

Appendix 2: Equality Action Plan Report 2025/26

This Action Plan Report details the progress made by the Council in 2025/26 to date to meet its 2025/26 Equality Objectives. These objectives are organised under six themes.

1. Meeting the needs of an aging population.

- Implement the Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document

The Mid Devon Meeting Housing Needs Supplementary Planning Document was adopted in November 2023. This planning document highlights the growing need for housing for older persons and people with disabilities. It provides guidance on accessible and adaptable homes, wheelchair accommodation and bungalow provision. The document is capable of being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and can therefore help ensure that new development responds positively to meeting the needs of Mid Devon’s aging population.

Additionally, the Council is undertaking a review of its Local Plan. This provides an opportunity to establish appropriate planning policy and site allocations to help meet the housing needs for older persons and people with disabilities. A new Local Housing Needs Assessment will be commissioned in 2026 to provide up-to-date evidence on district-wide needs for this form of housing. Meanwhile the Government has published a new draft National Planning Policy Framework and is consulting on it. This document includes national planning policies which provide scope for Local Authorities to set accessibility standards in their local plans in relation to the proportion of new housing that should be delivered to requirement M4(2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and/or M4(3) (wheelchair user dwellings) of the Building Regulations.

Equality Objective	2024/25	2025/26 (YTD)				Notes
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
• Provide housing adaptations in MDH housing stock (No. per year)	182	47	93	128		82 Minor, 46 Major
• Provide adaptations for adults in private sector housing through grant awards (No. per year)	75	16	27	51		
• Increase our understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to Know You” project (Residents with data captured)		15.76%	21.21%	23.51%		Survey now complete. 2,777 lead tenants surveyed and received 640 responses.

2. Overcoming the problems faced by vulnerable individuals caused by rural isolation.

- The Council, and partners, effectively signpost individuals to relevant information e.g. neighbourhood officers signpost vulnerable individuals to support, MDH surgeries (narrative update).

Neighbourhood Officers signpost and refer MDH tenants to help and support. Other tenant facing roles such as Tenant Involvement are also equipped to signpost. MDH host an annual rural roadshow where hubs are set up in different rural areas, with support from agencies such as the Police, Fire, CHAT, ECOE Advice and South West Water. Alongside this, Neighbourhood Walkabouts take place in spring and autumn, with Neighbourhood Officers visiting every street in Mid Devon where there are MDH properties and tenants are encouraged to either book a door knock to speak to their Neighbourhood Officer or are encouraged to join the entire walkabout. MDH offer online events to allow those that are unable to travel to a larger town and also advertise that travel expenses can be paid and taxis booked for those that are unable to travel, particularly rural tenants, but wish to attend an event. MDH also continues to improve the quarterly newsletters by involving tenants in their production to provide the most relevant and helpful information.

Equality Objective	2024/25	2025/26 (YTD)				Notes
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Care Leavers Council Tax Discount Policy (household uptake) 	30	26	21	32		At the end of Quarter 3 there were 32 households in receipt of Council Tax Discount in accordance with the Policy

- Carry out MDH Neighbourhood roadshows, “Neighbourhood Matters” based in communities where tenant satisfaction is low (Number of events/ attendees)

These themed events are now referred to as ‘Housing Matters’. In 2025/26, MDH continued the Rural Roadshow, however this was reduced from five to three areas due to limited uptake in 2024/25. Events were held in Hemyock, Bampton and Lapford, offering rural tenants the chance to speak with housing staff in person, raise complaints, report repairs and to bridge that gap for those that feel less listened to or involved due to where they live. Alongside this, MDH hosted a Making it Work - Cost of Living event, as Tenant Satisfaction data shows lower levels of satisfaction where tenants are concerned with the cost of living. This event was very successful, with a variety of local services collaborating to provide advice and support to tenants including Age UK, Citizens Advice, South West Water, local Police, ECOE Advice and more. Tenants were offered free bags of essentials, soup and refreshments whilst they could speak with local services and housing teams to address any of their concerns. We continue to host monthly coffee mornings in Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton, offering a place for tenants to discuss any housing related issues or to just attend for a cuppa.

3. Overcoming the effects of multiple disadvantage in families and individuals with complex needs.

- As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership, practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)

The Council is strengthening its approach to trauma by embedding trauma informed principles (safety, trust, collaboration, empowerment, choice, and cultural sensitivity) across all services. This helps ensure residents and staff experience compassionate, consistent, and psychologically safe interactions. To deliver trauma informed practice, staff are being encouraged to take practical actions such as:

- Creating predictable, safe interactions by explaining processes clearly and offering calm spaces for conversations.
- Building trust through transparency, including explaining decisions and following through on commitments.
- Reducing re-traumatisation by checking existing information before asking residents to repeat distressing details.
- Using trauma informed communication, focusing on strengths, empathy, and de-escalation.
- Providing choice and control, offering options around appointments, communication, and involvement in decisions.
- Being culturally aware, ensuring support is signposted that is appropriate to an individual's background, lived experiences and needs.

Examples from the Community Safety Partnership:

- Domestic abuse work now prioritises survivor safety and minimises re-telling traumatic experiences.
- Case reviews consider historical trauma before enforcement to improve outcomes for people with complex vulnerabilities.
- Staff training has improved trauma informed communication and response skills.
- Delivery of training which enhances de-escalation awareness and techniques.
- Youth engagement which aims to deliver consistency in terms of professional relationships and focuses on using strengths based methods to achieve positive outcomes.

Next Steps: The Council is continuing to embed trauma informed practice into policies, training, leadership, and equality impact assessments to create more inclusive, psychologically safe, and person-centred services.

- Deliver on Serious Violence Duty through the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (narrative update)

The Council continues to make strong progress in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty by actively contributing to the delivery of the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024–29. Through the Community Safety Partnership, the Council is strengthening early intervention approaches, improving multi agency intelligence sharing, and supporting targeted work with young people (Youth Intervention Panel) and vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation or harm. Local actions include enhanced problem solving around high-risk locations, closer partnership working with police and other statutory services and supporting community-based initiatives that build resilience and reduce risk

factors linked to serious violence. By embedding prevention, partnership and data led decision making, MDDC is helping ensure safer communities and improving long term outcomes for residents.

An example of this progress can be seen in the multi-agency initiative underway in Crediton, where several partners are working collaboratively to address violence, abuse, and exploitation affecting the local community. This coordinated approach brings together the Council, police, health services, youth providers, and the voluntary sector to share intelligence, identify individuals at risk, and implement timely interventions. The initiative aims to reduce incidents of violence and aggression in public spaces and to disrupt the exploitation of vulnerable residents who have been specifically targeted. Through earlier identification, joint problem solving, and trauma informed safeguarding responses, the expected outcome is a safer community with fewer serious harm incidents and improved protection for those most at risk.

Equality Objective	2024/25	2025/26				Notes
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDH homes reporting damp or mould that quarter 	N/A	2.24%	1.58%	4.50%		Data for 2024/25, Q1-Q4: 4.26%; 1.89%; 4.74%; 4.71%.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to Know You” project (% of residents with data captured; YTD) 		15.76%	21.21%	23.51%		Survey now complete. 2,777 lead tenants surveyed and received 640 responses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adaptations for children in the private housing sector (Number of grants approved; YTD) 	2	2	3	6		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor cases dealt with where hoarding, cluttering or cleanliness in the home is an issue (Number of new cases) 		0	0	2		A total of seven open cases.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor homeless approaches (Number per year; YTD) 	771	206	387	937		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake private rented housing inspections and monitor those that related to damp and mould where action is taken (Number per year; YTD) 	43 (24)	7 (5)	9 (7)	15 (10)		Total for 2025/26 so far is 15 private rented housing inspections, with 10 related to damp and mould where action was taken.

4. To continue to concentrate on mental health issues within MDDC and the wider community

- Include regular articles contained within internal communications (Number of articles in “The Link”)

Articles on Wellbeing are regularly included in the staff newsletter, The Link, with the aim to connect with national and international ‘days’ (e.g. Feb Time to Talk; April Stress Awareness month; May Mental Health Awareness Week; Sept National Inclusion Day; Oct World Mental Health Day and November National Stress Awareness Day and International Stress Awareness week). In addition The Link ends with a Random act of Kindness – article and/or link.

There are regular meetings with the Mental Health Champions every four months. These meetings have an agenda, minutes are taken, all reported in a dedicated Teams channel – where information is shared between meetings.

- Ensure that our leisure facilities are accessible and affordable for all carers and young carers, providing them with opportunities to enhance their mental and physical wellbeing. Committing to removing barriers to access and actively encouraging their participation and social connections (narrative and number of people taking up the offer)

In 2025/26 Active Mid Devon have been offering services to carers and young carers at a reduced membership rate. This scheme has proved increasingly popular with there being 146 memberships at the end of Quarter 3 (57 Under 18; 89 over 18 memberships).

Also this financial year, Active Mid Devon organised a wellbeing drop-in session aimed at supporting local unpaid carers at Active Tiverton. The session provided an opportunity for carers to unwind, connect, and recharge. The session was designed to cater to the needs of unpaid carers and included the following activities: Swim, Fitness class, Refreshments, including coffee and cake and opportunities to chat with Devon Carer and care ambassadors to share experiences. The event focused on providing a well-deserved break for unpaid carers, allowing them to prioritise their own wellbeing an aspect that is often overlooked when caring for others. Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing gratitude for the chance to relax and connect with people in the same or similar caring situations.

The session not only achieved its goal of supporting unpaid carers but also highlighted the demand for such initiatives. Following the success of this event, Active Mid Devon is actively exploring plans for similar sessions in the future to continue promoting wellbeing within the community. Outcomes of the event included:

- One attendee signed up for their unpaid carer’s passport.
 - Assistance was provided to another regarding their caring duties with signposting to relevant resources.
 - One unpaid carer, who initially felt nervous about attending, became a member after participating in the session.
- As a partner of The Community Safety Partnership, practitioners within the Council support to transition from being Trauma Aware to Trauma Informed (CSP Annual report)

Please refer to the update under Objective 3.

- Host an annual cost of living event supported by external agencies such as CHAT to address financial stress (narrative)

The cost of living event held in November 2025 was a success. Local services collaborated to provide advice and support to tenants including Age UK, Citizens Advice, South West Water, local Police, ECOE Advice and more. Tenants were offered free bags of essentials, soup and refreshments whilst they could speak with local services and housing teams to address any of their concerns.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the understanding of MDH tenants through the “Getting to Know You” project (% of residents with data captured) 		15.76%	21.21%	23.51%		Survey now complete. 2,777 lead tenants surveyed and received 640 responses.

5. Secure decent digital connectivity for all of Mid Devon

- Monitor and lobby for better digital connectivity (narrative update)

In July 2025, 88% of homes in Mid Devon have superfast (at least 30 Mbit/s) broadband available (data from Connected Nations, Ofcom). This compares to 98% for the UK. As operators focus increasingly on delivering gigabit capable services, any future increase in superfast coverage across the UK are expected to be modest and publicly funded.

The [Connecting Devon and Somerset](#) (CDS) is a local government-led partnership which helps to deliver next generation broadband infrastructure to areas where the market has failed to invest. In 2024 it was announced that CDS and Airband had agreed to scale back Airband’s contract agreements to deliver full fibre to properties in the region. In total, Airband was contracted to deliver 55,493 premises. To date the operator has delivered 18,794 premises in collaboration with CDS. Airband has now committed to provide full fibre access to 8,377 more homes and businesses covered by the contracts, providing a total of 27,171 out of the 55,493 premises it was originally contracted to deliver. This additional build will further unlock fibre delivery by Airband to 10,997 non-contracted premises along the network build routes, giving an overall commitment to connect a further 19,834 premises in Devon and Somerset.

[Gigaclear](#) also undertake projects to deliver fast and reliable broadband to rural communities. Householders and businesses can register their interest on the Gigaclear website.

6. Continuous improvement at Mid Devon District Council

Equality Objective	2024/25	2025/26				Notes
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and Councillors undertake training to improve their understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (Equality and Diversity course, % completion, Current) 	89.57% (Q4)	94.35%	91.77%	90.79%		554 individuals have it assigned to them of which 503 have completed so 90.79% completion rate. 10 are in progress and the remaining could be on long term sick, maternity casual staff, new starters and our test system users.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a better understanding of our workforce (% of workforce with equality monitoring data) 						Completion rates as of 20 February 2026: Ethnic Origin (93.49%); Disability (44.85%); Religion (92.04%); Sexual Orientation (92.22%); Marital Status (45.39%)