
York Schools Forum

22nd January 2026

Report of Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Post Safety Valve planning and disapplication from the Schools Block

Summary

1. This paper provides the members of the School Forum with an update on the development of the post Safety Valve DSG management plan and the proposed use of the disapplication of funding from the Schools Block to support this plan.

Progress on the development of the post Safety Valve DSG management plan

2. At their October meeting the members of School Forum agreed to support the local authority request for a 0.5% disapplication from the Schools Block. Whilst agreeing to the disapplication request the members of School Forum remain concerned about impact of the disapplication across the York School system. Given that the minimum funding guarantee has been set at 0.0% across the York School system for 2026/27 this concern remains. At the time of writing this report we are still awaiting the publication of the Schools White Paper and are yet to receive confirmation from the Secretary of State about the disapplication request.

3. Despite the current uncertain climate, it is clear that central government reforms will focus on the promotion of an inclusive mainstream school system. This is being incentivised through the allocation of capital to support adaptations in mainstream schools and the growth in specialist places in mainstream through an expansion in resourced provisions. The plan would include a growth in secondary enhanced resource provision places.

4. In developing the rationale for the disapplication from the schools block, we are seeking to ensure that the revenue implications of creating more specialist provision can be supported through an investment from and into the York school system. There is an acknowledgement that this is difficult at a time when all schools are having to implement efficiencies due to the low formula funding in York, however, meeting the varied needs of the city's children can only be achieved through collective ownership of the solutions and greater consistency in the application of the graduated response.

5. In developing the post Safety Valve DSG management plan we need to acknowledge that without the additional investment of funding through the Safety Valve, York has an underlying pressure of £1.5 million on the high needs block. The solution to the management of this pressure must be to ensure that the city is able to implement a provision map which can better meet the needs of all children and keep them connected with their locality. The development of neighbourhood clusters with a focus on building capacity to meet predictable needs alongside developing additional provision with a specific focus on supporting transition for children and young people with SEMH needs

would have a positive whole system impact and would support the city's focus on inclusion and belonging.

6. Following the October School Forum meeting it was agreed that the Chair and vice Chair of School Forum with the Chair of the York Schools and Academies Board would work with the Assistant Director, Education and Skills and the Head of Integrated SEND to work on the post Safety Valve DSG management plan. This would include a specific focus on the proposed use of the 0.5% disapplication from the Schools Block.

7. The consensus from the two Chairs and vice chair was that the planned actions need to focus on the needs of a small but significant cohort of young people with challenging behaviours who despite the adaptations being made by secondary schools remained at significant risk of permanent exclusion. One way to mitigate this risk would be to commission additional places from the INSPIRE independent special school to support intervention in KS3. It was felt that 2 places for each of the city's 9 secondary schools at a total cost of £360K would provide the additional capacity needed to meet the needs identified.

8. In order to support early intervention in primary schools it is suggested that each of the four neighbourhood clusters would be allocated £45K to support the development of team around the cluster interventions targeted at communication and interaction and SEMH needs.

9. This would leave £110k from the disapplication to invest in the development of a type of provision that is currently lacking in York. A number of colleagues have visited CATCH in Leeds which offers a model of provision which is successfully providing opportunities to re-engage children and young people with education and develop pride in their community through a focus on positive mentorship. We have a number of elements in place in York which we can use to develop a similar approach and this investment could provide the seed corn funding to attract investment from a wide range of partners. In Leeds, CATCH has been developed in partnership with Carr Manor School, and the model in York could be a practical demonstration of the impact of the York Schools and Academies Board to go beyond the confines of individual schools and academies to improve the holistic outcomes of children and young people.

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