



Welcome from Nina Broderick: Inclusion Service Leader

It's hard to believe that we find ourselves approaching the Easter break before entering the Summer term. It's certainly been a busy Spring term with the conclusion of our Local Area SEND inspection Friday 8th March after 3 weeks of activity.

Thank you again for your responsiveness and support to the surveys when the call came during the half term break. Thank you also to those settings and schools involved directly with meetings and visits from inspectors. The formal outcome is confidential until the report is received (likely 6 – 8 weeks) and will be shared in Heads up and the SEND Update newsletters as soon as we can.

It was lovely to be able to share our headline data with the inspectors which showed the excellent engagement from settings and schools with the SEND Support offer from the SEND Team. Since September 2023, this included **all** MK schools using the SEND Support Line at least once, majority of schools signing up to our SEND Updates newsletter (75%), Nearly three quarters of schools attending one of more centralised training session and most schools having attended at least one quadrant meeting.

I hope you find the information in our SEND Updates newsletter supportive and informative to your work. Should you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter Alicia and I as editors would love to hear your suggestions, please contact us at SENDNewsletter@milton-keynes.gov.uk

We wish you a lovely Easter break and look forward to seeing you on our return in our first [SENCo Quadrant meeting](#) that will take place during the second week of the Summer term.

Janet Probert

We received unexpected news that our former and much loved colleague, Janet Probert, sadly passed away on the 11 March. Janet was a Specialist Teacher who worked as

part of the SEND Team for over 18 years and had recently retired.

Many of you will have been supported in your role as SENCo by Janet over the years and would recognise how dedicated and passionate she was to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND in MK.

Janet will be deeply missed by all who were lucky enough to work with and know her.

Janet had a passion for literacy and supporting children and young people with specific learning difficulties. She also was also an advocate for supporting the wellbeing of all those she came into contact with. With this in mind, we would like to invite you to join us in memory of Janet to 'do something remarkable' as she did for us, with reference to literacy or well-being. Perhaps this could be something for yourself like finishing an unfinished novel, writing an original poem to share and inspire others, or a good deed to support someone you come into contact with.

SEND Youth Council - March meeting

In our session we reflected on the meeting with Ofsted and CQC inspectors, the young people were happy to share their experiences of the meeting and felt their involvement was positive. The SEND Team representatives were able to share their appreciation to the young people for sharing their experiences.

Our first project that we will be looking at is the young people's section of the [SEND Local Offer](#), the SEND Youth Council had time to look at the pages and the headings that fall under the [support for young people and preparation for adulthood section](#) and had some great initial ideas to improve the site. We acknowledge that this is a big project for us and we are going to look at reviewing and updating the information then the promotion of the information to other young people with SEND!



Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Steering Group – Moving Forwards

In order to drive forward aims and actions as set out within the SEND Strategy area of Mental Health and Wellbeing relating to EBSA, a multi-professional EBSA Steering Group was established during the Autumn term 2023 to offer a collaborative approach to understanding and meeting the needs of children and young people with an EBSA need in Milton Keynes.

The aims of the Steering Group include:

- To represent the views of health, education and children's social care, parent/carers and children and young people
- To provide opportunities for multi professional problem solving
- To address concerns and challenges that impact CYP with EBSA
- To assess/understand the prevalence of needs across the EBSA continuum, including entrenched EBSA.
- To drive forward strategic planning to address the needs of CYP with EBSA
- To contribute to improving and developing support and services for CYP with EBSA
- To improve the educational outcomes, including mental health and wellbeing, of CYP with EBSA

By the end of this academic year, the steering group have planned to review and refresh the current MK EBSA guidance. As a part of this review process, the steering group has compiled a survey for school SENCOs and/or school leaders with an EBSA responsibility

to complete. In addition to the survey informing the review of the guidance, it is also your opportunity to express your views in relation to EBSA support and what we can do differently going forward.

The survey will take no longer than 5 – 8 minutes to complete and comprises of 13 multiple choice questions.

To access the survey, please use the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/rt1U1Byzbn> We would be grateful if you could please complete this survey by **Friday 26th April 2024**.

In addition, we are looking for a further secondary school and a primary school to be a part of the EBSA steering group, this will require a commitment of attending one meeting every half term. If you would be interested in finding out more, please contact nina.broderick@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) is a national programme funded by the Shared Outcomes Fund and delivered between the Department for Education (DfE), NHS England (NHSE) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). The aims and progress of this project is overseen by the MK Deal CYP Steering Group and the SEND strategy workstream area: Autism and Co-occurring Differences.

Thank you to all our schools who responded, this week the final list of 40 primary

schools have signed up and we are about to start a self-audit process ahead of support being delivered to the schools between September 2024 – March 2025.

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

Thank you to the many secondary and primary schools that attended the AV1 No Isolation Robots information session yesterday (27.03.24). Attendees got to find out more about the technology and how it's helping to tackle persistence absence, including pupils with health needs and [EBSA](#) across 50 local Authorities and over 1000 schools across the UK.

If you missed the session but would like to learn more about AV1, its impact and uses, please click the links below:

[AV1 - Home](#)

[AV1 - Case Studies](#)



Short break update - Free Easter Activities

Please share the information below with parents/carers of children and young people with an EHCP.

We are working to improve our Short Breaks Service by introducing a new online booking system which will be coming soon. This will enable our children and young people to access a greater range of leisure activities.

For Easter, we are providing a range of FREE activities for children and young people with an EHCP in Milton Keynes. This offer is available to all eligible families

to access over the school holidays. For most activities, places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Bookings for these events open available via the [link](#).

When you look at the activities please take note of the information around whether parents/carers need to attend as this may make a difference to you. Please also note that we are unable to provide transport.

We hope you enjoy the range of free activities we have on offer for you this Easter holiday and wish you a restful break with family and friends.



sportWorks



As you may know, the short breaks service providers are changing from Barnardos to sportworks. Following our initial meeting, we're thrilled to welcome sportworks to the short breaks program. sportworks will launch their services during the May half term and will spend the next half term familiarising themselves with the families who will benefit from their service.

We would like to thank Barnardos for their support to the children, young people, and families over the years, and we wish them all the best for the future.

Please find further information on the sportworks short breaks offer [here](#).



Children with Disability Team is changing.

As of 01 April, the children with disability service will be changing the way in which we support families.

The team is splitting into three. There will be two teams that will support families who need social work support, and the third team will be supporting the families who access a short break only.

If you are a part of the Short Break Team it will mean that we will work in a different way with your family. Children will not have an allocated worker, but the small team will share the responsibility of liaising with you and assessing needs, alongside relevant colleagues/agencies and these may result in a bigger presence at the EHCP meetings, so that we can condense the several meetings you currently have to one a year.

The Team Manager is Mandy Fell. Many of you know Mandy as she has been working for the Milton Keynes Children with Disability Team for over 20 years. Mandy will be working alongside our experienced team, Karen Brammer, Tracey Collet, Chanee Randall, and Sophia Natale

HAF – Spring Offer

Our Spring Activities and Food programme will be taking place **Monday 8 April to Thursday 11 April 2024** – providing over 8,200 free activity and food sessions for children, young people and their families who are in receipt of benefit related Free School Meals.

The programme will go live on **Monday 19 March** via the [online booking system here](#).

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

The spring offer will take place in 55 locations across MK, including 11 locations with dedicated support for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

How do eligible families access provision – what do schools need to do?

We will be using vouchers through Wonde [Holiday Activities platform](#) to enable families on benefit related free school meals to access the HAF programme.

Most Schools are on the automated system provided by the [Holiday Activities platform](#), this means you can automatically distribute HAF vouchers, free, to your eligible families with no further ordering process required. All other schools will have been directly contacted by support@holidayactivities.com to confirm automation or order vouchers.

E-vouchers will be sent to eligible families from hello@holidayactivities.com by **19 March** and will include a link directly to the booking system where eligible families will be able to view the HAF programme and exchange their voucher for up to 4 days of activities and food through the [online booking system](#).

If you have any questions, please do contact the HAF team HAF@milton-keynes.gov.uk

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](#).

The SEND Team would like to thank all SENCOs and colleagues that support our children and young people in schools. We wish you a restful Easter break!



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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](#).

