

ANNUAL IMPACT



REPORT



HELPING YOUNG ADULTS RECONNECT

WE ARE ON A MISSION...

...to help young adults build their confidence and make meaningful connections with their peers and those a little older than themselves, by bringing them together in a safe space to talk about what feels important to them.

	Projects	Details	Outcome
1	Chelmsford 7 attendees	High impact programme delivered in small groups (8 people per group max) with 2 Popcorn hosts	Overall: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ncreasing sense of belonging• Confidence boost and better understanding of confidence• Open their mind on new people and opportunities• Celebration of self-worth and life experiences This programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New friendships• New relationship
15	meetups in Witham 195 attendees	Drop-in social meetings designed around an activity: Italian cooking workshops, board game bonanza, dancing, arts&crafts	Partners: The Well Community Cafe, Edda Cafe&Bistro, Giovanni-italian baker, Essex Youth Services
2	parties	Christmas Party and Popcorn's 2nd birthday celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friendships• Improved mental health and wellbeing• Sense of belonging
1	sponsored walk	Merse 13-mile walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fundraising• Improved mental health and wellbeing• Sense of belonging• integration with the wider community

8-WEEK PROGRAMME

“Popcorn programme is a place to meet new people and learn how other people think. It really helps with your social skills by getting to know and understand different type of personalities.” Popcorner

ACTIVE REFERRAL PARTNERS

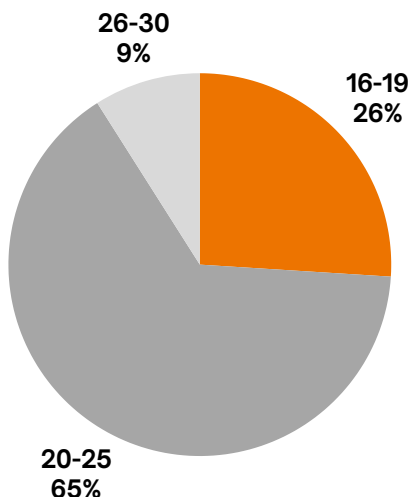
Social Prescribers, Hamelin Trust, Occupational Therapists, Job Centre in Witham, Job Centre in Chelmsford, Shared Lives, CHP housing association in Chelmsford, Community Support Workers (Adult Social Care/ Local Linked Support), Essex Partnership University-NHS Trust (Senior Clinical Psychologist)

MAIN PARTNERS

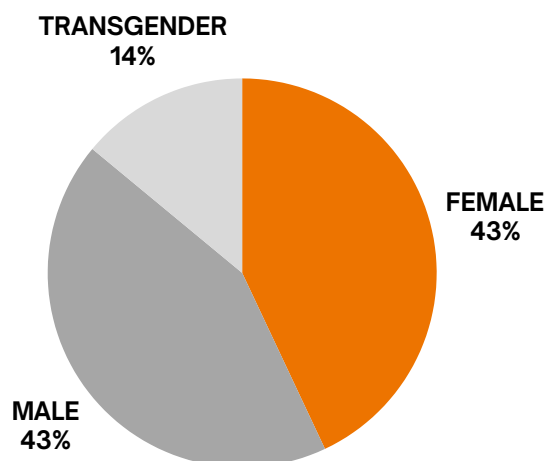
Essex Youth Services- free venues across Essex, DBS check for staff
CHP- free access to their community hub in Chelmsford & co-facilitator
Fusion Leisure Centre- free 2 months membership for people joining our programme in Witham

STATISTICS

AGE



GENDER

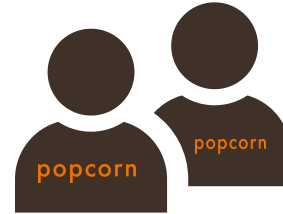


- 73% participants have learning difficulties and/or autism
- 13% are young carers
- 14% are transgender
- 62.5% struggle with mental health issues
- 57% NEET

STRUCTURE

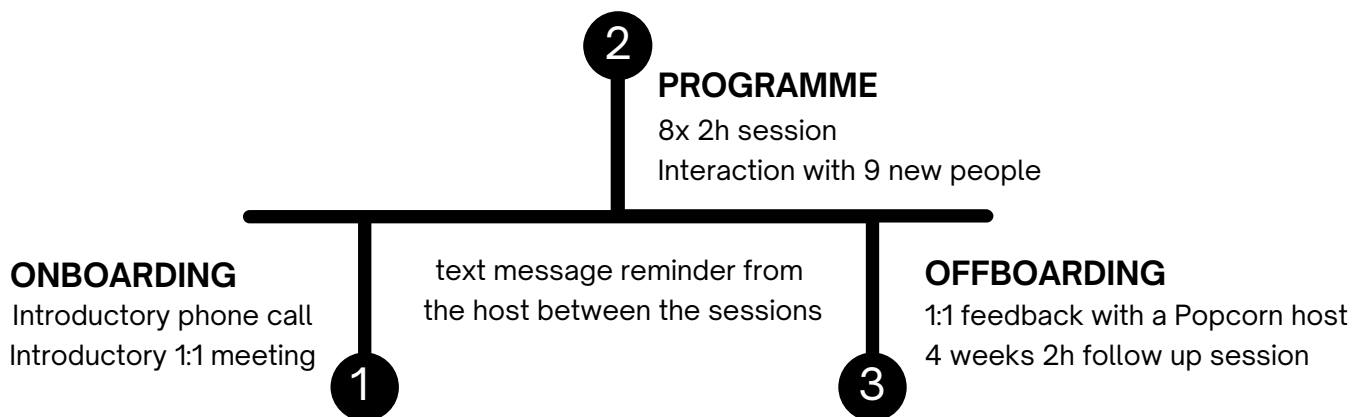


8 POPCORNERS



2 POPCORN HOSTS

STRUCTURE: 8 weeks | 2hours| follow up session after 4 weeks



103 interactions per person



824 interactions per group

FEEDBACK



FROM POPCORNERS

“Popcorn has given me something to look forward to at least once a month and it's really helped with socialising. I feel more confident talking to people I don't know because of Popcorn and I feel a lot more confident in my social skills as well.”

