



Mid Sussex District Council

Equalities and Diversity

Progress Report 2013

January 2014

INTRODUCTION

This is the Council's fourth Equality and Diversity progress report, outlining the achievements made in furthering equality and diversity in Mid Sussex. It highlights the key pieces of work we have undertaken as a District Council and sets out the future direction of action to provide fair and inclusive services for everyone living or using services provided by Mid Sussex District Council.

There are lots of practical examples included of the progress that has been made in the last 12 months. This helps to demonstrate how we are positively promoting equality within the Mid Sussex District and the wider community by ensuring that discrimination on the grounds of the protected characteristics of race; disability; gender; gender reassignment; sexual orientation; religion or belief; age; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership, does not occur.

We have been delivering the actions that we promised in our Single Equality and Diversity Scheme 2013-16 during the last year. The Scheme was adopted in March 2013 and is a public commitment of how Mid Sussex District Council plans to meet the duties placed upon us by the Equality Act 2010. The Scheme contains our Equality Objectives and an Action Plan for their achievement. An update on progress to the Action Plan is included as an appendix to this report.

We welcome feedback on our work around equalities and our reports. These will be taken into account to ensure services remain relevant to our residents.

The legislative context and review of the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty from April 2011, requiring the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out its activities. This Duty also included the requirement to establish Equality Objectives and to publish Equality Data about the Council's staff and services that we provide. The Public Sector Equality Duty was designed to address the bureaucracy associated with the previous separate duties for race, disability and gender.

As part of the government's Red Tape Challenge a national review has been undertaken to examine whether the Public Sector Equality Duty is operating as intended. The review reported in September 2013 and concluded that it was too early to come to a judgement about whether there is a need for legislative changes and that a full evaluation should be undertaken in 2016, when the duty will have been in place for 5 years. The review commented that public bodies need to adopt a proportionate approach to complying with the duty and that clearer national guidance is required on the minimum requirements for compliance.

Mid Sussex District Council has always adopted a proportionate approach to meeting its equalities duties, mindful of the need to target resources to frontline services that meet the individual needs of our customers.

PROGRESS TO OUR EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY SCHEME 2013-16

Progress to the Scheme's Action Plan is set out at Appendix B. Actions are set within the framework of the Council's Equality Objectives, which were adopted by Council in March 2012.

Key areas of progress include:

Using new media to engage people

The Council is using other forms of digital media such as Twitter and Facebook to reach out to people whom it is traditionally more difficult to engage with. Social media is particularly beneficial for engaging with younger people and those not able to leave their homes easily such as older and disabled people. Traditional forms of communication are still used to ensure that people who are not online still have access to the Council's messages.

A more accessible Website

The design and content of the Council's website is being reviewed and redesigned to ensure that it continues to maintain high standards of accessibility, with more customers benefitting from online transactions. The Council's website has a dedicated section on Equality and Diversity, designed to bring together Equality and Diversity information into one place.

Improving the Accessibility of the Council's Buildings

The new combined reception in the Oaklands building has improved accessibility, including a new disabled public toilet and baby change facility. There is a new audio induction loop for those with hearing difficulties and we are investing in new queuing software, which will aid visitors with visual difficulties.

Procurement

The new Joint Procurement Strategy with Horsham and Crawley Councils takes account of the Equality Act and the equalities requirements of tendering. The two largest tendering exercises undertaken this year are the grounds maintenance (jointly with Horsham) and Indoor Leisure contracts. Both are important in terms of equality and diversity, in particular ensuring accessibility and that sport and recreation activities continue to be provided for the whole community and target those in the most need. Equalities issues were included in the specification and tender evaluation process and an impact assessment was completed for both exercises.

Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments

Further progress has been achieved in completing the Council's programme of impact assessments. The assessments identify opportunities to promote equality and the barriers to service/differential impact on the protected group. They identify the current measures being taken to address these issues and any further action required. The Council has a three year rolling programme of impact assessments, which is shown at Appendix A. As well as assessments completed as part of the rolling programme for service areas, they are also completed for major new policies and service change initiatives that come up in the year. An example of this is the assessment of accessibility issues for the new combined reception. The programme of reviews by service areas will be completed in 2014/15 and from the following year impact assessments will continue to be completed for new policies and major changes to services.

There are now over 40 assessments completed on our website which can be viewed on the link below:

<http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/6536.htm> . Although it is no longer a statutory duty to publish them, the Council is taking the view with the majority of other public sector organisations, to still do so as they provide an evidence base for our decision making.

Improved procedures for dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime

Anti-Social Behaviour reporting arrangements have been reviewed and all key staff have been trained in the new procedures. This also covers safeguarding, identifying potentially vulnerable people and providing them with advice on where to go for help or refer direct to the appropriate service. Hate Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour are now managed in Mid Sussex using a risk assessment. Every caller is assessed using the same assessment which identifies if they are a repeat caller or have vulnerabilities such as disability that need to be considered. The risk assessment is used to ensure people get the support they need.

Locally the Mid Sussex Partnership Joint Action Groups monitors all hate related incidents reported to the Hate Incident Service, reviews this data and coordinates community action where there are patterns of harassment and hate crime. These types of incidents continue to be under reported in our District and the County. Work is on-going by the service to raise awareness and promote the support available.

For 2012/13 there were 26 recorded hate crimes in Mid Sussex, broken down as follows:

Racially aggravated crime-	5 (2 of these were criminal damage, e.g. racist graffiti on personal property)
Racist crime	19
Homophobic crime	2
Gender identity	0
Religion	0
Disability	0

Developing the Health and Wellbeing Hub

The Health and Wellbeing Hub which was established in June 2011, continues to be developed and has a high emphasis on targeting people in the community who are at risk of the poorest health. The Hub focuses on the prevention of cardio vascular disease and provides advice, guidance and support for local residents to lose weight, get active, stop smoking and to reduce alcohol intake.

Continued support to community organisations through our Grants Scheme

The Council's Community Service and Culture Team uses 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 Citizen Advice Bureau, Age UK, Councils for Voluntary Service 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. This year's theme is "Making a difference in your local community". The Council has again protected funding for the Grants programme, contributing more than £220,000 in grant funding for 2013/14, despite a difficult financial situation for the overall Budget.

Updated Equality Data

Equality Data is available on the Council's website via the following link <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/8509.htm> . It includes an Equalities Profile updated this year to include the release of Census 2011 information for Mid Sussex. The profile is designed to provide information about the protected groups in the District and the implications for the delivery of our services:

Equality and Diversity and the Council's staff

The Equality Data published on our website also includes an annual staff monitoring report setting out detailed information on the composition of the Council's staff in comparison with the background working age Mid Sussex population. The 2012/13 staff monitoring report includes information about age, gender, ethnicity and disability in relation to staff numbers, pay scales, employee relations, recruitment and staff turnover.

We also publish an Employment Profile, which is updated quarterly. Figures for the end of September 2013 show that the Council had 327 employees, 236 full-time and 91 part-time, with the following profile:

- 124 (37.9 %) are men and 203 (62.1%) women
- 44% of the senior management are women
- 17 (5.2%) are classified as disabled
- 11 (3.4%) are from ethnic minority communities
- 3 (0.9%) are under 21 years of age
- 29 (8.9%) are 21-29
- 75 (22.9%) are 30-39
- 112 (34.3%) are 40-49
- 84 (25.7%) are 50-59
- 24 (7.3%) are over 60.

The gender pay gap for the Council's employees in 2012/13 was 8.8%, calculated by comparing the average male and female employee pay. This is unchanged from 2011/12. The national average gender pay gap was 10% reported by the Office for National Statistics at April 2013.

The Council's Dignity at Work policy has been revised, which sets out expectations for maintaining a working environment where all employees and members are treated with dignity and respect. The revisions make even clearer the process that needs to be followed for staff and managers with regard to issues of bullying and harassment at work.

Equalities and Diversity Training

Training has been provided for the Council's customer contact team on the "Thumbs Up" initiative that the Council has signed up to provide for the customer service needs for people with learning difficulties, which is also applicable for other vulnerable groups. An on-line Equality and Diversity training module has been developed, which will be mandatory training for all of the Council's staff and managers. There is a commitment to provide Members with equality and diversity information as part of their induction and training at least once per election cycle. The last Member training, provided to all Members, was provided in 2012.

FOCUSED WORK AROUND PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN 2013

The next section of this report identifies service improvements for the protected groups last year. Our Equality and Diversity work also focuses on those who may find it difficult to access services by virtue of where they live, or because they have low skills or incomes.

Age - Younger People

The Council employs a Young Persons Development Officer who runs a range of programmes to engage with young people and provide youth activities. A “Youth Voice” for Mid Sussex has been established made up of a group of local young people with the aim of providing a platform for their voice to be heard. The group meets once per month and works on specific youth projects. Activities aimed at young people include community youth activities, especially in the holiday period as part of the Motiv8 initiative, and the provision of facilities such as skateboard parks and play areas. Youth activities are also provided at our leisure centres, together with programmes to encourage youth sport and the Junior Wellbeing programme.

Specific action in 2013 included:

- There have been improvements to 10 play areas which will help children with their social interaction, weight and play. Both Kings and St Johns Skate Park have been improved and the BMX track at Burgess Hill has been revamped.
- The Mid Sussex Rural Partnership was launched, which is a voluntary sector partnership supporting youth provision in villages. Other partners include West Sussex Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Action in Rural Sussex, the County Council, Mid Sussex Council for Voluntary Service and Sussex Clubs for Young People.
- This year’s Motiv8 programme included a National Playday event in Victoria Park in Haywards Heath, to encourage young people and families to use the park and its facilities. The programme for East Grinstead included multisport challenge days, street art, Fire Service challenge days and mountain biking at Deersleap Park.
- The Council supported the Young Craftsman of the Year award at the South of England Show.
- We have supported Young Enterprise, working with schools from all over Mid Sussex, to give students the chance to develop their skills in business, enhancing their future chances of employment.
- A NEETS’ (not in education, employment or training) network for professionals has been formed and works to provide better outcomes for young people in Mid Sussex.
- The Mid Sussex Community Safety Partnership supported the ‘This is Abuse’ campaign that raises awareness of relationship abuse among young people. The campaign aimed to provide information to help spot the signs of abuse and the assistance available.
- The Council works through the Think Family Project, which is managed by the Mid Sussex Community Safety Partnership. This provides intensive support to families with multiple problems who meet agreed criteria to address their complex needs with the aim of improving their life prospects and reducing the impact they have on their local community.
- Council officers have supported the Young Carers Event held in Burgess Hill and continue to support the work of the Mid Sussex Young Carers Partnership.
- A new housing support service for young people has commenced, commissioned through Supporting People funding. The Central Sussex YMCA houses and supports young people aged 16-25 who have experienced homelessness or housing crisis.

The service offers accommodation based support in Burgess Hill and a floating support service across the District.

- The Mid Sussex District Council chairman took part in the Sussex Central YMCA Sleep Easy event by rough sleeping overnight in Burgess Hill in order to raise awareness of and raise money to counter youth homelessness.
- The Mid Sussex Wellbeing Service provided a family weight management programme for school age children who are above a healthy weight.
- The Mid Sussex Wellbeing Service provided a family alcohol service for young people aged between 11 and 25 years of age, who are (or are at risk of) drinking to hazardous levels.

Age – Older People

The 2011 census showed that there were 25,300 people aged over 65 living in Mid Sussex, 18.2% of the population. This is expected to rise by 54% to 39,000 by 2030. In responding to the needs of an ageing population, the Council aims to ensure that:

- its services are accessible and appropriate
- the services that we deliver help to promote and safeguard the independence and quality of life of older people so that they can remain healthy, happy and active
- we value and respect older people and provide them, where we can, with opportunities to make a positive contribution to society.

It is important to be able to communicate to older people the help, support and opportunities available to them. We do this through initiatives such as the Life Show and annual publication of the Community Connections Directory for Older People. The Directory is updated annually and provides easily accessible information about organisations providing support for older people. A recent report by Age UK showed that 55% of people over 65 in West Sussex do not use the internet, which emphasises the importance of finding a range of means of providing information to older people across the District.

The provision of activities for older people includes projects under the Health and Wellbeing ageing well initiative, such as Healthy Walks. We also support independent living through initiatives such as housing developments for older people and housing support.

Specific action in 2013 included:

- This year's Life Show was held in East Grinstead in September and was attended by almost 200 local people. In recent years the event has been held in Burgess Hill and the move to East Grinstead provided a better opportunity for older people in the north of the District to attend. The Life Show provides older residents with information and advice on staying fit and continuing to live independently. Local voluntary and statutory organisations ran information on a range of topics including health and wellbeing, safety, working, learning and volunteering opportunities.
- The Council provided a grant to Mid Sussex Older People's Council to help them to undertake a "roadshow" visiting village fetes in Mid Sussex over the summer in order to engage with older people living in rural areas. The roadshows provided information and advice on how to access the assistance available.
- The Health and Wellbeing Team have been promoting activities targeted at older people, including seated exercise, Tai Chi and Nordic Walking. The Team provided the Balcombe 61 Social Club with a free outdoor gym session to ensure that they get the most from the outdoor fitness equipment provided by the Council at Balcombe recreation ground.

- Adults at risk have been included in the refreshed safeguarding policy and procedures are in place to support staff in identifying abuse and identifying what to do if they have a concern.
- We provided a grant to Handcross Rosemary Club which provides social and recreational facilities for elderly and disabled people.
- The Cherry Tree Court housing development for older people at The Brow in Burgess Hill has been completed. Part of the site is on land sold by the Council and the development has provided 22 units of affordable accommodation for the over 55's, including 2 two bed wheelchair units, as well as a private sheltered and assisted living scheme.
- A new floating support service for older people needing housing support has commenced and is promoted by the Council, commissioned through Supporting People funding. The "Here to Help" service provided by Family Mosaic offers support to people aged 60 and over in order to remain independent and stay safe and well at home.

Disability

The Council aims to promote equality for disabled people in the culture of the organisation, not just focusing on individualised responses to specific disabled people. In service delivery this means ensuring the appropriate levels of access and supporting independent living.

Specific action in 2013 included:

- Improvements have been made to the accessibility of our services at Oaklands, through the provision of the new combined reception. These include a new disabled access public toilet and baby change facility, induction loop and more accessible seating area.
- We provided a grant to Disability Access- East Grinstead area, to contribute to their running costs and for the setting up of a fund to cover transport costs of the East Grinstead Visually Impaired Readers Group. The aim of the reading group is to maintain and improve independence and social contact for visually impaired people in the area.
- Freedom Leisure are providing new disability sports sessions in the Council's leisure centres using grant funding from West Sussex County Council. Sports Mobility and Recreational Time (S.M.A.R.T.) sessions include Disability Aquafit and Disability Football sessions.
- The Council gave a grant to Vitalise, a group that provides short breaks for disabled people and their carers. The grant helped Vitalise to contribute towards the cost of providing 33 care breaks for carers of disabled Mid Sussex residents.
- We provided 150 Disabled Facility Grants in 2012/13, costing £747,000 to enable disabled people and parents with disabled children to adapt their homes to meet their needs. We have also met with Occupational Therapists regarding alternative options to be advised to their clients, such as assisting people to move to accommodation that is already adapted.
- The Council's policy for awarding Discretionary Housing Payment has been reviewed in response to additional Government funding for the benefits changes such as the withdrawal of the spare room subsidy for social housing tenants and introduction of the Benefit Cap. Our policy gives preference to supporting disabled people in properties with significant adaptations or those who require spare rooms because of disabilities.
- Further improvements have been made to make walking routes in the District more accessible and measures to enhance disabled access to Bluntswood Local Nature Reserve are being progressed.

- We provided 3 new wheelchair accessible affordable homes in 2012/13.

Race

The 2011 census results showed a more diverse population with a higher proportion of people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, up to 9.7% from 6.4% in 2001. The Council's Community Development Officer works closely with the Mid Sussex Diversity Forum, which has been formed in partnership with the Mid Sussex South Council for Voluntary Service. The Forum has been set up as a platform to provide advice and information to support the different communities in Mid Sussex and to foster an appreciation of the rich diversity of cultures in the District. A Diversity Forum website is under development which will provide a useful medium for sharing information. The Forum is also considering the organisation of a further Local Global event, building on the success of the three previous events held.

Specific action in 2013 included:

- The Wellbeing Service set up a physical activity session (Zumba) for Asian women in Burgess Hill. This was in response to the need identified for an activity provided by a female instructor in a venue which was not overlooked by spectators.

Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsy or Irish Traveller was included as an ethnicity category in the 2011 Census and 142 people identified themselves as in this group in Mid Sussex. This is likely to understate the actual numbers, given the reluctance of the Gypsy and Traveller community to identify themselves as such. The Council works with a Stakeholder Group of partner organisations to address Gypsy and Traveller issues in the District. We have assessed the need for additional pitches on permanent sites in Mid Sussex and provide them through an Allocations Document.

Specific action in 2013 included

- The Council commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in 2013 which concluded that there is a need for an additional 41 permanent pitches within the District in the period 2013-31. The study included face to face interviews with Gypsies and Travellers in the District. The Council is seeking sites to meet this need and intends to prepare a Traveller Sites Allocations Document in order to allocate land within the District for traveller sites.
- There are currently no transit sites within West Sussex and joint work is also underway with the County Council and all other District and Boroughs in West Sussex to provide a site in Chichester District Council's area during 2014/15.
- Grant funding has been awarded by the Homes and Communities Agency and agreement reached with the developer for the re-provision of the Fairplace Hill site in Burgess Hill by March 2015 as part of a new housing development.
- We provided support for an event held to celebrate Romany Traveller history at St John's Park, Burgess Hill in July organised by the Sussex Traveller Action Group. This included a celebration of Romany life and language and the contribution of Romany Gypsies to the war effort during World War Two.
- Our Housing Needs Team has been working with Friends, Families and Travellers to provide advice to Travellers affected by the Benefit Cap.
- The Health and Wellbeing Service is addressing health issues of the Gypsy and Traveller community by developing a specification for a countywide project to provide Wellbeing Advisors to work with Gypsies and Travellers living on sites and in settled accommodation across the County.

Sexual Orientation

The Council recognises that individuals can be fearful of revealing their sexual preference and may experience harassment as a consequence. Incidents of discrimination, harassment or hate crime can be reported to the Council. Homophobia is one of the categories for recording the motivation of hate crime (see the earlier section on anti-social behaviour and hate crime reporting).

Religion and Belief

Churches are often the first to recognise problems in their local communities, and many offer help to vulnerable people who are affected. The Council's work in this area centres upon countering religiously motivated hate crime, helping to promote good relations between the different faiths in Mid Sussex and using our links with faith based groups in providing access to services, especially for people in housing need and rough sleepers.

Examples of activity in 2013 include:

- The Diversity Forum also links into issues of religion or belief in helping to promote communication between multi-cultural groups in Mid Sussex.
- Our Housing Needs Teams refer people to the Haywards Heath and East Grinstead Foodbanks which are run by local churches through the Trussell Trust. Also to the Burgess Hill Community Foodbank, which has been established this year. Vouchers are provided which can be redeemed for three days emergency food. 157 food vouchers have been issued by the Housing Needs Team since the start of the scheme in August 2012 to November 2013.
- Church groups input to the annual count of rough sleepers in Mid Sussex and the Kings Church in Burgess Hill are providing Debt Advice sessions which are publicised on the Council's website. The West Sussex Credit Union holds weekly sessions at St John's Church Hall in Burgess Hill.

Gender and Gender Reassignment

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

In terms of leisure and health, targeted schemes are being implemented through the Well-Being Hub and Freedom Leisure to get young women active and address men's health. Our Hate Incidents reporting includes the recording of hate crime motivated by transphobia which refers to various kinds of aversions towards people undergoing gender reassignment.

Examples of activity in 2013 include

- Freedom Leisure is running the Girls Get Active initiative at the three Mid Sussex centres, with funding from Affinity Sutton Housing Association. The scheme aims to encourage teenage girls to get active by offering more appealing single sex exercise sessions, run in a fun and sociable way. The programme is designed to give teenage girls the confidence that they need to make physical activity a regular part of their lives.
- The Council's Wellbeing Team has again marked the Movember campaign by offering men aged 40-73 years old a NHS Health Check. The campaign is designed

to raise funds and awareness of men's health issues. The NHS health checks were provided in East Grinstead and Haywards Heath away from clinics in relaxed and informal settings.

Women Suffering Domestic Abuse

An important aspect of our gender related service provision is the assistance provided for women suffering domestic abuse. The number of recorded domestic abuse crimes over the last three years in Mid Sussex has increased as follows, in large part, it is believed, as a result of improved reporting:

2010/11 - 255

2011/12 - 307

2012/13 - 374

The Police are working to further encourage reporting of incidents and improve the way that they are recorded. 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 through 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. Domestic abuse is currently managed using a new approach in Mid Sussex, which prioritises the most urgent cases more effectively.

The Housing Needs Team had 65 requests for housing advice in cases involving a violent breakdown of relationship with a partner in 2012/13, compared to 50 cases in the previous year. A new supporting people cross-tenure outreach service has commenced to support victims of domestic abuse with housing needs. This is being provided by Stonham Housing Association and complements the WORTH service available for emergency domestic abuse cases. Stonham are running training for front line staff providing practical advice on awareness of domestic abuse and the assistance available.

Residential Location

The Council recognises that whether our residents live in a rural or urban location can affect how they access our services. Issues from rural isolation include transport difficulties for those dependent upon public transport, high local housing prices and a lack of community facilities.

Examples of activity in 2013 include

Supporting local communities

- The theme for the Spotlight Grants programme in 2013/14 has been "Making a difference to your local community". Small grants are available to voluntary/community organisations for one-off events or items of equipment that will make a beneficial difference to their local community, i.e. town or village.
- We provided a grant to Neighbourly Care, which provides practical help to housebound or isolated older people, people who are sick or disabled, people who are lonely, parents with young children or people in a sudden crisis.
- A grant was awarded for tidy up days in the Bentswood area of Haywards Heath, working with the Warden Park Primary Academy and the Salzworks Café.

Community Facilities

- A £200,000 programme of investment in community pavilions has been completed. Eight pavilions have been improved in a programme designed to deliver improvements to the facilities for residents, support for community use and making the buildings more energy efficient.
- We provided grants to support improvements to village community centres such as the Ansty Village Centre and Crawley Down Community Centre.
- New sports and recreational facilities are being provided at Bolnore Village, and will be managed by the Bolnore Village Community Partnership, following consultation with the Residents Association. The facilities include a pavilion/meeting place.

Housing Initiatives

- New affordable housing delivered in 2012/13 included 17 homes in more rural areas outside of the three main towns. Work has begun on a Rural Exception site in Crawley Down, and work is underway with the Parish Council concerned and Action in Rural Sussex to bring forward rural exception sites at Ashurst Wood and Bolney.
- We have worked with Affinity Sutton and Linden Homes on the regeneration of Wilmington Way in Haywards Heath, a poorly designed 1960's systems built housing estate. The final stage of The Americas development has been completed, providing a mix of houses and apartments, comprising 115 homes for private sale together with 71 homes for affordable rent. This is a very successful development that has really lifted this previously deprived area.

Income or Skill Level

The District is generally prosperous, but there are pockets of deprivation in each of the three main towns. Worklessness is particularly prevalent amongst those in social housing and people on low income are also in danger of suffering from fuel poverty. These issues become especially acute in the current tough economic conditions and changes to the Benefits system.

Examples of activity in 2013 include:

- The Council has implemented the Into Work programme, jointly funded with the County Council and set up to provide support to those affected by reductions in their Council Tax support or other income. In particular it aims to help people to gain the skills and confidence to find work, but also to assist or signpost people who need help with their finances and budgeting. The programme includes a telephone helpline service that commenced in July.
- The Council's Benefits and Housing Services have been proactive in working with the Department of Works and Pensions to signpost those affected by the withdrawal of the spare room subsidy in social housing and the introduction of the Benefit Cap. All of those affected by the cap in Mid Sussex have been contacted and offered advice. We have also used Discretionary Housing Payments to assist some of those affected.
- We continue to grant aid the Citizens Advice Bureaux who have offices in each of the three towns and can help with debt, budgeting and other financial problems.
- The Council assesses and refers those with emergency needs to the West Sussex County Council funded Local Assistance Network that has replaced Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants. This provides immediate short-term aid to help protect a person's welfare and includes access to food banks and other practical assistance.
- We have provided more affordable housing, despite a challenging year economically. Mid Sussex District Council delivered 108 new affordable homes in 2012/13 through working together with our housing partners. 75 of these were for rent with 33 for shared ownership. From April to October 2013, a further 103 affordable homes have been provided.

