



VCSE
EAST SUSSEX ALLIANCE

Quarterly Report

Executive Summary

Q1 2026/27

1 April – 30 June 2026

Quarterly report: Q1 April - June 2026

Q1 in numbers

East Sussex VCSE
Alliance members

32



Meetings of priority
working groups

9



Multi-agency
meetings co-chaired

3



View and Visitors



Documents shared
on the website
include:

-  [East Sussex VCSE Alliance Report Executive Summary Report January to March 2026](#)
-  [Joint Alliance response to modification to the East Sussex local government reorganisation proposal](#)
-  [Commissioning Excellence Programme 2023-2025 Summary Report](#)

No. of Newsletter subscribers



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



288

Hours Alliance members
contribute to strategic
partnership meetings
approximately

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Highlights & strategic impacts

The East Sussex VCSE Alliance plays a vital role in shaping local service design, influencing policy, and strengthening the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. This section provides a summary of our four new priorities agreed in April, key activities and progress. For more detail read the full monitoring report.

1.1 Priority 1: Neighbourhood Health & Integrated Community Teams

This new combined priority is focused on strengthening VCSE influence within existing neighbourhood health work and integrated community teams.

- 🌀 **Co-leads appointed** - following a nomination and voting process.
- 🌀 **Working group established** - ten Alliance members meeting in September.
- 🌀 **Embedding the VCSE role in neighbourhood health** –the group will co-design the programme to develop this.
- 🌀 **East Sussex Neighbourhood Health Plan** – supporting this work is a focus for the group.

1.2 Priority 2: Financial Inclusion

The Financial Inclusion working group continues to address hardship, resilience and access to advice and support.

- 🌀 **Broadened representation of the group** - existing members have re-committed and new organisations have joined.
- 🌀 **Crisis & Resilience Fund** – Reps provide insight during implementation, including in crisis support, employability, tenancy sustainment and food security.
- 🌀 **Multi-Agency Financial Inclusion Steering Group** – members co-chair and actively contribute to this group.
- 🌀 **Specialist welfare benefits advice services** - entered a co-commissioning and procurement process alongside ESCC colleagues.

1.3 Priority 3: Children & Young People

A new working group has been established to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

- 🌀 **Six Alliance members signed up** - additional organisations invited.
- 🌀 **Initial workshop** - planned for August 2026.
- 🌀 **Key themes** - include ESCC Families First Programme, representation, neighbourhood health links and wider children and young people priorities.

1.4 Priority 4: Sector Resilience & Commissioning

Work focused on strengthening sector resilience and progressing collaborative commissioning approaches.

- 🌀 **State of the Sector research recommendations** - developed an action plan alongside Partnership Plus colleagues.
- 🌀 **Local Government Reorganisation** – Joint Alliance response to government’s modification proposal and advocated for the ‘One East Sussex’ option.
- 🌀 **Devolution** - Alliance representation is supporting emerging devolution and mayoral authority planning.
- 🌀 **Commissioning Excellence Programme Phase 2** - launched, building on trust, co-production and collaborative leadership.

1.5 Alliance Oversight Groups

Representation & Remuneration

Although no longer a priority working group, representation remains central to ensuring the VCSE sector influences strategic decision making.

- 🌀 **Alliance representatives** - contribute across 49 strategic meetings.
- 🌀 **New Representation Framework** - launched in April 2026.
- 🌀 **Reimbursement arrangements** - introduced to support participation from smaller organisations.
- 🌀 **Improved feedback and information-sharing** – effective processes established.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

EDI activity continued despite the closure of the dedicated oversight group.

- 🌀 **EDI oversight group** - disbanded due to limited capacity.
- 🌀 **EDI Charter** - remains active with 23 organisations signed up.
- 🌀 **Peer support and learning sessions** – Alliance will host peer support sessions

1.6 Strategic Partnerships & Influence

Alliance continued to strengthen relationships with statutory and system partners.

- 🌀 **Chair reappointed** - until April 2027.
- 🌀 **Partnership Plus focus** - State of the Sector findings, stewardship and Compact implementation.
- 🌀 **ICT development and neighbourhood health programmes** – VCSE representatives continue to influence.
- 🌀 **Alliance maintained leadership roles** - on key boards including Partnership Plus, financial inclusion and health partnerships.

1.7 Collaborative programmes

The Alliance continued to support and lead a range of cross-sector initiatives.

- 🌀 **Tackling Loneliness Programme** - Implementation of Phase 2 and recruited Programme Manager.
- 🌀 **Befriending Scheme** - Maintained strong referrals and volunteer recruitment.
- 🌀 **SPACES Programme** - Highlighted community asset and property challenges for VCSE organisations.
- 🌀 **Co-design and commissioning programmes** - members continued to contribute to initiatives taking place across East Sussex.

1.8 Sussex Voluntary Leaders Alliance

Work continued to align local priorities with Sussex-wide VCSE system leadership.

- 🌀 **New Collaborative Strategic Group** - established around nine key thematic areas.
- 🌀 **Neighbourhood health, ICTs and VCSE influence** – remain a key focus.

1.9 Communications, Governance & Membership

Alliance strengthened communication, membership engagement and governance.

- 🌀 **Website, newsletters and engagement** - activity continued to raise awareness.
- 🌀 **Membership increased to 32 organisations** - following three applications to join.
- 🌀 **Priority groups and executive governance structures refreshed** for 2026/27.
- 🌀 **Funding opportunities and commissioning developments** – shared.

1.10 Strategic impact: Neighbourhood Health & Integrated Community Teams

This quarter saw the Alliance establish its highest priority workstream, positioning the VCSE sector at the heart of East Sussex's developing Neighbourhood Health model and Integrated Community Teams. This demonstrates the Alliance's influence 'upstream' in shaping future systems, services and investment.

- 🌀 **A new Alliance working group** was established, with co-leads and eight members.
- 🌀 **Alliance Reps continued to influence all five East Sussex ICTs**, helping shape priorities, governance arrangements and VCSE involvement.
- 🌀 **East Sussex progressed plans to co-design the VCSE role** within neighbourhood health, ensuring community organisations are recognised as key delivery partners.
- 🌀 **The county continued its involvement in the National Neighbourhood Implementation Health Programme**, creating opportunities to learn from and influence national best practice.