Businesses and Slough Children's Services Trust come together to address foster care shortage

Tuesday 14 January, 2020

Local businesses and Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST) have come together to explore how foster friendly work places could help address an urgent need for foster carers. SCST hosted the first of a series of fostering business breakfasts, in partnership with pharmaceutical company Ipsen.

The event was attended by a number of local organisations including O2, Lonza, RB, Aspire and Slough Business Community Partnership, with speakers from the business and fostering communities.

Denise Chappell, a foster carer with the Trust who runs her own business, spoke at the event:

"Businesses really can make such a difference in this area. On the whole, working foster parents are really no different from any working parent. There are always times when we need to drop work for our families but this is about businesses understanding the requirements of fostering and being more inclusive. This is ultimately about helping our local vulnerable children. "

While businesses legally need to have parental and adoption employee polices, there is currently no requirement to have a policy on fostering. Jo Briggs, HR Director at Ipsen, says becoming a foster friendly organisation would have benefits for both foster carers, their families and businesses too:

"This initially came to my attention when the Trust started a discussion with the local business community. Here at Ipsen we support all types of parental responsibility through our policies and practice and we want to make sure that includes anyone considering fostering. We recognise that it's a really positive thing in terms of helping vulnerable children and we were delighted to host the event in partnership with the Trust".

Following the success of the event, the Trust is planning to run another similar event early next year.

"There is an urgent need for more foster carers, both nationally and right here in Slough, and work with the business community is vital in supporting our local vulnerable children and young people. I'd like to say a huge thank you to Ipsen and the companies that came along to the event and I look forward to doing more work together in the future," said Lisa Humphreys, Chief Executive with Slough Children's Services Trust.

Anyone businesses interested in future events, should contact Communications Manager Kate Brewster on kate.brewster@scstrust.co.uk

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