

My name is Isabella Sabin-Dawson. I am here to share my view that the proposed site for the National Grid converter station is unsuitable, and that an alternative should be considered due to the negative impacts upon both people and wildlife.

I have a degree in Environmental social science in which I spent four years studying the complexities of human-wildlife co-existence. During this time, I learnt that managing and resolving challenges like this proposal is reliant on balance – which, applied to this case, would be a balance between the financial costs of generating green energy and the costs to local communities and the surrounding environment.

Unfortunately, in its current state, this proposal is no balance. Instead, we find ourselves facing the sheer exploitation of a vulnerable site that holds immense value for both people and wildlife.

As you've heard already, many species rely on this precious wetland habitat including 32 IUCN Red Listed species, and the proposed site is home to many other internationally important and rare plants and animals.

The suggested mitigation is inadequate, especially considering the drastic impact the project will have on wildlife populations, and the role of marshland habitat in carbon sequestration.

The impact for local communities will be no less dramatic. Thanet is a very nature depleted area and Pegwell bay is one of only a few accessible nature reserves, allowing wheelchair users and those with limited mobility, access to coastal paths and bird hides.

Our connection with nature is already dwindling, and losing access to this nature haven would be detrimental to many who use the space for exercise, for relaxing in the peace of wild spaces, for social engagements, or even for work.

The construction of the converter station would cause much disruption for local businesses that would damage income streams that many rely on to keep afloat throughout the year.

Furthermore, groups such as the 'Wilder Wellbeing' programmes led by Kent Wildlife Trust and the NHS Recovery College would be unable to use the site due to the closure of roads and footpaths, and noise pollution from construction and machinery.

I have seen the positive impact of these groups first hand - watching new mothers start programmes wanting their babies to experience nature, feeling anxious and isolated on arrival and leaving with confidence and a great group of new friends that continue to meet weekly at the café on site. Here are some quotes from participants of the programmes:

- *"I came in pain and left without pain. I came feeling angry and left feeling happy. Thank you."*
- *"This programme is a gift - because actually it was all about friendship."*

Other programmes have allowed people struggling with their mental or physical wellbeing to find coping mechanisms in the natural world. Whilst the impact of this project on the health and wellbeing of our local communities is evident, I am curious as to whether National Grid has considered the financial costs of this to the NHS? Has the knock-on effect of losing our access to this place, used for exercise, relaxation, recreation

and socialising, been considered in economic terms? If our communities lose this haven, how many additional doctors appointments might be needed; what costs might be incurred through medication, talking therapies, or recovery programmes as a result? If this space used to take care of our health and wellbeing is to be used for another purpose, I believe that the financial burden of this should be included in National Grid's project mitigation – not for it to fall on the shoulders of an already pressurised NHS.

One participant, on completing a Wilder Wellbeing programme, said *“Since retiring in March, I've felt like my soul and my get up and go, had got up and gone! This programme has given me a direct line back to my soul through nature!”*. Please refer to the attached report, case study, and song lyrics written by programme participants to see the further impact of having access to this wonderfully wild space.

Like the migratory birds that visit every year, where will we go when our sanctuary is destroyed?

What you're hearing today is far from NIMBY-ism. It is the sound of a community crying out for help. We recognise and appreciate the need for green energy. We understand that it is the way forward. But what we cannot stand for is the mindless destruction of an invaluable sanctuary for both people and wildlife, simply because it is the most financially viable option for National Grid.

Thank you.

Case Study- Pegwell Bay second programme

James (name changed) [REDACTED] was a self-referral after seeing an advert in the local newspaper for the programme. He has complex [REDACTED] and suffers from [REDACTED]. He attended 100% of the programme and whilst only living 10 minutes from the reserve he had only visited a couple of times before. He signed up to the programme to meet other people and to find ways to improve his wellbeing.

On completing the programme James shared the below

'I have tried different programmes and courses in the past, but this Wellbeing programme has helped me overcome so much that the other courses were unable to do and even counselling didn't help me as much as this programme did

The course has been so much fun, calming and educational at the same time. Credit must be given to all your staff but special thanks to L [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (Facilitators) who have the best people skills, knowledge, enthusiasm and organisational expertise. I have enjoyed every week and looked forward to each week.

Please pass my heartfelt thanks on to those involved. They will never know how much they have helped me and encouraged me to observe even more of our wonderful countryside.'

James has also started to paint again after trying some nature-based crafts on the programme and shared some of his artwork with us after the programme had finished.

Pegwell Bay Song

CHORUS

Pegwell Bay, Pegwell Bay

Oh I know I will be ok

When I find myself walking in Pegwell Bay...

VERSE 1

We all meet together at Pegwell Bay to connect with nature each week,

We all meet together at Pegwell to walk, to create and to speak.

VERSE 2

With the babies we've seen lots of sightings, with all kinds of birds that are flying,

There's been swallows that we follow and the times they have been exciting.

VERSE 3

There are birds and bees and butterflies, big skies, wide eyes and smiles,

We can see all the birds on the saltmarsh, our binoculars see for miles.

VERSE 4

Happiness, joy, smiles and giggles, making friends mums and babies alike,

We all have such fun from the beginning, we could go right the way through the night.

VERSE 5

Creativity, learning and looking, listening and loving it too,

We all had an adventure each week and sometimes we even had a poo!

VERSE 6

Thank you for the experience, to learn, to socialise and grow,

We appreciate each week and times that we speak and are grateful for all we now know.



Kent
Wildlife Trust

December 2024

Wilder Wellbeing



Supporting perinatal mental
health for parents and
carers with children under
18 months old

Photos included in this evaluation were taken with the participants' consent for use in this report

Action and innovation for nature

kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

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Wilder Wellbeing

Porchlight funded Kent Wildlife Trust to deliver two taster sessions and a six-week Wilder Wellbeing programme at Sandwich and Pegwell Bay Nature Reserve. These programmes specifically targeted parents and carers with children under 18 months living around the coastal area of Pegwell to support perinatal wellbeing.

While Kent Wildlife Trust has experience delivering wellbeing programmes to adults over 55 years old, we wanted to engage other groups who might benefit from connecting with nature. In Spring 2024, we conducted two four-week pilot programmes in Maidstone and Sevenoaks, funded by KCC, which yielded positive results, and we wanted to build on this.

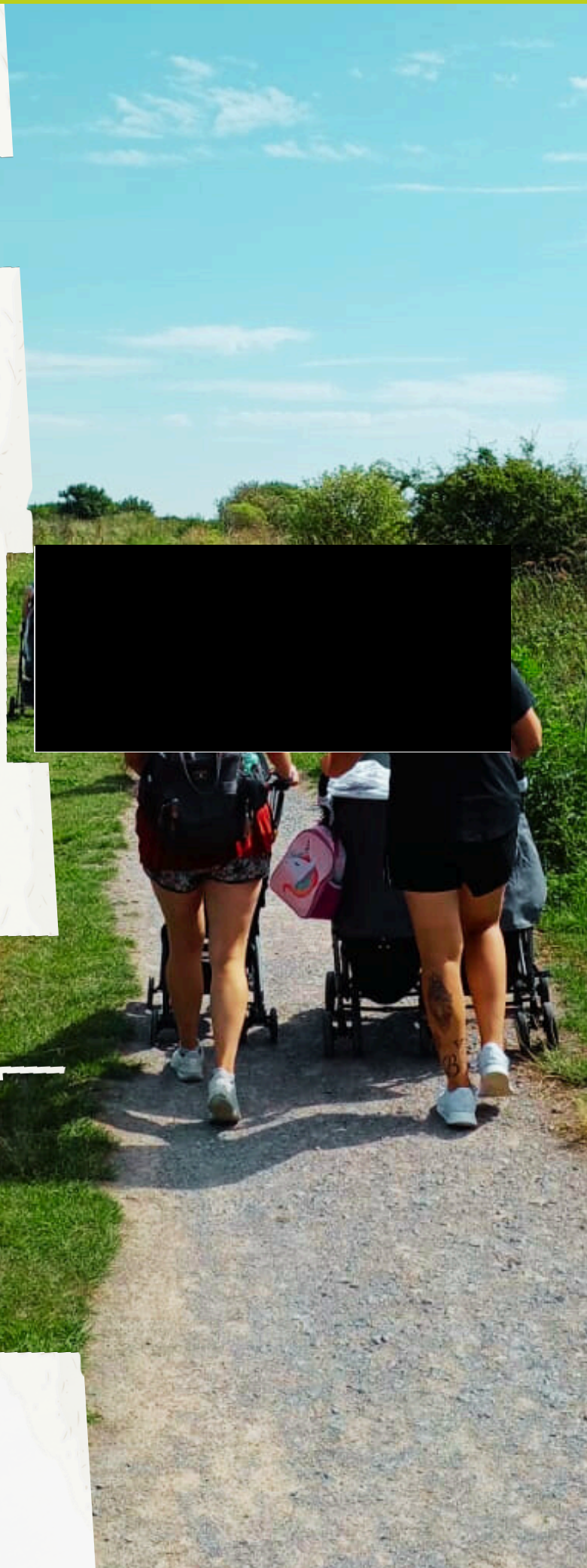
Thanks to Porchlight funding, we have had the opportunity to run a full six-week programme and two taster sessions for parents in a new location. Furthermore, for the first time, we were able to collect more in-depth data.

Programme outline

We recruited participants for the programme using social media; we also attended a family day at the family hub, put posters up in and around the Pegwell Bay area; contacted the perinatal mental health teams in Thanet and advertised across the social prescribing network.

The programme ran for two hours each week over a six-week period from August to September 2024. It aimed to teach participants mindfulness in nature techniques while engaging them in nature-based crafts, bird watching, plant identification, and gentle walks. Our sessions were based on the NHS's Five Ways to Wellbeing: Connect, Be Active, Learn, Give, and Notice. The programme also provided participants with opportunities to bond with each other and encouraged them to continue meeting up after the six-week programme ended.

The programme's directed participants to additional services, such as 24/7 helplines, Mind, and One You services. Additionally, we collaborated with the Family Group Hub, which attended one session to provide information, advice, and guidance to the participants. To encourage ongoing engagement with nature, we also informed participants about local family events, including Kent Wildlife Trust's Nature Tots and other family activities, that they could enjoy with their children now and in the future.



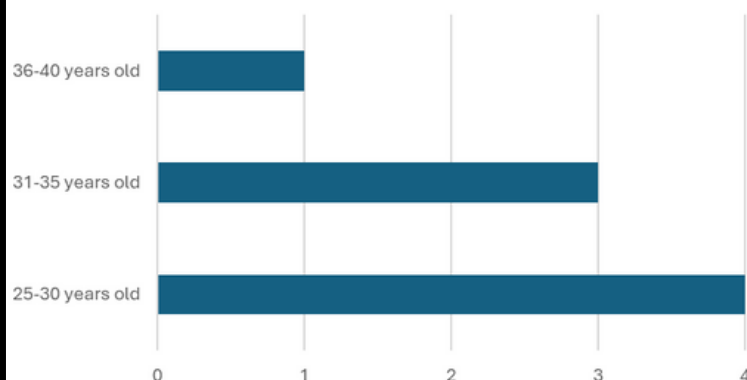
Engagement

We engaged with a total of 10 parents, with eight individuals completing 50% or more of the programme. Two parents, who were a couple, only attended the first session and did not fully complete the sign-up information. We kept their space open as they indicated they would return, but they decided to withdraw in week three. By then, it felt too late to offer their spots to those on the waiting list, and the group had already started to bond well.

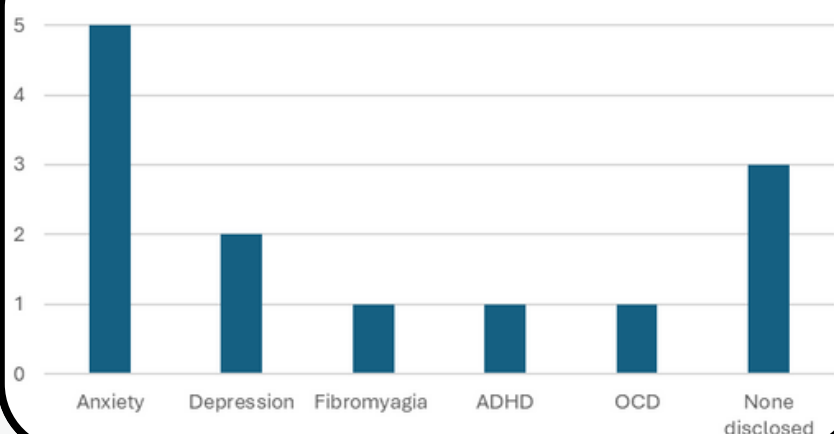
The figures below account for the eight people.

- 2 people attended 50% of the programme, 3/6 sessions.
- 3 people attended 67% of the programme, 4/6 sessions.
- 2 people attended 83% of the programme, 5/6 sessions.
- 1 person attended 100% of the programme, 6/6 sessions

Ages of participants



Disclosed health conditions at point of sign up.



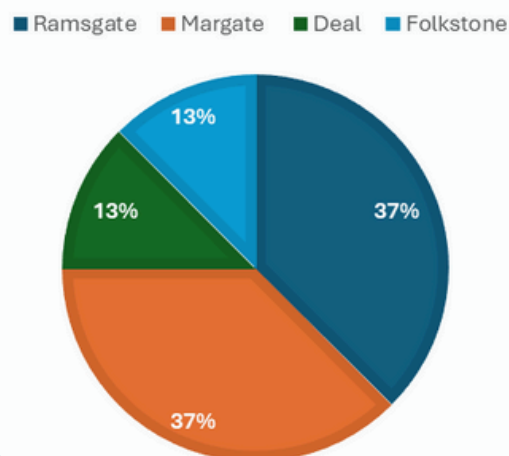
Demographics

All participants identified as white British females and were between the ages of 25-40 (see bar chart below). They were all primary carers to their children who were under 12 months old, and this was their first experience of being a parent.

Five of the participants disclosed health conditions, as summarised in the chart below. However, on meeting the participants the three who did not disclose any health conditions all shared that they were finding being a parent challenging and stressful and that it was having an impact on their wellbeing.

All participants lived along the southeast coast of Kent, with seven out of eight participants living less than a 20-minute drive from the Pegwell and Sandwich Bay.

LOCATION OF PARTICIPANTS



Reasons for attending wilder wellbeing

Participants were asked why they wanted to attend a Wilder Wellbeing programme, with the options being: to gain new skills, to meet new people, to improve or maintain their mental health, to improve or maintain their physical health, and other reasons.

The most significant trend was that 100% of respondents recorded improving or maintaining their mental health as a motivator for attending this programme.

Additionally, 88% responded that meeting new people was a motivator for signing up.

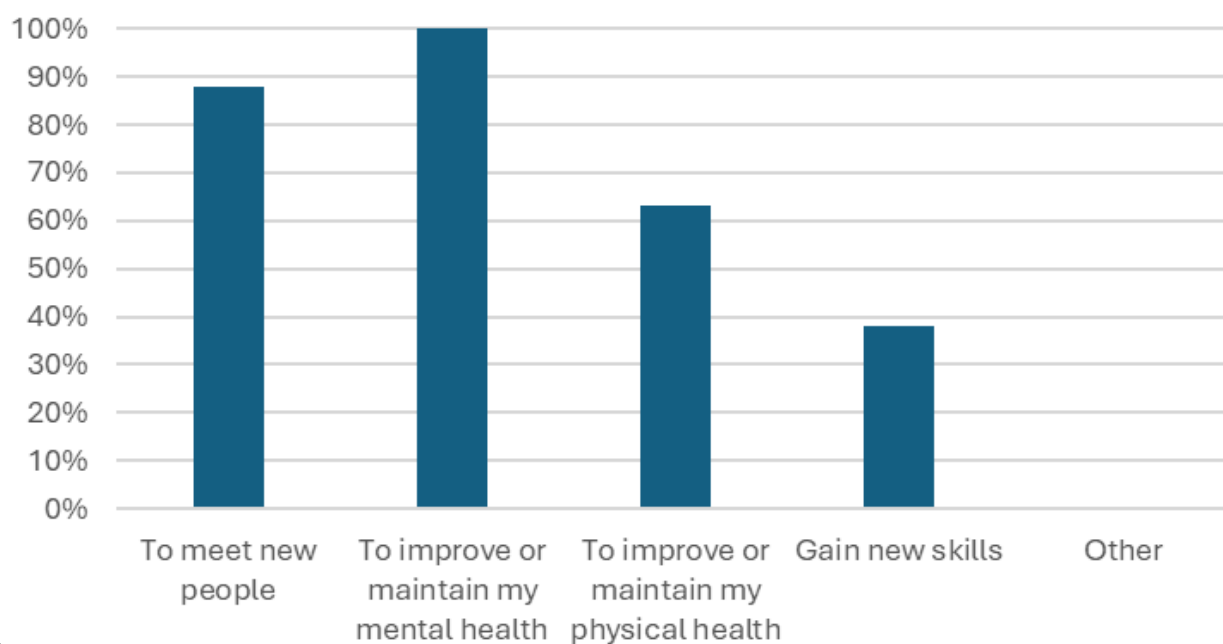
While 63% of participants recorded wanting to maintain or improve their physical health as a reason to join the programme; this was slightly less than the number of participants who selected wanting to improve or maintain their mental health as a motivating factor.

Furthermore, 38% of participants selected gaining new skills as a reason for taking part. No one provided any other reasons for attending the programme.



Nature mandala, a wellbeing craft activity

Reason for signing up



Mental health

Participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1-7 how satisfied they were with their mental health.

Out of the five people who completed both the before and after questionnaires, 80% of participants showed improvements of at least two points in their mental health satisfaction. One participant's score remained the same on both questionnaires. (See appendix, chart 1)

On week 6 participants were asked whether the programme had made a positive difference to their mental health. All of the five participants reported that attending the programme had a positive impact on their mental health.

On the final week of the programme, we asked participants: 'Have you learnt new tools and skills, to use in the future to help your wellbeing?' below is a word cloud of their responses. The size of a word or phrase within a word cloud reflects the number of times it appeared within participant responses. With larger words like 'breath' being used more frequently in the feedback collected.

“

‘As someone who has really suffered with post-natal depression, this group and experiences have been invaluable. I feel I am now sharing more, and communicating better with my family.’

”

Feedback from a participant at week six



Data Analysis

We developed a questionnaire using Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) and DIALOG satisfaction scale as our foundation to track parents' journeys. We had planned to undertake a questionnaire at week one, three, and six, and to have a follow up contact participants 3 months after the programme.

We chose the most relevant questions from the DIALOG, such as "How satisfied are you with your mental health?" and applied the DIALOG 1-7 point scale, with 1 being totally dissatisfied and 7 being totally satisfied. This scale allowed us to measure whether there was any progress in how satisfied a participant felt in different areas of their life throughout the programme and during the follow-up.

In practice we adjusted our data collection to include weekly feedback and removed the questionnaire at week three. However, we kept the main questionnaires at weeks one and six, as well as the follow-up contact.

The reasoning behind this was that attendance was sporadic during the taster sessions and the start of the programme due to babies being unwell, parents having good and bad days with their mental health and ability to leave the house. This approach also ensured we collected data from those who did not complete the full questionnaires in weeks one and/or six. Our weekly questionnaire used questions from WEMWBS.

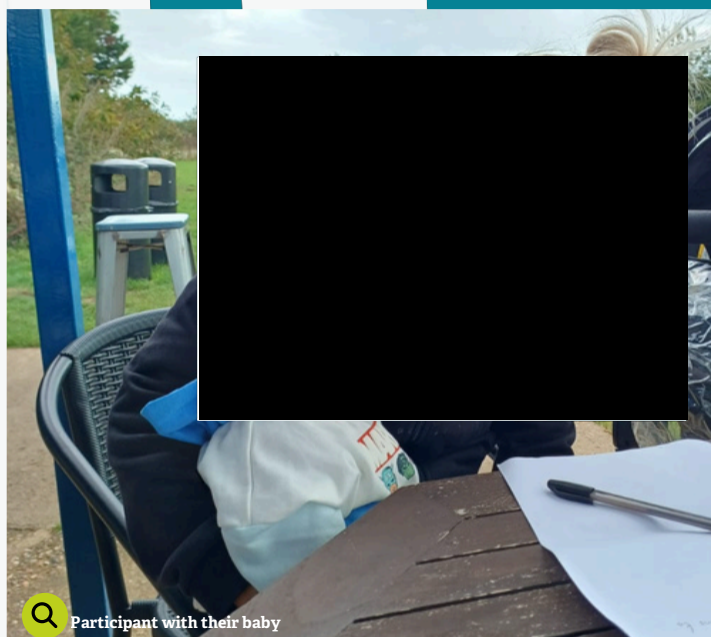
One participant did not complete the questionnaire in weeks one and six, stating that they preferred to fill out the forms at home, however their form was not returned. This participant experienced anxiety, and we know from experience that reflective rating questions can be overwhelming and can impact individuals' willingness to complete forms. However, they did complete the weekly tick sheet feedback form at the end of each session they attended.

Two participants completed the questionnaire at week one, but were not present on the final session and did not respond to follow up emails asking them to complete this online.

Therefore, we have data from five participants who completed both the before and after questionnaires.

In addition to this, we have data from three participants in the follow up questionnaire; the other five participants did not respond to our follow up contact via emails.

The following pages are analysis of the bar charts that can be found on page 9 and 10.



Participant with their baby

Mental health continued

Of the three participants who completed the follow-up questionnaire 3 months after the programme, two showed a decrease in their mental health satisfaction by two points each, while one person showed an increase by one point. However, all three scored the same or higher than when they first completed the initial questionnaire, indicating that their mental health satisfaction did not drop below their starting point. (See appendix, chart 1)

Furthermore, the participants all reported at the follow-up that they had continued to use the techniques they learnt in the programme to support their wellbeing. We asked participants if they had noticed any changes in their wellbeing since completing the programme. Their feedback highlights several key themes:

- Participants have increased their awareness and appreciation of nature, paying more attention to their surroundings and finding relaxation in natural settings.
- The programme has encouraged positive behavioural changes, with individuals for example, now seeking ways to stay calm during stressful times, and spending more time outdoors. Two participants mentioned that they look forward to future visits to nature spots like Pegwell Bay. One participant mentioned an increase in low mood and anxiety as the days become less accessible for outdoor activities due to the winter weather which indicates that participants' wellbeing did correlate to their time in nature.
- The sense of community and support created by the group is evident, with all participants expressing gratitude for the programme and their connection with each other.

Overall, the feedback suggests that the programme has had a significant positive impact on participants' awareness of nature, mental health, and sense of community, while also highlighting some challenges related to seasonal changes.

“

‘I’ve noticed I’ve enjoyed being outdoors more and I’ve been looking for smaller things...the programme has inspired me to visit different areas in Kent and I’ve decided that next year my New Year’s resolution is going to be to try and do 500 hours outside next year with my baby’.

”

Feedback from a participant in the follow up contact



Participant and their baby crafting after a walk

Physical health

Participants were asked 'How satisfied are you with your physical health?'. Of the five people who completed both the before and after questionnaires, four participants showed improvements in their scores in regard to their physical health satisfaction levels by at least two points. One individual scored themselves one point lower in the after questionnaire. (Chart 2)

Despite this decrease, it is important to note that all five participants reported in week six that the programme had a positive impact on their physical health.

In the follow-up questionnaire, one participant reported a one-point increase in satisfaction with their physical health, while the other two reported a decrease. (Chart 2)

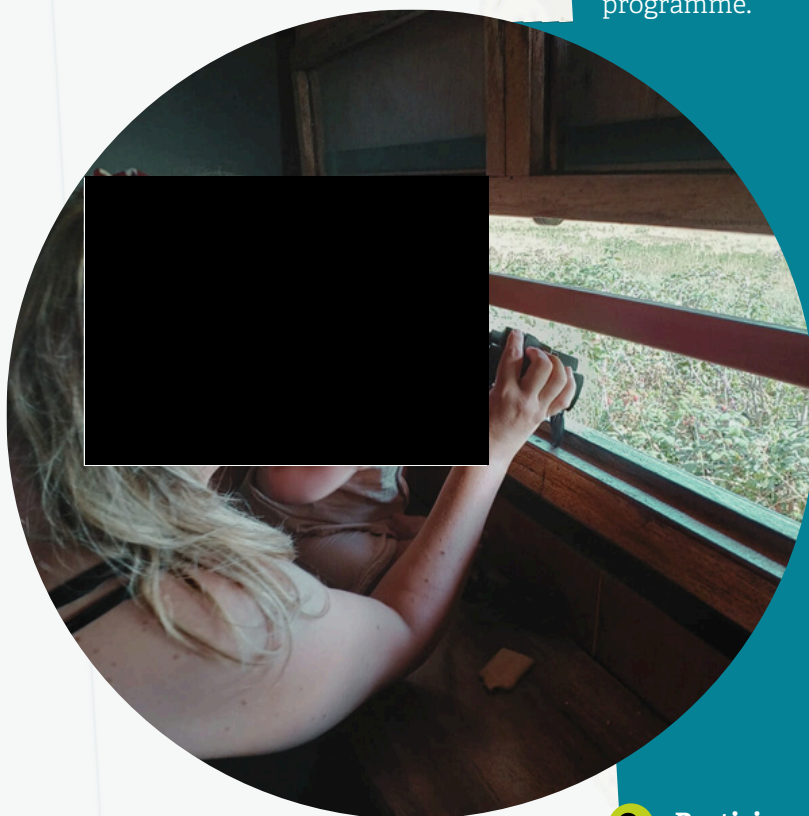
There could be many reasons for this. We know that people tend to be less active during the colder months, which might have influenced these results. Additionally, societal pressure to look a certain way and the physical changes after pregnancy could also play a role and this was one of the concerns that a number of participants mentioned during the programme

Leisure

Participants were asked 'How satisfied are you with your leisure activities?' Of the five participants who completed both the before and after questionnaire, all participants' scores increased in their leisure satisfactions levels (chart 3) and all reported in week six that the programme had a positive impact on their satisfaction levels around their leisure activities.

In the follow-up questionnaire, one participant reported a one-point increase in this category, another remained at the same level as the initial questionnaire, and the third participant showed a one-point decrease from their first score in week one. (Chart 3)

Of the three participants who completed the follow-up questionnaire, all reported visiting Pegwell Bay since the programme finished. Two participants visited three times, and one participant visited five times. Some of these visits included meeting up with others who attended the programme. It is positive that these individuals have continued to use the site, especially since they had not visited the reserve before attending the programme.



Participant and their baby birdwatching

Family/partner relationships

Participants' were asked on a scale of 1-7 how satisfied they felt with the relationships they had with their family/partner. Generally, there was an overall improvement between week one and six in how satisfied the group felt about their relationships with their partner and/or family. (Chart 4)

One participant scored "totally satisfied" in both questionnaires, suggesting that they may already have had strong, stable relationships that didn't change much over the period.

Another participant had a slight decrease in their score, and we know that they were having a difficult time with their family during the programme. They also reported that the programme did not make a positive difference to their partner/family relationships. The other four participants reported that the programme made a positive difference to their partner/family relationships.

In the follow up questionnaire one participant showed a one-point decrease in their satisfaction with their family/partner relationships since the programme finished (See appendix, chart 4)

Friendships

Participants were asked 'how satisfied do you feel with your friendships' on a scale of 1-7. For three out of the five participants, their scores increased by two points in this category between week one and six. (See appendix, chart 5)

One participant rated themselves as totally satisfied in both the initial and final questionnaires. Another participant consistently rated themselves in the middle for both questionnaires.

All five participants who completed the week six questionnaire reported that the programme has a positive impact on their friendships.

In the follow up questionnaire, one participant showed a decrease in their level of satisfaction with their friendships ; this dropped by 3 points from the week six questionnaire. The other two participants stayed the same level or recorded an increase in satisfaction (See appendix, chart 5)

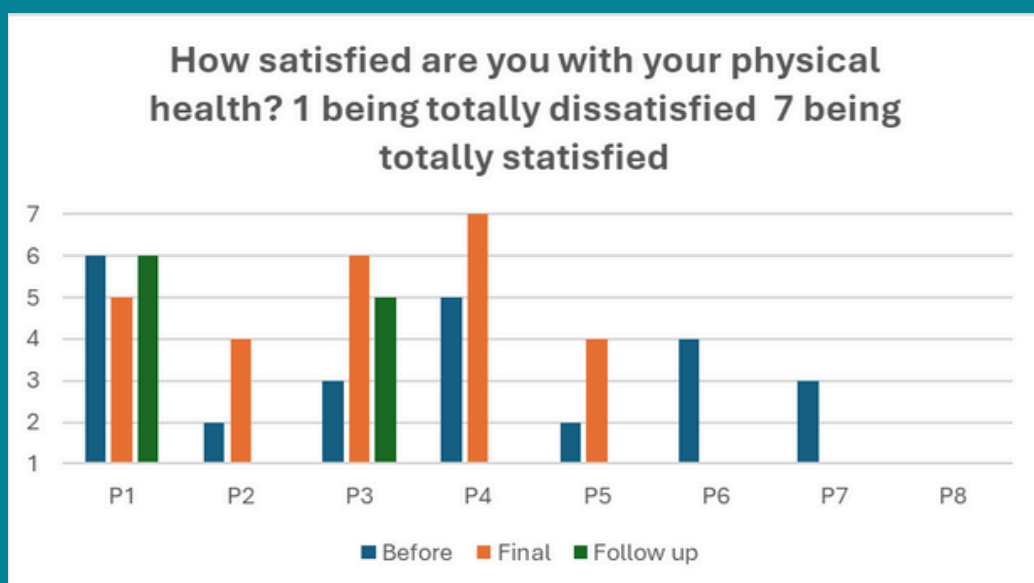
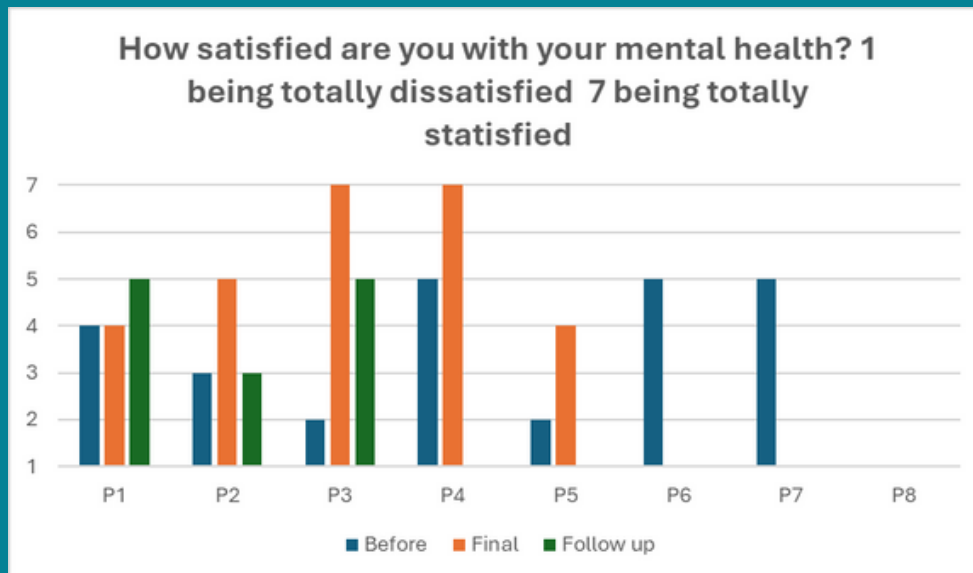


Participant creating a song about their experience on the programme

Charts

Bar charts illustrating the satisfaction levels in various areas of participants' lives are shown below. We have labelled participants P1-P8 on the following charts to ensure they remain anonymous.

 Chart 1 - Mental Health




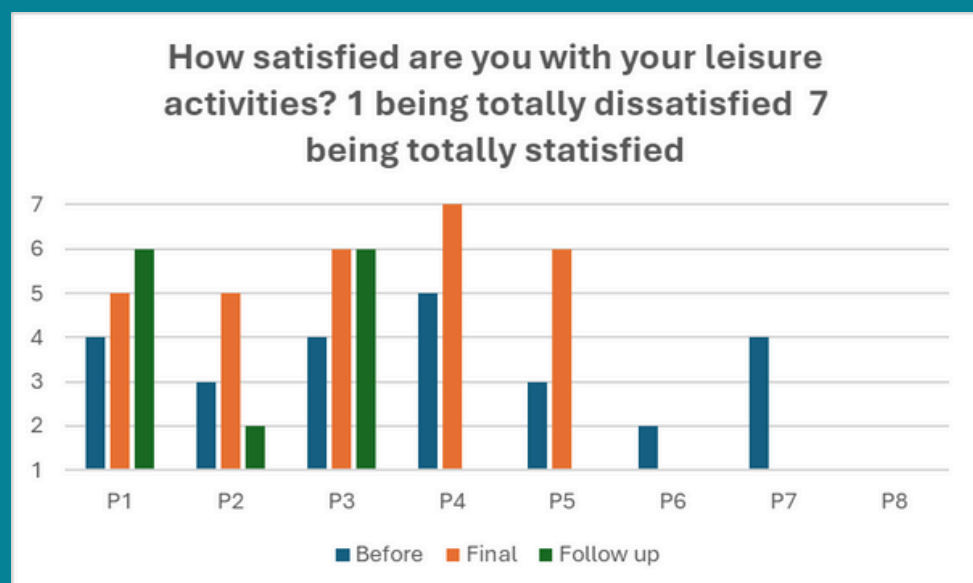
 Chart 2 - Physical Health

 Chart 3 - Leisure



Charts continued

How satisfied are you with your relationships with your family/partner? 1 being totally dissatisfied 7 being totally satisfied

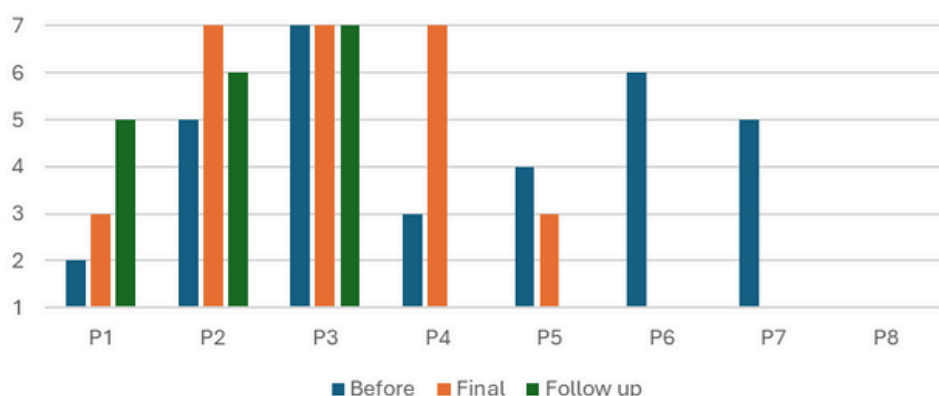
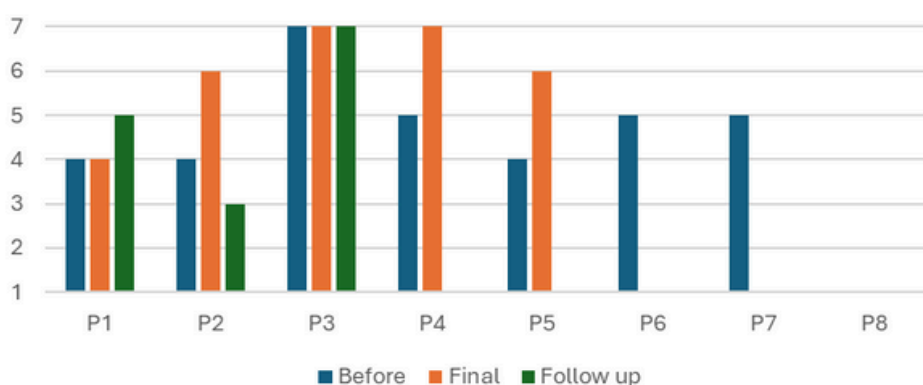


Chart 4 -Family/partner relationships



Chart 5- Friendships

How satisfied are you with your friendships? 1 being totally dissatisfied 7 being totally satisfied



Loneliness

Participants were asked in each questionnaire 'In the last week how often have you felt lonely' with a scale of five options ranging from never to always/often.

Out of the five participants who completed the questionnaire at week one and six two experienced a decrease in their loneliness levels by week six compared to week one. The remaining three participants reported no change in their loneliness levels across both questionnaires. One participant made a significant improvement, moving from often feeling lonely to hardly ever.

On the final week we asked participants 'Do you feel you have made connections with other people, if so, how?'

All participants reported that they had created a WhatsApp group and have stayed on after the sessions at Pegwell Bay to enjoy lunch together. This is something our team has also witnessed. There has been a strong connection within the group, and they all plan to continue meeting up after the programme finishes.

Participants mentioned that staying connected through the WhatsApp group has helped them make new friends and maintain regular meetups and they plan for this to continue. Several participants highlighted the positive impact on their mental health, noting that open conversations about the challenges of motherhood have been particularly helpful.

Overall, the programme seems to have successfully created a group where members can share their experiences and support each other, which has been a significant outcome.

“ ‘I have had open conversations with other mums about mental health and how being a mum is really hard. We have created a Whatsapp group, and we will be meeting again’. ”

Feedback from a participant at week six



A word cloud from feedback collected in week six when people were asked if they feel they have made connections with other people

Loneliness continued

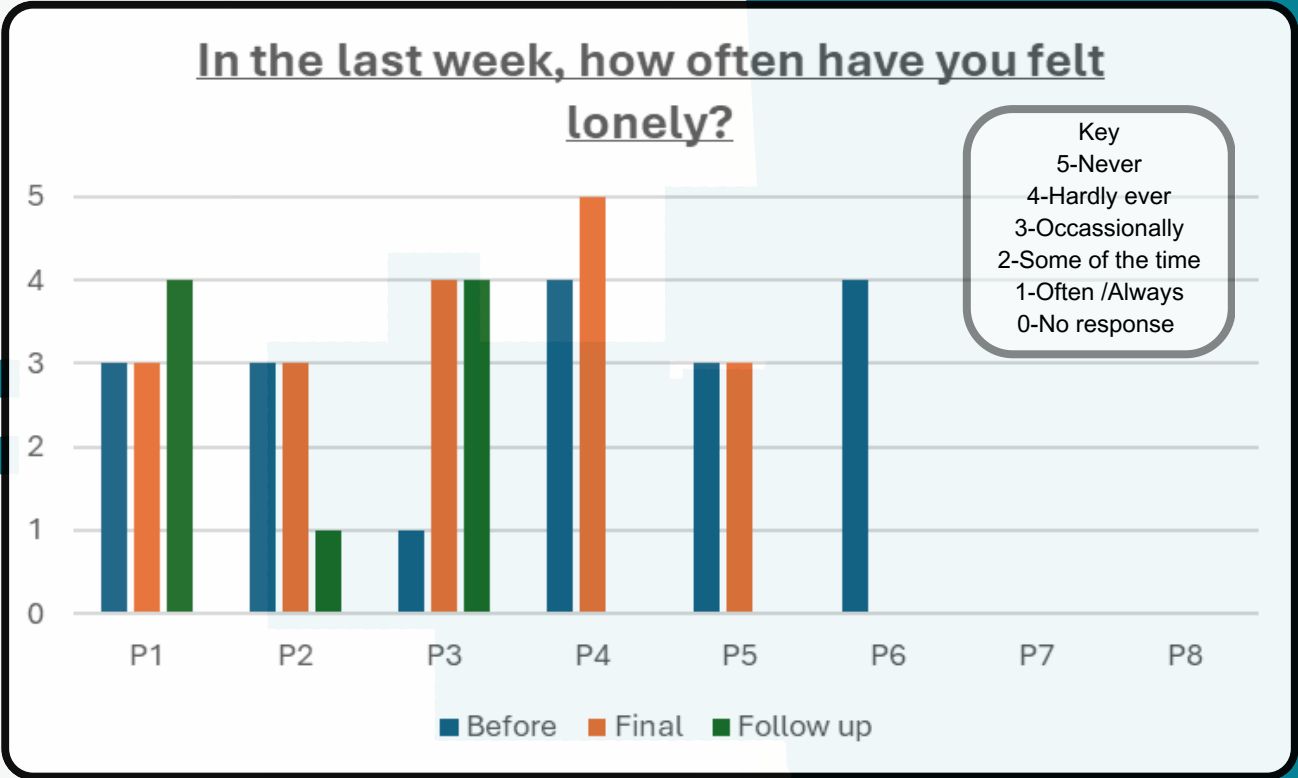
In the follow-up questionnaire, two of the three participants reported that they hardly ever felt lonely, which was an improvement from their first questionnaire.

This suggests that the programme may have helped them build and sustain social connections and we know that they formed friendships during the sessions which have continued after the programme ended.

However, the other participant showed a significant increase in their loneliness levels in the follow-up questionnaire. This participant also scored themselves lower in most areas and reported a decline in wellbeing at the point.



Participants engaging in a session focusing on natural musical sounds



Accessing nature for wellbeing

Participants were asked in each questionnaire 'In the last week how often have you accessed nature for your wellbeing' With a scale of 0 hours/not at all to 7+hours/daily.

By week six, four of the five participants had increased the amount of time they spent outside for their wellbeing compared to week one, whilst one participant's outdoor activity levels remained unchanged.

Notably, one participant made a significant improvement in accessing nature, increasing their time from 30 minutes to one hour per week, to over seven hours/ daily.

On the final week we asked participants Do you feel you have made connections with nature, if so, how? Below is a word cloud showing the common word that participants used in their responses.

Feedback from a participant at week six



Accessing nature for wellbeing continued

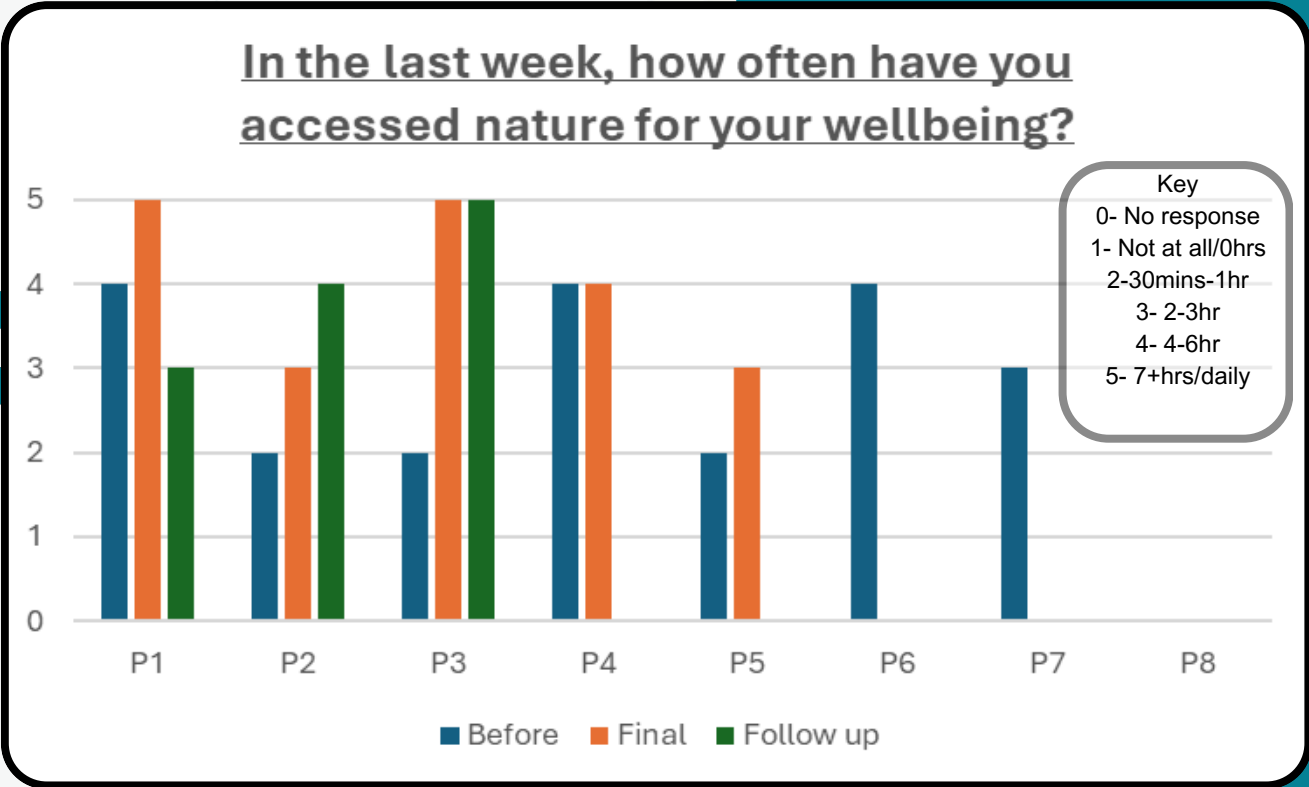
In the follow-up questionnaire, one participant reported a slight decrease in accessing the outdoors, one reported that they continued to access nature daily, and the other participants showed an increase from week six.

These two participants that have gone from accessing nature for 30 minutes to one hour a week, to spending 4-7+ hours a week since they completed the first questionnaire.

This may indicate that the programme has had a positive impact on the amount of time they now spend in nature for their wellbeing compared to before they started the programme.

“We (my baby and I) have leant birds, bird songs, different herbs and plants. Things I have never seen before. We had the chance to stop and enjoy the sun and nature sounds. This led me to feeling relaxed and recharged to take on the week’.

Feedback from a participant at week six



Weekly feedback form

Participants were asked to complete a tick sheet feedback form each week. For each of the questions (outlined below), they were asked to rate themselves from 0-4 – with 0 being ‘not at all’ and 4 being ‘very much’ in relation to how they felt after attending a session.

- Q1: I feel more relaxed
- Q2: I feel more confident
- Q3: I feel I have connected to the natural environment
- Q4: I feel I have connected to other people
- Q5: I feel I have been active
- Q6: I feel I have been learnt something new
- Q7: I feel I have done something positive for my wellbeing

Relaxation (Q1): Participants generally reported feeling more relaxed after the sessions. This suggests that the activities were effective in reducing stress and promoting relaxation.

Confidence (Q2): Across all the sessions, 91% of people felt more confident (on average across the weekly forms) after attending the session, indicating that most participants felt a moderate increase in their self-assurance.

Connection to Nature (Q3): After every session 100% of participants reported an increase in their connection with nature which highlighted the importance of outdoor activities in helping to improve individuals’ connectivity to their environment.

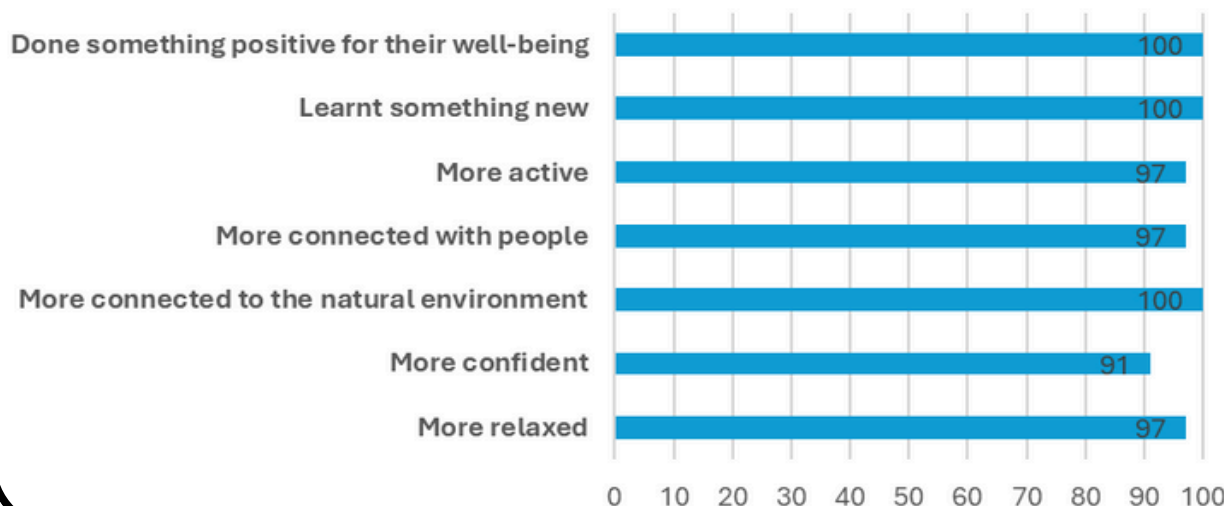
Social Connection (Q4): The sessions also fostered social connections, and on average 97% of participants showed an increase in connection to others

Physical Activity (Q5): Participants felt they were active during the sessions, with most participants reporting they felt that had been physically active during the session.

Learning (Q6): All participants reported that the sessions provided valuable new information or skills after each session throughout the programme. We know through the NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing that learning plays an important role in maintaining our overall wellbeing.

Wellbeing (Q7): Overall all participants who attended the sessions felt they did something positive for their wellbeing.

Across all 6 sessions, on average, participants felt that they have:



Qualitative data

On week six we collected qualitative feedback on the programme. Below are the comments made by the participants that have not already been included in the report

What did you enjoy the most about the programme?

'Meeting mums and exploring nature and encouraging the learning of nature for our children'

'I enjoyed how knowledgeable the leaders are. How friendly and accessible the service was. I enjoyed the music week and having the chance to sit with other mums in open spaces has really helped my mental health.'

'Enjoyed making new friends and learning all the fab new crafts and everyone. I can't wait to recreate some of them as the twins get older.'

'The bond made amongst the group, and support offered to each other to help with the babies.'
The simple but effective and fun activities. The walks, so refreshing.'

'EVERYTHING! We have loved every walk and activity, it was amazing to experience so many different crafts, nature activities as well as singing, natural musical instruments and then the final week of creating our own song'.

'I have really suffered with postpartum depression and anxiety, and it was a lift every week to have "nature club" to look forward to.'

What did you like the least? What improvements would you suggest?

'For it to be over :('

'Nothing!'

'I liked it all.'

· 'I really didn't dislike anything but maybe somewhere more covered when it was exceptionally warm/sunny. But that's the weather not anything negative for the course.'

'There wasn't anything I didn't enjoy.'

'There is nothing that I did not like about these sessions except that they are ending :(



Would you recommend a programme like this to others? Yes/No Why?

'Yes, it has been great for my mental health, meeting other people and staying on for lunch'

'Yes -To take time to connect with your baby and nature'

'Yes 100%. I started this course at a very difficult point in my life and it really gave me everything that I needed at the exact right time. I gained some confidence, friends and an outlet. I can't thank you all enough and I frequently recommend the course to others.'

'Yes, this is something which should happen more and be promoted to other mums.'

'Absolutely I have already been telling other friends about this programme as well as my perinatal mental health professionals to share with other parents. It has been so beneficial for my wellbeing.'

· 'yes'

Any other comments?

'Thank you so much!'

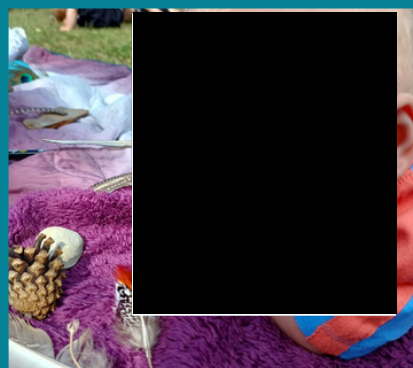
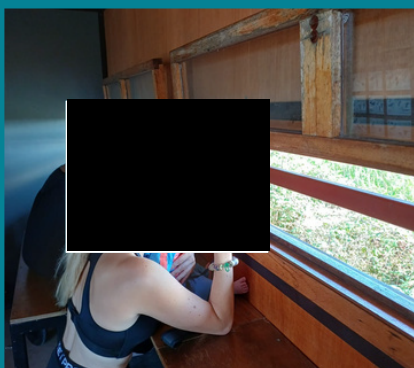
'This is such a beneficial service for women's health and for mothers. It allowed me to have space to breath. I am under the mental health service (perinatal), and I have felt that this programme has affected me to the point that we are discussing a discharge from the service!! Thank you.'

Thank you so much.'

'Lovely staff! Highly skilled, and down to earth people'

'Would love this to happen again and be a part of any future events. Yet, prior I was not even sure this would be for me.'

'Thank you so much for the experiences and chance to come along to this group. so, so appreciative and grateful. We really looked forward to attending these sessions.'



Song Lyrics- Pegwell Bay

In the final week of the programme, participants reflected on their experiences. The parents decided to write and record a song, which can be heard in the report video. Below are the lyrics:

CHORUS

Pegwell Bay, Pegwell Bay

Oh I know I will be ok

When I find myself walking in Pegwell Bay...

VERSE 1

We all meet together at Pegwell Bay to connect with nature each week,

We all meet together at Pegwell to walk, to create and to speak. |

VERSE 2

With the babies we've seen lots of sightings, with all kinds of birds that are flying,

There's been swallows that we follow and the times they have been exciting.

VERSE 3

There are birds and bees and butterflies, big skies, wide eyes and smiles,

We can see all the birds on the saltmarsh, our binoculars see for miles.

VERSE 4

Happiness, joy, smiles and giggles, making friends mums and babies alike,

We all have such fun from the beginning, we could go right the way through the night.

VERSE 5

Creativity, learning and looking, listening and loving it too,

We all had an adventure each week and sometimes we even had a pool!

VERSE 6

Thank you for the experience, to learn, to socialise and grow,

We appreciate each week and times that we speak and are grateful for all we now know.

Case study-Anna

Anna (name changed) experienced anxiety and postpartum depression and was engaging with perinatal mental health services when she joined the programme. She learned about the programme through word of mouth from the perinatal services she accessed. Anna had not visited Pegwell and Sandwich Bay before attending Wilder Wellbeing. She attended 5 out of 6 sessions but was unaware of the taster sessions.

She provided the following feedback:

"I just wanted to say thank you for the wonderful group we had the chance to join! It was absolutely wonderful, and we have all made friends and learned a lot. I have told my friends about this programme, as well as my perinatal mental health professionals, to encourage other parents to attend if it runs again.

We loved every walk and activity. It was amazing to experience so many different crafts, nature activities, singing, natural musical instruments, and the final week of creating our own song. I have really suffered from postpartum depression and anxiety, and it was a lift every week to have 'nature club' to look forward to.

I really hope these sessions will continue and run again, helping many more people like me, or others who want it as well. It truly is an amazing programme!"

In the follow-up questionnaire sent three months after the programme ended, Anna commented on how she enjoyed keeping in touch with the other mums in the group and how she has continued to access nature for her wellbeing. Anna has continued to visit Pegwell Bay nature reserve after the programme finished to meet with other mums.



Conclusion

This research focused on the impact of wellbeing on perinatal mental health. While attendance at the sessions was sometimes sporadic, making data collection more challenging, the programme initially garnered significant interest. Eight participants completed 50% or more of the six-week programme, with five out of eight completing both the week one and week six questionnaires, and three out of eight completing the follow-up survey.

The data and feedback collected indicate that participants generally benefited from attending the programme and were positive about its impact on their overall wellbeing. One of the most successful outcomes of the programme was the formation of strong connections among parents who did not know each other before the programme started. Additionally, participants learned to connect with nature as a means to improve their wellbeing.

The success of the programme and the positive outcomes experienced by the participants would not have been possible without the generous support of Porchlight

Thank you

If you would like any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

Wellbeing Officer

@kentwildlife.org.uk

