Healthwatch Essex Fella Forum (Colchester)

Healthwatch Essex

Healthwatch Essex's Fella's Forum within North East Essex provides a welcoming environment for men experiencing mental health issues to talk in a judgement free manner, and to signpost to further support and services if required. This exceptional project provides a referral pathway for men experiencing mental health conditions to gain support and awareness of services available to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. It also creates an environment where the men can support each other and create a community which meet and volunteer outside of the sessions.

The Forum, currently led by Healthwatch Essex staff, meets monthly in different sporting and physical activity settings. It links with local trusted organisations and engages with social prescribers, Neighbourhoods Teams, and community connectors. A recent survey found 100% of participants felt less isolated and their mental health had improved, with 80% mentioning improvements in their physical health, and 90% of men having formed new friendships.

The Forum's WhatsApp Group enables the group to support each other, share opportunities, and celebrate achievements. Guest speakers come and inform the men of new initiatives launching in their area, and the men have also co-produced impactful videos for Men's Health Week.