



Slough Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-27



Welcome


We want all our children and young people in Slough to be: Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving.

Our cared for children have told us:

“We think a corporate parent should help us and look after us to feel safe and happy in the same way that birth parents do. We would like to be well cared for and loved, given lots of opportunities to see our friends, and family members, and to have a home of our own when we become adults and are ready to leave care.

We want support with our emotional and mental health so that we can become successful and achieve. We do not want to change our social worker all the time so that we can build trusting relationships.

We want you to do what you say you will do and tell us about it!”

A photograph of a woman with long, curly hair smiling warmly while holding a young child. The child is laughing joyfully with their arms raised. The woman is wearing a dark blue top and has a gold ring on her finger. The child is wearing a light green t-shirt. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a home interior with warm lighting.

“Every child and young person has the right to feel safe, to be ambitious about their future and be empowered to reach their full potential.”

A message from our corporate parenting senior leaders



Councillor Dexter Smith
Leader of Slough Borough Council

Welcome to the Slough Corporate Parenting Strategy for Children and Young People who are in our care or who are leaving our care.

We are the local political leaders who will do our absolute best to make sure Slough Borough Council (SBC) provides our children looked after and care experienced young people with a service that prioritises their needs and works to ensure the very best outcomes, with high ambitions.

The children and young people of Slough are an absolute priority for us, and you really matter to us.

Children who are in our care and our care experienced young adults are our most important priority because we are or have been a parent to you as part of our corporate responsibilities. There is no greater responsibility for the council than being a corporate parent.

We know that many of our children and young people have suffered neglect, abuse, and trauma. You may have joined our care following a significant loss, or you have made a traumatic journey to reach safety and are looked after because you came here without any adults to care for you.

Whatever the reasons that you are in our care, you deserve us to be a good corporate parent. We take that role seriously and are committed to providing safe and loving homes and accommodation for you so that we can help you to fulfil your dreams and aspirations.

We know that children and young people need secure and long-lasting relationships with their carers and those who support them. We know that our relationships with you are crucial and you need people who spend the time needed to get to know you, your interests and aspirations so that we can make sure the care you receive is the best that it can be and that we help you to fulfil your ambitions for the future.

Every one of our children, young person or young adults should be supported to be part of their own plans so that they have meaning – this includes your care plan when you are looked after; your pathway plan as we start to help you think about and plan for the future; and once you have left care that we keep in touch so you have ongoing support into your early adult life.

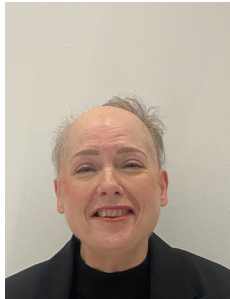
We heard you when you told us that we don't listen enough, or we don't act on what you say. We promise that we will listen to our children and young people, we will hear what you tell us about your care, and we will challenge ourselves and the services that support you so that we can be the best corporate parents that we can be. We therefore fully support and endorse this Corporate Parenting Strategy, and the resources needed to deliver it for our children.



Councillor Puja Bedi
Lead Member for Education and Children's Services



Will Tuckley
Chief Executive,
Slough Borough
Council



Sue Butcher
Director of Children's
Services and Chief
Executive of Slough
Children First

Hello, our names are Will Tuckley and Sue Butcher.

The Chief Executive is responsible for the delivery of all the council services to support our local community, including ensuring we provide the best and safest level of care and support to children and young people in Slough.

The Director of Children's Services is responsible for leading the department that helps support, keep safe, and care for children and young people within Slough. Sue is responsible for the statutory duties in relation to children in our care.

We are the senior leaders who will do our best to make sure Slough Borough Council and Slough Children First (SCF) provides our children looked after and care experienced young people with a service that prioritises their needs and works to ensure the very best outcomes, with high ambitions.

Together we work closely with other senior leaders and elected members in the council, as well as multi agency partners in our community (such as schools, health, and the police) to help us deliver our Corporate Parenting Strategy.

This means we explore how our service delivers our support, evaluate what we do well and what we could do better, and make sure we collectively work together in our aspiration to provide better and safer care and support for children and young people than they would have experienced if we were not involved in their lives.

This is a big responsibility and one we take very seriously.

We recognise that we are the corporate parents to the children and young people in Slough's care and as it is for any parent, this is both a challenging and rewarding experience to make sure we can help them aspire, achieve, and succeed in their own lives.

Our collective goal is to help the children and young people we care for and support in Slough to have a similar opportunity in their life to that of other children and families within the wider Slough community, whether they remain with their birth family or another family we help to connect them with.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Slough Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024 -2027.

What is corporate parenting?

The term 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility the council has alongside, elected members, employees, and our partners, police, education, and health services, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are in our care, or have left our care in Slough,
“As if this were my child.”

Corporate parenting is a term used which incorporates all the responsibilities that we have as a council to ensure that our cared for and care experienced children and young people are provided with the best possible care and protection.

This is about more than just keeping children safe; this is about enhancing every aspect of their lives as far as is possible and ensuring that they are equipped with the right support to achieve their dreams.

Corporate parenting is about how we care and show that we love and care for and about our young people, and how we demonstrate that we champion them, have high shared aspirations with and for them, and how we ensure that they are special and important as individuals and as a group. It is about how we want them to be **Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving**.

Good corporate parenting is ensuring that all our young people have all the chances that they need to be the best they can be, to recover from any previous difficulties they have faced so that they can achieve their goals as they grow. It is about positively discriminating for them in all we do as a council with our partners, so that they feel loved and part of our Slough family.

Put simply, this is how we care for children and young people as we would expect any other good parent to care for their child, providing safer and better opportunities in their life than they would have experienced with their natural family.

Context

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is cared for by the Council if they are:

- Provided with accommodation for a continuous period for more than 24 hours;
- Subject to a care order;
- Subject to a placement order.



When a child or young person becomes cared for, we become their corporate parent.

In February 2018, the Department for Education published Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and outlined the key principles of corporate parenting and the statutory responsibility that all elected

members and council officers have in terms of the wellbeing of cared for and care experienced children and young people.

We are also the corporate parent for those young people who are care experienced.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 outlines the legal definition in terms of who qualifies as a care experienced young person; this would relate to a young person aged sixteen or above who has been cared for by the local authority for a relevant period of time since their fourteenth birthday, and for who been cared for on or after their 16th birthday for a period of time.

The expectations in terms of the services and support that local authorities must offer is contained within the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The Council continues to provide support to care experienced young people until they are 25 under the extended duties contained within the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

We want to ensure that across the Council, including elected members, senior officers and all staff and our partners have a shared vision, collective responsibility, and commitment to our cared for children and care experienced young people, including the provision of quality services for them.

Our vision

Our overarching principle is believing in Children's Futures.

This gives meaning to our work and will provide focus whilst we progress Slough's improvement journey, over the next three years, to ensure we achieve our vision that children are **'Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving.'**

Every child and young person has the right to feel safe, to be ambitious about their future and be empowered to reach their full potential.

This is never truer than when we think of our own children who we care for as a council. Our Corporate Parenting Strategy is how we will make this vision a reality for children who are in our care and those young adults who are leaving our care.

Our collective goal is to help the children and young people we care for and support in Slough to have a similar opportunity in their life to that of other children and families within the wider Slough community, whether they remain with their birth family or another family we help to connect them with.

To help achieve our vision, it is important that we all work together and implement the values below.

Child-focussed

Honest and respectful

Improving constantly

Looking ahead

Delivering together

Our promises to care experienced children and young people

Our previous Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-24 aimed to deliver our corporate parenting priorities through six 'pledge's' which were identified by our children and young people cared for.

In this strategy, and following feedback from children and young people – we now call these 'Our Promises'.

You told us that you wanted us to involve you in producing plans for yourself and in developing services for all children and young people.



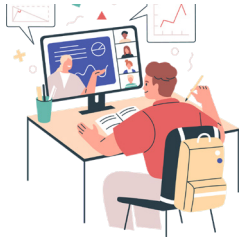
In doing that you told us that you wanted us to promise that we would help you to:

- Be healthy
- Be ambitious
- Be resilient
- Be happy
- Be independent
- Be safe



Be healthy

- Make sure you have access to and are provided with the right advice and support to ensure you are physically and emotional healthy.
- Make sure you can take part in activities and hobbies of your choice.



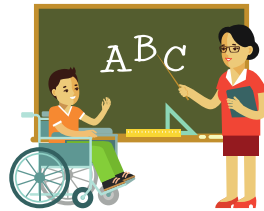
Be ambitious

- Help you to get the best educational outcomes and support you with your education.
- Ensure you receive the best advice and support about applying for college and university, applying for a job and for your future career.



