



# **Mid Sussex District Council**

## **Equalities and Diversity**

### **Progress Report 2014**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This is the Council's fifth 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.

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.

A national review to examine the operation of the Public Sector Equality Duty was undertaken by the Government as part of its Red Tape Challenge, which reported in September 2013. 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 with the duty. No new guidance has been issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and a further evaluation of the Public Sector Equality Duty is due to be undertaken in 2016.

Mid Sussex District Council continues to adopt 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.

### **Safeguarding and the Care Act 2014**

The Care Act 2014 comes into force from April 2015 and has important Equality and Diversity implications. It brings about a complete overhaul of the current adult social care system in the UK, aiming to put people and their carers in control of their care and support. The Council has already revised its Safeguarding Policy to now include "adults at risk" as well as children and young people. Adults at risk covers people over 18 who may be in need of additional support from community care services, such as those who have learning

disabilities, older people, people with physical or sensory disabilities, and people with mental health illnesses. The policy is supported by Designated Safeguarding Officers in each Department. The current Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy is being updated to reflect the changes brought about by the Act. Training on the Act's implications is being targeted at our staff who are most likely to come into contact with adults in need.

## **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.

Key areas of progress include:

### **Continued support to community organisations through our Grants Scheme**

The Council has continued to protect funding for the Grants programme, despite a difficult financial situation for the overall budget. In 2014/15 Mid Sussex District Council awarded £637,765 to local voluntary groups. 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 through partnership agreements 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.

The Revenue Grants Budget also funds Small Revenue Grants, Community and Economic Development grants and a spotlight programme with annual themes intended to "spotlight" particular parts of the community that may need additional help. All these are now considered through the Cabinets Grants Panel.

The Chairman of the Council works to support community organisations and to recognise the contribution of individuals. This has included in October last year a community champions awards ceremony held at the Ravenswood which was attended by 65 people. These represented a group of people who have made a big contribution to fund raising and providing services to some of the most vulnerable members of the community in Mid Sussex.

### **Improving the services offered by the Council's Leisure Centres and Civic Halls**

The retender of the contract for these services was conducted in a way which looked to ensure that accessible sport and recreation activities continue to be provided for the whole community and target those in the most need. The new contractor Places for People was appointed from 1 July 2014. Equalities issues were included in the specification and tender evaluation process and an impact assessment was completed for both exercises. The new contract includes the continuation of the programme of work to promote exercise with key target groups. These include the most vulnerable residents in the district, such as those with disabilities and people on low incomes. To encourage younger people to participate in sport, 16 to 24 year olds are now able to swim for £1.

### **A more accessible Website**

The design and content of the Council's website has been reviewed and redesigned to ensure that it continues to maintain high standards of accessibility, with more customers

benefitting from online transactions. The new design was launched in February 2015. Extensive consultation was undertaken to inform the design of the new site with focus groups comprising residents of all ages and from across the District paid to give their views on the structure, content and overall look of the site. Feedback was also gained through sessions with the East Grinstead Access Group and with the Speak Up Group that seeks to promote the needs of people with learning difficulties.

## **Further Development of the Health and Wellbeing Hub**

The Health and Wellbeing Hub continues to be developed with a high emphasis on targeting people in the community who are at risk of the poorest health. It 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. Examples of their work this year have included engagement of young people with the Family Alcohol project, which provides intensive support and if necessary referral to specialist substance misuse services. The Health and Wellbeing Team has also attended a number of community events to promote their services to the protected groups. Services commissioned by the Hub in 2013/14 have included:

- A physical activity project providing very low cost exercise for inactive adults
- An older people's physical activity project promoting strength and balance
- A family weight management scheme for school age children who are overweight or obese

The Health and Wellbeing service has been addressing health issues of the Gypsy and Traveller community through a countywide project to provide Wellbeing Advisors to work with Gypsies and Travellers living on sites and in settled accommodation.

## **Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime**

A hate incident/hate crime is any incident where the victim of another person believes that they, the victim have been targeted because of their perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity. Many victims of a hate crime experience repeat incidents.

For 2013/14 there were 57 recorded hate crimes in Mid Sussex, broken down as follows:

Racist crime	33
Homophobic crime	4
Disability	7
Gender identity	2
Religion/faith	11

Locally the Mid Sussex Partnership Joint Action Group 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 have been under reported in our District and the County and work has been undertaken to raise awareness and promote the support available. This is partly the reason for the 53.1% increase in overall hate crime recorded by the Police in West Sussex in 2013/14 compared to the previous year. Most of the hate incidents referred to the Support Service involved verbal abuse or abusive gestures, with 85.5% of total incidents involving this type of abuse.

## **Equality and Diversity and the Council's staff**

A staff monitoring report is published annually on the Council's website. This is part of the requirement to publish Equality Data and sets out detailed information on the composition of the Council's staff in comparison with the background working age Mid Sussex population. The 2013/14 staff monitoring report includes information about age, gender, ethnicity and disability in relation to staff numbers, pay scales, employee relations, recruitment and staff turnover. This can be accessed at the Equality Data page of the Council's website see <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/8509.htm>

We also publish an Employment Profile, which is updated quarterly. Figures for the end of December 2014 show that the Council had 317 employees, 222 full-time and 95 part-time, with the following profile:

- 116 (36.6 %) are men and 201 (63.4 %) women
- 42 % of the senior management are women
- 15 (4.7 %) are classified as disabled
- 10 (3.1 %) are from ethnic minority communities
- 1 (0.3 %) is under 21 years of age
- 27 (8.5 %) are 21-29
- 69 (21.8 %) are 30-39
- 99 (31.2 %) are 40-49
- 94 (29.7 %) are 50-59
- 27 (8.5 %) are 60 or over.

The gender pay gap for the Council's employees in 2013/14 was 8.0%, calculated by comparing the average male and female employee pay. This compares to 8.8% in 2012/13. The national average gender pay gap reported by the Office for National Statistics in 2014 was 10% for full-time staff and 19.7% for all employees, including part-timers.

The Council has a number of employment policies that are designed to help provide equality in the workplace. These include policies on Dignity at Work, Equal Opportunities, Flexible Working and Employee Wellbeing.

## **Equalities and Diversity Training**

Training has previously 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 and is mandatory for all of the Council's staff and managers.

Equality training has been provided to recent new starters at Mid Sussex District Council. Mandatory training has also been provided to all staff to support the introduction of new Customer Service Standards, which are designed to emphasise the need to cater for a diverse range of customers.

## **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 groups. They identify the current measures being taken to address these issues and any further action required. The Council had a three year rolling programme of impact assessments, which is shown at Appendix A.

In addition to 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. The programme of reviews by service areas has been completed for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Although it is no longer a statutory duty to produce and publish Equality Impact Assessments, 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. From 2015/16 impact assessments will continue to be completed when there are 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> .

There is also a standard section in all of the Council reports to Members, which assesses the “Equality and Customer Services Implications” of the actions referred to in the report so that Members are able to take these into account in their decision making.

## **FOCUSED WORK AROUND PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN 2014**

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, 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. The Mid Sussex Partnership has made young people issues in Mid Sussex a priority, against the background of further restructuring of the West Sussex County Council Youth Support and Development Service.

### **Specific action in 2014 included:**

- Representatives from the Mid Sussex Youth Action Council visited the Houses of Parliament and met with Sir Nicholas Soames MP. The visit involved 15 pupils from Downlands School, Oathall Community College, Oakmeeds School, Sackville School and Worth School. The trip gave members of the Youth Council the opportunity to learn more about the democratic process and how the Government at Westminster links to local councils in their area.
- The Mid Sussex Young Volunteer awards took place on 2 June 2014 to recognise the contributions made by young volunteers in the District to community life. The awards were open to young people aged 11-18, with nominations made by local schools, community groups and support organisations. As well as the overall award, there was also a category for the young conservationist volunteer. This was the first event of its kind and it is intended to make it part of our programme of community events.

- More than 1,300 young people and their families enjoyed free games, sports, art and competitions at Play Day events in the Council's parks at Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath in August. 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.
- A grant was awarded to Burgess Hill Boys Club towards the cost of running a programme of activities for young people during the holiday period.
- The Mid Sussex Partnership has provided funding to assist "NEET" Young People (Not in Education, Training or Employment) through projects involving mentoring and the development of an "employability microsite." This provides an online shop for information on jobs, skills to make young people employable and training opportunities.
- The Council has supported the creation of a new employability website called "Take Off/Our Future First", which has been developed with the input of pupils at Oathall Community College in Haywards Heath. The website provides an online resource offering top tips on how to look and apply for jobs, how to deliver the perfect interview and understanding what employers expect from young people joining their business.
- The Council jointly funded with West Sussex a subway street art project to revitalise a tired looking subway in East Grinstead into a bright and colourful work of art. The project involved artists from the Example working alongside pupils from Sackville school. The final art work formed part of the Townscape 2014 Contemporary Art Trail, designed to get residents and visitors to East Grinstead looking at and talking about art.
- The Mid Sussex Alcohol Project has worked to provide one to one support for young people and their families with alcohol related issues. Since April 2014, 157 brief interventions have been provided to enable young people to assess their drinking levels, with 19 young people and their families in receipt of support. There have also been 17 educational sessions delivered to over 400 young people in schools.
- The Council has funded through s106 contributions the construction of a new BMX bike track at Leylands Park in Burgess Hill, which opened in August 2014. Consultation took place with local youth groups and BMX enthusiasts to agree on the final design of the track based on consideration of plans submitted by four leading bike track designers.
- We sponsored the Young Craftsman of the Year award at the Ardingly Show, which attracted over 160 entrants from local young people aged between 14 and 21.
- The Council has supported the Young Enterprise in Mid Sussex scheme that gives students the chance to develop their skills in business and enhance their future chances of employment. The scheme involves local students setting up and running their own "real" company and marketing their products and services, with local business people acting as mentors. This year's Young Enterprise programme has involved pupils from Imberhorne School, St Paul's Catholic College, Warden Park School, Worth School, Hurstpierpoint College and Burgess Hill School for Girls.
- A grant was awarded to Burgess Hill Runners Junior Academy, a local athletics group for young people. This has helped to fund the purchase of equipment and the training of more volunteer coaches so that the Group can continue to accommodate demand from the local area.
- The "KeepOut" crime diversion scheme has been supported by the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, with 17 young people visiting Lewes Prison this year. The scheme aims to deter young people aged between 13 and 18 from entering the criminal justice system.
- The Think Family Neighbourhoods project has provided support for local youth work, primarily through the Streetmate youth outreach project. This provides a detached youth service working with young people to improve their life skills and opportunities. Since September, 6 of the Think Family Neighbourhoods have been visited offering

sessions on a weekly basis. This is complemented by three Youth Ambassador projects introduced in communities where there are concerns about low level youth anti-social behaviour. Youth workers engage with young people to form a core group to act as Youth Ambassadors to develop youth project in these wards.

## **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 to 39,000 by 2030, when the over 65's will make up 25.5% of the population of Mid Sussex. There are also large increases predicted in the number of people over 85, which stood at 4,408 in 2011 and is expected to rise by 59% to 7,000 in 2030. This will bring greatly increased demand for services for older people.

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 annual publication of the Community Connections Directory for Older People. The Directory provides easily accessible information about organisations providing support for older people. Age UK issued a report in September 2013, which 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 2014 included:**

- A partnership grant was awarded to Age UK. There are around 850 older people in Mid Sussex who are members of the Age UK Activity centres in Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and East Grinstead.
- The Council awarded a grant to the Mid Sussex Older People's Council towards the purchase of a Mini Dual Wireless Vocal Microphone System to be used at their public meetings. The organisation holds public meetings on subjects of concern/interest to older people and has a membership of around 1,200.
- The Council held a series of Extra Care Affordable Housing Open Days in September, with a chance to view the accommodation available in the District at Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and Lindfield. Extra Care provides an alternative to residential accommodation for people with personal care needs and provides access to on-site care staff. The Open Days also offered the opportunity to provide advice about housing options for older people and how to apply for Extra Care.
- We are continuing to work on the development of further state of the art housing schemes for older people at Buxshalls in Lindfield and at Bellhammer in East Grinstead to replace the current schemes which are not fit for purpose.
- The Wellbeing Team has set up a strength and balance programme for older people who are at risk of a fall. The pilot programme has commenced in Haywards Heath and will be rolled out in venues across the District in 2015/16.



- The Wellbeing Team have been out and about promoting the latest Communications Connections Directory of Services for Older People with relevant community groups for older people such as the Circle Club at Worth Abbey.
- Age UK teamed up with Mid Sussex District Council to hold activity sessions in Bentswood, Haywards Heath for isolated older people.
- The Council has been working towards the creation of Dementia Friendly Communities, through the setting up of local groups in each of the three towns

## **Disability**

Information from housing needs studies suggests that there are an estimated 12.35% of households in Mid Sussex with one or more persons with a disability, amounting to 7,078 people. An estimated 2,100 people are wheelchair users. Overall, whilst 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.

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 2014 included:**

- The Council has signed up to the “Pavement are for People” campaign, promoted by the East Grinstead and District Access Group, 4Sight, Guide Dogs and the Disabilities Trust. This aims to raise awareness of the hazards caused by blocked pavements, particularly to people with sight impairment, users of wheelchairs or mobility scooters and parents with buggies and young children.
- Council staff attended a Guide Dogs roadshow at Haywards Heath Town Hall to raise awareness of their work, how people can get involved and the challenges that sight loss can cause. Staff from our Customer Services Team attended to receive practical training to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to guide people with sight loss effectively.
- A grant was awarded to Disability Access- East Grinstead area towards their running costs. The Group promotes the rights and interests of disabled people in the north of the District, through such initiatives as a free loan scheme for mobility equipment, provision of transport facilities for the Visually Impaired Readers Group and the publication of an Access Guide detailing the accessibility of East Grinstead shops and other public buildings. It also works with the Council in commenting on relevant commercial planning applications across the District.
- We provided 112 Disabled Facility Grants in 2013/14, at a cost of £766,000 to enable disabled people and parents with disabled children to adapt their homes to meet their needs.
- We have provided 2 new wheelchair accessible affordable homes in 2013/14 and a further 4 in the year to date. We have introduced the requirement in s106 agreements for wheelchair accessible affordable housing to be consistent with the Habinteg guide. This covers all the requirements for Lifetime Homes and good practice in wheelchair housing design. The pre-submission Draft District Plan proposes new wheelchair user dwelling standards for affordable homes and wheelchair adaptable standards for extra care and assisted living accommodation.
- A grant was awarded to Tadpoles Swimming Club for the disabled towards pool hire, training, replacement wheelchair and equipment costs. The Club is based at the King's Centre in East Grinstead and provides rehabilitation and social contact through swimming for people with disabilities.

- A grant was awarded to the Sussex Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus as a contribution towards the Advisor, Social and Buddy Service. There are currently 35 users of the service in Mid Sussex.
- A grant was awarded to Vitalise towards care breaks for people with disabilities and their carers. This contributed towards the cost of providing 10 care breaks for four disabled Mid Sussex residents.

## **Race**

The 2011 census results showed a more diverse population compared to 2001, with a higher proportion of people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, up to 9.7% from 6.4%. 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.

### **Specific action in 2014 included:**

- Local Global 2014 took place on 21 June at the Kings Church in Burgess Hill. The event was organised by the Mid Sussex Diversity Forum, with the theme of Local Global meets the Big Lunch with food, dance, music and poetry celebrating the cultural diversity of Mid Sussex. It was attended by over 200 people.
- A Mid Sussex Diversity Forum website has been developed, <http://midsussexdiversityforum.com/> which provides a useful medium for sharing information. It includes advice and support for people new to Mid Sussex.
- A grant was awarded to the Filipino-British Association of Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill towards Sportfest. The group promotes active participation in cultural, social, sports and educational activities, sometimes jointly with the East Grinstead Filipino Association. Sportsfest was held over the summer and included basketball, volleyball, badminton and table tennis at The Dolphin Leisure Centre, and particularly targeted younger people.

## Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsy or Irish Traveller was included as an ethnicity category in the 2011 Census for the first time 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.

### **Specific action in 2014 included**

- The Council commissioned an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which concluded that there is a need for an additional 34 permanent pitches within the District in the period to 2030. A Traveller Sites Allocations Development Plan Document has been prepared to allocate land within the District for traveller sites. The Plan will be submitted to Government by November 2015, following further consultation.
- The joint work to provide a transit site in West Sussex with the County Council and all other District and Boroughs in West Sussex is coming to fruition. The site will be provided at Westhampnett near Chichester and is due to open in the spring of 2015, providing 9 pitches.

- Agreement has been reached with the developer for the re-provision of the Fairplace Hill Traveller site in Burgess Hill, as part of a new housing development. Funding from the Homes and Communities Agency has been received and the new site will be completed by April 2015.
- A Gypsy and Traveller Wellbeing Advisor service was commissioned by the Wellbeing Teams across West Sussex to improve the health and wellbeing of Travellers living on sites and in settled accommodation. This has assisted 51 people across West Sussex through regular visits to local sites. In Mid Sussex, local residents have been supported to start exercising, stop smoking and eat more healthily.
- Members of the Housing Needs Team attended a training session run by Friends, Families and Travellers and local Travellers on engaging more effectively with Gypsies and Travellers.

## **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 2014 include:**

- The Diversity Forum also links into issues of religion or belief in helping to promote communication between multi-cultural groups in Mid Sussex. Membership of the Forum includes Haywards Heath Hindu Samajam and the Jesus Living Water World Wide Church. This year's Local Global event was held at the Kings Church in Burgess Hill.
- Our Housing Needs Teams 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. 122 food vouchers were issued by the Housing Needs Team in the period January to December 2014.
- 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.
- Church representatives attend local operational youth activities planning meetings in the District, working in partnership with the Council to deliver co-ordinated youth projects.

## **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 Places for People to get young women active and address men's health. Our Hate Incidents reporting includes the recording of hate crime connected to gender identity.

### **Examples of activity in 2014 include**

- 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 such as school premises and Help Points.
- A grant was awarded to Hope (Building Confidence) towards a programme of activities and workshops to raise women's confidence and life skills. The initiative is aimed meeting the needs of isolated mothers from Burgess Hill, Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint who do not find it easy to engage with activities in their locality due to their own lack of confidence.
- A grant was awarded to the Haven Pregnancy Counselling service that provides free education, information and support to women in Mid Sussex who are facing a crisis pregnancy or who have previously had an abortion. The Centre provides non-directional counselling to women and girls facing a crisis pregnancy and post abortion counselling. They also work with Mid Sussex senior schools to provide information and education to young teenagers on choices when faced with crisis pregnancy.

### 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 is shown below:

2011/12 - 307

2012/13 - 388

2013/14 - 380

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 one of the priorities for the Mid Sussex Community Safety Plan and specific targeted awareness campaigns were run through 2013/14.

The Council's Housing Needs Team had 67 requests for housing advice in cases involving a violent breakdown of relationship with a partner in 2013/14, compared to 65 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**

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. Over the past year, the Council has funded improvements to a whole range of

pavilions and community facilities across the District, reducing residents' need to travel to benefit from these facilities.

### **Examples of activity in 2014 include**

#### Supporting local communities

- The Think Family Neighbourhoods scheme has been launched, building on the work undertaken so far with individual troubled families to adopting a neighbourhood approach. Nine neighbourhoods have been identified across Mid Sussex and a community development worker deployed. The programme aims to reduce anti-social behaviour, support people back into work and reduce truancy levels.
- The Health and Wellbeing Team have set up a new outreach service at The Melting Pot in Haywards Heath and is establishing links with the rural children and family centres.

#### Community Facilities

- Funding was released for the building of a new sports pavilion and community facility at Finches Field in Pease Pottage. The Council has worked with Slaugham Parish Council to deliver the sports pavilion and community building project, using over £500,000 released from s106 payments.
- The Council has supported and part-funded the provision of a much needed community facility at Bolnore Village, Haywards Heath. The Woodside sport and recreation building opened in October and provides for a number of local community groups. It is run by the Bolnore Village Community Partnership, a newly created charitable trust formed of local residents. The Council consulted with local people to ensure that the scheme meets the needs of the Bolnore community. In addition to providing a community hall, the outdoor facilities include a new skate park. We also provided a facility grant to purchase equipment.

#### Housing Initiatives

- New affordable housing delivered in 2013/14 included 51 homes in more rural areas outside of the three main towns. A further 34 were delivered from April to December 2014.
- A Rural Exception Site has been provided at Ashurstwood, comprising 12 properties at affordable rent. The new homes have been allocated to local people from the village and are protected from any right to purchase thereby remaining as an asset to the local community in perpetuity. The new homes have been designed and built by Sussex based firms. A further Rural Exception Site is nearing completion at Crawley Down which will provide 26 new affordable homes, 23 social rented and the remainder shared ownership.

### **Income or Skill Level**

The District is generally prosperous, but there are pockets of deprivation in each of the three main towns. Worklessness is more prevalent amongst those in social housing and people on low income are also in danger of suffering from fuel poverty.

### **Examples of activity in 2014 include:**

- The Council has commissioned Working Futures Partnership to provide a series of free "Moving on into work" training courses to help local people into work. The courses were designed to build confidence by identifying the key skills they possess and how to use them to impress employers. They also provided advice on improving interview skills and the employment opportunities arising from volunteering. Courses

have been run in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Hurstpierpoint with free crèche facilities provided.

- The Council has commissioned Sussex Learning Solutions to provide a training and learning programme to help people gain the skills required to get back into work. A series of one day workshops including food hygiene, paediatric first aid and customer services have been provided in venues across the District.
- 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. We have used Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to assist some of those affected.
- 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.
- The Council is part of the Sussex Homeless Outreach Reconnection & Engagement (SHORE) partnership, which has commissioned a rough sleeper outreach service. The service is designed to quickly identify people living on the street and help them access the support they need. St Mungo's Broadway is providing the service and has lots of experience with difficult to engage rough sleepers.
- We have provided more affordable housing, despite a challenging year economically. Mid Sussex District Council delivered 126 new affordable homes in 2013/14 through working together with our housing partners. 114 of these were for rent with 12 for shared ownership. From April to December 2014, a further 100 new affordable homes have been provided and the target is to deliver 164 by the end of the financial year.
- The West Sussex Credit Union has been running monthly contact sessions in the Council's main reception at Oaklands, Haywards Heath since September. The Credit Union is based in Worthing and now also has a presence in Burgess Hill and at the Help-Point in East Grinstead. The Credit Union advertises in Mid Sussex Matters and the Council promotes it as an alternative to high interest lenders such as Pay Day Loan companies and Loan Sharks. We also participate in their "Save as you Earn" scheme for Council staff.
- The Mid Sussex Wellbeing Team have provided low cost "back to exercise" classes across the District, with classes including Zumba, pilates and walking football.
- The Mid Sussex Wellbeing Team joined forces with the Working Futures Partnership and Job Centre Plus to help people find work and get back into shape at the same time, through Wellbeing courses run after the "Moving into Work" sessions.
- The Working Future Partnerships project has also provided "Making the Most of your Money" courses in Hurstpierpoint, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead, designed to assist people in need of advice in managing their finances. West Sussex County Council's Children and Family Centres provided free Crèche facilities to support attendance at the courses.
- The Council is addressing Fuel Poverty issues through "Your Energy Sussex", a partnership with the other Sussex authorities to maximise the use of energy saving schemes. The partnership is committed to helping elderly, vulnerable and low-income residents to stay warm and well in their homes. This has included the promotion in Mid Sussex of a boiler replacement and insulation service to households on certain income related benefits and provision of emergency heating

## **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 2015 include:

- Holding a further Local Global event to celebrate diversity in Mid Sussex. The 2015 event will be held in East Grinstead.
- Making further progress towards creating Dementia Friendly Communities in each of the three towns through the promotion of awareness raising amongst local businesses and voluntary organisations of the issues faced by people with dementia.
- Rolling out the strength and balance courses for older people across the district.
- Progressing the Council's work with young people in the District, including working with the Mid Sussex Youth Action Council to explore establishing a café for younger people in Burgess Hill; holding the second Youth Awards in conjunction with the Chairman of the Council; and celebrating play by holding 3 more Play Days in the summer holidays. Also developing a directory of information and services for young people and for professionals in the District that work with them.
- Implementation of further improvements to the accessibility of the Oaklands building and campus through improved disabled access to the Council Chamber from the staff car park, improved main reception ramp access and better pathways between them.
- Provision of Equality and Diversity training as part of induction for new Members following the election in May 2015.

## **Mid Sussex District Council Programme of Impact Assessments**

### Assessments completed in 2013/14

- Housing Services
- Car parking and enforcement
- Staff monitoring
- Building Control
- Health and Wellbeing
- New Oaklands combined reception
- Land at Courtmead Road, Cuckfield
- Concessionary Travel
- Changes to the Housing Allocation Scheme

### Assessments due to be completed in 2014/15

- Mid Sussex Partnership/Community Safety
- Housing Strategy
- Traveller Sites Allocation Development Plan Document
- Expansion of the use of Fixed Penalty Notices
- Development Management
- Learning and Development
- Further revisions to the Housing Allocation Scheme.
- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Pre-Submission Draft District Plan



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

**Appendix B**

Key actions	Progress
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p>Prepare an Equality and Diversity Annual Report by March each year, reviewing progress to the scheme.</p>	<p>The attached report fulfils this commitment.</p>
<p>Provide equalities training for members at least every electoral cycle and to staff every three years.</p>	<p>The last equalities training for Members and staff took place in 2012. Further training will be included in the Member Development Programme and Member Induction training, following the election in May. 2015</p>
<p><b>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.</b></p>	
<p>Complete Equality Impact Assessments on all policy and service proposals, with the programme of completed assessments published on our website.</p>	<p>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,</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The Committee Management and Information System template for committee reports includes an equalities and customer service implications section and guidance on its completion.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>An updated Equalities Profile was published on the Council's website in January, 2014 and included an analysis of information released from 2011 Census data.</p>
<p>Ensure that our community engagement follows the best practice principles contained in the Statement of Community Involvement.</p>	<p>Consultations have been undertaken in accordance with procedures in the Statement of Community Involvement. Consultation exercises in the last year have included: Draft District Plan, Draft Traveller Sites Allocations Development Plan and call for sites, consultation on new play areas and use of open spaces such as at Sandy Vale, Haywards Heath and at Spring Copse, East Grinstead, Mid Sussex Crime and Community Safety and the Council's Licensing Policy.</p>
<p>Annually consider the theme for the Council's Spotlight Grants Scheme, taking into account the needs of the protected groups in the District.</p>	<p>The Spotlight theme for 2013/14 was "Making a Difference to your Local Community" and was designed to support one-off events or items of equipment that support the local community.</p>
<p>In re-tendering the Indoor Leisure contract we will ensure that sport and recreation activities are provided for the whole community.</p>	<p>Equalities issues were included in the specification and as part of the tender evaluation process and an impact assessment completed. The new contractor Places for People have introduced a number of new initiatives to encourage participation such as allowing 16-24 year olds to swim for £1.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3 We will treat people as individuals and consider their specific needs in the way we communicate with them and deliver our services.</b></p>	

Key actions	Progress
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 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. Social media guidelines have been developed and communicated to all staff. We also introduced in September 2014 an on-line newsletter Mid Sussex matters more, which is being issued on a pilot basis of three trial editions.
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 improved Council's website was launched in February 2015- redesigned and with better navigability. The new design has been influenced by discussion with the Speak Up group that represents adults with learning difficulties and the Access Group in East Grinstead, as well as through feedback from a number of resident and Member focus groups.
Review previous Disability Discrimination Act compliance assessments of the Council's public buildings and consider any further actions as necessary.	The combined reception opened in November 2013, is DDA compliant and includes a 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 also display Council information. Further work is included in the current capital programme for improved access to the reception and entrance to the Council Chamber.
Establish a programme of accessibility awareness training for customer facing staff.	The customer contact team have undergone accessibility awareness training and have all signed up to do a Customer Services NVQ, which will cover access issues and equalities. The Team have also received practical training from the Guide Dogs organisation to provide knowledge and skills to guide people with sight loss effectively. All of the Council's staff have undertaken the on-line MOLLY equality and diversity training.
<b>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.</b>	
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 see <a href="http://midsussexdiversityforum.com/">http://midsussexdiversityforum.com/</a> . A local global event took place at Kings Church, Burgess Hill on 21 June. This year's theme was Local Global meets the Big Lunch and included food, dance, music and poetry celebrating the cultural diversity of cultures across Mid Sussex.
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. An online extra version has been launched that is being sent to those that sign up for it three times per year.
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. Representatives from Youth Voice also went on a visit to the Houses of Parliament and have assisted with the Play Events held in each of the towns.

Key actions	Progress
Work through the Council's multi-agency stakeholder group to address Gypsy and Traveller issues.	The need for further sites has been quantified and a Site Allocations Development Plan produced and consulted upon. A meeting of the Stakeholder Group took place as part of the consultation on sites, including representatives of Friends, Families and Travellers and Sussex Travellers and Gypsies. 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 in West Sussex 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. .
<b>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.</b>	
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.	A staff monitoring report for 2013/14 and has been published on the Council's Equality data page of the Council's website <a href="http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/8509.htm">http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/8509.htm</a>
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.	This work has not yet been completed.
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 have been rolled out to all staff.
Include equalities in the induction procedures for new staff.	New staff are required to undertake the on-line Equality and Diversity training upon joining the Council.