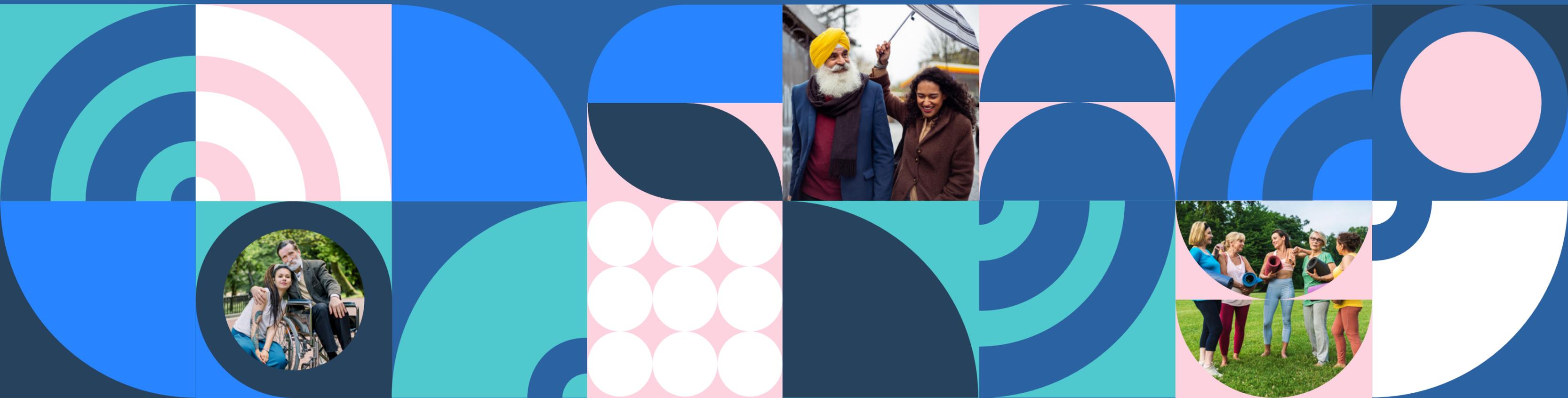




Case Study  
Essex County Council



## Essex's Challenges?

Like local authorities across the country, Essex County Council (ECC) faces increasing demand for care services at a time of acute financial pressure.

ECC is pushing a digital-first approach to critical public health and wellness issues to make communities more resilient, empowering individuals to make choices about their care while reducing strain on council services.

The Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) was formed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to support vulnerable residents' health, well-being, and care needs. Many existing partner services pivoted towards coronavirus action, supporting public health to distribute messages across the whole community, give support where needed, and recruit and mobilise volunteers.

Essex County Council needed a model that would ensure care needs are identified across the county, including in isolated rural areas, to highlight care blackspots and direct support appropriately.

## How We Helped?

The Tribe platform aligns with ECC's aims to develop the use of assistive technology to support its most vulnerable residents. Thanks to the information captured through Tribe, the local authority has been able to identify areas of need across the county and direct available resources accurately and efficiently.

The beginning of the rollout of Tribe in Essex has seen the technology provide individuals with choice and control over the care they receive, either through volunteers or community micro-enterprises. Tribe gives them power over the decisions that affect their lives whilst taking pressure off council services.



# Volunteers

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the need for communities to engage more than ever. The council used Tribe to increase the social impact of the public's efforts, supporting volunteers to mobilise effectively to support the most vulnerable.

The council's appeal for volunteers at the start of the first lockdown saw 4000 members of the public recruited, followed by a further 2500 volunteers later recruited to support the vaccination programme.

The Essex Wellbeing Service now has a sizeable pool of volunteers using the Tribe app, with thousands of vulnerable residents across Essex supported in numerous ways.

A number of voluntary sector organisations, whose work is crucial to the local communities they serve, have begun to trial the Tribe platform for their users. Groups like Rainbow Services in Harlow, which works to alleviate the effects of disadvantage and social exclusion, are beginning to rollout the app to their users, with many other groups enthusiastic to follow once the immediate demands of the pandemic are reduced.

Covid-19 has seen citizens more immersed in their communities than ever before, and therefore more inclined to

get involved on a community level. As a result, many mutual aid groups sprung up in communities across the county in response to the first lockdown, and Tribe has allowed these groups to self-organise and flourish. Users could immediately see how the app's functionality provided the potential for building and strengthening their communities due to its intuitive and responsive nature.

Youth opportunities are particularly exciting for ECC, as Tribe can provide these previously scarce opportunities in a digital format that is second nature to young people.

Post-Covid, one-off events and opportunities, such as localised litter picks or a beach clean, can become family-friendly events for the whole community, with volunteers recruited through the app.

As the rollout continues, all admins of place-based community groups on Facebook will have access to it to coordinate their community efforts more organically.

Crucially, through Tribe, Essex County Council has been able to connect with groups - not through organisations, but directly, allowing the council to track blackspots and engagement in real-time like never before.



*We see Tribe as central to the future of volunteering for EWS, post-Covid-19.*

**Nadine Allwood**  
Volunteer Co-ordinator,  
Essex Wellbeing Service



*Tribe shows the benefits that can be gained by putting people in control of accessing local-community care, something that is not achievable through LAs commissioning care at a large scale. It is particularly valuable for those who want access to personalised, local and flexible support. We're excited to see what the future holds as we broaden this approach to other areas of Essex and connect individuals with community micro-enterprises.*

**Lisa Wilson**

Head of Strategic Commissioning and Policy, ECC

## Community Micro-Enterprises

Adult social care teams in Essex County Council are also trialling Tribe in their work with community micro-enterprises.

A project within the 'Choice and Control' programme is focused on the Basildon district. It aims to provide individual choice and empowerment. For those residents allocated a personal budget in the form of a Direct Payment for meeting their care and support needs, Tribe allows them to make choices for themselves about the type of care they want to access, and the control over when and how they receive that support.

The council have worked with a mixture of community micro-enterprises, including groups and sole traders, to onboard them and set them up with the app, supporting them in ensuring the correct CQC registration and safeguarding measures are in place.

## Essex, Tribe and the Future...

ECC can see great potential in the hyper-local care environment post-Covid, particularly as the economic challenges are already evident, with people transitioning into new roles and new models of working.

Once councils can move out of the pandemic emergency mode, there are plans for volunteering and adult social care teams to work together to encourage volunteering as a path to paid work. The intention is to train those volunteers who express an interest in working in care, supporting them through qualifications and onboarding them as a community micro-enterprise. This in turn will help to address the existing gaps in the wider care workforce that have been further exacerbated by the pandemic.

Additionally, as local authorities manage the recovery of services after the pandemic's peak, Essex County Council sees Tribe as an opportunity to strengthen and increase the sustainability of public mobilisation so that it can be maintained into the likely long tail of Covid-19.



*I absolutely believe in Tribe as a product. It is what I can imagine citizens themselves using to come together and self-organise.*

*The sky's the limit for me. It will help me as a commissioner to be able to understand what I have and what I don't have, and it will be a barometer of how activated my communities are.*

**Kirsty O'Callaghan**

Head of Strengthening Communities, ECC



Thank You