Be resilient

- Listen if you have a complaint or would like to praise someone.
- Offer you the support of an advocate or independent visitor because sometimes you may find it difficult to say what you want, and you may want some support to put your views forward.
- Support you to maintain positive relationships with your friends and family. If this is not possible, we will tell you why.
- Make sure your social worker spends time with you to get to know you and understand you.
- Not change your social worker unless it is necessary. If this happens, we will tell you why.



Be happy

- Help you to be involved in choosing your home and to know more about where you are moving to, including being able to visit your new carers before you move.
- Listen to you and involve you in the decisions and plans that are made about you and your future.
- Help you to be involved in choosing the right school or setting for you, to help you enjoy learning.



Be independent

- Help and support you to learn about how to budget, cook, clean and other independent living skills.



Be safe

- Help and support you to stay safe and feel safe.
- Make sure you know who your social worker, independent reviewing officer and learning advocates are and how to contact them.

What is our Corporate Parenting Strategy?

A strategy is a plan to deliver something important in a clear way that is ambitious, has clear goals, and that enables us to evidence the difference we have made.

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy describes how the local authority and its partners, such as housing, health services, Police and schools, act as 'responsible parents' to children and young people living within their care.

Effective corporate parenting requires everyone involved including elected members, officers, teachers, GP's etc. to recognise their role as corporate parents and understand what they can contribute to enable us to be the best corporate parents we can be to all children and young people in our care.

When providing a service for our children and care experienced young people cared for, we should always challenge ourselves by asking, 'would this be good enough for my child?'.

It is our responsibility to make sure that children and young people for whom we are responsible feel safe and secure, have stability in their lives, and that they are supported to achieve their full potential and fulfil their ambitions and aspirations.

Our strategy demonstrates our Partnership's commitment to ensuring that the life chances of every child and young person in our care are improved in-line with their peers. This requires us all to be Champions and strong advocates to ensure their needs are met in the best way possible, and to prioritise access to our resources.

This is why, in July 2023 SBC voted for care experienced young people to become a protected characteristic.

This is a demonstration of our collective corporate parenting commitment to ensure that our children and young people receive equality of opportunity by way of reducing inequalities that may exist between our young people and their peers.

This means that all our strategies should clearly consider the impact for our children looked after and our care experienced young people. We know we need to do more, and we will ask for your help to do this. This is not and should never be a process. It is simply the way we should be to support our children cared for and leaving our care with a positive sense of being, belonging and achievement.

**Calling all care
experienced people**



Providing further opportunities and equality to care leavers in Slough!

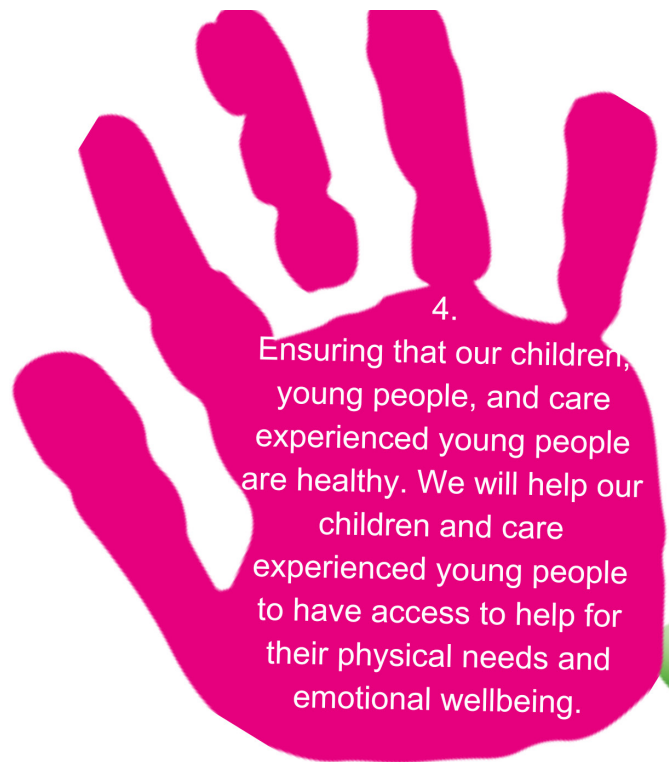
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Borough Council



Achieving the ambition

The six priorities in our strategy have been determined by both local and national priorities for children looked after and care experienced young people. They are:





4.
Ensuring that our children, young people, and care experienced young people are healthy. We will help our children and care experienced young people to have access to help for their physical needs and emotional wellbeing.



6.
Supporting children, young people and care experienced young people to have fun and have new experiences to develop their own interests.



5.
Developing a highly effective care leavers partnership to provide ongoing help in a variety of ways for them.

The six key priorities are consistent with the vision, outcomes and priorities set out within the Slough Children First Business & Improvement Plan and the Children & Young Peoples Sufficiency Strategy 2024-27.

Whilst set out as a three-year strategy, delivery will be supported through a live action plan that is reviewed through the Corporate Parenting Panel by named officers and supported by elected 'Member Champions'.

Hearing your voice and working with you

We will work together to deliver your priorities through active participation and consultation with children and young people looked after in Slough and working across our partnership.

We want you to tell us how we are doing at achieving our priorities for you. Let us know if:

- We have not achieved our priorities for you.
- You are unhappy with the support we've given you.
- Someone has worked hard to support you and you think they should be recognised and praised.

Share your experience of care with us, good or bad

As a first step, you should always speak to someone who can make a difference.

Tell your social worker, carer, or independent reviewing officer about how we have done - good or bad. If you think we have not achieved our priorities for you, this person could help you solve the problem.

If you want to take things further, you can contact our Participation Officer to help. Please contact Zainab Khan via email at:

zainab.khan@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk or at yourvoice@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk

This message will go to senior leaders at our children and families' service. It is our job is to make sure you are supported to be **Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving**.



“We will work together to deliver your priorities through active participation and consultation with children and young people looked after in Slough and working across our partnership.”

Strategic priorities

Strategic Priority 1: Supporting engagement and achievement in education, training, and employment.



What children and young people say to us:



We will

1. Work towards all council departments providing work experience, mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities for care experienced young people.
2. Develop an Education, Employment and Training (EET) partnership, to seek and identify the barriers, challenges and opportunities for care experienced young people's EET.
3. Ensure that children and young people have an annual 'celebration event' to celebrate their achievements.
4. Develop a programme of activities to support young people accessing education, employment, and training.

Deliverables

1. Our children and young people cared for will have access to learning, training, and progression opportunities across council departments in the 'Family business'.
2. EET opportunities available in slough will prioritise access for care experienced young people, identifying gaps or barriers to progression.
3. Our children and young people cared for will have their achievements and successes acknowledged through a celebration event.
4. Our children and young people will have access to workshops whereby they are supported to access education, employment, and training, such as, CV writing, becoming interview ready etc.

Strategic Priority 2: Ensuring that our children looked after and care experienced young people have stable homes and the right help.



What children and young people say to us:



We will

1. Work with the Participation Officer to re-introduce children looked after and care experienced young people's participation groups, following active consultation on how children wish the groups to be shaped and delivered.
2. Work in partnership with [Participation People](#) (an organisation that brings together a collective and diverse range of youth voices through great projects across the country) to explore best practice opportunities in delivering the Participation Strategy.
3. Ensure 'You said, we did, so what?' process for listening to and feeding back to children and young people is developed.
4. Create in consultation with children and young people a 'safe space' for meeting and active participation groups.
5. Ensure the annual theme of Corporate Parenting participation and consultation events are planned for and delivered, alongside children and young people, e.g. Have Your Say Day.

Deliverables

1. Participation People will support SCF to develop effective co-delivery and co-participation mechanisms, to ensure children's views are actively heard, responded to, and acted on through an embedded approach.
2. Children and young people cared for will have increased opportunities to routinely meet online and/or in person, to inform and support the co-delivery of services; and providing peer support and challenge.
3. Children and young people cared for will have access to a safe space, for them, that is accessible and user friendly.
4. Throughout the year children and young people cared will be invited and encouraged to attend participation and consultation events, such as, 'Take Over Day' and 'Have Your Say Day'.

Strategic Priority 3: We will listen and respond to the voice of our children, young people, and care experienced young people. They will help to develop and shape our strategic plans and delivery of services.



What children and young people say to us:



We will

1. Implement a care experienced young people's Joint Housing Protocol, in line with best practice, ensuring priority status, with the housing department and housing partners, to ensure a pathway to housing options for care experienced young people.
2. Ensure equality impact assessments are undertaken in the development of all strategies, policies, and procedures across SBC and SCF, including care experienced young people.
3. Scope the feasibility of opening a children's residential children's home in Slough, for children with more complex needs, to keep them close to home.
4. Continue to increase our number of local foster carers, to include a focus on increasing the diversity and strength of this offer to reduce the number of our children who are placed in external fostering homes.
5. Work with provider frameworks to review the local resource and offer, for children cared for in Slough to ensure local prioritisation, quality of care and cost effectiveness.

Deliverables

1. There will be an increase in care experienced young people accessing independent living when they are ready to live independently.
2. SBC and SCF will continually seek to understand the outcomes for children and young people across all protected characteristics, including care experience and will take appropriate action to mitigate.
3. Where children and young people need care in a children's residential home, staying close options will be actively pursued in all circumstances.
4. There will be an increase in the number of children cared for living with SCF foster carers and an increase SCF foster care households.
5. Where children and young people are provided homes via external provision, SCF will ensure they receive quality of care and value for money through external placement panel reviews and quality assurance activities.

Strategic Priority 4: Ensuring that our children, young people, and care experienced young people are healthy. We will help our children and care experienced young people to have access to help for their physical needs and emotional wellbeing.



What children and young people say to us:



We will

1. Improve on our performance in the quality of timeliness of health care assessments for children and young people to keep them healthy and identify and treat any health conditions as early as possible.
2. Improve our performance as a partnership in understanding and supporting our children's emotional and mental health by more effective use of the strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
3. We will work with our partners and young people to create a care leaver health offer which reduces barriers to accessing health and dental care for young people who are leaving care, and which ensures a smoother transition to adult services where required.
4. We will ensure that young people who leave our care have access to adult health services, support, and activities which promote their physical, mental, and emotional health and wellbeing.

Deliverables

1. Improvement on timeliness and quality of health care assessment performance.
2. Improved SDQ performance, with training of social workers and other professionals on the importance of completing these.
3. We will co-produce our health offer with care experienced young people to help us understand what their health needs are and what works best for them.
4. Ensure our care leaver offer includes access to activities which promote physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

Strategic Priority 5: Developing a highly effective care leavers partnership to provide ongoing help in a variety of ways for them.



What children and young people say to us:



We will

1. Set up a Care Experienced Young People Partnership Board with partners, to identify gaps in provision and barriers to progression, to develop an ambitious action plan with clearly timed and defined deliverables.
2. Develop further the Care Leavers Local Offer to include, local, regional, and National opportunities.
3. Work with the commissioning service to provide market warming activity within the private rental market to create an independent living pathway for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking adults (care experienced) with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).
4. We will work with colleagues in health and adults' services to review our transition pathways and develop a seamless transition pathway from the age of 14.
5. Scope and explore the opportunities to identify a Care Experienced Young People training flat; and co-produce/design an independent living skills training programme.

Deliverables

1. Care experienced young people will receive timely transition planning to adult services support and intervention.
2. Care experienced young people will have access to the Local Offer online, via a website and in printable format.
3. Our young adults seeking asylum will have increased access to independent housing opportunities that meets their needs.
4. Children cared for requiring specialist health and/or adult service intervention will be identified and reviewed from the age of 14, ensuring timely transition planning and access to the right support.
5. Care experienced young people will be supported to undertake life skills training and preparation programmes.

Strategic Priority 6: Supporting children, young people and care experienced young people to have fun and have new experiences to develop their own interests.



What children and young people say to us:



We will

1. Ensure all young people have access to the 'Active Leisure' pass to ensure all children can access local gyms and leisure services.
2. Work in partnership with our health colleagues to further develop the Local Offer for care experienced young people.
3. Ensure a smooth transition for experienced young people receiving support from CAMHs who are eligible for adult mental health services.
4. We will ensure that children's care plans and young people's Pathway Plans identify children and young people's interests, hobbies, and leisure interests.
5. An Edge of Care Service will be developed to support children to remain at home with their families, and or children cared for to safely return home to their families when in their best interests.

Deliverables

1. Children and care experienced young people will have access to free gym and leisure services in Slough.
2. All care experienced young people will have access to their health passport.
3. Care experienced young people who do not have access to free prescriptions will be supported to access an annual prescription card, where applicable.
4. Children' and young people's plans will include individual interests, hobbies, sports, and clubs' activity.
5. There will be an increase in the number of children supported to remain at home with their family, and an increase in the number of children supported to return home to their families when safe to do so.

Governance arrangements

The Corporate Parenting Panel provides the strategic partnership to oversee and drive our arrangements for ensuring that children looked after by Slough local authority, and those adults previously looked after, achieve the best possible outcomes.

The panel is made up of elected members, key service leaders and service providers including council officers, staff from SCF and representatives from wider public services.

The Corporate Parenting Panel provides a leadership role by championing the specific needs of children and young people who are, or have been, looked after by the local authority.

It does this through working with all elected members, officers within the council, with colleagues from partner agencies and with children and young people. This is done by overseeing the work undertaken in specific services to ensure a corporate approach is being taken from a range of Council departments and agencies and ensure that the services support children that are or have been looked after to have the full benefit of the widest possible resources to support successful outcomes.

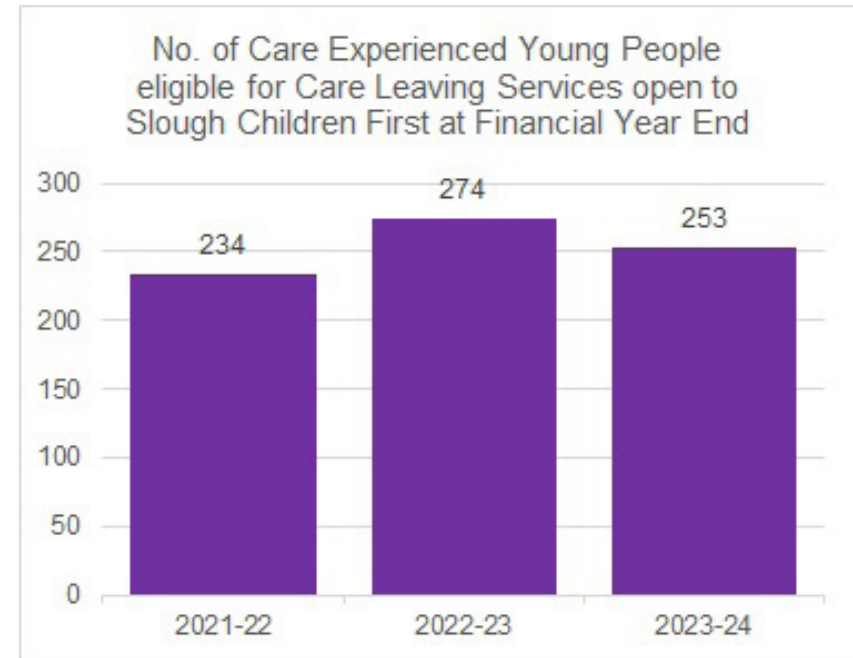
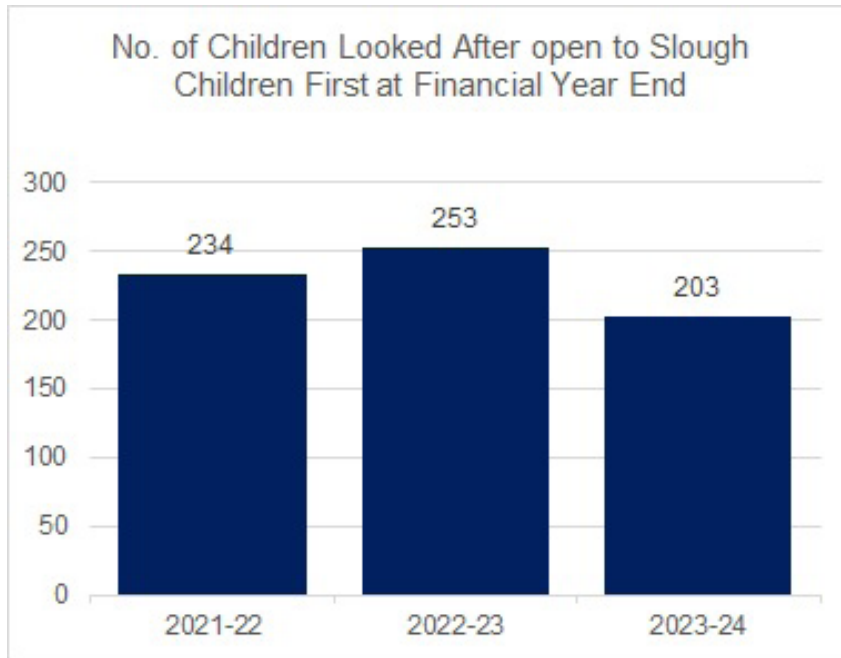
Our aim as corporate parents is for our children and young people to be **Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving**.