- The Green Doctor scheme operated last winter, providing home visits and targeted advice designed to assist people in reducing their fuel costs and improving energy efficiency.

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 in a manner which is proportionate and integrated into our customer services. Specific areas for development in 2014 include:

- Rolling out mandatory equality and diversity training to all staff and managers, to ensure that these issues are mainstreamed in the Council's working practices.
- Launching a redesigned website with improved accessibility.
- Holding the Life Show event for older people on Wednesday 10 September 2014 at the Martlets Hall, Burgess Hill.
- Holding a Mid Sussex Youth Debate in 2014.
- A clear challenge for the future is maintaining the help available to disabled people for adaptations to their home with the help of Disabled Facilities Grants. At present these are funded via Government grant together with funding from District and Borough Councils. From 2015 Government grant for DFGs will be included within a pooled budget called Better Care, intended to bring together services and funding for health and social care. We will be working with partner organisations to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged by these changes.
- Implementation of the Think Family Neighbourhoods initiative. This builds on the work undertaken so far to work with individual troubled families and adopts a neighbourhood approach. Nine neighbourhoods have been identified across Mid Sussex and a community development worker will be deployed to work locally to build neighbourhoods in support of families. The programme aims to reduce anti-social behaviour, support people back into work and reduce truancy levels.

Mid Sussex District Council Programme of Impact Assessments

Assessments due for completion in 2013/14

- Housing Services
- Car parking and enforcement
- Staff monitoring
- Building Control
- Traveller Sites Allocation Development Plan Document
- Mid Sussex Partnership/Community Safety
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule
- New Oaklands combined reception
- Land at Courtmead Road, Cuckfield
- Concessionary Travel
- Changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme

Assessments due for completion in 2014/15

- Development Management
- Learning and Development
- Building and Asset Maintenance
- Procurement Function

Progress to corporate actions for the delivery of the Council's Equality Objectives

Appendix B

Key actions	Progress
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 our 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 combating discrimination.	
Prepare an Equality and Diversity Annual Report by March each year, reviewing progress to the scheme.	The attached report fulfils this commitment.
Provide equalities training for members at least every electoral cycle and to staff every three years.	The last equalities training for Members and staff took place in 2012. Further training will be included in the Member Development Programme and forms part of the Member Induction.
Objective 2 We will consider the needs of the whole community, and especially those groups protected by the Equality Act 2010, when we plan our priorities and services using their feedback and other information about our community to help guide us.	
Complete Equality Impact Assessments on all policy and service proposals, with the programme of completed assessments published on our website.	Assessments have been completed and published on the Council's website in line with the programme and for new services and policies that have been developed in the year,
Ensure that equality and customer service implications are properly covered in relevant committee reports, so that these are taken into account in our decision making.	The new Committee Management and Information System template for committee reports includes an equalities and customer service implications section and guidance on its completion.
Update our Equalities Profile for Mid Sussex informed by the release of 2011 Census information and publish this on the Equality Data section of our website.	A new Equalities Profile has been published on the Council's website, highlighting the implications of the release of new Census data.
Ensure that our community engagement follows the best practice principles contained in the Statement of Community Involvement.	Consultations have been undertaken in accordance with procedures in the Statement of Community Involvement. Consultation exercises have included: District Plan; Stonepound Crossroads Hassocks Air Quality Action Plan, Council Tax Support Scheme; Playing Pitch Strategy; and consultations on specific outdoor facilities at Mount Noddy, Orchard Way Play Areas and Forest Fields Play Area.
Annually consider the theme for the Council's Spotlight Grants Scheme, taking into account the needs of the protected groups in the District.	The Spotlight theme for 2013/14 is "Making a Difference to your Local Community" and is designed to support one-off events or items of equipment that support the local community.
In re-tendering the Indoor Leisure contract we will ensure that sport and recreation activities are provided for the whole community.	Equalities issues were included in the specification and as part of the tender evaluation process and an impact assessment completed.
Objective 3 We will treat people as individuals and consider their specific needs in the way we communicate with them and deliver our services.	
Develop and implement a social media policy for the Council, to extend the ways in which we communicate with people.	The Council now has twitter and facebook accounts and since September we have been using them proactively to communicate with Mid Sussex residents and businesses. Likes and followers have been steadily increasing, as have the numbers of retweets and shares, so we are confident that our messages are reaching a wider number of people than previously. A dedicated social media policy was felt to be unnecessary and all issues were felt to be addressed by existing policies.

Key actions	Progress
Ensure that the Council's website continues to maintain high standards of accessibility, with an improved site design and content and more customers benefitting from online transactions.	The whole of the Council's website is being reviewed with a view to further improving its accessibility. Work continues on the website to improve the design, content and navigability. The new design (due to be launched in 2014) has been influenced by discussions with the Speak Up group that represents adults with learning difficulties. The site, its navigability, design and content will be tested by user focus groups in the New Year
Review previous Disability Discrimination Act compliance assessments of the Council's public buildings and consider any further actions as necessary.	The new combined reception is DDA compliant and includes a new disabled public toilet facility and better designed seating area allowing easier wheelchair and buggy access. The lighting has been improved, sound proofing has been installed, as well as larger screens to call people to booths/meeting rooms. Screens will also display Council information.
Establish a programme of accessibility awareness training for customer facing staff.	The customer contact team have undergone accessibility awareness training and have seen the "Thumbs Up" DVD. Representatives of the Communications and Customer Service Team met with Thumbs Up to understand how best to communicate with adults with learning difficulties.
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.	
Work with the Mid Sussex Diversity Forum to deliver a programme of activity building on the previous Local Global events.	Our Community Development Officer has been working with the Forum. A Mid Sussex Diversity Forum website has been developed.
Ensure that the Council's publications continue to include positive content and images of a diverse Mid Sussex.	Each issue of Mid Sussex Matters is checked to ensure that its appeal is wide and that images reflect our diverse communities.
Recruit a young Mid Sussex resident to act as a Youth Correspondent for Mid Sussex Matters.	A Youth Correspondent is yet to be identified, although further Youth Voice articles are planned for future editions of Mid Sussex Matters.
Develop "Youth Voice" as a group of young people for consultation on local issues and involve them with planning the Mid Sussex Youth Conference in 2014.	Youth Voice has been set up, formed from a group of local young people and meets on a monthly basis. It is planned to hold a debating based Youth Conference event in the Council Chamber later in the year.
Work through the Council's multi-agency stakeholder group to address Gypsy and Traveller issues.	The Stakeholder Group met in December and agreed priorities for future action. The need for further sites has been quantified and a Site Allocations Development Plan is in preparation. The Gypsy and Traveller section of the website has been revised. A partnership of West Sussex County Council and all the Districts and Boroughs has been established to deliver a transit site and a co-ordinated approach to dealing with unauthorised encampments.
Implement with other agencies the single recording system for anti-social behaviour to ensure that customers are dealt with effectively so that repeat incidents are minimised.	New anti-social behaviour reporting procedures are in place, preceded by staff training. Hate Crime and anti-social behaviour are dealt with using a risk assessment approach.
Objective 5. As an employer, we will seek to promote equality and respect for the diversity in the workplace by providing appropriate policies, training and support.	

Key actions	Progress
Monitor and publish annually data about the Council's workforce through a Workforce Monitoring Report looking at the composition of our staff in relation to the background Mid Sussex population.	An updated staff monitoring report has been produced for 2012/13 and published on the Council's website.
Complete the programme of job evaluations and implement a new pay structure in 2013/14 to ensure that there are no gender or age related pay issues.	Job evaluation remains an on-going project in agreeing a new and appropriate pay structure that reflects the completed evaluation of posts.
Provide equalities and diversity training for all staff at least every 3 years.	On-line training programmes for staff and managers have been developed for completion on MOLLY, the Council's electronic learning system and will be rolled out in early 2014.
Include equalities in the induction procedures for new staff.	New staff will also be required to undertake the on-line training upon joining the Council.