



# ESPIC Annual Conference 2026

Wednesday 8 July 2026, Herstmonceux Castle



## Speakers

### Opening keynote - The changing landscape for Adult Social Care and Health:

#### Mark Stainton, Director Adult Social Care & Health, ESCC

Mark joined East Sussex County Council in 1992, taking up the role of Assistant Director in 2005. From 2017, alongside his role as Assistant Director, he became Director of Integrated Community Services with East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust taking strategic responsibility for NHS community and integrated services including community hospitals, nursing, therapy and rehabilitation services.



Having held the position of Assistant Director of Adult Social Care and Health with East Sussex for 15 years, Mark became director of the service in November 2020. He also chairs the South East ADASS Regional Finance and Resources Sub Group and the East Sussex Autism Partnership Board.

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## Neighbourhood Health:

### **Vicky Smith, Programme Director, Health and Care Transformation, East Sussex County Council**

Vicky Smith leads the strategic delivery of health, care and wellbeing integration across East Sussex. Since joining East Sussex County Council in 2006 she has held a range of leadership roles, including Head of Policy and Strategic Development in Adult Social Care & Health, and has led programmes focused on personalisation, market development, engagement, and integrated care – including piloting whole population accountable care models under East Sussex Better Together.



Before joining the Council, Vicky trained as a social worker in Cardiff and worked across Wales in public and voluntary sector services, holding operational, management and development roles in primary care, mental health, community planning, partnership and system working, and welfare and advocacy services. A consistent theme throughout her career has been bringing organisations, people and communities together to find common ground, build trust and collaborate to unlock their collective potential and deliver meaningful change.

### **Andrea Potter, Integrated Community Teams Programme Manager, East Sussex County Council**

Andrea Potter is the joint Integrated Community Teams (ICT) Programme Manager across East Sussex County Council and the local NHS, leading the development and delivery of neighbourhood-based integrated health and care teams in line with the recommendations in the NHS 10-Year Health Plan. As part of our joint Sussex-wide approach she provides strategic oversight of the ICT programme across East Sussex, coordinating governance and delivery for five integrated community teams and the Highest and Ongoing Needs (HON) programme, to implement proactive,





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multidisciplinary care for people with complex health and care needs.

Andrea has more than 15 years' experience in the health and care sector, having worked across Sussex in a variety of health and wellbeing roles. Her career has spanned the voluntary sector, local partnerships and NHS transformation programmes. Andrea particularly enjoys bringing organisations together to build effective partnerships that improve access to services and deliver better outcomes for people and communities.

## **Digital Reforms: driving the digital revolution:**

### **Nada Wakeford and Trevor Bradfield**

With 24 years of exceptional managerial expertise in senior social care, Nada Wakeford is a seasoned professional with a long list of honours and remarkable accomplishments. Her career started in 2005 as a commissioning manager, where she was instrumental in creating a brand-new care facility that attained an outstanding rating very soon. Her ability to lead was further demonstrated in 2015 when she and her team achieved an exceptional rating in three of the five categories, raising the bar for care delivery. She reached a remarkable milestone in 2018 when she received the highly sought-after CQC outstanding rating in each of the five KLOE categories. Very few care facilities in the country can claim this distinction.





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## **How to build alliances and influence decisions? The Institute of Health and Social Care Management:**

### **Susan Jones, Director of Social Care Institute of Health & Social Care Management**

Sue Jones BSc (Hons) Psychology, Director of Social Care for the Institute of Health and Social Care Management specialises in Leadership & Change Management. She has spent 11 years' working within health & social care and 18 years' in financial services. In both sectors she has significant change management experience involving building relationships that cross multiple boundaries within the UK and internationally.



## **Expanding the Membership:**

### **Sean Walser and Reece White**

Reece White is a dementia behaviour consultant and former Registered Care Home Manager with 20 years' experience in health and social care. Holding a Master's in Dementia Studies, Reece specialises in understanding and responding to complex behaviours through a personcentred, evidence-informed approach. He is the founder of ReFOCUS, supporting families and care teams to interpret behaviour as meaningful communication. Passionate about improving quality of life, Reece advocates for innovative, compassionate, relationship-led care that moves beyond task-based practice and places the individual firmly at the centre of support.





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**Opening keynote: “We need a new vision for care sector reform”**

**Melanie Weatherly, Co-Chair, Care Association Alliance**

Melanie Weatherley MBE is Co-Chair of the Care Association Alliance (CAA) and Chief Executive of Walnut Care, an independent care provider based in Lincolnshire. She has worked in adult social care for many years and is a passionate advocate for high-quality care and for ensuring the voices of independent care providers are heard at both local and national levels.



Melanie is also Chair of the Lincolnshire Care Association and has played a leading role in representing the adult social care sector on workforce, funding and policy issues. She regularly engages with government, NHS organisations and other stakeholders to influence policy and champion sustainable reform of adult social care.

She was awarded an MBE for services to adult social care in recognition of her significant contribution to the sector.



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**How the care market is changing, what it means for SMEs, and driving the “Care Business Conversations”**

**Jimmy Johns, Christie & Co**



**Devon Carey-Hodges, Christie & Co**



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## **Supreme Court redefines deprivation of liberty: what providers need to know in a rapidly changing landscape as the law develops**

**Flora Jago, Hempsons**

Flora has considerable experience in advising clients on complex clinical issues, particularly those involving consent and capacity. She has conducted numerous serious medical treatment cases in the Family Division of the High Court and the Court of Protection.

Flora has significant experience of general advisory queries and liaising directly with a broad range of health and social care professionals. Flora's clients include acute and mental health NHS Trusts, ICBs and private providers. She is especially interested in clinical decision-making related to children. Flora is also a qualified solicitor-advocate, having obtained her civil higher rights in 2021, and frequently appears as an advocate in the Court of Protection.



Flora has particular expertise in the intersection of medical law and ethics. In 2024-2025, she took a period of study leave to complete a Master's in Bioethics at Harvard University, where her research focused on issues of mental capacity and end of life care for patients with severe and enduring anorexia nervosa.

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## **Regulation and Assessment Changes 2026: what they mean for care providers:**

**Antonia Rookley, Operations Manager, CQC**