



**Request for funding to cover Transformation cost pressures incurred in Slough
Children First of £348k for 2022/23**

Executive Summary

To seek additional funding from SBC to cover Transformation costs incurred in the Company following the late decision by the DfE to withdraw funding in 2023/23.

The total additional costs claim is **£348k**.

The additional burden on the Company from rising demand

SCF are requesting additional funding of **£348k** to cover spend over budget for the period Apr 22 – Mar 23 following the removal of the DfE Transformation Grant.

The company submitted a bid for **£1,844k** of Transformational funding to the DfE in advance of the financial year 22/23. This was following the grant award of £1,478k for transformational activities during 21/22.

The bid was revised down to £990k following on going discussions with the DfE, and re-submitted in February 2022. SCF were notified in late April / May 2022 that the bid was unsuccessful, by which time staff had been recruited into posts and workstreams either under way, or were continuing the progress made in the 21/22 workstreams.

The table below shows the costs and overspend totalling **£348k**:

Ref	Description	Funding Requested		Actual Spent
1	Stability of workforce	213,003		155,856
2	Contextual safeguarding	210,028		142,424
3	Quality of service	298,684		162,064
4	Development of sufficiency	164,408		5,400
5	Targeted Early Help	6,000		-
6	Participation	23,040		-
7	Further Development of Edge of Care Services	75,221		-
Total DfE Transformation Funding		£	990,384	£ 465,743
	Other Costs to Deliver Savings	£	220,000	£ 102,636
Other Costs to Deliver Savings		£	1,210,384	£ 568,379
	Net Budget			£ 220,000
Total Cost Pressure				£ 348,379



Additional transformational spend of £220k was proposed within existing budgets to help deliver savings for 22/23.

The extent of the increase in the demand for services and the impact on resources

4 of the 7 proposed workstreams were continuations of the prior year funding, and the Stability of Workforce, Contextual Safeguarding and Quality of Practice workstreams in particular were felt to be highly beneficial to the company in order to drive down costs in the longer term and improve practice and outcomes for young people.

The Stability of Workforce workstream has delivered a reduction in front line social work turnover from 56% in March 22 to 22% by March 23. The ratio of permanent case holding staff is predicted to increase to 69:31 v 57:43 at the beginning of 22/23. **£156k**

Contextual Safeguarding started late in 21/22. It is a regular focus of OFSTED and the Company was still exploring the impact of the new team. OFSTED noted it was an effective service and the wrap around support offered through SALT and parenting worker enabled a more holistic approach to assessment of need and more successful transitioning to adulthood of some of our older young people. **£142k**

Quality of Practice in the company is key to our improvement journey in getting to good. Practice improvement mentors have helped embed a successful and highly rated induction programme for our international recruits in order that they feel more welcome and settled in their new roles, and country, leading to better retention. A quality workforce leads to fewer referrals, reduced caseloads, and ultimately earlier release of managed teams and agency staff as the workforce stabilises. **£162k**

Other workstreams which were proposed but didn't progress were Development of Sufficiency, Targeted Early Help (training), Participation and Development of Edge of Care Services. **£6k**

Additional costs associated with delivering savings for 22/23. The remit included additional contributions from health, scoping the development of shared residential accommodation for young people with complex needs, assisting in the redesign of children's centres and maximisation of income. **£103k**



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 implementing against the **IFA recruitment strategy** to bring new carers onboard. Having achieved the Ofsted rating of Good, this provides greater opportunity to attract new carers. Looking further afield than just Slough, recognising the limitations of opportunity in Slough itself.
- 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 placements** challenged on bi-monthly basis to ensure best value.
- The savings consultant helped progress discussions with health leading to the achievement of **health contributions of over £1m** in year.
- 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](#)

