



SEND update

Key information for
SENCOs in MK schools

Welcome from Sarah Ray- SEND Assessment Practice Leader

A belated Happy New Year and welcome to the third edition of the SENCO Update newsletter. We hope that you managed to get a rest in over the festive holiday period, although its imagined it feels like a long time ago now. Let's hope any New Years resolutions are still holding strong.



The SEND Inclusion forum continues to be well attended and feedback remains positive this academic year: 97% of respondents felt that they understood the next steps and were able to share / explain these to parents; 99% felt that the forum process allows for open and supportive discussion in relation to the assessment process; and 100% felt listened to and able to share views of the school/setting . It is great to note that we have health colleagues in attendance at the majority of forums and the input and learning from this is valuable to all. We are working closely with special school representatives to gain input from them as well as social care, this continues to ensure a collaborative approach is taken in regards to a child / young person educational journey. As a team we continue to reflect on feedback received and improve the experience for all. If you feel that you are able to host forum then please let us know via EHCP@milton-keynes.gov.uk. We would require a room big enough to host 20 adults alongside a wifi connection.

We continue to offer our [SENCO quadrant meetings](#), it is pleasing to see how supportive they are to SENCO's, the [centralised training](#) booklet is updated and on the [Local Offer](#) and our requests for involvements from the Specialist teacher team offer remains in place.

We look forward to continuing to work with you in a variety of ways over the rest of the academic year.

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 pages](#) 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.

We would also like to say a huge thank you to the staff members that supported this session!

Have you considered having a SEND Youth Council in your school?

If so, we're keen to hear from you and explore opportunities to collaborate with the MKCC SEND Youth Council. We would love to link the MKCC SEND Youth Council to your school SEND Youth Councils, setting up a system of associates to participate in wider activities and projects. Please feel free to contact us via email at SENDYouthCouncil@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Education technology for inclusion – manage persistent school absence with the telepresence robot, AV1.

AV1 No Isolation Robots: Secondary Information session 5 March 2024, 9am – 10am

We'd like to invite secondary SENCOs or relevant leads to a session on **5 March 9am – 10am** to learn about AV1 No Isolation Robots and how it's helping to tackle persistence absence, including pupils with [EBSA](#) across the UK. We value your thoughts and views on this technology, and there will be an opportunity to ask questions. If interested in joining this session, please email nina.broderick@milton-keynes.gov.uk to confirm your attendance before 1 March 2024.

If you'd like to learn more about AV1 before signing up, please click the links below:

[AV1 - Home](#)

[AV1 - Case Studies](#)



Part-time timetables

The SEND Team receives regular queries regarding the use of part-time timetables and is aware that there are occasions where schools are considering their use for CYP with identified SEND needs. We would like to remind schools of the statutory DfE guidance to take into consideration when such decisions are made in agreement with parents as a short term support in **exceptional** circumstances.

The DfE guidance states the following: *'The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have... A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour... A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution'*.

Both the national guidance and local guidance relating to expected processes must be considered and applied when making decisions:

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Part-time school timetables | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](http://milton-keynes.gov.uk)

Literacy Difficulties guidance

Following a task and finish group held in the autumn term attended by SENCOs representing a range of schools, there has been a further review of the draft Literacy Difficulties Guidance. Due to this review, a further task and finish group is underway to ensure the guidance, which includes the MK position around 'Dyslexia', is easily accessible for all enabling understanding and improved practice on this area. Further updates to follow in upcoming [SENCo Quadrant Meetings](#).

A huge thank you to the SENCOs, Literacy leaders, primary and secondary schools involved in the creation of this guidance.



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.



SEND Inclusion Forum update

After the February half term break, following feedback from SENCOs that pen portraits do not consistently accurately reflect the CYP being considered for assessment, a different system will be trialled for two half terms. To replace the pen portrait information, we shall be trialling the use of set structured questions at the start of your introduction to the child/young person which will be shared ahead of time within your invitation to attend the SEND Inclusion Forum. The questions will be similar information to the pen portrait information such as year group, attendance, main need/s etc. We shall be gathering feedback before moving into the final 6 weeks of the summer term.

High Needs Top Up Funding

The HNTUF guidance and processes are currently being reviewed and further updates on this will be shared following the half term break.

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 minuted, 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

A consistent theme shared through all the quadrant meetings was how to support the secondary SENCO representation in the meetings due to low secondary numbers. We will explore with SENCOs if a secondary only meeting this academic year would be supportive.

North: SENCOs found the EHC/SEN plan audits to be beneficial. There was an expressed interest in seeing examples of well-structured SEND Support Plans. Regarding the SENCO group, it has not been established yet, but plans were made to initiate this. The discussion mainly revolved around topics such as High Needs Top-Up Funding (HNTUF), trigger points, how things change over the year and looking at group provision.

East: The quadrant was well attended. The main item on the agenda was a problem solving activity led by Samantha Upchurch, Educational Psychologist. Colleagues enjoyed discussing suggestions and solutions and said they found it helpful. It was decided to develop this activity in future meetings.

South: SENCOs discussed creating a transition template capturing pupil voice-secondary school led this and there was discussion around what this might contain. They are going to produce a document for next time to share. Some schools suggested that they would be interested in auditing - but concerns were shared as to burden of additional meetings. Concerns raised re: SEND Support Plans for secondaries, and referral routes into SEND Support

West: The discussion revolved around the local SENCO support groups and their current status. Feedback highlighted the challenge of scheduling meetings at a convenient time for everyone, leading to lower attendance rates. However, the main focus was on the Supervision information shared by the Educational Psychology Service, which all felt was beneficial. This information provided valuable insights into shaping conversations and effectively managing supervision sessions, whether among peers or within the school setting.

