

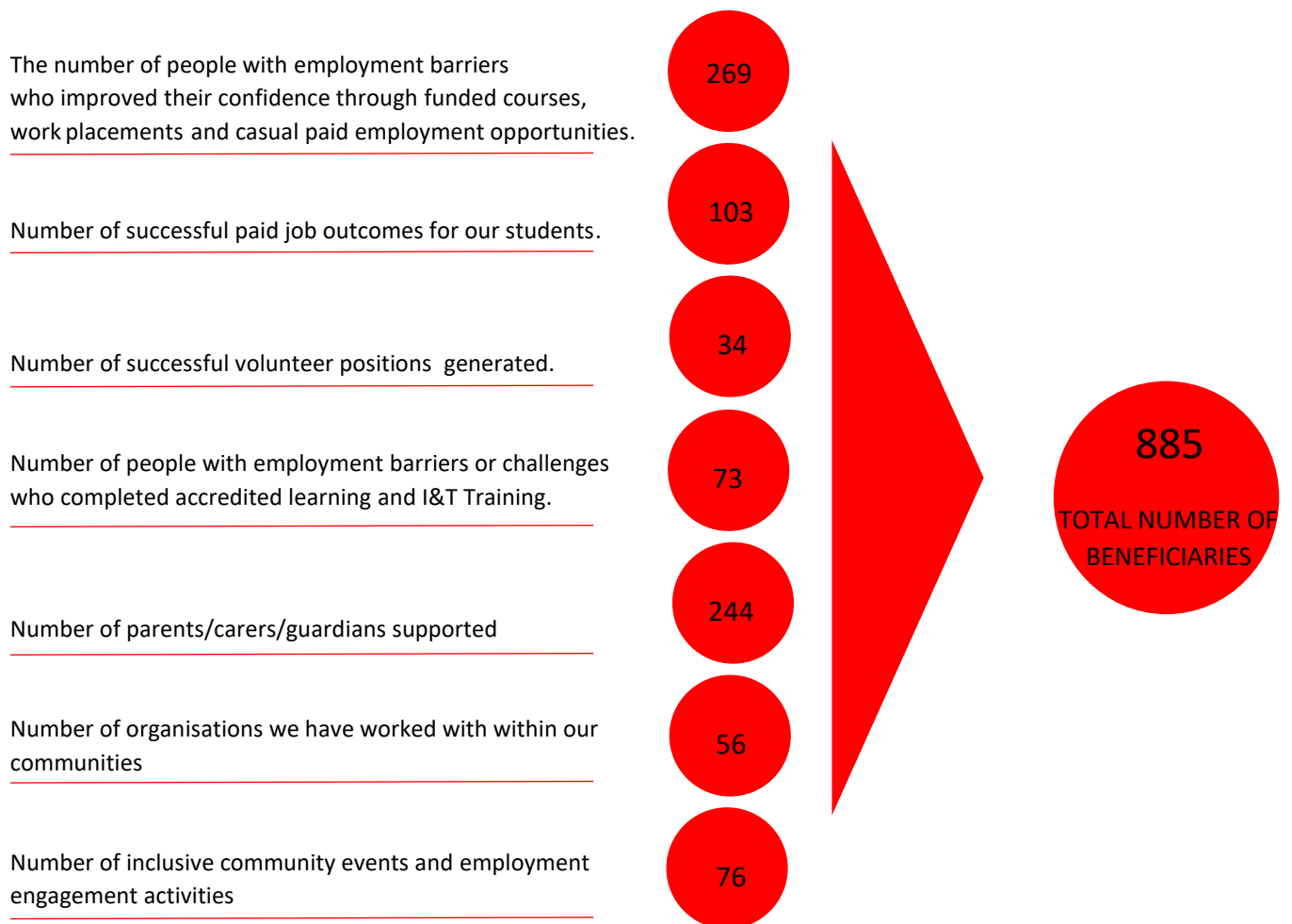


ENTERPRISE EAST GROUP



The Enterprise East Group CIC Coronavirus Lockdown Impact Report 2019 to 2022

A Snapshot of our Outcomes



Total number of Social Media Followers (February 2022) = 3.7k

Below you will find links to our website, social media pages and YouTube Channel, which demonstrate amazing examples of our business and ethos:

