



Government Actuary's  
Department

# Department for Education Risk Protection Arrangement

Summary of ultimate claim estimates  
as at 31 December 2025

30 March 2026

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**Navigating risk | Cutting through complexity**

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# Introduction

## Purpose

This report from the Government Actuary's Department ('GAD') is addressed to, and was commissioned by, the Department for Education ('DfE') in respect of the Risk Protection Arrangement ('RPA').

The purpose of this report is to summarise the latest estimates of ultimate claims by academic year as at 31 December 2025. Ultimate claims for a given period of cover refer to the final total cost of all claims arising from incidents occurring during that period, once they are fully developed and settled. These estimates do not include associated claim expenses, such as additional legal costs and loss adjustor fees, or costs incurred by DfE in the operation of the RPA, such as the cost of staff, claims handling, and external advisers.

Our estimates as at 31 December 2025 are referred to as the current estimates. These are compared with GAD's previous estimates of RPA claims as at 31 May 2025.

## Reliance

Other than DfE, no person or third party is entitled to place any reliance on the contents of this report, except to any extent explicitly stated herein, and GAD has no liability to any person or third party for any act or omission taken, either in whole or part, on the basis of this report.

This report must be considered in its entirety. Individual sections, if considered in isolation, may be misleading, and conclusions reached by reviewing only some sections on their own may be incorrect.

## Compliance

This work has been conducted in accordance with the applicable Technical Actuarial Standards TAS 100 and TAS 200 issued by the Financial Reporting Council ('FRC'). The FRC sets technical standards for actuarial work in the UK.

## Limitations

The data provided by DfE has been used as received. GAD has not independently verified the data, and we have relied on the completeness and accuracy of the information supplied. Where possible, we have performed consistency and reasonableness checks using data from our previous reviews.

There are inherent uncertainties associated with an actuarial analysis of this type, and our estimates of ultimate claims are sensitive to the assumptions used. As a result, actual claim experience may differ materially from these estimates.

# Background

The RPA is an alternative to insurance for schools in England, under which losses are met from government funds. DfE is overseeing the arrangement with some areas supported by external advisers.

The RPA has been operational since 1 September 2014. The arrangement covers risks such as property damage, business interruption, employers' liability, third-party liability, UK and overseas travel, legal expenses, and cyber cover.

Originally, the RPA was only available to academy schools, but membership was opened to local authority maintained schools ('LAMS') from April 2020. As of the start of January 2026, 13,546<sup>1</sup> schools are members of the RPA, which represents around 62% of eligible schools.

For academies, participation in the RPA requires a contribution per pupil<sup>2</sup>, which is deducted at source from the academy's general annual grant, and is applied on an academic year basis. For LAMS, the deduction is applied on a financial year basis.

**Table 1: Cost of RPA membership for academies and LAMS in recent years**

Academic / financial year	Academies membership period	LAMS membership period	Annual per pupil cost
<b>2022/23</b>	Sep 2022 – Aug 2023	Apr 2022 – Mar 2023	£21
<b>2023/24</b>	Sep 2023 – Aug 2024	Apr 2023 – Mar 2024	£23
<b>2024/25</b>	Sep 2024 – Aug 2025	Apr 2024 – Mar 2025	£25
<b>2025/26</b>	Sep 2025 – Aug 2026	Apr 2025 – Mar 2026	£27
<b>2026/27</b>	Sep 2026 – Aug 2027	Apr 2026 – Mar 2027	£29

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<sup>1</sup> This figure excludes 21 schools that are members of the RPA but are due to open at a future date.

<sup>2</sup> For special and alternative provision academies, special schools and pupil referral units, contributions are charged per place, rather than per pupil.

# Methodology

## Basis

The estimates are on a 'best estimate' basis, meaning they do not include explicit margins for prudence or optimism. All figures are undiscounted, which means that amounts are stated without considering the time value of money.

In the weeks following the end of December 2025, we assess whether any adjustments should be made for new information which is not captured in the claims data at that time.

Each academic year covers the period from 1 September to 31 August. Although LAMS operate on a financial year basis, estimated claims for LAMS are included in the totals on an academic year basis.

## Data

Our analysis is supported by the following data received from DfE:

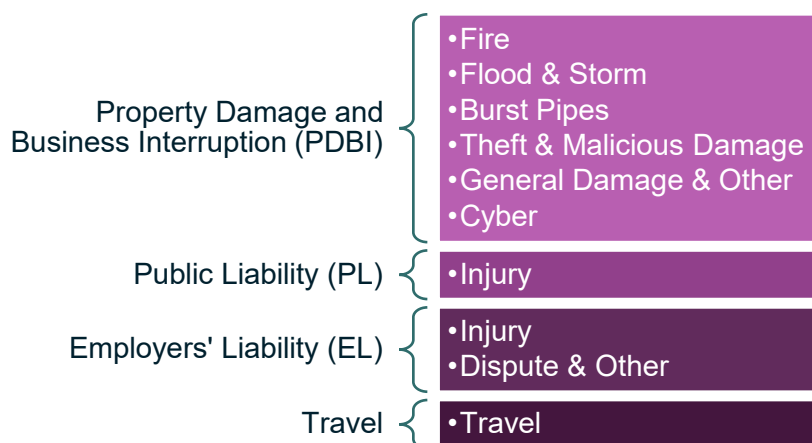
- RPA claims as at each month end up to December 2025, which are provided to DfE by the RPA claims handler
- RPA membership data as at the beginning of January 2026
- Forecast of schools converting to academies as at January 2026.

We have not verified the accuracy of the data independently. We have compared the academy projections and RPA membership data to that previously received for consistency and reasonableness. We are not aware of any material bias in the data used.

Additional external data sources have been used to inform certain assumptions.

## Classes of cover

We break down claims into ten distinct classes, within four main classes of risk, and estimate ultimate claims separately for each. These are broadly aligned with the risks covered in the RPA membership rules.



## Risk exposure

We use pupil numbers as the measure of risk exposure over the academic year, and that the number of RPA claims arising from a given academic year period is proportional to the number of pupils in attendance at schools in the RPA during that period.

For past academic years, we use historical RPA membership data to estimate the number of pupils in schools that were covered by the RPA.

For future academic years, we:

- Estimate the number of schools that will join and leave the RPA in each month;
- Estimate the number of pupils within each school that will join or leave the RPA;
- Convert these pupil numbers into 'pupil-years' of risk exposure for each academic year by accumulating the time on risk for each school within each year.

## Ultimate claims – past / current academic years

To estimate the ultimate claims, we combine the current value of claims that have been reported up to 31 December 2025 (known as the reported claims) with an estimate of future claims for incidents that occur during the academic year. The future claims include:

- **Incurred but not reported (IBNR):** Claims that have happened but have yet to be reported to the RPA's claims handler. IBNR could occur, for example, if a child has an accident but the parent delays reporting this to the school, perhaps because they didn't realise that they would have grounds for a claim.
- **Incurred but not enough reported (IBNER):** Claims that have been reported, but the value on the claims system may not accurately reflect the amount of the final settlement. IBNER could occur, for example, if a fire claim is reported and a standard initial loss estimate is recorded against the claim but then, following a more detailed assessment of the fire damage by a loss adjuster in the future, the expected cost of the claim is increased.
- **Incidents yet to occur:** For the latest academic year 2025/26, claims are expected to arise from incidents between 1 January and 31 August 2026.

For each type of risk, we use RPA's historical claims experience to make assumptions about how reported claims in respect of each academic year develop over time, i.e., how the proportion of total reported claims to the total ultimate claims for that academic year changes over time. At the start of the academic year, the proportion is 0%, and at the point when all claims from the year are fully paid and settled (which can be many years after the end of the academic year), the proportion is 100%.

For example, we expect claims from PDBI and Travel classes to develop the fastest because these claims are generally reported and settled relatively quickly. In contrast, the liability classes (EL and PL) take longer to develop as there is a significant component of personal injury which generally takes longer to settle. As a result, ultimate claims estimates for even the earliest academic years can still change from review to review.

In estimating the future claims, we consider a range of common actuarial methods.

## **Ultimate claims – future academic years**

Our view of future costs is based on estimates of claim frequency (per pupil-year of exposure) and average claim size for each of the different types of cover offered by the RPA. These estimates are based upon the RPA's historical experience for each type of risk. In general, the claim frequency is assumed to remain stable across future academic years on a per pupil-year basis, while the average claim size assumptions are adjusted for assumed future inflation.

# Ultimate claims by academic year

The table below shows the estimated pupil risk exposure and ultimate claims for each academic year up to the current year 2025/26 as at December 2025, along with a comparison to the estimates from our previous May 2025 review.

**Table 2: Estimated pupil risk exposure and ultimate claims by academic year**

Academic year		December 2025 review		May 2025 review		Change in ultimate claims	
		Pupil risk exposure (000s)	Ultimate claims (£000s)	Pupil risk exposure (000s)	Ultimate claims (£000s)	£000s	%
Past	2014/15	469	<b>3,504</b>	469	3,385	+119	+4%
	2015/16	1,098	<b>19,477</b>	1,098	19,432	+45	+0%
	2016/17	1,783	<b>25,397</b>	1,783	24,539	+859	+4%
	2017/18	2,210	<b>26,519</b>	2,210	26,509	+10	+0%
	2018/19	2,511	<b>32,030</b>	2,511	32,025	+5	+0%
	2019/20	2,906	<b>95,945</b>	2,906	95,828	+117	+0%
	2020/21	3,430	<b>82,271</b>	3,430	81,798	+473	+1%
	2021/22	3,908	<b>99,602</b>	3,908	76,250	+23,352	+31%
	2022/23	4,286	<b>111,878</b>	4,286	110,775	+1,103	+1%
	2023/24	4,752	<b>124,834</b>	4,752	121,048	+3,786	+3%
	2024/25	5,319	<b>125,936</b>	5,337	136,318	-10,382	-8%
Current	2025/26	5,643	<b>154,271</b>	5,773	152,098	+2,173	+1%
Future	2026/27	5,967	<b>159,023</b>	6,173	168,650	-9,627	-6%
	2027/28	6,226	<b>171,364</b>	6,491	182,936	-11,572	-6%
	2028/29	6,442	<b>183,293</b>	6,741	195,911	-12,618	-6%

Notable movements since the previous review:

- **2021/22:** estimate has increased by £23m, mainly due to additional costs relating to a fire claim from that year.
- **2024/25:** estimate has reduced due to more favourable claim experience than expected.
- **2025/26:** estimate has increased slightly due to slight adverse claim experience.
- **Future years:** estimates have decreased, reflecting claim experience and lower projected pupil risk exposure.

Department for Education - Risk Protection Arrangement  
Summary of ultimate claim estimates as at 31 December 2025

The table below breaks down the current estimates of ultimate claims by the four main classes of risk: Property Damage and Business Interruption (PDBI), Public Liability (PL), Employers' Liability (EL), and Travel.

**Table 3: Estimated ultimate claims by academic year and main class (£000s)**

Academic year		PDBI	PL	EL	Travel	Total
Past	2014/15	1,780	811	908	6	<b>3,504</b>
	2015/16	13,211	2,072	4,180	14	<b>19,477</b>
	2016/17	15,689	3,606	6,073	29	<b>25,397</b>
	2017/18	14,654	3,682	8,106	78	<b>26,519</b>
	2018/19	17,243	3,902	10,234	652	<b>32,030</b>
	2019/20	37,278	6,306	9,251	43,110	<b>95,945</b>
	2020/21	56,029	3,100	13,923	9,219	<b>82,271</b>
	2021/22	74,549	5,599	18,374	1,079	<b>99,602</b>
	2022/23	83,425	6,752	20,297	1,404	<b>111,878</b>
	2023/24	76,809	20,460	26,365	1,201	<b>124,834</b>
	2024/25	82,737	10,394	31,109	1,697	<b>125,936</b>
Current	2025/26	104,474	12,530	34,716	2,551	<b>154,271</b>
Future	2026/27	102,502	15,635	38,272	2,614	<b>159,023</b>
	2027/28	109,524	17,176	41,883	2,781	<b>171,364</b>
	2028/29	116,116	18,719	45,509	2,950	<b>183,293</b>

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Analysis of reported fire claims

The table below shows the number of fire claims reported to date and total corresponding losses over recent years, split by academic year of cover. For each claim, the reported loss is the sum of losses paid to date and losses expected to be paid in future. The number of claims excludes those reported to the RPA where no loss has been paid or is expected to be paid in future. The number of RPA member schools is measured as the average over the academic year.

**Table 4: Summary of reported fire claims**

Academic year	RPA member schools	Number of fire claims reported	Total reported fire losses
2019/20	6,387	40	£3,324,581
2020/21	7,716	28	£11,989,529
2021/22	9,098	47	£38,782,176
2022/23	10,008	57	£36,625,908
2023/24	11,149	55	£21,378,428
2024/25	12,777	59	£4,134,199
2025/26 *	13,829	23	£22,806,506

\* Partial year – number of claims and losses over four months up to 31 December 2025

A fire claim is one where the claims handler has recorded the main cause of loss to be fire, resulting in damage to the fabric of a school building, contents owned by the school, or has caused the school to incur additional costs associated with finding alternative accommodation. This definition excludes a small number of claims where fire has been the cause of other types of loss (for example damage to third-party property).

The figures include both settled claims and claims that have not yet settled, and therefore numbers for past years may vary from review to review as the claims develop.

## Appendix B: Analysis of reported flood and storm claims

The table below shows the number of flood and storm claims reported to date and total corresponding losses over recent years, split by academic year of cover. For each claim, the reported loss is the sum of losses paid to date and losses expected to be paid in future. The number of claims excludes those reported to the RPA where no loss has been paid or is expected to be paid in future. The number of RPA member schools is measured as the average over the academic year.

**Table 5: Summary of reported flood and storm claims**

Academic year	RPA member schools	Number of flood / storm claims reported	Total reported flood / storm losses
2019/20	6,387	282	£16,365,279
2020/21	7,716	227	£18,444,277
2021/22	9,098	211	£12,274,728
2022/23	10,008	374	£12,480,564
2023/24	11,149	404	£19,662,443
2024/25	12,777	463	£28,522,745
2025/26 *	13,829	146	£3,149,608

\* Partial year – number of claims and losses over four months up to 31 December 2025

For the purposes of this appendix, a flood or storm claim is one where the claims handler has recorded the type of loss to be flood damage or storm damage, or where the cause of loss is recorded as rain penetration. We have excluded claims which, although recorded as storm damage, appear from the claim description to relate to high/strong/heavy winds or lightning. We have also excluded:

- ‘escape of water’ claims (for example, damage to water pipes or similar infrastructure) resulting in water damage to contents and property
- a small number of claims where flood is recorded as the cause of other types of loss (for example damage to third-party property).

The figures include both settled claims and claims that have not yet settled, and therefore numbers for past years may vary from review to review as the claims develop.

## Appendix C: Number of claims reported

The following table gives a breakdown of the number of claims reported to the RPA by main class, split by each academic year of cover (not by year of reporting). This only includes claims where a loss has been paid or is expected to be paid in future.

**Table 6: Number of claims reported to the RPA by main class**

Academic year	PDBI	EL	PL	Travel	Total
2014/15	234	59	56	27	376
2015/16	560	155	89	54	858
2016/17	905	207	137	81	1,330
2017/18	1,165	334	153	110	1,762
2018/19	1,242	440	184	741	2,607
2019/20	1,358	374	112	5,549	7,393
2020/21	1,187	470	135	950	2,742
2021/22	2,079	622	227	606	3,534
2022/23	1,980	606	252	916	3,754
2023/24	2,029	802	269	1,082	4,182
2024/25	2,725	917	361	1,392	5,395
2025/26 *	972	230	85	183	1,470

\* Partial year – number of claims reported over four months up to 31 December 2025