



Long Report 2013 - 2022



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Notes on Data

Since 2013 there have been several changes to the counting methodologies of some datasets used to measure performance and trends. Some organisations have also not been able to undertake their annual surveys during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Comparative data on Northampton, as it has not been a Unitary Authority since 2021, is not available for metrics where comparative Local Authority level datasets have been used.

Comparisons are given where possible with the situation in 2013 and with England as a whole and selected places – namely Bedford and Luton as neighbouring Unitary Authorities, (and part of the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Health and Care Partnership). Northampton, where comparative data is available, has been included. Swindon is covered as a Unitary Authority that has some similarities with Milton Keynes in the need to manage planned rapid growth.

Vital Signs is an annual publication designed to identify and spotlight issues facing the communities of Milton Keynes (MK). This year marks the 10th edition, the first Vital Signs Report was published as a newsheet in 2013. We have taken the opportunity in this year's report to review how MK has changed over the years, identifying its strengths and the challenges we face.

The concept of 'Vital Signs' was pioneered by the Community Foundations of Canada. The aim is to support local Community Foundations create fairer communities by using evidence-based data and insights into local needs.

Vital Signs is produced by Milton Keynes Community Foundation, an independent charity with a mission to connect people with resources, skills, and ideas to enrich lives, and to create positive growth for Milton Keynes.

Vital Signs focuses on 12 major themes and combines published data with observations from local community organisations to shed light on the lived experience in Milton Keynes.

We use this report to advise individuals, families, and businesses in their philanthropic aims

The themes are aligned with the goals of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development blueprint. This is a call for countries to take actions to help reduce global poverty, reduce inequality, and at the same time tackle climate change. There is thus a close alignment between these goals and those themes reported on in Vital Signs, showing how **local actions contribute to global change**.

Over the last 10 years Milton Keynes Community Foundation has distributed over £9.8 million in grant funding and provided Voluntary, Community and Cultural Sector organisations with a further £8.6 million of rent subsidies.

Ian Revell CEO Milton Keynes Community Foundation

Milton Keynes Community Foundation value statements

- ✓ Fairness: We seek detailed understanding to make the right decisions
- ✓ Assistance: We share our expertise and referrals for those who need advice
- ✓ Inspiration: We communicate our unique proposition passionately and with hope
- ✓ Reliability: We deliver what we say, when we say our strategic goal is to build a resilient, creative, inclusive, and philanthropic community.

Looking back

The 2022 report aims to provide context to the progress made in Milton Keynes over the past 10 years in increasing fairness, reducing poverty and inequality, and tackling climate change.

Successes and challenges since 2013

With a population growth rate of 15% between 2011 to 2021 (Census data points) MK is one of the fastest growing places in the UK. Compared with the average in the UK the city continues to have a high proportion of young people and the proportion in older age groups is growing more rapidly. As with the rest of the UK, there are higher proportions of people from Ethnically Diverse communities than in 2011. These changes are creating the need for services, resources and policies that support **all** communities to thrive.

The design of MK provides easy access to pleasant, green spaces for most residents, with the associated physical and mental health benefits. The disadvantage of the low-density layout is widespread car use, which creates high levels of emissions, contributing to global warming. Given the current climate emergency and the Government aim to reach Net Zero by 2050, mitigating actions are a priority.

Over the past 10 years there has been growth in well-paid, higher skilled and specialist jobs in high tech and digital industries, and growth of insecure and low paid work. This, combined with a shortage of affordable housing is contributing to financial hardship, food and fuel poverty and high numbers of children living in poverty are threats to the wellbeing of residents and to equitable growth.

Education is under-delivering in enabling individuals from poorer backgrounds to get good jobs and to progress into Higher Education. To reduce skills shortages around knowledge-intensive jobs, employers are looking for education and training offerings that deliver relevant skills.

Violent crime, often a symptom of complex issues around disadvantage and exclusion, has risen since 2013.

Those who live in the more deprived communities are more likely to die younger and to experience poorer physical and mental health than residents living in the least deprived communities. As in the rest of the country, young people, especially those from poorer communities, are experiencing challenges around their mental health.

There is a strong local commitment to increasing inclusion and diversity across arts and heritage organisations and to strengthening the sector for the benefit of residents. There remain many challenges around funding and resourcing and concern that the current cost of living crisis will have a negative impact on participation.

Since 2013 the value of cross-organisational and partnership working to address challenges faced by some communities in Milton Keynes has been clearly demonstrated. Partnerships addressing child poverty, homelessness and the arts and heritage sectors, for example, have helped service providers share best practice, offer a more personalised approach, and strengthened their common understanding of the issues facing residents.

Strong Communities SDG Reduced inequalities.

Theme definition

‘Strong Communities’ theme is about there being a sense of belonging, trust, and engagement between local people. Strong communities are more cohesive, with members feeling their concerns are represented and voices heard, and that they can rely on one another.



Overview

Milton Keynes is one of the fastest growing cities in the country. Much has been done since its founding to welcome and integrate new communities, to try to level up disparities between communities, and to help all communities have a voice and sense of continuity with their heritage.

Embracing new communities within the Milton Keynes family

MK Community Action undertakes outreach programmes in the areas of MK that have new housing, to welcome new residents and to help them integrate. It also facilitates residents raising issues with stakeholders on services such as public transport, pedestrian access, or community buildings.

A voice for all communities

As Milton Keynes has grown it has become more Ethnically Diverse. The MK Intercultural Forum was set up in 2020 to improve the representation of the interests of Ethnically Diverse communities in local decision making.

Communities driving change.

Citizens:mk was launched in 2010 and is the local branch of a national organisation. An alliance of representatives from community groups, it aims to create change for the benefit of all. Outcomes of the processes it deploys include enhanced local accountability and democracy and a greater sense of community cohesion.

Supporting fairness among communities

MK Community Foundation supports charitable organisations that serve disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. It has contributed over £18.4m in grants and subsidies between 2013 and 2021 to local charities and good causes. During the COVID-19 Pandemic many new groups sprang up to support residents in need and were helped by emergency funding from MK Community Foundation.

Community engagement with local and national politics

A sense of community and shared purpose is one of the major reasons for voting in elections. (*The Electoral Commission: The Future of Voting 2021*).

Voter turnout statistics for elections since 2015 indicate that in Milton Keynes about two-thirds voted at national elections, a broadly similar rate to England overall. One third of residents chose to vote in the 2021 local election.

Table 1: Voter turnout at elections (*commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings*)

% turnout	MK North	MK South	MK Unitary	England turnout
2015 National Election	66.7	66		66.7
2016 EU Referendum			73.6	69.9
2017 National Election	72.1	70.4		69.1
2018 Local Election			32.8	
2019 General Election	68.3	66.4		67.4
2021 Local election			36.5	35.7

Connectivity

Internet connectivity is important both for business success and for residents. As of September 2022, the ultrafast broadband penetration for Milton Keynes is 91.6%, higher than the average for the country which is 73.3%. This is the outcome of the completion of a rollout of gigabit-capable fibre in April 2022, which started in 2018, when Milton Keynes had one of the lowest ultrafast penetration rates in the country. (labs2.thinkbroadband.com/local/E06000042)

Vital Statistics

- MK Community Foundation contributed over £18.4m in grants and subsidies between 2013 and 2021 to local charities and worthy causes.
- 11.9% growth rate of the population since 2013 to 287,060 in 2021.
- Ultrafast broadband penetration is 91.6%, one of the highest in the country.

Vital Action - MK Melting Pot

MK Melting Pot started life as a small idea by one woman, to run an event for her local community, helping to get children engaged and involved with cooking, music, play and activities. Little did Adewunmi Jade Jaieyola know that this idea would turn into a vital support network for many hundreds of people across Milton Keynes.



MK community Foundation helped in more ways than just finding the charity premises, their advice and support has been invaluable. They linked the charity to FareShare, who redistribute surplus food to charities who turn it into meals – this link had proved to be vital in allowing MK Melting Pot to continue their mission since COVID-19 and into the ‘Cost-of-Living Crisis’.

One of the other ways that the charity continued to support families during COVID-19 was by teaching cooking lessons online. They realised that supplying families with food was only the first step, many people needed help to cook and provide for their children, some of those cooking skills have been lost over the generations. MK Community Foundation supported this initiative by funding the creation and printing of a simple step-by-step recipe book that could be given to families.

Diversity SDG Reduced Inequalities



Theme definition

The goal of diversity is integral to the vision of MK when it was founded. Among the aspirations for MK was that all should have freedom of choice, everyone should be welcomed and there should be jobs for all.

Overview

MK population is 287,060 (ONS, 2021 Census), an 11.9% growth from 2013, and by 2050 the population is estimated to be at least 400,000. (MK City Council)

The city still has a young age profile compared with the average in England, but the proportion in older age groups is growing more rapidly than younger. As the city has grown, the make-up of the population has changed. In 2013 26% of the population were from Ethnically Diverse backgrounds and in 2021 it was 34%.

The diverse nature of the Milton Keynes' population is also being reflected in its schools, where in 2021 52% of children are from Ethnically Diverse backgrounds, up from 42% in 2015/16. Their families have links to an increasing number of cultural, linguistic, and national heritages and 160 different languages are spoken in schools. (MK City Council, 2019).

A 2017 survey of those who identify as LGBTQ+ found that younger people and those living in London and the Southeast (which includes MK) are more likely to identify as LGBTQ+. (gov.uk/government/organisations/government-equalities-office)

National data shows that people with disabilities are over a third less likely to be employed than people without disabilities (aged 16 to 64 years). Nationally, worklessness due to long-term ill-health is at its highest since records were first collated in 1992. It had started growing pre-Pandemic. (IES/ONS Sept 2022).

Table 2: Population profile MK compared with England 2011 and 2021 Census data points (ONS)

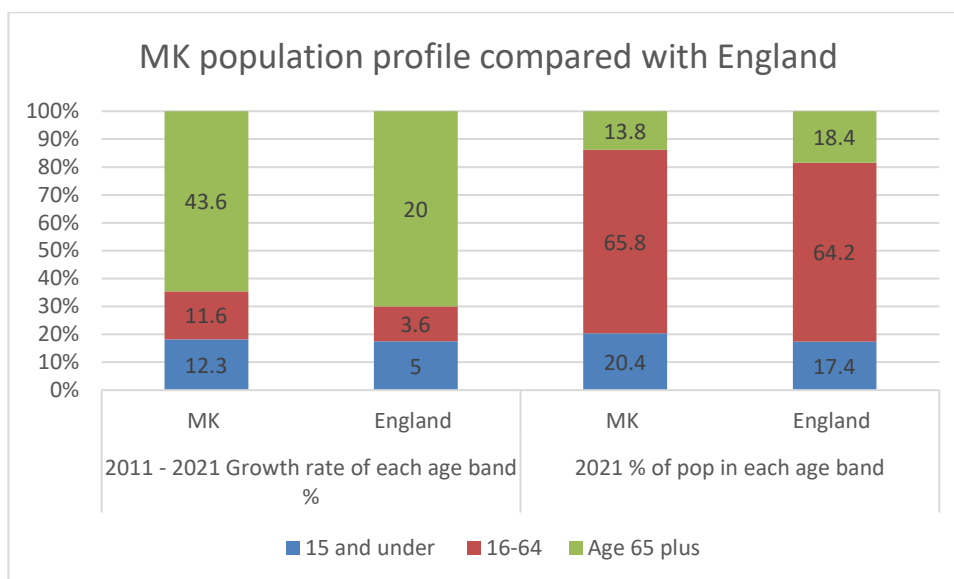


Table 3: Proportion of population by ethnic group (ONS)

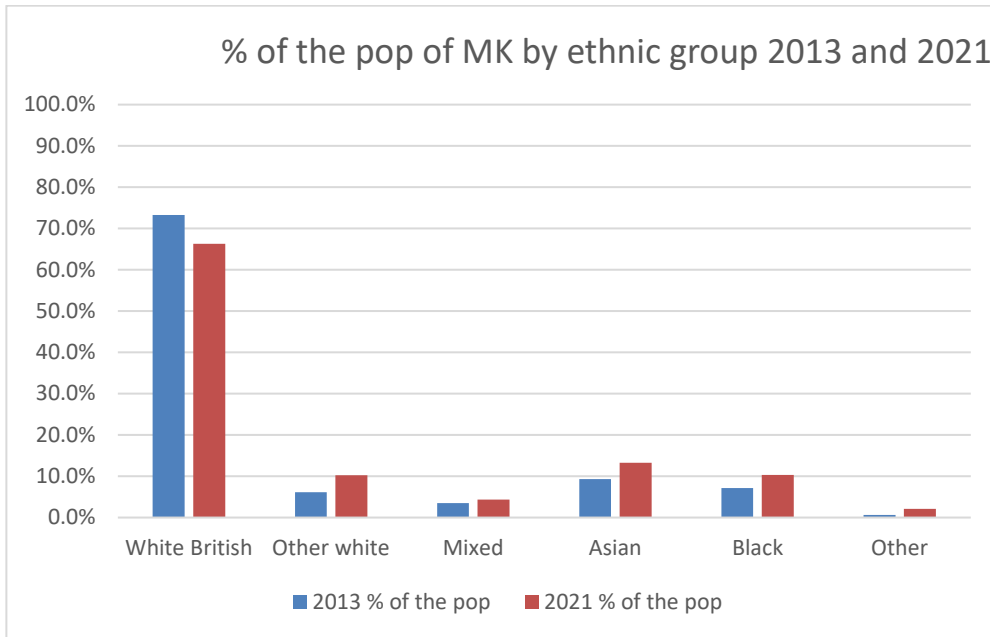
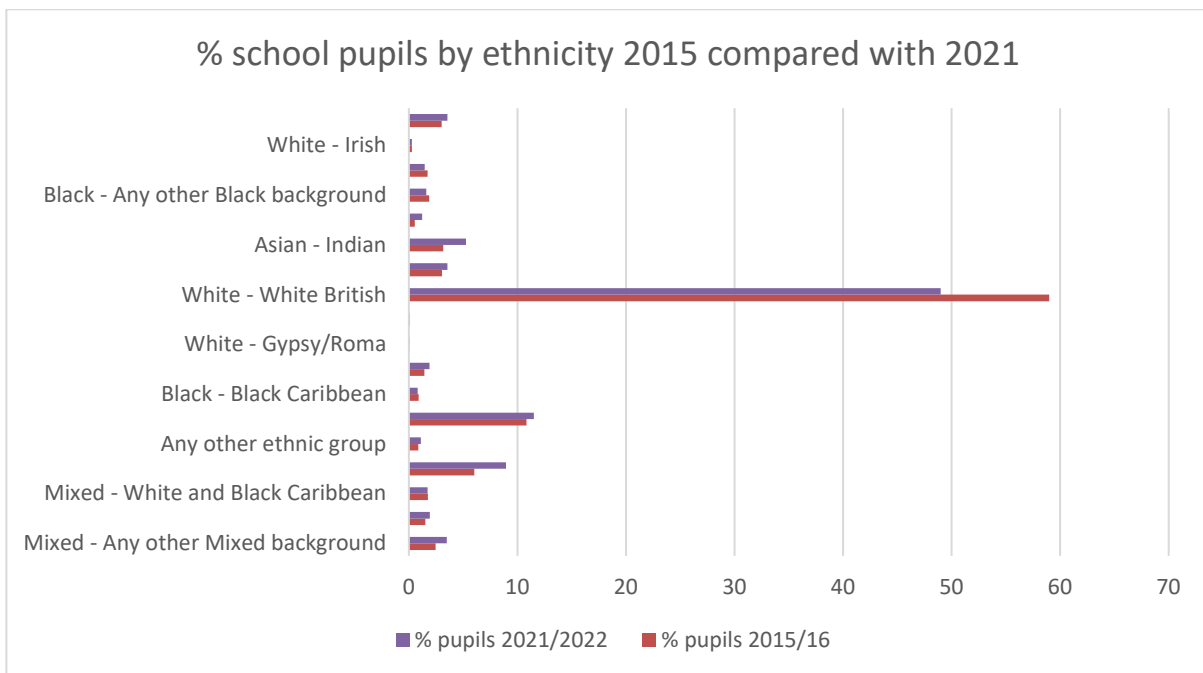


Table 4: Ethnicity of school children 2015-16 compared with 2021/22 (UK govt stats from School Census)



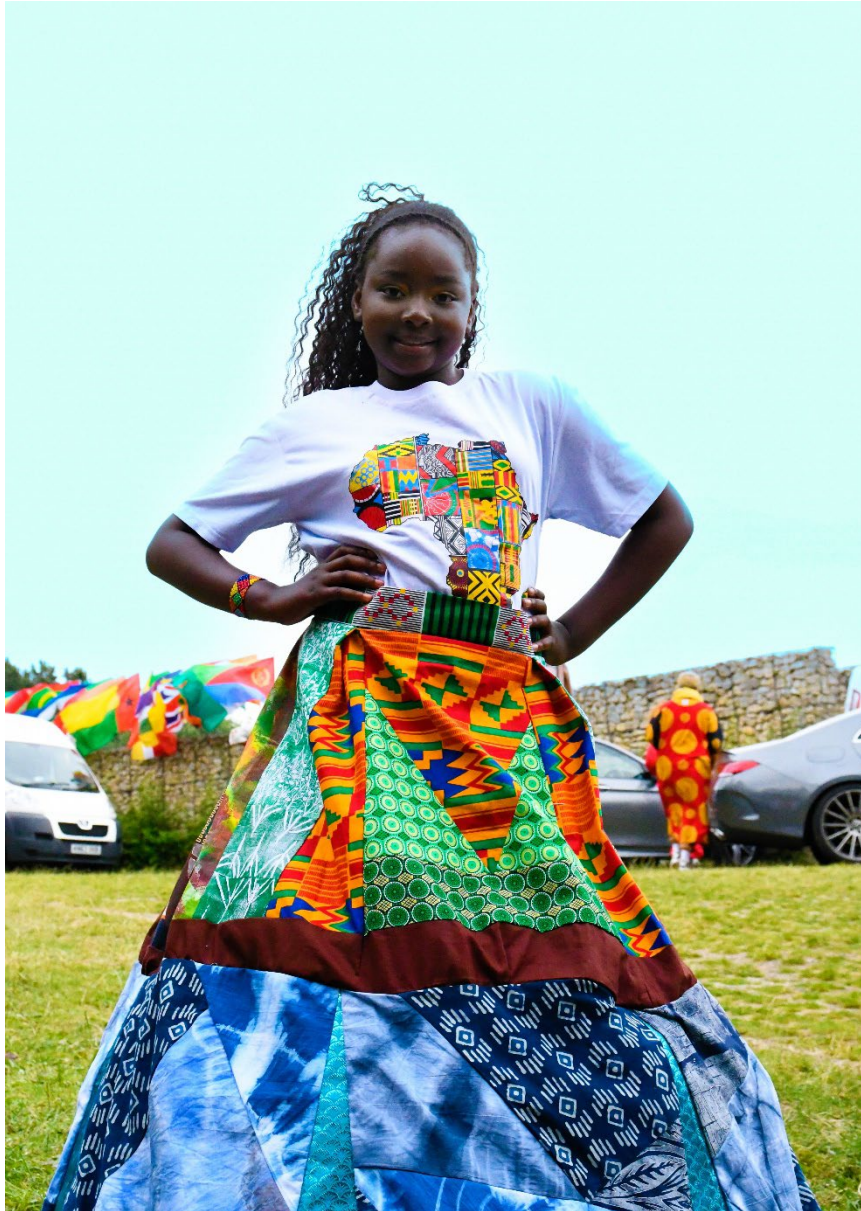
Vital Statistics

- According to the 2021 census, the number of people living in MK from Ethnically Diverse communities has increased from the 2011 figure of 26.1% to 34%
- 52% of school pupils are of Ethnically Diverse backgrounds in 2021/2 compared with 42% in 2015/16.
- 160 different languages are spoken in schools.

Vital Voices

"We have got all the pieces of a jigsaw to make MK the most inclusive city in the UK. But we haven't yet put all the pieces together so that all communities, services, agencies etc are sufficiently working together to make this a reality."

Gamiel Yafai, Founder and CEO of consultancy Diversity Marketplace, Trustee of MK Parks Trust



Vital Thinking

As a foundation how do we prioritise our grant funding to ensure we reach those groups who are rarely heard?

Education SDG Quality Education



Theme definition

Education should enable everyone to maximise their potential and have control over their own life course and help them develop the knowledge and skills needed for stable employment.

Overview

The strategy outlined in MK Futures is to ‘accelerate social mobility – making it easier for those in deprived communities to gain further skills.’ (*MKFutures.com*). In this 2022 Vital Signs report we look at the extent to which all children are being supported in realising their potential.

Those from disadvantaged* families in MK (*on free school meals during last 6 years at school) are likely to do less well at school and are less likely to go onto university than their peers. Disadvantaged white male students have amongst the lowest attainment of all groups, with disadvantaged students of most other ethnicities doing better. Milton Keynes City Council research highlighted structural and societal factors contributing to lower educational attainment. (*Aspirations and the under achievement of white working-class male students in further education: 2020, Milton Keynes City Council*).

Nursery Provision

In MK, 90% of early years education is provided by, nurseries, pre-school, and registered childminders. Extended hours entitlement of 30 hours is provided to parents or guardians on lower income during school term time, this equates to 22 hours per week across the whole year. Of children aged 3-4 years old who accessed the universal entitlement to pre-school education 46% qualified for the extended access. MK City Council predicts that there will be sufficient pre-school education provision overall across MK with 11 out of 17 areas projected to have sufficient places to meet the demand of their area. These areas also have an excess of places that covers the shortfall in the remaining 6 areas.

Attainment at GCSE level

Between 2013 and 2019 there was a decline of 1.3% in the percentage of children in MK gaining 5 GCSEs at grade 4 and above /Grades A-C. Nationally, there was a 5.2% improvement.

(Given the way GCSE results were awarded in the summers of 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 comparisons cannot be made accurately with the results in 2020 and 2021.)

There is a persistent gap in performance between those from advantaged and disadvantaged homes and between girls and boys both in MK and nationally. In MK 55.6% of girls from advantaged homes gained GCSEs at Grade 5 and above in Maths and English, compared with 29.3% of boys from disadvantaged homes in 2021-22. (Pupils are defined as disadvantaged if they have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the past six years if they are recorded as having been looked after for at least one day or if they are recorded as having been adopted from care.)

Participation in education age 16-17

There has been little improvement in the participation rate in education, training, or work in MK from 2016-2021, among 16–17-year-olds, and the rate is lower than Bedford or Luton. (Comparative records only available for this period). The groups most likely to not be participating by ethnicity both in Milton Keynes and nationally are white, mixed race or other racial groups. (gov.uk/government/publications/neet-and-participation-local-authority)

Attainment at A level

The 2022 academic year saw the return of the summer examinations after they had been cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, where alternative processes were set up to award grades.

In MK 77% of those from disadvantaged homes gained two or more academic A levels, compared with 87% of those who are not disadvantaged in 2021-22. Those from disadvantaged homes achieved lower average A level grades.

Milton Keynes College

Milton Keynes College plays a role in facilitating social mobility in its provision of vocationally orientated qualifications and its recruitment of those from disadvantaged communities.

50% of the 16–18-year-olds who live in the nine most deprived areas of MK attend Milton Keynes College. This is likely to benefit their social mobility as those who gain a qualification at Level 3 (i.e. equivalent to A levels or BTEC National Certificate) earn on average an additional £425,000 over the course of their career. (*Milton Keynes College*)

“Our goal is to enable people to have meaningful lives and careers within the community and help them develop resilience to deal with challenges. We act as a bridge to support students to succeed beyond their expectations. Form tutors takes responsibility for the welfare of a student and are accountable for there being appropriate intervention strategies.”

David Meadowcroft, Chair of Governors, Milton Keynes College.

Milton Keynes College is leading a project together with a consortium of partners, to run the South-Central Institute of Technology (SCIoT) at Bletchley. This opened its doors in 2021 and offers higher level technical qualifications, apprenticeships, and short courses in digital subjects to meet local skill needs.

Supplementary Schools

Milton Keynes City Council supports a network of some 90 Supplementary Schools, run by the community that students may attend at low cost in addition to their mainstream school. Pupils participate in activities that help preserve their community language and culture. The schools support cohesion and are valued by parents and students. (*Supplementary Schools in Milton Keynes - viewpoints and information: a report 2019/Attending supplementary schools: students’ perspectives report 2019.*)

Children with moderate Learning difficulties

The incidence (rate per 1,000) of children with moderate learning difficulties i.e., Special Educational Needs (SEN) in MK is higher than the average for England and among comparator places. The rate has fallen to 36.6 per 1,000 children in 2020 from 46.5 in 2015 (*Learning Disability Profiles OHID phe.org.uk*)

Experts believe that recent rises in numbers nationally may represent a ‘catch-up’ following policy changes. It may reflect greater awareness of SEN amongst educators, or changes in assessment and diagnostic tools. (*Centre for Educational Neuroscience, University College London – Birkbeck University of London*)

Prevalence of Special Educational Needs nationally is greater among boys than girls and among those eligible for free school meals. (*Special educational needs and disability: an analysis and summary of data sources June 2022, Department for Education*)

Progression to university

MK is underperforming in the percentage of the cohort who go onto high tariff universities and the percentage who are on free school meals going to any university.

For the year 2020-2021 8% of the total MK cohort progressed to a high tariff university, compared to 11% for England.

In MK 27% of those on free school meals progressed to any university compared with 45.8% of the total cohort. (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk>)

Those from more disadvantaged background are more likely to not go to university for financial reasons. The lack of role models among family and friends may contribute to this trend. (*Educational expectations of UK teenagers and the role of socio-economic status and economic preferences. Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities, UCL.*)

University provision in Milton Keynes

Despite the size and growth of MK, it has been a challenge to establish a face-to-face undergraduate university in the city.

Plans for the original building design of an undergraduate university campus, MK:U, which was due to launch in 2023 have been delayed due to lack of government funding. They have been able to open an Innovation Hub. The University is being spearheaded by the postgraduate Cranfield University, and planned to have a curriculum focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. MK:U has begun taking students on degree apprenticeships, but the qualifications come from Cranfield.

University of Bedfordshire has a small campus in MK offering six undergraduate degrees.

Table 5: % of students achieving 5 GCSEs A-C/Grade 4 and above) (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk>)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*	2018	2019
Milton Keynes Schools	61.3%	49.2%	52%	52.5%	60%	63%	60%
England average	59.2%	53.4%	53.8%	54%	63%	64%	64%

*First year of numeric grading structure, previously A-C

No data available for 2020/21 as no formal exams

Table 6: % of students achieving English and Maths GCSE at A-C, MK compared with England and by whether disadvantaged. (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk>)

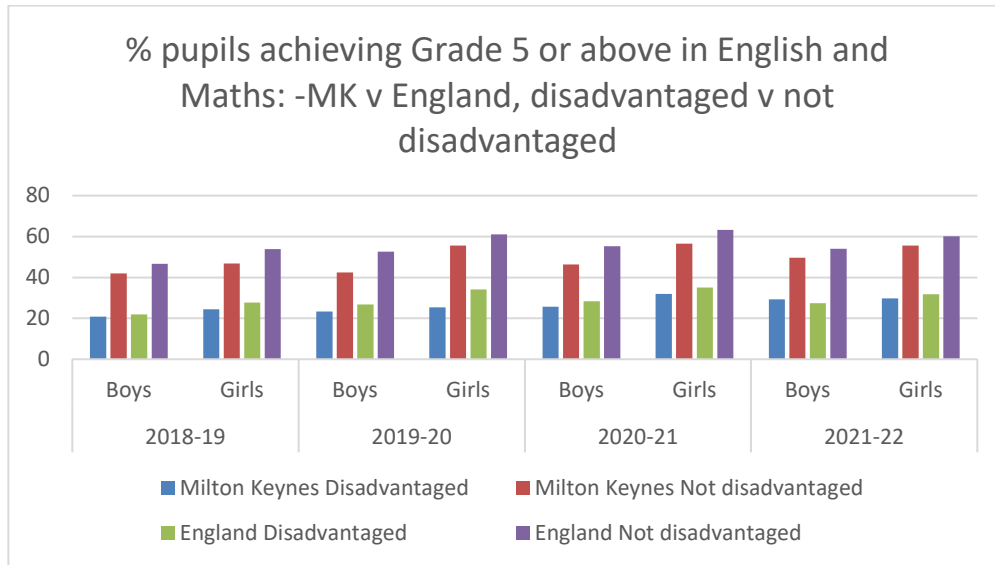


Table 7: % gaining 2 or more academic qualifications at level 3 Milton Keynes 2017-2022 (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk>)

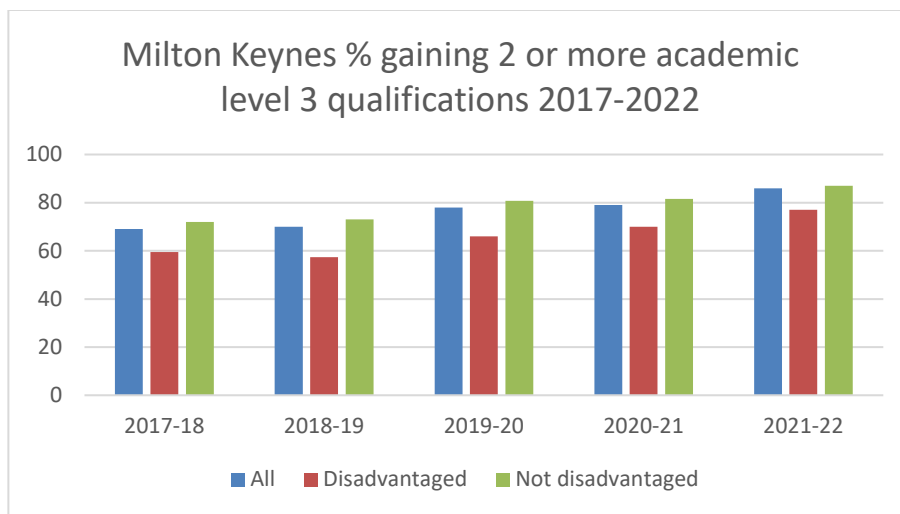


Table 8: Average Grade at A level in Milton Keynes (<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk>)

Year	All pupils	Not disadvantaged	Disadvantaged
2017-18	C	C	C-
2018-19	C	C	C-
2019-20	B-	B-	C-
2020-21	B-	B-	C-
2021-22	C+	B-	C-

Table 9: Changes 2016- 2021 in percentage of the 16-17 age group who are not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) Milton Keynes compared with other places
 (gov.uk/government/publications/neet-and-participation-local-authority)

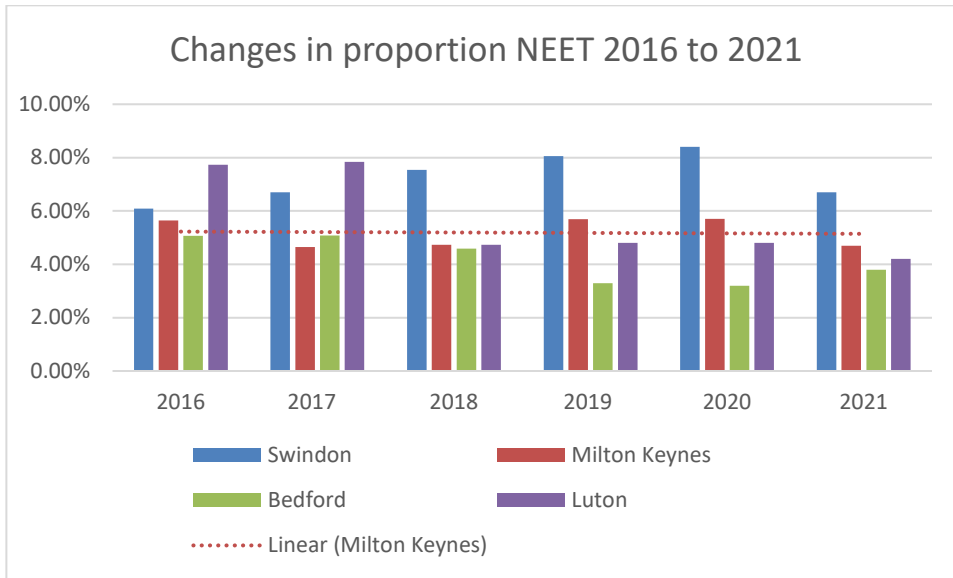


Table 10: Percentage of the 16-17 age group by ethnicity who are not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) Milton Keynes compared with England in 2021
 (gov.uk/government/publications/neet-and-participation-local-authority)

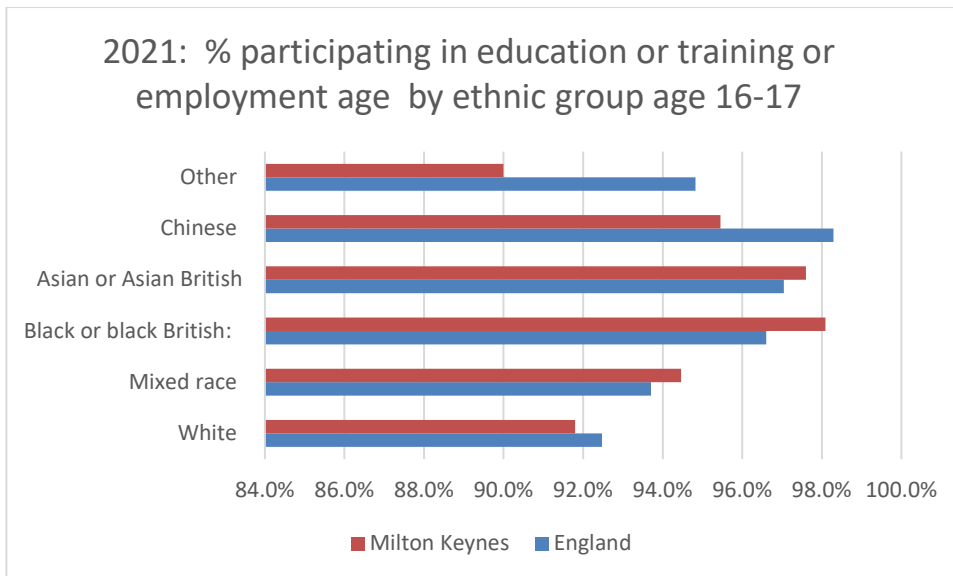


Table 11: Trends in progression to all universities and to high tariff universities, MK compared with England ((<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk>))

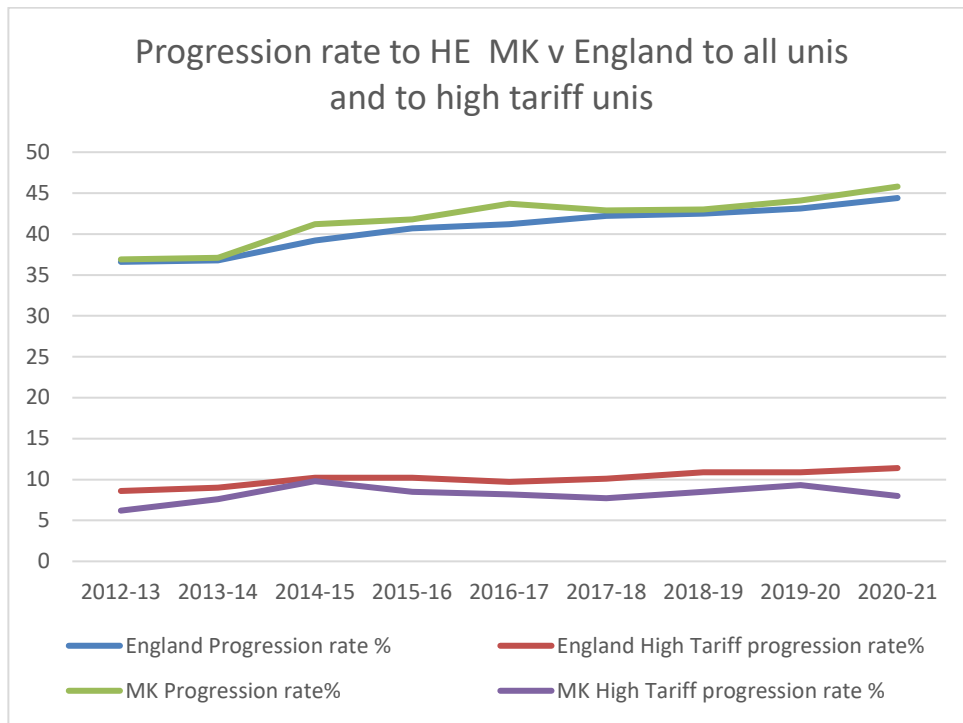


Table 12: Trends in University participation MK comparing those on free school meals with total cohort ((<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk>))

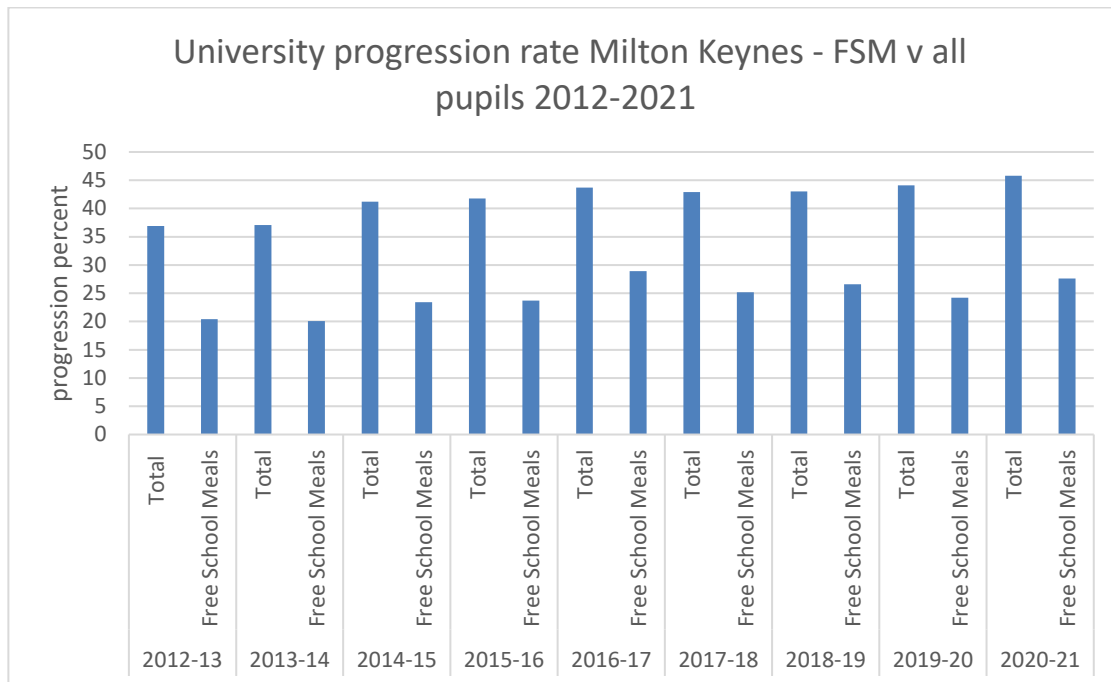
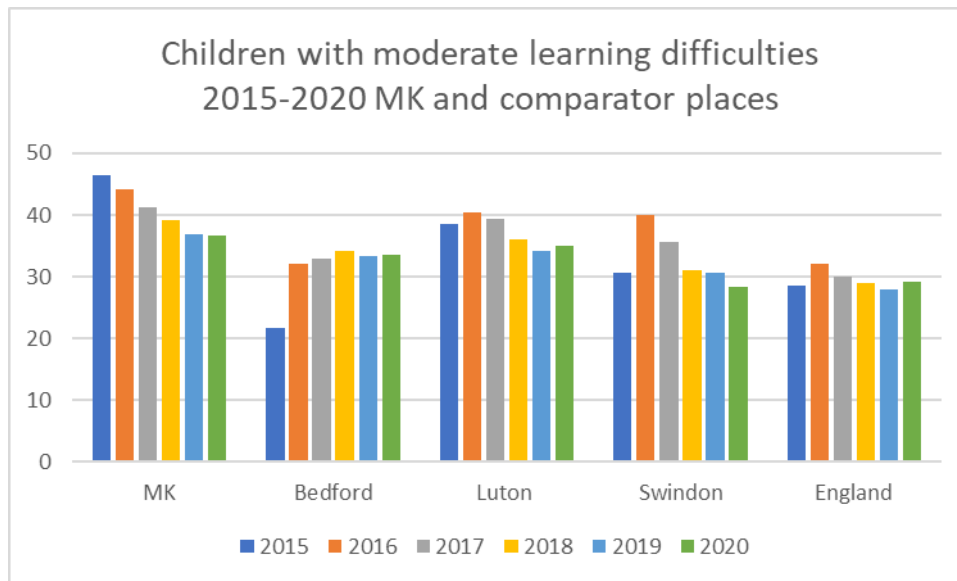


Table 13: Children with moderate learning difficulties Milton Keynes and comparator places 2015-2020 (*Learning Disability Profiles OHID phe.org.uk*)



Vital Statistics

- Between 2013 and 2019 there was a decline of 1.3% in the percentage of children in Milton Keynes gaining 5 GCSEs at grade 4 and above /Grades A-C. Nationally, there was a 5.2% improvement.
- 4.7% of the 16-17 cohort in 2021 was not in employment, education, or training, down from 5.6% in 2016.
- There has been an improvement of 7.2 percentage points to 27.6%, between 2012/13 to 2020/21 in the proportion of those in MK on free school meals who progressed to university from 20.4% in 2012/13.
- 45.8% of the cohort progressed into university in 2020-21, a growth of 8.9% since 2012-13
- There are 90 supplementary schools in MK which help pupils to preserve their community, language and culture.
- Of children aged 3-4 years old who accessed the universal entitlement to pre-school education 46% qualified for the extended access.

Vital Action – MK Christian Foundation

The Milton Keynes Christian Foundation is a charity that was set up around 35 years ago when the, now city, was still in its infancy. For the last 15 years, the charity has been working on various social enterprise projects helping young people in the community who have struggled with mainstream education for a variety of different reasons.

These young people, aged between 15-24, can come and work with the charity within one of their eight social enterprises. They work three days a week for anywhere between six months and two years depending on their needs. Three of the social enterprises run from Urb Farm in the very heart of Wolverton. 'Growing People' explores sustainable alternatives to growing food for the local community. 'Urban Beelievers' is a bee-keeping enterprise who look after eight hives at Urb Farm and two hives in Central Milton Keynes, The last enterprise is 'the Learning Tree' which is a forest school offering young people and adults a way to experience the outdoors in Urb Farm's own woodland areas using holistic and therapeutic learning activities.

MK Community Foundation have provided funding for equipment for growing and harvesting the fruit and vegetables, as well as an additional seasonal beekeeper to work with the young people.

Sarah Mist the Project Manager for Urban Beelievers project said, “It has had a huge personal impact for several trainees. One young girl aged 17 came to us after not leaving her own house for over two years. She actually progressed so much she is now at Moulton College and not only that, she has also moved out of home and is now in independent accommodation. She’s now able to positively look towards the future, something that just wasn’t even thinkable a few years ago. Without the funding from MK Community Foundation being made available and allowing us to employ Steve, I just couldn’t have dedicated the time needed to help this young girl make these life changing decisions, support her throughout her journey and now help her as she progresses in the world of education.”

Vital Thinking

How can we support the achievement of young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds?



Health and Wellbeing SDG Good Health and Wellbeing



Theme definition

Health and Wellbeing encompasses both physical and mental health. This is impacted by factors, including hereditary, individual lifestyles, social and community networks and living and working conditions.

Overview

The life expectancy of Milton Keynes residents is similar overall to the average in England. A higher proportion of adults are classified as obese (29%) compared to England overall (25.2%) and this trend is continuing.

Those who have highest deprivation, as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, are more likely to die younger from specific health conditions, and to experience lifestyles which are less supportive of good health. (gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019)

Young people are struggling with their mental health, especially those from poorer communities and the COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated this.

When asked in surveys to assess aspects of their own wellbeing, residents of Milton Keynes gave similar average scores as for England as a whole and indicated that the COVID-19 Pandemic had reduced their feelings of wellbeing.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the death rate from COVID-19 was slightly lower than the average for England.

Milton Keynes public health team, charities and other not-for-profit organisations are promoting and facilitating improved health and wellbeing to reduce health disparities and help employers who want to support the health and wellbeing of their staff.

Child health indicators

The percentage of children with a low birth weight has almost halved from 2013 to 2021 in Milton Keynes, but at 3.6% it is still above the average of 2.9% for England. (Table 14)

19.8% of children in Milton Keynes are classified as obese at age 10-11. This has increased by 1% from 2013 but is below the average for England. (Table 14)

The percentage of children aged 5 to 16 taking less than the recommended 30 minutes of daily exercise has increased from 32% in 2017-18 to 38% 2020/21. Children from more deprived neighbourhoods are less likely to be undertaking 30 mins of physical activity a day compared with those from the least deprived neighbourhoods. (*Sports England Active Lives Survey.*)

Local public health experts have commented that lower levels of physical activity from childhood onwards contributes to the increased health risks of many life-limiting diseases that are a cause of early death in Milton Keynes.

Affordability, knowledge of what's available as well as anxiety and worry about trying something new, are some of the barriers to participation of young people in Milton Keynes in physical activities. (*MK Movers, Survey of 200 young people in Milton Keynes, 2022*) (MK Movers Network is a collaboration of physical activity providers in Milton Keynes). Ongoing funding, promotion through schools and

community groups, and the opportunity for social interaction all help to increase long-term participation. (*Leapwithus.org*) (LEAP is a not-for-profit organisation serving Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire).

Health gaps

There is a life expectancy gap between those who are most and least deprived as measured by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. In Milton Keynes men living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods are likely to live 7.6 fewer years than men from the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods. Women living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods are likely to live 5.6 fewer years than women from the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods. (The website: gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019 explains the Indices of Deprivation and how deprivation is measured.)

In the more deprived neighbourhoods, there are higher rates of death from circulatory diseases, cancer, and respiratory diseases. Among women in more deprived neighbourhoods, there are also higher rates of death caused by cancer and mental health issues. This is a similar pattern for other places in the Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes Commissioning Group. (<https://analytics.phe.gov.uk/apps/segment-tool>)

Research from Healthwatch Milton Keynes found that lower income groups had fewer opportunities to lead healthy lives, experienced transport difficulties in accessing health services, had difficulty getting time off work for medical appointments, and had less access to healthy food and dental care. (*Healthwatch Milton Keynes, Perceptions of Inequalities in Milton Keynes, 2022*)

29% of adults in Milton Keynes are classified as obese, compared with 25% for England, and the percentage has grown from 25% in 2015. Obesity is associated with reduced life expectancy and a range of health conditions including Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, liver and respiratory disease and cancer.

Physical activity can contribute to reducing obesity and its associated harms. However, those living in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Milton Keynes are 10% less likely to be physically active than those in the least deprived. The percentage of those from the poorest households not taking 150 minutes physical activity a week has increased by 2% since 2015, while the percentage not taking this amount of activity for the wealthiest neighbourhoods has decreased by 1%. (*Sports England Active Lives Survey. Table 18*)

To help increase participation in physical activity among more deprived neighbourhoods, walking groups have been set up over 2022. There are now 850 people, mainly women who regularly participate and seven leaders have been identified to champion community activity. Barriers to participation included self-consciousness, low self-esteem, anxiety, concerns around leaving the home and lack of social confidence. Opportunity for social interaction was a driver in getting and keeping people involved. (*Leap.org*)

Health in the workplace

A number of larger national employers offer gym membership and encourage flexible working to fit activity into or around the workday. However, those in lower-paid service jobs, on shift work and working for SMEs are less likely to have access to these perks. (Chris Gregory, Head of Strategic Relationships at Leap)

To improve the health of those in work, Milton Keynes City Council is promoting 'Healthy Workplace Standards' accreditation. This provides a framework which supports sustainable improvements in workplace health and wellbeing.

A Public Health Workplace Health Team offers businesses a range of health and wellbeing services. Some specific employment areas where there is a concentration of shift and low paid jobs are a particular focus.

Mental Health

Many factors shape mental health and those with the strongest evidence demonstrating links to the development of mental health conditions include:

- experiences of poverty
- problem gambling
- adverse childhood experiences including trauma.
- unemployment
- debt and financial insecurity
- drug and alcohol misuse
- involvement in the criminal justice system (both as a victim or as an offender)
- homelessness
- loneliness, which can be exacerbated by isolating jobs
- relationship breakdown
- violence, including sexual violence.
- discrimination, including racism and homophobia.

(Public Mental Health, Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group BLMK)

Assessing differences in the prevalence of mental illness between social groups is challenging and complex. However national data suggests that demand for mental health services is higher among more deprived communities. (kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities#life)

Those in receipt of government income benefits have experienced greater impacts on their mental health from the COVID-19 Pandemic according to national research. (*Coronavirus: the consequences for mental health MIND July 2021*). This is endorsed by feedback from local charities that support disadvantaged communities who report their clients' mental health has worsened because of struggles with low and insecure incomes, debt, and lack of food, exacerbated by the COVID-19 Pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis.

The rate of hospital admissions in Milton Keynes for self-harm has fallen to 116.9 per 100,000 of the population in 2021, from 130.9 in 2013 (See Table 20).

Among working adults nationally there is a correlation between suicide rate and levels of deprivation. (kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities#life)

There is an NHS target to reduce the rate of suicide nationally by 10% between 2015 and 2020. In Milton Keynes the rate increased from 8.5 per 100,000 of the population in 2013-15 to 9.4 per 100,000 of the population in 2018-20. The suicide rate in Milton Keynes is substantially lower than the mean rate for other English Unitary Authorities which is 11.1. (See Table 21)

There is a Suicide Prevention Action Plan developed by the Bedfordshire, Luton, and Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (BLMK), in line with government requirements. The plan is cross sectoral and multi-agency and includes crisis support, community-based and workplace activities targeted at high-risk groups and those who interact with them. (The plan will be refreshed in 2023.)

The local charity, Arts for Health, reported it saw that COVID-19 lockdowns increased mild/moderate mental health concerns, loneliness, anxiety, and depression, especially among those already

experiencing health inequalities. Its 'Arts on Prescription programme' is available on a referral basis for clients with depression, stress, and anxiety.

Mental health of children and young people

Nationally, around 25% of women aged 17–22 years have a probable mental health disorder. Across the UK in the 20% most deprived areas, compared to the 20% least deprived, there is a 60% higher rate of crisis referrals among children and young people. (*The Health Foundation, July 2022 Improving Children and Young people's Mental Health Services*)

Milton Keynes Health and Care Partnership is prioritising building capacity for specialist mental health support for young people in Milton Keynes. (*Reported at meeting of the partnership June 2022.*)

YiS, a charity that supports young people's mental health in Milton Keynes has seen take up for its services grow nearly five times between 2019/20 and 2021/22 ([https://agm.mkyis.org.uk/.](https://agm.mkyis.org.uk/))

The locally based mental health support charity, Arthur Ellis, reports that it has seen a large growth in demand for its services and now receives approximately 1,200 referrals per year in Milton Keynes. The predominant age of referrals is 15, with the top presenting issues being anxiety, difficulties in coping with emotions, self-esteem, relationships and depression. The growth of relationship difficulties coincided with the lack of social contact during the COVID-19 Pandemic and thus reduced opportunities for young people to develop socially.

A 2020 local survey of young people found that the impact of COVID-19 had been social isolation, a loss of purpose, and being cut off from natural supports. To improve mental health of young people, there was a call for more activities and events, more safe spaces to meet, and more education around health and wellbeing. (*YiS Feedback forum, published by Health Watch MK*)

Older people's wellbeing

Loneliness is associated with poor quality of life, low self-esteem and some of the behaviours that can harm mental health and physical health. Factors specific to Milton Keynes which contribute to feelings of loneliness among older people include the design of Milton Keynes, with dividing road networks and lack of social centres; communities with a high turnover of residents; insufficient accessible public transport; and Redways that feel unsafe when walking or cycling. (*The Open University in association with Age UK Milton Keynes. 2015*)

Wellbeing and risky health behaviours

When asked to assess aspects of their own wellbeing, residents of Milton Keynes gave similar average scores as for England. Between 2013 and 2021 there was a small increase in feelings of anxiety and small decreases in feelings of life satisfaction, feeling that life is worthwhile and feelings of happiness. Ratings on these factors had increased slightly before 2019/20 – indicating negative impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. (ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/)

Hospital admissions for substance misuse among young people declined to 62.9 per 100,000 of the population in 2021, from 76.9 per 100,000 of the population in 2013. The rate is significantly lower than the average for England which is 84.7 per 100,000 of the population. (ginform.local.gov.uk/dataAndReports)

The COVID-19 Pandemic

There were 260 deaths per 100,000 of the population from COVID-19 in Milton Keynes compared with 299 per 100,000 of the population for England. The rate of people taking up the offer of COVID-19 vaccinations was lower in Milton Keynes compared with the England average. (*coronavirus.data.uk/*) (See Table 23 for detail).

The national prevalence rate for long COVID is 2.8%. It is most commonly reported by those age 35 to 69 years, females, people living in more deprived areas, those working in social care, those aged 16 years or over who are economically inactive, and those with another activity-limiting health condition or a disability. (*ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare*)

Table 14: Child and Maternal health (*Public health profiles - OHID (phe.org.uk)*)

	MK	MK	England av	England av
Year	2013	2021	2013	2021
Low birth weight %	7.2	3.6	7.4	2.9
Obese age 10-11: %	18.8	19.8	19.2	21
Hospital admissions due to substance misuse age 15-24: per 100,000	76.7	62.9	69.4	84.7
Smoking while pregnant %	12.3	12	13.2	10.4

Table 15: Children’s physical activity by most and least deprived neighbourhoods (*Sport England Active lives survey 2017 - 2021*)

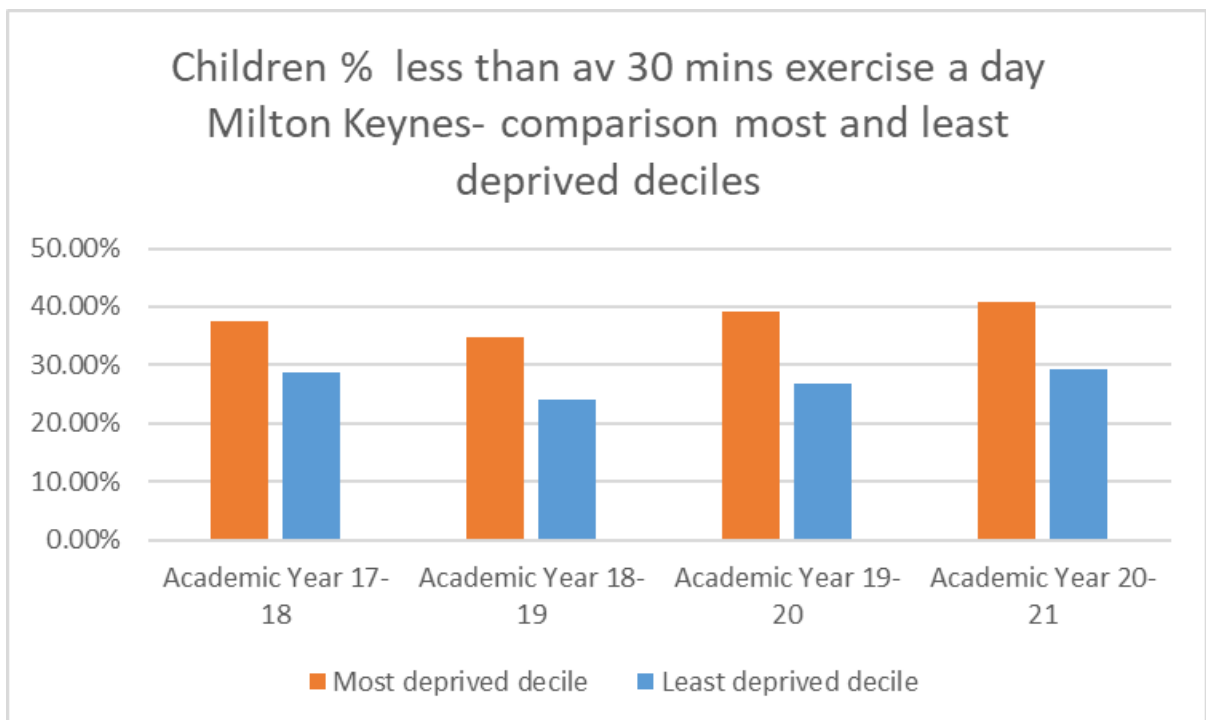


Table 16: Healthy Life expectancy (ONS)

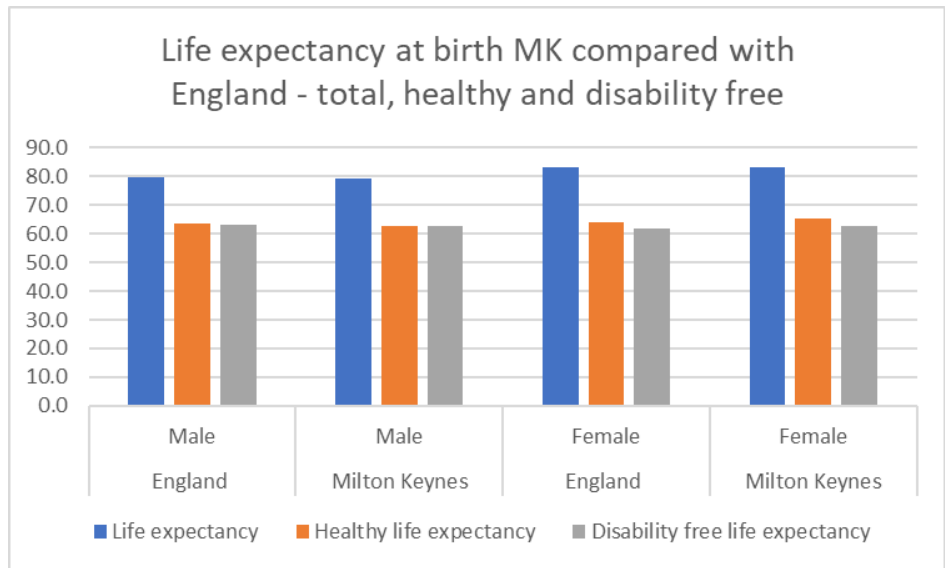


Table 17: Life Expectancy Milton Keynes, top and bottom quintile in terms of deprivation (ONS)

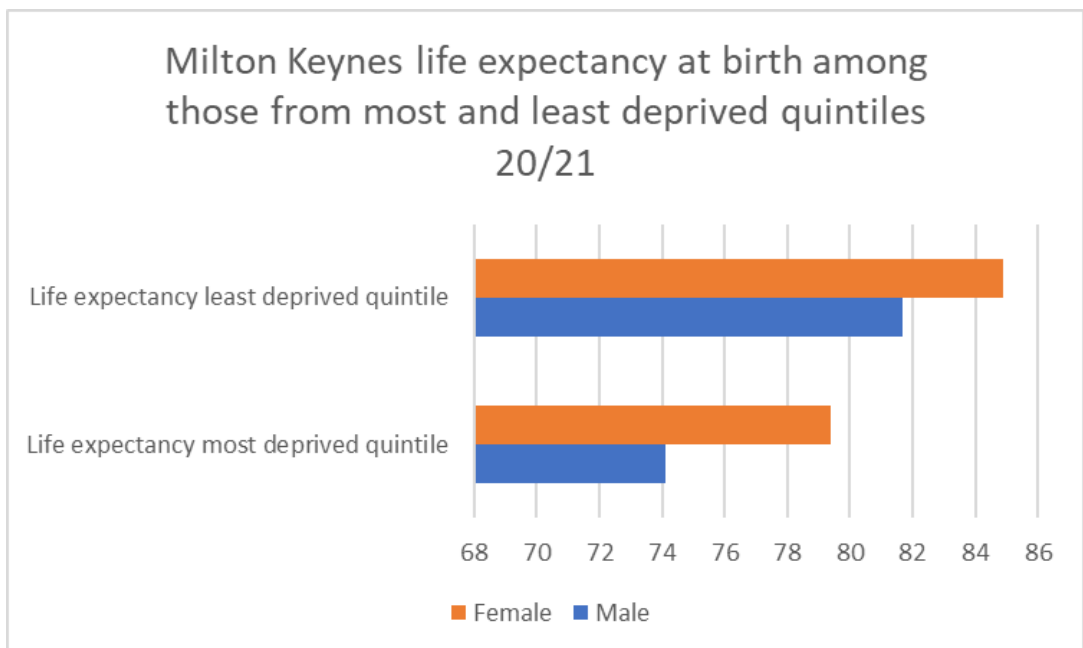


Table 18: Adult Physical activity – 150 mins a week MK compared with England and by socio-economic group, and disability (Sport England Active Lives Survey)

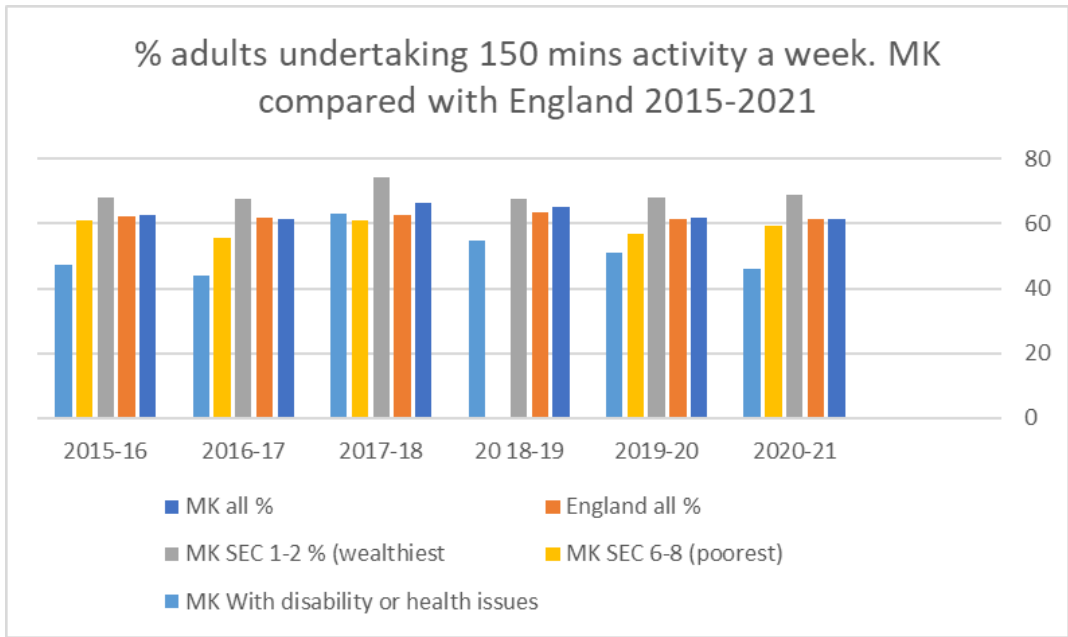


Table 19: Individual perceptions of health and wellbeing Milton Keynes, v England 2013-21
(www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/)

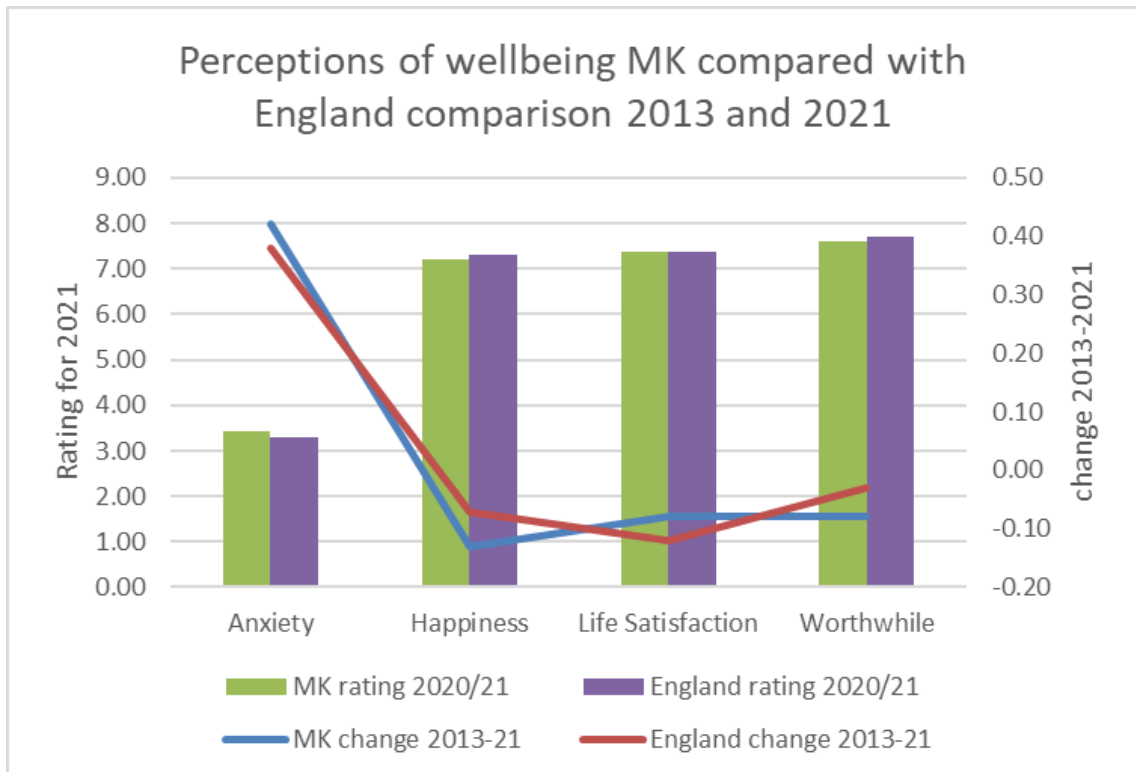


Table 20: Emergency hospital admissions for intentional self harm per 100,000 of the population.
 (ginform.local.gov.uk/reports)

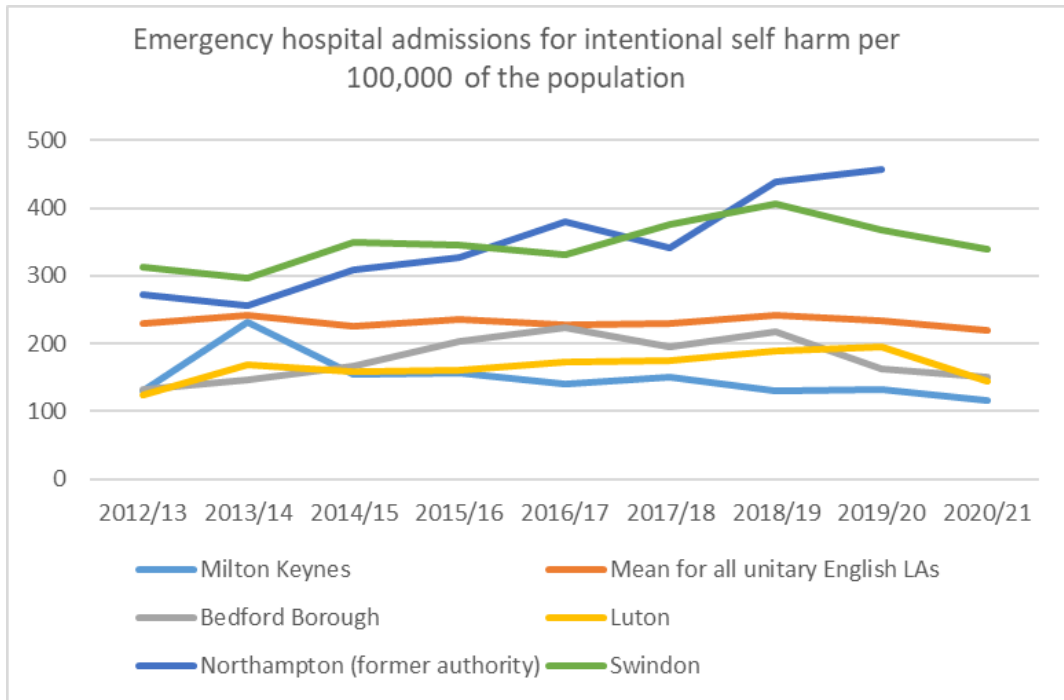


Table 21: Suicide rate per 100,000 of the population – those age 10 upwards, 3-year tranches (Office for Health Improvements and Disparities)

3 year period	Milton Keynes	Mean for All English unitary authorities
2013-15	8.5	10.9
2014-16	7.1	10.7
2015-17	7.6	10.3
2016-18	7.4	10.5
2017-19	8.9	10.9
2018-20	9.4	11.1

Table 22: % adults aged 18 and over classified as obese, Milton Keynes and comparator places 2015-2021 (<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/national-child-measurement-programme/data>)

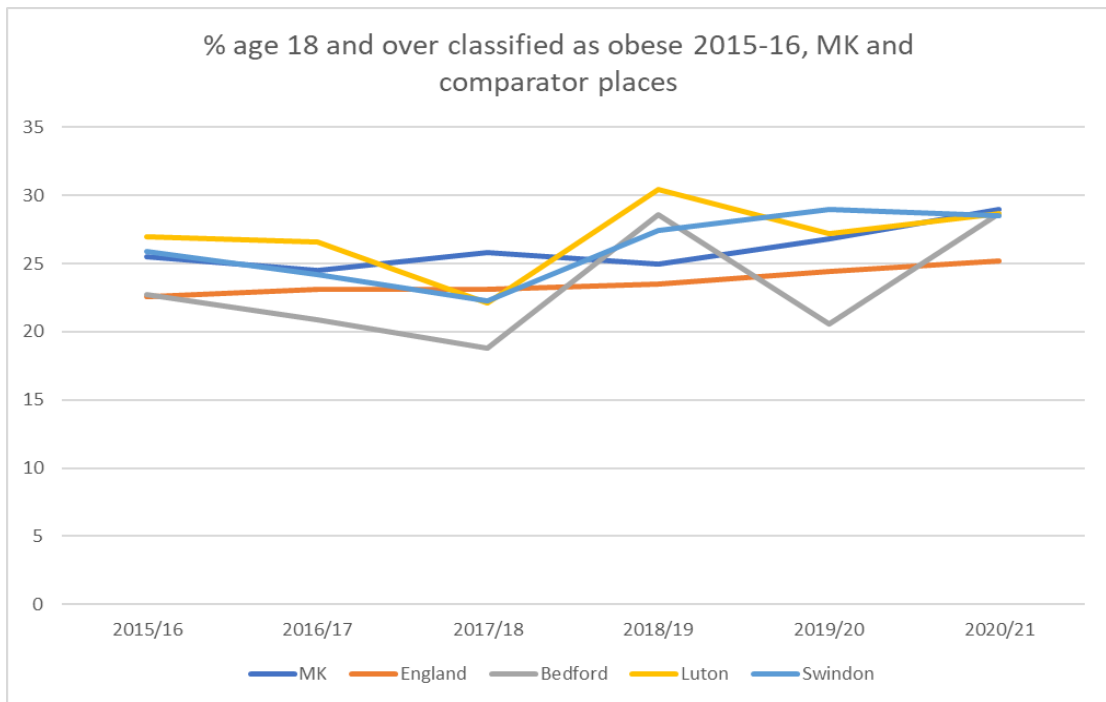
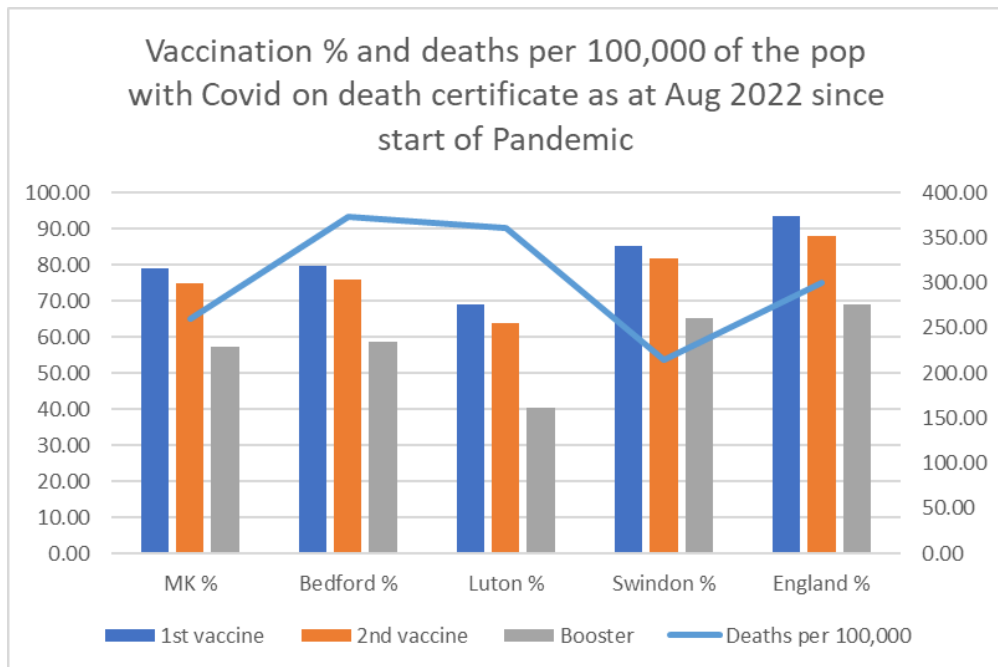


Table 23: Vaccination take up and deaths where COVID-19 on the death certificate (coronavirus.data.uk/)



Vital Statistics

- 3.6% of children born in 2020/21 in Milton Keynes had a low birth weight compared with the average for England of 2.9%.
- Men living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods are likely to live 7.6 fewer years than men from the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods.
- Women living in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods are likely to live 5.6 fewer years than women from the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods.
- 40% of children from the most deprived neighbourhoods in Milton Keynes are undertaking **less** than 30 minutes of exercise a day in 2021, up from 37% in 2017-18.
- 41.7% of adults from the most deprived neighbourhoods and 31% of adults in the least deprived neighbourhoods in Milton Keynes are undertaking **less** than the recommended minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity in a week in 2021.
- There were 260 deaths per 100,000 of the population from COVID-19 in Milton Keynes compared with 299 per 100,000 of the population for England.

Vital Action – MK University Hospital Cancer Centre Garden

In early March 2020, the new £15 million, state-of-the-art, **Milton Keynes University Hospital Cancer Centre** opened, bringing all the cancer services under one roof, and meaning that fewer patients had to travel long distances for treatment.

At the time, the piece of land to the rear of the centre was just a building site but there were always plans to create a garden for patients to be able to view and access. In fact, the centre was specifically designed to feature an arc of wide windows giving patients natural light and an uninterrupted outlook onto the ‘yet to be built’ garden area.

MK Community Foundation funded the hard landscaping for the garden and through additional fundraising including some from patients the new garden was opened in 2022. Hazel Howell from MK Hospital Charity told us about the impact the garden has had on patients.

“The garden has absolutely boosted morale with regard to outcomes, it is so important to have a nice environment, which is what the whole cancer centre is about. Improved mental health is such a big part of any illness and recovery. With the garden design we tried to remove any real connection with the hospital treatments; it’s a real sanctuary and haven for patients to enjoy”.



Vital Thinking

How can we facilitate wellbeing as a community, educating people for their whole lives about the importance of their physical wellbeing, and how it interacts with their mental health?

How can we empower the community to feel able to influence services provided by the local health authority to best meet their needs?

Local Economy SDG Consumption and Production; No poverty



Theme definition

This theme examines the local labour market, the skill needs in Milton Keynes for employment and how these are changing.

Overview

Milton Keynes has been identified as one of the country's Fast Growth Cities (alongside Cambridge, Oxford, Swindon, and Norwich) based on economic indicators, including productivity and share of knowledge-based jobs.

Milton Keynes has a slightly lower percentage than UK average of residents with degree-level qualifications (while Oxford and Cambridge have exceptionally high proportions). Inward commuters are filling the skills gaps. (www.centreforcities.org)

The Gross Value Added per capita (GVA) in Milton Keynes, a measure of productivity, is in the top 40 of Local Authorities ahead of the UK average and has grown consistently since 2013. (ONS)

At April 2022 the unemployment rate was 3.6%, a decline from 7.4% in 2013. (ONS)

Changes in the breakdown of job sectors

In 2021 the largest employment **sector** in Milton Keynes was 'science, research, engineering and technology' such as software, mechanical and industrial engineering, while in 2015 it was 'elementary business and service occupations', examples of such jobs are assisting in hospitality, cleaning, and clerical jobs.

Demand by employers has been growing since 2013 for technical skills, and especially for specialist digital roles. Demand has been strong consistently for those working in education and health. (Table 27)

The 5 sectors that employ the largest numbers in Milton Keynes are:

Professional in public administration education and health:	10%
Professional in transport and communications:	7%
Associate professional in banking and finance:	6.6%
Sales/customer service in distribution, hotels, and restaurants:	5.7%
Care in the health sector:	5.6%

Entrepreneurship and innovation

There is an entrepreneurial culture in Milton Keynes. In relation to business start-ups there were 64 per 10,000 of the population business start-ups in 2020, which is higher than the national average and other towns in the region.

Table 24: Unemployment rates 2013-2022 Milton Keynes and comparator places (ONS)

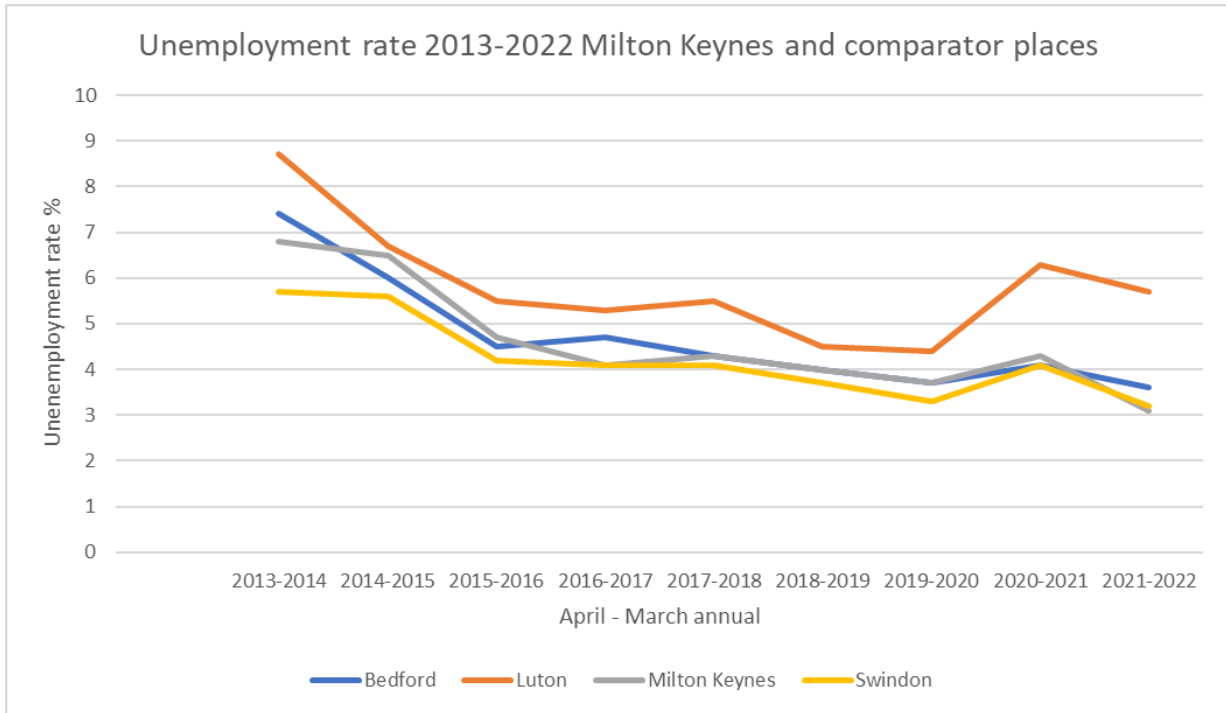


Table 25: GVA per hour work indexed against UK and comparator towns (ONS)

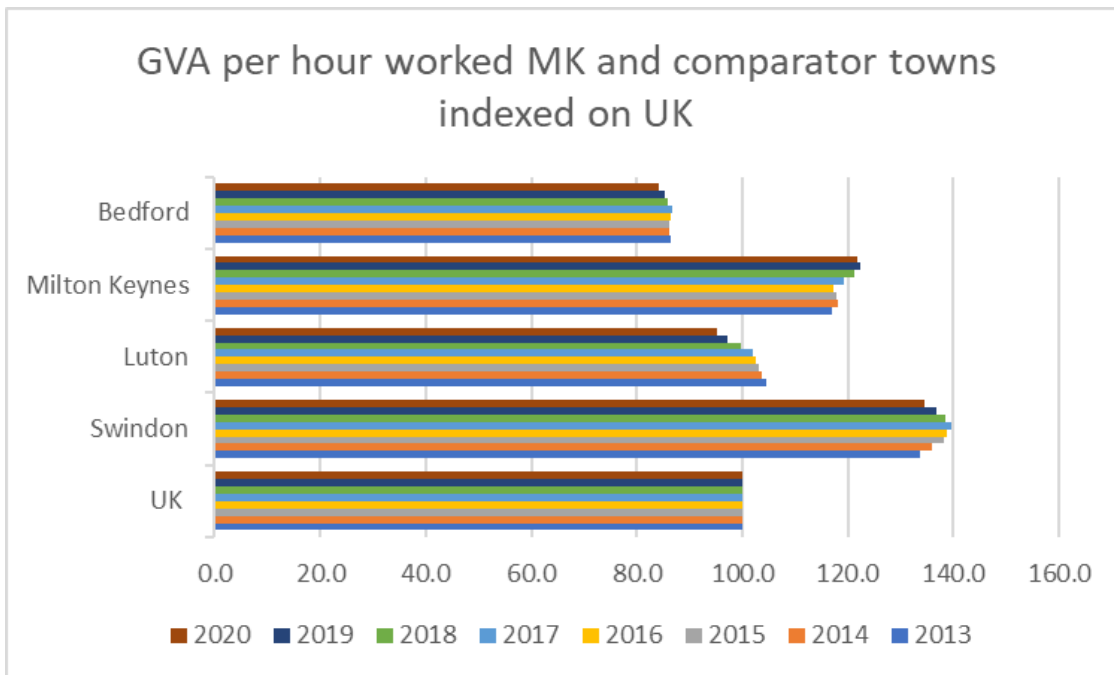


Table 26: Changes to the Employment structure in Milton Keynes 2015-2021 (SEMLEP)

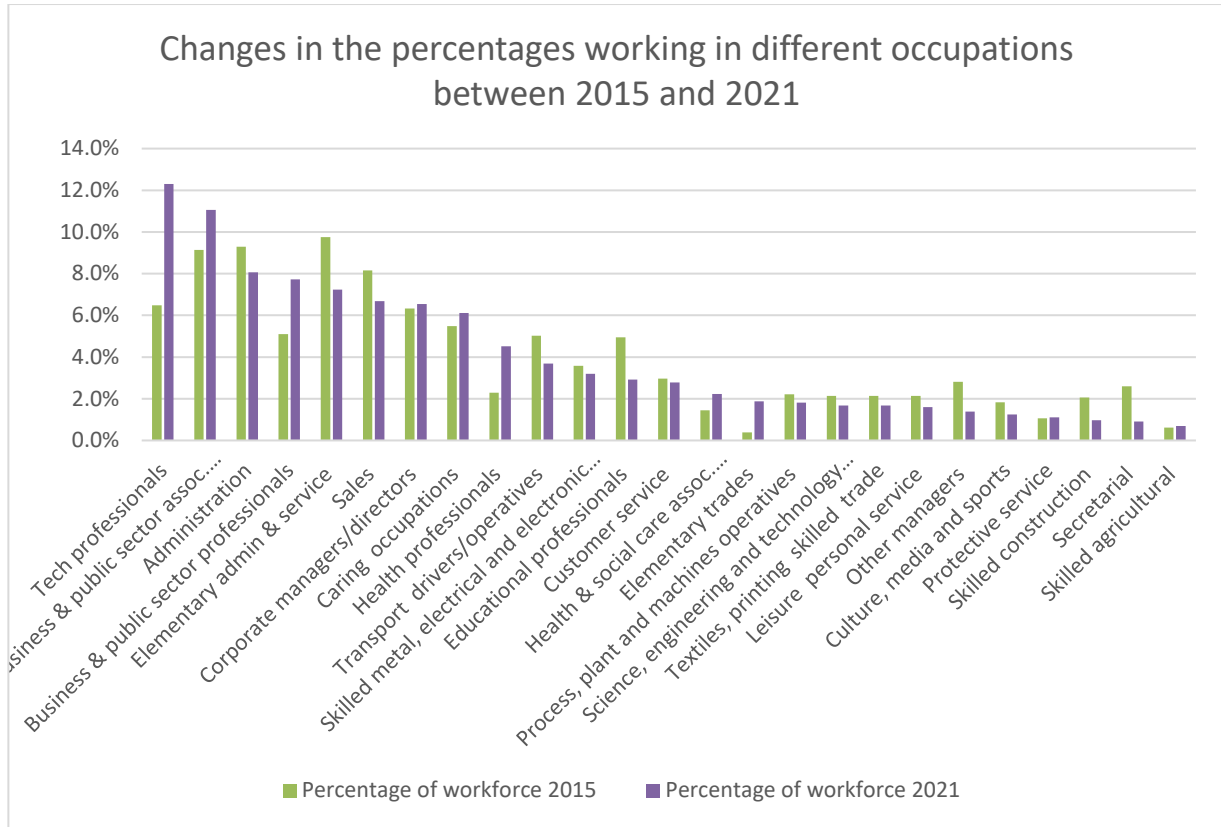


Table 27: Job postings by top sectors 2013-2021 (SEMLEP)

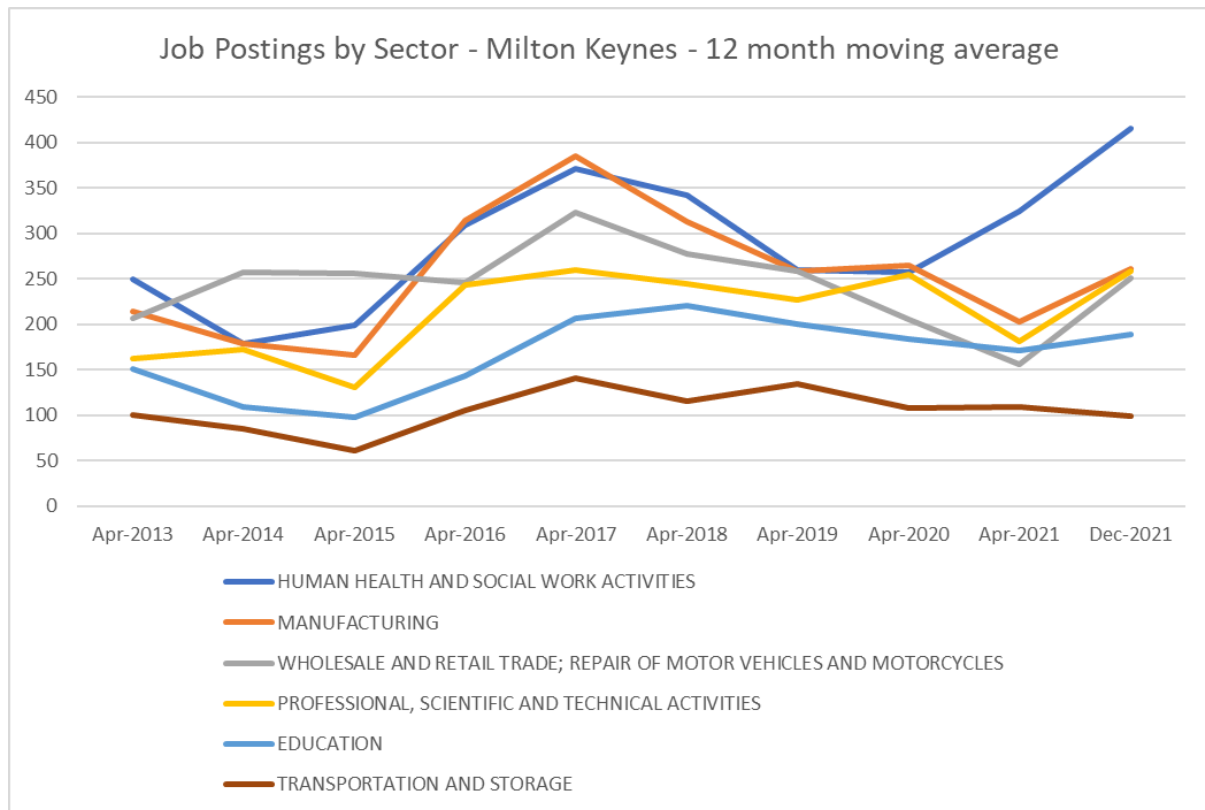


Table 28: Qualifications of the Workforce (SEMLEP Business Survey 2020)

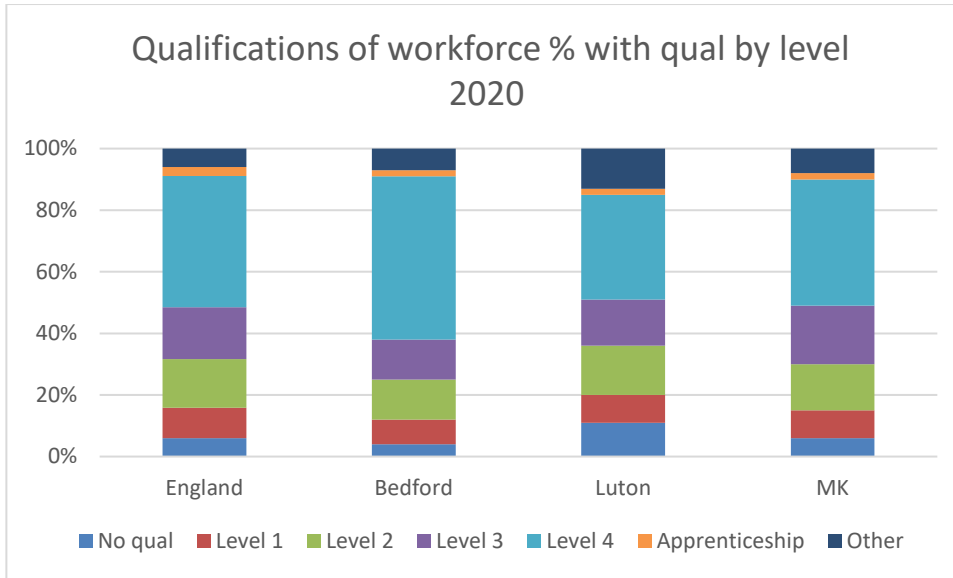
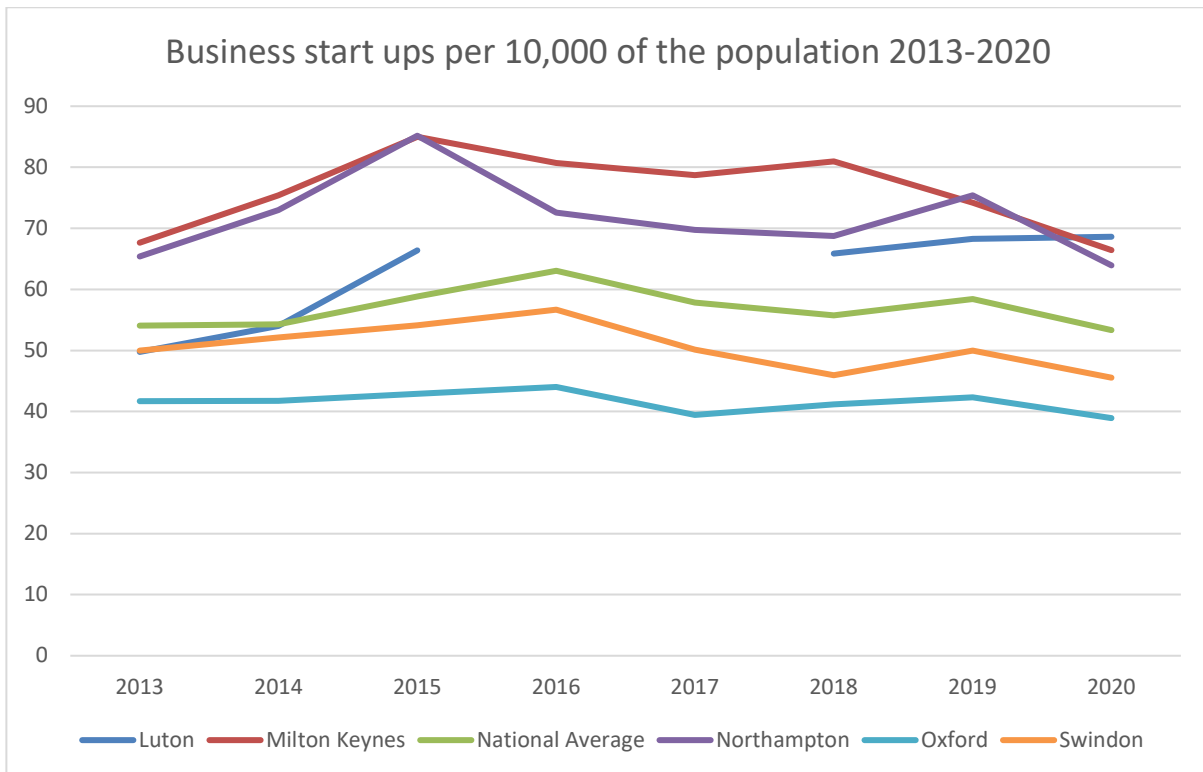


Table 29: Business start-up rate, Milton Keynes and comparator towns/cities (ONS)



Vital statistics

- The unemployment rate fell to 3.6% in 2022 from 7.4% in 2013.
- 40th in ranking for GVA per hour worked in the 2020 ranking of UK local authorities. This is ahead of the UK average.
- in 2021 the **largest** employment sector comprising 12.3% of the workforce – was ‘science, research, engineering and technology’.
- In 2015 the largest employment sector comprising 9.8 % of the workforce was ‘elementary business and service occupations’.
- 10% of those at work are professionals in public administration, education, and health.
- Part-time private sector jobs grew 28% between 2013 and 2020.
- 41% of the workforce have a qualification equivalent to degree level, which is 2% behind the average for England.

Vital Action – SOFEA

SOFEA is an education, training, employability, and well-being charity for young people, aged 16-25 years. Focused on working with the most vulnerable in the city, including young ex-offenders and care leavers, SOFEA works with those who are struggling to maintain or gain long term employment.

The aim of SOFEA is to build the skills, resilience, confidence and emotional health required for young people to not only enter or re-enter mainstream employment or education but for them to thrive in these environments.

To support this, MK Community Foundation awarded SOFEA with a large strategic grant to continue their work in coaching and mentoring young people. The grant allowed SOFEA to increase their specialist support team and to triple the size of their outreach and in-reach programmes. With increased capacity, SOFEA are now able to work with 30 young people, each year, for the next 3 years. These are young people identified as those most ‘on edge’ of criminality.

The results of SOFEA’s mentoring programme have been incredibly positive, with one young person saying *“SOFEA makes me feel like it’s one big family that supports me. It gives me opportunity and opens the future for me. It is just one big family.”*

Offering a personalised approach, SOFEA’s mentoring programme aims to truly understand the situation of the young person, personalising their experiences and helping them to plan and understand what life could look like through positive opportunity and choice. As well as improving the wellbeing of the young people in the city, SOFEA’s coaching has also resulted in an increased attendance to the charity’s Education Pathway programme, with all students involved in the pathway participating in GCSE and functional skills exams.

With the current post-pandemic, economic climate making life for young people more and more difficult, SOFEA’s work has been crucial in supporting some of the most vulnerable young people in MK. In the words of one young person, *“SOFEA gives me a place to go and food when I need it. SOFEA makes me feel comforted, safe, and happy.”*

Vital Thinking

Is flexible working an opportunity to upskill those in lower paid and insecure jobs, particularly women and those from Ethnically Diverse communities?

Work and Employment SDG Consumption and Production; No poverty



Theme definition

‘Work and employment’ explores the quality of jobs in Milton Keynes. It looks at the extent to which all residents benefit from the strength of the Milton Keynes economy by having access to secure jobs with employment conditions that support their wellbeing.

Increasingly, employers are held accountable for the quality of jobs that they offer. Characteristics of ‘good work’ include payment of living wages, supporting diversity and inclusion, supporting people into work from socially disadvantaged backgrounds and ensuring that people with disabilities and long-term health conditions can access and retain meaningful work. (*LGA /Institute for Employment Studies: Good Work Project local.gov.uk/topics/employment-and-skills/good-work-project.*)

Overview

Although on many measures Milton Keynes has a strong economy, many employees are trapped in low paid and insecure jobs. Women and those from some Ethnically Diverse backgrounds are less likely to be in the new, well-paid digital jobs. Local employers’ engagement with Apprenticeships is limited; many employers do not engage with those in education; and only a fraction actively targets or advertise to attract diverse applicants.

Cost of living and wages

Pay is slightly lower for those who work in Milton Keynes compared with those who commute outwards. (Table 30)

In Milton Keynes, as of September 2022, the inflation rate is 9.8% and the average wage growth was 3% between January and July 2022. The data is based on costs and consumption in particular cities. (*centreforcities.org/data/cost-of-living-tracker/*)

Insecure jobs

Job insecurity is common among those working in hospitality, health and social care, education, arts and entertainment, and transport. These sectors account for a high proportion of the jobs in Milton Keynes. (Table 26). Jobs in these sectors are more likely to be zero hours, seasonal or temporary, and offer fewer employment benefits and rights. (*Making work secure: unlocking poverty and building a stronger economy, the Joseph Rowntree Trust*)

Workers from Ethnically Diverse backgrounds are more likely to participate in the ‘gig’ economy – up to 25% compared to 14% of the general population. (*Runnymede Trust*).

The issue of insecure jobs is seen by many of the charitable organisations that contributed to this report as having a particularly detrimental impact on livelihoods in Milton Keynes.

Reducing barriers for disadvantaged young people into high quality jobs.

Fresh Youth MK was set up in 2020 to provide one-to-one mentoring and empowerment workshops for young people aged 16 to 25 with emphasis on those of black and mixed heritage from deprived and vulnerable backgrounds. Its aim is to be both preventative, by working with schools, and proactive, through wider outreach with relevant organisations.

Worktree, which has been operating in Milton Keynes for 30 years, aims to raise young people's career awareness and to help reduce unemployment and under-employment. It facilitates face-to-face meetings (online since the COVID-19 Pandemic) between young people and those in employment. Ratings of its sessions by teachers and students indicate that they deliver a high quality and valuable experience in terms of careers education.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships aim to improve skills, build sustainable growth and stronger communities, and enable individuals to succeed and progress in their careers. In 2017 the Government introduced a requirement for all businesses with a wage bill of £3 million per annum or higher to pay an 'Apprenticeship Levy'. Only 5% of those who responded to the annual SEMLEP business survey pay the levy, and of these, 19% plan to take on new apprentices. (*SEMLEP Business Survey 2021, MK responses*)

The numbers studying apprenticeships have declined in Milton Keynes since 2015. The 'business' category is most in demand overall. 'Information and Communication Technology' is the only subject area where there has been any growth, but from a low base. The take-up by subject category is broadly consistent with the national picture. (www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships#apprenticeship-and-traineeships-annual-data)

A possible reason for the low take-up is that some stigma remains in the public mind. Dated views place apprenticeships as second-rate to university and an option more suitable for low-attaining students. (*Prospects Luminare research August 2022*)

Inclusivity and work

The digital sector is growing strongly in Milton Keynes but those from Black, Black British, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups and women are under-represented. (*SEMLEP*)

Nationally, around 18% of Bangladeshi workers, 11% of Pakistani and Chinese workers, and 5% of Black African and Indian workers are paid below the National Minimum Wage, compared to 3% of white workers. (<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/the-colour-of-money-2020>)

Looking at inclusivity in relation to sexual orientation, 9% of UK respondents to an EU-wide survey felt they were discriminated against when looking for work due to being LGBTIQ+. (The EU average was 10%). 20% of UK respondents felt they were discriminated against while at work. (EU average 21%). (*A Long Way to go for LGBTI equality, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2020*)

Workless households

The percentage of households with no-one working (where members are of working age) has fallen since 2013 to 9.9% in 2021, and this is below the UK average. Around one fifth of those who are not working would like a job.

Table 30: Comparison of annual median salaries of those who live in Milton Keynes and those who work in Milton Keynes (NOMIS)

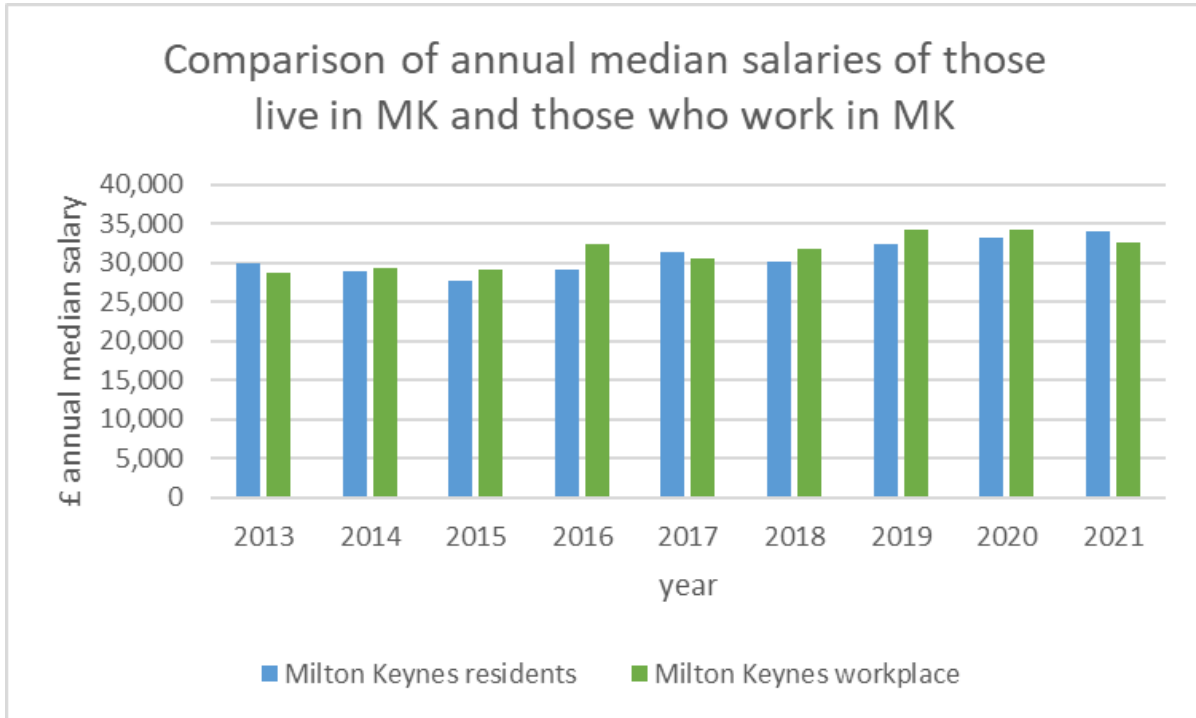


Table 31: Age 16-64 individuals not economically active and whether they want a job (ONS)

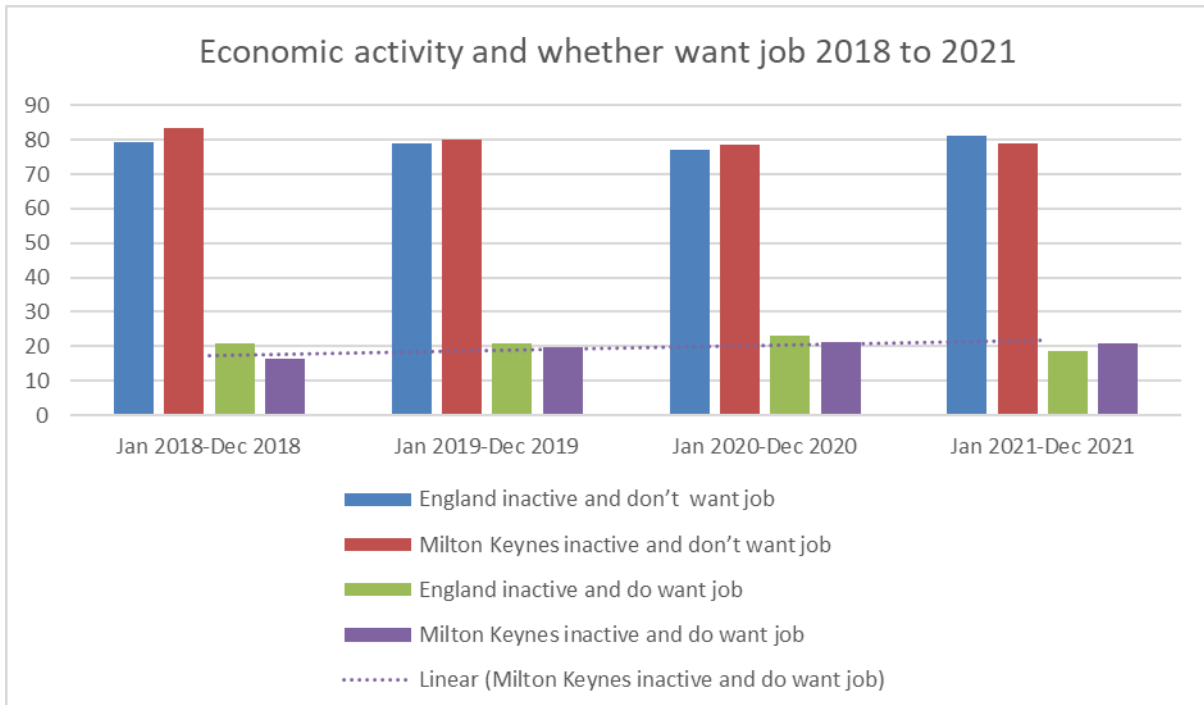


Table 32: Workless households MK compared with UK and comparator towns (ONS)

(Covers only households where at least one person is age 16-64)

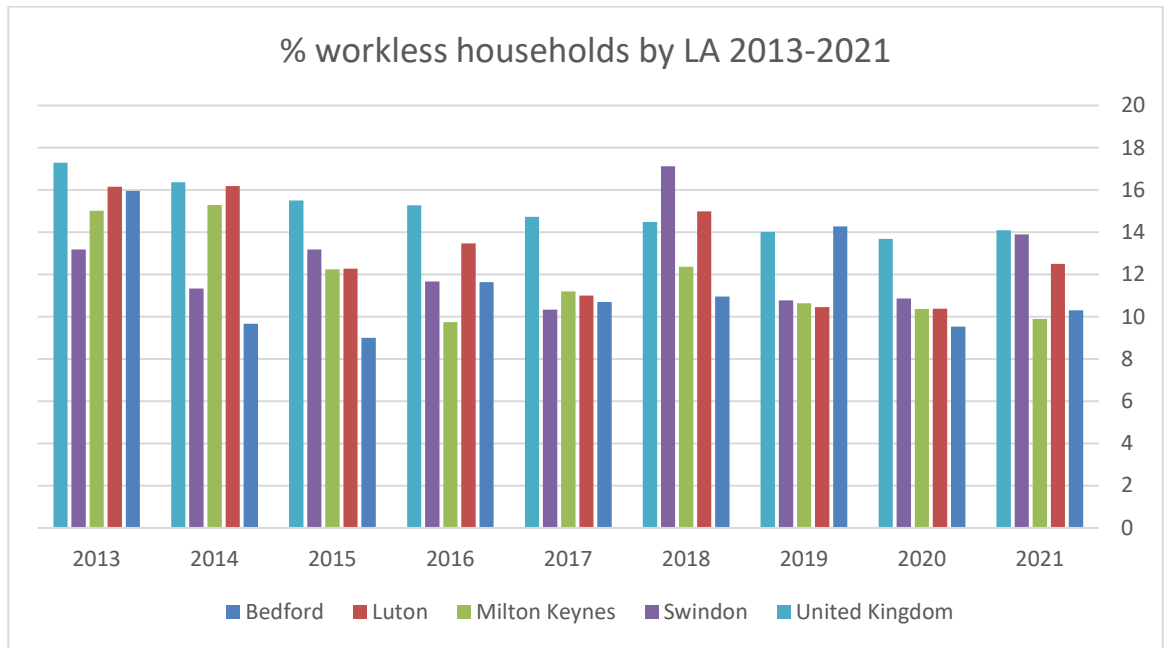


Table 33: Apprenticeship starts Milton Keynes 2015 to 2020 (www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships#apprenticeship-and-traineeships-annual-data)

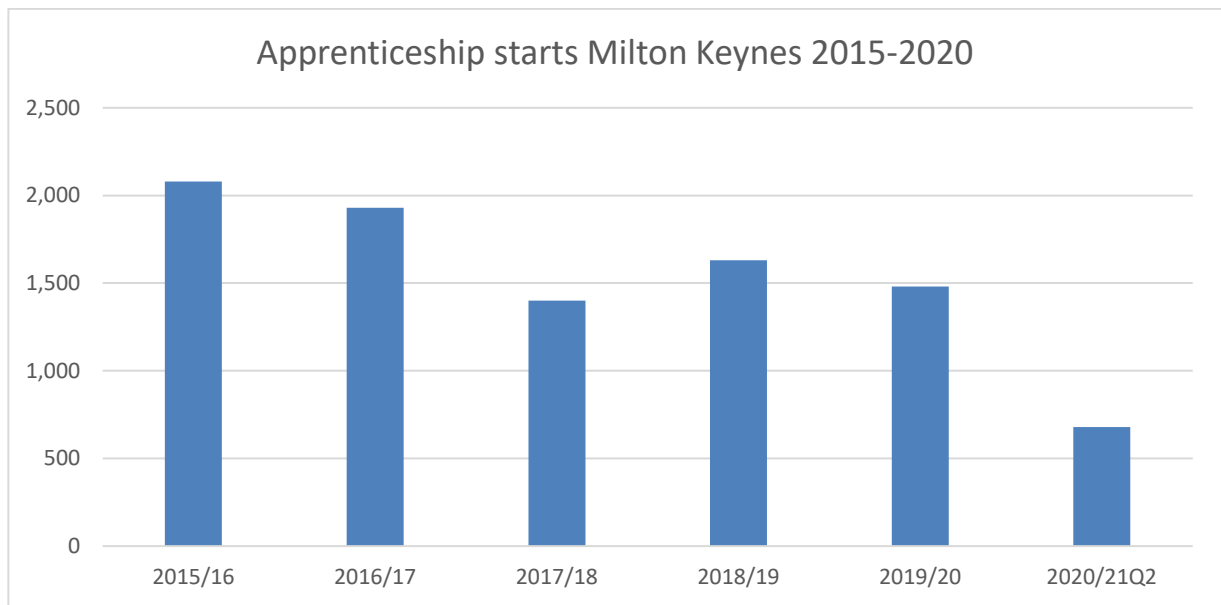


Table 34: Numbers studying an Apprenticeship in MK by subject and year

(www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships#apprenticeship-and-traineeships-annual-data)

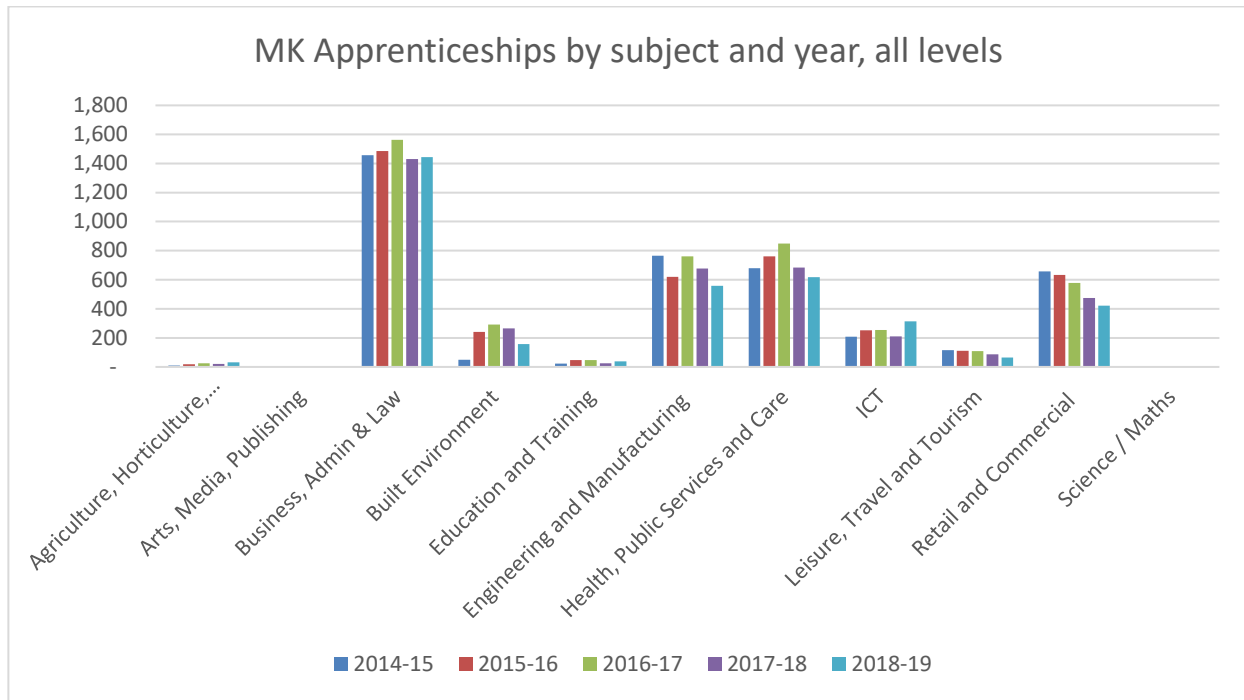
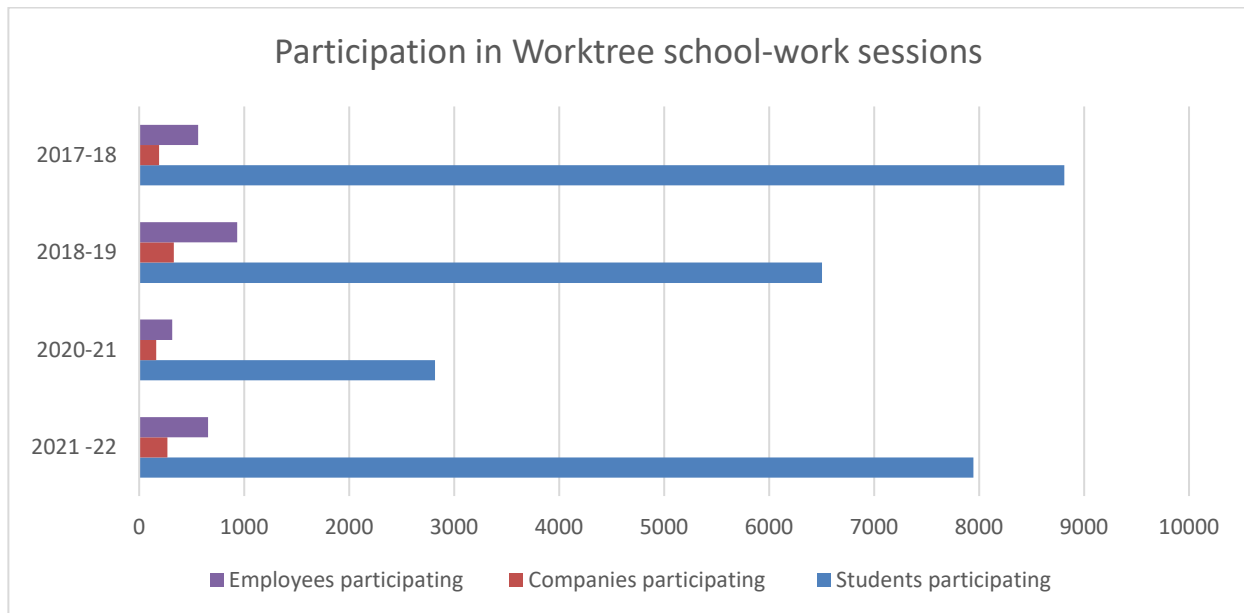


Table 35: Engagement with Worktree school to work sessions (Worktree)



Vital statistics

- 9.9% of households had no-one in work in Milton Keynes in 2021, a decline of 5.1% from 2013. (Households where someone is age 16-64)
- Around one fifth of those who are not working would like a job.
- 10% of Milton Keynes employers actively target/advertise to attract diverse applicants. (SEMLEP Business Survey 2021, MK responses)

Vital Voices

“The gig economy and the low skilled labour opportunities of Milton Keynes are something that has enabled us to flourish within the past ten years, but there is a downside to that – the two-speed nature of the city is becoming increasingly marked. Once employers view their employees with a degree of disposability, then it also has health effects, both mental and physical. Lack of work, uncertainty about income or stability of income, limited sickness pay, inflexible employers around childcare – these all add to mental stress as well as a lack of basic income.”

Paul Oxley, Vicar at St Marks Milton Keynes and founder of Milton Keynes Child Poverty Partnership



Vital Thinking

What are the barriers for the 20% of unemployed who would like a job and how can employers help to transition them back into employment?

Disadvantage and Poverty SDG No Poverty

Theme definition

Poverty is when a person's resources are well below what is needed to cover their minimum needs. It can mean falling into debt and creates pressures that undermine physical and mental health.



There is no single measure of poverty. The data used in this section is based on the definition by the End Child Poverty Coalition (endchildpoverty.org.uk). The measure it uses is 'households with incomes, net of housing costs that are below 60% of the median.' This method considers the relative inflated cost of housing in Milton Keynes.

Overview

The high cost of housing, insecure and low paid jobs, low levels of skills, inadequate benefits, high transport, and childcare costs, are all contributing to the poverty rates in Milton Keynes.

The sharp increase in the cost of living taking place from 2022 onwards, including fuel and food costs, is already exacerbating the problems being faced by low-income households.

Clustering of those in poverty in Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes ranks 126 out of 372 Local Authorities for the percentage of children living in poverty. The percentage decreased 0.5% between 2014 and 2021. (A rank of 1 indicates the highest percentage of children in poverty and 317 the lowest percentage).

12% of neighbourhoods in Milton Keynes (known as 'Lower Layer Super Output Areas') are in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England based on the government measures of deprivation. (gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019)

Food insecurity

Food insecurity is defined as 'a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food'. (*Trussell Trust*). Food insecurity and poor nutritional intake impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing. (*The Marmot Review 10 years on. London: Institute of Health Equity*)

There was a 110% increase in use in the Milton Keynes Foodbank between 2019 and 2020, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Pre-COVID, there were places in the city where people who were homeless could obtain food, but the majority closed during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Up until the COVID-19 Pandemic. Milton Keynes Food Bank was providing crisis support of one to six food parcels a year for 90% of recipients. By 2021, 25% of recipients needed longer term support. A significant proportion of users are single men, including pensioners on limited incomes, those not working or in low-waged jobs, long-term sick, or with a financial crisis and no savings to draw on.

Debt

2022 marks the 10th anniversary of MK Money Lifeline. The charity advises and advocates for clients with debt problems and negotiates on their behalf with their creditors.

10 years ago, most people using MK Money Lifeline services were supported to develop plans to pay off their debts. In 2022 the majority of clients seek to gain a debt relief order, as they have no likelihood of

paying their creditors. MK Money Lifeline reports that the situation is worsening as a result of low wages, low benefits, an high costs including fuel and housing, which are exacerbated by high inflation rates.

The majority of MK Money Lifeline clients are of working age, but are not able to work full time, and about one third have children. The stress and anxiety of their debt situation creates and exacerbates mental health problems.

Child Poverty

Over 18,000 children in Milton Keynes in 2021 were living in poverty – 29.8% of all children, based on data that considers housing costs. The UK average is 27%. This measure counts the number of households with incomes, net of housing costs, which are below 60% of the median.

The numbers are almost double government statistics which do not take account of housing costs. (Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University for the End Child Poverty Coalition.)

The percentage of children living in poverty was down by 0.5%.in Milton Keynes and the UK as a whole in 2020/21. This is likely to be a temporary improvement related to the additional support provided during the COVID-19 Pandemic by the £20 uplift to Universal Credit, which has since ceased.

Poverty by racial group

Those from Ethnically Diverse communities, who were disproportionately impacted through the Pandemic by COVID-related job losses, are now significantly more likely to be trapped in unemployment than their white counterparts. (TUC.org.uk)

Table 36: % of children 0-15 in households with incomes net of housing costs that are below 60% of the median. MK and comparator places. 2014-2021 (endchildpoverty.org.uk)

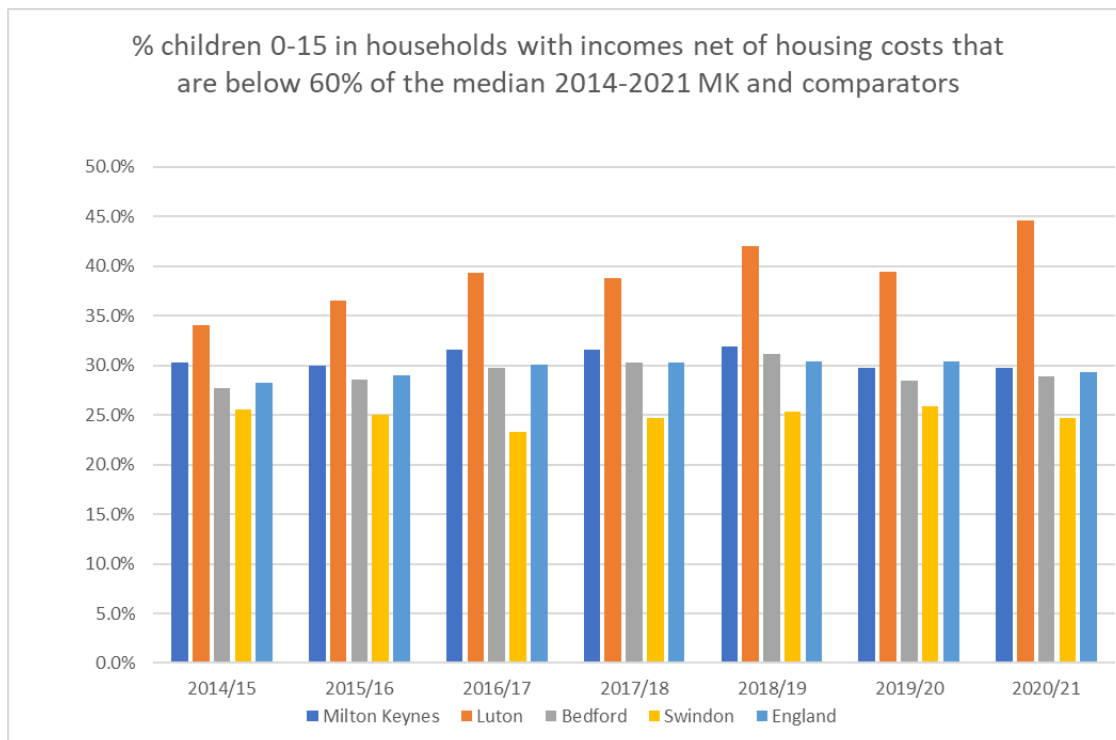


Table 37: Numbers of children 0-15 in households with incomes net of housing costs that are below 60% of the median. (Endchildpoverty.org.uk)

