



PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

10.30 am COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillor Johanna Howell (Chair)
Councillors Kathryn Field (Vice Chair), Colin Belsey, Charles Clark,
Anne Cross, Nuala Geary, Stephen Shing, Colin Swansborough, John Ungar
and Trevor Webb

Maria Cowler, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative
John Hayling, Parent Governor Representative
Lesley Hurst, Diocese of Chichester Representative

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (*Pages 3 - 12*)
2. Apologies for absence
3. Disclosures of interests
Disclosures by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
4. Urgent items
Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgent.
5. Work programme (*Pages 13 - 36*)
6. Safeguarding Adults Board- Annual Report (*Pages 37 - 100*)
7. Annual Review of Safer Communities (*Pages 101 - 124*)
8. Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4

PHILIP BAKER
Deputy Chief Executive
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent
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12 September 2025

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PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 14 July 2025.

PRESENT Councillors Johanna Howell (Chair), Kathryn Field (Vice Chair), Colin Belsey, Charles Clark, Anne Cross, Nuala Geary, Peter Pragnell, Stephen Shing, Colin Swansborough, John Ungar and Trevor Webb. Lesley Hurst, Diocese of Chichester Representative (online)

LEAD MEMBERS Councillor Bob Bowdler, Lead Member for Children and Families (online)
Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health (online)

ALSO PRESENT Ben Brown, Consultant in Public Health
Nathan Caine, Head of Education: SEND and Safeguarding
Michael Courts, East Sussex Housing Partnership Lead
Deborah Ennis, Assistant Director, Commissioning and Transformation
Darrell Gale, Director of Public Health
Ian Gutsell, Chief Finance Officer
Hayley Martin, Health Improvement Principal
Mark Stainton, Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2025

1.1 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2025 as a correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative).

3. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

3.1 Councillor Webb disclosed a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 8, East Sussex Housing Partnership, as a trustee of His Place, Hastings and as a voluntary member of Maslow Housing Co-operative.

4. URGENT ITEMS

4.1 There were no urgent items.

5. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR)

5.1 The Director of Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) introduced the report which marked the start of the Committee's input into the 2025/26 RPPR cycle and provided a stock take of the Council's position for scrutiny's consideration ahead of more detailed planning for the 2026/27 financial year. The report contained as appendices relevant parts of the Council's Year-End Monitoring Report, which highlighted achievements and challenges for services the Committee scrutinised, and the State of the County report which looked ahead at demographic, financial and policy trends and challenges. The Director highlighted the challenges of demand,

complexity and cost outlined in the State of the County report and noted the limited financial options available to the Council due to reduced reserves.

5.2 In relation to ASC the report set out a £10m overspend, mainly due to additional demand on the community care budget arising from increases in assessments and reviews as well as specialist work in mental capacity and deprivation of liberty. The Council remained in the upper quartile for its indicators and the recent ASC survey showed improvement in 5/6 areas of ASC services.

5.3 Priorities for the department remained around prevention, waiting times, safeguarding, quality and value for money. There would also be a focus on developing an action plan in response to the awaited Care Quality Commission (CQC) rating outcome from the recent assessment; responding to national reforms including the recently published NHS 10 Year Plan; and developing health and social care integration programmes with partners.

5.4 The Assistant Director Commissioning and Transformation set out the key headlines in relation to Children's Services (CSD) in the report which included an overspend of £13.6m due to staffing costs in localities, looked after children placements, and costs in Home to School Transport. The Assistant Director commented that the Dedicated Schools Grant position in March 2025 was surplus of £2.8m, however that was not expected to continue and the Department was forecasting a deficit at the end of 2025/26. The Assistant Director noted progress against targets with many met as well as areas for improvement, including education measures and attainment in Bexhill and Hastings areas. There was significant work underway in these areas to improve attainment and would remain a focus looking forward.

5.5 Other areas of focus for CSD including addressing areas of overspend, including placement costs and Home to School Transport; responding to national policy changes; and prevention and early intervention.

5.6 The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) outlined the key financial outlook in the report which set out the 2024/25 outturn deficit position of £7.6m, in addition to the £14.3m planned draw from reserves when the budget was set. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) in the State of the County projected a deficit of £36.5m for 2026/27.

5.7 The CFO commented that the recent Government Spending Review (Fair Funding Review 2.0) included some welcome announcements, including the updating of relative needs formulae, recognition of remoteness in an Area Cost Adjustment and the consolidation and simplification of grants, however there were still many unknowns in terms of future funding arrangements. He also noted, for East Sussex, this had resulted in an increased recognition of need, however, for Adult Social Care, there was a reduction for ESCC in the relative need formula due to a shift in focus from older people to working age adults. The new foundation formula would also result in fewer allocations to some local services, including cultural and environmental projects. The demand on Home to School Transport however was recognised which was positive, although a 20 miles per journey cap would limit the potential benefit overall, there was a risk that ESCC could see reduced funding under new mechanisms and would be responding to the consultation to ensure allocations would be able to meet the needs of East Sussex.

5.8 The Government was also consulting on council tax equalisation. It was currently unclear how that would impact on ESCC, but shire counties could see reduced funding and local modelling would therefore need to factor in funding for ESCC to either flatline or reduce. The CFO also noted the work underway on a CIPFA Financial Resilience and Governance review.

5.9 The Committee thanked officers for the information provided in the reports and through ongoing briefings, although requested that fewer acronyms were used in reports. The Committee discussed and asked questions in the following areas:

- **ASC survey** – The Committee welcomed the positive feedback received from the ASC survey, particularly regarding the work of the Joint Community Rehabilitation Team. The Director of ASCH also welcomed this feedback and noted that this highlighted good practice in health and social care integration and commented that work was ongoing to develop this further through integrated neighbourhood teams.
- **Use of the independent sector**– The Committee enquired about the use of the independent sector to deliver services, including Interventions Alliance, and asked if the Council prioritised the voluntary, community and enterprise sector (VCSE) in its commissioning and how many VCSE organisations had applied. The Director of ASCH clarified that during the tendering process priority was given to quality and value, including social value; the number of applications from the VCSE sector for the Refuge contract would be provided after the meeting. He also directed Members to the Market Position Statement which sets out the required provision to meet need. In relation to wider reliance on the independent sector, the Director commented that it was important to have a mixed economy of care and that due to CQC regulations, it could be challenging for some providers to meet standards and noted there was little interest in providing support for older people from the VCSE sector.
- **Support for carers** – The Committee enquired about a target to support carers. The Director clarified that this target related to a small, targeted service to support carers in crisis. The Department was focussed on preventing the need for this support so would aim to see a reduction. It was also noted that the voluntary organisation that provided this support was seeing fewer referrals but had increased the number of visits for individuals due to increasing complexities. The target had been changed to reflect this.
- **Prevent workshops** – There was a question about the number of workshops provided to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) providers with a comment that this seemed high. The Director of ASCH noted that a detailed written response could be provided after the meeting but that this was not particularly high given the broad range of SEND provision, including schools, in the county.
- **Employability Brokers** – The Committee sought clarification on the KPIs in relation to the Employability Broker's project. The Director of ASCH noted that this was partly due to the project building capacity - the KPI only reflected part year, as well as the significant work involved in supporting people into employment.
- **Drug and alcohol support** – The Committee expressed concern about the increase in drug and alcohol related deaths and asked about work to promote support services. The Director of ASCH commented that there had been an increase nationally and more significantly locally in drug and alcohol related deaths but clarified that most of these related to people with a long period of misusing alcohol and where alcohol is recorded as a factor of death; there had not been an increase in overdose related deaths. The Director noted the high success rates of people engaging with treatment, with ESCC above the national average for successful completion rates of rehabilitation courses, and there was continued investment in drug services. The Director of Public Health added that deaths often related to people unconnected with ESCC services. Work was underway to identify people in need of support, including through hospital admissions, and further promote support available, including the ADDER project, as well as work with providers to reduce stigma around seeking support. The Committee welcomed this work and asked for more information about the new measure which includes alcohol specific mortality and deaths related to drug

misuse. The Director ASCH confirmed that a written response with this detail would be provided after the meeting.

- **Cost of Adult and Children's Social Care** – The Committee asked if the Council had been too conservative in its budget planning for adult and children's social care costs given the overspend. The Director of ASCH clarified that each year an estimate on growth and demography in terms of fee uplifts is negotiated for older people, but for other adults and younger people this is negotiated depending on need. The challenge for both budgets was that they were demand led, and the Council had a legal duty to meet eligible need, and it had been difficult to predict the level of need. The Council was however, seeing an increasing complexity in need each year.
- **Local government funding** – the Committee sought clarification on proposals for local government funding, including the consolidation of some specific funding and the increased focus on deprivation, and asked how the Council would be responding to the current Fair Funding Consultation. The CFO noted that a simplification of grants would be welcome, however the mechanism to deliver this was not yet clear. In terms of changes to relative needs, he noted that although this had increased for ASC, the shift in focus from older people to working age adults meant this would be a loss for ESCC. 100% Council Equalisation would also be a disadvantage due to the assumption of 100% collection. The Council would respond to the consultation outlining the needs of East Sussex to ensure ESCC and its partners could effectively use of grant resources to meet the needs of residents.
- **Youth Centre Heathfield** – Councillor Cross welcomed the imminent opening of the new youth centre in Heathfield. The Assistant Director, Commissioning and Transformation noted this was positive for young people in the area.
- **Foster Carers** – The Committee welcomed the increase in ESCC in-house foster carers and noted the excellent care children received from in house provision and foster carers and commented that some of the related red RAG ratings in the report reflected the complexity of care required by some young people. The Assistant Director, Commissioning and Transformation noted the success in recruiting in house foster carers which would benefit children in East Sussex as well as relieve pressure on social care costs. She also noted work with West Sussex and Brighton & Hove councils to further develop fostering services across Sussex.
- **Educational attainment** – The Committee expressed concern about attainment scores in Hastings and Bexhill, noting the ongoing challenges in these areas despite targeted funding and work, and asked what ESCC could do to support the performance of academies and improve attainment. The Committee also asked about wider support for parents. The Assistant Director noted the targeted work and collaboration with colleagues and partners to support families, including work to prevent the need for statutory support from children's social care services for families, and work with academies to support attainment. A written response providing more detail on work to improve attainment in Hastings and Bexhill would be provided after the meeting. In response to a question on how Pupil Premium was being spent in schools, the Assistant Director noted that a written response would be provided after the meeting. The Committee commented that there was a need to expand Family Hubs to provide support to wider areas and recognised the limited role of the Council to support and influence school academies.
- **Youth Justice Inspection** – In response to a request to see the Youth Justice Inspection report, the Assistant Director, Commissioning and Transformation noted that this would be circulated to the Committee and commented that it had received a good outcome.
- **HUGG voucher underspend** – The Committee enquired about the reasons for an underspend on HUGG vouchers. A written response after the meeting

clarified that vouchers were delivered through early years settings, schools and college. However, not all vouchers were redeemed by families. CSD continued to promote the take up of vouchers through its communication channels and education settings.

- **Home to School Transport** – The Committee discussed the financial pressures in Home to School Transport (HTST), reflecting on the statutory duties in relation to this, and asked for more detail on how money is allocated and how alternative options are considered; how decisions on HTST are made across CSD and Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) departments; and if there was potential for further scrutiny. The Assistant Director, Commission and Transformation noted that further detail could be provided on work with CET. Some Members commented that the ability to means test parents in relation to HTST could significantly reduce costs.
- **SEND reforms** – The Committee enquired about anticipated changes to Education Health and Care Plans in the upcoming Schools White Paper. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Transformation commented that upcoming SEND reforms were still unclear, with the White Paper now expected in the autumn, but the reforms were expected to be significant. Despite this uncertainty, the Department was continuing to support pupils with SEND across the county.

5.10 The Committee RESOLVED to establish an RPPR Board to meet in December to consider the developing financial position for 2026/27 and draft Portfolio Plans and agree detailed comments on those to be put to Cabinet. The Committee agreed the Membership of the RPPR Board would be the whole Committee.

5.11 The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

6.1 The Chair introduced the report which outlined the Committee's latest work programme.

Transport for all Age Care Review

6.2 Councillor Pragnell, Chair of the Scoping Board, updated the Committee on the outcome of the recent scoping board on Transport for all Age Care noting that the Board had agreed to focus on Home to School Transport (HTST) but, due to expected national guidance and the Schools White Paper, it had been agreed to hold the next meeting in the autumn to ensure the Board was as informed as possible. Some Members agreed that a meeting in the autumn would allow the Scoping Board to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with a review. The Assistant Director commented that a meeting in the autumn would include an update on the recent HTST audit and clarified that although the updated guidance would include all aspects of HTST, it was expected to align with reforms in the Schools White Paper.

6.3 Councillor Cross noted her interest in exploring topics relating to work with suppliers to mitigate transport costs and work with other authorities to share best practice and expressed concern in delaying the start of a review. Councillor Cross requested interim information on the audit report and the Assistant Director confirmed that information about the scope of the audit could be provided to the Committee after the meeting.

Forward plan

6.4 The Committee reviewed the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions.

Work Programme

6.5 The Chair informed the Committee that an awayday would take place in the autumn to consider the work programme in detail.

6.6 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the updated work programme and to further review the work programme at the upcoming awayday.

7. SEND INSPECTION REPORT

7.1 The Head of Education: SEND and Safeguarding introduced the report, noting the legal requirement for a joint inspection of SEND services by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). He commented that the inspection had taken place at a challenging time with high demand nationally in the SEND sector and that the report included lobbying work with central government as part of the national Change Programme to address key issues in the SEND system.

7.2 East Sussex was awarded the middle outcome with the inspection report noting inconsistent experiences and outcomes, which aligned with the self-assessment. An action plan had been developed in response to identified areas of improvement and work on this was underway. Another inspection was expected in three years at which point there would be an updated SEND strategy which would incorporate upcoming SEND reforms.

7.3 The Committee discussed and asked questions in the following areas:

- **Waiting times for CAMHS** – The Committee commented on the ongoing issues in relation to waiting times for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and challenges around recruitment and increases in demand. The Head of Education recognised the ongoing challenges with waiting times, including the availability of professionals and noted the work underway to provide support to families whilst they were waiting.
- **Waiting times for wheelchairs** - The Committee raised concerns about waiting times for wheelchairs and asked if there were performance issues with the provider. The Head of Education noted that this service was commissioned by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and although there were no performance issues with the provider, there had been issues with funding due to increased costs for equipment. Interim funding had since been agreed to address this and the ICB had contributed to the action plan to address both waiting times for CAMHS and wheelchairs.
- **EHCP caseloads** – Councillor Clark commented that he had received a detailed response from CSD on Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) caseloads and expressed concern about staff levels to process new applications given the increase in demand. The Head of Education noted that high demand was a challenge for the department, however ESCC performed highly on its response times to EHCP applications. He also commented that the department was not always able to provide the service it wanted due to high caseloads, and it was currently unclear what the future framework for SEND would be. Once more detail was available, the department would be able to plan the resources needed.
- **Post 16 support** – The Committee asked about work to address the lack of provision for post 16 year olds noted in the report. The Head of Education informed the Committee that there had been a significant shift in provision for post 16 year olds over recent years with a reduction in level 1 and entry level courses at a local level. The department was working with providers to anticipate future need, develop new courses, and share information on the needs of current pupils through annual review processes. Work was also underway with parents and carers to develop commissioned post 16 provision for pupils with more complex needs and disabilities as some of the current options were limited.
- **SEND support in schools** – A question was asked about SEND support for pupils that did not meet the threshold for an EHCP but still required support. The

Head of Education informed the Committee that approximately 20% of children had some form of SEND, however only 5% had an EHCP. Schools had a responsibility to provide a graduated response to meet need before statutory support was offered and it was hoped that government reforms would shift focus from statutory high-end support to a broad inclusive offer. There was concern about the number of children not attending schools in their local communities, which was impacting on their outcomes, and the department was working with schools to provide support and develop a clear expectation that every child is supported in their school, including targeted support for pupils with more complex needs. The national Change Programme was also placing a greater emphasis on mainstream inclusion. In response to a question on the pilot special school satellite class in mainstream schools, the Head of Education noted the first meeting was taking place that day. There was evidence of it working well in other authorities and an update could be provided to the Committee on the progress of this at a later date.

- **School places for SEND pupils** – The Committee asked if children placed in special schools were ever moved back into mainstream education. The Head of Education noted that whilst the department was keen for this to happen where possible, this was rare with parents often not wanting to move their children back into mainstream settings due to a lack of trust that this could provide the right support.

7.4 The Committee thanked officers for the report and requested an update on progress be brought to the Committee at a later date.

7.5 The Committee RESOLVED to note the report and to receive an update on progress of the action plan at a future meeting.

8. EAST SUSSEX HOUSING PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

8.1 The East Sussex Housing Partnership (ESHP) Lead introduced the report which details the work of an East Sussex Housing Partnership multi agency group to develop a medium and long term vision for housing strategies in district and boroughs and set a framework for joint working.

8.2 The strategy identified key priorities including homelessness prevention; housing, health and care integration; housing standards; development and enablement; tackling climate change; and the private rented sector. The strategy was currently out for public engagement and feedback would be used to refine the strategy ahead of its adoption in the autumn. Once adopted, an annual implementation plan would be developed to address specific areas of work.

8.3 The Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health noted the recent Member briefing on the ESHP and encouraged the Committee to watch the recording if they had been unable to attend.

8.3 The Committee welcomed the work to develop the strategy and discussed and asked questions in the following areas:

- **Issues in housing planning** – The Committee discussed issues with planning including delays to building once permission has been granted; a lack of social housing; accountability; restrictions under current legislation and affordability. The ESHP Lead responded that the Partnership was working closely with Developers East Sussex to look at these issues, including challenges with affordable housing delivery on section 106 sites and to explore opportunities for collaboration and funding. Housing authorities were also seeking to address these issues, and this had informed the strategy. Work was also underway with housing partners to input into local plans. The issue of affordability, including

feedback from engagement would continue to be considered in the development of the strategy. In response to a question on collaboration with the National Housing Federation (NHF), the ESHP Lead clarified that the NHF was on its strategic board and had supported key areas of work including the production of a framework of good practice and a recent consultation on supported housing regulation.

- **Funding** – The Committee enquired about funding for the work of the Partnership, noting government funding for housing cooperatives, and enquired if this funding could be used by the Partnership. The ESHP Lead confirmed there was a funding allocation to Homes England to support those types of initiatives and part of the Partnership network was supporting community led housing initiatives; the Partnership would continue to explore opportunities and work would continue with districts and boroughs to support schemes at a local level. In terms of wider funding for the ESHP and why this work was happening now, the ESHP Lead noted a number of ongoing initiatives to support fuel poverty and homelessness prevention etc.; the strategy aimed to look at how these projects contributed to a longer term vision and how housing could work with system partners to develop the sector and address gaps in provision.
- **Supporting people with multiple compound needs** – In response to a question on a strategy to manage demand in relation to people who have been moved into East Sussex from neighbouring authorities, the ESHP Lead noted these cases were part of the Partnership's wider work to support people with multiple compound needs and learning from these would inform the future approach, including strengthening partnerships with neighbouring authorities to address regional challenges.
- **Floating Housing Support** – The Committee asked for an update on funding for floating housing support. The Director of ASCH noted that referral pathways had recently been revised to reflect lower activity levels due to the reduction in funding and clarified that ESCC would continue to fund £0.5m; priority would be given to households with children at risk of homelessness and households with adults at risk of needing care if housing needs are not met. Combined funding from districts and boroughs would also provide £0.5m and this would focus on homelessness prevention. The ESHP Lead commented that the Homelessness Prevention Grant funded the majority of this work, and the continuation of this had been confirmed in the recent Spending Review, however local allocations were yet to be confirmed. Wider collaboration with districts and boroughs was also taking place on prevention services.

8.4 The Committee RESOVED to note the report.

9. HEALTHY AGEING SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRESS REPORT

9.1 The Consultant in Public Health introduced the report which provided an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Healthy Ageing Scrutiny Review. The action plan included progress on the new Healthy Ageing Partnership, work to support older adults to be more active, and work with partners to support the Age Friendly Communities Age without Limits campaign to tackle ageism and develop age friendly communities.

9.2 The Committee welcomed the positive outcomes outlined in the report and asked questions in following areas:

- **Supporting older people in the workplace** – the Committee asked what progress had been made with local employers to support older people in the workplace as well as work with ESCC on adopting Age Friendly employment principles. The Health Improvement Principal commented that work was progressing on these actions and was on track to complete on time. In response to a question on the definition of an 'older worker', the Health Improvement

Principal clarified that the ESCC definition for an older person is anyone over the age of 50.

- **Partnership working** – The Committee welcomed the positive examples of partnership working, including the Active Partnerships to support people with physical activity as they age. There was also a request to hear more about progress of this work in the northern parts of the county.

9.3 Councillor Ungar, Chair of the Review Board, thanked members of the Review Board and officers for their work on the review and commented on the positive outcomes it had produced. Councillors Geary and Webb, members of the Review Board, also commented on their positive experiences working on the review, including engaging with knowledgeable witnesses.

9.4 The Committee agreed to note the report and to receive a further update report in six months' time.

Meeting ended at: 13:44

Councillor Johanna Howell (Chair)

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Report to: People Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 22 September 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Work Programme update

Purpose: To review and discuss the People Scrutiny Committee's future work programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) review and agree the latest work programme as set out at Appendix 1 to ensure it reflects the correct focus of the committee including in relation to its role in the ongoing RPPR process;
 - 2) review upcoming items on East Sussex County Council's Forward Plan as set out at Appendix 2 to identify any issues that may require more detailed scrutiny.
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1 Background

1.1 The work programme is an important tool in ensuring the correct focus and best use of the committee's time in scrutinising topics that are of importance to the residents of East Sussex, and the efficient and effective working of the Council. It also provides clarity for those who may be requested to give evidence to the committee on the issues under review, and the questions the committee requires answers to.

1.2 Discussion of the work programme provides the committee with the opportunity to consider topics that it may be of value to scrutinise, and to decide whether further scoping work is required. This provides a basis for deciding the best way of scrutinising a topic, the timescale, and who from the committee will be involved in carrying out the review work. If there are a number of potential topics for review, Members can determine the priority of the work within the resources available to the committee.

1.3 In setting and reviewing the work programme, Members should also consider the committee's input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process and identify any information needed to provide effective challenge on key issues and areas of work impacting on the Council's future planning.

2 Supporting information

Work Programme

2.1 The committee's latest work programme is attached at Appendix 1, incorporating a number of updates including those outlined below. The committee is asked to consider, discuss and agree the work programme, subject to any further changes required.

Scrutiny Reviews

Home to school transport

2.2 An initial scoping board on Transport for All Age Care was held in May 2025 where Members considered current statutory duties around transport in both adult social care and education; cost pressures; and programmes of work, planned and underway, to address these.

2.3 The Board agreed that it was not currently the right time for a scrutiny review in this area, due to work in progress, but that potential upcoming changes to transport policy in ASCH would be brought to the committee when appropriate. The Board considered there was potential to scrutinise areas in Home to School Transport and agreed that a rapid review in the autumn of some specific cost avoidance measures could add value. A further scoping board to consider these areas in more detail, and to consider if this topic is suitable for a full scrutiny review, is planned for October 2025.

Reference Groups

Local government reorganisation/devolution

2.4 The Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Reference Group, made up of Members of both Place and People Scrutiny Committees held its second meeting on 23 July 2025. The Reference Group considered and commented on updates on both the devolution and LGR processes. The Reference Group met again on 11 September 2025 and considered and provided comments to Cabinet on the East Sussex LGR proposal, as well as the latest developments in relation to devolution and proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Sussex.

Scrutiny engagement in RPPR planning

2.5 This committee's input into the RPPR process is ongoing, both through specific RPPR reports and through more detailed scrutiny of specific issues through the wider work programme.

2.6 At the **July** meeting the committee discussed relevant parts of the 2024/25 year end monitoring report and the State of the County 2025 report, both of which had been considered by Cabinet in June. These reports enabled the committee to review current service and financial performance information, as well as considering new developments which will impact on services, to ensure a full understanding of the current context and future pressures for the areas within the remit of the committee.

2.7 The **September** meeting provides an opportunity for the committee to consider the latest policy and financial context for planning for 2026/27 and beyond, and to identify any further information it requires to support its engagement in the planning process for inclusion in its work programme. Currently, it is expected that further detail of the Government's plans for local government funding will be set out in a policy statement in late October or early November, which will inform a further RPPR planning update to Cabinet. This will be followed by detailed funding allocations set out in the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement which we expect to receive in December.

2.8 Meanwhile, demand for local services has continued to increase. The Quarter 1 2025/26 Council Monitoring report, to be considered by Cabinet on 24 September, is expected to provide some initial indications of how national and local conditions are impacting on ESCC in year.

2.9 The **November** committee meeting will provide an opportunity to review the latest update to Cabinet on planning for 2026/27, including the latest financial position and national policy reforms.

2.10 The committee's **RPPR Board** will then meet on 11 December 2025 to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the budget and emerging updated portfolio plans to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the committee in January 2026.

2.11 The **March 2026** meeting will enable the committee to review the process and its input into the RPPR process and receive feedback on how scrutiny input has been reflected in final plans. Any issues arising can be reflected in the future committee work programme.

2.12 As part of its ongoing input to RPPR, the committee is recommended to identify any further information it requires to support its engagement in the planning process. The committee is also recommended to consider any amendments to its work programme to aid its contribution to the ongoing RPPR process.

Briefings and training

2.13 An annual awayday is planned for 20 October 2025 for the committee to undertake a more in depth review of its current work programme in light of the latest priorities and to discuss any key issues and the committee's approach to scrutiny in further detail.

2.14 Upcoming items on the Member Training Programme relevant to the People Committee are highlighted on the work programme. As part of ongoing development, Members are invited to consider any other topics of interest for training to support their role on the committee.

Forward Plan

2.15 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 September to 31 December 2025 is included at Appendix 2. The committee is requested to review the forthcoming items on the Forward Plan to identify any issues within the remit of this committee that may require more detailed scrutiny. The Forward Plan is revised and published on a monthly basis and committee members should regularly review the Forward Plan.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 An important part of managing the work of the People Scrutiny Committee, including its input into the RPPR process, is regularly reviewing the future work programme. This involves the Committee assessing its priorities, ensuring its ongoing reviews are completed in a timely fashion and identifying new areas for scrutiny.

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Deputy Chief Executive

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People Scrutiny Committee - Work Programme

Current Scrutiny Reviews		
Title of Review	Detail	Proposed Completion Date
Initial Scoping Reviews		
Subject area for initial scoping	Detail	Proposed Dates
Home to School Transport	<p>At its 2024 away day the Committee discussed the challenges in transport for care and home to school transport and agreed that this, in collaboration with Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Health, could be a potential topic for a future scrutiny review.</p> <p>An initial scoping board was held in May 2025 where Members considered current statutory duties around transport in both adult social care and education; cost pressures; and programmes of work, planned and underway, to address these.</p> <p>In relation to ASCH transport, the Board agreed that it was not currently the right time for a scrutiny review into this area, due to work in progress, but that potential upcoming changes to transport policy in ASCH would be brought to the Committee when appropriate.</p> <p>The Board was keen to scrutinise areas in Home to School Transport and agreed that a rapid review in the autumn into some specific cost avoidance measures could add value. A scoping board to look at these areas will take place in October 2025</p> <p>Membership of Scoping Board: Cllrs Belsey, Cross, Howell and John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative)</p>	<p>Further Scoping Board</p> <p>29 October 2025</p>
Suggested Potential Future Scrutiny Review Topics		
Suggested Topic	Detail	
Carers Partnership Strategy	At its 2024 away day the Committee agreed to recommend that a report on the progress of the Carers Partnership Strategy be brought to the Committee and that it may wish to consider this topic for a future scrutiny review.	

Recruitment of foster carers	At its 2024 away day the Committee discussed the vital role of foster carers and agreed that exploring ways to improve the recruitment and application process, including seeking best practice in other local authorities, could be a potential topic for a future scrutiny review.	
Elective Home Education	<p>The Committee heard at their 2021 work planning awayday that issues relating to the increase in the numbers of children being electively home educated (EHE) remain a concern for the Children’s Services Department and expressed an interest in scrutinising the work the Department is doing in response.</p> <p>The Committee received additional updates on the local situation, as well as national updates, at their November 2022 and November 2023 meetings, including information at the November 2023 meeting on a DfE Consultation that has opened on revised home education guidance for Local Authorities to provide more clarity about ‘suitable education’ and support to be provided for home educators. In the absence of legislation for a statutory register, the guidance proposes Local Authorities set up a voluntary registration scheme for parents who home educate.</p> <p>The Committee agreed at the November 2023 meeting to retain this as a potential area for review but will await further information from the DfE consultation.</p>	
Scrutiny Reference Groups		
Reference Group Title	Subject area	Meeting Dates
Children’s Services Reforms	<p>The Committee agreed at its March 2025 meeting to convert the existing Prevention in Children’s Services Reference Group and the Attendance Reference Group into a single Reference Group focused on national reforms relating to Children’s Services, with a particular focus on the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill. The Reference Group will consider the impact of these reforms on ESCC and scrutinise the Department’s response to these. The Committee agreed to look at the recruitment of foster carers as part of this work.</p> <p>The Group met in June 2025 and received a presentation on key reforms in children’s social care and the department’s work in response to these, including the establishment of the Transformation Board. The Group agreed that the next meeting would focus on the expected SEND White Paper.</p> <p>Membership of the Reference Group: Cllrs Belsey, Geary and Howell and John Hayling (Parent Governor Representative)</p>	8 December 2025
CQC Preparation Reference Group	<p>The Committee agreed at its 2023 awayday to establish a Reference Group to support ASCH with the upcoming CQC inspection and LGA Peer Review.</p> <p>The Reference Group last met on 17 June 2024 and received a presentation from the Department on findings from the recent LGA Peer Review and the Department’s response to these findings, including the development of an ASCH Departmental Priority Action Plan. The Group welcomed the positive findings from the LGA report, discussed some of the areas for consideration, and agreed to continue to provide</p>	TBC (depending on CQC report)

	<p>scrutiny support to the Department in its preparations for the upcoming CQC assessment.</p> <p>The next meeting is planned for autumn 2024 and will consider progress on the Departmental Priority Action Plan.</p> <p>Membership of the Reference Group: Councillors Cross, Geary (Chair), Howell and Webb.</p>	
Health and Social Care Integration Programme (HASCIP) Reference Group	<p>The Committee agreed to establish a Reference Group to monitor progress of the East Sussex Health and Social Care Integration Programme and identify areas for future scrutiny. It reviews HASCIP progress reports provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board and meets on an ad hoc basis as required to consider issues arising in more detail.</p> <p>The Group last met on 18 June 2025 to consider progress on the Shared Delivery Plan year 2 refresh and Integrated Community Teams. The Group discussed a number of issues including NHS reforms and changes to funding for Integrated Care Boards, hospital discharge and the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>The next meeting will take place in October 2025 to further consider the impact of NHS reforms.</p> <p>Membership of the group: Councillors Belsey, Clark, Geary (Chair) Howell and Webb.</p>	Next meeting: 2 October 2025
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) Board	RPPR Board meets annually to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the emerging portfolio plans and spending and savings proposals to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the scrutiny committee.	Next meeting: 11 December 2025
Reports for Information		
Subject Area	Detail	Proposed Date
Training and Development		
Title of Training/Briefing	Detail	Proposed Date
People Committee awayday	To review the Committee work programme and discuss any key issues in further detail.	20 October 2025
Relevant upcoming Member Training Programme items (open to all Members)	- Substance Misuse including the Alcohol Strategy	3 October 25

Future Committee Agenda Items		Author
20 November 2025		
East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP) Annual Report	Presentation of the annual report of the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership.	Independent Chair, East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership
Equality and Inclusion in ASCH	To update the Committee on the progress of the Equality and Inclusion Strategy in ASCH.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Review of ASCH savings proposals	At its 2024 away day the Committee agreed to recommend that a report on the impacts of any agreed savings be brought to the Committee in September or November 2025 as part of its Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) item.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Climate Change Health Impact Assessment	A report to the Committee on the draft Climate Change Health Impact Assessment report.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Committee Work Programme	To manage the Committee's programme of work including matters relating to ongoing reviews, initial scoping boards, future scrutiny topics, reference groups, training and development matters and reports for information.	Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)	To continue the Committee's work on the RPPR process for 2025/26 financial year.	Chief Executive
12 March 2026		
East Sussex Education Attainment and Performance	To update the Committee on the education attainment results for the 2023/24 academic year.	Director of Children's Services
SEND update	To update the Committee on progress on the SEND action plan; SEND White Paper and any local implications/programmes of work.	Director of Children's Services
Committee Work Programme	To manage the Committee's programme of work including matters relating to ongoing reviews, initial scoping boards, future scrutiny topics, reference groups, training and development matters and reports for information.	Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser
Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)	To continue the Committee's work on the RPPR process for 2025/26 financial year.	Chief Executive
Healthy Ageing Scrutiny Review	12 month monitoring report on progress with the Review's recommendations.	Director of Adult Social Care and Health

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN

The Leader of the County Council is required to publish a forward plan setting out matters which the Leader believes will be the subject of a key decision by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet member or officer in the period covered by the Plan (the subsequent four months). The Council's Constitution states that a key decision is one that involves

- (a) expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the expenditure of the County Council's budget, namely above £500,000 per annum; or
- (b) is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions.

As a matter of good practice, the Council's Forward Plan includes other items in addition to key decisions that are to be considered by the Cabinet/individual members. This additional information is provided to inform local residents of all matters to be considered, with the exception of issues which are dealt with under the urgency provisions. Only key decisions to be taken by officers are included.

For each decision included on the Plan the following information is provided:

- Page 21
- the name of the individual or body that is to make the decision and the date of the meeting or relevant time period for an officer decision
 - the title of the report and decision to be considered
 - groups that will be consulted prior to the decision being taken
 - a list of documents that will be considered when making the decision
 - the name and telephone number of the contact officer for each item.

The Plan is updated and published every month on the Council's website two weeks before the start of the period to be covered.

Meetings of the Cabinet/individual members are open to the public (with the exception of discussion regarding reports which contain exempt/confidential information). Copies of agenda and reports for meetings are available on the website in advance of meetings. Key decisions taken by officers will not be taken at a meeting – documents listed can be made available on request to the contact officer, with the exception of those which contain exempt/confidential information.

For further details on the time of meetings and general information about the Plan please contact Hannah Matthews at County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE, or telephone 01273 335138 or send an e-mail to Hannah.matthews@eastsussex.gov.uk. For further detailed information regarding specific issues to be considered by the Cabinet, individual Member or officer please contact the named contact officer for the item concerned.

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE

For copies of reports or other documents please contact the officer listed on the Plan or phone 01273 335274.

FORWARD PLAN – EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (including Key Decisions) –1 September 2025 to 31 December 2025

Additional notices in relation to Key Decisions and/or private decisions are available on the [Council's website](#).

Cabinet membership:

Councillor Keith Glazier - Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development
Councillor Nick Bennett – Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change
Councillor Penny di Cara – Lead Member for Economy
Councillor Claire Dowling – Lead Member for Transport and Environment
Councillor Carl Maynard – Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor Bob Bowdler – Lead Member for Children and Families
Councillor Bob Standley – Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability

Date for Decision	Decision Taker	Decision/Key Issue	Decision to be taken wholly or partly in private (P) or Key Decision (KD)	Consultation	List of Documents to be submitted to decision maker	Contact Officer
8 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	The East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) - Request Assessment Process (Transport Schemes) To consider the updates to the 'Request Assessment Process', to ensure alignment with the East Sussex LTP4, adopted by Full Council in October 2024. This will inform how requests for transport schemes are prioritised for inclusion in the annual Integrated Transport Capital Programme from 2026/27 onwards.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Douglas Chapman 07514 724422

8 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	<p>Highway Maintenance Incentive Funding 2025/26</p> <p>A condition of the 2025/26 Highway Maintenance Block Funding is to provide information to the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding the value of the Council's highway assets and evidence that the Council is following certain best practice criteria. The DfT require the information to be signed off by either the Leader of the Council or Lead Member for Transport and Environment. The report recommends approval of the draft report to the Department for Transport containing the information required.</p>	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Andrew Turner 07526 567283
8 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	<p>Petition regarding the 51 bus service</p> <p>To consider the petition on the 51 bus service. The petition is to 'Stop Stagecoach from changing the 51 bus service to Eastbourne to hourly from half-hourly'.</p>	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Craig Lamberton 01273 337525
8 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	<p>Strategic Highways Policies and Plans - Update and Approvals</p> <p>As part of best practice, the Contracts Management Group for the East Sussex Highways contract is conducting a comprehensive review of East Sussex County Council's strategic highways plans and policies to create a consistent, long-term approach to asset management. The Lead Member will consider proposed updates to key documents—including the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy - and consider introducing new</p>			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Rosslyn Mills 01273 336337

		policies on Commuted Sums and Winter Service. These updates align with Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) objectives, address identified policy gaps and reflect current best practice and government expectations linked to future funding.				
15 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development	East Sussex Local Growth Assurance Framework (ESLGAF) Capital Programme report To note the project progress and final spend in 2024/25 across the Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund and Growing Places programmes and agree the scheme spend profiles for the Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund and Growing Places programmes for the first half of the 2025/26 financial year.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Mirco Cordeiro 07731 343705
15 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development	Observer Building, Hastings - reprofiling finances To consider reprofiling and further support proposals for the Observer Building project in respect of the Growing Places Fund loan.	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Alex Colbran 07729 108123
15 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development	East Sussex Lane Rental Scheme - approval of Policy for surplus fund spend The East Sussex Lane Rental Scheme contains a surplus revenue policy which states that the East Sussex Lane Rental Scheme Board will determine the use of any surplus revenue. After bids have been reviewed by the Board, approval is required. As this relates to an executive function, the	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Pippa Mabey 01273 335506

		Leader will consider the addition of a new delegation to the Officer Scheme of Delegations to authorise the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to approve any Scheme Lane Rental surplus bids under £500,000.				
15 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development	Local Government Reorganisation: Proposal for a single tier of local government across East Sussex The Leader is asked to consider and note the full proposal for a single tier of local government in East Sussex, and to seek the views of Full Council ahead of consideration by Cabinet, and prior to the proposal being submitted to Government by 26 September 2025.	KD	If the proposal is agreed by Government it would impact on all Members' divisions.	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Philip Baker 01273 481564
15 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development	Devolution: Consent to the establishment of a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Sussex Government has confirmed the statutory tests for a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Sussex have been met and that it intends to proceed with its establishment. The Leader is asked to consider and note the summary content of the Statutory Instrument that will establish a Mayoral Strategic Authority, and to seek the views of Full Council ahead of consideration by Cabinet.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Philip Baker 01273 481564
24 Sep 2025	Cabinet	East Sussex County Council's approval as a constituent authority of the final draft of Transport for the South East's Transport Strategy	KD	Transport for the South East undertook a public	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Lisa Simmonds 03456 080190

		To approve of the finalised Transport Strategy that has been developed by Transport for the South East ahead of its proposed formal adoption by their Partnership Board in October 2024 and submission to the Department for Transport		consultation on their draft strategy between 10 December 2024 and 7 March 2025.		
24 Sep 2025	Cabinet	Local Government Reorganisation: Proposal for a single tier of local government across East Sussex Seeking Cabinet approval of the full proposal for a single tier of local government in East Sussex following discussion at Full Council, prior to submission to Government by 26 September 2025.	KD	If the proposal is agreed by Government it would impact on all Members' divisions.	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Philip Baker 01273 481564
24 Sep 2025	Cabinet	Council Monitoring Quarter 1 To consider the Council Monitoring report for the first quarter of the financial year 2025/26 as part of the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) budget monitoring process.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Victoria Beard 07894 708914
24 Sep 2025	Cabinet	Ashdown Forest Trust Fund To inform Cabinet of the movements on the Trust Fund during 2024/25 and the closing position as at 31 March 2025.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Andy Fowler 01273 481774
25 Sep 2025	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change	Playing field adjacent to the Tilling Green Community Centre - outcome of the public consultation of the Council's proposal disposal of the land On 22 April 2025, the Lead Member gave	KD	Public consultation was held.	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Rebecca Lewis 07955 312371

		approval to enter into a public consultation regarding the proposal to dispose of the land as per the requirement to do so under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. The consultation was held, and the responses will be considered by the Lead Member. Options for next steps will also be considered.				
25 Sep 2025 Page 27	Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change	Acre Wood Academy (previously Grove Park School)- award of building contract for new school facilities Award of Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) Building Contract in relation to the constructing a new building to provide Special Educational Needs (SEN) Secondary facilities on the existing Acre Wood Academy (previously Grove Park Primary School) site in Crowborough. The Secondary is relocating from its current shared site. The project will enable education provision for 60 pupils aged 2-16 with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) in one location.	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Nigel Brown 07394 410630
September 2025	Director of Communities, Economy and Transport	East Sussex on-street electric vehicle chargepoint contract award Award of contract, following the conclusion of a procurement process, of an operator to install and manage on-street electric vehicle charge points on the road network in East Sussex.	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Ian Glover 01273 336389

September 2025	Director of Adult Social Care and Health	<p>Contract Award - Adult Drug and Treatment Services</p> <p>To decide of the outcome of the commissioning process to award the contract for the Adult Drug and Treatment Services.</p>	<p>P</p> <p>KD</p>	<p>The following have been consulted:</p> <p>A range of professional stakeholders, those who use or have used the existing service in the past, those who do not use the service, those who care for people use or have used the existing service and the wider community.</p>	<p>Report, other documents may also be submitted</p>	<p>Caz Kearton-Evans</p> <p>07879 117579</p>
September 2025	Director of Adult Social Care and Health	<p>BHT Sussex, Provision of Housing-Related Floating Support, use of allowed for contract extension</p> <p>As part of its savings programme and following public consultation, the Council has agreed that the funding for the Floating Support Service should be reduced from 1 October 2025.</p> <p>The current contract held by BHT Sussex runs to November 2026 allowing for an extension of up to five years.</p> <p>It is proposed, as part of the contract amendment to reduce the funding, to extend the contract from November 2026 for a further three years to November 2029 with the option to use the further 2 years as</p>	<p>KD</p>		<p>Report, other documents may also be submitted</p>	<p>Tamsin Peart</p> <p>07881 282732</p>

		+1 and + 1 to allow for flexibility, provide continuity and enable additional funding from Districts and Boroughs to be added to the contract.				
6 Oct 2025	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability	<p>Chailey St Peter's Church of England Primary School</p> <p>To make a final decision on the proposal to establish a specialist facility with a designation of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Chailey St Peter's CE Primary School.</p>		<p>Consultation was undertaken with the school community and other interested parties between 25 April and 23 May 2025.</p> <p>A statutory proposal, to be published in July 2025, provides interested parties with a further opportunity to comment on, or object to, the proposal.</p>	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Gary Langford 01273 481758
14 Oct 2025	Lead Member for Economy	<p>Endorsement of the Get Sussex Working Plan</p> <p>The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has requested that the council develops a 'Get Sussex Working Plan' for the period 2025-2035, outlining priorities and actions for moving East Sussex towards an employment rate of 80%. The plan must be co-produced and endorsed by West Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council, and must also be endorsed by the Integrated Care Board for</p>	KD	Over 100 local stakeholders from across Sussex have informed the plan through surveys, stakeholder consultation exercises and user voice exercises. Skills and Employment	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Holly Aquilina 01323 463538

		Sussex and the South-East Regional Area Team for the DWP, prior to being sent to the Minister for Employment for final approval. It will be taken forward initially by the 3 upper tier authorities and then under the remit of the proposed new Mayoral Combined County Authority.		East Sussex have had the opportunity to review the report and implementation plan.		
20 Oct 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	Petition: Installation of a pedestrian crossing and a 20mph speed limit in Lewes Road, Newhaven To consider a petition to install a pedestrian crossing and a 20mph speed limit between Lawes Avenue and Robinson Road, in Lewes Road, Newhaven.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Clare Akehurst 03456 080193
20 Oct 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	Authorisation to carry out public consultation regarding the proposed introduction of parking charges at Broomhill Sands Car Park, Camber Authorisation is being sought to carry out a public consultation in relation to the proposed introduction of parking charges at Broomhill Sands Car Park, Camber.			Report, other documents may also be submitted	Andrew Le Gresley 03456 080193
20 Oct 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	Installation of Fire Suppression Systems at Waste Transfer Stations To seek Lead Member approval to utilise the Waste Reserve to fund the installation of fire suppression systems at Maresfield and Pebsham waste transfer stations. This is to reduce the likelihood of a fire causing damage and disruption at both facilities, and reduce the consequent impact that the loss	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Justin Foster 01273 335805

		of either facility would have on waste collection and disposal services in East Sussex.				
21 Oct 2025	Cabinet	Devolution: Consent to the establishment of a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Sussex Government has confirmed the statutory tests for a Mayoral Strategic Authority for Sussex have been met and that it intends to proceed with its establishment. Cabinet is asked whether to provide consent to the laying of the Statutory Instrument in Parliament by which the Mayoral Strategic Authority will be established with the Council becoming a Constituent Authority.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Philip Baker 01273 481564
23 Oct 2025	Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health	East Sussex Housing Partnership Strategy To approve a draft strategy which has been developed by East Sussex Housing Partnership. The strategy sets out a vision and priority areas of work for the local housing sector.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Michael Courts
23 Oct 2025	Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Proposal to introduce admin fees for adults who fully fund care and support arranged by East Sussex County Council To consider the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed implementation of admin fees for adults who fully fund their care. This would apply to adults who have been financially assessed as having sufficient capital to be able to pay for their care themselves, under section 17 of the Care Act, and have requested that	KD	A public consultation will be undertaken for this proposal (running from May-July). The 2400 individuals who could be impacted were contacted directly. The	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Ben Baker, Sonny Butler 01273 482830

Page 32		ESCC set up care on their behalf. The proposed fees would offset set-up costs and invoicing charges that the Council incurs when setting up this care		survey is available publicly online and will be promoted through local networks and the council social media channels. Feedback from this consultation will be used to inform the final proposal. This proposal has the potential to impact individuals across all wards, as adults who fully fund their care live countywide.		
Between 7 Oct 2025 and 31 Oct 2025	Chief Operating Officer	<p>Site 6, Eastbourne - Disposal of Long Leasehold Interest</p> <p>On 14 January 2025, the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change declared Site 6, Eastbourne (the property) to be surplus and approved the disposal of it. Authority was delegated to the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms of sale, jointly with Eastbourne Borough Council. The property has been marketed on the open market. The Chief Operating Officer will consider the offers made.</p>	P KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Rebecca Lewis 07955 312371

3 Nov 2025	Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability	Admission arrangements for East Sussex schools 2027-28- permission to consult To seek Lead Member approval to consult on the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the 2027-28 academic year.	KD	Public consultation to be published on website.	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Jo Miles 01273 481911
11 Nov 2025	Cabinet	RPPR Update - 2026/27 next steps and Medium Term Financial Plan To consider an update on the reconciling policy, performance and resources (RPPR) process for 2026/27, the next steps and the medium term financial plan.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Victoria Beard 07894 708914
November 2025 25 33	Director of Communities, Economy and Transport	Award of construction contract for the Exceat Bridge replacement scheme Following the procurement process under the Hampshire Gen5 framework, which allowed 6 suppliers to submit bids for the construction of the new bridge, the Exceat Bridge Replacement Project Board will review the bid evaluations and provide a recommendation to the Director of Communities, Economy, and Transport to make the final contract award decision.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Karl Taylor 01273 482207
8 Dec 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	The East Sussex Rail Strategy 2025 - 2050 To consider responses from the key stakeholder and public consultations on the draft East Sussex Rail Strategy, alongside seeking approval of this as a supporting document to the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Lisa Simmonds 03456 080190

8 Dec 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	The East Sussex Freight Strategy 2025 - 2050 To consider responses from the key stakeholder and public consultations on the draft East Sussex Freight Strategy, alongside seeking approval of this as a supporting document to the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Lisa Simmonds 03456 080190
8 Dec 2025	Lead Member for Transport and Environment	East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy The County Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the county, including the administrative area of Brighton & Hove City Council. The report will be to seek Lead Member approval for the final LNRS, as well as the necessary statutory stages that lead to publication of the final LNRS.	KD	The Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been developed through significant consultation with a large range and number of stakeholders. Ahead of the Lead Member decision, a draft Strategy will have been subject to a 6-8 week period of public consultation.	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Kate Cole 01273 481621
9 Dec 2025	Cabinet	Council Monitoring Quarter 2 To consider the Council Monitoring report for the second quarter of the financial year 2025/26 as part of the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) budget monitoring process.	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	

9 Dec 2025	Cabinet	Annual Report of Looked After Children To consider the annual report of the Looked After Children	KD		Report, other documents may also be submitted	Sally Carnie 01323 747194
16 Dec 2025	Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health	Circle Room Young Persons Sexual Health clinic, Lewes - consultation outcome To consider the feedback from the consultation in relation to the future of the Circle Room Young Persons Sexual Health clinic in Lewes and to make a decision in relation to next steps.	KD	Circle Room's service users (young people aged up to 25 years old)	Report, other documents may also be submitted	Tony Proom 01273 335252

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Report to:	People Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	22 September 2025
By:	Seona Douglas, Independent Chair, East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board
Title:	East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2024–25
Purpose:	To present the annual report detailing how effective the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) has been against the Strategic Priorities, as required by the Care Act 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

People Scrutiny Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Care Act 2014 requires each Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) to:
- **Develop and publish a Strategic Plan** (Appendix 1) setting out how they will meet their objectives and how their member and partner agencies will contribute.
 - **Publish an Annual Report** (Appendix 2) detailing how effective their work has been.
 - **Commission Safeguarding Adults Reviews** (SARs) for any cases which meet the criteria for these.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The 2024–25 Annual Report (Appendix 2) is structured around the SAB priorities as outlined in the East Sussex SAB strategic plan (Appendix 1). Partner agencies have contributed performance and activity updates, and a detailed data appendix within the report evidences the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

2.2 The SAB team has been strengthened with a permanent Board Support Coordinator and Administrator, jointly funded by Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH). Membership of the Board can be found in Appendix 4 of the Annual Report.

2.3 In 2024/25 there were fewer Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) referrals than the previous year. However, recommendations from SARs published in the last two years continue to shape the Board's strategic workstreams, including transitional safeguarding, multiple compound needs, and alcohol-related self-neglect.

Safeguarding Data (2024/25)

2.4 Key data from ASCH for 2024/25 can be found in Appendix 1 of the Annual Report. This includes:

- 15,385 safeguarding concerns were recorded
- 3,082 enquiries were initiated
- 53% of outcomes were fully achieved, and 42% partially achieved
- Neglect and Acts of Omission remained the most common risk type.
- Most risks occurred in the adult's own home.

- Financial abuse, neglect, and self-neglect increased, while domestic abuse decreased

*Note regarding statistics: the way data was recorded underwent a change regarding 'episodes' which makes it difficult to compare with previous years

Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs)

2.5 SAR referral activity during 2024/25 remained low, with only one SAR concluding within the reporting period (01/04/2024 – 31/03/2025). This represents a significant decrease compared to the five SARs published in 2023/2. The single concluded SAR in 2024/25 was SAR Jack, which involved one adult who suffered serious harm and subsequently died.

2.6 A total of 8 recommendations and associated actions from SAR Jack were incorporated into the SAR Action Plan in 2024/25. These were developed in partnership with SAB agencies to support system learning and drive improvement.

2.7 In addition to the concluded SAR, other SARs remained ongoing during 2024/25 and are expected to conclude in the 2025/26 reporting year. This reflects the nature of SARs, which are often complex and may span multiple years from commissioning to completion.

Strategic Themes and Progress 2024–25

2.8 **Theme 1: Accountability and Leadership**

- A pan-Sussex self-assessment was undertaken in early 2024, with agencies rating their safeguarding activity against Making Safeguarding Personal, leadership, and governance criteria. Results inform areas for targeted development.
- Sussex Police, NHS Sussex, and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) continued to chair and contribute to SAB subgroups. Data dashboards and referral data from Multi-Agency Risk Management Meetings now feed into performance reporting.

2.9 **Theme 2: Safeguarding Policies and Procedures**

- The SAB launched a new Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures website to promote consistency, access, and joint learning.
- Updated guidance was published on Trauma-Informed Safeguarding and Complex Needs. Learning briefings were issued for all published SARs.

2.10 **Theme 3: Performance, Quality and Organisational Learning**

- A new SAB Data Dashboard was launched, improving the use of partner data to inform decision-making.
- The Board developed a shared audit tool to review safeguarding casework across borders with Brighton & Hove and undertook a focused audit on housing moves, identifying barriers and areas for improvement.

2.11 **Theme 4: Prevention, Engagement and Making Safeguarding Personal**

- Over 6,400 home safety visits were conducted by ESFRS, identifying at-risk adults and referring for safeguarding where appropriate.
- Healthwatch East Sussex engaged over 3,500 people and produced 35 reports on care quality and user voice. Their work supports improved person-centred safeguarding.
- An Easy Read safeguarding leaflet was co-produced with adults with learning disabilities to improve public understanding of safeguarding and how to get help.

2.12 Theme 5: Integration, Training and Workforce Development

- SAB training covered key issues such as coercion, self-neglect, and modern slavery. Workshops on dependent drinking were held in response to SAR recommendations.
- NHS Sussex led safeguarding training on neurodiversity and trauma, improving frontline confidence and competence.

Progress on 2024–25 SAB Strategic Priorities

2.13 Self-Neglect

- Guidance for a multi-agency framework to support adults who self-neglect was completed in late 2024 by the Sussex Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Review Group. This guidance focuses on preventing harm by empowering individuals to understand risks and fostering a shared understanding across agencies, to ensure effective response.
- The Sussex Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Review Group also launched the Sussex Self-Neglect Practice Guidance which outlines a collaborative five step process: identification; lead agency assignment; information sharing; multi-agency meetings; and risk assessments.
- A podcast series, “Conversations in Self-Neglect,”, developed in partnership with Changing Futures and Care for the Carers East Sussex, was launched featuring practitioners sharing examples of positive safeguarding practice. The series is aimed at informal carers, family members and practitioners and offers practical and easy to understand definitions and examples of how self-neglect is identified and the steps to take to protect an adult at risk of self-neglect. This is supporting awareness and skill development in frontline services.
- Best practice guidance on safeguarding adults experiencing homelessness has been published and shared with agencies across the county.
- Carers’ consultation work was completed in partnership with the voluntary sector, helping inform the Board’s approach to safeguarding awareness for unpaid carers.
- The multi-agency audit on self-neglect has been scoped and is now scheduled for delivery in 2025/26, with tools and criteria agreed by the Performance, Quality and Audit subgroup. This audit focuses on self-neglect referrals, following recommendations from the SAR Gwen and Ian published in January 2024, and aligns with the Board’s commitment to improving safeguarding practices, embedding revised pan-Sussex Self-Neglect Procedures and addressing systemic gaps to improve the identification and prevention of self-neglect where possible.
- *Responding to Hoarding Behaviour Framework* was updated in 2025. This is a multi-agency guide to reduce risks of abuse/neglect linked to hoarding, prioritising autonomy, safety and collaborative solutions.

2.14 Prevention and Early Intervention

- SAB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Learning Event to review a complex situation involving an individual with serious health needs and a history of domestic abuse. Changes developed following this event include follow-up protocols for missed appointments, improved record keeping and more accessible training, peer support and supervisor support.
- Self-Neglect animation awareness piece has been developed by Bexhill College sixth form media department and is currently being reviewed by the Training and Workforce Development subgroup.

- A dedicated Task and Finish Group was established under the Training Workforce Development Subgroup to revitalize the SAB's multi-agency safeguarding training offer. The focus of this review has been on innovation, inclusivity and evidence-based improvement with a comprehensive review of key training topics including Self-Neglect; Modern Slavery Awareness; Coercion and Control, Domestic Abuse – covering the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), and Safety Planning; An Introduction to the Mental Capacity Act; and Safeguarding Introduction and Refresher sessions.

2.15 **Safeguarding and Homelessness**

- Multi-Agency Audit focused on adults facing risks linked to housing instability, mental health, and safeguarding concerns during moves across local authority boundaries. This has led to the development of Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Guidance for Adults Moving out of Area.
- Strengthening Safeguarding for Adults Rough Sleeping through a permanent housing representative attending the SAR subgroup, ensuring housing expertise informs safeguarding decisions and systemic improvements
- Direct Notification Protocol enabling immediate notification to the subgroup in the event of a rough sleeper's death. This triggers an assessment to determine whether a SAR referral should be made.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 The SAB has delivered strongly against its new Strategic Plan and Year 1 objectives. New partnerships, tools, and training are embedding across the system. Themes such as self-neglect, trauma-informed care, and safeguarding transitions remain at the forefront of strategic learning and service improvement.

3.2 The SAB will continue to progress work on any new SARs in 2025/26, seek assurances of evidence-based implementation of recommendations and actions and showcasing improved practice and impact, and enhance the data dashboard to support qualitative and quantitative analysis of strategic themes, ensuring insights directly inform actions that drive improved practices.

3.4 The Board remains committed to working across health, social care, housing, and community partners to prevent abuse and improve outcomes for adults with care and support needs.

Seona Douglas, Independent Chair, East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board

Contact Officer: Mary Payne, Tel 07712 237933

Email: mary.payne@eastsussex.gov.uk

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - SAB Strategic Plan 2024-27

Appendix 2 – SAB Annual Report 2024-25

Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027



What we want to achieve for 2024-2027

This Strategic Plan sets out the strategic themes and objectives that the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) want to achieve for the next three years.

Our vision is for all agencies across East Sussex to work together and effectively build resilience and empower communities in responding to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to widely promote the message that safeguarding is everybody's business in that:

- Abuse is not tolerated.
- People know what to do if abuse happens.
- People and organisations are proactive in working together to respond effectively to abuse.

A SAB Partnership Event was held on the 4th of March 2024 to identify and agree priority areas for the next three years, these are outlined on page 7. Over recent years the board has focused its work on embedding the Mental Capacity Act in practice, safeguarding transitions for young people at risk and working with multiple compound needs the board will continue to work on these areas and sustain this thematic work.



How will the effectiveness of this strategic plan be measured?

Annual Report - The board has a statutory duty to produce an annual report at the end of each year which details the work of the board and its effectiveness.

Bi-Annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment – We ask partners to complete a self-assessment to evidence the effectiveness of their local safeguarding procedures and practice and provide assurance to the SAB.

Development Event - The board holds a bi-annual development event following the self-assessment activity which is another way the board can measure its effectiveness and make improvements for the following year.

Partnership

The SAB has formal links with a number of other strategic partnerships in East Sussex, including the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership, Safer Communities Partnership, Children and Young People's Trust and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Board also works closely with the neighbouring Brighton & Hove and West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Boards and many of our policies, protocols and procedures are adopted on a pan-Sussex basis.

The work of the SAB is underpinned by the Care Act 2014 and has the overarching purpose of ensuring that agencies work in partnership to deliver joined up services that safeguard adults with care and support needs from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

We do this by:

- Gaining assurance that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act and its statutory guidance.
- Gaining assurance that the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) are central to safeguarding, and practice is person-centred, and outcome focused.
- Working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect, where possible.
- Ensuring partner agencies are effective when abuse and neglect has occurred and give timely and proportionate responses.
- Striving for continuous improvement in safeguarding practice and that this enhances the quality of life of adults in East Sussex.

A full list of the partners of the East Sussex SAB is listed at Appendix 1.

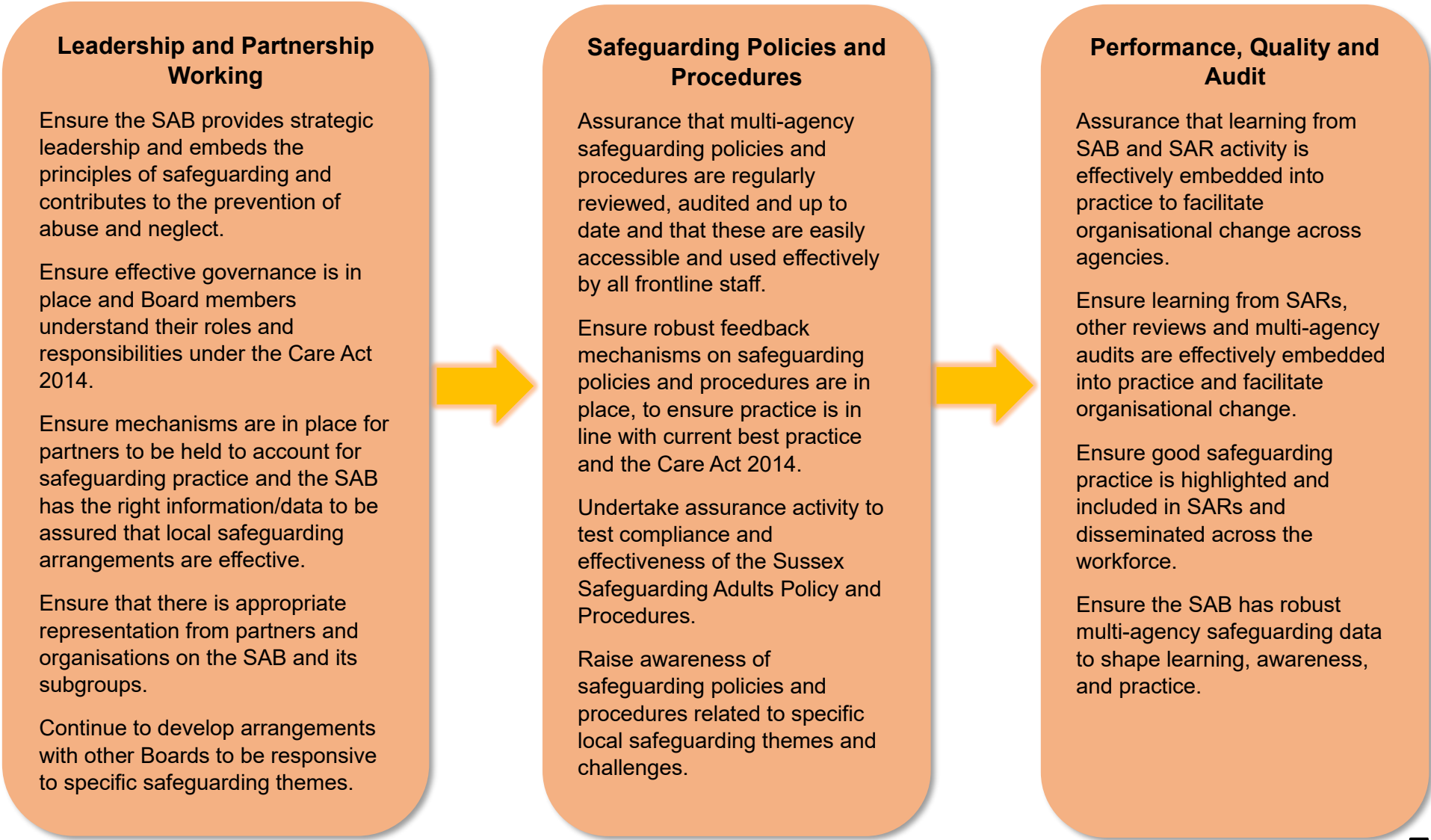


Safeguarding Adults Board Arrangements in East Sussex



Strategic Themes 2024 – 2027

Page 45



Strategic Themes 2024 – 2027

Page 46

Prevention and Engagement

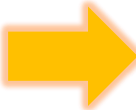
Ensure adults with lived experience, carers, professionals and the local community shape the work of the SAB and safeguarding practice is person-centred.

Develop processes to enable meaningful feedback to the SAB from adults and carers who have experienced safeguarding interventions.

Build the resilience of those who may be at risk of abuse and neglect.

Continue to develop approaches to safeguarding which recognise the value of prevention and early intervention especially in relation to exploitation and multiple compound needs.

Produce information for the community which is easily accessible and raises awareness of adult safeguarding and increases confidence in raising concerns.



Organisational Learning and Workforce Development

Ensure the workforce is equipped to support adults appropriately where abuse and neglect are suspected.

Ensure SAB multi-agency training remains current and promotes equality and diversity.

Develop training resources which are easily accessible and engaging, and which take into account time constraints of busy frontline staff.

Personalise SAR learning and ensure the adult is at the centre of the learning taking place.

Ensure learning from SARs considers the recommendations and implications for practice as well as the impact for individual organisations.

Collaborate with partners and other Boards to share joint learning.

Safeguarding Adults Board Priorities 2024 -2027

Page 47

Self-Neglect

Improve and develop effective multi-agency working and practice with adults who self-neglect.

Develop a shared understanding, and early recognition of the issues involved in working with adults who self-neglect with a focus on substance misuse, mental capacity, exploitation, and multiple compound needs.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Ensure informal carers who take on adult caring responsibilities have an understanding and awareness of adult safeguarding and what support they can access for the person they are caring for as well as for themselves.

Promote and raise awareness of the important role informal carers have in preventing neglect, abuse, or harm and ensuring informal carers know how to raise and report safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding and Homelessness

Promote positive practice with professionals working at the interface of homelessness and adult safeguarding.

Ensure professionals use trauma informed approaches and consider local multi-agency risk management pathways and legal frameworks to identify what action is needed to reduce or remove potential risk.

Multi-Agency Working

A key area of learning identified in many SARs commissioned in Sussex is the need for more effective partnership working in order to protect the adult .

Multi-agency working will be promoted and embedded within these priority areas of work over the next three years.

Multi-agency working will be promoted and embedded within these priority areas of work over the next three years.

Safeguarding Adults Board Objectives for the next three years

Year 1

Conduct a **multi-agency self-neglect audit** to identify key areas for learning and ensure local procedures are effective.

Review existing self-neglect pathways and local guidance to ensure processes are understood and used effectively.

In partnership with the community and voluntary sector **consult with local carers on their knowledge and understanding of adult safeguarding.**

Develop a podcast series ‘Conversations in Self-Neglect’ on positive practice shared by practitioners.

In collaboration with SAB partners develop Best Practice Guidance and Resources to **improve staff skills and knowledge in safeguarding adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.**

Year 2

Develop a **local campaign to raise awareness of safeguarding and local reporting pathways to informal carers.** Launch during National Carers Week

Embed trauma informed approaches in all safeguarding guidance documents.

In partnership with Brighton and Hove and West Sussex SABs **develop a Sussex Self-Neglect event to raise awareness of positive practice and early prevention.**

In collaboration with SAB partners promote and raise awareness through **a series of learning events, best practice in Safeguarding and Homelessness.**

Year 3

In partnership with care for the carers **develop local prevention guidance for informal carers with practical information on recognising early signs of abuse and neglect.**

Develop an East Sussex Self-Neglect – Early Interventions Toolkit for practitioners who support adults who self-neglect. Launch of the Toolkit through multi-agency Learning Events.

Conduct a **second multi-agency self-neglect audit** to identify what has changed since the audit undertaken in year 1.

Appendix 1

Board Membership

- East Sussex Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH)
- NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- NHS Sussex Safeguarding GP
- Sussex Police
- Care for the Carers
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Change, Grow, Live (CGL)
- District and Borough Councils
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS)
- East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT)
- East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP)
- Healthwatch
- HMP Lewes
- East Sussex Partners in Care (ESPIC)
- Lay members
- Probation Service (PS)
- South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb)
- Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT)
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT)
- Trading Standards (East Sussex County Council)
- Voluntary and community sector representation

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Annual Report 2024 - 2025



Contents

Foreword by the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board Chair	3
Our role and purpose	4
Partnership Working.....	5
Our Strategic Priorities 2024-2027	6
Partner Agency Contributions to the SAB Strategic Plan	7
Key Achievements 2024 – 25.....	9
Next 12 months	17
Glossary	18
Appendix 1 SAB Budget	21
Appendix 2 Partnership information and data	22
Appendix 3 Self-Neglect Assessment and Management	48
Appendix 4 SAB Membership.....	49
Appendix 5 SAB Structure	50

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If you would prefer this report in an alternative format or language, please

contact us: ESSAB.Contact@eastsussex.gov.uk

Photographs courtesy of Aging Better Resource Space



Foreword by the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board Chair

It is my privilege to present the Annual Report for East Sussex Adults Safeguarding Board (SAB) for 2024/25. This year marks the launch of our refreshed Strategic Plan 2024-2027, focusing on collaboration, prevention, and trauma-informed practice.

This Annual Report highlights the work that the Board has been engaged with over the year 2024-2025. I am grateful to all partners for their ongoing support. This year has seen many changes in personnel, and I want to welcome all the new partner representative's and thank them for being extensively engaged in its work.

All partners of the Board have continued to deliver services and provide care and support to people, and respond to safeguarding within the continually changing environment, which is evidenced in the Annual Report, alongside the data and additional information provided, through the Partners submissions.

Self-Neglect has been a significant issue this year and addressing the issues this raises for people and communities. Linked with prevention and homelessness it can feature through these themes, and you will note the activities to address knowledge and understanding not only for front line practitioners, but for people who live in our communities and their carers.

We have published one Safeguarding Adult Review this year; however, work has continued learning from Reviews published in previous years to enhance and improve practice through learning opportunities, using various media with the support of local organisations, in particular students from Bexhill College.

Our 2024–27 priorities remain anchored in collaboration, prevention, and amplifying the voices of adults at risk. We will expand trauma-informed training, strengthen data-sharing infrastructure, and deepen partnerships with housing and health sectors to address emerging risks.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Chairs of the subgroups and Board Office for supporting managing the business of the SAB. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the staff and managers across all the statutory, voluntary and community partners who are committed to working together to keep people safe in East Sussex.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Seona Douglas".

Seona Douglas - Independent Safeguarding Board Chair

Our role and purpose

The East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) is a multi-agency statutory partnership which provides leadership and strategic oversight of adult safeguarding work across East Sussex.

The work of the SAB is underpinned by the Care Act 2014, which sets out we must do:

Develop and publish a Strategic Plan setting out how we will meet our objectives and how our partner agencies will contribute to these objectives.

Publish an annual report detailing how effective our work has been over the past 12 months.

Arrange for Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) to be undertaken when the criteria under section 44 of the Care Act are considered to have been met.

The East Sussex SAB is led by our Independent Chair, and supported by a SAB Development Manager, a Board Support Coordinator and a part-time Administrator. The Board (**see Appendix 4**) meets at least four times a year and is supported by a range of subgroups which are crucial in ensuring that the priorities set out in the Strategic Plan are delivered – these include: the Safeguarding Adult Review subgroup, Operational Practice subgroup, Performance, Quality and Audit subgroup, Training and Workforce Development subgroup, Safeguarding Community Network and the Sussex Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Review Group (**see Appendix 5**). These subgroups ensure that the work of the Board really makes a difference to local safeguarding practice, and to the outcomes that adults, and their carers, wish to achieve.

Our Vision

Our vision is for all agencies to work together and effectively build resilience and empower communities in responding to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and to widely promote the message that safeguarding is everybody's business in that:

- Abuse is not tolerated.
- People know what to do if abuse happens.
- People and organisations are proactive in working together to respond effectively to abuse.

Our Purpose

Our overarching purpose is to ensure strategically that agencies work in partnership to deliver joined-up support that safeguards adults, with care and support needs, from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We do this by:

- Gaining assurance that local safeguarding arrangements are in place as defined by the Care Act 2014, and its statutory guidance.
- Working collaboratively to prevent abuse and neglect, where possible.
- Ensuring partner agencies are effective when abuse and neglect has occurred and give timely and proportionate responses.
- Gaining assurance that the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) are central to safeguarding, and practice is person-centred, and outcome focused.
- Striving for continuous improvement in safeguarding practice and supporting partner agencies to embed learning from local and national SARs, other learning reviews, and multi-agency audits.

Partnership Working

The SAB has formal links with other strategic partnerships in East Sussex, including the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP), Safer Communities Partnership (SCP), Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT) and the Health and Wellbeing Board. In addition, the Board currently maintains links with Sussex-wide and national networks and forums including:

- The National Network for Chairs of SABs.
- The National SAB Managers Network.
- The South-East Regional SAB Network.
- The Sussex Domestic Abuse Partnership Board
- The **Changing Futures Programme Sussex**

Collaboration with the Multiple Compound Needs (MCN) Board enables a coordinated multi-sector approach to the transformation and improvement of services for individuals experiencing Multiple Disadvantage. The Board works closely with the neighbouring Brighton & Hove and West Sussex SABs, and our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are adopted on a Sussex wide basis, as well as many protocols and guidance documents.



Our Strategic Priorities 2024-2027

Self-Neglect

Improve and develop effective multi-agency working and practice with adults who self-neglect.

Develop a shared understanding, and early recognition of the issues involved in working with adults who self-neglect with a focus on substance misuse, mental capacity, exploitation, and multiple compound needs.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Ensure informal carers who take on adult caring responsibilities have an understanding and awareness of adult safeguarding and what support they can access for the person they are caring for as well as for themselves.

Promote and raise awareness of the important role informal carers have in preventing neglect, abuse, or harm and ensuring informal carers know how to raise and report safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding and Homelessness

Promote positive practice with professionals working at the interface of homelessness and adult safeguarding.

Ensure professionals use trauma informed approaches and consider local multi-agency risk management pathways and legal frameworks to identify what action is needed to reduce or remove potential risk.



Multi-Agency Working

A key area of learning identified in many Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) commissioned in Sussex is the need for more effective partnership working to protect the adult.

Multi-agency working will be promoted and embedded within these priority areas of work.

work

Multi-agency working will be promoted and embedded within these priority areas of

The Strategic Plan has two main purposes:

To specify the actions required by the SAB and its member agencies to implement the strategy

To inform the local community and all interested parties about the work undertaken annually

The strategic plan can be viewed here:

[ESSAB Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)

Partner Agency Contributions to the SAB Strategic Plan

The agencies listed below each play a vital role in delivering the priorities set out in the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Strategic Plan. Their ongoing work supports key areas such as prevention, multi-agency collaboration, safeguarding practice, and improving outcomes for adults at risk. In addition to their operational contributions, several partners also lead SAB subgroups.

A key responsibility of the statutory partners (Local Authority, Police and ICB) is the funding of the Safeguarding Adults Boards duties, and activities to meet its legal duties. Non statutory partners in East Sussex, Fire and Rescue service and the Hospital contribute to the work of the SAB and therefore showing a real commitment to safeguarding and its importance strategically and operationally. For a breakdown of the funding, please see **Appendix 1**.

A brief overview of each agency's contribution is outlined below. For more detailed information on specific activity and impact, please see **Appendix 2** for agencies detailed safeguarding reports.

Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) ASCH plays a central role in delivering the SAB's strategic priorities, particularly around Making Safeguarding Personal, multi-agency working, and self-neglect. Their data-led approach supports the board's focus on performance, quality, and audit, while their work on mental capacity, advocacy, and outcome tracking reflects a strong commitment to person-centred safeguarding. ASCH also chairs the Operational Practice Subgroup (OPS).

Sussex Police: Sussex Police's safeguarding work contributes to SAB goals around prevention, risk management, and trauma-informed practice. Their work related to fraud prevention initiatives like Operation Signature, and cross-agency risk assessments and links with ASCH, highlight their active role in protecting vulnerable adults. Their efforts also support the SAB's priorities on multi-agency coordination and responding to exploitation. Sussex Police chairs the Performance and Quality Audit (PQA) Subgroup.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) SPFT's safeguarding service aligns closely with SAB themes of organisational learning, workforce development, and mental health-informed safeguarding. Their use of the Sussex Thresholds Guidance, SAR engagement (e.g., SAR Jack), internal learning initiatives strengthen multi-agency working. Their collaborative work with ASCH on information-sharing is a strong example of effective partnership.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS): Through home safety visits, hoarding-related referrals, and safeguarding alerts, ESFRS contributes directly to the SAB's goals on prevention and early intervention. Their close ties with vulnerable adults at home position them well to identify risk. ESFRS also chairs the Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Subgroup, helping embed learning from reviews into practice.

Probation Service: While no update was provided in this cycle, the Probation Service remains a core partner, supporting SAB goals around risk management, multi-agency safeguarding, and supporting individuals with complex needs in contact with the criminal justice system.

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) ESHT contributes to SAB strategic aims through its work on domestic abuse, trauma-informed care, and complex case management. Their Mental Capacity Act (MCA) improvements, Think Family model, and involvement in transitional safeguarding (e.g., long-stay patients) address multiple SAB priorities. Their daily safeguarding huddles support real-time, person-centred responses.

NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB) As a lead SAB partner, NHS Sussex ICB supports all core strategic objectives. They chair the Multi-Agency Risk Management Meetings, (MARM), and the Training and Workforce Development (TWD) subgroup, lead SAR-related actions, and deliver innovative training (e.g., on neurodiversity and trauma). Their role in developing tools such as the Self-Neglect Management Flow Chart supports Year 1 SAB priorities on self-neglect, multi-agency learning, and carer support.

Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT) SCFT aligns with SAB priorities through its safeguarding strategy, focus on Mental Capacity Act (MCA) implementation, and strong training compliance. Their safeguarding advice line and concern-raising to ASCH demonstrate a commitment to person-centred, responsive practice, and they contribute to system-wide improvement through partnership with the ICB and quality escalation pathways.

Southeast Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb) SECamb supports the SAB's strategic priorities through its significant safeguarding activity across both NHS 111 and 999 services. In 2024/25, the service managed a substantial volume of adult referrals, contributing to early identification and timely escalation of risk. Their collaborative work with social care and police, robust audit processes, and commitment to continuous

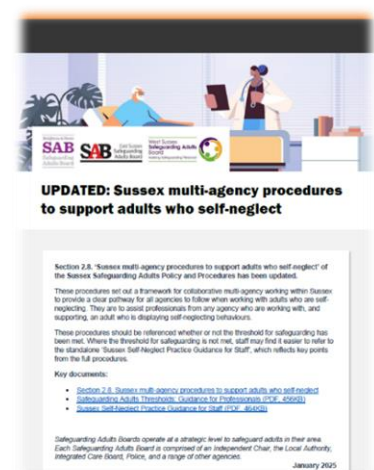
improvement align strongly with SAB goals on prevention, multi-agency working, and embedding safeguarding into frontline practice.

Healthwatch East Sussex Healthwatch supports SAB priorities by capturing lived experience and promoting person-centred safeguarding. In 2024/25, they published 35 reports and engaged with thousands of residents, highlighting feedback from people who use services, and helping to improve care. As chair of the Safeguarding Community Network (SCN), they play a key role in promoting engagement and accountability.

Key Achievements 2024 – 25

Strategic Priority 1: Self Neglect

Following the West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board **Thematic SAR** (self-neglect) a review of **The Sussex Multi-agency Procedures to Support Adults who Self-neglect** was completed in late 2024 by the Sussex Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Review Group. These provided guidance for a multi-agency framework to support adults who self-neglect, with the focus upon preventing harm by empowering individuals to understand risks, and fostering a shared understanding across agencies, to ensure effective responses. They outline flexible leadership (local authority or other agencies, depending on safeguarding needs) and guide professionals in convening multi-agency meetings. The purpose is to support practitioners working with self-neglecting adults and uphold a duty of care, whether interventions fall under formal safeguarding enquiries or proactive support.



Also launched in late 2024 by the Sussex Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Review Group was the **Sussex Self-Neglect Practice Guidance**. This supports a structured, person-centred framework for professionals to address self-neglect, whether cases meet formal safeguarding thresholds (under the Care Act's Section 42) or not. It outlines a collaborative five-step process—identification, lead agency assignment, information-sharing, multi-agency meetings, and risk assessments—emphasising proactive engagement and trauma-informed approaches to build trust. Key considerations include rigorous mental capacity assessments (accounting for fluctuating or executive capacity), balancing autonomy with duty of care, and



prioritising professional curiosity to uncover hidden risks to ensure people and others are safe within their living environment.

This work is rooted in lessons from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs), and includes early collaboration, and adherence to ethical-legal principles to safeguard vulnerable adults while respecting their rights. The guidance advocates for gradual, practical interventions tailored to individual needs while mandating multi-agency coordination. For extreme cases, where action may be required, it highlights legal pathways such as High Court interventions or Court of Protection referrals.

Conversations in Self-Neglect



Conversations in self-neglect - the role of carers. Produced by the ESSAB & CFTC East Sussex.

The East Sussex SAB has ensured learning from the second national SAR analysis, published in July 2023. 652 reviews completed between April 2019 and March 2023 were analysed. Both the first and second national SAR analysis it showed the most common type of abuse/neglect overall within SARs was 'self-neglect'.

The national picture of an increase in self-neglect is also mirrored locally with self-neglect which has been a significant and consistent theme of a SAR published this year by the SAB:

➤ [SAR Gwen & Ian](#)

All our published SARs can be found online, here: [Published safeguarding adult reviews \(SARs\) | East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

In response to the continuing identification of self-neglect, during 2024/2025 the East Sussex SAB launched three-podcasts in a series entitled: '**Conversations in Self-Neglect,**' developed in partnership with Changing Futures Sussex and Care for the Carers East Sussex. These podcasts are aimed at both informal carers/ family members and practitioners. They offer practical and easy to understand definitions and examples of how self-neglect is identified, and the steps to take to protect an adult at risk of self-neglect.



1. [Mental capacity](#) developed in partnership with East Sussex Changing Futures.
2. [Am I a carer?](#) developed in partnership with East Sussex Care for the Carers.
3. [The role of carers in identifying self-neglect](#) developed in partnership with East Sussex Care for the Carers.

NHS Safeguarding Fortnight 2024

The Sussex NHS Integrated Care Board delivered a fortnight of [multi-agency learning events](#) in November 2024, the theme of the fortnight was ‘hidden harm’. Pan Sussex SAB managers and the named GP for safeguarding delivered a ‘Guidance on working with people who self-neglect’ session.

Feedback from attendees confirmed that they were taking forward the related learning to embed into practice and discussing the issues more with colleagues and people they are in contact with. The feedback however also highlighted a continuing need for ongoing support, case-based learning, and possibly supervised practice or peer reflection, especially in complex areas like self-neglect.

Enhancing Support for Carers and Self-Neglect Management in Primary Care

In response to the learning from SAR Gwen and Ian, East Sussex SAB and NHS Sussex ICB have worked collaboratively to strengthen primary care responses to self-neglect, carer support, and safeguarding best practice. A key output was the co-development of a Self-Neglect Management Flow Chart—a practical, trauma-informed tool approved by the NHS ICB Head of Safeguarding. Now integrated into Mental Capacity Act (MCA) refresher training, it supports practitioners in identifying and responding to self-neglect and has been positively received by frontline staff. This will also hopefully act as an early indicator as part of preventing situations deteriorate, so that people can be supported as early as possible.

Additionally, a renewed partnership with Care for the Carers has enhanced visibility and access to support for informal carers. All NHS organisations in Sussex now host dedicated carer support webpages, while GP practices provide clear carer registration pathways, visible noticeboard materials, and easy-read resources—helping to ensure that carers can access tailored advice and are recognised within safeguarding processes. Outcomes of this work has been:

- Carers are now proactively identified and supported through streamlined registration processes, with their status logged in patient records to trigger timely interventions.
- Primary care teams are better equipped to address self-neglect risks with earlier intervention and collaborative safeguarding

Please see **Appendix 3** for the Self Assessment and Management of Self Neglect flow chart.

Multi-Agency Audit in relation to people suffering from Self-Neglect

The ESSAB Performance and Quality Audit (PQA) subgroup has coordinated a multi-agency audit focused on self-neglect referrals, following recommendations from the Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) Gwen and Ian (published January 2024). This audit aligns with the Board's commitment to improving safeguarding practices, embedding revised pan-Sussex Self-Neglect Procedures (released late 2024), and addressing systemic gaps identified in SAR findings to improve the identification and prevention of self-neglect where possible.

The SAR highlighted critical learning points, including:

Missed opportunities to escalate self-neglect concerns and initiate multi-agency risk management meetings.

Inconsistent application of Self-Neglect Procedures across agencies, particularly in triggering assessments and safeguarding actions.

Gaps in identifying carers' needs and proactive risk management.

The multi-agency audit group considered a sample of six people. As a result of the findings, action is being taken to include improving referral quality, ensuring consistent MCA assessments, enhancing multi-agency collaboration, strengthening carer support, and embedding person-centred planning.

Targeted training, regarding MCA application (particularly around executive functioning), and refresh guidance to promote information-sharing and the need to explain information clearly or in the appropriate language will be necessary. Good practice will drive real-world learning, and ongoing improvement.

Responding to Hoarding Behaviour Framework

Hoarding behaviour was recognised in the Care Act 2014 as one of the manifestations of self-neglect. It is an increasingly prevalent issue and is a complex condition which can involve risk to life, is subject to more than one area of legislation, and involves the health and wellbeing of the person at risk, as well as any others that may be in the household or surrounding properties. It is key therefore that a collaborative, multi-agency approach is taken in identifying and responding to hoarding behaviour.

Building on the success of the Hoarding framework published in 2023 by East Sussex & Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Adults Boards, the guidance was updated in 2025. The Hoarding framework is a multi-agency guide to reduce risks of abuse/neglect linked to hoarding, prioritising autonomy, safety, and collaborative solutions such as:



Enhanced Trauma-Informed Focus: Strengthened guidance on selecting a trauma-informed Lead Professional to build trust and ensure consistent support in high-risk cases.



Fire Safety: Expanded partnership with Fire & Rescue, emphasising early home safety visits and tailored escape plans for mobility-impaired individuals.



Child Safeguarding Clarity: Explicit links to Sussex Child Protection Procedures, stressing “think family” principles when children are exposed to hoarding environments.



Legislative Alignment: Updated references to the Data Protection Act 2018 and streamlined links to the pan-Sussex Safeguarding Adults Threshold Guidance.



Resource Expansion: Added tools for assessing digital/data hoarding risks and revised clutter rating guidance to improve risk stratification.

Core Principles and multi-agency coordination

A person-centred, trauma-informed approach should guide practice—using respectful language (e.g. “losing control of your home” vs. “hoarding”) and recognising emotional attachments. Interventions should be sequenced, starting with mental health support and addressing root causes like trauma or isolation. All actions must align with Care Act 2014, MCA, and Environmental Health duties.

Effective response requires clear roles across housing, health, fire, and voluntary sectors, with Hoarding Panels/MARM processes supporting complex cases. The framework—adopted both locally and nationally—will be reviewed again in 2028.

Link to website: [Responding to Hoarding Behaviour Framework](#)

Strategic Priority 2: Prevention and Early Intervention

SAB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Learning Event



In early 2025, the East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board held a closed learning event to review a complex situation involving an individual with serious health needs and a history of domestic abuse. Professionals from health, social care, and police came together to reflect on what went wrong, and how to improve joint safeguarding work.

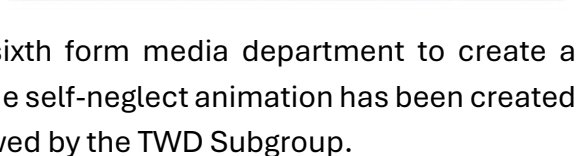
Outcomes & Next Steps

The event showed how reflective practice can lead to real opportunities for improvements. Changes already in place include:

- Follow-up protocols for missed appointments
- Improved record keeping
- More accessible training, peer support and supervisor support

A key area for the Training and Workforce

Through the TWD during 2024/2025 we collaborated with the local Bexhill College sixth form media department to create a bespoke self-neglect awareness animation. The self-neglect animation has been created by Bexhill College and is currently being reviewed by the TWD Subgroup.



The Training and Workforce Development (TWD) subgroup continues to play a key role in strengthening safeguarding practice across the partnership by ensuring learning insights is actively embedded into training and frontline delivery.

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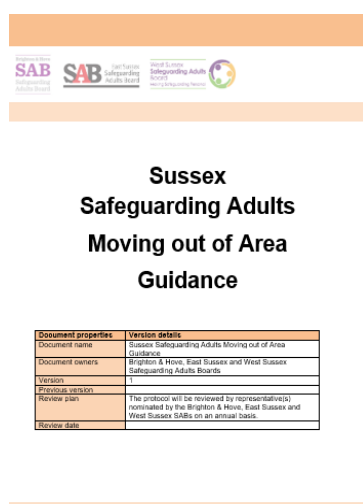
To support this, a dedicated Task and Finish Group was established under the TWD Subgroup to revitalise the SAB's multi-agency safeguarding training offer. The focus has been on innovation, inclusivity, and evidence-based improvement, with a comprehensive review of key training topics including self-neglect, modern slavery awareness, coercion and control, domestic abuse – covering the Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honor Based (DASH) Risk Identification Checklist and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference - MARAC, and safety planning (which is under separate review), an introduction to the Mental Capacity Act (MCA), and general safeguarding introduction and refresher sessions.

- **Content Updates:** All revised courses now align with the *Talking About Adult Social Care* guidance and reflect learning, ensuring that materials are both up to date and practically relevant.
- **Lived Experience Integration:** The group is actively exploring how to include survivor and carer voices in future training sessions, to bring learning to life and enhance real-world understanding.

- **Modern Slavery Training:** This workshop has undergone a targeted review, aligning with both emerging best practice and recent legislative changes. Delivery is now supported by specialist police officers whose core role is tackling modern slavery, providing valuable front-line expertise and real-case insight to learners.
- **Mental Capacity Act (MCA):** The TWD subgroup is currently exploring how to strengthen MCA content across the training offer e.g. bite-sized learning sessions, particularly focused on executive function and safeguarding.
- **Domestic Abuse (DA):** A review of the Domestic Abuse training offer is ongoing, particularly identification in older people.

Strategic Priority 3: Safeguarding and Homelessness

Multi Agency Audit and Development of Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Guidance



In response to key learning from SAR Charlie published in May 2023, gaps were identified in supporting adults with complex needs during transitions between local authority areas. East Sussex SAB and Brighton & Hove SAB carried out a joint audit. The audit focused on adults facing risks linked to housing instability, mental health, and safeguarding concerns during moves across local authority boundaries. Findings from the audit highlighted the need for more timely mental capacity assessments, better information-sharing, and trauma-informed risk management. Agencies also acknowledged challenges in meeting urgent housing needs while fulfilling safeguarding responsibilities.

To address these issues, the Pan-Sussex Safeguarding Adults Boards co-developed the *Sussex Safeguarding Adults Moving Out of Area Guidance*. This was launched in Spring 2025. This new guidance supports professionals by:

- Clarifying local authority roles during transitions, in line with the Care Act 2014
- Embedding Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM) approaches for high-risk cases
- Promoting trauma-informed engagement using tools like the Compassionate Curiosity Toolkit
- Improving communication and escalation pathways across agencies

This work reflects a strong, shared commitment to turning the lessons learnt into real-world improvements—ensuring that adults remain safeguarded, supported, and central to decisions during periods of transition.

Strengthening Safeguarding for Adults Rough Sleeping

The ESSAB Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) subgroup has proactively strengthened its safeguarding processes for individuals experiencing rough sleeping, in direct response to national recommendations. Recognising the critical intersection of rough sleeping, self-neglect, and compounded health and social care needs, the subgroup has implemented the following measures:

Permanent Housing Representative A dedicated housing representative has been formally welcomed to the SAR subgroup, ensuring housing expertise informs safeguarding decisions and systemic improvements.

Direct Notification Protocol A robust link has been established with the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), enabling immediate notification to the subgroup in the event of a rough sleeper's death. This triggers an assessment to determine whether a SAR referral is warranted under Section 44 of the Care Act 2014 and more generally learning to prevent further deaths where possible.

By bringing in housing expertise and improving how agencies communicate, the subgroup is tackling the complex risks rough sleepers face—such as mental ill-health, addiction, and self-neglect—which can make them more vulnerable to abuse and harm.

Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)

The SAR Subgroup acts with delegated responsibility from the East Sussex SAB. Its' main purpose is to monitor the delivery of its statutory duties with regards to SARs and other reviews of cases where there are lessons to be learnt.

SABs have a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to undertake Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs). This is when:

An adult dies because of abuse or neglect (including death by suicide), whether known or suspected, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult.

Or

An adult is still alive but has experienced serious abuse or neglect, and there is concern that partner agencies could have worked more effectively to protect the adult

Published Safeguarding Adult Reviews 2024/25

SAR Jack was published on the SAB website in 2024/25 and can be viewed here: [Published safeguarding adult reviews \(SARs\) | East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

Jack was 27 years old when he took his own life in July 2022.

Jack experienced a lot of trauma, in his life, including the loss of loved ones.

He was vulnerable to abuse and often struggled with challenging behaviour.

He didn't have a stable home and spent a lot of time on the streets.

Due to these challenges, Jack had to deal with many different organisations

and services. These started before he was born and continued until his

death. He was often in and out of prisons, homeless shelters and hospitals.

The review showed that people who worked with Jack understood his

problems with alcohol, homelessness, and getting into trouble with the law.

They recognised that his past experiences had a big impact on him and made him vulnerable.

Because of this, the review focussed on what is working well and what could be strengthened.

Current status of recommendations:

The East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and its partners have made significant strides in strengthening safeguarding practices through the implementation of the 8 Recommendation in Jack's Review.

The recommendations have been actioned during 2024/25 where possible, with several still in progress due to their ongoing nature. The recommendations from Jack's review and those from previous years, are being addressed through the priorities and subgroups as detailed above in this Annual Report.

Next 12 months

There is a renewed emphasis on enhancing the governance and structure of the Board to optimise functionality. This strategic shift aims to facilitate improvements, establish a clearer monitoring framework, drive change effectively, and yield more favourable outcomes.

The East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) has enhanced alignment with Strategic Priorities set forth until 2027.

The following will be directed towards the following key areas:

- Reviewing of Terms of Reference for each of the SAR subgroups.
- Enhancing governance practices concerning Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs) and evidence-based implementation of recommendations and actions and showcasing improved practice and impact.
- Emphasis will be placed on offering more precise recommendations with a focus on multi-agency collaboration.
- In the area of Homelessness and Substance Misuse, enhancing practitioners' comprehension and application of the Self-Neglect Toolkit with particular attention to Mental Capacity and the Hoarding Framework.
- Enhance the data dashboard to support qualitative and quantitative analysis of strategic themes, ensuring insights directly inform actions that drive improved practices.

Glossary

Abuse: A violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Can include physical, emotional, sexual, or financial abuse, as well as neglect, self-neglect, and discriminatory abuse.

Adult at Risk: An adult who has care and support needs (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

Care Act 2014: Legislation that outlines the responsibilities of local authorities and other agencies in safeguarding adults with care and support needs. It introduced the statutory requirement for Safeguarding Adults Boards.

Carer: A person who provides unpaid care and support to an adult who needs help due to illness, disability, a mental health condition, or an addiction.

Changing Futures The **Changing Futures programme** is a £77 million joint initiative by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest community funder in the UK.

DASH/DARA Forms: Risk assessment tools used primarily in domestic abuse cases to identify risk levels and guide intervention.

Executive Functioning: Mental skills that include working memory, flexible thinking, and self-control. Impairments can affect an individual's capacity to make decisions.

Hoarding: A pattern of behavior characterised by excessive acquisition and inability or unwillingness to discard possessions, resulting in clutter that disrupts living spaces and can cause health and safety risks.

Independent Chair: An individual appointed to lead the SAB independently from partner agencies, ensuring impartiality in governance and decision-making.

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP): A person-centred approach to safeguarding that focuses on achieving the outcomes that matter to the individual.

Mental Capacity Act (MCA): Law that provides a framework to empower and protect people who may lack capacity to make some decisions for themselves.

Multi-Agency Risk Management (MARM): A coordinated approach involving different organisations working together to manage high-risk safeguarding concerns.

Multiple Compound Needs (MCN): Multiple disadvantage or multiple complex/compound needs (MCN) is defined by the national Changing Futures programme as people who experience three or more of: homelessness, current or historical offending, substance misuse, domestic abuse, and mental ill health

Operation Signature: A Sussex Police initiative aimed at identifying and safeguarding vulnerable victims of fraud.

Pan-Sussex Procedures: Safeguarding policies and procedures that are agreed and adopted jointly by the three Sussex Safeguarding Adults Boards (East Sussex, West Sussex, and Brighton & Hove).

Professional Curiosity: An approach that encourages practitioners to explore concerns in more depth and not take information at face value.

Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB): A multi-agency partnership responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements work effectively to protect adults with care and support needs.

Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR): A statutory review conducted when an adult dies or experiences serious harm due to abuse or neglect, and there is concern about how agencies worked together.

Self-Neglect: A person's failure to attend to their basic needs, such as personal hygiene, health, or surroundings, which can result in a risk to their well-being.

Strategic Plan: A document published by the SAB that outlines its objectives, priorities, and how partners will work together to improve safeguarding outcomes.

Subgroups: Specialist working groups under the SAB that focus on areas such as Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Operational Practice, Quality and Audit, and Workforce Development.

Sussex Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Review Group: A multi-agency group that reviews and updates safeguarding policies and procedures across Sussex.

Threshold Guidance: Criteria used by practitioners to assess the level of risk or need and determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

Transition is the term used within the [2014 Care Act](#) (and also the Children and Families Act 2014) to describe the range of processes that local authorities should use to support a child with care needs or young carer (and their informal networks of support) to move successfully from childhood into adulthood. The 3 groups of people that transition applies to are: Young people with Care and Support needs who are approaching adulthood; Adult carers of young people with Care and Support needs who are approaching adulthood; and Young carers who are themselves approaching adulthood

Trauma-Informed Practice: Trauma-informed practice is an approach to health and care interventions which is grounded in the understanding that trauma exposure can impact an individual's neurological, biological, psychological and social development. A working definition of trauma-informed practice is detailed on the [Gov.uk website](#).

Workforce Development Subgroup (TWD): A subgroup of the SAB responsible for training and ensuring that learning from reviews and audits is embedded into professional practice.

Appendix 1 SAB Budget

Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH), NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB), Sussex Police, East Sussex Healthcare Trust (ESHT) and East Sussex Fire and Rescue (ESFRS) contribute annually to the SAB budget. SAB Partners support with the running of the Board, for example by offering to chair meetings and co-delivering training. The budget contributions are reviewed annually to ensure that the SAB is delivering its statutory duties.

Income 2024 – 2025

Partner Contributions	£135,985
Carryover from 23/24	£5,512
Total	£141,497

Expenditure 2024 – 2025

SAB Staffing	£112,944
Independent Chair	£16,859
Safeguarding Adult Reviews	£3,150
Website (SAB & Procedures) and training costs	£1,030
Total	£134,626
Carry Forward 2025/26	£7,192

Appendix 2 Partnership information and data

Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH)



The Care Act 2014 sets out statutory duties and responsibilities for safeguarding adults including the requirement to undertake enquiries under section 42 of the Act. Below is a summary of key safeguarding activity during 2023/24 for both concerns raised, and enquiries undertaken by Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) in East Sussex Council.

The number of safeguarding concerns received in 2024/25 is 15,385

i For 2024/25 ASCH have enhanced their way of recording referrals coming into Health and Social Care Connect - the ‘front door’ with a new way of recording contacts to enable a smoother transition from a safeguarding concern to a safeguarding enquiry.

Comparisons with previous years are challenging, as the HSCC safeguarding pilot has significantly increased the number of safeguarding concerns recorded as reportable contacts rather than as free-text case notes, which are not easily quantifiable. The number of enquiries (S42 and Other) that commenced in 2024/25 was 3,082

Table of concerns received/ how many concerns did not progress/enquiries started

Year	Total Concerns	Concerns not progressed to enquiry	Enquiries started (S42 and Other
2024/25	15,385	12,256	3,082

Note: Counting the concerns that raise an enquiry. Concerns (contacts) linked to an existing enquiry are not being counted. The concerns not progressed plus enquiries started will not equal the total concerns, as some enquiries started within the year from a concern received before the year, and some concerns progress to enquiries which started after the year end (but the difference is very small).

Type and location of risk reported nationally in 2023/24 in completed section 42 enquiries.

The most common type of risk in Section 42 enquiries which concluded in the year was Neglect and Acts of Omission, which accounted for 36% of risks (32% nationally in 2023/24) and the most common location of the risk was the person’s own home at 40% (compared to 46% nationally in 2023/24)

The risk figures that the NHS uses in their national report are figures from the Safeguarding Adults Return (SAC) return. The ASCH figures have therefore compared the number on their 24/25 SAC return to the 23/24 national figure.

The location of risk figures that NHS use in their national report are figures from the SAC return. ASCH have therefore taken the 24/25 SAC return SG2b figure and compared to the national figure for 23/24.

The link to the 23/24 NHS SAC return report is: [Safeguarding Adults, England, 2023-24 - NHS England Digital](#)

Outcomes for completed Enquiries (S42 and Other)

Year	Fully achieved	Partially achieved	Not achieved
2024/25	53%	42%	5%

- The total outcomes fully or partially achieved for enquiries (S42 and Other) has remained the same as in 23/24 at 95%

Note: These figures are the same as the 23/24 figures.

Making Safeguarding Personal – outcomes for completed S42 enquiries

- Of the 2378 Section 42 enquiries completed, 80% (1906) were asked and outcomes were expressed.
- 53% of outcomes were fully achieved, 42% were partially achieved, 4% were not achieved (all cases had outcomes achieved recorded)

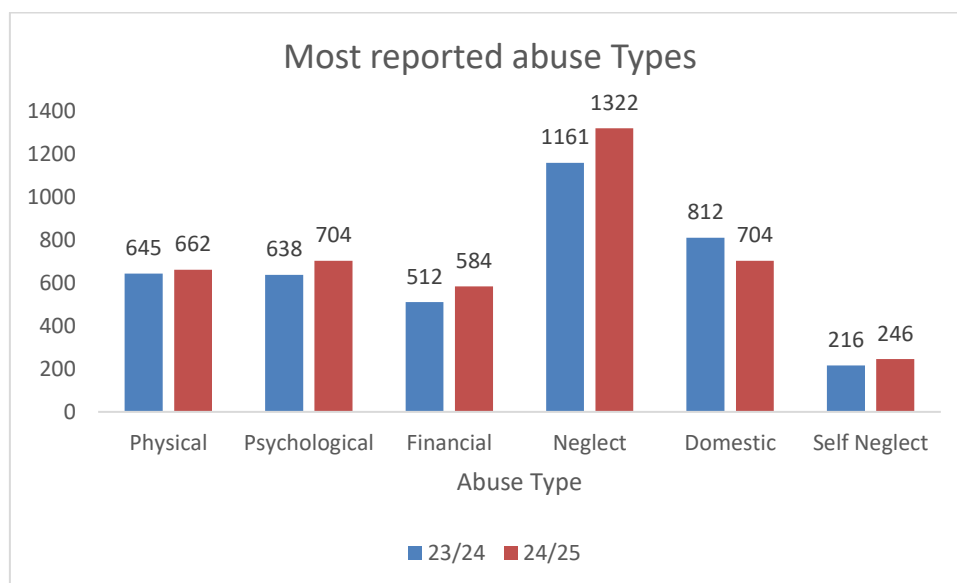
Mental capacity for completed Safeguarding Enquiries (S42 and Other)

Year	Has capacity	Lacks capacity	Not Known
2024/25	68%	30%	2%

Of Adults who lacked capacity, 98% were supported by an advocate in both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Most reported abuse types for completed enquiries (S42 and Other)

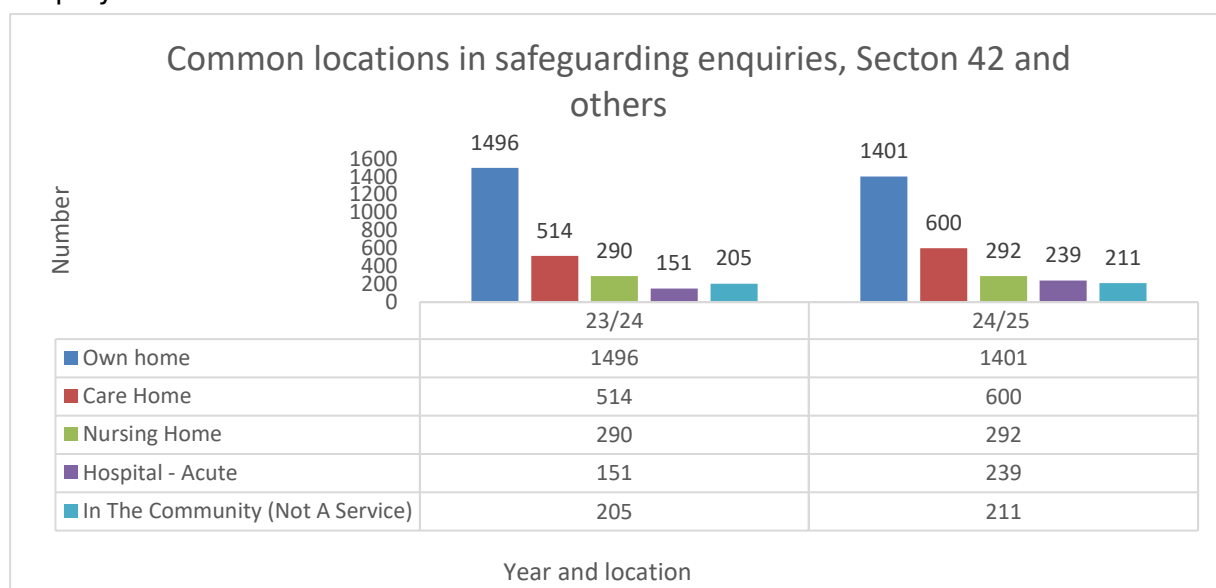
Below are graphs for completed enquiries. These are in the same order as last year. There can be more than one abuse type per enquiry.



- The most reported abuse types in 2024/25 remain the same as in 2023/24.
- Physical, Psychological, Financial, Neglect and Self Neglect all increased this year. Domestic abuse decreased this year
- The most significant changes in these abuse types are financial abuse, neglect, and self-neglect which have all increased by 14% this year. Domestic abuse has decreased by 13% this year.

Most common locations of abuse in completed safeguarding enquiries (S42 and Other)

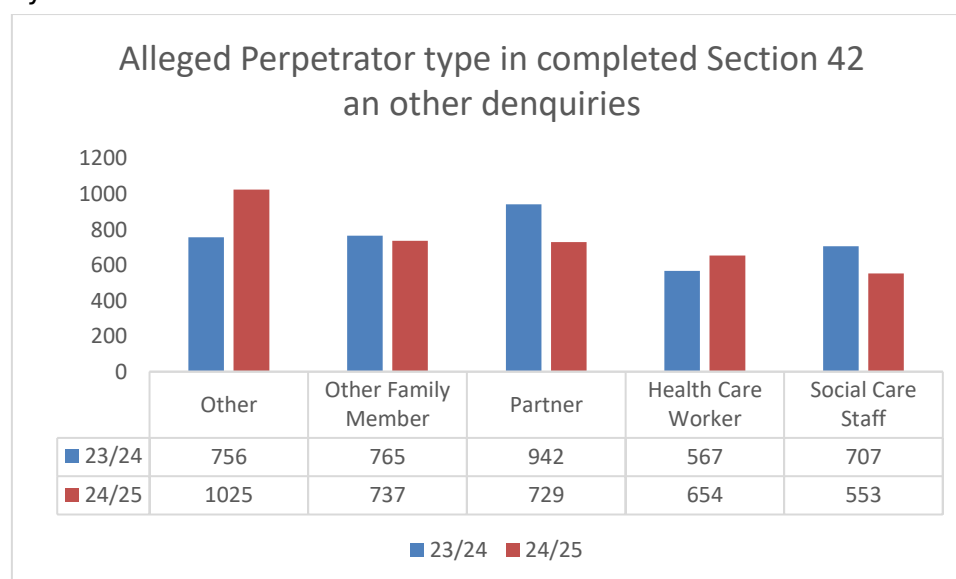
This data shows enquiries, not episodes. There can be more than one location per enquiry.



- The most common reported location of abuse in completed safeguarding enquiries is in the adult at risk's own home (1401). This has decreased by 6% in 24/25 compared to 23/24 (1496).
- The second most common location continues to be Care Homes. This has increased by 17%, from 514 in 23/24 to 600 in 24/25.

Alleged Perpetrator/PTCOR type in completed safeguarding enquiries (S42 and Other)

Below are graphs for completed enquiries and not for completed episodes. There can be more than one alleged perpetrator or person with Pretrial Conditions of Release (PTCOR) per enquiry.



Most common age and gender of victims in completed safeguarding enquiries (S42 and Other)

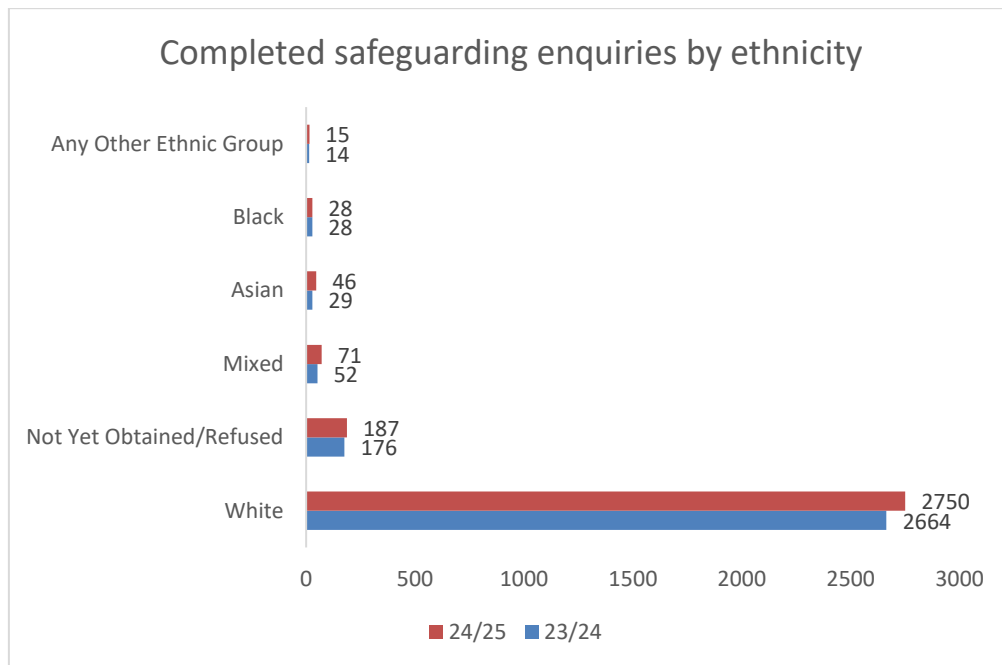
This data below shows enquiries, not episodes by counting once per enquiry (where an individual has multiple enquiries, they are counted once per enquiry)

All age/gender group combinations for ASCH are shown for 23/24 and 24/25, in decreasing order.

Age Group	Gender	23/24	24/25
18-64	Female	932	857
18-64	Male	385	474
85-94	Female	402	392
75-84	Female	395	384
75-84	Male	213	272
85-94	Male	202	219
65-74	Female	177	208
65-74	Male	142	177
95+	Female	90	79
95+	Male	24	28
18-64	Other	0	6
18-64	Unknown	1	1

Completed Safeguarding Enquiries by ethnicity

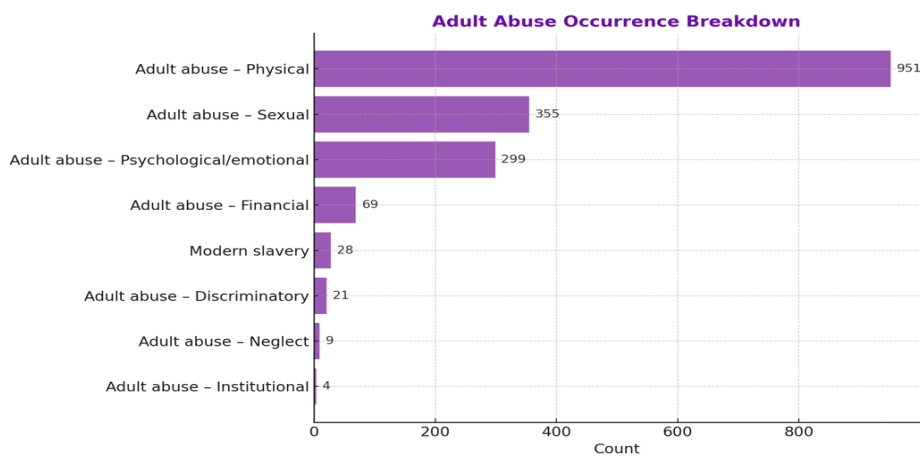
Below are graphs for completed enquiries and not for completed episodes. Counting once per enquiry (where an individual has multiple enquiries, they are counted once per enquiry)



- Adults of white origin continue to be the largest group, accounting for 89% of completed enquiries in 24/25, a slight decrease from 90% in 23/24
- The second largest group (excluding Not Yet Obtained/Refused) is once again Mixed, which has increased from 52 in 2023/24 to 71 in 2024/25.

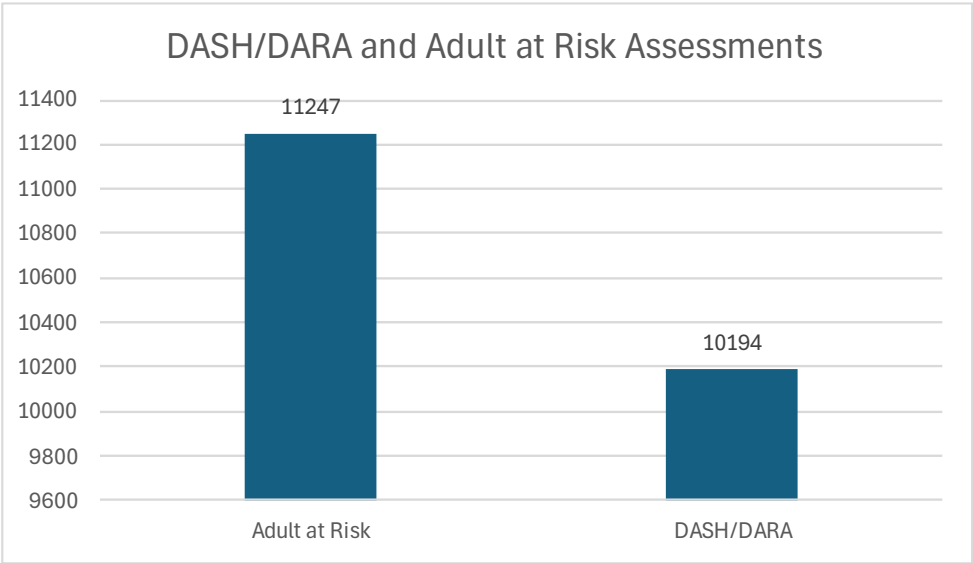


The graph below shows the number of Crimes per Category of Abuse Risk reported between 1st January 2024 to 1st January 2025).



Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and “Honour-based” violence (DASH) Risk forms (DASH) are for use by specialist domestic abuse and other nonpolice agencies for identification of risks when domestic abuse, ‘honour-based’ violence and/or stalking are disclosed.

The Vulnerable Adult at Risk (VAAR) section of the Single Combined Assessment of Risk Form (SCARF) is completed by the police for every safeguarding concern. Submissions for both the VAAR and DASH (now Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment - DARA) have decreased over the past 12 months. In 2023/24 VAARs totalled 12893 and DASH/DARAs 10362 (**see graph 2024/25 below**).





Operation Signature is the police service campaign to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud. The campaign aims to combat fraud and scams with a particular focus on protecting the more vulnerable and elderly.

- In 2024/25 Operation Signature supported 1004 vulnerable victims of fraud in East Sussex. 496 of these victims were offered additional support from fraud caseworkers working for Victim Support.
- The 3 most common fraud types reported in that period were Courier Fraud, Doorstep crime/Rogue traders and Dating and Romance.
- 52% of the victims were aged over 75 years old.
- The 3 most common ways victims were contacted by fraudsters was by Phone, In person and via social media.
- During the 24/25 financial year, vulnerable residents of East Sussex lost a combined £14.66 million.

How Sussex Police tackle fraud

Sussex Police prevented £1.7 Million in fraud losses through banking protocol

This year, Sussex Police have successfully prevented £1.7 million from falling into the hands of criminals through the Banking Protocol initiative.

As part of this effort, Sussex Police implemented a reverse mechanism that allows them to proactively notify banks about vulnerable customers. Over the past 12 months, officers have submitted 195 Bank Notification Forms, enabling financial institutions to take safeguarding measures to protect victims' accounts. In many cases, this process has also led to banks refunding stolen funds to vulnerable victims of fraud. In addition, Sussex Police fraud prevention volunteers have provided tailored advice to 6,856 victims of fraud who are not classified as vulnerable. This allows police resources to be focused on directly supporting those most at risk.

Following the success of a pilot scheme in East Surrey, they are now expanding the Volunteer Fraud Prevention Programme to Sussex. The programme involves trained volunteers delivering in-person presentations and talks to raise awareness about common frauds and how to avoid them. Nine volunteers have already been recruited across Sussex, with the first now active in Hastings and working alongside the local Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT).

Community partners, charities, and local organisations can request fraud awareness talks by contacting the Sussex and Surrey Fraud Prevention Engagement Team at:

SussexandSurreyFraudPreventionEngagements@surrey.police.uk

The *Op Signature* team also produces a monthly newsletter that highlights emerging fraud trends and offers safeguarding advice. This publication currently reaches over 40,000 residents across Sussex and Surrey. You can sign up to receive it via the Sussex Alerts homepage: **[Sussex Alerts Home Page - Sussex Alerts](#)**

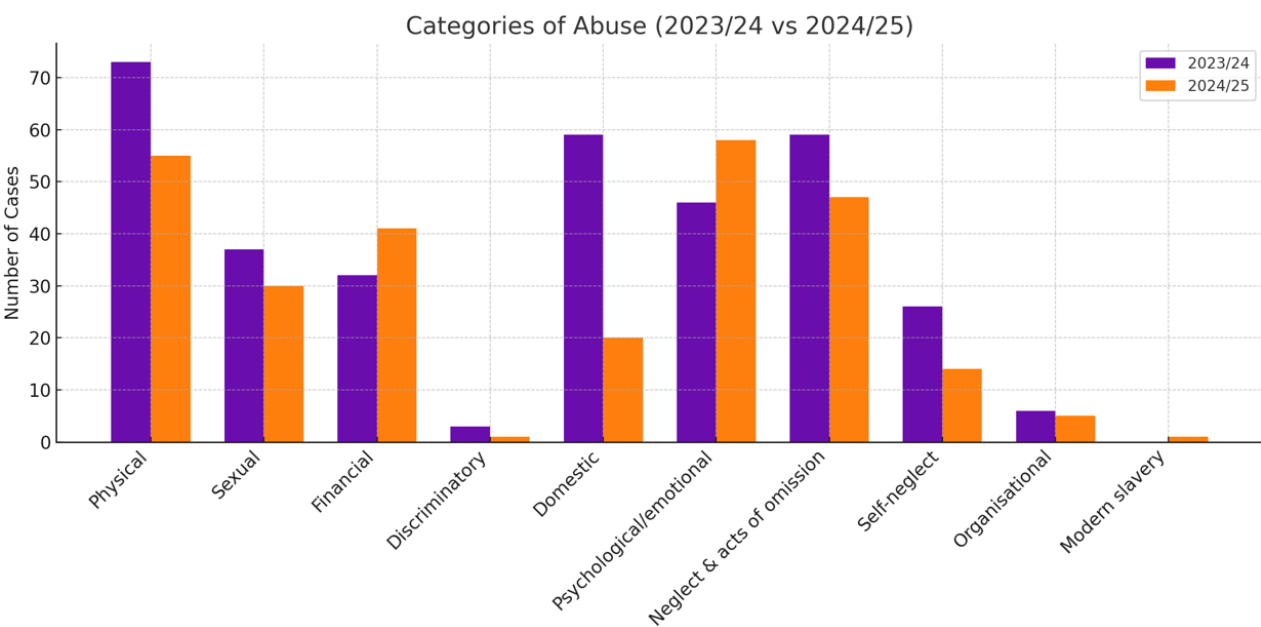
Safeguarding work within SPFT is led by its Safeguarding Service. The service provides safeguarding training and safeguarding consultations to its staff. It contributes to the Trust's programme of quality reviews of its services and participates in the multi-agency work of the Sussex Safeguarding Adults Boards and Safer Community Partnerships. The Service leads on the Trust's Prevent work and contributes to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) duties. It monitors and analyses safeguarding activity across the Trust.

Safeguarding Incidents - SPFT records safeguarding incidents within its incident recording system. This provides a central database for the storage and analysis of the Trust's safeguarding data. Table 1 shows the number of safeguarding adult incidents that were raised by SPFT teams working in East Sussex in 2024/25; numbers from the previous year are provided for comparison. The overall number of safeguarding incidents recorded reduced by 69. The Trust is promoting use of the *Sussex Safeguarding Adults Thresholds: Guidance for Professionals*. Use of this document helps staff to understand statutory safeguarding criteria and leads to fewer inappropriate safeguarding concerns being raised.

Table 1 - Adult Safeguarding Concern Incident Numbers 2023/24

Categories of Abuse	2023/24	2024/25
Physical	73	55
Sexual	37	30
Financial	32	41
Discriminatory	3	1
Domestic	59	20
Psychological/emotional	46	58
Neglect & acts of omission	59	47
Self-neglect	26	14
Organisational	6	5
Modern slavery	0	1
Total	341	272

Graph 1 – As per table, year comparison



Section 42 Enquiries - SPFT safeguarding enquiry information recorded thirty-four Section 42 enquiries within East Sussex where the Trust was named as the cause of risk. Most of the enquiries were linked to inpatient mental health settings where patients at risk of harm to themselves or others are accommodated together. A Section 42 enquiry and an SPFT internal quality review at the Department of Psychiatry in Eastbourne led to a programme of bespoke safeguarding training during 2024/25 to aid staff learning at this unit.

The total number of Section 42 enquiries was down from forty-seven in the previous year. Part of this reduction is attributed to the cessation of safeguarding enquiries being triggered automatically for every incident of a delay in hospital admission following a Mental Health Act assessment.

Safeguarding Adult Review (Jack) - SPFT contributed to SAR Jack that was published in September 2024. SPFT has shared learning from the review across its services. It has promoted use of the Sussex Multi-agency Procedures to Support Adults who Self-Neglect which were revised in line with a recommendation from the Safeguarding Adult review.

Information Sharing - The SPFT Safeguarding Service worked with East Sussex County Council to obtain read only access to the ESCC Adult Social Care client database. This improves safeguarding information sharing between the two organisations and is in line with best practice. SPFT now has this arrangement with each of the Sussex local authorities.

Prevent - The Trust reviewed and updated its Prevent Policy to reflect changes to terminology and definitions arising from the national review of Prevent in 2023. The Trust also began a project to analyse 130 cases referred by SPFT to the Prevent

Channel Panel process. The work will conclude in 2025. Its results will be shared to inform services of the characteristics of people being referred to Prevent who are linked to mental health services. It is hoped that the report will lead to publication of an academic paper.

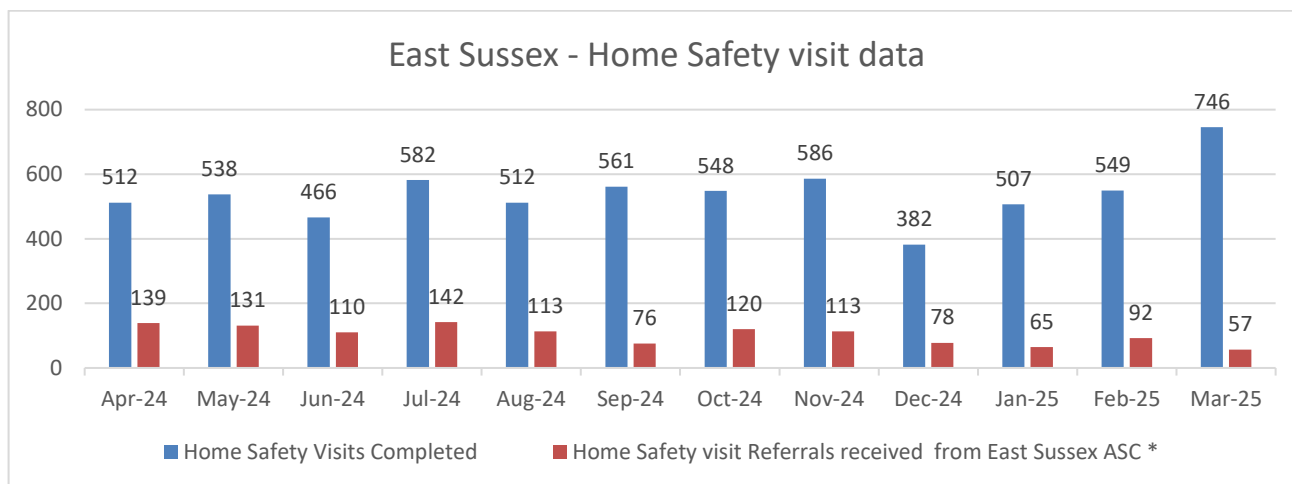
Responding to Trust staff experiencing or perpetrating domestic abuse - The Trust reviewed and updated its staff domestic abuse policy to ensure support of its own staff who experience or perpetrate domestic abuse is in line with legislation and best practice.

Changing the language: a guide to language for mental health - The Trust's safeguarding service contributed to the development of a new language guide for mental health. Learning from SARs about the power of language to engage or exclude was shared with the project and is reflected in the guide. The guide can be found at [Changing the Language Guide](#) and is for use by all agencies.

Home Safety Visits

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) provide Home Safety Visits (HSV's) to members of the community with essential information on safety in their home, escape plans and what to do in the case of a fire.

ESFRS also works with GP surgeries to deliver home safety visits to those most at risk from accidental dwelling fires.

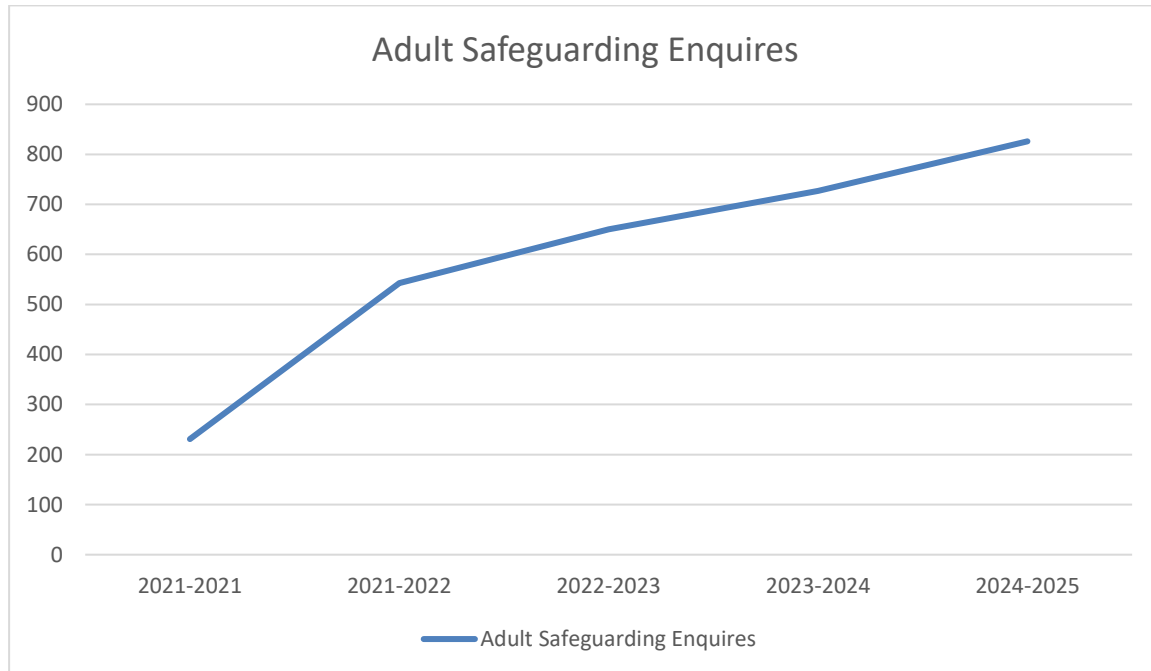


- In 2024/25 over 6,400 home safety visits were completed in East Sussex

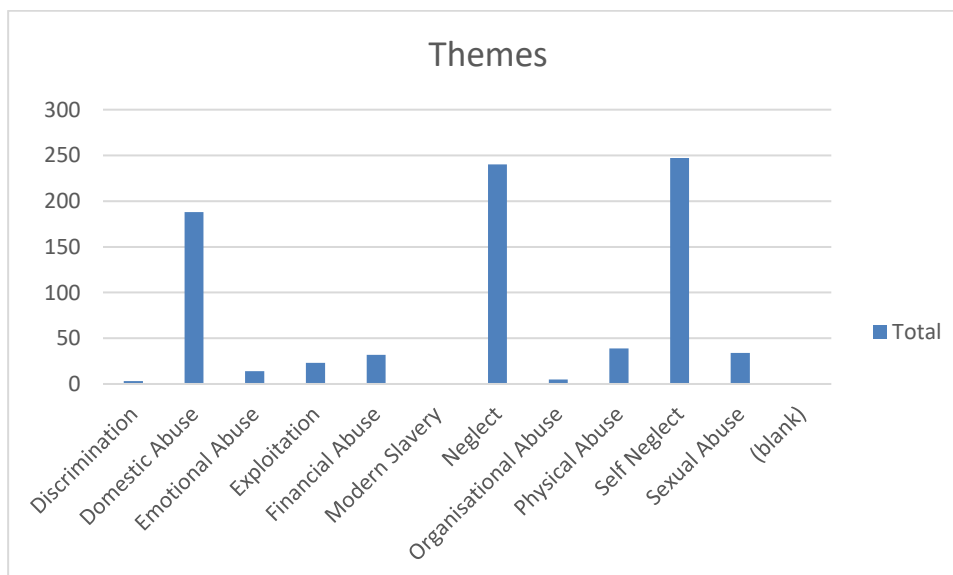
Coming to Notice (CTN) forms

- 387 Coming to Notice (CTN) forms were submitted in 2024/25 in relation to safeguarding concerns.
- Hoarding represented 18% of all concerns.
- Additional support represented 11% of all concerns.

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) safeguarding recorded a total of 826 adult social care enquiries; this continues to represent a year-on year increase.



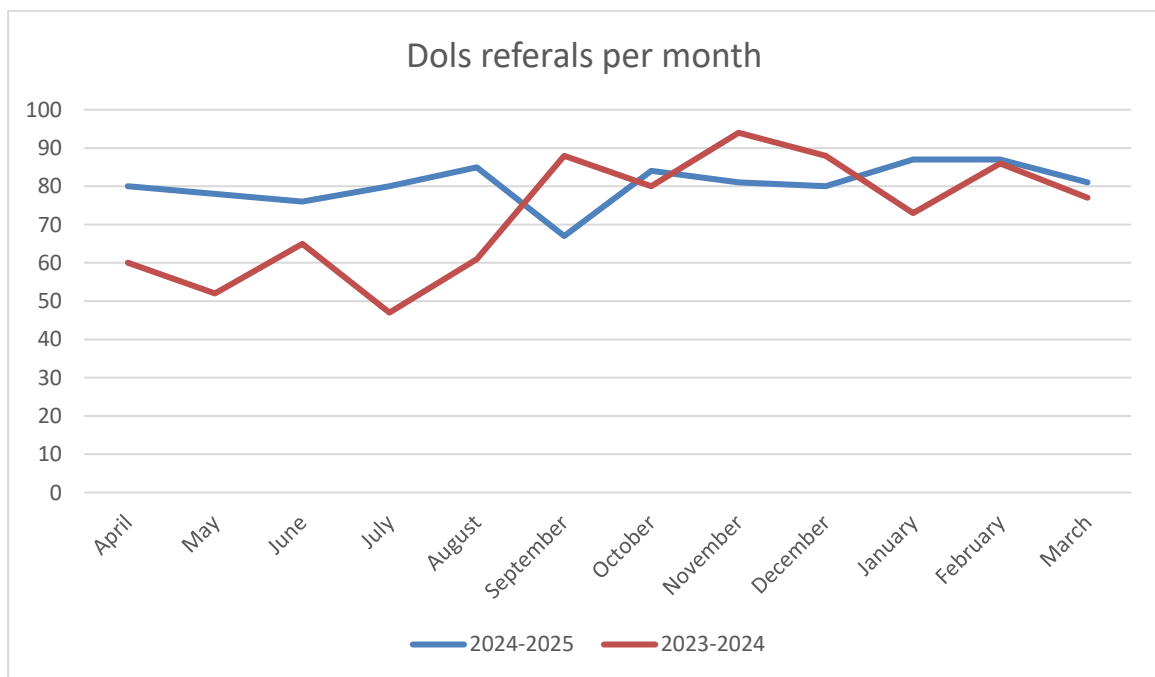
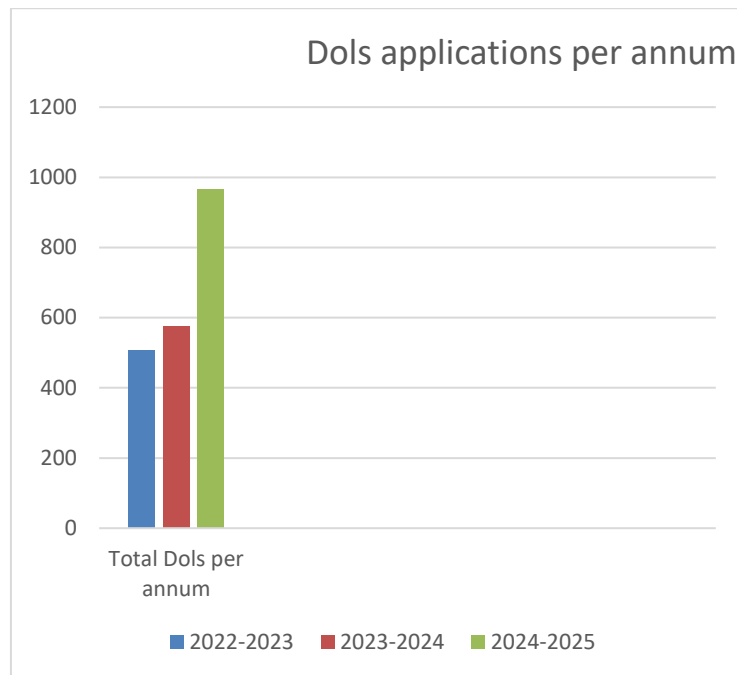
Neglect, self-neglect, and domestic abuse have featured as the prevalent themes for the last few years and this has continued.



- A screening tool for domestic abuse was embedded within the Emergency Department systems to support staff to undertake the routine enquiry of domestic abuse in March 2024, work to expand the tool and enable accessibility across the

organisation is ongoing. This has resulted in an increase in domestic abuse referrals from these departments.

- A trauma informed training package has been developed and piloted within gateway areas. Trauma Informed Care has been presented to the Trust Board, and we continue to work alongside Changing Futures Pan Sussex Trauma Informed Community of Practice.
- The Trust signed up to the NHS Sexual safety charter in 2023 and completed work to implement the charter in 2024.
- A task and finish group was established to consider how to support staff to manage cases of self-neglect with plans to take forward a bi-weekly 'drop-in' for staff to access guidance and support, with the expertise of safeguarding and adult social care teams.
- The Trust has participated in broader work with partner agencies about Right Care Right person and in response to this established a Missing person meeting to consider any potential learning.
- Pilot of new digital assessment document for mental capacity assessments and Best Interest Decisions.
- The safeguarding team participated in learning events across the emergency Departments and Surgical teams to name a couple. Ad-hoc and team days across the trust are attended by the safeguarding team on request.
- There has been an additional and significant challenge with the very high numbers of patient with a very extended length of stay many of whom are frail, complex and at high risk of harm e.g., falls, pressure damage and psychological distress.
- The presentation of some cases is increasingly complex. An area where this is continued to be a feature is within Maternity Safeguarding, for example domestic abuse considerations have also to encompass any risks to new-borns and other families.
- ESHT continue to facilitate level 3 training as a Think Family Safeguarding model. The training was formally updated in 2023-2024 and continues to be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure it links to current themes. Staff access an assessed e-learning package prior to joining a facilitated session which is r via virtual training platform.
- The Health Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (HIDVA) facilitates Domestic Abuse training within the trust. In 2024 the HIDVA also facilitated a third cohort of training for Domestic Abuse champions within the trust training a further 22 members of staff.
- The Trust employs two Mental Capacity specialists who have developed workshops and training within the organisation. The impact of the work is demonstrated through the increase in Deprivation of Liberty applications.

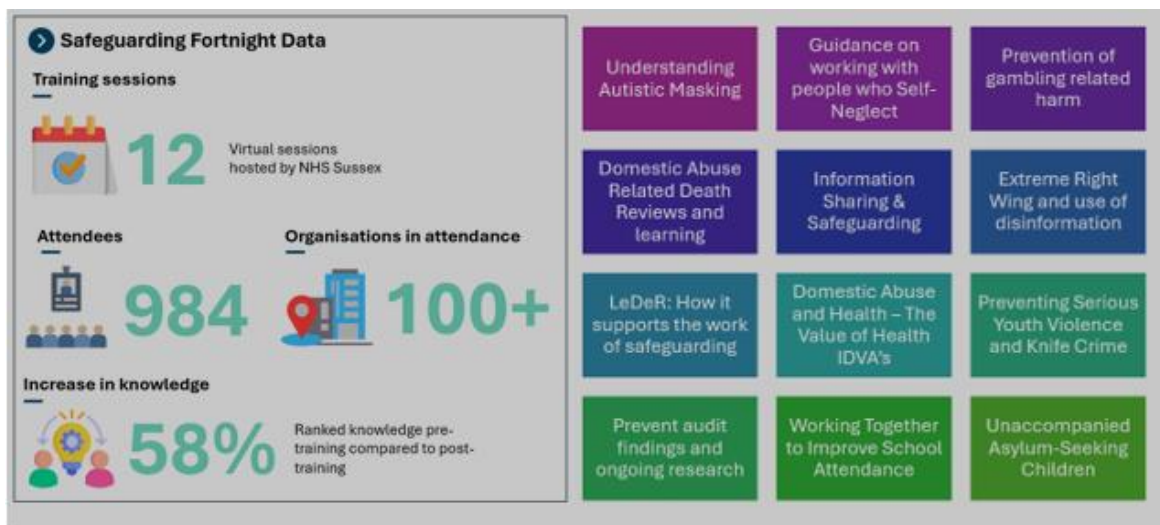


- The safeguarding team facilitate daily safeguarding huddles within the Emergency Departments to enable a process to support staff to recognise and manage safeguarding concerns in real time.

NHS Sussex have worked alongside both statutory and the wider partners of the Safeguarding Adults Board to safeguard the local population and is represented on all SAB subgroups and leadership groups. As one of the three lead partners, NHS Sussex supports all key decision-making functions of the SAB NHS Sussex chair the Training and Workforce Development (TWD) Sub-group, the Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR) Oversight Group and the Multi-Agency Risk Management Forum (MARM).

Training

NHS Sussex Safeguarding and Children in Care fortnight was held in November 2024 with the theme of 'Hidden Harm'. The training sessions offered frontline professionals and their managers across Sussex the opportunity for a learning and reflective space to improve understanding and awareness. This year of the fortnight was developed in collaboration with the Safeguarding Children Partnerships and Safeguarding Adults Boards to share resources and increase impact and awareness across the system.



Feedback Demonstrating Impact of Sessions

- 1 I will bear this in mind with the work that I do with neurodiverse young people, it was interesting and inspirational
- 2 I will use my learning to inform my strategic planning for families affected
- 3 I will share with my team and be more aware of the option to utilise Prevent and other channels

- 4 It was very helpful to learn about the national strategy for supporting unaccompanied minors.
- 5 Training flowed well, included interesting, relevant and challenging cases as well as a practical guide to assessment and referrals.
- 6 My role has some strategic elements - I will use this learning in my current and future practice

NHS Sussex have led on two Level 4 training sessions for health professionals across the system:

‘Improving care for women whose babies have been removed from their care’

Feedback post training included:

- *This was an excellent training session. I work in a psychiatric mother and baby unit and sometimes babies are separated from mothers, and I have never heard about Hope Boxes and have never heard about the charity Pause. The delivery of the sessions was very good.*
- *Excellent speakers. Particularly enjoyed hearing from the care leavers and the work being done around referrals to children's services for women who have been care experienced and currently well supported, and HOPE boxes work.*
- *Very thought-provoking session and I'm so glad to see the issues raised and considered for this group of women who go on suffering from the loss of their child*

By rating attendees' knowledge pre and post training, NHS Sussex identified a 25% increase in knowledge post training.

‘Understanding Neurodiversity in Safeguarding’

Feedback post training included:

- *Brilliant training: I have always only thought about neuro divergent children and never really thought about neuro divergent parents, parenting neurotypical/divergent children (and other generations).*
- *It was good, I learnt about the different types of neurodiversity and to be more aware and attentive when around everyone*

By rating attendees' knowledge pre and post training, NHS Sussex identified a **20%** increase in knowledge post training.

Provider assurance

NHS Sussex currently has a role in oversight and assurance of health providers through quarterly exception reporting, biannual safeguarding assurance self-assessment and through undertaking site visits. The quarterly exception report was reviewed in 24/25 and has been amended to ensure we get the data required from providers that provides a picture of where gaps may be or to highlight good practice. It has been agreed that relevant data collected can be shared with the Safeguarding Adults Board to inform the dashboard.

During 24/25 a safeguarding benchmarking toolkit was developed and shared with all pharmacy, ophthalmology and dentistry practices in Sussex as a self-assessment.

Working in Partnership to Provide Effective Safeguarding Arrangements

In response to the joint SAR (Gwen & Ian) commissioned by the SAB, NHS Sussex led on a collaborative piece of work developing a Self-Neglect Management Flow Chart for use by primary care to support and improve practise around identifying self-neglect, making referrals and undertaking carers assessment. The tool was promoted during Safeguarding Fortnight and initial feedback from providers was positive. In 25/26 the tool will be reviewed, and an audit undertaken to evaluate the impact on practice

NHS Sussex Safeguarding Team continue as source of expertise across the health and social care system, providing leadership via regular supervision with colleagues in NHS Providers, leading local and regional safeguarding forums and providing advice to system partners on complex safeguarding cases involving health.

Sexual Safety Charter

During 2024/25 NHS Sussex led and supported implementation and roll out of the NHSE Sexual Safety Charter across both the ICB and the provider network. The aim of the Charter is to ensure a systematic, trauma-informed approach to sexual misconduct and violence towards staff throughout the workplace. A gap analysis and action plan were developed to ensure improvements were in place and relevant safeguarding and HR policies were updated. A mandatory virtual training package 'understanding sexual misconduct in the workplace' was launched in Q3, which enable staff to recognise and report sexual misconduct and to understand how to support colleagues (victims and witnesses).

Mental Capacity Act (MCA)

Following the identification of gaps in learning in recent SARs, specific MCA training has been delivered to 93 primary care staff throughout the year to support embedding of MCA in GP practice. The training was reviewed and updated in Jan 25 and is offered to clinical staff on a bimonthly basis 60 people attended the sessions in Q4 with practitioners feeling more competent in applying MCA to practice based on feedback. Focused development work and training has been undertaken with All Age Continuing Care (AACC) to ensure application of MCA for 16/17-year-olds and an MCA Competency Framework will be developed by end of Q2 25/26 and will strengthen compliance.

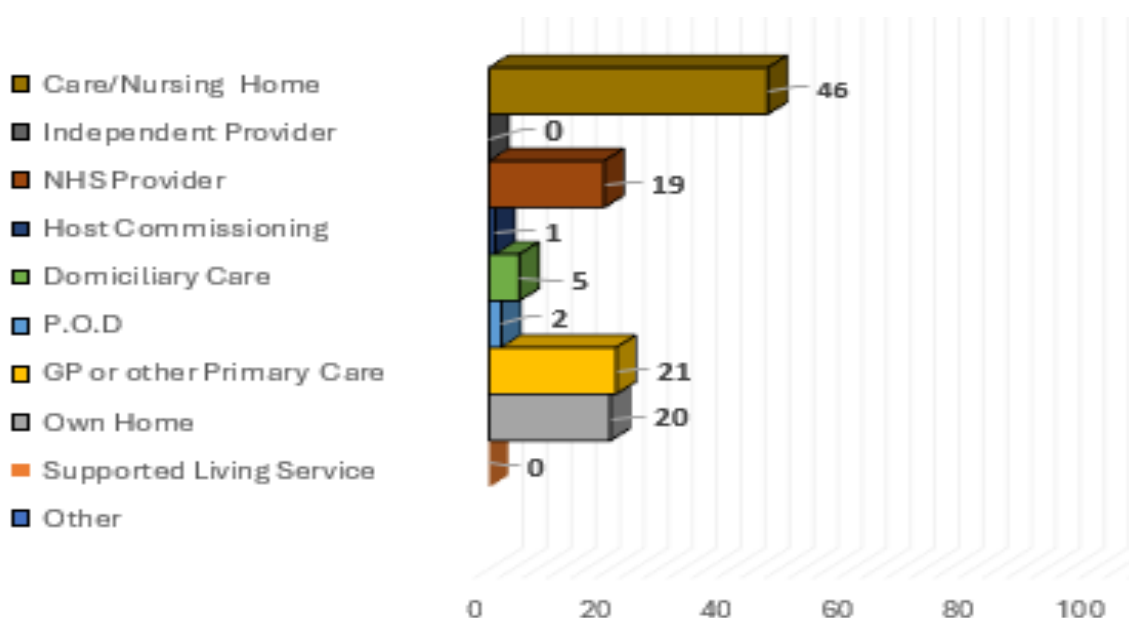
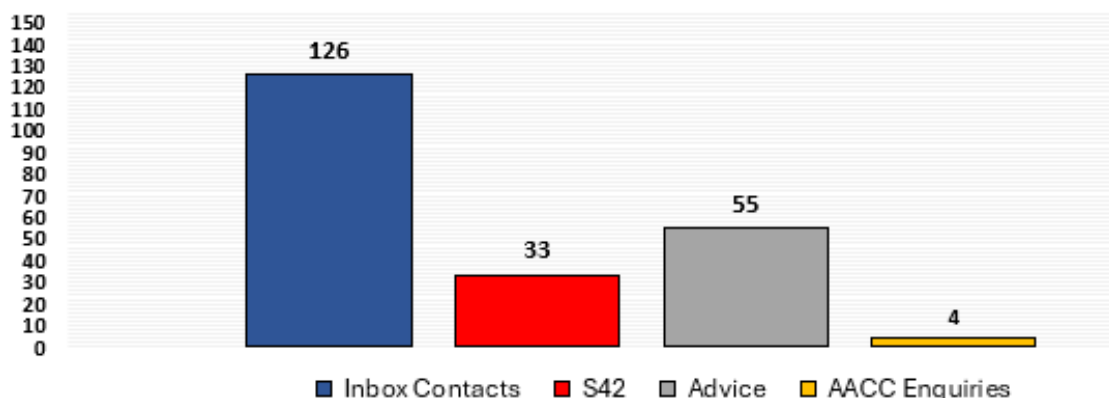
Clinical Safeguarding Advice and support

NHS Sussex provide an important clinical safeguarding advisory role across the health and social care system. Where safeguarding concerns of a clinical nature have been raised, the Local Authority will consider the need for a safeguarding response under Section 42 of the Care Act. [2.3. Receiving concerns and undertaking enquiries | Section 2 | Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures](#)

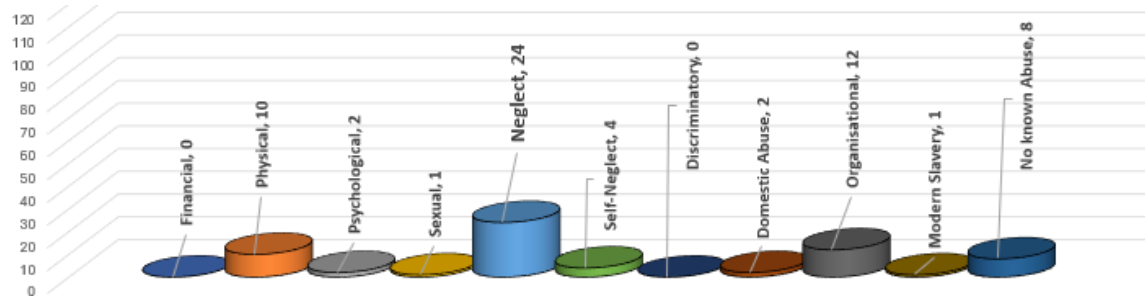
NHS Sussex continue to offer a robust advice and signposting service to ensure multi agency colleagues are supported with health-related safeguarding issues. Our Named GPs for safeguarding offer a separate advice line for GP practices.

East Sussex Inbox contacts; April 1st 2024 – March 31st 2025

The graph below represents the number of contacts received by NHS Sussex in the last year. Of these 126 contacts, 33 were specific to section 42 enquiries, 55 were professionals asking for advice and 4 related to AACC enquiries. The second graph relates to the Provider/Service Type in relation to the contacts. These figures highlight the level of support given to partner agencies and providers and the collaborative working undertaken to address the needs of our population.



The graph below relates to the Type of Abuse in relation to the Inbox Contacts in the first graph.



Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT) serves a wide geographical area which includes West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, High Weald, Lewes and Havens, and provides health services in the community to both adults and children.

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of our recruitment process, ensuring appropriate checks are in place to ensure all staff are employed within SCFT services to contribute to the delivery of excellent care within the community. All staff have access to mandatory and statutory safeguarding training for adults and children appropriate to their role and position within the Trust, including higher-level training for those in specialist roles.

SCFT has a safeguarding team which provides specialist advice for both adults and children across all services and supports staff to recognise signs of abuse and how to report it. The Trust works effectively with all safeguarding partnerships to ensure a multi-disciplinary and cross-agency approach.

The safeguarding team works closely with new service developments to ensure we provide high quality and effective health services. The team is part of a Quality and Safety Department, which enables close working both with specialist safety teams and clinical staff. This ensures that SCFT focuses on learning for improvement and strengthens their personalised approach to safeguarding. In 2025/2026 there will be a trust-wide focus on developing good practice around the Mental Capacity Act and Mental Capacity Act assessments.

SCFT continues to work in line with their safeguarding strategy, which underpins their commitment to providing excellent care at the heart of the community.

The aim of the strategy is to ensure that everything they do, wherever it takes place, ensures the safety, security, and well-being of children and adults who are involved with SCFT services. This will be achieved through the following goals, which reflect the priorities of the Trust's Strategy:

Our People - SCFT will provide effective safeguarding advice and guidance to staff, volunteers, and carers to enable them to support people with any safeguarding concerns.

Inclusive - SCFT will recognise and respect diversity to meet the safeguarding needs of marginalised and seldom-heard groups, reducing inequalities and deprivation within their communities.

Learning – SCFT| will continue to promote a culture of continuous safeguarding improvement and learning in the face of economic uncertainty.

Partnerships - SCFT will build on internal and external partnerships to strengthen safeguarding practice. Developed with the help of the SAB partners, the strategy sets out how they will deliver their commitment to safeguarding and their strategic priorities for the next three years.

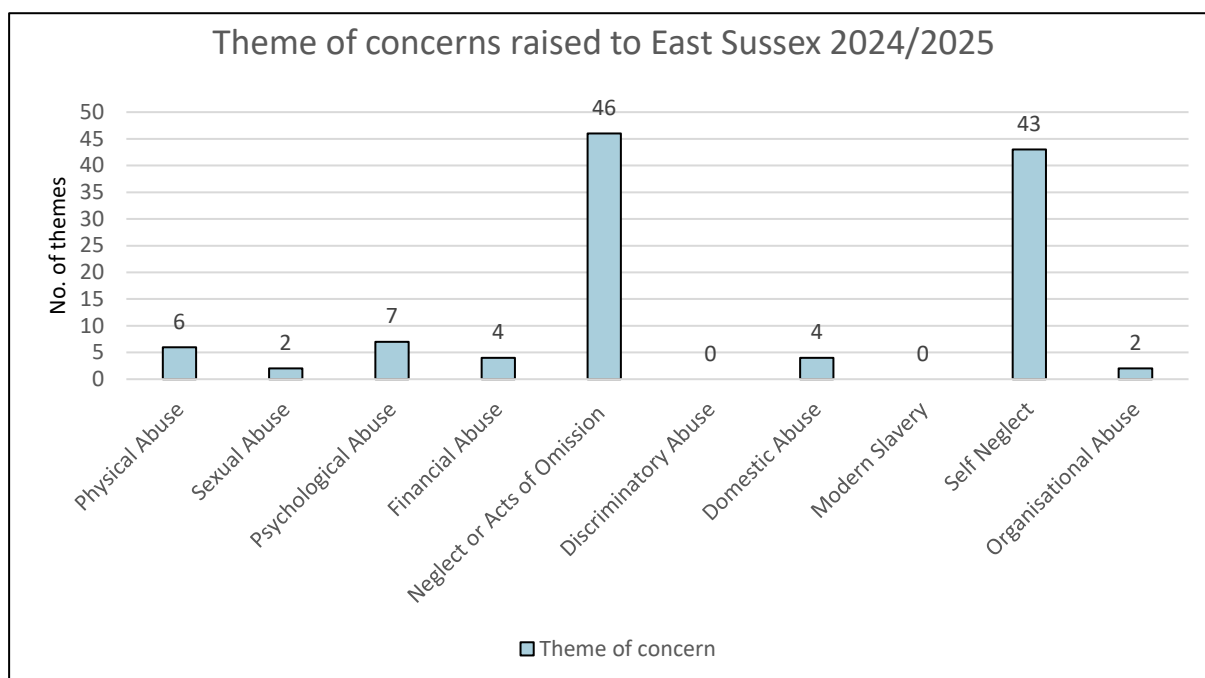
Safeguarding adults training

Level	Target Cohort	Target Compliance	2024-2025 Data	Analysis of Variance
L2	Mandatory for all staff	85%	98%	Compliance remained above SCFT compliance target of 95%
L3	Mandatory for all Adult and Specialist Services registered nursing and AHP staff Band 5-8a	85%	90.5%	In line with the NHS Intercollegiate Guidance the annual target is 85%
L3 WRAP	Mandatory for Adult and Specialist Services staff that require Adult Safeguarding L3, and Children's Services.	85%	97.5%	Compliance evidence that the final stretched third year target of 85% by Q4 23-24 has been met.
L3 MCA	Mandatory training for all new starters (in L3 cohort) and is also accessible to all staff should they chose to complete it.		New starter compliance: 96.4%	ESR Module MCA: Assessing Mental Capacity. Completion will fluctuate depending on new staff flow into SCFT, and substantive staff choice to complete.

Raising safeguarding concerns

SCFT staff demonstrate an awareness of risk and escalate adult safeguarding concerns to ensure support is provided to the adults involved. Safeguarding concerns raised to East Sussex County Council are as follows:

Adult safeguarding concerns raised by SCFT to ESCC 2024-2025	
ESCC	103



The table above shows the various safeguarding themes captured within the concerns raised to ESCC, and the key theme of neglect/acts of omission is as expected given the broad scope of issues encompassed within this category across health and social care services. These concerns may relate to care provided by SCFT, care delivered by other health or social care providers of care given by unpaid carers, such as family members and friends.

SCFT Internal Safeguarding Adults Advice line

SCFT staff have access to specialist advice via the SCFT safeguarding advice line. This support enables SCFT staff to improve their practice, knowledge and confidence in safeguarding and supports better outcomes for adults who need care and support. This also reinforces a culture of developing improved outcomes in the promotion of safeguarding adults from harm and abuse in line with the values expected from all healthcare professionals.

SCFT: Safeguarding Adults Advice Line	2024-2025
Contacts (Trust-wide)	552

East Sussex Healthwatch



Advice line contact demonstrates that staff discuss concerns directly with patients (when appropriate to do so and in line with consideration of mental capacity), provide risk mitigation where possible, provide safety netting information and case management, and contact Adult Social Care directly when urgency is required. The SCFT Safeguarding Adults team also escalates potential quality issues within other provider services to the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB) Safeguarding Team for wider consideration.

Healthwatch is the independent consumer champion created to gather and represent the views of the public on issues related to health and social care. They have legal functions, including a statutory power to ‘enter and view’ health and care services, established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

Healthwatch published 35 reports in 2024/25. The reports include findings and recommendations in relation to health and social care concerns and experiences of East Sussex residents.

- 3,586 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with Healthwatch helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care.
- Healthwatch directly supported 566 people with enquiries through their Information and Signposting service, including users of food banks, migrants and residents in Lewes Prison
- Healthwatch conducted ‘enter and view’ visits to 20 care homes settings across East Sussex to ask people about their experiences of [dentistry and oral health care](#) and their experience of [hospital discharge](#).
- Healthwatch conducted face-to-face engagement with 197 people during the [Listening Tour 2024/25](#), which focused on Wealden District, Lewes and the Havens, and Hastings Borough.
- Healthwatch staff and volunteers carried out a ‘mystery shopping’ exercise of [Modern General Practice](#), reviewing the website and in-hours phone messages of 55 GP practices from across East Sussex.
- During two phases of engagement Healthwatch staff and volunteers spoke to 358 people in the waiting rooms of [Emergency Departments \(ED\) or Urgent Treatment Centres \(UTC\)](#) at East Sussex hospitals about the journey they had taken before attending.
- Recommendations from Healthwatch reports are shared with statutory and VCSE partners. The [Annual Report](#) is presented to the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board.

You can view further information on all the reports Healthwatch have published [here](#).

South East Coast Ambulance Service



South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb)

responds to 999 calls from the public, urgent calls from healthcare professionals and provide NHS 111 services across Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent, Surrey, and North East Hampshire (a geographical area of 3,600 square miles). SECAmb employs over 4,000 staff with almost 90% of the workforce being operational staff - those caring for patients either face to face, or over the phone at our emergency dispatch centre where we receive 999 calls.

Safeguarding SECAmb reinforces the principle that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and develops a culture of continuous learning and improvement to promote the safety and welfare of adults at risk, children and young people and looked after children.

In 2024/25, a total of approximately 41,000 referrals were received across the NHS111 and 999 services: 33,000 for adults and 8,000 for children. This equates to an increase of 23 per cent compared to the previous year. All referrals continue to be triaged by members of the Safeguarding team before forwarding to the relevant local authority or other lead agency.

Despite the continued increase in referral number and subsequent pressure on the team's capacity there is assurance that SECAmb are escalating concerns appropriately and in a timely way. There are regular touchpoint meetings with heads of service across the SECAmb footprint in both adult and children's social teams where discussions take place regarding the quality and appropriateness of referrals.

A randomised audit was conducted throughout February 2025, spanning a month, to ensure timely processing of referrals. The audit concluded

- 57.5% of referrals on average processed in 24 hours
- 22% of referrals on average processed in 48 hours
- 11.1% of referrals on average processed in 72 hours
- 9% of referrals on average processed between 72 and 120 hours

SECAmb's Safeguarding team have built good relationships with partners across social care and with the Designated Safeguarding Teams within the ICBs. This enables queries to be answered quickly where necessary to ensure there is no delay to patient care, it also raises the profile of the ambulance service within the wider safeguarding network.

Working in partnership with local police services has seen improvements in joint working when sharing referrals. The Trust has established a clear pathway to share concerns in a timely way particularly if there are concerns regarding potential areas of neglect.

An example of good safeguarding practice demonstrated by SECamb clinicians were demonstrated when paramedics responded to an incident involving an elderly gentleman who had reportedly fallen. Upon arrival, the patient was assessed and deemed suitable for home treatment. However, when this outcome was communicated to his wife, she became highly distressed. She then revealed to the staff that her husband had been physically and emotionally abusing her for the past 20 years. Her intention was to leave the home while he was in the hospital. A call was made to the on-call safeguarding practitioner, and a safety plan was discussed for the wife.

As of the 10th July 2025, there are 2928 cases which are managed by the Brighton and East Sussex Probation Delivery Unit.

In 2024/25, there have been increases in safeguarding enquiry requests and responses, as well as an increase in the number of police intelligence requests and responses.

- The percentage of cases with a safeguarding enquiry requested is 77.70%, which is an increase of 1.26% on 2024/25
- The percentage of cases with a safeguarding enquiry response is 75.47%, which is an increase of 3.73% on 2024/25
- The percentage of cases with a police enquiry requested is 83.85%, which is an increase of 2.67% on 2024/25
- The percentage of cases with a police enquiry response is 69.64%, which is an increase of 12.87% on 2024/25

Safeguarding and Police Requests & Referrals Within the Last 12 Months by Gender

Gender	Type of Safeguarding Check / Referral						Total
	Safeguarding Referral (Adult)	Safeguarding Referral (Child)	Safeguarding Enquiries Requested	Safeguarding Enquiries - Response Received	Police Intelligence Enquiries - Requested	Police Intelligence Enquiries - Response Received	
Female	1	1	191	160	257	184	794
Male	0	1	2054	1771	2551	1894	8271
Total	1	2	2245	1931	2808	2078	9065

- 91.24% of requests and responses are for males on the Brighton & East Sussex caseload
- The strategic plan can be viewed in:

Safeguarding and Police Requests & Referrals Within the Last 12 Months by Age

Age Group	Type of Safeguarding Check / Referral						Total
	Safeguarding Referral (Adult)	Safeguarding Referral (Child)	Safeguarding Enquiries Requested	Safeguarding Enquiries - Response Received	Police Intelligence Enquiries - Requested	Police Intelligence Enquiries - Response Received	
18-20	0	0	95	72	121	88	376
21-24	0	0	210	161	246	188	805
25-30	0	1	367	326	445	323	1462
31-40	0	1	783	696	975	693	3148
41-50	1	0	458	393	564	431	1847
51-60	0	0	238	198	327	247	1010
61-70	0	0	71	67	98	79	315
71-80	0	0	21	16	29	24	90
81-90	0	0	2	2	3	5	12
Total	1	2	2245	1931	2808	2078	9065

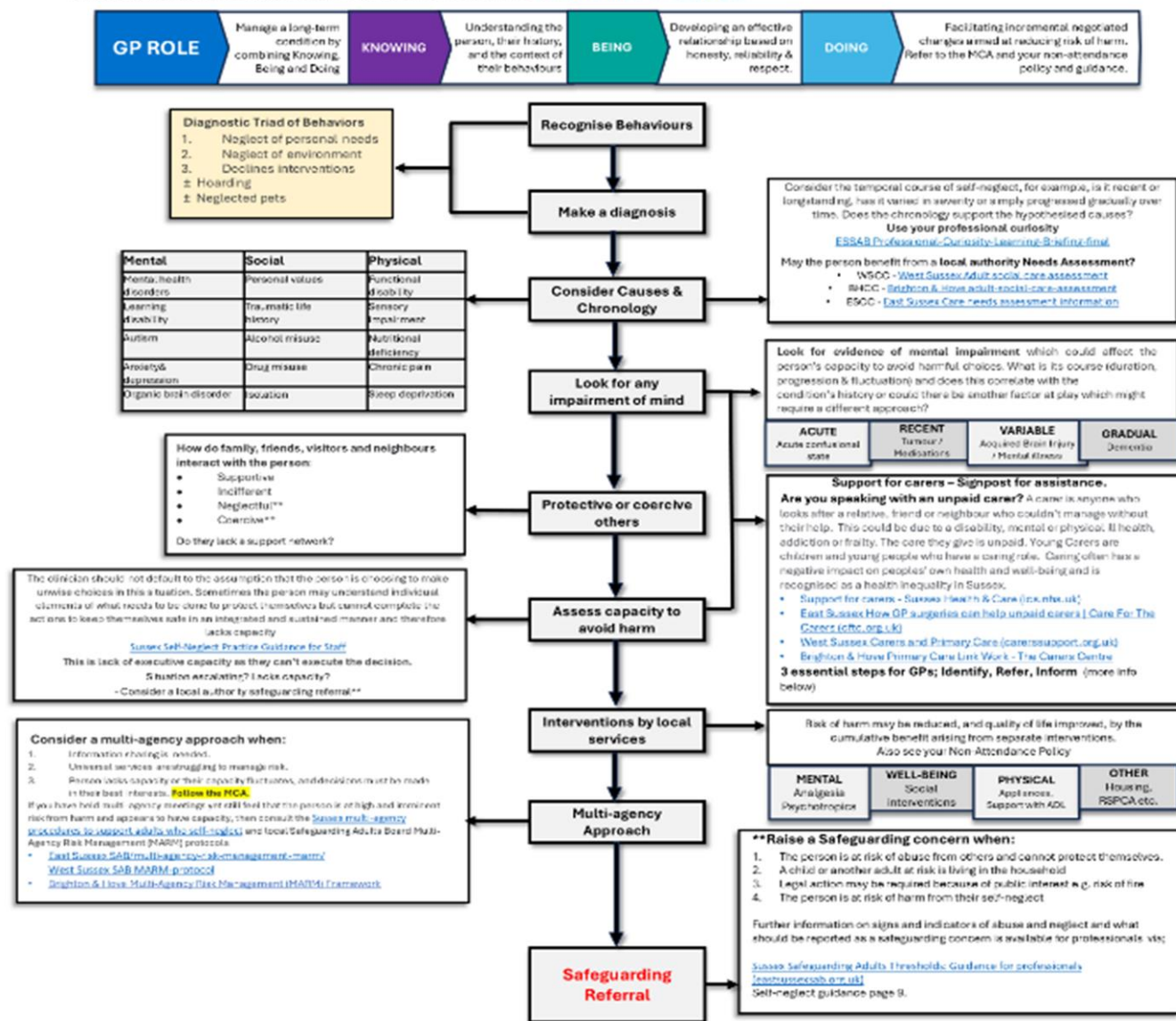
- 34.72% of requests and responses are for the 31-40 age group of the Brighton and East Sussex caseload

Appendix 3 Self-Neglect Assessment and Management

Self-Neglect Assessment and Management (Digital Format with links)



The term self-neglect can be used to describe a wide range of situations or behaviours. It could be someone not looking after their own health or personal care or not maintaining their home environment for so long that it becomes cluttered, dirty and/or unsafe. The Care Act recognises self-neglect as a category of abuse and emphasises the importance of working together and the need to take preventative actions to minimise risk ([Care Act 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#))



Quick References

Make a referral: Adult

West Sussex County Council
Please raise a safeguarding concern using the [online form](#)
Contact the Adult Care Point: 01273 642121
Email: adults.care@westsussex.gov.uk
For out of hours contact 0300 222 7007

East Sussex County Council
Raise a concern using the [online form](#)
Contact Health & Social Care Carers: 0345 50 50 181
For out of hours contact 0345 50 50 181 and select option 2

Brighton & Hove City Council
Raise a concern using the [online form](#)
Email: adults.care@brighton-hove.gov.uk
If you have concerns that someone may have care and support needs email: adults.care@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Make a referral: Child

West Sussex County Council
Please raise a concern using the [online form](#)
Contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASG) on 01 800 229 900
For out of hours contact 0330 222 6664 or 07711 769 607

East Sussex County Council
Contact the Single Point of Advice (SPOA) on 01323 464 222 or by the [advice form](#)
For out of hours contact [Emergency Duty Service](#) on 01273 335 905 or 01273 335 906

Brighton and Hove City Council
Contact the Front Door for Families on 01273 290 400
Email: frontdoor@brighton-hove.gov.uk
For out of hours contact 01273 335 905 or 01273 335 906

Support from local fire officers – Home safety visits

West Sussex
<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/west-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service/home-fire-safety/safe-and-well-visits/>

East Sussex (including Brighton)
<https://www.esfrs.org/hsvs>

Support for Carers – Additional Information- Provided by Care for Carers

Identify - Many people do not identify as 'carers' initially. Ask patient if they are 'looking after someone' who could not manage without their help. Add carer to the practice's Carers Register & flag their record. **Record** SNOMED code: 22448003 (Patient themselves providing care) or 300767002 (Carer for a relative).

Inform - Tell carer that free support is available through their local carers organisation and suggest they register as a carer. If carer's wellbeing is affected by the caring role, refer on their behalf. **Record**.

Refer - At next interaction, ask about their caring role. If they have not self-referred, remind that support is available. If carer's wellbeing is affected by the caring role, refer on their behalf. **Record**.

East Sussex: [Professional referrals | Care For The Carers \(cfc.org.uk\)](#)
West Sussex: [Referring Unpaid Carers: How to Spot the Signs - Carers Support](#)
Brighton & Hove: [Services for Professionals - Carers Hub Brighton](#)

Relevant SAR learning- SAR Ian and Owen

SAR-Ian-Learn-ing-Briefing-2024-pd

Appendix 4 SAB Membership

- East Sussex Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH)
- NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Sussex Police
- Care for the Carers
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Change, Grow, Live (CGL)
- District and borough council representation
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS)
- East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT)
- East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership (ESSCP)
- Healthwatch
- HMP Lewes
- Independent Homecare representatives
- Kent, Surrey, Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (KSS CRC)
- Lay members
- National Probation Service (NPS)
- NHS England
- Registered Care Association (RCA)
- South-East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECamb)
- Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT)
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT)
- Trading Standards, East Sussex County Council
- Voluntary and community sector representation

Appendix 5 SAB Structure



East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership

East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership



East Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board

Performance and Quality Assurance Subgroup

Safeguarding Adults Review Subgroup

Training and Workforce Development Subgroup

Operational Practice Subgroup

Safeguarding Community Network

Sussex Policy and Procedures Review Group



Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Adults Board

West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board



Report to:	People Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	22 September 2025
By:	Director of Adult Social Care & Health
Title:	Annual Review of the Safer Communities' Partnership, Performance, Priorities, and Issues
Purpose:	To update on performance in relation to safer communities in 2024/25

RECOMMENDATIONS:

People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the performance across the Safer Communities Partnership during 2024/25.

1 Background

1.1 The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) recognises that community safety and community cohesion are interconnected. A cohesive community is one where people feel safe, connected, regardless of background, identity, or circumstance.

1.2 While crime rates in East Sussex remain below the national average, the conditions that underpin safety, such as housing stability, economic opportunity, and social inclusion are unevenly distributed. Coastal urban areas like Hastings and Eastbourne face persistent challenges, including high levels of deprivation, housing insecurity, and health inequalities. Hastings, for example, has the highest rate of households in temporary accommodation (12.3 per 1,000), and over 40% of its neighbourhoods rank among the most deprived nationally.

1.3 In addition to the county-level SCP, which the County Council chairs and supports, five local Community Safety Partnerships operate across East Sussex, meeting in three Boards. Each partnership publishes a local plan based on issues raised by its members. These local plans inform the county-wide strategy, and vice versa.

1.4 The SCP coordinates community safety efforts across the county. Sub-groups under the SCP focus on violent extremism, drug and alcohol-related harm, domestic abuse, and serious violence. These groups also report to the pan-Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership and the Domestic Abuse Board.

1.5 The SCP aligns its work with the Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the Children and Young People's Trust through a Partnership Protocol.

1.6 The County Council shapes and delivers its community safety priorities through the SCP's business planning process. The current business plan runs from 2023 to 2026, and a new three-year plan will be produced next year.

1.7 The SCP's three strategic priorities are:

- Protecting vulnerable people
- Identifying those at risk of harm

- Keeping communities safe

1.8 These priorities align with those of partner organisations and the Police and Crime Plan. Other areas, such as road safety and the impact of anti-social behaviour and street communities, are addressed through other partnership structures with support from the wider SCP as needed.

2. Summary Performance Highlights

2.1 Sussex Police provided pre-publication data in March 2025 from live systems. To note, this data may change and could differ from official statistics later published by the ONS and Home Office.

2.2 Total crime reports in East Sussex remained largely unchanged between 2023/24 and 2024/25, increasing by just 0.8% from 39,270 to 39,579. Crime rates in East Sussex continue to sit below both the national and Sussex averages.

2.3 The most notable rise occurred in theft reports which jumped by 20.2%, from 7,548 to 9,069. Shoplifting drove this increase, rising by 39.1% from 4,188 to 5,826. Both national and local agencies have focused on shoplifting, with national figures showing a 20% rise in the year to December 2024, the highest since police began using current recording practices in 2003.

2.4 Violence without injury rose by 6.9%, from 5,996 to 6,411. Reports of violence against the person in public places increased by 3.8%, from 5,846 to 6,068.

2.5 Reports of non-domestic public place serious violent crime dropped by 12%, falling from 523 to 462. In contrast, possession of weapon offences rose by 3%, from 370 to 382. Proactive police activity and improved recording practices likely contributed to this increase.

2.6 Drug offence reports across East Sussex fell by 7.8%, from 1,047 to 965. Hastings saw the largest drop at 24.1% (from 336 to 255), followed by Eastbourne with an 11.6% decrease (from 371 to 328). Rother and Wealden experienced slight increases, rising from 92 to 116 and 116 to 130, respectively.

2.7 Reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) increased, with nuisance ASB rising by 4.9%, from 5,794 to 6,077. Most ASB reports involved youths, neighbours, drink and drug use, noise, and motorcycles or vehicles.

2.8 Reports of domestic violence crimes increased by 2.1%, from 6,020 crimes in 2023/24 to 6,149 crimes in 2024/25.

2.9 Reports of sexual offences increased by 6.3%, from 1,177 offences in 2023/24 to 1,819 offences in 2024/25.

2.10 In April 2024 Sussex Police expanded activity in 29 high crime and ASB areas using £1.4 million Home Office funding. The newly formed Hotspot Policing Team completed 18,365 hours of patrols on top of routine patrols by local officers and engaged with over 98,600 members of the public. Operating from new community pods, the team made nearly 300 arrests. Compared to the previous year, overall crime in hotspot areas dropped by 15%, and ASB fell by 19.5%. The team continues to work with divisional officers, partners, and local businesses to identify prolific offenders, improve reporting and intelligence sharing, and implement preventative measures. The Home Office has renewed funding for another 12 months.

3. Progress against the objectives in the 2023–2026 Business Plan

3.1 Of the 38 objectives in the 2023–2026 business plan, 21 have been completed or are progressing well, 16 are underway and 1 has not been achieved. Key achievements include:

- Securing 2025/26 funding for the Changing Futures Programme.

- Commissioning additional drug treatment and recovery services through Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG).
- Establishing a Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO) to support people recovering from substance misuse.
- Expanding the DISC reporting system for ASB and shoplifting to all five districts and boroughs.
- Launching the new Safer Communities Partnership [website](#).
- Growing the Voices of Lived Experience Board (VOLEB) to 28 members to shape domestic abuse strategy and services.
- Commissioning 12 units of specialist safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse who have multiple, compound needs.

3.2 One objective, reducing drug and alcohol-related deaths, was flagged as not progressing. The most recent data (2023) shows an increase in deaths, although this includes all drug misuse and alcohol-specific mortality, not just those in treatment. These figures are subject to long delays due to Coroner processes and include causes beyond local control, such as accidental poisonings.

3.3 However, the rate of deaths among those in treatment in the county, which is a more timely and actionable measure, has fallen to its lowest level since 2019 (1.21%). The number of deaths in treatment is also at a four-year low, with 34 deaths in the year to March 2025, although each individual death is a tragedy. Through DATRIG funding, outreach continues to target those at highest risk, particularly opiate and crack users, with a focus on harm reduction and engagement in structured treatment. **From 2025/26, deaths in treatment will replace drug and alcohol related deaths as a council KPI.**

4. Community Engagement

4.1 In May and June 2025 the Safer East Sussex Team (SEST) conducted an online survey that mirrored the questions from the County Council's Reputation Tracker survey (2017–2022). The survey asked participants to select their top three community safety and ASB concerns from a predefined list and explain their choices.

4.2 The survey received 427 responses: 233 from Wealden, 61 from Eastbourne, 56 from Hastings, 42 from Rother, and 35 from Lewes.

4.3 Respondents most frequently identified drug and alcohol misuse as a top concern (46%), followed by road safety (41%) and serious violent crime, including knife crime (37%).

4.4 The data also indicated that hate crime and fraud/scams have a more direct impact on respondents or someone they know, compared to other issues.

4.5 In Eastbourne more respondents than the county average highlighted rough sleeping/homelessness (+28%) and drug/alcohol misuse (+18%) as concerns. Hastings respondents also reported higher concern for rough sleeping/homelessness (+22%), reducing reoffending (+15%), and drug/alcohol misuse (+11%). In Lewes, more respondents identified sexual violence/abuse (+16%) and the exploitation and recruitment of young people by criminals (+13%) as key issues. Rother respondents more frequently cited serious violent crime, including knife crime (+13%), while Wealden responses largely aligned with the county average, with slightly higher concerns around fraud/scams (+7%) and theft/burglary (+7%).

4.6 Speeding and anti-social driving emerged as the most common ASB concern, with 45% of respondents selecting it among their top three. Fly-tipping/dumping (37%), drug dealing in public spaces (34%), and vandalism/criminal damage, including graffiti (31%), followed closely.

4.7 Most respondents cited ASB issues because they observed them locally. However, for nuisance/aggressive neighbours and noise disturbances from pubs, clubs, or vehicles, a higher proportion had experienced the issues directly or knew someone who had.

4.8 In Eastbourne more respondents than average identified drug dealing in public spaces (+14%) and drinking in public spaces (+15%) as concerns. Hastings also showed a higher concern for drinking in public spaces (+16%). Lewes respondents more frequently reported verbal abuse/intimidation (+13%) and fly-tipping/dumping (+10%). In Rother, fly-tipping/dumping (+13%) stood out, while Wealden respondents largely reflected the county average, with a slight increase in concern about illegal or anti-social parking (+6%).

5. Domestic Violence and Abuse

5.1 Police recorded a 2.1% increase in domestic violence crimes, rising from 6,020 in 2023/24 to 6,149 in 2024/25. However, the commissioned specialist East Sussex Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS) received 3% fewer referrals, dropping from 2,506 to 2,432. Before 2024, the multi-crime victim support services commissioned by the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC) triaged medium-risk domestic abuse police referrals and passed them to the specialist provider. In early 2024 the multi-crime service began supporting these cases internally through its own Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) provision, reducing the number that needed to be referred on. In 2023/24 ESDAS received 297 referrals via the Victim Support Service; in 2024/25 this was 31.

5.2 In 2022/23 the Council introduced a KPI to monitor access to ESDAS by people aged 65 and over. This aimed to improve understanding of how older residents, who make up a larger than the national average share of the population, experience domestic abuse and access support. The target initially stood at 3% and later increased to 5%. In 2024/25, performance reached 4.78%, just under the target.

5.3 East Sussex also benefits from a specialist older people's IDVA service delivered by Hourglass. Funded by the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and the ESCC Domestic Abuse Small Grants Fund, Hourglass offers a 24/7 helpline and a Community Response Hub that provides tailored support for older people at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation. ESDAS is currently working with Hourglass to improve referral pathways and to encourage Adult Social Care to refer older victims in 2025/26. In 2023/24 there were a total of 678 DA referrals for Hourglass and contact was successful in 614 (91%) of cases. In 2024/25 there were a total of 533 DA referrals, and contact was successful in 422 cases (79%).

5.4 In Q4 2024/25 Sussex Police reported two deaths to the Safer Communities Partnership Board that meet the criteria to commission a Domestic Abuse Related Death Review (DARDR). The DARDR Oversight Group recommended reviews in both cases. These will be the first DARDRs since 2022/23, when one review took place.

5.5 During 2024/25 agencies discussed 1,311 high-risk domestic abuse cases at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs). Eastbourne, Lewes, and Wealden accounted for 826 cases, 31% above the SafeLives recommended level. Hastings and Rother discussed 485 cases, 52% above the recommended level. Although MARAC referrals have increased nationally, East Sussex continues to exceed the national average. Eastbourne, Lewes, and Wealden recorded 52 MARACs per 10,000 adult women, and HR recorded 60 - compared to the UK average of 48.

5.6 The MARAC triage pilot introduced to manage rising referral volumes will continue through March 2026. This process ensures a strong multi-agency safeguarding response for high-risk victims who may not require full MARAC discussion. In 2024/25 the pilot reduced weekly MARAC cases by 29%.

5.7 Repeat referrals made up 40% of cases in Eastbourne, Lewes, and Wealden and 36% in Hastings and Rother, both within the SafeLives recommended range of 28–40%. Nationally, the repeat rate stands at 30%.

5.8 In Eastbourne, Lewes, and Wealden 25% of MARAC cases involved disabled individuals; in Hastings and Rother, the figure was 29%. These rates significantly exceed the national average of 11%, likely reflecting both a higher local rate of self-identified disability and broader interpretations of disability by referral agencies.

5.9 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 requires upper-tier local authorities to meet the support needs of all victims in relevant safe accommodation, including those from outside the area. East Sussex prioritises local residents for the first 48 hours of any vacancy, after which the space becomes part of a national resource.

5.10 In 2024/25 East Sussex offered 41 safe accommodation (refuge) units, including shared and self-contained spaces. The self-contained units prioritised individuals who might otherwise be excluded from multi-occupancy settings, such as men and LGBTQ+ survivors. Although the commissioned capacity stands at 56 units, the provider at that time could not secure enough properties. As a result the contract ended and a new provider took over on 1 June 2025 following a recommissioning process.

5.11 The safe accommodation provider received 145 referrals during the year and accepted 60. Of those who exited the service, 87% reported feeling safer.

5.12 The County Council commissioned a new Multiple Compound Needs (MCN) service using government funding attached to the Domestic Abuse Act which went live in January 2025. The service includes both an all-gender community offer and safe accommodation for female victims of domestic abuse who have MCN. The residential service is set to launch in Autumn 2025.

5.13 This ringfenced New Burdens funding also supported a new Small Grants Domestic Abuse Fund. Six projects launched in Q4 2024/25 offering support for ethnic minority communities, older people, those in temporary accommodation, and people who have MCN. Other initiatives include child-to-parent abuse support and whole-family approaches. A second funding round opened in August 2025.

5.14 A Pan-Sussex needs assessment has been completed and has informed a refreshed strategy to be published in Q3 2025/26. This new three-year strategy will replace both the Pan-Sussex Strategic Framework for Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse and the 2021–2024 Pan-Sussex Strategy for Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support.

5.15 The Home Office-funded, police-led, OPCC funded programme targeting high-harm domestic abuse perpetrators continued throughout 2024/25. The Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) process focused on managing the most harmful and repeat offenders. By concentrating resources on these individuals, the programme has successfully reduced reoffending and demand on services. In January 2025 Sussex Police commissioned an evaluation of MATAC; this found that the programme is broadly meeting its aims, but highlighted the need for clearer selection criteria, improved data collection and stronger partner engagement.

6. Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

6.1 Throughout 2024/25 the SEST and its partners led a range of initiatives to raise awareness and promote action on VAWG. These included social media campaigns, a co-hosted '16 Days of Activism' webinar with West Sussex County Council, participation in community awareness events, and the development of a comprehensive training prospectus.

6.2 Following the County Council's White Ribbon accreditation in 2023/24, the SEST began implementing a three-year action plan. The team recruited over 30 White Ribbon Ambassadors and Champions, aiming to reach 60 by February 2027. In 2024/25 SEST partnered with Lewes Football Club to promote White Ribbon and local VAWG support services. They also established a working group of Ambassadors and Champions to oversee and support delivery of the action plan.

7. Sexual Violence and Abuse

7.1 East Sussex recorded a 6.3% increase in sexual offence reports, rising from 1,711 in 2023/24 to 1,819 in 2024/25. Improvements in police recording practices and greater willingness among victims to report incidents have contributed to this trend in recent years, although the impact of these factors appears to be diminishing.

7.2 Nationally, fewer than one in six victims of rape or sexual assault report the crime to police.

7.3 The commissioned specialist rape and sexual violence service provider in East Sussex received 13% fewer referrals, dropping from 538 in 2023/24 to 470 in 2024/25. The largest declines occurred in self-referrals, police referrals, and referrals from the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

7.4 Survivors Network attributed some of this reduction to a recent review and improvement plan focused on data accuracy, which may have affected referral numbers. Additionally, the closure of the specialist Children's SARC in Brighton and Hove likely contributed to the fall in referrals through that route.

8. Drug and Alcohol Related Harm

8.1 The Harm to Hope Strategy in East Sussex focuses on achieving long-term health and crime reduction outcomes. The Harm to Hope Board drives this work through three sub-groups:

- **Enforcement Sub-Group** – disrupting drug supply chains.
- **Treatment and Recovery Sub-Group** – building a world-class treatment and recovery system.
- **Prevention Sub-Group** – aiming to reduce demand for drugs across generations.

8.2 The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) set a target of 2,694 adults in treatment by the end of 2024/25. East Sussex exceeded this target by reaching 2,799, an increase from 2,613 the previous year. The number of people in treatment for opiates remained stable over the past three years, while treatment numbers for non-opiate and alcohol-only users rose.

8.3 In 2023 OHID introduced a new performance measure to track treatment progress. East Sussex outperformed the national average in this area, although performance dipped slightly in 2024/25:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
East Sussex	51.44%	55.20%	48.55%
England	47.30%	47.01%	46.78%

8.4 East Sussex also improved its continuity of care for people released from prison. The proportion of individuals with ongoing treatment needs who engaged with community services within three weeks of release rose to 60.49% in 2024/25, surpassing the national average:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
East Sussex	47.17%	49.18%	60.49%
England	41.07%	50.29%	56.69%

8.5 The local system continues to review all drug and alcohol-related deaths of those in treatment and is currently aligning its processes with updated government guidance and best practice.

8.6 Being in treatment significantly reduces the risk of drug-related death. The commissioned treatment provider has adopted a national strategy to increase service access. By the end of 2024/25 deaths amongst people in treatment dropped to their lowest level since October 2019 (1.21%), with the actual number of deaths falling to 32, the lowest since September 2020 (based on a rolling 12-month figure).

8.7 Opiate users remain at particularly high risk. Although funding for specialist support teams focused on Hastings ended in March 2025, the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG) enabled the delivery of a cross-county complex case team and outreach provision. These services carry forward the legacy of Project ADDER into 2025/26, helping individuals access harm reduction advice and structured treatment.

9. Fraud and Scams

9.1 Fraud remains the most common crime type in the UK, accounting for 41% of all recorded crime.

9.2 Action Fraud serves as the national reporting centre for fraud. While it does not investigate cases directly, it forwards reports to local police forces when a suspect has been identified. Between January and March 2025, East Sussex recorded 613 individual Action Fraud reports, an 11% increase compared to the same period in the previous year.

9.3 Courier fraud/impersonation and doorstep crime/rogue trading emerged as the most frequently reported types of fraud. Many of the victims for these crime types (60%) were aged 75 plus, and 62% lived alone.

9.4 ESCC's Trading Standards Team delivered targeted communications throughout 2024/25 to help those most at risk of scams and fraud. The team provided advice to hundreds of vulnerable individuals and directly supported or investigated 290 cases involving scams, doorstep crime, or financial abuse.

9.5 In addition, Trading Standards launched a project targeting vulnerable groups likely to purchase or use unsafe e-bikes, e-scooters, or battery conversion kits, many of which have links to house fires. The project focused on gig economy workers, residents of Houses of Multiple Occupation, young commuters, and businesses such as vape shops. Working with East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and local businesses, the initiative reached over 30,000 residents and consumers.

9.6 Trading Standards continues to collaborate with Sussex Police on Operation Signature, ensuring that the most appropriate agency supports each victim. This approach places victims at the centre of the response while allowing police to focus on the most serious cases.

9.7 Operation Signature ensures that vulnerable fraud victims receive a face-to-face visit at their home address where possible by a uniformed officer or Police Community Support Officer. The visit to the victims is to offer reassurance, advice, and where appropriate, to refer to Victim Support for additional safeguarding and referrals to appropriate step down agencies.

9.8 Between January and March 2025, Operation Signature received 224 referrals in East Sussex, a 21% decrease from the previous year.

10. Preventing Violent Extremism

10.1 Counter Terrorism Policing South-East (CTPSE) produces the annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) to assess local risk. Partner agencies use this profile to guide their efforts, which may include tailored training packages for specific themes or audiences.

10.2 In 2024/25 the Home Office assessed the East Sussex Prevent Group through its annual assurance process. The partnership met all benchmarks and exceeded expectations in four out of seven areas. The assessment highlighted strengths in risk assessment and training.

10.3 The East Sussex Channel Panel continues to operate in line with Home Office guidance. This multi-agency panel, coordinated and chaired by the County Council, identifies individuals at risk of radicalisation and provides targeted support. Channel remains a voluntary and confidential early intervention programme. Counter-Terrorism Police screen all referrals and each person accepted into Channel receives a tailored support plan using local and national resources. Support continues until the risk reduces. The panel reports its activity to the Prevent Group.

10.4 To build trust and improve understanding of Prevent, the Prevent Group developed a multi-agency Communication and Engagement Strategy in Q1 2025/26. This strategy aims to increase public and partner confidence in Prevent and improve awareness of referral pathways.

10.5 In 2024/25 the Safer East Sussex Team (SEST) delivered 73 Prevent awareness and training sessions and engaged with communities at 34 events. The team focused particularly on raising awareness among special educational needs providers and supporting community cohesion following the Southport attacks.

11. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

11.1 In 2024/25 the East Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership expanded its remit to include adult criminal and sexual exploitation, such as cuckooing and county lines activity, rebranding as the Violence and Exploitation Reduction Partnership (VERP). To better understand the scale and nature of these issues, partners launched a data project which will involve developing an exploitation dashboard collating information from across the partnership.

11.2 The County Council referred 24 potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). Of these, 22 were children and 2 were adults. During the same period, Sussex Police submitted 78 NRM referrals, 45 adults and 33 children.

12. Serious Violence

12.1 In 2024/25 VERP updated its Needs Assessment, identifying seven key areas of risk. Based on this assessment, the partnership developed a new Preventing Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategy.

12.2 To support the Serious Violence Duty (2022), VERP completed a two-year, place-based project funded by the Home Office's Serious Violence Duty implementation grant in 2024. The project engaged individuals who lived in wards that are most affected by serious violence. Their insights shaped targeted, multi-agency interventions aimed at improving community safety and reducing harm. Examples include Crimestoppers Zones to promote reporting, the Newhaven Youth Work Infrastructure Forum, partnership Days of Action, designing crime initiatives such as lighting/CCTV, and targeted detached youth outreach.

12.3 VERP secured further Home Office funding to tackle knife crime, support children and families affected by criminal and sexual exploitation and implement a contextual safeguarding approach in communities facing the highest levels of harm.

12.4 In Baird Ward, Hastings, a contextual safeguarding assessment, young people's voices research, and design-out crime interventions supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the VERP, led to an 80% reduction in violent crime reports.

13. Changing Futures Programme - Multiple and Compound Needs (MCN)

13.1 The Changing Futures Programme is a £77 million joint initiative by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and The National Lottery Community Fund funded until March 2026.

13.2 Changing Futures works across East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove to test new ways of bringing together public and community sector partners to help people who face multiple disadvantage change their lives for the better. Multi-disciplinary teams located in Adult Social Care offer intensive, non-time-limited, trauma-informed, and person-centred casework to small caseloads of people with very complex needs. Ringfenced domestic abuse funding will sustain elements of multi-disciplinary teams in East Sussex through to March 2028.

13.3 In East Sussex, Changing Futures supported 35 people in the last quarter of 2024/25, and has supported 86 people in total since the beginning of the programme.

14. District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships

14.1 The Digital Intelligence Sharing Capability (DISC) system continues to support local efforts to tackle low-level crime and anti-social behaviour, including shoplifting. While Eastbourne and Hastings had already adopted the system, 2024/25 saw its rollout to Lewes, Rother, and Wealden.

14.2 In Lewes, the Business Crime Reduction Partnership oversees DISC, which now includes 70 retail and night-time economy businesses. Hastings experienced a rise in business crime reports as more users engaged with the system, although limited participation from smaller and larger stores has affected data accuracy. Rother launched DISC in October 2024 to encourage reporting of shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. Wealden has seen strong uptake, including the creation of two dedicated youth offender galleries. Environmental Health teams are also promoting DISC to smaller retailers.

14.3 Wealden Community Safety Partnership funded neighbourhood mediation services, available to all residents. The housing team also allocated funding to support tenants who may need mediation.

14.4 In Hailsham street drinking has increased. Sussex Police, the Town Council, and Wealden District Council are currently discussing responses.

14.5 Hastings has seen a rise in graffiti and under-reporting of crimes such as criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. Littering and enforcement challenges also remain ongoing issues. However, the town has seen a significant drop in night time economy related crime and violent incidents.

14.6 The Hastings and Rother areas have reported positive outcomes from the Hate and Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference and cuckooing meetings. Hastings gated five public rights of way to try to address anti-social behaviour and environmental crime. Local street community anti-social behaviour has declined thanks to enforcement of Public Spaces Protection Orders, support from the Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Programme and voluntary and community sector engagement.

15. East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership Priorities for 2025/26

15.1 The 2025/26 annual refresh of the SCPB Business Plan is attached at Appendix 2.

16. Conclusion and Recommendations

16.1 People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the performance across the Safer Communities Partnership during 2024/25.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Funding

Appendix 2: Safer Communities Business Plan refresh 2025/26

Appendix 1: Summary of Funding

The Safer East Sussex Team (SEST) successfully secured several income streams during 2024/25 totalling just under £4.6m.

1. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) New Burdens funding to provide support in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse: £1,114,315; this is additional to the core funding commitment into safe accommodation refuge services.
2. There has been significant investment into drug and alcohol treatment and recovery above the core funding commitment:
 - Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant (SSMTRG): £2,028,218 (was ADDER)
 - Individual Employability Placement Support Grant (IPS-AD): £160,000
 - Rough Sleepers Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG): £384,507
 - Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant - Housing Support Grant (SSMTRG HSG): £594,304
3. East Sussex is in receipt of funding from the Home Office via the Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership and alongside partners have commissioned several interventions which are predominantly delivered by Children's Services. £226,644 was received in 2024/25 for the Habitual Knife Carriers Programme and the Whole Systems Approach to Child Exploitation.
4. In 2024/25 East Sussex also received £58,250 to implement the Serious Violence Duty. This was used to deliver a placed-based research and engagement with people who have lived experience in communities experiencing highest harms.

This funding was complemented by over £4.6m of additional funding awarded by the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (OSPCC) for domestic, stalking, and sexual violence initiatives, sex-work outreach, multi-crime, and road safety victim support services, and to effect behaviour change with perpetrators of domestic abuse.

In East Sussex, these include:

1. £40k for Brighton Women's Centre to offer women only hubs in St Leonards-on-Sea and Eastbourne.
2. £137k for Change, Grow, Live to offer additional Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) and Health-IDVA capacity.
3. £20k for Counselling Plus Community to provide therapeutic support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence.
4. 27k for Sussex Community Development Association to employ an IDVA to work with Black, Asian and Minority survivors of domestic abuse.

In addition, the OPCC funded a range of pan-Sussex services which benefit residents of East Sussex, including:

- Brighton Women's Centre: core costs.
- Lotus Families: for support to female victims of domestic abuse.

- Capa First Response: an online platform supporting families and professionals impacted or working with child to parent abuse.
- Friends, Families and Travellers: support for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers affected by domestic abuse.
- Hersana: provision for those affected or at risk of harmful practices, immigration advice and counselling for women from Black and Asian communities.
- Hourglass: Community Response model for older victims of domestic abuse.
- LGBT Switchboard: to employ specialist IDVAs.
- Lifecentre: counselling for victims of sexual violence.
- Mankind: to provide specialist Male Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) and counselling support in partnership with Survivors Network.
- My Sisters House: to deliver a DART+ (Domestic Abuse Recovery Together) 10-week programme for mothers and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Oasis Project: for lived experience inclusion.
- Streetlight which supports women who face sexual violence and exploitation, alongside police operation support.
- Survivors Network: for counselling and specialist advice and support for victims of rape and sexual assault, ISVA and children's ISVA capacity, outreach and a groupwork programme.
- Sussex Police: to disrupt stalking and for buddy tags.
- The Daisy Chain Project: for the provision of pro-bono Legal Advice Service for victims of domestic abuse.
- Veritas Justice: for a Stalking Advocacy Service.
- YMCA Downlink to work with children and young people subject to exploitation alongside Sussex Police.
- Victim Support: multi-crime victim support service, including specific provision for victims of hate crime fraud and children and young people; Young Witness Service provides support to those under 16 who are attending Crown Court as a witness, and IDVAs for high-risk victims of domestic abuse.
- Brake: for support to families of fatal road incidents.

The OPCC has also funded pan-Sussex behaviour change support for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence and abuse and stalking, with funding awarded to:

- Sussex Police
- Brighton Housing Trust
- Change, Grow, Live
- Worth Services
- Interventions Alliance
- Survivors Network
- Veritas Justice
- Victim Support



east sussex
safer
communities
partnership

East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan Refresh and Strategic Assessment Executive Summary 2025

Our Ambition

The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership is committed to making our communities safer, more inclusive, and more cohesive. We want East Sussex to be a place where people feel safe, supported, and connected, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances.

We recognise that community safety and community cohesion are interconnected. A cohesive community is one where people feel they belong, where differences are respected, and where everyone has a stake in the success of their neighbourhood. This means tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, and also addressing the wider conditions that affect safety, such as housing, health, education, and economic opportunity.

Our ambition is to work in partnership to **protect vulnerable people, identify those at risk of harm, and keep our communities safe**, while also fostering trust, resilience, and shared values across East Sussex.

The East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership reflects and supports the work of the five local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs). These meet in three Partnership Boards: Eastbourne and Lewes; Wealden; and Hastings and Rother. Partners deliver a range of effective services, interventions, and community safety initiatives. Without these, the impact of the issues and challenges facing some of our residents and communities would be far more acute.

As we look ahead, we recognise the significance of the proposed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the development of a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) for Sussex. These changes present both opportunities and challenges for community safety. The Safer Communities Partnership is committed to being adaptive and responsive to this evolving landscape. Many of our functions, including domestic abuse and serious violence governance already operate effectively at a pan-Sussex level while many of the agencies involved in keeping our communities safe operate across all three local authorities. This provides a strong foundation for future collaboration and integration. Our Business Plan will remain flexible, ensuring that local priorities continue to be reflected, while aligning with wider strategic ambitions across Sussex.



Our Strategic Priorities

Protecting vulnerable people

We will safeguard those at risk of harm, including victims and survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, and victims of exploitation and hate crime.

Identifying those at risk of harm

We will use data and intelligence to identify individuals and communities at risk and intervene to prevent harm.

Keeping communities safe

We will reduce crime, anti-social behaviour, and serious violence through partnership working, prevention and community engagement.

Key Strategic Messages

Crime levels in East Sussex remain below national and regional averages; however, the conditions that underpin safety such as housing, health, and economic opportunity are unevenly distributed. Coastal towns like Hastings and Eastbourne continue to face persistent challenges linked to deprivation, housing insecurity, and health inequalities.

The Government has made tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) a national priority, with a new Strategy due in September 2025 aiming to halve VAWG within a decade. This is expected to include enhanced legal protections, improved victim support, and stronger multi-agency responses. Locally, this aligns with our White Ribbon accreditation, and support for victims and survivors.

Domestic and sexual violence remain high, with women and girls disproportionately affected. MARAC referrals remain above national thresholds.

Although **drug and alcohol misuse** continues to drive harm, East Sussex exceeds national targets for treatment access and continuity of care between prison and community treatment services. Drug-related deaths for people not in treatment however have increased, highlighting the need for continued outreach and harm reduction.

Community engagement shows concern about visible and localised issues, including drug and alcohol misuse, road safety, serious violence, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and fly-tipping.

Shoplifting has increased significantly. This reflects both national patterns and local pressures, including the cost-of-living crisis, and demonstrates the impact of local and national focus, leading to increased reporting.

The Partnership is committed to adjusting our systems to **improve outcomes for those who have experienced multiple disadvantage.**

Resilient communities are safer communities.

Local Strategic Alignment

The Safer Communities Business Plan aims to have operational application. The Plan will inform the actions of agencies working across the community safety landscape in East Sussex. It reflects and complements the individual priorities of the organisations within the partnership. This includes the five District and Borough Community Safety Partnerships, the Probation Service, the Fire and Rescue Service, Sussex Police and the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. The partnership collaborates with our local Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards, and the Youth Justice Service.

Sussex Police and Crime Plan

[The Sussex Police and Crime Plan 2024-28](#) outlines the strategic direction for policing in Sussex until 2028. There are three overarching public priorities:

Public Priority 1 – Prevent crime and support victims and witnesses

- Quality victim support services
- Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Rape and serious sexual offences
- Partnership activity to reduce crime
- Perpetrator intervention
- Fraud and cyber crime

Public Priority 2 – Investigate crime and bring offenders to justice

- Investigations and positive outcomes
- Positive outcomes and experience
- Burglary
- Homicide, serious violence, and knife crime
- Drugs and county lines
- Tackle business and retail crime

Public Priority 3 – Improve trust in policing and build public confidence

- Local, visible, and accessible policing
- Police officers, staff PCSOs, special constables and volunteers
- Public engagement
- Anti-social behaviour
- Access to policing
- Rural crime
- Public contact and response times
- Road safety
- Abuse and coercive control
- Stalking
- Safeguard the vulnerable
- Criminal exploitation, abuse, and modern day slavery
- Elder abuse



Our Approach

The Partnership must follow statutory guidance, legislation, and policy. There are statutory requirements around Prevent and Serious Violence, the provision of support in safe accommodation, and the requirement to undertake Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews (DARDRs) and Drugs and Alcohol Related Death (DARD) Reviews. The Partnership is also required to deliver a high-quality substance misuse treatment and recovery system and to work together to disrupt the supply and demand for illicit drugs.

The Partnership takes a **Public Health approach** to community safety, recognising that crime and anti-social behaviour are not inevitable. They are shaped by wider social determinants, including deprivation, inequality, and exclusion. We are committed to **doing no harm**, and to targeting our resources where they will have the greatest impact, guided by evidence and insight.

Our work is grounded in a **whole-person, whole-place perspective**. We aim to respond to people across the entirety of their experience, promoting **equity of access** to services and targeting our resources at the chronic hotspots for harm that often exist in our most deprived communities.

We understand that our workstreams are **interconnected**. Tackling serious violence requires us to address drug and alcohol-related harm. Reducing reoffending means confronting homelessness and worklessness. Our efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour must align with our commitment to eliminate harassment and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). Across all areas, we will maintain a focus on **online safety** and on supporting individuals who face **multiple disadvantage**.

Children and young people, particularly those transitioning to adult services, are central to our approach. The Partnership includes representation from specialist Children's Services and recognises the value of **early intervention**. By supporting behaviour change upstream, we can reduce the need for crisis-driven responses later.

Change happens **locally** — in the places where people live, work, and access services. Our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners play a vital role in bridging the gap between strategic ambition and community reality. Together, we will build networks of support, strengthen trust, and empower communities to take collective action. This means drawing on community assets, encouraging participation, and amplifying the voices of those most affected. There is compelling evidence to support the **co-production** of solutions, and we are committed to working in partnership with those who are most affected by local community safety issues.

The Partnership is more than the sum of its parts and views **community safety as an outcome**, not a collection of services. It relies on active collaboration at a systems level — aligning priorities, commissioning, and external funding. We will continue to share data, intelligence, community insights, and learning, and take a **data-informed, evidence-led approach** to planning and evaluation. Our annual Strategic Assessment also draws on a sample of community perceptions, alongside reports of crime, whilst recognising that many crimes are under-reported. Our goal is to build a shared understanding of **what works**, and to embed sustainable change across East Sussex.

Safer East Sussex Survey results

In May and June 2025, the Safer East Sussex Team ran an online survey which replicated the questions asked in the county council's Reputation Tracker survey which ran from 2017 to 2022. This approach was taken so that we had comparable data over time. The survey asked respondents to pick their top three community safety issues from a defined list of issues, and why they chose those issues. The survey also asked respondents to pick their top three antisocial behaviour issues from a defined list, and why they chose those issues. Finally, we asked respondents which district and borough they lived in. There were 429 responses to the survey.

Community safety

- 46% of respondents identified drug and alcohol misuse as one of their top concerns; this was followed by road safety (41%) and serious violent crime including knife crime (37%).
- Hate crime (45%) and fraud/scams (42%) directly affected respondents (or someone they know) more than other issues.

Anti-social behaviour

- Almost half (45%) of respondents identified speeding/anti-social driving as one of their top issues. This was followed by fly tipping/dumping (37%), drug dealing in public spaces (34%) and vandalism/criminal damage (31%).
- Nuisance/aggressive neighbours (63%) and noise disturbance from pubs, clubs, or vehicles (59%) directly affected respondents (or someone they know) more than other issues.

Our Strategic Objectives

- Support perpetrators of domestic abuse to change their behaviour and hold them to account.
- Improve outcomes for those experiencing domestic and sexual abuse.
- Develop and implement the Sexual Violence Needs Assessment and VAWG Strategy.
- Implement the White Ribbon Action Plan.
- Reduce adult exploitation.
- Implement year one of the Prevent Community Engagement Strategy.
- Reduce Hate Crime and increase confidence in reporting.
- Reduce drug and alcohol related harm.
- Improve outcomes for individuals who have experienced multiple disadvantage.
- Prevent violent extremism.
- Prevent and reduce serious violence.
- Reduce anti-social driving
- Tackle town centre ASB, criminal damage and shoplifting
- Ensure local planning takes account of community safety.
- Raise public awareness around fraud and scams.
- Understand and take action on locally identified priorities.
- Understand and take action on Youth Justice priorities.
- Reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.
- Improve public confidence in the safety of their communities.

Protecting Vulnerable People

Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse

Headline Data

- National estimates show 2.1% of adults experienced sexual assault in 2024.
- Nationally 36% (67,928 offences) of sexual offences recorded by the police in YE March 2024 were rape offences. This was a 1% decrease compared with YE March 2023 (68,762 offences). This follows general increases in sexual offences over the last decade largely because of improvements in police recording practices.
- Fewer than one in six victims of rape or assault reported the crime to police.
- National data estimates 2.3 million adults experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024, with Domestic abuse related crimes representing 15.8% of all offences recorded nationally.
- Nationally, approximately one in five (20.5%) adults have experienced domestic abuse.
 - 4.8% of adults experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2024.
 - 72.5% of victim/survivors were female.

- There has been a 5.5% increase in reported domestic abuse crimes over the past three years in East Sussex, with the rates highest in Hastings.
- 1 woman is killed by a man every 3 days in the UK, 61% were killed by a current/former partner, 80% of femicides occurred in the home of the victim or perpetrator¹.
- SafeLives estimate that the average high risk domestic abuse case costs almost £20,000 in public money, based on an assumed average number of police call outs, A&E attendances, and GP support.
- Locally, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) at which highest risk domestic abuse cases are discussed exceed the expected number of cases discussed.
 - Eastbourne, Lewes, and Wealden exceed this by 31%.
 - Hastings and Rother exceed this by 52%.

There was a 14% increase in reported rape and sexual offences in the two years from 2022/23 to 2024/25 in East Sussex, with rates highest in Eastbourne and Hastings.

Partnership Objectives

- Sustain the delivery of interventions for those that cause harm, targeting serial perpetrators and repeat offenders.
- The SCPB will oversee the work of the Domestic Abuse Board by receiving annual performance reports and monitoring progress against the East Sussex Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) Action Plan through the local Domestic Abuse Management Oversight Group, including developments such as increased lived experience representation, and commissioning a response to child-parent abuse. Domestic abuse and sexual violence will be included as a standing SCPB agenda item at least once a year to maintain visibility of key issues. While avoiding duplication of the work of specialist Boards, the SCPB will ensure strategic alignment and accountability across the partnership. The East Sussex DSVA Plan will incorporate recommendations from the pan-Sussex needs assessment and Strategy alongside learning from Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews.
- Increase the number of safe accommodation spaces to 67, including 5 safe accommodation places for male and trans victims.
 - 55 standard spaces and a further 12 spaces for local women who have multiple compound needs (MCN).
- Remodel MARAC to maximise impact through targeted use of resource.
- Improve the speed at which Domestic Abuse investigations are concluded through the 'Domestic Abuse in a Day' initiative.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Headline Data

- National estimates show 3.1% of adults experienced stalking in 2024 and 8.7% experienced harassment.
- Local data for 2023 and 2024 shows that:
 - 90% of rape offences involved female victims.
 - 79% of other sexual offences involved female victims.
 - 66% of stalking and harassment crimes involved female victims.
 - 72% of domestic violence crimes involved female victims.
- There has been a 28% decrease in reports of stalking/harassment crime over the past 3 years.
 - *Sussex Police have been approached for clarification regarding the decrease. A formal explanation is pending, and this section will be updated upon receipt of their response.*

Partnership Objectives

- Collaborate on the development of a pan-Sussex VAWG Strategy and VAWG dashboard.
- The OPCC will draw up a multi-agency plan to address the findings of the Sexual Violence Needs Assessment and VAWG Strategy with specific actions for the SCPB.

¹ [Femicide Census – Profiles of women killed by men](#)

- Facilitate collaboration between White Ribbon accredited partners to share progress, align messaging, and promote joint initiatives. The ESCC Safer East Sussex Team (SEST) will hold at least one joint planning / reflection session annually to share learning and coordinate communications.

Modern slavery, Human trafficking (MSHT) and adult exploitation

Headline Data

- Nationally, 45% of victims referred to the Home Office were British boys under 17yrs, often linked to County Lines. Deprivation, substance misuse and family issues are risk factors²
- There has been a 39% decrease in reports of modern slavery recorded in East Sussex over past 3 years.
 - *Sussex Police have been approached for clarification regarding the decrease. A formal explanation is pending, and this section will be updated upon receipt of their response.*

Partnership Objectives

- Convene a multi-agency session to review the Modern Slavery Maturity Matrix findings and agree on priority actions.
- Ensure the SCPB maintains strategic oversight of adult criminal and sexual exploitation by receiving an annual report from the East Sussex Violence and Exploitation Reduction Partnership (VERP), highlighting progress against the Preventing Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan. This includes improving understanding of the scale and scope of exploitation, increasing victim identification and support by harmonising cuckooing practice, and implementing new legislation, and supporting high harm offenders by analysing agency involvement with Habitual Knife Carriers aged 18 to 25.
- Produce an exploitation dashboard for East Sussex, collating data from across the VERP.

Hate Crime

Headline Data

- There has been a 9% reduction in hate crimes in East Sussex over the past 3 years.
 - *Sussex Police have been approached for clarification regarding the decrease. A formal explanation is pending, and this section will be updated upon receipt of their response.*
 - 58% of hate crimes are race related, followed by sexuality (19%) and disability hate crime (12%)

Partnership Objectives

- Improve partnership coordination and community engagement to prevent and address hate crime by improving information sharing, aligning local initiatives, and supporting public awareness across East Sussex.
- Deliver a joint partnership briefing on hate crime activity and engagement to the SCPB annually.

Identifying those at Risk of Harm

Drug and Alcohol Related Harm

Headline Data

- In the 12 months to March 2025 there were 2,799 adults in treatment:
 - 38% for opiates, 31% non-opiates and 31% for alcohol only.

² [CSJ-JC-Criminal-exploitation-modern-slavery-by-another-name-LoRes.pdf](#)

- There were proportionally fewer new presentations for opiate use, with 17% of new presentations compared to 38% of the treatment cohort.
- Treatment progress for individuals has been performing better than regional and national averages.
- There were 103 drug and alcohol related deaths in 2023 in East Sussex.
 - 25 drug misuse deaths, and 78 alcohol specific mortality.
 - This is an increase of 34% compared to 2022, the increase nationally was smaller (9%).
 - This is the latest data available due to delays in Coroner report processing.

Partnership Objectives

- Work with the commissioned substance misuse treatment provider, the Harm to Hope Board, and wider partners to implement a new treatment service.
- Reduce deaths of those in drug and alcohol treatment.
 - Keep the proportion of individuals that die in treatment as a proportion of all individuals in treatment below 1.2% - this is based on the national average.
- Improve treatment pathways for people with co-occurring conditions, those with respiratory and liver disease, and prison leavers. Collaborate to secure ongoing funding to support the continuation of the respiratory conditions pilot.
- Work with the Harm to Hope Board and relevant sub-groups to implement and review pathways for at risk groups.
- Ensure coordinated oversight and response to street community issues by incorporating this work into the Harm to Hope Board's Prevention Subgroup. This includes aligning outreach services, escalating concerns through existing mechanisms, and reporting progress through partnership structures.
- Ensure that there is continuity of care between prison and community of at least 50% of prison leavers, with an ambition that 100% of relevant prison leavers are successfully engaged in treatment services.
- Operationalise the Joint Working Protocol for Co-Occurring Conditions taking into account the development of the new Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams
- Encourage people to seek help earlier for alcohol misuse support in conjunction with Public Health through the implementation of the East Sussex Alcohol Harm Strategy.

Keeping Communities Safe

Violent extremism

Headline Data

- Since February 2022, the national threat level has been substantial, meaning an attack is likely.
- Nationally the Prevent programme is undergoing significant review. In the year ending March 2024:
 - There was a 1.5% increase in Prevent referrals nationally.
 - 40% of referrals come from the education sector.
 - 40% of referrals were for 11-15 years, and 13% were aged 16/17yrs.
 - For cases adopted by Channel, 50% were aged 11-15yrs and 89% were male.

Partnership Objectives

- SCPB to maintain oversight of the Prevent Community Engagement Strategy by receiving an annual report that provides assurance on delivery, public engagement, and emerging community concerns.
- Ensure the SCPB maintains oversight of the Prevent Group's Action Plan by receiving an annual report that provides assurance on delivery and progress. This includes implementing the Prevent Communications and Engagement Strategy to build community trust and confidence in reporting, reducing permissive environments for extremism, refreshing the Community Sentiment Monitoring Framework to better understand contributing factors to radicalisation, and safeguarding individuals by applying recommendations from the national evaluation of Channel.

Public Place Serious Violence

Headline Data

- Rates of serious violence are lower in East Sussex compared to regionally and nationally. however, Hastings and Eastbourne have rates higher than the national average.
- Hospital admissions for violence are highest in Hastings:
 - There is an increase between June and August.
 - Admissions are highest on Saturday and Sunday, between midnight and 4am.
 - Main causes are assault by bodily force (63%) and sharp object (14%).
 - 77% of admissions were male and 14% were under 20yrs, 25% were aged 20-29yrs, and 23% were 30-39yrs.
- Missing education, mental health, and substance/alcohol misuse are all risk factors for being perpetrators of violent crime.

Partnership Objectives

Ensure the SCPB maintains strategic oversight of serious violence and exploitation by receiving an annual report from the East Sussex Violence and Exploitation Reduction Partnership (VERP), highlighting progress against the Preventing Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan. This includes supporting the development of Youth Futures Prevention Panels, promoting system change in response to traumatic stress, continuing support for young adults involved with the Probation Service, and identifying and supporting victims through initiatives such as the Habitual Knife Carriers Project and the Whole System Approach to Child Exploitation. Serious violence will remain a standing SCPB agenda item at least once per year.

Antisocial behaviour (ASB), Retail Theft, and Street Communities

Headline Data

- National data estimates 36% of people experienced or witnessed ASB in 2024.
- There has been a 15% increase in ASB over the past three years in East Sussex. 84% of ASB is nuisance and relates to youths, neighbours, drink/drugs, noise, and vehicles.
- There has been a 142% increase in shoplifting over the past three years in East Sussex partly due to local and national focus which has resulted in increased reporting.

Partnership Objectives

- Local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to promote consistent and effective use of the DISC system to improve reporting and intelligence sharing of shoplifting, ASB and criminal damage.
- Ensure that the SCPB feeds into the safety and security objectives of the town deals / neighbourhood plans for Hastings, Bexhill, and Eastbourne.

Fraud and Scams

Headline Data

- Fraud and scams are the most common crime type in the UK, accounting for 41% of crime nationally.
- Locally, the latest data shows an 11% increase in referrals to Action Fraud between January and March 2025 compared to the same period last year.

Partnership Objectives

- Support the existing fraud and scam awareness campaigns through coordinated partnership working with Sussex Police, Trading Standards, local CSPs and voluntary sector organisations.
- Ensure fraud awareness materials and messaging are shared utilising existing networks and communication channels.

Reducing Reoffending

- The proportion of offenders that re-offend in East Sussex (20%) is lower than the national average (26%).
- Lewes has the highest number of re-offences.³

Partnership Objectives

- Request and consider an annual report on local work to reduce reoffending from the Reducing Reoffending Subgroup of the Sussex Criminal Justice Board (SCJB).
- Ensure the SCPB maintains strategic oversight of youth justice priorities, identifying opportunities for joint working on shared priorities. SCPB to review an annual update from the YJS Chief Officers Group and the Youth Justice Plan.
- Clarify the governance mechanisms for reducing re-offending by mapping existing sub-groups and responsibilities. Produce a governance structure document in collaboration with Probation and SCJB, to include cross-cutting themes such as rough sleeping.

Road Safety

- The number of people killed or injured on East Sussex Roads is significantly higher compared to national and regional averages. Per billion vehicle miles there are 141 casualties in East Sussex, this is 90 in the South East and 92 nationally in 2023
- In 2024 there were 1,481 fatal, serious, or slight casualties in East Sussex
 - 516 occurred in Wealden, significantly more than any other district/borough.

Partnership Objectives

- Local CSPs to integrate anti-social driving into their road safety workstreams, working with partners (Sussex Police, ESCC road safety team) to identify hotspots and co-design interventions.
- With the dissolution of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) - the SCPB will consider how road safety initiatives can best be influenced.
- Explore the inclusion of road safety as a themed SCPB agenda item annually, with a summary of current activity, risks, and opportunities for collaboration across partners.

Sussex Police provided pre-publication data in March 2025 from live systems. To note that this data may change and could differ from official statistics later published by the ONS and Home Office.

³ Average Number of reoffences per reoffender 2022/23, Public Health Outcomes Framework May 2025 (most recent published data).

