



Dedicated Schools Grant ‘Safety Valve’ Agreement: Bristol

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Bristol City Council, and covers the financial years from 2023-24 to 2029-30.
2. The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2029-30 and in each subsequent year. The authority undertakes to control and reduce the cumulative deficit as follows:

Year	Maximum Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at Year End ¹ £m
2023-24	£56.1m
2024-25	£64.2m
2025-26	£72.0m
2026-27	£73.6m
2027-28	£75.5m
2028-29	£68.6m
2029-30	£53.8m

3. The authority agrees to implement the action plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
 - 3.1 Co-produce and implement a city-wide SEND Inclusion Strategy to improve partnership working, joint accountability, planning, commissioning, and delivery, ensuring that SEND services are needs led;
 - 3.2 Enhance early intervention, effective outreach, school improvement and targeted funding to enable increased numbers of children and young people with EHCPs to be successfully supported in mainstream settings;
 - 3.3 Use a ‘Test and Learn’ approach to support the development of creative and dynamic ways to retain young people in quality mainstream provision, meeting

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

their needs, improving their educational outcomes and reducing the risk of exclusion;

3.4 Co-design, with schools, a standard practice of excellence in supporting children and young people with SEND through LA-commissioned SEND School Improvement Officers;

3.5 Improve the EHCP process through measures including speeding up time taken for assessments, plans and reviews;

3.6 Ensure effective joint governance of SEND improvement across the city, including improving quality and use of data for management performance and service planning, leading to improved accountability and speed of change;

3.7 Build provision to meet current and future demand with a focus on creating a flexible education estate that can adapt to changes in need.

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 £21.52 million of DSG before the end of the financial year 2023-24. In subsequent financial years, subject to compliance with the conditions set out in paragraph 3, the Department will pay DSG sums as below. This funding will be provided in instalments and subject to continued satisfactory progress. Subject to full compliance, Bristol City Council should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2029-30.

Year	The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end
2023-24	£21.52m
2024-25	£4.61m
2025-26	£4.61m
2026-27	£4.61m
2027-28	£4.61m
2028-29	£4.61m
2029-30	£9.22m

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, for example as a result of the government SEND Improvement Plan, 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 Bristol City Council is awarded additional capital funding support following the capital application process.

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

On behalf of Bristol City Council, signed by:



[Stephen Peacock, Chief Executive (08/03/2024)]



Hannah Woodhouse, Director of Children's Services (08/03/2024)



Denise Murray, Director of Finance and S151 Officer (08/03/2024)

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:

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Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit