



Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve' Agreement: Blackpool

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Blackpool Council, and covers the financial years from 2022-23 to 2026-27.
2. The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account in each year. The authority undertakes to control and reduce the cumulative deficit as follows, not including any contribution made by the department through this agreement:

Year	Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at year end £m
2022-23	£4.6m
2023-24	£3.9m
2024-25	£3.4m
2025-26	£3.3m
2026-27	£3.2m

3. The authority agrees to implement the DSG management plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
 - 3.1. Reduce the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) educated outside of Blackpool through the expansion of a Blackpool special school;
 - 3.2. Create an intensive support centre for pupils with the most complex needs;

- 3.3. Create a resourced provision base at a secondary school so that some pupils with SEND do not need to go to a special school;
 - 3.4. Encourage more pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to remain in mainstream schools through consistency of advice and guidance, by realigning roles in the Inclusion Team to provide the right support at the right time, and by giving mainstream schools the skills and funding to meet the needs of more children with SEND;
 - 3.5. Develop more robust and consistent processes for requests for assessment and EHCPs, and strengthen the criteria for targeted high needs funding for mainstream schools;
 - 3.6. Rationalise the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) estate so that pupils are not spread across multiple sites and to reduce the budget in line with lower numbers.
4. The authority also agrees to ongoing monitoring of its performance in fulfilling this agreement. The authority will:
 - 4.1. Report tri-annually (as a minimum) in writing to the Department (Funding Policy Unit) on its progress towards implementing the plan as per the conditions set out in paragraphs 2 and 3;
 - 4.2. The monitoring reports should include progress against the conditions of grant and a financial dashboard detailing various metrics relating to demand and cost. DfE will provide a template for this;
 - 4.3. Inform the Department (Funding Policy Unit) of any unforeseen difficulties or impacts of carrying out the agreement, or any significant risks to reaching the agreed financial position as soon as they arise;
 - 4.4. Meet with the Department at any time when the Department deems it necessary to discuss progress towards the agreement.
5. The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional **£1.55 million** of DSG before the end of the financial year 2022-23. In subsequent financial years, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in paragraph 3, the Department will pay

DSG sums as follows. This funding will be provided in instalments and subject to continued satisfactory progress. Subject to full compliance, Blackpool should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2026-27.

Year	The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end
2022-23	£1.55m
2023-24	£0.47m
2024-25	£0.47m
2025-26	£0.47m
2026-27	£0.93m

6. The Department has also sent a commission relating to the authority’s capital plans for the creation of new places for children and young people with SEND or those requiring Alternative Provision (AP). It is critical that the authority considers its revenue and capital plans holistically. The Department will assess and review proposals against set criteria which have been outlined in the commission. Subject to that assessment, the Department will consider making a capital contribution to these plans in 2023-24 as a top-up to the local authority’s High Needs Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA), which will be announced in spring. Progress against delivery of those capital plans should then be integrated into the tri-annual reporting to the Department as part of the monitoring of this agreement.
7. This agreement is subject to review at any time, for example as a result of the following events:
 - 7.1. Higher or lower DSG formula funding levels for the authority in future financial years than those the authority has assumed;
 - 7.2. Significant changes to national SEND policy which impact on elements of the plan;
 - 7.3. Insufficient progress being made towards the authority reaching and

sustaining an in-year balance on its DSG account as set out in the plan;

7.4. Whether Blackpool is awarded additional capital funding support following the capital application process;

7.5. Whether Blackpool is successful in its bid for one special free school.

The review process will include an assessment of the impact of the change in circumstances.

On behalf of Blackpool Council, signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Jack', with a large, stylized initial 'N'.

Neil Jack - LA Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Thompson', with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

Steve Thompson - Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Gent', with a large, stylized initial 'V'.

Victoria Gent - Director of Children's Services

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'T. Goldman', written in a cursive style.

Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit