

VitalSigns MK

2014 Update

Introduction

On October 1st, 2013, MK Community Foundation launched Vital Signs MK, a new annual report designed to round up all of the local research on Milton Keynes and present it to the public in a simple, easy-to-read format. Vital Signs is a health check on our city, examining the local themes most important to us all: local schools and education, crime and safety, jobs and the local economy, health and wellbeing, etc. Vital Signs points to our strengths and to the challenges we face, offering a balanced review of how well we are functioning as a community and how well we are supporting local people to help enable them to live happy, fulfilled lives.

Public Consultations

The report was distributed widely around the city (and can still be downloaded [here](#)) and generated a great deal of conversation and debate. We followed up the launch with a programme of forums, intended to focus on people's reactions to the report and its contents. **Vital Thinking** events involved representatives of various public, private and charitable organisations, as well as concerned members of the community. These public consultation forums identified what people felt our priorities should be moving forward, both as a community and for us at the Community Foundation as the largest local charitable grant maker.



From those forums came the clear consensus that our shared priority going forward would be looking for ways to support those living in poverty to reduce the negative impacts of poverty on their development and opportunities, in particular, on local children. This led to the next stage, **Vital Action**.



The centrepiece of this programme was the meeting of a new Child Poverty Forum, hosted by MK Community Foundation on April 23rd, 2014. Key representatives from a range of relevant organisations came together to wrestle with these complex and challenging issues. As a result of that forum, the Community Foundation has set aside £70,000 (on top of our existing grants budget) as a ‘Vital

Grants’ fund, to use specifically for supporting initiatives that work to address the needs of local children living in poverty. We have also launched a new campaign, “Eat Sleep Play Love” that aims to raise many tens of thousands of additional pounds to fund this work, and as you will see, the primary focus of this Vital Signs Update report is on poverty in Milton Keynes and takes a closer look at the latest data on our community. The Community Foundation in Milton Keynes has also made Vital Signs and the issue of poverty the focus of its recent Trustee and Staff strategic planning days and is in the process of writing a new strategic framework for the organisation for 2015-2018 to incorporate this renewed focus.

Vital Signs is not a solution in itself, Vital Signs is intended to inform and to serve as a spark for conversation and debate. We aim to inspire local people to look more closely at their own community and to explore the possibilities for what we can accomplish together to make our shared future here a fulfilling, prosperous and happy one.

Vital Updates

Crime and Safety

Our public consultations for Vital Signs 2013 indicated that a clear majority of local residents feel that Milton Keynes is a safe place to live (81% rated Milton Keynes as average or above with regard to safety). Given how rapidly the population of Milton Keynes is growing, it is especially reassuring that crime continues to decline in our community. The total number of offences dropped approximately 6% from 19,406 in the year April 2012 to March 2013 reduced to 18,318 in the year April 2013 to March 2014.

The total number of violent offences increased by about 3% in the same period from 2843 to 2942. Narrowing the focus to sexual offences, the statistics show an increase from 242 to 346, a jump of 43% in one year. In conversations with the Thames Valley Police, they informed us anecdotally that this is due, at least in part, to a substantial number of historic sexual assaults from decades past being reported here for the first time. This is possibly as a result of the many historic sexual assaults involving celebrities being the focus of so much national media attention and public debate over the past two years, giving local people the confidence to come forward and report their own historical experiences to police.

There was a sharp decline in the number of drug offences recorded during that period, from 1,173 to 835, a reduction of 29%.

Almost 25% of all offences committed during the period from April 2013 to March 2014 were anti-social behaviour offences.

Special attention by local authorities is being given to the problem of domestic violence, as it is generally considered one of the most underreported kinds of offence, with the number of repeat offenders causing particular concern. Our local authorities use the CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) indicators to define what is classified as domestic abuse, and further identifies incidents of domestic violence as 'Recorded Crimes' and 'Not Recordable Crimes'. The statistics for April 2013 to March 2014 show that there were 1,522 recorded incidents of domestic abuse in Milton Keynes and 4,859 incidents of domestic abuse that were 'non recordable.' Whilst this reflects a slight decrease in *recorded* domestic crimes, it also represents a 5% increase in '*non recordable*' crimes on the previous 12 month period.

It should be noted that looking back over a longer period of measurements, there is some volatility in some of these indicators, and while a large increase or reduction can often be seen when comparing only two years, if you review a longer period, the numbers appear more consistent. For example, the number of sexual offences increased very significantly for the year ending March 31st, 2014 from the year before. If you look back two years, however, you see that the new figure (346) is not far off from the figure measured that year (320) and the year previous (348).

Vital Action – Case Study

With the support of funding from MK Community Foundation, the Milton Keynes Somali Community Association launched an innovative project in partnership with the Thames Valley Police. Concerned that so many of their community's young people were falling into anti-social behaviour, and worried that traditional police interventions were not proving effective at halting this worrying trend, the community's elders began working side by side with police, and helping them to address problems involving young people of Somali origin in the City Centre and Fishermead estate. They did this by remaining on call and attending incidents as they developed, and then following up with the families of the young people afterwards. The police now report that this new initiative has been extremely successful and has reduced anti-social behaviour in the Somali community of Milton Keynes by approximately 60%.

