

# Safety Valve Progress

High Needs Sub-Group Update  
November 2024

# Safety Valve Agreement

Department for Education programme asking local authority areas to transform and modernise provision funded through the High Needs Block.

Requirement for Local Authorities to achieve in-year balanced budget over the life of the programme (2022-2027) in return for additional funding to clear the budget deficit.

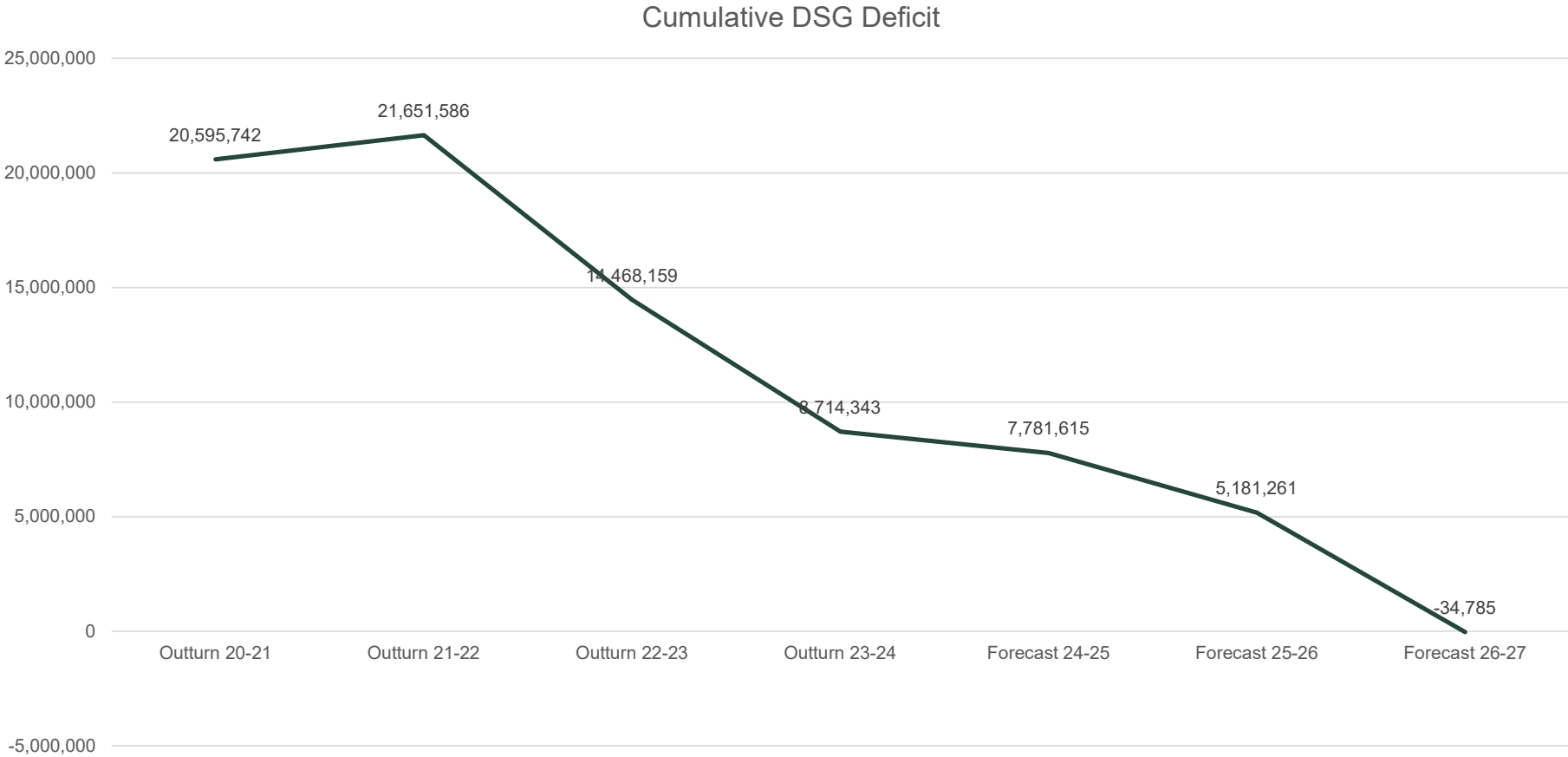
# Safety Valve Funding Agreement

Southwark	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Unmitigated Forecast Deficit	£24m	£30m	£41m	£55m	£72m
Mitigated Forecast	£23.9m	£24.1m	£23.6m	£23.1m	£23m
Safety Valve Funding	£9.22m	£2.77m	£2.77m	£2.77m	£5.53m
Remaining Deficit	£14.68m	£12.11m	£8.84m	£5.53m	£0

# Safety Valve Conditions

- 1. Develop and embed a universal, multi-agency offer for families of young children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), ensuring that only the most complex cases are being referred for Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment;**
- 2. Support mainstream schools to better meet the needs of children with all SEND needs but in particular Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) by using specific ASD focused whole school training and support packages and maximising the use of local resource bases;**
- 3. Deliver the 'Education Capital Strategy' (including the use of the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation) to develop in borough provision to meet need, provide adequate special school places and support mainstream inclusion, with a focus on ensuring provision is high quality and value for money;**
- 4. Increase the capacity of SEND professionals to continue to support and drive developments for SEND in the borough who are committed to meeting children's needs at the earliest opportunity;**
- 5. Review and revise the graduated response with school leaders, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and parents and carers, to promote early intervention and ensure children and young people with SEND are able to have their needs met in a provision which is most appropriate;**
- 6. Accelerate movement out of the SEND system through robust annual review processes, working with partners to develop alternative offers and promoting independence through strengthened process and practice.**
- 7. Reduce unit costs within the SEND system through benchmarking top ups and more effective commissioning**
- 8. Develop the Southwark SEND school hub to deliver training and support to other schools and signpost to available training;**
- 9. Expand the offer to young people with SEND in the 19-25 age range, by working with cross council colleagues to improve and increase opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and employment.**

# Current DSG Deficit Forecast



# Key Updates – Positive Drivers

- This quarter we delivered an intensive week-long programme of whole Children Services workforce learning and development focussed exclusively on SEND. Bringing together all education and social care staff to increase curiosity about children with SEND and develop closer education and care working practices, and understand the intersectionality between social care support and SEND support.
- This quarter we rolled out mandatory SEND training for all social care leaders and staff. The training is being enthusiastically promoted by social care leaders to support social work staff to understand and better recognise the impact of SEND needs amongst the children and families they work with. Increasing awareness, and supporting more timely and holistic intervention to prevent escalating needs.
- The Integrated Care Board have now nominated a senior health system leader as Senior Responsible Officer for SEND to work alongside the Local Authority SRO for SEND to drive the integrated development of our Safety Valve and SEND Improvement Programme.

# Key Updates – Barriers Drivers

- Our biggest barrier to successful delivery of the Safety Valve agreement remains the continued increases in demand and complexity that we are seeing in our SEND children, and the capacity challenges this continues to present to our system. Whilst we are seeing many excellent examples of motivation and drive to transform the system the scale of the local and national challenges impacting on our schools, local authority and partnership staff continue to pose a risk to the breadth of change needed to achieve the required deficit reduction.
- We continue to face a barrier in developing the broader health systems engagement with need to transform and modernise our approach to delivering in SEND, in particular the approach to and clarity of roles and responsibilities in joint commissioning. This will now be mitigated following the nomination of the new health SRO for SEND. We are already seeing positive changes in the coordination and drive of work through the ICB.
- In the last quarter we have seen a marked increase on previous years in the number of children requiring alternative provision, this has added cost pressure to our safety valve forecasting. Urgent work has been mobilised to review AP in partnership with our secondary schools and bring forward options for new joint enterprise approach to how we can achieve better outcomes at a reduced cost.

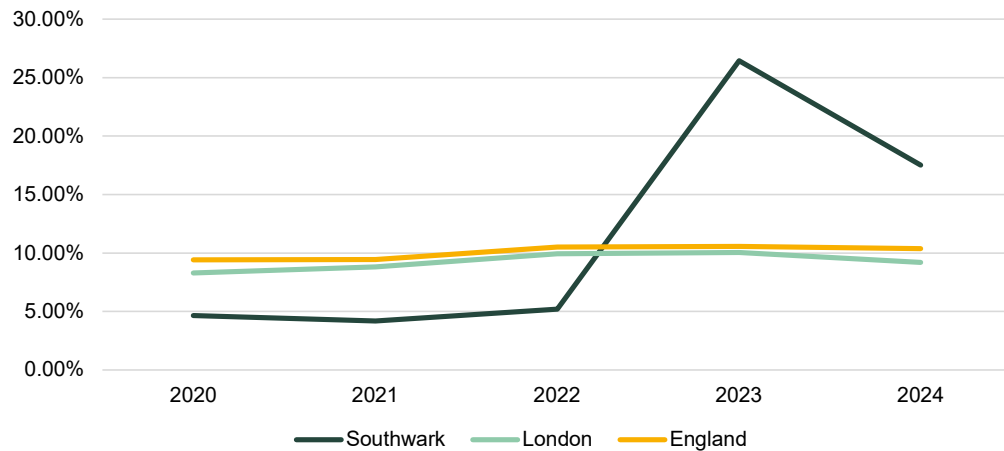
# Key Updates 1

- Programme of support, mentoring and guidance through the SEND School Hub – now with over 80 members. Expanding the SENCO support offer and strengthening the networked support. Opportunities for leadership networking
- Development of a SEND Children & Family Hub – opportunity for greater integrated outreach offer via the Hub but driven by schools and linked to the SEND School Hub
- Safety Valve roundtable with special school leaders - plan to take forward expansion of Highshore school
- Continued roll out of WellComm Tool and Earl Words Together programmes in the early years, including launch of specialist resourced provision in early years setting
- Continued delivery of the SEND Consultants support offer
- Relunched Autism Support Offer
- SEND Family Support Worker delivery
- Improving contract monitoring and challenge with independent providers.
- Development of joint funding protocol



# Key Updates 2

Rate of pupils in specialist post-16 institutions



Rate of special school pupils in independent settings (pre-16)

