



SEND update

Key information for
SENCOs in MK schools

Welcome from Nina Broderick - Inclusion Service leader

Dear colleagues,

As we come to the end of the academic year, we would like to thank you for all the fantastic work you do and the difference you make to the outcomes of our children and young people with SEND across the city of Milton Keynes.

We have particularly enjoyed working more closely with you this year in various ways including through our SEND Strategy working groups, SENCo quadrant meetings, attendance at the SEND Inclusion Forum, centralised training sessions and through your contributions to surveys. The SEND Team is currently working on an end of year data summary and we are looking forward to sharing the highlights with you at the start of the new academic year.



There are many positive local and national changes to come as we move into the new academic year which will include further developments in light of our Ofsted and CQC SEND inspection, and updates following the Change Programme which is currently testing proposed changes to the SEND and AP system in England. From September, we see the opening of our new SEND units offering much needed specialist places and the consultation of our co-produced Ordinarily Available Provision documents.

On behalf of the SEND Team, we hope you have a well-deserved restful summer break and we look forward to working with you again in September.

Meet the Team Principal Educational Psychologist - Rachel Caldwell

Hello I'm Rachel Caldwell and I was appointed to the position of principal Educational Psychologist earlier this month. I have been an Educational Psychologist for nearly 25 years, having started my career in Birmingham. More recently I worked in Luton where I worked across the social care and education teams.



I have previously worked in Milton Keynes and am very excited about being back here. I live just outside of the city and have seen it grow and flourish over the years. It has some of the best green spaces compared to any other UK city and there is so much to offer children and families.

We have recently started a Twitter (X) page so please find us and follow us at MKEPS.

Inspection Action Plan – MK Area SEND Partnership

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) visited Milton Keynes earlier this year to conduct an Area SEND Inspection. After an inspection report is published, Ofsted and the CQC require that the local area partnership updates their strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in the report.

We have now completed the action plan which outlines the work that our partnership will do over the coming years to respond to the areas for improvement, and how this fits with other strategic work that we are doing to improve services for children and young people with SEND in Milton Keynes.

Take a look [here!](#)



SEND Support Line

The SEND Team have made some changes to the SEND Support Line. Over the summer break this will be an email only service. The emails will be monitored between 9.30 and 12.30 Tuesday to Thursday during the summer holidays. Depending on the query this will either be replied via email or you will receive a call back.

For general advice you can view the Local Offer following this [link](#) that offers a wealth of information on SEND.

Ordinarily available provision document

As part of the *Inclusion (identifying and meeting needs)* SEND Strategy area, during the spring and summer terms managers from the Specialist Teaching Teams have been coproducing Ordinarily Available Provision documents with schools and settings. These documents aim to set out a consistent approach to supporting children and young people with SEND in MK settings and schools. A further consultation of these documents will take place in the autumn term through Head and SENCo quadrant meetings.

Thank you to settings and schools that have supported us with this important work.

FACT/FACT+ document review

As a part of the *Autism and Co-occurring differences* SEND Strategy area, we are in the process of setting up a representative working group to review the current use of the FACT/FACT+ documents. We are particularly looking at the successes and challenges of the document, how it informs support, the use of it within our current diagnostic pathways and what this means for settings and schools. This work will inform next steps regarding the document's use in Milton Keynes as part of the autism diagnostic pathway and its use in settings/schools.

Thank you to all the 30 plus settings/schools that have expressed an interest in supporting with this work during the autumn term '24, confirmation regarding the sessions will be shared in the coming days via email.

Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Update

As a part of the *Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health* SEND Strategy area, you will be aware that an EBSA steering group was established at the beginning of this academic year. The EBSA steering group has been working towards reviewing and improving the current data, support and understanding of services on this area with the view to making recommendations for improvements to meeting need. An important part of the work this year has focussed on working towards a review of the current EBSA guidance to schools and we are pleased to share that an initial draft will be shared and consulted with schools during the Autumn term '24.

We are still looking for good practice examples, if you are able to share an anonymous example to be included within the document, please contact either [Nina Broderick](#) or [Hayley Prickett](#).

Team updates

The SEND Team wanted to share an update on our Specialist Teaching Team as we have two of our long standing colleagues retiring at the end of the academic year.

We wanted to take this opportunity to thank Chris and Sally for all their dedication to our children and young people with SEND and the positive impact they have had. We wish them all the best in their exciting new adventures!

Christina White

I have worked in Milton Keynes for the last 24 years, firstly at Redway school and then working for SENDIAS and then the SEND team in early years and moving onto work in schools. It has been an amazing time and have really enjoyed working with so many fantastic colleagues, schools, settings and families. I still get so much pleasure in seeing students progress and working with everyone to enable them to reach their potential, along with supporting those around them to explore effective strategies. My decision to retire was made with mixed feelings, as I will miss everyone and so many aspects of the role, but am looking forward to spending some time travelling, riding my bike and exploring new hobbies and opportunities.



Sally Cass

After 37 years in teaching, 30 of them in Milton Keynes, I have made the decision to retire at the end of the academic year. My time in Milton Keynes has been spent both in schools and in the Local Authority and it has been a pleasure to work with so many colleagues and children during this time: in fact I now find myself working with the children of former pupils. I feel privileged to have worked with so many amazing colleagues and to have been involved with so many families over such a long period of time and to see children develop and grow into responsible adults.



My husband tells me I'll be bored by Christmas so who knows what the longer term future will hold but right now I have no particular plans for my retirement other than to go on holiday in term time for the first time since 1976 (!), to pick up my neglected hobbies and to tend my newly acquired allotment.

23-24 EHC Outcome Data

Thank you to schools that have already returned updated documents for the end of year EHC Outcome Data. Where this hasn't yet been returned we ask that it is updated to reflect all Annual Reviews that were due and held this academic year before the end of day on Friday 19 July to our [EHCP mailbox](#) please.

Outcome data

As part of our SEND Inclusion Strategy work, we would like to understand more as

a local area about how schools gather outcome data for their CYP with an EHCP, and how it is used. To aid us with this, we ask that you complete this very simple survey [here](#). The survey will take no more than 5 minutes to complete and we would welcome responses by 22 July.

We need your views!

Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy surveys for schools

As shared in the most recent edition of 'Heads Up', the SEND Team are currently reviewing the commissioned service offer of our school Speech and Language Therapy Service and Occupational Therapy offer. We are sharing two survey links for these services to understand how the services are currently used and your views on how effectively they meet need. The information gathered will be used to understand what changes are required moving into the next academic year.

The surveys consist of 21 largely multiple choice questions and will take approximately 6 minutes to complete. Thank you in advance for your involvement with this important work to shape our future service offer.

[Speech and Language Therapy Feedback](#)

[Occupational Therapy Feedback](#)

High Needs Top Up Funding (HNTUF) request updates

Proposed changes and improvements to HNTUF requests and decisions, taking onboard your feedback during the course of this academic year have been discussed and finalised via Head Quadrant meetings. To support with strategic planning with regards to funding, please note that only one request per term may now be submitted for all HNTUF requests for your school. For an overview of all updates, please find here a [link](#) to the new guidance to refer to when making a HNTUF request.

SEND Youth Council

The SEND Youth Council met for the final time this academic year. The focus on this session was a reflection of the positive changes that the SEND Youth Council have achieved so far.

It was also an opportunity to thank the young people for all their hard work over the last six months.

The group discussed some of the topics/themes they would like to look at next year

and the group gave their feedback on some of the services in Milton Keynes.

The SEND Youth Council shared some inspirational quotes on what being part of the SEND Youth Council has meant to them. We will be sharing these on our [SEND Local Offer!](#)

The SYC are also considering what they would like to be called, the group have come up with some fantastic suggestions. The SYC will vote in the autumn term - we will update everyone with our new SEND Youth Council name.

