



Request for funding to cover Other Child Support cost pressures incurred in Slough Children First of £98k for 2022/23

Executive Summary

To seek additional funding from SBC to cover increasing pressures from Other Child Support Costs. Rising demands have partly arisen from the cost of living crisis, higher levels of support required for complex young people, reduced housing stock for our care leavers to move into, plus the growth in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children (UASC) who have aged up to be care leavers.

The total additional costs claim is **£95k**, as this excludes the UASC cohort who are the subject of a separate claim.

The additional burden on the Company from rising demand

SCF are requesting additional funding of **£95k** to cover the balance of the over spend for the period Apr 22 – Mar 23 from an increasing Care Leaver cohort.

The overall overspend in care leavers is a pressure of £430k (excluding the UASC cohort), but with additional income from Strengthening Families, Home Office funding for UASCs, Household Support Grant offsetting one off support to care leavers and other additional income, the remaining overspend balance for SCF during 22/23 as a result of demand pressures is **£95k**.

There has been an overall increase in the numbers of care leavers during 22/23, at 24 over budget with an average of 52 per month during 22/23.

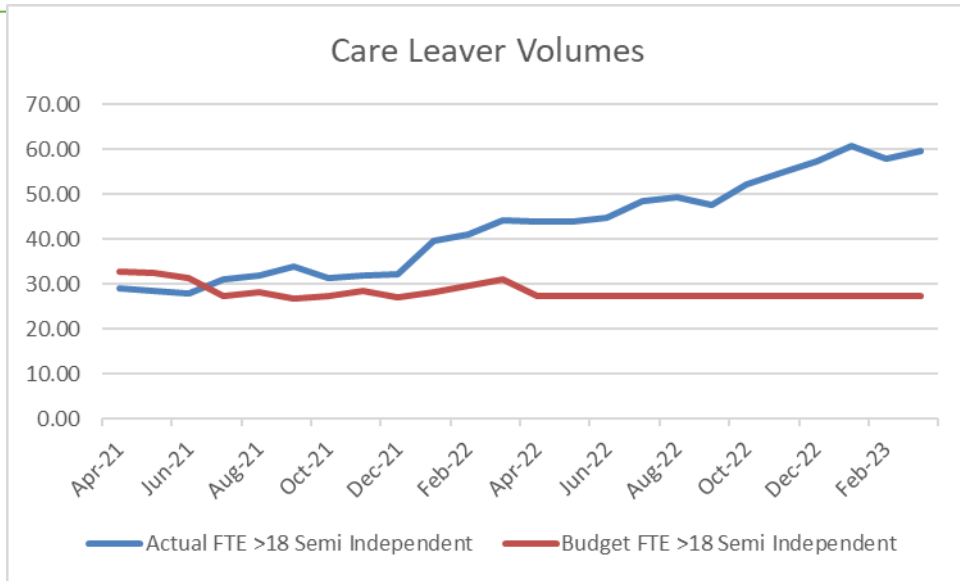
The total spend over budget in care leaver placements is **£974k, or £430k** excluding UASCs.

The average unit cost is £634 per week v a budget of £565 per week.

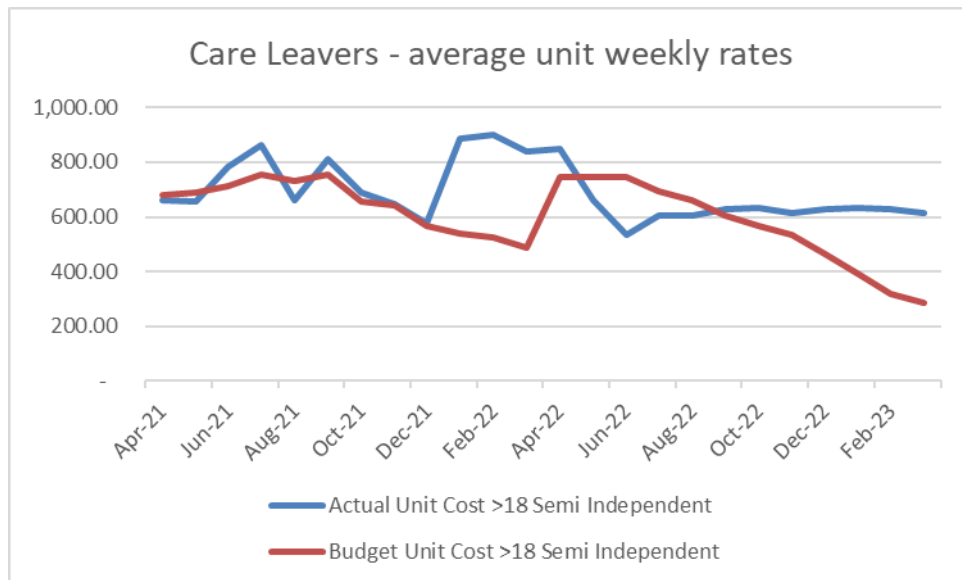
The extent of the increase in the demand for services

The overall Care leaving population has grown since 2021/22 as seen in the graph below, following broadly, the increase in the CLA population over that time period.

However, it was envisaged as part of the budget setting post Covid pandemic, and due to increasing use of Housing Panels to move more 18+ into independent living, that volumes would remain fairly flat.



The graph below demonstrates how increasing rates have also impacted on total costs during the period. In the 22/23 budget, unit rates were expected to fall in SCF with the implementation of the 16+tender. However, the tender for the procurement of Semi Independent accommodation and support for 16-25 year olds proved unsuccessful through the lack of a provider able to deliver a financially viable proposal for independent accommodation for 18-25 year olds.



There have been a number (11) of high-cost semi-independent placements over £1k per week which have had an adverse impact on the budget, including one exceptional cost for an individual child resulting in an adverse **£75k** by May 2022.



The Implications on Resources from Demand

The table below shows the additional cost burden position against budget of **£904k** for 22/23.

22/23 YTD	FTE	Unit rate	Total £000s
Actual	51.77	£ 633.75	£ 1,711
Budget	27.42	£ 564.55	£ 807
Variance	24.35	£ 69.21	£ 904

There have been no housing panels since June, which has led to a delay in some young people moving on to their independent living, and partially explains the rise in 18+ semi independent numbers.

18+ semi independent rates have increased 10% since 1 April 2022. This is in part an impact from inflation rises, but also delays in implementing the 16-25 tender plans aimed at reducing current rates which had been built into the budget as a saving. The delays a consequence of the provider no longer able to deliver against the original specification with the rises in cost of living. Alternative housing solutions are being explored for 23/24.

Information and Supporting evidence on steps the Company is taking to manage the said circumstances/ events within the initial Contract Sum

SCF are undertaking a number of activities to drive cost efficiencies and incremental income to assist with the pressures.

- SCF engaged **Homes 2 Inspire** to look at the opportunity of developing residential provision in Slough. SCF are working with housing to identify potential properties to meet this need and deliver savings.
- SCF have completed a **tender on 16-25 accommodation** and working with a provider to deliver against sufficiency plans. This includes the provision of emergency beds to allow time to find more suitable longer-term accommodation that matches the needs of the young person and provides better value for money.
- SCF have been **engaging new providers** to enter the local market and deliver greater competition.
- SCF are working with a local provider to develop a **new provision designed for UASCs**, recognising the increasing demands for UASCs. This will be tailored to meet their specific needs and provide for a better value option.
- Top **20 most expensive care leaving placements** challenged on bi-monthly basis to ensure best



value, and to ensure each young person is maximising benefits where applicable.

- Development of an **External Placement Panel** to focus on high cost, external placements with a tighter grip on review of time, additional support costs and step downs to drive value for money through appropriate placement decisions and more emphasis on permanence.

Any other information the Company and/or Council reasonably consider to be helpful for the Council to consider

The recent Mutual Ventures report on the business plan highlights that SCF and costs for children in social care are in the bottom quartile for cost per capita, suggesting costs of services are not excessive.

However, SCF accept there is other benchmark data which does not paint SCF in as good a light, largely around the high referrals but this must be seen in the context of Slough and the immature Early Help system. It is expected that with the investment in early help services this will result in fewer referrals to care and an improvement in the benchmark analysis.

It is commonly reported in the national press that children's services up and down the country are also overspending on their budgets with the rising demands for service.¹

¹ For example: [LGA: Eight in 10 councils forced to overspend on children's social care budgets amid soaring demand](#) | [Local Government Association](#) And [Safeguarding Pressures](#) | [ADCS](#)

