

Southdown

southdown.org

Our strategy

2025 - 2030



Specialist **care, support** and
housing in Sussex since 1972

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We believe everyone has the right to access support that enables them to feel safe, be well, and live the life they choose.

- Southdown vision



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Welcome

As we reflect on the challenges facing communities across Sussex, the need for organisations like Southdown has never been clearer.



Pauline Ford
Chair of the Board

At Southdown, we refuse to accept fragmentation as inevitable. People's lives don't fit neatly into boxes, and neither should their support services.

This strategy is our commitment to breaking down barriers, fighting for better housing, championing independence, and building a stronger, more resilient organisation that will stand the test of time.

We are immensely proud of the work Southdown has done and the positive impact we've had on people's lives over the past fifty years. Our new strategy sets out a clear vision for a future where

everyone has the right to support that helps them feel safe, stay well, and live the life they choose.

A safe, secure home is the foundation of this future. Without it, stability, recovery, and community remain out of reach. That's why we are determined to expand access to high-quality housing across the county, so more people can find the security they need to build a better life.

Housing provides the foundation, but a good life is built on more than bricks and mortar. We believe that every person's potential is too important to waste. Whether living with mental



Neil Blanchard
Chief Executive

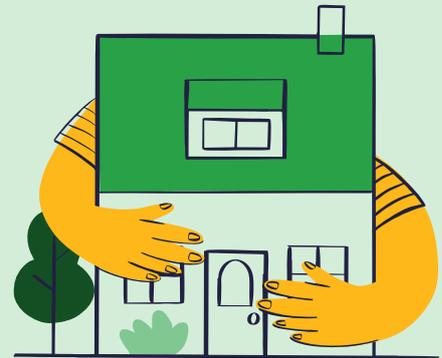
health challenges, disabilities, or the risk of homelessness, every person deserves more than just survival. They deserve meaningful purpose, connection, and the chance to thrive. Our strategy is focused on enabling this, supporting people into work, building independence, and creating services that empower individuals to take control of their future.

We also know that to make a lasting impact, Southdown must be strong and sustainable. Financial instability limits what we can do, so we are building flexibility and resilience into the organisation. This means we can protect our services, adapt to challenges, and play a leading role in supporting and championing the wider voluntary and community sector across Sussex.

This strategy has been shaped by the voices of the people we support, our staff, and our partners. Grounded in real lives, real challenges, and real hopes, we will keep listening, learning and acting, true to our values and focused on making a meaningful difference every day

Thank you to everyone who is part of this journey. Together, we will build a future where no one is left behind.

At Southdown, we are guided by the belief that:



A safe home provides the foundation for stability and opportunity.



Connection and purpose help people thrive in their communities.



High quality, **person centred support** empowers people to lead their own lives.

The challenges we must face together



Across Sussex, too many people are being let down by systems that can't keep up with rising need.



Too many people are falling through the cracks. Without a safe home, timely support, or joined-up care, lives are becoming harder, not easier. For those already facing disadvantage, through disability, poor mental health, or poverty, the impact can be devastating.

together can we build a future where no one is left behind.

The housing crisis is leaving people behind

With soaring costs, long waiting lists, and record levels of homelessness, many are left without safe, secure places to call home. Without that foundation, stability, recovery and connection are much harder to achieve.



Our strategy is a direct response to this reality. It is shaped by the pressures we see every day: a shortage of affordable homes, rising mental health needs, fragmented systems of care, and a workforce stretched too thin. We know these problems are connected, and that only by addressing them

Mental health needs are growing

Underfunded services and long waits for care are leaving people isolated, distressed and at risk of crisis. For many, the right help comes too late, or not at all.

Life is complex but support is fragmented

People's lives don't fit into neat boxes. But too often, housing, employment, and mental health support are disconnected. This creates stress, delays, and lost opportunities to help early.

People with learning disabilities still face barriers

Too many struggle to access housing, support or work that meets their needs. This leads

to isolation and limits their potential. We need services that recognise and build on people's strengths.

Our workforce and funding models are under pressure

Recruitment and retention challenges, along with underfunded contracts, are putting increasing pressure on frontline services. To secure a strong and sustainable future, we need to adapt and plan for long-term resilience.

These challenges are not isolated. They are part of a

system that too often leaves people without the support they need, when they need it most. We cannot fix them by working in silos, or by accepting the status quo. That's why our strategy is built on connection, prevention, and long-term thinking. It is about joining the dots between housing, health, work, and care and designing support around people's lives, not services. Because when we face these challenges together, we create the foundations for real and lasting change.



Our vision and purpose

Our vision and purpose express who we are, why we exist, and the difference we're here to make.

Our approach stems from a simple idea: people thrive when they feel safe and included, can learn and grow at their own pace, and have opportunities to shape their own path. Our vision and purpose are rooted in this understanding, guiding everything we do and every decision we make.

We work alongside people, recognising their unique

experiences, strengths and potential. Through close partnerships with organisations and individuals with lived experience, we design support that is accessible, joined-up and truly responsive. As a not-for-profit, we have the flexibility to meet changing needs and the commitment to always put people first.



We believe everyone has the right to access support that enables them to feel safe, be well, and live the life they choose.

Our values

Our values shape how we deliver our strategy and define success beyond numbers.

They guide how we work with each other, with our partners, and with the people we support. Our values influence every conversation, every decision, and every service we deliver. They help us stay grounded in what matters most and ensure that we remain a compassionate, trustworthy, and forward-thinking organisation focused on making a lasting difference.



Force for good

We are passionate about making a positive difference in people's lives, championing their strengths and potential.



Brilliant with people

Compassionate, inclusive, and welcoming - ensuring belonging and individuality are at the heart of everything we do.



United

Achieving success through working together with local authorities, the NHS, and voluntary sector partners, so everyone feels safe and connected.



Trustworthy

Acting with integrity and transparency in all operations, nurturing a sense of safety for staff and clients alike.



Responsive

Listening, learning, and adapting to changing need - recognising each person's experiences and choice in shaping support.

Our strategic ambition

We are breaking down barriers between mental health, housing, learning and physical disabilities by creating accessible, high-quality homes and services.

By 2030, we will expand our reach to thousands more people across Sussex to ensure no one is left behind.

To deliver on this ambition, we have developed four Strategic Aims that flow directly from our understanding of the challenges people face.

Each aim is supported by practical steps that describe the change we want to see. For every area, we explain why it matters, what success will look like, and how we'll stay on track. Together, these aims will guide our work and help us build a more joined-up and resilient organisation.

Breaking down silos

Expanding housing access

Enabling independence and meaningful purpose

Creating financial flexibility and resilience



Breaking down silos

“ People’s lives don’t fit into neat boxes, and their support shouldn’t either.



Jo Raisey
Chief Experience &
Transformation Officer

Too often, people have to navigate complex systems alone, repeating their stories and managing disconnected services. This creates delays, missed opportunities, and extra stress at the worst possible times.

This aim is about building a more joined-up approach that reflects the reality of people’s lives. By connecting teams, sharing knowledge, and designing better pathways, we will help people get the

right support at the right time, in a way that feels seamless and human.

Why this matters

People find it difficult to access the support they need; fragmentation causes delays and extra stress. By connecting services, we ensure timely, joined-up care that reflects our belief that everyone has a right to seamless support.

Objectives

- 1.1 Develop integrated support pathways across Southdown services that connect housing, mental health, and learning and physical disability services.
- 1.2 Drive improvements in the accessibility of services for people across Sussex, maximising open referral routes and ensuring more coordinate and connected support.
- 1.3 Utilise emerging digital technologies and innovations to improve pathways and experience for clients and tenants.

How we'll know it's working

We'll track how well services are working together by measuring things like the number of people referred between services, how quickly support is provided, and whether clients feel their experience is joined-up and seamless. Listening to the people we support will be central to understanding where things are improving — and where more work is needed.

What will help us get there

Delivering this aim depends on strong partnerships. We'll work closely with local authorities, the NHS, and voluntary sector partners to build a more connected system. Sharing data safely and improving how we record, refer, and respond will help us act faster. And through ongoing quality checks and client feedback, we'll keep raising the bar for joined-up care.



Southdown gave me the space to be and do. Their Employment Support service and Wellbeing Centres are like a warm blanket. They feel like coming home.

They saved my life.

- Southdown client



Expanding housing access



A safe, secure home is the foundation for stability and recovery.



Jim Aspdin
Director of Housing & Assets

Too many people in Sussex live in poor-quality, insecure, or unaffordable housing. Without a stable home, it's harder to stay well, build independence, or plan for the future, especially for those facing mental health challenges or disabilities.

This aim is about changing that. We want more people to have access to safe, secure homes that support recovery and stability. That means

investing in new housing, raising standards, and helping people sustain tenancies. A good home isn't a luxury, it's the foundation for a better life.

How we'll know it's working

We'll track the number of homes we own, the quality and safety of our housing, and how satisfied tenants are

Objectives

- 2.1 Develop new funding and investment models to sustain and scale our impact in underserved communities.
- 2.2 Support more individuals to successfully move into and maintain independent living.
- 2.3 Offer longer term tenancies to reduce instability and trauma.
- 2.4 Own homes where we provide services to ensure they meet our quality standards.

with where they live. We'll also monitor how long people are able to sustain their tenancies and reduce the number of unplanned moves or breakdowns. Our goal is to make housing a source of security, not stress.

What will help us get there

We'll need to think differently about how we invest in and manage our homes. That means finding new funding models, building partnerships, and using our resources wisely. We'll make sure all homes meet our quality and safety standards, and we'll give our staff the tools, skills and support they need to grow and deliver excellent housing services.



To be a Southdown tenant is to finally feel settled in my own home and in my own space, and to have the freedom and the time to work on myself as a person and my self-development.

- Southdown tenant



Enabling independence and meaningful purpose

“ Everyone deserves the chance to grow, contribute, and feel part of something.



Matt Gough
Chief Operating Officer

Everyone deserves the chance to use their strengths and feel part of something. But too many people face barriers to work, purpose, and connection, especially when living with health challenges or disadvantage.

This aim is about changing that. We'll support more people to build independence, find meaningful roles, and feel

a stronger sense of belonging in their communities.

How we'll know it's working

We'll track how many people we support into jobs, how many stay engaged in employment programmes, and how many get involved in volunteering or community

Objectives

- 3.1 Strengthen and expand employment support services for people further from the employment market.
- 3.2 Expand employment and progression opportunities within Southdown for clients and tenants.
- 3.3 Develop volunteering and community involvement opportunities for clients and tenants.

activities. We'll also listen closely to how people describe their own progress, purpose, and sense of connection.

What will help us get there

We'll grow our employment and volunteering services and work in partnership with local organisations to open up more opportunities. We'll co-design support with clients and tenants and build the skills and resources across our teams to deliver meaningful, person-centred support that truly makes a difference.



I get very good support here. I love all my Support Workers, and the Deputy Manager and Manager. My Keyworker's fab as well. I love everyone here

- Southdown client



Creating financial flexibility and resilience



Strong finances mean stronger services, now and in the future.



Michael Barford
Chief Finance Officer

To keep delivering high-quality support, we need to stay financially stable, even when external pressures change. That means being able to plan ahead, manage risk, and invest in what matters most.

This aim is about building greater flexibility and resilience into our organisation. By diversifying

income, strengthening financial planning, and focusing on what we do best, we can protect essential services and grow our impact across Sussex.

How we'll know it's working

We'll track the diversity of our income, how much of

Objectives

- 4.1 Diversify income streams to strengthen financial independence.
- 4.2 Strengthen financial planning, scenario modelling and risk management.
- 4.3 Create a balanced, focused and sustainable portfolio of core services.

it is unrestricted, and how many services are operating sustainably. We'll also run regular stress tests to understand how we'd respond to future financial pressures.

What will help us get there

Delivering this aim means smarter forecasting, stronger financial governance, and bold thinking about how we fund our work. With better data and clearer priorities, we'll stay resilient, and ready to grow when opportunities arise.



The day I got all the support from Southdown changed my life. I'd been looking for this support for years and in a month it's all changed. I can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

- Southdown client



Bringing our strategy to life

Behind every goal in our strategy is a strong foundation.

