



Dedicated Schools Grant ‘Safety Valve’ Agreement: Wiltshire

1. This agreement is between the Department for Education and Wiltshire Council, and covers the financial years from 2023-24 to 2028-29.
2. The authority undertakes to reach a positive in-year balance on its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) account by the end of 2028-29 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	£56.2m
2024-25	£84.5m
2025-26	£94.6m
2026-27	£114.4m
2027-28	£119.1m
2028-29	£67.0m

3. The authority agrees to implement the action plan that it has set out. This includes action to:
 - 3.1 Provide earlier support for children and young people with SEND, improving inclusion practices and managing pressure points and school transitions;
 - 3.2 Prevent the need for escalation by providing the right support, first time, including a more holistic response alongside health and social care, with improved management and communication;
 - 3.3 Increase the number of special school placements, resourced provision, and alternative provision to ensure that children and young people can access the support they need, with proper reintegration support for children who can be appropriately supported in mainstream provision;

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

- 3.4 Improve transition pathways to provide a range of opportunities for young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood, including training, further education, and employment;
- 3.5 Foster a culture of change across the Wiltshire SEND and AP system by engaging with partners and parent carers, improving trust and co-production across the sector.
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 £26.80 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, Wiltshire Council should therefore eliminate their cumulative deficit no later than 2028-29.

Year	The Department agrees to pay to the authority an additional £m of DSG by year end
2023-24	£26.80m
2024-25	£6.70m
2025-26	£6.70m
2026-27	£6.70m
2027-28	£6.70m
2028-29	£13.40m

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 Wiltshire 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 Wiltshire Council, signed by:



Terence Herbert, Chief Executive (12/03/2024)



Lucy Townsend, Director of Children's Services (12/03/2024)



Lizzie Watkin, Director of Finance and S151 Officer (12/03/2024)

On behalf of the Department for Education, signed by:



Tom Goldman – Deputy Director, Funding Policy Unit