Sources of New Data:

[Thames Valley Police statistics for 2014](#)

Poverty and Disadvantage

Following the release of Vital Signs MK 2013, many people responded that the findings on disadvantage and poverty were the most striking amongst all of the issues reported. Milton Keynes has a reputation as a forward-thinking and innovative city, an affluent community with a thriving local economy; one that has withstood the recent recession with greater resilience than most other parts of the country. The reality, however, is that Milton Keynes features significant income inequality, with a widening gap between the affluent and those living in poverty.

It is estimated that the UK is heading towards 3.5 million of its children living in poverty by 2020. With an expected £13 billion in additional cuts to the welfare budget in the next Parliamentary budget announcement even greater hardships may yet await our nation's poorest and most vulnerable.

Using the central government's measures of poverty, we saw in Vital Signs MK 2013 that **one in five children in Milton Keynes is now living below the poverty line**. This year, we can elaborate further. While the city-wide figure is one in five, this problem is unevenly distributed across Milton Keynes. Based on the ward map of Milton Keynes as it was in 2013, in Eaton Manor and Woughton wards nearly 2 out of every 5 children are living below the poverty line (38.8% and 37.9%, respectively). This is more than double the national average. In what was Campbell Park ward, it is nearly 30%.

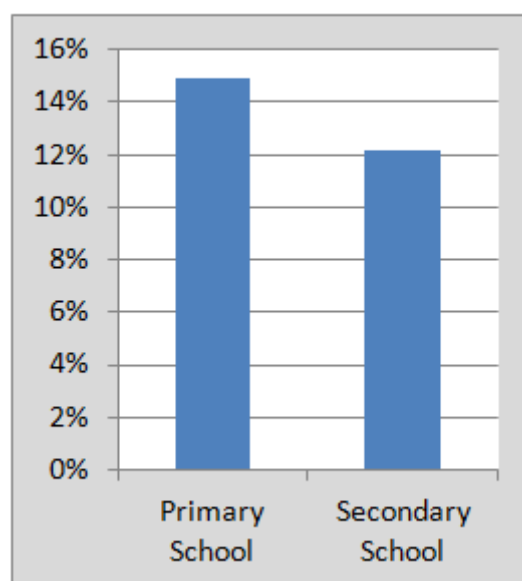
It should also be remembered that the criteria for 'poverty' is very restrictive (currently set at approximately £16k per year income or less for a family of four) and that large numbers of households are living in serious economic hardship, but do not meet the government definition of poverty. Consequently, it could be argued that these poverty numbers significantly underreport the scale of the problem of disadvantage and economic hardship in our community, as well as the impact they are having on local families and individuals, both in the short and long term.

Poverty and Education

Another indicator of economic disadvantage is the number of students in a community that qualify for free school meals. Children who are eligible for free school meals who participated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile were less likely to be rated as showing a 'good level of development' than those who are not eligible, 32.7% as opposed to 49%.

Economic disadvantage and poverty impact young

MK Students on Free School Meals

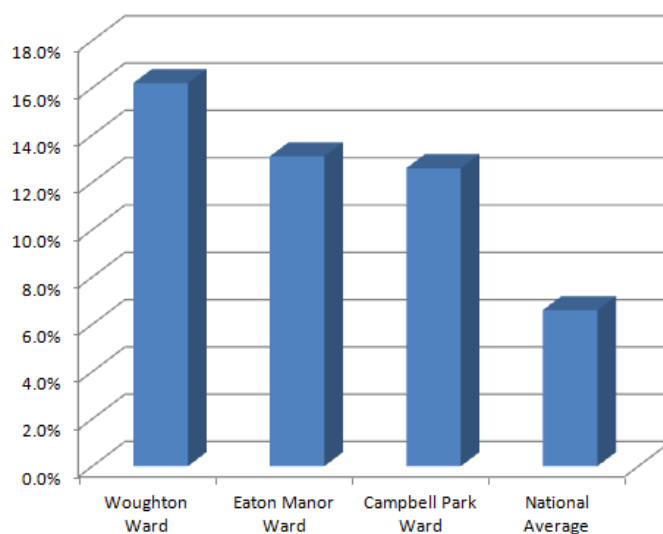


people’s academic performance. Disadvantaged students’ (as defined by eligibility for the ‘Pupil Premium’ scheme) average score in Key Stage 2 L4+ for reading, writing and maths was 63.2% whereas students who do not qualify as disadvantaged score an average of 80.4%. (2012 figures) The Pupil Premium was created by government to provide extra funds to schools for the purpose of raising the attainment of disadvantaged students. Eligibility for the programme is based on two criteria: students who have been deemed eligible for free school meals at any point in the past six years, and/or students who have been ‘looked after’ for a period of at least six months. The premium provided per student ranges from £900 to £1,900.

Poverty and Employment

Poverty in childhood can also correlate to long term economic disadvantage and under-employment. The three Milton Keynes wards (as they were in 2013) featuring the greatest levels of poverty and disadvantage impacting children also have the highest number of 18-24 years olds claiming job seekers allowance. The highest proportion of 16-24 year olds claiming income support in Milton Keynes can be found in the former Woughton ward, where the figure is 9.1%. This is nearly three times the national average.

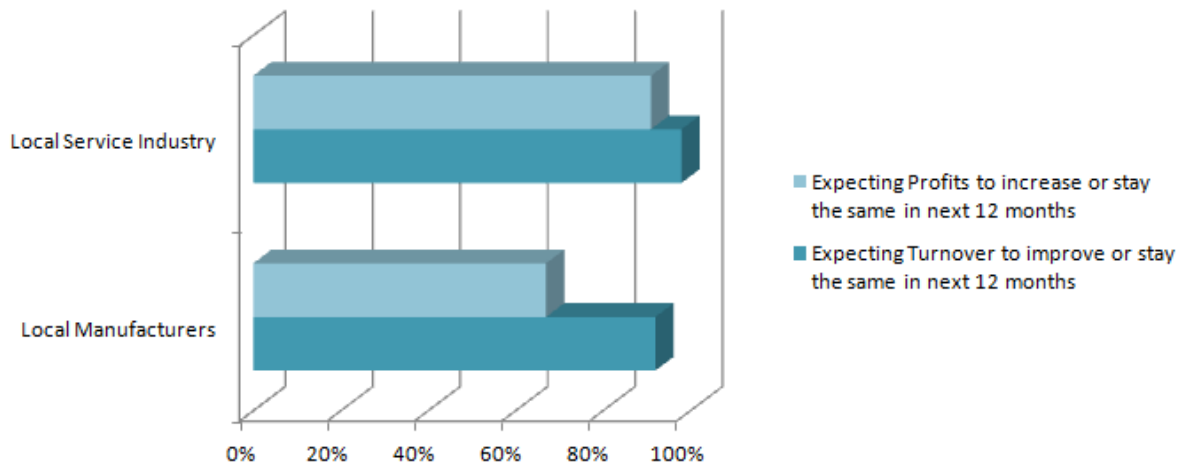
2013: Percentage of 18-24 Year Olds On Job Seekers Allowance



A ‘super output area’ is a unit of population and community measurement for census and research purposes. The Unitary Authority Area of Milton Keynes is comprised of 139 of these output areas. If you review the figures on income deprivation affecting children, 12 super output areas in Milton Keynes are ranked among the 10% most deprived in England. Almost a quarter of the total output areas in Milton Keynes fall within the top one-third most deprived in the country.

On the other hand, Milton Keynes as a regional district is holding steady in the national rankings of multiple deprivation for England – 211th of 326 districts (with 1 being the most deprived, 326 the least), compared to 212th in 2007. Further, 17 of our 139 super output areas are in the 10% least deprived in the country.

The private sector in Milton Keynes is performing well and is generally very bullish about the future.



Also, as of June 2014, the local unemployment rate had dropped to 2.3%, compared to the national average for the same month of 6.8% (of the ‘economically active’ population).

Wages, however, remain stagnant. Nationally, average wages have fallen more since 2010 than they have during any parliament since the ‘Long Depression’ of 1873. Nominal wage growth below the price of inflation is now seeing the longest sustained *period* of reduction since 1964. So, having a job and being in work are not the comprehensive solutions to poverty that they once were. The ‘working poor’ are a large and growing sector of our community.

The minimum wage, currently set at £6.50/hr for adults, does not provide what many are referring to as a ‘Living Wage’. Citizens MK have been championing their Living Wage campaign in Milton Keynes for several years, meeting with major local employers and working to persuade them to become accredited Living Wage Employers, ensuring that all staff are paid enough to afford them at least a basic standard of living. The latest House of Commons Library report on earnings shows that 13.1% of the jobs in the Milton Keynes North and 9.9% of the jobs in the Milton Keynes South Parliamentary districts were paid at below the living wage as of April 2013 . (The Living Wage is currently set at £7.65/hr.) MK Council has recently announced that they are beginning the accreditation process to become a Living Wage Employer, as is MK Community Foundation.

Poverty and Local Services

Part of the wider context for this issue is the level of support provided to low-income households by local government. Of course, funding cuts have hit all local authorities, and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has reported that local government spending is expected to have been cut by 30% in real terms for the period from 2008 to 2015. They focused on three local authorities as broadly representative of different types of regions and examined in detail their approach to these funding cuts. One of the three authorities they profiled was Milton Keynes Council.

The report was generally very positive with our local council’s strategy, how they have focused on cost saving and efficiency improvements in order to try to preserve services to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community whenever possible. They caution, however, that “the Budget

Gap is a measure that combines funding reductions with cost pressures. It refers to the total amount of savings that need to be made from the previous year's budget to balance the books..." MK Council faces a budget gap of 7.8% for 2015/2016. It is estimated that the council will have to identify in excess of £40 million worth of cuts in the next few years. However, "qualitative evidence suggests that, in Milton Keynes, efficiency savings (having already been exploited) will become much more difficult to identify by 2015/16." This means that services focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable become even more endangered by these deep spending cuts.

The Joseph Rowntree Report concludes that, "While local government's role as an economic leader might be expanding, it's role in relation to providing services designed to promote individual well-being and quality of life would appear to be contracting... the evidence of this research is that a step change is on the horizon in relation to the role of local councils in both the direct and indirect provision of a broad range of services."

Vital Thinking

What impact will these additional cuts have on families who rely on the public support that is now jeopardised?

How can Milton Keynes as a whole reverse the growing income inequality in our community?

How can we reduce the impact of poverty on local children, their academic performance and future opportunities / prospects?

In 2008, the research firm Strategic Urban Futures issued a commissioned report on Milton Keynes' regeneration strategy, that included the following warning:

"When we compared the IMD 2004 scores with those of the IMD 2007, we found that although Milton Keynes overall became more prosperous, pockets of deprivation were deepening and spreading within the city area. Thus in 2004, there were 9 disadvantaged residential settlements in the city, a figure that had risen to 15 by 2007; and the number of more affluent residential settlements had increased from 37 to 43. We discovered that a pattern of spatial segregation is emerging along a curved corridor of deprivation, which runs along a north-south axis, flanked on either side by zones of relative affluence. Although Milton Keynes is continuing to grow rapidly, there are clear signs that it is growing apart and becoming increasingly economically, socially and geographically polarised.

"... the consequent concentration of deprivation and disadvantage in particular neighbourhoods and on particular housing estates may be leading to the emergence of local cultures alienated from, and in some instances opposed to, mainstream values."

Does poverty in Milton Keynes increase problems of alienation and disenfranchisement of local people? Are our young people from disadvantaged backgrounds more vulnerable to voices of cynicism and extremism? If so, what can we do as a community to combat this?

Vital Action – Case Study

Recent progress by Citizens MK on their Living Wage campaign, aiming to secure commitments from local employers to ensure that all of their employees are paid a wage that will enable at least a basic standard of living, along with the continued work of Community Action: MK's outstanding Community Mobiliser team, are two of the more prominent local efforts to improve the situations of our community's more disadvantaged families and households.

Residents of Tinkers Bridge estate experience economic disadvantage at a greater level than many other communities in Milton Keynes, but they stand out as being one of our city's most active and mutually supportive estates. Tinkers Bridge Meeting Place has become a hub of activity with a whole range of community groups for all ages meeting there, including the very proactive and effective Tinkers Bridge Residents Association, ably supported by one of Community Action: MK's Community Mobilisers. These local people have demonstrated that by working together for their common benefit, they have been able to mitigate the impact of economic disadvantage on their quality of life and community pride.

"I love Tinkers Bridge Residents Association because it makes the place where I live a better place to live for me. It has helped me to get off the couch and become more active within the community.... I have gained so much in so many ways." John Orr, Tinkers Bridge

Sources of New Data:

- [MK Council 2013 Social Atlas](#) (published Feb 2014)
- [MK Council Joint Strategic Needs Assessments](#) – Child Poverty, Deprivation, Employment, Fuel Poverty, Young People Not in Education, Transport
- [MK Chamber Quarterly Economic Review, Q2, 2014](#)
- [MK Council data on people claiming out of work benefits for period from November 2009 – November 2013](#)
- [MK Council monthly unemployment benefit claims figures](#) with county and regional comparisons
- MK Council report on "Average deprivation by school based on attending pupil postcodes" taken from [Milton Keynes' 2013 School Census](#)
- [Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission response to UK Draft Child Poverty Strategy](#) (Published 9 June 2014)
- "[Poorer Areas Face £100 Per Head Greater Budget Cuts Compared to Rich Ones](#)" Joseph Rountree report, published Nov 2013
- "[Coping With Cuts? Local Government and Poorer Communities](#)" Joseph Rountree paper, published Nov 2013
- [Bank of England Inflation Report](#), May 2014
- Office for National Statistics: [An Examination of Falling Real Wages, 2010-2013](#); Jan 2014
- "[A Minimum Income Standard for Britain](#)", Joseph Rountree Foundation, published July 2009
- [The impact of Poverty](#), Child Poverty Action Group, 2013
- [Poverty and Victims of Crime](#), The Poverty Site, 2010

- [Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion](#), published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation and New Policy Institute, 2010
- [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#) (ASHE), Office for National Statistics, 2013

Health and Wellbeing

Vital Signs MK 2013 highlighted a number of measures in which Milton Keynes performed significantly above and below national averages. Most measures of our community's health since last year's health profile for MK have held steady, with a few exceptions. The 2013 report emphasised the higher rates of hip fractures amongst older residents here in Milton Keynes, as well as higher rates of early death from heart disease and stroke. Fortunately, there has been positive movement on both indicators. Emergency admissions for hip fractures in the over-65s has gone from 193 down to 159, placing it only slightly above the national average and the number of early deaths (under 75) from heart disease and stroke has shrunk from 143 to 138.

	Number of Local People	Local Value	England Average
Hospital stays for self-harm	343	132.5	188
Road injuries and deaths	89	35.5	40.5
Drug misuse	932	5.6	8.6
People diagnosed with diabetes	11,174	5.1	6.0
Smoking related deaths	286	311	292
Acute sexually transmitted infections	1680	672	804
Hip fracture in 65s and over	159	573	568
Excess winter deaths (three year)	73	14.5	16.5
Life expectancy – male	n/a	78.4	78.9
Life expectancy – female	n/a	82.6	82.9
Early deaths: heart disease and stroke	138	83.6	81.1
Adults classified as overweight or obese	423	72.5	63.8

(Items in green are at or better than the national average, those in red are worse)

The main issue of concern to highlight is obesity in Milton Keynes. The latest figures available for Milton Keynes (from 2012) indicate that over 23.4% of adults in our community are clinically obese. Nationally, the best rating in the country for excess weight in adults is 45.9%, the worst is 75.9%. Milton Keynes scored 72.3%, the fourth worst rating in the country, and making our population that much more vulnerable to the health problems associated with excess weight and obesity – increased risk of heart disease, stroke, some types of cancer, mobility issues, diabetes, etc.

Hospital stays for self-harm in Milton Keynes have dropped to 343. Last year we were higher than the national average and we are now lower on this measure than the national average, as you can see in the above table. For drug misuse, estimated numbers of users of opiates and/or crack cocaine aged 15-64 has dropped from 997 to 932. This is significantly lower than the national average (5.6 per 1,000 residents, versus 8.6 nationally).

The number of people on GP registers in Milton Keynes with a recorded diagnosis of diabetes has increased from 9,861 to 11,174, although we are still below the national average.

The numbers of people diagnosed with acute sexually transmitted infections per 100,000 residents has increased from 596 to 672. While this is an increase and is cause for concern, Milton Keynes is still below the national average of 804 per 100,000.

The GP Patient Survey for 2012-2013 in Milton Keynes showed that 81% of local people rate their experience of their GP surgery as 'very good' or 'fairly good'. This is the lowest result of any local authority in our ONS Cluster. (**ONS** clusters are groups of local authorities that are socioeconomically and demographically similar and hence can represent a more valid comparator group for each district than using the national average.) Similarly, our 77% 'very good' or 'fairly good' response to the question of local people's experience of dentistry services in Milton Keynes is the lowest result in our cluster, by some margin. Alternatively, patients' reported experiences of hospital care was at or just below the national average (78% favourable compared to an average of 80% nationally).

Vital Action – Case Study

Milton Keynes Arts for Health's Arts on Prescription project is available on a referral basis for clients with mental health conditions receiving health care in the community. Workshops are socially orientated small groups of up to 15 participants led by an artist experienced in working in mental healthcare. Participants are recruited through referrals from GP's, mental health services, mental health support agencies and community workers. People also self-refer. Most referral agencies are already aware of the project and there is a waiting list of referrals. The aim of the project is to improve participants' health and wellbeing and address the growing health inequalities which exist in Milton Keynes. Through this programme they expect that the participation will improve clients overall health and well being, leading to a decrease in need for GP surgery appointments, medication and in-patient visits.

Young People Are Our Future – 'Family Health and Wellbeing'? Through consultations with their members, this organisation has developed and delivered a Family Health and Wellbeing project over 12 weeks that was designed to expand on the work of the YPAOF charity and provide the entire family with a variety of training solutions to enhance family cohesion and encourage healthier, more positive life choices. The frequent sessions in fitness, yoga, stress management, personal safety, team building, parenting tips, assertiveness and weight control were offered to 23 local families .

Sources of New Data:

- [Milton Keynes Health Profile 2013](#), Published by Public Health England Sept 24th, 2013
- [Milton Keynes Health Profile 2014](#), Published by Public Health England July 8th, 2014
- [NHS Local Authority Information Packs: Milton Keynes](#); Published January 2014

Education

Milton Keynes has shown real growth and improvement with regard to education in recent years, with significant progress in all age demographics.

Milton Keynes has 110 schools: 88 primary, 12 secondary, 6 special, 2 nursery and 2 short stay (Pupil Referral Units) schools.

SEN students (special educational needs) and FSM (free school meal) students are assessed and their scores analysed separately. Good progress on the 2012 scores were seen across the board for both groups of students, showing significant improvement in almost every measure in L2b+ reading, writing and maths.

Key Stage	1	2	4	5
Description	Reception, Year 1 & 2; Children Aged 5-6 that met required level	Years 3-6; Children Aged 7-11	GCSEs (students with five or more A* - C)	A-Levels
Results 1	Reading Level 2+ = 90%	75% Achieved Level 4 or above in writing test	59.9%	Average Point Score per student 670
National Average 1	Reading Level 2+ = 89%	75% Achieved Level 4 or above in writing test	58.6%	Average Point Score per student 709.1
Results 2	Reading Level 2b+ = 82%	88% Progressed 2 levels or more in reading		Average Point Score per Entry 203.4
National Average 2	Reading Level 2b+ = 79%	88% Progressed 2 levels or more in reading		Average Point Score per Entry 212.7
Results 3	Reading Level 3 = 31%	91% made required progress in writing		Achieved 3 A*-A grades or better 8%
National Average 3	Reading Level 3 = 29%	91% made required progress in writing		Achieved 3 A*-A grades or better 12.1%
Results 4	Writing Level 2+ = 87%	89% made required progress in maths		Achieved AAB or better 13.2%
National Average 4	Writing Level 2+ = 85%	88% made required progress in maths		Achieved AAB or better 19.7
Results 5	Writing Level 2b+ = 69%			
National Average 5	Writing Level 2b+ = 67%			
Results 6	Writing Level 3 = 16%			
National Average 6	Writing Level 3 = 15%			
Results 7	Maths Level 2+ = 93%			
National Average 7	Maths Level 2+ = 91%			
Results 8	Maths Level 2b+ = 81%			

National Average 8	Maths Level 2b+ = 78%			
Results 9	Maths Level 3 = 24%			
National Average 9	Maths Level 3 = 23%			

Key Stage 1 describes the two years of schooling in maintained schools in England and Wales normally known as Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, when pupils are aged between 5 and 7. A review of Key Stage 1 outcomes in Milton Keynes for 2011-2013 showed that local students performed well and marginally higher than the national averages in all categories. Results also showed that local students either performed as well or better (up to 4% improvement) in every measure in 2013 than in 2012.

Key Stage 2 is the term for the four years of schooling normally known as Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6, when pupils are aged between 7 and 11. Testing of this group on reading, writing and maths shows that students achieve level 4 or above at similar rates to the national averages (77% locally compared to 75% national average in 2013). This is also a 2% improvement on our performance in 2012 and has moved us up 28 places in the national rankings to 43rd out of 150 local authorities nationally. We also saw 22% of local students achieving level 5 or better, compared to 20% in 2012 (the national average is 21%).

The minimum standard for Key Stage 2 is for schools to show at least 60% of their students achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths and they must also be at or above the England median score for progression by two levels in reading, writing and maths. In 2013, 7 KS2 local schools failed to meet the 60% threshold.

Key Stage 4 / GCSE – for the first time ever, Milton Keynes students have outperformed the national average for GCSEs. Measuring the performance of students who achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* - C, we record 59.9% of local students meeting this standard, compared to 58.6% nationally. This is also an improvement on our 2012 performance of 58.5% and since 2009 is an improvement of 11.9%! FSM (free school meals) students achieved this GCSE standard at a rate of 42%, a 10% improvement on the year before. 12% of students with statements of educational need also met this standard 2013, which is a significant improvement on the 2012 performance of 3%.

The government has set a minimum performance standard of 40% of pupils of secondary schools achieving five or more GCSEs A* - C, including English and Maths. It also includes standards for progress in these subjects. All MK secondary schools met this threshold in 2013.

Key Stage 5 / A Levels: Average A Level point scores for students in Milton Keynes dropped from 2012 to 2013, 704 down to 670. The national average for 2013 was 709. Per A Level entry, the average score was 203, compared to the national average of 212. For average

points per student, girls outperformed boys by 66.7 points in Milton Keynes. The gender gap nationally was 37.8 points.

The proportion of students achieving 3 A Levels at A* - A is 8% in Milton Keynes, compared to 12.1% nationally.

Ofsted Inspections: Tougher new Ofsted standards of inspection have been introduced, making it more difficult for schools to achieve 'good' and 'outstanding' outcomes. In the period 2012-2013, 35 Milton Keynes schools were inspected by Ofsted under the 'section 5' framework. In the results, 2 primary schools and 1 secondary school were judged to be 'outstanding', 19 schools (16 of them primary schools) were judged 'good' and 11 required improvement. Two primary schools were judged to be inadequate.

Milton Keynes Ofsted Results – 2012/2013

- Outstanding 9%
- Good 54%
- Requires Improvement 31%
- Inadequate 6%

Vital Action – Case Study

Artworks MK, based in Great Linford, launched a new Skills Exchange programme in the summer of 2013. This project was developed in partnership with Community Action MK's Community Mobilisers, local Residents Associations and Early Years Coordinators at the Moorlands Centre to develop a pilot project, led by Artworks MK and the Coffee Hall Residents Association and targeting all residents of the Coffee Hall Estate.

This exciting new initiative recognised that the residents of Coffee Hall Estate possess a wealth of knowledge and skills. This project saw artists work with the community to create a directory of the skills that exist on the estate along with those possessed by the Artworks MK team and studio practitioners. Weekly workshops create an environment in which these skills are shared with the community, presenting creative solutions to the issues experienced by those living on the Coffee Hall Estate.

This project focused on an Estate with issues related to poor community cohesion, funding cuts and high levels of unemployment, and provided a group of residents with the opportunity to take part in group activities, learn new skills, share experiences and exhibit art works over a six month period. The artists and facilitator provided a number of high-quality number of workshops that were adapted to the needs of the group.

The workshops successfully encouraged the group to work together whilst exploring new materials and craft forms. Through smaller numbers, the environment was friendly, supportive and allowed

members of the group to bond and talk to each other as a whole, creating friendships between older and younger residents who had never met before.

This project has exposed a wide age demographic of people to crafts through free demonstrations and events. (Youngest participant 16, oldest participant 73); allowed over forty participants to try their hand at new crafts and discover new skills; created intergenerational friendships on the Coffee Hall Estate; allowed 3 different community groups to work together on one project and created new relationships with 2 partner projects outside of Milton Keynes (in Deptford, London and South Africa).

Sources of New Data:

- [MK Council's School Performance and Achievement Report](#), November 2013
- [MK Council's review of local Examination Results, data for 2012/2013](#), released March 2014
- [Department of Education data on 16-18 year olds who are NEET](#), 2013 figures
- [Centre for Cities – Cities Outlook 2014](#), published January 2014

Conclusion

While this report contains a number of items that are cause for celebration, there are also increasingly worrying signs that poverty remains a major problem in our community, and one that is continuing to worsen. MK Community Foundation has committed to a renewed focus on poverty and disadvantage in our city and on finding positive, sustainable ways to reduce the problem and its impact on the lives and development of local people. In addition to our new anti-poverty campaign, we are also working closely with other Community Foundations across the country through our UK Community Foundations network to ensure this issue remains at the forefront of our national discourse.

We are also continuing our Surviving Winter campaign this year, seeking to support and raise the profile of local families and individuals who are struggling in the cold winter weather. Through the help and funding provided through MK Community Foundation and our partners, we hope to have a positive impact on those most desperately in need of our support this winter.

Next year in October 2015, we will launch an additional Vital Signs: MK update report with the latest facts and figures available on our city. Following that, there will be another full Vital Signs: MK report in October 2016. This will be a longer report, in the style of our first

Vital Signs report, and will be published every three years going forward, with annual updates in the intermediate years.

We are committed to working with, advising and supporting our local voluntary sector. In addition to more than £1 million pounds of grant making and support offered to the community each year, MK Community Foundation also takes very seriously the opportunities to offer leadership and guidance to our colleagues and friends around Milton Keynes. If you or an organisation you represent would like to engage with us, take advantage of our grant funding, participate in our Vital Signs consultations or support our work with a donation, please don't hesitate to contact us on the numbers / address below.

Thanks to Vanessa Hutton for her help in gathering research for this report.

Local Futures, National and Regional Grading

How do we compare to other parts of the country? MK Community Foundation benefits from the research gathering of the Local Futures programme, and uses their findings to monitor and grade the trends in our community and region. (For the purposes of the Local Futures data, Milton Keynes is grouped regionally with Buckingham and Oxford.) A-E grades for Milton Keynes are created using 20 percentiles for the score out of 100. The overall score is obtained using the national ranks for the three main indicators for each theme. Each rank is turned into a percentage, the percentage figure is then inverted (as a lower, rather than a high rank is 'better') to produce the score:

Theme	Grade
Work	C
Fairness	C
Housing and Homelessness	D
Safety	E
Learning	B
Arts, Culture and Heritage	B
Strong Communities	D
Environment	C
Healthy Living	C
Local Economy	A

Here are excerpts from the Local Futures 2014 gradings, by theme, for Milton Keynes.

1. Work - C

In this assessment, the employment, unemployment and economically active rates are used as overall measures of labour market performance across Milton Keynes. A range of other indicators such as youth unemployment, long-term unemployment, employment rate change, a composite labour market score and an inactive (long-term sick) are also scored to provide a fuller analysis of work conditions.

Milton Keynes scores 43/100 on the work score, based on the three core Vital Signs indicators, placing it in the middle 20% of sub regions nationally. This gives Milton Keynes an overall grade C for work.

In 2014, 79.1% of Milton Keynes' resident working age population were economically active. By comparison, the South East figure was 79.9% and the national figure was 77.4%.

2. Fairness - C

The Government's standard measure of disadvantage and inequality in England is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). In this section conditions are assessed across Milton Keynes according to a number of aspects of deprivation including education; income; employment; health; and housing. The inequality indicator is designed to highlight any large differences in deprivation; this can illuminate pockets of deprivation at the small area level within the wider area. The inequality indicator is measured as the difference between the highest and lowest ranking super output area (SOA) at each geographical level. Milton Keynes scores 45/100 on the fairness score, based on the three Vital Signs fairness indicators, putting it in the middle 20% of sub regions nationally. This gives Milton Keynes an overall grade of C for fairness.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation inequality range score is 29805 for Milton Keynes. This takes the difference between the highest and lowest ranking SOA and so a higher figure means more inequality. This is higher than the average for England (28531) and the South East (27261) and is second highest in the sub- region of Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

3. Housing & Homelessness - D

Housing affordability is a national problem yet its impacts are not evenly spread. While the previous boom in house prices in London and the South East is well documented, some areas in the North and Midlands continued to suffer from persistent low demand. Here housing and homelessness are considered in terms of an affordability score (assessed on the basis of the ratio between average earnings and average house prices), a household tenure rate and a homelessness measure. Additionally, there are indicators on average house prices, long term change in house prices, houses sold, houses rented, second homes, unfit stock and change in affordability over time.

Milton Keynes scores 29/100 on our housing and homelessness score, based on the three Vital Signs housing indicators, putting it in the low-mid 20% of sub regions. This provides Milton Keynes with an overall grade of D for housing and homelessness.

The average house price in Milton Keynes is £213,194, in the latest quarterly data from 2013. By comparison, the South East figure is £294,526 and the national average is £242,096.72.

4. Safety - E

Crime levels affect an area's 'liveability' and reflect the socio-economic conditions of the area and its surroundings. Nationally, there have been some reductions in crime over recent years. Here, Milton Keynes is assessed according to a number of crime related indicators, including total offences per 1,000 residents, violent crime, burglaries and the change in total number of offences over time.

Milton Keynes scores 17/100 on the safety score, based on the two key Vital Signs crime indicators, putting it in the bottom 20% of sub-regions nationally. This gives Milton Keynes an overall grade of E for safety.

With 74.71 total offences per 1,000 of the population, Milton Keynes has high levels of crime compared with the South East (54.77) and England (61.73). The crime score uses numbers of offences and provides an index to the England average (which is always 100). A score higher than 100 means that the crime is higher than the national average. With a crime score of 128.91, Milton Keynes therefore performs badly in comparison to the national trend.

There were 11.11 violent crimes per 1,000 residents in 2012-2013, which is above national standards. By comparison the South East figure was 9.83 and the national figure was 10.57. Between 2002/2003 and 2012/2013, the total number of offences decreased in Milton Keynes (-32.8). However, the number of offences in Milton Keynes have declined at a slower rate than the average for both the South East (-35.89) and England and Wales (-44.61). While there has been a substantial decrease in Milton Keynes, the reduction in offences overall across the South East and England has been more pronounced. Although the crime score for Milton Keynes is the second highest in the sub-region (128.91), the district only witnessed the second smallest decline in long term crime rates (-32.8).

However, one of the improvements of the past year saw Milton Keynes experiencing a dramatic reduction in the number of burglaries, largely in line with the South East and much lower than England and Wales.

5. Learning - B

In core assessment of skills and qualifications in Milton Keynes, a composite measure is used which presents an index of the qualifications of an area's workforce relative to the GB value, a measure of numbers of students attaining A*-C at GCSE as well as an indicator for those with no qualifications. The numbers of NEETS (young people not in education, employment or training) are considered as

we as the rates of those who have been in training in the last four weeks The report also examines different NVQ levels attained across the population of Milton Keynes.

Milton Keynes scores 61/100 on the learning score based on the three Vital Signs learning indicators, putting it in the mid-high 20% of sub regions. This provides Milton Keynes with an overall grade of B for learning.

With a skills and qualifications score of 102.26 (indexed against a Great Britain median of 100), Milton Keynes is slightly above the national median but below the average South East figure of 103.28.

6. Arts, Culture and Heritage - B

Arts, culture and heritage in Milton Keynes are assessed in terms of a number of indicators including the three key measures: a general amenities score, cultural amenities score and the percentage of the population employed in creative industries. Other available indicators include the density of national heritage sites, listed buildings, availability of libraries, retail floorspace and café culture. The level of local amenities or local residents is important for a good quality of life, making an area an attractive place to live and for tourists to visit. Milton Keynes scores 67/100 on our arts, culture and heritage score, based on the three Vital Signs indicators, putting it in the mid-high 20% of sub regions nationally. This provides Milton Keynes with a overall grade of B for arts, culture and heritage.

With a local amenities score of 234.04 (relative to the national median of 100), Milton Keynes is well above the national average. In this respect, Milton Keynes is ranked second in the sub-region behind Oxford (1537.62). Examining the cultural amenities score (139.35), Milton Keynes once again scores much higher than the national median. This reflects a relatively strong level of local cultural amenities (such as cinemas, theatres and libraries).

However, Milton Keynes does not perform so well in terms of employment in the creative sector, ranking 9th out of the 10 districts in the sub-region.

7. Strong Communities - D

Strong communities indicators come from the ONS Subjective wellbeing data, in which participants were asked to self report on a number of aspects to do with their wellbeing. Strong communities indicators in particular should not be considered in isolation and it is recommended that some may wish to take in to consideration qualitative data or local quantitative data in relation to electoral turnout or other measures.

Milton Keynes scores 26/100 on strong communities, based on the single Vital Signs indicator of wellbeing, putting it at the low-mid 20% of sub regions nationally. This provides Milton Keynes with a overall grade of D for strong communities.

The average wellbeing score is calculated using the additional four indicators 'anxious yesterday', 'happy yesterday', 'life satisfaction', 'life worthwhile'.

8. Environment - C

The natural environment is a subjective theme, which makes benchmarking problematic. This profile assesses the natural environment of Milton Keynes in terms of areas of a composite score which considers outstanding natural beauty, green space, green belt and heritage coast, air quality and CO2 emissions per capita. Also considered are tranquility, ecological footprint, a natural beauty score and weather. Milton Keynes scores 42/100 on our environment score, based on the three Vital Signs environment indicators, putting it in the middle 20% of sub regions nationally. This gives Milton Keynes an overall grade of C for environment.

With a score of 54.4, the quality of the natural environment in Milton Keynes is well below the national (indexed at 100 for England) and score for the South East (95.7).

9. Healthy Living - C

Nationally, there have been major improvements in public health over the course of the last century, with big increases in life expectancy. However, this overall picture masks significant geographical variations and health inequality. Here, Milton Keynes is assessed according to a number of health indicators, including a self-reported health census score, life expectancy, and expected prevalence of obesity. Additionally, infant mortality, cancer and circulatory disease mortality are considered as well as standardised mortality ratios. Milton Keynes scores 48/100 on the healthy living score, based on the three Vital Signs health indicators, putting it in the mid 20% of sub regions nationally. This provides Milton Keynes with an overall grade of C for healthy living.

With a health score of 128.48, Milton Keynes is above the South East and national median. However, average life expectancy in Milton Keynes is 80.62 years which is lower than the regional (82.08) and figure for England and Wales (81.05).

10. Local Economy - A

Strong economic foundations are critical to the future success of an area, creating quality employment opportunities for local people. Economic Performance is measured here in terms of productivity, scale and growth of the economy in Milton Keynes. Productivity measures the relative performance of the economy in an area, by combining Gross Value Added (GVA) per head with workplace earnings and the share of national GVA. Additional indicators include change in GVA per job, numbers of employees, earnings, and short term change in employment. Economic scale examines the absolute size of the economy and is derived from an area's share of Great Britain's total GVA and employment base. Finally, economic change measures percentage short term change in numbers of employees (by workplace) in relation to the national average. Milton Keynes scores

94/100 on the local economy score, placing it in the top 20% of sub regions nationally with an overall grade A.

With a productivity score of 132.4 (indexed using the median for England as 100), Milton Keynes is above the national median. By comparison the South East score was 112.54. Additionally, Milton Keynes' share of the national GVA (gross value added) is 0.65%, contributing more to the sub-region of Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire than any other district. The South East as a whole contributes 15.27%.