



People and Health Overview Committee

Date: Tuesday, 6 February 2024
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum: 3)

Mike Parkes (Chairman), Cathy Lugg (Vice-Chairman), Tony Alford, Pauline Batstone, Jean Dunseith, Beryl Ezzard, Ryan Holloway, Stella Jones, Rebecca Knox and Howard Legg

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

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact 01305 224185 - george.dare@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.

For easy access to all the council's committee agendas and minutes download the free public app called Modern.Gov for use on any iPad, Android, and Windows tablet. Once downloaded select Dorset Council.

Agenda

Item		Pages
1.	APOLOGIES	
	To receive any apologies for absence.	
2.	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.	
3.	MINUTES	5 - 8

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023.

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 Microsoft 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.** For further information read [Public Participation - Dorset Council](#)

All submissions must be emailed in full to george.dare@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Thursday, 1 February 2024.

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. COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

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 george.dare@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Thursday, 1 February 2024.

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

6. 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.

7. COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET'S FORWARD PLAN 9 - 24

To consider the Committee's Work Programme and the Cabinet Forward Plan.

8. FAMILIES FIRST FOR CHILDREN PATHFINDER UPDATE 25 - 82

To receive a report by the Corporate Director for Care and Protection.

9. CHILDRENS SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2024-2027 83 - 126

To consider a report by the Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships.

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (EDI) STRATEGY 127 - 198

To consider a report by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer.

11. FAMILY HUB NETWORK DEVELOPMENT 199 - 208

To consider a report by the Family Hub Programme Lead.

12. 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 x 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.

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank



PEOPLE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Cllrs Cathy Lugg (Vice-Chairman), Tony Alford, Pauline Batstone, Jean Dunseith, Beryl Ezzard, Stella Jones and Howard Legg

Apologies: Cllrs Mike Parkes, Ryan Holloway and Rebecca Knox

Also present: Cllr Graham Carr-Jones

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

Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sharon Attwater (Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance), Sarah Smith (Housing Strategy Lead) and Joshua Kennedy (Apprentice Democratic Services Officer)

42. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mike Parkes, Ryan Holloway, and Rebecca Knox.

Vice-Chair in the chair.

43. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

44. **Minutes**

Proposed by Cllr Batstone, seconded by Cllr Ezzard.

Decision

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 be confirmed and signed.

45. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

46. **Councillor Questions**

There were no questions from councillors.

47. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

48. **Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer outlined the committee's work programme for the upcoming meetings on 6 February and 19 March 2024.

There were no comments on the work programme or Cabinet's Forward Plan.

49. **Home In On Housing - Dorset Council's Housing Strategy**

The Lead Member for Housing introduced the Housing Strategy which was a high-level document setting out the vision, aims and objectives for housing in Dorset. The strategy was developed over the past 12 months through a series of internal and external stakeholder engagement and a public consultation. The strategy would replace former district council housing policies, and a delivery plan would sit behind the strategic document.

The Corporate Director for Housing and Community Safety gave a presentation to the committee. The presentation, which is attached to these minutes, outlined: the development of the strategy; the visions and objectives; the key themes from consultation responses; how the strategy would be delivered; and the next steps for delivery.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of the officers and Lead Member. The following points were raised:

- Parts of Part 2 of the cover report, outlining the Housing Strategy, could be made stronger relating to the delivery of new affordable housing and the link to the Climate and Ecology Strategy. It was acknowledged that the Housing Strategy itself was detailed and strong, and the delivery plan work would cover those, and other, areas of priority.
- The council should be prepared, when viable and appropriate, to use its status as a registered provider to acquire homes when other independent registered providers do not.
- Some registered providers have sold homes, largely because they were in poor condition and were not economic to maintain.
- The council bringing empty properties back into use was welcomed.
- The delivery plan would be developed in various parts, with the overarching delivery plan to be developed in early 2024.

- The housing strategy and delivery plan would be reviewed and monitored, and aspects of that plan being brought to appropriate Council committees – including the Housing Board and specific reports to Scrutiny and Overview.
- A key part of the delivery would be determined through the Local Plan and associated policies across the range of Council policies.

Members thanked officers for their support in developing the strategy.

Proposed by Cllr Legg, seconded by Cllr Ezzard.

That the following be added to the end of paragraph 2.3 of the cover report: “As a Registered Provider we will seek to provide housing that is not currently provided by registered providers. We will also be open to consider s106 housing where no registered provider is identified.”

Proposed by Cllr Legg, seconded by Cllr Ezzard.

That the following be added to the end of paragraph 2.5 of the cover report: “which is in accordance with Dorset Council’s Climate and Ecological Strategy.”

Both amendments to the cover report were unanimously supported by the committee.

Proposed by Cllr Batstone, seconded by Cllr Ezzard.

Decision

That the Housing Strategy and its objectives, and the amendments to the cover report, be recommended to Cabinet.

50. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.54 am

Chairman

.....

This page is intentionally left blank

People and Health Overview Committee Work Programme

Meeting Date: 6 February 2024

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Pathfinder Implementation Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To outline the plan for the implementation of the Families First for Children Pathfinder. 	<p>James Boxer – Programme Manager, Children’s Social Care Review</p> <p>Cllr Byron Quayle – Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help</p>	
Family Hub Network Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report outlines proposals for the development of Dorset’s Family Hub Network Model in line with requirements of the DfE’s grant funded Transformation Programme, local need, and strategic priorities. To make any recommendations to Cabinet. 	<p>Rebecca Watson – Project Lead, Family Hubs</p> <p>Elizabeth Saunders – Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning (Children’s Services)</p> <p>Cllr Byron Quayle – Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration by Cabinet on 12 March 2024
Placement Sufficiency Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the strategy that will meet the sufficiency duty over the next 3 years. 	<p>Elizabeth Saunders – Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration by Cabinet on 12 March 2024

Page 9

Agenda Item 7

		Cllr Byron Quayle – Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help	
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the refreshed EDI Strategy and make any recommendations to Cabinet. 	<p>James Palferman-Kay – Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Cllr Jill Haynes – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration by Cabinet on 12 March 2024


Meeting Date: 19 March 2024

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

Meeting Date: 13 June 2024

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Youth Justice Plan 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the annual Youth Justice Plan. To make any recommendations to Cabinet and Council. 	David Webb – Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service	Report to be considered by Cabinet and Full Council

Meeting Date: 23 July 2024

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

Meeting Date: 24 September 2024

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

Page 11

Meeting Date: 29 October 2024

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

Meeting Date: 21 January 2025

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

Meeting Date: 20 March 2025

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

Page
2

Unscheduled Committee Items

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Adults & Housing 10yr Transformation, Investment & Reform Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide an update on the Adults & Housing 10-year Transformation, Investment & Reform programme. 	<p>Jonathan Price – Corporate Director for Commissioning</p> <p>Andrew Billany – Corporate Director for Housing</p> <p>Cllr Jane Somper – Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health, and Housing</p>	
Community Safety Plan 2023-26 and Pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2023-26		Andy Frost – Service Manager for Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to be considered by Cabinet and Full Council

		Cllr Laura Beddow – Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities	
			•

Informal Work of the Committee:

Date	Topic	Format	Members	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information

This page is intentionally left blank



The Cabinet Forward Plan - January 2024 - April 2024 (Publication date – 21 DECEMBER 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 -

- 15
- 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
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>
<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 20 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</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p>Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>The new Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy aims to set out how Dorset Council will enable a thriving, sustainable and dynamic voluntary, and community sector to flourish and help improve the lives of individuals and communities in Dorset over coming years.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities</p>	<p><i>Laura Cornette, Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships</i> <i>Laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>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>Community Asset Transfer Policy</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>Update of Community Asset Transfer Policy</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee 23 Jan 2024</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Carly Galloway, Senior Projects, Contracts & Funding Manager carly.galloway@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Tim Hulme, Head of Assets and Property tim.hulme@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>Determination of Dorset Council's Admissions Arrangements 2025-2026</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Annual duty for the Council to determine a suite of policies in relation to the Admissions Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. These policies have to be determined by the 26 February in the year prior to their implementation.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Ed Denham, School Admissions Manager ed.denham@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Amanda Davis, Corporate Director for Education and Learning amanda.davis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</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>Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership PDSCP Annual Report</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>The PDSCP Annual Report provides an overview of multi-agency safeguarding practice over the year. It outlines key work within the partnership and priorities for forthcoming years. The RDSCP has a duty to produce an annual report under government guidance (working together 2018).</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Laurence Doe, PDSCP Business Manager laurence.doe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>
<p>A Devolution Deal for Dorset Expression of Interest</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To seek approval to formulate an expression of interest with partner councils to make an application to Government for a devolution deal.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Levelling Up</p>	<p><i>Steven Ford, Corporate Director for Transformation, Innovation, Digital, and Environment steven.ford@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>Dorset Harbours Five Year Business Plan</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Dorset Harbours Five Year Business Plan.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>	<p>Harbours Committee 22 Nov 2023</p> <p>Advisory</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>	<p><i>Ed Carter, Weymouth Harbour Master</i> <i>ed.carter@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>Care Dorset Holdings Ltd Annual Performance Report 2023</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the performance report produced by Care Dorset Holdings Ltd.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>	<p>Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd 6 Dec 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Adult Social Care, Health and Housing</p>	<p><i>Vivienne Broadhurst, Executive Director - People Adults</i> <i>Vivienne.broadhurst@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults</i></p>
<p>Dorset Centre of Excellence Annual Performance Report November 2023</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the performance report produced by Dorset Centre of Excellence.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>	<p>The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) 20 Nov 2023</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Theresa Leavy, Executive Director of People - Children</i> <i>theresa.leavy@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</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>Weymouth Regeneration - Levelling Up Fund Progress & Next Steps</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt</p> <p>To update Cabinet on progress since the November 2023 report and seeks approval for the step necessary to progress the relevant sites.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Levelling Up</p>	<p><i>Julian Wain, Strategic Property Advisor</i> <i>Julian.wain@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>Land at Whitepit farm, Shillingstone</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Fully exempt</p> <p>Report seeking approval to the sale of Whitepit Farm, Shillingstone</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 30 Jan 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Assets and Property</p>	<p><i>Jon Morgan, Development Manager</i> <i>jon.morgan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>March</p>					
<p>Procurement Forward Plan Report - Over £500k (2023-2025)</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>The Council defines a key decision, in terms of procurement activity, as those with financial consequence of £500k or more. This report will provide notice of the planned/known procurement activities that Cabinet will need to make a key decision on for 2024/25.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 12 Mar 2024</p>		<p>Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy</p>	<p><i>Dawn Adams, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement</i> <i>dawn.adams@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive (Matt Prosser)</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>Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To seek approval of the refreshed EDI Strategy for Dorset Council.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 12 Mar 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation</p>	<p><i>Jennifer Lewis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement jennifer.lewis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, James Palfreman-Kay, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer james.palfreman-kay@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i></p>
<p>Grid Capacity Task & Finish Group</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>The final report of Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee's grid capacity task and finish group, which was established to review the strategically significant issue of Dorset's constrained grid capacity. The report will summarise its findings and recommendations for the future.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 12 Mar 2024</p>	<p>Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee 26 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment</p>	<p><i>Antony Littlechild, Sustainability Team Manager antony.littlechild@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Carl Warom, Climate and Ecological Policy and Project Manager carl.warom@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>BCP Local Plan consultation response</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>Proposed for change set out in an invest to save business case.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 12 Mar 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Terry Sneller, Strategic Planning Manager terry.sneller@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>Family Hub network development</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>This report outlines proposals for the development of Dorset's Family Hub Network Model in line with requirements of the DfE's grant funded Transformation Programme, local need and strategic priorities.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 12 Mar 2024</p>	<p>People and Health Overview Committee 6 Feb 2024</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for People - Children, Education, Skills and Early Help</p>	<p><i>Elizabeth Saunders, Interim Corporate Director of Commissioning elizabeth.saunders@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Theresa Leavy)</i></p>
<p>Business Case - commercialisation of digital innovation</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>A business case looking at the costs and benefits of a special purpose vehicle to support the council's digital innovation ambitions.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 12 Mar 2024</p>	<p>Place and Resources Overview Committee</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation, Councillor Simon Gibson, Councillor Andrew Parry</p>	<p><i>Nick Webster, Head of Growth and Economic Regeneration nicholas.webster@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Colin Wood, Programme Manager - 5G and Mobile colin.wood@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>Allocation of S106 Funding for community facilities at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury</p> <p>Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open</p> <p>To determine the award of s106 developer contribution funding for the delivery of community facilities at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 12 Mar 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Andrew Galpin, Infrastructure & Delivery Planning Manager andrew.galpin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Mike Garrity, Head of Planning mike.garrity@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>Community Infrastructure Levy - Exception Circumstances Policy for the Purbeck area</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 12 Mar 2024</p>		<p>Portfolio Holder for Planning</p>	<p><i>Andrew Galpin, Infrastructure & Delivery Planning Manager andrew.galpin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (John Sellgren)</i></p>
<p>April</p>					
<p>Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring 2023/24</p> <p>Key Decision - No Public Access - Open</p> <p>To consider the Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring Report 2024/25.</p>	<p>Decision Maker Cabinet</p>	<p>Decision Date 16 Apr 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>
<p>June</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.

People and Health Overview Committee 6 February 2024 Families First for Children Pathfinder Update

For Review and Consultation

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: Paul Dempsey
Job Title: Corporate Director, Care and Protection
Tel: 01305 224513
Email: Paul.dempsey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

This report is an update to the People and Health Overview Committee on Children's Services involvement with the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme. It provides an update on progress with a focus on the implementation plan for the Pathfinder.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that members note the contents of the report and support our on-going participation in the Families First for Children Pathfinder programme.

Reason for Recommendation:

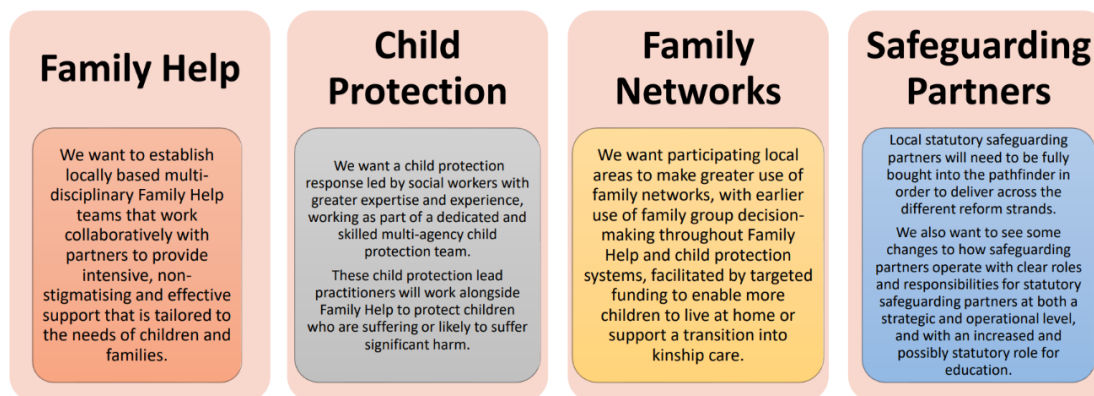
Participation in the Pathfinder programme is a huge opportunity for Dorset to shape the transformation that is required in children's social care, to secure DfE funding to support the required change, and for our children and families to benefit from the reforms sooner rather than later.

1. Report

- 1.1 The Independent Review of Children's Social Care published its final report in May 2022. The Review was described as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to set out a bold and broad plan to improve outcomes for children and families. The big question it sought to answer was: How do we ensure children grow up in loving, stable, and safe families and, where that is not possible, that care provides the same foundations?
- 1.2 The review found the current system to be increasingly skewed towards crisis intervention, with outcomes for children unacceptably poor, and costs continuing to rise. It reported that without a 'radical reset' of the whole system, outcomes will remain poor, and in a decade's time the children in care population will have increased from 80,000 to 100,000, and costs will increase to £15billion from £10billion now.
- 1.3 'Stable Homes, Built on Love', published in February 2023, is the Government's strategy for implementing the recommendations of the Review.
- 1.4 The Strategy sets out six pillars to transform children's social care. These are as follows:
 - Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families.
 - A decisive multi-agency child protection system.
 - Unlocking the potential of family networks.
 - Putting love, relationships, and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care.
 - A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one.
 - A system that continuously learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data.
- 1.5 The Government is sponsoring several test and learn pathfinder programmes to test out delivery of some elements of its strategy before they roll it out nationally. Dorset is one of three local authorities nationally who have been selected to deliver the Families First for Children Pathfinder

Programme. This Pathfinder involves designing a new model of provision to deliver the following elements of the strategy:

There are **four key reform strands** to the Families First for Children pathfinder that will be delivered as a whole system transformation. There will be minimum requirements alongside local flexibility and delivery questions to be worked through via co-design.



In summary, the ambitions of the Pathfinder are to deliver:

- Deeper integration and partnerships in child protection and family help.
- More support and help to families early, preventing crisis.
- Support to enable families and family networks to make their own decisions and plans to keep children safe.
- An enhanced safeguarding role for education at the strategic level

1.6 From August – December 2023 we undertook a co-design process to agree our proposed delivery model for the pathfinder reforms. This exercise was carried out in collaboration with Children’s Services staff, the wider council, and partnership colleagues. The model has also been built in line with the views and lived experience of our children, young people, and families.

1.7 Our delivery plan was submitted to the Department for Education in December 2023. This has now been agreed subject to some final policy clarifications.

2. Overview of our Families First for Children Pathfinder Model

2.1 In our co-design work, we established a set of key principles we felt should inform our model, as follows:

- 2.1.1 **Putting our Children and Families First** – we will continue to take a whole family approach to our work with children and families and will put their experience of our services and the improvement of their outcomes at the centre of everything we do.
 - 2.1.2 **Maintaining our strengths.** We have been careful to make sure that the design of our pathfinder model builds on and enhances our strengths, rather than losing any of the things we do well.
 - 2.1.3 **Enhancement and growth.** The model is about enhancing the way we operate and builds on the strengths of our current model. It extends and expands on our integration with partners and provides additional capacity to support children and families as soon as they need it.
 - 2.1.4 **Developing our workforce for the future.** As one of the first pathfinders, we are in a unique position to develop our workforce for the future system which will be built on the ambitions of the pathfinder and new central government policy.
- 2.2 The enhancements to our delivery model are structured around the four key reform strands in the Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme: Multi-disciplinary Family Help Services, Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams, Unlocking the Potential of Wider Family Networks & Safeguarding Partners. Key elements of our model are set out below:
- 2.3 **Family Help:**
 - 2.3.1 **We will increase integration in our conversation based front door, which currently includes** our Children’s Advice and Duty (ChAD) Service, our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), and our Family Help Hub, by adding the Dorset Education Advice Line (inclusive of the Educational Psychology consultation service), and the CAHMS Gateway.
 - 2.3.2 **We will enhance early support commissioning,** bolstering the Voluntary and Community Sector offer to deliver earlier, preventative support to children, young people, and families in their communities.
 - 2.3.3 **We will merge Early Help and Child in Need (CIN) work** into a single offer called Family Help. The majority of what we currently call CIN work will be held in this Family Help Service. All

families/cases supported in this space will benefit from oversight from qualified social work staff.

2.3.4 We will enhance and grow our locality Family Help and Inclusion & Belonging teams. These teams will provide Family Help that is overseen by qualified social workers. Our Inclusion and Belonging Teams will include a range of professionals from different disciplines including educational psychologists, specialist teachers, targeted youth workers, special educational needs provision leads, and provide greater support to families and work in partnership with Family Help Teams.

2.3.5 Family Help Lead Practitioners are those professionals identified as the lead worker allocated to a family receiving family help services. The Lead Practitioner could be a professional from any discipline and any agency working with the family, for example a health visitor, school nurse, or a Family Help Team worker, depending on which professional is best placed to support the family and undertake that role.

2.4 Child Protection:

2.4.1 We will establish Multi Agency Child Protection Teams which will include a range of different practitioners including Health (Drug and Alcohol Misuse, Domestic Abuse and Mental Health Practitioners) policing colleagues, our wider partners, and our most experienced social workers, who will be the Lead Child Protection Practitioners.

2.4.2 We will establish Lead Child Protection Practitioners to sit in our Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams. This is a defined role set out in the DfE Families First for Children requirements. Our experienced social workers will undertake this role. These practitioners will have low caseloads to ensure the role is attractive and that they have capacity to use their skills, experience, and expertise to safely lead child protection work and provide support and guidance to professional colleagues. Lead Child Protection Practitioners will work closely with the Family Help Lead Practitioner where appropriate.

2.4.3 **We will enhance advocacy for families going through Child Protection Processes** to ensure they understand the process, are well prepared, do not feel stigmatised, and are supported to have their voice heard.

2.4.4 **We will test a new model for Child Protection Case Conferences**, with new roles for social workers and Quality Assurance Reviewing Officers (QARO's)

2.5 **Family Networks:**

2.5.1 **Families will be offered Family Group Conferencing** in child protection by default. These are a family-led meetings in which the family and friends network come together to make a plan for a child.

2.5.2 **Families will be offered Family Network Meetings** in Family Help. Again, these are family led meetings and will support the family to develop their plan.

2.5.3 Families who have had a Family Network Meeting or Family Group conference **may be able to access a Family Network Support Package**. These packages will provide practical and / or financial support to the wider family network to enable children to live and thrive at home.

2.5.4 **We are developing a local Family Network/Kinship Care Strategy** that will embed a kinship care / families first approach.

2.5.5 **We will develop a dedicated Connected Persons Service**, bringing together assessment and support for Connected Persons Foster Carers, Special Guardians, kinship carers caring for children subject to Child Arrangement Orders, and Private Foster Carers.

2.6 **Safeguarding Partners and overall system design:**

2.6.1 **We will develop a single whole family assessment and plan** so that families only have to tell their story once, that is family led and that can be the foundation for the identification of further needs or specialist assessments if required.

- 2.6.2 **Our practice framework** will be strengthened, and we will continue to expand and embed the principles of Motivational Interviewing, Therapeutic Thinking, and Trauma Informed and Restorative & Relational Based Practice across the whole children's workforce and the partnership.
- 2.6.3 **We will undertake an efficiency review** of our key partnership forums and governance to streamlining wherever possible.
- 2.6.4 **Practice leads** will be established to support with practice changes and to sustain quality of practice and application of legislative changes.
- 2.6.5 We will strengthen the role of Education as a safeguarding partner by including our Education Director as a member of our safeguarding partnership and identifying nominated education professionals to sit on our safeguarding partnership subgroups.

3. **Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Participation in the Pathfinder presents an opportunity to secure a level of DfE funding to undertake the change and development work required that is unlikely to be available for other authorities once the Pathfinder programme has finished.
- 3.2 Our final costed plan that was submitted to the DfE includes detail of how we intend to use the grant funding to deliver the Pathfinder reforms and includes:
- Seconding/backfilling roles in police/health to support development of the programme and deeper integration.
 - New/additional roles in the Multi-Agency Family Help and Child Protection spaces (examples include, family help workers, youth practitioners, advanced practitioners)
 - Programme management roles
 - Enhancements to the learning and development offer for staff in line with the new model
 - Commissioning services differently (e.g., in the early support space)
- 3.3 The total funding we will receive for the programme is **£4,897,346**

- 3.4 The grant funding allocation runs to the end of 2024/25, and we have costed up to this point. It is our expectation that there will be an uplift to the settlement for Children's Services in Dorset and nationally for 2025/26 and beyond to account for the costs of delivering the Government's Strategy thereafter.

4. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

- 4.1 There are no implications for the environment, climate, and ecology other than that there may be benefits that may arise from a reduction in cross country travel if this strategy is successful in creating more local care placements for Dorset and for other authorities around the country.

5. **Well-being and Health Implications**

- 5.1 The aim of the Government Strategy is to improve the lives, and the health and wellbeing of children, young people, and families. Successful delivery of the strategy in Dorset will bring improvements to the health and wellbeing of our children, families, and communities.

6. **Other Implications**

- 6.1 Participation in the Pathfinder puts Dorset on the national stage, leading the implementation of a national strategy and with a responsibility and an expectation that we will thereafter support others on their own implementation journey.
- 6.2 There will be a reshape of some existing roles within our locality structures, predominantly a change in portfolio responsibility. However, we do not anticipate any significant contractual changes.

7. **Risk Assessment**

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

8. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 An EQIA in draft status in relation to the workforce planning element of the reforms. It has been reviewed and agreed by HR and is now with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer for final review and agreement.

8.2 A full EQIA for the programme will be completed ahead of the 1st of April 2024 if needed.

9. **Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1: FFCP Delivery Plan

10. **Background Papers**

[Stable Homes, Built on Love: Implementation Strategy and Consultation](#)

[Working together updated guidance](#)

[National social care strategy](#)

[Kinship care national strategy](#)

[Digital and data strategy](#)

This page is intentionally left blank

Dorset Families First for Children Pathfinder Delivery Plan

This document provides a delivery plan template for the Pathfinder, setting out how areas will deliver the reforms set out in the Design Specification.

Timelines

- A first full version of this document is due 31st October 2023.
- A final version is due on Thursday 30th November 2023.

Alongside this document areas will also provide the documents below by Thursday 30th November 2023.

- Updated costed plan.
- Updated population needs assessment.

Red text gives an indication of length for sections this is a guide rather than a strict wordcount.

Purple text sets out what must be included in each section and areas that are not necessary but can be included. LAs can provide additional detail if they wish. Purple text can be deleted before submission.

DRAFT

Reform Strand	Overall system design and Safeguarding Partners	Family Help	Child Protection	Family Networks
Ambition	<p>Explore changes to how safeguarding partners operate with clear roles and responsibilities for statutory safeguarding partners at both a strategic and operational level, and with an increased and possibly statutory role for education.</p>	<p>Establish locally based multi-disciplinary Family Help teams that work collaboratively with partners to provide intensive, non-stigmatising and effective support that is tailored to the needs of children and families.</p>	<p>Establish a child protection response led by social workers with greater expertise and experience, working as part of a dedicated and skilled multi-agency child protection team. The child protection lead practitioners will work alongside Family Help to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.</p>	<p>Make greater use of family networks, with earlier use of family group decision-making throughout Family Help and child protection systems, facilitated by targeted funding to enable more children to live at home or support a transition into kinship care.</p>
Our model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align with Partnership place-based strategies. Strengthen offer for underrepresented communities. Recruit engagement / youth voice officers to capture voice of lived experience. Establish Kinship Care Engagement forum. Strengthen strategic relationships between education and statutory safeguarding partners. Set up and education strategic sub-group of the Pan-Dorset safeguarding partnership. Formally nominate leads and delegates from the education community to sit on the safeguarding partnership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated Front Door New Locality structure for Family Help and Inclusion and Belonging VCS delivered Early Support offer with a focus on Early Years Updated Quality Assurance Framework in line with the new model for Family Help. Integrated Early Help and CIN Council wide Safeguarding Families Together roll out. Group case and line of sight supervision models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Locality Structure for Child Protection Updated Quality Assurance Framework in line with the new model for Child Protection Establish Multi Agency Child Protection teams. Pilot approach for Child Protection Conference Chairing Introduce a dedicated resource within quality assurance to enhance the advocacy offer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Group Decision Making offer for all families by default. Update the quality assurance framework in line with the new model of Family Networks Independent FGC team Agree sequencing and quantifiable timescales for undertaking Family Group Decision Making functions. Pilot Family Rights Groups Pre-proceedings. Establish approach for Family Network Support Packages across the spectrum of need. Development and Delivery of Kinship Care Strategy

Detailed model

1. Overall design for the system and safeguarding partners

1.1. System wide elements

Culture and language

In June 2023, the Dorset Strategic Alliance for Children and young people published our partnership [10-year plan](#). Through this plan, the partnership has signed up to a set of collective ambitions, set out under 7 priority themed areas, as follows:

1. Best start in life
2. Young and thriving
3. Good care provision
4. Best education for all
5. Best place to live
6. Local Family Help
7. Safe at home and in the community

Our partnership in Dorset is underpinned by a shared culture, language and set of values and is committed to working together and with children, young people, and their families in the following ways:

- Always putting children and families at the heart of everything we do – including in how we develop and shape services.
- No child or family left behind – we strive for equity of outcomes for all.
- Focus on early intervention and prevention – offering the right help, in the right place at the right time.
- Working restoratively – doing things with families, not to or for them.
- Thinking family – providing a joined-up approach.
- Focusing on and building on the strengths with individuals, families, and communities.
- Being inclusive – challenging discrimination where we see it and promoting a sense of belonging for all our children in our communities.
- Taking a rights-based approach to our work.
- Delivering best value for money – spending the Dorset £ in Dorset on the things that get the best outcomes for children and families.
- Remaining hopeful and determined to achieve good outcomes for all.

Our 10-year plan recognises the work that we will be doing to deliver the Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP), with strong partnership commitment:

“In early 2023 the government released a new strategy, ‘Stable Homes Built on Love’ on how local authorities and partners should work together to put families at the heart of the services we deliver. Dorset has been asked to lead on a national pathfinder, ‘Families First’, which further develops our established multi-agency locality-based approach. We will, through the Pathfinder and beyond, further strengthen the delivery of integrated services. We will explore different ways to promote family support through family decision making and new approaches to kinship care and working with the wider

community family to provide safe support for our children and young people. This model will be overseen by our Strategic Alliance Partnership.”

Our Strategic Alliance will continue to strengthen and embed a culture that promotes and works alongside communities, families, young people and children and ensuring that we design and develop our services with them. As a partnership we will continue to embed the use of strengths-based language which is trauma informed and restorative. Our ambitions for partnership workforce development are specifically tailored to embed this culture and language across Dorset.

1.2. Practice

Through the FFCP, we will make some key changes to practice across the partnership that will include but not be limited to:

- Embedding a partnership multi-disciplinary group case supervision and line of sight model.
- Ensuring a focus on our Dorset System including system leadership, partnership induction and learning events.
- Redesigning the practice model with safeguarding partners across Family Help and Child Protection with a specific focus on Family Group Decision Making, ensuring families are engaging, participating early, and empowered to co-design and develop plans to support and safeguard their children.
- Strengthening our practice framework and continue to expand and embed the principles of Motivational Interviewing, Therapeutic Thinking, Trauma Informed, Restorative & Relational Based Practice across the whole children’s workforce and the partnership.
- As we strengthen our practice framework our quality assurance work, both within children’s services and our multi-agency partnership, will align and develop to ensure we evaluate the impact of our practice model.
- Establishing a single whole family assessment and planning process which includes the development of multi-agency chronologies to support analysis, intervention and planning. This will include the development of the lead practitioner role to deliver this work where appropriate.
- Development of the Family Hubs workforce including an introduction to the family hubs e-learning module.
- Developing and embedding a training offer for the workforce, providers and settings focused on children under 2 years of age.

Approach to ensure that the system builds on families’ strengths, addresses the full spectrum of need, and is poverty-aware and anti-discriminatory.

Our current practice model is well embedded and is rooted in the principles of restorative practice and trauma informed approaches. Multi-agency professional relationships within our model will be built on co-design, partnership and empowering family-led solutions and using strengths-based language. Our population needs assessment and business intelligence functions will continue to ensure we are addressing the full spectrum of need, and that we are poverty-aware and anti-discriminatory. Examples include:

- Embedding the principles of the Staff College ‘Just Heart, Just Hope, Just Home’ publication which commits to racial justice, equity and inclusion and being passionate about tackling racial disparities within and across Children’s Services.
- Working closely with our LGBTQIA+ communities and ensuring they feel safe and are represented and responded to with our system.

- Our locality model and alignment with partnership place-based strategies means that we are responding to local need and embedding community driven solutions across a diverse spectrum of need.

1.3. Approach to quality assurance and supervision

Quality Assurance

Our quality assurance and performance management frameworks are strong, having invested significantly in these areas in the last 3 years. We can assess and evaluate the quality of practice and have a robust system of governance. We are agile in our response to quality assurance findings and make system improvements at pace. Through the FFCP, we will continue to build on these frameworks to evaluate the impact of the reforms on quality of practice and outcomes for children, young people and their families. This includes dedicated resource through practice leads to support with practice changes and to sustain quality of practice and application of legislative changes. We will continue to seek feedback from key stakeholders across the partnership and children, young people, and families as part of our quality assurance approach.

Supervision

One of the key defining characteristics of our model will be to have multi-agency group supervision across Family Help and Child Protection. Our group case supervision model will include all the professionals working with the family and will be outcome-driven and solution focused, with an emphasis on helping the family to utilise their strengths and family decision making. We have already seen the benefits of this approach at a smaller scale and will embed this across all our locality areas to ensure:

- We have a shared direction and solution finding.
- We are building relationships and learning from other subject matter experts.
- We are gathering evidence of assessment and analysis captured with clear outcomes for children.
- Social work oversight is embedded across the whole model.

1.4. Plan to engage children and families to capture their voices when designing and delivering services.

We have a well-established system for engaging, capturing, and responding to the voice of lived experience when designing and delivering our services. We will continue to utilise this system to further develop, design and hold to account the FFCP model as we move through implementation. Feedback from our children, young people and families tells us they do not want to be engaged multiple times on the same issues and expect consistency of relationships (in both how they are engaged and in terms of service delivery.) As such, we will continue to engage thematically and utilise the strong pre-existing networks of organisations that represent the views of children, young people and families in Dorset. Examples include:

- DPCC – Dorset Parent Carer Council
- 0-25 Voluntary and Community Sector Forum
- Youth Voice arrangements – including Care Leaver Forum, Children in Care Council and Dorset Youth Council
- Local Alliance Groups (multi-agency groups that come together to deliver outcomes for children in a particular locality – these are sub-groups of the overarching Strategic Alliance described above)
- Parental engagement role through the safeguarding partnership

Through the FFCP we will also embed some specific engagement roles/ mechanisms that will focus on gathering and responding to feedback from children, young people and families. Examples include:

- Engagement officers working with children, young people and families in Family Help and Child Protection.
- Youth Voice officers who will work alongside young people to define and deliver our commissioning offer.
- Establishing a Start for Life & Family Hub Parent Carer Forum to enable input to develop and ongoing delivery of our offer.
- Kinship Carer Engagement Forum to co-develop our own local kinship care charter.

1.5. Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

It is important to recognise the issues associated with the geographical boundaries of our safeguarding partnership in Dorset. There are two Local Authority areas, (Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP)) while police and health partners operate pan-Dorset. This is not an insurmountable barrier to change but there are potential implications for multi-agency arrangements recognising that the FFCP funding is allocated to Dorset Council and the safeguarding partnership boundaries span the entire county. Place-based arrangements are in place to deliver our responsibilities in Dorset through our 'Strengthening Services Board' an executive board chaired by the Chief Executive of Dorset Council which will support us to deliver these reforms for Dorset and enable us to engage closely with and share the learning with partners across the wider pan-Dorset footprint.

Governance structures

Our maturity assessment demonstrates that, broadly, our safeguarding partnership is well developed and meets the minimum requirements in the design specification for the pathfinder. There is ongoing work in this space through the FFCP and we will go further by:

- Developing our approach to scrutiny, commissioning independent scrutineers for thematic areas of multi-agency practice that we would like to test across the partnership (E.G. Neglect)
- Undertaking an efficiency review of our key partnership forums and governance to streamline wherever possible.

1.6. Plan on how to strengthen role of education at strategic level

There are some pre-existing mechanisms that set us up for the work to strengthen the role of education settings (including early years and post 16) at the strategic level.

- There is an existing role within our QA team that has oversight of safeguarding in our education system, and which strengthens our relationships within our education community and helps us to understand the quality of safeguarding in our schools and settings.
- We have representatives from the education community on our FFCP programme board.
- We have established connections to existing head teacher and school leader forums to test ideas with them as we move into implementation.
- A small number of Education Partners are currently engaged in our Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People (and associated strategic boards) and our Multi-Agency Strengthening Services Board which forms the place-based arrangements of our Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership arrangements.

To meet the design specification, we intend to explore a range of options including:

- Establish Education as a fourth safeguarding partner, initially the education representative will be the Corporate Director for Education and Learning, we will work with colleagues from across the education community to test and learn from this approach.
- Identifying leads or delegates from the education safeguarding community to sit on safeguarding partnership subgroups.
- Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) representation through the Local Alliance Groups with a clear thread for feeding into strategic safeguarding forums.
- Establishing and communicating the benefits for the education community.
- Building the relationship with our other statutory partners (specifically health) and our education community to share learning and provide support across parts of the system who represent equally diverse communities.
- Setting up an education specific strategic sub-group. This will likely be achieved by utilising and expanding the remit of a pre-existing forum.
- Clear and regular communication to education colleagues on the changes (N.B. this extends to all pathfinder reforms) via the weekly briefing from our Corporate Director for Education and Learning.

Shared values and resources:

Agreed ways of working, values, leadership statements

As we explore the role of education and formally bring our education community into the safeguarding partnership at the strategic level, we will work collaboratively on the pre-existing values of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding partnership.

The Pan-Dorset Children's Safeguarding partnership was set up to meet the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. It is committed to ensuring that:

- Children and families should receive targeted services that meet their needs in a co-ordinated way.
- There is a shared responsibility between organisations and agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in the Pan-Dorset area. The responsibility to join-up services locally rests with the safeguarding partners who have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children across the Pan-Dorset area.

The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership is in the process of agreeing a definition of trauma informed practice and a set of supporting principles it will work to:

'Becoming trauma-informed is a journey that never ends. We need to continually reflect and review our practices.' *'Being trauma informed is not something we do to people, it is a way of being with people, a way of developing relationships with people. Those that have experienced trauma have usually experienced relationship trauma, the only way to heal this is through positive relationships and workers are in a prime position to model relationships based on safety, trust and reliability.'*

The PDCSP Principles are:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
- Cultural consideration

Resource / funding commitments

We will explore the potential funding and structural commitment for the education community through implementation. The narrative below from the PDCSP Annual Report outlines the commitments from existing safeguarding partners.

“The PDCSP is committed to the principles of equitable and proportionate funding with shared and equal responsibilities. There is a dedicated Business Team to support the work of the partnership across the Pan-Dorset area. Following an external efficiency and effectiveness review of the Business team in 2022, a proposed restructure introduced a new single Business Manager across the Pan-Dorset area and introduced further administrative support. Both new roles have been successfully recruited and the remaining roles in the team made permanent. In February 2022 the Executive approved a recommendation from the review for the need for all partners to contribute an equal share into the PDCSP budget and agreed for 2023/24 that this would be £75,785 per partner. This would mean a total budget of £303,140. It was noted that this would be an increase for the police of £26,940, for Dorset Council of £6,853 and for Health of £785 with a reduction for BCP of £7,639. At the end of 2022/23 the PDCSP carried forward a small surplus of £21,697, due to the unpredictability of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, which fluctuate from year to year”.

Data sharing agreements

The PDCSP signed up to a new data sharing agreement in January 2023. Partners that have signed up to the agreement acknowledge that it provides a secure framework for the sharing of information.

The partnership comprise representation from the following organisations:

- NHS organisations and independent healthcare providers
- Primary Care providers e.g., GPs, hospitals
- Public Health
- Probation Services
- Youth Justice Services
- Dorset Police
- Schools, Colleges and other Education providers
- Early Years and Childcare providers
- Relevant Housing providers
- British Transport Police
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support
- Sports organisations/ groups/associations
- Coroner Services
- Voluntary, Charity, Faith based organisations and ‘hard to reach’ community group.
- UK Visa, Immigration Enforcement and Border Force

- Children’s Homes, Independent Fostering Agencies and Supported Housing Providers for young people
- Prisons
- Armed Forces
- Secure Training Centres and Secure Estate

There are also a range of other local data sharing agreements that are in place for supporting whole-family working. This is explained to families through the publication of a ‘privacy notice’ that contains important information about who we are, how and why we collect, store, use and share personal information, people’s rights in relation to the personal information we process and how to contact us and supervisory authorities in the event you have a complaint. We maintain a list of partners including schools and education settings who are signatories to this agreement, and we expect that we will be able to change the local system to ensure we meet the needs of the FFCP.

1.7. Stakeholder views

Workforce

Safeguarding Partners - Themes	Response through the model
There is consistent feedback from the education community that the system needs to collectively state the benefits of education being formally involved. They also feel they need to better understand the safeguarding partnership; what it is and what it does.	We will deepen our links with the education community collaborating around the benefits of an increased role of them at the strategic level. We will also enhance our comms and engagement with the education community to explain what the safeguarding partnership is, it’s ambitions and goals for children, young people, and families.
All partners have asked how we adequately represent the diversity of education settings, which span age ranges and multiple types of provision	Our health partners have offered to work closely with our education community to share learning on how they navigate and represent a similarly diverse/complex system across health provision. Through implementation we will explore methods for exhaustively but proportionately representing the diversity of provision in our education community
Our education community understand the need for engagement mechanisms (forums etc) but have highlighted that clarity of function, timings and proportionality are key	We will explore options for engagement in key forums that recognise the core-work and demands on time for all our statutory partners
Education colleagues are keen to ensure they feel like more than just commentators/observers to a process and want to be involved as decision makers/active engagement in change processes	We will shape and co-design the system with our education communities in a way that moves them towards active engagement in change processes and more of a decision-making role

Children and families

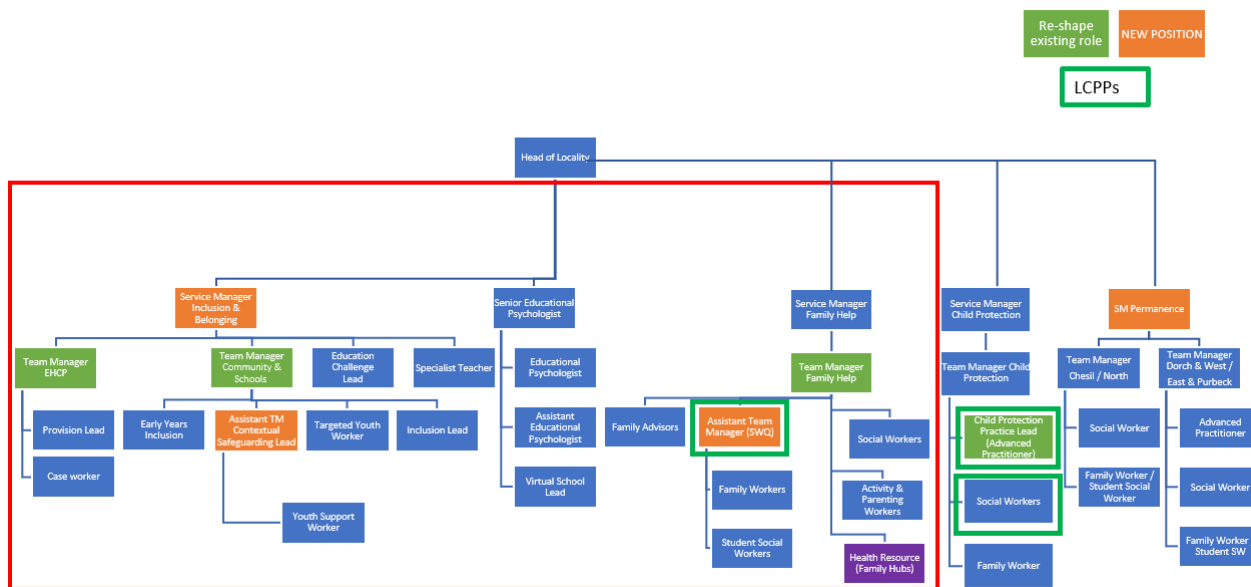
Safeguarding Partners - Themes	Response through the model
LGBTQ+ young people community did not feel heard, safe or that they had a space for themselves.	We will be shaping and co-designing the system with our LGBTQ+ young people community to enlighten the change processes and represent the diversity of our Dorset young people.

<p>They asked for training for teachers, about acceptance and different identifies.</p> <p>Specific support for children within middle schools and for those who are out of school/EHE.</p> <p>They asked for teaching and education about LGBT rights in schools and schools to address homophobia and bullying linked to this.</p> <p>The Chesil Youth Pride event 2023 was a co-produced event with young people of this community. The event was visibly supported by agencies and services and the public. Feedback from our LGBTQ+ young people and families was positive. A 2024 event is planned.</p>	
<p>Dorset Children and young people have said they need to have adults notice when things are troubling them.</p> <p>They need to understand what is happening, to be seen, heard, and understood and see action.</p> <p>They need to be kept informed, about assessment outcomes, decisions, concerns, and plans.</p> <p>They need to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship with someone they trust to help them understand decisions which they may not agree with.</p> <p>They need their own support and advocacy to help them put forward their views.</p>	<p>The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Partnership model is founded on good practice supporting the voice of the child and to maintain effective on-going action to keep the child in focus.</p> <p>This includes listening to the child’s wishes and feelings (using observations as well as what they child says about their situation and plans and hopes for the future), providing children with honest and accurate information about their current situation, future possible actions and interventions, involving the child in key decision making processes, providing appropriate information to the child about their right to protection and assistance, inviting children to make recommendations about the services and assistance they need or is available to them, ensuring they have access to independent advice and support (advocates or children’s rights officers) to be able to express their views and influence decision making, considering with them, issues arising in relation to identity, diversity, culture, faith, sexual orientation, language, disability, low confidence and trust.</p> <p>We will ensure through our model and workforce development that this is embedded in practice across the whole system.</p>

2. Welcoming and effective Family Help Services

2.1. Service design

The diagram below indicates how locality services will be organised to deliver for all children and families and describes the connection between the different parts of the system.



2.2. Overview of how to integrate current early help and CIN services to create seamless support for families.

Our locality teams will seamlessly respond to the spectrum of need across Family Help, utilising the strengths of our locality structure and the offer those locality teams currently deliver. We will bring together teams of family workers and social workers from within our existing locality structure to create our new family help teams. We have designed those teams and our practice operating model to have embedded social work oversight throughout, and we will continue to value the mixed experience and skillset we have in our early help (Family Help) structures. We will further embed our matrix management approach across our senior leadership structure to enable the change.

80% of what we currently categorise as Child in Need (CIN) cases will be held in family help alongside 100% of targeted (Level 3) early help work. The most acute (top 20% of) CIN cases will be held by our locality Child Protection teams to enable the maintenance of strong relationships and reduce professional hand-offs.

We will ensure that we offer structured workforce development, supervision and support to practitioners undertaking the lead family help practitioner role both within the local authority Family Help Service but also to practitioners in partner agencies who also undertake this role.

Makeup and organisational setup of multi-agency FH teams

As can be seen from the structure chart above family help will be delivered as part of a seamless service offer within localities under a single Head of Service working closely together to deliver outcomes for children. Family Help teams within Children’s Services will be locality based and include family workers and social workers and be managed under a single Service Manager. The locality structure will also include our “Inclusion and Belonging” strand (sitting within our locality structures as part of the Family help offer). This includes a range of practitioners - EHCP teams, Education Challenge Leads, Targeted Youth Workers, Inclusion Leads, Contextual Safeguarding Leads, Specialist Teachers, Educational Psychologists and Virtual School Leads.

Our 'Safeguarding Families Together' (Adult Services professionals working in our social care teams) offer will work with families in Family Help and Child Protection parts of the system and will include Social Work, Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Misuse and Domestic abuse practitioners working together utilising a group supervision model.

We intend to go further in enhancing our multi-agency teams in Family Help with a strong focus on the early years, co-locating and / or deepening the level of integration with Health Visiting, CAMHS, Sexual Health and Midwifery through our existing Family Hub programme. Our Family Help service will identify the group of professionals that need to work with the family and will be able draw on the experience and skills of all the practitioners listed above. We also intend to evolve these multi-agency networks, with the family, through multi agency decision making and adopt a family network approach here which enables access to family network packages.

Our Multi-agency Family Help teams will build on the pre-existing strengths of our locality model and the Local Alliance Groups (LAG's) which are the local embodiment of our strategic alliance and who are overseeing our developing network of Family Hubs. Our Family Help teams will include core staff employed by the local authority and with strong networks and integrated access to wider partner agencies, including Health, Policing and Education colleagues, Adult and Housing Services and Voluntary and Community sector organisations. We will support these agencies to take a whole family approach to working with children and families, undertaking the Lead Practitioner role when it is appropriate for them to do so. This will be in circumstances where the child / family has the strongest relationship with that alternative agency professional. We will build on and strengthen the work that we do as part of the 'Supporting Families' programme to enable this to happen.

We are enhancing our youth work offer, which will focus on our response to extra familial harm through education and community contexts. Our contextual safeguarding leads (Assistant Team Manager – Contextual Safeguarding Lead) will support increased focus on contexts within which harm occurs for young people and work with partners within our localities to make spaces and places safer for young people, including schools. Where there is a significant risk of harm outside of the home (extra familial harm), these risks will be managed through our extra familial risk and harm panel and the Multi agency child exploitation (MACE) meeting. These young people will be supported by a family help lead practitioner. A child protection conference would only take place where there is also intra familial significant harm.

Alignment to other / dependent transformation programmes

Dorset is an early adopter of the national Family Hub approach and one of 12 LA's delivering on the DfE's Family Hub Transformation Programme 1. We have aligned governance arrangements across both Family Hub and FFCP programmes, through the Family Help stream, with strong representation from across key partner organisations. Our Family Hub network will provide locality bases, facilitating co- location of our partnership workforce (including multi agency Family Help and Child Protection Teams) and providing accessible place-based delivery of our Family Help offer. Our Family Help offer will be built upon the foundations of strong universal and parent and community led early support provision. Dorset Families Matter (our name for the delivery of the national 'Supporting Families' Programme) will provide training and resources to support and enable partners from across the multi-agency workforce to embed effective whole family working and early help practice, with our developed model of maturity across the early help system enabling progress towards earned autonomy. Our Early Help Systems Guide and forward plan will provide a comprehensive assessment of current systems and practice, supporting development of our Family Help model.

Dorset is a Family Law Pathfinder, piloting the implementation of the private law recommendations. We deliver reducing parental conflict training across the partnership workforce and our evidenced based interventions are accessible through our early support and family help offer to families via our family hub network.

The pathfinder also provides an opportunity to recognise and join up with wider partnership strategies/ transformation plans to look for links / collaborative working in all areas of practice. This includes system transformation work on the following areas which we will ensure join up with and deliver on the principles agreed in FFCP:

- Health Visiting Transformation programme focused on delivery of the Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-Visiting Programme.
- CAMHS transformation – expansion of mental health support teams in schools, integrated front door and commitment to multi-disciplinary teams and service delivery through family Hubs.
- [Integrated Care Partnership strategy](#) – the development of multi-agency neighbourhood teams is a key part of this strategy, and we will support that for children through expansion of our locality family help model.
- Birth to Settled Adulthood Service – the creation of a flexible 0-25 service model for children and young people with complex needs across the local authority (launching in April 2024) which will be expanded through greater integration with health services in 2024/25.
- All-age Autism review – including family support and the introduction of [‘key workers’](#) a new workforce to support children and young people with autism and learning disability who are at risk of hospital admission. This will be aligned with the launch of our Birth to Settled Adulthood Service.
- [Right Care, Right Person Model](#) – this programme is aimed at ensuring that the right people are involved in responding to people with mental health needs, particularly those in crisis.

2.3. Integration with current early support offer and VCS implications

In broad terms, we define “early support” as what is currently known as level 2 early help. There are currently around 800 children in Dorset at level 2, using a ‘team around the child/family’ approach with lead practitioners from a range of partners including education and health professionals such as health visitors. Through the FFCP, there is a significant opportunity to bolster this early support offer through community led Family Help with a strong focus on the early years. We also see this community/VCS led approach as critical to embedding the Family Network reforms by providing more and earlier Family Group Decision Making in the early support space (see section on Family Network reforms). We will continue to work with our VCS partners to develop and implement Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches and commissioning differently with a focus on development of provision for 0-5’s in line with our Strategic Alliance Priority to deliver the Best Start in Life. We have allocated funding through our costed plan to test and learn here.

We are also members of 'New Local', a national organisation which is focused on unlocking community power and will use these connections to help us to test new ways of engaging with communities and community organisations to deliver a new system for early support and family/community led approaches to family help. Our Family Help offer will be built upon the foundations of strong universal and parent and community led early support provision delivered through our Family Hub network.

2.4. Lead practitioner role

Scope of lead practitioner_role

Our Family Help lead practitioners will deliver the minimum expectations as set out in the design specification. In most cases, our practice model is already aligned to the role as described but there is some further refinement we will need to make through implementation.

- We will develop and deliver a training offer and support structure that will enable lead practitioners outside of the LA to feel confident delivering services to families when they are sitting outside of the LA Family Help service and working alongside Lead Child Protection Practitioners at section 47.
- We already operate a whole family approach using 'Team Around the Family' so decision making with families is already happening in practice. We will go further (through the Family Networks reforms) to ensure that Family Help Lead Practitioners are offering Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to consider how the wider family network could support the family, training the workforce in Family Network approaches and where appropriate commissioning/providing Family Group Conferences.
- We will provide training to practitioners in VCS organisation to facilitate Family Network meetings (and access to family network packages) so that where appropriate families are able to be supported without having to come to the local authority for support.
- Where possible and makes most sense for the child and family, we will facilitate the continuation of the existing professional relationship with the lead practitioner.

We propose replacing references to social workers in section 17 assessment, planning and review with the term 'lead practitioner' to indicate where a broader range of practitioners with the relevant skills, knowledge and capacity can undertake direct work with families, holding the primary relationship with the family and co-ordinating services. We have clarified that when children are referred to children's social care and deemed to need support under section 17, social work qualified practice supervisors or managers should work with partners to agree to allocate a lead practitioner to work with the child and family. We would expect this decision to be taken in consultation with those already in the team around the child, where the child is known. Practice supervisors and managers will support the work of the lead practitioner, providing oversight for key decisions on the plan for support, approval of assessments and any review.

We will work to a principle of joint supervision and secondary allocation between FHLP's and LCPP's and a single plan. We believe the decision for co-working must be driven by what is in the best interest of the family. When there is a clear role, relationship / skill need that has been met up to that point by the FHLP, the FHLP will continue to provide that dedicated support / intervention as required. The FHLP will maintain a relationship with the family and will continue to carry out any direct work that is necessary for the child protection plan.

We do not want to create a model in which all FHLP's stay alongside the LCPP's in perpetuity because it wouldn't be sustainable. Our model will maintain the FHLP while that it is in the best interests of the family, where there is a required role for that worker, and where their contribution is purposeful.

We are committed to the ensuring we are reducing 'handoffs' and change for families where possible and already work to that principle. Where children and families are 'Stepping Down' from Child Protection this will be in a pre-planned way and we will work to bring the Family Help aspect of the work online as soon as we know that is the planned next step, enabling relationships to start and warm handover to be completed.

Considering the principles that we have laid out across practice to deliver the model we have considered those families who are already sitting at the higher end of need and risk in the Section 17 CiN space and that in order to reduce the potential for 'handoffs' that we should work with them on their current plan but in the Child Protection area of the service. We have looked at need across and this group of children and families equates to around 20-30% of our current Section 17 CiN work. We will continue to work in the context of de-escalation and ensuring that we are meeting the needs of these families and where we are able to assess their need has reduced sufficiently, we will work with them to 'Step Down'. Where need and risk may escalate we will be able to respond without significant change to their practitioner support network.

Who can be a lead practitioner?

We will work to implement a system in which the Family Help Lead Practitioner (FHLP) can come from any of our partner agencies. Where dictated by need and risk, the family help service will be able to wrap around that lead professional (with social work oversight and group supervision) to support the intervention to the family. Resourcing constraints and training and development needs may also need to be determining factors in the ability of the FHLP being able to effectively carry out the role and we will continue to test and learn around this during implementation.

How it is chosen who holds it and plans for key relationships

Through referral and assessment processes at the integrated front door, we will identify both the family and professional networks. This will enable us to identify important people and their relationships to the child and family to enable us to effectively choose the Family Help lead practitioner. In many cases, family network and Family Group decision making will be a key determining factor in the choice.

2.5. Supervision and quality assurance

Plans for case holding

Family workers and social workers in our Family Help Teams will hold what we currently describe as Level 3 / Targeted early help and 80% of CIN (least acute cases). We expect our social workers in family help to hold more of the CIN level work. Wherever possible, we will maintain the relationship with the existing worker as the family needs change.

We have modelled the number and ratio of family workers / social workers being able to provide an intensive response and they both will hold an average caseload of 15 families (this is based on 22 children). These caseloads may be subject to revision and change as our new locality structure is embedded.

Supervision

We will adopt a group case supervision model which will be led by social work qualified team managers or assistant team managers. All our Family Help Teams will have a social work qualified assistant team manager. For the most intensive / acute cases, this will involve the members of the multi-agency family help team, including our adult practitioners through our 'Safeguarding Families Together' approach. Social work oversight for non-social work staff will be provided by the assistant team managers. For less intensive cases we will offer a group supervision model through a "line of sight" approach, ensuring social work oversight.

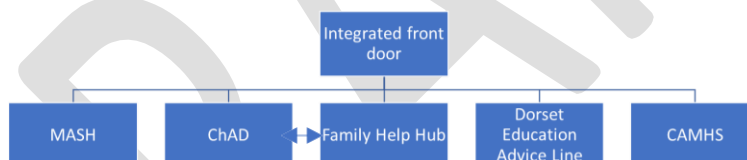
QA framework specific to Family Help reforms to deliver enhanced model

Our Quality Assurance (QA) framework will ensure that we are evaluating the quality of practice and effectiveness across all elements of the Family Help reforms. Our QA framework will also ensure that we are safely testing and learning the reforms and ensuring that policy and legislative implications are applied and responded to through the model, e.g., *Working together guidance*. The design of this framework is built into the delivery plan as one of the first key tasks. practice lead post Advanced practitioners will provide practice leadership within Family Help which will support implementation of practice changes from a "best practice" approach. This will also ensure that the policies, procedures, and frameworks are updated and embedded across the partnership.

2.6. Front door, thresholds, and assessments

Family Help Front door

The diagram below shows the functions that will be included within our integrated front door.



We will establish a single integrated front door to our family help services that will bring together several existing functions including our ChAD (Children's advice and duty service), Dorset Education Advice Line (inclusive of the Educational Psychology consultation service), and the Family Help Hub. This will be a multi-disciplinary team with an increase in core members and a range of practitioners from our localities will provide a link to local place-based services. Practitioners from each of these services will rotate in and we will increase the length of that rotation for continuity and staff development. There will be an opportunity to align access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health

Services (CAMHS) into the front door as we move forwards and we have built planning and implementation of this into the plan.

Building on our existing conversational practice approach, the new Family Help Front Door will harness skills, knowledge, and expertise from across our partnership workforce to ensure that families receive the right support at the right time.

We will develop systems and practice to enable families to connect to locality based Early Support Advisors enabling access to community based early support delivered through the Family Hub network.

Thresholds for Family Help

In Dorset we have adopted the language of “Need” rather than thresholds and will continue to use this language through delivery of the FFCP. A review of our existing ‘need’ documentation and guidance will be updated to reflect this as part of implementation. This work will include greater clarification of how “early support” (currently level 2 early help) and targeted Family Help (currently level 3 early help) are integrated into the new Family Help offer. Our working assumption is that the level of targeted early help delivered by the local authority family Help team will remain broadly the same, but we will aim to increase level of “early support” work delivered in the community.

Family Help will hold 80% of what we currently describe as CIN, with 20% of most complex cases being held in the CP teams. We will ensure there are effective mechanism in place for the transfer of cases recognising that we aim to keep the number of practitioner hand-offs to a minimum.

We will be mindful of the implications for partners who work across local authority boundaries as we undertake this work (in particular our police and health colleagues) working with potential differences between our “needs” documentation and other LA geographies they serve.

Approach to delivering a single whole family assessment and single plan for all Family Help referrals/cohort, that is strengths based.

We are committed to the development of a single whole family assessment and plan so that families only have to tell their story once, that is family led and that can be the foundation for the identification of further needs or specialist assessments if required. Our current practice model is ‘strengths-based’ and we use whole family assessment and plans already in the targeted early help space. Further work will be required to ensure that we are able to meet the requirements of recording for s17 work and the CIN census which tend to be at child rather than family level.

This is a complex space. We have discussed the concept with ICT / BI and workstream leads but not the specific document. Our current plan is to retain separate early help and CIN workflows but to adopt a single assessment and plan across the different levels. We will not reassess families as they move between areas if there is a recent assessment that is deemed sufficient. We will also be mindful of not making it so seamless that families are not aware of escalating risk and need. There needs to be a careful balance here that we will explore through test and learn.

We are well set up to deliver as we currently use one case management system for all LA lead Targeted Early Help and CIN and work can transfer from one level of need to another.

Through further work with our CMS system supplier, we are planning to make amendments to make a portal available in summer 2024 to provide technology to support lead practitioners from across the partnership to access key datasets and case information. We will explore expanding access to our CMS where there is a specific need, and it is proportionate to do so.

2.7. Meeting the needs of specific cohorts

How services support children with SEND and their families.

The integrated front door will include SEND expertise in the form of Family Workers currently operating DEAL (Dorset Education Advice line), being integrated into the rotation of family workers being part of ChAD rotation; Educational Psychologists and utilising pre-existing skills and knowledge within our Early Help (Family Help) workforce with awareness of SEND.

We will upskill the workforce in the Front Door to understand what current SEND workers provide on DEAL. These workers will remain within our localities and rotate in and out of Front Door.

Whoever may be contacting Front Door about Education Advice should be able to speak with any member of staff who will have the relevant skills and knowledge to support the conversation.

Our Inclusion and Belonging strand (which will sit within our locality structures as part of the Family Help offer) also includes EHCP teams, Education Challenge Leads, Targeted Youth Workers, Inclusion Leads, Contextual Safeguarding Leads, Specialist Teachers, Educational Psychologists and Virtual School Leads.

Our locality Family Help teams will continue to work closely with our specialist service for children with disabilities (CWAD) and this service will adopt the same assessment, planning and family led decision making approaches that will be adopted elsewhere. Families will continue to have access to additional support such as direct payments, short breaks activities and occupational therapy. We are in the process of expanding this service to meet the needs of children and young people up to the age of 25 years – through our Birth to Settled Adulthood Transformation Programme, this will launch in April 2024.

How service supports specific cohorts and needs identified in population needs assessment.

Our Family Help service will meet the needs of specific cohorts through a variety of mechanisms:

- A multi-disciplinary front door which will include but not be limited to subject matter expertise from social work, youth work, educational psychology, education, SEND, children with additional disabilities and CAMHS.
- Our group supervision model will include adult mental health, domestic abuse, and substance misuse practitioners.
- The multi-disciplinary family help team will include access to and / or co-location with wider partners from health, police and education. We will be continuing to deepen our relationships and co-location with health visitors to meet the needs of vulnerable babies and infants and will continue to work closely with early years settings to ensure that they are equipped to undertake the Family Help Lead Practitioner role when appropriate. Our locality based best Start in Life arrangements will be strengthened and used to ensure that we are collectively meeting the needs of vulnerable babies.
- There is pre-existing co-location with our police colleagues at "the Harbour" (our adolescent residential and edge of care outreach service). This model is expanding to the east of the county as well. Access to policing will also continue to be delivered / sought through our Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- We will continue to work with and support communities and community groups to work with and support a wide range of specific cohorts through commissioning arrangements as well as delegation of funding. For example Our Space Youth Project (for LGBT people up to the age of 25) has strong links with our family help service and aims to support young people who are or may be LGBT+ and empower them have positive self-esteem, to know they are supported, to have a sense of community and to overcome issues caused or intensified by prejudice in order

- to facilitate freedom of expression.
- Our partnership workforce development offer will continue to strengthen the way in which we work and co-design services with our global majority communities.

2.8. Workforce considerations

Recruitment plans and likely challenges

We are working to ensure minimal disruption and most effective deployment of staff to respond to the pathfinder. Our locality model and existing portfolio of staff can respond to many aspects of the work but currently there is separation between early help and section 17 CIN. We will adapt those structures to enable those aspects of the work to be held together within teams of Family Workers and Social Workers and are developing the correct leadership and oversight structures to enable social work oversight. There will be recruitment needs that emerge during implementation and the funding for new / extra resource to support the new structure will come from both finances allocated through our costed plan and reprofiling existing budgets in some cases.

There is a risk that we are aware of and working to mitigate, around the introduction of some new social work qualified senior roles. We expect our more experienced staff to apply for these and this could leave a gap elsewhere in the structure.

Necessary multi-agency L&D offer/workforce development plan specific to Family Help reforms for all potential lead practitioners to deliver the new model.

Wherever possible we will work to ensure that the partnership Learning and Development / Workforce Development offer span the full spectrum of need over bespoke, smaller packages of training. We will take a proportionate approach that ensures our staff and partners are able to access thematic training that will support them to work with all children, young people and families. *See section on Workforce Development for detail.*

2.9. Stakeholder views

Workforce views

Family Help - Themes	Response through the model
Population Needs Analyses and anecdotal feedback from practitioners across the partnership through co-design, suggest there is an opportunity to enhance our early support commissioning offer with a particular focus on the early years	Commission VCS to support the delivery of early support with a specific focus on the early years. This VCS provision will also support the approach to delivering FNSP's
Engagement and consultation with Social Workers highlighted some challenges for the current management of current social work caseloads.	The model recognises that Family Workers make the difference to SW caseloads and proportionate caseload allocation is reflected in the new structure.
Engagement and consultation with Advanced Practitioners captured the challenges for the current management of their caseloads	A recognition of the Advanced Practitioner role, their experience and complex case holding is reflected in the new structure.

