



Welcome from Sally Cass

A belated welcome back to the new school year and welcome to the first edition of the SENCo Update newsletter this year.

We hope that the new term is going well for you so far and that your new children and young people have settled well into school following their summer term transitions. It was good to see so many SENCOs at the Quadrant meetings, where we discussed transition experiences, looked at the reviewed annual review guidance, and discussed about the many challenges currently facing SENCOs in schools. It was clear from the discussions that while being a SENCO is a varied and interesting job, it is also very demanding and can often feel lonely.



The SEND Specialist Teaching Teams will continue to work collaboratively to support you in school and this year we are aiming to work more directly in schools with you, and with children and young people. If you would like to request involvement, then please contact the SEND Support Line.

We are looking forward to working closely with you and seeing even more of you at Quadrant meetings this year. We would like to thank you in advance for all the hard work you put into supporting children and young people across Milton Keynes.

Meet the team: Mim Kendrick

Hi, I'm Mim Kendrick and I'm the new SEND Local Area Partnership Manager and I started this new role on the 18 September. My role is joint funded across Milton Keynes City Council and Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board (BLMK ICB) which means that I work across education, social care and health. I'll be responsible for ensuring that the local area have a shared plan for children and young people with SEND so that things are as joined up as possible. I'll also be working closely with parent representatives including PACA MK, and with children and young people with SEND in Milton Keynes to ensure that they're involved in agreeing our priorities and that they understand the plans that are being made.



Prior to joining Milton Keynes local partnership, I've worked in children's education services in a number of other local authorities, most recently spending 5 years in Hertfordshire working on their SEND improvement programme and leading their EHCP team.

Outside of work, I enjoy anything that involves paint or ink – the messier the better! I also enjoy yoga, cats, eating delicious food and hanging out with my family.

Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Parent Guidance

Exciting news!! We are thrilled to announce the release of the [EBSA Parent Guidance](#). This guide aims to answer questions asked by parents and carers. It has been produced by parents and professionals, to support parents and their child or young person if they are finding it difficult to attend school and can be found on the [Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer](#).

Please share the [EBSA Parent Guidance Poster](#) to families through your school's communication system.

In addition the EPS are offering an [EBSA workshop](#) in the autumn, spring and summer term, more information can be found on the SEND Local Offer.

The EBSA guidance for schools remains essential as the first tool to action support when initially identifying an EBSA need.

Training is available delivered by EP Service found in our [centralised training booklet](#): Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA): Putting MK guidance into practice in your school context – Secondary 7.12.23 13:00 - 15:00

- [EBSA Guidance for Schools Part 1](#)
- [EBSA Guidance for Schools Part 2](#)



EMOTIONAL BASED SCHOOL AVOIDANCE (EBSA) PARENT GUIDANCE



What is EBSA?

Worrying or anxiety is a normal feeling that we all experience from time to time. It can even keep us safe from harm or help us perform in difficult situations. However, sometimes anxiety or excessive worrying can become a problem especially when it stops people doing what they want or need to do. Many children and young people worry about school. This is normal. Anxieties are part of life and learning to deal with them is part of growing up. However sometimes a child's worries may lead to difficulties attending school. If your child has high levels of anxiety and does not want to attend school, they may be experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). (Credit West Sussex EPS)

Who created the booklet?

This booklet was written by parents, PACA MK (parent carer forum) MKSENDIAS, Milton Keynes Educational Psychology Service and Senior Attendance Officer (legal interventions), representatives from education, health, social care and the Schools Mental Health Team



What can I find in the booklet?

The booklet covers information on the presentation of EBSA and what parents and carers can do to support their young person. Working in partnership with the school

What can I find in the booklet?

- Information on EBSA including autism
- What can build and maintain resilience?
- Information on the law and absence from school
- FAQ
- Further sources of support



Where can I find this information?

Guidance along with guidance for schools can be found on the Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer <https://www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk/emotionally-based-school-avoidance-ebsa>



<https://www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk/>

SENCo Quadrant Meetings Updates

(Following feedback, we are sharing a short update for each quadrant)

During the meetings, reviewed guidelines to assess and guidelines to review EHC's were discussed. Across all four quadrants positive feedback for the documents was received. Additional feedback from the quadrants is shared below:

North: Themes during the meeting were around higher levels of need transitioning into school. Further work was identified with EY settings to highlight needs to receiving schools and to ensure external agency support has been sought.

East: Colleagues shared some transition ideas that had worked well, including an after-school transition club which had met each week after school in the second half of the summer term.

South: Colleagues shared that increasing numbers of children are starting school for the first time with significant needs. Colleagues discussed how they can support one another and suggestions were made for how this could be approached.

West: Transition from Early Years and early identification of needs was discussed in the meeting. It also came up about support for SENCo wellbeing and a discussion was had about whether supervision could be a supportive way forward.

Information on SENCo Quadrant Meetings, including dates and venues can be found on the SEND Local Offer. Please check on a regular basis for changes and updates.



SEND Team Updates:

Specialist Teaching Team Updates

Top Up Funding

Schools and academies should have sufficient funding in their delegated SEN funding budget to enable them to support the majority of pupils' SEND where required, up to the nationally agreed cost threshold of £6,000 per pupil. Where individual pupils require additional support that costs more than £6,000, the extra costs can be met by requesting Element 3 funding for the individual pupil. Top Up funding is intended to provide additional, individually targeted support for named pupils who have a range of complex special educational needs whilst remaining in mainstream schools. Top-up funding is provided where these needs, and the provision required to meet them,

We have recently updated our SEND Local Offer with [Top Up Funding Guidelines](#). For all Top Up Funding requests, an application form should now be completed found in the above link.

SEND Team Request for Involvement

All requests for involvement from the Specialist Teaching Team (SST) or Educational Psychology Service (EPS), must be discussed via an initial conversation between the SENCo and SEND Support Line. The SEND Support Line will advise and triage all enquiries to ensure that the most appropriate support is given at the right time. Support may include initial advice from the SEND Support Line to add to an assess, plan, do review cycle.

Where it is agreed that the STT or EPS will be involved, the SEND Support Line will provide the relevant forms for the SENCo to complete.

For Specialist Teaching Team involvement for CYP with SEND Support Plans or EHCPs, you will be asked to complete a 'Request for involvement form'. All parts of this form alongside identified additional information **must** be submitted for the request to be considered for allocation.

Ordinarily CYP at the SEND Support Stage would need to have a SEND Support Plan in place and at least 2 cycles of APDR before specialist teacher involvement would be considered.

Phone: 01908 657825 (please leave an answerphone message with clear contact details)

Email: SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Communication with the SEND Team

The SEND Team receive a large and increasing volume of calls and emails to prioritise and respond to. Please note that for some enquiries that require a response from a specific team member, please allow up to 10 working days for a reply.

Early Years Team

The next Early Years SENCo Meeting is on Thursday Nov 09 17.00- 18.00 on MS Teams, where will be considering what neuro-diverse play looks like in young children, and how we support its development. For an invite to this session, please contact SEND Support.

New and improved Early Years SEND Support Plan is now available on the Local Offer. EY settings have shared positive feedback using this new format.

Assessment Team Updates

Coming soon: EHC Needs Assessment Guidelines

During the Summer term, we worked with representatives from SENDIAS, education, health and social care to review our current EHC needs assessment guidelines. Our new coproduced EHC needs assessment guidelines will be shared in the coming weeks on our [Local Offer Pages](#). The guidelines aim to support

professionals and parent/carers understanding of the EHC needs assessment process to ensure that requests are being made at the right time.

Review Team Updates

From 30 October 2023, there will be a move from our current allocation for Review and Placements Officers, from the current North, Central and South areas, to quadrants in line with our Heads and SENCOs quadrants. This will enable a more even distribution of schools and caseloads for our officers. Review officers for our special schools will remain the same. Further information will be emailed to SENCOs next week.

Updated 2023 - 2024 Annual Review Guidance and Templates will be available on the Local Offer, along with the 2023 - 2024 Annual Review Report. Any previous guidance and templates should not be used after this date.

The Annual Review report must be completed and returned to EHCP@milton-keynes.gov.uk with the recommended amendments within 2 weeks of the review meeting. If there are any queries regarding the new guidance please contact the EHCP mailbox, as above.

Educational Psychology Service Update

We have recently recruited an interim Principal EP, Jane Marriott and a Senior Leadership EP, Hayley Prickett who will be starting with us after the half term. The team is comprised a mix of permanently appointed EPs and a number of associate locum EPs at this time. Where an EHC assessment has been agreed for a CYP, adjustments in MK have mirrored national adjustments to support the assessment process being conducted in a timely way using a variety of methods and this includes the use of remote assessment.

Access to EP support is available to schools via the SEND Support Line where you can book a consultation slot. You will need written parental support before the consultation can go ahead.

If a different type of EP support is needed, schools should contact the SEND Support Line and complete a form requesting SEND and Inclusion support. The Educational Psychology Service will only become involved where psychology involvement is considered necessary and appropriate. We will prioritise requests for individual involvement where a child or young person meets one or more vulnerability criteria listed on the [SEND Support offer](#) on the Local Offer.

EHC Audits

The first EHC multi agency audit of this academic year took place in September which focussed on new EHCPs for CYP with SEMH difficulties.

Strengths

- Strengths were consistent across the EHCPs and have improved since the start of the auditing process last year
- Section B is clear and concise
- SENCOs and teachers would be able to put provision in place quickly and easily
- All key information is provided

Areas for development

We need to ensure that the voices of all professionals are heard in the plan

- Quality First Teaching strategies shouldn't be included in provision
- Outcomes don't always link to the difficulties in Section B

Auditing EHCPs will be a focus in a forthcoming Quadrant meeting. However, if you would like to join one of the multi-agency audits which take place monthly on a Wednesday afternoon then please email sally.cass@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Centralised Training Update

We have shared our [centralised training booklet](#) on the SEND Local Offer and continue to update the booklet so please keep checking for updates. We also have our training calendar alongside our booklet.

Upcoming training:

- Writing Outcomes *01.11.23 14:00 - 15:30*
- Sensory differences in children with SEND in the Early years *02.11.23 9:30 - 11:30*
- Understanding and Effectively Supporting ASC in the Early Years *03.11.23 9:30 - 11:00*
- Emotional regulation using 'Zones' – practical approaches to support children using Zones of Regulation (for Secondary) *06.11.23 15:30 - 17:00*
- Effective support for children with Downs Syndrome *13.11.23 9:30 - 12:00*
- Early Years Communication Training *14.11.23 9:30 - 12:00*
- Effective use of precision teaching *16.11.23 3:30 - 16:45*
- The Role of the Early Years SENCO – a course for new Early Years SENCOs and those wishing to refresh their knowledge *17.11.23 9:00 - 10:30*
- How to support learners with working memory difficulties across the curriculum *20.11.23 13:00 - 15:00*
- How to prevent and de-escalate behaviours that challenge *22.11.23 15:30 - 17:00*
- Understanding and effectively supporting ASC in Primary schools *27.11.2 15:30 - 16:30*

- Understanding and effectively supporting ASC in Secondary schools
29.11.23 15:30 - 16:30
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA): Putting MK guidance into practice in your school context – Secondary 7.12.23 13:00 - 15:00

Please find the Centralised Training Booklet

Additional Training from NASEN and Autism Education Trust

Online SEND CPD Units NASEN -this series of online [Continuing Professional Development](#) (CPD) units are designed to support those who work with children and young people in schools and further education settings to deliver an inclusive experience for every learner.

[The Autism Education Trust](#) - find out more about the AET Professional Development Programme and explore all our Training Modules.

SEND Local Offer Accessibility Tool



We want to ensure our young people, parents, carers and professionals are using the SEND Local Offer so will be sharing updates in every issue and doing a spotlight on an area of the SEND Local Offer!

Since we have come back from the summer holidays, we are excited to share we now have our accessibility tool available on the SEND Local Offer.

Following feedback from our families we have now introduced an accessibility toolbar. This allows our users to:

- Have the text on the website read aloud!
- Change the font and colours
- Customise background colours
- Translate text into over 100 different languages



Calling All SENDCo's!

Following our new SEND Local Offer microsite launch in February 2023, we would now like to look at the information on the SEND Local Offer for our SENDCo's.

We are excited to invite a small group of SENDCo's to participate in a collaborative effort aimed at enhancing our Local Offer with a focus on information accessed by professionals. We are looking for this session to take place on 23 November and are also asking our schools if they would be interested in hosting this half day session.

Your expertise is invaluable in ensuring that our Local Offer is comprehensive, responsive, and beneficial for the professionals using it. By joining this working group, you will have the opportunity to contribute your insights and ideas to make meaningful improvements

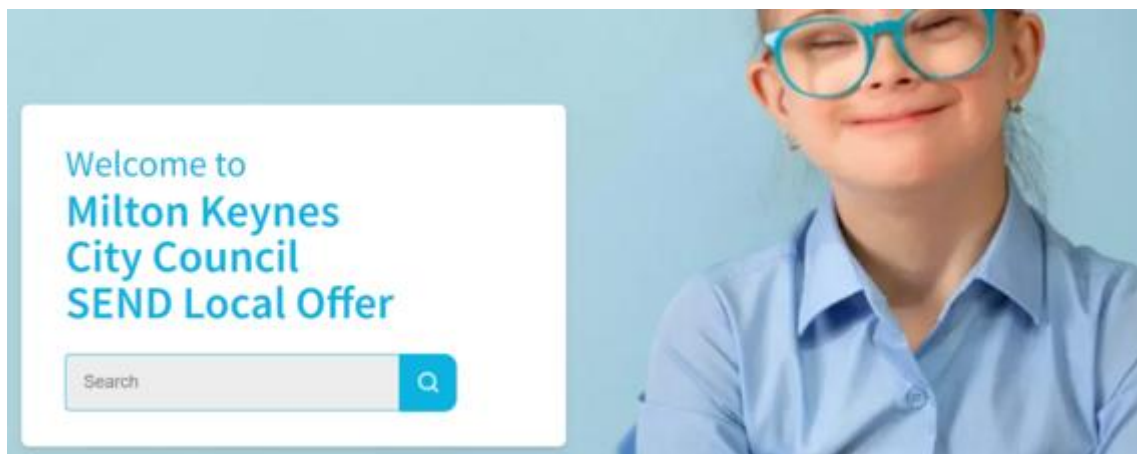
How to Get Involved: If you're interested in joining the working group, hosting the session or would like more information, please [email](#) by 3 November. We will follow up with further details on our first meeting and the agenda.



The Milton Keynes Social Communication Difficulties/Autism Directory of Services

As part of the MK SEND Strategy the autism workstream group have coproduced and developed [The Milton Keynes Social Communication Difficulties/Autism Directory of Services and Support](#). This information is now available on Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer. The directory has a list of service providers, schools, specialist schools, further education (post 16) as well as information about leisure activities and clubs

Please continue to signpost colleagues, parents and professionals to the [SEND Local Offer!](#)



Communication Update

There are two main mailboxes to contact the SEND team.

EHCP@ is to be used for all enquiries for CYP with EHCP's or who are under assessment. This includes contact with assessment and review teams.

SENDSupport@ is to be used for all CYP that are at the SEND support stage.

Please utilise the EHC or SEND support email instead of reaching out directly to assessment/review officers or specialist teachers. This approach helps reduce issues arising from annual leave or in case of illness.

If you are emailing for a particular officer or specialist teacher please put for the attention of in the subject.

Thank you so much for your support.

MK Deal

MK Deal is the local health partnership in Milton Keynes bringing together Milton Keynes City Council, the local NHS and the voluntary sector. One of its programmes is improving Children and Young Peoples (CYP) Mental Health in

Milton Keynes. The programme has identified 4 key goals, one of which is **Joining up the training on Neurodevelopmental Pathways**.

A huge thankyou to all the schools to completed the questionnaire on training in schools for Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) shared at the beginning of the Autumn term.

A working group has been established, led by Victoria Courtis (MKCC SEND Lead) and Vicky Hancock (Deputy Service Director for MK CAMHS) to identify the training that will be delivered to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo's) for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), and the outcomes to be achieved from its delivery. The working group would greatly benefit from your contribution and views.

If you haven't had a chance yet to complete the questionnaire to help inform the working group of your views and the current provision of training in your school, there is still time to do so! Please can you send completed [questionnaires](#) to adam.shiels1@nhs.net

This will help to ensure the planning of the delivery of training is informed by the experience and views of staff working with Neuro-diverse children in MK schools.

Updates from SENCo's

We're inviting SENCOs to share any updates or information they wish to contribute to the SEND Update newsletter. We aim to provide regular updates from SENCOs to be shared among colleagues in different schools. Please feel free to reach out to us via [email](#).

Sign up!

We produce this newsletter monthly. If you are not receiving this directly and would like to, [please follow this link to sign up](#).

We welcome your views on the newsletter and would love to hear any ideas you have for future editions. Please share your views via [email](#).



Note: Please do not respond directly to this email.

For SEND queries email: [SEND support line](#)

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