activities for young people
- Large supermarket with community space
- schools, churches, pubs, small independent shops
- local library
- The potential for inter-generational activity is strong.

**Potential Outcomes:**

- Individuals - Feeling Valued
- Individuals - Sense of purpose
- Communities - Engaged Communities
- Organisations – Increased variety of community associations

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.

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- **People / residents**
  - Community gardening
  - Social connections, skills and learning – Craigs Cabin Marline Gardeners
    - Cross connections with other groups – Arts in the Park
- **Wellbeing**
  - Outdoor activities
    - Project Rewild – Take Action Man
    - Men's Network
      - Cross connections with other groups – Men's Network
  - Other wellbeing activities
    - Aio Bara meditation
      - Cross connections with other groups – Ore Community Centre
  - Young people wellbeing activities
    - SIAM Animation Physical Activity
      - Cross connections with other groups – Four Courts Community Centre

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## Development Examples
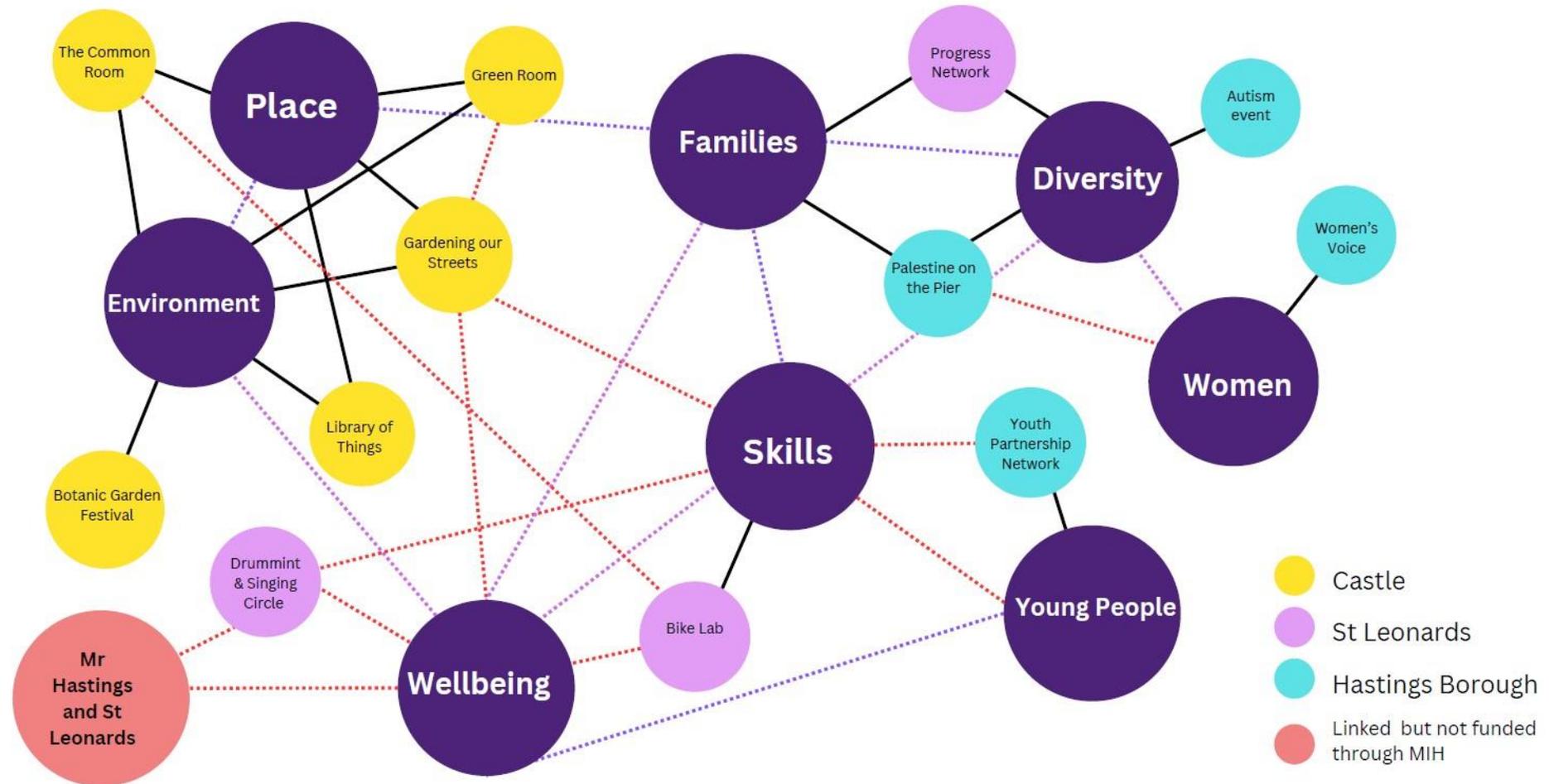
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## Key Challenges

- A challenge identified early on in Hastings related to the number of programmes and initiatives 'competing' for the engagement of people and communities in the centre of the town which often appeared to ignore Hollington.

- Areas such as Hollington take time and require 'a way in' – someone who can vouch for you and support you to be accepted.

- Some community centres are entrenched in what they do, but if it works for local residents, is it right to want them to change?

- By taking time to focus on relationship building, community led projects and activity has grown, but it has been slow.

- The number of initiatives evolving in Castle, St Leonards and across the Borough have been valuable, but have consumed much of the time and capacity of the CDW, meaning there has been less time to focus energy in Hollington.

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**ABCD Learning Reflections**

## What have you learned?

- Relationships and trust are key
- Groups take time to develop
- Some groups hit the ground running
- Some just need 'permission to try'
- Initial activities often attract people from other areas of the town
- Organisations are often able to work in other areas making useful connections with residents

## What do you want to share with others?

- Not to be concerned that some groups take years to find their 'pace, place or role'.

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## Grant Funding

Hollington

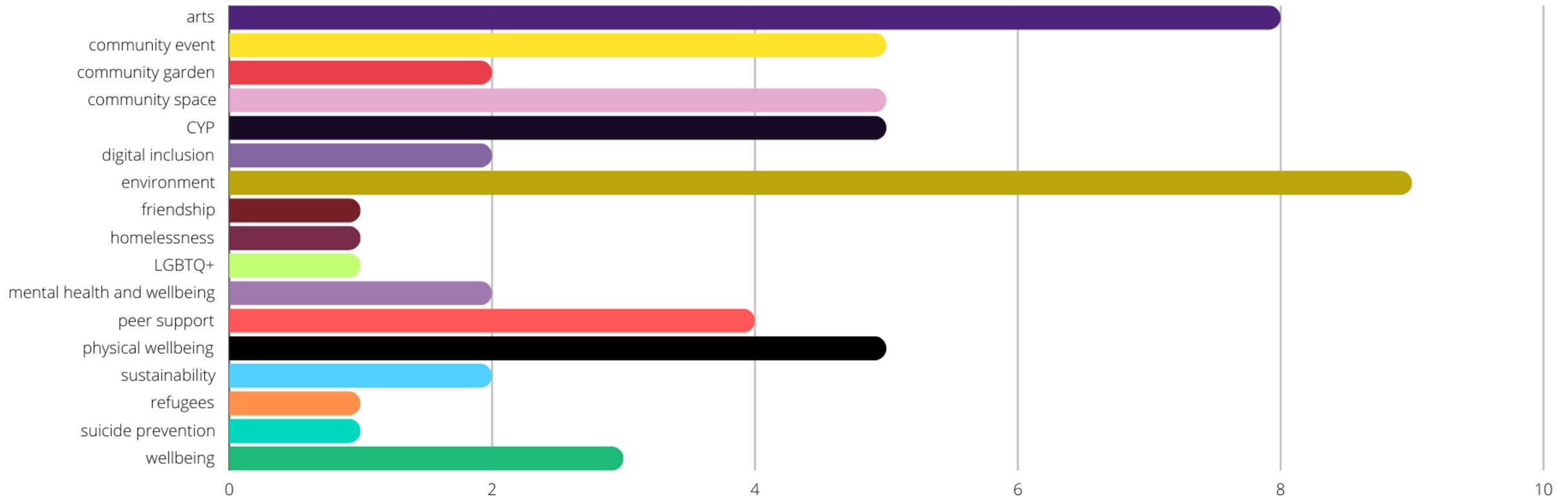(Between April 2020 and December 2024)

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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 Hollington

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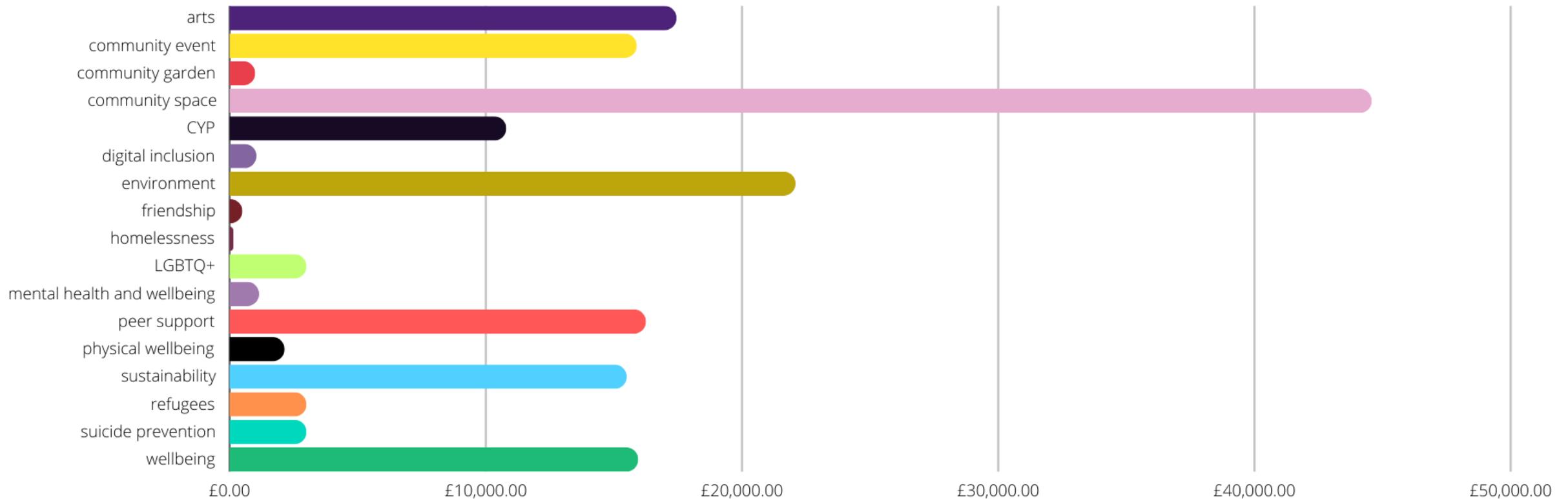


NB: It should be noted that many projects relate to more than one theme. This graph draws on the central project intention.

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## Impact and Outcomes

*"I remember feeling very isolated and disconnected from my community - Project Rewild has played a central role in helping me find my feet and find my people."* (Take Action Man participant)

*"The garden, it means such a lot to all of us in our residence. We have children come and play outside. People have barbecues, they get together. People's mental health and other problems, personal problems, they come and sit in the garden. I even sit in the garden when I'm feeling a bit down and it really does help with your mental health.... It's a lovely place to be."* (D from the Marline Court Gardeners)

***Clockwise from top left:*** *Take Action Man, Craigs Cabin, Marline Court Garden, Hollington Community Centre, Hollington Remembers*

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## 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.

## 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

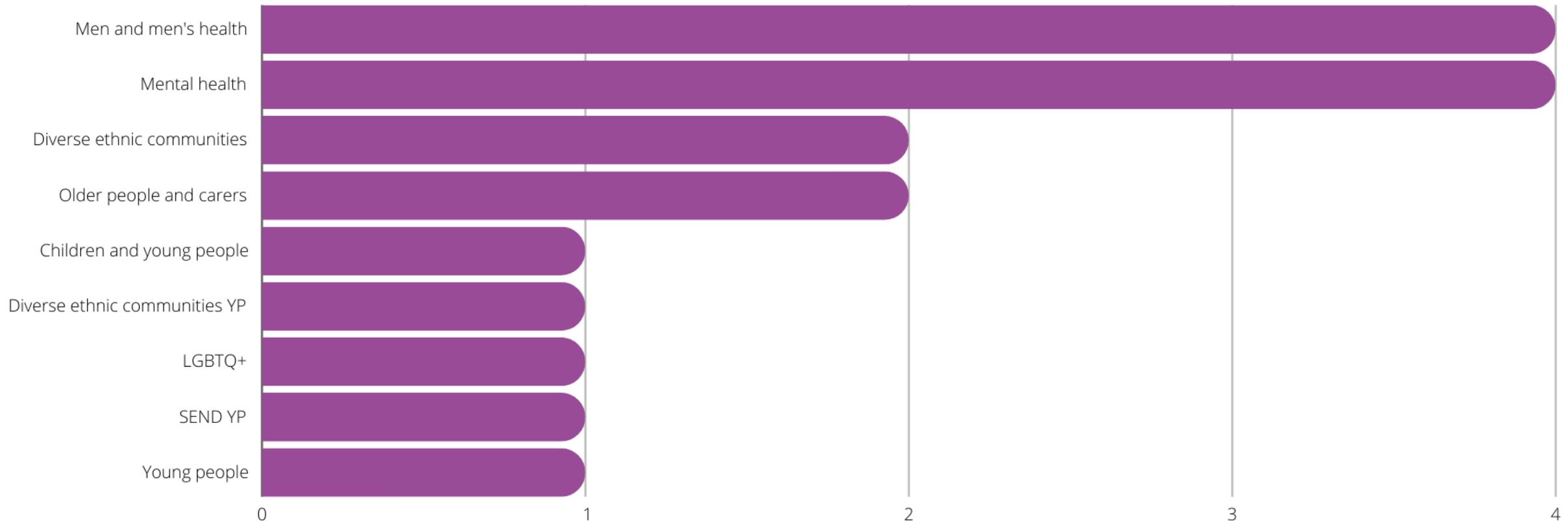**Allocation of larger grants by protected characteristic across the MIH programme:**
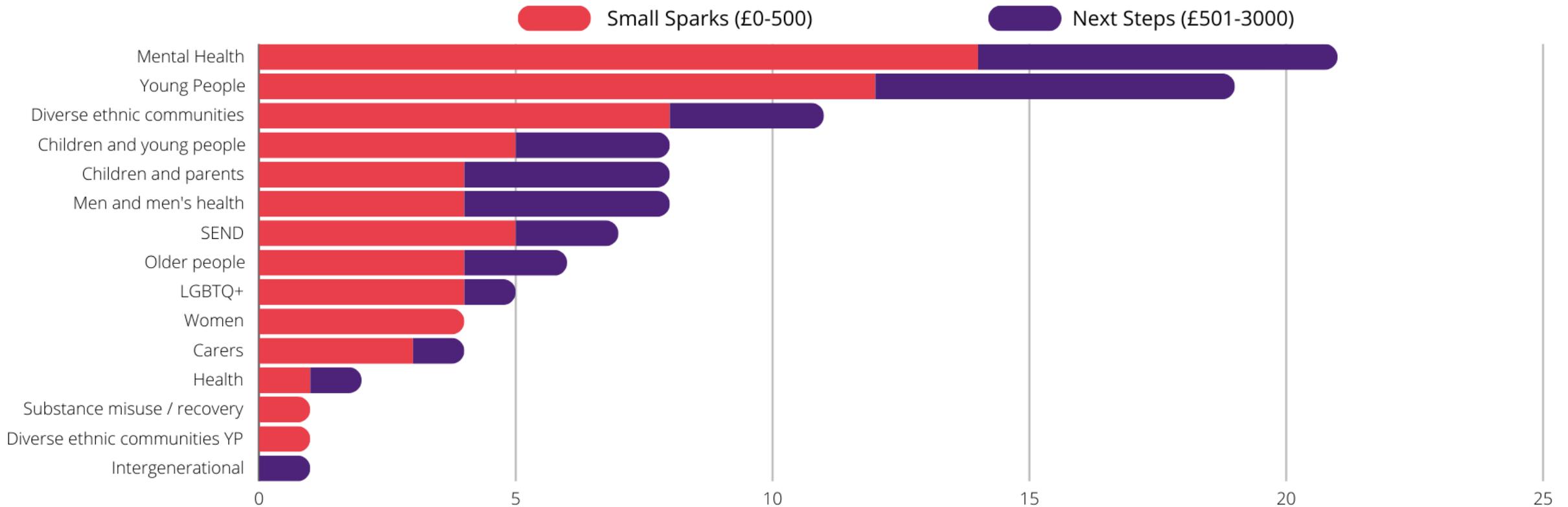


- It is important to note that many projects will have more than one core beneficiary group. Those detailed here are those that are focused on a particular group.

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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 Hollington, the MIH Community Development worker works 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.

- **Socio economic inequality**
- **Children**
- **Men's health and wellbeing**
- **Mental health**
- **Minoritised ethnic communities**
- **Women**
- **Young People**

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Stage Two Evaluation

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# Evaluation Reflections



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:

**MAKING IT HAPPEN**

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STAGE TWO EVALUATION

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

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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

Hastings - Hollington

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## Changes Over Time

In 2019 Hollington was selected as an area of focus for MIH based on a range of data which placed the area within the lowest decile across a range of scores including income, education skills and training, and health deprivation. Relationships, trust and sense of belonging also scored poorly in Co-op Wellbeing and WARM Ward data.

In 2019, the Community Development Worker highlighted opportunities and assets also, including local community spaces, green spaces, existing community groups and targeted youth services that were based in the area. Over time these have proved valuable resources which the CDW has sought to connect and build from.

There is clear correlation between the data and the activity which has evolved. There are common themes in relation to community gardens and green spaces for environmental objectives, but also frequently with explicit intentions to encourage better mental health and wellbeing and social connection. Craig's Cabin is a peer group for people who may struggle with their mental health, or who have challenging life circumstances, and focuses on encouraging activity which gets people outside and involved in the natural environment, but also in community action.

Take Action Man sought to encourage men who had completed a mental health support programme with Mind who were keen to carry on to become a self sustaining peer network, to spend time together participating and learning about outdoor activities and pursuits.

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Social connection and well being are core themes across many of the projects that have evolved, including into the development of wider networks, such as a recent initiative for groups to come together through the "Learning to Thrive" project.  This provides an opportunity for community groups to come together for mutual support, and to build skills, knowledge and connectivity to encourage longer term sustainability.

Community events with aims to encourage a sense of neighbourliness have also been an important feature of activity over the years, including the annual Hollington Remembers and Christmas Tree events.  Both of these pre date MIH, but proved fantastic opportunities to support and foster local action, such as through introduction of a Participatory Budgeting activity at Hollington Remembers, and to create a larger scale Christmas Tree event.  Feedback following the Christmas event flagged that neighbours were talking more, and there was a sense that people were taking more pride in their local area.

There has also been activity for young people, such as a project led by SIAM for young people to create and appear in there own motion capture martial arts video game, thereby introducing physical activity in a hugely creative way. There are links too with the local youth centre, and wider Hastings Youth Partnership and broader projects with families, such as Progress Network. Other notable themes in terms of project development relate to arts activities and sport.

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The CDW reflects that the Pandemic has changed things since 2019. Some community spaces no longer function, or have changed their focus after lockdown, while the cost of living crisis has also had an impact. Some people are no longer able to volunteer due to their own life circumstances or health issues, while perhaps the pandemic also encouraged others to think about their neighbours and become involved for the first time.

The CDW reflects that some community groups may regard HVA and MIH as too 'official', bound as we are by the need for accountability. Hollington has proportionally more social housing, so difficult relationships between residents and social housing landlords can also affect their views on 'community work': we are all viewed as one, and with mistrust. Some groups like their autonomy and choose to distance themselves from 'regulation'.

It can take many years and the gradual building of trust to overcome this wariness, and so the sparks of success are a powerful foundation to build from. There is huge potential too through the growing interest in green spaces and environmental initiatives.

Equally, potential through the ongoing encouragement of connections between the groups which already exist to continue to build a movement of mutual support, sharing, learning and connectivity. This includes through links with groups from the wider Hastings area and beyond.

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- **Strengths**
  - Growing interest in environmental and green initiative with potential to encourage links to groups in other parts of Hastings
  - The number of groups and activities encouraging positive activities for mental health and wellbeing
  - Grass roots peer groups providing mutual support and social connection
  - Community events that are contributing to a sense of belonging and encouraging neighbourliness
  - Projects for and with young people

- **Challenges**
  - Impact of the pandemic still being felt, and more recently impact of the cost of living crisis
  - The time needed to build trust in a context where 'officialdom' is viewed with mistrust

- **Opportunities**
  - Groups evolving through peer support
  - Interest in activity to support better mental health and wellbeing
  - Green and environmental groups and emerging networks encouraging collaboration and shared learning
  - Well supported existing community events
  - Projects and initiatives being led by and with young people

- **Threats**
  - New programmes and initiatives that ignore opportunities for collaboration and co-creation with communities and risk relationships and trust.
  - Funding landscape
  - Political uncertainty