

Vital Signs

Long Report 2018



What is Vital Signs?

The purpose of Vital Signs is to provide a single, easily accessible and understandable source of relevant data about the current state of our community in Milton Keynes. Vital Signs is a health check of where we are against national and regional trends; our strengths and weaknesses as a community, highlighting where we excel and can be proud of achievements, as well as where we have great need and where future attention and resources should be focused.

Vital Signs was first established as an information tool for communities and community support and development in Canada. In 2013, Milton Keynes Community Foundation was one of the first few Community Foundations in Britain to pilot Vital Signs. Since then we have annually produced this research and now many Community Foundations [across our network](#) produce [similar research for their communities](#). The aspiration is that people across the UK will be able to easily access information and statistics on the health of their local community.

Methodology

The 2018 Vital Signs MK report is an update report, rounding up new data on Milton Keynes to appear in the past year since our last report. It focuses on the new research published regarding our diversity, economy, education and poverty and disadvantage. In 2019, we are due to produce a full Vital Signs MK report, collating the latest data on the full 12 Vital Signs themes.

To ensure the data we compile in this report is as reliable as possible, the team at the MK Community Foundation have scoured as many reliable sources as we could find for data that has been newly published since we last reported on a theme, or that we have never reported on before. One big trove of data, as always, are statistical releases from central and local government sources and the Office for National Statistics. Reports from trusted organisations such as Shelter and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have also informed the reading of data from those same sources. The expanded edition of Vital Signs, which you are now reading, directs you where possible straight to each source of data. Exceptions to this may include where we have acquired data from Place Analytics, which is a paid subscription service to which we are not able to link directly.

Once we had gathered all our research we then had to work on a way to make the information accessible across Milton Keynes. We have produced two reports. One is a short magazine format document that we will share with our members, voluntary sector groups and disseminate across Milton Keynes through parishes, doctors surgeries, libraries etc. We have also produced this longer report that highlights the sources of research, information and statistics so that you are able to access these yourself. This is a free to download report made available through our website and online digital strategy. (Please note that some of the data has been obtained through Place Analytics, which is a paid subscription service compiling data from a range of reputable sources. References to their portal have been omitted, but everything else comes from the sources specified throughout this report). This full report also provides details of our consultations with several local professionals offering a real picture of the issue in our local environment.

How to use Vital Signs 2018

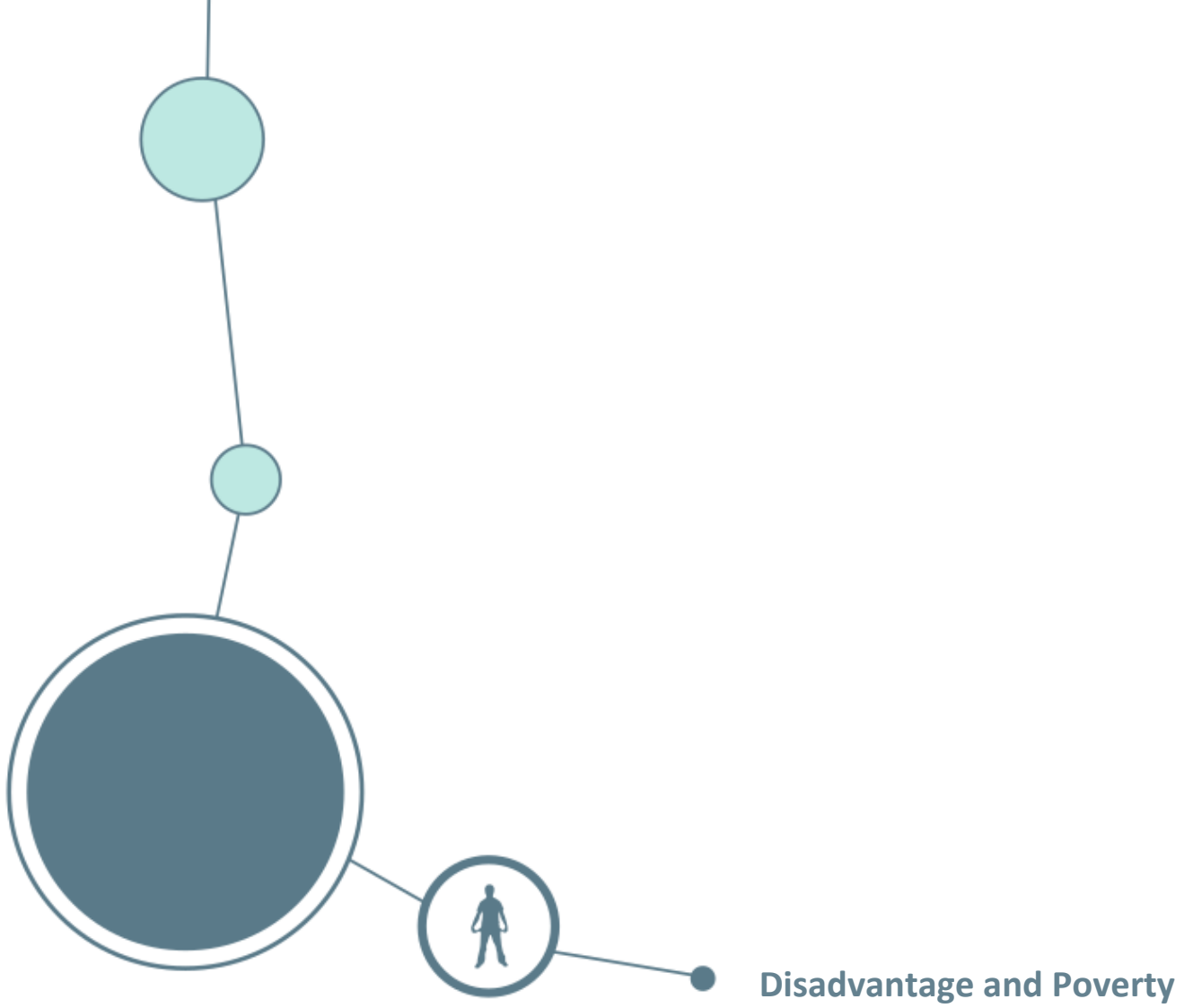
The purpose of Vital Signs is to make information about our local community available to those who are interested in it. However, a further purpose is that those of us who operate in the voluntary, community, commercial and public sectors who have resources, whether financial or strategic, to invest these efficiently and effectively, towards the areas of our community where it is most needed.

We hope that Vital Signs MK 2018 will be useful for organisations working in the voluntary sector as well as our wider community. We believe that promoting a deeper understanding of our shared community and the challenges we face can inspire the civic pride, leadership, informed debate and community action that will lead to a brighter future for all of us who call Milton Keynes our home.

Please note; statistics from our Vital Signs Report have been used by organisations in the wider community in applications for funding. We ask that when you reference Vital Signs in any writing please reference MK Community Foundation. This is important as it recognises the added value of our work in leveraging income into Milton Keynes from regional / national sources for the benefit of people in our local community.

Themes for 2018:

1. Disadvantage and Poverty
2. Education
3. Diversity
4. Economy



Disadvantage and Poverty

Theme definition

This year we are able to provide an update on some of the issues surrounding child poverty and homelessness that were highlighted in last year's report.

Defining poverty is not straightforward, as there is no single measure. Broadly speaking, poverty is when one's resources do not meet their minimum needs.

The UK government defines poverty in two ways:

- Relative poverty – people earning 60% of the median income after housing costs for the household size
- Absolute poverty – the same calculation using the median income in 2010/11 in order to measure how the living standards of low income households are changing over time

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation define destitution as “going without the bare essentials we all need—home, food, lighting, heating, basic toiletries. Destitution is when people have lacked two or more essentials over the past month because their income is less than £70 a week for a single adult.”

Whilst we have not found more up to date figures on levels of destitution specific to the Milton Keynes area, JRF estimates that 1,550,000 people, including 365,000 children, were destitute in the UK at some point during 2017.

Overview

40%	Average child poverty remains at 25% in Milton Keynes, reaching as high as 40% in some wards
26.3%	“Rent to wage lag” in Milton Keynes. This is the difference in the rise between the cost of private renting and the increase in the average household wages, which shows rents are rising
1 in 110	1 in 110 people in Milton Keynes are homeless, compared with 1 in 206 in England
26%	Increase in rough sleeping count since last year
1/3	Approximately one third of rough sleepers are under 25

Findings

Child Poverty

End Child Poverty published new figures on the level of child poverty at local levels in January 2018, showing that the child poverty rate for the local authority is 25.51%, or 16,645 children—similar to 2014 data (25%) we reported on last year.

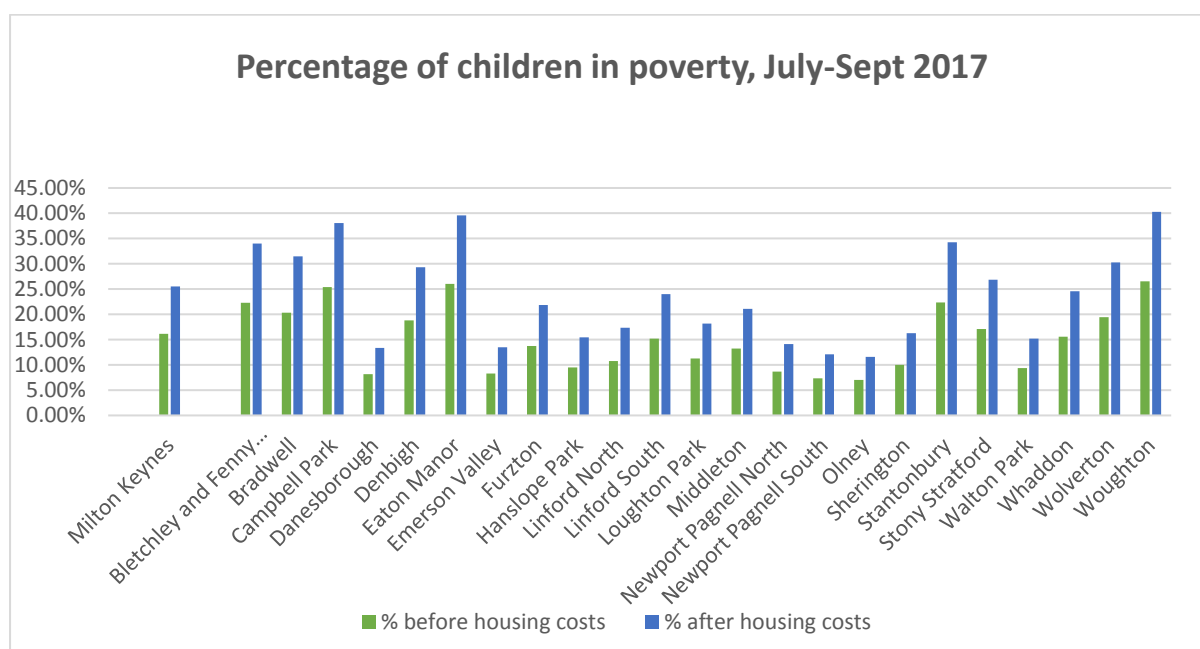
Interestingly, this data reveals the impact of housing expenses on the rates of child poverty in the region, showing that before these are deducted the percentage of children living in households in poverty is 16.17%. This difference accounts for 6,092 children. ([Source: Poverty in your area 2018. End Child Poverty.](#))

Shelter, an independent organisation which supports people who are homeless or struggling with housing problems, have highlighted a national picture of private rent rising 60% faster than wages across England, so the impact of housing costs on child poverty rates may only be set to worsen. In Milton Keynes between 2011 and 2017, average household wages¹ rose 2.8% whilst average rent rose 29.1%, leaving a “rent to wage lag” of 26.3%. ([Source: Rentquake: Change in private rents from 2011 to 2017. Shelter.](#))

The English Housing Survey 2016-17 shows that across England 20% of households live in the private rented sector, up from 12% in 2006-2007. ([Source: English Housing Survey 2016 to 2017: private rented sector. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.](#))

Further breakdown by ward shows that in some areas of Milton Keynes rates of child poverty after housing costs is as high as 40.29%.

Fig. 1. Percentage of children in poverty in Milton Keynes by ward, July-September 2017



[Source: End Child Poverty](#)

¹ Shelter describe household wages as “modelled on a two-person home, where one individual is working full-time and one part time.”

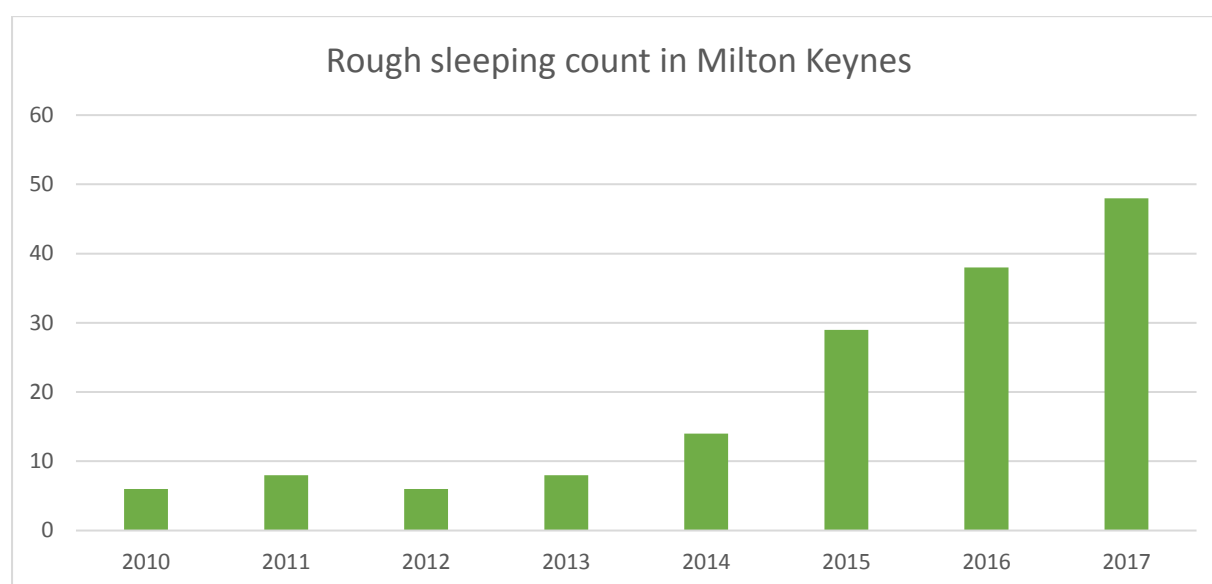
The breakdown by ward also offers us some insight into the levels of poverty that exist in areas of Milton Keynes such as Olney Ward which ranks in the 10%-30% *least* deprived areas in England (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2015), and yet still has over 1 in 10 children living in poverty after housing costs.

JRF have reported a troubling trend in an increase in both child poverty and pensioner poverty in the UK. Where poverty fell between the 1990s and 2011/12 for both groups, in the UK poverty rates have started to rise again—up to 16% for pensioners from 13% in 2011/12, and up to 30% in the UK for children, from 27% in 2011/12. ([Source: UK Poverty 2017. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.](#))

Homelessness

The most visible aspect of homelessness in Milton Keynes, and the aspect that has received a lot of publicity over the last year, is of course that of those rough sleeping. The most recent data available shows that an already increasing number continues to rise, with a 26% increase in those counted on a single night snapshot since we reported last year, and a staggering 700% (from 6 counted to 48) increase since 2010. Approximately one third of those counted were under 25.

Fig. 2: Rough sleeping count by number of individuals in Milton Keynes, 2010-2017



[Source: Rough sleeping in England: Annual rough sleeping counts and estimates statistical release, Autumn 2010 – 2017. 16 February 2018. Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.](#)

The legal definition of homelessness (from the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977) encompasses much more than rough sleeping, including those in temporary accommodation, those with no legal right to accommodation, or those with accommodation that is inaccessible or not reasonable to live in, for instance for fear of violence.

Shelter released their report 'Far from alone: Homelessness in Britain in 2017' in November 2017 that revealed that, in England, 1 in 206 people are homeless. Regionally, in the South East, it's 1 in 327 people.

In Milton Keynes, the figure is 1 in 110 people. This ranks us as 29th in the top areas in England for highest rates of homelessness, and one of only five local authorities in the top 30 outside of London. Others include Luton (1 in 55), Brighton & Hove (1 in 69), and Birmingham (1 in 88).

Shelter's figures cover rough sleeping (as at Autumn 2016, so refer to last year's count) and temporary accommodation (as at Q2 of 2017) only.

Fig. 3: Rates of homelessness in Milton Keynes

Number of people living in Temporary Accommodation	Number of people rough sleeping	Total homeless people	Total people	1 in x people are homeless	National rank (by Local Authority)
2,358	38	2,396	264,479	110	29

[Source: Far from alone: Homelessness in Britain in 2017. Shelter.](#)

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government publish detailed statistics quarterly on Local Authority Level responses that offer some insight into the needs and demographics of those who apply and are accepted from local authority support under the homelessness provisions.

The most detail is provided on those who are accepted as “eligible, unintentionally homeless, and in priority need”. More detail on how “priority need” is determined can be found [here](#).

They show that over the last year (Q2 2017 – Q1 2018), 679 households were accepted, with a further 71 households deemed homeless and in priority need but intentionally homeless, and another 71 as not in priority need—a total 826 homeless households applying for support from the council. A further 271 households were deemed either not homeless or ineligible.

The majority of accepted homeless households were lone female parents with dependent children (360 households).

Vital Thinking

Last year, Vital Signs introduced the growing trend of the working poor. How has the voluntary sector responded to this? Is pooling our resources across all sectors and working in partnership the most positive way we can make a difference? What are the issues surrounding disadvantage and poverty that we can affect?

Vital Action

One of the projects MK Community Foundation supported this year was MK Community Fridge. This funding enabled their project co-ordinator to dedicate additional staff time to the project that has increased food collections, organised 6 outdoor community events and run a regular pop-up cafe. In their first year of operation, they diverted more than 15 tonnes of quality food to the people of Milton Keynes. Their ethos focusses on reducing food waste and building community bonds, rather than food poverty, this approach helps reduce the stigma that may be present around sharing food with the growing number of people who are struggling financially.

Homelessness

1 in 110 people in Milton Keynes **are homeless**, compared with 1 in 206 in England



Increase in **rough sleeping** count since last years report (actual figure is 48 from 38)

26%



Approximately one third of rough sleepers counted in MK **are under 25**

1/3

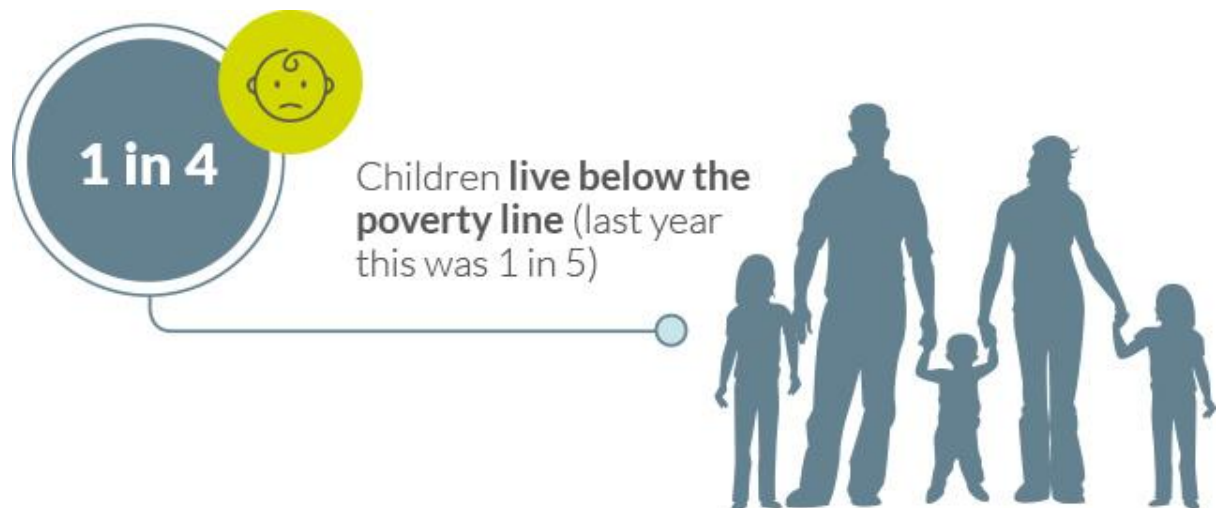
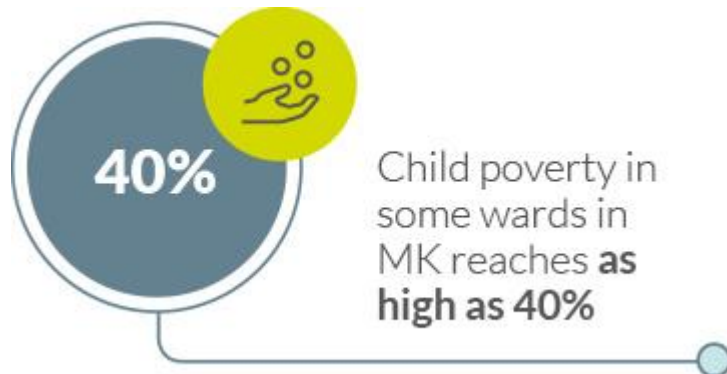


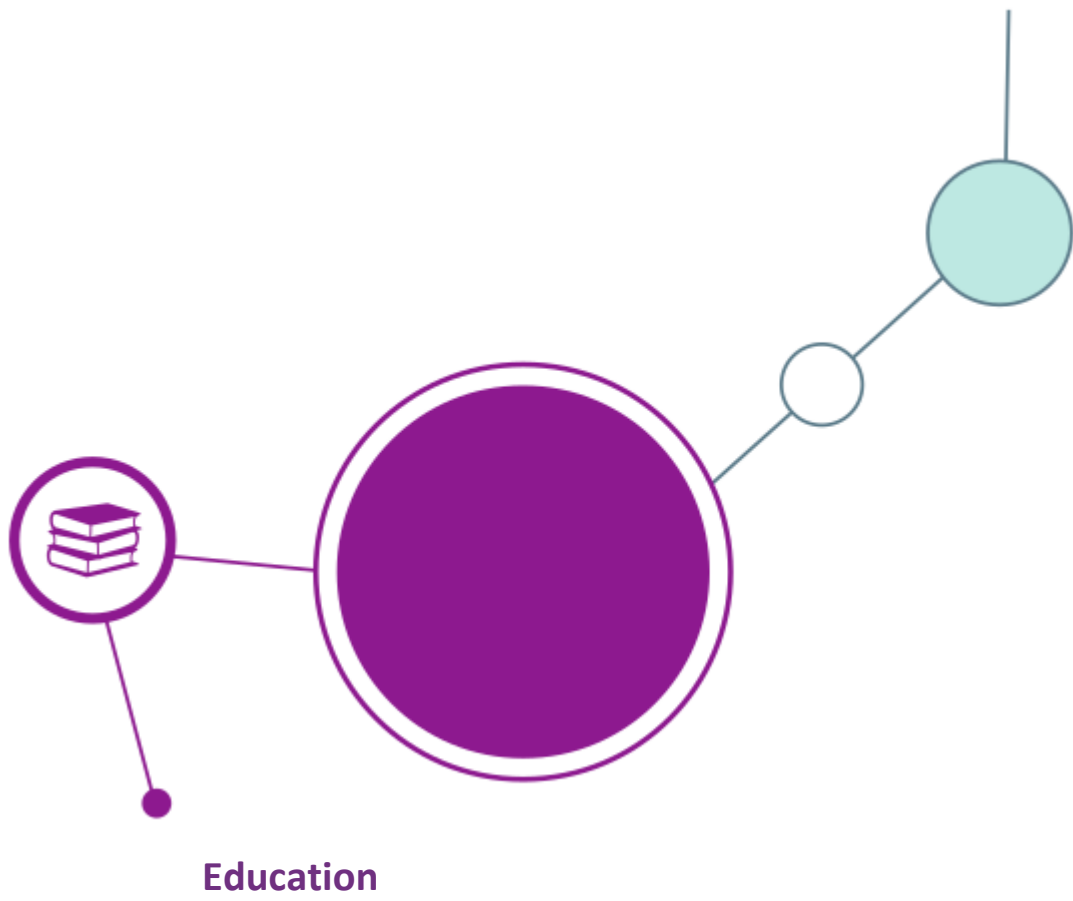
Private rent prices are **rising 26% faster than the average** household income.

26%



Child Poverty





Education

Theme definition:

By Education, we mean the teaching and learning of knowledge and new skills. When we think of education we often think of schools and Universities, and although these formal education settings do make up a large proportion of education across the UK, there are also many other routes to learning. Apprenticeships, vocational training, skills clubs, and community learning all play an important part.

This year, we are focusing on educational attainment for children eligible for free school meals (FSM) in schools. We are also able to look at provision of creative subjects, as well as the other types of qualifications that people in Milton Keynes have.

