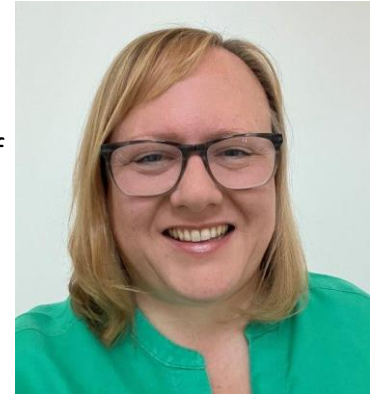




The East Sussex Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise Alliance welcomes a new Chair from 1st February 2023

Jennifer Twist, Chief Officer of Care for the Carers was elected as the new Chair, bringing over 15 years of experience of speaking up with and for carers to achieve strategic change. Jennifer has over a decade of experience as a VCSE representative on many strategic Boards with the NHS, local authorities and cross sector partnerships.



Jennifer says

“I’m very proud that my organisation has been a member organisation of the Alliance from the start, and of the distance that we as Alliance members have travelled together. It is a significant achievement that the sector voice is now much more recognised by our statutory partners, and that we are moving more to setting the agenda in our strategic dialogues with decision makers. I’m committed to this way of working and I firmly believe that it enables us to better represent the communities we each serve, and to find strategic and practical solutions that make a real difference to peoples’ lives locally.”

“I’m proud to be part of an Alliance that is always pushing forward for our communities. I also believe there remain significant opportunities to maximise our collective potential; a particular strength of the Alliance is the extensive expertise held by its members. John will be a hard act to follow, but in my new role as Chair, I will be very much wanting to work with members to keep up the momentum and learn from the wide breadth of skills and knowledge that exists within the Alliance.”

John Routledge is standing down from Chairing the Alliance for the past two years and retires as Executive Director of East Sussex Community Voice in March, after joining as Executive Director in 2017.

John says

“It is pleasing to see how far the Alliance has come in the last two years, establishing the VCSE sector as a trusted and strategic partner with our public sector colleagues. This positive relationship means that we can now do more to help improve the lives of people living across East Sussex, including some of the most vulnerable and excluded communities.”

East Sussex Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance

Edition 2 – February 2023

Spotlight on an Alliance Member: Southdown

At Southdown, we believe everyone has the right to live their life well and our mission is to provide exceptional community support services across Sussex which enable people to achieve this. In short, we are an organisation with a social purpose and a desire to change lives for the better.



We have been providing care and support for over 50 years and celebrate our extraordinary achievements and successes as we have grown to be one of the largest voluntary sector organisations in Sussex. We employ over 1,000 people each year with a wide range of skills and experiences from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. And we support over 9,000 people across 62 services.

We are a registered supported housing provider. In addition, we provide a range of specialist, person-centred support: 24-hour care and support for people with learning disabilities; mental and physical wellbeing support; peer support; homelessness prevention and learning and employment support.

As a not-for-profit specialist provider of care, support and housing services, nearly all our income is derived from public funds, either through commissioned contracts for the care and support services we deliver or the housing benefit we receive as a social landlord.

Southdown

Our Mission



Providing exceptional community support services and housing across Sussex which enable people to live well.

Become an Alliance member – if your VCSE organisation works across East Sussex and shares our principles of collaborative working, accountability and generous leadership, we would love to hear from you!

Contact: Anna McCollin-Moore, East Sussex VCSE Alliance Development Officer
anna.mccollin-moore@escv.org.uk 07983 855324



VCSE
EAST SUSSEX ALLIANCE

www.escv.org.uk/vcse-alliance/vcse-alliance



Alliance activity and latest news

- Three position papers have recently been published by Alliance members:
 - ❖ The '[Commissioning Principles](#)', reviewed in July 2022, provides updates and recommendations to improve collaboration in procurement and commissioning through a new culture and ways of working with the VCSE sector.
 - ❖ '[VCSE perspectives on Social Prescribing](#)' reflects the Alliance's interest in developing and promoting Social Prescribing to address the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and strengthening the impact for local people through necessary cross sector joint working.
 - ❖ '[Cost of Living and Financial Exclusion](#)' paper provides insight into current activities the VCSE sector are undertaking to provide information, guidance and support to those financially struggling.
- A **collaborative VCSE Alliance bid** to East Sussex County Council has been successful; to provide a social prescribing initiative for young Ukrainian refugees across the County.
- East Sussex VCSE Alliance '**Cost of Living Report**' – an emerging piece of work researching the impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on how the public are accessing services, the delivery of services and the impact on VCSE organisations and their staff.
- A **commissioning workshop** was held in November, co-hosted by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and the VCSE Alliance, attended by leaders from ESCC, voluntary sector, Public Health and NHS. A commitment to creating a Commissioning Excellence Programme was agreed, with the aim of developing East Sussex as a centre of excellence for VCSE commissioning. Read about the workshop and next steps [here](#).
- **East Sussex VCSE Alliance Young People Task & Finish group** have been awarded a £2.5k development budget to create a Young People's Volunteering & Safeguarding Framework, to support and enable more volunteering opportunities for the young people of East Sussex within Alliance organisations.
- **The Children and Young People Health Oversight Board** - Sally Polanski, CEO of Amaze, is the East Sussex VCSE Alliance Rep. Newly formed, the Board is establishing its remit to bring together and oversee place-based priorities, while driving system-wide agendas and collaboration. Its purpose is to provide effective system oversight and coordination of health and care services for children and young people in Sussex. If you have any questions or issues you would like raised at future meetings, please email Sally at sallyp@amazesussex.org.uk.
- **Partnership Plus** (VCSE Alliance members and leaders from the statutory sector) are progressing their priority of reducing loneliness and isolation by establishing their stewardship approach to tackling loneliness in East Sussex. Workshops to explore this are taking place in the spring.



Meet our newest member: Little Gate Supported Employment



At Little Gate Supported Employment we believe that everyone has the right to train for, find and thrive in paid employment. We were born out of a vision to enrich the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism and continue to work tirelessly with families and businesses across East Sussex and Kent to make this vision a reality.

With just 6% of adults with learning disabilities in paid employment, we aim to continue increasing this number until all individuals have the access and opportunities to realise their dreams.

Our service consists of our *Supported Work Training* programme based at Little Gate Farm. Trainees are supported to improve their confidence, independence, and communication, as well as develop specific job skills. Each trainee works with staff to identify and work towards specific, personal goals. Our trainees work in a range of different fields replicating professional industries such as office and administration, hospitality and catering, offsite garden maintenance, horticulture, animal care, and our cut flower and woodland social enterprises. The Supported Work Training program not only benefits trainees' employment opportunities but also enhances their physical and mental wellbeing and can spark life-long friendships.

Little Gate's *Supported Employment* model is all about finding the right employment for the right person; matching our trainees' skills, ambitions, and interests with employers' needs. Our trainees are supported by a Job Coach, prior to and during their employment or work experience and are also offered support in travel training and benefits advice.

Our support does not stop there. We offer *multiple courses* such as LEAPS, The Bridge and Jobs Forum, which are designed to support trainees to deepen their knowledge of employment, further develop their skills to allow trainees to grow within their career, as well as develop independence around relationships, sexual health, time management, self-advocacy and social skills in and out of the workplace.

Little Gate also offers a *Young Ranger* and *Teen Ranger* programme for young people ages eight and up. The programme acts as an activity club and respite for families. With acres of farm and woodland to explore, our Rangers spend their days cooking on campfires, building dens and enjoying the great outdoors.

At Little Gate Supported Employment, we are continuously identifying the gaps and barriers faced by adults with learning disabilities and autism accessing paid work opportunities, to develop and provide the support and services needed to overcome them.

For more information visit: www.littlegate.org.uk, email info@littlegate.org.uk, call 01797 260 580

STOP PRESS – as we go to publication, Wave Leisure have become the latest organisation to join the Alliance. Read more about them in the next edition!





Upcoming Alliance events

- Alliance monthly meeting: **28th February 2023**
- We are planning our next annual conference in **October 2023**. Contact us if there are any subjects or issues you would like to see covered. A report and details about last year's event can be found [here](#).

Upcoming member events, training and opportunities

Citizens Advice East Sussex

Volunteer opportunities at Crowborough, Hailsham & Uckfield Citizen's Advice

No specific qualifications needed, just friendly, approachable and good at listening, with good IT skills and a willingness to learn.

Trustee opportunities at Wealden Citizen's Advice

A fantastic opportunity to contribute your ideas, skills and experience at a time when our services have never been more needed.

Contact Emma for more details for both: 01825 705723/ da@wealdencitizensadvice.org.uk

Care for the Carers

Carer Awareness Training

This free training is suitable for professionals and volunteers in East Sussex. Sessions are available in person and online. For information about the training and dates, please visit the website [here](#).

Hastings Voluntary Action

Hastings Community Network Open Mic & Marketplace

The Stade Hall, Hastings, 3rd March 2023, 10.30am – 1.30pm

An opportunity to share information, learn about services delivered in Hastings, browse the marketplace and network with people from voluntary, statutory and independent sectors.

To book a place go to www.hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk/events

Amaze

Drusillas' Charity of the Year 2023!

When you visit the park, you'll be able to donate directly to Amaze – when there, look out to find out which animal will donate a percentage of their adoption fees to Amaze.

East Sussex Community Voice

Volunteer opportunity to join a new Equalities and Inclusion Advisory Group

This new group will meet every month to discuss current issues relating to equalities and inclusion and how we can ensure our work is as accessible, inclusive and representative as possible.

If you are interested in finding out more or joining, contact Jessica Gee: Jessica.gee@escv.org.uk

International Women's Day 2023

Member and partner events across the county

Wednesday 8th March, 9:30am – 2:30pm, County Hall, Horsham

International Women's Day Conference 2023 An in-person domestic abuse conference in honour of International Women's Day. To include speakers from East and West Sussex County Councils, Hourglass, My Sister's House, Hersana, and members of the Voices of Lived Experience Board for domestic abuse survivors. Eventbrite link: [International Women's Day Conference 2023 Tickets, Wed 8 Mar 2023 at 09:30 | Eventbrite](#)

Saturday 11th March, 10:00am – 4:00pm, Brighton Dome, Brighton

BWC (Brighton Women's Centre) hosts an annual International Women's Day Celebration in partnership with Brighton Dome and Brighton Museum. This free and inclusive event aims to celebrate and inspire women. Join for a day of inclusive discussions, workshops, talks, arts and crafts, music, dance, causes and campaigns. See the website for more information [here](#).



Friday 17th March, 7:00 pm – 10:00pm, All Saint's Centre, Lewes

Diversity Resource International is partnering with Lewes Town Council to host an evening of celebration for the young women and girls of Lewes, featuring inspirational speakers and female DJ. It aims to recognise that navigating today's world is hard but there are organisations that care. An Eventbrite registration will be issued closer to the date.

Contact cll.makepeace@lewes-tc.gov.uk or 07831106777 for more information.

Wider VCSE activity across Sussex

A **pan-Sussex VCSE Alliance** has recently been granted funding of approximately £300k from the Sussex ICS Health Inequalities Funding. This will enable the third sector to become embedded and able to operate at all levels within the integrated care system. More information to follow once the pan-Sussex Alliance is established.



Mental Health VCSE Network

The VCSE Mental Health Transformation Team have launched a new, collaborative network to bring voluntary organisations together to co-create and design mental health services. The network meets regularly, has a dedicated website for members and a monthly newsletter. Sign up to the website [here](#) and for more information email Andrea.Potter@vcse-mhtransformation.org

To submit an item to be considered for future editions of this newsletter or for further information about the Alliance, please contact:

Anna McCollin-Moore, East Sussex VCSE Alliance Development Officer

anna.mccollin-moore@escv.org.uk