

APPENDIX A

DfE Safely Valve Agreements: Mitigation Validation Exercise

Significant pressures on high needs budgets have resulted in many local authorities accruing deficits on their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). High needs reforms and savings targets have been agreed for local authorities with the highest dedicated school grant deficits as part of Safety Valve Arrangements (SVAs). There were two principal goals identified during the programme which were critical for the local authorities' ability to reach sustainable positions:

- *appropriately managing demand for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), including assessment processes that are fit for purpose*
- *use of appropriate and cost-effective provision. This includes ensuring mainstream schools are equipped and encouraged to meet needs where possible, whilst maintaining high standards for all pupils.*

Five local authorities moved into those agreements in the last academic year - Bury, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kingston upon Thames, Richmond upon Thames, and Stoke on Trent. Kingston Upon Thames and Richmond Upon Thames' safety valve agreements with the DfE mirror each other, they have therefore been combined in the table below.

Bristol has cross-referenced the current activity occurring within the Education Transformation Programme and wider improvement activity underway across the local area against the five published SVAs to determine how much of the existing activity aligns to DfE approved measures and interventions to reduce deficits. The following RAG rating was applied:

GREEN: our work in this area is well scoped and progressing well

AMBER: our work in this area is emerging and developing

RED: we are not currently doing anything in this space (note **RED** = an opportunity to move into a new area).

LA	Recommendation	Theme	Sub-Theme	RAG
Bury	Strengthen their Special Educational Needs assessment and placements process, including clarifying assessment thresholds for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) by March 2022. This should include reviewing transition arrangements for children and young people throughout 2021-22.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	EHCP Assessment and Review	

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LA	Recommendation	Theme	Sub-Theme	RAG
Bury	Strengthen their Special Educational Needs assessment and placements process, including clarifying assessment thresholds for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) by March 2022. This should include reviewing transition arrangements for children and young people throughout 2021-22.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Transitions	
Bury	Improve quality and timeliness of management information to enable evaluation of impact of central services.	Data, Outcomes and Digital		
Bury	Ensure robust planning for future provision, including reducing the use of independent school placements by increasing the availability and suitability of local provision within Bury. This should include developing a model for forecasting future needs by March 2022.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand		
Bury	Support and drive schools in Bury to meet a higher level of need in a more cost-effective way within mainstream settings, while maintaining the quality of provision. Develop a culture in which demand is more effectively managed throughout the authority.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	School Provision and Process	
Bury	Remodel financial practice to ensure accurate contributions from appropriate funding sources, by December 2021.	Financial Efficiencies		
Hammersmith and Fulham	Increase early intervention activity, including but not limited to the creation by September 2021 of a speech, language and communication needs offer for children and young people on SEND support, to reduce escalation of need to Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) level.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Early Intervention	
Hammersmith and Fulham	Development of a more robust local offer.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Local Offer	
Hammersmith and Fulham	Review and reform of the Alternative Provision (AP) model and funding to create efficiencies from 2021-22.	Financial Efficiencies	ALP Model	

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LA	Recommendation	Theme	Sub-Theme	RAG
Hammersmith and Fulham	Support and drive schools in Hammersmith and Fulham to meet a higher level of need in a more cost-effective way within mainstream settings, while maintaining the quality of provision.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	School Provision and Process	Yellow
Hammersmith and Fulham	Review and reform of outreach services to create savings from 2021-22.	Financial Efficiencies		Red
Hammersmith and Fulham	Implementation of a case management system to facilitate predictive modelling.	Data, Outcomes and Digital		Green
Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Improve support available in schools to manage demand more effectively and reduce escalation of need.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	School Provision and Process	Yellow
Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Expand specialist provision to avoid placements in more expensive Non-Maintained Special Schools and independent special schools.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	School Provision and Process	Green
Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Manage demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) by scrutinising provision at each annual review and continuing to work with consultants Mastodon C to forecast and manage growth during 2021-22.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	EHCP Assessment and Review	Green
Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Improve efficiency of commissioning services to drive down cost.	Financial Efficiencies	Commissioning	Yellow
Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Increase contributions from health and social care.	Financial Efficiencies	Partner funding	Red
Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Commission a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review and implement any recommendations arising from it which drive sustainability in their high needs system.	Financial Efficiencies		Red
Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Reform of the authority's post-16 offer, including but not limited to development of new provision.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Local Offer (Especially Post-16)	Yellow

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Kingston upon Thames/Richmond Upon Thames	Contribute to the reduction of the cumulative deficit via alternative council funding sources in each financial year covered by this agreement.	Financial Efficiencies		
Stoke-on-Trent	Reduce the authority's use of independent school places by increasing the availability and suitability of local provision, beginning in 2021-22 and continuing throughout the period of the agreement.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	School Provision and Process	
Stoke-on-Trent	Review and reform of the 'Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) offer' with all planned action completed no later than the end of 2022-23.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	EHCP Assessment and Review	
Stoke-on-Trent	Development of a Transition Action Plan by September 2021.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Transitions	
Stoke-on-Trent	Review and reform Early Years pathways, including implementing a new Early Years offer from September 2021.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Early Years	
Stoke-on-Trent	Support and drive schools in Stoke-on-Trent to meet a higher level of need in a more cost-effective way within mainstream settings, while maintaining the quality of provision. This includes recruiting a dedicated Strategic Manager in 2021.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	School Provision and Process	
Stoke-on-Trent	Reform commissioning practices to address sufficiency problems.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Commissioning	
Stoke-on-Trent	Reform post-16 offer from 2021 onwards including but not limited to development of new provision and establishment of a review cycle. New provision should largely be in place during the 2021/22 academic year.	Local Placement Sufficiency and Managing Demand	Local Offer (Especially Post-16)	
Stoke-on-Trent	Improve financial planning and collaboration with other funding streams.	Financial Efficiencies		