



Welcome to our first newsletter of 2024!

We had a busy end to 2023: we agreed our Alliance priorities and governance workstreams for 2024 and finalised our new membership structure to deliver on these; we also hosted our annual conference, attended by statutory partners and members of the wider voluntary sector.



Participants identified upcoming opportunities for the voluntary sector - it's great that collaborating featured so highly in the responses! We look forward to keeping you updated on our programmes of work and collaborations throughout 2024. [Read more about the day](#)

What's New

Our very own website

A new East Sussex VCSE Alliance website is in development. It will have a member's only portal, to make working together even easier – watch this space!

More support for the Alliance

We have successfully recruited an Alliance Administrative and Project Support Officer to support us deliver our key priorities – introductions soon 😊

Alliance Member Spotlight



From 1st April 2024 Home-Start East Sussex's charity name and objectives will be updated. Now named 'Lotus', "a family charity with a specialism in domestic abuse"

For almost 28 years, we have run a hugely successful local Home-Start and have enjoyed being part of the wider Home-Start 'family' of charities. However, departure from the Federation feels like the right time for us and will allow us to further develop services outside of those for which Home-Starts are renowned.

Lotus objectives:

To promote and protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of women, children and their families at risk of harm and disadvantage, including those at risk of domestic abuse in all its forms, in East Sussex and surrounding areas.

For further information please get in touch.

Email: esvcsealliance@escv.org.uk Visit: www.escv.org.uk/east-sussex-vcse-alliance

Alliance Updates

We're delighted to welcome two new members:



Wayfinder Woman - helping women take control of their lives by empowering them with the skills, confidence, and strength to step into who they aspire to be



Hastings Advice and Representation Centre – provides free and confidential end to end Welfare Benefit specialist advice and representation

Collaboration between the Alliance and Public Health to tackle loneliness

Loneliness is a significant public health problem that has wide ranging impacts on individuals and communities. Two programmes, developed in partnership with Alliance members, are now underway:

- *Befriending scheme* – supporting older adults mental health and wellbeing and tackling chronic loneliness – delivered by Age UK East Sussex
- *A stewardship approach to tackling loneliness and social isolation* - hosted by Sussex Community Development Association, with East Sussex Community Voice providing evaluation and monitoring.

Changing the way VCSE services are commissioned

The jointly hosted Alliance, ESCC and Sussex Health & Care 'Commissioning Excellence Programme' is progressing well. It recently explored the theme of 'Transparent Bravery' when commissioning services in the voluntary sector and undertook a survey on cross-sector trusting relationships - overall results indicated a good level of trust between commissioners and providers.

'Connecting Health Communities' collaboration

An Institute for Voluntary Action Research 'Connecting Health Communities' pilot was undertaken in East Sussex, in collaboration with the ES VCSE Alliance and Alliance member Diversity Resource International. The training element of this pilot is being expanded into West Sussex, with a number of GP surgeries taking up the *Cultural and Diversity Training offered by Diversity Resource International*.

Guest speaker from National Institute for Health and Care Research

Alliance members were updated on how equity of access to health and care research is crucial in reducing health inequalities. With Alliance involvement, we can support our communities to improve their own, and future generation's, health by sharing research opportunities.



Upcoming Member events

Diversity Resource International and Vandu: Annual Conference 2024, 6th March, 4pm – 7pm
Scrutinising the existing landscape of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and proposing strategies to transform organisational culture. [Confirm your attendance through Eventbrite](#)

Care for the Carers:

- **'Fair Futures For Young Carers' - Young Carers Action Day 2024. Events on 13th & 14th March**
Raising awareness of young carers across the county and the pressures place on them
- **'Think Carer' training** – free online/in-person sessions held across the county, for staff and volunteers in contact with carers

Hastings Voluntary Action: Open Mic, Marketplace & Hastings Levelling Up Partnership Programme 28th March, 10am – 1pm Share information about your work, learn about a range of services delivered locally, browse the marketplace and network. Also hear about the Hastings & St Leonards Levelling Up Partnerships Programme and how to get involved.

For further information please get in touch.

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