

## Suffolk Artlink's Social Impact 2025 / 2026

Suffolk Artlink uses the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) to measure the wellbeing impact of its programmes for people living with complex long term health conditions and family carers. We analysed data from a sample of 66 people attending these services in 2025 / 2026.

### Our key findings & summary

- **Clear wellbeing improvement**

Average wellbeing increased by nearly 3 points, which is a meaningful change.

- **High proportion of positive outcomes**

71% improved.

- **Strong impact for low-wellbeing participants**

The biggest gains occur among those starting with the lowest wellbeing scores.

- **Substantial social value**

Estimated wellbeing value created: £195k across 66 participants

Suffolk Artlink's SWEMWBS data shows a clear positive impact on participant wellbeing. Average wellbeing scores increased from 22.1 at entry to 25.1 at exit, representing a meaningful improvement of nearly three points on the SWEMWBS scale. 71% of participants experienced improved wellbeing, while only 17% reported declines, likely reflecting external life circumstances. Using wellbeing valuation modelling, these changes equate to an estimated £194,885 in social value for the people sampled, demonstrating the significant contribution Suffolk Artlink's programmes make to wellbeing.

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## What is Wellbeing?

“Well-being can be understood as how people feel and how they function, both on a personal and a social level, and how they evaluate their lives as a whole. To break this down, how people feel refers to emotions such as happiness or anxiety. How people function refers to things such as their sense of competence or their sense of being connected to those around them. How people evaluate their life as a whole is captured in their satisfaction with their lives, or how they rate their lives in comparison with the best possible life.

“You can think of someone as having high well-being if they function well, have positive feelings day-to-day and overall and think their lives are going well; we call this ‘flourishing’. Similarly, you can think of someone as having low well-being if they do not function well and have negative feelings day-to-day and overall.” Measuring Well-being A guide for practitioners, Juliet Michaelson, Sorcha Mahony and Jonathan Schifferes.

## Why does Wellbeing Matter?

Although wellbeing is distinct from mental health, low wellbeing is associated with poor personal and social function and increases the likelihood of negative outcomes for people’s mental and physical health.

Suffolk Artlink has identified that our biggest impact is where we work with people who come with very low wellbeing and we therefore target our recruitment accordingly. Our programmes have a significant positive direct impact on participants and a positive financial impact on other services such as health and social care.

Our social prescribing programme targets the people in the top 5% of primary care patients by cost. “The top 5% of patients account for around 50% of the total health care budget for primary care, secondary care and GP-prescribed drug therapy.” Health Foundation working paper, October 2019, Working paper number: 7, “A descriptive analysis of health care use by high-cost, high-need patients in England”, Kathryn Dreyer, Will Parry, Wikum Jayatunga, Sarah Deeny”

## Dataset Overview

- Participant sample: 66
- Measure used: Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)
- Scale range: 7-35
- Comparison: Entry vs Exit wellbeing scores

SWEMWBS is widely used to measure changes in mental wellbeing following interventions, including arts, community health, and social prescribing programmes.

## Average Wellbeing Change

| Measure             | Score        |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Average Entry Score | 22.14        |
| Average Exit Score  | 25.11        |
| Average Change      | +2.97 points |

A 2-3 point increase on SWEMWBS is typically considered a meaningful improvement in wellbeing in programme evaluations.

This suggests Suffolk Artlink's activity is generating a measurable improvement in participant wellbeing.

## Outcome Breakdown

| Outcome   | Participants | Percentage |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Improved  | 47           | 71%        |
| No change | 8            | 12%        |
| Declined  | 11           | 17%        |

### Chart: Outcome Distribution



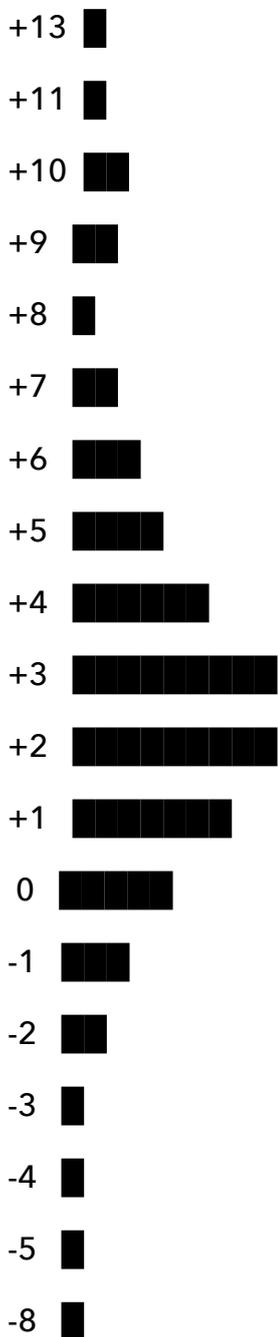
Nearly three-quarters of participants experienced improved wellbeing, which is strong evidence of programme effectiveness.

## Distribution of Score Changes

Most participants improved between 1 and 6 points.

Approximate distribution:

### Change in SWEMWBS score



Most improvements fall in the +2 to +5 range, which is typical for wellbeing interventions.

However, several participants experienced very large gains (8-13 points).

## Starting Wellbeing Levels

Average entry score: 22.14

Typical UK population averages: 23.5 - 24.5

Participants start with slightly below-average wellbeing. Suffolk Artlink is reaching people who already have some wellbeing challenges. This strengthens the significance of the improvement.

## Largest Improvements

Examples from the dataset:

| Entry | Exit | Change |
|-------|------|--------|
| 18    | 31   | +13    |
| 16    | 29   | +13    |
| 10    | 21   | +11    |
| 13    | 23   | +10    |
| 17    | 27   | +10    |

These cases suggest the programme can produce major wellbeing improvements for some participants.

## Largest Declines

| Entry | Exit | Change |
|-------|------|--------|
| 33    | 25   | -8     |
| 30    | 25   | -5     |
| 19    | 14   | -5     |

These represent a small minority of participants and likely reflect external life circumstances rather than programme impact. This accords with participants' responses when asked about their circumstances by our project team.

## Social Value

The calculation for social value is based on the model detailed in the paper, Mental Health and Life Satisfaction: The Relationship between the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale and Life Satisfaction, Daniel Fujiwara, Kieran Keohane, Vicky Clayton, Ulrike Hotopp, published by HACT, 15 September 2017.

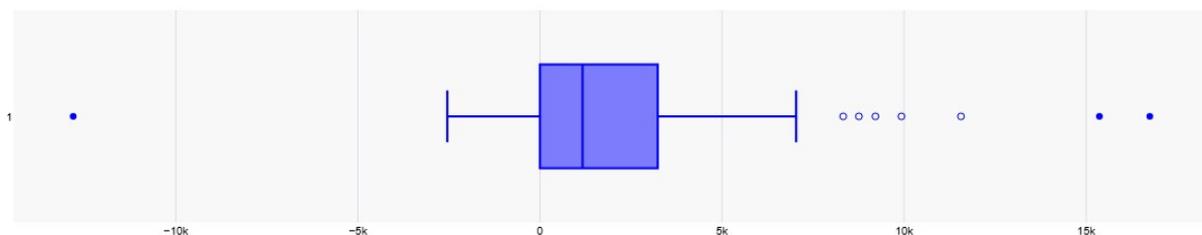
From the monetised values you provided:

| Measure                       | Value    |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Total social value generated  | £194,885 |
| Average value per participant | £2,953   |

This indicates substantial wellbeing value created through Suffolk Artlink's programmes.

Our largest values occur where participants move from very low wellbeing into moderate wellbeing.

### Boxplot, Social Value Distribution



Skewness Shape: Asymmetrical, right/positive (pval=0.007) (right-skewed)

Excess kurtosis: 4.3288 (the mean is pulled higher than the median by the large values to the right)

Tails Shape: Leptokurtic, long heavy tails (pval=0) (this is statistically significant and not random)

## Key findings

- Clear wellbeing improvement

Average wellbeing increased by nearly 3 points, which is a meaningful change.

- High proportion of positive outcomes

71% improved.

- Strong impact for low-wellbeing participants

The biggest gains occur among those starting with the lowest wellbeing scores.

- Substantial social value

Estimated wellbeing value created: £195k across 66 participants

## **Most Significant Change Case Study**

This amazing personal story was generously shared by a participant from our social prescribing programme as part of our Most Significant Change qualitative evaluation in 2025 and is representative of the amazing creative journeys our brave participants have taken through our programmes.

"My life used to be really busy until my depression. I now get up and then have a smoke and get ready to go out. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, I go to Curious Minds, and this is something that I didn't used to do.

"Before I did Curious Minds, I didn't do much and some days I didn't even get dressed as I had no need to get up. I don't go out anywhere. I used to sit and watch TV most of the time. Now, every day I get washed and dressed. I eat once a day, in the evening and this is due to me being really fed up and can't be bothered to cook just for one. I used to batch cook much of my food but when I'm fed up I no longer do this.

"I have now made friends, I never used to have many friends. I now have met x from Curious Minds and we now go for coffee. This has been such a big change for me. It has also inspired me to get in touch with my old friends. I have now started to make plans!

"Before I was quite happy to stay inside and not do anything, but I have now signed up for more courses. I have signed up for a networking breakfast, which is a really big step for me! I would never have done this before! I am now doing another Curious Minds course and have signed up for the next course, too.

"I never used to have many friends and now I do thanks to Curious Minds. I look forward to things now and feel so much better!

"Coming together as a group of likeminded people, talking to other people, having a purpose each week helped to create the change.

"I am now looking forward to things, I used to feel I didn't have any real purpose but now I look forward to coming out, meeting the group, doing the art, and talking to people. I am so much better than I have been. I am beginning to get better!

"The changes have been so significant in helping me to move forward."

# Theory of Change

