



## SEND update

Key information for  
SENCOs in MK schools

### Welcome from Allyson Tranter

Welcome to the second edition of the SEND Update. We hope that your terms have gone well and that all of your seasonal plays, concerts and activities have been thoroughly enjoyed by all those taking part and families and friends too! We know you will have been working hard supporting all your children with SEND who can find this time of year especially challenging with lots of changes and excitement in the air. It won't be too long now before you can all enjoy a well-earned rest and mince pie.



Our second SENCo Quadrant meetings went well, with more of you being able to attend and it was great to see so many of you across the 5 meetings. Representation at the November SENCo Quadrant meetings increased by 19% since the initial meeting of the academic year and following on from the last meeting there was further reflection on SENDCos wellbeing and how positive networking links are being considered and established, and what support is available through schools and trusts as well. It was clear that across the quadrants you are supporting each other and considering ways to develop the links you have already begun even further.

We have reflected on our support to you through our centralised training offer and more information about what is available during the Spring term is included in this update, with some dates in January so please do take a look and share with your teams.

We would like to thank all of those who were able to return their SEND Support primary needs lists and their 2022-2023 EHCP Outcomes to us this term so far.

We are looking forward to working with you all in 2024, and hope you all enjoy any celebrations you have planned during the break.

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## 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 5 key areas are:

- Inclusion
- Complex needs
- Transition and preparing for adulthood
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Autism and cooccurring 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.



## SENCo Quadrant Meetings Updates

Meetings for SENCo quadrants occur in the second week after each half term. The aim is to bring together SENCos and the SEND Team to address key themes and complete audits. Since the emphasis is on discussions, these sessions are not officially documented, but essential actions and discussions are communicated through our SEND Update newsletter.

Agendas are agreed in collaboration with SENCO co- chairs a week before the meetings take place.

### Quadrant summary of most recent meeting

**North:** North had a discussion around the challenges that transfer ins without EHC plans or identified needs, we discussed processes relating to this, in addition to support to register with a GP, OT, SALT, School nurse as appropriate. The plans for next session are around Autism and avoidant behaviours -sharing of good practice. Bring a particular challenge within your school to discuss to the next meeting.

**East:** The Educational Psychology Service are going to run a problem solving activity in the last half an hour of each meeting. Come with an idea about what you

might want to discuss. One idea will be chosen on the day by the group. This is being explored across all quadrants.

**South:** South are meeting in early spring to design transition info one page profile in preparation for next years transition. They have set up a whats app group and are looking at regular meetings to focus on SENCo to SENCo support in addition to quadrant meetings. The group enjoyed sharing good practice ideas for children with autism and avoidant behaviours and we will look at continuing these discussions in future meetings.

**West:** Discussions around wellbeing and how this was being supported by schools, through access to wellbeing schemes, HR wellbeing support colleagues or leadership team member, access to school counsellor. SENCos raised how it would be supportive just to be able to arrange coffee catch ups.

During the next meetings, week commencing 15 January the EPS have offered to share some information around supervision at the next meeting which was welcomed by all SENCos.

**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**

It has been a busy term for the Specialist Teachers; we thank you for working with us to support our children with SEND and their families. A gentle reminder of our processes; it is expected you would contact the Send Support Line for support and advice before consideration for direct involvement. The SEND Support Line will give you a Request for Involvement form for you to complete, should direct involvement from the team be agreed.

Please do continue to complete our feedback forms – your views are greatly appreciated to inform our practices. Keep an eye on the Local Offer as our Spring Centralised Training offer will be launched shortly.

We would like to thank you for your involvement and participation in the many working groups that have taken place this term to improve policies and practice.

### **Early Years Team**

We have been working hard with our Early Years settings this term, following Health Notifications and also via direct referrals from SENCos. Our new Early Years [SEND Support Plan](#) template is on the Local Offer- make sure you use this version instead of downloading your own copy as we will continue to improve it in response to feedback. We have also improved the [Early Years Local Offer pages](#) to make them simpler for settings to navigate around- give it a go and let us know what you think.

### **Assessment Team**

There continues to be a high demand for EHC needs assessment requests. It has been noted that a number of requests submitted do not contain all the required information for us to make a fair decision around assessment and the support the child or young person requires. As an LA, we will be looking at the information on the Local Offer and the supporting documents available, please keep a look out for the updated information.

### **Review Team**

The team are settling in to their new caseloads well and have enjoyed the opportunity to meet many of you at the quadrant meetings. Following the updated annual review guidance going out to schools this term we have had lots of positive feedback about how supportive it is, thank you for this and all feedback continues to be welcomed. The 2023-24 EHCP Outcome Data spreadsheet for schools will be sent out for schools to complete and return - this is for any reviews that have been held this term and the return date is 17 January 2024.

### **Educational Psychology Service Update**

A big thank you to all schools who have booked on and used the Psychological Consultation Service slots this term, the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Slots are now available for January 2024 onwards. As a reminder, please

ensure to send us the completed parental consent forms by 12 noon on the Tuesday before your arranged slot.

We have also received lots of interest in our updated workshop for school staff; 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA): Putting MK guidance into practice in your school context.' Our upcoming session for primary school staff is now fully booked! Please get in touch (via [SENDtraining@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:SENDtraining@milton-keynes.gov.uk)) if you would like more information or to be added to the list for future dates later in the Spring and Summer terms.

### **Sensory Team**

The Sensory team information has recently been updated on the [Local Offer](#).

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## **A project for your consideration**

I am Chelsea Markwell, a Year 2 Trainee Educational Psychologist, on the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology at University College London, Institute of Education. I am conducting a research project looking at the use of reduced timetables in secondary schools. That is, where students are spending some of their school week in school and some off of the school premises. I am looking to talk to young people in years 8-10 who are currently on a reduced timetable for behavioural or emotional difficulties. This is a great opportunity for schools to be involved in a project which allows young people to have a voice on current school practice.

This is not a piece of research commissioned or connected to the Local Authority, but is being conducted through my training at the Institute of Education, University College London; the reason the research is being conducted in MK is because I am currently on placement at MKCC.

If you are interested in your school being involved or finding out more, please contact: Chelsea Markwell [Chelsea.Markwell@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Chelsea.Markwell@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

Please find further [information on the project](#).

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## **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:**

Understanding and effectively supporting ASC in the Early Years 11.03.24 9.30-11am / 18.03.24 9.30-11am / 25.03.24 9.30-11am (It is strongly recommended that you attend all three sessions)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance Putting MK guidance into practice in your school 18.01.24 1-3pm (primary) 21.03.24 1-3pm (secondary)

How to de-escalate and prevent behaviours that challenge (including ASC needs) 13.03.24 3:30 – 5:00pm

Effective use of precision teaching 07.03.24 1-3pm

Annual Reviews and Statutory processes 30.4.24 11am - 12pm

EHC Assessment process 20.3.23 1-2pm

Sensory differences in children with SEND in the Early years 26.02.23. 12.30-2.30pm

Please find the Centralised Training Booklet



## Additional and free training from local and national organisations

[nasen](#) provide free resources and support for all their members, leading targeted programmes and projects to deliver widespread improvements, offering a structured

programme of professional development, accredited training and conferences as well as a package of SEND services throughout the UK and internationally.

Exciting news! [Free Early Years DFE funded training](#) is now accessible for practitioners within the Family Hub Network!

Embark on 'Meeting the Needs of Every Child' training, offering Early Years practitioners, childminders, and new SENCOs a valuable opportunity to deepen their understanding of inclusive practice for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Early Years settings.

[Specialist Spotlight: An introduction to teaching learners with physical needs \(Primary\)](#)- Join nasen for a FREE discussion exploring an introduction to teaching learners with physical needs in primary settings.

Further information on CPD can be found on their [website](#).

The [Council for Disabled Children](#) has developed a suite of [online training](#) for members and affiliated organisations and services. The courses have been developed to improve knowledge, understanding and practical skills and support in range of key areas that impact children and young people, particularly those with special educational needs and disability.

**MK College offer the following online courses:**

[Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Autism](#)

[Level 2 Certificate in Special Education Needs and Disability](#)

[Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Behaviour that Challenges](#)

[Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Children and Young People's Mental Health](#)

**New Education Endowment Foundation podcast: SEN in mainstream & adaptive teaching**

Episode of our podcast, '[Evidence into Action](#)', focusing on [SEN in mainstream & adaptive teaching](#).

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## Speech and Language Therapy and Youth Justice

**Did you Know** 60-90% of young people who offend have communication difficulties compared to 5% in the general population? 92% of these are undiagnosed before entering the youth justice service.

Of course that's not to say the communication difficulties have caused the offending. They are usually part of a much bigger picture, which may start when the young person starts experiencing difficulties at school. Behaviours in school may be a young person's way of communicating they are not coping or need support. If the right support is not put in early or the difficulties are labelled wrongly or not recognised, these behaviours can escalate. This could lead to school exclusion, disengagement, mental health issues and anti-social behaviour.

### **So how can Speech and Language Therapists help?**

That's where we come in. We are Janet Pembroly and Julie Lack, Speech and Language Therapists employed by the NHS but working as part of MK City Council's Youth Justice and Support Service (MKYJSS). The aims of our roles are to:

- Help identify communication issues so others working with them can adapt their language and support the young people appropriately.
- To advise others on how to help develop the young person's communication skills.

## **What do we do?**

Assess students in school as part of the PRRE (Promoting Reintegration and Reducing Exclusions) Project.

Complete assessments towards producing comprehensive reports and communication profiles to inform court reports /key adults working with the young person.

Give training /advice to schools, MKYJSS staff, magistrates, police, Appropriate Adults.

Model and share resources with school and MKYJSS staff to support their interventions.

Refer on for further assessment if other underlying conditions are suspected, such as Autistic Spectrum Condition and ADHD.

Liaise with other professionals such as Social Workers, Community Paediatricians, CAMHS, NHS Schools Team Speech and Language Therapists, Education and other Youth Support Services

Work with other agencies to adapt leaflets for young people and families, to include visuals and easy to understand language. The aim is that these are available at any point in young person's journey through the youth justice system.

## **What next?**

We are looking at how we can share information with the police so they can access information on the young person's communication difficulties and how best to interact with them.

## **How to contact us?**

We are based at Civic Offices with Milton Keynes Youth Justice and Support Service. The email is [MKYOT@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:MKYOT@milton-keynes.gov.uk) and contact number is Tel: 01908 39100

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## **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 31 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](#)



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## Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer

### Tools to support using the Local Offer

Have you had the chance to check out our [video](#) and [document](#) on navigating the SEND Local Offer? Please share these resources among your colleagues and families.

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.

### Updates on the Local Offer

We have recently updated our Early Years pages on the SEND Local Offer as part of a focused working group with a small group of Early Years settings.

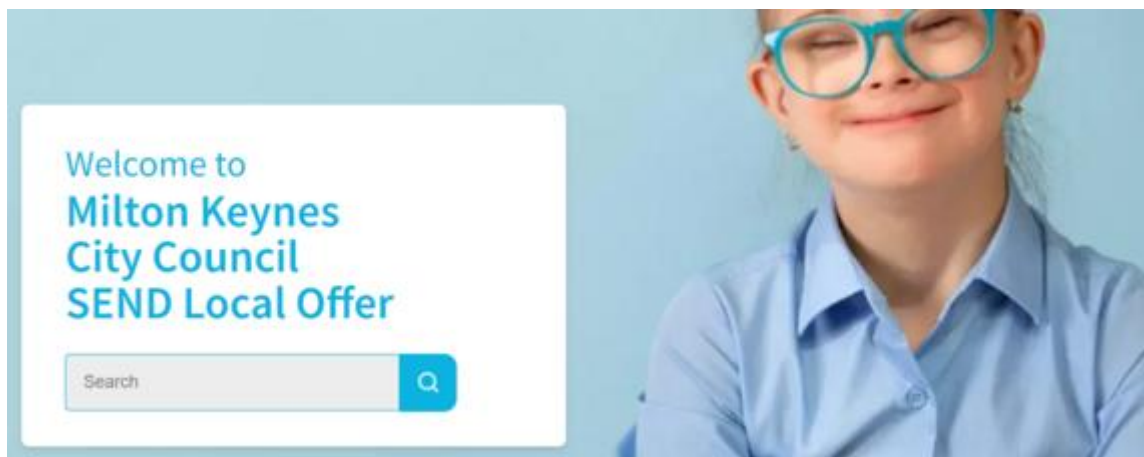
We are excited to announce that, based on insights from a focus group involving some of our school SENCo's, we are currently updating the information available to schools and professionals and to simplify the use of the SEND Local Offer. More

details about these updates will be shared in January 2024! A big thank you to the working group for their valuable contributions!

### Information to share with families

Please can we ask that you are sharing and signposting your families to our SEND Local Offer, we have leaflets to share with your families for our:

- [New SEND Local Offer website](#)
- [SEND Local Offer Facebook Page](#)
- [SEND Newsletter for parents and carers](#)



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## 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](#).

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## A message from public health

The Workplace Health team (WHT) is part of the local Public Health Service. We are here to support your health and wellbeing at work, by collaborating with local services and employers to promote healthy and supportive working environments for all working people, including those who experience challenges to employment. Here's how we can help:

1. [The Healthy Workplace Standards](#) can offer your workplace an opportunity to benchmark themselves against healthy workplace best practice and

receive awards in recognition of their achievements. You can read more about the Standards and how they can support you at work [here](#).

2. The new [Workplace Health Webpages](#) detail a range of resources, training opportunities, and [health and wellbeing services](#) to support you at work
3. The [workplace health service offer brochure](#) contains a range of free support services for people who work in Milton Keynes, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.
4. Our [monthly bulletin](#) covers a range of hot topics relevant to workplace health, which is freely available on our webpages. If you would like to be included on our monthly mailing list please contact [Public.Health@Milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Public.Health@Milton-keynes.gov.uk) .

If you would like your employer to take advantage of these services, please feel free to share this information with your senior leadership team!

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## Happy holidays!

The SEND Team would like to wish our schools and settings a wonderful break with your families and we look forward to welcoming you back in the new year.



## 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](#).

