



## SEND newsletter

Special Educational Needs  
and Disability

### Welcome from Clarah Muzira – Transformation Lead in Children’s mental health



Welcome to the spring edition of the newsletter. My name is Clarah Muzira – I am a qualified RMN (registered mental health nurse) with over 21 years of experience and I have recently moved into a newly created post of CAMHS and ED (eating disorder) Clinical Transformation Lead. An integral part of the role is to support collaborative working across all Milton Keynes partners to improve the emotional well-being and mental health support for our children and young people. This collaborative is called the MK Deal.

One of the areas of focus is to improve partnership working for those autistic young people with learning disabilities and mental health needs who require highly specialist support within a hospital setting.

In addition to our liaison and intensive support team (LIST) based in Milton Keynes Hospital A&E, we have also commissioned [The Youth Sanctuary](#), run in conjunction with [MIND BLMK](#) which is a drop-in service for young people (14 – 17 years old) in mental health crisis or distress in the evenings and at weekends. There is also the [MIND Crisis Café](#) for adults (18 yrs and over) .

We are putting into place additional and new early help services to support young people with mental health needs that do not meet the specialist CAMHS criteria – this pilot is being delivered by [Service 6](#) and Relate, who will offer personalised support for mild to moderate mental health needs, either in person, online or on the phone.

Our mental health schools team will be growing in 2024 to support a further two teams within Milton Keynes’ primary and secondary schools.

In CAMHS, we had a successful trial of an adopted intervention for anxiety and low mood for autistic young people called Chill Kids. More small group sessions are now planned.

We have better access to Life Hacks – a social prescribing service that can support YP ( 11-19 yrs) with Low mood, anxiety, unhealthy / risky behaviours , low self esteem, Identity issues, loneliness / social isolation.

Don't forget to visit the [mental health hub of the MK send local offer](#) for all the up to date information and links to the CAMHS new look website, coproduced with young people.

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## Phase Transfer

The SEND team are in the process of finalising placements for September 2024 for children with an EHCP who are due to start school, currently in Year 2 (attending infant school provision) or Year 6. If you have a child/children in one of those year groups you will be receiving an email by 3pm on the 14 February 2024 with their next provision named on the plan. For any questions after receiving this notification, email [ehcp@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:ehcp@milton-keynes.gov.uk), and a team member will reply within 5 working days.

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## SEND Youth Council

We are excited to share that we held our first SEND Youth Council session at the end of January. This session was an opportunity for our young people to get to know each other, discuss the purpose of the SEND Youth Council, look at previous information gathered from young people and plan our next steps.

The group shared their views and what they would like to change for children and young

people with SEND, we looked at where this would sit within our workstreams and how to ensure our children and young people's voices are heard.

The young people decided on the images they wanted for their [SEND Youth Council page on the Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer](#). Our next session will be looking at the SEND Youth Council page on the Local Offer and the information available.

We will also be looking at the [support for young people and preparation for adulthood page](#) to develop and review the information currently available.

The SEND team would like to thank the young people that have joined our SEND Youth Council for their valuable contributions, and we are excited for the positive changes ahead.



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## SEND Strategy

We will shortly be publishing the Milton Keynes Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy priority plans for the academic year 2023-2024. These plans are the joint responsibility of the SEND local area partnership, which includes education, health and social care services in Milton Keynes. The plans outline the improvements we want to make for children and young people with SEND in our area.

### **How many priority areas are there?**

The plans reflect 5 priority areas: Inclusion, Specialist Provision for Complex Needs, Autism and Cooccurring Differences, Transitions and Preparing for Adulthood, and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health.

### **How many times a year do the steering groups meet?**

Each of the 5 priority areas has a steering group who meet twice a term to update about progress, and to plan next steps.

### **Who attends the steering group and what happens during the meetings?**

These steering groups are made up of professionals from across education, health and social care, and they include parent and carer representatives from PACA MK and our schools. The steering groups ensure that progress is being made. They plan how to achieve the outcomes we want, and problem solve when things aren't progressing. The steering groups also ensure that plans for future work are driven by our 'self-evaluation' – i.e. by what we know about ourselves and what our families and professionals are telling us about how it feels to be a child or young person with SEND in Milton Keynes.

### **Who do the steering groups report back to?**

The 5 steering groups report back to the partnership four times per year, in a meeting called the SEND Strategic Partnership Board. This is chaired by the Director of Children's Services at MKCC, the Deputy Chief Nurse at BLMK ICB and the chair of PACA MK, and it's attended by senior representatives from education, health, social care.

### **What happens at the SEND Strategic Partnership Board?**

At the meeting, the group review our progress against this plan. They also review data and information such as feedback or survey responses which the local area use to continually self-evaluate and ensure that our strategic improvement plans reflect the feedback that we receive.

The action plans that we publish shortly will outline:

**What we're working on** this is the top level outcomes that we want to achieve. Many of these describe areas that we expect to be working on for several years to bring continuous change and improvement for families.

**Activities for this year** these are some examples of the specific activities and projects that are taking place within this academic year.

**How we'll measure success** these are examples of the things that we'll be measuring to make sure that our work is making a difference to families.



## **Update – Mental Health & Wellbeing services for Children & Young People in Milton Keynes**

As we approach Children's Mental Health week (w/b 5 February), we are pleased to announce the following updates to our mental health & wellbeing provision in Milton Keynes.

### **MK Wellbeing – A new service for young people in Milton Keynes**

The MK Wellbeing service offers a safe space for young people (aged 11 - 18) to discuss their mental health & wellbeing. It aims to provide support at the earliest possible stage and intervention for those who may be feeling low, unhappy or sad. For example, confidence building, stress management skills and support to improve resilience.

MK Wellbeing is being delivered in collaboration between CNWL, Relate MK and Service Six. You can access the service or make a referral by [emailing](#). Young people can also self-refer.

### **Young People Sanctuary for Milton Keynes**

Mind's Young Person's Sanctuaries are safe, non-judgemental spaces where young people aged 14-17 can come if they find themselves in crisis or mental distress in the evenings. There is no need to call ahead or book an appointment. A young person can simply drop-in and they will be met by a trained youth mental health professional who will listen carefully and help identify ways to address the problems they are facing. The teams will also be able to refer and signpost to other services if required.

The sanctuary is now open at CAMHS Eaglestone Health Centre, Standing Way, Milton

Keynes, MK6 5AZ. It is open from 5pm to 10pm on Wednesday, Thursday & Fridays. It is also open on Saturday between 4pm and 10pm. For more information about the Sanctuary, please see the attached flyer and visit [the local Mind website](#)

### **Reflect – new resources!**

Reflect is a free, confidential and 24/7 messenger support service for those who need advice or help in Milton Keynes. It is part of the wider shout network across the UK. Please find attached a digital flyer with details of the service.

Following feedback from professionals, we now have posters, flyers and business cards for the reflect messaging service. The public health team will be distributing these to partners over the coming weeks. If you have any specific requests or would like some copies, please email [Public.Health@Milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Public.Health@Milton-keynes.gov.uk).

### **Our mental health & wellbeing hub - A reminder!**

For more information on all local mental & wellbeing services, including details on these new services, please visit the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub](#) on our local offer.

Thank you – The Milton Keynes Public Health team

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## **Meet the Team - Iain Vass**

Hello, I am Iain Vass. I have been working with the SEND Team at Milton Keynes City Council for about ten years and have been in my current role for about three. I have actually been with the council for over 25 years, in a number of roles mostly related to education. In my current role my main responsibility is for the finance side of the work, making sure that people are paid for services provided to us and that young people with Personal Budgets receive their money.



As well as this, I have been responsible for the running of the Short Breaks vouchers scheme for a number of years, sorting out the distribution of the vouchers as well as making sure that venues are paid for welcoming scheme users. This meant that I recently helped set up a visit to the Festival of Lights event at Guilliver's Land for some of our voucher recipients, which was fun to do.

Outside of work, I am a keen walker, getting in my 10,000 steps every day. I have been trying to learn Japanese for some time, with mixed results! I have an interest in video games and anime. I have been known to attend conventions, such as MCM ComicCon in London, wearing costumes that I have made myself.

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## **Short Breaks Service**

We are currently making some new and improved changes to our [Short Breaks offer](#).

- Our paper vouchers will be moving to a new online system which will make it

easier for you and your young people to use and offer more choice of providers to access. This is due to launch early May 2024 with more information to follow. Keep checking our Local Offer Facebook page for further updates.

- We have commissioned a new provider to deliver short breaks starting in April 2024. This provider will offer after school, weekend and school holiday sessions. For children who already access short breaks provision in the school holidays a member of the team will be reaching out to ensure a smooth transition.
- Following feedback from our families we are now offering some one off events that are free to access for your child with an EHCP and one parent/ carer. If you have any suggestions of any one off events you would like to see please let us know by emailing [local.offer.feedback@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:local.offer.feedback@milton-keynes.gov.uk) with your ideas.

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## Short Break Event at Land Of Lights

Our first short breaks event was held at Land of Lights on a very wet and windy evening in January with nearly 100 families braving the cold. Our families told us they had a great time and would like to see the event repeated next year. This is something we are looking into.

We have the opportunity for more families to attend a further event with the information below:

Short Break Event at Land Of Lights 🚀 ✨

Tickets are for children with EHCPs and a parent/carer for use on 18 February 2024 17:00-17:45

Please use the link to apply for your tickets

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



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## Spring Holiday Activities and Food Programme

[Our Spring activity and food programme](#), aimed at school



aged children **in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals (FSM)** will run for **4 days during 8 - 11 April 2024**. The programme seeks to offer 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 19 March via the [online booking system here](#).

More information can be found via the [HAF webpage](#).

### **What is the Spring Activities and Food programme?**

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

### **When do the activities take place?**

All activities will take place **08 – 11 April** at a range of locations across MK. From multi sports camps, outdoor adventures, arts, crafts and more, which include a healthy meal and are free to attend. We hope there is something for everyone!

During our Winter HAF we delivered over 8,000 places, including 10 locations with dedicated support for children with special educational needs and disabilities offering a range of fun activities. Nearly 2,000 individual children and young people attended sessions, 20% of the individual children and young people which attended Winter sessions stated they had special educational needs and disabilities.

In Spring we will continue to engage a diverse range of provisions that supports the needs of local children and young people **in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals (FSM)**.

All can be view through our [online booking system here](#) from 12 March and providers can be contacted directly.

Further information can be found on the [HAF website here](#). If you have any questions, please do [contact the HAF team](#).

### **Milton Keynes Pantomime**

During MKCC Winter HAF Programme 1,105 individual children, young people and family were able to enjoy and attend the Cinderella Pantomime at Milton Keynes Theatre, with water and ice cream served during the interval.

800 meal boxes were purchased from a local charity, St Marks Meals. The boxes had complete ingredients and cooking instructions to enable families to enjoy a healthy meal at home. By purchasing meal boxes from a local charity, we aim to support and sustain the work they do around child poverty, whilst signposting families to additional support that is available.

St Marks Meals has free boxes available to families that can be accessed from Children Centres and Schools across Milton Keynes.

**Cllr Zoe Nolan, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, said:** “We are delighted that so many families got involved in our winter activity week and local providers offered



a fantastic range of events and fresh food. I was lucky enough to attend the pantomime trip to MK Theatre and it was lovely to see so many smiling faces. This week was part of our larger programme for children and families who are struggling, and we'll keep looking at ways we can support families in the year ahead.



## Thomley Holiday Hunger

FREE visits over the February half term for those on benefits as part of a 'Holiday Hunger' campaign, very kindly supported by 'Cash for Kids'

This is an amazing opportunity for those on a low income to attend Thomley including a lunch, for free! There limited number of spaces available to book, every day from Monday 12th February to Friday 16th February.

To be eligible you must be able to provide proof of receiving one of the following when you arrive for your visit: Universal Credit or Pupil Premium or provide us a previously used HAF Code.

Thomley will also be including a free lunch for the children, similar to the Holidays and Food Programme Thomley have offered in recent school holiday periods. You will be able to book your lunches on arrival via a pre-order form.

Bookings are now OPEN and can only be booked by following [this link](#).

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## Parent programmes

Please find our [parent programmes](#) that are available on our Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer, this information is regularly updated. Alongside our parent programme offer, we also have our SEND video resources to support parents and carers, covering a range of themes, we hope you find these videos supportive.

### Milton Keynes SENDIAS Parent Workshops

These workshops are for families living in Milton Keynes. Please book via Eventbrite.

- [Education Health Care Plan](#) - Tue 27 February 2024, 10am - 11:30am
- [Exclusion/Suspension](#) - Thu 07 March 2024, 10am - 11:15am

### Autism Milton Keynes

CNWL have commissioned Autism Milton Keynes to run parent workshops from autumn 2023 - summer 2024. Upcoming workshops for the summer term include:

01 May Autism, women and girls

07 May Autism and eating disorders

06 June Autism and mental health

For more information and to book your place, please contact [enquiries@autismbeds.org](mailto:enquiries@autismbeds.org) / 01234 214871

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

## Local Offer

Continuing with the theme of Children's mental health week, we wanted to highlight our [metal health and wellbeing hub](#) available on the [Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer](#), where you can find a vast range of advice and support.



Please find [resources for parents and carers](#), where you will be signposted to information and advice.

## Parents And Carers Alliance (PACA) MK



PACA MK is an independent and voluntary group of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs. The group

is open to parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-25 years old with disabilities or additional needs who live in the city of Milton Keynes.

We work in collaboration with service providers in health, education, social care and leisure services in Milton Keynes. Our aim is to fully include parents and carers in the development and improvement of local services.

### **Listening events**

Our listening events give our families an opportunity to meet professionals, feedback and share their suggestions, tell us what's not working and what is working well. Topics coming up are:

- [Mental health listening event](#), Thurs 15th Feb 10:30-12:00 in person at The Discovery Room, John Lewis, Centre: MK
- Secondary Education and EBSA, Tues 12th March, 7-8.30pm – details to be confirmed, please save the date.

If you are interested in find out about our forum, please come along to our monthly steering group or monthly Saturday coffee mornings where you can meet our parent representatives and find out more. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your feedback about local services. You can contact us at [pacamk@gmail.com](mailto:pacamk@gmail.com)

### **Workshops and family events**

It's been great to see so many of families at our events in recent months. We enjoyed some very festive activities over the Christmas period, a video of our Christmas party can be seen on our [website](#). We are also currently enjoying a 10 week course on mindfulness, meditation and yoga, thank to those who have joined us.

We are busy planning lots more events and workshops for the next few months:

- Family coffee morning and activities, 17th Feb 11am – 1pm at the Mead Centre, Newport Pagnell - sensory room, crafts and animals
- Coffee Morning, Sat 16th March
- Sensory processing workshop, March (details to be confirmed soon)
- ADHD Wise in workshop in June/July (details to be confirmed soon)
- [Financial Toolkit webinar](#), 5th March 10:30am – 11.30am booking link

Please see our [website](#) for up to date information about all our meetings and events, and information about how to book your place. You can also keep up to date via social media or email us at [pacamk@gmail.com](mailto:pacamk@gmail.com)

Finally, Did you know PACA currently has 956 members, if you have not yet joined us please sign up [here](#) .

Not only is our Membership FREE! but we have a prize for our 1000th member, could it be you?

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## **SEND Drop-In Sessions**

## SEND Drop-In Session at the Conniburrow Children Centre



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.

<b>Thursday 14 March</b>	<b>1:00 – 2:30pm</b>	<b>Conniburrow Childrens Centre</b> 1 Germander Place, Conniburrow, MK14 7DU
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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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:mail@carersmiltonkeynes.org)**



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

**T: 01908-657825 | E: [SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk)**

## School holiday activities

We are continuing to update our SEND Calendar of events, please do check the calendar at the bottom of the home page on the [SEND Local Offer](#). Please see below some of the activities and providers that are available over the half term.

[Gravity SEND Sessions 20.02.24, 22.02.24 and 25.02.24](#)

[Autism Milton Keynes Children's Holiday Activity Session 21.02.24](#)

[Thomley Open for All 11am 23.02.24](#)

[Climb Quest SEN Sessions 25.02.24](#)

[MK Gallery Relaxed Screening: Migration \(PG\) 25.02.24](#)

[Little Miracles](#) have a half term offer for members, parents/carers can sign up on the Facebook page to join in activities and will have to complete a membership form before attending any of the events.

We hope you have a wonderful half term.

*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.*

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