Hayden 22

“I've never seen my 17 year old brother this happy outside the house. He has been laughing out loud with a group of people he's never met before! This is incredible. “

Mia 20

“I lost my voice after the birthday party. This has only happened twice in my life – and both times it was at Popcorn's birthday party. Last year was exactly the same. I only ever talk so much at Popcorn.”

Jack 22

“ I drove from Basildon to join tonight's meetup in Witham. I am looking to make some friends, and there is nothing like this in my area.”

Tomas 27

“This is great for my mental health, especially after a tough year that I had. “

Charlie 20

“I am grateful to have Popcorn as there is a lack of social groups for younger people locally. I have met new people and enjoy the games and activities.”

Bethany 20

FEEDBACK



FROM POPCORN PARENTS

“I'm really pleased we found popcorn for Bethany; I think it has really improved her confidence.

I know Bethany always looks forward to the events and meet-ups, and she is always very enthusiastic during the drive home, telling me what she has done that evening. I think popcorn is a fantastic resource!”

Richard

***“Jack and Hayden absolutely love coming to popcorn .
It's so nice to see them have somewhere they truly feel they belong and they can be themselves.***

It's a safe space and I feel the positive impact it's had on both Jack and Hayden has been great , in all the ways confidence , belonging , learning new skills I.e. cooking etc , building friendships and also learning to be tolerant towards others .

This group has been invaluable, we didn't realise how much it was needed till they joined. As they're mum I am incredibly grateful, thank you so much.“

Kelly

“ I would like to say that I think Popcorn is an amazing group, it gives young adults the chance to meet up and make friends in the real world not on a screen where you are never sure who you are actually talking to.

The club's nights are relaxing and enjoying giving the young adults the chance to learn new skills and make friends in the process.

The organisers and support staff are excellent role models and nothing is too much trouble when it comes to supporting the group. I really hope the popcorn group continues because it's very difficult to make new friends in today's society. “

Jossalin

THE DREAM TEAM

Thank you to all amazing people, who have been supporting Popcorn with their passion, commitment, friendship and dedication:

THE BOARD

Paulina Kostas-Grycendler
CEO & a lead facilitator

George Fielding
Non-executive Director

Liz Hamilton
co-facilitator & NED



From the left: Mae, Liz NED



Popcorn's Friends & untstoppable NED, George

VOLUNTEERS

Mark Garnham
co-founder, partnership& fundraising manager

Carrie Chesterton
co-founder & meetups host

Sofiya Gak
Popcorner& meetups host

Codie Bloomfield
Popcorner, meetups host & a facilitator in training



From the left: Mark, Codie, Sofiya & Paulina

TAKE A PIC!



POPCORN 's 2nd BIRTHDAY PARTY

JULY 2025 at Valero Lounge

Popcorners, the team, parents, friends, Witham Town Mayor Paul Heath & Councillor Jack Coleman



Food, arts&crafts, board games, loads of popcorn, and great company!



Paulina congratulates Hayden after their first-ever public speech, where they thanked her and the entire team for creating a much-needed space for all Popcorners.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

DECEMBER 2024



From the left: Mae, Liz, Max, Jack, Oliver



From the left: Bethany, Lily, Mark, Jacob M., Sofiya



From the left: Codie, Rees, Ben, Katie, Martin

**BAKE&BOND**

Focaccia workshop with Giovanni Di Sarno

**MERSE 13-MILE WALK**

December 2024

**BOARD GAME BONANZA MEETUP**
at Edda Cafe in Witham



CHRISTMAS ARTS&CRAFTS
at Edda Cafe



BOARD GAME BONANZA MEETUP
at Edda Cafe in Witham

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



LEARNING

The biggest win

Popcorners coming back after a couple of months with no events.

The biggest surprise

New people joined from all over Essex (Chelmsford, Basildon) despite very limited advertising.

The greatest asset

The team

The dream

To keep growing our microcommunity at a steady pace.

CHALLENGES

- Note from Paulina, the CEO “ Last year in August my mental health declined rapidly, forcing me to focus on myself before I could continue supporting others. Despite my passion for Popcorn, I simply couldn’t bring to life all planned events. I am very lucky to be supported by wonderful volunteers, who have been helping me to keep Popcorn running through this really difficult period of my life. Together, we have delivered regular meetups, supported dozens of people and grew stronger as a micro community.”

- Building a team of trained facilitators to support our 8-week programmes has been a challenge. It’s a matter of volunteer availability and our team’s capacity to provide them with the required training. Although we couldn’t grow this part of our organisation in the past year, we are looking to revisit this area as soon as possible.