



enterprise socialise realise

## Impact of HMOs on the Local Community

We have represented businesses in the Eastbourne area since 1892 and are the largest Town Chamber in the South East. We are also part of the Alliance of Chambers in East Sussex representing 4,000 business members.

Over the last 18 months the situation on Eastbourne seafront has become untenable and we have received countless complaints from members, staff and residents in what is one of the most disadvantaged wards in the country.

Our members have worked hard to create a thriving community in Devonshire Ward but this has all been undone by the placement here of people from Brighton & Hove with extremely complex needs.

The aggression exhibited to our members is unprecedented and is impacting the business environment right across the town centre. This is made worse by placing vulnerable people here without any forewarning to the Police or agencies that need to provide them with support.

Drug dealing is constant, and the Police are stretched to breaking point. Break-ins in the wider area have increased so much that the government has been forced to fund the Secure Redoubt programme to introduce movement sensitive security lighting and CCTV infrastructure to protect residents' homes.

Please tell us, how do we:

- Prevent B&H from sending more people to our town and get the current cohort returned to B&H?
- Protect Eastbourne retailers and hospitality businesses who are threatened with closure? They are barely surviving the pandemic and this anti-social behaviour is pushing many over the edge. In fact, hotels reported after lockdown 1 that guests checked out early and will not be returning to Eastbourne.
- Protect the safety of our members, their customers, and Eastbourne residents?
- Train and support the BID team to manage the increase in anti-social behaviour caused by people with serious mental health and drug and alcohol issues?
- Protect our staff, residents, and businesses from the increase in serious organised crime operating drug supply into the town via HMO hotels?
- Encourage visitors to return to the town?

We understand that government funding to a City is much greater than to a Borough and so we do not understand why B&H Council is exporting problem residents to a smaller town with a fraction of their funding.

After lockdown we want to reopen the town centre in a safe and positive way. Local businesses are investing £300,000 each year in the BID to create an attractive place encouraging visitors back into the town, however this initiative is being destroyed by the aggressive, anti-social behaviour that is now rife across the town.

Please, do everything you can to get B&H Council to use their own government funding to manage their own vulnerable residents. These are real people with real issues who need to remain near their support networks and not be exiled to a new town without friends or support.



enterprise socialise realise

**Be under no illusion, the threat to Eastbourne posed by this anti-social behaviour, coupled with the pandemic and ensuing economic crisis is greater than at any other time since WWII. We cannot stress enough the damage this policy is doing to our residents, to jobs and to the local economy.**

**This is clearly unfair to the people removed from Brighton and is unacceptable to the business community in Eastbourne.**

Nicky Fisher  
President

Christina Ewbank  
Chief Executive

Eastbourne *unLtd* Chamber of Commerce