

March 2022

Welcome from Susan Akhtar

Hello,

I am really pleased to be introducing the spring SEND newsletter as Chair of [PACA MK](#).

We have had a very busy few weeks with meeting lots of you; on our Coach trip to Thomley, Ride High sessions, yoga, cinema showings and of course our SEND Festival which was online.



In addition to this we have been in a number of meetings raising issues which matter to our members, which include:

A focus on Mental Health, over the last twelve months we are pleased to have worked with PACA members and Healthwatch to publish a [report](#). I know I was not alone in finding this a difficult read and we are working with decision makers on the recommendations so we can see improvements for mental health support for our children and young people.

EBSA (emotionally bases school avoidance), we have been part of a working group on guidance for schools and we are about to start writing a guidance document for parents and carers, if you would like to be part of this then please get in touch.

Finally, we are really looking forward to seeing many of you at our mini- SEND day, which will again be free of charge and face to face next term. The date and venue are to be confirmed so keep a look out for further information!

Please [sign up](#) to be a member if you are not already, so you can receive details of everything we do and so we can hear your voice! Don't forget to checkout our survey below!

Many thanks,

Susan

Specialist Provision Development for Children and Young People with EHC Plans Consultation

We are currently running an informal consultation on developing specialist places in Milton Keynes, we have already had 150 responses. It was fantastic to have parent engagement in our virtual and in person event on 22 and 23 March!

There is still time to respond as the consultation is open until the 8 April. A huge thank you to everyone that has responded already!

We will continue to provide updates through our [Facebook page](#), SEND Newsletter and [SEND Local Offer](#).

Full details on the [consultation](#) can be found on the [SEND Local Offer](#)

Phase Transfer 2023

If your child has an EHC plan and is either due to start school, is currently in Year 1 of a non-all through primary school or is in Year 5, we will be contacting you in the first half of the summer term regarding your September 2023 school placement choices.

We will be sending you a form via email which will need completing and returning by 12 August 2022.

All details on information that will be required will be on this form. We know this is a big decision and if you have any questions then we would encourage you to initially talk to your child's SENCo. If you need further support then please contact us on the [SEND support line](#).

Short Breaks

Thank you for making your short break voucher applications, the application window remains open if you haven't yet applied. Please be assured, we are in the process of sending out the vouchers to all of our families!

We would love to see how you use your vouchers and what you get up too! If you'd like to star in our next newsletter, send in a photo showing us where you are and what you get up to [via email](#) before 20 May 2022.

Please find more information on [Short Breaks](#) along with our [brochure](#), on our [SEND Local Offer!](#)

Charity shout out

[The Sleep Charity](#)

Does your child suffer with sleep issues? Do you struggle with your child's bedtime? Will your child not sleep in their own bed?

One of the things we hear from parents and carers often is that their child is struggling to sleep, or they have been sleeping in the day and awake all night. The Sleep Charity run a free help line with trained sleep advisors (many of who specialise in working with SEND) to help offer support, strategies and advice. The help line is open 5 nights a week (Sunday to Thursday) from 7-9pm. The staff are happy to speak to parents/carers or the young people directly.

More information can be found on their [website](#) and on their flyer, or call them directly during the opening hours on 03303 530 541.

Forever Colours

Forever Colours is a family focused, community-based Children's Hospice in Buckinghamshire, who provide care to families who have babies, children and young people with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions as well as profound and multiple learning disabilities or SEND.

- Forever Colours offer a range of support services with the emotional and physical wellbeing of families in mind. Services include but are not limited to:
 - advocacy
 - sibling and parent support in the home or community
 - group days out
 - post-death and end of life support
 - fun, activities or a helping hand with the referred baby, child or young person
 - peer support
- Forever Colours deliver a high standard of care that's family oriented and invested in making a difference. Focussing on the child and wrapping their holistic services around the family.

And much more! To find out more or if Forever Colours could support you and your family, see their [website](#).

Upcoming workshops and training

Parent training

Autism in the Early Years (Early Years)

Wednesday 4 May - Wednesday 25 May 13:30 – 14:30

This is a four-session virtual, live programme aimed at parents of young children aged 2-5, who have Autism, or Social Communication Needs. You do not need to attend all four sessions. Come and join us on Microsoft Teams

Session 1. Understanding Autism/Social Communication in the EYs

Session 2. Developing communication skills

Session 3. Developing play and learning skills

Session 4. Understanding and supporting behaviour

Autism and Social Communication Needs in the Primary Age (5 - 11)

Thursday 5 May – Thursday 26 May 13.30 – 14.30

This programme has been developed with a range of professionals to support parents and carers of children and young people aged 5 - 11, who have Autism, or who present with Social Communication Needs.

It is delivered through a number of pre-recorded video sessions, along with 4 follow-up, live Question and Answer sessions, using Microsoft Teams. There will be a range of professionals available to talk to at the follow up sessions.

The video sessions will explore different topics and strategies to help you support your child(ren) with their needs while the Q&A follow up sessions allow for further exploration of the content of the video sessions and a chance to discuss individual needs and difficulties.

Check out our [SEND Videos Resources](#)

To book your place, please [email us](#).

Milton Keynes Theatre access performances

Milton Keynes Theatre offer a range of [services](#) to enable anyone who would benefit from additional support because of a disability or health condition to enjoy visiting their theatre.

The theatre can support with:

- [access for wheelchair users and those with limited mobility](#)
 - [visual impairment service](#)
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- [audio impairment service](#)
- [additional needs](#)
- [visual stories and resources](#)

along with offering various opportunities to visit the Theatre before the show date to ensure those attending have a positive and enjoyable experience. To find out more information and to book access performances you will need to join their free '[access membership scheme](#)'.

Check out the [access performance list for 2022-2023](#) to see which shows are available.

Meet the Team

Jac Lawrence - Senior Teacher on the EHC Specialist Teaching Team

My name is Jac Lawrence and I am the Senior Teacher in the EHC Specialist Teaching Team. The team work directly with children and young people who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), we can provide bespoke transitional educational packages, support and advise schools/settings as well as provide support for children with an EHCP when they move to Milton Keynes, assessing need and aiding transition to their next educational setting. I love the variety of my role and enjoy working directly with children, young people, families and schools.



I began my teaching career in London, my background is in primary education and I have been a SENCo, Teacher of the Deaf, Cognition and Learning Specialist Teacher. I have worked in Milton Keynes as a teacher for 20 years and have worked with children and young people aged from two to twenty five.

Away from work I enjoy walking, dancing and spending time with my family.

Social Media

We want to be able to share our [SEND Local Offer](#) with as many families in Milton Keynes as we can. In order to do this we are reviewing the current social media platforms we use and would like to know more about what parents/carers and young people want to see. We would particularly like to know which social media platforms you use to improve our reach to families across Milton Keynes.

We have created two surveys which will take no longer than 3 minutes to complete:

Survey for young people: [Local Offer Social Media Survey - Young People \(office.com\)](#)

Survey for parents and carers: [Local Offer Social Media Survey - Parents and carers \(office.com\)](#)

Thank you for supporting us with this key development.

Easter Events!

[Bonnet making workshop at Hobbycraft](#)

Children will be able to design their own Easter bonnet with support from staff at Hobbycraft. Sessions run through April on selected dates and are £5 per bonnet.

[Emily Star Easter Egg hunt](#)

15 April 10am - 2pm (*The secret garden - Wolverton*)

£4 per child, adults go free, all children will receive a prize.

[The Games Cafe](#)

1 April 3:45pm - 5:45pm (*MK Gallery Cafe*)

For 12 - 18 year olds

Refreshments and games provided.

[National Autistic Society parent/carer meet up](#)

12 April 9:30-11:30am (*Strudwicks coffee shop*)

New members welcome for a friendly drop in with coffee and cake.

[Parks Trust Easter Egg hunt](#)

Can be completed on any day, during daylight hours. (*Great Linford Manor Park*)

Two Easter Egg hunts available for 5-7 year old and 7-11 year olds

PACA Feedback

[PACA \(Parents and Carers Alliance MK\)](#) have created a survey for parents and carers to give their views on what is working well and what they can improve on over the next year to enable them to continue supporting families.

Please check out their short [survey](#) to provide feedback. The survey will close on Wednesday 20 April.

Sign up!

We produce this newsletter half termly. If you are not receiving this directly and would like to, please let us know on SENDSupport@milton-keynes.gov.uk

We would also welcome your views on the newsletter and any ideas you have for future editions!

[Feedback for the team!](#)

This newsletter has been co-produced between and the MKC SEND Team and Parents and Carers Alliance MK.

PACA is an independent forum for parent carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs who live in Milton Keynes.

We share our experiences with the SEND Team as an independent voice representing what matters to families in MK. We do this by taking an active role in meetings such as the Short Breaks Steering Group, Local Offer Group and Additional Needs and Disabilities Strategy Group.

The idea for this newsletter came from our regular meetings with Caroline Marriott, with the aim of keeping parents informed and up to date with the latest developments in SEND.

If you are a parent and would like to join PACA MK, or would like to know more about us, please visit [PACA MK](#)

Note: Please do not respond directly to this email.

For SEND queries email: [SEND support line](#)

Stay connected with Milton Keynes Council: