



# **MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Equality and Diversity**

## **Progress Report 2022**

March 2023

## **SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on progress made in 2022 to deliver the priorities set out in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2020 – 2024. It includes many examples of how the Council, working with its partners, is providing for the needs of the protected groups in the District.

### **Main areas of progress in 2022**

- Continuing to use our Community Grants Schemes to provide for organisations that support vulnerable people.
- Providing the Platinum Jubilee Grants Scheme to 37 neighbourhood, charity and local organisations to support and facilitate community parties and events within the District.
- Working with Citizens Advice to expand the use of the Community Champions Network to engage with local minority communities. This has included the provision of a language café and welcome scheme for Ukrainian refugees.
- Providing a programme of Play Days on tour during school holidays at 10 locations across the District and 3 Skate Fests with free activities for local families.
- Investment in our property assets and working to provide facilities with improved accessibility such as the provision of a changing places public toilets at the Orchards Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath.
- Committing to using the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to invest of £245,000 over three years in the community hubs being developed in areas of relative deprivation within the District's three towns at Bentswood, Haywards Heath; Stonequarry at East Grinstead; and the Cherry Tree, Burgess Hill.
- Provision of new community buildings such as at Kingsview Burgess Hill, Age UK facility.

### **Census 2021 information about the Mid Sussex population**

Information from the 2021 Census has been released and a summary of the key data for Mid Sussex can be found in the appendix to this report. The Census is a once in a decade event and it will provide us with key data to help plan our services with partners.

### **Equality and Diversity initiatives in the year ahead**

The report highlights initiatives to be delivered in the year ahead to further develop the Council's equality and diversity work. These include:

- Developing a new Equality and Diversity Scheme, informed by the 2021 Census data.
- Further work to address the cost of living issues, especially assistance to those most affected by the increase in energy costs.
- Play Days – delivering indoor Play Days, Play Days on Tour, Skate Fests and Activity Events "Spring into Action"
- Further support for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) through the services commissioned from Runway Training and West Sussex County Council's Think Futures.
- Armed Forces awareness training to be provided for staff and Members.
- Additional improvements to the accessibility of Council buildings, including the provision of further Changing Places public conveniences.

## INTRODUCTION

1. This is the Council's annual Equality and Diversity progress report, setting out the achievements made in supporting equality and diversity in Mid Sussex in 2022. The report highlights key pieces of work we have undertaken and sets out the future direction in our provision of fair and inclusive services.
2. Progress is reported against the context of the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2020-24, which contains the following Equality Objectives:

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

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

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

**Objective 4** - As an employer, we will seek to promote equality and respect for diversity in the workplace by providing appropriate policies, training and support, including assistance for former members of the armed forces.

3. The Scheme identifies actions to support the delivery of these objectives. It also sets out measures to ensure that the Council meets its public sector equality duty and ensures that discrimination does not occur on the grounds of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. These protected characteristics are disability; age; race; sexual orientation; religion or belief; sex; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership.
4. In addition to considering the needs of those with protected characteristics, our Equality and Diversity Scheme and this progress report considers disadvantage arising from income or skill level, by virtue of where people live and the Council's work to support the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

## PROGRESS IN DELIVERING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS IN 2022

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

### **Support to community organisations through our Community Development and Facility Grants Scheme**

6. The Council has supported the community and voluntary sector through the pandemic, with the protected groups especially impacted. The Council's Community and Development Grants Schemes continue to support a wide range of community organisations and projects that seek to assist vulnerable groups.

7. The grants scheme includes partnership agreements with a core of voluntary organisations that support vulnerable people of all ages and backgrounds. These agreements are in place with Citizens Advice; Age UK West Sussex Brighton and Hove; Age UK East Grinstead; Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA); and Action in Rural Sussex. The partnership agreements are awarded over a six-year period to provide continuity and financial security to these organisations.
8. Information about the contributions of the partnership agreement organisations to disadvantaged groups in Mid Sussex is provided below:
  - a. **Citizens Advice** deals with a variety of clients, with its biggest recent developments in its areas of advice for Mid Sussex clients being around Universal Credit claims, energy and debt advice. They provide advice sessions at the job centre in Haywards Heath and the community hub in the Bentswood area of Haywards Heath. The Council is working with Citizens Advice on the Mid Sussex Community Champions project, which is a network of volunteer community champions from EU, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups. New projects this year through this initiative have included the provision of a language café and welcome scheme for Ukrainian refugees.
  - b. **Age UK West Sussex Brighton and Hove** has around 800 older people in Mid Sussex who are members of their three centres in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath. The Council has assisted Age UK West Sussex, Brighton and Hove with the provision of new accommodation at the Kings Weald community building in Burgess Hill. Age UK has a new Community Development team in Mid Sussex, which aims to provide activities for older people in local community venues that are accessible and respond to the needs of older people to help combat social isolation.
  - c. **Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA)** supports local charities, volunteers, community groups, non-profit organisations and social enterprises. The Council has provided support to Mid Sussex Voluntary Action to move to the Cherry Tree at Burgess Hill and work to make this into a Community Hub. Their recent initiatives have included the setting up of the Mid Sussex Food Partnership and working on Digital Inclusion. The Cherry Tree is acting as a welcome hub for Ukrainian refugees in the District.
  - d. **Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS)** provides valuable support to village halls, which are often the heartbeat of rural communities. This has included provision of legal, organisational and development advice for the trustees and management committees running these facilities on behalf of local people.
9. Outside of the partnership agreements, the Council funded 20 organisations with a total grant value of £92,949 through Community Development Grants and to celebrate the Queen's jubilee, the Council made available the Jubilee Grants Scheme Fund of £25,000. This scheme gave grants to 37 neighbourhood, charity and local organisations to support and facilitate community parties and events within the District.
10. In addition to the Community Development Grants schemes, in 2022 there were six Facility Grants to voluntary sector organisations, funded through the release of s106 contributions, totalling £148,164. The awards supported sports clubs, youth groups, community centres and associations to make capital improvement to their facilities.

## The Health and Wellbeing service

11. The Council's 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, with their services of particular benefit to vulnerable groups. Ways of promoting healthy lifestyles were disrupted during the lockdown, with the Council's Wellbeing Team having to move to more virtual contact due to social distancing requirements. There has been a gradual movement back to more face-to-face interventions.
12. Examples of some of their work in 2022 include the falls prevention programme, which is especially useful for older people to improve their strength and mobility. Also, Workplace Health recognised by Public Health as a key vehicle through which to engage with younger, working age adults who are best placed to avoid developing long term conditions by adjusting lifestyle and behaviours. In addition, the service provides wellbeing coaches aimed at supporting people with low self-esteem, anxiety, or caring responsibilities to access Health and Wellbeing Services.
13. The Mid Sussex Health and Wellbeing Network is convened by the Hub and is made up of approximately 80 organisations, both statutory and third sector, working within the broad field of wellbeing. This is a key source of exchanging information and getting referrals to and from the service. Subjects covered this year have included addictive behaviours and Mental Health support.

## Leisure Centres

14. The Council's Leisure Centres aim to provide a balanced range of activities to suit all sectors of the community and includes a scheme for concessional use. Groups who benefit from concessionary charges include the over 60's; juniors of 16/17 years of age; and students in full-time education. The Leisure Centres also work through the GP Exercise Referral Programme and provide activities for local schools and community groups.

## Hate Crime Reporting

15. Reported hate crime figures for the last two years are shown below:

Table A: Reported Hate Crime

Type of Hate Crime	Mid Sussex		West Sussex	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Transgender	6	9	46	67
Religion	2	5	47	67
Disability	20	19	127	146
Sexuality	35	30	231	266
Race	88	149	888	970
Total	145	206	1,342	1,520

16. A hate incident/hate crime is any incident where the victim or another person believes that they, the victim has been targeted because of their perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity. Hate crimes tend to be under reported and increases can be seen as the success of initiatives to raise awareness of hate crimes and how it can be reported.

17. The Council works through the Community Safety Partnership to monitor and report any Community Tensions within the District leading to hate crimes. This data will be discussed further at the partnership and action agreed, particularly in areas where Mid Sussex has an identified issue. The table above suggests that race-based hate crime is an increasing problem in the District. Further work will be undertaken with partners including the police to address this.

## **FOCUSED WORK AROUND PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS IN 2022**

18. The next section of the report identifies service improvements for the protected groups last year. Data from the 2021 Census has been released and updated information for Mid Sussex is also included in this section. A summary of the headline data from the Census is included at Appendix A.

### **Disability**

19. The 2021 census showed that 5% of Mid Sussex residents are disabled under the Equality Act with their day-to-day activities limited a lot and 9.2% limited a little. Health Study information and projections to 2030, suggest a particular increase in the number of people aged 65+ with a disability in Mid Sussex. A further consequence of our ageing population is the projected increase in the numbers living with dementia in Mid Sussex, from the current 2,270 to 3,500 by 2030.

### **Specific actions in 2022 included:**

- a. The Council's Housing Standards Team provided 91 Disabled Facilities Grants during 2021/22. These delivered a range of home adaptations to help disabled people to live more independently in their own homes, including ramps, stairlifts, adapting kitchens for wheelchair use and replacing baths with level access showers. A further 69 have been awarded in the period April to December 2022.
- b. A Platinum Jubilee Grant of £1,000 was awarded to Kangaroos Mid Sussex to fund a Jubilee Picnic in the Park for families with disabled children at the Worlds End Park in Burgess Hill.
- c. £1,716 from the Community Grants Fund was awarded to 4Sight Vision Support to fund the production of newsletters in an accessible format.
- d. One wheelchair-accessible new affordable unit was provided in 2021/22.
- e. The Unmet Demand Survey is conducted every three years to assess and review the number of Hackney Carriage vehicles that the Council licences. This year's survey had an emphasis on contacting disabled people and their carers to gain views on the provision of wheelchair-accessible licensed vehicles in the District and the services offered by taxi drivers. The survey found we had sufficient taxis available for our population.
- f. Mandatory Safeguarding Awareness and Disability Awareness Training for licensed drivers has been introduced.
- g. A changing places toilet has been provided at the Orchards Shopping Centre, Haywards Heath. A Changing Places toilet is designed to meet the needs of

disabled children and adults with complex care needs who require carer support, appropriate equipment and more space.

## **Age- older people**

20. Age is a fundamental factor affecting people's life experiences. Mid Sussex has an older age structure, illustrated by the release of data from the 2021 Census. This showed that 20.6% (31,500) of the District's population is over 65, an increase since the 2011 Census of 24.5%. The national average % of over 65s is 18.4%. There has also been a 51% increase in Mid Sussex of those aged 70 – 74 and a 35% increase in those aged 75 -79.

21. An increasing number of older people have one or more long-term health conditions and the latest Census figures show that 11,582 Mid Sussex residents are providing unpaid care. The Census also showed that there are 8,599 single person 65+ households in Mid Sussex. Due to the predominantly rural nature of the District, there is an increasing danger that many older people will face social isolation and feel cut off from the wider community.

### **22. Specific action in 2022 included:**

- a. A Platinum Jubilee Grant of £695 was awarded to Mid Sussex Older People's Association to fund an afternoon tea at the King Edward Hall in Lindfield with a violinist and refreshments.
- b. A Platinum Jubilee Grant of £350 was awarded to Age UK West Sussex Brighton & Hove to fund celebrations at Lamb House, Haywards Heath, including afternoon tea with a harpist and Jubilee community party.
- c. The Mid Sussex Partnership provided a grant to Mid Sussex Older Peoples Council to provide MiDAS minibus driver training to 10 new volunteer drivers.
- d. The Council has published a new and updated edition of the Community Connections Directory to help older residents get access to vital support services. The Directory contains extensive contact information for the many local organisations that offer help to older people in the community. It provides details of organisations that can help older people with a range of issues like managing money, maintaining independence, finding local social activities, or getting support with housing issues.

## **Age – younger people**

23. The number of people identified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the District is one indicator of the economic wellbeing of young people. The Council facilitates a NEETs Forum, which is made up of representatives from the Better Young Lives Partners group forum and works to support young people who are NEET.

24. There was a total of 29 NEETs in Mid Sussex at December 2022 split as follows:

- NEETs seeking Employment, Education and Training: 22
- NEETs not available (those young people who for personal circumstances are not able to look for work – e.g., through pregnancy, illness etc.) 7
- Unknowns 336 – these are young people whom WSCC officers have been unable to contact who might be NEET or EET but no details are available.

This compares to the figures for June 2022 of a total of 41 NEETs with 26 seeking Employment, Education and Training, 15 not available and 71 unknowns.

25. The Mid Sussex Partnership Board has awarded a three-year £30,000 per annum contract to Runway Training starting in January 2023. The service will act as an engagement and prevention service for NEETs by increasing the young people's skills and abilities to enable them to remain in learning or make a positive transition into education, employment, or training. The Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan also includes a commitment to contributing £21,427 to West Sussex County Council's Think Futures service to support NEETs in Mid Sussex.
26. The Council's Community Engagement and Events Officer leads a forum of professionals from both the statutory and voluntary sectors, Better Young Lives, to ensure better lives and outcomes for children and young people. The current number of partners is 66 representing 36 organisations. Three meetings are held per year with updates given by local organisations on the services provided. Issues discussed at meetings of the Better Young Lives Group in 2022 have included: mental health and well-being of young people and appropriate services in the area; recruitment of staff for organisations; managing changes in organisations; support for young carers; safe places to meet with young people; and finding suitable secure meeting rooms for professionals to meet 1:1.

**27. Specific action in 2022 included:**

- a. Play Days on Tour took place over the Summer holidays provided at 10 locations across the district, with lots of free activities to join in with for local families. These were held at Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint, Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath, Cuckfield, Balcombe, East Grinstead, Crawley Down, Copthorne and Ashurst Wood.
- b. Skate Fests events were provided in the Summer at Victoria Park, Haywards Heath, Bolnore Village and King George's Field East Grinstead. This included a DJ taking requests and running mixing workshops.
- c. The Council worked with Burgess Hill Town Council to provide free ice skating and Christmas family fun to Burgess Hill town centre.
- d. The 2022 Mid Sussex Applauds awards recognised the contribution made by young people in the District through the young achiever and the young volunteer of the year awards.
- e. An event was held in February to celebrate the launch of the Pump Track in Bolney. The Pump Track is 80 metres long and is surfaced with tarmac to create a smooth ride and ensure children are able to use it all year round. The course has been specifically designed so that it can be used by riders of all ability levels.
- f. Students from every local senior school and college gathered in the Mid Sussex District Council Chamber for the launch of the Mid Sussex STEM challenge 2022. STEM education, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics provides an excellent grounding for students who wish to pursue a career in medicine, scientific research, chemistry or engineering.



## Race

28. Information from the 2021 census showed that the BAME (non-White British) population in Mid Sussex has increased from 9.7% to 14.2% since 2011, with the main increase in the “White Other” Group from 3.8% to 5.2%. The biggest other ethnicity in Mid Sussex is Asian or Asian British: Indian at 1.6%.
29. The latest Census data also showed that the percentage of the population in Mid Sussex where their country of birth is outside of the UK has increased from 9.7% in 2011 to 11.9% in 2021. The national figures for England and Wales show an increase from 13.4% to 16.8%. The 5 most numerous non- UK populations in the District were from India, South Africa, Ireland, Romania and Poland.
30. **Specific action in 2022 included:**
  - a. The Council continues to work with Citizens Advice to engage with local minority communities to improve access to support, information and services. The Community Champions project finds informal volunteers in our community to be champions; to share information at a community level and to help develop preventative messaging to ensure they are more effective across all of the District’s diverse communities. The Council awarded a grant of £4,984 to set up language café sessions through the project, working with Aspire adult education.
  - b. Also through the Community Champions Scheme, the Council has awarded a grant of £5,000 to Citizens Advice to fund an engagement project with Ukrainian refugees in Mid Sussex to provide information and connect them with the local communities.
  - c. The Council continues to manage the Bedelands site at Burgess Hill, which provides 9 plots for Gypsies and Travellers and has been working with residents to promote their welfare.

## Sexual Orientation

31. The 2021 Census included for the first time a question on sexual orientation for those aged 16 years and over. 2.63% of the Mid Sussex population answered as LGB+, with 1.33% gay or lesbian and 1.06% bisexual. The local authority with the largest LGB+ population was Brighton and Hove at 10.7%.
32. Hate crime reporting on the basis of homophobia continues to be reported through the Community Safety Partnership.

