



People and Health Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 19 June 2025
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum: 3)

Toni Coombs (Chair), Jane Somper (Vice-Chair), Bridget Bolwell, Barry Goringe, Sally Holland, Carole Jones, Chris Kippax, Robin Legg, Andy Todd and Carl Woode

Interim Chief Executive: Sam Crowe, 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. If you would like to attend this meeting and have any specific requirements please contact the Democratic Services Officer named above.

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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 - 10

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 May 2025.

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 DemocaticServices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Monday, 16 June 2025.

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 DemocaticServices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Monday, 16 June 2025.

[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. MATERNITY SERVICES IN DORSET 11 - 20

To receive an update and presentation from the Chief Operating Officer, Dorset County Hospital, on the impact of the temporary closure of the Special Care Baby Unit and changes to inpatient maternity services at Yeovil District Hospital.

A report by the Deputy Director of Maternity and Perinatal Services, NHS Dorset, on maternity services available to residents across the whole Dorset area is to follow.

8. EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS ENQUIRY DAY UPDATE 21 - 80

To consider a report by the Corporate Director for Education and Learning, on behalf of the committee's panel on Education, Health and Care Plans.

9. IMPACT OF COST-OF-LIVING SUPPORT PROGRAMME 2024-25 81 - 140

To consider a report by the Business Partner – Communities and Partnerships.

10. COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 141 - 158

To consider a report by the Service Manager for Community Safety.

11. COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME AND EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLANS 159 - 188

To consider the committee's Work Programme and the Executive Forward Plans.

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.



PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 MAY 2025

Present: Cllrs Toni Coombs (Chair), Jane Somper (Vice-Chair), Sally Holland, Carole Jones, Chris Kippax and Carl Woode

Apologies: Cllrs Laura Beddow, Bridget Bolwell and Robin Legg

Also present: Cllr Clare Sutton

Also present remotely: Cllr Andy Todd and Lesley Mellor (Chair, Dorset Parent Carer Council)

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

George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Paula Golding (Corporate Director for Care and Protection), Sarah Howard (Deputy Director of Modernisation and Place, NHS Dorset), Julia Ingram (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care Operations), Beth Whittaker (Interim Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Simon Fraiz-Brown (Head of Commissioning, Family Help, and Young and Thriving), Louise Ryan (Head of Service - Birth to Settled Adulthood), Pru Caldwell-McGee (Birth to Settled Adulthood Service Manager) and Kate Halsey (Senior Programme Lead, NHS Dorset).

57. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Laura Beddow, Bridget Bolwell and Robin Legg.

58. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

59. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 were confirmed and signed.

60. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

61. Councillor Questions

There were no questions from councillors.

62. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

63. Birth to Settled Adulthood Progress Report

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills introduced the report. The Head of Service for Birth to Settled Adulthood (B2SA) updated the committee on B2SA progress since the report was originally published in February 2025.

The Chair of Dorset Parent Carer Council highlighted that families were increasingly aware of the service and there was improved joint working.

The Committee discussed the report and asked questions of officers. During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- The Outcomes Framework, co-produced with the Dorset Parent Carer Council and young people, had been signed off. There was an easy-read version of the framework, which was requested for circulation.
- The Dorset Care Record (DCR) enabled professionals to identify whether individuals were supported by health or social care services. Staff training on the system was ongoing.
- Governance issues with data-sharing through the Mosaic system had been resolved. The system was being tested and rolled out to those in Adult Social Care that needed access to the system.
- Joint commissioning arrangements with the NHS were in place, though differences remained between children's and adult services. Work was ongoing to explore a more integrated solution to ensure a smoother transition into adulthood. However, officers recognised that different commissioning arrangements could cause disruption for a small number of people.
- The importance of smooth transitions into adulthood was emphasised to avoid placing pressure on carers and young people.
- Adult practitioners had begun engaging earlier with young people who had complex needs, working alongside children's services to ensure continuity of support during the transition into adulthood.
- Assistive technology was being used to support independence and reduce pressure on families. This included young people using apps to plan their day, and monitoring equipment for older children, enabling parents to feel more confident in identifying when their child needs help. Members were encouraged to visit the TEC Lounge.
- In response to a question on tracking how young people's needs are met as they transition into adulthood, officers advised that there was a review programme which ensured young people were moving in a positive

direction. There were also performance indicators, however the way data was captured was still work in progress.

- A member asked about the financial resilience of Birth to Settled Adulthood and how it could be delivered in the long-term if partners reduced their funding. Officers advised that B2SA helped by increasing direct payments and strategically managing costs by reducing the numbers of children in care, which increases financial resilience.
- Members asked how flexibility in the system could be used to empower young people to shape their own lives. Officers advised that care packages were delivered to suit the child's needs and that flexibility between children's and adult services was where it needed to be. The NHS had a universal commissioning arrangement; however, they would review individual needs and review how services are delivered to individuals.
- Accessibility could be more challenging in rural areas, so it could be harder to recruit personal assistants in rural areas. This caused a difference for some young people in rural areas compared to urban.
- There was progression by NHS Dorset in developing mental health support for young people. The Chair of Dorset Parent Carer Council hoped that this would improve mental health support.
- Members raised that representatives of only Dorset County Hospital were on the Delivery Board, rather than including other NHS providers, and questioned how this would be able to support young people across the whole county. Officers advised that the Delivery Board was working together with the SEND Board which had health provider representatives for the whole county.

The Chair closed the discussion and recommended that there were annual updates for the committee to review the progression of Birth to Settled Adulthood. This could be facilitated through reviewing the annual report of the Independent Chair of the Birth to Settled Adulthood Delivery Board.

64. Children not in Education, Employment or Training

The Head of Service for Family Help and Young and Thriving introduced the report. He outlines the current efforts to prevent young people from becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and to support access to education and employment pathways.

The committee discussed the report and asked questions of the officers. During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- It was highlighted that the highest number of NEETs were among Year 11 Elective Home Educated (EHE) pupils and students from a specific secondary school.
- Members discussed the potential to identify early indicators of NEET risk through school non-attendance data and queried the Council's influence over schools with higher NEET rates.
- Officers confirmed that an attendance strategy is in place, supported by a half-termly attendance group involving Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), and

that the proposed Ofsted framework will bring increased scrutiny of attendance.

- The Committee discussed the role of alternative provision in supporting engagement. It was noted that the Council's model includes learning centres with a 12-week turnaround, and that some schools commission additional pastoral support not formally classified as alternative provision.
- Transport to alternative provision was raised as a concern. Officers advised that arrangements depend on the individual's support package.
- Members queried the geographical distribution of NEETs and noted that some areas with good transport links still had high NEET rates. Officers suggested that economic disadvantage and transport timing may be contributing factors.
- Officers reported that the Dorset Careers Hub has now been brought in-house, enabling better coordination of work experience and careers support, ensuring that young people gain skills for starting work.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of rising employer costs on placement availability. Officers advised that it was too early to assess the full impact but noted that few young people enter employment at 16 which was the group most likely to be affected.
- Members asked whether other local authorities had seen similar trends. Officers confirmed that statistical neighbours had seen decreases in NEET rates, and that Dorset's increase may be due to an increase of approximately 400 people in the Year 12 cohort. Engagement with Wiltshire and Shropshire Councils was planned.
- Concerns were raised about bullying as a factor in disengagement with education. Officers confirmed that while anxiety-related absence can be recorded, bullying was not currently captured in the data. Further work with schools is needed to understand individual circumstances.
- Members asked what is being done to reduce bullying in schools. Officers advised that PSHE sessions and resources are provided to schools, but responsibility ultimately lied with headteachers.

A recommendation was made to gather feedback from young people on their experiences and the support they receive. Officers agreed to explore options for collecting and reviewing this feedback alongside future data. The committee would continue to monitor the NEET rate and how young people were being supported into education, employment and training.

65. Committee's Work Programme and Cabinet's Forward Plan

The committee noted its work programme and the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Members suggested that the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection and the action plan be added to the work programme.

66. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 11.00 am - 1.03 pm

Chairman

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Response to Somerset and CQC Journey

Page 11

Dorset Council People and Health Scrutiny Committee
19 June 2025

Agenda Item 7

Yeovil Arrangements – Timeline of Events

Yeovil District Hospital (YDH) closure was the result of a Section 29A warning notice issued by the CQC for Paediatric services; with subsequent improvement requirements that YDH were unable to achieve in the timeframe.

Page 12

12 May	5pm Notified informally of YDH Maternity Closure
13 May	9am YDH staff informed. Media aware and service users start calling DCH.
15 May	Cessation of elective care
19 May	Full closure of maternity and neonatal inpatient services. Movement of the Day Assessment Unit to Musgrove Park (Taunton) Antenatal service remain on site at YDH.

(Temporary – 6 months)

- Weekly collaboration meetings with Somerset Foundation Trust (SFT - home Trust of YDH) established.
- Designated joint 'Teams' space for continual collaboration.
- Workstreams and Leads (YDH/DCH) identified.
 - Clinical Pathways
 - Digital
 - Communications
 - Workforce
 - Finance
 - Diagnostics
- Designated transformation project support
- Weekly DCH Operational Response Meetings established.
- Risk log and mitigations
- Forecast modelling data – Indicative demand and likely impact.
- Data Mapping – Performance and activity, incidents, complaints and patient experience
- Staff engagement sessions

Workstream Updates/Progress



Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Workforce:

- Weekly SFT/DCH Meetings
- Secondment - Draft agreement – awaiting amendments from SFT.
- List of SFT staff expressing wish to move to DCH received.
- SFT staff visits to DCH maternity unit held.
- Two working days commitment to onboarding of staff, on receipt of pre-employment details from SFT.

Clinical Pathways:

- YDH Antenatal and Intrapartum guidelines shared with DCH
- YDH/DCH Clinician led meetings being arranged to review and compare pathways in obstetrics, paediatrics and sonography.
- Hybrid Working identified as a risk.
- Contact made between SFT and DCH Peri-Natal Mental Health teams for joining pathways and for Multi-Disciplinary Team care planning and support.

Finance:

- Finance Tracker set up to track expenditure.
- Initial conversations held between finance and clinical/operational management.

Workstream Updates/Progress



Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Communications:

- DCH video imbedded in YDH website.
- Website link across YDH/DCH
- Targeted comms sent to GPs.
- 3D virtual tour of DCH maternity unit on website and via social media.

Diagnostics:

- Contact established between SFT/DCH Radiology Leads
- Scanning capacity identified as a risk with ongoing discussions for mitigation.

Digital:

- Contact established between SFT/DCH Digital Leads
- Working with workforce and Clinical Systems Services Team (Digital) to ensure onboarding of staff and access to relevant systems.
- Solutions identified for sharing of clinical correspondence and results.

National Programme of Maternity inspection

Planned but with two days notice.

Two thirds of Maternity Services have been rated as Inadequate or
Requires Improvement

Undertaken by National Inspection Team, onsite for 1 day

Domains of Safe and Well led reviewed.

Positive findings

Staff risk assessed women and birthing people appropriately and records were complete.

Staff reported safety incidents and the service learned lessons from them.

Staff understood how to protect women from abuse.

The service had developed a service and used specialist physiotherapists to improve women's and birthing people's pelvic health after birth.

Staff felt respected, supported, and valued. They were focused on the needs of women receiving care. Staff were clear about their roles and accountabilities.

The service engaged well with women, birthing people, and the community to plan and manage services.

The service performed well in the CQC maternity survey and women felt well cared for.

Four areas of specific concern:

- Monitoring and oversight of Post Partum Haemorrhage
- Oversight of Carbon Monoxide (CO) monitoring at time of booking
- Monitoring and oversight of Hypoxic Ischaemic Encephalopathy, neonatal transfers to higher care and incidence of pre-term births
- Robustness of audit programme

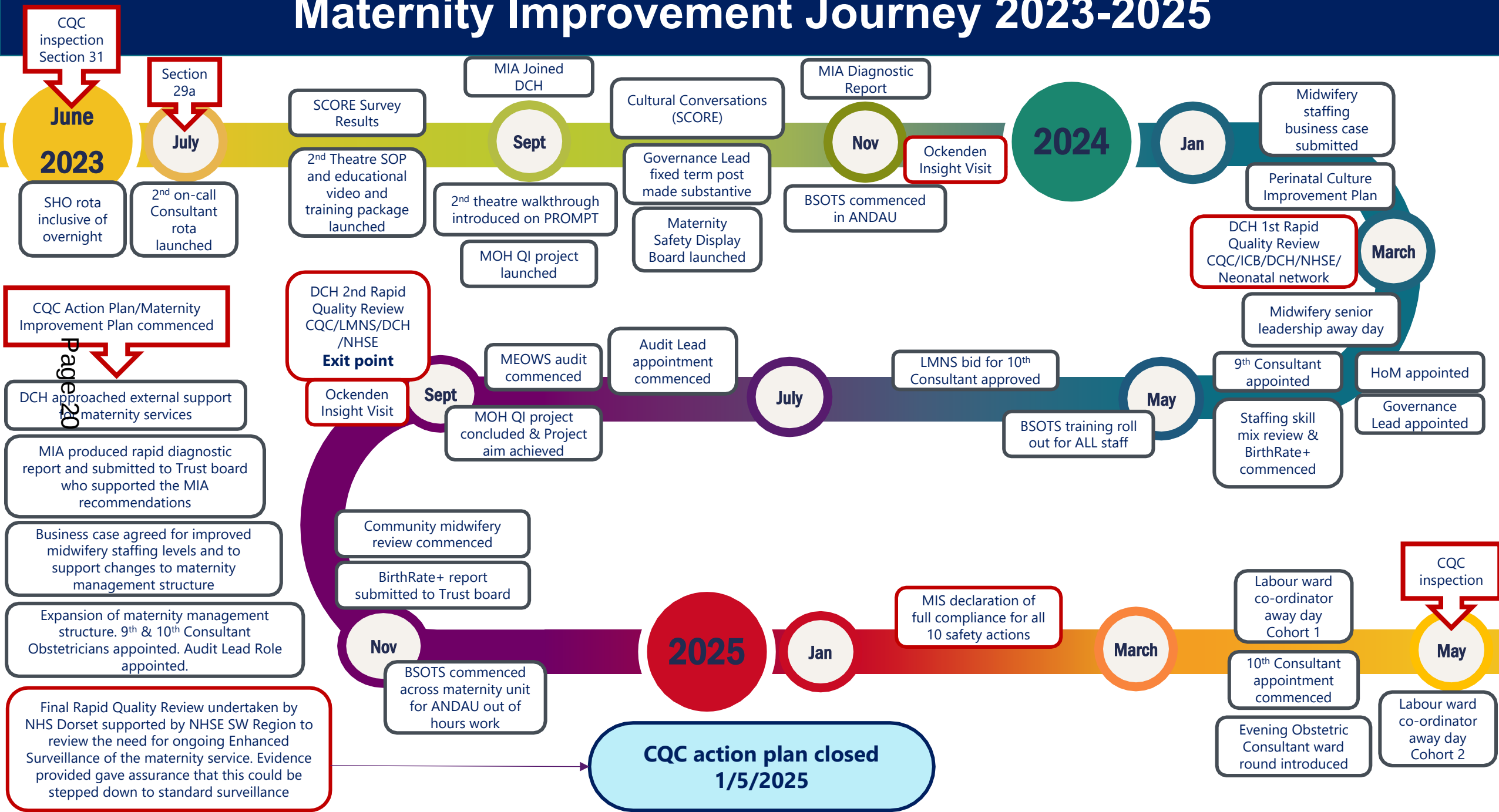
2023 – 2025 Actions Taken



Dorset County Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

- Secured external improvement advisor to work with the team on all recommendations and to strengthen arrangements in readiness for new CQC Single Assessment Framework
- Recruited substantive doctors to implement a 3-tier rota
- Implemented new dashboard using Statistical Process Charts – including Post Partum Haemorrhage and CO Monitoring
- Quality Improvement programme to progress Post Partum Haemorrhage reductions
- Recruited a Lead Midwife and launched full audit programme in line with system partners (Local Maternity Neonatal System)
- **PLEASE NOTE: DCH is currently in a live inspection period**

Maternity Improvement Journey 2023-2025



People and Health Scrutiny Committee

19 June 2025

EHCP (Education, Health & Care Plan) Enquiry Day

For Review and Consultation

Chair of People & Health Scrutiny Committee:

Cllr Toni Coombes

Local Councillor(s):

All

Executive Director:

P Dempsey, Executive Director of People - Children

Report Author:

Beth Whittaker on behalf of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee's panel on Education, Health and Care Plans

Report Status: Public (the exemption paragraph is N/A)

Brief Summary: This report provides a summary of the Education, Health and Care Plan Enquiry Day held on Monday 12 May requested by People and Health Scrutiny following discussion of the revised SEND Strategy report in October 2024.

Recommendation:

- a) That the committee notes the report.
- b) That a further report and recommendations are developed following further investigation by the panel.

Reason for Recommendation:

For the panel to make informed recommendations following the consideration of additional evidence.

1. **Report**

1.1 The revised SEND Strategy for 2024-2027 was presented to People and Health Scrutiny committee on 24th October 2024, and following discussion, a number of matters were raised *relating to the performance of the SEND Service in delivering Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within statutory deadlines and the impact of this on meeting children and young people's needs.*

1.2 The committee discussed establishing an enquiry day to address the committee's concerns with EHCP's. The concerns raised by committee members included:

- (i) That the council was failing some children by not meeting the deadlines required to provide EHCP assessments.
- (ii) There were delays in diagnosis from health partners. Therefore, health partners should be involved in an enquiry day.
- (iii) The time taken for a support package to be put into place, and the targets for this.
- (iv) Ofsted has recommended that data needed to be used more effectively to improve outcomes through the SEND Inclusion and Partnership Board
- (v) The 20-week period for EHCP's was not being met and this was not a priority for improvement.

1.3 The intended outcome for the enquiry day were to support the priority areas of the SEND Strategy 2024-26, to improve communication between the young people, parents and carers, and the council and its partners, and that if the council was more successful in delivering EHCP's on time, it would reduce unplanned expenditure.

2. **EHCP Enquiry Day**

2.1 On Monday 12th May, Cllr Toni Coombs (chair), Cllr Jane Somper and Cllr Bridget Bolwell met with a number of Dorset Council staff and staff from NHS Dorset, education settings, partners and the Parent Carer Council. Below describes briefly the content of each of the sessions. Please see appendix one for the agenda.

2.2 At the time of the Scrutiny Committee meeting in October 2024, there were concerns raised about performance in issuing EHCPs within the 20-

week statutory deadline. Performance in this space does fluctuate depending on a number of factors, including the time of year and staffing capacity. In October 2024, only 34% of plans in the month were issued within 20-weeks for the whole council area. As of the end of March 2025, 62.2% of plans were issued within 20-weeks for the whole council area. However, performance in each locality fluctuates with the number of plans being issued within 20-weeks being significantly better or poorer compared to the whole council average. The data for each locality is available in Appendix 2.

- 2.3 The panel were given the opportunity to review a range of data from the SEND Partnership Board to form some key lines of enquiry for the Enquiry Day. This enabled thinking to evolve around key barriers and pinch points and the Partnership's plans to address these. In addition to the data, the panel discussed the introduction of new IT systems which would streamline processes and improve efficiency. Other additional topics included early years restructuring, national benchmarking and annual review delays.

Please see appendix two and three for the data reviewed by the panel.

- 2.4 The Panel met with Dorset Parent Carer Council and a representative from SENDIASS, the service commissioned through Family Action to provide independent advice and guidance to families, to understand key themes from parents and carers. During this session, the panel discussed the benefits and challenges of the new Case Management System for parents and carers, the importance of communication and building trust, and concerns about the timeliness of annual reviews and the need to improve service delivery in these areas.
- 2.5 The Panel heard from the Youth Voice team about the ways in which we work with our children and young people to listen deeply to them to help shape policy and practice. However, the panel did not hear directly from children and young people to establish any issues they are facing and whether their views were being considered in the assessment and review process.
- 2.6 A range of SENCOs and senior education leaders talked about the work they do to support children with additional needs within their settings and how the Local Authority provides support through termly meetings and linked officers. They also talked about the challenges faced with reducing and pressured budgets, and the increasing complexity of needs that

children and young people are presenting with. The panel discussed the impacts of differences in setting size and staff levels between primary and secondary schools and how this would contribute to some schools having a higher proportion of children with complex needs and the additional pressures this brings in terms of capacity. A higher proportion in small schools was particularly challenging for staff who needed to plan support for multiple complex needs.

- 2.7 A session focussed on health matters looked at barriers and key challenges. There was a particular focus around inconsistent waiting times for assessments and diagnosis, especially for Autism diagnosis. The panel heard how as a Partnership, children and young people were supported regardless of diagnosis, and the support that is offered to meet their needs. The panel discussed the input and quality of health advice, which was often generic and not specific to EHCP's and the variable attendance of health representatives at annual reviews. They considered the commissioning arrangements and funding between the NHS and Local Authority for providing support to children with complex needs and difficulties of separate budgets.
- 2.8 Colleagues were able to provide information about the robust Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework in place, and that the quality of EHCPs is continuing to improve. Multi-agency Quality Assurance takes place to ensure there is a view from across the Partnership. 83.67% of all EHCPs audited between Jan – Mar 2025 was graded Good or better, meeting the KPI of 80%. 90% of amended EHCPs audited were graded Good or better, indicating a significant improvement in quality. The Quality Assurance process seeks the views of parents, carers and young people which is an important mechanism for ensuring we are listening to our families.
- 2.9 The Panel wanted to understand what happens when there is disagreement with decisions made. There was an opportunity to understand the volume of complaints and how these are raised in a number of different ways, often leading to duplication of effort to address. Positively, there has been an increase in the number of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decisions in favour of the work carried out by Dorset Council. The panel discussed the process for Ombudsman complaints and the effects of financial remedies as a result of a complaint being upheld. During this session, the panel considered the impact of parents requesting alternative provision due to their child being medically

unfit to attend school, and the role that GP's have in issuing medical evidence for school absence.

- 2.10 Finally, the Panel had the opportunity to understand the aspirations of key projects planned for the future and the work that is happening around improving inclusion in mainstream settings, development of Inclusion Hubs and activity focussed through the Council's 'Safety Valve' agreement ('Safety Valve' is the Department for Education programme where the local authority has agreed to develop a revised Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit Management Plan to achieve a sustainable financial position for the DSG budget.), although evidenced outcomes are not yet embedded.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The actions proposed through the SEND Strategy are predominantly met through the High Needs Block, a block within the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Block (DSG). As described above, this is an area of national challenge and concern. We believe our robust plan will deliver better value for money in the longer term, whilst supporting even better outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.2 Dorset is one of 38 Local Authorities in the DfE 'Safety Valve' **programme demonstrating this is a national challenge with** the national deficit on High Needs Block estimated to be in excess of £3bn in 2025.
- 3.3 The 'Safety Valve' is a DfE programme where the local authority has agreed to develop a revised DSG Deficit management plan to achieve a sustainable financial position for the DSG budget, particularly the High Needs Block. In return, the DfE will provide the local authority with additional funds as set out in the published plan. Agreements run for around five years
- 3.4 Dorset Council signed a £42m 'Safety Valve' agreement with the Department for Education in March 2022 to help eradicate the cumulative DSG deficit and support a return to a balanced in-year DSG position by 2026-27. As part of this agreement Dorset Council committed to contribute £33m as part of the agreement. Additionally, Dorset committed to invest £47m into capital schemes across the county.

- 3.5 Despite significant operational improvement, demonstrated by receiving the best possibly result at the March 2024 Ofsted inspection for the **Area SEND inspection of Dorset Local Area Partnership** Dorset is not on track to meet the financial position stated in the original 'Safety Valve' agreement.
- 3.6 **Dorset continue to work with DfE on a revised agreement.** For Dorset Council the DSG deficit is £95.6m and is estimated to increase to £145.7m by 31 March 2026. The current statutory instrument which allows for the DSG deficit to be accounted for separately expires on 31 March 2026.
- 3.7 Whilst the deficit is therefore held separately from the General Fund, there is a cashflow pressure resulting from carrying a £95.6m deficit meaning that the Council has access to £95.6m less cash than it would otherwise. As a result, interest foregone on the deficit equates to £4m of pressure met by the General Fund. This is £4m which could otherwise be spent on local service delivery.
- 3.8 Additionally, increased demand has put pressure on services funded via the General Fund that support children and young people with an EHCP, including officers who administer and support the EHCP process, Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers.
- 3.9 Another Dorset Council funded service under financial pressure that supports children and young people with an EHCP is SEN school transport. In 2024/25, £19.7m was spent on this service. The corresponding figure for 2019/20 was £9m.
- 3.10 The SEND strategy seeks to help rebalance the financial position through delivering better value for money and improved outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.11 However, this is only part of the financial solution; national reform, for example as described in the ISOS report referenced in the background papers, is required to deliver full financial stability.

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

- 4.1 There are no implications as a result of this report.
- 4.2 A Climate Decision wheel and impact assessment will be completed when the committee's final report and recommendations are developed.

5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 5.1 The outcomes within the Strategy are explicitly designed to have a positive impact on wellbeing and health, particularly for children, young people and families with SEND.

6. Other Implications

- 6.1 There are no other implications.

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 The recommendations and actions seek to support and enhance equality and equity for children and young people with SEND and their families.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Enquiry Day Agenda

Appendix 2 – EHCP Enquiry Day Data Report

Appendix 3 – SEND Board Performance Report (used by the Enquiry Day)

10. Background Papers

National Audit Office Report - [Support for children and young people with special educational needs](#)

ISOS Report - [Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND](#)

11. Report Sign Off

- 11.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

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Following a review of the SEND Strategy and its progress, and regular monitoring of the council's performance data, the People & Health Scrutiny Committee established a working group to review the timeliness of developing EHCP's. The committee had the following concerns:

- The council was failing some children by not meeting the 20-week statutory deadlines
- There were delays in diagnosis from partners and the health service
- The time taken for support packages to be put into place and targets for this
- Ofsted had recommended more effective use of data to improve outcomes.
- Only 60% of EHCP's were being delivered on time, with this number decreasing again – it was not a priority for improvement
- There was particularly poor performance in north & east localities, with 36.4% and 11.1% respectively of EHCPs being completed on time (August 2024).
- Delays in EHCP's creates an impact on the budget for spot purchasing
- There was an increasing demand for assessment

The key issues to be examined in the review are:

- Barriers to the timeliness of the process, which includes diagnosis from health partners and from educational psychologists
- Outcomes of ombudsman reviews and the financial cost implications of these.
- The experience of families when there is a delay in preparing EHCPs

- Effective sustainable positive change to the outcomes of children and families with access to EHCPs and SEND support services that meet their needs.
- What impact does delays in EHCPs have on transitions into adulthood and other services

Planned Outcomes:

Supporting the following priority areas and their outcomes from the SEND Strategy 2024-27:

Priority 1 – Early Identification

- Children, young people and families report satisfaction on the EHCP process and timescales. Quality Assurance have a robust evidence base of the provision and production of high quality EHCPs. Children and young people receive services that meet their needs.
- We meet the 20-week timescale in all cases. Whilst our performance is better than Southwest, Statistical Neighbours and England, our performance in this area has slipped in recent years

Priority 2 – Inclusion

- EHCPs are co-produced with families and young people

Priority 3 – SEND Pathway

- Leaders take effective action to improve the quality of the EHC plan process. This will include continuously refining a fair and robust decision-making system to decide on a child or young person's education, health and care needs or plan; issuing plans in a timely way; and assessing the quality of EHC plans.
- Every child/young person who has an EHCP has their plan reviewed at least annually, so that their needs are accurate, and provision is suitable.

In addition to these areas of the SEND strategy, it is anticipated that the review will contribute to the following outcomes:

- Reduced unexpected cost pressures, such as those caused by Ombudsman complaints being upheld.
- Transformation of the process for preparing EHCP's.
- Improved communication between children, parents, carers and the council and its partners.

DORSET EHCP Enquiry Day 12th May 2025

AGENDA

Time		Item	Content	Lead	Contributors	
10:00	10:10	Welcome		Chairman		Scene Setting
10:10	10:25	Introduction	An opportunity to describe current situation, context and performance strategically	Cllr Sutton	Paul Dempsey, Beth Whittaker, Kath Saunders, Lesley Mellor	
10:25	11:15	Data	What does our data tell us? Where are our key barriers/ pinch points, what are our plans to address? Data breakdown by locality	Kath Saunders	Doug Gilbert/ Rowena Wrixon, Gaynor Howlett, Emma Adlem, Liz Curtis-Jones, Rachel Meyrick, Louise Ryan	
11:15	12:00	Parent Carer voice	Dorset Parent Carer Council and SENDIASS Lived experience, communication and cyp voice	Lesley Mellor	Lucy Holliday (SENDIASS)	Evidence Gathering & KLOE
12:00	12:30	CYP Voice	Lived experience – how we seek feedback from young people, Youth Voice team, Dorset Unstoppables, CYP Advocacy	Simon Fraiz-Brown	Kaye Wright Kath Saunders	
12:30	13:00	View from Settings, LA support to settings	SENCOs perspective of process – barriers and opportunities for improvement (Termly planning meetings, ARs, collaborative working) Locality level data will be provided and discussed in the Data session	Kath Saunders	Snr EP Esther Gardner, Bethan West Oliver Greenaway Hannah Oram Nadine Dawson Claire Corrie Sam Branson Emma Gould Kirsty Cowley Claire Aiken Phil Jones	
13:00	13:30	LUNCH				

DORSET EHCP Enquiry Day 12th May 2025

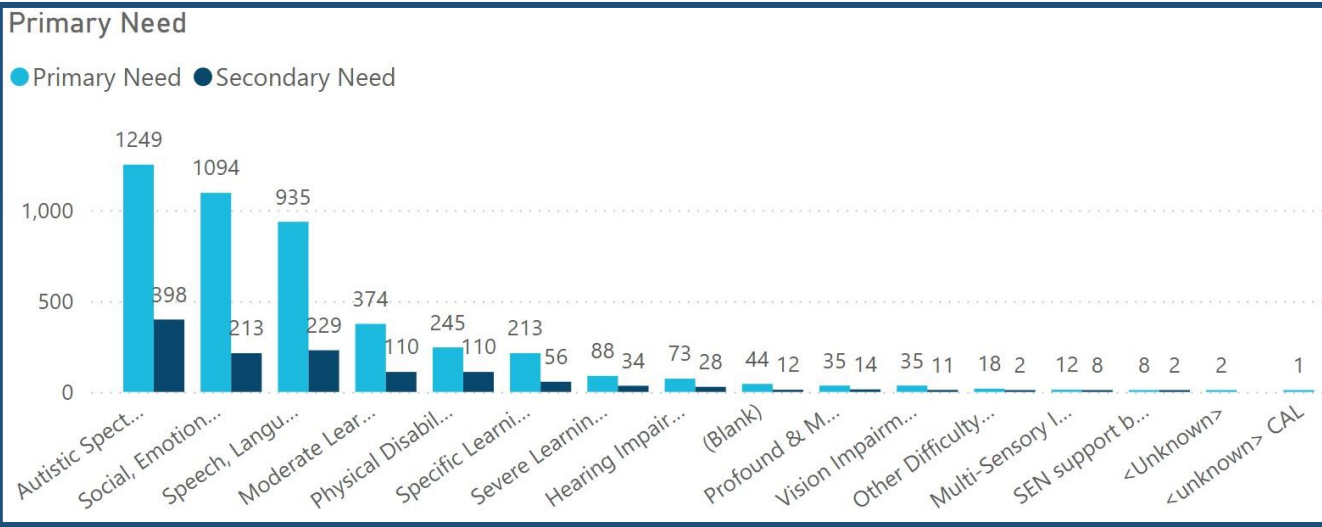
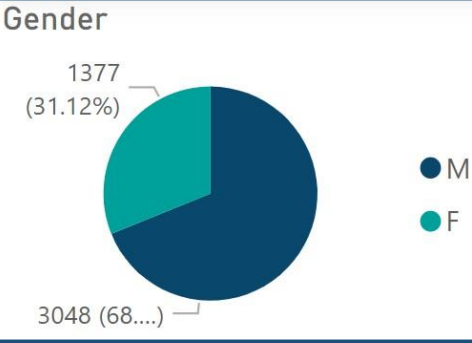
13:30	14:30	NHS Services	NHS Perspective and barriers to success	Chloe Morley	<i>Other health rep TBC</i> Ross Bowell Miriam Leigh	
14:30	15:00	Quality	How do we know we are providing good quality plans and annual reviews? Our QA process explained and our plans for improvement. The process of applying for, assessing and agreeing yes/no to issue a plan.	Kath Saunders	Emma Adlem, Gaynor Howlett, Louise Ryan, Sarah Allan Leigh Hudson, Liz Curtis-Jones	
15:00	15:30	What happens when we disagree?	Complaints, Tribunals, Legal and financial impacts	Kath Saunders	Gaynor Howlett, Antony Bygrave Samantha Oak	
15:30	16:00	Future Opportunities	Capital strategy, inclusion in mainstream, Inclusion Hubs, HNB/Safety Valve Budget Implications to high needs block of DSG (relating to challenges faced by settings)	Miriam Leigh	Louise Taylor, Ross Bowell	
16:00	16:30	Summing up	Opportunity to review the sessions of the day	Beth Whittaker	Kath Saunders	
16:30	17:00	Close	Reflections from panel. Any further data requests or further conversations needed? Next steps – report.	Chairman	Panel Members	

4425

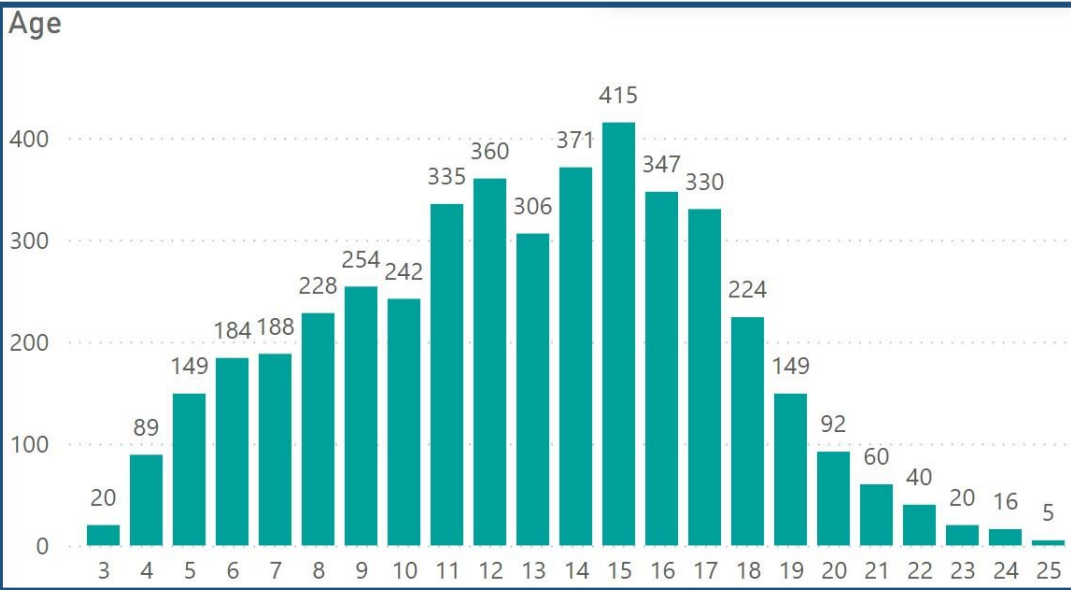
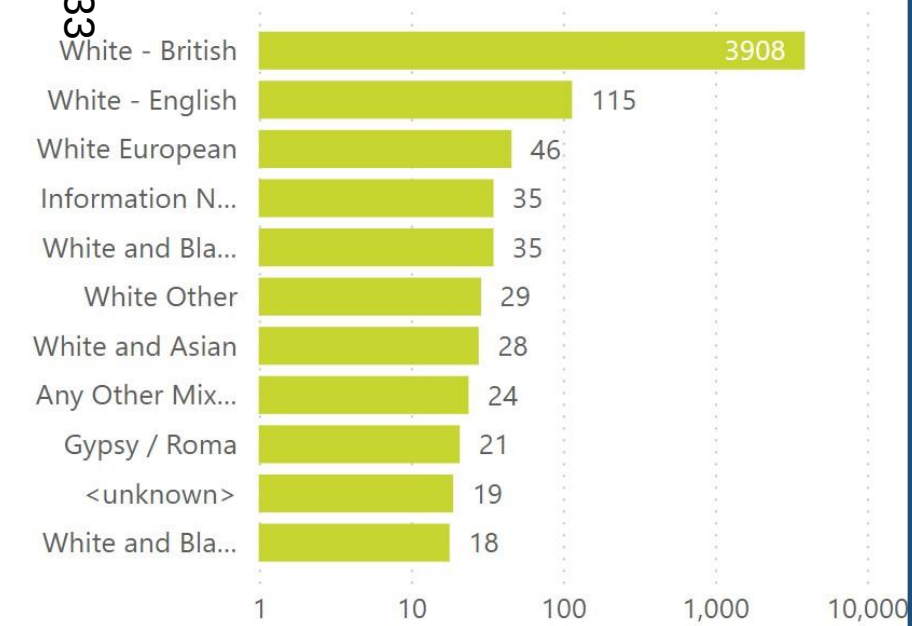
Current Children with an EHCP

141

Current Children in Care

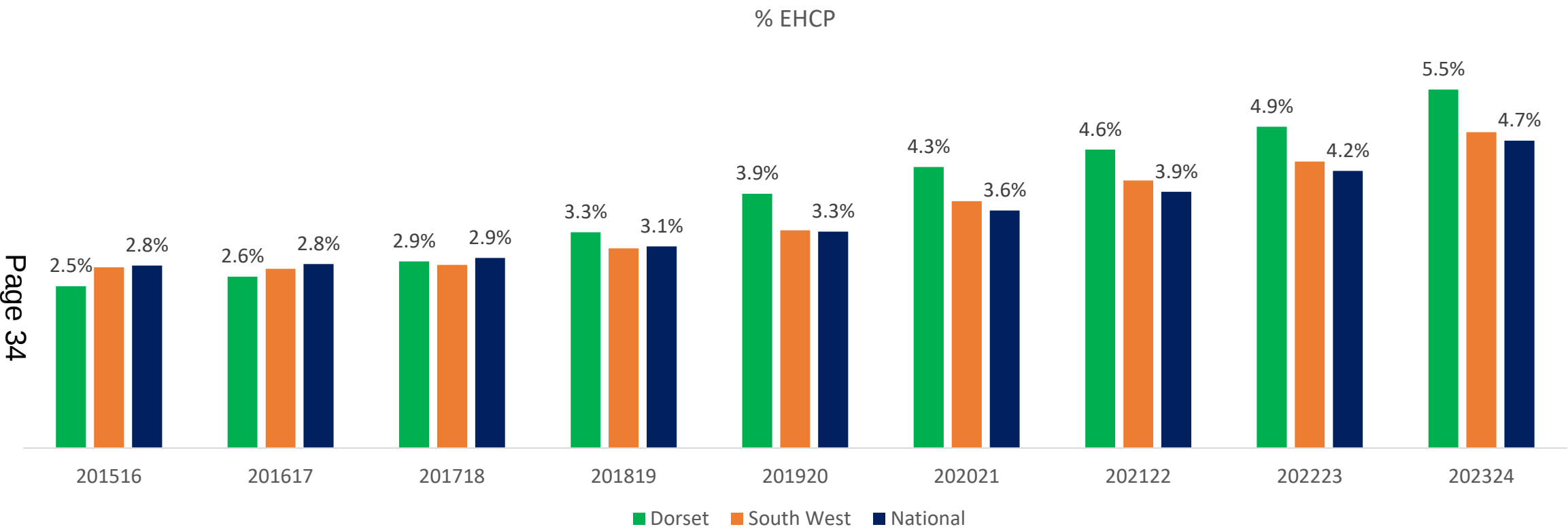


Ethnicity



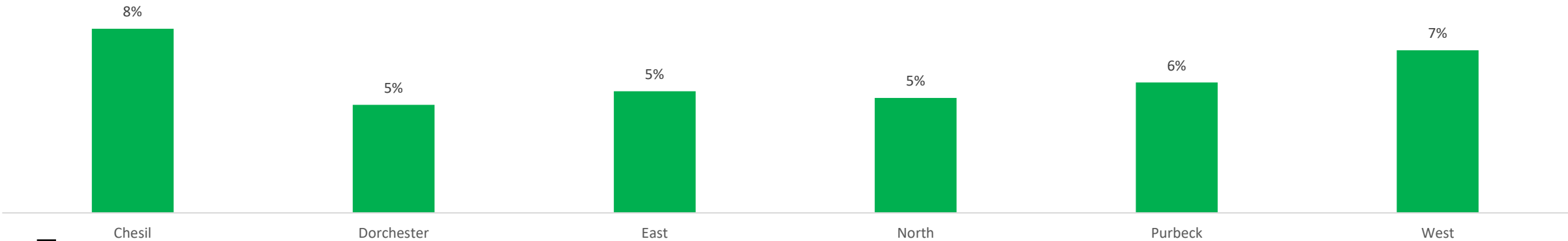
46

Current CP

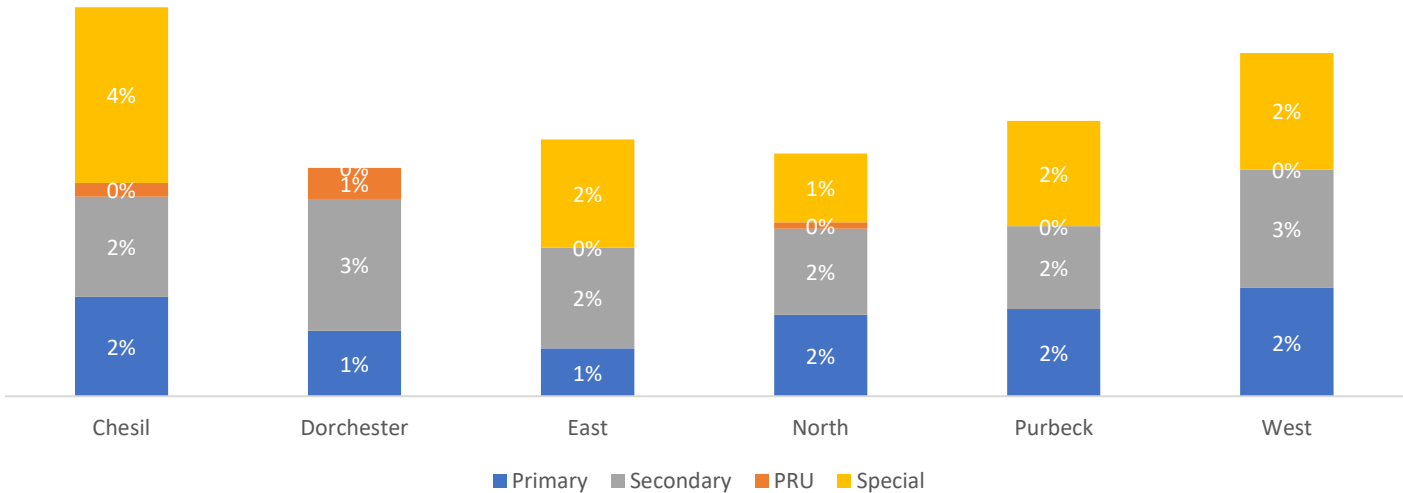


- Since 2015/16 there has been a national rise of 8% in the number of children with EHCP.

% EHCP by locality (January 2025)

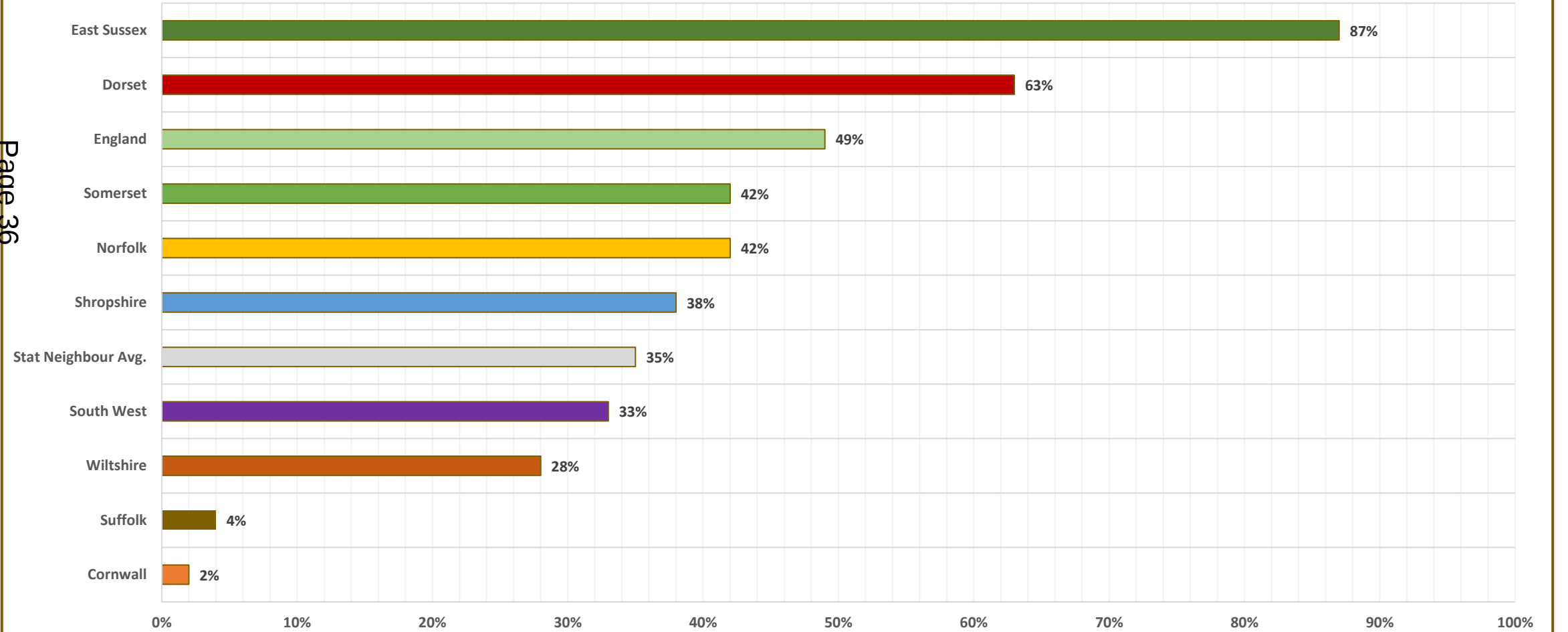


% EHCP with setting phase

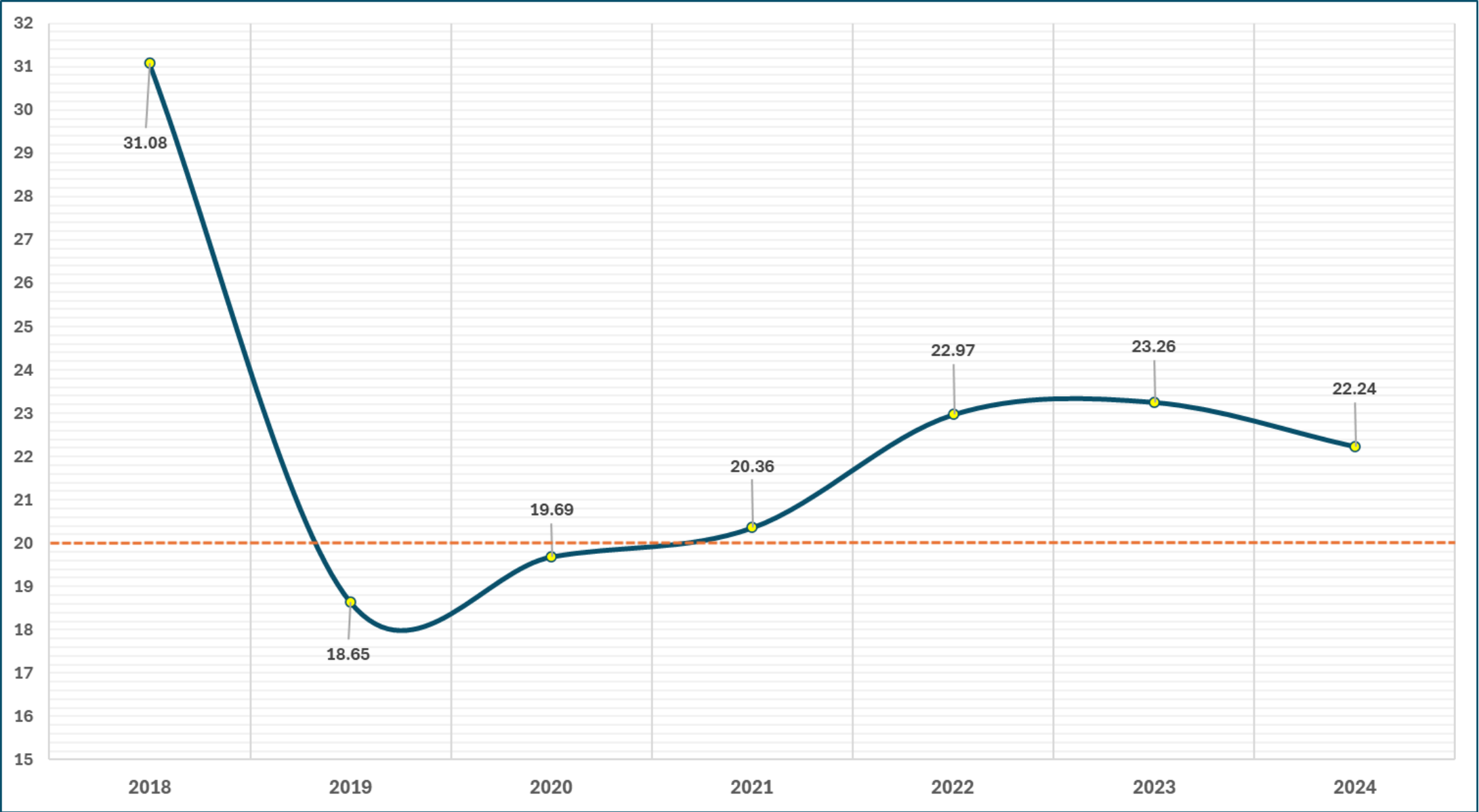


- Chesil locality has the highest proportions of EHCP children (with two special schools).
- Middle schools are deemed secondary – so skew primary/secondary proportions in Dorchester and East localities

Percentage of EHCPs Issued within 20wks
SEN2 2024

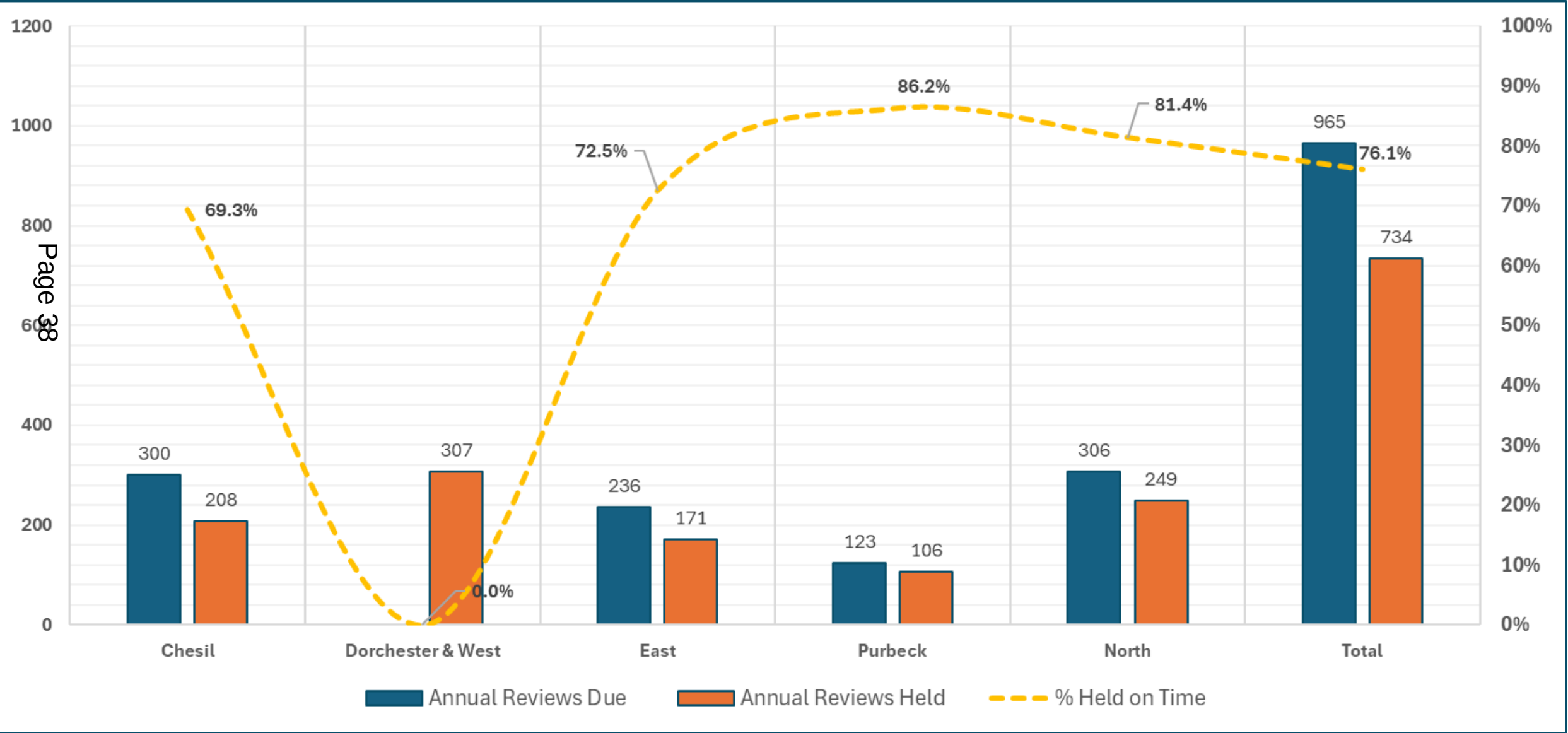


Average time to Issue a Plan Over the Last 7yrs



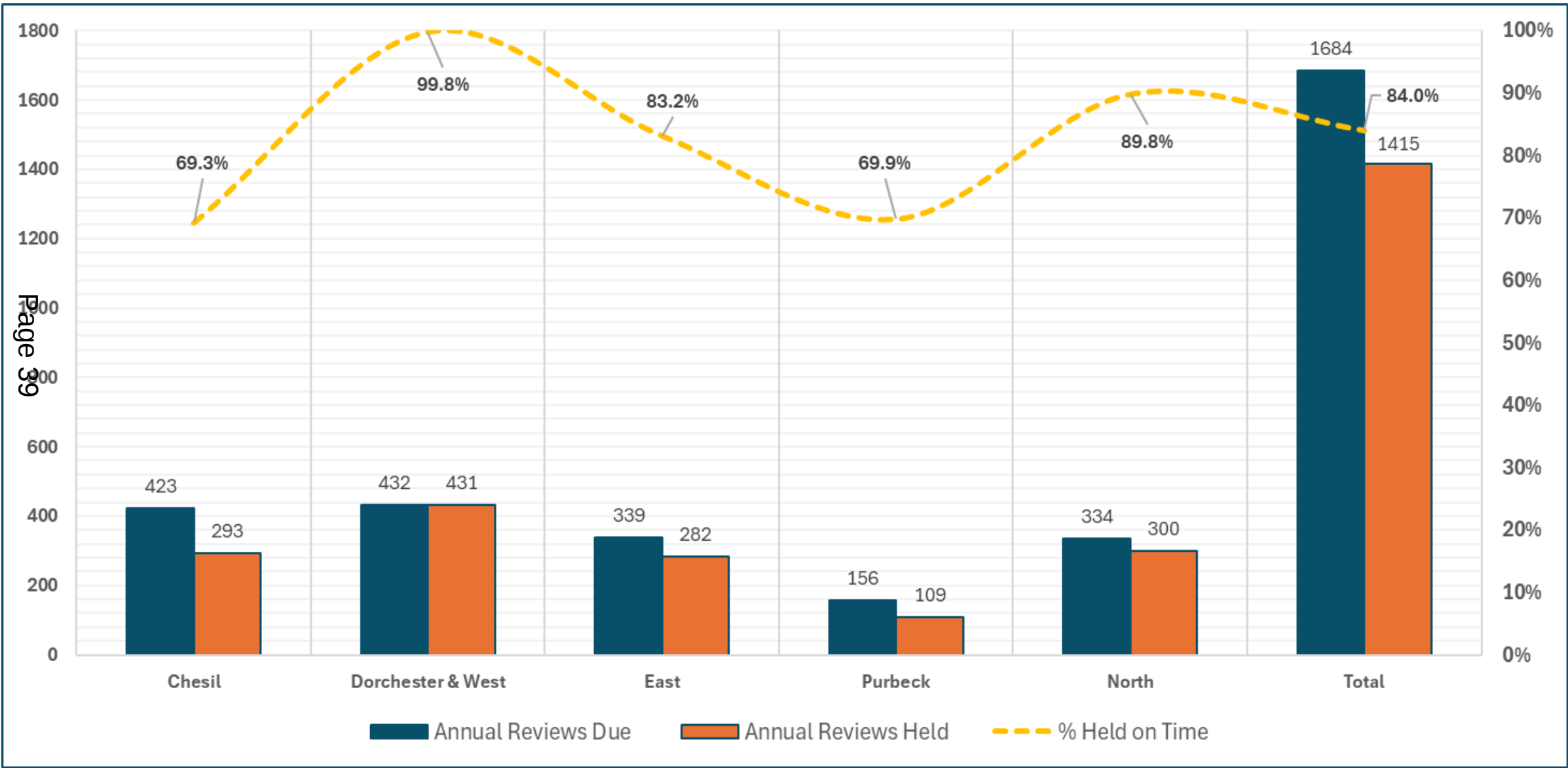
Annual Reviews - Autumn Term 24

Due vs Held



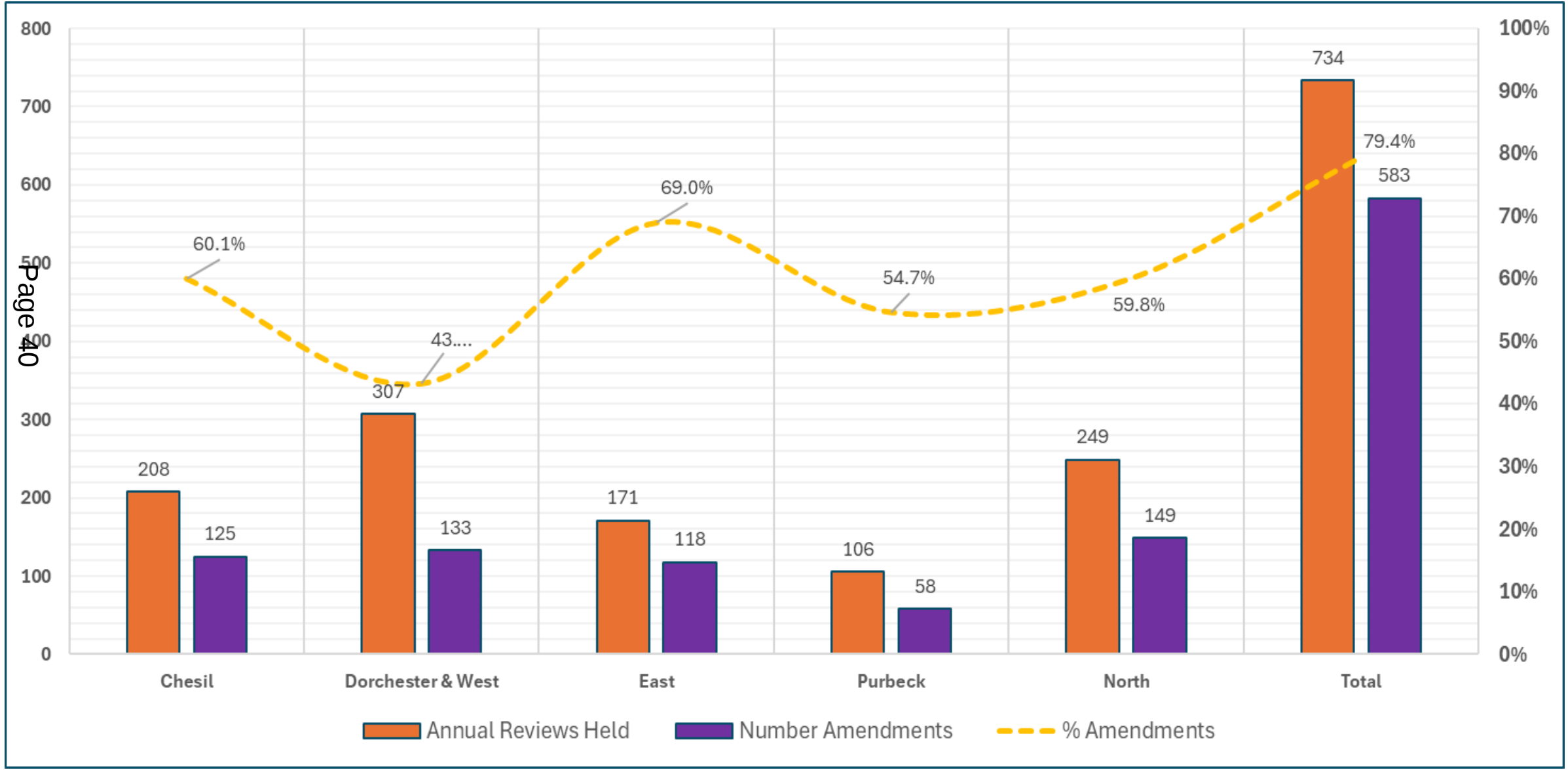
Annual Reviews - Spring Term 25

Due vs Held



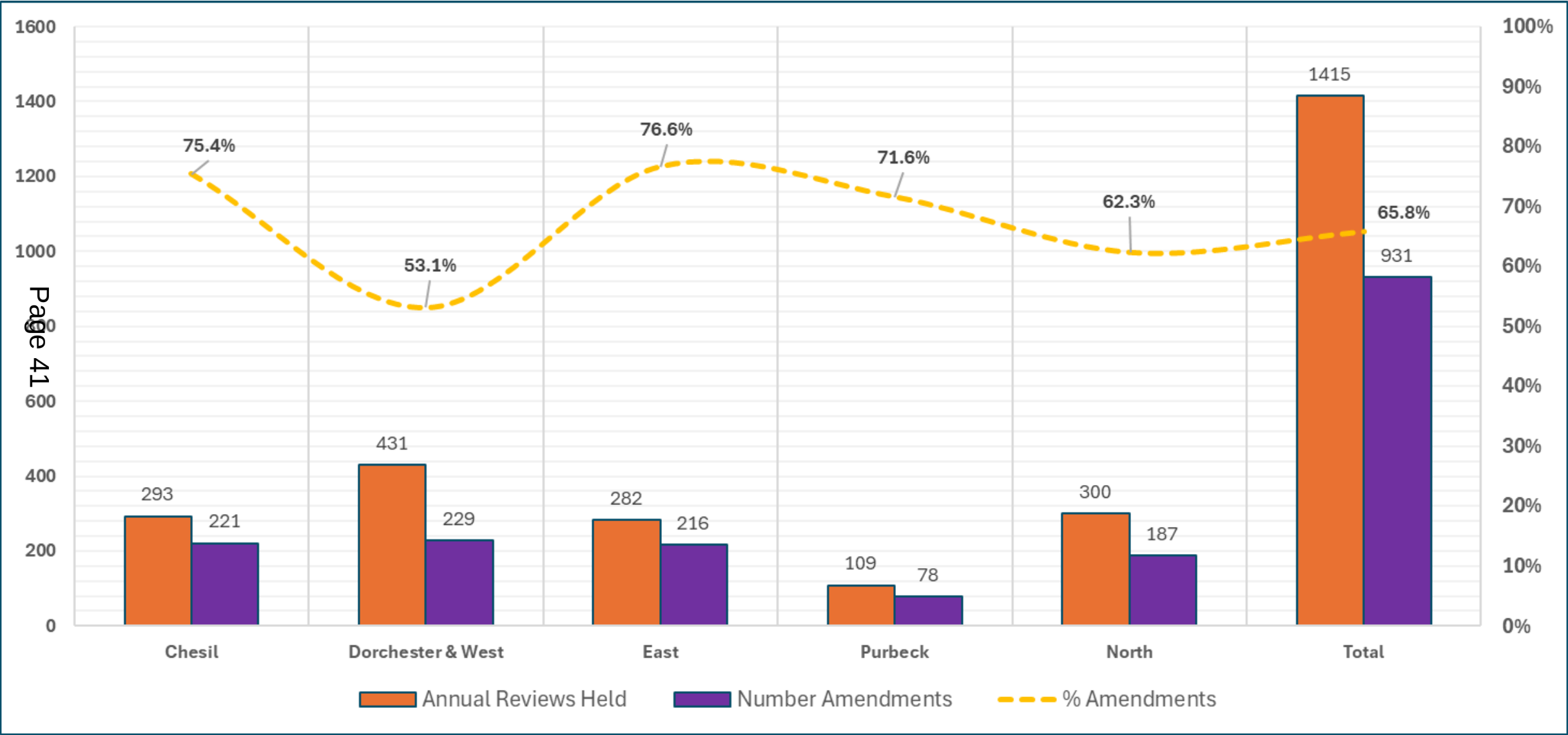
Annual Reviews - Autumn Term 24

Held vs Resulting Amendments



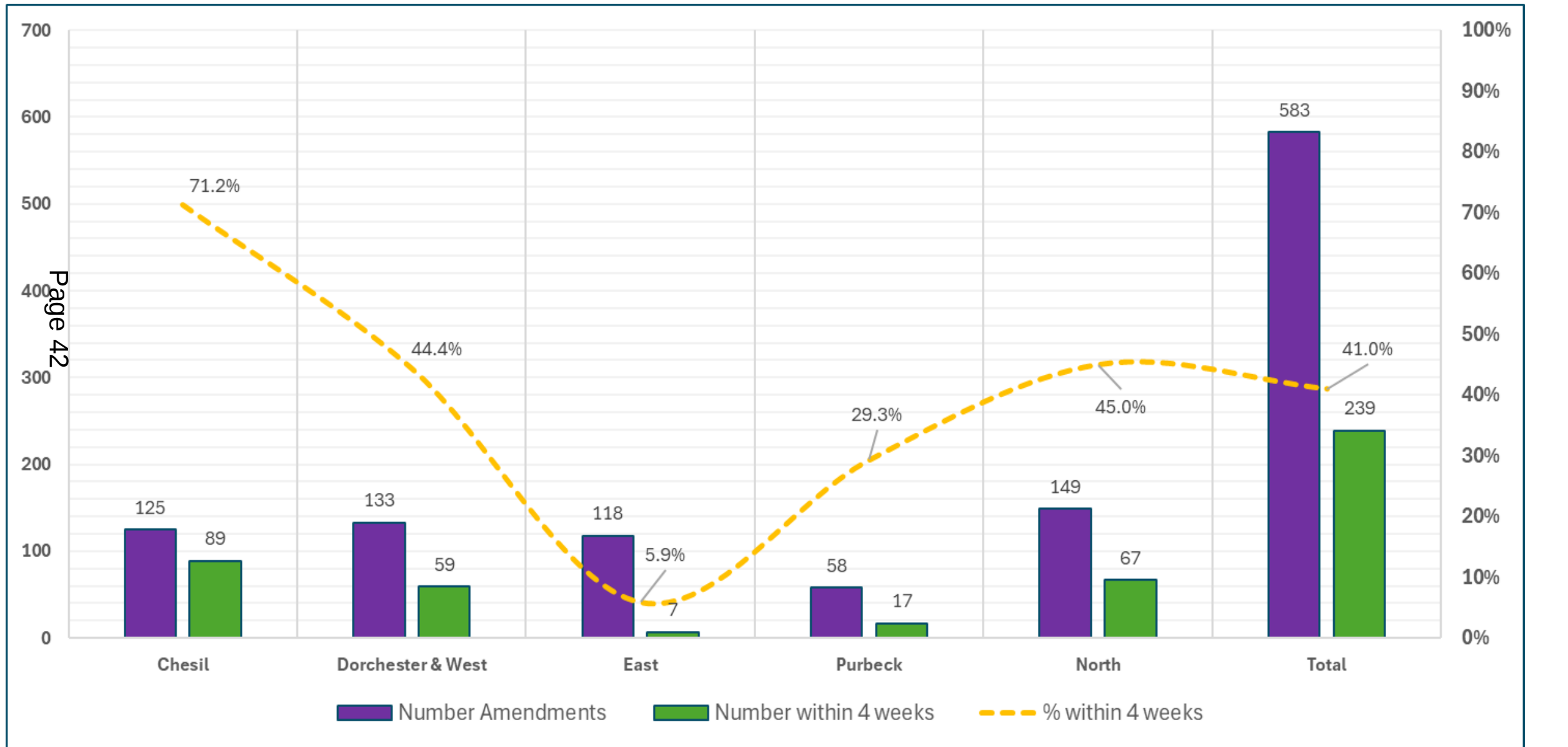
Annual Reviews - Spring Term 25

Held vs Resulting Amendments



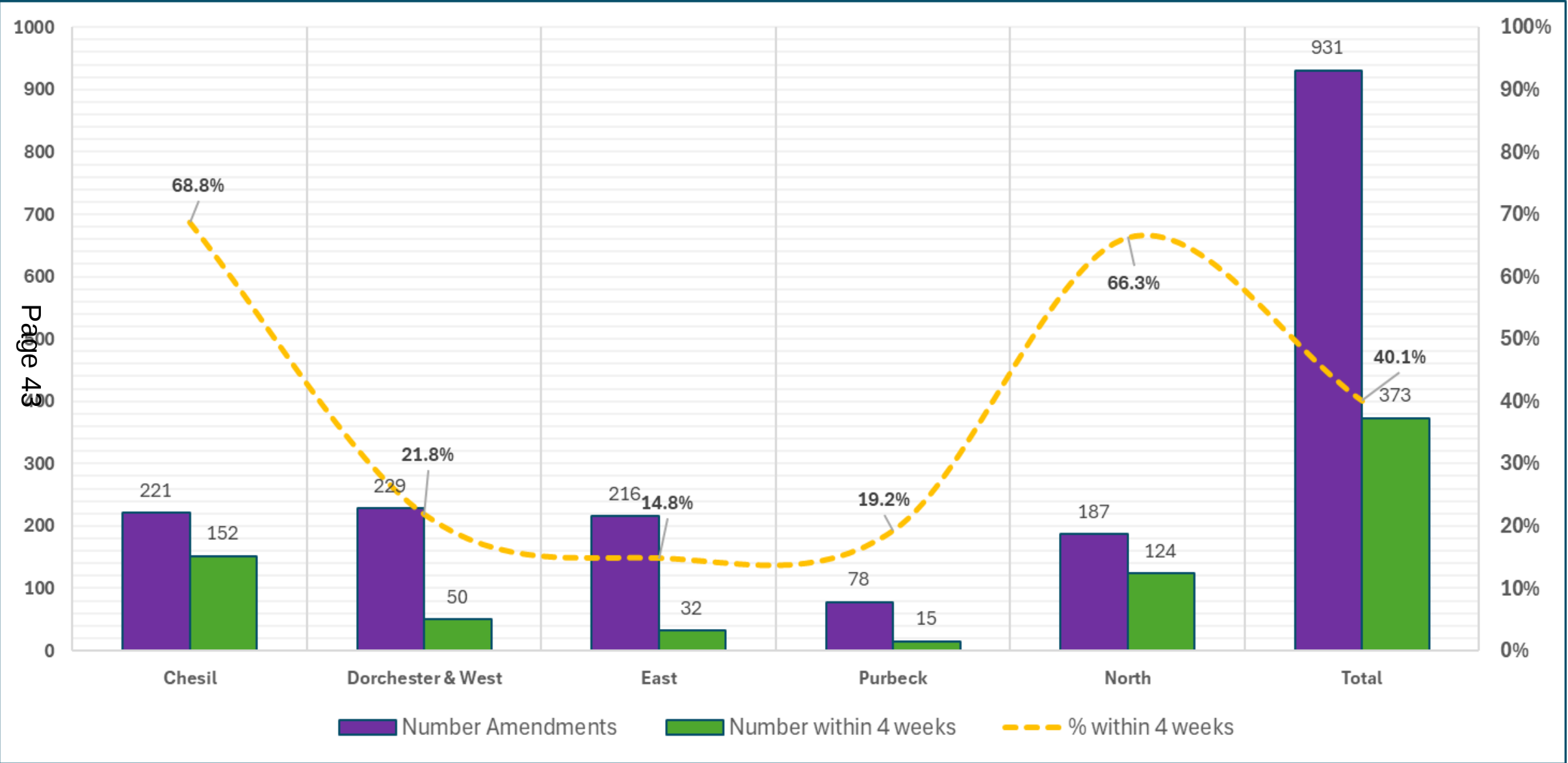
Annual Reviews - Autumn Term 24

Amendments vs No & Percent completed within 4 wks



Annual Reviews - Spring Term 25

Amendments vs No & Percent completed within 4 wks

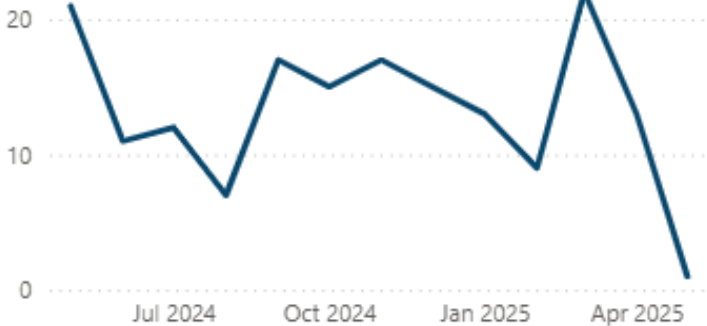


Locality Performance over last 12 months - Chesil

173

Number of EHCP Requests

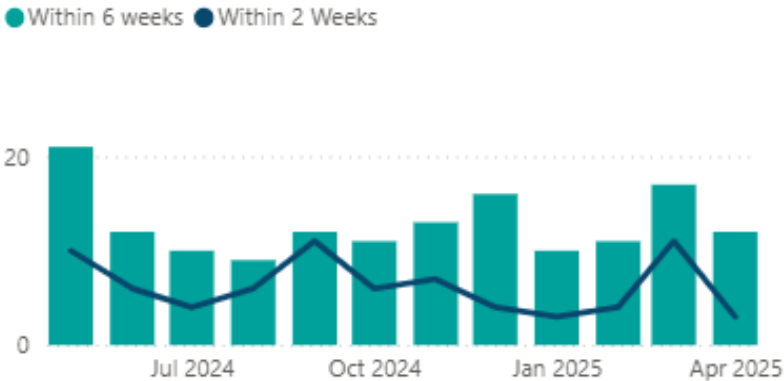
Number of EHCP Requests



86%

EHCP Decisions in 6 Weeks

Decisions within 6 Weeks

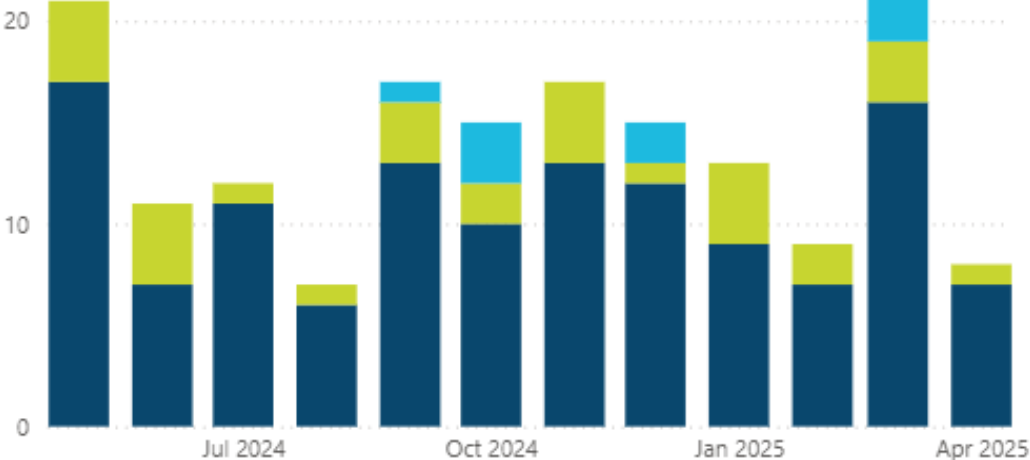


115

EHCP Requests Agreed

EHCP Request Type

● EHCP Assessment - Non Parental ● EHCP Assessment - Pare... ● EHCP Assessment ...



125

Number of Final EHCPs Issued

1040

Current Children with an EH...

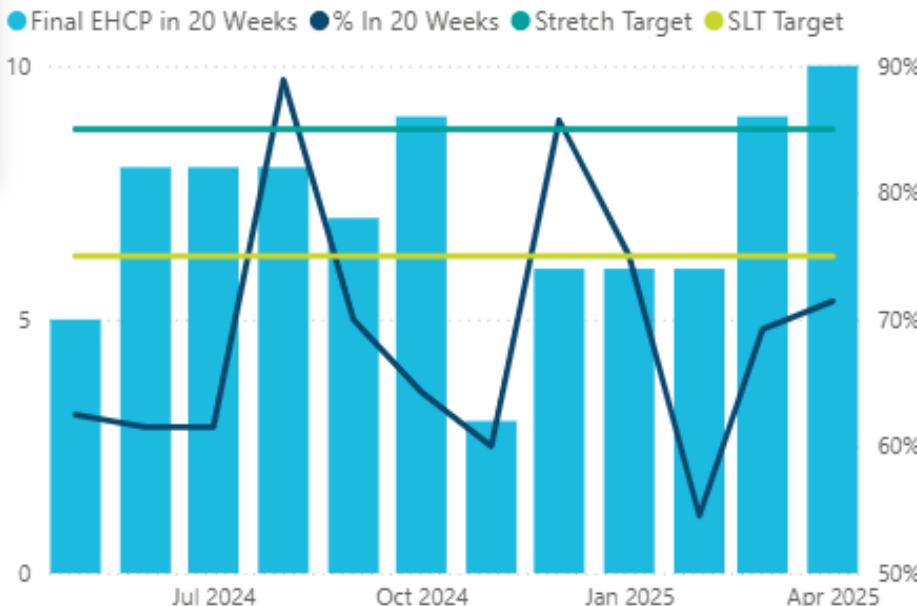
85

New EHCPs in 20 Weeks

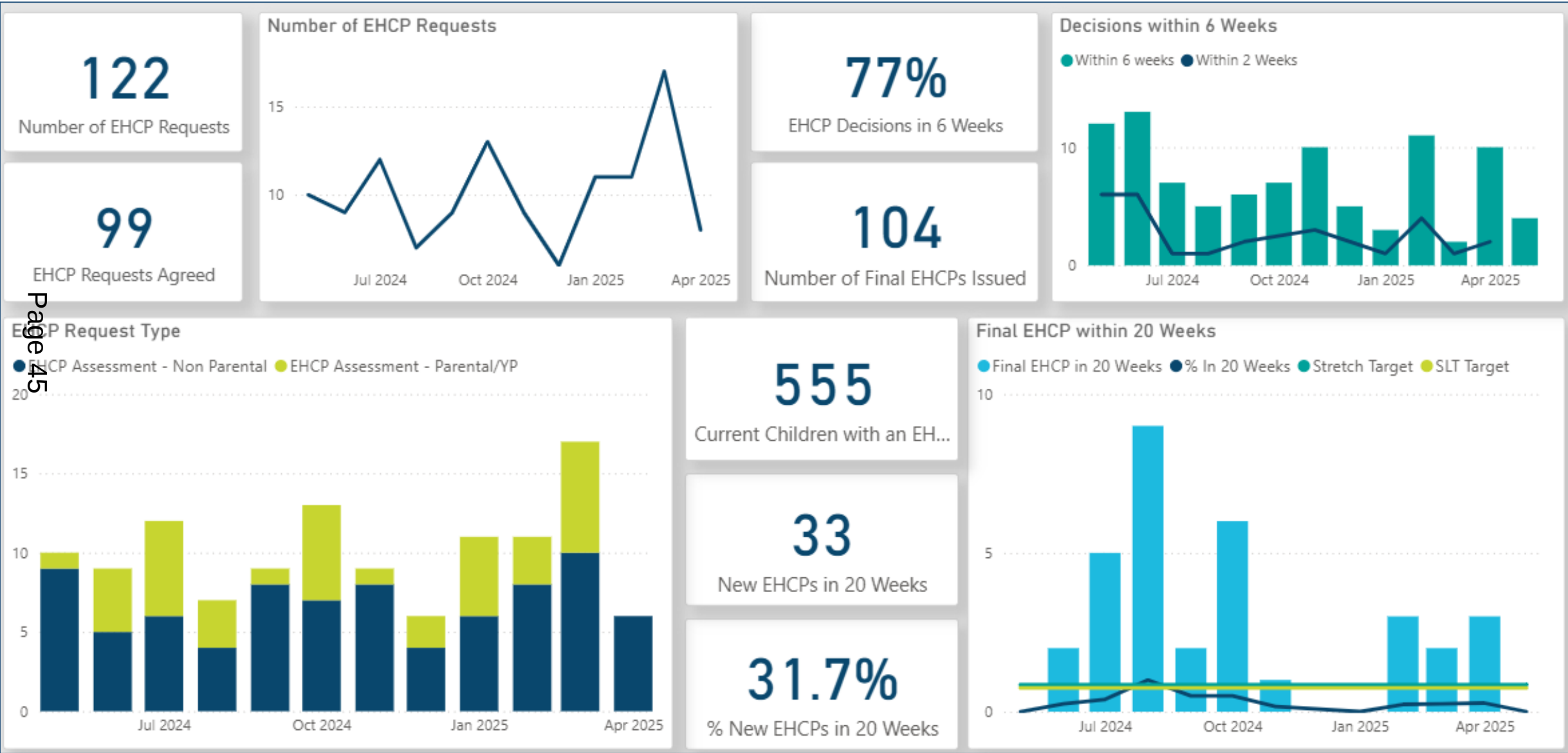
69.6%

% New EHCPs in 20 Weeks

Final EHCP within 20 Weeks



Locality Performance over last 12 months - Dorchester



Locality Performance over last 12 months – East

231

Number of EHCP Requests

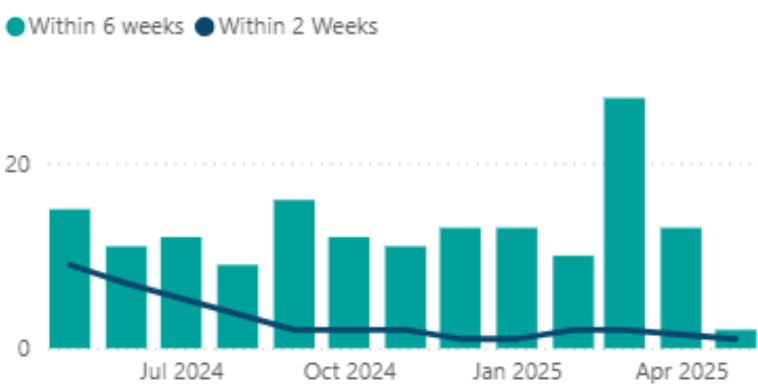
Number of EHCP Requests



75%

EHCP Decisions in 6 Weeks

Decisions within 6 Weeks

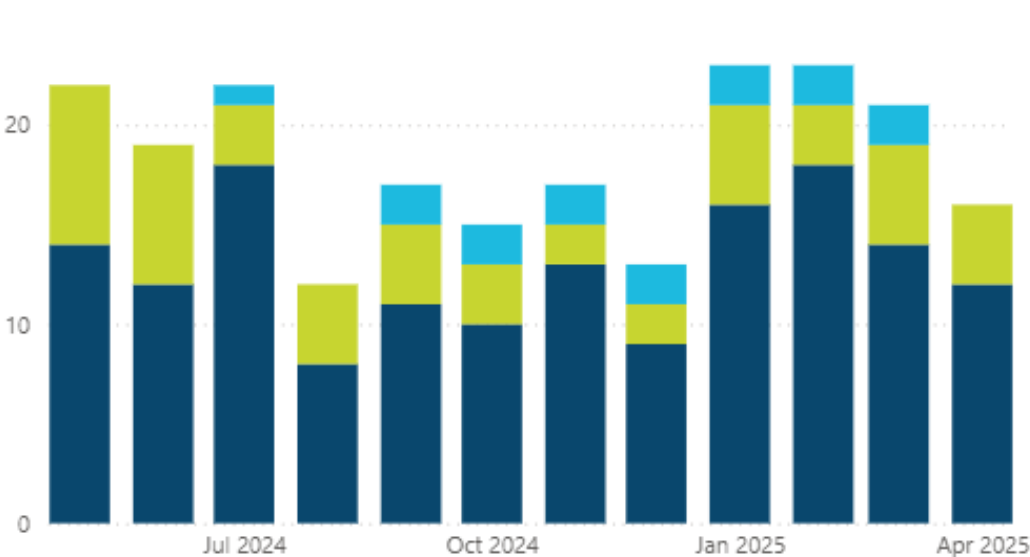


149

EHCP Requests Agreed

EHCP Request Type

● EHCP Assessment - Non Parental ● EHCP Assessment - Pare... ● EHCP Assessment ...



909

Current Children with an EH...

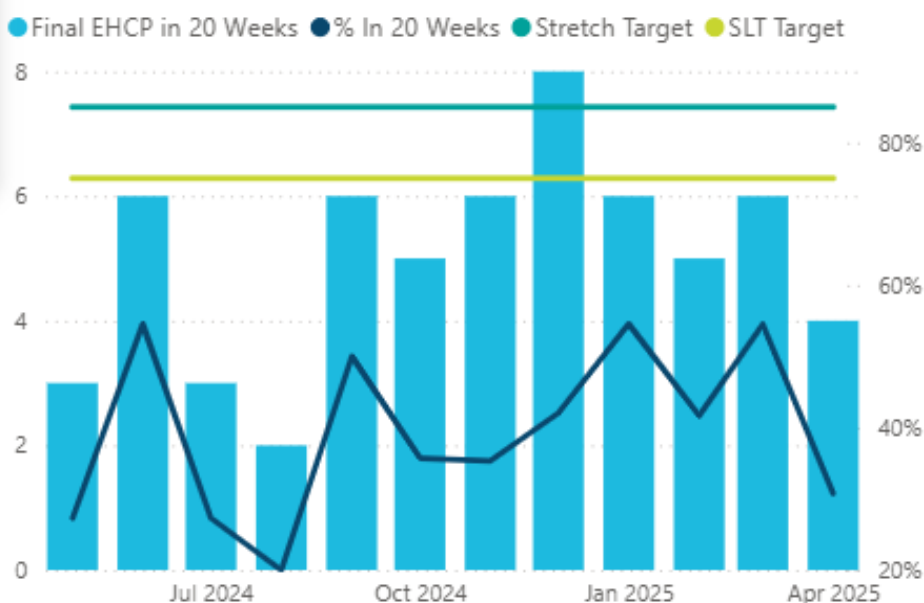
60

New EHCPs in 20 Weeks

40.8%

% New EHCPs in 20 Weeks

Final EHCP within 20 Weeks



203

Number of EHCP Requests

Number of EHCP Requests

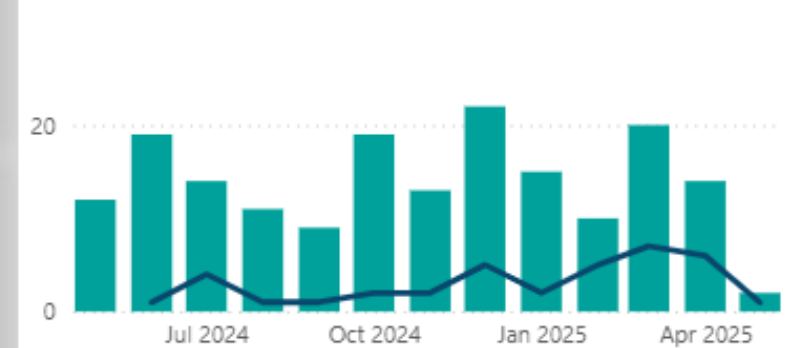


87%

EHCP Decisions in 6 Weeks

Decisions within 6 Weeks

● Within 6 weeks ● Within 2 Weeks



146

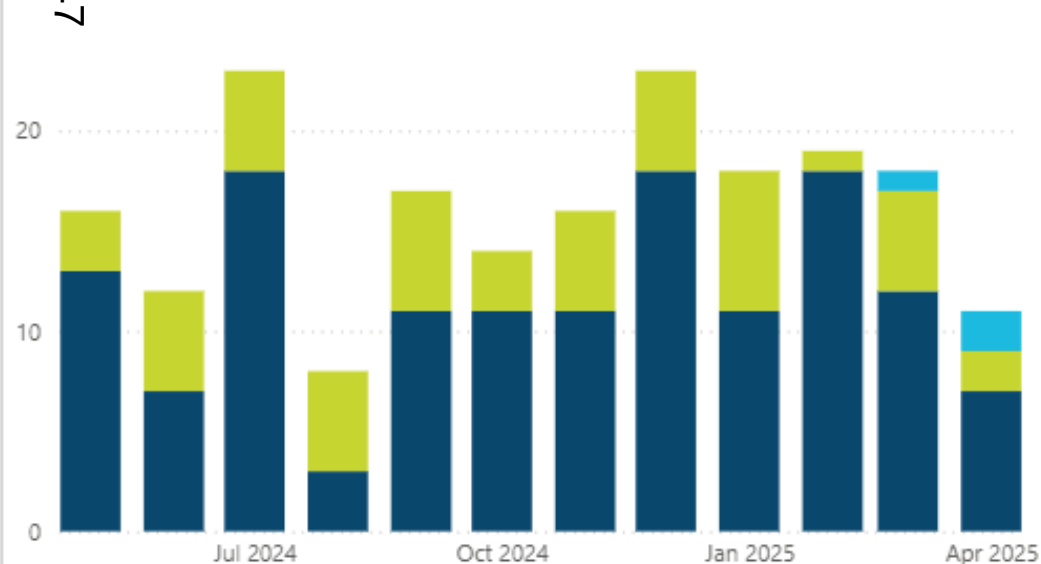
EHCP Requests Agreed

122

Number of Final EHCPs Issued

EHP Request Type

● EHCP Assessment - Non Parental ● EHCP Assessment - Pare... ● EHCP Assessment ...



983

Current Children with an EH...

50

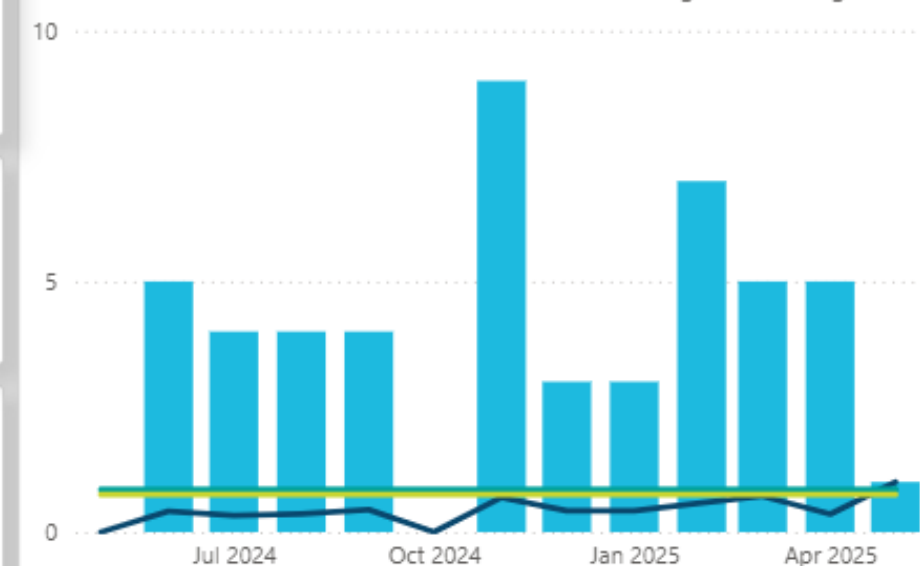
New EHCPs in 20 Weeks

43.4%

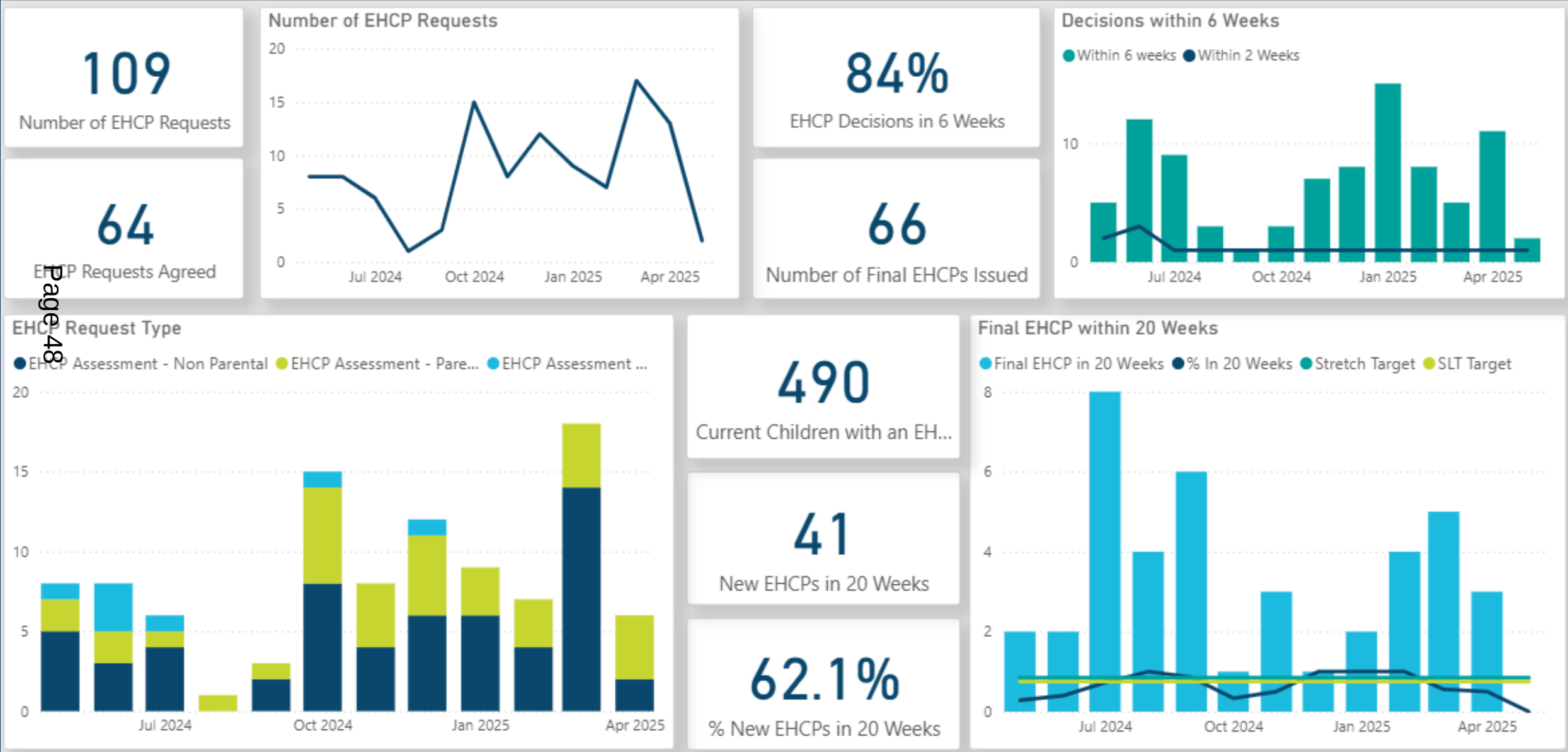
% New EHCPs in 20 Weeks

Final EHCP within 20 Weeks

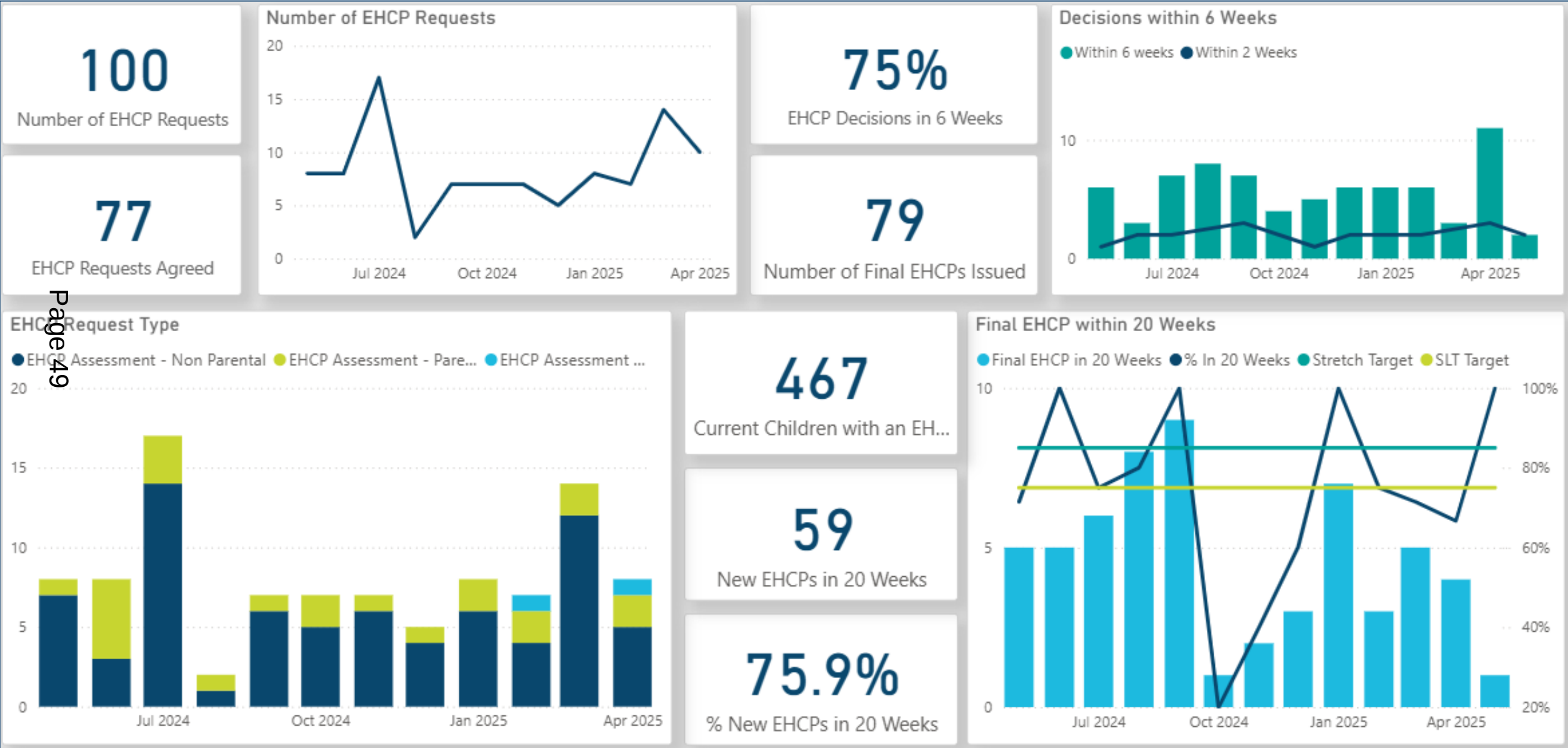
● Final EHCP in 20 Weeks ● % In 20 Weeks ● Stretch Target ● SLT Target



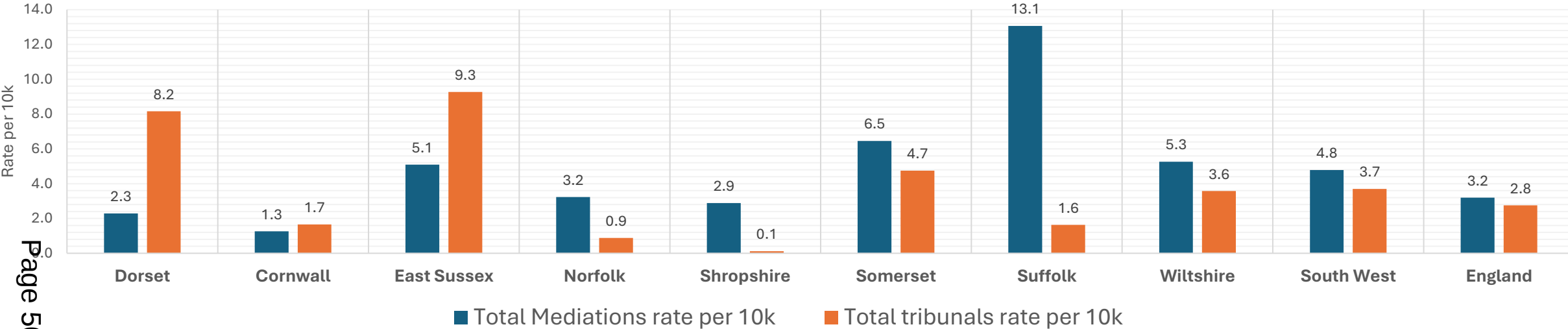
Locality Performance over last 12 months - Purbeck



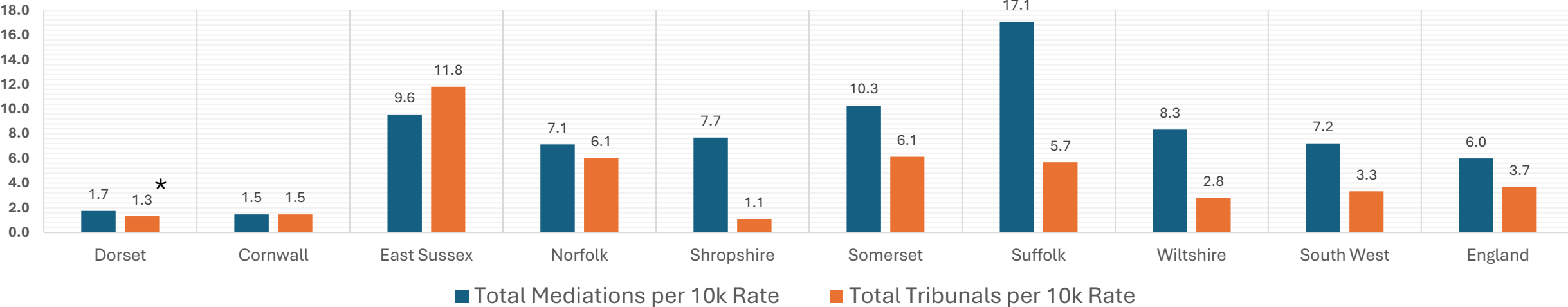
Locality Performance over last 12 months - West

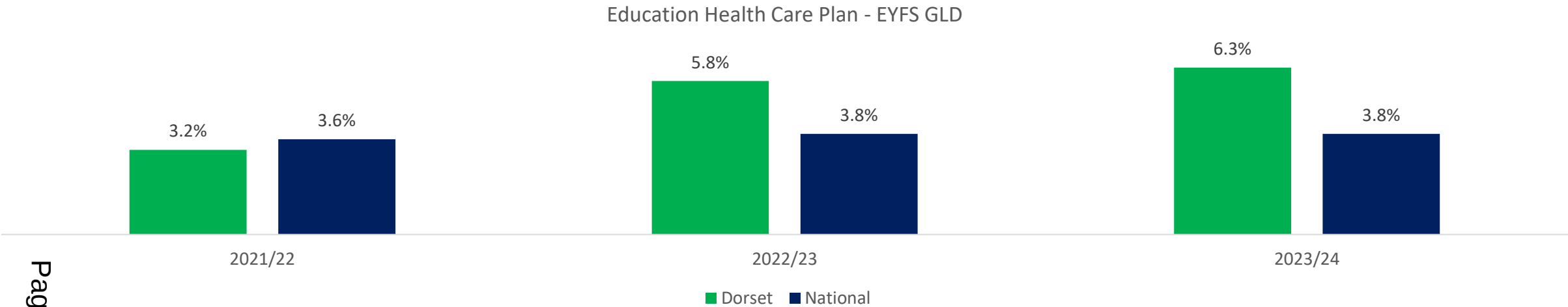


Rate of Mediations & Tribunals per 10k for 2022



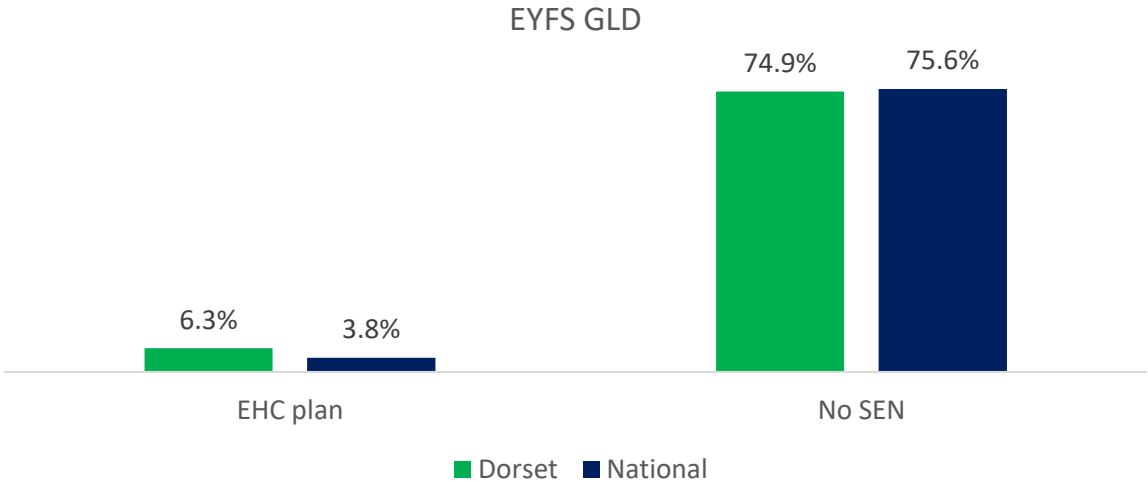
Rate of Mediations & Tribunals per 10k for 2023

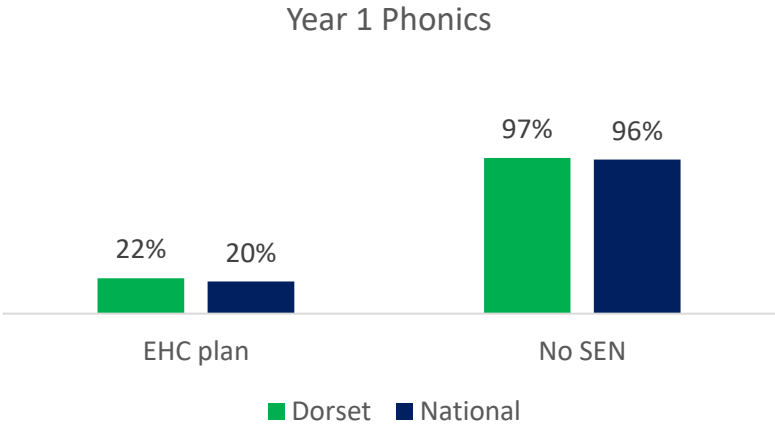
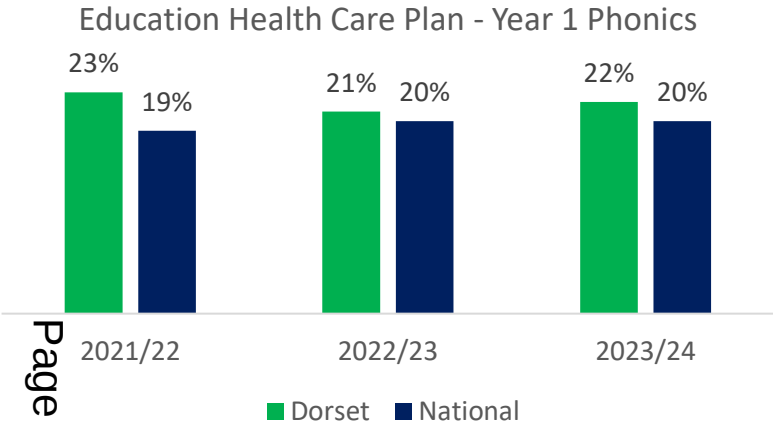




Page 51

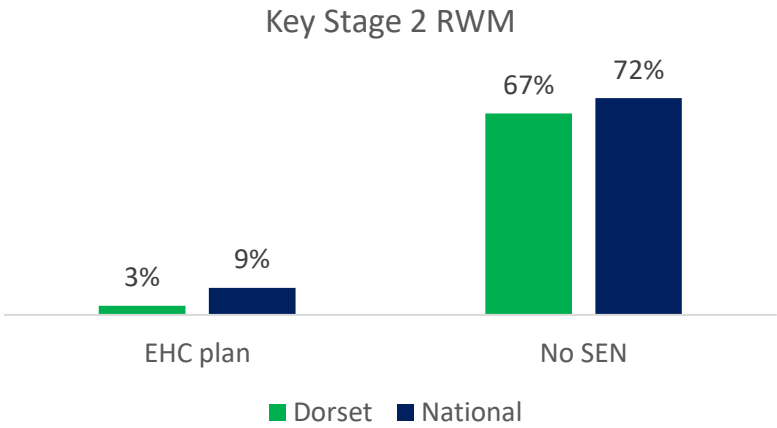
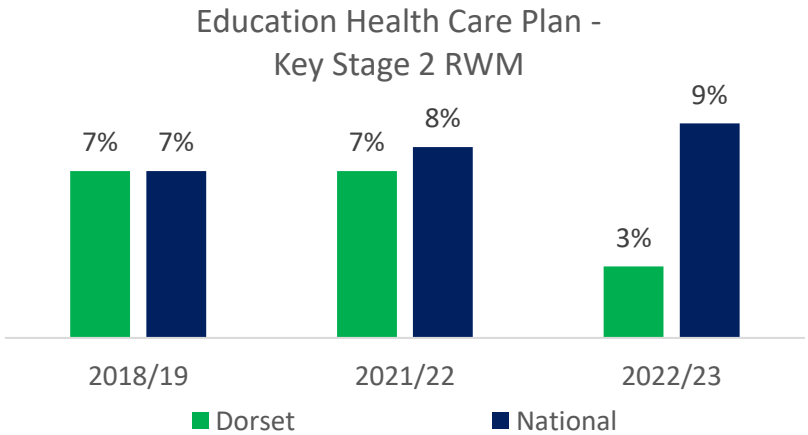
- At Early Years foundation stage (‘EYFS’, end of reception year), 6.3% of EHCP children achieve a ‘good level of development’.
- Dorset ranks 20th out of 150 local authorities (top 20%).
- All pupils rank 85th.



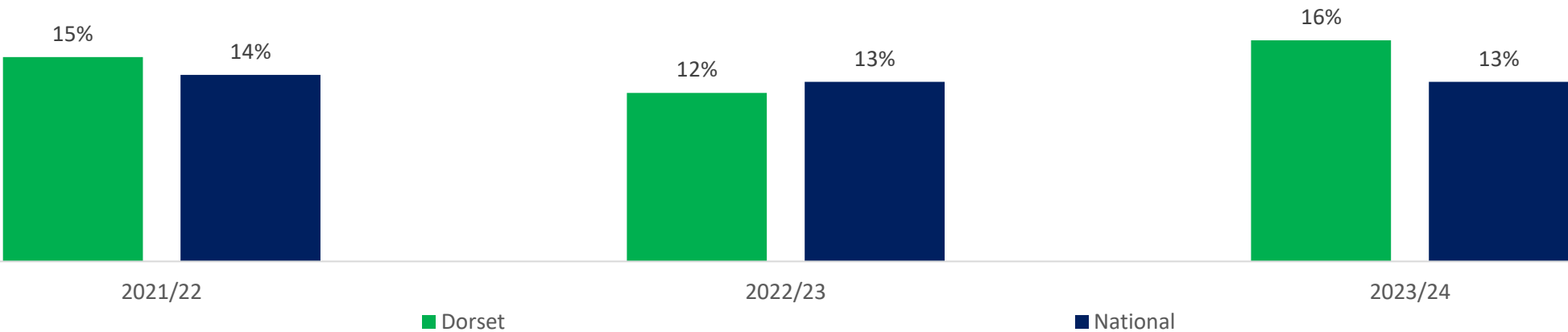


- For the year 1 phonics test, Dorset ranks 22nd out of all local authorities (all pupils rank 43rd)
- Dorset is 2% above national, same as South-West

- Pupils in Dorset schools underachieve at Key Stage 2 compared to elsewhere.
- At Key Stage 2 EHCP children in Dorset rank 148th out of all local authorities.
- All pupils rank 142nd



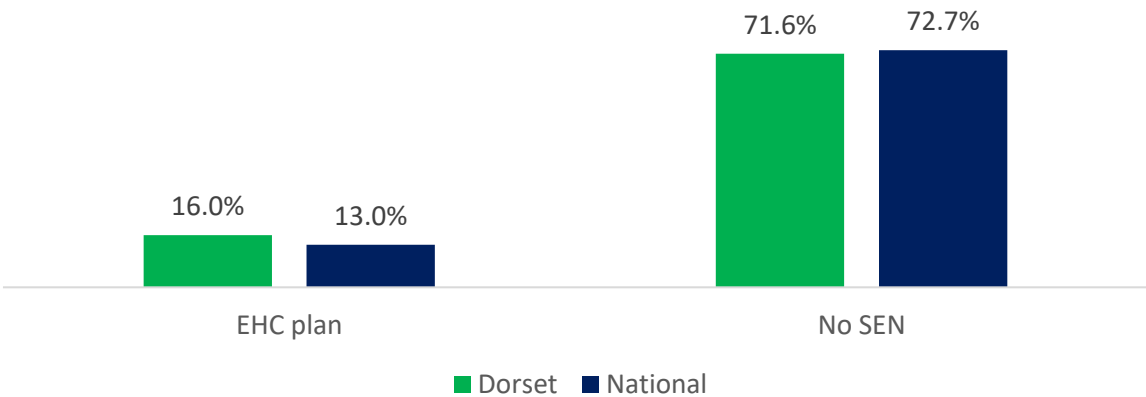
Education Health Care Plan - Key Stage 4 Basics 4+



Page 53

- At Key Stage 4, the Basics indicator refers to those achieving GCSE English and Maths.
- Dorset is 3% above national for EHCP children, 3% above national and 2% above the South-West.
- EHCP children rank 42nd, all pupils 98th

Key Stage 4 Basics 4+



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SEND Board Performance Report

Business Intelligence & Performance Team - Children's



March 2025

SEND Board: Performance

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

[Back to Home...](#)



Introduction

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

Overview of Performance

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

RAG Rating and Performance Direction

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

- Green** Performance is good and in line with or exceeding target: consistent with the National/Statistical Neighbour average.
- Amber** Performance is below target; inconsistent with National/Statistical Neighbour average; action is in place with likelihood of improvement.
- Red** Performance is poor; well below expected levels nationally; improvement is required.

Latest performance is compared with the previous month with the icons indicating direction of performance as shown below, based only on whether the figures has increased or decreased since the previous month. Please note, 'Direction of Performance' field is not related to targets and should be used to see where performance is changing and not to judge overall status of the measure; the RAG ratings in the 'Status' field identify where measures are in relation to the target for the latest months performance.

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

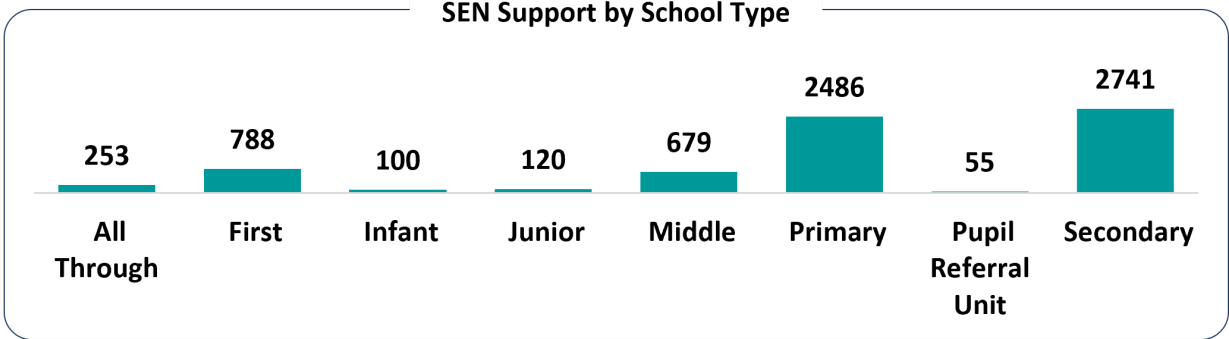
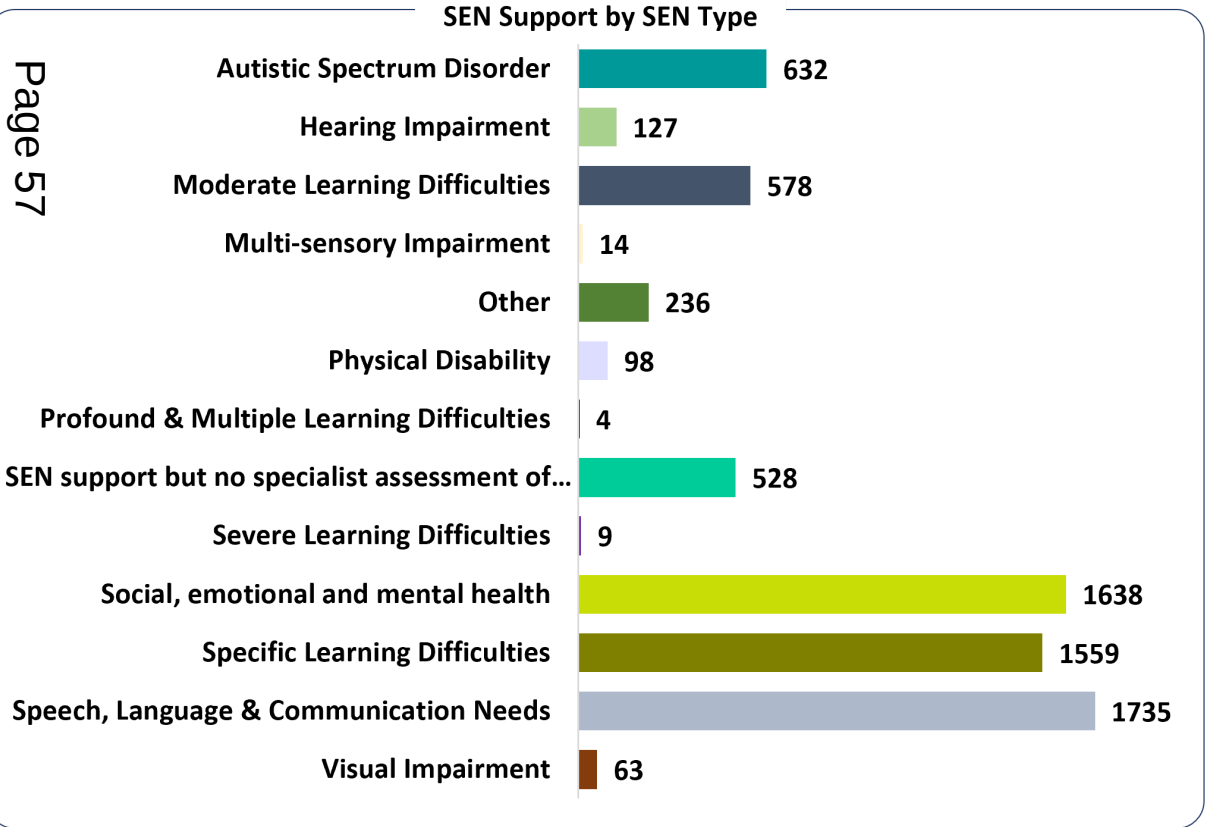
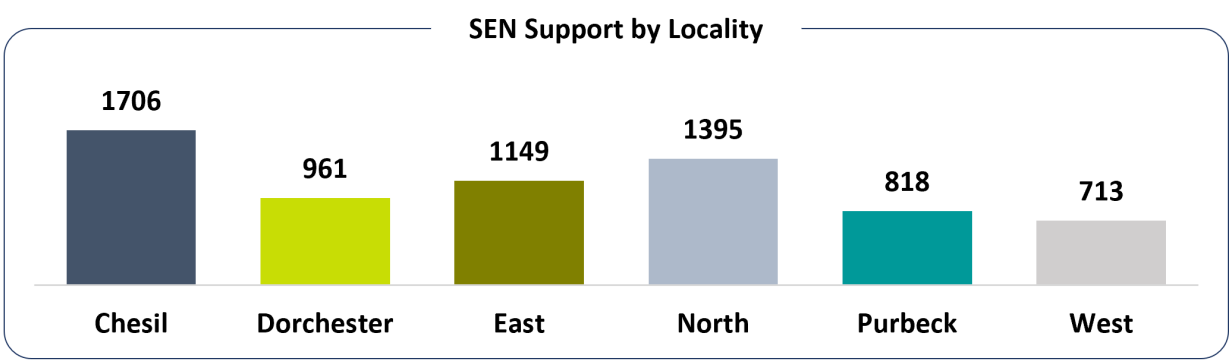
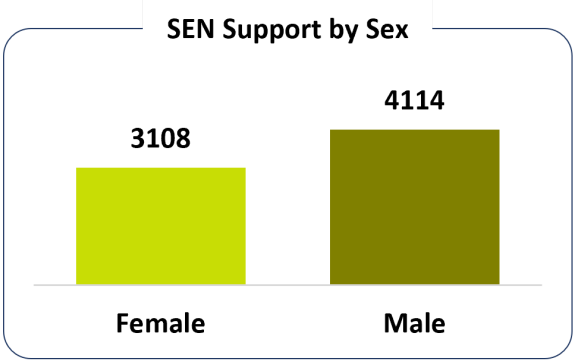
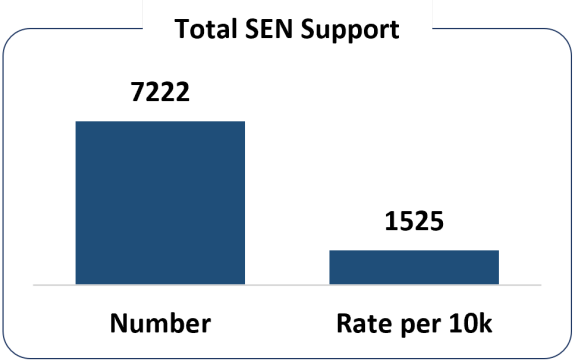
Benchmarking Note

Good and Outstanding Statistical neighbours for are Cornwall, East Sussex, Norfolk, Shropshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Worcestershire. The latest available benchmarking data has been included.

SEND Board Data Set: SEN Support Summary January 2025

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

[Back to Home...](#)



- Notes:
- Figures come from the January 2025 School Census
 - Rate per 10k is of School Pupil Total (47,356)
 - Locality is the locality of the pupil home address
 - Male and Female are shown by 'Sex' as per DfE published data

SEND Board Data Set: EHCP Summary

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

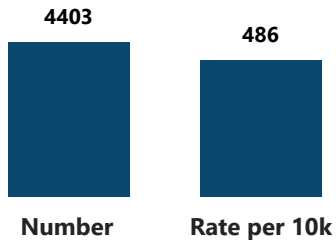
March 2025

[Back to Home...](#)

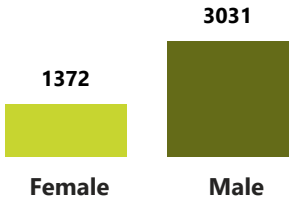


Page 58

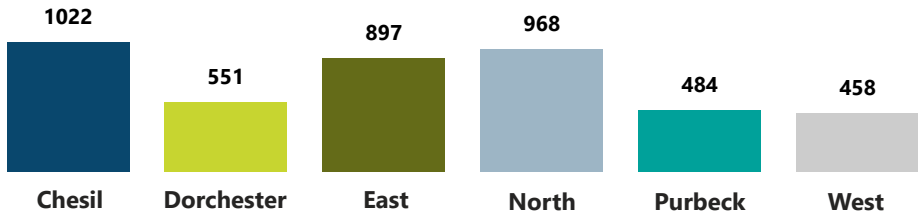
Total EHCP



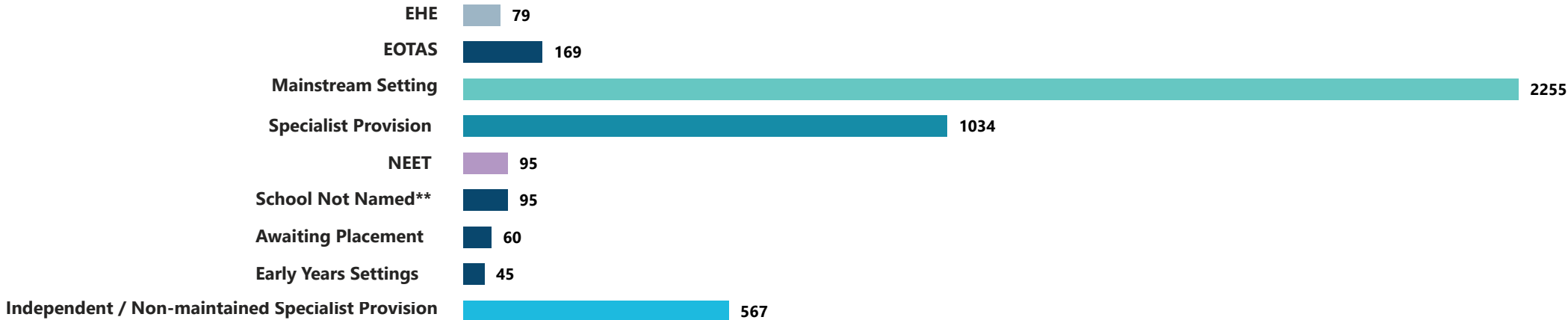
EHCP by Gender



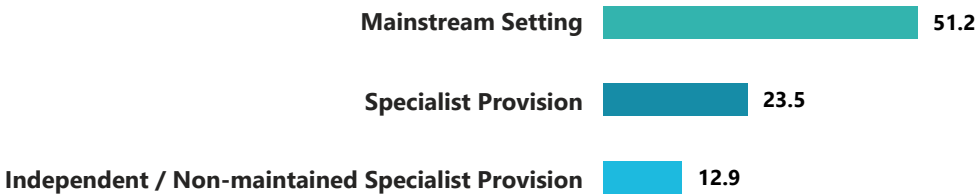
EHCP by Locality



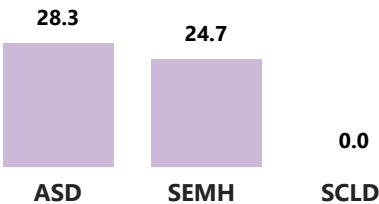
EHCP by Setting (Number)



EHCP by Setting (%)



EHCP by Primary Need

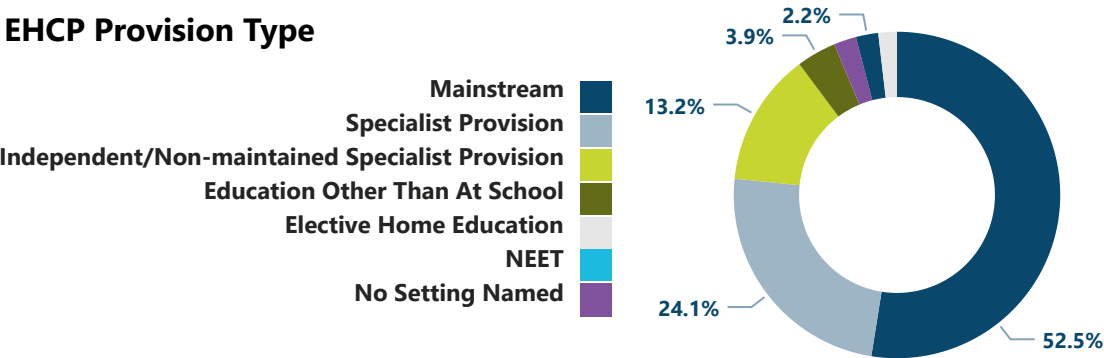


Things to Note

Data taken from Synergy as at the final day of the previous month.

- ** School Not Named includes the following cohorts:
- 1. Setting left blank on Synergy
 - 2. CME
 - 3. EHCP Cease Pending

EHCP Provision Type



EHCP's



At the end of the month there were **4403** current EHCPs, compared to **4354** for the previous month.



There were **114** EHCP requests for assessments in the month. The previous month this figure was **77**.



The number of Final Plans issued in the month was **56**, with the figure for the previous month being **56**.

EHCP with Other Services Involvement



The number of children with an EHCP that are in care at the end of the month is **140**, compared to **141** for the previous month.

EHCP Finance



Total spend on children in placements which cost more than £50k a year was **£19242902**, compared to **£18415624** the previous month (running 12 month total).

Education



The number of children with an EHCP that are awaiting placement according to Synergy was **60**, compared to **60** the previous month.



The attendance for school age children with an EHCP was **85**%. Last month this figure was **85**%. (This figure will be blank in August)

Timeliness and Reviews



77 % of EHCP assessment decisions were made within 6 weeks, compared to **85** % last month.



66 % of EHCP Assessments that resulted in a EHCP being agreed within 16 weeks. Last month this figure was **45** %.



59 % of EHCP were issued within 20 weeks (including exceptional cases), compared to **50** % last month.

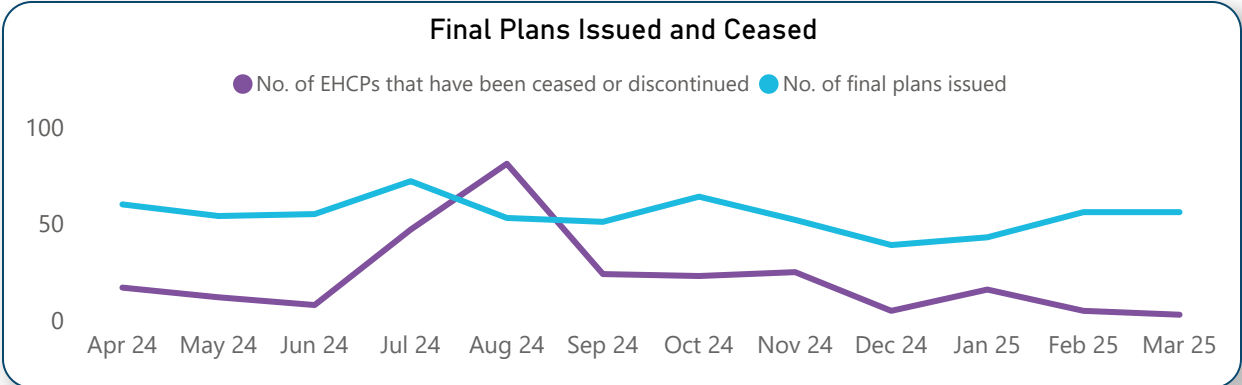
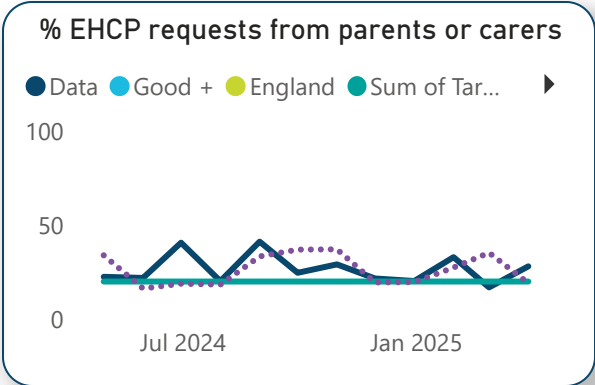
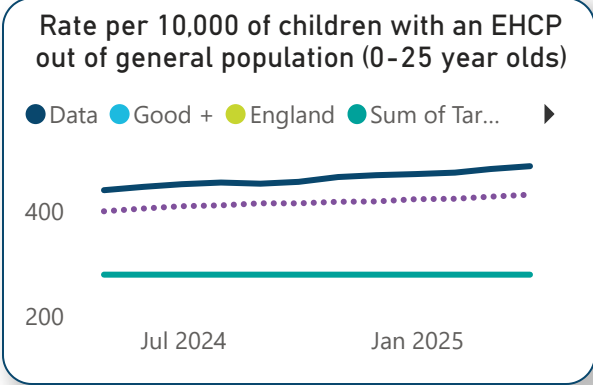
SEND Board Performance Measures - EHCPs

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Back to Home Page

Month Ending

March 2025



Indicator	Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
% EHCP requests from parents or carers	20.00	32.94	16.88	28.07	Worsening
EHCP requests for assessment		85.00	77.00	114.00	
EHCP requests from parents or carers		28.00	13.00	32.00	
No. of current EHCP (at end of month)		4292.00	4354.00	4403.00	Worsening
No. of EHCPs that have been ceased or discontinued		16.00	5.00	3.00	
No. of final plans issued		43.00	56.00	56.00	Same
Number of children with an EHCP at month end ages 4 or under		11.00	13.00	11.00	Improving
Rate per 10,000 of children with an EHCP out of general population (0-25 year olds)	280.00	474.07	480.92	486.33	Worsening

Key Commentary

EHCP requests for assessment

March saw a big increase in EHCNAs and this is higher than we saw in 2024. Further work is needed to understand whether this is being driven by a few settings, and if so, direct work to support these settings will be needed.

No. of EHCPs that have been ceased or discontinued

The number of ceases remains low, but this is in part due to not being a typical end-point of an academic programme. Further attention to ceasing will be needed.

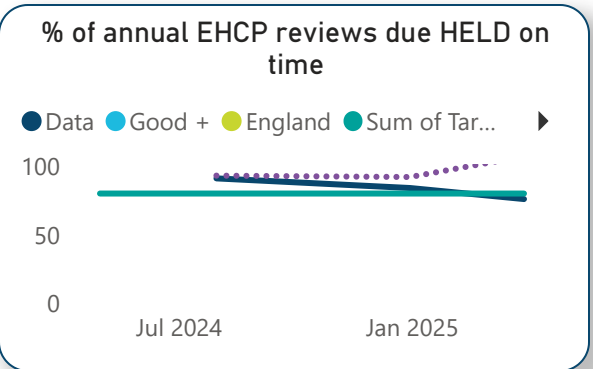
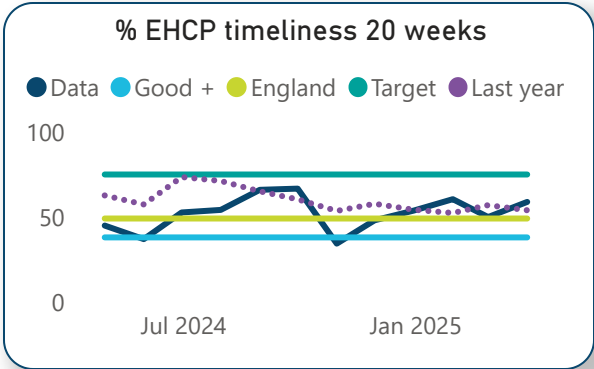
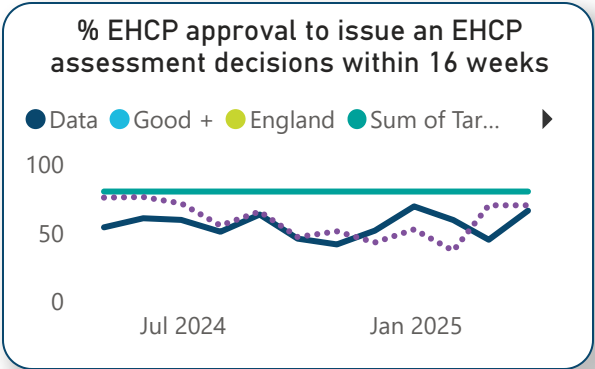
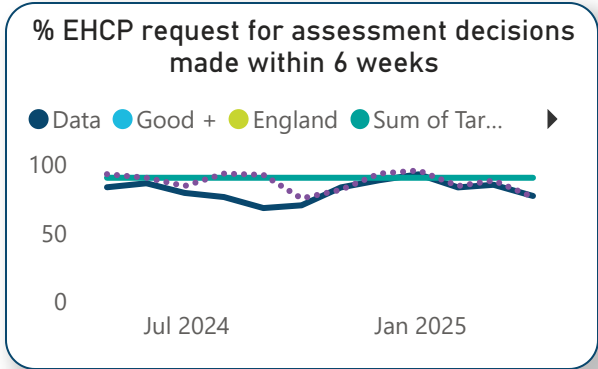
SEND Board Performance Measures - Timeliness & Reviews

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Month Ending

March 2025

Back to Home Page



Indicator	Good Is	Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
% of annual EHCP reviews due HELD on time	High	80.00			76.00	
No. of annual reviews due in this period	-				965.00	
Min time to issue an EHCP in Weeks			4.00	8.71	14.00	
Average Timeliness of EHCP in Weeks			20.70	21.00	21.00	
No. of final plans issued within 20 weeks from request	High		26.00	28.00	33.00	Improving
Max time to issue an EHCP in Weeks			51.29	41.29	46.00	
% EHCP approval to issue an EHCP assessment decisions within 16 weeks	High	80.00	59.30	45.00	66.10	Improving
% EHCP timeliness 20 weeks	High	75.00	60.50	50.00	58.90	Improving
No. of EHCP request for assessment decisions made within 6 weeks	High		65.00	62.00	76.00	Improving
No. of EHCP approval to issue an EHCP assessment decisions within 16 weeks	High		32.00	70.00	41.00	Worsening
% EHCP request for assessment decisions made within 6 weeks	High	90.00	83.00	84.90	76.80	Worsening

Key Commentary

% EHCP request for assessment decisions made within 6 weeks

6 weeks has reduced to 77%. Dorchester 29%, West 50%, North 71%, East 87%, Chesil 89% and Purbeck 100%. A large increase in new requests however should be taken into account.

% of annual EHCP reviews due HELD on time

We have fallen further behind in our Annual Reviews. Strategic Lead has asked for TM/SM commentary on how these will be addressed during the summer term.

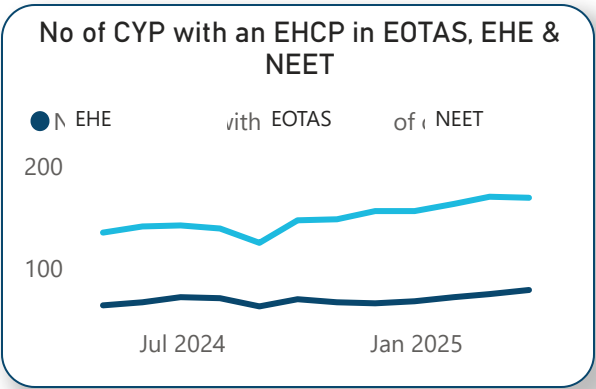
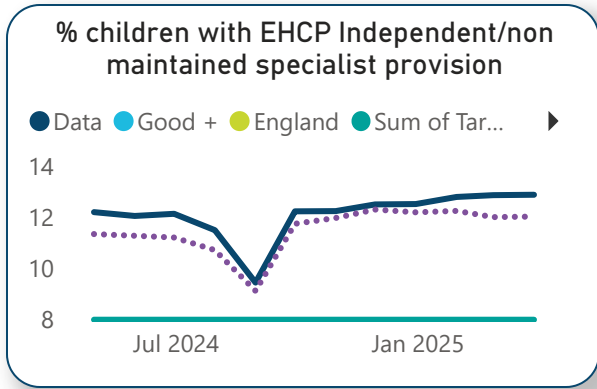
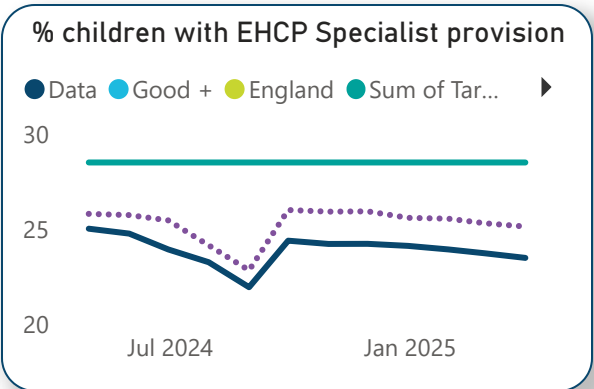
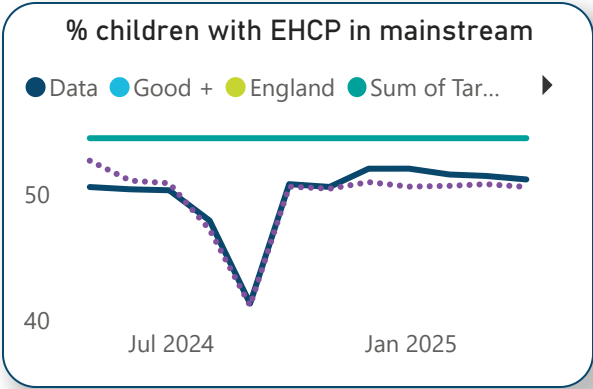
SEND Board Performance Measures - Provision Types

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Month Ending

March 2025

Back to Home Page



Indicator	Good Is	Sum of Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
% children with EHCP in mainstream	High	54.50	51.61	51.49	51.22	Worsening
% children with EHCP Independent/non maintained specialist provision	Low	8.00	12.79	12.86	12.88	Worsening
% children with EHCP Specialist provision	Low	28.50	23.93	23.73	23.48	Improving
No. of children with EHCP Specialist provision	Low		1027.00	1033.00	1034.00	Worsening
No. of children with EHCP awaiting provision	Low		51.00	60.00	60.00	Same
No. of children with EHCP in EHE	-		72.00	75.00	79.00	
No. of children with EHCP in EOTAS	Low	60.00	163.00	170.00	169.00	Improving
No. of children with EHCP in mainstream	High		2215.00	2242.00	2255.00	Improving
No. of children with EHCP Independent/non maintained specialist provision	Low		549.00	560.00	567.00	Worsening

Key Commentary

No. of children with EHCP in EOTAS

The decrease of 1 is welcomed, but the numbers overall remain higher than we would like. It should be noted that most EOTAS is a parental request, or in place where a suitable setting has yet to be found.

% children with EHCP Independent/non maintained specialist provision

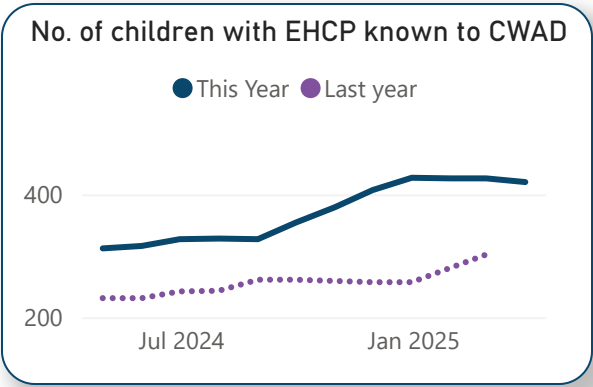
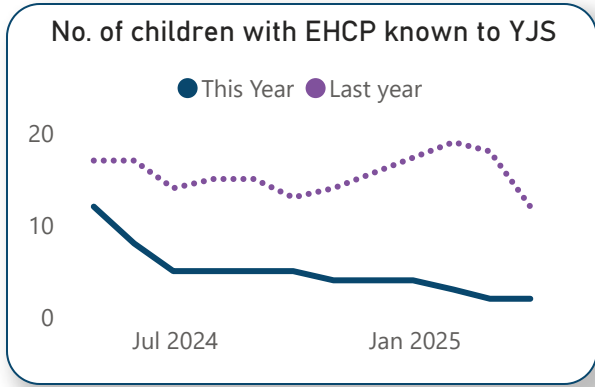
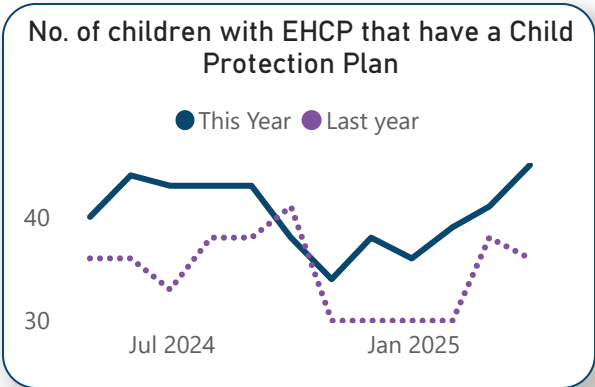
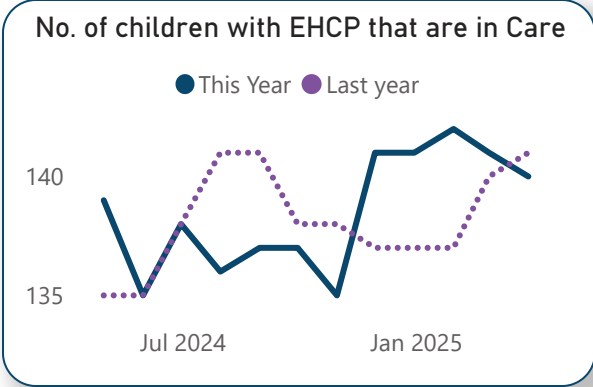
A very small increase of 0.02% (7 CYP)

SEND Board Performance Measures - EHCPs with other Service Involvement

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Back to Home Page

Month Ending
March 2025



Page 68

Indicator	Good Is	Sum of Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
No. of children with EHCP known to CWAD	Low		426.00	426.00	420.00	Improving
No. of children with EHCP known to YJS	Low		3.00	2.00	2.00	Same
No. of children with EHCP that are in Care	Low		142.00	141.00	140.00	Improving
No. of children with EHCP that are in CIN	Low		271.00	275.00	276.00	Worsening
No. of children with EHCP that have a Child Protection Plan	Low		39.00	41.00	45.00	Worsening
No. of CIC children missing education with an EHCP	Low	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00	Worsening

Key Commentary

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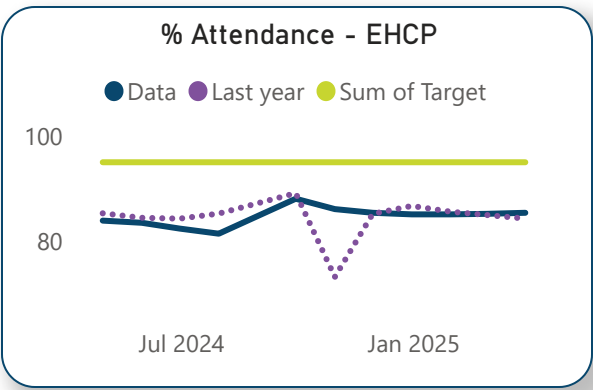
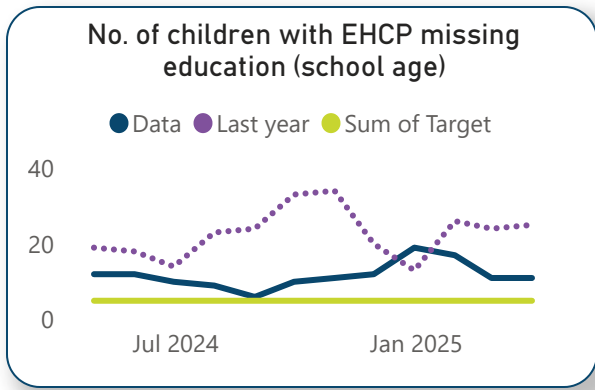
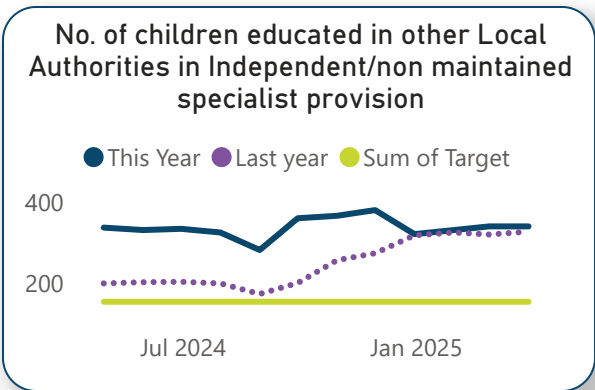
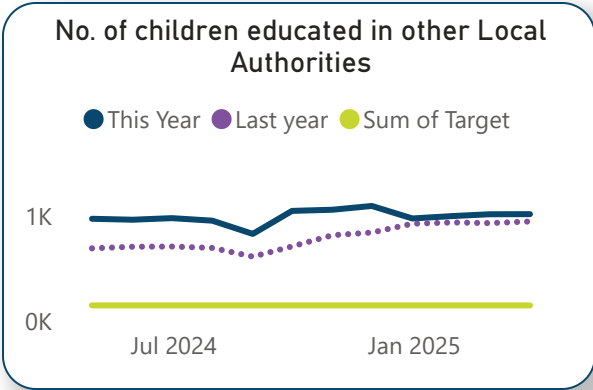
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SEND Board Performance Measures - Education

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Back to Home Page

Month Ending
March 2025



Indicator	Good Is	Sum of Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
% Attendance - EHCP	High	95.00	85.10	85.20	85.40	Improving
% of EHCP children 11-16 years in AP for more than 3 terms	Low		17.61	21.13	19.23	Improving
% of EHCP children up to 11 years in AP for more than 3 terms	Low		13.16	13.64	7.41	Improving
CIC with an EHCP not in fulltime education accessing AP (CME)	Low	1.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	Same
No. of children educated in other Local Authorities	Low		674.00	682.00	683.00	Worsening
No. of children educated in other Local Authorities in Independent/non maintained specialist provision	Low	155.00	331.00	340.00	340.00	Same
No. of children with an EHCP out of Education (school not recorded all 0-25)	Low		93.00	78.00	95.00	Worsening
No. of children with EHCP missing education (school age)	Low	5.00	17.00	11.00	11.00	Same

Key Commentary

% Attendance - EHCP

Correction in data from previous month, not worsening. We are receiving more data through our new system ACE. There is only 8 schools for whom we have not received any attendance information this year. Increase in data accuracy due to rectifying synergy issues.

No. of children with EHCP missing education (school age)

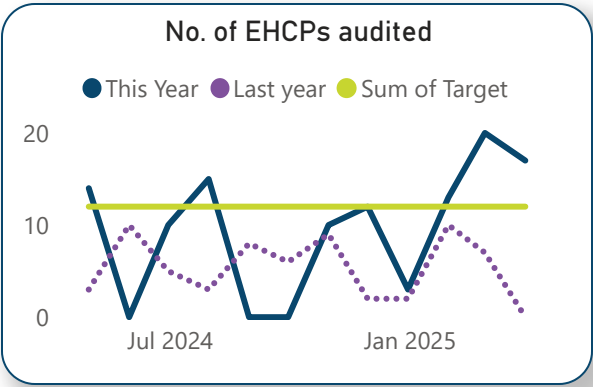
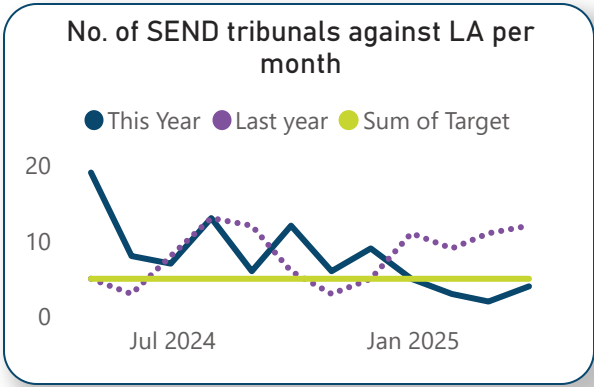
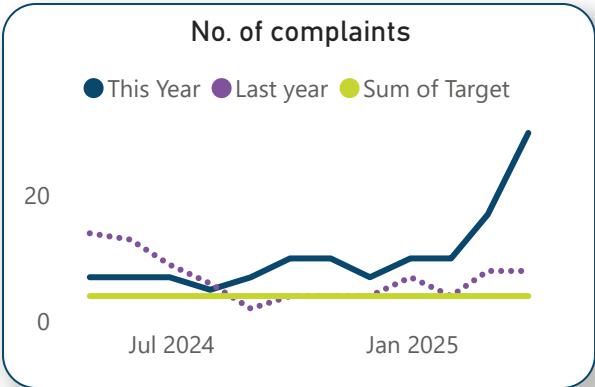
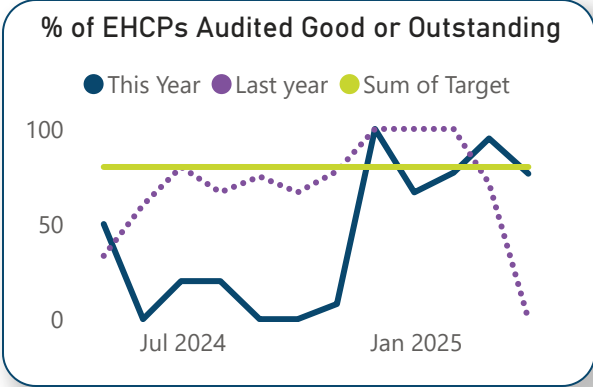
4 Dorchester, 2 East, 4 North, 1 West

SEND Board Performance Measures - Quality Assurance, Tribunals & Mediations

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Back to Home Page

Month Ending
March 2025



Indicator	Good Is	Sum of Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
% of cases with EHCP dip samples with good or outstanding gradings	High	80.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
Mediations			2.00	2.00	0.00	
No. of cases with EHC plan dip sampled	High	24.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
No. of compliments	High		0.00	0.00	1.00	Improving
No. of SEND tribunals against LA per month	Low	5.00	3.00	2.00	4.00	Worsening
No. of EHCPs audited	High	12.00	13.00	20.00	17.00	Worsening
No. of complaints	Low	4.00	10.00	17.00	30.00	Worsening
% of EHCPs Audited Good or Outstanding	High	80.00	77.00	95.00	76.47	Worsening

Key Commentary

No. of complaints

We have seen a large increase in March. Some of this is related to phase transfer deadlines. Only West did not receive any complaints. Locality breakdown:

- Chesil - 3
- Dorchester - 4 formal, 2 from MPs
- East - 9 formal, 1 pre-action (JR)
- North - 5 formal
- Purbeck - 5 formal, 1 from an MP

No. of SEND tribunals against LA per month

4 new appeals lodged in March. Chesil 1 (sections B,F & I); Dorchester 1 (no details yet logged); East 1 (sections B,F&I), 1 Purbeck (section 1 - Westfield - consent agreement already reached). 4 tribunals were completed in March. Chesil 1 (Section I consent); East 3 (BF&I - conceded, Failure to asses - conceded; Section I - consent)

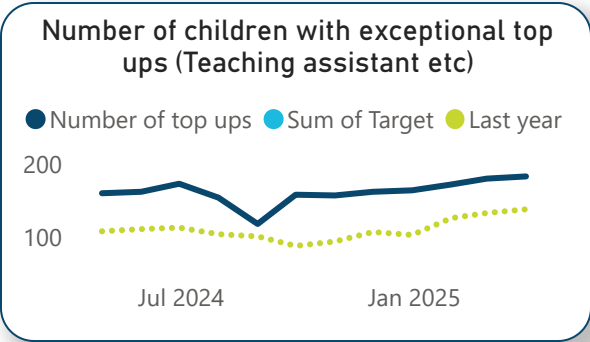
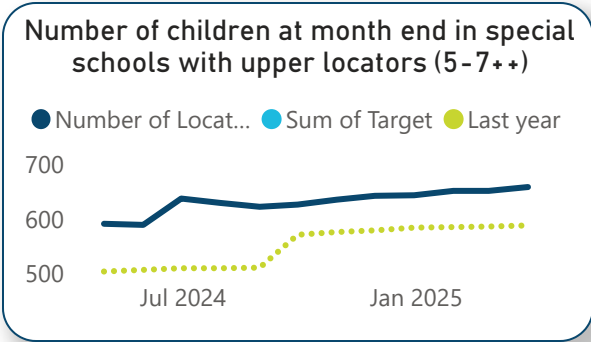
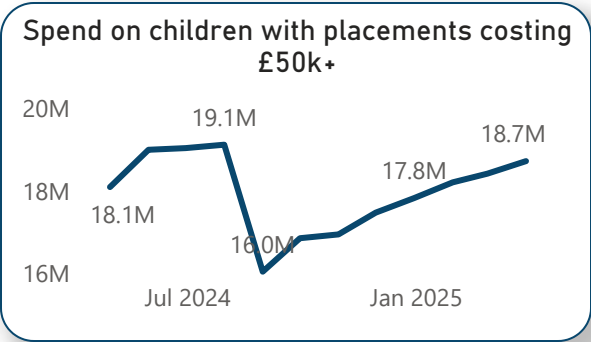
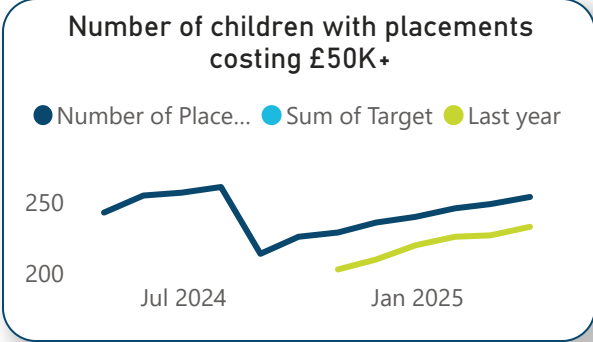
SEND Board Performance Measures - Finance

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Month Ending

March 2025

Back to Home Page



Indicator	Good Is	Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
Number of children at month end in special schools with upper locators (5-7++)			651.00	651.00	658.00	
Number of children with exceptional top ups (Teaching assistant etc)			172.00	180.00	183.00	
Number of children with placements costing £50K+			246.00	249.00	254.00	
Number of new 7+ and 7++ exceptional top ups in the month			2.00	1.00	0.00	
Number of young people at month end in further education upper bands (FE Bands 6&7)			8.00	8.00	8.00	
Number with an EHCP aged 19+ with 50k+ placements			28.00	29.00	32.00	
Spend on children with placements costing £50k+			18205313.78	18415623.78	18717564.47	

Key Commentary

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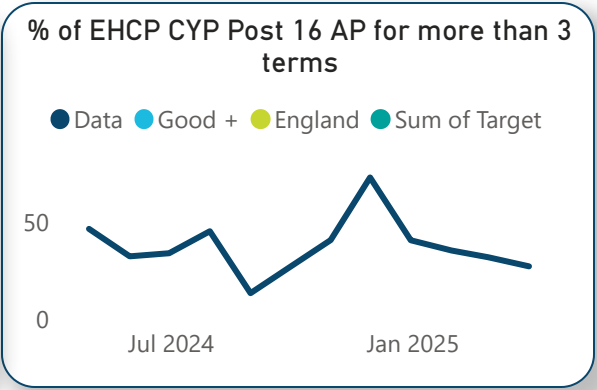
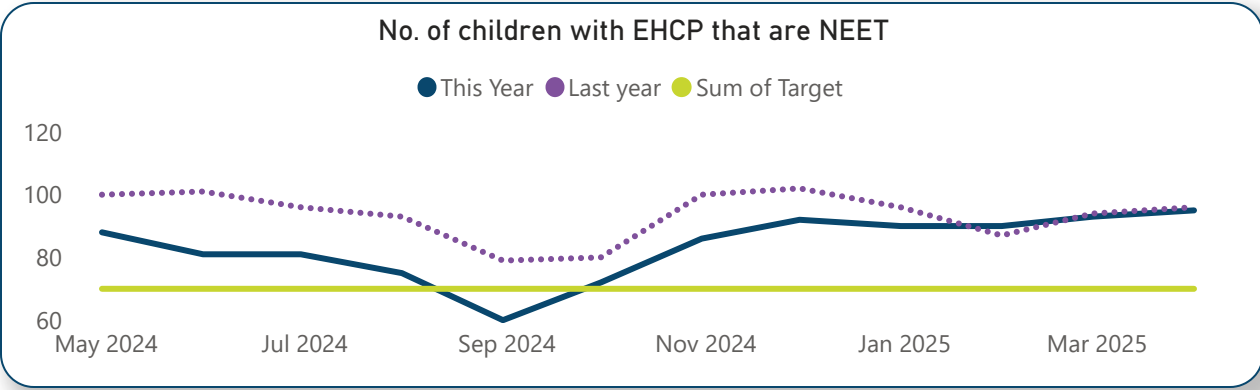
SEND Board Performance Measures - Going into Adulthood

Produced by Business Intelligence & Performance (Children's)

Back to Home Page

Month Ending

March 2025



Page 67	Indicator	Good Is	Sum of Target	Previous Month 2	Previous Month 1	Data	Latest D.O.T.
	% of EHCP CYP Post 16 AP for more than 3 terms	Low		35.56	32.08	27.42	Improving
	At month end - 19+ in employment, apprenticeship (EET)						
	No. of children with EHCP that are NEET	Low	70.00	90.00	93.00	95.00	Worsening

Key Commentary

% of EHCP CYP Post 16 AP for more than 3 terms

Jan 2025 - 16 out of 45 placements
Feb 2025 - 17 out of 53 placements
Mar 2025 - 17 out of 62 placements

No. of children with EHCP that are NEET

A very small increase of 2 on February. Tracked by EET team.

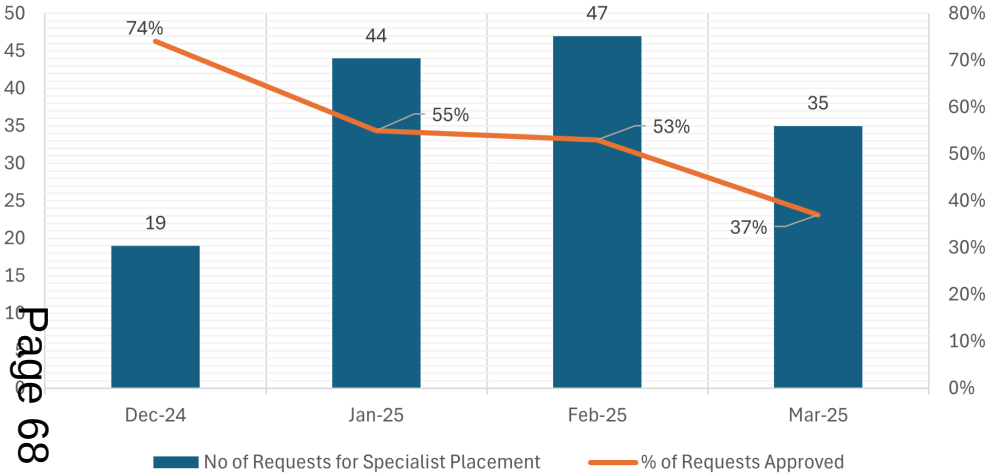
SEN Requests for Specialist Placement Analysis

March 2025

[Back to Home...](#)

Page 68

Breakdown of Specialist Placement Requests & % of those agreed across all Localities



Total Number of Requests for Specialist Placement across all Localities

Total number of requests for specialist placements:

The graph shows that since December 2024, the monthly numbers of requests for specialist placements has increased but the percentage of requests agreed has been dropping each month.

Purbeck & East has had the most requests in that time, as well as the most requests agreed and declined.

North has deferred the most requests in that time, with Chesil being a close second.

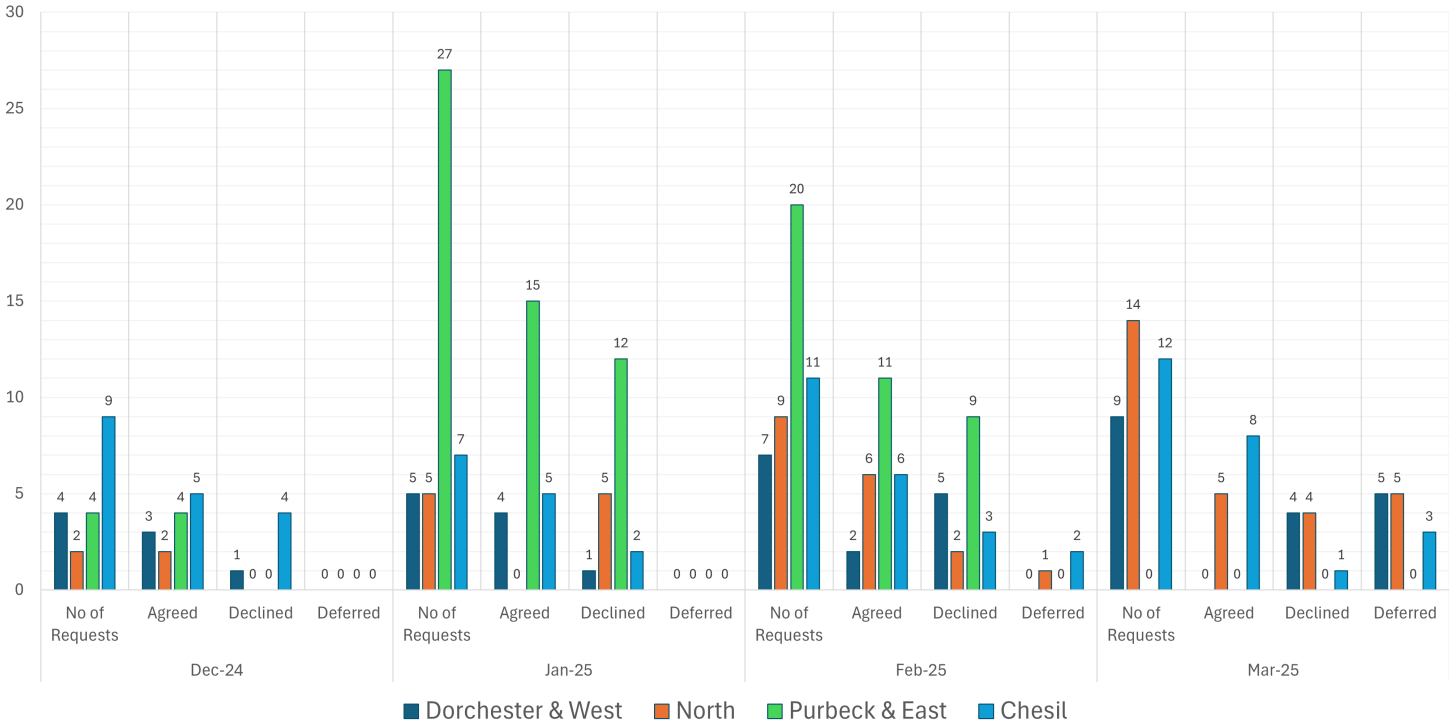
Number of Requests for Specialist Placements and those that have been agreed/declined/deferred

This performance measure is scheduled to be tracked using the monthly children's data collection going forward. This will allow for further analysis in the future.

There have been 145 requests for specialist placement since Dec 24. 51 of those have come from Purbeck and East alone. 30 of those requests were agreed, which is the highest of all localities. Whilst Chesil has declined the most requests.

Chesil has also deferred the most requests since Dec 24.

Number of Requests for Specialist Placement vs Agreed vs Declined vs Deferred Dec 24 - Mar 25



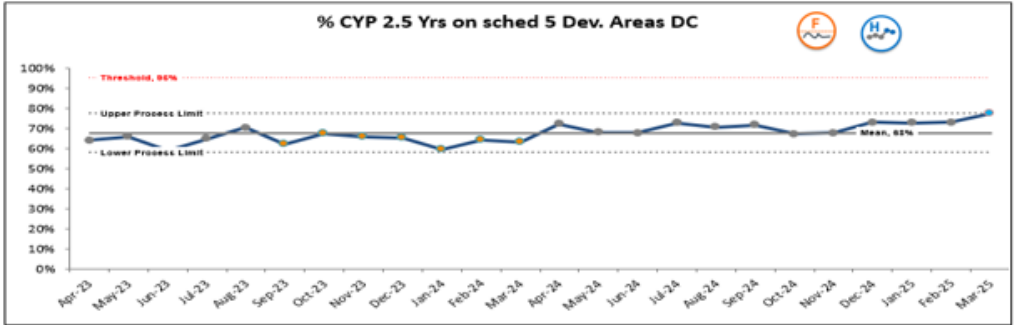
Dorset Health Care Metric Analysis: (1)

Based on all Children and Young People (not those with a SEND Status)
Source: NHS Dorset

March 2025

Back to Hom...

The proportion of children at or above the expected level in all 5 areas of development (from the ASQ-3) - % DC

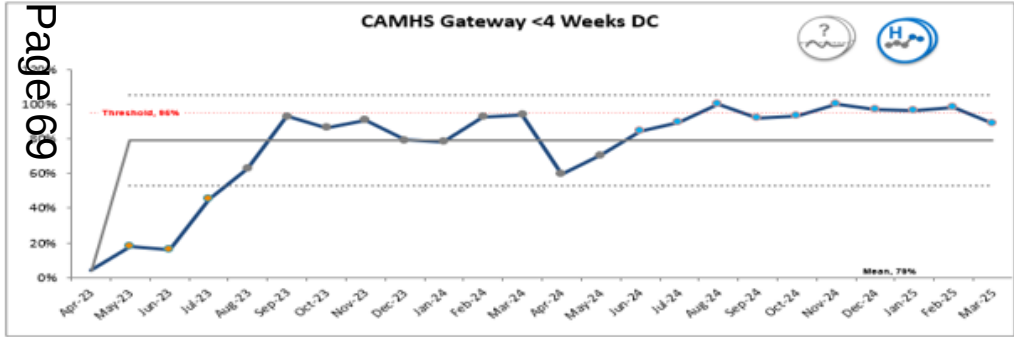


Assurance:
This metric is not changing significantly but has improved slightly in March and the target lies outside of the process limits meaning it will not be met without change.

Performance:
In March 77% of CYP were on schedule across all 5 domains.

Comments/Actions: This data only informs of the score at the time of assessment however there will be children who have not met all five domains but will then have a follow up assessment at a later date which may have shown improvement but currently this is not reportable.

CAMHS Gateway % CYP seen within 4 weeks of referral (RTA) - DC

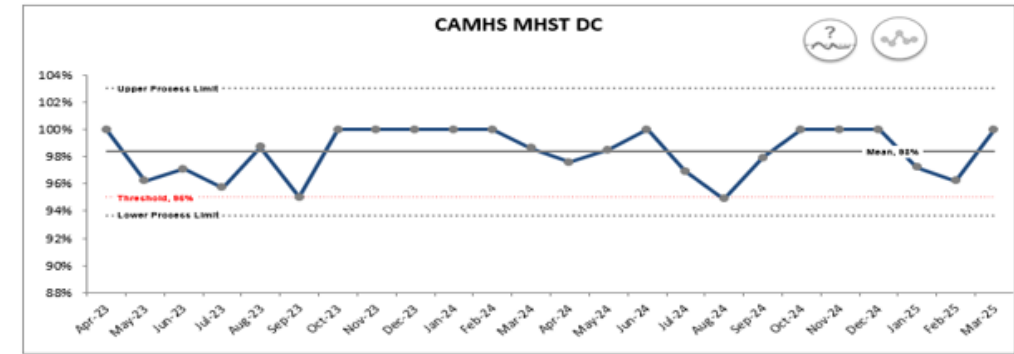


Assurance:
Good, this metric is not changing significantly. The target lies within the process limits so the target may or may not be met

Performance:
89% of CYP referred to the CAMHS Gateway across Dorset in March, 100% had their first appointment within 4 weeks of referral. The average wait was 18.8 days.

Comments/Actions:
The CAMHS Transformation Project is underway across the Service.

CAMHS Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) % seen within 4 weeks of referral (RTA) - DC



Assurance:
Average, this metric is currently not changing significantly. The target is within the process limits and may/may not be met.

Performance: In March 100% of referrals were seen within 28 days. There are 399 CYP currently open on caseload. On average children waited 24.5 days for their first appointment and there are currently 66 CYP waiting to be seen for their 1st appointment.

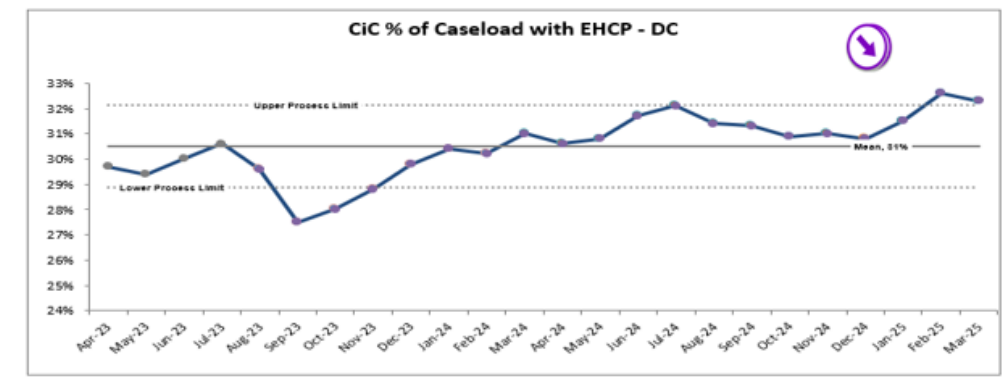
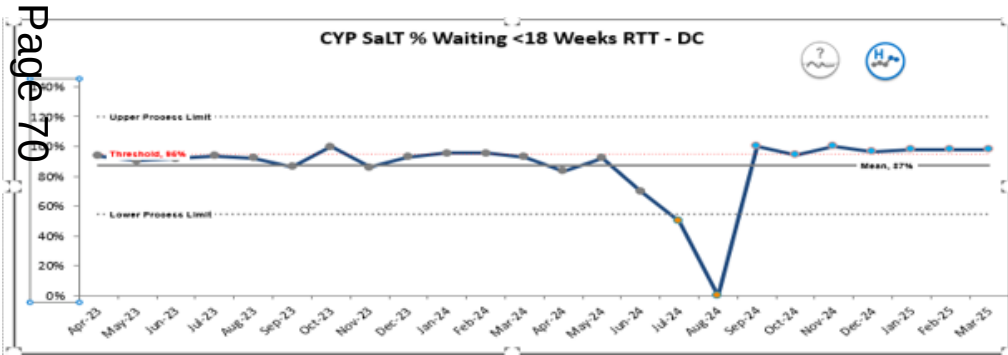
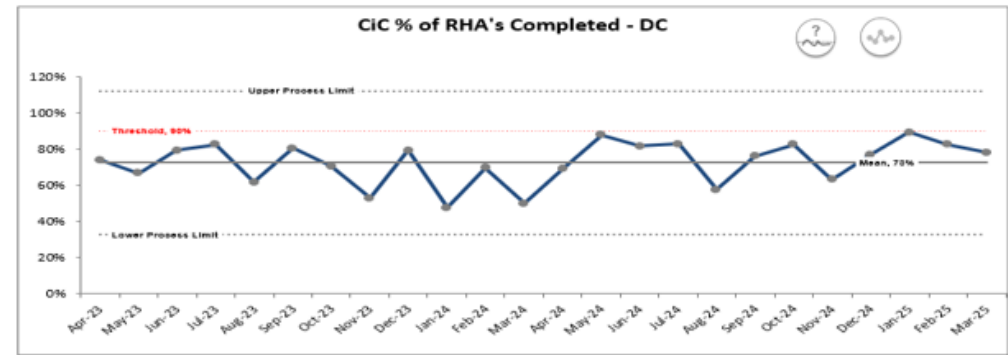
Comments/Actions:
Data currently excludes whole school activity, this would also contribute to the CYP 1+ Access indicator (national reporting). Work is underway to identify a solution to include this in reporting.

Dorset Health Care Metric Analysis: (2)

Based on all Children and Young People (not those with a SEND Status)
Source: NHS Dorset

March 2025

Back to Hom...



Child in Care - % of Review Health Assessments completed that were due in the month - DC

Assurance:
Average, no significant change. This system will not consistently hit or miss the threshold.

Variation: In March 37 RHAs were due of which 26 were completed. The main impact on performance is due to Out of Area delays which are escalated to the Designated Nurse for CiC (NHS Dorset) and monitored by the team.

Comments/Actions:
The main impact on performance is due to Out of Area delays which are escalated to the Designated Nurse for CiC (NHS Dorset) and monitored by the team.

CYP SaLT % waited less than 18 weeks (RTT) - DC

Assurance:
Average, this metric is not changing significantly. The target is within the process limits and may/may not be met.

Performance:
4 Referrals in Dorset have waited longer than 18 weeks from referral to commence treatment.

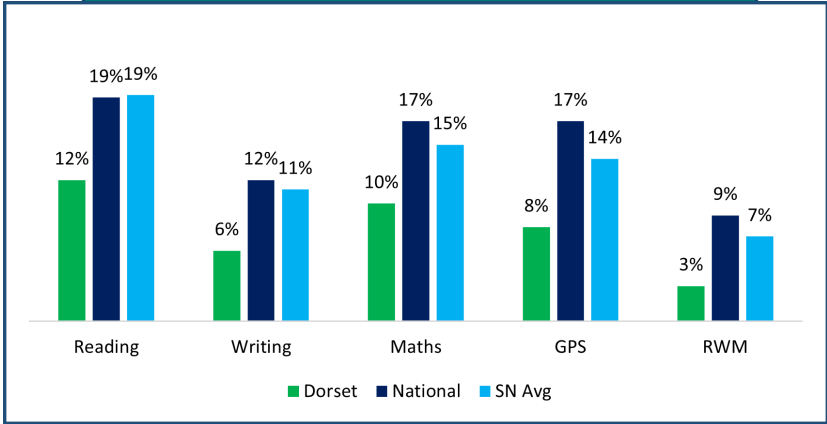
Comments/Actions: This indicator is impacted by referrals on the MAA/ASC caseload. The referrals in this indicator include patients who are awaiting joint assessment clinic appointments booked by our colleagues in other services, and others have postponed assessments due to parental/patient choice. The 0% figure for August is related to a reporting issue which has now been resolved and should be disregarded.

Child in Care - % of caseload with a EHCP - DC

Assurance:
This is not a targeted measure. Special cause variation of an increasing nature where DOWN is not necessarily improving nor concerning.

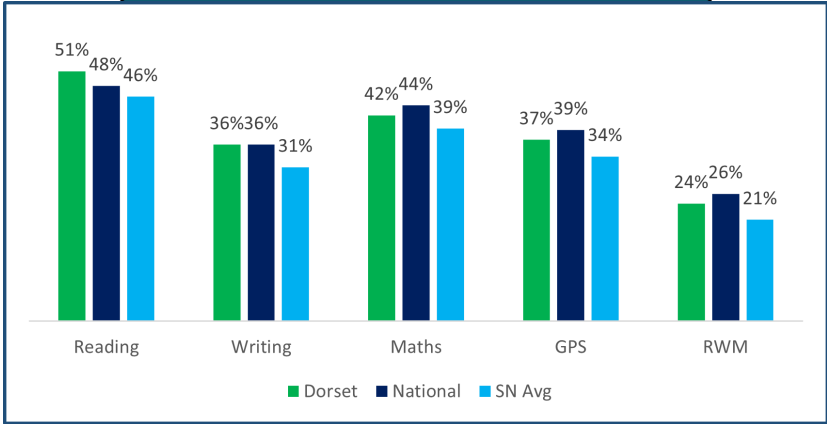
Variation:
There are 143 Children in Care under Dorset with an EHCP in place, which is 32.5% of the CiC Caseload.

EHCP

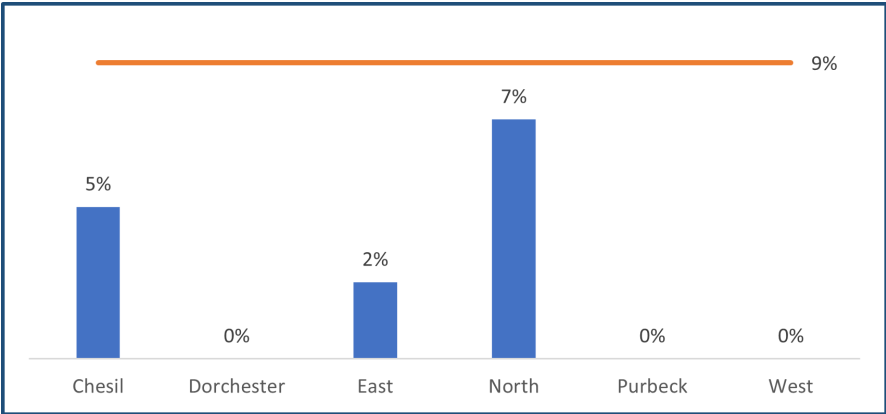


Dorset children with an EHCP 6% below national and in bottom 20% of all local authorities (as are all pupils in Dorset) for the combined Reading/Writing and Maths.

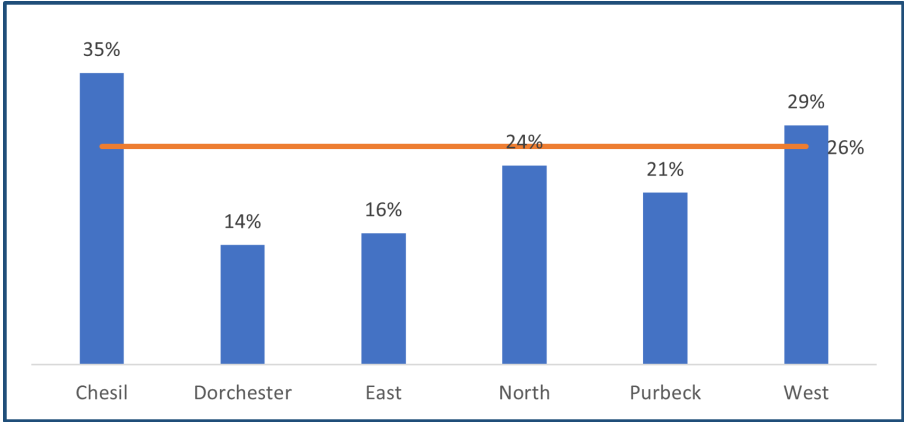
SEN Support



SEN Support are 2% below national for the combined Reading/Writing and Maths. Above national for reading.



Reading/Writing/Maths at the expected standard by locality. Caution is advised with low numbers here, Dorchester had 13 children for example. Orange line is national.



Reading/Writing/Maths at the expected standard by locality. Chesil and West above national average.



Special Educational Needs

Pupils with SEN Support (All Schools) (%)

Topic

Special Educational Needs

Measure

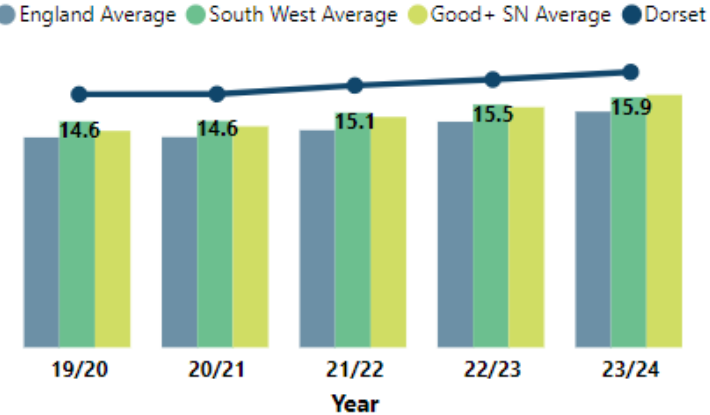
Pupils with SEN Support (All Schools) (%)

Clear Filters

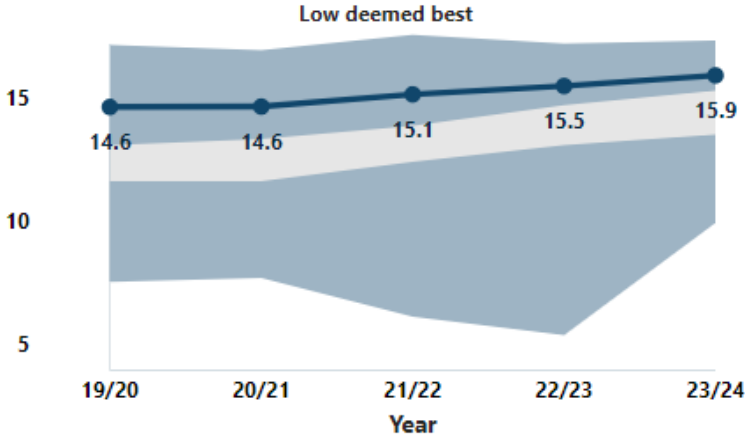


Page 72

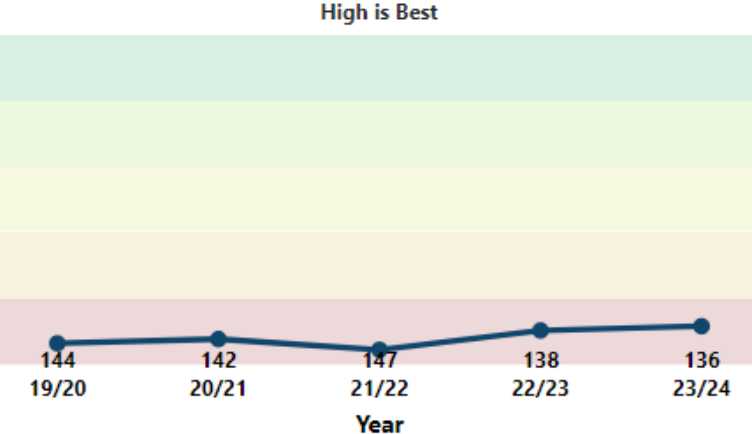
Dorset Compared to England, South West and Good+ SN



Dorset Compared to National and Good+ SN Range



Dorset's National Ranking Position



Commentary

2023: Pupils with SEN Support (All Schools): Dorset's figure increased slightly from last year (as did the national, regional and statistical neighbour averages), but Dorset rose up the national averages from 147th to 138th, though remained in the bottom quintile. Out of nine SEN measures benchmarked, (EHCP, SEN Support and All SEN in Primary, Secondary and all schools), Dorset is in the bottom quintile for six measures and second bottom quintile for the other three.

2024: Pupils with SEN Support (All Schools): Dorset saw a slight increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, and saw a slight rise up the national rankings, from 138th to 136th, thereby remaining in the bottom quintile.



Special Educational Needs

Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Primary Schools) (%)

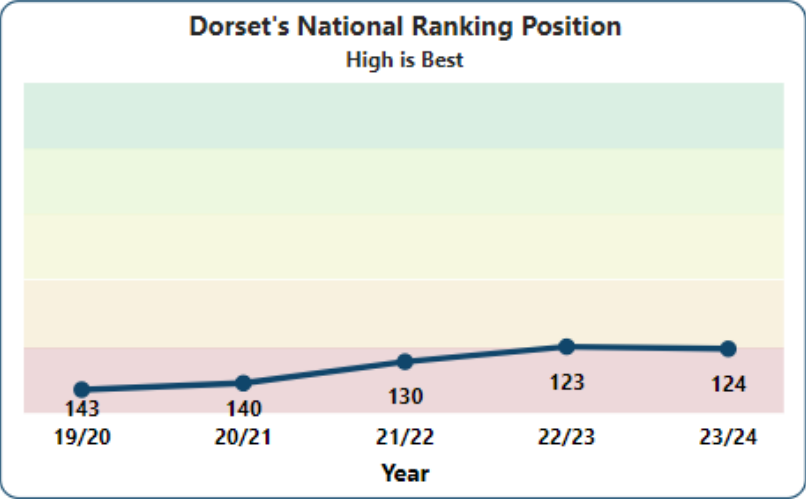
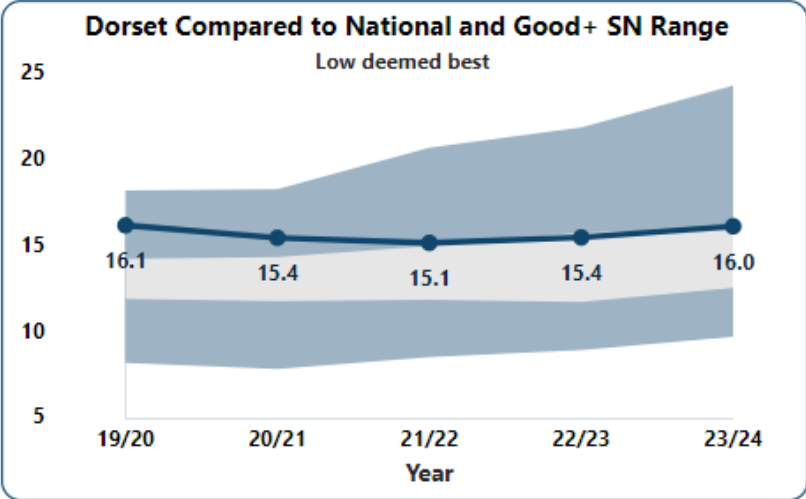
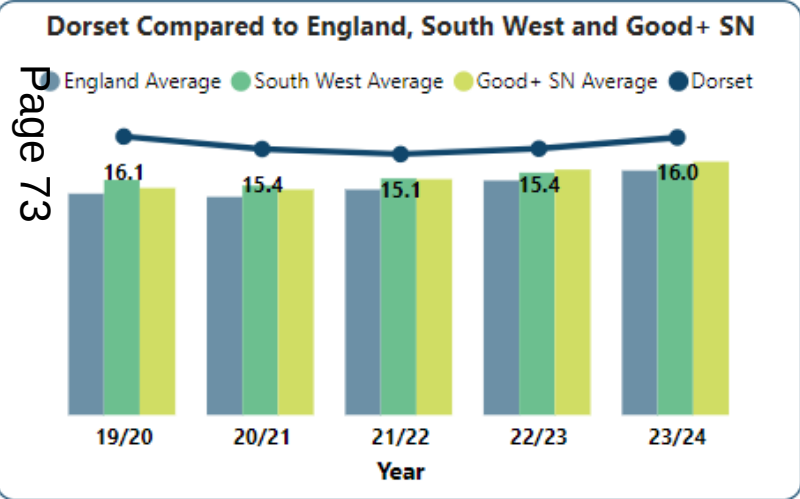
Topic

Special Educational Needs

Measure

Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Primary Schools) (%)

Clear Filters



Commentary

2023: Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Primary Schools): Dorset's figure increased slightly from last year (as did the national, regional and statistical neighbour averages), but Dorset rose up the national averages from 130th to 123rd, though remained in the bottom quintile. Out of nine SEN measures benchmarked, (EHCP, SEN Support and All SEN in Primary, Secondary and all schools), Dorset is in the bottom quintile for six measures and second bottom quintile for the other three.

2024: Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Primary Schools): Dorset saw a slight increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, and fell one place down the national rankings, from 123rd to 124th, thereby remaining in the bottom quintile.



Special Educational Needs

Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Secondary Schools) (%)

Topic

Special Educational Needs

Measure

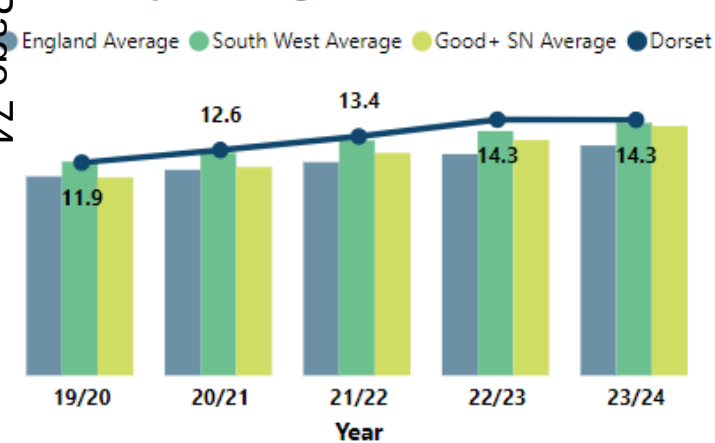
Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Secondary Schools) (%)

Clear Filters

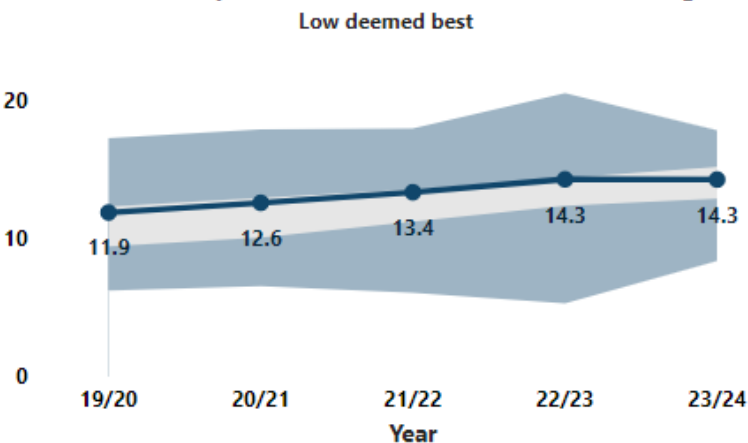


Page 74

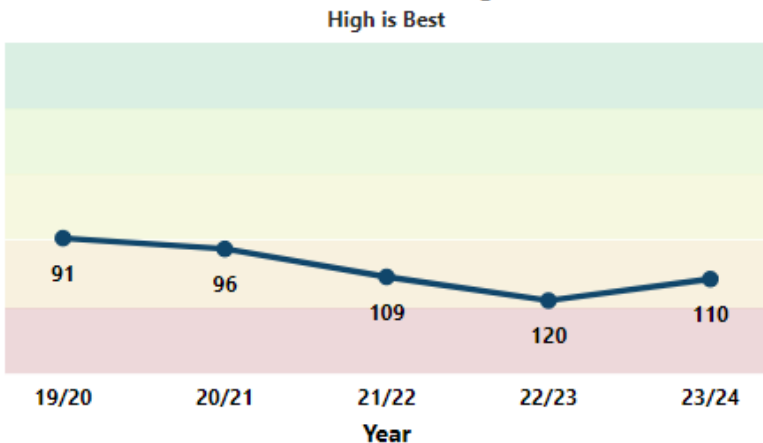
Dorset Compared to England, South West and Good+ SN



Dorset Compared to National and Good+ SN Range



Dorset's National Ranking Position



Commentary

2023: Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Secondary Schools): Dorset's figure increased from last year (as did the national, regional and statistical neighbour averages), but Dorset fell slightly down the national averages from 109th to 120th, (one place above the bottom quintile). Out of nine SEN measures benchmarked, (EHCP, SEN Support and All SEN in Primary, Secondary and all schools), Dorset is in the bottom quintile for six measures and second bottom quintile for the other three.

2024: Pupils with SEN Support (State Funded Secondary Schools): Dorset saw a very slight decrease compared to last year, contrary to the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, which all saw slight increases. As a result, Dorset rose up the national rankings, from 120th to 110th, remaining in the second bottom quintile.

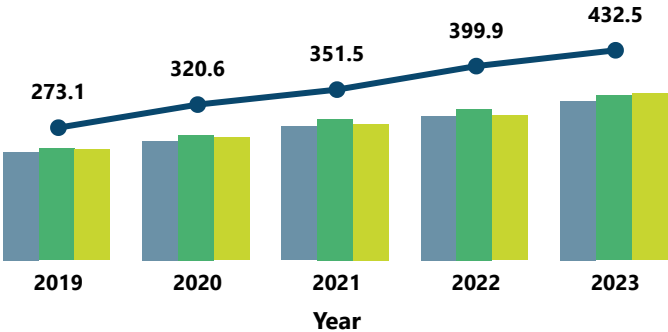
Special Educational Needs

Total EHCP (Rate per 10,000)

Page 75

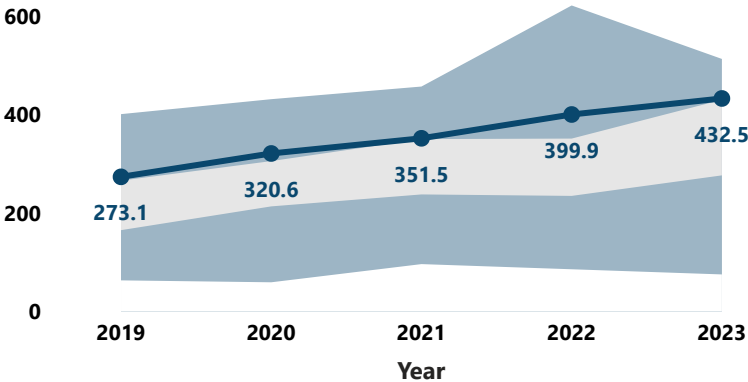
Dorset Compared to England, South West and Good+ SN

England AverageSouth West AverageGood+ AverageDorset



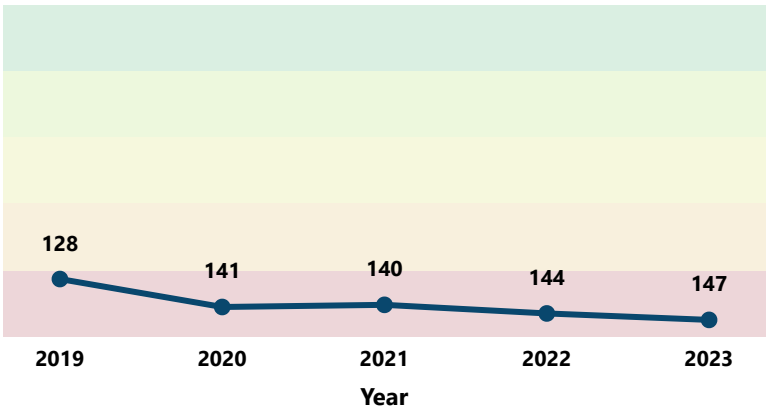
Dorset Compared to National and Good+ SN Range

Low deemed best



Dorset's National Ranking Position

High is Best



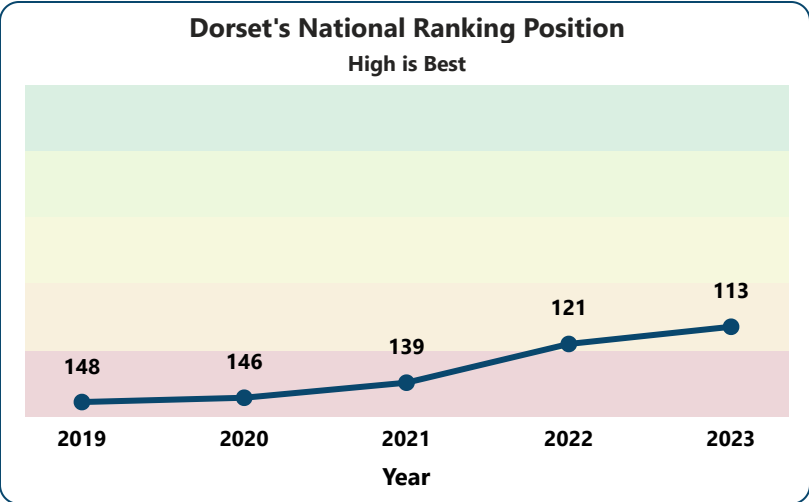
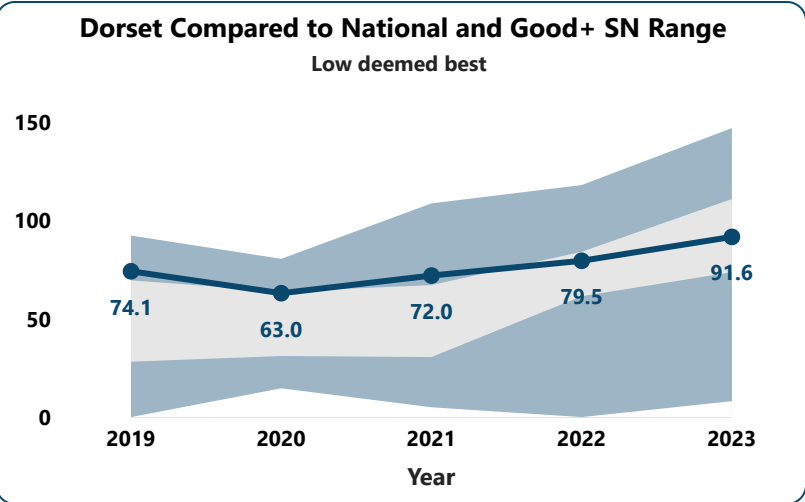
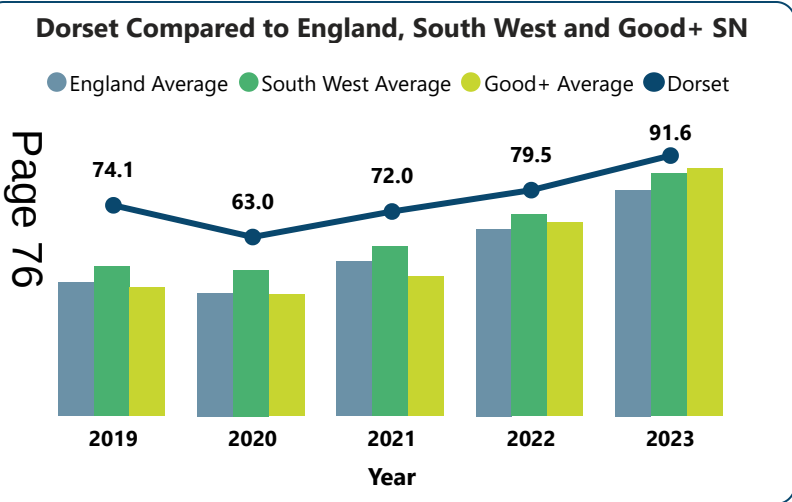
Commentary

2022: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: Total EHCPs (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, but increased more than other Local Authorities, resulting in a fall down the national rankings from 140th to 144th (dropping further down the bottom quintile).

2023: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: Total EHCPs (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, but increased more than other Local Authorities, resulting in a fall down the national rankings from 144th to 147th (dropping to the lower end of the bottom quintile).

Special Educational Needs

EHCP Requests (Rate per 10,000)



Commentary

2022: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: EHCP Requests (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, but increased less than other Local Authorities, resulting in a rise up the national rankings from 139th to 121st (though still just remaining in the bottom quintile).

2023: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: EHCP Requests (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, but increased less than other Local Authorities, resulting in a rise up the national rankings from 121st to 113th (thereby moving out of the bottom quintile).

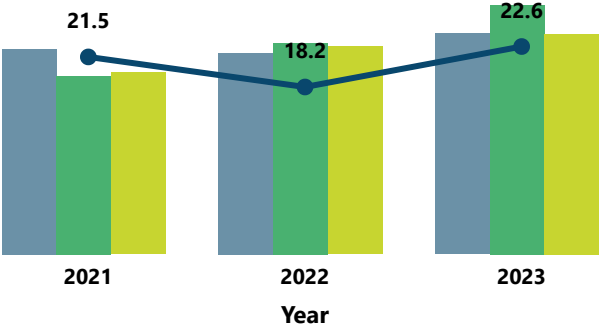
Special Educational Needs

Initial requests for assessment for an EHC plan that were refused (%)

Page 77

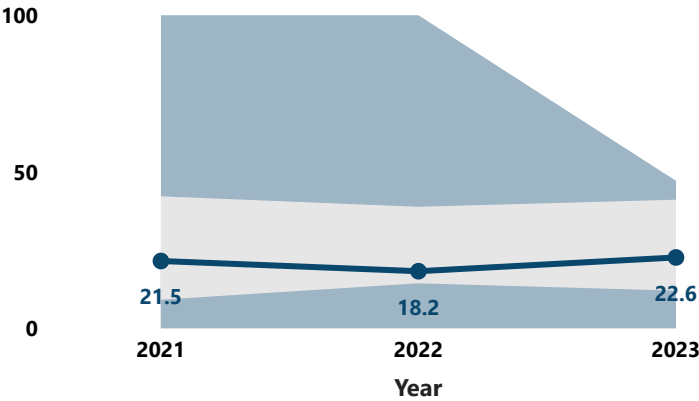
Dorset Compared to England, South West and Good+ SN

England AverageSouth West AverageGood+ AverageDorset



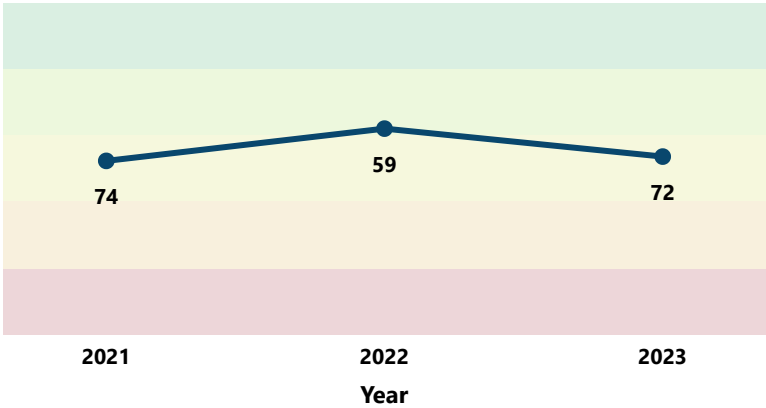
Dorset Compared to National and Good+ SN Range

Low deemed best



Dorset's National Ranking Position

High is Best



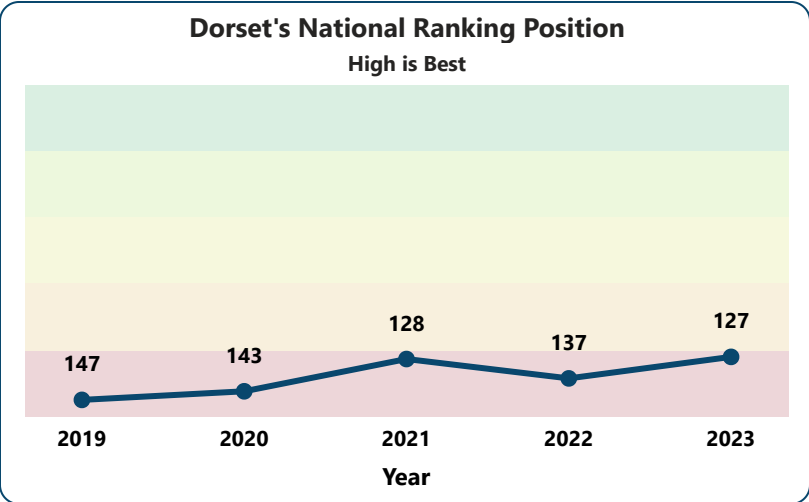
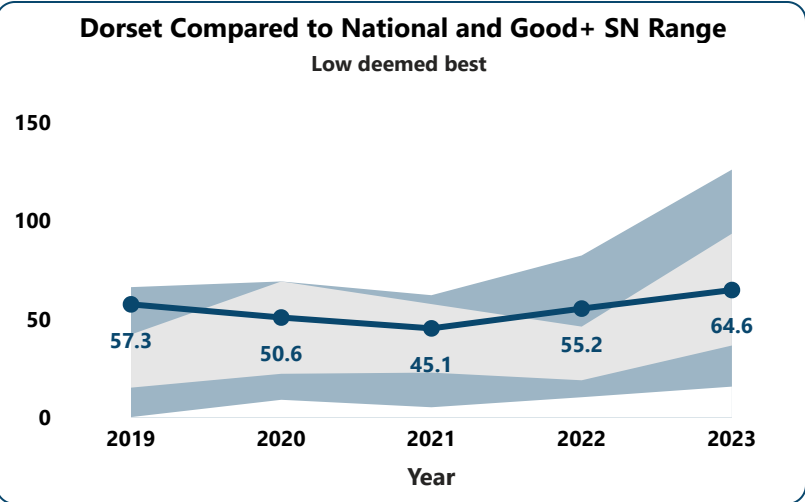
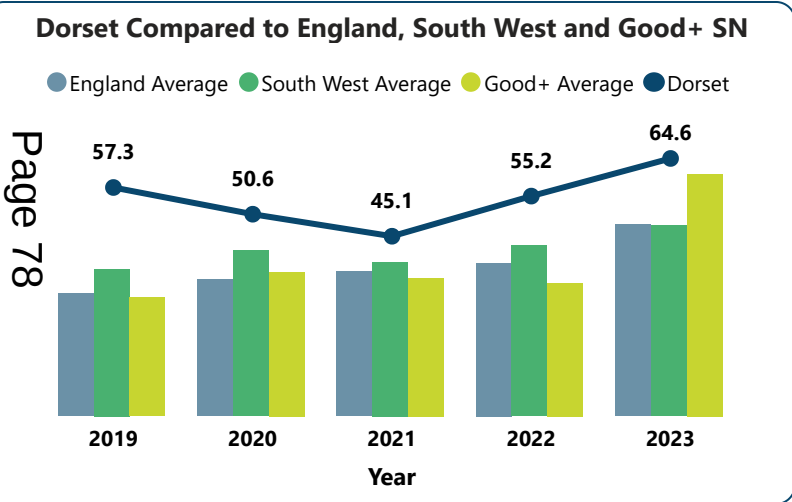
Commentary

2022: Initial requests for assessment for an EHC plan that were refused: While the national, regional and statistical neighbour averages all showed a rise in 2022 compared to 2021, Dorset saw a fall, which resulted in a rise up the national rankings from 74th to 59th.

2023: Initial requests for assessment for an EHC plan that were refused: Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, and regional trends, but contrary to the statistical neighbour average, which saw a slight decrease). As a result, Dorset fell down the national rankings from 59th to 72nd.

Special Educational Needs

EHCP Issued (Rate per 10,000)



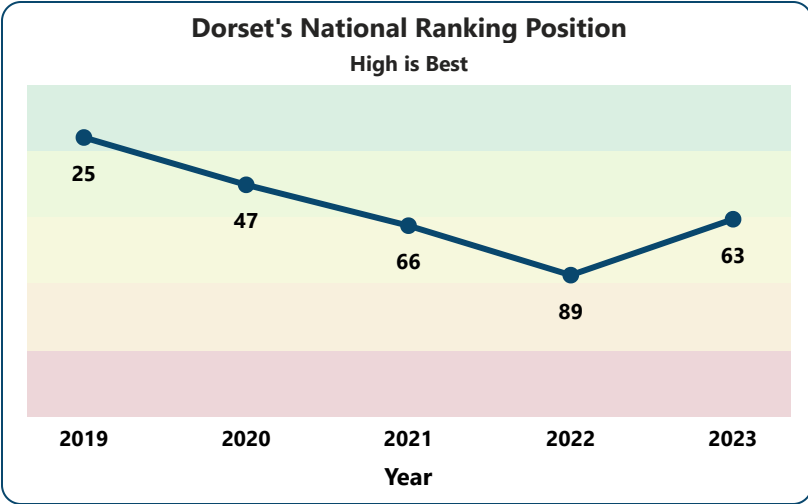
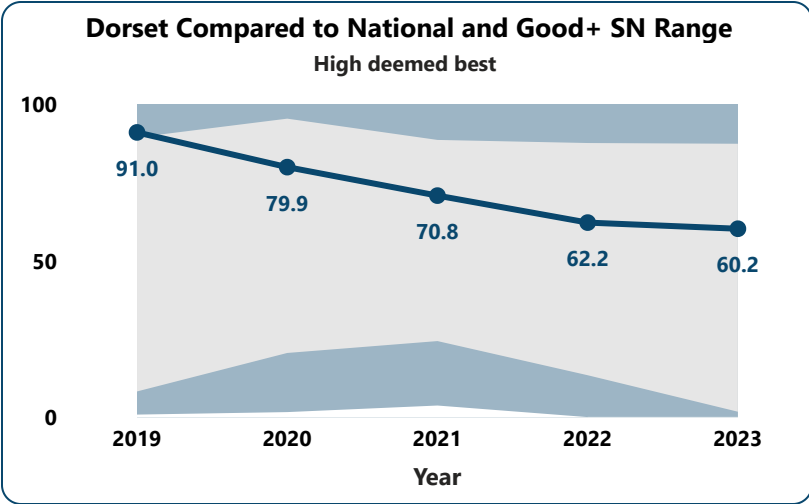
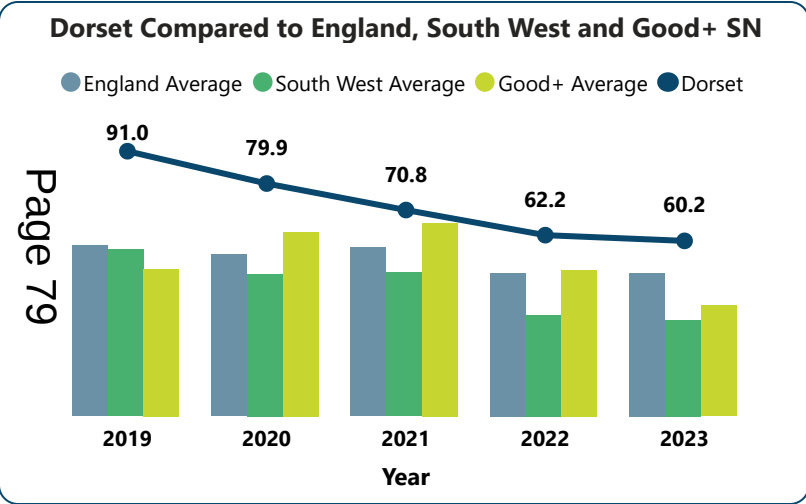
Commentary

2022: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: EHCP Requests (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, but increased less than other Local Authorities, resulting in a rise up the national rankings from 139th to 121st (though still just remaining in the bottom quintile).

2023: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: EHCP Requests (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, but increased less than other Local Authorities, resulting in a rise up the national rankings from 121st to 113th (thereby moving out of the bottom quintile).

Special Educational Needs

EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks - Including exceptional cases (%)



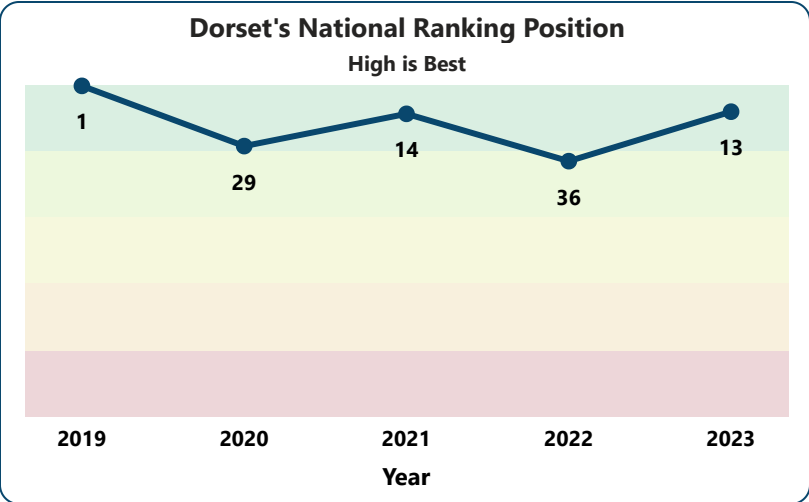
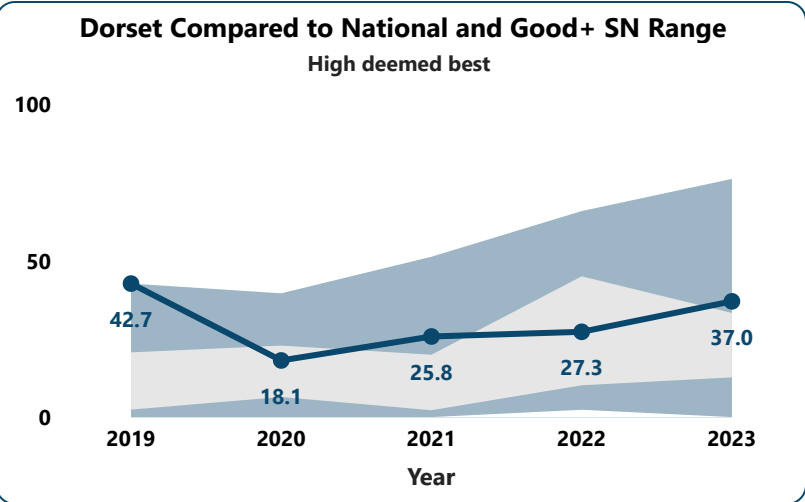
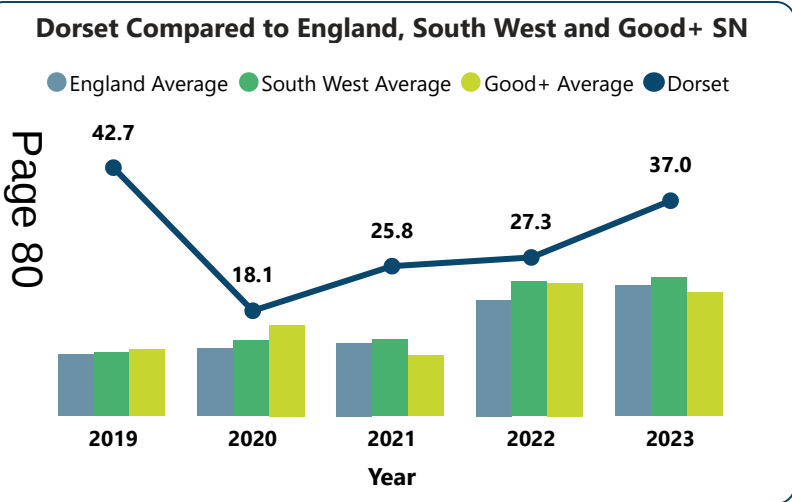
Commentary

2022: EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks (Including exceptional cases): Dorset saw a fall in the rate issued within 20 weeks from 71 to 62, which resulted in a fall down the national rankings from 66th to 89th, just about remaining in the middle quintile. However, Dorset remains significantly better than the national, regional and statistical neighbour averages.

2023: EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks (Including exceptional cases): Dorset saw a slight decrease compared to last year, in line with the regional, and statistical neighbour trends, (though the national trend saw a miniscule increase). Despite the decrease Dorset moved up the national rankings from 89th to 63rd.

Special Educational Needs

EHCP Ceased (Rate per 10,000)



Commentary

2022: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: EHCPs Ceased (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, regional, and statistical neighbour trends, but increased less than other Local Authorities, resulting in a fall down the national rankings from 14th to 36th (dropping out of the top quintile).

2023: Pupils with Special Educational Needs: EHCPs Ceased (Rate per 10k): Dorset saw an increase compared to last year, in line with the national, and regional averages, but contrary to the statistical neighbour trend, which saw a slight decrease. As a result, Dorset rose up the national rankings from 36th to 13th (moving back into the top quintile).

People and Health Scrutiny Committee

19 June 2025

Impact of Cost-of-Living Support Programme 2024-25

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr R Hope, Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Executive Director:

A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Laura Cornette

Job Title: Business Partner – Communities and Partnerships

Tel: 01305 224306

Email: laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary: This paper provides an update on the impact on the projects funded in April 2024-March 2025. The projects were recommended for agreement by the Place and Resources Overview Committee (which members of the People and Health Overview committee were also in attendance for) on 11 July 2024 and People and Health Scrutiny committee from November 2024. This report outlines the impacts and outcomes that have been achieved through targeted use of the cost-of-living fund. These outcomes include:

- 188 households have been financially supported to prevent homelessness
- The early help housing campaign led to a 12% increase on calls to our housing options team before reaching crisis
- 54 low income and vulnerable households received energy saving home adaptations including replacement boilers and underfloor or loft insulation
- Citizen's Advice supported 903 individuals with complex casework, resulting in income gains of £615,677 and £603,478 debts written off.
- Funded foodbanks and social supermarkets supported an average total of 6628 households per month.
- 7 targeted community cooking, education and support schemes were funded

- 29 targeted workshops were delivered to adults with learning disabilities to support and educate them with the cost of living.
- 502 older people received telephone support and 342 older people received face to face support in their homes to apply for welfare benefits they were entitled to which has resulted in returns of £388,000 (so far).

Recommendation:

That members review and comment on the progress of the £2 million investment in preventative and reactive spend agreed in July 2024.

Reason for Recommendation:

It was requested by the Place and Resources Overview Committee that quarterly project updates were brought to People and Health Scrutiny Committee.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Dorset Together: Cost-of-Living programme was created in 2022 in response to the rising cost of living and the financial impact of this on Dorset residents. It is a partnership between Dorset Council, our statutory sector partners and the voluntary and community sector and is driven by data insights and listening to our grassroots partners. The programme is agile and able to respond to emerging need with targeted support where it is most needed.
- 1.2. In June 2024 Cabinet agreed up to £2 million to continue to support residents with the ongoing impacts of the cost of living. Proposed projects were discussed at Place and Resources Overview Committee in July with delegated sign off given to the Executive Director for Corporate Development (S151) and the Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement.
- 1.3. A list of all authorised projects and total project spend can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.4. The cost-of-living challenge continues to have a severely detrimental impact on our most vulnerable residents. A proactive, targeted, and flexible approach to supporting Dorset's communities with the cost-of-living challenge in both the short and medium term, based on evidence and data sets, has enabled Dorset Council to meet identified gaps in local and national support initiatives and provide assistance to our most vulnerable residents. A full background of the programme to date can be found in the **background papers**.

2. Importance of the Programme

- 2.1. The importance of the Cost-of-Living programme cannot be overstated. The aim of the programme of activity has been to alleviate financial pressure on

vulnerable households. This has been delivered by direct support (such as food vouchers, energy bill subsidies, rent assistance) to help low-income families and individuals meet basic needs. This, in turn, has helped to reduce the risk of debt, eviction, and food insecurity, as well as reducing stress and anxiety associated with financial hardship. Better access to healthy food, heating, and housing leads to improved physical and mental health outcomes.

The programme has always aimed to ensure that resources are distributed fairly, prioritising those in greatest need and filling any identified gaps in support.

- 2.2. The programme has also adopted an early intervention approach, with the aim of preventing more costly outcomes later, such as homelessness and debt. In turn, this helps to reduce pressure on public services like healthcare, social care, and emergency housing.
- 2.3. It represents a proactive and flexible approach to community support, tailored to the unique needs of Dorset residents. By leveraging data and evidence, the programme ensures that resources are directed where they are most needed, maximising the impact of the funding. The programme fosters collaboration between Dorset Council and various partner organisations, creating a robust support network for residents.
- 2.4. This collaborative approach not only enhances the effectiveness of the interventions but also strengthens community resilience in the face of ongoing economic pressures. Its continued support is crucial for ensuring that all residents can navigate the financial challenges posed by the current economic climate.

3. Key Outcomes of the Cost-of-Living programme

- 3.1. An infographic offers a pictorial impact summary of the projects can be found in **Appendix 2.**
- 3.2. A report detailing the impacts and outcomes on all projects can be found in **Appendix 3.**
- 3.3. Overall the cost-of-living support programme delivered the agreed projects within the agreed timeframe. With the extension of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in the national Government's budget, adjustments were made to how some of the projects were supported which has resulted in a financial saving from the Dorset Council budget. The cost-of-living programme was designed to fill in the gaps in other funded support programmes so as the incoming national government announced their support, there was always going to be some flexibility for this.

4. Continuation of the Cost-of-Living Programme

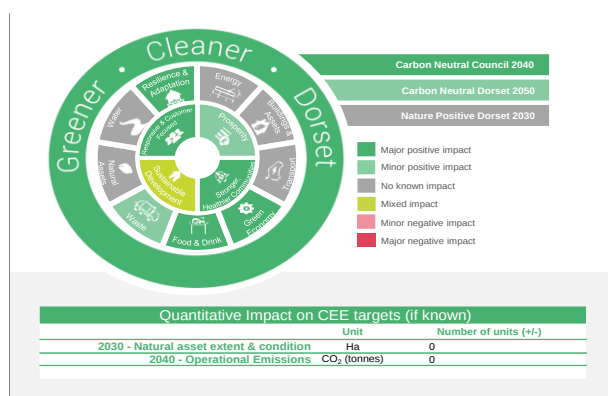
- 4.1. As agreed at Cabinet in February 2025, further allocation of support is being made to support Dorset's most vulnerable residents with cost-of-living projects in the next 4 financial years at £500,000 a year, built into the council's budget setting process.
- 4.2. The Government announced the detail and criteria for the Household Support Fund for 2025-26 on 4 March 2025 with a 12% decrease in funding for Dorset Council. For financial year 25-26, Senior Leadership Team have agreed that £700,000 of the Household Support Fund (HSF) be transferred to the Cost-of-Living budget to support the community prevention projects, avoid any duplication and to streamline the reporting and evaluation of impact.
- 4.3. A table detailing all projects that have been authorised for continuation in 2025-26 can be found in **Appendix 4**.
- 4.4. A table detailing the programmes for the Household Support Fund that have been authorised for continuation in 2025-26 can be found in **Appendix 5**.
- 4.5. Dorset Together: Cost of Living and the HSF team are preparing for the real and significant risk that the HSF fund may not continue beyond this financial year and have begun a 3-stage plan to supporting Dorset's communities with the decommissioning of this support.
 - 4.5.1. Utilising the Policy Strategy team to lobby Government to consider extending the HSF programme or some form of local welfare assistance for our most vulnerable communities.
 - 4.5.2. All HSF commissioned partners have been made aware this may be the last year of financial support.
 - 4.5.3. There is a communications plan that will be rolled out to schools from September 2025 to support them in their messaging to their families who receive free school meals holiday vouchers.

5. Financial Implications

Cabinet agreed that an ongoing allocation of £500,000 to support the cost of living for the next 4 financial years was agreed at Cabinet in February 2025.

It is likely that the Government funded HSF will be terminated or significantly reduced from April 2026. Besides prevention, the HSF fund mainly supports the free school meal vouchers scheme in the school holidays, direct support for vulnerable families and the discretionary hardship vouchers for adults.

6. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications



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	major positive impact
Food & Drink	major positive impact
Waste	minor positive impact
Natural Assets & Ecology	No known impact
Water	No known impact
Resilience and Adaptation	major positive impact
Corporate Plan Aims	Impact
Prosperity	minor positive impact
Stronger healthier communities	strongly supports it
Sustainable Development & Housing	neutral
Responsive & Customer Focused	strongly supports it

7. Well-being and Health Implications

This programme of activities has been designed to positively support the well-being and health of Dorset Council's residents with a range of targeted, preventative activities for those hardest hit by the high cost of living

8. Risk Assessment

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Medium

Although the previous £2 million has achieved its purpose and has significantly supported our vulnerable residents to weather the cost-of-living challenge, the challenge has not ended. Emerging trends throughout 23-24, continued into 24-25 have shown that housing and debt issues have become more prevalent. Food security organisations are reporting an increasing spend to support their projects.

In 2024, the Government reduced the winter fuel allowance to households on pension credit only. Although there have been discussions about the possibility of

reviewing this decision, we are not yet sure what will be in place for winter 2025/26.

9. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Equalities Impact Assessment included in **Appendix 6**

10. **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – List of agreed projects and total spend for 2024-25
- Appendix 2 – Infographic summary of impact
- Appendix 3 - Full outcomes impact report for projects 2024-25
- Appendix 4 – Projects funded for 2025-26
- Appendix 5 – Programme of Funding for Household Support Fund 2025-26
- Appendix 6 – Equalities Impact Assessment

11. **Background Papers**

- [Cost of Living Challenge Cabinet paper 23rd February 2023](#)
- [Cost of Living Challenge People and Health Scrutiny paper 7th March 2024](#)
- [Cost of living Challenge Cabinet paper 11th June 2024](#)
- [Cost of Living Place and Resources Overview Committee 11th July 2024](#)
- [Cost of Living People and Health Scrutiny Committee 14th November 2024](#)

12. **Report Sign Off**

- 12.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

Appendix 1 – List of funded projects for financial year 2024-25

Project no.	Project	Original Budget	Spend	Remarks/Differences in spend
Page 87	1 Homelessness Support – To continue the additional support provided in Q3&4 23-24 with 4 priority programmes of support : 1. Arrears/Rent in advance & deposit payments 2. Tenancy Sustainment 3. Media and information awareness 4. Emergency Food vouchers (for residents not eligible for other schemes).	£177,500	£177,500 (100%)	
	2 To continue to invest in the Healthy Homes Dorset scheme, focusing on geographical locations of disadvantage.	£200,000	£200,000 (100%)	
	3 Citizens Advice - To extend the CoL caseworkers and adding a further 0.5FTE to assist with increased demand. Additional resource for volunteer training and supervision	£214,489	£214,489 (100%)	
	4 Revenue and Benefits - To continue to support the Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance . Payments often prevent eviction and allow short term financial support regarding meeting costs in this area which can assist residents meet other financial demands.	£100,000	£98,000 (98%)	Cannot be spent until Q4 as service must spend Gov grant first.

5	Housing - To continue to support the Disabilities Facilities Grant to enable energy efficient improvements to be included as part of their building adaptations	£150,000	£150,000 (100%)	
6	Investment in Lendology . This SW Councils initiated scheme enables low income and disabled residents to get low interest loans for essential house repairs.	£50,000	£50,000 (100%)	
7	Continue to invest in emergency and affordable food security that has a referral system.	£100,000	£0	Funded via the HSF
8	Invest in more VCS led sustainable and affordable food security projects in areas of most need	£75,000	£43,170 (60%)	Some of these projects take a while to develop, the introduction of the Dorset Council facilitated food security meeting (project 8.7) has really helped accelerate this programme and will continue to deliver into the next financial year.
9	Boost the Household Support Fund (HSF) targeted means tested energy support referral scheme	£100,000	£0	Funded via the HSF
10	People First Dorset - Invest in a targeted programme for Cost-of-Living advice, support and anti-scams for vulnerable residents with learning disabilities.	£25,000	£25,000 (100%)	
11	Invest in the information, advice and guidance service for vulnerable older residents to ensure	£75,000	£68,000 (91%)	The underspend was due to one organisation handing back their £7,000 grant to deliver in this geographical area

	they are receiving all the income they are entitled to.			due to an unexpected change of circumstances.
12	Island Community Action - Invest in their Helping Hands programme that directly supports 1020+ vulnerable older/vulnerable people on Portland.	£50,000	£50,000 100%	
13	Dorset Community Action - Support for village/community hall/community spaces sustainability.	£30,000	£30,000 (100%)	
14	Invest in the sustainability of Dorset's Community Transport Network	£100,000	£100,000 (100%)	
15	Customer Services (Libraries) - Invest in the extension of the digital inclusion device loan scheme.	£10,000	£10,000 (100%)	
16	Children's Services - To continue the additional 4 targeted priority programmes that support low-income families 1. Increased food offer for children attending the holidays activities and food (HAF) programme (£20,000) 2. Additional hours for pre-school children commencing school in September 2024&25 (£20,000) 3. Additional funding to the Local Alliance Groups to distribute to VCSO's working with vulnerable families struggling with the cost of living. (£42,000)	£100,000	£40,000 (40%)	Increased food offer for children attending the HAF programme funding doubled to £40,000 to support the extra holiday in February half term Projects 2, 3 & 4 (£60,000) were delivered but were subsequently funded via HSF following the Government's announcement for its extension in November 2024

	4. Locality Family Help Teams to purchase essential starting school equipment for vulnerable families e.g. Shoes, bags, uniform. (£18,000).			
	Total	Awarded £1,556,989	Spend £1,256,159	

Appendix 2 Infographic summary of impact



Cost of living support for Dorset residents to date*

£400,000 invested in making **99** homes warmer and more energy efficient for our older and disabled residents



£100,000 invested in **14** community transport schemes



We support an affordable food network and funded:



6 social supermarkets



16 emergency foodbanks

to provide support for **6628** households** in September 2024



Our Cost of Living Help campaign has reached **194,700** people



through **63** social media posts



and we distributed **3,265** leaflets

Household Support Fund



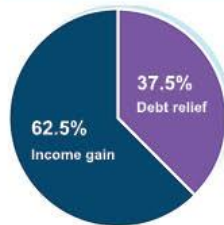
5,750 supermarket vouchers to struggling households via our HSF partner referral network scheme



We paid £555,694

to **799** people through the discretionary housing payment scheme

VCS Partners Financial Impact on Residents



Income gain: £1,003,677
Debt relief: £603,478

We have helped **986** households facing homelessness



26,037 children eligible for free school meals have enjoyed free holiday activities through the holiday activities and food programme

* Households can be families with children, all adult households, single person households, pensioner households

*June 2025

Appendix 3 - Full impact report for projects 2024-25

1 – Homelessness Support

Project: Homelessness Support (£177,500)	
About the project:	The additional funding has been spent in four areas: 1.1. Arrears/Rent in advance & deposit payments (£100,000) 1.2. Tenancy Sustainment (£42,500) 1.3. Media and information awareness (£10,000) 1.4. Emergency Food vouchers (for residents not eligible for other schemes) (£25,000).
Impact: Key Achievements:	1.1 Since April 2024, 188 households benefited from financial aid to prevent homelessness and sustain their existing housing with the help on offer with arrears payments or to secure accommodation in the private rented sector through rent in advance and deposits to relieve homelessness. 1.2 Tenancy sustainment officer – providing additional targeted early intervention support to prevent people becoming homeless 1.3 Media and information awareness campaign - aimed at homelessness prevention and including bus shelter ads and printing costs associated with community and business advertising of the campaign to ensure people seek help earlier. The collaboration of work between Dorset Council, Citizens Advice and Shelter promotes early help and intervention which is key to the success of preventing homelessness. Posters and leaflets are available across the county from Libraries to Children's Centres to GP surgeries. The promotion has also appeared on the side of a small number of refuse trucks and in bus shelters to ensure the message is shared as widely as possible. Social media has also played a big part in getting the message out. Since the launch in July 2024, the publicity has increased calls to our Housing Options team by 12% over the last six months compared to the same period last year. This early intervention helps improve outcomes for those starting to struggle. 1.4 Emergency Food vouchers (for residents not eligible for other schemes). £25,000 of vouchers were given to 274 households in hardship, including 122 with children and 14 pension age households.

Outcomes:	• Early Intervention Success: Targeted support can identify issues before they escalate, leading to fewer evictions and more stable tenancies. • Increased Housing Stability: The financial aid helps households stay in their current homes, reducing the risk of homelessness. • Targeted and Personalised Support: Tailored assistance can address specific needs of tenants, improving their ability to maintain housing. • Improved Well-being: Access to food can improve overall health and well-being. Reducing the stress associated with housing insecurity can lead to better mental health outcomes for beneficiaries. • Economic Benefits: Preventing homelessness can reduce the costs associated with emergency housing. • Increased Awareness: More people are informed about available resources, leading to earlier intervention and support, ensuring timely assistance.
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Demographics:

Tenancy Sustainment Statistics

Area	Number of households	%
North Dorset (Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury)	36	19%
West Dorset (Dorchester, Bridport, Lyme Regis)	34	18%
Purbeck (Wareham, Swanage)	7	4%
East Dorset (Wimborne, Verwood, Ferndown)	27	14%
Weymouth & Portland	52	28%
Not known / recorded	26	14%
Outside area	6	3%

Types of households		
Households with children	81	43%
At risk of/experienced domestic abuse	24	13%
Care leaver	5	3%
History of rough sleeping	12	6%
Disability	95	51%
Over 60 years of age	23	12%

Age	
18-24	18%
25-34	24%
35-44	27%
45-54	13%
55-64	11%
65-74	5%
over 75	2%
not stated	2%

2. Healthy Homes Dorset scheme

Project: Invest in Healthy Homes Dorset scheme, focusing on geographical areas of disadvantage (£200,000)	
About the project:	Invest in Healthy Homes Dorset scheme, focusing on geographical areas of disadvantage and park home properties.
Impact: Key Achievements:	• Ridgewater Energy, our delivery partner, manage the project cycle of raising awareness, handling enquiries and conducting surveys to assess eligibility. During this period 97 home visits/surveys were undertaken, with a further 65 technical surveys and 54 households had works completed as a result of the project. • Focus on Park Homes: We agreed a focus – not exclusively – on Park Homes as they are notoriously excluded from many other sources of funding, and residents tend to be in one or more vulnerable groups. 47 Park Home underfloor jobs completed, one park loft insulation installation to date, other works included storage heater upgraders and a replacement gas boiler.
Demographics:	• A total of 54 households benefitted. • All households were low income. • 43 (79%) households had a long-term illness or disability. • 48 (89%) properties were classed as Park Homes • Average age of the recipient was 72 years • Tenure – 98% owner occupiers, 2% private rental • Top 5 wards 1 – Chickerell (n=21); 2 – Cranborne & Alderholt (n=9); 3 – Sherborne (n=9) 4 – West Moors (n=3) 5 – Ringwood (n=3)
Outcomes:	• Warmer, more energy efficient homes • Lower energy bills • Improved health and wellbeing – many of the recipients had cardiac and lung disease and conditions which limited mobility. • Additional support: Ridgewater Energy have been able to deliver an expert energy advice home visit through their SGN Help for Warmth scheme advice on money saving and scams awareness, distribute Hygrometers Distributed (measures temperature/humidity) and provide onward referrals for external wall insulation, new boilers and white goods delivered via another funding source.

3. Citizens Advice – additional capacity to support increased demand.

Project: To extend the Cost of Living caseworkers and add a further 0.5FTE to assist with increased demand. Additional resource for volunteer training and supervision (£214,489)	
Impact: Key Achievements:	• Clients Supported: 903 individuals assisted with 1,851 issues. • Income Gains: £615,677 achieved for clients. • Debt Written Off: £603,478 successfully cleared.
Services Provided:	i. Energy Support: ○ 2 full-time caseworkers helped residents with energy-related issues, including heating solutions, government support and resolving supply problems. ○ Guidance on energy efficiency, reducing consumption and accessing grants for home improvements. ii. Cost of Living Outreach: ○ 1.5 full-time caseworkers focused on deprived areas (North Dorset and Bridport). ○ Services included home visits for vulnerable residents, welfare benefits advice, debt management and promoting financial resilience. iii. Volunteer Support: ○ Funding enabled 60 hours/week of supervision for 250 volunteers, recruiting and training 29 new volunteers. ○ Volunteers provided 9,600 hours of advice services across all Dorset Council wards.
Demographics:	• Client Profile: 77% of clients were disabled or had long-term health conditions. • Household Type: Single-person households were the largest group.
Outcomes:	• Increased financial stability for clients through income gains, debt relief and energy cost reductions. • Improved well-being and reduced anxiety for residents during the cost-of-living crisis.

4. Revenue and Benefits - support and extend the Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance scheme

Project: To continue to support the Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance (£100,000)	
Impact:	- Discretionary Housing Payments are funded by government via allocated funding on an annual basis which struggles to meet demand. The additional top up to the fund of £100,000 has been helpful to extend the essential financial support offered. We support residents in difficult times maintain suitable accommodation and or assist with the cost of securing more sustainable and suitable accommodation providing better outcomes. - Discretionary Housing Payments are financial awards, of a temporary nature, that assist residence in receipt of either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs meet a rent cost they are struggling with. The awards can be one off or for a short period to help towards items such as rent shortfalls, rent arrears, rent deposits or rent in advance, if securing suitable accommodation, some other rent related costs when essential can be supported on occasion such as essential moving costs. - Government funding was £458,298, 100% awarded first, then awarded £97,396.85 of the additional £100,000 granted via CoL by the end of the financial year.
Outcomes:	Increased Housing Stability: The financial aid helps households stay in their current homes, reducing the risk of homelessness. Improved Well-being: Access to food can improve overall health and well-being. Reducing the stress associated with housing insecurity can lead to better mental health outcomes for beneficiaries. Economic Benefits: Preventing homelessness can reduce the costs associated with emergency housing.

5. Disabilities Facilities Grant

Project: To continue to support the Disabilities Facilities Grant to enable energy efficient improvements to be included as part of their building adaptations programme (£150,000)	
About the project:	• The Energy Improvement Grant (funded from the Cost-of-Living funding) is designed to enable disabled homeowners and tenants to quickly access financial assistance towards a wide range of energy improvements around the home • The grant, delivered by the Dorset Accessible Homes Service (DAHS), promotes independent living and assists people coping with the ongoing cost of living crisis. It enables disabled residents to remain living at home, in warmer, more energy efficient homes, saving them money and making their homes safer and healthier. • The DAHS provide an 'end to end' works delivery process, from specifying works, appointing contractors and checking the quality of the final job.
Impact: Key Achievements:	This tranche of funding in 2024/25 of £150,000 has delivered (to end of March 2025) a further 31 Energy Improvement Grants. 88% of the budget is currently spent (£132,579), the average grant being £4,000. The full grant will be utilised once all planned works are complete. Works undertaken include replacement of broken boilers, heating improvements, insulation, replacement doors and windows.
Demographics:	Most (90%) of the recipients of the grant were aged between 50 and 90+.
Outcomes:	Lower energy bills – with new boilers, improved heating systems and better insulation individuals are likely to see a significant reduction in their heating bills Improved health and wellbeing – improved air quality, reduction of accidents and overall improved health

6. Lendology

Investment in Lendology. This SW Councils initiated scheme enables low income and disabled residents to get low interest loans for essential house repair (£50,000)	
About the project:	Dorset Council's not for profit, ethical lending partner, Lendology CIC, provides low interest, ethical loans to residents unable to raise finance from conventional 'high street' sources. For this reason, the target audience for loans is often lower income, vulnerable, disabled residents with a poor credit history or finance profile. This work directly targets households affected by the ongoing cost of living crisis. Loans are aimed at carrying out essential home repairs, enabling recipients to live safely at home.
Impact: Key Achievements:	This financial year we have loaned to 14 families living in Dorset (total loaned capital 24/25 £122,686) for a range of works including energy efficiency upgrades, park home improvement, disabled adaptations, roofing upgrades, resolving damp and other essential home repairs/improvements.
Demographics:	Of the 14, 10 (71%) households have an applicant over the age of 50. 5 (36%) households included an applicant or family member with a disability.
Outcomes:	1. Support for Vulnerable Residents: low-interest, ethical loans to residents 2. Essential Home Repairs: enable residents to improve their living conditions and live safely at home.

7. Invest in emergency and affordable food security that has a referral system

Project: Continue to invest in emergency and affordable food security that has a referral system (£333,500 in 24/25 funded from the Household Support Fund)	
About the project:	A targeted grant programme (4 tranches throughout the 2024/25 financial year) for foodbanks and social supermarkets has been funded entirely through the Household Support Fund (HSF). Proportionate funding based on need was distributed to 16 foodbanks and 6 social supermarkets who were able to demonstrate a referral process. We were also able to support refuges across Dorset with emergency food support.
Impact:	- Funding has enabled Foodbanks and Social Supermarkets to provide emergency and affordable food support to vulnerable residents - Work has been ongoing with food projects to develop robust referral mechanisms to ensure residents who use those projects have access to wraparound support as needed.
Demographics:	Funded Foodbanks and Social Supermarkets provided support for 6628 households* in September 2024, this number fluctuates every month according to need but demonstrates the numbers of household that <i>funded</i> food projects support. (* Households can be families with children, all adult households, single person households, pensioner households)
Outcomes:	Targeted Support for Foodbanks and Social Supermarkets: The grant programme provided proportionate funding based on need. Strengthened Referral Systems: The referral system ensured that those in need were efficiently directed to appropriate resources, improving access to food support Support for Refuges: Emergency food support for refuges across Dorset helped address the specific needs of those needed to seek refuge, providing them with essential resources during difficult times in partnership with Paragon. As part of this workstream we are working with projects to improve referral pathways and help people to a place of better resilience whilst ensuring the longer term sustainability of these projects (see project 8.7)

8. Invest in more VCS led sustainable and affordable food security (£75,000)

During the year we invested in seven food projects

8.1 Community Cooking and Skills courses

Community cooking sessions delivered at the Park Community Centre, Weymouth (£12,420)	
About the project:	The Friendly Food Club, an established partner of Dorset Council, were contracted to deliver Community Cooking and Skills courses – (36 x weekly 2.5 hour sessions) at Park Community Centre. Initially sessions were aimed at young families and timed after school drop off with the aim to cook and share a meal at the end of the session. Over the course of the sessions a core cohort has formed and there are now 16 people attending sessions regularly now – the sessions have become intergenerational (families with children, people with mental health issues, transient people passing through, older people with long term health conditions). 80% of attendees live very locally. The sessions offer peer support and connection. Referrals for the sessions come from local GP's, the Lantern and social prescribers. The venue plan to establish a community fridge to enable surplus food to be distributed which will be available to those who attend.
Outcomes:	• Share cooking and healthy eating skills and how to eat well on a limited budget. • Gain knowledge regarding budget cooking, reducing food waste and make the most of ingredients available. • Build confidence and resilience amongst attendees • Build social networks amongst attendees
Case study: Everyone said they really enjoy the cooking sessions and find the tutors and volunteers friendly and supportive. They all feel they have tried something new, improved their cooking skills and feel much more confident cooking meals from scratch and are cooking a wider range of meals at home now. The majority of participants are buying less convenience foods now as a result of the sessions. <i>"I've learnt new ways to get all the family to help cook meals"</i> <i>"My family are eating more veg now"</i> <i>"I've gained more confidence in cooking and planning my own meals"</i> <i>"I've enjoyed learning how to combine and cook different foods"</i>	

"I'm definitely not using so many convenience foods now and I'm using more spices and herbs for tastiness"

"I've started to eat healthier food"

"I've enjoyed learning quick and easier meals"

"The staff are so friendly and informative"

"The very friendly tutors clearly show you what to do and make it interesting"

Adrian, who is diabetic, was signposted to the PPG open day session through his diabetic dietician. He has transformed what he eats through coming along to the Park cooking sessions since December 2024. He now has savoury breakfasts with eggs, avocado on toast etc instead of sugary cereals and fruits. He said this:

"I had no idea....it's brought me on a long way. I wanted to have less sugar and transfer the balance on my plate, but I didn't know where to start. I've learned how to put ingredients together to make things taste good. The guidance and the recipes have actually helped me to balance my diet. If you have no idea, like me, I'd really recommend The Friendly Food Club"



8.2 Community Teaching Kitchen

Grant towards the teaching kitchen at Tumbledown, Weymouth (£10,000)	
About the project:	Tumbledown is a former farm owned by Weymouth Town Council who are developing the land into a community asset by producing and selling local fruit and vegetables, supporting people with volunteering and learning opportunities. A grant was made towards a community teaching kitchen where they can offer cooking lessons to children and families, school children, young people not attending school, and any other groups who may benefit from attending such sessions at Tumbledown. In particular they are aiming to teach people to cook healthy fresh food on a budget, with one member of staff being a domestic science teacher and three volunteers trained by the Friendly Food Club to provide such cooking sessions. The kitchen will also be used for processing produce from the farm into chutneys, pickles and jams, with our members and volunteers involved in the whole operation. Partners either currently involved or strongly interested in working with Tumbledown and using the kitchen include The Lantern, Wessex HomeStart, Live-Well Dorset, The Friendly Food Club and Houseworks.
Outcomes:	The kitchen is now completed, an opening event was held on 11 April 2025, with activities due to commence imminently



8.3 Basic Food Hygiene Certificates

300 licences for the Basic Food Hygiene Certificate via virtual college distributed by Volunteer Centre Dorset (VCD) (including administration costs) (£5050)	
About the project:	To distribute online food hygiene courses to voluntary and community sector organisations operating in the Dorset Council area who bring their local community together for food-based initiatives – including, but not exclusive to, foodbanks, social supermarkets, community fridges, lunch clubs, youth clubs and so on
Outcomes:	Since the end of August 2024, VCD have allocated 253 licences, they can offer a range of three food-related modules including: • Level 1 Food Safety and Hygiene • Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene for Catering • Food Allergy Awareness Training A wide range of organisations have taken this offer up including foodbanks, social supermarkets lunch clubs and a community pub. The offer is part of the support VCD can offer food projects across the county. Volunteer Centre Dorset are the commissioned provider of VCS infrastructure support across Dorset, offering training, support and development for the voluntary and community sector and the training licences enable organisations to improve their skills and knowledge around food related practices – as well as access to a wider range of online training.

8.4 Cooking Kits for community groups

To provide nine Community Cooking Kits to voluntary and community sector organisations who bring their local together for food based initiatives.(£7,500)	
About the project:	Following attendance at the Train the Training / Cookery Leader courses delivered by the Friendly Food Club the barrier of lack of equipment had been identified in terms of set up. The kits will be sited across the county in community venues and available to borrow by groups wishing to offer community cooking opportunities. Friendly Food Club have developed paperwork, signage and instructions with each kit and written a memorandum of understanding for host groups.

	We now have several venues who have offered to host the kits – in North Dorset (Buckland Newton and Shaftesbury) and West Dorset (Bridport), Portland and Wimborne. We are planning for the remaining kits to be sited in Weymouth, Dorchester and Gillingham.
Outcomes:	Providing community cooking kits to community venues will offer several benefits and outcomes: 1. Enhanced Community Engagement: encourage social interaction and community bonding by bringing people together for cooking activities. 2. Skill Development: new cooking skills and techniques, which can boost confidence and self-sufficiency in the kitchen. 3. Health and Nutrition: promote healthier eating habits by teaching participants how to prepare nutritious meals and save money. 4. Accessibility: more groups can access cooking opportunities, making it easier for diverse community members to participate.



8.5 Provision of subsidised offer for support to older people in East Dorset

Provide subsidised lunch club opportunities for older people in East Dorset (£3,000)	
About the project:	Age UK Bournemouth, Poole and East Dorset (BPED) provide support to older East Dorset residents in the Dorset Council area by facilitating community lunch clubs. The grant contributed to the cost of food/transport to enable those, who are not usually able to attend these community lunches (due to financial constraints), to do so. Age UK BPED were well placed to deliver this work as they had the transport available, the community lunch dates booked and crucially, they are delivering support to older people in East Dorset to access benefits they are entitled to, so could promote to exactly the target audience we wished to reach. Funding was used to offset the cost of transport for the lunch club and pub club visits.
Demographics:	144 older people in receipt of income related benefits were able to access subsidised lunch club provision (& 32 through the 'pub clubs' delivered throughout March).
Outcomes:	• Reduced isolation • Age UK staff could identify any issues/concerns through regular contact with customers

8.6 Cooking course for adults with learning disabilities

Contribution towards room hire costs for cooking for health and independence (£200)	
About the project:	Cooking for Health & Independence – Course Outline Overview: A 6-session cooking course designed for adults with learning disabilities, focusing on healthier eating, meal planning, and essential cooking skills to promote independence. Learners will gain confidence in preparing meals, shopping for ingredients, and cooking in multiples (e.g., for one or a family). Course Details: • Duration: 6 sessions • Participants: Minimum of 8 learners (carers or family members can attend for support if needed) • Venue: Bridport Youth and Community Centre • Tutors & Course Content: Provided by Skills and Learning • Support: Social prescribing team assisting with venue and learner recruitment

	• Funding Needed For: Venue hire
Demographics:	Participants with a learning disability
Outcomes:	• Increase knowledge and skills in cooking • Gain confidence • Social interaction

8.7 Food Security Network Meetings

Project: Invest in more VCS led sustainable and affordable food security projects in areas of most need – Food Security Network Meetings (£5,000)	
About the project:	The Food Network Meetings, held across six localities, successfully brought together 84 participants from various projects focused on community food, welfare, benefits and health.
Outcomes:	The meetings have yielded several significant early outcomes: Reduction in Foodbank Referrals: Implementation of voucher systems in East Dorset and Weymouth has effectively reduced long-term repeat food bank referrals, encouraging a more sustainable approach to food security. Enhanced Partnership Working: The meetings have fostered improved collaboration between projects. e.g. referrals are now made to Castleman Community Larder in West Moors for those with transport. Regular interactions with the Community Food Supply at the Allendale Centre, monthly sessions with Live Well Dorset, and bi-weekly visits from a Citizens Advice energy advisor have been established, demonstrating the value of these partnerships. <i>"Just to say THANK YOU very much for the meeting last week - it was so encouraging to meet up with like-minded people. It's so easy to get discouraged from time to time when volunteering, but meeting others who are passionate about making the world a better place always lifts your spirits. Thanks too for all the information."</i> Identification of Gaps in Local Provision: Meetings have been instrumental in identifying gaps in local provision, allowing Dorset Council to direct funding effectively. e.g. the need for community cookery on Portland was identified, projects are now collaborating to find the best partner to deliver this initiative. Promotion of Food Project Models: Efforts to promote and share the purpose of food project models, such as social supermarkets, have been

	enhanced. An article on social supermarkets was featured in the Dorset Council Magazine, raising awareness and understanding of these initiatives. Capturing Personal Stories: The meetings have initiated the process of gathering personal stories from community food clients. These narratives will help spread awareness and reduce stigma associated with food insecurity. The first steering group meetings has taken place, bringing key issues from grassroots projects to the forefront. This group will drive forward critical areas of work, ensure positive and widespread communication, and provide ongoing support and guidance to projects and their teams.
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10. People First Dorset (PFD) - targeted programme for Cost-of-Living advice

Project: People First Dorset - Invest in a targeted programme for Cost-of-Living advice, support and anti-scam knowledge for vulnerable residents with learning disabilities	
About the project:	This funding has made a significant positive difference to the lives of people with a learning disability in Dorset, enabling PFD to better provide support and guidance to their members who have been adversely impacted by the rising cost of living. This funding has been crucial in providing vital support and information to our members with learning disabilities during a challenging time.
Impact: Key Achievements:	Key Achievements ○ PFD delivered 29 events/workshops in six months. ○ Events reached 85 members, focusing on identified needs. Activity Breakdown ○ 22 in-person events included workshops on cyber-safety, mindfulness, finance, healthy eating and mental health. ○ 7 online events covered budgeting, digital safety and mental health.
Demographics:	45 members from Weymouth/Portland, 30 from Dorchester and 10 from other areas
Outcomes:	• Funding significantly improved support for adults with learning disabilities in Dorset. • Enabled People First Dorset (PFD) to provide guidance amidst rising living costs <i>'The insights gained from these events have helped us to shape our future support'.</i>

11. Older People - information, advice and guidance services

Project: Invest in information, advice and guidance services for vulnerable older residents to ensure they are receiving all the income they are entitled to (£68,000).	
About the project:	This project targeted potentially vulnerable older people because of the withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance. The aim was to get as many eligible people signed up to receive Pension Credit as possible. We identified five organisations who could add additional capacity – particularly with home visits to housebound residents. They met our governance criteria in that they all currently offer an advice service and had the necessary DBS and lone working policies in place. ○ The Lantern Trust (£10,000) ○ Age UK B, P & ED (£10,000) ○ Age UK NSW (£35,000) ○ Ferndown Community Support CIC (£3,000) ○ The YOU Trust (£10,000) Projects were supported through Citizen's Advice via a session around Pension Credit, to ensure that support was delivered consistently.
Demographics:	502 people have received telephone support following enquiries and over 342 people (to date) have received face to face support within their own homes to access benefits they are entitled to – each visit takes an hour+ to complete - often longer.
Outcomes:	A large majority of these applications have been successful and released more than £388,000 of annualised income to Dorset residents (although many are still in the system and awaiting decisions).
Key outcomes from the support provided by the funded organisations	Maximised Benefit Claims: ○ Full entitlement checks and structuring applications strategically, older residents have been able to maximise their income. e.g. applying for Attendance Allowance before Pension Credit increases the likelihood of a successful Pension Credit claim. Improved Financial Stability: ○ Targeting support to allow individuals to receive their full entitlement, significantly improving their financial stability. Enhanced Professional Knowledge: ○ Training sessions and best practice sharing with key organisations have enhanced the ability of professionals to assist individuals more effectively in navigating welfare benefits. Strong Referral Pathways: ○ These organisations have facilitated strong referral pathways into dementia care, social prescribing services, GPs and other trusted agencies. This includes signposting to services that promote social inclusion.

	Holistic Support Services: ○ The organisations have embedded support within existing service provision. This includes assisting people to reduce debt, clear rent arrears, access suitable housing, community networks and non-statutory agencies for physical and mental health support. Additionally, they have facilitated installations of careline devices, directed individuals to food banks, informed them about social tariffs and secured priority services for utilities. These outcomes highlight the impact that the comprehensive support provided by the funded organisations makes.
Impacts	As a result of the funding for this project organisations have reported the following impacts: Enhanced Service Delivery: ○ Proactive follow-up has improved tracking of claim success and identification of additional support opportunities like council tax relief and reduced utility bills. Strengthened Sector Knowledge: ○ Best practice sharing and targeted training have improved other organisation's understanding of the benefits system, positioning the funded organisations as key partners in providing comprehensive support to vulnerable individuals. Improved Community Engagement: ○ Strengthened relationships with the Primary Care Network and other community services have facilitated targeted benefits support and enhanced integrated neighbourhood working. Increased Awareness: ○ Advertising efforts have raised awareness among individuals who were previously unaware of their entitlements, particularly those with limited access to digital media or online resources. Identified Barriers: ○ Recognition of low awareness levels for Pension Credit and other benefits, especially among older people and those in rural areas, has highlighted the need for targeted outreach and support. Crisis Intervention: ○ Identification of individuals at crisis points has facilitated timely referrals to appropriate support services, preventing further escalation of issues. These insights and impacts demonstrate the significant positive effects of the funding on service delivery, community engagement and individual financial stability.

12. Island Community Action - Helping Hands programme for older and vulnerable people (Portland)

Project 12: Island Community Action - Invest in the Helping Hands programme which offers a range of support to over 1,000 older and vulnerable people on Portland. (£50,000)	
About the project:	Helping Hands provides support, activities and services to Portland's older vulnerable residents and to those, of any age, impacted by disability and/or serious, chronic, life-limiting or terminal illness. The programme includes advice and signposting, befriending, dog walking, brain games, coffee mornings, art groups, exercise classes, food-related activities, shopping assistance, singing groups, special events, transport services and a Good Neighbour Scheme. • At Home support: Befriending, Food Bank referrals, Good Neighbour errands and telephone check-ins. • Out of Home support: Community Crafters, club activities, food-based and exercise activities, social activities and singing groups, transport for essential appointments and shopping support.
Impact: Key Achievements:	• Continued Delivery: The funding has enabled ICA to continue delivering all existing activities and services. • Expansion of Community Connectors Programme: Improved collaborative approach to helping and referring those in need, working with various local organisations and service providers (e.g. Citizens Advice, Foodbanks, Portland Carers). • Benefits Application Support: ICA has provided benefits application support (see project 11) for older residents of Portland as part of this grant award. • Partnerships: Expanded partnerships with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue, Weymouth & Portland Lions Club etc.
Demographics and statistics:	• Clients Supported: 1,064 individuals with meaningful engagements. • Interactions: 1,136 At Home interactions and 3,652 Out of Home interactions. • Age Breakdown: Majority of clients are aged 65-74 (39%) and 75+ (48%). • Gender Breakdown: 64% female, 35% male. • Volunteering: 381 volunteers provided approximately 22,000 hours of support.
Outcomes:	Supporting Independence: Helping people stay in their homes longer through prevention, early action and essential 'at home' support (e.g., prescriptions, shopping, errands, DIY support, hospital transport). Reducing Isolation: Boosting independence, confidence, and happiness through home-based and community activities, enabling participation in community life and extending social networks.

	Ensuring Nutrition: Providing support with shopping, running lunch clubs and other food-based activities, including referrals to food banks and external food providers. Maximising Income: Assisting with personal applications for Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance and signposting to other relevant support providers. Raising Awareness: Providing information about local and non-local services, including statutory and non-statutory providers. Championing Individuals: Acting on behalf of clients or providing direct support through health and wellbeing processes including supporting with medical diagnoses and treatments.
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13. Dorset Community Action – Programme of support for village halls and community spaces to promote sustainability

Project: Dorset Community Action - Support for village/community hall/community spaces sustainability (£30,000)	
About the project:	This grant supported Dorset Community Action (DCA) in providing governance and fundraising help to community spaces like village halls and community centres. These spaces foster community cohesion and volunteer engagement through various activities, often reaching underserved populations. The support package included: ○ Training and workshops ○ 1:1 assistance for organisations facing challenges ○ Networking sessions with speakers ○ In-person events ○ A bi-monthly newsletter ○ Social media information dissemination ○ Research on successful warm spaces initiatives Key topics covered were policies, trustee recruitment, training, safeguarding and income generation.
Demographics:	DCA worked with organisations across Dorset and analysed their locations: • 34% in North Dorset (Blandford, Gillingham, Shaftesbury) • 31% in West Dorset (Dorchester, Bridport, Sherborne) • 15% in Purbeck (Wareham, Swanage) • 12% in East Dorset (Wimborne, Ferndown) • 8% in Weymouth & Portland
Outcomes:	Direct Support

	• Increased Awareness: Engaged with many new community spaces, extending support through around 1,400 interactions with over 700 people. • Specialist Newsletters: Bi-monthly newsletters covering topics like governance, funding, insurance safeguarding and ACRE Hallmark (ACRE Hallmark is a quality standard scheme for the management of community buildings/village halls). • Consultations: Conducted 15 individual consultations on policies, governing documents and funding. Training Courses • Positive Feedback: 9/10 attendees would recommend the courses. • Course Content: Topics included essential policies, long-term planning, budget management, recruiting trustees, financial systems and becoming a charitable incorporated organization (CIO). • Online Resources: Access to recorded courses, templates, handouts, and links on the DCA Academy. Networking & Events • Online Networking: Sessions on food inequality, governance and recruiting trustees. • Village Halls Event (Sept 2024): Hybrid event with over 60 attendees, covering policy environment, top issues for village halls, fire safety and net-zero guides • Becoming Sustainable Event (Nov 2024): Online event with around 30 attendees, focusing on fundraising, marketing and sustainable planning. • Thriving Community Spaces Event (Mar 2025): In-person event with over 60 attendees, discussing fundraising, food inequality, community involvement and innovative initiatives. Warm Spaces Research: As part of the funding, DCA undertook to research what makes a warm space community initiative successful. There are a variety of organisations offering warm spaces throughout Dorset from churches and foodbanks, community larders and independent groups to a Men's Shed. Some work and some don't, and they wanted to understand why that is and gather their expertise to produce some recommendations to help make future projects successful. The research included 20 in-depth interviews, focusing on aspects such as publicity, funding and partnerships. Key findings highlighted that successful warm spaces were welcoming, offered communal meals and provided a variety of services.
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	Important themes included understanding local issues, engaging holistically with people and emphasising collaboration and communication. Recommendations for successful projects were: • Training and supporting volunteers • Integrating warm spaces into a broader service package • Diversifying income streams for financial sustainability • Identifying unique aspects of the initiative These insights are based on the experiences of the groups involved, aiming to guide future projects. The full report is available upon request.
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14. Invest in the sustainability of Dorset's community transport network

Project: Invest in community transport network via the Dorset Community Transport grant (£100,000)	
About the project:	The funding enabled the Community transport team to offer Dorset Community Transport grants. There were two grant programmes to apply for, a revenue grant of up to £5,000 with no match funding required, or a capital grant of up to £10,000 with 20% match funding required.
Impact: Key Achievements:	14 Community Transport schemes were awarded funding from the Dorset Community Transport grant (some had multiple awards/applications) Six capital grants and 12 revenue grants out of the DCT fund in total. The grants were spent on a broad range of projects such as: • Purchasing wheelchair accessible vehicles to aid disabled passengers • Improvements to wheelchair accessible vehicles to make them more efficient for disabled and elderly passengers • Purchasing ticket machines to broaden accessibility through payment options • Purchasing electronic devices to allow the coordinators to plan routes and arrange volunteer drivers via an electric diary • Purchasing larger minibuses so that more passengers can be transported to appointments which improves sustainability by reducing passenger trips • Purchasing website and database subscriptions to aid Coordinators with planning trips • Revenue costs for multiple car schemes • Marketing campaigns for schemes that need to recruit more volunteer drivers • A community engagement role to coordinate specific day trips • A new route that supports subsidised day trips to points of local interest

	Setting up Community Transport schemes to fill in gaps where there is little to no transport in Dorset.
Demographics:	See map where projects operate
Outcomes:	Volunteer Recruitment: grants help recruit volunteer drivers, maintaining essential services. Efficiency: Funding for electronic devices and communication upgrades improves transport coordination. Revenue Costs: grants cover essential running costs such as vehicle maintenance, insurance, phone contracts, offsetting costs. Vehicle Upgrades: grant funding allowed purchase and upgrade of vehicles, crucial for longer term sustainability Social Isolation: schemes reduce isolation by providing transport for medical appointments and social activities. Expanded Coverage: New and improved schemes cover more areas, enabling wider travel options for residents.

Case Study:



Shaftesbury Car Link operates a community car scheme that provides transport for passengers who have difficulty accessing public transport, for whatever reason. It is primarily used by elderly and disabled residents. It currently has two wheelchair accessible vehicles funded by the Directors' own personal savings.

Shaftesbury has very poor public transport links, with limited bus services to Salisbury only on a Saturday and no buses at all on Sundays.

With many NHS providers now offering additional appointments at weekends this puts considerable extra pressure on the scheme. Buses to and from hospitals (Salisbury, Yeovil, Bournemouth, Poole, Dorchester, Southampton and others) do not start early enough to get people to early hospital appointments and finish too early to get them home if they have late appointments. Taxis are expensive and unavailable at certain times due to school contracts.

The majority of users are over the age of 65, however support is also provided to younger people who may be physically or mentally disabled and to families who have low incomes. Clients are also taken to the dentists, chiropody appointments and, where capacity permits, to social events, job centres etc. Currently there are approximately 300+ journeys made per month.

This service is crucial for providing accessible transport, especially to medical appointments and in reducing social isolation.

The scheme received a grant of £4,100 for revenue costs and £8,500 for improvements to a wheelchair accessible vehicle through the grant programme.

15. Invest in the extension of the digital inclusion device loan scheme

Project: Dorset Library Service iPad Loan Scheme	
About the project:	In 2023, Dorset Library Service launched an iPad loan scheme with 30 iPads aimed at reducing isolation and increasing digital inclusion. The scheme also targeted improving health and wellbeing and increasing employment levels. The reach of the scheme has been extended due to additional funding from the Cost of Living fund, which allowed for the purchase of 10 additional iPads. This brought the total number of devices to 40.
Impact: Key Achievements:	The iPads provided come with data for free internet access at home, a combined keyboard case, and a stereo headset to facilitate online interviews and private consultations. They are user-friendly and preloaded with links to websites offering information on: • employment, CV writing, and interview skills • money management, claiming benefits, and maintaining a Universal Credit claim • health and wellbeing • computing skills Customers are encouraged to book 1-2-1 support sessions with our Digital Champions, a group of friendly and patient volunteers skilled at explaining technology without jargon. Library staff are also available to provide support and continuously update their digital skills to meet customer needs.

Demographics:	Total number of devices: 40 Total number of issues Oct-Mar 2025: 154 Summary of responses from the end survey: • 77% of borrowers considered that the experience had improved their digital confidence • 13% used the iPads for employment support and information • 9% used the iPads for financial support and information • 20% used the iPads for health and wellbeing support and information • 18% used the iPads to improve their computer skills • 7% used the iPads for housing or accommodation queries Upon returning the borrowed iPads, customers are requested to complete a survey that gathers their feedback and personal information, including age, geographical location, and usage of the iPads. Unfortunately, the return rate of these surveys has been lower than anticipated, with many customers opting not to answer some questions. To address this, we have run training sessions to remind library staff to ensure the survey is completed before accepting the devices back. • Gender: Female: 20% Male: 13% Prefer not say: 37% • Age: 18-24: 6% 25-48: 26% 50-64: 31% 65+: 37%
Outcomes:	The Dorset Library Service iPad loan scheme has successfully achieved its goals of reducing isolation, increasing digital inclusion, and improving health and wellbeing. The additional funding has further extended its reach, making a positive difference in the lives of many community members

16. Children's Services - targeted priority programmes that support low-income families

Three of the four proposed Cost of Living programmes were funded via the Household Support Fund with one project remaining with this programme.

Project: Increased food offer for children attending the holidays activities and food (HAF) programme (£20,000)	
About the project:	The February half term provision represented an extension of the standard Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which typically operates during the longer school holidays. This pilot initiative enabled the use of funding from the Department for Education (DFE) to match fund the Cost of Living (COL) allocation, resulting in a total budget of £50,000. The primary focus was on enhancing provision in rural areas across the county. Eligibility for HAF Passcodes Children are eligible for a HAF passcode if they receive benefit-related free school meals. Additionally, a limited number of discretionary passcodes were issued to children who are part of a resettlement programme, in local authority care, or referred by a family or social worker. The programme offered a diverse array of workshops, including: • Forest schools • Football academies • Arts workshops • Kickboxing sessions
Impact: Key Achievements:	Rural Focus Workshops were conducted in the following rural locations: • Alderholt • Broadwindsor • Sturminster Newton • Langton Long • Corfe Mullen • Litton Cheney • Lytchett Minster • Sixpenny Handley Transport Support Funding was allocated to ensure that transport did not pose a barrier for children wishing to participate. Providers and Locality Teams were able to use the funding to cover transport costs to and from the venues.

Demographics:	Participation and Attendance • Individual Children with HAF Passcodes: 569 • Total Spaces used: 1,866 • Number of Providers: 22 • Number of Venues: 32
Outcomes:	The February half term HAF provision successfully extended the reach of the programme, particularly in rural areas, and provided valuable activities and support to eligible children. The pilot initiative demonstrated effective use of the allocated budget and underscored the importance of transport support in ensuring accessibility for all participants.

Appendix 4

Cost of Living Projects authorised for funding 2025-26

No.	DC Directorate /VCSO lead	Project detail	Amount 24-25	Amount 25-26	
				HSF	CoL
1	Adult Services - Housing – Homelessness prevention	1. Arrears/Rent in advance & deposit payments. This will support the team to negotiate with landlords to stop evictions from taking place or help to find new suitable accommodation. 2. Tenancy Sustainment. To maintain existing capacity of one of the tenancy sustainment officers to keep proactive negotiations with landlords 3. Media and information awareness – To run a media campaign to continue to raise awareness of the importance of asking for housing help earlier in the process with us and VCS agencies, before eviction 4. Food vouchers – These will continue to be used for when a resident/s present with nothing and can immediately be given by members of the housing team whilst other emergency support can be prepared	£177,500 CoL + £200,000 HSF £377,500	£200,000	£167,000
2	Place - Economic Regeneration	Invest in the Healthy Homes Dorset scheme. White goods only (previously funded by HSF) – other funding sources for insulation and boilers. £200,000 funding for the Healthy Homes Dorset scheme has been awarded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which will	£200,000 CoL + £223,700 HSF	£60,000	

		cover insulation and improving home efficiency. However will not cover park home insulation. Jon Bird has recommended that white goods continue to be a priority as vulnerable residents struggle to purchase new ones if they break or they have to move house.			
3	Citizens Advice	Extend x4 Debt caseworkers + increased volunteer supervision. To extend the Cost of Living (debt and energy) caseworkers and add a further 0.5FTE to assist with increased demand. Additional resource for volunteer training and supervision CA have demonstrated significant increase in need and the impact of these officers which supports our Revs & Bens teams	£214,489	£110,000	£100,000
4	Corporate Services - Revenue and Benefits	Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance Increase the amount from national government grant available to R&B teams to support residents from being made homeless.	£100,000		£48,000
5	Adults Services - Housing	Disabled facilities Grant Compliments the national government scheme	£150,000	£50,000	
8	Place – Community Transport & VCSO	Community Transport This was funded by both funds, however the impact is significant as the sector has been under funded for several years so propose a further to continue this funding at a lower level	£100,000 CoL +£70,000 HSF	£30,000	£30,000
9	Corporate Development - Communities and	Emergency and Affordable food security Demand for emergency and affordable food projects such as social supermarkets and foodbanks continues to increase	£332,800 from both HSF & CoL	£125,000	£120,000

	Partnerships & VCS	beyond current capacity. This funding will allow 2 targeted rounds of support funding during this financial year.			
10	Corporate Development - Communities and Partnerships & VCS	Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects The work that was started last FY, has really identified the gaps and now looking to invest support in more proactive projects to try and take the burden off the emergency food projects	£75,000	£70,000	
14	Older people's organisations supporting applications	Age UK NSW, Lantern Trust, Age UK B,P, (ICA as part of their grant) & East others The majority of this work is physical assistance in completing applications for Attendance Allowance; Personal Independence Payments (PIP); Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Pension Credit. This had mixed success in 24-25, however the successful applicants had a great impact. We are currently in discussions with potential delivery partners for this financial year.	£75,000	£55,000	5,000
17	Children's Services & VCSO	FY 24-25, most of the allocated funding was able to be charged against the HSF apart from the holiday and activities programme. This year the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme has received a significant cut to their budget from National Government so have requested a minimum of £50K	£100,000 £40,000		£30,000
		Totals:		£700,000	£500,00
		Budget total:	£1,200,000		

Appendix 5

Programme of Funding for Household Support Fund 2025-26

Funding Element	£	Summary
FSM+ holiday vouchers	2,035,000	11,000 vouchers per half term (£15 per child), Christmas and Easter (£30), and the summer break (£80).
Referral network scheme	825,000	Colleagues and partner referrals for residents in hardship. £150 vouchers distributed to 5,500 unique households.
Communities team	700,000	Supporting a programme of work to prevent and alleviate hardship. Include housing, food security, community groups.
Citizens Advice discretionary fund	200,000	Distribution to residents being supported by a CA case worker (11% admin fee), e.g. very complex circumstances or those who present for a second time in the year.
Children's Services discretionary fund	125,000	Need identified by practitioners and resources distributed directly.
Administration & contingency	159,766	Includes staffing within Customer Services to administer the referral network scheme vouchers. A significant contingency is reserved for allocation later in the period, to respond to emerging need.

Appendix 6

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1. Initial information

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

Cost of Living Support Programme 2025/26

2. Is this a (please delete those not required):

Review of existing programme – Cost of Living 2025/26

Other (please explain)

3. Is this (please delete those not required):

Both internal and external

4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:

To support residents with the rising cost of living, helping mitigate the effects and provide a range of supportive measures.

The programme (consisting of several separate projects) aims to:

- Increase access to emergency and affordable food
- Add additional capacity to several council programmes supporting residents experiencing homelessness or threatened homelessness or struggling with housing costs.
- Support vulnerable residents to access grants to enable energy efficient home improvements.
- Invest in voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations providing information, advice and guidance to residents, to mitigate increased demand on their services.
- Providing financial support to our local VCS as they support residents and communities managing the impacts of cost of living by investing in the community transport network (particularly in rural areas), addressing digital inclusion by offering devices on loan, providing support for village halls and community spaces to encourage long term sustainability, provide emergency and ongoing financial support, and provide support for high energy bills.

5. Please provide the background to this proposal?

- The Dorset Together: Cost-of-Living programme was created in 2022 in response to the rising cost of living and the financial impact of this on Dorset residents.
- In the last financial year (2023/24), a budget of £2 million from reserves was allocated to a series of projects which addressed gaps in the national provision of support. In June 2024 Cabinet agreed up to a further £2 million to continue to support residents with the ongoing impacts. Proposed projects were discussed at Place and Resources Overview Committee in July with delegated sign off given to the Executive Director for Corporate Development (S151) and the Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement.
- For 2025/26 £500,000 has been allocated to the Cost of Living Programme, with a further £700,000 allocated from the Household Support Fund to enable best value for money.

Evidence gathering and engagement

6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g. national statistics, employee data):

Since May 2022 Dorset Together: Cost of Living working group has met monthly to consider the cost of living challenges affecting our residents.

The working group is chaired by Aidan Dunn, Executive Director for corporate services and works from colleagues across the council from Adult Social Care, Housing Advice and Homelessness Teams, Children's Directorate, Communications, Customer Services, Business Intelligence and Insight Team, Revenues and Benefits, Public Health, Communities and Partnerships and with **Voluntary Sector Colleagues** including Volunteer Centre Dorset, Citizens Advice, Help & Kindness, Age UK NSWD, Dorset Voluntary Sector Assembly, Housing Associations e.g. SNG (previously Sovereign) and **Statutory Sector Partners**: Department of Work and Pensions, NHS Dorset, Wessex Water, Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service Safe and Well Team.

The insight from partners has enabled the programme to target support and respond to emerging needs.

The programme has four workstreams:

- Keeping warm and well
- Food security
- Keeping Homes warm and energy efficient
- Support to increase volunteering

- Modelled data from our Business Intelligence and Insight Team using Experian data to identify areas of significant need across the county where households were struggling with impacts of the cost of living.
- Data from the **DIIS** – Dorset Intelligence and Insight Service using a collaborative approach
- Intelligence from the Revenue and Benefits Team (Dorset Council) highlighting the increasing challenges our residents are facing (linked with insight from Department of Work and Pensions) and **Housing** colleagues within the council
- Citizens Advice in Dorset reports that 66% of clients are disabled or have long-term health conditions, 20% of whom have a mental health condition.
- National insight from **Citizens Advice**
- Voice of grassroots VCS organisations such as **Citizens Advice in Dorset**, Help & Kindness, Age UK NSWD and Volunteering Dorset to provide frontline insight
- Insight from Public Health
- and colleagues from foodbanks and social supermarkets across the county
- **Hidden Dorset Impact Report: Dorset Community Foundation**
- **National research reports:**
 - **How the rising cost of living is widening inequality and affecting the most vulnerable - LSE Business Review**
 - **How-are-Rising-Costs-of-Living-Affecting-the-Most-Vulnerable.pdf**
 - A 2024 survey by **Maternity Action** found that 65% of women reported that money worries had affected their health or wellbeing while pregnant or on maternity leave. The survey also highlighted that nearly a quarter of respondents struggled significantly to buy the things they needed during this period. Additionally, over half of the women surveyed had to cut back on heating and food costs, with some even going without food to prioritize feeding their children.
 - A rapid evidence review published in **BMC Public Health** in February 2024 highlights that the cost of living crisis, exacerbated by factors like COVID-19, Brexit, and the Ukraine-Russia war, has created significant health disparities. The review found that vulnerable populations, including those from diverse backgrounds, are at increased risk of adverse health outcomes due to factors such as cold and mouldy homes, food insecurity, and increased energy costs
 - **House of Commons Library Report (December 2024)**: This report details how the high period of inflation from 2021 to 2024 has disproportionately affected low-income households. It highlights that households with the lowest incomes experienced a higher-than-average inflation rate in 2023 due to rising food and energy prices

7. What did this tell you?

- The energy crisis and the cost of living have seen increased demand for Surviving Winter grants, funding for foodbanks and social supermarkets and increased demand for support services including mental health, homelessness, family support and domestic violence (**Hidden Dorset Impact Report: Dorset Community Foundation** 2025)
- 11 areas in Dorset are within the top **20% most deprived** nationally.
- Nearly a third of Dorset's residents are **aged 65+** compared to less than a fifth in England and Wales.
- 24% of properties in Dorset are **off-grid** and therefore pay more for their energy supply than average
- 60% of Dorset's housing is **not very energy efficient** – with a lower than rating 'D' EPC rating, and consequently will cost more to heat
- Dorset is a predominantly **rural authority** with fewer public transport options than more urban areas. Car ownership levels are high at 85% (compared to 74% for England) – so prices at the pump have more of an impact.

8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?

Internal stakeholders

- Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement
- Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
- Cabinet Member for Health and Housing
- Cabinet Member for Place Services
- Executive Director Corporate Development / Chair of the Cost of Living working group
- Head of Revenues & Benefits
- Principal Research Officer, Strategy, Performance and Sustainability
- Service Manager, Housing Advice & Homelessness
- Service Manager, Growth & Economic Regeneration
- Team Leader, Housing Standards (East)
- Public Transport Manager
- HAF Programme Coordinator, Best Start in Life (Children's Directorate)
- Commissioning & Transformation Lead, Social Mobility Commissioning

External stakeholders including VCS and Statutory Sector Partners

- Chief Officers, **Citizens Advice, Central Dorset, Citizens Advice East Dorset and Purbeck and Bridport & District Citizens Advice**
- CEO, **Friendly Food Club**
- Managing Director, **Ridgewater Energy**
- **The Lantern**

- Age UK North, South and West Dorset and Age UK Bournemouth, Poole and East Dorset
- The You Trust
- Dorset Community Action
- Volunteer Centre Dorset
- Wessex Water

9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?

Is an EQIA required?

Not every proposal will need an EqIA. The data and research should inform your decision whether to continue with this EqIA. If you decide that your proposal does not need an EqIA, please answer the following question:

This policy, strategy, project or service does not require a EqIA because (provide details):

Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and if unclear or negative please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

Key to impacts

Positive Impact	• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.
Negative Impact	• protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against
Neutral Impact	• no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups

Unclear	not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision.
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Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Positive impact	We expect people of all ages to be negatively affected by the cost of living crisis, and this work aims to mitigate some of the worst impacts. The grant programme will fund projects where assistance is targeted directly or indirectly at certain age groups, for example, advice on benefits (particularly pension credit and attendance allowance for older people) and support for families with children to access affordable food. This programme supports several place-based services (such as sustainable community spaces) supporting the local community, of which a proportion will be older people, means that the actual level of activity accessed by older residents is likely to be higher. The range of projects funded contributes to the increased resilience of a wide section of the community. 25/26 CoL Projects - Disabled Facilities Grant investment - Investment in Community transport, particularly in rural areas - Invest in targeted information, advice and guidance support for older people - HAF Programme support – for school age children
Disability	Positive impact	We expect the cost-of-living challenge to continue to have a disproportionately negative impact on

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
		people living with a disability and/or health conditions. Increasing capacity in the Disability Living Grant will help disabled homeowners whilst households with disabilities will benefit from the general support from projects funded as part of the Cost-of-Living Programme, particularly food support, housing and benefits advice. 25/26 CoL Projects • Homelessness Prevention • Citizens Advice benefit support • Disabled Facilities Grant • Community Transport • Emergency and Affordable food security • Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects • Older People's Benefit Support
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people who change gender identity to access cost of living support funded by the programme.
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people who are married or in civil partnerships to access cost of living support funded by the programme.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive impact	We expect the cost of living crisis have a disproportionately negative impact on pregnant women and new mothers and support provided via this programme will help to mitigate these. 25/26 CoL Projects • Homelessness prevention • Discretionary Housing payment Allowance • Emergency and Affordable food security • Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects
Race and Ethnicity	Positive impact	We expect the cost of living crisis have a disproportionately negative impact on diverse communities. 25/26 CoL Projects • Citizens Advice Benefit Support • Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance • Emergency and Affordable food security • Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects
Religion and belief	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people whatever their belief or religion. Many food banks are linked to religious organisations, including churches, and we recognise that religious communities are often places where people seek support or who come together to find solutions to support those who are struggling.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Sex (consider men and women)	Positive impact	The cost-of-living crisis will impact on both men and women. By mitigating some of the worst impacts, this programme of support aims to have a positive impact on all sexes. 25/26 CoL Projects • Homelessness prevention • Healthy Homes Dorset (white goods support) • Citizens Advice Benefit Support • Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance • Disabled Facilities Grant • Community Transport • Emergency and Affordable food security • Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects • Older People's Benefit Support • HAF Programme
Sexual orientation	Neutral Impact	There is no barrier or conditions that affect the rights of people whatever their sexual orientation to the projects funded by this programme. The cost-of-living crisis will impact on people of different sexual orientations. we do know that LGBT+ people are disproportionately likely to face disadvantage and discrimination which may then impact on their financial wellbeing.

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
People with caring responsibilities	Positive impact	The cost-of-living crisis will impact on those with caring responsibilities. By mitigating some of the worst impacts, this programme of support aims to have a positive impact on carers. This is particularly important because, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, informal carers are more likely to live in poverty than those without caring responsibilities: 24% compared with 21%. Carers are likely to be in the same household as disabled people or people with health conditions and therefore many of the financial impacts for people in that group also apply to carers. 25/26 CoL Projects • Healthy Homes Dorset (white goods support) • Citizens Advice Benefit Support • Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance • Disabled Facilities Grant • Community Transport • Emergency and Affordable food security • Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects
	Positive impact	We expect the cost-of-living crisis have a disproportionately negative impact on rural communities due to rising fuel costs. The cost-of-living programme directly addresses rural isolation through previous investment in community transport, investing in the sustainability of village halls and community spaces as well as projects which can be accessed by all residents. By mitigating the worst of the crisis, it is hoped that the programme of

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Rural isolation		support offered will have a positive impact on rural isolation. 25/26 CoL Projects • Community Transport
Socio-economic deprivation	Positive impact	The cost-of-living programme directly addresses poverty and financial inclusion. By mitigating the worst of the crisis, it is hoped that the programme of support offered will have a positive impact on poverty and financial inclusion. 25/26 CoL Projects • Homelessness prevention • Healthy Homes Dorset (white goods support) • Citizens Advice Benefit Support • Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance • Disabled Facilities Grant • Community Transport • Emergency and Affordable food security • Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects • Older People's Benefit Support • HAF Programme
	Positive impact	Women account for 90% of single parents and this group were more likely to be impacted by job loss or reduced hours compared to coupled parents. Single parents earn half the weekly wage of coupled mothers and were less likely to work from home. By mitigating the worst of the crisis, it is hoped that the programme of support offered

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Single parents		will have a positive impact on poverty and financial inclusion of single parents. The programme will provide additional capacity within the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme which provides additional activity for children eligible for free school meals during the holiday period. 25/26 CoL Projects • Healthy Homes Dorset (white goods support) • Citizens Advice Benefit Support • Discretionary Housing Payment Allowance • Emergency and Affordable food security • Food security – wider sustainable and affordable projects • HAF Programme
Armed forces communities	Positive Impact	The cost-of-living crisis will impact on people in the armed forces and ex-service people. By mitigating the worst of the crisis, it is hoped that the programme will have a positive impact on those groups. Where appropriate we will include information on where armed forces and veterans can get targeted financial and other support (such as through SSAFA).

Please provide a summary of the impacts:

Programme overview

The Cost-of-Living Support Programme 2025/26 by Dorset Council aims to mitigate the effects of the ongoing cost of living crisis through targeted support. It includes:

- Emergency and affordable food access
- Housing and homelessness support
- Energy efficiency grants
- Investment in voluntary and community sector (VCS) services
- Community transport, digital inclusion, and sustainability of community spaces

Positive Impacts

- **Age:** Older people and families with children benefit from targeted support like pension credit advice and affordable food access.
- **Disability:** Enhanced support for disabled individuals, including increased capacity in the Disability Living Grant.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Support addresses financial stress during pregnancy and maternity leave.
- **Race and Ethnicity:** Acknowledges disproportionate impact on diverse communities and provides inclusive support.
- **Sex:** Both men and women benefit from mitigated financial pressures.
- **Caring Responsibilities:** Carers, often in financially vulnerable households, receive targeted support.
- **Rural Isolation:** Investment in rural transport and community spaces helps reduce isolation.
- **Socio-economic Deprivation:** Directly addresses poverty and financial exclusion.
- **Single Parents:** Especially supports women, who make up 90% of single parents, with financial and employment-related challenges.
- **Armed Forces Communities:** Includes targeted support and signposting for veterans and service members.

Neutral Impacts

- **Gender Reassignment and Identity**
- **Marriage or Civil Partnership**
- **Religion and Belief**
- **Sexual Orientation**

These groups are not excluded from support, and no barriers were identified, but no specific targeted actions were noted either.

Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
Increased risk of homelessness	1.Arrears/Rent in advance & deposit payments. This will support the team to negotiate with landlords to stop evictions from taking place or help to find new suitable accommodation. 2. Tenancy Sustainment. To maintain existing capacity of one of the tenancy sustainment officers to keep proactive negotiations with landlords 3. Media and information awareness – To run a media campaign to continue to raise awareness of the importance of asking for housing help earlier in the process with us and VCS agencies, before eviction	Service Manager, Housing Advice & Homelessness, Dorset Council	March 2026
Vulnerable residents unable to furnish homes with white goods	Invest in white good provision scheme delivered by Ridgeway Energy for residents who qualify for Household Support Fund (HSF) - referred through frontline worker referrals who help target crisis and high need. The HSF funding can offer up to 2 appliances provided as replacements for broken or unsafe items. It can also supply up to 2 first-time appliances when someone is setting up home and has none.	Service Manager, Growth & Economic Regeneration / Ridgewater Energy	March 2026

Residents are struggling with cost-of-living crisis and increasing levels of debt	To invest in additional capacity via Citizens Advice for Cost of Living (debt and energy) caseworkers to assist with increased demand. Additional resource for volunteer training and supervision	Citizens Advice in Dorset	March 2026
Risk of Homelessness	Add additional capacity to the Government's Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme. These payments often prevent eviction and allow short term financial support regarding meeting costs in this area which can assist residents meet other financial demands.	Head of Revenues & Benefits, Dorset Council	March 2026
Poorly insulated housing	To add additional capacity to the Disabled Facilities Grant to enable energy efficient improvement as part of their building adaptations	Team Leader, Housing Standards (East)	March 2026
Residents in rural areas or with disabilities unable to access public transport system	Invest in a range of community transport schemes with both revenue and capital grants to ensure the long-term sustainability	Public Transport Manager, Dorset Council	March 2026
Residents are unable to afford basic healthy diet due to financial difficulties	Food vouchers – These will continue to be used in emergency e.g. for when a resident/s present with nothing and these can immediately be given by members of the housing team whilst other emergency support can sourced Invest in emergency and affordable food projects via a targeted grants programme (e.g. foodbanks, social supermarkets and including support to refuges)	Communities and Partnerships Team, Dorset Council	March 2026
Residents are encouraged to a place of better resilience through contact with various food projects	Invest in Community organisations which provide preventative, skills-based projects to build individual and community resilience. Previous projects have included budget cookery courses, investing in community kitchen and equipment, supporting older people's	Communities and Partnerships Team, Dorset Council	March 2026

	lunch clubs and providing a range of networking opportunities for food projects across Dorset to come together and tackle local issues.		
Some older people's resilience is eroded by the removal of the winter fuel allowance	Targeted benefits support for older people which may also provide support with home visits and form filling, Much of this work is physical assistance in completing applications for Attendance Allowance; Personal Independence Payments (PIP); Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Pension Credit	Communities and Partnerships Team, Dorset Council to commission external providers	March 2026
To maintain a level of Holiday activity support for school children eligible for free school meals	The holiday activities and food (HAF) programme has received a significant cut to their budget from National Government, the funding will aim to mitigate this	HAF Programme Coordinator, Best Start in Life (Children's Directorate)	March 2026

Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA: **Fiona Thomas, Communities Team Leader, Communities and Partnerships**

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: **Laura Cornette, Business Partner, Communities and Partnerships**

Date of completion: 03/06/2025

Version Number: 1

EqIA review date: June 2026

Equality Lead Sign Off: James Palfreman-Kay

People & Health Scrutiny Committee

19 June 2025

Community Safety Annual Scrutiny Report

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s):

All

Executive Director:

J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

Report Author: Andy Frost

Job Title: Service Manager for Community Safety

Tel: 01305 224331

Email: andy.frost@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

Under the Police & Justice Act 2006, local authorities are required to have Crime & Disorder Committees that review and scrutinise partners' community safety work. The committees should formally review progress at least once a year.

In Dorset Council, the function of the Crime & Disorder Committee is fulfilled by the People & Health Scrutiny Committee.

This annual scrutiny report provides information on the Council and partners' work against their statutory community safety functions.

Any observations or recommendations from the Committee will be considered by the Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and used to help develop its work.

Recommendation:

That members of the Committee consider and comment on the community safety annual report.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure the Council complies with its legal duties relating to community safety.

1. Background

- 1.1 Local authorities are required to have Crime & Disorder Committees that scrutinise the Council's and its partners' delivery of their shared statutory community safety functions. The committees should formally review progress at least once a year.
- 1.2 The Council's and partners' work on community safety is co-ordinated through the Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The CSP is a statutory partnership under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. It brings together the following responsible authorities who must work together to understand and address community safety issues in their area:
 - Dorset Council
 - Dorset Police
 - NHS Dorset
 - Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
 - The Probation Service
- 1.3 Although many of the responsible authorities work across the pan-Dorset area, CSPs are organised around local authority boundaries and there is a separate CSP for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council area with its own scrutiny arrangements.
- 1.4 Although separate, the Dorset and BCP CSPs work together on joint initiatives and share best practice where relevant and beneficial.
- 1.5 CSPs are responsible for numerous statutory functions. This annual scrutiny report looks at progress and compliance against these.

2. Dorset Community Safety Plan 2023-2026

2.1 CSPs are required to produce three-year Community Safety Plans that are revised annually. The plans must be informed by needs assessments that include local people's views on community safety issues.

2.2 The Dorset CSP completed its most recent needs assessment and agreed the annual refresh of its 2023-26 Community Safety Plan on 13th March 2025. The refreshed Plan, which covers the Dorset Council area, includes the following priorities:

- Domestic Abuse and Stalking
- Sexual Offences
- Serious Violence
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Rural Crime

2.3 These are complemented by the following cross cutting issues:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Complex cases / multiple needs
- Violence against women and girls

2.4 Partnership activity driven through the Community Safety Plan includes:

- the provision of a wide variety of services aimed at supporting victims of domestic abuse. Services are provided and commissioned by various partners covering a wide range of needs, from emergency safe accommodation to information and advice. Partners have a joint Domestic Abuse Commissioning Charter in place to help align their commissioning activities for domestic abuse services and interventions.
- joint working arrangements relating to domestic abuse including the High Risk Domestic Abuse (HRDA) approach that brings partners together to discuss individual cases, share information and develop joined up responses.
- programmes and initiatives aimed at addressing domestic abuse offending. It is the Council's and partners' ambition to stop people becoming victims of domestic abuse. Addressing offending behaviour is key to achieving that aim.
- regular communication and awareness raising campaigns relating to domestic abuse and sexual offences. These are timed to coincide with wider national campaigns such as the 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse.

- training on a wide range of community safety issues across agencies including domestic abuse, Modern Slavery and Preventing Violent Extremism (training on Modern Slavery and Prevent is mandatory for all Dorset Council staff).
 - a range of tools and initiatives to help tackle cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB).
 - a wide variety of multi-agency initiatives aimed at addressing violent crime and sexual offences in the night-time economy including education, enforcement and public confidence.
- 2.5 Cross cutting issues set out in the Plan are addressed through the delivery of activities relating to specific priorities. For example, violence against women and girls is addressed through the delivery of actions relating to domestic abuse, sexual offences, serious violence etc; substance misuse is addressed through the delivery of actions relating to anti-social behaviour and serious violence etc.
- 2.6 The CSP monitors and manages the delivery of the Community Safety Plan at each of its quarterly meetings. This includes using performance information to assess impact and direct activity. A summary of performance against current priorities is provided below with further detail set out in the appendix:
- total crime in the Dorset CSP area has decreased slightly (April 2018 - March 2025)
 - the volume of reported domestic abuse has increased gradually (December 2020 - March 2025)
 - the volume of reported sexual offences has increased (March 2019 - March 2025)
 - the volume of reports of anti-social behaviour has reduced significantly (March 2019 - March 2025)
 - volumes of rural crime are relatively low and vary from month to month
 - the volume of serious violence (Dorset definition) has remained consistent (March 2021 - March 2025)
 - domestic abuse and sexual offences are much more prolific in some areas than others
 - there is an uneven distribution of anti-social behaviour and serious violence across the Dorset Council area
- 2.7 It is a requirement for Community Safety Plans to be formally adopted by the local authority for the area. The current plan was adopted by Dorset Council on 10th October 2024. The new three-year plan for 2026-2029 will come to Dorset Council for adoption in due course.

3. Other Plans and Strategies

Reducing Reoffending

- 3.1 In accordance with the Policing and Crime Act 2009, CSPs are responsible for developing reducing reoffending strategies. Locally, partners have traditionally developed pan-Dorset reducing reoffending strategies because organisations and issues are common across the area.
- 3.2 The latest pan-Dorset strategy (covering 2024-2027) was agreed by the Dorset CSP on 19th March 2024 and was formally adopted by Dorset Council on 10th October 2024.
- 3.3 The strategy sets out partners' vision for reducing reoffending which is:
'To cut crime, reduce harm and protect victims by reducing re-offending through joint working and rehabilitation'.
- 3.4 It contains information on the reasons for reoffending and the services and programmes operating in Dorset to address issues and includes several strategic principles and objectives.
- 3.5 The strategy sets out activity around early intervention and targeted support, efficient resource allocation and integrated approaches, and outcome-orientated monitoring.
- 3.6 The Strategy is being delivered by the pan-Dorset Reducing Re-offending Strategy Group. Progress is monitored by the CSP.

Dorset Serious Violence Strategy

- 3.7 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 placed a new duty on the Council and its partners relating to serious violence.
- 3.8 The duty, which came into effect on 31st January 2023, requires the Council and its partners to produce an evidence-based analysis of serious violence and develop and implement a strategy in response.

- 3.9 The partners responsible for the new duty are the same as those responsible for CSPs with the addition of Youth Offending Teams. It is recognised that Education, Prisons and the Young People's Estate also have a key role to play under the Duty. In Dorset, partners agreed to lead their response to fulfilling the new duty through the Dorset CSP and published their first Serious Violence Strategy in January 2024.
- 3.10 The needs assessment used to inform the Serious Violence Strategy was updated in 2024/25. It identified the same priorities as 2023/24 supporting a continuation of the agreed strategic approach.
- 3.11 The Strategy includes a local definition of serious violence, as required under legislation. This allows partners to ensure their work on serious violence reflects local need. A list of the offences included in the local definition is provided in the appendix. Figures relating to serious violence in this report reflect the local rather than national definition and are for the Dorset CSP area.
- 3.12 The Strategy includes six priority areas:
- Develop and deliver approaches that tackle high-harm offending.
 - Develop and champion activity that supports victims of serious violence.
 - Ensure children and young people better understand the risks and drivers for serious violence to prevent them from becoming drawn into crime.
 - Taking action that tackles serious violence in the community, to improve the safety of our streets.
 - Robustly tackle organised crime, including county lines and rural organised crime.
 - Undertake work to further develop our understanding of serious violence.
- 3.13 Activities undertaken in 2024/25 include:
- the Bystander Project which is focused on those directly involved in, or who have witnessed violence. This includes cascading the work through arrangements with voluntary sector partners.
 - targeted and focused one-to-one work with young people aged 12-18 who are vulnerable to exploitation, using therapeutic and trauma informed approaches.
 - trauma Packs located in key locations across Weymouth and Portland, with strong support from nighttime economy businesses.

- focused one-to-one support for young people who have experienced sexual violence.
- work to raise awareness around consent and respect, delivered at the Shaftesbury and Gillingham Show and the Dorset County Show.
- supporting the Pineapple Project which aims to help safeguard young women when they are outside of their homes and in the community.
- maximising reach and impact by supporting voluntary partner work in rural and more isolated locations across the rural county area.
- developing a multi-agency High Harm Perpetrator Panel that discusses and puts plans in place for cases of high risk domestic abuse, stalking and sexual violence perpetrators.

3.14 The Serious Violence Strategy is closely aligned to and complements partners' Community Safety Plan. Progress against the Strategy is monitored regularly by the CSP.

3.15 Partners have been awarded central government funding to cover the costs of responding to the serious violence duty and implementing initiatives in their serious violence strategies. Funding has been channelled through Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and partners in Dorset have worked with the Dorset PCC to determine the allocation and use of funding locally.

Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy

3.16 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 became law on 29 April 2021. The Act placed new duties on local authorities to establish a Local Partnership Board (LPB) for domestic abuse and produce a needs assessment and strategy relating to support for victims and their children in safe accommodation.

3.17 The Dorset CSP took on the functions of the LPB for the Dorset Council area and its terms of reference and membership were updated accordingly.

3.18 Details regarding the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24 went to Dorset Council's Cabinet in November 2021 and the first Strategy was published in January 2022.

3.19 Activity in the Strategy focused on prevention, supporting victims and tackling offending. Key highlights of activity undertaken over the course of the first strategy include:

- bolstering provision for victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation via the Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS).
- investments made in the Dorset Council Housing Service to provide dedicated domestic abuse housing advice.
- strengthening the pathways between IDAS and the Dorset Council Housing Service.
- creating target hardening guidance (target hardening involves improving the security of a property).
- undertaking extensive research which has helped inform our local approach and the recommissioning of domestic abuse services.
- working with regional councils to map demand on safe accommodation, as well as using national findings to support the recommissioning of local services.
- using learning from the COVID-19 pandemic to adapt provision to meet the needs of the local community and to inform future provision.
- engaging with victims/survivors, communities, and providers of domestic abuse services including through the Dorset Domestic Abuse Forum.
- establishing a domestic abuse commissioning working group, which has explored and agreed options to align commissioning activity and worked together on system design, with a view to enabling a seamless pathway between services and enabling a balanced system.
- carrying out regular awareness raising sessions.
- engaging with regional and national forums to help shape policy, including working with the Office of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC).

3.20 The Domestic Abuse Strategy is closely aligned to and complements partners' Community Safety Plan. Progress against the Strategy is monitored regularly by the CSP.

3.21 A new needs assessment was completed in 2025 and has been used to update the Domestic Abuse Strategy for 2025-2028. The updated Strategy has been endorsed by the CSP and will be taken through the Council's governance processes for sign off in due course.

3.22 Internal Audit completed a review of the 2021-24 Domestic Abuse Strategy in October 2024 and concluded that overall, there were sound arrangements in place for its delivery. The audit included minor suggestions regarding the use of quantitative outcomes and frequency of reporting progress to the CSP. These have been considered in the refresh of the Strategy.

4. Domestic Homicide Reviews

- 4.1 The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 requires that following a domestic homicide, the local area should organise a multi-agency review. This requirement came into force on 13th April 2011. Reviews should be undertaken on both homicides and suicides.
- 4.2 The statutory responsibility for coordinating Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) lies with the local CSP.
- 4.3 The purpose of a DHR is to consider the circumstances that led to a death and identify where responses could be improved in the future. Reviews aim to ensure agencies are responding appropriately to victims of domestic abuse by offering and putting in place appropriate support mechanisms, procedures, resources and interventions with an aim to avoid future incidents of domestic homicide and violence.
- 4.4 DHRs are not inquiries into how a victim died or who is culpable; that is a matter for coroners and criminal courts to determine as appropriate. DHRs are required to be anonymised to protect individuals' identities.
- 4.5 Dorset CSP has conducted numerous DHRs. Where appropriate, reviews have been published on the CSP pages of the Dorset Council website.
- 4.6 Lessons learned from DHRs are formulated into action plans, which are disseminated across all partners and any additionally involved agencies, and progress against recommendations is monitored by the CSP.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Dorset CSP does not receive funding directly, however partners' plans and strategies clarify where they will focus their time and effort and their broad activity to meet priorities.
- 5.2 New Burdens funding has been made available to Dorset Council to deliver statutory duties relating to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 5.3 Central government has made available funding to partners to deliver the serious violence duty.

- 5.4 From time to time, central government makes available one-off funding opportunities to support community safety work such as tackling domestic abuse. When possible, partners apply for such funds.

6. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

- 6.1 None.

7. Well-being and Health Implications

- 7.1 Tackling crime and the fear of crime has a significant impact on health and wellbeing.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 Community Safety as set out in the report.

9. Risk Assessment

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 10.1 EqIAs have been completed on the CSP's various plans and strategies.

- 10.2 The EqIA for the Community Safety Plan covered serious violence issues drawing on findings from the serious violence needs assessment work. Given that, a separate EqIA was not needed for the Serious Violence Strategy.

- 10.3 The EqIA process identified opportunities which have been used to help steer the delivery of the Plans and Strategies.

11. Appendices

Appendix – Performance Information

12. **Background Papers**

Community Safety Plan 2023-2026 - [Community Safety Plan Link](#)

Reducing Reoffending Strategy - [Reducing Reoffending Strategy Link](#)

Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy - [Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy Link](#)

Serious Violence Strategy - [Serious Violence Strategy Link](#)

Domestic Homicide Reviews - [Domestic Homicide Reviews Link](#)

13. **Report Sign Off**

- 13.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

Introduction

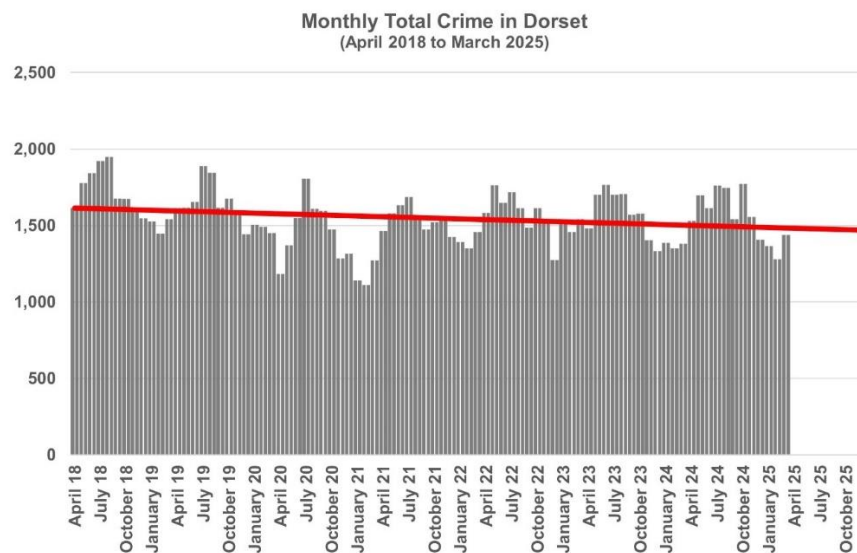
The graphs which follow illustrate the recent changes in volume for each CSP priority. All data relates solely to instances recorded within the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area.

Monthly volumes of total crime has been shown as a bar chart, with each month distinguished as a separate vertical bar.

For individual priorities, a 'monthly annual' figure has been used. These figures represent, for each month, the total number of crimes recorded during the preceding twelve months. This approach removes any seasonal variations, allowing a clearer identification of any long term trend in the changing volumes of crime.

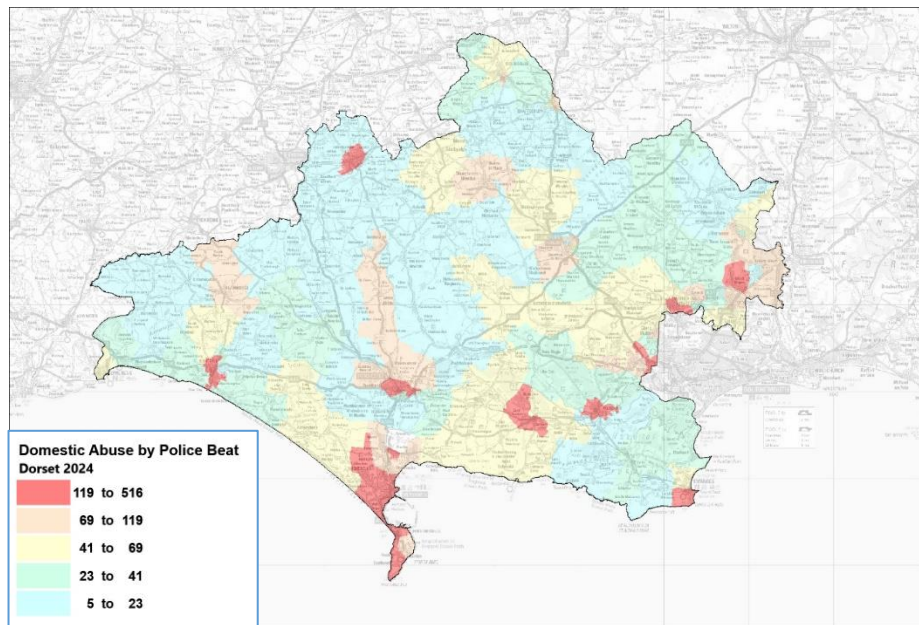
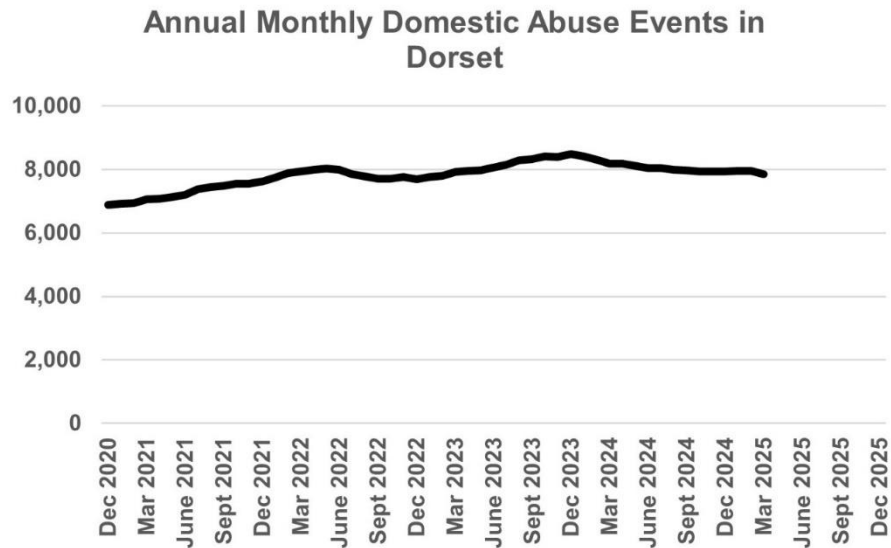
The geographical units illustrated in each of the accompanying maps are Dorset Police beat areas.

Total Crime (2018 to Present)



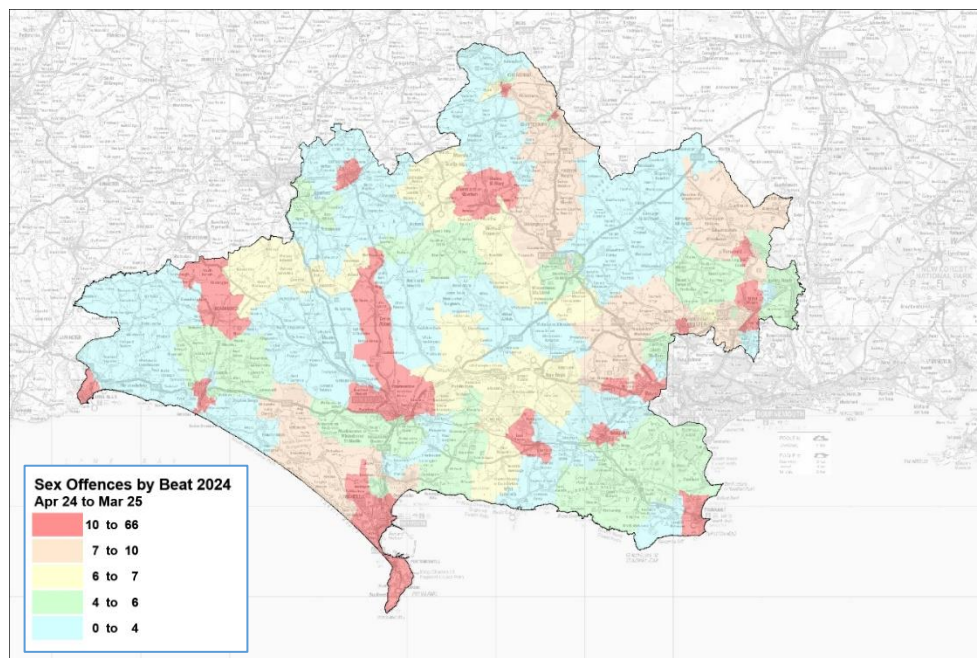
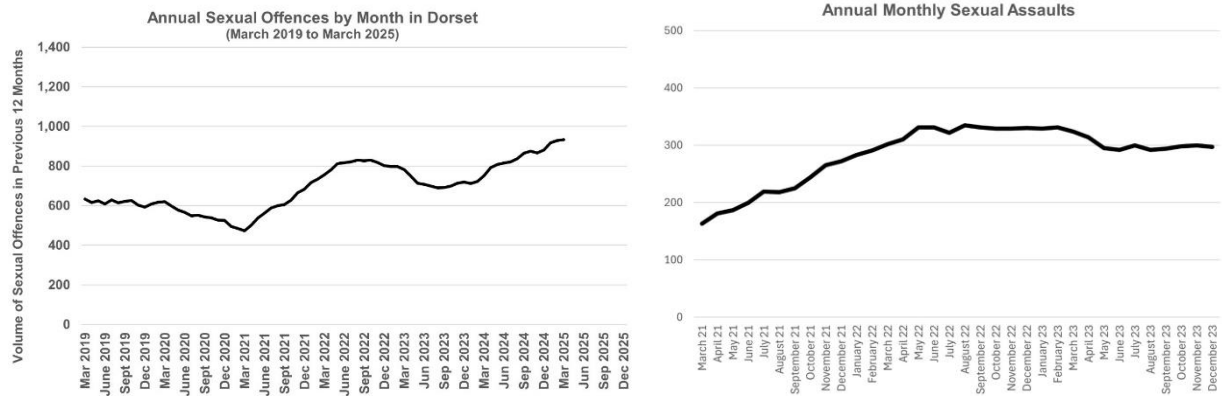
Priority One: Domestic Abuse

The graph below shows the 'monthly annual' volume of domestic abuse events (a combination of crimes and non-crime incidents) reported to the Police in the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area. The map illustrates the relative distribution of domestic abuse events.



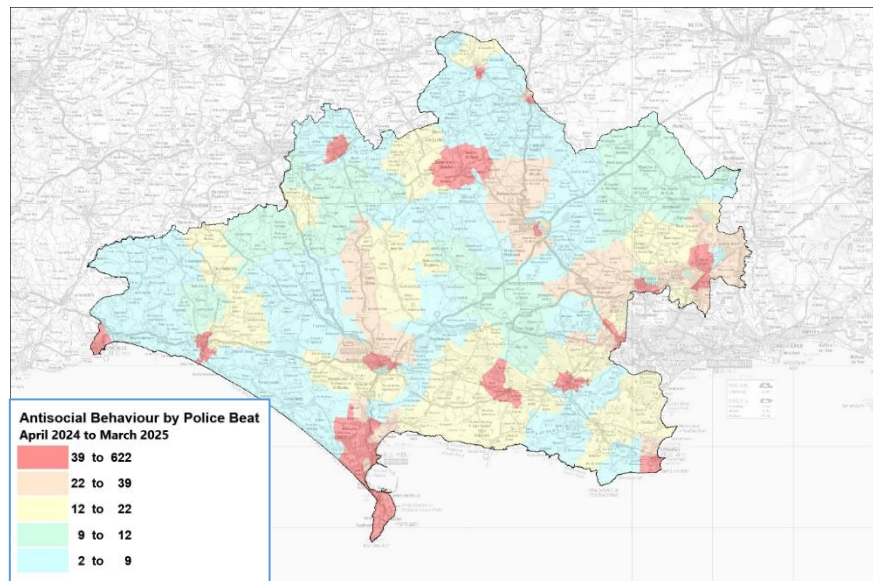
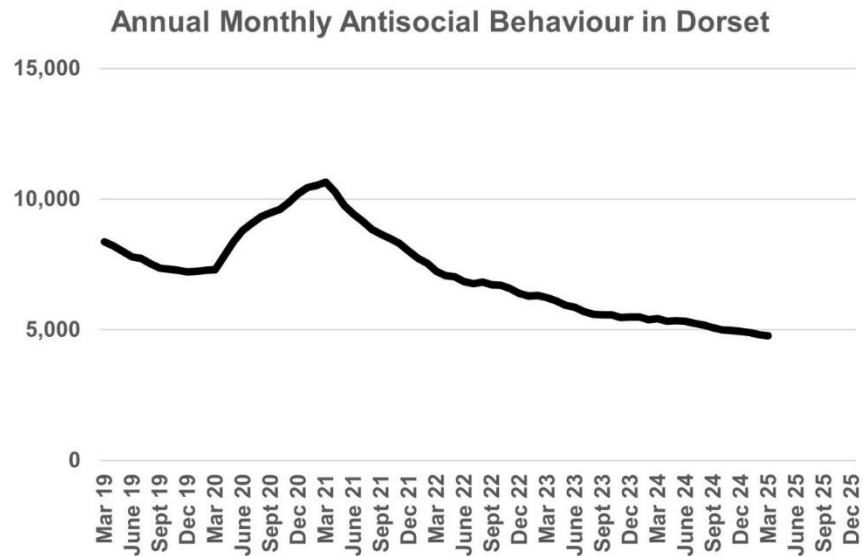
Priority Two: Sexual Offences

The two graphs below show the 'monthly annual' volume of all sexual offences (left) and a subset of sexual offences – sexual assaults - reported to the Police in the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area. The map illustrates the relative distribution of sexual offences.



Priority Three: Antisocial Behaviour

The graph below shows the 'monthly annual' volume of antisocial behaviour incidents reported to the Police in the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area and their relative geographic distribution.

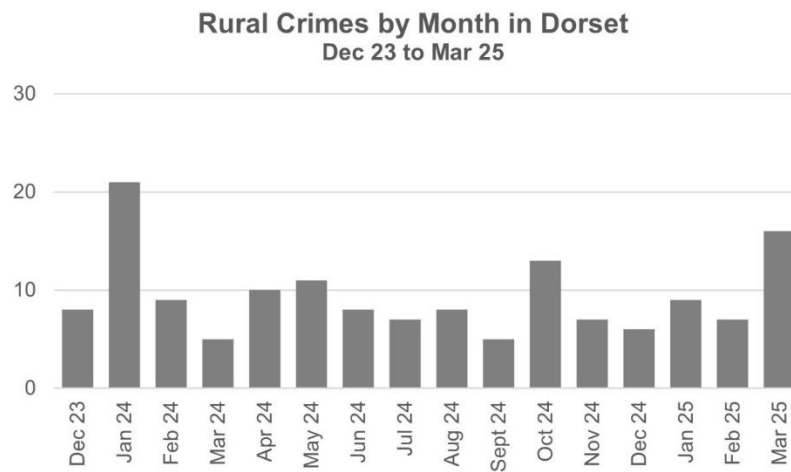


Priority Four: Rural Crime

Dorset Police's definition of 'rural crime', which has also been assumed by the Dorset CSP, includes the following crimes:

- Equine crime
- Theft of farm machinery
- Theft of fuel
- Theft of livestock
- Livestock worrying
- Theft of plant
- Poaching

This definition has only recently been adopted. Consequently, relevant data is only available dating back to December 2023. The graph below is presented solely to illustrate the monthly volume of rural crime in the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area.

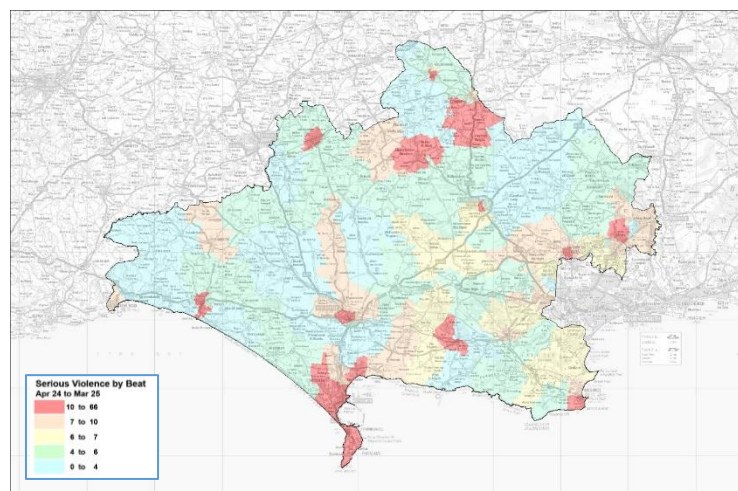
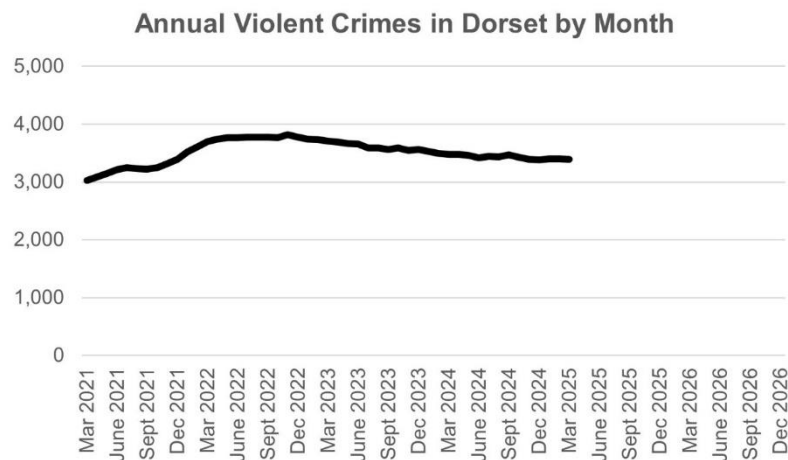


Priority Five: Violent Crime

The Dorset CSP's definition of 'serious violence' includes:

- Violence against the person (excluding harassment; non-injury violence against the person; malicious communication; and stalking)
- Knife and gun crime,
- Possession of weapons with intent,
- Aggravated burglary,
- All sexual offences,
- Domestic violence with injury,
- Robbery
- Arson with the intent of danger life

The graphs below show the 'monthly annual' volume of violent crime in the Dorset CSP (Dorset Council) area and their relative geographic distribution.



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People and Health Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

Meeting Date: 19 June 2025

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Community Safety Partnership Annual Report	Statutory community safety annual report. To review community safety performance, raised during performance monitoring.	Andy Frost – Service Manager for Community Safety Cllr Gill Taylor – Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	
Cost of Living Support	To review and monitor the progress of the council's cost of living support.	Laura Cornette – Business Partner for Communities and Partnerships Cllr Ryan Hope – Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement	Regular reports to scrutiny on Cost of Living Support requested by the Place and Resources Overview Committee
Education, Health, and Care Plans Enquiry Day	To receive an update report following an enquiry day established by the committee.	Kath Saunders – Head of Locality and Strategy (North) Cllr Toni Coombs – Chairman, People & Health Scrutiny Committee	

Meeting Date: 30 July 2025

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Performance Dashboard	To review the most recent performance information and use this to agree items to add to the committee work programme for further analysis.	Chris Heighway – Performance and Analytics Team Manager Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	
Birth to Settled Adulthood – Independent Chair’s Annual Report	To review the report of the Independent Chair.	Cecilia Bufton – Independent Chair, Birth to Settled Adulthood Delivery Board	
Ofsted Action Plan	To review the outcome and recommendations from the recent Ofsted inspection.	Paul Dempsey – Executive Director, People - Children Cllr Clare Sutton – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills	

Meeting Date: 22 September 2025

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Future Care Programme	To receive an update on a system-wide transformation programme to transform and improve urgent and emergency care services in Dorset.	Louise Ford – Strategic Health and Adult Social Care Integration Lead	

	To review the emerging benefits and progress of the programme after its implementation.	Cllr Steve Robinson – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	
Public Health Disaggregation	To review the new arrangements for public health in Dorset Council, following the disaggregation of Public Health Dorset.	Sam Crowe – Director of Public Health and Prevention Cllr Gill Taylor – Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	
Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024/25	To review the Annual Report and the effectiveness of the new arrangements for the Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership	Sunita Khattra-Hall – Corporate Director for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Families Cllr Clare Sutton – Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	

Meeting Date: 26 November 2025

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Performance Dashboard	To review the most recent performance information and use this to agree items to add to the committee work programme for further analysis.	Chris Heighway – Performance and Analytics Team Manager Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	

Meeting Date: 23 January 2026

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Performance Dashboard	To review the most recent performance information and use this to agree items to add to the committee work programme for further analysis.	Chris Heighway – Performance and Analytics Team Manager Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	
Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Strategy	- To scrutinise the council's budget and medium-term financial plan for the year 2026-27 - To make any recommendations to Cabinet.	Aidan Dunn – Executive Director Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) Cllr Simon Clifford – Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Strategy	

Meeting Date: 10 March 2026

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
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Performance Dashboard	To review the most recent performance information and use this to agree items to add to the committee work programme for further analysis.	Chris Heighway – Performance and Analytics Team Manager Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	
Housing Strategy	To scrutinise and review the Housing Strategy.	Andrew Billany – Corporate Director for Housing Cllr Gill Taylor – Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Performance Dashboard	To review the most recent performance information and use this to agree items to add to the committee work programme for further analysis.	Chris Heighway – Performance and Analytics Team Manager Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	

Meeting Date: Unscheduled Committee Items

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
Integrated Neighbourhood Teams			•
Better Care Fund		Sarah Sewell – Head of Commissioning for Older People, Home First and Market Access Cllr Steve Robinson – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	•
			•

Informal Work of the Committee:

Date	Topic	Format	Members	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
April 2025	Annual NHS Quality Accounts		People & Health Scrutiny Committee	George Dare – Senior Democratic Services Officer	To provide a response to local NHS Trust Quality Accounts.
Quarterly	Review of the committee's performance and risk dashboards.	Informal Meeting	People & Health Scrutiny Committee	Chris Heighway – Performance and Analytics Team Manager	Review of the dashboards to identify potential future areas for review by the committee.

12 May 2025	Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)	Enquiry Day	Cllrs Coombs, Somper, and Bolwell	Kath Saunders – Head of Locality and Strategy (North)	Decision to establish an enquiry day was made at the People & Health Scrutiny Committee on 24 October 2024.

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The Cabinet Forward Plan - June to September 2025 **(Publication date – 23 MAY 2025)**

Explanatory Note:

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

Definition of Key Decisions

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

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

4 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 Members and Portfolios 2024/25

Nick Ireland	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding
Richard Biggs	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth
Jon Andrews	Place Services
Shane Bartlett	Planning and Emergency Planning
Simon Clifford	Finance & Capital Strategy
Ryan Hope	Customer, Culture and Community Engagement
Steve Robinson	Adult Social Care
Clare Sutton	Children's Services, Education & Skills
Gill Taylor	Health and Housing.
Ben Wilson	Corporate Development and Transformation

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
June					

Draft 2024/25 Outturn report Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the 2024/25 Outturn report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
Update Statement of Community Involvement Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Agreement of revised Statement of Community Involvement for consultation following changes to consultation procedures.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025		Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning	<i>Mike Garrity, Corporate Director for Planning</i> <i>mike.garrity@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Hilary Jordan, Service Manager for Spatial Planning</i> <i>hilary.jordan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider a updated business case, reflecting the actual cost of the chosen solution, a confirmed implementation scope, seeking authorisation to award contract.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025		Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation	<i>James Ailward, Head of ICT Operations</i> <i>james.ailward@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Growth & Economic Regeneration Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider and agree a refresh of the Council's strategy for economic growth. This will encompass the functions to be taken over by the Council from Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership in accordance with devolution and promote the needs and actions required to drive forward the economy in the Dorset Council area. To endorse the proposal for use of the Rural England Prosperity Fund Extension for FY 2026 and delegate authority for its implementation.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025	Place and Resources Overview Committee 21 Nov 2024 Place and Resources Overview Committee 22 May 2025	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth	<i>Jon Bird, Service Manager for Growth and Economic Regeneration</i> <i>jon.bird@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Nick Webster, Head of Growth and Economic Regeneration</i> <i>nicholas.webster@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Public Spaces Protection Orders 2025 Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To approve the time extension of certain Public Spaces Protection Orders. To approve two new Public Space Protection Orders.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025	Place and Resources Overview Committee 22 May 2025	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>John Newcombe, Service Manager for Licensing & Community Safety</i> <i>john.newcombe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Commissioned Grants Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open New Commissioned grants policy that creates a structure and framework for Commissioners to offer grants in accordance to the national government Grant Function standards as an alternative to traditional procurement.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025	Place and Resources Overview Committee 22 May 2025	Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement, Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Laura Cornette, Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships</i> <i>Laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Richard Freed, Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement</i> <i>richard.freed@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
Dorset Council Local Plan Consultation Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Options for the Dorset Council Local Plan.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025		Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning	<i>Terry Sneller, Strategic Planning Manager</i> <i>terry.sneller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Mike Garrity, Corporate Director for Planning</i> <i>mike.garrity@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Children's Services - Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services March 2025 Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open An update on the outcome of the recent inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in March 2025, Official Ofsted Report, a letter of judgement, findings and recommendations, published on 9 May 2025. Supported by Dorset's Post Inspection Action Plan.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 24 Jun 2025		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Richard Belcher, Service Manager - Strategic Partnerships</i> <i>richard.belcher@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Youth Justice Plan 2025 - 26 Key Decision - No Public Access - Open Approval of the Youth Justice Plan 2025 – 26.	Decision Maker Dorset Council	Decision Date 10 Jul 2025	People and Health Overview Committee 19 May 2025 Cabinet 24 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>David Webb, Head of Service - Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service</i> <i>david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
July					

September

Street Lighting Policy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Improvements in lighting technology mean more options are available for our LED replacement of streetlights. The new paper will seek agreement on the type of lighting to be used within our policy.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Sep 2025	Place and Resources Overview Committee 13 Mar 2025	Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Jack Wiltshire, Corporate Director for Highways and Engineering</i> <i>jack.wiltshire@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Period 4 financial management report Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the Period 4 financial management report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Sep 2025		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (DSCP) Annual Report April 2024 - March 2025 Key Decision - No Public Access - Open This is the annual report for the activity completed by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership April 2024 to March 2025.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Sep 2025		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Megan Cameron-Brown, Head of Quality Assurance and Partnerships</i> <i>megan.cameron-brown@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
October 2025					
Financial Provision for the Voluntary Community Sector TBC Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open The current 5-year financial agreement for the VCS will be coming to an end in October 2026. This paper will propose the new support for them.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement	<i>Laura Cornette, Business Partner - Communities and Partnerships</i> <i>Laura.cornette@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Jennifer Lowis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement</i> <i>jennifer.louis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
November					

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Quarter 2 financial management report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Report 2024/25.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 11 Nov 2025		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, <i>Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider the Medium Term Financial (MTFP) and budget strategy.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 11 Nov 2025		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, <i>Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
December					

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dorset Council Housing Allocation Policy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Proposed revisions to the councils Housing Allocations Policy, which governs how social housing is allocated to applicants on the housing register. The revised policy update aims to ensure fairness, transparency and compliance with legal requirements while addressing local housing need. Key changes may include amendments to priority criteria, eligibility requirements, changes to relevant legislation and operational procedures.	Decision Maker Dorset Council	Decision Date 17 Feb 2026	People and Health Overview Committee 3 Nov 2025 Cabinet 9 Dec 2025	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Sarah How, Service Manager for Housing Solutions</i> <i>sarah.how@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
February					

Quarter 3 financial management report Key Decision - No Public Access - Open Quarter 3 financial management report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 3 Feb 2026		Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Strategy report Key Decision - No Public Access - Open	Decision Maker Dorset Council	Decision Date 17 Feb 2026	Cabinet 3 Feb 2026	Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Sean Cremer, Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial</i> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, Corporate Development - Section 151 Officer (Aidan Dunn)</i>

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.



Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd Forward Plan - June 2025 to October 2025 (Publication date – 22 MAY 2025)

Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd. 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 which are likely to -

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

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

Committee Membership 2025/26

Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Cllr Richard Biggs – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets, and Economic Growth

Cllr Steve Robinson – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Cllr Gill Taylor – Cabinet Member for Health and Housing

Cllr Ben Wilson – Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
June 2025				

Review of Terms of Reference Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note the shareholder committee terms of reference.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 25 Jun 2025	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Grace Evans, Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer</i> <i>grace.evans@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>
Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (as required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 25 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Dorset Council Organisational Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To present the developments on the part of the Council relevant to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 25 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Mark Tyson, Corporate Director for Adult Commissioning & Improvement</i> <i>mark.tyson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Care Dorset Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To provide an update for shareholder members on matters relating to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 25 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Annual report and Year end accounts to 30 September 2024 Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To receive the annual financial report for the year ending 30 September 2024.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 25 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
October 2025				

Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (as required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 6 Oct 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Dorset Council Organisational Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To present the developments on the part of the Council relevant to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 6 Oct 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Mark Tyson, Corporate Director for Adult Commissioning & Improvement mark.tyson@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Care Dorset Update Key Decision - No Public Access - Part exempt To provide an update for Shareholder members on matters relating to Care Dorset.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date 6 Oct 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Annual Reports				

Care Dorset Annual Business Plan Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt For the Shareholder Committee to consider progress in delivering the 5 year business plan, and any review of the plan as necessary.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date March	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Review of Terms of Reference Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note the shareholder committee terms of reference.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date June	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Grace Evans, Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer</i> <i>grace.evans@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>
Care Dorset Annual Performance Report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Do consider the Care Dorset Annual Performance Report.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date June (from 2026)	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Annual report and Year end accounts Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To receive the annual financial report.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd	Decision Date June	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Private/Exempt Items for Decision

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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.



The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) Forward Plan May to September 2025 (Publication date – 8 MAY 2025)

Explanatory Note:

This Forward Plan contains future items to be considered by the Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence. 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 which are likely to -

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

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

Committee Membership 2024/25

Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding

Cllr Richard Biggs – Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth

Cllr Ryan Hope – Cabinet Member for Customer, Culture and Community Engagement

Cllr Clare Sutton – Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Skills

Cllr Gill Taylor – Cabinet Member for Health and Housing

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
June 2025				

Review of Terms of Reference Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note the shareholder committee terms of reference.	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Jun 2025	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Grace Evans, Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer</i> <i>grace.evans@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>
Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (if required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
Dorset Council Commissioner's Report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt To provide an overview of the current position in relation to delivery by the Dorset Centre of Excellence against the commissioning agreement.	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Ross Bowell, Head of Service - Health, Education & SEND Commissioning</i> <i>ross.bowell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt To provide an update on the current situation at the Dorset Centre of Excellence and the Coombe House School, including progress made in relation to governance, leadership, staffing, estate, community use and finance.	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 9 Jun 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
September 2025				

Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (if required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 15 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
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Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Dorset Council Commissioner's Report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt To provide an overview of the current position in relation to delivery by the Dorset Centre of Excellence against the commissioning agreement.	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 15 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Ross Bowell, Head of Service - Health, Education & SEND Commissioning</i> <i>ross.bowell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
DCoE - Report of the Chair of the Board Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt To provide an update on the current situation at the Dorset Centre of Excellence and the Coombe House School, including progress made in relation to governance, leadership, staffing, estate, community use and finance.	Decision Maker The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 15 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>

Private/Exempt Items for Decision

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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.

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