



Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve' Agreement: Kent

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Kent County Council, and covers the financial years from 2022-23 to 2027-28.
2. The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2027-28 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 end¹ £m
2022-23	£129.7m
2023-24	£156.1m
2024-25	£170.5m
2025-26	£174.2m
2026-27	£163.1m
2027-28	£140.0m

3. The authority agrees to implement the DSG management plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
 - 3.1. Implement a countywide approach to 'Inclusion Education', to further build capacity in mainstream schools to support children and young

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

people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), thus increasing the proportion of children successfully supported in mainstream education and reducing dependence on specialist provision;

- 3.2. Introduce a robust Special Educational Need (SEN) offer for early years, following a review, which explores alternatives to special school admission before Key Stage 2 (KS2), SEN redesign and implementation of County Approaches to Inclusive Education (CAIIE) to support consistent mainstream offer, including leadership development programmes, peer review and core training offer;
- 3.3. Review the system of Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessments and annual reviews to ensure robustness, transparency, and consistency, through use of consistent criteria and practice framework;
- 3.4. Implement models of reintegration of children from special/independent schools to mainstream where needs have been met;
- 3.5. Develop a robust Post-16 offer across the county with clear pathways to independence for children with SEN, through increased Post-16 opportunities for preparing for adulthood;
- 3.6. Develop the Transition Charter to increase parental confidence in Kent's provision. This involves working with schools to enable them to articulate the provision pathways for parents clearly and provide support to both children and parents at key transition points;
- 3.7. Ensure there is sufficient and consistent capacity across the county to support children with severe and complex needs in their local area where possible. This includes recruitment of temporary posts to support sufficiency planning, reviewing the use of Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) and reviewing the specialist continuum to ensure only the most severe and complex needs are supported in special schools;

- 3.8. Develop a school/area-led approach to commissioning of SEN support services (Locality Based Resources), to better respond to the needs of children and young people with SEND;
 - 3.9. Continue working closely with NHS Kent and Medway to ensure a common understanding of SEND needs, including the drivers behind increases in need, ensuring clarity of clinical assessment and the subsequent funding associated.
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 **£56.80 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, Kent should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2027-28.

Year	The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end
2022-23	£56.80m
2023-24	£14.20m
2024-25	£14.20m
2025-26	£14.20m
2026-27	£14.20m
2027-28	£28.40m

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;
- 6.4. Whether Kent are successful in their bid for free schools.

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

On behalf of Kent County Council, signed by:



David Cockburn - LA Chief Executive



Zena Cooke - Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)



Sarah Hammond - Director of Children's Services

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:



Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit