

Strategic Plan 2024 – 2026



Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change
www.bht.org.uk

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Introduction

BHT Sussex is a highly valued, progressive and trusted charity. We empower and inspire people to overcome homelessness, poverty, addiction and mental ill health by working in partnership across Sussex with local councils, the NHS and voluntary organisations.

Every pound of income received is reinvested in improving our services, homes and the lives of our clients, tenants and the communities we serve across Sussex.

Our Mission is: ‘Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change’

We have successfully delivered specialist recovery and mental health services, legal advice on housing, immigration and welfare benefits related issues and the provision of general needs and supported housing to marginalised people with multiple and complex needs across Sussex for over half a century.

We provide support to more than 10,000 people each year.

We work at the centre of our communities across the county and our values, our spirit of co-operation and our commitment to equality underpins everything we do. See our real life stories overleaf which illustrate how we have supported clients to transform their lives. We strive to make sure our organisation is accessible to everyone irrespective of age, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity and physical or mental ability, and we will work to advance inclusion and value diversity in all aspects of our work.

Through our Involvement Strategy we are broadening and deepening opportunities for our clients and tenants to be involved in how we operate throughout the organisation.

Relationships are fundamental to BHT Sussex. We work closely with our clients, tenants and staff and other stakeholders. We are leaders in our field, helping people move from street homelessness to employment and secure housing.

We believe in treating every person as an individual, with their own needs and aspirations. We use the skills, knowledge and dedication of our staff to ensure we provide a tailored

service to support clients and tenants take control of their lives to achieve their full potential. We have a well-developed understanding of how to help people, including the importance of preventing problems happening and BHT Sussex was one of the first adopters of a psychologically and trauma informed approach to support.

Our recent achievement of Investors in People Gold and our ISO9001 accreditation are testament to our commitment to delivering continuous improvement and providing quality services to meet client, tenant and regulatory requirements and developing a culture of staff wellbeing and engagement.

Our Strategic Plan and objectives over the next three years have three pillars, Sustainability, Quality and Growth. Our Strategic Plan is organic and although based on a period of three years we are an agile organisation that can respond quickly to a changing external environment and find smarter and more relevant ways of working. Our Plan is refreshed annually and will rise to new challenges as needed.



David Chaffey
Chief Executive

Dr. Chaffey



Kelvin Macdonald
Chair of Board of Management

Kelvin MacDonald

Our Strategic Objectives

Sustainability, Quality & Growth

Three pillars are at the heart of what we want to achieve over the next three years: sustainability, quality and growth.

Sustainability

Sustainability describes our motivation to work in ways that ensure both the environmental and the financial future of the organisation. Over the last fifty years we have worked throughout Sussex to develop high-quality services valued by clients, tenants and stakeholders and invested in 'mission critical' services such as our groundbreaking legal and housing advice work and the First Base Day Centre. We are ambitious to continue to provide such essential services and to further develop funding streams to support it. We are also committed to producing a sufficient surplus each year to support our ambitious stock investment plans. Through this we will continue to provide our staff, clients and tenants with a nurturing environment in which to live and work – a principal component of our psychologically informed approach.

We have been awarded £60,000 towards improving energy efficiency in homes from the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). BHT Sussex is matching this funding, meaning £120,000 worth of property upgrades will take place.

The funding was awarded to BHT Sussex as part of a consortium of housing providers, led by Clarion Housing Group. The consortium also includes Worthing Homes, Southdown Housing and Accent Housing.

Additionally, we must play our part in tackling climate change. Our 3-year Environmental Strategy describes changes in every part of the organisation; for our staff, our clients and tenants, our offices and functions and travel.

In the next 3 years we will:

- Improve the quality of our properties and the experience of our staff, clients and tenants that work and live in them through investment in our asset management programme and by returning a net operating surplus of 3% per annum.
- Increase our financial robustness by implementing our review of the operational and strategic viability and value for money over thirty years of all our Supported and General Needs Housing schemes and properties.
- Evaluate all our services and implement project plans to ensure we can continue to deliver on our mission.
- Continue our environmental sustainability journey work to be 2030 and 2050 ready through the implementation of our Environmental Strategy.

Quality

BHT Sussex is proud of its reputation for excellence and will work with staff, clients, tenants, commissioners and stakeholders to maintain and increase the quality of services in Sussex.

This starts with support and investment in our staff. Our People Strategy details our plans to further improve our training offer, particularly around leadership and management, and our path to achieving Investors in People Platinum by 2024.

Our successful eight-year stewardship of the Fulfilling Lives Project for the South-East demonstrated clearly that organisations that succeed do so by drawing on all the expertise they have within them, including that of their clients and tenants. We will continue to develop client and tenant involvement in all areas BHT Sussex alongside other programmes of continuous improvement. Our research links with local universities and our programme of student placements will help us to improve the effectiveness of our work and to share our knowledge and skills.

Our Addiction Services have been rated 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission "There was a proactive approach to understanding the needs and preferences of different groups of people, and to ensuring the service met these needs, promoting accessibility and equality... Relationships between clients and staff were strong, caring, respectful and supportive".

Extract from the latest CQC's inspection summary for the Detox Support Project

In the next 3 years we will:

Expand the influence of people with lived experience in the development and delivery of services, as expert advisers, members of staff, and through participation in our governance structures. We will use the legacy of Fulfilling Lives to inform this work.

Further develop our continuous improvement programme around:

- Equality, diversity, equity and inclusion, health and safety, social value, client and tenant satisfaction, trauma psychologically informed working, digital transformation, CQC (Care Quality Commission) registered services.
- Maintain a happy workforce with the capacity and capability to deliver on our strategic objectives. We will do this by providing a leadership culture where everyone can thrive, by engaging and knowing our staff, and developing and retaining the best people. We want our staff to enjoy a good work life balance through building trusting and positive relationships with each other, their managers, clients and residents, through the implementation of our People strategy.
- Create research capacity that furthers our understanding of how we work, what works best, how we can innovate and the social value our services deliver.
- Increase our investment in Health and Safety to continue to ensure safe and secure homes and accommodation for all our clients and tenants.





Monitoring our Performance

Our Strategic Key Performance Indicators (SKPIs) follow the themes of Sustainability, Quality and Growth and monitor our performance against the ambitions in our Strategy. They also reflect our Business Plan based on it and our Risk Register.

These are the indicators we will regularly monitor at our Board meetings and committees:

Growth

By 2025 we will have grown to meet the increasing demand for our services, to deliver new and innovative projects and to ensure we return annual surpluses that allow us to honour our commitments around sustainability and quality.

To do this we will continue to explore options for investment in our stock and staff for the benefit of our clients and tenants. We will seek to partner with like-minded local organisations to deliver services and we are open to merger if the circumstances are mutually beneficial.

In 2021 we were awarded a contract by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to deliver Floating Support across East Sussex. This is BHT Sussex's largest contract to date and will support over 6400 people this year. Through this contract we have become a Strategic Partner with ESCC, and as such, we share the responsibility for the development and design of the Service and its outcomes, and collaborate with ESCC to achieve long-term benefits and that promote positive outcomes for all.

East Sussex Floating Support team photo above

In the next 3 years we will:

- Work collaboratively with commissioners and other providers to expand our offer to people with multiple and complex needs including mental ill health, homelessness, and problematic substance use.
- Increase the number of homes in ownership and management so that we can provide homes for more people in need, deliver our accommodation-based services and expand our asset base.
- Seek out future mergers and acquisitions in line with our mission and values.

Quality

- Level of overall client & tenant satisfaction
- Level of tenant repairs satisfaction
- Level of staff satisfaction
- Compliance with our dynamic regulatory obligations
- Mandatory training compliance
- Continuous improvement including lessons learned from complaints

- Rent arrears
- Performance against contract obligations
- Level of contract and fundraising income
- Level of free reserves to meet operational and investment requirements
- Asset management planned spend as percentage of agreed annual expenditure

Sustainability

- Overall surplus
- Occupancy levels and void rent loss

Growth

- Number and value of new grants and contracts
- Number of new homes / accommodation units
- Percentage of Properties with EPC (Energy performance certificate) level C



Strategic Risk Framework

BHT Sussex is responsible for not only general needs but also supported housing and care and support activities which attract specific additional risks and challenges compared with other Registered Social Landlords. Recent years have taught us that we cope well with disruptions and that our risk management framework is responsive and adaptable and that our approach is robust to the global and local challenges we have faced. We will continue to work closely with external regulators and our internal auditors and Board to plan for and mitigate the risks that our work brings.

Our Strategic Risk Framework is reviewed annually. This risk management framework is built upon the following fundamental principles:

Overall responsibility for risk management lies with the Board who delegate operational responsibility to the Executive Management Team.

The management of risk is a continuous process involving regular monitoring and reviewing.

The management of risk is externally monitored through our internal audit programme which provides a mechanism to assess if we have appropriate controls, governance and risk management systems in place and to highlight any areas for improvement.

