

## Our Commitment

We, the residents, organisations and services of Milton Keynes, challenge and reduce child poverty by:

- Establishing a Child Poverty Challenge Partnership in Milton Keynes.
- Urging all organisations, business, services and agencies in Milton Keynes to have a Child Poverty Challenge Plan based on the Commissions' reports and establishing a new funding trust for MK.
- Using our influence over our own services, our role in informing national policy agendas and work with our partners, to develop initiatives that directly contribute to the alleviation and reduction of poverty.

We wanted to make a fast start in 2021. How have we done?	
<b>1. Ensure no child is hungry,</b> supporting to meet basic food needs, including a commitment to providing food in school holidays to those on Free School Meals and those deemed in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial target 6 (six) community larders now extended to over 10 (ten)</li> <li>• Working in partnership with SOFEA, Community Fridge and Foodbank Xtra</li> <li>• Over 500 new members this year</li> </ul> 
<b>2. Launch a deposit scheme for childcare</b> like the one provided for housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot deposit scheme launched to support parents and carers who wish to return to work.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Deliver holiday activities</b> to the most vulnerable children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than 30,000 fully funded activity sessions during August</li> <li>• Most of the activities were 4 hour sessions and included nutritious, healthy meals with a total of 28,000 free meals served throughout August.</li> </ul> 
<b>4. Employability programmes,</b> bringing together expertise from existing employability projects, focusing on those looking for support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 200 people on the new futures programme</li> <li>• 50 places for women on the "Love local hub"</li> <li>• Over 12,000 residents and 400 local businesses have already been direct beneficiaries of MK Recovery funded events and programmes</li> </ul>

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How have we done?**

**5. Reuse 'pre-loved' clothes and school uniforms**, refocusing existing schemes to concentrate on supporting the costs of clothing local children

- A school uniform recycling project was successful in providing school uniforms for under £20.
- drop bins in many local supermarkets and shops across MK



**6. Stop the stigma of poverty** by including this into our definitions of bullying and abuse in our communities, schools and settings

*Progress still requires some work in this area.*

**7. Use local centres and facilities better** for all age groups

- The ability to use centres and facilities as a virtual hubs or meeting places for services is being studied
- Local centres will require resourcing with equipment and procedures to deal with the different usage

**8. Change how some services operate**, routinely considering barriers

- Exiting new options for meeting clients and access services are being examined
- To be feasible good connections and appropriate spaces need to be identified

**9. Give parents a better voice** by asking about the barriers they face in accessing and using services

*Progress still requires some work in this area due to Covid.*



**10. Better service information to help parents considering the high percentage of parents in Milton Keynes not born in the UK and the needs for simple explanations**

- New website in February
- Focused on the customer/resident and what their need to know rather than what we want to tell them

**11. Encourage local employers to pay the Living Wage** based on the true cost of living, increasing the number of employers in Milton Keynes who are accredited living wage employers

- 5% increase in the number of accredited living wage employers this year – note this is from a low base number



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How have we done?**

**12. Encourage people to support a local initiative** by increasing in-kind and voluntary support to local projects and services and using the list of projects and services

- Response to the Afghani Resettlement showed the power of local voluntary endeavour
- Baby Basics has over 900 referrals
- ‘Olney is kind’ project has over 50 posts a week on their Facebook page



**13. Ensure all children are able to study** developing places in homework clubs across key stages 1-4 with a meal delivered by the voluntary sector

- Delivered through Firm Foundations in line with the National Curriculum.
- Enhance learning in core subjects and will also include a meal.
- A total of 960 places have been made available across key stages 1-4

**14. Widen eligibility of support services** to families with children with a disability such as laundry services

- Over 6% of laundry service clients are children with disabilities
- More referrals required



**15. Use a credit union.** These are for everyone but need more investors to provide an alternative to payday loans or illegal money lending.

- Credit unions do not report any sizeable increase in members
- From August, Swan Community bank now includes Oxfordshire Credit Union

**16. Help parents access Mental Health services** by adjusting to dismantle barriers, such as childcare and needs of dependents

- A Single Point of Access now exists for all new referrals to Milton Keynes Specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).
- Family support workers at a community drop-in, are available
- Adult services will require more work to solve because of some of the parenting related mental health issues, services can be accessed through family support

**17. More storage space for child poverty initiatives** by releasing public owned capacity to projects who are limited by storage space

- New solutions have been identified in the Afghani Programme, and new solutions for a central hub are being examined

We wanted to make a fast start in 2021. How have we done?	
18. Better 'joined up' referrals collaboration between services, projects and voluntary groups	<i>Progress still requires some work in this area</i> 
19. Publish a list of projects and services that challenge child poverty this will include how to access them and how someone can be referred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community foundation project to produce this in partnership with the local child poverty partnership</li> </ul>
20. Launch a Child Poverty Trust through the Community Foundation in partnership with local agencies provide grants for small projects to tackle issues within their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Poverty Fund at the Community Foundation launched this year.</li> <li>• Child Poverty Partnership is launched 19<sup>th</sup> Nov.</li> </ul>
21. Help people to know "what is out there" through better promotion using official channels and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Foundation and MKC to host an open event in early March 2022</li> </ul> 

### Highlights of our fast start 2021

- Community ladders are proving popular
- Successful summer of activities
- Three community members who are Challenging Child Poverty in Milton Keynes recognised in the Honours List
- Childcare deposit scheme is being piloted
- Many families were able to get a school uniform at one fifth of the cost
- Challenge Child Poverty Event early March 2022