



SEND newsletter

Special Educational Needs
and Disability

Welcome from Susan Akhtar, PACA Chair

Dear Parents I'm pleased to be introducing the December newsletter on behalf of [PACA MK](#), the independent parent carer forum for Milton Keynes. In the last few months we have put on several events and workshops. We ran a six week course on ADHD with ADHDwise which proved to be very popular and held a MK SEND Post 16 mini conference. We asked young people to share their own Artwork which best represented what 16 and beyond felt like to them. The young people produced some very powerful images.



Videos of our event can be seen on our [website](#). We were so pleased to see so many of you at our Health focus group in November where we were joined by Amanda Bousaki, [Designated Clinical Officer](#), and Tracy Keech from Healthwatch. Parents were able to feedback on many aspects of health services, as well as suggested improvements to information on the [Local Offer](#). We look forward to seeing you at some of our future events, including Christmas wreath making, yoga and mindfulness and much more. Please see our [calendar for details](#).

Wishing you all Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

SEND Strategy

Milton Keynes has developed a Local Area SEND Strategy for children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. This document is a Local Area strategy, and its delivery is the responsibility of education, health and care services. It describes our strategic vision and the outcomes we

want for our children and young people with SEND. It describes the context in which we work, the principles underlying how we work and our strategic priority areas.

In Milton Keynes, we have identified 5 key areas which will underpin our SEND strategy. These are the areas that the partnership has agreed need some focus. This was done by taking information from feedback and data, including the PACA MK parent questionnaire and the outcomes of the SEND event held in June 2023. The five key areas are:

- Inclusion
- Complex needs
- Transition and preparing for adulthood
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Autism and co-occurring difficulties.

We are currently in the process of identifying how we'll measure that we're making a difference in the areas above, and the specific pieces of work (or projects) that will deliver the above strategy. We expect to have completed this work by Christmas and intend to share the action plan in January 2024.

For further information and updates, please see our [SEND Strategy page](#) on the SEND Local Offer.



Applying for college advice for young people with an EHCP

If you have an EHCP, whatever option you choose for Post 16, your EHCP will continue as long as you engage in some form of education or training that aligns with the EHCP outcomes and you continue to make progress with learning.

It is important to know that you will still need to apply for a place at college through college websites or enrolment centre, as well as requesting a change of placement at Annual Review of the EHCP. Colleges will have information on the application process on their websites.

It is helpful to visit the different options to see what is on offer. Open days at colleges and training providers are usually advertised and happen throughout the year.

If you think you might need special arrangements to support to have a successful visit, then talk to the college support and training provider team beforehand so they can put this in place.

Sometimes colleges and training providers will offer taster sessions for young people with SEND to support their transition. This usually happens in the summer term. Talk to the school about what happens in the area.



MAKING AN APPLICATION TO COLLEGE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH AN EHCP

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IMPORTANT

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For more information <https://www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk/milton-keynes-council/support-young-people-and-preparation-adulthood/your-options-post-16>

Meet the team: Rosemarie Jefkins Registered Manager of Furze House

Hello! My name is Rosie Jefkins and I am the Registered Manager of Furze House. Furze House is a short breaks service for children with disabilities who meet the criteria for this provision in Milton Keynes. We have a large building with lots of space and currently support around 40 children and their families. We have recently been very lucky to get a new look for the building which all of the children are enjoying! We love to host different events throughout the year for families and we are planning a regular coffee catch up morning in the New Year.



I started working at Furze House 10 years ago as a relief worker whilst I was studying for my Social Work degree, I then moved over to our long term home – Westminster House where I was a residential worker then shift leader. In 2018 I moved over to The Walnuts Children's home as a deputy manager and came back to Furze in 2020 as the Registered Manager. Our focus is to give all our children lots of great experiences and to build on their friendship groups as well as supporting the families with respite.

I enjoy spending time at the weekends with my family. My daughter and I love going out on long walks and finding new places as long as there is a café at the end with cake! I also have a new obsession with crocs much to the displeasure to my staff team who are always laughing at my expanding croc charm collection!

Milton Keynes CAMHS Parent Plus ADHD Programme



MK Sp CAMHS has been running an 8-week face to face Parents Plus ADHD Programme for parents of children aged 6-12 who are open to CAMHS ADHD pathway following diagnosis. Parents will be invited to attend these sessions following a diagnosis.


The sessions started at the beginning of 2023 and they run continuously during term time.

Session topics include:

- Understanding the challenges and strengths of ADHD
- Managing behaviour and emotional problems
- Building children's self-esteem and confidence
- Reducing their own stress as parents
- Understanding the role of medication and other treatments
- Managing homework and education challenges
- Helping their child talk about and understand ADHD

- Supporting children's friendships

Feedback so far has been very positive – these are some anonymised comments.



Parents Plus ADHD Programme Parent Feedback


“Talking through issues and hearing how others are having similar problems has been a great help”

“It was reassuring to be told that things are ‘normal’ and it is not bad parenting”

“We now have strategies to manage conflict”

“It has been good sharing experiences face to face and receiving validation”

“Receiving help and an explanation of ADHD and parenting ADHD, for example understanding the difficulties has helped us to better address my child’s needs”



Winter Holiday, Activities and Food Programme HAF2023

What is the Winter Activities and Food programme?

A range of **8,000** free activities and food sessions for children, young people and their families who are in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals.



All activities will take place **02 – 05 January at 56 locations across MK**. From multi sports camps, pantomimes, outdoor adventures, football camps and more

which include a healthy meal and are free to attend. We hope there is something for everyone!

Our Winter activity and food programme, aimed at school aged children **in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals (FSM)** will run for 4 days during 2 - 5 January 2024. The programme offers a diverse range of events aimed at meeting the local interests and needs of children, young people, and their families.

The programme is live from **5 December** via the [online booking system here](#).

More information can be found via the HAF webpage www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/HAF

What SEND specific sessions are available?

Sessions are all inclusive and we have over **400 places** offering a range of fun activities with specific SEND support at **10 locations across MK**.

There is a choice of providers and locations offering HAF SEND sessions across MK, from Climbing experiences to Film clubs, Music and meeting animals including miniature horses, donkeys, rabbits and much more.

All can be view through our [online booking system here](#) and providers individual links are below.

[Inclusive Fitness Winter HAF Sessions with Inclusive Fitness](#)

[Miniature Pony and animal experience with Petite Ponies · Eequ](#)

[MK Film Club - Superheroes \(SEN\) MK12 with MK Film Club · Eequ](#)

[MK Film Club - Superheroes \(SEN\) MK3 with MK Film Club · Eequ](#)

[SEND Winter activity HAF sessions with Kelly Day -Head of Inclusion Manager · Eequ](#)

[Music for SEND with Julie Barefoot · Eequ](#)

[SEND Climbing Experience - Winter HAF with Climb Quest Milton Keynes · Eequ](#)

[SEND HAF Programme at Thomley with Thomley Hall · Eequ](#)

[Multi-Activity SEND Camp \(HAF\) with APF ACTIVITY CAMPS DIRECTOR · Eequ](#)

[SEND HAF Caldecotte Winter Club with Action4Youth · Eequ](#)

Further information can be found on the [HAF website here](#). If you have any questions, please do contact the HAF team: HAF@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Short Break Event at Land Of Lights

As part of our Short Breaks offer Milton Keynes City Council are excited to share that we have organised tickets for the Land of Lights Festival at Gulliver's World, Milton Keynes. The tickets are for the families of EHCP children and will be available for use on 02 January 2024. This offer allows the child or young person with an EHCP and their parent/carer entry. We have 200 children's tickets available and parents can apply for the ticket via the link below. We know demand will be high so we will set up a reserve list and contact families should there be any cancellations. **Tickets will go live on Tuesday 19 December at 10am.**

[MK Land of Lights Festival with Milton Keynes City Council](#) .



Local Offer Updates

Have you had the chance to check out our [video](#) and [document](#) on navigating the SEND Local Offer?



Additionally, we've provided a [video](#) and [document](#) to assist you in using our Recite Me accessibility tool. Feel free to explore these materials for support when navigating the SEND Local Offer.

Top links on the SEND Local Offer

[SEND Calendar of events](#)

[SEND Video resources](#)

[Your mental health and wellbeing hub](#)

If you would like to share your feedback or suggestions for the SEND Local Offer please [email us](#).

Family Fund



We appreciate this time of year can be financially challenging and we wanted to raise awareness of Family Fund.

[Family Fund](#) is a charity in the UK that provides grants and support to families raising children with disabilities or serious illnesses. They offer financial help for various requirements such as, essential items, family breaks, and sensory toys. Families can apply for these grants based on the child's needs and the family's financial situation.

School Travel Support Team

School Travel Support – December 2023 Update

Milton Keynes City Council has a statutory duty to offer free transport support to children who meet nationally set eligibility criteria. We currently support over 1500 children get to school each day, via a range of transport options including public bus passes, MK Connect accounts, mileage reimbursements, flexible family travel budgets, shuttle buses and commissioned transport. So far this academic year, transport support has helped children get to over 75 different school locations both within and outside of MK.

Spotlight On – Eligibility

To be entitled to school travel support, children **must** be attending their nearest qualifying school – this is usually their catchment school, an LA allocated school or named school in their EHCP and meet **one** of the following criteria –

- **Statutory Walking Distance** – The school location is over 2 miles for children aged below 8 and over 3 miles for children aged 8+. Distances are calculated using a specific online system.

- **Unsafe Walking Route** – The route to school is not safe to walk due to lack of public pathways, options to cross roads and other instances such as rural environments. Routes are assessed by council officers.
- **SEND** – A child could not reasonably be expected to walk there because of their special educational needs, disability or mobility problem, even if they were accompanied by their parent.
- **Extended Rights** - A child is eligible for free travel to school if they are eligible for free school meals or a parent with whom they live receives maximum Working Tax Credit and they are:
 - aged 8 or over but under 11, attend their nearest suitable school and it is more than 2 miles from their home
 - aged 11 to 16 years, and attend one of their three nearest suitable schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from their home

If you are unsure about the eligibility of your child, please contact the team and we would be happy to assist. More information can also be found on our [website](#).

Spotlight On – Applications

There are two types of transport applications to use on our webpage and every application is reviewed on a case by case basis by a member of the transport team. The first is for those that meet the eligibility criteria and would like the default offer of a public bus pass. Please find further information – [Apply for School Travel Support](#)

The second application is for those who meet the eligibility criteria but would need a different form of transport as a public bus pass would not be appropriate due to a lack of available bus routes or the child's individual needs. For further information [Apply for alternative/SEN Travel](#) (when a bus pass is not suitable).

For both applications, there are options for those who cannot use/access online functions. If you would like any more information or have further questions on eligibility or applications, please visit [School Travel Support](#) or contact us on STS@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Parents And Carers Alliance (PACA) MK



PACA Survey Action Plan

Once again we would like to thank the 360 parents and carers who took the time to complete our 2023 survey and share your lived experiences of SEND services in Milton Keynes. We have recently published the survey results and coproduced an action plan with the SEND partnership in MK. The action plan can be viewed online via our [website](#).

PACA events

We are busy planning lots of events and workshops for the coming year. This includes a 10 week course on mindfulness, meditation and yoga for parent carers starting in January, and ongoing focus groups. You can keep up to date with all our events via our [website](#) or via social media.

Autism Milton Keynes

Autism Bedfordshire have recently launched new services and resources in Milton Keynes for autistic children and young people. They are an independent charity that aims to support the community and their families. Whether you are an autistic

person, a family member, a carer or a professional. For further information on Autism Milton Keynes please visit their [website](#).

parent/ carer virtual training

FREE

Autism Workshop

AUTUMN 2023

23/11/23	Autism & Sensory Processing	10am-1pm
28/11/23	Autism & Demand Avoidance	10am-1pm

SPRING 2024

11/1/24	Autism & Behaviour	10am-1pm
16/1/24	Autism & Demand Avoidance	10am-1pm
16/2/24	Autism, Women & Girls	6pm-9pm
27/2/24	Autism & Eating Disorders	10am-1pm
14/3/24	Autism & Mental Health	6pm-9pm

SUMMER 2024

18/4/24	Autism & Sensory Processing	10am-1pm
26/4/24	Autism & Behaviour	6pm-9pm
1/5/24	Autism, Women & Girls	10am-1pm
7/5/24	Autism & Eating Disorders	6pm-9pm
6/6/24	Autism & Mental Health	10am-1pm

See Autism Bedfordshire's website for more details on course content

For families living in Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire

TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT ENQUIRIES:
☎ 01234 214871
✉ enquiries@autismbeds.org

BLMK
Sustainability & Transformation Plan

Autism MILTON KEYNES
Delivered by Autism Bedfordshire

Autism BEDFORDSHIRE

Autism Central

NHS England have launched their new website, [Autism Central](#) is a program commissioned by NHS England to empower families about autism. It aims to enhance understanding and support for autistic individuals. The program, offered in seven regions of England (Milton Keynes sitting in the South East region) provides information through group and one-to-one sessions at Autism Central hubs. These sessions, led by parents and caregivers of autistic individuals, share knowledge and experiences to help others advocate for understanding and adjustments in the services they use. The program prioritises input from autistic individuals, families, and caregivers in its activities.



Update on Milton Keynes Youth Information Service (YIS)

Sadly, due to funding pressures, the local mental health charity MK YIS has announced it will close. They are no longer taking new referrals and will be supporting young people to access other services. Their last day in operation will be 31st December 2023.

There are both national and local mental health services that are available to support children, young people and families. You can find out more by visiting our local offer pages by clicking [here](#)

The Q: Hub Drop-In at The Café in MK Central Library every Tuesday (Term time only) 3:30pm - 5pm will continue to run.



SEND Drop-In Sessions



SEND Drop-In Sessions



Need help with the special educational needs processes relating to education, health and social care? Find out what support there is for children with additional needs and how our services can support you.

Wednesday 31 January	12:30 – 2:00pm	Moorlands Family Centre Beanhill Local Centre, Dodkin, Beanhill, MK6 4LP
Thursday 14 March	1:00 – 2:30pm	Conniburrow Childrens Centre 1 Germander Place, Conniburrow, MK14 7DU



A statutory service offering confidential and impartial information, advice and support. The service supports children, young people (0-25) with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as their parents/carers.

T: 01908-254518 | E: Contact@mksendias.org.uk



Parents and Carers Alliance

Parent Forum - An independent and voluntary group of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs.

T: 01908-257828, 07852526057 | E: pacamk@gmail.com



Carers MK are dedicated to supporting the wellbeing of unpaid family carers in Milton Keynes.

T: 01908-231703 | E: mail@carersmiltonkeynes.org



An opportunity to find out more about the 'SEND Local Offer' and the SEND Team offer of support.

The SEND Team includes Educational Psychology Service; EHCP Specialist Teaching Team; EHCP Review Team; Inclusion Specialist Teaching Team; EHCP Assessment Team; Sensory Team; Children with Disabilities (CWD)

T: 01908-657825 | E: SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

School holiday activities

[Cinderella \(Relaxed Performance\)](#) at Milton Keynes Theatre 10 January

[SEN Skating Session at Woburn Sands Emporium](#) 20 November - 01 Jan

[MK Gallery Home Alone relaxed screening](#) 24 December

[MK Gallery Wish relaxed screening](#) 31 December

Please continue to use our calendar of events, which is updated on a regular basis and can be found at the bottom of our homepage on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

By sharing this information, we are not endorsing or quality checking any events or activities, and parent/carer/families remain responsible for their own research. We recommend contacting providers directly.
