

WE MUST BUILD A FUTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN SUSSEX

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David is recognised for his clear, pragmatic advice and hands-on approach. Alongside his legal practice, he is a trustee of Saltdean Lido and a passionate advocate for community-led regeneration and opportunities for young people in Sussex.



I MOVED TO SUSSEX IN 2010 AFTER A CAREER IN LONDON, COMMUTING INTO THE CITY.

Like many, I came here for a lifestyle change – and I haven't regretted it for a moment. Brighton has been one of the best decisions of my life.

Alongside work, I became a trustee of Saltdean Lido which was on the brink of demolition. The fact that the community saved it and turned it into a thriving project shows what can be achieved when people come together with determination. That spirit matters because we need the same energy for the future of our young people.

I look at my own three children – two now graduated, one still at university – and I feel we, as the older generation, have broken a social contract.

It used to be simple: work hard, get your qualifications, and you had choices about where to live and how to build a life. Now too many young people can't get stable jobs, can't afford housing, and are crammed into rented accommodation while landlords cash in.

We celebrate 'slash' and 'portfolio' careers, and the flexibility this might bring, but too often young people take multiple jobs not out of freedom, but because they have no other option. Instability is being sold as a lifestyle, when really it's a lack of opportunity.

If Sussex is serious about its future, **a new mayor must make this a place where young people can live, work and thrive.** That means:

- Affordable transport. Families are paying hundreds each month just for teenagers to get to school or college. That shuts doors before they've even opened
- Apprenticeships, paid internships and on-the-job training. Not vague talk about opportunity but real investment in routes to work

- Affordable homes and support for innovative housing models that enable young people to stay where they grew up
- Progression. It's not enough to land a job. There needs to be help to move into better paid roles and careers
- Listening to young people. They need a say in shaping the places they live, through youth councils or other ways of having a seat at the table

This is about pay too. Wages in Sussex, including Brighton, are lower than most of the South East. Deprivation is not just in inner cities - you find it in Saltdean, in Peacehaven, in coastal towns like Hastings, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis. Yet Sussex gets written off as 'part of London', full of beachside mansions. That stereotype means we're over-looked for levelling-up support when in fact, **parts of Sussex are among the most deprived in the UK.**

For business, this matters just as much. Attracting talent is one of the biggest challenges. If young people stay in Sussex - if they see a future here - employers benefit too.

We could be shouting louder that you can build a great career in Sussex, including in professional services and regulated industries, not just in London. If I had one idea to put in front of a Sussex mayor, it's this: make Sussex a place that young people don't have to

leave to find stability. Invest in their transport, their housing, their jobs and their voices. Give them a stake in the future. because if they don't feel they have one, Sussex itself will be poorer.

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