- Our website - <https://www.enterpriseeast.org/>
- Our Facebook Pages - <https://www.facebook.com/The-Enterprise-East-Group-CIC-2607607885978757>
 - Sandy's Diner - <https://www.facebook.com/Sandys-Diner-104364404647715>
 - Café Cornell - <https://www.facebook.com/Caf%C3%A9-Cornell-107733134088624>
- Our company YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMKn4hSZTvSQ4T0RqLHeeiQ>

- Instagram Handles: @enterprise_east_group_cic,
@sandys_diner,
@cafecornell

The Enterprise East Group (EEG) opened its doors in October 2017 and delivered outreach projects in both Essex and Hertfordshire, supporting those furthest from employment to reach their full potential, to gain successful transferable work skills and to feel valued in their community.



In October 2019 and with the help of Uttlesford District Council and The Essex Community Foundation, we went onto open our first work-based training academy, The Tea Leaf Community Tearooms, in Great Dunmow. Its reputation for quality food and five-star service spread quickly around the community and the tearooms soon become a central, integral part of the community. Every customer was eager to learn about the work being done to support our local community, and our students, who were gaining self-confidence and building their skill set(s) to prepare them for future employment. We also delivered many community events including the 'Meet up Monday' initiative, where visitors who were isolated and lonely in the community could come along to the tearooms and be guaranteed a warm welcome into a friendly environment, where they will not stand out as being alone.



The tearooms thrived and soon began attracting customers from other communities. Some days there was a queue for a table! Alongside this, various individuals, volunteers, and organisations came to us for help with events and special occasions.



We organised an afternoon tea celebration for a 108-year-old lady's birthday at a local residential home, supported the Town Mayor with a fully themed Mad Hatters tea party which raised funds for her chosen charities, and even provided staff, catering, and decoration for a large charity ball in aid of the Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford, all of the events proved to be a roaring success.



Many more events were planned for the rest of 2020 and EEG's future looked bright, and busy. We had also secured a second location for another social business café/community hub of EEG, working alongside another charity, L&Q Living, who were building a brand-new site with a space for us to have a SECOND training academy and community café called the Café Cornell.



On 20th March 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the whole of the UK would be going into 'Lockdown' to try and stop the spread of Coronavirus. Initially it was thought it would only last a few weeks. Many of our planned events were postponed or cancelled altogether and we had to close our tearooms. Like most of the country, we thought we would be back in April, but it was then announced that the lockdown must continue. We began to worry... what would become of our tearooms and training academy? What would happen to our students?

For some of them we were the only occasion and reason that they left home and interacted with others. However, we were now being instructed to isolate, to protect ourselves and each other. Our CEO endeavoured to keep in touch with every single team member, volunteer and student and ensured we all had access to support and wellbeing checks. All we could do was wait.

At the end of May, a meeting was called for the core team. We met at the (closed) tearooms and discussed how everyone had been coping over the lockdown. The main outcome of the meeting was that we needed to come back! As well as the financial implications for the company, the mental health and wellbeing of the team was suffering. We also noted that if we could find a way to get up and running again, we may be able to get the students back too! Unfortunately, we were unable to claim the governments hospitality grant because we rented premises from another local charity, Mind in West Essex, and the building was a community asset building and was exempt from business rates. We knew that with the current social distancing guidance in place we would struggle to re-open the Tea Leaf and training academy due to the small size of the premises, so we needed to rethink our entire strategy to find something that was both financially viable and also safe for our students to return.

We began to share ideas and within an hour we had designed an entirely new business model and 'Sandys Diner' was born in the form of a pop-up takeaway and delivery service. All we needed to do was secure funds for the relaunch. Both Fowler Smith and Jones and The National Lottery agreed to support our project and with their financial support we were able to retain nearly all our staff, coupled with the governments furlough scheme, and we were fortunate that our volunteers were happy to step in too.



It was at this point that we stopped being just a company – we became a work family. A few of us in the team had loved ones who were classed as vulnerable and having to shield, as were some of our trainees, so we drove the food hygiene, face covering, social distancing and handwashing messages HARD! All of us were living in a constant fear of the dreaded virus but we also knew we needed to move forward. If we were going to beat this virus AND survive the lockdown as a company, we knew we had to be smart about how we did it!

Prior to launching Sandys Diner, each member of the team – both paid and voluntary, completed their Level 2 Food Hygiene course and were also trained around the Covid 19 prevention and management procedures. Risk assessments were completed, all PPE purchased, every single item, utensil, and surface was deep cleaned and sanitised within an inch of its life! There was only one thing left to do, open the door (well, the window that serviced our customers over the suspended disabled car parking space)

Sandy's Diner opened on 18th June 2020, providing Dunmow with a brand-new outside eatery and no one could have anticipated just how popular we would be!



Within weeks we had over 1000 followers on social media and a growing milkshake fanbase, as word spread around the community and the surrounding area, about who we were and what we do. Applications for jobs, student placements and even volunteer posts had tripled to the point where the company now has a waiting list for each category of team member and are planning group volunteering information sessions so we can share our five-star ethos with those who are passionate about our mission to empower people into work.

Sandy's became the 'place to meet' for everyone, from pensioners wanting a cup of tea, families looking for a treat, mums with buggies and young people meeting with friends – all of which took place outdoors and adhered to social distancing measures!



Our customers repeatedly told us that we are “just what the town was missing”, “somewhere fun and vibrant but the foods still good and the service is so friendly!”. The Diner enabled EEG to register with ASDAN - a curriculum development organisation and awarding body, providing courses that develop skills for learning, work, and life. This enables EEG to deliver accredited training and qualifications to our trainees, filling their CV with transferable credits and skills, ready for when they enter the world of employment.



We also launched our ‘Pay It Forward Meal’ initiative - known as “The Sandy Special” which provided a free drink and a meal, as well as information and referral service to those who are homeless or otherwise in need.

Sandy's Diner
THE FINER DINER
Hungry?
If you are hungry and do not have the money to pay for food, please come to our counter and ask for the 'Sandy's Diner special'.
We will make sure you receive a meal and a drink free of charge and we will also connect you with other support organisations who may be able to help.
Like to help?
You can, by paying for a £5.00 voucher for someone who may need a little extra help right now. (Enterprise East Group CIC will subsidise the additional cost)
You can make a payment using any of the following methods:
• Make a donation with your order – Just let your server know you wish to do so.
• By calling 07535 609248 and speak to one of our team
• Make a donation online via our website www.enterpriseeast.org
Thank You
For more information please contact info@enterpriseeast.org

CVSU Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford
Tel: 01371 404474. Mon – Fri 9.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.
Homeless or at risk?
We're here for you. We offer advice to anyone in England aged 16-25. Call us free on 0808 800 0661 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm). We can also help people worried about a young person they know.
Streets2Homes
Call Us On 01279 430 011 or Email: streets2homes@streets2homes.co.uk
Streets2Homes is a charity based in Harlow, Essex and we provide a day centre which seeks to reach out to and help homeless people, we can assist them in a number of ways including finding accommodation.
Nacro
At Nacro, we work with a broad range of young people and adults across our education, resettlement and rehabilitation, health and wellbeing, and housing services. Visit: <https://www.nacro.org.uk/>
Tel: 0300 123 1999
Email: helpline@nacro.org.uk

women's aid Women's Aid - 0808 2000 247
Free phone 24-hour National Domestic Violence Helpline. Women's Aid is the national domestic violence charity that works to end violence against women and children.
CARS CARA is a registered charity working with adults of all genders, young people (aged 13-19) and children aged 12 and under from across mid and north Essex.
CARA - FIRST CONTACT NAVIGATORS
03000 037 777
or finding out more about Essex-wide services through www.synergysessex.org.uk
Childline 0800 1111
Non-judgemental, confidential advice and support for anyone under 18 years of age.
Call us for free on 0800 1111
Essex Wellbeing Service
The Essex Wellbeing Service supports people in the community and at work with a range of health, wellbeing and welfare needs. We help people access information and support to stay healthy, safe and well from help to quit smoking to supporting families adapt to 'new normal'. 0300 303 9988
Please also contact your local council and see what help they may be able to give you:
• Uttlesford (Dunmow, Saffron Walden and surrounding villages) – 01799 510 510
• Braintree District Council – 01376 552 525
• Chelmsford City Council – 01245 606 606

Samaritans - TEXT 116 123
Shout (Give us a Shout) Text – 85258. Shout is the UK's first free 24/7 text service for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.
NHS 111 Telephone: 111 Option 2 A 24-hour 7 days a week telephone helpline for all health enquiries.

citizens advice For advice and support regarding benefits and your legal rights, you can contact an adviser through our national phone Adviceline (England): 03444 111 444

During the past few months, one of our awesome students (who really struggled with being socially isolated during the lockdown) has been able to start his own cleaning company, with the support of EEG, we have also secured a further 3 paid jobs and with the help of Essex Community Foundation we have secured an apprenticeship position for one of our volunteers! There are several in other similar positive outcomes on the horizon.



However, in September our landlord advised us that our temporary outside operating space that was rented to us as Sandys Diner seating area, would need to be vacated as their staff were returning to the workplace and would need the disabled parking bays. The inside tearoom space was unable to accommodate the government mandated 2 metre social distance rule, we had to rethink again. We spoke to L&Q and asked if we could move into the new location that was agreed with them earlier than scheduled, and they said..... **YES!**

We still had one more hurdle, the building and space was perfect for our working academy, but it was in a rural location and had limited transport services. We needed to find a way to get all our beneficiaries who did not own a vehicle, transported to work, to their training placements and enable them to attend our community inclusion projects. We decided to use our in-house talents to raise money for a community vehicle which could be run by our volunteers. One of the activities for our fundraisers was to support our team to make 'enabling angels' and these angels would then be sold in our community cafe for donations. One of our partner organisations, CVSU (the Council for Voluntary Services) came to our rescue and commissioned us to make 1000 Christmas angels for their Response, Recover and Sustain Project. The angels would be included in each gift parcel that would be delivered to those in need or isolated in Uttlesford over Christmas. What is more, our whole team volunteered to help with the delivery of the 1000 gift packs throughout Christmas week!



Our volunteers also put together funding applications to help us to raise the remainder of the funds required towards purchasing a vehicle, enabling us to provide safe and secure transportation and enable their inclusion. We now transport many of our staff and students to and from work in our community vehicle which has also enabled us to widen the types of activities and learning opportunities we offer our students.

Our whole journey through this pandemic has been both challenging and a valuable learning experience. The first lockdown prepared us for the second by permitting us to complete a forward strategy. As soon as we knew lockdown was coming our team prepared activity packs for all our trainees and vulnerable staff members for the coming weeks. We arranged weekly wellbeing checks with trainees, parents/carers, and our team, to be conducted by virtual media. Our volunteers also stepped in by arranging dog walks with our team members, whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines. All of this in aid of reducing the impact of any potential mental health issues, to promote individual wellbeing and consistency in our service quality delivery.

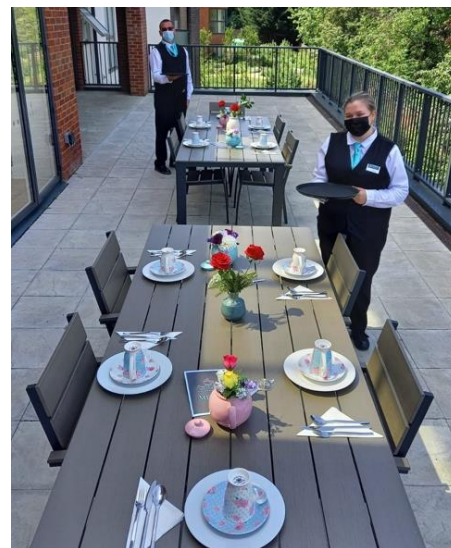
Finally, after all our challenges, we ended the year on a high as we were nominated by the community and won an award presented by the Town council for going 'Above and Beyond' for our community throughout the Covid 19 pandemic. We were thrilled to receive this award, which was presented by the mayor of the town.



The second lockdown was a busy one even without a café to run. Whilst some of us were furloughed, the rest were finalising menu's, interviewing for new staff, writing training plans, supporting our students, and writing all the required recipes, stock lists, policies, procedures, rotas... the list goes on! We were all very relieved to get back to work!