Child and Family views

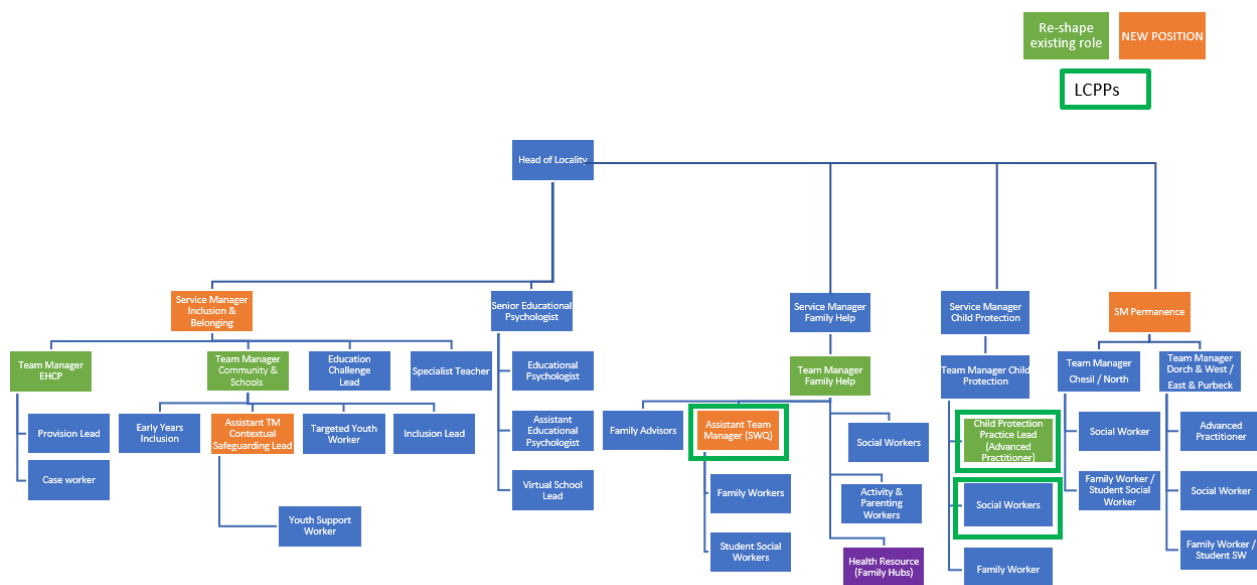
Family Help - Themes	Response through the model
<p>371 young people took part in the Voice X survey (VCS sector) aged 9-19 yrs. across all six Dorset localities.</p> <p>The top 3 topics which were important to young people were, mental health, social media, and body image. The responses to how they were feeling highlighted, tiredness, feeling stressed, and a lack of confidence.</p>	<p>Our VCS engage through partnership with over 250, 0-25 VCS services within Dorset and support over 60 club groups. The voices of young people shape the provision.</p> <p>Our model recognises the value of the VCS partnership, and working together, the design will reflect the difference communities make to CYP needs and support.</p>
<p>Our young people and parents/carers have told us they would like consistency of practitioner.</p>	<p>The Family Help Lead Practitioner will provide consistency of practitioner for our young people and their families.</p>
<p>Our young people told us through the “Your Mind, Your Say” and the “Dorset Student Pledge” feedback that Mental Health support in schools is helpful and easy to access but more is needed.</p>	<p>The Mental Health in Schools Team is embedded within some of our Dorset schools with roll out to all schools.</p> <p>This team working within the shared front door, could identify young people who may benefit from additional support from social care.</p> <p>Joint working with CAMHS Gateway and Social Worker could identify a plan to support and manage anxiety, confidence and self-esteem related to specific situations and or provide parents/carers with strategies to support their child.</p>
<p>Families have told us they need to have confidence in the family group decision process</p>	<p>For family group decision making, multi-agency support and access will reduce the power imbalance families feel and improve the relationships and trust for the longer-term and improve the CP decision making and outcomes for children and their families.</p>
<p>Young people attending recent diagonal slice partnership event told us that they would like to better understand how the different agencies supporting them work together</p>	<p>We will develop a clear early support and family help service offer, to reduce complexity and provide clarity for young people</p>
<p>They have also asked for easier transition for young people moving into adult support services.</p> <p>With more continuity of care is needed to enable young people to develop trusting relationships.</p>	<p>The B2SA – 0-25 Service delivery model for integration as part of the CAMHS review, with the adopted thrive model into CAMHS, highlights the areas where benefits could be realised, some of these areas potentially sit within the B2SA service for those with complex needs and some which are broader. For example, getting advice: a shared front door could give access to a graduated range of responses from targeted advice and guidance through to rapid emergency support. Providing early help support, when needed and at the right time.</p>

<p>Our parents and carers have told us that they would like improved care for children and young people with learning disabilities, autism, and ADHD.</p>	<p>The Birth to Settled Adulthood – 0-25 Service delivery model offers targeted support within a fully integrated multi-disciplinary team of practitioners with expertise of children and young people aged 0-25 with complex mental health issues, learning disabilities and/or ADHD/autism. This would include social workers with experience of working with CYP 0-25, family workers, nursing, psychology, occupational therapy, educational psychology, and psychiatry. Joint assessment, support, and safety planning with practical support to parents to provide necessary skills.</p> <p>They will also be closely linked to the NHS ‘key worker’ roll out referred to earlier.</p>
<p>Our young people told us through the Dorset CCG, CYP Mental Health project “your mind, your say” and B2SA service design (0-25 Service) that there needs to be more suicide awareness and prevention.</p>	<p>The B2SA – 0-25 Service delivery model offers a shared out of hours function, which is safe, impactful, and appropriately resourced through the fully integrated multi-disciplinary team to support a child or young person and their families through crisis, including jointly agreed crisis response plans. A Tier 3.5 offer to be developed to offer young people whose mental health needs cannot be safely met at home and where psychiatric hospital admission would not be helpful.</p>
<p>2023 Dorset Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Impact Survey completed by parents and carers, informed us that communication is very important to them, that they want good support in schools and that access to services and support from the whole system is not always as quick or as easy as they would like.</p>	<p>The family help model will respond to the many children with SEND who access Social Care and Early Help, between the ages of 0-25 years.</p> <p>We will be shaping and co-designing the system with our SEND children, and families to ensure the change processes represent their needs, in particular those with mental health issues through our links to the CAMHS re-design.</p>
<p>Our young people told us through the Dorset CCG, CYP Mental Health project “your mind, your say” that they need earlier access to services to prevent crisis and a review of the existing criteria.</p>	<p>The Family Help model enables families to feel safe and ask for support before they are in crisis (CP)</p> <p>The inclusion of designated staff from the CAMHS gateway within the Family Help single front door will provide different levels of support (school, home and in CAMHS services)</p> <p>The interface between Social Care and CAMHS will reduce the need for CYP to stay with CAMHS for extended periods of time, offering brief interventions for lower-level symptoms such as anxiety and depression and social care packages offered sooner. Moderate /severe symptoms will be transferred to the regular CAMHS team.</p>

3. A dedicated and skilled Child Protection response

3.1. Service design

The diagram below indicates how locality services will be organised to deliver for all children and families and describes the connection between the different parts of the system.



3.2. Lead Child Protection Practitioner

Definition of the Lead Child Protection Practitioner (LCPP) role.

In line with design specification The LCPP will:

- Lead all statutory child protection functions (enquiries, assessments, and reviews), including development and implementation of child protection plans.
- Work alongside family help lead practitioners to support the parents, child and engage the wider family, including through Family Group Decision making.
- Work as part of the MACPT, including acting as a bridge to the family help team.
- Lead preparation for court work and work in court proceedings, when required.
- Provide child protection advice across the service, including to family help.
- Work with IROs where a child is looked after.

The role of LCPP will be delivered by an Assistant Team Manager in Family Help (Social work qualified) or a social worker in the child protection team. These staff will all be level 2 and level 3 social workers, typically with a minimum of 2 years' experience post qualification. They have different roles and there is the benefit of cross-pollination across FH and CP.

The LCPP will be the lead worker for the child and family. In a minority of cases, the Assistant team manager in the family help space will act as an LCPP. For example, where strategy discussions in the family help space lead to an s.47 enquiry where we do not anticipate a CP conference will be required. This will protect the integrity of the established relationships and prevent disruptions.

Social workers in the Child Protection Service will case hold all children subject to child protection plans

and pre-proceedings. To support de-escalation where possible, the Assistant Team Managers in Family Help will lead child protection enquiries where there is an existing relationship with Family Help and work alongside the Family Help practitioner. There will be a matrix management arrangement which supports the Assistant Team Manager to be part of the multi-agency child protection team.

Assistant Team Managers in Family Help will also undertake section 47 work. Working example outlined below:

- Strategy discussion due to a specific incident (i.e., missing or extra familial harm).
- If they are already open to Family Help, the Family Help Team Manager would discuss with Team Manager in the CP service to consider if an ongoing CP response is going to be likely, and therefore the case would transfer to the CP service.
- If it's not likely, the assistant TM (FH) would be the lead child protection practitioner in this case and come alongside the family help worker (may or may not be SW) to complete the section 47.
- If it is likely that an ongoing CP response is required, the CP social worker to complete the section 47 alongside the FH worker and CP Social Worker would assume responsibility for the case.

We propose replacing references to social workers in section 17 assessment, planning and review with the term 'lead practitioner' to indicate where a broader range of practitioners with the relevant skills, knowledge and capacity can undertake direct work with families, holding the primary relationship with the family and co-ordinating services. We have clarified that when children are referred to children's social care and deemed to need support under section 17, social work qualified practice supervisors or managers should work with partners to agree to allocate a lead practitioner to work with the child and family. We would expect this decision to be taken in consultation with those already in the team around the child, where the child is known. Practice supervisors and managers will support the work of the lead practitioner, providing oversight for key decisions on the plan for support, approval of assessments and any review.

We see the LCPP carrying out and being responsible for all the statutory child protection functions in line with the requirements of the new Working Together guidance. Our model is that the LCPP will have primary responsibility for undertaking / carrying out the statutory child protection work including co-ordination of the Multi Agency plan. Our LCPP is the lead worker for the child and family. This is why we have Assistant Team Managers in Family help as LCPP's who can hold and maintain those relationships across FH and CP. Where a Family Help Lead Practitioner is also allocated, we see their role as supporting the child protection plan in a purposeful manner, delivering an intervention and/or maintaining a relationship in the way that is set out in the section above.

Case Holding

LCPP's will have a lower caseload and we are currently looking at an average of 10 because they will hold responsibility for the most complex children (Child protection, Care proceedings and the top / most acute 20% of what we currently call CIN). The majority of LCPP cases will be child protection and court work. We are expecting 70% / 30% split across Child protection and CIN cases respectively. We also expect this will also make the role more desirable.

Supervision

Group case supervision which will be led by a team manager or advanced practitioner. This supervision will involve the members of the multi-agency child protection team, including our adult practitioners through our safeguarding families together.

Quality Assurance

Our QA framework will ensure that we are evaluating the quality of practice and effectiveness across all elements of the CP reforms. Our QA framework will also ensure that we are safely testing and learning the reforms and ensuring that policy and legislative implications are applied and responded to through the model. E.G. *Working together guidance*. The design of this framework is built into the delivery plan as one of the first key tasks. Advanced practitioners will provide practice leadership within Child Protection which will support implementation of practice changes from a “best practice” approach. This will also ensure that the policies, procedures and frameworks are updated and embedded across the partnership.

22

3.3. Multi-agency CP teams

Make up of Child Protection Teams

As not all of our services are coterminous with partner agency (police and health) footprints, this has implications for the service delivery model that we will adopt. We have not been able to reach final agreement with our Police and Health colleagues through co-design, but we do have collective agreement on some key elements of the approach. These are:

- A hybrid model with a mix of physical and virtual colocation dependent on agency / partner ability / resource. The MACPT's will bring together multi agency practitioners whose majority of time will be spent on decision making, with clear schemes of delegation and group supervision.
- Team meetings with a core team and by invitation wider partners on a needs dependent basis. Service Managers will be our system leaders operating within a matrix supervision model.
- The MASH strategic and operational groups and SFT programme board will steer the MACPT development and delivery
- Physical co-location of the following professionals as part of our locality model:
 - Adult Mental Health
 - Substance misuse
 - Domestic Abuse
 - Probation
 - Education (Through our belonging and inclusion structure)
- Virtual co-location with
 - Police
 - An aim for greater police presence in joint CP investigations. Police CP resource operates pan-Dorset and is arranged thematically which makes it challenging to have single named resource for the MACPT's. We do have named leads in those police teams who will be part of the virtual MACPT's (Child Abuse Investigation Team, Missing, Child Exploitation)
 - Dorset Police are currently undergoing an operating model review during which seeks to achieve an uplift of a Detective Sergeant and two Constables in our Dorset County Child Abuse Investigation Team based at Weymouth. This would increase capacity and would also allow teams to operate co-terminus with the local authority boundaries. At the present time staff from the Bournemouth team also work across the Dorset geography and vice versa. This realignment will strengthen the place based working relations and robust points of contact can be formed. N.B. This is not yet agreed and is dependent on executive decisions within policing.
 - Police have committed to physically attend all RCPC's.
 - We will manage / monitor the system through our strategic MASH.
 - Our embedded harbour police continuing their work with children in this space
 -
 - Wider health colleagues
 - Health visitors and school nurses in ICPC's
 - Access to wider health colleagues through MACPTs and enhanced front

door with CAHMS integration

- Potential for physical co-location with health visiting in localities
- A drive to further improve our information sharing systems and approaches to allow for deeper integration and co-working especially where physical co-location is not possible. We are planning to give other agencies access to our case management system MOSAIC to enable timely and effective information sharing across partner agencies. Youth justice already have access. The benefits of this extend beyond the MACPT's. For the duration of the pathfinder, we will have seconded leads from health and policing to support the establishment of MACPT's (and other key parts of the pathfinder reforms)

3.4. Shared vision

We have a shared vision as part of our partnership plan that has been signed up to by all members of our Strategic Alliance. This vision commits to work we are going to do as a partnership as part of our Safe at Home and in the community theme:

- Work collaboratively with families, the wider family and community network, through our locality model, to manage and reduce risk, focusing on support, and taking a more investigative approach only where required.
- Routinely use family network decision making processes (Family Group Conferences or Family Network Meetings) through our early help, children in need, and child protection work.
- Maintain a strong, robust, multi-agency 'Front Door' (System that receives the requests for early help and safeguarding from people who are worried and concerned for children).
- Maintain a strong child protection service across the partnership that is informed and improved by the learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews locally and nationally and is staffed by well-trained professionals.
- Learn from the Safeguarding Families Together (SFT) practice model in Chesil, Dorchester and West Dorset to roll out an integrated model of family help and child protection across Dorset.
- Adapt our services and delivery in line with the implementation of the 'Stable Homes Built on Love' strategy.

3.5. Staff structure

We will have specific teams of CP social workers in each of our localities around which will be the multi-agency professionals inclusive of Adult Mental Health, Domestic Abuse, Substance misuse, and Police and Health colleagues some of whom will be co-located and some of whom will be virtual (see MACPT narrative above.)

23

Our CP teams will be working in the same physical space as our Family Help service, enabling good links across the structure.

3.6. Management arrangements

Our team managers and service managers will be social work qualified with matrix management oversight from two of our heads of locality (who are also SW qualified). SFT workers will have clinical supervision and management oversight provided by their host agencies and have group supervision and part of the team structure within children's services. Further work is needed to confirm arrangements for wider health colleagues and police, but we would expect the SM to have oversight of all allocations, work, QA, and performance of the work of the professionals within the MACPT.

Restructure

Currently we have SW's working with all children in a social care space, excluding permanence. We are creating a dedicated team for CP that will be within the locality but do not anticipate that this will need formal consultation or change of job descriptions.

3.7. Plans for consultancy service to other agencies on child protection matters.

This is already provided through ChAD and will be strengthened through our group supervision model.

3.8. Collaborative leadership

Many of the pre-existing forums within our strategic multi-agency governance structure create the conditions for effective practice. Examples include:

- FFCP programme board
- Multi-agency Child Protection FFCP workstream
- PDSCP
- Strengthening Services Board
- Our matrix management approach (and development of a further layer through the FFCP). The management structure provides specialist practice leadership (i.e., social work, SEND, inclusion)

We have also consolidated our wider multi-agency transformation portfolio to sit within the pathfinder work where possible (e.g., SFT / FFCP Child protection reforms brought together with multi-agency oversight and leadership)

We will strengthen our practice around CP in terms of understanding key themes, feedback from families to inform how we respond. The service manager has a key role here in multi-agency oversight and response and working alongside QA and multi-agency partners to provide QA, performance, evidence impact of CYPF experiences. We will update our practice standards around multi agency work as well.

Operationally, we will use a mixture of group supervision and our "line of sight" model to ensure collaborative leadership across CP.

Case conferences are also an example of collaborative leadership and involve multi-agency partners.

- Approach to joint decision making and multi-agency feedback.

Joint decision will be made through our group supervision and "line of sight" model. See above.

- Information sharing processes.

We have information sharing agreements in place with all key partners and these will be reviewed and updated to capture the work of the multi-agency CP teams.

3.9. CP conferences and Supervision

Approach to CP conference chairing

This has been an area of some contention, and we recognise that the minimum expectations have changed over the co-design period. There is significant risk in changing the whole system because it's currently very effective in Dorset. We are proposing that we will not initially change the chairing of CP conferences but will initiate a pilot in one of our locality areas to test and learn what works. This pilot will include social workers chairing conferences with oversight / co-chairing from our QARO's who currently chair CP conferences.

There is certainly an opportunity to change the way that CP conferences are delivered so that families have a greater input and participation in the development of a CP plan. Our work with the Family Rights Group on a pre-proceedings pilot will compliment this and commences in 2024.

Our police colleagues have also stated that they would like to see increased police contribution at Review Child Protection Conferences. At present Dorset Police provide a written report but do not attend the conference. We will move to a position where police attend all RCPC cases. It will have to be resourced from the Police MASH and expect it will result in improved joint working in ongoing CP cases.

Supervision and social work oversight - our model ensures SW oversight of all children in the Family Help Service and the Child Protection Service.

- **Case supervision** will be through a group supervision model in the Child Protection Service with clear social work oversight of the child, family and the plan and will result in a supervision record on the child's file on a minimum 4 weekly cycle. In addition, workers will continue to be supervised in the traditional sense, for wellbeing, for reflection and impact, professional development and performance management.
- **Case supervision** in the Family Help Service will include social work oversight. Initially this will include 1-1 or 2-1 case supervision meetings, which must include a social work manager for oversight and will result in a supervision record on the child's file on a minimum 8 weekly cycle. In addition, workers will continue to be supervised in the traditional sense, for wellbeing, for reflection and impact, professional development and performance management. Social work oversight will also be available through weekly Line of Sight meetings, this offers a space more akin to group supervision and we anticipate development in this space over time to enable an approach more like a group supervision approach.

25

3.10. Approach to including family networks in CP conferences

We want to promote family networks being involved in and attending CP conferences where appropriate. See section on Family Networks

Parental Engagement and Advocacy

We already commission SWAN (South West Advocacy network) who provide:

- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy including Safeguarding Advocacy, Litigation Friend, and Relevant Persons Representative
- Independent Mental Health Advocacy
- Care Act Advocacy
- General / Generic advocacy
- Continuing Healthcare Advocacy
- Advocacy for parents during care proceedings

- Carers Advocacy

In Dorset, advocacy is not time limited and is available to parents for as long as it is required.

Our internal QA service will also be a point of contact for all families and young people to provide advice and guidance regarding CP enquiries and conferencing. We will have dedicated resource within this team to enhance the advocacy offer (in line with the expectations in the design specification) as part of implementation.

Other elements to improve parental engagement

We have internal resource in the form of an engagement worker who will work directly with Children, Young People and Families to explore benefits and issues associated with parental engagement across the full spectrum of need. Feedback from these processes will inform the ongoing design and delivery of our model. This engagement officer is also establishing a Family Advisory Board to ensure ongoing engagement and participation of families into the Pathfinder model. Also, as part of our work with the Family Rights Group we will seek to introduce other new parental engagement mechanisms (e.g., Parental Panels).

3.11. Workforce considerations

Recruitment plans and likely challenges

Internally there is a potential challenge for some localities around having enough experienced permanent staff. The prescription that the LCPP must be a permanent member of staff may need to be a longer-term aspiration, but we are committing to it. To do this, we will move to the new model with some level of contingent labour with a plan to resource permanently longer term.

The introduction of additional Advanced Practitioner and Assistant Team Manager roles may lead to our most experienced staff going for these and this could leave a gap. We will advertise externally through a whole FFCP programme campaign approach which will major on the opportunities of working in a LA delivering FFCP.

Within our partner agencies there are resourcing challenges, most notably policing. The resourcing challenge in police is set against the backdrop that many of the specialist policing teams operate Pan Dorset but they have committed to place-based policing where appropriate. Outlining and finding solutions for this and other challenges will be part of the work we will undertake with our partners in the first stages of implementation.

26

Necessary L&D offer specific to CP reforms to deliver new model.

Wherever possible we will work to ensure that the partnership Learning & Development / Workforce Development offer spans the full spectrum of need over bespoke, smaller packages of training. We will take a proportionate approach that ensures our staff and partners are able to access thematic training that will support them to work with all children, young people and families.

In relation to the CP reforms, we will be embedding the principle of motivational interviewing and strengths-based language through a partnership L & D offer which we will also build into partnership inductions. We will also set out a minimum expectation for practitioners around knowledge, skills and experience in this space. *See section on Workforce Development for detail.*

3.12. Stakeholder views on reforms captured in co-design

Workforce

Themes	Response through the model
<p>Co-design highlighted the need for key responsibilities of the LCPP (working alongside FHLP, to support parents, engage with the wider family) and a clear understanding of who is responsible within these two lead roles.</p>	<p>The Family Help Lead practitioner role is well embedded across locality teams (undertaken by early help workers, family workers, targeted youth workers and social workers). Partners currently take the lead in early help systems (educational professionals, health visitors, school nurses) the model will build and develop this to strengthen and grow these roles to embed this support.</p> <p>The new proposed structure and matrix management will provide the clarity for the role and responsibilities for each lead practitioner.</p>
<p>Co-design highlighted the requirement for a clear training offer within learning and development to provide workforce opportunities.</p>	<p>A defined learning and development offer specifically designed to deliver the new model will be developed and commissioned. This is a multi-agency approach for the workforce to embed early help practice.</p> <p>Training and support packages for the workforce will enhance and strengthen confidence, skills, and knowledge across the workforce.</p>
<p>Co-design highlighted the requirement for CP to have one lead practitioner who would have oversight and decision-making responsibility from a strategy discussion and manage the risk.</p>	<p>The lead practitioner for CP becomes the lead within the network of practitioners supporting the child and family. They will be a qualified SW and for any child subject to section 47 and enquiry, or conference will be tasked with the responsibility for facilitating and undertaking the work alongside the family help worker who leads family help and to ensure all agencies act as a team with the help</p>
	<p>offered, as a seamless support to the child and family.</p> <p>The family help worker does not have to be a social worker, this could be a youth worker, family worker or partner practitioner, this will maintain the relationship with the family.</p>

Co-design highlighted the concern for chairing of the CP whilst maintaining the advocacy (to ensure a chance for all to express their views and voices are heard) for the families and providing scrutiny and oversight to wrap around teams.	A trial is underway to test this process to understand the risks, strengths, and development requirements.
Co-design highlighted the different assessment and plans across the levels of intervention (Early Help, CIN, and CP).	The development of a new single assessment and planning framework will support the family help design model, to provide the continuum of need from early help through to child protection.

Child and Family views

Themes	Response through the model
Prior to a child protection conference, families feel they are not given sufficient time to understand the process and there is an inability to challenge.	The QA framework responds to the requirement for SW reports to be shared 2 days before the conference.
Families feel it is inappropriate for reports to be shared amongst partner agencies, without their prior sight.	Reports will be shared and discussed with parents before they are shared with partners.
Surveyed families are neutral or in favour of the step up/step down process for EH, CIN & CP	Step up / step down remains within the proposed model to maintain the fluidity of support from FH through to CP.
Many families have said that although wider family members are welcomed as part of the conference, they are not an active participant unless the Chair allows them to respond.	The model recognises the anxiety and stressful situation and enables wider family members to step in and respond on behalf of the parent/carer. Our approach to this will mirror the rest of our approach and culture towards family networks. We see the value and therefore our new model will promote active engagement of family members in CP conferences.
A small proportion of families who have experienced FGC were unclear about the benefits of this.	The model will provide a respectful and empowering process for parents, children, and members of the wider family to understand and address the concerns shared by the SW to develop a plan, by providing their own solutions to the difficulties they have also identified through collaboration.

4. Family Network Support Packages + Family group decision making

4.1. Family group decision making

Proposed offer for family group decision making to all families

We will offer Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) to all families, by default, in Family Help, Child Protection and pre-proceedings. Our approach will be to empower the family to make decisions and we will support to varying degrees depending on the need of the child and the family. We recognise that FGDM is a generic term that encompasses a range of different potential approaches, and we will have a range of delivery mechanisms across the spectrum of need.

Broadly these will be:

- Family Group Conferencing (FGC) for all children / families on a CP plan / in pre-proceedings and in some cases for promoting reunification for Children in Care.
- Family Network Meetings for all families in Family Help (including Early Support – currently tier 2 early help)

FGC will be provided by a team of independent co-ordinators / practitioners. This will be a dedicated resource that will either sit within our locality structures or as a central team (to be agreed during pre-implementation). The FGC practitioners will facilitate timely and best practice provision of FGC. To ensure independence, these co-ordinators will solely undertake FGCs as part of their role and will not have pre-existing involvement with the case.

Family Network Meetings (FNM) could be facilitated by any practitioner within the locality model not working on the case (to ensure independence) and/or any practitioner outside of the LA locality structure best placed to support the process and with no prior involvement with the family.

We will embed a lifelong links approach, as part of assessment and consultation, prior to either an FGC or FNM, to cast the net wider and support the identification of family networks.

Our approach to FGDM will be underpinned by a training and development offer for staff across the breadth of the partnership. We are also working with the Family Rights Group on a pre-proceedings pilot which will complement and support the development of this work. This will focus on service development and training for staff in FGC's, establishing good structures and practice in family participation and new approaches to kinship care. We will also develop a local Family Network/Kinship Care strategy as part of implementation ensuring links to the national policy work on a kinship care strategy from the DfE (due for publication by the end of 2023).

Our model for delivery of FGDM will also recognise that FGC / FNM is one step in the process and the strength of the relationship between the lead practitioner and the family will be integral to the delivery of the plan.

Through this work, we will also explore extending and enhancing our advocacy offer to young people and families going through FGDM. This work is likely to be undertaken by our FGC co-ordinators (who are independent). The partnership training package for any practitioner in the FGDM space will also include advocacy. We will provide external advocacy where required, most likely in those cases where there are potential consent issues or where the child doesn't want to or is unable to attend the

meeting. We are, however committed to self-advocacy and creating the conditions for children and young people to be involved wherever possible. As part of our Family Network/Kinship Care strategy we will establish new practice standards and processes to capture family feedback.

4.2. Plan for how FGDM and family network plans are integrated and sequenced as part of family help and child protection.

Family Group Conferencing (FGC) will be offered for all children / families on a CP plan / in pre-proceedings and in some cases for promoting reunification for Children in Care. Family Network Meetings will be offered for all families in Family Help (including Early Support – currently tier 2 early help).

The sequencing and hard deadlines for undertaking these functions will be clarified during pre-implementation but the principle will be to undertake them at the earliest possible point and then at other points during the child and family's journey where it's seen to be helpful, where the family request it or are experiencing barriers to accessing practical support.

4.3. Family network support packages

Proposed model for delivering Family Network Support Packages (FNSP)

We currently have an offer around FNSP's, in all but name, providing practical support to families. These packages include things like providing food, utilities and in some cases the provision of alternative accommodation. Through the FFCP we will grow and invest more in this work and formally label the approach as FNSP's in line with FFCP design specification. We intend to use FNSP's across the spectrum of need in Family Help, Child Protection and for reunification.

This is an exciting and novel area of practice, but we want to take an approach that does not encourage families to feel they need to formally approach the local authority to access support. Wherever possible, we want to see these packages driven and delivered within the community while recognising that independently facilitated FNMs / FGCs are a prerequisite to accessing the practical support provided through an FNSP.

We see a strong link between our intentions around a greater role for the VCS in the "early support" offer and community driven and delivered FNSP's. We also intend to build links between this, and the Family Hubs work to further ensure that support is being provided by organisations and practitioners who have a deep knowledge and understanding of their local communities.

Our scheme of delegation will be updated to include who has authority to agree to what and agreed limits for funding by grade of staff member. We will avoid panels as a mechanism for sign off where possible. We believe the strength of this approach should be rooted in minimal bureaucracy but with robust oversight of packages of funding.

Local eligibility criteria for FNSPs and process used to identify families that will have access to this

The decision for accessing practical support through an FNSP will be made in the FGC or FNM in line with the family plan with a view to supporting the goals of that plan.

4.4. Plan for delivering family group decision making and family network support packages including workforce considerations:

Plans for rolling out reforms.

There are several key pieces of work we will undertake to deliver the reforms:

- A whole partnership training offer on facilitation of FNMs that will ensure practitioners across the system are skilled and able to independently co-ordinate these meetings.
- Embedding the FGC model of FGDM, which meets the principles set out in the Family Rights Group (FRG) accreditation framework.
- Establishing an FGC team of independent co-ordinators who will undertake FGCs and provide advocacy.
- A therapeutic training offer for families.

Plans for necessary recruitment

We will recruit between 6-8 FGC co-ordinators (exact number to be worked up during pre-implementation.) These will be funded in part through the FFCP and grant and some pre-existing resource that is available following the cessation of an externally commissioned service. This includes some from an external organisation previously providing our FGC service – including a leadership role.

Plans for case holding, supervision, QA, specific to delivering the Family Network elements of reforms.

FGC coordinators will aim to deliver 50 FGCs per year. We expect an average of 50% (25 per worker) of FGC's will lead to a review with those reviews being carried out by lead practitioners in localities. FGC co-ordinators will be supervised by senior staff in our QA service. Our QA framework will audit the effectiveness of FGC family plans and the use of FNSP's. Our evaluation lead will also be involved with this audit. We will develop clear KPI's within the QA framework and softer, qualitative metrics around feedback and engagement from families and children involved in the process. The QA framework will also include clear mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of FNM's facilitated by independent co-ordinators outside of the local authority.

Links to Kinship care

To further bolster the Family Networks reforms, we intend to bring the SGO service that is currently delivered through the RAA, in house. We will also explore and implement policy changes where possible to streamline the assessment process for kinship carers to facilitate timelier placement and keep children within their family networks wherever possible.

4.5. Stakeholder views on reforms captured in co-design

Workforce

Family Network - Thematic Themes	Response through the model
<p>Co-design highlighted the need to explore relationships and impact when considering the wider family network (family network is more than just grandparents).</p>	<p>The new model will support the family to identify who their wider family support network/ connected person(s) through genograms, at referral, to understand who they are to them, the risks, and points at which to extend consent at the right time.</p> <p>The model will establish the initial trust and relationship, to avoid crisis and then build over time the strength of an extended family and support network.</p> <p>Practitioners to support, with least intervention and empower the family network e.g. 'X needs some help with her transport so she can visit her grandchildren more often'. Whilst using good professional judgement around safety.</p>
<p>Co-design highlighted the need to consider consent in relation to the wider family network.</p>	<p>The new design model will support the family to understand the benefits of a family network meeting, and how to consent, this can be full, partial or no information.</p> <p>The design will incorporate established frameworks such as Fraser guidelines for a child under the age of 16.</p>
<p>Co-design identified the need for clear language to equip the workforce when talking to families about their network, relationships, and safety.</p>	<p>A defined learning and development mechanism with the training offer for the workforce to improve confidence to use clear language to convey to parents e.g. X will do much better if they have at least one safe adult who they can be with, when sometimes mum and dad are struggling with difficult circumstances in the home, like an auntie or grandparent they see regularly.</p> <p>The learning offer will include the family rights group pilot (an accredited model around FGC).</p>

Child and Family views

Family Networks - Themes	Response through the model
<p>A small proportion of families who have experienced FGC were unclear about the benefits of this.</p>	<p>The new model will reframe the purpose of the family group conferences and our approach to respond to the basic family need.</p> <p>The design is being informed by the Family Rights Group pilot (accredited model for FGC) to ensure the FGC is a family led meeting, with a network of family and friends, who come together to make a plan for their child. The independent co-ordinator provides the support to the family, and children are supported by an advocate.</p> <p>It is a voluntary process, but we are optimistic that our approach encourages and empowers families to collaborate, to keep children safe within the family network and prevent children from entering the care system.</p>
<p>Other child and family feedback / views:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FGDM at earliest point possible • Reluctance for wider family engagement especially where traumatic • Shame and stigma – not wanting wider family to know. • Kinship carers feeling they are failing at parenting. • Can financial support be provided where we are looking to parents as first point of contact to support kinship arrangements but are in poverty themselves. • There doesn't seem to be much leeway for potential exclusions from school 	<p>Development of Kinship Care Strategy with following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded Family Group Decision Making Approach. • Workforce development programme for Children's Services and partnership workforce for Family Group Decision Making. • Early identification and support offer for informal kinship care arrangements. • Dedicated digital space with accessible and relevant information. • A designated Kinship Service. • Tailored training and preparation offer for Kinship Carers. • Support for minoritized ethnic kinship families. • Kinship Carers to have access to legal support. • Family Friendly Fostering Panel. • Published offer of Financial Support. • Emotional and therapeutic support offer for kinship carers. • Support for managing family time. • Support to prevent potential breakdowns by kinship care arrangements.

5. Corporate impacts

5.1. ICT / BI / Performance / Data sharing

The overall requirements have significant system impact, in terms of case management form changes and system configuration, report design and creation and measuring impact. These largely fall into the following areas: Front door, identifying the Family Help cohort, single assessment and family plan, system access (including partner considerations), allocated workers and team structure, supervision and oversight, Family Group Decision Making, Support Packages, and Family Group Conferences.

The exact scale of the changes will become apparent as the detail is worked through during a detailed discovery phase and following requirements from the final design. It is anticipated that a large amount of e-system and reporting change will be required and will need to be planned over a period of time to make it realistic and manageable to implement to ensure that implications are considered at each stage of design change. Planning will also consider the timeliness of the practice change and what e-system changes are required to support the practice changes, such as supporting the work of a single assessment and plan. Some elements of practice will be possible without an e-system change (such as family support packages) but will be better supported once systems can accommodate recording. Operational reporting and performance indicators will be developed in a sequential way following system design and will evolve over time, with priority given to ensuring existing measurements are still reportable where required.

Consideration has also been given to statutory return requirements. We want to ensure that operational requirements remain a priority and are not driven by data requirements while maintaining our ability to submit our statutory returns and submit data to Ofsted. We anticipate the increase in certain CIN Census queries (*such as 2991Q and 8825Q where CIN assessments are expected but these may not exist against the CIN episode if recently completed within targeted early help*).

Dorset have numerous data sharing arrangements in place which enable the necessary sharing of data with partners. Once system access requirements are better understood, should an external partner direct case management access be required, data sharing agreements will be checked and updated where necessary to ensure specifics are considered to ensure sharing is done safely and legally. We plan to make full use of the Digital Economy Act, which we have in place for our Supported Families Programme. We plan to use our current partner-based systems to the full, exploiting the benefits of our existing person level electronic system, Dorset Care Record (DCR), and our linked health and social care datasets to allow population health management via our Dorset Intelligence and Insight Service (DiiS). We will also explore the options and benefits of utilising our internal data warehouse.

5.2. HR and consultation

We expect minimal disruption as we move towards the enhanced model, we have worked up during the co- design period. The proposed model is based on growth and improvement, and we do not anticipate that it will require formal consultation in most cases. We will produce a change management document as part of pre-implementation and intend to begin engagement with the workforce as soon as possible. If formal consultation is required, we will follow standard procedures. Early engagement with Trade Unions has already been undertaken and further notification will be required prior to the start of formal consultation, which would be no more than 45 days. Once agreement is reached the next steps would be implementation.

We are aiming for full go-live of our new locality model no later than April 1st, 2024, subject to completing the following steps:

- Engagement
- Formal Consultation – where required.
- Expressions of interest for new roles (6 weeks for internal staff)
- External recruitment where needed as part of whole programme FFCP campaign.

5.3. Workforce development and Learning and Development Offer

Throughout the co-design phase we have captured the additional workforce development requirements to support the implementation and delivery plan.

These include developing and strengthening career pathways and the training offer for new and existing roles to attract and retain employees in the areas of Family Help and youth work. We will be creating entry level routes (e.g., apprenticeships, formalised qualifications), reviewing induction and creating an assessment process to support career grade progression.

We have mapped the requirements against our current workforce development offer and will develop and deliver a training programme to provide the necessary skills set for the workforce and our partnership, specifically for:

- A partnership multidisciplinary group case supervision model.
- Leadership & management including matrix leadership and supervision skills.
- A focus on our Dorset System including system leadership, partnership induction and events.
- Child Protection Conferences.
- Family group decision making approaches including but not limited to family group conferencing.
- Strengthening our practice framework and continue to expand the principles of Motivational Interviewing, Therapeutic Thinking, Trauma Informed, Restorative & Relational Based Practice within our workforce and the partnership.
- Developing a training offer for kinship carers and the locality teams.
- A single whole family assessment and planning process.
- Family Hubs workforce development for the partnership including an introduction to family hubs e-learning module.
- Family network plan training for our lead practitioners (at a minimum) and wider workforce.
- Develop a training offer for the workforce, providers and settings focused on children under 2 years of age.

5.4. Finance and resources

Reforms funded from outside FFCP grant.

TBC pending conversations on grant

5.5. Sustainability

Our working assumption is that the increased resource requirements and associated spend on the FFCP reforms will require an increased settlement after the end of the pathfinder programme to ensure sustainability of the model. We recognise the scale of this assumption and will need to continue to have regular conversations around future funding as we approach the potential cliff-edge at the end of FY 24/25.

Previous investment into our model

It is important to recognise the previous level of investment that has been made into our model in Dorset. These define our pre-existing conditions for success and were determining factor in our selection as a Wave 1 pathfinder site. As other sites come on board nationally, we need to be able to share learning about what needs to be in place (and the costs associated with that) to implement these reforms successfully and at pace. It would not be reasonable to state a position that the grant funding alone is enough to deliver all the reforms if many of these pre-existing local conditions are not in place already.

Significant previous investment in Dorset (and associated benefits) can be demonstrated in:

- Our Quality Assurance service
- Early Help
- Strategic leadership

Nice to have's / need but grant funding doesn't cover

The main part of the model which is not covered through the grant funding is our multi-agency Safeguarding Families Together approach. This is critical to the delivery of our model and requires significant levels of funding from pre-existing local authority budgets but ideally from partnership contributions. We will be rolling this out regardless but would like to explore the potential for increasing the grant fund to cover this service as part of test and learn during the pathfinder.

6. Delivery Milestones

Key Points to note:

We have separated our high-level delivery milestones into 3 phases.

- Phase 1 = November 23 – March 24
- Phase 2 = April 24 – June 24
- Phase 3 = June 24 – March 25

We intend the for the majority of pre-implementation and implementation to take place in phases 1 and 2. In general, Phase 3 will be categorised by ongoing delivery, test and learn adjustments and evaluation, except for further design and implementation work on the most complex aspects of the reform / those that require further negotiation with our partners and in some cases funding from outside of the FFCP grant:

- A single whole family assessment and plan
- Establishing the final delivery model for MACPT's

The table below contains generic, high-level milestones but we will use the delivery plan below to inform our detailed local implementation plan. For example, go-live of the single integrated front door requires a number of steps which are not contained within the plan below but will be included in our local plan. This local plan will be managed by our programme management / transformation team (this work has not been factored in the tables below).

Workstream	Phase 1 Nov – Mar 2024	Phase 2 Apr 24 – Jun 24	Phase 3 Jul 24 – Mar 25
<p>Welcoming and Effective Family Help Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrated Front Door <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Go live for single front door -processes to be in place, e-system implementation to follow. ○ Establish updated timescales for rotation of multi-disciplinary staff. ● New Locality Structure for Family Help and Inclusion & Belonging Go Live <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Alignment agreement of Multi-Agency FH Staff ○ Clarity of case holding numbers & responsibility ● Early Support Commissioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Commission enhanced VCS early support offer with a focus on 0 to 5years. ○ Explore partnership contributions/social philanthropy. ○ Scoping/Outcomes /Focus (VCS Key) ● Quality Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated quality assurance framework in line with new model -processes to be in place, e-system implementation to follow. ● Needs and Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communication of integration of early help and CIN with implications for staff roles and practice model ● Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agree multi agency contributions to county wide safeguarding families together offer. ○ Establish line of sight supervision model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integrated Front Door <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CAMHS integration ● New Locality Structure for Family Help and Inclusion and Belonging. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Embed enhanced multi agency Family help teams. ○ Family Help Lead Practitioners in place and operating. ○ New Locality Structure for Family Help Embed ○ Further layers of matrix management ○ Provision of specialist practice leadership ● Early Support Commissioning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluate review and refine. ● Supervision and quality assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Group case supervision model go- live. ● Need and Assessments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated referral and assessments processed at integrated front door to identify family help Lead Practitioner ○ Single whole family assessment and plan go live 	

Workstream	Phase 1 Nov – Mar 2024	Phase 2 Apr 24 – Jun 24	Phase 3 Jul 24 – Mar 25
Family Network support packages - Family Group Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Group Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Processes to be in place, e-system implementation to follow. ○ Offer FGDM to all families by default. ○ FGC team of independent co-ordinators in place ○ Family network meeting approach in family help live. ○ Agree sequencing and quantifiable timescales for undertaking FGDM functions. ○ Family Right Group pre-proceeding pilot scoping ● Family Network support packages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Processes to be in place, e-system implementation to follow. ○ Establish approach for use of FNSP across the spectrum of need. ○ Align VCS commissioning offer to support packages. ○ Update scheme of delegation for sign off. ○ Set out local eligibility criteria as part of offering FDGM by default. ● Kinship Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bring SGO service in house. ○ Policy changes to streamline assessment processes. ○ Develop local Kinship care strategy. ● Quality Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Processes to be in place, e-system implementation to follow. ○ Update Quality Assurance framework to audit effectiveness of Family Network reforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family Group Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer FGDM to all families by default. ○ Family Right Group pre proceeding pilot Delivery. ○ FGC Accreditation ● Family Network support packages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full go live ● Kinship care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New SGO service live ○ Delivery of Kinship care strategy 	

Workstream	Phase 1 Nov – Mar 2024	Phase 2 Apr 24 – Jun 24	Phase 3 Jul 24 – Mar 25
A dedicated and skilled Child Protection response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Locality Structure for Child Protection Go Live <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction of Lead Child Practitioners ○ Social Work oversight across entire model ○ Clarity of case holding numbers & responsibility ○ Processes to be in place, e-system implementation to follow. • Supervision and Quality Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated quality assurance framework in line with new model • Needs and Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communication of CIN cases held in CP with implications for staff roles and practice model. • Supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agree multi agency contributions to county wide safeguarding families together offer. • Quality Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Updated quality assurance framework in line with new model • Multi Agency Child Protection Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish physically collocated multi agency professionals as part of the locality model. ○ Further scoping will design work with police and wider health colleagues. • CP Conference Chairing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Design pilot in one locality • Parental engagement and advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dedicated resource within QA to enhance advocacy offer ○ Processes to be in place, e-system implementation to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi Agency Child Protection Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Police and wider health colleagues as part of MACPT (on a needs led basis) • New Locality Structure for Child Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Embed Further layers of matrix management. ○ Provision of specialist practice leadership • CP Conference Chairing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pilot approach go live. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi Agency Child Protection teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Further negotiations and enhancements of police and wider health colleague role and contribution

Workstream	Phase 1 Nov – Mar 2024	Phase 2 Apr 24 – Jun 24	Phase 3 Jul 24 – Mar 25
Overall design for the system and Safeguarding Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment with partners place based strategies. Embedding /enhancing strategic partnership principles to address the full spectrum of need (BAME, LGBTQIA) Youth Voice and engagement officers recruited to capture voice of lived experience. Start for Life, Family Hub Parent Carer Forum in place. Kinship Carer Engagement forum established. Benefits scoping for education community. Build relationships between education and other statutory partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Strategic subgroup of PDSCP Formally appoint Leads and delegates from education community on the Safeguarding Partnership. Explore and agree funding Safeguarding partnerships commitments. Updates to data sharing agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing test and learn and evaluation of new approach.
Workstream	Phase 1 Nov – Mar 2024	Phase 2 Apr 24 – Jun 24	Phase 3 Jul 24 – Mar 25
Corporate Impacts			
ICT, BI & Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping and enhancing required changes to systems in line with new model. Updating performance management framework Agree local resource requirements to support the change. Update data sharing agreements where required. Work to systematise single assessment and plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to systems Links to local and national FFCP evaluations Extra resource in place Implement single assessment and plan. Continue to review and update data sharing agreements 	
Communications Engagement & Co-production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child and family views and engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define annual plan. Youth voice officers in post Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme wide partnership comms plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child and family views and engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise existing channels with enhancements in line with plan. Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of updated comms plan 	

Workstream	Phase 1 Nov – Mar 2024	Phase 2 Apr 24 – Jun 24	Phase 3 Jul 24 – Mar 25
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Forward schedule of key strategic and operational partnership forum 		
HR Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Informal/formal consultation as required. ● Programme wide recruitment campaign for all new roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consultation and engagement on multi agency staff requirements as needed. ● New roles recruited to 	
Workforce Development and L & D offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership workforce skills audit ● Cross programme workforce development training offer ● Update partnership induction offer to include key skills and knowledge needed. ● Clarification of approach to strengthening career pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further updates and delivery of L&D /workforce development training offer in line with finding of workforce skills audit. 	

DRAFT

This page is intentionally blank

This page is intentionally left blank

People and Health Overview Committee 6 February 2024 Childrens Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027

For Recommendation to Cabinet

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: Elizabeth Saunders
Job Title: Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships (Interim)

Tel: 01305 224676

Email: Elizabeth.Saunders@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary: The Attached Report is our Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027, which outlines how we will continue to implement and deliver arrangements that wrap around our children and families, to ensure that they receive the right support at the right time.

This strategy will support us to deliver the best possible outcomes for our children when they are in care and as they enter adulthood. Our aim is to keep children close to home and be the best corporate parents that we can be, and this strategy will help us do just that.

The report offers a snapshot of “Our Care Family” highlighting the details of the number of children and families that we support.

Recommendation:

To recommend that Cabinet approves this sufficiency strategy and related action planning that is required for its effective delivery.

Reason for Recommendation:

There are a range of legal duties associated with an overall “sufficiency duty” on all local authorities, as part of the Children Act 1989, to secure accommodation for children in their care, within the local authority area. This report highlights some of the detail.

With regards to the strategic contexts, we are working within, the report highlights some of the national strategies, which underpin our plans and approach. **Stable Homes Built on Love** (which Dorset is one of three Local Authorities chosen to implement the recommendations of this review) and **Families First** together with **Regional Care Coordination** are some examples nationally. Locally we refer to Dorset Children, Young People and Families Plan 2023 -2033, where we have highlighted that **“We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be.”** This plan is reinforced by the Dorset Strategic Alliance for children and young people, which offers the best from a multi- agency partnership, which is actively shaping the transformation of our services and approach.

1. Report

- 1.1 Within the report we have provided an analysis of our current provision and achievements from our last strategy;
- 1.2 We have reduced the rate of children in our care from Dorset to 60 per 10,000, however changes to the National Transfer scheme and the high court ruling relating to placement of unaccompanied children in hotels by the DfE resulted in a rapid increase in the number of unaccompanied children being care for by Dorset so our overall rate of children in care is 71 per 10,000.
- 1.3 There has been a reduction in children in care placed out of area from 47% in 2020 to 42% in 2023. Again, this has been impacted by the number of unaccompanied children who are more likely to be placed out of area – if these are excluded the proportion placed out of area is 36%
- 1.4 We have increased the number of children’s homes places in Dorset from 16 to 30.
- 1.5 Although the number of in-house fostering households has remained the same, we have increased the number of children our in-house foster carers are caring for through better utilisation rates. We have also

implemented an increase in foster carer payments to in-house foster carers (above inflation) to recognise the invaluable role they play in caring for our children.

- 1.6 We have implemented a new evidenced based model of sustainable foster care – Mockingbird, offering structured support and relationships that mirrors an extended family. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.
- 1.7 We have implemented a new framework contract for supported accommodation which is supporting providers to meet the requirements of the new regulations. There are five local providers on there offering 87 places.
- 1.8 We have implemented a new model of support and care for teenagers who are on the edge of care, at risk of placement breakdown or in insecure accommodation – through the ‘Harbour’ approach. The Harbour approach is a multi-agency partnership that pools resources to achieve improved outcomes for children, families, and communities. This has a linked 3 bedded residential children’s home, College House (rated good by Ofsted).
- 1.9 We have converted a range of Dorset Council properties to develop a range of in-house provision and used this to develop the external residential children.
- 1.10 Our overall Strategic commissioning intentions for 2024 – 2027 are:

1. **We will support more children to stay with their birth parents or within their wider family networks**

- This work will be underpinned by our Pathfinder work which includes, supporting communities to respond and develop resources to support families, increased use of Family Group Conferencing, rolling out Safeguarding Families Together to the West of the county. Develop a Harbour East out reach service and develop the ‘Lighthouse Model’ for outreach for families who care for children with a disability. Continue to grow the Pause Project.

2. **We will increase the provision of local high quality foster care so that most children who cannot live with birth family are provided with alternative family-based care**

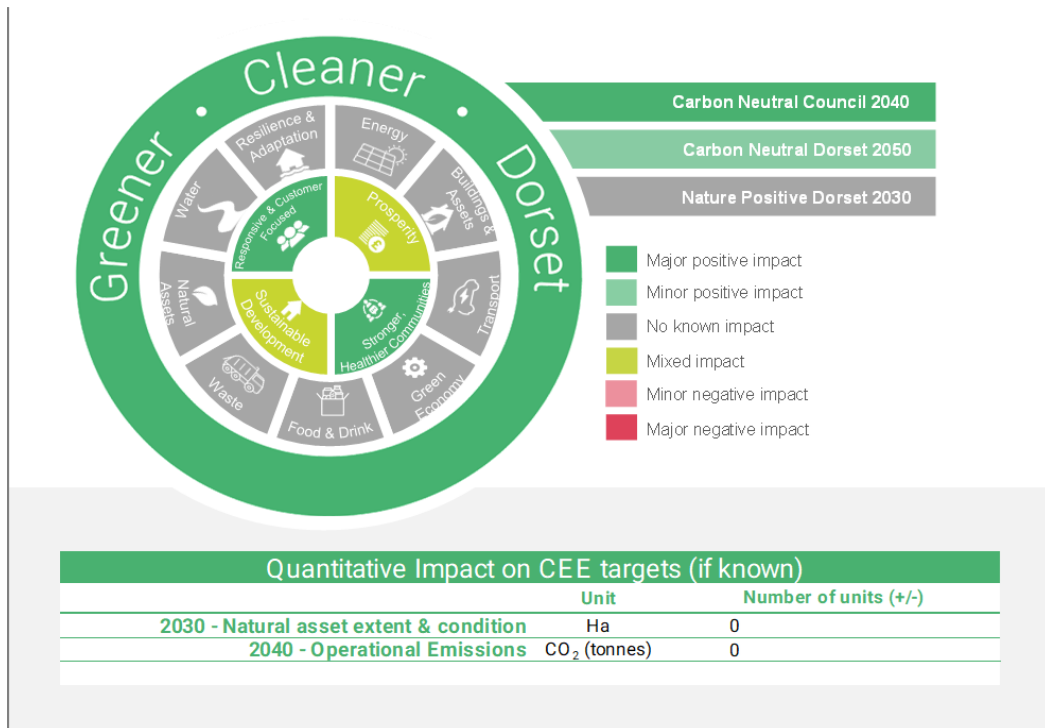
- The Southwest consortium of Local Authorities of which Dorset is one, were successful in a DfE bid to undertake a regional recruitment drive to grow the number of foster carers, the funding will also support Dorset to develop more Mockingbird fostering communities. We will bid for Capital Funds to support carers to make adaptations to their homes to create more fostering availability or to adapt homes to care for children with special needs,
3. **We will only place children and young people in residential care where their needs cannot be met within a family, and we will increase local provision so that when we do so, we do not place them at distance**
 - We will develop both internal provision as well as engaging with external providers to create more provision within the county with opportunities for external providers to lease council owned buildings to create more capacity.
 4. **We will increase and improve specialist provision for children and young people with significant mental health and /or complex needs**
 - We will continue to develop and implement our Birth to Settled Adulthood service, creating specialist services for children with a disability and the support they and their families receive, we will continue to support the Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services re design ensuring a range of ways and places where children can receive support (I.e. mental health practitioners within schools, family hubs and within localities)
 5. **We will secure permanence outside of care through adoption and special guardianship for all children for whom this is in their best interests**
 - We will ensure that permanence is secured at the earliest opportunity for children and the right support is in place for children to maintain permanence.
 6. **We will increase the quantity and range of high-quality care leaver accommodation and support to promote stability, safety, and emotional wellbeing**
 - Working with our Housing and Assets team we will identify and re purpose Dorset properties for our care leavers, learning and building on the success of the 12 self-contained units in operation currently. We will also review our Staying Put Policy to encourage more of our foster carers to offer Staying Put accommodation to children in their care when they turn 18.

- 7. **We will manage placement resources effectively**
 - We will review the mechanisms in which we oversee and manage all resources for children and their families which includes both quality of provision, value for money and developing and managing the local external social care market.

2. **Financial Implications**

n/a

3. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**



4. **Well-being and Health Implications**

The children, young people and their families will benefit greatly in terms of their health and well-being by the commissioning of the right care, in the right place and closer to home.

5. **Other Implications**

n/a

6. **Risk Assessment**

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

Current Risk: high if we fail to approve the sufficiency strategy and do not deliver its plans and actions.

Residual Risk: The risk is significant reduced by the delivery of this strategy,

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**
n/a

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Accessible Table and Table of Recommendations

Appendix 2 – Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2024-27

9. **Background Papers**

n/a

Appendix 1: Accessible Table of Impacts and Table of Recommendations

ACCESSIBLE TABLE SHOWING IMPACTS

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	Impact
Energy	No known impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact

Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	neutral
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	neutral
Responsive & Custome Focused	strongly supports it

TABLE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Responses -will this be incorporated into your proposal? How? And if not, why not?
Energy	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A
Buildings & Assets	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A
Transport	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A
Green Economy	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A
Food & Drink	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A

Waste	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A
Natural Assets & Ecology	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A
Water	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A
Resilience & Adaptation	
No recommendations found for this category	N/A

Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers

2024 - 2027

Dorset Council, Children's Services

Contents

Foreword	2
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Our legal duties	4
3. The Dorset Promise.....	4
4. The Strategic Context.....	5
National Strategy: Stable Homes Built on Love.....	5
Families First.....	5
Regional Care Cooperatives	5
Local Strategies	6
Good Care Provision	6
Corporate Parenting Strategy.....	7
5. Our Care Family – A Snapshot	8
6. Our children and young people.....	9
Family help, child protection and edge of care	9
Children in Care	9
About our children in care	10
Types of home for our children	10
Locations of homes for our children	11
Children coming into our care	11
Children leaving our care	11
Stable homes for our children	11
Wellbeing of our children in care	12
Our care leavers	13
Our children in care have told us	14
7. What we have achieved since our last strategy	14
8. Our strategic priorities	16
9. How will we know we have been successful?.....	32

Foreword

I am delighted to share with you our Sufficiency Strategy for 2024-2027. This is our strategy for how we will continue to implement and deliver arrangements that wrap around our children and families to ensure they receive the right support at the right time. We want to deliver the best possible outcomes for children when they are in our care and as they enter adulthood.

Our aim is always to keep our children close to home and to be the best corporate parents that we can be. Where we can, we want to support families to stay together, but where children and young people do need care, we want to make sure this is in family-based care where possible and that we support extended family networks to be able to raise their children. We will actively seek out and work with a child's direct and extended family and friends in considering the best forms of support. We will prioritise loving relationships for all children in care and care leavers and ensure we have a wide range of care options in place locally through having the right number, type and quality of foster carers, residential homes, and accommodation. Where children cannot return to their birth family, we want to secure timely and successful permanence through adoption wherever this is assessed as the best plan for the child.

Our ambitions for all children and young people in Dorset are set out in our partnership's ten-year plan – [Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023 to 2033 - Dorset Council](#). This Sufficiency Strategy and its supporting action plan are how we implement the activity required for our Good Care Provision priority.

My sincere thanks to all the families, carers, colleagues, partners, and elected members who all play a huge role in making Dorset a great place to grow up and above all to our amazing children and young people who have told us the importance of belonging and what that means to them – that they want all children to thrive in Dorset. My commitment to you is that we will continue to work tirelessly to make that a reality for every child and young person in Dorset.

Theresa Leavy,

Executive Director People: Children's Services

Dorset Council

1. Introduction

Welcome to Dorset Council's Placement Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers, 2024 to 2027.

Dorset Council is committed to supporting a child's right to family life and we are focused on providing services that:

- Support families to care for their own children, preventing the need for children to enter the care system.
- Support extended families to care for children through kinship care arrangements.
- Support children to live in a family setting wherever possible when in care.
- Provide loving and stable homes for children while they are in our care.
- Provide high quality and safe accommodation for care leavers.

When children do come into our care it is important that we are able to offer the right home that meets their needs and enables them to remain in touch with the people and communities that are important to them. As children leave our care and enter adulthood, we want them to have the best possible access to high quality accommodation with the right support that meets their needs.

This strategy sets out how Dorset Council will meet these objectives. It sets out our understanding of current needs, availability of provision, and our plans for development over the next 3 years.

Our ambitions for our children in care and care leavers have informed our '**Strategic Priorities**' for this Sufficiency Strategy.

Our Strategic Priorities are to:

- 1. Support more children to stay with their birth parents or within their wider family networks.**
- 2. Increase the provision of local, high quality foster care so that more children who cannot live with birth family are provided with alternative family-based care.**
- 3. Only place children and young people in residential care where their needs cannot be met within a family, and to increase local provision so that when we do so, we do not place them at distance.**
- 4. Increase and improve specialist provision for children and young people with significant mental health and/or complex needs.**
- 5. Secure timely permanence outside of care through adoption and special guardianship for all children where this is in their best interests.**
- 6. Raise our ambitions for our care leavers and increase the quantity, quality, and range of care leaver accommodation and support to promote stability, safety, and emotional wellbeing.**
- 7. Manage placement resources effectively.**

The Strategy sets out in detail how we will go about addressing each of those seven Strategic Priorities and identifies some high-level success measures. If we are successful in delivering this strategy, we would expect to see:

- Fewer children in care.
- A higher proportion of children in care placed in foster care.
- Fewer young people in residential care and more of those who are, being placed in Dorset.
- Increased provision for young people with mental health and complex needs.

- More children moving to adoption and special guardianship more quickly.
- No care leavers in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Well managed placement resources.

We will measure ourselves against these high-level indicators, while also setting out more detailed actions and performance measures in an accompanying action plan.

2. Our legal Duties

There are a range of legal duties associated with an overall ‘Sufficiency Duty’ on local authorities as part of the Children Act, 1989, to secure accommodation for children in their care within the local authority area:

- Section 17(1) sets out the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need and their families in a local area that are appropriate to their needs.
- Section 20 requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within the area if they appear to require accommodation.
- Section 21 requires a local authority to accommodate certain children who are remanded or who are subject to a criminal court order.
- When deciding on the most appropriate placement, Section 22 requires a local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent.
- Section 22C sets out additional factors which must be taken into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
 - Allowing child to live near their home.
 - Not disrupting child’s education/training
 - Enabling the child and other sibling to live together.
 - Meeting the needs of disabled children
 - Providing accommodation in the local authority area unless that is not reasonably practicable.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017, extends the duties on all local authorities to have regard to a set of Corporate Parenting Principles when exercising their functions in relation to children in care and care leavers up to the age of 25.

3. The Dorset Promise

It takes a community to make a difference to the lives of our care experienced children and young people. This strategy is aimed at ensuring a sufficient quantity and range of high-quality care placements and accommodation for children in care and care leavers so that we support improved outcomes. Our Dorset Promise to children in care and care leavers makes a number of commitments to how we will work with and support our children and young people by:

- Keeping our word. Being honest, kind, and reliable.
- Listening to you and involving you.
- Working with you.
- Helping you to be safe.
- Supporting you with your health and wellbeing.
- Supporting you to live your life by providing you with opportunities and activities and celebrating your achievements.
- Helping you to have aspirations for your future.
- Supporting you to be steady and settled as adult.

You can see our full promise on the Council’s website [The Dorset Promise - Dorset Council](#).

4. The Strategic Context

National Strategy: Stable Homes Built on Love

Following an [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#), the government published a new strategy '[Stable Homes Built on Love](#)', which brings forward a range of plans to reform how children's social care is delivered and has changed the national context for social care placement sufficiency. These reforms are being tested through a number of different pathfinders, the most relevant of which to this strategy are the 'Families First' and 'Regional Care Cooperative' pathfinders.

Families First

Dorset Council has been invited to be a pathfinder authority to implement the reforms under the Families First for Children programme, the key strands of which are:

- Family Help – establishing locally based multi-disciplinary teams that work collaboratively with partners to provide intensive, non-stigmatising and effective support that is tailored to the needs of children and families.
- Child Protection – a more specialised service response involving workforce transformation.
- Family Networks – greater use of family care and support, with earlier use of family group decision-making, with support to enable more children to live at home or to transition into kinship care.
- Safeguarding Partners – greater clarity on multi-agency roles and responsibilities, and an increased role for education providers.

We will work on testing and learning from these new approaches over the next 2 years before wider roll out across the country.

Regional Care Cooperatives

Regional Care Cooperatives have been recommended to address challenges with care provision across the country. They are described as a model for providing homes for children where responsibility for planning, commissioning and delivery sits at a regional level, rather than with individual local authorities. The government's intended outcome of this approach is improved planning which increases the available number of care placements and enables local authorities to manage the care market. Regional areas have been invited to participate in these pathfinders. Dorset Council, along with 13 other local authorities in the South-West has expressed an interest in becoming a regional care cooperative and have moved to phase 2. Regional Care Collaboratives will be required to focus on the following activities:

1. Carrying out regional data analysis and forecasting future needs of homes for children in care, in partnership with health and justice.
2. Developing and publishing a regional sufficiency strategy setting out current provision and action to fill gaps.
3. Market shaping, working as one customer with providers to address local needs, improve value for money and commission the care places required from external providers. This should include

responding to the recommendation from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel report on safeguarding children with complex needs in residential settings “to improve commissioning for children with disabilities and complex health needs”, in conjunction with health partners.

4. Recruiting foster parents through a regional recruitment support hub and improving the support offer to both new and existing foster parents. The RCC could also include support for foster parents through involvement of regional health partners, e.g. named nurse for children in care, potentially to help address skills needs around providing trauma-informed care.
5. Developing new regional provision where gaps have been identified.

Local Strategies

Dorset Children, Young People and Families Plan 2023-2033

The Dorset Strategic Alliance for Children and young people is a multi-agency partnership which brings together senior people from across the partnership to shape and transform services for children, young people, and their families to deliver our vision which is:

“We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be.”

As a partnership we are committed to laying the foundations for improving life outcomes now that will last into future generations, so have developed a new [ten-year plan](#) that provides a strategic framework for how partners work together. Our priorities for the plan are grouped under seven themes:

1. Best start in life
2. Young and thriving
3. Good care provision
4. Best education for all
5. Best place to live.
6. Local family help
7. Safe at home and in the community

Good Care Provision

In delivery of this sufficiency strategy, we will be guided by the aims set out in the ‘Good Care Provision’ theme which states that we will explore different ways to promote family support through family decision-making and new approaches to kinship care, working with the wider family and community to provide safe support for our children and young people.

- Our aim is to keep our children close to home and to be the best corporate parents we can be.
- Where we can we want to support families to stay together. Where children and young people do need care, we want to make sure this is in family-based care wherever possible, and that we support extended family networks to be able to raise their children.
- We will actively seek out and work with a child’s direct and extended family and friends in considering the best forms of support.
- We will prioritise loving relationships for all children in care and care leavers and ensure we have a wide range of care options in place locally by ensuring we have the right number, type and quality of foster carers, residential homes, and accommodation.

- Where children cannot return to birth family, we want to secure timely and successful permanence through adoption wherever this is the best plan for the child.
- We want to reduce inequalities for children in care and care leavers ensuring we improve their health and wellbeing and are ambitious for them to achieve their potential, recognising the important foundation that stability and consistency of relationships with care providers gives.
- In addition, we want to make sure that there are a range of short breaks available to support families with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to be able to continue to care for their children.
- Our ambition is that more of our children and young people, who need care, are cared for in Dorset. When a child or young person needs care, if they are closer to their home and community, the people, and the services they already know will be able to continue to help them, this helps to ensure better outcomes for young people.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

Our Corporate Parenting Strategy [Dorset's Corporate Parenting Strategy 2020 to 2023 - Dorset Council](#) sets out the key priorities and actions required to ensure we are providing our looked after children and young people with the best start in life so they can achieve their full potential.

1. Increase opportunities to hear the voice of our children and young people and to take their views, wishes and feelings into account when developing our services
2. Promote better physical and mental health and well-being through improved access to health information and services
3. Have high aspirations for children in care and care leavers in their education, training, and employment
4. When children are unable to live within their family, we will ensure our children are matched to carers who promote local connections, provide safe and stable placements and achieve timely permanence
5. For our children to have a good and enriching experience of care provision and to prepare for adulthood and an independent and successful life.

5. Our Care Family – A Snapshot

Our Care Family: A Snapshot



Our Children in Care

We have **465** children in our care  **399** from Dorset

 **66** are unaccompanied children and **49** have a Disability


77% of our children in care are White or White British with **23%** from Black and Minority ethnic groups

The Care We Provide

 **310** of our children in care are living with foster carers (**67%**)

 **58** children are living with connected carers

196  **42%** of our children in care are living outside Dorset

 Half of our unaccompanied children live in supported

53 children are living in residential children's homes 

Our Care Leavers

We have **542** care experienced young people in our care leaver family 

309 are receiving a service from a Personal Advisor. Of these:

164  are Female **139**  are Male

 **52** are Former Unaccompanied Children

33  Have a Disability

60% of our care leavers are in Education, Employment and Training

 **White**

79% of our care leavers are White or White British with **21%** from Black and Minority ethnic groups

98% of our care leavers are in Suitable Accommodation

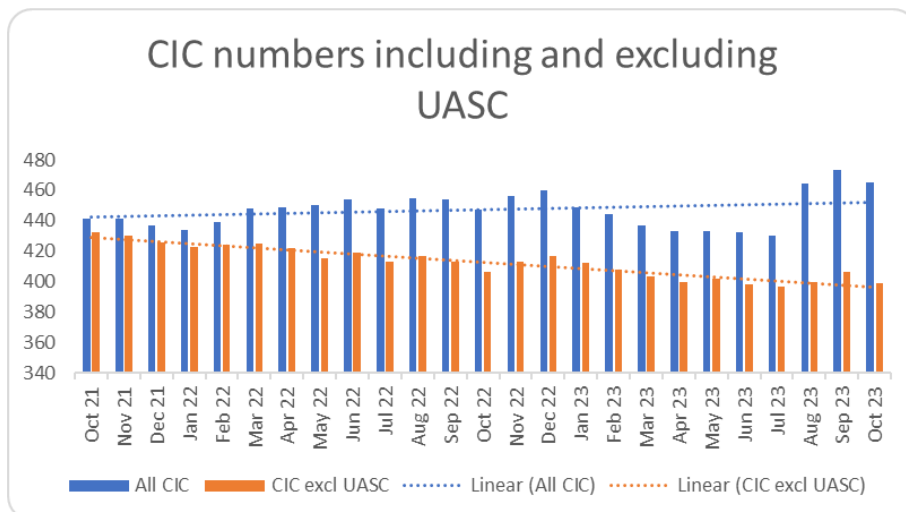
Figures as at the end of October 2023

6. Our Children and Young People

Family help, child protection and edge of care

- There are over 1500 children being supported through Early Help services across the county, the numbers supported this way has been steadily growing over the past 5 years.
- There are around 1200 children being supported by a social worker through a child in need plan. The rate of children in need has decreased over the past year and in line with our statistical neighbours.
- 10% are children who are disabled who are being supported in range of different ways including through Direct Payments and the provision of short breaks.
- We support 133 Young Carers; these are children under 18 who provide significant support to someone who is physically or mentally ill or disabled. We offer guidance and support including short breaks and advocacy [Dorset Young Carers Service - Dorset Council](#).
- We work closely with our Housing Department to undertake joint assessments for all 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless, of which we have 17 currently placed. The accommodation needs for homeless young people are met through our Supported Accommodation Framework.
- The number of children who are subject to child protection plans, and for whom there is a greater risk of being cared for by the council, has been stabilising, at around 300, to a level comparable to statistical neighbours, and reduced again in October.

Children in Care



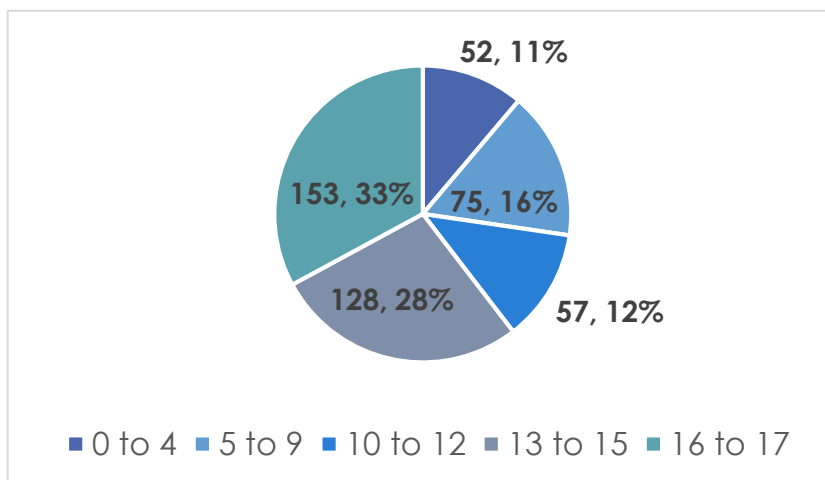
- The number of Children in Care is 465, of whom 399 are children from Dorset and 66 are unaccompanied children.
- The rate of children in care, excluding unaccompanied children, has been reducing over the last 3 years and is now 60 per 10,000 population. This is still higher than the rate of statistical neighbours and we expect our numbers of children in care to steadily reduce over the next 3 years. If we became comparable to statistical neighbours, we would have 375 children from Dorset in our care.
- We have seen a rapid increase in the number of young people in care who have arrived in the UK unaccompanied seeking asylum. This is likely to stabilise at the current level of 0.1 per 10,000 of the child population.

- 80% of unaccompanied children are aged 16 to 17 years old requiring support to prepare for independent living. Most unaccompanied children are placed outside of Dorset.

About our children in care

Sex

- There are more boys (278, 60%) than girls (187, 40%) in our care family. These proportions are greatly affected by the profile of our unaccompanied children, with only 1 unaccompanied girl in our care. If this cohort were to be excluded the proportions would be more equal with 53% male and 47% female.



Age

- There are more teenagers (281, 60%) in our care than younger children (184, 40%). A breakdown of age groups is provided below. Again, this is impacted by the number of unaccompanied children, who are more likely to be older teenagers. There are over 100 children aged between 5 and 12 years.

Ethnicity

- The majority of our children in care (77%) are white, although when excluding unaccompanied children this proportion is much higher at 90%. The table below shows the ethnic backgrounds of our total care family and compares unaccompanied children with children from Dorset.

Ethnic background	All children in care	Unaccompanied children	Children from Dorset
White	77%	0%	90%
Mixed race	5%	0%	6%
Asian or Asian British	1%	3%	1%
Black or Black British	4%	21%	1%
Other ethnic group	12%	76%	2%

Types of homes for our children

- The majority of our children (310, 67%) are living with foster carers. Most of our children are living with stranger foster carers (252, 80%), with 58 (20%) living with connected carers or kinship care. About 50% of unaccompanied children are living in foster care, with the rest living in supported accommodation.
- A further 25 children are placed with parents in readiness for reunification and 14 have been placed for adoption.
- 54 children are living in an Ofsted registered children's home.
- 48 are living in supported accommodation that is registered with Ofsted or in the process of being registered.
- 45% of our children in care are placed with private providers.

Locations of homes for our children

- 196 children in care are living outside Dorset (42%). Although still higher than we would like, this has reduced since 2021/22 when the proportion was 47%. Excluding unaccompanied children, the proportion of our children in care living outside of Dorset is 36%.
- Just over one third (36%) are living more than 20 miles away from home – this has also reduced from previous years.
- Many children living outside the council's boundary are living in neighbouring local authority areas, which can be closer to home. Just under a quarter (24%) of children in care live outside Dorset and more than 20 miles away from home.
- A small % of unaccompanied children are living in Dorset (10%)
- 20 Dorset children and young people currently live in Dorset children's homes. This means that 33 children still live in residential settings outside of Dorset.

Children coming into our care

- Excluding unaccompanied children, on average around ten children from Dorset enter our care every month and they generally do so in a planned way, through care orders, with very few entering our care through the use of police powers.
- The number of unaccompanied children arriving through the national transfer scheme has stabilised for now but could well increase in the coming months and years and this is difficult to predict.

Children leaving our care

- An average of 11 children and young people leave our care every month.
- Children who have been in our care for a long time tend to stay in our care until their 18th birthday.
- In the last 12 months:
 - 55 young people left care as they turned 18 years old (32%)
 - 17 (11%) children were adopted and there are 34 waiting to be adopted
 - 48 children (31%) returned home.
 - 21 (14%) left through a special guardianship order or child arrangement order

Stable homes for our children

- We want to make sure that we provide the right homes for our children and avoid unnecessary moves. Long-term placement stability for those that have been in our care for more than 2 ½ years has increased over the past year, with almost 2/3 in the same home for 2 years or more. The proportion of children who have had 3 or more placement moves in the last 12 months is around 10%.

Wellbeing of our children in care

- Timely Identification of the health needs of children as they come into our care is a challenge, with initial health assessments often taking longer than the required 20 days. This is particularly marked for those placed out of area.
- Children in care in Dorset are more likely to have poor emotional wellbeing as measured through the strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Immunisation take-up is good, however, access to dentistry is a particular challenge for our young people in Dorset.

Our children in care have told us:

- Following a good response rate to our Bright Spots New Belonging Survey (in partnership with Coram Voice) and an active children in care council that meets to develop priorities, we have rich information on what is important to them and been involved in the development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the [Dorset Promise](#). The following areas of strength were identified and areas for development.

Areas of strength: Children in care in Dorset	Areas for development: Children in care in Dorset
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Trust their carers and most trust their social worker ➤ Feel their carers are interested in their education. ➤ Are more likely to have the same social worker for the last 12 months than the rest of the country. ➤ Spend time outdoors. ➤ Like their bedrooms ➤ Mostly feel safe where they live. ➤ Mostly feel like life is getting better. ➤ Are supported to participate in their children in care reviews and have access to advocacy. ➤ We have low levels of complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Need to feel more positive about the future. ➤ Don't always feel good about school. ➤ Are sometimes afraid to go to school because of bullying. ➤ Want to do similar things to their friends. ➤ Don't always have at least one really good friend. ➤ Want to feel happier about themselves. ➤ Would like to see brothers, sisters, and dads more

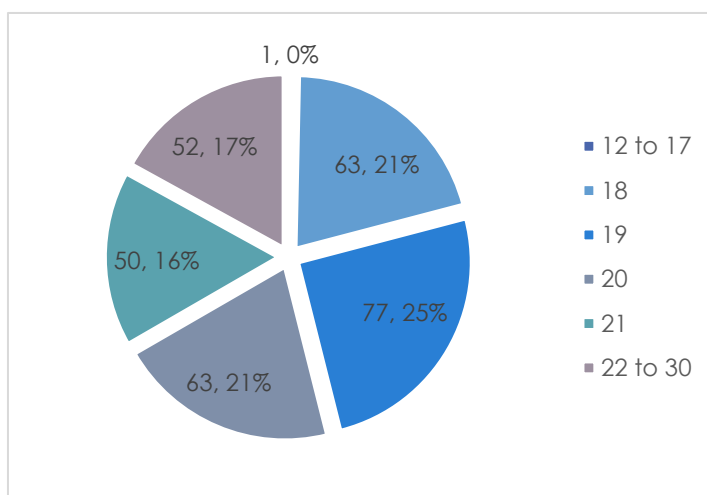
In summary:

- We need to continue to increase the number of children supported to stay with their families.
- We need to increase the number of children that can be supported by their wider family networks.
- We currently have too many children placed out of the local area in residential care and supported accommodation – this is particularly true for unaccompanied children.
- We have a growing population of children within Black and minority ethnic groups and therefore need carers that reflect their cultural diversity.
- We have a growing population of children in our care whose first language is not English, and we need to be able to support them.
- We need to increase the number of children that are cared for by their extended family networks.

- We need to continue to support children to return to their families.
- We need to make sure that the children in our care are supported by their schools.
- We need to make sure that we can support the emotional wellbeing of the children in our care.
- We need to make sure that we support our children in care to make friends and get involved in activities.
- We need to make sure that we support the children in our care to keep in touch with and regularly see the people that are important to them.
- We need to make sure that we enable our children in care to have a strong voice and participate in their plans and reviews and tell us when things aren't working.

Our Care Leavers

1. As most of our children in care have remained in care until their 18th birthday, our care leaver family has been growing over the last 3 years. We now have 542 care experienced young people in our care leaver family, with just over 300 receiving a service from a Personal Advisor. We anticipate that this growth will continue slowly until we reach a peak of around 320 care leavers receiving a service in 2025, when it will begin to fall in line with the reduction of children in care.



2. Of those care leavers that are receiving a service a higher proportion are female (164, 54%) than male (139, 46%). This is different to the current children in care population where there are more boys than girls. There are a similar proportion of care leavers as children in care that have a disability 10 per cent (33).
3. A high proportion of our care leavers that are receiving a service are aged between 18 and 21 years. The pie-chart above shows the age distribution.
4. A slightly higher proportion of our care leavers are white (79%) and 21% are from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds, but this profile may change as our current unaccompanied children become older and they go through the asylum claim process.
5. 97% of our care leavers are living in accommodation that is considered suitable. Whilst the picture is improving and we have seen an increase in Care Leavers remaining in their foster placement after their 18th birthday, we know not as many of our young people are benefiting from these arrangements as we would like. A high proportion of our care leavers live in supported accommodation (for longer than we would like) as a result of lack of alternative move on provision.
6. The Care leaver service undertakes weekly monitoring for a small number of care leavers placed in unsuitable accommodation, this includes young people who are living in temporary B+B and young people in prison to ensure active plans are in place regarding finding suitable accommodation and planning for release from prison.

Our care leavers have told us

7. Following a 60% response from young people in the New Belongings survey, 'Your Life Beyond Care) we have rich information which supports us in service development and delivery for our Care Leavers. In addition, care experienced young people have been involved in the design and delivery of our strategies and plans across the year – including our Corporate Parenting Strategy and the development of the [Dorset Promise](#). The table below highlights areas of strength and areas for development.

Areas of strength - Care Leavers from Dorset	Areas for development - Care Leavers in Dorset:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have trusted relationships with their personal advisors and find it easy to get in touch with them. • Have people who believe in them. • Are more likely to have had the same leaving care worker for more than 12 months than care leavers elsewhere. • Are more likely to have pets compared to care leavers nationally and get a great deal of emotional support from their pets. • Have coproduced our care leaver offer including the expansion of support for emotional wellbeing through 'Ask Jan' and the care leaver nurse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Told us housing was the biggest priority for them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over one third feel that the accommodation they live in is not right for them and don't always feel safe in the area they live. ○ Difficulties in accessing social housing or affordable private provision. • Many report finding it hard to cope financially. • Want to feel more positive about the future. • Are less likely to have a trusted person in their lives or a really good friend than their peers. • Are more likely to have a long-term health problem or disability than care leavers elsewhere in the country.

In summary:

- We need to ensure that we lay the foundations for friendship and the development of lifelong links for children when they are in our care supporting these to endure into adulthood.
- We need to continue to offer a wide range of support to our care leavers both within and outside Dorset, including financial support such as council tax exemptions.
- We need to focus on the provision of high-quality accommodation that feels safe and is affordable.
- We need to work with colleagues and partners to support our care leavers with their health and wellbeing.
- We currently have a growing number of care leavers living outside the county, so we need to develop more local accommodation options – including supported lodgings providers that come from a diverse range of backgrounds to meet the needs of our growing Black and Minority Ethnic groups.
- We need to make sure we are offering a wide range of education and work opportunities for our care experienced young people locally.

7. What we have achieved through our last strategy

In our last strategy we set ourselves several goals, this section describes the progress we have made:

- We have **reduced the rate of children in our care** from Dorset to 60 per 10,000, however changes to the National Transfer scheme and the high court ruling relating to placement of unaccompanied children

in hotels by the DfE resulted in a rapid increase in the number of unaccompanied children being care for by Dorset so our overall rate of children in care is 71 per 10,000.

- There has been a **reduction in children in care placed out of area** from 47% in 2020 to 42% in 2023. Again, this has been impacted by the number of unaccompanied children who are more likely to be placed out of area – if these are excluded the proportion placed out of area is 36%
- We have **increased the number of children's homes** places in Dorset from 16 to 30. This would have been higher, but 2 children's homes operated by an independent residential provider have closed.
- Although the number of in-house fostering households has remained the same, we have **increased the number of children our in-house foster carers are caring for** through better utilisation rates. We have also implemented **an increase in foster carer payments to in-house foster carers** (above inflation) to recognise the invaluable role they play in caring for our children.
- We have implemented a new **evidenced based model of sustainable foster care – Mockingbird**, offering structured support and relationships that mirrors an extended family. The model nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community.
- We have implemented a **new framework contract for supported accommodation** which is supporting providers to meet the requirements of the new regulations. There are five local providers on the framework offering 87 places.
- We have **implemented a new model of support and care for teenagers who are on the edge of care, at risk of placement breakdown or in insecure accommodation** – through the 'Harbour' approach. The Harbour approach is a multi-agency partnership that pools resources to achieve improved outcomes for children, families, and communities, and reduce spending across the public sector and as a result there been a reduction in the number of children placed in residential care, from 63 in 2020 to 53 in 2023. This has a linked 3 bedded residential children's home, College House (rated good by Ofsted).
- We have **converted a range of Dorset Council** properties to develop a range of in-house provision and used this to develop the external residential children. This has included a former office conversion delivering a 3 bedded children's home (College House) and new build 5 bedded home (Chestnut House) on the same site; refurbishing a former supported accommodation unit to provide 12 affordable flats for care leavers and a care leaver hub on the ground floor; repurposing 2 properties formerly let to the public to be registered as children's homes and run by private provider; converted a former bungalow into a residential unit – operated by a private provider; converted a former single placement residential unit into a short breaks home for disabled children, which will be operated by the council and converted a property initially into a single children's home and now transferring into care leaver accommodation.

8. Our Strategic Priorities

Strategic Priority 1

We will support more children to stay with their birth parents or within their wider family networks.

Current position

Locality Model – rebalancing the system

We are successfully rebalancing the system towards earlier help and as a result we are seeing a reduction of children from Dorset entering our care. Our locality model is delivering good services for families and independent evaluation indicates that children and their families are getting the right help at the right time.

Safeguarding Families Together

Our Safeguarding Families Together pilot programme is delivering services to families in the west of the county. This model brings practitioners with expertise in working with adults together with children’s social care in order to provide a whole family approach. This is helping support children to remain being cared for by their families.

Harbour Model

The Harbour outreach model has successfully supported more young people to remain with their families or to go back to live with their families after a period in care. This model has primarily been working with young people living in Weymouth and Portland and the west of the county. There is insufficient capacity to offer services to young people living in the east of the county.

Pause practice

We have invested in the development of a Pause practice in Dorset, which seeks to support women, who have had children removed from their care by offering an intensive and supportive 18-month programme that involves a trusting relationship between a woman and their PAUSE practitioner. Currently 22 women are being supported by the Pause practice.

Parent and child placements

Parent and child placements are placements that can be either foster carer or within a specialist residential assessment facility. The purpose of parent and child placements is to provide parents with the support they need to care for their children or as part of a court ordered assessment.

Dorset Fostering Service has 3 fostering households that are approved to provide parent and child placements and have been utilised on 4 separate occasions this year. Where we are unable to use our in-house parent and child foster placements, we refer to our Independent Fostering Agency Framework, we used independent parent and child placements on 2 occasions this year.

There are no specialist residential parenting provisions within the county of Dorset but there are provisions in our neighbouring authorities. Our need for residential assessments places is low, year to date we have only commissioned one residential unit place.

Outreach support and short breaks for children who are disabled

Strengthening our support offer is a priority to promote family stability and quality of life so that children can continue to live with their birth families. The short breaks offer is key to this.

We commission a short breaks children's home offering four places in the Chesil locality which currently serves the whole county, meaning that some children travel significant distances, and we know we need more provision. We have developed an overnight short breaks children's home in the east of the county (Hayeswood) which will offer two to three places. We also need provision in the North locality offering at least two places. Short breaks with linked host families are also needed to help fill the gap in overnight provision and this is being developed with our Fostering and Shared Lives services.

We have a range of short breaks daytime activities and have been promoting improved accessibility to a range of activities for children and young people with disabilities through our Holiday Activity and Food Programme. There is not currently enough short breaks provision in Chesil and West localities and the offer for those aged 18 to 25 years needs significant development. We are working with NHS colleagues to develop provision for children with physical disabilities and complex health needs.

Families in receipt of direct payments can struggle to find people and/or providers that are able to support them.

Currently we are spot purchasing a range of in-home and community support for families who have children with complex needs and disabilities, and it is not cost-effective.

Reunification

We recognise that overtime birth family's circumstance's change and safeguarding concerns and risks that lead to children becoming children in care may reduce. We will therefore ensure that reunification to birth families is kept under review and take the necessary assessments and support plans to return children to live with their birth families.

Next steps

We will:

1. Ensure, through implementation of our new Family Network Strategy, within our Families First Pathfinder model, that we deliver family led decision making for all families and provide Family Network Support Packages to remove barriers to children staying at home.
2. Devolve money to the voluntary and community sector to encourage and facilitate early community support for families.
3. Extend the Safeguarding Families Together provision across all Dorset localities.
4. Develop a Harbour East adolescent service in East Dorset
5. Extend the Pause programme, and scope the next community of women, up to 24 in total for 2024 who could benefit from the programme.
6. Continue to deliver parent and child fostering placements internally and expand the number of carers who can offer this, and spot purchase where we need residential provision.
7. Recommission short breaks activities and overnight short breaks and extend the offer to 18-25-year-olds.
8. Work with the Dorset Centre of Excellence to develop residential, and activity based short breaks for disabled children in the North of the county.

9. Develop a Lighthouse model of outreach support for children with disabilities and implement a framework of commissioned providers offering in-home support to better manage costs and improve quality.
10. Open Hayeswood short break home to provide overnight short breaks for disabled children and outreach support to their families.
11. Continue to use HAF funding to increase access to community provision.
12. Develop a range of services that can accept Direct-Payments and develop support for families who are in receipt of Direct Payments.
13. Develop a reunification strategy and use kinship care and other family network arrangements to support children to return to birth families.

Strategic Priority 2

We will increase the provision of local, high quality foster care so that the vast majority of children who cannot live with birth family are provided with alternative family-based care.

Current position

In-house fostering

We have 171 fostering households: 112 are mainstream (stranger foster carers) and 58 are connected person (kinship) carers. The demographic make-up of our foster carers does not match the demographics of our care population. There are fewer carers from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and fewer carers that can care for teenagers. We have improved efficiency by reviewing the availability of our approved foster carers to increase the proportion who are active and able to receive children, improving our utilisation rate from 0.65 to 1.08. This has been achieved both by supporting more carers to provide placements, and by deregistering those carers who have reached the end of their fostering career.

We know that Mockingbird foster carer constellations improve resilience in the system and support positivity, connection, and retention. Since 2020 we have implemented five constellations out of a planned ten, which we are aiming to achieve by the end of 2024. We have restructured the service to support this, with a training programme in place.

Short term placements with mainstream foster carers are more likely to be with Dorset Council than independent sector agencies. We believe that our own provision is meeting more complex and challenging needs than private sector providers. We need more Dorset Council foster carers to improve outcomes for children including being able to live closer to home.

To look after children and young people with complex needs and who are members of sibling groups of 3 or more children, foster carers need properties that have sufficient living space, and we need to support this by offering capital funding support to adapt properties. This will improve the availability, stability and permanence outcomes for the children and young people who are in our care.

We forecast that we need an additional 10 internal foster carers for children from Dorset and a further 20 more internal foster carers for unaccompanied children per year.

<p>Independent foster care</p>	<p>We have 108 children with independent foster carers, which is 38% of our total cohort of children in foster care compared to 45% nationally.</p> <p>We participate in regional commissioning arrangements for the delivery of a fostering framework and hold Independent Fostering Agency Surgeries to develop relationships and seek to support better matching for children.</p> <p>We would like to develop better relationships with local foster carers that work for IFAs and the IFAs themselves so that we can increase the number of these that are available for local children.</p>
<p>Kinship care/connected persons</p>	<p>When a child requires to become looked after we strive to identify and place within existing family networks. We currently have 58 connected person carers.</p> <p>As part of our work through the national pathfinder we are keen to make sure that we significantly increase the number of children that can be cared for in their extended family.</p> <p>We will also explore options for children to leave care through putting place permanent kinship arrangements.</p>
<p>Staying Put</p>	<p>For young people moving into adulthood, the Staying Put scheme offers the opportunity to remain with their foster carer after they have turned 18. We need to develop this further.</p> <p>Most of our care leavers remain in care until their 18th birthday. Whilst the picture is improving and we have seen an increase to 29 Care Leavers remaining in their foster placement after their 18th birthday, we know not as many of our young people are benefiting from these arrangements as we would like.</p>
<p>Next Steps</p> <p>We Will:</p> <p>Increase the provision of local high quality foster care so that more children who cannot live with their birth family are provided with alternative family-based care.</p> <p>We will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Deliver a foster-care recruitment and retention strategy with a particular focus on recruitment and retention of carers who can care for adolescents, children with disabilities and unaccompanied children. Our strategy will ensure our 'offer' to foster carers and prospective foster carers is sufficiently attractive. 2) Thoroughly embed therapeutic assessments for prospective foster carers. 3) Participate in the development and implementation of the Southwest regional fostering recruitment hub. 4) Continue to provide high quality support to all our foster carers. 	

- 5) Develop a policy and process where Dorset Foster Carers can apply for Capital Funds to extend their homes to increase availability to foster more children and to accommodate more children who require specialist adaptations.
- 6) Improve out of hours support for foster carers.
- 7) Develop a permanence fostering social worker post that can help ensure children are achieving permanence fostering.
- 8) Participate in regional IFA fostering arrangements.
- 9) Deliver quarterly provider engagement events with IFAs to build relationships.
- 10) Continue to support the Independent Fostering Agency Surgeries.
- 11) Develop specialist, alternative assessment, and support for connected carers under our 'Families First' pathfinder work.
- 12) Develop a dedicated connected persons team within the Fostering Service.

Strategic Priority 3

We will only place children and young people in residential care where their needs cannot be met within a family, and to increase local provision so that when we do so, we do not place them at distance.

Current position

Residential care overview There are currently 31 children's homes places available in Dorset with 20 Dorset children in care living there. We have reduced the number of young people placed in residential care settings over the life of our previous strategy by 10 and there are currently 53.

Many Dorset children and young people who are looked after in children's homes live outside of Dorset, sometimes in neighbouring counties (15 young people) but too often far away from their families and friends (18 young people). Sometimes this is because their needs are particularly complex and they need specialist therapeutic provision, but sometimes this is because we don't have the right provision locally. We need to ensure that young people have every opportunity to live within Dorset. To achieve this more local children's homes are needed.

In-house residential care

College House was opened late 2022 and can accommodate up to 3 children, the home is currently rated as Good. It is part of our harbour outreach model and has a foster carer linked to the provision.

The Cherries Residential Home for children with learning and physical disabilities can accommodate up to 9 children and is rated Good by Ofsted. It has not been full to capacity for some time and the building itself is quite old-fashioned and not as homely as other more modern children's homes. There we are in the process of moving this home to a more homely new build property in Weymouth, Chestnut House, which will offer homes for up to 5 children with disabilities, from early 2024.

We have invested in workforce development for our practitioners working in our residential provision, working alongside the Mulberry Bush, to deliver a level 4 qualification for all workers.

There are workforce challenges within the children's residential home sector, particularly in relation to registered managers.

Externally commissioned residential care

We continue to strengthen relationships with Dorset providers and where appropriate enter block contract arrangements with providers of Ofsted-graded Good and Outstanding homes to ensure local access for Dorset children.

We monitor the track record of children's homes and find homes for our children where provision is of good quality. Regrettably not all the provision in Dorset sustains this level and we will continue to work with providers to achieve good outcomes for Dorset children and young people.

There are a number of children's homes across the county however we need additional provision for young people with complex needs, which includes single occupancy homes.

We need to develop partnership working and continue to engage with emerging providers of residential care in Dorset.

We anticipate needing a further 5 children's homes places in the next year.

The cost of housing within the county can be a deterrent to attracting new external children's homes providers.

Next Steps

We will:

- 1) Place children in residential provision that is judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. If we have a child placed in provision that is downgraded to 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' we have an internal procedure regarding enhanced oversight of the provision to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children to allow them to remain in their home.
- 2) Progress with de-commissioning the Cherries and the opening of Chestnut House five-bedroom accommodation.
- 3) Implement a workforce development strategy for residential care.
- 4) Undertake a procurement exercise to engage providers to run one children's home (1 place) and an overnight short break home (2 places) using current Dorset properties in the East Locality.
- 5) Support external providers with Ofsted registration of a Dorset owned property in Weymouth, to be a forever home for one of our young people.
- 6) Hold quarterly residential engagement events and residential surgeries.
- 7) Continue to bid for properties within the council's owned estate where a conversion into a residential children's home may be possible and offered to approved providers.
- 8) Undertake market engagement with external providers to encourage the setting up of new provision locally.
- 9) Reopen the provider framework annually.
- 10) Offer 2 x 2 bed Dorset Properties to Supported Accommodation Providers to provide accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.
- 11) Continue to work in partnership with our providers in preparation for Ofsted inspections in 2024.

Strategic Priority 4

We will increase and improve specialist provision for children and young people with significant mental health and /or complex needs.

Current position

Children with significant mental health and/ or complex needs

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are mainly provided by Dorset healthcare University Foundation Trust. This includes Core CAMHS, Intellectual Disability (ID) CAMHS; Forensic CAMHS and Pebble Lodge inpatient service. They also provide psychology services for children in care and support to foster carers.

We are working with NHS colleagues to develop care provision for children with complex needs including mental health and neurodiversity which prevents the need for hospitalisation and supports a return to family life. There is an ongoing review and transformation across the Integrated Care System, 'Your Mind Your Say, making **mental health** services better for young people in Dorset'. This is in response to some significant and ongoing challenges, which include:

- Referral numbers have increased significantly post-Covid, and the services are only funded to meet 41% of the prevalent population, and so access to services for children and families was challenging with unmet need.
- The crisis offer to young people and families is not at the level needed.
- The offer to support those with complex needs, such as those who are neurodiverse with eating issues, who self-harm or with gender identity concerns is not right.

The Wessex and Dorset Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Provider Collaborative is responsible for tier 4, specialised mental health services including in-patient services across the region, eating disorder services and a care closer to home team. There are not enough Tier 4 places for children generally and there are particular challenges for young people experiencing mental health crisis and that need intensive treatment locally. Plans are in place to develop a specialist 8 bedded psychiatric intensive care unit in Bournemouth. We seek to work in partnership with children, their families, and the professional network in these circumstances, to ensure the appropriate exit plans and services are in place. We hold a monthly liaison meeting with colleagues from NHS Dorset, part of this meeting is to review progress of young people in such facilities to understand any issues or barriers to exit plans or future services to be provided.

Birth to settled adulthood (B2SA)

The Birth to Settled Adulthood Programme is progressing, and we are developing approaches and services to support children and young people where there is evidence that transition to adulthood has been particularly challenging for services in their current configurations. This has been the case for children who are disabled, and we are developing a new service to meet the needs of children from birth to settled adulthood, normally 25 years old.

Secure estate

Secure welfare provision is used where we are unable to keep children safe in traditional care placements in the community, placements in such arrangements can only be agreed by the Courts. There is a total of 13 Secure Children Homes across England and Wales which can accommodate up to 113 children however demand for such provision outstrips availability, on average there is a waiting list of 50 – 60 children at any one time seeking such an arrangement.

We have made applications for a small number of children to be placed in Secure Welfare provision however we have not placed any children in this provision since the last strategy this is either due to children's need changing and so no longer meet criteria or we have had to seek alternative placements due to lack of availability in Secure.

If a young person is arrested and remanded to the local authorities' care, we seek to consider where safe to do so a placement within the family network. Where this is not possible, we utilise a specialist remand foster care placement, jointly commissioned with BCP Council. In the past year we have utilised this provision on 4 occasions.

Next steps**We will:**

- 1) Continue to support the transformation work identified through the business plan in 2024 and implement new pathways and a new model of provision in 2025 that will include collaboration between NHS, Dorset Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 2) Work with regional colleagues and with local NHS partners to develop a residential provision for children with complex needs.
- 3) Maintain our monthly liaison meeting regarding children admitted to Tier 4 provision to ensure post discharge support is in place.
- 4) Review and implement an operational service design to be in place by April 2024.
- 5) Deliver the Birth-to-Settled Adulthood (B2SA) commissioning plan including increasing the number of Shared Lives carers for young people aged 16 to 25.
- 6) Explore regional secure provision through the Southwest Sufficiency group.

Strategic Priority 5

We will secure permanence outside of care through adoption and special guardianship for all children for whom this is in their best interests.

Current position

Adoption

Our Adoption Service is currently provided through Aspire, the Regional Adoption Agency for Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Councils. The service is working well. In 2022/23 15% of children who left our care did so via adoption. This compares to 9% nationally and 14% for good and better authorities.

On timeliness, on average children adopted in the six months to end of October 2023 moved from becoming children in care to place for adoption is 536 days (compared to 376 days nationally and 342 days among statistical neighbours) and from Placement Order to a matching decision in 170 days (178 days nationally and 149 days among statistical neighbours)

Special Guardianship

Our Regional Adopting Agency ASPIRE also hold responsibly for Special Guardianship assessment and support work.

Dorset Council acknowledge that Special Guardianship Orders for some of our children is an appropriate permanence pathway and as such we have a clear special guardianship pathway and finance policy to ensure equitability in support packages offered to prospective Special Guardians. In 2022/23, 9% of children who left our care did so via Special Guardianship Orders. This compares to 12% nationally.

We will be looking to review our financial support offer to Special Guardians and to place our Special Guardianship Service back in-house as part of a dedicated Connected Persons Service.

Next steps

We will:

- 1) Support Aspire to develop and implement an effective adopter marketing and recruitment strategy so that the number of adopters is increased.
- 2) Support Aspire to develop and implement multi-agency adoption support arrangements.
- 3) Ensure that childcare social workers and team managers have quality training on permanence planning and adoption.

- 4) Bring the Special Guardianship Service back in-house from Aspire as part of a new 'Connected Persons Service'.
- 5) Develop a comprehensive multi-agency support offer for Special Guardians,
- 6) Support wider birth family network members to secure Special Guardianship Orders for children in the family early on, once it becomes apparent that this is in the child's best interests.

Strategic Priority 6

We will increase the quantity and range of high-quality care leaver accommodation and support to promote stability, safety, and emotional wellbeing.

Current position

Supported lodgings

We have 23 carers offering Supported Lodgings carers to a total of 21 young people aged between 17 and 23 years old. We have a further 3 carers in the assessment process.

We forecast that we need an additional 5 places in supported lodgings for unaccompanied young people.

Supported accommodation framework.

We have been supporting providers to register with Ofsted and develop good quality services to meet regulatory requirements and evidence the outcomes for preparing for adulthood in our refreshed specification under the 2022 re-tendered framework.

Dorset Council commissions 87 local supported accommodation places (up to 18 months duration) for young people aged 16-25 through its Supported Accommodation Framework, of which 15 are for unaccompanied young people seeking asylum who are in care; 30 places are for children in care or care leavers and 40 are for young people aged 16-21 who are at risk of homelessness, although this division is not fixed, and the proportion is an average subject to variation.

We predict that we may need a further 30 places in line with anticipated increase of care leavers in 2025.

<p>Staying Close</p>	<p>In 2022 Dorset was successful in being awarded a 3-year DfE grant to pilot Staying Close, which can help young people stay in touch with and get ongoing support from Children’s Home carers after they move on.</p> <p>Our Staying Close project has seen young people retain links through formalised support arrangements. We are actively supporting 10 young people under Staying Close arrangements.</p>
<p>Independent accommodation for care leavers</p>	<p>We have worked hard to increase the offer of accommodation, having invested in a care leaver accommodation, however we do not have sufficient affordable local homes for our care leavers, and they have told us that they don’t always feel safe in the areas that they live.</p> <p>Despite our best efforts, we have a small number of care experienced young people in Bed and Breakfast at any one time and we work hard to ensure that they are moved to suitable accommodation in the shortest possible time. Personal Advisors work hard to support young people to maintain their tenancies when they are in independent accommodation.</p> <p>The housing market in Dorset is challenging and more local supported and independent housing is needed for former unaccompanied young people seeking asylum and care-experienced young adults.</p> <p>There is an estimated need for housing for young adults exiting supported accommodation of 50 places per year (25-30 for care leavers and 20 for vulnerable young adults at risk of homelessness).</p>
<p>16- & 17-Year-olds at risk of homelessness</p>	<p>When 16- and 17-year-olds are at risk of homelessness we strive to ensure those young people remain with their family by undertaking mediation. We undertake joint housing and social care assessment to understand need and present options to young people.</p> <p>We currently have 17 young people placed in supported accommodation who are not children in care and are living in supported accommodation. This accommodation is secured through our Supported Accommodation Framework.</p> <p>We can also access Night Stop; a service where young people can be placed in an emergency in a host's home for short periods of time whilst assessment of needs is undertaken.</p>
<p>Support for children in care and care leavers</p>	<p>We have an externally commissioned service in place to provide advocacy and Independent Visitors for our children in care. This contract ends in 2024.</p> <p>Our anticipated use of both advocacy and independent visitors under the current contract was lower than anticipated due to low referral numbers and some challenge in recruitment. We also recognise that the referral process to access the support can be cumbersome for practitioners.</p> <p>As part of the pathfinder and in response to new national standards it is anticipated that our need for Advocacy will grow in future years.</p>

<p>Keeping in touch arrangements</p>	<p>We have an in-house service that provides supervised contact arrangements in a number of locations across the county as well as providing support when there is a requirement to observe relationships within a family as they are being assessed. In many cases another practitioner or a carer will facilitate arrangements for keeping in touch with people that are important to a child in our care such as foster carer, residential children’s home provider, family worker or social worker.</p> <p>Some children in our care do not think we are getting the levels of contact right for them at the moment, particular arrangements for keeping in touch with brothers and sisters and/or dads.</p>
<p>Emotional Wellbeing and mental health support</p>	<p>Children in care and care leavers are more likely to experience poor mental health. There is a range of support in place including wellbeing practitioners in the children in care and care leaver nursing service; prioritised access to CAMHs; clinical psychology support – provided directly to children and young people, nut also supporting carers. The council also makes provision for and access to support and activities such as counselling, play/art therapy and therapeutic children’s homes and education providers.</p> <p>For care experienced young people the council has invested in ‘Ask Jan’ to give direct access to emotional well-being support and where required they can access Community Mental Health teams.</p> <p>The clinical psychology offers to children in care and those on the edge of care is currently being reviewed as we have not got the right model in place.</p>
<p>Care experience as a protected characteristic</p>	<p>In October 2023 the council approved that it would treat any person who was ‘care experienced’ as if it were a Protected Characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 so that any future decisions on services and polices of the Council would be assessed and considered as to the impact on people with care experience.</p>
<p>Care leaver apprenticeships</p>	<p>We have developed 4 apprenticeship opportunities for our Care Leavers within the council as part of our Pathways to Employment Programme.</p> <p>We have committed to fund the necessary tools and training for our apprentices, i.e., internet access at home or additional tuition.</p>
<p>Befriending and Mentoring</p>	<p>Our care experienced young people have told us through surveys that they are less likely than their peers to have at least one good friend. They have also told us that they would like to be able to access more mentoring opportunities or to develop relationships with trusted adults locally to where they live. Therefore, we need to grow this area of support, both for those that live locally as well as those who live outside the county. We have recently been awarded DfE funding to set up a mentoring and befriending programme for our care leavers.</p>
<p>Interpreters and translation services</p>	<p>There has been a significant growth in our need for interpretation and translation services, because of the growth in our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and for care experienced former unaccompanied children and we are currently spot purchasing these from a range of providers at significant cost.</p>

Next steps

We will:

1. Support more of our foster carers, and independent sector foster carers who are fostering Dorset children, to provide them with on-going Staying Put accommodation once they become 18.
2. Embed Staying Close as part of our mainstream offer to care leavers from 2025 when the temporary grant funding ceases.
3. Continue to recruit supported lodgings providers as well as preparing the service for Ofsted inspections of our Supported Lodgings provision from April 2024.
4. Reopen the Supported Accommodation framework annually.
5. Offer 2 x 2 bed Dorset Properties to Supported Accommodation Providers to provide accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
6. Work in partnership with our Supported Accommodation providers in preparation for Ofsted inspections in 2024.
7. Continue to explore rent guarantee schemes for care leavers to access private rented property.
8. Develop a three-bedroom property in Portland for care leavers.
9. Bid for Capital funds to acquire and/or build up to 20 self-contained flats for care leavers.
10. Continue to bid for properties within the council's property estate which can be converted for both supported accommodation and residential children's homes.
11. Support the delivery of the Council's Housing strategy.

Strategic Priority 7

We will manage placement resources effectively.

Current position

Brokerage

Our Brokerage Service works closely with our internal fostering and residential services as well as external providers of fostering, residential and supported accommodation as well as referring teams to ensure children and young people are matched to appropriate carers.

The team is also responsible for brokering support packages for both families in need of support and for individual children. They are also responsible for undertaking due diligence checks on new provision not under framework agreements, monitoring, and quality assurance of externally commissioned provision.

The team undertake consultations and notifications for children placed outside of Dorset.

Value for money

We strive to utilise all in house provision for our looked after children and where young people are placed with external providers these placements are commissioned under Framework agreements rather than spot purchased arrangements.

We have various mechanisms to track spend to ensure value for money and costs negotiations are undertaken but recognise that we could strengthen the systems around this particularly regarding negotiations of accommodation and support costs for care leavers who remain in supported accommodation.

We have also identified a need to ensure that we take a more systematic approach to ensuring that the right partners are contributing financially to or commissioning a young people's care.

Next steps

We will:

1. Review the current financial panels and process to identify efficiencies and savings.
2. Introduce a new Joint Commissioning Panel.
3. Publish an annual market position statement.
4. Undertake a redesign of the current referral pathway to ensure a strengths-based approach.
5. Improve data collection using current digital systems.

How we will make sure that we deliver our strategy

Our established Sufficiency Board, chaired by the Executive Director People – Children, will continue and will oversee the delivery of this strategy. This Board will report on progress every quarter to the Strategic Alliance for Children, Young People and Families through the 'Good Care Provision' work stream.

The group will develop and deliver a SMART action plan which will be reviewed annually to ensure that it responds to emerging needs, trends, and legislation, such as the proposed introduction of Regional Care Cooperatives proposed as part of the governments 'Stable Homes Built on Love' Strategy.

Partnership engagement with current and prospective providers of care and support for children in care and care leavers will be essential to the delivery of this strategy.

9. How will we know we have been successful?

We have identified the following as high-level success measures.

Strategic Priority 1 - We will support more children to stay with their birth parents or within their wider family networks.

Success measure

- **The number of children in care (not including UAS children) will decrease.** At the end of October 2023, the number of children in care was 399 (not including UAS children)

Strategic Priority 2 - We will increase the provision of local, high quality foster care so that more children who cannot live with birth family are provided with alternative family-based care.

- **The number and proportion of children in care in foster placements will increase.** At the end of October 2023, the number of children in foster care was 310 and the proportion of children in care in foster placements is 67%.

- **The number of children in care living with Dorset Council approved foster carers will increase.** At the end October 2023 there were 182 children placed with Dorset Council foster carers. (This was 125 with mainstream foster carers and 57 with connected persons foster carers)

Strategic Priority 3 - We will only place children and young people in residential care where their needs cannot be met within a family, and to increase local provision so that when we do so, we do not place them at distance.

- **The number of children in care placed in children's homes will decrease.** At the end of October 2023 there were 53 children in care living in children's homes
- **The proportion of children living in children's homes who live within Dorset will increase.** The proportion at the end of October 2023 was 26%.

Strategic Priority 4 - We will increase and improve specialist provision for children and young people with significant mental health and /or complex needs.

- **We will have developed and opened a residential provision for children with complex needs** in partnership with NHS partners.
- **We will increase the number of Shared Lives Carers** for young people aged 18 to 25. The number at the end of October 2023 was 45.

Strategic Priority 5 - We will secure permanence outside of care through adoption and special guardianship for all children for whom this is in their best interests.

- **We will increase the percentage of children who leave care via adoption and/or Special Guardianship.** In 2022/23 24% of children who left care in Dorset left care via adoption or Special Guardianship (15% adoption and 9% Special Guardianship)
- **We will improve the timeliness with which children move through care to adoption.** In October 2023 children adopted in the previous 6 months moved from becoming children in care to placed for adoption in 536 days on average. The number of days adopted children moved from being subject to a Placement Order to being matched with adopters on average was 170 days.

Strategic Priority 6 - We will increase the quantity and range of high-quality care leave accommodation and support to promote stability, safety, and emotional well-being.

- **We will consistently have no care leavers in bed and breakfast accommodation or care leavers who are homeless.** At the end of October 2023 there were 2 care leavers in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- **We will have significantly increased the number of self-contained accommodation units/flats available to Children's Services for allocation to care leavers.** Currently we have the 12 self-contained flats at Kirtleton Avenue.

Strategic Priority 7 - We will manage placement resources effectively.

- The brokerage service will be a 'one stop shop' for all placement and support resources that practitioners need.
- Partnerships with providers will be strong and effective.
- Oversight of provision quality and financial spend will be robust.

This page is intentionally left blank

People and Health Overview Committee 6 February 2024

Dorset Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Portfolio Holder: Jill Haynes, Corporate Development and Transformation

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: Aidan Dunn, Executive Director Corporate Development and
Chair of EDI Strategic Board

Report Author: Dr James Palfreman-Kay
Job Title: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
Tel:
Email: James.Palfreman-Kay@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy describes what we plan to do over the next four years to deliver better outcomes for those living and working in Dorset. The strategy frames proposed action around four key objectives:

1. Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities
2. Demonstrate our leadership, partnership and organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
3. Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services
4. Develop and support a diverse and engaged workforce

The strategy and action plan were developed through engagement with employees and stakeholders, including colleagues from the voluntary and community sector. We met with representatives from our EDI Reference Group, employee networks, trade unions and senior officers throughout 2022 and 2023.

The EDI strategy has been developed using data on both the profile of our local communities and the make-up of the council's workforce. Work has been

undertaken to provide definitions for each of our 7 local characteristics which have been taken from the 2021 census. The Local Government Association's Equality Framework has been used as a tool to assess our progress on EDI to date and to help shape our future direction of work.

A detailed action plan has been developed which assigns actions to officers.

Recommendation:

To recommend to Cabinet that it:

- Supports the adoption and supporting definitions for the 7 local protected characteristics.
- Approves the EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027
- Approves the supporting detailed EDI Action Plan which covers the period 2024-2027.

Reason for Recommendation:

1. Background

1.1 As a council we have legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 which are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity, and
- Promote good relations between different groups of people.

1.2 We have also identified 7 local protected characteristics: the EDI strategy and supporting action plan provide an opportunity to show how we are responding to these specific groups.

1.3 It is also recognised that there is continuing and persistent inequality in society and, as a council, we have an influential community leadership role in challenging that inequality. We can ensure that what we do is always for the benefit of Dorset's residents by:

- Delivering high quality responsive services and improving customer care
- Delivering fair and equal access for all to facilities and services, free from discrimination
- Supporting a diverse and engaged workforce that represents the communities we serve
- Being more efficient – providing value for money with improved and targeted services and savings.

To ensure that our workplace and our services are meeting the needs of everyone, we have a responsibility to listen and respond better. As one of the county's largest employers, we also have a responsibility to lead by example.

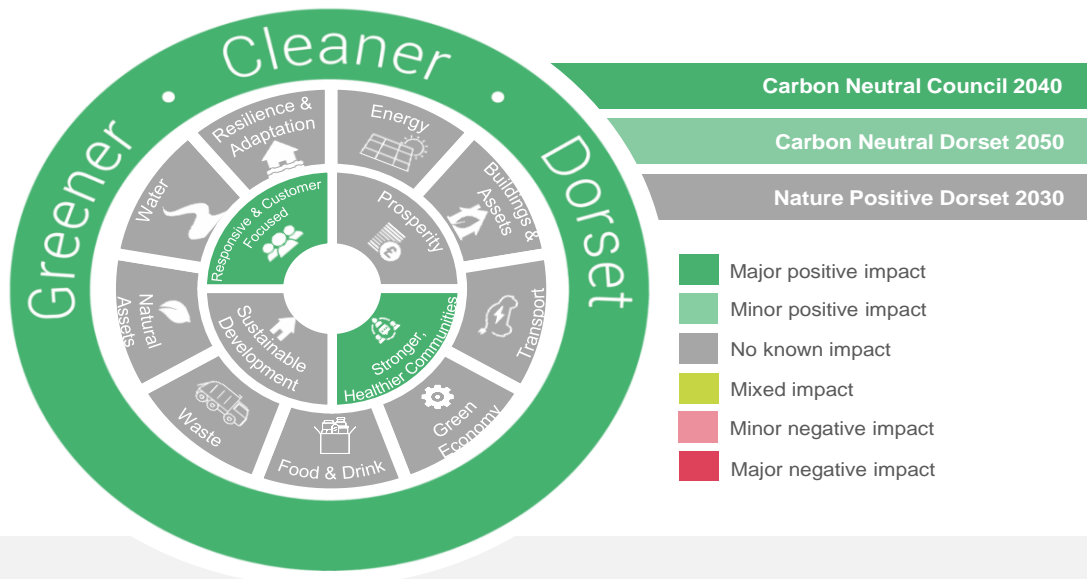
1.4 The strategy and action plan make an essential contribution to the achievement of all five priorities set out in the Council Plan. In particular, this strategy aims to support the achievement of the council's vision by focusing on the priorities of 'creating stronger, healthier communities' and a diverse and engaged workforce to enable us to 'become a more responsive, customer-focused council'.

2. Financial Implications

2.1, There are negative financial implications if we do not consider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as part of normal business activity. The proposed EDI Strategy and Action Plan aim to mitigate this implication. For example, failure to consider EDI may results in judicial review or employment tribunal cases.

3. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

Overall, the strategy currently seeks to have a carbon neutral impact. The current assessment illustrated in the table below is high level only. Assessments will be completed for the detailed delivery plan actions as they are developed.



Quantitative Impact on CEE targets (if known)		
	Unit	Number of units (+/-)
2030 - Natural asset extent & condition	Ha	0
2040 - Operational Emissions	CO ₂ (tonnes)	0

Accessible Table showing impacts

Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy Commitments	
Energy	Impact
Buildings & Assets	No known impact
Transport	No known impact
Green Economy	No known impact
Food & Drink	No known impact
Waste	No known impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	No known impact
Corporate Plan Aims	
Prosperity	Impact
Stronger healthier communities	no response
Sustainable Development & Housing	strongly supports it
Responsive & Customer Focused	no response

4. Well-being and Health Implications

4.1 Implementation of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan is likely to have a positive impact on well-being and health implications for our employees and residents living in the Dorset Council area.

5. Other Implications

There are no other identified implications.

6. Risk Assessment

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

Current Risk: low

Residual Risk: low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

7.1 The whole purpose of this EDI Strategy and Action Plan is to have a positive impact on our employees and residents living within the Dorset Council area.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Dorset Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027

Appendix 2: Dorset Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan
(Detailed) 2024-2027

10. **Background Papers**

None

This page is intentionally left blank



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy & Action Plan 2024-2027



Contents

1. Welcome	3
2. Introduction	4
3. Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion	5
4. How this strategy was developed	6
5. Diverse Dorset	7
5.1 Dorset Council area	7
5.2 Dorset Council workforce	10
6. How do we currently deliver?	10
6.1 Governance	10
6.2 Current EDI activity	11
6.3 Accreditations, charter marks, strategic commitments and frameworks	12
7. Our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives	12
8. Action plan	13
Appendix 1: Definitions adopted for Dorset local protected characteristics	16
Appendix 2: Workforce at Dorset Council 2019-2023	18
Appendix 3: Accreditations, charter marks, strategic commitments and frameworks	21

Figure 1: EDI activity within and outside Dorset Council



1. Welcome

Dorset Council has an important role to play in helping reduce inequalities in the county and safeguarding the rights of people protected by the Equality Act 2010.

As a public body and local organisation, we recognise that the council has a special responsibility to show leadership through our actions and words on equality, diversity and inclusion.

In the Dorset Council Plan, we set out our vision to make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit.

Tackling inequality, challenging discrimination, promoting inclusion and celebrating diversity helps to achieve this vision for Dorset. We are committed to leading by example, working with others, investing in communities, and listening and acting when people tell us how we can deliver better services.

We invite you to read our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027. This document sets out our approach, objectives and actions for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion over the next four years, building on the valuable work done to date.

By placing fairness at the centre of what we do, promoting equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity and community cohesion, we can help to build a fairer future for all.

If you would like document in an alternative format, please call 01305 221000 or email customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Jill Haynes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation
Cllr Laura Beddow, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Communities and Customer Services
Aidan Dunn, Executive Director of Corporate Development and Chair of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Board



2. Introduction

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy describes what we plan to do over the next four years to deliver better outcomes for those living and working in Dorset.

As a public authority, Dorset Council has a legal duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity, and
- Promote good relations between different groups of people

These provisions are found in the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act also introduced the term 'protected characteristics' to refer to specific aspects of a person's identity that cannot be used as a reason to discriminate against. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage and civil partnership
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

We are following the definitions for each protected characteristic provided by the Equality Human Rights Commission, case law and guidance provided by central government. It is important to note that carers are also protected through association with any of the above nine protected characteristics.¹

We recognise there are some additional characteristics that impact people and their ability to access services and/or participate in public life, and we also consider these when making decisions and refer to these as 'local protected characteristics'. These include:

- care experience (individuals who have been in care)
- carers
- rural isolation
- socio-economic status
- lone parent
- armed forces
- gender identity

Appendix 1 provides a definition we have adopted for each local characteristic. Our definitions are based on the 2021 census and other relevant information provided by the Equality Human Rights Commission, case law, guidance provided by the central government and best practices.

¹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics>



Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), the council is required to:

- publish relevant information demonstrating its compliance with the Equality Duty, which we do at the end of March
- set specific, measurable equality objectives which need to be reviewed every four years.

However, the drive behind this strategy is not just to meet a legal requirement. We recognise that there is continuing and persistent inequality in society and, as a council, we have an influential community leadership role in challenging that inequality. It will also help us ensure that what we do is always for the benefit of Dorset's residents by:

- Delivering high quality responsive services and improving customer care
- Delivering fair and equal access for all to facilities and services, free from discrimination
- Being more efficient – providing value for money with improved and targeted services and savings.

To ensure that our workplace and our services are meeting the needs of everyone, we have a responsibility to listen and respond better. As one of the county's largest employers, we also have a responsibility to lead by example. This document outlines the principles and objectives that will guide us on our journey.

3. Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion

The Dorset Council Plan 2022-2024 sets out our vision to “make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit”. The development of a new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy is key to achievement this vision. This strategy makes an essential contribution to the achievement of all five priorities set out in the Council Plan:

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

In particular, the purpose of this strategy is to support achievement of the council's vision by focusing on the priorities of 'stronger, healthier communities' and a diverse and engaged workforce to enable us to become 'a more responsive, customer focused council'.

As a council, we believe in the value of diversity in our workforce:

- making diversity an important part of the recruiting process broadens our talent pool of prospective employees
- different perspectives can inspire creativity and drive innovation when delivering services to our residents
- diverse teams can increase problem solving capacity, be more productive and perform better.

The change we want to see



In developing this strategy, we talked to our colleagues and partners to gather their views on the top priorities for equality, diversity and inclusion at the council. As a result of this activity, we have identified five high level outcomes which underpin this strategy. They are summarised below as the change we want to see over the four years of the strategy.

1. Equality, diversity and inclusion is everyone's business

Decisions are made using the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion. Employees assess the impact of decisions on our residents and colleagues and will adapt services and projects as needed to mitigate any negative impact.

2. Services and facilities are accessible to all

Dorset Council's facilities and services, whether for residents or employees, will be adapted to meet the needs of our diverse communities. We will aim to update and adapt these through co-design with our employees, customers, residents and partners to ensure they meet everyone's needs.

3. We will strengthen our relationships with communities

We will work together with our communities, building relationships based on trust and respect, coming to the table as equal partners.

We will use different methods of engagement, tailored to the needs of our diverse communities. We will have ongoing and regular conversations where we listen and act upon feedback.

4. We celebrate and support our diverse workforce

We will celebrate the benefits that a diverse workforce brings and will actively work to be as diverse as we can by creating a workplace where barriers are removed, with an inclusive culture where colleagues feel well supported.

5. The council celebrates the diversity of Dorset

Where the council leads the way with equality initiatives, or has a good news story to tell, the council will act as an advocate for everyone in Dorset.

We recognise that we have a long way to go on our EDI journey and culture change takes many years to achieve. We must acknowledge that the council is working under considerable constraints – for instance, the ongoing financial pressures. However, this strategy sets out our clear direction of travel and our commitment to deliver the change required for our residents and our employees.

4. How this strategy was developed

This strategy and action plan was developed through engagement with employees and stakeholders, including colleagues from the voluntary and community sector. We met with representatives from our EDI Reference Group, employee networks, trade unions and senior officers throughout 2022 and 2023.

We asked questions about our key actions, rationale and success measures for this work. Drafts of this strategy were shared with these partners and their feedback was used to shape the final



version to produce a genuinely co-designed strategy. This work was undertaken to embed EDI into all council activities.

We have also used the Local Government Association's Equality Framework as a tool to assess our progress on EDI to date and to help shape our future direction of work.

To support the development of our new EDI Strategy and Action plan, we have drawn on key council strategies, including those outlining our work with the voluntary and community sector, young people, the provision of library services and how we lead, manage and support the development of our employees. Where appropriate, relevant tasks have been incorporated into the action plan.

Dorset Council is committed to embedding inclusive practices, culture and behaviours to contribute towards making Dorset a great place to live, work and visit. This approach enables employees to engage fully in their work and helps our communities thrive. The need to ensure everyone is treated equitably, with dignity and respect, is at the heart of everything we do.

5. Diverse Dorset

To support us in making informed decisions, it is important that we understand who our residents and our employees are. Population and workforce data tell us that the needs of our customers, visitors and employees are continually changing; therefore, we need to anticipate and respond to current and future requirements.

5.1 Dorset Council area²

We use information provided by the census to understand who may access one of our services or work for us. Figure 2 (Dorset as a village of 100 residents) provides an insight into who is living in the Dorset Council area. Nearly an equal number of males and females live within the Dorset Council area. The majority are from the age category 16 to 64.

Most residents have the same gender identity as registered at birth. Under 1% of our residents identified a different sex registered from birth, trans woman or man and non-binary. A small number of residents identified that they are either lesbian, gay, bisexual or other. When considering available data concerning gender identity and sexual orientation it is important to note that it was residents aged 16 and older who would have answered this question, and a number of residents did not answer these questions. Twenty residents living in the notional 'Dorset Village' have identified as having a disability, with 5 individuals confirming that they are armed forces veterans. Just over 40 residents are married or in a civil partnership. Turning to ethnicity, most residents are white British. The residents who identify from an ethnic minority³ are from an 'other ethnic' group.⁴ Over 50 of our residents living within Dorset identify as Christian. A

² There is no pregnancy, maternity or rural isolation data provided in this section which is because it is not provided by the 2021 census or suitable information being available.

³ We are following the [guidance](#) by the government concerning ethnicity, which states the term ethnic minorities should be used to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.

⁴ This group covers White Irish; White Gypsy/Traveller/Roma; Other White



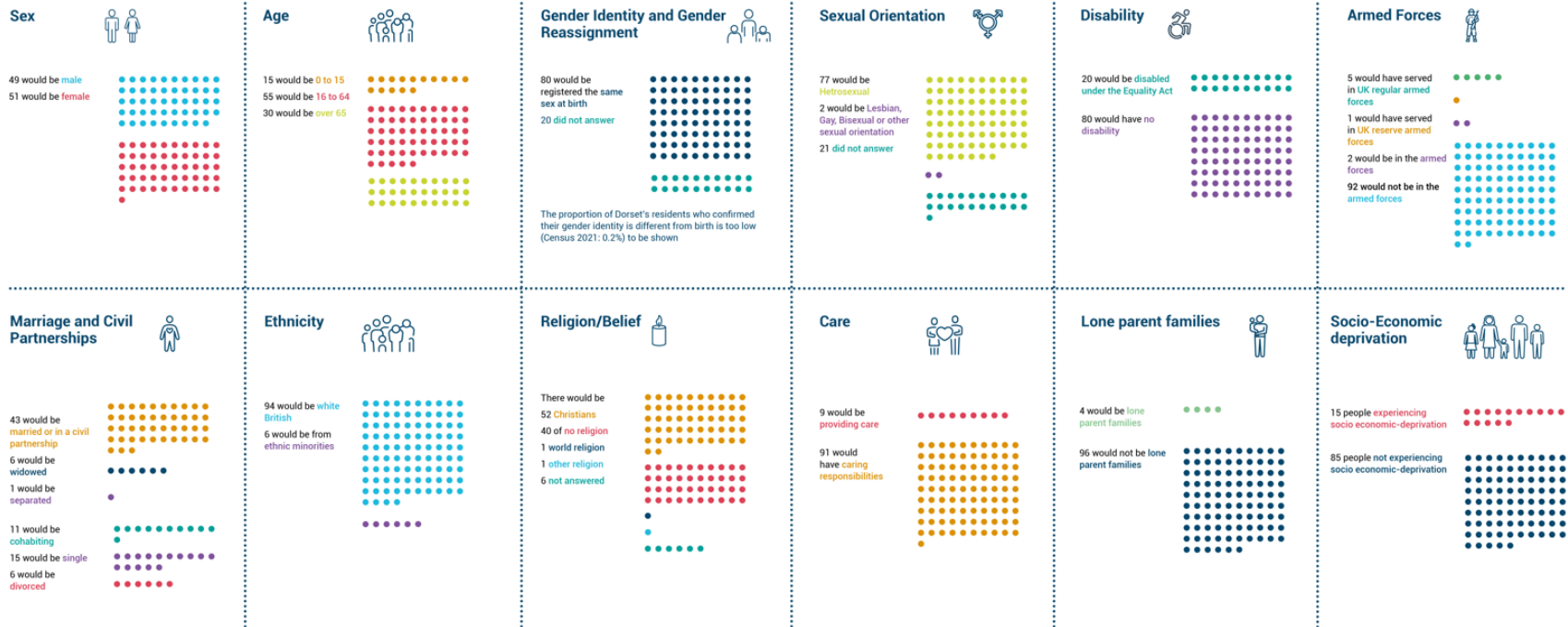
small number of residents have shared that they are providing unpaid care or a single parent. Seven households out of 45 living within the 'Dorset Village' are experiencing socio-economic deprivation.

The council has recently adopted care experience as a local protected characteristic and at the end of December 2023, we are supporting 521 individuals from this group. The data provided in figure 2 tells us that it is necessary for the council to consider needs of different communities when developing policies for future employees or services for our residents.



Figure 2: Demographic profile of the Dorset Council area

If Dorset was a village of 100 people...



Page 141

Protected characteristics are aspects of a person's identity that make up who they are. The presented characteristics are based on the Equality Act 2010 as well as the local protected characteristics Dorset Council has adopted. Data for this infographic has been taken from the 2021 census.



Making Dorset a great place to **Live, work and visit**

5.2 Dorset Council workforce

Our workforce, our demographic data tell us:

- Over the last 4 years, an analysis of workforce data has identified that over 50% of the workforce is aged 40-59.
- The proportion of employees sharing information concerning their ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation has been very small since 2019-20. By 2022-23, 3.6% of employees had shared that they have a disability, 4% had identified from an 'ethnic minority' background, and 1.5% had shared that they are lesbian, gay or bisexual.

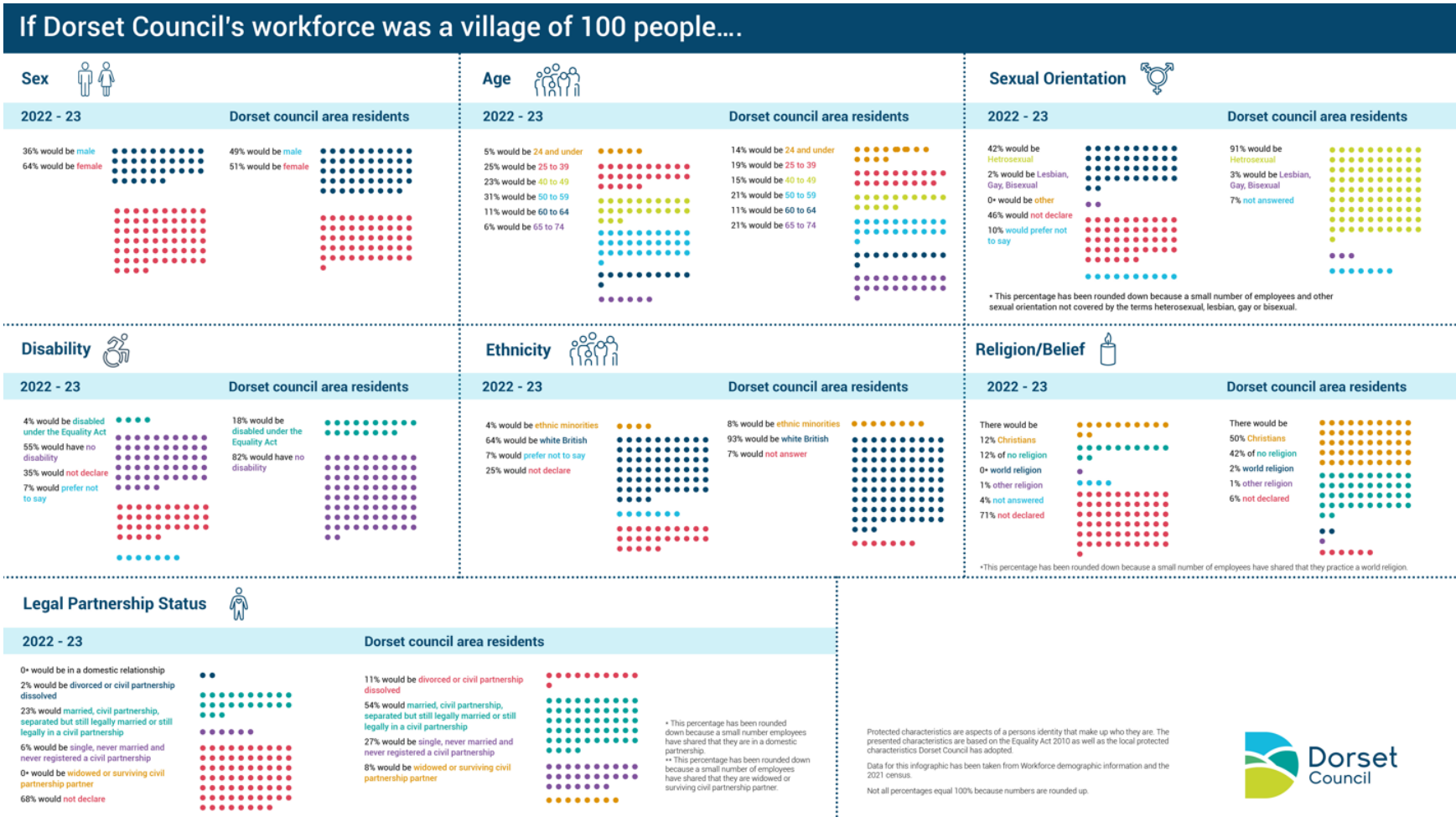
Appendix 3 provides a four-year breakdown of our workforce. When comparing workforce data against demographic information provided by the 2021 census, we can see our workforce is above the area average in relation to the age group 25-64 and the proportion of the workforce who identify as female.

As a council, we must [publish](#) information on our gender pay gap every year. Our gender pay as of 31 March 2022 identified that the mean hourly pay gap of 0.13% is negligible and well below the average for public and private sector organisations. We're committed to maintaining, or improving our gender pay gap.

It is evident that our workforce does not reflect the communities we serve in relation to disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. However, it should be noted that we have some big gaps in the available data: this could be because employees do not understand why the council wants this information so choose not to provide it, or do not feel confident enough to share. Further work is needed to improve the quality of data on the profile of our workforce.



Figure 3: Demographic of Dorset Council workforce



6. How do we currently deliver on EDI?

6.1 Governance

EDI work is being undertaken in several ways across the council, and this part of the strategy provides an overview of the activity. With the council providing over 450 services to 380,000 residents, we believe having governance structures to oversee all EDI work is important. The EDI Strategic Board aims to review and embed EDI activity within Dorset Council and the delivery of its services when working with partners and stakeholders. Membership of the Board is drawn from senior officers and trade unions. A member of the Senior Leadership Team leads the board. Figure 4 outlines our current governance model for EDI.

Figure 4: EDI governance at Dorset Council 2022 to date

Group	what does it do?
Portfolio holder for Corporate Development and Transformation	The elected member holds the EDI responsibility for the council.
People and Health Overview Committee	Responsible for overseeing the Council's statutory functions in relation to EDI.
Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Ensures the strategic direction set by our councillors is followed. They make high-level decisions that have an impact on more than one area of the council. Key decisions made by individual directorates are also shared with SLT. The group meets weekly.
Senior Sponsor	Represents the voice and advocate for the Employee Network they are sponsoring within and outside Dorset Council.
EDI Strategic Board	Has strategic oversight of EDI within Dorset Council and all its external work.
EDI Operational Group	Oversees the operational EDI work within Dorset Council and the wider community.
Breaking Down Barriers Group	The purpose of this network is to provide structure for engagement and a platform for discussion and cooperation on themes or projects that contribute to improving accessibility for the residents of Dorset and the employees of Dorset Council.
EDI Reference Group	The role of the group is to act as a critical friend to the council and assist in the delivery of the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action plan.
Network Leads	Provides an opportunity for Network Leads to discuss items of relevance with officers that are of specific relevance to the Employee Networks.
Specific task and finish groups to progress specific pieces of work	Undertakes specific time-limited pieces of EDI work.



6.2 Current EDI activity

Dorset Council's first EDI Strategy and Action plan was published in 2021. It identified 35 actions. We have completed 14 actions and partially progressed 18 actions. A small number of actions (3) have not been progressed. We are proud of the achievements to date but realise there is more work to do, which is outlined in this refreshed strategy and action plan. An overview of [activity](#) is published annually as part of our Public Sector Equality Duty requirements.

6.3 Accreditations, charter marks, strategic commitments and frameworks

As a council, we have committed to several accreditations, charter marks, and strategic commitments:

- To promote the council as an inclusive employer
- To inform the development of inclusive policies, services and support for all who live, work and visit the Dorset Council area
- To reflect and understand the needs of the different communities we serve as a council
- To provide effective mechanisms to help us deliver on the Public Sector Equality and Armed Forces Covenant Duties

Appendix 4 provides a rationale for why we have signed each one. Resourcing requirements will be met via the EDI budget.

Figure 5: EDI Accreditations at Dorset Council



7. Our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives

We have refreshed the council's equality objectives which support the council's wider vision, based on feedback from colleagues and partners. These updated objectives are to:

1. understand and foster good relations with and within our communities
2. demonstrate our leadership, partnership and organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
3. develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services
4. develop and support a diverse and engaged workforce

These objectives align neatly with the Equality Framework for Local Government. As part of this framework, there are three levels of attainment: 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellent'. The focus of our work up to 2027 is on fully meeting the 'developing' and 'achieving' criteria in all areas. This approach continues to build on our current achievements and provides a clear focus to inform future priorities. After 2027, we want to achieve the 'excellent' category in all the identified areas.

8. Action plan

We have developed an action plan to help us meet the four themes of the local government equality framework; aiming to make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit. It is broken down under the key priorities to be achieved within each financial year. Some priorities will be running throughout the period as they are key to providing the evidence base to inform activity and show impact. We recognise that there might be change, whether that is locally, nationally or internationally; if this occurs, the EDI Strategic Board will decide whether or not existing priorities need to be changed. Success in achieving our priorities will depend on officers viewing the activity as part of normal business activities.

An action plan has been developed by seeking feedback from identified internal stakeholders (Senior Leadership Team, EDI Strategic Board, EDI Operational Group, employee networks, trade unions), the community and voluntary sector and members of the Integrated Care Board.

Figure 7 provides a breakdown of the considered priorities. The detailed action plan is held internally by members of the EDI Strategic Board. If you want to see a copy of this action plan, please email EDI@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk



Figure 6: Feedback from Dorset Council Officer feedback on EDI activity

“When I first joined Dorset council five years ago, I felt like I didn’t fit in. when I checked the intranet and couldn’t find anything for Black workers like me. Although there’s been some progress, it’s been slow. One big win for me and my colleagues is seeing the Black History Month flag raised, something I’d never seen before. I’ve been part of efforts to make the hiring process better for everyone. The Council introduced courses like the Black Talent Leadership and Beyond Difference Leadership programme, thanks to the support of our Learning and Development team. Our EDI officer has been a great help, and we now work closely with our communications department to share information.”

Florence Matimba, Chair of Ethnic Minority Employee Network

“This group is highly engaged and always suggests considerations we may have overlooked. They also seem to be flexible to engage in different ways. They have shown interest in coming in person to access our libraries and help us find ways to make the spaces more inclusive. They also don't just make assumptions on behalf of the networks they represent. They actually proactively look for ways to involve them and challenge us to engage with them directly.”

Officer feedback on the impact of the EDI Reference Group



Figure 7: Dorset Council top level priorities 2024-2025

Dorset Council EDI top level priorities
Top level priorities 2024-2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• embed care experience as a local protected characteristic across all business activities at Dorset Council.• deliver an organisational approach to translation, interpretation and alternative formats• complete the Wellbeing Service review• publish a Dorset Council Trans inclusion policy for future and current employees• ensure EDI is a core element of Our Future Council work• ensure Dorset Council workplaces are accessible and inclusive for all• share the learning from the 'Dorset Leading for Inclusion Change Agents Programme with officers and members to shape future organisational activity• ensure 100% completion of EDI mandatory training for all officers and members• encourage applicants, employees and members to share demographic data at key points throughout the year. This will help the council address any gaps, identify future priorities, and foster a culture of respect and belonging.



Figure 8: EDI activity within and outside Dorset Council



Appendix 1: Definitions adopted for Dorset local protected characteristics

It is important to provide a definition for each of our local characteristics. The council draws on these definitions to measure our activity in relation to each characteristic which are based on the 2021 Census and Healthwatch.

Figure 9: Dorset Council local characteristic definitions

Local characteristic	Definition
Armed forces veteran	People who have previously served in the UK armed forces. This includes those who have served for at least one day in armed forces, either regular or reserves, or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.
Carers	An unpaid carer may look after, give help or support to anyone who has long-term physical or mental ill-health conditions, illness or problems related to old age. This does not include any activities as part of paid employment. This help can be within or outside of the carer's household.
Care experience	An organisational definition has not been agreed. It is a priority for 2024.
Gender identity	Refers to a person's sense of their own gender, whether male, female or another category such as non-binary. This may or may not be the same as their sex registered at birth.
Lone parent	A family with a single male or female parent living with either dependent or non-dependent children. Note: The definition of a lone parent does not make any distinction between situations where a child has regular contact and/or partly resides with their other parent and a child who solely resides with and is cared for by one parent. Only the parent living with their children is included in the estimated number of lone-parent families and households



Local characteristic	Definition
Rural isolation ⁵	<p>Isolation is often defined as having little to no social contact, whether that is family, friends, access to services or community involvement. It can be both a physical and mental feeling. Social isolation can lead to loneliness, though this is not always the case. Rural isolation can be made worse by a lack of access to key services, e.g. poor transport services and/or key services that are based in urban areas rather than rural places.</p>
Socio-economic status	<p>A household is considered to be deprived if it meets two of the following dimensions or more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education: A household is classified as deprived in the education dimension if no one has at least level 2 education and no one aged 16 to 18 years is a full-time student. • Employment: A household is classified as deprived in the employment dimension if any member, not a full-time student, is either unemployed or economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability. • Health: A household is classified as deprived in the health dimension if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled. People who have assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the harmonized standard for measuring disability and is in line with the Equality Act (2010). • Housing: A household is classified as deprived in the housing dimension if the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, in a shared dwelling, or has no central heating.

⁵ <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Rural-Isolation-in-Oxfordshire-Report-March-2022.pdf>



Appendix 2: Workforce at Dorset Council 2019-2023

Tables 1 to 7 compare the proportion of the workforce against the working population for the Dorset Council area. Not all percentages equal 100% because numbers are rounded up. The population data for Dorset has been provided by the Office National Statistics: Census 2021.

Table 1: Proportion of Dorset Council workforce by age 2019-2023

Age	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Dorset council area residents 14-74
24 and under	5.0%	4.3%	4.5%	4.7%	14.0%
25-39	24.1%	24.8%	25.1%	24.6%	19.4%
40-49	23.9%	23.6%	23.4%	23.4%	14.7%
50-59	31.1%	31.4%	31.3%	30.5%	20.6%
60-64	10.1%	10.4%	10.1%	11.1%	10.5%
65-74	5.7%	5.5%	5.5%	5.6%	20.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%

Table 2: Proportion of Dorset Council workforce by Disability 2019-2023

Disability	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Dorset council area residents 15-64
Disclosed disability	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	3.6%	17.9%
No Disability	58.8%	59.0%	57.6%	54.8%	82.1%
Not declared	31.4%	31.6%	32.0%	34.6%	N/A
Prefer not to say	7.1%	6.7%	7.5%	7.1%	N/A
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100%



Table 3: Proportion of workforce by legal partnership 2019-23

Legal partnership status	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Dorset council area residents 16+
Domestic partnership	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	N/A
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	2.0%	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	10.8%
Married, civil partnership, separated but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership	24.2%	24.4%	23.9%	22.9%	53.7%
Single, never married and never registered a civil partnership	6.8%	6.8%	6.4%	6.2%	27.4%
Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	8.2%
Not declared	66.5%	66.3%	67.0%	68.2%	N/A
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4: Proportion of workforce by ethnicity at Dorset Council 2019-2023

Ethnic minorities	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Dorset council area residents 25-64
Arab	0.0%	0.0%	<0.0%	<0.0%	0.1%
Asian	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	1.5%
Black	0.3%	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%
Mixed	0.5%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.9%
Other	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%
White: Gypsy/ Irish Traveller	<0.0%	<0.0%	<0.0%	<0.0%	0.2%
White: Irish	0.6%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.5%
White: Other	1.7%	1.9%	1.8%	1.6%	3.5%
Ethnic minorities	3.5%	4.1%	4.2%	4.0%	7.5%
White: British	69.1%	67.7%	65.6%	63.5%	92.6%
Prefer not to say	8.4%	7.7%	8.0%	7.4%	N/A
Not declared	19.0%	20.6%	22.2%	25.1%	N/A
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Table 5: Proportion of workforce by religion and belief 2019-2023

Religion and Belief	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Dorset council area residents 16-74
Buddhist	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.5%
Hindu	<0.0%	<0.0%	0.1%	<0.0%	0.2%
Jewish	0.0%	<0.0%	<0.0%	<0.0%	0.1%
Muslim	0.0%	0.0%	<0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
Sikh	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	<0.0%
Other	0.7%	0.6%	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%
Christian	12.4%	13.1%	13.1%	12.4%	49.5%
Non-religious	9.8%	10.5%	11.4%	11.8%	42.1%
Not declared	72.9%	71.4%	70.3%	70.8%	6.3%
Prefer not to say	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%	3.8%	N/A
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6: Proportion of Dorset Council workforce by sex 2019-2023

Sex	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Dorset council area residents 16-74
Female	62.3%	62.9%	63.9%	64.3%	51.1%
Males	37.7%	37.1%	36.1%	35.7%	48.9%
Prefer not to say	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.1%	N/A
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0

Table 7: Dorset Council workforce by sexual orientation 2019-2023

Sexual orientation	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Dorset council area residents 16-74
Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual	0.7%	0.9%	1.2%	1.5%	2.6%
Heterosexual	39.7%	41.1%	41.7%	42.0%	90.8%
Other	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	N/A
Not declared	48.6%	47.6%	46.4%	46.3%	N/A
Declined	0.1%	<0.0%	<0.0%	0.0%	N/A
Prefer not to say	10.6%	10.2%	10.5%	9.9%	N/A
Did not answer	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



Appendix 3: Accreditations, charter marks, strategic commitments and frameworks

Local and national protected characteristic	Accreditations, charter marks and strategic commitments	Why have we signed this commitment?
All protected characteristics	Equality Framework for Local Government	We are drawing on the framework because it helps councils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deliver accessible, inclusive and responsive services to customers and residents in their communities including those from under-represented groups. • employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of the area they are serving. • provide equality of opportunity for all staff. • meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and support any aspirations to exceed these.
Age	Age-friendly Employer pledge	47.2% of our workforce is from the age group 50-74. As a council, we want to recognise the value of our workforce.
Armed Forces	Armed Forces Covenant	The 2021 census identified that 14.2% (45,768) of our residents are a veteran. Through our covenant work, we want to ensure that the services we offer recognise the needs of our veterans and their families.
Disability	Disability Confident	As one of the largest employers in Dorset, we believe it is appropriate to take a leading role in recruiting, retaining and supporting the career development of disabled people.
Gender identity	Stonewall Workforce Equality Index	We want to use the WEI as a benchmarking tool to identify the work required to progress LGBT+ inclusion.
Race	Social Care, Workforce Race Equality Standard	Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard identifies issues and measures improvements in the workforce with respect to the experiences of people from ethnic minorities. Our goal is to promote Dorset Council as an anti-racist organisation.
Mental health	Mindful Employer ⁶	We are committed to supporting the mental health of all our employees. Membership of this charter supports our work in this area.



Local and national protected characteristic	Accreditations, charter marks and strategic commitments	Why have we signed this commitment?
Religion and Belief	International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism	Central government requiring councils to adopt this definition.
Sexual orientation	Stonewall Workforce Equality Index	We want to use the WEI as a benchmarking tool to identify the work required to progress LGBT+ inclusion.

As a member of the Dorset Integrated Care Board (ICB), we have signed the South West Leading for Inclusion Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to:

- create a culture where our people feel valued, heard, and able to be their best selves at work
- develop our leaders to be compassionate and inclusive in all they do
- recruit, develop, and retain a more diverse workforce to ensure equitable representation with an initial focus on disabilities, race and ethnicity, and LGBTQ+
- improve staff experience across all protected characteristics to ensure the South West NHS (with a specific focus on the Dorset Integrated Care System) is the best place to work



**Dorset Council Equality,
Diversity and Inclusion
(EDI) Action Plan
2024-202**

Action Plan

1. How has the action plan been organised?

The action plan has been divided into four actions based on the LGA Equality Framework. These are:

Action 1: Understanding and working with your communities living within the Dorset Council area

Action 2: Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment to EDI within the Dorset Council area

Action 3: Develop, commission and deliver inclusive and responsive services

Action 4: Diverse and engaged workforce

The action plan is divided into three areas: indicator, measurement and actions. The indicator column provides the criteria we are planning to meet, and the second column outlines our measurement and what actions are being undertaken. Under the actions heading, tasks have been identified, who is responsible for them and when they will be completed. It is recognised that the person responsible may delegate this responsibility to another. If this occurs the individual identified will still be expected to provide a report on activity. It is also important to view the action plan as a living document which may result in a change in task and date for completion.

2. How will progress be monitored?

Monitoring activity will be overall the responsibility of the EDI Strategic Board. The following reporting progress is being introduced to help with the provision of updates. It would cover the following areas:

- Objective/LGA Theme
- Measure
- Task
- Who is responsible for the task?
- Date for completion
- What is our starting position in relation to this task?
- What quantitative and qualitative data is available concerning this task?
- Is there any evidence of impact to date in relation to this task?
- What quantitative and qualitative data is available to support the impact?
- Any issues of concern or risks in relation to this task
- Recommendations

A RAG approach is being introduced to help with the tracking of identified tasks within the EDI action plan).

Green – The task is going well and is progressing as planned.

Amber – the task is progressing, but it is facing potential issues. Support maybe required from the Board or Operational Group members.

Red – there are problems with the specific action. Action is required from the Board or Operational Group members.

Action 1: Understanding and working with your communities living within the Dorset Council area

- 1.1 Collecting and sharing information
- 1.2 Analysing and using data information
- 1.3 Effective community engagement
- 1.4 Fostering good community relations
- 1.5 Participation in public life

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
1.1 Collecting and sharing information Developing category: The organisation has gathered and published information and data on the profile of its communities and the extent of inequality and disadvantage. Plans are in place to collect, share and use equality information with partners.	Dorset Council is clear about what sources of information (both local and national) are relevant and useful. The organisation knows what information is already being collected – internally and by its partners, including voluntary and community sector stakeholders. Some information and data have been gathered and published. The organisation is working with its partners to ensure information is shared effectively. Partners ensure efficient collection of data that avoids duplication. The council is compliant with GDPR legislation in its collection, analysis storage and use of data and information.	1.1.1 Understand what community information is currently collected by different Directorates and partners.	Principal Research Officer – Social	End of Summer 2024
		1.1.2 Ensure employees undertake data protection <u>training</u> available via the Learning Hub.	All Line Managers	Ongoing
		1.1.3 Publish an EDI dashboard which provides information concerning the different communities living within the Dorset Council area by protected characteristics.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Business Intelligence Team	End of March 2024
		1.1.4 Promote available information about the different communities living in Dorset to officers and partners through the Data and insight for Dorset and EDI SharePoint pages .	Principal Research Officer – Social	Ongoing

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
<p>Achieving category: Relevant, proportionate and appropriate information about the local communities and their protected characteristics is being gathered. Information is shared appropriately across the organisation and with partners, informing the planning of services and contributing to better outcomes.</p>	<p>Information is analysed on the basis of different communities, including those sharing protected characteristics. Quantitative and qualitative research methods are used to gather data and information. National and regional data is used and analysed. Information from ward councillors is gathered in a systematic way. Data is easily accessed, shared and used by departments across the organisation. The council is working with partners to address identified gaps in information. Data is disaggregated using the same or similar categories. Information is being shared to identify and measure equality needs and to understand and measure outcomes for the area. There are robust and effective protocols in place for sharing information between partners and within the council and to ensure data protection. Information is being captured about health and the social determinants of health including socio-economic deprivation and other inequalities.</p>	<p>1.1.5 Publish EDI Dorset Council data as part of the annual public sector equality duty reporting.</p>	<p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>The end of March each year</p>
		<p>1.1.6 Monitor complaints and compliments by protected characteristics to follow any inequality or discrimination.</p>	<p>Complaints Manager - Assurance</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
<p>1.2 Analysing and using data information</p> <p>Developing category: Systems are being developed to analyse soft and hard data/intelligence about communities, their needs and aspirations.</p>	<p>Dorset Council is developing and improving systems for collating and analysing the different sets of data being collected. Information is collected by front-line employees or key decision makers and taken account of. Information captured about inequalities is used in decision making. The council is compliant with GDPR legislation, analysis and use of data and information.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Data provided by the Residents Survey is used to inform service planning, commissioning and decision-making.</p>	<p>Principal Research Officer – Social</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
		<p>1.2.2 Available data is used to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives and equality impact assessment work.</p>	<p>Business Intelligence Team Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Achieving category: Information and data is disaggregated and analysed to support the assessment of local need, impacts of changes to services and priorities</p>	<p>Data is used to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives, and these are regularly monitored. Data is used in service planning, commissioning and decision making. Data is continuously gathered and analysed. Information is disaggregated in a meaningful way, by relevant protected characteristic and other factors (such as deprivation or rurality) and analysed on a regular basis. Information is used to identify and prioritise on the basis of need.</p>	<p>1.2.3 Ensure employees undertake data protection training available via the Learning Hub.</p>	<p>All Line Managers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>1.2.4 Available Dorset Council and system data is used to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives and priorities at EDI Strategic Board meetings.</p>	<p>EDI Strategic Board members</p>	<p>Every three months</p>
		<p>1.2.5 Grant funding applications are analysed by national and local protected characteristics to establish what communities are being funded.</p>	<p>Grants Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
	Information and data are used effectively as part of impact assessment/risk assessment ensuring due regard is given to the public sector equality duty. Performance data is monitored against equality objectives and outcomes with key partners and other stakeholders. EDI outcomes for commissioned and procured services are monitored and reported on.	1.2.6 Work with EDI groups based in Dorset to prepare them to build capacity to make applications for funding.	Grants Monitoring Officer Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Ongoing
<p>1.3 Effective community engagement</p> <p>Developing category: A whole council approach to the development of inclusive community engagement structures is being developed throughout the organisation. There are opportunities for communities to be involved in decision making.</p>	The council has an agreed approach to engagement. It is clear about different levels of engagement (i.e. informing, consulting, participating, co-producing) and when these are appropriate. Engagement structures are in place. There are opportunities for under-represented groups to engage with decision making. The organisation can evidence examples of these opportunities. Shared engagement structures/mechanisms are in development with partners. There are some shared engagement activities with partners.	<p>1.3.1 Publication and delivery of Dorset Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy. It outlines how we will make a greater difference to those in our communities who need support.</p> <p>1.3.2 Ensure good representation of EDI groups at funding workshops.</p>	<p>Business Partner - Communities & Partnerships Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer Senior Consultation & Engagement Officer</p> <p>Grants Monitoring Officer Equality Diversity and</p>	<p>January 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions	Responsible Officer	Timeline
		<p>1.3.3 Collaborate with the Armed Forces Covenant programme to develop the library service's role in supporting members of the Armed Forces and their families in Dorset.</p> <p>1.3.4 Collaborate with the Dorset Council EDI groups, networks, and governance to improve provision of accessible services.</p>	<p>Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Libraries Business Partner - Communities & Partnerships Covenant Programme Board</p> <p>Assets and Regeneration Libraries Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>End of 2024</p> <p>By spring 2024</p>
<p>Achieving category: Integrated engagement mechanisms and structures are in place to involve stakeholders in scrutinising service delivery, decision-making and progress. The council engages with all its communities when making decisions, including those</p>	<p>People from under-represented groups are encouraged and enabled to participate in decision making. A range of engagement methodologies are used. Priorities have been changed as a result of community engagement with a clear and demonstrable evidence basis. The organisation and its partners share information and the results of engagement activities to</p>	<p>1.3.5 Involve local people/EDI groups in decisions and issues that affect them, which builds trust and confidence in council processes and decision-making.</p>	<p>All officers Senior Consultation & Engagement Officer Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
from under-represented groups.	<p>ensure that particular groups are not being over consulted with. There is an increase in the involvement of underrepresented groups.</p> <p>Engagement with the community and voluntary sector and the wider community effectively inform decisions. There are processes and plans throughout the organisation and with partners to increase stakeholder and voluntary and community sector involvement in informing priorities. Feedback is given and people in the community are able to challenge and have their views taken account of.</p>	<p>1.3.6 Collaborate with partners and the community and voluntary sector on EDI issues e.g. Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Group, Dorchester Access Group and South Dorset Access Forum.</p>	<p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>1.3.7 Provide space where residents can connect with health and wellbeing opportunities, partners and groups.</p>	<p>Adult Social Care, Our Dorset Integrated Care System, Public Health Dorset, LiveWell Dorset</p>	<p>By winter 2025</p>
		<p>1.3.8 Explore making connections with Dorset's health and care networks and promote library's social prescribing offer.</p>	<p>Our Dorset Integrated Care System</p>	<p>By winter 2025</p>
		<p>1.3.9 Continue to support Dorset Council residents who are experiencing cost of living challenges through specific projects.</p>	<p>Cost of Living Group</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
<p>1.4 Fostering good community relations</p> <p>Developing level: Structures are in place within the council and across partnerships to understand community relationships and map community tensions.</p>	<p>There are joint partnerships responsible for monitoring community tensions. The council has a strategy in place to consider community cohesiveness. Council communications/ promote positive relations.</p>	<p>1.4.1 Provide updates on harassment and hate crimes and the response, including violence against women and girls, at meetings of the EDI Operational Group.</p>	<p>Service Manager for Community Safety</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Page 166</p>		<p>1.4.2 To put in place a strategy to strengthen community cohesion.</p>	<p>Service Manager for Community Safety EDI Officer</p>	<p>January 2025</p>
		<p>1.4.3 Collaborate with partners and the community and voluntary sector on EDI issues e.g. Gypsy & Traveller Liaison Group, Dorchester Access Group and South Dorset Access Forum.</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>1.4.4 Establish libraries as inclusive, welcoming and trusted spaces, offering refuge and support.</p>	<p>Libraries Communities and Engagement</p>	<p>By summer 2024</p>

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		1.4.5 To continue participation in refugee resettlement and asylum seekers programmes.	Manager for Refugee Resettlement Service Manager for Ukraine Libraries	Ongoing
<p>Achieving level: The council and its partners have a strong understanding of the quality of relations between different communities and collectively monitor relations and tensions. The council and its partners are actively engaged in planning and delivering activities that foster good relations.</p>	<p>Harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified. Members play a role in monitoring community relations and reporting intelligence. Data is available, and it is disaggregated to cover the protected characteristics. Data and intelligence is regularly analysed and acted upon. Stakeholders and communities are involved in the monitoring of community relations and cohesion.</p>	1.5.1 Working in partnership with community groups and Dorset Police to monitor harassment and hate crimes and take appropriate action which involve media campaigns or delivering development opportunities.	Service Manager for Community Safety Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Ongoing
<p>1.5 Participation in public life</p> <p>Developing category: Dorset Council has a clear understanding of the level of participation in public life by</p>	<p>The organisation has a clear understanding of the level of participation in public life by different communities/protected characteristics. This can include involvement in local democracy and representation e.g. school governors, councillors, board</p>	1.5.2 Invite the individuals who are taking part in local democracy and representation to share their demographic information on a voluntary basis.	Service Manager for Democratic Services	Ongoing

Objective 1: Understand and foster good relations with and within our communities

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
different communities/protected characteristics. This can include involvement in local democracy and representation e.g. school governors, councillors, board members of voluntary/statutory sector organisations.	members of voluntary/statutory sector organisations.			
<p>Achieving category: Local people are encouraged to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented. The council uses a range of different methods and it is able to innovate and find new ways to extend participation in certain communities.</p>	The council actively informs and involves local people, including under-represented groups, in opportunities for public participation. The range of participation is wide - from involvement in service consultations to participation in community-based forums, to becoming school governors etc. Outreach work or public campaigning has been undertaken to increase levels of participation by protected groups.	<p>1.5.3 Facilitate opportunities for Dorset residents to participate in the democratic process, for instance, remote attendance, inclusive access to meetings etc</p> <p>1.5.4 Provide opportunities, activities or events for engagement with democratic processes (e.g. Youth Parliament elections, councillor shadowing opportunities, and activities for International Democracy Day).</p>	<p>Service Manager for Democratic Services</p> <p>Service Manager for Democratic Services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Action 2: Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment to EDI within the Dorset Council area

- 2.1 Political and officer leadership
- 2.2 Priorities and partnership working
- 2.3 Using Equality Impact Assessment
- 2.4 Performance monitoring and scrutiny

Objective 2: Demonstrate our leadership, partnership and organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
2.1 Political and officer leadership Developing category: The political and executive leadership of Dorset Council have publicly committed to reducing inequality, fostering good community relations and challenging discrimination.	Senior leaders in the council have stated their commitment to a diverse workforce and have made clear what is expected from employees when delivering services to the community. Leadership on EDI is demonstrated in a way that is recognised and understood by the organisation and local communities. Leaders have publicly committed to improving equality in their area. There is some evidence of action, not just 'talking about it'. The organisation has established and publicised a strong business case for its equality work. There is evidence that the organisation is aware of the socio-economic duty within the Equality Act 2010. The organisation regularly communicates its commitment to promoting equality to employees and the community. There is evidence that publications reflect the organisation's commitment to equality and fostering good relations. There is adequate resourcing and some expertise for EDI work across the organisation.	2.1.1 Members of ELT and elected members support the council being a member of several EDI accreditations, charter marks, strategic commitments and frameworks.	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation	Ongoing
		2.1.2 Dorset Council signs the Unison anti-racist charter. It requires the council to several commitments within 12 months of signing.	Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities Executive Director (Corporate Development S151)	Ongoing
		2.1.3 Members of the Extended Leadership Team communicate their commitment to EDI at key points throughout the year via meetings. This would be through adopting an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ROADmap objective which supports aspects of the work outlined in this organisational action plan.	Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team	Ongoing

		<p>2.1.4 To ensure there is a nominated, elected member who acts as the EDI representative for the council.</p> <p>2.1.5 To ensure a representative from the Senior Leadership Team, acts as the Chair for the EDI Strategic Board.</p> <p>2.1.6 Senior leaders share a zero-tolerance commitment to bullying, harassment and discrimination at key points throughout the year via Team meetings, manager/leadership forums, Directorate meetings and organisational events. This would involve sharing relevant policies and available support.</p> <p>2.1.7 Corporate Directors agree to become senior sponsors of Employee Networks every two years.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
--	--	---	---	--

		<p>2.1.8 Senior Leaders attend EDI events within and outside the council and draw on this learning to share and inform organisational practice.</p> <p>2.1.9 An annual budget is in place to support EDI work within and outside the council.</p> <p>2.1.10 To ensure Dorset Council shows 'due regard' to the principles of the Armed Forces Act 2021.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team and Corporate Leadership Team</p> <p>Business Partner - Communities & Partnerships</p> <p>Business Partner - Communities & Partnerships</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Achieving category: Political and executive leaders demonstrate personal knowledge and understanding of local communities and continue to show commitment to reducing inequality.</p>	<p>Senior leaders can demonstrate their commitment to EDI in decision-making and how this informs the way the organisation responds to challenges. Senior leaders demonstrate knowledge and commitment to equality issues. They 'walk the talk'. There is evidence that equality considerations inform their decision-making. Senior leaders understand the value and impact good communications can have and ensure that publications, websites and other communications channels are as diverse as possible. The council promotes a positive narrative around EDI and good relations across the whole community. It has influence in wider communities and partnerships, on a</p>	<p>2.1.11 Share the learning from the 'Leading for Inclusion Dorset Change Agents Programme' with officers and members to shape future organisational activity.</p> <p>2.1.12 Elected members and senior officers proactively facilitate discussions surrounding EDI matters which are attracting public and media interest.</p> <p>2.1.13 Deliver a programme of key EDI events to raise</p>	<p>Senior officers who have undertaken the programme</p> <p>Elected members Extended Leadership Team.</p>	<p>End of May 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

	<p>range of cohesion issues such as countering far right extremism. The council has adopted some of the key policies of the socio-economic duty when taking decisions. There are examples of where the organisation and its partners have had to take unpopular decisions and can evidence how it has involved the community in reaching the decision. The organisation is up to date with language and concepts and has the cultural competence and confidence to have difficult conversations around EDI issues. The organisation has taken steps to counter negative stereotypes or dispel myths.</p>	<p>awareness and understanding of the inequality facing different communities. The learning from these development opportunities is used to improve inclusivity.</p>	<p>Members of the Integrated Care System Internal partners (Directorates, Employee Networks and Trade Unions)</p>	
<p>2.2 Priorities and partnership working</p> <p>Developing category Partnership working arrangements are being reviewed with the voluntary and community sector and the wider community to ensure that local EDI priorities are addressed.</p>	<p>Corporate and partnership documents capture the commitment of the organisation and partners to equality. Equality objectives are reflected in local strategic planning. There is support and investment in the voluntary and community sector that it is able to work as a network or collective with the council.</p>	<p>2.2.1 Establish what corporate and partnership documents are in place at Dorset Council with the aim of establishing whether they need to be updated to include EDI objectives.</p> <p>2.2.2 Funded opportunities are available for the voluntary and community sector to work with Dorset Council on EDI matters.</p>	<p>Corporate Policy and Performance Officer Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Business Partner - Communities & Partnerships</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Achieving category There is a coherent, shared vision of EDI for the local area, with clear</p>	<p>Key stakeholders have been involved in developing the shared vision of EDI for the area. The shared equality priorities, objectives and outcomes for the local</p>	<p>2.2.3 The voluntary and community sector is invited to share feedback on EDI policies and action plans. The</p>	<p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

<p>priorities which have been agreed and understood by all key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector.</p>	<p>area are understood and acted on at all levels within the organisation. The council looks beyond traditional partners and includes the voices of smaller influencing organisations. The organisation and its partners monitor, review and evaluate performance against equality priorities, including inequality and an intersectional understanding of health inequality. The results of these activities contribute directly to the development of the organisation's objectives.</p>	<p>information provided is used to enhance proposals.</p> <p>2.2.4 EDI programme members of the ICS are invited to share feedback on EDI policies and action plans. The information provided is used to enhance proposals.</p>	<p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>2.3 Using equality impact assessment</p> <p>Developing category</p> <p>Due regard is taken to the aims of the general equality duty when conducting business as usual, making decisions and when setting policies.</p>	<p>The council has an agreed approach to conducting equality analysis/impact assessment of policy and service decisions. This process includes both business as usual issues and decision making. Training and support on equality analysis and impact assessment is available for employees. Impact assessments take account of the views of those affected by the policy or decision. There is a process for ensuring that equality impact assessments are sufficiently robust.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Promote the council approach to undertaking equality analysis/impact assessment via the intranet and key meetings (e.g. employee induction, managers/ leaders forums) and via the Leadership and Management Development Academy.</p> <p>2.3.2 Publish the EqIA SharePoint pages.</p>	<p>All officers and elected members</p> <p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>End of March 2024</p>
<p>Achieving category:</p> <p>Equality analysis/impact assessment is integrated systematically into planning, decision making</p>	<p>The agreed approach to conducting equality analysis/impact assessment of policy and service decisions is used across the whole organisation. Assessments are undertaken at an appropriate stage. There is senior level</p>	<p>2.3.3. Establish an electronic/automated process that tracks actions identified within an equality analysis/impact assessment work.</p>	<p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>By December 2024</p>

<p>and performance reviews across the organisation.</p>	<p>commitment to using and understanding equality analysis/impact assessment to inform planning and decision making. The majority of the organisation's assessments are accessible, robust and meaningful. There is evidence that members and senior leaders routinely take account of equality analysis/impact assessment when making decisions. Members challenge poor quality equality assessments. Decisions around budget cuts and savings have taken account of cumulative impact. The findings, recommendations and conclusions are shared effectively to inform decisions and planning. Mitigating actions are identified where appropriate.</p>	<p>2.3.4 Develop case studies which show how equality analysis/impact assessment work is being used to inform planning and decision making.</p> <p>2.3.5 Publish an update on equality analysis/impact assessment as part of the annual report on how the council meets its duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>	<p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer Officers who have undertaken EqIA work</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>End of March each year</p>
<p>2.4 Performance monitoring and scrutiny</p> <p>Developing Category Appropriate structures are in place to ensure delivery and review of equality objectives.</p>	<p>There is an appropriate and accountable leadership group/board/forum who have responsibility for the equality agenda. There are dedicated resources for supporting equality work.</p>	<p>2.4.1 Undertake an annual review of the Terms of Reference for the Network Leads, EDI Operational Group and Strategic Board to ensure they are effectively supporting the EDI work at Dorset Council.</p> <p>2.4.2 Members of our internal EDI groups have an induction and understand what is expected of them when they undertake this role.</p>	<p>Chair of the EDI Strategic Board</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Leads for Employee Networks</p>	<p>By the end of December each year.</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

		2.4.3 Consider merging the EDI Operational and Breaking Down Barriers Group, as both groups are undertaking similar activities.	Chair of the EDI Strategic Board EDI Officer Leads for the Breaking Down Barriers Group	End of March 2024
<p>Achieving category The setting and monitoring of equality objectives is subject to challenge, including through any organisational bodies or groups and the political overview and scrutiny process.</p>	<p>The overview and scrutiny function is used to support and challenge progress on equality. This can include scrutinising and challenging equality analysis/impact assessment, reviewing objectives that are being set and monitoring progress. The public and partners are enabled to monitor progress. Progress and responses are reported regularly to the leadership of the organisation, officers and members. Corrective action is taken if outcomes are not being achieved.</p>	2.4.4 Relevant EDI policies and action plans are considered by key council committees such as Cabinet, People and Overview, EDI Strategic Board, Extended Leadership/Corporate Leadership Team Committee.	Elected members Extended Leadership Team	Ongoing

Action 3: Develop, commission and deliver inclusive and responsive services

3.1 Commissioning and procuring services

3.2 Integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes

3.3 Service delivery and design

Objective 3: Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
3.1 Commissioning and procuring services Developing category: The organisation ensures that procurement and commissioning processes and practices take account of the diverse needs of clients, and that providers understand the requirements of the public sector Equality Duty.	Guidance is available for suppliers on the equality requirements for the procurement and commissioning process. There are standard equality clauses for contracts. Procurement is based on known analysis of 'communities' needs. The organisation has started to consider how it can measure the social value of its contracts and procured services and goods. The organisation considers the equality impacts of how the public pound is spent with regard to local procurement and influence on the local economy. Specifications take account of the different needs of users. For example, through equality analysis/impact assessments. Monitoring requirements are built into contracts to ensure equality issues are addressed. These are then monitored and reported on. The organisation has an established Social Value Framework which includes equality outcomes. The social value of contracts is measured. The performance of sub-contracting arrangements is measured.	3.1.1 External providers who deliver services on behalf of the council have confirmed they understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Dorset Council local protected characteristics, which will be managed through agreed contracts.	Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement	Ongoing
		3.1.2 We continue to review and assess our commissioning, procurement, and contract management processes to ensure we take into consideration the different risks associated in our supply chains, including modern slavery and human trafficking, and that we seek to mitigate risk.	Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement	Ongoing
		3.1.3 Establish how the equality impact of the council's procurement work has influenced the local economy.	Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement	Ongoing

Objective 3: Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
		3.1.4 Establish how building in accessibility requirements into IT procurement has made a difference to users of council IT services.		
		3.1.5 Establish a monitoring process to capture social value from procurement and commercial activity.	Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement	Ongoing
<p>Achieving: Mechanisms are in place to ensure that equality standards are embedded throughout the procurement cycle.</p>	<p>The organisation considers the equality impacts of how the public pound is spent with regard to local procurement and influence on the local economy. Specifications take account of the different needs of users. For example, through equality analysis/impact assessments. Monitoring requirements are built into contracts to ensure equality issues are addressed. These are then monitored and reported on. The organisation has an established Social Value Framework which includes equality outcomes. The social value of contracts is measured. The performance of sub-contracting arrangements is measured.</p>	<p>3.1.5 Establish a monitoring process to capture social value from procurement and commercial activity.</p> <p>3.1.6 Draw on EqIA to establish the impact of procurement activities.</p>	<p>Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement</p> <p>Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	Ongoing

Objective 3: Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
3.2 Integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes Developing category: Equality objectives for the organisation have been set and published in accordance with the requirements to support the public sector Equality Duty.	Structures are in place to ensure equality outcomes are integrated into business objectives. Objectives are underpinned by robust equality analysis. Equality analysis is fed into planning and assessment of service plans. Objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable Realistic, Achievable and Timely). An Annual Equality report is published and shared. The specific duty to publish equality objectives has been met. Service plans are monitored regularly to ensure that equality objectives are being met. Customer care policies highlight the needs of protected groups.	3.2.1 Ensure EDI objectives are integrated into all council plans, strategies, policies, procedures and team charters when reviewed every 2 years.	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Ongoing
		3.2.2 Publish an annual EDI report which shows how the council is meeting its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.	Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer	End of March each year
Achieving category: Specific and measurable equality objectives have been integrated into organisational strategies and plans and action is being taken to achieve them. Outcomes are measured and monitored regularly by senior leaders	Equality objectives are integrated into organisational strategies and plans. There is evidence of a link between equality objectives, business planning and performance management. Equality objectives are integrated into service plans across the organisation, with progress towards them managed by key decision makers. Steps are taken if deficiencies are identified. Members are kept informed of progress against equality objectives. Objectives address equality gaps and have specific timescales. The needs of protected groups are taken account of. Service users have opportunities to comment on how services are	3.2.3 Review service plans to establish if Equality Objectives are built into individual service plans.	All service managers	Ongoing

Objective 3: Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
	planned. Resource implications have been properly assessed. Key decision makers demonstrate that they continuously monitor, review and evaluate performance of equality objectives.			

Objective 3: Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
3.3 Service delivery and design Developing category: The organisation has systems to collect, analyse and measure how satisfied all sections of the community are with all services.	There are mechanisms in place for service users to be consulted about service development and delivery. Social Value and collaborative principles are reflected in the organisations practical service delivery. The organisation is able to analyse and measure whether all sections of the community are able to access services. It is clear who service users are. Services carry out mapping exercises to identify and review current participation and to highlight gaps. The organisation collects data about user satisfaction with its services. The mapping and satisfaction data collected is disaggregated by different equality groups or vulnerable communities. Complaints are disaggregated by protected groups. There are mechanisms in place to enable employees to introduce business improvements. Appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that Human Rights considerations are identified when planning services and that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect. Consideration has been given to the links between equalities and safeguarding in relevant services.	3.3.1 Establish what feedback mechanisms the council has in place to capture user feedback of services it provides to residents.	Design Architect	Ongoing
		3.3.2 Ensure any user of a council system can share user feedback by protected characteristics.	All service managers	Ongoing
		3.3.3 Carry out an audit of accessibility in our buildings, including layouts, services delivery points, signage and quiet zones.	Assets and Regeneration Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Summer 2024
Achieving category: There is evidence that services are meeting the needs of	The organisation has systems in place to use monitoring data and citizen feedback to redesign or adapt services to ensure equity of access and can demonstrate where this has	3.3.4 Services carry out mapping exercises to identify and review current participation and highlight gaps.	All service managers	Ongoing

Objective 3: Develop and deliver inclusive and responsive services

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
a diverse community, and that take up of services is representative of the wider community.	been done. Service users are consulted effectively before services are developed. Issues such as social prescription and social value involve measuring outcomes which are not delivered by the organisation. Access to and appropriateness of services is monitored regularly by senior leaders and decision makers. Senior leaders and decision makers demonstrate that they continuously review and evaluate access to services. Data about access to services and user satisfaction is used in equality analyses/equality impacts assessment. A scrutiny/evaluation process of services is in place. Human Rights issues are understood and considered when delivering services to customers and clients. Human Rights guidance is available for employees and decision makers have up to date knowledge. Equalities are accounted for within safeguarding policies, particularly in social services, education, commissioning and non-upper-tier responsibilities like housing and community safety.	3.3.5 Agree on a council approach to the provision of translation, interpreting services and alternative formats for our employees, residents and visitors.	Corporate Director for Transformation, Customers and Culture	Ongoing
		3.3.6 Develop a web accessibility policy which shows how the council meets the WGAC 2.2 AA standard and the Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018.	Head of Digital Strategy & Design	December 2024.

Action 4: Diverse and engaged workforce

4.1 Workforce diversity and inclusion

4.2 Inclusive strategies and policies

4.3 Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data

4.4 Learning, development and progression

4.5 Health and wellbeing

Objective 4: Develop and support a diverse and engaged workforce

Indicator	Measurement	Actions		
		Task	Who	By when
4.1 Workforce diversity and inclusion Developing category: The organisation understands its local labour market and has mechanisms in place to monitor its workforce against protected characteristics.	The organisation is clear about its local labour market. The organisation has begun to identify the steps it needs to take to achieve a diverse workforce. These are reflected in recruitment policies and procedures. The progress of protected groups through the organisational hierarchy is monitored and reported on. Equality mapping data is used as part of the analysis. Recruitment and selection is monitored at all stages of the process by protected characteristics.	4.1.1 Ensure the Dorset Council Recruitment and Selection Strategy makes a clear commitment to EDI.	Head of Human Resources	End of April 2024
		4.1.2 Recruitment and selection data is monitored by the EDI Strategic Board at all stages of the process by protected characteristics.	Head of Human Resources Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Every 3 months
Achieving category: The organisation can demonstrate movement towards greater diversity in its workforce profile compared with previous years, including increasing the levels of previously under-represented groups at all levels of the organisation.	Where there is evidence of disproportionality, any barriers have been identified and action taken to reverse the trends. There are initiatives aimed at increasing workforce diversity in underrepresented areas of the organisation. There is some evidence that gaps are being narrowed. There are career development and retention strategies for under-represented groups into management roles. There is a developing understanding of the local labour market/community profile, the barriers equality groups face and the	4.1.3 All selection panels are trained in inclusive recruitment practice.	Head of Human Resources	Ongoing
		4.1.4 Promote internal and external development opportunities for council employees from underrepresented groups.	Head of Human Resources	Ongoing
		4.1.5 Establish targets to ensure the Dorset Council	Head of Human Resources	Ongoing

	<p>impact this has on achieving a diverse workforce. Succession plans and recruitment processes address under-representation. Specific and measurable employment targets have been set to improve workforce diversity. Selection panels are trained in good selection practices including how to avoid bias. This includes senior recruitment panels where members are involved.</p>	<p>workforce mirrors the community it serves.</p>		
<p>4.2 Inclusive strategies and policies</p> <p>Developing category: The organisation's workforce strategies and policies include equality considerations and objectives.</p>	<p>All employment policies and procedures comply with equality legislation and employment codes of practice. The organisation's workforce strategy identifies equality issues. Targets and objectives are based on internal monitoring, employee consultation and the assessment of the local labour market and barriers to employment. New/changing employment policies and procedures are assessed for their impact on people with protected characteristics. All employment and training related policies are regularly reviewed. The organisation recognises and acknowledges that employees from protected groups may experience issues such as micro-aggression from colleagues or service users. The council is using its workforce data to develop training and development strategies that can support a wider equalities agenda for employees. A range of inclusive</p>	<p>4.2.1 Ensure the Dorset Council EDI policy is reviewed every two years.</p> <p>4.2.2 Update and publish the following policies and guidance: - Dignity at Work policy - Violence, Aggression Harassment at Work policy and guidance. - Disability Leave (paid)</p> <p>4.2.3 Reviewing grievance resolution procedures to ensure microaggressions are appropriately considered.</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Network Leads for Employee Networks Health and Safety Manager Trade Unions Head of Human Resources Trade Unions</p> <p>Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>End of January 2026</p> <p>End of December 2024</p> <p>End of March 2024</p>

	<p>structures are in place to engage and involve employees. Policies and systems are in place to identify, prevent and deal effectively with harassment and bullying at work.</p>	<p>4.2.4 Publish a new Dorset Council People Strategy.</p> <p>4.2.5 Develop a Trans policy and guidance that supports applicants/employees.</p> <p>4.2.6 To ensure all appropriate HR policies and procedures use gender-neutral language.</p> <p>4.2.7 Employees are encouraged to become Dignity at Work Advisers. This results in a year-on-year increase.</p> <p>4.2.8 Feedback from the Dignity at Work Advisers is used to ensure Dorset Council is an inclusive employer.</p>	<p>Head of Organisational Development</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer with support from HR, Trade Unions and LGBTQI+ Employee Network</p> <p>Head of Human Resources</p> <p>All line managers</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Equality,</p>	<p>End of December 2025</p> <p>End of March 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Every three months</p>
--	---	--	--	--

		<p>4.2.9 Provide reports on the activity of the Dignity at Work Advisers to the EDI Strategic Board.</p> <p>4.2.10 Promote the Senior Leadership Team video concerning bullying and harassment in the workplace every other month.</p> <p>4.2.11 Develop a council uniform policy which would support all employees in the workplace.</p>	<p>Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Comms BP - Corporate & Internal Comms</p> <p>Head of Human Resources Trade Unions</p>	<p>Every three months</p> <p>Every other month</p> <p>End of September 2024</p>
<p>Achieving category: The equality objectives contained within workforce strategies are implemented and monitored.</p>	<p>The organisation has a basic set of policies and practices to enhance workforce equality and diversity including reasonable adjustments, equal pay, flexible working and family friendly policies. The equality aspects of the organisation's workforce strategy are being implemented and tracked. When necessary, policy changes have been made as a result of equality analysis findings. Managers apply policies and practices across the authority in a consistent manner for all employees. Harassment and bullying incidents are monitored and analysed regularly.</p>	<p>4.2.12 Promote the support for disabled employees (Reasonable Adjustment Passport, Access to Work, Disability leave). This information will be provided in an accessible format for employees who are not digitally connected.</p> <p>4.2.13 Ensure changes to council buildings consider relevant accessibility standards</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources Head of Organisational Development</p> <p>Health and Safety Manager Head of Assets and Property</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

	<p>Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified. There is evidence that discipline, grievance and capability procedures are not disproportionately being applied to employees from protected groups. There are processes in place to address and monitor specific complaints of employees from protected groups about issues like micro-aggression from colleagues or service users. There are toolkits and guidance documents provided to help employees and their managers discuss sensitive issues such as race, gender identity and religion. Exit interviews are monitored and analysed with appropriate action taken to address any issues identified. Employees are engaged positively in employment and service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working. Trade unions and partners are involved. The training and development offer supports a wider equalities agenda for the organisation. Training courses and development interventions are meeting the needs of different groups and are making a difference in getting underrepresented groups of employees up the leadership ladder. Employee-led equality networks have been established.</p>	<p>provided by bodies such as the British Standards Institution.</p> <p>4.2.14 Promote the guidance concerning making inclusive meetings and events information accessible to all employees. This information will be provided in an accessible format for employees who are not digitally connected.</p> <p>4.2.15 Clarify the position concerning digital accessibility for employees with a particular focus on establishing what support is available to assist employees who have shared that they have a disability. Promote the assistive software available via the Microsoft toolset.</p> <p>4.2.16 Provide hubs via the EDI SharePoint pages by protected characteristic, which give relevant information to employees on EDI. This information will be provided in an accessible format for</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Operations Manager - ICT User Support</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer with support from the Employee Networks</p>	<p>End of March 2024</p> <p>End of September 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
--	---	--	--	--

		<p>employees who are not digitally connected.</p> <p>4.2.17 Exit interviews for Dorset Council roles are monitored by protected characteristics.</p> <p>4.2.18 Support the establishment of new Employee Networks (Age and Religion and Belief) which are related to national and local protected characteristics.</p> <p>4.2.19 Consider whether to allocate time to officers undertaking network leadership for participation in Network meetings and activities.</p> <p>4.2.20 Ensure performance management information published by the council includes an element on EDI.</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>ELT and EDI Strategic Board</p> <p>Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>End of December 2024</p> <p>End of December 2024</p> <p>March 2024</p>
<p>4.3 Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data</p> <p>Developing category:</p>	<p>The organisation reports annually on its Gender Pay Gap. People are encouraged to provide data and there are initiatives in place to increase the disclosure of equality information by employees. Employee data is analysed</p>	<p>4.3.1 Continue to undertake an equal pay audit by gender and publish the results.</p> <p>4.3.2 Ensure the system to update employee demographics</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources</p> <p>Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>End of March each year</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

<p>Systems are in place to collect and analyse employment data across a range of practices (recruitment, training, leavers, grievance and disciplinaries etc).</p>	<p>organisationally and service by service. Diversity monitoring information is separated from recruitment decisions and held securely. GDPR processes are in place and regulations are being met</p>	<p>is easy to use and accessible to all employees.</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>4.3.3 Improve the quality and comprehensiveness of employee demographic data, which responds to identified gaps. This could be done by marking specific diversity dates, case studies or relevant presentations.</p>		
<p>Achieving category: The organisation regularly monitors, analyses and publishes employment data in accordance with its statutory duties</p>	<p>Data on applicants, people shortlisted and the composition of the workforce is systematically collected. This can be disaggregated by the protected characteristics. There has been success in encouraging employees to disclose equality information and there are no significant gaps in employee data. Where there are low numbers of any protected group, ways are found to overcome this. e.g. boosted sampling, grouping ethnicities or looking regionally/nationally as well as making more use of qualitative information. The organisation publishes its race pay gap and is addressing any race and disability pay gaps. Its' gender</p>	<p>4.3.4 Ensure employees undertake data protection training available via the Learning Hub.</p>	<p>All line managers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>4.3.5 Undertake equal pay audits in relation to age, disability, race and sexual orientation, if the quality of the data will result in a meaningful audit.</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>End of March 2024</p>
		<p>4.3.6 We see a continued increase in the proportion of employees disclosing demographic information each year.</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>4.3.7 Publish an EDI workforce dashboard which provides information concerning</p>	<p>Head of Human Resources</p>	<p>End of March 2024</p>

	<p>pay gap is reducing. There is evidence that workforce data is analysed and reported to senior leaders regularly. Workforce information is published to cover basic legal requirements and includes analysis of pay/job evaluation outcomes. Action has been taken as a result of monitoring, trends are being identified and used to help establish objectives.</p>	<p>recruitment and workforce by protected characteristic which also draws on relevant benchmarking information.</p> <p>4.3.8 Analyse training data by protected characteristics to establish who is undertaking development opportunities across the organisation.</p>	<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Business Intelligence Team Learning & Development Lead</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>4.4 Learning, development and progression</p> <p>Developing category: The organisation carries out regular assessments of the training, learning and development needs of members and officers in order that they understand their equality duties and take action to deliver equality outcomes. Consideration is given to the progression of under-represented groups.</p>	<p>An assessment has been made as to what equality-related training, learning or development is required in the organisation. Appropriate behavioural competencies have been identified for the workforce. The learning and development plan/strategy take account of equality issues including the progression of under-represented groups. Induction training for new members includes equality and all members are offered equality training. Appraisal processes ensure employees and managers are aware of their equality-related responsibilities and accountabilities.</p>	<p>4.4.1 There is an annual review of the EDI training-related requirements of the organisation in partnership with our Employee Networks, Trade Unions, EDI Strategic Board members.</p> <p>4.4.2 Ensure EDI learning and development opportunities are embedded within our Leadership and Management Development Academy.</p> <p>4.4.3 Ensure leaders and managers understand the importance of the completion of mandatory training around EDI. The target is 100% completion of mandatory EDI training by all</p>	<p>Members of the EDI Strategic Board Learning & Development Lead</p> <p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer Trade Unions Learning and Development Consultant (Management Development)</p> <p>Learning & Development Lead</p>	<p>September – December each year</p> <p>September – December each year</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

		employees (including those who are not digitally connected).		
<p>Achieving category: The organisation provides a range of accessible learning and development opportunities to support members and officers in achieving equality objectives and outcomes. The organisation's learning and development strategy supports the progression of under-represented groups.</p>	<p>Equality and diversity forms part of the training and development for key decision makers. There is evidence that equality issues are mainstreamed into all training (e.g. training on customer care) and rooted in clear organisational values and behaviours. Employees are confident that they can deliver services to diverse customers. They are made aware of equality objectives and/or any changes or improvements. Different methods are used to promote learning to a wide audience (e.g. standard courses, coaching, mentoring). There are specific development programmes to promote and support the progression of under-represented groups in the workplace. Management and individual appraisals include specific equality objectives for the service area.</p>	<p>4.4.4 Organisational commitment to EDI is communicated at application, induction and key points of the employee journey.</p> <p>4.4.5 Employees complete the support for our resident's module on the learning hub as part of their mandatory training.</p> <p>4.4.6 Members complete the resident's module on the learning hub as part of their mandatory training.</p> <p>4.4.7 Executive Leadership Team members are invited to attend relevant EDI development opportunities every 12 months and share the impact of this experience within and outside their directorate.</p>	<p>Head of Organisational Development</p> <p>Head of Organisational Development Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Head of Customer Services, Libraries and Archives</p> <p>ELT members</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>July 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

		<p>4.4.8 A joint programme of EDI training is provided in partnership with the council and the Trade Unions (Unison, GMB, Unite). The training provided is based on a needs analysis of organisational needs.</p>	<p>Head of Organisational Development Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Voluntary and Community Sector</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>4.4.9 Commission leadership development opportunities for underrepresented groups working at Dorset Council, which supports the organisation's promotion as an inclusive organisation and employer of choice.</p>	<p>Head of Organisational Development, Trade Unions, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>4.4.10 Conduct a review of all apprenticeship training providers and apprenticeship standards to understand what evidence and support is required for reasonable adjustments. Analyse findings and propose ways forward to ensure our apprenticeship offer is inclusive, sustainable and all employees receive the support they need to achieve their apprenticeship.</p>	<p>Head of Organisational Development, Trade Unions, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer</p>	

<p>4.5 Health and wellbeing</p> <p>Developing category: The organisation has begun to consider how equality, diversity and inclusion issues are linked to employee health and wellbeing</p>	<p>The council uses workforce data and other information from employees to determine what its health and wellbeing priorities are. Employees in protected groups have opportunities to inform these considerations. The organisation has assessed all aspects of the working environment to ensure that the health and safety needs of all its employees are met including around COVID-19. A range of inclusive mechanisms are in place to engage and involve employees. The organisation has considered working arrangements and patterns in the light of the COVID pandemic. The organisation has a policy for reasonable adjustments for employees and members and managers are trained to implement it. Occupational health services are provided. The organisation has started to address mental health issues in the workplace.</p>	<p>4.5.1 Complete the Wellbeing Service Review and implement a new model.</p> <p>4.5.2 Provide health and wellbeing services that recognise the needs of national/local protected characteristics.</p> <p>4.5.3 Continue to promote the opportunity for employees to become mental health champions, and ensure they are appropriately supported by the Council when undertaking this role.</p> <p>4.5.4 Publish a Disability Employment policy which outlines how the council supports (including reasonable adjustments) disabled employees in the workplace.</p> <p>4.5.5 Promote opportunities for officers to undertake health and</p>	<p>Wellbeing Lead and Organisational Development Consultant (Strategy and Performance)</p> <p>Wellbeing Lead and OD Consultant (Strategy and Performance)</p> <p>Wellbeing Lead and OD Consultant (Strategy and Performance)</p> <p>Head of Human Resources</p> <p>Wellbeing Lead</p>	<p>End of March 2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
---	--	---	---	--

		wellbeing checks when they are available	and OD Consultant (Strategy and Performance)	
Achieving category: The organisation promotes the health and well-being of employees via its policies. The intersectionality of health and wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion is recognised.	There is a coherent and joined up approach to Health and Wellbeing that addresses a range of related issues. Improvements have been made to the working environment. In the post-pandemic world, homeworking and working more flexibly is now the default position in the organisation. Employees from protected groups say there is a safe working environment which supports their wellbeing and resilience where they are impacted by racism and other discrimination. Harassment such as racism is recognised as a safeguarding/wellbeing issue which can be a cause of trauma. Employees are engaged positively in employment and service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working. Reasonable Adjustments are provided in a timely fashion consistently across the organisation. Occupational health works closely with HR to identify and address absence trends. Managers have received training on mental health awareness and say they are equipped to address employee issues. Employees from protected groups say that their specific needs are taken into account by their	4.5.6 Health and wellbeing opportunities available via the Wellbeing Team and the Learning Hub are promoted to by individual departments, and directorates throughout the year. Line managers promote these opportunities to their direct reports.	Line Managers	Ongoing
		4.5.7 Provide health and wellbeing services to employees who experience discrimination, harassment or victimisation in workplace.	Wellbeing Lead and OD Consultant (Strategy and Performance)	Ongoing
		4.5.8 Implement individual Directorate Health and Wellbeing plans across the council.	Corporate Sponsors	Ongoing
		4.5.9 Line Managers undertake the Wellbeing for Managers course, and provide feedback that attendance has equipped them to address employee issues.	Line Managers	Ongoing

	managers when COVID-19 risk assessments are undertaken.			
--	---	--	--	--

People and Health Overview Committee

6 February 2024

Family Hub Network Development

For Recommendation to Cabinet

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: Rebecca Watson

Job Title: Family Hub Programme Lead

Tel: 01305 221764

Email: rebecca.watson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

This report outlines proposals for the development of Dorset's Family Hub Network Model aiming to improve access to and take up of child and family services, in line with requirements of the DfE's grant funded Transformation Programme, local need and strategic priorities.

Recommendation:

To recommend to Cabinet that the proposed development of Dorset's Family Hub Network be approved, in order to optimise the use of community and council owned premises to facilitate co-location, and to enable place-based delivery of integrated, intergenerational services.

Reason for Recommendation:

1. Becoming a more responsive, customer focused council:
As detailed in Dorset's successful Family Hub TF1 bid, Dorset Council are committed to developing at least 8 Family Hubs by September 2024 in lieu of 22 children's centres, plus community delivery (network / outreach points)

Family Hubs aim to improve access to, and take up of services for babies, children, young people, and their families, through coordinated multi agency delivery of information and support located in accessible spaces within communities.

2. Creating stronger healthier communities:

Asset based community development (ABCD) is a localised and bottom-up way of strengthening communities through recognising, identifying and harnessing existing 'assets' (i.e. things like skills, knowledge, capacity, resources, experience or enthusiasm) that individuals and communities have which can help to strengthen and improve things locally. Instead of looking at what a community needs or lacks, the approach focuses on utilising the 'assets' that are already there, building resource and capacity through identification of existing strengths.

3. Driving economic prosperity:

The plans contained within this report are aligned to the Council's Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan promoting effective use of the asset base, aiming to enable the Council to meet its social and financial challenges through asset disposals, generation of capital receipts, savings in costs through the reduction, rationalisation and improved efficiency of the estate and more importantly the generation of value through income generation and the repurposing, redirecting and reuse of land and buildings.

1. **Report**

1.1 DfE grant funded Family Hub Transformation Programme

The DfE describe Family Hubs as 'a place-based way of joining up locally in the planning and delivery of family services. They bring services together to improve ACCESS, improve the CONNECTION between families, professionals, services, and providers, and put RELATIONSHIPS at the heart of family support'

Dorset have received funding from the DfE Family Hub Transformation Programme 1 (TF1) to develop and deliver a Family Hub approach. In addition to this funding, Dorset have also invested council transformation funding.

Dorset have committed to meet specific requirements as defined by the DfE, in addition to ensuring that local needs and strategic priorities underpin the development of our Family Hub approach.

Family Hubs are seen as a significant vehicle in which we will deliver much of the Strategic Alliance for Children, Young People and Families Plan and Family Help element of the Families First for Children Pathfinder, enabling non-stigmatised Family Help to be delivered within localities.

The rural nature of Dorset presents several challenges for implementing a Family Hub model that meets the needs of all families as such we are placing emphasis on developing a Family Hub Network, with main Family Hub sites supplemented by associated community outreach points, with development aligned to our locality model. The type of Family Hub delivered in a local area will be dependent on the needs and requirements within each community and will be developed in response to local need.

Our Family Hub Network is built upon an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, recognising the strengths of community-based assets and service provision, and building capacity and resource within local areas. This is leading to mixed model of Family Hubs, developed from Community Centres, Children's Centres and Libraries

Family Hubs are for all families living in Dorset Council area. They provide information and services for families with children from conception to age 18. This is up to age 25 for children and young people with SEND.

All families need information or support from time to time, but sometimes it can be difficult to know where to go or who to ask. Family Hubs bring together workers from Dorset Council, Health Services, and Voluntary and Community Organisations in one place. This helps to get the right support as they need it.

Dorset's 'network' approach acknowledges and addresses the particular challenges in accessing support for many families living in more rural areas of the county and those whereby transport / travel is a barrier, by providing an increased number of designated spaces across the county, with systems and processes to support improved coordination across multi-agency delivery partners in response to local need.

1.2 Children's Centres

Sure Start children's centres were designed to deliver a place in every community that would provide integrated care and services for young children and their families.

The implementation of children's centres began in 2004. The programme was rolled out first in the 20% most deprived communities in England (Phase 1, 2004 to 2006). This phase mostly involved converting existing Sure Start Local Programmes – but also provision established through earlier initiatives, such as Early Excellence Centres and Neighbourhood Nurseries – into children's centres, although there was some new building. Centres in the second phase, rolled out

from 2006 to 2008, brought the core offer to remaining areas in the bottom 30% of the deprivation scale. Centres in the third phase, established between 2008 and 2010, covered more all areas and did not have to provide childcare and early education places.

Dorset Council currently manages 22 designated Children's Centres. However use of some centres has changed over the past years, with many operating reduced opening hours and others utilised for early education provision only. Where this is the case services have moved to other local community spaces in response to parental feedback and local need.

Where a capital asset funded wholly or partly by the department's Sure Start capital grant has its usage changed, is transferred or otherwise disposed of, the local authority may be liable to repay the grant money to the DfE through the claw back process in line with the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant capital guidance.

There are 2 criteria by which claw back may be deferred:

- If the building remains to be used predominantly for the delivery of early years services (at least 51%)
- Where local authorities are not able to keep buildings open or in use predominantly for early years services, subject to prior approval by DfE, the claw back rules allow local authorities to avoid claw back by reinvesting any remaining value of a capital asset in a new asset used for similar purposes. In these circumstances, DfE defers claw back and transfers its interest to the new asset

1.3 Family Hub Network Development

An Asset Based Community Development approach is guiding identification of potential Family Hub sites, with additional feasibility assessment to ensure that designated hubs can meet the requirements as defined by the DfE in line with grant funding conditions.

The Family Hub network is being developed from existing community spaces where families tell us they feel comfortable and welcome and are being led by services and providers with existing and well-established relationships with local families. This is supporting delivery of non-stigmatised, accessible information and support in local areas.

This approach is leading to mixed model of delivery, with Family Hubs developing from a range of existing places such as children's centres, community centres and libraries.

Assessments have been undertaken for each Children's Centre supporting identification of potential Family Hub sites or potential vacation / de-designation of centres deemed surplus to requirements: enabling realisation and financial savings through relocation of services into new Family Hub buildings and community outreach points (The Family Hub network).

Centres are identified as surplus to requirements either because we are developing a Family Hub in that area and/or, they are already underutilised and therefore its closure as a children's centre will have no or minimal adverse impact on families or delivery partners.

Individual impact assessments for each of our children's centre confirm that all centres identified for potential vacation / de-designation meet one of the 2 criteria for Sure Start Clawback deferral and will inform individual vacation plans.

Vacation of children's centres will be led by the Family Hubs project team and Communications and Engagement team to ensure we meet all our duties in relation to consultation, and supported by Assets & Regeneration. Vacant children's centres will be assessed by the Assets & Regeneration service for repurposing / development / disposal in line with the council's asset decision making process.

Importantly, development of our Family Hub network approach will increase the level of service provision, with no reduction of existing services.

1.4 Alignment to Library Strategy

Dorset's recently published Library Strategy sets out a vision to develop 'trusted community spaces for everyone, with services to inspire your future', with the following aims:

- To connect with and meet the needs of our communities.
- To create accessible, inclusive spaces for our communities to share and use.

The strategy details plans for a new model of delivery across the library network.

Library and Children's Services recognise the synergies in their priorities and plans and acknowledge the potential benefits of alignment to enable place-based delivery of services, through development of premises that enable integration of

delivery partners from across a broad range of services and organisations through co-location and shared use of space.

We aim to maximise the benefits of this opportunity, designating libraries as Family Hub network points, enabling children and family services to be delivered in non stigmatised community venues in accessible spaces across the Dorset Council area.

As a minimum all public access computers will enable families to access the online Family Hub and library staff will be trained to connect families to information, help and support as required. In many libraries children and family services will be delivered directly on site.

2. Financial Implications

Through the rationalisation of the property estate and the re-provisioning of existing assets the Council will be able to generate not only efficiency savings and capital receipts but also generate income and both commercial and social value through the repurposing and redirection of the existing estate in order to meet the Council's social, economic and financial needs and aims.

In order to develop a network of community spaces that enable integrated service delivery, we are working towards a strategic agreement defining arrangements for shared use of premises. This is aligned with the implementation of the Effective Property Services approach across all Dorset Libraries. Thus, enabling Council services to be delivered from Council buildings with avoidance of unnecessary financial transactions between Council services.

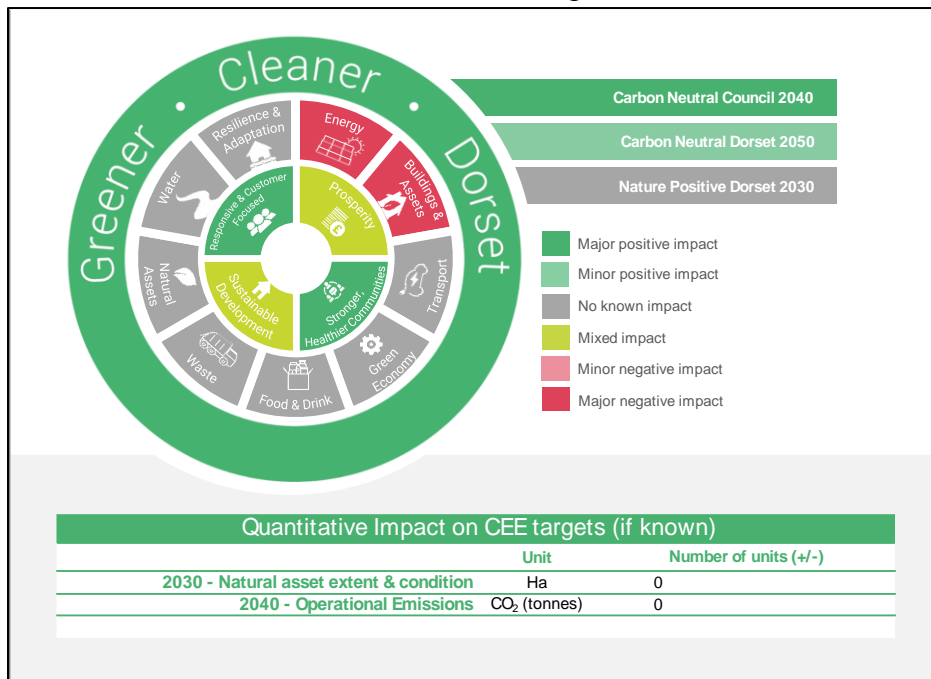
The library service offer space for use by community groups and other public services at subsidised booking rates.

Increased occupancy and ad hoc use of library buildings by children's services will reduce the ability for the library service to generate income from the higher of its meeting rooms and venues. Therefore, the income generating target for the library service will be reduced in line with the children's services anticipated use of the library spaces this will be informed by a review of the library estates by children's services. The resulting figure will be shared in future updates, but it is estimated to be in the region of £30-40,000. We will look to mitigate the financial impact of this through the balancing of savings achieved under the family hub programme.

3. Environmental Implications

The Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency and is committed to taking direct action to reduce the negative environmental impact of our services. Included within the Council's Draft Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy is a Buildings & Built Assets Detailed Technical Paper which has established a series of objectives and an action plan for the estate to ensure that it becomes zero carbon by 2040.

This report aligns with the Property Strategy and Asset Management Plan recognises the above objectives and as part of any Asset Review and new Council developments will work to implement the necessary actions in order to reach the Council's carbon reduction target.



Recommendations:

1. Ensure all electrical equipment is the most energy efficient.
2. Maximise energy efficiency of the building fabric (e.g. Loft & wall insulation, triple glazing)

Response: Any capital works or improvements associated with development of the Family Hub network will incorporate the most energy efficient options available.

NB, *The decision wheel is currently focused on projects relating to individual buildings whilst the family hubs project relates to a number of buildings across the county. The Assets & Regeneration team are working with the Climate team*

on revising the environment & climate policy & strategy to better reflect work programmes of this nature.

4. Well-being and Health Implications

Family hubs provide families with a single access point to integrated family support services for early help with social, emotional, and physical needs.

Family Hubs also provide opportunities for social interaction for all family members, aiming to reduce isolation, support connections and strengthen relationships.

5. Other Implications

There are no other implications to consider.

6. Risk Assessment

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

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and verified by Dorset Council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer. The impacts for each of the protected characteristics groups are classed as either positive or neutral.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Family Hub Network

Background Papers

None

Appendix 1 – Family Hub Network

The table below shows the proposed Family Hub network points, alongside the Children’s Centres proposed for designation.

Locality		Children’s Centre		Family Hub Main Sites (bold) and Delivery Points		
EAST	Vacation /De-Designation		Designated Family Hub Network	The Centre		
				Leigh Park Children’s Centre		
				Verwood Hub		
				Corfe Mullen Library and Children’s Centre		
				Ferndown Library		
				Wareham Library		
				Westmoors Library		
				Wimbourne Library		
		Verwood Library				
PURBECK				Wool & Bovington		Bovington MoD Hub
				Wareham		Purbeck Youth and Community Foundation
						Swanage Children’s and Community Centre
						Upton Library and Children’s Centre
DORCHESTER				Poundbury		Lytchett Matravers Library
				Broadmayne		Swanage Library
						Dorchester Library
CHESIL				Westham		Relate
				Outlooks Portland		Crossways Library
						Weymouth TBC
						Portland
						Islanders Club
						Portland Town Council
						TopClub Littlemoor
						Weymouth Library
WEST		Beaminster & Lyme		Littlemoor Library		
				Wyke Regis Library		
				Beaminster Library		
				Lyme Regis Library		
NORTH				Bridport Children’s Centre		
				Bridport Library		
		Blandford		Blandford TBC		
		Shaftsbury		Shaftsbury Library		
		Sherborne		Sherborne Library		
				Gillingham Library		
			Sturminster Newton Library			
			Vale Pantry			

We will continue to grow the network of Family Hub delivery points, connecting existing community assets through engagement with community delivery partners.

This page is intentionally left blank