Through collaboration and partnership with our elected members, senior leaders, and partners we will achieve this by focusing on six key priorities. We have developed promises with our children and young people cared for that align with our priorities, becoming the mechanism for delivery and success.

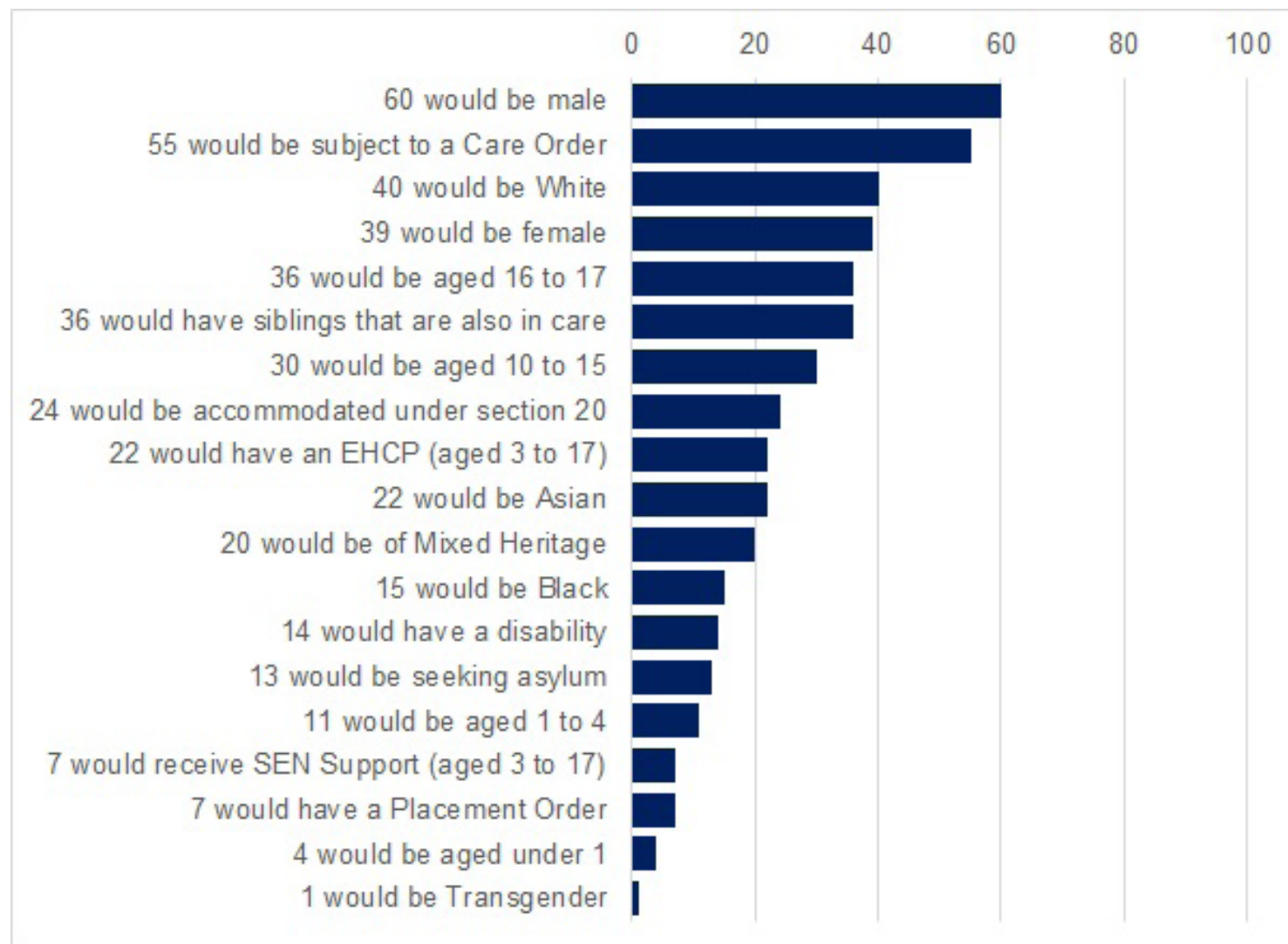
An action plan will detail what needs to happen to fulfil our promises to children cared for and our care experienced young people. The progress of the action plan will be reported back to the Corporate Parenting Panel every six months.

