



University
Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust

Excellent Care Everywhere

Patients

Our People

Communities

Future

One UHSussex



Our Trust Strategy
2025-2030



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Foreword

Our hospitals have always been at the heart of the communities they serve. You or your children may have been born here. You may work here. You may have had an operation or been treated for a long-term condition here. You and your family might have turned to us in an emergency.

In whatever way you know us – as a patient, a partner, a colleague or a neighbour – we want you to feel you can rely on us however, whenever and wherever you need us. In short, we want to offer Excellent Care Everywhere we provide it.

This new strategy explains what that looks like and sets out how we will deliver it over the next five years. We're doing this now to build on the strengths of our young organisation and the early improvements we've made, but also to address the long-standing issues on which we've not made the progress we hoped.

We're proud of the work colleagues have done to reduce our waiting list faster than any trust in the country, and that 92% of the 10,000 patients who take the Friends and Family survey each month say they would recommend our care. We're proud too of the role we play in training more than 2,000 healthcare professionals each year, and of the way in which we're using new technologies to improve patient care.

But at the same time, our waiting lists are still too long. Too many patients don't get the urgent or emergency care they need fast enough. Too many of our buildings fail to provide the standards of facilities we need to provide excellent care. Not all our staff are happy in their work. Our

organisational culture is not as consistently inclusive or supportive as it should be. And we spend more on caring for patients than we receive in funding.

These strengths to build on and challenges to address came through loud and clear in the Big Conversation that was the starting point for the development of this strategy. The Big Conversation told us how our patients, colleagues and partners see us, and where you want us to improve. More than 5,000 individuals and organisations took part in that discussion, and what you told us is reflected in the priorities and ambitions this document sets out.

It's now important that conversation continues as we bring our new strategy to life and agree on how best we should go about achieving its goals. The people who use our services, the colleagues who provide them and the partners who work with us are those who know them best. We want your ideas, innovations and energy to help us move forward quickly in ways that meet your needs.

We look forward to working with you to achieve our goal of providing Excellent Care Everywhere across University Hospitals Sussex.



Philippa Slinger
Chair



Dr Andy Heeps
Interim Chief Executive



Our values:

We are compassionate – We communicate and act kindly

We are inclusive – Our teams work collaboratively

We are respectful – We behave professionally

Introducing our new Trust strategy:

Excellent Care Everywhere

Our new University Hospitals Sussex strategy has been developed in a time of change. The government's 10-year Health Plan for England is refocusing the priorities of the NHS. Demographic shifts are changing the nature and needs of the population we serve. And our hospitals must change too as we respond to these demands and look for new ways of tackling the long-term operational and cultural challenges we face.

This strategy has been shaped by those changes, and the perspectives of our patients, colleagues and partners. It is also our response to them and the way in which we will navigate the altered landscape ahead as we work towards delivering Excellent Care Everywhere we provide it.

To do this, we will focus our efforts on five important ambitions:

1. Providing excellent care for our patients

Fast, fair, high-quality care

4. Providing excellent care for the future

Being ready for the world ahead

2. Providing excellent care for our people

Supporting all our colleagues to be their best

5. Providing excellent care together

Becoming one UHSussex – united for success

3. Providing excellent care for our communities

Helping local people live well and thrive

Achieving these ambitions will not be easy, but our patients, colleagues and partners have told us clearly what we need to prioritise as we go about it. These ambitions are summarised in each section of the document ahead, but they have in common a need for significant change: for us to think, organise and work differently to improve.

We will need to make better use of technology; improve our systems and processes to better meet the needs of patients and staff; generate more income so we can improve our services and facilities more quickly, and develop our culture so our people are supported and motivated to deliver the excellent care you deserve, wherever you need it.

We have good reason to be confident we can make this change, and to be optimistic about our future. We are investing hundreds of millions in our facilities, including a state-of-the-art new Sussex Cancer Centre. Our electronic patient record will transform how we provide care and empower patients. We are making a significant investment in developing a positive shared culture and providing the training, development and leadership

skills our colleagues need. Above all, we have brilliant people who are committed to doing the very best for their patients and who live our values of compassion, inclusion and respect every day.

Trust and transparency will be the hallmarks of how we work too. This strategy also stands against the backdrop of the continuing police investigation into historic patient deaths at one of our hospitals. We recognise the seriousness of the concerns this raises and the distress families, patients and staff may feel. Our responsibility is to cooperate openly with the enquiry, be guided by our values and do all we can to build confidence in our services. Earning that trust will be paramount in our minds as we take the steps forward this strategy sets out.



Roxanne Smith
Chief Strategy Officer

What this means for you

By 2030:

1 Patients can rely on timely, high-quality care with reasonable waiting times, at all of our hospitals.

2 All our hospitals are thriving, with centres of excellence run by experts giving Sussex patients access to the best care and treatment available.

3 Our staff are skilled, supported, and able to make improvements – they enjoy working here and can get things done.

4 We are a top employer, offering excellent education and training. The diversity of our workforce is one of our strengths and we develop local talent and attract the best people from across the country.

5 We lead in research and innovation. Working with our medical school and universities, we combine academic insight and clinical application to directly benefit patients, and give Sussex patients faster access to new treatments.

6 We are known nationally for being at the forefront of environmental sustainability in healthcare - using and supporting the development of green technology and radically reducing single-use items.

7 We have easy-to-use digital systems. Artificial Intelligence and automation have been successfully integrated, helping staff improve the timeliness and quality of care, and helping patients take greater control of their conditions and treatment.

8 We have modern, high-quality buildings, and have raised funds by selling old facilities and land we no longer need.

9 We are financially strong, keep our services efficient and productive, and bring in more money to benefit our patients.

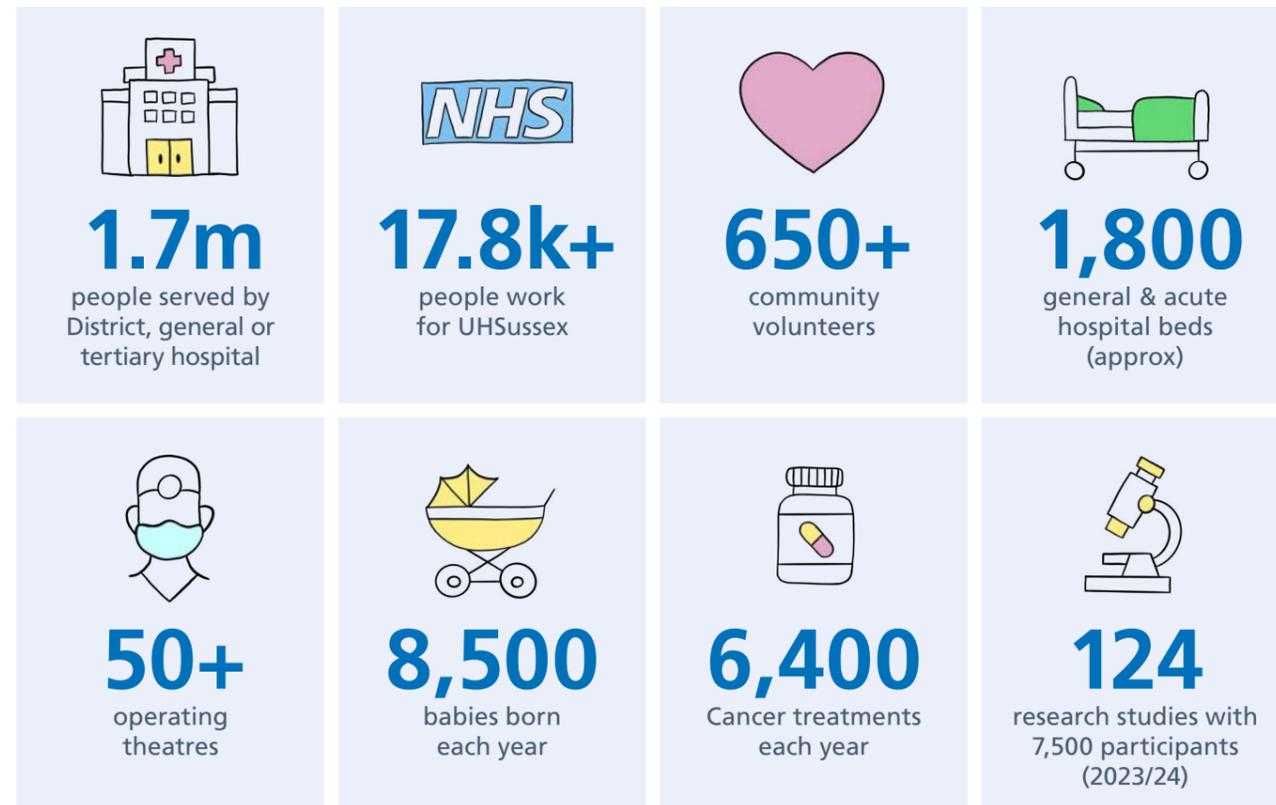
10 We play a major role in a Sussex health and care system built around integrated neighbourhood health services, working closely with our communities and local partners to reduce health inequalities, improve screening, and help everyone live healthier lives.



UHSussex numbers at a glance

UHSussex provides acute and tertiary services to people in Brighton and Hove, West Sussex, and parts of East Sussex. The Trust runs seven hospitals as well as satellite sites across Brighton and Hove, West and Mid Sussex and parts of East Sussex.

- St Richard's Hospital
 - Worthing Hospital
 - Southlands Hospital
 - Princess Royal Hospital
- Brighton campus:
- Royal Sussex County Hospital
 - Sussex Eye Hospital
 - Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital



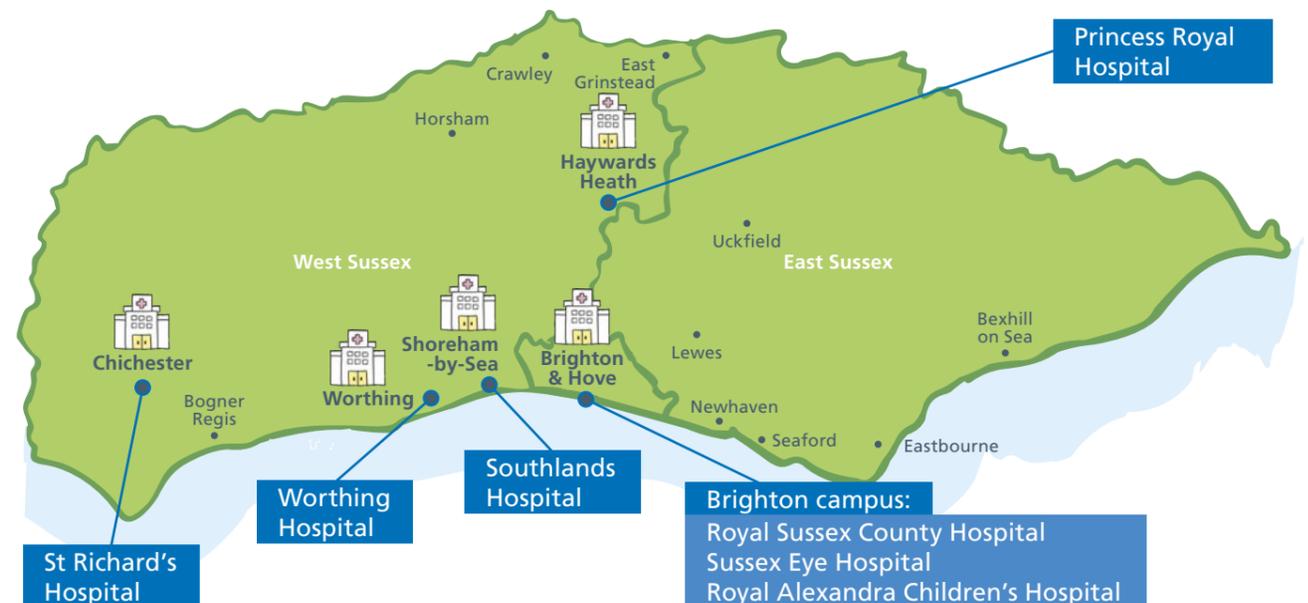
Every day:



Our population:



Staff:



Our context

As well as our Big Conversation with patients, colleagues and partners, this strategy has been shaped by the strategic context in which it will be delivered over the next five years. This will be a period of significant change for the NHS, our Trust and our communities. Our strategy provides the direction and focus to help us navigate this change in the best way for our patients, staff and the population we serve – and do so as part of a local health system focused on providing joined-up services and doing more in the community.

A changing population

The people we serve are at the heart of our strategy. We are privileged to care for a patient population of more than 1.7 million people, and their changing needs and priorities are among the main influences that have shaped our strategy.

Overall, our population is older than that of England as a whole, and life expectancy is higher too. Between now and 2030, we will see an 18% increase in our numbers of over-85s but a decline in numbers of babies, children and people of working age. More people will continue to move into the area and more housing will continue to be built, but our population structure will still shift towards older age groups.

This change will require more expertise in the care of frail patients, while our services will also need to support the growing

number of people who are living with cancer or multiple long-term conditions. And although our population is relatively affluent compared to many other parts of the country, there are also significant health inequalities within our region. Several Sussex wards are among the 20% most deprived in England, we have some significant variations in life expectancy by area. Brighton has the country's second largest homeless population and increasingly high levels of mental ill health.

We need to design services that meet the needs of our diverse population, making sure they are accessible, that we reach out to people who may be marginalised, and that no one is left behind as technology evolves. To ensure we are meeting the increasingly complex physical and mental health needs of our population, we will need to work even more closely with our partners in the health and care system.

A changing NHS

We will be implementing this strategy across an important period of change for the whole NHS, as set out in the government's 10-Year Health Plan for England. The three transformative shifts in healthcare it is seeking to achieve are central to our strategy:

- Moving more care from hospitals into the community
- Empowering patients and realising the benefits of technology by moving from analogue to digital systems and processes
- A healthier population by increasing focus on preventing rather than treating sickness

The priorities of the government's new plan are already starting to be reflected in Sussex, for example through the development of integrated community teams built around 13 places across the area, and will be supported by many of the ambitions of our new strategy, particularly in supporting our communities and equipping ourselves for future success.

A changing UHSussex

UHSussex is a young organisation that was formed during the pandemic, and which has found it hard to realise the early benefits of merger during the difficult years since.

We have made significant improvements in many areas, but our performance

remains challenged in others. As a large organisation, though, we have important strengths this strategy will draw on to help us make more rapid progress again.

We exited the pandemic with some of the longest waiting lists in England. However, in 2024 we treated 19% more people than before the pandemic and achieved the greatest waiting list reduction in the NHS. We have also delivered a comprehensive improvement plan in response to recommendations from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), including important advances in our maternity care and surgical services. At the time of publication some 94% of patients now rate their surgical care as good or very good, and 97% of families recommend our maternity services.

We have much more to do, though. Like many organisations across the NHS, too many people are still waiting far too long for both planned and emergency treatment; up to a fifth of our beds are routinely occupied by patients who no longer need our care. We need to continue to work on developing a positive culture across the whole Trust and on delivering consistently high-quality care across all of our services.

This strategy prioritises addressing these issues by unlocking the potential of our Trust and using our strengths to make the improvements that will enable us to provide Excellent Care Everywhere. Our broad expertise in a wide range of services and our status as a major teaching centre, regional research leader and key partner in the Sussex health system will all help us do that.

Strategy context:

The Big Conversation

The Big Conversation collected views of more than 5,000 people through events, workshops and surveys, producing more than 12,000 pieces of feedback from across Sussex. These voices were critical to shaping our strategy.

Patients said they want:

- Shorter waiting times for appointments, treatments, and urgent and emergency care.
- Excellent standards of patient care - receiving the most appropriate treatment, delivered by kind staff who have time to provide the care needed.
- To be listened to and receive personalised care that considers them as an individual.
- To be able to get to appointments and treatment easily, to have care closer to home, to have access to parking, and to be able to use public transport to get to appointments.
- Better communication and administrative processes both with patients, and between different departments.

“Staff are friendly and want to help – efficient, warm and caring. They’re knowledgeable and inspire with confidence”

Member of the public

“Look at the whole picture not just the one thing the person is being seen for that day.”

Member of the public

Our staff said they want:

- To deliver safe, high quality and timely care, and a good patient experience is the most important thing.
- Simpler, joined-up IT systems that are the same across the whole of UHSussex to help treat patients safely and effectively.
- To be known for innovation, and for research to bring benefits for patients and staff.
- To work in thriving hospitals as part of strong NHS services, with all our sites recognised as important.
- To feel valued and fairly treated by a trust which is better at the basics - pay, conditions, working environment, management and decision making.

Our partners said they want to:

- Be able to share and receive patient information more easily, with less duplication, to improve patient care and safety.
- See thriving hospitals with staff able to provide high quality care, building on the excellent work they see UHSussex frequently deliver.
- Have shared strategic goals and joined up delivery of better access, faster discharges, reduced health inequalities.
- Work with us to help our communities, but find that hard because we are such a large and complex organisation.

“Home grown talent. Rolling our leadership development to lower bands...”

Member of staff

“Work with social care to speed up patient discharge to safe, suitable community setting.”

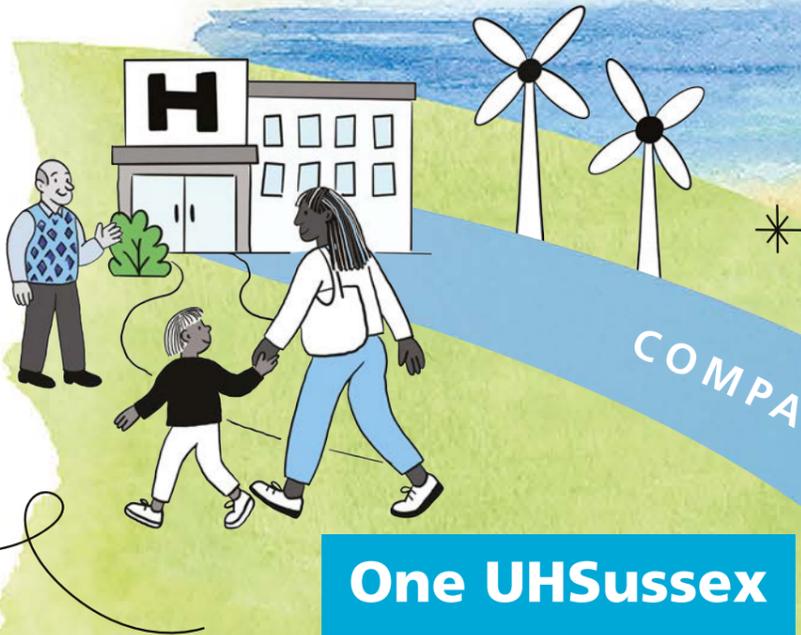
Partner

Excellent Care Everywhere

UHSussex Strategy 2025-2030



University Hospitals Sussex
NHS Foundation Trust



One UHSussex

United for success

- One culture
- One way of doing things
- One team
- One infrastructure

Our people

Being supported to be our best

- Looking after our colleagues
- Improving and innovating
- Always learning
- Strengthening the staff voice



COMPASSIONATE

INCLUSIVE

RESPECTFUL

Future

Being ready for the world ahead

- Going from analogue to digital
- Better buildings and equipment
- Leading regional research
- Providing value for money



Patients

Fast, fair, high-quality care

- Faster access to planned treatment and cancer care
- Better urgent and emergency care
- Centres of excellence
- Everyone treated fairly



Communities

Help to live well and thrive

- Supporting health and wealth
- Moving from treatment to prevention
- Being green
- Working with others





Excellent care for our patients

We want all our patients to have the best possible outcomes and experiences, wherever and whenever they need us. That means giving them fast and fair access to high-quality care.

We have made real progress in improving the quality and safety of our hospital services in recent years, and in making sure more people can access them faster too. We are treating more patients than ever before and achieved the biggest reduction in waiting lists in the entire NHS last year.

But we know we need to do more and do so quickly. So we have four priorities we will focus on to achieve the standards we all want to see:

1. Faster access

Reducing waiting times for planned treatment and cancer care

2. Better urgent and emergency care

Improving access, quality, safety and environments

3. Centres of excellence

Raising standards and providing access to expertise

4. Fairness for all

Improving equality of access, outcomes and experience so no-one is left behind

Patients will be at the centre of these improvements. We'll design services around what patients tell us matters to them most. We'll strengthen the ways in which we gather feedback and act on it and we'll give patients the power to make informed decisions and take control of their treatment and care.



By 2026 we will:

have new urgent and emergency care units at Worthing and St Richard's Hospitals.

By 2027 we will:

have achieved our waiting time reduction targets and be meeting national standards for referral to treatment times,

have proactive care plans in place for 95% of patients with complex needs, and

be delivering the first wave of new specialist services across the Trust.

By 2028 we will:

have redeveloped the emergency department at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, and

have opened our new stroke centre of excellence at St Richard's.

And by 2029 we will:

be treating patients in the new Sussex Cancer Centre in Brighton.

Priority 1

Faster access to planned treatment and cancer care

We know that being able to diagnose and treat patients quickly has a huge positive impact on their health outcomes and quality of life. In the Big Conversation that informs our new strategy, patients and colleagues said faster access to hospital services was a top priority for them, for their wellbeing and job satisfaction respectively.

Although we are making important progress, we are not yet meeting national standards for access to planned treatment and cancer care. Over the coming years, we will make six important commitments to change that:



1. Making outpatient care more accessible and efficient

We will do this by providing more appointments; modernising our booking systems so patients can initiate follow-ups and choose more convenient virtual or phone appointments; and moving some outpatient services into community settings.

2. Carrying out more operations and procedures

We will do this by providing more day-case surgery in specialties with the longest waiting lists; reducing cancellations by separating planned and emergency care; adopting the best practice of the Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme; and prioritising capital investment into expanding, refurbishing and maintaining our operating theatres.

3. Getting patients home faster

We will do this by reducing patients' average length of stay; expanding six and seven-day services to include pharmacy, therapies and consultant ward rounds; improving discharge coordination with social and voluntary sector partners; and developing innovative programmes to support patients at home.

4. Helping patients stay well while they wait

We will do this by giving patients more guidance and support in managing their condition while they wait and prepare for treatment; doing more pre-operative assessments online; and keeping in closer touch with people on our waiting lists so they can tell us if their condition changes.

5. Developing more alternatives to hospital care

We will do this by working with our local healthcare system partners to improve community services, including mental health provision; streamlining referral processes and enabling GPs to treat more people in the community with better guidance and advice; and improving data sharing to support more personalised care.

6. Modernising our diagnostic and clinical support services

We will do this by investing in new facilities and equipment in our new centres of excellence, including our Community Diagnostic Centre; establishing a rolling equipment upgrade programme; strengthening fragmented support services such as pharmacy, therapies, diagnostics and sterile services; and optimising our medicines use.

Priority 2

Better urgent and emergency care

Our Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) departments are incredibly busy places, often seeing more than a thousand patients a day. As well as providing life-saving, time-critical care to patients experiencing major trauma, strokes and coronary arrest, they are also the front door to our hospitals for a much wider group of patients and act as a safety net for people who are unable to access the support they need elsewhere in the health system or community.

Most patients are seen and treated within four hours of their arrival, but too many are not. The pressures our UEC services face also mean we are often not able to provide the quality of care we would wish, in either experience or the environment in which patients wait and are treated. This strategy makes four commitments that will help us improve on all fronts:



1. Improving the quality and safety of urgent and emergency care services across the Trust

We will do this by standardising urgent care procedures and pathways; expanding same-day emergency care, including specialist provision for older and frail patients; and upgrading Urgent Treatment Centres (UTC) on all sites to treat less serious cases.

2. Investing in our emergency departments

We will do this by committing £7 million to expanding Worthing Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) and UTC, £4.5 million to a new Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC) unit at St Richard's, and completing a more than £60 million transformation of the Royal Sussex County Hospital's ED.

3. Improving patient experience in our emergency departments

We will do this by taking immediate steps to reduce the need for corridor care and to eliminate it by the end of the first year of this strategy; prioritising privacy and dignity in emergency environments; using patient feedback to drive improvement; and improving coordination between our EDs and wards by training staff to be better able to support patients as they move through our hospitals.

4. Supporting the shift in healthcare provision from hospital to community

We will do this by playing our part in creating a joined-up health and care system with integrated urgent care pathways; embedding clinicians in ambulance call hubs to provide paramedics with real-time advice when deciding whether to bring a patient to hospital; and expanding the Hospital Alternative Oversight (HALO) programme, including working with care homes to keep residents out of hospital and providing virtual wards for home-based care.



“Some excellent staff working in awful conditions in A&E.”

Member of the public
Big Conversation feedback

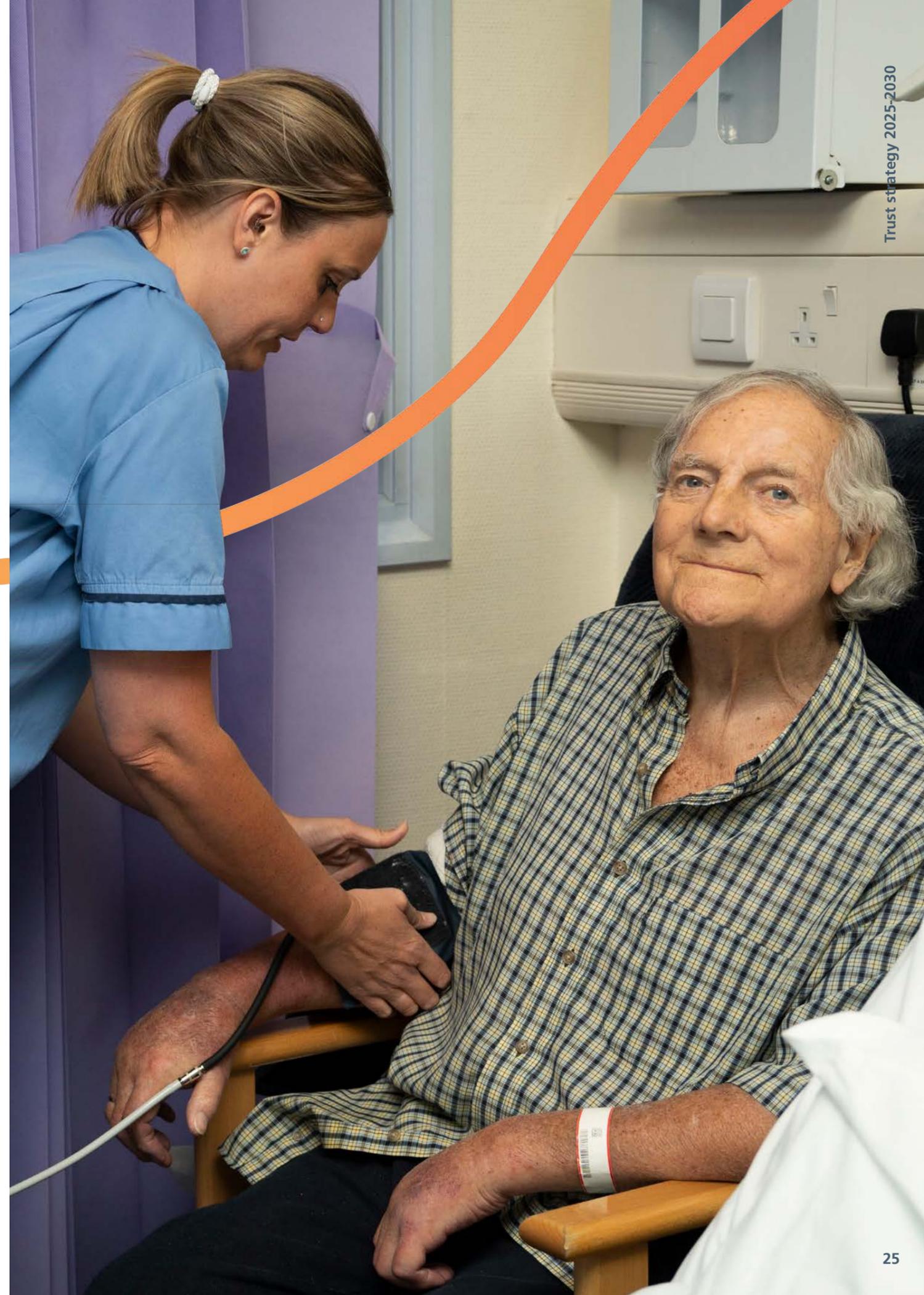
“Long wait in A&E waiting for only doctor to view results. Frustrating for patients and added pressure for staff.”

Member of the public
Big Conversation feedback



☆ **Best practice example – Joint working with the ambulance service**

UHSussex clinicians including consultants in emergency and elderly care are working alongside advanced paramedic practitioners in the ambulance call centre in Falmer to reduce the number of people who need to be taken to A&E by providing their expertise at the beginning of the 999 call pathway. Their input has made a significant difference, with 565 patients benefiting from their assessment in the first 10 weeks of the initiative and 76% of them being redirected to more appropriate services away from A&E.



Priority 3

Creating centres of excellence that offer outstanding specialist care

Our position as a large multi-site trust gives us a unique opportunity to consolidate expertise and resources to deliver outstanding specialist care. Centres of excellence allow us to pool clinical skills, improve outcomes and increase productivity by concentrating services where they can be most effective. This approach is backed by national and international evidence and supports our strategic objective of providing sustainable, high-quality care.

We have already established one centre of excellence by consolidating vital surgical services for colorectal cancer into a single high-volume site at Worthing and are seeing improved outcomes, fewer cancellations and faster access for patients, as well as building staff expertise. Over the next five years we will make five commitments to build on this model:



1. Building a new Sussex Cancer Centre

The new Sussex Cancer Centre in Brighton will serve one of the largest cancer populations in the NHS, treating patients from across Sussex, Kent and beyond. Designed with patients, it will offer cutting-edge treatments, advanced technology, and expanded research capabilities. This centre will transform cancer care across the region, improving access and outcomes.

2. Establishing a new stroke centre of excellence

Opening in 2027 at St Richard's Hospital in Chichester, our purpose-built Stroke Centre will deliver high-quality, specialist care for stroke patients. It will bring together expert teams in modern facilities to save lives, improve recovery outcomes and reduce long-term impacts of stroke across Sussex.

3. Developing at least three more centres of excellence by 2030

We will explore opportunities to develop additional centres of excellence at our Southlands and Princess Royal hospitals. These centres will focus on expanding diagnostics and day-case surgery capacity to improve access, reduce waiting times, and ensure sustainable, high-quality care.

“Treatment by the best specialists in the field”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

4. Providing more specialist care in Sussex

We will do this by expanding our specialist services in key clinical areas such as neurosciences, paediatrics, cancer, and cardiac care. This will allow more patients to receive advanced care in Sussex, reducing their need to travel. The new Louisa Martindale Building will be a dedicated centre for specialist services in Brighton and partner with academic institutions to develop our people's skills and attract expertise and funding.

5. Investing in improving services

We will invest at least £3 million annually in service transformation across the Trust, prioritising improvements based on patient and clinical input, and focusing on areas with outdated infrastructure or fragile service delivery. This will ensure changes are inclusive and equitable, and that investment makes the biggest difference to those services in need of the greatest support.

Priority 4

Fairness in access, experiences and outcomes

Every patient deserves to have the fastest possible access to safe, high-quality care – regardless of who they are, where they live, or which of our hospitals they attend. Yet we know that health inequalities persist across Sussex, and that experiences and outcomes can vary.

So our goal is to embed fairness into every aspect of care – from how services are designed to how patients are treated – so no one is left behind. We are already working towards this objective in population health, through our innovative programmes in Hepatitis C and maternity care, for example. Now we are making three commitments that will take us further:



1. Providing consistent standards of quality and safety

We will do this by introducing unified care pathways to remove disparities in access or treatment; expanding our Critical Care Outreach provision; continuing to implement the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) to integrate learning from incidents; and using our Daily Management System on all wards to ensure consistent, basic standards of care and share good practice.

2. Addressing healthcare inequalities

We will do this by improving our demographic data collection to better understand our patients' needs and remove barriers to access; monitoring waiting lists for fairness and equity; partnering with community organisations to reach and support marginalised groups; adapting our buildings for accessibility and dementia-friendly design; and promoting digital inclusion and equitable referral pathways.

“More joined-up working within the hospital. I have had occasions where I have been invited for an investigation when I am already due to be in the hospital for a different investigation.”

Member of the public
Big Conversation feedback

3. Making the most of the time we spend with patients

We will do this by using every patient interaction to support broader health and wellbeing, discussing lifestyle factors and social circumstances that impact long-term health. This approach will help patients address challenges such as smoking, diet, physical activity, and social isolation. By 2027, we will also ensure 95% of patients with complex needs have a proactive, co-produced care plan that covers both medical and social needs.





Excellent care for our people

Our people are the foundation of everything we do. Across our hospitals, thousands of dedicated colleagues care for patients with compassion, resilience and skill. To achieve our ambition of providing Excellent Care Everywhere, we must create an environment in which our colleagues feel valued, supported, and inspired. The Big Conversation and our culture inquiry have told us that stronger leadership, clearer expectations, and better support for wellbeing and development are all needed for us to achieve our ambitions.

In creating that environment, and responding to national priorities such as the NHS People Promise and forthcoming Staff Standards, our strategy identifies four key priorities on which we will focus:

1. Looking after our colleagues

Helping everyone to be healthy and happy at work

2. Improving and innovating

Creating the culture and conditions in which positive change can happen

3. Always learning

Educating and developing our people throughout their careers

4. Strengthening the staff voice

Helping colleagues shape our future

If we can deliver on these, we will attract and retain talent, improve care quality, and build a workplace where everyone can thrive.



By 2026 we will:

have an enhanced leadership development offer through a new Leadership and Talent Management programme,

have set clear expectations in our new values-based behaviour guidelines and embedded our values in all people policies and processes,

have published a new three-year Health and Wellbeing Plan to help colleagues stay healthy, and

have expanded our professional development and learning offer as part of a new Trust-wide integrated Education Plan.

By 2027 we will:

have adopted the new national Staff Standards framework, and

have identified our future skills needs and enhanced opportunities via a five-year Workforce Development Plan.

By 2028 we will:

have an equitable offer for all staff through harmonised terms and conditions.

Priority 1

Looking after our colleagues

To deliver excellent care, we must look after our people by creating safe, supportive environments in which they can thrive and be healthy and happy at work. To do this, we will make sure every colleague has access to the support they need. We will tackle discrimination, promote civility, and equip our managers to lead with compassion. This work is essential to building a resilient, motivated workforce and will be led by three main commitments:



1. Building a culture of safety

We will do this by tackling harmful behaviours, promoting psychological safety, and embedding learning from incidents. We will review our safety and violence prevention programme with a focus on sexual misconduct, harassment, and discrimination. We will expand training in Civility Saves Lives, Active Bystander, and Human Factors to promote psychological safety. We will also continue to implement the Patient Safety Incident Framework (PSIRF) so all staff can confidently learn from near-misses and harms. And we will ensure managers are skilled at welcoming concerns and continue to promote our Freedom to Speak Up Guardians for confidential support.

2. Being better at the basics

We will do this by adopting the new national Staff Standards to be announced in 2026 to make sure our people have access to nutritious food, dedicated rest spaces, safe environments, and occupational health support. We will also prioritise accurate, fair pay and continue to expand financial wellbeing initiatives for staff.

3. Creating a healthy workforce

We will do this by supporting colleagues' physical and mental wellbeing through a new Health and Wellbeing Plan. This will address health inequalities, improve access to psychological support, and promote physical activity. We will also ensure universal access to occupational health and employee support programmes and will continue to partner with charities to enhance staff wellbeing offers for our people.



“Listen to the workforce. Empower us all to help us make changes.”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

Priority 2

Improving and innovating

Improvement is driven by the people closest to the work. Our staff have the insight, creativity and motivation to make meaningful changes – but they need the right support and environment to do so. The Big Conversation highlighted the need for better decision-making, clearer structures, and more opportunities for staff to shape services. We recognise that and will make three important commitments to create a culture of curiosity, collaboration and continuous learning that will unlock the full potential of our workforce and deliver better care for our patients:



1. Strengthening our culture of continuous improvement

We will do this by fostering the psychological safety our people need to feel confident trying new things and challenging the status quo. We will create more opportunities for colleagues from across the Trust to come together and problem-solve through rapid improvement events and innovation labs. And we will pilot new approaches to recognising and rewarding ideas that lead to measurable improvements for our patients or staff.

2. Empowering our teams

We will do this by adopting NHS Impact principles as our Trust-wide improvement methodology to help staff use evidence and creativity to drive meaningful change. We will also strengthen training to support local innovation and celebrate successful change.

3. Equipping our people to make change happen

We will do this by making sure our staff have the tools and resources they need to drive improvement. We will establish a Clinical Transformation Programme Board to lead strategic change, while supporting local leadership teams with development budgets for site-level improvements. We will align our improvement and organisational development functions and promote learning from successful service transformations, using improvement summits to tackle cross-cutting challenges.



Priority 3

Always learning

We are proud to be a major university teaching trust, bridging academic knowledge and clinical practice to benefit both patients and learners. With our partners, we train more than 2,000 student and trainee doctors and nurses each year.

Learning is central to our goal of delivering excellent care. We are uniquely positioned to offer high-quality education and development across all roles and career stages. By embedding a culture of continuous learning, we will attract and retain talent, improve care quality, and help our staff reach their full potential. Over the five years ahead, we will commit to:



1. Providing quality education and training

We will do this by launching a new Integrated Education Plan from 2026, informed by staff feedback and best practice. This plan will develop a skilled and sustainable workforce through excellent education and training for all. We will improve support for educators, provide high-quality learning environments tailored to diverse needs, and develop excellence in patient safety education. The plan will also promote digital confidence to support new ways of working and strengthen partnerships to improve our educational expertise and capabilities.

2. Developing inclusive, high-performing leaders

We will do this by introducing a new multi-professional leadership development programme for all professional groups; launching new core training for managers and a 'manager's passport' to ensure consistency in standards and expectations; and developing our community of leaders through summits and shared learning opportunities, with all our programmes designed to address imbalances in representation at senior levels.

3. Delivering effective plans for our workforce

We will do this by planning proactively, identifying future skill needs and the career paths required to attract and retain diverse talent. Each of our professional and corporate groups will create aligned workforce plans to support recruitment, retention, and development. We will develop a five-year Workforce Development Plan and publish aligned plans for each of our professions, starting with nursing, midwifery, and allied health professions.

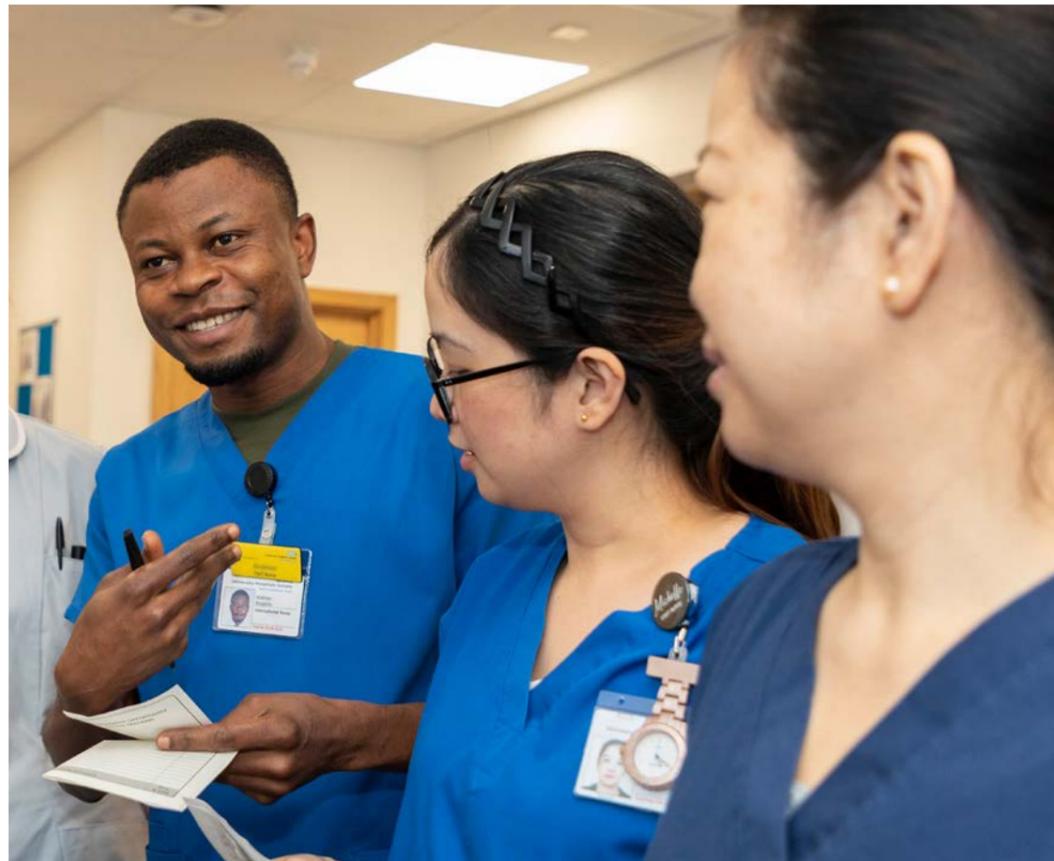
☆ Human Factors training

We offer courses on 'human factors', exploring why errors happen, and cognitive biases, to improve performance and safety. The principle is to understand the 'fit' between people, equipment, and environment and to make changes which improve care and safety.

Priority 4

Strengthening the staff voice

Our people know our hospitals better than anyone. They are experts in their field and know what needs to change for us to be able to deliver the excellent care we want to see everywhere. To make the most of their skills and experience, we are committed to welcoming a wider diversity of perspectives and ideas to inform every decision we make, and to telling people what happened in response to what they said. We will take three important steps to make this happen:



1. Supporting our staff networks

We will improve staff experience and build community and belonging by growing and professionalising our staff networks. We will provide organisational support for their coordination and activity and create more opportunities for them to influence the future of the Trust. And we will work with our networks to co-create the frameworks we need to make this happen.

2. Hearing more diverse voices

We will do this by creating a new staff panel drawn from across the organisation and representing a diversity of roles, sites, backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. We will also build stronger relationships with trades unions to ensure their members' perspectives are better understood and reflected in the decisions we take. Access to this wide range of views and lived experiences will make our planning and decision making more responsive to the needs of our people.

3. Championing speaking up

We will do this by making sure all colleagues know how and to whom they can speak up and be confident they can do so in confidence and safety. We will build on the great work of our independent Freedom to Speak Up Guardian by growing our network of local champions and peer support. And we will equip our leaders at all levels with the skills they need to be able to hear, respond to and act on concerns with compassion and respect.

“We have our unique challenges, however it would be amazing to consider placement opportunities across all fields of nursing practice – and how we help the learners understand the patient journey.”

Partner, mental health
Big Conversation feedback

Big conversation: you said, we are...

This strategy is deeply informed by what we heard through more than 4,500 responses from colleagues.

The key themes were:

This strategy commits to:

Management, leadership and decision making. Culture and behaviour.

- Upper management not visible or understanding of frontline staff – staff do not feel listened to.
- Lack of clarity about role of different managers.
- Lack of clarity, and engagement with frontline teams, around decision-making.
- Poor behaviour not being challenged and good behaviour not being rewarded.

- ☑ Improving visibility of leaders and involve teams in shaping our future.
- ☑ Setting fair expectations giving clarity around people's roles and behaviours, and how issues are addressed alongside what colleagues can expect in return.
- ☑ Enhance management and leadership development to better help people to lead and manage effectively.
- ☑ Simplifying our processes and decision making to ensure staff know what to do and where to go for help.

Care and quality

- Inconsistent standard, timeliness and availability of care received in our hospitals.
- Some patients feeling staff may not have time and resources to care as well as they would like to.
- Patients not receiving consistent records, and the difficulty of accessing information to help with this.

- ☑ Implementing consistent and predictable services which make sense for patients.
- ☑ Giving care faster by offering more appointments and treatments, and developing specialist services.
- ☑ Standardising and improving urgent and emergency care services, investing in new facilities.
- ☑ Ensuring we always demonstrate compassion, inclusion and respect.

The key themes were:

This strategy commits to:

Staffing levels, other workforce issues

- Front line staff feeling over-stretched/ under resourced.
- Not good enough at the basics – being paid correctly and on time, having a good working environment, effective systems.
- Staff want to be involved and they want input into decisions, to understand what is expected of them, and receive training to help them deliver.

- ☑ Do the basics well, delivering the NHS People Promise and supporting colleagues to be healthy and happy.
- ☑ Ensure accurate pay and resolution of problems, harmonised terms and conditions.
- ☑ Develop and deliver a Trust-wide education plan. Staff will have development plans, protected time for development, and a greater focus on talent management and progression planning.

Feedback

- People said that they felt they are often asked for feedback and ideas, and don't know what happens with it.

- ☑ Showing how your feedback has influenced the Trust's strategy and plans.
- ☑ Continuing engagement in the development of changes at site and service level, as part of the Big Conversation, and more opportunities to see how decisions are made.



Excellent care for our communities

Our hospitals are deeply embedded in the communities we serve across Sussex. As the region's largest employer and a major contributor to its economy, our impact goes far beyond delivering healthcare services. We have a responsibility to support the health, wellbeing and prosperity of the people we serve – not only through treatment, but also prevention, sustainability, and partnership.

This strategy builds on our leadership role in the Sussex Provider Collaborative and the insights gathered through the Big Conversation. It responds to growing demand, constrained resources, and the national shift to provide care closer to home, and it highlights four key areas of focus we will prioritise in helping our communities to live well and thrive.

1. Supporting health and wealth

Being a strong community partner by spending and recruiting locally

2. Moving from treatment to prevention

Helping people to stay well and access healthcare closer to home

3. Being green

Reducing our environmental impact and championing sustainability

4. Working with others

Collaborating to improve services, pathways and patient experience

As we do so, we will improve lives, reduce inequalities, and ensure our services reflect the needs and values of the communities we serve. This is how we will transform hospital care, strengthen local partnerships, and drive lasting health improvements across Sussex.



By 2026 we will:

be driving integrated healthcare delivery as chair of the Sussex Provider Collaborative,

be continuing our Big Conversation with patients and partners, and

be generating more green energy through a major new solar panel installation.

By 2027 we will:

be saving 3,000 tonnes of carbon a year by connecting our hospital to the Worthing Heat Network,

having a positive partnership impact on health inequalities, screening uptake, and preventative healthcare, and

be an NHS Green test bed for innovative practice.

By 2028 we will:

have achieved a major reduction in single-use clinical products.

By 2030 we will:

have reduced our carbon footprint and electrified our transport fleet.

Priority 1

Supporting health and wealth

As Sussex's largest employer, with more than 20,000 staff and a £1.65 billion annual turnover, we play an important role in shaping the region's social and economic wellbeing. In the Big Conversation, our staff and partners said they want us to be more visible, accessible, and impactful in the communities we serve. As part of our promise to being that strong community partner, we will commit to:



1. Creating job opportunities for local people

We will do this by becoming the leading employer of choice in Sussex through our offer of diverse and supported career pathways that attract the best local talent. We will prioritise opportunities for underrepresented groups, including care leavers, veterans, and people with disabilities. We will further develop and expand supported employment pathways and collaborate with Job Centres and community organisations to ensure our workforce truly reflects the communities we serve.

2. Partnering with local schools, colleges and universities

We will do this to inspire the next generation of healthcare professionals and improve employment routes into our Trust. Career fairs and community outreach activity will help young people and career changers explore roles in the NHS and improve access to health education, while we will expand opportunities around apprenticeships, T Levels, work experience and placements too.

“Work in closer partnership with the voluntary and community sector.”

Partner, Voluntary Sector
Big Conversation feedback

3. Choosing suppliers and services to support our local community

We will increase the proportion of our spending that goes to local suppliers and businesses to support the economic health, and social and environmental wellbeing of Sussex. Our approach will support local businesses, reduce our carbon footprint, and ensure our investments benefit the communities we serve. To achieve this, we will increase local procurement beyond our current 10% spending rate and embed social and environmental criteria in all our supplier selection decisions.

4. Sharing our spaces

We will make our hospital spaces more accessible to the community by inviting youth groups, community partners and local organisations to use our facilities. This will strengthen relationships, promote wellbeing, and create more welcoming environments.



Priority 2

Moving from treatment to prevention

The government's 10-year Health Plan confirmed that the future of healthcare lies in prevention, early intervention, and care delivered closer to home. Our new strategy's embrace of this shift of emphasis away from reactive treatment and towards proactive prevention is aligned with our leadership position in the Sussex Provider Collaborative and responds to the needs of our ageing population and the feedback of partners who want more joined-up, community-based services.

This transformation will reduce pressure on our acute services, improve outcomes, and ensure care is accessible, equitable, and tailored to local needs. To make the change, we will focus on four commitments that will make the biggest difference:



“ Greater alignment of outcomes with GP surgeries, better facilitation of contact with community care colleagues ”

Partner, Community Health
Big Conversation feedback

1. Working with partners to transform the health system

As Chair of the Sussex Provider Collaborative, we will do this by supporting integrated planning and delivery across the region to promote more equitable and sustainable healthcare; and by building on the success of our public health initiatives, such as the Hepatitis C elimination program, to lead system-wide transformation that promotes and supports the development of prevention-focused care.

2. Moving services into the community

We will do this by working with Neighbourhood Health Services and Integrated Community Teams to expand outreach for frailty, renal, and MSK care, and support virtual wards and remote monitoring to reduce unnecessary admissions and enable earlier discharges. To achieve this, we will identify and relocate services better suited for the community and increase our collaboration with community teams to develop new pathways.

3. Finding new ways of working with partners

We will deepen our partnerships with local communities and organisations to co-design services that directly meet the needs of our local population. This includes expanding community services and our collaboration with voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. We will do this by strengthening 'advice and guidance' support for GPs to reduce unnecessary referrals and use digital tools to improve care coordination and patient experience.

4. Collaborating to address healthcare inequalities

We will do this by strengthening our partnerships with local VCSE organisations to improve access for marginalised groups, including people with learning disabilities, mental health needs, complex healthcare needs, and language barriers. These new collaborations will help us tailor our services to communities facing inequalities. We will review and enhance our pathways to improve access and promote the inclusive design of care pathways.

Priority 3

Being green

We want to be one of the greenest NHS trusts in the country. This ambition reflects the views of our staff and patients, aligns with national net zero goals, and reflects our belief that environmental responsibility is integral to excellent care.

Since 2010, we've reduced our carbon footprint by 37% and cut anaesthetic gas emissions by 87%. We will now build on our leadership in sustainable healthcare, including our founding role in the Circular Economy Healthcare Alliance and our partnerships with universities and industries, to go further again. By embedding sustainability into everything we do, from procurement to digital transformation, we will protect the planet, improve health outcomes, and lead the way in green healthcare. Our strategy sets out four commitments that will help us achieve this goal:



“Invest in green technologies such as solar power, water recycling, rainwater harvesting.”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

1. Reducing and reusing by default

Minimising waste is a top priority for us. By reducing the waste we produce, we can save money and support our long-term net-zero ambitions. We will do this by building on successful initiatives like the 'Gloves Off' campaign to integrate sustainability into our daily decision-making. To do this, we will reduce our consumption of single-use products, expand sustainability training for all staff, and integrate waste reduction into all appropriate clinical and procurement practices.

2. Cutting our carbon footprint

We will do this by expanding renewable energy generation across our sites through solar panel installations at Princess Royal, Southlands, and St Richard's hospitals; by decarbonising heating systems, starting with Worthing Hospital's connection to the town's new heat network. This will not only power our hospitals with clean energy but integrate sustainable practices into our estates and digital planning.

3. Creating a green test bed for innovators

We will launch a Green Test Bed in partnership with universities and industry. This initiative will support real-world testing of sustainable technologies, attract greater investment, and strengthen the life sciences sector in Sussex. It will also position our trust as a national leader in green innovation. We will specifically launch a Green NHS Health Technology Test Bed to promote collaboration between the NHS and industry to drive evidence-based innovation.

4. Making travel, cleaner, smarter and more efficient

We will do this by beginning the transition to an electrified transport fleet and expanding our solar-powered charging infrastructure. We will electrify the majority of our transport fleet by 2027 and continue to promote sustainable travel for staff and patients, reduce inter-site transport through digital transformation, and consolidate support services to minimise unnecessary journeys.

Priority 4

Working with others

Partnership is at the heart of how we deliver care: ideas and feedback from patients, volunteers, charities and community organisations were essential in shaping this strategy. Over the next five years, we will build on these relationships by involving more patients and voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in the design of our services and improving how we work with our volunteers and charities. By working together, we will enhance patient experience, improve our hospital environments, and ensure our services are shaped by those who use them. We are making four commitments to doing this:



1. Involving patients in the design of services and sites

We will do this by improving how we receive and respond to feedback, and supporting patients with lived experience in contributing to pathway reviews and site development plans. To achieve this, we will reform our complaints and major service change feedback systems to ensure patient voices are instrumental in delivering change across the Trust.

2. Working with organisations that know our communities

There are many fantastic VCSE organisations in Sussex that support people with complex healthcare needs. These groups engage a wide range of communities, and we can use their reach and expertise to help improve access and outcomes for underserved populations. We will do this by removing barriers to collaboration and developing improved processes to co-design services with these community partners.

3. Being a good partner, locally and nationally

We will do this by maintaining strong relationships with councils, political leaders, and the Integrated Care Board, and through the joint planning and problem-solving that will make sure our services are integrated into wider community strategies. To do this, we will maintain and further develop strategic partnerships across Sussex,

strengthen our collaboration with local organisations to improve transport links, and contribute to regional and local planning to ensure our service changes align with system-wide priorities.

4. Creating positive volunteer experiences

We will do this by developing a new approach to volunteering that enhances the experience for everyone involved and will create more opportunities for volunteers to contribute to service improvement and patient care. This will begin with the launch of a refreshed voluntary services programme to improve training, induction, and support processes. We will also expand the number of volunteer roles and celebrate their contributions.

5. Improving how we work with our charities

We will strengthen our collaboration with our hospital charities to support their fundraising efforts and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. Our charities raise millions of pounds every year, but complicated processes can make it difficult to spend this money. To improve this, we will align charity priorities with our Trust strategy, reduce barriers to implementing funded projects, and improve communication and collaboration to increase both income and the impact of charitable funding. We will also specifically support charity-led innovation and fundraising activities.



Excellent care for the future

As one of the largest hospital trusts in the country, we have an important role to play in the future development of the NHS – and an opportunity for that role to be a leading one. But we can only shape that future if we are ready for it. The Big Conversation identified challenges around outdated infrastructure, fragmented digital systems and financial pressures that are limiting our ability to innovate, improve and set ourselves up for long-term success. This strategy responds to those challenges with a commitment to change, enabled by four ambitions for the five years ahead:

1. Going from analogue to digital

Using technology to improve care and communication

2. Better buildings and equipment

Investing in modern facilities and the most advanced kit

3. Leading regional research

Becoming a centre of excellence that widens access to research and innovation

4. Providing value for money

Running our services efficiently and sustainably

In this way, we will adapt to change, embrace innovation, and ensure our services are thriving in the long run. By investing in technology, facilities, research and financial sustainability, we will create a future-ready organisation that delivers Excellent Care Everywhere.



By 2026 we will:

have expanded robot-assisted surgery with a new robot in Worthing Hospital,

be piloting ambient voice technology (AVT) in patient consultations,

have completed phase one of our estate rationalisation, and

be carrying out a rolling programme of equipment upgrades.

By 2027 we will:

be achieving a recurrent monthly break-even financial position.

By 2028 we will:

have opened our new UHSussex Clinical Research Centre, and

introduced electronic patient records across the Trust.

By 2030 we will

be in the top 25% of trusts nationally for productivity.

Priority 1

Going from analogue to digital

Digital transformation is essential to delivering safer, faster, and more personalised care. Currently, UHSussex is one of the few NHS trusts without a single electronic patient record, and many services still rely on paper or disconnected and outdated systems. Transitioning to more digital ways of accessing and delivering NHS services is also part of a national shift to improve productivity and clinical decision-making, reduce administrative burden, and enable patients to have a greater say in the care of their health.

Our ambitions here build on early successes in artificial intelligence (AI) diagnostics and robotic surgery and respond to feedback from staff and patients calling for better communication and more efficient systems. And by designing digital systems with users in mind, we will ensure no one is left behind as we move from analogue to digital. To do this, we will commit to:



1. Introducing an electronic patient record

We will launch a new Trust-wide electronic patient record (EPR) by 2027 to unify our digital systems and improve care. This will ensure patients only have to tell their story once, and staff will have better access to information for safer, faster decision making, while also reducing paperwork.

2. Carrying out more robot-assisted surgery

We will build on the success of robot-assisted surgery at Princess Royal Hospital by introducing the technology to Worthing Hospital in 2026. This will improve patient recovery times, reduce complications, and support the development of surgical expertise within our new colorectal centre of excellence. We will also use this advanced technology to attract and retain top surgical talent.

3. Providing faster, better diagnostics

We will do this by expanding our use of AI in imaging, clinical pathways and other innovations to deliver faster, more accurate diagnostic results; and by implementing a new Sussex-wide Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) to improve consistency and reduce turnaround times.

4. Improving communication and access to information

We will do this by moving away from paper-based processes by prioritising electronic communication for all patients who are happy to participate, using the NHS App as a central hub. This will improve appointment management, enable the secure sharing of results, and give patients more control over their care. We will transition to electronic communication for most patients and be using the NHS App as our main contact point by 2028.

5. Involving everyone in digital change

While digital solutions offer many benefits, we know some patients and staff find them difficult to use. We will ensure our digital changes are inclusive by providing digital skills training for staff and patients. We will also collaborate with community partners to address barriers and co-design new systems with users to ensure no one is left behind as we adopt new technologies.

6. Enhancing cyber security and resilience

We will do this by working with cyber security advisers to upgrade our digital security infrastructure and resilience; through network segmentation for medical devices; by strengthening our preparedness for digital threats; and by enhancing staff training.



☆ **Digitalisation of records**

As we move to Electronic Patient Records, we are digitising existing paper records. The Royal Alexandra Children’s Hospital has already transitioned to digital records, and Sussex Eye Hospital went live in December 2024.

Adult services at Royal Sussex County Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital are now switching to digital records. St. Richard’s, Worthing, and Southlands hospitals already use digital patient records and can now also access digital records from Royal Sussex County and Princess Royal Hospital.

The new system will bring benefits, including:

- Patients only having to ‘tell their story once’
- No more paper records
- Improved handovers
- Less administration
- Better data quality and security

To ensure staff are comfortable with this change, we are offering face-to-face and online demonstrations of the new system.

Priority 2

Better buildings and equipment

Our large and diverse estate spans five hospital sites and covers more than 350,000 m², equivalent to 36 football pitches. We have made major investments in modern facilities like the Louisa Martindale Building and Southlands Diagnostics Centre, but many of our buildings are outdated and no longer fit for purpose, while the Big Conversation highlighted our need for better environments for patients and staff. This strategy sets out four commitments that will address our need to provide improved facilities, spaces and advanced kit:



“Invest in the fabric of the hospital for the benefit of staff as much as patients.”

Member of the public
Big Conversation feedback

1. Creating vibrant, thriving hospitals

We will do this by improving our hospital sites and empowering staff to shape their own working environments. Each hospital is unique, so we will co-design any changes with local staff, patients, partners, and volunteers, allocate funding to support locally driven improvements, and raise the visibility of our investments.

2. Investing more than £350 million

Over the next five years, we will deliver a major programme of building and equipment upgrades and improved urgent care facilities. This includes a new Acute Stroke Centre and Sussex Cancer Centre, and upgrades to our theatres, clinics, wards, and staff areas, addresses Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) issues at St Richard's Hospital, and seeks national funding to expand day-case surgery at Southlands Hospital.

3. Selling unused buildings and exit expensive leases

This will generate income for reinvestment and reduce maintenance costs, supporting a more efficient and sustainable estate.

4. Upgrading equipment

We will do this through a multi-year equipment replacement programme so our patients can benefit from the latest technology. This includes a commitment to invest in advanced imaging and radiotherapy machines to meet national standards and improve patient outcomes and experience. Instead of simply replacing old equipment with like-for-like, we will actively adopt innovations that improve safety, reduce waiting times, and enhance patient experience.

☆ Artificial cornea transplant – A groundbreaking new procedure

Patients in Sussex can now benefit from a new transplant procedure to restore sight loss caused by a damaged cornea. The usual treatment involves surgery to replace all or part of the damaged cornea with donated human tissue. But there is a chance that the body rejects the new tissue. University Hospitals Sussex is one of only five NHS trusts to offer an artificial transplant, which can be a life-changing alternative for patients. Our team has treated five patients who are now recovering and experiencing improved vision. The innovative procedure highlights our dedication to research and innovation, providing excellent care for all our patients.

Future – ready for the world ahead

What this means for each of our sites:



At our Brighton campus, in 2023, we opened the award-winning Louisa Martindale Building. The new Sussex Cancer Centre, opening in 2029, will bring state-of-the-art facilities, which will benefit the whole of Sussex by enabling higher levels of specialist treatment. Our Acute Floor reconfiguration, due to be completed in 2027/28, will improve the facilities and environment in our Emergency Department. The Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital, opened in 2007, continues to deliver specialist diagnostic, emergency and inpatient services as one of the country's few dedicated children's hospitals.

However, other parts of our Brighton estate remain cramped and over-pressured, particularly compared to comparable tertiary centres.

Some of our buildings, such as the Sussex Eye Hospital (1935) and St Mary's Hall (1836), are difficult and expensive to maintain to modern standards, and occupy commercially valuable real estate.



At the Princess Royal Hospital (Haywards Heath), the Sussex Orthopaedic Centre is award-winning for sustainability, while our Urology Treatment Centre provides a high standard of accommodation for our new one-stop-shop service. We recently opened an outpatient pharmacy that will serve thousands of patients following a £1.2 million investment by Pharm@Sea and University Hospitals Sussex. This will make obtaining prescribed medicines easy for outpatients and people attending A&E.

However, we have disused and underused buildings elsewhere on the Princess Royal Hospital site. There are opportunities to further develop this site to support our clinical aspirations, enhance elective activity and meet the changing needs of the local population.



At St Richards Hospital, (Chichester) we are investing £4.5 million in a Same Day Emergency Care unit to improve our urgent care offer to local residents. Our new Acute Stroke Centre, opening in 2027, will provide faster access to services and improve patient outcomes.

Since 2023, St Richard's laundry service has served the whole Trust, saving money and reducing our carbon footprint. It is one of the most modern hospital laundries in the NHS, thanks to its smart, green technology and infrastructure. Like many public buildings, the Diagnostic Block at St Richard's has been affected by reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). We will be upgrading the affected areas in the diagnostic block and mortuary roof as part of the national RAAC programme.



At Southlands (Shoreham-by-sea) our new Community Diagnostics Centre (CDC) provides NHS-leading facilities and dementia-friendly navigation. We also have

a purpose-built ophthalmology centre. However, some theatres at Southlands are out of action due to asbestos and ventilation issues. We are seeking national funding to invest in new theatres in our Southlands Treatment Centre and expand our CDC to improve patient access to modern facilities that support innovative and effective care.



At Worthing Hospital, we are investing £7 million in an Urgent Treatment Centre and expanding our Emergency Department to improve patient access and experience.

Other services at Worthing are already delivered in purpose-built estate, such as our Medical Day Care Unit that provides a comfortable environment for our patients receiving chemotherapy, while our Urology Investigation Unit provides specialist facility services, enabling an effective patient pathway for diagnosis and treatment.

The new centre of excellence for colorectal cancer surgery at Worthing opened in April 2025 and the Hospital is also leading the way in reducing our carbon footprint through its participation in the Worthing Heat Network. There are further opportunities to ensure the estate at Worthing advances healthcare services, patient care, and operational efficiency.

Priority 3

Leading regional research

Health research transforms care by giving patients access to the latest innovations in treatment, diagnostics and condition management, and helps staff develop new skills and expertise. UHSussex already ranks in the top 25 NHS organisations for number of recruiting research studies, with more than 5,000 participants recruited into 198 studies in 2024/25.

Staff and patients have told us they want more opportunities to take part in innovative healthcare research. This strategy makes five commitments to enable them to do that:



“Look at areas where more joint and joined-up working would be beneficial.”

Partner within Mental Health
Big Conversation feedback

1. Giving every patient access to research

We will do this by improving access to studies and expanding our clinical research facilities. We aim to be in the top 10% of trusts for patient participation, ensuring the Sussex population has fair access to health research. To achieve this, we will open a new Clinical Research Centre in Brighton by 2027 and join national programmes such as The Generation Study.

2. Providing faster access to healthcare innovations

We will do this by expanding our portfolio of earlier-phase trials and interventional studies. New facilities and stronger links to our clinical services will improve access to innovative treatments, while community engagement and inclusivity will make sure our research programmes reflect the needs of our population.

3. Offering colleagues more opportunities to get involved in research

We will do this by integrating research as a key part of job planning for clinical staff; expanding the number and variety of research roles for nurses, midwives, and allied health professionals; and strengthening our partnership with Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) to support career development and improve service quality by increasing joint academic appointments.

4. Collaborating more closely with our research partners

We have been funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to establish a Commercial Research Delivery Centre, which will enhance the speed and efficiency of commercial clinical research in the UK. By expanding our research leadership and working with partners, we will increase opportunities for Sussex, bring new funding into the organisation, and support future research leaders.

5. Using research to get better value for money

We will do this by exploring new technologies that can reduce costs and streamline workflows; conducting research programmes to improve service efficiency; exploring the use of AI and digital tools; and using the new Health Data Research Service (HDRS) to support evidence-based innovation.

Priority 4

Providing value for money

In providing Excellent Care Everywhere, we are also committed to running our services efficiently and sustainably – making sure we use public funds responsibly and provide value for money in everything we do. This strategy sets out three commitments that will help us make smarter use of our resources and build on our multi-year financial plan:



1. Improving productivity

We will do this by investing in our estate, equipment, and technology to deliver more care, more efficiently, without compromising quality. Our goal is to achieve a top 25% national productivity ranking by 2030. To do this, we will monitor performance, invest in new infrastructure, and improve workflows to reduce duplication.

2. Reducing costs to reach break-even

We will do this by working with staff and patients to reduce unnecessary costs and achieve financial balance across our Trust; collaborating with clinical divisions; and planning for the longer term to ensure budgets are reasonable and aligned with patient demand. Our immediate goal is to achieve a run-rate financial balance by March 2027 by ensuring budgets reflect demand and reducing corporate and non-clinical overheads.

3. Developing a commercial mindset

We will pursue commercial opportunities to increase income, reduce costs and generate funds to reinvest in front line care. Areas of opportunity includes expanding income from private patients, retail partnerships, and subsidiaries through the expansion our pharmacy company Pharm@Sea.





Excellent care together

UHSussex was created to help our hospitals achieve together what they would not be able to do alone. The advantages of our status as one of the largest NHS trusts in the country give us a rare opportunity to deliver a broad range of high-quality services for patients, provide rewarding career paths for all colleagues, and be a powerful force for good in our communities – today and tomorrow.

Unlocking that potential has been difficult though. Completing the merger has been challenging and complicated by the pressures created by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. In the Big Conversation, colleagues raised concerns about confusion, duplication and inconsistency across sites, as well as around fairness, visibility and clarity of roles. To address these issues, our new strategy sets out four commitments that will unite our organisation and set it up for long-term success as One UHSussex:

1. One culture

Living our values in everything we do

2. One way of doing things

Consistent practices and pathways that make sense for patients

3. One team

Getting the right people with the right skills working towards common goals

4. One infrastructure

Combined systems that help us do our jobs better

So over the next five years we will standardise patient pathways, harmonise staff terms and conditions, and simplify our digital and governance systems. We will also invest in leadership, culture, and communication to ensure everyone feels connected and empowered, and can be compassionate, inclusive and respectful in all they do. By completing our merger, we will unlock the full potential of our Trust.



By 2026 we will:

- have published our Workforce Inclusion Plan,
- have a new behavioural framework.

By 2027 we will:

- have a new organisational operating model,
- and strengthened our staff networks.

By 2028 we will:

- have a single sign-on across all our IT systems, and
- have harmonised staff terms and conditions.

By 2030 we will:

- have standardised pathways in all services, and
- have unified digital systems across the Trust.

Priority 1

One UHSussex culture

Compassion, inclusion and respect: these are the values on which our culture is built. Co-produced with staff and patients, they reflect what matters to us most. However, internal reviews and the Big Conversation have shown that inconsistent behaviours and cultural challenges are holding us back. So over the next five years, we will make four commitments to embed our values into every aspect of our work – from recruitment and development to leadership and decision-making:



1. Celebrating and promoting our values

We will do this by making our values visible in every interaction; expecting them to be modelled at all levels and celebrating the people and teams who do so, using new ways of recognising colleagues for positive behaviours. We will also strengthen our staff networks to amplify the voices of specific and minoritised groups in shaping to our cultural growth. And the Board will lead a campaign to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion.

2. Setting fair expectations

We will do this by introducing a behavioural framework, aligned with our Trust values, to set clear expectations for how we work and support personal development. This framework will guide recruitment, development, appraisal and job planning, and make clear how we will address behaviours not in line with our Trust values. We will also expand 360-degree feedback to middle and senior leaders to foster a robust feedback culture and set clear expectations for appraisals and objective-setting. This will include consistent guidance for managers to support staff with additional needs.

“You need staff to be properly trained and supervised.”

Member of the public
Big Conversation feedback

3. Shaping our culture through leadership

We will do this by building a new leadership development programme and creating a ‘passport’ for managers that sets clear expectations of them. We will promote the visibility and accessibility of leaders by having them host conversations about this strategy within their teams. We will also launch an expanded leadership and management development programme to help people develop the skills needed to lead in complex environments, in line with our values.

4. Recruiting locally for values and attitude

We will strengthen recruitment processes to help us attract a diverse range of talent by embedding our values within it and adopting competency-based hiring across all roles. We will continue to value our international workforce while working to reduce our reliance on new overseas recruitment to less than 10% by 2035 as we strengthen our focus on local recruitment and community partnerships that will grow the skills we need within our local community.

Our values journey: bringing our values to life

Our values are more than words - they guide how we work together and care for patients. Before merger, each former Trust shared similar values but had distinct cultures. In 2020, more than 3,900 staff and public contributions helped us to shape six core values: Communication & Compassion, Inclusion & Respect, Teamwork & Professionalism.

In 2024, we launched a Trust-wide Values Inquiry as part of our culture programme, engaging more than 1,500 staff through workshops, surveys, and focus groups. Colleagues told us they wanted values that are “lived, not laminated”- visible in behaviour, decision-making, and their teams. They asked for clear, practical guidance on how to live these values every day.

In 2025, following further engagement with colleagues, we simplified our values into three ‘We...’ statements to create shared ownership:

Our values:

We are compassionate – We communicate and act kindly

We are inclusive – Our teams work collaboratively

We are respectful – We behave professionally

These refreshed values underpin our Trust Strategy and show us how to deliver our Excellent Care Everywhere vision. They guide our choices, shape how we behave, and help us build a culture where everyone belongs.

We are working to develop a behavioural guide which will focus on delivering the strategy by creating an environment where people can thrive and achieve high-quality patient outcomes. It will

move beyond a list of dos and don'ts to support effective delivery throughout the strategy's full lifecycle. It will influence the entire workforce and shape the employee experience, especially the moments that matter - recruitment, induction, appraisal and during change. Additionally, it will guide the organisation in becoming truly values-led by enabling the cultural and behavioural shifts needed to achieve our vision.



Priority 2

One way of doing things

Many of our services still operate differently on different sites, leading to variation in treatment, waiting times, and patient experience. The Big Conversation highlighted how confusing this inconsistency can be for patients and the frustration it causes for partners and staff.

To address this issue, our new strategy will make two important changes to how we work. These will align with wider system transformation taking place across Sussex and be co-designed with patients, colleagues and partners. To improve outcomes, reduce duplication and make our services easier to navigate, we will commit to:



1. Developing single treatment pathways and waiting lists

We will do this through a phased programme of review and redesign, starting with care for frail patients, and emergency and cancer care. All changes will be clinically-led, aligned with NICE guidelines and best practice, and developed in consultation with patients, GPs, and other partners.

2. Creating a new 'front door' for hospital services

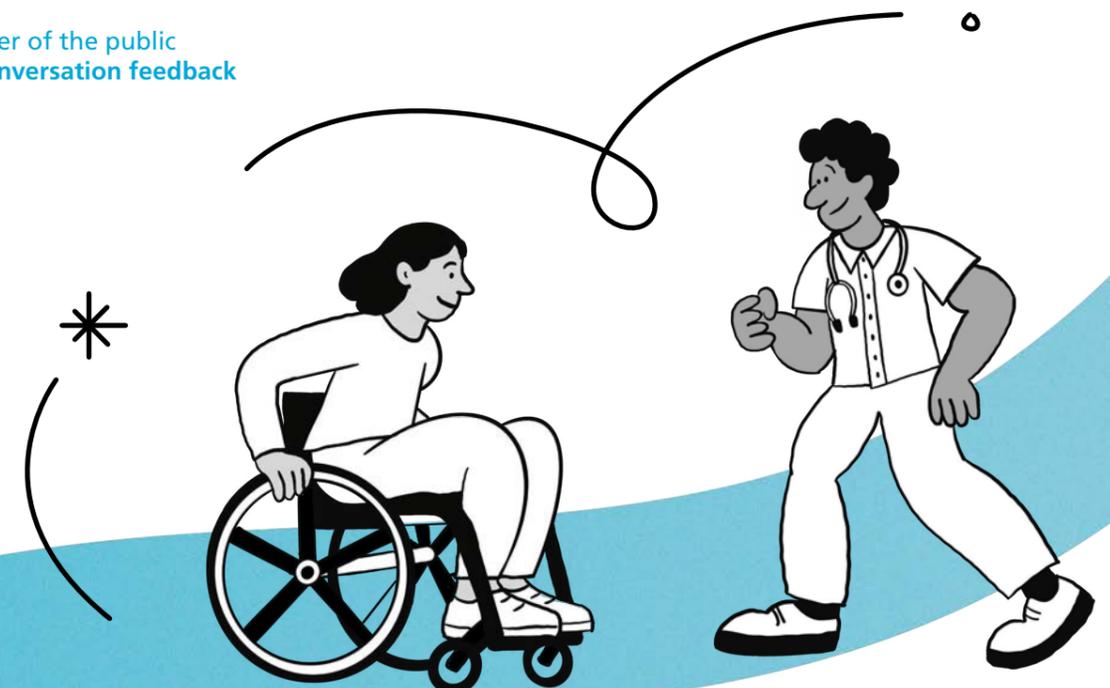
We will do this by reviewing all our contact points with patients and healthcare professionals – whether online, in person, or by phone – to develop consistent and reliable two-way communication. This approach will align with the NHS app, which will be the digital front door for NHS services by 2027.

“Align all staff and work on professional standards and all strive for the same goal.”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

“Standardised services across east and west.”

Member of the public
Big Conversation feedback



Priority 3

One team

Being One UHSussex means being one team. That starts with a culture in which we all live our values, everyone feels they belong, understands their role, and works together towards shared goals.

However, the Big Conversation and our culture enquiry revealed that many colleagues feel disconnected – from each other, from leadership, and from decision-making. This strategy identifies four commitments through which we can build trust, bring clarity, and foster collaboration to become One UHSussex – one team united in delivering Excellent Care Everywhere:



1. Developing a new operating model and senior leadership structure

We will do this by removing duplication and clarifying leadership responsibilities; reviewing governance processes to improve oversight and accountability while reducing meeting numbers; and establishing a new Board-level committee to oversee and support the delivery of this strategy and its major projects.

2. Promoting a positive culture of One UHSussex

We will do this by embedding our values across all our people processes to ensure everyone understands our shared vision; ensuring every colleague has the opportunity to be part of a conversation with their leaders about what the strategy means for them; continuing to involve staff, patients and partners in change and improvement; and providing Board-level oversight of delivery of our culture improvement plans.

“The scale of the Trust can be positive and negative. We need to work on how to integrate more, to learn from each other...”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

3. Providing equitable terms and conditions for all

We will do this by continuing to harmonise legacy terms and conditions and consulting with staff groups and unions on standardising contracts for new staff, with the aim of achieving full equity by 2028.

4. Ensuring our Board leads by example

We will do this by requiring our Board members to model the values and behaviours expected throughout the organisation; increasing their visibility across sites and services and bringing more staff stories to the Board; using a ‘problem-sensing’ approach to strengthen oversight of culture, safety and patient experience; and realigning our committee structures and strategic risks with effective decision-making and this strategy’s delivery.

“There is very little understanding from department to department as what each one does. This creates hostility when jobs are not (thought to be) done fast enough for one.”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

Priority 4

One infrastructure to support us

Behind every great service is a strong infrastructure. At UHSussex, fragmented systems and inconsistent processes are holding us back – from booking appointments to managing data and making decisions. The Big Conversation revealed the frustration of patients and staff with disjointed IT systems, unclear governance, and slow administrative processes. Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will make five commitments to building a single, supportive digital, operational and governance infrastructure that will make it easier for all colleagues to get things done:



“A user-friendly joined-up IT system across the Trust.”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

1. Simplifying and unifying our digital systems

We will do this by introducing single sign-on for all Trust IT systems to give staff secure access to unified patient data and support the implementation of the new Electronic Patient Record (EPR).

2. Combining operational data to help manage services

We will do this by introducing the NHS Federated Data Platform to provide frontline teams with the near real-time access to operational data that enables rapid data-driven decision-making.

3. Improving our corporate and business procedures

We will do this by simplifying corporate and business processes, including those in finance, HR, and digital, to remove duplication and unnecessary paperwork; using artificial intelligence (AI) to automate routine tasks; and ensuring the efficiency of HR and OD resources through benchmarking against comparable trusts.

“Patients have access to healthcare professionals that are supported by a unified system for patient information.”

Member of staff
Big Conversation feedback

4. Strengthening our compliance and assurance systems

We will do this by building on the work of our Single Improvement Plan; repurposing resources to support safety monitoring; improving our ability to identify and respond to risks; and maintaining regulatory standards across all our sites.

5. Following a clear delivery plan

We will do this by developing a five-year delivery plan aligned with our capital and financial recovery plans; supporting divisions in setting their own plans within the context of this strategy; and reviewing and restructuring our project, improvement and change-management capacity to best support strategy delivery.



Our story so far

University Hospitals Sussex was formed in April 2021, and builds on a proud history of hospital care, which we can trace back to the early 1800s. We have seven hospitals across five main sites in Chichester, Worthing, Shoreham-by-Sea, Haywards Heath and Brighton as well as delivering services across Sussex.

- 1828** Sussex County Hospital and General Sea Bathing Infirmary opens on what will become our Brighton Campus
- 1871** The Royal Alexandra Hospital for Sick Children opens in Dyke Road, Brighton
- 1882** Worthing Hospital opens on our Lyndhurst Road site, then called the Worthing Infirmary and Dispensary
- 1906** Southlands Hospital opens on our Upper Shoreham Road site at Shoreham
- 1935** The Sussex Eye Hospital moves to our Eastern Road site, Brighton campus
- 1939** St Richard's hospital is built
- 1948** The NHS is founded

- 1991** The Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath is opened on part of the site of the former St Francis Hospital (a mental health hospital founded in 1859)
- 2003** Brighton and Sussex Medical School accepts its first cohort of students in partnership with Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust
- 2007** The Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital moves to a new building on our Brighton Campus
- 2009** Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is formed from the merger of Royal West Sussex and Worthing and Southlands Trusts
- 2020** Coronavirus global pandemic declared
- 2021** University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust is formed when Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust merged with Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- 2021** New nursing school opens at the University of Chichester in collaboration with UHSussex
- 2023** Opening of the state-of-the-art Louisa Martindale Building on the Brighton Campus
- 2025** Working together to deliver Excellent Care Everywhere as one UHSussex



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Thank you for reading our strategy.

**We look forward to continuing to
work with you on our journey to
Excellent Care Everywhere.**

**For regular updates and to get involved:
uhsussex.nhs.uk/trust-strategy**