



# Early help

## A guide for parents and carers



[www.sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk](http://www.sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk)



## About our early help approach

We know that being a parent or carer has many challenges in modern day life, from meeting the emotional and basic needs of your children, to dealing with others around you and your family, managing your home, money, etc.

We all need some support from time to time, and it is important to prevent things getting worse, especially if they could impact our children. This is what we call in Slough 'early help'.

Some people may have family or friends to assist them.

Others may not have anyone to turn to, when dealing with something particularly difficult.

In all cases, there are services and professionals within the community, and they might be able to provide support!

Early help is for **everybody** – no matter their age, their background, their needs. It is about making sure our children have the best chances in life and they can grow up to be healthy and happy.

In Slough we are aiming that 'children and young people feel happy, safe & loved within their families and wider community, where they are helped to thrive, not just survive'.

They are our future generations, and therefore we all need to work together to support them.

## Types of early help support

There are three different types of early help support available depending on the needs of the family:

- Universal support
- Additional support
- Targeted support

### Universal support

These services are available to everyone and are those that many of us are familiar with, and access on a regular basis, like education for our children, midwifery, health visiting and GPs.

There are other universal services that support the general wellbeing of families, when accessing activities and spaces within the community such as family hubs, sports clubs, voluntary & faith groups, youth clubs and libraries.



# Types of early help support

## Additional support

If accessing universal services in your area is not fully resolving things, you can seek additional support.

Here are few examples, of times when you should talk to a professional within your community, if:

- You notice your child is constantly having difficulty at school.
- Your child is struggling to follow boundaries at home, and this is causing friction.
- You are experiencing housing issues.
- You or your partner have lost your job and are struggling to make ends meet.
- You are experiencing low mood and feeling isolated.
- Issues in your relationship with other adults may be impacting your child.



Anyone from the community services that you reach out to can help you by assessing your needs and making a plan with you about how to best support your family. This is what is called a 'Team Around the Child and their Family', which is a process to make sure everyone involved meet to discuss if the actions tried are working, and that your children and you are getting the help needed.

# Types of early help support

## Targeted support

When there are several complex challenges impacting your family, or the additional support that you have been given isn't helping, a family Support Worker or Targeted Youth Worker may be able to step in to strengthen the 'Team Around the Child and their Family' process.

Working with your children, you, other family members, and professionals involved, an early help assessment will be completed to agree an action plan with everyone.

Your children and family should always be the central part of the 'team', and your voices should be key to any decision.

Meetings will take place regularly to discuss the plan of support, focus on what is improving and decide on any further help needed.



## Frequently asked questions

### **Q: What's an early help assessment?**

**A:** This is a form and process that is completed so a professional can get a better understanding of your child(ren) and family's needs and what can be done to better assist you.

The information that you and others involved with your family give, can be put together in what is called an 'early help assessment'.

The last part of the assessment is called an 'action plan' and that should summarise what your child, and everyone around your family agree is best to do, to get you where is needed.

### **Q: How would I know that I need 'early help'?**

**A:** Research suggests that early help and intervention can protect children from harm, reduce the need for a referral to child protection services, improve children's long-term outcomes, improve children's home and family life and support children to develop strengths and skills to prepare them for adulthood.

If you feel you may be struggling and whatever is going on could affect your children, it is better to ask for 'early help'.

### **Q: What happens at a Team Around the Child and their Family meeting?**

**A:** You and everyone around your family should meet regularly to discuss the progress of your family's early help action plan.

The lead professional will arrange a place and time for the meeting, and you'll discuss what is working well, worries, and what needs to happen to resolve them.

The original action plan should be always reviewed and progressed up to a point when all actions have been completed satisfactorily.

## Frequently asked questions

### **Q: Will a Family Support Worker want to visit my home?**

**A:** Yes, the best way to get to understand your needs should be through ongoing direct contact with you and your family.

Family Support Workers and Targeted Youth Workers, once allocated to your family or young person, are expected to do their first home visit by no longer than 7 working days.

### **Q: Will a Targeted Youth Worker support all of my children?**

**A:** Targeted Youth Workers will only work directly with children ages 11 and over. If they feel your family need further support, they can always speak to the Family Support Workers Teams in their TEH Team, after discussing this option with you.

### **Q: Will professionals want to see my children on their own?**

**A:** At times, professionals may need to work directly with your child / young person only. Your children should have their own voice heard. This is something that we promote in Slough, to enable children from all ages to build resilience and all the necessary skills to thrive.

### **Q: What if I don't agree with the plan that's been created to support my family?**

**A:** That's fine. Everyone should be heard, and their views considered.

Sometimes it's important to respectfully challenge something you don't agree with or understand fully.

Having everyone working together to support you, and understanding what is needed will be the most effective way to help your children feel loved, be Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving.

## Contact us

There are several ways you can get in touch with us:



[Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk](mailto:Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk)



01753 875 362



Early Help, Slough Children First  
Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road  
Slough  
Berkshire  
SL1 2EL