



Slough Children's Services Trust Our Second Year

A Summary of Achievements
October 2016 - October 2017





Slough Children's Services Trust

Our Second Year

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1. Foreword

As our second year as a not-for-profit children's services trust draws to a close, this report reflects on the significant achievements we have made in Slough over the past 12 months.

Last year's summary captured our immediate challenges and outlined the plans we put in place to underpin and make the significant shift from an 'inadequate' service on our journey to achieve good by the summer of 2018'.

This summary report reflects on our achievements throughout our second year. We have brought this to life with case studies and examples of some of the innovative and inspiring work our staff have delivered to improve the lives of vulnerable children and their families in Slough.

The year has been punctuated by four Ofsted monitoring visits, which have served as a constant reminder of our need to focus and address all areas of our work - to improve our quality, workforce, processes and information - so that services are targeted, appropriate and deliver what children and families need and to do so when they need it.

Children and their families remain at the heart of our decision-making. We have listened hard this year and we have heard what we've been told. The participation of our children and young people is better than ever before.

Independent research into our practice around child protection provided us with a wealth of information about what we're doing right - comments obtained from parents of children on CP plans (and the number of parents willing to be interviewed) showed us that they think the approaches we take are firm but fair.

Our impressive results from introducing a new domestic abuse programme for families who want to stay together has delivered outstanding results and attracted national attention.

Our relationship with Slough Borough Council strengthens by the day and we are functioning as effective and joint corporate parents.

We're not there yet - we recognise we still have a way to go until we are 'good', but we remain determined to do so and to reach 'outstanding' within five years.

The key message is that the children we work so hard to protect are - and have been - safer, secure and successful.



Nicola Clemo
SCST CEO



Robert Tapsfield
SCST Board Chair



2. Summary

Our focus for the year has been to build a solid business foundation and to make improvements in line with Ofsted's recommendations in previous inspection reports, as well as learning from each of the Ofsted monitoring visits, which have been every 12 weeks, since November 2016.

Our initial objective over the past 12 months has been to fully embed our new social work model - safe, secure and successful - and to train all staff in the new, systemic approach we have adopted.

Our year started with the new hub structure in place and a trial period, with permanent staff increasing but with agency staff retained, to support the model's introduction.

As the year has progressed, we have refined the hub groupings and have actively reduced the number of agency staff, as the structure and roles and responsibilities have been further defined.

In March, we were delighted when the Department for Education approved our innovation funding bid and we were awarded £1.439m over two years. The funding has been used to further enhance our model by introducing an Innovation Hub - a multi-agency, more dynamic way of delivering early help and support to children in need with professionals from a range of different backgrounds and areas of specialism.

Operational advances have also been informed by evidence-based research and, this year, the evaluation of our new social work model was completed and the report, *Measuring What Matters*, has influenced our practice, as has a commissioned survey of our children looked after.

The voice and feedback from children, young people and their families is central to our work and we have made sure we've not only listened but have heard their views and have been able to feed back through a 'you said, we did' approach throughout the year.

New actions

- Early on in the year, as the operational structure developed and we enhanced our work with new innovations and ways of working, we identified a need for faster decision-making. To achieve this, we established a small Executive



Leadership Team (ELT) in December 2016. The team consists of the chief executive, head of operations, head of HR & OD and the director of finance & resources.

- Our improved performance data and quality assurance frameworks have allowed for clearer decision-making on areas for improvement and resource allocation and there have been key appointments of a principal clinical lead and a practice development manager, as well as group managers to oversee all the operational hubs and teams.
- A Workforce Development Committee, chaired by our Board Chair, was introduced in July. We recognise that the quality of our services depends on our staff and the committee brings additional focus on that quality through the recruitment, retention and care of staff throughout the organisation.

Governance

The Board has continued to provide strong leadership as well as clear challenge and scrutiny. In April, we welcomed Robert Tapsfield as the new Board Chair.

Robert, a trained social worker, has been chief executive of two national children's and family-focused charities and has brought that experience and expertise to the role.



2. Summary (continued)

In addition, Children's Commissioner Eleanor Brazil contract with the DfE to oversee the development of the Trust came to an end. The Board has also welcomed SBC councillor, Khaula Usmani, whose position as Slough Borough Council nominee on the Trust Board was approved by the Department for Education in October this year.

Our relationship with Slough Borough Council continues to go from strength to strength, both with council officials and elected members. In May, Cllr Madhuru Bedi was appointed as Slough Borough Council's lead member for children and has made a significant contribution in support of all aspects of our work, particularly in the area of Corporate Parenting.

Through the Finance and Resources Director and the Board's Finances & Resources Committee, we have developed stronger financial governance & controls, stabilised our finances and have set a three year budget with SBC and the DfE, which offers us medium term financial security.

Our annual financial audit was 'clean' and we have filed our statutory accounts three months early,

The Board's Quality and Innovations Committee has been key in helping to identify and shape the Trust's future, both in terms of driving up quality of service delivery and encouraging innovative working practices that are more inclusive and are achieving better outcomes for children and their families.

Key Achievements:

- **ELT makes faster key business and operational decisions, such as targeted resourcing and staffing**
- **The Senior Management Team (SMT) has now expanded to include operational group managers (now called heads of service) and can concentrate on, action and embed new practices more effectively.**
- **The professional focus now includes clinical**

provision and practice deficits are being identified by the practice development manager, who is able to action and rectify these more quickly.

- **The Innovation Hub is delivering strong results, particularly in the area of domestic abuse, through our Inspiring Families programme, and in preventing multiple pregnancies with repeat removals of children into care, thanks to our adoption of the PAUSE Slough project.**
- **The Board's oversight is stronger and more integrated, via committees focusing on areas for improvement.**
- **The whole organisation is stronger, thanks to a support structure which responds to business needs in terms of service delivery and better identification of what works.**

'What I valued is that senior management are approachable and will listen to the views of staff'
senior social worker

'I have felt supported and encouraged in my career progression (particularly when I have felt overwhelmed by the increase in responsibility'
manager

I have been able to learn and grow as a newly qualified professional and feel that I have a bright and lengthy future at Slough'
newly-qualified social worker

'There is scope for me to make decisions or changes that are creative and bespoke'
consultant social worker



3. Vision



With so many service area action plans, improvement activities and on-going preparation for each of the Ofsted monitoring visits, it was important to be able to take a step back and to clearly (and concisely) capture our vision on a single page.

The graphic above, which was produced by the head of communications, in consultation with the Board and staff at all levels, identifies our common goals in a simple, yet effective way for everyone to follow. It is, in effect, our 5-year strategy, summed up in a way that everyone understands and supports.

Safe, Secure and Successful is firmly embedded at SCST. It is not just the name for our social work model. It's what it represents and the outcome we strive for in each and every child and family we help.

By adding in our vision, mission, aims and objectives, we share a common path. These are

not just words on a page. They are standards we all must adhere to in order to succeed.

While our aims may have changed from last year's, to adapt to our business as it has developed and evolved, our objectives have remained the same. We are all working towards improvements in quality, learning, workforce and information.

These improvements cover the business as a whole. The infrastructure – often referred to as support services – are the foundations upon which our success, both in terms of better outcomes and long-term sustainability, is built and we have further strengthened and developed these over the past year, to enable our social work model to work effectively.

The sections on the following pages cover the four improvement areas and demonstrate how we have developed our change programme across the business as a whole.



4. Our Objectives

OUR FOUR THEMES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Our four major themes for improvement are:

Improving Quality: improving the quality of social work and safeguarding practice in Slough.

Improving Learning: establishing a learning culture within the Trust, ensuring knowledge is shared in order to improve practice and result in a continuous improvement.

Improving Workforce: ensuring there is a stable workforce and leadership team in place to deliver good outcomes for children and families and to drive the programme of change and culture of continuous improvement.

Improving Information: improving the quality and availability of information for staff, partners and communities to underpin the other 3 themes.

