



Access Community Trust - Sams Coffee House  
Social Enterprise Cafe Evaluation  
February 2017



access  
*community trust*





## Contents

---

Foreword	P4
Executive Summary	P7
Introduction	PI I
Understanding Lowestoft	PI2
Community Cafés: Creating Opportunities	PI4
Sams Coffee House	PI6
Key findings	P20
Governance	P20
Engaging young people	P22
Addressing real needs	P25
Impact on young people	P33
Customer Satisfaction	P42
Conclusion: Sams Coffee House as a unique entity	P45
Recommendations	P49
Case Studies	
Josh's Story	P50
Claire's Story	P52
Nathan's Story	P54

## Foreword by Phil Aves Change Manager for Lowestoft Rising

As a former Police Officer I had the pleasure of serving at every operational rank in Lowestoft, as a young Constable on night shift in a cold and peaceful Town I took great pleasure in gazing into the windows of Sam Hooks Sports Shop on Bevan Street East. Its windows were full of every kind of sports equipment you could ever need. As a keen sportsman I spent many an hour, off duty by the way, browsing the nooks and crannies full of wonderful things. With its sweeping wooden central staircase leading to a second floor full of fishing tackle and many other sporting gems. It was a wonderful old shop with really great customer care.

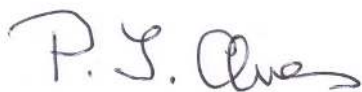
Imagine my sadness when the tills stop ringing for the last time and the shop closed, caught by the changes in time and tide in our shopping habits. The shop stood empty, ravaged by the floods of December 2013 and time, a sorry looking building with brown paper up its windows.

So imagine my delight when Emma Ratzer and her team at Access Community Trust announced they had acquired the building and had grand plans to turn it into a Coffee House and Young Persons Enterprise Lounge where young people could learn to work and develop skills in a supported environment.

I watched as the builders tore apart and lovingly rebuilt the insides of the shop. I watched as the Waveney Youth Council helped to design the colour, look and even the menu of the new Sams. They even helped choose the name, with no apostrophe by design. I watched as the new Coffee Shop opened, with a fanfare, and young people started to learn skills in a place that was truly friendly and supportive. A great building was again back in use helping restore some Pride in Bevan Street East. But has it worked?

Emma Bond and her team at University of Suffolk have been commissioned to carry out this review of Sams. I commend you to read it and discover its findings. More importantly I commend us all to think about how, by being bold, we can all do our bit to help the young people of Lowestoft develop their skills and work readiness and follow in the footsteps of Access Community Trust who have led the way with this venture.

Enjoy the read.



Phil Aves- Change Manager Lowestoft Rising





Emma Ratzer  
Sam's Coffee House  
132 Bevan Street East  
Lowestoft  
NR32 2AQ  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Dear Emma

Just a very quick note to say how pleased we are with the results of the trading agreement between Sam's Coffee House (Access) and the Paddy & Scott's Made with Love Branding and Support package.

I have to say I was slightly taken aback when I first saw the building, the task at hand and the timescale you had set to finish the project but you did it with style and passion which continues to resonate today.

Working to brand guidelines and the subsequent training commitments is a tough ask for many independent coffee shops but you guys seem to be hitting the mark! We enjoy your social media interaction very much and feel proud when we see such good feedback on the coffee from both new and old customers alike.

Keep up the good work and happy drinking!


Kind regards

*Scott Russell*

Scott Russell  
Founder & CEO

[scott@paddyandscotts.co.uk](mailto:scott@paddyandscotts.co.uk)

Paddy & Scott's Cafés Ltd, The Bean Barn, Moat Park, Framlingham Rd, Earl Soham, Suffolk, IP13 7SR  
T: 0844 477 85 86 | E: friends@paddysandscotts.co.uk  
**[www.paddyandscotts.co.uk](http://www.paddyandscotts.co.uk)**



“....The initial one year business development planning and Youth Manager post was made possible by a grant by the Esmee Fairburn Foundation, who saw our vision and supported us to achieve our potential....”

Emma Ratzer

CEO, Access Community Trust

## Executive Summary

---

This report presents evidence from the independent evaluation of Sams<sup>1</sup> Coffee House, a social enterprise community café based in Lowestoft, Suffolk, developed by Access Community Trust.

Between September 2016 and February 2017, the University of Suffolk undertook the evaluation. Outputs during the first nine months of trading, such as customer satisfaction and youth engagement, as well as stakeholder interviews suggest that Sams Coffee House provides a range of appropriate and much needed supportive services to young people as well as meeting their objectives to provide high quality services to the public. Additionally, there is clear evidence that Sams has made a positive impact upon the lives, employment prospects and well-being of the young people accessing their support.

Key findings from the evaluation are:

- The young people we interviewed described Lowestoft as a deprived area with blocked opportunities; they were very grateful for the variety of opportunities, both employment and support-related, provided through Sams Coffee House.
- All the young people and the stakeholders described Sams as a unique entity in the locality that supports young people's emotional well-being, as well as providing employment and practical work experience opportunities.
- The young people Sams helps and supports often have complex emotional, practical and learning needs.
- Case study narratives from young people reveal that the employment opportunities and support provided through Sams has enabled them to move away from preceding problematic circumstances.
- In the first nine months, Sams successfully supported 17 young people from being NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) into permanent employment or education.
- Individual learning plans are effectively used to maximise the young person's time at Sams. The analysis of the plans reveals the various opportunities available, as well as the varying confidence, skills and general well-being scores rated by the individuals themselves.
- In relation to customer satisfaction, Sams was described as 'excellent' or 'good' in 44 survey responses from members of the public who had visited the café in

---

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the absence of an apostrophe in Sams is deliberate. The logo was designed by the young people in Lowestoft, and relates to Sams' heritage, a fishing shop owned by Sam Hook. They designed the logo without an apostrophe and felt it looked better that way. We have respected the design and the identity of Sams as the young people wished throughout the report.

#### August and September 2016

- Drawing on wider data from the Safer Suffolk project and The Globe youth club in Lowestoft, Sams is currently on track to meet their targets in relation to the number of young people engaging with their services.
- Both stakeholders and young people we interviewed highlighted the need to develop a more comprehensive approach to marketing and advertising the services that Sams provides.
- Sams has a website and is developing an online presence via social media. It is recommended that Sams considers how social media could be used more effectively to promote and advertise both the café and the services they offer young people.



“

“...When we said someone is paying for you to do an apprenticeship, he just looked at me and he said ‘why?’ I said, well, because someone wants to give you a chance. ‘But why me?’ Well we went through this whole thing, ‘I just don’t understand why anyone would want to take a chance on me, and you’re going to give me a job? What, here with public people?’”

Sams





## Introduction

---

The purpose of the following report is to provide an independent evaluation of Sams Coffee House, a social enterprise community café based in Lowestoft, Suffolk, developed by Access Community Trust. The outputs, outcomes and impact of the project relevant to Access Community Trust and its stakeholders during the first nine months of trading will be discussed and evaluated. The evaluation adopted a mixed method approach, using appropriate data gathered from a variety of sources since its opening in March 2016, to provide an objective analysis of Sams Coffee House, including stakeholder interviews, interviews with young people, organisational ethnography, in-depth case studies, policy analysis and social media.



## Understanding Lowestoft

Parts of the Waveney district, particularly the town of Lowestoft, are some of the most deprived in the country (see Figure 1), with more than one in five children living in poverty. Figures provided by Bell and Blanchflower (2010)<sup>2</sup> demonstrate that the decrease in employment as a result of the 2008 recession was largely concentrated on the young and the unemployment rate for young people in the UK was high, at 35.6 per cent for 16-17 year olds, and 17.1 per cent for 18-24 year olds. In Lowestoft, youth unemployment remains high, compared with national and local benchmarks, and there are areas with up to a quarter of the population claiming benefits. A significant proportion of young people are subsequently failing to achieve their full economic and life potential.

Dogaru (2016)<sup>3</sup>, Suffolk has a higher proportion of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) young people when compared to the rest of England and this is on the increase. According to the EY Foundation (2016)<sup>4</sup>, nationally the unemployment rate for people aged 16-24

Parts of the Waveney district, particularly the town of Lowestoft, are some of the most deprived in the county, with more than one in five children living in Poverty.



is relatively high compared to other age groups. Lowestoft is the UK's most easterly town and is in the district of Waveney in the county of Suffolk. Its population of 62,000 (according to the 2011 census) rely on a diverse range of service sector industries that account for 76 per cent of employment, including both higher skilled and lower skilled occupations. Looking at the national picture, the CMI and EY Foundation

<sup>2</sup> Bell, D. N. F. and Blanchflower, D. G. (2010) UK Unemployment in the Great Recession. National Institute Economic Review 214(1), R3-R25.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, N. and Dogaru, C. (2016) Hidden Needs: Hidden Needs in Suffolk Five Years On (2011-2016) A Report to the Suffolk Community Foundation. <http://suffolkcf.s3.amazonaws.com/app/uploads/2016/09/Hidden-needs-report-WEB.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> EY Foundation (2016) The employment landscape for young people in the UK available online from [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/Employment\\_landscape\\_for\\_young\\_people\\_in\\_the\\_UK/\\$FILE/Employment%20landscape%20for%20young%20people%20in%20the%20UK%20-%20final%20report.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/Employment_landscape_for_young_people_in_the_UK/$FILE/Employment%20landscape%20for%20young%20people%20in%20the%20UK%20-%20final%20report.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> EY Foundation and Chartered Management Institute (2016) An Age of Uncertainty Young people's views on the challenges of getting into work in 21st century Britain available from [http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-cmi-eyf-an-age-of-uncertainty-september-2016/\\$FILE/EY-cmi-eyf-an-age-of-uncertainty-september-2016.pdf](http://www.ey.com/Publication/vwLUAssets/EY-cmi-eyf-an-age-of-uncertainty-september-2016/$FILE/EY-cmi-eyf-an-age-of-uncertainty-september-2016.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

(2016:10)<sup>5</sup> surveyed 1,510 16-21-year-olds from across the UK in depth about their views and experiences. Thirty-five per cent of young people surveyed did not know about employers and jobs in their local area and, perhaps as a result, 31 per cent did not think they could find a job (or a new job) in the area they live<sup>6</sup>. **Evidently, increasing the amount of employment opportunities and raising the aspirations of young people in Lowestoft is of vital importance.**



In Lowestoft, **youth unemployment remains high**, compared with national and local benchmarks, and **there are areas with up to a quarter of the population claiming benefits**. A significant proportion of young people are subsequently failing to achieve thier full economic and life potential.

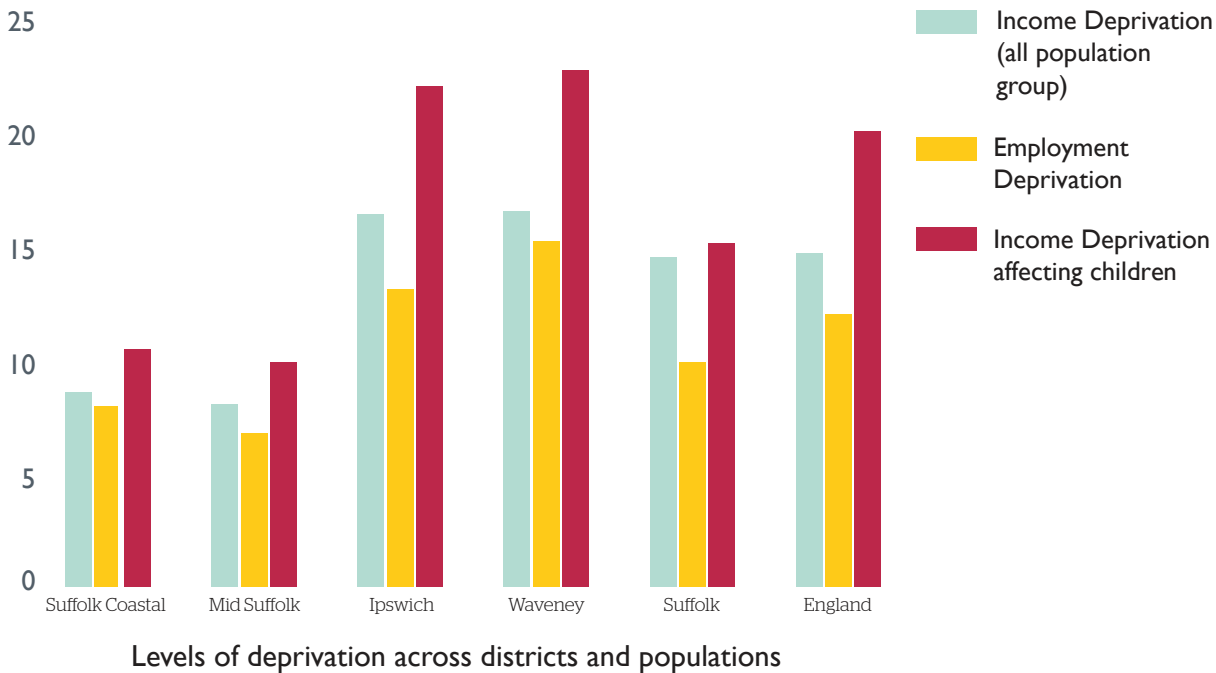


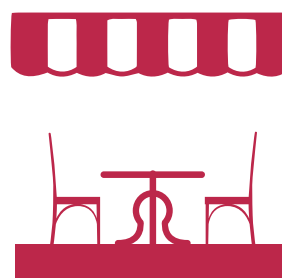
Figure 1: Percentage levels of deprivation across Suffolk districts and England, adapted from Smith, N. and Dogaru, C. (2016) Hidden Needs: Hidden Needs in Suffolk Five Years On (2011-2016)

## Community Cafés: Creating Opportunities

Research consistently suggests that public spaces, such as community cafés, have a positive influence upon people's well-being, particularly in areas of high deprivation (Warner, Talbot and Bennison, 2012)<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, the creation of social enterprises that strive for economic self-sufficiency as well as achieving social goals may address imbalance in disadvantaged areas (Bertotti, Harden, Renton and Sheridan, 2012)<sup>8</sup>. Oldenburg (1999)<sup>9</sup> suggests that the 'third place' between work and home, such as cafés, provide a neutral environment which enables the development of informal relationships, a sense of equality and feelings of acceptance. **Therefore, social enterprise cafes within deprived areas have numerous benefits, including increasing community cohesion and well-being, social equality, employment opportunities and local economic sustainability.**

A number of social enterprise cafés have been established across England. For example, The Camden Society, a charity based in London, owns several 'Unity

Research consistently suggests that public spaces, such as community cafés, have a positive influence upon people's well-being, particularly in areas of high deprivation.



Kitchen Cafés', each one a social enterprise café providing a public service but also employment opportunities for individuals living with disabilities (The Camden Society, 2017)<sup>10</sup>. Providing employment opportunities in deprived areas is of increasing importance, particularly for

<sup>7</sup> Warner, J., Talbot, D., and Bennison, G. (2013). The cafe as affective community space: Reconceptualizing care and emotional labour in everyday life. *Critical Social Policy*, 33(2), 305-324.

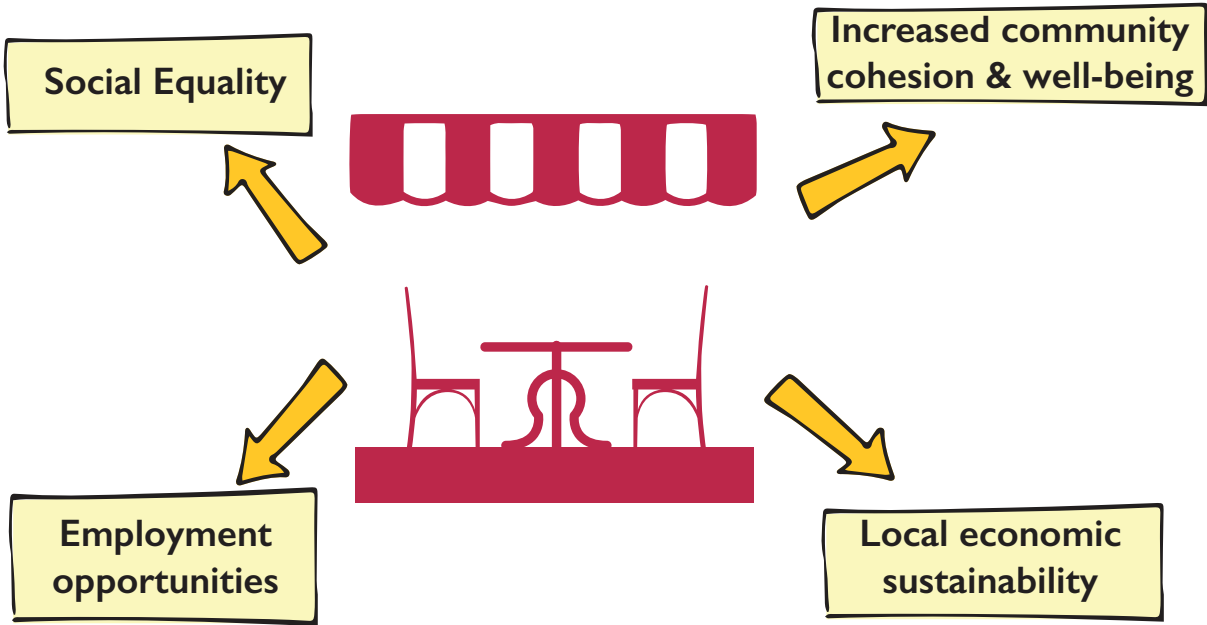
<sup>8</sup> Bertotti, M., Harden, A., Renton, A., and Sheridan, K. (2012). The contribution of a social enterprise to the building of social capital in a disadvantaged urban area of London. *Community development journal*, 47(2), 168-183.

<sup>9</sup> Oldenburg, R. (1999). *The great good place: Cafes, Coffee Houses, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community*. Da Capo Press.

<sup>10</sup> The Camden Society (2017). *Our Businesses: Café Enterprises* <http://www.thecamdensociety.co.uk/ourbusinesses/cafes> [accessed 14/02/2017]



young people where unemployment leads to lower self-esteem, negativity and a perceived lack of control (Winefield, Winefield, Tiggemann and Goldney, 1991)<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, tackling youth unemployment may reduce the extent of unemployment during adult life (Gregg, 2001)<sup>12</sup>. Research conducted by Bertotti et al. (2012) evaluating a social enterprise café in London suggests that the benefits for volunteers were widespread, allowing them to develop confidence and skills which could lead to paid employment. **Considering the deprivation and high rates of youth unemployment associated with the town of Lowestoft, a self-sustaining social enterprise café which brings business and employment opportunities has the potential to be highly beneficial.**



**Social enterprise cafés within deprived areas have numerous benefits.**

<sup>11</sup> Winefield, A. H., Winefield, H. R., Tiggemann, M., and Goldney, R. D. (1991). A longitudinal study of the psychological effects of unemployment and unsatisfactory employment on young adults. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76(3), 424.

<sup>12</sup> Gregg, P. (2001). The impact of youth unemployment on adult unemployment in the NCDS. *The economic journal*, 111(475), 626-653.



## Sams Coffee House

Sams Coffee House opened in March 2016, in Bevan Street East, Lowestoft. The coffee house is a social enterprise initiative, led by Access Community Trust. The Trust is a well-established charitable organisation, which promotes the social inclusion of individuals across all ages and backgrounds, providing accommodation, enrichment, well-being and employment services in the local area. Access Community Trust began life as the Lowestoft Night Shelter in 1975. Local people raised funds to provide shelter in the derelict St Johns Church to the town's single homeless and vulnerable people who had found themselves on the streets following the decline of the fishing industries. The trust became a registered charity (St Johns Housing Trust) in 1980 and in 1985 they opened their first purpose built hostel in Lowestoft. Since the eighties, the trust has grown considerably. With a forward-thinking and proactive board of trustees, the decision to update their brand and organisational focus was a key activity throughout 2012 and in 2013 and the trust relaunched as Access Community Trust.

**Sams Coffee House is envisioned to become the leading Coffee House in the central Lowestoft area, connecting the community with employment, education**

**and social activity while providing exceptional locally sourced products and outstanding customer service.**

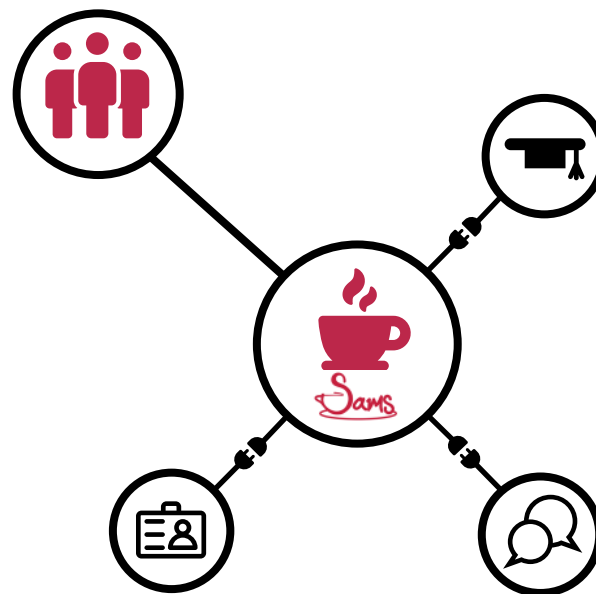
**Sams Coffee House was established with four main aims:**

- To provide local, healthy, high quality coffee and food products;
- To set and maintain the highest standards of quality and ethics in everything they do;
- To earn the respect and trust of their customers, employees, partners and their community in order to enhance social inclusion and community prosperity;
- To inspire individuals, groups and communities to achieve their full potential.

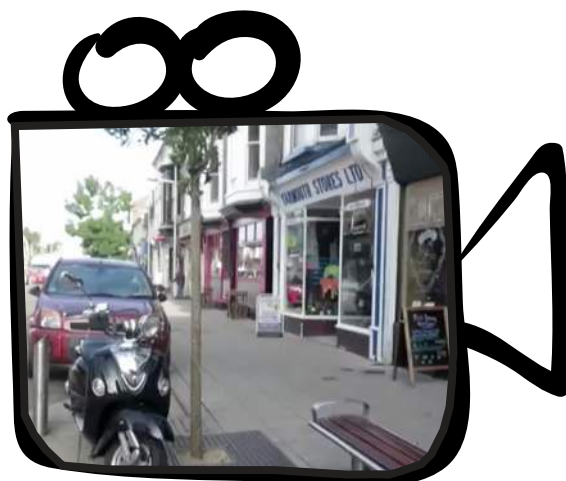




Sams Coffee House project offers employment opportunities, practical work experience and training that leads to accreditations and qualifications within the hospitality industry, and a range of bespoke, individualised supportive services to young people from the community. Promoting lifestyle change is a key philosophy which underpins all service provision. To the public, Sams Coffee House provides light meals and beverages, a place to socialise, free Wi-Fi and charging points. Young people are provided with voluntary posts, paid-work, apprenticeships, or work experience placements. Additionally, sessions that revolve around health and fitness, unemployment advice and lone-parenting are offered to individuals within the Access support network. A well-being team based at Sams café also provides mental health support to young people in the form of regular meetings for those seeking support around drug and alcohol use, self-harm, risk-taking behaviours and sexual health.



Connecting the community with employment, education and social activity



Sams is also closely linked to the residential housing provided by Access and residents are offered the same range of positions within the café. The majority of projects and individuals working within Access are funded via external organisations, as opposed to being funded by the state.

Many of the activities and support services take place in the Enterprise Lounge located above the coffee house; the Enterprise Lounge is also available to hire for external organisations.

## The Evaluation

### Aims:

1. Investigate how the Sams Coffee House project has influenced and impacted the lives of young people using the service, including their participation in projects and well-being.
2. Determine whether Sams Coffee House provides excellent customer service by delivering a range of high quality goods and services.
3. Highlight any areas for improvement to enable the project to reach its full potential.

### Methods

A mixed methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods was utilised, incorporating young people's

participation and ethnography, in order to gain an in-depth insight into the impacts of the project (Bryman, 2006)<sup>13</sup>. The approach taken was both flexible and adaptive to the context of the participants and involved working collaboratively with key stakeholders and young people.

It is acknowledged that individuals who experience unemployment and access support services are the experts in their own lived realities, and as a result, data collection is ethnographic. Using ideas from anthropology and human geography, the methodological approach stems from an interpretative framework which has historically argued for the uniqueness of human inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998)<sup>14</sup>. Qualitative data collection will enable individuals in direct contact with the service to share their idiosyncratic experiences and perceived impact of the project upon their lives. The evaluation also involved collection of customer experience surveys and young people's well-being data for statistical analysis. Use of quantitative data collection will enable analysis of customer experience of the café itself, as well as identifying the objective impact of the project on the well-being of young people.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to build up a rapport with the participant, allow for open-ended discussion and to gather in-depth

<sup>13</sup> Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done? *Qualitative research*, 6(1), 97-113.

<sup>14</sup> Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (1994). *Handbook of Qualitative Research* London: Sage.

data (Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005)<sup>15</sup>. A total of 28 face-to-face interviews were implemented. Informed consent forms were collected from all participants prior to audio recording. We conducted 17 interviews with young people who were volunteering or working within Sams café. A further 11 interviews were conducted with stakeholders, including internal staff members and managers of the café, as well as individuals involved with Access Community Trust from external organisations. While the stakeholder interviews were conducted in an unoccupied room, the young person interviews took place in the café space itself. Three individuals out of the 14 young people were interviewed twice, and were therefore analysed as individual case studies. The data collected from interviews were analysed using thematic 'framework' analysis to identify any recurrent themes across both young people and stakeholders in order to ascertain the quality of service and impact of the project on young people<sup>16</sup>. In order to protect participant identity and preserve confidentiality, participants names have been anonymised.

In addition to the qualitative interviews, an anonymous satisfaction survey was handed out to customers visiting Sams café, where 43 responses were collected. The survey consisted of 15 questions, asking participants to rate their experience of certain aspects of the café, such as service, food and drink, on a

1-5 point Likert scale. Participants were also given space to make written notes regarding any potential improvements they would like to see relating to the products on offer at the café.

Secondary data relating to project engagement and the well-being of young people were also analysed. A total of 17 individual learning plans were provided to indicate the young person's history, aspirations, skills, areas for development and existing mind-set prior to engagement with Sams. Additionally, data relating to projects such as The Police and Crime Commissioner's Safer Suffolk Fund and The Globe youth club is also provided. Actual numbers engaged and targets are shown with reference to several factors, such as improvements in well-being and reductions in anti-social behaviour.

<sup>15</sup> Reid, K., Flowers, P., and Larkin, M. (2005). Exploring lived experience. *Psychologist*, 18(1), 20-23.

<sup>16</sup> Ritchie, J., and Spencer, L. (2002). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. *The qualitative researcher's companion*, 573(2002), 305-329.

## Key findings

### I. Governance

**Access Community Trust features a robust governance and management structure with a range of appropriate operational and staff policies, including equal opportunities, safeguarding and health and safety.** The organisational chart demonstrates the structure and service provision offered by Access and the positioning of Sams Coffee House within the trust.

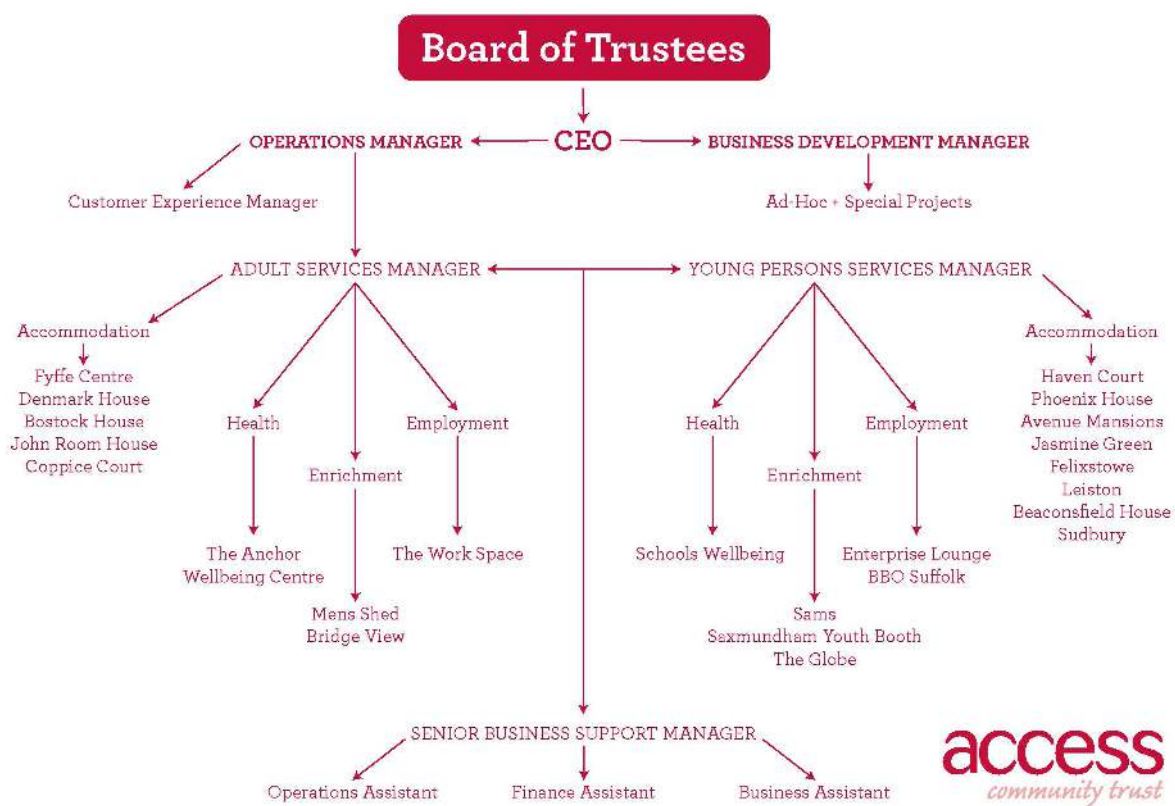


Figure 2: Access Community Trust Organisational Chart



RATION  
Inspiring and Encouraging

aged  
pizza  
as  
my  
time  
milly

RATION  
Inspiring and Encouraging

led  
my  
milly  
Age 7

ASPIRATION  
Inspiring and Encouraging

20-30 class was  
brilliant & tasty at  
the end

Lisa  
Age 27

Everything is the  
best!

Dylan  
Age 9

“

Bea (stakeholder): "...that's what it is, we're able to operate so much from here and have this as a central point for all of that, and that really does allow us I think to bring together quite a comprehensive service of different things and it's all based on the needs of what those young people tell us, because it's one place, they can really shape that with us."

## 2. Engaging young people

**Sams Coffee House acts like a ‘hub’ for the various youth activities and projects that are run by Access Community Trust.**

The activities that the trust coordinates through Sams include Safer Suffolk<sup>17</sup>, Youth Clubs, volunteer placements, emotional well-being support, Arts Award<sup>18</sup>, and holiday activities (e.g., pizza making and photography group).

Evidence shows that Sams has met and even exceeded the targets set for 2016-2017. For example, for Safer Suffolk they exceeded the target for number engaged, met the target for health-related activities, and nearly met the targets set for improving well-being, higher aspirations and involvement in economic activities.

To date, the Globe Youth Club<sup>19</sup> has engaged with well over a hundred young people, exceeding the targets that were initially set. The club runs three days a week, in the evening, using Sams’ Enterprise Lounge. Young people engage in a variety of activities such as cookery lessons and other activities aimed at increasing confidence, self-esteem, positive activities and ambition. The number of young people the Globe Youth Club engaged with each week increased steadily. In October-November 2016, for example, the number of young people engaged in activities with the club (both internal and external engagement)

increased from about five per week to about 40 per week. Some of the young people attending The Globe were subsequently referred to the Safer Suffolk programme.

---

<sup>17</sup> In November 2016, ACT secured funding to deliver a Safer Suffolk contract, from Suffolk’s Police and Crime Commissioner; “to support the work of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations that are delivering services that help make Suffolk a safer place to live, work, travel and invest in.” (Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> [www.artsaward.org.uk](http://www.artsaward.org.uk)

<sup>19</sup> Funded by Children in Need

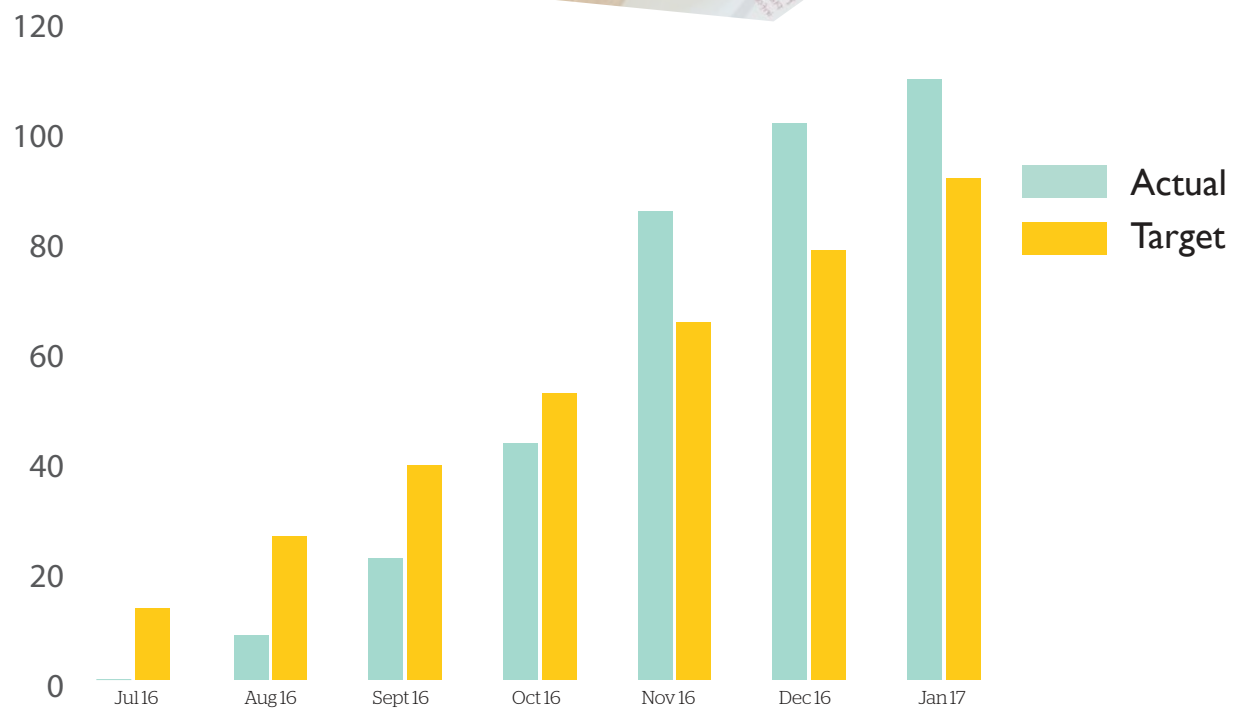


“

“It’s a cool place to go, chill out, speak to adults and I particularly get on well with [name]. I feel supported here at the Globe and I like updating the staff with what I am up to... If I wasn’t here, I’d be around a friend’s as my home life is cramped as I live in a small flat with my brothers and sisters.” (Girl, age 16)

“It’s the best place to go for any youth in Lowestoft. I prefer the Globe at Sams because it’s a new building and therefore it’s better looked after. I am here most evenings as it’s a great place to meet up with friends from different schools and the staff are great too.” (Girl, age 16)

“It’s a cool place to go, I have a laugh with the staff and I know they want the best for me. If I wasn’t attending the Globe I’d probably be getting into trouble or just playing on my Xbox.” (Boy, age 15)



### The Globe Youth Club - Numbers Engaged With

Figure 3: Numbers engaged with at The Globe Youth Club

The holiday activities were also very successful. For example, Pizza Making Days attracted over 100 young people to Sams where they learnt about pizza making, local ingredients, and having fun. In a short survey with a group of 29 participants, age 4-19 (11 years old on average), there was unanimity in saying that they enjoyed the activity, they would recommend it to friends and family, and they would like this activity to be offered

every holiday. The local MP for Waveney also participated in this event and declared that it was “Really enjoyable: good trainer and really good designs by my fellow cooks”.

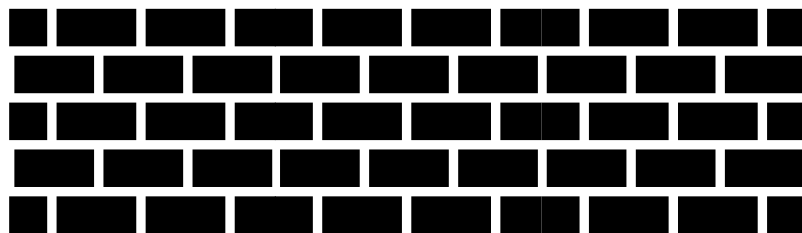




### 3. Addressing real needs

The deprivation in Lowestoft was one of the main topics that all the participants discussed. All the participants talked about Lowestoft as an area of deprivation and the blocked opportunities for many young people in the town. Stakeholders described a lack of aspiration held by these young people, potentially resulting from views passed down through generations, lack of available coordinated support, academic and social pressures, poor coping mechanisms and the deterioration of the town's industry. In addition to low aspiration, many stakeholders suggest that poor mental health within young people is becoming more of a concerning issue, as a result of the numerous factors described previously as well as a sharp reduction in child and adolescent mental health services available.

All the participants talked about Lowestoft as an area of deprivation and the **blocked opportunities for many young people** in the town.





Gabrielle: "...and the young people here are stuck in this 'everything is crap'. And the more I spoke to young people, because the more we increased our young people services, the more exposure you have to young people saying 'oh I'm not doing that; it's just a load of old crap'..."

James: "...from information and figures I have seen via the CCG [the Clinical Commissioner Group] what I know is that Lowestoft, Waveney generally, has poor mental health, erm compared to the rest of the country."



**The young people described Lowestoft as lacking in community cohesion, motivation and opportunities, and held a very negative view of the town.** They suggested that the decline in the area is a result of failing industry, with shops closing along the high street and reductions in the fishing industry. The gradual decline in businesses appears to contribute greatly to the young individuals' perceptions of blocked opportunities.

**The young people described Lowestoft as lacking in community cohesion, motivation and opportunities, and held a very negative view of the town.**





Nathan: "Yeah, I mean there's nothing really in this town anymore in terms of industry or like say in the high street all of the shops are starting to close down, like there's no sort of opportunities in Lowestoft anymore."

Emma: "Until an apprenticeship comes up I think, but still have to search for work, but there is nothing in this town, it's just a dead town at the minute."

Kane: "Well, within Lowestoft it is quite a deprived and low income area... and there isn't a lot of motivation amongst families."





The young people interviewed described Lowestoft as a place in which the young people don't wish to live, describing the town as "unforgiving". One young person suggested that they are disappointed with the lack of enthusiasm from the state in providing what the community needs, especially regarding young people of the town. There is a perception that the increasing amounts of antisocial behaviour in the town is due to individuals originally from outside areas, such as London and Essex, who have moved to Lowestoft. Furthermore, drug use and homelessness are seen as an issue within the town.





“

Claire: “I don’t hang about too much in Lowestoft, but from what I see it’s not the most forgiving place at times if you see what I mean.”

Zoe: “Yeah, I know what the community needs, it’s just trying to get it done. Hardly anyone can be bothered to do it; no one cares.”

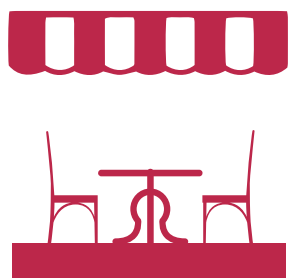
Kane: “...the amount of young people here who have come down from London and who have come down [from] Chelmsford who come down from them areas and come to here and bring everything with them – all their issues all the drugs and everything... that the problems that come with that... there’s fights a lot of the time and you get... like several or a group of kids hanging around in the library causing trouble and that sort of stuff, and they all/some of them walk around town and walk around Lowestoft picking fights with people.”

A few individuals on the other hand suggest that there are limited opportunities. But this doesn't equate to no opportunities; it's just about finding them.

**“** Josh: “Not a lot of opportunities but it's whether you take that opportunity and go, 'oh yeah, I'm gonna do this'; that's when you've taken the opportunity and gotten yourself out there.”

**It was clear from the interviews with both young people and stakeholders that there is an urgent and desperate need for the types of services that Sams provides.**

Individuals were asked how they initially heard about Sams café; a variety of different modes of initial contact were described. Many young people heard about Sams through other organisations such as MyGo<sup>20</sup> and the job centre, while others heard about the service through support workers, family, newspapers, residential housing and medical professionals.



**It was clear from the interviews with both young people and stakeholders that there is an urgent and desperate need for the types of services that Sams provides.**

<sup>20</sup> [www.its-mygo.co.uk](http://www.its-mygo.co.uk)





It was also clear from the interviews that Sams is working very effectively with other providers like MyGo in the local area, and it was clear from the number of referrals from other agencies that service provision is highly valued by both statutory and third sector organisations in the local area.

#### 4. Impact on young people

From the evaluation, it is clear that Sams adopts a rigorous and bespoke approach ensuring that there is a positive impact on each young person accessing their support. This is monitored through the development and implementation of an Individual Learning Plan. The plan initially records young person's information regarding their aspirations, skills, strengths, areas for development and existing mindset in terms of confidence, self-perceived skills, and general well-being. Areas for development are also identified and whether these can be attained within Sams' provision, including referral to other staff members, such as well-being practitioners or employment mentors. As an organisation, Sams keeps detailed records of the courses young people access, the qualifications gained and potential future development opportunities and their progression into employment and/or education. **In the first nine months, they successfully supported 17 young people from being NEET into permanent employment or education.**

There is a positive impact on each young person accessing their support.



## Step 4

Record your findings, proposed actions and who will lead on what action. Record the date of implementation.

“

Louise: “the idea around it has always been though to help young people take a step from maybe being out of work, not being in training – the people who are classified as NEET –, and helping them gain the confidence, gain the skills and take those steps. But it’s steps with support but then also with ways of relinquishing that support, so that they can move on on their own, but enabling them to see that they can do it. Empowerment is a really hugely important thing with it.”

Tilly (external stakeholder): “I just think it’s a really good thing for young people, and the young people who won’t necessarily be given a chance elsewhere or who would find it really difficult to get the chances that Sams can offer.”

Ben (external stakeholder): “I think the first thing is its offered job and apprenticeship opportunities, and work experience and volunteering opportunities for young people who would possibly never have got that chance because our mainstream employers would probably say it’s too complex and would need too much effort to give them those opportunities...”



James (external stakeholder): “ I think it has brought an awareness of, erm, young people’s potential to contribute, you know, to contribute to the local community. I think it has given opportunities for young people, who otherwise might not have got work experience or employment opportunities to get them...”

The young people discussed their perception of Sams, what the service is about and the support provided to young people. **The young people describe Sams as being a friendly, welcoming service, open to a whole variety of individuals, providing support and activities for school-aged children, individuals with learning disabilities and deprived young people, as well as serving the general public.** The majority of young people interviewed described Sams as a real community service, with a great atmosphere suited to young people wishing to get support and employment, as well as individuals wanting to relax with good food and drinks.

All young people interviewed commented upon the employment and training opportunities provided at Sams. Several individuals described how they were initially asked to join the team at Sams; many then stating that after volunteering for a few weeks they were offered funded apprenticeships. Many young people discussed completion of a food and hygiene online course, as well as various other training courses, such as safeguarding and customer service qualifications. **Provision of such qualifications alongside training while on the job appears to provide many of the young people with confidence and a sense of aspiration for further development.** Additionally, volunteering or working at Sams has enabled many young people to become involved in a variety of other projects held by Access Community Trust. The young people describe involvement in the youth club, as well as other projects external to Sams, organised through the Trust, such as allotment projects and projects within schools for children struggling with academic work.



**Provision of such qualifications alongside training while on the job appears to provide many of the young people with confidence and a sense of aspiration for further development.**

“

Bea: “I’ve given him a project to take lots of photographs of everything that goes on here for our website, you know and his mum came in earlier and said ‘he never smiles about anything, and the moment he talks about here, his face lights up’, that for me says it all doesn’t it? If we can give these young people something that they feel [they] can take enjoyment from, naturally their confidence will grow and naturally their aspirations will raise.” [Note: young person with Asperger’s]

James (external stakeholder): “I think my main thing would be they engage young people in mental health who are extremely difficult to engage and extremely difficult to talk to, not one-on-one but as a group. And they physically got them into this building talking to them. That’s an achievement and I think that’s really valuable, erm, and I think they do that better than anybody else of that I know locally...”

“

Josh: “Yeah I was an apprentice straight away; I was given an opportunity straight away and I just took it.”

Kane: “I think the best training we have is the shop floor training. So it’s all hands on training, learn to speak with the customers, learning how to prepare the food, learning how to make the coffees and all that, as it’s a much better experience than just, ‘cos learning in a college you might not have these people in there.”

Sarah: “Food hygiene, erm, I’ve got a list: health and safety, customer service, professional boundaries, equality and diversity, child protection, uniSafe, personal safety, first aid, fire training and safeguarding adults and safeguarding children, drugs and alcohol awareness...”

Zoe: “I’m looking at getting my qualifications upped a bit more, possibly going up toward a chef, hopefully with what they’re offering and that I should be able to get those skills.”



In addition to the employment and training opportunities provided by Sams, participants described a variety of supportive services available for young people, including their own personal experience of that support. **Many young people were highly complimentary of the staff working within Sams, suggesting that these individuals were supportive and understanding of their needs and issues they presented with.** Several of the young people described having problems with drug use, mental health and homelessness when they first arrived at Sams. **Many continued to suggest how the staff at Sams and Access Community Trust helped them through these presenting issues, enabling them to live a more fulfilling life.**



**Many young people were highly complimentary of the staff working within Sams, suggesting that these individuals were supportive and understanding of their needs and issues they presented with.**



“

Steven: “Yeah, yeah; and they’ve supported me in the process through the procession of going from home into foster care and they’ve helped me with anxiety and stress and how to cope with it and all different sorts of things.”

Sarah: “And they’ve been so nice and really understanding about me being a single parent and having to nip off if I’ve needed to.”

Josh: “So, say like if I was feeling down at work one day, she’d take me away and I’d do more, like she’d speak to me and blah blah blah and I’d speak to her, so like offers support.”

All young people described their life prior to employment at Sams, many suggesting they were in problematic circumstances: for example, via involvement with the wrong people, drug usage or without accommodation and employment.

For many of the young people, an improvement in well-being was described after engaging with Sams, probably as a result of acquiring a sense of purpose. One individual reported wishing to have as many hours as possible within the coffee house due to feelings of boredom and purposelessness when she doesn't attend. Additionally, a sense of pride for the work they do, whether that is voluntary or paid can be inferred from the interviews. **The sense of pride expressed by the young people also comes across when some describe having recommended Sams to friends who are in similar situations to which they used to be.**



Ollie: "Er, I don't know if I can say it, I'd probably like still be on the street smoking weed and just doing nothing with my life."

Chloe: "...I see my mum more than anyone else, she's erm, said that I'm like a bit happier now where like before I was like so down I didn't know what to do."

Emma: "Contact them or call in to see if they will give you any work experience or can point you in the right direction. Because they are Access, they have got other organisations that can help you..."

Zoe: "I'm bringing my community group. I'm always asking friends to come and visit and that. I love coming here. I try and get as many people to come and visit as I can."



**The sense of pride expressed by the young people also comes across when some describe having recommended Sams to friends who are in similar situations to which they used to be.**

All stakeholders described Sams as place providing opportunities for young people and as a service that attempts to break the perception of blocked opportunities.

**Sams is described as a service that enables young people to feel as if they belong, particularly with those who are difficult to engage for a variety of reasons**

Sams has not only raised awareness of employment opportunities for young people, but also enabled conversations about mental health and provided support. **Due to the diversity of the stakeholders' roles and experiences, a wealth of insight into the various projects and training on offer for young people was discussed and how this increases social inclusion and employment prospects.**

*able to see it going on in front of your eyes and not hidden away somewhere."*

According to these individuals, talks revolving around employment and sexual health, projects involving catering and hospitality training, allotment gardening, photography, and opportunities to gain qualifications are some of the opportunities on offer at Sams. **Providing such variety of services, projects and opportunities for the young people is of uppermost importance to all individuals we spoke to.**

“Tilly (external stakeholder): “... actually, you can see the training going on in the café, and how polite everybody is, and how willing and how much effort and, erm, enthusiasm goes in to making the things for you and being



**Sams is described as a service that enables young people to feel as if they belong, particularly with those who are difficult to engage for a variety of reasons**





“

Claire: “I think it provides opportunity. I think one of the biggest problems facing young people here is just lack of opportunity and also perceived lack of opportunity. So I think sometimes when there are opportunities those young people have nobody telling them about it or helping them find them or seeing if those opportunities are there... So I think not only are we kind of providing opportunities, we're also showing other opportunities that not only we're providing but also beyond us, so we're that kind of that gateway, really.”

Gabrielle: “So the offer is, if you want to work and gain some experience, come here. Built around that, we have mental health workers, we have employment mentors, we have access to our housing services. So all of that holistic support around is also here...”

Kane: “Well, within Lowestoft it is quite a deprived and low income area... and there isn't a lot of motivation amongst families...”

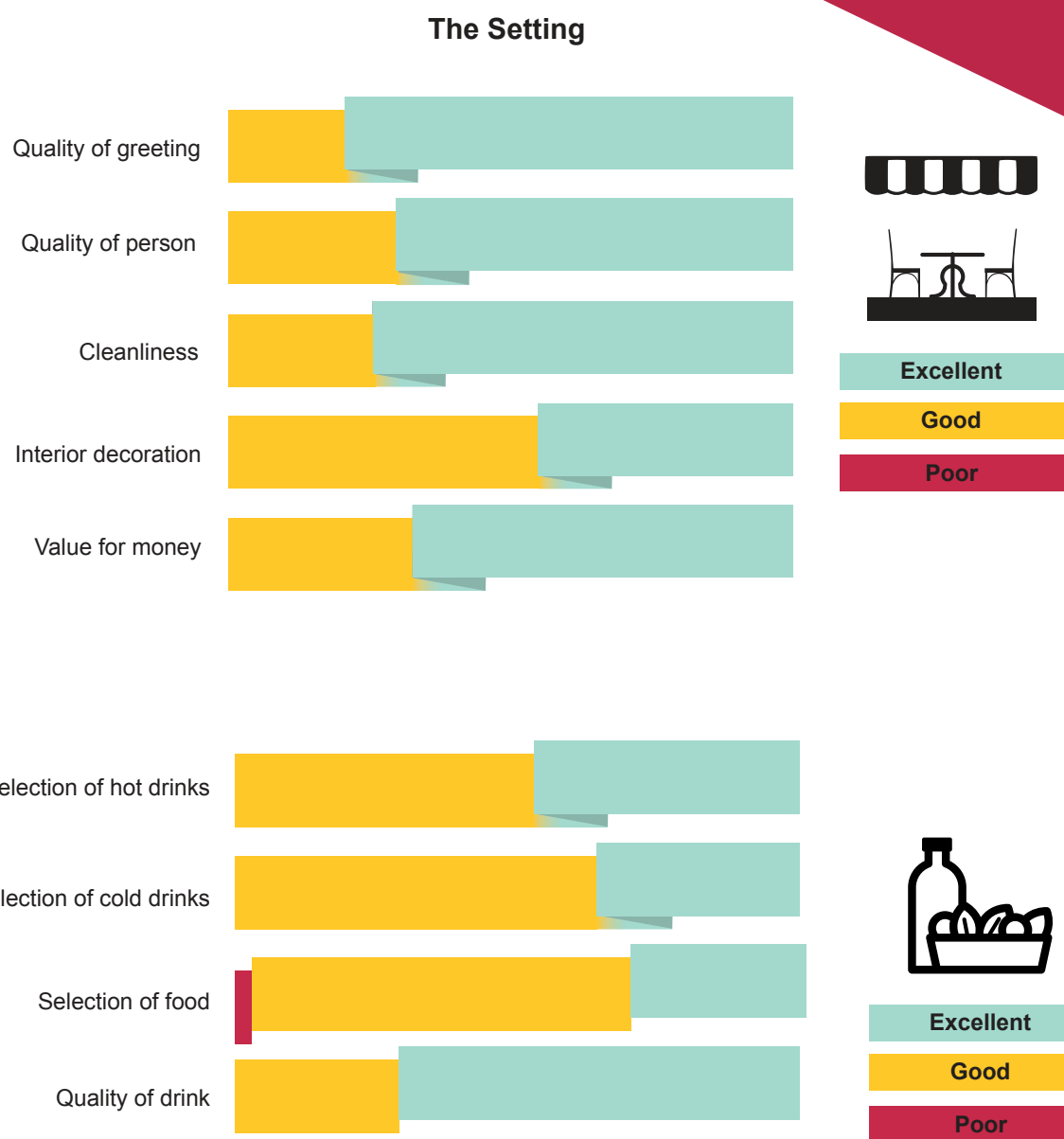
Ben (external stakeholder): “I think it provides a service that's real, because it would have been really easy to create something that was bogus, so [they're] actually providing a café that's a real service, so young people working here actually feel it's genuine, it's a job.”

## 5. Customer Satisfaction




Sams Coffee House is located in the centre of Lowestoft and it is easily accessible. **The café is hosted in a recently renovated building where considerable investment transformed an old fishing shop into a vibrant, modern facility providing fresh coffee, a range of hot and cold drinks, freshly baked cakes and light meals.**

A customer satisfaction survey was conducted in August-September 2016, using a paper and pencil questionnaire. The questions related to the setting in general (greeting, person serving, cleanliness, interior decoration, value for money) and the food and drinks being served. Forty-three customers completed the survey. Of them, 19 (43%) had not visited the café before. All customers declared that they would recommend Sams to friends and family. While almost all customers rated the quality of the setting and the quality/range of food and drink as being good or excellent, there are some items that have been rated as 'good' rather than 'excellent', in particular the interior decoration (including tables, chairs and floor), selection of food (the only item that was rated 'poor' by one customer), and selection of cold and hot drinks.





Figures 4&5: Customer satisfaction ratings for the setting, food and drinks at Sams



As part of the evaluation we considered the online profile of Sams. The coffee house has a dedicated website as well as a Facebook page – which has received 15 reviews to date and all very positive, with an overall rating of 4.8 out of five. Both could, however, be improved to make finding information about the services offered and other events being held at Sams easier. Sams' Twitter profile is more active with 639 followers and 427 likes. It should be noted however, that most of the followers are other local organisations and charities.

---

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.samscoffeehouse.com/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://en-gb.facebook.com/samscoffeehouseeast/>



## Conclusion: Sams Coffee House as a unique entity

Overall, the evaluation found overwhelmingly positive support for Sams from young people and wider stakeholders. It provides highly effective yet bespoke services for young people seeking employment opportunities and support in an area of significant need. The bespoke, individualised approach to supporting young people enables Sams to effectively help young people who have complex needs and who may find other more universal service provision hard to access and engage with. **The dedication of all individuals involved with the young people being supported through Access Community Trust is evident within the young people's narratives.** The staff hold a vast array of skills and experience, which enables effective implementation of a variety of projects. Sams is well respected by wider stakeholders and organisations in the area, and this facilitates good collaboration that subsequently increases young peoples' employment prospects, confidence and well-being. The enthusiasm and commitment to opportunities provided within Sams for young people is highly apparent.

Narratives provided by young people indicate a sense of gratitude toward Sams

for providing paid employment or voluntary positions, particularly in Lowestoft – an area perceived to be deprived with limited opportunities. Additionally, it became apparent that to the best of their knowledge, they believe that there are no other services like Sams within Lowestoft. The perceived uniqueness of Sams is also reflected in interviews with stakeholders.

**All stakeholders consider Sams Coffee House as a unique social enterprise bringing individuals together from diverse areas of employment to create a comprehensive service.** Several comparisons were made between state-funded employability services and Sams. It is suggested that while the services are not in competition, Sams does provide a more informal step toward employment with less prerequisites.



“

Rob: “Erm, I would probably say that a lot of people aren’t doing what we are doing so we have got a unique selling point. We have clearly identified a gap in the market... which prevents young people from gaining work experience because of (sometimes, unfortunately) other service providers and other organisations and business possibly don’t want our clientele.”

John: “...I think as a freestanding organisation doing it, in the interest of the people themselves rather than being forced into it as the job centre was doing to people, I think we’re quite unique in that sense.”

David: “I believe it’s unique in this town at the moment. We have a café, er, downstairs which is run, clearly by the youngsters; erm, and a lot of the services that we do provide have been determined by the youngsters as well...”

Compared to commercial coffee shops, Sams is considered by the young people to be much better for them in terms of support and with providing training opportunities. One individual describes Sams as being more personal than commercial coffee shops, with customers who want to engage with the employees. In terms of the services and opportunities provided, the young people perceived Sams as a service like no other in Lowestoft. Although other services exist in Lowestoft, none of these were considered to be on the same level as Sams with regards to support for young people.



“

Zoe: “Er, not around here no. I don’t think I’ve actually seen any like Sams. It’s the first time I’ve ever seen a place like this, and obviously after living here all this time I pretty much know Lowestoft like the back of my hand and I’ve never seen Sams, anything like Sams round here before.”

Claire: “...so I’ve got to say this is probably the best thing that’s around here. I mean, there probably is other bits and pieces about but probably not anywhere near this sort of level of bits of pieces. They cover such a vast amount of things...”

Josh: “I think that it’s great, because we offer a lot of support towards young people between 16 and 25 but then it’s like, if you went to Costa or Starbucks you wouldn’t really see that sort of support...”



## Recommendations

---

### Young people participation

A first recommendation is that Sams Coffee House continues to provide the high-quality support and range of services they currently offer and that they continue to engage young people in meaningful participation in service delivery, as they are doing. This will ensure that the views and ideas of young people continue to be included in service design, and the suggestions young people have made (for example, to create music and themed evening events, to offer improved seating and disabled access, and more activities within the café area for children) are considered.

in opinion as to where the coffee house's priorities should lie. While some members of staff considered the services to support young people should be the main priority, others felt that this can be realistically achieved only by prioritising the business of running a café and attracting more customers in order to ensure economic sustainability. Our recommendation is for Sams to consult with staff members to agree and develop an overall business strategy whereby the mechanisms are clearly identified by which their priorities can be achieved.

### Marketing and advertising Sams

This is an area that we think could be improved in order to better promote and advertise the services and facilities available, given the importance of tourism for the town. We recommend that consideration be given to how Sams can use social media more effectively to promote and advertise both the café and the services they offer young people.

### Service coherence

While analysing the staff narratives, it became apparent that there were some differences

# Josh's Story

## Diversion and Purpose

Josh is an apprentice working within Sams Coffee House. After being kicked out of his home, he started living in residential accommodation for young people managed by Access Community Trust. Prior to employment with Sams, Josh engaged in antisocial behaviour, remained disengaged and avoided entering further education. After becoming an employee within Sams café, Josh appears to feel as if he has a sense of purpose and has gained several qualifications to enhance his employment prospects.

*"I was an apprentice straight-away; I was given an opportunity straight away and I just took it."*

*"Well, I used to, before anything, I used to just go out with my mates, stay out, party and stuff like that, just like normal – and then I got kicked out of my house. And I was like, 'I need to grow up a bit'. So I sorted myself out a place. I went to the place Access and then Access sent me to Sams and then started from there."*

*"...Yeah, yeah; it tells me I have to get up at this time, to earn my money to pay for my flat and the things I want to help me in that way."*



# Claire's Story

## Support and Stability

Claire is a volunteer within the café area at Sams Coffee House. After an unexpected pregnancy and finding herself out of work, Claire found she was unable to pay the rent, and as a result was at risk of becoming homeless. Claire then resided in one of Access Community Trust's accommodation facilities for mothers and babies, where she soon involved herself with volunteering in Sams and the allotment project. Claire is grateful for the support Sams has provided, and when she is ready, aspires to return to full-time paid employment.

*"And honestly, like I say, if it wasn't for, if it wasn't for Access/Sams etc., then one, I wouldn't have anywhere to live and there would be no roof for [name] and I would be in a far worse off situation."*

*"I was renting accommodation privately after I found out my boss decided she didn't want to keep me on so I was sacked. Erm, which meant I wasn't able to keep up with my rent and I was going to be made homeless, so I needed somewhere to live. I ended up luckily being put into one of the hostels joint with the Access Community Trust which Sams is a part of, so yeah."*





# Nathan's Story

## Employment and Progressions

Nathan is an apprentice at Sam's coffee house, he found himself in supported residential accommodation provided by Access Community Trust. After applying for an apprenticeship at Sam's coffee house, he soon got the job and moved out of the previous housing and into different accommodation, which enabled him to be far more independent, paying bills and council tax. Nathan has gone on to gain many qualifications at Sam's and also engage in a variety of activities, such as helicopter rides and charity events through the charity.

*"I just came in after applying for the apprenticeship and I think it was the next day that I came in and I spoke to the manager upstairs, and er and then I came back in a month; time and had an interview, and it was onwards and upwards from there really."*

*"It's brilliant, it got me out of the situation I was in at Phoenix, I wanted to leave there and I wanted d'you know what I can get on the path to actually build my life together and not be in supported accommodation as much as I did appreciate being there even though I had nowhere else to go, but I just didn't like the place I wanted to get out of there really."*



“

“Yeah, i’ve done my food hygiene when I started and i’ve done all of the training courses like professional boundaries, safeguarding adults, safeguarding children, erm I think yeah i’ve done first aid as well and I think i’ve got fire safety coming up as well.”

“Yeah definitely, that’s only kind of the tip of the ice berg, the opportunities they’ve given me.”

