



Corporate Parenting Board

Date: Thursday, 29 April 2021
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: A link to the meeting can be found on the front page of the agenda.

Membership: (Quorum 3)

Kate Wheller (Chairman), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chairman), Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Andrew Kerby, Cathy Lugg and Andrew Parry

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1UZ (Sat Nav DT1 1EE)

For more information about this agenda please contact Megan Rochester, Democratic Services Officer Apprentice tel: 01305 224709 email: m.r.rochester@dorsetcc.gov.uk



For easy access to the Council agendas and minutes download the free public app Mod.gov for use on your iPad, Android and Windows tablet. Once downloaded select Dorset Council.

Due to the current coronavirus pandemic the Council has reviewed its approach to holding committee meetings. Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and listen to the debate either online by using the following link: <https://youtu.be/-L7A5Xr7pVY>

Members of the public wishing to view the meeting from an iPhone, iPad or Android phone will need to download the free Microsoft Teams App to sign in as a Guest, it is advised to do this at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

Please note that public speaking has been suspended. However Public Participation will continue by written submission only. Please see detail set out below at item 4.

Dorset Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it carries out its business whenever possible. A recording of the meeting will be available on the Council's website after the event.

AGENDA

Page No.

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS- 17:00

The Chairman to open the meeting and note any apologies.

2 MINUTES

5 - 10

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021.

3 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive questions or statements on the business of the committee from town and parish councils and members of the public. Public speaking has been suspended for virtual committee meetings during the Covid-19 crisis and public participation will be dealt with through written submissions only.

Members of the public who live, work or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area, may submit up to two questions or a statement of up to a maximum of 450 words. All submissions must be sent electronically to m.r.rochester@dorsetcc.gov.uk by the deadline set out below. When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for and include your name, address and contact details. Questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda. Questions will be read out by an officer of the council and a response given by the appropriate Portfolio Holder or officer at the meeting. All questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The deadline for submission of the full text of a question or statement is **8.30am on Monday 26 April 2021**.

5 INTRODUCTION AND SCENE SETTING- 17:05

Theresa Leavy, Executive Director for Children to report.

6 FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT INCLUDING UPDATE ON THE MODERNISING FOSTERING PLAN- 17:10

11 - 34

To consider a report by John Heron, Fostering Lead.

7 DORSET FOSTER CARER ASSOCIATION VERBAL UPDATE- 17:40

Jan and Martin Hill, Foster carer representatives, to give an update.

8 ASPIRE ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT- 17:50

To consider a report from Michelle Whiting, Aspire Manager. (Report to follow).

9 REPORT ON THE HARBOUR SERVICE FOR ADOLESCENTS AND CHILDREN ON THE EDGE OF CARE- 18:20 35 - 60

To receive a report from Louise Drury and Simon Fraiz-Brown, Service Manager Adolescent Service.

10 CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY UPDATE- 18:35 61 - 68

Matthew Chislett, Service Manager Corporate Parenting and Permanence to report.

11 CORPORATE PARENTING DATASET- 18:45 69 - 86

Matthew Chislett, Service Manager Corporate Parenting and Permanence to report.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING- 18:55

To confirm the details of the next Corporate Parenting Board meeting which will be held 22 July 2021 and to consider any items for consideration.

This page is intentionally left blank



DORSET COUNCIL - CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 21 JANUARY 2021

Present: Cllrs Kate Wheller, Richard Biggs, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Andrew Kerby, Cathy Lugg and Andrew Parry

Apologies: Jan and Martin Hill (Foster Carer Representatives), Elaine Okopski (Dorset Parent Carer Council), Antonia Dixy (participation People) Simon Fraise Brown (SM Adolescent Services)

Also present: Cllr Val Potheary and Cllr Jane Somper

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Miriam M Leigh (Principal Education Psychologist), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Mark Blackman (Corporate Director - Education and Learning), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships), Matthew Chislett (Service Manager - Corporate Parenting Board and Permanence), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Megan Rochester (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice), Sarah Jane Smedmor (Corporate Director - Care & Protection), Lisa Linscott (Principal Teacher), Liz Plastow (Head of Safeguarding), Ann Haigh (Participation Worker, Participation People), Louise Smith and David Webb (Service Manager - Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service) Hannah and CJ (Young Person Representatives)

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman of the meeting welcomed all presented.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct recorded and would be signed by the Chairman at a date in the future.

3. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

4. Public Participation

There was no public participation to report.

5. Children in Care at Risk of Offending and Custody

The Service Manager, Dorset Combined Youth Offending Service presented a report on Children in Care at risk of offending and of the work being carried out to address these issues.

Members were advised that the number of Dorset children in care entering the justice system for the first time had reduced in the last three years. There has also been a reduction in the number of children in care receiving a formal youth justice 'outcome'.

No Dorset children in care had been remanded or sentenced to custody in the last two years. The Board discussed the report and asked a number of questions in relation to:-

- Engagement with employees and unions in respect of health and safety issues and acknowledging the importance that employees feel safe in the work space.
- It was noted that restorative justice approach should be a key element for victim led outcomes.
- Further work on embedding restorative approaches would be carried out in the near future.
- Members requested the figures of Dorset children in care provision outside of Dorset. They recognised the importance of each child either in the Dorset area or outside of it, was being treated equally.
- Noted that following the first COVID lockdown the justice system backlog had been cleared locally.
- Welcomed the approach to engagement through a combination of a speech and language assessment and a trauma formulation to enable YOS workers and other professionals to respond to individual(s) requirements.
- The Service Manager confirmed that the approach of additional speech and language therapists had transformed the service.
- Acknowledged that the local Protocol for Reducing the Criminalisation of Children in Care was working well and would be subject to ongoing scrutiny and improvement.

Decision

The Board noted and supported the work being carried out to reduce the criminalisation and offending of children in care.

6. Emotional Health and Well-Being in schools and briefing on the Emotional Health and Well-Being Steering Group

The Corporate Director for Education and Learning outlined a report that highlighted the importance of addressing the issues around emotional health and well-being of children; who may come into care with experiences of trauma associated with abuse, neglect, loss and separation from family and friends.

The Principal Education Psychologist set out the salient points of the detailed document including the work being carried out with education colleagues and the wider work of Corporate Parenting in order to support looked after children. Evidencing the applications of the strength and difficulties questionnaire in order to support children better.

The Board welcomed the detail within the report and also discussed:-

- The impact of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire and its progress;
- Why were Dorset children more “sad” than other children outside of the area? Responding the Executive Director of People Children advised that to date the cohort had not been measured properly. Going forward it was essential to get the process right; for example if you only ask people who are in crisis, it is likely that the figures would be distorted.
- However, she continued that some of the children were sadder and this was probably due to too many being in residential care or far away from home. Going forward this bench-mark allowed for the planned improvement to be recorded.
- Members welcomed the early intervention work, but what support was being carried out with care leavers?
- They noted that Health Care nurses were commissioned to work with care leavers. Educational psychologists were also supporting care leavers to ensure that their needs were being met.
- Noted that life story work was being carried out.
- Noted that children’s voices were heard in many different ways. They must feel secure and supported in order that they can build loving relationships in the future.
- Acknowledged that a reporting framework would be regularly fed back to the Board.

Decision

- (a) The Board noted and supported the work being done to develop relationship-based approaches in schools with an emphasis on trauma informed practice.
- (b) That Board noted and supported to improve the emotional wellbeing of children in care and care leavers.

7. **Sufficiency Strategy (Children's Provision)**

The Head of Commissioning updated the Board on the Placement Sufficiency Strategy. The strategy for children and young people was based on a rights-based approach to reducing the number of children in care which was adopted by the Council in 2019.

The strategy also outlined the targets for reducing the number of children in care in Dorset and increasing the number of homes available for children in care in Dorset.

Members made the following observations:-

- Noted that the strategy was approved by Cabinet on 19 January 2021.
- Expressed concern regarding 16 year olds living with minimal supervision; Family care was the ambition.
- Reconsider the importance of bringing children back into the Dorset area.
- Requested more information regarding young adults. No figures for the ages between 21-25.

- How were “the Strengthening of Services Plan”, “the Children and Young Peoples Plan” and “the Corporate Parenting Strategy” going to be monitored and which committee would be responsible for scrutinising them? In response, the Executive Director for People – Children confirmed that scrutiny committees would consider the delivery and the outcomes of the work; plus regular updates at the Corporate Parenting Board and potentially reporting to Health and Well-being Board when required.
- Members noted that the annual report on Care Leavers would be considered by the board at a future meeting.
- Expressed concern about the lack of foster carers; discussions were on-going with colleagues in respect of housing, the building better lives project and the local plan consultation. Plus consideration of opportunities for capital bid projects where appropriate.

8. **Corporate Parenting Strategy**

The Service Manager for Corporate Parenting and Permanence set out a power-point presentation on the Corporate Parenting Strategy covering the following areas:-

- Increasing the opportunities to hear the voice of our children and young people and to take their views, wishes and feelings into account
- Promote better physical and mental health and well-being through improvement access to health information and services.
- Have high aspirations for children in care and care leavers in their, education, training and employment.
- Ensure safe and stable accommodation within the family home or close relatives and friends, If not possible, children are moved to a permanent placement without delay.
- For our children to have a good enriching experience of care provision and to prepare for adulthood and an independent and successful life.
- Effective governance and planning arrangements are in place to mean the Corporate Parent can be the best they can be.

9. **Corporate Parenting Dataset**

The Board considered the report on the Corporate Parenting Dataset.

The Board made the following comments:-

- Welcomed the work being carried out on the health assessments within 20 days. Members acknowledged the issues with Covid-19, but improvement needs to be shown soon.
- That data showed that the right children were coming into care.
- Important to ensure that the right carers were in place and that permanence plans were put into place promptly.

Cllr S Jones and Cllr A Kerby left the meeting at 7.05pm

10. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the formal Corporate Parenting Board would be held on 29 April 2021.

11. **Exempt Item**

It was proposed by Cllr C Lugg seconded by Cllr R Biggs

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraphs 1 & 2 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

12. **CLICC Update and challenge cards- 18:55**

The Board received an update on the CLICC update and challenge cards from the Service Manager for Corporate Parenting and Permanence with the input of the young people representatives.

13. **Urgent Exempt Item**

The following urgent, exempt items was considered by the Board.

14. **Unregistered Placements**

Members considered a report of the Corporate Director – Commission, Quality & Partnerships on the current position regarding unregistered provision and the actions being taken to date.

Duration of meeting: 5.00 - 7.40 pm

Chairman

.....

This page is intentionally left blank

Corporate Parenting Board Thursday 29th April 2021 Fostering Service Annual Report including update on the Modernising Fostering Plan

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Local Councillor(s):

Executive Director: T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: John Heron

Tel: 01305 224664

Email: john.heron@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation: Members are requested to note the content and actively consider and comment upon the strengths and future recommendations

Reason for Recommendation:

To be assured that the report had identified the strengths and areas for development that will strengthen the work we do as Corporate Parents and ensure that children and young people in Dorset will be happy and safe and have opportunities to reach their goals.

1. Executive Summary

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require that the Fostering Services provides written reports on the management, outcomes, and financial state of the fostering service. This Annual Fostering Service Report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the Fostering Services in the Dorset Council area as required by statutory guidance. The Annual Fostering Service Report must be presented to Corporate Parenting Board.

2. Financial Implications

None identified

3. Well-being and Health Implications

None identified

4. Climate implications

None identified

5. Other Implications

At the beginning of 2020 a worldwide Pandemic started and on 23 March 2020 the UK was advised that all unnecessary social contact should cease. The pandemic continues and has impacted the way we have implemented our statutory duties.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: N/A

Residual Risk: N/A

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

N/A

8. Appendices

None

9. Background Papers

1. Background

The Fostering Services Regulations 2011 require that the Fostering Services provide written reports on the management, outcomes, and financial state of the fostering service. This report provides an overview of activity from the last financial year, April 2020 to March 2021, and the plans from the service for the forthcoming year (April 2021 to March 2022).

2. Executive Summary

This has been a busy and unprecedented year within the fostering service. The Covid-19 virus has presented logistical challenges for service delivery but has also brought out the very best in our foster carers. It is remarkable that many foster carers were able to accept new placements and continue to provide foster homes for children who need them.

Since the last annual report consideration has been given to the way in which Dorset Council delivers the fostering service. Alternative delivery models were considered, and due diligence work was completed. It was ultimately decided that the service would remain in-house. The fostering service has since undergone a restructure in line with the Blueprint for change programme.

2.1 Service Improvement Plan

The Fostering Service has developed a Service Improvement Plan which will ensure service delivery is monitored and continually improving.

Since November 2020 the service has been reviewed and areas for development have been identified. These have been included in the Service Improvement Plan.

2.2 Mainstream Foster Carers

Early in 2018 the Fostering Service began working with Whitehead Ross Education and Consulting (WREC) to recruit mainstream foster carers. The role of WREC has been to work with the Fostering Service and Corporate Communications service to produce and implement a fostering recruitment strategy, receive enquiries from the public about becoming a foster carer, undertaking initial home visits where appropriate and encourage suitable prospective foster carers to apply to foster. In November 2020 two Fostering Social Workers were seconded to WREC from the Post-Approval team in order to undertake foster carers assessments. However, this contract will expire at the end of May 2021 these functions will revert to being delivered in-house.

In this reporting period, the Fostering Assessment Team and WREC have recruited 20 new mainstream fostering households. In addition, 16 new Connected Persons Foster Carers were approved bringing the total of new foster carers for Dorset to 36.

As at 31 March 2021 there are a further 19 new mainstream fostering assessments in progression. Of these 3 are with foster carers with IFA' looking to transfer to Dorset. Additionally, 28 Connected Persons assessments are in progress. This work will carry over into 2021/22.

In this reporting period, 19 foster families were deregistered from fostering leaving an overall net gain of 1 mainstream household (17 including Connected Persons).

2.3 In-House Fostering Placements

On 31 March 2021 there were 218 children and young people living within 207 in house fostering placements.

Throughout the period 2020-21 27 households were temporarily approved as connected persons foster carers under Regulation 24 of the Care Planning Review and Placement Regulations 2010. Sixteen Connected Persons households became fully approved Foster Carers.

In addition to statutory visiting requirements which have been carried out in person wherever safe to do, the fostering service has provided weekly check in calls to carers through periods of lockdown and a county wide, virtual foster carers support group has been provided on a monthly basis. Senior Managers have also facilitated a fortnightly foster carers touchdown meeting. These virtual meetings have been well attended.

The Support offer to Foster Carers has been further enhanced by the establishment of the Dorset Foster Carers Association.

3. Fostering Service Restructure.

The fostering service has recently undergone a significant restructure alongside Dorset's Blueprint for change programme.

Earlier in the reporting period consideration was given to alternative delivery models for the fostering service. Work was undertaken with Mutual Ventures as part of the Department of Digital, Culture and Sports (DCMS) Mutual Support Programme to explore alternative delivery options for the Fostering Service that would drive service improvements and improve financial stability.

3.1 Drivers for Change

The drivers for change in the delivery of the fostering service in Dorset included:

- Improving outcomes for children through placing more children locally enabling them to maintain relationships with friends, family, and community
- Delivering value for money: significant investment has been made in the service, but this has not, yet, delivered anticipated reduction in spend on external placements
- Ability to compete in the market: current approaches to recruitment are not delivering an increased number and range of local foster carers with the skills and competencies required to meet our needs.
- Supporting foster carer resilience: the current offer does not sufficiently meet the needs of all carers, particularly those caring for the most vulnerable, and a model that is based on best practice is needed
- Ensuring there is a sufficient number of foster carers with the right skills in the right location to enable appropriate matching

3.2 Business Case

An Outline Business Case, which presented a range of options for the future delivery of the Fostering Service, including in-house transformation and a range of externalisation approaches was considered by the Children's Services Leadership Team in December 2019 and approval was given to develop a Full Business Case for the preferred option, the creation of Corporate Joint Venture between Dorset Council and an external partner.

The rationale for this was that whilst the creation of a Corporate Joint Venture requires initial investment and investment of time it would enable the service improvement to be delivered by experts, support an increased commercial focus and enable innovation to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and foster carers and contribute significantly to reductions in spend on placement costs. There was a concern that historic attempts to improve the service in-house had not been effective and that an external partnership would prove beneficial, and a desire to ensure that Dorset Council still retained some element of control over the delivery of this important service.

The Full Business Case was presented to the Children's Services Leadership Team in August 2020. It was apparent by this stage that the decision to restrict the scope of the case to considering a corporate joint venture had been unnecessarily restrictive. Market engagement had given mixed feedback from providers. It was decided that the establishment of a corporate joint venture would not be pursued because

- The process carried a level of risk and uncertainty around any potential partner
- Further investment was required
- There was insufficient confidence in the savings and benefits which had been identified

As a result, the fostering service was restructured under the scope of the Blueprint for Change.

The fostering service consists of three teams:

- Pre-Approval Team
- Post-Approval
- Post Approval Complex Needs

Each team has a Team Manager who currently reports to the Fostering Transformation Consultant.

3.3 Pre- Approval Team

The Pre-Approval Team has 6 full time equivalent (fte) workers. These workers undertake all Connected Persons Viability Assessments for temporary approvals under Regulating 24 of the Care Planning Review and Placement Regulations 2010 and Full Connected Persons Fostering Assessments and mainstream fostering assessments under the

Fostering Agency Regulation 2011. Currently each fostering assessment worker carries a caseload of 6 assessments at any one time.

These workers also provide supervision and support to those temporarily approved foster carers as required by the National Minimum Standards in Foster Carer 2011.

The Pre-Assessment team also works closely with WREC who have since October, been undertaking mainstream fostering assessments.

3.4 Complex Needs and Post Approval Teams

Prior to the September 2020 reorganisation both post approval teams had the same remit but were geographically based. Following the restructure one team has become the Complex Needs Post Approval Team. This is still a work in progress. It is planned that this team will be responsible for the support, supervision, and training of the most experienced foster carers who will be able to offer robust and tenacious foster homes for children with the more complex needs. The team is linked to The Harbour Project and is supporting our first Harbour Foster Family Carers. They will continue to provide this support to other Harbour Specialist foster carers as we add to our numbers of these carers. We plan to have 10 Harbour Foster Families by March 2022.

It is also planned that the Complex Needs Post Approval Team will support foster carers caring for teenagers and other children with additional needs.

Currently the two Post Approval Teams have a total of 15 staff between them. The workforce is made up of a mixture of full and part-time staff. In aggregate, there is the equivalent of 11.25 fte Fostering Social Workers within the team (417 Fte hours). The Complex Needs team has 4.3fte and the Post Approval team has 4.8fte.

However, 2 part time workers (42.5 hours) have been seconded to WREC, to undertake foster carer assessments. Fostering Social Workers currently hold caseloads of 20 fostering households per fte worker (pro-rata).

A third, full time (37 hours) worker acts in the role of Fostering Panel Advisor and is therefore non-caseholding. This leaves 337.5 hours or 9.12 fte FSW's time across the post approval teams.

Two of these workers are on temporary contracts until June 2021.

Post Approval Fostering Support	Post Complex Support	Approval Fostering	Fostering Team	Assessment
1x TM 4.8 Fte SW	1xTM		1xTM	

(Does not include worker seconded to WREC)	1 x AP Panel Advisor 4.3 Fte SW (This does not worker seconded to WREC)	6 x FTE Assessment Workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream Foster Carer Supervision and Support • Connected Persons Foster care Supervision and Support • Foster carer Training and Development • Support Groups • Foster care Annual Reviews • Placement service • Long term matching within house carers • Support Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream Foster Carer Support Supervision and • Harbour Fostering Support • Connected Persons Foster care Supervision and Support • Foster carer Training and Development • Support Groups • Foster care Annual Reviews • Placement service • Long term matching within house carers • Support Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reg 24 Viability Assessments with CSW's • Reg25 Extensions • Reg 27 Assessments using form C • Court reports where required • Respond to enquiries • Initial visits • Mainstream Form F Fostering Assessments

Whilst it is understood that substantial investment was made by the council in 2017 under the Modernising Fostering initiative the majority of this money went towards the funding of a new foster carer payment system which increased foster carer payments and ensured that Dorset Council fostering service is financially competitive in the marketplace. Since this time there is no evidence of any foster carers leaving Dorset Council to join an Independent Fostering Agency for financial reasons.

A discussion paper is being prepared for CSLT to discuss the staffing needs of the fostering service to ensure good levels of support to foster carers and therefore to assist placement stability.

The fostering service aims to provide a high-quality responsive child-centred service in relation to its core functions and to recruit new foster carers from the community. We

prepare applicants through training to be able to deal with the range of issues that foster carers face when looking after children.

The service assesses a range of foster carer applicants i.e. Mainstream Foster Carers, Connected Persons Carers and Parent and Child, Short Breaks etc. The service undertakes comprehensive assessments and checks to ensure that prospective carers are suitable and can carry out their role. The service supervises, supports and develops carer's skills and knowledge in order that they promote and achieve the highest standards of care, safeguarding and outcomes for children in care.

4. Types of Foster Care

The types of Foster Care offered includes:

- **Short Term/Time Limited:** Time limited placements across all skills Levels. However, level 4 carers would be expected to undertake assessments on children and young people in their care or undertake specified tasks.
- **Long Term:** Planned, permanent placements across Skills levels. Level 4 carers would be expected to provide permanent placements for children with significantly complex needs or challenging behaviors.
- **Respite:** Planned, child needs led support for placements and agreed support for carers across skills levels.
- **Support Care:** Part of a package of support (including day care and child minding) where carers provide planned time limited support to maintain children with their current foster placements and to prevent placement breakdown.
- **Children with Disabilities:** Short Term / Short Breaks provision and Long Term (Permanent) placements for children with disabilities.
- **Kinship Care & Connected Persons:** Planned and Court approved placements for children and young people within their wider network including family members or other with whom children have an existing and positive relationship.
- **Parent and Child:** Parent and child fostering is a specialist type of supportive fostering where a parent, often a mother and their baby, can learn parenting skills and foster carers are able to assess of the parent's capabilities.

5. Recruitment and Marketing

Early in 2018 the Fostering Service, began working with Whitehead Ross Education and Consulting (WREC) to recruit mainstream foster carers. The role of WREC has been to work with Fostering Service and Corporate Communications service to produce and implement a fostering recruitment strategy to attract and receive enquiries from the public about becoming a foster carer, undertake initial home visits where appropriate and encourage suitable prospective foster carers to apply to foster.

In October 2020 WREC began undertaking the assessments of prospective foster carers when two fostering social workers were seconded to the company from the fostering service. However, this contract will expire at the end of May 2021 and these functions will revert to being delivered in-house.

5.1 Initiatives and Events

Throughout the year there have been a number of initiatives and events designed to recruit new foster carers for Dorset children. Due to the current pandemic the vast majority of this has been conducted online. Alongside advertising on social media and the corporate website events have included -

- Drop-in and Chat events hosted on zoom. These events have been held at least weekly and provide an informal opportunity for new enquirers to chat with existing foster carers, social workers, panel members etc.
- Live Chats and Interviews, particularly during the first lockdown period. These discussed a range of pertinent subject matters to generate reach and general engagement. e.g. Live Well Dorset, SuperKids Webeing, Friends of Dorset Care Leavers, South West Recruitment, Foster Carers and live Q&A.
- Online Information Sessions/Introduction to Fostering. Featuring foster carers video interviews, blogs, written case studies. Discussions regarding Work commitments and Fostering, Fostering Siblings, Being a single Male Foster Carer and Care experienced young people's interviews – 'Paige's Top Tips'.

The service has also worked with the South West Regional Local Authorities to run joint recruitment campaigns online. #fosterforyourcouncil. These have included;

- September – Social Media posts directed at myth busting ideas about fostering, followed by 'Why foster for your council? This included daily quotes from foster carers
- December – Christmas Countdown – 24 videos and quotes based on what fostering means at Christmas.
- January – All walks of life – daily videos and quotes about what careers foster carers have had or still have alongside fostering.

The next joint campaign is due to run in April and will focus on attracting foster carers for teenagers.

5.2 Outcomes

In the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 WREC received 248 enquiries from the public seeking information about becoming a foster carer. The team completed 131 Initial Visits (IV's) and 20 new fostering households were approved.

As at 31 March 2021 there are a further 19 new mainstream fostering assessments in progression. Of these 3 are with foster carers with IFA's looking to transfer to Dorset. Additionally, 28 Connected Persons assessments are in progress.

Enquiries	248										
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>
20	42	19	13	13	16	27	20	19	23	20	19
Initial Visits	131										
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>
12	20	14	6	9	12	12	11	5	12	11	7
Invited to Apply	87										
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>
11	19	11	5	3	5	7	7	3	7	6	3
Approvals	20										
<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>
0	1	0	1	0	2	2	4	2	2	3	3

6. Fostering Panel

Under the Fostering Service (England) 2011 Regulations Fostering Services are required to

appoint a foster panel. Under Regulation 25 the fostering panel is required to:

- To make a recommendation as to whether the applicant is suitable to be a foster carer and the terms of the approval.
- To consider the first annual review for newly approved foster carers, as well as reviews following the managing allegations process, and where foster carers are seeking a change in the terms of their registration status.

- To recommend whether or not a person remains suitable to be a foster carer, and whether the terms of their approval (if any) remain appropriate.
- To give advice or make recommendations, on other matters or cases referred to it by the fostering service provider, including terminations of approval.
- The fostering panel must also advise, where appropriate, on the procedures under which reviews in accordance with Reg. 28 are carried out by the fostering service provider, and periodically monitor their effectiveness.

In addition, the National Minimum Standards 2011 requires that:

- Panels provide a quality assurance feedback to the fostering service provider on the quality of reports being presented and the timeliness of assessments and decisions.

Fostering panel is held on consecutive days once a fortnight i.e. Tuesday and Wednesday every other week. In the future it is planned that panels will be held weekly. This will even out the administrative load on business support and reduce waiting time if a case is needed to be presented urgently.

The panel has a 'central list' of 14 members who attend on a rota basis. A panel is quorate when at least 5 members are in attendance. This must include the Chairperson, a Social Worker and at least three other members.

As a result of the pandemic in 2020-21 the fostering panel has met virtually. This has had an impact on the number of cases being presented to panel because of the technical challenges involved of panel Members, social workers and foster carers logging in to meetings and the trials of internet stability. Dorset has also increased the number of panel members available to each panel to allow for IT issues and dropout rates.

In the reporting period the panel met 48 time and heard 176 cases.

<u>2020 -2021</u>	
Number of panels	48
New Approvals	20
Connected Persons	16
Regulation 25 Extension (Connected Persons)	12
Resignations/Deregistration	3
Matches	44 Children
Reviews	68

Total number of actual cases presented	176
--	-----

It would be true to say that following the reorganisation of the fostering service in September 2020 there have been some difficulties with panel administration. Unfortunately, a combination of changes of personnel and staff sickness meant that the planned handover period to new staff was curtailed. This resulted in some difficulties until the new staff were able to become familiar with the processes systems required by panel. Since this time panel processes have been reviewed and are now managed by a single team of administrators. Social work staff have also been made aware of the deadlines necessary in order to ensure all necessary documentation is available for panel.

7. Dorset Approved Fostering Households and Beds (31st March 2021)

As at the 31st of March 2021 there were 453 children who were being looked after by Dorset Council. Of these 326 or 72% of all children in care were being looked after by foster carers either through an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or with Dorset's own in-house fostering service. Of all children in care 48% were placed with Dorset in-house foster carers.

Of the 326 children in foster care, 218 (or 67%) were placed within Dorset Council Foster Carers and 108 (33%) were placed with IFA carers.

The table below shows the number of approved households by type, the optimum number of registered placements and the number of placements used by type

Type of Fostering Household	Total Number of Fostering Households	Total Number of Beds	Total Number of Children Placed
Mainstream Including Parent and Child	148	286	144
Kinship Foster Carers	57	80	72
Foster for Adoption	3	3	2
Total number of Households	207	369	218

The combined number of all types of approved fostering households including Short Breaks, Kinship Care and Supported Lodgings, is 207. The optimum number of

placements provided through the Fostering Service is 369, and the number of fostering beds used was 218.

The current utilisation rate of foster children to fostering households is 1.05. This is low. However, this number is inflated by the number of fostering households with fostering beds on hold due to fostering families shielding or other covid-19 related issues.

Fostering households are approved for one, two or three children. Often the approval can be for one or two if siblings. This is usually due to bedroom space available and in Dorset we allow siblings (if appropriate) to share bedrooms. For the purposes of reporting the number of beds approved, the maximum number is reported. On the 31st March 2021 there were 151 fostering beds not in use.

It is unlikely that a fostering agency will be able to use all the fostering beds the agency has registered. There are two reasons for fostering beds not being used. These are, that the beds are available but waiting for a child to be appropriately matched or, the foster carers have beds on hold.

Foster carers can be on hold for a number of reasons, for example, the foster carers may request that they are put on hold due to health issues or due to personal or family circumstances. Foster carers can also be placed on hold by the service due to complaints or safeguarding concerns. It is also common for fostering households not to be used to the maximum number of beds they have available because of the needs of children already placed with them.

It is important to differentiate between fostering households that have vacancies and have no foster children placed (primary vacancies) and those that have vacant beds but do have other foster children in place (secondary vacancies). Likewise, fostering households that are on hold without any foster children placed have primary beds on hold and those that have children in placements but have additional unused beds have secondary beds on hold.

On the 31st March 2021 21 fostering households have 23 vacancies between them. Of these, 10 households have 12 primary vacancies between them and of these 7 beds were only available for respite care. Three were available for children under the age of 5 and 2 were available for teenagers and were in the process of being matched. Of the secondary vacancies 6 were for children under 10, 3 were for respite alongside the existing foster child. 2 were available for older children but require careful matching alongside.

Examples of why fostering households were on hold included; Covid-related issues (18), on hold to resume short breaks for specific children after lockdown (2) other health related issues (7), matching consideration regarding placing children alongside another child (8), taking a break following adoption of foster child (2), break after complex placement (2) personal issues (8) placed on hold by the fostering service (4).

Carers on hold due to Covid-19 have expressed a willingness to return to fostering once the second vaccine has been given.

8. Fostering Reviews

The foster carer's annual review of approval, addresses all relevant aspects of the National Minimum Fostering Standards and Regulations 2011. The reviews are initiated by the Fostering Social Worker with a written summary of achievements and significant events within the foster carer's home over the preceding year. A Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer convenes and chairs an independent annual review meeting. A report is then either presented to Panel and endorsed by the Fostering Panel Agency Decision Maker or submitted to the Senior Manager for Fostering who is the Agency Decision Maker for non-Panel reviews. All the completed reviews are scrutinised by the relevant Team Managers who monitor compliance with the regulations before final agreement.

The Fostering review process is currently being revised in order to streamline the procedure and ensure continued compliance with the Regulations. Is this fair to add continued compliance?

The current process of fostering reviews includes Personal Development Plans, feedback from children and young people, their social workers and other professionals working with the fostering household as well as obtaining the views from the carers own children.

9. Foster Carers Support

As mentioned elsewhere in this report 2020-2021 has been full of unprecedented challenges for foster carers. Foster carers have valued more than ever the contact and support they have received for Dorset Council. Foster carers have particularly appreciated that Dorset Council agreed that Foster carers should be included in the first wave of Covid vaccines as front-line workers. They also appreciated that an extra payment was made during the main lockdown periods of April 2020 and January 2021.

9.1 Support Groups

In more usual times the fostering service provide a number of local support groups for foster carers throughout the county. However, as a consequence of the Covid pandemic these support groups have been paused and a county wide support group has been established online. These meetings are held on the first Monday of each month and have been well attended.

In addition, during the pandemic senior managers have held touchdown meetings with foster carers every fortnight, alternating evening and daytime meetings. Again, these meetings have been well attended by foster carers who tell us they value them.

The fostering support groups enable foster carers to meet with their peers and form supportive relationships to help them understand their fostering role and share their experiences and provide opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. Various speakers have been invited in the past to the foster carer support groups to talk about specific topics and offer any information about local activities within the community.

Minutes from the support groups are sent to all foster carers regardless of their attendance so they are kept informed.

It is our intention to re-instate foster carers support groups as face-to-face meeting in line with the governments roadmap as we come out of the current covid restrictions.

9.2 Therapeutic Support

The Fostering Team work in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group to promote the emotional wellbeing of fostered children and young people. A total of 18.5 hours of Clinical Psychology support is provided through 2 part time clinical psychologists. The clinical psychologists work predominately with the foster carers as the agent of change to provide trauma informed strategies to meet the emotional wellbeing needs of children and to help manage behaviour. The psychologists hold regular surgeries which can be attended by foster carers and/or fostering social workers alike. They will also undertake short interventions directly with children where this is an identified need.

9.3 Child's Voice

The Fostering Service actively seeks to support children and young people to share their views about how they are being cared for and supported by the fostering service and wider directorate.

Children and young people are invited to comment about the support they are receiving from their foster carers, including support for family time with their birth family and friends and support with education ahead of their statutory child in care reviews. In addition, children are consulted with as part of the foster carers annual review.

The fostering social worker also aims to see children and young people in person when they are undertaking unannounced visits to fostering households. This will usually involve the Fostering Social Worker talking with the child or young person to ensure they are safe and happy within the foster home.

Children in foster care also have access to a Children's Advocates. This service is provided independently through Action for Children. The Advocacy service can help children or young people to explore and express their opinions and be heard.

The Participation People undertake an annual Children in Care survey in order to receive feedback from Children and Young People. As at the 30th March 2021 32 completed surveys have been returned from children aged 5 to 10 and 52 have been received from the over 11s. The final results and analysis of the survey will be reported to the Corporate Parenting Board in June 2021.

The fostering service meets regularly with the Participation People. The group meets fortnightly. The group runs three Children in Carer Councils;

- Junior in Care Council for children aged 5 to 10 years

- Children in Care Council for Children and Young People aged 11 to 15 years
- Care Leavers Council for young people aged 16+

Young People from the Children in Care Councils contribute to the fostering recruitment process by participating in the 'Journey to Fostering' training provided to all prospective foster carers.

The Children in Care Councils and the Fostering Service are also exploring how we can work together to enhance training provided for existing foster carers.

Young people and Care Leavers have also worked closely with the Harbour Project and the Fostering Service to identify qualities and develop a profile for prospective Community Foster Family Carers to be used in the targeted recruitment of Harbour Foster Carers.

9.4 Delegated authority

Children in care have often stated that they are treated differently to their peers who are not in care and foster carers have also been concerned that they have not been able to make the same decisions for their foster children as they can for their birth children. This can lead to tensions within the household.

In 2020/21 Dorset Council Children's Services have worked to ensure that foster carers have delegated authority to make certain decisions for the children they care for. A delegated authority agreement is completed at the point of the initial placement planning meeting which provides clarity and enables foster carers to make common sense, everyday decisions about the children and young people they care for, for example allowing them to go to friends' houses for sleepovers, signing consent forms for school trips and even arranging haircuts.

9.5. Dorset Foster Carer's Association (DFCA)

The Dorset Foster Carer's Association was formed in March 2021 by some of the foster carers from Dorset. The association is constituted with a Chairperson, a Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Jan Hill has been appointed by the Association to be Chairperson, Martin Hill is Vice Chair, Kayleigh Barguss is Treasurer and Mandy Jarvis is Secretary. A Service Level Agreement has been drafted for use between Dorset County Council and The Foster Carers Association.

The aim of the DFCA is to raise the profile of all foster carers and to ensure that they are viewed as professionals by social workers and colleagues working with children that are looked after by Dorset Council.

The DFCA will:

- Provide strong channels of communication between the Fostering Service and the Association
- Work in partnership with Corporate Parenting and Fostering Services

- Seek to improve all aspects of fostering
- Promote good practice
- Represent foster carers as a group
- Organise support and social events for foster carers

The formation of the DFCA will raise the profile of DC foster carers, advance foster carers views and recommendations regarding the Fostering Service and support carers to provide to provide high quality care for the children they look after.

Currently the DFCA are in the process of setting up a website for all Foster Carers to access information regarding various issues and topics and for them to leave their views in relation to any fostering matters. This will ensure that there are robust channels of communication and feedback from foster carers to senior managers.

9.6 Peer Mentoring

As well as offering the fostering support groups and touchdown meetings the fostering service also operates an informal peer mentoring/buddy scheme where identified foster carers offer support and guidance to all newly approved or less experienced foster carers.

The mentors/buddies are experienced, with at least five years of fostering experience and are approved at skills level 3 and above.

The mentors/buddies offer their experience in all different types of fostering:

- from moving babies on to adoption
- to adolescent/teenage management and support
- long term foster care
- parent and child placements
- caring for children with disabilities

The identification of mentors/buddies is established by the fostering social workers who know the carers best and where their skills sit and is also influenced by the demographic/location within Dorset.

Mentoring remains a valuable resource aspect of fostering and mentees continue to offer positive feedback in relation to support received by them from the mentor.

9.7 Long Service Awards

In October 2020, foster carers, children and young people attended the annual Star Awards event with foster carers receiving awards in recognition of the outstanding care they have provided and in recognition of length of time they have fostered for Dorset

Council. Eighteen foster carers received awards for fostering for Dorset Council for 15, 20, 25 and in one case 45 years. Fifteen 'children who foster' were also recognised with awards at the event. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic the awards ceremony was held virtually but was still successfully inspiring. We are looking forward to holding the next event in person, Covid allowing.

10. Complaints and Allegations

The Fostering Service always takes any complaints and allegations against foster carers very seriously and all complaints and allegations are thoroughly investigated. Wherever possible we will attempt to resolve complaints informally, but these can be escalated should the complainant remain dissatisfied.

All Allegations against foster carers are referred to the LADO and are thoroughly investigated

10.1 Complaints

There were 7 complaints about the fostering service.

Two of these were from children, one upset about a foster carer regarding contact. This complaint was resolved informally.

The other complaint from a child concerned her previous foster carer. This complaint is current and ongoing at the time of writing.

Two complaints were made by birth parents concerning care of their children. One of these complaints was resolved informally. The other is ongoing.

One complaint was received from Grandparents who have applied to become connected foster carers. The Grandparents have referred to the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) to appeal against the Agency Decision Makers decision not to approve their application.

Two further complaints were received from foster carers. Both complaints were resolved informally by meeting with the foster carers who did not wish to pursue the complaint any further and were satisfied with the outcomes.

10.2 Allegations

During this reporting period there were 25 referrals to the Designated Officer (aka LADO) concerning foster carers during this reporting period. Ten of these were did not meet the allegation threshold and were therefore closed.

After deliberation with the LADO 10 were considered to be unfounded.

Four were substantiated and appropriate actions taken. After formal reviews 3 carers were reapproved at fostering panel subject to additional training etc. The fourth carers approval was terminated and a referral was made to the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS)

One new allegation is current and ongoing.

11. Foster Carer Training.

In 2020 – 2021 227 foster carers enrolled on 38 e-learning courses. In addition, there were 25 courses offered in a virtual face to face format and these were attended by 224 foster carers.

Most foster carers tell us that they enjoy and value the training they have received however, some very experienced foster carers tell us they would like some more advance courses. The new foster carers training handbook is currently in development and will cater for this request.

12. Budget

The 2020/21 budget for Inhouse Fostering Fees & Allowances totalled £5.2M funding an average of 231 placements during the year.

Placements were consistently below this level and an estimated underspend of £1.1M is forecast.

It is anticipated that usage of in-house provision will increase in the coming year as the COvid-19 restrictions are lifted, foster carers receive second vaccinations and in-house placement availability is improved through the recruitment of foster carers more able to meet the sufficiency needs of Dorset children.

13. Summary

The fostering service has had a busy year helping to place and support children with foster carers in the midst of a pandemic. Staff and foster carers have risen to the challenge, adapted and found new ways of working to enable us to continue our essential tasks to provide safe and loving homes for our children. Although visits to foster carers homes have continued wherever safe and appropriate some visits and the support groups have been undertaken virtually. The Fostering Panel too moved online and managed to hear 176 cases during the reporting period. We have learned from these experiences and will take the lessons forward. We may never fully return to pre-Covid working models. Some meetings may remain on-line whilst others may be run in a combination of on-line and in person. Social workers have reported that for many young people meeting online appeals to them.

The fostering service is responsible for recruiting, training, supervising and supporting Foster Carers. It is also responsible for undertaking connected person's assessments. The service also works closely with commissioning colleagues and provides a Duty Service every day to identify any urgent and emergency placements required across Children's Social Care.

In addition, the service runs a successful foster carer mentoring scheme and a monthly support group, currently online, but with a keen intention to return to in-person support groups as conditions allow.

During the course of the last year the fostering service has been through a period of uncertainty as consideration was being given to an alternative delivery model and then change as part of the Blueprint programme. Managers and staff who relocated into new roles have now settled.

The fostering service has created a Service Development Plan in order to strategically manage and monitor the continual improvement and development of the service. This will form the basis of the Fostering Service Development strategy for the coming year and will be monitored through the fostering steering group.

It is recognised that there is a continued urgent need to recruit more foster carers willing and able to offer foster homes to Dorset children. It is important to target our recruitment efforts towards recruiting foster carers for teenagers, groups of brothers and sisters, children with additional needs and children from black and minority ethnic groups. The service is in the process of enhancing the fostering recruitment strategy in order to ensure we are able to meet the sufficiency requirements going forward. At the 31st March 2021 19 potential mainstream foster families were being assessed. This would provide a potential of 23 new homes for children.

The Fostering Service has also worked hard to improve the quality of support offered to Foster Carers. As part of this the service has worked with foster carers to establish the Dorset Foster Carers Association. Although the committee is now established the Association is still in an embryonic stage. The Service and the Association will work in the coming months to fully develop communication strategies and partnership working in order to promote foster care and foster carers in Dorset.

14. Developments For 2021/22

The fostering service has developed an exciting and ambitious action plan and over the coming year will prioritise work in the following areas:

14.1 Strengthening Business Intelligence and Performance Monitoring Arrangements.

A range of key performance indicators and business information requirements have been identified in order to more effectively monitor the fostering service. Currently management information and business tracking information are held in a combination of excel spreadsheets and on mosaic. The intention is to hold and report all information through mosaic. This will be used to produce a dashboard which will be able to provide quality and

practice information at a granular level. A draft dashboard has already been produced and is being refined.

14.2 Ensure Fostering Service Has Sufficient Staffing to Meet Current and Predicted Service Demand (In Line with Planned Service Development)

To undertake a modeling exercise to understand the staffing needs of the fostering service based on planned targets and caseloads of 15 households per fostering social worker and 5 assessments per fostering assessment worker. This will include posts already identified in the Blueprint for Change programme but not yet appointed to and the transfer to Dorset Council of 1 post under TUPE arrangement following the end of the WREC contract.

A first draft paper is currently being produced.

14.3 Ensure Effective Policies, Procedures and Processes Are in Place and Align with Statutory and National Minimum Standards and Best Practice.

The fostering service will undertake a root and branch review of all fostering service policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose and Ofsted ready to support the service and reflect the wider locality children's services offer. This will include a full benchmarking exercise against the National Minimum Standards and the implementation of any subsequent action plan. It is good practice for fostering agencies to benchmark themselves in this way at least annually to keep abreast of national and local changes.

This will also include the revision of key documents required by Ofsted under the National Minimum Standards in Fostering 2011. These include:

- Statement of Purpose
- Foster Carers Handbook
- Children's Guide
- Foster Cares Training Handbook
- Foster Carer Financial Allowance Guidance
- Foster Carers Register

The fostering service will also review and revise the training offer made available to both foster carers and staff to ensure all carers and staff have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the children they care for.

14.4 Ensure the Quality of Practice in Dorset's Fostering Service Meet Fostering Regulations and Standards

The Fostering Service will develop and implement practice standards for workers with the service. It will also ensure that regular reflective supervision is taking place across the service and that this is recorded by managers.

The fostering service has strengthened their suite of foster carer file audit proformas which correlate to the Fostering Agency Regulations and link to Dorset Policies and Procedures. These templates are being used by the fostering reviewing officers.

14.5 Strengthen Fostering Duty Service Arrangements

The fostering service alongside the commissioning team work hard to identify foster placements for children who need them. The fostering service will review the process of placement finding and consider transferring the placement finding functions for inhouse placements to be within the fostering service. This may increase the identification and use of inhouse foster placement first and thereby reduce the number of IFA placements.

The fostering team will also consider setting up an out of hours fostering duty system to support foster carers and children in need of advice or support during evenings and weekends. This service is currently provided through the general Dorset Council out of hours duty service. A dedicated out of hours duty system would strengthen the support provided to foster carers by having fostering social workers they are likely to know and who have specialist fostering knowledge. This could lead to increased placement stability.

14.6 Strengthen Fostering Panel Arrangements

The fostering service will continue to work to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the fostering panel.

New processes have already been put in place to ensure that all documentation for panel is panel ready. The fostering service will continue to review these procedures in order to streamline the process and maximise panel time. For example, it is planned that the process for matching children to their long-term foster families will no longer be presented to panel. This is not a statutory requirement and will speed up decision making as the case does not need to be booked in to panel. This will also free up panel time.

A benchmarking exercise has also been undertaken regarding the cost of Dorset's Fostering Panel. It has revealed higher than average costs and actions are being taken to reduce these costs.

14.7 Strengthen Fostering Recruitment

The Fostering Service is working with Dorset's Corporate Communications Service to develop a coherent Fostering Recruitment Strategy designed to meet the needs of the sufficiency plan. The plan will take in to account placement demand and demography using the Mosaic demographic analysis tools. This work is already underway.

The fostering service is keen to maximise recruitment and retention efforts and to ensure that Dorset fostering service is the provider of choice for foster carers. As such the service is keen to explore a range of Dorset Council fostering friendly initiatives including loans for house extensions, concessions on Council tax, free parking passes for foster carers etc.

14.8 Work with Foster Carers to Establish the Dorset Foster Carers Association

At a meeting on the 9th March 2021 Dorset Foster Carers appointed a Chairperson, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary to form an interim Committee in order to establish the Dorset Foster Carers Association.

The idea of the Foster Carers Association is to have an organisation run by foster carers for foster carers that will work in partnership with the Dorset Council Fostering Service and other senior managers to improve all aspects of the fostering service. By working together in this way we can ensure strong channels of communication, raise issues that affect foster carers, share ideas to improve the service, promote good practice, improve the outcomes for the children we care for and organise events for children and young people to have fun. The Association will be funded by Dorset Council.

The fostering service will continue to work with the committee and other foster carers to establish the Association. A draft service agreement has already been produced and will be finalised shortly.

14.9 Implement the Mockingbird Programme.

Mockingbird uses an extended family model, in the form of 'constellations' which consist of a 'hub' home and several 'satellite' homes nearby. The specially recruited and trained hub home carers offer respite care, peer support, regular joint planning and social activities.

Because of its structure, Mockingbird helps alleviate the sense of isolation foster carers can feel and offers immediate practical support - similar to that a non-fostering family might receive from friends and relatives.

Dorset Fostering Service intends to set up two Mockingbird fostering communities in Dorset by September 2021.

Author: John Heron

Fostering Transformation Consultant

April 2021

[Please do not delete the footnote.](#)

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

This page is intentionally left blank

Corporate Parenting Board Thursday 29 April 2021 The Harbour Progress Report

Choose an item.

Portfolio Holder: Cllr A Parry, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Local Councillor(s):

Executive Director: T Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author: Louise Drury

Title:

Tel: 01305 2283

Email: louise.drury@dorset.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Corporate Parenting Board note the progress in the implementation of The Harbour and the impact in improving outcomes for young people who are on the edge of care, in care and leaving care and reducing cost for NHS, Criminal Justice and Children's social Care.

Reason for Recommendation: To ensure that support from Corporate Board Members is maintained.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Young people who enter care during their teenage years traditionally spend considerable periods in residential care often without sufficient planning and support to re-engage in family relationships or form strong relationships with carers. They are more likely to experience placement breakdowns as a result of poor experiences in their formative years and lack of engagement with services. They may follow a path of multiple placements, with handoffs between services and changing relationships following each placement breakdown. Some young people develop multiple vulnerabilities through offending behaviour, substance misuse, disengagement from education and high-risk behaviours such as repeatedly going missing and over time can become distrusting of positive relationships.
- 1.2. Between 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020 there were a total of 152 new admissions to care which equates to 145 young people becoming a child in care in Dorset. 53 young people entered care during their teenage years and of these, 27 young people are placed in residential care. The Harbour is developing an integrated service for our more complex and troubled young people to ensure that their needs, no matter how diverse are addressed within a single team of trusted and skilled workers, be it to

prevent care, support placement stability or reunification if in care, and a smooth transition to independence when leaving care.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1. As part of the local authority's duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked after children, a Residential Sufficiency Business Case was presented to Cabinet on 3 March 2020 which gave approval for:
 - Building a new residential home on the site of 45 Dorchester Road
 - Refurbish the existing building at 45 Dorchester Road to provide a No Wrong Door Hub
 - Purchase and re-furbish 10 Kirtleton Avenue to provide a care leaver hub and accommodation, plus supported bedsit accommodation for young people who are disabled.
 - Delegate authority to Executive Director People – Children's for capital and revenue expenditure.
- 2.2. This was further updated within the Sufficiency Statement approved by Cabinet on 19th January 2021.
- 2.3. There are no further financial implications for this report.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

- 3.1. The Harbour will provide consistent relationships and continuity of key worker. Keyworkers bring with them a range of experience, hobbies and interests which will ensure that relationships do not need to be outsourced when offering a diverse range of activities to strengthen emotional resilience and wellbeing. The Harbour will also bring together a common approach to working with young people across different staff specialisms. Through the embedded specialist roles, young people to access help when needed and in a way that does not rely on an appointment.

4. Climate implications

- 4.1. New build – 5 bedroomed home
- 4.2. PV (photo-voltaic panels) panels are proposed for the modular build. The new build element is also a MMC (Modern Methods of Construction) building which provides the opportunity to be more sustainable as buildings are precision-engineered and manufactured in a factory-controlled environment. Buildings are constructed using sustainable materials and this type of construction also helps reduce waste. MMC is about better products and processes which aim to increase efficiency, quality, user satisfaction, environmental performance and sustainability.
- 4.3. Refurbishment of existing building – 3 bedroomed home
- 4.4. Unfortunately, as this is a refurbishment project on a period building of townscape merit there is little which can be done to improve its impact on the climate. However,

the building is to be re-piped and rewired with new replacement radiators which would bring the Mechanical & Electrical Services up to current standards. We are also proposing to insulate the existing roof space with 300mm thick mineral wool which would also help with reducing the carbon footprint.

5. Other Implications

- 5.1. The Harbour will operate from a hub Dorchester Road, Weymouth. It will also bring together a variety of accommodation options eg Clarence Road and Hayeswood Bungalow. Further options are being explored in the development of St Marys.
- 5.2. Operating capacity is being delivered through recruitment, common training and management, supervision, staff remodelling and engagement with young people in the development of The Harbour.
- 5.3. Through the development of a Dashboard and financial tracker we will be able to demonstrate better outcomes for young people and financial benefits to the Council and partners.

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1. Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:
- 6.2. Current Risk: Medium
- 6.3. Residual Risk: Medium

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for both staff and resources. This is a working document that is regularly updated.

8. Appendices

- 8.1. SCPS programme EqIK/Service user SWR comments draft
- 8.2. Children in care and care leavers eqa

9. Progress update

10. Core Offer

- 10.1. The Harbour will improve the following outcomes for young people:
 - Reduce vulnerabilities
 - Build and restore relationships
 - Increase engagement in education, training and work readiness
 - Strengthen planning for transitions
 - Strengthen self-esteem and resilience
 - Strengthen mental health and wellbeing

11. Accommodation

11.1. The hub in Weymouth will be able to offer the following:

- A 5 bedroomed medium-term residential children's home placements from 1-12 months whilst return to family/independence is achieved.
- A 3 bedroomed short-term residential home where it has been assessed that a young person/family need intensive support and intervention to re-build relationships with their family/foster carer to return home quickly and safely.
- It is planned that onsite construction of the 5 bedroomed home and refurbishment of 3 bedroomed home will be completed by mid-December 2021. Application to register with Ofsted will be submitted prior to completion to avoid delay in registration.
- Accommodation in Wimborne which is registered with Ofsted and home to a young person.
- Accommodation in Portland which is currently unoccupied. An application has been submitted to Ofsted for registration.
- 10 family placements with training and support from The Harbour Team
- 5 supported lodgings placements with training and support from The Harbour Team
- Moving towards independence accommodation

12. Restructure and Recruitment

12.1. The staffing structure of the adolescent service has been remodelled so that staff are able to wrap around and provide stability to young people irrespective of where they are being cared for. Young people will receive services from The Harbour rather than a specific residential home or care placement which will ensure that there is access to the range of services available without the need for referral.

12.2. A rolling programme of recruitment is underway. As of 29th March, the total number of vacancies include: 1 residential manager, 2 deputy managers, 22 youth practitioners and 5 senior youth practitioners, 1 psychologist and 1 speech and language therapist. We are seeing a strong response to adverts and interviews are planned throughout April 2021 and are being scheduled monthly.

12.3. From the beginning of March 2021, 2 PCSO's have joined the team. We are looking forward to welcoming a joint funded researcher and performance analyst.

12.4. A targeted recruitment campaign is underway for foster carers for adolescents which includes recruitment of Specialist Foster Carers and Supported Lodgings Carers. Monthly information sessions are also being held. We have 1 specialist foster carer recruited and interest has been expressed by another. The support of the Corporate Parenting Board members would be very welcome in promoting the recruitment of foster carers.

13. Workforce Development

- 13.1. The Harbour Team use a range of evidence-based interventions which includes Restorative Practice, Family Group Conferencing and Motivational Interviewing. A strength's-based approach is at the centre of our practice in how we assess with young people and develop their care plans.
- 13.2. Through the senior youth practitioner, we plan to be able to offer training to partners in restorative approaches for example in our engagement with housing colleagues to support in the delivery of the Harbour Steady and Settled Pathway for young people aged 16-25years
- 13.3. We have developed a shared workforce development programme and induction. Monthly reflective supervision is delivered to The Harbour Team by 2 education psychologists.

14. Pathways and Processes

- 14.1. 28 day pathway
- 14.2. The principle objective of the 28 day approach is to effectively reintegrate young people home, safely and securely.
- 14.3. The 28 day approach sets a clear structure, expectations, and time frame for a comprehensive set of interventions to be delivered to safely maintain young people in their families and communities.
- 14.4. PRIDE – Prevention, Risk, Identification, Disruption, Evaluation
- 14.5. PRIDE brings together a multi-agency group to identify, consider and manage potential & current risks impacting on young people who are receiving a service from The Harbour
- 14.6. The Police intelligence analyst supports the flow of information between Dorset Police and The Harbour.
- 14.7. Where identified, information is also disseminated to other local meetings and processes i.e. MACE, IMPACT, CE Champions Meeting, Daily Missing Meeting and CAROLE.
- 14.8. Steady and Settled Pathway for young people age 16-25yrs
- 14.9. Through the delivery of this pathway, The Harbour will work collaboratively with Housing colleagues to engage with young people with high needs where there is an imminent risk of relationship break down in their home, or who are at risk of eviction and are:
 - 16/17 year olds who have previously accessed The Harbour as a child in need, child in care or subject to child protection planning
 - 16/17 year olds with no previous social care involvement where additional intensive support is required focussing on supporting young people to be steady and settled at home
 - 18 – 21/25 care leavers

- 18 – 21 year olds who are at risk of eviction or have been evicted, who have previously been on the edge of care and have accessed support from The Harbour

15. Activity and Case Study

- 15.1. Between December 2020 to March 2021, The Harbour have increased the number of young people being supported by Outreach each month from 26 to 40.
- 15.2. On average each month, 50% are young people on edge of care who are supported to remain at home.
- 15.3. Missing reports have decreased and in March 2021 there were no missing episodes for young people in Harbour placements
- 15.4. We have also seen an increase in the number of young people accessing an increasing range of activities.
- 15.5. Anonymised Case Study
- 15.6. Archie was 13 when he entered foster care. Archie is now 15 years old and has experienced a number of placements. His school attendance was very poor in the last academic year and he was at risk of exclusion. Archie has low self-esteem and anxiety and is known to CAMHS, although does not attend appointments. Archie is linked to a number of crime occurrences either as a victim, witness, named suspect or subject to child protection. A significant proportion of occurrences are recorded as violent crime, relating to the adults in the household. Archie has been reported to the police on 9 occurrences due to missing. Archie moved to a Harbour foster placement this year.
- 15.7. **Risk** - Since January 2021 there have been no reports of missing or crime occurrences. Embedded police roles are providing evidence informed approach to understanding risk.
- 15.8. **Placement Stability** - Stickability of key worker and Harbour Team to wrap around and support placement stability – Archie’s Team. The foster carer is part of the team where there is a shared approach to workforce development.
- 15.9. **Education** - With support from education psychologist, virtual school, key worker and foster carer are working collaboratively with the school to support Archie to make progress.
- 15.10. **Self-esteem and emotional wellbeing** – The key worker has engaged Archie and his foster carer in a range of activities to build their relationship and provide opportunities for personal achievement – Archie is noticeably growing in confidence.
- 15.11. Archie’s foster carer is also supported to build relationships with Archie’s family.

16. Conclusion

16.1. The finalised Harbour staff structure will provide the operating capacity to deliver the core offer of The Harbour. As we implement our pathways and processes, culture and values, we aim to safely reduce the number of children who enter care, improve outcomes for our most troubled young people and reduce cost on local authority, criminal justice system and health services.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

This page is intentionally left blank

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

Name:	Carol Hosking
Job Title:	Project Officer
Email address:	Carol.hosking@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	
Date assessment started:	
Date of completion:	
Version Number:	1.0

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	
New or proposed	✓
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	
External (residents, communities, partners)	✓
Both of the above	

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

Social Care Placement Sufficiency Programme

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

The SCPS Programme intends to adopt a No Wrong Door approach in providing an integrated service for young people aged 12 -25 with complex needs who are either in care, edging to or on the edge of care, or who have recently moved to supported or independent accommodation whilst being supported under No Wrong Door.

The proposal is to develop two sites that have been identified in the Weymouth area to provide a children's home and supported housing for children in care and care leavers. The programme also aims to provide activity and co-working spaces which would bring together early help, education, health and police colleagues to provide a range of services which could divert children from care, strengthen contextual safeguarding arrangements in the area, and provide integrated support for care leavers.

The programme aims to:

Improve:

- Accommodation stability
- Engagement and achievements in education, employment and training
- Relationships with others
- Planning of transitions from care to independent living
- Resilience and wellbeing
- Access to support in crisis

Reduce high risk behaviours, including:

- Criminal activity
- Self-harm
- Child exploitation
- Missing from home and care incidents
- Drug and alcohol substance misuse
- Reduce cost to society, including to a range of agencies including NHS and Police.

What is the background or context to the proposal?

There is a continuing need to have access to residential care for Dorset children, and this care should be available in Dorset. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked after children. The SCPS Programme will address this issue, starting with the area of greatest need and demand (this is the Weymouth and Portland area, from where almost 40% of the Council's looked after children originate). As well as improving outcomes for children & young people the programme will also help to address the current placement overspend & will benefit the climate through reduced travel requirements.

The programme falls within the Good Care Provision priority in the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2020-23.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

a) The number of children in care has risen nationally by 17% in the years 2010 to 2018. In Dorset the number of children in care has risen from 344 in 2013 to 466 in December 2019, peaking at over 500 in early 2017. Meanwhile the rate per 10,000 of children who are in care has risen to 64 from 60 nationally between 2013 and 2019. The rate of increase in Dorset has outstripped the national rise – rising from 44.4 per 10,000 in 2013 to 68.4 in December 2019. In addition, Dorset's rate per 10,000 has gone from being lower than south west authorities and statistical neighbours to exceeding both.

b) During the last five years, the use of residential placements nationally has increased by over 8%. Within this increase there has been a reduction of children placed within the local authority boundary and in local authority run children's homes and a substantial increase in children placed in nearby or distant placements run by 'for profit' organisations.

c) In the current financial year, a spend of £12,767,728 forecast for residential care, and secure accommodation, with an average annual cost of £255,355 per placement. This assumes that numbers of children, and individual placements costs remain stable.

d) At time of writing, 181 children are placed in external placements, residential or independent fostering placements. Of these, 28% (50) are placed with providers in Dorset. Of the external placements which are out of county, 47% (85) are placed in authorities which border Dorset.

e) The issue is more acute with respect to residential care. 50 children are placed in external placements, but only 7 of these are in the County of Dorset. A further 17 are placed in neighbouring authorities. This means that children who are deemed to require residential care are more likely to have this provided in distant placements as it cannot be sourced within Dorset.

f) This is a poor outcome for the local authority as it adds to placement costs and to care planning and monitoring costs. It may also lead to poorer outcomes for the young person as they are placed far from family and friends and experience a lack of continuity to their care, education and health provision. They may in turn have less resilience and will potentially be more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, including through county lines networks.

g) In addition to this, Dorset Council have an unusually large number of looked after children who will be transitioning to adulthood over the next 3 years. There are currently 156 looked after children between the ages of 15 and 17. The Council has a duty to identify and, if necessary, provide suitable accommodation for these young people until the age of 25.

h) The National Audit Office (NAO) report *Children in Care* was able to map the national mismatch between the number of children's homes in local authority areas, and the number of children in care – with patterns of over and under supply across the country. The NAO was also unable to establish a link between house prices and the cost of residential provision with evidence that market pressure was the driver of cost differentials.

i) The 2015 report Financial stability, cost charge and value for money in the children's residential care market from the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes analysed in more detail the nature of the market for children's residential care noting:

- The market is not stable, and many providers struggle to maintain a viable business
- The market cannot be understood in isolation as it interacts with the market for family placements and secure accommodation.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

Although work will need to take place to both reduce the number of young people entering the care system, and increase the proportion who live in family placements, there will be a continuing need to have access to residential care for Dorset children, and that it should be available in Dorset. The SCPS programme will begin to address this outcome, starting with the area of greatest need and therefore demand. This is the Chesil locality where almost 40% of the Council's looked after children originate from.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

- Workshops – Partners in Practice workshops facilitated by North Yorkshire local authority to support the application of the No Wrong Door model in Dorset. Multi-agency partnership including senior members from police, health, CAMHS, Youth Offending Service & schools
- Workstreams – Multi-agency partnership meetings including police, health, housing, CAMHS, & Youth Offending Service
- Young People engagement activities planned throughout the programme
- Public engagement – online & virtual Q&A session

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

- Feedback shared through regular operational team meetings, workstream meetings & programme board meetings
- SCPS Programme Teams site – accessible by Dorset Council staff & external partners
- Dorset For You – public information page to be monitored & updated throughout project
- YP Feedback - Feedback has been provided to Harbour Young People's Participation Group and via Children in Care Council.

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqIA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqIA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqIA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	✓
An EqIA is not required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqIA because:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

Please send a copy of this document to [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#)

Next Steps:

- The EqIA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Communications and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- If not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.

Part 4: Analysing the impact

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Positive impact</i>
What age bracket does this affect?	Young people aged 12 -25
Please provide details:	<p>The programme seeks to improve outcomes for young people with complex needs by helping to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • divert young people from care • strengthen contextual safeguarding arrangements in the area • provide integrated support for care leavers • provide placements nearer to home, education & communities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve accommodation stability • improve engagement and achievements in education, employment and training • improve relationships with others • improve planning of transitions from care to independent living • improve resilience and wellbeing • improve access to support in crisis • reduce criminal activity • reduce self- harm • reduce child exploitation • reduce missing from home and care incidents • reduce drug and alcohol substance misuse • reduce cost to society, including to a range of agencies including NHS and Police
--	---

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Positive impact</i>
Does this affect a specific disability group?	Young people with special educational needs & disabilities (SEND)
Please provide details:	<p>The programme seeks to review our residential provision and apply a model of practice and delivery which better meets the needs of the most vulnerable young people.</p> <p>It will help to better prepare our young people with SEND for a settled adulthood including developing the skills required for employment and independent living and focus on improving transitions between services.</p>

Gender Reassignment & Gender Identity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified. We will ensure that discrimination, harassment & victimisation would be dealt with and that specific services can be used to support young people e.g. Space?

Pregnancy and maternity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified

Race and Ethnicity:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified

Religion or belief:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Sexual orientation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified. We will ensure that discrimination, harassment & victimisation would be dealt with and that specific services can be used to support young people e.g. Space?
Sex (consider both men and women):	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Carers:	<i>Positive impact</i>
Please provide details:	The programme provides community outreach support to parents & carers to avoid placement breakdown
Rural isolation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Single parent families:	<i>Positive impact</i>
Please provide details:	The programme provides community outreach support to parents & carers to avoid placement breakdown
Social & economic deprivation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Armed Forces communities	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:	Stuart Riddle	Date:	
Equality Lead:		Date:	
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:		Date:	

Next Steps:

- Please send this draft EqIA to: [Diversity & inclusion Officer](#)
- The report author will be invited to an Equality & Diversity Action Group (these are held monthly - dates are available on the intranet)
- The Equality & Diversity Action Group will review the EqIA and you may be asked to make some alterations
- EqIAs are signed off and published
- The report author is responsible for ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Before completing this EqIA please ensure you have read the guidance on the intranet.

Initial Information

Name:	Stuart Riddle
Job Title:	Head of Commissioning
Email address:	stuart.riddle@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Members of the assessment team:	
Date assessment started:	10/03/21
Date of completion:	
Version Number:	1.1

Part 1: Background Information

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Existing	
Changing, updating or revision	✓
New or proposed	
Other	

Is this (please tick or expand the box to explain)

Internal (employees only)	✓
External (residents, communities, partners)	
Both of the above	

What is the name of your policy, strategy, project or service being assessed?

Children in care and care leaver services – employee consultation

What is the policy, strategy, project or service designed to do? (include the aims, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy)

1.1 In March 2020, Cabinet approved a series of recommendations which signalled a major change of strategic direction for Children’s Services. In response to the rise in numbers of children in care, and the attendant pressure on budgets, it was agreed to return to the direct provision of children’s homes by Dorset Council, including the building of new homes and the purchase of additional properties. Alongside this, there was an agreement to develop a systemic approach to working with young people on the edge of care, and working with young people in the care system, based on North Yorkshire County Council’s No Wrong Door Project.

1.2 The council has also taken steps to improve the sufficiency of care provision for children in Dorset by block contracting with residential care providers to provide accommodation in Dorset, and to shape the market for fostering and independent special schools.

1.3 The leadership team has also considered options for the alternative delivery of fostering services and has committed to the improvement and development of in-house fostering provision.

1.4 This has brought together an integrated approach to the provision of services for children in care and care leavers which is not just about the increase and aggregation of in-house provision, but which is based on a new approach and culture. At the core of this is the approach we have adopted from North Yorkshire County Council, and which we call the Harbour.

1.5 The Harbour will develop a whole system service for our more complex and troubled young people. It will ensure that their needs, no matter how diverse, are addressed within a single team of trusted and skilled workers. The integrated team will stay with the young person throughout their journey, be it to prevent care, in care or leaving care. It ensures that young people are not passed from service to service and they have a dedicated highly trained team around them.

1.6 The programme aims to:

Improve:

- Accommodation stability
- Engagement and achievements in education, employment and training
- Relationships with others
- Planning of transitions from care to independent living
- Resilience and wellbeing
- Access to support in crisis

Reduce high risk behaviours, including:

- Criminal activity
- Self-harm
- Child exploitation
- Missing from home and care incidents
- Drug and alcohol substance misuse
- Reduce cost to society, including to a range of agencies including NHS and Police.

What is the background or context to the proposal?

There is a continuing need to have access to residential care for Dorset children, and this care should be available in Dorset. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked after children. The Social Care Placement Sufficiency Programme will address this issue, starting with the area of greatest need and demand (this is the Weymouth and Portland area, from where almost 40% of the Council's looked after children originate). As well as improving outcomes for children & young people the programme will also help to

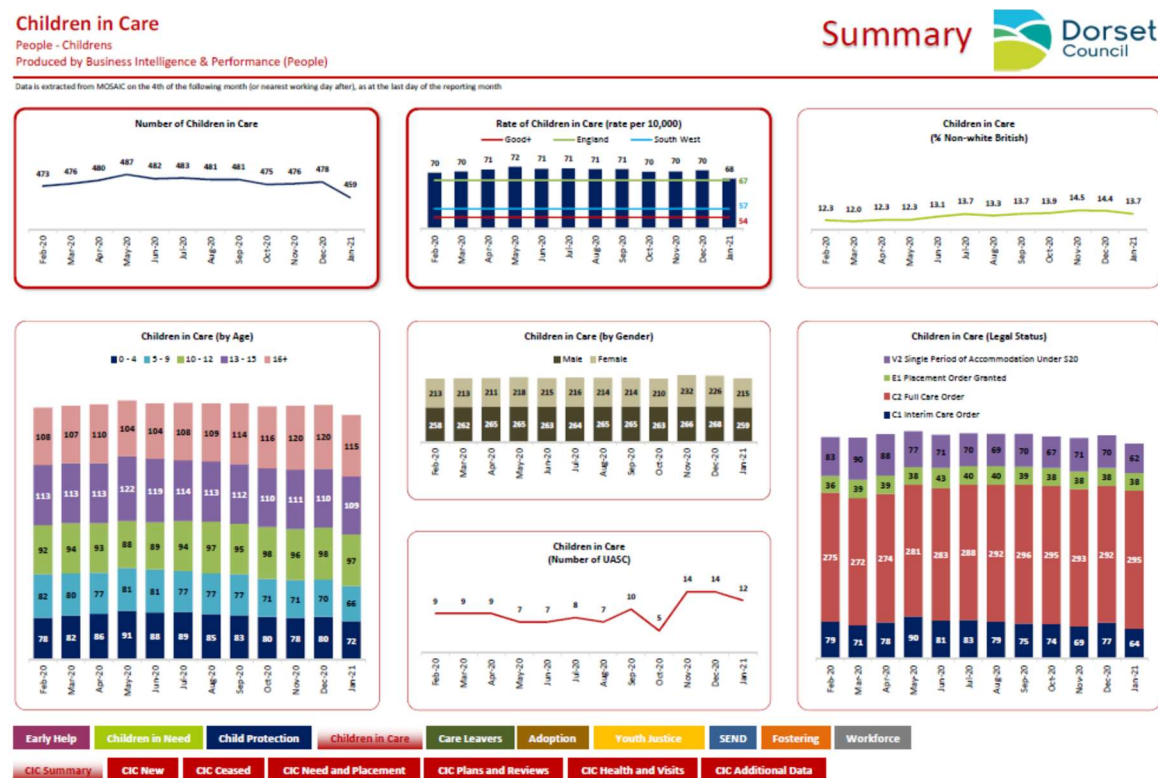
address the current placement overspend & will benefit the climate through reduced travel requirements.

The programme falls within the Good Care Provision priority in the Children, Young People and Families Plan 2020-23.

Part 2: Gathering information

What sources of data, information, evidence and research was used to inform you about the people your proposal will have an impact on?

a) The number of children in care has risen nationally by 17% in the years 2010 to 2018. In Dorset the number of children in care has risen from 344 in 2013 to 466 in December 2019, peaking at over 500 in early 2017. Meanwhile the rate per 10,000 of children who are in care has risen to 64 from 60 nationally between 2013 and 2019. The rate of increase in Dorset has outstripped the national rise – rising from 44.4 per 10,000 in 2013 to 68.4 in December 2019. In addition, Dorset’s rate per 10,000 has gone from being lower than south west authorities and statistical neighbours to exceeding both.



b) During the last five years, the use of residential placements nationally has increased by over 8%. Within this increase there has been a reduction of children placed within the local authority boundary and in local authority run children’s homes and a substantial increase in children placed in nearby or distant placements run by ‘for profit’ organisations.

c) In the current financial year, a spend of £12,767,728 forecast for residential care, and secure accommodation, with an average annual cost of £255,355 per placement. This assumes that numbers of children, and individual placements costs remain stable.

d) At time of writing, 181 children are placed in external placements, residential or independent fostering placements. Of these, 28% (50) are placed with providers in Dorset. Of the external placements which are out of county, 47% (85) are placed in authorities which border Dorset.

e) The issue is more acute with respect to residential care. 50 children are placed in external placements, but only 7 of these are in the County of Dorset. A further 17 are placed in neighbouring authorities. This means that children who are deemed to require residential care are more likely to have this provided in distant placements as it cannot be sourced within Dorset.

f) This is a poor outcome for the local authority as it adds to placement costs and to care planning and monitoring costs. It may also lead to poorer outcomes for the young person as they are placed far from family and friends and experience a lack of continuity to their care, education and health provision. They may in turn have less resilience and will potentially be more vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, including through county lines networks.

g) In addition to this, Dorset Council have an unusually large number of looked after children who will be transitioning to adulthood over the next 3 years. There are currently 156 looked after children between the ages of 15 and 17. The Council has a duty to identify and, if necessary, provide suitable accommodation for these young people until the age of 25.

h) The National Audit Office (NAO) report *Children in Care* was able to map the national mismatch between the number of children's homes in local authority areas, and the number of children in care – with patterns of over and under supply across the country. The NAO was also unable to establish a link between house prices and the cost of residential provision with evidence that market pressure was the driver of cost differentials.

i) The 2015 report *Financial stability, cost charge and value for money in the children's residential care market* from the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes analysed in more detail the nature of the market for children's residential care noting:

- The market is not stable, and many providers struggle to maintain a viable business
- The market cannot be understood in isolation as it interacts with the market for family placements and secure accommodation.

What did this data, information, evidence and research tell you?

Although work will need to take place to both reduce the number of young people entering the care system, and increase the proportion who live in family placements, there will be a continuing need to have access to residential care for

Dorset children, and that it should be available in Dorset. The SCPS programme will begin to address this outcome, starting with the area of greatest need and therefore demand. This is the Chesil locality where almost 40% of the Council's looked after children originate from.

There is currently no whole system strategic leadership for services for children in care and care leavers at Head of Service Level. The work which has been undertaken to date to implement the Harbour and to register new children's homes in Dorset has led to a recognition of the need to consolidate these services within a single organisational structure which will give focus and direction to the work.

The work has also identified the need to recognise and create a service manager post which would manage the residential provision we are bringing on line, and manage the Harbour approach, and a service manager post which could lead the improvement and development of our fostering service as part of this overall. There is also the need for a service manager post which can develop our approach to work with children who are disabled and reshape services so that a whole life approach can be taken to meeting their needs.

In addition, the proposal brings the employees in one of our new children's homes into this management structure and will fully integrate our existing adolescent team into the Harbour with the same terms and conditions as the existing residential workers.

Is further information needed to help inform this proposal?

No

Part 3: Engagement and Consultation

What engagement or consultation has taken place as part of this proposal?

- Workshops – Partners in Practice workshops facilitated by North Yorkshire local authority to support the application of the No Wrong Door model in Dorset. Multi-agency partnership including senior members from police, health, CAMHS, Youth Offending Service & schools
- Workstreams – Multi-agency partnership meetings including police, health, housing, CAMHS, & Youth Offending Service
- Young People engagement activities planned throughout the programme
- Public engagement – online & virtual Q&A session
- Employee consultation commences on 18 February 2021

How will the outcome of consultation be fed back to those who you consulted with?

- Feedback shared through regular operational team meetings, workstream meetings & programme board meetings

- SCPS Programme Teams site – accessible by Dorset Council staff & external partners
- Dorset For You – public information page to be monitored & updated throughout project
- Employee consultation feedback to staff and trade union representatives on 22 March 2021

Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance before completing this section.

Not every proposal will require an EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does **not** require an EqIA, it is important to show that you have given this adequate consideration. The data and research that you have used to inform you about the people who will be affected by the policy should enable you to make this decision and whether you need to continue with the EqIA.

Please tick the appropriate option:

An EqIA is required (please continue to Part 4 of this document)	✓
An EqIA is not required (please complete the box below)	

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require an EqIA because:

Name:

Job Title:

Date:

Please send a copy of this document to [Diversity & Inclusion Officer](#)

Next Steps:

- The EqIA will be reviewed by Business Intelligence & Communications and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- If not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.

Part 4: Analysing the impact

Who does the service, strategy, policy, project or change impact?

- If your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option. Please cut and paste the template accordingly.

For each protected characteristic please choose from the following options:

- Please note in some cases more than one impact may apply – in this case please state all relevant options and explain in the ‘Please provide details’ box.

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.

Age:	<i>Neutral Impact</i>												
What age bracket does this affect?	Employees of all ages												
Please provide details:	<p>Age Characteristic</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Row Labels</th> <th>Count of Age Group</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>25-39</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>40-49</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50-59</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60-64</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The employee groups tends to be older. Some older workers may not wish to work evenings and weekends as part of a rota pattern at this point in their career. Work will take place as part of our recruitment strategy to broaden the age range of the workforce and attract younger people.</p>	Row Labels	Count of Age Group	25-39	2	40-49	1	50-59	5	60-64	2	Grand Total	10
Row Labels	Count of Age Group												
25-39	2												
40-49	1												
50-59	5												
60-64	2												
Grand Total	10												

Disability: (including physical, mental, sensory and progressive conditions)	<i>Unclear</i>								
Does this affect a specific disability group?	Not known								
Please provide details:	<p>Disability Characteristic</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Row Labels</th> <th>Count of Disability</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Disabled</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not Disabled</td> <td>9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grand Total</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Row Labels	Count of Disability	Disabled	1	Not Disabled	9	Grand Total	10
Row Labels	Count of Disability								
Disabled	1								
Not Disabled	9								
Grand Total	10								

	Grand Total 10
	The cohort is predominantly female.
Marriage or civil partnership:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Carers:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	Individual meetings with employees will identify whether any have caring responsibilities. Employees who are not able to work a shift pattern due to their caring responsibilities will be able to explore other employment options within children's services.
Rural isolation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Single parent families:	<i>Unclear</i>
Please provide details:	Individual meetings with employees will identify whether any have caring responsibilities. Employees who are not able to work a shift pattern due to their caring responsibilities will be able to explore other employment options within children's services.
Social & economic deprivation:	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified
Armed Forces communities	<i>Neutral impact</i>
Please provide details:	No specific impacts identified

Part 5: Action Plan

Provide actions for **positive**, **negative** and **unclear** impacts.

If you have identified any **negative** or **unclear** impacts, describe what adjustments will be made to remove or reduce the impacts, or if this is not possible provide justification for continuing with the proposal.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by

Page 60

EqIA Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:		Date:	
Equality Lead:		Date:	
Equality & Diversity Action Group Chair:		Date:	

Next Steps:

- Please send this draft EqIA to: [Diversity & inclusion Officer](#)
- The report author will be invited to an Equality & Diversity Action Group (these are held monthly - dates are available on the intranet)
- The Equality & Diversity Action Group will review the EqIA and you may be asked to make some alterations
- EqIAs are signed off and published
- The report author is responsible for ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Dorset's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 – 2023

Page 61

Making Dorset the best place to grow-up



Agenda Item 10



Dorset
Council

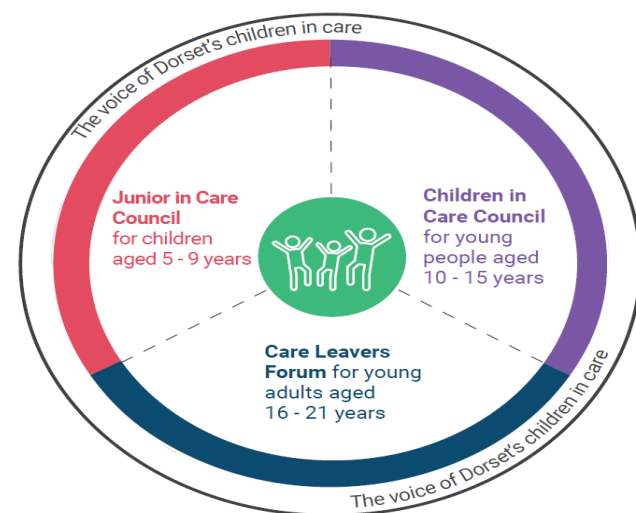
Corporate Parenting Ambitions & Priorities

- 1 Increase opportunities to hear the voice of our children and young people and to take their views, wishes and feelings into account.
- 2 Promote better physical and mental health and well-being through improved access to health information and services.
- 3 Have high aspirations for children in care and care leavers in their education, training and employment.
- 4 Ensure safe and stable accommodation within the family home or close relatives and friends. If not possible, children are moved to a permanent placement without delay.
- 5 For our children to have a good and enriching experience of care provision and to prepare for adulthood and an independent and successful life.
- 6 Effective governance and planning arrangements are in place to mean the Corporate Parent can be the best they can be.

1 Increase opportunities to hear the voice of our children and young people and to take their views, wishes and feelings into account.

Positives

1. Participation services now moving in house
2. Workshops are being co-produced and delivered with our young people in the next Corporate Parenting board
3. Child in Care Challenge Cards have been refined and this will be developed as part of the in-house services with our young people.
4. Updating Annual CIC survey findings coming to next Corporate Parenting Board. This will be co-produced with young people.
5. Young people are contributing to our recruitment process - examples can be seen in our Harbour recruitment of staff.



Area of Focus

1. The move from Participation people to in house services has begun and planning continues to ensure good transitions.
2. The number of children and young people involved in the Children in Care survey and panels requires improvement.

2 Promote better physical and mental health and well-being through improved access to health information and services.

Positives

1. Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) are well sighted each month on the Strengths and Difficulties Questioner (SDQ) data.
2. Adhoc report on Emotional Health and Wellbeing presented to Board Jan 2021.
3. Strengthening Services Plan in place (SDQ) and progress is starting to be seen.
4. Initial Health Assessment (IHA) completed in 20 days is seeing steady improvement

Areas of focus

1. SDQ Training workshops have been delivered and recorded, policy and practice guidance has been signed off and a workflow guide completed. Refining our data remains a focus.
2. Initial Health Assessment - whilst rates of completion are improving, this remains a focus
3. Dental checks for our Children in Care and Care Leavers - there has been a decline in accessing dental checks nationally during the pandemic.

3 Have high aspirations for children in care and care leavers in their education, training and employment.

Positives

1. There is now a clear focus on exclusions in the Virtual School including an expectation that there will be follow-up immediately after a fixed term exclusion, and all children who have had exclusions are a focus in the monthly pupil progress meeting.
 2. The drop in attendance during lockdown is to be expected. The figures on return following full opening are promising: 225 children have 100% attendance since full school re-opening. 124 have rising attendance. 138 have sustained 95%+ attendance since September.
- Page 6
6 Spring term PEP completion has not yet closed so will be reported on next month.

Areas of focus

1. Increased uncertainty from young people around future job prospects. (Dorset Young Researchers)
2. Focus on reducing the number of Care Leavers that are NEET and have created a 'team within the team' to focus on supporting Care Leavers around their employment, education and training.
3. Focus on Care Leavers who are NEET but are available for education, employment and training.

- 4 Ensure safe and stable accommodation within the family home or close relatives and friends. If not possible, children are moved to a permanent placement without delay.

Positives

1. Established improved management oversight processes
2. Joint Viability Assessments completed between the children's social worker and a fostering social worker.
3. Well established Fortnightly Permanency Panel established October 2020 ensuring timely permanence planning. (improvement in children achieving permanence)
4. Permanence training for social workers completed
5. Enhanced Tracking by Quality Assurance Reviewing Officers QARO
6. Multi agency Transitions Operational group set up to ensure smooth transitions of our children and young people.
7. Harbour Project and edge of care support developing

Areas of focus

1. Better use of Family Group Conferences
2. Fostering Strengthening Services underway
3. Improve quality of permanence plans and timeliness of achieving permanence:
 - Best Practice Permanence Planning Guide completed and shared with staff
 - Refined Long Term Fostering Process completed and shared with staff
 - 12 Week Reunification Process and Guidance completed and shared with staff
 - Special guardianship pathway refined and Policy being updated
 - Refined Adoption and Early Permanence pathways completed in draft

5 For our children to have a good and enriching experience of care provision and to prepare for adulthood and an independent and successful life.

Positives

1. Independent Advocacy services for our Children In Care age 8 years and older (opt out)
2. Children in Care Awards well established
3. Personal assistant co allocated from 16 Birthday
4. Multi agency operation and Strategic Transition working group underway
5. Low placement instability in comparison to national and statistical neighbours.

Areas of focus

1. Strengthening the in-house fostering offer to ensure that children are local and to build local links and access to local services.
2. Too many of our children are placed out of area and we remain focused on bring our children back to Dorset where appropriate. We are reviewing these children via our permanence panel
3. Transition working group in place and processes are being refined and embedded. We are developing consistency across Children Services however some of our children are still having their transitions planned at late stages of their journey in our care.
4. Life story development work with staff underway, complimenting external training already offered.

- 6** Effective governance and planning arrangements are in place to mean the Corporate Parent can be the best they can be.

Positives

1. Corporate Parenting Strategy Launch for 2020 - 2023 linked with other existing policies.
2. Corporate Parenting Strategy update at formal meetings and an Annual Report will be provided.
3. CPB Forward Planner in place until 2022.
4. Data pack comparing our performance against statistical neighbours and national trends for formal meeting

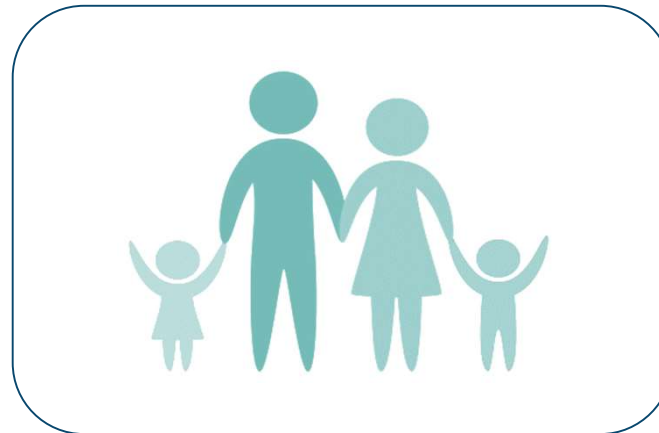
Page 6

Areas of focus

1. Corporate Parenting Training to form part of new starters induction to DC.
2. Mandatory training for all Corporate Parenting Board members being developed
3. Informal sessions to be co-developed and delivered with our young people

Corporate Parenting Performance Report

People - Childrens



February 2021 Data

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

Corporate Parenting Board - Performance



Introduction

This purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of performance. These indicators are grouped together under the relevant areas. Work will continue with managers to develop targets.

Overview of Performance

The report assesses the performance of available data during or as at the end of the last month, snapshots of this data are taken. Performance is compared with the previous month and whether there has been an improvement or decline in performance. Where appropriate, a target has been set to ensure high performance and drive improvement and there is RAG rating for these indicators. Targets have been set in line with national and statistical neighbour rates/averages and this information is included in the report where it is available and in discussion with Service Managers. Sparkline graphs have been included to illustrate trends.

RAG Rating and Performance Direction




Where a target has been set, indicators are RAG rated using the criteria below:

Green Performance is good and in line with (with 5% tolerance where relevant) or exceeding target: consistent with the National/Statistical Neighbour average.

Amber Performance is below target; inconsistent with National/Statistical Neighbour average; action is in place with likelihood of improvement.

Red Performance is poor; well below expected levels nationally; improvement is required.

Latest performance is compared with the previous month with arrows indicating direction of performance as follows:

-  improved performance compared with previous month
-  similar performance compared with previous month
-  decline in performance compared with previous month

Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



	Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset 19/20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											
Profile													
Measure													
Rate of children in care as at end of month													
	67	54	60		70.9	70.0	70.1	70.4	67.6	66.3	▲	Yellow	
Number of children who became CIC													
	NA	NA	8		11	6	13	10	3	11	▼	Yellow	
Number of children who ceased to be CIC													
	NA	NA	13		8	10	11	8	16	20	▲	Green	
Health													
Measure													
% Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days (CCG Data)													
	NA	NA			9%	20%	15%	55%			▲		
% CIC Annual Health Assessment completed on time													
	90	89	90		70%	76%	75%	74%	78%	77%	▼	Yellow	
% of children in care who have had a dental check within 12 months													
	86	82	85		58%	55%	46%	40%	30%	22%	▼	Red	
% of children in care at end of month with up to date immunisations													
	88.0	92.4			78.2%	82.1%	79.4%	79.5%	81.1%	83.8%	▲		
Emotional Wellbeing													
Measure													
% of children for CIC for at least 12 months age 4-16yrs with completed SDQ assessment													
	81	74			42%	38%	31%	27%	9%	54%	▲		
Average SDQ score for children in care who have been in care for more than 12 months (age 4 to 16)													
	14.1	14.8			18.9	19.15	20.2	20.3	19.4	15.7	▲		
Safety													
Measure													
% of children in care missing from placement in the last 12 months (by frequency)													
	11.0	10.4	10		13%	13%	14%	14%	14%	12%	▲	Yellow	
% Children in Care who have had more that 1 episode of Missing													
	7.4	6.8			8.9%	8.5%	8.3%	8.3%	8.1%	7.8%	▲		
Number of allegations made against foster carers													
	10	8.75		27	1	1	1	0	0	3	▼		

Page 71

Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



	Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset 19/20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											
Placement													
Measure													
% Children in Care living in foster placement													
	71.8	73.3			68%	67%	67%	67%	70%	70%			
% of CIC at end of month with 3+ placements in previous 12 months													
	11.0	11.6			10%	10%	9%	8%	9%	8%			
% of children in care for 2.5 years or more, aged under 16 who have been in their placement for 2 or more years													
	68.0	69.2	70		69%	69%	70%	71%	72%	73%			
% Children in Care living in a commissioned placement													
	51.0	41.0			54%	56%	56%	55%	53%	52%			
% children placed more than 20 miles from home at end of month													
	20.0	33.4	35		45%	46%	46%	47%	48%	49%			
% children in out of county placements at end of month													
	41.0	26.2	30%		42%	41%	41%	42%	42%	43%			
Education													
Measure													
% Children in Care with an Education Health and Care Plan													
	27.2	34.0			33%	39%	39%	32%	33%	33%			
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 1													
	NA	NA			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Maths													
	51% (18/19)	48.6% (SN 18/19)			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Writing													
	50% (18/19)	46.3% (SN 18/19)			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Reading													
	49% (18/19)	46.9% (SN 18/19)			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			
Average Attainment 8 score for Children in Care													
	19.2 (18/19)	15.4% (SN 18/19)			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			
Average progress 8 score for Children in Care													
	1.23 (18/19)	1.42% (SN 18/19)			NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			
% of children with a PEP within 20 days of coming into care													
	NA	NA			NA	NA	NA	46%	NA	NA			
% all Children in Care Unauthorised absence													
	1.4% (18/19)	1% (SN 18/19)			4.7%	4.8%	3.2%	3.1%	0.8%	2.3%			

Page 72

Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



	Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset 19/20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											
Education													
Measure													
Average Attendance % for Children in Care of school age													
	NA	NA			85%	86%	92%	94%	59%	64%	▲		
% Children in Care who have been in care for 12 months who have had at least one Fixed Term Exclusion													
	11.7% (18/19)	13.6% (SN 18/19)			7.0%	0.9%	2.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	■		
% all Children in Care on reduced timetable													
	NA	NA			NA	4.0%	4.0%	4.2%	4.2%	3.6%	▲		
Permanence													
Permanence													
% of CIC for 4 months or more with a completed permanence plan													
	NA	NA	90		89%	88%	88%	89%	91%	96%	▲	■	
% Children who have achieved Permanence													
	NA	NA			22%	21%	21%	23%	23%	25%	▲		
% Children Achieved Permanence SGO													
	12.2	11.4			15%	16%	18%	14%	14%	12%	▼		
% Children Achieved Permanence Adoption													
	11.0	12.2			16%	18%	18%	20%	15%	15%	■		
Sufficiency													
Measure													
Number of Foster carers at end of month													
	NA	NA	215	202	205	206	205	204	207	201	▼	■	
Number of new households recruited – Mainstream													
	NA	NA		24	1	1	3	3	3	2	▼		
Number of new households recruited – Connected Person													
	NA	NA		14	0	0	1	1	1	1	■		
Number of new households recruited – Temporary													
	NA	NA		0	3	0	2	4	0	1	▲		
Number of households de-registered – exclude connected carers													
	NA	NA		22	2	0	1	0	3	1	▲		
Number of households resigned													
	NA	NA		64	4	0	1	1	1	2	▼		
Number of allegations made against foster carers that were substantiated													
	NA	NA		14	0	0	0	0	0	0	■		

Page 73

Corporate Parenting Data Set (last 6 months)



	Benchmarking		Current Target	Baseline Dorset 19/20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Direction of Performance	Status	Trend
	Eng AV	Good + AV											

Adoption

Measure

Number of adoptions finalised in month

NA	NA		16	2	3	0	3	2	1	▼		
----	----	--	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--

Number of children living in adoptive placements pending adoption orders

NA	NA			20	18	19	17	15	16	▲		
----	----	--	--	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	--	--

Number of children with a match identified

NA	NA			2	0	0	1	6	5	▼		
----	----	--	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--

Number of children where family finding is ongoing

NA	NA			28	29	32	32	32	20	▲		
----	----	--	--	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	--	--

Numbers of Adoption revocations over last 12 months

NA	NA		2	7	6	5	5	5	7	▼		
----	----	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--

Average number of days between entering care and moving in with adoptive family for adopted children (adjusted for foster carer adoptions)

			412	357	387	385	373	379	400	▼		
--	--	--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	---	--	--

The average number of days from the date of the placement order to the date the child was matched to prospective adopters

			203	199	172	172	161	175	185	▼		
--	--	--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	---	--	--

Number of adoptive families recruited

NA	NA		60	5	5	3	2	1	4	▲		
----	----	--	----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	--

Number of adoptive Families in assessment

NA	NA			45	44	46	45	47	47	▬		
----	----	--	--	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	--	--

Care Leavers

Measure

% Care Leavers with an up to date pathway plan at end of month

NA	NA	95		61%	63%	59%	58%	62%	76%	▲	Red	
----	----	----	--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	---	-----	--

% Care Leavers who are living in suitable accommodation (19-21 yrs)

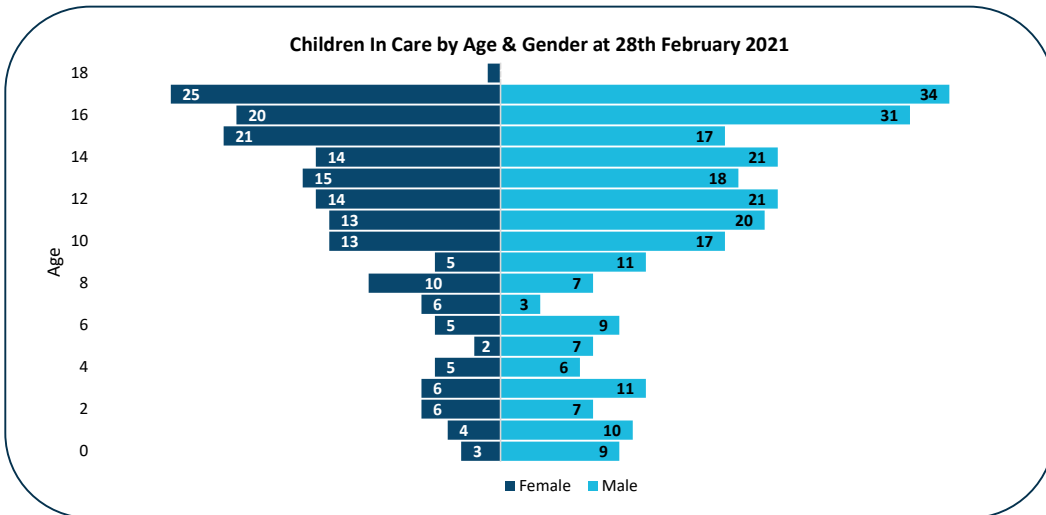
85.0	85.4	96		95%	97%	97%	96%	97%	97%	▬	Green	
------	------	----	--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	---	-------	--

% Care Leavers who are in Employment Education or Training (19-21yrs)

53.0	55.4	60		46%	47%	48%	48%	50%	49%	▼	Red	
------	------	----	--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	---	-----	--

% Care Leavers who are in touch with Dorset Local Authority (19-21yrs)

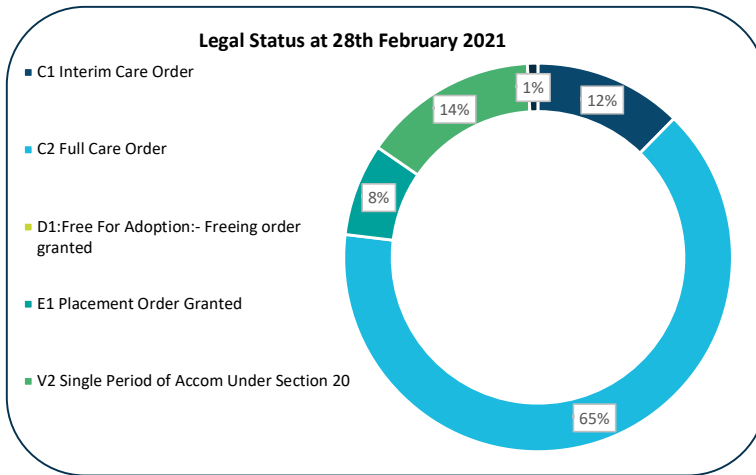
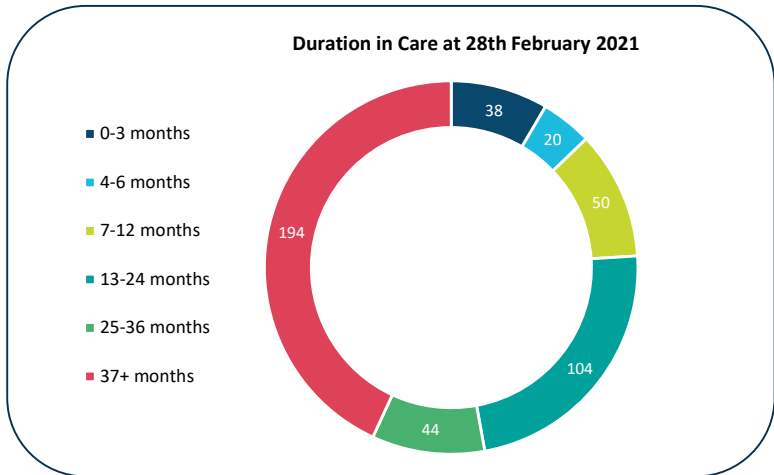
90.0	89.3	93	8%	95%	94%	95%	96%	96%	97%	▲	Green	
------	------	----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	---	-------	--



Number of Children In Care:
450 ↓

Number of Care Leavers:
260 ↑

Comments:
We have seen a significant reduction in our total number of children in care, although this remains higher than our statistical neighbours. We now have robust processes in place to ensure a clear line of sight and scrutiny of all children coming into care and their care plans. We also have robust processes in place to ensure scrutiny of progressing permanence.



Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

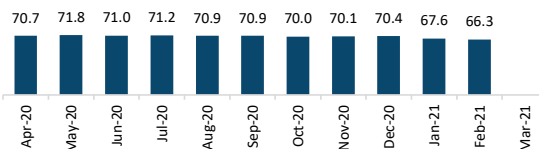
Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

PROFILE



Page 76

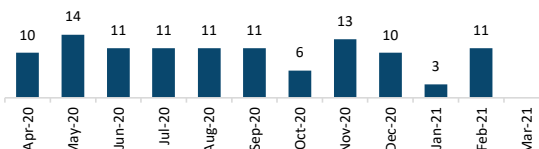
Rate of Children In Care per 10,000



England Average 19/20: **67**
 Dorset 19/20: **70**
 Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20: **54**

Comments:
 Our rate of Children in care has reduced significantly since the start of 2021. Our rate of children in care is now lower than national average. This is the first time in over a year that this has occurred. This is positive and an improving picture for Dorset Council, we remain with a higher rate of children in care then our good or outstanding statistical neighbours. Considerable efforts have been made and continue to be made to only have children come into our care when appropriate to do so and they achieve permanence without drift or delay. The effects of the pandemic on our children in care numbers is yet to be seen as we come out of the current national pandemic lockdown.

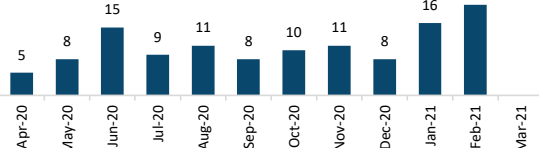
Number of Children who have come into Care



Dorset 18/19: **157**
 Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **234**
 Outstanding SN 18/19

Comments:
 We are seeing in 2021 less children coming into care than exiting our care. February's figures show that this month was busy for children services with a high number of children coming into care. February's figures also show a high number of our children exiting our care. It is positive that we continue to progress children through to permanence despite the additional pressure of the pandemic and time of year. Attention continues to be given to ensuring that plans for permanence include all permanence options which are being explored and progressed in a timely manner. This is achieving permanence for our children in a timely way. As we continue to develop and embed the Harbour and Adolescent Services this will support reducing the number of children coming into our care and timeliness of our children leaving our care.

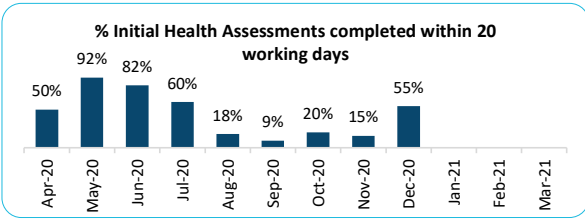
Number of Children who have ceased to be in Care



Dorset 18/19: **198**
 Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **213**
 Outstanding SN 18/19

Benchmarking Note:

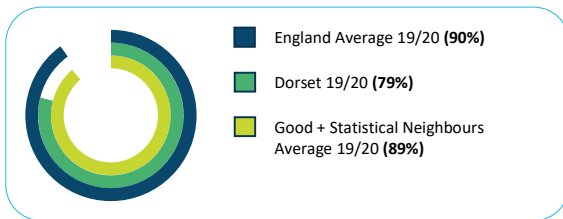
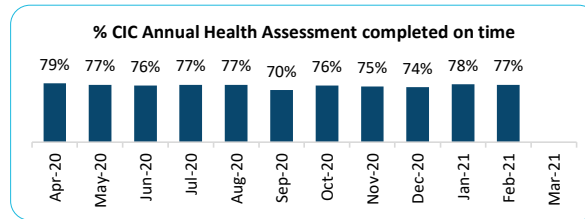
Good and Outstanding Statistical neighbours include Wiltshire, East Sussex and Suffolk. The latest available benchmarking data has been included.



Comments: % Initial Health Assessment (IHA) monthly data is reported 2 months after the month is due, this is to allow for the data to fall into the month due, i.e. a child accommodated on the 31 December would not be calculated until 26 February. Data is supplied directly from the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Benchmarking data is currently not available.

We are now starting to see an improvement in performance in completed IHAs. We have better management oversight of this process in real time, reducing and preventing delay in completing and sharing relevant documents with health which has led to delay in setting up an IHA within 20 days.

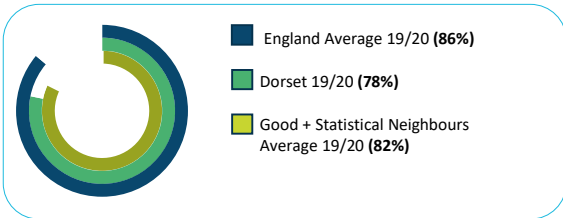
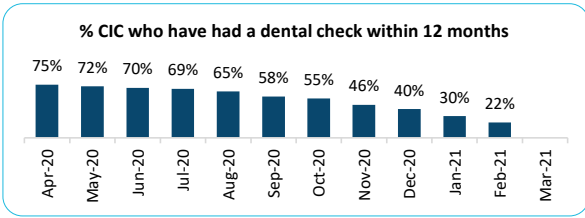
We continue to work closely with our health colleagues to address any issues in real-time with all professionals involved fully committed to improving performance. Performance should continue to improve in this regard as our systems continue to imbed within Children Services



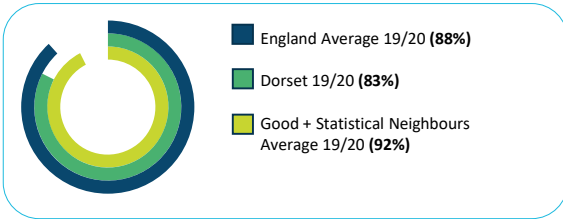
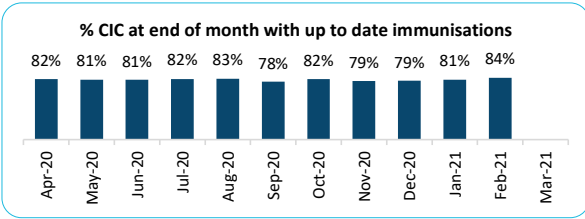
Comments: Figures shown on the graph are for children in care for 12 months or more, the percentage having their Annual Review Health Assessment (RHA) completed on time.

CCG data shows that the % of RHA's completed **within the month** they were due in the month, October 81.1%, November 72.5% and December 92.1%.

In the second wave of COVID-19, health staff have agreement not to be redeployed and ensure that RHA and IHA remain a priority task to be



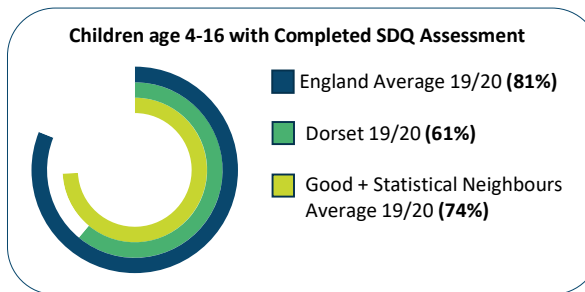
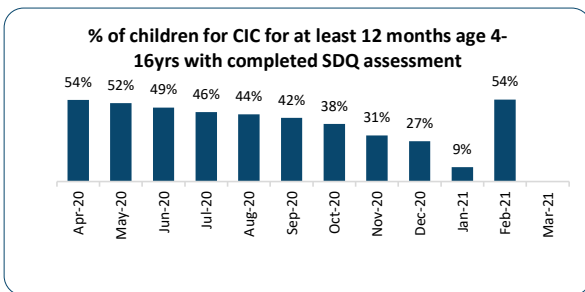
Comments: Figures shown on the graph are for children in care (CIC) for 12 months or more and whether they have had a dental check within the last 12 months. CCG data shows CIC up to date with dental screening for the month of those due an RHA **within the month**, target of 80%, October 83.8%, November 90% and December 86.8%. Health and Children Services report data differently and so the data will not align. All dental practices have been written to and asked to prioritise seeing children in care. The Child In Care Nurses are proactively targeting those dentists saying they can't accept our children in care to be registered and any not moving on that decision are escalated to the CCG.



Comments: Figures shown on the graph are for the percentage of children in care at end of month with up to date immunisations.

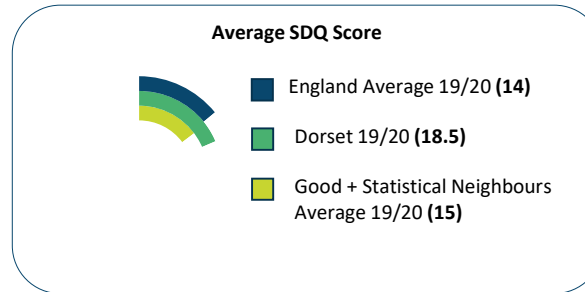
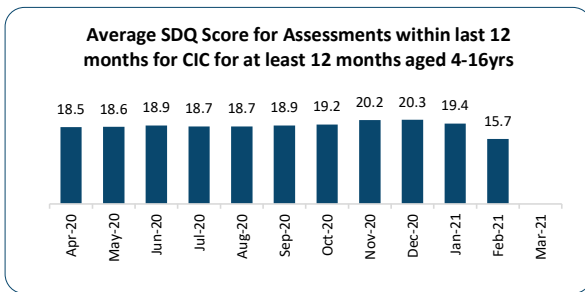
CCG data shows Immunisations for CIC are up to date with the UK Immunisation schedule for the month of those due an RHA in the month, October 84%, November 77.5% and December 92.1%. We continue to work on improving our data and being consistent with health colleagues

EMOTIONAL WELLBEING



Comments:
 Due to the decline in the completion rate of the SDQ we carried out a big drive to increase the take up hence the increase which has continued to rise. March 2021 % completed projection to be greater than 19/20, still below National and Stat neighbours.
 Workshops delivered and workflow to go live 1 April 2021, expectation is that we will sustain this progress and increase the completion rate .

Page 78



Comments:
 A score below 14 is best. Dorset's average score has dropped as the percentage of SDQs completed has increased. As previously stated we believed the high average score was largely due to the SDQs only being completed when there was concern.
 We have also discovered that there was a mis calculation of the scores resulting in higher scores being recorded. Any score over 14 will result in a consultation as part of the PEP process and triangulation of the carers SDQ alongside the education setting and young person's SDQ score.
 Training workshops have been delivered and recorded, policy and practice guidance have been signed off and workflow guide completed.

Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

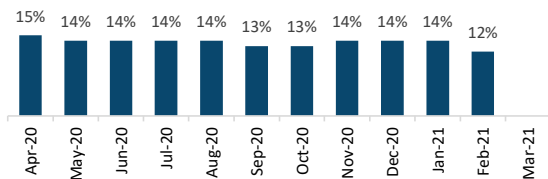
Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

SAFETY



Page 79

CIC who have had a Missing Episode

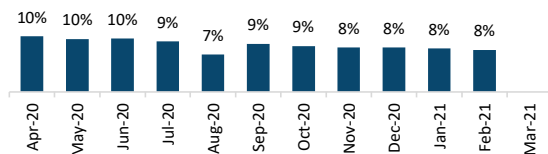


- England Average 19/20 (11%)
- Dorset 19/20 (16%)
- Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (10%)

Comments:

12% of our children in care have had a missing episode which is an improving picture, leaving Dorset as an outlier when compared to our National and Statistical Neighbours. The Philomena Protocol is being implemented by Dorset Police and is also being rolled out nationally across police forces. It will replace the missing persons passport. This will improve our data quality.

CIC with >1 Missing Episode

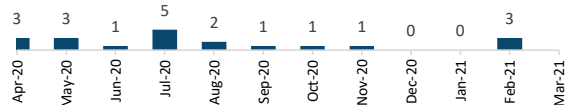


- England Average 19/20 (7%)
- Dorset 19/20 (8.2%)
- Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (7%)

Comments:

There remains ongoing work to improve practice including work with partner agencies such as police of when to report a child missing who is in care. This will lead to better data. We remain a statistical outlier with our current data set to our statistical neighbours and the national average.

Number of allegations made against foster carers



England Average 19/20 (10)

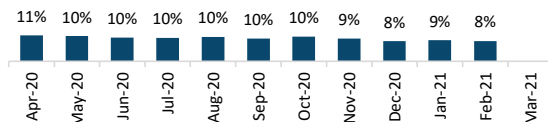
Dorset 19/20 (27)

Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (8.8)

Comments:

In February there were three allegations against foster carers. One of which is in part substantiated and further support is being offered via the fostering team. The remaining two are ongoing enquires.

Children in Care with 3 or more Placements

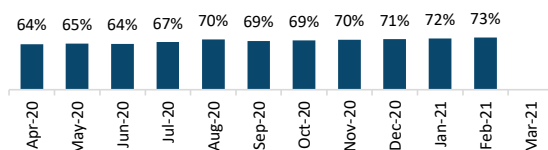


- England Average 19/20 (11%)
- Dorset 19/20 (11%)
- Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (11.6%)

Comments:

Dorset is performing better than our statistical neighbours. We continue to use stability meetings as a way of offering support early to reduce crisis escalating and placement break down. The Harbour Outreach team are also now working with our children where placement break down has been identified. This will support placement stability for our children. Figures are taken from Mosaic.

CIC 2.5 Years in same placement for 2+ Years

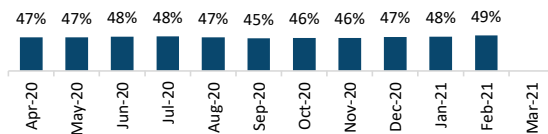


- England Average 19/20 (68%)
- Dorset 19/20 (69%)
- Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (69.2%)

Comments:

This continues to be an improving picture as we develop practice to ensure that where possible children receive permanence and stability earlier.

CIC Living 20+ Miles from Home Address

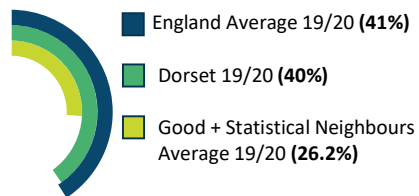
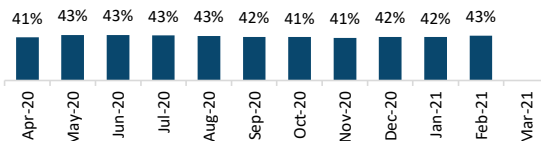


- England Average 19/20 (20%)
- Dorset 19/20 (47%)
- Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (33.4%)

Comments:

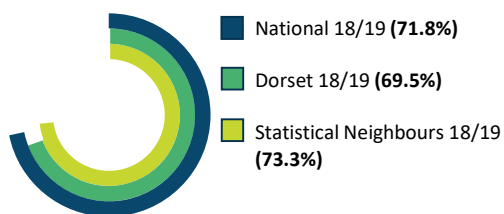
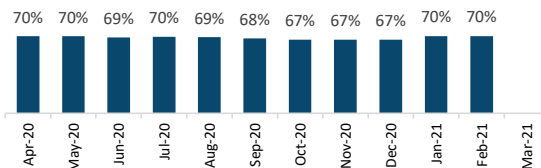
We continue to have too many children who are placed away from their local community and are not yet settled in their permanent placement. Recruiting local carers for local children is central to our sufficiency strategy. There is an ongoing recruitment drive underway.

CIC Living Outside Dorset Council Area



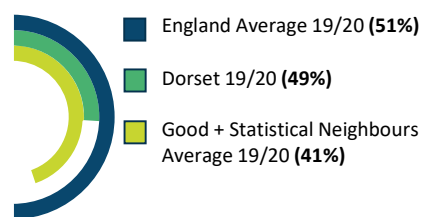
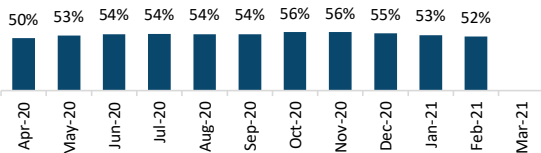
Comments:
We continue to have too many children placed out of their local area and not yet settled in their permanent placement. We continue to review permanence plans for our children. This is hoped to be an improving picture as we develop aspects of our services.

Children in Care Living in Foster Placement



Comments:
The majority of our children continue to live in a family home. There remains some level of hesitance from our carers in having children placed with them due to the current pandemic. We continue to be in regular contact with our carers and are mindful not to add any pressure to do anything that they do not feel comfortable with. Figures are taken from ChAT.

CIC Living in a Commissioned Placement



Comments:
Figures are taken from ChAT and include children in care as at the end of each month. Includes all placements that are not in Dorset provision.

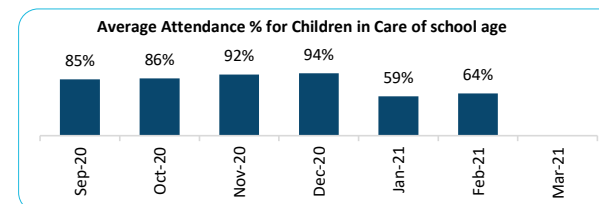
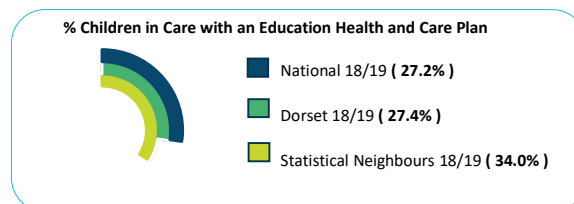
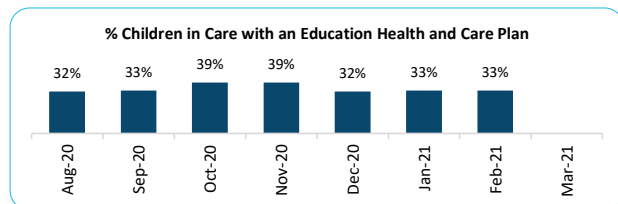
There is positive traction seen in November's data as we continue to look to place our children in our own provision when coming into our care.

Corporate Parenting Data Set

People - Childrens

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (People)

EDUCATION



INDICATOR	National 18/19	Dorset 18/19	SNs 18/19	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-20	Feb-20
% of children with a PEP within 20 days of coming into care				NA	NA	46%	NA	NA
% all Children in Care Unauthorised absence	1.4%	1.7%	1.0%	4.8%	3.2%	3.1%	0.8%	2.3%
% Children in Care who have been in care for 12 months who have had at least one Fixed Term Exclusion	11.7%	12.1%	13.6%	0.9%	2.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
% all Looked After Children on reduced timetable				4.0%	4.0%	4.2%	4.2%	3.6%

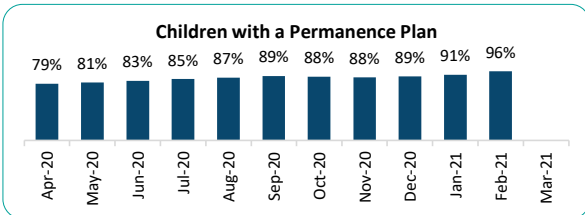
Page 82

County and National data is not available for 2020 year due to Covid-19 pandemic. The use of these indicators , for accountability, is suspended. Dorset Council continues to support our schools to provide the best education for all.

INDICATOR	National 18/19	Dorset 18/19	SNs 18/19	Outstanding SN 18/19 Range
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Maths	51%	57%	49%	35% - 46%
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Writing	50%	43%	46%	32% - 42%
% Children in Care achieving expected standards in Key Stage 2 Reading	49%	43%	47%	25% - 37%
Average Attainment 8 score for Children in Care	19.2	14.4	15.4	14.9 - 17.8
Average progress 8 score for Children in Care	-1.23	-0.96	-1.42	- 0.93 - -1.33

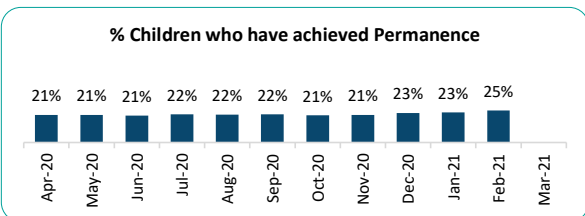
Comments:

There is now a clear focus on exclusions in the Virtual School, including an expectation that there will be follow-up immediately after a fixed term exclusion, and all children who had had exclusions are a focus in the monthly pupil progress meeting. The drop in attendance during lockdown is to be expected. The figures on return following full opening are promising: 225 children have 100% attendance since full school re-opening. 124 have rising attendance. 138 have sustained 95%+ attendance since September. Spring term PEP completion has not yet closed so will be reported on next month.



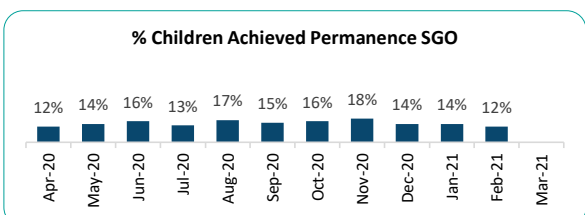
Comments:

This continues to be an improving picture for Dorset Children with month on month improvement. We continue to hold fortnightly permanence panels, complete themed audits and dip samples. Monthly updates are also being shared through the performance panel and monthly Service Manager meetings to promote improvement. There is also scrutiny from our Quality Assurance and Reviewing Officers to ensure further oversight of timeliness and quality of plans. Figures taken from Mosaic for children in care for 4 months or more at the end of each month.



Comments:

We have refined our permanence pathways to ensure our processes are streamlined and reducing the potential for any drift or delay. We have also developed Best Practice Guidance for permanence planning and meetings to ensure quality of the permanency plans created are consistent. We have developed and delivered permanence training for our workforce to improve our performance in this regard. Figures taken from Mosaic.



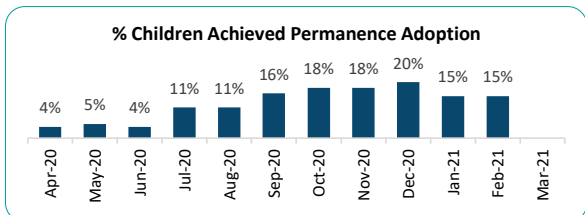
England Average 19/20 (12%)

Dorset 19/20 (8.6%)

Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (11%)

Comments:

Figures are taken from ChAT and include children who left care in the last 6 months. We continue to look at all options for securing permanence for our children whilst in our care.



England Average 19/20 (11%)

Dorset 19/20 (9%)

Good + Statistical Neighbours Average 19/20 (12%)

Comments:

Figures are taken from ChAT and include children who left care in the last 6 months. Despite the additional pressure of the current pandemic, it is positive that this is the second months where 15% of our children have achieved permanence through adoption.

INDICATOR	Dorset 18/19	Dorset 19/20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21
Number of approved foster carers (All)	186	202	208	210	206	205	206	205	204	207	201
Number of new households recruited;											
Mainstream	21	22	2	1	0	1	1	3	3	3	2
CP	14	18	2	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Temporary CP	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	2	4	0	1
Number of households de-registered – exclude connected carers	16	22	3	0	1	2	0	1	0	3	1
Number of households resigned	44	64	3	0	5	4	0	1	1	1	2
Number of allegations made against foster carers that were substantiated	Data not available	14	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Comments:

For the 'number of new households recruited' a figures has been given for each mainstream and connected persons.

The 'number of households de-registered' just includes mainstream de-registrations.

A clear action plan is in place to look at improving the level of foster carer availability. There's is an ongoing recruitment drive to develop our in house provision.

2 new mainstream foster carers were approved in February. Although two others were recommended for approval by panel the Agency Decision was not complete before the end of the month.

1 foster carer registration terminated following safeguarding allegations were made. 1 foster family resigned.

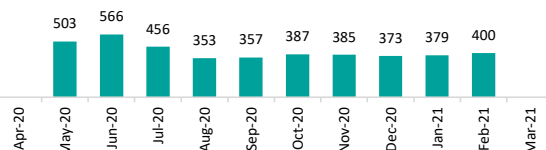
There is a clear plan to manage the number of non-available beds with foster carers being on hold. This is regularly monitored and foster carers are encouraged to consider availability. It is hoped that this will improve with the role out of Covid Vaccines.

Recruitment efforts continue with the latest fostering advertising campaign focused on recruiting foster carers for teenagers. At the end of February 16 prospective mainstream foster carer are in the assessment process and 24 connect persons assessments are underway.

INDICATOR	Dorset 19/20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21
Number of adoptions finalised in year	16	0	6	2	2	3	0	3	2	1
Number of children living in adoptive placements pending adoption orders	-	25	18	19	20	18	19	17	15	16
Number of children with a match identified	-	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	6	5
Number of children where family finding is ongoing	-	29	20	19	28	29	32	32	32	20
Number of revocations of Placements Orders	2	7	8	8	7	6	5	5	5	7
Number of adoptive families recruited	60	4	6	3	5	5	3	2	1	4
Number of adoptive Families in assessment	-	42	42	42	45	44	42	45	47	47

Page 85

Average number of days between entering care and having an adoptive placement



National 18/19: **486**

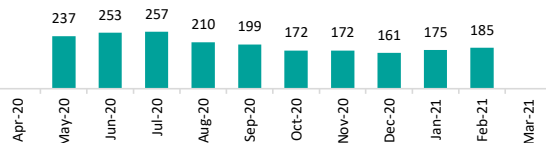
Dorset 18/19: **433**

Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **453**

Comments:

Progress in this area remains positive. During Covid-19 restrictions, children continued to move to their adoptive placements and we have not needed to use any of the Adoption Act amendments agreed for the period of Covid-19. We continue to work closely with Aspire Adoption Agency to understand and take action on any practice issues that may create delay.

Average No. of days between a child receiving a PO & being matched to an adoptive family



National 18/19: **201**

Dorset 18/19: **137**

Statistical Neighbours 18/19: **176**

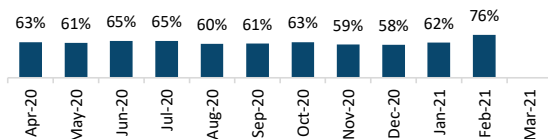
Comments:

Progress in this area remains a focus.

Comments:

Dorset have continued to perform well among statistical neighbours for the time a child starts in care and moves to their adoptive family. New permanence planning oversight for senior leaders through permanence panel is providing scrutiny and challenge. All data is taken from Aspire Adoption Agency.

With an up to date Pathway Plan



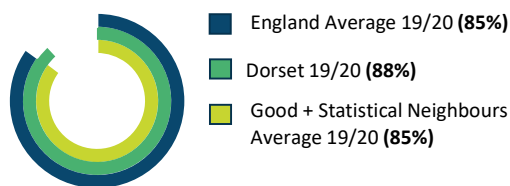
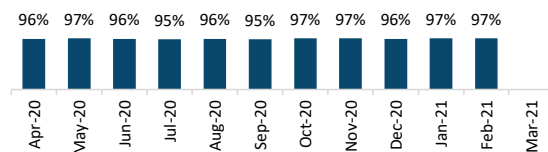
Comments:

Benchmarking data currently not available.

The completion rates for updating of Pathway Plans is a work in progress and are monitored fortnightly through the Care Leaver Management meeting.

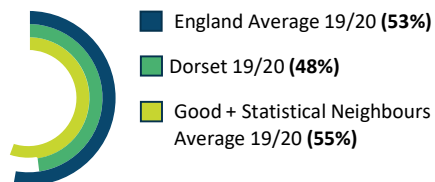
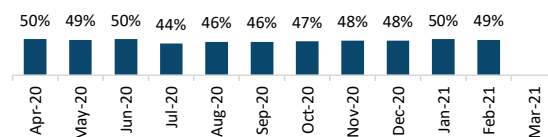
Figures taken from Mosaic for all Care Leavers at the end of each month.

Living in Suitable Accommodation (19-21)



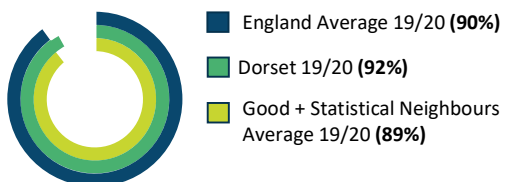
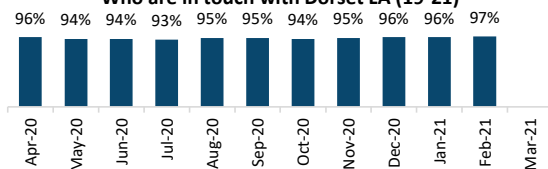
Comments: Although a high number of our Care Leavers are in suitable accommodation, we have a small number that are in B&B, living with friends or in emergency accommodation, however, these have been coming down gradually and there are now less than 10 in this position. Those in unsuitable accommodation are monitored through a monthly highlight report to CSLT and followed up through Case Supervision with Personal Advisors. Figures are taken from ChAT based on current care leavers at the end of each month.

In Employment Education or Training (19-21)



Comments: Improvements in our NEET statistics have levelled off in the past few weeks. However, we have 3 Personal Advisors who focus on supporting Care Leavers around their employment, education and training and we have established a referral system within the team and are developing bespoke interventions to support around 20 Care Leavers. Figures are taken from ChAT based on current care leavers at the end of each month.

Who are in touch with Dorset LA (19-21)



Comments: Our 'In Touch' rates are higher than our statistical neighbours, we do have a small number of Care Leavers we are not in touch with, including one who has formally refused our Care Leaver Service and two who are former UASC's with no leave to remain in the UK. Where we are not in touch, Care Leaver will still have an allocated PA who will continue to try to make contact by whatever means they can. Figures are taken from ChAT based on current care leavers at the end of each month.