

**Update - East Sussex County Council
April 2022
Cllr Bob Bowdler**

Adult Social Care

Continued government funding for Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership

Public-sector organisations in Sussex have welcomed news of renewed government funding to help reduce violent crime in the county.

The Home Office has provisionally allocated funding for a further three years to continue the activities of the Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), which is a collaboration between Sussex Police, Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Public Health England, the NHS, the Probation Service, and others.

Funding to date has been invested in interventions that support vulnerable young people, providing guidance and activities to divert them away from serious violence.

In East Sussex, two Youth Offending Team practitioners have been funded at College Central in Eastbourne, a school for students who have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion.

Working alongside school staff, the practitioners deliver one-to-one sessions, group work, outreach, and family support to all pupils. This includes specific interventions on knife crime, exploitation, and offending. They also provide a link between the school and wider services, including Children's Social Care and the Police.

The additional funding will enable the partnership to maintain this existing provision and develop new projects.

Taxi driver suicide intervention programme launched

Taxi drivers in Eastbourne and Seaford are being offered free suicide intervention and prevention training.

The Taxi Watch programme, delivered by the charity Talk To Tom, teaches drivers how to spot the signs of a person suffering through a suicide crisis, how to react, and how to get the person to safety.

East Sussex County Council is one of the first local authorities in the country to offer this training to drivers, which has been commissioned as part of the council's broader suicide prevention strategy and is supported by Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council.

While the training will initially be offered to drivers operating in Eastbourne and Seaford, it is hoped to extend the programme across East Sussex subject to funding.

Children's Services

Expansion of Substance Misuse Service for young people

Following successful treatment activity last year, the East Sussex Substance Misuse Service will now be expanded to support young people up to age 25.

Funding from the Project ADDER government initiative enabled a significant increase in the number of young people accessing treatment through the service in 2021. In addition, 92 per cent of young people successfully completed their treatment in East Sussex - compared to 81 percent nationally.

As a result of these successes, the former Under 19 Service has received additional funding for new staff, including health practitioners, who will deliver drug and alcohol support services to young people aged up to 25 across the county.

As well as offering specialist treatment services to young people who are using alcohol, drugs, 'legal highs' and research chemicals, the service also provides advice and support to parents and carers.

Communities, Economy and Transport

Eastbourne job fair opens doors

Over 200 people attended the Opening Doors Job Fair, an event aimed at supporting people who are furthest from the workplace to find meaningful employment.

The Fair, organised by People Matter and supported by East Sussex County Council's ESTAR (Employability for Supported and Temporary Accommodation and Refuges) initiative and Eastbourne Borough Council, was held at Eastbourne Town Hall. The event was open to everyone, but geared towards providing employment support for homeless people, ex-offenders, veterans, and refugees – including Ukrainian residents who have recently arrived in the county.

Around 30 local businesses exhibited at the Fair, including hotels, construction companies and care companies, as well as representatives from the Jobcentre and local councils.

Record breaking illegal tobacco haul

Trading Standards officers in Eastbourne uncovered their biggest haul of illegal tobacco this year.

The discovery included 18,500 illegal cigarettes and over 19kg of rolling tobacco, worth around £28,000. The illegal products were discovered at a flat in Eastbourne during inspections carried out by Trading Standards officers and Sussex Police.

Further enquiries into the illegal tobacco haul will be carried out before considering criminal charges.

Members of the public are encouraged to play their part in helping East Sussex Trading Standards and Public Health keep illegal tobacco products off the streets by reporting anything suspicious. Anyone with information about illegal tobacco sales is urged to report it

by calling the illegal tobacco helpline on 0300 999 6999 or online at www.stop-illegal-tobacco.co.uk.

Solar panels take council a step closer to carbon target

Hundreds of solar panels are being installed on the roofs of buildings owned by East Sussex County Council, boosting ongoing efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

So far, 156 panels have been fitted to Milton Grange in Eastbourne, 172 panels have been installed on the roof of Sackville House in Lewes, and 69 panels have been installed at Hookstead Resource Centre in Crowborough.

An additional 128 panels have been installed on the roof of County Hall in Lewes, doubling the total number on the building and helping the council save more than £5,000 a year in energy costs. These additional panels will save around 11 tonnes of carbon a year, which is the equivalent of planting 525 trees.

Further work to reduce the council's carbon footprint includes the provision of renewable electricity for offices and libraries, and for street lighting and traffic controls.

A programme to improve the energy efficiency of more than 14,000 streetlights is almost complete and has already resulted in a reduction of more than 250 tonnes of CO2 from street lighting – about 12 per cent of total street lighting emissions.

The county council recently committed to invest a total of £9.1million to support efforts to cut carbon emissions and continue to work with partners and MPs to identify projects and additional funding that will help it become a carbon neutral authority.

Many thanks

Cllr Bob Bowdler – Wealden East Division