



VCSE
EAST SUSSEX ALLIANCE

Quarterly Report

Executive Summary

1st April – 30 June 2025

Q1 in numbers

East Sussex VCSE
Alliance members

26



Meetings of priority
working groups

26

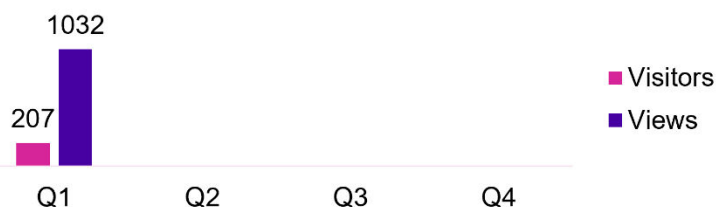


Multi-agency
meetings co-chaired

4



Website visitors and page views



11

Documents shared
on the website



[Hints and tips for inclusive events and activities.](#)



[East Sussex VCSE Alliance Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Charter resources. Including a suite of resources and templates](#)

No. of Newsletter subscribers

3
Newsletters
sent

148

Q1 Q2 Q3 Q4

No. of boards/partnerships/programmes &
steering groups with Alliance representation



201

Hours Alliance members
contribute to strategic
partnership meetings
approximately

1. Highlights and strategic impacts

The East Sussex VCSE Alliance plays a central role in shaping local service design, influencing policy, and strengthening the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. This summary captures high-level activities and outcomes during the past quarter, structured by thematic priorities as outlined below. More information on each area can be found in the main report.

- ❁ **Priority 1 – Financial Inclusion & Cost of Living**
- ❁ **Priority 2 – VCSE Sector Resilience**
- ❁ **Priority 3 – Representation, Relationships & Influencing**
- ❁ **Oversight Groups – Social Prescribing & Climate Change**
- ❁ **Governance – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**
- ❁ **Collaborative programmes of work**

1.1 Priority 1: Financial Inclusion & Cost of Living

Addressing the cost of living crisis remains a top concern, with the Alliance actively co-designing services and advocating for sustainable support models.

- ❁ **Welfare Benefits Advice Service:** Alliance members influenced the redesign of this ESCC-commissioned service, emphasizing co-production with the VCSE sector.
- ❁ **Funding Advocacy:** Evidence of reduced and short-term funding impact is being compiled into a report to guide financial planning.
- ❁ **Strategic Groups:**
 - Financial Inclusion Steering Group: Co-chaired by the Alliance, this group addresses challenges such as HSF7 and champions longer-term funding models.
 - Independent Review of Advice Services: Alliance Reps are co-leading the redesign; a commissioning role for the Alliance is under consideration.
- ❁ **Children's Services – Early Help Transformation:** VCSE input is shaping integration with the Families First policy.

1.2 Priority 2: VCSE Sector Resilience

Strengthening sector capacity and sustainability through data-led strategy and cross-sector dialogue.

- ❁ **Resilience Research:** A comprehensive review led by Colligo Labs and Ideas Alliance is underway; final report due September 2025.
- ❁ **Key Focus Areas:**
 - Workforce Development
 - Office Co-location
 - Impact Measurement
 - Sustainable Funding
- ❁ **Sector Budget Impact:** National Insurance and Minimum Wage increases are projected to cost the sector £2 million annually. Findings have been shared to support advocacy and planning for 2025.

1.3 Priority 3: Representation, Relationships & Influencing

Improving sector visibility and influence across East Sussex's decision-making forums, streamlining to ensure VCSE engagement.

- 🌀 **New 2025 Workstream:** Launched to enhance representation and influence within strategic partnerships.
- 🌀 **Capacity Challenge:** Members sit on over 40 boards, but resources are stretched. A working group is reviewing protocols, strategy, and potential funding.
- 🌀 **Key Partnerships:** Active participation in Partnership Plus, SVLA, Integrated Community Teams (ICTs), and the Children & Young People Health Oversight Board.
- 🌀 **Partnership Plus:** Jointly chaired by the Alliance and ESCC Adult Social Care leadership; a driver for cross-sector transformation, devolution, and Compact 2025.
- 🌀 **SVLA Integration:** A strategic lead role is in development. First joint workshop defined purpose, values, and shared objectives.

1.4 Oversight Groups

The Alliance strengthens system collaboration through key forums and co-chaired groups.

- 🌀 **Social Prescribing:** A joint bid with Age UK ES is underway for upcoming NHS Sussex tender.
- 🌀 **Climate Change:** Alliance supported the Wealden Climate Action Group; broader coordination will resume in late 2025.

1.5 Governance workstream: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Guiding principles and co-designed initiatives are shaping more inclusive and effective delivery.

- 🌀 **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI):** Charter launched in April 2025 with 6 core commitments. Resources available online; members encouraged to signup by 31 August.

1.6 Collaborative programmes of work

- 🌀 **East Sussex Compact 2025:** The Alliance reviewed the Compact 2020 and signed off the updated East Sussex Compact 2025, refreshed by ESCC, Alliance members and wider voluntary sector.
- 🌀 **Commissioning Excellence Programme:** Concluded in May, next steps are to focus on embedding principles, refreshing trust surveys, and improving communication.
- 🌀 **Tackling Loneliness:**
 - *Workshops:* Held in Rye and Hastings.

- ❁ **Befriending Older People Scheme:** East Sussex County Council Public Health and Age UK East Sussex worked in collaboration to co-design a befriending older people scheme.
- ❁ **SPACES Programme:** Addressing property access; an asset mapping workshop is planned.
- ❁ **Sector Research & Co-design:** Alliance leads "State of the Sector" work and contributes to service redesigns (e.g., Welfare Advice, Social Prescribing)

1.7 Communication and engagement

Increasing visibility, sharing knowledge, and celebrating VCSE leadership across the county.

- ❁ **Website: 25% growth in traffic:** most viewed sections: Home, Documents & Resources, and Our Work.
- ❁ **Newsletters:** Monthly updates shared with 150+ subscribers.
- ❁ **Events & Representation:**
 - Presented at RVA summer event, ESCV Away Day.
 - Hosted EDI workshops and leadership sessions.

1.8 Secretariat and governance

Ongoing governance improvements and membership growth underpin the Alliance's ability to deliver this quarters highlights include:

- ❁ **Membership & Engagement:**
 - 26 members as of April 2025; Wealden Volunteering joined this quarter.
 - Associate membership encouraged.
- ❁ **Meetings & Strategy:**
 - 3 Executive meetings and 1 member workshop held.
 - 26 working group meetings across Financial Inclusion, Sector Resilience, Representation and EDI.
- ❁ **Governance Framework:**
 - Approved processes for elections, roles, and decision-making.
 - Direct commissioning procedure revised for increased transparency, continued development next quarter.
- ❁ **Funding:**
 - Core funding secured three-year funding from April 2025 (£89,680/year).
 - Core team continues to share funding opportunities and support member bids.

1.9 Quarterly Focus: Integrated Community Teams (ICTs)

Alliance representatives have supported the ICT model to embed voluntary sector insights at local levels.

- ❁ Reps contributed to Management Planning Group meetings.

- 🌀 Lewes ICT Involvement Strategy co-developed with Alliance input.
- 🌀 New Reps for Lewes, Rother, and Hastings inducted by ESCC.
- 🌀 Priorities include supporting people with ongoing needs, dashboard development, and strengthening local leadership.
- 🌀 Alliance circulates regular updates to all members.
- 🌀 Alliance exploring how this will link with the SCLA lead role.

The East Sussex VCSE Alliance continues to grow in reach, strategic influence, and collaborative power. Through focused representation, co-production, and sector leadership, the Alliance ensures the VCSE sector is central to shaping services, policies, and outcomes across East Sussex.