



Dedicated Schools Grant ‘Safety Valve’ Agreement: Cambridgeshire

This agreement is currently subject to review. Payments of grant have been suspended but will be made up if a revised agreement is reached. The total paid under the agreement in the financial year 2023-24 was £1.96m.

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Cambridgeshire County 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 2026-27 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	Maximum Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at Year End ¹ £m
2022-23	£48.6m
2023-24	£50.9m
2024-25	£51.5m
2025-26	£50.8m
2026-27	£49.0m

3. The authority agrees to implement the DSG management plan that it has set out. This includes action to:

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

- 3.1 Improve decision making on awarding Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) through developing a more consistent and transparent multi-agency decision making process;
 - 3.2 Develop a special schools outreach model to facilitate supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream provision;
 - 3.3 Review current tuition packages to ensure appropriate and successful reintegration to mainstream school settings;
 - 3.4 Develop a model of investment in ordinarily available provision to support schools in meeting need without an EHCP. This will include developing a system for funding which will provide consistent resources and support across a graduated approach to need including those pupils without an EHCP;
 - 3.5 Review the needs assessment and post-assessment process to ensure appropriate and consistent provision is put into place;
 - 3.6 Strengthen processes around mediation and dispute resolution in order to reduce the requirement for tribunals;
 - 3.7 Increase independence of children and young people by targeting reviews to ensure provision is appropriate, meets needs and promotes independence;
 - 3.8 Continue offering free access to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) District Team support to identify training needs, emerging themes and focus less on individualised support and more on upskilling staff knowledge and skills in all areas of SEND.
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 £19.60 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, Cambridgeshire 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	£19.60m
2023-24	£5.88m
2024-25	£5.88m
2025-26	£5.88m
2026-27	£11.76m

6. The Department has also agreed to provide Cambridgeshire 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;

7.4 Whether Cambridgeshire are successful in their bids for two free schools.

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

On behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council, signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen S. Moir', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Stephen Moir - LA Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Kelly', written in a cursive style.

Tom Kelly - Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Redding', written in a cursive style.

Elaine Redding – Executive Director Children’s Services

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Goldman', written in a cursive style.

Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit