



**Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
(JSNA)
Children Summary
Central Bedfordshire**

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Introduction

On the 1st April 2009 Bedfordshire County Council ceased to exist. All services previously hosted by the County Council are now being provided by either Bedford Borough Council or Central Bedfordshire Council depending on the area concerned.

Central Bedfordshire will now replace both Mid and South Bedfordshire District Councils to form a single unitary authority.

Available statistical data at the time of writing this summary document varies and where possible the new unitary data is used. Comparable data for Bedfordshire County or the Eastern Region has been used, where this is not readily available the figures for England or England and Wales have been used. Some figures may not total due to rounding.

Should something be written here about the 5 aims of Every Child Matters:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well Being

Section 1: Demography

Around 254,600 people live in Central Bedfordshire (Bedfordshire County Council 2008 forecast), or if using the ONS Estimates 2007 there are around 252,100. Children aged under 16 years comprise of nearly 20 percent of the population, and 11 percent are aged 16-24.

Forecasts of Resident Population 2008/ Mid Year Estimate 2007

	Central Bedfordshire	ONS Mid Yr Est	Bedfordshire County	ONS Mid Yr Est
0-4	15,500 (6.1%)	15,400 (6.1%)	25,500 (6.1%)	24,600 (6.0%)
5-9	15,400 (6.0%)	15,300 (6.0%)	24,600 (6.0%)	24,700 (6.0%)
10-14	15,500 (6.1%)	16,100 (6.3%)	25,500 (6.2%)	26,100 (6.4%)
15-19	16,100 (6.3%)	16,200 (6.4%)	25,900 (6.3%)	26,400 (6.4%)
20-24	14,100 (5.5%)	13,900 (5.5%)	23,400 (5.7%)	23,200 (5.7%)
Total 0-16	52,840 (20.8%)	58,200 (20.3%)	80,280 (19.6%)	94,100 (23.0%)
Total 0-24	76,600 (30.1%)	76,900 (30.5%)	124,400(30.4%)	125,000 (32.5%)
Total Population	254,600	252,100	409,400	407,000

Source: BCC population estimates and forecasts 2008 & ONS Mid Year Estimates 2007

Currently there are slightly less than 55,000 children aged under 16 in Central Bedfordshire. This is expected to increase gradually reaching just over 32,000 by 2016, and then levelling off to 2021.

Forecast of Resident Population 2021

	Central Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire County
0-4	15,700 (5.6%)	25,500 (5.5%)
5-9	16,300 (5.8%)	26,300 (5.8%)
10-14	16,500 (5.8%)	27,200 (6.0%)
15-19	14,400 (5.1%)	24,200 (5.3%)
20-24	13,200 (4.7%)	22,600 (5.0%)
Total 0-16	54,260 (19.2%)	83,340 (18.3%)
Total 0-24	76,100 (26.9%)	125,800 (27.5%)
Total Population	282,400	454,900

Source: BCC population estimates and forecasts 2008.

When comparing the 2008 population forecasts, published in BCC "Population estimates and forecasts 2008" and ONS "Mid-2007 Population Estimates: Quinary age groups and sex for local authorities in the United Kingdom", ONS reported that Central Bedfordshire is to have an additional 100 0-19 year olds.

Note: Population Estimates includes ONS (Office of National Statistics) estimates, GP-based estimates and school census and forecasts

Dependency Ratios

In 2021 the dependency ratio is predicted to drop to 29.2% for Central Bedfordshire which will have an impact on those who are working to maintain those who are not.

Estimate of Resident Population 2008

	Central Bedfordshire	ONS 2007 Mid Yr Est	Bedfordshire County	ONS 2007 Mid Yr Est
*Child Dependency Ratio	29.5%	28.4%	30.0%	30.2%

Source: BCC population estimates and forecasts 2008 & ONS Mid Year Estimates 2007

Estimate of Resident Population 2021

	Central Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire County
*Child Dependency Ratio	29.2%	29.5%

Source: BCC population estimates and forecasts 2008.

*The Child Dependency Ratio (number of children 0-15 years/ working age 16-64 years) measures the economically inactive population compared to the economically active population.

Ethnicity and Migration 0-15 years old

In 2006 ONS reported that 91.8% of the Central Bedfordshire population is white and has a lower percentage aged under 16 classified as White British than Bedfordshire and England as a whole.

Ethnic Group Number (Percentage)	0-15 years
White	45,800 (91.8)
Mixed Ethnicity	1,700 (3.4)
Asian or Asian British	1,400 (2.8)
Black or Black British	700 (1.4)
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	300 (0.6)

Source: ONS, Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group, All Persons, 2006

Minority ethnic groups comprise around 8 percent of the population aged under 15 in Central Bedfordshire, with Asian and Mixed comprising the largest minorities.

Currently there are no reliable population projections for ethnic populations.

Polish nationals dominate the recent migrant flows, making up at least 40% of applications for National Insurance numbers from all nationalities. In terms of concentration within the county, 40% of applicants in Central Bedfordshire were of African applicants.

Section 2: Social and Environmental Context Relating to Children

Education

Ready for School (pre-school)

Children from some ethnic groups, wards and social classes are significantly less likely to attend pre-school provision.

Bedfordshire is making good progress in increasing full day care provision.

A positive Home Learning Environment is crucial in Early Years development.

Attainment

Bedfordshire is above both national and statistical neighbour averages in participation in full-time education at ages 16 and 17. The gap between girls (87.2%) and boys (79.8%) staying in full-time education after Year 11 is significant and widened between 2005 and 2006.

Around six percent of 16-18 year olds in Bedfordshire are not in education, employment or training. Boys are more likely to choose work based learning than girls, but are also 3 times more likely to be in employment that does not offer training.

Pupils with Special Needs are less likely to stay in education than the average for Year 11 leavers; they are more likely to seek employment instead, and more often jobs that do not offer training.

Participation in education by both 16 and 17 year olds has increased steadily since 2001 though there is a significant and persistent decline in participation from ages 16 to 17. Level 2 attainment by age 19 has improved steadily since 2003/04, both in the numbers achieving by age 16, and the additional numbers attaining Level 2 at ages 17-19.

GCE A Level entries receiving a pass rose to 98.7% in 2007, and the percentage of A Grades is also increasing. Girls outperform boys. Pupils eligible for Free School Meals and those with Special Needs both perform below average, and most minority ethnic groups perform below 'White' pupils.

Of the Bedfordshire children that did the GCSEs at the end of KS4 in 2006/07, 57.6 percent of children achieved 5+ A* to C. Comparative figures for England and the East of England region were 62 percent and 61.2 percent respectively.

While girls constituted 56.1% of all A Level Biology entries in 2007 and almost half of Chemistry entries (49.2%), they are under-represented in Maths (34.6%) and, especially, Physics (16.1%).

Successful course completion rates in Further Education colleges are increasing for both males and females. There are no gender differences in the number taking

apprenticeships or in success rates, though males are approximately 3 times more likely to take Advanced Apprenticeships (Level 3).

Attend and Enjoy School

There are marginally higher levels of authorised absence in Bedfordshire's lower schools compared to statistical neighbours, but attendance at middle and upper schools compares much better.

Achieve Stretching National Educational Standards at Primary

Bedfordshire continues to perform well at Key Stage 1 in comparison with statistical neighbours, achieving level 2+

Achieve Stretching National Educational Standards at Secondary

Bedfordshire's school performance at Key Stage 2 has improved, but still falls short of statistical neighbour averages in English and Maths. Overall average point scores fell between 2005/6 and 2006/7, reversing good improvement made in the two previous years.

Bedfordshire pupils currently make inadequate improvement compared to the national average in terms of the proportion of children attaining two levels higher at KS3 than KS2.

This has in part been attributed to the 3-tier school structure in Bedfordshire, though analysis shows this is not entirely to blame.

KS4 attainment has improved consistently overall, but with faster progress made by Bedfordshire's boys than girls (compared to statistical neighbours). This has led to a rapidly closing gender gap in attainment at this level.

School Quality

In line with national trends, the number (and proportion) of schools judged as poorly performing by OFSTED has greatly reduced in Bedfordshire. There are now less than half as many such schools compared to 1999.

As at April 2008, there was one school in the County in special measures (Northfields Upper), and two schools with 'notice to improve'. In November 2008 Northfields had recovered, and no Bedfordshire schools were in special measures.

This was an improvement from the 2006/07 academic year, when there were two schools in special measures and five with 'notice to improve'.

The Impact of Socio-Economic Disadvantage on Pupil Performance

Young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with special educational needs, mostly continue to suffer significant and persistent lifelong disadvantage for themselves.

Research has shown that bright young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are often not able to maintain their attainment lead over less able children from better-off families, even for the duration of primary school.

The attainment gap between the pupils who are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) and those who aren't gets larger at each Key Stage, resulting in less than half as many FSM pupils getting 5 A*-C grades at GCSE compared to their non-FSM classmates.

The gap is even wider for pupils with SEN, of which four times fewer achieve 5 GCSEs graded A*-C. At Key Stages 2 and 4, this gap does not appear to be closing.

The gap between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and non-FSM, and children with special educational needs (SEN) and non-SEN pupils grows bigger at each Key Stage. However, pupils with SEN at Key Stages 2 and 4 are not catching up with children without SEN.

Over time, FSM pupils have been improving more rapidly than their non-FSM peers, giving some hope of beginning to close this gap.

Truancy

Absenteeism rates in 2006/7 for Bedfordshire pupils was around 6.2%, of which 0.7% were unauthorised (truancy). Comparative figures for England were 6.5% and 1% percent respectively.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Latest government figures report that 9.4% 16 to 18 year olds were NEET at the end of 2007 which was a reduction from 10.4% at the end of 2006. In Bedfordshire it is estimated that 740 (5.8%) were NEET compared to 6.2% for the East of England. (Source: www.dcsf.org.uk, *Every Child Matters*.)

NEET rates at ages 16-18 are declining, and at a faster rate than national or statistical neighbour averages. The traditional September peak in NEET rates is now much less pronounced, reflecting the impact of the September Guarantee. Care leavers are more likely to be NEET at age 19, though Bedfordshire rates have declined and are now comparable to national and statistical neighbour averages.

Unemployment among those 16-19 is heavily concentrated in the more deprived wards in Houghton Regis

Socio-economic Influences

Child Poverty - Children in Households Dependant on Benefits

Although child poverty in the UK has decreased in the last decade, the number of children living in poverty actually increased between 2004/05 and 2006/07.

Child poverty can seriously affect a child's development and future well-being. There is a strong correlation between poverty and well-being, educational attainment, skills levels, worklessness, aspirations, health and self-esteem. *(Source: Public Health Report, issue 3, Central Bedfordshire, March 2009)*

In Central Bedfordshire, around 1 in 9 children live in income-deprived households. A child born into a poor family is more likely to be born early, to be of low birth weight, or both. They are more likely to die in the first year of life, to die from an accident in childhood, to have low educational achievement, turn to crime, to be poor as an adult and raise their own children in poverty, and eat less healthily

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Central Bedfordshire is an affluent Unitary Authority with Mid Bedfordshire ranking 340 and South Bedfordshire ranking 263 out of 354 local authorities in the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation in England, (rank of 1 indicates the most deprived). The Indices of Deprivation 2007 have been produced at Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level, of which there are 32,482 in the country. Of these, Central Bedfordshire has no LSOA's ranked in either the top 10% or 20%.

Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) Children in Households Dependent on Benefits

The IDACI represents the proportion of children aged 0-15 living in income deprived households in each Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). 4 LSOA'S were ranked in the top 20% deprived areas. Manshead, Tithe Farm, Houghton Hall, and Parkside Wards all have an LSOA ranked in the top 20%.

Housing

Sustainable communities can only be developed with the involvement of all residents. While we have information showing priorities for adults, there is very little available evidence showing priorities for children, and what is being done to meet these priorities.

There is a high correlation between the proportion of children living in overcrowded conditions and deprivation. A significant number of children in more deprived wards also lack direct ground floor access to private play areas.

The high cost of ownership and lack of social housing in villages and rural areas may be adversely affecting the sustainability of these communities.

Transport

The Accessibility Study for Bedfordshire's Local Transport Plan demonstrated that there are no significant access issues in the County during the day.

Young people who live in households in small towns and rural areas can be more isolated and less able to meet friends outside the working day, due to the unavailability of a lift and the absence of public transport.

Anti-social Behaviour

Bullying

A significant minority of pupils worry about bullying, with some of them being afraid to go to school. A fairly high proportion of children would not share their concerns about bullying with anyone.

Racist Incidents in Schools

Bedfordshire uses the Macpherson Report's (1999) definition of a racist incident, "an incident which has been perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person".

Around 4 in every 1,000 pupils were subject to a racist incident in 2005/06. Boys are more likely to initiate a racist incident, and also to be victim to a racist incident. Most reported incidents are verbal, and 60% of Bedfordshire's schools reported that they had no racist incidents during the year.

During 2005/06, some 320 racist incidents, initiated by both pupils and adults, were reported in Bedfordshire schools. This equates to 4.9 incidents per 1,000 pupils at Bedfordshire schools.

Crime and Anti-social Behaviour in and out of School

Custodial sentences are more often given to young people in Bedfordshire than on average.

Children as Victims of Crime

Data from the police showed a decrease in crime against children in 2007, and the level of crime recorded increases as children grow older.

In 2007, 685 children were recorded as the victims of crime, a decrease from 858 children in 2006. The most frequent crime type in all age groups was 'Assault with injury' followed by 'Personal Robbery'. Both of these crime types involve the use, or threat of force. The number of children affected increased with age in all categories.

Children from disadvantaged groups are more likely to be victims of crime.

Security and Stability

In Bedfordshire, older children appear more likely to feel unsafe in their local area after dark, and by year 10, up to 20% carry a weapon for protection, or are aware that their friends do so. Modern technology also has an impact on children's safety. It enables contacts to be made with children that can result in 'real world' meetings, and it has also expanded the range of information that they have access to – almost 60% of children who use the internet regularly have seen pornographic images.

Section 3: Births and Infant Mortality

Teenage Pregnancies

There has recently been a rise in the rate of teenage conceptions in Bedfordshire. We do not know why this is the case or which interventions have been effective in reducing conception rates historically.

In 2006, there were 22.4 teenage pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-17 in Mid Bedfordshire compared to 40.2 in South Bedfordshire, while the East of England had 33.3.

Infant Mortality (inc affect on life expectancy)

In 2003/5, the infant mortality rate was 4.6 per 1000 live births in Bedfordshire compared to the regional average of 4.2. The low numbers of infant deaths means that differences in rates within Bedfordshire and any recent changes cannot be detected. (Source: *Bedfordshire PCT (2007), Public Health Annual Report 2007/008, Issue 3*)

There were 113 deaths in children under 15 in Bedfordshire between 2003 and 2005.

Section 4: Child Mortality (inc affect on life expectancy)

The top three reasons for hospital admission in children aged under ten are: diseases of the respiratory system, injury, poisoning and other consequences of other external causes, and symptoms, signs and abnormal clinical laboratory results. These differ slightly in the under ones and 10-14 year olds.

Deaths in young people from suicide are rare with only 55 per year across the East of England. However, Suicide is a leading cause of death in adolescence and accounts for around 30 percent deaths in people aged 15-24.

Section 5: Child Morbidity

Low Birth weight

Over the last 12 years the proportion of low birth weight babies in Central Bedfordshire has remained fairly static around a mean of 6.8 percent (the 2007 value is 6.2 percent), about 1 percentage point lower than the East of England average of 7.1 percent. Smoking cessation and good nutrition in pregnant women will help to reduce the number of low birth weight babies.

Low birth weight births as a percentage of all births 2006/07

	Raw low birth weight
Mid Bedfordshire	6.5%
South Bedfordshire	9.8%
Bedfordshire	8.9%
East of England (2006)	7.2%
England (2006)	7.9%

Childhood Obesity / Eating Disorders

Joint analysis of Child Obesity by Bedfordshire PCT and the County Council's Corporate Policy Group showed that there were differences in levels of obesity according to gender, age ethnicity and location within Bedfordshire.

- More boys than girls were found to be obese
- Central Bedfordshire had lower proportions of obese children than the rest of the county
- The proportion of children who were obese was a lot higher in Year 6 than in Year R
- Non white ethnic groups had more obese children than White British
- Wards with areas of high deprivation tend to have a higher proportion of obese children.
- It is also an issue in some areas which are not so deprived

The percentage of children found to be overweight and obese for each year are:

	Yr R	Yr 6
Overweight	12.8%	12.9%
Obese	9.3%	15.1%

Diabetes

The recorded diagnoses of diabetes in the under 20s is around 0.14%. The proportion of the child population estimated to be diabetic is expected to be around 88 children in the Central Bedfordshire area. (Source: Bedfordshire PCT (prevalence), and BCC population estimates and forecasts 2008)

Oral Health

In Bedfordshire in 2003-2004, 65-70 percent of five-year-olds have no experience of dental decay. Oral health in Bedfordshire is significantly better than in England; with Bedfordshire 5-year-olds have an average of 0.9 decayed, missing or filled teeth compared to 1.15 decayed, missing or filled teeth for England and Wales.

Hospital Care

To be filled in

Accidents/Injuries

Most children do not experience serious injury, and the number of accidental deaths is low. Injuries from road traffic accidents remained relatively steady between 2003 and 2007. Boys are much more likely to be involved in accidents (of all types) than girls, and older children are more likely to have an accident than younger children.

Death from injury is very rare. In Bedfordshire between 2004 and 2006 there was an average of one death per year from 'external causes' among the 0-15 age group, and five deaths per year among the 16-19 age group. The majority of these were the result of accidents. (*Source: ONS, Vital Statistics 3, Mortality by cause*)

Breast feeding

The proportion of mothers initiating breast-feeding in Bedfordshire was low; 62.2 percent in 2007/08, compared to 78 percent nationally. Breast feeding initiation has improved at Bedford Hospital and was at 73.5 percent in the third quarter of 2008/09. However in Luton & Dunstable Hospital initiation rate is still only 63.2 percent. This is below target.

At first contact with Health visitor (10 days to 3 weeks) breast feeding in Bedford was 54.6 percent, and by the 6th – 8th week, the rates fell to around 31.2 percent in the third quarter of 2008/09 compared to figures of around 50 percent at national level.

Section 6: Mental and Emotional Health.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Most children are happy but exams remain a significant worry for young people. While information on the prevalence of mental ill-health remains poor, nearly a quarter of children are 'worried a lot' and this worry increases with age. Over 90% of children say they have one or more good friends but less than half of teenagers think their classmates are 'kind and helpful'.

Nearly half of teenage girls are worried about how they look, and in the same survey we learnt that teenage girls are less likely to feel fit, especially by Year 10. This is more pronounced in the South of the County.

Family functioning is more relevant to child well-being than family status. The quality of relationships in the family is particularly important.

Self-harm and suicides are more frequent among teenagers than younger children, and are linked particularly to poor family functioning, the type of housing occupied and housing tenure.

In 2004, nationally, 1 in 10 of those aged 5-16 had a mental health problem. This proportion has not changed since 1999. Boys are more likely to have a mental disorder than girls. Among 5-10 year olds, 10 percent of boys and 5 percent of girls had a mental health problem. Among 11-16 year olds, the proportions were 13 percent for boys and 10 percent for girls

Section 7: Sexual Health

Rates of Common STI Infections

Incidence of sexually transmitted infections in Bedfordshire is in line with the national average.

Infection with Chlamydia (diagnosed in clinics of genito-urinary medicine) is increasing. Some of this increase is due to increased testing but the high proportion of positive tests is of concern

Around 8 percent of 15-24 year olds in Bedfordshire had been tested for Chlamydia by the end of January 2009. The number of testing kits requested has gone up dramatically in the last couple of months compared to the first six months of the financial year. 1 in 10 young people screened opportunistically (i.e. without symptoms) for Chlamydia were found to be infected

Infection with Gonorrhoea is decreasing from a peak in 2003/04.

In 2006, there were 31.2 teenage pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-17 in Central Bedfordshire compared to 33.3 in the East of England.

At Risk Populations

To be filled in

Section 8: Healthy Lifestyle

Physical Activity

Involvement in organised physical activity appears to have risen over the last ten years, but this needs to be set in the context of a rise in obesity and a decrease in the percentage of pupils walking to school.

Participation in Sport

In 2006/07, 92% of 5-16 year-olds had undertaken a minimum of 2 hours per week on high quality sport and PE within and beyond the curriculum, compared to a Government target of 85%.

Personal and Social Development and Recreation

A high proportion of children in Bedfordshire attain nationally determined goals at the Foundation Stage for Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Some children spend large amounts of their free time in sedentary activities. When they are online and/or watching TV, it could be difficult to meet their needs for personal and social development. More young people are taking up sport, but they remain concerned about the lack of access to play facilities. Adults remain concerned about a perceived lack of activities for teenagers.

Travel to School

At primary school, 55% of pupils walk to school, and 40% are taken by car.

At secondary school, 44% of pupils walk to school and 21% are taken by car.

Use of dedicated pupil bus services in Bedfordshire is higher than among our statistical neighbours.

Sedentary Life Styles

Children have more access to new technology and media than ever before. This provides opportunities to find information and have contact with remote friends and family. However some children are tending to spend too much time in front of the television or computer and there are dangers that it is:

- reducing their social interaction
- damaging to their health and well-being
- putting increased consumer pressure on them

This is important because if by spending more time in sedentary occupations, children are becoming more obese, it will affect their health in adult life.

Diet and Nutrition

Only 22 percent of children (ages 12 to 13 years) in Central Bedfordshire eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day; 52 percent eat some fresh fruit each day, compared to 29 percent eat sweets and chocolate every day.

School Lunches

Monitoring by Bedfordshire County Council indicates that, for schools within the central school meals contract, only 35% of pupils (all ages) are actually taking up the lunches on offer. The Balding Survey (Yr 8 and 10 only) confirms a similar average rate of take-up (33%) for all our schools. We also learn from the same survey that 15% of Yr 8 and 10 pupils are having no lunch at all, while 42% of pupils eat a packed lunch (making it the most frequently used option). We do not know what is included in packed lunches, but we do know that 15% of pupils had already eaten packet snacks/chocolate/sweets for breakfast.

Immunisations

For 2005-06 at age 2 Central Bedfordshire had a lower percentage uptake than the national rate. A similar situation is to be found at ages 1 and 5. A similar situation is to be found at ages 1 and 5.

In order to prevent the spread of measles, at least 90 percent of children should be vaccinated, but in a small number of practices, coverage was below this level in 2007/8. Although more children were vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella by their 2nd birthday than in the East of England and England (84 percent), by the age of 5, only 72 percent of children in Bedfordshire had received both the recommended MMR vaccinations compared to a regional average of 76 percent.

Vaccinations against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, Haemophilus influenza b, and meningitis are above 90 percent for the PCT as a whole but this hides some variation among GP practices in Bedfordshire.

Section 9: Smoking, Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Smoking

Nationally it is estimated that 450 children start smoking everyday. By the age of 15 years old 23% of young people are regular smokers. Studies have shown that due to the addictive nature of nicotine, the earlier a person starts smoking the more likely he or she will become a heavy smoker. Approximately, half of today's young smokers will die early from smoking related diseases.

About 17,000 children under the age of 6 are admitted to hospital every year with illnesses resulting from second hand smoke. (Source: ONS, Stop Smoking Service Manchester)

Smoking In Pregnancy

Data from the third quarter of 2008-2009 show that 15.7 percent of Bedfordshire women were smoking at the time of delivery. At Bedford Hospital the rate is 14.1 percent and at Luton & Dunstable Hospital it is 21.5 percent for Bedfordshire women. There is still work to be done at Luton & Dunstable Hospital to meet the government's objective of 15 percent by 2010.

At ward level there is wide variation from 5% to 45% of households with a pregnant woman having at least one smoker.

Children Smoking

The percentage of girls smoking in Central Bedfordshire is a particular cause for concern especially at Yr 10, but note that nearly all of the regular smokers in this group want to give up.

Pupils reporting to smoke 'regularly' or 'occasionally' (%)

	Year 8		Year 10	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Central Bedfordshire	3	4	13	35

Source: The Balding Survey, Schools Health Education Unit (2006).

Note: 'occasionally' means less than 1 per week.

18 percent of girls and 16 percent of boys in year 10 in Central Bedfordshire schools reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.

Alcohol

In 2006, a survey found the percentage of 14-15 year olds in Bedfordshire reporting having at least one alcoholic drink in the previous week had increased to 53 percent.

47 percent of year 10 had at least 1 alcoholic drink in a week prior to the Balding Survey 2006, and 24 percent had drunk on more than one day in that week. Estimates for Bedfordshire suggest that there are nearly 1900 young people aged under 19 who are dependent drinkers and over 7,700 drinking at hazardous/harmful levels

Illegal Drugs

Excessive alcohol use and exposure to drugs continue to be common among young people in Bedfordshire, despite an awareness of the risks involved. But consumption of alcohol and drugs are falling among 11-15 year-olds.

The hospital admission rate for poisoning and mental disorders due to substance misuse was significantly lower in Bedfordshire in the period 2001-2005 compared to the regional average (50 per 100 000)

Section 10: Vulnerable Groups

Looked after Children

No single source identifies all children with disabilities (CwD) in Bedfordshire. As of February 2008, the Social Services database (SWIFT) identified **487** children aged 0-18 who are supported for one or more disabilities by Children's Services (individual needs are not recorded), and **528** young people aged 18-25 with an involvement from one or more specialist teams for disabilities in Adult Services.

The database of pupils in maintained schools within Children's Services (Tribal), which is shared with schools, separately records **4,085** children in February 2008 as having one or more Special Educational Needs (SEN - school action plus or statemented). Data on CwD is not currently available from health systems.

Children with Learning Difficulties

No single source identifies all children with disabilities (CwD) in Bedfordshire. As of February 2008, the Social Services database (SWIFT) identifies **487** children aged 0-18 who are supported for one or more disabilities by Children's Services* (individual needs are not recorded), and **528** young people aged 18-25 with an involvement from one or more specialist teams for disabilities in Adult Services†.

The database of pupils in maintained schools‡ within Children's Services (Tribal), which is shared with schools, separately records **4,085** children in February 2008 as having one or more Special Educational Needs (SEN - school action plus or statemented). Central PCT systems do not identify specific disabilities: information is distributed across many unlinked systems and paper records in health organisations.

Gypsy and Traveller Children

In England, there are about 1,100 Irish Travellers and 2,300 Gypsy/Roma Students in secondary schools, fewer than half the number registered in primary schools. Both Gypsy/Traveller groups have extremely low attainment.

Access to education and attendance by primary aged Traveller children continues to improve, but not enough Traveller pupils attend or stay on at secondary school. The average attendance rate for Traveller pupils is around 75%. This figure is well below the national average and is the worst attendance profile of any minority ethnic group (James Foley, 'Pupil characteristics and class sizes in maintained schools in England, January 2006 (provisional),' National Statistics: First Release [DfES, London, April 2006]).

Ofsted considers that about 12,000 Traveller children are not registered with a school and that at Key Stage 4 this represents about 53% of these pupils

Safeguarding Children

To be filled in

Domestic Violence (children)

The exact prevalence of domestic violence is unclear, as it is dependent on incidents being reported, and recent increases in the number of reported incidents in Bedfordshire are indicative of efforts to improve reporting, rather than a signal of increased domestic violence. National estimates suggest that about 0.5% of adults aged 16+ have been the victim of domestic violence at least once.

Children in Need and Child Protection

Most children are kept safe from abuse and harm. However, a relatively small number of children are known to be at risk. Children are supported in their homes wherever possible, and the level of child protection cases is now below that of our statistical neighbours. The exact prevalence of domestic violence is unclear, but reporting in Bedfordshire has improved in recent years.

An updated census in January 2008 showed almost 2,200 open cases for children's social care services in Bedfordshire.

At 31 March 2007, 110 children and young people under the age of 18 years were subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP)* in Bedfordshire. This equated to a rate 12 per 10,000 children in the local population, and compared with a rate of 20 among our statistical neighbour group.

In Bedfordshire there were 19.3 registrations per 10,000 population in the year ending 31 March 2007 (a total of 175 children in the year). This compared with an average of 24.5 for our statistical neighbours, including a high of 32.2 and a low of 13.1. (*Annual Performance Assessment, 2007*)

Section 11: Children – Making a Positive Contribution

Engage in Decision Making and Support the Community and the Environment

We do not know to what extent young people are involved in decision-making beyond the choices they have at school (e.g. subject options and school council membership). However, most decisions about what children learn at school, when and how success is judged are still mainly taken by adults.

There has been an increase in the number of young people involved in electing members on to the Youth Cabinet.

There is national evidence of children volunteering with nearly half of 16-24's providing help within their communities.

Law Abiding and Positive Behaviours

Most young people participate in positive leisure activities, but nearly one in four do not. Over 4,000 are currently involved in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

Bedfordshire residents identify more activities for teenagers as a priority, and see groups of teenagers hanging around on the streets as one of the biggest problems, in terms of anti social behaviour.

Both the total number of pupils excluded and the total number of days lost by fixed term exclusions, has decreased in recent years.

The provisional data for 2006 indicates a rise in teenage conceptions from 2005 – 2006. This means that Bedfordshire is unlikely to meet the 2010 target to reduce teenage conceptions by 50% from the 1998 baseline. The problem seems to lie in Bedford Borough.

Develop Positive Relationships and Choose not to Bully or Discriminate

6% of boys in Year 10 thought that other children were fearful of going to school because of them.

Self-confidence

Over exposure to advertising in the media, and peer pressure to own the latest gadgets and fashions can lead to young people having feelings of inadequacy and low self esteem.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to develop important non-cognitive skills.

Develop Enterprising Behaviour

An increasing number of children are involved in Young Enterprise programmes which are running in Bedfordshire schools to give young people an insight into running a business.

Section 12: Economic Wellbeing

Ready for Employment

Local employers have raised concerns about the literacy and numeracy skills of school leavers, as have business organisations nationally. The Bedfordshire and Luton Chamber of Commerce is committed to working with education and training providers to raise skill levels, and to improve the readiness of young people for the work environment.

Bedfordshire is expected to experience major employment growth to 2021 and beyond. This will create a wide range of employment opportunities for young people. There is a critical need to ensure that the careers advice given to young people, and the education and training programmes available to them, reflect these opportunities.

References

BCC population estimates and forecasts 2008.

Bedfordshire PCT (prevalence)

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