

Mental Health Strategy for Housing 2021-2025

“A Housing Department supporting East Devon residents to achieve and maintain the best possible mental health and wellbeing”

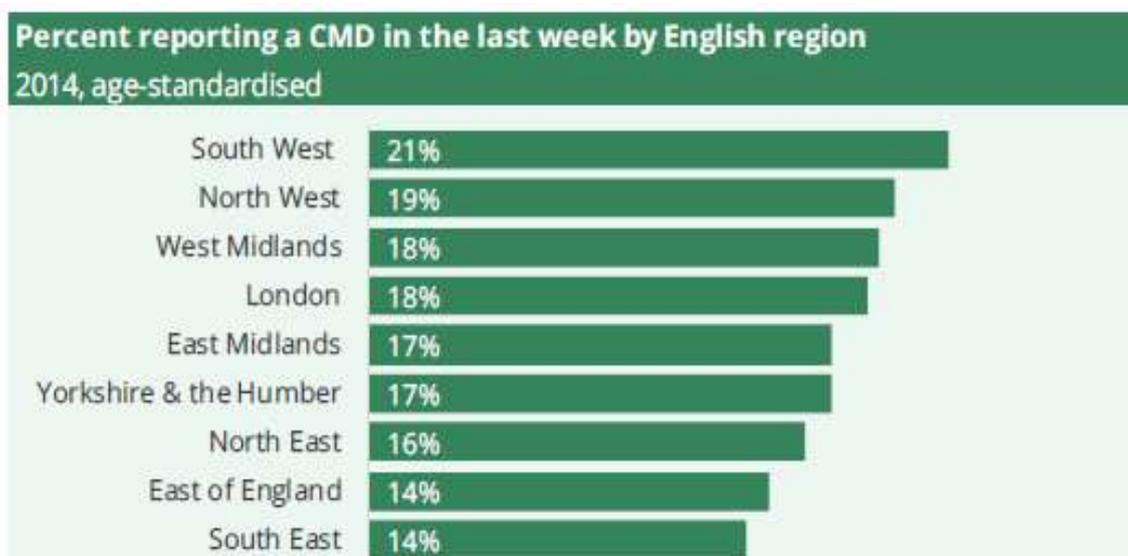
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1. Introduction

1.1 Mental Health problems are widespread but very often hidden from the public eye. **One in four adults** experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in any given year. Mental health represents the largest single cause of disability in the UK (NHS England, 2016). In children, we are seeing **one in ten** aged 5 – 16 having a diagnosable mental health condition. The support for both adults and children is severely lacking and our professional services are not able to adhere to the demand and support individuals appropriately and in many cases, convincingly.

1.2 The South West has the highest percentage in England for individuals reporting to have a common mental disorder (CMD).



1.3 We know in East Devon we are dealing with an increasing demand on our services from tenants who require mental health support and signposting.

1.4 From within our housing department we can highlight the importance of our homes in maintaining good mental health and creating a safe environment for those experiencing mental health issues. For individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, it is highly likely mental health problems can, and will, occur, with underlying conditions such as stress, anxiety, and depression common. These three wellbeing issues are also common in other groups such as those using foodbanks, unemployed people, and those living alone.

1.5 This strategy will reflect the intentions of East Devon District Council's Housing Department, as a whole, to provide improved and sustainable provisions for tenants and residents to support good mental health and ensure that we account for the needs of those with mental health issues in providing housing and homelessness services. We need to bring together local housing and mental health knowledge and expertise with information and evidence from public health, mental health services, and wider mental health support groups in East Devon.

The development of this strategy was in the context of:

- the Mental Health and Housing Policy Paper 2016 (MHF)
- the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health 2016 (NHS England) focusing on prevention, equality and strengthening community support
- the NHS Long Term Plan 2019-2029 promoting integrated care systems working with Local Authorities on preventative activities that support self-help and build resilience, linking patients in primary care with support in the community
- Devon Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020-2025) highlighting poor mental health and wellbeing, social isolation and loneliness, and housing issues, as two of the main areas of concern within Devon
- EDDC Public Health Strategic Plan 2019-2023
- Devon-wide strategies for safeguarding, dementia, carers, learning disability, early help, drugs and alcohol, and domestic violence

1.6 Our [Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023](#) identifies poor mental health as a potential cause and consequence of homelessness. The corresponding action plan gives a commitment to:

- Work more closely with Devon Partnership Trust and the local agencies providing support for drug and alcohol addiction
- Explore the Housing First model and supported housing for the most vulnerable people to address the issues impacting negatively on their health and wellbeing
- Implement relevant actions from this Housing Mental Health Strategy

1.7 Reducing pressure on services is a key focus within this strategy, facilitating and delivering better and earlier prevention whilst ensuring better value for money. Activities and ways of working that have sustainable and consistent benefits to the community will be encouraged and adopted in relation to mental health prevention and intervention.

2 Factors affecting emotional and mental wellbeing

2.1 Living with a mental health condition is the product of a combination of factors. Personal circumstances, physical health difficulties and the stimuli an individual encounters in their day-to-day routine are all influences on mental health issue development. Things like poverty, living conditions, housing, relationships, and employment all influence an individual's wellbeing. The negative effects of one or more of these factors can increase the risk of mental ill health and we have to ensure that our housing services and support are sufficiently robust to address the increasingly complex needs of those on our housing register, homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, and our tenants.

2.2 Stigma is a major issue for those with ongoing mental health issues. The negative impact that it can have is a key barrier for many. It can lead to social isolation and exclusion from social belonging, which many require to build confidence, self-worth and personal development.

2.3 Whilst mental ill health is common and can affect anyone at any time in their life, there are a number of identified groups in society with an increased likelihood of acquiring mental health conditions including:

- **Older People**
- **Homeless People**
- **Children**
- **Young People**
- **Those serving in the armed forces and ex-service personnel**
- **Bereaved people**
- **People with dementia**
- **Carers**
- **Young Carers**
- **People living in particularly rural areas**
- **People with a physical or mental disability or special learning need**
- **Travellers**
- **People who have experienced traumatic events**
- **LGBTQ+**
- **Those involved in drugs or gang culture**

3 East Devon District Council's long-term commitments

3.1 East Devon District Council is proud to present our first mental health strategy outlining our aspiration to support a whole person, whole life, and whole community approach that works for our residents and tenants across East Devon.

3.2 Using both holistic and strategic approaches, we must ensure that multiple opportunities for people to engage exist, including support from the relevant professionals and officers that can contribute to improving mental health and wellbeing. In providing better choices, we create a sense of belonging and value within society. Working collaboratively with existing mental health peer-support groups, Primary Care Trust, the Community Mental Health Team, and other wellbeing services across East Devon, we look to build an integrated system that not only works for us as a council, but also works for our residents living in our - and their - communities. This process has to be coherent using a system-wide leadership approach through the services available.

3.3 The priorities and themes identified in this strategy will be of significant importance in achieving our goals:

- **Keeping our residents safe and independent in their own homes, wherever and whenever possible, creating community strength, strong friendships and positive dynamics, whilst reducing social isolation**
- **Supporting people to build stronger resilience through awareness, prevention work and appropriate sign posting**
- **Working closely with voluntary and community sectors in particular to support people with mental health needs to increase employment opportunities, training and volunteering**
- **Adopting asset-based community approaches to front line work to identify mental health problems early on**

3.4 As part of East Devon District Councils first Mental Health Strategy, and in line with its commitment to utilise holistic and strategic approaches, it is committing to implementing psychologically informed environments (PIEs) across its housing and homelessness services. To achieve this aim East Devon District Council will seek to adhere to the five key elements of PIEs as set out below:

The Five Key Elements

- **Relationships** - East Devon District Council will maintain an open dialogue with both tenants and staff regarding roles and the impact of relationships on the work that we engage in. Staff will be encouraged to reflect on how they communicate with an emphasis on respectful, thoughtful and non-threatening communication approaches.
- **Staff Support and Training** - East Devon District Council will ensure that its housing and homelessness services reflect on their working practices to encourage a process of continuous improvement and the ongoing development of staff competencies when supporting tenants in maintaining their mental health and wellbeing. EDDC will develop a core-training programme to support the implementation of psychologically informed practice across the housing and homelessness services.
- **The Physical Environment and Social Spaces** - East Devon District Council recognises that the spaces in which our tenants live and our staff work can and do influence the mental health and wellbeing of all and that poorly maintained spaces could have a negative impact. Therefore, East Devon District Council is committed to maintaining its housing stock, offices and other buildings to a high standard. That all external areas and internal communal areas are kept in a good state of repair are fit for purpose and looked cared for. East Devon District Council will also consider the creative use of its outside spaces and gardens to support mental health and wellbeing.
- **A Psychological Framework** - East Devon District Council is committed to identifying and introducing the principles and insights from one or more psychological disciplines to provide a framework for our service approach to supporting individuals to maintain their mental health and wellbeing. Once identified these principles and insights will also inform the development of the core-training programme supporting the implementation of psychologically informed practice across the housing and homelessness services.
- **Evidence Generating Practice** - By introducing a psychological framework, East Devon District Council will be able to identify and monitor changes as they occur. East Devon District Council will seek regular feedback from tenants and staff on their sense of wellbeing and mental health to measure and evidence change as result of the impact of working towards providing psychologically informed environments.

4. Key priorities

4.1 [‘Healthy and Happy Communities’](#) Devon’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25 identifies health and wellbeing challenges and priorities for the county.

4.2 One of the 10 challenges is poor mental health and wellbeing, social isolation and loneliness. As a provider of social housing, East Devon has an opportunity to play a major role in addressing this challenge by identifying, working with, and supporting our tenants who are likely to be some of the most deprived and vulnerable residents of the district.

4.3 Priority 3 of the joint strategy is to focus on mental health, building good emotional health and wellbeing, happiness and resilience to achieve the following outcomes:

- a) Reduce loneliness in all age groups
- b) Identify people at risk and intervene to improve poor mental health as soon as possible
- c) Proactively address the mental health consequences of trauma and adverse childhood experiences
- d) Promote a positive approach to mental health and wellbeing.

4.4 Our Housing Mental Health Strategy will identify how we can contribute to a, b and d, working in partnership with health and social care colleagues, our tenants and communities, and local organisations working to improve mental health and wellbeing.

4.5 The purpose of this strategy is to deliver:

- 1. A consistent approach across Housing teams to support East Devon to become a suicide safe and mental health friendly Council**
- 2. Access to housing for residents with ongoing mental health conditions on an equal basis with other residents**
- 3. Community wide and whole family approaches to improving resilience and maintaining positive mental health and wellbeing.**
- 4. Effective partnership working internally across Council Departments, and externally to ensure the need for mental health support is recognised by staff, and appropriate signposting and referrals are made**

5. East Devon context

5.1 Local Context

East Devon Population Key Facts
142,300 people (2017 mid-year estimate)
Average Age 50.7 years (Nationally 40.1)
Average life expectancy is 82 years
Across Exmouth there is a difference of 15.5 years in life expectancy
98.41% have a white British background
Average household size is 2.2 residents
18.3% of households are single occupancy aged 65+
Over the 10 years 2017-27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The population is expected to rise by 10% 65+ age group will increase the most 30.1% to 32.5% (and to 36.1% by 2037)

East Devon Income & Affordability Factors
Average household income in 2017 - £29,300 (below national average of £34,300)
Average weekly pay is £486.30 (Devon £496.50; national £571.10)
In the top 25% nationally of all districts for house prices
In the bottom 25% nationally in the affordability index
Private rent levels are amongst the highest in Devon

East Devon: Areas of Deprivation from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exmouth Littleham Exmouth Town Centre Exmouth Withycombe - Raleigh Moorfield Road Honiton Dowell Street area near High Street Cranbrook

East Devon Property Key Facts
68,950 properties 59,071 households
74.9% homes are owner occupied
13.6% homes are privately rented
9.3% homes are social rented
3.8% (2400) are holiday homes
387 empty for 6 months+ (1 April 2018)
94 empty for 2 years + (1 April 2018)
EDDC owns 4200 properties (December 2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2855 are general needs properties 1345 are sheltered properties
10 Housing Associations provide 2186 homes
High % (15.3%) in Council Tax Bands F, G, H
Lowest % in Devon are in Band A (9.2%)

Proportion (%) of the population by age range 2017						
	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-65	65+	Average Age (years)
East Devon	14.92	8.68	18.83	27.52	30.06	50.7
National average	18.07	11.95	26.38	25.57	18.03	40.1

6. Priorities and Actions

Priority 1

6.1 A consistent approach across Housing teams to support East Devon to become a suicide safe and mental health friendly Council.

6.1a Suicide Safe

6.1.1 Suicide is the biggest killer in men under the age of 50 across the UK. According to the Office for National Statistics in 2017/2018, there were 5821 registered suicides.

6.1.2 In 2017, one in eight deaths investigated by coroners in the whole of the South West is a suicide, the highest proportion in England and Wales. This statistic pinpoints the need for more focus on the following priorities, championed by Safer Devon:

- Reducing the risk of suicide in high risk groups
- Tailoring approaches to improve mental health in specific groups
- Reducing access to the means of suicide
- Providing better information and support to those bereaved by suicide
- Supporting the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour
- Supporting research, data collection and monitoring
- Reducing the rates of self-harm as a key indicator of suicide risk

6.1.3 Across East Devon, the volume of call outs related to suicide/attempted suicide has risen 16.7%.

Ambulance Call outs in East Devon to Suicide/Attempted Suicide

July 2017 to June 2018 – 1433

July 2018 to June 2019 – 1673

16.7% increase in volume

6.1.4 Reducing the risk of suicide in high-risk groups is key to improving these figures. In East Devon we have a number of groups that could be deemed 'high-risk' such as young people, the elderly, those involved in drug and gang activity, individuals living in isolation, and those living in rural areas.

6.1.5 Suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility and requires a community-wide approach. No one person or agency can reduce suicide rates in isolation. It requires input from the public as well as a collaborative approach from statutory, voluntary and community groups, police, fire, ambulance, public health, substance misuse services as well as children and young people's services.

6.1.5b Action to become Suicide Safe

- We need to develop our understanding of suicide and high risk groups in East Devon. We will work closely with the Community Safety Partnership coordinator to identify and collate data and information to inform and develop plans to target these groups.
- In working towards making our communities in East Devon suicide safer, we will ensure the staff of the Housing Department improve their understanding of suicide and those who may be at risk, so they recognise when action needs to be taken and what to do.
- We will identify appropriate training such as SafeTALK and ASIST to equip our staff to respond to customers identified as being at risk of suicide, or experiencing suicidal tendencies. Some front line roles may require more intensive training and support through supervision to ensure staff maintain their own personal wellbeing.

6.1.6 Mental Health Friendly

6.1.7 Becoming a strong and consistently mental health friendly Council requires clear direction and targeted work across all teams, supported by integrated policies, procedures and guidance for staff. Residents who come to us for housing advice and provision, people experiencing homelessness, and our tenants are all customers of the Housing Department, and are at the centre of the work we do. We need to ensure they feel supported by the Housing Department, taking account of their mental health needs, if required.

6.1.8 Poorer mental health outcomes are prevalent in Devon including suicide rates, social connectedness, and mental health outcomes for vulnerable groups. In line with its role as a provider of social housing, East Devon designed its allocation policy to help those whose housing need is greatest. These are likely to be the most economically deprived and vulnerable in our community, including those with physical and mental ill health and disability. From the current housing register of around 4500, there are 704 individuals in 635 households citing a mental health illness or disability in their Devon Home Choice application.

6.1.9 In Devon, rates of admission for self-harm have increased and are above the national average, with the highest rates in young people aged 10 to 24, women, and those living in more deprived areas. East Devon’s most deprived wards (see summary at 5.1 above) are in areas with significant Council housing stock, so the need for targeted action in these areas to reduce self-harm is likely to be needed.

6.1.10 Lower employment rates and higher mortality rates for people with mental health conditions are prevalent in Devon compared to the England average. It is difficult to source East Devon specific data. However, Devon-wide we are able to see the situation we are in. These figures come from the Department for Work and Pensions, based around benefit claiming and those unemployed.

BENEFIT	EAST DEVON	ENGLAND
Jobseekers Allowance (only)	1.2%	3.3%
Incapacity Benefits (IB or ESA)	1.7%	2.4%
Any Benefit (includes in work benefits)	10.4%	13.5%

6.1.11 Loneliness and poor mental health have a considerable impact on demand for a wide variety of health and care services across Devon. Our front line staff in Landlord Services including rentals, mobile support and estate management are experiencing increasing demands and pressure from tenants with increasingly complex needs, many of which are in relation to poor mental health.

6.1.12 The year 2 report of a joint 3 year study [“Your Home, Your Wellbeing”](#) with the University of Birmingham has provided comparative data on feelings of wellbeing amongst our tenants and those of another social housing provider, and people on the Housing Register. Appendix 3 provides the extract from the year 2 report.

6.1.13 The Devon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) data produced by public health provides the evidence base for identifying health priorities across Devon. The mental ill-health estimates for East Devon, which inform our strategy, are included in Appendix 1. Nationally conducted surveys relating to mixed anxiety and depression, anxiety and depression, dementia and self-reported wellbeing provided the basis for these estimates.

6.1.14 Dementia is a significant factor in East Devon and the impact will continue to increase with our older than average age profile and increasingly aging population. Dementia predominantly affects people over 65. Prevalence rates increase rapidly with age, with 1 in 1400 affected under the age of 65, compared to more than 1 in 5 in those aged 85+. Combined with longer life expectancy, this means women with dementia outnumber men by more than two to one in the 85+ age group. There were 3,311 people with dementia in East Devon in 2013, with numbers projected to rise to 4,128 by 2025, and 5,516 by 2035.

Age	Female	Male	Persons
60 to 69	149	124	273
70 to 74	148	140	287
75 to 79	245	187	432
80 to 84	371	264	635
85 and over	1,246	437	1,684
Total	2,159	1,152	3,311
Percent	7.79%	5.00%	6.52%

Estimated prevalence of Dementia (aged 60+)

6.1.15 The top five wards for dementia prevalence in Devon are in East Devon (in 2013), with the highest rate in Sidmouth Town ward.

6.1.16 Action to become Mental Health friendly

6.1.17 We need to ensure that current housing policies and procedures take sufficient account of mental health needs across the range of services and contacts with customers. We will review internal housing procedures to ensure a common approach where mental health issues are identified, including:

- Handover from one team to another
- Information on mental health support needs recorded on Open Housing, including any support plans in place and any risks associated with individuals
- Consideration of whether housing needs to be included in an existing support plan compiled by another agency
- Consideration of whether housing needs to instigate mental health support as part of a personal housing plan (Housing Options Team) or tenant management plan (Landlord Services)

- 6.1.18** Guidance is in development for all staff to raise awareness of mental health needs and to ensure that they are equipped to respond appropriately to customers with mental health needs, including escalation procedures where there is concern about an individual's behaviour.
- 6.1.19** We will explore the potential for employing/accessing specialist mental health advice to support our front line staff in dealing with increasingly complex mental health needs amongst our customers.
- 6.1.20** We will define core mental health training requirements for staff in our housing teams and deliver an annual programme of training to bring all staff up to a minimum level of awareness and skills appropriate to their roles. For example, Mental Health First Aid courses to provide basic awareness of mental health and mental illness and how to recognise and provide non-clinical support and guidance to those in need, including signposting vulnerable individuals to the correct services and support agencies.
- 6.1.21** Consideration for the needs of tenants with dementia will inform plans for Home Safeguard support services in our sheltered housing.

Priority 2

6.2 Access to housing for residents with ongoing mental health conditions on an equal basis with other residents

- 6.2.1** East Devon District Council currently owns 4214 properties (August 2018). Classification of 2871 properties is as general needs, and 1343 are sheltered properties where residents have access to alarm and support services through Home Safeguard. Ten Housing Associations with 2186 homes in East Devon also provide Social Housing.
- 6.2.2** The distribution of EDDC's housing stock is across the district, with the main towns of Exmouth, Sidmouth, Axminster, and Honiton having the highest number of general needs homes (over 1700). Exmouth, with around 450, has the most sheltered housing, with a further 470 spread across Sidmouth, Honiton, Axminster, and Seaton (see map at Appendix 2).

- 6.2.3** EDDC is a partner of Devon Home Choice, alongside other Devon districts and Housing Associations, to determine policies and manage the allocation of social housing for local residents. Those requiring housing complete an application. The application is then banded A – E according to need. The Council also receives homeless approaches through the Housing Options Team.
- 6.2.4** It is a vital that we accommodate our tenants in the most appropriate and suitable homes for their needs. Sheltered housing is allocated to those who have a support need and have access to an alarm system through Home Safeguard and regular support from mobile support officers. EDDC recognises that those allocated supported housing are presenting with increasing mental health needs. Not all MSOs have training, or have experience, in dealing with these needs. This is creating increasing pressures on staff and local residents.
- 6.2.5** We also have an indication of the level of mental ill health from our Housing Options team who deal with homelessness and from households on the Housing Register where records of any specific needs form part of the applications to join Devon Home Choice:
- 6.2.6** Since April 2018, there have been 1201 homelessness applications to housing options where an assessment was completed. 355 (29%) have a history of mental health issues reported in the support needs section of the application. The largest proportion of these is young adults, 18 – 29 (29%), with a further 23% aged 30 – 39, and 11% under 18.
- 6.2.7** Of the 4914 households (applications) on the East Devon register, 777 (16%) reported at least one household member with a mental illness; some households have more than one member with mental health needs. Of the 10,858 individuals on the Housing Register, 854 stated that they have a mental illness.
- 6.2.8** A high proportion of rough sleepers have mental health, drug or alcohol addiction problems, which are likely to have contributed to becoming homeless. Breaking out of that situation is extremely difficult without help and support. Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2024 and action plan addresses those specific needs in more detail.

6.2.9 Actions

- 6.2.10** We will review our allocation policies and procedures to ensure that we take sufficient account of mental health issues, especially when an individual or household is moving through the system from the responsibility of one team to another, or when several teams are working with one customer.
- 6.2.11** Abide by and follow regulations surrounding the [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#) to ensure appropriate access and support at service level.
- 6.2.12** Improving our understanding of each tenant's history and his or her experience of mental illness is important. It will help us to assess what housing and support they need to achieve a sustainable tenancy. Improved training and awareness of mental health and identifying behaviours will underpin this improvement.
- 6.2.13** We will consider links between support packages agreed by community mental health teams, housing allocations, and housing options to coordinate efforts in supporting individuals to manage their mental health and sustain a tenancy.
- 6.2.14** Under the housing staff remit plans are in place to recruit a clinically trained mental health support worker who will support MSO's and T&C with advice and some case loads

Priority 3

6.3 Community wide and whole family approaches to improving and maintaining positive mental health and wellbeing

- 6.3.1** Poor mental health and wellbeing has a considerable impact on quality of life and is a major contributor to premature death. There are close links between mental and physical health problems. Loneliness is often a precursor for mental health problems and occurs across the life course and most frequently in younger adults. Prevention, coupled with early detection and treatment is vital, and the 'five ways to wellbeing' highlight the importance of being active, taking notice, learning, giving and connecting with others.

- 6.3.2** The Devon Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-25 identifies that many communities have a high risk of loneliness, and younger renters with little sense of belonging to their area, unmarried middle-aged people with long-term conditions, and widowed older people living alone with long-term conditions are at increased risk.
- 6.3.3** The population of East Devon covers a wide geographical area, with many rural towns and villages, and relatively few large population centres. Local services, facilities, and public transport can be poor or non-existent in the more rural areas.
- 6.3.4** The average household size in the district is 2.2 residents. The main household composition for East Devon is a one-person household with a resident aged 65 and over, making up 18.3% of all households. Since the 2001 census, the household type that has grown the most is the one-person household increasing by 2.7%, nearly 2000 households.
- 6.3.5** 8,700, (20%) of over 65 year olds in East Devon experience mild loneliness. A further 8 – 10% (3,480 – 4,350) experience intense loneliness. Those with no friends report the highest rates of social isolation and loneliness.
- 6.3.6** In 2015, Age UK produced loneliness heat maps predicting the risk of loneliness in local areas. The East Devon Wards with the highest risk level of loneliness are Axminster Town, Budleigh, Exmouth Brixington, Exmouth Littleham, Exmouth Town, Exmouth Withycombe Raleigh, Honiton St Michaels, Honiton St Pauls, Seaton, and Sidmouth Town.
- 6.3.7** The Community Development team functions within housing at East Devon to address community dynamics and improve interactions between tenants and front line officers. Building trusting, and supporting, relationships with our tenants is imperative, as we are then able to enable and empower our communities to make better decisions and build strong resilience. Local communities are a vital aspect of an individuals, or families, belonging and as therefore is a key focus of the work done by our community development officers.

6.3.8 Existing Groups

6.3.9 In East Devon there are several mental health groups that are run by community volunteers to give individuals safe, supportive space to interact and help improve their mental health circumstances. We recognise the good work accomplished through community initiatives such as Open Arms East Devon in Honiton, operating out of our community building Dunning Court. We also have initiatives like Men Shed, bringing men together for life skill development through practical activities but with a strong focus on men's wellbeing and providing a community and sense of belonging for men to talk about their emotions and feelings.

6.3.10 Actions

6.3.11 We need to ensure that we assess the impact of our community development work on improving the wellbeing of our tenants and the wider community, using available data to cross-reference risk factors leading to social isolation and identify targeted actions in areas that have groups at highest risk of mental ill health.

6.3.12 We need to develop ways to assess how our customers are experiencing the impact of our activities to support them with mental health issues.

6.3.13 We need to effectively share local community intelligence on formal and informal support networks and ensure our staff are aware of what exists at local level for signposting and referrals.

Priority 4

6.4 Effective partnership working internally across Council Departments, and externally to ensure staff recognise the need for mental health support, and appropriate signposting and referrals made.

6.4.1 Internally

6.4.2 Within Housing, Mobile Support Officers provide direct tenancy support to the sheltered tenants of East Devon in collaboration with the services of Home Safeguard. Linking Private Sector Mobile Support Officers in with Home Safeguard through their general need and private properties would be beneficial

- 6.4.3** The Countryside officers deliver educational activities and events promoting positive wellbeing in our areas of natural beauty, for example Seaton Wetlands and the Knapp. Activities such as bug hunts, bird box making, outdoor adventure sessions and family interaction challenges designed to improve wellbeing, connect individuals with the outside space and environment and reduce social isolation and exclusion.
- 6.4.4** Projects such as the Family Adventure Days are joint working between Countryside and Community Development, where they take some of our most vulnerable and in need families from Sidmouth to locations across East Devon to break down social barriers and improve family dynamics, both for parents and children. Links with Thelma Hulbert Gallery also exist whereby the running of activities, particularly for our young people within the council's SWITCH Youth project, involving arts and crafts and creative ideas, which have proven to have valuable impact on the wellbeing and behaviours of our young people that are enrolled within the provision.
- 6.4.5** Tenant Participation and Resident Involvement have annual events such as the Garden Competition, which encourages tenants of all ages to get involved with outdoor and garden orientated activities. The impact on individual wellbeing is positive with categories such as disability and learning difficulties.
- 6.4.6** **Externally**
- 6.4.7** The NHS Long Term Plan 2019-2029 promotes new service models based on integrated care systems. It identifies a key role working with Local Authorities on preventative activities and the expansion of practices that support self-help and build resilience, linking patients in primary care with sources of support in the community. This comes at the right time to facilitate joint work on the actions needed to implement this strategy, and we want to be directly involved with our NHS partners at local level to prevent and reduce the impact of mental ill health.
- 6.4.8** The need to ensure a coordinated approach with other local support services, primary health care, and the community mental health team has become increasingly important in addressing local needs.
- 6.4.9** We need to develop our working relationships with GPs and Primary Care Teams, and the Community Mental Health Teams based at St Johns Court

(Exmouth) and Hayden's Court (Honiton). They respectively cover the East Devon district and provide our residents with primary and secondary clinical mental health support if required.

6.4.10 Furthermore, regular analysis of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#), with specific focus on the [Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019-2024](#) will be imperative to assessing the work done locally in East Devon to that of the national standards.

6.4.11 Actions

6.4.12 To review and update the role of MSO's

6.4.13 Annual housing team meetings where all front line officers come together to discuss and update each other on work and events regarding mental health and wellbeing

6.4.14 Continue to develop the role of the Mental Health East Devon Group between managers of the Community Mental Health Team, and Housing.

6.4.15 Take proactive steps to engage with GP practices across Devon by identifying local GP leaders to agree actions to promote closer working relationships between housing staff and East Devon GP practices.

6.4.16 Initiate discussions on extending the "duty to refer" under the Homelessness Act 2017 to GPs in East Devon.

6.4.17 To use the Mental Health Networking Conference to promote this strategy and identify key partners to work with on ensuring its sustainability

6.4.18 An Annual review of employee safety data base will be mandatory

6.4.19 With each scheme change of Mobile Support Officer's (*every 3 months*) cluster teams need to identify and update colleagues on any concerns regarding individuals and their behaviours, in addition adjusting the employee safety data base accordingly

7 In Summary

- 7.2** As we move into a post pandemic way of working again, wellbeing and mental health must be at the forefront of our reengagement programmes and working approach. Communities have been without social context, community bonding and crucial council-to-tenant contact, which provides trust, positivity and good mental wellbeing.
- 7.3** A crucial step forward within the Housing department is the employment of a professionally qualified Mental Health Practitioner. The service has recognised a growing demand on mental health and as a result, the recruitment into the Housing Services Team, of a mental health specialist was proposed. This would directly address some of the issues highlighted in this document and as recognised previously. Further consideration into the new role was required with preparation of a relevant job description and personal specification that would fit the required outcomes.
- 7.4** ‘Cabinet approve additional funding (£37,500 – Grade 6 with associated costs) is designated from the Housing Revenue Account. Proposals have been submitted for a number of edits on this role and with further scope to ensure maximum recruitment potential and desired purpose’
- 7.5** We are now awaiting fulfilment of this employment, pending interview and selection.