



Vital Signs 2019

Vital Signs MK is an annual publication designed to round up the most current research on the communities of Milton Keynes and present it in an easy-to-read format. Vital Signs categories help us to highlight our strengths and point to the challenges that we face in Milton Keynes. Inevitably, there are areas that overlap and affect one another. This report asks how can we all work together to support, inspire and lead our local communities.

To download this year's Vital Signs Report as well as an extended version with many more statistics and links to all of the sources of the original research, visit: mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk.



VITAL SIGNS 2019

Long Report

What is Vital Signs?

Vital Signs MK is an annual publication designed to round up the most current research on the communities of Milton Keynes and present it in an easy-to-read format.

This year's publication focuses on 11 key areas of interest within Milton Keynes, mapping trends, highlighting our strengths, and challenges we face.

This year the Report looks at: Strong Communities, Work & the Economy (these 2 themes have been merged), Education, Diversity, Disadvantage & Poverty, Housing, Crime & Safety, Health & Wellbeing, Transport, the Local Environment and Arts & Heritage.

Inevitably, there are areas that overlap and affect one another. This report asks how we can all work together to support, inspire and lead our local communities.

Vital Signs was first established as an information tool for communities and community support and development in Canada.

In 2013, Milton Keynes Community Foundation was one of the first few Community Foundations in Britain to pilot Vital Signs. Since then we have annually produced this research and now many Community Foundations across our network produce similar research for their communities.

The aspiration is that people across the UK will be able to easily access information and statistics on the health of their local community.

Methodology

The 2019 Vital Signs MK report is an update Report, rounding up new data on Milton Keynes since our 2018 Report.

It focuses on new research published regarding the 11 Themes. To ensure the data we compile in this report is as reliable as possible, our MK Community Foundation team have identified many reliable sources for data that has been newly published, or that we have not reported on before.

The Office for National Statistics and Local Government data are an important part of the sources looked at, as are Public Health England, Sport England and Shelter.

Once we had gathered all our research we then have tried to make the information accessible across Milton Keynes.

The Short Report (magazine format) will be shared with our members, voluntary sector groups and disseminated across Milton Keynes through parishes, public libraries etc.

This second Report - Long Report (expanded version of Vital Signs) - which you are now reading, directs you where possible directly to each data source.

This is a free to download report made available through our website and online digital strategy.

How to use Vital Signs 2019

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

We hope that Vital Signs MK 2019 will be useful for organisations working in the voluntary sector as well as our wider community.

We believe that promoting a deeper understanding of our shared community and the challenges we face can inspire the civic pride, leadership, informed debate and community action that will lead to a brighter future for all of us who call Milton Keynes our home.

Please note: when statistics or information from our Vital Signs Report are used by organisations in the wider community in applications for funding, we request that you reference Vital Signs (MK Community Foundation) in the application. This is important as it recognises the added value of our work in leveraging income into Milton Keynes from regional/national sources for the benefit of people in our local community.



STRONG COMMUNITIES

Theme Definition

The Strong Communities theme seeks to capture and highlight the qualities that foster a sense of belonging, trust and engagement between local people. Strong Communities are more cohesive and less vulnerable, with members of the community able to rely on one another more.

Overview

Milton Keynes is one of the fastest growing cities in the UK and looks set to continue to grow just as quickly as the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge growth corridor develops. With growth comes the continued challenge of how you develop community in rapidly growing and changing environments. Communities are still feeling the effects of austerity, with cuts to local services still affecting many across Milton Keynes—in these times more and more will be asked of local communities to meet these needs. How well connected and engaged our citizens are will be as important as ever to meet these challenges.

Key Statistics

268,607	Estimated population of Milton Keynes (mid-2018) which is a 3.6% increase since last reported in 2016
7.1% decrease in public spending	Public spending cut in MK, vs 14.3% decrease national average for UK cities of (2009/10 to 2017/18, (source Cities Outlook 2019 (Centre for Cities: January 2019))
32% Ultrafast broadband penetration	Making us the worst connected city in England (city average of 56%), and second worst in UK
-1,098 flow of young people in MK (age 15-19years)	Largest 5-year age group flow of internal migration (in residential moves between MK and other UK Local Authorities)
22%	People report volunteering formally at least once a month in England.
1,314	Active local voluntary sector organisations (known to Community Action:MK)
90%	Of local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations are supported by volunteering

Impact of Austerity on Public Spend

[Cities Outlook 2019 \(Centre for Cities: January 2019\)](#) identifies that austerity has hit the UK's cities and urban areas the hardest, with an average spending cut of £386 per city resident, against £172 per non-city dweller, despite cities containing the majority of the UK's population, productive jobs and economic output.

In terms of the percentage change in total expenditure, Cities Outlook reports that Milton Keynes fares better than many other UK cities, with a decrease of 7.1% between 2009/10 and 2017/18, compared to an average city decrease of 14.3%, and with decreases for cities in the north of England generally much higher, reaching as high as 40% (Barnsley).

A couple of our nearest city neighbours, Luton and Oxford, count as the only cities to actually increase their expenditure in this period.

Cities more reliant on receiving funding from central government have been hit the hardest by austerity, and this possibly provides some insight as to why Milton Keynes is less hard hit than other areas.

One way to counter this impact is by increasing council tax base, which is difficult to do due to a number of restrictions on increasing local council tax rates, though council tax can be increased as a result of home building.

Cities in the South East of England have been building more homes, and have been more able to increase their council tax base, and our rapidly expanding city is in the top 5 across the UK (also including Exeter, Telford, Peterborough, and Cambridge), who have achieved between an 8% and 15.1% growth in their Council Tax base.

Milton Keynes (along with Coventry) is also leading the trend of councils increasing their reserves, more than tripling their reserves in this period. The Cities Outlook report acknowledges that this practice does take money away from covering shortfalls in services. It also notes that reserves spending is unsustainable, and that accumulation of reserves is encouraged by the fact that councils operate to yearly budgets that they have to balance, and that may mean they face more cuts in future.

Cities Outlook 2019 and its corresponding [online data tool](#) are referenced across many of the themes covered in this report.

Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector

Of the respondents (adults aged 16+) in Milton Keynes of the Sport England Active Lives survey for November 2017-18, 16.7% said that they volunteer to support sport and physical activity. This was higher than reported across England, at 13.9%.

The Community Life Surveys from 2016/17 and 2017/18 give us some insight into the national (England) picture in terms of how people nationally feel about their communities and the extent to which they are engaged in it. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) describe it as “a key evidence source on social cohesion, community engagement and social action”.

Further results from the survey:

- 22% volunteered formally at least once a month (formal volunteering is defined as "giving unpaid help through groups, clubs or organisations to benefit other people or the environment" (Source [Third sector](#)).

- 82% agreed their area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together
- 85% felt they belonged to Britain

For those who engage in volunteering, the previous year's survey results have been released with some regional breakdown. In the South East, 25% of respondents reported volunteering formally at least once a month, slightly higher than the England average (22%).

Socioeconomic background appears to be an indicator of the likelihood of someone volunteering formally.

Across respondents, 15% from the most deprived areas reported engaging in formal volunteering once a month, as opposed to 29% in the least deprived areas.

The difference is less for "informal" volunteering (giving unpaid help to someone who isn't a relative, such as keeping in touch with someone who has difficulty getting out and about, giving advice, filling in forms, or babysitting), at 27% for the most deprived and 28% for the least deprived.

Sources: [Community Life Survey 2017-18](#); [Community Life Survey: Ad-hoc statistical releases](#); [Community Life Survey: Focus on Diversity 2016/17](#). Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Community Action: MK (CA:MK) report that they hold 1,314 active records of local voluntary sector organisations, an increase of 7% since 2017. The actual number of local voluntary sector organisations is likely to be higher. Just over half of these (51%) are registered charities.

CA:MK's research has also found that 90% of voluntary sector organisations surveyed work with volunteers. Over half (56%) have no staff, and 13% have only one paid member of staff, and those with fewer paid staff are more likely to be reliant on volunteer support. They report that their findings indicate that the sector needs support with finding, retaining and managing their volunteers. (Source: Volunteering in Milton Keynes: Current Position, Future Aspiration. Community Action: MK.)

Digital Connectivity

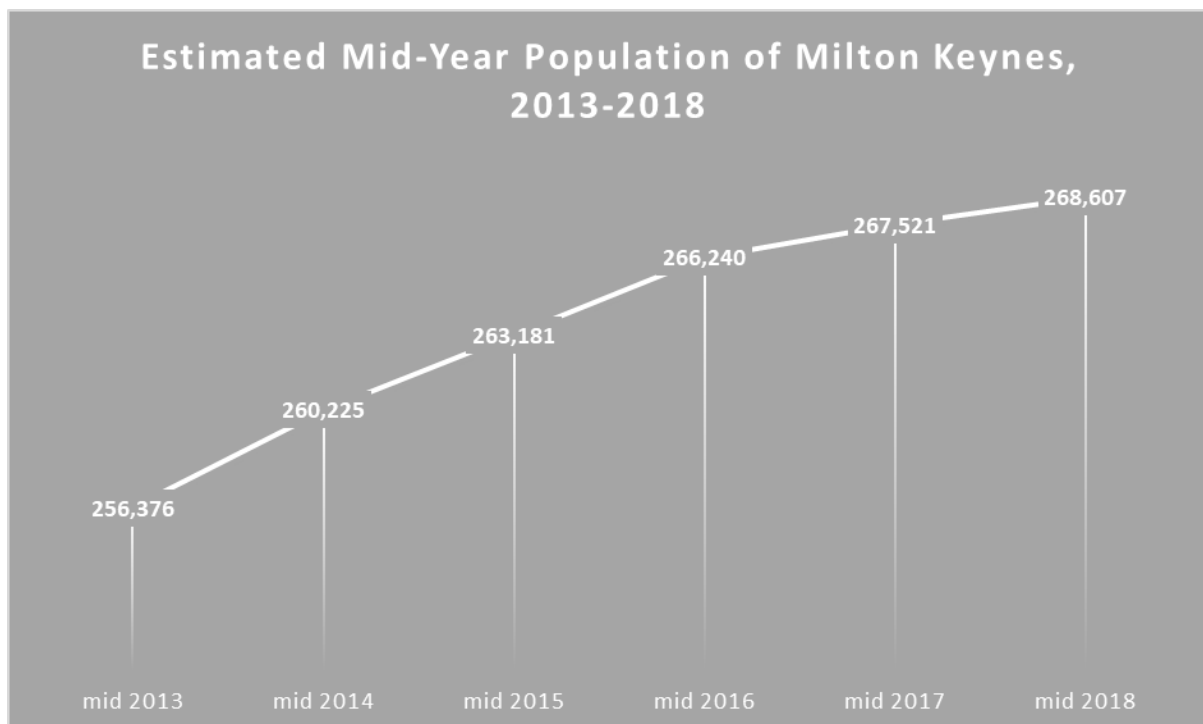
Milton Keynes was one of only two cities from the South East in the bottom 10 for digital connectivity, and the second worst city overall - with Aberdeen being below for low ultrafast broadband penetration out of all cities. Only 32.1% of our properties achieved ultrafast broadband (over 100 Mbps) penetration in 2018, against a 56.1% UK average.

Reviewing the source data that informs the Centre for Cities data on this, it appears that by the first quarter of 2019, this had increased to 43.3% (thinkbroadband: Broadband Coverage and Speeds for UK Local Authorities and Regions) -UK : 57.57%.

Population

The estimated population of Milton Keynes, mid-2018, is 268,607.

Figure 1: Estimated Mid-year population of Milton Keynes 2013 – 2018



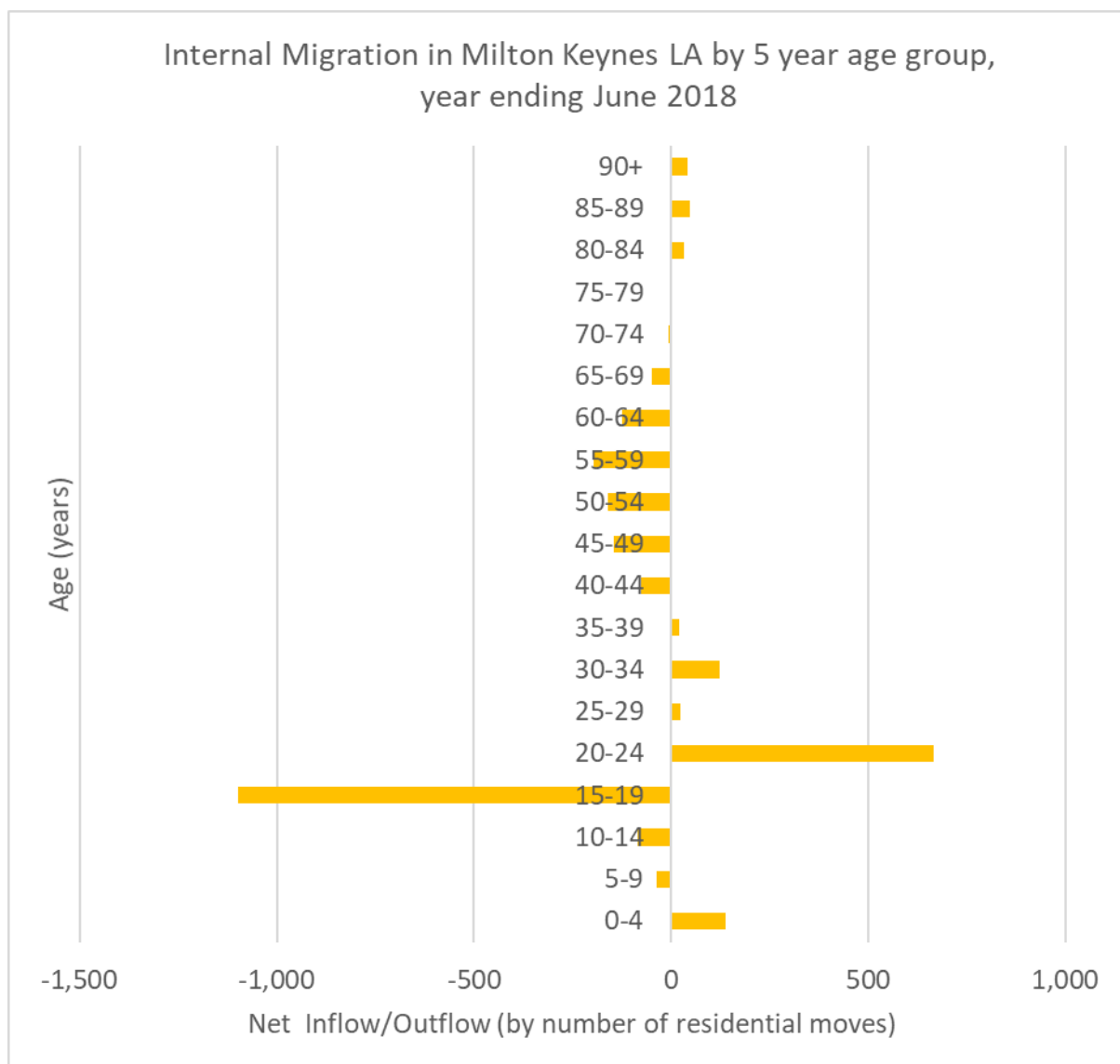
[Source: ONS: Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2018, using April 2019 local authority district codes: June 2019](#)

Internal Migration

Internal migration is defined as residential moves between different local authorities (LAs) within the UK, including across boundaries between the four UK nations. It does not include international movements either into or out of the UK from other countries.

We can see the net movement into and out of Milton Keynes to or from other UK LAs in the below graph:

Figure 2: Internal Migration in MK Local Authority by 5-year age group, year ending June 2018



[\(Office for National Statistics: Internal migration: by local authority and region, age and sex\)](#)

Results from the MK Community Foundation Vital Signs Survey, June 2019 (205 respondents):

- 86% of survey respondents agreed ('somewhat' to 'strongly') with the statement "I have a sense of belonging to my neighbourhood, estate or village" (17% strongly agreed)
- 84% agreed that they try to get involved with local events and activities. Only 1% strongly disagreed
- 73% agreed that their community has enough local activities, such as fetes, faith group events, sports and recreation and arts activities (13% strongly agreed)
- 93% would recommend moving to Milton Keynes to a friend who was considering it

Vital Thinking

Communities are still feeling the effects of austerity, with cuts to local services still affecting many across Milton Keynes. Now more will be asked of local communities to meet these unmet needs. How well connected and engaged our citizens are will be as important as ever to meet these challenges.

How can the voluntary sector support our umbrella bodies and build sustainable funding strategies to support volunteering and community development?

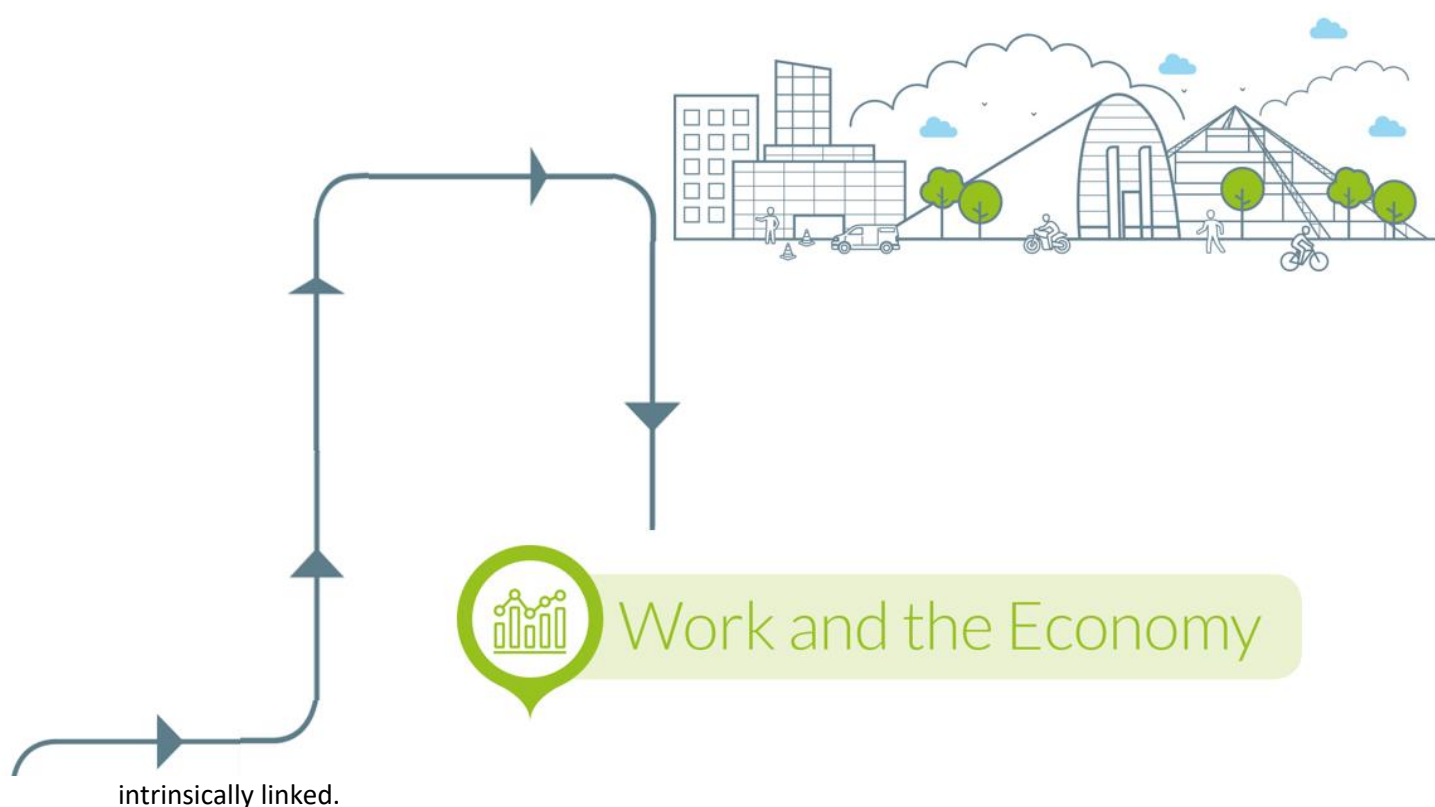
Vital Action

BLC (Big Local Conniburrow) is one of 150 areas in the UK that received just over £1,000,000 of funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. The idea behind the project was to mobilise the community to come together and decide how to spend the money to improve their community.

MK Community Foundation are the local trusted organisation that manage the funds over the 10-year period of the project. Community Action MK have been brought onboard to help to share their skills in community development. They identified a skills gap when local people were applying for job roles as Community Mobilisers, so they decided to set up a mentor programme so local people could learn skills in community development within their own community.

WORK AND THE ECONOMY

This year we have decided to join the vital signs areas of Work and the Economy as they are so



Theme Definition:

The Economy includes the production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money in the local area. Work in this context is paid employment. It does not include voluntary work, unpaid caring duties or other forms of activity that produce goods such as hobbies. A high level of paid employment opportunities provides an indication of a healthy and vibrant city. Milton Keynes has been long recognised as an entrepreneurial city, with the number of new start-up businesses recorded as one of the highest in the UK.

Overview:

With unemployment relatively low (4%), the main concern is maintaining the range of opportunities as the city grows. There is still relatively low take up of apprenticeships and a potential skills gap as the number of jobs and the nature of employment changes with the growth in technology. Both Milton Keynes Council and Chamber of Commerce have identified that this is an issue that needs to be tackled in educational and training sectors and there are currently several collaborations between business and educational establishments, for instance the development of MK:U being supported by Santander, and the collaboration between MK College and Bletchley Park in the development of an Institute of Digital Technology (more details in the education section of the report). It is predicted that many employment opportunities that will face our children when they enter the workforce don't yet exist.

Our local workforce is flexible and has a good mix of skills allowing it to adapt as changing business needs, it is relatively highly skilled, and unemployment is lower than the national average.

Findings:

Table 1:

UK Business Counts (2018)				
	Milton Keynes (Numbers)	Milton Keynes (%)	South East (Numbers)	South East (%)
Enterprises				
Micro (0 To 9)	11,160	90.0	363,890	89.9
Small (10 To 49)	930	7.5	33,090	8.2
Medium (50 To 249)	235	1.9	6,035	1.5
Large (250+)	70	0.6	1,535	0.4
Total	12,400	-	404,555	-
Local Units				
Micro (0 To 9)	12,275	83.6	398,835	85.4
Small (10 To 49)	1,800	12.3	55,365	11.9
Medium (50 To 249)	510	3.5	11,340	2.4
Large (250+)	85	0.6	1,620	0.3
Total	14,675	-	467,160	-
Source: Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS)				
Note: % is as a proportion of total (enterprises or local units)				

Milton Keynes has the 5th highest business start-up rate (78.7 per 10,000 population in 2017), but interestingly, out of all the cities listed in the top 10 has the third lowest “churn rate”. The “churn rate” is the difference between business start-ups and business closures as a percentage of total business stock. Milton Keynes is ranked third for business stock per capita (476 businesses per 10,000 population), behind only London (583) and Reading (478).

Table 2:

Business formation and closure rates		
Business formation is considered a vital ingredient in local economies, encouraging 'churn' and driving growth.		
Milton Keynes		
	Business formation rate	Business closure rate
Jan - Dec 2010	11.73	11.83
Jan - Dec 2011	13.17	10.65
Jan - Dec 2012	13.00	10.50
Jan - Dec 2013	15.56	10.21
Jan - Dec 2014	16.36	10.08
Jan - Dec 2015	17.15	9.56
Jan - Dec 2016	15.37	11.81
Jan - Dec 2017	14.45	12.63

£1,540.50	Difference in annual earnings between the National Living Wage and Living Wage Foundation Living Wage (based on 37.5 hours a week)

Employment in Milton Keynes

Employment in Milton Keynes is still relatively high with 78% of the population being economically active (producing an income), and 74.5% being in full or part-time employment. Trends for Milton Keynes are mostly in line with the national average, although there is a slight under representation of people identifying as female in the workplace compared to national and regional statistics.

Table 3: Employment and unemployment in Milton Keynes, the South East and Great Britain, April 2018 to March 2019

	Milton Keynes (Numbers)	Milton Keynes (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
All People				
Economically Active†	137,100	78.0	81.1	78.7
In Employment†	130,900	74.5	78.4	75.4
Employees†	117,800	67.6	66.2	64.4
Self Employed†	12,500	6.8	11.9	10.7
Unemployed (Model-Based)§	5,400	4.0	3.3	4.1
Males				
Economically Active†	73,900	84.3	85.3	83.5

In Employment†	70,400	80.4	82.6	79.9
Employees†	62,400	71.3	67.0	65.5
Self Employed†	8,000	9.0	15.3	14.2
Unemployed§	3,500	4.7	3.1	4.2
Females				
Economically Active†	63,200	71.8	77.0	73.9
In Employment†	60,600	68.7	74.2	70.8
Employees†	55,500	63.9	65.4	63.4
Self Employed†	4,500	4.6	8.5	7.2
Unemployed§	2,600	4.1	3.4	4.1

Source: ONS Annual Population Survey † - numbers are for those aged 16 and over, % are for those aged 16-64 § - numbers and % are for those aged 16 and over. % is a proportion of economically active

The number of job opportunities are equally spread across all professions with the highest concentration being in professional occupations and the lowest in plant and machine operatives. This shows that there is a variety of opportunities in Milton Keynes and a proportionally larger section of the population are in what is regarded as skilled work.

Graduate Qualifications

Cities with high proportion of graduates tend to have stronger economies, but this is concentrated in a few areas. 37.4% of the population of Milton Keynes has high-level qualifications, just behind the average of 38.4%.

Table 4: Employment by occupation in Milton Keynes, the South East, and Great Britain, April 2018 to March 2019

	Milton Keynes (Numbers)	Milton Keynes (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
Soc 2010 Major Group 1-3	61,800	47.3	51.2	46.8
1 Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	13,700	10.5	12.3	10.9
2 Professional Occupations	28,000	21.3	22.6	20.9
3 Associate Professional & Technical	20,100	15.3	16.2	14.8
Soc 2010 Major Group 4-5	24,900	19.1	19.7	20.1
4 Administrative & Secretarial	14,900	11.4	10.3	9.9
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	10,100	7.7	9.4	10.1
Soc 2010 Major Group 6-7	22,700	17.4	15.7	16.5
6 Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	10,200	7.8	8.8	9.0
7 Sales and Customer Service Occs	12,500	9.6	6.9	7.4
Soc 2010 Major Group 8-9	21,200	16.2	13.4	16.6
8 Process Plant & Machine Operatives	5,700	4.4	4.7	6.3
9 Elementary Occupations	15,400	11.8	8.7	10.3

Source: ONS annual population survey
 Notes: Numbers and % are for those 16+
 % is a proportion of all persons in employment

Wages in Milton Keynes

The National Living Wage (NLW), which is the government-set mandatory wage for those aged over 25, (a rebranding of the national minimum wage from 2016) is £8.21 per hour as of 1st April 2019.

[The Living Wage Foundation](#) calculate that the actual living wage is £9 per hour for areas in the UK outside of London to account for the high cost of living and applies to everyone over 18.

Based on full time hours (37.5 per week), someone over 25 on the NLW would earn £16,009.50 gross income in a year, and someone on the Living Wage Foundation Wage would earn £17,550 a year—a difference of £1,540.50. It's worth noting that this difference is less stark than the difference between the then *minimum* wage and then Living Wage Foundation wage report in 2016, which was £2,184.

In 2017, the median* weekly wage for *residents* of Milton Keynes was £576 and median gross annual salary £31,205 compared to the median wage for *people working in* Milton Keynes whose weekly median wage was £602 but median gross annual salary £30,646. This indicates that there is a larger proportion of higher earners living in Milton Keynes but working elsewhere. Nationally the total average** wage is currently rising at the rate 3.5% the highest level in over 10 years according to Labour Market Statistics ONS July 2019

Table 5: Median earnings (GBP) by place of residence (2018)

	Milton Keynes (Pounds)	South East (Pounds)	Great Britain (Pounds)
Gross Weekly Pay			
Full-Time Workers	587.8	614.5	571.1
Male Full-Time Workers	637.1	670.8	612.2
Female Full-Time Workers	517.5	541.9	510.0
Hourly Pay – Excluding Overtime			
Full-Time Workers	14.73	15.65	14.36
Male Full-Time Workers	16.17	16.61	14.89
Female Full-Time Workers	13.93	14.43	13.56

[Source: ONS annual survey of hours and earnings – resident analysis](#)

*Median – the midpoint in a range of data **average – cumulative data divided by the number of data sets.

Unemployment in Milton Keynes

Since November 2015, individuals of working age looking for work or on low incomes are eligible to claim Universal Credit. This is a single monthly payment which replaced six existing benefits, including Jobseekers Allowance. Universal Credit was introduced in stages and Milton Keynes adopted Full Service Universal Credits in December 2018. MK Council, concerned about the delays experienced by other authorities, set up a hardship fund to offset the effects of the transition.

In June 2019, there were 3,430 individuals in Milton Keynes claiming Universal Credit who were also registered as 'out of work'. Of these 58% were identified as male and 42% identified as female. This represents 2% of the population of Milton Keynes, below the national average of 2.8% but in line with the South East Region average of 1.8%.

Table 6: Local authority profile for Milton Keynes – unemployment by Ward, May 2019

Area	Number	Rate (% population)
Milton Keynes	3315	1.9
Bletchley East	300	3.3
Bletchley Park	225	2.5
Bletchley West	160	1.8
Bradwell	190	2.3
Broughton	115	1.1
Campbell Park & Old Woughton	150	1.7
Central Milton Keynes	330	2.7
Danesborough & Walton	90	1.1
Loughton & Shenley	115	1.1
Monkston	115	1.3
Newport Pagnell North & Hanslope	65	0.9
Newport Pagnell South	105	1.5
Olney	65	1.0
Shenley Brook End	150	1.6
Stantonbury	205	2.0

Stony Stratford	150	2.4
Tattenhoe	95	1.2
Wolverton	215	2.1
Woughton & Fishermead	470	4.1

[Source: Claimant Court, ONS via NOMIS \(Invest Milton Keynes\)](#)

Most wards in Milton have below the national and South East regional average levels of unemployment however two wards stand out; Bletchley East and Woughton & Fishermead. Both have been identified as areas of deprivation in the Poverty and Disadvantage section of this report. Youth unemployment is in line with national figures although the number of 16-17 has reduced in line with the introduction of compulsory education up to 18.

Table 7: Youth unemployment

Universal Credit Claimant count by age (not seasonally adjusted – June 2019)	Milton Keynes (Numbers)	Milton Keynes (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
Aged 16+	3430	2.0	1.8	2.8
Aged 16 to 17	5	0.1	0.1	0.3
Aged 18 to 24	525	2.9	2.4	3.7
Aged 18 to 21	330	3.5	2.6	3.9

Source: ONS Claimant count by sex and age

Note: % is number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age

Gross Value Added (GVA)

In economics, *GVA* is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

Milton Keynes is in the top 4 for Gross Value Added (GVA) per worker, showing that we are the fourth most productive city, and this is linked in the report firstly to our South East location as there is a geographic bias in the South East for productivity, and there is a trend for cities who rank highly to also rank in the top 10 for industrial share in private knowledge service jobs.

Table 8: GVA

GVA			
League table ranking		GVA Q1 2019, £millions (Annualised, constant 2013 prices)	Growth (YoY)
1	Reading	6,400	2.0%
2	Cambridge	8,900	2.0%
3	Oxford	8,400	1.8%
4	Milton Keynes	11,500	1.7%
5	Ipswich	4,500	1.6%
6	Peterborough	5,300	1.5%
7	Portsmouth	5,400	1.4%
8	Norwich	2,600	1.3%
9	Southampton	6,100	1.3%
10	Coventry	8,100	1.3%
11	Wakefield	6,800	1.3%
12	Exeter	4,700	1.2%
13	Brighton	7,200	1.2%
14	Outer London	122,200	1.2%
15	Sunderland	5,700	1.2%
16	Nottingham	9,000	1.2%
17	Stockport	6,500	1.1%
18	Rotherham	4,400	1.1%
19	York	4,800	1.1%
20	Aberdeen	12,200	1.1%

Head Office Growth

Milton Keynes is home to more than 150 head office operations, representing diverse industries including consumer finance, retail, banking, industrial products, financial technologies, IT outsourcing, leisure and social care. Some of the companies with head offices in Milton Keynes are:

Volkswagen Group - UK HQ
 National House Building Council (NHBC) - HQ
 Domino's Pizza - UK HQ
 Aston Martin Red Bull Racing - HQ
 Makita - UK HQ
 Mercedes-Benz - UK HQ
 Xero - UK HQ
 Rightmove Group - HQ
 Suzuki GB - UK HQ
 Volkswagen Financial Services - UK HQ
 Yamaha Music Europe GmbH - UK HQ
 Source: Invest MK

Santander's new Tech hub is due to open in 2022 bringing more new tech jobs and potentially £150m investment into MK.

*Future of employment in Milton Keynes

The Spring 2019 Quarterly Economic Report from the MK Chamber of Commerce found that 31% of businesses anticipated increasing their workforce in the next year, and that 43% of businesses who had attempted recruitment over the past quarter, stated that they had experienced recruitment difficulties in finding suitable staff. This figure has remained roughly constant over the last year. The

main difficulty reported was in recruiting managerial staff, followed by semi/unskilled staff. The report also notes that intentions to recruit were slightly down and speculates that this may be in response to the uncertainty over the future hiring of EU migrant workers and in the increase of the National Living Wage.

Milton Keynes is at the centre of the Oxford – Cambridge arc development; planning consultation is currently taking place for an east-west rail link and infrastructure planned along this route. The intention is to create a further million homes along this route by 2050. The three major cities along this ARC are some of the most productive in the UK, with Milton Keynes having a 25% higher than national productivity average per worker.

According to UK Powerhouse Sustainable Cities report Summer 2019, Milton Keynes is 35th in the national league table of employment growth with a year on year growth of 0.7% 2018 to 2019. However, with the development of the Oxford - Milton Keynes - Cambridge arc, employment is predicted to grow by 1% by 2021 moving the city up to 24th on the table.

With science, technology, research and engineering at it's core the ARC should further cement this region as a leader in the field. The region would create a further 1.1 million new jobs increasing economic output in the region by £163 billion per annum. (source New Infrastructure Commission report, Partnering for Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford ARC)

Sources:

Is England Fairer? The state of equality and human rights - Equality and Human Rights Commission April 2019

Q2 2019 Quarterly Economic Survey – Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce June 2019

Apprenticeship Statistics: England by Andrew Powell, Briefing Paper No 06113 – House of Commons Library 11 February 2019

Nomis Official Labour market Statistics – Office for National Statistics – www.nomisweb.co.uk 16/07/2019

UK Powerhouse Sustainable Cities Summer 2019 – Irwin Mitchell

Milton Keynes Employment – Invest Milton Keynes May 2019

Vital Action

Funded through MK Community Foundation 'The Work Life Project' is a series of workshops and talks for young women to support them to discover how they can develop their skills and contribute to the creative industry, run by MK Gallery. The project aims to improve access to creative industries for BAME women and women from disadvantaged backgrounds by supporting participants to develop the skills and confidence to pursue a creative career. Activities have included workshops facilitated by 'Of Our Own' and Conde Nast College of Fashion and Design, which raised awareness of career, education and work experience opportunities.

Vital Thinking

Is the local workforce flexible and does it have enough mix of skills allowing it to adapt as business needs change?

It is predicted that many employment opportunities that will face our children when they enter the workforce don't yet exist – will they be prepared?

How will the uncertainty regarding our relationships with the EU effect our local economy?

How can we encourage more employers to pay the National Foundation's actual living wage?

How can we as a community, support women to have equal opportunities in the workplace?



EDUCATION

Theme Definition – This section concentrates on traditional forms of training, learning and development. Gathering data on more informal learning is more difficult, as is training and

development in the workplace, as many reports are produced by training sponsors and community learning schemes are less regulated. A well skilled and educated population is needed to meet the challenges of a growing workforce. On a personal level being able to reach your potential contributes to a sense of wellbeing and satisfaction, encourages people to be more engaged as citizens and they are less likely to be involved in crime.

Overview

One of the main concerns for MK is the growing need for places, starting with nursery provision. The standard of education is good up to Key stage 3 but falls away at Key Stage 4 and A Levels when MK drops below the national average. The participation rate of 16-17 year olds in education and training is however comparable with the national rates. MKC has started to put strategies in place to encourage collaborations between providers. Participation in higher education is low. MK:U and the Bletchley Park/MK College partnerships will improve the tertiary offering in MK and the availability of local higher education is known to increase participation from those groups more reluctant to progress to higher education.

Early years

There are over 300 early years childcare providers in Milton Keynes Council area. Approx. a third of these are independent childminders, 20% are breakfast or out of school clubs, the remainder are pre-schools, day nurseries and schools with a nursery unit. Ofsted inspections over the last 3 years indicated that only 3% 'required improvement', 60% were rated as 'good' and 7% were 'outstanding'. The remainder have not yet had an inspection. This shows that the early years provision in Milton Keynes is of a good standard overall.

[file:///L:/Publications/Vital%20Signs/Vital%20Signs%202019/Research/Education/EY%20FWD%20View%20Final%20Edition%20\(1\).pdf](file:///L:/Publications/Vital%20Signs/Vital%20Signs%202019/Research/Education/EY%20FWD%20View%20Final%20Edition%20(1).pdf)

In 2017, the government extended a scheme in England to provide eligible children of working parents with 30 hours of free childcare provision for 38 weeks a year for children between the ages of 3-4 years. MK Council identified that MK has enough places for 3-year olds but has a substantial deficit for 2-year olds. The entitlement is also extended to 2 year olds that are from income deprived or disadvantaged families based on eligibility criteria.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596460/early_education_and_childcare_statutory_guidance_2017.pdf

Table 1: MK: 2 year old provision

Milton Keynes: 2-year-old provision:	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Number of places available	952	952	952	952	952
Projected demand for places	1160	1334	1504	1621	1734
Balance of Places	-209	-383	-552	-669	-782

Primary

Milton Keynes primary schools have 1% of pupils achieving a higher standard in attainment in Reading, Writing and Maths at primary school level, with 11% of pupils "achieving at a higher standard" compared to 10% across England

Table 2: MK primary school pupil attainment

	% of pupils meeting expected standard	Progress score & description			% of pupils achieving at a higher standard	Average score in reading	Average score in Maths
		Reading	Writing	Maths			
Milton Keynes	65%	Average -0.1	Average 0	Average -0.2	11%	105	104
England State funded schools	64%	0.0	0.0	0.0	10%	105	104
England – all schools	64%				10%	105	104

Secondary

According to MK Futures 2050 – one of the council's key priorities is to work toward providing world class education for 11-19 year olds, to complement its ambition to establish a higher education institution in the centre of the city.

Ref: Commission Working Paper 15 – Education and Skills 2018.

The keys issues raised from the paper were:

- The growth of the school population, in 2015 - 35% more children entered reception than left in year 11
- 3 secondary schools in MK were rated as 'requiring improvement' – these represented the more deprived areas in MK
- Poor aspiration by some white young males
- Although schools performed well under OFSTED, results at GCSE and A Level were below the national average
- Insufficient cooperation between schools and local businesses

Therefore, MK Council has in place a plan to extend the educational provision, with 3 new schools being opened in 2018 providing places for primary and secondary pupils.

There is ongoing work between schools across the borough to share best practice in order to raise the attainment rate of students. In order to increase the number of students taking STEM subjects, (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) MK College is leading a consortium to launch an Institute of Digital Technology in Block D at Bletchley Park. Due to open in September 2021 the Institute will provide places for 1,000 students a year to teach technical and digital skills, required by future Businesses in MK.

Due to the high employment in MK, young people can find low skilled work easily and this may explain the lack of aspiration from young males from lower income areas, where the focus will be on getting a paid job rather than continuing in education.

However, participation in education and training by 16-17-year olds is on a level with the national rates and is higher than those in South East England, although it is slightly lower than the neighbouring local authorities of Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Central Bedfordshire. It is also the only one of those five areas to see a drop in participation over the last year. The mix is also slightly different with a greater percentage undertaking apprenticeship and work based learning than is the case in South East England and Bucks, another feature of the buoyant employment opportunities in MK.

Table 3: Proportion of 16-17 year olds recorded in education and training, March 2019

Proportion of 16 and 17 year olds recorded as participating in:							
	Full time education and training	Apprenticeship	Work based learning	Part time education	Employment combined with study	Other	Total
MK	85.7%	5.0%	1.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.0%	92.1%
England	84.8%	5.5%	1.1%	0.2%	0.7%	0.2%	92.5%
SE England	85.4%	4.9%	0.6%	0.1%	0.4%	0.4%	91.7%
Bucks	89.0%	3.7%	0.2%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	94.3%
Northants	83.9%	7.3%	1.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%	93.0%
Central Beds	84.7%	7.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	92.4%

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/neet-and-participation-local-authority-figures>

The problem of engagement with business, higher education and raising aspiration is a national issue. As a result of a report commissioned in 2013 by government, all schools are encouraged to benchmark themselves against 8 areas to help overcome this problem. These include having a stable careers programme, learning from career and labour market information; addressing the needs of each pupil; linking curriculum learning to careers; encounters with employers and employees; experience of workplaces; encounters with higher education establishments and personal guidance. All secondary schools in MK are being actively encouraged to work to these benchmarks.

Table 4: Results 2018 Results at Key Stage 4 Results at Key stage 4

	No of students at end of Key stage 4	Grade 5 or above in English & Maths GCSEs
		Grade
Milton Keynes	2774	38.8%
England State funded schools and colleges	523636	43.3%
England – all schools and colleges	583615	40.2%

Table 5: A level results

	No of students with and A Level exam entry	Average results		Students completing their main study programme	Achieving AAB or higher in at least 2 facilitating subjects	Grade and points for a student's best 3 A Levels
		Grade	Point score			
Milton Keynes	1482	C	30.23	94.9%	10.2%	C 30.86
England State funded schools and colleges	263436	C+	32.12	92.5%	13.7%	C+ 32.5
England – all schools and colleges	299420	C+	33.33		16.2%	C+ 33.59

https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=phase®ion=826&geographic=la&phase=16to18&orderby=ks5.0.TALLPPE_ALEV_1618&orderdir=desc

Participation in higher level education by young people from Milton Keynes is traditionally low. Data on participation rates are produced nationally and are used to define geographical areas in one of five categories: the highest 20% and the lowest 20% participation rates nationally with three bands of 20% in-between.

The participation rate is defined as the proportion of young people who entered higher education by the age of 19 during the 2009-10 to 2014-15 academic years (the most recent data available).

Only one part of MK features in the top category with a participation rate of 51%. However five areas in Milton Keynes are in the bottom category and two of those have participation rates in higher education at about 18%. This compares with the neighbouring areas in Buckinghamshire with rates at over 60%.

Participation in higher education from under-represented groups is facilitated by having university level education available locally and with direct travel routes.

<https://esrc.ukri.org/files/news-events-and-publications/evidence-briefings/student-mobility-and-local-economy/>

MK:U

Work on establishing a university in Milton Keynes is well underway; a competition held for architects to win the contract for the final design is now in the closing stages. The proposed site, near to the rail station, is due to open for undergraduates in 2023. It will focus on digital economy skills and business-orientated courses with fast track 2-year degrees. The project is a partnership between MK Council and Cranfield University and the project recently received a grant from Santander of £30m. Research from the governments Digital Economy Council found that Britain is creating more technology companies than any other country apart from the US and China. MK:U will give opportunities for students in MK as well as attracting students both nationally and internationally.

Source: Skills and Commission Working Paper 16 – Options and opportunities for university education in Milton Keynes (MK Futures 2050 Commission) 2015

Apprenticeships

The take up of apprenticeships nationally has fallen since the recent changes in funding. The government charges a levy to larger companies with a pay bill over £3million each year, which they can use towards funding apprenticeship training. Whilst this has encouraged larger companies to put more employees through apprenticeship training, it does make it more difficult for smaller companies to take on apprentices without funding support and there is a lobby to encourage the government to make unused levy payments available to smaller companies. The change in charges has also influenced the type of training being supported through apprenticeships, with many companies using it as a tool to encourage development of older/existing employees.

In 2017/2018 the take up of apprenticeships in Milton Keynes fell by 530 with a total of 1350 places, similar to the national trend and the lowest level since 2011. Despite this, apprenticeships for those over 19 has grown by 3% although they are more likely to start at the higher level. The take up between gender is balanced at 49% for women and 51% for men.

Table 6: Actual numbers of apprenticeships in Milton Keynes, by level and age group

Levels:	No	Ages	No
Intermediate	500	Below 19	350
Advanced	680	19-24	400
Higher	240	25+	670

[Source: BIS FE Data library](#)

Crime prevention and reducing reoffending

Given the emotional, physical and financial costs of crime on victims, perpetrators and the economy, a strategic priority is to prevent crime from happening in the first place and to reduce reoffending through rehabilitation. Resources directed at such activities have to be prioritised to where they make most impact.

Young people with a life style which puts them at high risk of committing crime are identified and supported to try to prevent them getting into crime. MK Youth Offending Team works with Thames Valley Police to bring this about as well as working to prevent from re-offending those young people who have already been sentenced. At particular risk are those young people who have been excluded from school.

The number of permanent exclusions from secondary schools in MK has been dropping over the last two years for which data are available. However fixed term exclusions are on the rise. Those in primary schools in MK are comparable across the two years.

MK has one of the highest rates of permanent exclusions in primary schools across the whole of the SE England and one of the lowest in secondary schools by a long way. For fixed term, primary is roughly in a median position, but secondary is well above average.

Table 7: Permanent and fixed period exclusions by type of school (Department for Education)

State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools

State-funded primary schools						
	Number of permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusion rate (1)	Number of fixed period exclusions	Fixed period exclusion rate (2)	Number of pupil enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion	One or more fixed period exclusion rate (3)
17/18	9	0.03	484	1.77	212	0.77
16/17	8	0.03	420	1.55	194	0.71

State-funded secondary schools						
	Number of permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusion rate (1)	Number of fixed period exclusions	Fixed period exclusion rate (2)	Number of pupil enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion	One or more fixed period exclusion rate (3)
17/18	1	0.01	2,025	10.90	940	5.06
16/17	14	0.08	1,638	8.96	812	4.44

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2017-to-2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2016-to-2017>

Vital Action:

MKCF have funded Shenley Brook End School £15,000 to deliver the training of teachers in Leadership Equality & Diversity, at the Training Centre, supporting teachers from BME backgrounds to ensure positive outcomes for the students from BME/disadvantaged backgrounds. Outcomes of the training they offer include: developing one's own leadership style, increased self-awareness and interpersonal skills, increased confidence to progress in one's career and gaining a better understanding of diversity issues.

Vital Thinking:

- One of the main concerns for MK is the growing and challenging need for provision, starting with nursery places. How do we address this?
- The standard of school education is good up to Key Stage 3 (up to the age of 14 years) but drops at Key stage 4 (14-16 years) and A Levels (16-18 years) when Milton Keynes is below the national average (England).
- There is a correlation between school exclusions and offending rates. How can we as a community support young people?
- How can we as a community address the relatively low take up of apprenticeships and a potential skills gap, as the number of jobs and the nature of employment changes with the growth in technology?

Diversity



DIVERSITY

Theme definition

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

Overview

We last took a look into what diversity in Milton Keynes looks like now in last year's Vital Signs report. Unfortunately, it remains the case that it is a challenge to get an up to date picture across all the protected characteristics. Data remains elusive between census years on race and ethnicity, and there was paucity of data available at the time of writing this report for the school census.

This year, however, we are able to highlight some local research around the experiences of local LGBT+ people, which seems to reflect some national statistics.

Findings

37.6	Median age* in Milton Keynes (mid-2018)
84	Syrian refugees have been settled in MK since we joined the settlement scheme
1 in 4	LGBT people report a lack of understanding of their needs from healthcare professionals when accessing services

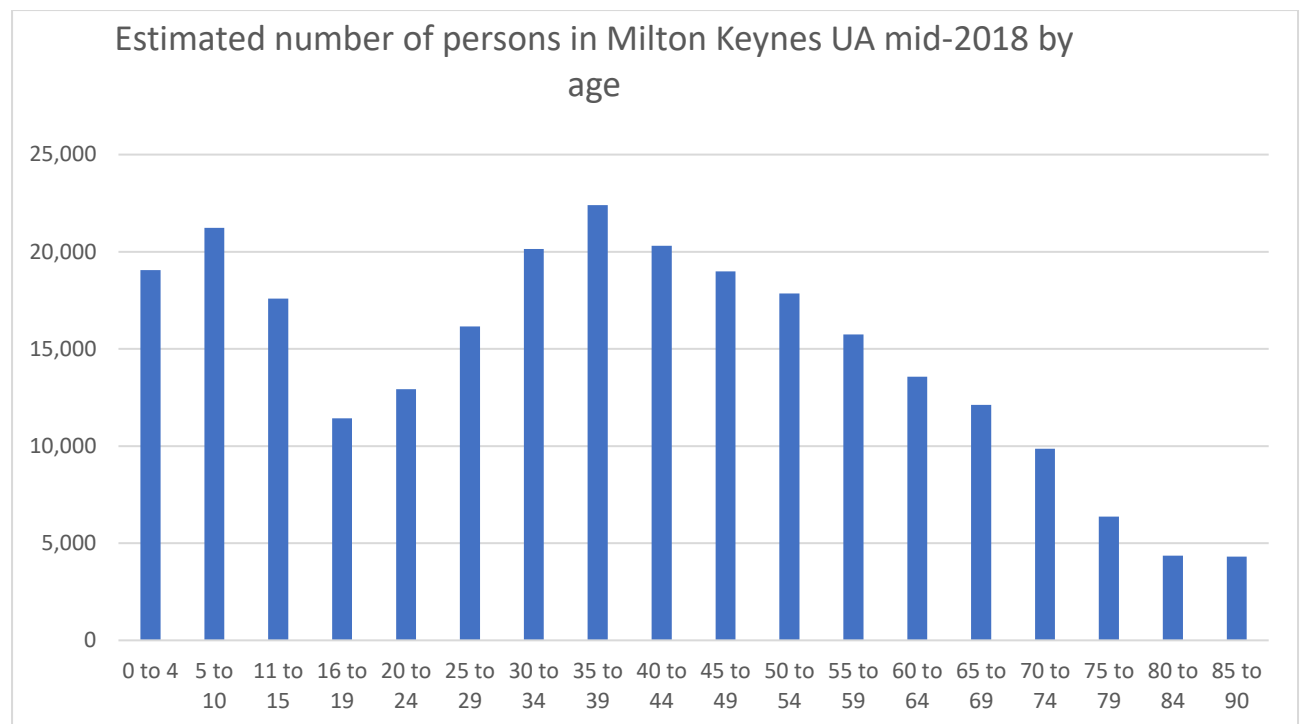
*Median – the middle value of a set of data when figures are written in order

Age

Estimated numbers of the population for mid-2018 in the Milton Keynes Unitary Authority:

- 0 – 17 years: 68,278
- 18 -24 years: 18,124
- 65 years and over: 37,032

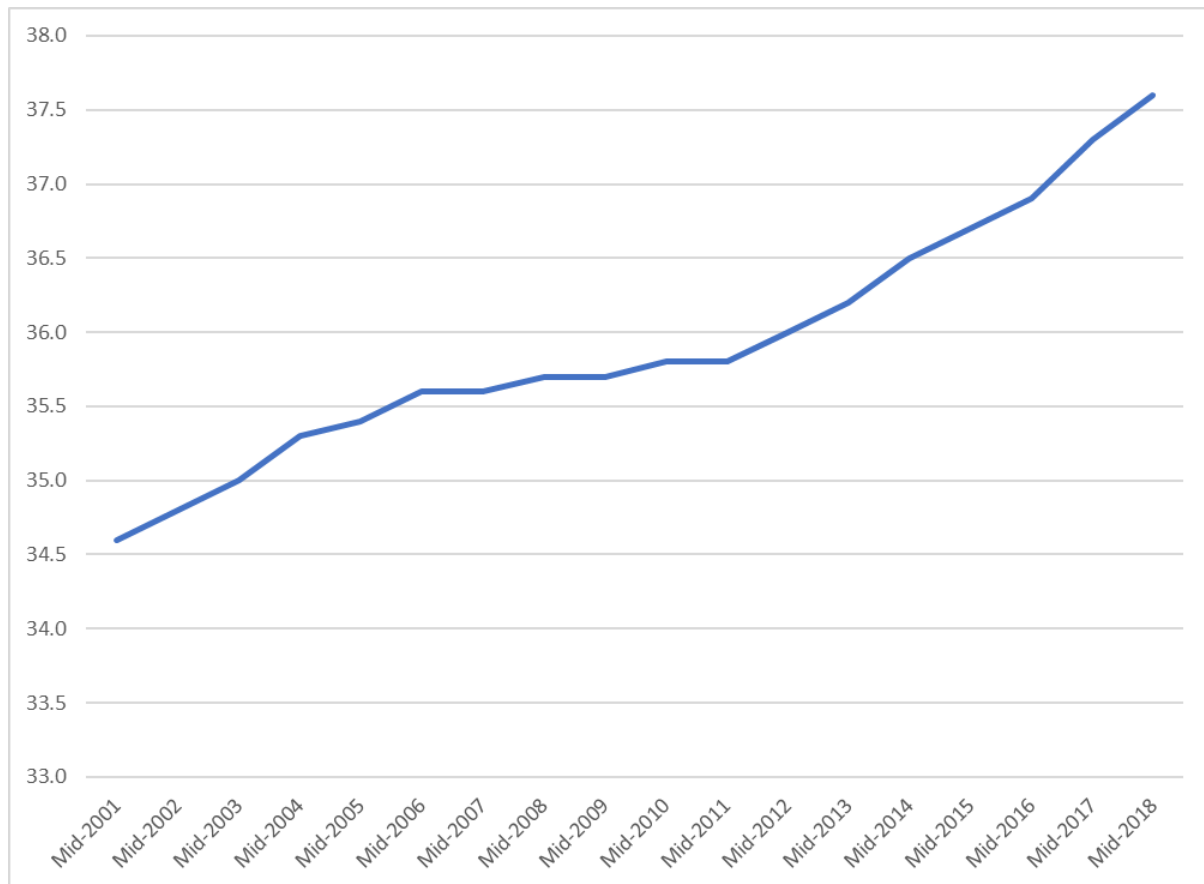
Figure 1: Estimated number of persons in M K Unitary Authority mid-2018 by age



[\(Source: ONS: Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2018: 2019 LA boundaries\)](#)

The mid-2018 median age of Milton Keynes has risen slightly since the prior year to 37.6 (mid-2017: 37.3), continuing the trend of a rising median age. This is still lower than the UK and England averages (38.7 and 39.9 respectively). According to the ONS, median age is a predictor of births and deaths, with younger populations tending to have more births and fewer deaths.

Figure 2: Mid-year median age in Milton Keynes Unitary Authority, 2001-2018



[\(Source: ONS: Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: Mid-2018: 2019 LA boundaries\)](#)

Disability

Learning Disabilities

According to [Public Health England profiles for Learning Disabilities](#), in 2018 Milton Keynes had a higher than average number of children with moderate learning difficulties known to schools (39.2 per 1000, compared with 24.0 for the South East region and 28.9 for England). The average is much lower for those with severe learning difficulties known to schools, however, with 2.07 per 1000 (SE: 3.3.0; England: 3.74).

The PHE profile marks that the rates of children with multiple and profound learning difficulties and children with autism are similar to the regional and national averages:

	Milton Keynes	South East	England
Children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty known to schools per 1000	1.10	1.01	1.26
Children with Autism known to schools per 1000	14.3	14.0	13.7

Race and Ethnicity

Diversity in Schools

Unfortunately, the January 2019 school census data tables ([Department for Education: School Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2019](#)) do not contain the same level of detail about the characteristics of school pupils by Local Authority as for January 2018, which we reported on in Vital Signs MK 2018.

The main text report does detail that, across England, the proportion of pupils from Minority Ethnic backgrounds continues to steadily increase (Minority Ethnic is defined as those classified as anything other than White British).

As above, a localised breakdown was not available, but the England trend is that the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language has steadily increased. The source material notes that this cannot be read directly as a result of immigration.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Milton Keynes Council joined the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme as a full participant in 2015. The latest available data shows that in total 84 persons have been settled in the area between this and the Vulnerable Children resettlement schemes, including dependents, up until the end of the first quarter of 2019. ([Source: Immigration statistics – Asylum tables, Year end March 2019, volume 4. Home Office.](#))

LGBT+

In 2018, we noted the lack of localised data about LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and other identities relating to gender identity and sexuality) people in Milton Keynes, and were able to report little regional data alongside noting some national research into the issues faced by LGBT+ people.

Healthwatch have since then released a report on consultation they had conducted with the LGBT+ community that they delivered in partnership with the local charity for LGBT+ people in Milton

Keynes, Q:alliance ([Healthwatch Milton Keynes: LGBTQ+ Health Inequalities and Access to Treatment: June 2019](#)) Testimony gathered demonstrated poor and underdeveloped knowledge of LGBT needs and care pathways and noted that many felt they experience health inequalities as a result.

The report revealed that local GP services have poor knowledge and understanding of issues facing LGBT people, particularly trans people. Trans people were identified as facing difficulty in accessing the right referral pathways, and issues around data protection and confidentiality, including previous gender status referred to in clinical records and shared with other NHS staff without their consent (this is contrary to the Gender Recognition Act). It was noted that these experiences not only impact the gender journey of the individual—that is, the access to the services and support needed through their transition—but also was reported to have negative impact for access to support for other health conditions that they may have that are otherwise unrelated to their transition.

A lack of awareness and understanding of current local processes for support was identified across responses from a number of trans women who had come into contact with local GPs and other health services. Similarly, a lack of awareness of fertility processes for same sex couples was reported, as well as the financial inequality within up-to-date processes for same sex couples looking to access treatment (which, as it notes, is a national issue). For instance, a same sex female couple would have to go through a minimum of 6 cycles of self-funded artificial insemination before being entitled to any NHS support, which carries an estimated cost of approximately £800-£1,300 per cycle.

National LGBT charity Stonewall released a report investigating the specific experience of LGBT people accessing health services ([Stonewall: LGBT in Britain: Health Report: November 2018](#)) which show that the experiences reported locally are not unique to Milton Keynes, with the following findings reflecting the experiences noted by local LGBT communities above:

- *Data protection and confidentiality:* 1 in 10 LGBT people outed without consent by healthcare staff in front of other staff or patients . This is particularly pronounced for trans people, for whom this is more than 1 in 4. For LGB people who are not trans, around 7% reported being outed without consent.
- *Lack of understanding:* 1 in 4 LGBT people said they've experience a lack of understanding of specific lesbian, gay, and bisexual needs by healthcare staff; 3 in 5 trans people reported a lack of understanding of specific trans needs
- *Inappropriate curiosity and invasive questioning:* 1 in four LGBT people have experienced inappropriate curiosity from healthcare staff because they are LGBT

Whilst the above only provides us specific detail about access to healthcare, it is possible that similar experiences are reflected in access to other non-healthcare services or in a vast array of other settings. The Stonewall report also shows that LGBT people can sometimes begin to avoid accessing services altogether—1 in 7, in fact, reported having avoided treatment for fear of discrimination.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) recently conducted [the second wave of the European LGBTI survey](#) (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans intersex and non-binary and other gender non-conforming people) earlier in 2019, and results are due to be shared in 2020. It will compare results with the first wave, conducted in 2012, to assess the effectiveness of policies and measures to combat discrimination and victimisation of LGBTI people in the European Union.

Results from the MK Community Foundation Vital Signs survey 2019 (205 respondents):

- Most people agreed (48%) or somewhat agreed (42%) that people of different cultural backgrounds get along well in Milton Keynes. 3% of people strongly agreed.
- There was no strong consensus when asked to what extent they agreed that “Milton Keynes is not doing a good job of meeting the needs of its growing immigrant communities”: 49% somewhat agreed or agreed; 44% somewhat disagreed or disagreed.
- 90% of people agreed (somewhat agreed, agreed, and strongly agreed) that diversity in our communities is a strength of Milton Keynes

Vital Thinking

What can we learn in the voluntary, cultural and community sector about the experiences that marginalised communities report about accessing services?

How do we ensure MK is accessible, open, and welcoming to all its communities, whatever their background, experience, or identities?

How can we meet MK’s Creative & Cultural Strategy 2018 – 2023 that states that we should:

“ensure that our cultural venues and programmes are disability compliant, removing barriers and actively welcoming people from all backgrounds through accessible education programmes”?

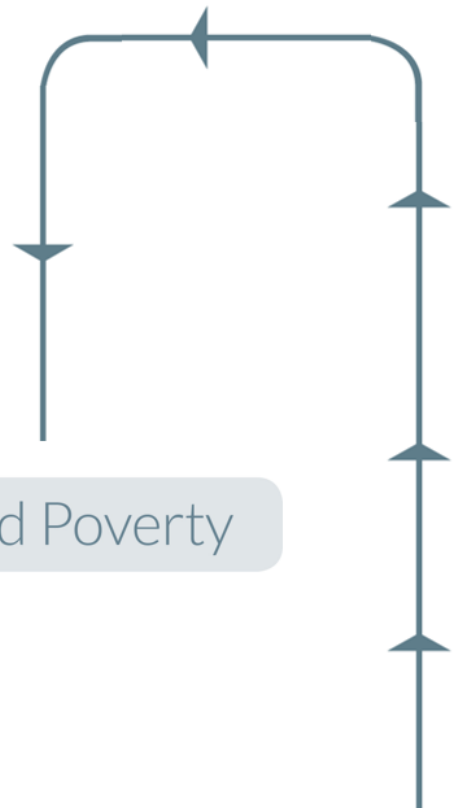
Vital Action

MK Community Foundation are delighted to award The Stables Theatre in MK a Large Strategic Grant of £95,000. The grant, which will be awarded over 2 years, will be used to fund an extensive programme designed to enhance the organisation’s approach to working with deaf and disabled communities as participants, audience members and performers.

The Stables will work with national accessibility and disability specialists including Attitude is Everything and Graeae Theatre Company to create a bespoke training programme for The Stables’ staff and its 200 strong volunteer base. It will also open up sessions to the wider cultural sector.



Disadvantage and Poverty



DISADVANTAGE AND POVERTY

Theme Definition

Poverty is when one's resources do not meet one's minimum need. There is no single measure of poverty, but the UK government defines poverty in 2 ways:

1. Relative poverty - those whose income is less than 60% of the income after household costs, relative to that household's size.
2. Absolute poverty – the same calculation as above using the national median income in 2010/11 in order to measure how the living standards of low-income households change over time.

Relative poverty is the definition used by End Child Poverty, whose local statistics for Milton Keynes are cited in this section of the report.

Overview

We have reported on this theme in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Unfortunately, the trend that the UK and Milton Keynes has seen through the 2010s continues, and we report worsening statistics regarding child poverty and the demand on some of the local services that are known to us.

Last year, we also reported on homelessness under this theme—this year, an update on our findings in this area can be found under the Housing section of this report.

Key Statistics

48%	Clients who sought advice from Citizens Advice Bureau Milton Keynes in 2018/19 were in paid employment, which is their highest rate to date.
Just under 1 in 3	Children in Milton Keynes living in poverty (31%), as high as 50% in some wards
10%	Increase in demand on Milton Keynes Food Bank in 2018 compared to the 11,500 clients it saw in 2017

Child Poverty

Where in previous years Milton Keynes, whilst facing a worsening problem of child poverty, had a lower rate than the national average, we now find ourselves matching it, with 30% of children (total figure: 22,940) in Milton Keynes Local Authority now living in poverty.

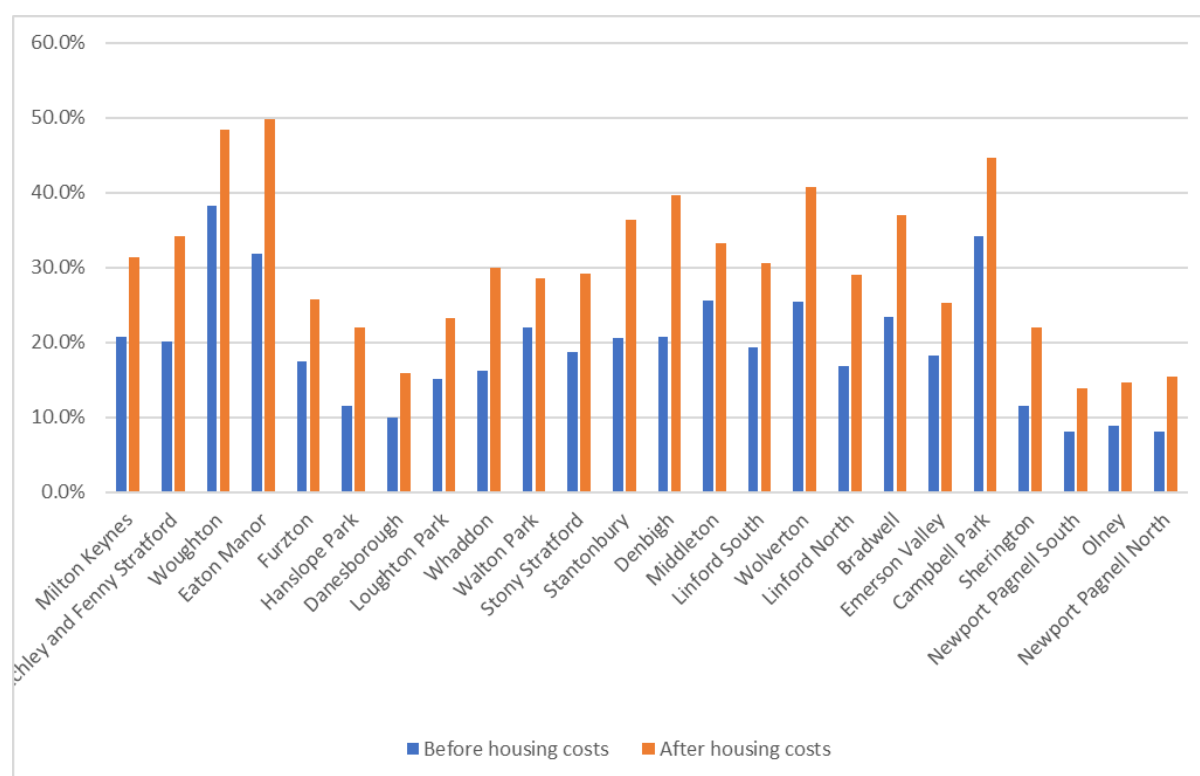
(Source: [Poverty in Your Area. End Child Poverty. May 2019.](#))

We have the 9th highest rate of poverty of local authorities in the South East Region ranked out of 68.

End Child Poverty's (2019 Report) localised breakdown of these statistics provides us for the second time some insight into how this breaks down by ward, and the extent to which the situation has worsened for some of our communities. The highest rate of child poverty for a single ward we reported last year was 40%, this has now increased to 50% for Eaton Manor, and 48% for Woughton.

Rates have increased even for our least deprived wards. Olney Ward has increased from 10% to 15% of children living in poverty.

Figure 1: Percentage of children in poverty in Milton Keynes by ward, 2017/18



(Source: End Child Poverty)

Housing costs include rent, water rates, mortgage interest payments, buildings insurance payments and ground rent and service charges (Source: [Shelter](#))

In-Work Poverty

In-work poverty occurs when a working household's total net income is insufficient to meet their needs (Source: [Nuffield Foundation](#)).

Two thirds of children in poverty in the UK live in a working family.

[\(Source: Local indicators of child poverty, 2017/18: Summary estimates of child poverty in small areas of Great Britain. Juliet Stone and Donald Hirsch. Loughborough University\).](#)

Also, in the UK, it is reported that five out of every six low paid workers fails to escape low pay over a period of 10 years.

[\(Source: Budget 2018: Tackling the Rising tide of in-work poverty. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. October 2018\)](#)

The Institute for Fiscal Studies explain that the rise in in-work poverty is not just about low pay, citing that, in addition to the inequality in the rates at which high, middle and low incomes are increasing, the rise in average income of pensioners (which raises the 60%), the cuts to benefits and tax credits which lowers the income of the poorest households, and the rising cost of housing (at higher rates for low income households than middle or high), all impact on who falls below that 60% threshold. [\(Source: What has in-work poverty risen in Britain? IFS Working Paper. June 2019.\)](#)

Locally, [Citizens Advice Milton Keynes](#) informed us that they are facing some of the highest rates of clients accessing their support services who are in work, with 48% in paid employment.

[MK Food Bank](#) do not collect statistics about the employment status of those accessing their services, but reported anecdotally that they do perceive that they are seeing more people in work, predominantly from the seasonal, zero-hour contract sectors of the economy. They did note that they have seen a 10% general increase in demand for food parcels (from 11,500 distributed in 2017 to 12,700 in 2018).

Impact of Universal Credit

Universal Credit was rolled out in Milton Keynes in December 2018.

MK Food Bank have indicated that 40% of the vouchers that they issued between December 2018 and the end of June 2019 were as a result of issues relating to benefits. Of these, 10% cited “Universal Credit” as the main reason they needed vouchers, “waiting benefits” for 20%, “benefits changed” for 11% and “benefits sanctioned” for 1%.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation released a statement earlier this year that expresses support for Universal Credit in principle, but that outlines recommendations for how to deal with the issues that have arisen through its roll-out across the UK so far (Source: [The Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#)).

