

widespread emotional exhaustion, disrupted sleep, fear of landscape loss and declining wellbeing, none of which has been meaningfully assessed.

- 1.4 The ES does not meet Public Health England or IEMA guidance, both of which require local evidence, identification of vulnerable groups, and competent assessment of psychosocial pathways. As a result, the ES substantially underestimates the likely impacts of Sea Link
- 1.5 SEAS therefore asks the Examining Authority to require an independent, clinically led Mental Health & Trauma Impact Assessment, incorporating Suffolk-specific data and cumulative NSIP effects, before any conclusions on health and wellbeing can be relied upon.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 This submission sets out SEAS' concern that National Grid's Health & Wellbeing assessment does not comply with national standards and does not reflect the true mental health risks facing Suffolk's communities.
- 2.2 According to the applicant's Statement of Competence, the Health & Wellbeing chapter([APP-088](#)) was prepared with no contribution from qualified mental health or public health professionals. Instead, it was authored by an economic development specialist and an environmental management professional. Neither holds clinical qualifications or expertise in assessing psychological risk, trauma, or community mental health.
- 2.3 This fundamental omission affects every conclusion within the ES. Without specialist input, the assessment fails to consider psychological vulnerability, cumulative stress, lived experience, or the recognised determinants of community wellbeing.

3. Suffolk's Documented Mental Health Vulnerabilities (Not Reflected in the ES)

- 3.1 Public Health Suffolk, Suffolk Mind, and the NHS ICS all identify Suffolk's coastal and rural communities as having heightened mental health risks.
- 3.2 The Mind/ESC Survey Report identifies high levels of anxiety, chronic stress, disturbed sleep, reduced emotional resilience and low fulfilment of basic psychological needs.
- 3.3 Sleep is the lowest-met emotional need across the region, and East Suffolk's disproportionately older population is particularly vulnerable to environmental and psychological disruption.
- 3.4 None of this Suffolk-specific evidence was used to inform the ES health baseline ([APP-088](#)), rendering the assessment generic, incomplete and unsuitable for decision-making.

- 3.5 It is important to note that the survey forming the basis of the Mind/ESC Survey Report was conducted between 13 June 2022 and 14 March 2023, prior to the commencement of major construction works at Sizewell C. The substantial disruption now being experienced was therefore not reflected in the survey data. The testimonies provided at the Open Floor Hearings suggest that, were the survey repeated today, the results would show significantly higher levels of stress, anxiety, sleep disturbance and emotional exhaustion than those reported in 2022–2023. This further highlights the inadequacy of the Applicant’s reliance on outdated baseline assumptions and reinforces the need for an updated, clinically robust assessment of current community wellbeing.

4. Existing Emotional Burden & Cumulative Trauma Already Evident

- 4.1 Residents are not encountering Sea Link in isolation. Years of disruption from Sizewell C, cable corridors, substation development and other upcoming NSIPs have already created high levels of community stress.
- 4.2 At the Open Floor Hearings, residents consistently reported emotional exhaustion, anxiety, sleep disturbance, fear of loss of landscape and identity, and an overwhelming cumulative burden².
- 4.3 East Suffolk Councillor, Sarah Whitelock, articulated the findings of the *Suffolk Mind & East Suffolk Council - Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham Wellbeing Report* and illustrates the extent to which communities are experiencing cumulative psychological pressure that the Applicant has not acknowledged or assessed.
- 4.4 A further illustration of community concern was provided by a resident of Friston, who spoke during the OFH1 Session 3, the person reflected the growing distress among residents who feel caught between multiple overlapping energy projects. Although individual circumstances varied, the person’s testimony echoed a consistent pattern heard across the hearings, that local people are already living with heightened emotional pressure and that Sea Link let alone LionLink adds yet another layer to an already overwhelming burden.
- 4.5 These testimonies align closely with Suffolk Mind’s findings on low “security” and “control,” and increasing levels of worry and tension. Despite this, the ES did not examine any of this lived experience through recognised psychological methodologies, contrary to national guidance.

5. Lack of Qualified Mental Health Expertise

- 5.1 No clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, trauma specialists, or public health professionals contributed to the preparation of the (APP-058) *ES 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing*⁴. Despite this absence of relevant

expertise, the ES nevertheless seeks to interpret psychological stress, assess significance, and propose mitigation measures—tasks that require specialist clinical and public health competence.

- 5.2 The reliance on non-specialists to make these judgements raises a serious concern regarding the adequacy, accuracy, and reliability of the ES conclusions. Without appropriately qualified professional input, the assessment cannot be considered a sound basis for evaluating the mental health implications of the Sea Link project.

6. Failure to Meet National Guidance

- 6.1 Public Health England's *Health Impact Assessment in Spatial Planning (2020)* requires assessments to use local health evidence, identify vulnerable population groups and consider the full range of mental, social, and psychosocial pathways through which major developments affect wellbeing.
- 6.2 IEMA's *Guidelines for Health in EIA (2022)* similarly require a holistic, evidence-based appraisal of mental, psychological, and social wellbeing, including explicit consideration of cumulative impacts, local inequalities, and the need for competent specialist input.
- 6.3 The Sea Link ES does not meet these standards. It treats mental health as a secondary matter, relies on generic assumptions rather than Suffolk-specific data, and fails to assess cumulative or locally relevant determinants of psychological wellbeing. As a result, the ES lacks the depth and professional rigour required for sound decision-making.

7. Suffolk's Rural Identity and Psychological Stakes

- 7.1 The Suffolk landscape plays a crucial role in residents' sense of identity, wellbeing, and emotional stability. This relationship is strongly evidenced in the local wellbeing report and by the oral evidence heard at the Open Floor Hearings.
- 7.2 Landscape industrialisation, prolonged uncertainty and loss of tranquillity can trigger chronic stress and erode residents' sense of security and place attachment.
- 7.3 The ES treats these impacts solely as "visual effects," failing to consider their psychological dimensions.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The evidence presented demonstrates that the Sea Link Environmental Statement significantly underestimates the health and wellbeing impacts on

Suffolk communities. The area's well-documented mental health vulnerabilities, combined with the sustained and cumulative burden of multiple major infrastructure projects, make a clinically robust and locally informed assessment essential.

- 8.2 Until such an assessment is undertaken, the conclusions of the (APP-058) *ES 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing*⁴ cannot be considered reliable. The assessment was not prepared or reviewed by qualified mental health or public health specialists, it omits essential Suffolk-specific evidence, and it fails to recognise or evaluate the cumulative psychological harm already being experienced.
- 8.3 SEAS therefore asks the Examining Authority to recognise these shortcomings and to conclude that the current Health & Wellbeing assessment does not provide a safe or sound basis for decision-making.
- 8.4 An independent, clinically led Mental Health & Trauma Impact Assessment undertaken by HCPC-registered clinicians or senior public health specialists is required. This assessment must incorporate local mental health data, cumulative NSIP impacts and the significant lived experience evidence presented through community surveys, written submissions and the Open Floor Hearings.
- 8.5 Only such a rigorous and professionally informed assessment can provide the Examining Authority with the reliable foundation necessary to understand the true implications of the Sea Link proposal for community health, wellbeing and resilience.

References

- 1 (EV4-003, EV4-005, EV4-007, EV4-009, EV4-011, EV4-013, EV4-015, EV4-017) Sea Link Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1) Transcripts, Sessions 1–4 (November 2025).
 - 2 APP-058) National Grid: National Grid: *ES 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing*
<https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN020026-000243-6.2.2.11%20Part%202%20Suffolk%20Chapter%2011%20Health%20and%20Wellbeing.pdf>
 - 3 Suffolk Mind & East Suffolk Council (2025). *Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham Wellbeing Report (August 2025)*.
<https://www.suffolkmind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Aldeburgh-Leiston-and-Saxmundham-Wellbeing-Report.pdf>
 - 4 (APP-088) National Grid: *EN020026-000270-6.3.1.1.A – Statement of 2 Competence* (Environmental Statement Appendix 1.1.A).
<https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN020026-000270-6.3.1.1.A%20ES%20Appendix%201.1.A%20Statement%20of%20Competence.pdf>
- Public Health England's *Health Impact Assessment in Spatial Planning* (2020)
IEMA's *Guidelines for Health in EIA* (2022)

APPENDIX A

SEAS Relative Representation (RR-5210) on Mental Health and Wellbeing, dated 23 June 2025

APPENDIX B

Suffolk Mind & East Suffolk Council - Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham Wellbeing Report

APPENDIX A

**SUFFOLK ENERGY ACTION SOLUTIONS (SEAS)
Relevant Response**

**HEALTH & WELLBEING
SEA LINK DCO**

PINS Ref: EN020026

IP Ref: [REDACTED]

Date: 20 June 2025

RR Deadline: 23 June 2025

RELEVANT REPRESENTATION: HEALTH & WELLBEING - SEA LINK

(EN020026) Submitted by Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS) - [REDACTED]

Executive Summary

This submission presents SEAS's formal objection to the Sea Link project on the grounds of mental health and wellbeing. It provides detailed evidence that the Environmental Statement (APP-058) fails to assess the serious and ongoing psychological harm already being experienced by communities in East Suffolk. This includes stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and social breakdown, as revealed through a 2025 public survey by SEAS and S.A.N.D. This harm is cumulative and intensifying due to overlapping NSIP projects (Sizewell C, EA1N, EA2, and LionLink).

The Environmental Statement:

- Minimises long-term construction and decommissioning phases by misclassifying them as "short-term"
- Ignores government cohesion data and public mental health policy (NPPF, NICE, IEMA)
- Fails to consider community engagement or lived experience
- Lacks credible mitigation or mental health indicators

The Examining Authority is respectfully requested to recommend that Development Consent be refused unless and until a full, independent and cumulative mental health and wellbeing assessment is completed in accordance with best practice.

1. Introduction

1.1 The following is the response of Suffolk Energy Action Solutions (SEAS), prepared by Iryna Tulovska, Counsellor and Psychologist MA, on the mental health and wellbeing impacts of the Sea Link proposal (EN020026). It is based on a comprehensive review of relevant DCO documents, including APP-057, APP-058, APP-059, APP-060, APP-091 to APP-093, APP-362, and national policy guidance (NPPF, IEMA, NHS HUDU).

1.2 SEAS also conducted a public survey with 131 responses in April–May 2025 in collaboration with S.A.N.D. This provides primary evidence from affected communities that has not been accounted for in National Grid's Environmental Statement. The key findings are summarised in the Psychological Impact Statement (Section 3) and Appendix 1.

2. Context

1.1 The Environmental Statement (APP-058) claims that supporting technical assessments will manage risks to health and wellbeing. Table 11.1 states:

1.1.1 "It is expected that measures relevant to supporting technical assessments will manage risks and ensure effects on health and wellbeing are unlikely/minimised directly."

1.2 The methodology cited includes IEMA (para 11.4.22) and NHS HUDU (para 11.4.23), and the following technical chapters are referenced as relevant:

- Landscape and Visual
- Traffic and Transport
- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism
- Water Environment
- Geology and Hydrogeology

1.3 Paragraph 11.4.30 confirms that baseline data was drawn from desk-based research alone.

1.4 SEAS disputes the adequacy of this approach. The assessment lacks robustness, misapplies terminology, ignores lived experience, and fails to meet the holistic definition of health set out in IEMA (2022). The consequences for public wellbeing are already real and measurable.

3. Key Objections

3.1 Failure to Assess Mental Health and Community Stress Adequately

APP-058 primarily treats health as physical and claims mental health impacts are not significant unless air, noise or traffic exceed thresholds. This fails to follow NICE NG44, IEMA (2022), or the NHS HUDU requirement for engagement-based scoping.

3.2 Limitations of Desk-Based Assessment

Paragraph 11.4.30 confirms reliance on online sources. This omits community engagement and ignores core determinants like emotional security, stress, or sense of place — all key factors in psychosocial health. Government guidance (HUDU 2019, IEMA 2022) calls for local consultation, especially at the DCO stage.

3.3 Misclassification of Duration and Significance

The 5-year construction phase is called "short-term" yet under EIA guidance this is clearly "medium-term". Likewise, the 2-year decommissioning phase is wrongly described as short-term. This affects conclusions about significance.

3.4 Flawed Baseline on Community Cohesion

The ES cites outdated 2021 figures to claim the East of England has low cohesion. The 2023/24 Community Life Survey shows it is above national averages in 6 out of 7 metrics. Therefore, para 11.9.54 and the resulting para 11.9.59 conclusions are invalid. (See Table 1 below.)

Table 1. Community Cohesion Metrics – Sea Link ES Baseline vs Actual 2023/24 Data

Indicator	Claimed in APP-058 (para 11.7.22)	Actual 2023/24 Data (East of England)
Sense of belonging	64%	>61% (above national avg)
Neighbourly interactions	Not reported	71% (vs 69%)
Neighbourhood collaboration	Not reported	58% (vs 55%)
Neighbourhood trust	Not reported	49% (vs 40%)
Local area cohesion	Not reported	84% (vs 81%)
Pride in local area	Not reported	61% (vs 59%)
Satisfaction with green spaces	Not reported	79% (vs 75%)
Area improved in last 2 years	Not reported	10% (vs 11%)

3.5 Cumulative Impact Ignored

APP-060 fails to evaluate cumulative mental health burdens from concurrent NSIPs affecting the same population — Sizewell C, EA1N, EA2, and LionLink.

3.6 Vulnerable Populations Overlooked

The Equality Impact Assessment (APP-362) acknowledges risks to elderly, disabled and neurodivergent residents but APP-058 fails to identify localised impacts in Friston, Aldeburgh or Saxmundham.

3.7 Failure to Assess Alternatives or Avoidance

APP-058 breaches NPS EN-1 para 4.4.4 and EIA Reg 14(2)(d) by failing to assess avoidance strategies or robust alternatives. SEAS's proposed offshore HVDC grid was not considered.

3.8 Lack of Mental Health Indicators or Monitoring

No indicators of stress, resilience, anxiety or quality of life are used in APP-058 or supporting documents (APP-341, APP-342, APP-346, APP-350).

3.9 No Lived Experience Included

3.9.1 The public survey shows measurable emotional and psychological harm is already occurring. (See Table 2 below.)

Table 2. SEAS/SAND Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey – Key Quantitative Findings

Survey Indicator	% of Respondents
Very aware of Sea Link	93%
Aware of multiple NSIPs	98%
Anxiety or worry	85%
Frustration or anger	85%
Sadness or disappointment	80%
Uncertainty or helplessness	72%
Depression	40%
Insomnia	21%
Significant negative impact on mental health	69%
Mild negative impact	26%
No impact	2%
Positive effect	0.8%

Source: SEAS/SAND Survey, May 2025

3.9.2 A summary of key inconsistencies between the Sea Link Environmental Statement and available evidence is presented in Table 3 below.”

Table 3. Inconsistencies in Sea Link Environmental Statement – Mental Health and Wellbeing

ES Claim or Conclusion	Source (APP Ref)	Contradictory Evidence	Source
5-year construction is "short-term"	APP-058, para 11.9.18	1–5 yrs = medium-term	Lanpro (2023), IEMA (2022)
Low community cohesion	APP-058, para 11.7.22	2023/24 survey shows stronger cohesion	DCMS Community Life Survey 2023/24
Desk-based baseline is sufficient	APP-058, para 11.4.30	SEAS/SAND survey shows direct harm	SEAS 2025 survey
Cumulative effects are minor	APP-060, Sec. 13.4	Multiple NSIPs affect same communities	APP-060, Tables 13.31–13.34
Mitigation will manage risks	APP-341 to APP-350	No mental health monitoring or support	SEAS review of APPs

4. Psychological Impact Statement

4.1 Concerning the Cumulative Emotional and Mental Health Consequences of the Sea Link Project and Related Large-Scale Energy Infrastructure in East Suffolk

4.2 Introduction: In 2021, Dr. Jane McNeill, Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society and a clinical psychologist specializing in anxiety and trauma, provided expert testimony on the anticipated psychological risks to communities affected by the East Anglia One North and Two Projects. Her analysis was grounded in theory, clinical evidence and understanding, and highlighted how such long-term factors as uncertainty, deterioration of environment, destruction of rural life, combined with planning uncertainty and institutional disregard, would seriously threaten the mental well-being of local residents.

4.3 Four years later, in 2025, Dr. Jane McNeill's warnings have substantiated, and the survey has reported lived experience of 131 residents of the realities she warned us about: decrease of resilience, fall into helplessness, chronic stress, and even suicidal despair. The statement draws straight on an anonymous public survey conducted in May 2025 alongside in-depth qualitative responses; it gathers the psychological feedback from the area affected by the cumulative impact of the Sea Link proposal, Sizewell C, and related Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

4.4 The survey becomes a testimonial record of how deeply mental health of East Suffolk community has been affected, fuelled by environmental loss, forced

helplessness, unfair planning decisions, and a fear of losing the way of life. It mirrors the emotional cost to people which has been dismissed as collateral and non-significant by the Sea Link Environmental Statement. These are real harms affecting real community right now, in social, emotional and psychological terms, and the impact of the harm is cumulative, increasing with each and every additional project.

4.5 The statement below summarises the key data via thematic clusters, backed by citations from residents (drawn from descriptive replies to questions (hereinafter Q) 2a, 3a, 4a and 5a in Appendix 1) and demonstrates the most typical reactions and feedbacks.

4.5.1 Headline Results (Quantitative Highlights):

- Awareness of Sea Link: 93% very aware, 7% somewhat aware
- Awareness of multiple NSIPs: 98% aware, 2% unaware
- Emotional responses to Sea Link:
 - Anxiety or worry – 85%
 - Frustration or anger – 85%
 - Sadness or disappointment – 80%
 - Uncertainty or helplessness – 72%
 - Depression – 40%
 - Insomnia – 21%
- Direct mental health impact:
 - Significant negative impact – 69%
 - Mild negative impact – 26%
 - No impact – 2%
 - Positive effect – 0.8%
- Main concerns included:
 - Environmental impact – 95%
 - Noise, traffic, disruption – 80%
 - Economic insecurity (property/tourism issues) – 67%
 - Long-term uncertainty – 64%
- 69% confirmed the project had significantly harmed their mental wellbeing. A further 26% reported mild negative effects. Only 3 people said it had no impact.

The above confirms what Dr. Jane McNeill predicted in the area: long-term, unresolved stress and significant degradation in emotional and mental health, closely tied to infrastructure-led environment destruction.

4.5.2 Thematic Analysis and Community Voices:

4.5.2.1 Emotional Exhaustion and Chronic Stress

Our bodies and minds are well-equipped to manage short-term acute threats. But when the threat is ongoing, diffuse, impossible to control, and close to home, the stress response becomes chronic. Over 70% of open-ended responses demonstrate a state of sustained emotional strain, consistent with chronic stress and symptoms of long-term pre-clinical trauma. The most common symptoms include:

- Hypervigilance, constant dread and startle response
- Sleep disturbance, nightmares
- Emotional numbness or tearfulness
- Physical symptoms: nausea, exhaustion, tension
- Irritability, anger, feeling “on edge”
- Persistent intrusive thoughts about loss, destruction, harm in the future

4.5.2.2 Numerous respondents report impression as if their lives are no longer under their control. Many mention an “existential dread” about future for themselves, their descendants and nature itself:

“I have days of depression thinking what's the point. I'm normally a bright person but now I often don't want to go out and spend time in my bed and sleep so not to think about it.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

“Loss of sleep with concerns over noise pollution, light pollution and damage to the environment.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

“My anxiety is through the roof... Trying to self-help but banging one's head against a wall.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

4.6 Mental Health Deterioration: Clinical Concerns

4.6.1 The language of the responders of the survey reveals symptoms associated with acute and chronic clinical conditions. While not being a diagnostic tool, it shows increased mental health risks across the community:

- **Depression:** over 50% described persistent low mood, helplessness, sadness and a sense of mourning, hopelessness, pointlessness and social withdrawal
- **Anxiety:** Over 50% described constant worry, sleep disruption, or fear of the future
- **Panic and physiological distress:** 10% mentioned nausea, stomach upset, heart palpitations, or dissociation when thinking about the projects
- **Suicidal ideation:** A smaller but significant number described thoughts of suicide or a desire to leave the area permanently for their own safety

4.6.2 Vulnerable groups are particularly affected, include older residents with long-term ties to the place, individuals with chronic health conditions, carers, neurodivergent people. The same patterns demonstrate individuals whose work relates to the environment (farming, tourism, etc.)

“A feeling of despair for the loss of much loved peaceful environment, a loss of my home.” (Q2a, Appendix 1)

“It has added further to the poor state of my mental health... decisions of 2017–2024 that have similarly destroyed what was a peaceful retirement.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

“Seeing the trees and hedgerows being depleted and knowing they’ll not grow back for decades makes me constantly think about my life expectancy.” (Q4a, Appendix 1)

“I lie awake and mourn what we would lose if this disastrous project goes ahead.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

4.7 Powerlessness as a Primary Psychological Driver of Harm, and Institutional Betrayal

4.7.1 One of the most psychologically harmful stressors is powerlessness and helplessness, perceived absence of control, combined with a sense of injustice, in particular.

4.7.2 Many residents have spent a lot of their time engaging in social activity like organizing campaigns, writing letters, collecting and submitting evidences, to find their concerns dismissed as non-significant causing emotional breach between local people and developers, citizens and government:

“I feel like we are being dumped on because we don’t matter.” (Q2a, Appendix 1)

“The people making the decisions won’t listen or make appropriate changes.” (Q4a, Appendix 1)

“The inability of the planning authorities to influence this – our local representatives are ignored.” (Q4a, Appendix 1)

“The choices all seem to be made based on profit... not what is sustainable.” (Q4a, Appendix 1)

4.7.3 This pattern addressed as institutional betrayal aggravates feelings of helplessness and results in social withdrawal. The word "ignored" appears more than 25 times in the full set of qualitative responses, which reflects deep disruption of trust.

4.7.4 This situation is not only sad, but is clinically significant as well. Disempowering could be a precursor to depression and trauma-related disorders, and the risk significantly increases if it is combined with loss of housing stability, community, cohesion, access to nature, etc.

4.8 Environmental Grief and Eco-Trauma

4.8.1 Environmental loss is one of the most cited concerns; responders demonstrate strong ties to the environment and landscape, and the destruction of it provokes grief and bodily symptoms:

“My stomach churns at the very thought of it. The devastation it will cause.”
(Q2a, Appendix 1)

“Just feel stressed & ignored all the time.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

“Destruction of farmland, country roads, our landscape, beautiful views.”
(Q4a, Appendix 1)

“It illicit[s] a real sense of panic, that we – in our natural world – are being concreted over.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

4.8.2 This pattern resonated with the growing field of eco-psychology, which strongly correlates destruction of the environment with emotional trauma and existential anguish. Over 70% of responses reference the natural world as a source of identity, safety, peace, and recovery.

4.9 Disruption of Daily Life and Loss of Safety

4.9.1 Many responders mention practical and sensory triggers (light and noise pollution, increased traffic, road closures, restricted access) and the loss of personal safety and space:

“I have respiratory problems and I worry about the effects from the dust and pollution.” (Q4a, Appendix 1)

“We will be plagued with surveys and work for many more years to come... a loss of both peace and quiet and our privacy.” (Q2a, Appendix 1)

“Our access lane will also be used by the developers. The impact on us is huge.” (Q2a, Appendix 1)

4.9.2 For some individual it triggers their actual conditions:

“I am autistic and struggle with OCD. Ongoing construction is difficult from a sensory standpoint.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

4.10 Socioeconomic Instability and Relocation Stress

4.10.1 Responders express economic insecurity and housing-related distress, together with forced relocation and socioeconomic failure. They are trapped in unsellable and discounted homes, loose equity, safety, and plan to relocate against their will:

“Feeling trapped in that I might not be able to sell my property.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

“We made the decision to move away from the area...” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

“Concern for the value of my home.” (Q3a, Appendix 1)

“Economic loss we have suffered through no fault of our own... the failure of the developers or government to offer any compensation.” (Q4a, Appendix 1)

4.10.2 These contexts worsen the distress of retired or economically vulnerable residents, especially in areas relying on land-based livelihoods and tourism. This is not only financial pressure, but it destroys home security, safety, identity, and ability to plan the future.

5. Study Conclusion

5.1 This survey confirms what clinical experts and Dr. Jane McNeill in particular predicted: the psychological and emotional toll of the Sea Link and similar infrastructure projects like is serious, pervasive, and continuing. There is clear evidence that the psychological toll of Sea Link and related NSIPs is not insignificantly hypothetical, as one could derive from any desk-based research of theoretical data in the reviewed Environmental Statement; it is a growing public mental health emergency throughout the affected area, characterized by:

- Chronic stress and emotional exhaustion,
- Predominance of depression and despair,
- Feelings of powerlessness and institutional betrayal, intensifying emotional harm,
- Widespread environmental grief and eco-trauma,
- Disruption of safety, routine, and psychological stability of people,
- Socioeconomic uncertainty and distress, sense of displacement in one's own home

5.2 The above-mentioned cannot be considered as side effects or temporary reactions, they are serious main consequences such as ongoing and immersive degradation of wellbeing, meaning, and hope, which affect the entire community. This is public mental health crisis in progress.

5.3 The cumulative, wide-reaching, deepening with time mental health impact of the Sea Link and associated NSIP projects is already taking place, and this psychological harm is not collateral damage. It is real harm to real people, right now.

5.4 Respect for the natural world cannot be separated from respect for those who live there, and the reviewed Sea Link Environment Statement clearly demonstrates a lack of both. Therefore, it cannot be considered a valid and ethically mindful foundation for decisions that affect the environment and people's lives so deeply.

6. Overall Conclusion

The Sea Link Environmental Statement does not meet the minimum requirements of national policy or good health impact assessment. The project is already causing measurable psychological and emotional harm.

SEAS respectfully submits that consent should be refused unless a new, independent, community-informed cumulative health and wellbeing assessment is conducted, including primary data, vulnerable groups, and realistic avoidance strategies.

End

References:

APP-058 6.2.2.11 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 11 Health and Wellbeing.pdf

APP-059 6.2.2.12 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 12 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Intra-Project Cumulative Effects.pdf

APP-060 6.2.2.13 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 13 Suffolk Onshore Scheme Inter-Project Cumulative Effects.pdf

APP-091 6.3.1.5.A ES Appendix 1.5.A Cumulative Effects Assessment Methodologies

APP-092 6.3.1.5.B ES Appendix 1.5.B Inter-Project Cumulative Effects Long List

APP-093 6.3.1.5.C ES Appendix 1.5.C Inter-Project Cumulative Effects Short List

APP-057 6.2.2.10 Part 2 Suffolk Chapter 10 Socio-Economics, Recreation and Tourism

APP -362 7.9 Equalities Impact Assessment

NHS England's HUDU Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Toolkit 2019

Government Statistics -Community life survey 2023/24... Sense of Belonging to the Neighbourhood.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/community-life-survey-202324-annual-publication/community-life-survey-202324-neighbourhood-and-community#sense-of-belonging-to-the-neighbourhood>

Lanpro Services. (2023) *West Burton Solar Project, Environmental Statement, Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology, PINS reference EN010132, Document reference APP/WB6.2.2, APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)*

Oral presentation to ISH10 - SEAS-Mental Health, Wellbeing & Anxiety by Dr Jane McNeill (2021)

APPENDIX 1

National Grid's Sea Link Project - Mental Health survey

B *I* U  

S.A.N.D/SEAS are conducting a short survey to understand how the National Grid's Sea Link project has been affecting the well-being of people in East Anglia. Your responses will be very helpful and remain anonymous.

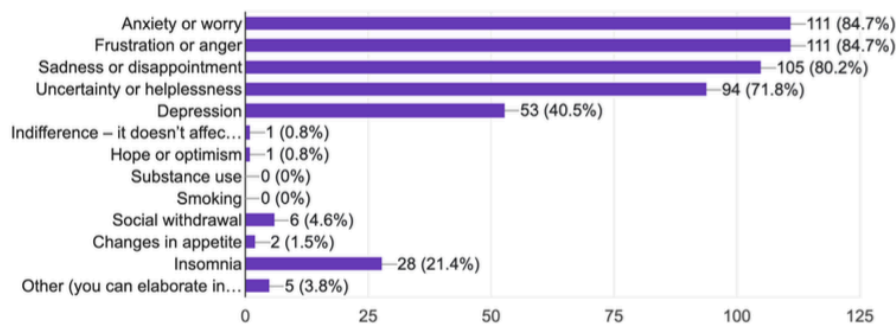
1. How aware are you of the National Grid's Sea Link project and its developments?

131 responses



2. What emotions, emotional states or behavioural changes does the current situation with the Sea Link project evoke in you? (Select all that apply)

131 responses



2-a. The situation with the Sea Line project evokes in me... (optional): 87 responses

Anxiety and sadness that our beautiful countryside will be destroyed.

Fear

Sheer Terror

All ways, linked to all the other things happening around this area and all the wars etc it's mind blowing

Despair

Much anger that Government have ignored SEAS campaign group's alternative solutions to the massive destruction they intend to wreak upon the Suffolk Coast. When Labour came in we all hoped they'd see sense and take the opportunity to go offshore but have been sadly swayed by the monopoly and profiteering National Grid and forged ahead even faster than the Conservatives were.

feelings of total hopelessness and extreme sadness

A combination of delight that so many people are involved offering different solutions to the appallingly destructive one that National Grid propose.

A deep disappointment; anger about short termism.

A sense of powerlessness and helplessness

Frustration and angry.

acute worry that our happy place is going to be desecrated...

Utter sadness at the lack of understanding or caring for nature and the good things we enjoy in this area. We live here primarily for the beauty and nature. Sacrificing the many benefits of living in the cities which most of our taxes subsidise. This plan shows indifference to our distress and loss while shouting Nimby at us when we object. Two Tier.

I feel so angry at the disregard of the local environment & the people around. I feel like we are being dumped on because we don't matter. The open space is just that, not a building site or dumping ground. We need fields for food not huge concrete monsters.

Deep depression and anxiety at the destruction of our beautiful countryside and the loss of habitat for wild animals and birds

Anger sadness frustration

exasperation and despair

A feeling of despair for the loss of much loved peaceful environment, a loss of my home

A sense of helplessness about our natural environment, about the fact that human infrastructure always prevails over any other argument, an intense feeling of overdevelopment/overcrowding on a very finite and small piece of land, a sense of not being heard.

Anxious

My stomach churns at the very thought of it. The devastation it will cause

Frustration at no 'big picture/joined up' thinking

High levels of stress and feeling powerless and not listened to. Moved to Suffolk for health reasons, for tranquility and stress relief and to appreciate the natural Unspoilt environment.

Infuriates beyond belief

Utter devastation and helplessness (btw you have a typo - Sea Link not Sea Line!)

Wanton vandalism & desecrating the beautiful Suffolk countryside

While understanding the need for green energy, I feel helpless and deeply anxious at the roughshod and unnecessary destruction of the rural environment, nature and wildlife, when other less damaging options (such as a sea route going more directly to a brown site such as Bradwell) is clearly the most sensible and least damaging options. It seems Lionlink (an American company) are pursuing what for them will bring them maximum profit, and have no interest in cooperating with local, informed sources. We only have one planet and every unnecessary erosion of our natural environment is a nail in its coffin.

A feeling of dread and hopelessness.

Anger at the bad decision making by the powers that be

Anger, frustration, sadness, helplessness
A heavy heart
Fear and sadness
Feeling of being railroaded by international capitalists and government
Disbelief that an area of conservation is being allowed to be devastated by our Government
Depression at the ruination of our beautiful county
Anger and sense of helplessness
Anxiety about the future: how I will cope, what will happen to the town, wider anxiety about the loss of natural habitats and what that means for society. We depend on nature for our physical survival, and in a world which is increasingly stressful, having natural places to access to allow us to recharge etc. are so important. This area is not just important for local residents, so many others use it as a regular escape to recharge from their city lives. It makes me really fear for the future that our government can make decisions like this that completely disregard the importance of nature, for our society. It also invokes anger that there is a viable alternative.
Horried that this could actually happen
My overriding emotions are around frustration and sadness given the highly destructive nature of the individual energy plans for Suffolk. This area has many protective orders on it after decades of hard work to preserve the very important ecosystems and wildlife that are essential to our future. The fact that the government is allowing so many companies to individually plan and disregard these ecological and scientific protection orders is extremely worrying for the future of our environment and climate change, we should not be destroying all the progress that has been made towards preserving the environment and protecting our climate with such poor planning.
A depression for the future of our natural world
Despair at the refusal to protect a beautiful village and the rich ecology all around it. Political vandalism when there are several much saner options.
nothing seems clear- 24,000 trees down already and don't know if they are you, Sizewell C or other.
Anger at the needless destruction of our environment - in the interests of 'green'. Frustration that the totality of the energy projects in the area are not being considered.
Horror at the needless destruction of our beautiful county.
complete disillusion & disgust with the politicians that totally disregard the environment & pursue flawed & outdated policies thinking they know best despite evidence to the contrary
A great sadness to see such ignorance and destruction.
A deep sense of sadness as there is only a limited amount of our Heritage Coast and it should be respected.
A massive frustration that there is no joined up thinking and that this fragile, small coastline is being dumped upon. The sense of loss is overwhelming.
Bafflement and anger at the shortsightedness and lack of consideration for the environment and community.

Desperation & exasperation
<p>Frustration at the lack of consideration of the cumulative impact of all these projects in a small area. Sizewell C is enough for this small area of the country.</p> <p>Anger that no joined-up thinking from Government. Unwillingness on Government's part to look at options which won't further devastate the countryside. No real consideration of using brownfield sites closer to electricity demand.</p> <p>The madness of destroying wildlife, trees, farmland in what is claimed to be the pursuit of clean, green energy/"net zero" etc. These platitudes are meaningless.</p> <p>The Labour Government's attempts to boost the economy with a slew of new data centres (needed for further developments & use of Artificial Intelligence) will emit loads of carbon dioxide & mean net zero is unattainable. (India, China & US are huge polluters & won't cut back on their use of fossil fuels.) Meanwhile, beautiful parts of the country will have been destroyed for no reason.</p>
Bafflement as to why we are destroying so much natural environment for a green cause
Extreme frustration and anger
A sense of impending doom
Generally higher stress levels
Sadness about the poor organisation
Concern about flood gates scenario
Fury and complete despair
<p>Disbelief at the site they have chosen - prime agricultural land; so close to Manor Gardens, on a really high spot (for Suffolk) so will be so very visible for miles and miles.</p> <p>Anger and sadness that there's a better alternative to the destruction and devastation to the Suffolk Coast and surrounding areas but they are not being chosen. This may well be on cost but if the impact of the project/s is taken into account such as loss of countryside, tourism and wellbeing of local residents it's a very sad and shortsighted view. I love Saxmundham and its community but sadly I feel forced to consider relocating (and all the stress that entails) to help my mental health and that of my family. Every time I drive anywhere there's more needless devastation and it's only going to get worse. Seeing my thoughts put down in print makes me feel devastated.</p>
Feelings of failure, helplessness and despair
Shock
Just the inability to have a say in projects that are destructive and for their own capital gain, when there are alternatives. The company claim that the alternatives are more costly, but we don't know that.
Deep concern for my children's future- by destroying their lives
I feel depressed about it and I have had dreams and I wake up in floods of tears about it all
Yes
A genuine feeling of helplessness and that the opinions of local residents aren't being given the appropriate level of concern

A deep sadness that the power of shareholders outside of the UK can cause so much damage to the environment, the community and people right to live a peaceful life. All for profit dressed as net zero.

It feels as if moving to the countryside was pointless, and that nobody out there is listening.

Worry about losing my job which is related to tourism, worried about my house value dropping

We will be very close to the pylons. They will affect the views from our house, where we walk and we will suffer the noise and inconvenience while they are being installed.

Anger

It makes me feel very upset as this does not have to be like this it could go off shore. It will ruin the habitat for wild life, take up good farm land and I worry about flooding in saxmundham

Despair that this is happening

Terrible sadness as I moved here just 3years ago to be near the coast I love.

The project will affect us directly- our property - we'll have a cable route running both in front to one side of our home and the National grid substation and SRP substations will be immediately in front. Consequently we will be plagued with surveys and work for many more years to come. Our access lane will also be used by the developers. The impact on us is huge - already we have had years of contesting these projects and the uncertainty around them -now we are faced with construction of the SPR projects and now the DCO process and possible construction of Sea link and later Lionlink. If lion Link is given the go-ahead that will also involve another cable route to the side of our property and additions to the National Grid substation which is planned to be built in front of our property.

Currently our home has a rural location surrounded by fields with views towards Friston Village and is half a mile from the nearest road. The impact is and will be huge with disruption on going for years and a loss of both peace and quiet and our privacy together with accompanying concerns about the security of our property. The failure to offer any compensation for the loss of value to our property adds to our anxiety and worry

Dismissed over concerns during consultation, helpless.

Sadness, hopelessness, fear of loosing our countryside

Rage because we are powerless

A violation of people's rights and a rape of the landscape. We will never recover in our life span nor will the local landscape, flora and wildlife.

Anger

Disgust no one can prevent destruction of nature and disgust none of the companies involved are not being held to account

A feeling of desolation, for the countryside, the ecological system and people! Also having had cancer - the worry that so much technology will increase illnesses substantially in semi urban environments.

Anger at the destruction of a beautiful area of coastline which I've previously enjoyed, and frustration at the system where people's views are ignored.

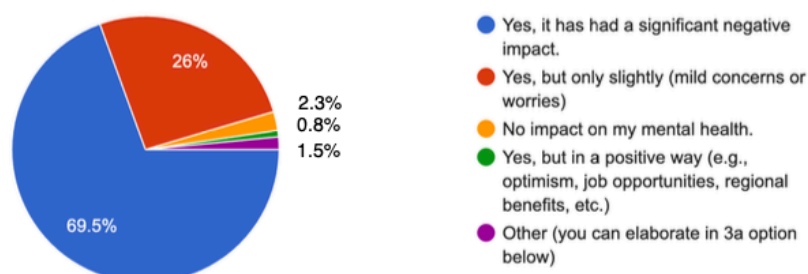
Utter despair

A sense of bereavement. Loss of the east suffolk i have lived in and loved for 71 years.

Sadness and helplessness

3. Has the Sea Link project impacted your mental well-being so far?

131 responses



3a. Other: The Sea Link project impacted my mental well-being in another way, specifically (optional): 53 responses

Depression

My anxiety is through the roof, I want to move.

Trying to self help but banging ones head against a wall with the locals lack of enthusiasm

Even though I believe I look after myself well with exercise and a balanced diet, I have days of depression thinking what's the point we are just little ants running around being squashed by giants. Having seen the devastation Sizewell is doing it has made me realise what is to come with the infrastructure that offshore wind will create. I'm normally a bright person but now I often don't want to go out and spend time in my bed and sleep so not to think about it.

Taking up time to understand impacts and share with family. Impact on house value and ability to plan. Stress and worry

Uncertainty for the future as we do not know the extent of the multiple projects in progress and to come

Anxiety over financial implications. Life plans in disarray

inability to relax during our latest holiday in the area seeing all the destruction and potential loss of wildlife habitat and beautiful areas

Just feel stressed & ignored all the time

Feeling trapped in that I might not be able to sell my property

feel trapped as will struggle to sell house and move

We made the decision to move away from the area.,

It illicit a real sense of panic, that we - in our natural world - are being concreted over. Nowhere to go.

Makes me feel sick at the devastation it will cause to all nature the entire echo system.

Made mentally unstable

I feel the rest of my life will be blighted by all this destruction

The feeling of helplessness

Not being listened to, frustration at the disinterest and disregard of the perpetrators in failing to listen to less environmentally destructive methods of achieving the objectives

Constantly concerned about the biodiversity destruction.

Feeling helpless

Failure of gov and developers to explore better long term solutions in the name of haste and profit. Also the mindset that land is a resource for exploitation only rather than a source of many other non-monetary values

Fear for the future as this could be the tip of an iceberg

Wondering why I moved here 20 years ago

Anxiety about whether I will need to move, what the impact will be on my mental health. I have struggled with mental health issues (anxiety and depression) my whole life. I have chosen to live in this area because of the access to nature it offers which is really important to my well-being. I consider myself a 'highly sensitive person' (see Elaine Aaron), my work has been/is in the education, ngo and academic sectors. I contribute to society in this way but do get overwhelmed and need this stable access to the natural world to keep myself well. Many people choose to live in environments where there is good access to nature etc because of fundamental personal characteristics such as their personality type or past life experiences.

Loss of sleep

I am resilient and enjoy stable mental health, but the serious concern arising from the extraordinary proposals that will lead to such want, and destruction of our ecosystems is causing me to have sleepless nights and a background ground level of anxiety that I've been entirely unused to. I have tended to trust in government to make the right decisions when it comes to our environment, but there now seems to be total disregard of all the progress that has been made in order to meet at zero. It seems that zero will result in so much more damage than any of these renewable energy projects planned for East Suffolk

It has spoilt my enjoyment of the surrounding area worrying about the impact it will have on a landscape that I & my family have loved for many years.

It has become a nagging concern. I worry about it every day.

I worry about the future, being a business owner which our children will inherit. Building will take at least 4 years and much of the wildlife has been trashed. The roads are too small for the level of current traffic, let alone more traffic

Distress over the needless building of infrastructure, roads etc which can never be reversed.

Very depressing. Such devastation of the countryside and alternatives are available

The thought of more infrastructure being brought to our area causes deep anxiety. The trains at night supplying the route to Sizewell C often wakes me and I dread the possibility of further disruption.

Anger towards our government and the system that disregards the people in the area, environmental devastation and frankly ridiculous plans. Yet again huge companies are ruling with money and power. It is disgraceful and makes me consider moving abroad to get away from a corrupt system.

Anxiety

Frustration and sadness at devastating impact on our wonderful countryside and quality of life

Mourning the loss of Suffolk

Trying to sell my home. I want to stay in the area even though there is destruction
It has been my home for 60 years

I lie awake and mourn what we would lose if this disastrous project goes ahead

Feeling low with the prospect of even further destruction of our beautiful corner of Suffolk. Sizewell's cutting down of so many trees and hedges has been a big wake up call and I'm worried about what will come with Sea Link

It has added further to the poor state of my mental health on top of similar feelings of despair resulting from ScottishPower Renewables's & National Grid's East Anglia ONE North and East Anglia TWO project decisions of 2017 -2024 that have similarly destroyed what was a peaceful retirement to the East Suffolk coast.

Concern for the value of my home

Frustration that this disaster is going ahead

Yes

Loss of sleep with concerns over noise pollution, light pollution and damage to the environment. I also worry how it will effect the value of my property should I want to move away from the destruction.

I am autistic and struggle with OCD. Ongoing construction is difficult from a sensory standpoint and makes me incredibly anxious.

The uncertainty about the impact, feeling ignored. No real consultation or consideration of alternatives

It has a cumulative effect, combined with the destruction of our local landscape for Sizewell C, which is deeply upsetting to witness, in addition to the effects of climate change, the state of our rivers, and the general degradation of our natural environment, at both a national and a global scale.

Depression,wishing that I hadn't moved. I knew nothing about it.

As above -

I don't want to loose our countryside

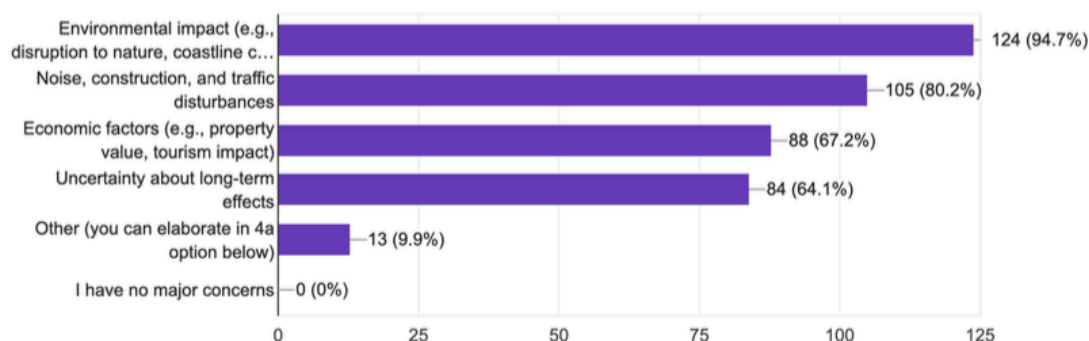
It has made me feel I have to lose my security by moving home and away from friends and family

I love the natural world. I fear for diversity and wildlife, on which we rely.

Upset at the destruction to nature for something which supposedly has an environmental benefit. Anxious about the impact on wildlife.

4. What concerns you most about the project relating to your well-being?

131 responses



4a. Other: What worries me most is... (optional): 66 responses

I am of an age where it won't be a long battle for me but the younger generations will suffer

I have respiratory problems and I worry about the effects from the dust and pollution created from these massive construction builds. Will I have to wear a mask.

My sleep is disturbed by light and it worries me whether the 24 hr security lights will have an effect on me.

When I want to drive anywhere it is already taking me extra time. When full construction of 6 NSIP projects happens in the next few years we are going to be gridlocked into our towns and villages. I could go on.

the destruction of what little is left of nature and what will happen to all the living beings that will lose their homes and die as a result

Seeing the trees and hedgerows being depleted and knowing they'll not grow back for decades makes me constantly think about my life expectancy. This in itself is depressing thinking "I've only got 20+ years left on this planet"

Bringing up my family in an industrialised area when I chose here to raise them. Now thats been taken away. Out side construction companies taking up already limited resources. Not feeling safe.

Tourism and local economy. Friends and family not visiting.

That we are powerless in the face of these multiple projects

On a personal level finance. Devastation for the village.

special areas will be desecrated and that wildlife habitat will be adversely affected

Pylons and the dangers connected with them. Destruction of habitat and natural beauty. We have only one major road to get about and it will be clogged by trucks noise and police.

I feel once built more will be added in the future because "it's easier". Look at Sizewell A, B now C & D will be close behind. This whole are will just become an energy hub in what was a coastline of outstanding beauty.

This area relies largely on seasonal tourism which will be greatly impacted by the loss of the beautiful countryside ans well as all the contrusction work and lorries

You can't replace the destroyed areas and there is a better way

Unable to see my property and being stuck with all the noise and teaffic

makes this area a target for attack in these uncertain times

Loss of nature and peacefulness

The fact that valuable and beautiful ecological 'empty' landscape and nature spots are being used for human development. The fact that the green energy bandwagon is being abused for commercial gain.

It's being build on the cheap better options are available but NG does not want the cost

Decline in physical health

The cumulative effect of planned industrialisation over an extended period and that, along with Sizewell, means this once unique and protected area will not only be ruined but also become a major security risk in an already war-ridden world.

Damage to the nature habitat and unnecessary

the destruction of the tourism industry and the reduction in the capicity of growing local food

Suffolk will change forever

Unnecessarily complex solutions to the situation

The amount of extra traffic it will bring.

The long term impact

Tail is wagging dog. developers free reining. Gov encouraging this.

Environmental impact - we rely on the natural world and need unspoilt places for our well being, to build connection to and appreciation for nature.

Permanent loss of nature

The plans to come through protected saltmarsh's and bird reserves seems entirely illogical. This is my overriding concern of these projects. The salt marshes. in themselves also act as carbon capture environments that are incredibly valuable to our net zero ambitions. These delicate environments should never be part of the consideration for major construction and destruction when can look at offshore options and bringing this power assure at Brownfield locations. We should not be destroying part of our ecological resource to reduce carbon. And preserve wildlife in the environment in order to meet another NetZero target. The Netherlands have achieved this and we should learn from them and do the same.

Is the hypocrisy whilst destroying the natural world under the guise of producing energy to supposedly help the natural world

The disregarding of the deep concerns of those whose lives will be so seriously affected for the worse.

The choices seem all to be made based on profit for the various private companies. None it is based on what is based on current thoughts of sustainable and suitable choices. ie the off shore systems

The inability of the planning authorities to influence this - our local representatives are ignored

Beautiful suffolk countryside being needlessly destroyed. Once the roads are in more and more houses will be built.

That there are so many people being lied to by the politicians & the power companies - they are rigging the system against us.

You cannot get back the things that have been and are being destroyed; they are gone forever.

No one is considering the alternatives

Worried that this is simply a profit making enterprise for a few whilst devastating the life of many...the government is not listening, it is a brutal attack on what is most precious to mankind..

The long term impact in the area as a whole as well as the disruption that we will inevitably endure.

The long term effects on wildlife in this area

The environmental vandalism. Over 26,000 trees already pulled down for Sizewell C. The county doesn't have the infrastructure for these projects!

Sea Link project will further devastate the countryside & wildlife & farming land.

The adverse effect on the wildlife & nature is deeply concerning.

Irreparable damage to the area's thriving tourism industry.

Light and air pollution. Displaced wildlife

The complete change of our environment

Long term environmental impact

The loss of our beloved Suffolk

Environmental

I fear the health implications such as EMF s

The combined damaging effects during the rest of my life due to the large number of massive National Strategic Infrastructure Projects that National Grid has allocated in the same area of rural land just 4 square miles in area around my home and village: : EDF Sizewell C Nuclear Powerstation project, National Grid's Sea Link and Lion Link, Iberdrola ScottishPower's EA1N and EA2, and clearly more such projects destroying the same communities and ecology that are to follow.

The area will become industrialised

We may have both cables and Pylons near our house.

The area has so many nature reserves that will be affected. Also a major income stream for the community is through tourism, we're already seeing mass destruction of trees/hedges etc. the building of these carbuncles will just put off people visiting our, currently, beautiful area

I worry that EMRs from the converter stations may cause colony collapse to my bees.

Destruction of farmland, country roads our landscape, beautiful views, lots more heavy traffic .

Tourism traffic and environmental impact

The impact on jobs due to lack of tourism and it will impact further a field in the tourism supply chain.

How long the construction will take and the inconvenience that might be caused during construction

That animals, birds trees will be trashed and disappear for ever.

Firstly, the impact on us as a family and our property as I have outlined above both the loss of amenity for example already not being able to walk our dogs round to Friston , the loss of our peaceful environment, the worry about the years of DCO PI hearings etc , surveying and construction, access to our property, road closures, et cetera, concerns about our privacy and the security of our property and finally the economic loss we have suffered through no fault of our own by the devaluing of our property because of these projects and the failure of the developers or the government to recognise this and offer any compensation. Secondly, concern about the impact on the area that we love. The whole of the Suffolk coastal area will be crisscrossed for years to come by cable routes , permanent large scale industrial infrastructure of substations and converter stations, congested potentially dangerous roads etc.together with the devastating impact already being felt in the area by the enablement works for sizewell C which have progressed a pace despite no final investment decision being made. This tiny unspoiled area is being devastated by these energy projects. It's a source of great unhappiness to all of us.

Once we lose the beautiful countryside we will never get it back.

Cumulative impact with other infrastructure

The greed and thoughtlessness of our elected representatives

The effect on the wildlife. The frustration that it is a money making exercise for the companies involved. Why is there no environmental oversight? Why is no one in authority being cautious to balance the needs of nature (on which we rely) with the energy 'needs'?

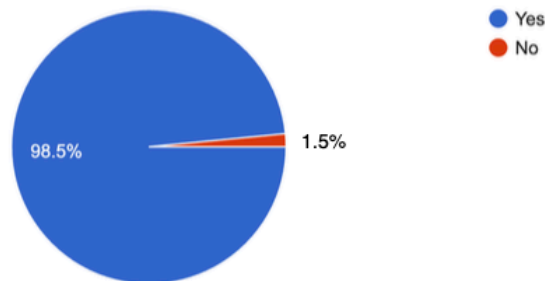
Just all of it! Suffolk has enough with Sizewell - B & C and maybe the rest of the alphabet..... Suffolk will be totally industrialised in the near future and there will be no coastline left!!!!

The people making the decisions won't listen or make appropriate changes

Have enjoyed frequent visits to the area. Future visits will be less. Will never again offer that peace and relaxation even if plans are abandoned. Looming threat forever.

5. Are you aware that the National Grid's Sea Link is just one of many energy projects planned for this area?

131 responses



5a. If "YES": How do you feel about them? (131 responses)

It's an absolutely awful and needless destruction of the environment and people's life!

They will have significant negative effects on the ecology and nature, economy and the daily lives of the people in fragile Coastal Suffolk

Horrified

Outraged... this is a very beautiful part of UK. Tourism and agriculture. What's the point of classifications such as AONB and SSSI if money and profit are allowed to demolish them?

Angry they are all impacting one area

Horrified

Full of frustration and anxiety

Horrified, they act without any form of feelings, just want to break our villages, towns and communities up and making too much money for their share holders

Terrified

The cumulative impact of 6 NSIP projects will industrialise this beautiful area that I have come love. The wildlife will disappear never to return or it will take 40 years if they do.

Fire of these projects is not properly assessed especially BESS, battery storage
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyrmy61967o> We have a voluntary fire service who will never be equipped to cope with fires in these huge buildings full of flammable and toxic materials.

Security is a risk. 30% of UK power is coming into East Anglia. Suffolk Coastal becomes a sitting target for terrorism.

Tourism decline with destroy the local economy. Whether it will ever come back who knows but on average it would take 20 odd years to build it back up

Again I could go on, but it is stressing me to do so.

Far too much for a rural area. This is a huge onslaught and attack on nature. We should be using brownfield sites not destroying more nature

Overwhelmed

Terrified

Horrified

Concerned
Disgusted for disregard.
Very sad.
Very distressed I do not want to spend the next 12 years on a building site locked away by traffic and construction
As above.
I feel Suffolk and its residents are being victimised
angry that so much destruction and negative impact on a once beautiful area.
Terrible that the authorities think we don't matter and our lifestyle and livelihood can be sacrificed to power areas far from here. There is a better cheaper strategic plan worked out by SEAS and others but short term thinking and vote winning in Cities far away drive the policies.as well as foreign profits. Suffolk already powers more than fair share of national power infrastructure. I am also anxious about the over concentration of projects in a small 10sq mile ? area. It puts us in the middle of the target for any attack and feels like a foolish strategy for national defence.
I am frustrated & upset about them all. It's turning an area of outstanding beauty into an area of concrete & tarmac. Huge lorries & pick ups filling the small roads. Rumbling the foundations from the houses. All the ancient trees & hedges just flattened & Carpark's carved in. It's just total disregard for local people & the environment.
Awful
Very frustrated especially when there are better options for delivering energy
Unbelievable
Incredulous and angry
devastated
We need renewable energy and to be Independent of other countries, but the devastation of the way it is being carried out with no regard for the landscape and the environment is appalling- already It is deeply shocking to see how it's being done
It is the cumulative effect that makes it even more oppressive. There is no sense of coordination, at a local or national al level. It feels like a program designed to 'meet targets' and 'make money for shareholders'. This is not a programme for national good.
Concerned and upset at the devastation. It seems unfair how one area is bearing the brunt.
Sad and angry
I believe that the onslaught of all the energy projects is too many. SZC is enough for this area. The proposed converter stations site near Saxmundham is a gross industrialisation adversely impacting the residence near by in numerous ways.
Completely disgusted that they think they can rip out/ up natural areas of significant importance. The total disregard for all the species living there. Endangered species, special areas. The total destruction of these special places. Never to recover, you can not replace it. It will NOT recover. Species will be lost forever. It is irreplaceable! Killing birds who fly into pylons on their flight path. It's unforgivable.
Concerned for the permanent detrimental impact upon the whole area. (Human & natural world)
Not properly and independently thought through
It just does not make sense to pile so many pipelines, pylons and other major electricity infrastructure into one place when there are alternatives. There are potential risks that must be

explored regarding Electromagnetic fields and their impact on human health and wildlife. There is significant research evidence of the dangers this can represent.

Negatively

Surrounded and threatened in all directions

Aaargh don't get me started too much all in one place

The same as above. There are much less intrusive methods of achieving the objectives, which are being ignored. Also by the time Sizewell C gets constructed „(if ever since it has no definite funding)... 10 years? It will be obsolete as the science will have moved on by then...i.e. the planned emergence of small reactors for local areas...as is already underway in other parts of Europe.

Annoyed and depressed

Helpless ... we are not being listened to either by Government or National Grid

angry at the stupidity of it all, when as we know there are alternatives. blinkered thinking of an outdated plan

Despairing - this will wreck our wonderful environment

Frustrated

Overwhelmed

Angry.

Its causing so much unrest among the community in which we live the environmental effect to the area we live in and never has there been anything like this taken place before our 2 local power stations never caused all this destruction of a area of natural beauty. why should it all come here ?

Frightened and feel betrayed

Depressed that the residents objections and feelings are being totally ignored, and that our beautiful county will resemble a war zone.

Angry

It concerns me hugely that this is not an isolated project.

Concrete Suffolk is happening

I feel distraught that we have a government approach that is not demanding of all the energy providers that they work together for a unified solution that does minimal damage to our environment and wildlife resources

A similar negative view why not COORDINATE THE PROJECTS!!!!

I only approve if cables are brought ashore at brown field sites and if infrastructure does not impact negatively on local communities and on nature.

It is a mess in every sense and the public re hood winked into thinking it is sustainable and caring choices- it is for profit

Anger that they are not being considered as a group. And concern that there will subsequently be more developments of on shore solar in the area because of the 'connection' simplicity

As above more needless destruction

Horried at the destruction of the environment & disregard for people in pursuit of flawed policies.

Appalled

Disgusted, dismayed, incredulous.

Negatively

Distressed

Very angry there is no cohesion between these companies
This is a fragile and small landscape not suitable for these projects!
Using the fear mongering around climate change to kill off the natural world..and the hearts and souls of all who live and work here!

Anxious

Deep sadness that it seems like a done deal.

As above - there is no joined up thinking, no joined up strategy and, seemingly, no real care for the communities here. When there are such obvious alternatives, which will bring the same results with virtually no negative community, social, environmental and tourism outcomes, I simply cannot understand why profit and convenience is being allowed to drive the narrative.

Overwhelmed

I feel that Suffolk and its community is being completely 'thrown under the bus' with no care for us that live here. There are better options and yet the most impactful and devastating is being planned and ploughed ahead with.

Exasperated- the cumulative impact is immense

I feel both anger & frustration. Anger at the sheer bone-headed stupidity of ruining AONBs, nature reserves. Anger & frustration at the numpties from National Grid who attended a community drop-in at Saxmundham Town Hall for Lion Link project. Their inability to answer simple questions about the project.

The solar "farms" are in reality solar factories. Why do they rarely put solar panels on warehouse roofs? Surely that is a first step, rather than ruining countryside/using farming land.

Battery energy storage systems used to hold electricity generated by renewables like solar & wind farms are fire hazards.

Frustrated and disappointed

Extremely annoyed and concerned

Terrible

Very concerned that this area will become industrialised.

It is not a suitable location for a major energy hub, the cumulative impact is too much for this countryside location. These plans were devised way before the scale of offshore wind and interconnectors was realised, and are now not fit for purpose, an energy hub site closer to demand nearer to London and Kent/South east should be found, like every other leading European wind power nation, who are using previously industrialised brownfield sites for their energy hubs. It's a National Grid stitch up maximising short term profits when better transmission network designs for the medium and long term exist, better for consumers, quicker through planning permissions and with lower negative impact on communities and the environment.

The complete destruction of our environment and loss of tourism.

Sad

Petrified of devastation

Very anxious and pretty sure that this will open the floodgates for many more projects over the coming years which will change our area permanently

Depressed

I am appalled at the lack of communications between the various companies and what is now and will be in future the industrialisation of our beautiful, SSSI, unique & what used to be quiet

countryside. Pre-SZC works make my garden noisy, dusty & fume filled. I can't go outside because of the multiple pollutants. The whole of East Suffolk will be a no-go zone for so many.

I'm horrified

Having looked at the plans again horrified at the area they could cover. Will be such a horrid eye sore.

Appalled

Devastated

Powerless.

Very sad and worried

It's upsetting especially as none of it is necessary with the cheaper, faster less damaging off shore option. Needless destruction of farmland and wildlife areas and lack of concern for the locals and their livelihoods

I feel overwhelmed and saddened by all that is being proposed. That Suffolk and its beauty is being sacrificed needlessly when there are less devastating options to be considered and there are years ahead of disruption. Before projects have even got full funding/approval the bulldozers are in replacing green spaces with concrete and needlessly felling trees that are on the boundaries of sites, so not even working in a sympathetic way when they could.

I despair at the devastation to come. I feel that my remaining 5 - 10 years of life is now trapped and spiralling downwards totally out of my control through their cynical conspiracy from an uncaring government in cahoots with National Grid and international energy developer corporations.

Shocked

Destructive for their own means

A disaster and the uproar it will cause when people who are unaware find out it's too late

Not happy

I find it appalling

Not happy could impact my house price significantly.

This beautiful area will become a massive industrial estate ruining countryside and seaside. I feel dreadful about it

It is too much industrialization of a beautiful area to line the pockets of share holders of National Grid. There are better options offshore.

Extremely negative.

It's the start of a huge industrialisation of a beautiful,, and productive rural area

Sick. It's going to ruin so much of our beautiful green countryside and wildlife, no one will want to visit for tourism and our peace and tranquility will be taken away from us.

Despair

Poorly planned, short term not integrated long term planning

Anger

It's too much for one relatively small area, and threatens to completely alter the character of our local landscape in a detrimental way.

At a time when we should be creating more space for nature/wildlife, this is completely wrong. Of course, we need energy, but the right kind in the right place, and not all in one environmentally sensitive area.

It could also have a detrimental effect on tourism. Who will want to visit an increasingly

industrialised landscape? That's not what people come to our East Suffolk coast and countryside to see.

Afraid for the area but this need not happen if we use the technology to go off shore.

They make me feel positive about the local area

Despair and the fact we have no rights the government are changing legislation and ignoring people giving foreign investors the right to destroy our countryside, wildlife and homes to make the biggest profit they can instead of building an offshore grid which is less intrusive.

To much all in one place

Horried. What have we done to deserve this.?

Don't want them

Anxious, frustrated, powerless, angry

See above - we are devastated. Had there been no better alternatives we may have had to accept these plans but the piecemeal way that developers are being allowed to pursue these projects when other better ways of coordinating projects of short to minimise the unsure impact as other countries are doing has been ignored and constantly huge damage will be done to areas like ours unnecessarily.

Negative

I'm devastated that the government doesn't give a damn about peoples mental wellbeing. Beautiful countryside is so important for mental wellbeing

Feel angry

Devastated

Horried

Angry sad frustrated

There are so many and no one body seems to be coordinating or taking care of the environment. Why is there no environmental protection?

Sick to my stomach - see my answer to 4a

Angry

Desperately sad

Disgust at them promoting old technologies. NG has no real interest in Suffolk or the UK. Just a money making machine for foreign investors etc. Our beautiful natural landscapes are going to be ripped apart. Slippery slopes!

Feel sad, anger and disappointment, thinking moving out of the area.

Despondent, has affected my physical health with heart related problems made worse by stress

Same as answer to question 2

Angry & sad

5b. If "NO": Please be advised that at least seven energy projects will effectively industrialise this area and change its character over the next 12 years of construction, namely:

- Sizewell C
- ScottishPower EA1N and EA2

- National Grid Substation
- National Grid LionLink
- Solar Energy Farms.

Does this change anything you said above? – 131 responses

I am angry more than ever!
No
Horrified
No
No
No
The cumulative impacts of so many projects being constructed at the same time will be overwhelming.
They are all guilty if having no care for anything other than a quick buck !!
No
National Grid Sea Link is not included here. Nor are BESS or Hydrogen storage both highly flammable.
no
No
-
No
I am aware and somewhat impotently horrified...thank goodness for Seas/Sand
No as aware
No.
I don't as unaware until very recently when I saw the the traffic signs of the solar farms and the extent of the destruction of trees and landscape at Sizewell and along the A12
No
No
makes me feel even more anxious that our special place is going to be ruined.
no
No in fact this number frightens me even more. I'm not sure how I will cope tbh watching this happen. My anger & rage at how helpless I feel.
I know already thanks, just terrifying
No
Dreadful. Why are they picking of this beautiful area of England?
No, but wasn't aware there were at least 7 projects
No

No
It makes it catastrophic. We are even considering emigration
No
No
I feel depressed just thinking about it all these energy projects landing here.
No there are better places to put them causing less destruction. Come on NG think again pay the price to keep out natural life safe
No
No
No
This is very bad news
.
No
No...As regards solar farms, why not put them out at sea, and/or insist that all new public buildings and huge warehouses etc will have to have solar panels installed by law. I heard that one country has installed solar road surfaces...perfect..
Ni
No
no
No
No
No
No
Nothing at all just pure destruction and something we cannot seem to stop happening very sad and angry.
No
No
NO
It is terrifying!
No
we can already see the extraordinary destruction of the countryside for the Sizewell C project. If these six other energy companies are allowed to individually run right with their plans then there will be an enormous environmental impact as a result. Government's job is to bring all interested parties together and come up with a unified low impact solution, such as other countries have achieved.
No - all very depressing that nothing is linked up.
Yes, it multiplies my worries many times over.
And this is just the start....
i am beyond angry. I feel helpless and that we are just going to be told we are blocking 'progress'

No
Or just hardens my opposition to it. Their arrogance astounds me, there are other options - they refuse to even consider them. To them the environment isn't worth protecting. They are evil.
No
Still appalled.
Still very negative
I believe the project to be wrong and destruction of our local area
No
No
I hope that the off shore options will be looked at as a serious option to the above.
No, it doesn't change my response - my response is based on exactly this point: there are far far too many separate projects which will collectively have a devastating impact on this area. I am fully aware of all that is planned and simply cannot understand how it/they can be allowed to proceed.
No
N/A
Yes- even worse!!
Construction will take longer than 12 years. This country specialises in mucking up large infrastructure projects & ruining countryside - e.g. HS2, Hinckley Point C.
No
No
No
My answers remain the same.
NO it is shocking and WRONG
Makes it worse
No
No
No it just reinforces what I think is going to happen
More depressed
No
We're the sacrificial lamb and I feel utterly helpless as I see vast tranches of our precious countryside destroyed. It makes no sense in such a nature depleted country
It's terrifying
No
No
I answered "Yes"
No
No

No, I think I've covered everything I can.
No, I was already aware of these projects and others on the stocks
no
I knew about these gacts
I know and it is a constant worry which requires taking tranquilisers
No
No I cannot believe what is happening to our beautiful Suffolk
No
No
NO
N/A
No. This is destruction on a major scale. Mainly for making money for foreign investors
No
No, I still feel overwhelmed with worry and despair
No
Yes
No!
No I think the government should make this offshore. Once under concrete there is no going back. Why should our children and grandchildren have to live with this when it could go off shore.
Not at all.....my main concern is how well any inconvenience/disruption to day-to-day activities of living is managed
No
No
No,this makes me feel worse. I probably won't have many more years on this earth and it is going to be like living in hell here.
No
No
See above
We need a better way.
No
No
No
No
No
No. I think it a travesty that this has been imposed on our coastal area and they are bulldozing plans through. They've even trashed the Sizewell area without there being permission in place.
No! I believe I have indicated my disgust for the destruction of Suffolk as I k ow it!

No
We are living in a 'careless' society Those making THE decisions have absolutely no concern about the effect any of these schemes will have on people's well being, the devastation on the flora and fauna Ultimately how it will change absolutely everything we know and love about our surroundings.
No
Doesn't change how I feel, sadness, anger, disappointment and more sadness
No
na
There is far too much going on in our area causing total destruction & devastation to our coastal area & wildlife

Offshore Wind Farms

EAST ANGLIA ONE NORTH

PINS Ref: EN010077

and

EAST ANGLIA TWO

PINS Ref: EN010078

**Oral Presentation to
ISH10 Health and Wellbeing
by Dr Jane McNeill
Deadline 8 – 25 March 2021**

by

SEAS (Suffolk Energy Action Solutions)

Unique Ref. No. EA1(N): 2002 4494

Unique Ref. No. EA2: 2002 4496



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Oral Presentation to ISH10 Health and Wellbeing by Dr Jane McNeill Deadline 8 – 25 March 2021

My name is Dr Jane McNeill – I am an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society, AFBPsS, a fully accredited Psychologist with the HCPC (Health and Care Professions Council) and I specialise in Anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and other related disorders which sit under the umbrella of anxiety. I'm representing SEAS – Suffolk Energy Action Solutions. I'm here to speak about Anxiety and the potential impact of Scottish Power's East Anglia One North and East Anglia 2 Projects on the community. Mental Health is being taken seriously by HM Government. Up to one in four of us have problems with our mental health and the links between mental health and our surroundings are manifold. Numerous studies show that nature, open space, access to the outdoors and tranquillity all benefit our mental health. Planning Policy Guidance has this enshrined in their definition of a healthy place.

“A HEALTHY PLACE IS ONE WHICH SUPPORTS AND PROMOTES HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS AND ENVIRONMENTS, AND A REDUCTION IN HEALTH INEQUALITIES FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES. IT WILL PROVIDE THE COMMUNITY WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THEIR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH, AND SUPPORT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING”.

SO WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Before I go into what Anxiety is, I think it's really important here that I say that anxiety isn't just about uncertainty – it can include feeling uncertain, but anxiety is primarily about feeling under threat (Craske and Barlow, 2008).

OK, so what is anxiety? Anxiety is a perfectly normal response to situations that make us feel under threat. Indeed, we've survived as a human race for millions of years precisely because we are hard-wired to avoid danger. You will remember fight flight and freeze from your school days – in fact there are two more which we don't need to go into depth about today but they are cling and submit.

Anxiety is a feeling that can range from unease – which is mild - to severe which we might call panic or panic disorder. When we're anxious we release adrenalin and cortisol – we

may notice changes in our breathing, we may notice we have pins and needles in our extremities, we may notice our heart is pounding, we may notice our thinking becomes feels foggy. We may feel tense, paralysed, angry, powerless, we may feel all of these.

This is entirely normal and it's our sympathetic nervous system gearing us up in order to respond to the threat either by fight, flight, freeze, cling or submit. The part of our brain which is active here is our amygdala which is right in the centre of our brain – and is where you will find the fear system. If this is severe, we may call it a panic attack.

Your anxiety response may look like a bell-curve where it peaks and then goes back down to your base-line. And then I might say – good – this shows your system is working well – however, it's the right response to the wrong situation – ie, you can respond when you're under threat, but we don't want people to be feeling under threat all the time because if they do, this is going to impact their mental health and well-being.

So, my job here is to look at what's causing the anxiety, what are the symptoms which are going to be physical as well as psychological – heart pounding, increased blood pressure, breathlessness, etc all of which are anxiety symptoms – and what going on in the brain – what are we thinking, what are we feeling, what are we experiencing physically, and what are we doing or not doing. We call this the vicious cycle – or the 3 P's: what's predisposing the individual to be anxious, what are the precipitating factors, ie what are they anxious about, and what are the perpetuating factors – what's keeping the anxiety going.

Here with the Projects, we have the proposition of a threat to individuals' lifestyle and wellbeing – environmental threat, air pollution, noise pollution, threat to livelihoods, natural habitats, loss of community and more.

When we are under threat, we feel anxious. Anxiety becomes a problem when it persists and begins to interfere with our quality of life and wellbeing. Anxiety prepares us to confront a crisis by putting us on alert.

We can treat anxiety – and my job as a psychologist is to work with individuals to start to break down the thoughts, feelings and behaviours using evidence-based psychological therapy. In the case of anxiety, the front-line treatment in the UK is Cognitive Behaviour Therapy as recommended by the NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) guidelines.

So here, we would be looking at the thoughts which are triggering the anxiety – what's the worst thing that could happen, how likely is it, how bad would it be – what can I do about it, what's helped me in the past – essentially problem-solving – we call it the "what if.... Then what... – breaking down thoughts, stepping back and thinking rationality about the

difference between possibility and probability. Is the threat internal or external? Here with the Projects the threat is external.

This community is under threat – so we can't treat the cause of the anxiety because currently it appears the threat is real. We cannot rationalise the threat away. We can't begin to break down the impact of the anxious thoughts on the physical symptoms of anxiety, the psychological symptoms and look at encouraging healthier behaviours, because with the proposed Projects, the behaviours we would be recommending are precisely the activities which are under threat:

for example: break down the negative automatic thoughts, tolerate uncertainty, spend time outdoors, do some exercise, take time to relax, join in with the community, do some volunteering, engage with nature, disengage from the worry, engage in pleasurable activities.

Untreated, anxiety can have a significant effect on individuals' wellbeing. Their mental health is affected, which and can also bring with it a host of other problems including other mental health disorders. These can and often include depression, sleep problems, relationship problems and other anxiety related disorders, alcohol and drug mis-use.

And it's not just mental health - evidence also demonstrates anxiety is implicated in a number of chronic health problems including gastro-intestinal disorders, chronic respiratory disorders and cardio-vascular disorders, (Harter et al, 2003). Medication to treat anxiety and mental health problems here can play a role, but it's not a long-term solution.

So what do we need for good mental health? What protective factors do we need in place to prevent poor mental health and what are the risk factors?

Protective factors which we know are beneficial for individuals' mental health that are relevant here (Kousoulis, 2019) are:

- Connecting with others
- Staying active both physically and mentally
- Making time for nature
- Making time to relax
- Being creative, for example painting, writing, photography and other pleasurable activities
- Being part of something bigger
- Using our senses
- Financial security
- Positive family functioning

Here, with the Projects, we have a threat to all of these protective factors. Risk factors for developing mental health problems which are particularly relevant here include

- severe or long-term stress
- social disadvantage
- social isolation
- unemployment or losing your job
- Housing problems

Friston and its surroundings demonstrates it has a strong sense of community. Research shows us these social networks have a beneficial impact on health and wellbeing, (Holt-Lunstad et al 2010). Social support has been shown to increase resilience and promote recovery from illness (Pevalin and Rose, 2003). And when there is a lack of social networks and support, when that sense of community breaks down, the effect of raised stress-hormones can lead to decreased immune function and effects on cardio-vascular health, (MacLeod, 2010).

The effect on the immediate locality is likely to have a significant impact on the natural environment. The noise pollution, increased traffic is likely to affect individuals' ability to engage with nature, to be creative, stay active and relax. The impact on jobs and tourism is likely to affect individuals' financial security and positive family functioning.

From reading the Open Floor Hearings in October and November 2020, it is clear that many individuals are already experiencing high levels of anxiety about the potential changes to their community.

I am not a planner, however, I understand that The National Planning Policy Framework sets out how planning decisions should "SUPPORT COMMUNITIES' HEALTH, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WELL-BEING". This policy framework requires those making planning decisions to engage with local communities with their concerns over their health and wellbeing as a result of the disruption and nuisance the proposed works would cause. Paragraph 91C requires decisions to 'ENABLE AND SUPPORT HEALTHY LIFESTYLES, ESPECIALLY WHERE THIS WOULD ADDRESS IDENTIFIED LOCAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING NEEDS'.

Open space, outdoor recreation and public rights of way are all considered of utmost importance in planning decisions. In particular, because these amenities provide such an imperative benefit to their users. Dozens of public rights of way will be impacted and the Planning Policy Guidance states that "PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY FORM AN IMPORTANT

COMPONENT OF SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT LINKS AND SHOULD BE PROTECTED OR ENHANCED”

The proposed Projects impact several parishes. I understand that Aldringham is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and Leiston has successfully adopted a Neighbourhood Plan. This indicates the strength of local community involvement in the future shape of the area.

To summarise, the impact of a large construction project on a small rural population of approximately 5,000 people, and another 5,000 in the wider community is likely to have a significant effect on individuals’ mental health. This can in turn contribute to their physical ill health.

These proposals I understand will take more than 12 years of construction. This follows on from a number of years of current uncertainty, therefore in my professional opinion, there will be a significant impact on the communities’ mental health.

Again, Anxiety isn’t just about uncertainty – it can include feeling uncertain, primarily it’s about feeling under threat.

Thank you for listening.

Dr Jane D McNeill, March 2021.

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APPENDIX B

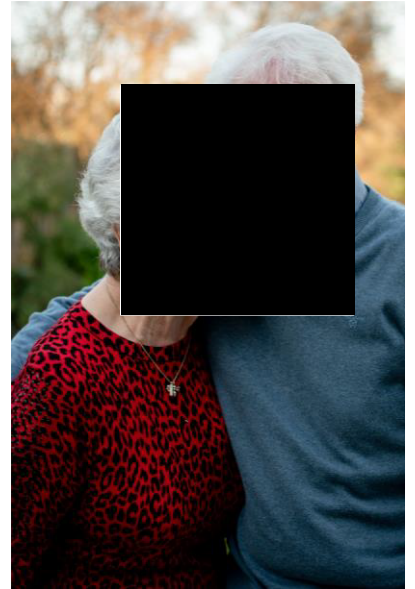


Wellbeing in Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham

This report has been produced based on data collected across this area, in collaboration with East Suffolk Council.

August 2025





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Introduction

The aim of this research is to understand wellbeing among the local population living in the Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham area (defined as IP15, IP16 and IP17). This area in East Suffolk has multiple large Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) currently being built and is therefore undergoing many changes. This report dives deeper into how this impacts the local community and more specifically residents' mental wellbeing.

In 2023, we conducted research in partnership with Suffolk County Council to gain more insight into the mental health of Suffolk's population. One of our focus areas was the Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham area*. We're interested to see how wellbeing in this area has changed over the last two years, and will use the data from our 2023 project as a baseline for comparison.

This research was conducted using our validated mental health measure, the Emotional Needs Audit (ENA), which assesses how well residents are meeting their Emotional and Physical Needs. We have also gathered qualitative data that has given us insight into how the NSIPs are affecting residents' wellbeing, whether this is positively or negatively.

Our research has shown varied results and opinions. The qualitative research has highlighted the impact to those living in close proximity to the sites. Here, there are *“people who are permanently and significantly impacted by infrastructure as opposed to those who are just going to be affected for a few years”* [Resident in Friston]. Therefore, it is important to note that this report shows a generalisation of the area, and the impact of the builds on residents will vary considerably with where they are in the area. For a map of where different energy projects are being built across East Suffolk, see Appendix 6.

* The report for this piece of work can be found at suffolkmind.org.uk/reports

63% of
Aldeburgh,
Leiston &
Saxmundham
respondents are
meeting their
needs well
overall

57% of
residents feel
that local
energy projects
are a barrier to
their mental
wellbeing to
some extent

Average Emotional Need scores in the
area have **increased** by **17%** since **2023**

Those aged **45-54**
are the least well
age group on
average

Sleep is the
worst met need
on average

43% don't feel they as
safe and secure as they
would like

**Close
Relationships**
is the best
met need on
average

Key Findings

Overall, **62.6%** of IP15, IP16 and IP17 respondents are meeting their needs well.

There are a few needs that are particularly less well met on average, amongst those who live in IP15, IP16 and IP17, as well as some themes as to what was negatively affecting residents' wellbeing, specifically connected to the NSIPs.

The needs include:

- 1. Sleep – 55%** of respondents are not meeting this need well*
- 2. Movement – 65%** of respondents are not meeting this need well
- 3. Security – 67%** of respondents are not meeting this need well
- 4. Status – 68%** of respondents are not meeting this need well
- 5. Control – 69%** of respondents are not meeting this need well

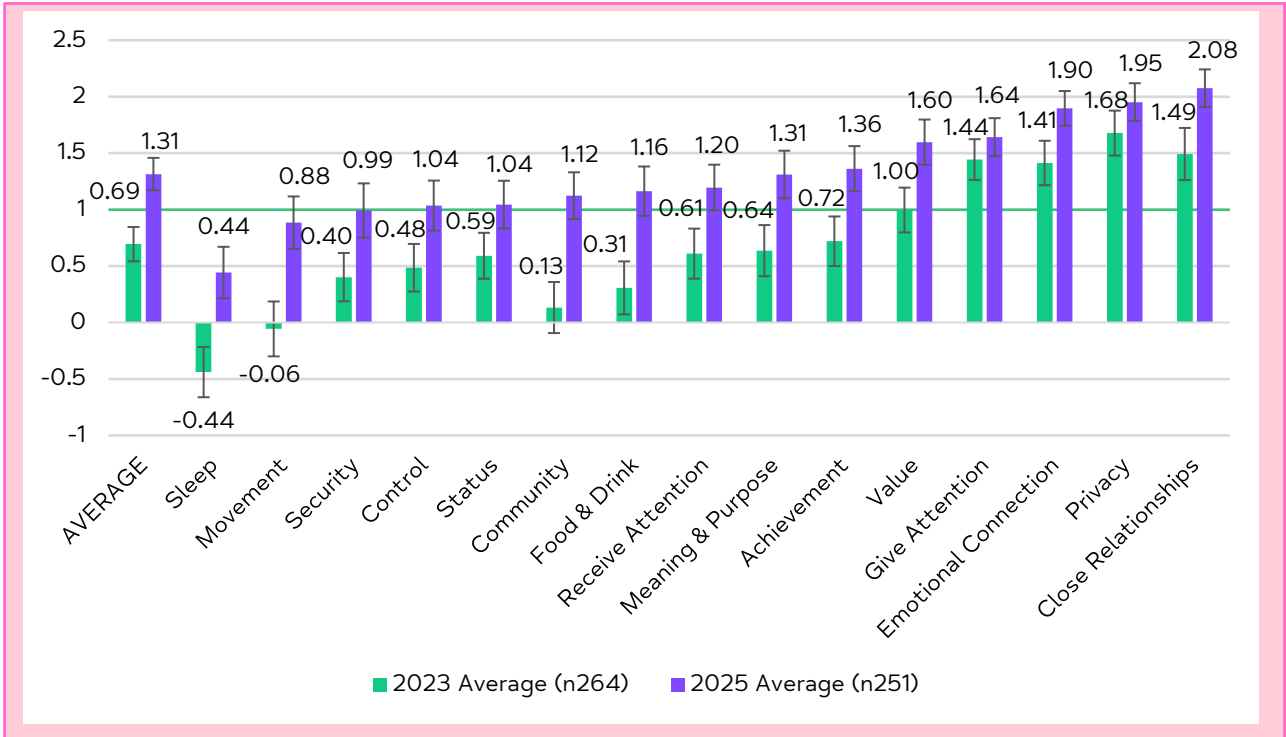
The themes include:

- 1. Perceived poor communication:** Residents' communication with NSIP developers has been limited. Therefore, some are feeling like they are not informed or involved in important decisions that are affecting them.
- 2. Environmental destruction:** The change and loss of habitats and green spaces in the local area has impacted local residents' wellbeing and physical health.
- 3. Insecurity about the long term:** Residents are feeling insecure about what impact the NSIPs will have on their lives and the local area. A key area of insecurity is what the financial impact will be.
- 4. Increased anxiety and stress:** Residents are worrying about many aspects of the NSIP builds – from their housing situation to the local environment rapidly changing. This has resulted in some not meeting their Emotional & Physical Needs.

** We define a need as being 'well met' when it has a score of 1 or more, out of a scale of -3 to 3. For more information on our methodology, please refer to Appendix 1.*

For more information on our Emotional Needs & Resources approach, see the summary of the needs in Appendix 2, or visit our [website](#).

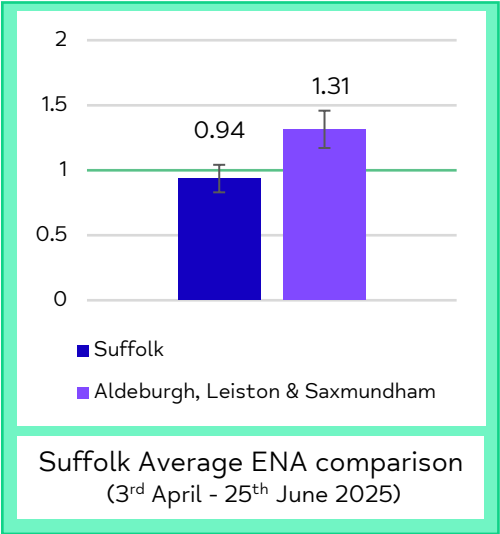
Wellbeing in Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham



Here we have Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham’s average results from the Emotional Needs Audit. The Emotional and Physical Needs are along the bottom on the x axis, arranged from least to best met on average from left to right, with the average of all needs combined on the far left. How well the needs are met is shown on the y axis – here the averages land between -1 and 2.5 (a view of the results on the full scale can be found in Appendix 4).

The green line shows where we define a need to be ‘well met’ – a score of 1 or more. At a glance, we can see that needs are well met by Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham on average, with an overall average score of 1.31. Similarly, 12 of the 15 needs are well met overall. This is significantly better than the overall Suffolk average over the same time frame, where the average is 0.94 and only 6 needs are well met overall (see graph to the right).

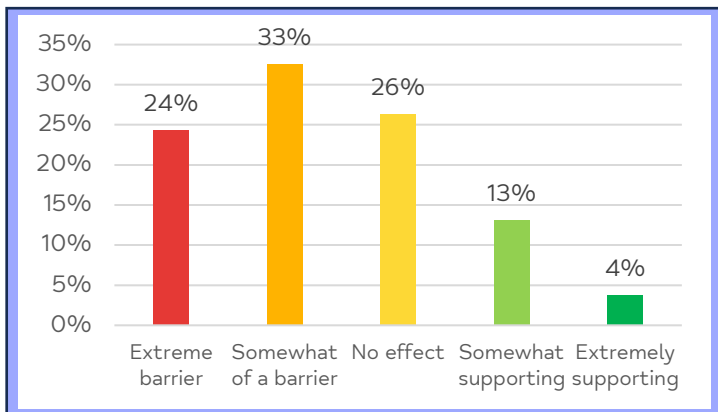
On an individual level, we deem someone to be meeting their needs well overall if they have an average score of 1 or more. 62.60% (n157) of Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham respondents are meeting their needs well overall. Therefore, 63% are classed as being in wellbeing. This is significantly better than both the 2023 results in this area, and the 2025 results over Suffolk as a whole, where 42.80% and 54.30% of respondents, respectively, were meeting their needs well.



Compared to the data collection in 2023, most needs are statistically significantly better met (i.e., the error bars do not overlap) – the exceptions being Giving Attention and Privacy. However, in the last two years, wellbeing has increased across Suffolk as a whole. In most cases, the increase we see here is not statistically significant in comparison to the proportional increase we would expect to see, based on the increase in wellbeing across the whole county. The exceptions are in the needs for Sleep, Movement, Food & Drink and Community. This means that for these four needs, we can understand that the increase in how well they are met is statistically significant.

Whilst looking at this data shows a positive step in how well needs are met, there are still areas to be aware of. Notably, our qualitative data shows a slightly different perspective.

To what extent are Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects affecting residents' mental health?



57% of residents felt the NSIPs were a barrier to their mental wellbeing to some extent.

We asked respondents how the NSIPs are affecting their mental health. These four themes surfaced in the data. The majority of respondents feel that the NSIPs pose a barrier to their mental health, particularly in IP15 where the percentage is slightly higher (71%).

"Information is hard to get at times"

Poor communication:

Perceived poor communication between the construction companies and the local community was a common theme that came across in the data that we gathered. Local residents reported feeling underinformed, underrepresented and excluded from important decisions that are affecting them. With the numerous potential energy project plans, it is difficult to stay engaged and know what is going on in the area.

When there is communication, residents have expressed that *"there is a distinct lack of empathy for local communities"* who are affected daily by the builds. The community are feeling that they are not being involved enough in decisions. A case study respondent described the consultation process as a *"tick box exercise"* where they thought it would be a chance to share their views but instead felt *"completely ignored"*. Additionally, unlike the developers, the community have limited resources with a lack of time and expertise for the consultation process to feel legitimate. Therefore, for residents this feels like there isn't a real way to get their feelings heard and contribute to decisions.

The perceived poor communication has made residents feel *"frustrated"*, *"hopeless"* and *"powerless"*, which can disrupt our emotional needs for Security, Control and Status.

A case study respondent who lives close to the substation build explained how they were told different things by different people. For example, they were assured that there was a dust management protocol put in place. However, the resident expressed that the dust was *"unbearable. We literally couldn't breathe, Your eyes were scratching."* Upon asking a worker on site what dust management there was, they were told *"there isn't any"*. The resident had to lodge an official complaint for the site to be shut down again.

"I moved to Suffolk for a slower, more peaceful way of life to improve my wellbeing and these projects are destroying that"

Environmental destruction:

The environmental destruction in the local area is another element of how the NSIPs are negatively affecting residents' wellbeing. With these builds, respondents have said that the access to green spaces and the beach has been reduced and restricted. Additionally, the loss of trees and habitats has upset many residents: *"Seeing the wholesale destruction of the natural environment is traumatising"*

"I am also very concerned about the traffic and pollution – noise, light and air – and the damage this may cause to all of us, particularly children and vulnerable elderly people"

The environmental destruction has meant that the area that many have lived in for years is rapidly changing. Many moved to Suffolk for peace and tranquillity and feel that this is now lost.

Respondents have also highlighted that as a result of the NSIPs, the pollution levels are increasing, including air, traffic, noise and light. This has affected their mental wellbeing and has given them concerns for their physical health too.

The reduction of greenspace, the changing landscape and the destruction of the environment and habitats can impact our emotional and physical needs – such as our need for Movement, Achievement and even Community.

Insecurity about long term:

The sense of insecurity in the long term is affecting some individuals' wellbeing where they are not only concerned over the future for their local area but also their personal situations. Residents have expressed this uncertainty which has led to some respondents feeling an *"increasing level of anxiety about the future"*. There is a sense of unknown of what will happen when the builds are complete. For example, some are worried about the hum or buzz from the substations, *"The real anxiety for me is this 'hum'",* of which they won't know until its complete.

There is also insecurity about the long term on an individual level. This is mainly the financial impact, particularly around residents housing situations. With some feeling like they are *"trapped"* as they cannot afford to move away and therefore cannot leave the environment that is causing a negative effect on their wellbeing. The unknown about the future can be *"unsettling"* for residents which may affect their needs for Security and Control.

General wellbeing effects:

The NSIPs have affected residents' mental wellbeing and physical health. We are all on the Mental Health Continuum – and we move along it depending on how we cope with the challenges of life and the stresses that it creates. If we are unable to meet our emotional needs we will experience stress – which is the crossover point between wellbeing and mental ill-health.

Some respondents are reporting that the NSIPs are contributing to their experience of stress and anxiety, whether this is directly or indirectly. Some are experiencing anxiety specifically due to the NSIP builds as they are uncertain of what the impact will be on their lives. Some are experiencing anxiety indirectly such as climate anxiety over the environmental destruction or driving anxiety as there is increased traffic congestion from the construction. There are some residents moving further along the Mental Health Continuum towards extreme mental ill-health and are experiencing suicidal thoughts. A case study respondent opened up to us about how their partner was experiencing suicidal thoughts as a *"direct result"* of the NSIP builds.

Other wellbeing effects were mentioned such as a lack of sleep due to the NSIP builds with construction noise and anxiety contributing to this. Sleep is one of our physical needs, and not meeting this need is an important indicator of when people are starting to move down the Mental Health Continuum.

"I have never had any real struggles with my mental health and wellbeing during my life, but the impact of the multiple energy projects locally has not only impacted on my mental health, but also on my physical health"

26% of residents felt the NSIPs did not affect their mental wellbeing

Just over a quarter of respondents stated that the NSIPs do not affect their mental wellbeing. If we look at how this differs with locations, there is a larger proportion of IP16 stating that they are not affected by NSIPs (39%) compared to IP15 and IP17.

"I am living outside of the main construction projects, so little affect on my life"

17% of residents felt the NSIPs supported their mental wellbeing to some extent.

There were some positive comments about the local energy projects bringing work opportunities and good business.

Additionally, 37% of those who feel that the NSIPs support their mental wellbeing moved to the area for employment on a local energy project.

Furthermore, 95% of those who feel that the NSIPs support their wellbeing are meeting all their emotional needs, with an average ENA score of 1.65. The difference between those who are affected by NSIPs and those who are not is significant. Perhaps this highlights the major impact that the NSIPs can have on different people. There is a clear pattern that those who are negatively impacted by the builds are less likely to be meeting their emotional needs – specifically 15 times less likely to be meeting their needs than those who say it supports their wellbeing.

"The projects will provide jobs in the local area. This gives me more opportunities for employment"

Other positive comments were from those favouring the energy projects for the benefits they will bring such as renewable energy or a low carbon footprint. For example, *"I believe that society must change to move forward and what's happening here in Suffolk is moving forward. The electricity infrastructure projects don't disturb me at all"*. Some also added that they feel it is *"essential"* and a *"necessity"* for the future.



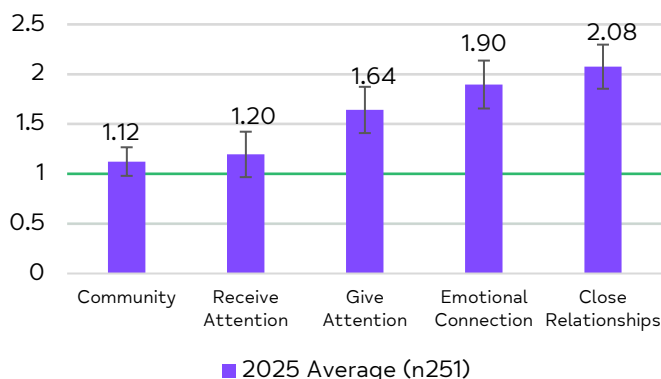
Interpersonal Relationship Needs

The interpersonal relationship needs have the highest average score out of the other need groups. We can see that the need for Close Relationships is very well met on average, with a score of 2.08 (on a scale of -3 to 3), showing that people are feeling accepted for who they are by at least one person. Overall, Close Relationships is the best met need out of the fifteen for IP15, IP16 & IP17. We asked those who are meeting this need well (i.e. scoring 2 or 3) to identify any supporting factors that help them to do so. 73% (n32) cited that their relationships are a supporting factor.

Emotional Connection also scores highly on average, being a well met need with a score of 1.90. This suggests that respondents are feeling connected in small, intimate groups. The need for Emotional Connection has the highest percentage (89%) of people meeting this need well (having a score of over 1), compared to all the other needs.

It's helpful to compare these two needs to Community, as this reflects the difference between feeling connected in smaller groups compared with bigger groups. Despite the need for Community having a well met average score of 1.12, it scores the lowest out of the other social needs. This suggests that people aren't feeling as well connected in larger, less intimate settings. It is positive to note that the need for Community shows the biggest increase (32%) in average need scores compared to the data in the area in 2023, and is one of the only needs with a statistically significant increase in that timeframe.

Giving Attention is another well met need on average, with a score of 1.64. For both this area and Suffolk average, Giving Attention scores higher than Receiving Attention. This shows that people feel they give others more attention than they receive back. However, Receiving Attention still has a well met score of 1.20.



“The devastating effects of the energy projects on our community has resulted in a depletion of community mood”

How are the NSIP builds affecting the Interpersonal Relationship needs?

Community:

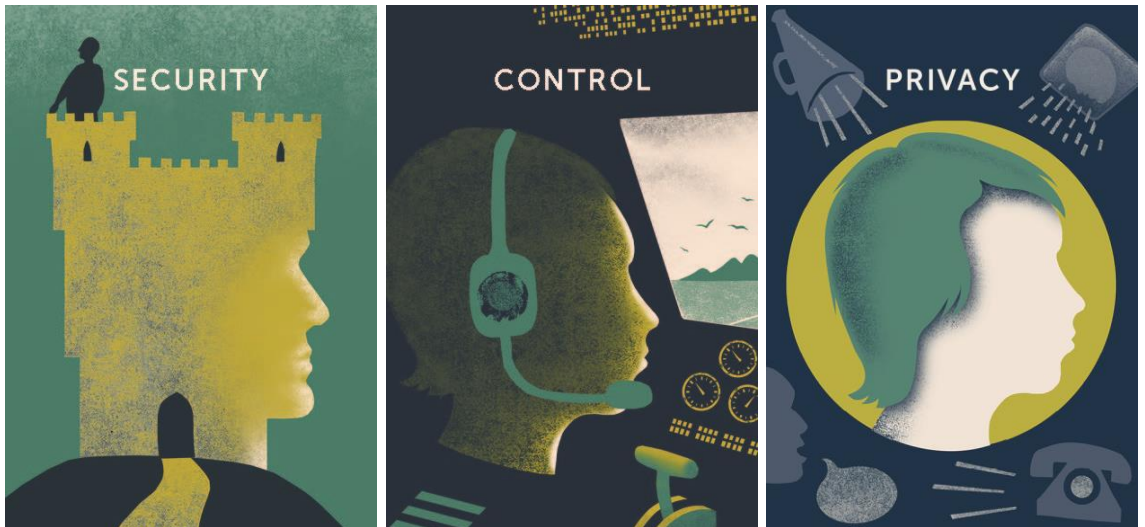
Feeling accepted in a community supports good mental health and wellbeing. Local residents can confide in each other over the changes in the area. However, over time, some have said that the NSIPs have become a constant conversation within the community which is making some residents feel overwhelmed as *“sometimes I feel that it is the only topic of conversation locally and it’s difficult to focus on anything else”*. One case study respondent stated that *“I don’t want to talk about it... I want to get away... it’s exhausting”* and that has led them to become *“more and more isolated”*. Normally our community helps us feel less isolated but, in this case, it is driving individuals apart. Perhaps, the NSIPs are posing a barrier to a happy and connected community.

Attention:

The NSIPs have also taken a toll on the need for Attention. The projects have been ongoing for years with a respondent sharing that *“for the last eight years the threat of these developments has dominated my life”*. We have a finite capacity for attention, so, when something takes up too much of our attention, it means that less attention is available to give to other things that really matter to us like our relationships, interests or hobbies. The multiple NSIPs in the area has also meant that there are constant updates and new proposals that demand attention. This is illustrated by a respondent: *“The number of energy projects is overwhelming. Having to keep on objecting is overwhelming too. That does impact our mental health.”*

Emotional connection:

Some have explained how the NSIPs are negatively affecting themselves or their loved ones. When we are not meeting our needs well, it can interfere with our relationships. As previously mentioned, a respondent told us that their partner is having suicidal thoughts, with the NSIP builds having a significant impact on their mental wellbeing. This worrying insight shows how these builds are significantly affecting individuals, families and communities.



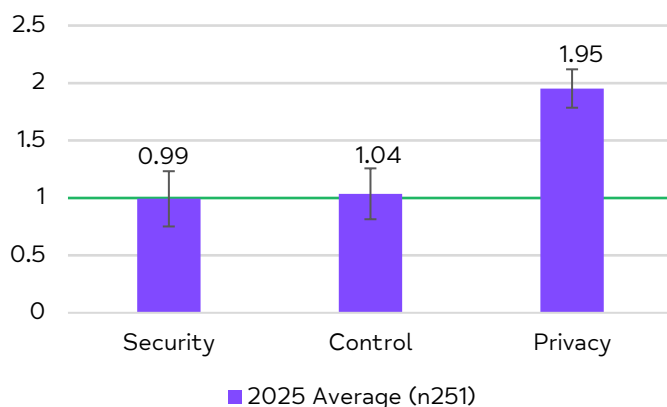
Security and Control Needs

For IP15, 16 & 17 **Security** is the third least met emotional need on average, with a score of 0.99 (on a scale of -3 to 3). It is also the lowest of the safety needs. This shows that individuals may not always be feeling as safe and secure in their lives as they would like to. We would expect Security to be slightly better met, reflecting the trend of our Suffolk data. We asked those who weren't meeting this need (i.e. scoring less than 0) to identify any barriers that prevent them from doing so. The biggest barriers to individuals not meeting their need for Security are their physical and mental health, the cost of living, Sizewell C and international politics.

Control is the fourth least well met emotional need, having an average score of 1.04. Those meeting the need for Control have found that their access to nature and their home environment helps them to do so.

This dataset shows a strong positive correlation between the needs for Security and Control. This means that if residents are feeling safe and secure, they may be more likely to be feeling in control (and vice versa). If we look at how Security and Control compares with our 2023 data in IP15, 16 & 17, we see that they have moved down the ranking compared to other needs. Previously, Community and Food & Drink were less well met than these two needs, whereas now they have surpassed them, with Security and Control not increasing as much over the last two years.

On the other hand, **Privacy** is a well met need on average, the second best met need among local residents. This is positive, since it reflects the fact that respondents feel able to take time to themselves – with the top supporting factor for respondents meeting this need being people's home environments.



Security is among the least well met needs

How are the NSIP builds affecting the Security and Control needs?

Security –

A recurring theme identified in the qualitative data is that some residents are experiencing a lack of security. This could be due to the NSIP builds, with 41% (n9) of those not meeting this need stating that a barrier is Sizewell C. This feeling of insecurity could affect many areas of life, whether this is physically, financially, socially or environmentally.

Physically and socially -

As mentioned previously, the perceived poor communication between the NSIPs and the community seems to be affecting how well residents are meeting the need for Security. Residents are reporting hearing different things from different people which makes it hard to feel secure in what is happening. Residents are feeling like they have a lack of information about what is happening and what the effects are, in the short and long term: *“This uncertainty and current and potential disruption is severely impacting our well-being”*. If residents don’t know what the truth is and what to expect, it will be harder for them to adapt to these changes.

“Rent prices are rising and are no longer affordable to local people”

“I can’t move away from the fear. The house is so devalued. It’s a constant worry and at times difficult to sleep”

Financially -

The financial burden is adding to the lack of security experienced by residents. Residents feel that there is not enough compensation or mitigation for the effects of the NSIPs. A key area that is of concern for the residents is the impact that this will have on the housing market. For example, respondents have stated that rent prices are going up because more people are moving to the area temporarily, whilst house prices are going down as people are avoiding moving there permanently. One case study in Friston went so far as to say, *“I wouldn’t come live in Friston if you paid me”*.

More respondents explained how the NSIPs will have a negative effect on selling their house which is adding stress to their lives. This was illustrated by many comments such as: *“Fear of my house losing value and being unable to sell it”* and *“My house has lost value so can’t afford to move”*. This has made some report that they *“feel trapped”* as they cannot move and leave the area if they wish to do so.

One case study opened the conversation of how this could impact older residents who are thinking of their future and might not be able to borrow against home for social care.

"There's older people who are thinking about social care ... your main asset is your home, and you're relying upon your home to fund your social care. Then you might think, well, actually, I might not be able to get money out of my house to fund my social care, because I won't be able to sell it... I think that's particularly true for the people who live closest to the site."

[Case study respondent, resident in Friston].

Others are concerned that the builds will have a negative impact on tourism, as the area is popular for its coastline. A resident in IP17 explaining that *"I worry about my job security as my company relies heavily on tourism who visit the area for its natural beauty and beaches"*. With the cost-of-living crisis and the unknown financial effect of the NSIPs, it is unsurprising that some residents are worried about their finances and therefore Security ranks the third least well met need overall.

It is also important to recognise that some see a positive financial benefit to the NSIPs in the local area, including new jobs and business opportunities. For example, a respondent stating, *"I like the project Sizewell C because it employs many locals."* Another said: *"My work will start to get busier. Which makes me happier to be at work."* With more jobs in the local area, it may help others find a sense of security.

Environmentally -

With the land use changing this might increase environmental risks. For example, the increase of impermeable surfaces from new infrastructure and the deforestation will increase flood risk in the area.

Control –

When we are not involved in decisions that affect us, we might feel that we have less control. With the NSIP builds process, it seems that there has been an illusion of control through the consultation process. However, the community do not have the resources to meaningfully contribute to consultation, so cannot exert that control. This has left individuals feeling frustrated: *"The decision was already made. This makes me feel impotent and disempowered"*. Residents also feel they are not given enough of a voice to ensure that they will be protected through the process.

There are multiple NSIPs located in this area of East Suffolk, with new projects and potential proposals coming up regularly. A respondent highlighting that *"The pace and scale of these developments is too much in such a small area"* which is largely beyond residents' control. Residents are also *"not knowing exactly what is coming"* and when the builds and environmental destruction will stop. This lack of control can make us feel stressed and overwhelmed.

"The lack of control local people have over these projects is hugely damaging to wellbeing and a sense of efficacy. We are left feeling our voices don't matter"

"The unknown and feeling of no control, it feels a threat to my peace of mind and home"



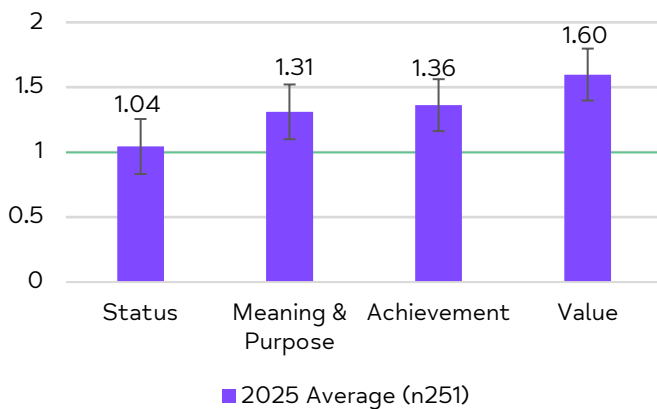
Achievement and Value Needs

Achievement is a well met need on average, scoring 1.36 (on a scale of -3 to 3). Respondents' work situations strongly affect how well they're able to meet their need for achievement, with 58% of those not meeting the need reporting it as a barrier, and 57% meeting the need reporting it as a supporting factor. Other significant supporting factors for those meeting the need include hobbies and interests (52% reporting this) and access to nature or the outdoors (48% reporting this).

Meaning & Purpose is strongly positively correlated to Achievement within the Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham data, meaning that on average we'd expect to see that if Achievement is high, then so is Meaning & Purpose (and vice versa). Meaning & Purpose has a similar score to Achievement where it is also well met on average for Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham, with a score of 1.31.

Value is a well met need, with an average score of 1.60. Value indicates how much people feel others appreciate them for their actions and contributions. Therefore, Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham meeting this need well on average suggests that individuals are feeling valued for what they do and what they contribute.

Status, on the other hand, tells us how much people feel others appreciate and respect them as a person (and not just for their actions or contributions). Status is just about well met need on average, with a score 1.04. For those not meeting their need for status, the biggest reported barrier was the cost of living, with 69% reporting this. The data in this area shows that Status and Control are strongly positively correlated. Therefore, as the average score for one need increases, it is expected that the other will also.



“Start treating local residents with respect”

How are the NSIP builds affecting the achievement and value needs?

Status –

Status links to the idea of being listened to and respected by others. Many residents feel that their opinions are not being heard by NSIP developers. For example, a respondent in Saxmundham said that they feel they are *“not listened to as an individual or a community”* which could affect the need for Status. When we don’t meet this need, it can contribute to feelings of low self-esteem.

The area is becoming well known for the construction of the NSIPs. A local resident living in Friston has stated that the village is now defined as *“where the massive development’s going to be: ‘Poor you, you live in Friston’.”* Having these negative perceptions of the area is upsetting for long-time residents as the village is not being recognised for what it once was.

Achievement –

The need for Achievement may be affected as some residents’ have tried to go against the proposals – feeling hopeful that they can represent their community. Residents have spent money, time and resources to do this. However, they have not got the sense of achievement they were hoping for with a respondent highlighting that *“the decision was already made”*.

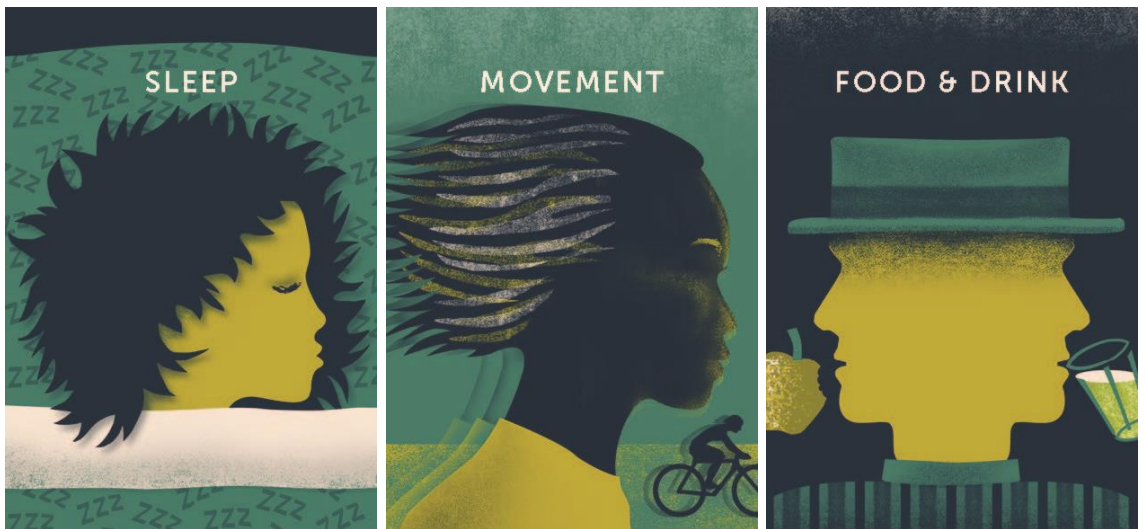
Meaning & Purpose –

The insecurity about the long term means it’s hard for people to maintain Meaning & Purpose around what their lives will look like in the future.

Additionally, seeing the local area change may make some residents feel that their initial Meaning & Purpose in their lives looks different. Many mentioned how they moved to the area for the rural and quiet nature of the landscape, which has considerably changed.

A lack of Meaning & Purpose in our lives is a significant risk factor for suicide and suicidal thoughts. Therefore, it’s important to support people to keep meeting this need through achieving things, feeling they are needed, or connecting to something bigger than themselves.

“This will impact not only those who have lived here for generations and see everything they know disappear, but also those who made a conscious choice to live here over the last few decades and see everything they worked for disappear”

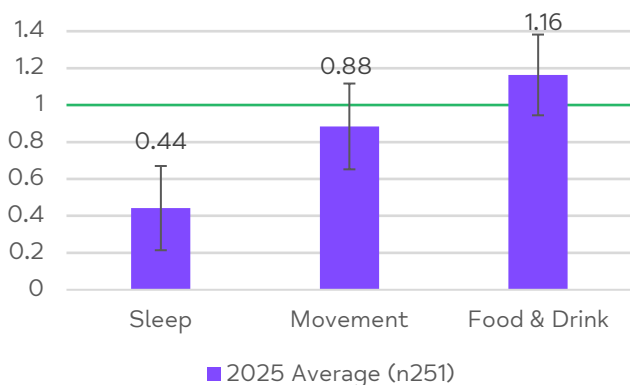


Physical Needs

As for the physical needs, it can seem like these aren't as connected to wellbeing as some of our emotional needs. However, there are many connections between our emotional needs and physical needs, and what happens during the waking day can have a significant impact on our physical needs, particularly Sleep. Our wider mental health research often shows that people tend to meet their emotional needs better than their physical needs – this is consistent with this data where the physical needs average score is the lowest compared to the other need groups. However, all the physical needs show an increase in average scores from the 2023 data, particularly the need for Movement which has increased by 32%.

We can see from the data that **Food & Drink** is the only physical need which is well met, having an average score of 1.16. Additionally, 70% of respondents are meeting this need well.

However, Movement and Sleep are both not well met on average. **Movement** has an average score of 0.88. The top barriers for those not meeting this need are respondents physical and mental health and their work situation. **Sleep** is the least met need overall and out of the physical needs with an average score of just 0.44. Just over half (55%) of respondents are feeling rested after sleep. This means that just under half of the respondents are not feeling like they are getting enough sleep.



Sleep is the lowest met Emotional Need

How are the builds affecting the physical needs?

Movement –

For many residents, their access to nature and the outdoors helps them meet the need for Movement, with 83% (n25) of respondents citing this as a supporting factor. With residents' increasing concerns over the loss of green spaces and access to the beach due to the NSIP builds, this is having a negative impact on residents' need for Movement. Furthermore, 19% (n5) of residents have stated that Sizewell C is a barrier for meeting the need for Movement.

"I enjoy walking in the countryside for clearing my mind, but it's difficult to go anywhere to avoid the devastation caused by one project or another in the area"

Our qualitative data shows that the NSIPs in the local area are affecting how much physical activity some residents are doing. For example, one respondent sharing that *"Getting out in environment used to help. But now it's just depressing seeing by destruction wherever I turn"*. The NSIPs could pose a barrier for some getting outside and meeting the need for Movement.

With more people moving to the area, services and sports facilities are in demand. One Suffolk Mind referral stated that: *"An increase in residents to the local area has meant that it is far more difficult to do activities such as going to the gym which helped manage my anxiety I feel."* When we asked respondents what they would introduce to support mental wellbeing, some suggested having better exercise facilities to allow for new people moving to the area (see page 19 & Appendix 5 for more community suggestions).

Sleep –

Not getting the sleep we need can be caused by stressful life events which compromise our ability to meet our emotional and physical needs. Particularly, excess worry and stress can have a direct effect on how refreshed and rested we feel after sleep. For the respondents, the top barrier for those not meeting this need was Sizewell C, where 38% (n10) cited this. The qualitative data we have gathered highlights residents' worry – from their houses, the community, businesses and the future. The concern was reflected in a case study respondent: *"Sleep has gone out the window... We're in a constant state of stress."*

How does wellbeing change looking at different factors?

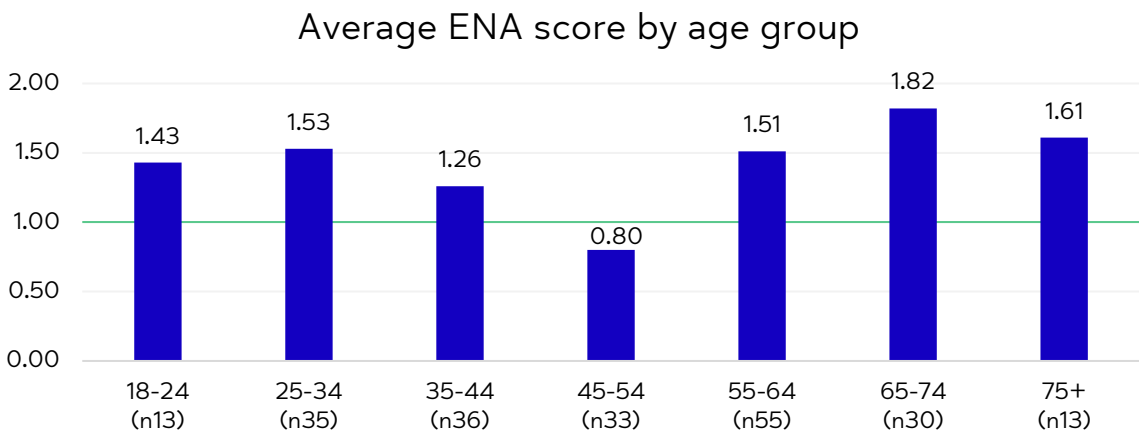
Do results change with how long respondents have lived in this area?

90% (n225) of respondents have been living in the area for more than 2 years. Only 6% (n14) of respondents have been living in the area for less than a year. The average ENA score is slightly lower for those who are new to the area (1.14) compared to those who have been living in the area for over 2 years (1.34).

The majority of the respondents (90%, n225) did not move to the area for employment on the NSIP builds.

Only 9% (n22) specifically moved to the area for employment on a local energy project. Those who moved to the area for employment on a NSIP are meeting all the emotional and physical needs, on average. This indicates good mental health. Additionally, over two thirds (68%) of those working on an NSIP have stated that the local energy projects are supporting their mental wellbeing. It is interesting to note that the need for Control is the second best met need overall for this group. This emphasises the gap between those meeting the need for Control and whether local energy projects pose a barrier to their mental wellbeing.

Do results change with age?



If we look at how ENA results differ with age, we can see that nearly all age groups are meeting their needs well. Those over 65 are the most well with an average score of 1.76. This aligns with our wider Suffolk research which shows that individuals in older age categories have better mental health, on average.

As you can see from the graph, there is a significant dip in the average ENA score for those in the 45-54 age category. This group are only meeting 6 of the 15 emotional needs with an average ENA score of 0.80. Those who are in the middle age category often deal with many responsibilities that can add extra stress and stretch in their lives. From family life, financial stress, relationships and caring for relatives, these factors may alter how well emotional and physical needs are being met. The NSIP builds in the area could exacerbate this pressure on this age group through factors such as the financial impact of the builds – in fact, 70% of respondents aged 45-54 stated that the NSIPs are a barrier to their mental wellbeing to some extent.

How can wellbeing be improved in the local area?

Only 56% have heard of the local community hubs in the area.

Many are not sure what is out there in their community. With respondents highlighting that: *"It's not advertised. I don't know anything about it"* and one respondent suggesting there should be *"more awareness of what's available"*.

We asked respondents what they would introduce to support mental health or wellbeing locally. These were the four main themes that we gathered:

Improved Emotional Support:

As this research has shown how residents' wellbeing has been negatively affected by local NSIPs, many mentioned how more emotional support in the area would be beneficial. In-person mental health services are limited due to the rural nature of the area. Therefore, some suggested that in-person drop-in sessions for those who want to chat with someone would be valuable. Additionally, several mentioned more counselling services that are accessible and outside working hours.

Better communication about NSIP builds...

Some mentioned how wellbeing could be improved with better communication and control over the NSIP builds. Respondents suggested that it would be beneficial to have all the information on NSIPs in one place so information is easily accessible or meetings with developers and/or the council where residents can have their views heard. Keeping residents informed will help them feel more secure and in control of their lives.

Environmental projects:

Our research has shown how vital access to nature is for residents' mental health. With the loss of green spaces in the area, many have suggested that replacing and replenishing these spaces would help – such as tree planting schemes. Suggestions on having information on how to support local wildlife. Several respondents also suggested having outside wellbeing groups such as walking, cycling and beach meet-ups to help them meet their needs for Movement, Community and Emotional Connection.

Integrating the Community:

The quantitative data highlighted that Community is the lowest of the social needs and the qualitative insights revealed that residents are feeling disconnected. Residents suggested having better community activities. For example, positive and engaging social events for the community (e.g. street parties, festivals, markets) which might shift the focus away from residents' frustration of the NSIP builds. More classes and activities were also mentioned such as art, singing and exercise classes.

For more of the community suggestions on what would help improve their wellbeing, see the anonymised summary in Appendix 5.

What conclusions can we draw from these results?

Our research has revealed that the needs for Security and Control, alongside Sleep and Movement, are the least well met needs in IP15, IP16 & IP17, on average. Therefore, targeting local interventions to better meet these needs could help to improve wellbeing here.

Although the quantitative data suggests that people are generally meeting their needs, the qualitative data has given us an insight into how residents are affected by the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

This varies by area, with some people not being affected at all, and some being affected indirectly, for example through increased traffic or loss of access to green spaces. Of those being directly affected, some will only be affected for a short period of time, during construction (for example, those near cable routes), while others will be affected forever, like those living near the substation in Friston. It's worth considering how support might be differently targeted to each of these different groups, and especially considering those who are *"permanently and significantly impacted by the infrastructure"* – for example, those living in Friston.

Since much of the building of the energy projects has already started, some factors are irreversible and the community can't control this. Therefore, it's important that there is good communication, empathy and honesty with residents to help them feel more security and control in their lives. Working on what the community have suggested will support wellbeing in the area, including by giving them a sense of autonomy and choice over what is happening when they don't have control in other areas.

When considering how things could change going forwards, our case study respondents spoke about wanting an increase in honesty, respect and consideration of the community – both in terms of inclusion in conversations and acknowledgement of the mitigations that are required to make up for the damage being done.

"there is some money on the table but there's not enough"

"a lot more proactive engagement with the community"

"to improve going forward would be just honesty"

"It might be helpful if the developers of the energy projects and the government departments behind them would take the time to listen to local communities who are being negatively impacted by their actions and explain how they are they trying to mitigate the impacts on local people"

Appendix 1

Purpose of Report

This research, funded by East Suffolk Council, was conducted using our validated mental health measure, the Emotional Needs Audit (ENA), which has been distributed widely online and on foot by trained data collectors.

This report focuses on the average wellbeing of those in Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham, throughout this report, defined to be IP15, IP16 and IP17 postcode areas respectively, based on data gathered from 3rd April 2025 to 25th June 2025. This data is compared with data gathered over the same geography from 13th June 2022 to 14th March 2023.

Methodology

This research is based on the Emotional Needs and Resources approach, which outlines the 12 innate Emotional Needs that we must meet, in balance, in order to be mentally well. This approach can be used to provide a useful direction to help improve mental wellbeing, allowing us to identify when a specific need is not met and enabling us to make changes to meet that need and improve wellbeing. This idea applies to individuals, but also to groups of people, including samples of the population. Looking at which needs are generally unmet in a sample population can help identify areas to work on to make this area a healthier and happier place to live. If you'd like more explanation on each of the Emotional Needs, see Appendix 2, or visit our website: www.suffolkmind.org.uk/ENR.

In the ENA, we ask 15 questions that encompass all elements of the 12 needs, containing both emotional and physical aspects. These are scored on a scale from -3 (not at all met) to +3 (very well met). We also ask respondents to identify any environmental barriers that may prevent them from meeting their needs, as well as any factors that support them to meet needs well. We included some bespoke questions asking respondents how the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) affected their mental health (either positively or negatively). Finally, we collected data on demographic factors, such as age and gender identity, to determine how these factors affect wellbeing. For a full list of questions, reach out to the Suffolk Mind Research Team. We also undertook case studies to support this research and allow us to gain a deeper understanding of factors that may prevent or enable individuals to meet their needs.

Appendix 2 – The Emotional Needs

Sleep helps calm emotions and repairs our body. We can tell our need for Sleep is met when we feel rested after waking up

Food & Drink is about feeling you get energy, nutrition and pleasure from your diet – however that looks for you

Control is feeling we are free to make choices for ourselves, and part of meeting this need is recognising that there are things we can't control

Meaning & Purpose is feeling motivated and that there is a point to getting out of bed in the morning. This can be met through meeting our need for Achievement, through helping other people, or by being part of something bigger than ourselves

Achievement is met by feeling stretched and challenged by the things we do

Emotional Connection is about feeling connected in smaller, more intimate groups. **Close Relationships** is about feeling we can be completely ourselves around at least one other person (or a pet!)

Movement isn't just about going to the gym or out for a run. Getting our heart rate above resting level just three to four times a week – whether that's a brisk walk, dancing or Hoovering – is enough to trigger a hormone release equivalent in its effect to anti-depressant medication

Security is to do with our need to feel safe and secure in our surroundings. Some examples of where we meet our need for Security is in our housing situation, financially or in relationships

Privacy is about being able to get time away from distractions and have time to process our thoughts and emotions

Status is met by feeling appreciated and respected as a person. **Value** is about feeling appreciated for our actions and contributions

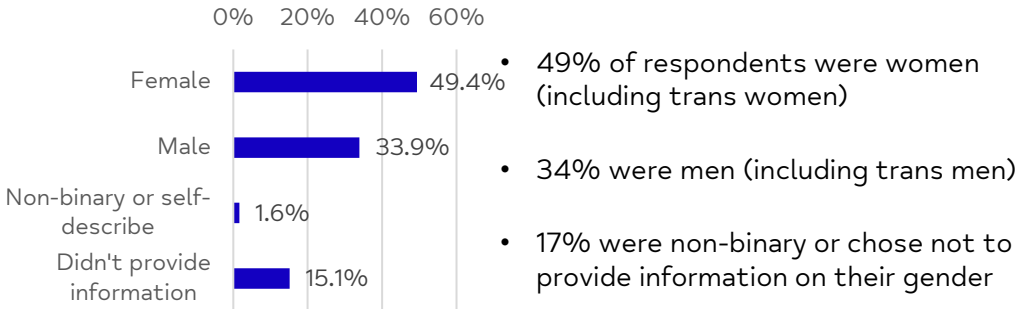
Giving and Receiving Attention is about exchanging positive attention with those around us. It is a finite resource, but can be replenished by better meeting the need for Privacy

Community is met when we feel we're part of a group

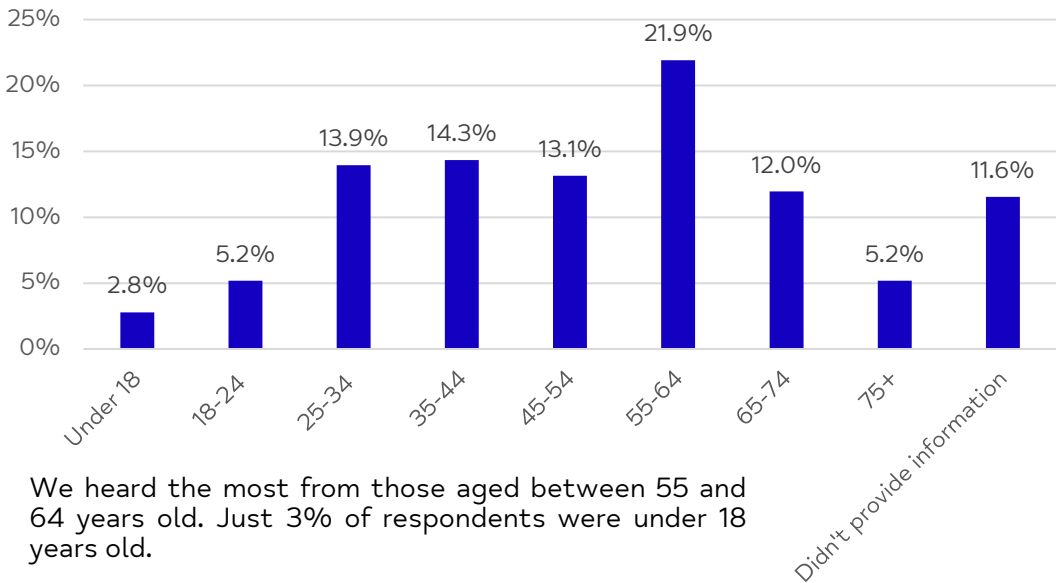
Appendix 3 – Engagement from residents

We received 251 responses from those living in IP15, IP16 and IP17.

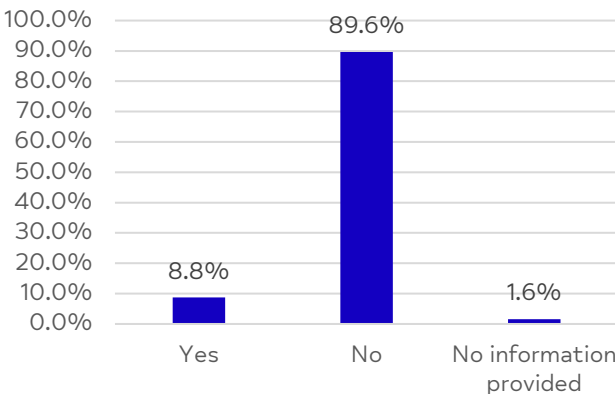
Response rates by gender:



Response rates by age:



Did respondents move to the area for employment on an NSIP?

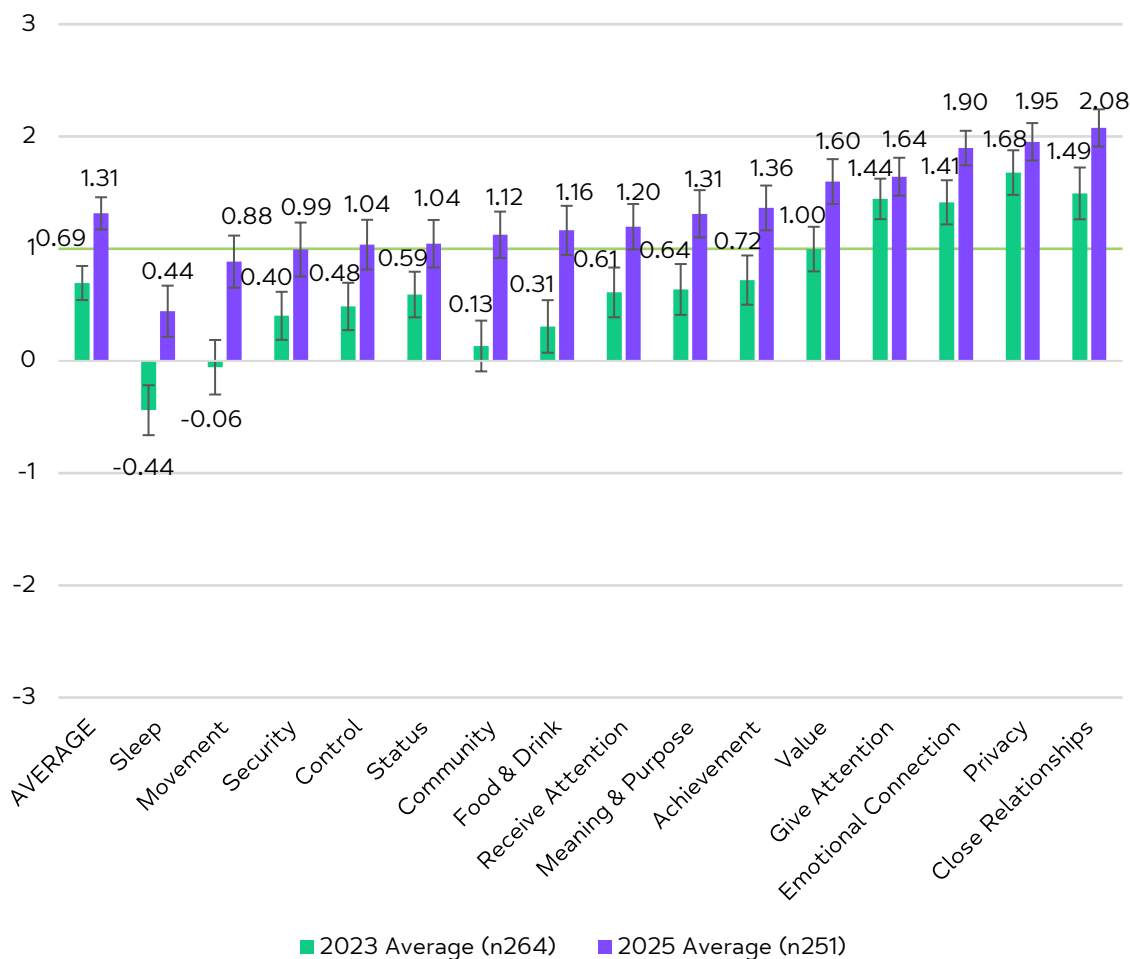


The majority of respondents – 90% – did not move to the area specifically for employment on a build. Just under 9% did move to the area for employment. It's worth bearing in mind how these differences of perspective will affect responses.

Where we receive fewer than 3 responses per reportable group, we do not report on the average wellbeing of this group – to ensure all responses remain anonymous.

Appendix 4 – Overall Wellbeing Graph

Average wellbeing amongst those living in Aldeburgh, Leiston & Saxmundham, compared to 2023 data:



The error bars indicate the values we would expect our averages to fall within if we repeated this research. We used a 95% confidence interval.

Appendix 5 – Wellbeing suggestions from respondents

NSIP specific suggestions (12% (14/87) of suggestions), including:

- Easy to access information about the local energy projects all in one place
- Developers, government departments, the council to listen to residents (e.g. hold meetings or forums with residents)
- Restricting, reducing and rejecting major infrastructure projects or building developments in the area

Improved emotional support (26% (30/87) of suggestions), including:

- More people to talk to for emotional support – drop-in sessions, wellbeing café
- Accessible, closer in-person mental health support
- Outside wellbeing groups – group walks, cycles, dog walks, using the beach, forest bathing
- Counselling – easily accessible, free/affordable, better work-friendly hours, specifically mentioned the need in Leiston
- More knowledge and awareness of mental health services, support and workshops
- Suicide prevention
- Specifically, wellbeing activities for young people, those with young children, those in the construction industry and Saturday wellbeing for those working in the week.
- Support groups for those with autism or those who are neurodiverse
- More GPs, dentists, companion services in the area

Integrating the community: (15% (17/87) of suggestions), including:

- Local community hub in village
- Social events – in Leiston and Saxmundham
- Group activities – such as art groups, singing, chess, bridge, exercise classes
- Community events – such as street parties, festivals, markets, discos
- Low cost, free and engaging activities

Environmental suggestions: (7% (8/87) of suggestions), including:

- Protected green spaces
- Replacing wildlife areas and trees – tree planting schemes
- Info and advice on how to support the local wildlife with the destruction going on
- Outside wellbeing groups – group walks, cycles, dog walks, using the beach, forest bathing

Supporting younger people: (5% (6/87) of suggestions), including:

- Hub for young people
- Advice and career support
- Suicide prevention

Better wellness/exercise facilities in the local area: (7% (8/87) of suggestions), including:

- More local gyms
- Affordable exercise groups – such as for disabled people, yoga and mindfulness classes.
- Local people discounted rates at leisure centre
- Sauna and cold plunge releases

Infrastructural and financial changes: (6% (7/87) of suggestions), including:

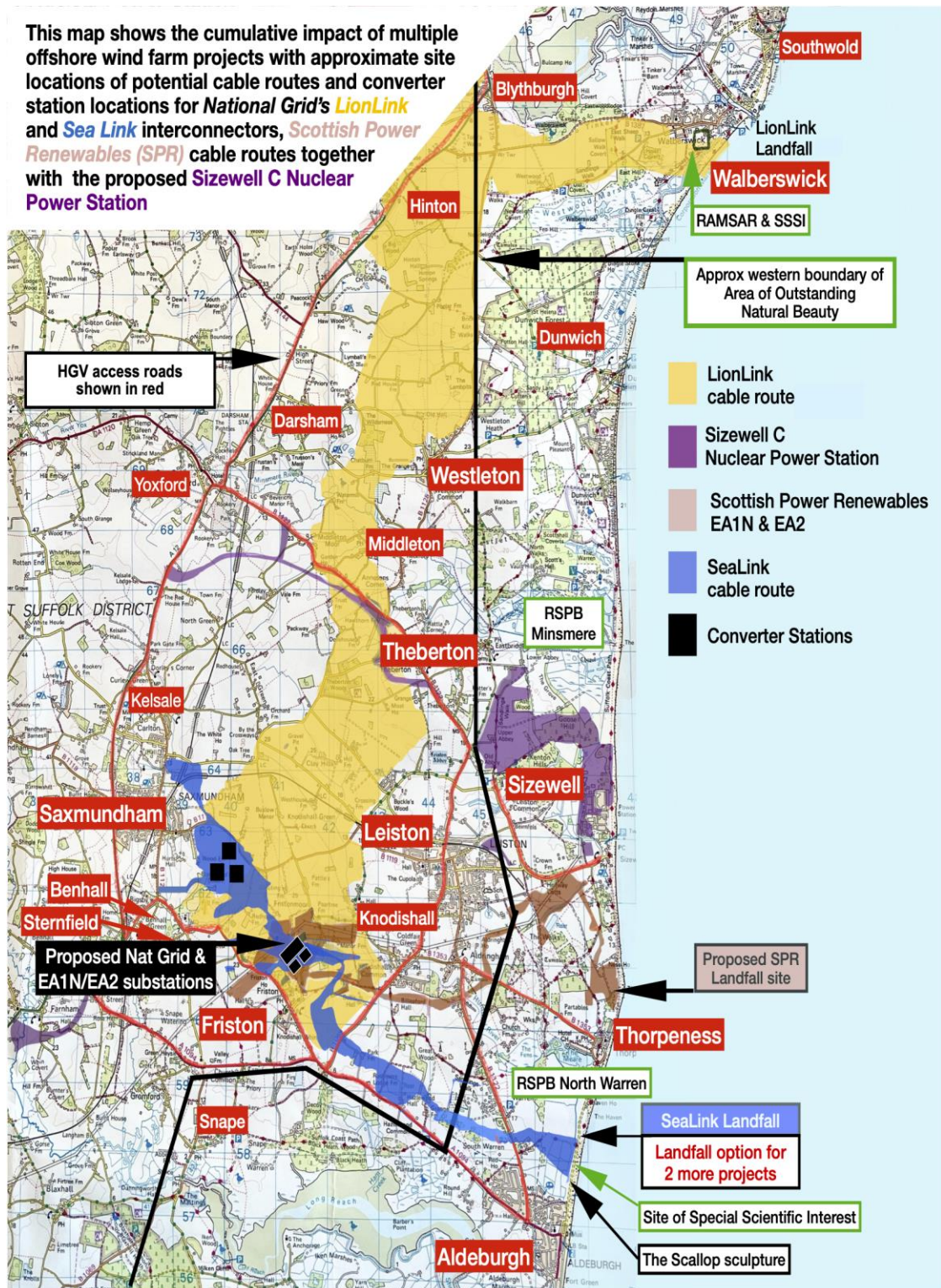
- Better public transport links
- Parking – free parking at Sizewell beach
- Social Hub in Saxmundham – improve the high street to encourage people to meet up
- Road improvements – quieter, traffic policing due to excessive roadkill
- Dog free zones on beach
- Financial – reduction in council tax

Awareness of community hubs and support: (6% (7/87) of suggestions), including:

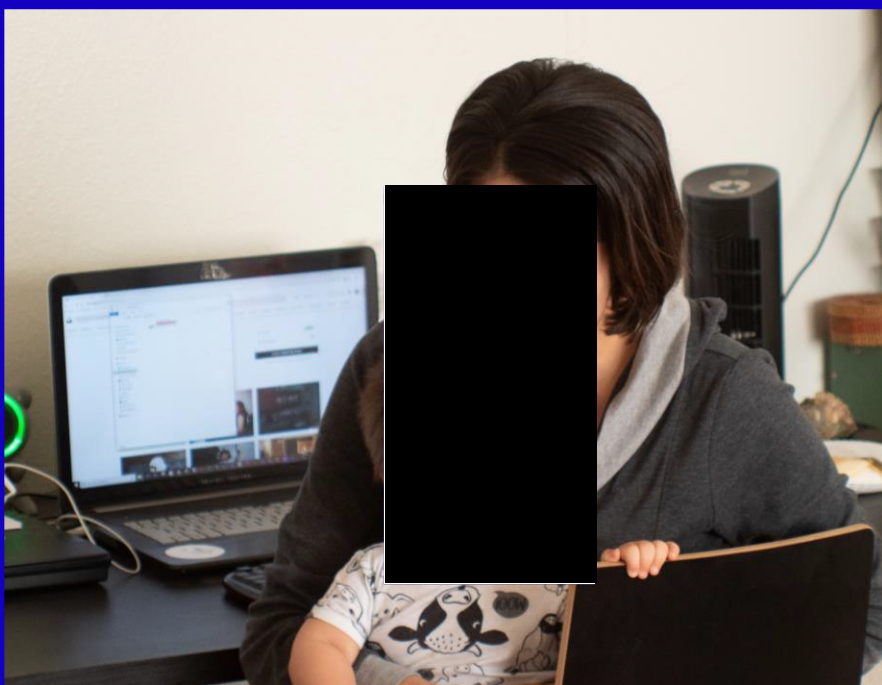
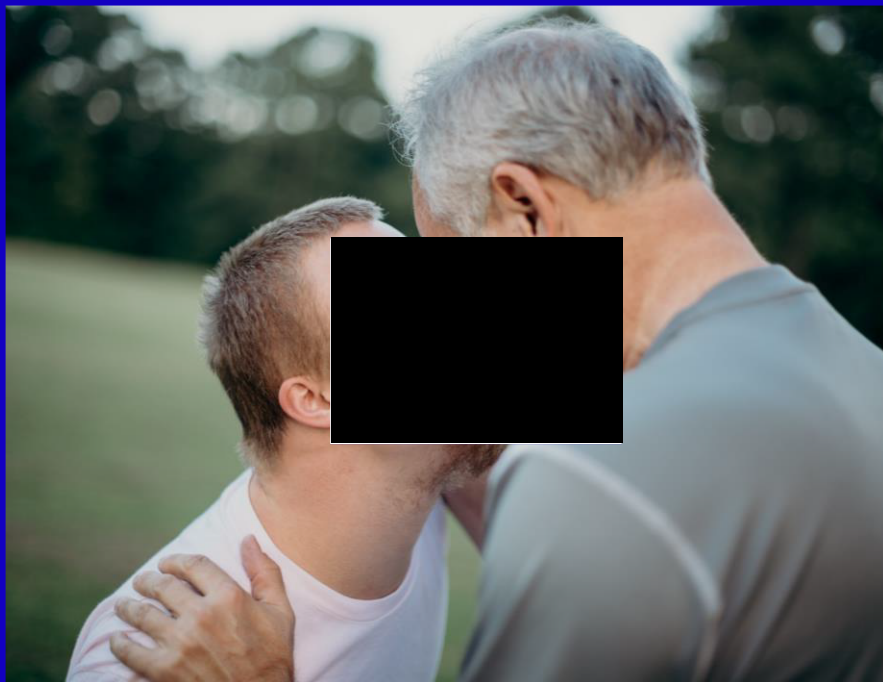
- More awareness of mental health support and local community hubs
- Advertisements on support – e.g. in a local magazine

Appendix 6 – A map of where different energy projects are being built across East Suffolk

This map shows the cumulative impact of multiple offshore wind farm projects with approximate site locations of potential cable routes and converter station locations for **National Grid's LionLink** and **Sea Link** interconnectors, **Scottish Power Renewables (SPR)** cable routes together with the proposed **Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station**



Ref – <https://www.suffolkenergyactionsolutions.co.uk/cumulative-impact/>



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