

Equality Action Plan 2022/23

Equality Objective	Progress in 2022/23
Meeting the needs of an aging population	<p>The Mid Devon Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was approved at Cabinet in March 2023 for public consultation. This planning document highlights the growing need for housing for older persons and people with disabilities. It includes sections on accessible and adaptable homes, wheelchair accommodation, and bungalow provision.</p> <p>Where a tenant or household member has a disability or a long term illness, the council may provide equipment or adaptations to their home to enable them to remain living in that property. The council will provide minor adaptations for works under £250 where the tenant feels that they may help them or their household member to live more independently.</p> <p>The council requires a referral from the Occupational Therapist for adaptations costing between £250- £1,000. Examples of adaptations include: ramps, safety glass or minor internal alterations to the kitchen or bathroom. The council will provide major adaptations to help eligible tenants and household members to live independently. A referral from an Occupational Therapist will be required before carrying out any works.</p> <p>Major adaptations can involve extensive structural alterations and will normally cost more than £1,000. Examples of major adaptations include: property access (ramps, drop kerbs) widening doorways, level access showers, change of heating or lighting controls, stair lifts or changes to the configuration of the bathroom or kitchen and extensions to the property.</p> <p>Mid Devon Housing started running a 'Winter Warmth Club' in 2022/23. This is predominantly attended by older people. Due to the value in offering tenants a meeting place, the Tenant Involvement team are looking into widening the offer and perhaps expanding to Cullompton and Crediton too.</p>
Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation	<p>At the Community PDG meeting (7th June 2022), Members agreed that it would be of interest to them to look into effective community integration and engagement focusing on topical experiences of refugee or asylum seekers in moving to the district given international conflicts. The members also agreed to broaden the scope of the project to include new residents in new housing estates.</p> <p>In 2022, the Council agreed to identify a Member Champion for Equalities and Accessibility. This remit has now been widened out to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and following engagement with the Local Government Association a role description has been drafted and it is recommended that this responsibility is part of a cabinet position. The Member Champion will be identified after the May 2023 elections. Working with other councillors, they will help to provide a more local level insight on rural isolation and vulnerable individuals</p> <p>Neighbourhood Officers signpost and refer Mid Devon Housing tenants where appropriate so tenants know where to go to receive the help they may require.</p>

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<p>Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families with complex needs.</p>	<p>Since October 2021, the council has appointed a Customer Engagement Coordinator who works to support tenants' involvement.</p> <p>In 2022, Mid Devon Housing adopted a revised Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard Policy. The aim of this policy is to ensure that our tenants live good quality lives in a place where people come together and contribute as one community, where people value decency and dignity and where neighbourhoods are clean, safe and well maintained.</p> <p>The Homes PDG received an update in September 2022 on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Members were informed that the family scheme was proving to be challenging but a lot was being done to provide support and signpost to helpful agencies. Consideration was also given to the complexities in having to support individuals and families experiencing trauma</p> <p>Becoming a Trauma Informed Council will ensure that MDDC services accommodate the needs of service users, including those facing multiple disadvantage. This proposal was taken to Cabinet in September 2022, paper entitled 'Mid Devon as a Trauma Informed Council'. Members of the Cabinet resolved to recommend to Full Council that the degree of investment the Council would be required to make towards becoming Trauma Informed as set out in the report and that a stepped approach be adopted. On 26th October 2022, Full Council voted for the motion to be carried.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Officers work with vulnerable tenants on a daily basis and signpost to further support as necessary.</p> <p>A new Customer Relationship Manager (CRM) System is being implemented at MDDC. This will aim to provide a more complete record of our residents and customers so that we can provide even better levels of support. The new CRM system will make it easier for residents and customers to access council services. Work on the implementation of the new CRM started in January 2023.</p>
<p>To continue to concentrate on mental health issues within MDDC and the wider community.</p>	<p>Regular articles have been posted in the council staff newsletter (The Link) regarding wellbeing and mental health. Examples from 2022/23 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting to wellbeing support from an organisation called 'Wellbeing Works' • Signposting to the Mental Health Foundation website regarding help and advice on how to cope with loneliness and improve mental health • Details of Mental Health First Aiders with a link to the SharePoint page published in the Link (4th July 2022) • Information relating to specific things relating to mental health – for example, information and signposting to Mind for further support relating to Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) • Tips and advice on how to look after your mental wellbeing during winter months while working from home • Information about 'Brew Monday' by the Samaritans – encouraging people to look at 'Blue Monday' in a new way and to reach out to someone for a cuppa and catch-up on any day, not just this one.

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	<p>MDDC currently has 10 officers trained as Mental Health first aiders. Their details are available on the intranet and noticeboards so that staff are able to contact them.</p> <p>A number of officers have been trained as workplace coaches to support colleagues with personal or work related concerns. There are currently eight workplace coaches, details of whom are available on the Learning and Development SharePoint page.</p> <p>Details of organisations who can support mental health are available on the council's website. Details of community support across the district are available on our website and there is a community support helpline.</p> <p>In view of the pandemic, Devon County Council were able to offer a Covid-19 Counselling Service specifically for our BAME communities and details are available on our website.</p> <p>The council's Reasonable Adjustment policy includes mental health impairments (this includes mental health issues). Examples of adjustments that can be made under this policy are – time off for counselling, extra breaks to help cope with fatigue (which can be a symptom of mental illness), additional supervision or mentoring, and allowing an employee to work in a private room instead of being in an open plan office (could be good for those who suffer with anxiety,etc.).</p> <p>The council can flag the account of someone who may be struggling to pay their council tax due to mental health issues so that officers are aware and can treat the individual accordingly.</p> <p>In 2022/23 Mid Devon Leisure Centres ran a pilot offering free leisure access to unpaid adult carers, parent carers and young carers. The scheme ran at all three MDDC leisure centres (Culm Valley, Exe Valley and Lords Meadow. Unpaid carers had access to all activities, excluding swimming lessons, and in order to access this scheme, all they had to do was show identification that they are an unpaid carer (a 'Carers Passport'). The purpose of this scheme is to enable unpaid carers to exercise freely and boost their own physical and mental wellbeing.</p>
Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon (Corporate Plan aim).	<p>Airband is doing work in rural areas regarding digital connectivity and updates are provided regularly by Devon County Council through press releases, e.g. Airband rolls out full fibre broadband to another 1,700 homes and businesses.</p> <p>Orion was appointed in 2021 to look into a free-to-use Wi-Fi network for Tiverton and Cullompton town centres and have been progressing with establishing the necessary infrastructure. The Council is due to receive an update very soon.</p> <p>Within the council, a working group has been established to support the transition to hybrid working and hot-desking. In 2022/23, the first hot-desking areas have been established enabling staff to work in a more agile manner.</p>