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

The Specialist Teaching Teams continue to receive a high demand for direct support with well over 100 children and young people allocated to team members every month. The SEND Team would like to remind settings/schools that when contacting the SEND Support Line for direct support, the graduated approach will have been applied to supporting the children/young people, this will ordinarily involve at least 2 cycles of APDR using a SEND Support Plan. Please also consider the use of advice for groups of pupils with similar needs rather than multiple requests for individual pupils to make the best use of the resource available.

In addition, when making an EHC needs assessment request, the locally agreed [assessment guidelines](#) to assess advise that external agency involvement will have ordinarily supported the APDR process for the children/young people, and does not relate specifically to the involvement of the Inclusion Specialist Teaching Team. If there is current external agency involvement, please note that the Specialist Teaching Team would not typically be involved during the same period as this can lead to multiple outcomes and potentially conflicting advice.

With national offer day for secondary places on the 1st March, we know that schools will be arranging conversations and transition plans between primary and secondary schools. Please find [transition advice and support](#) available on our [SEND Local Offer](#).

Early Years Team

Our Early Years SENCo Meeting last month focused on how we might support groups of children with SEND in our early years settings- some of our providers shared how they are adjusting their offer to ensure that all children are included (eg: smaller story times with different resources for different ages/stages, and flexible use of sensory spaces).

We look forward to seeing as many early years providers as possible at our next SENCo Meeting on 07.03.24 at 17.00.

Assessment Team

With the majority of EHC need assessment requests continuing to be made by settings and schools (64% Sept – Dec '23) and a significant 33% increase overall in requests made during this autumn term '23 compared with autumn '22, we would like to remind settings and schools of the revised locally agreed [EHC need assessment guidance](#) to support with the right time to make requests. Within this [guidance](#) it advises that typically two terms of APDR information will be available at the time of the assessment request and that all outcomes have been reviewed.

Review Team

For annual reviews that have been held up until the end of January, 69% of paperwork has been received by the team within 2 weeks of the meeting date - thank you to all schools that have returned paperwork promptly as this enables us to keep up to date records for our CYP. We are processing paperwork as quickly as we can, however to further support the team please remember that the Annual Review Report must be returned with your recommended amendments, with the meeting date included. Please find the [Annual review guidance and template](#) on the

[SEND Local Offer.](#)

Sensory Team

[Please find an update from the Sensory Team on the subject of glue ear.](#)

EHCP Outcome Data

You will shortly be receiving an email with information about updating the EHCP outcome data for any CYP who had annual reviews during the autumn term. Thank you to those schools that have returned your data for 2022 - 2023. Where we have not had your data yet we will reach out about this.

Further advice on outcomes can be found in the [Annual Review Guidance and Templates 2023 – 2024](#), if you have any questions please email EHCP@milton-keynes.gov.uk

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

With it being Children's Mental Health week last 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 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.

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



Children's Mental Health Week

Children's Mental Health Week 2024 took place from 5-11 February.

[Place2Be](#) launched the mental health awareness week in 2015 to empower, equip and give a voice to every child in the UK.

Every year Children's Mental Health Week sees hundreds of schools, children, parents and carers taking part. Now in its 10th year, they hope to encourage more people than ever to help us reach our goal that no child or young person has to face a mental health problem alone.

Each year, they create **free resources** so that as many people as possible can take part. Take a look at our resources for [schools](#) and [families, parents and carers](#).



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)
- 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

5th July 2024 - 08:00 - 16:30 nasen LIVE 2024: Inclusive Action in Practice

Unlock a world of innovation, inclusion, and inspiration at nasen LIVE 2024! Join leading specialists, educators, and advocates as we explore the future of SEND. Be part of an unmissable experience, gain invaluable insights, and help make a meaningful impact to the sector at this in-person CPD conference.

nasen LIVE 2024 is committed to serving the diverse interests and needs of all attendees. We look forward to seeing you July 5th, 2024!

[nasen LIVE 2024: Inclusive Practice in Action | Nasen](#)

[Council for Disabled Children EYSEND - Ordinarily Available Provision in the Early Years National Seminar](#)

Attend this seminar to find out more about:

- What is required under the Children and Families Act and Equality Act
- The wider benefits of having an agreement about provision

- Examples and shared learning from recent EYSEND Partnership work

This seminar is open to practitioners in from all local areas and parents and carers.

Milton Keynes SEND 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 and [information for schools](#) where you will be signposted to information and advice.

Information for schools and SENCos tile

In our last newsletter we shared we held a Local Offer working group looking at the information available for SENCo's on the Local Offer and how we can make accessing this information easier. We are excited to share these changes have been made and we now have a dedicated [Information for schools and SENCos tile](#) in our [Education and SEND section](#) of the Local Offer.

Here you can find the following information:

- [SENCo quadrant meetings and SEND update newsletter](#)
- [Support in school](#)
- [Centralised training for professionals](#)
- [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) Support Plans](#)
- [Education, Health and Care plans and processes \(EHCPs\)](#)
- [Emotionally Based School Avoidance \(EBSA\)](#)

We are meeting later this week to continue to review and improve the information available.



[Information for schools and SENCos](#)

Information, support and resources for professionals working in 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](#).