Risks are categorised under three headings and are broken down in the following ways:

Financial strength

- Ability to respond to negative trends in income for example rents and service charge income
- Ability to retain relative value of contracts
- Ability to maintain and improve cash levels to meet operational and investment requirements

Operating Environment

- Ability to meet our regulatory obligations
- Ability to respond effectively to external threats (such as pandemics)
- Its impact on workforce planning, staff retention and to manage succession
- Ability to be competitive, demonstrate value for money and social return on investment
- Ability to respond to the impact of inflation on income, expenditure and service delivery

Influence and reputation

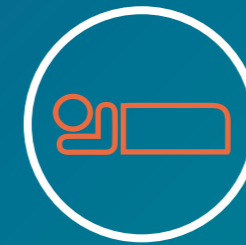
- Ability to deliver quality housing, advice and support services
- Ability to retain cyber security
- Ability to safeguard tenants and clients

Our Impact

BHT Sussex in Numbers (In 2022/23)



10,000+
clients and tenants were supported



2,500+
cases of homelessness were prevented



2,214
people were helped by our advice centres in Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings



£2,702,566
raised by our welfare benefit advisers in income for 427 clients



6856
visits were made to First Base by people experiencing homelessness



1,215
people were supported by our community Mental Health services in West Sussex



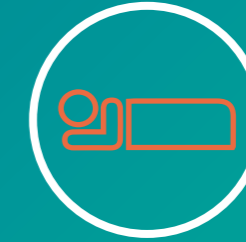
181
people were accommodated in our specialist Mental Health supported housing



65
people were supported to achieve abstinence and recovery from addiction



491
individuals and households were accommodated in our community housing



20
people joined us who have first-hand experience of the issues our support services address



1,195
hours of free meeting space were provided to partner agencies

Our Values

Our values are embedded throughout the organisation; they are highlighted on our website and are a theme at workshops, Staff Conferences and staff surveys. With regard to new employees, interview questions are values-based, values are explained and discussed in our HR Induction and in the Welcome to BHT Sussex Induction for new staff, delivered by our Executive Management Team. They also feature in our employment contract. Staff must demonstrate how they work towards delivering these values in probation interviews, appraisals and supervision sessions. Our mandatory staff training programme aligns to our values.

Being accountable

We are a provider who is transparent, honest, trustworthy and acts with integrity and respect in being accountable. We care about the quality of the services we provide and the development and wellbeing of our staff to ensure our employees continue to deliver the highest standards of performance.

Being Accountable in practice

- BHT Sussex is regulated by the Charity Commission, the Regulator of Social Housing, the Care Quality Commission, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Legal Aid Agency (for our legal advice services). We abide by the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice.
- We have client and tenant representation on our Board of Management

Inspiring change

We understand change is a process, not an event. We work to understand, motivate and inspire our clients, residents and staff to make the positive changes they want to see in themselves and our services.

Inspiring Change in practice

- We are committed to employing people with lived experience; analysis conducted in 2020 showed that 8% of our staff were previously BHT Sussex clients.
- We hold regular resident Scrutiny panels and Resident Focus Groups, putting residents at the heart of the change they want to see.

Collaboration

We are proactive in our strategies to improve our services through innovation and alignment with those we work with. Our strong sense of purpose, passion and resilience mean we put relationships, partnerships, communication and engagement at the heart of everything we do.

Collaboration in practice

- All of our services work in partnership with voluntary and statutory services to deliver the best possible outcomes for our clients.
- We are an active member on a number of professional networks, including the Brighton Chamber of Commerce, Homeless Link, South East Leaders Forum, Acuity Benchmarking, National Housing Federation.

Empowering people

We support our clients and tenants by enabling them to take control of their lives and feel empowered to change things – to live fulfilling lives and reach their potential. Through trust, respect, support, autonomy and open communication our staff are empowered to deliver on new challenges and opportunities with clients and tenants.

Empowering People in practice

- In our 2022 Investors in People review our 'Empowering People' value (also an IIP Theme) was highlighted as a strength of the organisation "People often referred to being trusted in their role, being empowered to try new approaches and being respected by managers"
- 76% of the residents of our Accommodation for Work project gained employment in the past year.

Delivering excellence

We want to deliver excellent services both internally and externally to our clients. We always work to ensure our services are efficient and effective in their outcomes and achieve value for money. We believe in constantly listening and challenging ourselves to deliver continuous improvement and excellence in service delivery.

Delivering Excellence in practice

- We hold ISO 9001 and Investors in People Gold accreditation
- BHT Sussex has four CQC registered services, with two achieving Outstanding

"BHT Sussex want to do the right thing. There's a clear set of values and I feel grateful that I work for an organisation whose values I share and have colleagues that are the same"

BHT Sussex staff member, Investors In People report, 2022

Real Life Stories

Lindsay

BHT Sussex is a member of Pathfinder West Sussex – an alliance of organisations working together to enable people with mental health support needs, as well as their carers, to improve their mental health and wellbeing. As part of this offering, Pathfinder has many volunteer peer mentors.

Peer Mentors use their lived experiences of mental health challenges to create a supportive environment where their clients can discuss their needs, as well as work towards achieving their goals and aspirations.

This is the how one of our peer mentors, Lindsay, became a volunteer at Pathfinder.

“I ended up in hospital due to my declining mental health. When I was discharged, I was given support by a Community Psychiatry Nurse. I next accessed support through Pathfinder, firstly by seeing a Clinician, and later a Peer Mentor, who helped me find strategies to deal with my anxiety.

I was inspired by my Peer Mentor and decided to train as one myself, as I wanted to help others. I became a Community Champion and have since had my first client. I find that it has really increased my confidence and given me a purpose. I now really believe I can help people.”



Sarah

The Court Duty Scheme is a little known but incredible service which provides last-minute emergency advice for people who are facing eviction.

When repossession cases are being heard in Brighton, Lewes or Hastings Courts, our specialist Housing Advisers can step in to protect people and ensure they know their rights. These clients have usually never sought advice or representation before meeting our advisers that morning. Often alternatives to eviction can be worked out, debt payments can be renegotiated, and people can stay in their homes. This was the case with Sarah, whose story is below.

Sarah is a housing association tenant with young children who was facing eviction after getting behind with her rent. She is a single parent and

had been forced to take time off work due to family bereavement and health issues. Despite this, she had agreed repayment terms with her landlord and had kept to them, but her landlord still took her to court to seek possession.

Despite the rent arrears being quite high, the court duty adviser was able to stop the possession order going ahead, and negotiated affordable weekly repayments towards the arrears. This meant Sarah was able to manage the debt, and she and her family could stay in their home.

The Court Duty Scheme is freely available to all. For people on the brink of losing their home, this service can offer a reprieve by giving them access to justice when they need it most.





Our Partners

Khan

“I was living a hectic life in Brighton and Eastbourne – to escape that I turned up on my mum’s doorstep, and I wasn’t looking well because I’d been on drugs for a long time”.

After 6 months, Khan’s relationship with his mum and his recovery broke down. He returned to Brighton, where he had nowhere to live and ended up sleeping rough.

After a period in emergency temporary accommodation, Khan was referred to Phase One.

“They showed me my room and the room looked brand new, all done up nice and clean, the furniture was nice and tidy... it was very welcoming. They’re just providing a safe haven for us, for homeless people, people with bad mental health or addiction to alcohol or drugs... and it’s really appreciated because on the street people look down on us.”

Khan was at Phase One for nearly 6 months and was then supported to move to BHT Sussex’s Detox Support Project, which provides accommodation and a detoxification programme for people to achieve abstinence.

Khan made incredible progress on his recovery journey and his keyworker described him as being a completely different person to the one who

came into the Project for his initial assessment, emphasising all the work Khan put in, as well as the invaluable support he offers his peers at the Project.

Khan made contact with members of his family again and was delighted when his mum and nephews visited for his birthday:

“It was lovely to see them. I literally cannot remember the last birthday I celebrated... living in the madness and whatever I’ve gone through I can’t actually remember celebrating a birthday, and my house, my peers, my family, my recovery family, they made that a really memorable special occasion for me”.

Khan is working hard to regain the trust of his family and is optimistic for the future.

“I’ve reconnected with my faith and that’s a big part of my recovery. I’ve managed to pull my life back together... doing what a son should be doing, what faith requires of me, and building bridges hopefully with my ex-wife.

90% of the staff that work here [at the Detox Support Project] have gone through the service, and every one of them is inspiring, and I learn from their stories and their examples of what I can do with my life when I leave here”.



National Lottery Community Fund | Brighton and Hove City Council | Change Grow Live | East Sussex County Council
 Eastbourne Borough Council Hastings Borough Council | Homes England | Legal Aid Agency | Macmillan
 Mid Sussex District Council | NHS Sussex | Rother District Council | Sussex Police | West Sussex County Council



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Regulator of Social Housing No.H1696

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