

Essex Caring Communities Resident Survey 2025

Policy Unit |
Essex County Council

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Sponsored by:



Essex County Council

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About the survey

The 2025 Caring Communities Resident Survey was a sample survey designed to:

- be representative of the Essex adult population (18 plus); and
- draw conclusions by relevant sub-groups.

Topics covered included:

- Your local neighbourhood
- Planning for future care needs
- Experience of social care
- Community activities, care and support
- Demographic profile

The survey was delivered in partnership with Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent research organisation, and conducted in line with Market Research Society standards.

Fieldwork took place during 6th December 2024 and 14th January 2025. 31,517 residents received an initial email inviting them to participate in the online survey (with a charity donation made for everyone that did) followed by a reminder email to all non-responders, with selected non responders subsequently receiving a follow up call to take part via an interviewer administered telephone interview. A total of 940 responses were achieved (528 online and 412 via telephone interview), this includes 22 partial online completes who completed all main questions (up to the profile section).

This provides a robust sample size which enables reliable analysis of the data by relevant population sub groups.

Survey analysis

The survey has been designed to ensure that all the themes and questions can be examined by:

- Gender
- Age
- Personal working status
- Long-term limiting health condition or illness
- Ethnicity
- Household finances
- District
- Urban/Rural
- Those giving help or support
- Those receiving help or support
- Those who have done some voluntary work in last 12 months

Reporting conventions



The pie and bar charts (and other graphics) show the proportions (percentages) of residents making responses.



Percentages displayed on charts may not always add up to 100% due to rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple answers.



Throughout an asterisk (*) denotes any value less than half of one per cent.



The number of valid responses recorded for each question (base size) are reported throughout. As not all respondents answered every question, these base sizes vary between questions.



A sample and not the entire population of Essex has been surveyed. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. Results which are significantly different are highlighted in the text.



Statistical significance has been calculated against overall results for Essex at a 95% level of confidence.

Key Findings

A decorative graphic on the right side of the page consisting of several overlapping circles in various shades of teal and blue, creating a modern, abstract background element.

Local neighbourhood

Most residents of Essex aged 18 or over are positive about their local neighbourhood with:

- Over three quarters (77%) chatting to neighbours at least once a month;
- Almost two thirds (65%) feeling like they belong to their immediate neighbourhood;
- Over three fifths (63%) agreeing people in their neighbourhood can be trusted; and

- Over three fifths (61%) agreeing that their neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well.

There are some differences in opinion within the population, with older residents, those who are retired, those who describe their finances as comfortable and those who take part in volunteer work significantly more likely to agree with most of these statements.

Planning for future care needs

Most Essex residents aged 18 or over (62%), recognise they have a stake in their own future and said they were making lifestyle choices now, in order to reduce or delay any need for future adult social care services. However, it appears there are limits to the actions that residents are prepared to take now with;

- Less than half (49%) agreeing people should plan financially for any social care they might need in the future; and
- A smaller proportion again (45%) agreeing that they themselves had thought about/were actively making plans for how they might pay for any care needed in the future.

There are some differences in opinion within the population, with males, those of a non-white ethnic background and those who describe their finances as comfortable significantly more likely to agree with most of these statements.



Experience of social care

In terms of the overall population, one in ten (10%) Essex residents aged 18 or over give help or support, and just over one in twenty (6%) receive help or support relating to a long term physical or mental health condition or illness or problems relating to old age (not including any paid employment).

Help or support provided and/or received included*;

- Household support (71%);
- Personal care and support (54%); and
- Advocacy and administrative support (48%).

* Methodology: Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages may total more than 100%. Responses to these questions are based primarily on answers to the online survey ONLY.

Evidence suggests that many Essex residents see **family and friends** as playing a pivotal role in the provision of social care with **almost half (49%)** stating they should take primary responsibility for organising household support, and similarly for advocacy and administrative support.

A slightly smaller proportion, **just over two-fifths (41%)** say that **family and friends** should take the primary responsibility for organising personal care and support.

However, some residents think that organisations have a role to play with **around a third** saying that the **Council or Local Authorities** should take primary responsibility for organising these types of care.



Views on primary responsibility for organising social care – main groups identified



Household Support

Family and friends

49%

Council/Local authorities

31%

Local community groups/charities

11%

The NHS

3%



Personal Care and Support

Family and friends

41%

Council/Local authorities

32%

The NHS

16%

Local community groups/charities

3%



Advocacy and administrative support

Family and friends

49%

Council/Local authorities

35%

Local community groups/charities

8%

The NHS

4%

Views on this varied by sub-group and are noted in the more detailed pages to follow.

Role of community organisations and volunteers

Residents feel that there is a role that community organisations and volunteers could both play in providing some aspects of social care, with half of residents (50%) agreeing that they would be happy to volunteer their time to provide care and support to those who need it.

Over a third (35%) of Essex residents had already taken part in some volunteering in the last 12 months (groups, clubs, organisations or helping someone, excluding any care or support given to family).

Residents feel that community organisations and volunteers could play a significant and increasing role with some aspects of social care:

- Over a quarter (27%) said they thought these groups could be involved a 'great deal', with over half (56%) saying 'to some extent';
- Only one in ten (12%) said they should not be involved very much, and just over one in twenty (6%) did not think they should be involved at all.

Views differed slightly depending on the type of help or support. Of those that felt there was some role that community organisations and volunteers could play in the provision of social care:

- Most (77%) stated household support, and over half (55%) said advocacy and administrative support;
- Whereas fewer than half (45%) stated personal care and support*

* Methodology: Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages may total more than 100%. Responses to these questions are based primarily on answers to the online survey.

Your Local Neighbourhood



Views on local neighbourhood

Most residents of Essex aged 18 or over are positive about their local neighbourhood with:

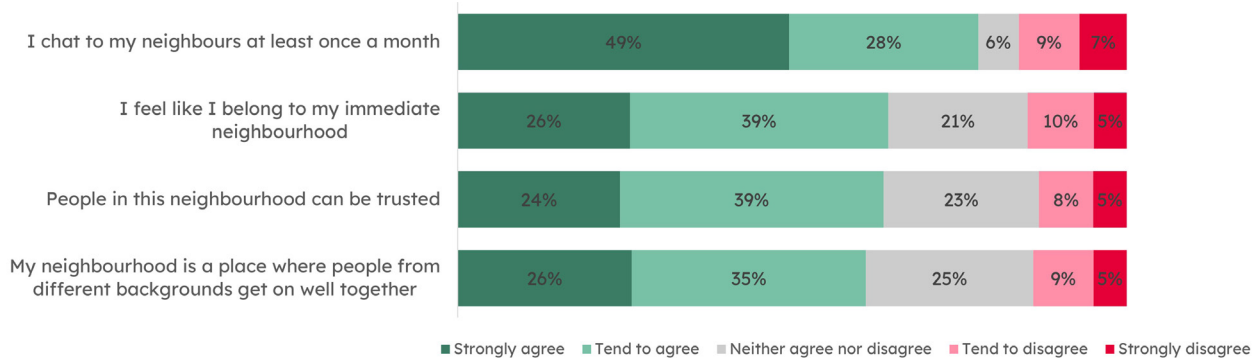
- Over three quarters (77%) chatting to neighbours at least once a month;
- Almost two thirds (65%) feeling like they belong to their immediate neighbourhood;
- Over three fifths (63%) agreeing people in their neighbourhood can be trusted; and
- Over three fifths (61%) agreeing that their neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well.

There are some differences in opinion within the population, with older residents, those who are retired, those who describe their finances as comfortable and those who take part in volunteer work significantly more likely to agree with most of these statements.*

* There is some evidence to suggest that those completing the Caring Communities Survey are more likely to agree that people in this neighbourhood can be trusted, compared to those taking part in the 2024 Essex Residents Survey, with over six in ten (63%) agreeing to the statement in this survey but under six in ten (56%) agreeing in the Residents Survey. However, it should be noted that the two surveys were undertaken using slightly different methodologies (online and by telephone versus online and by post respectively), and there were also differences in sample design, and response scale used.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your neighbourhood? By neighbourhood we mean the area within 15 minutes' walk from your home.



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 902 – 934 per statement

Statement	% Strongly agree / Tend to agree
I chat to my neighbours at least once a month	77%
I feel like I belong to my immediate neighbourhood	65%
People in this neighbourhood can be trusted	63%
My neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	61%

- Those aged 55 to 64, who are self-employed or retired from work, of a white ethnic background, take part in volunteer work, give/receive help or support or live in Rochford are significantly more likely to **agree they chat to their neighbours at least once a month.**
- Those who take part in voluntary work, live in a rural area, who describe their finances as comfortable, who are retired or aged 65 and over are significantly

more likely to **agree they belong to their immediate neighbourhood and that people in their neighbourhood can be trusted.**

- Those who take part in voluntary work, receive help or support or who describe their finances as comfortable are significantly more likely to **agree that their neighbourhood is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.**

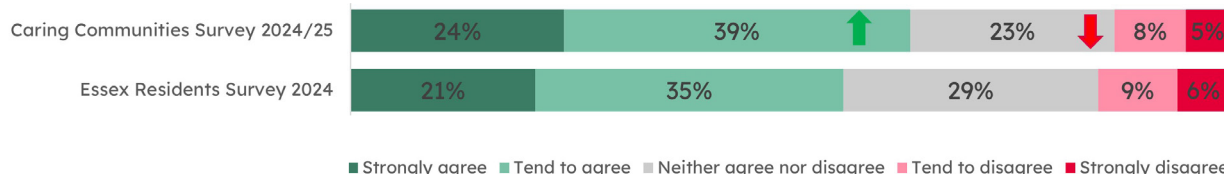
Comparing views with the 2024 Residents Survey

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your neighbourhood? By neighbourhood we mean the area within 15 minutes' walk from your home.

I chat to my neighbours at least once a month



People in this neighbourhood can be trusted



↑↓ Denotes a statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level

Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses (Caring Communities Survey 2024/25: 914 – 932 per statement; Essex Residents Survey 2024: 5,525 – 5,527 per statement)

Methodology: Caring Communities Survey undertaken online and via telephone; Essex Residents Survey 2024 undertaken online and via postal survey

Methodology: Essex Residents Survey 2024 used a slightly different wording of response scale: Agree strongly, Agree slightly, Neither agree nor disagree, Disagree slightly, Disagree strongly

Statement		% Strongly agree / Tend to agree
I chat to my neighbours at least once a month	Caring Communities Survey 2024/25	77%
	Essex Residents Survey 2024	78%
People in this neighbourhood can be trusted	Caring Communities Survey 2024/25	63% ↑
	Essex Residents Survey 2024	56%

- A similar proportion **agreed that they chatted to their neighbours at least once a month** in the Caring Communities Survey and the 2024 Essex Residents Survey, with over three quarters agreeing they did in both.
- A significantly larger proportion **agreed that people in their neighbourhood could be trusted** in the Caring Communities Survey with over six in ten either agreeing strongly or tending to agree compared to under six in ten from the 2024 Essex Residents Survey.



Planning for Future Care Needs



Planning for future care needs

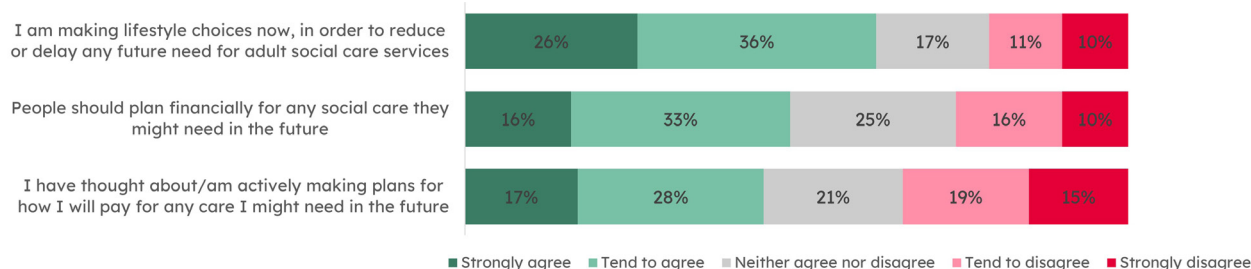
Most Essex residents aged 18 or over (62%), recognise they have a stake in their own future and said they were making lifestyle choices now, to reduce or delay any need for future adult social care services. However, it appears there are limits to the actions that residents are prepared to take now with;

- Less than half (49%) agreeing people should plan financially for any social care they might need in the future; and
- A smaller proportion again (45%) agreeing that they themselves had thought about/were actively making plans for how they might pay for any care needed in the future.

There are some differences in opinion within the population, with males, those of a non-white ethnic background and those who describe their finances as comfortable are significantly more likely to agree with most of these statements.



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 929 to each statement

Statement	% Strongly agree / Tend to agree
I am making lifestyle choices now, in order to reduce or delay any future need for adult social care services	62%
People should plan financially for any social care they might need in the future	49%
I have thought about/am actively making plans for how I will pay for any care I might need in the future	45%

- Those aged 55 to 64, those of a non-white ethnic background, give/receive help or support, who describe their finances as doing alright or live in Epping Forest are significantly more likely to **agree that they are making lifestyle choices now, in order to reduce or delay any future need for adult social care services.**
- Males, those with no limiting health condition or illness, who describe their finances as comfortable, who are retired or live in Maldon

are significantly more likely to **agree that people should plan financially for any social care they might need in the future.**

- Males, those of a non-white ethnic background, who describe their finances as comfortable, take part in volunteer work or live in Epping Forest are significantly more likely to **agree that they have thought about/are actively making plans for how they will pay for any care they might need in the future.**

Experience of Social Care



Giving or receiving help or support

In terms of the overall population, one in ten (10%) Essex residents aged 18 or over gave help or support and just over one in twenty (6%) received help or support relating to a long term physical or mental health condition or illness or problems relating to old age (not including any paid employment).

Help or support provided and/or received included:

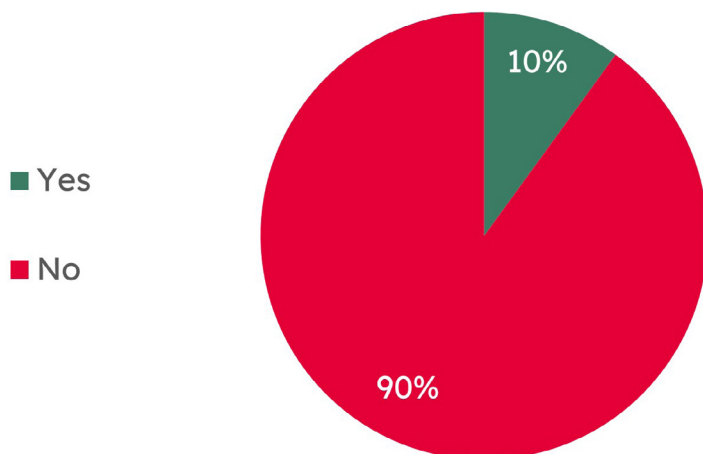
- Household support (71%)*;
- Personal care and support (54%); and
- Advocacy and administrative support (48%).

* Methodology: Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages may total more than 100%

Responses to these questions are based primarily on answers to the online survey ONLY



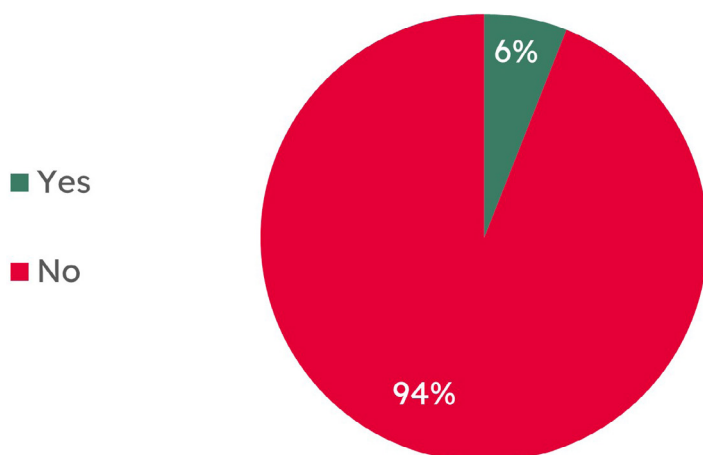
Do you look after or give any help or support to anyone because they have any long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems relating to old age?



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses:
923 – 926 per statement

- Females, those receiving help or support or those who take part in voluntary work are significantly more likely **to look after or give help or support to someone.**

Do you receive any help or support because of any long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems relating to old age?



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses:
923 – 926 per statement

- Those who are retired or otherwise not working, those with a health condition or illness lasting 12 months or more, those with a limiting health condition or illness, who describe their finances as just about getting by or those giving help or support are significantly more likely **to receive help or support.**

Help or support provided and/or received

Which of the following best describes the type of help or support provided and/or received?



Base: All respondents providing or receiving care excluding 'don't know' responses: 167 (giving 317 responses)

Methodology: Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages may total more than 100%

Responses to these questions are based primarily on answers to the online survey ONLY



Views on primary responsibility for organising help or support provided

There is evidence to suggest that many Essex residents see family and friends as playing a pivotal role in the provision of social care with **almost half (49%)** saying that **family and friends** should take the primary responsibility for organising household support and the **same proportion** saying this for advocacy and administrative support.

Whilst it is a slightly smaller proportion, there were **just over two-fifths (41%)** saying that **family and friends** should take the primary responsibility for organising personal care and support.

There is also evidence to suggest that some residents think that local communities groups or charities could take on primary responsibility for organising these types of care with;

- **Over one in ten (11%)** saying **local community groups or charities** should take primary responsibility for household support;
- **Under one in ten (8%)** saying **local community groups or charities** should take primary responsibility for advocacy and administrative support; but
- **Just 3%** saying they should take primary responsibility for personal care and support.

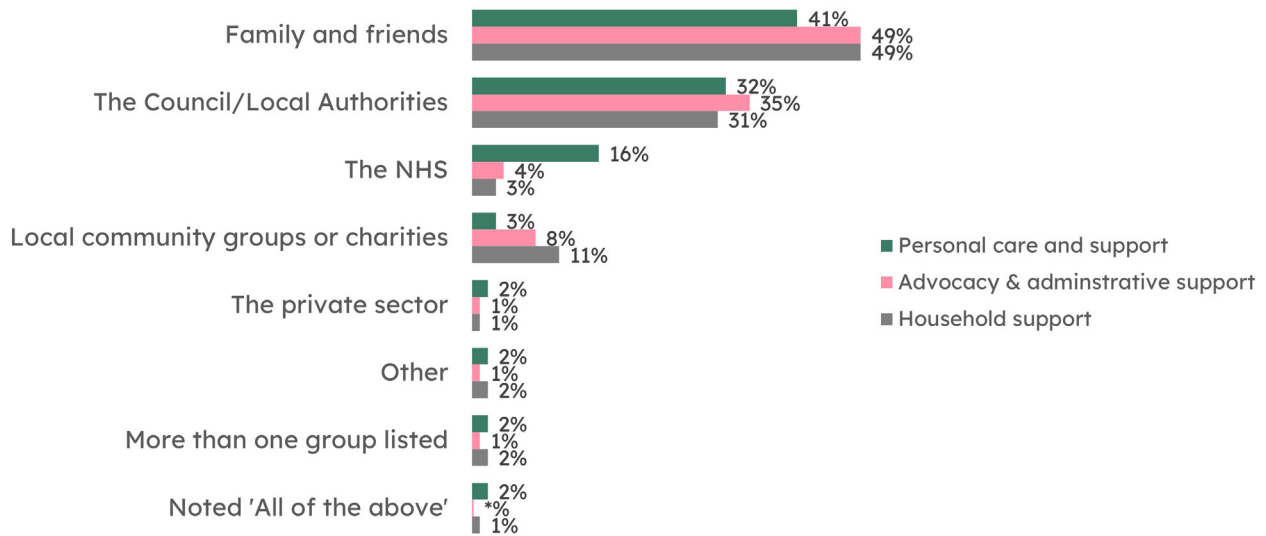
However, there is also evidence to show that a good proportion of residents think that organisations have a primary role to play with **around a third** saying that the **Council or Local Authorities** should take primary responsibility for organising these types of care:

- **Over a third (35%)** saying they should take primary responsibility for advocacy and administrative support;
- **Just under a third (32%)** saying they should take primary responsibility for personal care and support; and
- **Under a third (31%)** saying they should take primary responsibility for household support.

With a smaller proportion noting the NHS:

- **Around one in six (16%)** saying they should take primary responsibility for personal care and support;
- **4%** saying they should take primary responsibility for advocacy and administrative support; and
- **3%** saying they should take primary responsibility for household support.

Who do you think should take primary responsibility for organising...?



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 894 – 909 per statement



Difference in view by sub group - primary responsibility for organising help or support provided

There are some differences in opinion on who should take primary responsibility for organising each type of help and support, which can be explored further if we look at the answers by sub groups within the population. In general;

- Those currently receiving help or support are more likely to note **family or friends**.
- Those identifying as female are more likely to **note local community groups or charities**.
- Those having some trouble with their finances are more likely to note **the Council/Local Authorities**.
- Those who take part in voluntary work are more likely to note the **private sector** (though this was only given by a small percentage of residents across all groups).

Further details about these differences are noted on the following pages.



Who do you think should take primary responsibility for organising Personal care and support?

- Those of a white ethnic background, living in Basildon, Castle Point or Maldon or those receiving help or support are significantly more likely to say **friends and family**.
- Those who identify as female are significantly more likely to say **local community groups or charities**.
- Those aged 35 to 54, those living in Rochford or those not receiving help or support are significantly more likely to say **the NHS**.
- Those aged 55 to 64, those who describe their finances as finding it quite/very difficult or those living in Colchester or Uttlesford are significantly more likely to say **the Council/Local authorities**.
- Those who take part in voluntary work are significantly more likely to say **the private sector**.
- Those who identify as female are significantly more likely to have noted 'All of the above'.

Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 894



Who do you think should take primary responsibility for organising Advocacy & administrative support?

- Those aged 55 and over, retired from work, of a white ethnic background, those who describe their finances as doing alright, living in Uttlesford or those who give/receive help or support are significantly more likely to say **friends and family**.
- Those who identify as female, those who describe their finances as finding it quite/very difficult or those not taking part in voluntary work are significantly more likely to say **local community groups or charities**.
- Those who are otherwise not working are significantly more likely to say **the NHS**.
- Those aged 35 to 54, those who are in employment or self employed, those who describe their finances as just about getting by or live in a rural area are significantly more likely to say **the Council/Local authorities**.
- Those who live in an urban area or take part in voluntary work are significantly more likely to say **the private sector**.
- Those aged 35 to 54 are significantly more likely to have noted more than one of the groups listed.
- Those who give help or support to someone are significantly more likely to have noted 'All of the above'.

Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 909



Who do you think should take primary responsibility for organising Household support?

- Those who are retired from work, living in Maldon or receive help or support from someone are significantly more likely to say **friends and family**.
- Those living in Basildon or take part in voluntary work are significantly more likely to say **local community groups or charities**.
- Those of a white ethnic background are significantly more likely to say **the NHS**.
- Those living in Uttlesford are significantly more likely to say **the Council/Local authorities**.
- Those aged 55 to 64 or living in Brentwood are significantly more likely to have noted more than one of the groups listed.

Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 907

Community Activities, Care and Support



Voluntary work and involvement in the community

It is clear that residents feel that there is a role that community organisations and volunteers could play in providing some aspects of social care, with half of residents (50%) agreeing that they would be happy to volunteer their time to provide care and support to those who need it based on this survey.

Furthermore, based on this survey over a third (35%) of Essex residents had already taken part in some volunteering in the last 12 months (groups, clubs, organisations or helping someone, but excluding any care or support given to family).

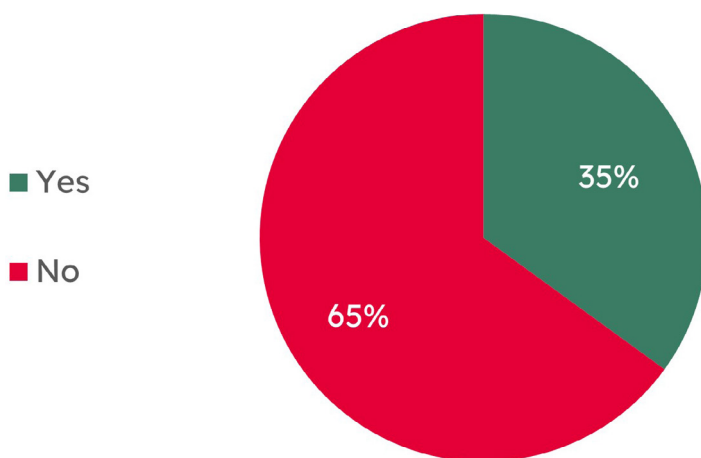
Essex residents also believe in the power of community spirit with over two thirds (68%) agreeing that when people get involved in their local community, they really can change the way it is run.

There are differences in opinion within the population with those who live in Brentwood and those who live in a rural area more likely to currently volunteer, agree they would be happy to volunteer and believe they can change their local community.



Voluntary work

In the last 12 months, have you taken part in any voluntary work? This could include giving unpaid help to a group, club or organisation or helping someone that you know such as a neighbour or friend. Please exclude any care or support that you give to your family.



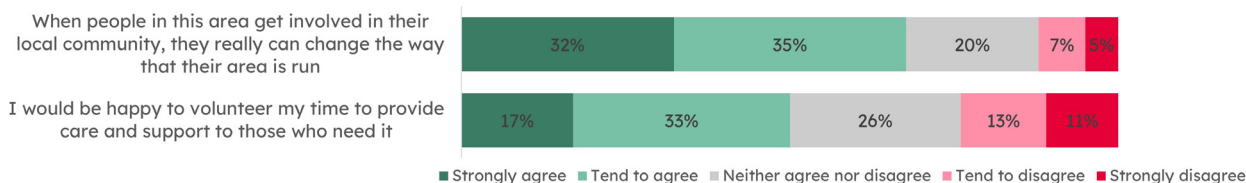
Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 930

- Those of a white ethnic background, who describe their finances as living comfortably, living in Brentwood or Epping Forest, those who live in a rural area, those who give help or support or those who do not receive help or support are significantly more likely **in the last 12 months, to have taken part in voluntary work.**



Involvement in the community

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 892 - 914 per statement

Statement	% Strongly agree / Tend to agree
When people in this area get involved in their local community, they really can change the way that their area is run	68%
I would be happy to volunteer my time to provide care and support to those who need it	50%

- Females, those in part time employment, those of a non white ethnic background, those living in Brentwood or Uttlesford, those who live in a rural area, those who receive help or support or those or take part in voluntary work are significantly more likely to **agree that when people in this area get involved in their local community, they really can change the way that their area is run.**
- Those aged 18 to 34, females, those in full time employment or otherwise not working, those of a non white ethnic background, those who live in Brentwood, those who live in a rural area, who give help or support or who take part in volunteer work are significantly more likely to **agree that they would be happy to volunteer their time to provide care and support to those who need it.**

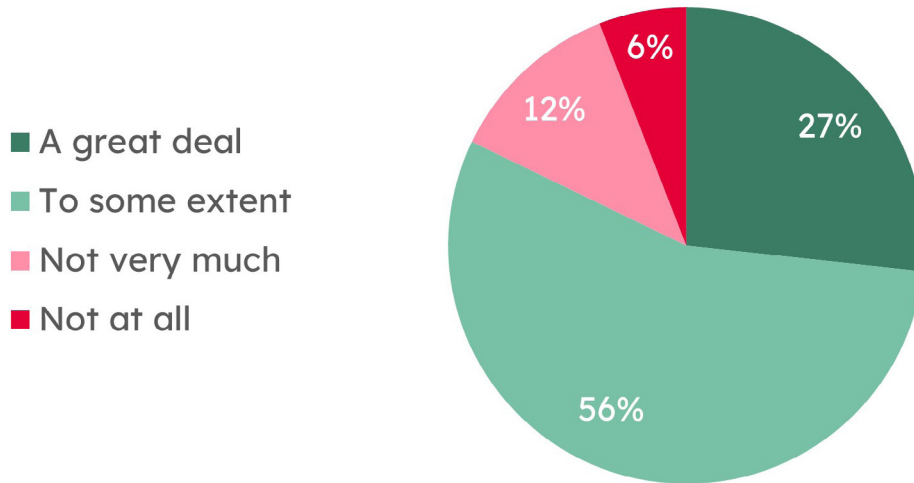
Role of volunteers with providing help or support

Residents feel that community organisations and volunteers could play a significant and increasing role with some aspects of social care:

- Over a quarter (27%) said they thought these groups could be involved a 'great deal', with over half (56%) saying 'to some extent';
- Only one in ten (12%) said they should not be involved very much, and just over one in twenty (6%) did not think they should be involved at all.



To what extent do you think that community organisations and volunteers could play an increasing role in providing some aspects of social care in the future?



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 903

- Those aged 18 to 54, females, those in full time employment or otherwise not working, those of a non white ethnic background, those who live in Brentwood or those who give help or support are significantly more likely to say a **great deal**.
- Those aged 65 and over, retired from work, of a white ethnic background or describe their finances as living comfortably are significantly more likely to say **to some extent**.
- Those aged 55 to 64, males, those retired from work, who describe their finances as finding it quite/very difficult or those who live in Colchester are significantly more likely to say **not very much**.
- There were no significant differences identified by sub group for those saying **not at all**.

Help or support volunteers could have an increasing role with

It is clear that their view is dependent on the type of help or support being considered. Of those that felt there was some role that community organisations and volunteers could play in the provision of social care:

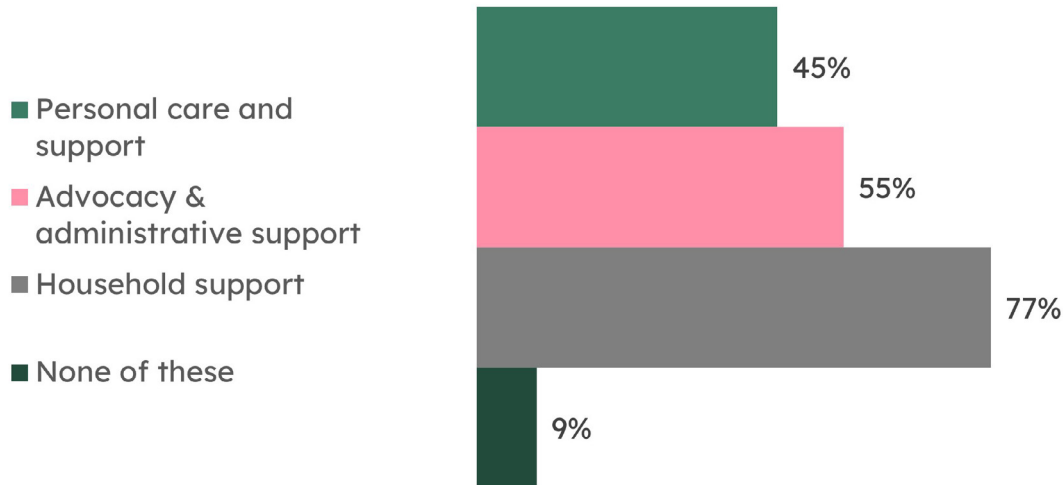
- Most (77%) thought household support was something they could play an increasing role with;
- Over half (55%) said advocacy and administrative support;
- Whereas fewer than half (45%) stated personal care and support*.

* Methodology: Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages may total more than 100%

Responses to these questions are based primarily on answers to the online survey ONLY



Which of the following types of help or support, if any, do you think that community organisations and volunteers could have an increasing role with?



Base: All respondents thinking volunteers could play a role excluding 'don't know' responses: 472 (giving 877 responses)

Methodology: Respondents could give more than one answer so percentages may total more than 100%

Methodology: Note the responses to these questions are based primarily on answers to the online survey ONLY

- Those aged 18 to 34, those otherwise not working, those with a limiting health condition or illness, those living in Epping Forest or Maldon or those who receive help or support are significantly more likely to say **personal care and support**.
- Those otherwise not working, those with a health condition or illness lasting 12 months or more, who live in Epping Forest or those who receive help or support are significantly more likely to say **advocacy and administrative support**.
- Females, those who are self employed, those living in Braintree, Brentwood or Castle Point or those who give/receive help or support are significantly more likely to say **household support**.
- Those of a white ethnic background are significantly more likely to say **none of these**.



Views on the provision of public services

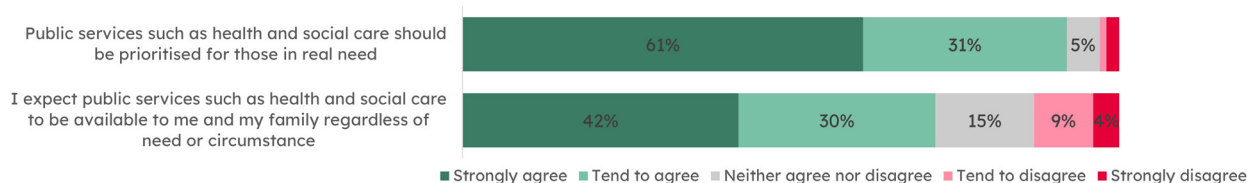
The majority of Essex residents agree that public services such as health and social care should be prioritised for those in real need with over nine in ten (92%) either agreeing or strongly agreeing to this statement.

However, over seven in ten (72%), agree that they expect public services such as health and social care to be available to

them and their family regardless of need or circumstance.

This suggests that whilst Essex residents believe that those in real need should be prioritised, most also believe they should be able to access services when needed regardless, i.e. that sufficient service should be provided to cater for all.

Thinking about public services such as health and social care, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All respondents answering excluding 'don't know' responses: 923 to each statement

Statement	% Strongly agree / Tend to agree
Public services such as health and social care should be prioritised for those in real need	92%
I expect public services such as health and social care to be available to me and my family regardless of need or circumstance	72%

- Those aged 18 to 34, those otherwise not working or those living in Castle Point, Epping Forest or Rochford are significantly more likely to **agree that public services such as health and social care should be prioritised for those in real need.**
- Those of a non-white ethnic background, those living in Brentwood or Rochford or those who give/receive help or support are significantly more likely to **agree that I expect public services such as health and social care to be available to me and my family regardless of need or circumstance.**

Demographic Profile



Weighting the data

The profile of survey respondents were checked against population estimate data for District, and checked against Census 2021 data for Age, Gender, Long-term limiting illness, Unpaid carers, Working status and Ethnicity. It was then subsequently weighted by each of these.

The weighted results can therefore be considered to be broadly representative of the Essex County Council adult population.



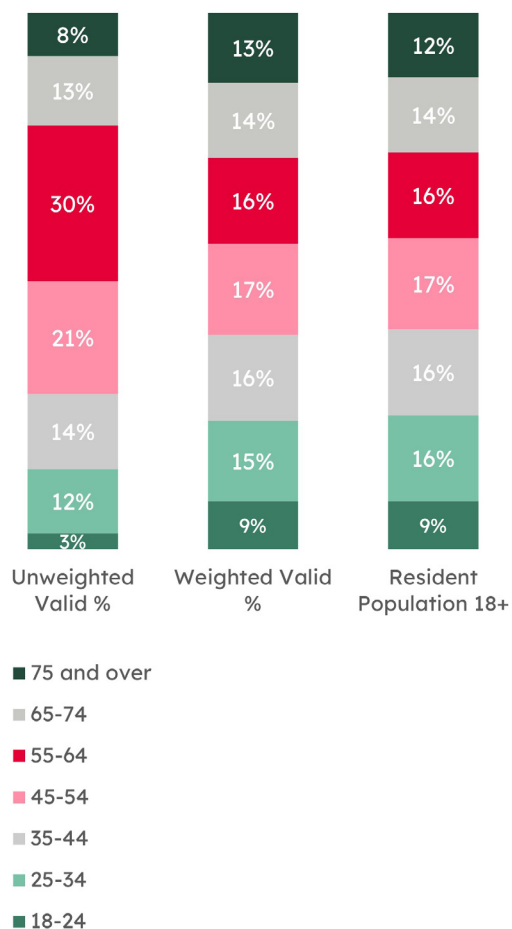
Respondent profile compared with resident adult population – Key differences

- Females more likely to respond than males.
- Those aged 18 to 24 less likely to respond and those aged 55 to 64 were more likely to respond.
- Those with limiting illnesses or health conditions were more likely to respond.
- Carers i.e. those providing unpaid help or support were more likely to respond.
- Those of white ethnicity were more likely to respond.



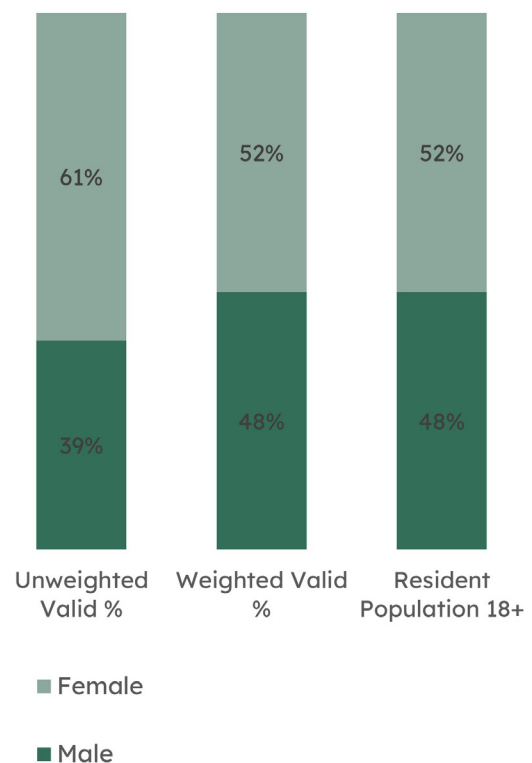
Respondent age and gender compared with resident adult population

Respondent Age



Base: All residents answering age - 929

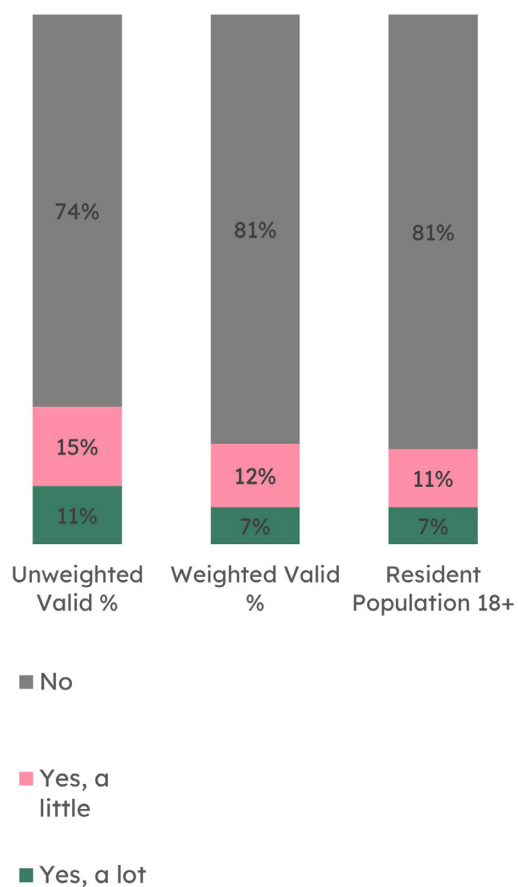
Respondent Gender



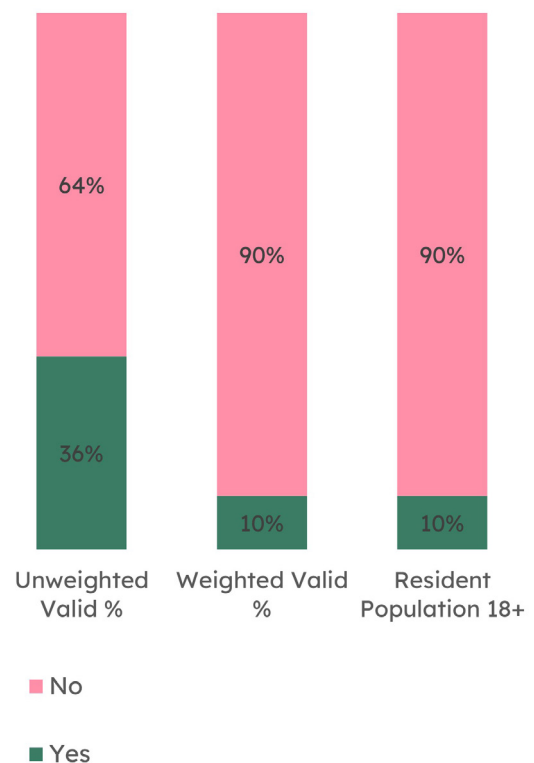
Base: All residents answering gender - 921

Respondent limiting long-term illness and providing support compared with resident adult population

Respondent Limiting Long Term Illness

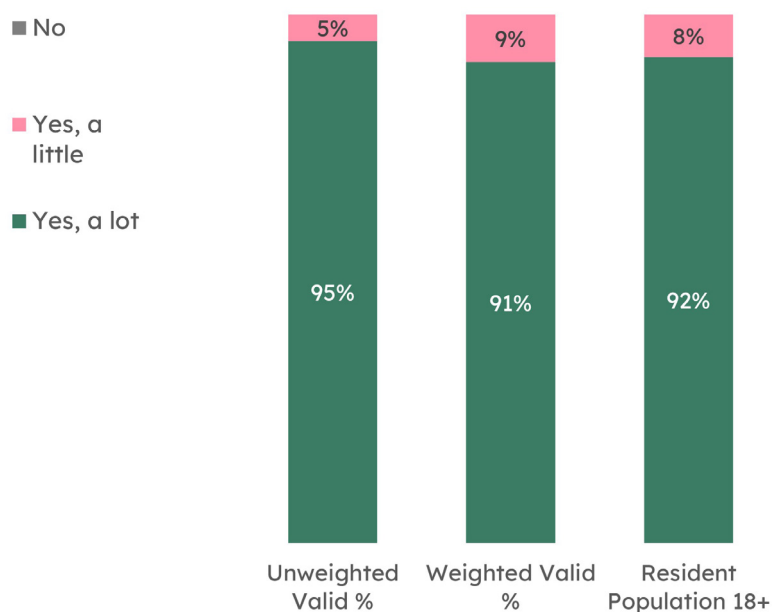


Respondent Providing Support



Respondent ethnic group or background compared with resident adult population

Respondent Ethnic Group or Background



Base: All residents answering ethnic group or background - 898








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