

# Parenting in Slough

A multi-agency strategy  
(April 2020)

DRAFT

## Parenting Strategy Pledge:

Working on the parenting strategy with partner agencies has been a rewarding experience with the shared vision of bringing together services and resources to help improve outcomes for parents, carers and families. By sharing our goals and individual areas of expertise, we have a wonderful opportunity to offer a co-ordinated approach to services and support parents/carers with developing effective parenting skills, which is key to maximising their children's potential. It is now up to all of us as professionals to bring the paper to life and make a difference to families across Slough.

### Our pledge is to:

- Strengthen availability and accessibility of general information and advice to parents**
- Build parenting capacity in specific areas where gaps have been identified**
- Ensure there is a clear focus on early help and prevention**
- Improve cohesiveness of parenting support across Slough**
- Work with partners to deliver the recommendations set out in this strategy**

# Foreword

*A parent as their child's primary educator can be the single most significant influence on what their children experience and achieve in life. It is well documented that the love and nurturing a child receives is fundamental to their health, mental health and wellbeing, not only in early years, but throughout childhood, adolescence and into young adulthood. Parents tend to underestimate their own influence, however we know from extensive research that effective parenting can have a positive impact on a child's future outcomes. Of course there are other factors that can influence a child's outcomes such as poor health, low income, low literacy and numeracy levels, poor mental health, domestic abuse and substance misuse and ultimately, resources that are accessible to parents that can support them with such issues.*

*Slough is committed to supporting our community's parents and families with a prime focus on promoting their capabilities and self-efficacy, to build their confidence and capacity to do the very best for their children and enable them to fulfil their potential.*

*The power of positive parenting for children, communities and society as a whole is now recognised as a national priority. (Working Together Statutory Guidance 2018)*

*This document details plans for the delivery of Slough Borough Council's Parenting Offer and provides the policy platform for developing and implementing early help through interventions for both universal and targeted parenting provisions. By adopting a joint, integrated parenting model, with a needs-led focus to service delivery, Slough will effectively support parents on their journey with their children through from early years to young adulthood in a way that encourages engagement, co-operation, learning and involvement in positive parenting.*

*Councillor Carter, Lead Member – Children's Services and*

*Cate Duffy, Director of Children, Learning and Skills*

*(Photos to be added)*

# Contents

- Introduction and Vision
- The National Context: Parenting – a national priority
- The Local Context: A profile on Slough
- Implementing the Strategy
  - Referral Pathway
  - Assessment and Intervention
  - Measuring Impact and Outcomes
  - Key Partners
  - Key Priorities
- Our Parenting Offer
  - Evidence based parenting programmes
- Action Plan
- Evaluation of the Strategy
- Next Steps

# Introduction and Vision

Slough's multi-agency parenting strategy relates to families with children aged 0-25 (including SEND) and essentially aims to drive good professional practice and improve outcomes for families and parents in Slough. The strategy sets out our vision, the local and national agenda, our parenting offer, and what we are aiming to achieve (our priorities) in Slough from April 2020.

## Our Shared Vision

With a primary focus on early help and prevention, Slough's parenting offer aims to take a multi-agency and restorative approach to providing both universal and targeted parenting and family support to improve the future outcomes for children, young people and families in Slough.

Our desired short term outcomes	Our desired long term outcomes
Increase number of families accessing parenting interventions	Increase families self-efficacy and capabilities
Reduce family complexities	Improve emotional wellbeing
Increase parent confidence	Reduce risk of child anti-social behaviour
Improve child and parent behaviours	Substantial public savings with the reduction in cases escalating to statutory services via early intervention and increased universal parenting provisions

As set out within Slough's Early Help Strategy, our parenting offer commits to ensuring that parents will be:

- self-reliant, confident and resilient
- physically and emotionally well
- reach their maximum potential
- live in safe, strong families and communities

In order to achieve this and ensure a sustainable improvement to families' future outcomes, SBC will invest in workforce development opportunities via the commissioning of a range of evidence based Train the Trainer parenting programmes and delivering cross-skills competency based training.

The National Troubled Families programme has shown that there is a greater impact when working with the family as a whole rather than focusing on a single family member.

It is equally fundamental that we provide tailored options to help families with issues such as domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health, as we know that these factors can have devastating effects on families' lives (DfE, 2011).

When parents need information, advice or support with parenting, they will know where to find it, and they will receive an appropriate, timely and helpful response that is respectful and understanding of their needs as parents/carers.

We will aim to provide targeted options for families with young carers, teen parents, and foster carers, to meet their differing and particular needs.

Families where parents have learning disabilities and those with chaotic and complex lives may well also require specialised, ongoing provisions.

