

Draft



Mid Sussex District Council

Equality and Diversity Scheme

2016 – 2020

January 2016

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Foreword

This Equality and Diversity Scheme sets out the Council's commitment to meeting the public sector duty under the Equality Act to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This applies to everything that the Council does, whether providing services to our local population, employing people, working with partners, developing policies or communicating and involving people in our decision making.

Mid Sussex is fortunate in being a generally prosperous area, whose residents in the main enjoy good health and above average life expectancy. However, anyone can be discriminated against and suffer disadvantage which affects their quality of life. We are conscious of the needs of those who by virtue of their "protected characteristics" defined in the Act (age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership) may find it difficult to access the services that they need, or to participate in decisions that affect them. This scheme identifies the issues faced by the protected groups in Mid Sussex and the measures that we are taking in response. We also recognise that living in a rural area, or having poor skills or low income can impact on people's life chances, so our scheme also addresses these issues.

We value the diversity of people within the District and will regularly monitor progress to the scheme. Particularly important is ensuring that we know our community, by local analysis and engagement. The latest information suggests that although the District's age profile is fairly balanced at present, there have been increases in the over 65s and over 85s. The District is also becoming more diverse in terms of its ethnicity and religious beliefs. These factors present challenges and opportunities, which will be reflected in the way that we plan our services.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the partner organisations that we work with to promote equality and diversity in Mid Sussex. Our grants scheme supports a wide range of community organisations and projects that seek to assist vulnerable groups. The Council has made it a priority to protect funding for the grants programme, despite the challenging overall financial position.

We are committed to being an employer of choice, providing a flexible and supportive working environment and trying to ensure that our workforce reflects the community that we serve. As Cabinet Member with responsibility for this area of work, I recognise that our elected members, who know and represent their communities, are central to both policy development and to the scrutiny of this work. We will work with staff to ensure that we deliver against our Equality Objectives.

Councillor Norman Webster Cabinet Member for Health and Community

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Equality and Diversity Scheme is to:

- a) Show how the Council will meet the requirements of the Equality Act and the public sector equality duty. This is in relation to our work in representing, employing and serving people and as a partner working with other organisations.
- b) Set out the Council's Equality Objectives and to outline the main actions that the Council intends to take for their achievement.
- c) Enable monitoring of progress.
- d) Enable the public and other agencies to hold the Council to account for progress.

We have published annual Equality and Diversity Progress Reports since 2010 and the 2015 Progress Report is included as an appendix to this scheme.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a public sector equality duty and nine protected characteristics. The duty means that the Council must in the exercise of its duties have due regard to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The nine protected characteristics covered by the new duty are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act).

2. Meeting the needs of Protected Groups in Mid Sussex

This section of the scheme looks at references to the protected groups in the Equality Act, the issues that they face in Mid Sussex and how the Council is responding in its service delivery. As well as protected groups our Equality and Diversity Scheme also covers potential disadvantage arising from residential location (for example rural isolation) and levels of income or skills. This information draws on the Mid Sussex Equalities Profile, which was updated in 2014 and pulls together data such as the 2011 Census.

Disability

The Equality Act states that a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform day to day activities.

The Act also provides rights for people not to be directly discriminated against or harassed because they have an association with a disabled person. This can apply to a carer or parent of a disabled person.

The 2011 census showed that 14.2% of Mid Sussex households contained at least one person with a long term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities, compared with 13.5% in 2001. Health Study information and predictions to 2030 suggest that, while the number of people with a disability aged 18-64 is expected to rise only moderately, the rate of increase for those aged 65+ is much higher, reflecting the projected increase in this sector of the population. A further consequence of our ageing population is that whilst in 2014 there were 14,201 people living with dementia in West Sussex, this is predicted to rise to more than 16,692 by the year 2021.

Particular difficulties that the Council can assist people with a disability to overcome include issues of access and the need to promote independent living. Also ensuring that the needs of those with different types of disability are met, such as people with learning difficulties, mental health issues, physical disability, hearing or visual impairment.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Promotion of independent living- provision of Disabled Facilities Grants to enable disabled people and parents with disabled children to adapt their homes to meet their needs.
- Concessionary travel – the Council currently administers a taxi voucher scheme above the concessionary travel statutory obligation and has facilitated a discounted disabled person railcards offer operated by local parish and town councils.
- Tailored customer services- assisted refuse collections, home visits.
- Improving the accessibility of Council buildings and facilities- disabled car parking spaces, accessible toilets, providing access paths in green spaces.
- Accessible new housing and public spaces- providing new wheelchair accessible affordable housing and extra care housing. Involvement of the East Grinstead Access Group in planning applications and the public realm in new housing developments. Working through town centre regeneration projects to improve the accessibility of our town centres.
- Leisure and community activities - programmes of activity for disabled people at our leisure centres and using our grants scheme to support voluntary organisations that provide services to disabled people.

- Ensuring that Council publications and the website are accessible, for example through Browsealoud.
- Participating in campaigns aimed at promoting the interests of people with disabilities, such as Dementia Friendly Communities and Pavements are for People.

Race

The Equality Act refers to discrimination on the grounds of race, which it defines as colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins.

The 2011 Census results showed a more diverse population compared to 2001, with a higher proportion of people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups, up to 9.7% from 6.4%. “White Other” groups make up 4.8% of the District’s population, comprising 0.9% White Irish, 0.1% who identify themselves as Gypsy or Irish Traveller and 3.8% “Other White”. The biggest other single group is Asian or Asian British: Indian at 1%. The Census data also provides information on country of birth. This shows that 90.3% of Mid Sussex residents were born in the UK, 0.7% in Ireland, 2.9% from other European Union countries and 6.1% from other countries.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Customer service – provision of translation and interpretation. Our web site allows translation of any document on the site.
- Supporting the Mid Sussex Diversity Forum – to make contact with BME groups and celebrate diversity in the District through events such as Local Global.
- Community safety – systems for reporting and dealing with racially motivated hate crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Planning to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers – working to assess their accommodation needs and to adopt an Allocations Development Plan identifying potential sites for additional pitches.

Age

Age is a fundamental factor affecting people’s life experiences. According to the 2011 Census, 18.1% of the Mid Sussex population are aged 65 and over and the Office for National Statistics has projected that this will increase to 21.2% by 2021. There is also a projected increase in people aged over 85 years living in Mid Sussex from 2.8% to 3.3% by 2021. These projections for an ageing population, means an increasing demand for services to meet the needs of these groups. Due to the predominantly rural nature of the District, there is an increasing danger that many older people will face social isolation and feel cut off from the wider community.

Feelings of being socially excluded and marginalised within these communities also need to be considered in relation to young people. This means that we need innovative measures to engage with young people to empower them to participate in their local communities. Also, providing youth activities in order to meet the perceived need for young people to have “something to do”.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples for older people include:

- Engagement with and funding for groups such as the Mid Sussex Older People’s Council

- Production of the Community Connections Directory to publicise the clubs and activities that they can participate in to maintain their health and wellbeing and the services available to meet their needs.
- Support for community transport.
- Providing activities for older people, such as Healthy Walks, Health and Wellbeing initiatives in support of ageing well and promoting independent living. Including older people in our updated safeguarding policies.

Examples for young people include:

- Engagement with local young people through the Mid Sussex Youth Voice.
- Providing community youth activities especially in the holiday period and the provision of amenities such as skateboard parks and play areas.
- Facilities provided at leisure centres, together with programmes to encourage youth sport.

Sexuality

The Equality Act refers to a person's sexual orientation as their sexual attraction to persons of the same, opposite or either sex.

The Office for National Statistics carries out a survey of a sample of households which includes a question on sexual orientation. Data for the South East from the survey undertaken in 2012, estimated that 0.9% of people identified themselves as gay or lesbian, 0.4% as bisexual and 0.4% as "other".

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Homophobic crime is one of the categories of hate crime that is monitored and reported upon.
- Providing equal opportunity in employment- our staff monitoring survey includes a question on sexuality.

Gender

Information from the Office for National Statistics 2014 suggests that the overall gender split in the District is 48.9% male and 51.1% female. ONS estimates for life expectancy in Mid Sussex are 80.8 years for men and 83.0 years for women.

