



PSV Update for schools

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A reminder of the context

Since 2020, Bury Council has participated in the Department for Education's (DfE's) Safety Valve programme (PSV).

The Safety Valve programme targets the Local Authorities with a high deficit in their Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), providing targeted support and challenge to ensure their budget is sustainable in the future. Local authorities also receive additional funding as part of their agreed plan with the DfE.





Participation in the programme

An original agreement was entered into with DfE and published in March 2021, at which point the cumulative DSG deficit in Bury was £25.5m. We undertook to eliminate this deficit by the end of 2024/25 and committed to an associated management plan.

Pressures on the DSG were identified as primarily falling within the High Needs Block which is used for supporting children and young people from 0-25 who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). As such, the agreed action plan centred around strengthening the SEND offer to more sustainably meet the needs of children and young people.



Progress in delivery but ongoing challenges in tackling demand and cost

In early 2023, regular monitoring undertaken with DfE found that despite significant progress being made to meet the agreements outlined in the 2021 PSV plan there continued to be an increase in EHCPs in mainstream schools, an increase in out of borough placements and an increase in per head costs.

Updated modelling forecast that a cumulative deficit of £12m would remain by the original timeline to eliminate the deficit at the end of 2024/25 and as a result the terms of the agreement with DfE would not be met.

Our new plans

Over the subsequent months, Bury Council worked with DfE to produce an **updated management plan** which would allow for continued participation within the Safety Valve programme and an extension to the original timeline within which to eliminate the deficit.

An updated plan was submitted in October 2023 and is now with DfE awaiting final approval. In the meantime, Bury Council is fully committed to delivering against this updated plan which will **see the DSG deficit eliminated in the 2028/29 financial year.**

At present, the DSG deficit at the end of the current financial year (2023/24) is forecast to be £18.5m, which is **on track against the updated management plan**, but with significant pressures and risks in the system. To deliver on the plan we will need to be ambitious and make some tough decisions.

We can't do this alone and need the support of our schools – we are committed to working in true partnership with you.



OUR LIVE PROJECTS

Reduce EHCP demand by delivering on our Early Help strategy, including increased capacity, increased reviews, and strengthening of provision.



Early Years

Co-production of a Graduated Approach Toolkit, and support to schools to utilise and implement the toolkits.



Graduated Approach

Increase of Resourced Provision places, working with an estimated 13 schools to provide additional places.



Resourced provision

Strengthening the Alternative provision offer and the processes related to this, ensuring better outcomes and value for Money.



Alternative provision

Ensuring a timely effective review of EHCP cases to ensure that we are providing the right care and in a sustainable way.



EHCP reviews

Publish an up to date Local Offer and establish networks and engagement to strengthen communication of the local offer.




Local Offer

Increase of specialist school places through the delivery of two new schools and expansion of existing provision in Milwood.



Specialist schools

Reducing the number of children within EOTAS through reviews of cases and support and training to council and partner staff.



EOTAS

Ensuring that the decision making process is effective and efficient, and supports the right care to be put in place in-line with our new strategy and offer.



Process panels

Working together to create a shift to early identification and intervention through a programme of engagement and support.



Culture





Key developments to highlight

- Establishment of a Schools Inclusion team, including SEND and Inclusion Champions.
- Development of the Graduated Approach Toolkit and the comprehensive support to schools to implement the toolkit.
- Development of the Multi-agency inclusion panel, providing schools with one point for support
- Expansion of the EHCP team so each school has a named case worker and schools' involvement in the EHCP panel.
- Expansion of Special School provision and Resourced provision.
- Extension of the Autism in School project
- Further training and support for schools delivered through the SENCO network

Get in touch

The logo for Bury Council, featuring the word "Bury" in a large, bold, yellow sans-serif font, with the word "Council" in a smaller, grey sans-serif font directly below it. The logo is centered within a white circular background.

Bury
Council

If you have any
questions please
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