DRAFT

# The National Context

## Key statistics at a glance

- 1 in 4 children are born into households affected by drink, drugs, mental illness and domestic violence.
- 1 in 5 mothers suffer from postnatal depression and anxiety during pregnancy and in the first year of their baby's life.
- 61% of parents described parenting as 'fairly' or 'very' difficult.
- 1 in 5 mothers find it difficult to access help with parenting.
- Up to 50% of children born today can expect to see their parents split by the time they are 15.

(Local Government Association 2016)

## Parenting – A National Priority

Nationally, estimates show that around 2 million children in the UK today are living in difficult family circumstances including parental drug and alcohol dependency, domestic abuse and mental health, unemployment.

There is substantive evidence which supports the claim that positive parenting can help to address the structural causes of poverty, and is one of the key elements of sustaining families' social mobility (All Parliamentary Group Report, 2015).

Statutory guidance such as *Working Together* (2018), alongside evidence from research such as the Allen (2011) and Munro (2011) further state that "Early intervention is crucial for the social and emotional development of children and families which can in turn significantly improve mental and physical health, educational attainment and employment opportunities." *Graham Allen (2011)*

As well as making a positive impact on the outcomes of children, young people and families, research tells us that public money is also saved in the long run. *Early Intervention Foundation (2016)*. When families reach crisis point, support is needed at a much more intensive level which costs more. By investing in early help to prevent difficulties from escalating, the need for these more costly services is reduced.

National government guidelines require local authorities to adopt a joined up approach for families and parenting support based upon analysis and mapping of local needs, which involves service users in its development and implementation (*Working Together 2018*).

*\*Infographics on regional/national data from the Office of National Statistics to follow.*

# The Local Context

Our local data compiled from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2018 (JSNA) and Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020 gives us a strategic overview of trends in Slough, and a clear understanding of the factors that influence local needs of parents and families.

Some of the cross cutting headlines relevant to Early Help include the following:

- With a population of approximately 149,000, Slough is made up of a significantly younger than average population compared to any of the south east local authorities – approximately 42,180 (**28%**) under 18s.
- **39.2%** of all households contain dependent children - this is the third highest proportion across England and Wales.
- Slough is one of the most ethnically diverse areas outside of London with **46%** of the population identifying as White British or White Other, **40%** Asian or British Asian, **8.6%** Black or Black British, and **3.4%** as mixed heritage.
- Slough ranks 78 out of 152 for deprivation amongst upper tier authorities. **19.5%** of children under 16 live in low-income families in Slough.
- Compared to the South East, Slough has relatively low employment (**78%**) and high economic inactivity (**18.6%**).
- At **3.6%**, family homelessness is significantly worse in Slough than national (1.6%) and regional (**1.9%**) averages.

Across Slough, parenting has been identified as a priority and is a recurring theme in the majority of Strengthening Families and Early Help cases. Parents within the Strengthening Families programme are frequently confronting a range of problems that are likely to affect their inter-parental relationship and their ability to parent effectively.

Since April 2015, Slough has worked (or completed an intervention) with a total of 671 families who meet the Strengthening Families criteria. Issues range from children being in need (by default) coupled with additional needs/issues such as health, domestic abuse, crime/ASB involvement, issues around education or unemployment.

**48%** of the 671 families who have had an intervention had some form of domestic abuse or violence prevalent in the household.

It was also found those suffering from abuse will start presenting with other issues such as 'health'. In fact **54%** of families worked with under the strengthening



Families programme suffered from a range of health issues relating to physical, emotional or mental health (low self esteem, anxiety, depression for example).

Additionally, based on data for April 2019, Slough Children's Services Trust received 1,042 contacts relating to children by the Front Door service and of those contacts 650 (**62.4%**) could be classed as issues caused by parental factors (alcohol misuse, abuse/ neglect)

*\*Infographics to Follow*

DRAFT

# Implementing the Strategy

Improving outcomes for families and parents/carers is the driving force of this strategy and should be the basis of all forms of family and parenting support.

With this in mind, Slough's Early Help Strategy is the foundation of Slough's Parenting Model to delivering better outcomes for children, young people and their families. Multi-agency working is a key component of our early help approach based on the principle that delivering early help is everyone's responsibility. There are high aspirations for delivering the parenting offer outlined in this strategy based on successful partnership working not only between statutory agencies such as the council, health agencies but also the voluntary and community sector, independent providers and of course families.

The national framework for Contextual Safeguarding recognises that the different relationships that children and young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can also feature violence and abuse and therefore can experience significant harm beyond their families. Parents and carers can have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. 'Contextual Safeguarding Network' (2017).

Therefore it becomes vital that practitioners engage with individual services and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these services are a critical part of safeguarding practices. Hence, our working practice will adopt a multi-agency approach to service delivery.

## **Referral Pathway**

At present, the highest level of referrals for parenting support come via the 'front door' with the remaining coming from social workers or parents self-referring. Going forward, a simple but robust referral process will be introduced in line with the current 'front door' process to capture the range of referral pathways.

Our universal parenting offer will be open to all and can be accessed via self-referrals as well as via Early Help and statutory services. Our targeted parenting offer will see referrals come through our Early Help process and other statutory organisations such as Youth Offending Team, Slough Children's Services Trust, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and so on and so forth.

## Assessment and Intervention

A single 'parenting screening tool' will be incorporated within the 'whole family' assessment, which will identify issues or indicators relating to:

1. Parents or children involved in anti-social behaviour or crime
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly
3. Children of all ages in need of help, are identified as a Child in Need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse
6. Parents and children with a range of health problems

The Early Help 'level of need' thresholds will guide and establish the level of parenting/family intervention required through levels. It is very common for parents to use services across several levels, or to access different levels of parenting support at different times. The intensity of the intervention families require may change with life transitions such as starting school, separation, illness, loss, trauma and financial hardship.

Level of need	Who will benefit	Parenting offer
<b>1 Universal</b> Children and families with no additional needs, whose health and development needs can be met by universal services	All parents - universal entitlements before any specific problems have been identified	Family and community networks of support and access to universal provision Information, involvement and opportunities
<b>2 Additional</b> Children with additional needs that can be met through the provision of early help	Parents with additional needs	Universal plus targeted parenting support Targeted support
<b>3 Complex</b> Statutory threshold. Child and/or family whose welfare or development is significantly impaired without intervention	Parents in families with multiple, complex needs	Universal plus targeted plus intensive support Coordinated multi-agency interventions with families
<b>4 Statutory</b> Statutory threshold. Child and/or family with high level of complex needs or in need of protection & care	Parents who are unwilling or unable to fulfil their parenting responsibilities	Universal plus intensive statutory intervention Intensive, sustained specialist support and statutory interventions

The RAI diagram illustrates in brief the parenting referral, assessment and intervention process. To view click on the link below



Draft Parenting  
Referral Pathway Dia

## Measuring Impact Outcomes

Robust monitoring and evaluation processes to assess impact and outcomes of programmes and interventions will be implemented whereby a single parenting offer 'evaluation tool' will be used by all services offering parenting provisions. All progress/feedback data will be collated centrally to measure true impact of Slough's parenting offer.

Measured outcomes will be strategically linked to outcomes stated on the Strengthening Families Outcome Plan in order to meet the Troubled (strengthening) Families Framework. This is so we can evidence how our parenting programmes are intrinsically linked to the Strengthening Families Outcome Plan whereby needs of the family are identified and addressed.

## Key Partners

Key partners include both commissioners and providers of services across Slough, in some cases organisations that both commission and deliver services for children, young people and families.

Commissioners are central to ensuring that programmes are evidence based, sufficiently evaluated, located in areas of greatest need, and target vulnerable groups. It is the role of commissioners to ensure up to date needs assessments are developed and used to provide a targeted needs led approach. Commissioning processes will also enable the assessment of programmes to be held centrally to aid evaluation and future commissioning plans.

This evaluation will consistently be used by the Parenting Strategy Task and Finish Group who will be tasked to share any learning and to inform subsequent commissioning.

The Parenting Strategy Task and Finish Group has representation from a wide range of partners, both internal and external to Slough Borough Council and who are responsible for implementing the strategy and related action plan.

Members include:

- Slough Borough Council
- Early Help Services
- Children's Social Care (SCST)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Young People's Service
- Early Years
- Public Health
- Adult Social Care
- East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Solutions for Health
- BHFT
- Children's Centres
- Voluntary and Community Services
- Youth Offending Team

### **Key Priorities of the Strategy**

In consultation with delivery partners the following key priorities will underpin implementation of the strategy and parenting offer:

- **Early intervention and Prevention-** Resources will focus on meeting families' needs at the earliest point. The purpose of the parenting offer is to deliver the right level of parenting support to parents who require at the earliest possible time, before problems and issues become entrenched. By supporting parents early, it is anticipated that outcomes will be more positive, ultimately reducing the need for statutory involvement.
- **Co-ordinated Multi-Agency Approach** – A co-ordinated and integrated approach to service delivery is planned to support parents, carers and families. Partner agencies will share information and best practice to ensure a holistic parenting offer is provided in Slough. We are developing referral pathways and processes for parents/carers, ensuring that access to support is timely and appropriate. Service delivery will utilise the skills and expertise of practitioners across services to match delivery with individual expertise and need.
- **Quality Standards** – Clear, consistent quality standards for family and parenting support will be established. Practitioners will be trained as Train the Trainer for nationally recognised evidence based programmes. Service delivery will be quality assured to ensure a continuum of desired standards. We will ensure that that support is needs-led rather than being responsive to availability. We will develop a quality standards framework for Slough which

describes a core set of competencies and knowledge/skills/experience for workers.

- **Participation** – Wherever possible parents and carers will be involved in the planning and delivery of services. We will also involve families in the decisions made about their support, to increase their level of participation with services, and ensure that interventions offered are relative to their needs. Families' experiences and opinions are essential to achieving effective feedback. By taking a 'whole family' approach, the voice of the child and family will define the effectiveness of our service delivery and the development of our future provisions.
- **Accessibility and Engagement** – A needs led approach is key to delivering appropriate and effective provisions. We will source a range of methods to ensure families can access the entirety of the support provision, especially families with complex needs or who are hard to reach through traditional approaches. For example, providing transport and crèche facilities, ensuring provisions offered are run at suitable times of the day and accessing translation services where required.
- **Workforce** – Workers providing family and parenting support will be adequately competent, confident, experienced and qualified. Training for practitioners will be relevant, planned, coordinated and appropriately resourced. Practitioners accessing training for evidence based parenting programmes commissioned by SBC, have completed Expressions of Interest affirming their competencies, experience, skills and commitment to future co-delivery. Management feedback and ongoing support processes will be established to improve standards of delivery via A Memorandum of Understanding which underpins the role, responsibilities, and expectations that partner agencies will be signing up to as part of their commitment to the multiagency parenting strategy.
- **Co-ordinated Multi-Agency Approach** – A co-ordinated and integrated approach to service delivery will be taken to support parents, carers and families. Sharing knowledge and best practice across partner agencies is vital to providing a holistic parenting offer across Slough. We will establish clearer referral pathways and processes for parents/carers, ensuring that access to support is timely and appropriate. Service delivery will utilise the skills and expertise of practitioners across services to match delivery with individual expertise and needs.
- **Quality Standards** – Clear, consistent quality standards for family and parenting support will be established. Practitioners will be trained in Train the Trainer for nationally recognised evidence based programmes. Service delivery will be quality assured to ensure a continuum of desired standards. We will ensure that that support is needs-led rather than being responsive to

availability. We will develop a quality standards framework for Slough which describes a core set of competencies and knowledge/skills/experience for workers.

DRAFT

# The Parenting Offer

National guidance and local tools that have been sourced to aid the development of the Slough's Parenting Offer include:

- National/statutory guidelines – Parenting as a national priority
- NICE (2011) Guidelines (social learning, attachment, CBT approaches)
- EIF recommendations for evidence based programmes
- Statistical Neighbours Data
- Recommendations from other Local Authorities
- Audit of current provisions and identified gaps
- Parent feedback

Below details the range of evidence-based, bespoke and universal parenting programmes that will be incorporated into Slough's Parenting Offer as part of the strategy.



Parenting Offer Grid  
- For Practitioners.do



Parenting Offer Grid  
- Guide for Parents.c



Parenting Support -  
Useful Contacts & On

## Action Plan

The strategy action plan has been established in collaboration with our key partners/stakeholders and outlines the key actions and processes to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy/parenting offer. The Action Plan can be viewed via the link below:



Action Plan.docx



# Evaluation of the Strategy

Evaluating the impact and outcomes of our parenting offer will provide direction for the future planning and development of Slough's Parenting Offer.

## **Service Level Evaluation**

Services will be responsible for examining their work with children and families, and assessing its quality, effectiveness and the extent to which families' needs were met by the support offered. Across Slough, this will be achieved through the use of the single evaluation tool which will be rolled out across all parenting services in Slough. The Parenting Strategy Task & Finish Group members will be responsible for monitoring the progress against the action plan and measuring the outcomes of the strategy.

## **Evaluation of the Strategy**

The action plan will be monitored and reviewed quarterly by the Parenting Strategy Group Task & Finish Group. From a governance perspective, periodic updates and reports will be shared with the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel.

# Next Steps

On behalf of Slough Borough Council, the Slough Parenting Task and Finish group will ensure:

- The strategy is shared and implemented across the full range of services and governing boards.
- Review the strategy and its action plan at quarterly meetings
- Align strategy with future transformation plans for Slough Borough Council.

DRAFT