



Insight into prevention activity in Norfolk & Waveney (2022)

Emily Woodhouse, Business Development Director



What is Prevention?

- Healthwatch Norfolk was commissioned by the Health & Wellbeing Board for Norfolk to explore prevention activity.
- It is recognised by the Health and Wellbeing Board that there is a lack of clarity about what prevention is considered to be.
- *'Prevention means stopping problems from arising in the first place; focusing on keeping people healthy, not just treating them when they become ill. And if they do, it means supporting them to manage their health earlier and more effectively'. – Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE).*

Aims

1. To inform and support the development of the Health & Wellbeing Board's next strategy in relation to prevention.
2. Highlight prevention activity that has been taking place.
3. To provide insight into the experiences of Norfolk and Waveney residents.

What were the findings?

- We engaged with over 250 members of the public.
 - 3 focus groups,
 - 2 interviews with families,
 - 250+ survey respondents.
- Over 100 individuals from local partner organisation.
- National literature review.

Priority 1: Creating healthy environments for children and young people to thrive in resilient, safe families

- **Range of barriers to support** – Parents highlighted the enduring impact of the pandemic, and the absence of in-person groups negatively impacted child development and parental/ carer wellbeing.
- **Importance of the first 2 years** – A broad range of opportunities in the area for wellbeing at early ages. There is united concern about the impact of the pandemic on this early stage of children and their development.

Priority 1: [...Continued]

- **Mental Health** – The public are very conscious of the impact of the pandemic, particularly on children's and parent's mental health and noted delays in access to support.
- **Shared messaging & multi-agency approach** – A multi-agency approach has been identified as essential in the Flourish Children's and Young People Partnership Strategy for Norfolk.
- **School years** – Respondents highlighted the importance of better access, information, and advice for young people to grow up managing their own health and wellbeing.

Priority 2: Delivering appropriate early help services before crisis occur

- **Access to Services** – It was felt that some services can no longer be accessed for a large number of the population, with many feeling they were unable to access usual services, such as GPs, post-pandemic.
- **System is 'too busy'** – Clear sense that the NHS and wider system was overwhelmed and people did not want to be a burden, with concerns about wasting the time of medical professionals. People often felt their contact would be unwelcome.

Priority 2: [...Continued]

- **Value of preventative support** – Well accepted that preventative services and support make a difference. Nationally, there seems to be a lack of detailed analysis and evaluation.
- **Support in the local community** – Voluntary sector organisations play a large role in providing support in the community that can prevent people needing more intervention at a later stage.
- **Technology** – Technology has been found to be used not only on an individual level but also a system level in supporting prevention.

Priority 3: Helping people to look after themselves and make healthier lifestyle choices.

- **Healthier lifestyle priorities and barriers** – Participants identified priority areas for managing their health and well being as well as barriers experienced to keeping healthy and well.
- **It is just not that simple** – Sense across the system that whilst initiatives that support individual responses may provide value, this is limited without considering and addressing the broader social inequalities.

Priority 3: [...Continued]

- **Technology in supporting healthier lifestyles** – Public experience was that the use of technology can increase the likelihood of taking preventative actions, and being able to do so from removed barriers such as time.
- **Workforce** – Respondents and focus group participants all noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had created a shift in focus on making healthier lifestyle changes, particularly in relation to the awareness of mental wellbeing, and exercise.
- **Isolation and mental health** – Older people all recognised that the pandemic had had an impact on their mental and physical health and some members felt they had become more 'fragile' over this period.

Priority 3: [...Continued]

- **Healthier lifestyle choices** – Many participants said that the pandemic has changed how they prioritise their health and wellbeing now, and for the future with many saying the pandemic has made a difference in how they will access support.
- **Little initiatives can have a big impact** – Within Norfolk and Waveney there are a vast number of small initiatives that are having significant impact, as they address a very specific and niche need within that particular community, whether that be a geographical community or a community of shared interest/challenge/need.

Key areas to consider

- i. **Individual, place and system** – For preventive activities to have full impact perhaps there is a need to consider them from an individual, place-based and system wide level, to give individuals an opportunity to self-care within a place and system that supports and enables this.
- ii. **Technology** – that technology can play a key role in prevention, not just by providing tools at an individual level and in the local community, but also at a system level by ensuring information is available and consistent online.

Key areas to consider [... Continued]

- iii. **Workforce** – People feel there should be a greater emphasis and conversation in the workplace about managing health and wellbeing, particularly because of changes to working practice since the pandemic.
- iv. **Messaging** – We found the area where messaging is currently most complex relates to accessing primary care for support with physical and mental health concerns. The importance of consistent messaging across the system emerged as a theme from all areas of engagement and exploration.

Key areas to consider [...Continued]

- v. Start young** – prevention needs to start early and to ensure that children and families are supported from the earliest possible stage. Greater investment needed in the first years of a child's life.
- vi. Co-production** – In order to address the complexity in relation to prevention, effective approaches and interventions will need to understand the perspective of those directly experiencing it to be adequately responsive and supportive.

Key areas to consider [... Continued]

vii. Evaluation & financial impact – Throughout this piece of work, we found there to be a general lack of evaluation data available from most organisations, services, and projects, on their prevention initiatives.

viii. Ongoing impact of the pandemic – For some the change in how they will access support is a positive one, with the move to online support offering benefits in terms of time, convenience, and availability. However, for many this change referred to a real or perceived lack of access to key health support such as the GP and dentistry, and a feeling of being lost within the system.

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