

Lowestoft CP priorities survey report

Question 1: Name one gap or challenge regarding Social Isolation in Lowestoft

- Public transport – “limited or no regular bus services” “No bus transport in Blundeston” “The ability to travel”. Public transport was mentioned by 5 respondents.
- Mental health – “mental health with the isolation of COVID, some people still will not go out because of the pandemic”. The term “mental health” was mentioned by 3 respondents.
- Communication – 7 respondents mentioned communication of some form in their answer. General themes included: difficult to reach those with no digital skills, lack of advertising of what’s going on in certain areas, and older people being cut off from friends and family.
- Covid-19 – people still worried about going out, it is also difficult to get groups up and running post-Covid. Covid-19 was mentioned by 3 respondents.

Question 2: Please give details of why you think this is a particular gap/challenge

- Public transport – Mentioned 4 times by different respondents. “Ageing and people of limited transport can be trapped in rural environments. Also lack of public service infrastructure limits the attraction of young people to rural living” “Because we have no bus service in Gunton at all now that the last bus was cancelled”.
- Reaction rather than prevention – “Because you find out after it’s happened” “acknowledge that this exists, no help with this challenge, social, work, school, everything”. General thoughts on having the community be more proactive and solving issues when they first arise.
- Volunteer groups – “Because the volunteer numbers are low and VCS orgs cannot get up and running quick enough or with enough support”
- Communication and IT – “Assuming that everyone has access to the Internet and Social Media” “having no digital connections (laptop, mobile phone etc.) is usually because of other barriers (e.g.: economic and educational); these also need to be overcome” “Lack of response from provider of Voice of a Friend to grow the project as expected”. Communication was mentioned by 6 respondents.

Question 3: Identify one way to reduce the gap or one solution to reduce social isolation

- Public transport – “Provide regular public transport, but comprehensive, without reliance on volunteer sponsored projects”. Public transport was mentioned by 4 respondents.
- Communication and advertising – “try to identify those who do not have internet access and see if other solutions can be provided. Provision of regular times for things like local coffee mornings where general advice of what is happening locally, information on benefits, pension changes etc can be given” “Lowestoft town council newsletter” “local television or local radio campaign to reach those hard to make contact with through other means”. This topic was mentioned by 6 respondents.
- Groups and services – “Provide more opportunities to socialise for parents, babies and toddlers. With health visitors look at how local organisations could support this.” “Consider paying people to run things we need, like meet up Mondays etc. Get the Walks in the Park going” “More community centre's”. This topic was mentioned by 5 respondents.

Question 4: Name one gap or challenge regarding Childhood Healthy Eating in Lowestoft

- Parents – mentioned 3 times by respondents. “Teaching parents how to cook healthily” “Parents to start cooking from scratch with nutritious food which is cheaper”
- Cooking skills – “limited experience of food preparations and reliance on processed foods”. General thoughts on improving education around food and what makes up a healthy diet.
- Convenience and takeaways – “use of fast food and takeaways - lack of understanding of what is a healthy diet” “The amount of cheap poor-quality food available through takeaways and home delivery services” “the availability of fast food outlets that sell low-grade food cheaply”. Fast food and takeaways were mentioned by 5 respondents.
- Links with poverty – “There are two Wards in Lowestoft where there are still significant issues with poverty, and this has been going for many years. Poorer families will not have the funds to eat more healthily; a lot of these families have to resort to cheap and often unhealthy foods.” “Issues like poverty and mental health are intrinsically linked. Not always an issue that parents and children are interested in.”

Question 5: Please give details of why you think this is a particular gap/challenge

- Convenience and takeaways – “The ease of fast food leading to bad cooking habits.” “Too many takeaways, because it’s convenient to parents” “because it provides a quick fix and comfort food for families that have other challenges (e.g.: poverty of time, money or facilities)”. This topic was mentioned by 6 respondents.
- Cost – varied answers on this topic but it came up frequently. “Belief that a healthy diet is much more expensive” “It’s cheaper to buy McDonalds than it is a fresh Fruit and Veg. A meal deal is cheaper than a good meal” “Food environment. Cost of healthy food. Families have lots of other stresses, so healthy eating not a priority.” Cost was mentioned 5 times.
- Education – “Only anecdotal opinion, but cooking/food preparation skills are, like all other predominantly passed down. Schools no longer teach life skills in the same breadth and depth, and lack of experience and confidence in younger people generates a reliance on prepared (and intrinsically unhealthy) food” “Parents aren't sufficiently educated”. This topic was mentioned by 3 respondents.
- Poverty – “The increase in use of Food Banks and low-esteem amongst struggling families.”

Question 6: Identify one way to reduce the gap or one solution to improve Childhood Healthy Eating

- Education – “All children should be taught to cook and to grow vegetables. Reduction in the use of meat, especially red meat should be encouraged. Reduction in salt and sugar should also be promoted.” “Provide basic meal preparation classes to young families” “Education in use of fresh ingredients either in schools or by other means.” “More involvement with children learning where healthy food comes from and how to prepare and cook it. Perhaps then children can teach adults.” Very popular topic, mentioned by 8 respondents.
- Cost – “Find ways to make fresh fruit and veg available at low cost.... even subsidies shops to offer it cheaper....or tap into Allotments surplus”
- Schools – “Whole system co-ordinated approach; schools as the hubs. Work with local businesses including supermarkets.” “Introduce proper school dinners” “ask schoolchildren to keep diet/food diaries so that schools can monitor weaknesses and gaps in provision and an over-reliance on takeaways”. Mentioned by 3 respondents.

Question 7: Name one gap or challenge regarding Mental Health & Wellbeing in Lowestoft

- Covid-19 – “The lack of group activities made worse by the pandemic” “Ongoing effects of Covid and people being afraid to go out and socialise.” “Impact of C-19 - isolation, poverty, employment opportunities”. Mentioned by 3 respondents.
- Services – “Poor access to facilities to help those suffering, delays in delivering services to those often in desperate need. Lack of funding for services” “lots of gaps, mental health is not being noticed for the individual” “Services not taking in people face to face meetings” “The delay in getting people into Statutory Services”. Mentioned by 4 respondents.
- Communication – “Better communication with parents and services talk to each other” “The various people identified to deliver and manage Mental Health don’t talk to each other”. General theme of services not linking up effectively to work together on solutions.
- Awareness – “More support for their families who look after them” “generational suffering whereby poor mental health just gets passed from one to another family member”. Mentioned by 3 respondents.

Question 8: Please give details of why you think this is a particular gap/challenge

- Detection – “Mental health problems difficult to detect in early stages, can tie in with social isolation and poor eating habits. Poor housing and difficulties in getting contact with the correct services early enough” “People are waiting months for an assessment, on the phone, and then months more before any help.... the help is too little too late”. Mentioned by 3 respondents.
- Services and facilities – “Lack of community facilities like Pubs and Clubs etc.” “Additional stress on Medical Services and lack of funds to create opportunities for Social Prescribing.” “Because they need someone in person to talk to”. Mentioned by 4 respondents
- Young people – “Because of the increasing amount of young people with mental issues, which are not being resolved.” “Affects the whole of an individual's life - domino affect” “because especially young people spend too much time using phones and games rather than physical activities”. Mentioned by 4 respondents.
- Family support – “If the family's looking after a mentally ill person had some more support it would help” “perhaps we need to look at whole family diagnosis or treatment if this is not already happening”. Mentioned by 2 respondents.

Question 9: Identify one solution to help improve Mental Health & Wellbeing in Lowestoft

- More facilities – “Provision of activities to give people a sense of wellbeing and purpose” “More facilities being made available such as men's sheds projects.” “Encourage more use of clubs, societies and organisations that can provide both physical and mental stimulation” “Put pressure on the CCG to fund VCS to provide more support services....to fill the gap left by a failing service.... which they already fund.” General theme of physical and outdoor activities. Mentioned by 5 respondents.
- Improving and promoting existing services – “Buses in Blundeston” “Local Community to host events where available activities and support can be advertised. There was an event last week at Parkhill which I would have liked to attend as a Councillor, but I knew nothing about it.” Mentioned by 3 respondents.
- Education – “educate everyone to help notice it in people. help people try and find a solution. it could be isolation, loneliness, the inability (or not wanting) to get out” “ensure that holistic questionnaires are given out when patients present with poor mental health at any clinic or surgery”. Mentioned by 2 respondents.