



## Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve' Agreement: Bolton

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Bolton 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 2022-23 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:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at year end £m</b>
<b>2022-23</b>	£16.3m
<b>2023-24</b>	£12.8m
<b>2024-25</b>	£9.8m
<b>2025-26</b>	£7.7m
<b>2026-27</b>	£6.4m

3. The authority agrees to implement the DSG management plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
  - 3.1. Create resource provisions and expand maintained special schools in Bolton to reduce demand on non-maintained and out of borough provision;
  - 3.2. Deliver a graduated approach which recognises needs at the earliest opportunity in order to ensure children and young people with Special

Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can have their needs met in the most appropriate provision;

- 3.3. Implement a clear 'SEND Quality Assurance framework' across all Local Authority commissioned services and provisions;
  - 3.4. Build capacity across the system through training and the celebrating and sharing of good practice that successfully meets need at Special Educational Needs (SEN) support;
  - 3.5. Further develop the 'SEN support self-assessment framework' for schools and the 'Assessment and Intervention Strategy';
  - 3.6. Enhance and embed an inclusive culture across partnerships and within all schools, to enable a reduction of school exclusions;
  - 3.7. Undertake detailed analysis and projections of special school populations to inform decision making and the medium/long term strategy;
  - 3.8. Develop and deliver multi-agency provision and services for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties;
  - 3.9. Deliver a consistent Preparing for Adulthood offer for all children and young people with SEND;
  - 3.10. Strengthen co-production arrangements to ensure that children/young people and their families are provided with greater opportunities to influence decision-making and work in partnership with leaders to plan, review and evaluate service delivery.
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 **£2.64 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, Bolton should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2026-27.

<b>Year</b>	<b>The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end</b>
<b>2022-23</b>	£2.64m
<b>2023-24</b>	£0.79m
<b>2024-25</b>	£0.79m
<b>2025-26</b>	£0.79m
<b>2026-27</b>	£1.58m

6. The Department has also agreed to provide Bolton with additional capital funding to support the delivery of this agreement. 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.

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

On behalf of Bolton Council, signed by:

*S. Johnson*

Sue Johnson - LA Chief Executive

*A S Glennon*

Tony Glennon - Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)

*Bernie Brown*

Bernie Brown - Director of Children's Services

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'T' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal tail.

Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit