



# Milton Keynes SEND strategy 2021-2025 2024 Action Plans

## Our shared vision:

“ Together we support and empower children and young people with SEND to live well, learn well, and lead happy and fulfilling lives. ”

February 2024



# What you will find in this document



This document is a summary of the Milton Keynes Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy priority plans to September 2024. These plans are the joint responsibility of the SEND 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.

Our current SEND strategy was published in 2021 and runs until 2025. We have been reviewing the strategy over the last year and have coproduced new action plans for this academic year with representatives from across the area SEND partnership, including schools and education professionals, feedback from families, and professionals in health and social care.

This document outlines the 5 key priorities in the SEND strategy, some examples of the activities within each area for this academic year, how we'll know whether we've been successful, and how the local area partnership will monitor the plans.

# Introduction from the leaders of the area SEND partnership

## Mac Heath

Director of Childrens Services  
Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC)

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In Milton Keynes we have a proven history of growing our relationships and partnerships as we have grown as a city. We know that we can only achieve the best outcomes for our children, young people and their families with SEND if we work together in partnership in understanding need, shaping our system and delivery, and being committed to our children and young people to help them reach their potential. Our SEND strategy helps focus our approach in realising our ambition as a partnership, holding each other to account, to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people.

## Simon Hardcastle-Waugh

Deputy Chief Nurse  
Integrated Care Board -  
Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton  
Keynes (BLMK ICB)

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I am pleased and proud to be part of this Local Area Partnership that is focused on improving outcomes for children living in with SEND in MK. It is clear that no one organisation can do this alone and the SEND Strategy is one important step in ensuring that all stakeholder in the SEND local area partnership have been involved in agreeing what needs to change and how we are going to work together to bring about that change.

## Susan Akhtar

Chair  
Parents and Carers Alliance Milton  
Keynes (PACA MK)

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Parent and Carers Alliance MK (PACA MK) is an independent and voluntary group of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs. We work in collaboration with service providers to influence change in health, education and social care in Milton Keynes. Our parent and carer representatives meet with decision makers to share the experiences of parents and to ensure that their views are heard. PACA MK representatives were involved in the creation of the five workstreams in the MK SEND strategy. We will continue to ensure the voice of parents and carers is heard in the development and improvement of local services, and to engage with families in the area to ensure that the action plans are focusing on the key areas for development in Milton Keynes. PACA MK are pleased to see that the workstreams now all have key measures of success (2024) and we are looking forward to sharing details of the outcomes.

# What do we mean by ‘SEND’?

‘SEND’ stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. The SEND Code of Practice 2015 gives a legal definition of Special Educational Needs (pages 15-16): A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child or young person with SEND will need extra help that is additional to or different from their peers. This extra or different help is known as special educational provision.

Most children and young people will have their needs identified and met at an early stage and they will access support through their school or setting - this is known as SEND Support. Children and young people with the most significant needs will have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The EHCP is statutory and sets out clearly the child or young person’s SEND along with the provision they need to help them overcome the barriers to learning that their needs present.

Children and young people’s needs are categorised into one or more broad areas of need which can change over time. The four areas of need are known as:

- **Communication and Interaction**
- **Cognition and Learning**
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health**
- **Sensory and Physical**



As children with SEND grow up, it’s important to consider and prepare for their future, and the Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes Framework is a useful tool to consider special educational needs in four areas relating to the transition to adulthood:

- **Employment**
- **Independent Living**
- **Community Inclusion**
- **Good Health**

# Working in partnership - coproduction in action

In Milton Keynes we are committed to the process of 'coproduction'. Coproduction is defined as 'doing with'. It means that we always work to include families and professionals in decisions about individual care, as well as plans for how we deliver services in the area.

We believe that co-production enables our services to be:

- **Based on good relationships so that we can find solutions together**
- **Developed using first-hand experiences**
- **Delivering support that meets the needs of people who use it**
- **Accessible to those who need it**
- **Improved by the feedback we receive from people who use the service.**

We know that co-production has many benefits, not only of improving the experience for all involved in SEND but also by enabling a better 'fit' of services offered which are available to meet the needs and expectations of families. It's not always easy to coproduce – there can be barriers like time pressures, differing expectations and understanding of systems and services, difficult conversations between different parts of the area partnership, etc.

We hold the following principles in mind when coproducing in imperfect circumstances:

- **Identify key people and services/organisations and develop partnerships, systems and processes that support co-production**
- **Build common ground and shared language within and between key people, services/organisations and partnerships**
- **Co-explore needs and barriers**
- **Co-develop and then co-deliver solutions wherever possible**
- **Evaluate and adapt**

The SEND strategy has been coproduced with feedback from families and professionals from across the partnership, including PACA MK on all steering groups and SEND strategic boards. The area partnership will ensure that updates are regularly shared about the SEND priority areas and progress in improving outcomes and services for families, and are committed to listening to feedback and acting on it.

We are also excited to work closely with the SEND Youth Council which has recently been set up in Milton Keynes, who will support the development of youth voice within the strategy and action plans.



# The five priority workstreams

Each of the 5 priority areas has a steering group who meet twice a term to update about progress, and to plan next steps. These steering groups are made up of professionals from across education, health and social care, and they include 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.

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.

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 rest of this document outlines the five priority workstreams in Milton Keynes area SEND partnership and how we will monitor them. Each workstream is outlined as follows:

- **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.

# SEND Partnership Strategic Priorities

## Inclusion

### AIMS:

Children and young people are effectively included to achieve their full potential by accessing high quality inclusive practice

## Emotional and Social Wellbeing and Mental Health

### AIMS:

Children and young people enjoy positive mental health, emotional and social wellbeing and a sense of belonging through clear graduated pathways of support

## Complex Needs and Specialist Provision

### AIMS:

Effectively and efficiently meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs ensuring that they remain engaged with their education and their local community

## Autism and co-occurring differences

### AIMS:

Effectively meet the needs of children and young people with autism and co-occurring difficulties and their families through delivery of an integrated pathway of support leading to improved outcomes

## Preparing for Adulthood and Transitions

### AIMS:

Transitions for children and young people with SEND will be well planned and supported, and children will feel well prepared for their future

Milton Keynes Area SEND Partnership includes



# Inclusion - Identifying and Meeting Need

Children and young people in Milton Keynes are effectively included to achieve their full potential by accessing high quality inclusive practice

## We're working on:

A universally understood processes of identification of needs

Implementing the graduated response appropriately so that the right SEND support is provided at universal and targeted levels

Ensuring that EHCP's support children and young people to learn and thrive

Ensuring that children with EHCP's experience well planned and supported transitions between settings

Ensuring that the local area has a clear understanding of the quality of SEND provision and EHCP processes

## Activities this year will include:

Training to improve the understanding of processes for identification of SEND across the partnership (for education, health and care)

Updating our processes and our 'quality assurance framework' to ensure that we know how good our plans and services are, and that we're learning from this

Updating our local offer website with information about the types of education available in Milton Keynes, and who they are designed to support

Looking at the structure of annual reviews, and considering how we can make them more friendly and more focused on children and young people's ambitions

## We'll measure our success by monitoring:

The number of people attending training, and the feedback

Parents and young people's feedback about their own EHC plans and reviews

Outcomes of audits of our work

The number of children with SEND who are suspended from school



# Emotional and social wellbeing and mental health

Children and young people in Milton Keynes will enjoy positive mental health, emotional and social wellbeing and a sense of belonging through clear graduated pathways of support

## We're working on:

Promoting preventative approaches to well-being and resilience

Developing the graduated pathway of support for CYP experiencing emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)

A better understanding of unmet mental health needs for CYP with SEND and ensuring that appropriate intervention options are available

Responsive mental health support for CYP in crisis

## Activities this year will include:

Developing a new regular meeting between education health and care to ensure that children who are experiencing EBSA are regularly reviewed and helped to access appropriate services

Case studies of those experiencing EBSA who also have autism and anxiety to ensure we learn from what has worked to support some children and what hasn't

Extending the Mental Health in Schools Team to cover more schools in the area

Reviewing the referral guidelines for our local specialist setting for children and young people who are unable to access education for mental health reasons

## We'll measure our success by monitoring:

The number of part time timetables in the area and how long they have been in place

The number of referrals to CAMHS and whether they are accepted

Parents and young people's feedback about the services they receive

The number of children and young people who are admitted to specialist inpatient services

# Specialist provision for complex needs

Effectively and efficiently meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs ensuring that they remain engaged with their education and their local community

## We're working on:

Planning and commissioning of local specialist SEND provision that meets and responds to local need

An appropriate education for children and young people with health needs or where no school is able to meet need (EOTAS)

## Activities this year will include:

Publishing information for families about what options are available to young people with SEND when they turn 16

Working with a new short breaks provider to provide more social activities for children eligible for short break support

A long term project to open new provisions on mainstream school sites, for children and young people who need specialist support due to autism and behaviours that challenge

Ensuring our processes for supporting children who are unable to attend school due to health reasons are working as they should

## We'll measure our success by monitoring:

How far children travel from their home when they are not educated in a mainstream setting

How many children are educated in a setting that isn't a school

How many families follow a legal route to challenge the school placement for their child

# Autism and co-occurring differences

Effectively meets the needs of children and young people with autism and co-occurring differences and their families through delivery of an integrated pathway of support leading to improved outcomes

## We're working on:

An integrated pathway of support from early concerns through to post diagnosis

Schools in Milton Keynes are well equipped to ensure the inclusion of children and young people with autism and social communication needs

## Activities this year will include:

Publishing a guide of local services that support children and young people with autism and associated differences, developed by PACA MK

Developing a joined-up training offer for autism

Building up our knowledge of educational progress and achievement towards outcomes for children and young people with autism, and considering which support is working and what might benefit from development

Exploring options for reducing waiting times for autism and ADHD assessments

## We'll measure our success by monitoring:

The number of children and young people with social communication needs who are experiencing school absence – either because of a part time timetable or suspensions from school

Feedback from families about how simple it is to find information about available support

Waiting times for autism and ADHD assessments

# Preparing for adulthood and transitions

Transitions for children and young people with SEND will be well planned and supported, and children will feel well prepared for their future

## We're working on:

A coproduced, integrated 14-25yr pathway for preparing for adulthood (PfA)

EHCP's and annual reviews support seamless and supportive transition and preparation for the future

## Activities this year will include:

Promoting annual health checks for young people with learning difficulties to reduce health inequalities

Coproducing a feedback tool for young people and families to share their experiences of preparing for adulthood

Reviewing and updating cross-team processes for transition from children to adult's health and social care services

Developing expectations around young people's involvement in their EHC plans and ensuring that annual reviews capture the voice of young people

## We'll measure our success by monitoring:

Feedback from parents and young people about access to information and services relating to adulthood

The number of young people who are accessing education, employment or training

How often young people's views are included in their EHC plans and reviews

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# For more information

Visit the SEND Strategy pages on the Local Offer - [www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk/send-strategy](http://www.mksendlocaloffer.co.uk/send-strategy)

For more information about PACA MK, visit their website - [www.pacamk.org](http://www.pacamk.org)

To get in touch with us about this strategy or the priority plans - [local.offer.feedback@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:local.offer.feedback@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

The partnership will share more information about the strategy and progress towards the plans in the autumn term.

