

Men's Sheds Project 2021-2024 Evaluation

Introduction

During its lifetime, the Men's Sheds Project had different officers working on it. The first Men's Shed Development Officers were Jonny Wood and Colin Burcombe, and later they moved on and then James Fletcher and Keith Shiels became the dedicated officers.

The aims of the project were to work with men's groups to develop Men's Sheds, working with the UK Men's Shed Ambassadors (<https://menssheds.org.uk/> is the website for any background to men's sheds), but in short was about:


- Connection, conversation and creation – that's what joining a Men's Shed is all about.
- Men's Sheds encourage people to come together to make, repair and repurpose, supporting projects in their local communities.
- Improving wellbeing, reducing loneliness and combatting social isolation.

During the project, the various officers got involved with Men's Sheds that were already up and running, that were in the development stages or that were having problems, and they worked with them to try and resolve them, or that were just the spark of an idea.

Men's Sheds project mapped the Sheds that exist across the county, as can be seen in the map below.



Men's sheds map

This pin:  means the shed is open and this pin:  means the shed is in development



The project also developed a Toolkit – which again, is available through the CAS website [here](#).

The first step in the Men's Shed project evaluation was undertaken when CAS distributed a Men's Sheds Evaluation Survey to everyone on the Men's Shed Network Email list and it was also sent out specifically to Men's Sheds a month before.

The intention of the survey was to gain an understanding of how the Men's Sheds and shed volunteers themselves were supported by the project as a whole and the officers.

It was felt that the feedback directly from the Men's Sheds would be invaluable in evaluating what worked and what didn't with the project and would help CAS to learn and take forward their experiences when looking to future support and assistance that may be developed.

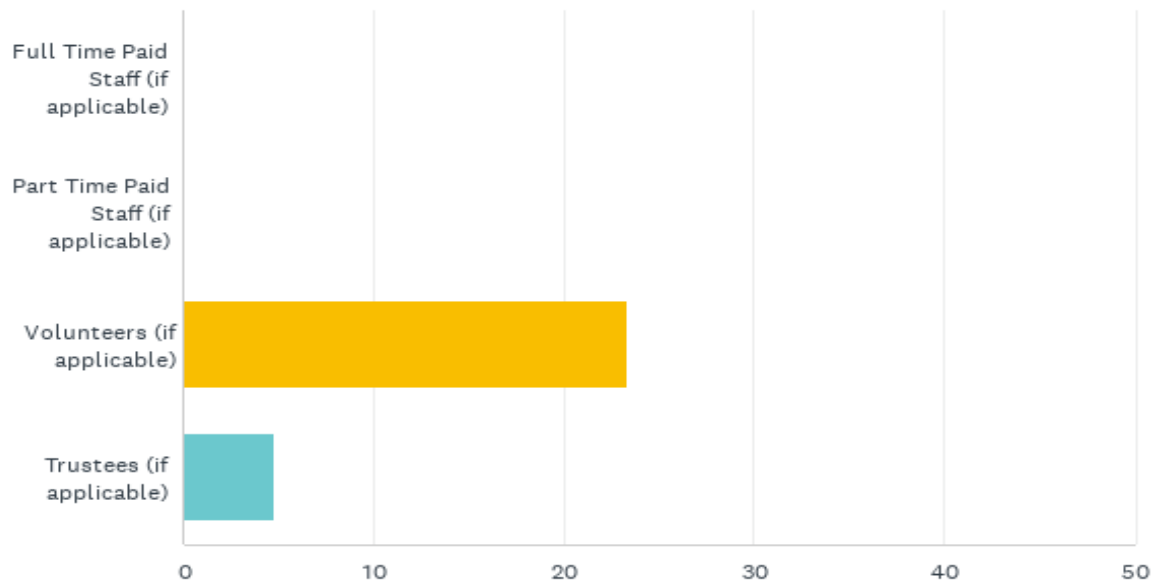
A copy of the survey can be found in the [Appendices](#).

Survey Responses

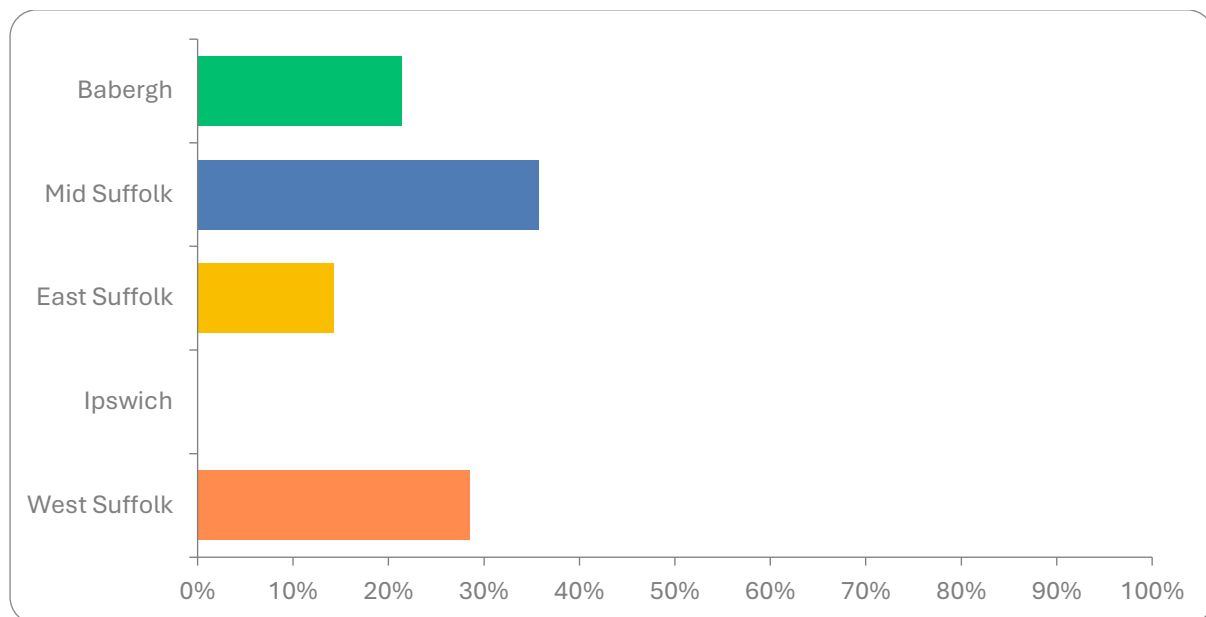
Q1: What is the name of your Men's Shed

Responses came in in response to the survey from 15 Men's Sheds around the county.

Q2: How many volunteers, trustees and / or paid staff does your organisation have?



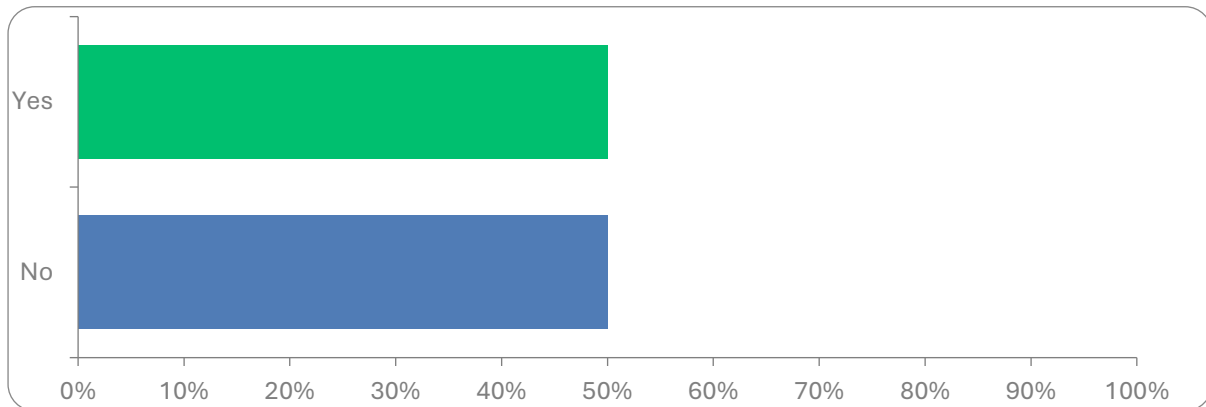
Q3: Which district is your Shed in?



Q4: What did you find useful about the Men's Shed Project from Community Action Suffolk, and the support provided by the Men's Shed Development Officers?

- Assistance with applying for charitable status along with wider community research.
- Limited day to day assistance - due to CAS being based far away from Haverhill. Shed fest was Excellent / Workers Excellent.
- Excellent source of information and networking
- Shed fest was a great way to meet and network with other groups. We copied the format at Hadleigh and ran a shed fest event in 2024.
- Shared information and resources
- 1. Enthusiastic and encouraging support. 2. Valuable signposting hub that connected our fundraising efforts across commercial bodies. 3. Provider of regular grant funding opportunities across Grant Funders.
- Most useful was the coordination and communication with other Sheds in Suffolk. At present there is no formal network of Sheds in Suffolk, unlike Essex, although Hadleigh Men's Sheds have held two "Suffolk Shedfests" in Hadleigh. We really need a network for communicating between sheds. CAS have also helped us to obtain CIO registration recently - a great step forward for us. Funding support is also invaluable, but CAS already do this.
- The initial involvement of CAS (Jonny Wood) and UKMSA (Alan Page) were crucial in getting the project off the ground.
- We are not part of the national Men's Shed

The officers were fully committed, and their support was so usefulQ5:
Since the Men's Shed Project finished, do you see CAS as the 'go to' organisation for the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector in Suffolk?



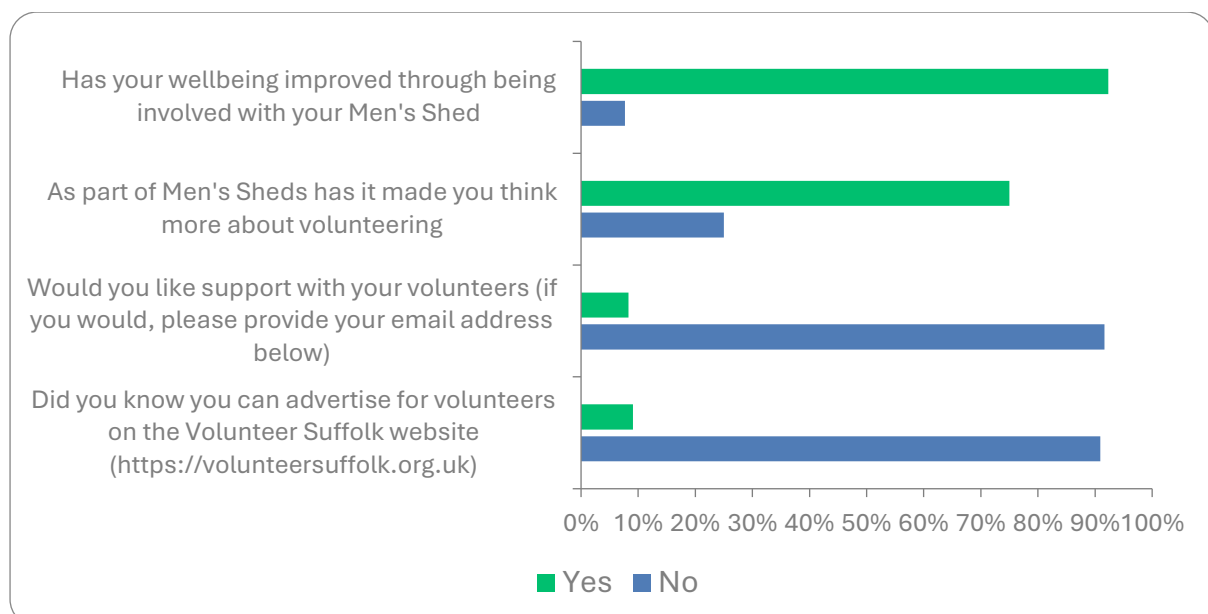
Please expand on your answer if you wish.

- Reference source option?
- Only focused on Ipswich and East Suffolk as its convenient and the rest of Suffolk loses out.
- Though I wish the project hadn't finished as the work that Mens Sheds do is ever more important
- I have found that CAS has provided an essential link to Grant Funding providers, without such a support network, our charity would not have made much progress at all.
- Received £2500 to get the shed started and then was asked to reallocate £1000 of it to another project.
- For training, funding support, governance. We haven't used CAS yet for buildings advice or insurance support/advice.
- I don't see any one organisation taking the main role.

Q6: How would you rate the Shed Support you received through the Men's Shed Project?



Q7: Volunteering and Wellbeing



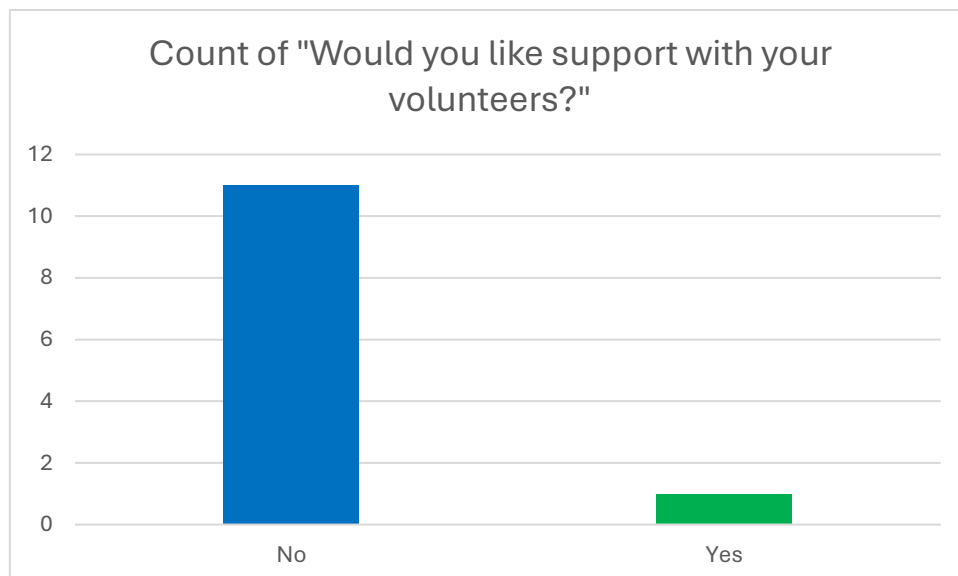
Has your wellbeing improved through being involved with your Men's Shed? Other (please specify)

- As chair
- My role is to help facilitate the development of the Men's Shed through being a trustee of the Wickham Market Partnership. However, I love being part of the project and have welcomed the contact with the members.
- community support and interaction has improved mental wellbeing
- We have reviewed the effect that being part of the Stour Valley Men's Shed has had on our members and have observed an increase in personal esteem and self confidence.
- We have many adults who have experienced social exclusion, loneliness etc, who have been helped by coming to the shed.
- My involvement has given me a sense of purpose.
- I think there is a mistake, we are not part of the national Men's Shed group

As part of Men's Sheds has it made you think more about volunteering: Other (please specify)

- I do 3 days a week already and have a 30Hr job.
- I already volunteer in a range of capacities but this is my favourite at the moment!
- Part of our ethos has been to provide practical assistance to the local community. This continues to expand.
- Not in a more general sense. I spend enough time on managing the shed.

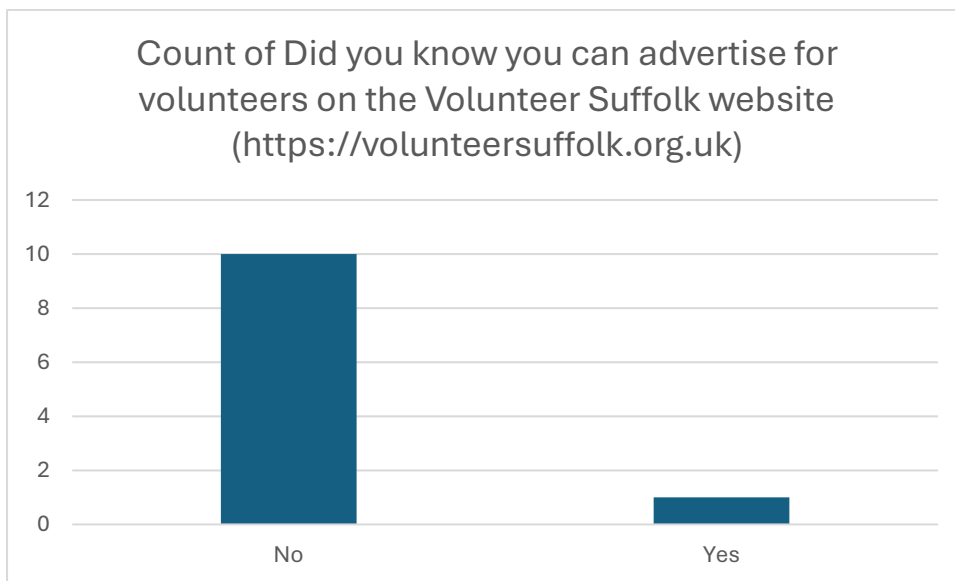
Would you like support with your volunteers (if you would, please provide your email address below): Other (please specify)



Would you like support with your volunteers (if you would, please provide your email address below): Other (please specify)

- We would always appreciate offers of support and guidance that will underpin our aims and ideals.
- Our need is one of more members with sufficient skill and practical experience to train others.

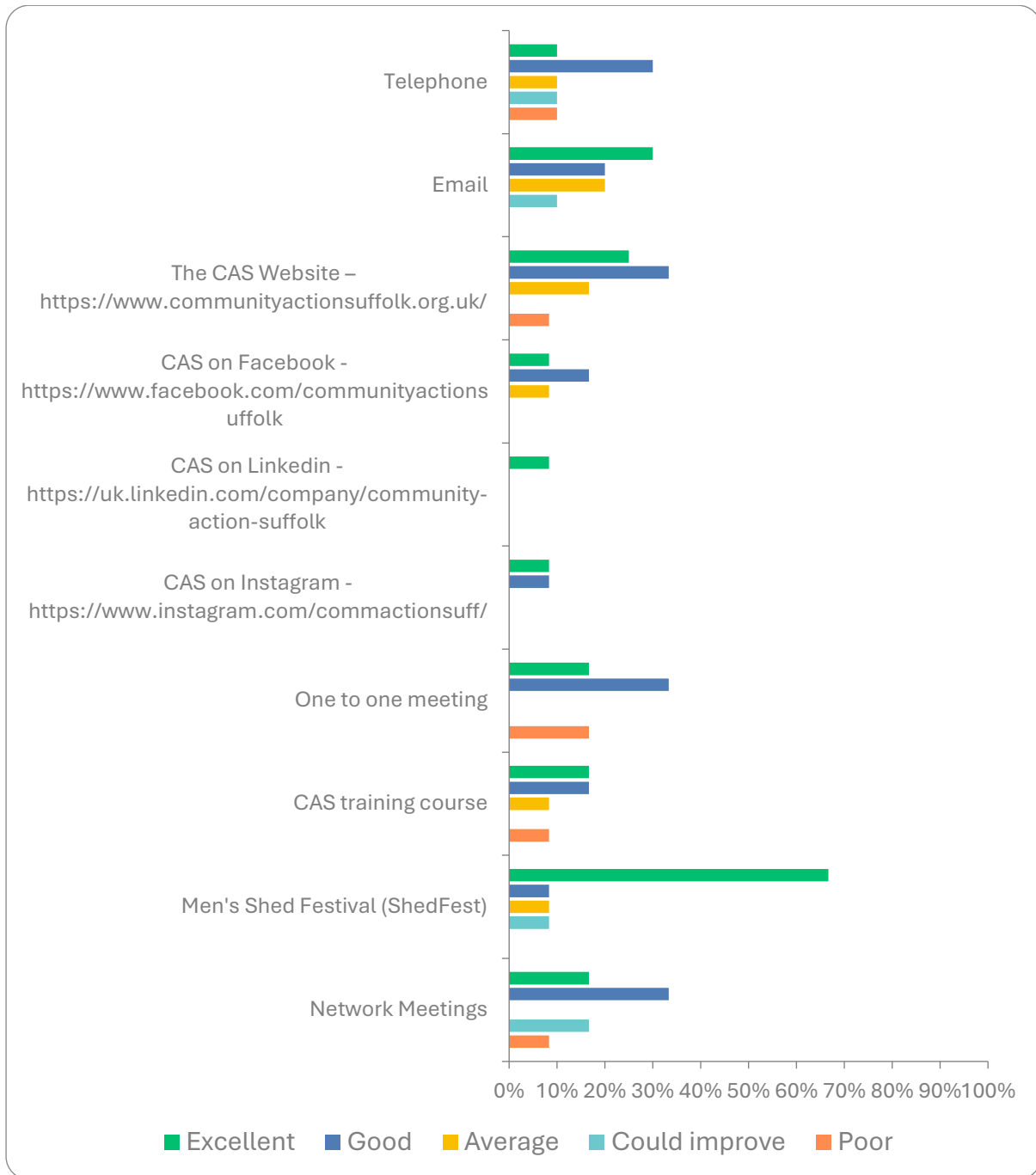
Did you know you can advertise for volunteers on the Volunteer Suffolk website (<https://volunteersuffolk.org.uk>)



Did you know you can advertise for volunteers on the Volunteer Suffolk website (<https://volunteersuffolk.org.uk>): Other (please specify)

- No
- From Ipswich? - Rather use local and informed.
- We already advertise through the weekly village round robin email and attract potential new members that way, as well as by word of mouth.
- Providing this web link is typical of the rhythm of developing our connection with the local community and needy causes.

Q8: When contacting Community Action Suffolk, please rate how you accessed the services:



Excellent or Good: What did we do well?

Average to Poor: What could we do better?

Did you access the service in another way?

- Need further assessment of above strands
- Training again 40 Miles away ...
- Dedicated staff supporting Sheds was excellent.

- Shed Fest
- Guest speakers were focussed, encouraging and informed. Every contact that I have made within CAS has left me feeling encouraged and part of a larger, well focussed/structured organisation.
- After Jonny left we had little contact.

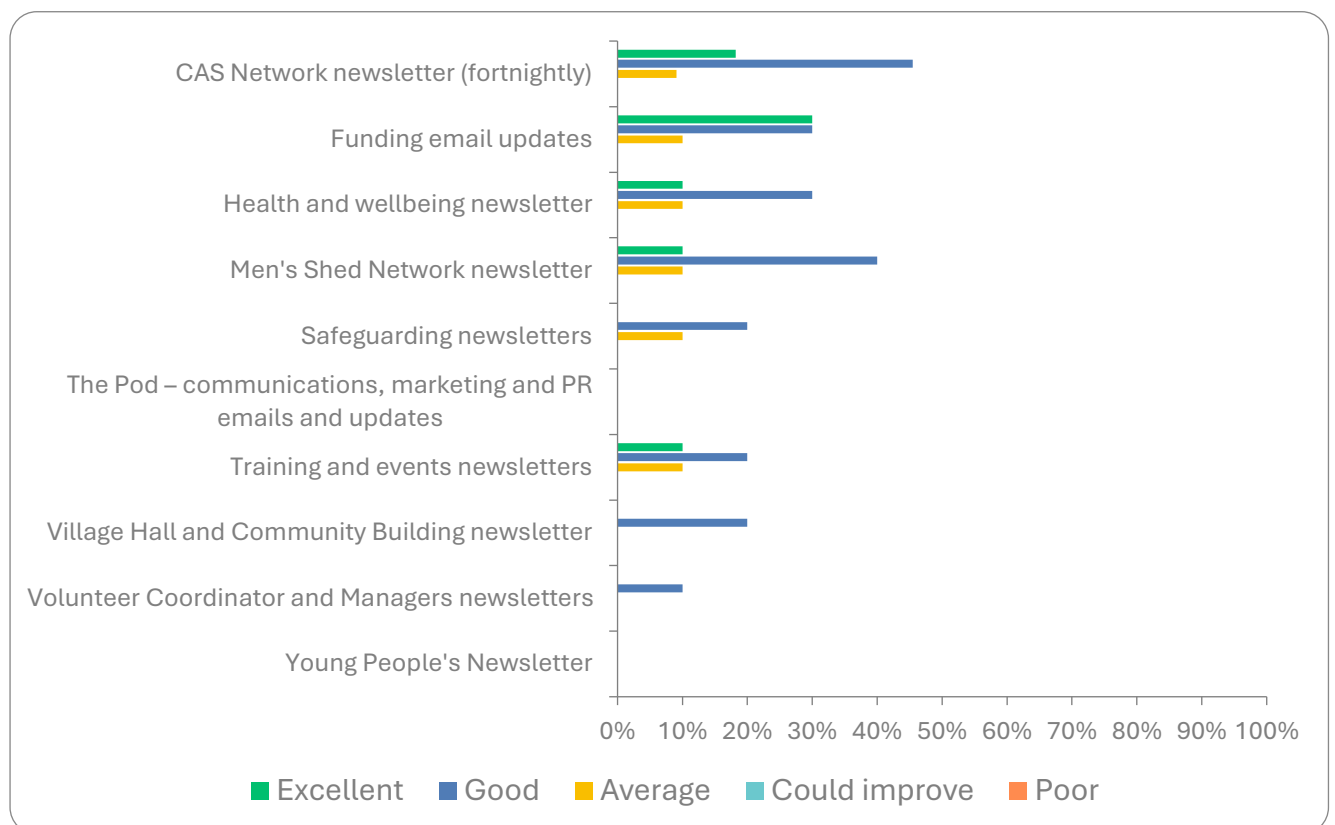
Q9: As a result of using any of Community Action Suffolk's services, products or projects, we'd like to know what has changed with your organisation. Do you agree with the following statements?



Has something else changed or improved as a result of CAS's involvement?

- No
- Yes but not due to CAS Input
- Members have experienced other Men's Sheds and how they operate through the East Suffolk Shedfest organised by CAS as well as visiting other local Shed. Meeting and discussing issues with the staff recruited to support Sheds in their development phase was a real help and being able to put names to faces was a real plus. Their enthusiasm for Sheds was great.
- Our understanding of the legal and functional aspects of managing a registered Charity has improved significantly. Regrettably, the main thrust of our engagement with CAS has been to progress our financial potential towards securing architectural works to our dilapidated building, a huge portion of which has been to meet Planning Authority Criteria before we can approach external Grant Funding providers. We still have very significant obstacles to overcome and feel we must ride on 3rd party's conveyor belts to satisfy regulatory requirements (Planning & Pre Applications, Project management responsibilities and Contractor Risk exposure requirements), all of which incur sobering financial costs.
- We have become a CIO
- We were encouraged to seek CIO status and did.

Q10: If you have signed up as a CAS Network Member, how would you rate the quality and content of any newsletters you receive? If you receive any of the following, please rate them:

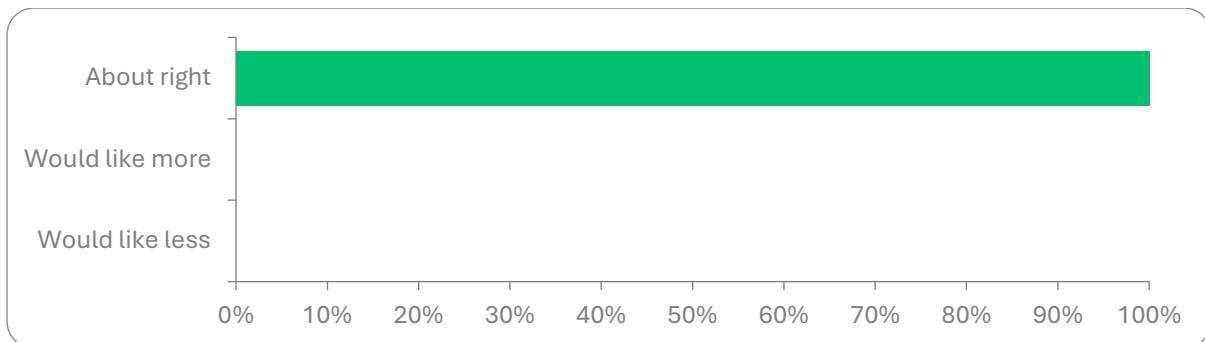


Excellent or Good: What did we do well?

Average to Poor: What could we do better?

- Not up to speed time side yet
- Not sure if our Partnership office is receiving newsletters but would like to receive newsletters for Sheds on XXX please
- As referenced above, I find the fortnightly Grant Funding Bulletins extremely valuable signposts to external funding sources. I often find it challenging to highlight and retain for future funding applications, many of the grant funding providers. I would welcome more guidance as to how I might work 'smarter'.
- To be honest they are of little interest. What we really need to move forward is our own premises and otherwise we get on very well within the constraints of a rented workshop.

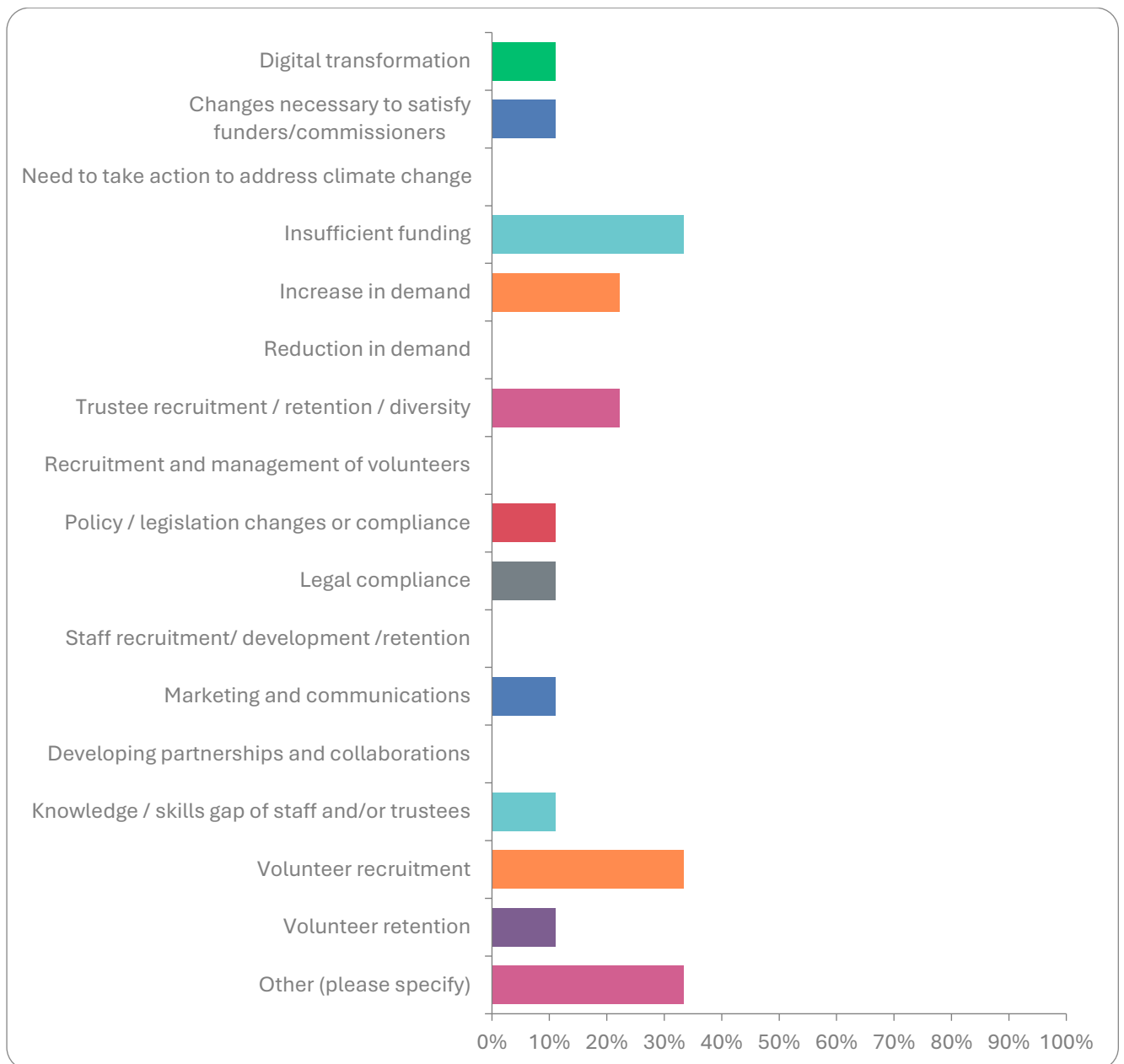
Q11: Is the frequency of our communications to the network:



Are there any areas that we don't cover within a newsletter that you would like to see?