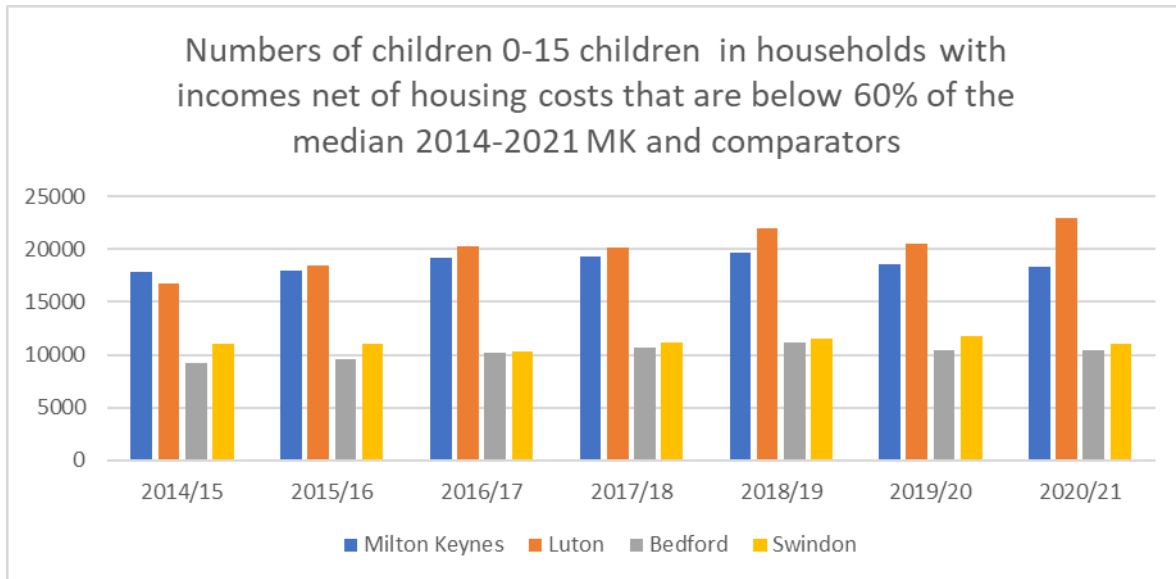
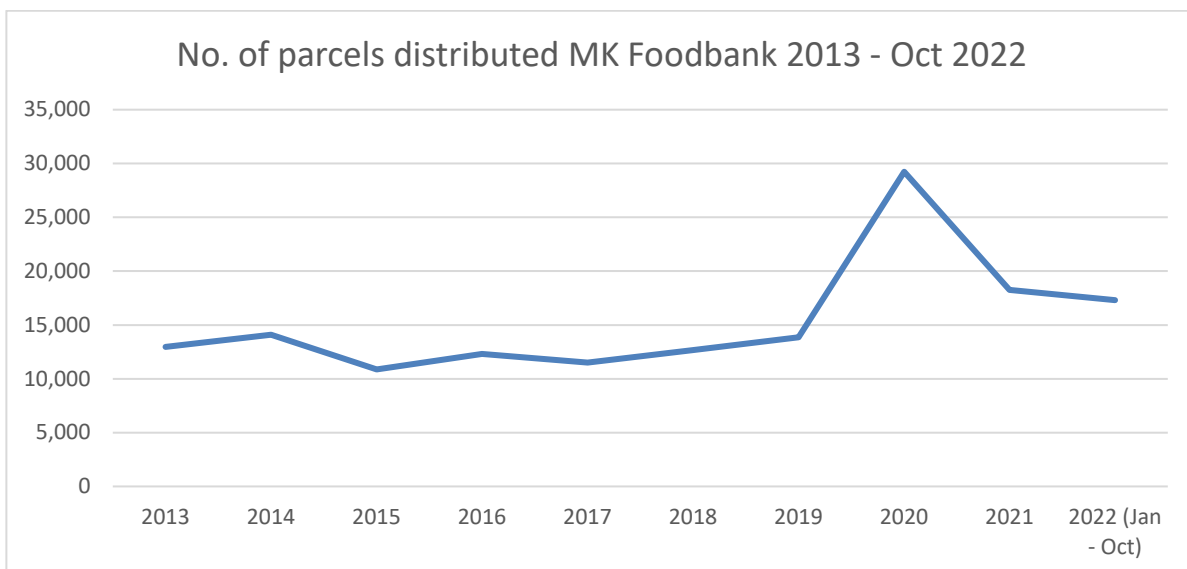


Table 38: Milton Keynes Foodbank usage 2013-2022 (Source MK Foodbank)



Vital Statistics

- Milton Keynes ranks 165 on a measure of the average level of deprivation across the Local Authority. (A rank of 1 indicates the most deprived Local Authority and 317 the least deprived.)
- 12% of neighbourhoods in Milton Keynes are in the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England based on government measures of deprivation.
- Over 18,000 children in Milton Keynes in 2021 are living in poverty (after housing costs) - 29.8% of all children.
- An estimated 2% of Milton Keynes households used the Foodbank Service in 2021.
- Over 110% increase in use in the Foodbank between 2019 and 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Vital Actions – MK Food Bank

MK Food Bank has been supporting individuals and families since 2014. Louisa Hobbs, Operations Manager at the charity spoke about the ‘perfect storm’ that they found themselves in when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The charity relied on public donations to keep their food stocks high, in March 2020, when lockdown was introduced, understandably these donations stopped overnight but the demand due to redundancies, loss of work and other factors quickly went through the roof.

MK Food Bank applied to Mk Community Foundation for an emergency grant of £10,000 to buy food supplies to keep their vital service going as the requests for help kept coming, it was very apparent to the charity that this money wasn’t going to last long. They applied for an additional grant of £50,000 which was rapidly approved with all involved quickly realising the need for a swift response.

Louisa says, *“The Food Bank had never had to buy food before, we’d just never had to, but it was very obvious to everyone involved that we wouldn’t be able to meet the COVID demand without taking that action”.*

An extra £50k grant from the National Lottery funding (managed by MK Community Foundation) was also approved giving the organisation some much needed stability at a crucial time. Louisa continues, *“The two grants allowed us to breathe, and gave us the confidence to be able to support everyone who needed it without worrying where the money was going to come from. We were able to lift our standard six parcels limit for a period to allow more people to reach the help they so desperately needed”.*

In partnership with FareShare/DEFRA, additional food supplies were sourced during the first lockdown, so MK Community Foundation were very flexible and allowed the initial timescales of the grants to be pushed back, which meant the Food Bank didn’t have to use the grants all within the first 12-month period. The Charity also investigated ways of providing longer term support for people in need with the launch of their ‘Top Up Shops’. These take place weekly at their warehouse and in two locations in MK and allow people in need to buy 10 items of food for just £2. This has meant more people are reached across the area and has given some much needed support to families over the last year.

“One of our volunteers in 2020 said that it felt like Milton Keynes was wrapping its arms around the community to meet the increased demand, whether that be from the funding grants we received or the donations that started coming in again, or through the innovative ways that people kept the food collections going during those difficult lockdown periods. Everyone stepped up and we’re so grateful that they did”.



Vital Thinking

In 2020 **MK Community Foundation** held a vital thinking event around the issue of Child Poverty, convening a number of organisations that were involved in food distribution.

The outcome was the setting up of the Child Poverty Partnership. The group look at how the various organisations can work effectively to ensure the maximum amount of coverage for their services. Their website signposts people to the different help available and they encourage collaboration.

The overriding aim for the Partnership is “challenge the causes, alleviating the effects and working for the eradication of child poverty in Milton Keynes. www.mkcpp.org.uk)



Housing SDG Sustainable Cities and Communities

Theme definition

Access to affordable, good quality housing provides families and individuals with a sense of security and stability. Poor or unstable housing is associated with poor physical and mental health. (*The Marmot Review 10 years on. London: Institute of Health Equity*)



Overview

Milton Keynes is ranked 23rd out of all 317 local authorities in England for barriers to housing and services in the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, where 1= high barriers). This indicates that those who are disadvantaged experience particular challenges in relation to housing.

The rate of new home building has not kept up with the rate of demand, particularly for low cost, affordable options and rental properties. This is despite Milton Keynes Council's policy to require developers to build affordable homes as part of new housing developments.

Many of the estates built in the 1970s are now in need of substantial investment to ensure that the homes meet modern standards and over half of the first phase housing estates rank amongst the highest in the UK for levels of deprivation. (*MKFutures2050.com*)

Homelessness in young adulthood is closely associated with poverty especially in childhood. Other higher risk factors are health needs, serious drug use, lack of social support networks and living in a high-cost housing area. (*Could Universities do more to end homelessness, HEPI 2022*)

The immediate cause of homelessness in Milton Keynes is around relationships – family and friends no longer able to accommodate the person/household, or because of domestic abuse or violence and relationship breakdown.

The prevalence of rejection and abuse of young LGBTQ+ people by their families is a major contributor to their becoming homeless. This is particularly experienced by those who are from Ethnically Diverse communities. (*The Albert Kennedy Trust, 2021*).

Comparative data on homelessness is not available prior to 2018 when new ways of measuring homelessness were introduced as part of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Affordability

There is gap that is becoming wider in relation to income levels and prices of homes in Milton Keynes. (See Table 39.) The lack of affordable of housing is the underlying cause of homelessness (*Shelter - Denied the Right to a Safe Home 2021*)

Getting a foothold into housing among young, disadvantaged people

The YMCA provides housing support to young people who are not working or in low-paid jobs, and with no family support. Many are vulnerable and have a background of trauma, have experienced domestic abuse or have been involved in the criminal justice system. Since 2020, due to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, there has been a 150% increase in demand for housing and an increase in the number of YMCA residents with complex mental health needs.

“We are trying to have a deep and powerful impact over the 3 years that the young person is with us, so that they leave us feeling confident, more resilient and with a vision for their own future.”

Simon Green, Chief Executive Milton Keynes YMCA.

YMCA data highlights that since 2013 it is more difficult for young people, when they move on from YMCA accommodation, to get into private accommodation, and more need to stay with friends and family.

Comparative figures from ten years on YMCA residents:

- those moving in with friends/family/partner has **increased** from 15% to 39%
- those moving into Supported Housing has **decreased** from 18% to 3%
- those moving to private rented has **decreased** from 43% to 16%

Rough sleeping

There has been a reduction in Milton Keynes in rough sleeping since the establishment in 2017 of a Rough Sleeper Outreach Service funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

People who sleep rough experience some of the most severe health inequalities and report much poorer health than the general population. Many have co-occurring mental ill health and substance misuse needs, physical health needs, and have experienced significant trauma.
(gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-rough-sleeping/)

Temporary accommodation

The high rates of those in temporary accommodation reflect the shortage of affordable housing in Milton Keynes in relation to demand. The rate per 1000 households living in temporary accommodation, secured by Milton Keynes Council as part of their statutory duty towards homeless households, is 8 per 1,000, more than double the rate for England which is 3.98 per 1,000 households, as at March 2022.

Data from the charity Shelter estimates the numbers of people, rather than households, who are homeless. It uses a broader definition of homelessness: ‘those living in temporary accommodation arranged by their local council, or by themselves, or are legally homeless but still living in their home and are yet to be moved into temporary accommodation.’ Based on these definitions Milton Keynes is ranked 27 out of all English Local Authorities for the rate of homelessness in the population. A rank of 1 is the highest rate of homelessness). The situation has worsened – the 2018 rank was 32.

More temporary accommodation has become available to Milton Keynes Council through the building of housing association homes and the policy that gives the Council the right to decide to whom some accommodation should be allocated.

Housing and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Milton Keynes Homelessness Partnership, set up in 2018 to foster collaboration across public, private, and voluntary sector organisations, identified that ‘one of the shining lights that came from the Pandemic response was the way in which the sector worked together to achieve the goals.’

Its data showed that during the COVID-19 Pandemic more people confronted the possibility of homelessness as a result of reduction in income due to furlough or unemployment or relationship breakdown and domestic abuse.

Protections introduced during the COVID-19 Pandemic prevented evictions from rental housing, and numbers becoming homeless for rent arrears fell in 2021 in Milton Keynes.

Milton Keynes Council has commented that the ‘Everyone in’ policy increased the need for temporary housing. The policy embraced those who are categorised as ‘having no recourse to public funds’, who usually are not able to access statutory support services. (I.e., all migrants granted limited rights to be in the UK such as partners, spouses, children, and adult dependent relatives.)

Table 39: Change in the affordability ratio based on median house price and median earnings
(ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/housingaffordabilityinenglandandwales/2021#local-authority-housing-affordability)

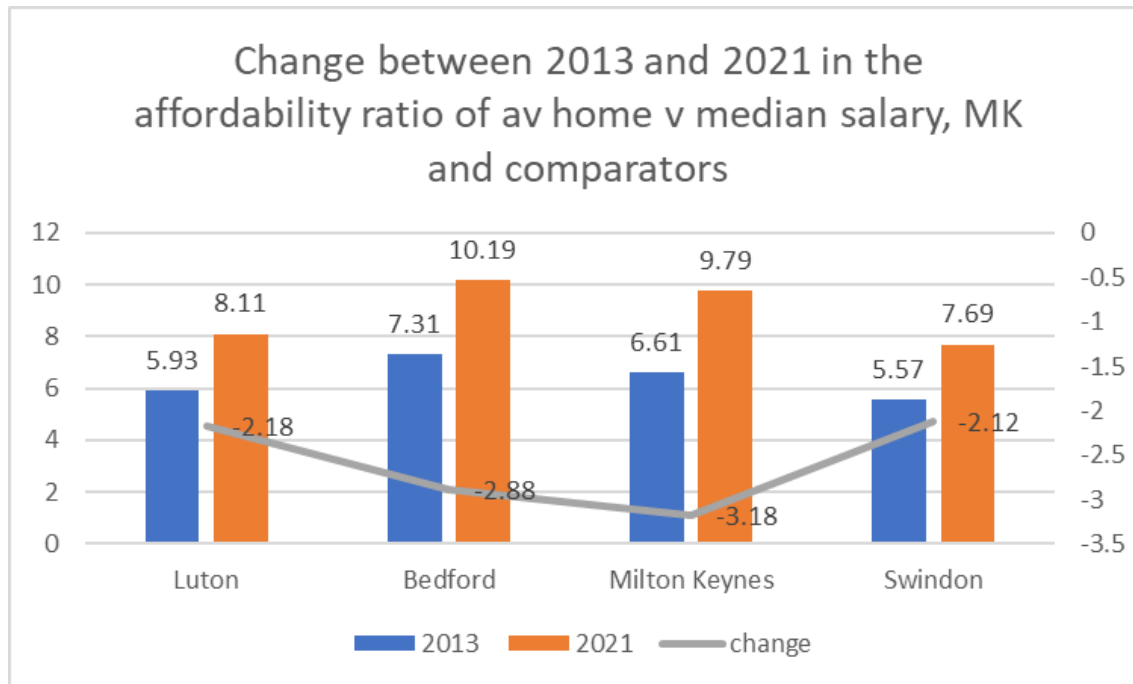


Table 40: Rough Sleeper snapshot Milton Keynes *(www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness)*

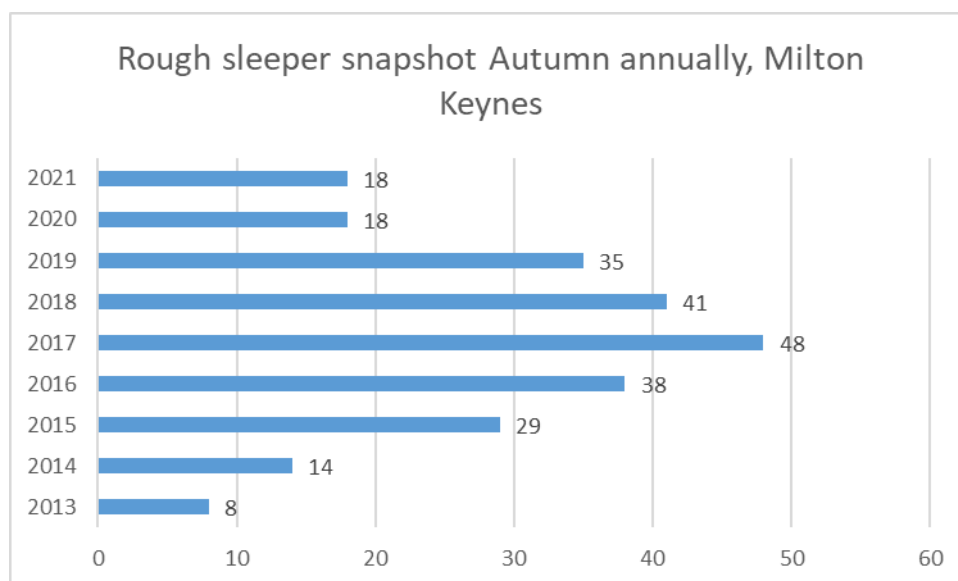


Table 41: Milton Keynes homelessness trends by population, (not households) estimates 2018 – 2021 (Shelter)

Year	No of people living in temp accommodation est	Rate of homelessness : 1 in xx of the pop of MK who are homeless	National rank based on rate of people homeless by local authority
2018	2244	117	32
2019	1918	137	37
2020	2482	109	28
2021	2859	94	27

Table 42: Rate of households living in temporary accommodation secured by the local authority.
 (Snapshot at the end of the quarter. not a cumulative total of all placements across a quarter)
 (www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness)

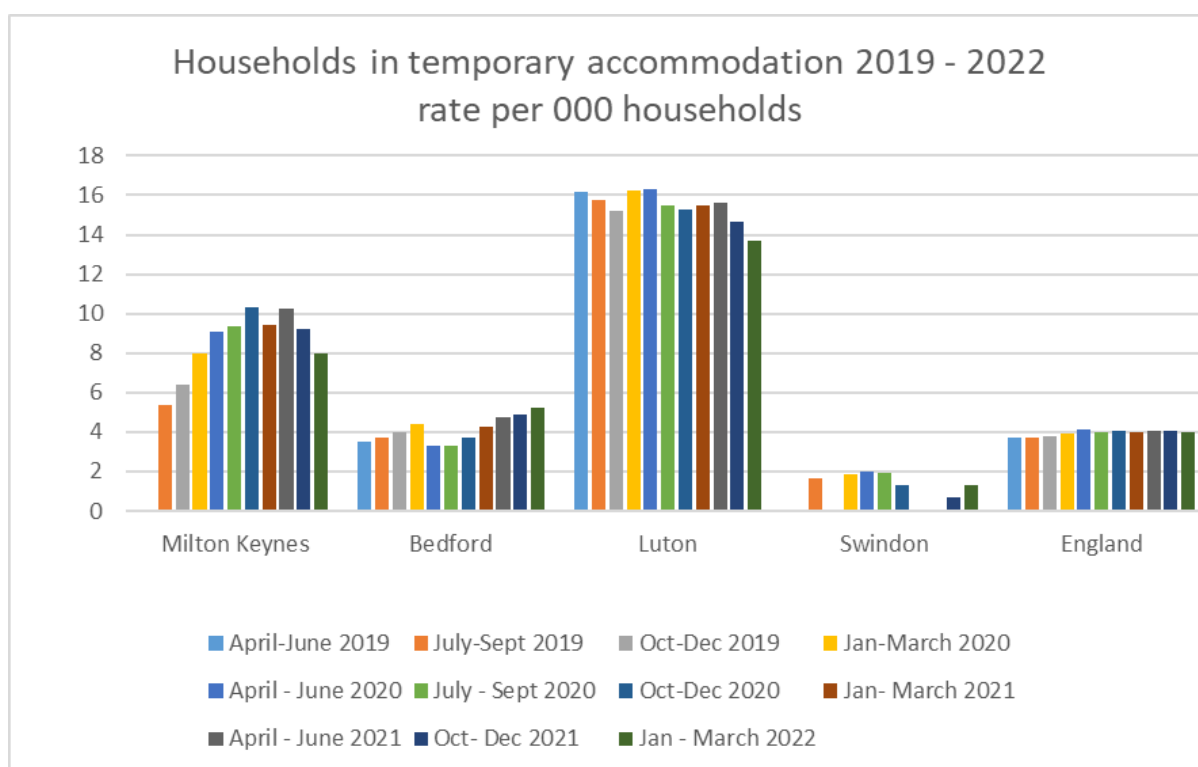
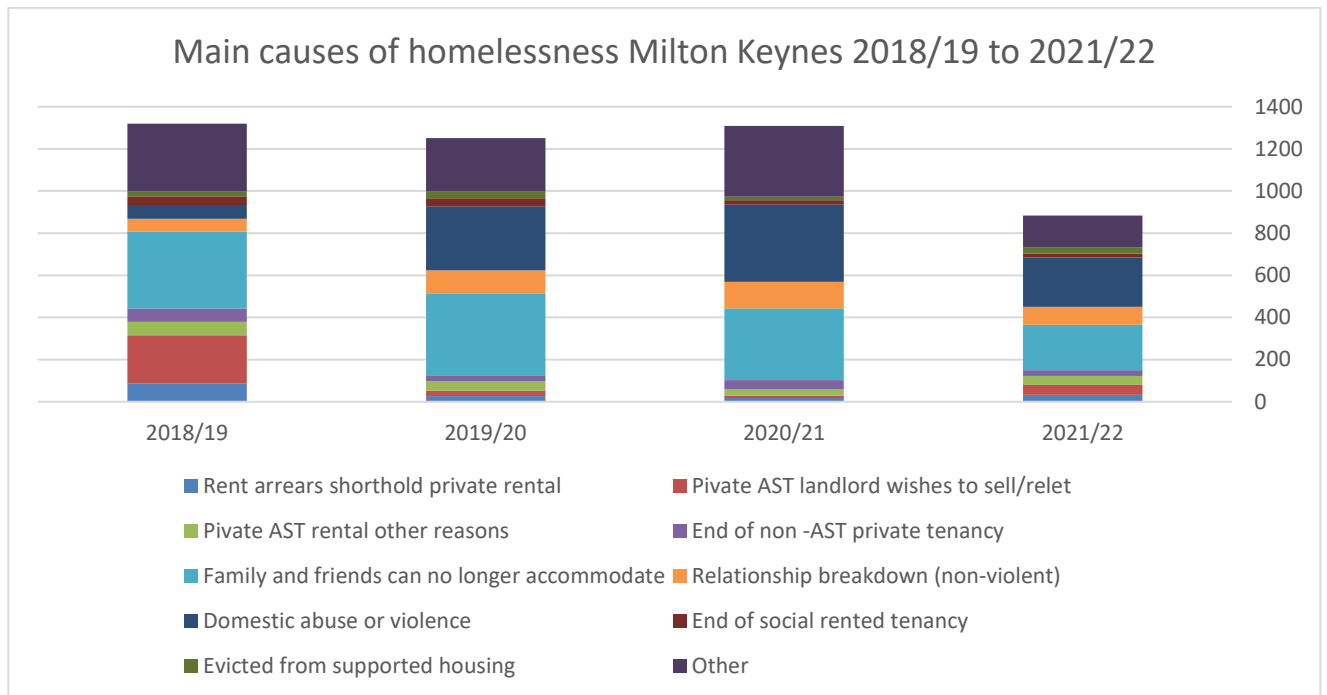


Table 43: Causes of Homelessness in Milton Keynes 2018-9 to 2021/22
 (www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness)



Vital Statistics

- Over half of Milton Keynes first phase housing estates rank amongst the highest in the UK for levels of deprivation.
- The ratio of mean annual salary to mean house price in MK was 6.6 in 2013 and increased to 9.8 in 2021.
- Milton Keynes was ranked 27 out of all English Local Authorities in 2021 for the proportion of its population that was homeless (a rank of 1 is the highest proportion that are homeless). In 2018 Milton Keynes ranking was 32.
- 65% of households become homeless in Milton Keynes due to the impact of relationship breakdowns or family/friends no longer being able to accommodate.
- The rate of households living in temporary accommodation is 8 per 1,000 households, double the average rate for England.

Vital Thinking

How do we support newly arrived communities to be welcomed and integrated into MK?

The Environment SDG Sustainable Cities and Communities



Theme definition

The environment theme encompasses the natural and built environment, including its design and architecture, green spaces, and waterways.

Access to green space has health and wellbeing benefits, as well as urban cooling in heatwaves, helping flood prevention, improving carbon storage, and increasing biodiversity. (*England's Green Space Gap, Friends of the Earth 2020*).

Overview

Milton Keynes Council has stated its aspiration to make Milton Keynes the world's greenest city and to be carbon neutral by 2030. (*MKFutures2050.com*)

Over 60% of Milton Keynes neighbourhoods are rated in the top two categories in England in terms of their access to green spaces – one of best rankings in the country (*England's Green Space Gap, Friends of the Earth 2020*)

The Parks Trust won in 2022, for the sixth consecutive year, a Green Flag Award for the network of parks that it manages. This is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces.

The low-density layout of Milton Keynes has created a comparatively high level of greenhouse gas emissions from transport. 71% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Milton Keynes are from transport or domestic sources. The national rate is 64%. (See Table 44 and the Transport Section)

Recycling

Rates for recycling household waste at 54% are above the average for England and there has been a small improvement of 1.2% between 2013 and 2021. Milton Keynes Council set itself a target of 70% recycling by 2024/25.

Community action

A survey of residents and groups in 2019 found that the majority are concerned about climate change. They wanted to act but faced barriers particularly in relation to usage of public transport. There was also concern expressed about vulnerable communities being most affected by climate change. (*2019 Annual Report MK Community Action*)

Milton Keynes is part of the 'Transition town' movement – a national network of community organisations promoting local action for low-carbon living.

Innovative solutions

A programme to pilot the application of emerging technologies to help Milton Keynes become carbon neutral by 2030 is being sponsored by Milton Keynes Council. Projects funded include sustainable mobility, renewable energy, and air quality, among others. (*cp.catapult.org.uk/news/milton-keynes-council-selects-10-smes-for-innovation-programme-to-support-green-recovery-and-local-resilience/*)

Table 44: Greenhouse gas emissions per capita and per km2 Milton Keynes compared with England and comparator towns (www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions)

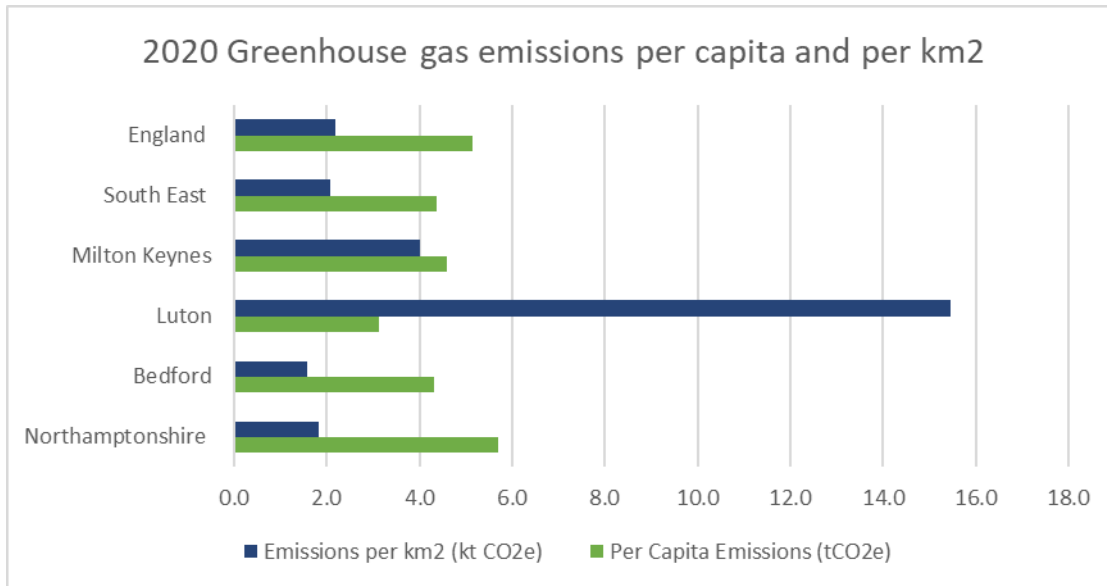
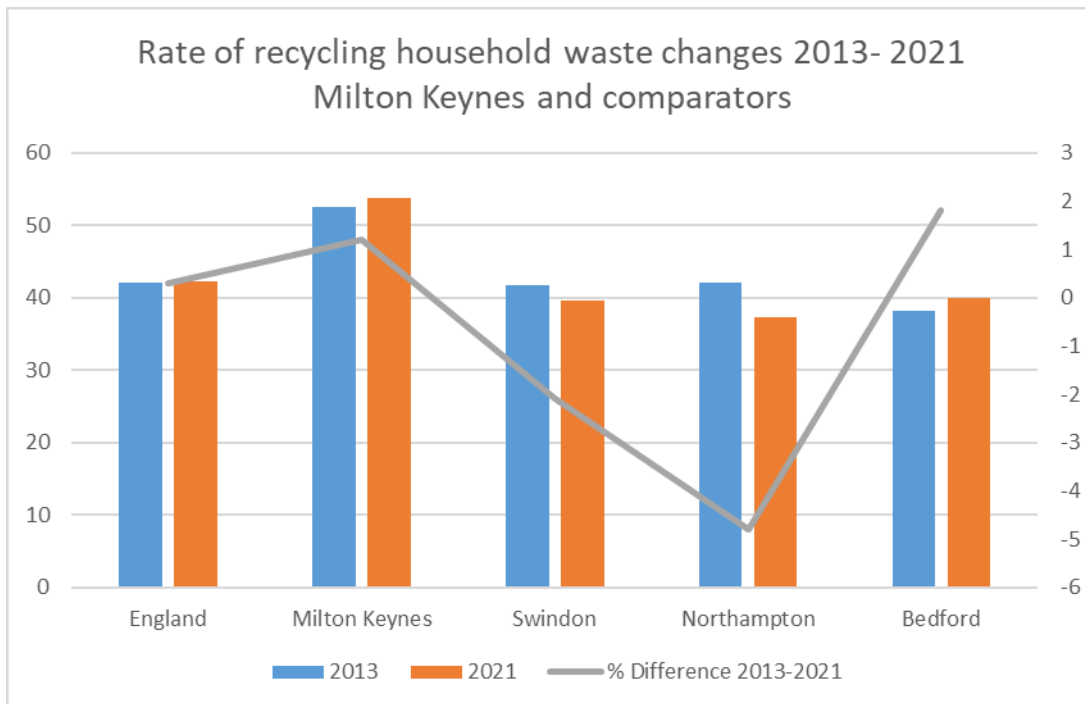


Table 45: Recycling rates for household waste changes 2013-2021

(www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env18-local-authority-collected-waste-annual-results-tables)



Vital Statistics

- Over 60% of Milton Keynes neighbourhoods are rated in the top two categories in England in terms of their access to green spaces.
- 4% of employers in Milton Keynes have committed to become net-zero by 2030 (SEMLEP Business Survey 2021, Milton Keynes responses)
- 53.8% household waste recycling rate in Milton Keynes in 2021 (England average 42%).
- Recycling rate of household waste up 1.2 % between 20213 and 2021 (England average 0.3%).
- 71% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Milton Keynes are from transport or domestic sources. The national percent is 64%.



Vital Thinking

How do we raise awareness of the issues around climate change to encourage all citizens to contribute to MK Council's aim to become carbon neutral by 2030?

Transport SDG Sustainable Cities and Communities



Theme definition

Access to affordable transport enables participation in work, education, and social networks. One of the seven ambitions for Milton Keynes for 2050 is to: 'Make it easier for everyone to travel on foot, by bike and with better public transport, recognising both the undesirable impacts of high levels of car usage and the need to improve accessibility.' (*MK Futures 2050.com*)

Overview

Milton Keynes' low-density grid system was designed for car use, now making it difficult for some residents to get around using public transport. The charities consulted for this issue of Vital Signs believed that practical difficulties in accessing jobs, healthcare and other services are contributory factors to levels of poverty and disadvantage and to loneliness among older people.

Fast commuting into work and low traffic congestion were the original design goals of Milton Keynes. However, long car commutes – average 40km, combined with population growth, is leading to increased congestion, making Milton Keynes a less attractive place to live and work. (*Centre for Cities, Fast Growth Cities 2016*)

Public transport

Bus passenger use is lower in Milton Keynes than in England and satisfaction is lower, particularly among people aged 16-34. Since 2013 bus usage has been decreasing in Milton Keynes and the rest of England. The COVID-19 Pandemic drove an even greater decline. (See Tables 47 and 48)

Sustainability

Transport accounts for 41% of greenhouse gas emissions in Milton Keynes, the single largest category of emissions. (www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions)

Milton Keynes won £9m of funding as part of the Low Carbon Cities scheme, launched in 2016, for initiatives to drive the awareness of ultra-low emission vehicles and incentivise their uptake. (getaroundmk.org.uk/news/milton-keynes-receives-9m-funding-slash-vehicle-emissions.) An outcome is that Milton Keynes now has the UK's strongest Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure, with more than 130 devices per 100,000 people in 2021 (centreforcities.org/blog/why-we-need-more-electric-vehicles-to-reach-net-zero/)

Walking and cycling

The Redways, a 200-mile network of cycle and walking paths are important in enhancing the sustainability of transport in Milton Keynes.

A survey of 2,300 pupils in six schools (in 2017) showed that 80% of pupils use the Redways but only 40% think they are safe. As a result of campaigning by school children Milton Keynes Council and the Parks Trust implemented over 250 improvements to the Redways. (*Citizens:mk*)

Safe walking and cycling routes to schools are being promoted by Milton Keynes Council, along with piloting cycle and pedestrians-only access to certain schools. (<https://getaroundmk.org.uk/school/walk-to-school>)

Rail

A rail link is under construction that links Milton Keynes to Oxford, Aylesbury, and Bedford, all via Bletchley. Planned opening is 2024.

Table 46: % of emissions from transport

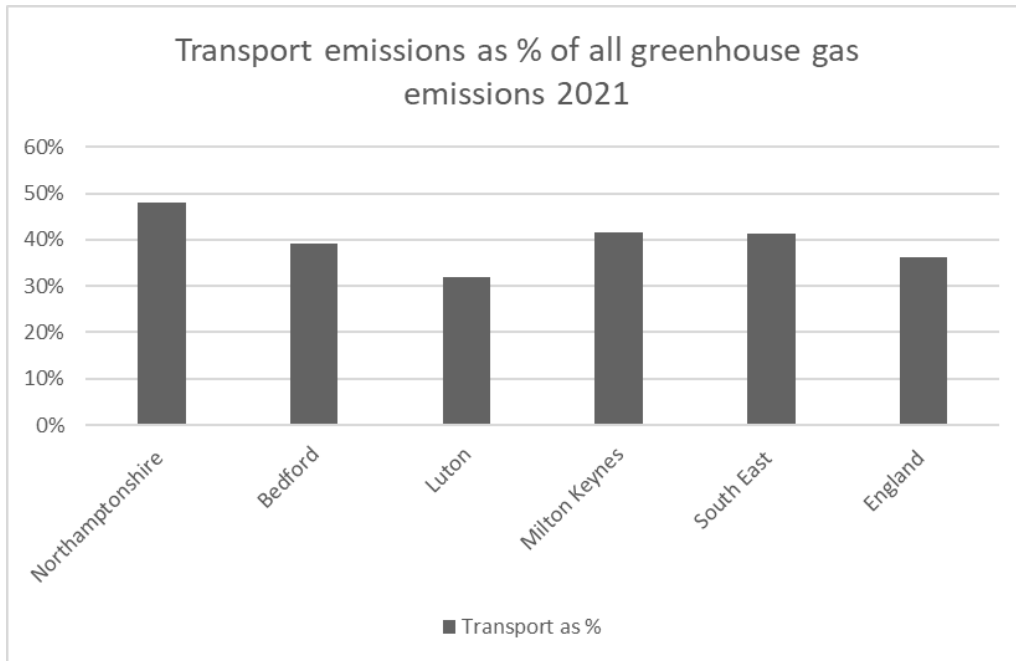


Table 47: Bus Passenger journeys per head of the population (gov.uk/government/collections/bus-statistics)

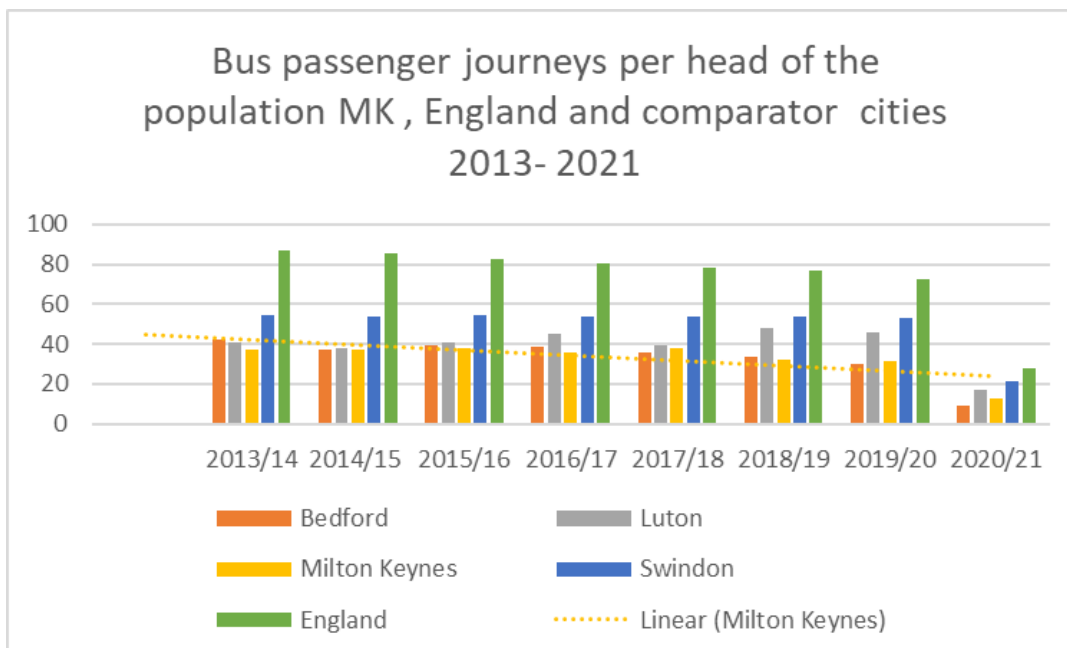
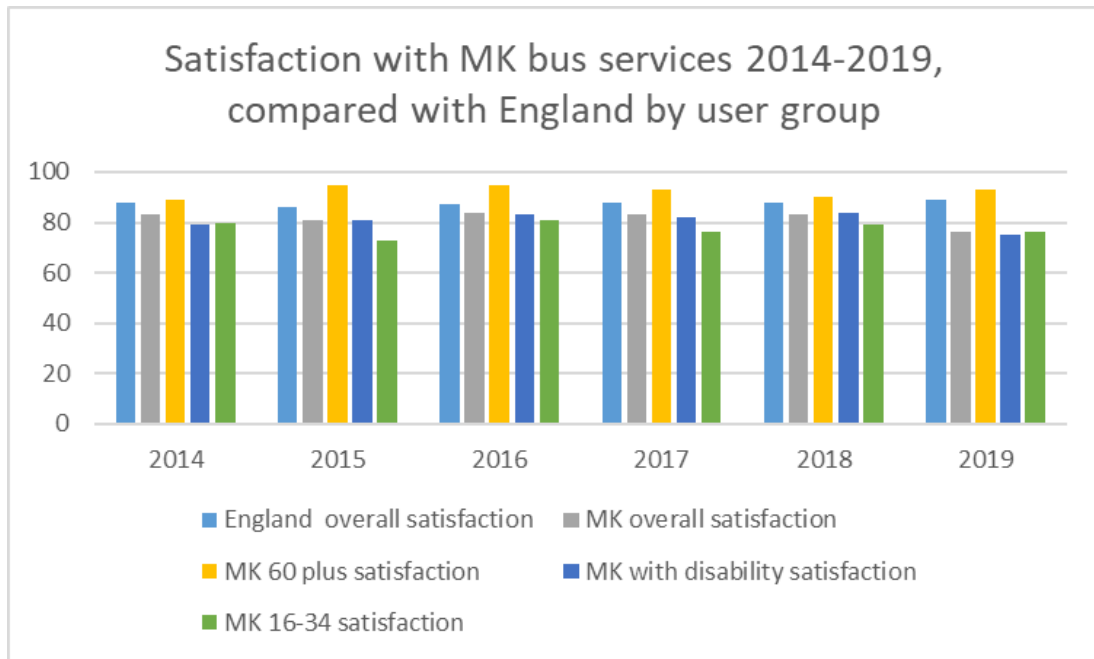


Table 48: Satisfaction with bus services in Milton Keynes by group and comparison with England.
(Transport Focus)



Vital Statistics

- 32.9 bus passenger journeys per head of the population from 2013-2021 in Milton Keynes, compared with average in England of 73.7.
- 41% of greenhouse gas emissions in Milton Keynes are from transport – the single largest activity which is contributing to emissions. This is above the England average of 36%.
- Milton Keynes is one of four cities in the country to receive funding as part of the ‘Low Carbon City scheme’.
- 133 Electric Charging Points per 100,000 of the population – the greatest density anywhere in the UK. (The second largest is at 80 per 100,000 for Coventry and Dundee).

Vital Action – CyclingCitizensMK

Funded by MK City Council from the post COVID-19 recovery fund, the **CyclingCitizens:MK** project began in January 2021 with an aim to increase cycle use among CyclingCitizens:MK Members, which included many secondary schools, faith groups and The Open University. Monthly rides and competitions were organised in and around the city to encourage cycling and physical activity and to promote the mental health benefits and sustainability element.

From January to July 2021, the project saw a 30% increase in cycle trips via the Love to Ride App and the project was extended into 2022. In collaboration with MK Community Foundation the project was promoted to the highly active business community in MK; this resulted in many businesses getting involved including Volkswagen Financial Services (VWFS), Gemini Rail Services and Red Bull Technology.

Richard Scott, Chair of the Employee Forum at VWFS, led an exercise of postcode mapping to discover that 230 of its 1200 staff live less than 8 minutes away from work by bicycle.

VWFS registered with Cycle to Work schemes, relaxed staff dress codes, helped inexperienced cyclists practice riding in the company car park and they even lent e-bikes for journeys to business meetings. Richard said *“We got involved because it’s good for our colleagues’ health, physical and mental wellbeing, we have teams going out in the evenings which helps staff camaraderie and we’re also raising money for the local community through cycle rides, so for us it’s a real win-win.”*

The MK Community Foundation’s continued support linking up relevant and interested organisations has been vital in the overall success and impact of CyclingCitizens:MK. In July 2022, over 120 cyclists from all walks of life came together for a mass ride in Central Milton Keynes to celebrate the awarding of official city status.

10 year-old Luca Galeanu, a pupil at Bradwell Village Primary School, won two Golds and one Bronze in the inaugural Bikeability Olympics 2022, organised by CyclingCitizens:MK. In an interview for ITV Anglia News, Luca said, *“Cycling is important because I learn new things, make new friends and it keeps me healthy.”*

The success has meant the project has now been extended to the end of 2023.



Vital Thinking

How can MK residents be further incentivised to choose ‘green’ travel?

Crime and Safety SDG Sustainable Cities and Communities



Theme Definition

Crime and the fear of crime have physical and psychological effects such as whether people feel safe and in control in their communities.

Overview

The overall crime rate is higher in Milton Keynes than the average across England (but lower than Northampton, one of the comparator places used in this report).

‘Violence against the person’ is now the largest category of crime, with a higher incidence than the average for England.

As well as the amount of crime increasing, the severity of crimes committed is increasing. Between 2013 and 2022 the crime severity score in Milton Keynes increased from 8.2 to 14.8. (The score is based on government calculations that consider lengths of custody and community orders and value of fines).

Crime decreased during the COVID-19 Pandemic, but this reversed since the easing of restrictions.

Victims of crime and offenders are more likely to live in the most deprived areas than in better-off areas. (*Marmot Review, 10 years on*)

SaferMK, the statutory Community Safety Partnership for Milton Keynes has produced a new strategy covering 2022- 2026 which has addressing the increase in crime as one of its priorities.

Domestic abuse

A charity that supports victims of domestic violence (mkact.com) reported since the end of COVID-19 restrictions that there has been an increasing demand for its services. It recommends that more early prevention, including greater understanding of what makes a healthy relationship, would reduce need for its services.

Hate crime.

There has been an increase in the reporting of hate crime, specifically offences with racial, disablist, and homophobic indicators over the last two years, according to the 2022 -2026 SaferMK strategy.

Research by Stonewall nationally found that one in five LGBTQ+ people have suffered a hate crime in the last 12 months in the UK as at 2020.

Young people and crime

Knife crime and youth violence are areas of concern to Milton Keynes citizens (*SaferMK Community Safety survey and consultation 2021/22*). The research found that substance misuse and county drug lines were seen as potential causes of anti-social behaviour and criminality in Milton Keynes.

A UK government report identified that those young people most likely to be involved in crime tend to be from deprived communities; to have adverse childhood experiences; to have poor educational

attainment, combined with school exclusion and truanting; to have experienced victimisation; and have low self-esteem and impulsive behaviour. (www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities-supporting-research/)

Surveys by Citizens:mk 2019-2020 show that that among young people distrust in the police doubled from 20% to 45% between primary and secondary school age.

Expert, Dr Anthony Gunter, at the Open University, who has undertaken research into serious youth violence, advised that people who get involved in knife crime are still developing emotionally and psychologically. “They often feel their future is bleak and without opportunity and may lack the skills to get and retain a job. They can get catapulted into an intense world fuelled by music and gang culture.” He believes that solutions require a holistic investment to prevent young people falling into gang culture, keeping them in school, providing training and support for work and supporting their parents.

Government research identified a relationship between incidence of knife crime and provision of youth centres among Local Authorities. Declines in the number of youth centres is associated with an increase in knife crime. The benefit of youth services to young people is in offering ‘a unique, safe space that is theirs, and youth workers bring those spaces to life as trusted role models.’. (*All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Knife Crime & Violence Reduction 2020*)

Milton Keynes Council expenditure on youth services declined since 2018. However, it reported in its Community Safety strategy 2022-2026 that ‘over the last three years Milton Keynes Council has invested £350,000 in knife crime prevention activity’.

Safety in Milton Keynes was raised as an issue in survey of young people by Healthwatch MK in 2019.

Young people wanted more facilities and youth clubs that were safe.

Table 49: Changes in types of crime recorded in MK, per 1,000 of population 2013-2022

(ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeseverityscoreexperimentaltatistics)

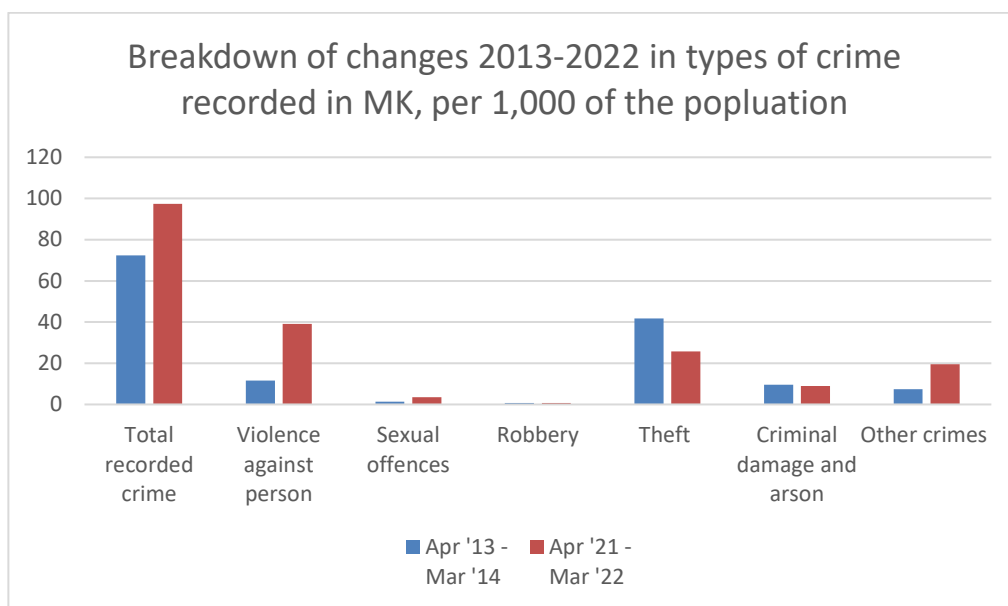


Table 50: Total recorded crime per 1,000 of the population MK and comparator places

(ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeseverityscoreexperimentalstatistics)

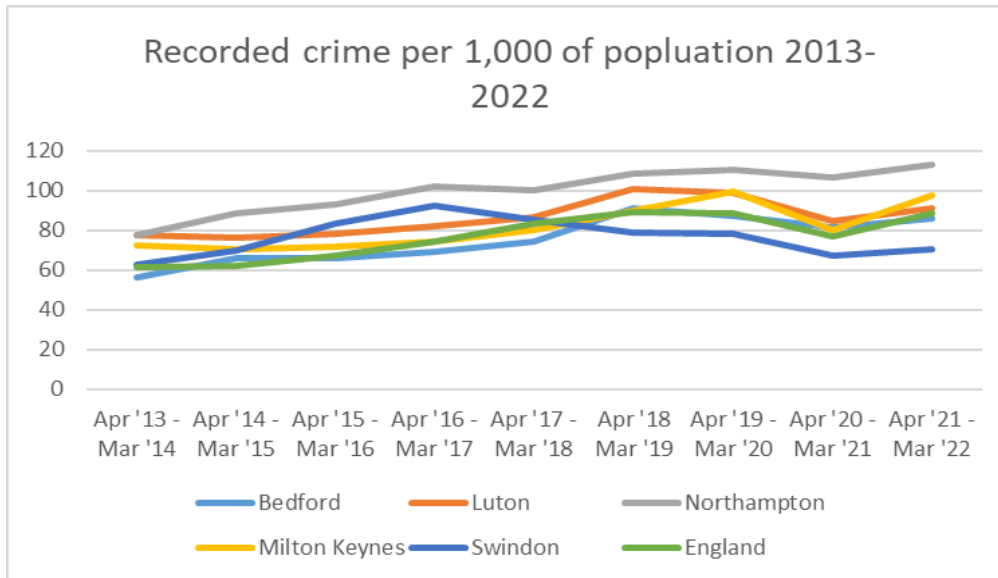


Table 51: Milton Keynes 2013- 2022 volume and severity of crime.

(ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeseverityscoreexperimentalstatistics)

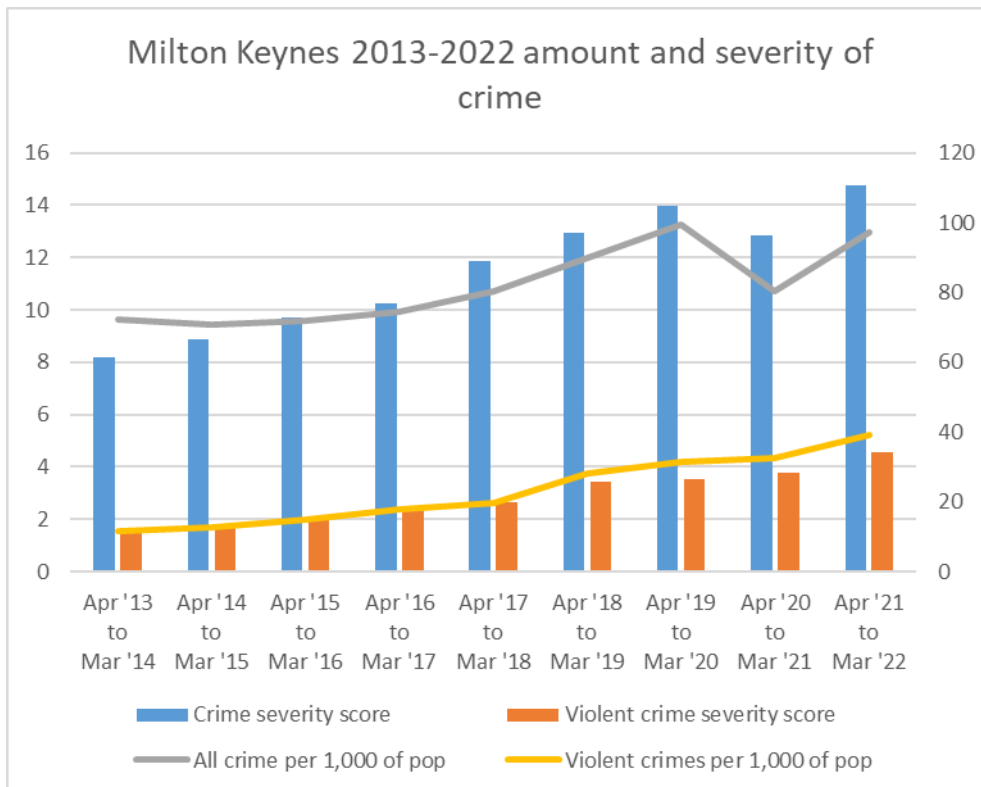


Table 52: Recorded crime - Violence against the person 2013- 2022, MK and comparator places
*(ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeseverityscoreexperimentals
 tatistics)*

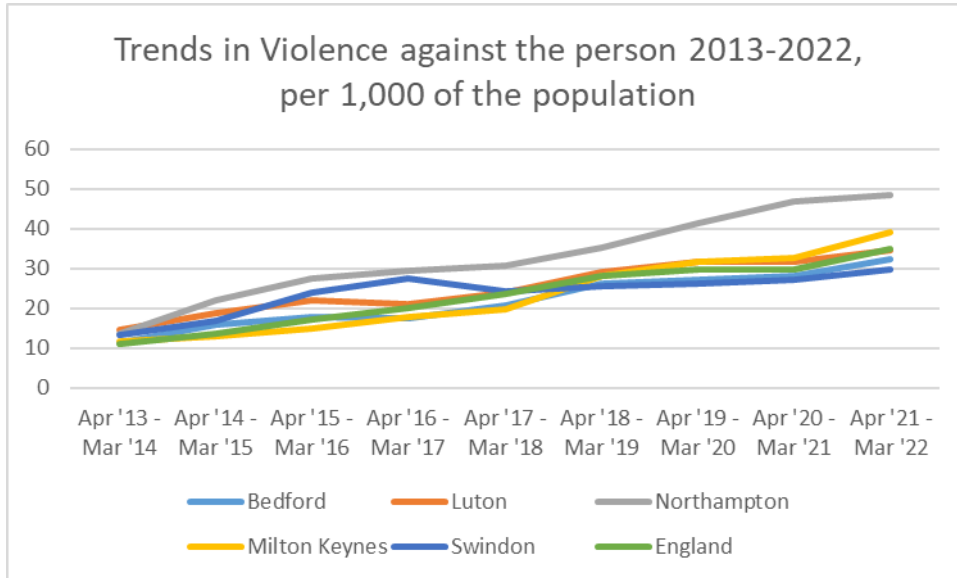


Table 53: Severity of crime, MK and comparator places 2013-2022
*(ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeseverityscoreexperimentals
 tatistics)*

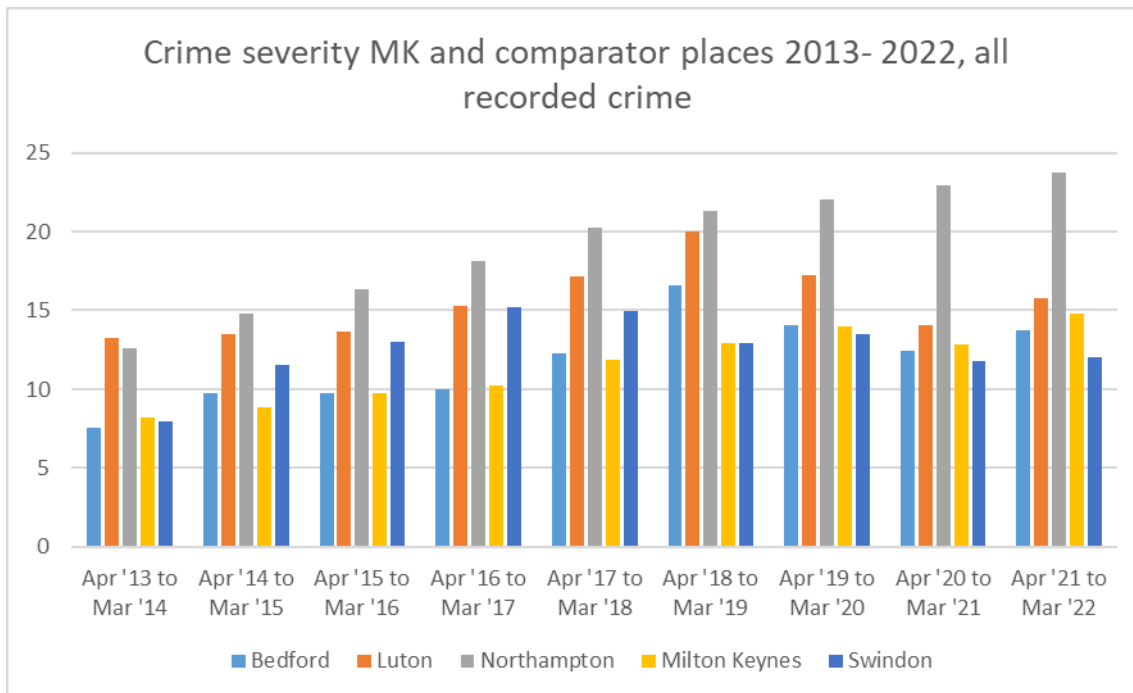
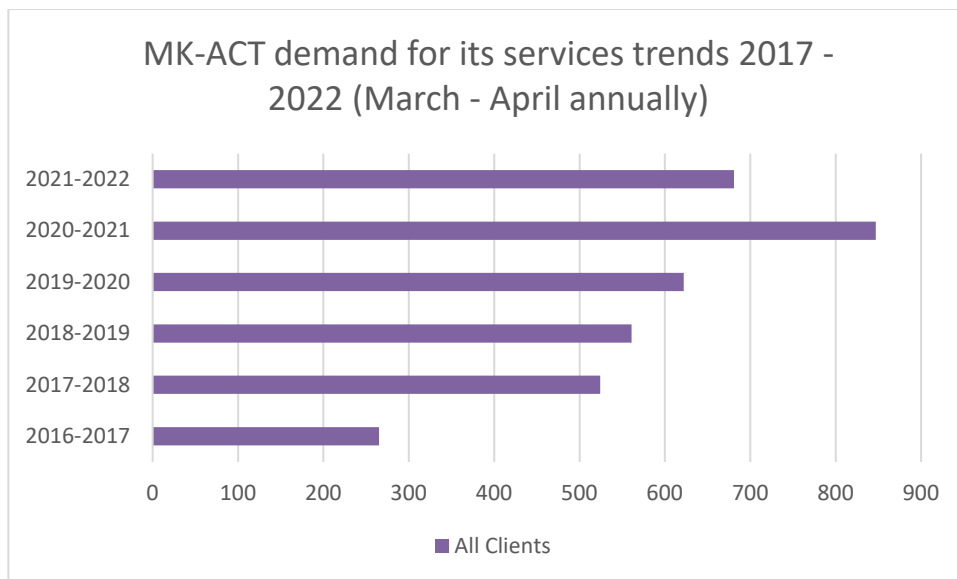


Table 54: MK-ACT demand for its services 2017-2022 (MK Act.com)



Vital Statistics

- Between 2013 and 2022 the volume of recorded crime in Milton Keynes increased from 72 offences per 1,000 of the population to 97 offences per 1,000 of the population in 2022.
- ‘Violence against the person’ is the largest category of crime in Milton Keynes in 2022 (39 offences per 1,000 of the population).
- Theft was the largest category of crime in 2013, with 42 offences per 1,000 of the population.
- Between 2013 and 2022 the crime severity score in Milton Keynes increased from 8.2 to 14.8

Vital Action -Safety Centre

Established in 1992, the **Safety Centre** based in Kiln Farm, Milton Keynes is the region’s leading and the world’s first interactive, immersive, and memorable safety education charity. Specialising in teaching children, young people, and adults about how to stay safe, understand risks and avoid accidents using realistic learning experiences, the charity are pioneers in safety education.

To support the Safety Centre in their vital work with refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the city, MK Community Foundation recently provided the charity with a Community Grant. With 280 Afghan refugees residing in two hotels in the city alone, the charity was being increasingly approached by professionals to support newly arrived communities in providing essential safety education.

The grant has allowed the Safety Centre to run a programme for 350 new residents in Milton Keynes. Topics covered on the programme, specifically designed for those recently arrived in the city include choices and consequences of knife crime, bullying and shop theft, personal safety and home safety.

Maya Joseph-Hussain, CEO of the Safety Centre said *“With the funding we’ve received from MK Community Foundation, we have developed and are delivering safety education for 350 refugees and people from recently arrived communities from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Hong Kong and China. This vital education helps newly arrived individuals integrate into their communities in a meaningful, safe and positive way.”*

As Milton Keynes continues to rapidly expand, the work of the Safety Centre is vital in helping its new residents integrate in their new community. As Maya says, the grant has allowed, *“Opportunities to share our lifesaving safety education with the wider community across Milton Keynes and beyond, ensuring that we all live in safe flourishing communities today and in the future.”*

Arts and Heritage SDG Health and Wellbeing and Sustainable Cities and Communities



Theme definition

Opportunities to participate and engage with the arts and heritage are important for the positive effects they can have on personal wellbeing, on community building and cohesion, place-making and on developing a creative mindset among individuals. Creativity is now one of the most in-demand skillsets among employers as it helps drive innovation and change.

“Art helps us access and express parts of ourselves that are often unavailable to other forms of human interaction. It flies below the radar, delivering nourishment for our soul and returning with stories from the unconscious. A world without art is an inhuman world. Making and consuming art lifts our spirits and keeps us sane. Art, like science and religion, helps us make meaning from our lives, and to make meaning is to make us feel better.”

Grayson Perry, Artist

Overview

MK Futures 2050 states as one of its seven ‘Big Ambitions’: ‘Make Milton Keynes a leading cultural city by global standards.’ The Milton Keynes Creative and Cultural Strategy 2018–2027 seeks to address the challenge that the cultural offer in Milton Keynes neither reflects the city’s size nor the diversity of its communities. (*MK Futures 2050*).

The low level of engagement among some communities in the mainstream cultural offer is a result not only of cost, but also of perceptions that the offerings are not sufficiently relevant to them and do not reflect or represent them and their lives.

The Arts and Heritage Alliance MK (AHA-MK) is driving a programme of change to embrace what different communities bring to the cultural landscape in Milton Keynes, as well as building relationships between community-based groups and the mainstream cultural sector, which is increasingly delivering a diverse cultural offer.

Research among local schools found that many did not have the funding to invest in cultural education, although schools in wealthy neighbourhoods with active Parent Teacher Associations were more likely to offer arts and cultural activities. (*Milton Keynes Arts Education Schools Relationship Manger Report 2020*).

Partnership working across the sector is seen as invaluable for strengthening the sector, for example the Arts and Heritage Alliance (AHA-MK), the Heritage MK Consortium, MK Music Hub, and the MK Heritage Association.

Success stories since 2013

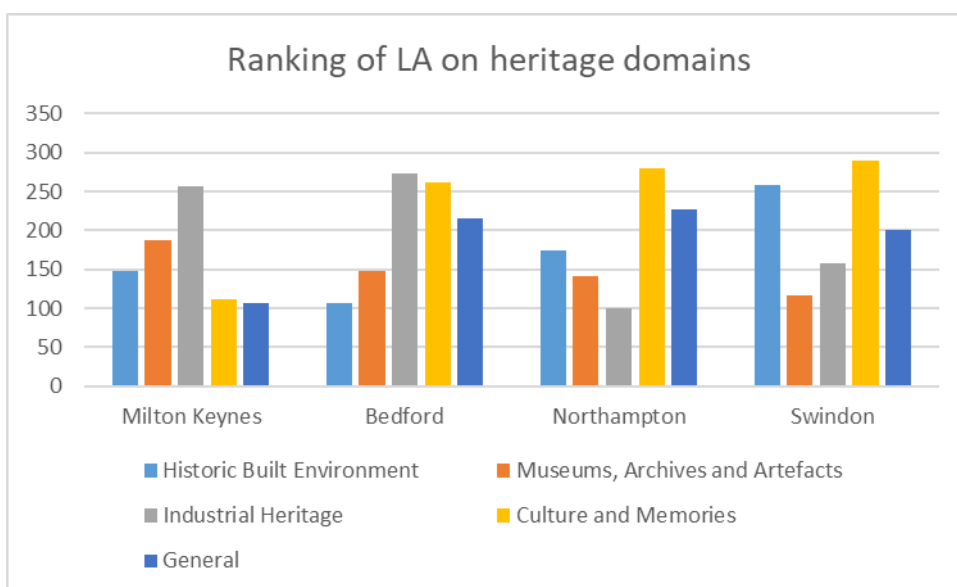
There have been important successes in the delivery of arts, heritage and cultural activities for residents and visitors since 2013. They include:

- Milton Keynes International Festival (IF), founded in 2010, takes place every two years in locations across Milton Keynes. Produced by The Stables, it offers community participation projects, large-scale outdoor events, concerts, theatre, dance, music, and visual arts installations.
- MK Rose, an open-air circle of pillars and markings based on the mathematical beauty of a flower, was installed in Campbell Park in 2013. Designed as a place for celebration, commemoration, and contemplation, it is used for civic, faith and cultural gatherings.
- There is a track record of successful events hosted by diverse communities celebrating their own unique cultural heritages, including Milton Keynes Islamic Arts and Culture (MKIAC) which has delivered inclusive arts and cultural programmes for 20 years. The African Diaspora Festival Day MK was launched in 2017. India Day MK was launched in 2019 and the 2022 festival attracted 11,000 visitors.
- Milton Keynes Cultural Education Partnership (MAKE) was launched in 2016. This advocates for the importance of creative skills and cultural wellbeing of children and young people across Milton Keynes. Milton Keynes-based arts and heritage organisations deliver cultural learning and as MAKE partners, are committed to building cultural education in Milton Keynes.
- The celebrations for Milton Keynes 50th anniversary in 2017 had arts and cultural activities embedded within the festivities.
- MK Gallery reopened April 2019 after a major renovation and expansion. This doubled the exhibition space, added a multi- purpose auditorium, café, and a studio for family, schools, and community programmes. In 2021 and 2022 it won prizes for its family-friendly activities in the Inclusive Practice in the Arts category.
- The COVID-19 Pandemic had a major impact on the cultural sector with some venues closed for up to 18 months. National government and Milton Keynes Council funding helped these organisations survive the pandemic and supported their long-term sustainability. Many organisations pivoted to online delivery methods and outdoor events were highly successful when the legislation permitted. The Parks Trust provided a platform for outdoor festivals. In 2021 MK Pride had 14,000 attendees and a Reggae Festival had 8,000 attendees.
- Most venues and activities re-opened post COVID-19 helped by Milton Keynes Council and government funding, but with challenges remaining, including increased costs, reduced audiences, and shortfalls in staffing and volunteers.
- Capital investment has been made in venues including Bletchley Park and The Stables to increase accessibility to all communities.
- The Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes (AHA-MK) is working in 2022 with six diverse communities to develop their cultural agency. Six diverse artists were co-commissioned to create projects/artefacts which will occupy mainstream cultural spaces/networks in Milton Keynes.
- High levels of pride and commitment to local heritage is indicated by the fact that at the most recent (September 2022) Heritage Open Days festival, there were 82 heritage places open to the public, the fourth highest number in a Local Authority area. (<https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting/>)

- Arts Council England announced November 2022 that it was extending its National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) investment in Milton Keynes from three arts organisations to five for the period 2023-26. The two new organisations are the diverse-led Milton Keynes Islamic Arts and Culture (MKIAC) and Pagrav Dance Company. The existing organisations are MK Gallery, MK Arts Centre, and The Stables. Five years ago, the Arts Council had 1100 applications, and this year 1700.
- The Cowper and Newton Museum is celebrating over 2022-23 the 250th anniversary of the hymn 'Amazing Grace,'. This was written in Olney by Reverend Newton, who came to advocate against the slavery industry, after previously participating in it. Partners in the celebrations include the Milton-Keynes based Sierra Leone community and 'Museumand,' the national Caribbean Heritage Museum.

Table 55: Ranking of Milton Keynes and comparator places on the RSA Heritage ranking.

(www.thersa.org/projects/heritage/index)



Key:

- Historic built environment: listed buildings and monuments, battlefields, conservation areas, funding, visitor numbers etc
- Industrial heritage: heritage open days and visitors, heritage railways, canals, boats shipwrecks, industrial buildings etc
- Museums archives and artefacts: museums, collections, funding, archaeological finds, heritage open days
- Culture and memories- blue plaques, conservation activities etc

Vital Statistics

- Milton Keynes overall ranking is 206 out of 316 Local Authorities. (Ranking on RSA Heritage index 2020 which measures relative performance of each Local Authority on the different heritage domains based on national lottery fund interest areas. (1 'is the highest ranking)
- Five venues in Milton Keynes are in receipt of Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation funding for three years, from 2023 out of 990 organisations nationally.
- Milton Keynes ranks 4th highest in the UK in 2022 for the number of heritage venues open as part of the 2022 Heritage Open Days festival.

Vital Action – Pride Festival

Milton Keynes Pride Festival – Back in 2019 the community in Milton Keynes was crying out for a Pride event to celebrate LGBTQ+ achievement, life and love, and to create a ‘safe space’ where the community can be who they want to be without fear or prejudice.

The charity Q:alliance over saw the event in 2019 and thanks to a grant from the MK Community Foundation they were able to invest in their accessibility offer by bringing in sign language interpreters which had a big impact on how the event was perceived. In 2021, the Milton Keynes Pride Festival was moved over to an independent, not-for-profit Community Interest Company. Mk Community Foundation were keen to move the funding arrangement to a partnership.

Helen Pritchard, director at MK Pride Festival, talks about the impact the partnership had, *“First and foremost, it enabled us to raise our profile. We had a partner and more importantly a trusted partner within the local community. The MK Community Foundation has such a positive reputation and does such good work, we were able to go to other interested sponsors and show them this commitment and it solidified people’s trust in us as an event,”*

Helen continued, *“The Community Foundation’s approach to the partnership was different to other sponsors, it was very much about what works for the community, going both ways – how we can help in the training and advocacy, and how they can support the festival to, in turn, support the local community. The funding partnership has allowed the festival not only to secure our longevity but some of the funding still supports our accessibility. This year, we were able to introduce sensory, calming space on site, this really helped to reassure visitors to the festival that they were in a safe space. It gave them time to think, to be calm and to contemplate when other areas in their lives seemed chaotic and sometimes very challenging.”*

Another positive legacy story to come out of the Pride Festival is the new Faithfully LGBTIA+ church group which formed after the 2019 Festival. After such a positive response the new group was formed to support people of Christian faith and they now regularly hold inclusive and affirming local church services and have an ongoing Christian presence at MK Pride. For the LGBTQ+ community seeing a local funding organisation investing in social action gives them confidence that they care, which means an awful lot to a sometimes-isolated community. The Pride Festival is seen as a very safe space in a city where safe places are few and far between.

Vital Thinking

Given the pressure on costs for arts, heritage and cultural organisations, and on affordability for many residents, what can be done to support participation so that all can enjoy the enrichment offered by these experiences.

Timeline – 2013 – 2022 key events

Year	Significant Local Event
2013	<p>Healthwatch Milton Keynes launches, the independent consumer champion for adults and children who may need to use health and social care services in Milton Keynes.</p> <p>Milton Keynes Council partners with Coca-Cola Enterprises to develop a new pilot community project to improve local recycling with funding for from Defra.</p>
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MK:Smart sets up with the Open University to develop innovative solutions and to support sustainable economic growth, and meet key carbon reduction targets. <p>Milton Keynes citizens contribute ideas as to how to make MK a smarter and greener community.</p>
2015	<p>Launch of MK Living Wage Business Network, a UK first. http://www.citizensmk.org.uk/wins/</p>
2016	<p>Milton Keynes awarded 9m in funding by Go Ultra Low as part of the 'Low Carbon City Scheme' aimed at reducing emissions in major cities https://evexperiencecentre.co.uk/grants/</p> <p>Milton Keynes launches first green-vehicle permit, giving electric cars free parking.</p> <p>Brexit vote – MK split remain/leave</p>
2017	<p>50th anniversary of MKs designation as a new town.</p> <p>East-West Rail Company established 14 December 2017 to link Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Aylesbury.</p>
2018	<p>MK Redways relaunched</p>
2019	<p>Vision unveiled for the ARC – a region for innovation led growth which has Milton Keynes at its centre.</p> <p>Learning 2050/MK Education Partnership launched 2019 which includes goals of raising the outcomes for students in Milton Keynes schools, increasing the number of Apprentices and improving school to work links.</p> <p>MK Gallery reopens with a café, shop, larger art gallery space and cinema, offering family and community activities. It is run as a charitable organisation.</p> <p>Milton Keynes Community Foundation Arts Bursary winners are Sarah Wright, an artist who practices and teaches drawing and Michelle Sawbridge-Praties, a jeweller based in Stony Stratford</p>
2020	<p>MK Community Foundation launches emergency appeal in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and distributes £437,00 in funding to local people via 60 special projects.</p>
2021	<p>The South-Central Institute of Technology (SCIoT) at Bletchley launches and wins government funding to offer digital skills courses.</p> <p>Milton Keynes Community Foundation 35th birthday.</p> <p>A smartphone app is launched by Milton Keynes Council to help people make environmentally friendly transport choices.</p>
2022	<p>Milton Keynes is designated a city.</p> <p>Milton Keynes Council bids as part of the Government's Levelling Up Fund for multi-million-pound funding for three major projects, including enhancements to Bletchley town centre and transport improvements.</p> <p>Freedom of the City of Milton Keynes is awarded to Leah Williamson, the captain of the women's national football team, known as the Lionesses. who led the team to victory at Euro 2022 championships. Leah was born and went to school in Newport Pagnell.</p>

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Bletchley Park (bletchleypark.org.uk/)
Camphill MK Communities (www.camphillmk.org.uk/)
Citizens: MK Alliance (citizensmk.org.uk/)
Fresh Inspiration (Freshinspiration.org)
Friends of the Caribbean (friendsofthecaribbean.co.uk)
Healthwatch Milton Keynes (healthwatchmiltonkeynes.co.uk/)
LEAP (Leapwithus.org.uk)
Milton Keynes City Council (milton-keynes.gov.uk/)
Milton Keynes Community Action (communityactionmk.org/)
Milton Keynes College (mkcollege.ac.uk/)
Milton Keynes Hospital Charity (mkhcharity.org.uk/)
Milton Keynes Theatre (atgtickets.com/venues/milton-keynes-theatre/)
MK:act (MKact.com)
MK Child Poverty Partnership (<https://mkcpp.org.uk/>)
MK City Discovery Centre (mkcdc.org.uk/)
MK Heritage Association (mkheritage.org.uk/)
MK Gallery (mkgallery.org/)
MKIAC MK Islamic Arts and Heritage (mkiac.org/)
MK Foodbank (Mkfoodbank.org.uk)
MK Homeless Partnership (<https://mkhp.co.uk/>)
MK Money Lifeline (mkmoneylifeline.org.uk)
MK Rose (miltonkeynesrose.org.uk/)
Milton Keynes Improvement District (Mymiltonkeynes.co.uk)
Q:alliance (alliance.org.uk/)
Pooleyville (pooleyville.uk/)
SEMLEP (semlep.com/)
SOFEA (www.sofea.uk.com/)
The Parks Trust Milton Keynes (theparkstrust.com/)
The Stables (stables.org/)
Worktree (worktree.org/)
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Funding Fairness

MK Community Foundation is a leading grant-making charity sending funding where it is needed most in Milton Keynes.

With so many vulnerable, isolated and disadvantaged people in Milton Keynes we're proud to be leading the way in supporting community projects and charitable activities to help create a fairer more connected community.

Here at MK Community Foundation, we're dedicated to making a difference and improving the lives of people within the local community by supporting a diverse range of projects.

But we cannot do this alone.

We rely on your donations, kindness and generosity so that we can continue to guide businesses, philanthropists and charities to the right giving and grants.

We are on a mission for a fairer community.

Join the conversation!