

VITAL SIGNS 2015



Helping make MK a better place to live and work



What is Vital Signs MK?

Vital Signs MK is an annual report designed to round up new research on Milton Keynes and present it in an easy-to-read format. Vital Signs points to our strengths and to the challenges we face as a city. This summary report is the second update to Vital Signs MK 2013, which presented the results of research across eleven important themes.

On our website www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk you can download a longer version of this report with links to all of the research, as well as copies of past reports. The Vital Signs 'movement' is spreading across the UK, see examples of this by visiting www.ukcommunityfoundations.org.

What is MK Community Foundation?

MK Community Foundation is an independent Milton Keynes charity working for and at the heart of MK. We support local charities and community groups through our grant making programme and property subsidy. With the help of local people and businesses in the last financial year we gave £1.6 million back to community groups and charities, making MK a vibrant place to work and live. To help us award grants for important charitable projects across MK you can donate online at www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk or call us on 01908 690276 to find out more.

Economy

While our local economy continues to grow at an impressive pace, the influx of skilled non-MK-resident workers is creating challenges for residents looking for work.

Prosperity and opportunities to grow business contributes greatly to the vitality and vibrancy of an area. As one of the most recession-proof local economies in the nation, Milton Keynes has proven itself to be a natural home for creative enterprise and innovative business practice with new and well-established companies. Measures of any local economy include productivity, presence of diverse industries and opportunities for enterprise and innovation.

Vital Action

Works for Us

Works for Us offers coaching and support to people who are struggling to find work. The service has been supported by MK Community Foundation to enable Works for Us to help local people with job searches and confidence building, enhancing their employability.



Vital Thinking

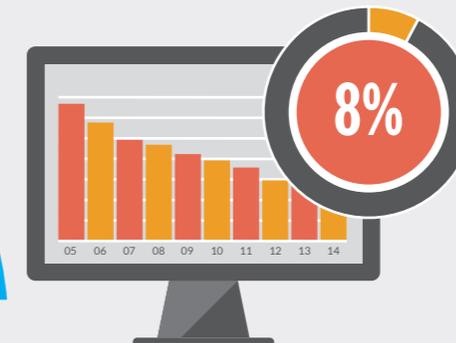
How can we ensure that local people have the skills to compete for jobs with others commuting into MK for work?

Vital Statistics...

MK is **22% more enterprising** than the national average, with more new businesses and start ups that succeed

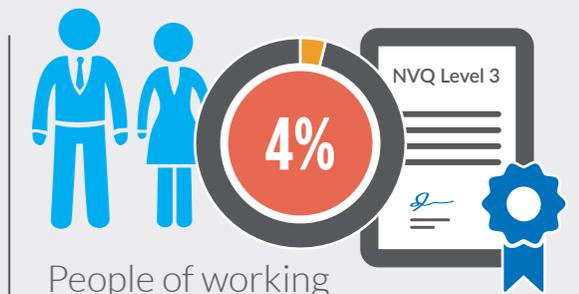


Men in full time employment earn **£100 more than women per week**



Employment of local people between **2005 and 2014 has dropped by 8%**

MK is **51% faster** at creating jobs than the national average



People of working age have **4% fewer NVQ-level qualifications** than the national average

Disadvantage and Poverty

Despite the thriving local economy, Milton Keynes has seen no improvement in the numbers of local people living in poverty.

In order to live to our full potential as individuals, we must all have equal access to opportunities, such as equality of access to meaningful employment and good quality services, as well as opportunities for social and educational engagement.

Vital Action

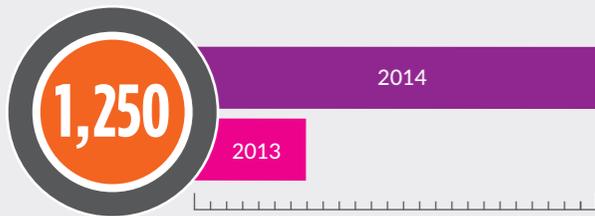
MK Community Bank (a branch of Swan Credit Union) helps people to open savings accounts and secure low-interest loans when high street banks can't help them. They have recently appointed a Development Worker, Diane, funded by MK Community Foundation to raise the profile of the bank and to make sure local people are aware of how the bank can help them.



Vital Thinking

With average local unemployment figures so low, why does poverty remain so stubbornly high, and why are 20% of our young people unemployed?

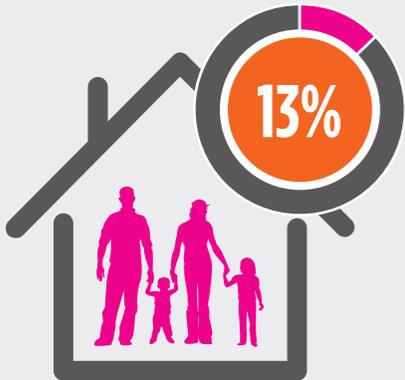
Vital Statistics....



1,250 people were recorded as homeless in MK in 2014, compared to 350 in 2013

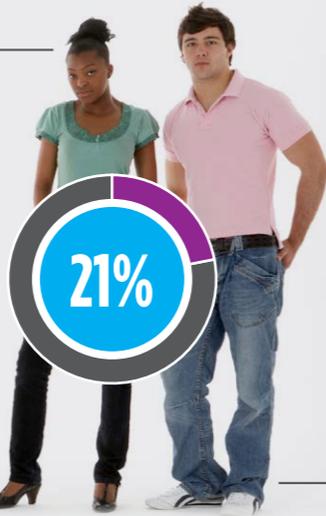


The average unemployment in MK between April 2013 and March 2014 was 2%



13% of MK residents are living in some of the most deprived areas of England

21% of 16-24 year olds in MK are unemployed (not including students), double the rate of Northampton and one third higher than Bedford



19% of children under 16 in MK still live below the poverty line, that's 1 in 5



Education

Milton Keynes has seen a worrying drop in exam performance and students are struggling to keep up with national averages.

Education and skills provide greater access to employment, lifelong learning and personal growth. Strategies to promote opportunities for early childhood development can have a significant impact on young people's long term educational attainment.

Vital Action

St Francis Children's Society (SFCS) runs a parent training programme called Preparation Group Training to help new adoptive parents prepare to welcome adoptive children into their homes. SFCS offers life time support to adoptive families at any point of their journey. MK Community Foundation funded this project to ensure that adoptive children are taken into stable and supportive family environments. This in turn helps adoptive children grow and develop in their new homes and improves their chances of doing well at school.

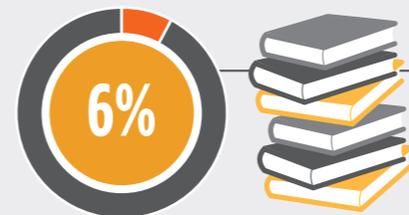
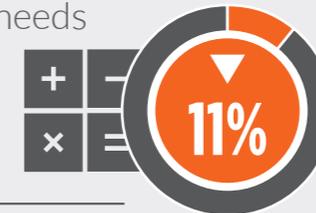


Vital Thinking

How can we best support the development of vulnerable, disabled and low income students, whose exam results fell significantly in the past year?

Vital Statistics....

5-7 year old students with special needs achieving the expected standard in maths **dropped from 25% to 14%**



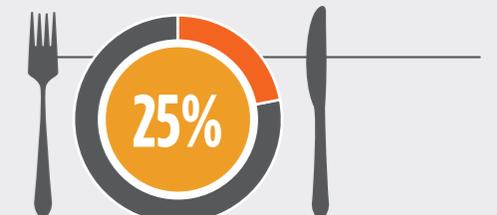
6% of A-level students in MK achieved grades A*-A or better in three subjects compared with 12% nationally in 2014

Less than half of children aged 5 and under who qualify for free school meals showed 'good' development



13% increase in children aged 5 and under showing 'good' levels of improvement in development criteria

61% of MK students achieved 5 or more A*-C grades in their GCSEs, compared with 63% nationally*



Only 25% of MK students who qualify for free school meals achieved 5 or more A*-C grades in their GCSEs

* These statistics are based on 2014 exam results. 2015 exam results will be available in November 2015.