## Religion or Belief

33. Information from the 2021 census shows that 47.9% of Mid Sussex residents stated their religion as Christian, compared to 62.7% in 2011. The second largest group was no religion at 42.1%, compared to 26.6% in 2011. Of the remaining who stated their religion, responses were spread across a number of faiths, with Muslim being the largest at 1.2%.
34. Churches and other places of worship 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 to provide access to services.

35. Our Housing Needs and Benefits Teams refer people to the Burgess Hill, Haywards Heath and East Grinstead Foodbanks, which have connections to local churches. Vouchers are provided which can be redeemed for three days of emergency food.

## **Sex**

36. 2021 Census information showed a split in Mid Sussex of 78,500 women (51.5%) and 74,066 (48.5%) men, compared to the 2011 split of 51% to 49%.
37. The Wellbeing Team have been running the MEN programme (Motivation, Exercise, Nutrition) a 12-week programme designed to give men support to make changes working towards a healthy lifestyle. Additional funding was secured in partnership with WSCC Public Health to deliver three males only groups. Statistical trends revealed a low uptake from men on weight management courses and so a tailored approach was required. The service successfully enrolled 23 men and the men only programme will now be a part of the normal wellbeing service offer in 2022/23.
38. The Wellbeing Team are also providing menopause advice as part of their Community Health Talks and Workplace Health programmes.
39. The Council provided a Community grant of £9,500 to Carers Support West Sussex to fund a project to identify and engage with male carers in Mid Sussex.

### Men and Women Suffering Domestic Abuse

40. An important aspect of our service provision related to the protected characteristic of sex is the assistance provided for people suffering domestic abuse. The number of recorded domestic abuse crimes in Mid Sussex in 2022 was 1,077 compared to 1,052 crimes in 2021. The Council's Housing Options service deals with homelessness cases involving domestic abuse and refers cases to the support available.
41. There are a range of services and initiatives available in Mid Sussex aimed at responding to domestic abuse. These include the Worth Specialist Domestic Abuse Service which supports people at high risk of harm or homicide as a result of domestic abuse. They have teams of IDVAs (independent domestic abuse advisors) across West Sussex who work to identify, assess and assist people at risk.
42. There is Safe in Sussex, a registered charity providing help and support for people affected by domestic abuse in West Sussex. They provide emergency refuges, drop-in centres and one to one help and practical support for anyone affected by domestic abuse. Also, the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) brings together responsible agencies in West Sussex to discuss those cases with the highest risk of harm.

## **Gender Reassignment**

43. The 2021 Census included for the first time a question on gender identity. In Mid Sussex, 0.32% had a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth. 0.07% identified as a trans woman, 0.06% a trans man, 0.05% as non-binary, 0.12% had a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth but no specific identity given and 0.03% another gender identity.

44. Our hate crime incident reporting includes the recording of hate crime motivated by transphobia, which refers to various kinds of aversion towards transsexual people.
45. With regard to gender identity issues amongst young people, the Council's Community Engagement and Events Officer leads a forum called Better Young Lives, which provides an opportunity to share information and network. The group has discussed support services available for young people facing gender identity and wider LGBTQ+ issues.
46. A page has been developed for the Council's website – "Information for Parents and Carers of Teens" – recognising that Parenting teenagers can be challenging, and many parents find it hard to adapt to changes in their child's behaviour as they grow up. This includes specific information and support advice for LGBTQ+ young people and can be found at [Information for Parents and Carers of Teens - Mid Sussex District Council](#)

## **Residential Location**

47. 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.
48. Supporting local communities
  - a. The Council's Investment Plan for the use of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund includes investment of £245,000 over three years in the community hubs being developed in areas of relative deprivation within the District's three towns. These are at Bentswood, Haywards Heath; Stonequarry at East Grinstead, where the hub has moving into expanded accommodation at the Old Post Office, and the Cherry Tree, Burgess Hill. Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) are based at the Cherry Tree accommodation, which has been provided through the Council following Age UK's move from the building as a day centre.
  - b. A Community Grant of £820 was awarded to Family Support Work to fund the setup of an informal, drop-in group for isolated parents and carers of children at the Bentswood Hub.
  - c. A grant of £495 was awarded to the Maple Drive Community Group to hold a Summer Fun afternoon at Leylands Field, Burgess Hill.