Our strategy is more than a document, it is a shared commitment, brought to life by every person at Southdown. Whether supporting clients, managing services, or working behind the scenes, everyone has a part to play in making our vision real.

that shape how we work, grow, and stay true to our values. We are also making sure every colleague understands how their role contributes to something bigger.

To support this, we have developed a set of key strategies and frameworks that strengthen how Southdown operates and help us achieve our goals:

To turn ambition into action, we are building strong foundations: systems, frameworks, and strategies



The Beacon Framework

Service Delivery Model

Asset Management Strategy

Data & Digital Strategy

People Strategy

Quality Assurance Framework

Client & Tenant Involvement Strategy

Financial Strategy

Partnership Strategy

Environmental, Social & Governance Strategy



Shared objectives

Our strategy is only possible because of the people who bring it to life every day. Across every role and service, there are three things that unite us: a shared commitment to delivering person-centred support, working together across barriers, and helping Southdown stay strong for the future.

We support clients to be in control of their life – no matter their ability or disability.

- Southdown staff

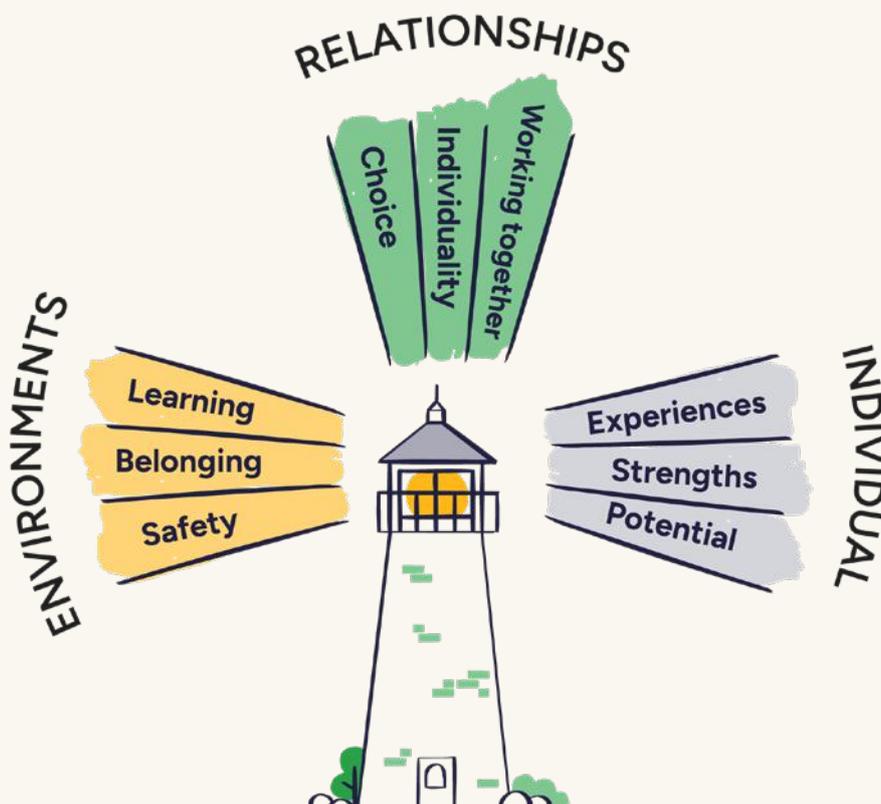


The Southdown Beacon

Our shared framework for delivering psychologically informed support.

At Southdown, we recognise that to truly support people, we must understand their emotional and psychological needs, and our own. The Southdown Beacon is our organisation-wide framework for doing just that.

Launched in 2023 and developed collaboratively across teams and services, the Beacon provides a shared foundation for support across everything we do. It centres around three key areas - Environment, Relationships, and Individual - each with three specific 'beams' of practice. Together, these nine beams guide how we listen, respond, and work alongside people with compassion, clarity, and consistency.



Why we developed it

The Beacon was co-produced over 18 months with insight and input from staff and clients across Southdown. It has been externally reviewed by clinical psychologists to ensure it meets a high standard of psychological practice.

While our services vary, the Beacon ensures we take a consistent approach grounded in empathy, reflection, and empowerment. It supports our staff to work in ways that are trauma informed, strengths based, and person led - across every role and setting.

How it supports our strategy

The Beacon underpins how we deliver high-quality, person-centred care and how we create environments where people feel safe, seen, and supported. It strengthens our approach to joined-up care, supports workforce development, and connects everyday practice with our strategic ambition for inclusion, recovery, and independence.



Support from Southdown has allowed me to breathe. The support looks at what my needs are and who I am as a person. I don't feel like a number.

- Southdown tenant



Financial planning

Delivering our strategy requires careful, forward-thinking financial planning.

To achieve our ambitions for growth, quality, and long-term sustainability, we are implementing an integrated financial planning framework. This approach balances investment in housing and services with strong financial governance and risk management. It ensures we

can deliver now while building resilience for the future.

The framework includes four key elements: a high-level financial strategy, a detailed five-year financial plan, an annual business plan, and a thirty-year asset management model. Together, these will guide how we allocate resources, manage risk, and track performance across all areas of the organisation. Each element is designed to support Southdown's strategic goals and maintain a strong, stable foundation for years to come.



Financial Strategy (overarching framework)

Our Financial Strategy sets the high-level direction for how Southdown will:

- Build financial resilience through diversification of income streams and use of reserves.
- Manage financial risks in line with our Board-approved risk appetite, supported by annual risk stress testing and scenario planning.
- Create the financial capacity to invest in priority areas such as housing, care, and employment support while safeguarding core services.
- Align spending and investment strategies with a view towards asset condition and financial/legal readiness to support financing options.
- Embed financial governance through close alignment with the Board Assurance Framework (BAF), ensuring strategic risks are monitored and mitigated.

Five-Year Financial Plan (medium term financial projection)

A fully costed plan that:

- Supports the delivery of our strategy, including growing our housing portfolio using reserves and responsible borrowing.
- Identification and assessment of investment and revenue opportunities, including new capital and revenue funding models.
- Includes investment in existing properties to support service quality, business growth and financial sustainability.
- Drives margin improvement across all business areas, with a focus on delivering an organisational margin greater 2%.
- Strengthens the financial performance of our Housing services while maintaining healthy margins across Mental Health, Learning Disability, Housing Support, and Employment Support.
- Balances investment in modernising the organisation (e.g., data capabilities, digital transformation and automation) with balancing central overheads appropriate to the size and scale of Southdown's activities.
- Incorporates strategic risk modelling and stress testing to ensure financial plans are resilient to external pressures (e.g., inflation, contract risks, or policy shifts).

Annual Business Plan

The Annual Business Plan will translate the Five-Year Financial Plan into detailed operational and financial targets, including:

- Setting annual margin, income, and efficiency targets by business area.
- Detailing action plans to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational and central support services, with clear KPIs around overheads.
- Aligning annual service delivery plans with financial plans, including planned investments in existing property, workforce, systems, and infrastructure.
- Progress will be reviewed quarterly by the Board, with updates on both financial delivery and achievement of key strategic objectives.

Thirty-Year Asset Management Financial Plan

This long-term plan will underpin the sustainable management of Southdown's assets and include:

- A 30-year lifecycle costing model to guide investment in existing and new housing and service buildings.
- Alignment with our sustainability strategy, ensuring asset investments contribute to net-zero and decarbonisation goals.
- Financial modelling to ensure properties remain compliant with regulatory standards and continue to meet the needs of tenants and clients.

Governance and risk oversight

Our financial framework will link directly to the Board Assurance Framework and Strategic Risk Register. Key risks such as inflation, cost pressures, borrowing, and income diversity will be monitored at Board level. Annual scenario testing will assess our ability to sustain services, with financial health tracked alongside service impact.

Next steps 2025/26

We will model financial scenarios across all service areas, track progress with Board leads, and present a Five-Year Financial Plan by September 2025. This will include growth plans, risk mitigation, and margin goals, with reporting built into quarterly and annual reviews.

Thank you

This strategy belongs to all of us. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive Southdown.

Southdown



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Southdown is an exempt charity registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (L1829) and committed to the National Housing Federation's code of governance. Southdown is also a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014 (20755R).