

# SPACE2TALK

July 2021 Update



Your Space2talk update is for all of Slough's young people looked after and care leavers aged 16 - 24. It tells you all about the different ways young people have shared their views and how they have helped to improve the services and support you all receive.

## Weekly support group

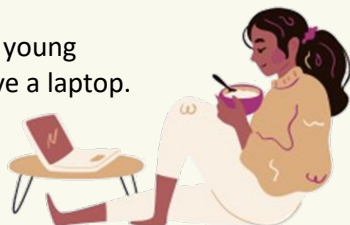
When the Covid-19 national lockdown began in March 2020, young people involved in Reach Out! and the participation officer agreed that the group would continue to meet virtually. The group met up weekly for a catch-up and to support one another. All young people were aged 16 – 20 and therefore a new 16+ group naturally formed which young people named Space2talk.

Each week we would check up on one another to see how everyone was doing, suggested movies or series to watch, shared tips for cooking and shared our worries and thoughts about the future and what we needed support with.

*"Attending to plants helped me to get through the lockdown"*

*"Lockdown helped me to budget better. Before lockdown I would go to the shop and buy things like chocolate just because I could whereas now I think about whether I really need things"*

In response to Covid-19 and to support young people, care leavers were able to receive a laptop. All those young people who requested one received their laptop last summer.



Last September young people had the opportunity to talk with inspectors from Ofsted who wanted to find out how children and young people had been supported during the first national lockdown and throughout the pandemic. Ofsted inspectors commented on the weekly support group and were pleased to hear that care leavers valued the weekly virtual contact with each other.

## Space2talk forum

Space2talk is a forum for Slough's care experienced young people aged 16 – 24. The forum provides young people with a space to talk openly about the things that matter to them.

These discussions help to highlight what is working well and where positive changes could be made to the services that young people (both looked after and care leavers) receive from Slough Children First, Slough Borough Council and partner agencies.

A huge **THANK YOU** to all of the young people involved in the Space2talk group for all your hard work and commitment over the past year!



## Your savings

### You told us:

Some of you (aged 18+) had not received your savings as a child looked after.

### We listened:

- A clear savings policy has been written.
- All children will be contacted about their savings.
- Savings will be discussed at the last looked after review meeting so young people know how much savings they have and how to access them.
- The Children's Looked After Review report has also been updated with a section about 'Savings'.

## Moving-in hamper

### You told us:

When young people move in to their new home (independent accommodation) it would be nice if we were given a little parcel to help us on our way. It would be like a moving-in gift from their social worker or personal advisor. This is what a parent would give to their child.

### We listened:

All young people aged 18 and over will receive a hamper from their personal advisor.

## Changes in social workers

### You told us:

Some young people have experienced a sudden change in their social worker (who they had built a strong relationship with) in their last year of being 'looked-after'.

### We listened:

- The Children Looked After service is recruiting permanent staff.
- Key messages, on the impact a change in social worker or personal advisor can have on a young person, will be fed back to workers.
- All young people aged 16 will have a personal advisor as well as their social worker.

## What's next for Space2talk?

### "A home is more than just a place to live"

Young people involved in the Space2talk group will continue to champion the things that matter to you and them. The topic that the group are currently focusing on is housing for care leavers.

Young people want to use their experiences to:

- To improve housing for care leavers and how it is provided.
- To make sure young people's new home is suitable.
- To ensure young people receive the right advice and support from a range of professionals including their PA and Housing Officer.

To find out how you can get involved and share your views contact Sharon (details below).



Throughout the year, the Space2talk group have shared their views and thoughts on a number of topics...



#### Support and expectations of a personal advisor (PA)

Feedback from the group was used to inform the creation of Joint Guidance for both social workers and PAs which sets out clearly what the role of the PA is and the role of the social worker so that both professionals can be clear with their young person who is responsible for attending their reviews, developing their Pathway Plan, housing and benefit entitlements etc.

#### 16-25 Support and Accommodation Pathway Project

As well as hearing about the project young people shared their housing experiences including what support they received. All of the feedback will help with the future planning of services for care leavers.

## Young interviewers

Members of the Space2talk group have helped to recruit a Head of Service and a new Chief Executive for Slough Children First.



By taking part in an interview panel you learn lots of new skills and this volunteering role looks great on your CV.

Get touch to get involved in future interview panels!

## Your Wellbeing

As your corporate parents, Slough Children First and Slough Borough Council wanted to understand how Covid-19 and the national lockdown was impacting you; your education or employment; how your social workers or PAs were keeping in touch and how you were coping physically and emotionally.

Some of you expressed feeling...happy and some felt lonely; being more active during the lockdown than you had been before; had seen your PA more or received more support; not being able to go to work or found it hard to focus using on-line learning.

Thank you to everyone who took part. The pandemic has impacted us all in lots of different ways. Remember to talk to your PA about how you are feeling.

## Care Leavers Offer

Our **Care Leaver Local Offer** tells you about the different services, including entitlements, that are here to help and support you. To find out more visit:

[www.sloughchildrenfirst/care-leaver-local-offer/](http://www.sloughchildrenfirst/care-leaver-local-offer/)

HOUSING HEALTH WELLBEING  
EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT



## Keeping you up to date...

We have been finding out from you what are the best ways to let you know about different opportunities and services for Slough's care leavers.

Each of your PAs were in touch with you recently to find out if the Leaving Care Service should create a private Facebook group. You told us that using social media is the best way to connect with young people. We are looking in to how we can set up the private group.

We are also looking at using the WhatsApp broadcast feature. You will need to store the senders mobile number in your mobile but this feature offers a quick and simple way to keep you updated and it doesn't share your contact number with others.

We will let you know how you can join the WhatsApp broadcast list.



To find out how you can get involved and share your views please contact Sharon, participation officer:

Call/message/WhatsApp 07591 990111

Email [sharon.stephenson@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk](mailto:sharon.stephenson@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk)