



VCSE
ALLIANCE

**East Sussex Voluntary, Community & Social
Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Alliance**

**Membership Agreement
April 2025**

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Membership Agreement – April 2025

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This Membership Agreement was agreed by the 15 founding members of the Alliance and revised by members in September 2023.

It is made up of 25 of the county's VCSE organisations who have come together with a commitment to the following purpose, vision and mission. Current members are listed in Appendix Two.

Purpose

To speak as one voice, to influence and promote the importance of the VCSE sector, to increase our influence and trust amongst partners.

All members are active participants and commit to work according to the following principles:

Collaboration Accountability Generous Leadership

Vision

To have created an ecosystem where services are designed, commissioned and delivered in true collaboration between the VCSE and statutory partners for the benefit of our communities and wider voluntary sector.

Mission

We will tackle inequality and injustice in society by developing our strategic relationships and working with statutory partners to empower people and communities to have control of their own lives and ensure equality of access to our services for everyone.

This Agreement provides a framework for Alliance members to work collaboratively together and with other partners. It may be modified at any time by agreement of a simple majority of members.

2. MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

*Applications for membership of the Alliance can be made by completing the Alliance Application Form – please state which level of membership best suits your organisation and if a Full or Executive Member, which priority you would like to progress as part of a working group. (See Appendix One for full details of membership levels, commitments and benefits). **Please return the form to: esvcsealliance@escv.org.uk***

A) Full Membership

Organisations may join the Alliance as full members if they meet the following membership criteria:

- They are independently constituted community, voluntary or social enterprise organisations
- They work to support beneficiaries and communities living across the county of East Sussex
- They work with the Alliance agreed principles of 'Collaborative Working', 'Accountability' and 'Generous Leadership'
- They have the capacity to commit to actively participate in Alliance activities, to represent the Alliance at Partnership Boards, meetings and Steering Groups
- Commit to joining a working group to support and progress one key priority area of work
- Attend in-person Alliance meetings every 3 months

B) Executive Membership

Organisations may join the Alliance as Executive Members if they meet the following membership criteria:

- They are independently constituted community, voluntary or social enterprise organisations
- They work to support beneficiaries and communities living across the county of East Sussex
- They work with the Alliance agreed Principles of 'Collaborative Working', 'Accountability' and 'Generous Leadership'
- They have the capacity to lead on developing and delivering a key priority area of work
- Drive systems change, influence and coordinate partnership working with key stakeholders
- Attend monthly Teams Executive meetings and quarterly in-person Full meetings

C) Alliance Associate

Organisations may join the Alliance as an Alliance Associate if they meet the following criteria:

- They are independently constituted community, voluntary or social enterprise organisations
- They work to support beneficiaries and more localised communities anywhere in East Sussex
- They work with the Alliance agreed Principles of 'Collaborative Working', 'Accountability' and 'Generous Leadership'
- They wish to be an active participant in partnership activities of the Alliance and benefit from shared learning, best practice and collaboration opportunities

The Alliance Development Officer will inform existing Alliance members of any new applications for Full and Executive membership or requests to become Alliance Associates.

Decisions to accept new members or associates will be made by all existing Full and Exec Alliance members based upon applications meeting all stated criteria for membership with a simple majority agreement of members at the meeting (in person or by proxy) following receipt of the application form.

3. BENEFITS OF ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE AND FULL MEMBERSHIP

- Enhancing benefits we offer to our local communities
- More strategic relationship with statutory partners
- Making more effective use of assets and resources
- A shared commitment to high quality services
- Opportunities for income generation, inward investment and Social Capital
- Reduced duplication and competition
- Building trust among partners
- Opening up partnership opportunities across a wider geography

4. BENEFITS OF BEING AN ALLIANCE ASSOCIATE

- Access to information and advice available to Alliance members
- Opportunity to comment on draft Alliance position papers
- Enhanced opportunities for partnership working with Alliance members and associates
- Priority invitations to attend Alliance events and activities, benefit from networking

5. PRINCIPLES FOR ALLIANCE WORKING

Alliance members and associates commit to work according to the following principles:

1. Alliance members agree to work to the principles of collaborative working, accountability and generous leadership.
2. The VCSE is a natural home of co-operation and partnership and we will develop collaborations in a way that is consistent with the values of our sector.
3. We work to empower people and communities to have control of their own lives. We value approaches that are bottom-up, user led, and seek to draw on the strengths and assets of local communities.
4. We will tackle inequality and injustice and ensure equality of access to our services for members of all communities. Alliance members make a commitment to adhere to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion best practices.
5. We seek benefits for the wider voluntary sector, especially small, local community organisations that form a crucial part of social capital in the county.
6. We will develop shared funding opportunities between Alliance members and with other partners including smaller VCSE organisations.
7. We seek to build the resilience of the sector so it can thrive and withstand change.

6. WORKING TOGETHER ON SHARED PRIORITIES

Alliance members commit to working collaboratively to address the priorities that they agree. We will also work with statutory and private sector partners to align our priorities where possible.

These priorities and examples are periodically reviewed by Alliance members at Development Workshops.

Current priorities

1. Seamless navigation of services
2. Reduce demand on acute services and increase prevention activity
3. Promoting wellbeing and resilience through reducing poverty, isolation and distress
4. Improve community safety and safeguarding
5. Enhance and sustain sustainable practice
6. Tackling Inequality
7. Co-design of services

Examples

- Social prescribing and integrated services
- Personal/community resilience
- Communication strategies
- Place Based Community Development
- Engagement and Intelligence gathering
- Partnerships with statutory initiatives
- Action on climate change
- Targeted work with communities
- Collaboration with statutory commissioners

7. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Alliance membership or associate status may be terminated by a simple majority vote of Alliance members but only where there are reasonable grounds. Examples of where membership may be terminated are:

- Where an Alliance member acts in a way that brings the Alliance into disrepute
- Where an Alliance member/associate does not attend three or more consecutive appropriate membership level meetings without providing a reasonable reason for absence
- Where an Alliance member/associate operates for private gain over public good



Appendix One

Three membership levels: Executive, Full and Associate - commitment, engagement and benefits

Commitment & benefits of membership	Chair/Vice Chair/Host	Executive	Full	Associate
Days per month (approx.)	4	2	1	1/2
Attend Alliance meetings	Two weekly (via Teams)	Monthly (via Teams)	Quarterly (in person)	Six-monthly (in person)
Agenda planning	✓			
Manage ESCC contract and reporting	✓			
Chair Alliance meetings	✓			
Support Alliance Dev. Officer	✓			
Lead on strategic relationships	✓	✓		
Lead on key priorities	✓	✓		
Lead on VA community network engagement	✓	✓		
Oversee programmes of work	✓	✓		
Coordinate partnership working	✓	✓		
Host in-person meetings	✓	✓		
Voting rights	✓	✓	✓	
Join working group, deliver key programmes of work	✓	✓	✓	
Represent Alliance: feedback on Boards, Partnerships, Steering Groups	✓	✓	✓	
Collaborate on funding bids	✓	✓	✓	
Become Alliance Mentor	✓	✓	✓	
Draft position papers	✓	✓	✓	
Review/comment on draft position papers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Opportunities for partnership working	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newsletter contribution	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access to information, opportunities, learning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Networking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Priority invitations to Alliance events, activities	✓	✓	✓	✓



Appendix Two

Current Executive, Full and Associate members of the East Sussex VCSE Alliance

- Action In Rural Sussex (AIRS)
- Age UK East Sussex
- Amaze
- BHT Sussex
- Brighton Women's Centre (BWC)
- Care for the Carers
- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Diversity Resource International (DRI)
- East Sussex Community Voice (ESCV)
- East Sussex Vision Support
- Little Gate Farm
- Lotus
- Hastings Advice and Representation Centre (HARC)
- Hastings Community Network
- Jigsaw South-East
- Possability People
- Southdown Housing
- Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA)
- The Advocacy People
- Three Voluntary Actions in East Sussex
 - 3VA
 - Hastings Voluntary Action
 - Rother Voluntary Action
- Warming up the Homeless
- Wave Active
- Wayfinder Woman
- Wealden Volunteering

FURTHER INFORMATION

For general information about the Alliance and how to join, please contact esvcsealliance@escv.org.uk

Contact details for the East Sussex VCSE Alliance Chair, Vice Chair and Alliance Development Officer:

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END