At a glance: care experience in Slough

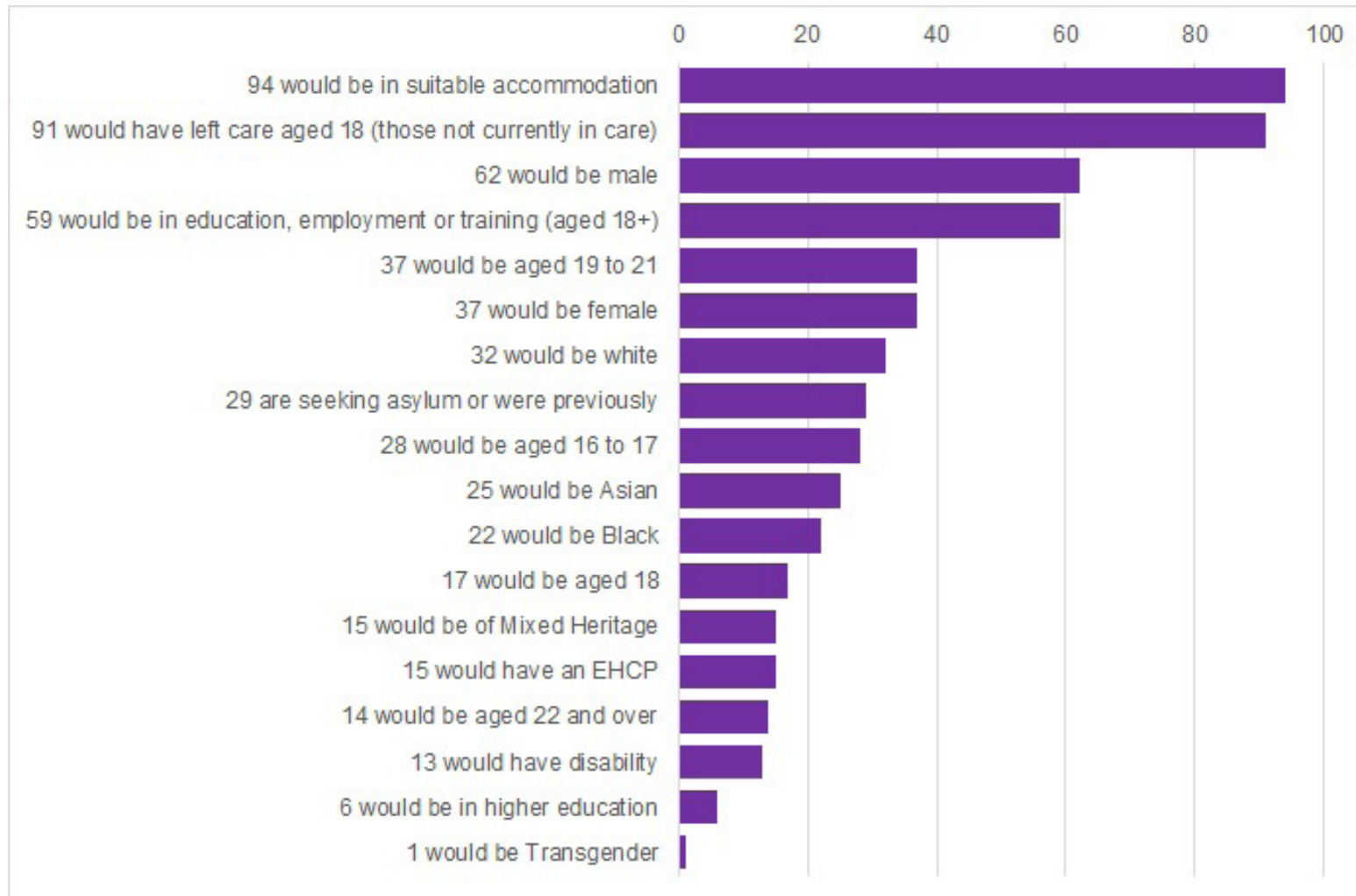
In the financial year 2022-23 there has been a significant reduction in the number of children in the care of SCF and a subsequent reduction in the number of care leavers.



If there were 100 children and young people in our care (aged 0-17)



If there were 100 young people eligible for care leaving services (aged 16-25)



“Our aim as Corporate Parents is for our children and young people to be Happy, Safe & Loved, Thriving.”