Overview:

28	MK Schools are signed up to Artsmark.
63.7%	Of children eligible for FSM achieve a good standard at foundation stage, and improvement on the past 2 years.
5	In KS5, students eligible for FSM have an average points score of 26.05, 5 points lower than other pupils
20%	In KS2, 38% of students eligible for FSM are performing at expected standard compared to 58% of all pupils, a difference of 20%
7%	Of students eligible for FSM go into selective higher education by age 19
2.34%	Of the population in Milton Keynes have trade apprenticeships
£108m	Only £108mil of the £1.9bil available in the apprenticeship levy has been withdrawn

Findings

According to Place Analytics, 14.8% of all A-Level students in Milton Keynes in 2016/17 achieved AAB or more passes, compared with 31.6% in Buckinghamshire. 7.8% achieved 3 A*-A grades, compared with 19.5% in Buckinghamshire. (Source: Place Analytics)

Nationally, based on data from 2016, arts and creative subjects receive a relatively low uptake at GCSE, with some disparity between uptake between more and less deprived students. Although uptake remains low at A Level, the gap between uptake across deprivation levels becomes smaller. The national GCSE uptake of Art and Design was 13.7%, Drama and Theatre was 11.9%, and Music only 7.3%. When broken down by socio-economic background, the uptake of Music is 8.6% among less deprived students, and only 5.7% among more deprived students. By contrast, the top options after core subjects such as Maths, English, and Science were Religious Studies (46.5% uptake), History (44.2% uptake), Geography (41%) and French (25.3%). ([Source: Uptake of GCSE Subjects 2016, The Cambridge Assessment](#))

At A Level in the same year, Art and Design (Fine Art) had uptake of 4.7%, Drama 4.2%, and Music 1.6%. The highest uptake was in Maths (28%), Psychology (20.6%), Biology (19.5%) and History (17.85%). ([Source: Uptake of GCE A Level Subjects, The Cambridge Assessment](#))

However, whilst creative subjects are not always selected or provided as options at GCSE and A Level, successful efforts are being made to get art back into schools in Milton Keynes. 28 of our schools are signed up to the Artsmark, an Art Council England accreditation which supports schools to develop their arts provision. This is more than Buckinghamshire and almost as many as Oxfordshire, and represents a good level for the region. ([Source: Artsmark](#))

Arts & Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes (AHA-MK), a group of 39 local arts organisations, also worked hard to encourage arts and culture in schools, carrying out a total of 769 schools outreach visits and hosting 1360 schools visits to site in 2016/17. ([Source: AHA-MK Annual Report, AHA-MK](#))

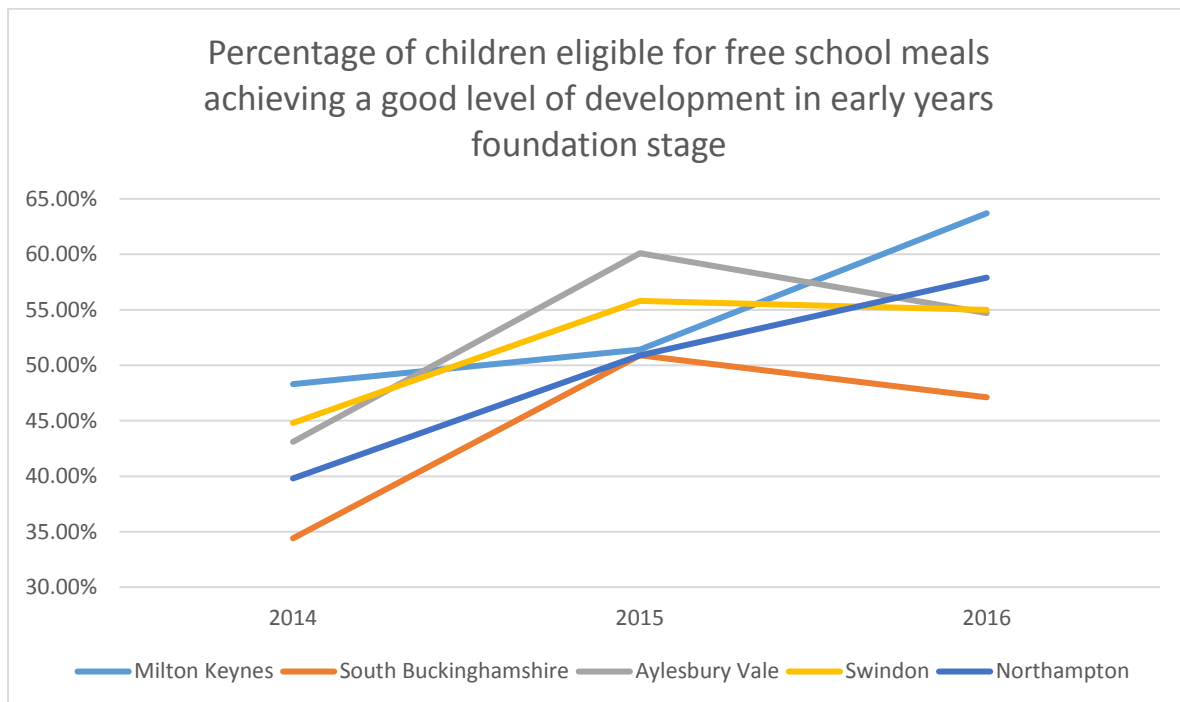
Public Health England suggests that 73.4% of our 5 year olds were ready for school at the end of reception in 2016/17, higher than the national average of 70.7% ([Source: Public Health England](#)).

This is supported by data available from the Social Mobility Commission's Social Mobility Index ([Source: Social Mobility Index November 2017, Social Mobility Commission](#)), released in November 2017, which shows that Milton Keynes performs in the top half of Local Authorities for children eligible for FSM during early education. However, these students perform less well at school age, and MK is in the lower performing half of local authorities for youth.

In 2016, 63.7% of children eligible for free school meals were achieving a good standard at early years foundation stage, an increase from the previous two years. In fact, we continued to see an improvement in this area whilst some other comparable areas and nearby local authorities saw a decline.

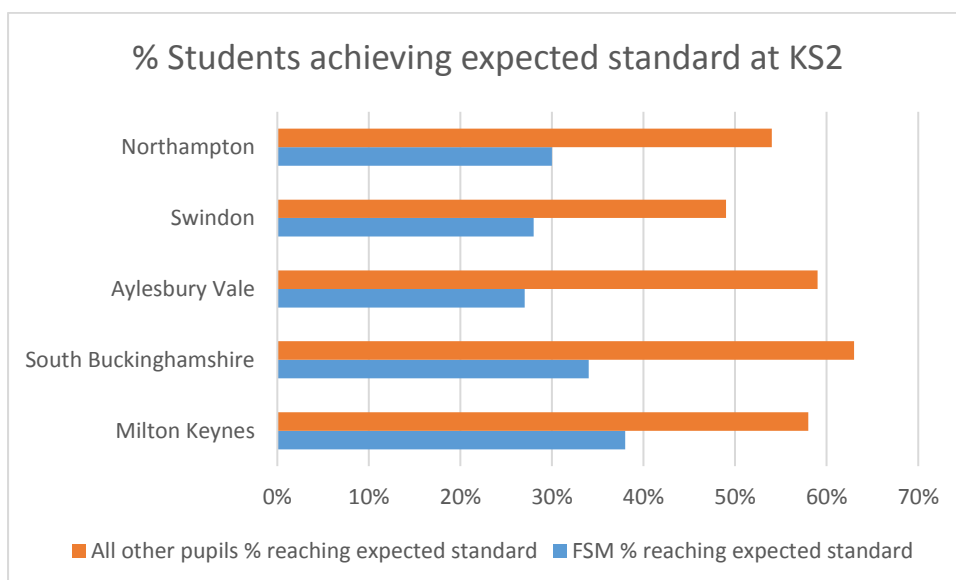
In KS2, 38% of pupils eligible for free school meals were performing at the expected standard compared to 58% of all pupils. By KS5 children eligible for free schools meals had an average points score of 26.05, compared to 30.83 amongst other pupils – almost 5 points difference. The following tables show comparisons with other local towns in the region and with Swindon, a town with which Milton Keynes is often compared to on the basis of history and population size.

Fig 1., Percentage of children eligible for free school meals achieving a good level of development in early years foundation stage



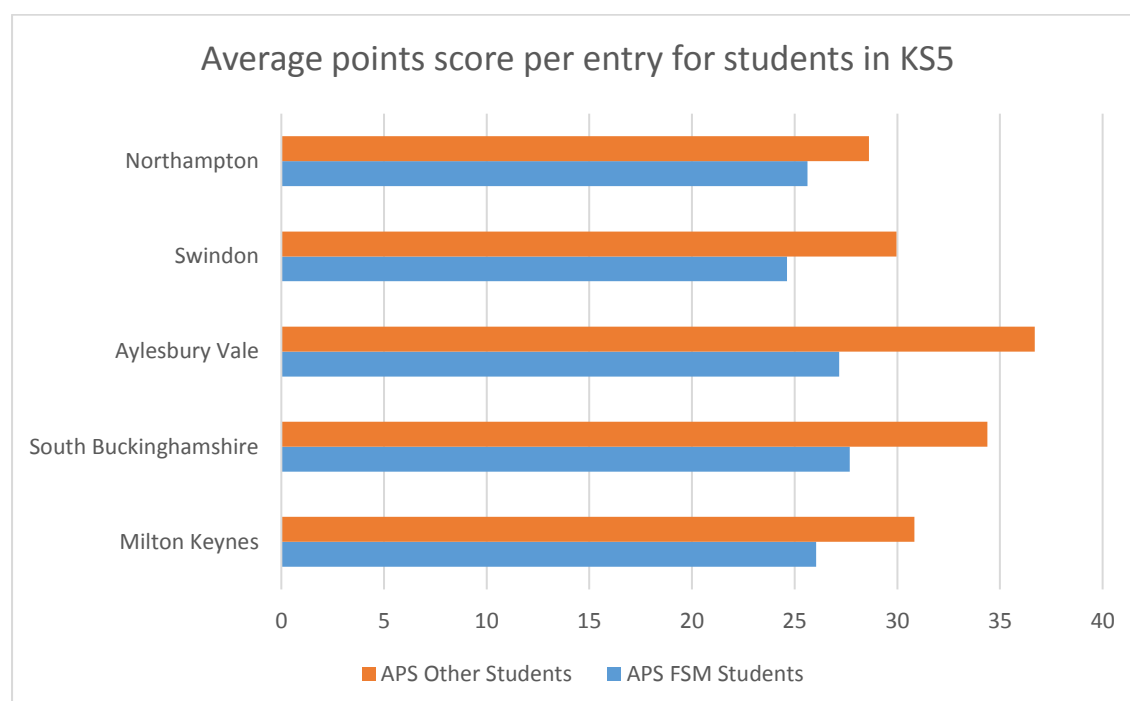
[Source: Social Mobility Index November 2017, Social Mobility Commission](#)

Fig 2., Percentage of students not eligible for FSM and students eligible for FSM achieving the expected standard at KS2.



[Source: Social Mobility Index November 2017, Social Mobility Commission](#)

Fig. 3, Average points score per entry in KS5 for students not eligible for FSM and students eligible for FSM.



[Source: Social Mobility Index November 2017, Social Mobility Commission](#)

As the graphs show, whilst we appear to be performing better than other areas at KS2, by KS5 the gap has closed, and both Aylesbury Vale and South Bucks start to overtake.

Despite this apparent lowering of attainment through the course of schooling, more children eligible for Free School Meals from state schools in Milton Keynes now go in to selective higher education by the age of 19 – the number has risen from 2% in 2012/13 and 2013/14, to 7% in 2014/15. This is better than the national average of 5%. [\(Source: Social Mobility Index November 2017, Social Mobility Commission\)](#)

This reflects a national trend according to the Department for Education (DfE) Widening Participation Report, released in 2017. Looking at a cohort from 2014/15, there was more movement into Higher Education among children eligible for free school meals over a steady increase since 2008/09. At the same time however, there had also been an increase nationally in the number of students not eligible for free school meals accessing higher education, so the gap in access remained. Despite this data being from 2014/15, the same report also highlights a continued increase in both FSM and non-FSM students accessing higher education via UCAS for 2015/16 and 2016/17, suggesting the overall trend may be continuing. The report also highlights a national increase in the gap between access to higher education for state school pupils and independent school pupils between 2008/09 and 2014/15 [\(Source: Widening Participation in Higher Education, England, 2014/15 age cohort, DfE\)](#)

Of course, GCSEs, A Levels, and Degrees are not the only routes into further education and training. In 2017 9.09% of the MK population aged 16-64 had no qualifications. This is higher than the rest of Buckinghamshire, where only 3.13% have no qualifications. However, as of December 2017 6.45% of the Milton Keynes population ages 16-64 had other qualifications (compared to 6.93% in England

and only 4.47% in Buckinghamshire). Additionally, 2.34% had gained Trade Apprenticeships. Although slightly lower than the national rate of 2.92%, this is again higher than the rate of 2.02% in Buckinghamshire. (Source: Place Analytics).

The Open University found that 84% of business leaders in England support the apprenticeship levy. However, only £108m of the £1.9billion paid in to the levy has been withdrawn. It must be used by April 2019 or will expire and no longer be accessible to businesses. The majority of apprenticeships so far are aimed at training new recruits and helping them develop technical and sector-specific skills. A smaller proportion are used to train existing staff or as an alternative to a graduate scheme, and some focus more instead on managerial, IT, and leadership skills. [\(Source: The apprenticeship levy: one year on, April 2018, The Open University\)](#)

Perhaps connected to the identified skills gap, could more be done by Milton Keynes businesses to understand and access the apprenticeship levy to offer skills training and jobs in the areas they are most needed?

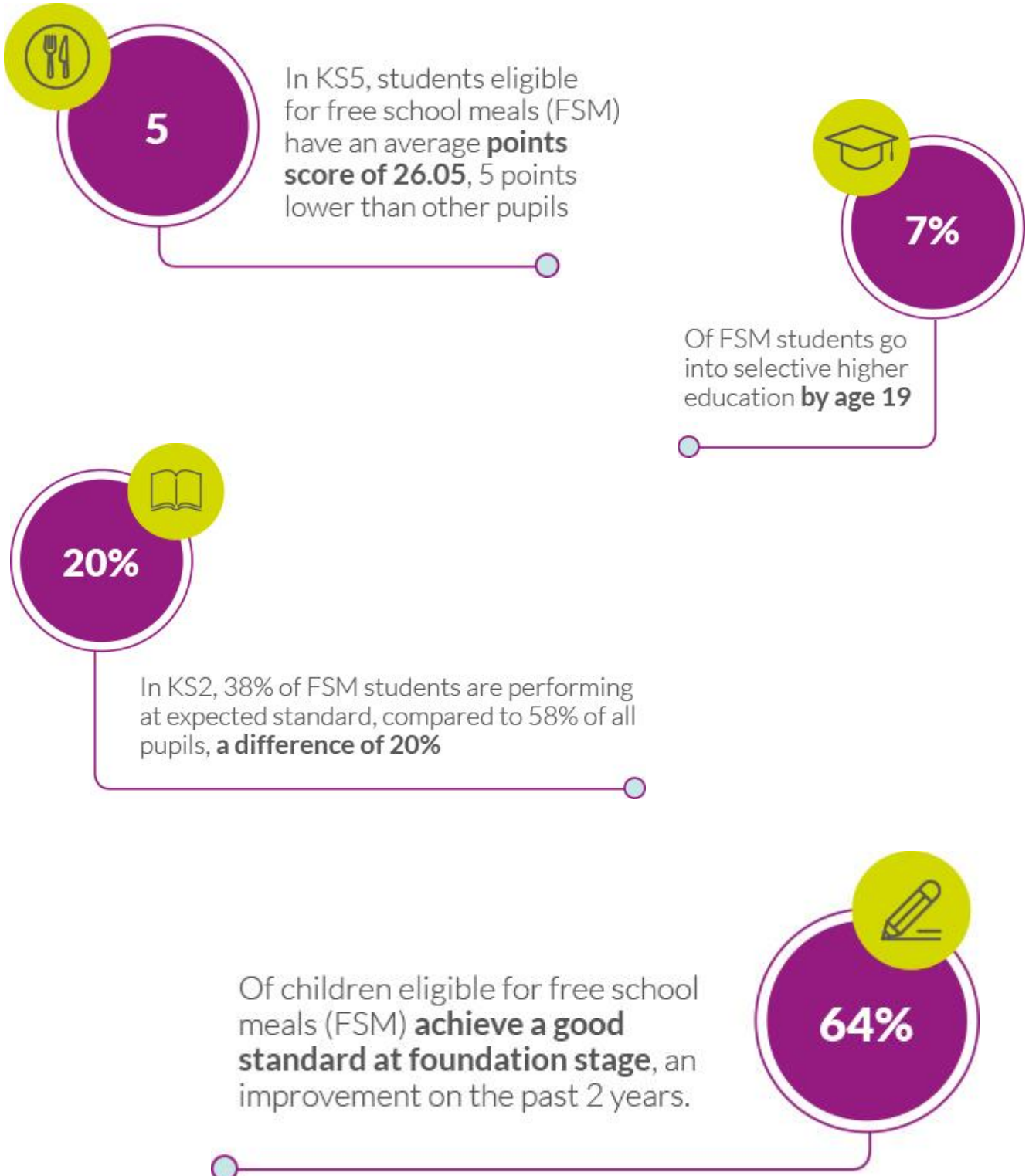
Vital Thinking

Although changes to the curriculum mean that creative subjects are sometimes less available in primary and secondary schools and the uptake at GCSE and A Level is relatively low, creative learning and the confidence gained through engagement in arts activities provide skills that underpin so much of what we do in all areas of life. How else can we continue to ensure our young people are still exposed to and are able to develop these vital creative skills?

Vital Action

Last year, MK Community Foundation supported the MK Cultural Education Partnership (led by the Arts & Heritage Alliance) to run a 7-month action research project that encouraged MK schools to be more creative and allow young people to take the lead. The project, delivered by MK Gallery Learning Team, worked with 10 schools in Milton Keynes and 5 arts providers to bring the arts to children in our community.

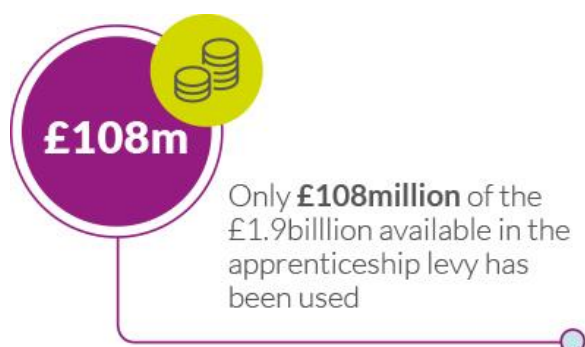
Free School Meals



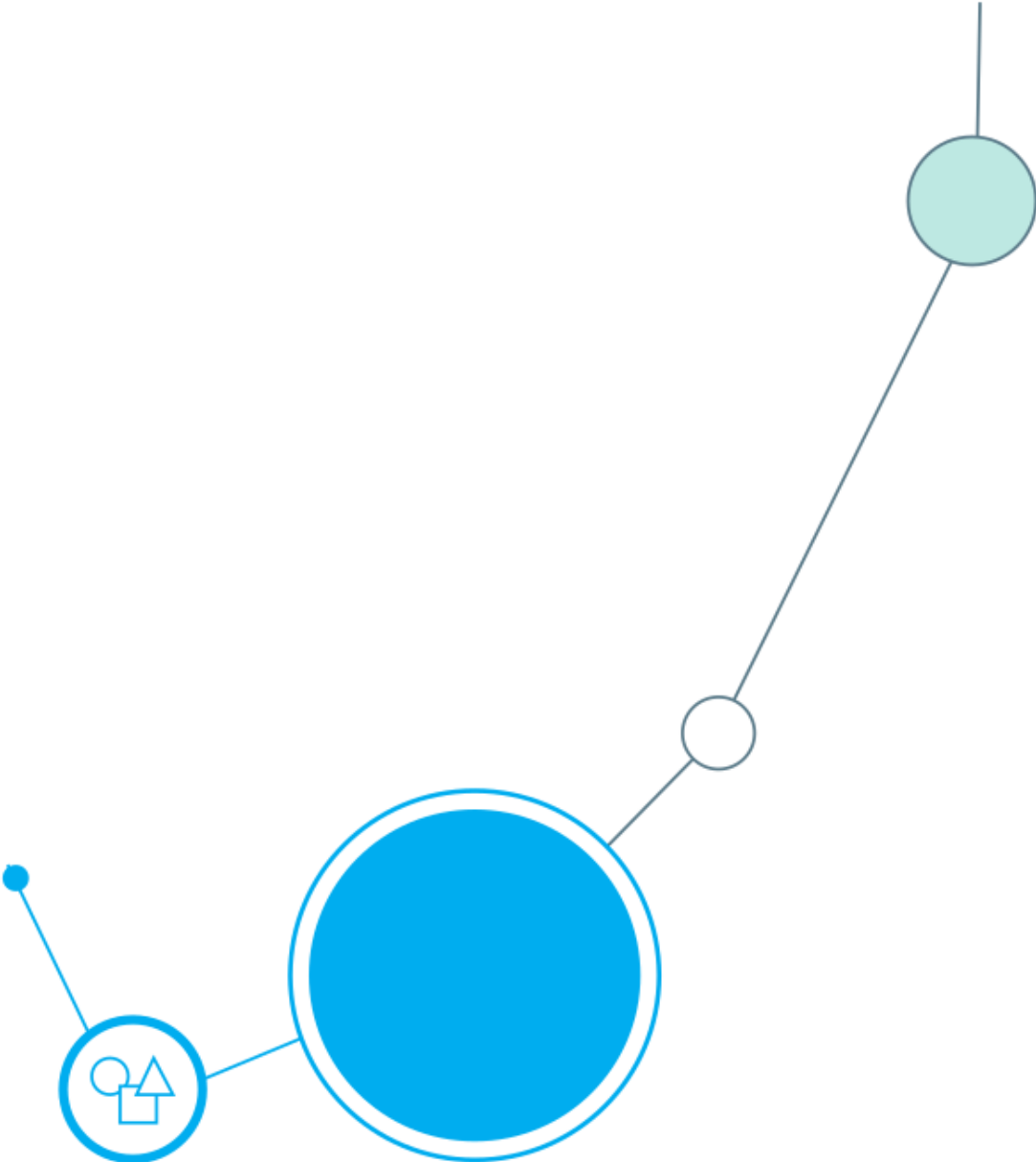
Arts Subjects



Other Qualifications



Diversity



Diversity

Theme definition:

Under equality and diversity legislation in the UK, there are nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including ethnic or national origin, colour, or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.²

Overview:

We last focussed on Diversity in our 2016 full Vital Signs report. As we noted last time, it can be difficult between census results years to gain an in-depth and up to date understanding of how our population is changing. The Milton Keynes Student Census provides us again with an exception, which shows us how amongst our younger generations racial and ethnic diversity continues to grow rapidly.

When we refer to diversity it is easy to focus on race and ethnicity as this is often the most visible and noticeable way that Milton Keynes' demography is changing. Indeed, our own previous reports have had this focus. However, as noted in the theme definition, there are many characteristics that make a population/community diverse. Unfortunately, where diversity is less visible, so it seems similarly is the data availability. This therefore limits our insight into the strengths that communities bring, and the needs that they may have. For instance, we report for the first time this year on some information about our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) community, but much of this data is at regional and national level. Therefore, while we can make some inferences about the local population from this, it will be limited in helping us understand any specific challenges, needs, or even strengths at a local level.

Summary of data presented in this section...

13.4%	Population of Milton Keynes that are 65 and over. This is lower than the national average of 18%, but predicted to rise by 44% between 2015 and 2026
25%	Of pupils in state funded schools whose first language is known or believed to be other than English
45%	Of primary school pupils are minority ethnic
1.9%	Of people surveyed in the South East identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or "Other"
2 in 5	Trans people in England, Scotland and Wales have experienced a hate crime in the last 12 months. Local data on gender variance is not available.
68.2	General Fertility Rate in 2016, higher than the national and regional average
54	People have been settled in Milton Keynes under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme in the period of 2016-2017
-0.55	Net internal migration, showing that despite our expanding population, more people within the UK are leaving Milton Keynes than moving here

² Equality Act 2010. <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4>>

Findings

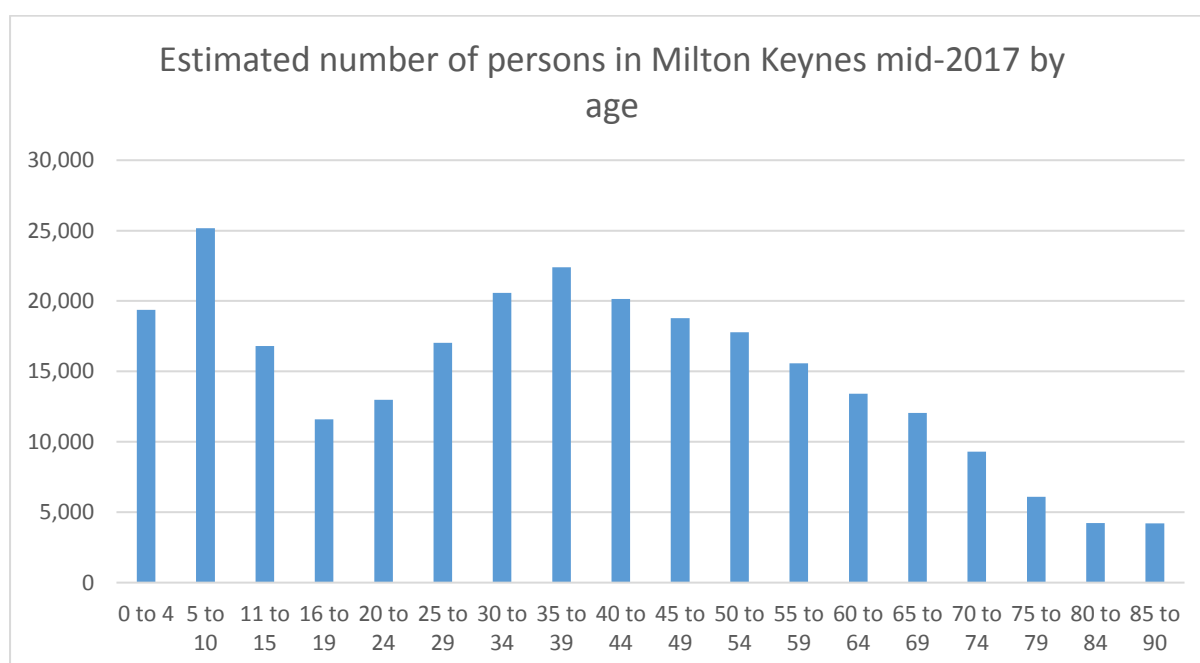
Age

Estimated % or proportion of the population for mid-2017 in the Milton Keynes (Unitary Authority):

- 0-15 22.9%;
- 16-64 63.6%
- 65 and over 13.4%.

The older population is on average lower than it is nationally (in the UK 18% are over 65 and 2.4% are 85 and over), but this remains the fastest growing age group in Milton Keynes. *The Milton Keynes Population Bulletin 2016/17* predicts a rise of 44% between 2015 and 2026 in the 65-79 age range, and an increase of 67% for those over the age of 80.

Fig. 1. Estimated number of persons in Milton Keynes mid-2017 by age

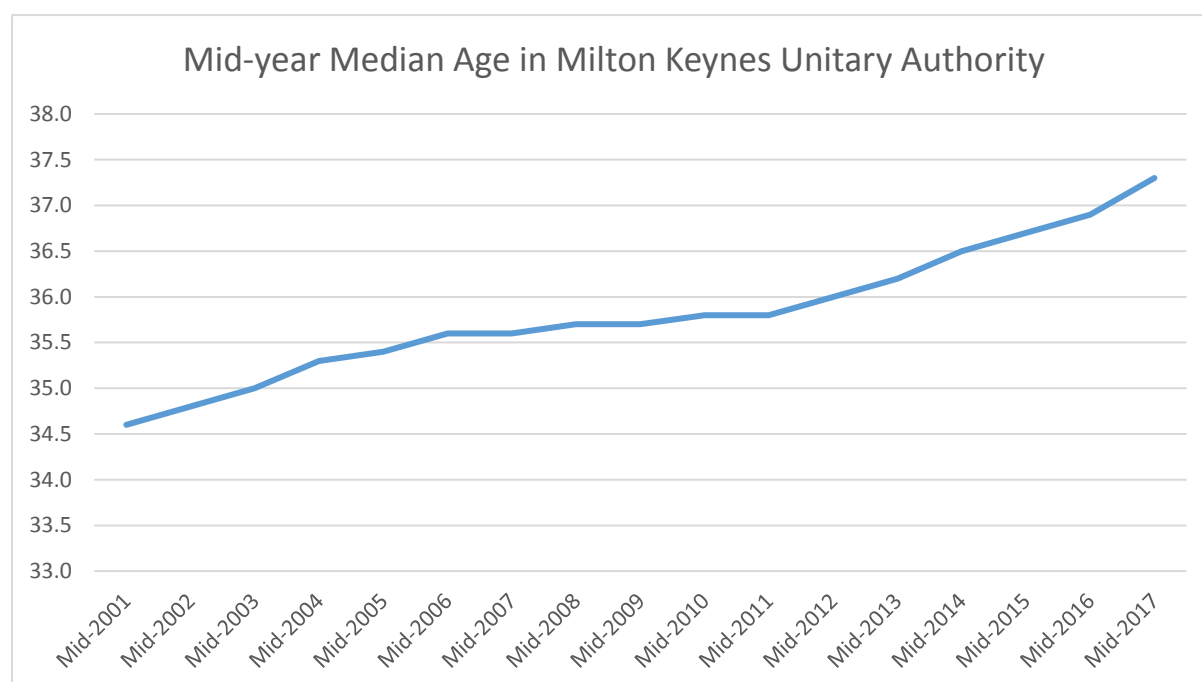


[Source: Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2017. Office for National Statistics.](#)

Milton Keynes on average still has a younger population when compared with the nation, but the median age³ is gradually but steadily increasing, sat at 37.3 years old in mid-2017. The UK median is 40.5.

³ The “median age” is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups, meaning that half the population are younger and half are older. This index is used to understand population distribution.

Fig. 2. Mid-year Median Age in Milton Keynes Unitary Authority, 2001-2017



Source: Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2017. Office for National Statistics.

Diversity in schools

The number of pupils in Milton Keynes state-funded schools increased to a total of 46,797 by the School Census in January 2018. Whilst the total number of school pupils is increasing in general, the proportion of minority ethnic pupils is increasing at a higher rate than of White pupils (including White, White British, Irish, Traveller of Irish Heritage, Gypsy/Roma, and Any Other White Background), with an increase of 56% in the five years since we first reported on the Diversity theme in 2013, and of 28% since we last reported in 2016.

Racial and ethnic diversity is increasing fastest in primary schools, which has seen a 72% increase in minority ethnic students since 2013. Minority ethnic pupils now make up 45% of the total number of primary school children. To put this in our regional and national context, we are more diverse than the rest of the South East region at primary school (22% of pupils are Minority Ethnic) and England (29%).

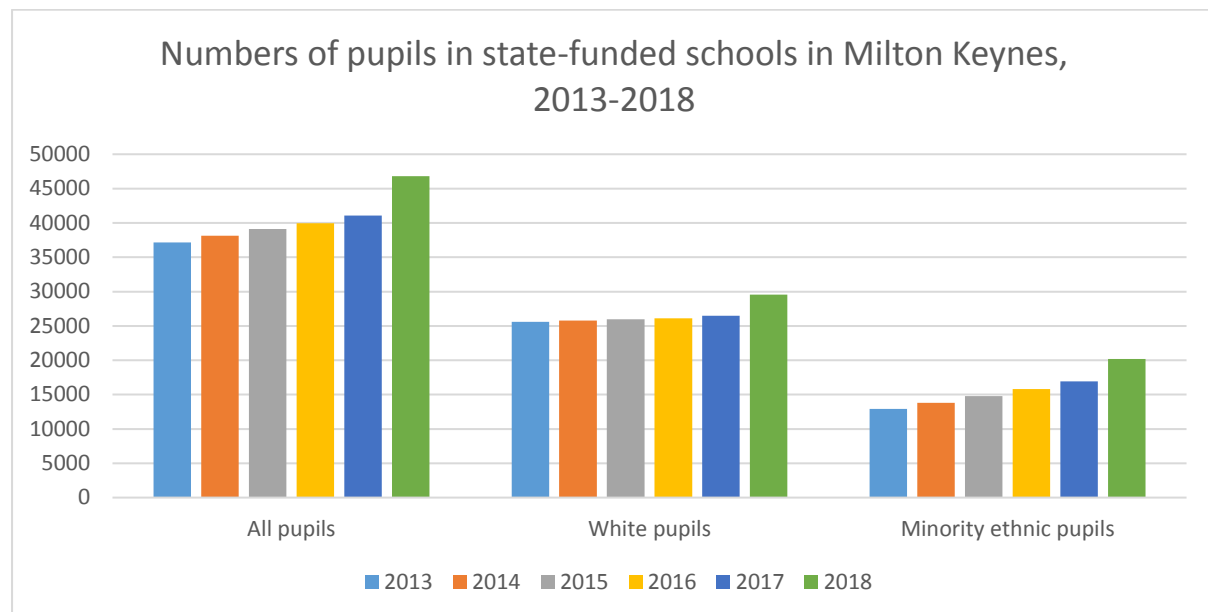
The most pronounced increase is in the number of pupils of mixed ethnicity (increased by 63% over the last five years), followed by Asian students (which includes Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Any Other Asian Background) which has increased 53% (or 64% in primary schools) since 2013, with the largest increase in numbers of students occurring between 2017 (4,676 pupils) and 2018 (5,608 pupils).

During the same periods there was a 16% (2013 to 2018) and 13% (2016 to 2018) increase in the number of white pupils. The total number of pupils increased by 26% (2013 to 2018) and 17% (2016 to 2018) increase in the total number of students.

Notably, in secondary schools, the number of white students is on a general downward trend, having decreased a further 1% since 2016, and 4% since 2013.

The below table shows some of the difference in these trends, with the proportion of Minority Ethnic students increasing more steeply and steadily.

Fig 3. Number of pupils in state-funded schools in Milton Keynes, 2013-2018

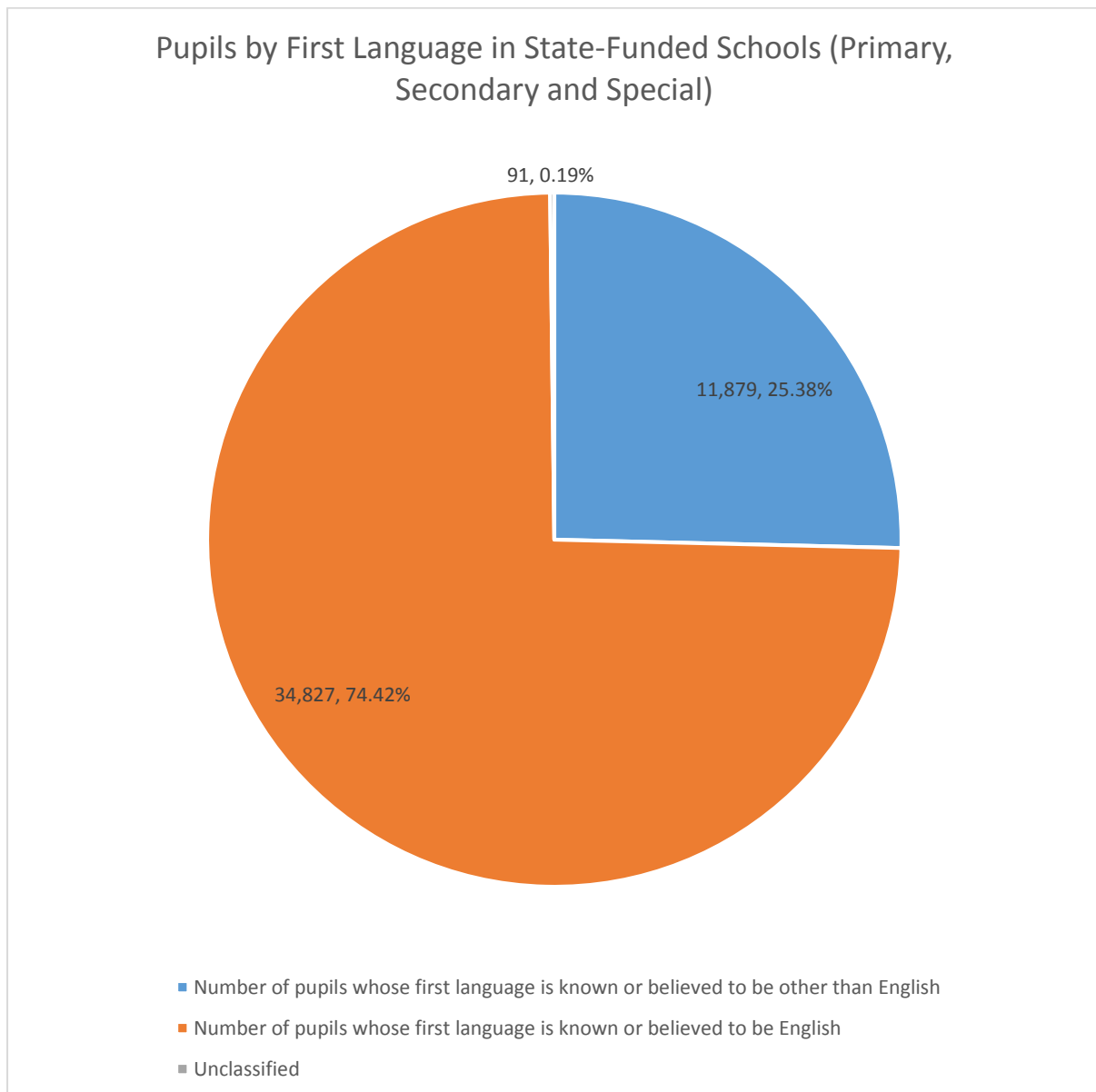


*Source: School Pupils and their Characteristics: Local Authority Tables. Department for Education.*⁴

The proportion of pupils whose first language is known or believed to be other than English is also rising, across all state funded schools, now representing about 25% of students. As with the proportion of minority ethnic students, this is most striking in state-funded primary schools, where 28.6% pupils' first language in January 2018 was known or believed to be other than English.

⁴ The numbers of white plus the number of minority ethnic students adds up to more than the "all pupils" numbers provided in the Department for Education data, so it is likely that there is crossover in these categories and it is something of an oversimplification to read the data straightforwardly as white meaning "not Minority Ethnic".

Fig. 4: Pupils by First Language in State-Funded Schools (Primary, Secondary and Special), January 2018



Source: School Pupils and their Characteristics – January 2018: Local Authority Tables. Department for Education.

Population change and migration

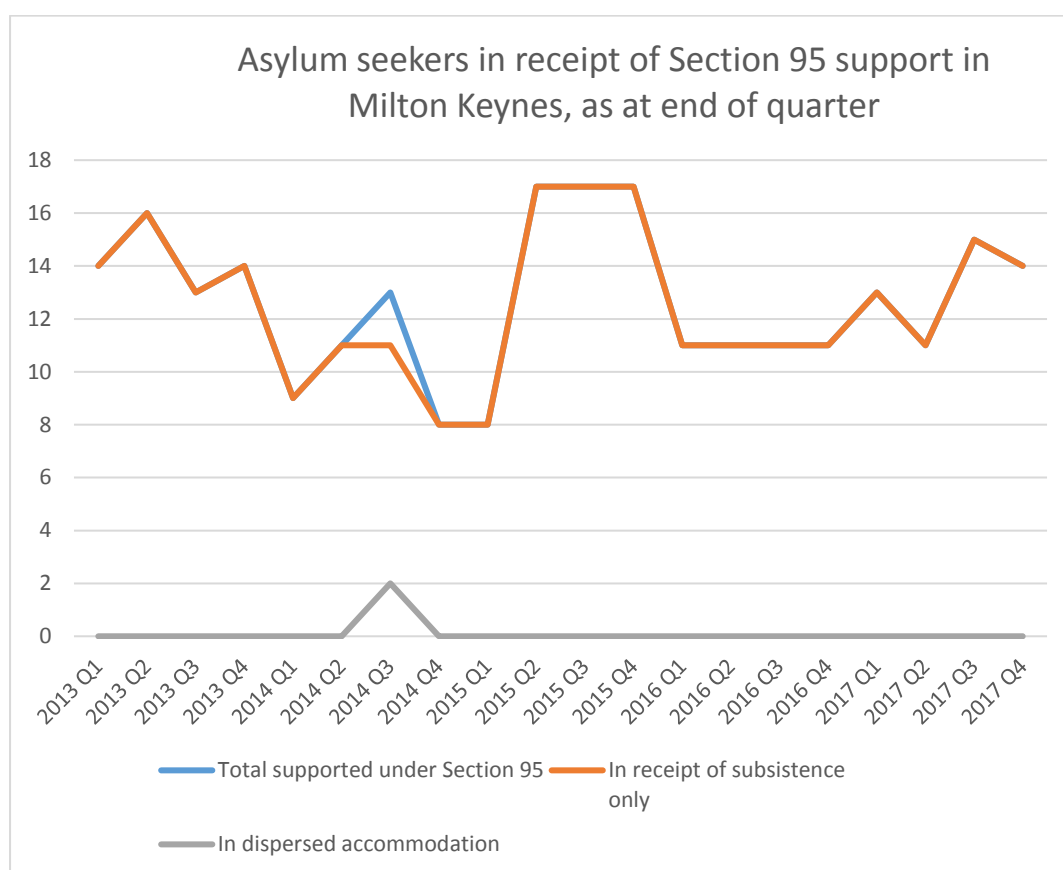
In 2016-17, Milton Keynes had a population change rate of 0.48. Net internal migration was -0.55, showing us that, within the UK, more people are leaving Milton Keynes than are moving here. Our increasing population comes from the natural change rate of 0.67 (showing more births than deaths), and net international migration, which is at 0.35.

Between 2007 and 2017 the non-UK born population increased by 7% (meaning those who were born abroad) and the non-British population increased by 3%.

Milton Keynes Council joined the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme as a full participant in 2015. The latest available data shows that in 2016 30 persons (including dependents) were settled in the local authority through the scheme and 24 in 2017. (Source: Immigration statistics – Asylum tables, February 2018. Home Office.)

The below graph shows the general number of asylum seekers receiving support locally. “Section 95” refers to the Immigration Act 1999, and takes the form of support with basic living expenses delivered by the Home Office and is available for asylum seekers (and their dependants) whose claim is ongoing and who are destitute or about to become destitute. Accommodation support can also be available, but those claiming are “dispersed” outside of London and the South East, resulting in the almost flat line in the below graph.

Fig 5. Asylum seekers in receipt of Section 95 support in Milton Keynes, as at end of quarter, 2013 to 2017



[Asylum seekers in receipt of section 4 or section 95 support. Home Office.](#)

LGBT Population

According to data from the Annual Population Survey published by the 'Office for National Statistics' (ONS) in April 2017, 1.9% of people in the South East region between 2013 and 2015 identified as gay or lesbian, bisexual or other (no further breakdown of "other" was collected), with a breakdown as follows:

Fig. 6. Sexual identity in the South East region, 2013-2015

	%
Heterosexual or straight	94.0
Gay or lesbian	0.9
Bisexual	0.7
Other	0.3
Don't know or refuse	4.1

[Source: Annual Population Survey. Office for National Statistics](#)

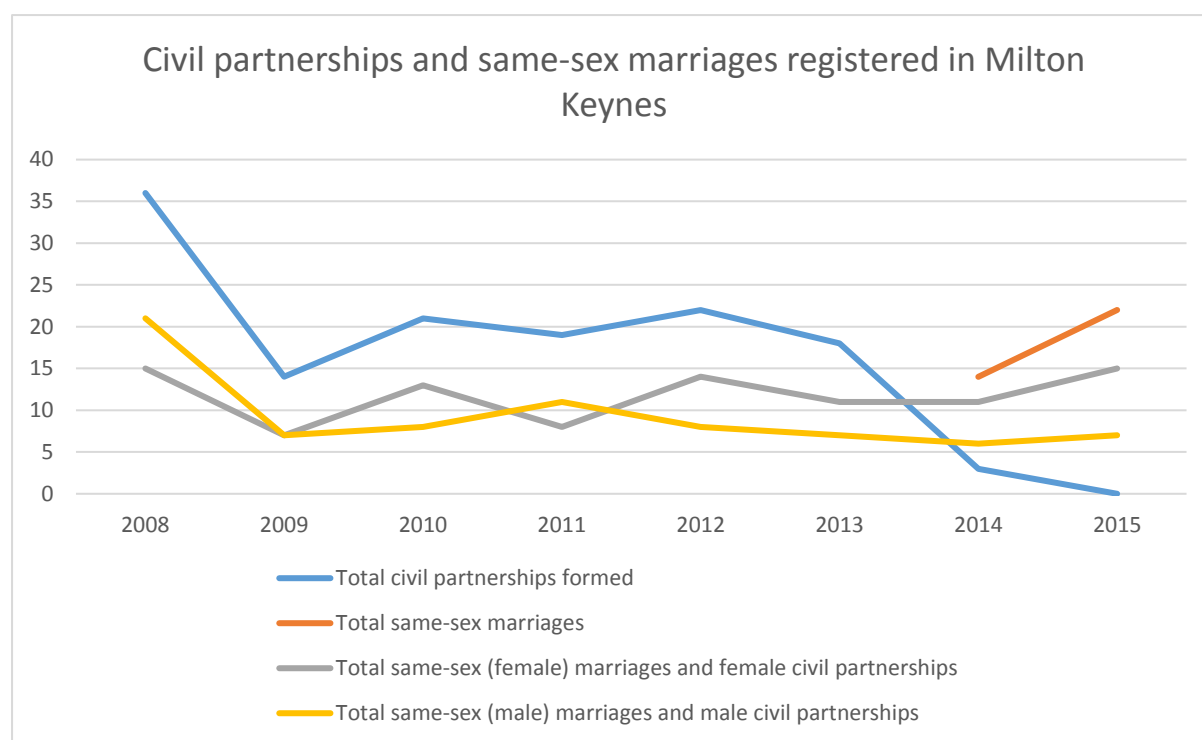
In recent years, trans and non-binary identities have gained greater visibility across mainstream media. However, the Office for National Statistics currently does not collect any information on gender identity, so it is not possible to provide extrapolated data on the level of the local trans population from either regional or national data.

The ONS website does indicate that gender identity may be included in the next census, though this has not yet been confirmed.

National statistics show us that LGBT people are often disproportionately affected by many of the other issues we report on in Vital Signs in this and previous years. For instance, 1 in 4 trans people in England, Scotland and Wales have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives and 2 in 5 trans people report experiencing a hate crime in the last twelve months. ([Source: LGBT in Britain – Trans Report. Stonewall.](#))

Nationally, people who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual rate their quality of life as lower than the UK average ([Annual Population Survey](#)). Without a more robust understanding of even the local population of LGBT people, we can only have a very limited understanding of how LGBT people are affected by these issues locally, posing a challenge to local services to ensure they can cater to particular needs that may arise.

Fig. 7. Civil partnerships and same-sex marriages registered in Milton Keynes, 2008 to 2015



Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence⁵.

Please note that the binary terms “same-sex” and “opposite-sex” are used here in this report to reflect language used in government legislation and by the Office for National Statistics.

The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 received royal assent in July 2013, with the first marriages taking place nationally in March 2014. Whilst it was ruled by the Supreme Court in July 2018 that opposite-sex couples can enter into civil partnerships, they were since 2004 otherwise exclusively same-sex.

Whilst data on the number of formal same sex unions cannot inform us in detail about the sexual identities of those who enter into those unions, and indeed many “non-heterosexual” identified people may enter into opposite sex unions, this is the most localised LGB specific data we were able to identify. This data can possibly provide some indication of the proportion of same-sex unions in Milton Keynes in this period.

For comparison, there were 972 opposite-sex marriages in Milton Keynes in 2014, and 936 in 2015. Legal same-sex unions were therefore 1.4% and 2.3% of total unions respectively.

⁵ Civil partnerships formations

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/civilpartnershipstatisticsunitedkingdomcivilpartnershipformations>), and Marriages in England and Wales (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/marriagecohabitationandcivilpartnerships/datasets/marriagesinenglandandwales2013>)

Pregnancy and Maternity

In 2016, an estimated 55,300 females aged 15-44 lived in Milton Keynes. There were 3,607 recorded maternities the same year. The General Fertility Rate (all live births per 1,000 women in this age bracket) was 68.2, compared with 61.4 in the South East region and 62.5 across England. 45.7% of live births were outside of marriages or civil partnerships.

Vital Thinking

There are many characteristics that make a population/community diverse. Previously, we focussed on data around race and ethnicity. This year, we have included some of the less visible characteristics, such as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) community. Much of this data is at regional and national level; therefore, while we can make some inferences about the local population from this, it will be limited in helping us understand any specific challenges, needs, or even strengths at a local level. Who is responsible for collecting this data locally? What effect will Britain's exit from the European Union and the presence of a new University have on our diversity?

Vital Action

Last year, MK Community Foundation supported Q:alliance, a charity that provide support and information for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people who live and work in Milton Keynes. Their youth group offers 13 to 19-year-olds a safe space when they are questioning or dealing with their sexuality or gender identity, where they are able to be themselves and access support for many issues that they may face.

Vital Voices

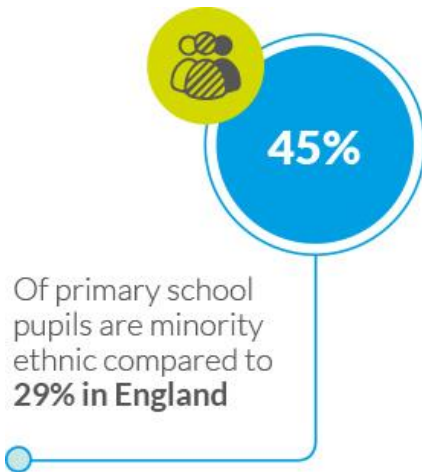
Peter Kingham, Vice Chair of Q:alliance:

"Q:alliance works hard to build good relationships with strategic partners in Milton Keynes. Since Brexit we have seen attitudes change towards diverse communities which has led to a rise in negative behaviour towards LGBTQ+ people (and other minority groups). This has fuelled our mission to support, represent and inform our community who live, work and play in Milton Keynes.

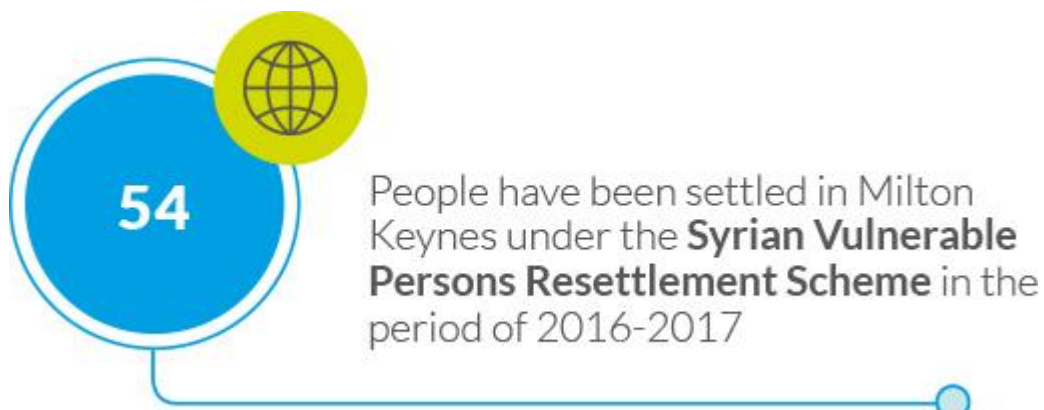
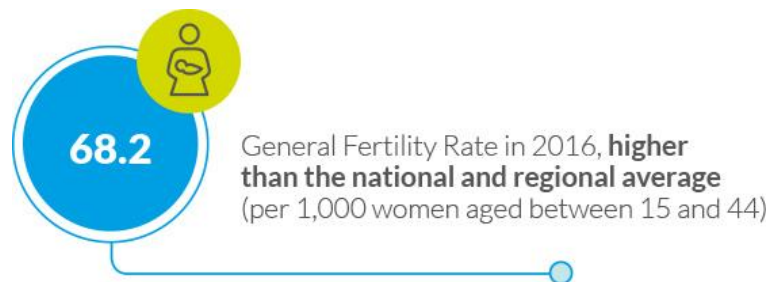
MK Uni will provide great opportunities for young people in Milton Keynes. Cultural shifts mean young people are more likely to stay at home when studying and this gives an opportunity for us to represent a demographic that Milton Keynes has lacked, as it is very possible it will bring an increase in LGBT young people. It could influence a whole new social scene. Exciting times ahead.

Data is vital for us to demonstrate the need amongst our community to power holders and stakeholders, and support Milton Keynes to be a safe space for anyone whatever their gender identity or sexual orientation. "

School Diversity



Population



Age



Population of Milton Keynes that are **65 and over**. This is lower than the UK average of 18%



Predicted rise of **people ages 65 and over** between 2015 and 2026



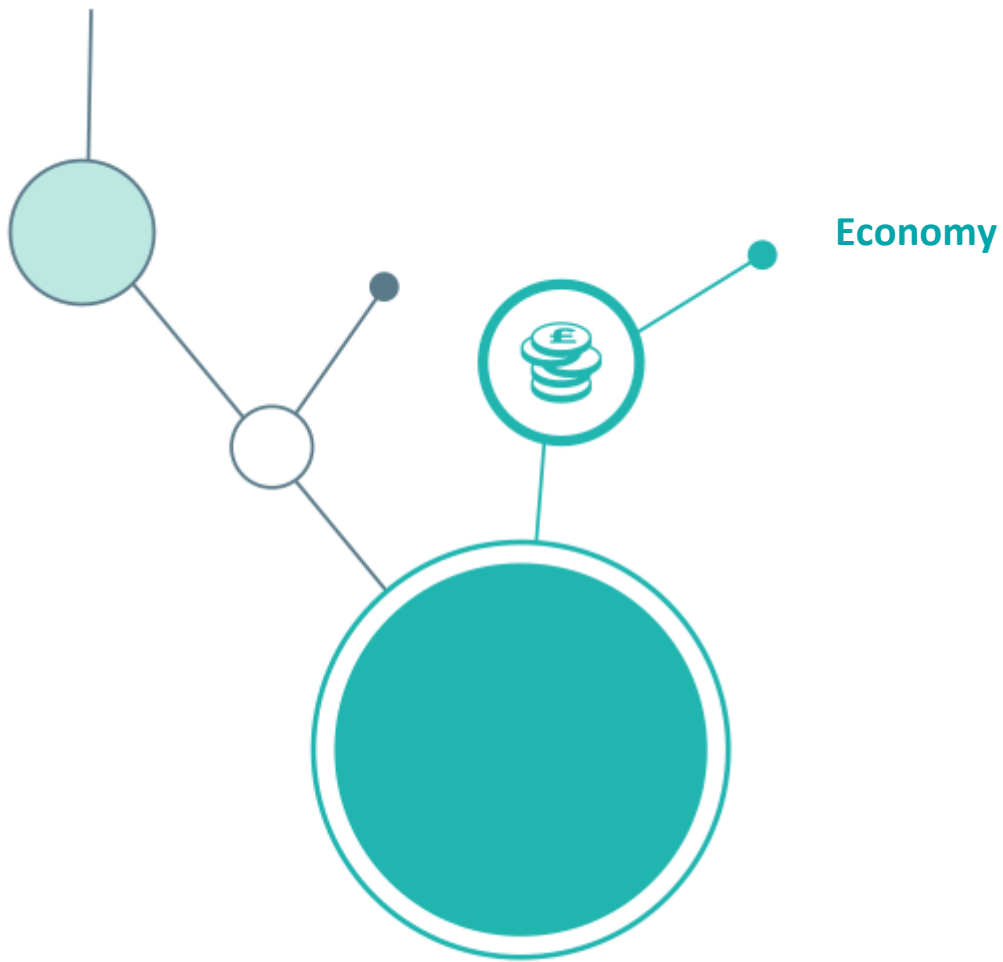
LGBT People



Of people surveyed in the South East identified as **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or "Other"** (4% didn't know or declined to answer)

Trans people in England, Scotland and Wales have **experienced a hate crime in the last 12 months**. Local data on gender variance is not available





Economy

Theme Definition:

Put simply, the economy includes the production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money in the local area. When we talk about the economy in this report, we mean the local labour market, businesses, and worklessness here in Milton Keynes.

We regularly report on the economy as data is often readily available, and we have previously reported that Milton Keynes is very much a tale of two cities, with both huge economic success stories and families struggling to make ends meet. The trend seems to be continuing.

This year's data suggests, however, that we could be seeing an emerging skills gap. We also look at the types of work in the city, and the data raises questions about how we can attract people to live and work here in Milton Keynes, to continue to support our local economy.

Overview:

136,000	People in MK are employed
10.93%	Of workers are employed in the Education sector, the largest employment sector in MK
14.43%	Jobs paid below the Living Wage Foundation Living Wage
1.18	Jobs available per person in the working age population in MK
2151	People in MK claiming JSA in June 2018
11.2%	Of households in MK are workless
155	Jobs advertised for Programming and Software development in June 2018
£26	The median weekly wage for workers who travel into MK to work is £26 higher than the median weekly wage for residents of Milton Keynes (£602 vs £576). Both are higher than the national median (£552)
£23,000,000	Turn over other of the 39 cultural and creative organisations who are members of AHA in 2016/17

Findings

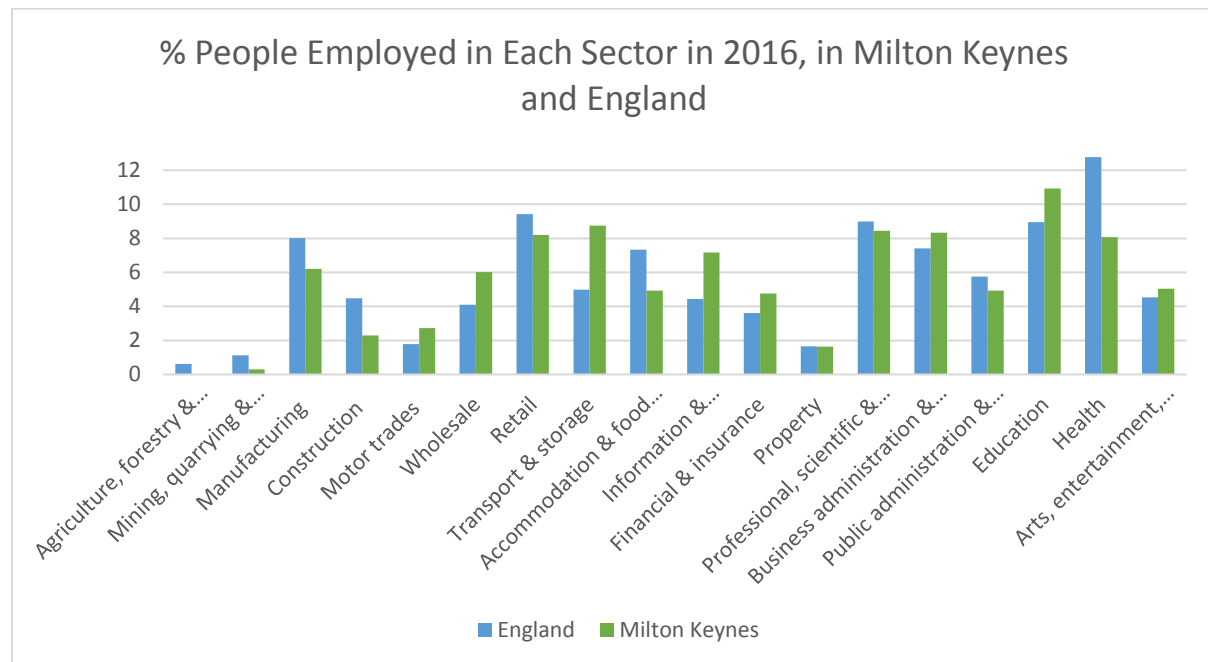
Grant Thornton have recently released information on their vibrant economy index, which ranks Milton Keynes in the top 20% of local authority areas nationally for prosperity, resilience and sustainability, reflecting our strong economic position. However, it only has an average rank for inclusion and equality. If we want everyone in our city to share in our success, perhaps more needs to be done to encourage greater inclusion and equality. ([Source: Vibrant Economy Index, Grant Thornton](#))

Data from the annual population survey to March 2018 suggests 136,000 people were employed in Milton Keynes, and 6,100 working age adults were unemployed. This is an employment rate of 77.7% - this is 0.8% lower than the rate for whole South East region, but 2.5% higher than the

average for England ([Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics](#)). There are a range of types of work in Milton Keynes.

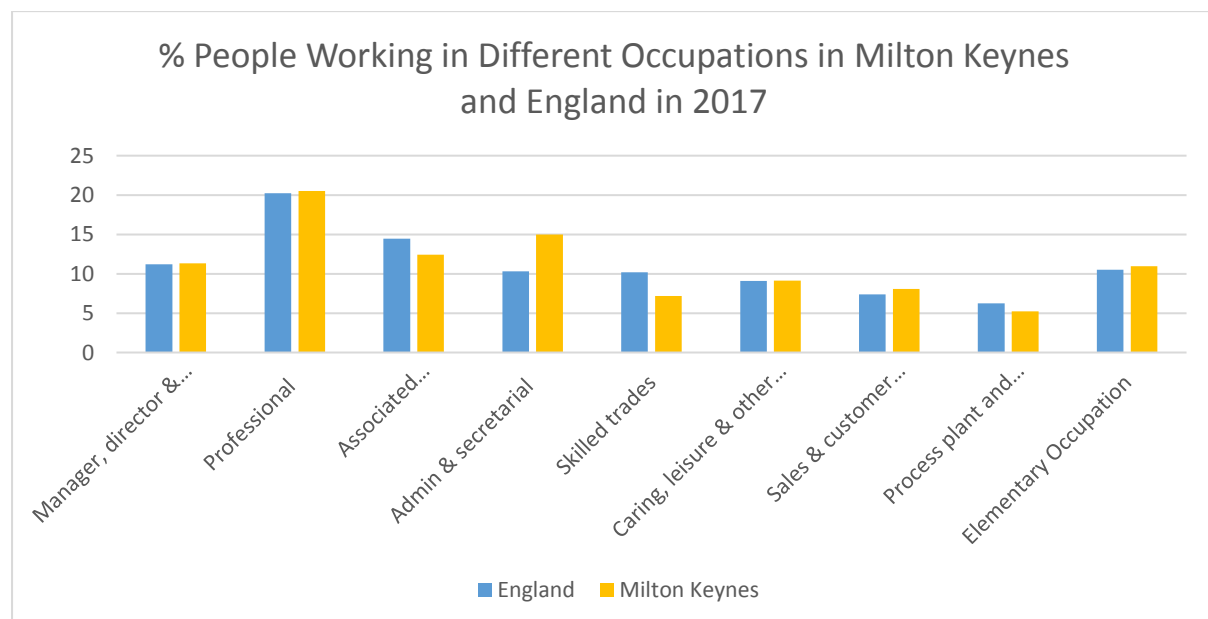
The following graph shows % people employed in each of the following sectors. Milton Keynes' biggest employment sector is Education at 10.93%. We have proportionally less people working in a range of sectors than England overall. Similar trends are reflected in the types of occupation we have, with fewer than national figures in skilled trades but higher in office based roles.

Fig 1, Percentage of employed people working in each sector for England and Milton Keynes



(Source: Place Analytics)

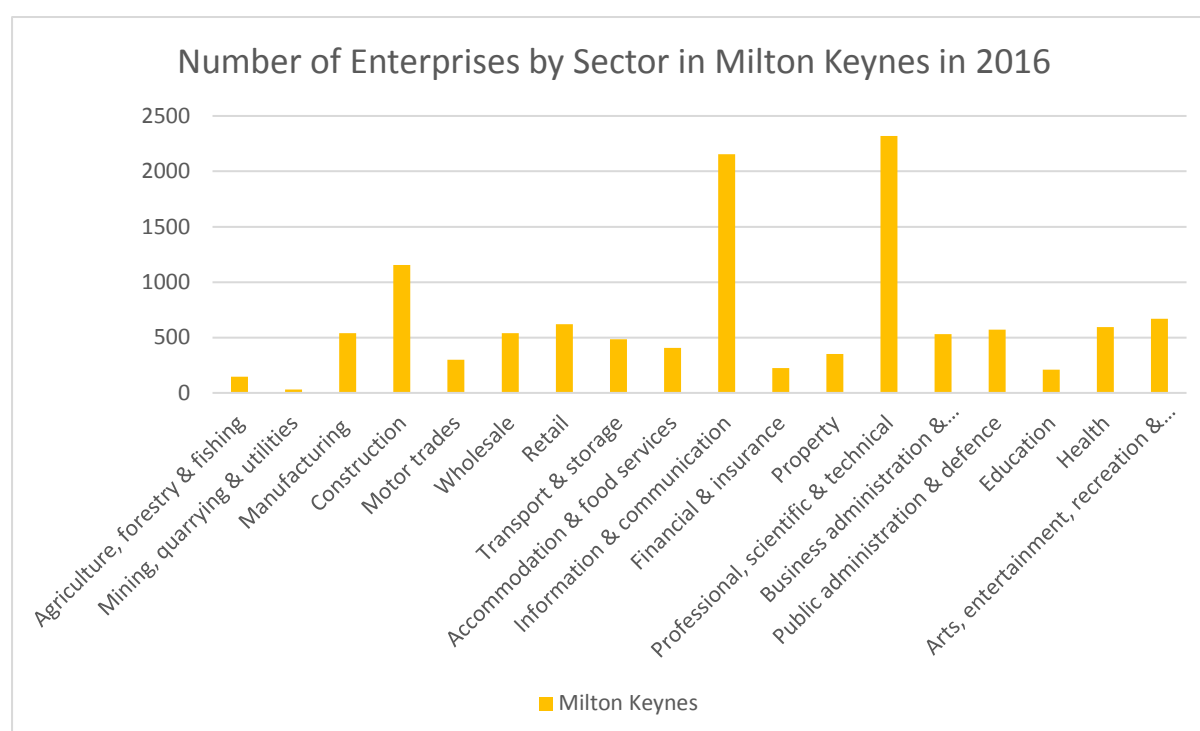
Fig. 2., Percentage of employed people working in each occupation for England and Milton Keynes



Source: Place Analytics

In terms of the types of enterprise in Milton Keynes some interesting information emerges. Despite education and motor trades being higher than the England figures for % employment, they are relatively low in the number of total enterprises in Milton Keynes. This suggests that in these sectors we have a small number of big organisations. In other sectors, there instead seems to be a larger number of enterprises with smaller number of people working for them. For example, in the Arts and Entertainment sector there are more enterprises than in Health, Education, Transport, and Wholesale, but has a lower rate of employment than each of these.

Fig. 3, Number of enterprises in Milton Keynes by sector.



Source: Place Analytics

Only 14.43% of jobs are paid below the Living Wage Foundation Living Wage according to the Social Mobility Commission, which is very positive. It also suggests that there are fewer of the kinds of jobs that often fall below this level. They also report that the average house price is 7.1 times the median wage of employees who live in the local area. ([Source: Social Mobility Index November 2017, Social Mobility Commission](#))

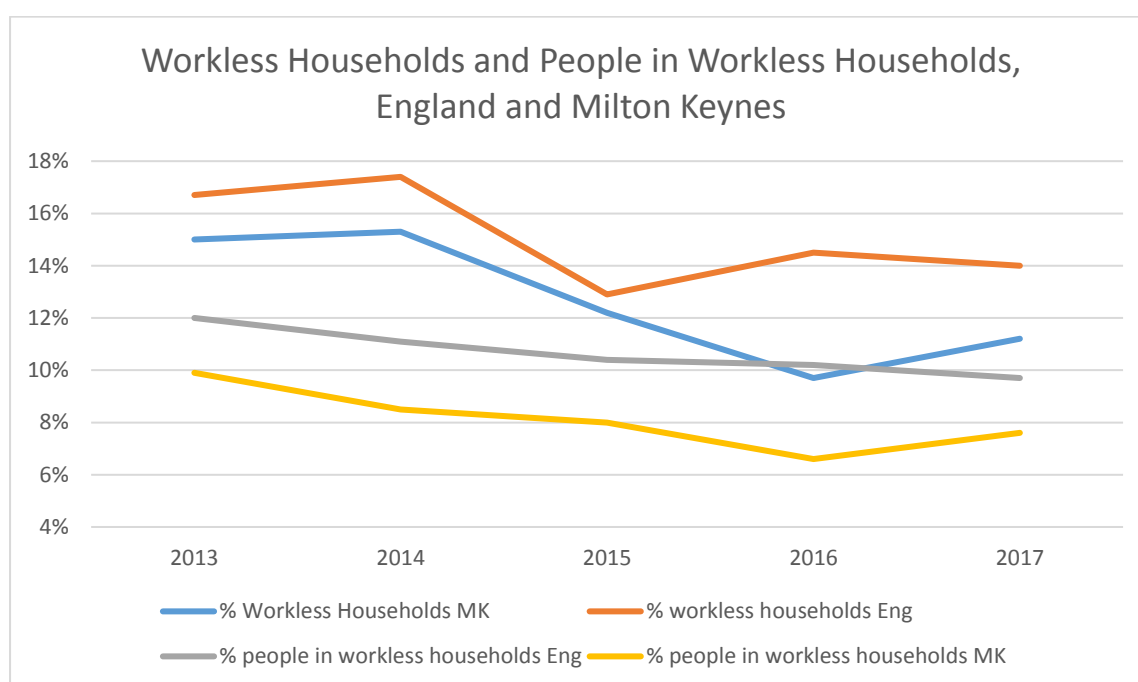
With 201,000 jobs available as of 2016, and a working age population of around 170,000, there is around 1.18 jobs per person. Milton Keynes businesses therefore often need to source workers from outside the city ([Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics](#))

Data from April 2017-March 2018 shows that around 31,000 people in Milton Keynes are classed as 'economically inactive', which is a rate of 18.2%, which is lower than the national average of 21.4% and the regional average of 18.7%. This group includes students, people who are retired, people looking after family or the home, and people who are temporarily or long-term sick. ([Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics](#))

According to Milton Keynes Council there were 2,151 people in Milton Keynes claiming JSA in June 2018, a rate of 1.3%. This is higher than both regional and national rates. 580 of those people had been claiming for over a year, and a further 315 between 6 months and a year. ([Source: Unemployment Summary June 2018, Milton Keynes Council](#))

Additionally, in 2017, according to available ONS data, 11.2% of Milton Keynes households were workless. This was an increase from 2016, when it was the lowest it has been since we started reporting on Vital Signs, and marks the end of a steady decrease over the past few years. Whilst generally speaking both regionally and nationally the % of workless households and % people in workless household has been dropping, Milton Keynes went against this trend and saw an increase in 2017, when we had some 13,000 people living in workless households. However, we still remain below the national figures. ([Source: Workless households for regions across the UK: 2017, ONS](#))

Fig. 4, Percentage of workless households and people in workless households in Milton Keynes and England



[Source: Workless households for regions across the UK:2017, ONS](#)

The top occupation by job posting, according to MK Council, was Programming and Software development in June 2018, with 155 jobs advertised. A further 84 jobs, and the 10th most advertised, were for IT Business Analysts, Architects and Business Designers, meaning that tech skills feature heavily on our jobs market. A number of other skilled and trained positions also feature in the top 10 most advertised roles, including Nurses (93), Solicitors (98), Human Resources staff (95), Marketing and Sales Directors (102), and Managers (101). ([Source: Unemployment Summary June 2018, Milton Keynes Council](#))

It is possible that this highlights a skills gap between the vacant roles and those who would be available to fill them. Milton Keynes Council have made 'Skills' one of their key priority areas for the Economic Development Strategy 2017-2027, recognising this gap.

Data shows that in 2017, the median weekly earning for full time workers who are resident in MK was £576 per week. The median weekly earnings for full time workers by workplace, which therefore

includes people who travel in to Milton Keynes to work but do not live here, is £602 per week. Both are higher than median earning for England overall, which is £552. ([Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics](#))

Of course, if we could attract more people to live AND work in Milton Keynes rather than travel in, this would have additional economic benefits, meaning people were spending more of the money they earned working here, on goods and services here too.

A major contributor to encouraging people to stay in a city is the cultural offer. Milton Keynes Council have made 'Brand' one of their four key priorities for the Economic Development Strategy 2017-2027, recognising the importance of the things that make Milton Keynes an attractive city to live and work in, and this encompasses our environment, leisure, and cultural strengths. As well as attracting and keeping much needed talent for vacant posts, the cultural sector is also an important contributor to the local economy. The 39 creative and cultural organisations who make up the membership of Arts and Heritage Alliance had a combined turnover of almost £23,000,000 in 2016/17, and make up just a proportion of organisations in the sector. They also created 1306 employment opportunities through their work, and 1396 volunteer opportunities. ([Source: AHA-MK Annual Report, AHA-MK](#))

Interestingly, according to a recent report for the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) focussing on diversity, adults from less affluent backgrounds are less likely to engage in culture than those from more affluent backgrounds ([Source: Taking Part focus on: Diversity Trends, DCMS](#)). Although generally speaking the proportion of adults from less well off backgrounds taking part in culture has increased, most notably in attending Museums, this perhaps reflects back on Grant Thornton's findings that whilst prosperous, there is still room to grow to ensure all we have to offer is available to all our residents.

Vital Thinking

There appears to be an employment gap in the city, as although there are more jobs than people, many jobs advertised are specialised and we still have a large number of people who are unemployed or living in workless households. Is this the result of a skills gap, or are there other underlying issues that the data does not show? What more can be done to support more people to gain the skills, confidence, and aspiration they need to get in to work?

Vital Action

This Year, MK Community Foundation supported GirlsCode MK, a volunteer organisation who aim to get more girls and women into programming and STEM careers. They organise regular workshops and meetups for women and provide a friendly and supportive learning environment. They currently run various workshops including GirlsCode MK – a fortnightly meetup for all levels.

Wages

The median weekly wage for residents in MK is £576, compared to £602 for people working in MK, **a difference of £26 a week**. Both are higher than the national median (£552)



Amount of jobs paid below the **Living Wage Foundation Living Wage** in MK



Of **working age population** are employed compared to 75% in the rest of England

Skills Gap

People in MK are **employed**



People in MK claiming **Job Seekers Allowance** in June 2018



Jobs available per person in the working age population in MK (15 -64 Years old)



Update since last year

What's been achieved since we last published our Vital Signs Report?

Vital Thinking Events

Since last year's Vital Signs Report, we have held 2 Vital Thinking events around Mental Health and Disadvantage and Poverty.

Disadvantage and Poverty Update

Last year, we raised £10,000 towards our Surviving Winter Campaign that supports some of the most disadvantaged people throughout winter. As heating bills are ever increasing, it can be difficult for some people, especially the elderly, to stay warm and safe within their own homes, and difficulties may be faced with saving enough money for food and other necessities.

We are currently exploring partnerships to help deliver much needed support to those who need it most.

We are also working with the Homelessness Partnership, who are working together to relieve hardship and distress among homeless people and among those in need who are living in adverse housing conditions in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas.

MK Community Foundation would like to thank Global Challenges Local Solutions (GCLS) for their support in facilitating the Disadvantage and Poverty Vital Thinking event.

Mental Health Update

As a result of the Mental Health Vital thinking event, we have recently commissioned a piece of research from the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Transformation Fund, to assess the landscape of the current voluntary sector provision for children and young people experiencing poor mental health.

MK YiS - MK Youth Information Service

MK Community Foundation have awarded Milton Keynes Youth Information Service (YiS) a large strategic grant of £120,000. The grant, which will be awarded over 2 years, will be used to fund vital resources for their free youth counselling service. Open to any young person between the ages of 11 and 21 years, the sessions help young people work through a range of issues including anxiety, depression, anger, family problems and many more.

Acknowledgements

This report was compiled by Laura Berrisford, Natalie Jordan, and Jennifer Walker. We would like to offer our thanks for the valuable support and advice of Vasco Fernandez and Francesca Skelton.