



# OUR 2022-23 IMPACT

Sussex-based not-for-profit care,  
support and housing provider since 1972

Southdown

[www.southdown.org](http://www.southdown.org)

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## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

All figures quoted refer to the year running from 1st April 2022 to the 31st March 2023, unless otherwise stated. Figures describing the success of interventions made by Southdown services relate to clients for whom the outcome was an identified support need.





# Southdown at a glance

## WE BELIEVE:

Everybody has the right to live their life well.

## OUR MISSION:

To provide exceptional community support services and housing across Sussex which enable people to live well.

## OUR VALUES:

Guiding how we do things, how we interact with the people we work with and the decisions we make, are our values:



### Force for good

We're passionate about making a difference.



### Brilliant with people

We're compassionate, inclusive and welcoming; our colleagues and local communities deserve nothing less.



### United

Together, we can achieve so much more.



### Trustworthy

We're knowledgeable and act with integrity.



### Responsive

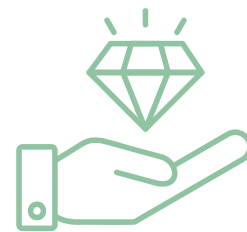
We listen, learn and adapt.



## WHAT WE DO

We deliver specialist, person-centred support:

- 24-hour and community care and support (autism and learning disabilities)
- Mental and physical wellbeing community services
- Peer support opportunities
- Learning and employment
- Homelessness prevention and support
- Social landlord of supported housing



## OUR ADDED VALUE

- Big enough to be taken seriously, small and local enough to care (approachable and accessible)
- Renowned for consistency, quality, reliability and professionalism
- Unique capability to act as an inclusive VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) Lead Provider
- Being a psychologically informed organisation
- We influence and innovate on behalf of the wider VCSE sector
- We believe in and stand up for our people (our clients and colleagues)



# In the last year...

we supported

**10,854**

people\* in the 63 services  
we provided across Sussex  
(9% increase year on year)



\*'People' refers to timelines of support rather than unique individuals.



# We supported

**180 people** with learning disabilities live in and were supported by our 23 supported living services and four residential care homes.

**571 tenants** and shared owners, for whom we are the landlord for or act on behalf of another landlord, were supported to live in their own homes.

**644 people\*** were supported by our seven homelessness prevention and support services (82% decrease year on year). This significant decrease is due to no longer being the provider for an East Sussex-wide housing support service, new services secured over the year taking time to embed, and our East Sussex Rough Sleeper Services' data being held on partner systems.

**9,459 people\*** were supported by our 24 mental health support services, including our employment, learning, peer support and mental and physical wellbeing services. (49% increase year on year)

**602 people\*** received support from our Financial Inclusion team (141 of whom were supported to claim a total amount of £687,173 in welfare benefits back payments owed). The team also supported 87 clients to receive additional weekly or monthly payments.

**1 in 4 people** who accessed support were able to use more than one of our services due to multiple needs.





# What our clients and tenants said about us...



**90%**  
said

"Overall, I am satisfied with the support I receive"

**87%**  
said

"Support has made a positive difference to my life"

**92%**  
said

"My Southdown worker listens to me"

**90%**  
said

"My Southdown worker respects my values and background"

**89%**  
said

"I feel understood and valued as an individual"

**86%**  
said

"My Southdown worker does what they say they will do"

## Complaints

At Southdown, we actively encourage feedback and have policies and procedures in place to ensure comments and complaints are responded to in a timely and appropriate way. Over the year, we received 19 complaints (a 29% reduction year on year) of which 31.5% were upheld or partially upheld.



# Mental and physical wellbeing support (Including learning and employment)



Of 3,571 individual  
client assessments,  
**82%**  
reported an improved wellbeing score\*.





**Our community mental health support has been our largest area of growth and expansion during 2022/23 (49% increase of people accessed support we provided year on year, from 6,343 to 9,459).**

## **In our emotional and physical wellbeing services**

- We employed 30 new roles within Primary Care Networks (groups of GP practices) to support mental health coordination and improve access to physical health checks for people with severe mental illness (Screen and Intervene service). These new roles are aligned with the transformation of community mental health services across Sussex, with Southdown playing a leading role for the ambition to increase funding and service provision for the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector.
- 1,520 people accessed support at our eight wellbeing centres in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Our centres offer a range of support to help people facing mental health challenges to recover, stay well and prevent crisis.
- Our Complex Emotional and Relational Needs services (previously known as Personality Disorder service) in East Sussex and Brighton ran 374 sessions which were attended 1,919 times.
- 1,150 people received support from our crisis prevention Staying Well services in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove (176% increase year on year). 4,270 in-person or phone support sessions were provided. When asked, how did you feel before coming to Staying Well and how they felt afterwards, 87% said 'improved'.
- 904 people received support over 1,916 sessions from our Community Connectors social prescribing service in East Sussex. Based in GP practices, social prescribers take a holistic approach to health and help people find and remove the barriers to accessing local community services, groups and activities to support and empower their health and wellbeing.
  - Of those people, 412 completed a subsequent MYCAW (questionnaire designed specifically for evaluating holistic and personalised approaches to supporting people) in the year, and 75% saw an improved wellbeing score.
  - 78.3% of 355 people saw a reduction in the frequency of GP appointments in the 3 months following support.

## In our lead provider role

- In our lead mental health provider role for UOK Brighton & Hove, we worked with 16 local providers to deliver joined up community support for local people across the city.
- 885 calls were made to the Central Access Point phoneline. And in accordance with the 'no wrong door' approach, 100% of contactable callers achieved an outcome, from signposting and advice to onward referrals.
- 18,000 people visited the UOK Brighton & Hove dedicated website (1,500 on average each month).
- We steadily grew the UOK Brighton and Hove online community (26% increase in followers on Facebook and Twitter).

## In our employment and learning services

- 2,418 people with mental health challenges received support from our Supported Employment services across Sussex. Of those, 433 people were supported to secure paid work and 330 were supported to keep their job.
- 600 students registered onto a wide range of 78 different courses and workshops provided by our Brighton & Hove Recovery College. 223 (37%) were new students and 377 (63%) were returning students.

## What people said about us

**87%**  
said

"Support has made a positive difference to my life"

**91%**  
said

"My Southdown worker respects my values and background"

**89%**  
said

"Overall, I am satisfied with the support I receive"

Freephone 0808 196 1768  
[www.uok.org.uk](http://www.uok.org.uk)





# Jess' story

“ I am a Mental Health Support Coordinator for the Emotional Wellbeing Service which provides support to patients from GP surgeries in Brighton and East Sussex. It is a partnership between Southdown, Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust and local Primary Care Networks (PCNs).

Many of our patients are living with depression or anxiety, substance misuse, bereavement, stress, complex emotional needs, a relapse of their mental health, or a physical health and / or social situation that is impacting on their mental health such as a flare up of a long-term condition, relationship stress or financial stress.

My main responsibilities include triaging referrals that come to the mental health team at the PCN, establishing if the patient is suitable for the service, or if another service would be more appropriate, such as social prescribing.

I also provide trauma-informed support to patients who are struggling with their mental health. Support is personalised but it usually involves providing a safe space to discuss how they are feeling, what their goals are, and how they can be achieved.

A direct mental health intervention role like mine means that patients can access support more easily. We have more time and availability than GPs and often an individual's mental health needs require more than just a prescription. People want to feel heard and we give them a space for that. We provide personalised, non-clinical, non-judgmental support, and can help by speaking with other healthcare professionals.

One of the benefits of PCNs adopting a model like this is that it relieves some of the stress on GP surgeries where patients need appointments for non-clinical issues. The model also allows for a more holistic approach to healthcare, collaborative multi-disciplinary team working, and flexible support options for patients.

It's amazing to see people become more confident and able to advocate for themselves as they make progress in their journeys.”





# Learning disability support

Across our 27 learning disability services in Sussex we enabled the

**180**

people we provided support for to fill their lives with things that they enjoy, bring them happiness, and matter the most to them.







**We believe everyone has the right to live their life well, regardless of abilities, background or lifestyle.**

## **Quality support**

100% of our learning disability support services achieved a 'Good' Care Quality Commission (the regulator of health and social care in England) rating, with some areas assessed as 'Outstanding'.

- 15% of people supported by our learning disability services are over 65 years of age. With the average life expectancy for men with a learning disability being 66 and 67 for women, this is a great testament to our care and support team's fantastic work to enable our clients to live well.
- 58% of people we provided support for have been with us for over 10 Years, and 18% have been with us for over 20 Years. This longevity of support means we get to know the people we support really well.
- We arranged and hosted a Summer Fiesta and Christmas Carol Concert to bring people together, along with their Support Workers, from our 27 services across Sussex. The events were particularly special as they followed a tough couple of years of Covid-19 restrictions.
- Our Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) approach, embedded throughout our services, continued to enable us to provide the very best care and support. Our PBS approach focuses on understanding challenging behaviour and tailoring support in response. 37% of the 180 people we supported have additional complex behaviours.
- We introduced 'Quality of Life Champions' across our learning disability services to help ensure that each individual person's choices and needs are nurtured.

” Staff placed people's wishes, needs and rights at the heart of everything they did. The registered manager and staff at the service demonstrated values, attitudes and behaviours which supported people to lead confident, inclusive and empowered lives.

– Extract from CQC inspection report for Beaconsfield Villas supported living service in Brighton



## What people said about us

**100%**  
said

"my Support Worker  
helps me to see  
what I can do to  
feel good about  
myself "

**100%**  
said

"I am happy living  
at Southdown"

**97%**  
said

"My Support Worker  
cares about me"

**91%**  
said

"My Support Worker  
listens to me"







## Jo's story

We spoke to Learning Disability Support Service Manager, Gemma, about client Jo's quality of life:



Jo goes to his summer house every day. He has his morning drink there and has started to have some of his lunches there. He loves the summer house; it is a place for him to create.

Jo's loved gardening in the last year. His other passions include horses and horse riding, and he enjoys his college courses. He likes music and went to a music festival, and he adores Strictly and went to The Professionals Tour!

His favourite place is Paradise Park – a garden centre with heritage trail and gardens and a planet earth museum with dinosaurs. He really loves the café and the mini train - he really likes Stan the Train Driver who also runs a bingo session which Jo goes to.

Family is very important to him too. He's an uncle to lots of children and his parents are very involved.

He does yoga here every Wednesday afternoon, and every month we have a client meeting with everyone together. We talk about what they've enjoyed, any new staff and new residents. We do lots of planning in these meetings such as who wants to go to what activity. We make it fun by getting everyone to decide what they want to eat for a takeaway!

He says he has a good, happy life here."



# Social landlord of supported housing

Over the past year,  
we supported

**571**

tenants and shared owners, for  
whom we are the landlord for or  
act on behalf of another landlord.







## **Providing safe and secure homes**

Over recent years, the reputation of the social housing sector has been negatively impacted by a series of damaging and unfortunate serious incidents; most notably, the sad death of Awaab Ishak due to poor practice in dealing with damp and mould and the Grenfell Tower disaster. Rightly so, building and fire safety have become key national and political priorities to ensure housing associations provide tenants with safe and secure homes.

At Southdown, the safety and welfare of our tenants is important to us, and we're proud of the safety standards for our properties.

- Our overall compliance to provide our tenants with safe and secure homes averaged at 98.5% throughout the year.
- 100% of Fire Risk Assessments were carried out over the year.
- We started reporting properties affected by damp and mould in February 2023 in monthly compliance reports. At the end of March 2023, we reported 11 properties that were being affected and had open cases that we were progressing.

**More information is available on our website at:**

[www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/](http://www.southdown.org/how-we-help/housing/safeandsecurehomes/)

## **Energy efficiency**

- To further support our environmental sustainability programme, we were successful in a consortium bid, led by Clarion, to Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The funding will support us in our commitment to addressing fuel poverty in social housing and driving a transition to a low-carbon future for our business and our tenants.

## **Tenant engagement**

- We have continued to expand our Tenant Engagement and Voice activities. We now have in place a well embedded range of engagement and feedback activities and have undertaken considerable work to ensure that we meet the new Tenant Consumer Regulation Standards from April 2023.





## Personalised support

- As a small, supported housing provider, we provide our tenants with a personalised Housing Management service. Typically, we have around 50 tenants for every one member of Housing Management staff.
- 16% of our 571 tenants received additional support from our learning disability support services.
- 33 tenants (an increase of 5 year on year) were successfully supported to move on to independent living, enabling us to use our supported housing for other people that need it.

## What people said about us

**87%**  
said

"I am happy living  
at Southdown"

**85%**  
said

"My Southdown  
worker helps me  
to learn new things"

**81%**  
said

"I feel safe at  
home with my  
support staff"

**80%**  
said

"My Southdown  
worker helps me to  
do the things I want  
to, without rushing me"





## Sam's story

“ I've been a Southdown tenant for a couple of years. They're an amazing landlord. They listen to us. Sort issues out. I feel valued.

We have the mobile numbers and email addresses of Housing Officers and Assistants. They'll always call back. I have that trust with them. There's a lot of flexibility with my Housing Officer. They're very accommodating and personable. And because of that, I'll do my best for them. It's a reciprocal relationship.

Southdown holds meetings with residents in my building every six months. It makes a huge difference being listened to. I can trust them to share what's important to me. They listen and act on it.

Southdown's Tenant Communication and Involvement Officer approached me about participating in tenant involvement activities. I recently sat on interviews for a Financial Adviser and a Housing Assistant. My impression counts. I feel respected and equal in interviews. The benefit for Southdown of my tenant involvement activities is I'm honest. The benefits for me are it gets me out. It does my mental health good as well.

It's very positive being part of Southdown.”



# Homelessness prevention and support

“ When I was first approached by Southdown, not long after coming out of prison, I wasn't hopeful or sure that they could help me because of my mental health and drinking issue. I seriously thought I was going to die. You listened to my needs though, and went out of your way to help me. It was a ray of hope when I was offered a place I could afford and that met my needs. I am so grateful for my home.”

– Client of our Rough Sleeper Support Services (not pictured)







## New support contracts

Although funding for housing support has significantly reduced over recent years, it is positive that we are continuing to maintain and expand provision where possible.

Over the year, we were awarded 4 new contracts; Worthing Supported Housing for former homeless people (utilising a Homes England revenue grant); East Sussex Rough Sleeper Services, and in Brighton & Hove, 2 elements of the new Mental Health Housing Pathway; 20 units of supported housing and a 16-person Discharge to Assess short-term service as an alternative to hospital admission/delayed discharge.

## Homelessness prevention

- 83% of people who accessed our West Sussex Hospital Discharge service were supported to find new accommodation or retain their existing accommodation when they were at risk of becoming homeless.
- Our Brighton & Hove Transition and Resettlement service completed 2,583 support visits and 3,160 video/phone calls to people.
  - The service helped 13 people avoid eviction and 70% of people find accommodation more suitable for their needs.
  - 89% of people supported reported an increase in health and wellbeing at the end of support. 94% had increased their involvement in the community and local groups.
- 263 people were supported by our West Sussex Pathways Home housing support service. 81% of those who finished support, achieved a positive outcome (were supported to stay in their existing accommodation or to find new accommodation).

## What people said about us

**87%**  
said

"I am happy living at Southdown"

**86%**  
said

"Staff help me when I ask them to"

**84%**  
said

"My Southdown worker does what they say they will do"



# Peter's story

“ They helped me find tenancies to let. I viewed 3 places before this one. It was quite hard, actually. Without the support, I wouldn't have been able to do it.

I didn't know where to go. I didn't want to be in temporary accommodation forever. I was in there 1 and a half years, so it was a long time in a tiny room.

They helped me budget. They also helped me with getting discretionary payment, and they helped with setting up universal credit.

The support I got was unbelievable. It was absolutely brilliant. At one stage, I didn't want to do it because I felt like I couldn't do it because they didn't know what steps to take and where to go. And she sat there and explained everything to me very well.

We went and viewed the place. We got a phone call the next day and I think it was the following week I moved. We packed all my stuff up and my Support Worker helped me.

It's made a big difference in getting me my own home. It's lovely. It's really nice. Getting me out of temporary accommodation into permanent housing. Where I can have visitors, I can have friends round, I can have my family round. It's changed my life. There's no way I could have done that on my own. There's no way.

And I've still got the support of my Southdown worker for the next six months. If I've got any problems, which there has been, knowing somebody is there, is great."





# Force for good



As well as being a service provider, we are committed to playing an active and leading role to support the Statutory and Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) sectors to maintain and improve local health, care and housing services within our Sussex communities.

Over the past year, this has included the development of new service models as well as promoting the ability of the VCSE to help solve some of the biggest issues facing our society.





## Fair funding for fair pay

We are, and have been for some time, working at the very edge of profitability for our learning disability support services. However, through robust and evidence-based lobbying, we secured some improvements to funding levels that enabled us to retain care placements and pay our employees more.

The improved fee levels enabled us to address recruitment and in-work poverty challenges by increasing our lowest salaries by 12.5%, as well as making additional cost-of-living in-year bonus payments.

Going forwards, we will continue our campaign for fairer funding, appreciating that this is a widespread issue for the whole of the social care sector.

## Systems leadership

As one of the largest Sussex based providers, we are committed to playing an active and leading role in helping shape and support the continued viability and development of the VCSE sector. Championed by our Chief Executive, Neil Blanchard, who represents the sector at numerous local and national forums and networks, during 2022/23 we led on several initiatives to increase VCSE engagement as a valued and respected strategic partner in the future development and provision of transformed community and health support services.

This included the establishment of a Sussex Mental Health VCSE Strategic Leadership Group, bringing together VCSE elected representatives engaged in the transformation of community mental health services. In addition, our CEO will be co-facilitating a new 2-year East Sussex VCSE Commissioning Excellence Programme, aiming to develop East Sussex as a best practice Centre of Excellence.







## Social housing rents

Through engagement with the National Housing Federation, we took an active and vocal position to ensure supported housing was exempt from the Government's 7% cap on social housing rent increases for 2023/24. The ability to increase rents by 11.1% enables Southdown to continue to deliver high quality and responsive housing and maintenance services to our tenants, whilst also investing in property safety and sustainability programmes.

## Social impact within the Sussex economy

With a total income of £28.6 million and employing over 1,000 local people each year, Southdown makes a significant contribution to the local Sussex economy. Working within our financial regulations we prioritise awarding procurement contracts to local businesses, and with the majority of employees living locally, they reinvest their salaries to further stimulate the local economy.

We invest time and resources to support local professional networks and community initiatives as part of our corporate social responsibility.





# Our 50th year



**We celebrated our 50th anniversary year with opportunities to reflect on achievements whilst also looking forward to future ambitions and goals.**

## Values

During the year, we reviewed our values; what we stand for. The process we went through to develop our values was a great example of collaborative working as we involved colleagues from across the organisation. See page 3 for further details about our values.

## Psychologically informed

Over the past 18-months, we developed a bespoke framework to help everybody across the organisation recognise and respond to people's psychological needs (our colleagues as well as the needs of people who access our services). We're excited about the benefits that this innovative, clinically reviewed approach will bring as the framework, which we're calling the Beacon, becomes embedded across Southdown.





## Southdown Voice

Another area we're proud of is the launch of a new colleague engagement framework, called 'Southdown Voice'. This approach increases opportunities for colleagues' opinions to be heard and responded to, with direct involvement and accountability from Southdown's Executive Team and Board. Our colleague survey undertaken in March 2023 indicates that this approach is already having a positive impact, with increased engagement scores.

## Cost of living

It has been a tough year for everybody as the cost of living soared with real fears for people's ability to pay for food, utilities and other essential items. In support, we offered clients and tenants, along with our colleagues, access to advice and guidance from our in-house Financial Inclusion Team, as well as signposting to other Sussex-based initiatives.

For employees at Southdown, we were bolder than we've ever been on pay so that we could increase our base pay above the Real Living Wage rate for all staff from April 2023.



# How we did it

In the last year,  
we employed

**1,024**

people with a wide range of skills  
and experiences from a variety of  
backgrounds and cultures.





# Our team

We believe in doing the very best for people – for our employees as well as people that access our services. Their health, happiness and wellbeing really matter to us. We work hard to recruit and retain skilled and caring individuals. In return, we aim to be the best employer we can be.

## In 2022-23:

- We gave our employees a pay rise and bonus. Success in funding lobbying and appeals enabled us to award colleagues a 5% pay award for 2023/24, with additional weighting to our lowest paid roles equivalent to 12.5%, bringing our base salary level above the real living wage. In addition, we awarded a 3% backdated pay bonus for 2022/23 (on top of a 2% general pay award) and made cost-of-living bonus payments of £245.
- We offered 118 distinct training courses for our colleagues to develop their knowledge and skills.
- We delivered a 0.58% gender pay gap (comparing the median hourly rate of pay for men and women). What this means is that our male employees earn 0.58% more than our female colleagues. We monitor the salaries of our workforce to ensure that there is no bias regarding gender and that salaries are fair and comparable to similar organisations.
- We were recognised as a Top 30 Family Friendly Employer for the 10th year in a row.
- We established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Leadership Team so everybody at Southdown (employees and clients) feels welcomed and we create a culture that challenges prejudice and values diversity.
- We employed graduates which has enabled us to progress projects and improve our social media use to drive recruitment.



“It’s really important to me that I work in an organisation that takes diversity and inclusion seriously. As a member of the EDI Leadership Group, I’ve been really pleased to see how Southdown is developing this very important area, including the mechanisms that enable us to challenge how we do things and make things better so people in our communities can live well and safely. The EDI Leadership Group plays a key role in doing this – we communicate key messages across the organisation, ask questions, sit in and drive conversations, and have the capacity to set the agenda to make change happen.”

– Vaska, member of our EDI Leadership Team



# About us

- On average, there are 800 employees working across Southdown.
- 18 years to 78 years is the age range of our employees.
- 1 in 3 of our employees are carers for disabled or elderly relatives/loved ones or children outside of work.
- 6.7 is the average number of years employees stay with us and 25% of our workforce have been with us for 10 years or more.
- 1 in 5 of our employees are disabled or have a long-term health condition.

In an annual satisfaction survey, colleagues told us:

87%

are proud to work for Southdown

84%

would recommend Southdown as a great place to work

91%

are motivated to do their best work

“ I love my job because I am passionate about supporting people to live their lives to the full, for them to achieve the maximum that they are able to.

The best thing about support work is the feedback that you get from clients. The fact that at the end of the day, you can go home and feel that you've done a good job and made a difference to the clients. It's good for your mental wellbeing.

Working for Southdown means that you are working for an organisation that is committed to sustainability, whose senior leadership team is accessible, and where the training you get equips you well for your role.”

– Chris, Support Worker for our learning disability services





# The figures

We continue strive to be a robust, professional, and efficient business, committed to delivering Value for Money. Our strategic vision and 5 year business strategy further evidence this as we aim to deliver One Southdown – an insight led, outcome focused organisation that is simple to do business with.

## OUR INCOME SOURCES



As a not-for-profit organisation, we reinvest any surpluses into service delivery and development.



Learning Disability Support

£13,519,495



Mental Health

£7,005,403



Housing

£4,518,097



Housing Support

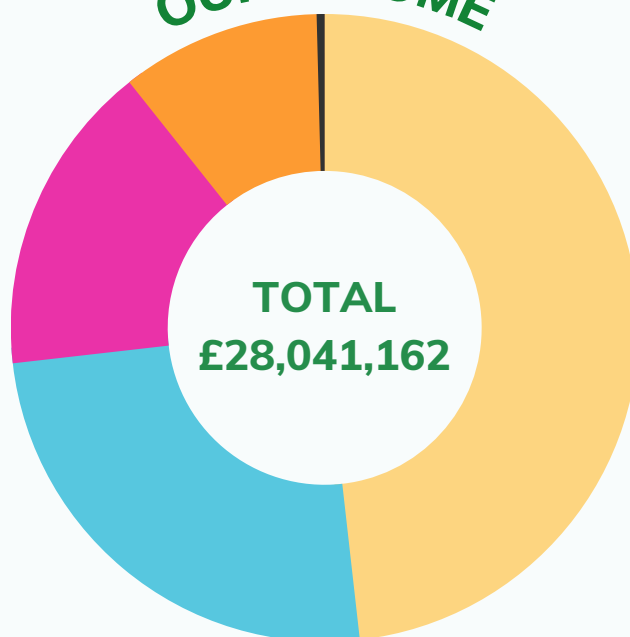
£2,882,911



Other

£115,255

## OUR INCOME





# Our learning



## Co-located workers

Many of our employees are co-located workers, working as part of an integrated team in GP surgeries and partner offices. Over the year, we looked at how this way of working impacted on workers' engagement, line management and onboarding. What was working well and what could be improved. Our learning has led to a pilot to develop a strengths-based approach to people management. And included an acknowledgement that we need to develop our recruitment approach to be inclusive about the skills needed to thrive as a co-located worker.



## Repurposing our property

Following the closure of one of our learning disability supported living services in Worthing, we repurposed the property to be used to provide housing and support for people who have been homeless or are living in temporary accommodation. Our learning from the project included the beneficial impact of multi-disciplinary team working towards a common goal. In addition, we've produced a checklist from our learning for future mobilisation projects.



# Our learning



## Energy efficiency of our properties

We are committed to addressing the climate emergency as well as maximising the quality of life for our tenants and clients by addressing issues of energy poverty and affordability. As part of this, we continue to invest capital and resource to improve the energy efficiency and environmental sustainability of our properties.

Over the year we have operated several small pilots for energy efficiency, focusing upon fabric-first measures, improving insulation and the thermal performance of our stock. We continue to learn from these experiences and refine our specification. Our Director of Housing and Business Services chairs the Climate and Net Zero sub-group of the East Sussex Housing Partnership Board - seeking to build collaboration across East Sussex in addressing the challenge of decarbonisation at scale in terms of data, skills, developing shared supply chains, and technologies.



## Higher needs' referrals

Over the past year, we have had a higher number of vacancies in our learning disability services which has caused us to examine why. This has been in part due to the nature of our services and some of our aging housing stock, coupled with more referrals for people with complex support needs.

People with complex support needs often need specific environmental specifications, whilst our vacancies have tended to be in shared services. We have also had referrals for clients with complex dual diagnosis of learning disability and mental health issues, where we have felt we don't have the right training /skill sets to be able to meet the person's mental health (this hasn't always been the case as we support many people with dual diagnosis). In addition, as with the sector as a whole, we have had challenges recruiting care staff, so we have had situations where we have identified a client to fill a vacancy, funding is agreed, but we have had to delay move in until we recruited.

These are live issues we're grappling with and learning about how we can develop what we do to meet the changing and more complex needs of people living with learning disabilities in local communities across Sussex.



# Looking ahead

## Business strategy – ambitions and priorities

To respond to challenges and opportunities in our operating environment, and to deliver on our core mission, Southdown operates a five-year business strategy model. This establishes both our longer-term strategic priorities (taking Southdown forward), and our business objectives (how we will deliver our business now).

### Strategic priorities

Following a review in 2023 we agreed four longer-term strategic priorities for 2023-2028:

- 1. Voice (clients, colleagues & sector)**  
Create opportunities to express opinion, respond and influence.
- 2. Growth in partnership**  
Expand the role of Southdown as a sector leader in delivery of community support services and housing.
- 3. Income generation**  
Develop profitable income streams to enable us to have greater autonomy in achieving our mission.
- 4. Digitally enabled care and support services**  
Modernise ways of working to improve systems, data insight, integration, connectivity and client experience.

### Business objectives

These describe how we should deliver our business:

- 1. People (colleagues)**  
Be an exceptional employer, maximising pay and development opportunities.
- 2. People (clients & tenants)**  
Provide exceptional and responsive services to our clients and tenants.
- 3. Assurance**  
Operate safely and meet regulatory standards.
- 4. Growth**  
Managing our capacity and market position.
- 5. Finance**  
Maintain long-term financial security.
- 6. Efficiency**  
Modernise ways of working to reduce overheads and improve experience.

## Delivering our objectives and priorities

Our strategic priorities and business objectives are enabled through clear functional strategies which outline the initiatives and activities (over and above business as usual) required to deliver our ambitions. Some of these activities have been defined as projects and will be managed in accordance with our project governance structure.



# Thank you

We would like to say a BIG thank you for the ongoing support of our commissioning partners: the local authorities and NHS organisations who procure our services. We firmly believe that developing credible and long-lasting relationships with our partners enables us to work collaboratively for the benefit of our clients.

Our main commissioning partners who we work with include:

- East Sussex County Council
- West Sussex County Council
- Brighton and Hove City Council
- Sussex Health and Care Partnership
- Brighton and Hove City Clinical Commissioning Group
- East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group
- West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group
- Primary Care Networks across Sussex
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS England
- Department for Work and Pensions

We'd also like to recognise and highlight the support and contributions we've had from people who access our services and the wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations we've worked with.

And finally, we'd like to thank our staff and volunteers. The continued success of Southdown is also only possible due to the amazing colleagues that we are fortunate to work alongside.

**Thank you.**





# How to contact us

## **We want to hear from you**

Whether you'd like to find out more about our services, provide feedback on support you've received or enquire about job opportunities to join our team, please get in touch.

Head Office: 2 Bell Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN1 7JU

Phone: 01273 405 800

Email: [info@southdown.org](mailto:info@southdown.org)



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