



Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve' Agreement: Slough

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Slough 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 by the end of 2025-26 and in each subsequent 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	£27.6m
2023-24	£28.1m
2024-25	£28.1m
2025-26	£27.7m
2026-27	£27.0m

3. The authority agrees to implement the DSG management plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
 - 3.1. Work with providers to ensure best value and, where necessary, review and renegotiate the fees, rates, and tariffs currently charged for Independent and Non Maintained Special School (INMSS) placements;
 - 3.2. Improve joint commissioning processes with other East Berkshire authorities to enable more effective commissioning and decision making;

- 3.3. Review the current process for commissioning private therapies and individual tuition to manage cost for children and young people with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs);
 - 3.4. Review local Post-16 provision in collaboration with health and adult services. For identified gaps in provision, develop joint commissioning arrangements with other Local Authorities (LAs) in the South-East;
 - 3.5. Continue to work with Post-16 providers to ensure there is a wider range of quality provision available for learners aged 16-25 with a range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND);
 - 3.6. Review and remodel the current system for awarding Top Up Funding (TUF);
 - 3.7. Ensure commissioning of SEND placements reflects population trends and is in line with the current High Needs Block Guidance;
 - 3.8. Review agreements for Alternative Provision (AP) with local providers and ensure sufficient places are available to meet the statutory six-day provision for Permanent-Exclusion (P-Ex) pupils;
 - 3.9. Work with providers to develop a commissioning framework to support schools in identifying how best to purchase additional AP interventions and provisions.
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 **£10.80 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, Slough 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	£10.80m
2023-24	£3.24m
2024-25	£3.24m
2025-26	£3.24m
2026-27	£6.48m

6. This agreement is subject to review at any time, for example as a result of the following events:
 - 6.1. Higher or lower DSG formula funding levels for the authority in future financial years than those the authority has assumed;
 - 6.2. Significant changes to national SEND policy which impact on elements of the plan;
 - 6.3. Insufficient progress being made towards the authority reaching and sustaining an in-year balance on its DSG account as set out in the plan.

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

On behalf of Slough Council, signed by:

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Stephen Brown - LA Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Mair', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Steven Mair - Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sue Butcher', written in a cursive style.

Sue Butcher - Director of Children's Services

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Tom Goldman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit