

PARENT CARERS TOGETHER



Bournemouth Christchurch Poole

the voice of parent carers of young people with
special educational needs and disabilities

Parent Carers Together Position on BCP Council Safety Valve Proposal

The steering group of Parent Carers Together are aware of the depth of feeling being discussed among the SEND community regarding funding for SEND and the 'Safety Valve' proposal currently being negotiated between the DFE and BCP Council.

When it comes to funding for SEND it is agreed that nationally it is dire, and here at PCT we don't disagree with that statement.

Like many other local authorities BCP Council have seen a sharp increase in SEND spending in recent years and are consequently spending more on SEND than government provides them. BCP Council has therefore been invited to join the Safety Valve Programme.

PCT believes that SEND funding is a national problem that should be addressed at the national level. The needs of SEND children and young people should be met with adequate funding, whether through EHCPs or SEND Support at schools.

PCT has not yet been consulted or involved in the Safety Valve proposal that has been submitted by BCP Council to the DFE. PCT will not support any proposed plan that is based on BCP Council reducing the funding that is available for SEND in BCP.

PCT does however support the work being undertaken in the SEND Improvement Plan (separate to Safety Valve). PCT has a representative seat at the SEND Improvement Board, along with representatives from education, health services, PCF and schools. PCT is actively engaged in working with BCP Council to improve SEND services, and we will continue to be your voice in this work.

Context

The Safety Valve programme targets those local authorities with the highest deficits in their Dedicated Schools Budget. The Safety Valve programme aims to provide a mix of support and challenge. Local authorities will receive additional funding, in increments, as part of their agreed plan, and is subject to them making satisfactory progress towards achieving the target in their plan.

The DfE has stated that:

'Local stakeholder engagement will be vital to ensure everyone has fed into the plan and has bought into the outcomes the local area wants to achieve together. Newton/CIPFA will support this engagement.

The department is engaging with schools' forums as part of the development of the programme. We expect that local schools' forums will be consulted as part of the Diagnostic phase. It is also expected that local Parent Carer Forums (PCFs) will be involved in the diagnostic phase of the programme'. [page 7]

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Parent Carers Together have not been involved in the diagnostic phase of the Safety Valve Plan.

Parent Carers Together Steering Group