



# Reaching *Potential*.

## Executive Summary

SEPTEMBER 2024



# Reaching *Potential*.

## Introduction.

This Reaching Potential report is the second in our Sussex Uncovered series, which uses data to explore the challenges being faced by the county.

We looked at how well our education and training services are working across Sussex and what employment opportunities exist. We have also explored the additional barriers that people face in education, training and employment, our economy, population changes and inequality across our county.

The findings of our research were stark and may be surprising to those who see Sussex as a wealthy, privileged community. They present very significant challenges to our statutory services and to our private sector, which are not performing as well as we would hope.

Education and training should help every child and young person to achieve a good quality of life. As adults, we need access to employment and ongoing skills development to achieve our goals.

This report highlights the vital role of local grassroots charities in identifying those people who are disadvantaged and helping them overcome barriers so they can reach their full potential.

Kevin Richmond, Chief Executive

September 2024



With thanks to OCSI for analysing and presenting the data in the Reaching Potential report.  
**The full report can be found on our website.**

# School *attainment* & *participation*.

## Key findings

- Sussex has nearly a 3% lower rate of Key Stage 2 attainment (57.1%) than the average across England (59.9%) with Hastings, Adur, Chichester, Arun and Eastbourne at lower performance levels.
- Sussex has a lower proportion of Key Stage 4 pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and Maths GCSEs than the South East and England.
- There has been a sharp increase in persistent absence since the Covid pandemic – with similar rates in 2022/23 in Sussex (20.8%) the South East (20.3%) and England (20.9%).
- At Secondary School, Brighton & Hove has the highest rate of persistent absences amongst girls of all the comparator areas. At Primary School the opposite is true, and boys are more likely to be persistent absentees across all areas.
- The proportion of Key Stage 4 pupils going into sustained education, employment or apprenticeships is broadly similar to the South East and England.
- However, Sussex has lower rates of apprenticeship participation and achievements than the regional and national average for those under 19.

**“I have been heavily inspired by this programme. It has shown me that I do have confidence and I just needed a push to see I can use it to do more things outside my comfort zone. By pushing myself, I have started working towards goals that I never thought I would be able to achieve.”**

Love Local Jobs Foundation beneficiary

# Educational *inequalities* & *disadvantaged* groups.

## Key findings

- Sussex has a higher proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs than the national average and a lower proportion of SEN pupils meeting the expected standard at KS2. The most common type is Speech, Language and Communications needs.
- Brighton & Hove has the highest levels of need with 20.39% of pupils receiving extra help for support with learning disabilities or neurodiversity.
- Sussex has lower rates of attainment in KS2 and KS4 for pupils whose first language is not English than the South East or England.
- Sussex has a slightly higher proportion of Children in need than across England. Parental mental health is the dominant issue in Sussex - 43.0% compared to 31.7% in England.
- Sussex has higher rates than England of persistent absence at Primary School and Secondary School among Free school meals eligible students.
- East Sussex has a higher proportion of young people claiming Disability Living Allowance (7.48%) than England (6.12%).

**“A 16-year-old boy was autistic and suffered from mental health issues. He had complex family relationships and school was not an easy place for him to be.**

**Engaging with the Horsham Youth Centre offered him a space where he felt confident, and his needs were understood. His difficulties making friends were addressed and he learnt to approach situations differently.”**

Horsham Youth Centre

# *Employment & job opportunities.*

## Key findings

- Job opportunities are fewer and access to jobs is more difficult in many communities across Sussex that also show poorer educational outcomes.
- Brighton & Hove has some of the highest rates of unemployment across Sussex at all adult skills levels, with notably high proportions of unemployed people with low to mid-level skills.
- Crawley and Hastings show particularly high rates of people with no qualifications who are unemployed.
- East Sussex has lower jobs density and higher travel times to large employment centres, with 60.74 jobs per 100 working age population.
- Hastings has the second lowest jobs density of all Local Authorities in Sussex (57.47 jobs per 100 working age people) and the highest average travel time to a large employment centre at 55 minutes.
- East Sussex has a higher proportion of small businesses and a lower proportion of large businesses than England and the South East.

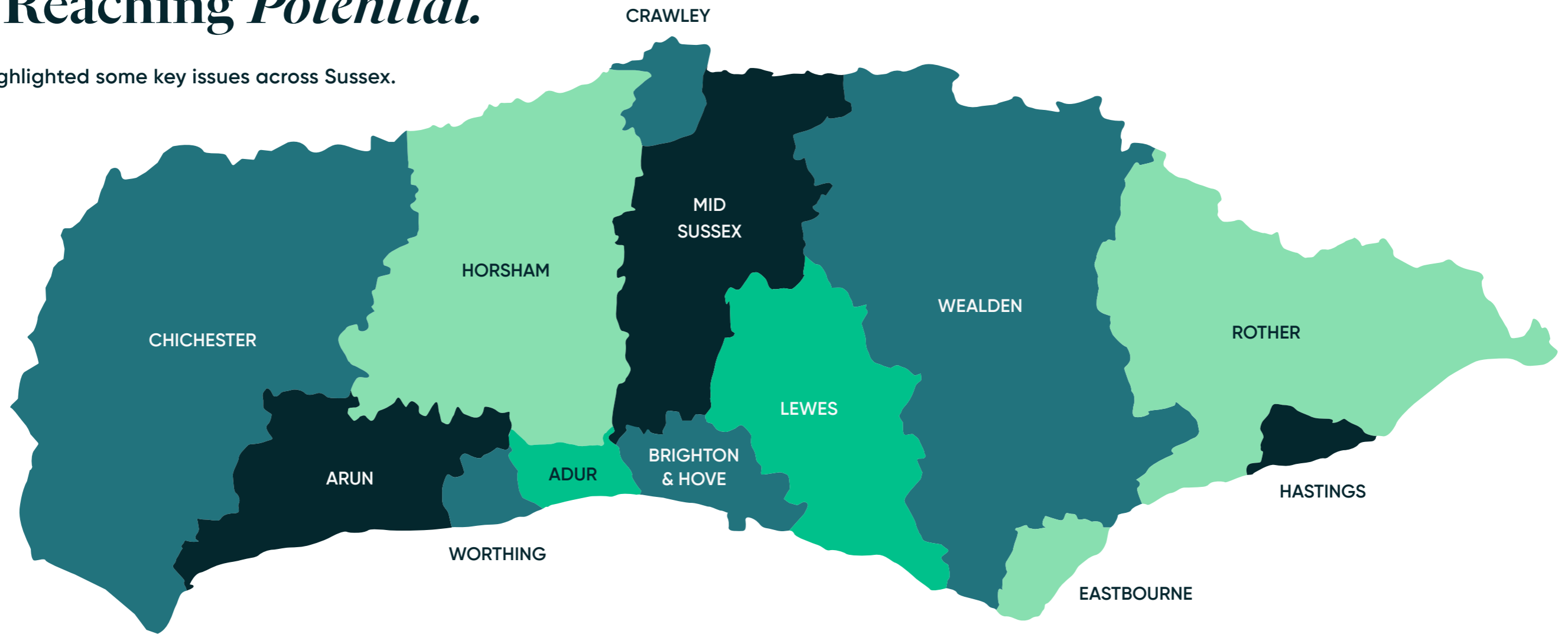
**“I feel a lot happier in myself and feel there is a path in life I can take. I feel part of a great community.. I’m able to be a lot more open about my learning disabilities and feel accepted. I feel like I have a future ahead of me.”**

Team Domenica beneficiary



# Reaching Potential.

We've highlighted some key issues across Sussex.



West Sussex has the lowest rates of participation across community learning, education and training and Further Education Skills categories.

Crawley has notably high rates of low-skilled employment compared to England.

East Sussex has a high proportion of young people claiming Disability Living Allowance.

Hastings and Eastbourne have the highest rates of pupils eligible for Free school meals in Sussex.

West Sussex has the highest rates of permanent exclusion for both Children in need and Children on a child protection plan.

Brighton & Hove has the highest rates of Children in need with a rate of 462.7 per 10,000 children.

East Sussex shows poorer adult skill outcomes, with 17.33% of the adult population having no qualifications.

**Reaching *Potential*.**  
**Part of the Sussex Uncovered Series.**



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