



## Dedicated Schools Grant ‘Safety Valve’ Agreement: Bury

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Bury Council, and covers the financial years from 2020-21 to 2028-29.
2. The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2028-29 and in each subsequent year. The authority undertakes to control and reduce the cumulative deficit as follows:

| Year    | Maximum Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at Year End <sup>1</sup><br>£m |
|---------|---|
| 2020-21 | £27.4m  |
| 2021-22 | £30.5m  |
| 2022-23 | £30.6m  |
| 2023-24 | £32.6m  |
| 2024-25 | £33.7m  |
| 2025-26 | £30.3m  |
| 2026-27 | £26.4m  |
| 2027-28 | £21.1m  |
| 2028-29 | £15.7m  |

3. The authority agrees to implement the action plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
  - 3.1 Improve their early years identification and intervention strategy to prevent the need for escalation where possible, including targeting transition points at primary and secondary phases;
  - 3.2 Ensure robust planning for future provision by increasing the availability and suitability of local special schools and alternative provision within Bury;
  - 3.3 Improve the quality and timeliness of management information to enable evaluation of impact of central services, ensuring that the council has the relevant staffing, expertise, and representation to fulfil the aims of its agreement;

<sup>1</sup> This profile includes contributions that the council will make from its own resources to reduce the DSG deficit.

- 3.4 Design and implement appropriate policy and guidance for children and young people in education otherwise than at school (EOTAS) to reduce health interventions and high needs spending;
  - 3.5 Increase collaboration and coproduction, in particular with local schools, to foster a culture of change in alignment with the council's graduated approach. As part of this requirement, the council must ensure clear expectations and contribution from relevant partners.
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 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;
  - 4.3 Meet with the Department in the last quarter of each financial year covered by this agreement to discuss progress, and update on detailed plans for the subsequent financial year;
  - 4.4 Meet with the Department at any other time when the Department deems it necessary to discuss progress towards the agreement;
  - 4.5 Provide the Department with relevant Schools Forum papers as soon as they are issued.
5. The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £6.00 million of DSG before the end of the financial year 2020-21. In subsequent financial years, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in paragraph 3, the Department will pay DSG sums as below. This funding will be provided in instalments and subject to continued satisfactory progress. Subject to full compliance, Bury Council should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2028-29.

| Year    | The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end |
|---------|---|
| 2020-21 | £6.00m  |
| 2021-22 | £4.00m  |
| 2022-23 | £4.00m  |
| 2023-24 | £1.00m  |
| 2024-25 | £1.00m  |
| 2025-26 | £1.00m  |
| 2026-27 | £1.00m  |
| 2027-28 | £1.00m  |
| 2028-29 | £1.00m  |

6. The Department has also provided Bury Council with additional capital funding to support the delivery of this agreement. Progress against delivery of those capital plans should 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;

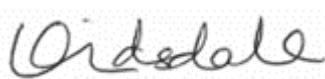
7.2 Significant changes to national SEND policy, for example as a result of the government SEND Improvement Plan, which impact on elements of the plan;

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 Bury Council is awarded additional capital funding support following the capital application process.

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

On behalf of Bury Council, signed by:



Lynne Ridsdale, Chief Executive (08/03/2024)



Jeanette Richards, Director of Children's Services (08/03/2024)



Paul McKeivitt, Director of Finance and S151 Officer (07/03/2024)

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:



Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit