Government Actuary's Department

Department for Education Risk Protection Arrangement

Summary of ultimate claim estimates as at 30 June 2026

22 September 2026

Jonathan Day

Navigating risk | Cutting through complexity

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Contents

Introduction **3**
Purpose 3
Reliance 3
Compliance 3
Limitations 3

Background **4**

Methodology **5**
Basis 5
Data 5
Classes of cover 5
Risk exposure 6
Ultimate claims – past / current academic years 6
Ultimate claims – future academic years 7

Ultimate claims by academic year **8**

Appendices **10**
Appendix A: Analysis of reported fire claims 10
Appendix B: Analysis of reported rainfall-related flood and storm claims 11
Appendix C: Number of claims reported 12

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 30 June 2026. 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 adjuster 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 30 June 2026 are referred to as the current estimates. These are compared with GAD's previous estimates of RPA claims as at 31 December 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 GAD has relied on the completeness and accuracy of the information supplied. Where possible, GAD has 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, through which losses are met from government funds. The arrangement is run by DfE with support from external advisers in some areas.

The RPA has been operational since 1 September 2014. The arrangement covers risks such as property damage, business interruption, employers' liability, third-party public 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 July 2026, 63% of eligible schools are members of the RPA.

Participation in the RPA requires a contribution per pupil[1], which for academies 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
2022/23	Sep 2022 – Aug 2023	Apr 2022 – Mar 2023	£21
2023/24	Sep 2023 – Aug 2024	Apr 2023 – Mar 2024	£23
2024/25	Sep 2024 – Aug 2025	Apr 2024 – Mar 2025	£25
2025/26	Sep 2025 – Aug 2026	Apr 2025 – Mar 2026	£27
2026/27	Sep 2026 – Aug 2027	Apr 2026 – Mar 2027	£29

[1] 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 are intended to be neither prudent nor optimistic. All figures are undiscounted, which means that expected future claim payments are included at their full value and are not adjusted to reflect the time value of money.

In the weeks following the end of June 2026, GAD considered whether any adjustments should be made to reflect material information that is not captured in the claims data at that date.

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

The analysis is supported by the following data:

- RPA claims extracts from each month end up to June 2026[2], including the amounts paid and outstanding expected future payments.
- RPA membership data as at the beginning of July 2026.
- A DfE forecast of schools converting to academies as at July 2026.

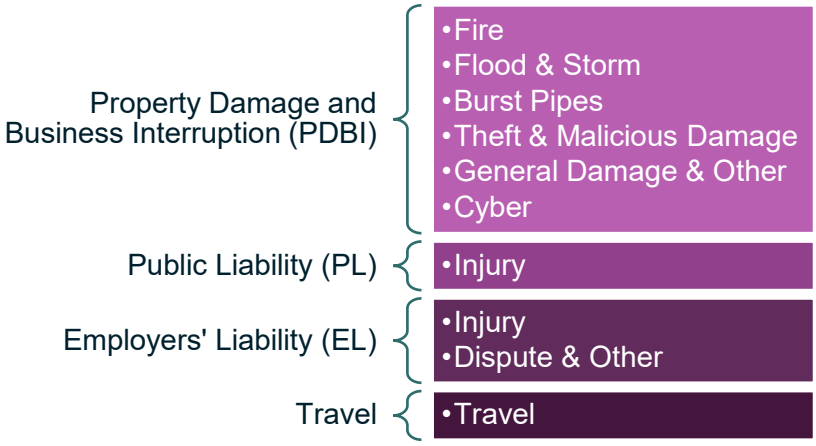
GAD has not verified the accuracy of the data independently. GAD has compared the academy projections and RPA membership data to that previously received for consistency and reasonableness. GAD is not aware of any material bias in the data used.

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

Classes of cover

Claims are segmented into ten distinct classes, within four main classes of risk. Ultimate claims are estimated separately for each class. These are broadly aligned with the risks covered in the RPA membership rules.

[2] The analysis is based on a claims data extract provided as at 26 June 2026, estimated claim costs occurring up to the 30 June 2026 have been allowed for as part of the analysis.



Risk exposure

Pupil numbers are used as the measure of risk exposure over the academic year. This assumes the number of RPA claims arising during an academic year period is proportional to the number of pupils attending schools in the RPA during that year.

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

For future academic years:

- The number of schools that will join and leave the RPA in each month is estimated;
- The number of pupils within each school that will join or leave the RPA is estimated;
- These amounts are then converted 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, the current value of claims that have been reported up to 30 June 2026 (known as the reported claims) is combined with an estimate of future claims for incidents that occur during the academic year. The estimate of future claim costs includes:

- **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 currently recorded may not accurately reflect the final settlement amount. 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 July and 31 August 2026.

For each type of risk, the RPA's historical claims experience is used to make assumptions about how claims in respect of each academic year develop over time. For example, 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%. It gradually increases as claims are reported and developed, reaching 100% once all claims from the year have been fully settled, which can be many years after the end of the academic year.

Claims from PDBI and Travel classes are expected 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.

When estimating future claim costs, a range of common actuarial methods are considered.

Ultimate claims – future academic years

Estimated costs for future incidents are based on assumptions about claim frequency (per pupil) 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 latest ultimate claims estimates for each academic year, and a comparison with the estimates from the previous review.

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

Academic year		June 2026 review		December 2025 review		Change since previous review	
		Pupil risk exposure (000s)	Ultimate claims (£000s)	Pupil risk exposure (000s)	Ultimate claims (£000s)	£000s	%
Past	2014/15	469	**3,405**	469	3,504	-99	-3%
	2015/16	1,098	**18,624**	1,098	19,477	-853	-4%
	2016/17	1,783	**25,792**	1,783	25,397	+394	+2%
	2017/18	2,210	**27,141**	2,210	26,519	+622	+2%
	2018/19	2,511	**32,749**	2,511	32,030	+719	+2%
	2019/20	2,906	**99,661**	2,906	95,945	+3,716	+4%
	2020/21	3,430	**85,534**	3,430	82,271	+3,263	+4%
	2021/22	3,908	**103,129**	3,908	99,602	+3,528	+4%
	2022/23	4,286	**115,636**	4,286	111,878	+3,757	+3%
	2023/24	4,752	**125,043**	4,752	124,834	+209	+0%
	2024/25	5,319	**125,292**	5,319	125,936	-645	-1%
Current	2025/26	5,585	**151,907**	5,643	154,271	-2,364	-2%
Future	2026/27	5,779	**159,057**	5,967	159,023	+34	+0%
	2027/28	5,939	**169,326**	6,226	171,364	-2,038	-1%
	2028/29	6,074	**178,789**	6,442	183,293	-4,504	-2%

Notable movements since the previous review:

- **2019/20 to 2022/23**: estimates have increased due to more development on historical claims than expected.
- **2025/26**: estimate has decreased due to favourable claim experience.
- **Future years**: estimates have decreased, mainly reflecting lower projected pupil exposure.

The table below shows how the current ultimate claims estimates are split across 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	792	828	6	**3,405**
	2015/16	12,329	2,093	4,188	14	**18,624**
	2016/17	15,678	4,032	6,053	29	**25,792**
	2017/18	14,517	4,351	8,196	78	**27,141**
	2018/19	17,219	4,455	10,423	652	**32,749**
	2019/20	37,261	9,794	9,499	43,107	**99,661**
	2020/21	56,575	3,577	16,163	9,219	**85,534**
	2021/22	77,024	5,623	19,403	1,079	**103,129**
	2022/23	85,545	7,466	21,211	1,413	**115,636**
	2023/24	75,499	19,478	28,866	1,201	**125,043**
	2024/25	78,456	10,851	34,340	1,644	**125,292**
Current	2025/26	96,581	14,152	39,059	2,116	**151,907**
Future	2026/27	98,930	17,091	40,477	2,558	**159,057**
	2027/28	104,491	18,425	43,698	2,713	**169,326**
	2028/29	109,196	19,771	46,972	2,851	**178,789**

Appendices

Appendix A: Analysis of reported fire claims

The table below shows the number of fire claims reported to date and the total corresponding claim costs, split by academic year of cover. For each claim, the reported loss is the sum of amounts paid to date and outstanding amounts expected to be paid in the future. The number of claims excludes those reported to the RPA where no loss has been paid or is expected to be paid in the 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	46	£39,060,833
2022/23	10,008	57	£38,532,019
2023/24	11,149	56	£22,416,832
2024/25	12,777	57	£3,410,835
2025/26*	13,648	47	£22,591,962

* Partial year – number of claims and losses over ten months up to 26 June 2026

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 figures for past years may vary from review to review as the claims develop.

Appendix B: Analysis of reported rainfall-related flood and storm claims

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

Table 5: Summary of reported rainfall-related 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	£16,345,933
2020/21	7,716	227	£18,446,034
2021/22	9,098	212	£12,475,238
2022/23	10,008	372	£12,286,027
2023/24	11,149	398	£18,936,056
2024/25	12,777	445	£28,065,664
2025/26*	13,648	157	£4,467,897

* Partial year – number of claims and losses over ten months up to 26 June 2026

For the purposes of this appendix, a flood or storm claim category is one where the claims handler has recorded the main cause of loss to be flood damage or storm damage, or where the cause of loss is recorded as rain penetration. Claims recorded as storm damage where the claim description suggests the loss was caused primarily by wind or lightning have been excluded. In addition, the following claims have also been excluded:

- escape of water claims (for example, damage caused by burst pipes or similar infrastructure failures)
- a small number of claims where the 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 figures for past years may vary from review to review as the claims develop.

Appendix C: Number of claims reported

The following table shows the number of claims reported to the RPA by main class, split by academic year of cover (rather than by year of reporting). This only includes claims where a loss has been paid or is expected to be paid in the future.

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

Academic year	PDBI	PL	EL	Travel	Total
2014/15	234	56	58	27	**375**
2015/16	559	89	156	54	**858**
2016/17	905	138	207	81	**1,331**
2017/18	1,164	155	334	110	**1,763**
2018/19	1,241	189	441	741	**2,612**
2019/20	1,359	115	374	5,549	**7,397**
2020/21	1,186	137	475	950	**2,748**
2021/22	2,080	226	625	606	**3,537**
2022/23	1,973	268	649	916	**3,806**
2023/24	2,021	277	848	1,082	**4,228**
2024/25	2,694	327	1,058	1,399	**5,478**
2025/26*	2,445	326	850	1,100	**4,721**

* Partial year – number of claims reported over ten months up to 26 June 2026