## 49. Community facilities and Housing Initiatives

- a) The Kings Weald Community Centre has opened, built by Croudace Home as part of development at the former Keymer Brick and Tile site in Burgess Hill. The centre is a spacious and modern intergenerational space offering a range of possibilities for groups, activities, and events. The building is being managed on behalf of the Council by Age UK.
- b) New affordable housing delivered in 2021/22 included 174 outside of the three main towns of which 114 were in rural villages.

## **Income or Skill Level**

50. 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 incomes are also in a growing danger of suffering from fuel poverty, given the recent rises in energy costs. The Council has been closely monitoring the cost of living issues facing Mid Sussex residents. Citizens Advice information shows more requests for advice based on financial worries and debts. There has also been an increase in the use of food banks in the District.

**51. Specific action in 2022 included:**

- a. A cost of living support page has been provided on the Council's website [Cost of Living Support - Mid Sussex District Council](#) to provide information on the support available in the District.
- b. In addition to being able to refer people to foodbanks, the Council is now providing its own voucher scheme for food and white goods. This provides for eligible people who are struggling to feed themselves or their family in the short term to receive £25 food vouchers per person or up to £200 in vouchers towards the purchase of white goods.
- c. 349 new affordable housing units were delivered in 2021/22, 299 for rent and 50 shared ownership. A further 288 new affordable homes have been delivered in the period April to December 2022.
- d. The Council's Housing Needs Team assisted 67 households to access private rented sector accommodation in 2021/22 and a further 7 in the period April to December 2022.
- e. A grant of £2,545 was awarded to IMPACT Foundation to support 30 families in need with individual and group cooking sessions. The Tasty Team provide cooking sessions, budgeting help and general nutritional advice to improve the health and wellbeing of children and families in Mid Sussex.

**Support for the Armed Forces Community**

52. The 2021 Census included for the first time a question on whether anyone in the household has an armed forces connection. 4,673 people in Mid Sussex, 3.8% of usual residents aged 16 and over, reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. This is consistent with the national figure of 3.8%.
53. Mid Sussex District Council signed the Armed Forces Community Covenant in September 2014, which is a statement of mutual support between the District Council and the local Armed Forces community. The Council also received the Bronze Employer Recognition Scheme award in January 2018, which shows support for the Armed Forces community through its employment policies. We will aspire to receive the silver award and provide Armed Forces awareness training to staff and Members.
54. Initiatives associated with this have included the adoption of a guaranteed interview scheme for suitably qualified applicants with an armed forces connection and proper recognition in the Council's employment policies of provision for members of the Reserve Forces.
55. The main Council service that has had contact with veterans, reservists or active members of the Armed Forces is Housing. The Housing Register identifies those with an armed forces connection as they are exempted from the usual requirements to

have a local connection. The Housing Needs Team provides specialist advice and support to homeless ex-forces people and liaises with organisations such as the armed forces charity SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association).

56. The Council continues to publicise the Heroes Welcome Scheme and there are 12 businesses signed up to the scheme in Haywards Heath.

57. A Platinum Jubilee grant was awarded to the Royal Sussex Regiment Association Mid Sussex Branch to fund a screening of Trooping of the Colours followed by afternoon tea for members and friends of the Regiment.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND THE COUNCIL'S STAFF**

58. In addition to looking at improvements to services in the context of equality and diversity, this progress report also provides information about the Council's staff. As part of the requirement to publish Equality Data, we produce an annual monitoring report about the composition of our staff compared to the background Mid Sussex population. This includes information about age, sex, gender pay gap and ethnicity and is published on the Council's website <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/my-council/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity/equality-data/>

59. At the end of December 2022, the Council had 295 employees (268 full-time equivalents), 212 full-time and 83 part-time, with the following profile:

- 118 (40%) are men and 177 (60%) women
- 60% of senior managers (defined as the top 5% of earners) are women
- 23 (7.80%) have identified themselves as disabled
- 13 (4.4%) are from ethnic minority communities
- 1 (0.3%) is under 21 years of age
- 21 (7.1%) are 21-29
- 53 (18.0%) are 30-39
- 83 (28.1%) are 40-49
- 102 (34.6%) are 50-59
- 35 (11.9%) are over 60.

60. The Council's gender pay gap in 2021/22 was 15.0% calculated by comparing the mean average male and female employee pay. This compares to 11.9% in 2020/21. The median average gender pay gap for 2021/22 was 15.7%, compared to 10.8% in the previous year. The 2022 ONS national median average pay gap was 14.9% for all employees and 12.1% nationally for local government administrative staff. The gender pay gap is different to equal pay. Equal pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value. It is unlawful to pay people unequally because of their sex.

61. The Council is required to submit this gender pay gap information to Government, together with the proportion of males and females in each of four pay quartiles as shown below for 2021/22:

Upper Quartile	Men 61.8%	Women 38.2%
Upper Middle Quartile	Men 42.9%	Women 57.1%
Lower Middle Quartile	Men 27.3%	Women 72.7%
Lower Quartile	Men 27.3%	Women 72.7%

62. The 2021/22 gender pay gap is calculated as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Since then, the gender pay gap at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023 has reduced to 10.9% for the mean and 12.2% for the median. The planned completion this year of a job evaluation exercise is also expected to help to address pay gap issues.

63. For staff with a disability, the Council is a “Disability Confident Committed” employer, recognising our commitment to the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees. This includes a commitment to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and to consider them on their abilities.

## **Equality and Diversity Training**

64. All recent new starters at the Council have received equality and diversity training. This has had an emphasis on understanding unconscious bias. All staff are also required to complete an equality and diversity on-line training module.

## **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS**

65. The Council completes impact assessments where there are major changes to a service area or new policies. The assessments identify opportunities to promote equality and the barriers to services/differential impact on the protected groups in Mid Sussex and disadvantage arising from income or skill level and by virtue of where people live. They also consider issues for the armed forces community.

66. The assessments that have been completed in 2022 are:

- Sustainable Economy Strategy
- Modern Slavery Transparency Statement
- Introduction of new Smart Pay payments system
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy.
- Virtual Parking Dispensation System
- Pay Policy Statement
- Public Space Protection Order Car Cruising

67. Completed impact assessments are included with relevant Committee reports and published on the Council’s website. These can be found at <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk/my-council/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity/equality-impact-assessment/>

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

### Census 2021 Headline Information for Mid Sussex

The main changes since the 2011 Census are:

- the population has aged with an increase of 24.5% in people aged 65 years and over, a 51% increase in Mid Sussex of those aged 70 – 74 and 35% increase in 75 - 79 year olds.
- the percentage of retired people has increased from 14.7% to 23.92%.
- the biggest changes in religious belief have been a 15.5% increase in those stating as having no religion to 42.1% and a 14.8% reduction in those stating Christian to 47.9%. Of the remaining who stated their religion, responses were spread across a number of faiths, with Muslim being the largest at 1.2%.
- the BAME population (non-White British) in Mid Sussex has increased from 9.7% to 14.2%, with the main increase in the White Other Group from 3.8% to 5.2%. The biggest other ethnicity in Mid Sussex is Asian or Asian British: Indian at 1.6%.
- 11.9% of Mid Sussex residents have a non-UK country of birth or passport compared to 9.7% in 2011. The top 5 most numerous non- UK populations in Mid Sussex are from India, South Africa, Ireland, Romania and Poland.
- 5% of Mid Sussex residents are disabled under the Equality Act with their day to day activities limited a lot and 9.2% limited a little, compared to 5.8% and 8.4% respectively in 2011.
- 13% of Mid Sussex residents provide unpaid care, 4.5% 1-19 hours per week, 1.2% 20-49 hours per week and 1.9% over 50 hours per week.

Some of the new questions in the census showed that for Mid Sussex:

- 0.32% had a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth
- 2.63% of the population answered as LGB+, with 1.33% gay or lesbian and 1.06% bisexual
- 3.8% of the adult population of Mid Sussex have previously served in the armed forces, which is line with the national figure.