Gender related issues include ensuring equal access to our services and addressing issues such as domestic violence. Also, ensuring that our employment practices are fair and address gender equality issues.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Community safety - providing support for services for women and men suffering domestic violence.
- Leisure and health promotion - targeted schemes for getting young women active and for men's health.
- Employment practice - equal pay and flexible working policies.

Gender reassignment

The Equality Act states that a transsexual person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if they are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

It is difficult to establish the numbers in this protected group. There were no questions on gender in the 2011 Census regarding gender identity. The Gender Identity and Research Society has estimated that nationally 1% of the population may be gender variant to some degree, with 0.2% of the population likely to seek medical treatment, at some stage, to present in the opposite gender.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Community safety - our hate crime incident reporting includes the recording of hate crime motivated by transphobia, which refers to various kinds of aversion towards transsexual people.

Religion or Belief

The protected characteristic of religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. It also includes a lack of any such religion or belief. Information from the 2011 census shows that 62.7% of Mid Sussex residents stated their religion as Christian, with the second largest group being those with no religion at 26.6%. Of the remaining 2.8% who stated their religion, responses were spread across a number of faiths, with Muslim being the largest at 0.8%.

It is important that the Council respects the sensitivities of faith issues in its decision-making, employment policies and provision of services.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Tackling religiously motivated hate crime.
- Supporting the Diversity Forum to make contact with faith groups through events such as Local Global.
- Using our links with faith based groups in our community development work, e.g. Churches Together and the Foodbanks in Mid Sussex, linking to Money Advice Services provided by the Kings Church in Burgess Hill.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Equality Act prohibits discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity. This relates to a defined protected period from conception to the end of statutory maternity leave.

Issues around pregnancy and maternity are mainly relevant to the Council in its role as an employer, but also in the accessibility of our facilities for pregnant women and parents with young children.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Employment practices - maternity/paternity arrangements.
- Access issues - unisex access to baby changing facilities in our public toilets. Parent and toddler spaces in our car parks. Access to buildings for parents with young children.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to directly or indirectly discriminate against or harass a person because they are married or in a civil partnership. Marriage and civil partnership is only a protected characteristic in the context of the Council's employment practices, for example in ensuring that employees who have a civil partnership are treated in the same way as married employees. Same sex weddings became legal in England and Wales from March 2014.

The next two categories of disadvantage are not covered by the protected groups referred to in the Equality Act, but are important factors in the delivery of the Council's aim to ensure that all sectors of the community can thrive and enjoy access to our services. They are income or skills level and residential location.

Income or skill level

Mid Sussex is one of the least deprived districts in the country. However, the levels of deprivation vary considerably across the District and there are pockets of deprivation within Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and East Grinstead. Information from the 2011 census shows that the population is generally well qualified, with 33.6% qualified to level 4 or 5 (first degree or higher), the highest in West Sussex. Conversely, 14.8% have no qualifications, the lowest in the County.

The welfare reforms already introduced and measures still to come are designed to provide work incentives, simplify the benefits system and make it easier to administer. They are likely to impact on people, whether working or not, who are currently in receipt of benefit in the District. This is having particular implications for the Council's Housing and Council Tax Benefit services and requires initiatives to ensure that those affected by the welfare changes are supported. The Council has an important role to play in helping people into work through supporting them to improve their skills and removing obstacles to finding employment.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Benefits - operation of the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme.
- Housing - delivering affordable homes, providing housing advice and temporary accommodation for homeless people.
- Working with Housing Associations to target support at social housing tenants affected by the welfare reforms.
- Debt advice - providing access to debt advice services and supporting the West Sussex Credit Union.
- Measures to address fuel poverty and affordable warmth.
- Community projects in areas of deprivation.
- Employment projects - working to get local people into work, especially geared towards young people Not in Education or Employment (NEETs).

Residential Location

The Council recognises that whether our residents live in a rural or urban location can affect how they access our services. Based on Office for National Statistics data for 2011, it is estimated that 22.7% of the population of Mid Sussex, some 31,800 people live in the rural wards and therefore could be experiencing rural isolation. This is associated with issues such as travel difficulties for those dependent upon public transport, high local housing prices and a lack of community facilities.

Measures that we are taking:

Examples include:

- Customer service - offering on-line services, visiting officers and use of the Help-Point network.
- Providing rural affordable housing - including working with Parish Councils and developers on Rural Exception Sites.
- Investing in community facilities in rural areas such as pavilions and village halls.

Council initiatives that benefit a range of protected groups

In looking at the measures that we are taking to meet the individual needs of the protected groups, there are a number of initiatives that the Council is delivering that cover a range of equality issues such as:

- The operation of our grants scheme to support a wide range of community organisations and projects that seek to assist vulnerable groups. The grants scheme funds a core of voluntary organisations that support vulnerable people of all ages and backgrounds, such as the local Citizens Advice Bureau; Age UK; Horsham and Mid Sussex Voluntary Action; and Action in Rural Sussex. There is also a spotlight programme with annual themes intended to “spotlight” particular parts of the community that may need additional help. The Council has made it a priority to protect funding for the grants programme, despite a difficult overall financial position for the Council, with £637,765 awarded to local voluntary groups in 2014/15.
- Our systems for reporting and dealing with hate crime and anti-social behaviour, motivated by racial, faith, disability or homophobic prejudice.
- Provision of a balanced range of activities offered at our leisure centres to suit all sectors of the community. We also work with the health sector on the promotion of sport and healthy lifestyles.
- Our Health and Well- Being service provided on behalf of NHS West Sussex and the County Council. The services provided by the Wellbeing Hub are of particular benefit to vulnerable groups, for example in addressing issues associated with an ageing population, fuel poverty and support for carers.
- The Chairman of the Council works to support community organisations and to recognise the contribution of individuals. This includes the Community Champions awards to recognise people who have made a big contribution to fund raising and providing services to some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

Equality Impact Assessments

The Council completes Equality Impact Assessments for its major changes to services and where there are new policies. The assessments identify opportunities to promote equality and the barriers to services/differential impact on the protected groups in Mid Sussex. The completed assessments are published on the Council's website.

There is also a standard section in all of the Council's reports to Members, which assesses the "Equality and Customer Services Implications" of the actions referred to in the report.

Equality and Diversity and the Council's Procurement

The Council provides a wide range of services to the community in Mid Sussex, some of which are provided directly and others on our behalf by contractors and partners. We seek to ensure that the contractors that the Council uses and partners with whom we work have the same standards in meetings equality and diversity requirements. Equality considerations are assessed as part of every procurement exercise and embedded into the specification and contractual conditions. This was demonstrated in the retendering of the Indoor Leisure contract in ensuring that sport and recreation activities continue to be provided for the whole community and with the appropriate concessions for those most in need.

Equality and Diversity and the Council's staff

The Council's equality and diversity responsibilities as an employer are met through our employment policies, which aim to ensure that all staff are treated fairly and with respect. These include Dignity at Work; Code of Conduct; Equal Opportunities; Family Friendly; Disciplinary and Grievance Policy. There is also the provision of regular Equality and Diversity staff training, both general awareness training and tailored courses for frontline staff on meeting the needs of customers with specific needs.

The Council monitors the composition of its staff in relation to the background Mid Sussex population so that we are aware of how representative the workforce is of the people that we are seeking to serve. We publish an Annual Workforce Monitoring Report as part of the requirement to publish equality data, which includes information about age, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion and sexuality. The Report includes information about the gender pay gap, comparing the average male and female employee pay. We also publish a quarterly staff profile, which appears on the employment page of the website.

3. The Council's Equality Objectives

It is a requirement under the Equality Act for the Council to have a set of Equality Objectives and to review them at least every four years. The Council's five Equality Objectives were adopted in 2011 and were subject to a consultation exercise. It is proposed to retain the essence of the original objectives, shortening them where possible and combining the original objectives 2 and 3 into one. The proposed new set of four objectives is shown in bold below, together with some of the actions that have been identified for their delivery over the next four years.

Original objective

1. We will show our commitment to equality and diversity. To achieve this we will set out what we intend to do to meet these broad objectives, and will publish what we have achieved so that Councillors and members of the public can judge our progress. We will also provide training to Councillors and staff to help them fulfil their role in promoting equality and diversity.

Revise to

Objective 1. We will show leadership and commitment in promoting equality and diversity

Supporting actions:

- Publish an Equality and Diversity Scheme every three years.
- Prepare an Equality and Diversity Annual Report by March each year, reviewing progress to the scheme and setting out further action for the year ahead.
- Provide equalities training for Members at least every electoral cycle.

Original objectives

2. We will consider the needs of the whole community, and especially those groups protected by the Equality Act 2010, when new plan our priorities and service using their feedback and other information about our community to help guide us.

3. We will treat people as individuals and consider their specific needs in the way we communicate with them and deliver our services

Revise and combine to:

Objective 2. We will consider the needs of individuals across the whole community, and especially those groups protected by the Equality Act 2010, when we plan and deliver our services.

Supporting actions:

- Ensure that our community engagement follows the best practice principles contained in the Statement of Community Involvement.
- Use the Council's Grants Schemes to support organisations that promote the interests of protected groups in Mid Sussex.
- Ensure that equality and customer service implications are taken onto account in our decision making through the appropriate use of Equality Impact Assessments and references in Committee Reports.
- Regularly update the Mid Sussex Equalities profile to ensure that we know the changing needs of our community.
- Monitor the Indoor Leisure contract to ensure that sport and recreation activities are provided for the whole community.
- Ensure that the Council's website continues to maintain high standards of accessibility, with more customers benefitting from online transactions.
- Use a range of communication methods, including social media, to widen the range of people that we communicate with.
- Deliver further improvements to the accessibility of the Council's buildings and open spaces.

Original objective

4. We will seek to prevent discrimination and to promote good relations between different sectors of our community. This will include using our communications to promote positive images of all parts of our community, and working with partner agencies to tackle hate crime and to support victims of domestic violence.

Revise to:

Objective 3. We will seek to prevent discrimination and to promote good relations between different sectors of our community.

Supporting actions:

- Work through the Mid Sussex Partnership to tackle Hate Crime, Anti-Social

Behaviour and domestic abuse.

- Ensure that the Council's communications continue to include positive content and images of a diverse Mid Sussex.
- Work to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers.
- Provide support to the Mid Sussex Diversity Forum, including the annual Local Global event which celebrates the diversity of the District.

Objective 4. As an employer, we will seek to promote equality and respect for diversity in the workplace by providing appropriate policies, training and support.

Supporting actions:

- Monitor and publish annually data about the Council's staff through a Workforce Monitoring Report looking at the composition of our staff in relation to the background Mid Sussex population and to ensure that there are no gender or age related pay issues.
- Provide equalities and diversity training for all staff at least every 3 years.
- Include equalities and diversity in the induction programme for new staff.

4. Responsibility for the Scheme and Monitoring Arrangements

Responsibility for the implementation of this scheme at Member level rests with the Cabinet Member for Health and Community. The lead at Management Team level will be with the appropriate Head of Service. The Council's Scrutiny Committee for Leisure and Community will be responsible for scrutinising the scheme, prior to its adoption by Full Council, and will consider an annual progress report, which will be shared with key consultees and published on the Council's website. The Annual Report for 2015 is included at Appendix A to this scheme.



MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality and Diversity

Progress Report 2015

INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth annual Equality and Diversity Scheme progress report that we have produced. Given the development of a new scheme 2016 - 20 that sets out the context for the Council's equality work and what we plan to do in the future, this progress report is limited to providing information on the specific service improvements that have been delivered in 2015, together with updates on progress with our equality impact assessments and equality related staff matters.

PROGRESS IN DELIVERING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN 2015

This section identifies service improvements for the protected groups, together with those who may find it difficult to access service by virtue of where they live and those with poor skills or low incomes. Some of our initiatives cover a range of equalities issues. These include our systems for reporting and dealing with hate crime and anti-social behaviour, the operation of our grants scheme, and provision of activities through our leisure centres and Health and Wellbeing Service.

Hate Crime Reporting

For 2014/15 there were 55 recorded hate crimes in Mid Sussex, broken down as follows (figures for 2013/14 are shown in brackets):

Type of Hate Crime	Mid Sussex	Sussex Police area
Disability	3 (7)	106 (80)
Race	36 (33)	961 (731)
Religion	9 (11)	106 (71)
Sexual orientation	6 (4)	230 (144)
Transgender	1 (2)	28 (24)
Total	55 (57)	1,352 (1,009)

Recorded hate crime has remained fairly steady in Mid Sussex, but has increased across the Sussex Police area in 2014/15 compared to the previous year, partly due to a drive to raise awareness of what constitutes hate crime and how people can report it. This has included a campaign to recruit hate crime ambassadors designed to raise awareness and support those who may become victims of hate crime.

Disability

- Training to become a Dementia Friend has been held for Council staff and two members of the Health and Wellbeing Team have been trained to be dementia champions. This is part of the Dementia Friendly Mid Sussex initiative.
- Reception and other relevant staff received Hearing Awareness Training in September provided by Action for Deafness and designed to assist staff in dealing with the needs of customers with hearing difficulties.
- Improvements have been made to the accessibility of the Oaklands site, including to the ramp access at the front of the main entrance, path widening for better wheelchair access and re-profiling the car park by the oak door entrance to allow level access.
- Grants have been awarded to local groups that promote the interests of people with disabilities, including support for Disability Access - East Grinstead towards their running costs; the Tadpoles Swimming Club based at the King's Centre in East Grinstead which provides swimming for people with disabilities and the Kangaroos Playscheme for children with special needs.

- The Triangle Leisure Centre hosted the Parallel Youth games in June where more than 400 school children with disabilities participated in a wide range of sporting activities.
- There were 88 Disabled Facilities Grants awarded in 2014/15 to the value of £362,814. These enable disabled people and parents with disabled children to remain in their homes through the provision of adaptations to meet their needs.
- 5 wheelchair accessible new affordable housing units have been provided in 2014/15 and a further 3 between April and November 2015.
- As part of the review of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, it has been established that 20% of hackney carriage vehicles are currently wheelchair accessible and that this is sufficient to meet customer needs.
- A redesigned Council website was launched in February 2015. This was informed by substantial consultation, including sessions with the East Grinstead Access Group and the "Speak Up" group that seeks to promote the needs of people with learning difficulties.

Age

Work with Older People

- The Mid Sussex Older People's Council has been successful in achieving funding from the British Gas Energy Trust Healthy Homes Fund. The Council has supported the "Heat for Health" bid, which gained £126,000 for energy saving measures in Mid Sussex such as boiler replacements, insulation, glazing etc. aimed at fuel-poor households. The Council held Heat for Health events in November at Hurstpierpoint, Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath, to help publicise the scheme and provide advice on switching suppliers to save money.
- The Council's Housing Enabling Officer attended a Mid Sussex Older People's Council Housing Event in September 2015 regarding the retirement housing available in Mid Sussex and housing options for older people.
- We have continued to work on the development of a further state of the art housing scheme for older people at Bellhammer in East Grinstead to replace the current schemes which are not fit for purpose.
- The Health and Wellbeing Service has introduced a new falls prevention programme, aimed at vulnerable adults aged over 65 years to improve their strength and mobility.
- The Spotlight Grants Scheme for 2015/16 is Older People and grants have been awarded to fund one off projects/events or items of equipment to improve the lives of older people living in Mid Sussex. Recipients have included the Mid Sussex Older People's Council; Hassocks and District Age Concern and Age UK.

Work with Young People

- Youth organisation have benefitted from the Council's Grants Scheme, including grants to Burgess Hill Youth, East Grinstead Scout group and funding for the provision of a Crawley Down Village Green Youth Shelter and fitness equipment.
- An Apprenticeship Job fair was held in Haywards Heath in March 2015, organised by Affinity Sutton Housing Association and backed by Mid Sussex and West Sussex County Councils. The event focussed on young people who are considering an apprenticeship as an alternative to further or higher education.
- We have worked with Love Gatwick Diamond jobs to support the development of a microsite for young people about local employment opportunities and guidance from local employers on what skills they will look for from young people applying for work. The website is called "take off" and was designed for young people by young people.
- The Council hosted the Young Volunteer of the Year Awards in June 2015 at Wakehurst Place, to coincide with National Volunteers Week. Local schools, community groups

and support organisations nominated young people from across the District in recognition of those who give up their free time to make Mid Sussex a better place to live.

- Free Play Day events were held in August at Victoria Park, Haywards Heath; St John's Park in Burgess Hill and King George's Field in East Grinstead. These were aimed at local families and attracted over 1,100 people. Young people from the Youth Voice Group supported the events by helping with the planning and volunteering on the day to help them run smoothly.
- New adventure playground equipment has been provided at the Sandy Vale play area in Haywards Heath. The Council consulted with local children and parents on the style of adventure playground equipment to be installed. New playground equipment has also been installed at Richmond Way, East Grinstead.

Race

- This year's Local Global event to celebrate the diversity of the District was held at East Grinstead in October. It was organised in partnership with the Mid Sussex Diversity Forum and celebrated "One World Week", bringing together communities to perform traditional songs and dances, followed by samples of food from around the world.
- The Wellbeing Team have launched their pre-diabetes service. The BME community are especially susceptible to this condition and the service has been promoted to reach these groups.

Gypsies and Travellers

- We have worked with West Sussex County Council, the Homes and Communities Agency and the developer to re-provide the Fairplace Hill site at Burgess Hill from April 2015. This has delivered a much better quality site as part of a new housing development in the town.
- A transit site for West Sussex has been provided at Westhampnett, jointly funded by the County Council and West Sussex District and Borough Councils.
- We are continuing to work on the Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocation Plan to meet the assessed need for additional pitches in the District.

Sexual Orientation

- Hate crime reporting on the basis of homophobia continues to be reported through the Crime and Disorder Partnership.

Religion or Belief

We work with local churches to meet the needs of more vulnerable residents:

- Our Housing Needs Team refer people to the Haywards Heath, East Grinstead and Burgess Hill Foodbanks which are run by local churches. Vouchers are provided which can be redeemed for three days emergency food. 70 food vouchers were issued by the Housing Needs Team in the period January 2015 to November 2015.
- Church groups were contacted to input to the annual count of rough sleepers in Mid Sussex., e.g. rough sleeper count debt advice at King's Church and West Sussex Credit Union sessions at St John's Church, Burgess Hill.

Gender and Gender Reassignment

- The Wellbeing Team has provided a walking Football Scheme for men over 50, which has been well attended and has also commissioned the provision of a Back to Netball programme aimed at getting women back into sport.
- Hate crime reporting included the recording of transphobia which refers to various kinds of aversions towards the protected group of gender reassignment.

Men and Women Suffering Domestic Violence

An important aspect of our gender related service provision is the assistance provided for people suffering domestic violence. The number of recorded domestic abuse crimes over the last three years is shown below:

2012/13	388
2013/14	380
2014/15	464

Domestic abuse is one of the priorities for the Mid Sussex Community Safety Plan. For the first time in a number of years, the Freedom Programme, a domestic abuse group for women, has been run in Mid Sussex. This is a 12 week programme just for women who are still in abusive relationships. There are a range of services and initiatives aimed at responding to domestic abuse. These include the WORTH services, which provide support to victims of domestic abuse and are based at hospitals in West Sussex, and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) which brings together responsible agencies in West Sussex to discuss those cases with the highest risk of harm.

The Council's Housing Needs Team had 59 requests for housing advice in cases involving a violent breakdown of relationship with a partner in 2014/15, compared to 67 cases in the previous year. There is a cross-tenure outreach service in place provided by Stonham Housing Association. This provides housing related support to victims of abuse to enable them to be "safe at home" or enable victims to secure a safe home.

Residential Location

Supporting local communities

- The Think Family Neighbourhoods initiative continues to target the nine identified areas of the District which have issues with deprivation and anti-social behaviour.
- Families from the St Andrews area of Burgess Hill have benefitted from a scheme to provide a mobile library service throughout the summer. This has been commissioned by the Wellbeing Team working with West Sussex County Council's library service, linking to the Summer Reading Challenge.
- The Wellbeing Team also attended the Bentswood Fun Day and Ashenground Open Day in Haywards Heath.

Community facilities

- A grant has been awarded through Section 106 funding to East Grinstead Town Council to improve the play area at East Court, which will include new accessible play equipment.
- A facilities grant was awarded to St Andrews Church Hall in Burgess Hill, to provide an improved community facility for the town, with better disabled access.

Housing Initiatives

- 221 new affordable housing units were delivered in 2014/15, 161 for rent and 60 shared ownership. 84 of these affordable homes were outside of the three towns.
- A rural exception site has been completed at Crawley Down, providing 26 new affordable homes, 23 affordable rented and the remainder shared ownership. These have been built to passivhaus ultra low energy use standards, with the residents benefiting from reduced fuel bills.

Income or Skill Level

- The Work Enablement project has been successful in supporting targeted groups such as the long-term unemployed to be ready for work through workshops and one-to-one sessions. In 2014/15, 108 people were supported with 19 people finding work. There was also a training and learning aspect to the project providing bespoke training courses, with 109 people attending the courses. 58 people were provided with support in managing their finances in the transition from being in receipt of benefit to paid employment.
- We have worked with the West Sussex Credit Union to publicise and provide access to their services. The Council has become a corporate member of the West Sussex Credit Union and has invested £25,000 to enhance the Union's capacity for local lending.
- My Home energy roadshows were held in March 2015 at Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill, Turners Hill and Hassocks, providing advice on energy efficiency and the savings to be made from switching suppliers.

Equality and Diversity and the Council's staff

In addition to looking at improvements to services in the context of equality and diversity, this progress report also provides information in relation to the Council's staff. As part of the requirement to publish Equality Data, we monitor the composition of our staff in relation to the background Mid Sussex population. This includes information about age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, religion and belief and is published on our website

<http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/council/8509.htm>

Figures for the end of September 2015 show that the Council had 305 employees, 217 full-time and 88 part-time, with the following profile:

- 115 (37.7%) are men and 196 (62.3%) women
- 47% of senior management (defined as the top 5% of earners) are women
- 12 (3.93%) have identified themselves as disabled
- 9 (2.95%) are from ethnic minority communities
- 2 (0.7%) are under 21 years of age
- 23 (7.5%) are 21-29
- 61 (20.0%) are 30-39
- 92 (30.2%) are 40-49
- 94 (30.8%) are 50-59
- 33 (10.8%) are over 60

The gender pay gap in 2014/15 was 10.59% calculated by comparing the average male and female employee pay. This has increased from 8.01% in 2013/14. The average national gender pay gap reported by the Office for National Statistics in November 2015 was 19.2% for all employees including part-timers and 9.4% for full-time workers. The Council's gender pay gap increase is due to a number of high earning female staff leaving the organisation.

Seven of the highest earning leavers in 2014/15 were women and some of the resulting vacancies have been filled by male members of staff.

Equality and Diversity Training

Equality and Diversity training has been made available to all of the Council's managers and staff over the last year via an on-line training module. Diversity Awareness training has also been provided to all Members following the elections in May.

Equality Impact Assessments

Assessments have been completed this year for the following:

- Review of the Housing Allocation Scheme for 2015
- Pre-submission District Plan
- Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Scheme 2015
- Burgess Hill Town Centre Redevelopment Planning Application

The assessments are published on the Council's website
<http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/council/6536.htm>

Impact assessments for the coming year will be conducted where there are major changes to services or relevant new policies are introduced.

CONCLUSIONS AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE YEAR AHEAD

This report includes many examples of how the Council, working with its partners, is providing for the needs of the protected groups in the District and addressing issues arising from where people live and their income or skill level.

The Council will be looking to further develop its equality and diversity work in the year ahead. Specific areas for development in 2016 include:

- Working through the Diversity Forum to hold a further Local Global event to celebrate diversity in Mid Sussex.
- Making further progress towards creating Dementia Friendly Communities in each of the three towns in the District and working to set up a Mid Sussex Dementia Action Alliance.
- Reviewing the Council's Corporate Grants Schemes and assessment criteria to ensure that the awards made maximise community benefit.
- Further development of the Youth Voice Group, including the exploitation of opportunities for the use of social media and promoting the introduction of a Local Band Night for young people.
- Exploring the potential for the greater use of video conferencing to interact with customers who want to "see" staff but who can't easily get to our offices. This might particularly benefit older and disabled residents.
- Implementing the £126,000 Heat for Health project with the Mid Sussex Older People's Council, targeting fuel poverty in households containing an over 65 or under 5.