4a. Improving Quality

While 2015-16 was a time for putting structures in place, 2016-17 has been devoted to developing those structures and getting the right people in place to deliver on the Trust's Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

We must ensure the right children and young people in Slough are appropriately safeguarded and protected and that services offered are the right ones, delivered at the right time, are of high quality and are making a significance difference to their lives.

Quality is the golden thread. It has to run through the entire service and be at the heart of everything we do. This section summarises some of our achievements in this aim.

Achievements

■ In January, we completed a comprehensive piece of work to define our cohort of care leavers and the first, regular reporting was produced to ensure every young person was allocated to a worker and had an up-to-date Pathway Plan. This was further strengthened in August, with regular reporting on keeping in touch visits put in place.



- We jointly launched the new Care Leavers' strategy, with our joint corporate parents, Slough Borough Council, and the strategy was written in a clear, understandable way for all young people, covering what, why, who, where, when and how we were delivering an effective service for them.
- Our Virtual School has seen improved results across the board, particularly for the 11 year olds in Key Stage 2 SATs, who out-performed their non CLA peers. There have been improved results for those in alternative provision and, overall, our young people's GCSE results matched the predictions from their results at age 11. Some children gained outstanding results, for example one child gained 11 A*-B GCSEs and our NEET numbers have dropped.
- We have established stronger links between the



4a. Improving Quality (continued)

Trust and partners, including Slough Borough Council's Educational Psychology Services and Young People's Service, as well as the NHS. Our children and young people's health needs are well assessed, thanks to a more effective assessment system and their mental wellbeing is monitored and addressed through more effective use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and through the hubs' clinicians.

- We have seen rising numbers going to university and trying taster days and a widening range of subjects studied at post 16. Where students have not achieved the results expected in maths and English, we've run weekly sessions for re-takes and a re-evaluation of our Easter and summer revision classes has seen a doubling in attendance.

- Our Complaints Manager, who came into post just before the end of our first year, has worked hard to embed and promote good and responsive customer service. By focusing on resolving many complaints at an informal mediatory level, far fewer complaints have progressed to a formal Stage 1. This has resulted in many complainants providing positive verbal feedback that they felt they had been given a chance to talk and be listened to by a senior manager.

- We successfully recruited a permanent team of Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairs. During the year 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 the IROs chaired 523 reviews for children looked after, with 95% of these completed within the statutory timescales.

- Participation of children has been a key focus for development of the Reviewing Service which is responsible for the independent chairing of child protection conference, reviews for children in care and quality assurance. Children now have a variety of ways they can contribute to their review or conference. This includes an online consultation form, face to face meetings with the Chair, or through an advocate.

- Independent Ofsted inspections of fostering, adoption, Mallards (our residential home) and

Our allotments project has brought the YOT and Slough communities together in a positive way



Breakaway (our residential and respite home for children with disabilities) all recognised significant service improvements and achieved positive Ofsted judgements..

- Our YOT team has maintained four regular reparation placements within the local community. Positive work has been completed with Slough Allotments, Aik Saath and Britwell Community Centre. The reparation provisions at Slough YOT continue to provide opportunities for young people to repair the harm as a result of their offending behaviour.
- Our child protection conference structure has been reviewed and now follows the Signs of Safety framework, firmly placing the voice of the child at the heart of the process. We have increased the number of children who are supported to share their views through an advocate and we have delivered multi-agency training on the new framework, so both practitioners and partners have a clearer understanding and focus on positive outcomes for children.
- Our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) provides regular training for partners on the process for managing allegations and ensuring allegations are managed in line with the policy. A significant achievement has been in engaging schools and the community through organised



4a. Improving Quality (continued)

Community Forums and making links with faith groups in Slough.

- A programme of regular case file audits provides a key measure of improvement across the Trust. The audits have enabled us to identify key themes and areas of good practice and areas where further improvement is needed. There have been some excellent examples of direct work with children, good assessments being completed and some very positive outcomes for children being achieved.
- Child sexual exploitation has been a key focus this year. SEMRAC (Sexual Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference) is firmly in place and focused on identifying children or young people who are at risk and ensuring there is an effective package of support in place to reduce the risks and keep them safe. It is an integral part of the multi-agency work to support young people who are at risk and is well attended by partners.
- Children or young people who go missing have been a significant focus and there are now improved systems in place to identify and support them.
- We have largely kept the number of children in placements flat across the year, but have improved the mix of placements, with more in-house fostering placements offsetting reductions in external fostering and residential placements. This has not only resulted in a significant cost efficiency to the Trust, it has created more of a 'family' feel to our fostering service, with both carers and the children themselves closer (in terms of both proximity and support) to our social care hubs. There are signs that the numbers are increasing and we have put in checks and balances to ensure the right children are being looked after and are well-matched to carers – this was picked up as a strength in the latest Ofsted monitoring visit.

4b. Improving Learning

Our staff are the key to our success and recruiting, retaining and looking after them is key.

We offer our staff no fewer than 112 different training options, both as courses and workshops. Some are mandatory, as we strive to improve practice standards but others are optional, to give staff the additional tools and support they need to deliver a quality service. In addition, we offer voluntary lunchtime 'masterclasses' which are more informal but are nevertheless popular.

Achievements

- Ofsted has reviewed our CSE & Missing activity and has identified that there have been many areas of improvement.
- Partners have engaged positively in the Local
- Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and this has led to some key pieces of work being completed, including a multi-agency audit on gangs and youth violence. The audit, alongside research information, led to the recommendation that a clear strategy for gangs and youth violence be developed to support partners in working with young people.
- In April, the Trust took part in the pilot of a new visual tool, later called the ChAT (Child Analysis Tool), through a programme funded by Ofsted, Waltham Forest and Hackney. It is now regularly used by the Trust to inform practice.
- The LSCB's Serious Case Review sub group has reviewed a small number of cases in depth

'SCST is a great place to work and the entire culture is supportive, with everyone seeking to achieve the best for children' social worker



4b. Improving Learning

which has led to learning events being organised and some changes to systems and practice. A newly formed Education sub group places a more focused overview of safeguarding in schools and a comprehensive multi-agency safeguarding training programme is in place with a range of training on offer.

- Through case file audits, we have identified areas for improvement and provided workshops, masterclasses, and other ways to embed learning. We are also developing tools and materials to support social workers with their knowledge and practice.
- Slough YOT became part of the London YOTs' training consortium this year to expand the already extensive training offered to the team. In addition, staff in the YOT have also delivered training to colleagues and partners, including weapons awareness and substance misuse.
- ePEPs (Personal Education Plans) are now thoroughly embedded, with three ePEPs per child each year, two of which are led by Virtual School. The quality of our children's ePEPs has improved considerably, with significant improvement since June.
- A Practice Development Forum has been developed to focus on the themes for improvement identified in audit. This has engaged frontline social workers and managers in reviewing the supervision process and we have introduced

Example of Learning:



In June, Coram Bright Spots released the findings from its survey of our children and young people. We broke these down into 'you said, we did' solutions and action plans have been put in place across the organisation. This covers everything from making sure every child and young person knows their social worker's first name, phone number and how often they'll visit (and has a card with these on) to not embarrassing children in care by wearing our name badges into schools and colleges.

new templates for clear recording.

- A dedicated training officer was appointed to the Family Placement Service, recognising the need for specialist training, both for staff and potential adopters and foster carers.
- The Virtual School's accurate weekly register data now informs the team's work, helping them to be more targeted and more effective. Its Governing Board reflects a wider range of stakeholders too and accountability is stronger.

More overleaf

Example of Learning:

In November 2016, we celebrated the success of our first cohort of five social workers who completed their ASYE (Assessed and Supported Year in Employment) and were offered full time positions at the Trust. Four of the five are pictured with CEO Nicola Clemo (centre) receiving their certificates.