Results from the MK Community Foundation Vital Signs Survey 2019 (205 Respondents):

- In answer to the question, “Which particular sections of the community do you think have difficulties accessing public and community services”, over half of those who wrote in an answer identified people with physical or learning difficulties and/or mental health issues. Common responses also included people without access to transport, BAME people, migrants and asylum seekers, and LGBT people.
- 68% of people agreed or strongly agreed that lack of transport contributes to disadvantages and exclusion in Milton Keynes

- 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that some people in Milton Keynes do not have enough money for basic needs, such as food and heating
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed that some sections of the Milton Keynes community are more likely to experience disadvantage and exclusion than others

Vital Thinking

Our findings show that the trend that Milton Keynes has seen through the 2010s continues, and as a result it is putting pressure on local services and more importantly on communities and families.

Almost half the clients seeking advice from Citizens Advice Milton Keynes last year were in paid employment. What is causing this and what help can we offer as a community?

What does this say about the pressures working families are facing?

Are high rents and unprotected tenancies causing working families to slip into poverty?

Vital Action

This year MK Community Foundation Supported Fun in School Holidays (FISH) which is a programme run by Service Six that provides activity sessions throughout the summer holiday for children whose families would otherwise not be able to go on holiday or provide other activities. The programme provides a safe space over the six weeks, where young people can take part in sport, education, recreation and personal development activities, making friends, growing skills, and making sure they get a healthy meal each day.

MK Community Foundation also supported Citizens Advice Milton Keynes with £20,763 to fund The Mix Development and Sustainability Project. This will enable The Mix to enter into a productive relationship with Citizens Advice to help provide strong governance, business development, fundraising and support with recruitment and selection of volunteers.



HOUSING

Theme Definition

Access to affordable, good quality housing plays an important role in contributing to vibrant healthy communities, as well as in providing families and individuals with a sense of security and stability. A diversity of housing types can also contribute to the social diversity and vitality of a community and can help to ensure that everyone has a place to call home.

Overview

Last time when we focussed on Housing in the Vital Signs report of 2016, we noted trends around the increase in house prices, the decreasing rates of home ownership, and the increasing rates of homelessness, both in terms of visible rough sleeping, and less visible numbers of families in temporary accommodation.

Our findings in this report show many of these trends continuing. Homelessness is perhaps one exception to this, with indicators showing that some reported rates are slightly less now than in Vital Signs 2018's report re Disadvantage and Poverty. Those rates, are, however, often still higher than they were just a few years ago, and it remains to be seen if a general downward trend continues .

With the cost of housing a significant factor in the rates of families living in poverty, the continuing increasing cost of living in Milton Keynes will continue to be important.

Findings

1 in 117	People in Milton Keynes are homeless
9.75x	Average salary is the cost of an average House in MK (9.77 average for UK cities)
6.1%	Increase in average house price 2017 to 2018 (5 th highest rate for a UK city)
£302,700	Average house price in Milton Keynes in 2018
41	Rough sleeper count for Autumn 2018
18%	Increase in proportion of adults over Milton Keynes living in the private rented sector 2001-2018
42%	Of income of a family in the lowest quartile would be spent on the average private rent in MK

Housing is one of the top three areas local residents approach Citizens Advice Milton Keynes for support on. Within housing, the top three concentrated areas are: Threatened Homelessness, Disrepair in Private Rental Property and Access to Affordable Housing.

House Prices and Affordability

Milton Keynes has the 5th highest rate of increase in house prices out of UK cities at 6.1% (2.7% UK city average). The average house price in 2017 was £285,200, increasing to £302,700 in 2018.

However, in terms of “affordability” measured here in terms of the ratio of the average annual salary against house prices, the ratio for Milton Keynes is relatively in line with the average. Houses in Milton Keynes in 2018 were 9.75 times the average annual salary; the UK average is 9.77. (Cities Outlook.) It is worth noting, however, that the average income for Milton Keynes can be skewed by the high earners who live here and may not accurately reflect the income of most residents.

New Housing

According to the Cities Outlook report and online data tool, Milton Keynes no longer ranks in the top 10 cities in the nation for growth in our housing stock, now ranking at number 13.

When we reported in 2016 we were the third fastest growing city in terms of housing stock with an increase of 1.2% between 2013 and 2014. Our housing stock is increasing slightly faster than it was at that time.

Housing Stock 2016	Housing Stock 2017	Housing Stock Actual change 2016-2017	Housing Stock Percentage change 2016-2017
108,740	109,970	1,230	1.13

[Source: Cities Data Tool. Centre for Cities](#)

Private Rent

According to the English housing survey in 2017-18, the private rented sector accounted for 19% of households in England, not too dissimilar from the 20% figure reported in last year's VS.

Shelter have released data that they had compiled from the 2001 Census and data collected by YouGov comparing the proportion of adults living in the private rented sector has increased dramatically, more than doubling across England, with the proportion of individuals living in their own home also on the decline.

The average increase in proportion of those living in the private rented sector in England is 17%.

The article notes that this shift is largely unprecedented, with the only near-equivalent shift in housing situations in England being the shift from private to social renting that took place after World War II.

Table 1: Change in tenure in Milton Keynes for adults age 20 and over, 2001 - 2018

Census 2001			YouGov 2018			Percentage point change 2001 to 2018		
Owens outright/ with mortgage/ shared ownership	Social Housing	Private rented or lives rent free	Owens outright/ with mortgage/ shared ownership	Social Housing	Private rented or lives rent free	Owens outright/ with mortgage/ shared ownership	Social Housing	Private rented or lives rent free
74%	18%	8%	60%	13%	26%	-14%	-4%	18%

(Source: The dramatic rise of private renting, 2001 to 2018. Shelter.)

Milton Keynes ranks 91st out of local authorities for the affordability of private rent for families on low incomes. It is one of 66 out of 67 areas in the south east where families on low incomes would need to spend more than 30% of their income to rent a typical home, and one of 47 where this is higher than 40%.

Table 2: Proportion of family wages at lower quartile spent on average two bed private and social rent

Local Authority	Annual regional net earnings (based on one FT and one PT wage)	Annual median private rent (2 beds)	% of income spent on private rent	Annual Social Rent (2 beds)	% of income spent on social rent	Rank
Milton Keynes	£25,411	£10,740	42%	£4,804	22%	91

(Source: Private renting unaffordable for working families on low wages in 67% of the country. Shelter. July 2019)

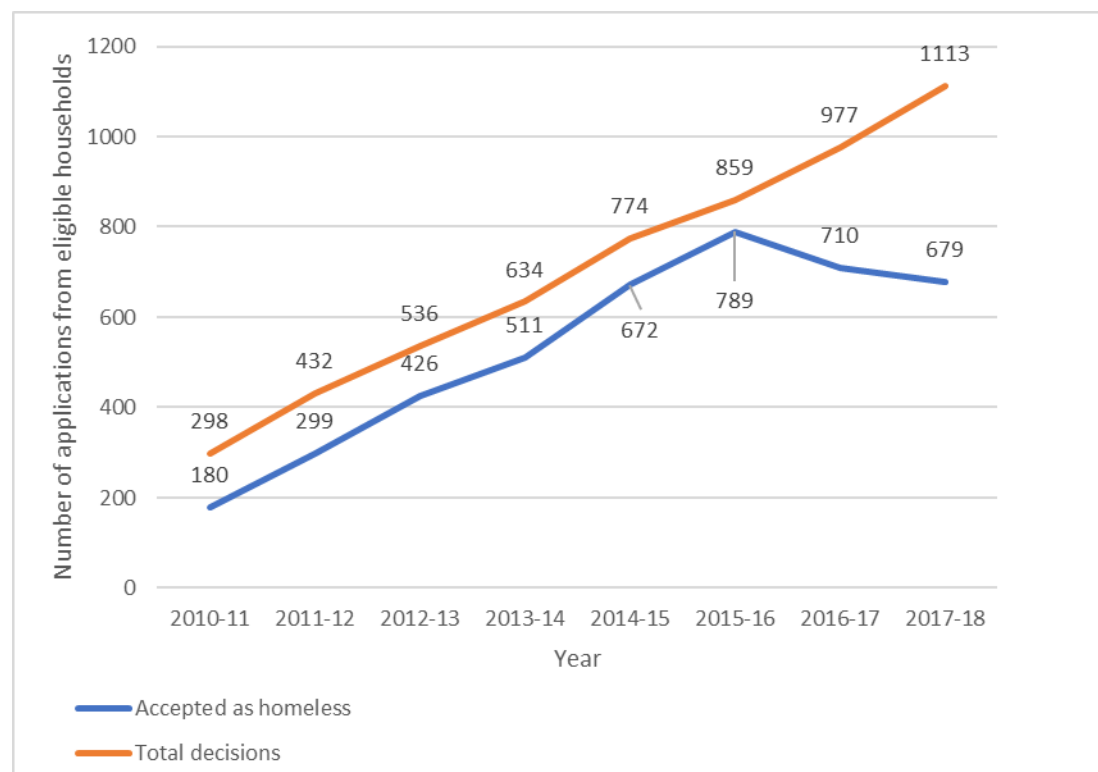
<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2018/jan/20/milton-keynes-uk-capital-of-right-to-buy-to-let>

Homelessness

Statutory homelessness

Local Authority homelessness statistics show the rates at which there are successful applications to the local authority for housing assistance for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The local authority has a duty to provide housing where households are deemed eligible, unintentionally homeless, and in a priority need group.

Figure 1: Statutory homelessness applications from eligible households accepted as homeless in Milton Keynes Local Authority



[Source: Local Authority Homelessness Statistics \(England\). House of Commons Library. January 2019.](#)

This shows that in the last two years there has been a decrease in the number of households successful in seeking support from the local authority under this criteria, down by 15% since 2015/16.

The data also shows, however, that the number of applications are still increasing year on year.

Going forward, this data will be impacted by new legislation from the April 2018 Homelessness Reduction Act, which gives local authorities more duties to support all eligible households, not just the unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

Homelessness rates in Milton Keynes

Research from Shelter, updating on their shocking report that we included the MK results of in last year's Vital Signs report, calculates that as at Q1 2018 1 in 117 (Q2 2017: 1 in 110) people in Milton Keynes are homeless, national rank of 32 out of all local authorities. Some of the information used to calculate this rate, for instance the rough sleep count, used less up to date information than is now available to us. Please see Shelter's website for full references to their sources.

Table 3 Rates of recorded homelessness in Milton Keynes Local Authority as at Q1 2018

Homeless in Temporary Accommodation	Rough Sleeping	Total people homeless	Population	Rate (1 in x)	National Rank
2,244	48	2292	267,521	117	32

[Source: 320,000 people in Britain are now homeless, as numbers keep rising. Shelter. November 2018.](#)

Rough sleeping

The latest rough sleeping count from Autumn 2018 was 41, down from 48 in autumn 2017 and the first time in years that this number has decreased. Rough sleeping counts are a single night snapshot, however, and therefore it is hard to tell from this statistic alone as to whether rough sleeping in general is declining. [\(Source: Rough sleeping in England: autumn 2018. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government\)](#)

Vital Thinking

With the average house price at £302,700 needing a deposit of £30,000, it is not surprising that many young people are living with their parents or guardians to maybe either save money or avoid high rental prices.

What impact does this have on aging households?

What happens to those people in MK who do not have family support?

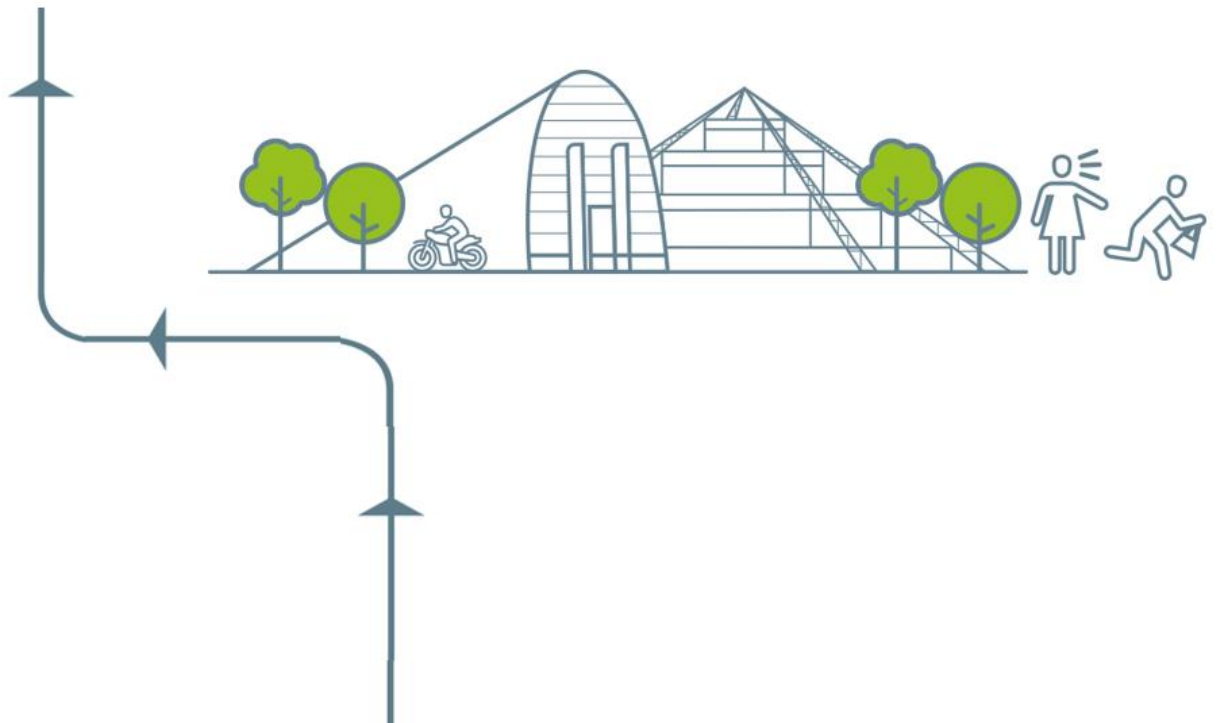
Vital Action

YMCA MK is the main provider of supported housing to young people in MK. MK Community Foundation has awarded a grant of £27,921 to YMCA MK to fund the development of a space dedicated to mental health wellbeing within the new modern campus with expanded facilities in MK which is due to open shortly.

YMCA MK said “The suite which has access to a roof top garden, will proved a private tranquil space for young people to access one-to-one counselling. 70% of the young people who come to the YMCA have mental health issues, with the most common being depression and anxiety. Providing mental health support in a safe, confidential environment will enable us to tackle the deep-seated issues many of our residents face, ensuring they are equipped to access our other support services and make a positive change in their life.”



Crime and Safety



CRIME AND SAFETY

Theme Definition

This theme looks at local and national trends in crime from Home Office and police data.

Overview

In light of recent reports across national media on the increasing levels of hate crime (largely credited to higher reporting rates and the political climate post the EU Referendum and 2017 terrorist attacks), we took a look at how this is reflected locally, and to some mixed results across the different types of hate crimes.

We also update on rates of domestic abuse and sexual offences and other trends that we reported on when we last covered this theme in the Vital Signs MK 2017 update report.

Key Statistics

8%	Increase in recorded crime between August 2018 and July 2019 in Milton Keynes according to TVP (Thames Valley Police)
7%	Increase in racially or religiously aggravated crime between 2017/18 and 2018/19
17%	Increase in overall hate crime in England and Wales between 2016/17 and 2018/19
12%	Increase in recorded domestic crime occurrences which meet the national definition of “domestic abuse” between 2017/18 and 2018/19 (28% increase in domestic crimes that don’t meet the abuse definition)
-23%	August 2018 – July 2019 decrease in burglary both dwelling and non-dwellings
-10.6%	August 2018 – July 2019 decrease in bike theft

Source: Thames Valley Police [Summary of notifiable offences in Milton Keynes- August 2018 - July 2019](#)

Hate crime

The Government's definition of hate *crime* involves any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. The definition covers five main strands:

- disability,
- gender-identity,
- race,
- religion or faith,

- sexual orientation.

Whilst a hate *incident* is defined as any *non-crime incident* which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race / religion or perceived religion / sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation / disability or perceived disability / transgender or perceived to be transgender ([Source: College of Policing](#)).

In 2017/18, there was an increase of 17% of hate crime recorded by police in England and Wales compared with the previous year, continuing an upward trend. A Home Office report on hate crime in this period does note that the increase (including rates almost doubling since 2012/13) is largely thought to be driven in improvements in police recording. It does also note that certain events such as the European Referendum and 2017 terrorist attacks as being factors. It is thought that around 53% of hate crimes are reported to police (this is higher than the rate for all crimes—40%). (Source: [Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2017/18 Statistical Bulletin. Home Office. 16 October 2018.](#))

For Milton Keynes specific data on hate crime

The following data from TVP's crime summary reports dated August 2018 – July 2019 shows the extent to which recent crime rates in Milton Keynes may or may not be reflecting or continuing this trend.

We have included individual numbers of cases as well as percentage rates, as some, such as incidents of transphobia, where there is a 120% increase, in fact only represent an increase of 6 incidents:

Table 1: Recorded Hate Crime and Incidents in Milton Keynes, August 2016/17 to 2018/19

Offences	2016/17 No of cases	2017/18 No of cases	2018/19 No of cases	% change (2017/18 to 2018/19)
Racially or Religiously Aggravated Crime	101	300	320	7%
Racist Incidents – Recorded Crime	264	394	463	18%
Racist Incidents – Non Crime occurrence	241	197	106	-46%
Religious Incidents – Recorded Crime	13	35	21	-40%
Religious Incidents – Non Crime Occurrence	11	12	7	-42%
Homophobic Incidents – Recorded Crime	18	52	56	8%
Homophobic Incidents – Non Crime Occurrence	24	28	26	-7%
Transphobic Incidents - Recorded Crime	5	5	11	120%
Transphobic Incidents – Non Crime Occurrence	8	10	5	-50%

Disability Incidents – Recorded Crime	22	47	69	47%
Disability Incidents – Non Crime Occurrence	38	47	31	-34%

Non crime occurrence means that the incident does not come under hate crime law, however it is still motivated by the same bias against a particular group or person.

Source: [Summary of notifiable offences in Milton Keynes- August 2018 - July 2019](#). Thames Valley Police.

From these, figures, it is possible to see the reported increase between 2016/17 and 2017/18 from England and Wales reflected locally, particularly across racial and religiously motivated crimes. However, this trend does not appear to have continued into 2018/19, with reported decreases across many of the hate crime offence types.

It is important to remember that the local figures provided are taken from TVP's crime recording system. This is a dynamic system and additional information identified during any investigations may lead to a reassessment of the crime classification. For this reason, the data should only be used as an indicator in trends.

Knife Crime

The [National Office of Statistics](#) reported a 6% increase in police recorded offences involving a knife or sharp instrument (to 40,829 offences) across England and Wales for crime figures year ending December 2018.

Table 2: Thames Valley Police Area estimated Knife or Sharp instrument offences recorded by the Police for selected offences

2010/11	2010/2011	2017/18	2017/18	Change per 100,000 pop	Change per 100,000 pop
Number	Offences per 100,000 pop	Number	Offences per 100,000 pop	Change 2010/11 – 2017/18	% change 2010/11 – 2017/18
1,165	50	1,294	54	4	9%

1. Police recorded crime data are not designated as National Statistics
2. Police recorded knife and sharp instrument offences data
3. In this table "offences involving a knife" refers to the use of a knife or sharp instrument

Source: ONS, Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area Data Tables

This table is adapted from Table P5, July 2018

We know that knife crime is a topic which is well publicised within the media. However, there seems to be no data publicly available on knife related crime specifically in Milton Keynes, although the above table of the Thames Valley Police Area (TVP) includes Milton Keynes.

Gangs

Although police recorded crime data will include offences which are related to gangs, these are not separately identifiable from other crimes, therefore we were not able to report on specific gang related crime.

Domestic and Sexual Violence

The Home Office defines domestic abuse as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

TVP record domestic abuse in two forms:

Domestic crime and incidents – national definition: this is based on the definition provided by the Home Office (see above).

Domestic crime and incidents – domestic qualifier only: this relates to any domestic abuse related characteristics regardless of age. This is up to the Officer in Charge and is based on their interpretation.

With regards to domestic abuse across England and Wales the [Office of National Statistics](#) reported at the end of March 2018 recorded domestic abuse related crime had risen by 23% compared to previous years. The source does note that part of the rise in figures reflects police forces improving their identification and recording of domestic abuse incidents as crimes and an increased willingness by victims to come forward.

Specific Milton Keynes related data from TVP shows under the national definition of abuse the number of domestic abuse incidents recorded crime figures has risen by 12% compared to 2017/18 whilst the non-crime occurrence rate has reduced by 16%.

However, the figures for the domestic qualifier of domestic abuse has increased by 28% for recorded crime incidents and decreased by 18% for non-crime occurrence incidents.

The source material does note that following the introduction of Niche RMS (a database system for crime management), the number of crimes that are finalised under the national definition has fallen due to the recording of key information that identifies whether an incident meets the definition

Source: [Summary of notifiable offences in Milton Keynes- August 2018 - July 2019](#). Thames Valley Police.

Sexual offences increased by 12% (rape by 17.4% and non-rape offences by 9.6%) in Milton Keynes, according to TVP publicly available data.

Other crime rates

Some further updates on trends that we last reported on in 2017:

- Bicycle theft decreased by 23% (649 reported in total - a dramatic decrease since last year 2017/18, especially considering we last had reported a rise of 38% in 2017)
- Possession of drugs continued to decrease by 2.8% (in 2017 we reported a decrease of 14% in arrests for drug possession)
- Trafficking of drugs still seems to be increasing, at 14.4% (in 2017 we reported an increase of 23%)

Vital Thinking

How can we support the diverse communities in Milton Keynes to feel safe?

The drop in burglaries (domestic) is welcome, but we must be cognisant of other forms of crime that may be harder to quantify (e.g. cybercrime) where data is harder to produce.

How can we support our security agencies to help them keep our communities safer?

Noting the rise in domestic crime, how can we as a community shed light on the issues so actions can be developed to start to address this issue?

Vital Action

Through the New Leaf Project, run by Thames Valley Partnership, volunteers provide support and mentoring for adult offenders released from custody who settle in Milton Keynes. Volunteer mentors support them “through the gate”, providing advocacy through probation meetings and other appointments, and support them to meet their goals for rehabilitation in the community for a minimum of 12 weeks after release. Mentoring support of this nature has been shown to reduce reoffending and improve community safety.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Theme Definition

Health and Wellbeing is a broad category that includes the physical and mental health of local people and the factors that affect their wellbeing.

The MK Community Foundation's 2019 survey (205 respondents) on this theme investigated the activities and services in Milton Keynes that support residents' health and wellbeing, including quality and availability.

Overview

As well as exploring some of the trends we regularly look at in this category, this year we look at physical activity and loneliness, two big predictors of lifelong health and wellbeing that can be greatly affected by one's ability to access their local community.

Nationally, young people and older people are getting lonelier, with 9 million people including 40% of young people saying they feel lonely often or very often. Local data on loneliness is sparse, though we have some idea of the areas and demographics at most risk.

Locally and nationally, deprived and marginalised communities are less likely to be physically active.

Findings On...

21%	Children between ages of 10-11years in Milton Keynes are obese (this is an increase)
32%	Milton Keynes children are "inactive" (partaking in less than 30 minutes physical activity per day)
66%	MK adults (16 years and over) reach recommended 150 minutes moderate to vigorous physical activity per week (higher than England average of 63%)
33%	Of adults from the MK communities in the 10% most deprived areas are inactive, compared with 20% for those in the 10% least deprived
1 in 4	Survey respondents agreed that they often feel lonely for long periods

Loneliness and Social Isolation

Healthwatch have also recently explored the issue of social isolation in 15 care homes in Milton Keynes that receive council funding in their report "Care not Chandeliers": A Thematic Review based on Healthwatch Milton Keynes' Care Homes Enter and View programme.

Age UK's Loneliness heat maps shows areas in MK where older people are at higher risk of loneliness based on Census data for 2011 which includes marital status, self-reported health status, age, and household size. Using the map, it is possible to see which specific wards are identified as more at risk in Milton Keynes.

<http://data.ageuk.org.uk/loneliness-maps/england-2016/milton%20keynes/?loadAllData=true&indicator=i0&prop legendClassifier=quantile&pal defaultPaletteld=Sequential%20Cyan&pal defaultSchemeId=categoricScheme1&pal noClasses=5&bbox=-111838.38576081491,6792546.8319999995,-52472.20423918508,6837805.6280000005&select=E01033497&printmode=true>

Child and Maternal Health

Childhood Obesity

New data on the Public Health England tool Fingertips has highlighted a worsening situation for prevalence of obesity (including severe obesity) in Milton Keynes in Year 6 aged children (10-11 years old), with 21% now classed as obese (South East: 17.3%, England: 20.1%). The prevalence of severe obesity is also worsening, now at 4.4% in Milton Keynes for the same age.

For reception age children, the profile notes no significant change: 9.7% are classed as obese.

Young People's Mental Health

The data shows no significant change for the rate of young people admitted to hospital as a result of self harm, and the latest data for 2017/18 shows the rate in Milton Keynes is lower than the England average. (Source: Public Health England)

Maternity

Milton Keynes performs better than average in breastfeeding initiation, at 80% compared with 75% in England.

Rates of teenage motherhood are decreasing and generally in line with the England benchmark, at a 0.6% rate for 2017/18.

Smoking

Across England, admissions to hospital for reasons attributable to smoking have increased by 2%, but deaths attributable to smoking has decreased by 2%.

We have previously reported that Milton Keynes has higher smoking rates than the rest of the country. Here's how things looked across the mentioned measures compared to England and the South East for the year ending March 2018.

Table 1 Deaths and hospital admissions attributable to smoking in Milton Keynes, the South East, and England

	Milton Keynes	South East	England
Smoking attributable deaths per 100,000 population in those age 35 or over	281	238	272
Smoking attributable hospital admissions per 100,000 population	2,079	1,314	1,685

(Source: [Statistics on Smoking – England, 2018. NHS Digital. July 2018.](#))

Physical Activity

A major factor in the long-term health and wellbeing of individuals and communities is physical activity. Higher levels of physical activity are linked to many positive outcomes for people’s health and wellbeing, such as reduced risk of illness and improved mental health (including the reduction of depression and anxiety). Sports and physical activity have a big impact on communities too, bringing people together, even improving school attendance and performance, and reducing risk of criminal behaviour. ([Source: Benefits of Sport. Sport England](#))

Understanding how active our community is, who is and isn’t accessing sport, and what can be done to get people more physically active is therefore potentially an effective route to make a difference to an array of issues that we cover in Vital Signs.

Sport England’s Active Lives Surveys provides some insight into the activity levels of both adults and children and young people. The Active Lives Online interactive tool can be used to filter by local authority and local sports partnership, type of activity, along with other dimensions such as ethnicity, gender, and deprivation, and can be accessed [here](#) for any queries from the data we may not have included in this report.

Adults

The latest research from Active Lives has shown that activity levels across England are increasing, with more adults (age 16+) reaching the recommended levels of activity of 150 minutes or more moderate exercise per week, and fewer doing under 30 minutes per week. ([Source: Active Lives Adult Survey: November 17/18 Report. Sport England.](#))

Women in particular have seen an increase in levels of physical activity, which is expected to be the result of specific efforts in the sport and physical activity sector to appeal to women, such as the This Girl Can campaign.

However, “stubborn inequalities” remain. Those from lower socio-economic groups and those from Black and South Asian communities, for instance, are still less likely to be active, and haven’t seen the same kinds of improvements in participation.

Milton Keynes has seen an increase of 5.1% in the last 12 months of adults doing more than 150 minutes of exercise per week, though this is not noted as a significant change in the data tables.

Activity levels reported are largely in line with those reported for the wider South East region, and slightly higher than the rates for all respondents across England.

Table 2 Activity Levels

	Milton Keynes	South East	England
Active (for 150+ minutes moderate exercise per week)	66.3%	65.9%	62.6%
Fairly active (for 30 – 149 minutes per week)	12.6%	12.0%	12.3%
Inactive (under 30 minutes per week)	21%	22.1%	25.1%

(Fig. #. Levels of physical activity for adults aged 16+ between November 2017 and November 2018. Active Lives)

Socioeconomic status makes a large difference in levels of activity and inactivity, as shown when comparing the most and least deprived deciles within Milton Keynes. Those from rural areas of Milton Keynes are also slightly more active than urban residents:

Table 3 Activity Levels for Adults (between May 2017 and May 2018) by socioeconomic status and Urban/Rural

	All Milton Keynes Local Authority	Decile 1 – Most deprived	Decile 10 – Least deprived	Rural	Urban
Active (for 150+ minutes moderate exercise per week)	68.2%	55%	68.1%	64.3%	61.9%
Inactive (under 30 minutes per week)	18.2%	32.8%	19.9%	23.4%	25.6%

(Source: Levels of physical activity for adults aged 16+ between May 2017 and May 2018. Active Lives)

Localised data on the levels of activity by gender and ethnicity were not available through the online tool.

Children and Young People

The recommended level of physical activity for children and young people is 60+ minutes per day. The below table shows how young people in Milton Keynes are faring in achieving this target—again seemingly in line with rates across England:

Table 4: Levels of sport and physical activity for Children and Young People in school years 1-11

	Milton Keynes	England
Active every day (60 minutes or more every day)	17.1%	17.5%
Active across the week (an average of 60 minutes or more a day but not every day)	29.1%	25.7%
Fairly active (an average of 30-59 minutes a day)	21.9%	23.9%
"Less active (less than an average of 30 minutes a day)"	32%	32.9%

[\(Source: Active Lives Children and Young People Survey: Academic Year 2017/18. December 2018. Sport England.\)](#)

70% of children and young people in Milton Keynes in years 3-11 had taken part in sport and physical activity at a vigorous intensity on at least three days per week (71% in England).

The Active Lives Survey has also revealed that there is a correlation between levels of physical activity and a number of attitudes identified as making “physical literacy” amongst respondents to the survey from across England. Physical literacy is said to support individuals to value and take responsibility for lifelong engagement in physical activity [\(Source: Sport England: Active Lives Children and Young People Survey: Attitudes towards sport and physical activity \(Academic Year 2017/18\). March 2019. Sport England.\)](#)

The 5 attitudes measured are:

- Competence (finding exercise and sport easy)
- Understanding (why exercise and sports are good for you)
- Enjoyment (liking/enjoying sport, exercise and being active)
- Confidence (feeling confident exercising and playing sport)
- Knowledge (knowing how to get involved and improve skills in different kinds of exercise and sports)

Enjoyment was found to be the biggest driver of activity levels, with positive association also identified with competence (finding a sport easy) and understanding why taking part is good for you.

There was also a strong correlation between attitude to sport and physical activity and reported levels of happiness and resilience (continuing to try when finding something difficult). For instance,

those who strongly agreed that they enjoyed being physically active reported an average of 7.7 out of 10 for their happiness, whereas those who strongly disagreed reported an average of 4.5 out of 10.

Younger children are more likely to report a more positive attitude to sport, particularly in terms of their confidence in participating. Girls were less likely to report a positive attitude, and those with disabilities reported less confidence, enjoyment, and understanding of why physical activity is important.

Results from the Survey

- Just over 1 in 4 survey respondents agreed ('somewhat' to 'strongly') that they often feel lonely for long periods (5% strongly, 14% somewhat)
- Most people (87%) agreed that they were able to access facilities for physical activity such as leisure centres, gyms, and swimming pools

Vital Action

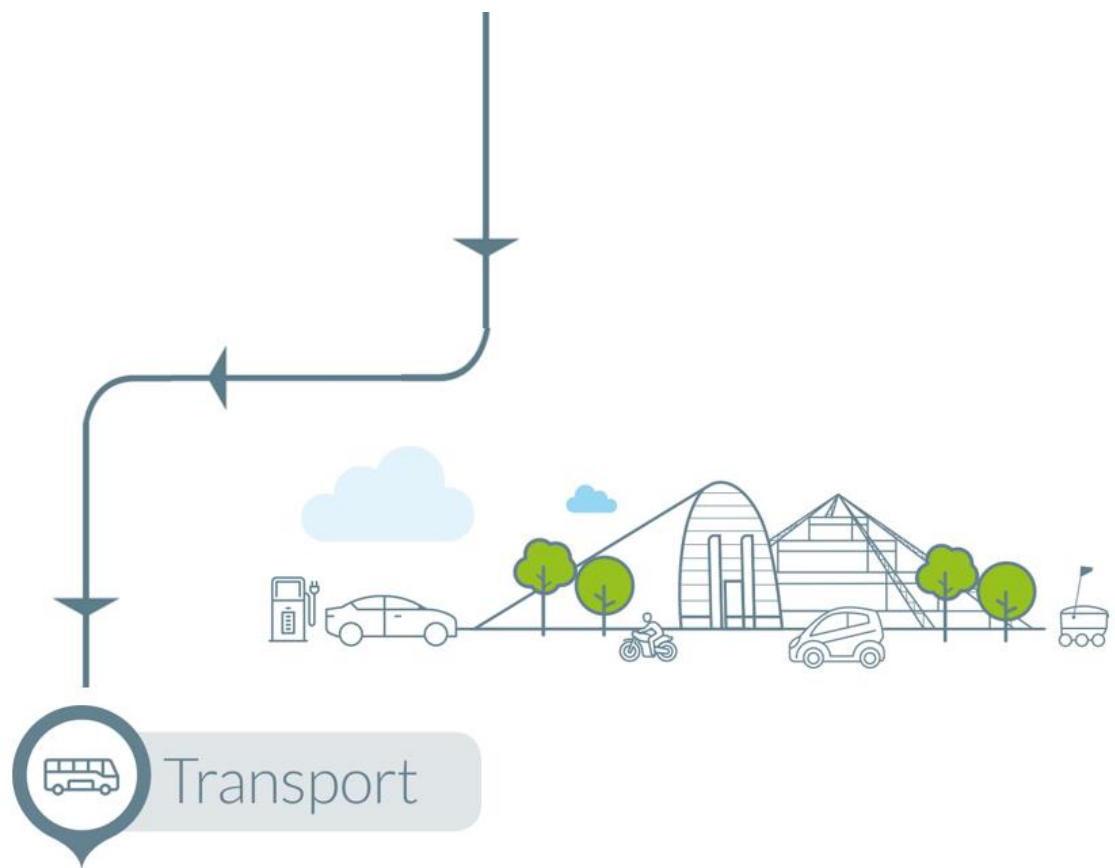
Through the Tampon Tax Community Fund, this year we supported All People Active CIC to deliver the Us Girls Get Active programme, which aims to engage with women and girls in Milton Keynes, particularly teenagers, young mums, and families, to develop physical activity programmes which meet their needs and reduce the barriers that they may otherwise face to living healthy active lifestyles. Participants contribute to the design of programmes that fit their interest and lifestyles, whether that is through dance, yoga, fitness classes or sports.

