

# Children and Families Plan 2015/16

Together for Children and Families



Final (Update)

# Introduction

We produce all kinds of plans. Some we have to produce by law, others we write when our services need to change or when we want to improve things. Whatever the reason for writing them, all our plans help us provide better services for children and families in the borough.

This plan is designed to provide an high level overview of the sorts of things we want to do in the coming year and how we will measure how well we are doing. Everything we do links back to our corporate plan which sets out the council's vision and priorities, including a commitment to:

1. Develop and maintain strong local partnerships to improve outcomes for children and young people.
2. Challenge all schools, settings and services to be outstanding, enabling them to take the lead in driving up standards and safeguarding children and only intervening when outcomes are not good enough.
3. Develop and maintain effective services and interventions that enable those children and young people who face barriers to participation to successfully overcome them.
4. Develop and maintain effective services and interventions that keep the most vulnerable children and young people safe and prevent them from experiencing additional difficulties.

If you have a comment on the plan or would like to find out more about the work we are doing, please do get in touch - it's always good to get feedback.

**Michael Bracey**

Corporate Director - People and Director of Children's Services



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# What kind of place is this?

**Milton Keynes has grown from a collection of small towns and villages into a significant sub-regional centre in less than 40 years.**

Outside the 'city', the surrounding rural area has attractive countryside with a range of villages and small towns, which provide contrast to the urban area. Urban Milton Keynes has been built with future growth in mind and is regarded as the largest and most successful British New Town.

It has a distinctive grid system and extensive green public space. It is a place fuelled by change and strong aspirations. Nothing has ever stood still in Milton Keynes; this is what makes us different. The ability to create our own future and manage change allows us to pursue new strategies and respond to the needs of investors and changing economic and social circumstances faster than older, more established cities in the UK and Europe. We have a strong track record of planning and delivery; we can do, have done and will do.

***Milton Keynes 'Where we think differently, create opportunity and believe in people'.***



At a glance

**Fast growing:** In 2013 our population reached 255,700. Our population is forecast to increase to a total of 302,100 in 2026.

**Young:** We have a younger age profile than England as a whole. In 2014 22.6% of the Milton Keynes population were aged under 16 compared with 19.0% in England.

**Diverse:** We are more ethnically diverse than the England average, within the local school population the percentage of children from a black or minority ethnic heritage is 37%.

**Safe:** We are a relatively safe place with 70 crimes per 1000 residents recorded during 2014. In context Oxford, Reading and Slough recorded 93, 91 and 77 respectively.

**Economically active:** We are an area with low unemployment. 16-18 year olds not in education or training (NEET) is now down to just 3.9% (December 2014).

**Some areas of high deprivation:** Seven Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are within the 10% most deprived in England. 18 LSOAs in the 20% most deprived in England (Social Atlas 2012).

**Some areas of health inequality:** We generally compare favourably to national although there are gaps in health outcomes between the most and least affluent and some small communities.

For more information please read our *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)* available at [www.milton-keynes.gov.uk](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk)

# Our plan for the year ahead

## Getting off to a great start

High quality education early years education ensures that children are ready to succeed in school and is particularly beneficial to those children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Progress is being made but there is more to do. So we will:

01. Continue to develop new provision and widen access to high quality early years education and childcare places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
02. Refresh our arrangements for providing quality improvement advice and guidance to the early years sector and the support we offer for training and development.

## A good school place

Like many areas, we have significant pressure on school places, but because of substantial capital investment we are continuing to provide access to a school place for every child who needs one. To sustain this we will:

03. Deliver an ambitious programme of new school openings and expansions of existing schools, on time and within budget.
04. Continue to improve our school place planning to meet demand from existing and new areas of the borough and ensure our admissions service supports parents to secure a school place and tracks those children out of school.

Of course, what matters isn't access to a school place but access to a *good* school place. We continue to work towards all our schools being judged good or better by Ofsted but we are not there yet. So we will:

05. Challenge and support all our schools to improve, linking improvement partners to all LA maintained schools, using improvement boards where necessary.
06. Deliver a comprehensive governor support programme designed to improve the quality and effectiveness of school governance.
07. Support the local system, underpinned by our four teaching schools, to move towards a self sustaining model of school improvement.

We know that some children, often from disadvantaged backgrounds or with special educational needs or disabilities are not yet making the progress they should. So we will:

08. Continue our investment in targeted support programmes and activities, including work with some Black and Ethnic Minority groups and white British children from low income families.
09. Embed the national interagency special educational needs and disability reforms.
10. Ensure that specialist provision in both mainstream and special schools is sufficient and children are in appropriate settings matched to need.

## Support for parents

Every parent wants to do the best for their child. We will help parents by continuing to provide access to good quality local services and:

11. Reshape and refresh our children's centre services, giving schools a greater role in the running of services and developing a more co-operative approach which will let parents get more involved in designing and delivering activities.
12. Ensure specific programmes, like those designed to support breastfeeding and tackle childhood obesity are offered as widely as possible.
13. Work with our health colleagues to ensure the effective delivery of the objectives set out in our local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

However, from time to time, some families need more intensive help than others and to ensure they receive that support we will:

14. Further develop our early help case work service (Children and Families Practices) by linking it with wider family support teams and ensuring that it is as effective and efficient as possible.

Like all areas, we have some families that have multiple problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector. We want to ensure the children in these families

have the chance of a better life, and at the same time bring down the cost to the taxpayer. In April 2015 we move into the second phase of the national Troubled Families programme and we will:

15. Design, agree and deliver our local targets for the next phase of the Troubled Families programme.
16. Work with our partners on identifying and utilising their contribution to turning around those families in our local programme.

## Services for young people

We recognise the value of youth work to the personal and social development of young people. We also acknowledge the role of the council is supporting young people who are not in education, employment or training. So we will:

17. Reshape and refresh our youth work offer, retaining a specific targeted information, advice and guidance team and linking these services with our community learning service.

Of course, the majority of young people do not offend but we need to continue to reduce the harm caused by youth crime both to those who are victims and to young offenders themselves. So we will:

18. Review and improve the way we work to reduce first time youth entrants to criminal justice.

19. Work with our partners to deliver the 2015/16 Milton Keynes Youth Justice Plan.

### Keeping children safe

Keeping children safe from harm is our priority. It is critical that people can raise a safeguarding concern and that this is quickly and properly looked into. So we will:

20. Ensure the ongoing effective operation of our multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

If as a result of assessment we need to intervene we need to ensure we have the capacity to take action. To do this we will:

21. Ensure the effective development, retention and recruitment of managers and front line staff across the service.

Alongside this we need to make sure we keep developing new services and interventions to improve the outcomes for children and families. So we will:

22. Embed and ensure the sustainability of reforms to family court processes (26 week completion of care proceedings and Family Drug and Alcohol Court pilot).
23. Ensure the development and co-ordination of effective inter agency work to tackle child sexual exploitation.

### Children in our care

Children coming into care might have a history of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Some may have suffered the death of a parent, or have parents who can't look after them properly because of illness. Others may have disabilities. Some are unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Whatever the reason they need to be in our care we are committed to improving the health and safety of looked after children, who often come from families who have experienced extreme hardship and upheaval, whilst working as closely as possible with the birth parents where that is appropriate. To do this we will:

24. Ensure wherever possible we move young people from 'at a distance' residential placements to placements which are either in or close to Milton Keynes or to the young person's birth family, including intensively supported rehabilitation.

There are other things we can also do to improve the life chances of looked after children, so this year we will:

25. Deliver placement stability work to maintain the improvements we achieved in 2014/15.
26. Develop our 'virtual school' for children in care, strengthening our capacity to challenge and support schools to secure the very best educational outcomes possible for this vulnerable group.

# Getting things done

## Governance and scrutiny

Political governance and scrutiny arrangements are extensive and rigorous and include a select committee focused on children and young people and an active corporate parenting panel. Councillors, including the Lead Member, are appropriately represented on partnerships.

## Corporate support and challenge

Corporate support and challenge is well developed – alongside the regular corporate management team meetings and activities, a statutory officers group and a performance board is in place.

## Partnerships

We have a large partnership footprint. Our arrangements are best viewed as a network not as a hierarchy. Engagement is good by all key agencies and services and there is strong political engagement, support and challenge across partnerships. Our main partnerships are supported by sub groups and linked groups. **During the coming year a priority is the refresh of the Children and Families Partnership and the recruitment of a new MKSCB chair.**

## Leadership and management arrangements

There is considerable experience across our senior management team. Colleagues work closely together as well as across the council and with our partners. We are committed to a distributed approach to leadership, with an on-going investment in coaching and an emphasis on appropriate support and challenge across our team.

There is well developed set of management arrangements in place, including regularised performance boards.

### Senior Leadership Team

Chief Executive

Carole Mills

Corporate Director People  
Service Director - Children and Families

Michael Bracey  
Nicky Rayner

Head of Capital and Infrastructure  
Head of Sufficiency and Access  
Head of Setting and School Services  
Head of Setting and School Effectiveness  
Head of Children's Centres  
Head of SEN and Disability  
Head of Children's Social Work  
Head of Corporate Parenting (Interim)  
Head of Safeguarding  
Head of Youth Offending Service

Mark Dolling  
Marie Denny  
Gavin Sandmann  
Cheryl Eyre  
Jacqui McGrath  
Caroline Marriott  
Melinda May  
Kelly Lockwood  
Jo Hooper  
Lee Westlake



# Key performance indicators

* Denotes a corporate dashboard item Other performance indicators are included in service level plans	This Year's Target
Percentage of 2 year olds who take up free early education as a percentage of those eligible*	92%
Percentage of 3 to 4 year olds who take up free early education as a percentage of those eligible*	95%
Percentage of early years providers that are good or outstanding*	82%
Percentage of schools that are good or outstanding*	84%
Percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or better in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2*	80%
Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including English and Maths*	56%
Percentage of looked after children attending a good or outstanding school*	84%
Percentage of young people aged 16-19 who are not in education, employment or training*	4%
Align the local percentage of looked after children placed in residential provision with national average*	10%
Percentage of care leavers who are in education, employment or training*	79%
Percentage of child protection family court cases completed within 26 weeks	75%
Percentage of children in care with less than three or more placements during the year (stability)*	88%
Percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation*	95%
Percentage of children started to be looked after with an initial health assessment within 28 working days*	90%
Average time (days) between court authority to place a child and the LA matching an adoptive family*	274
Percentage of SEN Statements successfully converted to Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans	40%
Number of first time entrants (per 100,000 of the 10-17 population) to the youth justice system*	450
Number of families identified and worked with as part of the local Troubled Families programme	257
Percentage of agency front line social workers	15%
Sickness target- number of days (Children and Families combined)	6.83



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