Milton Keynes has a weight problem and it doesn't only affect adults. Childhood obesity has reached worrying levels and will likely contribute to additional health complications later in life, increasing the chance of disease and early death.

Feeling 'healthy' is important to our sense of vitality and wellbeing. Health includes both physical and mental health as well as lifestyle choices and opportunities.

Building a greater awareness and understanding of social conditions, including differences in gender, income, ethnic background, education and early childhood development also helps to inform us about the overall wellbeing of our communities.

Vital Action

Ride High works with some of MK's most vulnerable young people. Their combined approach of horse riding, horse care and clubroom sessions help children attending overcome self destructive behaviours like self harm and confidence issues. As a result of their dedicated programme, which has received funds from MK Community Foundation since it began in 2009, Ride High is proud to report a significant reduction in self harm amongst their members. 75% of children and young people who were referred to Ride High with destructive behaviours including self-harm have stopped or significantly reduced these behaviours within 6 months of attending.



Vital Thinking

Obesity is a leading cause of premature death as it contributes to heart disease, cancer, diabetes and stroke. How do we reverse this deadly trend, especially amongst our children, who will suffer the consequences if we fail to act?



Causes of OBESITY

- Diets high in sugar and/or fat
- Lack of physical activity
- Social, cultural, biological and psychological factors

Between **3 & 13** years

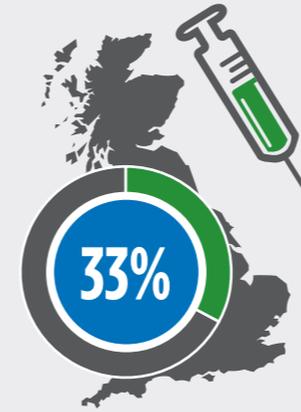
"On average, obesity reduces life expectancy by between 3 and 13 years with excess mortality being greater the more severe the obesity and the earlier it develops." (National Heart Forum, 2007)

"Obesity is the new smoking, and it represents a slow-motion car crash in terms of avoidable illness."

Simon Stevens, Chief Executive, NHS England



Vital Statistics...



33% less crack and opiate (opium, morphine, heroin, and codeine) abuse in MK than the national average



Hospital stays for self harm are 15% higher than the national average



39% of overweight and obese 13-15 year olds identify themselves as being 'the right weight' or 'too light'

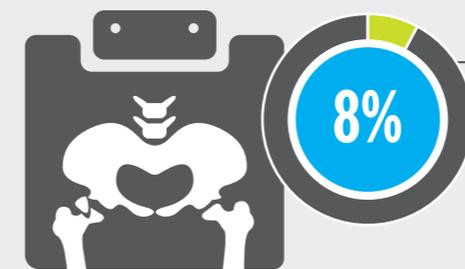
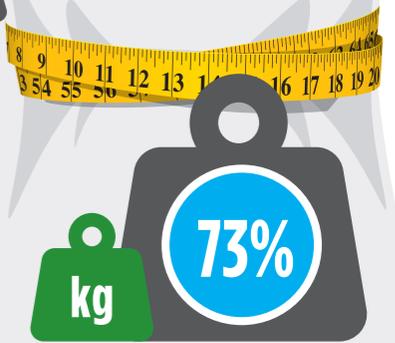
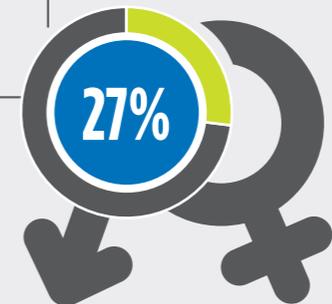


Nearly 1 in every 5 children aged 10 - 11 are clinically obese, unchanged from 2014



Nearly 3 in every 4 adults are overweight or obese

27% fewer diagnoses of sexually transmitted infections than the national average



Hip fractures for residents 65 and older have increased by 8% between 2012 and 2014



Nearly 1 in every 4 adults are clinically obese

Looking Ahead

Milton Keynes is thriving in many ways, but our unchanging levels of poverty, dropping educational standards and lower than average employment-related skills are not a recipe for the brightest of futures.

How much of our current success is due to the influx of non-local people into our local work force? What can we as a community do to turn these worrying indicators around? How can we enhance the skills and employability of local workers, mitigate the impact of poverty on the development and education of children and young people and reduce the pay gap between men and women?

Join the Conversation!

Get involved and have your say



Tweet your **#VitalSignsMK** thoughts to **@MKComFoundation**



Send an email to **giving@mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk**



Send a letter to MK Community Foundation, Acorn House, 381 Midsummer Boulevard, MK9 3HP



Call us on **01908 690276** we'd love to talk more about Vital Signs with you

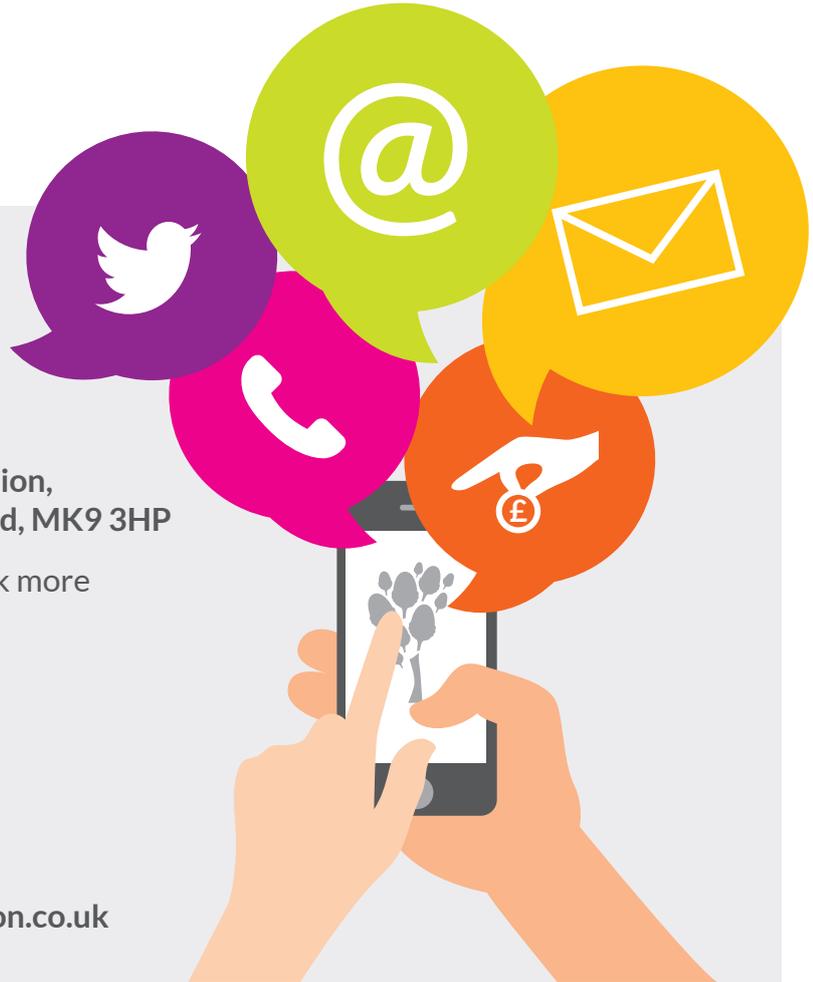
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Speak to our team about leaving a gift in your will, call us on **01908 690276** or email **giving@mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk**



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