

# Creativity for Healthier Lives



# Contents

Foreword.....	5
Executive summary.....	7
Recommendations: Creativity for Healthier Lives .....	8

## *Section one*

An introduction to creative health .....	9
What is creative health?.....	9
Why is creativity important to health and wellbeing?.....	10
Creative health as a 'building block' for health.....	11
Joyful, fulfilling and happy lives, getting a bit more than the bare necessities .....	12
East Sussex, local assets and creative riches .....	16
Inequality and creative health opportunities .....	19

## *Section two*

Setting the scene .....	20
Our place .....	20
Our residents.....	21
East Sussex – A rich artistic heritage and a bright cultural future.....	23
Culture East Sussex .....	25
The role of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector .....	25

## *Section three*

East Sussex creative health, across the life course.....	29
Starting well .....	30
Living well.....	32
Ageing well.....	34
Dying well.....	36

## Section four

Key creative health programmes.....	38
Eastbourne ALIVE.....	38
Making it Happen.....	38

## Section five

Local area transformation through creative health .....	41
Recommendations.....	42
Conclusion.....	43

## Section Six

Update on the Director of Public Health Report 2022/23.....	44
Recommendations.....	44
Acknowledgments.....	46
The Schools Art Competition.....	48
Resources and references.....	49



I have prescribed many things, dogs, books, roller-skating, rambling, crochet and choirs alongside standard medical treatments.

A holistic approach to health is often a creative one - people need joy to get better as much as they need all the other things that medicine can offer.



Dr Sarah Andersen, Herstmonceux Integrative Health Centre



# Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this annual report for 2023/24 which focusses on Creativity for Healthier Lives. Creativity is a fundamental aspect of humanity, and it is a pleasure to be able to focus on the essential role creativity has in supporting us all to be fulfilled, connected, healthy and expressive individuals.

One of the core tasks of a Director of Public Health comes from the statutory requirement that they publish an annual report on a theme of their choosing that speaks to a key issue or area of concern and focus. I am pleased to be able to use this year's Annual Director of Public Health Report to highlight the wide range of creative health activities and opportunities already in place across the county.



Darrell Gale  
Director of Public Health

This year's Creativity for Healthier Lives report forms part of a series of Annual Director of Public Health reports. These reports have been developed to highlight and increase our impact on health and wellbeing locally by focusing on the wider determinants of health, the factors that create and sustain the health and wellbeing of our population, beyond the provision of universal free NHS healthcare. These include the 2019/20 Health and Housing report that focused on health and housing in East Sussex. The 2021/22 Work, Skills and Health report that considers the relationship between work, skills, and health. Whilst last years, Connecting People and Places report covered social connections and multi-agency work to tackle loneliness.

A lot of arts in health and care work happens at grass root levels, in community based organisations and programmes that address both the clinical and social determinants of health. With this in mind, it's a great time to look in detail at creative health and the many contributions it makes at improving the health of our communities.

Health improvement projects and programmes that have featured creative health elements are not a new thing in the county. We have been making steady progress to establish East Sussex as a creative health county. We have done this with a wide range of partners, including those from the cultural, heritage, tourism, artistic and health and care sectors. When it comes to using creative health approaches we are slowly moving from 'nice to have' to 'must do!'.

This report builds on the Creativity and Health Evidence Review 2022 <sup>[Endnote 1]</sup>. The East Sussex Creative Health Position Paper - September 2023 <sup>[Endnote 2]</sup> and the Creative Healthier Lives - Arts in Public Health Delivery Action Plan <sup>[Endnote 3]</sup>. With contributions from

key national and local figures in the creative health sphere. This report aims to be a key resource in making East Sussex a creative health county and highlights the creative health assets and organisations involved.

There is a vast range of creative activities and opportunities across the county including the recent exhibition of the Turner Prize to Eastbourne <sup>[Endnote 4]</sup> and the Towner Eastbourne Gallery's centenary <sup>[Endnote 5]</sup>.

This report sets out the benefits and evidence base for using creative health approaches across the life course. Recommendations are included to show how creative health approaches contribute to the local economy and health improvement, enhancing individual and communal opportunities to engage in creative activities that bring joy, connection and personal expression.

Furthermore the recommendations set out how we will work, without contributing additional financial resources, with new and existing partners. This will be through the strengthening of established structures to focus on creative health, connecting local partners, and weaving it into existing public health programmes. We shall also be building collaboration beyond the county using research and external funding opportunities to support our creative health ambitions.

My thanks are extended to everyone across East Sussex who, in ways great and small, are making East Sussex a creatively healthier place to live in.

Darrell Gale

Director of Public Health

# Executive summary

Creativity, artistic, heritage and cultural activities have an enormous potential to help improve our experience of life. They can help improve our health, connect with others and most importantly, they give us joy. Joyful experiences are at the heart of a healthy life well lived.

From pre-conception to end of life care, creativity can help to support the needs of our communities. With just two hours of structured creative activity a week <sup>[Endnote 6]</sup> we can all improve our own health and wellbeing and of those around us.

Many organisations contribute to the range of work that uses creativity to help connect, support, and inspire people to live joyfully, making East Sussex a special place to live, work and play in. This includes, East Sussex County Council (ESCC), district and borough councils, the NHS, artistic, cultural and heritage organisations.

The public health department, within ESCC, has actively explored the use of creativity to understand how it can improve health and wellbeing for our communities. Since 2021, a programme has been in place to explore how East Sussex might become a creative health county.

A creative health county actively encourages all of its residents, communities and visitors to be involved in a range of activities that can support self-care, prevent ill health and strengthen connection between people. Creativity can have a real, measurable, positive, and lasting effect on individuals and communities. It should be seen as one of the foundations for good health and wellbeing.

In this report we shine a spot light on the organisations, activities and projects that provide a range of creative opportunities across the county <sup>[Endnote 7]</sup>.

We want to ensure that the opportunities to take part, express ourselves and enjoy creativity are available to everyone across East Sussex.

Local creative opportunities include activities such as music, drama, dance, painting, drawing, collage, sculpture, cultural exchanges, celebrations, heritage, and tourism activities. They can also include 'everyday creativity' from home baking, crafts, hobbies, alongside outdoor and natural pursuits like gardening <sup>[Endnote 8]</sup>, conservation <sup>[Endnote 9]</sup>, and other nature-based <sup>[Endnote 10]</sup> or outdoor activities <sup>[Endnote 11]</sup>.

Collaborative work to explore how East Sussex can become a creative health county has informed this report and a series of recommendations which are listed below.

## Recommendations: Creativity for Healthier Lives

1. We will work with the wide range of existing partners in East Sussex – including the district and borough councils, the NHS, voluntary, community and creative sectors, and use established collaborative groups such as Culture East Sussex to promote and embed creative health approaches for everyone.
2. We will embrace the new opportunities in tourism promotion provided by 'Experience Sussex' to support economic development that builds on the vast array of creative action within the county.
3. We will continue to develop and refine the Creative Health Support Collaborative and ensure that it evolves to meet the needs of the wide range of stakeholders, organisations and communities that are contributing to East Sussex becoming a creative health county.
4. We will 'connect the creatives' by understanding the current practices and future opportunities for service commissioners across East Sussex to benefit from embedding creative health approaches into existing or new areas of work.
5. We will use the Creative Health Charter Mark as a complimentary addition to the existing Wellbeing at Work East Sussex Programme.
6. We will work with system partners across the South East to understand and secure opportunities for research, collaboration, integrated programme support, delivery, and funding of creative health works across the region.

# Section one

## An introduction to creative health

Creative health activities are not a 'cure all' but can have a positive, lasting effect across a range of conditions and health support needs.

Creative health has been shown to have beneficial effects to support those experiencing numerous physical and mental health conditions. These include non communicable diseases such as cancer, heart and other cardio-vascular conditions. Creative health approaches have shown to have positive impacts to support child development, healthy ageing, end of life care and bereavement. Sometimes creative health approaches support medical interventions and sometimes can be a replacement for such interventions <sup>[Endnote 12]</sup>.

### What is creative health?

There is no single definition of creative health but there is a consensus that it refers to the use of creative, artistic, cultural or heritage assets to positively improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

If we can embed the arts, creativity, culture, heritage and the natural environment alongside other community and non-clinical approaches to health and social care (such as social prescribing) into the everyday life of individuals, and their communities, we can help everyone to experience good health.

'Good health' is not only concerned with a person's level of physical and mental health and wellbeing. It also describes the extent to which individuals in a community or wider society are enabled and encouraged to live healthy, flourishing, and joyful lives.

The World Health Organisation definition of 'wellbeing' <sup>[Endnote 13]</sup> includes quality of life and the ability of people and societies to contribute meaningfully to the world around them.



The arts can be seen as the glue that binds all parts of society.

Cllr Keith Glazer ESCC Health & Wellbeing Board







Imagine this: not just pills and prescriptions, but a vibrant tapestry of music, dance, storytelling, and nature woven into the fabric of our communities. This is the essence of creative health, a powerful tool that goes beyond symptom management, delving into the very essence of human connection, expression, and resilience.



Professor Kevin Fenton CBE, President, Faculty of Public Health

## Why is creativity important to health and wellbeing?

There is growing evidence that arts and creative activity can lead to improved health wellbeing and social connectivity. Getting involved in creative activities throughout our lives helps reduces loneliness, supports our physical and mental wellbeing, and helps to strengthen the social ties we need to live happily <sup>[Endnote 14]</sup>.

Group arts, creativity, culture, heritage, and the natural environment form the components of a creative health programme. Similarly, engagement in a wide range of activities across these five areas has comparable beneficial physical and mental health impacts on individuals.

Turning to the New Economics Foundation's Five Ways to Wellbeing <sup>[Endnote 15]</sup> we can see the underlying health improvement actions proposed <sup>[Endnote 16]</sup> include the following:

**Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give**



Fig 2. The 5 Ways to Wellbeing Summary <sup>[Endnote 17]</sup>

Central to the Five Ways to Wellbeing, and creative health, is the idea that ‘...people will, to some extent, already be involved in specific activities under the overarching themes of

connecting, being active, learning etc. Rather than encouraging a completely novel set of behaviours, the outcomes of a campaign of this kind are, therefore, more concerned with increasing the time people spend in activities known to enhance wellbeing <sup>[Endnote 18]</sup>.

If we build on the foundations and health benefits of activities that people already enjoy, we are much more likely to help them to live healthier, happier lives.



The arts are less about curing our conditions and more about curating our lives, giving events meaning and in so doing, transforming ourselves and often those around us. Creative expression is a health behaviour, like nutrition and exercise. It helps us live to our fullest potential throughout the life course.



Christopher Bailey, Arts and Health Lead at the World Health Organisation (WHO)

## Creative health as a 'building block' for health

All of us need some basic things to grow, learn, develop, and thrive. Evidence tells us that engagement with the arts and creativity can mitigate against some of the negative effects that individuals may experience caused by wider health determinants of health.

Many factors or building blocks, sometimes called the wider or social determinants of health, combine together to affect the health of individuals and communities. Whether people are healthy or not, is determined by their circumstances and environment. To a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health, whereas the more commonly considered factors such as access and use of health care services often have less of an impact <sup>[Endnote 19]</sup>.

The East Sussex Creative Health Position Paper <sup>[Endnote 20]</sup> states that access to the opportunities presented by creative health is one of the building blocks <sup>[Endnote 21]</sup>, and a key element of delivery for services.

This year's report seeks to show just how access to creative, cultural, artistic, heritage, environmental and community activities form part of the foundations for individual and community health and wellbeing.

The Creative Healthier Lives - Arts in Public Health Delivery Action Plan <sup>[Endnote 22]</sup> explains how individuals, communities, and the systems in East Sussex, can all benefit from creative health approaches to help support them to live fulfilled, healthier, and joyful lives.

## Joyful, fulfilling and happy lives, getting a bit more than the bare necessities

Creativity, artistic, heritage and cultural activities have an enormous potential to help improve our experience of life. They can help improve our health, connect with others and most importantly, they give us joy.

We all deserve joy in our lives. Joyful experiences are at the heart of a healthy life well lived.

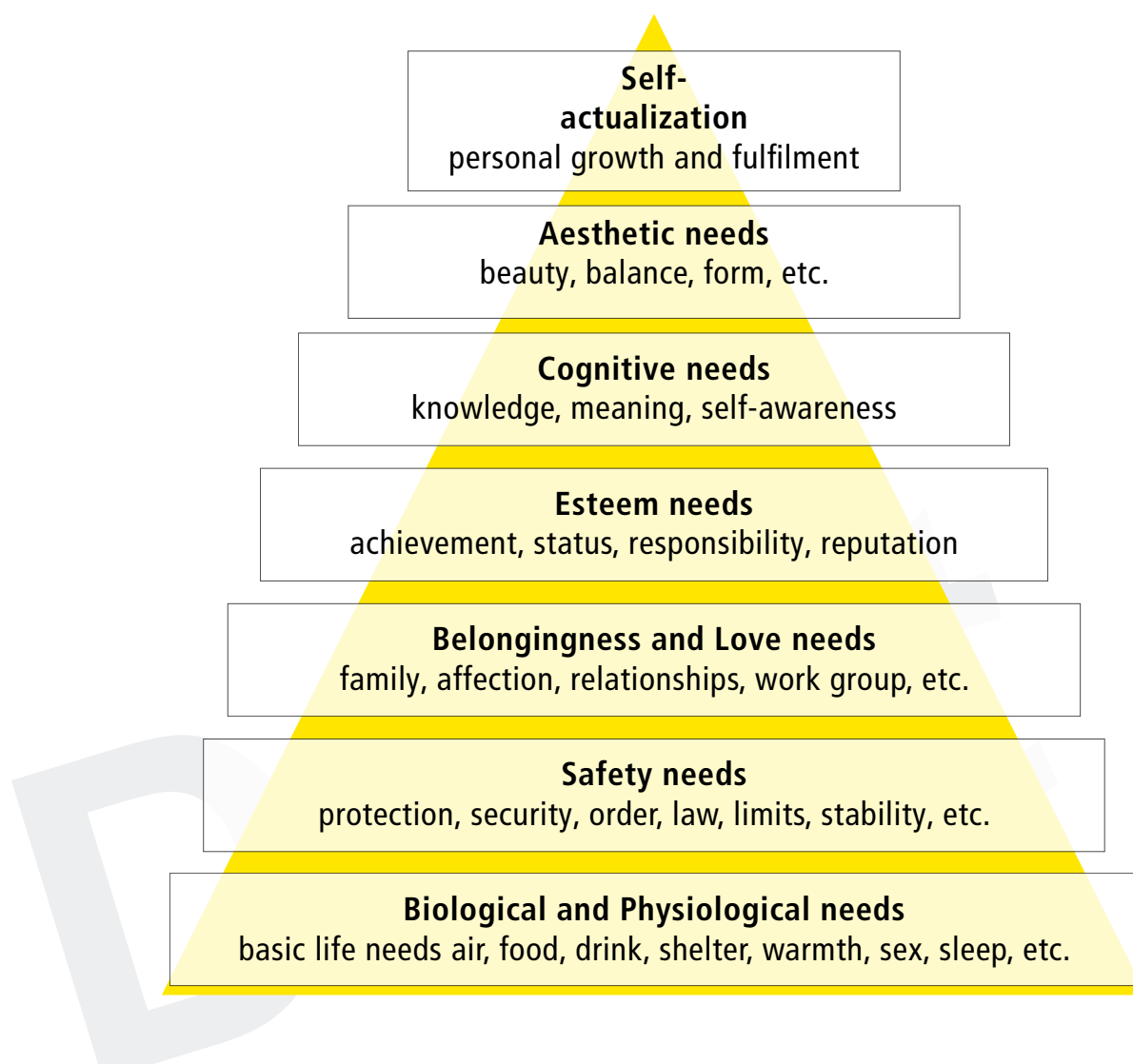
We all deserve the basics such as safety, food, water, shelter, education, employment, people we can share our lives with. We also all deserve the opportunity to grow, explore and experience the world around us.

In the 1950's, Maslow came up with a way to describe these basics, the original model for the 'Hierarchy of Needs' <sup>[Endnote 23]</sup>. This was updated in the 1970's to include <sup>[Endnote 24]</sup> a larger and more specific range of definitions for the needs of individuals and communities. Ranging from the basic physical need to sustain basic life support (food, water, air, shelter, safety) at its basic level to 'cognitive' or intellectual stimulation, 'aesthetic' or cultural opportunities and experience, and 'self-actualisation' or personal fulfilment needs at its top.

Sometimes we forget that we need a bit more than the basics, and the bare essentials to keep ourselves happy and well. Therefore we should make real efforts to nourish our psychological, emotional, and intellectual needs as much our physical selves.

In a nutshell, 'One must live well to know what living is' <sup>[Endnote 25]</sup>.

**Fig 1 The 7-level version of the Hierarchy of Needs based on Maslow** <sup>[Endnote 26]</sup>



Source: Design Alan Chapman 2001-7-adapted by Ward, David & Lasen, Marta. (2009).

We need to be able to communicate what we are feeling, and have meaningful connections with others, if we want to stay healthy.

One example of a local project is Mr. Hastings and St Leonards. This uses drama and film making to look at the issues around communication, connection, mental health and suicide prevention.

Mr Hastings and St Leonards is a project for local men that has been making important contributions to the local discussion around mens health. The project, run by a group of local men, with assistance from Hastings Voluntary Action <sup>[Endnote 27]</sup> it seeks to support men to develop coping strategies, resilience and peer support networks that enables them to live happier and healthier lives.

The Monologues of Men <sup>[Endnote 28]</sup> was developed and delivered by the Mr Hastings and St Leonards project <sup>[Endnote 29]</sup> and looks at communication around men's mental health and wellbeing. The Monologues of Men was a community theatre project that tackled a range of key subjects including childhood experiences, mental and physical health, self imposed limitations, negative expectations and pressures men can face.

The project highlights that men are often uncomfortable with communication, sometimes lacking experience or the chance to talk about their personal issues and challenges. The wider social pressure to 'man up' and not share anxieties, weakness, fears and uncertainty can lead to some men bottling up their feelings.

This can lead to deterioration in relationships, worsening mental health, and sometimes self harming behaviours or suicidal thoughts and feelings. The project provides spaces and connections that can support them to get used to communicating their experience, develop relationships and links with others who can help build personal resilience. Through this they can live happier, more fulfilled, less lonely and isolated lives.

Monologues of Men builds upon the work highlighted in the short film 'Men Don't Talk' <sup>[Endnote 30]</sup>. The film, made by the Mr Hastings and St Leonards project to help tackle male mental health issues and high levels of suicide and self harming behaviours in men, looked at the difficulties faced by men in Hastings and St Leonards. The film highlights the need for open communication, sharing of experiences and feelings. With an insightful depiction of male mental health and wellbeing, it is an important creative output from a grassroots community project.

Another Hastings based project used music and a 'rave style' event to help highlight community mental health issues and challenge stigma during the 2024 Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW). The MHAW Musical Extravaganza <sup>[Endnote 31]</sup> that ran on the 17 May used a wide range of musicians and dance acts to tackle some of the stigma that surrounds mental health.

This festival, a collaboration between ESCC, Hastings Borough Council, Hastings Voluntary Action, Mr. Hastings & St Leonards, Love Hastings and Hastings Commons. Included the Hastings Punk Choir and a wide range of DJ sets and musicians. Local mental health advocates and 'experts by experience' were also in attendance.

Both of these projects highlight the sort of activities that are already happening in East Sussex and show local people getting involved in organising creative experiences and activities that give their communities a bit more than the bare necessities.



Still from the [Men Don't Talk - Mr Hastings and St Leonards | youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) film project.



Hastings Punk Choir at the MHAW Hastings event.



You can find more information about Mr. Hastings and St Leonards in the links below.

- [Mr Hastings & St Leonards, BBC South East News 26/04/24 | youtube.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-60424)
- [Men's Room Hastings & St Leonards | Youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [#MentalHealthAwarenessWeek2024 | TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/tag/MentalHealthAwarenessWeek2024)
- [Mental Health Awareness Week 2024 | hastingsonlinetimes.co.uk](https://hastingsonlinetimes.co.uk)

# East Sussex, local assets and creative riches

East Sussex has a rich and diverse range of arts, creativity, culture, heritage and tourism activities.

These include concert halls, galleries, libraries, theatres, and museums. We also have some of the most beautiful countryside and coastline. Our assets include a wide range of education, health and social care environments, community settings, and our places of work, and of course our own homes.

There are many local opportunities for creative activity, reflection and connection on our doorstep. As individuals we are often consumers of creativity, however we can also be active participants and creatives in our own right. We all have the ability and the opportunity to make something that nurtures and supports our creative expression, wellbeing, and health. It's important that we can find the help we need to do this, near to where we live, study, work or play.

In order to really make people's lives better, it is necessary to understand the whole system and to be person-centred. That's where arts, culture, museums, libraries, and other community assets can play a key role. When people are isolated and disconnected from their communities, there is an automatic correlation with poor health' [Endnote 32].

Across the county we have an impressive range of opportunities to engage with creative activities. The following list represents a sample of countywide creative assets.



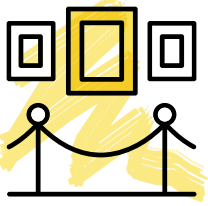
## Music venues and concert halls

- [Trading Boundaries | tradingboundaries.com](https://tradingboundaries.com)
- [Glyndebourne opera | glyndebourne.com](https://glyndebourne.com)
- [The White Rock | whiterocktheatre.org.uk](https://whiterocktheatre.org.uk)
- [Blackbox Hastings | blackboxhastings.com](https://blackboxhastings.com)



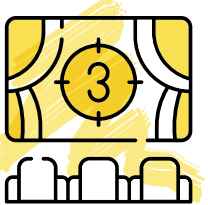
## Museums and heritage sites

- [Anne of Cleves House | Sussex Past](https://sussexpast.org.uk)
- [Hastings Museum and Art Gallery | hmag.org.uk](https://hmag.org.uk)
- [Seaford museum | seafordmuseum.co.uk](https://seafordmuseum.co.uk)



## Art galleries, cultural centres

- [De La Warr Pavilion | dlwp.com](http://dlwp.com)
- [Hastings Contemporary | hastingscontemporary.org](http://hastingscontemporary.org)
- [Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft | ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk](http://ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk)
- [Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts | attenboroughcentre.com](http://attenboroughcentre.com)
- [the blackShed gallery | theblackshedgallery.org.uk](http://theblackshedgallery.org.uk)
- [Project Art Works | projectartworks.org](http://projectartworks.org)
- [Devonshire Collective | devonshirecollective.co.uk](http://devonshirecollective.co.uk)
- [Towner Eastbourne | townereastbourne.org.uk](http://townereastbourne.org.uk)



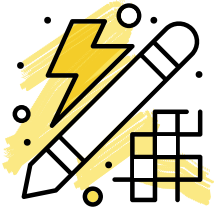
## Cinemas

- [Cineworld Eastbourne | cineworld.co.uk](http://cineworld.co.uk)
- [Depot Lewes | lewesdepot.org](http://lewesdepot.org)
- [Duke's at Komedia Picturehouse | picturehouses.com](http://picturehouses.com)
- [Kino Rye | kinodigital.co.uk](http://kinodigital.co.uk)
- [Kino-Teatr | kinodigital.co.uk](http://kinodigital.co.uk)
- [Odeon Cinema Hastings | odeon.co.uk](http://odeon.co.uk)
- [Pavilion Hailsham | hailshampavilion.co.uk](http://hailshampavilion.co.uk)
- [Picturehouse Uckfield | picturehouseuckfield.com](http://picturehouseuckfield.com)
- [Sussex Exchange Cinema | thesussexexchange.co.uk](http://thesussexexchange.co.uk)
- [Towner Eastbourne Cinema | townereastbourne.org.uk](http://townereastbourne.org.uk)
- [Seaford Community Cinema Seaford Community Cinema | escis.org.uk](http://escis.org.uk)



## Theatres

- [Devonshire Park Theatre | Eastbourne Theatres](#)
- [Royal Hippodrome Theatre](#)
- [Congress Theatre | Eastbourne Theatres](#)
- [Winter Garden | Eastbourne Theatres](#)
- [Opus Theatre | Hastings](#)
- [Stables Theatre & Art | stablestheatre.co.uk](http://stablestheatre.co.uk)
- [Chequer Mead Theatre | chequermead.co.uk](http://chequermead.co.uk)
- [Printers Playhouse | Eastbourne](#)



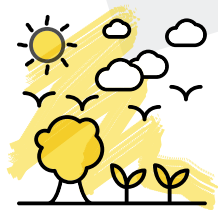
## Creative, cultural organisations

- [Hospitable Environment | hospitable-environment.com](https://hospitable-environment.com)
- [Culture Shift | cultureshift.org.uk](https://cultureshift.org.uk)
- [Make \(Good\) Trouble | makegoodtrouble.co.uk](https://makegoodtrouble.co.uk)



## Community activities, pastimes and support

- [The Sussex Stitchers | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [The Links Project East Sussex | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [The Hastings Library of Things | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [The Hastings Local History Group | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [The Dallington Art Club – Rother | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [The Lewes Singing Circle | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [Lewes Live Literature Group | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [Meridian Lacemakers in Seaford | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [Bexhill Art Society | Sussex Modern](https://escis.org.uk)
- [Projects | Sussex Wildlife Trust](https://escis.org.uk)
- [Home - South Downs National Park Authority](https://escis.org.uk)



## Outdoor, environmental or natural settings

- [Allotments, Lewes and Eastbourne Councils | lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](https://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)
- [England Coast Path | East Sussex County Council](https://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)
- [The Coastal Trail - South Downs National Park Authority](https://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)
- [Great Dixter Charitable Trust](https://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

### National forums and agencies about creative health

- [National Centre for Creative Health Round table on Health Inequalities Dec 2022 | youtube.com](https://youtube.com)
- [CHWA Seminar Health Inequalities Panel 2021 | youtube.com](https://youtube.com)

# Inequality and creative health opportunities

Many East Sussex residents already enjoy a wide range of arts, creativity, and cultural experiences, from everyday creative activities within their homes, activities held within local organisations to large events hosted by internationally renowned venues. However we have to recognise that some people and communities face barriers in accessing creative health activities. These can include.

- Disposable income, where you or your family or your ancestors come from, the colour of your skin, your accent and attitudes, if you have physical and or intellectual disabilities.
- The way you think, express yourself, communicate with and understand the world, the way you worship or choose not to.
- The way you feel love and who you love, your identity and the way you choose to dress and name yourself.
- How young or old, how thin or fat you are and how you think and feel.

Across the county, in coastal, urban, and rural communities, there are a wide range of organisations and individuals increasing access to creative health activities to support local people, many examples are highlighted throughout this report.



There is clear evidence that cognitive stimulation, a sense of purpose, engagement in your community and a fulfilling social life are as important as diet, exercise and medical care when it comes to living a long and healthy life. This 'creative health' approach to public health is a vital component to tackling prevention and addressing major health inequalities. To this end I am delighted that East Sussex County Council is a partner in a newly funded Coastal Communities research consortium supported by United Kingdom Research and Innovation's mobilising community assets to tackle health inequalities research programme. This important research project will bring together the NHS, local authorities, researchers, voluntary and community organisations and residents together to tackle health inequalities including young people's mental health, substance misuse and life-limiting illness.



Professor Helen Chatterjee, Professor of Human & Ecological Health, UCL and AHRC/UKRI Programme Director for Health Inequalities.



# Section two

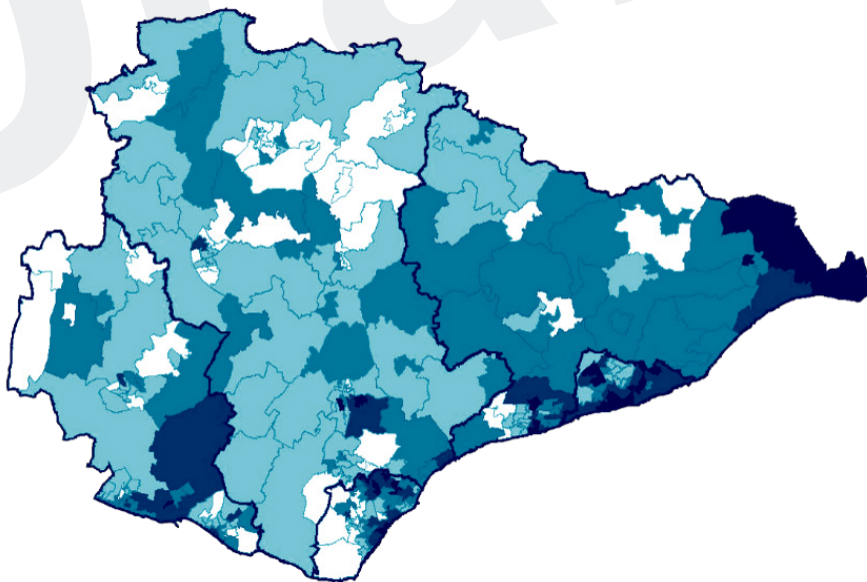
## Setting the scene

### Our place

East Sussex is a diverse and contrasting county, with a rich cultural heritage. It features the coastal urban boroughs of Eastbourne and Hastings, and mixed coastal and rural districts of Lewes, Rother, and Wealden. Although over three-quarters of residents live in urban areas, the county is predominantly rural with almost two-thirds falling within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the South Downs National Park. This mix of rural and urban brings challenges for people's health and wellbeing, and access to creative cultural, heritage and tourist activities.

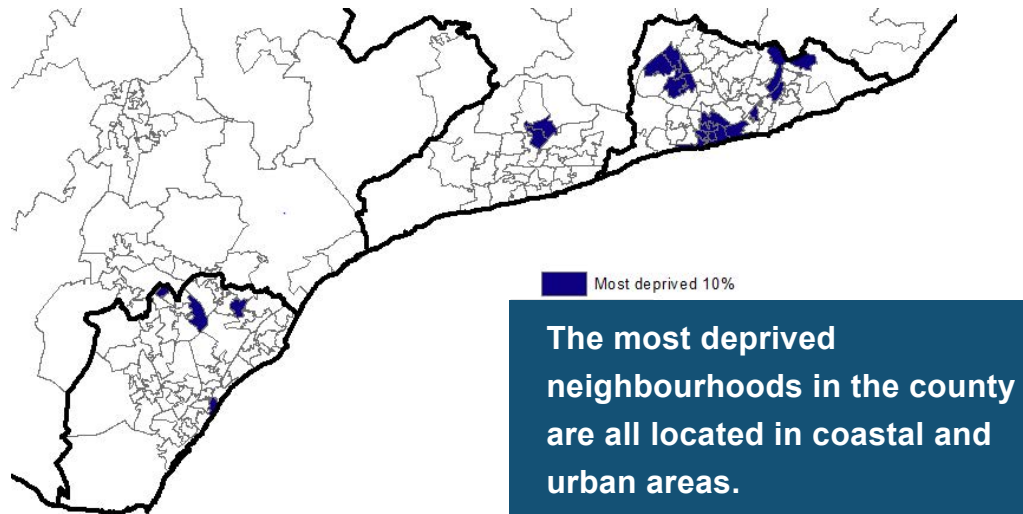
The latest [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\) | gov.uk](#), suggests that relative multiple deprivation has risen in East Sussex in all district and borough councils since 2015, although there is variation across the County.

#### Map of areas of deprivation in East Sussex, 2019



Source: [JSNA Life Course Summary East Sussex 2023 | eastsussexjsna.org.uk](#)

Deprivation is a significant driver of health inequalities and is notable along the coastal strip, particularly in Hastings which is the most deprived local authority in the Southeast.



Source: [Indices of deprivation 2019 | eastsussexjsna.org.uk](https://indicesofdeprivation2019.eastsussexjsna.org.uk)

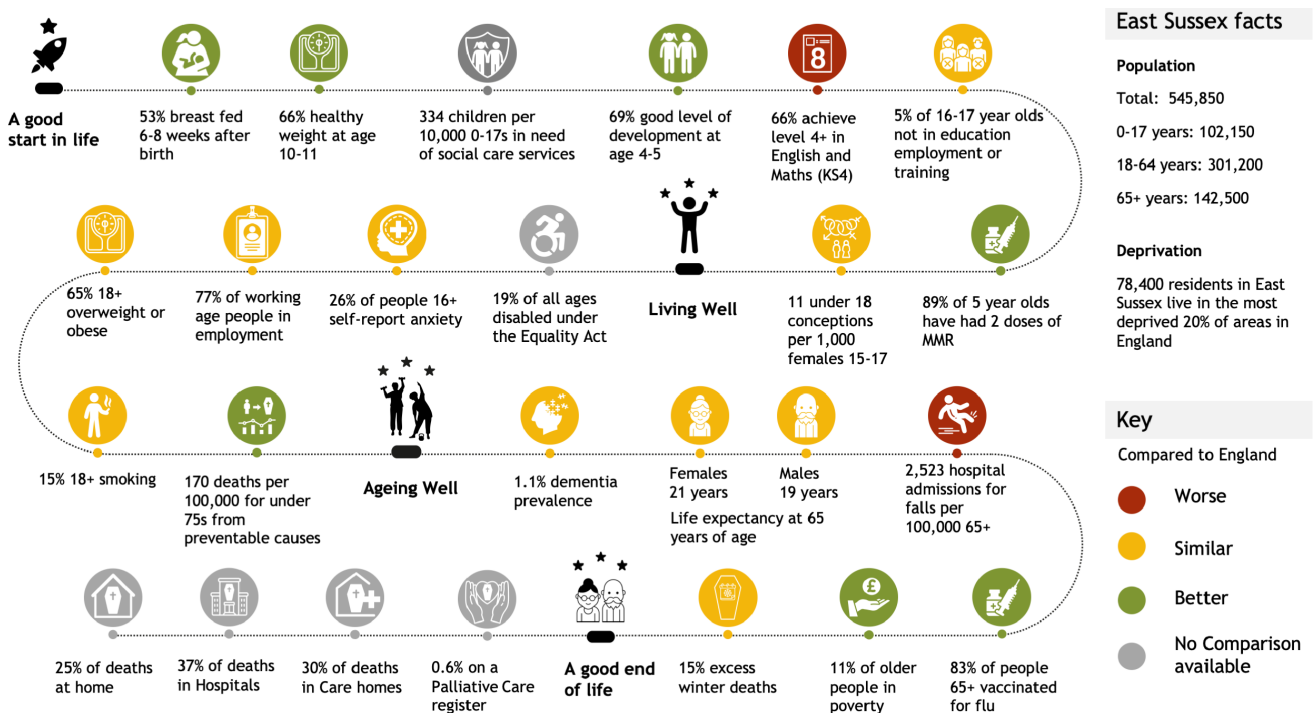
## Our residents

Compared to England, East Sussex has:

- a much older age profile with an increasingly ageing population,
- a less ethnically diverse population,
- a higher proportion of people with a long-term limiting illness or disability (20% vs 18%).

Whilst there are many indicators that can be measured, figure 3 sets out a few key facts to paint a picture of the East Sussex population.

**Fig 3 The East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Life Course Summary** <sup>[Endnote 33]</sup>



The East Sussex population is projected to grow by nearly 66,000 people by 2037, from 550,700 in 2022 to 616,300. Over a quarter (26%) of our residents are aged 65 years or over, a much older age profile compared to England (18% aged 65 years and over). This is projected to increase to a third of our population by 2037, which presents unique challenges to supporting the health and wellbeing of East Sussex residents.

This underlines the importance of initiatives to support self-care, resilience, prevention of ill health and promotion of activities, for all ages, that foster creative activity and connection with others to tackle isolation. Creative opportunities and interpersonal and community connection are key elements required to be a creatively healthy county.

You can find more local data and information:

- [East Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment | eastsussexjsna.org.uk](https://eastsussexjsna.org.uk)
- [East Sussex In Figures | eastsussexinfigures.org.uk](https://eastsussexinfigures.org.uk)
- [East Sussex Life Course Summary | eastsussexjsna.org.uk](https://eastsussexjsna.org.uk)
- [NHS England Towards integrated care, the Sussex and East Surrey journey | youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [Our Plan for our Population | youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)
- [Healthwatch East Sussex | youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

# East Sussex – A rich artistic heritage and a bright cultural future

East Sussex is a county with a diverse creative and cultural legacy. This is showcased through its many historic landmarks, buildings, landscapes, creative centres, organisations and historic individuals. From prehistoric Britons, through to the Romans, including the Beachy Head lady, a well to do Black Roman woman whose buried remains were found in Eastbourne. This continued with the Normans, to Anne of Cleves to Winnie the Pooh. With our Medieval castles to the Turner prize and beyond, East Sussex has so much to offer in terms of culture, art, heritage, history, and landscape.

Outside of physical cultural infrastructure, East Sussex continues to play a role in developing and nurturing creativity through hubs and networks such as Hastings Creatives or the Rye Creative Centre. Many of the institutions mentioned in this section have strong links to the community in which they are situated, working to increase access to, and enjoyment of, the creative world as well as enhancing the wellbeing of participants.

## History

- [Pevensey Castle | english-heritage.org.uk](https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/pevensey-castle/)
- [Lewes Castle | sussexpast.co.uk](https://www.sussexpast.co.uk/lewes-castle/)
- [Wealden Hall House | sussexpast.co.uk](https://www.sussexpast.co.uk/wealden-hall-house/)
- [Bodiam Castle | nationaltrust.org.uk](https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodiam-castle)
- [Herstmonceux Castle](https://www.herstmonceuxcastle.co.uk/)
- [Long Man of Wilmington](https://www.wilmington.gov.uk/long-man/)
- [Litlington White Horse](https://www.litlingtonwhitehorse.co.uk/)

## Events

- [Jack in the Green Lewes](https://www.lewesjackinthegreen.co.uk/)
- [Bonfire Night Bonfire Night](https://www.bonfirenight.co.uk/)

## Authors

- [The Bloomsbury Group Bloomsbury Group](https://www.bloomsburygroup.co.uk/)
- [Thomas Paine A.A. Milne author of Winnie the Pooh and the illustrations by Rev E H Shepard Pooh Corner Hartfield Homepage - Pooh Corner Hartfield](https://www.poohcorner.co.uk/)

## Nature

- [Ashdown Forest South Downs Beachy Head Beachy Head - Visit Eastbourne](https://www.visit-east-sussex.co.uk/ashdown-forest-south-downs-beachy-head/)
- [The mystery of Beachy Head Lady – Museum Crush](https://www.museumcrush.co.uk/the-mystery-of-beachy-head-lady/)

## Gallery and artists

- Hastings Pier, Stirling Prize [RIBA Stirling Prize](#)
- [Turner Prize 2023 Turner Prize 2023 | Towner Eastbourne](#)
- [Jesse Darling Wins Turner Prize 2023 – Press Release | Tate IMAGE TBC](#)
- Towner: [Eastbourne Alive](#)
- [De La Warr Pavilion](#)
- [Hastings Contemporary](#)
- Eric Ravilious
- Edward Burra

## Museums

- [Ditchling Museum of Art and Craft](#)
- [Farleys House and Gallery](#)

## Music

- [Glyndebourne Opera](#)
- [Lewes Folk Club](#)
- [Music: Hastings Punk Choir](#)
- [Love Supreme Festival – 5-7th July 2024](#)
- [Festival: Rye International Jazz & Blues Festival](#)
- [ryecreativecentre.co.uk/](#)

**TBC Map to be added**



# Culture East Sussex

Culture East Sussex (CES) is a network of public bodies, cultural organisations, and individuals that is hosted by ESCC. It works across four main areas, all of which are essential for the creative, and programmes across the county. CES has four key responsibilities:

- as a collective voice for culture across East Sussex.
- as a supports and develops the skills of all people working in the cultural sector in East Sussex.
- to promote the diversity of the sector and ensures equality of access to culture in East Sussex.
- to encourage collaboration and mutual support within the cultural sector and works with its partners across a range of themes of mutual interest.

The priorities of CES are linked to the [East Sussex Cultural Strategy \(2013-25\) | eastsussex.gov.uk](https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk) which has three key priorities:

- Priority 1** Create an environment where great cultural experiences are available to everyone to enhance their quality of life.
- Priority 2** Create an environment which enables the cultural and creative economy to expand and enhances the ability to attract and retain other businesses.
- Priority 3** Develop and promote well packaged cultural tourism offers which celebrate the identity of East Sussex, raises its profile and attracts more visitors and businesses to the County.

## The role of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector

The voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector continues to make an essential contribution to the cultural life and vitality of East Sussex. The sector facilitates and leads a wide range of creative projects giving communities much needed support and activities, that contribute to health.



### Compass Arts

Based in Eastbourne, Compass Arts is an intergenerational, co-creative, artist led organisation for anyone vulnerable to social isolation, lived trauma, mental illness and hidden disabilities



Mental health services are constricted by the time they can spend with clients. Escalating demand means that staff can only focus on the bare minimum of alleviating suffering.



Through the provision of spaces that are dedicated to developing art practices, patients can experience the potential of art and its enhancement and contribution to a quality of life. Art supports healing by reaching the plasticity of the brain. It is beneficial for everyone.



Fenya Sharkey, Artistic Director, Compass Community Arts.

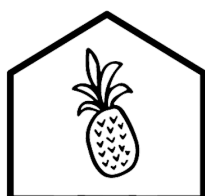
## Death Cafe

### Lewes Death Cafe

A Death Cafe is a group directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counselling session

At a Death Cafe people, often strangers, gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss death. Our objective is 'to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives'.

[deathcafe.com](http://deathcafe.com)



**HOSPITABLE  
ENVIRONMENT**

### Hospitable Environment

Is a socially engaged arts & wellbeing organisation based in Newhaven, East Sussex. We bring people together using creativity and food to explore what it takes to build safe, connected and sustainable communities.

A small sample of the organisations involved in co-ordinating creative health and linked programmes includes wellbeing.

[hospitable-environment.com](http://hospitable-environment.com)



## Hastings Voluntary Action

Hastings Voluntary Action - a charity that helps other charities, community groups and social enterprises to start, survive and thrive in Hastings, East Sussex.

- Social Prescribing for older people pilot
- The Hastings & Rother Food Network
- Links Project
- Shorelink Writers
- [hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk](https://hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk)



## Sussex Community Development Association

Sussex Community Development Association works across East Sussex, supporting community based projects aimed at tackling loneliness and social isolation, improving health and wellbeing and increasing economic stability.

- [Our Stories](https://sussexcommunity.org.uk)
- [sussexcommunity.org.uk](https://sussexcommunity.org.uk)



## Rother Voluntary Action

Support and champion Rother's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector to make positive change, challenge issues and develop new ideas to strengthen communities.

- [Rother Food Partnership | rva.uk.com](https://rva.uk.com)
- [Rye Community Garden | rva.uk.com](https://rva.uk.com)
- [Age-Friendly Rother | rva.uk.com](https://rva.uk.com)
- [Ukraine Crisis | Rother Voluntary Action | rva.uk.com](https://rva.uk.com)



## 3VA

Voluntary Action organisation for the three districts of Wealden, Eastbourne and Lewes in East Sussex.

[3va.org.uk](https://3va.org.uk)



For me, a truly creative approach to health would seek to remove more of the psychological and physical barriers to engaging with the natural world and invest in the natural and human assets that exist there. We have many innovative volunteer-led community projects across the county that create meaningful opportunities for individuals to connect with nature and each other. Being free to play, create and learn in wild places brings health and wellbeing benefits and early intervention across the spectrum of public health concerns.



It promotes physical and mindful activity, raises confidence, reduces anxiety and isolation, encourages mindfulness, self-care and create opportunities to find peace and joy, ourselves, and with each other, all of which makes us more resilient to life's challenges



Kim Richards, CEO, Rother Voluntary Action

**For more information visit:**

- [East Sussex Community Information System | escis.org.uk](https://escis.org.uk)
- [The Tribe Project | East Sussex County Council](#)

# Section three

## East Sussex creative health, across the life course

From preconception to the end of our lives, our needs change. When we move from childhood into adulthood there are different opportunities for creative health to help individuals and communities explore, experience, reflect upon, and actively participate in the world.

Pablo Picasso once said “Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up”. It is startling just how resonant this quip seems when we look at how many of us do not think of ourselves as having creative abilities, interests, or outlets. A recent report from a member of the Eastbourne Alive team shows the power of remembering how we played and can play again.

The member of the team recalled how a woman, who was visiting the Eve De Haan artwork ‘Its nicer to be nice’, sat on the swing which was a central element of the artwork and began weeping openly. When asked why she was crying she explained that she had not sat on a swing since she was a very small child and was simply moved by the joyful experience and the interaction with the artwork. She explained that she hadn’t realised that, as an adult, it was ok to play and think creatively. Her interaction with the De Haan artwork had in a powerful and poignant way helped her rediscover a simple forgotten pleasure, a playful and creative experience after many years that had moved her to joyful tears.

The Eve De Haan artwork was made available as part of Turner Wraparound events <sup>[Endnote 34]</sup>.

A small selection of case study summaries set out below give an indication of the wide range of projects and organisations using creative health approaches. Each summary has a link to a larger more detailed summary with contact details for the organisations leading on the projects involved.

## Starting well

So much of human development relies on the arts, culture, heritage, and the environment to support experimentation, education, play and growth.

Babies, children and young people need to access opportunities that support cognitive and social development, reasoning, critical thinking, self-expression, self-regulation, connection and a range of experiences across different artistic, cultural and heritage domains and the natural world <sup>[Endnote 35]</sup>. This access to varied, vibrant encounters and connections is important to support healthy development, growth, independence, and maturity. It is in short 'how we learn to be human'.

It is essential that we give every child and young person the opportunity to develop and grow with a wide range of opportunities and experiences. There is a range of creative activities including for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

### The Catalyst

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#### **Delivered by Making Good Trouble**

A children and young people's creativity focussed project looking to widen access to the creative sector and creative skills.

- [The Catalyst: A creators' collective | Make Good Trouble](#)

### The Devonshire Collective

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Devonshire Collective is a cultural and community organisation operating across a network of ex-retail sites in the Devonshire West ward, Eastbourne – a vibrant area with a long-standing community.

- [Devonshire Collective | devonshirecollective.co.uk](#)

### Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

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#### **Delivered by more than 100 East Sussex**

The HAF is a Department for Education funded programme that provides free healthy meals and enriching holiday activities to eligible young people. Activities include arts, music, drama, and other creative sessions across the county. During 2023, more than 36,000 sessions were attended by children in receipt of benefits-related free school meals.



One example of HAF delivery is The All Aboard Bus: This is an art and foreign language-based activity provider that takes young people (aged 5-11 years) on 'journeys' to different places, cultures, languages, and food. Sessions include a range of arts activities as well as daily opportunities for young people to prepare meals and try new foods.

- [Welcome to Holiday food and fun | East Sussex County Council](#)

## Social Prescribing for Children and Young People

### Delivered by Imago and Sussex Community Development Associate (SCDA)

NHS Sussex and ESCC are currently funding and supporting Imago and SCDA to deliver two pilot social prescribing projects. These projects provide early intervention support to young people with mild to moderate mental health and wellbeing needs by giving them access to a social prescriber. The pilot has two strands:

- Children in four primary schools in the High Weald area, as a pilot project for the Primary Care Network area.
- Ukrainian children and young people who are fleeing war and conflict in Ukraine.
- [Children and young people's social prescribing | socialprescribingacademy.org.uk](#)
- [Imago Community](#)
- [Webinar for launch of the CYP Social Prescribing Tender Opportunity in East Sussex \(youtube.com\) December 2022](#)
- [SCDA • Making A Difference In Our Community \(sussexcommunity.org.uk\)](#)

## Theatre in Schools

### Delivered by various Theatre in Education providers

Since 2021, ESCC has developed and supported the delivery of Theatre in Education packages for state funded secondary schools in East Sussex (including special schools). Key issues addressed include county lines, harmful sexual behaviours and drug, alcohol and tobacco education.

- [Embracing Arts, East Sussex | 1Space](#)
- [Head2Head Sensory Theatre | East Sussex 1Space](#)
- [HAF Easter Musical Theatre Workshops | eequ.org](#)

## Living well

The focus on living well seeks to build upon the creative activities we enjoyed in the past, perhaps continue to enjoy, and expand them to support health benefits and health seeking behaviours, and we hope, joyful experiences.

We have an opportunity to ensure that we bring creativity into the workplace and throughout our adult lives. If we become parents or carers there is another key opportunity to ensure that the creativity, we value for ourselves, is maintained with those creative elements we treasure, and 'handed down' or inherited by the next generation.

## Wellbeing at Work Programme

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The Wellbeing at Work Programme aims to provide support to East Sussex employers with improving employee health and wellbeing in their workplace.

The programme:

- Offers workplace health resources, training, events and a signposting service to those working in East Sussex.
- Operates a free Accreditation Scheme for East Sussex employers, providing a framework to improve employee health and wellbeing, whilst rewarding organisations who are actively working to do so.

Is funded and delivered by Public Health at East Sussex County Council.

Existing creative support opportunities offered by the programme have been added to with a new Creative Health Charter Mark, aimed at promoting two hours of creative activity before, during or after work.

- [Website | East Sussex Wellbeing At Work](#)

## The Creative Health Charter Mark

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Aimed at encouraging workplaces across the county to include creative health in their workplace health offer and support the take up of two hours of creative activity within or outside the working week

- [Wellbeing at Work, Factsheets | cipd.org](#)
- [Creativity and wellbeing, What Works Wellbeing | whatworkswellbeing.org](#)
- [Wellbeing In The Arts | wellbeinginthearts.org.uk](#)

## Pottery Project Pilot

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### Macmillan, ESHT NHS Trust, ESCC Public Health Eastbourne Pottery Studio

A project using pottery and peer support as part of the cancer pathway in East Sussex, initially working with people with breast cancer.



A diagnosis of cancer changes a person's world and knocks it off its axis, as they are plunged into treatment, recovery and all the physical effects and anxieties that accompany it. People affected by cancer tell us that they often lose a sense of control. We have found that the creative arts are a way back for people to regain some new control within their lives and find outlets for the emotional upheavals of cancer. I have been pleased to work with patients who have used poetry, theatre, painting, sculpture and even someone who created music from the electrical signals of the plants originally used to make chemotherapy. These all have been evidence to me of the benefits of creative arts in health.



Professor Richard Simcock, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Chief Medical Officer, Macmillan Cancer Support

## Arts on Prescription

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Arts on Prescription (AOP) has been running creative programs for people who have issues impacting on their mental health and experience challenges accessing groups in the wider community since 2018. Their programs support people to maintain mental health wellbeing and reduce loneliness and isolation through activities proven to build confidence, learn new skills, access training, education, volunteering and employment.

In 2022 AOP took on a disused building in Alexandra Park in Hastings and set up a peer-led wellbeing hub. People who have been through the program are invited to join the steering group and to be actively involved in the running of the space.

- [Arts on prescription | artsonprescription.org](https://artsonprescription.org)

# Ageing well

From retirement and into older age it is important that we maintain our social connections, our physical health and mental wellbeing. We need to ensure that we support ourselves, and those around us to age healthily, remain physically and mentally active, connected and engaged with the world around us. Creativity offers us shared languages, and opportunities to make lasting contacts with others. As we age we must recognise the need for connection and community and the possibilities that engagement with creative activities can bring.

## Our Songs, Our Stories

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Our Songs our Stories is a creative health project which is founded on the body of evidence around the impact of music-based activity on people living with Dementia and those who care for them to:

- Improve physical and mental health
- Improve connections and relationships
- Combat loneliness and isolation
- [Culture Shift CIO | cultureshift.org.uk](https://cultureshift.org.uk)

## Grow Your Own Health

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### **Herstmonceux Integrative Care Centre, ESCC and Sussex LMC**

The Grow your own health project was started by Dr Sarah Andersen, a Sussex GP, and Julia Behrens, a medical herbalist and published author. This project used the simple act of giving away small packets of seeds as a method for people across Sussex to grow and share with others around them.

- [Grow Your Own | hmxihc.co.uk](https://hmxihc.co.uk)
- [Introduction to Grow Your Own Health | You Tube](#)

## Life Transitions – HAIRE Project

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### **ESCC and Rother Voluntary Action**

Healthy Ageing through Innovation in Rural Europe (HAIRE) ran until March 2023 and used community and creative projects to promote healthy ageing activities.

Since then, the Life Transitions project has been established to carry on the work with a renewed focus on connection and local opportunities for creativity.

- [Life Transitions | East Sussex County Council](#)
- [Transitions Service - Innovate UK Business Connect | ktn-uk.org](#)
- [East Sussex Conference: Innovations in Healthy Ageing | exeter.ac.uk](#)

## Wellbeing Support at the De La Warr Pavilion

A multi-stranded wellbeing support programme designed to encourage and assist access to creative arts practice and experiences for people with a range of complexities and challenges. De La Warr is a Dementia Friendly venue and has specifically works with the Bexhill Dementia Action Alliance to develop its support offer.

- [Wellbeing The De La Warr Pavilion | dlwp.com](#)



'One of the founding principles of De La Warr Pavilion when it opened in 1935 was to promote health in mind, body and soul. We continue with that ethos today, providing creative and cultural experiences to help boost the health and wellbeing of our local community. Our packed programme includes free fortnightly making sessions, creative holiday clubs for children eligible for benefits-related free school meals, art and craft workshops for people living with dementia and their carers, and creative groups for young people experiencing social, emotional or mental health challenges and from asylum seeker, refugee and migrant backgrounds. We host shows by local dance and drama groups and work with organisations including Create Music and Bexhill Festival of Music to give young people hugely valuable professional performance experience. This is in addition to our year round programme of uplifting and inspiring gigs, performances, comedy shows, talks and free exhibitions.



Stewart Drew, Director & CEO, De La Warr Pavilion

## Compass Arts

An intergenerational, artist-led organisation providing arts opportunities for those vulnerable to social isolation, lived trauma, mental illness, and hidden disabilities.

Specific contributions include work with the Eastbourne ALIVE programme of Turner wraparound events and the Big Conversation in the Beacon Shopping Centre.

- [Compass Arts | compasscommunityarts.co.uk](#)

## blackShed Gallery

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Is a well respected gallery in the heart of Rural Sussex with a reputation as a distinctive, diverse contemporary art space with a focus on artist lead projects and exhibitions. The gallery has a strong and established relationship with a number of highly regarded partners, such as Hastings Museum, Hasting Contemporary, De La Warr Pavilion, Project Artworks and the Towner Gallery, and more recently the Talent Accelerator, which helps drive our work towards supporting community projects, and young people as they look for experience within the cultural sector.

At its core, the blackShed aims to develop and support the regional artist based community, bringing high quality artwork, through direct inclusion, to a rural audience where social-economic inequalities preclude and prejudice participation in the visual arts. The environment surrounding the blackShed is set in a beautiful location giving artists the opportunity to explore their practice within the immediate environment, taking art beyond the gallery, often creating informal opportunities with the public and local visitors.

- [theblackshedgallery.org.uk](http://theblackshedgallery.org.uk)

## Dying well

Death can occur at all stages of life and central to this is the support for end-of-life care, a 'good death' and care for the bereaved. Death is a central aspect of human existence, and we could all be doing more to understand the experiences of both those who have died or are nearing death alongside those that will be bereaved by their death.

## Child Bereavement UK

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Child Bereavement UK helps families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies with confidential bereavement support for individuals, couples, children, young people, and families.

They routinely utilise creative techniques to explore and support the experiences of the bereaved.

- [BBC Radio 4 - Four Thought, Facing Death Creatively](#)
- [British Association for Music Therapy: Facing Death Creatively | bamt.org](#)
- [Creative connections made at a conference | stchristophers.org.uk](#)
- [Sussex to host the inaugural Death Festival | University of Sussex](#)



## Dragonflies Bereavement Project

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Dragonflies provides creative therapeutic activities and group discussions delivered by trained staff and volunteers and a range of support options.

- [Dragonflies Bereavement Project | East Sussex 1Space](#)

## Willow Tree Children's Support

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Willow Tree Children's Support provide group & individual support in school settings for children and young people impacted by family illness and bereavement.

- [Willow Tree Children's Support, Hastings | willowtreechildrenssupport.com](#)

## Death Café Lewes

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The Lewes Death café gives attendees an opportunity to discuss issues related to death and dying in a directed group discussion. Death Cafés are run on a not-for-profit basis, and provide an accessible, respectful, and confidential space with no intention of leading people to any conclusion, product, or course of action. Frequently referencing artistic and cultural practices from different cultural traditions the Death Cafes provide a safe space to discuss death and enjoy a nice cup of tea and some great cake.

- [Lewes Death Cafe | deathcafe.com](#)
- [Encouraging death communication in a death-avoidant society | biomedcentral.com](#)
- [Can the 'death café' concept be adapted for use in healthcare professional learning and development? | BMJ Supportive & Palliative Care](#)
- [Death cafés as a strategy to foster compassionate communities: Contributions for death and grief literacy | nih.gov](#)
- [The Global Spread of Death Café: A Cultural Intervention Relevant to Policy? | Cambridge Core](#)
- [Death doulas: helping people at the end of their life | open.ac.uk](#)
- [Death doula Alua Arthur on letting grief transform the creative process of your life | The Creative Independent](#)
- [Creative Engagement in Public Health Interventions | Rosetta Life](#)

# Section four

## Key creative health programmes

With the Turner Prize's arrival in East Sussex in 2023 and the Towner Gallery's centenary, a programme of work was developed to promote, sustain, and share the creative opportunities presented to Eastbourne.

### Eastbourne ALIVE



Eastbourne ALIVE, a town-wide partnership project celebrating local art scene, creatives, and businesses, developed an ambitious wraparound partnership programme of public art, exhibitions, movement, music and workshops. The programme was designed to ensure that all of Eastbourne could participate in the creative opportunities the Turner prize coming to Eastbourne presented.

Public Health worked extensively with the Eastbourne ALIVE team from the early days of the project's design to ensure that activities could be evaluated to understand the difference the programme has made to the local economy and to the attitudes and outlook of Eastbourne residents and visitors.

### Making it Happen



[Making it Happen](#) (MiH) takes an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach to building the confidence and capability of people to come together in their neighbourhoods to make change for themselves and create positive health outcomes. It seeks to support people to make connections, initiate projects and activities, feel more connected to their local place, and bring local community assets into use.

It is delivered with the support of a wide range of partners to ensure that it can work with local organisations across East Sussex and works with the core voluntary sector alliance members to ensure local reach.

[Action in Rural Sussex](#) is delivering Making it Happen in the following areas in Wealden District: Uckfield North, Polegate, Crowborough East, Hailsham East.

[Hastings Voluntary Action](#) is delivering Making it Happen in the following areas of Hastings Borough: Greater Hollington, Castle Ward.

[Rother Voluntary Action](#) is delivering Making it Happen in the following areas in Rother District: Central & Sackville, Eastern Rother, St Michaels, Sidley.

[Sussex Community Development Association](#) is delivering Making it Happen in the following areas in Lewes District: Newhaven Valley, Newhaven Meeching, Peacehaven West, Peacehaven North.

[3VA](#) is delivering Making it Happen in the following areas of Eastbourne Borough: Shinewater, Willingdon Trees, Hampden Park East.

MiH supported activities are built from the community-up rather than trying to create activities for a particular cohort or need. The focus is instead about what gives someone purpose, enjoyment and belonging. Creative, cultural, artistic heritage and natural environment-based approaches and settings are used throughout the wide range of projects MiH supports.

The [stage two report | making it happen.org.uk](#) has found that without question MiH is deploying ABCD effectively to support people to make connections, initiate projects and activities, feel more connected to their local place, and bring local community assets into use. The report identified that one of MiH's greatest aspects is its ability to recognise individuals and communities for their strengths and create change by building on these. The findings show no shortage of ideas and passions from people for change they'd like to see in their communities.

From the ideas that have been nurtured, explored, and developed to come to fruition, it is evident that East Sussex is abundant with creativity, and individuals and community have taken forward their own ideas. Almost a quarter of the grants awarded to community projects were for arts related projects, with activities ranging from crochet to choirs, as well as the development of new arts spaces, to applying arts and creativity to placemaking to community research. Just a few of the brilliant groups and projects across the county are showcased in the TV Series [Phenomenal Happenings | making it happen.org.uk](#)

The programme, recognised nationally as good practice, includes many projects across the Life Course.

## Newhaven Wood Creatives

Formed originally as a Woodcarving Club we have grown to enhance all creative aspects of working with wood. The Wood Creatives meets at the Hillcrest Centre, where we rent a large workshop behind the main building for adults to learn, practice and hopefully improve our woodcarving, woodturning and the other general wood related skills.

- [Wood Creatives – Hillcrest](#)

## Take Action Man

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Take Action Man offers local men the opportunity to get outside in the town's wonderful natural spaces, get active, learn new skills and spend time together talking, supporting and helping one another.

- [Take Action Man — Project Rewild](#)

## Compass Arts

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An intergenerational, artist-led organisation providing arts opportunities for those vulnerable to social isolation, lived trauma, mental illness, and hidden disabilities.

- [Compasscommunityarts.co.uk](https://compasscommunityarts.co.uk)

## Bexhill Men's Shed

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Men's Sheds (or Sheds) are similar to garden sheds – a place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practice skills and enjoy making and mending. The difference is that garden sheds and their activities are often solitary in nature while Men's Sheds are the opposite. They're about social connections and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge, and of course a lot of laughter.

- [Bexhill Men's Shed | bexhillmensshed.org.uk](https://bexhillmensshed.org.uk)

# Section five

## Local area transformation through creative health

The East Sussex Creative Health Position Paper was published in 2023. It was developed to set out the key features and opportunities for using creativity across of East Sussex to promote the connective, cognitive, physical activity and engagement benefits that creative health can bring. At its heart is the idea that creativity can have a real, measurable, positive, and lasting effect on individuals and communities.

Creativity should be seen as one of the building blocks for good health and wellbeing. The Creative Healthier Lives - Arts in Public Health Delivery Action Plan provides a roadmap and central strategy in the use of the arts, culture, heritage, and creativity to support the health and wellbeing of residents.

The 'Local Area Transformation through Creative Health' (LATCH) concept aims to support population level health improvement using creative health approaches. It will drive increased activity, resilience, connection and participation in creatively healthier activities and health promoting behaviours such as the Five Ways to Wellbeing. It also uses The COM-B model of behaviour. The COM-B model <sup>[Endnote 36]</sup> is a behavior change framework that proposes three necessary components for any behavior (B) to occur. Through assessing capability (C), opportunity (O), and motivation (M), leaders, policymakers, and behavioral scientists can understand why a specific behavior occurs and how to create targeted interventions that lead to effective change.

Key resources for the creative health programme include:

- [creativity-and-health-evidence-review-2022 | jsnaeastsussex.gov.uk](https://jsnaeastsussex.gov.uk/creativity-and-health-evidence-review-2022)
- [Evaluation - Everyday Creativity Programme](#)
- The East Sussex Creative Health Position Paper which sets out the strategic high-level case and evidence base to support the roll out of a creative health Approach.
- The Creative Healthier Lives - Arts in Public Health Delivery Action Plan which sets out the details for how each priority area will be addressed across each life course stage.
- A life course approach from Starting Well, into Living Well Ageing Well and Dying Well.
- A Creative Health Charter Mark Aimed at encouraging workplaces across the county to include creative health in their workplace Health offer and support the take up of two hours of creative activity within or outside the working week.
- A focus on research evaluation and local evidence to inform practice and help establish

more localised evidence of what works for the East Sussex context.

- The quantification of creative health (the 'arts dose').
- A creative health support collaborative aimed at supporting dialogue, understanding and collaboration between creative, cultural, artistic, heritage and health and social care practitioners, groups and organisations.
- A range of practice support resources aimed at supporting the creative sector.

## Recommendations

Following on from the initial consultation events that began in 2021 and the publication of the East Sussex Creative Health Position Paper in 2023. Public Health have been working to capture recommendations, activities and priorities suggested by creative and health and social care practitioners across the statutory and VCSE sectors. Many of these are already using creative health approaches to their work. These conversations have informed both the Position Paper, the Delivery Action Plan that supports it, and this report.

The recommendations are mostly focussed on enabling the sharing of creative health approaches, tools, techniques and opportunities across East Sussex.

System level partners include the ESCC service areas for adults, children and community services, the local district and borough councils, NHS Sussex Integrated Care system, Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust, East Sussex Foundation Trust, Culture East Sussex partners, voluntary and community sector organisations including HVA, 3VA, RVA and wider VCSE alliance.

The Creative Health Support Collaborative is a community of practitioners from across the different sectors and places in the county to access resources, evidence and insights that can help them to either recognise where they are already contributing to creative health projects or support them to include new approaches into their existing services.

## Recommendations: Creativity for Healthier Lives

We will work with the wide range of existing partners in East Sussex, including the District and Borough Councils, NHS and voluntary and community and creative sector to establish a system level creative health operational group reporting to the Public Health Board and Culture East Sussex Board. This will help to focus collaboration and leadership across the county to aid promotion and embedding of creative health approaches for everyone.



1. We will work with the wide range of existing partners in East Sussex – including the district and borough councils, the NHS, and voluntary, community and creative sectors, and use established collaborative groups such as Culture East Sussex to promote and embed creative health approaches for everyone.
2. We will embrace the new opportunities in tourism promotion provided by 'Experience Sussex' to support economic development that builds on the vast array of creative action within the county.
3. We will 'Connect the Creatives' by understanding the current practices and future opportunities for service commissioners across East Sussex to benefit from embedding creative health approaches into existing or new areas of work.
4. We will use the Creative Health Charter Mark as a complimentary addition to the existing workplace health offer for East Sussex (Wellbeing at Work).
5. Work with system partners across the Southeast to understand and secure opportunities for research, collaboration, integrated programme support, delivery, and funding of creative health works across the region.

## Conclusion

It is clear that creative health activities are effective in promoting lasting and sustainable health improvement across our lifetimes. With the wealth of creative assets, opportunities and expertise across East Sussex, it is vital that we build upon these assets and that anchor institutions collaborate with the VCSE and all partners involved, to maximise the impact that creative health can have in East Sussex.

# Section Six

## Update on the Director of Public Health Report 2022/23

### Recommendations

For the report please visit [Connecting people and places 2022/23](#)

For previous reports focusing on housing, employment and the recovery from the pandemic please visit: [Annual public health reports | eastsussexjsna.org.uk](#)

Below is a summary of key elements of progress against last year's report. You will see that there are a wide range of achievements against the ambitions set out in last year's report and much work already underway. Crucially you will see how the focus of this year's report can add to the works set out in the previous years and how we have sought in this year's report to contribute to and support existing works and issues identified in the report on Connection People and Places.

### Recommendations

1. Establish a System Stewardship Group to build and maintain the required collaborative leadership across the system.
2. Create a 'connection test' to apply a loneliness perspective to the policy making process.
3. Develop an action plan for developing social infrastructure rooted in the principles of ABCD (asset-based community development) and harnessing the potential of community ownership and community businesses.
4. 'Connect the connectors' by creating learning communities that learn and test ideas together and model and incentivise ongoing learning.
5. Mobilise and equip a movement of connectors stretching across all public facing roles, businesses and communities.

## Latest updates from 2023

1. A series of workshops have been held with partners to identify how system leaders and interested parties could be best supported to drive future actions across the system through this stewardship approach. East Sussex County Council has then worked in partnership with the East Sussex Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Alliance to develop proposals and appoint a host organisation within the VCSE sector to support the development of this collaborative stewardship group and approach.
2. A two-year grant agreement has been in put place with the host organisation, Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA), who will be involving many other partners in this work. East Sussex Community Voice will be providing evaluation, data and monitoring capacity, and other VSCE organisations such as 3VA, Age UK East Sussex, Care for the Carers and Possibility People will help reach target communities and support identification of other East Sussex organisations to be involved as the programme develops.
3. The programme facilitator and reference group are working to establish a broad coalition of partners to join the collaborative stewardship group, define what success looks like and agree the vision for the programme. The collaborative group will then be developing ways of working together, reaching and engaging those with lived experience of loneliness, providing learning opportunities, raising awareness of loneliness, and agreeing how to make further progress on other recommendations of the 2022/23 report, which include:
  - create a 'connection test' to apply a loneliness perspective to the policy making process.
  - develop an action plan for developing social infrastructure rooted in the principles of ABCD (asset-based community development) and harnessing the potential of community ownership and community businesses.
  - 'connect the connectors' by creating learning communities that learn and test ideas together and model and incentivise ongoing learning.
  - mobilise and equip a movement of connectors stretching across all public facing roles, businesses and communities.

# Acknowledgments

Of special note for their contributions in enabling, shaping, and generating this report, and the works it flows from, thanks are extended in particular to the following:

Alex Coulter, Director, National Centre for Creative Health (NCCH)

Dr Cara Courage,

Dr Caroline Osella, Coastal Creative

Dr Helen Johnson, University of Brighton

Jane Povey, Clinical Lead for National Creative Health Program, NCCH and NHS England

Jo Alner, Director of Population Health and Inequalities, NHS Sussex

Jo Crease, Program Manager, Personalised Care, NHS Sussex

Lucy Watts,

Naomi Roche, Creative Health Program Manager, NCCH and NHS England

Nick Ewbank, Director, Nick Ewbank Associates

Phoene Cave, Creative Director, The Musical Breath

Ruth Melville, RMR - Research and Strategic Development

Cllr Keith Glazier, ESCC Health & Wellbeing Board

Professor Kevin Fenton CBE, President, Faculty of Public Health

Fenya Sharkey, Artistic Director, Compass Community Arts

Dr Chi Eziefula, Senior Lecturer at Brighton and Sussex Medical School and Consultant Physician at University Hospitals Sussex NHS Trust

Kim Richards, CEO, Rother Voluntary Action

Dr Sarah Andersen, Herstmonceux Integrative Health Centre

Sarah Davies, Clown and Creativity Coach

Professor Helen Chatterjee, Professor of Human & Ecological Health, UCL and AHRC/UKRI Programme Director for Health Inequalities

Prof Daisy Fancourt Professor of Psychobiology & Epidemiology, Research Department of Behavioural Science and Health Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care, University College London

Alex Coulter, Director of the National Centre for Creative Health

Christopher Bailey, Arts and Health Lead at the World Health Organisation (WHO)

Professor Richard Simcock, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Chief Medical Officer, Macmillan Cancer Support

Emma Dean, External Funding Manager, ESCC

Esther Watts, Creative Health Associate, NHS Sussex

Hannah Waterson, blackShed Gallery

Stewart Drew, De La Warr Pavilion?

**Eastbourne ALIVE would not exist without the Towner Eastbourne Gallery:**

Joe Hill, Director, Towner Eastbourne Gallery

Liis Hirvoja, Project and Communications Co-ordinator, Eastbourne ALIVE, Towner Eastbourne Gallery

Sarah Dance, Sarah Dance Associates, Project Director, Eastbourne ALIVE, Towner Eastbourne Gallery

Along with the rest of the fantastic team leading and supporting them.

**Catalyst project - Make (Good) Trouble:**

Daisy Cresswell, Co-founder, Make (Good) Trouble CIC

Taylor Cresswell, Co-founder Make (Good) Trouble CIC

Jane Keating, Director, Make (Good) Trouble CIC

Leah Kluckow, Make (Good) Trouble CIC

Ellis Chapman, Make (Good) Trouble CIC.

**Our Songs, Our Stories:**

Julia Roberts, Co-Director, Culture Shift CIO

Luke Reed George, Project Manager, Culture Shift CIO.

**Our colleagues in Culture and Tourism:**

Sally Staples (Team Manager, Culture & Tourism, ESCC)

Kim Bulgin (Culture and Tourism Project Manager, ESCC)

**Colleagues in Children's Services who helped in lots of ways throughout the journey, especially, for co-ordinating the competition for the front and back cover artwork, along with all those who took part in the competition:**

Atiya Gourlay, Lead - Equality, Participation and Strategic Partnerships, ESCC

Natasha Cummings, Children and Young People's Participation Officer, ESCC

**Those within Public Health:**

Darrell Gale, Director of Public Health, ESCC

Dan Devitt, Health Improvement Specialist, ESCC

Edward Marshall Scheldt (Project Officer), ESCC

Jayne Barnett, Associate Project Manager Apprentice, ESCC

Lyndall Hall, Public Health Graduate, ESCC

Martine Gardener (Information & Technical Guidance Officer), ESCC

Miranda Scambler (Public Health Practitioner), ESCC

Parmila Mannan, Public Health Graduate, ESCC

Rosie Crichton, Senior Researcher, ESCC

Ross Boseley, Specialist Support Manager, ESCC

Stewart Marquis (Public Health Apprentice), ESCC

Teresa Salami-Oru, Consultant in Public Health, ESCC

Terry Hume, Community Resilience Project Manager, ESCC

Tracey Houston, Business Manager, ESCC

Along with contributions from many other members of the team

## The Schools Art Competition

Following a competition among schools to design the front and back covers of this report, two were chosen out of the incredible entries. A full gallery is online for you to see the amazing entries.

TBC link on essc website to follow

A full list of contributors is available here TBC

Thanks are extended to everyone in Childrens services and the schools the children attend and of course the children themselves.

Note of Thanks to Compass Arts and other contributors - illustration numbers etc



# Resources and references

## Key organisations and resources for creative health

### Links to Resources to follow

- 1 <https://www.eastsussexjsna.org.uk/resources/creativity-and-health-evidence-review-2022/the-east-sussex-creative-health-position-paper-september-2023> | eastsussexjsna.org.uk
- 2
- 3 See **TO BE ADDED**
- 4 [Turner Prize — Towner Eastbourne](#)
- 5 [Towner 100 Celebration — Towner Eastbourne](#)
- 6 [Study reveals the art of ageing well \(uwa.edu.au\)](#)
- 7 [Creative Health The Short Report.pdf \(culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk\)](#)
- 8 [Cultivating resilience: community gardening can benefit all ages | \(ageing-better.org.uk\)](#)
- 9 [The impact different species and their traits have on human wellbeing | University of Leeds](#)
- 10 [Linking the natural environment, human wellbeing & poverty | Conservation Research Institute \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)
- 11 [committees.parliament.uk/written-evidence/117836/pdf/9789289054553-eng.pdf \(who.int\)](#)
- 12 [Promoting wellbeing \(who.int\)](#)
- 13 [Outcomes | Arts Council England](#)
- 14 [Five ways to wellbeing | New Economics Foundation](#)
- 15 [Five\\_ways\\_to\\_wellbeing the evidence.doc \(neweconomics.org\)](#)
- 16 <https://wellbeinginfo.org/self-help/wellbeing/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>
- 17 [Five ways to wellbeing | New Economics Foundation](#)
- 18 <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/determinants-of-health>
- 19 [The East Sussex Creative Health Position Paper - September 2023 | \(eastsussexjsna.org.uk\)](#)
- 20 [Wider Determinants of Health - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](#)
- 21
- 22 **LINK TO FOLLOW WHEN AGREED**
- 23 [An Overview of Needs Theories behind Consumerism | researchgate.net](#)
- 24 Ward et al ibid [ResearchGate](#)
- 25 Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weil the Threepenny Opera, The Ballad of Gracious Living
- 26 Ward Ibid
- 27 [Hastings and St Leonards Men's Health and Wellbeing Project | Hastings Voluntary Action](#)
- 28 [The Monologues Of Men – Stables Theatre](#)
- 29 [Hastings and St Leonards Men's Health and Wellbeing Project | Hastings Voluntary Action](#)
- 30 [Men Don't Talk \(You Tube\)](#)
- 31 [Hastings Online Times – Mental Health Awareness Week 2024](#)
- 32 [Museums: Sites of history, culture – and wellbeing? | European Voices - UCL – University College London](#)
- 33 [JSNA Life Course Summary East Sussex 2023 | \(eastsussexjsna.org.uk\)](#)
- 34 [Eve De Haan It's nicer to be nice — Towner Eastbourne](#)
- 35 [Children and young people | Arts Council England](#)
- 36 [Behaviour-change-guide-for-local-government-and-partners | /www.gov.uk](#)

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