Vital Thinking

How do we address the challenge of not only getting our young people to be more physically active, but also to have positive attitudes and improve their physical literacy to improve their likelihood of remaining physically active throughout their lives?

How can we as a community capitalise on our European City of Sport 2020 status in getting residents engaged and active?

In an ever-connected society why are 1 in 4 people in our community feeling lonely and how should we address this?



TRANSPORT

Theme Definition

Robust, sufficient and modern transport infrastructure is critically important to the functioning of any economy, and the availability and accessibility of transportation greatly impacts the range of goods and services that the public can access. By ensuring an effective and affordable public transportation system is available, a community can provide the means for all residents, especially low-income residents, to fully engage with the services, employment, education and other opportunities they need. (The environmental effects are also key, as we discuss in the Theme on The Local Environment)

Overview

Whilst at the forefront of many innovations in transport, including autonomous vehicles such as the Star Ship delivery pods and testing of driverless cars, and multiple options for green bike share schemes now available with Santander and Lime bikes, we have collated data that shows that Milton Keynes is not up to speed in ensuring we reduce our reliance on polluting means of transport as well as making use of public transport.

With Milton Keynes set to grow more and quickly, with the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc bringing more people and commuters to the city, access and participation in healthy and green ways of getting around will be important to ensure the sustainability, health, and wellbeing of our communities.

37.3	Annual number of bus journeys per head in Milton Keynes, less than half the England average (78.3)
78%	MK residents walk or cycle at least once per month
6%	Of the population of Milton Keynes use low emission transport (25 th out of 42 UK cities)
54%	Expected increase in morning peak travel times over the next decade

Environmentally Friendly Commuting

Milton Keynes lags behind other UK cities in terms of environmentally friendly commuting, ranking 25th out of 42 UK cities for environmentally friendly commuting, with 6% of the share of the population using low emission transport. Inner London, London, and Outer London take the top

three spots with 34%, 28% and 25% respectively. Cities in the South East take 3 other spots from the top 10: Brighton (#4, 14%); Reading (#5; 12%); and Oxford (#9, 10%).

We fall even further down the table when it comes to the use of zero-emission transport according to the same report (travel by walking or cycling), ranking at #35 with only 5% of the population commuting this way.

[Source: UK Powerhouse: Sustainable Cities, Summer 2019](#)

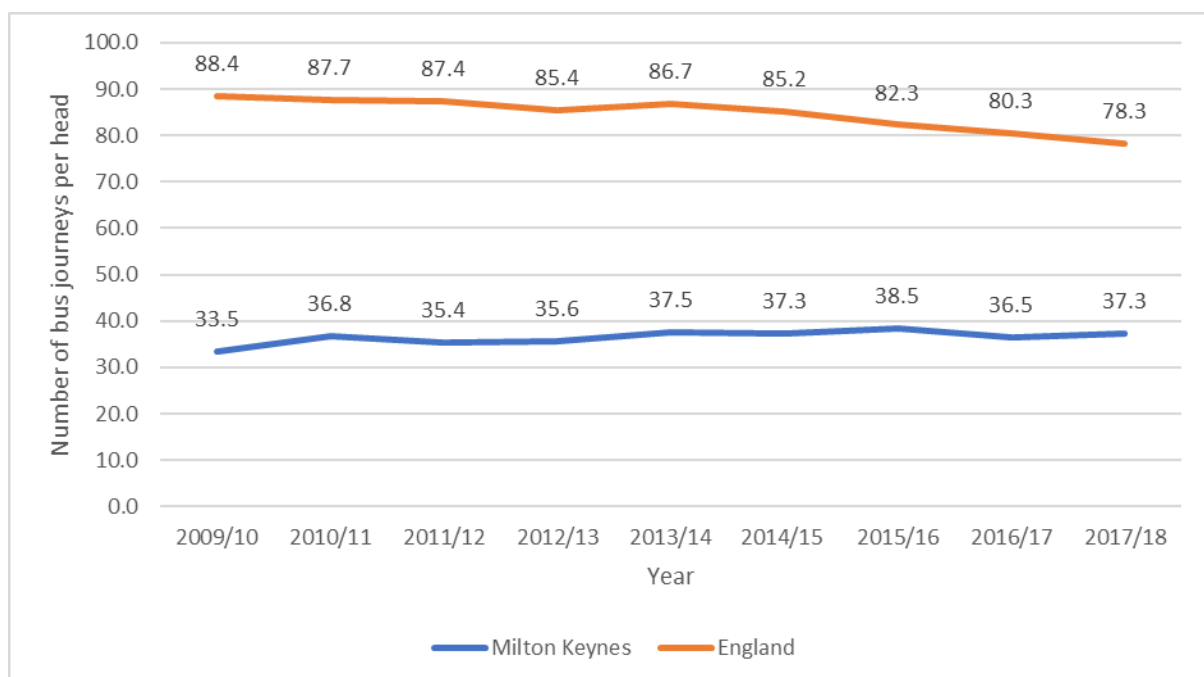
Public Transport

Buses

Milton Keynes Local Authority has less than half the rate of travel by bus compared to the national average, with 37.3 journeys on a local bus per head in 2017/18 compared with England's 78.3.

Across England, the use of bus services has been declining consistently since 2009/10. In Milton Keynes there has overall been an increase in this same period.

Figure 1: Average number of bus journeys per head per year in Milton Keynes and England

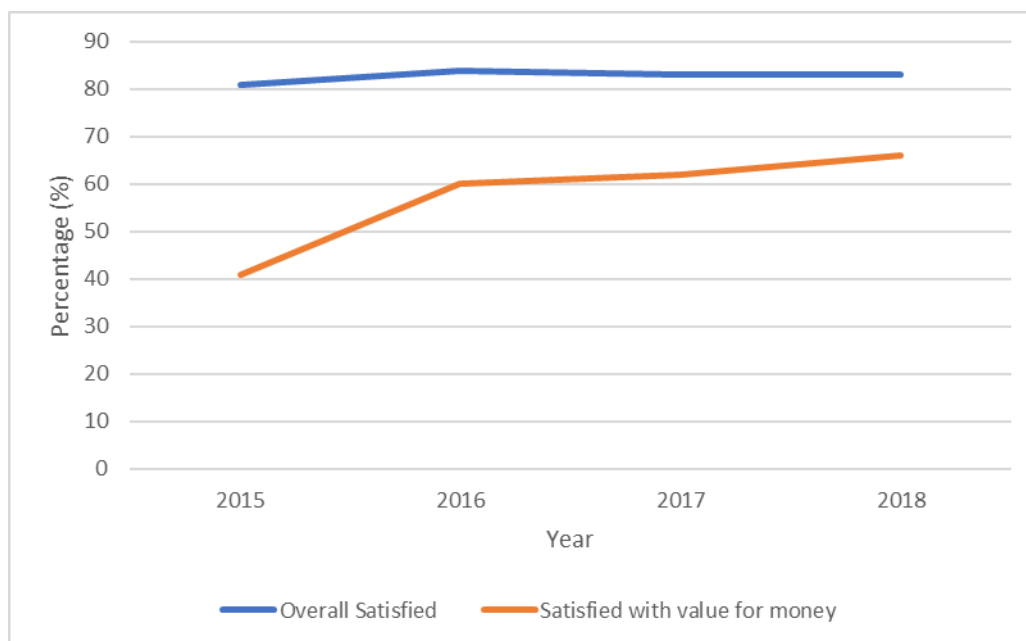


[Source: Local bus passenger journeys \(BUS01\). Department for Transport.](#)

According to the [Bus Passenger Survey](#), Milton Keynes local authority had the following results relating to satisfaction of those surveyed with their most recent bus journey:

- 83% overall satisfaction
- 66% value for money
- 65% punctuality
- 86% journey time

Figure 2: Satisfaction with most recent bus journey in Milton Keynes, 2015 to 2018



[Source: Bus Passenger Survey: Autumn 2018 report. Transport Focus.](#)

The above graph shows that overall satisfaction with bus journeys made in Milton Keynes is consistent.

Walking and Cycling

Table 1: Proportion of adults who do any walking or cycling, for any purpose (walking for at least 10 continuous minutes, or any cycling), 2016/2017

	At least once per month	At least once per week	At least three times per week	At least five times per week
Milton Keynes	77.9%	66.6%	44.3%	35.0%
South East	82.8%	74.2%	48.9%	36.1%
England	80%	71.8%	47%	35.2%

[Source: Walking and cycling statistics, England: 2017](#)

Milton Keynes is noted in the same source as having a significant *decrease* in the proportion of people who cycled at least once per week (for any purpose) in 2016-2017 (16.5%) compared with 2015-2016 (2.8%). ([Source: Proportion of adults that cycle, by frequency, purpose and local authority: England. Walking and cycling statistics. Department for Transport](#))

Roads

The average speed on local A roads in Milton Keynes is higher than the average for the South East and England, but is falling faster, down 2% between 2017 and 2018 (South East: -0.5%, England - 1.3%).

Table 2: Average speed on local 'A' roads in Milton Keynes Local Authority, England, and the South East

	Average speed (mph)					Change in last year
	2015	2016	2017	2018		
England	25.5	25.2	25.2	24.9		-1.3%
South East	28.5	28.1	28.2	28.0		-0.5%
Milton Keynes	34.5	34.5	34.7	34.1		-2.0%

[Source: Average speed, delay, and reliability of travel times. Department for Transport. June 2019.](#)

According to the National Infrastructure Commission Report on the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Arc, the congestion experienced on roads in Milton Keynes is expected to grow substantially over the next decade, with morning peak travel times increasing by 54%. ([Source: Partnering for Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc. National Infrastructure Commission.](#))

The report also states that 8 in every 10 commuting journeys in Milton Keynes are made by car (contrasted with 53% in Oxford and 55% in Cambridge).

The mean home-to-work travel time in Milton Keynes in 2016 was, according to the Labour Force Survey, 27 minutes. ([Source: Travel to work methods and the time it takes to commute from home to work, Labour Force Survey, 2007 to 2016. January 2018.](#))

Road Casualties

The number of casualties on the road in Milton Keynes is continuing a downward trend since 2013, with 743 reported road casualties in the local authority in 2018, 9 of which were fatal. This reflects a downward trend across England and Wales. ([Source: Reported road casualties Great Britain, main results: 2018](#))

Driverless Vehicles

Autonomous technology is becoming more and more common in Milton Keynes, with Milton Keynes one of four UK cities testing driverless vehicles.

Results from the MK Community Foundation Survey 2019 (205 respondents):

The Vital Signs Survey results show some dissatisfaction with transport options that provide an alternative to car use:

- 78% of people agreed ('somewhat' to 'strongly') that buses in Milton Keynes are too expensive
- 52% disagreed that public transport runs reliably and on time
- 63% of people disagree that bus routes in Milton Keynes are conveniently located
- 63% disagree that Milton Keynes offers good quality public transportation options for those who want to travel without a car

Vital Thinking

Mk is at the forefront of many innovations in transport, including autonomous vehicles such as Star Ship delivery pods and testing of driverless cars, and multiple options for green bikes share schemes available with Santander and Lime bikes. However, we have collected data that MK has more to do to ensure provision and use of public transport that pollutes.

How can we do more to ensure that we improve provision and use of public transport and reduce our reliance on transport that pollutes?

Vital Action

The Bus Users Group were supported by the MK Community Foundation who provided Conferencing facilities for a debate about driverless vehicles.

The Bus Users Group work to make public transport inclusive and accessible, while promoting high standards of transport planning and delivery. The organisation also raises awareness of the effects that transport poverty has on loneliness, isolation and social exclusion.



LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

Theme definition

The environment refers to the natural or built environment of our community, including its design and architecture, agricultural activities, green spaces, and waterways. It also includes the extent to which the air is clean from pollution, how well we engage in recycling and 'going green', and how well-maintained we feel our public spaces are.

Overview -

Findings On....

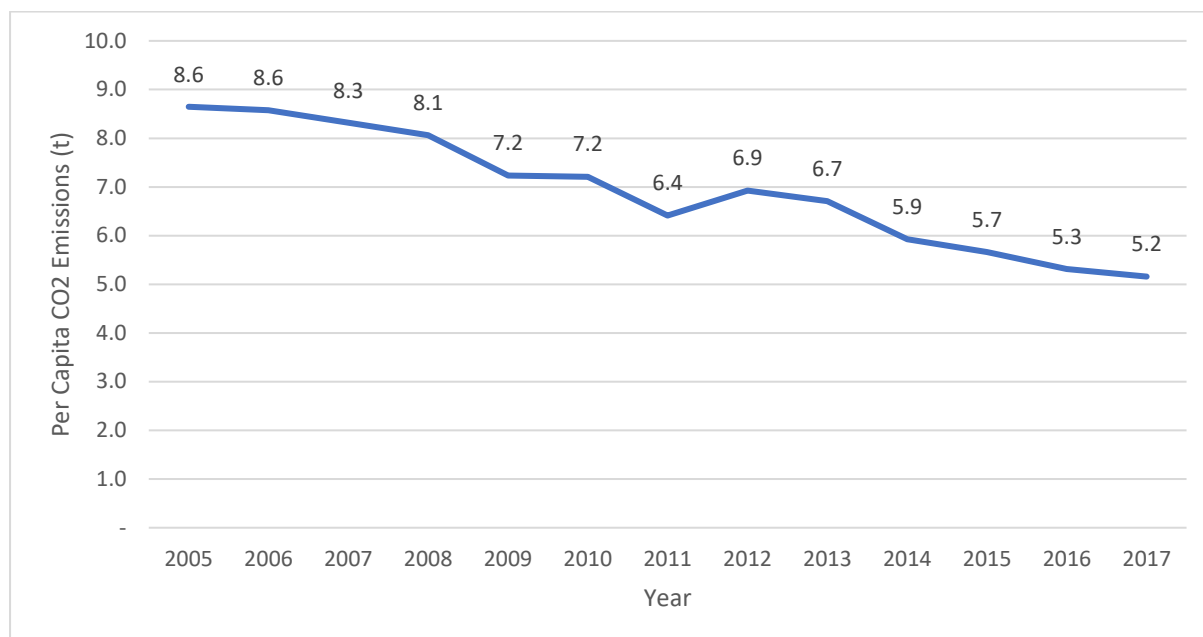
2 nd best	City in the UK for proportion of waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting (52%)
5.2	tons of CO2 emissions per capita in 2017 (41 st out of 46 cities)
44%	of CO2 emissions in Milton Keynes come from transport (UK 34%)
5 tonnes	of litter cleaned up from Parks Trust land in just one week in summer 2018

Our Local Environment

Pollution and Emissions

Milton Keynes ranks 41st out of 46 cities reported in the UK Powerhouse Sustainable Cities report, with 5.2 tons of CO2 per capita in 2017. In terms of year on year, this represents a decrease of 2.9%. (Source: UK Powerhouse Sustainable Cities, Summer 2019. Irwin Mitchell.)

Figure 1: Per capita CO2 Emissions (t) Estimates for Milton Keynes Local Authority, 2005-2017



Source: [UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2017. Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.](#)

The largest contributor to CO2 emissions in Milton Keynes is transport, responsible for 44% of total emissions in 2017.

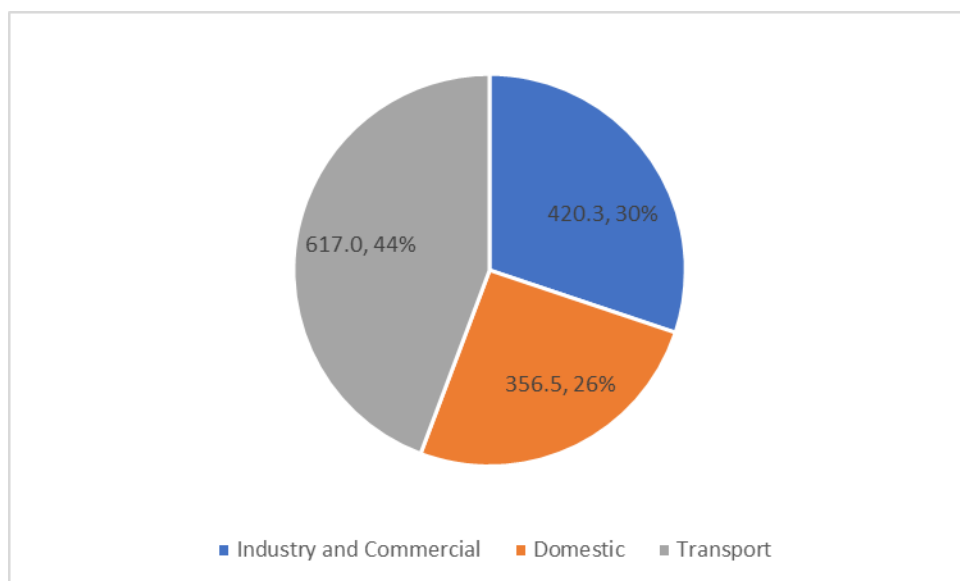
Transport was responsible for around 34% of the UK's CO2 emissions in 2017. This share has increased from 21% in 1990 as other sectors of the economy have cut their emissions while transport CO2 output has barely changed.

This sector includes cars and taxis, heavy goods vehicles, vans, buses and coaches, motorcycles and mopeds, rail transport, domestic aviation and shipping and other mobile emission sources. It does not include the UK's share of international aviation and shipping.

Transport is a particularly challenging sector for emission reductions, as cost-effective electric alternatives to petrol and diesel vehicles are only beginning to emerge. Most of the reductions that have happened in the transportation sector have been driven by more efficient vehicles, with some additional reductions in recent years due to reduced miles driven and the blending of biofuels into petrol and diesel.

<https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-why-the-uks-co2-emissions-have-fallen-38-since-1990#>

Figure 2: Estimated contributions to CO2 emissions (t) in Milton Keynes from Industry and Commercial, Domestic, and Transport, 2017

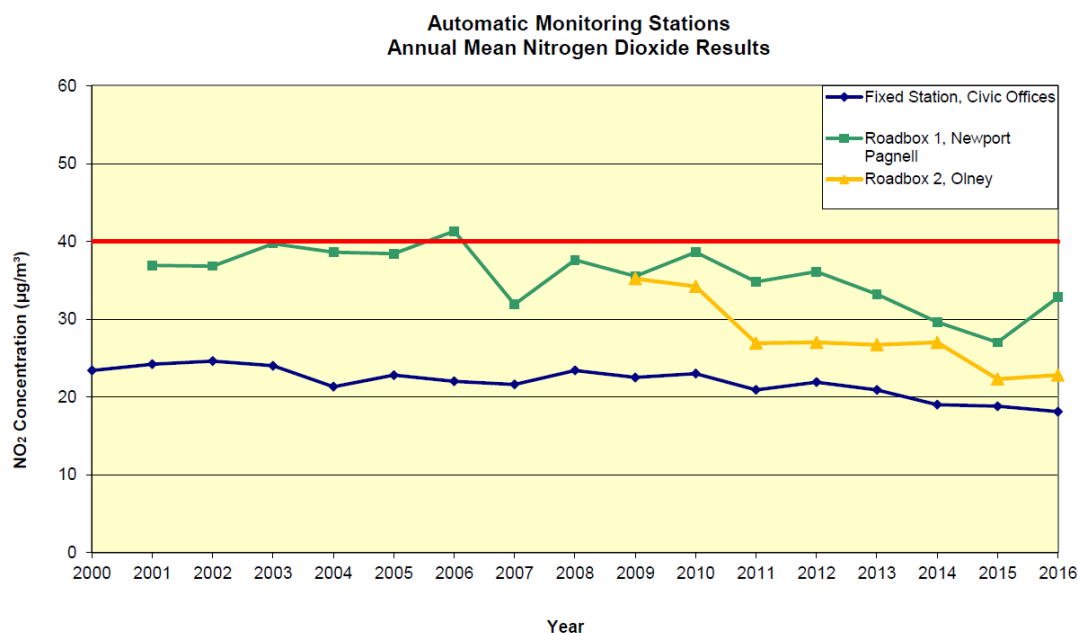


[Source: UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics: 2005 to 2017. Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.](#)

The sum of the above pie chart represents the gross total emissions for Milton Keynes. The net total is affected by activities in the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry Sector (LULUCF), which can add or remove some CO2 from the environment—for Milton Keynes in 2017 the LULUCF was responsible for -13.9 (t) CO2, bringing the net total estimated emissions for MK to 1,380.0 (t) CO2.

We have had a steady reduction in Nitrogen Dioxide pollution found in the air of Central Milton Keynes between 2000 and 2016. It has reduced from around 23 to under 20 µg/m3 over the last 16-year period.

Figure 3: Trends in Annual Mean NO2 Concentrations (in Milton Keynes LA)



Source: Milton Keynes Council: 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR)

(In fulfilment of Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 Local Air Quality Management)

Renewable Energy

Milton Keynes is fast becoming a leading place for registrations of new electric cars. With more vehicle charging points than any other town or city in the UK and the EV Centre opening in Centre:MK. MK Council has installed 170 standard/fast charging points and 56 rapid charging points, these are located throughout the borough with a large concentration in the city centre. **(source: MK Council)**

As at the end of 2017, 3% of households in Milton Keynes had renewable electricity installations (actual: 3,400), making us the 13th out of 46 cities.

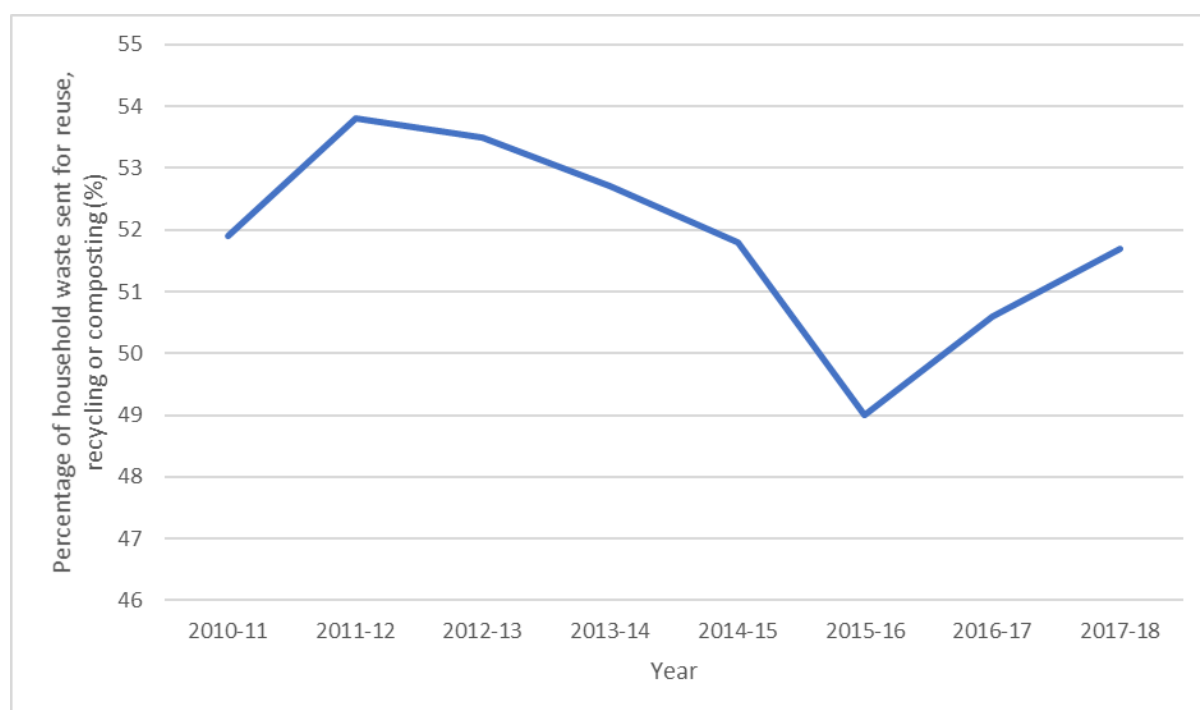
Household Waste and Recycling

During 2017/18 MK Council collected 459.8kg of waste per resident of Milton Keynes and 51.7% of that waste was either reused, recycled or composted. This compares well against the South East region where the rate is 46.7%. **(source: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).**

This puts us 2nd in the league table ranking out of 40 cities reported on in the UK Powerhouse report, beaten only by Stockport who sent 56% of their waste for recycling, reuse, or composting.

Whilst Milton Keynes is doing well compared with the region and with other cities across the UK, there does not seem to be a consistent trend upwards in the proportion of our waste that is recycled/reused/composted, though there has been an increase over the last 2 years, as the below graph shows.

Figure 4: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting in Milton Keynes Local Authority, 2010-11 to 2017-18



[Source: Local Authority collected waste management – annual results. Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs](#)

Green Spaces

817 bags of rubbish, equating to nearly 5 tonnes, of litter was left in Park's Trust parkland in the space of one week in the summer of 2018. [\(Source: The Parks Trust. September 2018\)](#) Cleaning up rubbish costs the charity £350,000 per year.

Willen Lake is the most popular of the Parks Trust's green spaces, with 40% of those surveyed having visited [\(Source: The Parks Trust Public Survey 2019. The Parks Trust. April 2019\)](#).

Vital Thinking

MK is often thought of as a green environment but are we doing enough to encourage and incentivise the use of our Redways and growing infrastructure for electric cars?

With MK set to grow, with the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc bringing more people and commuters to MK, access and participation in healthy and green ways of getting around will be important to ensure the sustainability, health and wellbeing of our communities. What can we do to promote this as a community?

How can we maximise the opportunities this provides for our community?

Vital Action

MK Community Foundation have supported MK Christian Foundation with £4,000 for the 'Urban Bee-lievers' project at the Urb Farm in Wolverton that supports young people to learn about bee-keeping, how to produce market and sell honey and beeswax wraps as well as bee-friendly products like seed bombs and bee houses. As well as supporting young people to gain valuable skills, MK residents can learn about the amazing life of bees and take action to slow their decrease.



Arts and Heritage



ARTS AND HERITAGE

Theme Definition – Arts and Heritage pervades every part of our culture, including leisure, work and education. This section attempts to reflect the wide range of events that are on offer in Milton Keynes across a diverse and growing community.

Some of our local arts and culture providers have shared with us some of their own statistics, as well as providing us with some guidance as to what they think are the pressing issues for engagement with the arts in Milton Keynes, from placemaking (the process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in) to education.

We of course also asked local people their views through the survey and focus groups, and results from those show how people's views have/haven't changed about the sector since 2016.

Overview – It is often difficult to gather specific statistics around activity, engagement, and impact of arts and heritage, particularly on a more localised level. However, the cultural sector in Milton Keynes is still active and appears to be thriving, with the newly expanded MK Gallery opening its doors in March this year. The 5th International Festival in 2018 delivered nearly 300 performances across MK last summer, selling 14000 tickets and seeing 60,000 free attendances.

Key Statistics

£665,626	Invested in Milton Keynes by Arts Council England between 2015 and 2019
34% growth in visitor economy	According to visitors figures from MK Gallery and Bletchley Park
68.9%	Arts engagement in MK, compared with 74.1% in the South East
MK has three NPO's MK Gallery The Stables MK Arts Centre	National Portfolio Organisation's (NPO) awarded by the Arts Council aims to enable artists, arts organisations, museums and libraries to deliver artistic work and cultural experiences that represent the height of ambition, talent and skill .

Engagement in Arts, Heritage and Creativity

MK Gallery reopened its doors in March of this year following its expansion, attracting the attention of national press* as well as attracting more visitors in the first three months; more than they previously attracted in a whole year.

*<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/mar/09/mk-gallery-new-milton-keynes-art-gallery-6a-architects>

Milton Keynes International Festival 2018 saw ticket sales of 14,000, and 60,000 more came to see the free-to-attend elements of the programme.

95,000 people engaged with the Stables directly promoted music programme. Run with a team of over 250 volunteers known as 'Stablemates', The Stables was recently awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Services.

Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes's 43 member organisations attracted 1,314,145 cultural visits and delivered 6,349 events in 2017-2018 and saw a turnover of £23,703,302. Importantly the

report also found that over 1000 jobs exist in Milton Keynes because of its thriving cultural sector. (Source: Arts & Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes: Annual Report 2017 – 2018)

Table 1: Active Lives Survey 18-month data (mid-November 2015 to mid-May 2017)

Done in past 12 months	MK adults 16+ (%)	All adults 16+ (England) (%)
Spent time doing a creative, artistic, theatrical or music activity or craft	33.42%	34.67%
Attended an event, performance or festival involving creative, artistic, dance, theatrical or music activity	51.55%	52.22%
Used a public library service	32.37%	35.01%
Attended a museum or gallery	43.7%	46.5%
Dance	19.45%	21.15%
Creative or artistic dance	3.8%	4.7%

(Source: The Active Lives Survey. Sport England/Arts Council England.)

[The Taking Part Survey](#), a continuous face-to-face survey run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport which aims to collect evidence around cultural, digital and sporting engagement, reveals that southern regions in England seem to have significantly higher levels of arts engagement than the rest of the country, and this is true of the South East region, where engagement was at 83.3%. (Source: [Taking Part Survey: England Adult Report, 2017/18. Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport.](#))

The report notes that there is no significant change from the previous year, for which there is a report that more closely examines engagement in the South East region between 2010/11 and 2016/17: [Taking Part 2016/17: South East. Arts Council England.](#)

The report also references that Milton Keynes is categorised as an area of “high concentration and high growth” when mapping the creative industries in the UK, and one of 47 creative clusters across the UK, and one of 15 in the South East region.

Details extracted from Arts Council Website:

Fund	Recipient	2018	2017	2016	2015
NPO	Stables	£ 379,223	£ 379,223	£ 379,223	£ 379,223
NPO	MKG	£ 383,307	£ 383,307	£ 383,307	£ 383,307
NPO	MK Arts Centre	£ 98,000			
Ambition for Excellence	City club			£ 750,000	
Cultural Destinations Fund	Pedalling Culture		£ 300,000		
Project Grants		£ 217,092	£ 165,074	£ 188,994	£ 217,960
Capital	MK Gallery				
	The Stables	£ 250,000			
		£ 1,327,622	£ 1,227,604	£ 1,701,524	£ 980,490
					£ 5,237,240

The NESTA report cited says the following about Milton Keynes, contrasting it with areas like London, Oxford, Cambridge, Brighton and Edinburgh which have high levels of international connections:

“[...] creative conurbations such as [...] Milton Keynes seem to have lower levels of international connectivity. [...] This may simply be a consequence of differences in business models and needs, and the types of networking which are relevant for their business. However, it may also reflect a lower level of international awareness of these creative clusters, consistent with the idea they are rarely mentioned in discussions about creative clusters compared with the UK’s established creative cities. Perhaps this could be addressed through changes in local, national and international programmes for creative cluster promotion and collaboration.” [\(Source: The Geography of Creativity in the UK: Creative clusters, creative people, and creative networks. Nesta. July 2016.\)](#)

<https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/data-map-reveals-levels-arts-engagement-across-england>

Anecdotally, the workforce, volunteers and audiences for culture in MK is not as representative of the wider population, however it is difficult to find statistics that support this finding MK Council along with AHA have pulled together a working group to specifically look into diversity and equality in the cultural sector and the findings will be available later in 2019.

Arts in Education

Last year when we reported on Education, we highlighted some of the national engagement (England) with arts subjects from 2016 according to the Cambridge Assessment. Since then the uptake of subjects from 2017 report has been released, that shows the following uptake of individual arts subjects compared with the prior year:

Table 2 Uptake of individual GCSE Arts subjects, 2017 (England)

Subject	2016	2017
Art and Design	13.7%	12.9%
Drama and Theatre	11.9%	11.1%
Music	7.3%	7.3%

Girls seem more likely to take up arts subjects than boys, with 18% of girls taking Art and Design (compared with 7.9% of boys), and 13.9% of girls taking up Drama and Theatre Studies (8.4% boys). Rates for take up of music were very close between genders (7.4% boys, 7.2% girls).

As with last year, those from more deprived backgrounds had a lower take up of Music and Drama and Theatre than those from the less deprived backgrounds. Take up of Art and Design, however, was higher amongst the most deprived communities.

Table 3 Uptake of individual GCSE Arts subjects by deprivation, 2017 (England)

Subject	Low Deprivation	Medium Deprivation	High Deprivation
Art and Design	12.2%	13.2%	14.1%
Drama and Theatre	12.3%	11.0%	9.4%
Music	8.3%	6.6%	9.4%

Source: [Uptake of GCSE subjects 2017. Cambridge Assessment.](#)

Vital Thinking

Last year we reported on the significant contribution that cultural and creative organisations make to the local economy. With cuts to statutory arts education it has fallen to arts organisations to provide sessions of arts education rather than it being embedded within the curriculum. Will this lack of statutory arts education affect our workforce and our economy? How can we make sure our local arts organisations can remain supported and sustainable?

Do we need a better understanding of the importance of creativity for many areas of life including work and wellbeing?

Vital Action

In 2019 MK Community Foundation provided £5000 towards a dance project 'Fluid in Flight' run by MOTUS across several schools in MK. The ten-week festival and dance programme culminated in a performance at Milton Keynes Theatre. Over 500 young people took part in an intensive two-and-a-half-day workshop working from concept to performance with 10 professional choreographers in a professional theatre. 'Fluid in Flight@ was the last performance of the festival/dance programme 'Journeys' that focused on increasing the reach of dance throughout Milton Keynes with inclusivity and accessibility at its heart.



Looking Ahead

Across all 11 themes, the Vital Signs 2019 report describes an often vibrant, dynamically changing, but sometimes extremely challenging picture of our community in Milton Keynes.

However, it is essential that Vital Signs 2019 is not seen as a one-off piece of insight that generates short-term interest and comment but does not change or impact our communities.

During the remainder of 2019 and into 2020, MK Community Foundation will be examining and highlighting several Vital Signs themes in more detail; in particular, we will be looking for insightful answers and potential solutions focused on some of the more challenging aspects of this year's report.

We will be facilitating Vital Thinking Events (face to face and online) bringing together people with 'lived experience' and specialists from across our communities and beyond.

We aim to explore solutions and identify potential policy, practice and behaviour changes which will make a real positive difference to the lives of the people of Milton Keynes.



If you would be interested in participating in one of these events please email giving@mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk

We are always looking for ways to improve and develop our Vital Signs report, so please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to participate in future Vital Signs research.



Join the conversation

Get involved and have your say on the findings in this Vital Signs report



Tweet your #vitalsignsMK thoughts to @MKComFoundation



Send an email to giving@mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk



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



Call us on 01908 690276 – We'd love to talk more about Vital Signs with you!



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