



MAKING IT HAPPEN

AREA SNAPSHOT

Peacehaven West and Peacehaven North
Sussex Community Development Association
Nov 2019 – December 2024



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What This Snapshot Will Cover

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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 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.



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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.

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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)

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Peacehaven West and North

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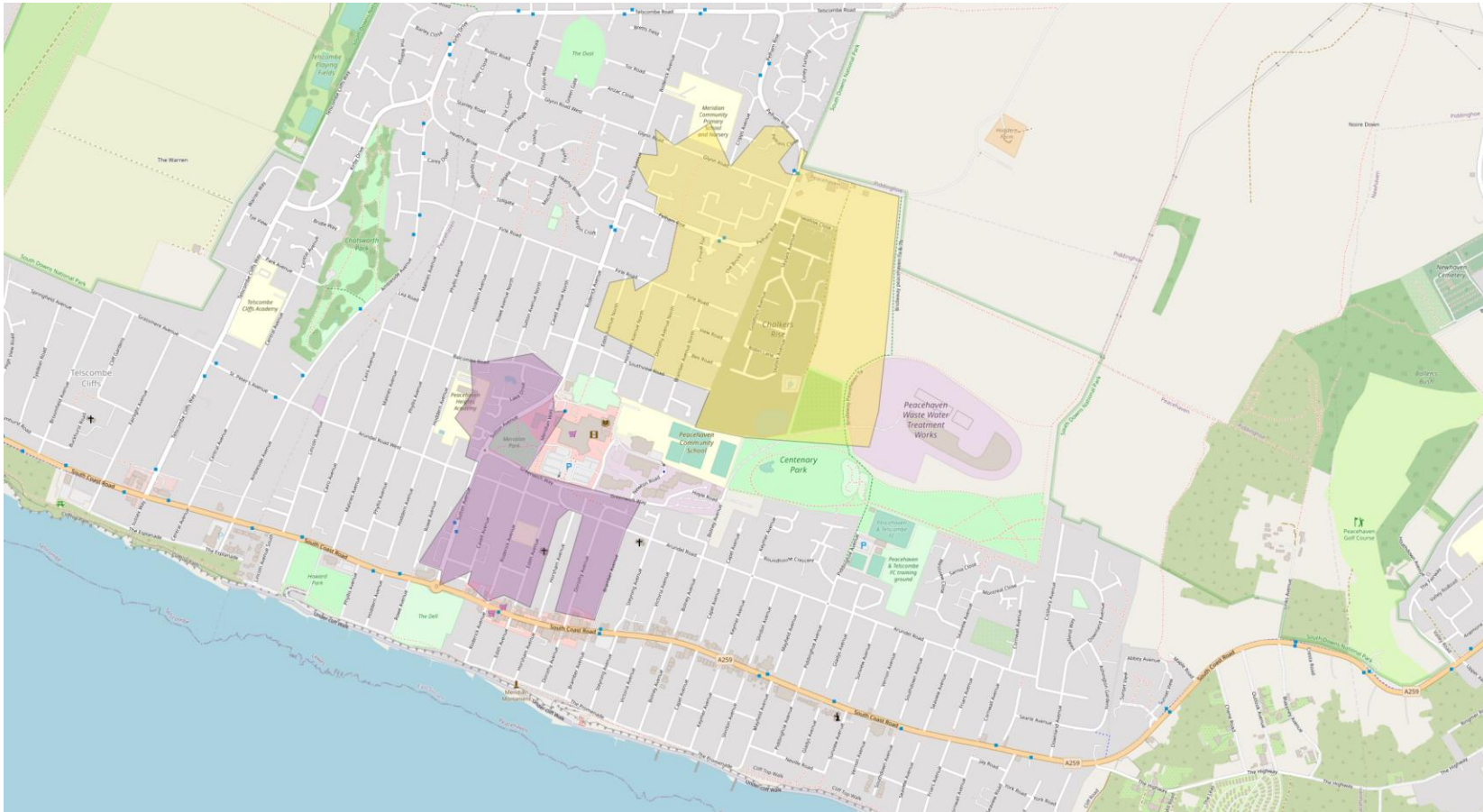
Area context

Peacehaven has a unique geographical feel, owing to the US grid system that the town's American founder, Charles Neville, designed the town around. Located above the chalk cliffs of the South Downs, it is closely linked to Saltdean and Newhaven on either side, with Brighton and Seaford also around 5 miles west and east respectively; the town falls within the Brighton Kemptown Parliamentary constituency (to be renamed Brighton Kemptown & Peacehaven, bringing greater name recognition to the town, at the next election). The 2021 census reported that 15,707 live within Peacehaven, a considerable increase of 1364 – or 9.5% – on the 2011 figures. Peacehaven's primary transport links are by car and bus, with the East Coastway trainline arcing around the town from Brighton to Lewes and beyond, meaning the closest station is Newhaven Town, an hour's walk away.

The two areas of interest that Making it Happen is focused on in Peacehaven are to the West and North of the town, with both areas in question also forming council wards. **Peacehaven West** lies within the wider area that is generally thought by locals to be the heart of the town, with the Meridian shopping centre (including the Town Council and Library), Peacehaven Leisure Centre, and Peacehaven Community School, as well as other key amenities close by. **Peacehaven North** is located to the north-east of this central area, just the other side of the Community School, with key green spaces located here: the Oval, including Peacehaven Community Garde, the 11-acre Centenary Park, more commonly known as the 'Big Park' and the nearby Peacehaven Sports Park, home to Peacehaven & Telscombe Football Club, and Bowls Club.

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The Area



There are two Making it Happen areas based in Peacehaven.

Peacehaven West lies to the south west and contains key amenities for the town. This area is shown in purple. **Peacehaven North** is located to the north-east and shown here in yellow.

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Executive Summary

Peacehaven West and Peacehaven North

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Executive Summary

- In 2019 Peacehaven was selected as an area of priority based IMD and JSNA data particularly in relation to health and mental health concerns. Housing, space and environment, relationships and trust were also flagged. CDW discovery work from that time noted the presence of a handful of local assets including the Meridian Centre, library and leisure centre.
- CDWs were able to hit the ground running despite lockdown because the lack of indoor community spaces for once didn't matter, and the presence of plenty of green open space came into its own.
- Activity including discovery walks with local Town Councillors, pop up engagement events and bulb planting proved hugely valuable in connecting with local residents.
- Community action has dipped since lockdown lifted. Community events have suffered from the lack of indoor meeting space and enthusiasm has been dented by repeated outdoor events hit by poor weather and wash outs.
- However, much has been achieved. Activities led by and with children and young people, arts and environmental projects, and projects to encourage better health and wellbeing have all flourished.
- Peacehaven Mosque has built connections with other local residents and groups and is developing new projects and initiatives
- Intergenerational projects have taken root, such as We've Got Mail and the Peacehaven Academy students history project with representatives from U3A
- Peer support is also proving immensely valuable, both for mutual support but also to raise awareness of service gaps
- Partnership and collaboration has flourished, such as with DRI, Latest TV and Recovery Partners.
- A new housing development of 2000 homes is placing pressure on already stretched services and there is intense frustration at the lack of inclusion in plans for community spaces or amenities. Lack of recognition that Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven are effectively one town adds to challenge, and implications for the population
- The road system with only one road connecting in either direction to the rest of the county is inadequate given the population size and the scale of housing development.

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The Picture in 2019

Summary of the 2019 area rationale:
Peacehaven West and Peacehaven North

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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.

In Peacehaven West and North issues flagged were broadly similar: worse than East Sussex average in rates of:

- Ratio of working age to non-working age people
- Lone Parent Households **(North only)**
- Older People Living Alone **(West only)**
- Income Deprivation Affecting Children
- Early Years Development
- Key Stage 2 Development **(North only)**
- GCSE Attainment
- Adults with No/Low Qualifications
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Socially Rented Households **(North only)**
- GP-reported Obesity in Adults **(North only)**
- 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
- Adults with Dementia
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services caseloads
- Adults claiming ESA due to mental health

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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 Peacehaven North and West:

- Income – 2
- Employment – 2
- Education, skills and training – 2
- Health deprivation – 2
- Barriers to housing – 3

	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 Peacehaven:

- 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
- Health

Amber

- Material wellbeing
- Strong & stable families
- Belonging
- Local economy
- Public services
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Infrastructure

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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.

- Meridian Shopping centre as a hub for the area
- Leisure facilities
- Library
- Educational and cultural buildings
- Local schools

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The Picture in 2024

Peacehaven North and West

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.

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Key Challenges

- Lack of community buildings/venues
- Uncertainty about space for community groups during redevelopment of Meridian Centre
- Lack of networks and communication

What have you learned?

- Peacehaven doesn't have a strong sense of belonging.
- Sense of being forgotten about by East Sussex / Lewes District Council
- Hard to get people involved

What do you want to share with others?

- Keep persevering to find "right" contact – e.g. with school, so fruitful in long-term.
- Stop building housing without the necessary infrastructure – e.g. need for community space.

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Grant Funding

Peacehaven North and West
(Between April 2020 and December 2024)

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The Grant Programme

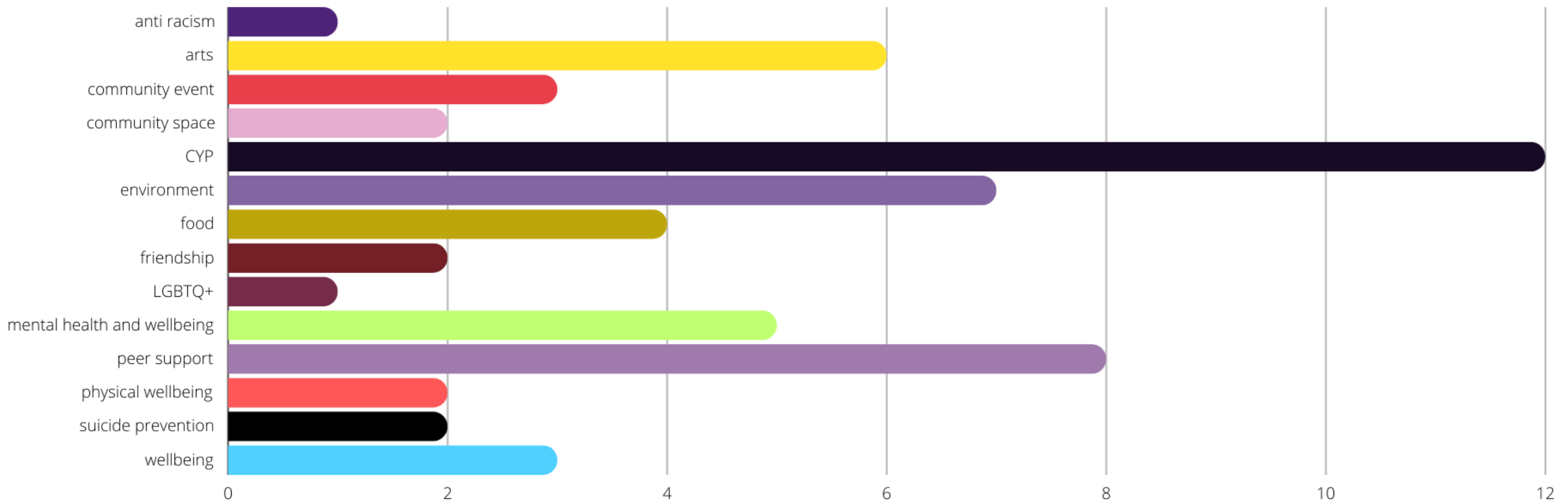
The Making it Happen grant programme was designed to be flexible and offer a range of funding options to reflect the needs of different projects of different sizes. The broad aim was for projects or activity that would build from the positive things that are already present, involve local people, benefit 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 Peacehaven

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

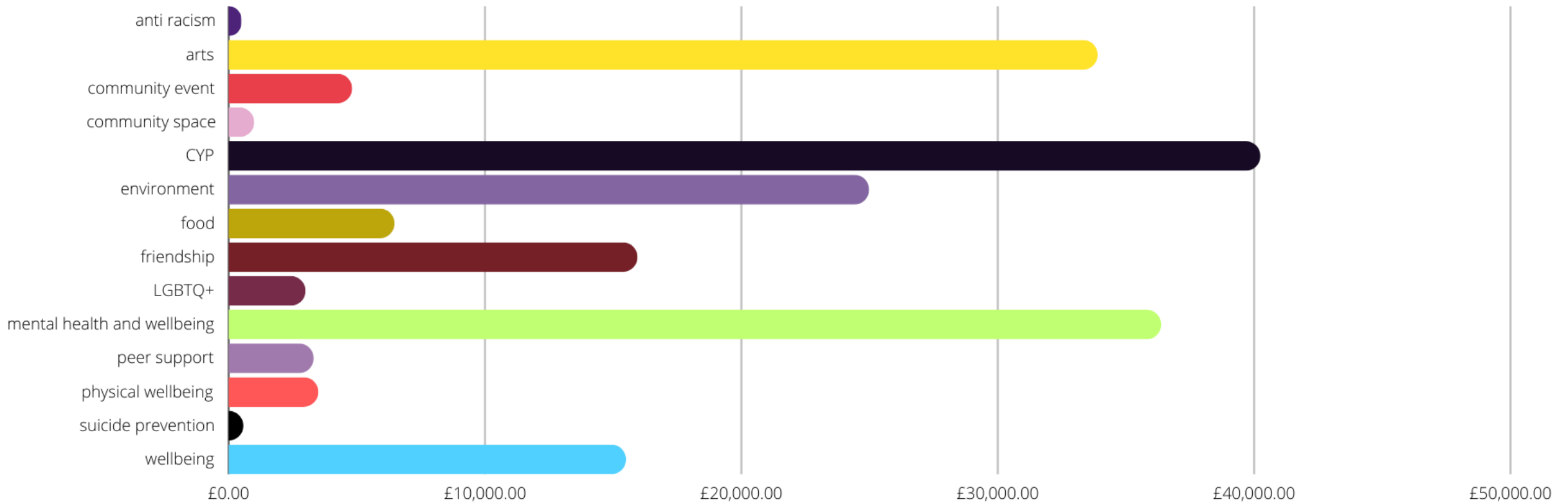


NB: It should be noted that many projects relate to more than one theme. This graph draws on the central project intention.

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Grants Awarded

Total sum invested in Peacehaven 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

“Being able to run these lunches has helped us to combat some of the isolation we felt and also that of the people coming along. The MiH team are now looking to help us secure some more funding so that the relationships we have made continue to build, our group is gaining knowledge, language skills, friendships and confidence.” (Peace Community Centre and Mosque)

“The [MIH] community development workers opened doors for DRI with their knowledge of the locality, connections with the communities and other local organisations and assets. DRI with our expertise of working alongside ethnically diverse communities and the relationships we share with them helped expand the connections of the community development workers.” (DRI on the collaboration with MIH to deliver ESOL classes in Peacehaven and Uckfield)



Clockwise from top left: Christmas Lights at the Bricky; We've Got Mail; Peacehaven Neighbourhood Sparks event; Barn Dance; Peacehaven Mosque Soup and Social; Towards Zero Carbon event.

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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.

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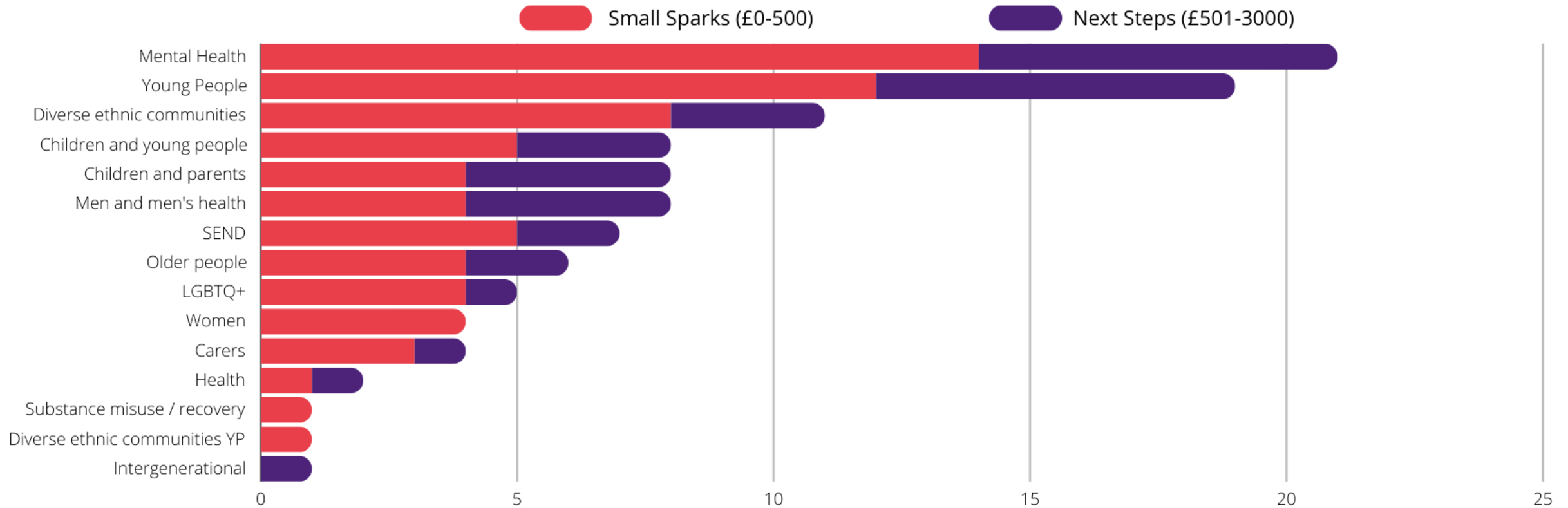
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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:

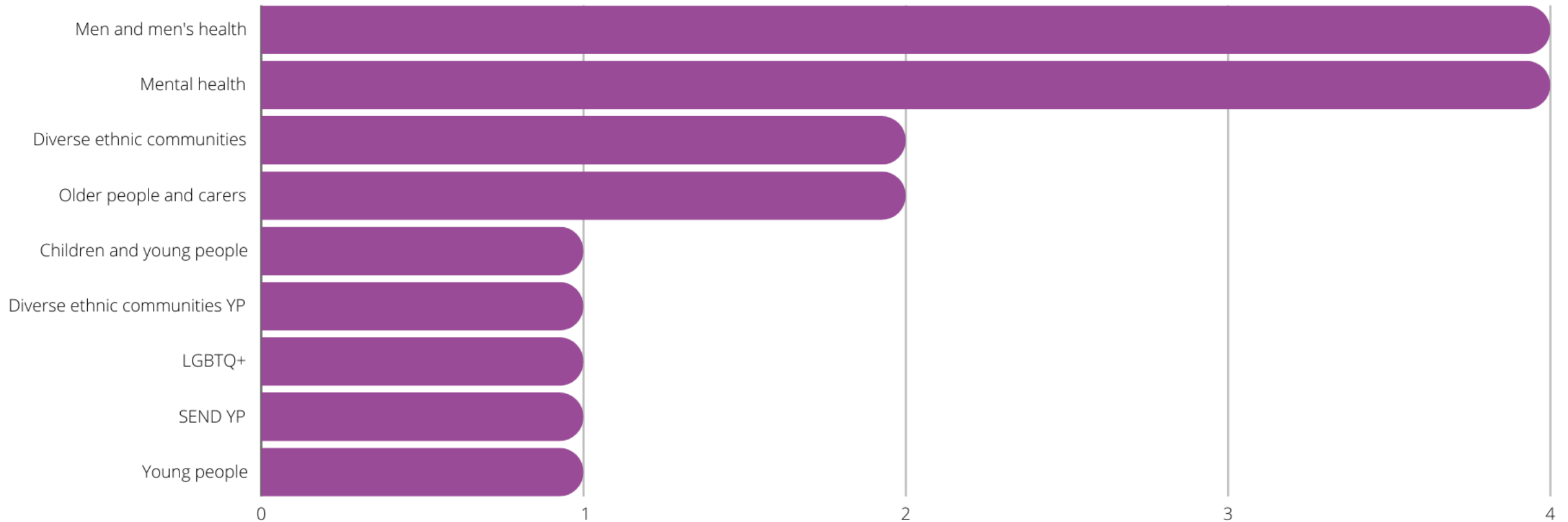


- It is important to note that many projects will have more than one core beneficiary group. Those detailed here are those that are focused on a particular group.

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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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Newhaven: 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 Peacehaven 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.

- **Children**
- **Young people**
- **Diverse ethnic communities**
- **Refugees and asylum seekers**
- **Carers**
- **Older people**
- **Substance misuse / recovery**
- **Families / parents**
- **SEND**

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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:

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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

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

Peacehaven West and Peacehaven North

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Changes Over Time

In 2019, Peacehaven was selected as an area of focus for Making it Happen based on IMD and JSNA data. This included challenges around income deprivation affecting children, rate of adults in alcohol treatment, self reported bad health and long term health conditions, and poor mental health. There were also challenges around education, and the number of pupils with SEND. Housing, space and environment, relationships and trust and life satisfaction were also flagged.

Potential assets included the Meridian Centre as a hub for the community, leisure facilities, the local library and the presence of educational establishments. From the start, CDWs sought to build connections with local assets, including local Town Councillors and key organisations such as Kempton House which provided an older people's day centre.

A striking feature of the MIH work in Peacehaven is that lockdown may have explicitly helped galvanise activity in this area. At the start of the programme people described a lack of community spirit or pride in the area, exacerbated due to limited community spaces, or natural bumping spaces, where people might meet to spark ideas and action. The crisis encouraged creativity to support connection via social media, but also because of the abundance of local green and open spaces, these became central to effort to encourage mutual support and connection. The fine weather helped and outdoor events, such as bulb planting, pop up activities and asset mapping, and discovery walks were very successful.

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Changes Over Time

As time has gone on and lockdowns lifted, normal weather patterns have made the lack of indoor space hugely challenging again. Community events have been washed out and enthusiasm has dropped due to the regular disappointments. This lack of community space has become a huge issue for local residents, compounded by the closure of the Meridian Centre, also affecting the library, for redevelopment.

Despite these challenges, much has happened and there is clear correlation between the data from 2019 and the projects, activities and developments which communities have driven since that time. Activities for children and young people are proving hugely popular, alongside peer support, arts activities, community events, environmental initiatives and mental health and wellbeing. There is a significant focus on activity that will bring people together for connection, friendship and mutual support, including across different demographics.

CDW work with Peacehaven Mosque to encourage better understanding and links with the wider community, included support to connect with other faith and community leaders. The Women's Group from the Mosque put forward a project idea to the Peacehaven MIH Neighbourhood Sparks event, and won the public vote for funding from a participatory budgeting activity. The Saturday Souper Social became a fantastic event for all the community. Other community events with a focus on building community spirit and a sense of belonging include Christmas Lights at the Bricky event, a Harvest Festival and ceilidh, and support for residents to be involved in Seahaven Pride.

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Changes Over Time

Relationship building with Peacehaven Community School took time but paid off in the end. CDWs worked with the school and a group of students, connecting them with representatives from the local University of the Third Age, to fulfil their project aims of an inter generational history project, resulting in a book.

Collaboration with the Wealden MIH Team from AIRS and with Diversity Resource International (DRI) saw DRI delivering ESOL classes for people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. MIH CDWs worked with class participants to explore their passions and interests which led to the development of a recipe book, and connections with other local community groups. The Peacehaven students are now working with the Trustees at the Hillcrest Centre and run a café on Friday's from the Centre.

Peer support groups have evolved for parents of children with SEND and for people in recovery from alcohol and substance misuse. Recovery Partners, a grass roots mental health service user led organisation, are working with groups from across the Havens, including Gardening in Action, to explore ideas around how to create mental health friendly communities. Bags of Hope is a project established by a local resident to support people with similar lived experience of losing a loved one to suicide.

Despite positives, CDWs have flagged ongoing frustration for local residents, particularly in relation to new housing developments. A new development of 2000 dwellings has been built, but there is also private redevelopment of existing bungalow sites into blocks of flats, which may be contributing to even higher population increases than recorded. Local amenities and services were already under pressure, exemplified in pressure on local GP practices, schools and road system.

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Changes Over Time

CDWs explain that Peacehaven as a town is unique: it was designed 100 years ago as a country escape, with many people buying a plot of land and building their second homes away from large cities. It is set in a linear grid system without an obvious centre, which provides no focal point for community connection. The grid is serviced to other parts of the county via a single road along the coast causing traffic chaos for people trying to get in or out of town.

The curious design also exacerbates a sense that residents are cut off and ignored by service providers and large organisations. There is little outreach in the town and very little service delivery, which in turn makes signposting to other information, support and guidance almost non-existent. The Big Park was developed using Section 106 funding following siting of the sewage works in the town. It provides fantastic outdoor space, but can't be relied on in poor weather.

The two adjoining towns of Telscombe Cliffs and Peacehaven have separate town councils and are viewed in decision making terms as technically different places, while local residents view them as a single town. There is a sense that if this was recognised, there might be greater recognition of the inadequacy of local infrastructure, lack of community space and transport issues.

While there are many positives, these infrastructural challenges are proving a major block to community action. However, in that context, the progress that communities have made is all the more impressive.

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Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

- **Strengths**

- Creative response to lockdown which sparked lasting community connection
- Activity which is bringing people together across demographic differences and building understanding
- Emergence of peer support groups
- Facilitation of collaborations with key organisations and services including schools
- The Big Park as an outdoor meeting space

- **Challenges**

- Lack of community space and closure of the Meridian Centre for redevelopment
- Lack of local services and amenities
- Poor transport and road connectivity
- New housing development placing additional pressure on local services and amenities

- **Opportunities**

- Projects that have brought groups and organisations together for mutual support and collaborations which have the potential to continue to grow and evolve
- Peer support groups providing invaluable self help, but also flagging key service gaps
- Community events as a mechanism to encourage social connection

- **Threats**

- New developments placing increased pressure on existing services, and which don't factor the need for community spaces and amenities
- New programmes and initiatives that ignore opportunities for collaboration and co-creation with communities and risk relationships and trust.
- Funding landscape
- Potential to lose relationships and trust with communities when MIH ends