- I feel the frequency is comfortable for me as it takes time to confirm that we meet the funder's criteria and then initiate grant applications.

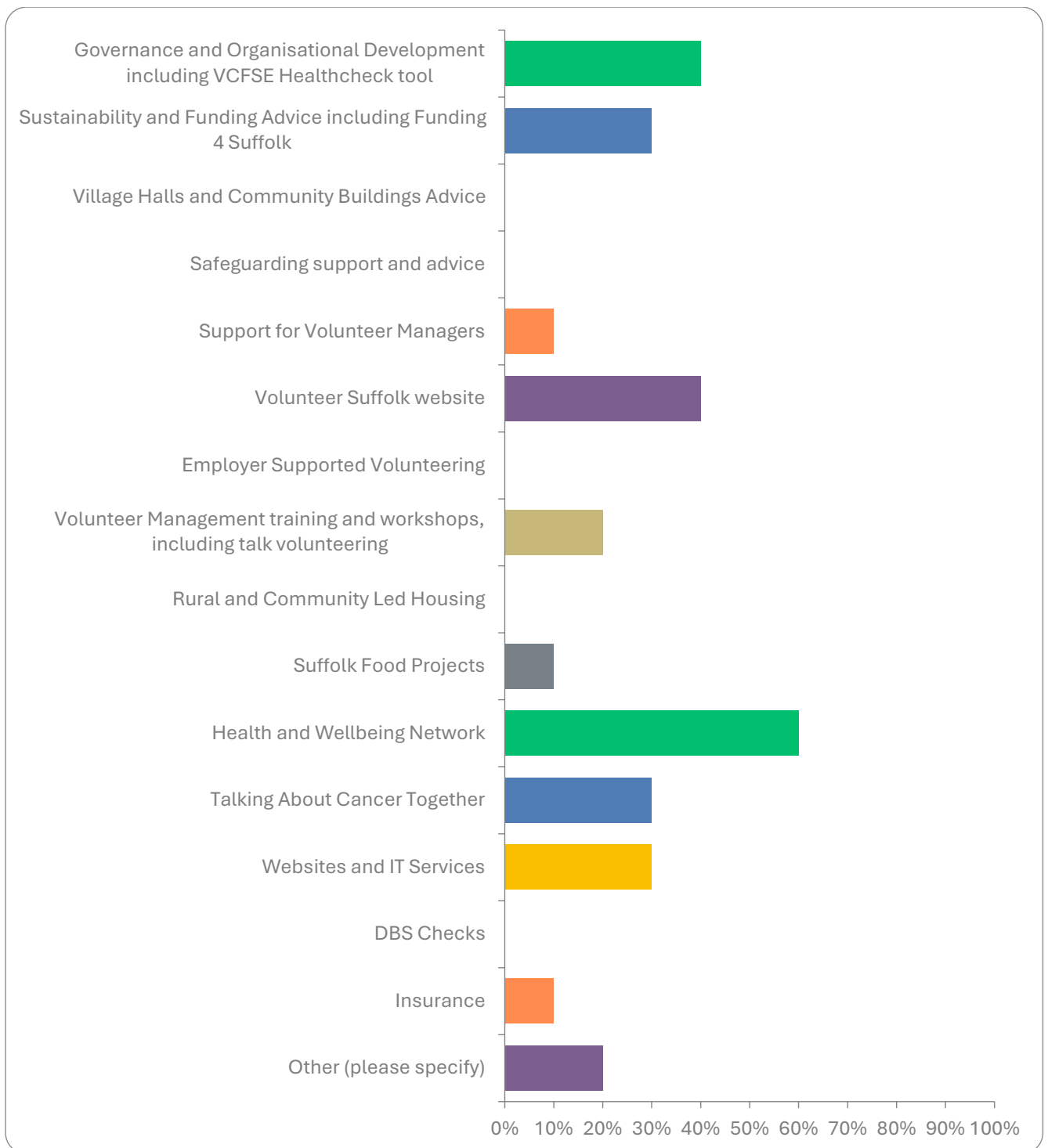
Q12: What are the top three challenges your organisation is currently facing? (Please select up to three)



What are the top three challenges your organisation is currently facing? (Please select up to three): Other (please specify)

- Finding suitable permanent accommodation
- Our own Shed.

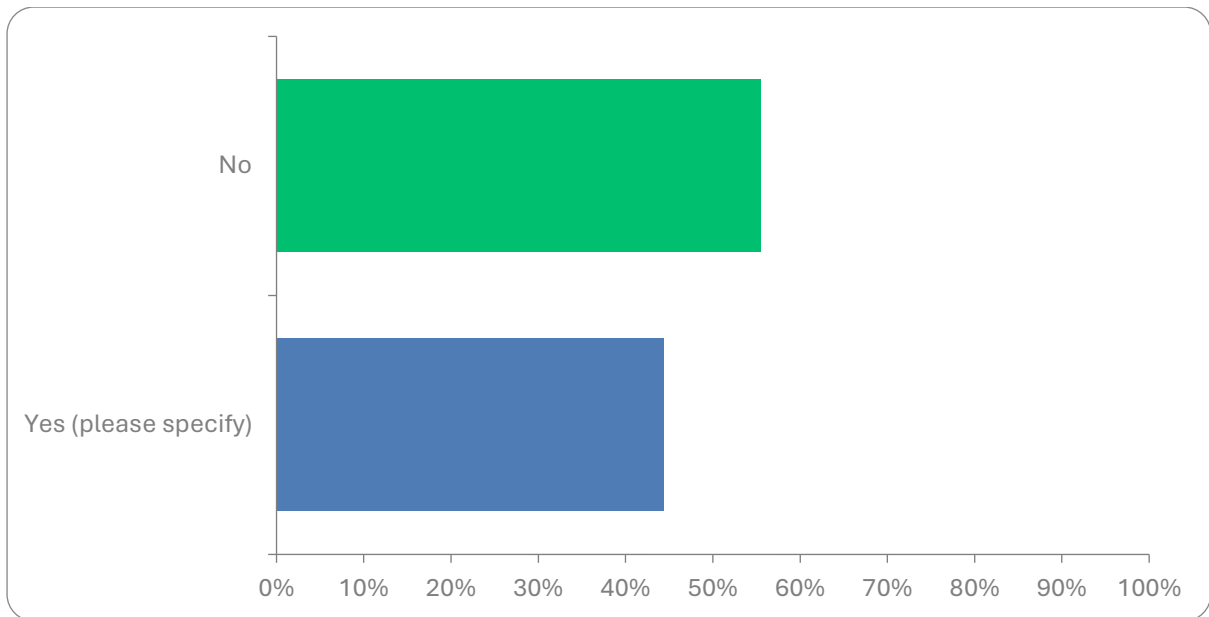
Q13: Which Community Action Suffolk projects or services do you think you will use in the next 12 months? (Please tick all that apply)



Which Community Action Suffolk projects or services do you think you will use in the next 12 months? (Please tick all that apply): Other (please specify)

- Limited vision
- No our Go to organisation

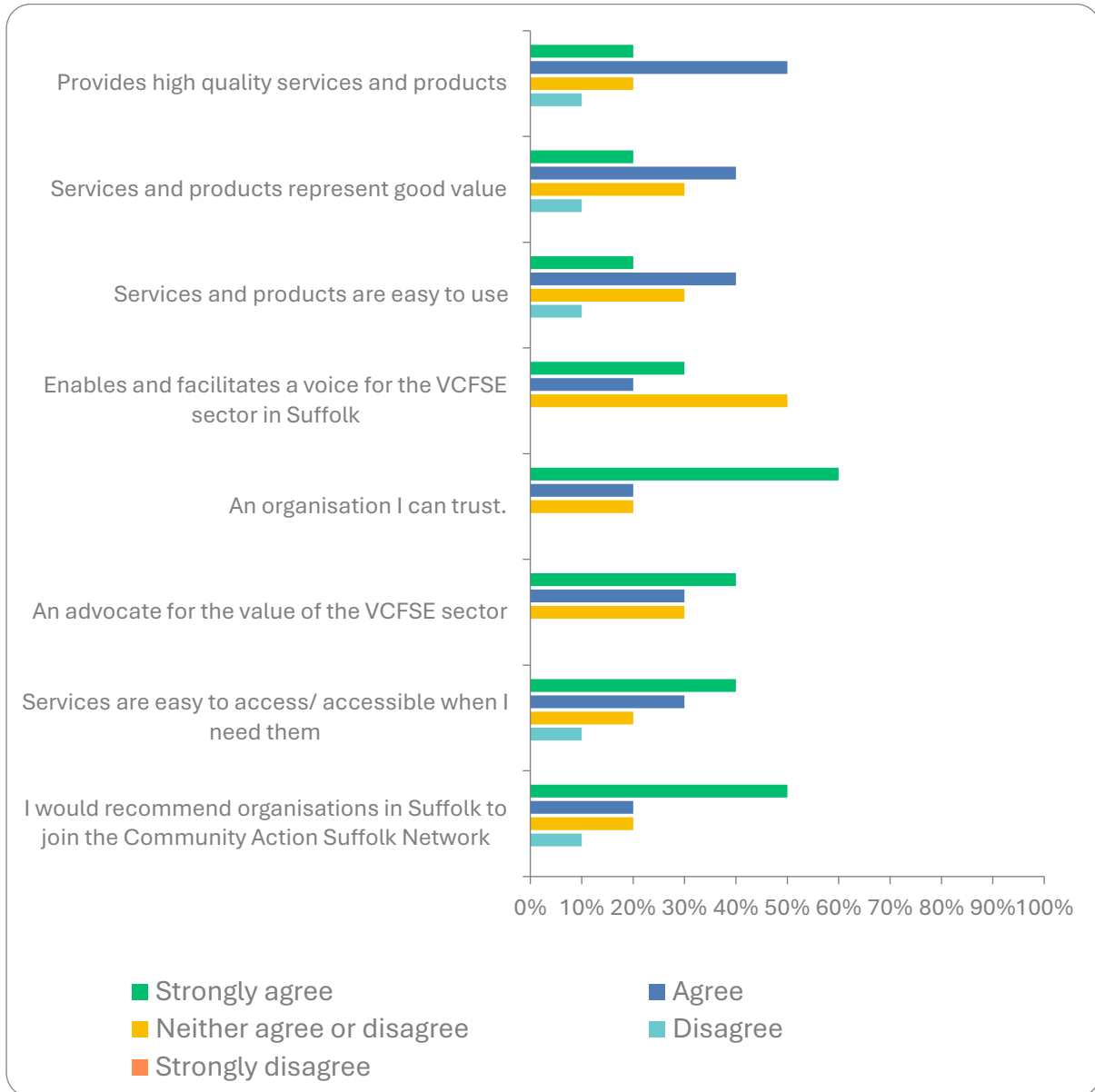
Q14: Is there any support you or your organisation needs, that you would like to see Community Action Suffolk provide that we don't currently offer?



Is there any support you or your organisation needs, that you would like to see Community Action Suffolk provide that we don't currently offer?: Yes (please specify)

- To be determined
- Dedicated West Suffolk office / Show intent
- To continue support for Men's Sheds in Suffolk
- We are a rural charity and as such, transportation is a high priority. We do not have a regular bus service and disadvantaged families cannot afford return taxi trips

Q15: Finally, please rate the following statements about Community Action Suffolk (VCFSE stands for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector)



Strongly Agree or Agree: What did we do well?

Neither to Strongly Disagree: What could we do better?

- See previous comments
- Apart from contact with Shed support staff in previous years we have not had the need to contact CAS as the Wickham Market Partnership has been established for 22 years and is robust and experienced in its approach to supporting local projects.
- It is difficult to project how our Charity would have fared without the continual organisational support and enthusiasm exuded by your officers. The close interaction between CAS and Babergh District Council Officers have been pivotal to

our modest progress towards securing a structurally and organisationally robust amenity for the local area. Ours has been a challenging journey however, I have learned many facets during my journey that have helped to protect our members from false starts and ill-considered options that would not have delivered on our expectations.

Q16: We welcome any other comments or feedback about Community Action Suffolk at any time. Please feel free to feedback below or email us on CASNetwork@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

- I hope when the councils merge CAS will have a presence or monies used by a more local service.
- My feedback is that for people with sensory loss who expressed interest is that there were barriers to success as the Mens' Shed needed people with such disabilities to be supported. The message was that to accommodate this at Mens' Shed would be very difficult, to the point it put people off.
- I have been accessing the CAS network for 2 years as the Grant Funding Co-ordinator for the Stour Valley Men's Shed. During this time, I have met and liaised with many people who work diligently to provide encouragement, hope and guidance to, in my case, fledgling charities who are on a steep learning curve as we try to put our charity on a safe and robust footing. I have never engaged with anyone who has not left me feeling that my engagement was not worth the time or effort. For this, I am extremely grateful. Thank you everyone for sharing your conviction and confidence that, in time, we will succeed.

Interviews

The next step in the evaluation was to arrange to talk to people involved in Men's Sheds about their experiences of the Men's Shed project, what they felt went well, what didn't go so well. Whether they felt it was valuable to have dedicated Men's Sheds Officers and whether they are aware that CAS can still support their shed with any organisational issues they may have now or in the future, from community building support, trustee support, safeguarding, all those sorts of things.

It was felt that the feedback directly from the Men's Sheds would be invaluable in evaluating what worked and what didn't with the project and would help CAS to learn and take forward their experiences when looking to future support and assistance that may be developed.

Six Men's Sheds were approached to assist with the evaluation by taking part in an interview. Four interviews were then arranged, and were undertaken with the following organisations:

- Debenham Men's Shed
- UKMS Ambassador
- Fressingfield Men's Shed
- Stour Valley Men's Shed

The interview questions and the responses given during the interviews were as follows:

At what stage was your Men's Shed at in terms of development when you became aware of the Men's Shed Project at CAS? Was it just an idea; Early Stages – had a committee of people; Had a premises; Had everything in place (funding to set up, committee, registered as a charity?); Already Up and Running, etc.

- *Group of friends had a container and some funding from lottery fund and local counsellors. Have only just become a registered charity in this last month after running for 4 years.*
- *Keith helped with the set-up and worked closely with them for 2 years where he regularly met with them at care homes.*
- *They had recently been established for approx. 1 year with a premises and trustees.*
- *We hadn't had our initial meeting at that time.*

Were the Men's Shed Project officers able to help you with setting up or running the shed(s) you are involved with?

- *Yes! Helped with different roles and infrastructure. Have become more of community hub with access for both genders over time.*
- *Keith helped them with liaising with Kessingland Men's Shed. Also advised on funding for buying resources.*
- *Used CAS more as a reference and for help with coordination.*
- *Yes, they advised and suggested that we should look at existing sheds, and we followed most of the suggestions.*

What kinds of support did the officers provide? E.g. Telephone, visits, sounding board for ideas, mediation if any members were not seeing eye to eye, funding advice, funding applications

- *James visited several and attended bi-weekly meetings with them. He also introduced Debenham Shed to 'ShedFest' where they have since participated in and led different seminars and workshops.*
- *Keith and James both visited numerous times and helped them get an article published in a local newspaper.*
- *Keith visited them and had several phone calls. Helped to coordinate different Men's Sheds with them and was good to bounce ideas off.*
- *General advice, committee formations, etc.*

Did they help with anything in particular that you can think of? Any particularly tricky issues, or queries you had along the way. We are after stories or anecdotes of what helped and what didn't really, so anything they'd like to tell us, good or bad will help us to evaluate the project.

- *They spoke with Heyder [CAS Governance and Business Support Officer] a lot about different legislation for the protection of committee members, etc. Katie [CAS Marketing and Communications Manager] also helped them make a video for Instagram to help promote themselves.*
- *CAS helped a lot with health and safety legislation. We often liaised with care homes to determine what tools could be brought on site. Also helped with the Mobile Shed in order to promote Men's Sheds as a whole in the community.*
- *Keith did help a bit with funding, along with sharing feedback between different groups.*
- *General support, without which we would have been floundering about. A general leading by the nose.... A VERY valuable general support.*

If they helped with any funding advice, how much funding have the group managed to bring in? A rough amount is fine.

- *They gave their treasurers email – awaiting response.*
- *£200 initial funding. UKMSA are now able to self-fund themselves and utilising over-60s clubs, different community groups, and rural coffee caravans.*
- *Went on a tangent! Fressingfield helped other groups through Keith encouraging a two way communication.*
- *Nothing specific, but very valuable general advice which proved to be correct.*

Do you find that the Shed environment helps your users to open up and talk freely with each other? Does this environment help support their health and wellbeing? Would you have any examples of this you could share anonymously with us perhaps?

- *Yes. They spoke about how the older generation are often stuck in their ways. He said an older member who has since passed away but he was a big part of the community who actually had a cake made for him by the Queen Mother. During an AGM, they asked if there was anything the members thought needed improvement and he said "No boy, keep it all as it is!" His favourite weekly fixture, along with many other members, was the fish & chip night.*
- *Yes! Men talk more without women. They're all much more willing to open up about any stress or mental health issue whilst enjoying their hobbies.*
- *Yes. People definitely talk and there's a good buzz.*

- Yes Definitely, some member when they first joined were very quiet and now, I see them mixing and talking with others all the time. I hear a lot that members say coming to the shed and talking to others helps their health and wellbeing, we have members that come to talk about health issues and other members will then go and get checked.

What do you think is the special thing about working with the Men's Shed that makes such a difference to the men that come along and take part? Is it the friendship, the comradery, having a reason to go out, reducing isolation etc?

- All the above. Sense of achievement, value, pride, self-worth, learning new skills.
- The banter and jokes. A lot of members used to enjoy working in male-dominant environments and this is great to replicate a similar, more relaxed, scenario.
- Many things. Self-worth, welcoming environment, valued, having a bigger purpose.
- Seeing the members making friends, working together, arranging to meet up outside the shed, hearing that the shed has helped a lot of members with their mental health.

Is there any help or support that your shed is still looking for that perhaps we could try to help with, or sign post you to?

- They need a fundraiser / help with funding. Very keen for a concrete pad so people can work on classic cars. Want to share a vehicle with Mobile Sheds to widen access for the community. Would also like a lean-to for rear of shed.
- No help needed currently. They have recently attended a health and safety seminar with us.
- Would like some help with funding and revenue. Health and safety is constantly having to be kept up with.
- We are seeking ideas for Fundraising events.

Is there anything else you would like to feedback on about the Men's Shed Project?

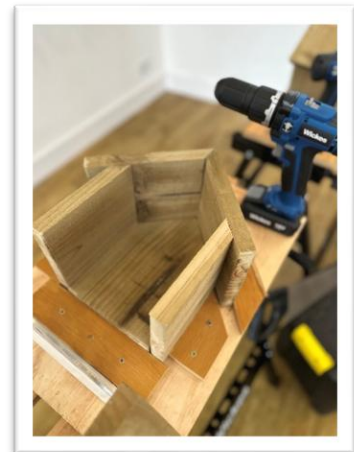
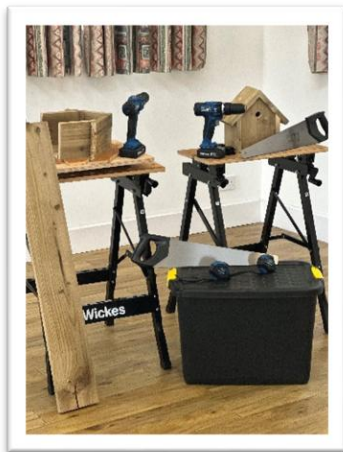
- Wanted to highlight how much they're now able to help the wider community through their projects. To list a few, they have: built a stage and recovered radiators at old bank building in Eye, converted a telephone box into a book swap library, upholstered chairs for Framsdon church, local scout groups also use their facilities. Members enjoy many different workshops like woodwork, needlework, metal work and paint spraying.
- Nothing else to add.
- Their members enjoy a range of activities including metal work, woodwork, glass work, ceramics, gardening, and sewing.
- Men's sheds is a fantastic group, and seeing the difference it makes for members, from when they first come to look and sign up to after they joined has made a massive difference for them.

Participants were thanked for their time, and reminded that even though we don't have an official Men's Shed Project going at the moment, we are still here to help you as a group/organisation.

Case Studies

Mobile Men's Shed

Mobile Men's Sheds working in collaboration with Rural Coffee Caravan has made progress. There is clearly potential in developing the Men's Sheds / mobile workshop project. The residents of Suffolk face several determinates because of its rural nature and can feel lonely, especially men which could be attracted to participate by shed type activities. In rural/isolated locations some people have difficulties accessing transport, thus cutting their opportunities to meet and engage with others. The Rural Coffee Caravan is already established in these remote villages and working with them is the obvious way forward. A selection of tools including work benches, saws, and drills has been supplied by CAS for the pilot, and Mellis Village Hall was chosen as the venue to grow interest. The Caravan visits once a month and a volunteer from UKMSA also attends to assist in the construction of bird boxes. There have been three visits so far and momentum is building slowly. UKMSA ambassadors and other volunteers plan to continue this work.



Improving social cohesion, community engagement and networking.

CAS continues to drive the awareness of this project in communities across Suffolk. Part of this focus is to strengthen and build links between Sheds across the region. We are committed to building a stronger and closer network of Men's Sheds across Suffolk. With the drive to be more cohesive, Suffolk Shed Network Coffee Mornings has evolved as an informal way to get Sheds to exchange ideas and share wisdom. There is a huge amount of



experience and knowledge built up within sheds that can be shared to developing sheds. Alongside this, best practice can be offered to help support effective building of new sheds as they benefit from those already in place. Meadlands Stowmarket Shed was the second event to be held and was a huge success, with around 20 people attending including industry professionals and agencies such as Portable space, Multiply Suffolk, and Christies Care.

As the project draws to an end the recruitment process is underway to find a shedder to coordinate these events in the future.

Impact Case Studies

There is no way to better demonstrate the effectiveness of a Men's Shed than to listen to the journey of shed members. This is sometimes very delicate and can take time to build confidence and trust before individuals are willing to share. It has become more apparent that everyone has a story and a reason to be involved with a shed.

Below are testimony examples from some of the shedders whose stories are common.

Case study X

Shedder X was moved from a special needs school to a mainstream school when he was 11 years old. He said he was constantly bullied and excluded, not only by the other children but teachers too. The teachers were not able to cope with his needs and behavior, so he spent most of his school life in isolation. He said he never had any friends growing up which was the start of deterioration in his loneliness and mental health decline.

Shedder X is a quiet, well-built man with a kind heart. Assisting other shedders moving heavy tools and conducting varying tasks, he is the go-to man at the shed and a people pleaser. It is clear he enjoys being needed by others.

He went on to say, he had terrible mental health concerns with anxiety and depression for almost thirty years.

X tried to fit into a shed a few years ago after seeing it advertised, he tried to make friends but after giving it some time, he had not managed to make a connection. Moving to a different area gave him the opportunity to join a new shed. Shedder X said, "I love my time here, I've always been made welcome and consider these people my friends" Going on to say, he visits the shed every day it is open, and when not, he helps other shedders with things such as decorating or making model railways. When asked what would he be doing if there wasn't a shed? "I probably wouldn't be here" he asserted.

His involvement with the shed is his coping strategy, he has friends, which he has not had in his life before, a sense of purpose and a feeling of being needed, all help to combat his ability to cope with his ongoing anxiety and depression.

Case Study Y

Shedder Y has serious social and mental health problems due to a head injury; he was lonely, isolated, and lived a sedentary life. The suggestion to join a men's shed was offered to him and, in principle, he agreed. On first approaching the shed Y was assisted by his support worker; he managed to get to view the shed from the outside. In subsequent visits

his confidence increased, and he eventually made it inside. After many months of building trust, shedder Y has become an integral part of the shed and now attends regularly, unaccompanied, contributes and engages with the other shedders.

Case Study Z

Speaking to shedder Z, he explains the importance of the shed and how it has impacted positively on his life. He speaks about problems he has with low self-esteem and anxiety. His confidence has been low, but he said, “I know how to do stuff and I’m happy to work hard, I just struggle with some things and feel under pressure.” Shedder Z goes on to explain “The shed has given me the opportunity to work on things at my pace and when I feel ok to do it. I have met some new mates and even managed to help them out too. Now I have got a job with a local charity, 3 days a week and I’m managing to cope and not get overwhelmed. I think the shed has helped me get back into work and boosted my confidence.”

Suffolk Men’s ShedFest

Over three quarters of the established sheds in Suffolk attended ShedFest. UKMSA (UK Men’s Sheds Association) also attended with the Chairman Robbie Lloyd delivering the opening address. Having the National UKMSA organisation at ShedFest brought gravitas to ShedFest as well as highlighting the close support and co-operation that has developed between the UKMSA and CAS. What was very pleasing was the supportive and co-operative atmosphere displayed by the Shed members. Informal networking was the “order for the day” following the open address from CAS Shed Development officers and Rob from the UKMSA. The delegates did not disappoint, lunchtime was a buzz of conversations and the sharing of experiences. It is essential that we build on this goodwill quickly to maintain momentum. The recently created Suffolk Shedder Facebook page has been designed to do this.



Overall Findings

The ShedFest was very well received by the large majority of Sheddors. Several Sheddors exclaimed that they enjoyed the whole day - one stated that it was a brilliant first attempt. There was an overall feeling of goodwill and enthusiasm amongst the delegates, and this was reflected in the high satisfaction scores. Many comments supported the idea that an annual event is not only highly desirable but necessary. It is interesting to note that the

sessions most valued were presented by fellow Shed Members – (Community Interest Organisations and Standard Operating Procedures). A point to consider for next time?

It is also noticeable that although over three quarters of existing Sheds attended the ShedFest only 2 Sheds that are in development chose to do so. Both CAS Men's Sheds Development Officers feel that this is an area for development and the starting point must be whether some of these developing Sheds are currently not in operation or close to forming.

Quotes from: What are highlights for you from this day?

- “Networking” – Many respondents highlighted the ability to network with fellow sheds as their main highlight.
- “Sharing Experiences”, “well organised”, “Being together”, “Great to Socialise with other Sheds”, “Friendly”.
- “Mike Griffen – inspirational”

Quotes from: What could be better and why?

- “Safeguarding did not cover Safeguarding”- others commented highly on Paul's slightly personal approach to the subject.
- “Too much Lunch” “Sandwiches would be better”
- “Shorter sessions - more varied sessions”
- “A better main Speaker” “Sheds don't need inspiring they need to know how to do things”.

Please tell us if there was anything else you would have liked to have seen covered in this course?

There were a number of topics suggested.

- Meeting Carbon Zero
- A central database of shed tools. Equipment sharing
- Fund Raising - bid writing.
- Interaction with care home residents.
- Health and Safety
- PAT testing services carried out through CAS.
- National Issues in the Shed World

The birth of a new Shed - Lowestoft North

Shed Members cleared the ground for their new Shed beside the railway tracks in Lowestoft. Once the brush is cleared a container will be placed in situ and act as a meeting point whilst surveys are completed on the empty adjacent railway buildings which hopefully can be used a later date. Congratulations to the members who have been able to remove such large lumps of industrial heritage by hand. An excellent effort.



Picture of the Shed Members clearing the ground for their new Shed beside the railway tracks at Lowestoft

Gareth Lloyd - a story of determination over adversity.

The most powerful advocate to the importance of Men's Sheds on improving the lives of individuals is through their own stories. Gareth Lloyd's story is one that stands out and leaves you in no doubt as to crucial role Sheds play in their Lives.



Gareth is a Shed member and Buildings Manager at Kessingland Shed. He was born in 1990 and as a bit of an understatement, had to battle all that life could throw at him. Gareth has a military background joining the RAF as a soldier and PT instructor at the age of 18. His

career in the forces was not smooth as he was plagued by serious illness. Gareth suffers from mitochondrial myopathy which leads to muscle damage and deterioration. In 2016 he was medically discharged from the RAF. Three bouts of sepsis left him struggling for life and he lost his lower legs through amputation in 2019. Further tragedy was to befall Gareth. An accident at a swimming pool when a chair collapsed broke his back and left him paralysed from the chest down. Gareth was at his lowest point. He could not see a future and contemplated taking his own life. He openly states that if it was not for an introduction to a Men's Shed (Kessingland) he would not be here today. The shed not only gave him hope and a focal point in his weeks as he went through rehabilitation but a sense of worth and purpose in society. Gareth's desire to help others and the community he lives in so evident when you talk to him. His difficult background has forged an iron will and focus to help others. He believes that you only get one life, and you need to maximise your opportunities. Gareth with a sense of humour stated that he felt that "barriers and limits are to be torn down and smooth wheelchair access paths put in their place." He believes that disability should not be an obstacle in life and hopes that his own position can instead inspire others to follow their dreams and goals.

Gareth's can-do attitude can be seen at the Kessingland Shed. Rather than make do with an older building's accessibility issues he simply, but sympathetically updated and redesigned them, careful not to destroy any of the history of the building. An accessible toilet was designed and built by himself.



Gareth is keen to volunteer his services wherever he can make a difference. He would like to be an UKMSA Men's Shed Ambassador and advise Sheds over accessibility issues. His goal is to make all sheds inclusive and as diverse as possible. He works tirelessly with the local community. He has recently made two sensory resonance boards for the Kirkley Family Centre which allow children with sensory impairment to experience sound through vibration. He obtained the wood for free so levied no charge on the centre. Gareth built and provided the shelving for the local food bank. He was instrumental in helping gain Kessingland the East Coast Community of the year award.

Congratulations to Gareth Lloyd from Kessingland Men's Shed

The most powerful advocate to the importance of Men's Sheds on improving the lives of individuals is through their own stories. Gareth Lloyd's story is one that stands out and leaves you in no doubt as to crucial role Sheds play in their Lives.

Gareth's story was documented above, but in the following quarter, Gareth picked up a prestigious national award from the UK Mens Sheds Association (UKMSA). Gareth was nominated through CAS and fought off stiff opposition to win the UKMSA National Volunteer of the year award in a ceremony held at the House of Lords at Westminster. The two photographs below starting from the left show Gareth and Keith Shiels outside Westminster and a very happy Gareth just after the receipt of his award.



Hadleigh Men's Shed

A small group of 4 Men were keen to set up a Mens Shed in Hadleigh and very aware that there was not one in the local proximity. Since meeting with them in August, they were very aware of the benefits of sheds, however they were unsure of how to set one up. Therefore, we have closely supported this group and provided valuable direction in how to establish a shed.

In the early stages, the group were unsure what type of venue or activities they wanted to go on. Although experienced in various fields of skill including woodworking, it was clear they were not sure what their venue needed to be.

To help progress the project, CAS Men's Sheds officers supported a Public Awareness Event aiming to promote the visions and recruit additional participants. Following local advertising in the Hadleigh News and various posters and cards in local shops, it was fantastic to see over 25 men attend on 18th October. This meeting provided a great opportunity to recruit more members, explain the plan and ensure additional help was obtained to find a venue. All approved contact details were obtained so that ongoing communications could be shared.

Following this meeting, a core committee group was formed, and they agreed to meet more regularly than the wider group. The committee then met on 22nd November and agreed various tasks that would be completed. Key positions were adopted, and a small constitution was created. In addition, the committee then went out and explored various spaces across Hadleigh to understand what would work. CAS Men's Sheds officers guided them on positions, constitutions, supplied templates, identified governance items needed and highlighted various items needed to set up an ongoing shed.

This specific support has now resulted in a suitable space being found at very low cost. Although not in the right condition, a series of working parties have been set up to clear the space, fit various features and prepare for the opening on a weekly basis. This has been arranged alongside the ongoing work with the owner of the space.

The new space will be ready for use from January 2023 and will be open for selected sessions for a minimum 12-month period. This will allow additional time for the group to gel and ensure their own strategy is defined. Moreover, it will provide a dedicated space to meet, build friendships and move forward with their shed.

Ipswich Town Football Club - Foundation

While our focus has continued with various stakeholders within Council and NHS, it was also clear that promoting the message as far as possible would also be valuable. A key target was Ipswich Town Football Club which could potentially reach our target demographic alongside a recognizable brand and reach across the region. They have a regular home game attendance of around 20,000 spectators as well as established and multiple links to various parts of the community through activities across Suffolk. The relevant part of the Club was 'The Foundation' which stands alone and has its own trustee board while staying aligned with the Club.

Therefore, since August, we have continued to build links with The Foundation and after meeting with Leanne Smith (Community Engagement Officer) we arranged a visit with her to Felixstowe Men's Shed on 10th November. This was a great opportunity for Leanne to see a Men's Shed, discuss the benefits with those attending and understand the advantages to the local community. Pictures below:



This visit created a robust platform to discuss other opportunities and how we promote the Men's Shed project further utilizing the Foundations strong community links across Suffolk. As a first step, it was agreed that a promotional item would be included within the Ipswich Town Football Club home game on 10th December. On average, ITFC attracts around 20,000 spectators with a large proportion purchasing the program for the game. This is a considerable item to build awareness locally of the project. In addition, we are in discussions to present to various groups within the Foundation to promote the Men's Shed Project further.



Picture of the program item

Kessingland Shed visit November 30th

The visit provided me with my first hands on experience of a Shed. It turned abstract theory, words and pictures into a tangible reality of what an actual Shed looks like. It gave me the opportunity to meet in person Doug Mizon the UKMSA Ambassador. Doug and I were able to quickly establish a working relationship and clear conduits for future communication. Access to Doug's experience will be vital in future work with Suffolk Men's Sheds. Doug will be joining me in another visit planned in the new year to the Shed at Saxmundham.

Talking with the chairman, buildings manager and three members of the Kessingland Shed allowed me to establish common themes over what the Shed means to them and how it impacts the local community.

- All saw the Shed as a safe place to visit and looked forward to attending it.
- All felt that the experience of comradery was a boost to their mental health feeling happier since joining. One member talked at length about the role of the Shed in overcoming his sense of isolation since retiring. Previously holidaying in the area he decided with his wife to move to the area after retirement from Essex. The Shed allowed him to fit into a new community and find friendship.
- All felt an immense pride in their achievements in helping the local community. Giving back to the community where they live where they can see the impactful results of their work brought a sense of inner satisfaction and community cohesion and belonging. Conservation work for the Church, replacing the wooden cross, projects with the primary School, providing insect homes and raised beds for the children's vegetable patch and a wooden Nativity Scene and stage props for the Christmas play were all enthused over. A good relationship to the local building firm provided access to materials at very competitive rate and often free.
- The members wanted to visit other Sheds in the locality to gain ideas. A visit in the new year to Halesworth Shed is being planned.
- The members wanted to grow their shed and would welcome help with promotional activities.



Kessingland Shed member hard at work

Pilot: Carlton Hall Care Home and Village and Men's Sheds Update.

One of the outstanding CAS Men's Shed's project aims that still remains was to encourage and facilitate interaction between Men's Sheds members and care home residents. National data from the UKMSA and organisations such as Age Concern have often highlighted that some men struggle within a care home environment and can become withdrawn, isolated, and depressed. Following the Suffolk Men's ShedFest held in September a group of Men's Shed volunteers from Kessingland and Lowestoft have established a working party to tackle these issues. The group of Shedders, led by Michael Jackson and directed by Carlton Hall's activities lead Hannah Fuller, have got together to establish an inclusive programme of events for residents. To this date ten volunteers from the Men's Shed movement have made four visits to Carlton Court Care Home with 2 reciprocal visits made by the residents to the Sheds.



Photograph above: Carlton Hall residents mingling with Lowestoft and Kessingland Shed Members (In Green) during the Halloween festivities. Venue Carlton Hall.



Photographs above: The first visit to Lowestoft Pakefield Shed for four care home residents.

Hannah commented that the impact of the collaboration between her male residents and the Shedders have been enormously positive. She stated that “there was a noticeable uplift with the mood and behaviours” of her participating residents. She added that her residents “felt a real feeling of inclusion and felt valued”. Talking with the Shedders helped with other skills, such as memory retrieval, with residents fondly reminiscing their own skill sets, hobbies and work practices. Hannah also noticed an increase in banter and comical humour amongst her male residents when they were away from the Carlton Hall, suggesting that away from female company these men felt less inhibited and constrained by social expectation.

Hannah and Michael are determined to build upon such a positive start and are planning their next steps. They value the support offered by CAS and the close collaboration with the Men’s Sheds development officers. All parties feel that the model that has started should be shared with other



Sheds and Care Homes. Michael has made some flat pack bird boxes that can be seen in the photograph below for residents to construct. There is talk of making planters and entering the “in Bloom” competitions creating a sense of pride that their efforts have produced such a stunning environment for all to see. Completed bird boxes and insect boxes can be distributed in the Home’s grounds and gardens creating another focus of interest. Completed bird boxes can also be given to family members for presents on occasions such as Christmas, supporting the residents’ feelings of worth and inclusion. There was also discussion over establishing a Community Shed on the grounds. A mobile Shed Van that could visit the hard-to-reach residents in Care Homes was seen as an important step forward to decrease feelings of isolation. This could be part of any future Shed Development at Carlton Hall.

From the left: Keith Shiels CAS Men’s shed development officer. Centre Hannah, Carlton Hall Activities lead. Right Michael Jackson Shed volunteer.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Men's Shed Project began at Community Action Suffolk in May 2021. Between then and project closed down in June 2024, the project assisted existing and developing Men's Sheds across Suffolk.

The project developed various resources to help and support the development of Men's Sheds, from fledgling idea, through to fully fledged operational Sheds. These are all still available through the Men's Sheds webpages on the CAS website - <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/mens-sheds/>

The Men's Sheds project mapped the Sheds that exist across the county, as can be seen in the map shared in the introduction. This map is still live and available for people to use [here](#). Updates can be made to details by simply contacting the CAS Team. The project also developed the Men's Shed Toolkit – which again, is available through the CAS website [here](#).

From the survey respondents, there was some mention that the project office was based in Ipswich and not nearer Haverhill, however, the majority of respondents responded in a positive way to confirm that the project had facilitated networking with other sheds and those involved were excellent. With a special mention for ShedFest 2023 which “was a great way to meet and network with other groups” being one of the comments received, a further respondent said that the most useful support provided by the project was the “coordination and communication with other Sheds in Suffolk”. It was commented on that “At present there is no formal network of Sheds in Suffolk, unlike Essex...We really need a network for communication between sheds.”

Other organisational positives to come out of the Men's Shed Project was the support given around governance and structure to groups to register with the Charity Commission, such as support in becoming a CIO, which has been successfully achieved by a number of sheds.

There is a clear need for CAS to look at its communication of the services it offers, as when asked about the rating of the support received, Shed Community Buildings Advice came in at the lowest rating for Good and Excellent combined. Sheds are community buildings, and therefore are included in the Community Buildings advice and support that CAS offers, however, perhaps because the project started out with dedicated officers, there is a feeling that because those officers that did a little bit of everything have moved on, that advice and support is no longer there, when in fact it is, just across the CAS service offering.

Communication is also needed about the Volunteer Suffolk portal being available for all the voluntary sector to use free of charge, to search of volunteers, and advertise their volunteering opportunities to a wider range of people across the county. It needs to be emphasised that the website is available to the whole county to advertise volunteering opportunities, from Haverhill, to Brandon, to Diss (in Norfolk, but has a Suffolk catchment area too), to Beccles, Bungay, Lowestoft, Leiston, Aldeburgh, Felixstowe, Shotley, Sudbury, Lavenham, Clare, and everywhere in the middle too! There seems to be a perception from the West of the county that because CAS is based in Ipswich, everything is about Ipswich, and this couldn't be further from the truth. In these post Covid days, training courses and meetings happen online, via MS Teams and Zoom, so participants can become involved from anywhere in the world. Whilst some also take place in real life, venues can vary across the county and tend to take place where there is demand. ShedFest was located in the middle of the county so that it was equidistant from both the east and the west.

When asked about improvement in wellbeing through being involved with a Men's Shed, comments put forward included:

- Community support and interaction has improved mental wellbeing
- We have reviewed the effect that being part of the Stour Valley Men's Shed has had on our members and have observed an increase in personal esteem and self-confidence.
- We have many adults who have experienced social exclusion, loneliness etc, who have been helped by coming to the shed.
- My involvement has given me a sense of purpose.
- When asked to rate access to CAS Services, the standout "Excellent" ratings were for ShedFest (The Men's Shed Festival). One respondent went on to explain "Guest speakers were focussed, encouraging and informed. Every contact that I have made within CAS has left me feeling encouraged and part of a larger, well focussed/structured organisation.

Further project feedback was also provided...

- It is difficult to project how our Charity would have fared without the continual organisational support and enthusiasm exuded by your officers. The close interaction between CAS and Babergh District Council Officers have been pivotal to our modest progress towards securing a structurally and organisationally robust amenity for the local area. Ours has been a challenging journey however, I have learned many facets during my journey that have helped to protect our members from false starts and ill-considered options that would not have delivered on our expectations.
- I have been accessing the CAS network for 2 years as the Grant Funding Co-ordinator for the Stour Valley Men's Shed. During this time, I have met and liaised with many people who work diligently to provide encouragement, hope and guidance to, in my case, fledgling charities who are on a steep learning curve as we try to put our charity on a safe and robust footing. I have never engaged with anyone who has not left me feeling that my engagement was not worth the time or effort. For this, I am extremely grateful. Thank you everyone for sharing your conviction and confidence that, in time, we will succeed.

When the interviews with Men's Sheds were undertaken, this was when the real impact and social value of the Men's Sheds and what they do for people really came through. The CAS Men's Shed Project helped the sheds to get to this point and to be able to provide this support to a certain degree. One interviewee commented when asked whether the Project Officers were able to help, and they said "Yes! Helped with different roles and infrastructure [and that they] have become more of community hub with access for both genders over time.

When asked specifically how the Men's Shed officers helped, interviewees confirmed that they spoke to CAS staff about governance and legislation for the protection of committee members, and to the CAS Marketing Manager who helped a group to make a video for Instagram. The Men's Shed officers helped with where to look for funding and provided "A VERY valuable general support."

It's worth repeating in full, the interview answers to the next two questions that were posed, as this is the real reason that Men's Sheds make such a difference.

When asked whether they find the Shed environment helps users to open up and talk freely with each other and whether the Shed environment help support their health and wellbeing, they said:

- *Yes. They spoke about how the older generation are often stuck in their ways. He said an older member who has since passed away but he was a big part of the community who actually had a cake made for him by the Queen Mother. During an AGM, they asked if there was anything the members thought needed improvement and he said “No boy, keep it all as it is!” His favourite weekly fixture, along with many other members, was the fish & chip night.*
- *Yes! Men talk more without women. They’re all much more willing to open up about any stress or mental health issue whilst enjoying their hobbies.*
- *Yes. People definitely talk and there’s a good buzz.*
- *Yes Definitely, some member when they first joined were very quiet and now, I see them mixing and talking with others all the time. I hear a lot that members say coming to the shed and talking to others helps their health and wellbeing, we have members that come to talk about health issues and other members will then go and get checked.*

When asked what they thought was the special thing about working with the Men’s Shed that makes such a difference to the men that come along and take part – Whether it was the friendship, the comradeship, having a reason to go out, reducing isolation, they said:

- *All the above. Sense of achievement, value, pride, self-worth, learning new skills.*
- *The banter and jokes. A lot of members used to enjoy working in male-dominant environments and this is great to replicate a similar, more relaxed, scenario.*
- *Many things. Self-worth, welcoming environment, valued, having a bigger purpose.*
- *Seeing the members making friends, working together, arranging to meet up outside the shed, hearing that the shed has helped a lot of members with their mental health.*

When asked whether there was anything else that they would like to feed back on, the responses included:

- *Wanted to highlight how much they’re now able to help the wider community through their projects. To list a few, they have: built a stage and recovered radiators at old bank building in Eye, converted a telephone box into a book swap library, upholstered chairs for Framsdon Church, local scout groups also use their facilities. Members enjoy many different workshops like woodwork, needlework, metal work and paint spraying.*
- *Their members enjoy a range of activities including metal work, woodwork, glass work, ceramics, gardening, and sewing.*
- *Men’s sheds is a fantastic group, and seeing the difference it makes for members, from when they first come to look and sign up to after they joined has made a massive difference for them.*

The Men’s Sheds Project ran for 3 years and made a big impact supporting Men’s Sheds across the county during their time. It is evident that the Sheds really valued having dedicated Men’s Sheds Officers to provide that support and link into other Sheds, facilitating a Network across the Sheds.

Recommendations

More communication is needed to inform Sheds that CAS officers, through their Capacity Building support can provide this governance, start up support, organisational development, funding advice, training and safeguarding support to Men's Sheds.

Targeted promotion of the CAS courses that run on writing a funding application and searching for funding using Funding4Suffolk should be undertaken so that Sheds are aware of this training.

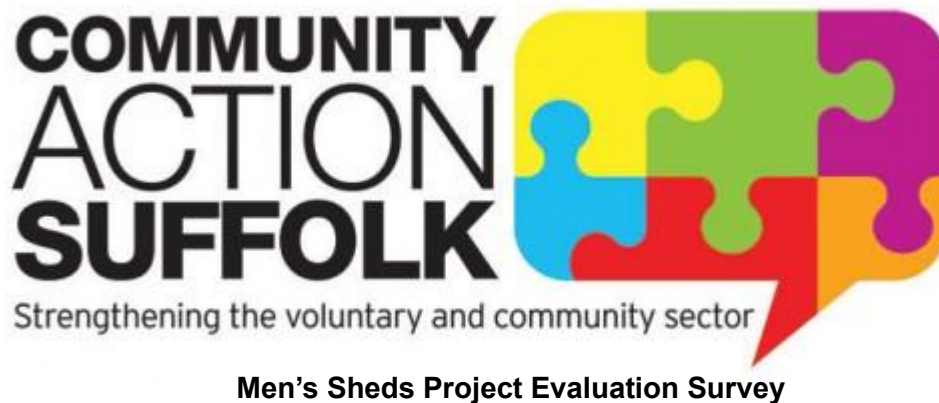
Health and Safety Training for Men's Sheds could potentially be developed using an external training provider to help sheds keep up to date with legislation. Perhaps UKMSA could be approached to develop something in partnership which could support Sheds across the UK.

An online Network of Men's Sheds in Suffolk could potentially be facilitated through CAS, though it would be better being owned by the Men's Sheds community themselves. There is a Facebook group that has been set up, but doesn't appear to have had very much traction, so perhaps a partnership between the organiser of this could be brokered, where CAS could support promoting the Men's Shed Community page to Men's Sheds across the county, and then step back once it is up and running, if Sheds feel this is a good idea.

The difference that is made by the work of Men's Sheds needs to be celebrated and shouted out to local authorities, health services, funders and commissioners, as there are clear mental health and physical health benefits to being part of and going to a Men's Shed, in terms of those organising them and those visiting, improvements in mental health and reductions in loneliness and social isolation being just the start of them.

Appendices

Men's Sheds Survey



Introduction

Community Action Suffolk (CAS) is carrying out a survey to evaluate the Men's Shed Project, which finished last year.

We would like to understand how you and your Men's Shed was supported by the project as a whole and the officers.

Your feedback will be invaluable in evaluating what worked and what didn't with the project and will help us to learn and take forward your experience when looking to future support and assistance that may be developed.

1. What is the name of your Men's Shed

2. How many volunteers, trustees and / or paid staff does your organisation have?

Full Time Paid Staff (if applicable)

Part Time Paid Staff (if applicable)

Volunteers (if applicable)

Trustees (if applicable)

3. Which district is your Shed in?

- Babergh
- Mid Suffolk
- East Suffolk
- Ipswich
- West Suffolk

4. What did you find useful about the Men's Shed Project from Community Action Suffolk, and the support provided by the Men's Shed Development Officers?

5. Since the Men's Shed Project finished, do you see CAS as the 'go to' organisation for the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector in Suffolk?

- Yes
- No

Please expand on your answer if you wish.

6. How would you rate the Shed Support you received through the Men's Shed Project?

	Excellent	Good	Average	Could improve	Poor	Not applicable
Governance and Organisational Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Funding Advice including Funding 4 Suffolk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shed Community Buildings Advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safeguarding support and advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insurance support and advice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Volunteering and Wellbeing

	Yes	No
Has your wellbeing improved through being involved with your Men's Shed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments		
As part of Men's Sheds has it made you think more about volunteering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments		

	Yes	No
Would you like support with your volunteers (if you would, please provide your email address below)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments		
Did you know you can advertise for volunteers on the Volunteer Suffolk website (https://volunteersuffolk.org.uk)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comments		

8. When contacting Community Action Suffolk, please rate how you accessed the services above:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Could improve	Poor	Not applicable
Telephone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The CAS Website - https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CAS on Facebook - https://www.facebook.com/communityactionsuffolk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CAS on LinkedIn - https://uk.linkedin.com/company/community-action-suffolk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CAS on Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/commactionsuff/	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
One to one meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CAS training course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Men's Shed Festival (ShedFest)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Network Meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Excellent or Good: What did we do well?
 Average to Poor: What could we do better?
 Did you access the service in another way?

9. As a result of using any of Community Action Suffolk's services, products or projects, we'd like to know what has changed with your organisation.

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Yes	No	Nothing has changed
We have written a grant or funding application	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have received a grant or funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are better connected with our local community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are better able to support our local community / clients	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We are better able to identify problems and the solutions in our organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have improved partnership working with another organisation(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have improved our policies and procedures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We meet our legal obligations as an entity (specifically DBS checks, insurance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have a clearer focus and direction for our organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have recruited a volunteer(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Volunteers are managed more effectively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have improved our skills or knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Has something else changed or improved as a result of CAS's involvement?

How Community Action Suffolk communicates with you

10. If you have signed up as a CAS Network Member, how would you rate the quality and content of any newsletters you receive?

If you receive any of the following, please rate them:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Could improve	Poor	Not Applicable
CAS Network newsletter (fortnightly)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Funding email updates	○	○	○	○	○	○
Health and wellbeing newsletter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Men's Shed Network newsletter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Safeguarding newsletters	○	○	○	○	○	○
The Pod – communications, marketing and PR emails and updates	○	○	○	○	○	○
Training and events newsletters	○	○	○	○	○	○
Village Hall and Community Building newsletter	○	○	○	○	○	○
Volunteer Coordinator and Managers newsletters	○	○	○	○	○	○
Young People's Newsletter	○	○	○	○	○	○

Excellent or Good: What did we do well?
Average to Poor: What could we do better?

11. Is the frequency of our communications to the network:

- About right
- Would like more
- Would like less

Are there any areas that we don't cover within a newsletter that you would like to see?

Looking to the future

12. What are the top three challenges your organisation is currently facing?

(Please select up to three)

- Digital transformation
- Changes necessary to satisfy funders/commissioners

- Need to take action to address climate change
- Insufficient funding
- Increase in demand
- Reduction in demand
- Trustee recruitment / retention / diversity
- Recruitment and management of volunteers
- Policy / legislation changes or compliance
- Legal compliance
- Staff recruitment/ development /retention
- Marketing and communications
- Developing partnerships and collaborations
- Knowledge / skills gap of staff and/or trustees
- Volunteer recruitment
- Volunteer retention
- Other (please specify)

13. Which Community Action Suffolk projects or services do you think you will use in the next 12 months?

(Please tick all that apply)

- Governance and Organisational Development including VCFSE Healthcheck tool
- Sustainability and Funding Advice including Funding 4 Suffolk
- Village Halls and Community Buildings Advice
- Safeguarding support and advice
- Support for Volunteer Managers
- Volunteer Suffolk website
- Employer Supported Volunteering
- Volunteer Management training and workshops, including talk volunteering
- Rural and Community Led Housing
- Suffolk Food Projects
- Health and Wellbeing Network
- Talking About Cancer Together
- Websites and IT Services
- DBS Checks
- Insurance
- Other (please specify)

Your thoughts on Community Action Suffolk

14. Is there any support you or your organisation needs, that you would like to see Community Action Suffolk provide that we don't currently offer?

- No
- Yes (please specify)

15. Finally, please rate the following statements about Community Action Suffolk: VCFSE stands for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Provides high quality services and products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services and products represent good value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services and products are easy to use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enables and facilitates a voice for the VCFSE sector in Suffolk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An organisation I can trust.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An advocate for the value of the VCFSE sector	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Services are easy to access/ accessible when I need them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend organisations in Suffolk to join the Community Action Suffolk Network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Strongly Agree or Agree: What did we do well?
 Neither to Strongly Disagree: What could we do better?

16. We welcome any other comments or feedback about Community Action Suffolk at any time. Please feel free to feedback below or email us on CASNetwork@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

If you are not sure if you have joined the Community Action Suffolk Network, please go to:

<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/join-our-network/>

when you have completed this survey, to sign up.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.