

SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

LA Name	Date Report Submitted	Name & Email Address of Key Personnel	
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Chris Ward	Ashley Whittaker	Other key contacts for Safety Valve:	Naomi Carter Service Director for Education, Inclusion and Access Naomi.Carter@iow.gov.uk

Is your LA's Safety Valve plan on track?	Yes/No	Commentary
To achieve the Safety Valve agreement's projected deficit in the current year?	No	A new Area SEN plan has been created and a new plan to provide more specialist places is being created. However, in the interim growth in specialist places is not keeping up with need, along with a fragile primary school system, which is not financially secure.
To achieve a £0 DSG deficit by the end of the Safety Valve agreement?	No	We believe our plans in the long run will reduce the overall deficit. However, we need to take a pragmatic approach due to the financial position of schools and their ability to meet needs of children.

Is your LA's Safety Valve capital project on track?	Yes/No	Commentary
	N/A	

Programme Headlines

This quarter, the biggest drivers of positive change have been (up to 3):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of additional specialist places on the Island such as the SEMH Satellite of St George's and expansion of Medina House. The Pupil Referral Unit, Lionheart School (formally Island Learning Centre), has been transformed under the leadership of the new headteacher. It has been rebranded, redecorated and trauma informed, therapeutic approaches have been introduced. Already there is a noticeable difference in the support of children's needs. The SEN Statutory team are all undertaking IPSEA level 1, 2 or 3 training with more senior staff undertaking Level 4 training.
This quarter, the biggest barrier(s) to successful implementation of the Safety Valve plan have been (up to 3):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing high rates of requests for EHC needs assessments. Lack of appropriate specialist places causes pressure on the system. Staff illness and resignations, within our Statutory SEN Team have diminished capacity. Adverts are out and we are reviewing our structure.
This quarter, the best examples of stakeholder engagement around the Safety Valve plan have been (up to 3):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst the Parent Carer Forum ceased in late 2024, statutory partners and an independent parent carer support group have been working with the DfE's commissioned provider Contact to establish a new Parent Carer Forum. This has resulted in 4 meetings

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with parents and Contact, 2 of these included LA officers and colleagues from the ICB, listening to the views of parents.

- We recognise our Local Offer needs improvement and have taken steps to survey parents, so that we can improve in the interim and once a Parent Carer Forum is established, we will take steps to work with them, and other parent groups to co-produce our Local Offer.
- The development of the Area SEN self-evaluation and improvement plans, set out our ambition and plans for the Island. These are in final and draft form respectively, and have been shared with the Area SEND Partnership board for further feedback and implementation.

Alongside your Safety Valve financial and narrative monitoring reports, please share with us the latest strategic data dashboard utilised by your governance oversight board for Safety Valve.

NB This should not be something created for the DfE Safety Valve monitoring process; if you do not have a strategic data dashboard, just let us know.

SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
Condition 1: 3.1. Create greater clarity of 'Ordinarily Available Provision' (OAP) through further dissemination of recently produced Special Educational Needs (SEN) support guidance and offering training to headteachers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) about what constitutes OAP	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have paused the development of the new Ordinarily Available Provision document, due to it needing to be co-developed with SENCO's, teachers and headteachers in schools. Once we have an EP service, we can use their expertise to enhance the draft version. This will not be until September 2025. In the meantime, we will take the following actions: We have continued buying in the SEN Phone line, which Hampshire provides. This is not being used by schools as much as we would like. In April 2025, we launch our comprehensive school improvement offer and approach to all schools, focusing on cradle to career approach, with our new inhouse school improvement team.
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
	RAG	
Condition 2: 3.2. Improve the quality of annual reviews of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) through training, greater Local Authority (LA) engagement and improved processing to ensure timescales are met, so that children and young people meet the outcomes in their EHCPs, which should lead to a step-down in provision over time	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPSEA level 1,2 and 3 training for all members of the Statutory SEN team, with Level 4 training by SEN Expert planned for seniors in team and senior leaders. Internal training is now a regular feature. Staff capacity within Statutory SEN Team has been diminished due to illness and resignation. Recruitment is underway and review of team structure will take place. Internal data systems and how we use systems are being reviewed.
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
	RAG	
Condition 3: 3.3. Ensure more robust oversight of decision making during the assessment and co-production of EHCPs, so that children are placed in most suitable provision that can meet their needs	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A multiagency panel meeting to support the EHC new assessment takes place weekly to support decisions to assess and whether to award an EHCP following statutory assessment. The SEND Manager is making the panels more interactive and holding members to account for their individual service areas Where it is a decision not to assess/award an EHCP telephone contact with families/school to explain how the decision was reached and to provide recommendations is now part of best practice. Discretionary spending is reducing through targeted work with schools and robust decision making when referrals are received. The high need placement cost panel is now more robust. Officers prepare each case for panel to outline the funding request and how this is linked to the provision in the EHCP – the panel will only make decisions on cases that are in a statutory process, this is enabling more challenge back to schools around implementing a robust graduated approach.
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
	RAG	
Condition 4: Increase maintained/academy specialist placements	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We continue to develop further expansion plans, building on the 55 specialist places already delivered upon.
	RAG	

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available on the Isle of Wight to minimise the need for more expensive placements	Update 2 (July)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From our analysis we have identified a need for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary aged SEMH provision Secondary aged high anxiety/mental health (Section 19/EHCP) Primary aged SLD/PMLD provision We are seeing a growth of EOTAS/EOTIC places due to the lack of mental health/high anxiety provision.
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
	RAG	
Condition 5: 3.5. Create an early intervention ' Primary Behaviour Service ' to replace the primary provision at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) on the island, to reduce the number of permanent exclusions and meet needs earlier	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This service has been reviewed and following feedback we have taken the decision to provide an 'outreach' model only. This will provide teachers and staff in schools with the bespoke support in the classroom to support schools meet the needs of their pupils in the classroom. Line management of this has changed and PBS will sit alongside the School Improvement Service.
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
Condition 6: 3.6. Improve the Post-16 offer on the island, encouraging take up of supported internships and supported apprenticeships, improving preparation for adulthood outcomes, and reducing demand on High Needs funds	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An audit of Post 16 provision across the Island is to be requested from the LGA, to identify areas which need to be improved upon. This will form part of our Post 16 plan. Mapping of post 16 provision is underway and will feed into the overall plan. DFN project is underway. (DFN is the name, not acronym of a national organisation).
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
Condition 7: 3.7. Review the governance of the High Needs Performance and Oversight Board with the intention to include a reference group which will include stakeholders, partners, and children and young people, to help inform planning in the local area.	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance arrangement for SEN across the Island have been re-visited with all work related to SEN feeding into the Area SEND Partnership Board. (see in SEF or plan, attached for details). A new Area SEN Self Evaluation has been drafted. Needs to be refined and ratified at Area SEND Partnership Board. A new Area SEN Improvement plan has been drafted. Needs to be refined and ratified at Area SEND Partnership Board. Area SEN Improvement plan has 6 workstreams, all devised from the outcomes of the LGA Peer Review and the 7 Safety Valve conditions. Workstream leads for these 6 workstreams need to be agreed and these 6 workstreams will feed into the Area SEND Partnership Board. All the above provides better synergy and genuine partnership working across the system to improve SEND.
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
	RAG	

RAG	Definition
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) complete
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) remains on target
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) are currently off target, with plans to mitigate
	Savings/cost avoidance and/or workstream(s) are off target

SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME RISK REGISTER

Risk	Assurance Level	Mitigation	Progress Update from this Quarter <i>Please include/refer to relevant data and evidence to support your rating and explain the scale of any impacts</i>
Risk 1: Fragility of primary school system due to high numbers of surplus places causing financial instability, impacting on the quality of education.	Update 1 (April)	Regular meetings with Governors on school budgets. School improvement service, focused on standards.	Closures are needed because the decrease in the number of children on the Island has resulted in a significant excess of primary school places and a maintained primary school system that is expected to lose £2.2m in financial year 2024/25. A significant number of schools are in debt and these and others do not have capacity to fund investment in improved SEND provision. A primary school system realigned to the number of children will allow an improved financial situation and better investment in improved ordinarily provision and a graduated response.
	RAG		
	Update 2 (July)		
	RAG		
	Update 3 (December)		
	RAG		
Risk 2: Recruitment of Educational Psychology Service.	Update 1 (April)	Locum arrangements are in place, but this is costly.	New recruitment campaign for a PEP and EP's will commence. However, there is a national shortage of EP's.
	RAG		
	Update 2 (July)		
	RAG		
	Update 3 (December)		
	RAG		
Risk 3: Ability to create the additional appropriate SEN places, leading to more costly packages.	Update 1 (April)	New plan is being developed on the creation of new SEN places.	New plan is being developed on the creation of new SEN places. Need to be creative with our use of buildings to achieve this within the financial envelope available to LA.
	RAG		
	Update 2 (July)		
	RAG		
	Update 3 (December)		
	RAG		