4b. Improving Learning (continued)

■ The Head of Family Placement Services is part of a national Ofsted adoption advisory sub group, and one of the adoption managers is our early permanence champion, attending national early permanence seminars and bringing that learning back into the organisation. In addition, we have formed new, collaborative partnerships with other adoption agencies and we are a member of the Consortium of Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

our social work model was working, particularly in relation to our child protection hubs, and carried out by the University of Bedfordshire, was published. It showed evidence of systemic practice in group discussions and respectful discussions and social workers' willingness to offer help in family meetings. It also opened up lines of discussion about how barriers could be further reduced and enabling factors increased.

■ In September, the Measuring What Matters research, commissioned by us to examine how

4c. Improving Workforce

Embedding a new social work model, as well as dealing with legacy issues of inadequate performance inevitably needed a higher proportion of agency staff, to ensure a safe transition and training of staff.

This year we have concentrated on increasing the number of permanent staff, or those on fixed-term contracts and have had a large degree of success.

From October 1, 2016 to October 31, 2017, the Trust employed 132 new starters, of which 9.8% were in permanent social work roles. In the same time period, there were 84 leavers, of which 26 returned to Slough Borough Council as part of the agreed transfer of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Family Information Service (FIS) teams.

Included in the leavers' figure are staff who were employed on fixed-term contracts to deliver specific pieces of work (not agency staff).

Between October 2016 and March 2017, the Trust employed 163 agency staff but, as the systemic model further evolved and was embedded, we have reduced that figure to 121, with firm plans in place to reduce it even further over the next 12 months.

We have also looked for new ways to bring in specialist staff to enhance our offer but without committing to increasing the permanent establishment list. One of the key ways we have done this is to second staff from partner agencies, particularly for our Innovation Hub, which now has three such secondees, bringing additional skills and perspectives to our work.

Our new website is proving invaluable in our search for new, permanent staff. It has an improved job section and is the second most visited page on the site (behind fostering).

Achievements

- A permanent CSE Manager was appointed in August 2017 and is focused on ensuring CSE is fully embedded in the Trust and with partners
- The Family Placement Service (fostering and adoption) has been one of the most successful

'Working systemically in hubs has led to more joined up and cohesive working between teams where previously they have worked in isolation'
social worker



4c. Improving Workforce (continued)

Example of Improving workforce:

In December, we took a giant step forward by equipping our frontline staff with work tablets. This has not only helped with agile working - which means staff spending less time at a desk - it has helped us to better engage with families and children locally by allowing staff to do more direct work in people's homes, using special apps. It also means our systems are updated in real time.

RIGHT: Staff at a tablet 'Masterclass'



areas of the business in reducing the number of agency staff and attracting permanent staff to vacant positions. By the end of December 2017, all posts in the service will be permanent

- Our Virtual School now has age specialists from birth to 21 and is now developing an offer for the under 5s and specialist transition from primary to secondary school
- 16 New foster families and 11 new adoptive families have been recruited
- A permanent life story worker, appointed last November, has successfully completed the inherited backlog of life books and this work is now up to date
- In September, a dedicated permanent panel advisor was appointed to oversee the quality of fostering panel and to establish an adoption panel
- Linked to the reduction in statutory work nationally, funding uncertainties, and the profiling of the work of the YOT, a new staffing structure was agreed and implemented by March 2017.
- The YOT has successfully recruited 11 new volunteers to the service, who are currently undertaking training within Appropriate Adult (AA) services and Referral Order Panellists.
- The Trust staff speak over 26 different languages between them!

Example of Improving workforce:

When staff from the Children Looked After and Care Leavers' hub and the business support team finished their week-long training on the Trust's systemic social work model, they gave a presentation on what they'd learned. It was seen by CEO Nicola Clemo, who came back to the office and remarked: 'It was truly impressive. What an inspiring group of staff. I was amazed by what they said.'



Each team or hub gave a presentation to their peer on what they'd learned about systemic practice



4d. Improving Information

Sharing information and how it can effectively be used to improve both quality and practice is vital.

One of the key priorities of the year was to improve data quality and recording, both in terms of inherited information and the Trust's own recording systems.

To do this, several new roles were created in the performance data and analysis team, which better connect service-facing learning and data quality processes. This included the integrated case management system trainer, an early intervention analyst (to support Troubled Families' data submissions as well as strengthening oversight of MASH and early intervention activity) and an information governance officer.

We have spent a lot of time over the past year improving processes, templates and forms, to make them easier to use. We have also introduced – and then further revised – our supervision templates to make sure our systematic approach is working and that information shared between hub members and their managers 'flows' and captures all observations and actions appropriately and reflectively.

We have also strengthened our branding, using the hands drawn in our logo by one of our young service users. We have a strong presence through our new website and a colourful, clear way of conveying messages to our staff, clients and the community we serve.

Achievements

- The views of our children, young people and care leavers about the quality services they receive from us is (and always will be) a priority and we've done our utmost to improve participation and to include them in changes to the service. While the engagement of children looked after in the joint parenting panel has markedly improved, we have further improved children's participation by listening to their ideas and, with panel members, we have developed a children's scrutiny panel.
- Our fun activity days are attended by an increasing number of children looked after

Example of Improved Information

Our new website launched in May, alongside our bright new branding. The website includes a section dedicated to children and young people in care and for care leavers, all of whom helped with the design and content.



during Easter and summer holidays and we have done much more to increase participation of all children, whether living in the Borough or outside it.

- Slough YOT received praise from the Youth Justice Board for its Youth Justice Plan in August. The YJB was particularly impressed with the YOT's 60% reduction in custody cases since 2014, reducing the frequency of offending and the provision of speech and communication therapy.
- In May, we relaunched our website which now includes a dedicated section for children, young people and care leavers. They were instrumental



4d. Improving Information (continued)

in choosing what information to include and the way it's presented, as well as helping us with our new, bright and child-focused branding.

- In September, and again with significant input from our children, we introduced the new 'helping hand' information packs for all children looked after and a separate pack for care leavers, which includes information and advice on independent living, education, training and employment opportunities, as well as financial entitlements. The packs were praised by inspectors at our latest Ofsted monitoring visit, who recognised the significant improvement in our ability to listen to – and react to – the views of everyone in our care.
- SEMRAC has increased its focus on gathering wider intelligence and information to inform service development, this includes victims, perpetrators and trends.
- We have tightened up and largely automated the Trust's weekly Management Overview Report, leading to greater engagement with the data by everyone in the Trust – from Board members



Reaching out to every community in Slough: Two of our fostering recruitment team social workers went along to Friday prayers, at the invitation of the local Imam, which led to several enquiries from potential foster carers and was a great way for members of the local community to find out more about what we do

and senior managers to frontline practitioners, who get the reports weekly and can view all past copies on the staff intranet.

- We have reviewed and implemented a new learning and development programme for adopters, introduced adoption and fostering advisory boards and children of foster carers, foster panel members, foster carers and adopters now sit on interview panels for all new staff appointments in the Family Placement Service.

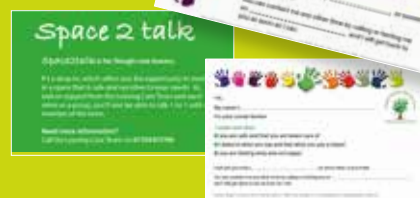
New CLA and Care Leaver packs launched this year

With the help of both our children looked after, young people and care leavers, we launched new information packs for them, with content that they said they wanted.

The packs, which were launched in September, contain a wealth of information in age-appropriate formats and in the new SCST

branding.

Feedback from the children has been positive, with one young girl saying she was using her 'journal' for spellings and a boy told us he was using his to write things down - before he forgot them - that he wanted to talk to his social worker about.



5. Other Improvements

- We held our third successful foster carers celebration event, attended by Slough MP Tan Dhesi and the Mayor of Slough, Cllr Ishrat Shah, who were there to show support for our foster carers as they received length of service and 'above and beyond' awards.
- We have developed good working relationships with health providers
- We have better responded to our service users' needs by delivering some translations services using in-house skills and resources
- We have engaged with the communities of Slough by attending fetes, festivals and other community events, as well as promoting our services on bus stop posters and on roundabouts in and around Slough.
- We have increased our local and national profile by engaging proactively with the media, as well as responding quickly – and honestly – to journalists' requests. We have had a number of national articles written on us, all of which can be seen on our website.
- We have relaunched our Mockingbird scheme (fostering), to give additional support to – and by – our foster carers and increase their sense of belonging.
- The Coram Bright Spots Survey found that Slough children looked after generally like school, with

Examples of improved community links:

Our Virtual School co-hosted a very successful partnership event on the inclusion of children looked after. Called Count Me In, the conference was not only very well-evaluated, the feedback was 100% positive. It was attended by local school governors, designated teachers, foster carers, social workers, education specialists and academics.



100% agreeing their foster carers cared about their education.

- The Troubled Families programme continues to evolve. We are working with more families than ever before and are capturing the results from interventions, resulting in improved outcomes and increased funding.



Space 2 talk

Space 2 talk is for Slough care leavers.

It's a drop-in, which offers you the opportunity to meet in a space that is safe and sensitive to your needs. As well as support from the Leaving Care Team and each other as a group, you'll also be able to talk 1-to-1 with a member of the team.

Need more information?
Call the Leaving Care Team on 01753 875760

In February we launched our Space2Talk drop-in sessions for care leavers, who can come along for support, guidance, a 1-to-1 with a member of the team or just for a coffee and a catch-up chat



6. Future priorities

We will continue to focus on the priority areas for delivery and improvement and on the needs of children and vulnerable families.

We have listened carefully to the feedback given to us during our Ofsted monitoring visits and, after each visit, we have actioned the areas highlighted to us.

We are fully committed to this process and will continue to be co-operative, transparent, open and honest.

We are under no illusions that fixing a service that had been inadequate for some time is a quick or easy process but we hope that this review of our actions over the past year go a long way in offering reassurance to the public that we are on an upward journey and we are dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable children and their families, in a safe, secure and successful way.

Listed below are a number of key priorities we will focus on over the next 6-12 months.

- The Trust has committed to a new programme of action '*stepping up the pace of improvement*' with the following four improvement themes:
 - Improving management oversight and accountability
 - Training and development of staff
 - Recruitment and retention of social workers
 - Quality assurance across the system
- The Trust will dovetail the work identified above alongside workstreams that have come out of the senior leaders' diagnostic workshop with Essex County Council, the Trust's new improvement partner.
- We will review the thresholds for statutory social work interventions and reshape services to strengthen prevention of escalation in order to support this.
- Our work with children in need and their families will become more intensive, which will lead to a decrease in the numbers of children subject to statutory interventions and to the numbers of open child in need cases.
- We will look at ways to improve the usefulness and the application of our case record system, to both reduce the technological difficulties in keeping records up to date in real time and also to increase the accurate recording of information, by offering more user-specific training to staff
- Our social work model is systemic, relationship-based social work. It also draws from social justice and strength based partnership approaches, so that social work is something we do *with* families, not *to* them. We want the operating model to be influenced and supported by communities and services in Slough and we will look at ways to strengthen and improve this joint, community-based approach.





Staff supporting National Adoption Week (above) and Foster Care Fortnight (below)



We've attended more than 50 local events this year, all over Slough and beyond



Our teams have been out and about, meeting local communities and promoting our fostering services

NOTES:

The Trust's Financial Report / Strategy is provided separately.
The Ofsted monitoring visit reports can be found on our website
<http://www.scstrust.co.uk/who-we-are/our-ofsted-journey/>





www.scstrust.co.uk

Slough Children's Services Trust

St Martins Place
51 Bath Road
Slough
Berkshire
SL1 3UF

01753 477 321

emailus@scstrust.co.uk

www.scstrust.co.uk

Registered in England & Wales: 9487106