



Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 20 June 2023
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Membership: (Quorum 3)

Spencer Flower (Chairman), Gary Suttle (Vice-Chairman), Laura Beddow, Ray Bryan, Simon Gibson, Jill Haynes, Andrew Parry, Byron Quayle, Jane Somper and David Walsh

Cabinet Lead Members (6) (are not members of the Cabinet but are appointed to work alongside Portfolio Holders)

Cherry Brooks, Graham Carr-Jones, Andrew Kerby, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke and Mark Roberts

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact 01305 252234 - kate.critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting, apart from any items listed in the exempt part of this agenda.

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Agenda

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1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

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To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interest as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their

declaration.

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Representatives of town or parish councils and members of the public who live, work, or represent an organisation within the Dorset Council area are welcome to submit either 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting. You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for the committee this will be circulated to all members of the committee in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes for the formal record but will not be read out at the meeting. **The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each meeting will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline set out below.** Further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to Kate.Critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Thursday 15 June 2023.

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement.
- a question may include a short pre-amble to set the context.
- It must be a single question and any sub-divided questions will not be permitted.
- Each question will consist of no more than 450 words, and you will be given up to 3 minutes to present your question.
- when submitting a question please indicate who the question is for (e.g., the name of the committee or Portfolio Holder)
- Include your name, address, and contact details. Only your name will be published but we may need your other details to contact you about your question or statement in advance of the meeting.
- questions and statements received in line with the council's rules for public participation will be published as a supplement to the agenda.
- all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions submitted by councillors.

Councillors can submit up to two valid questions at each meeting and sub divided questions count towards this total. Questions and

statements received will be published as a supplement to the agenda and all questions, statements and responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The submissions must be emailed in full to kate.critchell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk 8.30am on Thursday 15 June 2023.

[Dorset Council Constitution](#) – Procedure Rule 13

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| 6. | FORWARD PLAN | 21 - 28 |
| | To consider the draft Cabinet Forward Plan. | |
| 7. | COUNCIL PLAN ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 | 29 - 74 |
| | To consider a report of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation. | |
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| | To review a report of the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help. | |
| 12. | YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023/224 | 227 - 280 |
| | To consider a report of the Portfolio Holder for Childrens, Education, Skills and Early Help. | |
| | Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: | |
| 13. | DORSET COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES UPDATE: WORKING WITH THE INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM | |
| | To receive an update report from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health. (To follow) | |

14. PORTFOLIO HOLDER /LEAD MEMBER(S) UPDATE INCLUDING ANY POLICY REFERRALS TO REPORT

Cabinet Portfolio Holder(s) and Leader Members to report any updates.

15. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

16. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 4 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

17. USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS FOR LAND ADJACENT TO SUNRISE BUSINESS PARK, BLANDFORD

281 - 296

Para 4

To consider a report of the Portfolio Holder for Customer Services, Community Safety and Services.



CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2023

Present: Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Peter Wharf (Vice-Chairman), Laura Beddow, Ray Bryan, Graham Carr-Jones, Tony Ferrari, Jill Haynes, Andrew Parry, Gary Suttle and David Walsh

Cabinet Leads in attendance: Cllr Simon Gibson, Cllr Andrew Kerby, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Byron Quayle and Cllr Jane Somper

Also present: Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Susan Cocking, Cllr Kelvin Clayton, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Paul Kimber, Lacey-Clarke and Cllr Bill Trite

Also present remotely: Cllr Ryan Holloway and Cllr Mark Roberts

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

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Sean Cremer (Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Megan Rochester (Democratic Services Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Tracey Old (Strategic Commissioner), Sara Hardy (Senior Planning Officer (M&W)), Steven Ford (Corporate Director for Climate and Ecological Sustainability), Antony Littlechild (Sustainability Team Manager), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), Alison Turnock (Service Manager for Conservation) and Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer)

127. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

128. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

129. Public Participation

There were 3 questions/statements presented from the public. A copy of the full questions and the detailed responses are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

130. Questions from Councillors

There were 2 questions received from Councillors Clayton and Kimber, these along with the responses are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

131. **Forward Plan**

The Cabinet Forward Plan for April 2023 was received and noted.

132. **Capital Programme 2023/2024 - 2026/2027**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy set out the report on the Councils capital programme for the period 2023/24 and 2026/27

Although the capital strategy was approved on 14 February 2023 by Full Council, there had been a review to refresh the capital programme to ensure that the finite resources available, both in terms of financial and capacity, were able to deliver the projects listed in the programme within the current economic climate.

The Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial was invited to present a more detailed PowerPoint presentation of the proposals.

In response to question regarding resources, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the point of the exercise was to rationalise the programme to be able to ensure delivery of Dorset Council's agreed priorities.

In response to a question around governance, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that Overview and Scrutiny Committees would continue to play their role within the decision-making process and in accordance with the member protocol, ward members should be fully informed of issues in their areas.

As part of presenting the report, Cllr G Suttle proposed the recommendations, and these were unanimously supported by Cabinet.

Decision

(a) That the capital strategy as set out in appendix 1 and the capital programme set out in Appendix 2 be agreed.

(b) That the impact on the Medium-Term Finance Plan be noted.

Reason for the decision

The Council approved the capital strategy and a capital programme budget on 14 February 2023 and at this meeting noted that a refreshed list of capital programme would be reported to this Cabinet.

Capital expenditure has an impact on the revenue budget, and so members should be aware of the financial implications to the revenue budget when agreeing the Capital Programme.

133. **Swanage Capital Asset Transfer**

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help presented that proposal to the opening of a third family hub in Swanage in partnership with Swanage & Purbeck Development Partnership Trust (SPDPT).

In setting out the recommendations of the report, the Portfolio Holder proposed a minor amendment to recommendation 2, and that it be amended to read “that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property”. The proposal with the amendment was seconded by Cllr G Suttle.

The Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships and the Strategic Commissioner set out the detail of the proposal for an integrated service delivery model, which would be operated by the SPDPT to enable services for the community of all ages in Swanage. The local ward member spoke in support of the project.

In response to a question regarding timelines, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help advised that he was keen to see the project progress promptly and Executive Director for Place confirmed that this transfer was being progressed at pace.

Decision

- (a) Cabinet noted and supported the opening of a national exemplar for Family Hubs in Swanage, Dorset.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property, to transfer the Chapel Lane site to the Swanage & Purbeck Development Partnership Trust (SPDPT) through a community asset transfer process to enable the Family Hub to occupy the Chapel Lane site on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property, the Executive Director for People – Children and Executive Director People – Adults and Housing, including inter-alia:
 - Due diligence of SPDPT (associated with transfer of asset).
 - Ensuring best value in terms of disposal of the asset, taking into account all other matters such as subsidy control.
 - Tenure and specific terms and conditions in relation to ongoing liabilities of the asset.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director People - Children to enter into a commissioning service level agreement with the SPDPT for the provision of services in Swanage, funded by the DfE Family Hubs external grant.
- (d) That the People and Health Scrutiny Committee be asked to receive and comment upon an annual review of the outcomes delivered by the Swanage & Purbeck Development Partnership Trust each year in March, the first annual review in March 2024.

Reason for the decision

This proposal supported the strategic objectives of the council to create strong, healthy communities. Dorset Council recognised the devolution of assets to local communities, particularly to town and parish councils and voluntary and community-based organisations could make a significant contribution to enabling them to be stronger, more resilient and to support services within their local areas. This proposal will enable the development of an intergenerational approach to service delivery in Swanage through the creation of a Family Hub that better meets the needs of the local community and supports the delivery of children's and adult's services commissioning strategies.

134. Children's Services - Annual Self-Evaluation

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help presented a report that gave a summary of the comprehensive self-evaluation of Children's Services produced as part of the Ofsted Inspection Framework for the inspection of Local Authority Services for children in need of help and protection children looked after and care leavers.

The self-evaluation focused on leadership and governance, the quality and impact of social work practice, education and inclusion, the approach to performance management and quality assurance and future plans. Members also received a detailed PowerPoint presentation from the Executive Director for People - Children.

It was proposed by Cllr A Parry seconded by Cllr J Haynes

Decision

That the Annual Self-Evaluation of Children's Services 2023 be received, noting the strengths and continuous improvement approach of the service.

Reason for the decision

The requirement to produce an Annual Self-Evaluation was part of the Ofsted Inspection Framework of Children's Services. This report was intended to enable Cabinet to understand areas of strength and continuous improvement approach taken.

At this juncture the chairman reordered the agenda taking items in the following order:

Item 12 – Natural Environment, Climate and Ecological Strategy 2023 -2025

Item 13 – Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Decision Wheel

Item 11 – Planning for Climate Change: Interim Guidance and Position Statement Sustainability Checklist and Listed Building Guidance.

135. **Natural Environment, Climate and Ecological Strategy 2023 - 25 - refresh**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment presented a report on the refresh of the strategy which aimed to repurpose, reframe, and tighten the existing content. The strategy, a living document, would continue to evolve as action, technology and policy progressed.

Members noted that the strategy had been retitled to the “Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy to ensure its clear alignment to the associated priority within the Council’s Corporate Plan.

It was proposed by Cllr R Bryan and seconded by Cllr G Carr-Jones.

Decision

That the Dorset Council Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Refreshed Strategy and action plan be approved.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that the strategy remained fit for purpose by being responsive to latest policy and progress, and concisely communicates our direction and ambition.

136. **Natural Environment Climate and Ecology Decision Wheel**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment set out the report that introduced the decision wheel that aimed to integrate and embed the principles of the Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy as part of the Council’s democratic decision-making process.

It was proposed by Cllr R Bryan and seconded by Cllr A Parry

Decision

- (a) That Cabinet supports the integration of the Natural Environment, Climate & Ecological decision tool into the democratic decision-making processes of Dorset Council, with inclusion of the model in the committee templates being a prerequisite for sign-off.
- (b) That Cabinet supports the integration of the Natural Environment, Climate & Ecological decision tool into the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Group, and its associated sub-groups, and the longer-term aspiration to embed into the procurement and policy processes of Dorset Council.

Reason for the Decision

The Natural Environment, Climate & Ecological decision tool provided a robust, transparent, accessible and in some instances measurable process to support the delivery of the Natural Environment, Climate & Ecological Strategy, and council plan ambitions, and would enable policy makers to understand the wider implications on climate, ecology and adaptation of the decisions being taken.

137. **Planning for Climate Change: Interim Guidance and Position Statement Sustainability Checklist and Listed Building Guidance**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report aiming to clarify the approach to considering climate change in planning decision making. He also highlighted that the report and appendices had been considered, supported, and welcomed by the Place and Resources Overview Committee at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

In presenting the recommendations, the Portfolio Holder proposed an amendment to recommendation 4, “that authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Planning in consultation with the Executive Director for Place to consider the consultation responses and agree final wording of the documents listed in the recommendation”.

In response to a question, the Portfolio Holder for Planning confirmed that provision of training for town and parish councils was likely to take place after Easter.

The recommendation with the amendment was seconded by Cllr P Wharf

Decision

- (a) That the content of the report and the Interim Guidance and Position Statement (appendix 1) Sustainability Checklist (Appendix 2) and Listing Buildings: what you can do for climate change (Appendix 3) be considered and approved.
- (b) That the three documents in the appendices for consultation, as well as a related amendment to the Local List (Appendix 4), be agreed.
- (c) That agreement to any minor changes that were considered necessary prior to the consultation starting, be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Planning to approve.
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Planning in consultation with the Executive Director for Place to consider the consultation responses and agree final wording of the documents listed in Recommendation (a) above.

Reason for the decision

To enable efforts to be taken to address the climate emergency when new buildings were proposed and to assist with decision-making for renewable energy proposals. The Interim Guidance and Position Statement and Sustainability Checklist would give clarity to developers as to the expectations of Dorset Council when considering development proposals.

The Listed Buildings document would provide guidance for owners of listed buildings when considering energy efficiency works. Consultation enables the documents to be adjusted to reflect issues raised and therefore for weight to be given to it when making planning decisions. Should significant changes to any of the documents be considered necessary as a result of the consultation, councillors would be given the opportunity to consider revised versions prior to their use in planning decisions.

138. Dorset Council Plan Priorities Community Safety

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety presented an information paper on the Dorset Council Plan priority – Community Safety. He set out how the council worked closely with Dorset police to ensure best outcomes when dealing with local crime and anti-social behaviour.

He also reported the priority issues currently being addressed by the Community Safety Partnership.

139. Portfolio Holder /Lead Member(s) Update including any Policy referrals to report

There were no updates for policy referrals to report.

140. Urgent items

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

141. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business to report.

Appendix 1 - Public Participation

Appendix 2 - Councillor Questions

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.18 pm

Chairman

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Public Participation – Cabinet 28 March 2023

Question from Mike Hall

Mr Chair, my name is Mike Hall, owner of Silton Mews. On the 12th Jan '23, out of the blue, Silton Parish Meeting was notified of a provisional Area Tree Preservation Order relating to Silton Mews.

By way of background, we have been in dialogue with Dorset Planning for almost 2 years with regards to extending our property, for which Planning permission has now been granted. At no point in this process has the Tree Team or Case Officer raised any concern for a TPO until the 11th hour.

This TPO has come as a shock to us and has caused alarm in the Parish of Silton too. An Extraordinary Parish Meeting was held on 21st February where our provisional TPO was Agenda item 3. Cllr Belinda Ridout was present for this item, having kindly conducted a full site visit of our garden and Application site.

It is important to note that no trees in our garden are at risk or will be impacted by the extension or parking.

We value our trees, we have planted 27 trees to date and we've been instrumental in planting 3 English oaks in the village to honour our late Queen's Green Canopy Initiative in 2022.

We were taken aback to receive an Area TPO, particularly because much of the area designated is nowhere near the Application site.

There is no logic to a non-specific Area TPO that, for example, includes fruit trees and a diseased ash tree. **Several objections to this Area TPO have been lodged including one by Silton Parish Meeting** - the final paragraph of which sums up the prevailing situation:

"This Area TPO will not help the trees at Silton Mews to contribute positively to the amenity of Church Road and the Parish of Silton, indeed it will do exactly the opposite as it will impose a completely unnecessary layer of bureaucracy on the management of these trees. This TPO is arbitrary, unjustified and completely unnecessary.

Silton Parish Meeting strongly objects to the imposition of this TPO and requests that it be withdrawn".

Our key concerns are:

- The imposition of a TPO order of this nature will be counter productive and rather than protecting trees, as news of this Area TPO spreads, it is very likely to prompt the felling of trees prior to planning applications being submitted.
- There has been no consultation with us from the Tree Officer about the Area TPO to date.

- Silton is not in a conservation area or an AONB. There is no other existing TPO in our parish.
- This TPO will inevitably generate an unnecessary level of bureaucracy for all parties, as it encompasses many trees that require regular tree management and remedial pruning to ensure their optimum health.

LPA's have powers to cancel confirmation of TPOs or else vary or revoke them. I request that such action is taken in respect of the Area TPO due to be imposed on our property.

We were drawn to Silton Mews for its calm, green space for our health & wellbeing following a cancer diagnosis in our household. This TPO has put undue stress on us.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

The Silton Mews TPO (TPO/2023/001) has been made in response to a planning application and potential future planning applications. The TPO is dated 12th January 2023.

In response to the specific queries raised by Mr. Hall:

- The imposition of a TPO order of this nature will be counter productive and rather than protecting trees, once news of this Area TPO spreads, it is more likely to prompt the felling of trees prior to planning applications being submitted.

Response: Area TPOs are made as a matter of urgency to protect trees of amenity value within defined land. The intention is that the TPO will be modified to cover appropriate individual or groups of trees within the designated area. This will be undertaken in the next two to three weeks.

- There has been no consultation with us from the Tree Officer about the Area TPO to date.

Response: consultation is not undertaken prior to serving a TPO. This is to prevent the removal of unprotected trees prior to a TPO being served.

- Silton is not in a conservation area nor is it in an AONB. There is no other existing TPO in our parish.

Response: Trees within Conservation Areas are afforded protection, as the Local Authority must be notified of proposals to carry out tree works. The number of existing TPO's in an area is not a factor taken into consideration when making a TPO.

- This TPO will inevitably generate an unnecessary level of bureaucracy for all parties, since the TPO encompasses a large number of trees that require

regular tree management and remedial pruning to ensure their optimum health.

Response: tree works can be undertaken on trees covered by TPO's. A Tree Works Application needs to be made to Dorset Council – there is no charge for this.

To conclude, Dorset Council is not proposing to confirm the TPO with an Area designation, but rather to modify it to cover specific trees and groups of trees considered worthy of protection. This would not include diseased trees referred to in the submission.

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Questions from Councillors to Cabinet 28 March 2023

1. Question from Cllr P Kimber

Question to Cabinet Regarding the long-suffering issues for the people regarding the mess on Portland roads from the Quarry's.

I'm receiving complaints via my Councillors surgery regarding the mess on the Portland Roads and which is going onto homes, and cars. This is regarding the stone dust that's messing up the streets and Houses.

"The horrific state of Grove Rd Portland. Where to start? The constant mud dirt, stones from the new quarry off grove field and the pathetic attempts to road sweep as there should be some sort of truck wash as the lorries leave the quarry entrance at the least.

I must wash 3 cars every week as they are caked in mud there is damage to the road where the heavy loaders cross from one side then on to the main road to the quarry on the other side the whole Rd from grove corner to midway up grove Rd is dangerously skiddy when wet due to the mud dust stone etc.

Then come summer just dry dust everywhere in the garden on the washing on the cars let alone what health dangers this will impact our health in the future. I could go on and on, but things need to change urgently as it is like living on a constant building site with no due care for the residents the environment the natural habit and wildlife. Please treat this as a priority community disaster unfolding before anyone nationally pays a big interest. Look forward to your thoughts and response."

Other areas are Easton where the homeowners are also facing this mess.

From another angry resident. I live on Portland in your constituency where there is a serious problem with the roads. They are a mess because of detritus caused by quarrying activity, particularly around Easton.

Dorset Council say their powers to limit and regulate quarry activity are limited because of a **1951 planning consent. This cannot be right in 2023!**

I should be grateful if you would ascertain whether this aged planning consent can be amended so that the quarry companies act more responsibly and clear the mess they cause. drive round the island and see for yourself.

Stone quarrying activity obviously needs to be limited so the whole island does not disappear on the backs of lorries! People should come before profit.

Question when will the Dorset Council address this problem.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

The majority of the quarry sites on Portland were allowed under a 1951 planning permission, which only had two conditions, neither of which could be used to enforce against these matters.

There has been a particular problem during the intensive quarrying of stone for the deep-water berth at Portland Port. The contractor has been working directly with affected residents to resolve their concerns and has been carrying out regular and daily sweeping of the roads, but this has had mixed success depending on the weather conditions.

As these particular quarrying operations have now ceased, the situation should now improve.

2. Question from Kelvin Clayton

A substantial number of Bridport's housing stock are listed buildings. These are often small and relatively cheap houses inhabited by the working population of the town. However, when many owners have applied for permission to install energy efficiency measures like double-glazing, they are often refused on the grounds that such measures will harm the significance of the building. The same reasons have been given to small businesses trying to reduce their energy bills by installing solar pv panels on their roofs.

Although the NPPF defines 'significance' as "The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest" this significance, and any harm done to it, is in effect the sole judgement of a conservation officer.

In her book *Playing With The Past*, the former CEO of the Welsh Government's heritage service, Kate Clark, writes: "Traditionally, heritage specialists have used their expertise to define the significance of heritage sites, but increasingly practitioners will need to behave less like dictators and more like facilitators – listening to people, engaging with communities and helping groups explore what matters, rather than telling them."

Would it be possible for the guidance note outlining the importance of the historic heritage and issues to consider when looking at energy efficiency in listed buildings to be modified to include a commitment to a programme of community engagement?

Response from Portfolio Holder for Planning

The aim of the document "Listed buildings – what you can do for climate change" is to take the approach suggested by Kate Clark in that it seeks to facilitate and work with applicants. The document outlines what measures can be taken on listed buildings which do not require listed building consent. Where consent is required, the approach is to look at whether there are other options that could be undertaken to achieve the aims of the applicant and not conflict with national planning policy. One example of this could be to locate solar panels on modern extensions, sheds or garage roofs as an alternative to siting them on the listed building.

With regard to community engagement, a series of planning workshops is planned after Easter to which representatives from all town and parish councils will be invited. A key part of these will be presentations on the climate change interim guidance and position statement, sustainability checklist and listed building guidance. Town and

parish council representatives will have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the content of the documents. Community engagement forms part of the implementation of the planning commitment to climate change, so it is not proposed to include specific reference to it in the document.

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**The Cabinet Forward Plan - July 2023 to October 2023
For the period 1 JULY 2023 to 31 OCTOBER 2023
(Publication date – 27 JUNE 2023)**

Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Cabinet and Council. It is published 28 days before the next meeting of the Committee. The plan includes items for the meeting including key decisions. Each item shows if it is 'open' to the public or to be considered in a private part of the meeting.

Definition of Key Decisions

Key decisions are defined in Dorset Council's Constitution as decisions of the Cabinet which are likely to -

- (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates (**Thresholds - £500k**); or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority."

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes the Council will have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000 Act. Officers will consult with lead members to determine significance and sensitivity.

Cabinet Portfolio Holders 2023/24

Spencer Flower	Leader / Governance, Performance and Communications
Gary Suttle	Deputy Leader and Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
Ray Bryan	Highways, Travel and Environment
Jill Haynes	Corporate Development and Transformation
Laura Beddow	Culture and Communities
Simon Gibson	Economic Growth and Levelling Up
Andrew Parry	Assets and Property
Byron Quayle	People – Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help
Jane Somper	People - Adult Social Care, Health, and Housing
David Walsh	Planning

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
July					
<p>Quarter 1 2023/24 Financial Monitoring Report</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 25 Jul 2023</p>		<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p>Library Strategy</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>The proposed library strategy is in the process of going through the second phase of consultation.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 25 Jul 2023</p>	<p>Joint Overview Committee 7 Jun 2023 and 28 June 2023 (TBC)</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities</p>	<p><i>Kate Turner, Library Strategy Manager</i> <i>kate.turner@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>Adult Social Care - Reablement Hubs</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To provide an update on the reablement hubs and seek assurance on future plans.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 25 Jul 2023</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Adult Social Care, Health and Housing</p>	<p><i>Jonathan Price, Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning</i> <i>jonathan.price@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>A Devolution Deal for Dorset</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider proposals for a Devolution Deal for Dorset in response to the Levelling Up White Paper in which Government has committed to offer a devolution deal to any part of England which wishes to have one.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 25 Jul 2023</p>		<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p><i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren), Jonathan Mair</i></p>
<p>Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Housing for Local People</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To receive a report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 25 Jul 2023</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Adult Social Care, Health and Housing</p>	<p><i>Andrew Billany, Corporate Director for Housing andrew.billany@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>
<p>Dorset Council's Digital Strategy</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider a report on Dorset Council's Digital Strategy.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 25 Jul 2023</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation</p>	<p><i>Timothy Robertson, ICT Project Manager timothy.robertson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Dugald Lockhart, Service Manager Digital Place dugald.lockhart@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>New Approach to Engaging our Contingency Workforce</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Fully exempt</p> <p>To present out preferred option for engaging agency workers and consultants in the future and seek agreement to enter into a Joint Venture with a partner organisation to create our own agency/broker.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 25 Jul 2023</p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 6 Jun 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation</p>	<p><i>Chris Matthews, Interim Head of HR christopher.matthews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p>September</p>					
<p>Additional Procurement Forward Plan 2023-24 and incorporating the refresh of the annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Additional Procurement Forward Plan: Cabinet is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more. This report will also incorporate the annual refresh of the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for Cabinet's agreements.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 5 Sep 2023</p>		<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Dawn Adams, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement dawn.adams@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Value for Money (Unitary Council Benefits)</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To receive a report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 5 Sep 2023</p>		<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p>October</p>					
<p>Families First for Children Pathfinder</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider a report regarding the Families First for Children Pathfinder.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 3 Oct 2023</p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Paul Dempsey, Corporate Director - Care & Protection Tel: 01305 224513 paul.dempsey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>
<p>November</p>					
<p>Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order- Renewal</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To agree and adopt the draft order.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 7 Nov 2023</p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 5 Oct 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities</p>	<p><i>Janet Moore, Service Manager Environmental Protection Janet.Moore@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring 2023/24</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 7 Nov 2023</p>		<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p>Our Future Council - putting our customers first</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Setting out the proposed future programme.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 7 Nov 2023</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities</p>	<p><i>Lisa Cotton, Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Services</i> <i>lisa.cotton@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Nina Coakley, Programme Manager</i> <i>n.coakley@dorsetcc.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn), Matt Prosser</i></p>
<p>December</p>					

January 2024

<p>Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>		<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
<p>Budget strategy and medium-term financial plan (MTFP)</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider a report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Assets.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Dorset Council</p>	<p>Decision Date 13 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Cabinet 30 Jan 2024</p> <p>Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee 17 Jan 2024</p> <p>People and Health Scrutiny Committee 12 Jan 2024</p>	<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil .gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>

Private/Exempt Items for Decision

Each item in the plan above marked as 'private' will refer to one of the following paragraphs.

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the shadow council proposes:-
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Cabinet

20 June 2023

Council Plan Annual Report 2022/23

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council
Cllr Jill Haynes, Corporate Development and Transformation

Local Councillor(s): All
Executive Director: M Prosser, Chief Executive
A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Dr David Bonner
Title: Service Manager, Business Intelligence & Performance
Tel: 01305 225503
Email: david.bonner@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

The Dorset Council plan is an articulation of the priorities of the council. It reflects resident priorities, a commitment to deliver high quality services and the leadership required to deliver strong outcomes for Dorset. Dorset Council is a complex organisation, delivering a multitude of services that are important to our residents. Ensuring that its priorities are clearly articulated, and that progress is reported against, is an important element of our performance framework.

The Dorset Council Plan was refreshed in 2022 to ensure it reflected the highest priorities for residents, especially following the covid-19 pandemic. The council plan was reviewed and amended to reflect new cabinet commitments, and a new strategic delivery plan for 2022-24 was also created which sets out the council's key activities to achieve the priorities in the Dorset Council Plan 2022-24. Both the refreshed plan and the new delivery plan were approved by Full Council in October 2022.

The delivery plan is an iterative, live document which is evolving over time, to ensure a responsive approach to local and national policy and need. This report provides a summary of these iterative amendments to the delivery plan at appendix A. It is of note that the delivery plan reflects activities ranging from smaller, immediately deliverable activities to larger strategic plans which will commence in 2022-24 as milestones that will continue to deliver over the longer term.

The 5 council priorities are:

- Protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology
- Creating stronger, healthier communities
- Creating sustainable development and housing
- Driving economic prosperity
- Becoming a more responsive, customer focused council

This report provides a progress update on the council's performance and delivery against the plan since its approval by Full Council in October 2022. This is in addition to focussed and detailed progress updates in relation to specific council priorities to cabinet on a monthly basis. This will enable councillors and officers to assess progress to date. The council's performance measures are publicly available as part of the work undertaken by the two scrutiny committees. They can be found at:

- [People and Health Scrutiny Dashboard](#)
- [Place and Resources Scrutiny Dashboard](#)

The council priorities are supported by a delivery plan of 136 specific objectives. The refresh process in 2022 reflected the breadth and scope of activity required to make a positive impact for the residents of Dorset. To date, delivery progress reporting against the plan can be summarised as:

- 10 action targets are fully complete
- 114 action targets are in progress
- 12 action targets are not yet started
- 0 action targets not deliverable

Recommendation:

Note annual progress against the refreshed Council Plan for the period October 2022 – March 2023.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure progress towards delivery of the Council Plan is monitored.

1. **Council Plan 2022-24 Performance and progress report**

1.1 **Protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology**

The protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology priority outlines our ambitions to improve access to, and use of, Dorset's environment in a sustainable way which protects it for future generations. This commits us to taking direct action across our operations to become a carbon-neutral council by 2040, and through our wide-ranging services

and partnerships, to facilitate the changes required for the whole of Dorset to become carbon neutral by 2050, and to protect and enhance biodiversity across Dorset with 30% of land in positive management by 2030. Our operational focus is on the continued decarbonisation of our fleet, expanding electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, reducing the emissions from our estate and increasing renewable energy generation. In addition, our leadership to support both decarbonisation and an increase in biodiversity across Dorset is also important.

1.2 Performance summary: protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology

- The proportion of waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting remained high in Dorset throughout 2022/23 and performance has been on-target at approximately 60%. This level of performance has previously seen Dorset ranked highly against other councils in England. In addition, only approximately 5% of household waste was sent to landfill, meeting the council's target.
- The circa £19m Salix programme which is aimed at accelerating the decarbonisation of council buildings is nearing completion; with over 200 buildings receiving measures, including 5MW of solar PV, 15 heat pumps and a range of other measures that have reduced the carbon emissions of council buildings by 20%.
- Significant external funds have been sourced, including over £4m for the Homes Upgrade Grants, circa £1m from the two prosperity funds and over £5.5m for electric vehicle infrastructure.
- A new environment, climate and ecological strategy and action plan has been signed off, alongside a new decision-making tool and a local planning position statement with a sustainability checklist.
- A new team is in place to deliver the Local Nature Recovery strategy, and the council continues to receive national recognition for initiatives such as our verge maintenance approaches.
- A climate vulnerability assessment for council services is underway, which will lead into the development of a more strategic approach to adaptation for Dorset.
- Projects completed within the Low Carbon Dorset programme delivered a total saving of 9,626 tonnes of CO² in 2022. We are expecting this to have risen again by at least 500 tonnes by the end of March 2023. This is above the anticipated savings target.
- We have supported projects to install 11.8 Mega Watts (MW) of renewable energy capacity via the Low Carbon Dorset programme in 2022. This exceeds our target of 7.9MW.
- In working towards the council's aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2040, over the past twelve months, 17 electric vehicles have been added to the Council's vehicle fleet. These vehicles include cars and vans. As the charging infrastructure grows, more fossil fuelled vehicles

will be replaced with electric variants, alongside investigating the options for emerging technologies such as hydrogen.

1.3 Annual update on action plan delivery: Protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology

Completed	In progress	Not yet started
0	17	0

As an overall reflection on progress all activities are in progress with all reported with either manageable or no concerns.

1.4 Good progress has been made against the following:

- A new carbon and ecological decision-making tool will be integrated into council decision-making process, this has been approved by cabinet and is now undergoing operational testing prior to being used across the Council. Additionally, a new strategy and action plan have been signed off by cabinet, and there is a climate planning position statement that lends greater weight to sustainability in planning considerations (with the development of a sustainability checklist).
- We will continue to reduce the carbon emissions from our estate utilising efficient renewable energy supplies such as solar power – projects in the region of £19million have been completed on providing solar panels across Council buildings.
- We will continue the decarbonisation of the Dorset Council vehicle fleet including expansion of electric vehicles by 2024 – the County Hall pool vehicle fleet has been replaced with electric vehicles along with a number of service-based vehicles, and a further 14 EV chargers have been installed for operational and staff vehicles. Work is progressing on other sites as part of a phased approach.
- We will work across the farm estate to develop the innovation potential across renewable energy generation and technologies, agricultural and business development, and ecology and nature recovery. A new strategy has been written and next stages for this are in development.
- Employee and councillor carbon and ecological literacy training models will be available – training models are being developed in conjunction with our OD team, external training has been sourced and delivered in partnership with the MET Office. A green champions network has been developed, and their work programme is now in development.
- Dorset Council will continue to source external funds to deliver against its 2050 ambitions, with a focus on housing and transport – allocations of £19million for Salix programme and a further £5.6million to expand the public EV network in Dorset has been achieved. Additional allocations have been secured for the Homes Upgrade Grant (£4m), as well as significant funds from the Shared Prosperity Fund and the

Rural England Prosperity Fund which has enabled the council to continue the Low Carbon Dorset programme.

- We will facilitate an increase in renewable energy generation across Dorset.
- Resources have been reallocated from other parts of the council to support the climate programme and this has enabled the development of bids for external funds.
- We have responded to harbour revision orders, providing a more consistent customer experience when moving from harbour to harbour. This has been delivered through the Salix programme.

2. Creating stronger, healthier communities

This priority sets out our ambition to enable our residents, working with partners, to develop strong networks of support and maintain strong communities. We are focussing on the most vulnerable in our communities to improve wellbeing and reduce inequality through collaboration between public services, community leaders, residents, and voluntary groups.

Improving the outcomes for children and young people has a long-lasting impact for health, wellbeing and economic growth of the county. Children's Services facilitates a multi-agency partnership to deliver [The Children, Young People and Families Plan](#) which supports the delivery of the council's plan in creating stronger, healthier communities. There are robust plans in place to continue the delivery of this plan into next year and work has commenced on the development of our new plan. The focus on partnership and delivery of well evidenced approaches, with a strong return on investment that deliver value for money will continue.

2.1 Performance summary: creating stronger, healthier communities

- We have performed well in supporting our younger adults with a learning disability to live independently or at home with their families, therefore ensuring they achieve the best possible outcomes in their day to day lives.
- The newly formed Care Dorset is showing positive impacts on our reablement provision, maintaining people's independence.
- The number of working age adults with a learning disability in paid employment continues to be a challenge; however, we have seen increasing numbers of individuals with mental health conditions in paid employment. A different focus on improving outcomes for people will see an improvement in this area from April 2023.
- Ongoing demand in respect of hospital discharge is placing continued pressures on adult social care and our permanent placements into residential and nursing care homes have exceeded target. However, our focus on Home First and reablement should see this position

improve throughout the next year. Hospital discharge pressures continue to be a challenge for adult social care and the wider health system. Additional funding from central government has enabled us to discharge more people from hospital into reablement and back home.

- Close partnership working with our providers is ensuring that we keep people safe. Our Safeguarding position remains positive and above target.
- Domestic abuse cases continue to decrease following extensive work with partners to establish services and develop initiatives and interventions to support people.
- Carers play a really important role in supporting people who need care and support. We have increased the number of carers assessments completed each month through our work with partners and this measure remains within desired target levels.
- The numbers of reported crimes and anti-social behaviour cases have remained relatively stable across Dorset and within target levels.
- We have seen a positive and gradual increase in the number of children supported within early help over the last year, indicating that we are supporting more families at an earlier stage.
- We have seen a positively gradual increase in the number of children supported within early help over the last year (1,387 at the end March '23), indicating that we are supporting more families at an earlier stage.
- A good gauge of success of social care intervention is a low percentage of re-referrals (within 12 months of previous referral) to social care. We have performed consistently strongly with this indicator over the last 12 months and on a quarterly basis have been within target at under 20%.
- We continue to support a high number (and rate) of Children in Need in Dorset. Increases in complex referrals have led to an increase in children assessed to require statutory support.
- We support children on a child protection plan when they are at risk of significant harm. This number peaked at 342 in April 22 and there has been a clear focus on bringing this figure down, which has now reduced back to 308 at the end of March 23 against a target aim of 280.
- For our children in care, there continues to be good focus on permanence planning and reunification. Over the last year the number of Children in Care has been gradually reducing (437 children at end of March 2023) working towards a target of 420. The Nation Transfer Scheme has led to Dorset taking increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children into care (and these numbers are set to rise). When removing these children from our in-care numbers we have reduced to 403 children which is comfortably within target and the lowest since Dorset Council formed.

- The average caseload of lead social workers has remained within target over the last year (15.84 at end of March '23) and we have seen a positive recent recruitment drive.
- The percentage of children with an Education Health and Care Plan issued within 20 weeks has fluctuated throughout the year dropping to 41% in December '22 but has seen an improvement to 71.7% on time in March '23. A clear focus on improving this performance is in place with action plans within specific localities.
- Care leavers in bed and breakfast accommodation continues to be an area of very close scrutiny for the council. We have seen the number increase to 6 at end of March and we continue to work very closely with our Housing colleagues to support this reduction to 0.

2.2 Annual update on action plan delivery: creating stronger, healthier communities

Completed	In progress	Not yet started
5	25	0

There has been good progress across the work defined in the priority including 5 fully completed activities:

- Care Dorset, the new provider delivering Adult Social Care services for our Dorset residents went live in October 2022. This was the replacement for the services previously provided by Tricuro. Since then, Care Dorset has progressed well. The new company had an unannounced inspection by the regulator in March '23 and received a good CQC rating for reablement, as a result.
- A new children's residential home in Weymouth was opened in October 2023 and welcomed its first residents in November 2023.
- The Harbour Service has been launched and is delivering outreach and residential provision to young people. This continues to provide an effective approach for supporting young people to remain in the care of their families through the delivery of outreach. As at the end of September 2022, 153 young people have been supported since December 2020. Of these 100 young people who were on the edge of care were supported by outreach. Only 6 young people entered care meaning that 94% children were supported to remain at home.
- Local accommodation for Dorset's care leavers was opened in Weymouth in April 2023. This is providing homes for up to twelve young people leaving care.
- A new model to support and retain foster carers and improve stability has been established, called the Mockingbird Model. Three constellations have been launched within the local foster carers network and the fourth and fifth are due to be launched in 2023.

Good progress has been made against the following:

- The Strategic Alliance, stakeholders from across Dorset's partnership, including Children's Services, Police, NHS Dorset, Dorset Healthcare, Schools, Early Years settings, Fire and Rescue and Representatives covering 3500 voluntary and community sector organisations, have progressed our Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2020-23 improving outcomes for children, young people and families in the communities of Dorset. We are updating our plan, to a bold and ambitious ten-year plan, building on the success of our 2020-23 plan and meeting the emerging changes to legislation, government policy and the priorities of our communities, putting families at the heart of everything we do. This is on-track.
- As part of the delivery of our Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2020-23, we have established the Dorset Education Board. The Education Board drives forward one of the priorities in our Children, Young People & Families' Plan, 'Best Education for All'. This is on-track.
- Continued delivery of the Holiday Activity and Food Programme over a wide range of venues and expanding access to activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities as well as those eligible for Free School Meals.
- We are working in partnership with others including schools/early years settings, Citizens' Advice in Dorset and Age UK, we have supported people through DWP funded Household Support Fund, getting money into resident's pockets to help with the cost of living.
- We have welcomed Ofsted to our early years provision and to our Youth Justice Service which highlighted areas of strength.
- Awarded a contract to Bournemouth Churches Housing Association to deliver PAUSE – a programme to support women who have had multiple children removed from their care which we know will offer them much better support but also prevent the likelihood of this happening in the future.
- Delivered a 'healthy movers' project in East Dorset which has proven not only to help with physical activity but to improve wellbeing and speech and language too.
- Supported young people to take part in local democracy through our youth parliament elections, youth council and in the Takeover challenge to enable them to have their say in how services are run.
- Continued distributing over £100k in grants per year to local youth organisations to create activities and opportunities for young people.
- Created the [Pineapple](#) project in the local community in Weymouth to help girls feel more safe in their communities.
- Building a partnership with the [My Time](#) charity to provide more support for young carers.
- We have secured funding for children's services through some successful national bids to help us to do more locally including Family

Hubs, supporting young people in residential care to 'Stay Close' to their residential care provision and support for workforce development and our strategy for reducing parental conflict.

- Launched our [Safeguarding Families Together](#) project to embed whole family approaches, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of children living with parental substance use, parental mental ill-health or domestic abuse.
- Continued to deliver our SEND Strategy and continued our investment in increasing SEND Provision through the investment in special school places and inclusion hubs and offering earlier support through our graduated response and agreed a new Accessibility Strategy to seeks to improve accessibility for children with disabilities and improve sense of belonging.
- Opened our first 2 family Hubs in Ferndown and Wareham and agreed a partnership approach to an intergenerational Family Hub in Swanage which will be supported by a Community Asset Transfer.
- Relunched Dorset fostering with new website and branding to increase those who [Foster with Dorset Council](#) and agreed an increase in the fees and allowances for foster carers.
- The library strategy has been developed over 2 phases of consultation. Over 12,500 survey responses were received, and 21 engagement workshops were undertaken, the strategy and action plan have been refined as a result. This will be presented for sign off at Cabinet in July 23.
- The initial stage of the optimising waste routes has been completed. The project is now in the second stage where the model will be refined with an estimated completion date by November/December 23.
- The review of leisure centres has commenced with the initial report on a potential future strategy expected July 23.
- Voluntary & community sector organisations continue to be commissioned for vital infrastructure support. This programme continues to run well with a commitment for 5 years.
- The 'Dorset Together' network of voluntary and community organisations continues to perform well.
- A Feeding Dorset event took place in April 23 to support the food projects across Dorset and was also used to network other support opportunities. The food Security Network continues to be used to provide information and support. 5 pop-up larders now exist with another 10 planned in rural areas of most need in Dorset (NHS funding).

3. Creating sustainable development and housing

The creating sustainable development and housing priority outlines our ambitions to work with government, registered housing providers, community land trusts and local housing partners to deliver affordable,

suitable and decent housing. It also outlines the desire to work with our partners to promote our climate and ecological priorities by providing sustainable services such as rainwater harvesting, solar panels and other such approaches. The overall outcome of the priority looks to deliver sustainable and suitable housing for all now and in the future.

3.1 Performance summary: creating sustainable development and housing

- The number of households in B&B continues to be higher than desired at 129 in March 23, compared with 100 for the same period last year. The ongoing work of the homeless and housing solutions teams is helping us to reduce numbers where possible.
- 15 % of families with children and pregnant women in B&B exceeding 6 week stays in March 23, which is higher than the same period last year, but down from a peak of 27% in December 22. A lack of family sized accommodation and the dominance of the Airbnb market is an ongoing challenge.
- We are projecting the delivery of 611 affordable homes in the Dorset area and have also seen an increase in the completion of shared ownership properties. More funding is being made available to support low-cost home ownership.
- Demands on the service in respect of homeless cases are increasing as are the complexity of cases. Homeless approaches were 3996 in 2022/23 compared to 3408 in 2021/22. The cost-of-living crisis and ongoing interest rate increases are a significant factor. The increased demand has also impacted on the ability to undertake prevention activity.

3.2 Annual update on action plan delivery: creating sustainable development and housing

Completed	In progress	Not yet started
0	11	0

This priority of the council plan contains four activities which are led within housing and seven which are led within the Place directorate. As an overall reflection on progress all activities are in progress with all reported with either manageable or no concerns.

Reflecting upon the delivery of the four activities within housing, there has been good progress to date:

- From a strategic perspective the service is on-track with the production of the Housing Strategy which is due to be considered by cabinet in December 2023.

- A good start has been made towards the ambition of ten empty properties being brought back into use, with a former empty property in Blandford being opened during April 2023.
- There has been significant progress towards the target of 400 sustainable homes to be built per year. Forecasts show that 450 affordable homes are due to be built by end of March 2023, exceeding the original target of 400.
- To increase the amount of temporary accommodation that is available funding has been agreed to acquire 30 family homes. These will initially be utilised for temporary accommodation for Ukrainian and Afghan households. Further funding is being acquired via the Rough Sleeper Action Plan as part of a government grant.
- There has been progress in the prevention of homelessness which has led to the number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation not rising, despite a significant rise (31%) in number of people presenting as about to be homeless. Relationships with registered providers of social housing are continuing well with a quarterly liaison meeting in place.

Reflecting on the seven activities within the Place directorate there has again been good progress:

- From a strategic perspective progress on the new local plan is continuing in accordance with the milestones in the Local Development Scheme (with joint working on the long-term plan). Final adoption of this is dependent upon the examination completed by an independently appointed inspector.
- As part of the local plan a new settlement for Dorset will be progressed. There is ongoing work to robustly assess against evidence to ensure that any environmental issues can be addressed.
- Planning transformation is on track, with all legacy planning systems converged. This success is being built on by continued customer focused improvements to the online register.
- To progress towards a planning policy which encourages developers to integrate renewable energy approaches, a position statement was considered at Cabinet in March and consultation will now commence.
- Due to uncertainty over the transitional arrangements with proposed changes to the national planning system and challenges in connection with nutrient neutrality requirements there is some risk over the housing delivery targets. This is being monitored and should be resolved with the adoption of a new local plan.
- To work towards the activity that all developments will be designed in line with the 'planning for the future' white paper and the 'levelling up and regeneration' bill, local plan milestones will allow for the new plan to be aligned with the revised planning system once it is agreed at parliament.

4. Driving economic prosperity

The driving economic prosperity priority outlines our ambitions to support sustainable economic growth across the county, enabling high-quality jobs through improvements to productivity, sustainability, and accessibility, creating great places to live, work and visit.

During the first year of the refreshed council plan the national landscape was shifting and regional policy was being amended by the levelling up agenda. Dorset Council made a successful bid in 2022 securing £19.5m.

4.1 Performance summary: driving economic prosperity

- 20,600 businesses in Dorset. An increase of 310 from last year.
- 82 business births per 10,000 working-age population. An improvement from 71 in 2021.
- 1.7% unemployment rate. A fall from 4.4% for the same period last year, following the pattern seen in England and the Southwest. The unemployment rates in England, SW and Dorset are now back to pre-covid levels.
- 74.8% employment rate, down from 75.4%. Although the employment rate has decreased, the unemployment rate has not increased. Instead, more people have become economically inactive, meaning they are not actively participating in the labour force or seeking employment. This may be because they've chosen to take early retirement, are long-term sick, a student or looking after family.
- 2.4% Claimant count rate. Slightly better than the rate last year of 2.8%.
- 500 new jobs in the Maritime sector, 1000 new jobs in Advanced Engineering sector, 3000 new jobs in Tourism, 1000 new jobs in the Care sector, 0 new jobs in the Agritech sector.
- £579 average weekly earnings for full time jobs in Dorset in 2022, up from £549 in 2021. This compares to £611 in the South West and £646 in England.
- 7.3% of jobs pay below the Living Wage (as defined by the Living Wage Foundation), down from 18.5% in the previous year. The fall was also seen nationally and may reflect increases in the minimum wage, or a change in the mix of part-time and full-time workers.
- £31.90 Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour. Up from £30.60 in the previous year. Still a big gap the UK which is £37.70.
- 11x house prices to residence-based earnings ratio. This was the highest ratio on record. Previous year was 9.6. This compares to 9x in the South West and 8x in England.

- The gap in attainment between children who are eligible for Free School Meals and those who are not (the 'Disadvantage Gap') for English and Maths GCSEs 5+ is 26% compared to national 27%. However, this figure needs to be considered in the context that our non-disadvantaged pupils are not performing well. 25% disadvantaged pupils achieving 5+ Basics compared to 30% nationally.
- The percentage disadvantaged gap in achievement across all Early Learning Goals is 29% compared to 20% nationally (non FSM eligible pupils in Dorset are 1% above national at 68%, FSM eligible are 8% below).
- Key Stage 1 disadvantaged attainment gap - For reading the gap in Dorset is the same as national. The gap for writing is 5% higher than national and 3% higher for maths. In both cases it is similar to the South-West.
- The disadvantaged gap for the combined reading/writing/maths at Key Stage 2 is 25% in Dorset compared to 23% national (27% in the South West). This smaller gap is in fact due to lower attainment in Dorset by both groups – Disadvantaged are 7% below national and non-disadvantaged are 5% below.
- 45% of Dorset pupils achieved a grade 5 or higher in English and Maths at Key Stage 4 compared to 50% nationally (49% in the South-West and 47% for our authorities like us). This is due largely to low attainment in Maths where girls are 5% below national and Dorset is in the bottom 20% of local authorities.
- Percentage of children with 'a good level of development' at early years foundation stage indicating school readiness - Overall, 66% of Dorset children achieved a 'good level of development' in 2021/22, 1% above national.
- Percentage of children achieving expected standard at KS2 at reading, writing and maths in Dorset is 4% below national (55% compared to 59%). Dorset is below national for all subjects, with Maths a particular concern. The Dorset Education Board, bringing together representatives from across the sector, is bringing a sharp focus on achievement at Key Stage 2, with a particular emphasis on Maths. The Board has a task and finish group focussing on Maths
- Suspension rates have been increasing post pandemic. Dorset had rates below national for Spring 2021/22 (the last nationally available comparable data): 2.27 compared to 2.4 nationally. However, internal data suggests this has risen to a rate of 3.5 for the spring term 2022/23.
- The most recently available comparable data shows a significant reduction in permanent exclusions in Dorset. In the spring term 2021/22 the rate per 10,000 of the school population in Dorset was 0.1, compared to 0.3 nationally and in the South-West. However internal data would suggest that these rates are increasing.

- Absenteeism and the rates of those deemed persistently absent (missing 10% or more of sessions) have risen significantly over the last few years. The most recent comparable data shows the Dorset absence rate of children in schools in 2021/22 was above national at 8.2%, up from 5.1% in 2017/18. The number of severe and persistent absentees have doubled from the years prior to Covid. Dorset held an attendance workshop in September 2022 which was attended by over 80 delegates from schools, health, police, youth justice service as well as Dorset Council Officers. This led to the development of the Dorset Attendance Strategy and Plan which is being delivered through locality attendance networks

4.2 Annual update on action plan delivery: driving economic prosperity

Completed	In progress	Not yet started
4	40	3

Throughout 2023/24 the plans will be developed, the economic growth strategy reviewed, and implementation will begin.

There has been good progress across the work defined in the priority including 4 fully completed activities:

- Levelling Up Funding of £19.5m secured
- Completion of the 5G RuralDorset programme
- Superfast connectivity expanded working with BDUK
- Ultrafast connectivity maximised across Dorset utilising grant funding secured from Building Dorset UK (BDUK), the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Areas of the delivery plan that are not yet started include the following:

- The 5G adoption programme will commence following announcement of competition and potential funding from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. This is expected in Spring 2023.
- The Dorset Digital Innovation Network is not yet in place however the strategic business case is in preparation. This will commence following an initial development session with commercial partners.
- Innovation for digital connectivity in relation to wireless broadband is dependent on additional funding being secured. This work is currently awaiting the outcome of a £570k bid to the Rural Fund.

Improvement activity that is underway and on track include:

- The Dorset shared prosperity fund investment plan was fully approved in January 2023 and a local partnership has been formed resulting in the commencement of the cost-of-living support programme.

- Project delivery of the £19.5m levelling up fund for Dorset has commenced with work secured for Weymouth peninsula, New Bond Street sites and for the demolition of North Quay.
- A commercial development 'Quadrant 2' at Dorset Innovation Park is in progress with contractors approved to start in 2023. This will provide additional facilities for sector investment and lead to new job opportunities in the county.
- We have so far committed £1m to community and £2.5m for business support to supply grants to businesses.
- The future farm resilience fund programme has been available since October 2022, providing support to farmers and land managers during agricultural transition.
- The Dorset education board is independently chaired and has been established focusing on working together to deliver opportunities and tackling the challenges of the education system in Dorset.
- The shared prosperity fund is providing Dorset with £6m over 3 years for skills development. An investment plan has been developed and from September 2022 work to provide additional numeracy skills support to adults was underway and in delivery through the 'multiply' investment plan.
- Dorset Council is committed to increasing social value and as such contracts awards by the council continue to encourage supply chains to support skills development and training opportunities for Dorset residents.
- Delivery of Phase 1 of the Defence Innovation Centre (BattleLab) has begun, with the aim of maximising the catalytic opportunity to attract further investment in Dorset Innovation Park.

There has also significant progress made in relation to digital, innovation, skills and connectivity:

- Residents have been supported to access and use digital tools including the supply of over 200 devices during and after the pandemic. A programme to supply a further 500 devices is in place for delivery by March 2025.
- Embedded digital champions to support residents with increasing their digital skills and confidence continue to be successfully received. Over 800 frontline employees are already delivering this support to communities they work with.
- Funding from the Local Government Association has been committed to train five new fibre engineers in Dorset helping to fill the skills gap as the Dorset network is improved.
- A coding day was held for Dorset schools with over 2000 students learning and exploring their digital skills, supported by Dorset Council, BCP Council and 25 local tech companies.

- We continue to successfully work with Building Dorset UK to ensure Dorset benefits at the earliest stage for funding and pilots under the new UK gigabit programme.

5. **Becoming a more responsive, customer focused council**

Becoming a more responsive, customer focussed council covers a wide breadth of our organisation, with a focus on how we work as one council to deliver effective value for money services for our customers and our organisation. The scope includes how our customers contact us, customer engagement, our way of operating, digital, technology, accessibility, data intelligence and records, building in our communities, our employee organisational development strategy and our financial model.

The launch of the 'Our Future Council Programme' working with Local Partnerships is a positive step towards bringing the direction needed for future ways of working for the organisation. The business case is currently in development and will be submitted to Cabinet in November providing detail of the opportunities for Dorset through this whole-organisational change programme.

However, as an organisation we're not waiting for the accelerating customer transformation work to commence, and 'in-progress' activity continues and will be aligned in due course. In recent months examples of progress include: the launch of the first version of the online customer account, our data & business intelligence strategy, parking services customer contact moving into Dorset Direct, a new one council out of hours service and the sign video service which provides a video relay service for customers whose preferred choice of communication is British sign language.

5.1 **Performance summary: becoming a more responsive, customer focussed council**

- Our customer satisfaction surveys across a number of services have maintained excellent levels of satisfaction.
- We have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of complaints managed by the corporate claims team – from 545 in 2021/22 to 773 in 2022/23. This continues an ongoing increase of 166% since 2019.
- We had 882,000 visits to our libraries in 2022/23, a considerable increase on the previous year. In addition, we reviewed our new 10-year Library strategy which will look to the future of Dorset's libraries, and how they can best meet the needs of local residents and communities, now and in the future.
- Dorset Direct handled 288,722 contacts across a range of enquiries with 81% of customers' requests resolved at first point of contact,

avoiding the need for multiple interactions with other services across the council.

5.2 Annual update on action plan delivery: becoming a more responsive, customer focused council

Completed	In progress	Not yet started
1	21	9

Progress across this priority has reported 1 area fully completed:

- We have published a Data and Business Intelligence strategy, as approved by Cabinet in February 2023. Work is underway to develop and deliver the organisational wide action plan.

There are 9 areas of the delivery plan that are not yet, or only just started and as such we are not in a position to yet measure impact:

- In conjunction with changes to the way we work, we will deliver more customer focussed services which will result in a leaner application portfolio and roadmap, integrated systems and processes which provide good experiences for our internal and external customers – First workshop related to Application Portfolio Management was held on 4 May 2023.
- We will seek to increasing the number of residents who think the council delivers value for money through our commercial strategy and approach. This will include improvements to the way we transact with our customers.
- By 2026, a review of how local depots are used and managed will be complete.
- We will undertake regular self-assessment of our data culture, using data maturity to show improvement - this is going to be a piece of work which is implemented as part of the data and BI strategy.
- We will work closely with our partners to overcome barriers to join up and improve the quality of our data – some activity has taken place with regard to improving data quality such as driving up the number of NHS numbers stored on customer records.
- We will encourage a culture where the importance of data is understood by everyone within the council – some activity has taken place, for example with regard to data quality improvements within the SEND service, this will be more broadly addressed as part of the data and BI strategy.
- We will provide learning and development for staff to understand the power of sharing data as well as the legal, moral and financial implications – to be addressed as part of the data and BI strategy.
- We will bring together operational data to support a better service to customers and strategic level data to help ensure better outcomes and

decisions by the council and with our partners - to be addressed as part of the data and BI strategy.

- We will review our ways of working to improve the way we respond to customers on common transactions e.g. enquiries and payments. This will also include a review and alignment of the internal systems used.

There has been significant progress made:

- By 2023 we will publish our customer strategy (now called Our Future Council) and a transformation plan to achieve a modern, customer first operating model by 2030.
- We will reduce the number of ways customers contact the council and bring more high-volume customer management and assessment into our professional customer services, Dorset Direct. Previous customer transformation work has taken place with parking services which included a transition of the way customers contact them to using Dorset Direct in November 22. A One Council Out of hours services for Dorset Council went live in October 22, this has consolidated numerous out of hours offerings. Conversations are also taking place about the future model for how customers contact adult services. The Accelerating Customer Transformation programme will build on these changes as part of the future operating model for the Council.
- Embed our accessibility principles and assessment guidance within our strategy plans to ensure we create accessible, inclusive, and easy to use services for our customers. In March 2023 a SignVideo service was launched for our customers who use sign language as their preferred means of communicating.
- We will develop our new customer platform and customer account following the initial soft launch in April 23. This will be developed to provide easy to use, accessible, services, increasing the number of customers using online services independently or with assistance.
- We will underpin the delivery of how we work in the future through our continued development of our strategy for automation and self-service. To achieve this, we will invest and explore advances in technology, automation, artificial intelligence and digital ways of delivering services to increase productivity and help manage demand.
- The council's engagement and consultation processes have been reviewed and a new platform is being embedded in summer 2023. This will ensure improvements in the way that residents' views are sought, listened to and acted on.
- Our medium-term financial strategy will continue to act as a key financial tool that drives good financial decision making and supports strategy, transformation and commercial thinking.
- We are working to enhance our commissioning activity through effective market shaping so that we are able to meet need in the most-cost effective way. This commercial approach is set out in the Commercial Strategy approved by cabinet.

- A new approach, working with the Dorset ICS will support activity to better engage with customers. This is focused on in depth qualitative engagement.
- The Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy and refreshed action plan is being implemented to ensure Dorset Council continues to meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010. This work includes a network which is providing opportunities for customer collaboration and problem-solving ways to remove barriers to accessibility.
- We will deliver a new asset management strategy, rationalising our property, co-locating services and developing our commercial approach to property. This is due to be complete by the end of 2023.
- An efficient, hybrid way of working for all council employees has been implemented and in 2023 further work will ensure the best use of office accommodation.
- A refresh of our People Strategy is planned for 2023/24 which will support and develop skills within leadership and workforce, recognising talent, improving retention and embedding diversity and inclusion and helping employees to feel ready for change.
- Work to improve Dorset's brand as an employer is underway and is helping to showcase our opportunities so we can recruit and retain the best people. Efforts have been reflected in the success of the 'Work for Dorset' social media campaign which has seen impressive growth in the last six months.
- The number of users of the Dorset Care Record is increasing, with an average of 81,265 user logins per month recorded in 2022/23, reaching over 100,000 in March 2023. In 2023 an adults alert feed has also been successfully added to the system.
- Progress is continuing to modernise the way information and case records are stored and accessed, supporting an agile workforce and an improved customer experience when records or information is requested.

6. Financial Implications

The Dorset Council Plan and Delivery Plan 2022-24 is costed and will be delivered in line with the council's budget strategy and medium-term financial plan (MTFP).

The MTFP shows how we intend to ensure that money will be prioritised to those services that matter most to residents and how the council will re-shape itself to be better able to deliver those services within the available funding. This year's budget setting exercise takes place against a national and global background of extreme pressures for councils. There is high and sustained inflation and we have seen a prolonged period of political instability. The war in Ukraine and its humanitarian and economic consequences are also being felt globally.

7. Environmental Implications

Dorset Council is committed to delivering the Natural Environment, Climate and Ecological strategy and as such, the new council plan incorporates a priority to ensure delivery of this. The purpose of our council plan is to ensure a joined-up and consistent approach across all council services to ensure that we improve access to and use of Dorset's natural environment in a sustainable way which protects it for future generations, as well as reducing our impact on the climate.

8. Well-being and Health Implications

The council continues to deliver services to support residents with their specific needs. The Council Plan is designed to impact positively on the well-being and health of all through the joined up, consistent delivery of over 450 services. This includes the provision of universal and specialist services to residents and businesses alongside benefits driven from responsible management of the natural environment.

9. Other Implications

None

10. Risk Assessment

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

11. Equalities Impact Assessment

We are committed to ensuring fair and accessible services for everyone in Dorset through the delivery of services and improvements as set out in our council plan. Where the council will make changes to a service or offer, an equality impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure due regard of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The overall council plan has not been the subject of a separate equality impact assessment but the changes upon which delivery of the plan will depend will themselves be subject to impact assessments.

12. Appendices

Appendix A: Updated Council Plan Delivery Plan

13. Background Papers

Dorset Council Plan 2022-24 approved by Council in October 2022

Dorset Council Delivery Plan 2022-24 approved by Council in October 2022

Dorset Council's Delivery Plan

2022 - 2024



Updated: May 2023



Protecting our natural environment, climate and ecology

We will improve access to and use of Dorset’s environment in a sustainable way which protects it for future generations.

Amendments to the plan since last update:

- The following two actions:
 - There will have been an improvement in air, land and water quality since last measured
 - We will have protected our wildlife and local species
 have been merged for monitoring and reporting purposes into the following action which is also already in the plan “An ecological baseline will be undertaken as part of the 2030 aspirations”

- The following action:
 - Energy and water efficient technologies will have been installed in our properties
 has been merged with the following action which is already in the plan “We will continue to reduce the carbon emissions from our estate utilising efficient renewable energy supplies such as solar power”

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Outcome	How we will achieve it	Lead role / service
Contributing towards Dorset having 30% of land in positive management by 2030	We will develop a local nature recovery strategy	Head of Environment and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Contributing towards Dorset having 30% of land in positive management by 2030	We will strengthen partnership working to support the aspirations of the ecological emergency programme at scale, working closely with the Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Head of Environment and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Contributing towards Dorset having 30% of land in positive management by 2030	We will work across the farm estate to develop the innovation potential across renewable energy generation and technologies, agricultural and business development, and ecology and nature recovery.	Head of Environment and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

Dorset Council will be carbon-neutral by 2040	New bidding capability will be in place to attract government funding to enable the council to meet its net zero target by 2040	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset Council will be carbon-neutral by 2040	We will continue the decarbonisation of the Dorset Council vehicle fleet including expansion of electric vehicles by 2024	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Our highways, coasts and greenspaces will be managed and maintained more efficiently	A joined-up delivery approach will be implemented for place-based management and maintenance including assets, highways and coast and greenspaces	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset Council will be carbon-neutral by 2040	We will continue to reduce the carbon emissions from our estate utilising efficient renewable energy supplies such as solar power	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset Council will be carbon-neutral by 2040	A new carbon and ecological decision-making tool will be integrated into council decision-making	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset Council will be carbon-neutral by 2040	Employee and councillor carbon and ecological literacy training models will be available	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset county area will be carbon neutral by 2050	A comprehensive engagement approach will be developed with residents, businesses, and town and parish councils	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset county area will be carbon neutral by 2050	Dorset Council will source external funds to deliver against its 2050 ambitions, with a focus on housing and transport	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset county area will be carbon neutral by 2050	We will facilitate an increase in renewable energy generation across Dorset	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

Dorset county area will be carbon neutral by 2050	We will shape supporting and underpinning policies such as the local transport plan, economic development strategy, and local plan to enable and support decarbonisation.	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset county area will be carbon neutral by 2050	We will manage the impact of waste on the Dorset environment by implementing a reduce and reuse campaign, increasing recycling rates and reducing the volume of waste to landfill	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
We will better avoid or reduce exposure to climate risks by adapting how we respond to them	We will deliver an adaptation strategy setting out how we will adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient	Corporate Director Climate & Ecological Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Harbour processes will have been improved to make it easier for visitors to access services consistently	We will respond to the harbour revision orders, provide a more consistent customer experience when moving from harbour to harbour and align fees and charges	Head of Environment and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Contributing towards Dorset having 30% of land in positive management by 2030	An ecological baseline will be undertaken as part of the 2030 aspirations	Head of Environment and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment



Creating stronger, healthier communities

We will enable our residents, working with partners, to develop strong networks of support and maintain strong communities. We will focus on the most vulnerable in our communities to improve wellbeing and reduce inequality through collaboration between public services, community leaders, residents and voluntary groups.

There have been no amendments to the plan since it was adopted in October 2022.

Outcome	How we will achieve it	Lead role / service
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	Care Dorset, a new company for delivering care will be in place from October 2022	Executive Director for Adults Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	There will be a plan in place to deliver the Adult Social Care White Paper	Executive Director for Adults Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	A locality model will have been established to deliver early intervention in adult social care	Executive Director for Adults Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	A carers' strategy will have been developed and implemented	Executive Director for Adults Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	The children's and adults' commissioning strategy will have been developed and will be implemented	Executive Director for Adults and Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across	A 0-25 birth to settled adulthood offer will have been established to improve the way we support children and young people as they move from Children's to Adult services	Executive Director for Adults and Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Adult Social

universal, targeted and specialist services		Care and Health Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	The Children's Residential Home in Dorchester Road will be open and providing placements for Dorset's children	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	The Harbour Service will be delivering outreach and residential provision to young people	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	Accommodation for Dorset's Care Leavers will be available in Kirtleton Avenue	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	We will have embedded specialist workers with children's social workers to operate a single practice model of whole family working by 2025	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	A new model to support and retain foster carers and improve stability will be established	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	The 0-5 offer through the provision of family hubs within the community will have been embedded	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	The council will deliver its SEND capital strategy to deliver over 500 new specialist provision places by 2025	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	The Children's Plan 2020 – 2023 will have been delivered	Executive Director for Children Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	The council will have an effective preventative offer	Service Manager for Community Safety Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety
Effective networks of support in place for residents across universal, targeted and specialist services	Dorset will be a safer county	Service Manager for Community Safety Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety
Visible, appealing and welcoming spaces for residents to access help and support and rationalisation of existing provision to be fit for purpose and flexible to meet changing needs	The customer strategy and new approach to responding to residents first contact will be developed (But is this already covered in Customer Focused group)	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Visible, appealing and welcoming spaces for residents to access help and support and rationalisation of existing provision to be fit for purpose and flexible to meet changing needs	Adults' day services will have been reviewed to improve opportunities for care and support needs	Corporate Director for Adult Care Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health
Delivery of best-in-class service provision driving high customer satisfaction whilst delivering best value and a reduction in inequality	A new library strategy and delivery plan will be published and being implemented	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Delivery of best-in-class service provision driving high customer satisfaction whilst delivering best value and a reduction in inequality	We will have reviewed all waste routes across the county and optimised in terms of efficiency of service, cost and carbon footprint by 2025	Corporate Director for Place Services Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Delivery of best-in-class service provision driving high customer satisfaction whilst delivering best value and a reduction in inequality	We will have reviewed the leisure services offer and implemented modern delivery models that are sustainable for the future by 2026	Corporate Director for Place Services Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	We will be an active partner of the Integrated Care System for Dorset and the Dorset Intelligence and Insight Service	Senior Leadership Team Leader of the Council

Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	By 2026, we will have delivered an effective care framework to enable procurement as part of the ICS, created a platform for local strength and asset-bases approaches and completed a review of adult brokerage systems and processes	Senior Leadership Team Leader of the Council
Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	The Better Life Programme and Greater Partnership Programmes will be successfully concluded	Executive Director for Adults Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health
Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment will be updated	Director for Public Health
Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	Voluntary and community sector organisations will be commissioned to provide vital infrastructure support: including information and advice to residents struggling financially, organisation development and strategic voice for the voluntary sector, and management of volunteering opportunities	Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	Grant funding will be provided to a range of voluntary and community sector organisations across Dorset to deliver work that contributes to achieving the Council Plan priorities	Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	The 'Dorset Together' network of voluntary and community organisations will jointly tackle emerging issues alongside the council and other public sector partners	Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Effective relationships between the council, health, statutory partners and the VCSE sector	A new Enabling Communities strategy will be developed, outlining a council-wide approach to how we work with communities	Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Identify and enhance strengths and abilities of local communities	Community support to reduce food poverty will be embedded and improving the lives of residents	Chris Ricketts, Head of Programmes



Creating sustainable development and housing

We will work with government, registered housing providers, community land trusts and local housing partners to deliver affordable, suitable and decent housing. We will seek their support to help us promote our climate and ecological priorities by providing sustainable services such as rainwater harvesting, solar panels and other such approaches.

There have been no amendments to the plan since it was adopted in October 2022.

Outcome	How we will achieve it	Lead role / service
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	Alternatives will be found to bed and breakfast accommodation for those who are homeless and need short term support. These will be cost-effective and of a decent quality and will cause an incremental reduction in the number of households accommodated in bed and breakfasts. No family will be in bed and breakfast accommodation for greater than six weeks	Corporate Director Housing Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	The new Local Plan will be agreed by 2026 and work on a 30-year plan will be started	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Planning
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	There will have been significant progress in developing a new settlement for Dorset	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Planning
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	Homes will have been delivered in line with land supply target and the local plan	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Planning
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	Dorset Council will be working on a new housing strategy, considering all aspects of housing need, demand, supply and quality. This will link with a range of key council priorities and strategies, recognising that good housing is essential for a good life	Corporate Director Housing Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	The housing strategy will support: 1. At least 10 long-term empty properties to be brought back into use for housing purposes, as part of a wider set of initiatives to reduce the number of potential homes remaining empty 2. The build of 1200 new affordable homes by Registered Providers at 400	Corporate Director Housing Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety

	<p>per year</p> <p>3. At least 20 new and additional units of temporary accommodation acquired per year, as part of a wider drive to find housing for people and families who are either homeless or in urgent housing need</p> <p>4. An incremental reduction in households with homeless main/relief duties owed, with a higher proportion of people having their housing need settled earlier, and homelessness prevented</p>	
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	A continued relationship with Registered Providers of social housing will ensure that the quality of services and accommodation is kept high or improved, with complaints responded to in a timely way. An annual report of performance from all registered provider housing associations with greater than 250 homes in our area will be requested to review performance	Corporate Director Housing Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	Dorset Council will be working with government on a strategically based new Local Plan linked to the local transport plan	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Planning
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	There will be a single planning system in place across the county supported by an increase in public engagement in the planning process and improvements including the redesign of the online register	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Planning
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	We will implement planning policy to encourage developers to integrate renewable energy approaches	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Planning
Sustainable, and suitable housing for all, now and in the future	All developments will be designed in line with the 'planning for the future' white paper and the 'levelling up and regeneration' bill	Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Planning



Driving economic prosperity

We will enable sustainable economic growth across the county, enabling high quality jobs through improvements to productivity, sustainability, and accessibility, creating great places to live, work and visit. We will drive forward a plan whereby Dorset Council is a catalyst for prosperity and growth, working with and supporting local businesses and partners.

Amendments have been made to the following outcome since the last update:

- “*Digital connectivity is widely available*” has been amended to “Digital skills - Help Dorset residents improve their digital skills so they can access council and other essential services easily”. This better reflects the outcome being achieved from the activities.

Amendments have been made to the following six activities since the last update:

- Changed to: Digital Doorway #1 and #2 - Continue to help people get online through the provision of devices and data to provide digital access for all. Remove the barriers to getting online for people, use data to identify cohorts most in need eg digitally excluded child. Use creative means to maximise the number of devices donated to the community by working closely with VCSE partners. *Replaced: Gigabit capable (full fibre) networks will have risen from 24% to 85% by 2025*
- Changed to: Digital Infrastructure Skills - Explore opportunities to fill the skills gap and provide more trained fibre engineers to build the Dorset network. *Replaced: 2G coverage of A and B roads will have increased from 42.6%*
- Changed to: Embedded Digital Champions - Encourage people in the community to use council online services, and utilise opportunities to increase their digital skills. Extend initial target of 1,000 frontline staff in line with demand from this and partner organisations. *Replaced: The rural connected community’s programme will be being delivered*
- Changed to: Our commercial activity will seek to maximise social value by awarding contracts that encourage our supply chains to support skills development, training, and apprenticeship opportunities for Dorset residents. *Replaced: New contracts with Dorset Council will include skills development, training and apprenticeship opportunities for Dorset’s residents*
- Changed to: There has been an % increase of council’s third party spend with Dorset firms. *Replaced: There will have been an % increase in the number of Dorset based firms accessing training on public procurement requirements and accessing public sector frameworks and contracts*
- Changed to: Volunteer Digital Champions - Remove the barriers to online connectivity for people. Extend the project to reach more learners by creating new opportunities for different demographics to access help. *Replaced: Ubiquitous full fibre will be available by 2028/2033*

These changes have been undertaken to better reflect the progressive activity underway and have been agreed by the Digital Place Board.

Outcome	How we will achieve it	Lead role / service
Digital Innovation for economic growth	5G Adoption Programme	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Innovation for economic growth	5G RuralDorset Inciteful 5G testbeds and trials with research reports on how mobile connectivity can facilitate delivery of council services and our corporate priorities. Four outcome-based workstreams: - Future of Food - Rural Business Accelerator - Connected Coast - Innovation Accelerator - Coastal Cliff Monitoring	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2023, dedicated support for growth in high value sectors, including advanced engineering/manufacturing, defence, security, agritech, marine, aquaculture, and tourism is available	Head of Service for Growth & Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to create jobs and wealth for local people	By 2023, Dorset's largest employers receive regular communication and interaction to form relationships where mutual opportunities and challenges can be shared with relevant partners	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to create jobs and wealth for local people	By 2023, phase 1 of the Defence Innovation Centre will be delivered, maximising the catalytic opportunity to attract further investment in Dorset Innovation Park	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
There are more level 4+ qualifications and apprenticeships available, appropriate for the workplace of tomorrow	By 2023, the 'multiply' investment plan will be developed, approved and in delivery phase to provide additional support to adults with numeracy skills	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property

Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to create jobs and wealth for local people	By 2023, the 'Visit Dorset' suite of websites will be receiving over 2 million visits a year, raising the global profile of Dorset	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2023, the Dorset Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan will deliver a new approach to investment in local business support, that features a range of commissioned and directly delivered services including business grants, specialist advice and mentoring, and workforce skills support	Head of Service for Growth & Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2023, the Future Farm Resilience Fund programme will be available (subject to funding approval)	Head of Service for Growth & Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
There are more level 4+ qualifications and apprenticeships available, appropriate for the workplace of tomorrow	By 2023, the Skills Commission will make recommendations to address Dorset's skills-gap	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2024, development will have started on regenerating key sites in Weymouth, including North Quay and the Bowling Alley site	Corporate Director for Assets and Property Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to create jobs and wealth for local people	By 2024, Dorset will have formed a local visitor economy partnership with a range of local partners to address strategic challenges to the sector and access government support and funding	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to create jobs and wealth for local people	By 2024, Quadrant 2 commercial development at Dorset Innovation Park will be delivered	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to	By 2024, resources will be in place to help to exploit opportunities presented by the Department for International Trade's High Investment opportunities (i.e. Sustainable Aquaculture in Dorset; Marine Autonomy in the South West;	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property

create jobs and wealth for local people	Smart and Sustainable Aviation in South West England), including attracting the proposed National Aquaculture Centre of excellence to Dorset	
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2024, the council in partnership with BCP council and the Dorset LEP will have established a dialogue with government for a county deal for the whole of Dorset to enhance and drive economic development and the skills agenda, attracting additional government funding into Dorset	Executive Director for Place Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment Portfolio Holder for Planning
There are more level 4+ qualifications and apprenticeships available, appropriate for the workplace of tomorrow	By 2024, the Dorset Education Board will be embedded	Corporate Director, Education and Learning Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
There are more level 4+ qualifications and apprenticeships available, appropriate for the workplace of tomorrow	By 2024, the Education and Skills Leadership Board will be established	Corporate Director, Education and Learning Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2026, a campaign to create vibrant towns through improvements to town planning will have been launched	Corporate Director for Economic Growth & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
There are more level 4+ qualifications and apprenticeships available, appropriate for the workplace of tomorrow	By 2026, an apprenticeship strategy with a focus on increasing starts in higher and degree level apprenticeships will be developed	Head of Organisational Development Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2026, employment land for development in appropriate locations across Dorset will be safeguarded in the Local Plan	Corporate Director for Assets and Property Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By 2026, the Dorset County Deal will have been agreed with central government and a proposal implemented	Executive Director for Place Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment Portfolio Holder for Planning
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to	By 2033, 9,600 additional local, full time employment jobs will have been created	Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property

create jobs and wealth for local people		
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	By summer 2022, the Levelling Up Fund round 2 bid will have been submitted	Head of Service for Growth & Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
Digital Innovation for economic growth	Connected Place (Weymouth) Understand how connectivity and tech can make a place better to live work and visit	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital skills - Help Dorset residents improve their digital skills so they can access council and other essential services easily <i>Amended from: Digital Connectivity is widely available</i>	Changed to: Digital Doorway #1 and #2 - Continue to help people get online through the provision of devices and data to provide digital access for all. Remove the barriers to getting online for people, use data to identify cohorts most in need eg digitally excluded child. Use creative means to maximise the number of devices donated to the community by working closely with VCSE partners Replaced: Gigabit capable (full fibre) networks will have risen from 24% to 85% by 2025	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Leadership - Promote Dorset as a digital place	Digital Dorset Programme Awareness of Dorset as a digital place, increase opportunities for inward investment, closer co-operation between partners etc	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital skills - Help Dorset residents improve their digital skills so they can access council and other essential services easily <i>Amended from: Digital connectivity is widely available</i>	Changed to: Digital Infrastructure Skills - Explore opportunities to fill the skills gap and provide more trained fibre engineers to build the Dorset network Replaced: 2G coverage of A and B roads will have increased from 42.6%	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital skills - Help Dorset residents improve their digital skills so they can access council and other essential services easily	Digital Skills Partnership - Better shared understanding of existing and potential digital skills training opportunities for the workforce at all levels, from basic to advanced	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation

Digital Connectivity - increase gigabit-capable infrastructure for Dorset residents and businesses	Dorset and North Somerset - lot 14b - Project Gigabit - Continue working with Building Digital UK (BDUK) to ensure Dorset benefits at the earliest stage possible for funding, pilot or first wave opportunities under the new UK Gigabit programme.	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Innovation for economic growth	Dorset Digital Innovation Network The vision is one of an innovation network working together - both virtually and physically in Dorset - to provide solutions to the UK's (and Dorset's) biggest problems, whether that is a new generation of microchip to power an agricultural revolution, challenging the delivery models which have left rural areas of the world without mobile signal for the past 20 years, or a new funding and delivery paradigm for adult social care.	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital skills - Help Dorset residents improve their digital skills so they can access council and other essential services easily <i>Amended from: Digital connectivity is widely available</i>	Changed to: Embedded Digital Champions - Encourage people in the community to use council online services, and utilise opportunities to increase their digital skills. Extend initial target of 1,000 frontline staff in line with demand from this and partner organisations <i>Replaced: The rural connected community's programme will be being delivered</i>	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Connectivity - one council approach to facilitating commercial deployment	Fixed connectivity - Ensure commercial provision of gigabit capable connectivity proceeds at pace.	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Connectivity - increase gigabit-capable infrastructure for Dorset residents and businesses	Gigabit Hubs - hub projects Progression of delivery under the Fibre Hub Connectivity in Rural Dorset and Dorset Libraries projects providing public sector building upgrades/ hub and spoke enablement in communities served.	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Connectivity - increase gigabit-capable infrastructure for Dorset residents and businesses	Gigabit Vouchers - Continue structured and resourced project management of supplier & community engagement and top up funding (as available) to facilitate maximum utilisation of government funding for provision of new gigabit connections.	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Connectivity - Wireless Broadband Access	Investigate whether wireless technologies can provide transformational internet speeds to homes and businesses currently not due to receive fibre broadband via commercial or state supported rollouts.	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital

		Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to create jobs and wealth for local people	<p>Changed to: Our commercial activity will seek to maximise social value by awarding contracts that encourage our supply chains to support skills development, training, and apprenticeship opportunities for Dorset residents</p> <p><i>Replaced: New contracts with Dorset Council will include skills development, training and apprenticeship opportunities for Dorset's residents</i></p>	Service Manager for Commercial & Procurement Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
Digital Connectivity - increase gigabit-capable infrastructure for Dorset residents and businesses	North Dorset - lot 14a - Project Gigabit Continue working with Building Digital UK (BDUK) to ensure Dorset benefits at the earliest stage possible for funding, pilot or first wave opportunities under the new UK Gigabit programme.	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Digital Connectivity - increase gigabit-capable infrastructure for Dorset residents and businesses	SEP (Superfast Contract 2) - Utilise available BDUK, grant funding to provide expanded Superfast fixed connectivity under legacy Superfast programme	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors	The local plan will support economic regeneration plans, aligned to the local transport plan for Dorset	Corporate Director for Economic Growth & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment
Dorset has a reputation as the 'Natural Place to Do Business', attracting inward investment to create jobs and wealth for local people	<p>Changed to: There has been an % increase of council's third party spend with Dorset firms</p> <p>Replaced: There will have been an % increase in the number of Dorset based firms accessing training on public procurement requirements and accessing public sector frameworks and contracts</p>	Service Manager for Commercial & Procurement Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
Dorset Council inspires and supports cultural opportunities	To bring inward funding to Dorset to develop and celebrate culture and arts	Corporate Director for Place Services Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Digital Connectivity - increase gigabit-capable infrastructure for Dorset residents and businesses	Ultrafast (Superfast Contract 3) Utilise available BDUK, LEP and DEFRA grant funding to maximise delivery of Ultrafast fixed connectivity under legacy Superfast programme	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation

<p>Digital skills - Help Dorset residents improve their digital skills so they can access council and other essential services easily Removed: Digital connectivity is widely available</p>	<p>Changed to: Volunteer Digital Champions - Remove the barriers to online connectivity for people. Extend the project to reach more learners by creating new opportunities for different demographics to access help. Replaced: Ubiquitous full fibre will be available by 2028/2033</p>	<p>Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation</p>
<p>There is sufficient employment, land and workplaces in Dorset. Jobs are created and safeguarded, especially in key growth sectors</p>	<p>We will deliver a total Dorset plan on public transport and transport delivery models will be reviewed</p>	<p>Corporate Director for Economic Growth & Infrastructure Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>
<p>Digital Connectivity - one council approach to facilitating commercial deployment</p>	<p>Wessex Digital Infrastructure Accelerator - Understanding of: What assets exist and where The economic benefits and revenue streams achievable with an asset management system How an asset portal could speed up infrastructure rollout and make it more cost effective/sustainable</p>	<p>Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation</p>
<p>There are more level 4+ qualifications and apprenticeships available, appropriate for the workplace of tomorrow</p>	<p>Work will continue to increase the take-up of the government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee programme</p>	<p>Head of Service for Growth and Economic Regeneration Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property</p>
<p>Dorset Council inspires and supports cultural opportunities</p>	<p>Work with the Dorset Arts Development Company and other local partners to promote a year of culture for 2023</p>	<p>Corporate Director for Place Services Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services</p>



Becoming a more responsive, customer focused council

We will continue to be responsive, fair and efficient in how we deliver services to our customers by listening and learning from their experiences. We will strive to constantly improve with an emphasis on innovation and working with residents and businesses in a collaborative, co-production approach.

Amendments have been made to the following two activities since the last update:

- Changed to: We aim to underpin the delivery of how we work in the future by enabling our strategy of automation and self service. To achieve this we will invest and explore advances in technology, automation, artificial intelligence and digital ways of delivering services to increase productivity and help manage demand. *Replaced: We will invest and explore advances in technology, automation, artificial intelligence and digital ways of delivering services to increase productivity and help manage demand*
- Changed to: In conjunction with changes to the way we work, we will deliver more customer focussed services which will result in a leaner application portfolio and roadmap, integrated systems and processes which provide good experiences for our internal and external customers. *Replaced: We will deliver an updated applications portfolio and roadmap, focus on implementing integrated systems and processes and provide good employee experiences*

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Outcome	How we will achieve it	Lead role / service
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	By 2023, publish our customer strategy, and a transformation plan to achieve a modern, customer first operating model by 2028. This will mean that the number of people who speak positively about the council will increase	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	We will reduce the number ways customers contact the council and bring more high-volume customer management and assessment into our professional customer services, Dorset Direct	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide	Embed our accessibility principles and assessment guidance within our strategy plans	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural

easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers		Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	Adopt consistent organisational design principles to redesign services making the most of modern technology and understanding customer needs to provide the foundations for a one council approach	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	Embed customer feedback across all high demand service areas to drive continuous service improvement, improving customer experience	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	We will develop our customer platform and customer account to provide easy to use, accessible, services, increasing the number of customers using online services independently or with assistance	Head of Digital Strategy and Design Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	Changed to: We aim to underpin the delivery of how we work in the future by enabling our strategy of automation and self service. To achieve this we will invest and explore advances in technology, automation, artificial intelligence and digital ways of delivering services to increase productivity and help manage demand <i>Replaced: We will invest and explore advances in technology, automation, artificial intelligence and digital ways of delivering services to increase productivity and help manage demand</i>	Head of ICT Operations Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	Changed to: In conjunction with changes to the way we work, we will deliver more customer focussed services which will result in a leaner application portfolio and roadmap, integrated systems and processes which provide good experiences for our internal and external customers <i>Replaced: We will deliver an updated applications portfolio and roadmap, focus on implementing integrated systems and processes and provide good employee experiences</i>	Head of ICT Operations Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide easy to access, responsive	The council's engagement and consultation processes will be reviewed and improved to ensure that residents' views are sought, listened to and acted on	Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement Portfolio Holder for Culture,

services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers		Communities and Customer Services
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	We will have set realistic budgets for the council and our spending will have not exceeded them	Executive Director for Corporate Development (S151 Officer) Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	Our medium-term financial strategy will continue to act as a key financial tool that drives good financial decision making and supports strategy, transformation and commercial thinking	Executive Director for Corporate Development (S151 Officer) Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	We will implement the agreement reached with the Department for Education on the High Needs Block historic deficit	Executive Director for Corporate Development (S151 Officer) Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	We will consistently commission services, developing the market to meet need in the most-cost effective way	Executive Director for Corporate Development (S151 Officer) Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
We work together as 'one Dorset Council', with partners to provide value for money services that meet the needs and expectations of our customers	We will focus on increasing the number of residents who think the council delivers value for money	Executive Director for Corporate Development (S151 Officer) Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
Increased the reach of our services through accessible and inclusive services ensuring we proactively tailor the level and type of support available to suit the needs of different groups	A new citizens panel will be set up jointly with ICS partners to engage a representative panel of residents	Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Increased the reach of our services through accessible and inclusive services ensuring we proactively tailor the level and	The Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy and action plan will be implemented to ensure Dorset Council meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010	Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement Portfolio Holder for

type of support available to suit the needs of different groups		Corporate Development and Transformation
We design the places and spaces we need to support services and customers in-person, via outreach, or in a virtual way that meet the needs of our communities	We will deliver a new asset management strategy, rationalising our property, co-locating services and developing our commercial approach to property	Corporate Director Assets & Property Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
We design the places and spaces we need to support services and customers in-person, via outreach, or in a virtual way that meet the needs of our communities	Development and investment in our customer, community, family, and library hub model will provide plans for co-location together and with other agencies to maximise community impact and support agile working and hybrid service delivery	Corporate Director Assets & Property Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
We design the places and spaces we need to support services and customers in-person, via outreach, or in a virtual way that meet the needs of our communities	By 2026, a review of how local depots are used and managed will be complete	Corporate Director Assets & Property Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
We design the places and spaces we need to support services and customers in-person, via outreach, or in a virtual way that meet the needs of our communities	An efficient, hybrid way of working for all council employees will have been implemented, reducing office space and increasing value for money	Corporate Director Assets & Property Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
Our workforce takes advantage of learning opportunities to develop the skills to deliver modern, customer first services, by thinking innovatively and using data, intelligence technology and customer insight	We will have launched an organisational development strategy, supporting and developing skills within leadership and workforce, recognising talent, improving retention and embedding diversity and inclusion	Head of Organisational Development, and Head of Human Resources Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Our workforce takes advantage of learning opportunities to develop the skills to deliver modern, customer first services, by	We will develop and embed our employer brand, helping to showcase what we have to offer and become identified as an employer of choice, ensuring that we can recruit and retain the best people	Head of Organisational Development, and Head of Human Resources Portfolio

thinking innovatively and using data, intelligence technology and customer insight		Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	We will publish a Business Intelligence and Data strategy	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	We will undertake regular self-assessment of our data culture and maturity shows improvement	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	The number of users of the Dorset Care Record will have increased	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	We will work closely with our partners to overcome barriers to join up and improve the quality of our data	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	We will encourage a culture where the importance of data is understood by everyone within the council	Corporate Director Transformation, Innovation and Digital Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	By 2027 we will have modernised the way that information and case records are stored and accessed, supporting an agile workforce	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	We will provide learning and development for staff to understand the power of sharing data as well as the legal, moral and financial implications	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture,

delivery of our services to improve outcomes		Communities and Customer Services
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	We will bring together operational data to support a better service to customers and strategic level data to help ensure better outcomes and decisions by the council and with our partners	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
We develop our use of data and insights to support evidence-led decisions and targeted and timely delivery of our services to improve outcomes	We will review internal services to more efficiently transact, receive information and engage with the workforce including the completion of a corporate system review	Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services

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Cabinet

20 June 2023

Draft outturn report 2022/23

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr G Suttle, Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Sean Cremer
Title: Corporate Director, Finance & Commercial
Tel: 01305 228685
Email: sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

This report comes to Cabinet with information about the Council's draft, unaudited financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2023 and the financial position at that date.

Recommendation:

Cabinet is asked to;

1. Note the draft revenue and capital outturn and the financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
2. To approve use of un-ringfenced reserves to support the overspend position in addition to increasing the general fund balance in line with the financial strategy document.
3. To approve an increase of £2.0m to the working capital loan facility available to Dorset Centre of Excellence limited and delegate authority to agree the terms of the loan to the Section 151 officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for finance.

Reason for Recommendation:

Although this report does not seek formal approval from Cabinet for the reported outturn, the financial performance for the year and the financial position at 31 March 2023 are important aspects of financial management as they mark the start of the next medium-term financial plan update (MTFP) and budget strategy development for 2024/25.

In addition to reporting outturn, with the financial performance for the year materially complete, it is important for Cabinet to review the risks the organisation now faces and to consider areas where it wishes to make strategic investments and/or to repurpose and prioritise its reserves to facilitate these aims.

1. Financial Implications

The financial performance for the year and the position at year-end are set out in this document. The report also summarises the impact on the 2023/24 budget and the MTFP.

The actions to reduce the balance and age of debt and arrears following the increases in these numbers during the pandemic and more recently the cost of living rises, are critical to reducing debt as well as supporting residents and businesses to pay what is due. Most of the charges levied by the Council – and all local taxes – are underpinned by national, legal requirements so they must be supported by appropriate and proportionate recovery action by all local authorities.

2. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

The outturn for the year and the position at 31 March 2023 includes revenue and capital spend which support the delivery of the Council's climate and ecology strategies.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

The Council has continued its focus on keeping people safe and well, particularly during the pandemic but also in managing the transition out of national restrictions.

The Council continued to play an essential role in distributing Government grants to individuals, businesses, and other qualifying groups during the year.

4. Other Implications

None specific.

5. Risk Assessment

5.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

Reporting draft outturn against budget has very limited risks.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

No specific equalities issues have emerged in drafting the Council's various reports on financial performance and position.

7. Appendices

- a) Financial Savings graph

8. Background Papers

[2022/23 budget strategy report](#)

[Financial management report Qtr1 2022/23](#)

[Financial management report Qtr2 2022/23](#)

[Financial management report Qtr3 2022/23](#)

[2023/24 budget strategy report](#)

9. Budget setting 2022/23 and context

- 9.1 2022/23 once again involved setting a strategic budget and MTFP against a one-year settlement from Government. This year has proved challenging which has required the Council to drive proactive and positive action to achieve high quality service provision within limited resources. Once again this requirement has been delivered at the same time as dealing with a global pandemic. The Council has also been experiencing a period of sustained inflation. These rising costs directly affects the Council in terms of cost of providing services as well as leading to increased demand for support from residents and businesses.
- 9.2 The Council's budget requirement was £331.6m and was funded from rural services delivery grant (£2.5m), new homes bonus (£3.8m), business rates (£46.3m) and council tax (£279m). More detail is set out in the budget strategy report at the link above.
- 9.3 Members will recall that the Council had been anticipating an overspend against its budget for much of the year. During 2021/22, reserves were realigned to sit within a new financial management strategy and were better aligned with risks facing the organisation as well as to take advantage of opportunities to invest in areas where pressures on the MTFP can be reduced.
- 9.4 Areas of risk remain and are carefully monitored and reported on during the year. During the year, inflation in the UK reached 10.1%. Whilst the Council made some provision for inflation in its 2022/23 budgets, and has a contingency budget to support price fluctuations this level of inflation was not generally foreseen and has put additional pressure on Council resources. The Council has robust contract management in place to best

manage rising costs but ultimately the pressure on costs could not and should not be dealt with by the Council alone.

- 9.5 The Council's budget is essentially fixed in cash terms and its ability to raise income is limited. There are national controls in place around council tax and business rates and ability to generate income from trading is relatively limited in the short-term as well as potentially at odds with wider economic development ambitions.
- 9.6 Despite the risk around this report being deemed low, the financial risk was increased to high at the time of the budget report, and additional pressures are building in the economy and the Council is not impervious to these.

10. Financial performance for the year

Overall performance

- 10.1 The financial performance for the year was an overspend of £1.7m. This overspend falls to be financed from the general fund. Headline performance against budget is summarised in the table below.

Directorate	Net Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Overspend)/ Underspend	
	£k	£k	£k	%
People – Adults	149,481	152,420	(2,939)	(2.0%)
People - Children's	77,847	78,682	(834)	(1.1%)
Place	75,763	81,132	(5,369)	(7.1%)
Corporate Development	29,581	27,967	1,614	5.5%
Legal & Democratic Services	6,274	5,788	486	7.7%
Public Health	3,002	3,002	0	0.0%
Total Service Budgets	341,949	348,990	(7,041)	(2.1%)
Central Finance	(358,770)	(364,138)	5,368	(1.5%)
Whole Authority	(16,821)	(15,148)	(1,673)	

- 10.2 The draft outturn variance of £1.673m as a proportion of the £331.6m net budget is 0.5%. This is a significantly better performance than had been predicted earlier in the year and one which reflects positively on the Council's performance in response to operating and cost pressures arising during the year.
- 10.3 Directorate-specific narrative is set out in the following paragraphs.
- Children's Services
- 10.4 The Children's Services outturn was £78.682m compared with a net budget of £77.847m, an overspend of £0.834m (1.1%). Given the demand-led nature of this directorate and national situation a variance of

1.1% demonstrates the outcome of effective operational and financial management within the directorate.

10.5 The Quarter 3 forecast indicated a £1.793m overspend, so there was an improvement of £0.958m between the last predictions reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn. The narrative below considers major variances from budgets during the year as well as any risks or other factors that need to be considered in the next iteration of the MTFP.

10.6 The national overspending position for children in care external placements is also true at Dorset Council. This area overspent by £2.9m despite the number of children in care falling, excluding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children:

10.7

	April 2022	March 2023	Change
Children in Care (excluding UASC)	434	404	-30
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (USAC)	23	34	+11

Source: Monthly Financial Tracker

10.8 The children in care external placement overspend has been balanced by in-house fostering and in-house residential underspends of £2.9m.

10.9 Other Care and Protection budget pressures are within services for children who are disabled (CWAD) (£0.7m), unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (£0.5m), other children in care expenditure and Section 17 (£0.4m).

10.10 Education and learning budgets underspent in 22/23 by £0.522m. This was a result of unbudgeted grant income from public health (£0.122m) and the Schools monitoring and brokering grant (£0.108m).

10.11 Further underspends in this area of £0.292m were due to vacancy savings within the six locality teams.

10.12 Director's Office budgets underspent by £0.358m as a result of underspends against the change fund (£0.079m), innovation pots (£0.091m), premature retirement funds (£0.024m) and underspends on pay, predominantly as a result of Ukrainian education funding (£0.164m).

10.13 The Children's directorate also delivered £4.0m (93%) of targeted transformation and tactical savings during the year.

10.14 However, there are risks within the 2022/23 budget that will require careful monitoring and management as we move into 2023/24. Risks include capital project delays and the subsequent impact on revenue budgets, inflation (particularly for placements and externally provided services), the Social Care reforms and the delivery of transformation and tactical savings.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

- 10.15 The DSG was overspent by £19.96m. The grant is split into four blocks, with the High Needs Block (HNB) overspending by £19.3m, and the Early Years Block (£0.66m) with an underspend in the Central Services to Schools Block (£0.04m). The Schools Block had no variance.
- 10.16 The outturn position is over the required *Safety Valve* 2022/23 DSG outturn position by £9m. In March 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) and Dorset Council signed a £42m agreement to eradicate Dorset's cumulative DSG deficit by 2025/26.
- 10.17 The cumulative DSG deficit, including the 2022/23 overspend, application of all tranches of *Safety Valve* funding and Dorset Council funding, is £35.9m. Without the support this would be £64m.
- 10.18 Consequently, the Department for Education (DfE) are currently in discussions with Dorset Council about the *Safety Valve* agreement and collaborating as part of the DfE's Enhanced monitoring and support (EMS) programme. This programme seeks to ensure returning the DSG to a balanced financial position.
- 10.19 Capital delays are a significant reason for the financial position.
- 10.20 The historical DSG deficit is a long and well-documented risk stemming from a change in government legislation in 2014. The number of children who require an Education Health and Care Place (EHCP) continues to rise and coupled with Dorset Special Schools reaching capacity, has seen an increase in the use of generally more expensive special school places.
- 10.21 This picture has been mirrored nationally. The County Council Networks (CCN) estimates that if no changes are made, the deficits built up in the system meeting the statutory demands from the 2015 reforms would reach £3.6bn by 2025.
- 10.22 In response to the national challenges, in March 2023 the government released the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan.
- 10.23 The SEND and AP Improvement plan sets out measures for reforming the SEND system, following consultation on last year's SEND Green Paper - Right Support, Right Place, Right Time. The reforms will seek to deliver greater consistency in provision across the country, and link closely with the recently announced Children's Social Care reforms.

- 10.24 The 'mission' of the plan is to setup a new SEND and alternative provision national system with a three-fold aim:
- a. Fulfil children's potential: children and young people with SEND (or attending AP) enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes and are well prepared for adulthood and employment;
 - b. Build parents' trust: parents and carers experience a fairer, easily navigable system (across education, health and care) that restores their confidence that their children will get the right support, in the right place, at the right time;
 - c. Provide financial sustainability: local leaders make best use of the high needs budget to meet children and young people's needs and improve outcomes, while placing local authorities on a stable financial footing.
- 10.25 Although the reforms will take time to implement, Dorset Council and partners need to be ahead of the curve, especially regarding the *Safety Valve* and for our children and young people.
- 10.26 A key component in the delivery of the Council's SEND strategy is increasing the provision of placements to meet need. A key part of this is the operations of Dorset Centre of Excellence Limited
- 10.27 Based on the latest business plan, approved at shareholder panel on 5th June 2023 it is recommended that the Council increases the working capital loan by a value of £2.0m.
- 10.28 The exact terms of the loan are delegated to the Councils s151 officer in consultation with the Portfolio holder for finance.

Adults Services & Housing

- 10.29 The Adults Services & Housing outturn was £152.4m compared with a net budget of £149.5m, an overspend of £2.939m (2%). Given the national picture and demand for service provision post-pandemic this is a positive outcome for the directorate.
- 10.30 The quarter 3 forecast indicated a £3.634m overspend, there was an improvement of £0.695m between the last predictions reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn. The final quarter's improved performance was achieved through Adult Care packages and Adult Care operations.
- 10.31 The Adult Social Care budget supports approximately 3,925 people and provides approximately 3,900 services.

- 10.32 The Adult Care Packages budget ended the year with an overspend of £2.113m. The main driver for the overspend was the continuation of the Hospital Discharge Programme legacy costs.
- 10.33 Positive work has taken place in year with the 'Home First Accelerator' programme which started in December and supports Hospital Discharge. Through the ICS (Integrated Care System), partners have brought forward Home First plans. The proposals along with actions taken, are intended to rebalance demand across the out of hospital pathway, improve system resilience and improve outcomes for people.
- 10.34 30 therapy led, reablement beds have been commissioned through Care Dorset supported by multi-disciplinary teams. To date, we have seen a flow of circa 60 individuals through these beds.
- 10.35 There has been a positive shift in year between supporting more people at home 1,204 in July 22 and 1,258 in March 23 an increase of 54 with an average weekly cost of £433. This is compared to a reduction in residential care 1,075 July 22 and 1,017 in March 23 at an average cost of £1,184 per week. The net saving of this shift is £45,290 per week.
- 10.36 This work will continue into 2023/24 where we will see a full year's benefit.
- 10.37 The Adult Care Budget ended the year with an underspend of £1.129m. There were a number of vacancies across the Directorate in the year, particularly within Locality and Specialist Teams which were the primary cause of this.
- 10.38 Housing overspent by £2.134m. This overspend is attributable to the Council needing to pick up the widened Housing Benefit Subsidy shortfall on B&B accommodation used for homelessness. This is adverse because of the impact of increased demand and increased charges and rents for such accommodation. Front door homelessness demand is up by 28% from this time last year and this is expected to continue.
- 10.39 Performance in homelessness prevention is strong, but the increased demand means that Bed and Breakfast and other expensive nightly rate accommodation is still being required at charges which are punitively high. Charges are rising from the private landlord and B&B sector, whilst Local Housing Allowance remains frozen at 2011 rates (meaning that the cost of the shortfall is picked up by the Council). Due to the attractiveness of AirBnB and holiday lets, it is increasingly expensive to secure rented accommodation in the private rented sector. Housing Association lettings are at a good level (around 1,000 a year) but are not sufficient to meet demand.
- 10.40 To meet the high increases in demand and costs, plans are being prepared to scale up and transform the work on prevention of homelessness and also to increase the supply of better priced non B&B accommodation (including proposals to make better use of Council assets

and land, but to operate from several approaches, such as Government grants, leases with private providers and Housing Associations). Prevention of homelessness is the key result, but the financial mitigations are primarily linked to finding alternatives to the high net cost accommodation, such as B&Bs, which are delivered with a smaller subsidy gap.

- 10.41 Adults and Housing have delivered £3.705m of transformation and tactical savings during the year with a total of £10.3m over the last two years.

Public Health

- 10.42 The public health grant for 2022/23 for BCP council was £20.616m and for Dorset council was £14.613m. Agreed local authority contributions for the year gave a shared service budget of £25.614m.
- 10.43 Final outturn was £25.337m, resulting in a £0.375m underspend which has been added to reserves. The figures in the table, above are net, so they do not reflect the numbers shown in this analysis, which are gross grant income and expenditure and transfers to and from reserves.

Place Directorate

- 10.44 The final Place Directorate net budget for 2022/23, after in-year adjustments, was £75.763m, and the final net spend was £81.132m, an overspend of £5.369m.
- 10.45 Financial monitoring from early in the year indicated that Place Directorate was going to suffer adversely from a number of factors: the wider economic climate including rising inflation affecting contract costs, the fuel cost crisis of summer 2022, escalating costs within the Dorset Travel sector and SEND transport in particular, and in car parking income falling short of the budget set.
- 10.43 The Assets and Regeneration budget ended the year with an underspend of £237k. Assets and Regeneration budgets were affected by a wide range of issues including historic savings targets that were included in the budget and not achieved, loss of income in respect of staff car parking and café, underspends in the postage budget and County Hall utility costs. Staff vacancies contributed significantly to the underspend position. In addition, unbudgeted rental income, in particular for South Walks House and Coombe House, also made a significant contribution.

10.44 The Highways service ended the year at £2.4m overspent. This is not related to an overspend in expenditure but almost entirely relates to Parking Services income underachieving against the income budget. Highways operations and infrastructure saw increases in costs around electricity which was offset by additional income from road closures and also vacancy management.

10.45 The Planning Service ended the year at £638k overspent, broadly in line with the expectation due to the issues flagged during the year, mainly the inability to recruit staff and the subsequent need to spend on agency staff, and income levels underperforming against the budget.

The table reveals the highly volatile nature of the fees and charges income budget for Planning over the last four years:

	Outturn 2019/20	Outturn 2020/21	Outturn 2021/22	Outturn 2022/23
	£	£	£	£
Fees and Charges	-4,521,157	-4,003,881	-5,164,922	-4,038,113

10.46 Dorset Travel ended the year at £3.721m overspent, despite an investment of £0.800m during the year from the Commercial Board. All aspects of the Travel budget – public transport, mainstream school transport, and SEND transport – saw significant cost increases due to the nature of the market, being significantly affected by driver shortages, rising wages, general inflation, and in many cases, contracts being handed back and then having to be re-let at significantly higher cost. This service area remains a significant concern heading into 2023/24.

10.47 Environment and Wellbeing budgets ended the year at £173k underspent, largely due to favourable income performance in grounds, landscaping, greenspace and country parks.

10.48 Community and Public Protection (CPP) budgets ended the year at £61k overspent. Notable adverse variances were incurred in the cost of contributing to the Coroners service and the running of Dorchester Market, and partially offset by favourable variances in vacancy management and income, with particularly good income in Registration Services.

10.49 Waste – Commercial Waste and Strategy ended the year at almost £1.3m favourable. Income earned for waste recycle was very favourable during the early part of 2022/23 although has since worsened considerably. Trade waste and garden waste services also performed well.

- 10.50 Waste Operations including Dorset Council fleet services ended the year at £458k adverse. This is largely caused by the fleet budget, and primarily by the sustained rises in vehicle fuel costs during summer 2022.
- 10.51 Customer Services, Archives, and Libraries collectively ended the year at £618k underspent, largely in the areas of Customer Services and Libraries around pay related costs.
- 10.52 The Directors Office ended the year at £456k overspent, picking up unfunded costs for historical Weymouth Harbour capital spend, the cost of the Tour of Britain event, and unfunded interim costs.

Corporate Development

- 10.53 The Corporate Development outturn was £27.967m compared with a net budget of £29.581m, an underspend of £1.6m (5.46%).
- 10.54 The quarter 3 forecast indicated a £0.29m overspend, so there was an improvement of £1.90m between the last predictions reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn. The narrative below considers major variances from budgets during the year as well as any risks or other factors that need to be considered in the next iteration of the MTFP.
- 10.55 Finance & Commercial was £0.34m underspent, this resulted from a few key factors. Within the Revenues and Benefits service the bad debt provision was reduced, thereby releasing £1.9m. This helped offset a shortfall in court fee income of £698k
- 10.56 During the year the revenues and benefits service for the North Dorset and East Dorset residents was transferred from the Stour Valley & Poole Partnership (SVPP) to Dorset Council, with the SVPP service arrangements formerly ending on the 31st March 2023. The one off costs associated with the dissolution have been funded in year and the final accounts were signed off on 7th June 2023.
- 10.57 Across the rest of the service there were other budget variances, however, overall they largely offset each other:

External audit fee - £88k over spend
 Treasury Management bank charges - £225k overspend
 Pensions ICT cost saving and income shortfall – net £291k underspend
 Pay related costs – £192k underspend
 Insurance costs - £78k underspend

- 10.58 Human Resources & Organisational Development was £0.46m underspent, mainly relating to vacancies, lower corporate training spend and increased income.
- 10.59 Digital and Change was £0.32m underspent through vacancies across the service and additional income.

- 10.60 ICT Operations was £0.78m underspent through vacancies within the service and a change to the accounting for service contracts.
- 10.61 Business Intelligence was £0.12m underspent through vacancies within the service.
- 10.62 Superfast Broadband was £0.24m overspent, due to the inability to capitalise all the costs of the project.
- 10.63 Dorset Care Record was £0.11m was overspent, this was an identified saving, which could not be achieved due to contractual obligations.
- 10.64 There was a further £0.06m overspend across the other services within Corporate Development, mainly due to recruitment advertising and spend on agency staff.

Legal & Democratic Services

- 10.65 The Legal & Democratic outturn was £5.788m compared with a net budget of £6.274m, an underspend of £0.49m (7.75%).
- 10.66 The quarter 3 forecast indicated a £0.57m underspend, so there was a worsening of £0.08m between the last predictions reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn. The narrative below considers major variances from budgets during the year as well as any risks or other factors that need to be considered in the next iteration of the MTFP.
- 10.67 Assurance was £0.07m underspent through vacancies within the service.
- 10.68 Democratic Services were £0.23m underspent which was related to reduced travel spend, associated costs for Member meetings and additional income.
- 10.69 Legal Services were £0.24m underspent through vacancies and lower software costs/general supplies and services.
- 10.70 Land Charges were £0.05m overspent due to a shortfall in fee income.

Central budgets

- 10.71 The outturn on central budgets was £364.138m compared with a net income budget of £358.770m, a net surplus of £5.368m (1.50%).
- 10.72 The contingency budget was £1.4m which is released as an underspend after being held centrally to support inflation across the Council.
- 10.73 Capital Financing were underspent by £2.5m due to increased income from interest held on investments of £2.2m and £0.3m underspend on MRP.
- 10.74 Central Finance income has a net surplus of £2.1m, which is made up from the Council Tax surplus of £2.3m, offset by the Business Rates deficit of £0.2m. More information is outlined in the Collection Funds section below.

Collection funds

- 10.75 The in-year council tax collection rate was 96.62%, which is a slight improvement on 2021/22 (95.96%). This position has been helped by the debt recovery processes being restarted during 2022/23. The bad debt provision methodology has been revised to better reflect actual collection trends. There was a surplus of £2.3m against a budget of £296m.
- 10.76 The in-year business rates collection rate was 92.07%, which is slightly less than 2021/22 (93.24%). The debt recovery processes for business rates did not restart until May 2023. The bad debt provision methodology has been revised to better reflect actual collection trends. Overall, there was a shortfall of £0.206m against a budget of £55m.

11 General fund position and other earmarked reserves at year-end

- 11.1 The overspend of £1.7m for the year falls to the general fund to finance. The quarter 3 finance report indicated a £8.4m overspend, so there was an improvement of £6.7m between the last forecast reported to Cabinet and the draft outturn.
- 11.2 As well as covering the overspend, Council agreed that the general fund should be increased to £34.8m when approving the budget strategy in February 2023. The fund started the year with a balance of £33.2m so taken together, the £1.6m required to do this must be funded from the reorganisation of other reserves.
- 11.3 The impact of the outturn position on the Council's general fund and its earmarked reserves is set out below. The same analysis is used as in last year's outturn report, albeit the numbers vary marginally between the draft outturn reported to Cabinet and the audited figures.

	31/03/2022 £'000	31/03/2023 £'000	31/03/2024 £'000	31/03/2025 £'000	31/03/2026 £'000	31/03/2027 £'000
General Fund	(33,207)	(34,755)	(36,255)	(37,655)	(38,955)	(40,155)
Reserve purpose/ use						
Risk mitigation/alignment	(53,053)	(26,711)	(18,647)	(15,399)	(13,199)	(6,162)
Deferred grants	(24,293)	(27,448)	(8,857)	(8,078)	(7,250)	(8,570)
For investing/service provision	(14,055)	(16,357)	(6,777)	(6,680)	(6,598)	(4,845)
Accounting requirements	(30,521)	(30,682)	(20,136)	(10,730)	(5,827)	(772)
Funding (restricted eg S278)	(25,401)	(30,457)	(15,249)	(14,046)	(13,980)	(13,989)
PFI reserves	(7,727)	(6,977)	(6,343)	(5,718)	(5,095)	(4,472)
Partnerships/joint reserves	(2,261)	(1,836)	(1,921)	(1,581)	(1,421)	(1,044)
Traded services	(483)	(437)	(119)	(119)	(119)	(119)
Total earmarked reserves	(157,794)	(140,905)	(78,049)	(62,350)	(53,489)	(39,974)

12 Capital outturn and financing

- 12.1 The approved capital programme for the year, based on the reprofiled capital budgets report presented to cabinet on 28th March 2023, was £73.17m.
- 12.2 The Capital outturn as at 31 March 2023 is shown in the table below. Following final year-end adjustments spend was slightly more than profiled at £75.89m

Directorate	No of Projects	Reprofiled Project Budget (£000's)	Actual Spend (£000's)	Variance	
				Reprofiled projects (£000's)	Overspends (£000's)
Adults & Housing	14	2,294	2,954	(606)	54
Childrens	16	7,787	9,024	(1,237)	0
Place	140	57,902	55,471	4,317	965
Corporate	13	5,187	8,442	(2,019)	0
Total	183	73,170	75,891	455	1,019

- 12.3 Slippage figures represent a difference in the anticipated spend profile of a project when compared with the final spend profile for the year. Positive slippage figures will be carried forwards for spend in future years. Negative slippage figures, shown in brackets, are as a result of spend ahead of schedule.
- 12.4 Of the total spend; £44.1m was externally financed (mainly grants from Government). The remaining £31.8m was funded from Dorset Council's own resources.
- 12.5 The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities sets out the conditions under which a Local Authority can incur prudential borrowing. Most borrowing is incurred through the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) via the UK Debt Management Office (DMO) which has further restrictions on the nature of projects which allow Local Authorities to access this type of borrowing.

13 Sundry debt management

- 13.1 The net sundry debt position as at 31 March 2023 grew by £6.4m from the previous quarter to £39.46m.

Balance at 31/03/2023	Less than 30 days	30-90 days	90-365 days	Over 365 days
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
24,553	9,277	1,819	5,241	8,216
998	689	151	47	111
10,465	7,246	390	1,106	1,724
3,445	2,388	491	209	356
39,462	19,601	2,851	6,603	10,406

- 13.2 The Council had been expecting increases in the level of overall debt given the economic circumstances faced by residents and businesses. The Council has commissioned SWAP internal audit services to review how different services approach debt recovery to ensure that the most efficient processes are being followed.

14 Local taxation

Council tax

- 14.1 The value of council tax unpaid at 31 March 2022 was £35.004m. During 2022/23 £10.161m of this was collected and the balance of historic arrears was therefore reduced to £24.843m.
- 14.2 The value of all council tax levied in 2022/23 was £352.9m and the unpaid amount at the end of the year was £11.824m, giving an effective, in-year collection rate of 96.6%.
- 14.3 These headline figures need to be taken in the context of the wider economic realities that local taxpayers have lived through, although of course there is a legal requirement on all taxpayers to pay what is due. The collection and recovery processes have resumed after significant periods of closure during the pandemic and the Council remains confident that arrears will reduce, and collection rates will continue to improve. Further updates on collection rates are provided quarterly to Cabinet in financial management reports.

Business rates (non-domestic rates – NDR)

- 14.4 The value of business rates unpaid at 31 March 2022 was £11.718m. During 2022/23 £4.407m of this was collected and the balance of historic arrears was therefore reduced to £7.310m.

- 14.5 The value of all business rates levied in 2022/23 was £95.5m and the unpaid amount at the end of the year was £6.849m, giving an effective in-year collection rate of 92%.
- 14.6 The situation with business rates is similar to council tax and again has been a common theme for councils nationally in the circumstances we have experienced.
- 14.7 The Council recognises the impact that the cost-of-living increases have had and continue to have on many residents and businesses. Local taxation is at the heart of the Council's revenue stream, and we recognise the importance and legal requirements placed upon residents and businesses to pay their liabilities. On the whole Dorset residents and businesses conduct their local tax affairs effectively but the Council also recognises the need to support those in our communities who are facing financial difficulties.
- 14.8 The Revenues and Benefits teams work with residents and businesses to make sure they are accessing all available forms of financial support and are maximising the income they are entitled to, which in turn supports affordability. Officers also support residents and businesses to agree payment arrangements and plans to make sure liabilities are paid and outstanding amounts are recovered. For many customers, this is all that is required but some other debts need to move through the set stages of recovery and eventually, when appropriate, into more formal forms of enforcement.
- 14.9 The service maintains a recovery programme and reminders have been issued to both Council Tax and Business Ratepayers in 2023 as the full recovery programme escalates in a post covid environment. We manage full recovery cycles and the increase in customers showing signs of requiring support with the added pressures of the current cost of living increases.
- 14.10 All stages of recovery will be undertaken during the year where appropriate, but it is right to help customers reposition where they need to with reminders so that we can support and signpost at the earliest opportunity and help people set new plans when required to make payments, catch up or adjust existing payment plans.

15 Financial planning, strategy and the MTFP

- 15.1 The Council will shortly start the process of refreshing the MTFP and developing the budget strategy for 2024/25. Recent budget rounds have seen significant turbulence and volatility, and the backdrop to setting the budget for next year to be very similar, with uncertainty around prices, markets, and labour conditions.
- 15.2 There are significant and sustained inflationary pressures building in the UK economy and globally, driven principally by fuel and energy prices but the knock-on effect of these is increasingly apparent across other commodities and supply chains. The labour market is also a significant concern, especially in the care sector although this is spreading to other areas where the Council needs to engage significant human resources in coming months, such as in gearing-up to meet the challenges of adult social care reform.
- 15.3 The first update of the refreshed update of the MTFP financial model will come to Cabinet in October for endorsement of the planning assumptions for the year ahead as well as the longer-term financial planning horizon.

16 Summary, conclusions, and next steps

- 16.1 2022/23 was another challenging year financially with inflation continuing to impact on income, expenditure, and in particular the collection funds.
- 16.2 The medium term continues to be of concern. 2022/23 concluded in a much better financial position than had been anticipated, and despite the short-term risk being graded to high in the budget strategy paper, since then, inflationary pressures have been continuing to build in the economy and the Council will need to manage this as effectively as possible.

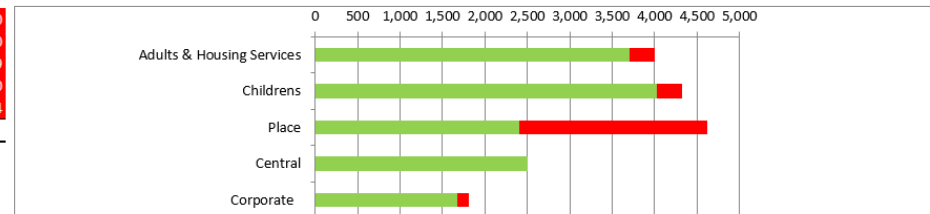
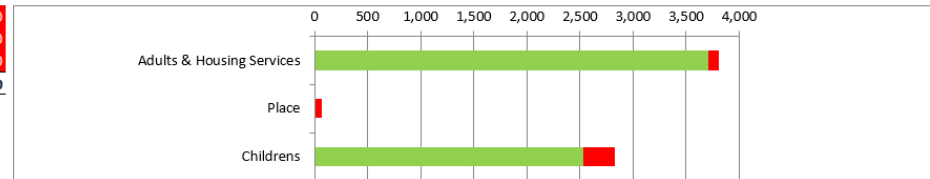
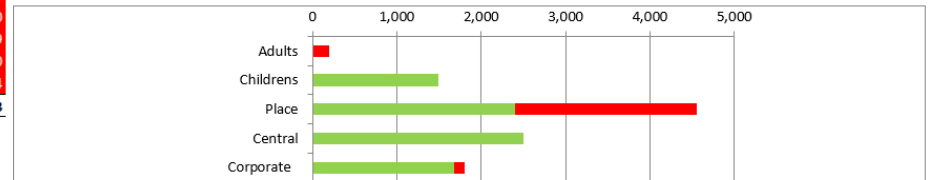
Aidan Dunn

Executive Director of Corporate Development

Appendix A

The table below shows the final position for the 2022/23 savings. The financial implications of this are reflected in the 2022/23 outturn figures contained in this report

Officer assessment on savings target					
2022/23 Savings Plans		Green	Amber	Amber 2	Red
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Tactical					
Adults	200	0	0	0	200
Childrens	1,492	1,492	0	0	0
Place	4,556	2,407	0	0	2,149
Central	2,500	2,500	0	0	0
Corporate	1,808	1,674	0	0	134
Total Tactical	10,556	8,073	0	0	2,483
Transformation					
Adults & Housing Services	3,805	3,705	0	0	100
Place	70	0	0	0	70
Childrens	2,828	2,528	0	0	300
Total Transformation	6,703	6,233	0	0	470
Total - Tactical and Transformation					
Adults & Housing Services	4,005	3,705	0	0	300
Childrens	4,320	4,020	0	0	300
Place	4,626	2,407	0	0	2,219
Central	2,500	2,500	0	0	0
Corporate	1,808	1,674	0	0	134
Summary Savings Plans	17,259	14,306	-	-	2,953



Cabinet

20 June 2023

Transformation Annual Report 2022/23

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Haynes, Corporate Development and Transformation

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Nina Coakley
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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Dorset Council is 4 years old, and during that time it has initiated large scale change on a number of fronts that have reflected the need for convergence and adaptation of the way that we operate to reflect the change environment around us. To date, the council has saved £96m as a direct result of the convergence of systems and processes following local government reorganisation. This was the planned outcome of the reorganisation and the move to a unitary authority model.

The changes and progress that Dorset Council has both experienced and delivered during this time have been significant, multifaceted and have involved service specific and council-wide changes that can be categorised along the following lines:

- Staff integration, culture and values
- Service improvement through change and performance management (enhanced business as usual)
- Improvements driven by capital investments
- Enhanced partnership working and governance
- Transformation

While it is important to understand how performance, change and transformation activity underpins the delivery of our priorities, this paper is focussing specifically on the progress that has been made through transformation.

Within the context of the above, transformation can be defined as “fundamentally changing the systems, processes, people and technology across a whole organisation to achieve measurable improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction” For Dorset Council this means fundamentally changing the way we

deliver our services and the way we operate, to achieve our council priorities within our financial constraints. It means approaching this as a whole system change, applying solutions that meet the needs of our residents as a whole. Driving change within and across services that both underpins the delivery of our council plan, but also helps to frame how the council will need to adapt to remain relevant, fit for purpose, financially stable and maintain strong service delivery in an ever-changing world.

Dorset Council is currently delivering a five-year transformation plan which was approved by Cabinet in November 2020. Despite the significant disruption experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic and the more recent cost of living crisis, the council has maintained a focus on improving services for customers and achieving long-term financial stability.

The long-term transformation plan is delivered in the context of an annual budget setting process for the council (in line with government guidelines) and has a direct read-across to the medium-term financial plan which requires annual alignment of the transformation plan with the budget setting process. The organisation's approach to service planning is in development but is anticipated to articulate how a service is delivering against the council plan, strategic indicators and transformation plans, delivering outcomes to our customers.

£10.8m from the council's invest to save fund has been allocated to the council's transformation programme across years 0-2. This is to realise transformation savings of at least £31m against an original projection of £33m over five years 2021-26. £13.6m has already been successfully delivered 2021-23. This has exceeded anticipated savings from reorganisation and the move to unitary council.

Transformation progress to date, by year, is summarised below:

- Year one commenced in April 2021 and delivered £7.4m (78% of target) in cashable savings across all directorate areas of the council with a summary report was presented to the Performance Board in April 2022. Under delivery of savings in year 1 was as a direct impact of the covid-19 pandemic where a significant proportion of resource was redirected to support the emergency response.
- Year two commenced in April 2022 and has delivered £6.2m bringing the cumulative savings to 85% of target across year 1 and year 2. The Council Plan was refreshed during this same year which enabled the alignment of our transformation outcomes to the council priorities for 2022-24. Under delivery of cashable savings in year 2 relate to:
 - Housing transformation activity which ultimately delivered a £100k cost avoidance saving due to a significant increase in demand during 2022/23. The services savings made through the project was therefore reinvested to support this additional housing demand and provide additional services to residents.
 - The completion of work to implement an upgraded system for regulatory services following local government review suffered delays due to covid and as a result, the final implementation will be completed in year 3. It is still expected to deliver the £70k savings projected.

- 0-25 birth to settled adulthood savings which are projected to deliver £300k in year 3 following early delays in the project initiation which are now on track.

It should also be noted that the council has launched a significant acceleration of the customer transformation programme which will drive and further align transformation activity across the council. While work has started, it is expected to accelerate as we enter year three and beyond and will develop into a further seven-year programme of change.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet:

- a) approves the transformation plan annual report.
- b) notes the planned shift in year three of the transformation plan to integrate ambitious customer transformation/Our Future Council plans from 2024 - 2030.

Reason for Recommendation:

Fundamental change to systems enabling improved outcomes across demand-led services can take time, and as such, a long-term transformation programme is required as we build incremental change to drive outcomes and realise financial stability.

1. Year 2 summary

In terms of governance, the transformation programme is governed by each directorate and reported to the council-wide transformation board, known as “DARTboard”, for strategic oversight and alignment with the Council Plan 2022-24. Political oversight is delegated by Cabinet to the Performance Board.

- 1.1 The second year of transformation concluded in March 2023. During this time, a number of foundational changes and reviews have been undertaken to ensure that the programme remains focused on our priorities. These have included:
- The transformation programme has been reviewed and aligned to the refreshed Dorset Council Plan 2022–24 and takes forward lessons learnt from the pandemic.
 - The Place Directorate and the Corporate Services five-year programmes have been redefined and savings identified, and governance adjusted to best support our organisational change programme.
 - DARTboard established the baseline benefits for the programme which was supported by a financial deep dive in June 2022, in addition to the monthly monitoring by the board.
 - A SWAP audit of transformation resourcing was undertaken from July – October 2022. The scope of the audit was to review the staffing capacity available in the organisation to deliver our transformation plans. Key findings from the report included the requirement for a review of the following, with actions related to these tasks already underway:
 - the way projects are prioritised in line with the Council Plan,
 - the way project managers are managed and structured and how project governance is embedded across the organisation
 - As an organisation, we continue to understand the changing landscape and respond to sector changes, including but not limited to:

- Adult social care reform white paper – People at the heart of care
- SEND and alternative provision green paper.
- Stable Homes: Built on Love Children’s Social Care Reform 2023
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2022
- Our role in the Integrated Care System partnership
- The Transformation Hub and supporting governance has been established including the DARTboard and supporting delivery boards in each directorate. This is regularly reviewed to ensure our governance supports continued progress and delivery.

2. Key Achievements and Activities

2.1 In terms of in-year projects, eight were delivered in year 2, and these included:

- **Right sizing with health partners** – this work was completed by Adults and Housing delivering £900k by maximising the number of people who should be funded by Continuing Health Care (CHC) and are currently not, and increasing the proportion of funding that the authority achieves from the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- **Tech enabled care** - In Adults and Housing, this contract was retendered making savings of £30k per annum. This provides a responsive tech-enabled care service to people in Dorset who need it. The closure report was approved by DARTboard in on 11 August 2022.
- **Care Dorset** - A new care company was set up in October 2022 following the safe, legal and correct transfer of adult care services from Tricuro to Care Dorset.
- **Coombe House School** – The school was opened in the summer term 2022 with provision for 50 places initially. There is further development work in place to increase this offer to 200 children by 2024.
- **Dorset Workplace** – this project completed the first phase of their work to enable office-based employees to work in a hybrid way with the launch of a new framework, team app and team charter arrangements. Further work is ongoing in phase 2 to finalise employee parking arrangements and the adjustment of office accommodation to enable more collaboration spaces for individuals and teams.
- **Planning convergence** - Dorset has succeeded in converging 6 legacy planning systems into a single system for the wider county. The closure report was approved by DARTboard on 11 August 2022. This work has migrated 47 years of data, 200 report and letter templates have been reviewed and consolidated and workflow has been automated within MasterGov including the reminder process. Convergence of land charges into MasterGov has allowed integration with GIS and streamlining and automation of processes to increase efficiency and help clear backlogs.
- **Employee recognition** – a review was completed to understand how we recognise employees within Dorset Council, and how this compares to research on the benefits of recognition within an organisation. Subsequently our annual employee awards were launched in 2022 along with a new approach for recognising years of service in 5-year milestones.
- **Employee brand** – work has been undertaken to improve how we promote who we are and what we have to offer. Our branding as an employer is beginning to set us apart from other organisations with applications for roles

originating all over the world. This is helping us to improve recruitment and retention and this will build as the work is further embedded.

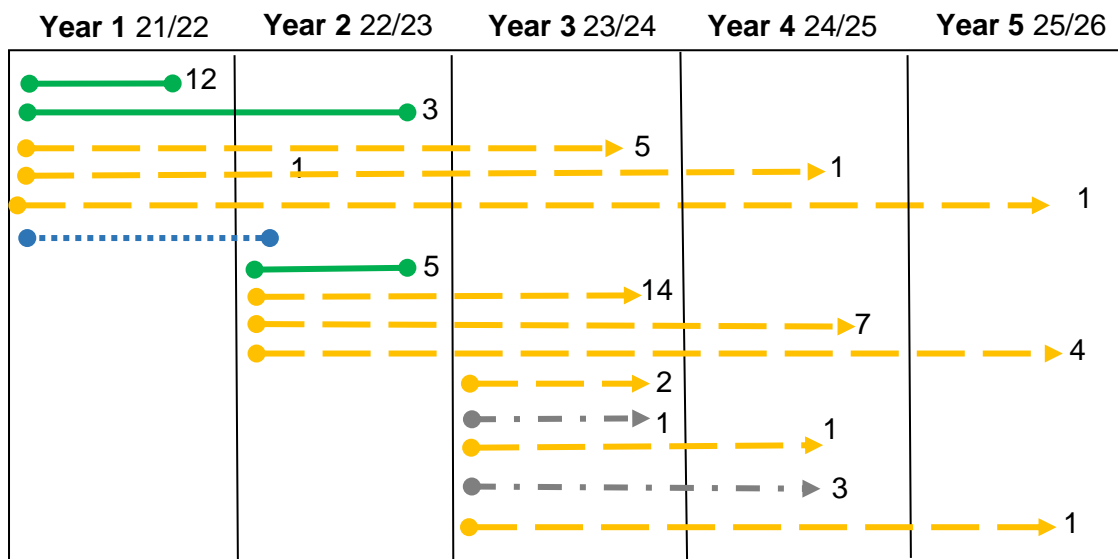
There are notable achievements across the portfolio from work undertaken in year 2, with activities planned to continue into year 3:

- **Social Care Sufficiency** – College House formally opened on 12th October 2022 and welcomed first residents in November 2022 to the residential home for Dorset’s children. Kirtleton Avenue officially opened on 18 April 2023, our new purpose-built accommodation in Weymouth, which provides homes for up to twelve young people leaving care.
- **Mockingbird** – Our pilot constellation, Pegasus, launched on 12th November 2022 and had its first post launch review by the Fostering Network. Constellation 2, Orion and Constellation 3, Draco launched on 25th March 2023 and 29 April respectively.
- **Family Hubs** – We opened our first two Family Hubs in Tricketts Cross (Ferndown) and Wareham. Family Hubs make council and partner services easily available, providing a complete experience for families where different services can work together to deliver the right help at the right time.
- **Safeguarding Families Together** – Phase 1 of the pilot project launched in November 2022 in Chesil, Dorchester and West localities, with substance misuse workers and domestic abuse (victim support) workers due to start working alongside social workers. The concept of Safeguarding Families Together is to embed specialist adult workers alongside children’s social workers, with an approach to keeping children safe in the family home, and we are already seeing the impact of the approach with supporting families staying together.

2.2 However, it is important to note that impactful and outcomes-based transformation takes time. As such, there are a large number of projects being delivered in year 2 that will continue delivery into year 3 as planned alongside additional activity which is yet to commence. The overview of this portfolio of work is complex and requires significant capacity across the organisation as we navigate through significant change.

The table below shows the profile of those projects over these five years and indicates where they are complete, in progress, projected to start or did not deliver. What this table signifies is that there is an increase in projects during 23/24 that will continue for the next 2 years at least (There has been one project started but after initial discovery was not progressed to delivery. This reflects our learn by doing approach and commitment to user centred design).

Table 1. Project numbers



Key: Green solid line = completed
 Amber dashed line = in progress with projected end date
 Grey dot dash line = projected to start and end
 Blue dotted line = project ended without full projected delivery

To help conceptualise future work, summaries of council-wide and directorate-based work has been provided to highlight new work that will be coming online, as well as work that will be continuing from previous years.

2.3 Whole council: becoming a responsive, customer focused council

Customer – our future council – transformation programme

The Our Future Council programme is a whole council, joined up programme which seeks to deliver an improvement to customer experience and changes to the way that the council operates to enable this.

Plans are underway to accelerate our plans in recognition of the improved level of service to our customers achieved from smaller scale change in year 1 and 2. By increasing the scale and pace of change across all services, we will:

- Deliver a ‘one council’ customer experience
- Enable a ‘one council’ people focus and organisational culture for the future
- Be ready for 2030 and beyond
- Become more financially sustainable

The business case is in development and if approved by Cabinet in November 2023, will commence implementation from early 2024.

Additionally, the council has been selected to form a Future Council’s pilot being led by the Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities. This will enable the council to expediate the delivery of our technology aspirations including an applications portfolio and management system and will be a key enabler of the organisation's transformation programme.

During year 2 the programme included the following:

- **Customer platform and account** – The customer account went live in April 2023 and enables customer to register, deregister and access local personalisation to them. The soft launch took place after consultation with steering group and stakeholders. The next phase of this work will see more data held in the account.
- **Out of hours front door** – In October 2022 a new approach to our out of hours service went live for the whole council including adults and children's services and highways. This meant we could end external contracts and use our existing customer services teams to provide this service in a more efficient and cost effective way. In the first 3 months 100% of out of hours calls were being answered, an increase of 31% on our previous arrangements. We have now integrated internal help desk services, such as ICT, and work continues as we transition other services to use this service, reducing our reliance on voicemail and email traffic to services out of hours.
- **Consultation and engagement** – This work is providing opportunities for all residents to have their say in the way that suits them, ensuring their views are thoroughly considered and where appropriate, acted on for Dorset policy making and service delivery. A new system is being procured to improve our platform and reach to residents and enable us to better coordinate our response to consultation and engagement. This is anticipated to be live by summer 2023.
- **Newsroom** – This work is designing a new online newsroom for Dorset Council reusing and developing capabilities on the customer platform, which will enabling the targeting and personalisation of services and information via the customer account. The first increment is live with work underway on the second increment.
- **Parking phase 3** – this successfully delivered a transfer of parking services customer front door into Dorset Direct. This has led to 77% of phone calls resolved by Dorset Direct without requiring specialist input from the parking service. This provided capacity in the parking service to reduce the number of outstanding parking charge notices by 100%.

2.4 Jointly commissioned between Children's and Adults Services

Birth To Settled Adulthood is a joint programme to improve the services and experience for children and young people aged 0-25, with a particular focus on the transition from Children's to Adult services. In 2023 a joint declaration of the principles for the work was signed by Dorset Children's and Adult Social Care, Dorset Council Members, NHS Dorset ICB and the Dorset Parent Carer Council. The vision is to develop a service that can effectively support young people in their Preparation for Adulthood, particularly those who have a disability, special educational need, mental ill health or a safeguarding need. This will sit alongside the wider 0-25 offer to support with housing, employment, education (including early years) and more.

The B2SA programme is continuing with the development and re-design of the 14-25 Transition to Adulthood Service and the 0-25 pathways development for education and employment, health and wellbeing, independent living and

community and friends. These were launched through a partnership workshop and agreed the next steps in the co-produced approach. The Independent Chairs report was submitted to People & Health Overview Committee on 21st March.

2.5 Adults and Housing

The Adults and Housing 'A Better Life' programme has been delivered in 2022/23 and a further new 10-year strategy of transformation is being developed as we commence year 3. The Adults Transformation, Investment and Reform (TIR) programme will be included into the council transformation portfolio following oversight at DARTboard in May 2023. This plan will reflect further demand management strategies to address the forecast 7% year on year demand for services.

In year 2, good progress has been made within the savings programme with £3.7m in savings delivered. This totals £8.3m transformation savings, in addition to £2.1m of tactical savings, bringing the total savings envelope to £10.4m across Adults and Housing over the past two years, with no significant cuts to service delivery.

Projects underway in year 2 that will continue into year 3:

- **Commissioned community care** - reviewing spend on packages in commissioned care across Residential & Nursing Care, Supported Living, Home Care, Extra Care and partner spend to ensure the best value for money.
- **Day opportunities** - exploring new models of delivery for day services, including the private day services market. Focus will be on connecting to communities, promoting wellbeing, increasing independence, pathways to employment and implementing the dementia services review.
- **Dorset Care framework** – this is launched and we have successfully onboarded providers to the framework. This is an ongoing process, and more providers will be added to the framework in the coming months. We have built some positive relationships through provider collaboration that will play a key role in delivering further developments in this area.
- **Resource/process redesign** (*was workforce redesign*) - delivering an effective and efficient workforce in adult's operations, providing a positive customer experience and good outcomes, with a focus on having a good place-based offer relevant to people's local area.
- **Housing Strategy** – setting out our refreshed housing strategy including allocating social rented housing, assisting homeless households and regulating private sector housing.

There is further activity in addition to the core transformation programme which has delivered the following:

- Set out our plans for **Market Sustainability** where we have increase hourly pay rates for community based support providers.
- Completed **initial mapping work with the Department of Health and Social Care** to highlight areas of improvement within our operational service. We are using this work to model the service redesign.
- We have set out ambitious plans within our Accommodation with Care Programme with the development of **Extra Care Housing & Reablement Hubs** Business cases.

- Through the Hospital Discharge money for 22/23, and in line with thinking around the Home First Accelerator Programme, agreed a two year contract for **30 beds of additional reablement support**. Care Dorset rapidly recruited a workforce to start to deliver the service for the winter of 22/23 with 20 beds now live.
- **Commissioning strategies** were developed, which included an autumn of engagement with staff, Members, Partners and Communities to help shape. These strategies were endorsed by Cabinet in February 2023.

The following projects have or will commence in year 3:

- **Shared Costs** – review all support provided to our partners and contractual arrangement in place, such as our brokerage support model for the NHS, and will ensure fair funding is being provided to us for these services.
- **Enhanced shared lives** - enhancing this service and helping to prevent reduce or delay needs for care and support of individuals, we can offer alternative solutions to a bedded placement.
- **Enhanced community reablement** - provide enhanced short-term social care rehabilitation to support people to become or remain independent at home, help people to retain or regain their skills and confidence so they can learn to manage again after a period of illness.
- **Housing Transformation** – this work will undertake change to deliver cost-effective and high-quality solutions to housing needs. This includes improving our housing prevention offer to reduce the number of people who are homeless and those living in temporary accommodation and improve housing standards.

There is further activity in addition to the core transformation programme which Adults & Housing plan to deliver in year 3 and beyond. This includes:

- Working with Care Dorset to remodel services to better meet the outcomes of the People of Dorset in a more effective and sustainable way.
- Continue to deliver the HomeFirst Accelerator Programme - a two year programme to help rebalance demand across the out of hospital pathway, improve system resilience and improve outcomes for people.
- Continue modelling of our accommodation with Care Programme, including delivery of Extra Care, Support Living, Key Worker Housing and Reablement Services
- Deliver on what we set out within our commissioning strategies and action plans for all ages
- Enhance our Digital offer, developing TEC and ensuring we have the right information, advice and guidance that is easily accessible. Supporting corporate colleagues on 5G connectivity across rural locations.
- Working with the VCS & wider Communities to develop our partnership and community offer.
- Redesign our operations service, to ensure services improve outcomes, support peoples wellbeing, get it right first time, meet our statutory obligations with a focus on prevention and early intervention, with a focus on ensuring we have the right systems, workforce and services in right places.
- Delivery of our assurance readiness programme, CQC inspection & Peer Review.
- Strengthen our role as a system partner, working with integrated care board colleagues to deliver an enhanced health and social care system.

- Deliver £3.4m in transformation savings and £5.3m of tactical savings for 23/24 with plans for further savings in future years.

2.6 Children's Services

The transformation programme in delivery in Children's Services centres on six projects and these are profiled to deliver outcomes and benefits over a 5-year period. In addition to this, we are in second year of delivery of the Social Care Sufficiency Strategy.

100% of Year 1 and 82% of Year 2 planned savings have been delivered totalling £4.3m to date. A solid benefits realisation framework is in place built upon a baselined evidence base and allows close monitoring of performance against projected savings. This supports a proactive approach to savings and a collective responsibility for delivery across the programme.

- **Family hubs** – In partnership with communities and partners family hubs provide whole-family, universal, and specialist services from 0-19yrs (25yrs with special educational need and/or disability (SEND)). The council secured £875k from the Department for Education to set up family hubs over two years later increased by a further £124k to increase capacity of delivery. Two hubs have been set up in Ferndown and Wimborne and are providing visible, appealing and welcoming spaces for families to access help and support from Dorset Council and from partner services such as NHS health visitors, midwives, early years practitioners, voluntary, community and faith sector partners without needing an appointment or having to travel too far. In March Cabinet supported the opening of a national exemplar for Family Hubs in Swanage, and delegated authority to officers to transfer the remaining Chapel Lane assets to the Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust (SPDT) Further hubs will be opened in 2023/24. We have received further investment for Reducing Parental Conflict programme and its development of a legal pathfinder, through working closely with the Family Courts we have begun to develop our offer to ensure that families seeking support with their separation always have options aside from pursuing legal action.
- **Mockingbird family model** – the model improves the stability of fostering placements and strengthens the relationships between carers children and young people, fostering services and birth families. The project secured £96,500 funding to support this approach from a successful Children's Social Care COVID-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund Bid, and the project is closely working with the Fostering Network and the South West regional group. To date, three constellations have launched between November 2022 and April 2023. The fourth and fifth constellations are planned for Autumn 2023.
- **Our digital family offer** – a programme to provide a digital space for children and families in Dorset where they can easily find help and advice when they need it. We will deliver a personalised experience and create an online Family Hub where people and professionals can form and build networks to support one another. The first iteration, focused on our SEND local offer is in the build stage. Our Local Offer (information and advice for SEND) is in the top 20 for most accessible in the UK.
- **Safeguarding Families Together** – embedding specialist adult workers, alongside children's social workers with an approach to keeping children safe

in the family home. We now have substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health specialists who have joined Dorset Children's Services and are co located in the pilot localities. Working with partners to recruit specialist workers who support domestic abuse perpetrators will complete the team. The pilot will continue until March 2024 and an evaluation of the project will commence in the autumn.

- **Traded services for schools** – the expansion and improvement of our traded services offer to schools due to be delivered in July 2023. This will provide a costed, transparent traded offer to the education market that is easily purchased with a digital platform in place that is customer friendly. One of the Local Digital Fund projects being delivered will build capabilities on the customer platform that will help enable this work.
- **0-25 birth to settled adulthood** as mentioned earlier in this report.
- **Social Care Sufficiency Strategy** – Kirtleton Avenue, College House - welcome Ofsted for first inspection. Recruited to manager post to enable registration for a further 5 bedded unit. Supported accommodation contract has been let and we are supporting the market to meet the requirements to register for Ofsted by Autumn 2023.
- We have entered into an academic partnership with the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University as an evaluation partner to strengthen the evidence base in relation to policy, research, and service through transformational change within children's services.

In addition to this programme of work in Children's Services there is further significant improvement work being undertaken within the directorate. This includes a number of prioritised requirements for Children's Services in addition to transformation plans. This includes activities such as the replacement of the SEND case management system.

Following a successful expression of interest to the Department for Education (DfE), Childrens Services was allocated funding of £762k in June 2022 to develop a model of **'Staying Close' for Care Leavers** over the next three years. This has strong interdependency with delivery of overall Transformation Programme.

Childrens Services were also selected to receive government funding worth 200k from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) under the Innovation Fund to Reduce Demand for Illicit Substances (RDIS). The funding will be used to explore and investigate drug use amongst young people, develop preventative programmes and provide support to reduce their vulnerability to illegal substances.

From Year 3 there are two large national programmes of work to which Children's Services must respond. The first is the SEND and alternative provision improvement plan and the second requires significant changes to the delivery of children's social care through the national Social Care Reforms (Stable Homes: Built on Love Children's Social Care Reform 2023).

2.7 Place

The Place transformation programme focuses on four key areas of work, profiled to deliver outcomes and benefits over a 5-year period. This work is supported by strategy reviews and other enabling work.

In addition, the directorate has delivered a programme of tactical savings for year 2 of £2.4m delivered in addition to transformation activity.

Transformation projects include the delivery of the following:

- **Planning** - Following convergence, the focus is on customer engagement and experience and work is focussed on delivering mobile working for building control, planning and enforcement officers, implementing application response and policy modules and consultation and engagement software for the Call for Sites and Climate consultations. A successful bid of £95k from the DLUHC PropTech Engagement fund enables the redesign of the online planning register to increase public engagement with the planning process. A further successful bid for £250k to the DLUHC Software Improvement Fund will allow the council to reduce the number of invalid planning applications received. Visioning work for the remaining transformation ambitions has taken place, these will be set out in year 3.
- **Dorset Travel SEND transport** – this project has begun to review existing SEND transport provision and will be supported by a review of the transport delivery model. Funding has been secured to allow specialists to work with both Dorset Travel and Children’s Services to review provision and to help review our delivery model and ways of working. This work is underpinned by the implementation of a new **Dorset Travel ICT System**, with the first phase going live in May 2023 and the full system live in early 2024.
- **Hedge to Hedge** – this project is anticipated to transform the way asset management is delivered across place-based services to ensure a consistent responsive service. This includes carriageways, drains, rights of way, bus stops, car parks, play and recreational equipment etc. The project is in ‘understand’ stage, an exploratory workshop has taken place to gather further insight, scope and shape both short term improvements and longer-term transformation work. Outputs from the workshop will be developed into proposals for prioritisation. It is anticipated that this work will transform the way asset management is delivered across our networks.
- **Assets & Regeneration**, whilst not a transformation project, this will be supporting other corporate transformation work and are anticipating £513k savings in holding costs.

Underpinning Strategy & Enabling work:

- **Library service strategy** – Phase 1 and 2 included a comprehensive consultation exercise, listening to residents, businesses and partners as we design our new library strategy. Further phases will deliver a modern and sustainable service that meets the needs of residents over the next 10 years. The strategy is due to be considered by Cabinet in Summer 2023.
- **Regulatory services** – this project is harmonising three business solutions and implementing a single cloud-based solution that will allow officers to work in a fully agile way, putting our officers where they need to be to meet the needs of the customers.

- **Records Management** – this work will enable improvements to records management systems and processes and setting out a clear blueprint for the future. To date, the development of an information asset register is nearing completion and the appropriate destruction of historical records is underway.

Projects not completed:

- **Stronger Neighbourhoods** – this project was a cross council initiative to help improve social mobility and health inequalities, which can particularly affect people with certain protected characteristics. Initially, good links were made with community groups and members with a commitment to work on improving services to Weymouth and Portland agreed. Following early discovery work to understand the current challenges, it became evident that other initiatives such as work through the Dorset Together network on cost-of-living etc, was already making a real, practical difference to residents with greatest need. Therefore, the decision to stop this work in favour of building other embedded community support networks was taken at DARTboard on 13 October 2022.

2.8 Corporate Services

Corporate Development alongside Legal and Democratic Services has a unique role in supporting and enabling the delivery of transformation and change plans for all other parts of the organisation in addition to its own programme of change.

The programme for year 2 incorporated the following:

- **Automation** – A low code platform is being procured following invest to save funding being approved in year 2. Our automation capability is a key enabler for the organisation to deliver transformation plans in all directorates.
- **Corporate system review** – a business case is in development to consider future options as the contract end date with SAP draws closer.
- **Data and business intelligence strategy** – the strategy has been approved and published during year 2. Year 3 will see projects initiated to deliver the strategy action plan.
- **Employee experience programme**
 - Dorset Workplace – phase 2
 - Employee Gateway
 - Employee Offer
 - Recruitment experience
 - Talent management
- **Climate and ecology programme**
 - Electric vehicle estate charging infrastructure – this work is overseeing the installation of electric vehicle charging points across the Dorset Council estate.
- **Being more commercial** – further development of the council's approach continues through the delivery of the Commercial Strategy through 4 key themes: behaving in a more business-like way, being business friendly, commissioning as One Council, making money.

In year 3 the following projects will commence in addition to projects started in year 2:

- **Corporate offer** – this project will review the way that corporate services operates to ensure that appropriate support is prioritised and provided to

directorates for their business as usual and change plans, and that corporate frontline services are delivered in the most sustainable way. This will align closely to the Our Future Council programme as organisational wide ways of working are reviewed.

- **HR Front door** – making improvements to the way that enquiries and managed by the HR service and the way that HR information is communicated to employees by signposting efficiently and effectively on first contact. This will allow the HR service to concentrate on critical situations and ensuring that capacity in teams can focus on value added activity, where advice, guidance and interpretation of policy is required.
- **HR case management system** – this project will develop a casework management system to enable improved data management and reporting of HR documents in a single place.
- Projects to deliver the outcomes in the **data and business intelligence strategy**

3. Financial Implications

£10.8m investment from the council’s invest to save fund has been made in the council’s transformation programme across years 0-2. This is to realise transformation savings of at least £31m against an original projection of £33m over five years. £13.6m has been successfully delivered. This has exceeded anticipated savings from reorganisation and the move to unitary council.

The council employs an invest to save approach to transformation, recognising that in the latter years of the programme further savings will be likely as we are able to scale up change plans.

Table 2. Transformation savings years 1 - 5

	Year 1 2021/22	Year 2 2022/23	Year 3 2023/24	Year 4 2024/25	Year 5 2025/26	Total
Budgeted	9,480,222	6,632,500	7,150,000	4,250,000	5,500,000	33,012,722
Achieved	7,419,537	6,232,500				13,652,037

Table 3. Transformation savings by directorate for year 2

Savings year 2 2022/23	Projected	Achieved	Underachieved
Adults and Housing	3,805,000	3,705,000	100,000 (housing transformation delivered as cost avoidance)
Children’s	2,827,500	2,527,500	300,000 (0-25 birth to settled adulthood)
Place	0	0	70,000 deferred from year 1 (regulatory)
Total	6,632,500	6,232,500	

Table 4. Savings by directorate project for year 3

Savings year 3 2023/24	Projected
Adults and Housing	3,400,000

Children's	3,000,000*
Place	750,000**
Total	7,150,000

* Additional £300k savings carried forward from year 2 in relation to 0-25 birth to settled adulthood.

** Additional £70k savings carried forward from year 1 in relation to regulatory services.

Since its inception in 2019, the transformation investment fund has approved 28 bids made to the transformation investment fund totalling £10,856,701. From the investments made in years 0 - 2, there are savings of £13,652,037 already delivered with the remaining £17,270,000 being tracked for delivery into year 3 and beyond. The profiling of these savings will continue to ensure the full £31m in savings is realised by year 5.

Table 5. Return on investment years 0-3

Year of investment	Number of bids	Total investment	Savings*	Return on investment
	28	10,856,701	30,922,037	20,065,336

* £13,652,037 already delivered, remaining figure projected over years 3 - 5

The crack-on fund totals £100,000 and is utilised for small bids to enable change at the discretion of the Corporate Director for Transformation, Innovation, Digital and Environment as delegated by the Performance Board.

To date, there have been 5 bids supported totalling £48,600 to enable activity:

- To improve recruitment and retention
- For two environmental and climate initiatives in line with the action plan
- To support the library strategy development
- To improve the way we coordinate our transformation activity

4. Environmental Implications

The new natural environment, climate and ecological decision process will help to frame the projects that come forward as transformation in the future. This is in keeping with the key natural environment council priority. The transformation programme will continue to consider the impact of any change delivered on these commitments. Each project and programme undertakes an impact review during the understand innovate stages of our change management framework.

5. Well-being and Health Implications

The transformation programme continues to deliver change to improve the way that the council provides services, including supporting residents with their specific needs. The transformation plan themes are designed to impact positively on the well-being and health of all through the joined up, consistent delivery of change. This includes the provision of universal and specialist services to residents and businesses alongside benefits driven from responsible management of the natural environment.

6. Other Implications

None

7. Risk Assessment

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Medium

Residual Risk: Medium

To ensure that the transformation programme operates safely and within risk appetite, we have adopted the corporate risk framework which is aligned to council priorities. The risk scoring methodology is in line with the corporate risk register.

The purpose of this risk register is to provide a snapshot of the key strategic risks arising from transformation. Risks are identified by projects in relation to their activity and additional programme level risks are identified by the DARTboard.

Where a risk is significant to the council's operation it will be included on the corporate risk register and monitored by the Audit and Governance Committee.

An emerging risk to the transformation programme is the emerging acceleration of the customer transformation programme. Currently this is a programme of work within the portfolio, but it is anticipated to supersede this plan following development of a business case in autumn 2023. This will change our approach to transformation across the organisation in line with our council priority to become a more responsive, customer focused council.

To mitigate this risk, the same lead officer is overseeing the current transformation plan in addition to the development of the business case to accelerate customer transformation. This will enable joined-up conversations and read-across as the plans and financial information develop.

Current risk profile for transformation (as at 4 May 23):

		Likelihood				
		Very unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Certain
Impact	Catastrophic	0	0	0	0	0
	Major	0	8	8	7	1
	Moderate	0	7	35	27	6
	Slight	1	3	14	5	4
	Negligible	1	0	1	0	0

Red = high risk	Immediate management action
Amber = medium risk	Plan for change
Green = low risk	Continue to manage

14 areas of high risk are actively being mitigated by actions within the project and relate to:

- Capacity and availability of the right people and skills within projects
- Leadership and support capacity to champion and embed large programmes of work
- Impact on records management and retrieval in the early stages of the project

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

We are committed to ensuring fair and accessible services for everyone in Dorset through the delivery of services and improvements as set out in our transformation and council plan. Where the council will make changes to a service or offer, an equality impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure due regard of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

An equality impact assessment is therefore undertaken for each change made as a result of transformation or broader change activity; these are usually identified by project and completed by the service, supported by the project delivery team.

9. Appendices

10. Background Papers

[Dorset Council Draft Transformation Plan 2020-2024](#)

[Transformation plan 2020 – 2025](#)

[Transformation progress report 2021](#)

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Cabinet

20 June 2023

Aspire Adoption Annual Report for Dorset Council

1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr B Quayle, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Local Councillor(s): All

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

Report Author: Allan Charlton
Title: Aspire Service Manager
Tel: 01202 817268
Email: Allan.Charlton@aspireadoption.co.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Dorset Council has a duty under the Adoption and Children Act 2002 to establish and maintain an adoption service for its area.

Dorset Council along with BCP Council discharges this duty through a delegation of functions to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency. Dorset retains overall responsibility for its adoption and special guardianship services, continuing to have parental responsibility for its own Children in Care but most adoption and some special guardianship functions are delegated to Aspire Adoption.

The appended report is the sixth annual adoption report presented by Aspire Adoption, summarising the work of the agency in the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023. It has been written to provide the Council with an opportunity to satisfy itself that the requirements of the Statutory Adoption Guidance 2013 and the Adoption Minimum Standards 2014 are met.

This report provides a summary of the comprehensive self-evaluation of Aspire Regional Adoption Agency

Recommendation:

That Cabinet approve Aspire Annual Report and Statement of Purpose.

Reason for Recommendation:

That Cabinet is satisfied that Aspire Statement of Purpose accurately describes the activities that the agency discharges on behalf of Dorset Council and the Annual Report satisfies the report that these activities were discharged to a high standard in the reporting year.



Aspire Adoption Annual Report for Dorset Council

1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Children's Adoption Data**
- 3. Adopter Recruitment**
- 4. Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Services**
- 5. Adoption Panel**
- 6. Birth Parent Services**
- 7. Special Guardianship Assessment**
- 8. Finance**

Appendices

- A. Local authority statutory responsibilities in respect of adoption**
- B. Division of roles and responsibilities between Aspire and the local authorities.**
- C. Aspire Organisational Structure and Staffing**
- D. Governance of Aspire Adoption**
- E. Adoption Panel**

1. Introduction

1.1 This is the sixth annual report for Aspire Adoption Regional Adoption Agency (RAA).

1.2 During the year 2022-2023 there have been significant changes within Aspire, there was a permanent appointment to the Service Manager post in October 2022, following a period of Interim service managers, two changes of Team Manager, and a partner Voluntary Adoption Agency closed.

2. Children's Adoption Performance Data

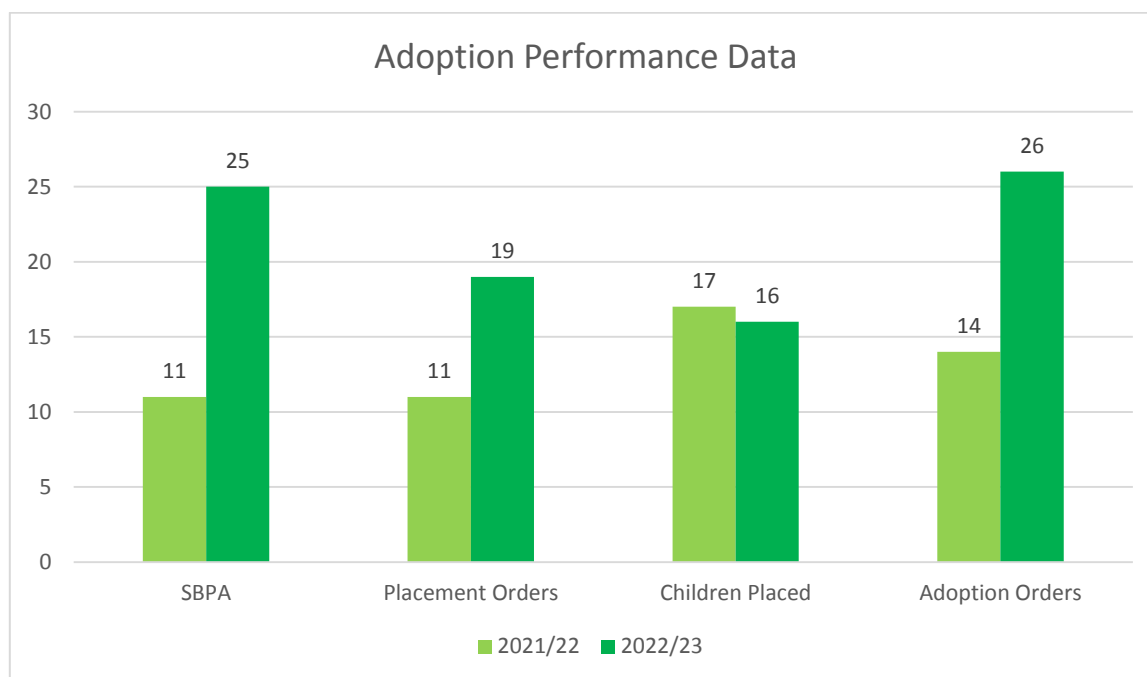


Fig1. Adoption Performance Data

2.1 Should be placed for Adoption Decisions (SBPA)

More children had a Local Authority Should Be Placed for Adoption (SBPA) plan this year.

Dorset have made a total of 25 SBPA decisions in 2022/2023 which is an increase of 127% over the 11 made in 21/22.

Of the 25 SBPA decisions made, 9 were boys and 16 girls, there were 6 sibling groups, 3 of which were groups of two siblings, 1 group of three and 1 group of four. 9 children were below the age of 2 and the remaining children were aged between 2 and 8 years old at the time of the SBPA decision.

There were 3 changes of SBPA decisions made, which related to 2 sibling groups of 2 and 1 single child. One sibling group of 2 and the single child

returned to their birth parents care, the other group were matched with long term foster carers.

2.2 Placement Orders.

There has been an increase in Placement Orders this year from 11 in 2021/22 to 19 in 2022/23. This is an increase of 72.7%. As the SBPA figures rise, then the expectation is that the Placement Orders will increase. We have observed that some placement Orders were taking longer to achieve through the Courts, however, since January 2023 the Courts have begun to refocus on the 26-week timescales for Care Proceedings, which should avoid delay in the placement orders being made.

2.3 Children Placed

There has been a slight decrease in children being placed within 2022/23. This is due to the complexity of the children having a plan for adoption and locating suitable adopters that can meet the children's needs.

2.4 Adoption Orders

There has also been an increase in adoption orders made. There were 26 adoption orders granted in 2022/2023 an increase of 85% compared to 14 in 2021/2022.

However, of these 25 adoption Orders made, some were related to the delays in 2021/22 due to the 'Somerset Ruling', which saw 9 adoption orders made in the month of May, of those 9, 5 related to adoption order hearings that were adjourned from the hearings due to be heard in Quarter 4 of 2021/22. The Courts had requested that statements of compliance were filed which confirmed that the children being considered for their adoption hearing were compliant with the regulations. This had been achieved and the adoption hearings were again relisted.

2.5 Children waiting for a match.

Both Dorset and Aspire are ambitious for their children and strive to seek placements for all children, no matter what age, level of need or sibling group size.

For the children currently waiting for a match. Aspire has worked hard to increase the range and diversity of adopters enabling children labelled the 'hardest to place' find loving adoptive families, by prioritising the assessment of those families wishing to consider sibling groups and older children. Aspire have also attended matching events both regionally and nationally, linked with

our Southwest Adoption Consortium Partners, and have used link maker, a national matching tool to link with external adopters. There are currently 11 prospective adopters who will consider older children and sibling groups, and 2 would be happy to explore older children with additional needs.

**Children with
PO waiting
for a match**

	Jun-30	Sep-30	Dec-31	Mar-31
Dorset	11	7	7	10

**Children with
PO linked to
adopters**

	Jun-30	Sep-30	Dec-31	Mar-31
Dorset	7	3	0	1

**Children with
PO not yet
linked**

	Jun-30	Sep-30	Dec-31	Mar-31
Dorset	4	4	7	9

Of the 10 children waiting for a match, 9 children are deemed harder to place (sibling groups and health needs). Since the end of Quarter 4, of the 9 children, 6 children have been linked with an adoptive family, and will be attending matching panel in May and June 2023. 1 child, not deemed harder to place, is also linked with a family and is attending matching panel in May 2023.

As a general principle, siblings will be placed together; however, due to the individual needs of children, this is not always appropriate and cannot always be achieved. It is essential that sibling assessments are carried out to ensure good quality decision making and support plans are evidence based if children are placed together or apart. Of the 3 sibling groups who were subject to placement orders and those who are waiting to be matched, only the sibling group of 3 is yet to be linked and there is consideration for a sibling split assessment taking place.

3. Timeliness of adoption

There has been an increase in both the time between entering care and being placed for adoption and the time from Placement Order to be matched with adopters.

The most up to date comparator figures available at the time of writing are the Coram BAAF quarter 3 figures to the 31st of December 2022. The England average was 478 days and Dorset 517.

(A10) Time between entering care and placed with family for adopted children

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

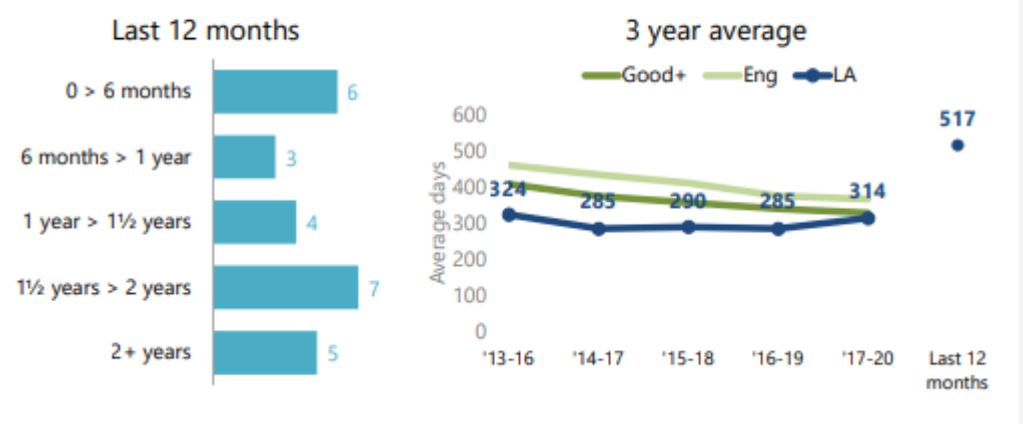


Fig 2. Time between entering care and placed with family.

The most up to date comparator figures available at the time of writing are the Coram BAAF quarter 3 figures to the 31st of December. The England average was 199 days and Dorset 296 days.

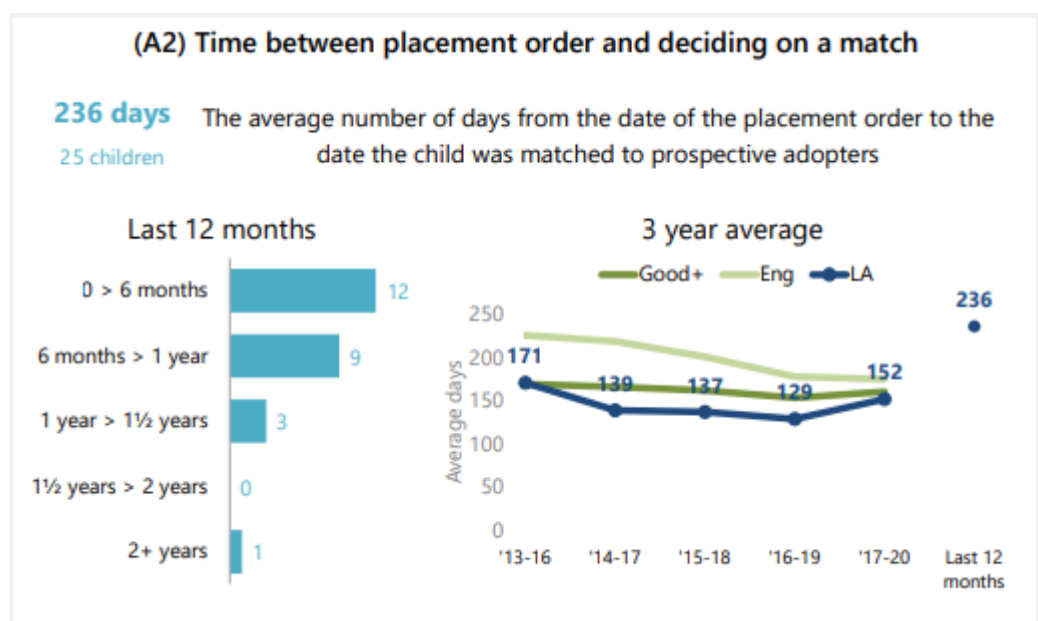


Fig 3. Time between placement order and match

While there is a significant increase for Dorset and this is worrying, this reflects the ambition that Dorset and Aspire have for their children.

These figures include a child who had been placed for adoption, which disrupted, who was then placed again in an EP placement in February 2022, and was successfully adopted in February 2023. There were children who were impacted by the Somerset ruling in early 2022, who were placed in Early Performance then matched once the Courts were satisfied that the Placement Orders were legally made. There was also one family who had extensive support throughout the placement, until the application for the adoption order was made.

Figures about timeliness therefore need to be treated with a degree of caution because figures can appear excellent when only placing easier to place children and less positive when children who have been challenging to place have good outcomes.

Aspire have reviewed The Family Finding Team services and have consolidated and updated their offer of family finding support to provide a much more consistent service to the cases where they do not hold case responsibility, as this has been identified as an area for development. This was launched in May 2023.

4. Early Permanence

Early Permanence					Total
	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	
Dorset	1	0	0	1	2

Early Permanence is where children are placed with prospective adopters on a fostering basis. If the courts decide that adoption is the right plan, they become their adopters. This avoids the additional trauma children suffer from changes in their primary carers.

Early Permanence has generally been used for babies. Aspire has placed babies direct from hospital so there are Dorset children who have only known the one carer. We have also been far more creative in our use of early permanence with older children to reduce placement moves to avoid delay.

Previously our adopters have proved that with the right support and information they can manage a high degree of risk, uncertainty, and contact. Two children ended up being returned to their birth families. They worked incredibly hard to make it a smooth transition for the child.

There has been a decrease in the use of early permanence placements for 2022/23, and whilst discussions have taken place regarding using this approach, they have not always resulted in the child being placed within an Early Permanence Placement.

Aspire have been part of a Pan regional Early Permanence project to develop a range of training packages for different audiences including Local Authority social workers, IROS/QARO'S, CAFCASS and the judiciary. The conference was held on the 19th April 2023 and this was attended by Aspire and members of Dorset's legal services and QARO's.

Aspire also provided an Early Permanence workshop at the Family Justice Conference held on March the 3rd 2023 to raise awareness and 'myth busting' which had a high attendance and received positive feedback from those attending and the designated Judge for Dorset.

To continue to promote the use of Early Permanence, Aspire are arranging early permanence workshops/training for Dorset staff, which will be included on the training schedule. It is hoped this training will dispel some myths, raise awareness of the purpose and use of Early Permanence, and increase confidence in using this approach.

Currently 44% of our adopters will consider Early Permanence

Greg's story

Greg was initially placed in his adoptive placement in July 2021. Unfortunately, this placement was ended in February 2022, following intensive support provided relating to 'blocked' care. To avoid further trauma work was undertaken to identify suitable potential Early Permanence adopters to avoid additional placement moves. Greg was placed with his Early permanence carers in February 2023, and then matched and placed with his Early Permanence adopters in August 2022. Greg was adopted in January 2023.

5. Adopter Recruitment

Aspire recruits a great range of diverse adopters. At any one time, we try to have around 25 - 30 families available to meet the needs of Dorset and BCP children.

Subtle changes to our social media messaging and changes to the induction programme have helped attract adopters for older children, sibling groups and children with additional needs that we require.

We have fine-tuned our messaging and work with adopters to flex around the needs of local children. We do adopt some babies, but we are mainly looking for adopters who will consider older children, sibling groups and children with additional needs.

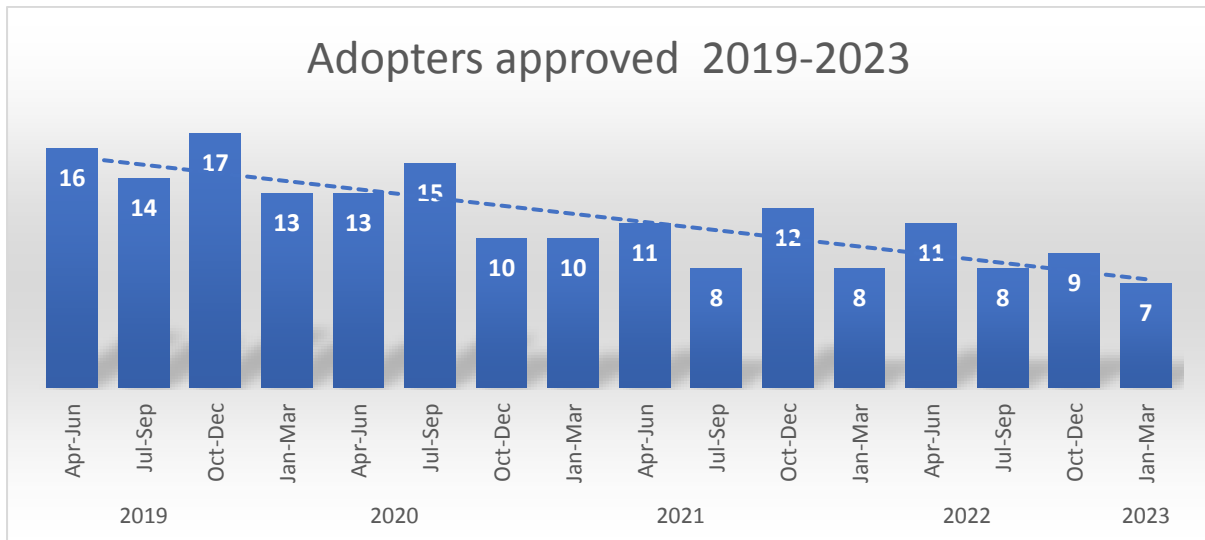


Fig 4 Adopters Approved

At any one time we have approximately 25-30 available approved adoptive households. If adopters are not matched with Dorset or BCP children, we support them to explore children nationally.

However, there has been a gradual decline in adopter enquiries and approvals, which is a national trend.

The ASG secretariat report “The number of adopter registrations and approvals have continued to decline, together with the numbers of adopters not yet approved, and adopters approved and waiting to be matched”. They report there were “660 Registrations, a decrease of 20% (160n) from Q2 2022/23 and a decrease of 18% (140n) when compared to Q3 2021/22 – 560 Approvals, an increase of 4% (20n) from Q2 2022/23 and a decrease of 27% (210n) when compared to Q3 2021/22” (Adoption and Special Guardianship Quarterly Data Collection Headline Measures: Q3 2022/23)

The closure of Families for Children impacted upon the ability of the Recruitment and Assessment Team to complete some assessments as immediate, and in some cases, intensive work had to be undertaken due to an influx of adopters at various stages of matching and children in placement.

Aspire are improving their website to recruit more adopters, this will include videos from current adopters, and up to date case studies relating to children and sibling groups. Aspire are also aiming to release recruitment information on social media sites in collaboration with Dorset.

Aspire have also made links with Homes for Good, a faith organisation within Dorset, and we hope to develop this partnership to aid recruitment. Aspire will be undertaking marketing for recruitment across the whole of Dorset to encourage more prospective adopters from across the county.

Of the 25 adopters available, 11 are happy to be considered for those older children and sibling groups, and 2 would be happy to explore older children with additional needs.

5.1 Interagency adoptions

Aspire supports national adopter sufficiency adopters.

This year Aspire spent £92,934 on adoptive placements and sold £221,629 on placements.

The close relationship and tracking we undertake with Dorset means that by the time the placement order is made, we will know whether Aspire has suitable adopters or not, and can immediately look elsewhere to avoid delay for children.

Our relentless focus on finding families for children means that almost all children with a plan for adoption are found families.

6. Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Services

Aspire offers support to Dorset adopters and special guardians until their children reach adult hood. This is a service that families choose to access. We have worked hard over the last year to eradicate the waiting list and offer an immediate response to families at the lower tiers through a daily duty system.

The cumulative increase in the number of adopters and special guardians eligible for this support continues to be challenge. This is a small team consisting of just under 3 FTE social workers and 4 and half family support workers. We have maximised capacity by reducing bureaucracy.

The service has undertaken a review and introduced a new tiered approach to services, which consists of a duty system, universal support, and a targeted Intervention.

The duty system is managed by experienced Family Support Practitioners who are able to give advice and guidance and signpost to other services if needed.

The universal support offer which is inclusive and provides regular newsletters and information via the mailing list and support_groups and workshops/training.

A targeted support offer for those families needing more than universal services. An assessment of need will be carried out. This will be done via a consultation with one of the experienced social workers.

For those families that need targeted support, a worker will be allocated to the family to carry out the identified work on the plan.

Allocations will be on a short-term basis (approx. 3 months) to provide an intensive package of support, to build a parents/carers skills, resilience, and confidence to parent the child/ren in their care.

86 parents (Dorset and BCP) attended Aspire training and workshops over 2022-2023, with many more attending the support groups.

The service has strong links with Virtual Schools, Early Help and universal services who offer bespoke services for our families.

167 Children (Dorset and BCP) are currently receiving direct social work support, with an allocated worker. It generally takes about 5 days to be allocated.

6.1 The Department for Education Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASF)

The post support team help adopters and special guardians to access the ASF fund completing the required assessment and sourcing the therapists using our procurement framework. This has become increasingly important for our families. and the current service, has meant we have been able to support significantly more Dorset families access therapeutic services. The annual claimed funding is.

2019 /20	57 Families
	£32,845.99
2020/ 21	130 Families
	£186,183.91
2020/22	261 Families
	£342,205.00

Fig 5. Claimed funding from ASF

6.2 Have the changes to the post support service had a positive impact for families?

Changes were made in consultation with the Adopter and Special Guardianship Forum. While they understood what the service wanted to achieve, there was some anxiety that moving away from a mainly allocated service would reduce the support available to families. However, feedback received has been positive.

The forum conducted an independent survey in January 2022, which their key findings of preference for support were.

- **Social events** (e.g., walk, picnic)
- Therapeutic **support for the whole family** is more important than therapy for the child or support (e.g., self-care) for parents.
- The **monthly support groups** are highly valued.
- The next most preferred support is **Access to ASF, Therapy for the child, and Help with educational settings.**

These key findings have been embedded within the services provided and Aspire are continually working to develop their workshops/training packages available for adopters and special guardians.

There are monthly social walks, and coffee mornings for SG and Adopter groups, and regular monthly support groups through stay and plays, summer picnics and Christmas parties. There is an adult adopter group held 6 times a year.

There are workshops provided to Special Guardians and Adopters, these are the Great behaviour breakdown, and Foundations of Attachments, and Nonviolent resistance.

There are now special guardianship support groups arranged in schools throughout Dorset to enable the special guardians to meet up and form links within their local area.

Clive and Harry (4 and 2 years old)

They are living under a SGO with their grandparents.

They called into ASPIRE asking for advice and guidance on parenting two children that have witnessed DV and alcohol/drug misuse in their early years.

The Special Guardians have stated that the worker is “part of the family” and they “don’t know what they would do without the support that has been provided.” There were weekly interventions in the home to model therapeutic parenting and set clear and consistent boundaries for both boys. This has now

reduced to once every two weeks and involves one outing a month supporting Nan to feel confident in parenting both young children in a social setting. Clive has a life story book which has supported the family in sharing the children's experience and their journey. They are also on the waiting list for Foundation of Attachment training (funded by the ASF) and have attended all of the SG meet ups in the school holidays making new connections.

6.3 Need for post support services

This service has seen a continued increase in uptake over the year which is expected to continue.

The service has in quarter 4 of 2022/23 had 870 enquires for support.

There have been 132 referrals for ASF support made in the same quarter.

6.4 Provision of therapeutic services by the Adoption and Special Guardianship support teams.

Aspire are currently providing services to 7 families which is funded through the ASF, there are three families receiving therapy techniques, 3 families receiving therapeutic life story work and 1 family receiving Think Bricks This will generate £20,834.19 income for Aspire.

There is a Foundation of Attachment course running currently which will generate a further £3,360.

There is currently a guaranteed income of £24,194.19.

There is also a waiting list of work for 5 families and if this work progresses this will generate a further £12,967.75.

There will be another Foundation of Attachment course running in September, however, until there is a confirmation of the numbers, we are unable to predict the amount that can be claimed.

There are two further workers who will be completing their therapeutic life story work qualification in September, and this would then enable more families to be supported.

6.5 The challenge for the Post Adoption and Special Guardianship Service

It is important that Aspire continues to review post support services closely with the Forum to ensure they continue to be accessible, timely, relevant and have impact. But it is clear that an increasing cohort and increasing demand is the greatest issue for the service.

At present the current change in systems are proving beneficial, and are manageable by the Team, meaning more families are being supported.

7. Aspire Adoption Panel

The Adoption panel has continued to meet virtually twice a month.

This year the panel made: -

- 36 Approvals
- 35 Matches
- 8 De-Registrations

7.1 Matches of children with adopters.

The statistics for Adoption Placements show the number matches to have returned to pre pandemic and Somerset Judgement levels. There were no deferred matches this year. One match was deferred due to paperwork being sent to the adopters (who were already caring for two children under early permanence), too late for them to read it before the Panel date. The match was subsequently approved at the following Panel.

7.2 Adopters

The number of adopters approved fell slightly this year. Panel considered 37 cases, approving 35 immediately and deferring two cases. One of these subsequently returned to Panel to be approved, while the second is currently on hold pending the adopters' decision whether to proceed. The number of deregistration's of adopters has been higher than usual, this as a result I think of social workers checking the status of those who have long been waiting.

7.3 Feedback from Panel

The Adoption Panel has been operating a RAG rating system for social worker reports since early 2021. This has been generally well received and has improved the consistency and quality of feedback. The process has enabled an objective and measurable assessment of the direction of travel of reports which has in large part been positive as most reports are given a 'green rating'.

The only area of vulnerability remains CPRs, where the quality can vary greatly but where once again there is an indication of the average score improving over the year.

Analysis in PARs has also been identified as an area requiring some improvement. Joint social worker and Panel training has been arranged for the Summer to discuss this and allow panel to articulate directly where they feel additional information would be of use. Panel has noticed a drop in the number of approvals and matches being undertaken within the advised time limits. In some cases, this has reflected the complexity of assessment needed, in others staffing pressures in Aspire has been the cause.

8. Birth parent services

It is a requirement that the birth family are offered independent support when a placement order is made in respect of their child. Aspire commissioned an independent Birth Family Matters (BFM) Support Service from Families for Children. This had been recommissioned from April 2022 to 31st of March 2024 with an option to extend for a further 2 years.

The service consists of 15 hours a week of an experienced social worker, management oversight and agency support. The social worker has at times gained additional external charitable funding to support activities.

However, Families for Children announced that they would be closing on the 31st August 2022. It wasn't possible to undertake a proper procurement exercise in the time available. It was also important that a Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA) delivering the service had experience of adoption. The only VAA in the region that met this requirement was Parents And Children Together (PACT). Permission was given to consult with PACT.

BCP and PACT separately, had to consider TUPE law and the detail of the contract. A process that would normally take some months was executed in 3 weeks. Although the cost of due diligence, compared to the size of the contract, didn't make business sense PACT took the long view facilitating a larger presence in the region. The contract was let to PACT at the end of August.

The service that was provided was a seamless transition that had no impact upon the families that the worker was engaged with, and the level of service was maintained. The worker is currently engaging with 80 birth families.

9. Special Guardianship (SG) Assessment

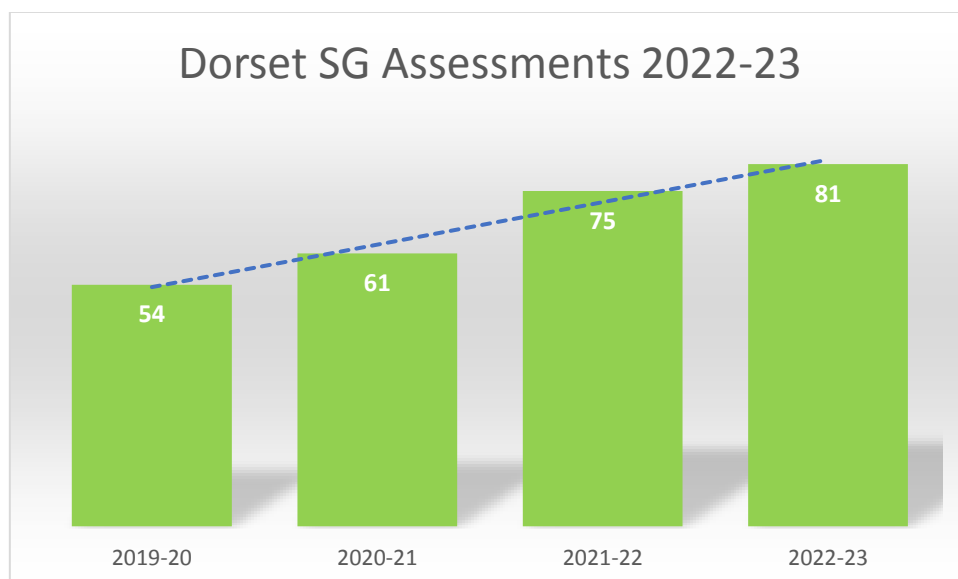


Fig 6 Number of SG Assessments

**SG
Assessments
filed 2022-
2023**

	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct- Dec	Jan- Mar	Total
Dorset	18	9	14	21	62

It should be noted that approximately a quarter of the special guardianship referrals received did not result in a full assessment being completed. This dropout rate is to be expected for a variety of reasons. For example, the family may decide that they cannot offer permanence, they chose to remain as foster carers, more than one family member is being assessed, issues arise during the assessment or the child's plan may change.

The number of special guardianship referrals from Dorset has risen and Dorset indicate that this is likely to remain the case as it is preferred that children live with their families wherever that is feasible.

During 2022/23 there were 61 Special Guardianship assessments filed with the Court for Dorset, an increase of 97% from the 34 completed in 2021/22.

Dorset and BCP agreed to expand the service by 1 social worker at the May 2021 board. To increase capacity from 100 to 120 pa for both authorities. Aspire has taken 179 referrals for assessments in total this year. The Team continues to be under pressure when the referrals increase.

Special Guardianship Referrals for both Local Authorities

2019-20 110

2020-21 140

2021-22 159

2022-23 179

There were 20 withdrawals of Special Guardians throughout 2022/23, however, these assessments had commenced, and as such workers time was used to complete them.

Where demand exceeds capacity Independent social workers are commissioned. These are more expensive, and parts of the assessment still must be completed by Aspire and the child's worker.

6. Financial Implications

Aspire is funded 49% by Dorset and 51% by BCP. Considerable work took place to agree a 3-year budget for Aspire from 2022 to 2025.

In terms of this financial year although the figures have not been fully signed off. We are expecting to report that Aspire has come over budget due to a variety of reasons.

The previous Service Manager of Aspire agreed use of casual workers to meet demand in the Special Guardianship Assessment Team and Recruitment and Assessment Team. There was agreement for 2 Family Support Practitioners to be employed funded via the Adoption Support Fund, to enable staff to undertake training to provide therapeutic services via the ASF. However, the ASF income could not meet this demand. There were secondments of staff within Aspire to cover posts.

7. Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Implications

None

8. Well-being and Health Implications

None

9. Other Implications

10. Risk Assessment

10.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as: Low

Current Risk:Low

Residual Risk:Low

11. Equalities Impact Assessment

The service promotes permanence for children through Special Guardianship and Adoption and services to support adopters and Special Guardians. It commissions an independent birth parent service.

The statement of purpose outlines the services commitment to dignity, equality and respect for all who come into contact with the service

APPENDICES

Appendix A

1. Local authority statutory responsibilities

- 1.1 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 sets out the duty all Local Authorities to establish and maintain an adoption service, to meet the needs in relation to adoption, of children who have or may be adopted, of adults who have been adopted, parents and guardians of such children and persons who have or may adopt a child in their area
- 1.2 On the 1st July 2017 Dorset County Council delegated most of those functions, along with some statutory responsibilities in relation to special guardianship, to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). The division of responsibilities is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Aspire (RAA) is funded by Dorset County Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to deliver adoption and special guardianship services.
- 1.4 Each local authority retains overall responsibility for their adoption and special guardianship services, continuing to have parental responsibility for their own Children in Care, but delegating most adoption and some special guardianship functions to Aspire Adoption.
- 1.5 Aspire works closely with colleagues in the voluntary adoption sector, Parents and Children Together (PACT) are represented on the Aspire Partnership Board.
- 1.6 It is a requirement that elected members satisfy themselves that the Local Authority and the Regional Adoption Agency are working together to meet the needs of children requiring permanence through adoption as laid out by the Statutory Adoption Guidance 2013 and the Adoption Minimum Standards 2014.

The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards can be accessed at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_NMS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf

The 2013 Statutory Adoption Guidance can be accessed at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270100/adoption_statutory_guidance_2013.pdf

Appendix B

1. Division of roles and responsibilities between Aspire and the local authorities

- 1.1 Aspire has been delegated all of the local authority statutory responsibilities for adoption, other than the court work leading to Care and Placement Orders.
- 1.2 Aspire has responsibility for recruiting, assessing and supporting prospective adopters, for non-agency adoption work including partner adoptions and intercountry adoptions.
- 1.3 The local authorities retain overall responsibility for their Children in Care but have delegated case responsibility for the majority of children with adoption plans to Aspire following the granting of a Placement Order.
- 1.4 Aspire is responsible for family finding for all children with adoption plans. The RAA is also responsible for preparing children for a move to adoption, for preparing moving calendars or diaries, undertaking life story work and creating life story books.
- 1.5 Aspire undertakes special guardianship assessments for court on behalf of the local authority as part of care proceedings, or in private law applications.
- 1.6 Aspire provides support to all parties affected by adoption, including adopters, adoptive families, adopted adults and birth relatives, and also to special guardians, families created through special guardianship, and to the birth families whose children are subject to SGOs.
- 1.7 The table on the following page sums up the division of responsibilities between Aspire and the local authorities.

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters	✓	
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
PERMANENCE PLANNING		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓

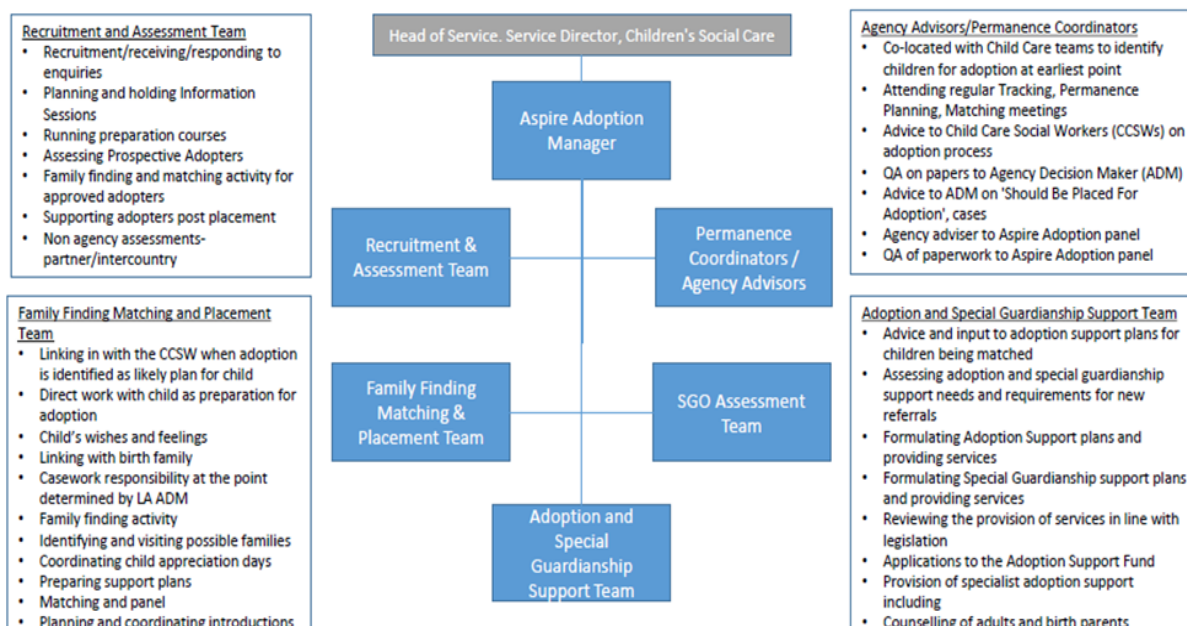
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓
Support and advice to child care social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments if commissioned by LA	✓	
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for “Should be placed for Adoption” decisions		✓
Case management prior to the point agreed by the LA ADM		✓
Case management from point agreed by the LA ADM	✓	
MATCHING AND PLACEMENT		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	
Organising child appreciation day	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child	✓	
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	
Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book	✓	
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child’s care and care plan		✓
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter	✓	
ADOPTION AND SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT		
Assessment for adoption or special guardianship support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption and special guardianship support plans	✓	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre and post Adoption Order		✓
Adoption and special guardianship support delivery including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption/special guardianship training 	✓	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Birth Relative services • Support with ongoing birth relative contact • Specialist Life Story practitioners • Adoption counselling and training 		
Financial support to adopters and special guardians including adoption and special guardianship allowances		✓
SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS		
Receipt of application or court request for special guardianship		✓
Assessment of applicants for Special Guardianship	✓	
NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS		
Step parent/partner adoption assessments	✓	
Intercountry adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	

Appendix C

1. Aspire Organisational Structure and Staffing

Aspire Adoption - Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) – Organisation Structure



2. Staffing

- 2.1 There are 43.54 permanent full -time equivalent posts in Aspire with the permanent staffing establishment supplemented by those on casual contracts to increase capacity where needed. Many of the staff work part time, with the total number of staff comprising of social workers, support workers, and business support staff totalling about 56.
- 2.2 The service is led and managed by the Aspire Adoption Service Manager, Allan Charlton, Allan Charlton is a qualified social worker, has a management qualification and is registered with Social Work England.
- 2.3 The Recruitment & Assessment Team comprises of a team manager, practice manager, and 7.44 social workers. There is included within this one 30hr vacancy. All are registered with Social Work England
- 2.4 The Family Finding, Matching and Placement Team comprises of a team manager, 1 FTE practice manager and 4.3 FTE social workers, all of whom are registered with Social Work England, and 3.64 FTE family support workers.
- 2.5 The Special Guardianship Assessment team has a team manager, practice manager and 5 social workers. All are registered with Social Work England.
- 2.6 The Adoption & Special Guardianship Support team consists of 1 Team Manager, 1 Assistant Team Manager, and 2.75 FTE Social Workers, all of whom are registered with Social Work England, and 4.5 FTE Family Support Practitioners.

The Team has a social work vacancy of 18.5 hours following a full-time worker taking flexible retirement. One part time FSP is currently absent, one fulltime FSP will be leaving the service on the 28th April 2023.

- 2.7 There are 2 FTE Permanence Coordinators, who also act as Agency Advisers to the Aspire Adoption Panel and Aspire Agency Decision Maker, and to the Agency Decision Makers in the local authorities in relation to decisions as to whether a child should be adopted.
- 2.8 The service is supported by 7 FTE business support staff including a senior business support officer, a panel administrator, and a marketing, media and monitoring officer.
- 2.9 All of the social workers employed by Aspire are registered with Social Work England, and many of the staff, including support workers, have additional qualifications including skills in a variety of therapeutic interventions such as theraplay, Therapeutic Life story work, sensory integration, mindfulness and DDP (Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy).
- 2.10 Aspire also has access to dedicated clinical psychology support for staff and service users.
- 2.11 No agency staff are employed, and any vacancies attract a high standard of applications across all areas of the work undertaken by Aspire. Casual staff add capacity for one off pieces of work in the Recruitment and Assessment Team and the Special Guardianship Assessment Team.

3. Staff training and development

- 3.1 Staff in Aspire have access to training and courses run by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council as the host authority paying for these from the Aspire training budget of £8,000 a year. They have access to external courses, but only dependent on budgetary restrictions. In 2022/23 6 members of staff attended Dyadic Developmental Parenting training stage 2.
- 3.2 Staff have monthly supervision and annual appraisals, and regular team case and practice reflection sessions are facilitated by the clinical psychologists.
- 3.3 A staff forum for all staff in Aspire is held every 6 months to update on Aspire performance data, local and national issues relating to the service and to develop the team service plans.

Appendix D

Governance

The following is taken from the Inter Authority Agreement

SCHEDULE 2 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Governance Structure



Part 1 – Strategic Partnership Board

1 Name:

The name of the Board for Aspire Adoption shall be the **Strategic Partnership Board** which is established pursuant to an Inter Authority Agreement between Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole ("the Councils") for the creation of a Regional Adoption Agency.

2 Role:

The Board will provide advice, oversight and endorsement of the strategic direction of Aspire Adoption.

3 The Board will:

- 3.1 Provide and review the strategic direction of Aspire Adoption;
- 3.2 Oversee, review and endorse budget setting and make recommendations to the Councils for Aspire Adoption;
- 3.3 Oversee, review and endorse the Business Plan annually and make recommendations to the Councils for Aspire Adoption;
- 3.4 Attempt to resolve disputes between the Councils under the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement.

4 Accountability and Responsibility:

- 4.1 Each Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that their nominated representative(s) (or named substitute) are available to attend all Board meetings, which will be scheduled in advance.
- 4.2 All members of the Board will be in a position to make decisions within their respective organisation, where appropriate.
- 4.3 All members of the Board will be responsible for reporting to their organisation, through their respective governance arrangements.

5 Meetings of the Board

- 5.1 The Board will meet every six months or at a greater or lesser frequency if it so decides.
- 5.2 The Board will elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from amongst its members.
- 5.3 The Chairperson will agree the dates, times and venues for the meetings of the Board. The meeting timetable will be scheduled over the year, to reflect both planned monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- 5.4 The Chairperson shall normally preside at all meetings of the Board.
- 5.5 The Chairperson will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and draft minutes for circulation.
- 5.6 Agendas and papers for the meeting will be sent out at least five working days prior to the meeting in order to provide time for members of the Board to read them and identify actions for their own organisations.
- 5.7 Minutes of meeting will be circulated within 5 working days after the meeting with an action list.

6 Membership:

- 6.1 The Board will consist of:
 - Portfolio Holder and Executive Director for Children's Services for Bournemouth Borough Council;
 - Cabinet Member for Learning, Skills and Children's Safeguarding and Corporate Director for Children's, Adults and Community Services for Dorset County Council;
 - Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director for Children's Services for the Borough of Poole Council.
- 6.2 The Board will consult (so far as it considers proper and appropriate to do so):

- Representatives from local Voluntary Adoption Agencies/Families for Children; and
- A representative from Stakeholders.

6.3 Members of the Board should:

- Commit to attending the majority of meetings or nominate a suitable substitute who can attend in their place who will be expected to exercise the powers of the Member for whom they are substituting. Only Board members or their named representatives can attend Board meetings;
- Uphold and support the Board decisions and be prepared to follow through actions and decisions for the Board proposals and declaring any conflict of interest should it arise;
- Be prepared to represent the Board at stakeholder events and support the agreed consensus view of the Board when speaking on behalf of the Board to other parties.

7 Voting – Quorum

- 7.1 No quorum is necessary for the routine business and the receiving of reports. However where the Chairperson determines that a critical decision is required there must be a representative from all the Councils.
- 7.2 In the spirit of effective collaboration and partnership working, the Board will always seek to come to agreement through consensus and unanimity following debate and discussion where all the members will be encouraged to participate.
- 7.3 The Members of the Board will be expected to subscribe to the seven principles of public life in their work and decision making. The principles are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 7.4 Members will be expected to declare any personal interests in the business of the Board and to withdraw from participation where such interests are prejudicial or pecuniary.

Part 2 – Operational Management Board

1 Name:

The name of the Board for Aspire Adoption shall be the **Operational Management Board** which is established pursuant to an Inter Authority Agreement between Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council

and the Borough of Poole ("the Councils") for the creation of a Regional Adoption Agency.

2 Role:

The Board will provide support, advice and management to Aspire Adoption to ensure that statutory requirements and the Business Plan is delivered effectively.

3 The Board will:

- 3.1 Oversee the implementation of the Aspire Adoption Budget and Business Plan;
- 3.2 Oversee the commissioning arrangements and operational performance against agreed local priorities and targets and in line with national priorities and targets.

4 Accountability and Responsibility:

- 4.1 Each Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that their nominated representative(s) (or named substitute) are available to attend all Board meetings, which will be scheduled in advance.
- 4.2 This Board will report to the Strategic Partnership Board.

5 Meetings of the Board

- 5.1 The Board will meet quarterly or at a greater or lesser frequency if it so decides.
- 5.2 The Board will elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from amongst its members.
- 5.3 The Chairperson will agree the dates, times and venues for the meetings of the Board. The meeting timetable will be scheduled over the year, to reflect both planned monitoring and evaluation requirements.
- 5.4 The Chairperson shall normally preside at all meetings of the Board.
- 5.5 The Chairperson will be responsible for agreeing meeting agendas and draft minutes for circulation.
- 5.6 Agendas and papers for the meeting will be sent out at least five working days prior to the meeting in order to provide time for members of the Board to read them and identify actions for their own organisations.
- 5.7 Minutes of meeting will be circulated within 5 working days after the meeting with an action list.

6 Membership:

6.1 The Board will consist of:

- Service Director for Children’s Social Care for Bournemouth;
- Assistant Director – Care and Protection for Dorset;
- Head of Children & Young People’s Social Care for Poole;
- Childrens Services Commissioners from each of the three Parties;
- Adoption Aspire Manager.

6.2 Members of the Board should:

- 6.2.1 Commit to attending the majority of meetings or nominate a suitable substitute who can attend in their place who will be expected to exercise the powers of the Member for whom they are substituting. Only Board members or their named representatives can attend Board meetings;
- 6.2.2 Uphold and support the Board decisions and be prepared to follow through actions and decisions and declaring any conflict of interest should it arise;
- 6.2.3 Be prepared to represent the Board at stakeholder events and support the agreed consensus view of the Board when speaking on behalf of the Board to other parties.

7 Voting – Quorum

- 7.1 No quorum is necessary for the routine business and the receiving of reports. However where the Chairperson determines that a critical decision is required there must be a representative from all the Councils.
- 7.2 In the spirit of effective collaboration and partnership working, the Board will always seek to come to agreement through consensus and unanimity following debate and discussion where all the members will be encouraged to participate.
- 7.3 The Members of the Board will be expected to subscribe to the seven principles of public life in their work and decision making. The principles are selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- 7.4 Members will be expected to declare any personal interests in the business of the Board and to withdraw from participation where such interests are prejudicial or pecuniary.

Appendix E–

1. Aspire Adoption Panel

- 1.1 Aspire Adoption operates an Adoption Panel, constituted in accordance with legislation, regulations and guidance. The panel has an independent chairperson, and 22 members on a Central List from which each panel is drawn. There is no legal maximum number of panel members at each panel but in practice, a maximum of 6 or 7 attend each panel, including the panel chair and a social worker. The designated doctor for looked after children in the local authorities funding Aspire is also the agency medical adviser and is a full member of the panel.
- 1.2 The panel is serviced by a panel administrator and has access to legal advice if needed. The professional advice to the panel is provided by the two FTE Agency and Panel Advisors, one of whom attends each Panel to ensure the smooth running and to advise on policies and procedures.
- 1.3 Current membership includes individuals with personal experience of adoption as adopters and adopted adults. It also includes experienced social workers with direct experience of adoption work, a psychotherapist with experience of working in a child and adolescent mental health setting, and panel members with experience of working in an educational setting.
- 1.4 Members of the Central List from which individual panel membership is drawn reflect the diversity of modern society as far as possible, and include those who are single, in heterosexual and same sex relationships. One panel member on the Central List has personal experience of disability. There is some diversity in terms of age, with panel members in their 30s and others who are retired. Although most panel members are of white British ethnic origin, one panel members is of black African ethnicity, and another is of Indian descent.
- 1.5 The functions of the panel in relation to adoption matters are.
 - to recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child.
 - to recommend whether a proposed match between a child and prospective adopters is a suitable one.
 - In circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no Placement Order is applied for, the panel will recommend whether the child should be placed for adoption.
- 1.6 The panel can also give advice about the numbers and ages of children in relation to prospective adopters, also about post adoption contact, delegated parental responsibility and adoption support. The panel has a consultative role regarding the agency's policies and procedures, and a monitoring role regarding quality assurance and ensuring that the time scales set out in the Adoption & Children Act 2002 are met.

- 1.7 The Aspire Adoption Panel makes recommendations based on detailed written reports prepared by the child's social worker and adoption social worker, and the social worker and team manager's attendance at panel to clarify points if needed.
- 1.8 When considering the approval or deregistration of prospective adopters or a match between prospective adopters and a child, adoptive applicants have the option of attending panel in person, to provide scope to discuss and clarify any issues relevant to the application. Applicants who decide not to attend in person are not disadvantaged in any way and no judgement is made from their decision not to do so although every effort will be made to assist their attendance.
- 1.9 The recommendations and advice of the panel are referred, along with the final agreed minutes of the meeting, to the Agency Decision Maker, for a decision to be made and conveyed to all parties within the time scales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.
- 1.10 The Panel chair is independent, is an experienced chair and an adopter of 2 children. He attends the Aspire Strategic Partnership Board and presents a report to the Aspire Operational Management Board and Strategic Partnership Board every 6 months in line with standard 17 of the Adoption Minimum Standards, on the quality of reports being presented to the panel. This includes whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met, and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent and fair approach across the service in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement. His most recent report is included as Appendix 5.
- 1.11 In 2022/23 the Adoption Panels have all been held virtually to enable full participation of members and adopters.

Appendix F

Aspire Adoption Statement of Purpose 2023 - 2024



Aspire Adoption
Statement of Purpose
2023 - 2024

Introduction

Aspire Adoption is a Regional Adoption Agency, established in July 2017, with delegated responsibility for discharging most of the adoption functions of Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole. From 1 April 2019, because of local government reorganisation, the councils funding Aspire are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and Dorset Council. Aspire Adoption working in partnership with the Voluntary Adoption Agency Parents and Children Together (PACT).

Families For Children were another partnership agency, however, they closed on the 31st August 2022.

This statement of purpose has been written in accordance with the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and associated Regulations, and the Adoption Statutory Guidance 2013. It fulfils the requirements of Regulations 2 and 4 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003; Regulations 3 and 24B and Regulations 4 and 24 C of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies and the Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2003; and of Regulations 5 and 6 of the Adoption Support Agencies (England) and Adoption Agencies (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2005. It also fulfils the requirements of Standard 18 of the National Minimum Standards for Adoption 2014. The 2014 Adoption Minimum Standards can be accessed at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336069/Adoption_N_MS_July_2014_for_publication.pdf

The 2013 Statutory Adoption Guidance can be accessed at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-statutory-guidance-2013>

Principles and Value Statement

The principles of the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, the Adoption & Children Act 2002 and accompanying Regulations and Statutory Guidance, the Children and Families Act 2014, the Education and Adoption Act 2016, the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, and the Adoption National Minimum Standards 2014, all underpin the work of Aspire Adoption. The values statement in Appendix A is adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards and sums up the important principles which underpin all adoption work within Aspire and within the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, and Dorset Council in their permanency planning for children for whom adoption is the care plan. These values are equally applicable to children for whom special guardianship is the care plan.

Aspire is committed to promoting diversity and non-discriminatory practice.

Aims and Objectives

In accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, all local authorities have a duty to establish and maintain an adoption service in their area, to meet the needs in relation to adoption, of children who have or may be adopted, of adults who have been adopted, parents and guardians of such children and persons who have or may adopt a child. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council have delegated most of those functions to Aspire Adoption, a Regional Adoption Agency. Further information can be found about this in the Schedule of Responsibilities in Annex B, part of the Inter Authority Agreement between the local authorities. It explains in more detail what functions remain in the local authority and which have been delegated to Aspire. Aspire Adoption is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council.

Aspire Adoption aims to ensure that children who are unable to live with their birth family and for whom adoption or special guardianship has been agreed as the plan, can live in a permanent, stable and loving family in which their needs will be fully met throughout their lives. This can only be achieved if the needs of all of those touched by adoption are also supported, including adoptive parents, adopted adults and birth relatives of those who have been adopted or made the subject of Special Guardianship Orders

The name "*Aspire Adoption*" reflects the aspiration to learn, to build on existing good practice and achieve practice improvements in the delivery of services for children, adopters and others who benefit from or need adoption and special guardianship services in the area covered by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council and Dorset Council.

Aspire's vision and the objectives aimed for are to achieve excellent outcomes for children and adults affected by adoption and special guardianship by:

- Working closely with our partner local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of placement decisions which will fully meet their needs.
- Targeted recruitment and the establishment of a wide and diverse pool of prospective adopters.
- Matching so that children are placed without delay in secure, loving families.
- Undertaking special guardianship assessments which are thorough, evidence based, and timely.
- Providing creative and outstanding adoption and special guardianship support services.
- Investing in our workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services.
- Continually seeking to apply best practice and innovation to our ways of working.

- Actively listening to and learning from children, adults and staff with whom we work to develop and improve the services provided.

The Registered Manager/Responsible Officer

The Registered Manager for Aspire under regulation 5 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003 is Allan Charlton, Adoption Manager, Aspire Adoption Services.

The Responsible Officer for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council is Jane White, Director of Children's Social Care and YOS Children's Services, BCP Council.

The Responsible Officer for Dorset Council is Paul Dempsey, Corporate Director Children's Services, Care and Protection Dorset Council.

There are five Agency Decision Makers (ADMs).

Jane White Director of Children's Social Care and YOS Children's Services and Aleksandra Zabielskia Service Manager CHAD are ADMs for decisions about whether BCP Council children in the care of the local authority should have a plan for adoption, and for matches for those children.

Paul Dempsey (Corporate Director Care and Protection) and Louise Drury (Head of Service for Children in Care and Care Leavers) are ADMs for decisions about whether Dorset children in the care of the local authority should have a plan for adoption, and for matches for those children.

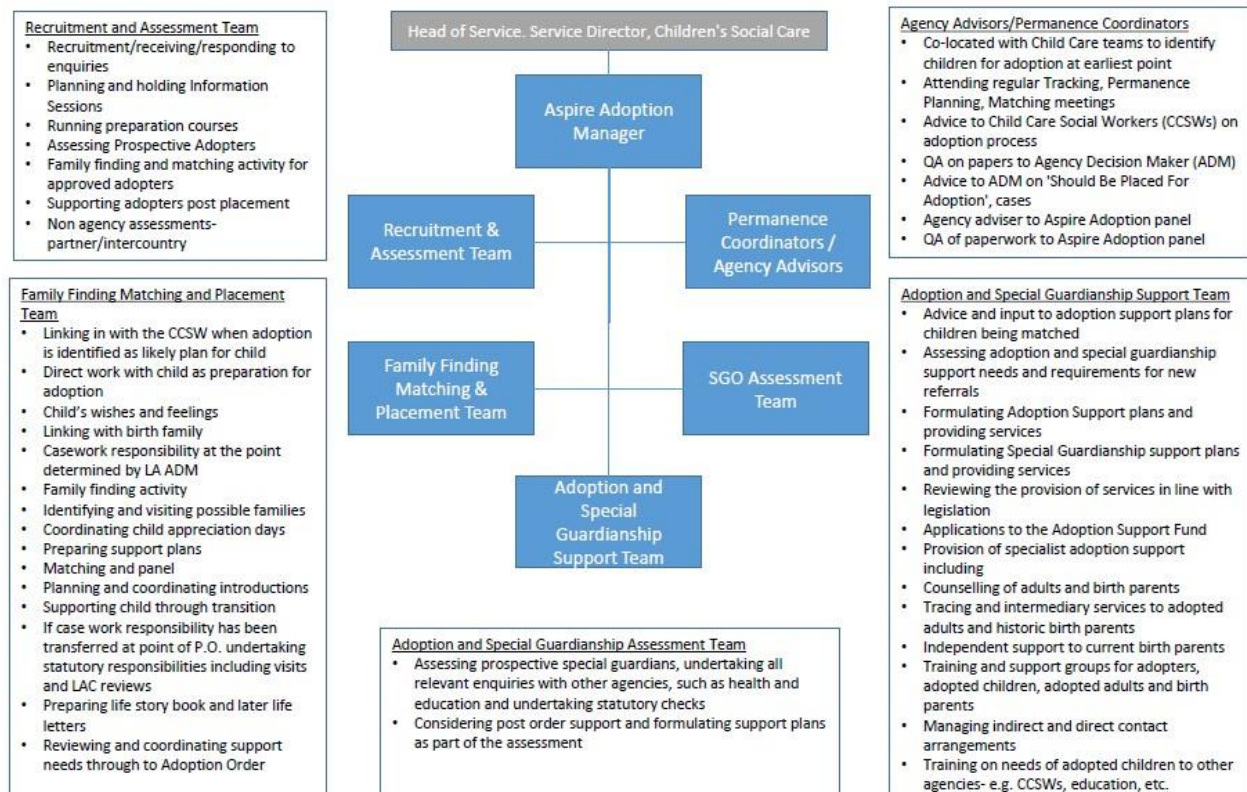
The ADMs in each of the authorities are also responsible for decision making in respect of the temporary approval of adopters as foster carers for early permanence placements.

Allan Charlton, Service Manager for Aspire Adoption, is ADM for decisions about the suitability of prospective adopters.

All have social work and management qualifications and are registered with Social Work England.

Organisational Structure of Aspire Adoption

Aspire Adoption - Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) – Organisation Structure



The service is led and managed by the Aspire Adoption Manager, Allan Charlton. Allan Charlton is a qualified social worker, has a relevant management qualification and is registered with Social Work England as a social worker.

The Recruitment and Assessment Team comprises of a team manager, practice manager, 7.44 FTE social workers. All are registered with Social Work England as social workers.

The Family Finding, Matching and Placement Team comprises of a team manager, 1 FTE practice manager and 4.3 FTE social workers, all of whom are registered with Social Work England, and 3.64 FTE family support workers.

The Special Guardianship Assessment team has a team manager, practice manager and 5 FTE social workers. All are registered with Social Work England as social workers.

The Adoption & Special Guardianship Support team consists of 1 Team Manager, 1 Assistant Team Manager, and 2.75 FTE Social Workers, all of whom are registered with Social Work England, and 4.5 FTE Family Support Practitioners.

There are 2 full time equivalent Permanence Coordinators, who also act as Agency Advisors to the Aspire Adoption Panel and Aspire Agency Decision Maker, and to the Agency Decision Makers in the local authorities in relation to decisions as to whether a child should be adopted.

The service is supported by 6 FTE business support staff including a senior business support officer, a panel administrator and a marketing, media and monitoring officer.

All staff are based at the Aspire Adoption headquarters which is at the Kinson Hub, 1599 Wimborne Rd, Bournemouth BH11 9AW. Social workers and support workers have lightweight laptops and smart phones and can work from home or from touch down points across Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset or further afield.

Roles and responsibilities

The successful delivery of the services provided by Aspire is dependent on a high level of joint working between Aspire and Aspire’s partner local authorities. The table below sets out how Aspire and the three local authorities will ensure that all the agencies work together effectively in the best interests of children and families affected by or created through adoption or special guardianship. More detail is provided in Appendix B in the Schedule of Responsibilities which forms part of the Inter Authority

Agreement between the local authorities. Aspire also works in partnership with the local Voluntary Adoption Agency, Families for Children, running joint training and support groups for service users and commissioning out to Families for Children an independent support service for birth relatives, Birth Family Matters. Then voluntary adoption agencies; Families for Children and PACT – parents and children together, attend the regular ‘Children Waiting Meetings’ to promote prompt matching of children with prospective adoptive families.

Function	Regional Adoption Agency	Local Authority
RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT		
Marketing and Recruitment Strategy	✓	
Adopter Recruitment and Enquiries	✓	
Assessment of Prospective Adopters – all Stage One and Stage Two functions	✓	
Completion of Prospective Adopter Report	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for approval of adopters	✓	
Post approval training	✓	
Matching	✓	
Post Placement training for Prospective Adopters	✓	
PERMANANCE PLANNING		
Early identification of a child possibly requiring adoption		✓
Tracking and monitoring the child possibly requiring adoption	✓	✓

Support and advice to childcare social worker on the adoption process	✓	✓
Sibling or other specialist assessments if commissioned by LA	✓	
Direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Preparation of the Child Permanence Report		✓
Agency Decision Maker for “Should be placed for Adoption” decisions		✓
Case management prior to the point agreed by the LA ADM		✓
Case management from point agreed by the LA ADM	✓	
MATCHING AND PLACEMENT		
Family finding	✓	
Looked After Child reviews	✓	✓
Shortlist and visit potential families	✓	
Organising child appreciation day	✓	
Ongoing direct work to prepare child prior to placement	✓	
Adoption Panel administration and management	✓	
Agency adviser role	✓	
Agency Decision Maker for Matching prospective adopters and child	✓	
Placement Planning meeting administration and management of introductions	✓	
Support to family post placement and planning and delivery of adoption support	✓	
Ongoing life story work and preparation of Life story book	✓	
Independent Review Officer monitoring of quality of child’s care and care plan		✓
Support prospective adopters in preparation and submission of application for Adoption Order – including attending at court	✓	
Preparation of later life letter	✓	
ADOPTION AND SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT		
Assessment for adoption or special guardianship support	✓	
Developing and delivering adoption and special guardianship support plans	✓	
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre and post Adoption Order		✓

Adoption and special guardianship support delivery including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support groups • Social events • Post adoption/special guardianship training • Independent Birth Relative services • Support with ongoing birth relative contact • Specialist Life Story practitioners • Adoption counselling and training 	✓	
Financial support to adopters and special guardians including adoption and special guardianship allowances		✓
SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS		
Receipt of application or court request for special guardianship		✓
Assessment of applicants for Special Guardianship	✓	
NON-AGENCY ADOPTIONS		
Step parent/partner adoption assessments	✓	
Intercountry adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	✓	

Aspire Adoption Panel

Aspire Adoption operates an Adoption Panel, constituted in accordance with legislation, regulations and guidance. The panel has an independent chairperson, 21 members on a Central List from which each panel is drawn and two medical advisers who share the Panel attendance. There is no legal maximum number of panel members at each panel but in practice, usually a maximum of six attend each panel. To be quorate, the panel needs to have a minimum of five members present, which must include the chair or vice chair, an independent person (who could be the chair or vice chair) and a social worker. One of the agency medical advisers for the two local authorities attends the Aspire Adoption Panel where possible and is a full member of the panel when they do so. The panel is serviced by a panel administrator and has access to legal advice if needed. The professional advice to the panel is provided by the Permanence Coordinators/Agency Advisers, one of whom will attend each Panel to ensure the smooth running and to advise on policies and procedures.

Current membership includes adopters and adopted adults with personal experience of adoption. It also includes experienced social workers with direct experience of adoption work, a psychotherapist with experience of working in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services setting, a former magistrate, and a social worker with experience as a CAFCASS guardian. The Central List reflects the diversity of modern society, with some panel members in a same sex or heterosexual relationship, others who are single with experience of bringing up children as single parents. Most of those on the Central List are white British, with two panel members who are from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic

(BAME) background. One panel member has a registered disability, another has a relative with Down's Syndrome. There are more women than men on the Central List, with proactive efforts being made to recruit more men.

The functions of the panel in relation to adoption matters are

- to recommend whether prospective adopters are suitable to adopt a child;
- to recommend whether a proposed match between a child and prospective adopters is a suitable one.
- In circumstances where a child is relinquished for adoption and no Placement Order is applied for, the panel will recommend whether the child should be placed for adoption.

The panel can also give advice about the numbers and ages of children in relation to prospective adopter approval, also about post adoption contact, delegated parental responsibility and adoption support. The panel has a consultative role regarding the agency's policies and procedures, and a monitoring role regarding quality assurance and ensuring that the time scales set out in the Adoption & Children Act 2002 are met.

The Aspire Adoption Panel makes recommendations based on detailed written reports prepared by the child's social worker and adoption social worker, and the social worker's attendance at panel to clarify details if needed. When considering the approval or deregistration of prospective adopters or a match between prospective adopters and a child, adoptive applicants have the option of attending panel in person, to provide scope to discuss and expand on any issues relevant to the application. Applicants who decide not to attend in person are not disadvantaged in any way and no judgement is made from their decision not to do so, although every effort will be made to assist their attendance.

The venue of the panel meeting is in a modern purpose -built building with disabled access. During the period since March 2020, in response to the Coronavirus restrictions, Aspire Panel has met virtually using Microsoft Teams.

The recommendations and advice of the panel are referred, along with the final agreed minutes of the meeting, to the relevant Agency Decision Maker, for a decision to be made and conveyed to all parties within the time scales laid down in the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

Systems for the monitoring, quality assurance and evaluation of services

The Aspire Adoption Service undergoes regular internal and external scrutiny to ensure that services are robust and of good quality. This will be achieved by:

- Collection and scrutiny of data, recording outcomes for children and adopters, including data as required by the Adoption and Special Guardianship Secretariat and Ofsted.
- Tracking systems, internally and in conjunction with the local authorities, to measure the timescales involved in providing services.

- Aspire Adoption's Operational Management Board meets quarterly and reviews outcomes against key performance indicators and national standards. It also reviews budgets and the financial state of the agency. The Board consists of representatives from both local authorities at Service Director and Service Manager level. Others attend by invitation, and there is a standard Focus on Practice agenda item at each meeting.
- The Aspire Strategic Partnership Board meets every 6 months, and membership consists of the Executive Corporate Directors in BCP Council and Dorset Council, and the lead members/portfolio holders for Children and Families representing elected members. A representative of the CCG attends, also the panel chair, a service user representative and the Service Director of the Voluntary Adoption Agency with which Aspire is partnered, Parent and Children Together. The role of the Board is to oversee and review the service from a performance and financial perspective, also, to attempt to resolve disputes between the Councils under the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement.
- The Permanence Coordinators/Agency Advisers and the Aspire Adoption Panel chair provide quality assurance feedback every six months on the quality of reports being presented to the panel. This includes whether the requirements of the Restrictions on the Preparation of Adoption Reports Regulations 2005 have been met, and whether there is a thorough, rigorous, consistent and fair approach across the service in the assessment of whether a child should be placed for adoption, the suitability of prospective adopters and the proposed placement.
- Six monthly performance reports are provided by the Aspire Adoption Service Manager to the Aspire Strategic Partnership Board and to the executive officers of each Council. The local authorities still retain corporate responsibility for their own Looked After Children, even where they have delegated functions to Aspire. These reports address the management, outcomes and financial state of the agency, and monitor the management and outcomes of the service, to satisfy the local authorities delegating adoption functions to Aspire that the agency is effective, achieving good outcomes for children and other service users, and complying with the conditions of registration.
- Each team has regular team meetings and there are staff meetings for all of those working in Aspire every 6 months, to analyse performance across the service and take part in practice development sessions.
- Service user feedback is sought at different stages of the adoption process, and in relation to special guardianship services.
- A Service User Consultative Forum meets every 3-4 months to feedback to the agency on specific issues. The chairperson of the Forum sits on the Strategic Partnership Board.
- Second opinion visits to prospective adopters take place where there are issues arising during the assessment.
- Statutory Child in Care reviews, chaired by Independent Reviewing Officers, and planning meetings provide a structure for the agency to record progress in individual cases where a child is looked after by either of the local authorities.
- Where Aspire has case responsibility for children with adoption plans, the local authority audit schedule includes these cases. Aspire has also set up an audit schedule to audit a sample of cases in each of the four teams on a rolling monthly basis, with feedback to the case holder, team manager and Aspire Service Manager. Themes from

the audits are drawn together every 3 months by the Permanence Coordinators/Agency Advisers.

- Staff performance is routinely monitored during regular supervision sessions and appraisals with line managers.
- Appraisals for Aspire Adoption Panel members, including the chair take place annually.
- Annual updates take place of the *Statement of Purpose* and *Children's Guides to Adoption* and *Children's Guide to Adoption Support*.

Complaints and compliments

All of those receiving a service in relation to adoption or special guardianship by Aspire Adoption are advised of their right to make representations or complaints.

The complaints officer for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole (BCP) Council collates and progresses all complaints and compliments according to Local Authority procedures and produces reports on an annual basis. The Aspire Adoption Service Manager monitors the progress of all complaints and compliments specifically relating to the service. There is a protocol in place which defines how complaints are managed which are received by or about the services provided by staff in Aspire's partner local authorities. Details of this can be found in one of the Schedules to the Inter Authority Agreement, attached as Appendix D.

A Children's Guide to Adoption is given to all children where the decision has been made that they should be placed for adoption. This contains local information about adoption, a summary of what happens at each stage of the adoption process, including at court, how long each stage should take, how a child can find out about their rights, how to contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, how to secure access to an independent advocate, how to make a complaint and how to contact the Children's Rights Officer and Ofsted.

A Children's Guide to Adoption Support Services is given to all children at the time of placement dependent on age and understanding and those in receipt of adoption support services, and contains the information laid down in the Minimum Standards about how a child can find out about their rights, how they can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted, if they wish to raise a concern with inspectors and how to secure access to an independent advocate.

Contact details for Aspire Adoption

Aspire Adoption,
First Floor,
Kinson Hub,
1599 Wimborne Road,
Bournemouth BH11 9AW

Tel - 0300 123 9868

Email - enquiries@aspireadoption.co.uk

Contact details for complaints

Tel 01202 458712

acomplaint@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Freepost RTKS-LEBR-YTAR

W. BCPCouncil.gov.uk/complaints

Contact details for Ofsted

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

General enquiries 0300 123 1231

Contact form <https://contact.ofsted>.

Contact Ofsted about concerns on 0300 123 4666

The helpline is open Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

Appendix A

The values statement below is adapted from the 2011 and 2014 National Minimum Standards for Adoption and reflects those of Aspire Adoption.

Values - children

- The child's welfare, safety & needs are at the centre of the adoption process
- Adopted children should have an enjoyable childhood, & benefit from excellent parenting & education, enjoying a wide range of opportunities to develop their talents & skills leading to a successful adult life.
- Children are entitled to grow up as part of a loving family which can meet their needs during childhood and beyond.
- Children's wishes & feelings are important & will be actively sought & fully taken into account at all stages of the adoption process.

- Delays should be avoided as they can have a severe impact on the health & development of the children waiting to be adopted.
- A sense of identity is important to a child's well-being. To help children develop this, their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, language & sexuality need to be properly recognised & positively valued & promoted.
- The particular needs of disabled children & children with complex needs will be fully recognised & taken into account.
- Where a child cannot be cared for in a suitable manner in their own country, intercountry adoption may be considered as an alternative means of providing a permanent family.
- Children, birth parents/guardians & families & adoptive parents will be valued & respected.
- A genuine partnership between all those involved in adoption is essential for the National Minimum Standards to deliver the best outcomes for children; this includes the Government, local government, other statutory agencies, Voluntary Adoption Agencies & Adoption Support Agencies.

Values- adopted adults & birth relatives

- Adoption is an evolving life-long process for all those involved- adopted adults, & birth & adoptive relatives. The fundamental issues raised by adoption may reverberate & resurface at different times & stages throughout an individual's life.
- Adopted people should have access to information & services to enable them to address adoption related matters throughout their life.
- Agencies have a duty to provide services that consider the welfare of all parties involved & should consider the implications of decisions & actions for everyone involved.
- Agencies should seek to work in partnership with all parties involved, taking account of their views & wishes in decision making.
- Agencies should acknowledge differences in people's circumstances & have established policies that provide non-discriminatory services.
- Adopted adults have their adoptive identity safeguarded & the right to decide whether to be involved in contact or communication with birth family members.

Values - adopters

- The role of adoptive parents in offering a permanent family to a child will be valued and respected.
- All adoptive applicants will be treated fairly, openly and with respect throughout the adoption process. No applicant will be discriminated against on grounds of disability, ethnicity, culture, language, sexuality, gender, financial status or marital status.
- All applicants are entitled to know what issues will be considered in their assessment and will be kept informed of progress throughout. They will receive a copy of their assessment report before an adoption panel meeting, have the opportunity to comment on the report and to attend panel and be heard if they wish.

Appendix B

Schedule of Responsibilities

The successful delivery of the services provided by Aspire will be dependent on a high level of joint working between Aspire and Aspire's partner local authorities of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. This document summarises respective roles and responsibilities, to ensure that all the agencies work together effectively in the best interests of children and families touched by or created through adoption or special guardianship.

Aspire Adoption, Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council, and the Borough of Poole

This document summarises the respective roles and responsibilities between Aspire Adoption and partner local authorities which are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council regarding the delivery of adoption and special guardianship services.

The Vision

Aspire's vision is to achieve excellent outcomes for children and adults whose lives have been touched by adoption and special guardianship by:

- Working closely with our partner local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that children's best interests are at the heart of placement decisions which will fully meet their needs.
- Targeted recruitment and establishment of a wide and diverse pool of prospective adopters.
- Matching so that children are placed without delay in secure, loving families.
- Undertaking special guardianship assessments which are thorough, evidence based, and timely.
- Providing creative and outstanding adoption and special guardianship support services.
- Investing in our workforce to ensure they have the right skills and capacity to deliver excellent services.
- Continually seeking to apply best practice and innovation to our ways of working.
- Actively listening to and learning from children, adults and staff with whom we work to develop and improve the services provided.

Summary of roles and responsibilities

The successful delivery of the services provided by Aspire will be dependent on a high level of joint working between Aspire and Aspire's partner local authorities which are Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. This document summarises respective roles and responsibilities, to ensure that all the agencies work together effectively in the best interests of children and families touched by or created through adoption or special guardianship.

THE CHILD

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Case responsibility	The local authority will take primary casework responsibility for all children for whom adoption or special guardianship is being considered to the point of Care and Placement Orders. In the case of relinquished babies, the local authority will take primary casework responsibility until the formal witnessed CAFCASS consent has been obtained.	Aspire will provide specialist advice and support to help the local authority workers to understand the adoption process, influencing and promoting best practice. This will be via the Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and allocated Aspire social worker and support worker.	
	The Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in each local authority may make a decision, at the time of making a Should Be Placed for Adoption (SBPFA) decision about a particular child, as to the point of transfer of case responsibility for that child to Aspire. For the majority of children, this will be at the point of Placement Order or formal witnessed CAFCASS consent.	Aspire will take primary casework responsibility for all children for whom the ADM in that child's authority has decided that the case should transfer to the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). For those children not transferring to Aspire, the role of the Aspire workers will be primarily family finding and providing specialist support and advice via the allocated workers and the Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser.	The funding formula used to establish the Aspire budget has been calculated on 100% of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council's children transferring to Aspire at the point of Placement Order and 20% of Dorset children. If the proportion of Dorset children transferring in to

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
			Aspire exceeds that percentage, additional funding will be required.
Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO)s	Where a child is Looked After, the IRO in the local authority will remain responsible for monitoring and overseeing the child's care plan to the point of an Adoption Order or Special Guardianship Order regardless of whether case responsibility has transferred to Aspire or not.		
Early identification of children with adoption plans	The local authority is responsible for care planning and for identifying the children who may require an adoptive family, and of then notifying the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser at the earliest possible stage. For some children, this will be pre-birth.	Aspire will provide support to the local authority in the care planning process via the Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser. Aspire will allocate a social worker and support worker from the Family Finding and Placement team within 48 hours of notification by the local authority of a child with a possible adoption plan.	
	The local authority will keep the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser informed of progress in care planning and will invite the Permanence Coordinator to relevant meetings such as legal gateway meetings, permanency planning meetings, and tracking meetings where adoption is being considered for a child.	The Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser will attend relevant local authority planning meetings about a child where adoption is being considered. The allocated Aspire social worker or support worker will draft a profile of the child and begin to identify suitable adopters as early as possible.	
Early Permanence	The local authority will consider whether an Early Permanent (Fostering for Adoption) placement would be appropriate for any child for whom they	The Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and the allocated Aspire social worker will provide advice and support to the local	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	<p>are considering adoption, in line with Section 22c (9B) (c) of the Children Act 1989.</p> <p>If so, they will notify the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and the allocated Aspire family finding social worker.</p>	<p>authority in identifying which children are suitable to be considered for an Early Permanent (EP) placement.</p>	
		<p>Where available, a suitable family able to provide an Early Permanent placement will be offered to the local authority for a named child, with ongoing support to the carers.</p>	<p>In recruiting, assessing and preparing prospective adopters, Aspire will encourage those applying to adopt to positively consider the benefits for the child of Early Permanence.</p>
	<p>The local authority social worker will prepare the relevant paperwork for the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) in the child's authority to agree to a placement under Regulation 25a of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010.</p> <p>They will also progress this paperwork to the ADM in the child's local authority via the Aspire Permanence Coordinator for consideration and will be responsible for any formal notifications to their fostering service, the prospective foster carers/adopters, birth parents and court.</p>	<p>The Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and allocated family finding social worker will support and assist the local authority social worker in completing the relevant paperwork for the ADM decision under Reg 25a. The Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser has responsibility for the quality assurance of reports to the ADM.</p>	
	<p>The local authority social worker will set up all payments to the prospective adopters/foster carers whilst the placement remains an Early Permanent one.</p>		
Tracking	<p>The local authority will continue to maintain tracking systems in relation to all children in care</p>	<p>Aspire will maintain tracking systems for all children notified to them by the</p>	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	proceedings or accommodated under Section 20 of the 1989 Children Act.	local authority with a plan for adoption or for whom initial information suggests that adoption may become the plan (children in the pipeline) for that child. Aspire will also maintain tracking systems of all children in placement up to the Adoption Order and tracking systems of assessments and prospective adopters approved and either waiting or with a child in placement.	
Adoption Medicals	The local authority social worker will be responsible for obtaining completed CoramBAAF M and B reports (Obstetric and Neo Natal Reports), CoramBAAF PH reports (reports on the birth parents' current and family health history) and liaising with the Agency Medical Adviser to arrange the Adoption Medical. The child's social worker should arrange with the foster carer to take the child to the medical and should also attend in person.		
Completion of Adoption Reports	The local authority social worker will be responsible for the completion of the Child Permanence Report (CPR) for the Agency Decision as to whether a child should be placed for adoption. They will also be responsible for updating the CPR following the making of Care and Placement Orders, prior to any transfer of primary responsibility for the child to Aspire. The line manager of the allocated social worker is responsible for reading and signing off the CPR	The Aspire family finding social worker will support and assist the local authority social worker in the completion of the CPR for the agency decision. The Permanence Coordinator, in their role of Agency Adviser, will be responsible for the QA of all reports being presented to the local authority or Aspire ADM, and it is for them alone to decide whether the report is adequate	It will be necessary for the local authority worker and Aspire worker to work closely and collaboratively to ensure that all relevant information is included in the CPR and that the report is of a high standard.

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	<p>prior to submission to the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser.</p> <p>The local authority social worker will be responsible for updating the CPR eg for matching if case responsibility remains with the local authority.</p>	<p>for submission to the panel and to the ADM.</p> <p>The Aspire family finding social worker will be responsible for updating the CPR e.g. for matching, if case responsibility for the child is transferred to Aspire post Placement Order.</p>	<p>Cases will not be transferred into Aspire until the Case Management System (CMS) is up to date and the CPR has been updated.</p>
	<p>The local authority social worker will be responsible for completing a draft support plan for the child at the point of ADM decision (SBPFA) based on the assessed needs of the child in line with the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005, and for obtaining 'in principle' agreement from the child's local authority to any financial support post placement. This plan will be reviewed and updated as further information becomes available about the child's needs.</p>		
	<p>If casework responsibility has not been transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the local authority social worker will collaborate with the Aspire social worker in reading Prospective Adopters' Reports (PARs), shortlisting and visiting potential families as soon as legally possible.</p>	<p>The Aspire social worker will lead on identifying potential adoptive families and will shortlist and visit potential families as a priority as soon as legally possible.</p> <p>If casework responsibility has not been transferred to Aspire at the point of the Placement Order, the Aspire worker will collaborate with the local authority social worker in shortlisting PARs and visiting potential families as soon as legally possible.</p>	
	<p>The local authority social worker will be responsible for obtaining agreement, prior to the</p>	<p>The Aspire social worker will be responsible for obtaining agreement,</p>	<p>The ADM in each local authority will need to</p>

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	<p>matching panel, from the child's local authority to any financial support identified for the placement and included in the support plan, if casework responsibility has not transferred to Aspire.</p> <p>This should include any one off or setting up costs specific to the proposed placement, any ongoing financial support in the form of an adoption allowance, the cost of accommodation for prospective adopters who live too far to travel on a daily basis for introductions, the cost for the submission of the adoption application to court and any costs in relation to the management of direct contact.</p>	<p>prior to the matching panel, from the child's local authority to any financial support identified for the placement and included in the support plan, if casework responsibility has transferred to Aspire.</p> <p>This should include any one off or setting up costs specific to the proposed placement, any ongoing financial support in the form of an adoption allowance, the cost of accommodation for prospective adopters who live too far to travel on a daily basis for introductions, and the cost for the submission of the adoption application to court and any costs in relation to the management of direct contact.</p>	<p>agree to any financial support included in the support plan, or to delegate responsibility for that decision to a budget holding senior manager within the local authority.</p> <p>The funding of any finance to support an adoption placement, whether a one-off payment or ongoing payments remains the responsibility of the child's local authority.</p>
Direct work with children	<p>The local authority social worker is responsible for all statutory duties and direct work with the child in relation to permanency planning and care proceedings.</p>	<p>The allocated Aspire family finding social worker and support worker will advise and support the local authority social worker in planning any direct work with the child, to ensure that they understand why they are in care and the court process (dependent on their age and understanding).</p>	
	<p>Post Placement Order, if the primary responsibility for the child has not transferred to Aspire, the local authority social worker will undertake all stat visits and all direct work with the child, to prepare them for placement, with advice and support from the Aspire social worker and family support practitioner.</p>	<p>Post Placement Order, if the primary responsibility for the child has transferred to Aspire, the allocated Aspire social worker will undertake all stat visits and the Aspire social worker and Aspire family support practitioner will take responsibility for all direct</p>	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		work with the child, including life story work, to prepare them for placement.	
Life story book		The Aspire support worker will prepare the life story book for all children moving to an adoptive placement. The first draft will be handed to the prospective adopters at the latest by the second review with the final version being handed over within 10 days of the Adoption Hearing. An electronic version of the life story book will be made available to adopters as well as a paper copy.	
Later life letter	If casework responsibility is being transferred to Aspire, the local authority social worker will complete the first part of the later life letter prior to transfer. If casework responsibility is not being transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the local authority social worker will be responsible for completing the later life letter and handing it to the adopters within 10 days of the Adoption Hearing.	If casework responsibility is transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the allocated Aspire worker will complete the later life letter and handing it to the adopters within 10 days of the Adoption Hearing.	
Adoption Panel	There are no Adoption Panels remaining in the local authorities. For quoracy, Adoption Panels require the attendance of a social worker as a member of the Panel. Social workers from the local authorities are welcome to approach the Agency Advisers if they are interested in becoming a panel member	Aspire will take on all responsibility for the setting up and running of an Adoption Panel to consider the suitability of prospective adopters, matches between prospective adopters and children, and whether adoption should be the plan for the child in the case of a relinquished baby where there	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	and should talk with their line manager in the first instance.	are no court proceedings to scrutinise the planning for the child. Aspire will appoint a Panel chair and maintain a Central List to ensure that at all times the Aspire Adoption Panel is set up and run in accordance with regulations and guidance and that it is quorate for all meetings. Aspire will take responsibility for the minuting of all panels and for the distribution and storing of those minutes securely.	
Agency Adviser	There will be no Agency Adviser post in the local authorities.	The Aspire Permanence Coordinator is a combined role with that of Agency Adviser. The Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser will act as the Agency Adviser to the ADM in both local authorities in relation to SBPFA decisions and matches, and to the Aspire ADM in respect of approvals and as Agency Adviser to the Aspire Adoption Panel, with responsibility for the QA of all reports being presented to the local authority or Aspire ADMs. It is for them alone to decide whether the report is adequate for submission to the panel and to the ADM.	
Panel Administrator	There will be no post of panel administrator within the 3 local authorities.	Aspire will be responsible for providing business support in the role of panel administrator to service the Aspire Adoption Panel.	

SERVICE AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Formal notifications following ADM decisions	The local authority will take responsibility for informing birth parents of SBPFA decisions, within statutory timescales.	Aspire will be responsible for the written notification of birth parents in relation to BCP SBPA decisions and the referral to the independent birth parent service. Aspire will be responsible for informing prospective adopters of ADM decisions re their suitability as adopters. Aspire will also be responsible for informing birth parents and prospective adopters of matches agreed by the Aspire ADM.	
Formal notifications prior to the placement of a child		Regardless of whether casework responsibility transfers to Aspire at Placement Order, the Aspire panel administrator will take responsibility for sending out formal notifications of a child's placement in advance of that placement to health, education and to the local authority where the child will be living post placement.	
Access to child's CMS	The local authority will provide access to an individual child's record in their CMS to the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser and the allocated Aspire social worker, support worker, their business support worker and team manager, for any children for whom adoption is likely to be the plan.	Aspire workers will record all activity in relation to the child on the child's CMS.	Case recording will be completed within the timescales of each local authority's policies and procedures.

ADOPTER RECRUITMENT

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Adoption enquiries	The local authority will ensure that the Council website contains information about Aspire and a weblink to the Aspire website. The local authority will signpost any adoption enquiries which are in scope for Aspire, including enquiries about adopter recruitment, whether domestic or intercountry, adoption and special guardianship support, and partner (step-parent) adoptions to Aspire, within 24 hours.	Aspire will maintain a website giving general information about adoption and special guardianship and outlining the services which Aspire provides. The website will have clear contact details including a dedicated telephone number and an email contact address. Within office hours, a duty worker will be available to respond directly to enquiries from other professionals and from members of the public.	
Pre-assessment stage		Aspire will hold regular information events for prospective adopters at geographic locations across the Aspire region.	
Stage One	The local authority will provide all information required for statutory checks of prospective adopters currently resident in the local authority or previously resident in the local authority within 15 working days.	Aspire will carry out all stage 1 functions, including running the preparation course for prospective adopters.	
Stage Two		Aspire will carry out all stage 2 functions and be responsible for the preparation of the Prospective Adopter's Report.	
Approval of suitability		The Aspire Adoption Panel will consider the suitability of prospective adopters and the Aspire ADM will make the decision. Aspire will be responsible for all formal notifications to the prospective adopters of suitability, including where	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		prospective adopters are not seen as suitable. Aspire will have responsibility for appeals against qualifying determinations and for any case referred to the IRM.	

POST ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Adoption support	The local authority will signpost enquiries and referrals for adoption support to Aspire within 24 hours. This might be an adoptive family in need of support, an adopted adult, or a birth relative.	Aspire will maintain a daily duty service to ensure that all of those making an enquiry about adoption support or requesting an adoption support assessment are responded to within 24 hours.	
	If the primary reason for the referral is that the child is at risk of significant harm and/or the child is on the edge of care, the local authority will retain primary responsibility for the case, to undertake S47 enquiries and allocate a social worker where LSCB thresholds are met.	Aspire will provide core adoption support to the family in the form of newsletters, invitation to support groups, and access to Aspire's therapeutic support services including clinical psychology support. The following are the core services on offer to all adoptive families for whom Aspire, undertaking the function as a delegated function from the local authority, is responsible for offering services to- Telephone or email advice and information services; Liaison, short-term counselling, assessment and social work or support	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		<p>worker support, referral to in house clinical psychology or other specialist services if appropriate;</p> <p>Access to training, workshops support groups for adopters and adopted children;</p> <p>Access to and information about resources such as DVDs, books and specialist services;</p> <p>Opportunities for networking with other adoptive families, including social events for adoptive families;</p> <p>Agency updates for adoptive families, e.g. newsletters and other communications whether digital or paper.</p>	
Out-of-hours services	Adoptive families will have the same access to the Dorset, or Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Out of Hours service, as other families living in the area.	Aspire will operate a daily duty service within office hours but will not operate an Aspire Out of Hours service.	
Indirect/ letterbox contact		Aspire will operate the indirect exchange of information between birth families and adoptive families including arrangements set up before July 2017.	
Supervised direct contact	The local authorities will remain responsible for funding any direct post adoption contact arrangements agreed prior to July 2017 but can delegate the responsibility to Aspire to supervise those arrangements in individual cases, if the funding is provided by the local authority for Aspire to do so.	Responsibility for the management of direct post adoption contact arrangements set up after July 2017, provided that the funding has been agreed at the time of matching. Aspire will supervise direct post adoption contact arrangements made	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	Arrangements for direct post adoption contact made after July 2017 should form part of the adoption support plan at the time of matching, with the funding for these arrangements agreed by the local authority prior to presentation to the Aspire Adoption Panel for matching.	before July 2017 if the funding is provided.	
Adoption allowances and other financial support to adoptive families	The agreement to, means testing, administration, payment and review of adoption allowances or other financial support to adoptive families, including costs incurred in managing direct contact arrangements will remain the responsibility of the relevant local authority. The local authority will be responsible for setting up costs and for costs incurred during introductions between a child and prospective adopters, including the costs of providing accommodation if the prospective adopters live too far from the foster carers to travel daily, if agreed by the local authority as part of the support plan at the time of matching. The local authority will remain responsible for the costs of lodging adoption applications.		Harmonisation of adoption and special guardianship allowances across the local authorities will be undertaken at some future point.
Adoption Support Fund	The pan Dorset therapeutic provider list will continue to be maintained by Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council (BCP) as host authority. Any new providers will be checked out by the BCP Access to Resources (ART) team, prior to their addition to the list. The ART team will also set up and monitor contracts to providers of services funded by the Adoption Support Fund (ASF).	Aspire is responsible for all applications to the Adoption Support Fund, based on assessments of need undertaken by Aspire social workers.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Independent support to birth parents	<p>The local authority will include details of the independent birth relative support service (Birth Family Matters) in their formal letter to birth parents notifying them of an ADM decision that their child should be placed for adoption. It will be an opt out approach i.e. birth parents will be contacted if they do not inform Aspire within 4 weeks that they do not wish to be contacted by the BFM worker. A copy of the letter will be sent to the Aspire Permanence Coordinator/Agency Adviser</p>	<p>Aspire commissions an independent birth relative support service (Birth Family Matters) from Families for Children. The panel administrator will refer all birth parents who have not opted out of contact with the BFM services following an SBPFA decision to the service. The panel administrator will refer all birth parents who have not opted out of contact with the BFM worker following a match. The BFM worker will contact all birth parents who do not opt out and any other birth relatives who self-refer or who are referred by other professionals, to offer support, advice and counselling.</p>	<p>The Birth Family Matters (BFM) service is a support, advice and counselling service. It is not an advocacy service. The BFM service will be funded from the Aspire base budget and is not an additional charge to the local authority.</p>
Birth Records Counselling and intermediary services	<p>All requests received by the local authority via the General Register Office or directly from a service user, for access to birth and adoption records, will be signposted by the local authority to Aspire within 24 hours, as will requests by adopted adults for counselling, advice and support or for intermediary services. Requests for independent support from birth parents or other relatives received by the local authority pre or post Adoption Order and including requests for support from birth relatives whose children were adopted in the 1950s, 1960s or 1970s, will be signposted to Aspire within 24 hours.</p>	<p>Information about access to records and services for adopted adults and birth relatives will be available on the Aspire website, with links to relevant organisations. The daily duty worker will respond to all referrals, via the General Register Office or directly from a service user, for access to birth and adoption records, within 1 working day. The daily duty worker will respond to all requests by adopted adults or birth relatives for counselling, advice and</p>	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		support or for intermediary services within 24 hours.	
		Aspire will not offer a tracing service unless in exceptional circumstances e.g. terminal or hereditary illness. Service users will be given advice and information about tracing and signposted to Adoption Support Agencies who undertake tracing services.	
Intermediary services	All requests by adopted adults or birth relatives for intermediary services to establish contact with their birth relative will be signposted by the local authority to Aspire within 24 hours.	All requests by adopted adults or birth relatives for intermediary services to establish contact with their birth relative will be responded to by the duty worker in Aspire within 24 hours.	
		Aspire will offer support and advice but will not offer a tracing service unless in exceptional circumstances e.g. terminal or hereditary illness. Service users will be given advice and information about tracing and signposted to Adoption Support Agencies who undertake tracing services.	

NON-AGENCY PLACEMENTS

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Partner (step-parent) adoptions	All enquiries about partner (step-parent) adoptions and all formal notifications of intent to adopt in such cases which are received by the	Information about partner adoptions will be available on the Aspire website, with links to relevant organisations.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	local authority will be signposted to Aspire within 24 hours.	The daily duty worker will respond to all enquiries and referrals about partner adoptions within 24 hours.	
	The local authority will respond to requests, from Aspire or other local authorities or Regional Adoption Agencies, for local authority statutory checks on those living in their area who have applied to adopt, including in respect of non - agency placements, will be responded to within 15 working days.	Aspire will be responsible for the formal written response to notifications of intent to adopt in partner adoption applications. Aspire will allocate a social worker to counsel and advise the family, and to complete the Annex A report for court if an application is lodged.	
	If legal advice or support at the court hearing is required, the local authority legal team where the child and family live will be responsible for providing advice to or support to the Aspire social worker at the court hearing if this is required.	The allocated Aspire social worker will be responsible for attending all court hearings in relation to the application.	
Intercountry adoption	All enquiries from prospective adopters about intercountry adoption received by the local authority will be signposted to Aspire within 24 hours.	Information about intercountry adoption will be available on the Aspire website, with links to relevant organisations. The daily duty worker will respond to all referrals about intercountry adoption within 24 hours.	Local authorities will need to identify who in the local authority will respond to these requests in a timely way, as currently these are undertaken by their adoption team staff.
		Aspire will be responsible for all intercountry adoption assessments, preparation and support for prospective adopters living in the geographic area of the 3 local authorities of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
		The Aspire Adoption Panel will consider all applications for suitability to adopt from overseas and the Aspire ADM will make the Agency Decision.	

DATA COLLATION AND SUBMISSION, FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Data collation and reporting	The local authority will retain responsibility for collating and reporting internally and to external bodies such as the Department for Education, Ofsted and the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board on information about children in need and children in care. If Aspire has primary responsibility for a child, the Case Management System (CMS) in the child's authority will be the CMS for the Aspire social worker to record any information relating to the child. This will enable reports to be run by the child's local authority from their own CMS.	Aspire will take responsibility for collating and reporting, internally and to external bodies such as the Department for Education, Ofsted and Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board on information about prospective adopters, adopters, adoption support. If Aspire has primary responsibility for a child, the Case Management System (CMS) in the child's authority will be the CMS for the Aspire social worker to record any information relating to the child. This will enable reports to be run by the child's local authority from their own CMS.	
	The local authorities will identify the data they require Aspire to produce in order to fulfil their own responsibilities in relation to children in care, including those with adoption plans.	Aspire will be responsible for producing the Annual Adoption Report for each local authority in relation to adoption services within their area. This will be presented to the Aspire Management Board and to the relevant Council Boards.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Freedom of Information requests	The local authority will be responsible for responding to any Freedom of Information requests relating to care planning for children and data about ADM decisions, Placement Orders and Adoption or Special Guardianship Orders made in respect of children who are or were in their care.	Aspire will be responsible for responding to any Freedom of Information requests relating to adoption assessments and adoption support.	Where a request relates to both the local authority and Aspire, an agreement will have to be reached on a case by case basis as to who is best placed to collate and respond to the request.
Complaints	The local authority will be responsible for all complaints received in relation to the child, to the point of transfer of case responsibility to Aspire.	Aspire will be responsible for all complaints relating to prospective adopters and adopters, children post transfer of case responsibility to Aspire, adopted adults, letterbox.	
	Where a complaint relates to services pre and post transfer of case responsibility to Aspire, a decision will be made following consultation with the complaints officer in the child's authority as to how to manage the complaint and as to who will take responsibility for investigating the complaint and for funding any stage 2 and stage 3 investigations.	Where a complaint relates to services pre and post transfer of case responsibility to Aspire, a decision will be made following consultation with the complaints officer in the child's authority as to how to manage the complaint and as to who will take responsibility for investigating the complaint and for funding any stage 2 and stage 3 investigations.	

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Special guardianship in	The primary responsibility for the child remains with the local authority in respect of permanency planning, court proceedings, parenting	Following a positive viability assessment of a family member or friend and referral into Aspire, a social worker	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
care proceedings	assessments, and viability assessments of family or friends.	will be allocated within 48 hours to complete a full assessment.	
	<p>The local authority will refer into Aspire for a full assessment of a family member or friend as soon as possible following the conclusion of a positive viability assessment.</p> <p>To enable court timescales to be met, this could be before a full assessment is ordered by the court but where the viability assessment is positive and where the local authority is recommending a full assessment to the court.</p> <p>If the family to be assessed lives outside of England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland, the assessment will need to be undertaken by an international organisation such as Children and Families Across Borders (CFAB) or via ICACU, with access to local systems for undertaking statutory enquiries and medicals, and knowledge of the local cultural and legal context. It is the responsibility of the local authority to fund this.</p> <p>Any assessments of family members from overseas if they travel to this area for a time limited period will be undertaken by the local authority social worker. In these circumstances, any assessment can only be undertaken at the level of a viability assessment, given the need to undertake statutory and medical checks of the applicants in their country of residence, to explore their home conditions and financial circumstances, and also to visit referees.</p>	<p>If the family to be assessed lives outside of England, Wales, Northern Ireland or Scotland, Aspire will offer advice and assistance upon request, but will not undertake the assessment.</p>	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	The local authority will respond to all requests for local authority statutory checks for anyone living in their area within 15 working days. If English is not the first language for any applicants, the local authority will fund the cost of interpreters to enable the Aspire worker to undertake the assessment.	The Aspire social worker will undertake all relevant enquiries and investigations relevant to completing a full assessment. Once completed and signed off by the team manager, the report will be submitted to the local authority legal team and to the social worker with primary responsibility for the child for submission to court.	
	The local authority social worker will retain primary case work responsibility for the child and for the court case throughout.	The Aspire social worker will attend court to give evidence on their assessment if requested.	
Direct applications for Special Guardianship Orders	Enquiries and notifications about Special Guardianship Order applications, which are received by the local authority where the child is not the subject of care proceedings, will be referred to Aspire within 24 hours.	Enquiries and notifications about Special Guardianship Order applications, where the child is not the subject of care proceedings, will be responded to by the Aspire duty worker within 24 hours.	
	The local authority will respond to all requests for local authority statutory checks for anyone living in their area within 15 working days.	Aspire will allocate a social worker to undertake all enquiries and complete all reports in respect of Special Guardianship Order applications, where the child is not the subject of care proceedings.	
	If legal advice or support at the court hearing is required, the local authority legal team where the child and family live will be responsible for providing advice to or support to the Aspire social worker at the court hearing if this is required.	The Aspire social worker will attend all relevant court hearings in respect of such applications.	

FOSTER CARERS WISHING TO ADOPT OR APPLY FOR A SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDER FOR A CHILD IN THEIR CARE

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	Where a foster carer expresses an interest in adopting or applying for a Special Guardianship Order in relation to a child in their care, the local authority will contact Aspire for a social worker to be allocated to undertake a joint visit to explore further.	Upon request, Aspire will allocate a social worker to undertake a joint visit with the child’s allocated social worker in the local authority to explore further.	
		Should the foster carer wish to proceed following the joint visit, Aspire will undertake either an adoption assessment within statutory timescales of 4 months, or a special guardianship assessment in line with legislation.	
	The local authority social worker will continue to take primary responsibility for the child. If the foster carer is a local authority foster carer, they will continue to support the carer in line with fostering regulations whilst the assessment is being undertaken by Aspire. If the foster carer is an Independent Fostering Provider (IFP) carer, that agency will continue to support the carer whilst the assessment is being undertaken.		
	Responsibility for funding any support including financial support post order will be held by the local authority.	Post order, Aspire will provide core support services as provided to other adopters or special guardians.	

SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP SUPPORT

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	The local authority will signpost enquiries and referrals for special guardianship support to Aspire within 24 hours.	Aspire have information about special guardianship core support services on their website.	
	If the primary reason for the referral is that the child is at risk of significant harm and/or the child is on the edge of care, the local authority will retain primary responsibility for the case, to undertake S47 enquiries and allocate a social worker where LSCB thresholds are met.	Aspire will maintain a daily duty service to ensure that all of those making an enquiry about special guardianship support or requesting a special guardianship support assessment are responded to within 24 hours.	
	The local authority social worker will be responsible for formulating a support plan where a Special Guardianship Order is the outcome for the child in care proceedings.	The Aspire Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Team will offer advice and give information about core special guardianship support services offered by Aspire to inform the support plan for the court.	
	If a Supervision Order is made alongside a Special Guardianship Order, the local authority will retain responsibility for the Supervision Order.	If a Supervision Order is made alongside a Special Guardianship Order, Aspire will offer the family access to the core special guardianship core support services of counselling, advice and information and access to support groups, but will not take responsibility for the Supervision Order.	The funding formula agreed in the Business Case did not include Aspire taking responsibility for Supervision Orders made alongside Special Guardianship Orders.
	The agreement to, means testing, administration, payment and review of special guardianship allowances or other financial support to special guardians, including the costs of managing direct contact arrangements and any costs incurred in	Aspire will take responsibility for managing direct contact arrangements if agreed as part of the support plan submitted to court, and if funded by the local authority.	Harmonisation of adoption and special guardianship allowances across all the local authorities

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	the provision of therapeutic support, will remain the responsibility of the relevant local authority.		will be undertaken at some future point.
	Where the child was not looked after immediately prior to a Special Guardianship Order, the local authority has discretion but is under no duty to offer an assessment of the need for special guardianship support services, including any assessment of need for financial support.	Where a Special Guardianship Order is made as a result of a direct application to court and not as part of care proceedings, the Aspire worker completing the report for the court will consider the need for support after the order is made. In such cases, special guardians and their families will be offered access to the core support services of counselling, advice and information and access to training and support groups offered by Aspire.	

LEGAL

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
Children	The local authority social worker will have primary responsibility for permanency planning and all court proceedings in relation to Looked After Children, including applications for Care and Placement Orders and Special Guardianship Orders. The local authority social worker will be responsible for any appeals against the making of Care and Placement Orders within the timescales allowed by the court at the time of making those	Aspire will have responsibility for the completion of special guardianship assessments referred to them by the local authority but will not have primary responsibility for the child or court proceedings.	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	orders, even if primary responsibility for the child has been transferred to Aspire.		
	If casework responsibility is not transferred to Aspire at the point of Placement Order, the local authority social worker will be responsible for all legal challenges by the birth family to the Care and Placement Orders until an Adoption Order has been made.	If casework responsibility has transferred to Aspire, the Aspire social worker will be responsible for responding to legal challenges until an Adoption Order has been made, other than an appeal against the Care and Placement Orders within the timescales allowed by the court at the time of making those orders.	
	The local authority legal team will be responsible for supporting the primary case holder, whether this is the local authority social worker or Aspire social worker, in responding to legal appeals against or challenges to the making of Care and Placement Orders or Special Guardianship Orders, where the child was previously a Looked After Child in that authority.		
Adults affected by adoption	As host authority, any legal advice in relation to an assessment or other matter relating to prospective or approved adopters, or other service users will be provided by the BCP Council legal team.		
Adoption Panel	If the Aspire Adoption Panel require legal advice in relation to any matter under their consideration, this will be provided by the BCP Council legal team, as BCP is the host authority. The exception to this is where a relinquished child is presented to the Aspire Adoption Panel prior to		

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	a local authority decision as to whether he or she should be placed for adoption. In such cases, the child's originating local authority remain responsible for providing all relevant legal advice to enable the panel to reach a recommendation.		

ARCHIVING AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	The local authority will retain responsibility for storing and maintaining electronic and paper adoption records archived prior to 1 st July 2017, in accordance with Regulations and Statutory Guidance. This includes records in relation to prospective adopters and adopters, adopted adults, adoption support to families, birth parents, indirect exchanges of information (letterbox), children subject to adoption plans and adopted. This also includes records in relation to special guardianship assessments and support.	Aspire will take responsibility for storing and maintaining electronic and paper records in line with Regulations and Statutory Guidance for any case open to them and archived after 1 st July 2017 in relation to prospective adopters and adopters, adoption or special guardianship support to families, adopted adults, birth parents where a separate case management record to their child's record has been opened, and indirect (letterbox) exchanges of information.	
	The local authority will retain responsibility for storing and maintaining electronic and paper records archived after 1 st July 2017 in accordance with Regulations and Statutory Guidance, in relation to children with adoption plans and adopted.		
	The local authority will provide access to Aspire to any records in their archive in relation to prospective adopters and adopters, adopted	Aspire will take responsibility for the data storage and security of any information accessed by an Aspire	

	RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBILITIES OF ASPIRE	NOTES
	adults, adoption support to families, birth parents, indirect exchanges of information (letterbox), children subject to adoption plans and adopted, which are required for new referrals to Aspire after 1 st July 2017 where those records are required to inform or assist Aspire in the work they are undertaking.	worker from archived records held in the local authority in line with Regulations and Statutory Guidance. Once the case is closed, Aspire will either return that information if requested to the originating local authority or will dispose of it confidentially.	

Appendix C

Protocol for the Handling of Inter Organisational Complaints in Relation to Aspire Adoption

Between

Aspire Adoption (Hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council)

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council

Dorset Council



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Reason and Purpose for the Protocol

Aspire Adoption is a Regional Adoption Agency which has been formed through an inter authority agreement with Bournemouth Borough Council as the hosting authority. From 1st July 2017 adoption staff from Dorset County Council and the Borough of Poole will be transferred to Bournemouth Borough Council under TUPE arrangements. Bournemouth Borough Council hold management responsibility for staff working within Aspire.

Aspire is responsible for the recruitment, assessment, training and support of prospective adopters, matching and placement, adoption panel and support work. In addition, Aspire staff will be undertaking Special Guardianship Order assessments and hold some case holding responsibilities post Placement Order. Please see the attached case holder timeline in Appendix 1 for further information.

Aspire is overseen by a Management Board comprising of senior management representatives from Bournemouth Borough Council, Dorset County Council and Borough of Poole.

The purpose of this protocol is to provide a guide for the management of complaints, to demonstrate a commitment to work together to provide a positive outcome, ensure ownership of complaints, to reduce confusion and ensure clarity for the complainant. All complaint investigations will take place under relevant complaints legislation and guidance.

All organisations party to this protocol will ensure that any complaints arising from the joint working are handled in line with this protocol.

The Protocol

Complaint Manager Role

For each signatory organisation, the designated Complaints Manager is responsible for co-ordinating whatever actions are required or implied by this protocol.

As host authority, Bournemouth Borough Council's Complaints Manager will act as the Complaints Manager for Aspire.

They will co-operate with other Complaint Managers and agree who will take the lead role in inter-organisational complaints.

In the unlikely event that Complaints Managers are unable to reach agreement about any matter covered in this protocol, they should each refer the matter promptly to the relevant senior Manager in their respective authorities.

The Process

Single Authority Complaints – See flowchart in Appendix 2

The receiving authority will establish case and therefore complaint responsibility. Where the complaint responsibility lies solely with one authority, the responsible authority will investigate and respond to the complainant through their usual statutory processes.

If the complaint needs to be passed from one authority to another to achieve this, the receiving authority should always obtain **consent** from the complainant to pass their complaint to the responsible authority to respond. Consent should be in writing and kept by the receiving authority for their records.

The responsible authority will progress the complaint in accordance with their procedure from the point of acknowledgement onwards.

Joint Authority Complaints – See flowchart in Appendix 3

Where this document refers to joint authority complaints, it is understood that this could also refer to authority / Aspire complaints. In this case, Bournemouth's Complaints Manager will act on behalf of Aspire.

Where it is established that the complaint is jointly held between two authorities, the receiving authority's Complaints Manager will obtain consent to share with the responsible authorities.

The Complaints Managers from the responsible authorities will discuss and agree which authority is to take the lead in managing the complaint process. In determining this, consideration will be given to the number of complaint elements for each authority and the 'weight' of the complaints being made, or this role will default to the receiving authority if the number and weight of complaints is equal.

The lead authority Complaints Manager will be responsible for acknowledging the complaint and managing the complaint process at Stage 1 and in coordinating a joint response.

Should a request for a Stage 2 consideration be received, the Complaints Managers will review the aspects of complaint being brought to Stage 2 to ensure that the lead authority is still relevant. The split of investigation costs between authorities will be agreed and the lead authority Complaint

Manager will be responsible for appointing an Investigating Officer and an Independent Person at their agreed rates.

The investigation will produce a joint report and the authorities Adjudicating Officers will consider the aspects of the investigation report relevant to their authority and respond to these. The lead authority Complaint Manager will combine the responses to provide a joint response to the complainant.

Following a Stage 3 review request, the Complaints Managers will review the aspects of complaint being brought to Stage 3 to ensure that the lead authority is still relevant. The lead authority Complaint Manager will make arrangements following their own procedures. Both Adjudicating Officers will attend if complaints remain unresolved for both authorities. As in Stage 2, the cost will be split between the authorities as agreed and a joint response to the Panel's report and any recommendations issued to the complainant.

The authorities will work together where complaints are considered by the Local Government Ombudsman to ensure that joint working is maintained.

MP Enquiries

In the event of an MP enquiry, joint discussion and agreement will take place between Complaints Managers and Aspire where appropriate regarding who to take the lead with management of the enquiry. This will then follow the usual process of the lead authority.

Compliments

Each authority to process their own compliments in their usual way. Compliments for Aspire staff should be passed to the Bournemouth Complaint's Manager to record.

Recording and Learning

Each authority will remain responsible for recording and reporting complaints and learning made about its staff and service in line with the statutory guidance.

Joint complaints may be reviewed to ensure that any inter authority learning is embedded in service improvements.

Aspire Adoption

Case Holder Timeline

Aspire Adoption – pre Placement Order

Recruitment, assessment, training and support of prospective adopters - for all authorities.

Special Guardianship Order Assessments – for all authorities

Aspire Adoption – post Placement Order involvement

Majority of children Social Worker case holding responsibility taken over from originating authority post Placement Order
Matching and placement – for all authorities.
Adoption support work – for all authorities (not financial).
Post adoption indirect contact (letterbox)
Adoption Panel - for all authorities.
Special Guardianship Order support – for all authorities (not financial).
Agency Decision Maker - for decisions about the suitability of adopters.

Placement Order Made / Special Guardianship Order Made



Originating Authority – pre Placement Order or Special Guardianship Order

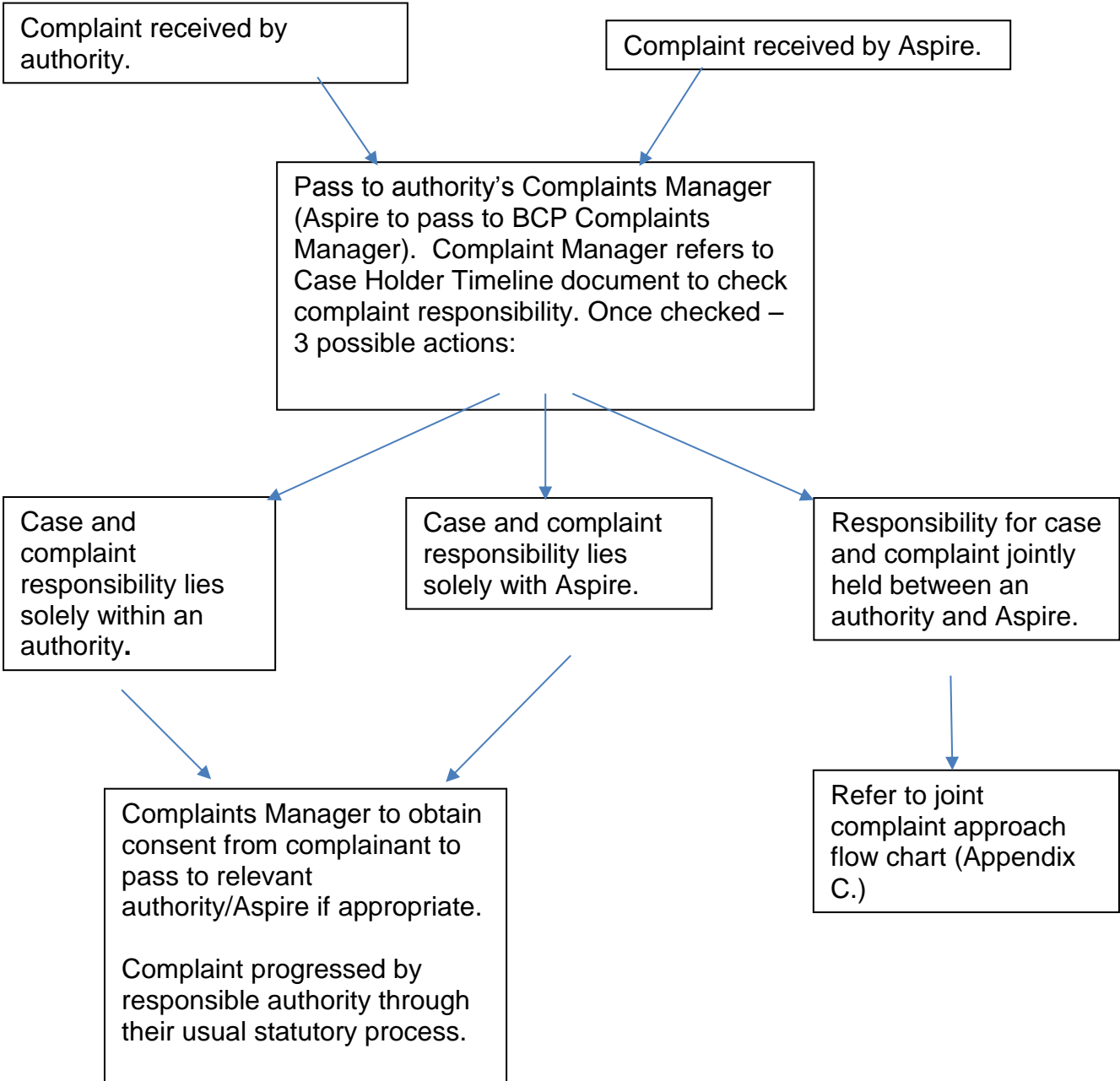
Permanency planning, court process and early identification of child requiring adoption:

- all adoption case holding responsibility up to Placement Order, including Agency Decision that the child should be placed for adoption.
- case responsibility for care planning and court process for Children in Care where a Special Guardianship Order is the permanency plan.

Originating Authority – post Placement Order or Special Guardianship Order

Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole – All adoption case holding responsibility transferred to Aspire following Placement Order – local authority retain responsibility for Independent Reviewing Officer/Children in Care reviews.
Dorset – Approximately 20% of adoption case holding responsibility transferred to Aspire following Placement Order – local authority retain responsibility for Independent Reviewing Officer/Children in Care reviews.
Dorset/ Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole- responsibility for any Supervision Orders made alongside a Special Guardianship Order.

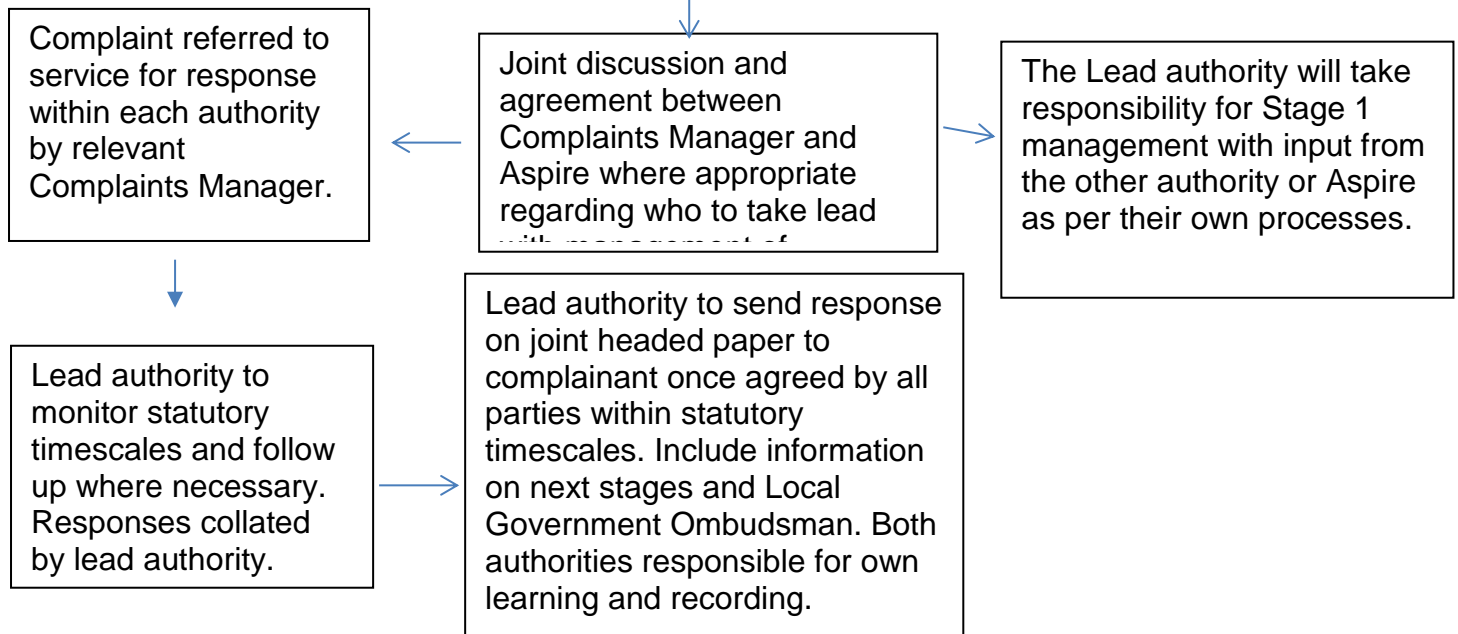
**Protocol for Dealing with Complaints in relation to the Regional Adoption Agency – Aspire and its partners
Flowchart following initial contact from complainant**



**Protocol for Dealing with Complaints in relation to the Regional Adoption Agency – Aspire and its partners
Flowchart following identification of joint complaint**

Responsibility for case and complaint identified as being jointly held between originating authority and Aspire.

Stage 1 process - Receiving complaints manager to obtain consent from complainant to share complaint with other authority / Aspire as appropriate.



Stage 2 process – review complaint to ensure lead authority still relevant. Agree between relevant complaint managers how investigation cost will be split. Lead authority appoints investigators with agreement of other authority and provides information to complainant. Complaint to be investigated in accordance with procedure of lead authority following the Statutory Guidance. Joint report and adjudication to be issued to complainant on completion.

Stage 3 process – Same costs split as the Stage 2 process as this is a review of Stages 1 & 2. Lead authority appoints panel with agreement of other authority and provides information to complainant. Review to be completed in accordance with procedure of lead authority following the Statutory Guidance. Both authorities Adjudicating Officers to attend review. Joint adjudication to be issued to complainant on completion.

LGO Referral – Authorities to work together on receipt of Local Government Ombudsman enquiry to provide Local Government Ombudsman with information.

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Cabinet

20 June 2023

Youth Justice Service Inspection

For Review and Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr B Quayle, Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help

Local Councillor(s):

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

Report Author: David Webb
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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

HMI Probation led a Joint Inspection of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service in September and October 2022. The inspection report was published on 17 January 2023. The overall rating of the service was Good. The inspection report provides a thorough review of the work of the service, applying 13 inspection standards. 11 of the 13 standards were rated Good, one was rated Requires Improvement and one was rated Outstanding.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet notes the findings of the inspection report, including the 'Recommendations', 'Strengths' and 'Areas for Improvement' identified by the inspectors, and are assured that an action plan is in place, with suitable monitoring, to address the inspection report's Recommendations.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure the committee has oversight of the inspection report and is assured that an action plan is in place to address the report's Recommendations.

1. Report

- 1.1 HMI Probation have responsibility for the inspection of youth justice services. All youth justice services in England and Wales are being inspected in a programme that will run from 2018-2024. The current youth justice inspection framework provides for two types of inspection, 'single' or 'joint'. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was the subject of a joint inspection in September and October 2022. The joint inspection format requires the submission of evidence in advance; a fieldwork week during which HMI Probation inspect a sample of YJS casework; a second fieldwork week in which YJS staff and partners meet with a multi-agency inspection team comprising specialist inspectors for youth justice, children's social care, education, police and health. The report from this joint inspection was published on 17 January 2023.
- 1.2 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is a partnership between Dorset Council, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and the Probation Service in Dorset. The inspection covered work in both local authority areas and reported on the combined work of the service so that the findings apply to both local authority areas.
- 1.3 The inspectors found that "children from the two local authorities covered by the YJS – Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole (BCP) and Dorset – have access to quality resources based upon their needs and these are not restricted by locality". In terms of the direct work of the YJS, the inspectors commented that "staff encourage good engagement with the child. Staff and managers are child-centred and know their children well".
- 1.4 The inspection report is appended to this report (Appendix 1). The youth justice inspection framework is structured into 4 'domains': Organisational Delivery; Court Disposals; Out of Court Disposals; Resettlement. Each domain is divided into Standards, making a total of 13 inspection Standards.
- 1.5 Inspection of the first domain, Organisational Delivery, is undertaken through a combination of 'evidence in advance' and fieldwork meetings with YJS staff, managers, Board members and partners. All four inspection Standards in this domain were rated Good. Committee members will see that the report lists the Strengths and Areas for Improvement identified by the inspectors for each Standard.

- 1.6 As part of the inspection HMI Probation sent a text survey to all children on the current YJS caseload and asked to interview children whose cases were included in the inspection sample. Surveys were also sent to YJS team members, YJS volunteers and to the local youth magistrates.
- 1.7 Inspection of the other three domains (Court Disposals, Out of Court Disposals and Resettlement) is undertaken through detailed scrutiny of a sample of cases. The YJS was required to submit details of all cases commencing between 27th September 2021 and 22nd July 2022. From this list the inspectorate selected a total of 62 cases (24 court orders, 35 out of court disposals, 3 custody cases). Inspectors applied a structured set of inspection criteria to each case, reading the case record and interviewing the lead YJS worker.
- 1.8 Committee members will see in the report that seven of the nine casework standards were rated Good, one was rated Requires Improvement and one was rated Outstanding.
- 1.9 HMI Probation made six Recommendations in their report. Four of the Recommendations are addressed to the YJS Management Board, covering some of the Board arrangements, local partnership work in response to child exploitation, education for YJS children and some of the partnership working between the YJS and children's social care. The other two Recommendations are addressed to the YJS Manager, relating to the analysis of the outcomes for different types of out of court disposal and to the quality of assessments of the risk of harm posed by children on the YJS caseload.
- 1.10 HMI Probation required an action plan to be submitted by 1st February, showing how the YJS will address the inspection recommendations. The action plan was submitted on time and has now been approved by HMI Probation. This is provided as Appendix 2. The YJS Management Board will oversee progress on implementing the plan. Progress can also be reported to the People and Health Overview committee in June when the committee is due to consider the annual Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24.

2. **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with the inspection report.

3. **Environmental Implications**

No environmental impact has been identified in respect of the inspection report.

4. Well-being and Health Implications

No specific health implications have been identified in the inspection report. The report notes the strong partnership working with health commissioners and providers in Dorset and the quality of work undertaken by the YJS nurses, psychologist and speech and language therapists.

5. Other Implications

No other implications have been identified in respect of the inspection outcome.

6. Risk Assessment

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

7.1 There are no specific equality implications associated with the report. One of the suggested Areas for Improvement is for the service to develop a discrete diversity and disproportionality policy which will guide staff to ask appropriate questions about a child's heritage and their lived experiences.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: "An inspection of youth offending services in Dorset".

Appendix 2: Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Inspection Action Plan

9. Background Papers

N/A



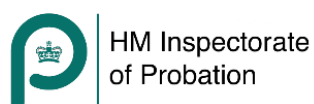
HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of youth offending services in
Dorset

HM Inspectorate of Probation, January 2023

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Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Pauline Burke, supported by a team of inspectors and colleagues from across the Inspectorate. HM Inspectorate of Probation was joined by colleague inspectors from police, social care, and education. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth offending and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth offending service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government and speak independently.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

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Published by:

HM Inspectorate of Probation
1st Floor Civil Justice Centre
1 Bridge Street West
Manchester
M3 3FX

Follow us on Twitter
[@hmiprobation](https://twitter.com/hmiprobation)

ISBN: 978-1-915468-24-6

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Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth justice service (YJS) inspections. This was a joint inspection, and we were joined by colleague inspectors from police, social care and education. We have inspected and rated Dorset Combined YJS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work. Overall, Dorset Combined YJS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Good'.

The inspection found that children from the two local authorities covered by the YJS – Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole (BCP) and Dorset – have access to quality resources based upon their needs and these are not restricted by locality. The partnership board ensures that performance, learning, and good practice are effectively shared across the two areas.

As a combined local authority YJS there is an appropriate focus on the quality of services provided by each local authority at board level. However, this must not detract from the need to ensure a collective strategic approach which is effective. For the partnership board to be challenged in its ambition to drive the performance of the service forward, a level of independence in its chairing arrangements could help ensure that all agencies are held to account more effectively.

In terms of partnerships, the YJS receives good health provision, which includes a psychologist, nurses, and speech and language therapists. We found the service to be well supported by Dorset police and police officers were valued members of the team who demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the children coming to their attention. The reoffending of children subject to out-of-court disposals is monitored, however, there is no detailed analysis of the profile of the children who reoffend and the effectiveness of the disposals they were given.

Although there had been a strategic focus on working with schools to support them to implement inclusion strategies, too many YJS children did not have access to full-time education and this needs to be an area of focus moving forward. We also found some disconnect with children's social care. In particular, there were delays in obtaining information as YJS case managers were not consistently invited to children's social care statutory multi agency meetings. Whilst YJS managers and business support officers had access to children's social care records, YJS case managers did not and therefore direct access to social care records would facilitate improved information sharing and communication.

YJS case managers understood the dangers of county lines and recognised when children were at risk of, or were already experiencing, exploitation. However, there was no agreed understanding of child exploitation across the partnership and no clear framework to guide practitioners. For both court orders and out-of-court disposals, case managers need to consider the possible wider risks when assessing children's risk of harm to others, for the quality of work around this standard to be improved.















For out-of-court disposals, it was good to see that the police notified agencies of all the children they encountered. There was also evidence that staff worked in a trauma-informed way and did all they could to engage children and families.

In this report, we make a number of recommendations that we hope will support Dorset Combined YJS to build on its strong foundations and ensure it continues to deliver a high-quality service for children.



Justin Russell, HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service		Score	24/36
Fieldwork started September 2022			
Overall rating		Good	
1. Organisational delivery			
1.1	Governance and leadership	Good	
1.2	Staff	Good	
1.3	Partnerships and services	Good	
1.4	Information and facilities	Good	
2. Court disposals			
2.1	Assessment	Good	
2.2	Planning	Good	
2.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
2.4	Reviewing	Good	
3. Out-of-court disposals			
3.1	Assessment	Requires improvement	
3.2	Planning	Outstanding	
3.3	Implementation and delivery	Good	
3.4	Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	Good	
4. Resettlement¹			
4.1	Resettlement policy and provision	Good	

¹ The rating for resettlement does not influence the overall YJS rating.

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made six recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth justice services in Dorset. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth justice services, and better protect the public.

The Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership board should:

1. review the board arrangements to ensure effective strategic partnerships across the combined area and consider whether additional independent chairing arrangements could enhance these
2. develop a shared approach across the partnership to addressing child exploitation and county lines and put a framework in place which promotes effective practice
3. continue to support and challenge all schools to ensure that YJS children receive their full entitlement to education
4. improve partnership working with children's social care by ensuring YJS case manager involvement in all statutory multi-agency meetings and improve their direct access to children's social care records.

The YJS service manager should:

5. analyse the reoffending of children subject to out-of-court disposals and monitor the effectiveness of the disposals given
6. improve the analysis and quality of assessments to ensure there is effective and robust understanding regarding the risk of harm a child can pose to others.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in Dorset Combined YJS over a period of two weeks, beginning 26 September 2022. We inspected cases where the sentence, licence or out-of-court disposal began between 27 September 2021 and 22 July 2022. We also inspected resettlement cases that were sentenced or released between these same dates. We conducted 45 interviews with case managers.

Dorset is a county in south west England. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) was formed in 2015 and works across two local authorities, Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole (BCP) and Dorset. The service matches the boundaries of the other statutory YJS partner agencies, including Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Dorset clinical commissioning group (CCG), Dorset HealthCare NHS Trust and the Probation Service (Dorset), who also work across both local authorities. The two local authorities are unitary and were formed in April 2019. BCP is a large urban area, while Dorset comprises a mainly rural area with market towns and a larger urban area in Weymouth and Portland. Dorset Council has a population of about 380,000. Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of nearly 400,000.

The YJS is hosted by BCP Council, located in the safeguarding and early help service directorate of children's social care, with links to the Dorset Council children's social care directorate. The YJS is represented across other strategic and operational partnerships both within the local authorities and across the pan Dorset partnerships; and issues impacting on youth offending are prominent on the agendas of these other key strategic groups.

At the time of the inspection there were 54 staff in the YJS. The number of interventions that were open in September 2022 showed that 76 were post court interventions and 64 were out-of-court disposals. The YJS caseload consists of approximately 65 per cent BCP children and 35 per cent Dorset children, with some slight fluctuation. YJS staff are employed through BCP and split into two geographical teams. The YJS specialist workers work across both areas. The service receives funding from NHS England to support the introduction of trauma-informed practice and has a 'trauma champion' to develop this area of work.

The YJS has access to a comprehensive suite of data, analysis of which has led to deep dive reports. These have included a report on the profile of younger children known to the YJS, as well as, monitoring the potential criminalisation of care experienced children. From January 2021 to December 2021, the number of first-time entrants for Dorset Combined YJS was more than the average for England and Wales. Its use of custody was less than the average for England and Wales. From October 2019 to September 2020, Dorset's performance in the proportion of children who reoffend and how frequently they reoffend were both better than the average for England and Wales

Both local authorities understood the risk to the service regarding Covid-19 and reacted quickly and proportionately to support staff, manage the workload, and ensure that children and families were kept safe. Virtual interventions and online programmes were delivered throughout lockdown to children and their families. restorative justice provision had to be varied and 'reparation at home' packs were developed for children to complete. Referral order panels and parenting programmes continued to be delivered virtually and the YJS offices remained open to a restricted number of staff.

Domain one: Organisational delivery

To inspect organisational delivery, we reviewed written evidence submitted in advance by the YJS and conducted 22 meetings, including with staff, volunteers, managers, board members, and partnership staff and their managers.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows.

1.1. Governance and leadership



The governance and leadership of the YOT supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- The Youth Justice Service partnership board is chaired by the Dorset director for children's social care and its membership includes all statutory partners.
- Both local authorities ensure they are equitably represented on the board.
- Board members are clear about the vision for the service and are consulted on its annual priorities.
- Staff ensure that children from the two authorities are treated equitably, have access to resources based upon their needs and this is not restricted by locality.
- Key indicators are split by the local authority areas to ensure that performance, learning, and good practice are shared across both.
- The YJS is represented across other strategic and operational partnerships, both within the local authorities and across the pan-Dorset partnerships.
- The YJS is receiving funding from NHS England to support the delivery of trauma-informed practice.
- The board receives information relating to the service's performance, progress on past plans, learning from case reviews, and inspection reports, as well as deep-dive thematic reports.
- Board members hold each other to account and challenge partner agencies about the resources that are provided to the service.
- YJS team managers regularly attend the management board and staff present specific pieces of work.
- There is a youth justice plan supported by a team plan in which managers lead on specific areas of practice.

Areas for improvement:

- The board chairing arrangements are not rotated. For the partnership board to be challenged in its ambition to drive the performance of the service forward, a level of independence is required that holds all partnership agencies to account.
- While the seniority of the board membership is appropriate, attendance is not consistent.

- Although the youth justice plan references work taking place to look at disproportionality, the service does not have a specific diversity and disproportionality policy. Focus on this area requires a framework that collates the diversity and disproportionality work together, which guides and enables staff to ask appropriate questions about a child's heritage and their lived experiences.
- Although new board members meet with the YJS service manager and chair of the board as part of their induction, there is no formal induction pack which ensure consistency.

1.2. Staff



Staff within the YOT are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- The YJS has a stable and experienced workforce.
- Allocation of cases considers which staff have previously been involved with the family and prioritises case manager consistency.
- Staff encourage good engagement with the child. Staff and managers are child-centred and know their children well.
- Staff receive regular monthly supervision; clinical supervision is also provided when needed. They reported feeling supported by both their managers and their peers.
- Seconded staff receive supervision from their home agency, who complete an appraisal, and from their YJS line manager.
- There is a comprehensive induction process for new staff and volunteers, and procedures for addressing staff competency.
- There is a workforce development policy, the service keeps comprehensive training records, and staff and volunteers reported that they feel encouraged to take up training opportunities.
- All staff and volunteers have access to courses available through the two local authorities and external providers. Specialist workers had access to joint training provided by the YJS.
- In the cases inspected, management oversight met the needs of the case in 71 per cent of post-court cases and in 72 per cent of out-of-court disposals.
- The YJS uses workshops to develop practice and staff can become 'champions' in specific areas.
- Staff development is encouraged through offering management opportunities within the service and support for external qualifications.
- In the staff survey, 95 per cent of the 23 staff who completed it said their views about working for the YJS were listened to and acted on either 'quite well' or 'very well'.

- Staff receive praise and appreciation through emails from senior leaders and supervision with their line managers; team meetings encourage the sharing of positive news and recognition of good practice.
- Staff reported that they felt valued by managers and by their peers, and all 23 staff who completed the staff survey said that exceptional work is 'sometimes' or 'always' recognised.

Areas for improvement:

- Opportunities for staff to learn from the different challenges each local area face need to be further developed to ensure shared learning across the combined area.
- The quality of work to analyse and assess who was at risk and the nature of the risk needs improving and staff would benefit from additional training.
- Staff expressed concerns about how children had been treated by the police but had not effectively raised these at the time with the YJS police officers. It is essential issues are raised and addressed in a timely manner and learning shared is identified.
- The understanding of child exploitation in the area needs to improve. Further training and clearer pathways for responding to child exploitation are required.

1.3. Partnerships and services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- The YJS has access to a comprehensive suite of data, which have been the subject of deep-dive analysis.
- The YJS has two parenting workers. Feedback from parents showed that they appreciated the practical help and emotional support they have been given.
- The YJS can access two separate substance misuse services and both organisations provide link workers.
- The YJS restorative justice practitioners contact every victim to highlight the restorative justice opportunities available. The service is developing interventions with emergency workers. Victim engagement and feedback are reported to the management board.
- Feedback from the court indicated YJS staff give professional advice, allowing the bench to fulfil their role in sentencing while engaging the child in the proceedings.
- The YJS employs two education, training, and employment (ETE) workers who play an effective role in supporting schools and education providers to meet the needs of YJS children. They advocate well and are knowledgeable in the various inclusion and special educational needs and disability (SEND) forums. They are supported by YJS practitioners who use risk assessments effectively in addressing school leaders' concerns about a child's behaviour and educational needs.

- There is good health provision, which comprises a psychologist, child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) nurses, and speech and language therapists. The nurses combine expertise in child mental health and wellbeing with wider nursing expertise in physical health, sexual health, and substance misuse. There was evidence in the inspected cases that the speech and language therapists advocated strongly to ensure that children's needs were met.
- The YJS was well supported by Dorset police with two seconded police constables, a sergeant dedicated to the YJS, and a police inspector. The officers were highly regarded and valued as members of the team by both peers and the YJS management team. They demonstrated good knowledge of the children managed by the YJS, and intelligence was routinely shared by both police and case managers. The police officers attend the risk assessment panels, providing updated intelligence on children being discussed, and contribute to risk management plans.
- The YJS has a full-time seconded probation officer who prepares a transition OASys (offender assessment system) assessment which captures the key aspects from the youth justice assessment. Transition arrangements were good, and the service was well engaged with the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) process. When young people aged over 18 come to the attention of the Probation Service, contact is made with the YJS to verify if they have been previously known to them.

Areas for improvement:

- The service did not have sufficient data about education exclusions, attainment, destinations, and progress to inform and guide decisions. Both local authorities were, however, enabling YJS staff to access pupil data where needed.
- Both local authority areas have strategic and operational multi-agency meetings to monitor children at risk of or experiencing criminal exploitation. The inspection found, however, that there was no collective clear framework to guide practitioners, including mapping the location of risky areas in the localities, sharing and collating intelligence with other agencies and formulating multi-agency assessments and plans for children and families.
- Both local authorities have been working with schools to support them to implement inclusion strategies. There has been a focus on building schools' capacity to manage YJS children and retain them in learning. Senior managers review and challenge all potential school exclusions, thereby communicating a clear message about keeping children in learning and the risks to the child associated with non-attendance. However, despite this too many YJS children were not getting their entitled access to full time education.
- There were too many YJS children aged 16 or older not in suitable education, training or employment. Although YJS staff worked assiduously, in conjunction with partners, to provide bespoke support, there were insufficient volume, range, and flexibility of options across the combined area to meet the needs of these children.
- Although the quality and effectiveness of partnerships with children's social care were good overall, there was a reliance by children's social care on agency staff from areas outside Dorset, which limited the opportunities for children and their families to receive the necessary support when they needed it.

- YJS managers have direct access to children’s social care records along with the business support, however, the YJS case managers do not. As a result of this, some YJS case managers can experience delays in obtaining information. Additionally, we found examples of YJS practitioners not being invited to children’s social care multi-agency meetings which presented challenges to effective information sharing.

1.4. Information and facilities



Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- There is a full range of policies and guidance, which are understood by staff and reviewed regularly.
- Information-sharing protocols are in place and understood across the partnership.
- There is an escalation process for all partners to help challenge other agencies, and staff feel supported by managers in raising concerns.
- The YJS has two offices, in Poole and in Dorchester. Staff working with children can access community facilities across the geographical area, including community centres and schools, and will visit children at home.
- YJS police officers had access to police and YJS IT systems and were proficient in the use of both. A flagging system on the Dorset Police record management system automatically notifies the YJS police officers when frontline police encounter children. This is considered good practice.
- The YJS case management system enables the service to produce quality data on performance.
- There is a quality assurance and practice improvement policy that outlines the framework for auditing work, and this was evident and impacting in the cases inspected.
- The YJS is involved in multi-agency audits, taking part in multi-agency learning reviews.
- The YJS had completed an intensive feedback exercise through in-depth interviews with some children who had been remanded or sentenced to custody in the past three years.
- There is evidence that the YJS reviews cases when serious incidents occur and learns from the outcomes of inspections to help improve practice.

Areas for improvement:

- Although YJS offices are a safe space for staff, some are not accessible for children and families.
- While the police officer in BCP works alongside case managers in the main office, enabling good joint working through formal and informal information sharing, in Dorset the arrangements are less conducive to joint working.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

As part of the inspection, inspectors met parents of children known to the YJS who were working with the YJS parenting support workers. Their feedback was very complimentary; they said they appreciated the emotional support they received and could ask the workers for advice, as well as learning practical parenting skills.

The YJS has completed feedback through in-depth interviews with a small number of children who had been remanded or sentenced to custody in the past three years. Its aim is to understand the child's journey to custody, their individual experiences, whether they experienced discrimination, and how they had been affected by their contact with the service and other agencies. The findings from this will influence provision in the future.

The YJS ensures that it gets feedback from children and both parents where possible and it uses different ways to do this, including online surveys and self-assessments. Although feedback is recorded, it is not analysed, which is a missed opportunity for the YJS to use what is said to influence the way that services are delivered.

The YJS contacted, on our behalf, children who had open cases at the time of the inspection, to gain their consent for a text survey. We delivered the survey independently to the 31 children who consented, and nine children replied. When asked how they rated the service they had received from the YJS, six responded, with a score of 10 out of 10, with one child saying:

"They understood why I've done what I've done, and they really tried to help me."

When asked how the YJS had helped them stay out of trouble, one child said:

"By offering things to keep you busy and to stop going out causing trouble, giving you lots of opportunities to turn your life around."

While another commented:

"Because they talk through things with me, and even when I went to a secure unit, they made sure they were still there helping me."

Inspectors also spoke to eight children and two parents, all felt that their YJS workers had the right skills to do the work, and all but one said that they had been able to access the right services and support to help them stay out of trouble.

One child, talking about their case manager, said:

"They knew what they were talking about and had a good understanding of my situation. They could say things in a way that young people understand. They listened really well and gave good advice."

Diversity

The inspection found that children from the two authorities are treated equitably and staff ensure that they have access to resources based upon their needs, which is not restricted by their locality.

The caseload at the time of inspection showed 11 per cent were black, Asian or minority ethnic children. Given the balance of the caseload in BCP, black, Asian or minority ethnic children are not therefore over-represented as a whole. The distribution within the caseload shows a higher proportion of children at the court order stage who are black, Asian or minority ethnic children than the proportion of those at the out-of-court stage.

The YJS identified that only two per cent of its workforce are black, Asian or minority ethnic, and therefore has links with local organisations who can provide mentors who can support a child's understanding of their heritage if needed. When considering the child's diversity, worker allocation decisions are taken carefully to be sensitive to children's needs.

The number of girls on the caseload stays within a range of 15 to 20 per cent of the total caseload, which is consistent with national rates. The YJS is working with a small number of children who are exploring their gender identity. The YJS recognises that they have specific needs and are providing an individualised response.

At the time of inspection, the YJS had 140 open interventions, of which 20 per cent were linked to females, 64 per cent had substance misuse issues, 79 per cent had emotional, mental health, and wellbeing concerns, 48 per cent had a learning disability, learning difficulty or were subject to an education health and care plan, and 10 per cent were care-experienced children living within the YJS area. Although the YJS comments on disproportionality in its youth justice plan, it does not have a specific diversity and disproportionality policy.

Domain two: Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 23 community sentences and one custodial sentence managed by the YJS.

2.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Good

Our rating² for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	96%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	88%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	79%

In assessing desistance, case managers showed a suitable understanding of the trauma that children had experienced and its impact on their behaviour and engagement. Assessments collated information from other agencies and appropriately analysed children's factors for and against desistance, including their attitude and motivation for offending. Children's diversity needs were explored and assessments provided a reliable understanding of the child, their family, and their personal circumstances. The views of both parents were prioritised, and case managers focused on children's strengths, and levels of maturity. Case managers had considered the wishes and needs of victims, allowing restorative opportunities to be offered to them.

Cases appropriately identified the potential risks to children's safety and wellbeing and included information from other agencies, for example, health and speech and language. Case managers considered the external factors that could be put in place to support the safety of children.

In assessing children's risk of harm to others, information from other agencies informed the assessment. This included information from the police which was used to help analyse the internal and external controls, and interventions needed to manage the risks that children presented to others. However, there was limited evidence that case managers consistently considered who was at risk, and the nature of that risk and this is an area that needs further development.

² The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available at web link.](#)

2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Good

Our rating³ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus sufficiently on supporting the child's desistance?	96%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	96%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	71%

Where possible, cases were allocated to practitioners who had already worked with the child and their family. Planning for the child's interventions evidenced that the case manager knew the child well, considered their strengths, and understood their ability to change.

Planning to support the children's desistance was a strong area of practice. Case managers considered the diverse needs of children and could plan access to the appropriate services. Plans were adapted to the child's needs, and the views of both parents and carers were taken into consideration. Planning was linked to the child's assessed desistance factors and took account of their level of motivation to engage. YJS education workers were part of the plan to keep children motivated while appropriate provision was being found for them or while their education, health and care plan (EHCP) was being reviewed. Planning to take account of the wishes of victims was inconsistent. Restorative justice practitioners worked well with engaging victims and consistency would ensure this was better evidenced in cases.

Planning to keep children safe was strong in most of the cases inspected. Other agencies were involved in the planning process, which built on existing relationships with other professionals, including YJS education officers and complex safeguarding team social workers. Case managers planned for the interventions that were needed to support children and managed the risk to their safety and wellbeing. However, contingency planning to address escalating concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing were not adequately detailed in some cases. This was linked to case managers not being invited consistently to children's social care meetings and so not having all the information about the child's current circumstances.

Planning to manage a child's risk of harm to others was the weakest area of practice in the post-court cases inspected. Planning did promote the safety of other people and addressed the safety of specific victims in most cases. Case managers did use the YJS risk assessment panel and, where appropriate, MAPPA (multi-agency public protection arrangements) meetings to help inform the planning process.

³ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available at web link.](#)

However, as some of the wider potential risks around the child’s risk of harm to others had not been identified as part of the assessment, this impacted on the quality of contingency planning. Where there were concerns that the child’s risk to others could increase, contingency planning was not evident in nearly half of the relevant cases.

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.	Good
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Our rating⁴ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the child’s desistance?	75%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of the child?	88%
Does the implementation and delivery of services effectively support the safety of other people?	79%

The delivery of services and interventions showed that the case manager had built a strong relationship with the child and their family, and this was evident in the child’s engagement.

To help support desistance, most cases demonstrated the importance that case managers gave to considering children’s diverse needs. The interventions delivered built on the case manager’s understanding of the child, their strengths, and their ability to engage. In all cases, practitioners prioritised developing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the child and their parents or carers. Case managers were involved in multi-agency discussions and meetings to ensure that provision was in place for the child when their involvement with the YJS ended.

Interventions were identified to manage the child’s safety and wellbeing. There was evidence of joint working with specialist staff, including the nurses and the psychologist, as well as early help services, substance misuse workers, and the complex safeguarding team. Inspectors noted excellent work from the education workers, who advocated for children to ensure that they received appropriate provision, and the speech and language therapists, who shared their assessments with education and care providers to help them understand the child’s needs and adapt their services accordingly.

We found some variability in the delivery of services and interventions that considered a child’s risk of harm to others. When considering the risk that some children pose to others, the protection of actual and potential victims was not consistently considered in all cases. However, there was good multi-agency coordination to monitor the risks, and this included MAPPA meetings. The

⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available at web link.](#)

communication and information sharing between the YJS police officers and case managers was timely and effective in ensuring all professionals were updated and the child’s risk was being well managed.

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers. **Good**

Our rating⁵ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on supporting the child’s desistance?	88%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	83%
Does reviewing focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	71%

Reviews were completed at key points in the order, and many cases showed ongoing reviewing of desistance factors as the order progressed. It was pleasing that case managers continued to build on children’s strengths, responding to their diversity needs, and considered the changes in their personal circumstances. There was evidence that the focus of interventions changed if needed and the child’s ongoing plan was adjusted when necessary. The reviews considered children’s motivation appropriately as the order progressed, and the child and their parents or carers continued to be involved in the reviewing process.

Reviews of the safety and wellbeing of children detailed the changes in children’s circumstances and case managers responded accordingly. There were examples of professional discussions and meetings with education, health, and some children’s social care social workers. Case managers also used the risk assessment panel to help them manage any changing concerns or escalations in the risk to children’s safety and wellbeing. In nearly all cases, this resulted in adjustments to the ongoing plan of work with children, which reflected the changing circumstances.

Reviewing a child’s risk of harm to others needs strengthening in the post-court cases inspected. Case managers recognised and responded to changes in the child’s circumstances, and the reviewing process included information from, and meetings with, other agencies. However, reviews did not consistently lead to the necessary adjustments in the ongoing plan, and work to manage the risk of harm to others remained ineffectively addressed or managed.

⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available at web link.](#)

Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 35 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of 13 youth conditional cautions, 16 youth cautions, and six community resolutions.

3.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Requires improvement

Our rating⁶ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to support the child's desistance?	86%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep the child safe?	71%
Does assessment sufficiently analyse how to keep other people safe?	60%

The YJS used a specific 'brief assessment' tool based on AssetPlus for assessing all children subject to an out-of-court disposal. Inspectors noted that the quality of the assessment depended on the experience of the practitioner and their understanding of the tool. Also, similar to the post-court cases inspected, when considering the risk a child posed to others, case managers did not routinely take into account the wider potential risks, including the nature of the risk and who was at risk.

To help identify children's desistance factors, case managers had accessed a range of sources from partner agencies and offered a sufficient analysis of children's attitudes towards, or motivations for, their offending. They focused on children's strengths and their motivation to change. Case managers involved children and their parents or carers in the assessment, and in all relevant cases the needs and wishes of victims had been considered. Assessments would be further informed, however, if children's diversity needs were taken into account consistently.

Two thirds of the cases identified and analysed sufficiently the potential risks to children's safety and wellbeing. Information from other agencies was used to inform the assessment, and there was a clear written record of children's wellbeing and how to keep them safe.

In the majority of cases, the risks to others were identified and analysed, but as stated above, in a number of cases practitioners were not recognising wider risks to other people or analysing sufficiently children's potential future harmful behaviour. Overall, however, inspectors did find that most cases assessed how to keep other people safe sufficiently.

⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available at web link.](#)

3.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating⁷ for planning is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does planning focus on supporting the child's desistance?	89%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping the child safe?	86%
Does planning focus sufficiently on keeping other people safe?	80%

Planning for out-of-court disposals was the strongest area of practice when considering a child's desistance, their safety and wellbeing, and the risk they posed to others. Where possible, cases were allocated to practitioners who had already worked with the child and their family. Planning for the child's interventions evidenced that the case manager knew the child well and understood their motivation and their strengths.

Plans addressed the child's desistance factors, and case managers took account of children's diversity needs. Practitioners included children and their parents or carers and made plans proportionate to the type of disposal. They also ensured that plans reflected the wishes and needs of victims, and cases showed good examples of restorative justice work being completed. As some of the interventions were delivered within a short period, case managers appropriately concentrated on children's access to mainstream services and opportunities for community integration after the disposal had ended. This was evident in the work of the education officers and case managers who advocated for YJS children to ensure that they were receiving the appropriate provision relevant to their needs.

Planning to address children's safety and wellbeing was supported by work with substance misuse workers, the YJS health team, and, especially, the speech and language therapists. Although assessments did not always consider the wider risks the child posed to others, practitioners were strong at planning for the child's risk when related to the offence that had been committed. Plans involved other agencies where relevant and case managers addressed the concerns and risks to victims.

Both planning to address a child's safety and wellbeing and their risk of harm to others require contingency arrangements to be considered consistently. Case managers need to look beyond the offending behaviour and take into account the potential wider risk factors around the child's circumstances. Overall, however, in most cases planning to address the child's safety and wellbeing and their risk of harm to others was sufficient.

⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available at web link.](#)

3.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Good

Our rating⁸ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

	% 'Yes'
Does service delivery effectively support the child's desistance?	83%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of the child?	89%
Does service delivery effectively support the safety of other people?	74%

The delivery of services and interventions was a strong area of practice which built on the assessment and the plans. Case managers could access all the services and interventions available for children on court orders for those subject to an out-of-court disposal. The interventions delivered showed that the case manager had built a strong relationship with the child and their family, and this was evident in the child's engagement with their disposal.

To help support children's desistance, case managers matched interventions to their needs and learning styles, taking account of their diversity. They were also proportionate to the type of disposal. There was good engagement with interventions, which were mainly voluntary, and case managers worked hard to establish effective working relationships with both the children and their parents or carers. Interventions considered a child's speech, language, and communication needs. In most cases, consideration had been given to how children could be linked into mainstream services once their interventions had ended.

The delivery of interventions to support children's safety and wellbeing included doing this alongside other professionals, although consideration was given to not involving too many professionals. There were examples of case managers working in a trauma-informed way and using case consultations with the health professionals to help them deliver sessions that would meet the child's needs. Nearly all the cases inspected showed that the service delivery and interventions supported the safety of children effectively.

In most cases of interventions with children to support the safety of other people, the services delivered were managing and minimising the risk of harm. Case managers, however, need to give more consideration to the protection of potential and actual victims when delivering interventions. Overall, though, the interventions delivered had supported the safety of other people in most of the cases inspected.

⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available at web link.](#)

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based out-of-court disposal service in place that promotes diversion and supports sustainable desistance.

Good

We also inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. Our key findings were as follows:

Strengths:

- Children and families can access programmes and projects across both local authorities, ensuring they receive appropriate early intervention work.
- There is an out-of-court disposal protocol between the YJS and Dorset police.
- Frontline police officers do not give community resolutions on the street. Instead, it was good to see that the police notify agencies of all the children they encounter.
- Partnership agencies screen all children on receipt of the notification from the police, and check if the child or family are known. The responses are collated by a police sergeant who then sends them to the YJS team managers with a proposed outcome.
- Based on the screening information, an out-of-court disposal or an allocation for a YJS brief assessment is proposed. If an assessment is needed, then the case manager will visit the child and family and make a proposal based on their assessment.
- An AssetPlus is used where there are concerns about the child's level of risk, or it is a harmful sexual behaviour case.
- Any disagreements regarding the proposed outcome are discussed at the weekly panel meeting, which is attended by the police, the YJS team manager, and representatives from early help. This panel also tracks and reviews out-of-court disposal cases.
- All the interventions and services available to children on court orders can be used for children on an out-of-court disposal.
- When a child does not participate with their disposal, efforts are made to support engagement.
- Dorset Police produces a performance report, which is shared with the YJS Board and management team, that tracks the timeliness of out-of-court decisions from their initial referral to the disposal being given.
- An evaluation of out-of-court disposals was completed by Bournemouth University and Dorset police. One of its recommendations was the development of an intervention specifically looking at assaults on emergency workers, which the YJS has taken forward.
- A local scrutiny panel reviews cases and looks at the consistency of decision-making and outcomes.

Areas for improvement:

- The evidence of police and YJS joint decision-making and the rationale for the outcomes agreed were not recorded clearly or consistently.
- Staff did not always understand the process for the out-of-court disposal or that their brief assessment could influence the outcome for the child.
- The quality of assessing the risk of harm for children who are subject to an out-of-court disposal needs to improve to take account of the wider potential risks and contingency planning.
- While the reoffending of children subject to out-of-court disposal is monitored using the YJS reoffending toolkit and is reported to the YJS partnership board, there is no detailed analysis of the profile of children who reoffend and the effectiveness of the disposals they were given.

4.1. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based resettlement service for children leaving custody.

Good

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings, and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected three cases managed by the YJS that had received a custodial sentence.

Our key findings were as follows.

Strengths:

- The YJS has a resettlement policy, which includes work with children in custody and after release from custody.
- The service manager is proactive in reporting to the partnership board on the timeliness of release addresses being confirmed. Individual case concerns are escalated with social care managers before release to expedite placement decisions.
- YJS staff described communication with the secure estate as good. Each child is allocated a resettlement worker and there are weekly conversations between the YJS and the establishment.
- Case managers attend review meetings and visit children in custody in person whenever possible to maintain and develop their working relationships.
- A YJS nurse and education worker are allocated to all children in custody to ensure access to the right provision, and to assist continuity of care during and after custody.
- The speech and language therapists share with relevant custody professionals the results of their individual assessments of children in custody.
- In the cases inspected, there was sufficient planning to support the child's accommodation on release. The quality of planning was helped by the multi-agency response that was in place, as all the cases were subject to MAPPA.
- The findings from the view-seeking work with children in custody will help the service understand the children's experiences and improve provision.

Areas for improvement:

- The resettlement policy does not contain information on recalling children to custody.
- The YJS does not have a resettlement panel, but children in custody are discussed at the risk assessment panels.
- Provision for children's education, training, and employment is affected by where they will live on release. Any issues should, therefore, continue to be escalated to the board so that accommodation is found promptly.

Further information

The following can be found on our website:

- [inspection data, including methodology and contextual facts about the YJS](#)
- [a glossary of terms used in this report.](#)

Following the full joint inspection of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service, HMI Probation made six recommendations that they believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth justice services in Dorset. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth justice services, and better protect the public.

Governance for this plan will be provided by the YJS Management Board. Progress on this plan will also be reported to the Dorset Council Strengthening Services Board, to the BCP Council Area Child Safeguarding Committee and to the respective local authority quality assurance and performance boards. Quality Assurance for actions in this plan will be integrated into the DCYJS audit programme, linking with audit activity by partner agencies. This plan was implemented fully on 01/02/2023 with some actions being implemented after the inspection fieldwork to ensure improvements delivered at pace.

Ref	Ofsted recommendation	Action required and identify if applies to different partners/LA	Start Date and action owner	Target Date	Updates
	The Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership board should:				
1	Review the board arrangements to ensure effective strategic partnerships across the combined area and consider whether additional independent chairing arrangements could enhance these.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Board chair role to rotate between local authorities in line with Board Terms of Reference. Board to agree improvements to enhance the effectiveness of our strategic partnership 	<p>To agree schedule at the next board (27/01/23) – TL, CH</p> <p>Board development session November 2022, actions to be implemented in 2023 – Board Chair</p>	<p>End of January 2023</p> <p>Review in October 2023</p>	<p>Dorset Council to continue chairing the Board pending longer-term review</p> <p>For review later in 2023</p>
2	Develop a shared approach across the partnership to addressing child exploitation and county lines and	1. Both local authorities and their	January 2023	March 2023	Review of CE documentation in

	<p>put a framework in place which promotes effective practice.</p>	<p>partner agencies, including YJS, to review their CE screening and assessment tools and CE meeting processes, as part of the pan-Dorset CE Strategy review.</p> <p>2. Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children’s Partnership to agree and implement a training plan to promote the revised CE tools and procedures.</p> <p>3. Survey of partnership staff to check awareness and confidence about new CE tools and procedures</p>	<p>Paula Golding (Dorset) Juliette Blake (BCP)</p> <p>Laurence Doe March 2023</p> <p>YJS Board members</p>	<p>September 2023</p> <p>September 2023</p>	<p>progress. YJS Board requested pan-Dorset tools if possible.</p> <p>Waiting on the new CE documentation</p> <p>To follow implementation of the new CE tools and procedures</p>
3	<p>Continue to support and challenge all schools to ensure that YJS children receive their full entitlement to education</p>	<p>1. Develop YJS processes for monitoring and review of education offers to include monthly review with local authority</p>	<p>David Webb Kelly Twitchen (BCP) Amanda Davis (Dorset) February 2023</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>YJS ETE officers are reviewing child-level issues with VS, SEND and Inclusion. Development meetings in April and May with BCP and DC EET</p>

		<p>colleagues and agreed action plans.</p> <p>2. Review local processes to speed up the response to find suitable provision for children who have been permanently excluded.</p>	<p>Kelly Twitchen</p> <p>Amanda Davis</p> <p>March 2023</p>	<p>June 2023</p>	<p>teams to improve joint work.</p> <p>Directors of Education will present to July Board meeting on joint work with YJS to reduce exclusions and meet other educational needs</p>
4	<p>Improve partnership working with children's social care by ensuring YJS case manager involvement in all statutory multi-agency meetings and improve their direct access to children's social care records.</p>	<p>1. Obtain access to Mosaic for YJS case managers working in each local authority.</p> <p>2. YJS to share weekly caseload information with each local authority to enable the responsible local authority staff to invite relevant YJS practitioners to multi-agency meetings</p> <p>3. YJS management case supervision to include checks of YJS being invited to multi-agency meetings.</p>	<p>David Webb</p> <p>January 2023</p> <p>David Webb</p> <p>February 2023</p> <p>David Webb</p> <p>February 2023</p>	<p>January 2023</p> <p>March 2023</p> <p>February 2023</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>YJS caseload info shared monthly with local authority information colleagues. Working on local authority processes to check relevant professionals, including YJS, are invited to multi-agency meetings</p> <p>Complete</p>

		<p>4. YJS data recording to show inclusion in multi-agency meetings for children with a social worker, with collated information to be reported to the YJS Board.</p> <p>5. Increased attendance by YJS practitioners in shared spaces</p> <p>6. YJS and CSC in each local authority to increase instances of joint work, eg attendance at team meetings, shadowing, named link workers for services.</p>	<p>David Webb March 2023</p> <p>David Webb April 2023</p> <p>David Webb, Paul Dempsey, Juliette Blake January 2023</p>	<p>March 2023</p> <p>July 2023</p> <p>June 23</p>	<p>Complete</p>
The YJS service manager should:					
5	Analyse the reoffending of children subject to out-of-court disposals and monitor the effectiveness of the disposals given	1. Undertake detailed analysis, using the reoffending toolkit, to show reoffending rates for different OOCd disposal types,	David Webb – to report to Board in April 2023	April 23	Complete. Included in April 23 Board Performance Report

		including profile of children who reoffend			
6	Improve the analysis and quality of assessments to ensure there is effective and robust understanding regarding the risk of harm a child can pose to others.	<p>1. Provide additional AssetPlus training for staff who joined DCYJS in 2022</p> <p>2. YJS managers workshop and benchmarking activity to agree standards for sign-off of ROSH assessments</p> <p>3. Workshop for case managers to identify and share good practice</p> <p>4. Periodic focused case audit exercises to monitor progress in risk of harm assessments</p>	<p>David Webb December 2022</p> <p>David Webb February 2023</p> <p>David Webb April 2023</p> <p>David Webb July 2023</p>	<p>Dec 22</p> <p>Feb23</p> <p>June 23</p> <p>Ongoing audit activity</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Date to be confirmed</p> <p>Included in case audit of weapon offences Apr-May 23. Audit completion by 31/5/23. Will be reported to next Board meeting.</p>

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Cabinet

20 June 2023

Youth Justice Plan 2023/24

For Recommendation to Council

Portfolio Holder: Cllr B Quayle, Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Local Councillor(s):

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

Report Author: David Webb
Job Title: Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Tel: 01202 974321
Email: david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

There is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.

Recommendation:

For the Cabinet to recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan to Full Council.

Reason for Recommendation:

Youth Justice Services are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the Local Authority for that Youth Justice Service. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works across both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. Approval is therefore sought from both Dorset Council and from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

1. Report

- 1.1 The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires Youth Offending Teams (now more widely known as Youth Justice Services) to publish an annual youth justice plan. The Youth Justice Board provides detailed and prescriptive guidance about what must be included in the plan. The draft Youth Justice Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is attached at Appendix One. A brief summary of the Youth Justice Plan is provided in this report.
- 1.2 The Youth Justice Plan provides information on the resourcing, structure, governance, partnership arrangements and performance of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service. The Plan also describes the national and local youth justice context for 2023/24 and sets out our priorities for this year.
- 1.3 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was inspected under HMI Probation's 'Joint Inspection' framework in September and October 2022. This was a rigorous and detailed inspection, scrutinising work with 62 children across both local authorities and reviewing the service's management and leadership, partnership arrangements and use of information. The inspection report was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'.
- 1.4 The Youth Justice Board continue to monitor three 'key performance indicators' for youth justice. The first indicator relates to the rate of young people entering the justice system for the first time. The latest national data, relating to the 12 months to September 2022, shows a combined pan-Dorset rate of 239 per 100,000 under 18-year-olds entering the justice system for the first time. This compares with a figure of 183 per 100,000 under 18-year-olds in the previous year. For context, the rate for the year 2019/20, before the pandemic, was 309 per 100,000 under 18-year-olds. The combined pan-Dorset rate does not reflect progress made in the Dorset Council area, described in the following paragraph.
- 1.5 Local data enables us to monitor numbers of first-time entrants in each local authority area. This local data shows the number of Dorset children entering the justice system reduced from 79 in 2019/20, and 50 in 2021/22, to 40 in 2022/23, reflecting good progress in partnership early intervention work in Dorset. The Youth Justice Plan provides more detail about the children who enter the justice system and about work to divert children from the youth justice system.

- 1.6 The other two national indicators relate to reducing reoffending and minimising the use of custodial sentences. Our local reoffending rate has for the most part remained below the national rate. Local analysis shows that young people who are more likely to reoffend are also more likely to have more complex speech, language and communication needs, to have experienced traumatic events that have impaired the child's cognitive and emotional development and to find it hard to access education or training. The Youth Justice Plan sets out some of the actions that have been taken and future plans to address these issues.
- 1.7 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service has low rates of custodial sentences, below the national average. Work to avoid custodial sentences has been particularly successful in the Dorset Council area. For the third consecutive year, no Dorset Council children received a custodial sentence during 2022/23.
- 1.8 The Youth Justice Service Partnership priorities for 2023/24 align with the strategic priorities of other services and partnerships, including the Dorset Community Safety Partnership and the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. More work is planned to divert children from the justice system and to ensure their needs are identified and met, using the Ministry of Justice 'Turnaround' programme; further work will be undertaken to improve the education outcomes of children in the youth justice system; additional action is needed to improve the timeliness and effectiveness of our local responses to weapon offences and serious violence. The Youth Justice Plan also outlines priorities for practice development within the Youth Justice Service, including implementation of the 'Identity Lens' model to build children's positive, pro-social identities.

2. **Financial Implications**

The Youth Justice Plan reports on the resourcing of the Youth Justice Service (YJS). After years of static or reducing Youth Justice Grant allocations, and static local authority and other partner contributions, there was an increase in the Youth Justice Grant in 2022/23, taking it to £794,915. To put this in context, the Youth Justice Grant allocation in 2014/15 was £790,000. At the time of writing this report, in mid-May, the Youth Justice Grant for 2023/24 has not been announced.

The creation of the pan-Dorset youth offending service in 2015 increased the service's resilience and ability to adapt to reduced funding and

increased costs. The management of vacancies, and the deletion of some posts, has enabled a balanced budget to be achieved in the years to 2023.

3. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

No adverse environmental impact has been identified. The Covid-19 pandemic led to changes in the working arrangements of the Youth Justice Service. These changes included significant reductions in staff travel, both to and from work and to visit service users, with more activities being carried out remotely. Although staff travel has increased, with the return to more face-to-face work, team members continue to undertake some tasks remotely and travel has not returned to pre-Covid levels.

4. **Well-being and Health Implications**

Young people in contact with youth justice services are known to be more likely than other young people to have unmet or unidentified health needs. The Youth Justice Service includes seconded health workers who work directly with young people and who facilitate their engagement with community health services.

5. **Other Implications**

No Human Resources implications have been identified. Local Authority YJS staff members are employees of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council, including those team members who work in the Dorset Council area. The YJS also includes employees of the partner agencies who have been seconded to work in the team and who remain employed by the partner agency. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 also contains statutory requirements for the staffing composition of youth offending services. The Youth Justice Plan shows how Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service meets these requirements.

6. **Risk Assessment**

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

The Youth Justice Plan does not relate to a new strategy, policy or function so an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

Some information about equalities issues is included in the report. No adverse equalities impacts have been identified.

It is recognised nationally that young people with diverse heritage, and young people in the care of the local authority, are over-represented in the youth justice system and in the youth custodial population. It is also recognised that young people known to the YJS may experience learning difficulties or disabilities, including in respect of speech, language and communication needs. Information from Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service records, summarised in the Youth Justice Plan, shows that these issues of over-representation also apply in our area. Actions have been identified in the Youth Justice Plan to address these issues.




8. **Appendices**

Appendix One: Youth Justice Plan 2023/24

9. **Background Papers**

None.

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 D O R S E T
 C O M B I N E D
 Youth Justice Service



YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023/24

Service	Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Head of Service	David Webb
Chair of YJS Board	Theresa Leavy

Youth Justice Plan 2023/24

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1. Introduction, vision, strategy and local context

Introduction

This document is the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) for 2023/24. It sets out the key priorities and targets for the service for the next 12 months as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and overseen by the Youth Justice Board. This Plan adheres to the Youth Justice Board's 'document 'Youth Justice Plans: Guidance for Youth Justice Services'.

This Plan has been developed under the direction of the DCYJS Partnership Board after consultation with DCYJS staff and taking into account feedback from DCYJS users.

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan:

- summarises the DCYJS structure, governance and partnership arrangements
- outlines the resources available to the DCYJS
- reviews achievements and developments during 2021/22
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Statement of Purpose

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works with children in the local youth justice system. Our purpose is to help those children to make positive changes, to keep them safe, to keep other people safe, and to repair the harm caused to victims.

We support the national Youth Justice Board Vision for a 'child first' youth justice system:

A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

Who We Are and What We Do

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a statutory partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, The Probation Service (Dorset) and NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board.

We are a multi-disciplinary team which includes youth justice officers, restorative justice specialists, parenting workers, education and employment workers, police officers, a probation officer, nurses, speech and language therapists and a psychologist.

More information about the Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership and the members of the YJS team is provided later in this document.

The team works with children who have committed criminal offences to help them make positive changes and to reduce the risks to them and to other people. We also work with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

We contact all victims of crimes committed by the children we work with. We offer those victims the chance to take part in restorative justice processes so we can help to repair the harm they have experienced.

The organisations in the YJS partnership also work together to prevent children entering the youth justice system, to improve the quality of our local youth justice system and to ensure that young people who work with the YJS can access the specialist support they need for their care, health and education.

The combination of direct work with children, parents and victims and work to improve our local youth justice and children's services systems enables us to meet our strategic objectives to:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system
- Improve the safety and well-being of children in the youth justice system
- Reduce and repair the harm caused to victims and the community
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

Local Context

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a partnership working across two local authorities: Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Dorset Council covers a large geographical, predominantly rural area with market towns and a larger urban area in Weymouth and Portland. Dorset Council has a population of about 380,00. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of nearly 400,000.

Other members of the DCYJS Partnership, such as Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Dorset CCG, Dorset HealthCare Trust and the Probation Service (Dorset) also work across both local authorities.

The following tables provide demographic information about young people in both local authorities:

Dorset Council:

Population

Age 10-17

Number of Children ¹	32,924
Male ¹	51.4%
Female ¹	48.6%
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals ²	20.2%
Pupils with SEN Support ²	14.2%
Pupils with an EHC Plan ²	5.4%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups ³	4.7%
22.7% children living in Poverty after housing costs ⁴	

Safeguarding

Age 10-17

Number of Children in Need ⁵	665
Male ⁵	52.5%
Female ⁵	46.9%
Indeterminate ⁵	0.6%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan ⁵	140
Number of Children in Care ⁶	310
Male ⁶	60.3%
Female ⁶	39.4%
Indeterminate ⁵	0.3%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation ⁷	
Significant	24
Moderate	56
Emerging	16

1. Dorset mid-year 2021 population estimates (published June 2022)

2. October 2022 School Census (includes all pupils at a Dorset School aged 10-17: ages as at 31 August 2022)

3. January 2022 School Census (all non-white pupils at a Dorset School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')

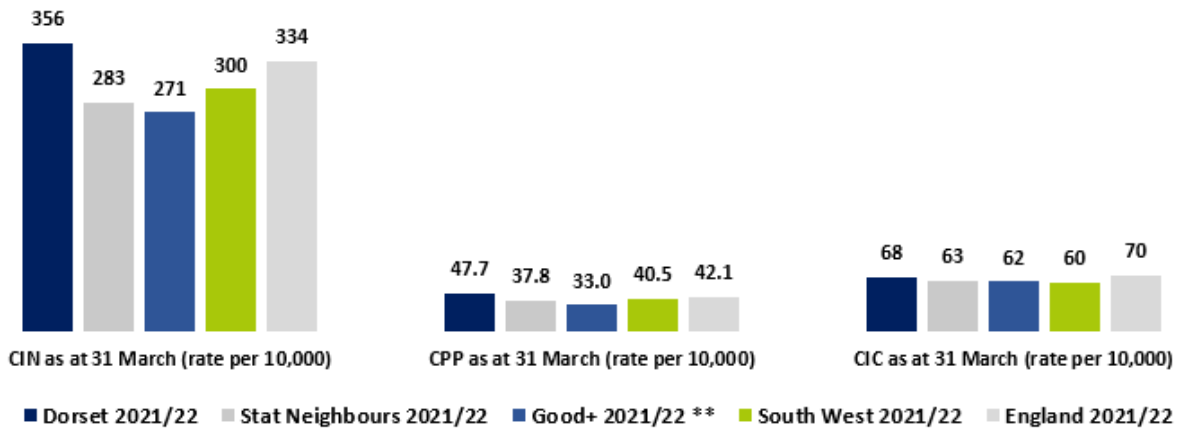
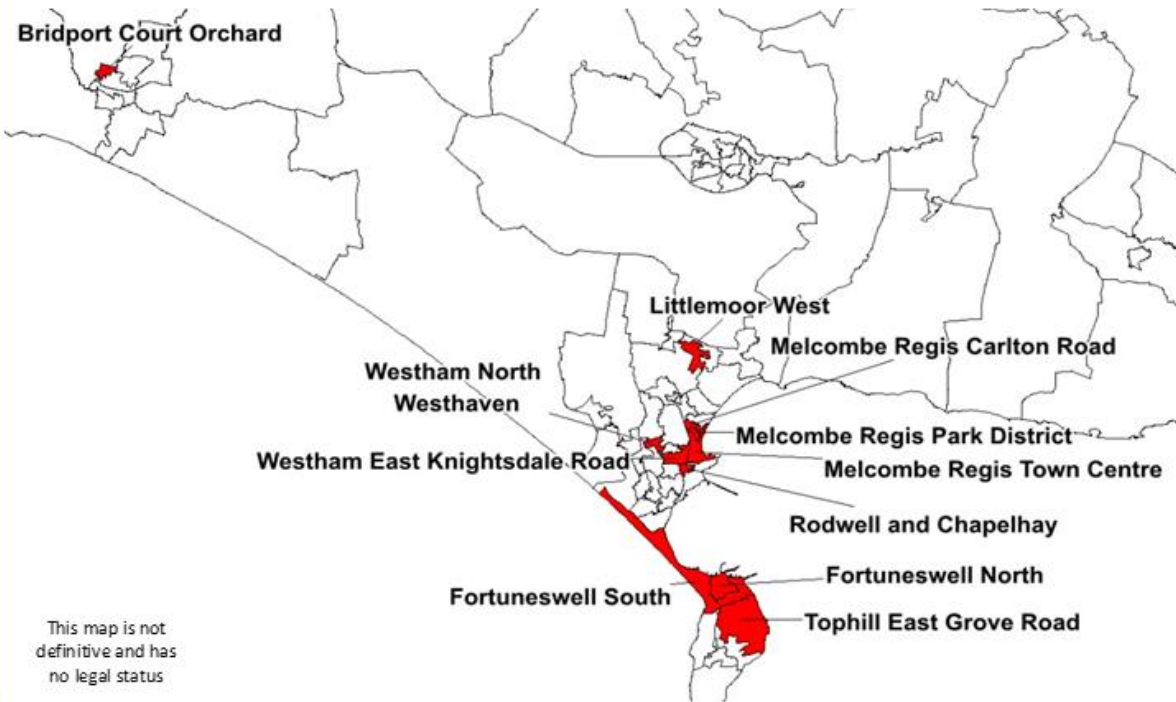
4. Local child poverty indicators 2020/21. Based on the DWP/HMRC statistics "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2022).

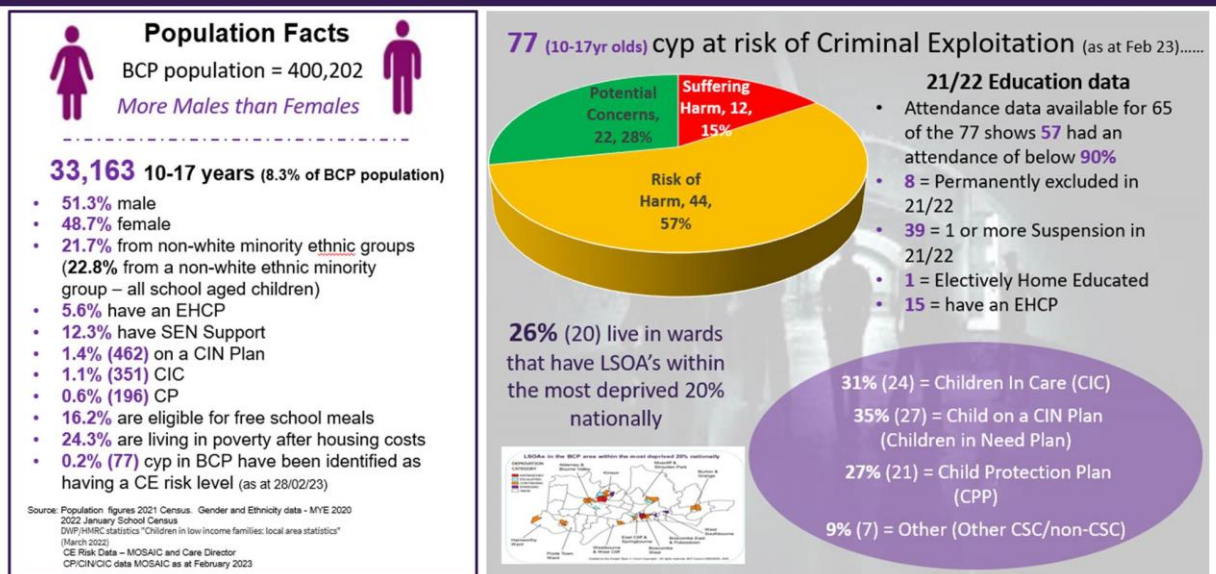
5. From MOSAIC, as at 31 March 2023. Excluding CP and CIC. Gender figures exclude Unknown, Unborn and Indeterminate

6. From MOSAIC, as at 31 March 2023. Gender figures exclude Unknown, Unborn and Indeterminate

7. From MOSAIC as at 31 March 2023

LSOAs in Dorset within the top 20% deprived nationally





DCYJS was inspected in September and October 2022 under the HMI Probation 'Full Joint Inspection' framework. The inspection report was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspection report can be found at this link: [A joint inspection of youth offending services in Dorset \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk).

2. Child First

Under the leadership of the Youth Justice Board, 'Child First' is the guiding principle for the youth justice sector, underpinning their guidance documents 'Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System' and the 2022 revision of 'Case Management Guidance'. These documents direct the work of youth justice services.

The YJB's 'Child First: Overview and Guide' states that 'A Child First approach means putting children at the heart of what we do. The youth justice system should treat children as children, see the whole child, including any structural barriers they face and focus on better outcomes for children. This will also create safer communities with fewer victims'.

The Child First approach has four tenets, summed up as 'ABCD':

- **As children:** recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support
- **Building pro-social identity:** promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop a pro-social identity, focusing on positive child outcomes rather than just trying to manage offending
- **Collaborating with children:** involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement and social inclusion
- **Diverting from stigma:** promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within it, as we know that stigma causes further offending.

The Child First approach is built on evidence demonstrating its effectiveness to reduce offending by the small number of children within the youth justice system and to prevent offending by children who are at risk of entering the justice system. The research evidence is summarised in this document: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/research/child-first-justice/>.

DCYJS supports these principles and promotes them in its own work and in its interactions with local partners in children's services and the youth justice system.

The following feedback from a young person to a YJS manager illustrates how this approach can work in practice:

I had a telephone conversation with P, and she shared with me that she had a good relationship with her YJS worker, T, and she got on really well with her. P didn't have anything she was unhappy about and said that T was clear with her about what was expected from her, and they didn't focus solely on the offence as in P's words "I just used a word I shouldn't have". She said T supported her with liaising with school and supporting her with positive activities. P was clear the offence was a one-off occurrence and T didn't make her focus on the negatives of what had happened.

The DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2022/23 set out strategic priorities which were aligned with the YJB's Child First principles, reflecting work to strengthen the local implementation of the four tenets of Child First practice.

Evidence of the Partnership's commitment to Child First principles is embedded throughout this document.

3. Voice of the child

DCYJS works collaboratively with children to elicit their views and to hear their voices. The team's Speech and Language Therapists complete assessments so that each child's communication needs can be understood and responded to, not just by other workers in the team but also by the child, their carers and other professionals working with the child.

As well as hearing the child's voice in the team's day to day practice, there are also processes in place to gather the views of children and other service users about their experience of the service's work.

A 'Smart Survey' feedback form is used towards the end of the child's contact with the service, alongside some of the questions in the self-assessment documents that are completed by children and their carers. Appendix 3 shows the collated Smart Survey responses received in February and March 2023.

The survey includes questions about children having a say in the work that we do with them, about their worker believing the child would make positive changes and the child feeling listened to and being helped to find their own answers. These questions give an indication of the effectiveness of worker relationships with the child. Positive responses indicate worker adherence to the service's practice principles. The survey responses in Appendix 3 show that most children were 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with these aspects of our work.

In 2022/23 the service also sought the views of children and parents as part of an audit of YJS work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Seeking the views of service users is now an established part of YJS case audit processes, influencing the service's improvement plans.

Service users also make spontaneous comments about the quality of the service's work with them. These comments are recorded and collated to give a wider, less structured perspective on the service's work. Examples of recent comments from service users include:

H's mum has thanked me for the work completed to help H. She said he has turned things around and it was a wakeup call for him. He is starting to think about the future.

My feedback for you couldn't be more positive. All I have seen from you is someone who really cares about the well-being of my son. As I said on the call I really did expect this process to be something to be endured for a year but it's been so positive and great for M's self-esteem. Nothing has been too much trouble and you were always there when we needed you.

Just a update on W. The police and others are all really proud of him turning himself around and not being on the radar any more. He was pupil of the week whoop whoop. And has been gold for the last 2 weeks at school. We have the YJS SALT calling round in the morning to do the report for EHCP and to do the autism testing. He had his CAMHS meeting yesterday which went well and he's going to get CBT therapy. I have a meeting at school next Tuesday about his EHCP plan also. So things seem to be moving in the right direction for him. So thank you for all your help steering us in the right direction to receive the help he needed.

In 2022/23 the service also sought the views of children and parents as part of an audit of YJS work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Seeking the views of service users is now an established part of YJS case audit processes, influencing the service's improvement plans.

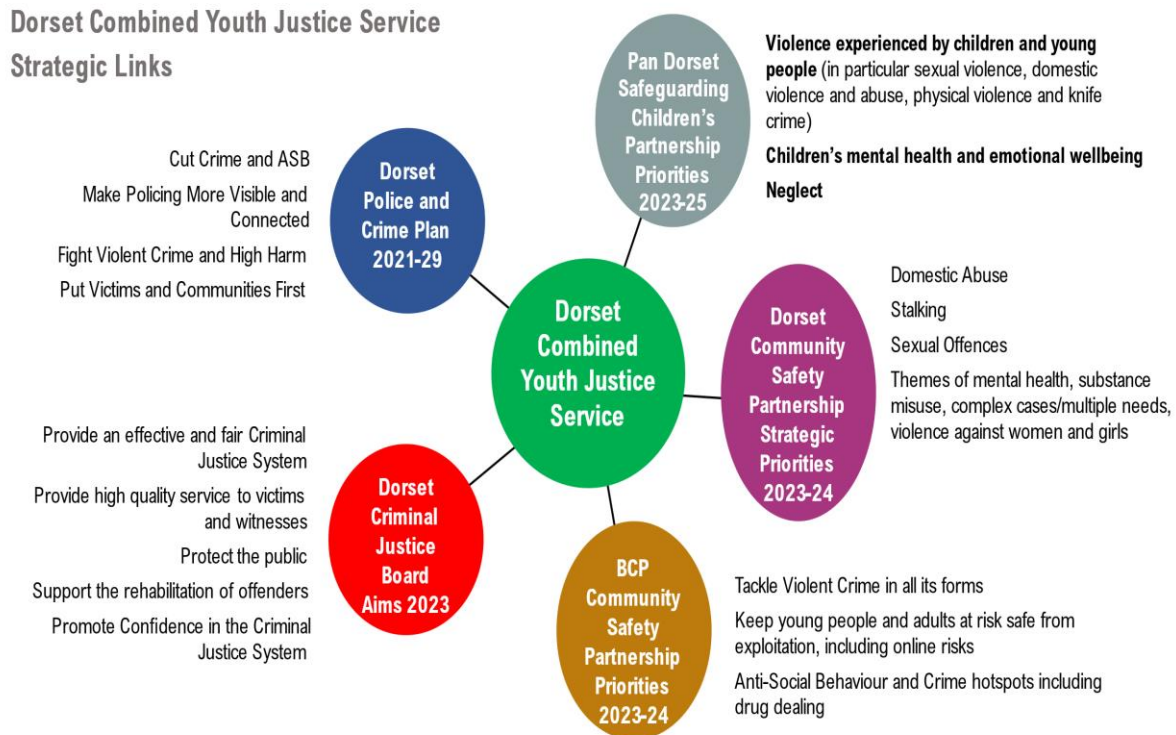
4. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

The work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is managed strategically by a Partnership Board. The Partnership Board consists of senior representatives of the statutory partner organisations, together with other relevant local partners.

Membership:

- Dorset Council (chair)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (vice-chair)
- Dorset Police
- The Probation Service (Dorset)
- NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust
- Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal service
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Partnership Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan, ensuring its links with other local plans. Board members sit on other strategic partnerships, helping to ensure that strategic plans and priorities are integrated and consider the needs of children and victims in the local youth justice system. The following graphic illustrates the links between local strategic groups and their overlapping strategic priorities:



Representation by senior leaders from the key partners enables the DCYJS Manager to resolve any difficulties in multi-agency working at a senior level and supports effective links at managerial and operational levels.

The DCYJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns. The DCYJS Partnership Personal Information Sharing Agreement underpins local multi-agency work to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending.

The DCYJS Partnership Board oversees activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key youth justice outcomes, particularly in respect of the prevention of offending.

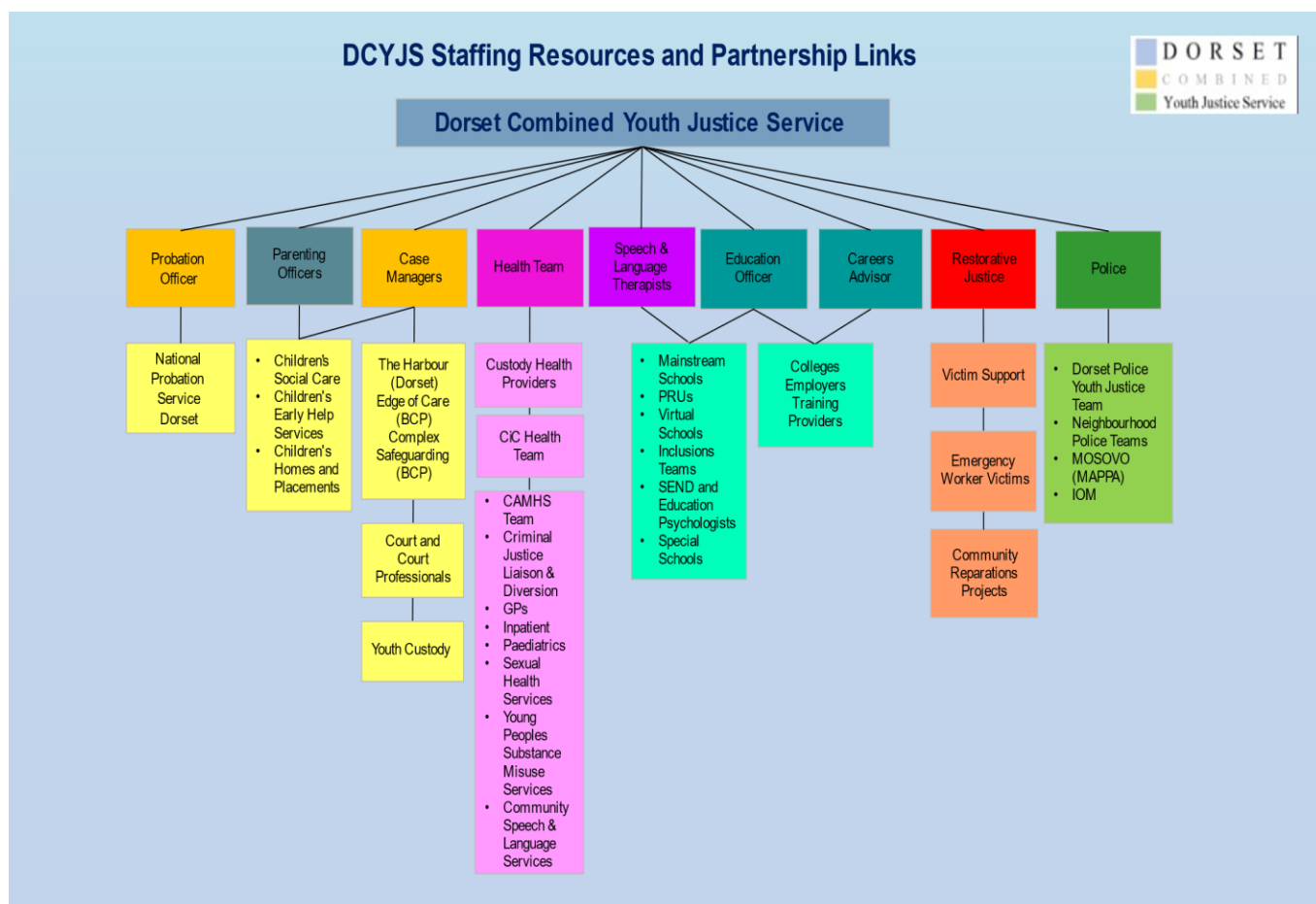
The Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of children in police custody. The DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The Head of Service is a Tier 3 Manager, reporting to the Director for Safeguarding and Early Help in the Children's Social Care service. The Head of Service also reports to the Corporate Director for Care and Protection in Dorset Council.

Appendix One includes the structure chart for DCYJS and structure charts showing where the service is located in each local authority.

DCYJS meets the statutory staffing requirements for youth justice services, set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Specialist staff are seconded into the service by Dorset Police, the Probation Service and Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust. These workers have line managers in both the YJS and their employing organisation. They have direct access to their own organisation’s case management systems, to enable the prompt and proportionate sharing of information.

The YJS multi-disciplinary team also includes education specialists, parenting workers and restorative justice practitioners. The team works closely with other local services, as illustrated below:



5. YJS Partnership Board Development

The YJS Partnership Board met for a half-day development session in November 2022. The Board reviewed information from its own self-assessment and from the recent HMI Probation Joint Inspection of the service, which included scrutiny of the Board’s work.

HMI Probation gave a rating of Good for the service’s Governance and Leadership. As well as identifying many strengths, the inspectors suggested possible ‘Areas for improvement’:

- The board chairing arrangements are not rotated. For the partnership board to be challenged in its ambition to drive the performance of the service forward, a level of independence is required that holds all partnership agencies to account.
- While the seniority of the board membership is appropriate, attendance is not consistent.
- Although the youth justice plan references work taking place to look at disproportionality, the service does not have a specific diversity and disproportionality policy. Focus on this area requires a framework that collates the diversity and disproportionality work together, which guides and enables staff to ask appropriate questions about a child's heritage and their lived experiences.
- Although new board members meet with the YJS service manager and chair of the board as part of their induction, there is no formal induction pack which ensure consistency.

The Board has taken action in response to all these points. The Board is currently reviewing its chairing arrangements. The attendance of Board members is monitored at each meeting and has improved since the inspection. An induction process for new Board members has been agreed and work is underway on a discrete YJS Diversity and Disproportionality Policy.

6. Progress on previous plan

The DCYJS Youth Justice Plan for 2022/23 identified strategic priorities under the headings of 'System Improvement' and 'Practice Improvement'.

The System Improvement priorities are listed below with a brief summary of progress made:

Continue to reduce the rate of children entering the justice system:

- Implementation of the Ministry of Justice 'Turnaround' programme targeted at children who have not yet entered the justice system
- Use of the police crime disposal option 'Outcome 22' for children with low level offences who receive assessments and interventions through the Turnaround programme
- Extending the Turnaround approach for children who are excluded from the Turnaround programme criteria, such as children in care and children on a child protection plan
- Developing a Turnaround route for children who are coming to police attention for repeated Anti-Social Behaviour
- Work in Dorset Council to develop a pro-active approach to identifying and supporting children who are at risk of future offending.

Continue to address over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system:

- Analysis of police custody detention times by ethnicity
- YJS performance data reporting is broken down by disadvantaged groups to check for any over-representation

- YJS staff have received training to build their knowledge and confidence in working with sexuality and gender identity issues
- The findings from previous view-seeking work with young people have been shared with other services
- A route has been agreed with Dorset Police for the YJS to help families raise concerns about perceived unfair treatment on grounds of race
- YJS Speech and Language Therapists provide assessment reports to other professionals to help them meet children's communication needs and to assist with assessments for special educational needs and disabilities

Continue to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the local youth justice system:

- YJS staff and Dorset youth panel magistrates have worked together, with advice from children and parents, to create and distribute the booklet "You are going to Youth Court in Dorset"
- Continued joint work with DCYJS and the Dorset Police Youth Justice Team to ensure the timeliness of youth Out of Court Disposals
- Work with defence solicitors to reduce the inappropriate use of 'no comment' interviews which prevent children receiving diversion options or Out of Court Disposals
- The YJS Speech and Language Therapist provided training sessions to detectives in Dorset Police and to Appropriate Adults to help them respond to children's communication needs
- Transition arrangements from YJS to Probation have been strengthened, working with other services such as leaving care and SEND to meet young adults' ongoing needs.

Practice Improvement priorities for 2022/23 are listed here, with brief details of actions taken, progress made and work still to do:

Make our assessments, plans and interventions more accessible, collaborative and responsive to discrimination:

- A new format for intervention plans, based on advice from the YJS Speech and Language Therapists, has been trialled with some children and volunteers
- We have changed the format of our reports for Referral Order initial panel meetings so that information about the child comes first, before information about the offence
- YJS practitioners have received training and support from YJS Speech and Language Therapists to promote the use of 'Talking Mats' in their work with children
- Team audits of casework now include contact with the child and their parents to seek their views of our work
- Identification and recording of diversity and identity issues has improved, with diversity statements added to Pre-Sentence Reports.

Clarify and align activities to repair harm, increase employability and to support pro-social interests and activities, including links to community organisations:

- We have reviewed our approach to ‘reparation’ activity to switch the focus to ‘repairing harm’ and making the activities more meaningful for the child and responsive to their victim’s wishes
- Recruitment of a new Community Resource Worker has restored our capacity to use these workers for constructive activities and for activities to support employability
- The OPCC has provided funding to support children gaining their ‘CSCS’ card and to support access to post-16 Maths and English courses
- A budget allocation has been set aside to support children to access positive activities to support pro-social identities and reduce the likelihood of re-offending.

The improvement areas listed above reflect areas of YJS practice which will need continuing attention during 2023/24. Specific issues where more work is needed include:

- Further work to reduce the numbers of local children entering the justice system
- Monitoring the timeliness of cases progressing through the youth court, including the possible need to fast-track priority cases such as those related to weapon offences
- Extend our work with children who have experienced discrimination to help them understand its impact and ways we can respond
- Develop links with community organisations to support children developing a pro-social identity with community support.

7. Resources and Services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget are listed in Appendix Two.

All local authority staff in DCYJS are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other DCYJS staff are employed by Dorset Police, the Probation Service (Dorset) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. A DCYJS Structure Chart is included in Appendix One, showing the posts provided through our partnership resources DCYJS has a strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary identity, meeting the staffing requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998).

Like all public services, DCYJS operates in a context of reducing resources. Ensuring value for money and making best use of resources is a high priority for the service. The combined partnership, working across Dorset’s local authorities since 2015, has enabled the service to maintain high practice standards while managing real terms budget reductions over that period.

The Youth Justice Board Grant is paid subject to terms and conditions relating to its use. The Grant may only be used towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system;
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system;
- Improve the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system; and
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

The conditions of the Grant also refer to the services that must be provided and the duty to comply with data reporting requirements.

The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the Partnership's resources for employing practitioners who work with children to prevent and reduce offending and to keep children and other members of the community safe from harm. Resources from the Youth Justice Grant are also used to provide restorative justice and reparative activities, to promote pro-social activities for children building on their strengths and to improve the education, training and employment opportunities of young people in the local youth justice system.

In addition to the service outcomes listed above, the Youth Justice Grant and other Partnership resources are used to achieve the strategic priorities set out later in this Plan. Progress against those priorities is reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board, with oversight also provided by the respective children's services scrutiny committees of the two local authorities.

8. Performance

In 2022/23 the three national key performance indicators for youth justice services related to:

- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system
- The rate and frequency of reoffending by children in the criminal justice system
- The use of custodial sentences.

The YJB publish quarterly performance data for youth justice services, compiled nationally, in relation to these three indicators. The information reported below is drawn from the data published in February 2023 for the period ending December 2022.

New Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for youth justice are being introduced from April 2023. A summary of the new KPIs is included below.

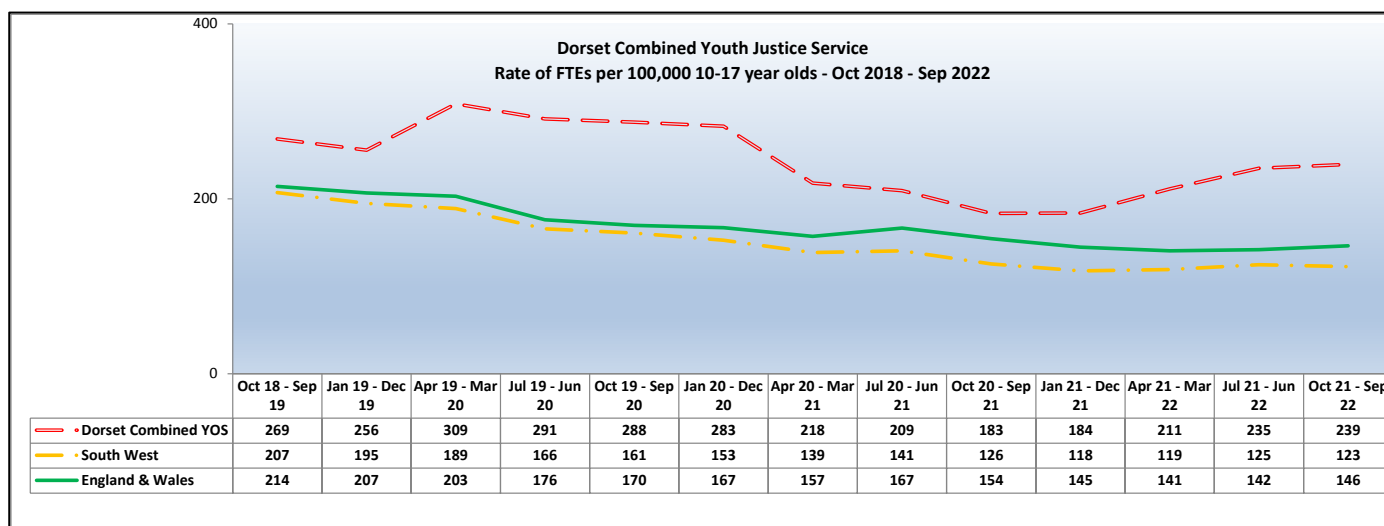
First Time Entrants

A 'First Time Entrant' is a child receiving a formal criminal justice outcome for the first time. A Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome count as a formal criminal justice outcome. There are also informal options available for responding to offences by children.

Dorset Police, DCYJS and other children's services work closely together to decide the appropriate outcome for a child who has committed a criminal offence. Whenever possible we seek to use an informal option which does not criminalise the child. It is recognised that receiving a formal justice outcome is in itself detrimental for children.

National performance data for First Time Entrants is drawn from the Police National Computer (PNC). Local data is also recorded on the DCYJS case management system. There is a discrepancy between national and local data for First Time Entrants; it is not possible to compare individual case records to confirm how national data allocates children to local areas. DCYJS has confidence in the accuracy of its case records showing home address information and child in care status.

The following chart shows the most recent published national First Time Entrants data. DCYJS saw a reduction in its rate of children entering the justice system in 2020 and 2021, possibly linked to the pandemic and its aftermath. In 2022 the rate has risen, although it has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. The combined rate for our two local authorities dropped from 288 per 100,000 under 18s in the year to September 2020 to 183 in the year to September 2021, rising to 239 in the year to September 2022.. Despite local work to divert children from the justice system, DCYJS remains above regional and national averages for this indicator. The ambition is to match or move below rates in other areas.



DCYJS tracks data on its own case management system to monitor the extent and characteristics of children entering the justice system. Local data shows a reduction in the number of children entering the justice system compared to the year before the pandemic, with the reduction being more marked in the Dorset Council area:

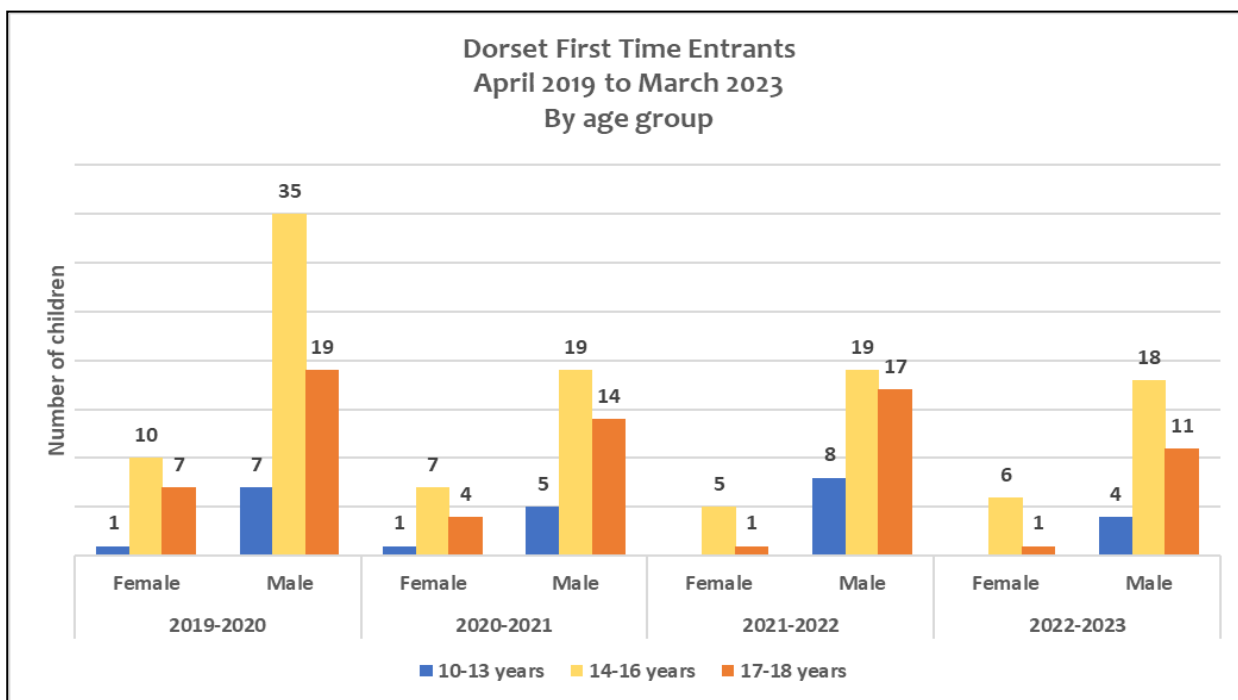
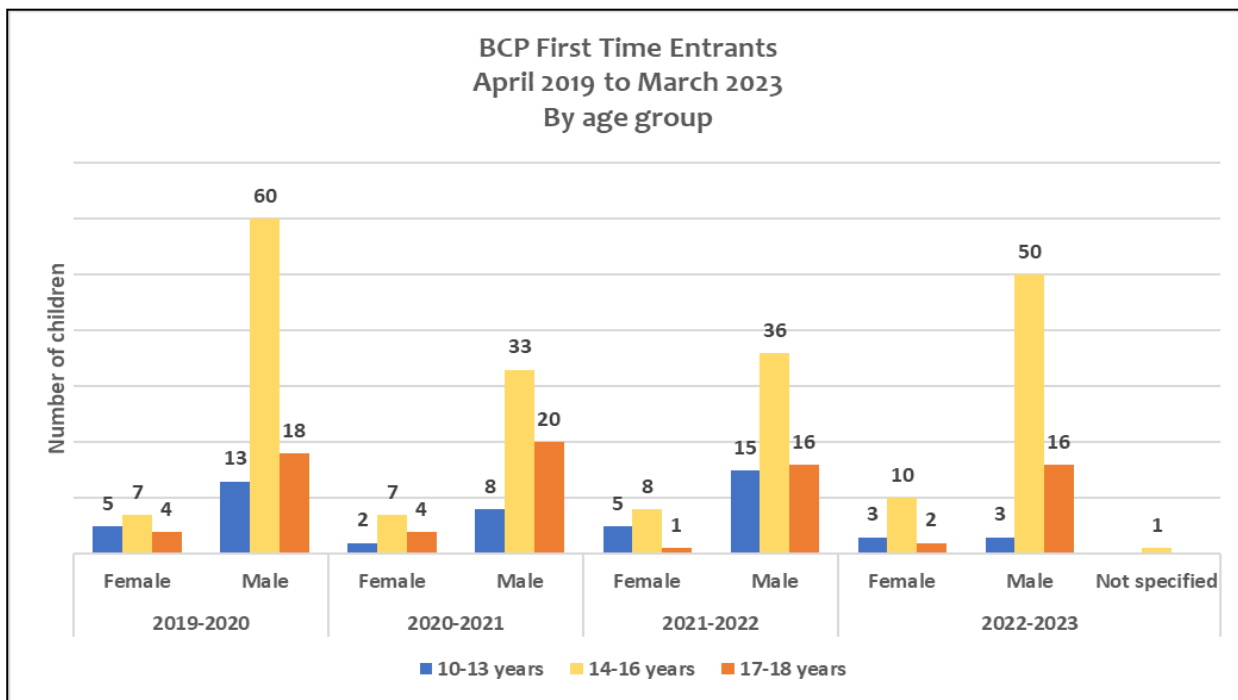
Year	BCP First-Time Entrants	Dorset First-Time Entrants	Total DCYJS First-Time Entrants
2019/20	107	79	186
2020/21	74	50	124
2021/22	81	50	131
2022/23	85	40	125

The gender breakdown of first-time entrants remains fairly consistent, with about 17-18% being female.

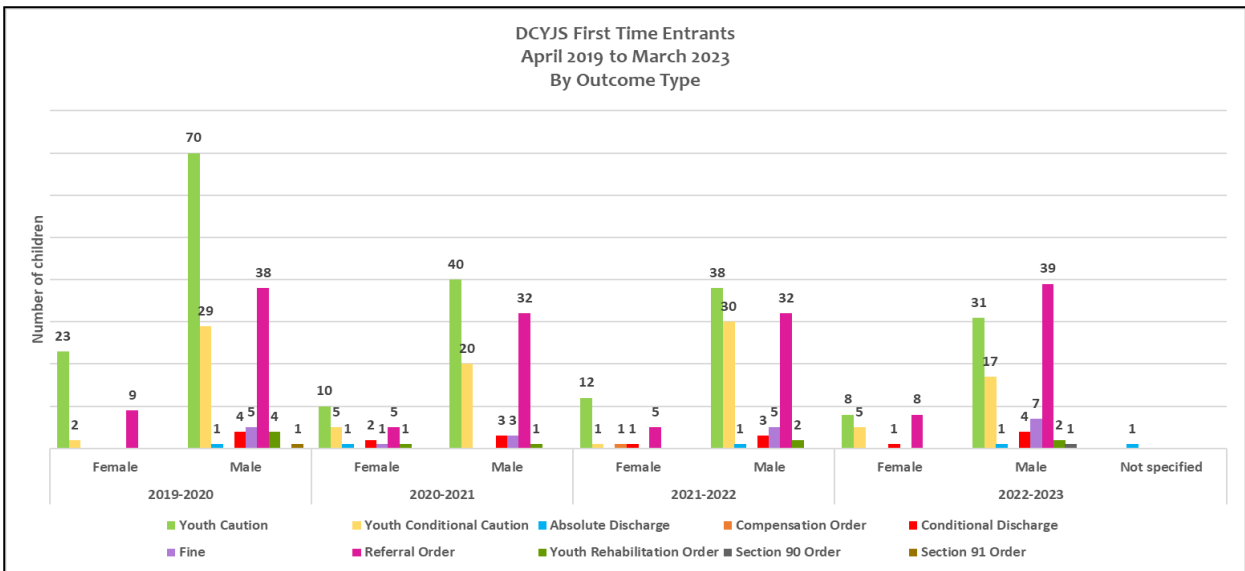
The ethnicity of local first-time entrants does not indicate over-representation of black, mixed heritage or other children of diverse heritage. Over the past two years, local data shows that 10.8% of first-time entrants in the BCP Council area and 3.3% of first-time entrants in the Dorset Council area were from black, mixed heritage or other diverse heritage groups.

Previous analysis of our local first-time entrants indicated that the reduction had been less marked among younger children. Further analysis was undertaken to identify the common factors in this group of younger first-time entrants, with a pattern emerging of these children being first known to the police as a victim or witness of crime, having special educational needs or disabilities, having experienced school exclusions and being known to children's

social care. Data for the past 4 years indicates that 2022/23 saw a reduction in first-time entrants aged 10-13 in both local authority areas:



There was a drop in 2022/23 in the proportion of children receiving out of court disposals when they entered the justice system, down from 60% in 2021/22 to 49% in 2022/23. This is illustrated in the following chart:



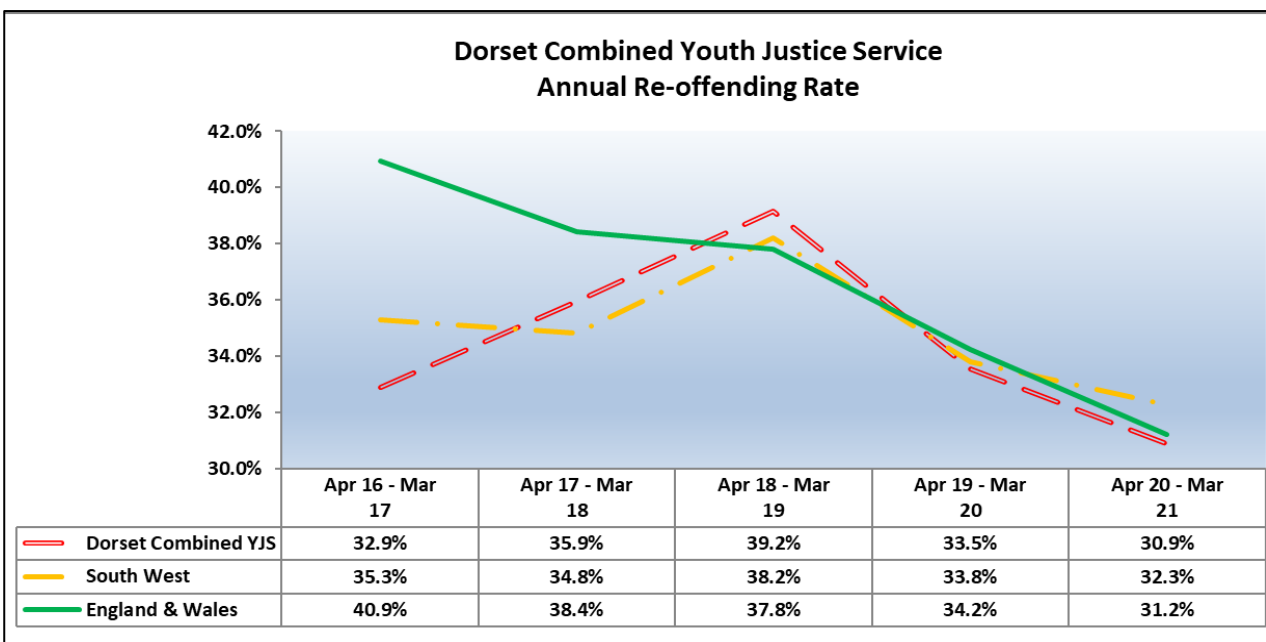
Decision-makers on the local Out of Court Disposal panel have been seeking to divert children from formal outcomes, like Youth Cautions, to informal outcomes like community resolutions.

Local application of the Ministry of Justice ‘Turnaround’ programme is focusing on diverting children from Youth Cautions to an ‘Outcome 22’ disposal, meaning no further police action with the child receiving support from the Turnaround workers.

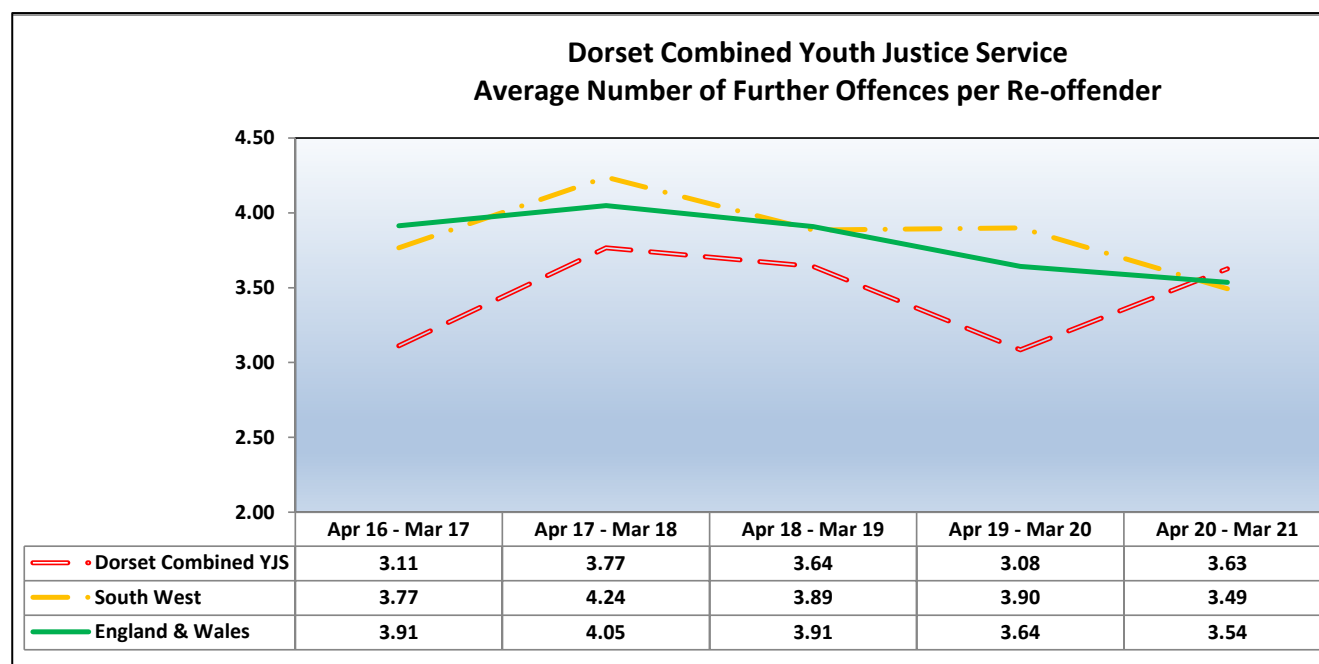
Rate of Proven Reoffending

National re-offending data is published in two formats: the ‘binary’ rate shows the proportion of children in the cohort who go on to be convicted for subsequent offences in the 12 months after their previous justice outcome; the ‘frequency’ rate shows the average number of offences per reoffender. Reoffending data is necessarily delayed in order to allow time to see if the child is reconvicted and for that later outcome to be recorded. The following data therefore relates to children with whom the service worked up to March 2021.

Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)



Reoffences/Reoffenders



DCYJS has remained below or close to the regional and national averages for both measures, showing good performance in both the numbers of children reoffending and the average number of their offences.

Local data, stored on the DCYJS case management system, can also be scrutinised to provide a more specific understanding of reoffending patterns. Analysis of reoffending by children on the DCYJS caseload between April 2020 and March 2021 gives a more detailed understanding of reoffending by local children:

- 14-16 year-olds are the age group most likely to reoffend
- Boys are more likely to reoffend than girls
- Black and mixed heritage children show a higher reoffending rate than white children
- Children in the BCP Council area had a higher reoffending rate than children in the Dorset Council area
- Children who were currently or previously in care were more likely to reoffend than children who had not been in care
- Children on court orders were more likely to reoffend than children on out of court disposals

[Use of Custodial Sentences](#)

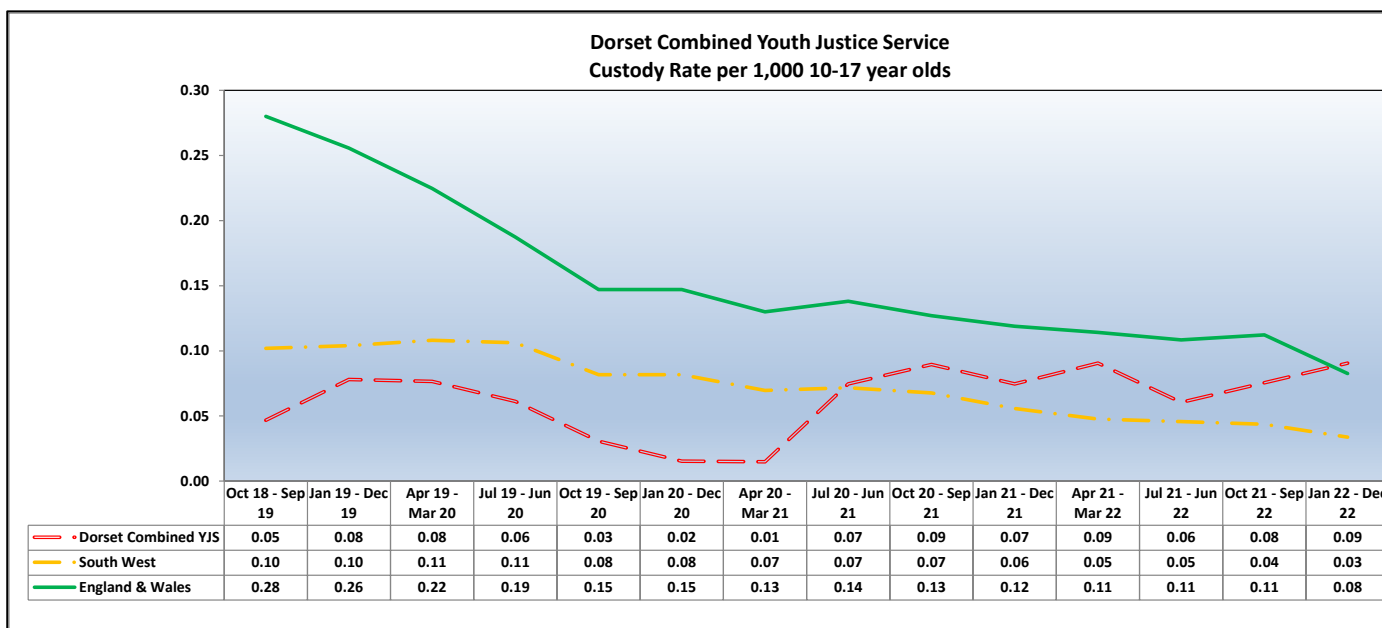
DCYJS continues to see low numbers of children sentenced to custody.

The latest national data is copied below. The context of this data is a large reduction over recent years in the number of children in custody in England and Wales. This means that small changes in numbers can have a noticeable effect on the local and national rates.

No children from the Dorset Council area have been sentenced to custody since March 2020.

Seven children from the BCP Council area were sentenced to custody in the year to March 2023.

DCYJS works closely with other children’s services to provide community sentences which have the confidence of our local courts so that custodial sentences are only used as a last resort.



[New Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators](#)

Youth Justice Services are required to report on a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from April 2023. The new KPIs will add information for children who received diversion outcomes as well as for children on the statutory caseload. The intention is for the new KPIs to show the strength of local partnership working, indicated by the following measures:

- Accommodation – the percentage of children in suitable accommodation
- Education, training and employment (ETE) – the percentage of children attending a suitable ETE arrangement
- SEND – the percentage of children with SEND who are in suitable ETE with a current, formal learning plan in place
- Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to improve their mental health or emotional wellbeing and the percentage being offered and attending interventions
- Substance misuse – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to address substance misuse and the percentage being offered and attending interventions
- Out of Court Disposals – the percentage of out of court disposals that are completed or not completed

- Management Board attendance – the attendance of senior representatives from partner agencies and if partners contribute data from their services to identify ethnic and racial disproportionality
- Wider services – the percentage of YJS children who are currently on an Early Help plan, on a Child Protection Plan, classified as a Child in Need or a Child in Care
- Serious Violence – the rates of children convicted for a serious violence offence on the YJS caseload
- Victims – the percentage of victims who consent to be contacted by the YJS; of those, the percentage who are engaged with about restorative justice opportunities, asked their views prior to out of court disposal decision-making and planning for statutory court orders, provided with information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate support services (when requested).

DCYJS has been working with local partners to continue or establish data exchange processes to enable it to meet all of these new reporting requirements. We have also been working with our case management system supplier to agree the necessary changes to our case management system to enable the new recording and reporting.

9. Priorities

Over-representation

It is recognised nationally that some groups of children, such as those with diverse ethnic heritage, children in care and children with Special Educational Needs are over-represented in the youth justice system. Nationally, just over 50% of children in custody identify as having diverse ethnic heritage, significantly more than the proportion in the total population.

The low numbers of local children being sentenced to custody makes it difficult to provide sound statistical analysis of possible over-representation of young people with diverse ethnic heritage. The YJS reviews custodial sentences to identify learning, including possible indications of over-representation or differential treatment.

First-Time Entrants information referred to above, relating to the analysis of local children entering the justice system, does not show over-representation of children with diverse ethnic heritage at this stage of the justice system.

National reviews do show, however, that black children can be more likely to 'progress' through the justice system to receive court orders and custodial sentences. The proportion of children with diverse ethnic heritage on the DCYJS caseload is higher among those who received a court order compared to those who received an out of court disposal. The reoffending rate of children with diverse ethnic heritage is higher than the rate for white children. This may reflect the higher reoffending rate for children on court orders but other explanations and responses are also being explored, such as the point of entry into the justice system and possible differences in the assessment of risk. The YJB have recently published research analysing ethnic disparity in reoffending rates in the youth justice system which gives us a helpful basis on which to address this issue: [Understanding ethnic disparity in reoffending rates in the youth justice system - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/research-data-and-analysis/publications/understanding-ethnic-disparity-in-reoffending-rates-in-the-youth-justice-system).

The proportion of girls on the DCYJS caseload fluctuates but stays within a range of about 15%-20% of the total caseload, consistent with national rates. Worker allocation decisions are taken carefully to be sensitive to each girl's needs. DCYJS recognises that work to make girls safer, in the context of the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda and concerns about peer on peer sexual abuse, requires work with boys to help them achieve healthy relationships and to reduce the risk they pose to girls.

DCYJS also works with a small number of young people who are exploring their gender identity and may be in the process of gender reassignment. Given the low numbers and the emerging information and understanding in this area it is hard to assess the extent of possible over-representation of this group in the youth justice system. It is clear though that these young people face potential discrimination and are likely to have specific needs which require an individualised response. DCYJS commissioned training in this area for its practitioners in March 2023.

During 2022/23 DCYJS made good progress, with local authority colleagues, to improve the accuracy of our information about children's educational needs. DCYJS caseload information shows that children in the local youth justice system may well have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In February 2023 29% of children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 17% had the status of 'SEN Support'. These concerns fit with evidence collected by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists, showing high levels of communication needs amongst children in our local youth justice system.

[Prevention](#)

The rate of children entering the justice system is influenced by the effectiveness of local prevention and diversion activities. 'Prevention' refers to work with children who have been identified as being at risk of going on to commit offences in future if they do not receive additional help. 'Diversion' refers to the response to children who have committed an offence but who can be diverted from the justice system.

DCYJS does not directly undertake prevention work. Each of our local authorities provides early help services, working with other local organisations like schools, the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team and the voluntary sector.

In the Dorset Council area oversight of prevention activities sits with the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, supported by more detailed work at locality level. The DCYJS Manager is a member of the Strategic Alliance and team members participate in locality meetings to identify and respond to children at risk. 'The Harbour' is a Dorset Council multi-disciplinary service which works with children who need additional support to prevent negative outcomes such as being taken into care or entering the justice system. DCYJS and The Harbour have close links, including joint work with children who have entered the justice system.

In the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area, the Children and Young People's Partnership oversees prevention work.

[Diversion](#)

Diversion work is undertaken locally on a partnership basis. Dorset Police, DCYJS and local authority Early Help services meet weekly as an Out of Court Disposal Panel to decide the appropriate youth justice outcome for children who have committed criminal offences. The panel looks for opportunities to divert children from a formal justice outcome when possible.

Diversion activities usually involve additional support for the child and, when appropriate, some form of restorative response in respect of the criminal offence. The Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team, Early Help Services, Children's Social Care Services and DCYJS each provide support at the diversion stage. The appropriate service for each child is decided on the basis of the child's needs, risks and existing relationships with professionals.

During 2022/23 the Ministry of Justice announced a new programme, 'Turnaround', aimed at 'children on the cusp of the youth justice system'. Locally we have used this programme to target our high rate of first-time entrants. Instead of receiving a Youth Caution, children are considered for an informal response which is recorded by the Police as 'Outcome 22' (No Further Police Action) on the basis that a Turnaround worker will meet with the child and their family, complete an assessment and commission a suitable intervention. The aim is to build the child's positive identity and reduce the risk of further offending.

The local Turnaround programme is overseen by a multi-agency group of operational managers, reporting to the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board and submitting the necessary quarterly returns to the Ministry of Justice.

[Education, Training and Employment](#)

Nationally and locally it is recognised that children in the youth justice system are less likely to stay in mainstream schools, to achieve good educational outcomes and to access education, employment or training after Year 11. Each local authority's Director of Education is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS employs an Education Officer and a post-16 Careers Adviser who work with schools and local authorities to increase the suitability of provision and with young people to understand their needs and to support their attendance and engagement.

In June 2022 HMI Probation published a thematic inspection report on 'education, training and employment services in youth offending teams in England and Wales': [A joint inspection of education, training and employment services in youth offending teams in England and Wales \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](#). DCYJS reviewed its ETE work against this report and took actions in response, including improved recording and reporting of school exclusions and of children's education attainment levels.

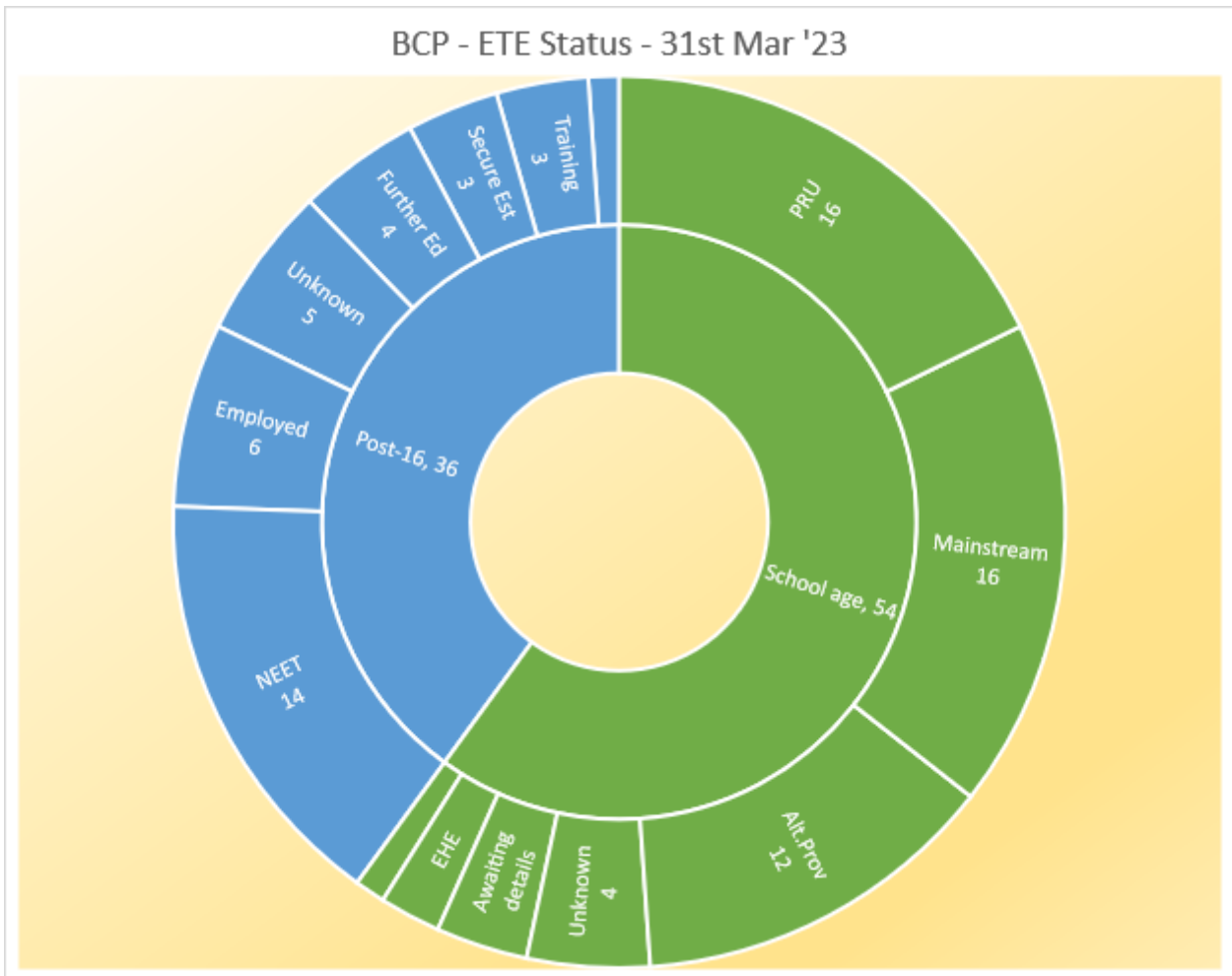
The DCYJS ETE workers maintain strong links with colleagues in the local authority Virtual Schools, the SEND teams and Inclusion services. In 2022/23 DCYJS ETE workers and the local authority Virtual School and SEND teams completed self-assessment documents, modelled on the youth justice SEND quality mark framework, to review our joint working and identify areas for development.

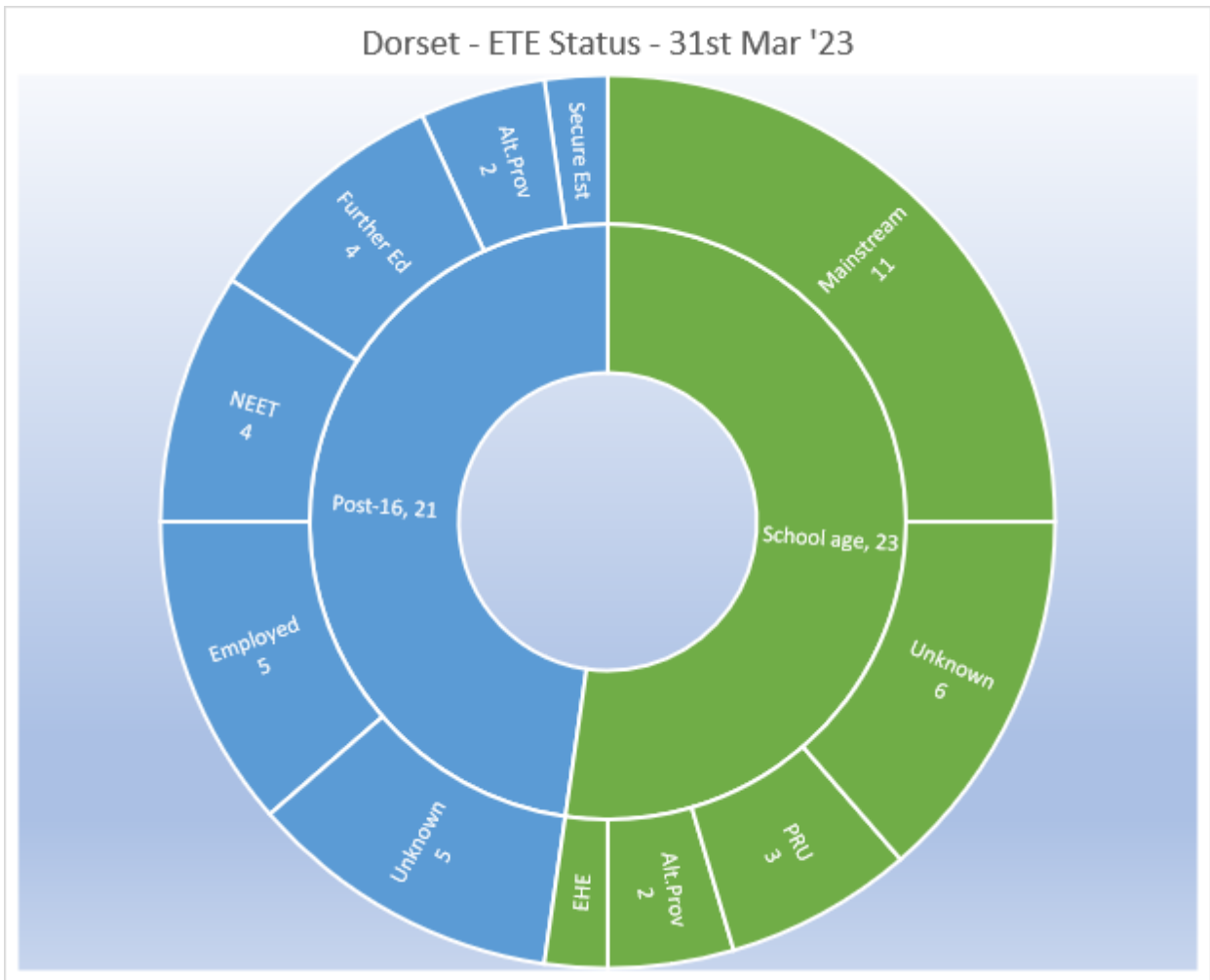
Information reported above, in the section on Over-Representation, showed the frequency of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities among children on the DCYJS caseload. In

February 2023 29% of children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 17% had the status of 'SEN Support'.

During 2022/23 DCYJS has allocated additional staffing resources to improve the collection and recording of education information for each child. More accurate and more detailed information enables a more targeted approach to improve education provision and outcomes for children in our local youth justice system.

The following charts show the education status of BCP and Dorset children on the YJS caseload in March 2023:





These charts show the numbers of children who are not in mainstream school or in suitable employment or training. The service monitors more detailed information, such as the social care and SEND status of these young people, to enable a focused response by our education specialists, working alongside relevant local authority colleagues.

DCYJS occasionally works with children who are receiving Elective Home Education. The YJS Education Officer follows up each case where a child receives Elective Home Education to review the adequacy and safety of the arrangement and to offer more support if needed.

The numbers of young people who not in employment, education or training (NEET) or in employment without training reflects the limited opportunities for YJS young people, who can lack the necessary attainment levels. Actions taken in 2022/23 to address this gap include:

- funding provided by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for young people to train for the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS card)
- DCYJS registered with AQA to enable young people's learning from activities with DCYJS to be certificated
- DCYJS ETE and reparation staff trained as AQA award facilitators, to support team colleagues in this work.

Implementing the new AQA awards will be a priority for 2023/24.

Restorative Justice and Victims

Whenever DCYJS work with a child whose offence harmed a victim, the DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact the victim to find out about the impact of the offence and to seek opportunities for Restorative Justice activities.

One element of the team's Restorative Justice work is undertaking 'reparation' activities with young people, to help them make amends for their offence. Examples include making wooden planters or bird boxes to be sold for charities chosen by the victim or supported by the service or conservation activities. During 2022/23 the service has been developing its approach to reparation so that it is tied more closely to meaningful work to repair the harm caused, directed by the victim if possible, rather than setting a fixed number of sessions for a young person to complete.

Delays in the youth justice system, which are more common in cases that go to court, make it harder to engage victims in activity to repair the harm they have experienced. The DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners exercise tact and sensitivity in their contacts with victims, emphasising the victim's choice in whether or how much they engage with our service.

During 2022/23 DCYJS has increased its restorative justice work and victim support in complex and sensitive cases. Examples of this work include:

- facilitation of a restorative justice conference in a case of domestic abuse;
- careful, sensitive long-term support for a victim in a high risk public protection case;
- helping a young person raise money for a charity nominated by a bereaved family.

The DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners are experienced, skilled facilitators of Restorative Justice Conferences, illustrated in the following case example.

The victim in this case had been assaulted and humiliated, with the incident filmed and shared on social media. Each time the incident was viewed and commented on, the child was revictimized.

The victim wanted a Restorative Justice Conference but his father was sceptical, feeling disappointed that the offender had received an out of court disposal which he felt did not represent sufficient consequences for him. The YJS workers decided to go ahead with the Restorative Justice Conference because both young people wanted to meet. The workers completed a risk assessment in case difficulties arose during the meeting and gave clear guidance to all participants about the rules and expectations for the meeting.

Having answered the initial scripted questions around the offence and his thoughts and feelings towards his actions the young person stood up, apologised, and shook the hand of his victim. It was clear to all present that he was genuinely sorry for his behaviour. The victim willingly accepted this apology. The victim's father visibly relaxed back into his chair. At the point he was asked to contribute to the meeting all his answers reflected his appreciation of the apology made to his son. All the anger he had displayed during the preparation session had dissipated.

Following the conference, while the boys chatted together, the YJS Restorative Justice Practitioner accompanied the father outside and asked him his views on the meeting. He said, "I understand it now. I get it".

Serious Violence and Exploitation

Tackling child exploitation and reducing serious violence are priorities for strategic partnerships in both our local authority areas (as described in section 4 of this Plan).

Most of the violent offences committed by children do not reach the 'serious violence' threshold. Youth Justice Service and Community Safety Partnership data analysis shows that there has been a reduction in the total number of violent offences in recent years but an increase in weapon-related offences.

In May 2023 the YJS will complete a case audit to review its work with children who commit offences with weapons. The audit will include the views of children, parents and YJS practitioners and will inform our service priorities in 2023/24.

DCYJS uses the 'Trauma Recovery Model' in its work. One of the benefits of this approach is to understand and respond to the issues which may underlie a child's exploitation or their use of violent behaviour. DCYJS appointed a 'Trauma Champion' to participate in the YJB's South West network of trauma champions and to lead the service's work in this area, working with the service's Psychologist. Although the NHS England funding for the Trauma Champion post ended in March 2023, the service will continue to resource this important role.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduced a Serious Violence Duty for specified authorities, including youth justice services, to work together to share data and knowledge, allowing them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence. The Duty came into effect at the end of January 2023. As stated in section 5 above, tackling violence is a current priority for both our Community Safety Partnerships, and for the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner. It is a priority of the DCYJS Partnership to accelerate the response to children with weapon offences, including faster progress through the justice system so that less time passes between the offence and the criminal justice outcome.

Child Exploitation occurs across the pan-Dorset area, with DCYJS seeing higher rates of exploitation amongst its BCP Council caseload. DCYJS plays an active role in the partnership arrangements in both local authority areas to address child exploitation, participating in the strategic and tactical groups as well as other multi-agency initiatives such as the 'Missing, Exploited, Trafficked' (MET) Panel in BCP Council and the Dorset Council CE Champions group. At the operational level, DCYJS team members are part of multi-agency child exploitation case meetings and contribute to multi-agency responses to concerns about specific locations or networks.

Dorset Police, Children's Social Care services and DCYJS work together to refer suitable cases to the National Referral Mechanism. Delays in the Home Office response to these referrals can lead to repeated adjournments of court cases involving young people who have had NRM referrals. Long delays in completing cases in the youth court and the crown court mean that children can remain subject to bail conditions for many months. Delays between the offence and the court outcome also have a negative effect on work to meet the needs of victims and to address a child's offending.

Detention of children in police custody

A multi-agency group, led by the DCYJS Head of Service, monitors and addresses the use of police custody for children. The aim of the group is to avoid the unnecessary detention of children and to reduce the duration of detentions that do take place.

Data on child arrests is also reported to the YJS Partnership Board. The following table shows the child arrests in Bournemouth, Weymouth and Poole during 2022/23.

2022/23	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	42	40	38	51	43	34	29	24	22	32	35	38
Detention Not Auth	5	4	2	9	8	1	2	2	3	1	2	2
10-13 Y/O	1	1	3	9	1	1	3	0	1	2	2	2
Overnight	17	21	14	25	20	8	9	10	9	16	23	10
Remand/warrant	2/3	0/0	1/0	1/2	0/2	2/2	0/3	3/1	0/2	3/2	2/1	0/0
Average detention length	10.88	12.2	10.81	12.12	11.74	9.12	12.6	15.1	11.3	13.8	16.1	10.5

Child arrest numbers reduced from September, reflecting active efforts to avoid using arrest for children. Dorset Police have also been working to reduce the length of detentions in police custody, reflected in the overnight detention and average detention length figures. The figures for 'Detention Not Authorised' show that custody sergeants actively review each child that is brought to the custody suite, refusing detention in some cases.

The multi-agency group has previously identified a number of factors which can prolong a child's detention in police custody, including the availability of Appropriate Adults and the time of day when the child arrives in the custody suite. The timeliness of Appropriate Adult attendance has improved since the service was commissioned externally from 'The Appropriate Adult Service' (TAAS) with average arrival times in 2022/23 of 31 minutes at Bournemouth and 34 minutes at Weymouth. Dorset Police have changed their approach to custody arrivals during the evening to reduce the numbers that are detained overnight.

When the police charge a child with an offence and refuse to grant the child bail, there is a legal requirement to transfer the child to local authority accommodation until their appearance at the next available court. Locally a foster carer is on standby each night to accommodate a child in this situation. Usage of this foster placement is lower than expected so the local authorities and Dorset Police are working together to ensure that opportunities are not missed to use the foster bed.

Supporting children in custody

There are no child custody establishments in the south-west. This means that all children in custody are located at a considerable distance from home, making it harder for families to visit. DCYJS supports parents of children in custody, as well as the children themselves, helping them to cope with both the practicalities and the emotional impact of the situation.

DCYJS allocates paired case managers for all children in custody, to ensure resilience and shared reflection in the work with these children. A DCYJS nurse and a DCYJS education specialist are always allocated to children in custody to facilitate liaison with custody health care and education providers so that the child's specific educational and health needs can be met. This also enables continuity of education and health care during and after the

custodial period. DCYJS Speech and Language assessments are also shared with the custodial establishment to enable custody staff to communicate more effectively with the child.

Remands

While the national performance indicator relates to custodial sentences, there is also concern about the numbers of children being remanded into custody. Information from the Ministry of Justice showed that in 2021 about 45% of children in custody were on remand. During 2022/23 five local children were remanded in custody, a reduction on the seven custodial remands in the preceding year. Of the five children remanded in custody, three received a custodial sentence in excess of 12 months, one has now been released on bail and the other received a community sentence. Lack of suitable accommodation was a factor in the remand decision for this final case, concerns which DCYJS raised at the time.

Custodial Sentences and Resettlement

Seven local children received custodial sentences during 2022/23. Most of these young people will turn 18 during their time in custody, with case responsibility being transferred to the Probation Service prior to their release. The seconded DCYJS Probation Officer facilitates the transition of cases to ensure the appropriate transfer of information and a careful handover from the YJS worker to the Probation worker.

In recent years very few children have been released from custody before their 18th birthday. The service approach to resettlement is therefore adapted to each child's unique situation, led by the allocated YJS case manager who prioritises maintaining positive relationships with the young person. Finding suitable accommodation for children leaving custody can be challenging. DCYJS contributes to local authority care planning processes, promoting the early identification of the child's release address. The DCYJS Manager reports to the DCYJS Partnership Board on the timeliness of accommodation being confirmed for children being released from custodial sentences. Only two children reached their release dates during 2022. Their release addresses were not confirmed until 11 days or less before release.

10. Standards for children in the youth justice system

Youth justice services are required to comply with minimum national standards. The latest edition of national standards, 'Standards for Children in Youth Justice Services', was published in 2019. The YJB mandates youth justice services to undertake periodic self-assessments of their compliance with national standards.

The last national standards self-assessment was completed in March 2020. DCYJS demonstrated adherence to the standards with a small number of standards requiring further activity in order to strengthen compliance.

The following areas of activity were identified for further development:

- Development of local strategies to prevent children from becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- Multi-agency analysis of disproportionality in court and out of court contexts for local children
- Evidencing strategic partner confidence in the YJS supervision of children on justice outcomes in the community
- Holding local partners to account for their part in the successful transition and resettlement of children released from custody
- Consistent recording/storage of sentence plans.

These actions were reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board and were added to DCYJS team plans. Progress has been made in all these areas though some of these activities are outside the direct control of DCYJS. Continuing actions are identified for each of the above issues, to develop or audit the progress made.

Although the joint inspection of DCYJS in 2022 did not explicitly focus on compliance with national standards, the inspectors were satisfied that DCYJS provides the required activities and meets its duties, rating the service as 'Good'.

The Youth Justice Board requires youth justice services to undertake an updated self-assessment of compliance with national standards during 2023/24. Actions arising from this self-assessment will be added to the service's priorities for the year.

11. Workforce Development

The DCYJS Workforce Development Policy identifies core training for different roles in the team. As well as refresher training in child safeguarding, child exploitation and information governance, team members are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, AIM3 Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments and Restorative Justice with complex and sensitive cases.

In 2022/23 team members also attended:

- training courses to build their knowledge, skills and confidence in working with young people's sexuality and gender identity
- a workshop led by a YJS Nurse on self-harm and suicide
- a workshop led by the YJS Education Officer on education and SEND issues for children in the youth justice system
- a workshop led by the YJS Trauma Champion on trauma informed practice
- training sessions with the YJS Speech and Language Therapists on using 'Talking Mats'
- a training session led by the MAPPA Coordinator on MAPPA in youth justice
- a regional conference on Prevent and radicalisation in the youth justice context.

In addition to the core training courses, which will continue to be attended and updated in 2023/24, the service's development plans require staff training in the following areas:

- Identity Lens – develop the team's understanding and application of this model
- Child Exploitation and Extra-Familial Harm – train with colleagues from other local services to embed the use of new multi-agency assessment and planning processes

- Assessments – continue to develop the quality of YJS Risk of Harm assessments, using learning from the case audit of weapon offences
- Assessments - implement the new national assessment tool for children on Out of Court Disposals
- AQA awards – train team members in the provision and certification of activities with children for AQA awards

Working in youth justice is both demanding and rewarding. Team members work closely with children who experience significant harm and who sometimes cause significant harm to others. Our parenting workers and our Restorative Justice practitioners support parents and victims at times of distress and challenge. DCYJS team members are also affected by the impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. Supporting the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers will continue to be a priority in 2023/24, attending to relationships within the team as well as with children, parents/carers, victims and other professionals.

12. Evidence-based practice, innovation and evaluation

The primary focus for effective practice in DCYJS is the quality of workers' relationships with children on the caseload, alongside positive relationships within the team and with other professionals. This focus reflects evidence showing that the key determinant for positive change is a pro-social relationship with a trusted adult. The approach also builds on previous feedback from young people on the DCYJS caseload about what was most important to them in their experience of the service.

The team continues to focus on understanding children's communications needs, through speech and language assessments, and responding to children's history of trauma, understanding its impact on their current behaviour and on their interactions with other people.

Risk Factors for Speech and Language Assessments

In 2022-23 the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists developed a 'risk factor' methodology to assist their prioritisation of children to assess. Although the preference is to assess the communication needs of all children on the team's caseload, this presents issues for the therapists' workload capacity. Assessing all children also means that the children with the most acute need are not prioritised. The risk factor approach enabled the therapists to identify those children with pre-disposing factors for communication needs. A subsequent review confirmed that the level of communication need did correlate with the number of risk factors identified before the assessment. Alongside the risk factor approach, the therapists developed screening tools for YJS case managers to use with other children and provided advice on communication-friendly working practices which would assist all children with communication needs.

Employment and training support for 16-17 year-olds

Another area of development has been to improve the employment and training prospects of young people aged 16 and 17 on the DCYJS caseload. Training options for this group have reduced in recent years, making it harder to find suitable courses or to find alternatives if a young person does not maintain a place on a course. In 2022/23 DCYJS has registered with AQA and relevant team members have completed the necessary

training to enable us to provide the AQA award scheme. This means that YJS workers will be able to structure their activities with young people so that the young person achieves an AQA certificated learning award. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner also agreed to provide funding for young people to work with training providers to gain their 'CSCS' card to increase their chances of work in the construction sector.

Early identification of children at risk of future offending

Last year's Youth Justice Plan included analysis of common factors among children who entered the youth justice system under the age of 14. Almost all these children were first known to the police as a victim or witness (often in a domestic abuse situation), most of them had special educational needs or disabilities, were known to Children's Social Care and had experienced exclusions from school. During 2022/23 DCYJS and Dorset Council have built on this evidence to develop a methodology for pro-actively identifying younger children with these risk factors so that additional support needs can be identified.

13. Service development plan

All the information summarised in the preceding sections have contributed to the service's plan and strategic priorities for 2023/24.

The service's priorities and development plan for 2023/24 are based on the information contained in the preceding sections of this document, including:

- Local partnership priorities
- Strategic direction from the DCYJS Partnership Board
- National initiatives and priorities
- DCYJS performance information
- HMI Probation's full joint inspection of DCYJS in autumn 2022
- Needs and views of children, families and victims
- Views of DCYJS team members
- Learning from self-assessments, case audits, learning reviews and thematic inspection reports during 2022/23.

HMI Probation inspection recommendations:

HMI Probation published the report 'An inspection of youth offending services in Dorset' in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The report included the following six recommendations:

The Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership board should:

1. review the board arrangements to ensure effective strategic partnerships across the combined area and consider whether additional independent chairing arrangements could enhance these
2. develop a shared approach across the partnership to addressing child exploitation and county lines and put a framework in place which promotes effective practice
3. continue to support and challenge all schools to ensure that YJS children receive their full entitlement to education

4. improve partnership working with children’s social care by ensuring YJS case manager involvement in all statutory multi-agency meetings and improve their direct access to children’s social care records.

The YJS service manager should:

5. analyse the reoffending of children subject to out-of-court disposals and monitor the effectiveness of the disposals given

6. improve the analysis and quality of assessments to ensure there is effective and robust understanding regarding the risk of harm a child can pose to others

DCYJS’s action plan in response to these recommendations was accepted by HMI Probation in February 2023. The inspection report also identified ‘areas for improvement’ which are addressed in a more detailed action plan, with progress monitored by the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2023/24

The following table shows the priorities and plans for DCYJS in 2023/24. Actions which link to our inspection report are marked ‘HMIP’. This is a dynamic plan which will continue to be updated, recognising that other priorities will arise during the year.

DCYJS Partnership Priority	Area for Development	Partners and Staff Providing Support	Benefits	Success Indicators
Reducing First-Time Entrants	Develop the implementation of the ‘Turnaround’ programme	Local Authority Early Help Services Dorset Police Dorset HealthCare Ministry of Justice	Children diverted from the justice system	Reduction in FTEs Successful Turnaround completions
Reducing First-Time Entrants	Early identification of children at risk of offending	Local Authority Business Intelligence Local Authority Early Help Services	Prevention of future offending	Reduction in FTEs Children at risk of offending receiving support
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Contribute to Serious Violence Duty needs assessments and action plans	Local Authority Community Safety Partnerships	Strategic, coordinated response to serious youth violence	Needs assessment completed Action Plan agreed and implemented
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Case audit of DCYJS work on weapon offences	DCYJS team members Children and families	Improved DCYJS work with children who carry weapons	Case audit completed Action Plan agreed and implemented
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Extension of DCYJS Trauma Champion role	DCYJS Trauma Champion DCYJS Psychologist	Development of trauma informed practice with children	Actions agreed and implemented to show trauma informed work

		DCYJS team members		with wider caseload
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Local partnerships agree new CE tools, processes and training (HMIP)	Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership	Clear and effective processes for identifying and responding to CE	New CE documents and processes being used by YJS staff
Serious Violence and Child Exploitation	Improve the analysis and quality of DCYJS risk of harm assessments (HMIP)	DCYJS operational managers and case managers	Improved risk assessments leading to better risk management for harm to others	Case audits evidence good quality risk of harm assessments, addressing HMIP findings
Reducing over-representation	YJS Partners share disproportionality data from their services	BCP Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, Probation Service, NHS Dorset	Improved understanding of and response to over-representation	YJS Board receiving and reviewing disproportionality data from partners
Reducing over-representation	Create a DCYJS diversity and disproportionality policy (HMIP)	YJS Head of Service	Clarity about YJS work on diversity issues	New Diversity Policy completed and shared with YJS staff
Improving education outcomes	Allocate additional YJS resources to improve education for children with EHCPs, SEN Support	YJS Head of Service Local authority education services	Timely, suitable placements for children with EHCPs, SEN Support and other specific needs	Better education outcomes Reduction in fixed term and permanent exclusions on YJS caseload
DCYJS practice improvement	Use the Identity Lens approach to underpin DCYJS work with children	YJS managers and practitioners; YJB and other Youth Justice Services	Improved outcomes for children focusing on their positive identity	Evidence on assessments, plans and case records of the Identity Lens model being applied
DCYJS practice improvement	Implement the use of AQA awards for children doing YJS activities	DCYJS ETE and reparation workers; BCP and Dorset EET and Virtual School teams	Improved access to ETE options for YJS children	Completed AQA awards
DCYJS practice improvement	Use the HMIP ETE thematic report and the new KPI ETE information to continue to improve work on education outcomes	DCYJS ETE and information staff. BCP and Dorset ETE and information staff. Schools.	Improved knowledge and targeting of specific ETE issues leading to better ETE outcomes for YJS children	Accurate, up to date, detailed ETE case records on YJS system

Board development	Develop partnership effectiveness and confirm future chairing arrangements (HMIP)	YJS Board Partners, BCP and Dorset Chief Executives	Improved local YJS strategic and operational partnership	Decision taken on future Board chairing. Board partners actively contributing to Board meetings and work
Develop the collection and use of performance information	Implement the new national youth justice Key Performance Indicators	YJS head of service and management information staff. Partner information staff. YJB	Improved understanding of local YJ partnership performance and actions needed	Successful quarterly reporting of new KPIs
Develop the collection and use of performance information	Analyse the reoffending of children subject to out of court disposals (HMIP)	YJS Performance and Information Manager. Dorset Police	Better understanding of OOCDC impact to guide decision-making	Report to YJS Board of reoffending by different out of court disposal types
Compliance with YJB requirements	Audit compliance with national standards and implement the new national OOCDC assessment tool when directed	YJS managers. YJB	YJS meeting national standards for youth justice work	Audit of national standard compliance submitted on time to YJB. YJS using new assessment tool for OOCDC work.

14. Challenges, risks and issues

Like other youth justice services, DCYJS operates in a context of system challenges and resource pressures. Achievement of the service's priorities in 2022/23 could be affected by a number of risks and issues, including:

- Funding and resources –the DCYJS partnership budget has seen little growth in cash terms since the service formed in 2015, without allowing for inflation and pay increases during that period. In 2022/23 the national Youth Justice Grant increased, returning to 2014/15 levels, and local partners increased their contributions. Continuing budget pressures on all partners and inflation risks make resources an ongoing challenge.
- Children's Services face a number of challenges, nationally and locally, with the shortage of suitable placements for children in care being of particular relevance to youth justice services. Without suitable placements it is difficult to establish the building blocks to help children build positive futures, such as education, health care and positive peer networks, and to propose credible bail packages and community sentences for children at risk of custody.
- Children's Services are also responding to the independent review of children's social care

- Delays in the youth justice system, linked to pressures in the wider criminal justice system, make it harder to work effectively with young people to prevent future offending to engage victims in Restorative Justice.
- The impact of Covid on young people is still emerging, including setbacks to young people's education and their mental health.

DCYJS will continue to address these issues on a partnership basis in 2023/24, making best use of resources, working with partners to mitigate the impact of placement shortages, developing plans to improve timeliness in our local youth court system and responding to the education and mental health needs of children following the pandemic.

15. Sign off, submission and approval

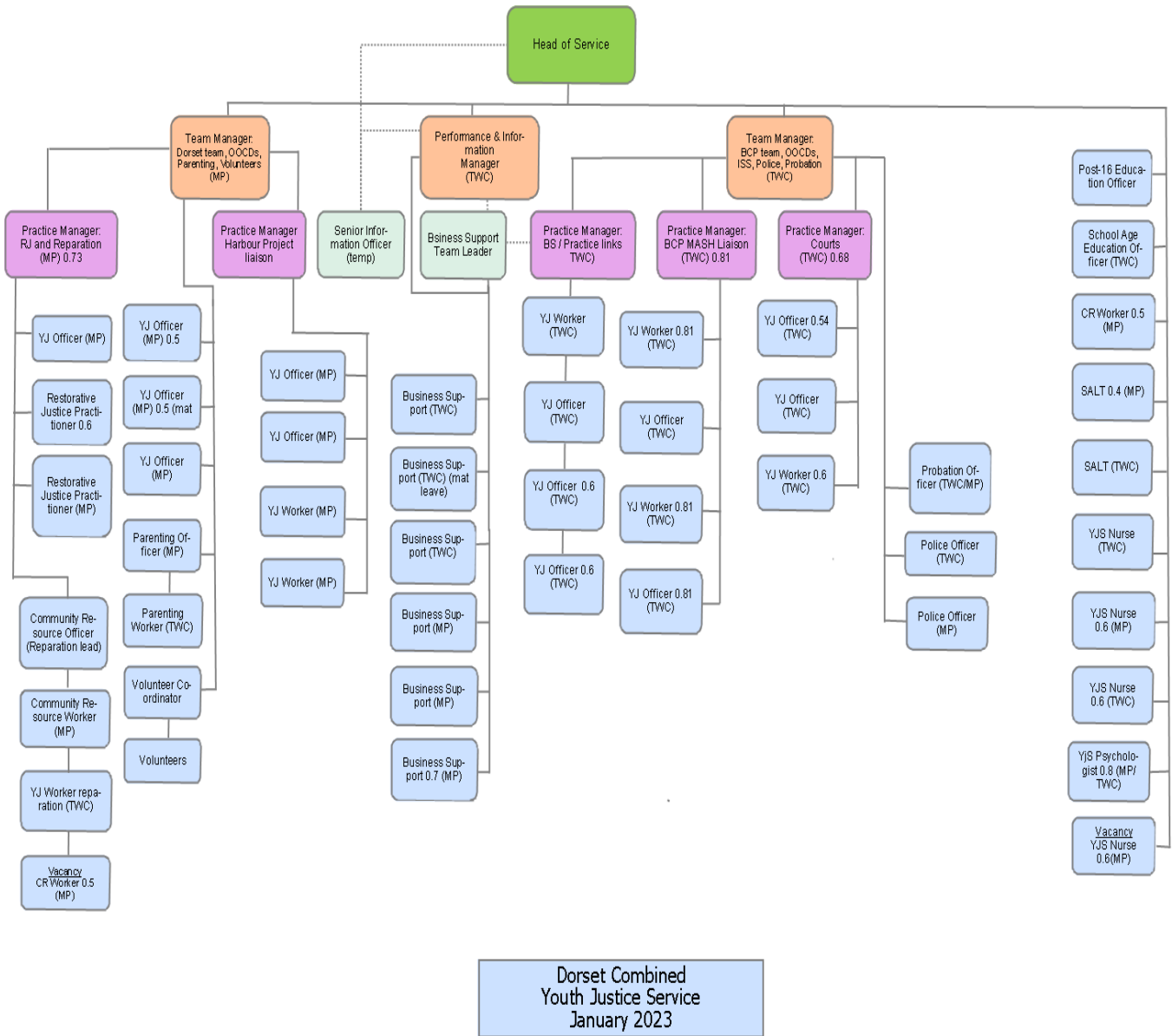
This Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the YJS Partnership Board in April 2023.

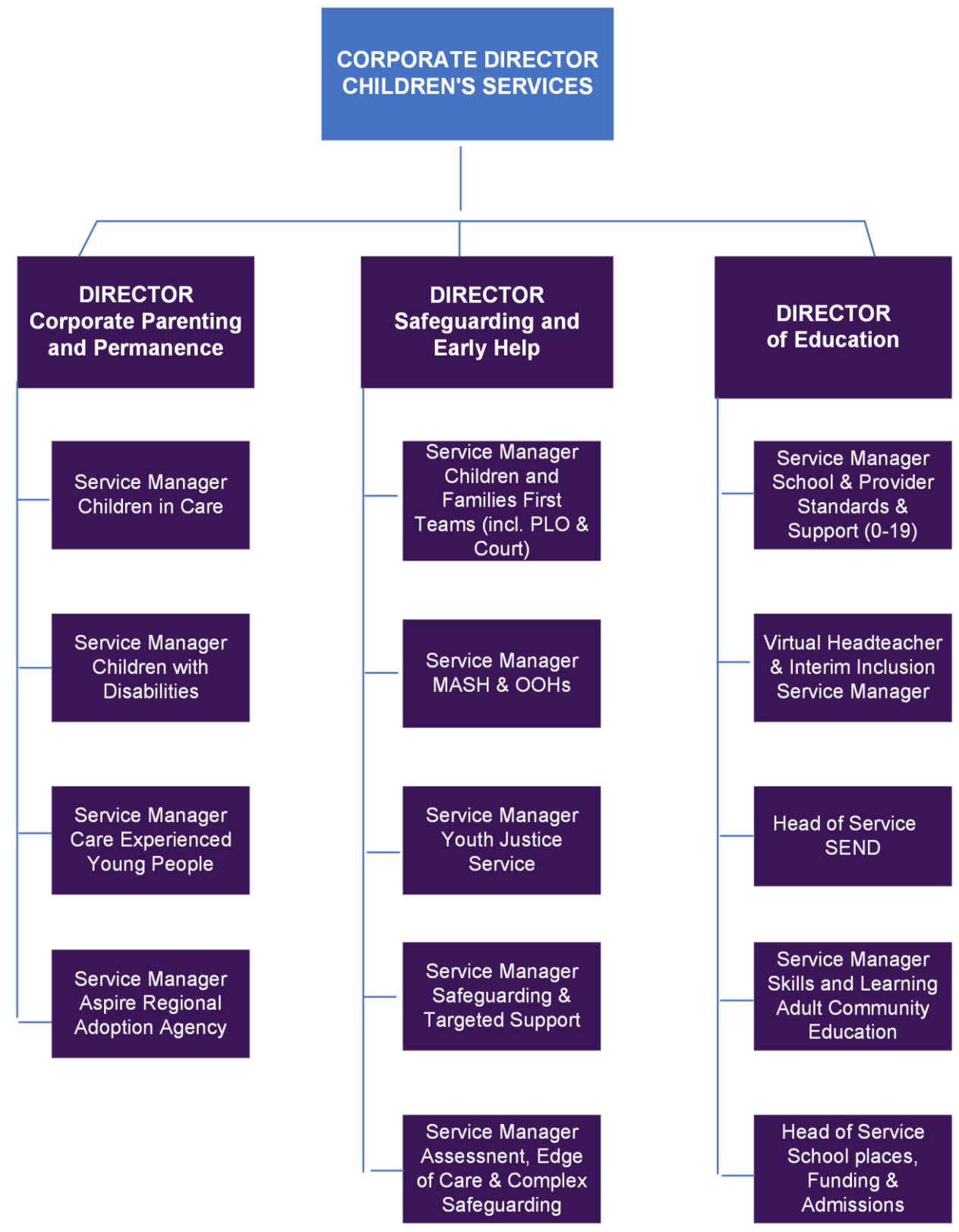
In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of our two local authorities. It will be considered for approval by the full council of Dorset Council on 13/07/2023 and by the full council of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council on YYYY.

Chair of YJS Board - name	Theresa Leavy
Signature	
Date	

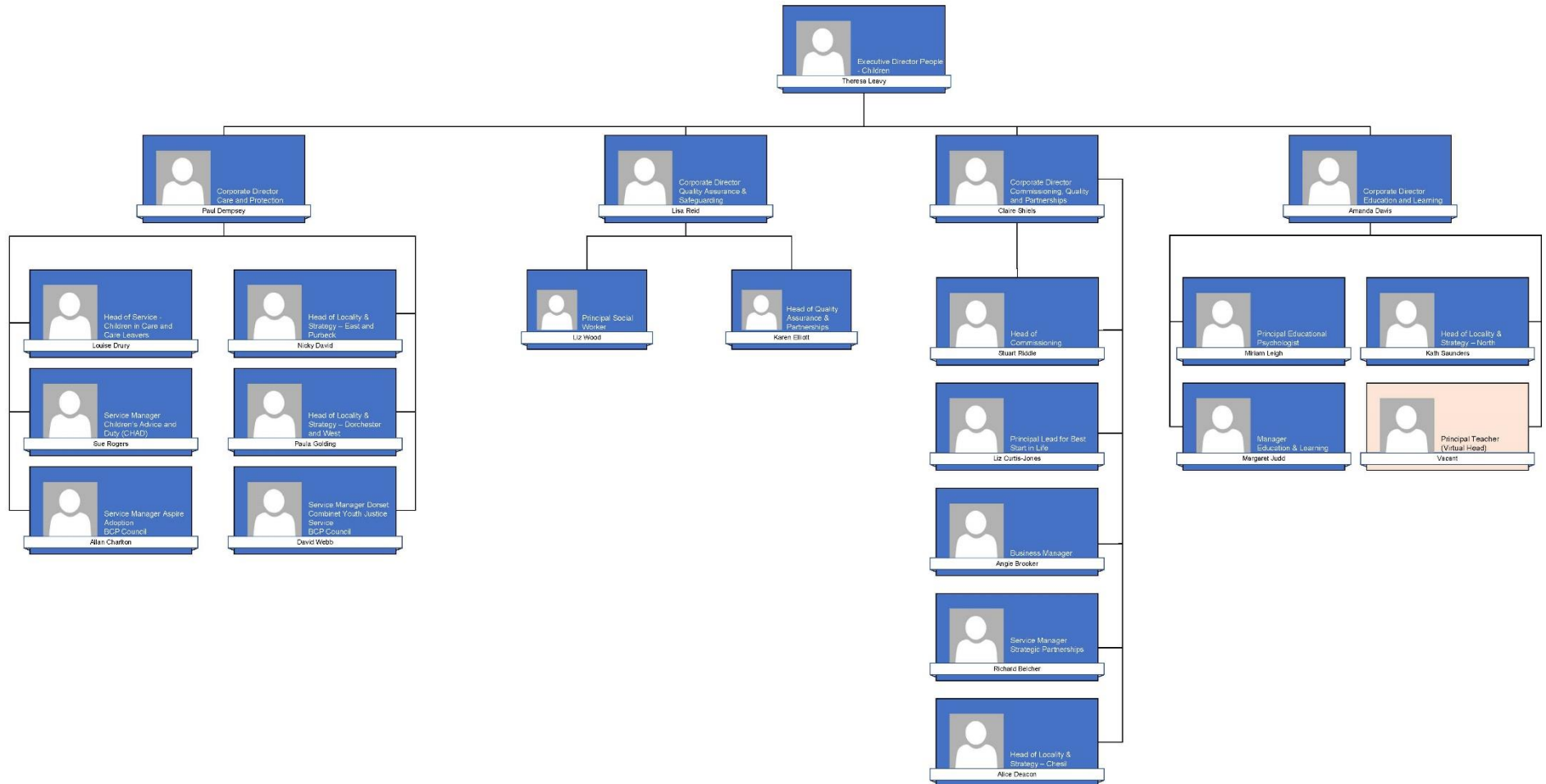
16. Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.





Dorset Council Extended Leadership Team



DCYJS Staff and Volunteers:

The following table shows the gender, ethnicity and disability status of DCYJS staff members and volunteers:






Ethnicity	Female staff members	Male staff members	Female volunteers	Male volunteers	Total
White British	42	10	10	6	68
White Other	1		3	1	5
Mixed Heritage	1		0	0	1
Disability	4				4






Five staff members in DCYJS are recorded as having a disability.









17. Appendix 2 – Budget Costs and Contributions 2023/24

Partner Agency	22/23 Revenue (excluding recharges)	Staff
Dorset Council	£536,164	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£628,529	
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner	£81,927	2.0 Police Officers
The Probation Service (Dorset)	£5,000	1.0 Probation Officer
NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group	£22,487	2.8 FTE Nurses, 0.8 Psychologist, 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists
Youth Justice Grant	£794,915 (2022/23 figure)	
Total	£2,069,022 (assuming standstill contributions from all partners)	



18. Appendix 3 – Smart Survey feedback results

1. I had a say in what work the YJS planned with me:				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.55%	1
2	Dissatisfied		4.55%	1
3	Neutral		13.64%	3
4	Satisfied		50.00%	11
5	Very Satisfied		27.27%	6
			answered	22
			skipped	0







2. The good things about the YJS are:				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	My worker		65.00%	13
2	Learnt new things		50.00%	10
3	Interesting		30.00%	6
4	Reparation		30.00%	6
5	Did something different		25.00%	5
			answered	20
			skipped	2

3. I had help with:				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Friends		4.55%	1
2	Money		4.55%	1
3	Alcohol		9.09%	2
4	Drugs		18.18%	4
5	Anger		45.45%	10
6	Boredom		18.18%	4
7	Health		13.64%	3
8	Education		45.45%	10

3. I had help with:

9	Family		36.36%	8
10	Other (please specify):		36.36%	8
			answered	22
			skipped	0
Other (please specify): (8)				
1	10/03/2023 11:50 AM ID: 212818667	Housing		
2	14/03/2023 07:30 AM ID: 213018384	Nothing		
3	14/03/2023 09:57 AM ID: 213028493	Nothing		
4	21/03/2023 17:23 PM ID: 213610283	CSCS Card qualification		
5	30/03/2023 16:29 PM ID: 214313048	Head injuries Consequences of violence		
6	31/03/2023 14:25 PM ID: 214376662	Head injuries Assaults Consequences		
7	03/04/2023 11:28 AM ID: 214472216	They listen and give good feedback		
8	03/04/2023 11:31 AM ID: 214472521	Got me back in to school.		





4. The things I would change about the YJS are:

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Boring		14.29%	3
2	Time of appointments		23.81%	5
3	Worker		4.76%	1
4	Length of appointments		14.29%	3
5	Nothing		52.38%	11
6	Other (please specify):		19.05%	4
			answered	21
			skipped	1
Other (please specify): (4)				





4. The things I would change about the YJS are:

1	28/02/2023 10:56 AM ID: 212017304	Sometimes not long enough I like to work with my worker as much as I can as find it really helps me
2	10/03/2023 11:50 AM ID: 212818667	Later appointments
3	21/03/2023 17:23 PM ID: 213610283	Not sure what I would change. I like my worker The reparation sessions are long not sure if they help with not offending. If I could choose I wouldn't of done them. CSCS card sessions were good and I have learnt something.
4	31/03/2023 14:25 PM ID: 214376662	Shorter appts





5. My worker thought I would make positive changes to my life:

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.76%	1
2	Dissatisfied		0.00%	0
3	Neutral		14.29%	3
4	Satisfied		42.86%	9
5	Very Satisfied		38.10%	8
			answered	21
			skipped	1

6. My worker listens to my ideas and helps me find my own answers:

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.76%	1
2	Dissatisfied		0.00%	0
3	Neutral		9.52%	2
4	Satisfied		42.86%	9
5	Very Satisfied		42.86%	9
			answered	21
			skipped	1

7. Working with the YJS made things better for me:

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very Dissatisfied		4.76%	1
2	Dissatisfied		0.00%	0
3	Neutral		19.05%	4
4	Satisfied		42.86%	9
5	Very Satisfied		33.33%	7
			answered	21
			skipped	1

Common youth justice terms – national glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health and life outcomes
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, Intervention and Moving on; an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenets to this approach which should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after, also Child in Care	Child Looked After/Child in Care; where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution; an informal disposal, administered by the police, for

	low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan; a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated; children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school; children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPP	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre

SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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