We were finally allowed to restart working and training again in March 2021 so we held another 12-week Inclusion and Thrive workshop course until we could open the café safely in May 2021 and we could get our students back! As no one had worked in a café since the previous spring we took the risky decision of not advertising so that the staff and students could get back into the swing of serving gradually. As a Not-For-Profit company, staff and student welfare are a much higher priority than anything else. Little did we know how quickly the word would spread and how brilliantly we would be supported by the residents and everyone else in Saffron Walden! Within a few weeks we were very busy, and it's been quite a phenomenal experience.



Like many businesses in the hospitality industry, we had faced a rocky road throughout the pandemic. But with the help and support of likeminded organisations such as L&Q limited and The Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford, we were able to ensure our survival and more importantly, secure jobs for our staff. In fact, since opening in May we have been able to create another 9 jobs within our organisation and help another 6 students to find work in their community.

On Wednesday the 20th October 2021 we held our official launch event and we were honoured to have the current Mayor, Councillor Richard Porch and Daphne Cornell herself – namesake of the building and in turn our academy. They officially opened our café, as well as our brand-new hair salon and treatment room, all of which are part of the new EEG training academy.



These services will offer our residents, students and the public, the opportunity to come together, make friends and engage with their local community whilst providing essential training and experience to our students. We are now also a registered and accredited ASDAN Training centre and have just had our first student complete their Employability Skills Certificate with us.

The support and kindness we have received has been incredible and the whole team are overwhelmed and grateful for how we have been received. Even local rock band Leader of Down have sent their well wishes and goodie bags to two of our students who they had heard are big fans! Our volunteer list has tripled, and this has been an integral part of our success since the beginning.



Donations to our 'Pay-it-forward' scheme, where we provide meals and support to those who need it, increased way beyond the level of need so we planned to put the funds to good use by launching our **#LetsEatTogetherThisChristmas** event where we would provide a FREE Christmas Day Dinner for anyone who would otherwise be alone. However, the arrival of the omicron variant and the rapid rise in cases prompted L&Q to restrict entry to the building to protect their residents. This led to us deciding to temporarily cease trading on the 17th December so we too could protect our vulnerable staff and students. Unfortunately, this meant we had to cancel the many Christmas parties that had booked into the café and rethink our plans. Getting the team together, to take the opportunity to deep clean throughout the kitchen and café, we also held crisis talks and discussed how we could avoid letting down the 70+ people who were planning to join us on Christmas day for a free lunch and more importantly some company. The original initiative was being supported by Waitrose and Tesco as well as the very long list of people who volunteered their time and/or made donations of raffle prizes to raise further funds for the event so we didn't want all the good will and hard work to go to waste either... Suddenly, inspiration struck, and we decided we would compile and deliver a Christmas goody bag to each person who was on the list on Christmas day and stop for a chat to ensure they saw at least one friendly face that day.



As well as deep cleaning the entire premises while we were closed, the team spent the week sorting through all the donations and goodies and bagging them up as well as organising the addresses, contacting all the recipients and volunteers, and generally just working out all the different logistics! This was no mean feat and was completed within 2 DAYS!



We even had a morale boosting visit from Saffron Walden Mayor Richard Porch and his wife the Mayoress, who then volunteered to return on Christmas day to do some deliveries! What an honour!



After a slightly extended festive break, we reopened on 4th January 2022 with low expectations... January is notoriously quiet in hospitality. But within the month we were pretty much back on top and have now started planning some exciting new events for the Café and we are even daring to take on bookings for weddings, parties, and corporate events!

We know many businesses like ourselves are facing such challenging times ahead, but with **your support** and the tenacity and determination of the EEG family, driven by its unwavering and motivated CEO, it means that we are evolving and supporting more people in our community.

The Enterprise East Group's future looks bright and busy, even though we are not out of the woods quite yet. We will continue to support and engage with our staff, volunteers, trainees, and our community, to find a way to continue our work, continue to engage, continue to listen and for us all to thrive collectively.



Now you know our story. We are more than just a café. The future for EEG looks bright and busy. We are already looking into new academies and other social enterprises across Uttlesford and are planning on creating our own pandemic – of success, employability, inclusivity, and equality across the district. So, if you happen to be in Saffron Walden one day, pop into Café Cornell and say hi, we would love to meet you!