We are looking for new members to join our SEND Youth Council!

Are you a young person with SEND who is passionate about making a difference for children and young people with SEND in Milton Keynes?

We have four vacancies in our SEND Youth Council, minimum age being year 5.

We are looking for young people to join our SEND Youth Council to:

- Share your experiences of education, health and social care
- Represent the views of young people with SEND in Milton Keynes and make positive changes!
- Attend a SEND Youth Council meeting every half term with a member of staff from school or supporting adult

If you would like to find out more information about joining please contact SENDYouthCouncil@milton-keynes.gov.uk



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.

North:

Attendance at the North meeting was disappointing on this occasion we are looking for your contributions to ensure these meetings are meaningful to support your attendance. Similar topics were discussed as for the other quadrant meetings, which included an interesting discussion around SEND register.

A huge thank you to Sophie from Portfields, who has been the vice-chair of the meetings this year!

East:

The East Quadrant had a really useful discussion with creative suggestions about ways of developing the meetings. Schools were appreciative of the opportunity to meet colleagues face to face and share the challenges of SEND work in schools. There was also a lively discussion about the SEND register and how it is used by schools, which allowed everyone to reflect on good practice. A big thank you to Michael Scott, who has been the vice-chair of the meetings this year and thank you to Lucy Rogers from Oakgrove School, who has agreed to be the vice-chair for 2023-24.

South:

The South SENCo quadrant meeting was hosted by Cold Harbour school with good attendance noted alongside the positive impact of the SENCos own WhatsApp group. During the meeting, we had a positive discussion around school SEN registers and autism. We discussed the LA EOTAS policy, phased transfer arrangements and centralised training sessions. We also discussed the various working groups that are taking place linked to our local area SEND Strategy and thoughts around the soon to be statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. We wished Natalie Rutherford from Rickley Park all the best in her new role and a gave huge thank you to Michelle Lasky from Cold Harbour for agreeing to continue on in the role as SENCo co-chair until Jan 2025.

West:

Attendance in the West Quadrant has always been consistent and we thank you all for your time and contributions this year.

In our final meeting for the year we looked at the EOTAS policy and has discussion around some key areas. We had an insightful discussion into the use of our SEND registers and the criteria for children who are named on this. We highlighted the nuance surrounding this and how the SEND Code of practice can be interpreted here. Allie Tranter shared the Phase Transfer process and offer clarification where required.

We had some time to reflect on the Quadrants and felt there was value in face to face meetings but would like the blended offer next year of some TEAMS and some in person. It was recognised that this Quadrant find the sessions extremely helpful for updates and networking opportunities.

Thank you to Juliette Phillips who has been an excellent co-chair and for hosting at Oxley Park. Giles Brook school have kindly volunteered to be the next host school for the West Quadrant.

Early Years:

This term we were joined by Tina Price (Children and Family Centres Manager), who shared a helpful picture on the range of support available across MK at our

centres. We hope it gave our early years providers lots of ideas for how they can signpost families for support, especially over the summer break.

With transition arrangements well underway, we also shared some tips for supporting transition- all of which can be found on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

We look forward to having a range of guest speakers at our EY SenCo meetings during 2024-25- please look out for the meeting dates on the SEND Local Offer, and invites via email.

As shared in the most recent SENCo Quadrant meeting, the format and timings are the meetings are currently being reviewed having taken on board your feedback and other meetings such as the Head quadrant meetings that take place. Further information regarding dates, times and locations for your diary for SENCo Quadrant meetings are due to be shared before we break for the Summer on the following link to the LO.

SEND Team Updates:

Specialist Teaching Team Updates

The Specialist Teaching Team would like to thank you for working in partnership with us this year to support the needs of our MK children and families.

We will be launching the new Centralised Training offer in September; this will be shared with SENDCos and updated on the local offer. In the Autumn term we will also be sharing our Ordinarily Available Provision guidance which has been a successful partnership project; we have been working with over 23 schools, SALT, OT, EPs and Social Care to develop this very useful document which we hope will further support our SEND children in schools.

We look forward to seeing you in the Autumn term and wish you a restful summer break.

Early Years Team

Our team have had a very busy year- with over 400 referrals received from our colleagues in Health, and early years providers. We know our early years providers have been working exceptionally hard to meet the needs of our children and families- please know that your efforts are very much appreciated.

We would like to say thank you to all colleagues who have joined our Early Years SenCo Meetings- your contributions and suggestions for future learning topics have been valued.

We are proud of the way groups of settings and representatives from health have come together to enthusiastically support with the development of the Ordinarily Available Provision Document for children in the Early Years and look forward to sharing this in the new academic year.

Lastly we would like to wish those who are having a summer break a restful time- and for those who are continuing to work with children over the summer please

contact our SEND Support Line should you need advice or support.

EPS

The EPS have welcomed Rachel Caldwell as the Principal Educational Psychologist and Chelsea Markwell to the team as a full-time EP in September.

For those schools who have joined the Making Connections project, [please get in touch to book in](#) your 'PATH' planning session with our EP team. If summer term is looking difficult to get dates in the diary, perhaps consider early September.

Don't forget, we are now up and running on X (formerly Twitter). Feel free to follow us @psychologyMKEPS!

Assessment Team and Review Team

Forum dates for the next academic year will be available shortly on the LO. Forums do continue over the holiday period however these are not open to schools or settings for attendance. The assessment team will be continuing to work over the holiday period and will be consulting with schools, sending out drafts etc however there is no expectation for schools to respond during the holiday period, as appropriate dates for responses will be adjusted to coincide with term dates.

Could SENDCos please ensure that any updated Appendices C are submitted prior to the end of term, as this will allow us to share them with professionals as required.

Sensory Team

As we approach the end of this academic year, I firstly wanted to say an enormous 'Thank you' to all the SENCos who have supported the children and young people with Sensory (hearing, vision and multi-sensory) needs in their settings. Secondly, the Sensory Team are currently supporting transitions of pupils moving from one setting to another. If you require support please contact us and we will endeavour to do our best to support you. For those pupils with sensory needs remaining in your setting, please can you store away any equipment they use over the Summer break. Pupils who are moving setting, their equipment move will be arranged with you. We will also be requesting end of term attainment and progress data from you.

Finally, the Sensory Team are making arrangements in preparation for the Autumn Term 2024 – If you have pupils with sensory needs in your setting please arrange training so that you and your staff have knowledge of the levels of sensory needs the pupil has and the strategies which will support them to continue to make progress in your setting.

Have a lovely, relaxing Summer break and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Uday Thakrar, Head of the Sensory Team

Centralised Training Update

We are currently finalising the Centralised SEND Training Offer for the new academic year and look forward to sharing this at beginning of term. This will be shared on the following [link](#) when ready.

For further information on training from other sources please find information on the Local Offer!

Developing and using signing

SALT are offering a [one day course](#) will give you confidence to use Signalong signs to develop language and communication skills; supporting children and young people to use signing effectively.

Milton Keynes SEND Local Offer

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:

- [SEND Local Offer website](#)
- [SEND Local Offer Facebook Page](#)
- [SEND Newsletter for parents and carers](#) - this months newsletter contains a wealth of information on short breaks, HAF and other holiday activities.



Calendar of events

Please share with your parents and carers that our SEND specific calendar of events is available on the [SEND Local Offer](#). This valuable resource is designed to keep parents informed about the upcoming activities and events tailored for children and young people with special educational needs.

Please encourage parents/carers to sign up to the newsletter using this [link](#).

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](#).

We would like to wish all our SEND colleagues a restful summer break and we look forward to welcoming you back in the autumn term.



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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](#).

