

SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

LA Name	Date Report Submitted	Name & Email Address of Key Personnel	
Isle of Wight	16/07/2025	CEO:	Wendy Perera Wendy.Perera@iow.gov.uk
		S151 Officer:	Chris Ward Chris.ward@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
Signed off by S151 Officer	Signed off by Director of Children's Services	DCS:	Ashley Whittaker Ashley.Whittaker@iow.gov.uk
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
Is the LA delivering appropriate support for children and young people? <i>Safety Valve agreements do not in any way release LAs from their obligation to fulfil their statutory duties to children & young people with SEND.</i>	Yes	We are delivering appropriate support, but expansion of specialist places needs to be balanced against the level of children's needs.
Is the LA moving towards reaching an in-year balance? <i>If yes, please include the projected year</i> <i>If no, is the LA doing everything appropriate to contain costs?</i>	No	A new Area SEND transformation plan, a new plan to provide more specialist places, and a new financial model are 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.
Is the LA moving towards full eradication of the DSG deficit? <i>If yes, please include the projected year</i> <i>If no, is the LA doing everything appropriate to prevent excessive growth in deficits?</i>	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 the LA delivering on all the conditions set out in their SV agreement? <i>If no, has the workstream been updated or replaced to adapt to current circumstances?</i>	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 lack of Educational Psychologists, which hampers our ability to develop ordinarily available guidance materials and inclusion across our schools.

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):

- The proposed expansions recently agreed by the IOW Councils Children's Committee will create an additional 130 specialist places, some opening in September 2025, others January 2025
- Training for the SEN Statutory team continues with all undertaking IPSEA level 1 and 2 training and more senior staff undertaking Level 4 training.

SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

- A new Parent Carer Forum has been established and we look forward to working with them.

This quarter, the biggest barrier(s) to successful implementation of the Safety Valve plan have been (up to 3):

- Ongoing high rates of requests for EHC needs assessments.
- Lack of appropriate specialist places causes pressure on the system.
- Capacity in our SEN statutory team. We have struggled to recruit into SEN senior leadership positions. Staff illness within our Statutory SEN Team have diminished capacity.

This quarter, the best examples of stakeholder engagement around the Safety Valve plan have been (up to 3):

- Parent groups (not PCF) attend the Area SEND Partnership Board and engage in this process.
- The Area SEN Improvement Plan, has identified workstream leads for the 6 workstreams and these workstreams are being established across all external stakeholders
- Working far more closely with ICB/NHS colleagues on individual children's case, in a more unified way. This has been a really positive development.

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

Condition / Workstream	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"> • Due a lack of EP's we have paused the development of the new Ordinarily Available Provision document. We have a new EP starting in September and they will be tasked with the development of this. • 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. • We have created online training for schools to access through the Transforming SEND portal • Our school improvement service has started and are building relationships with school leaders and staff across the system. Their focus will be on high quality inclusive teaching.
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
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 and 2 training for all members of the Statutory SEN team, • Level 4 training by SEN specialist planned for seniors in team and senior leaders. • Internal training for statutory team is now a regular feature. • Staff capacity within Statutory SEN Team has been diminished due to illness. • We did not manage to recruitment for a Service Manager SEN, we are investigating other options. • We have internal recruited for the SEN Quality and Performance officer who is reviewing and developing Internal data systems and how we use them.
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	
	RAG	
	Update 3 (December)	
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 at panels is 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)	
Condition 4: Increase maintained/academy specialist placements available on the Isle of Wight to minimise the need for more	Update 1 (April)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have delivered an additional 55 specialist places. • We have been granted approval for another 130 additional specialist places, to cater for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary aged SEMH provision • Secondary aged high anxiety/mental health
	RAG	
	Update 2 (July)	

SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME DETAILED UPDATE		
Condition / Workstream	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>
expensive placements	RAG	(Section 19/EHCP) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new Primary Resourced Provision for AS/SLCN A new Primary Resourced Provision for AS Along with an increase in places at our established Resourced Provisions across the Island, with Primary Resourced Provision moving to 12 and secondary moving to 20. These will open in September 2025 and January 2026.
	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 and we moved to 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. This service now sits within the School Improvement Service, to ensure an aligned approach to support for schools.
	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"> We have developed a new brochure aimed at employers to encourage the take up of Supported Internships. Mapping of post 16 provision is underway. However, we need to track young people through the system to better understand the repetition of courses and work more closely with adult social care regarding transition arrangements.
	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"> Area SEND Partnership Board is now established with external and internal stakeholder from across the system. The Area SEN Self Evaluation has ratified at Area SEND Partnership Board. The Area SEN Improvement plan has been ratified at Area SEND Partnership Board. Area SEN Improvement plan has 6 workstreams, Workstream leads for these 6 workstreams have been agreed, but need to set up their workstreams. These 6 workstreams will feed into the Area SEND Partnership Board.
	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.	The Childrens Committee have tasked officers with developing an options paper on how we address the high number of surplus places on the Island. 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)		
Risk 2: Recruitment of Educational Psychology Service.	Update 1 (April)	Locum arrangements are in place, but this is costly, are not face to face and quality can be an issue.	We have run 2 recruitment campaigns without success. We will continue to attempt to recruit for a PEP and EP's. However, there is a national shortage of EP's.
	RAG		
	Update 2 (July)		
	RAG		
	Update 3 (December)		
Risk 3: Ability to create the additional appropriate SEN places, leading to more costly packages.	Update 1 (April)	We have a plan for immediate development of places. However, we will run out of buildings/options to expand further.	An additional 130 places are about to be delivered. 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		