

Leader's Office
BCP Civic Centre
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY



The Rt Hon Angela Rayner MP
Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Date: 1 July 2025
Contact: Councillor Millie Earl
Email: millie.earl@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Sent by email to
psangelarayner@communities.gov.uk

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council – SEND expenditure

I am writing to draw your attention to the unsustainable pressure placed on this Council by the governments continued delays in resolving the funding of SEND services.

By the end of this financial year, in March 2026, we forecast that the accumulated deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) will reach £171m, which means that we are both technically insolvent, and also facing an ongoing bill of £7.5m to service the debt. This cost is currently charged to the General Fund revenue account and means that we have had to consider further cuts to vital services including libraries, vital environmental services, play provision and support services in our most deprived communities, because this issue has not been resolved.

I should emphasise that these costs have been incurred mostly due to external factors beyond the council's control and are matters that the council has had limited power to tackle given the legislation and shortfall in the DfE's budget to cover the SEND services.

We welcome the recent announcement that the Local Government Fair Funding Review 2.0 announced the intention of a 2-year extension of the statutory override until 31 March 2028, but that does nothing to ease or prevent the Council's General Fund cashflow crisis.

One very simple solution which would resolve the revenue budget crisis, would be for you to give permission for the Council to charge all lost interest, and interest on short-term loans taken out to cover the SEND deficit, into the DSG deficit account in the form of rolled-up interest. This would immediately resolve our cashflow crisis and would recompense the General Fund for the short-term costs it is incurring, pending national resolution of the SEND funding challenges over the next couple of years. This decision would prevent us from making further damaging cuts to our vital front-line services, at no cost to the government at this time, and would enable the Council to balance our revenue budgets.

I would welcome an urgent opportunity to meet with you to discuss our position, to seek your permission to resolve the issue as I have outlined and to obtain reassurance that the announcements now being promised for the autumn will indeed provide solutions to BCP Council's particular set of issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Earl'.

Cllr Millie Earl
Leader
BCP Council (Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole)