

24/25 Month 10 Budget Monitoring Report

- Children & Families Scrutiny Committee
- 31st March 2025



Somerset
Council

Children's & Families Budget Monitoring – Month 10

Forecast £4.188m overspend. A decrease of £1.673m from Quarter 3.

	Budget 2024/25	Month 10 2024/25	Variance	Movement from Month 9 (Under) / Over £m
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Children & Families	98.496	105.648	7.152	(1.014)
Commissioning & Performance	11.557	9.830	(1.727)	(0.778)
Education & Transport	32.406	31.404	(1.002)	0.110
Children's Services Team	0.329	0.094	(0.235)	0.009
Total	142.787	146.976	4.188	(1.673)

- The net pressure on **External Placements** is currently forecast to be **£9.694m**. This is a decrease of **(£0.942m)** from Quarter 3.
- **Fieldwork** are forecasting an underspend of **(£1,428m)**, a decrease of **(£0.034m)** from quarter 3.
- **Childrens Commissioning** is forecasting an underspend of **(£1.727m)**, an increase of **(£0.778m)** from Quarter 3 due to vacancies and a reallocation of **(£0.600m)** from Housing.
- **Education & Home to School Transport** are forecasting an underspend of **(£1.002m)**, a decrease of **£0.110m** from Quarter 3. The budget for **SEND Transport** is forecasting an overall underspend of **(£1.118m)** relating to savings identified as part of ongoing transport projects.

£10.570m savings requirement 2024/25

2024/25 MTFS savings update - £1.592m still to be delivered

Red – £1.592m currently 'unachievable' – need substitute savings

Amber – £0.000m 'at risk'

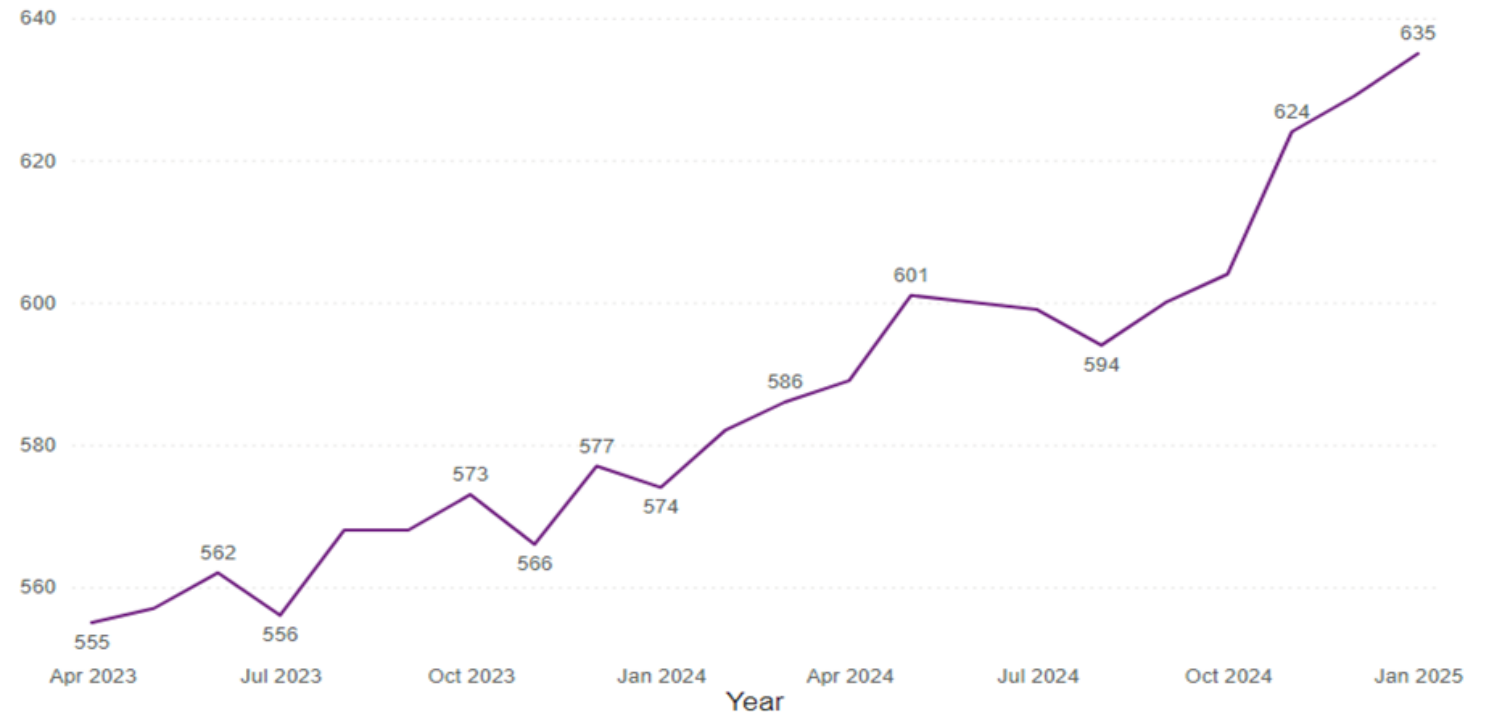
Green – £0.000m 'In delivery'

Blue - £8.978m 'achieved'

Children Looked After Numbers

From April 2024 there has been an increase of 46 children looked after (CLA). With the more recent numbers coming into care moving into either high-cost residential placements or kinship care placements.

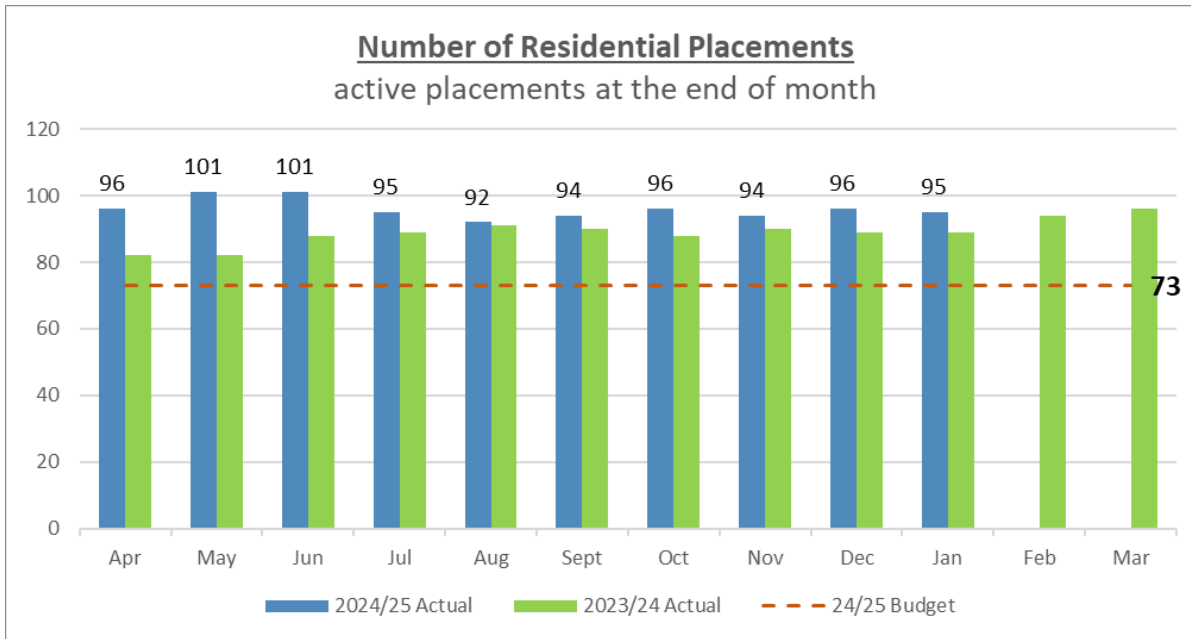
CLA Total by Month



Residential & Unregistered Placements Month 10 24/25

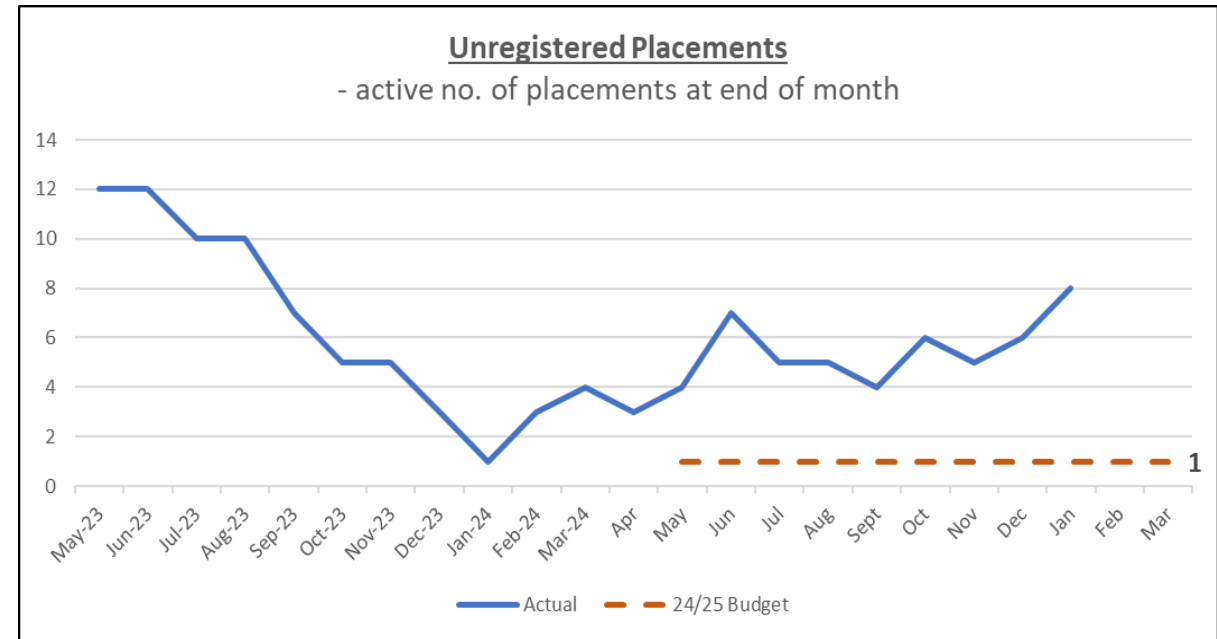
The graph below shows the trend in the **number of active residential placements** at the end of each month during 24/25.

The budgeted number of residential placements for 24/25 is 73.



From April 2024 there has been an increase of 5 children in unregistered placements. As of January 2025, there are 8 active unregistered placements.

The budgeted number of unregistered placements for 2024/25 is 1.



Education & Transport Forecast Month 10 24/25

Area – all in £m	Current Budget 24/25	Forecast 24/25	Month 10 Variance Over/ (Under)	Quarter 3 Variance Over/ (Under)	Change Over/ (under)
Education	5.740	6.755	1.015	1.128	(0.113)
Home to School Transport	13.285	12.385	(0.900)	(0.906)	0.006
SEND Transport	13.381	12.264	(1.117)	(1.334)	0.217
Total	32.406	31.404	(1.002)	(1.112)	0.110

Month 10 position overall £1.002m underspend, reduction in underspend of £0.110m from Q3

- There is a decrease in the forecast overspend for the education service of £0.113m from Quarter 3. This is due to several changes, including increases in vacancy savings and forecast increases in traded income for the remainder of 2024/25.
- There is a decrease in the forecast underspend for transport from Quarter 3 of £0.223m, relating to growth in the number of SEND children being transported to school in Quarter 4.

DSG Deficit Forecast Month 10 2024/25

Forecast deficit carry forward	Balance b/fwd restated at 1 Apr 2024 surplus/ (deficit) £m	Forecast in-year variance Increase/ (Decrease) spend £m	Forecast carry forward 31 Mar 2025 £m
Schools Block	(1.090)	0.198	(0.892)
High Needs Block	42.856	30.748	73.604
Early Years Block	(1.878)	(0.186)	(2.064)
Central Schools Block	(5.977)	(0.022)	(5.999)
Total DSG	33.911	30.738	64.649

There continues to be significant pressure on costs within the High Needs Block, which relates to low inflationary increases to mainstream school funding, a range of factors putting pressures on school budgets and historic underfunding of Special Educational Needs (SEND). These factors combined along with lack of sufficient appropriate places are driving higher use of Independent Non-Maintained School (INMS) provision at a cost on average of £70k per placement.

High Needs Block breakdown budget	Current Budget 2024/25 £m	Forecast Outturn 2024/25 £m	Variance Increase/ (Decrease) £m	Change from Quarter 3 Increase / (Decrease) £m	%
Mainstream	12.441	19.812	7.371	0.211	59%
Independent Non-maintained Schools	26.265	30.994	4.629	(0.113)	18%
CLA Pre 16	6.477	4.727	(1.750)	-	-27%
Post 16	8.533	10.109	1.576	(0.484)	18%
Special Schools	24.728	24.837	0.109	(0.213)	-
Autism Spectrum Disorder Bases	2.152	2.096	(0.056)	0.007	-3%
Other	2.255	1.992	(0.263)	(0.050)	-12%
Pupil Referral Units	8.916	9.154	0.238	0.160	3%
Advisory Services and Virtual School	4.413	4.452	0.039	(0.005)	1%
Total	96.280	108.175	11.895	(0.487)	12%
Allocation after deductions	77.427	77.427	-	-	0%
In-year deficit	18.853	30.748	11.895	(0.487)	63%

MTFP Savings Tracker C&F Month 10

Year Approved	Saving Reference	Service	Title	Rolled Forward Savings from 2023/24 £m	New Savings for 2024/25 £m	Total Saving to be Delivered £m	Achieved £m	On-track £m	At Risk £m	Unachievable £m
Children & Family Services										
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-016	Commissioning & Performance	New homes for young people aged 16 to 25 years who are ready to live in supported accommodation on their journey towards independent living	-	(3.386)	(3.386)	(1.829)	-	-	(1.557)
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-017	Commissioning & Performance	Support children and young people in a loving Homes & Horizons home	-	(1.715)	(1.715)	(1.715)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-018	Commissioning & Performance	Support eight young people in care who are currently living in residential homes, who are ready to live in supported accommodation on their journey towards independent living	-	(1.586)	(1.586)	(1.586)	-	-	-
2022/23	CS-2324-LTSIGP-05	Children & Families Operations	Reduction in the cost of providing residential placements for Children in Care	-	(1.109)	(1.109)	(1.109)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-005	Inclusion	Fund the Virtual School for Children in Care using the Pupil Premium Plus grant	-	(0.410)	(0.410)	(0.410)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-003	Education, Partnerships & Skills	The Council will deliver a greater proportion of the support provided to Early Years settings through centrally retained funding, reducing its use of external partners.	-	(0.398)	(0.398)	(0.398)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-001	Inclusion	More efficient delivery of home to school travel	-	(0.325)	(0.325)	(0.325)	-	-	-

MTFP Savings Tracker C&F Month 10 (page 2)

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Children & Family Services										
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-007	Inclusion	Educational Psychology Service Budget Reduction	-	(0.141)	(0.141)	(0.141)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-006	Inclusion	Reduction of four of nine vacant posts in the Special Educational Needs (SEND) team.	-	(0.132)	(0.132)	(0.132)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-009	Inclusion	SEND delivery of Education Health & Care Plans	-	(0.125)	(0.125)	(0.090)	-	-	(0.035)
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-008	Inclusion	External funding for the service to support young people who are at risk of not being in education, training or employment post 16	-	(0.100)	(0.100)	(0.100)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-015	Commissioning & Performance	Support five children in care who are currently living in residential homes to move to a foster family so they experience a caring family home	(1.000)	(0.067)	(1.067)	(1.067)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-012	Commissioning & Performance	Stop out of hours security checks for three Somerset Council supported accommodation homes for young adults aged 18+	-	(0.035)	(0.035)	(0.035)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-013	Children & Families Operations	Special Guardianship Support	-	(0.030)	(0.030)	(0.030)	-	-	-
2023/24	TSIGP-2425-CFE-010	Children & Families Operations	Mind of My Own	-	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	-	-	-
Children & Family Services Total				(1.000)	(9.570)	(10.570)	(8.978)	-	-	(1.592)

MTFP 2024/25 savings unachievable

- Of the £10.570m 24/25 budget savings, there is currently £1.592m of unachievable savings
- Substitute savings are required for any unachievable savings
- £1.557m relates to 'New homes for young people aged 16 to 25 who are ready to live in supported accommodation on their journeys to living independently'
- £0.035m relates to 'SEND delivery of Education Health & Care Plans'

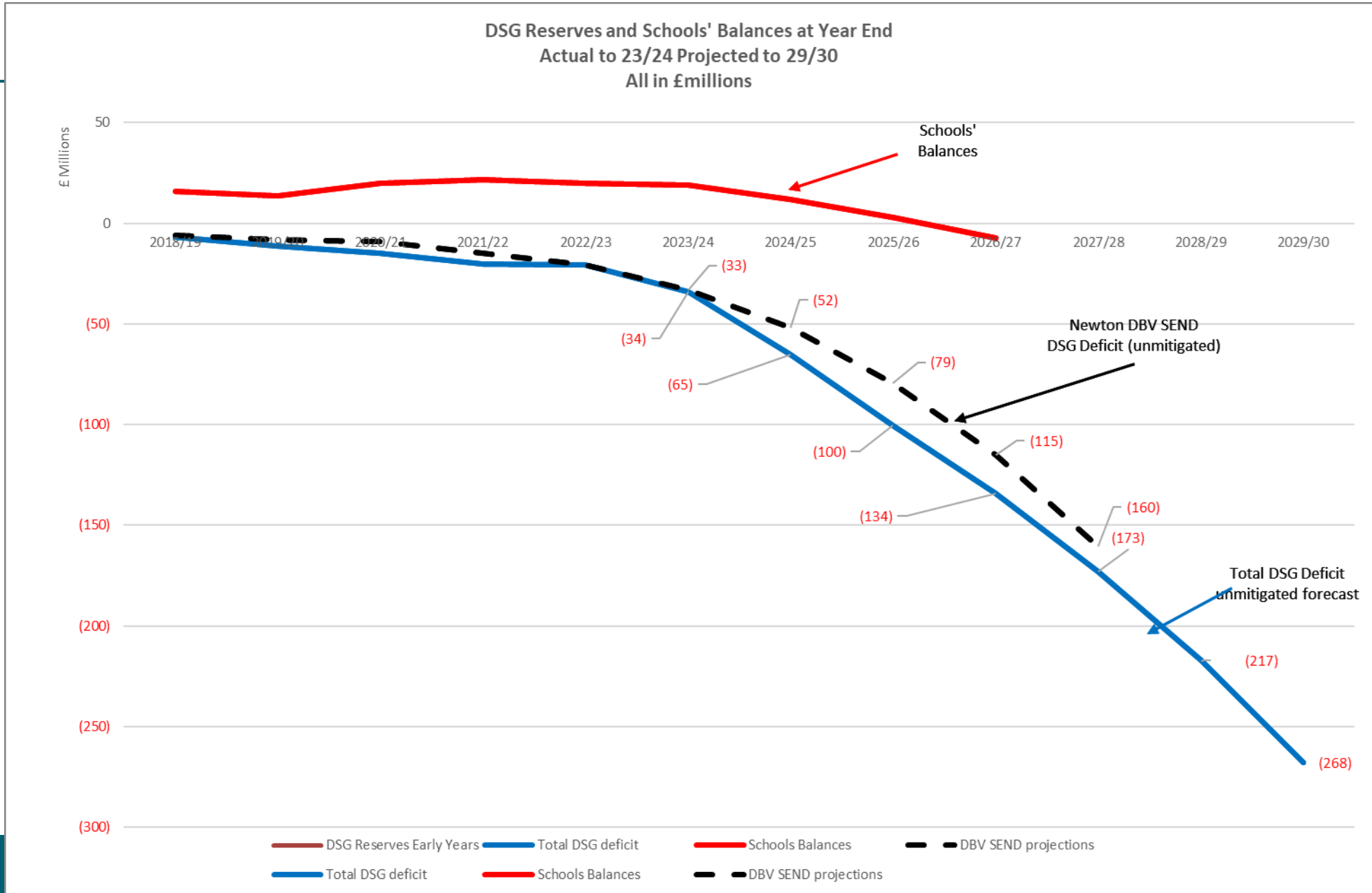
Childrens Families & Education Headline Budget 2025/26

- Somerset Council budget 25/26 £622.089m
- Exceptional Financial Support required of £43.000m to balance budget
- Budget gap 26/27 circa £100.000m
- Budget assurance statements signed by ELT
- Total Childrens 2025/26 net budget of £159.493m
- A net budget increase of £16.379m or 11.4% from 24/25 budget
- Growth £18.000m - Inflation, demography, pay
- Savings - Prior year
- Dedicated Schools Grant - forecast deficit to be circa £100m by 31st March 2026 (statutory override??)

Childrens Families & Education Budget 2025/26

	2024/25	2025/26	Change	
	Revised Budget	Budget	£m	(%)
	£m	£m	£m	(%)
Children & Families and Education Services				
Children & Families	98.926	116.818	17.892	18.1%
Commissioning & Performance	11.616	10.213	(1.403)	(12.1)%
Education	31.791	31.681	(0.110)	(0.3)%
Schools & Early Years (DSG)	-	-	-	-
Childrens Services	0.742	0.742	-	0.0%
Children & Families and Education Services Total	143.075	159.453	16.379	11.4%

Dedicated Schools Grant – Forecast budget & Deficit 2025/26



Acronyms (for information)

- CLA – children looked after
- UASC – unaccompanied asylum seeker children
- IFA – independent foster agency
- DSG – dedicated school's grant
- DMP – deficit management plan
- INMS – independent non-maintained schools
- SEND – special educational needs and disabilities
- EHCP – education, health and care plan

Questions



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