

1992 – 2001



Transforming the lives of adults with learning disabilities



“
*I enjoy my life here.
I like the staff. They're
friendly and I have lots
of friends here.*”

Tracy, who has been a long-term learner

MK SNAP was set up by parents who found no services suitable for their children with learning disabilities once they had left their education provision.

It began as a day service in an industrial unit in Kiln Farm, owned by Milton Keynes Community Foundation, with 15 young adults learning life-skills and work training and packing and assembling items for local businesses to increase their independence.

The learners work expanded to computer studies and woodwork, making products for sale.

The work experience and life-skills were tailored to meet the needs of each individual, in a safe and supportive environment.

In 1992, MK SNAP became a registered charity.

After a decade MK SNAP was at full capacity with up to 30 learners attending daily; with the demand for places growing it was clear a larger home was needed. The search and fundraising began.

Dawn



Tracy



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2002 – 2012



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In 2003 a £2.5m appeal was launched to create a purpose-built centre for people with learning disabilities on land owned by Milton Keynes Community Foundation in Walnut Tree.

The fundraising campaign attracted fantastic support. Individuals, voluntary groups, the business community, trusts and foundations were extremely generous in their support.

Between 2003-2007, a collective of business executives formed the WillSNAP Band and played across the city to raise funds. Fundraising was boosted with iconic events including the MK SNAP annual gala dinner, SNAP UP a Frock and legendary quiz nights.

Our Patron Her Grace the Duchess of Bedford, and vice-patron Roger Jefcoate, CBE, DL, added their support to the fundraising drive.

In 2004, the Mayor Norman Miles, chose MK SNAP as his Charity of the Year.

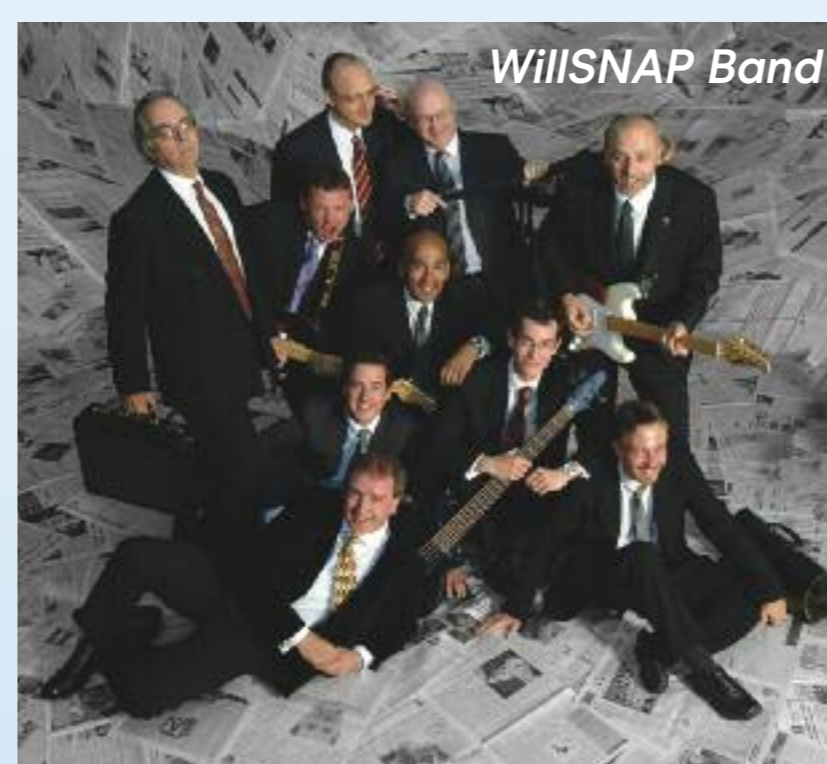
In 2007, thanks to the support and dedication of so many architects Woods Hardwick drew up the plans for the building and work began.

On 17th October 2008, Her Grace officially opened the MK SNAP Centre.

The opening of the new centre brought exciting new opportunities to people with learning disabilities in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas, including the addition of a sports hall to deliver sport, performance arts and dance.

It was soon clear that offering more sessions meant more learners. The staff team grew to support the growing number of learners attending and by 2010 there were as many as 45 learners attending daily.

Mayor, Alan Richards made MK SNAP his Charity of the Year in 2011.



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2012 – 2022

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Our learners wanted to be out and about in the community and a mini bus was donated enabling more trips outside of MK SNAP for our learners.

This third decade saw a record 65 learners attend. Over 50 sessions covering 23 subjects were on the weekly timetable.

We found incredible partners that shared our values including Walnuts School for young people with learning disabilities and The Jill Foster Dance Centre. In 2013 Walton Community Council joined us at MK SNAP; opening our doors to the local community.

We wanted our whole community in MK to recognise and celebrate ability and in 2013 Milton Keynes Disability Awareness Day (MK DAD) was established. MK DAD is now celebrated every year on July 14, raising awareness of what people with disabilities 'can do'.

Support from trusts and foundations transformed our kitchen into a fully accessible and inclusive commercial kitchen and the MK SNAP Catering Team was formed.

On March 23 2020 services at the centre were suspended. The team rapidly adapted our services and support to meet changing needs.

During the closure we installed our Changing Places Facility to meet learners' needs for personal care. This was officially opened in October 2021.

We opened briefly in the summer of 2020 but closed again in December 2020. It was not until Easter 2021 that there was a real sense of celebration, joy and relief as our learners started to return.

To add to our celebrations, MK SNAP was chosen as the city's Charity of the Year by Mayor Amanda Marlow.



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Our Values



Transforming the lives of adults with learning disabilities



Our vision is to transform our community through the promotion of independence, inspiration and opportunity.

In 2018 a widescale consultation was started to listen to the views of all stakeholders including learners, families, staff and board members around our vision, mission and values. This involved our Learner Council, who are democratically elected each year, who gave us their views on what really matters at MK SNAP.

By 2019 we were able to see the way forward with the launch of our first five year strategic plan; making it clear that we are a people-centred values led organisation.

Our aim is to provide a safe, progressive and professional service through the delivery of a unique blend of education and work opportunities in a stimulating environment.

Our Values are:

- **Fun** – To provide a fun environment which builds key life skills through the creativity of the innovative MK SNAP offer.
- **Respectful** – To have respect for others creating a supportive and beneficial atmosphere where difference can thrive.
- **Inclusive** – To ensure that everyone is fully included as a member of our dynamic community through celebration and difference.
- **Safe** – To provide a safe environment where everyone in the MK SNAP community is comfortable with themselves and others.
- **Progressive** – To continually improve the standards of service and positive outcomes in all aspects of MK SNAP.
- **Professional** – Ensuring and maintaining a high standard of professionalism in all dealings with our stakeholders.



*Our Vision,
Our Values,
Our Work.*



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SNAP Enterprises



Transforming the lives of adults with learning disabilities



“*I like the freedom of being outside.*”

MK SNAP learner Hazel

In 2013 SNAP Enterprises began. The concept was to expand the work training and work experience offering.

The mission was to grow five business enterprises providing opportunities for people with learning disabilities to be involved in 'the world of work' in a supportive and creative environment, unlocking and developing their talents, skills and interests.

The learners had the opportunity to experience all aspects of running a business, from sourcing the raw materials to designing, creating and selling in the five business enterprises.

- 1. The Crafts enterprise** involves learners using different materials to create items for sale. This includes woodwork sessions creating bird boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels; card making for all occasions; pottery sewing; glass and metal work; candles and jewellery.
- 2. The Horticulture enterprise** focuses on cultivating plants, flowers and herbs for sale, hanging baskets and bespoke and celebration displays.
- 3. In the Canvas art enterprise** learners produce art onto canvas which are sold and exhibited in and around Milton Keynes, including MK Gallery. MK SNAP learner Anita said: *“I enjoy painting. I feel so happy when it's finished and we sell it.”*
- 4. Our Catering Hub and Café** provides learners the opportunity to gain baking and customer service skills. MK SNAP learner Lauren said: *“I'd like to start my own cupcake business one day.”*
- 5. Our Work Training enterprise** enable the learners to develop and foster a greater understanding of work; for example, in packing and assembly contracts for local businesses.



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Our Future

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MK SNAP at the centre:mk, MK DAD

...what can your business do to help our neurodivergent community be included?

The ethos of MK SNAP is simple, the more opportunities that are available to people, the more likely they are to discover new talents and skills which have the potential to change lives.

In 2022 learners from MK SNAP had the opportunity to contribute towards the discussions around the bid for MK to become a city. As you would expect our learners told us exactly what they thought and in the Queens Platinum Jubilee honours MK was named as a city. The pride and celebrations at MK SNAP reflected the significance of such an historic moment for our city and the honour of being included.

The future is forever changed by the pandemic and the ongoing uncertainty of the world economic and political landscape as we go into the next decade. What remains, however, is the certainty that charities like MK SNAP will be needed more than ever; with MK being named the fastest growing 'new city' in the UK and an estimated 8,000 people living with a learning disability.

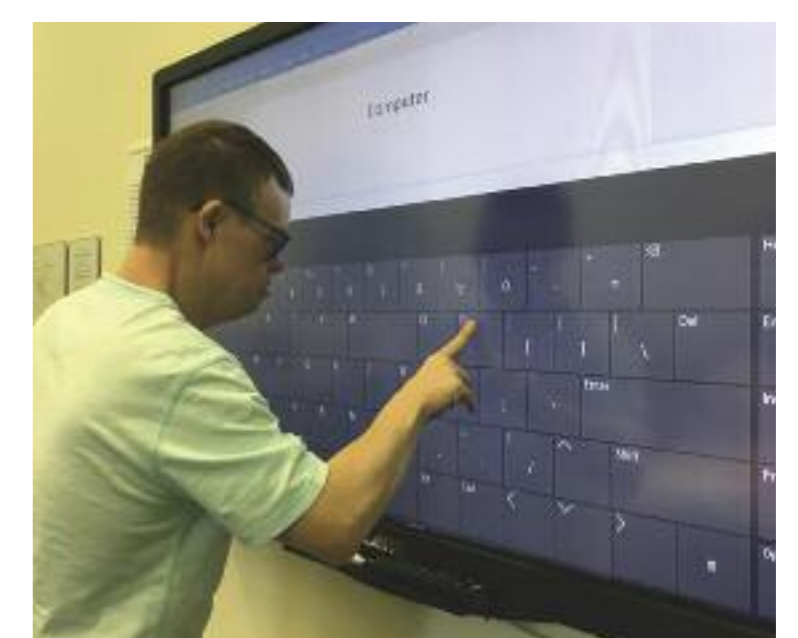
Specialist services will be vital for the future along with increasing demands that our community is accessible and inclusive; we have future-proofing in our organisational DNA.

Collaboration and partnership with businesses is key; what can your business do to help our neurodivergent community be included?

Digital inclusion is a priority and we have shown through adapting our offer that tech skills are important.

We have an online shop and will continue to use adaptive technology to empower the lives of our learners.

Packing & Assembly



Learning with IT



Canvas art



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Award-winning

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Patricia

MK SNAP's learner Patricia, was voted a 21st century Worthy Woman...

It is part of MK SNAP's business plan to seek to apply for formal recognition for services to volunteering and the community. These awards demonstrate MK SNAP's contribution to our community and our social impact.

Social Care Award

Best Disabled Learning Support Service in Buckinghamshire by GPH Social Care Awards 2020 and 2021.

Winner of Third Sector Long-Term Partnership with a local business

Our 25-year partnership with Mechline Developments, was awarded the Third Sector Award for outstanding contribution made by UK businesses to good causes. The Mechline project, assembling components of Mechline's Dormont gas connectors builds skills, confidence and work-readiness.

Sports Project of the Year Bucks and MK

MK SNAP's project 'SNAP TO IT!' to increase participation of people with learning disabilities in sport and physical activity, was named Project of the Year in the Bucks and MK Sport Awards 2019.

Trish Worthy Woman Award

MK SNAP's learner Patricia Poole, was voted a 21st century Worthy Woman for her ambassador role for the charity. In 2018 a cast of Patricia's hands signing the word 'Worthy' was on display alongside 16 new worthies, including Queen Elizabeth II, J.K. Rowling and Sir David Attenborough at the National Trust's Stowe gardens.



Social Care Award



Sports Project of the Year



Sports Project of the Year



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COVID19 Pandemic

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In March 2020 the world was hit by the global COVID19 pandemic. At that time people living with a learning disability were seven times more likely to die from the virus.

Remembering learners lost; Isi, Gemma and Romini

On March 23 2020 services at the centre were suspended. The team rapidly adapted our services and support to meet changing needs and tackle the fear and isolation of people with learning disabilities.

The crisis called for change. As we invested in new technology including iPads for learners at home; we took our learning and social sessions online.

Mum of one learner wrote: *“Thank you for the timetable. It will be good for Stefan and the others to use this so thank you.... to all the staff who are putting so much effort in to keep the learners having positive things to do, even though (these are) such strange times.”*

The COVID19 pandemic resulted in an unprecedented loss of income from learner fees, fundraising, from room hire, our SNAP Enterprises and from our community cafe. However, MK SNAP received enormous support and understanding from trusts, foundations and MK Council.

The return of learners to MK SNAP was a cautious approach led by the concern for learners' safety and made in partnership with the local authority.

In the Autumn of 2021, learners led a very special tree-planting ceremony in our gardens in memory of Isi, Romini and Gemma who sadly lost their lives to COVID19.



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Queen's Award



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“
MK SNAP is a great place and does an amazing job providing opportunities for people with learning disabilities they would not otherwise have.”

Peter Wilson MBE

Queen's Award for voluntary service: thank you to Volunteers, supporters of MK SNAP, individuals & businesses

On 29 October 2020 MK SNAP was extremely proud to celebrate the official presentation of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

It is the highest award which can be bestowed to a charity by Her Majesty and equivalent to an MBE.

MK SNAP's CEO, Angela Novell said: *"The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is an incredible recognition of our volunteers and their dedication to transforming the lives of people with learning disabilities."*

"When you look back at the work of the charity over the last three decades its clear to see that the role of volunteers has been absolutely critical in growing the charity."

Each year MK SNAP provides Social Responsibility days for over 135 volunteers from across the business community equating to over 2000 volunteering hours. Our incredible board of trustees are volunteers; a more dedicated and committed group of people would be hard to find. Each and every one of them give their time; asking for nothing more than that positive feeling that you get from knowing you are making a difference.

MBE for Peter Wilson

In 2022, long-term trustee of MK SNAP Peter Wilson received an MBE in recognition of his outstanding contribution to people with learning disabilities at MK SNAP. Mr Wilson, MBE and his late wife, Jane, dedicated a remarkable thirty years to championing the charity's work.



Peter Wilson MBE



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Highlights



Transforming the lives of adults with learning disabilities



We couldn't do anything without the incredible support of our community!

Thanks to the votes of thousands of people in Milton Keynes, MK SNAP celebrated life-changing funding awards.

The first came in 2015 with the Johnstone's Community Spirit Award 2015. With the support of MK Dons Sport & Education Trust and hundreds of voters, MK SNAP won a nationwide competition to have the inside of the building painted by Mitie Properties Services.

In 2016 MK SNAP won the regional ITV Peoples National Lottery competition and received £49,452 to make our garden fully accessible for people with learning and physical disabilities.

In 2018 MK SNAP won the regional ITV Peoples National competition and received £50,000 for our health, well-being and sports project 'SNAP to It'.

In 2018 MK SNAP celebrated its Silver Anniversary. A year-long celebration took place with funding from MK Arts & Heritage Alliance and Artswork.

The celebrations provided many opportunities to bring our learners, our work and the charity closer to the hearts and minds of our local community.

The 25th birthday celebrations included a special royal visit by HRH, The Duke of Kent in March and the formal naming of The Mrs Robeson Garden in May.

In October 2018 we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the MK SNAP building. Walk through the doors of our light, bright and airy centre and you will feel the energy, hope and pride that is lighting up the lives of people with learning difficulties.



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