

Early Help in Slough

Family Information Resources Support Team (FIRST)

Edition 2 – October 2018

In our first edition we told you all about FIRST as the name given to Slough's Early Help offer and introduced you to the whole team structure. As you may recall, FIRST launched in June 2018 and we are currently in our initial phase where we are accepting referrals from schools and stepping down cases from statutory services.

Now that we are well underway into the Autumn Term, we have plenty of new updates that we would like to share and information that we hope everyone will find useful.

Where do FIRST referrals come from?

Pathways for referrals have been shared with all partners and we hope that you have all had a chance to take a look at them and familiarise yourselves with them. As a quick reference point, during the initial phase of FIRST we are co-ordinating cases from the following referral routes;

- Referrals for Slough children directly from Slough Schools who require Early Help at Thresholds 1 or 2
- Stepped down school referrals from Slough Children's Services Trust Front Door which are triaged as Thresholds 1 or 2
- Stepped down cases from Slough Children's Services Trust as a step-down from statutory interventions and assessments, where the Trust has already undertaken an intervention with the child and/or family.

WAM Update

In the September edition (embedded at the foot of this update), we told you all about our WAM meetings and what they are all about. We have reviewed these with our Early Help community partners who attend and discuss cases with us and have identified a few changes that we will be making.

New name – WAM will no longer stand for 'Weekly Allocation Meeting' as they are not always held weekly and will now be called '**Work Allocation Meeting**' instead.

Meeting structure – As well as utilising the knowledge and skills of our community Early Help partners to identify Lead Professionals and support for new cases, the FIRST EH Co-ordinators will also be invited to attend to present cases that have progressed but now require further input from other agencies or cases that are deemed to be 'stuck' and a multi-agency professional discussion would support us to progress the case and find a solution.

Early Help in Slough

Family Information Resources Support Team (FIRST)

Meet the team

As a follow on from our first edition, where we shared details of the whole team, we felt it would be a good opportunity to introduce you to a different member of the team in subsequent editions.



Adriana Lozano – Early Help Co-ordinator

Hello, I am Adriana Lozano, one of the Early Help Coordinators in the “Family Information Resources Support Team”.

I have been working within the Family Information Service (FIS) as an Early Help Advisor since 2014, and prior to that I worked in SBC’s Housing Department for 10 years. My role changed to Early Help Coordinator since the launch of FIRST in June this year which has been really exciting. I think it is great that the Early Help agenda has been championed by the Council and key partner organisations, as working collaboratively with all professionals involved with families in Slough makes sense, and ensures we have an effective way of assisting vulnerable children and young people.

Once a referral has been allocated to me as an EH Co-ordinator, I will get involved by contacting the family to get more information from them; and I will also keep in close contact with the referrer (schools in this phase of development), helping to identify any other professionals that can contribute and provide support to the child and family.

We will happily get involved coordinating Team Around the Family (TAF) Meetings, brokering relationships with the many services available in Slough, and recording, from beginning to end, the journey of the child.

FAQ’s

In this section of the Newsletter, we will provide answers to some of the frequently asked questions that we have been receiving from partners.

Can we refer straight to other agencies such as Children’s Centres?

In this initial phase of the Early Help offer we are taking direct referrals from schools only, all other agencies should undertake their usual referral processes accessing multi-agency support for children and families in the usual way. However, if your concern is about a child’s safety and requires urgent attention, you should always refer directly to Slough Children’s Services Trust whichever agency you are from, including schools.

Early Help in Slough

Family Information Resources Support Team (FIRST)

Should we get the parent or carer to sign the consent on the referral form before or after we complete the referral form?

As part of the Early Help process, we need families to be engaged from the start so that we can provide the best possible outcomes to children and young people. The referral and discussion leading up to this are the first step in the process which we need the family to 'buy in' to. Our suggestion is that the referral is completed with the family members, which includes the child or young person as appropriate to ensure they are fully informed and can sign the referral consent as part of this process.

FIRST have already had a positive impact in terms of putting Early Help into place and improving Slough children's lived experiences.

Case example – We received a referral from a school regarding concerns for a family with a single mother and 7 children, 3 under 5 and 4 under 10 years old. The school were concerned that despite having worked with the family additional coordinated support was needed to affect substantial change but this did not meet statutory thresholds, and the children's mother was asking for help. F.I.R.S.T have been able to work with our Early Help Partners including the school, children's centre, housing, DWP, Health and SBC's Welfare and Benefits Rights service to drive coordinated positive change in the children's lived experiences.

The children and their mother have been supported to move out of unsuitable, overcrowded and inadequate temporary housing through negotiation with our housing colleagues into suitable accommodation meeting their needs as a large family.

Through engagement with SBC's Welfare and Benefits Rights service and our DWP colleagues we have been able to address a housing debt of £20,000 to avoid escalation and legal action. Further we have coordinated support for the children's mother to address her capped benefits by empowering her to find employment that meets her needs caring for her children which has significantly improved the families' finances.

Our colleagues in the Children's Centre have worked with the children's mother to address positive and practical parenting in the family home to empower the children's mother to be able to provide the care and parenting that she wanted to ensure for her children was in place and she was able to provide.

Between school and the Children's Centre the use of the emotional first aid program has support the children's mother to be able to feel more emotionally available to her children, child care has been provided to allow their mother to spend quality one

Early Help in Slough

Family Information Resources Support Team (FIRST)

to one time with each of them to build on this to positive affect. The school have also supported in purchasing school uniforms and sports kits for each child as was required but due to family finances preventing this.

Our colleagues in Solutions for Health have support the family from their Health Visiting and School Nursing team's to address the children's holistic health needs ensuring that all children have had appropriate health assessments, developmental checks and immunisations are up-to-date.

The outcome of this targeted and coordinated Early Help is that the family are now out of unsuitable temporary accommodation into secure housing. The families finances have improved and the children are now more secure in their lives holistically with their mother feeling emotionally available to them and with their access to education improved significantly with increase in their attendance and reduction in their being late or absent.

Getting in touch

If you have any questions regarding FIRST, the referral processes or information about services, please do not hesitate to contact us.

You can find us in St Martins Place, 51 Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3UF.

We're on the second floor (west) within the Early Years Service.

Or call us on 01753 476589

"Co-ordinating Early Help and support to Slough's children and families from the right place, at the right time."

Previous Edition of the Newsletter



Early Help FIRST
Newsletter - Issue 1 :