



People and Health Scrutiny Committee

Date: Monday, 22 September 2025
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Meeting Room 1, 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

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, 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 30 July 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 george.dare@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Wednesday, 17 September 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 george.dare@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by 8.30am on Wednesday, 17 September 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. ARRANGEMENTS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH IN DORSET COUNCIL FOLLOWING DISAGGREGATION 11 - 22

To consider a report by the Deputy Director of Public Health and Prevention.

8. DORSET SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25 23 - 54

To consider a report by the Head of Quality Assurance and Partnerships.

9. COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME AND EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLANS 55 - 86

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

10. 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.

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PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 JULY 2025

Present: Cllrs Toni Coombs (Chair), Bridget Bolwell, Sally Holland, Carole Jones and Andy Todd

Present remotely: Cllrs Jane Somper (Vice-Chair) and Chris Kippax

Apologies: Cllrs Barry Goringe and Carl Woode

Also present: Cllr Clare Sutton and Cecilia Bufton (Independent Chair, Birth to Settled Adulthood Delivery Board)

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

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

Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Paula Golding (Corporate Director for Care and Protection), Sarah Howard (Deputy Director of Modernisation and Place), Julia Ingram (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care Operations), Beth Whittaker (Interim Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Liz Crocker (Head of Strategy) and Chris Heighway (Performance and Analytics Team Manager)

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

Simon Fraiz-Brown (Head of Commissioning, Family Help, and Young and Thriving)

13. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barry Goringe and Carl Woode.

14. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2025 were confirmed and signed.

16. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

17. Councillor Questions

One question was submitted by Cllr Orrell, with a response given by the Chairman of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee. The question and response are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

18. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

19. Birth to Settled Adulthood Service - Independent Delivery Board Chair's Annual Report

The Independent Chair of the Birth to Settled Adulthood (B2SA) Delivery Board introduced the report. The Independent Chair highlighted the programmes focus on early planning and preparation for adulthood, to avoid the 'cliff edge' at 18-years-old. She outlined three key risks to the programme which were: NHS structural changes and their potential impact on funding and commitment, however there was not currently any lack of commitment; Increasing complexity of young people's needs, which was a national trend; and data integration challenges.

Committee members made comments and asked questions of the Independent Chair. The following points were raised:

- Embedding the services would make a positive difference to young people's lives, whilst it would save time and money for the council in supporting the transition between children's and adult services.
- Communications was an area which needed to be improved to show what the B2SA service had been achieving, its aims for the future, and managing expectations.
- There were concerns about the work options available for young adults being supported by the B2SA service, as connecting to work was fundamental and it gives fulfilment. The Careers Hub worked with employers to become disability confident employers, however more of this was needed.
- In looking for work and careers, it was essential that employers looked at what people can do rather than what they cannot do. It was suggested that the Independent Chair links with local business networks to talk to employers about this subject and B2SA.
- Over 200 young people aged 16–18 were being supported in workplace placements, but it was unclear how many will transition into work.
- A member suggested proactive engagement with Chambers of Commerce and asked what information could be provided to them. The Independent Chair advised there was information about the programmes, however not about individuals and their preferences, it was recognised this needed to be done to get more work experience for young people.
- In relation to progress towards an integrated database between Adults, Children's Services, and Health, the Independent Chair acknowledged this

was a long-term goal, however there were difficulties in children's services and adults' data working together, and there were multiple incompatible health systems. Options were being explored to share information appropriately.

- Asked whether an earlier diagnosis would be better in the long term for cost and planning, the Independent Chair felt that normal child development issues were being overmedicalized, however early identification of disabilities could be used to give young people the best start in life.
- There was a growing number of young people with complex needs, early support needed to be promoted to families, such as using family hubs. There was work with IMPOWER which was focussed on early intervention and meeting needs in a mainstream setting.
- Small employers could be a better option for young people. The Independent Chair advised there was some work with small employers, but not enough. The Careers team could be contacted to discuss something for a local area.
- Barriers for young people achieving steps towards settled adulthood often included self-belief and the opportunities available. There was a need to look at what individuals can do and creating an individual plan for them.
- Mainstream schools were receiving funding to support children with additional needs. Pupils would have the opportunities to follow a mainstream pathway, rather than a SEND specific pathway, with some schools having a satellite special school providing a mixed timetable in a mainstream school.
- A member asked how there would be feedback on B2SA. There would be a survey conducted by Oxford Brooks university to receive feedback, including from young people, however it was important to be in the right language to enable them to give true and honest feedback.
- The Chair of the Dorset Parent Carer Council had been receiving good feedback from parents and thought services were more seamless with integration of health services. She emphasised that parents and young people's voices needed to be included in data and feedback.

The Committee Chairman summed up the discussion. It was a complex area to bring services together, and it created a blueprint to move services forward by looking at the 'whole person'. Whilst the committee has previously been critical of the programme, it was good to see the service progressing, however it needed to become outstanding. She emphasised the need to upskill the knowledge of local businesses.

20. **Ofsted Inspection Report and Action Plan**

The Corporate Director for Care and Protection introduced the Ofsted Inspection report and Action Plan. The inspection identified one area for improvement, which was the clarity and detail of the care leaver offer, including for care leavers who

are parents. A part of the action plan would ensure financial support to care leavers in relation to council tax was equitable for care leavers living inside and outside of Dorset.

In response to a question about the number of care leavers that do not participate in the care leaver offer, the Corporate Director advised that a very high percentage of 18–21-year-olds participated. The majority of care leavers that did not participate were aged 22-25, however they had access to an app so they could access the offer should they choose to.

There were no care leavers in B&B accommodation, and 98% of care leavers were in suitable housing. A small number of care leavers were in custody.

There were minor concerns in the Ofsted report about a lack of police attendance. This was in relation to LADO investigations, where there was some lack of police attendance. Officers were working with the police to ensure attendance going forward.

The Chairman highlighted the positive outcome of the Ofsted inspection, with Children's Services being rated as Outstanding; and stressed the need to continue to drive services forward for the benefit of our children and young people.

21. **2024/25 Quarter 4 Performance Report**

Following a review of the council's performance indicators, the committee identified three performance indicators of concern. The committee received an update on each of these performance indicators and were given to ask questions and raise comments and concerns on the indicators.

Percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The Head of Service for Family Help explained the current performance indicator. The target rate for NEET was under 3.5%, however the rate was currently 4.1%. This rate could have been caused by an increase in the cohort size for this age group and the long-term impact of Covid-19 causing this cohort of students to miss school in Year 7. There had been some success in bring young people back into education, employment in training. There would also be support available for students on results day, to discuss their future options.

A lack of public transport was a cause of young people becoming NEET. Yeovil and Weymouth colleges provided subsidised transport to access further education. Vocational courses being provided by sixth forms were being looked at, to provide more options across the county for young people that do not want to do an academic subject. Supported internships were also available to people with an EHCP.

Asked whether there was a correlation between low school attendance and becoming NEET, officers explained there were projects which helped pupils struggling with attendance and funding was being sought to extend the Marvels

project for a further 3 years, to assist with school attendance. There was a tool which gave a good identification of pupils in Year 7 & 8 who were likely to struggle in Year 12.

A discussion would be had about mapping educational support and transport, through the revised SEND Sufficiency Strategy, to identify where gaps in support were.

Percentage of children achieving basics (9-5 in English and Maths) at Key Stage 4

The Corporate Director for Education and Learning outlined work that was being done with Key Stage 4 to improve outcomes. The council was working in collaboration with ImpactEd and secondary schools to identify correlations between teacher and pupil engagement and how this affects outcomes. It was not known what the Key Stage 4 outcomes would be for this year, however Key Stage 2 outcomes had improved.

A member asked whether there was a difference in outcomes between maintained schools and Multi Academy Trusts. It was confirmed that maintained secondary schools often had better outcomes compared to Multi Academy Trusts.

Rate of permanent exclusions from all schools

The Corporate Director for Education and Learning outlined the performance indicator, which appeared to be improving. The way learning centres operate has been reviewed because it has been contributing to the rate of permanent exclusions. Learning centres were now used as a 12-week placement, which was an intervention, so there was a better chance of pupils integrating back into mainstream schools with less risk of a permanent exclusion.

There were no questions or comments from members on this performance indicator.

The Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Decision:

That:

1. The Quarter 4 (January–March 2025) performance exceptions report and actions undertaken, be noted.
2. The performance reporting schedule for 2025/26 within the context of the strategic performance reporting framework, be agreed.

22. Committee's Work Programme and Executive Forward Plans

The Committee noted its work programme and the executive forward plans.

Options for what could be included in a report on Integrated Neighbourhood Teams would be explored, to see if it would be an appropriate topic for scrutiny.

There were also ongoing discussions about Continuing Healthcare (CHC), and when this would be appropriate for the committee to consider.

23. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.02 pm

Chairman

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People and Health Scrutiny Committee

22 September 2025

An update on arrangements for public health in Dorset Council following disaggregation

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

Local Councillor(s):

Senior Leadership Team:

S Crowe, Director of Public Health & Prevention

Report author and job title:

Rachel Partridge, Deputy Director of Public Health and Prevention

Email: Rachel.Partridge@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority:

Report status: Public

Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

This report provides a brief update on changes to the way public health is provided for the two unitary councils in Dorset. It reports on the disaggregation of Public Health Dorset – a shared service for BCP and Dorset Councils during 2024-25. Following this decision a new Directorate for Public Health and Prevention has been set up within Dorset Council, with a public health and communities team established at BCP Council. A joint steering group from both BCP and Dorset Council helped manage this transition, ensuring services continued smoothly and safely, with both new teams working well from 1 April 2025. The teams continue to work together to make sure key public health services and advice are available to local residents and partners such as the NHS.

Services have continued without disruption, performance remains strong, and the cost of change was well within its allocated budget (funded from the ring-fenced public health grant). An assurance review conducted by the Regional Director of Public Health on 30 June 2025 gave very positive feedback on the performance of the services, and public health advice to partners (including the integrated care board) and confirmed that Dorset Council is using its public health funding in line with the statutory conditions placed around the ring-fenced grant.

There is now a good opportunity for the new public health team to support the council's priorities, including the work on community partnerships, neighbourhood health and improve local health and wellbeing. This could be the focus of a future scrutiny, once the team has had time to become more established.

The report asks committee members to note the successful changes and positive feedback, and to agree on future ways to oversee and review public health performance through the Council's usual committees.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Members of the People and Health Scrutiny committee are asked to note the progress of the establishment of the new arrangements for Public Health in Dorset Council following the disaggregation of Public Health Dorset 31st March 2025.
- 1.2 To note the positive feedback and assurance around the performance of public health in Dorset following the annual assurance process from Regional Director of Public Health on behalf of Department of Health and Social Care.
- 1.3 To agree the future arrangements for scrutinising the performance of the Public Health function through Dorset Council's governance structures, primarily through People and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

2. Introduction and summary of progress to the new arrangement for Public Health in Dorset Council.

- 2.1 In April 2024, BCP Council gave notice to cease the shared service arrangement for Public Health Dorset hosted by Dorset Council and to establish its own team within the Local Authority led by a Director of Public Health from 1st April 2025.
- 2.2 Both councils indicated the desire to work collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition to the new model of Public Health. The aims were to ensure retention of skilled workforce, minimise impact on delivery of services and the retention of a skilled and well performing workforce and minimise any potential impact on the delivery of Public Health services and in turn minimise impacts on the wellbeing of residents.
- 2.3 A steering group was established led by directors from both councils, supported by HR, finance, legal and programme managers to ensure disaggregation proceeded smoothly and within the specified timeframe.

- 2.4 In February 2025, Dorset Council Cabinet received a report on the work done to date to disaggregate the shared public health service. Cabinet endorsed the pragmatic approach adopted in order to maintain positive working relationships, financial stability and service provision to residents throughout the transition.
- 2.5 This report updates Dorset Council's People and Health Scrutiny Committee on the progress to deliver the new arrangements for Public Health for the Council and residents of Dorset since 1st April 2025.
- 2.6 Each Council appointed a Director of Public Health to lead the two new Public health teams from 1st April 2025. Dorset Council appointed Sam Crowe as Director of Public Health and Prevention. Whilst Sam Crowe acted as the Interim Chief Executive for Dorset Council March-July 2025, Rachel Partridge served as Acting Director for Public Health and Prevention in Dorset Council. BCP Council appointed Rob Carroll as Director of Public Health and Communities who came into role 1st April 2025.
- 2.7 Two new teams have been created aiming to ensure that both authorities retain a balance of the quality, value, knowledge, expertise and experience of the Public Health teams. As the host authority for the shared Public Health service of Public Health Dorset, Dorset Council led a formal HR process to transfer staff into the two new Public Health team structures. This was a complex process but well supported by HR colleagues and led to the successful appointment of all but one of the existing Public Health Dorset staff. This was important to retain high quality, skilled and experienced staff and mitigate the risks of redundancy costs.
- 2.8 A Joint Transition Management Team has been established since 1st April which comprises the senior leadership of both Public Health Teams in BCP and Dorset Council to maintain coordination and oversight of the shared Public Health work programmes and key commissioned mandated Public Health services. Both teams will collaborate as required to ensure smooth transition establishing the new services and to consider any continuing shared arrangements.
- 2.9 A Contract Oversight Group has been established to manage shared contracts and contract risks, including Livewell Dorset, NHS Health Checks, Community Health Improvement Services and the contracts held with Dorset Healthcare for 0-19 Public Health Nursing and Sexual Health. These remain in place for the duration of the existing contract periods to maintain continuity of service. These are contracts where the public health assessment is that the service is currently working well delivery the required outcomes for our residents.

- 2.10 The Public Health teams have ensured Public Health leadership, representation and input into a range of system boards and meetings as well as working with key partners and communities at a locality level. The core offer of specialist Public Health advice and guidance to the NHS includes support around intelligence and insights, such as Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to support a focus on public health, early intervention and prevention and reducing inequalities.
- 2.11 The Directors of Public Health have a statutory role to ensure that plans are in place to protect the health and wellbeing of residents and this includes an assurance role to ensure systems are in place for health protection and emergency preparedness and response. Both DsPH have links to key external partners such as the UK Health Security Agency as well as the Local Resilience Forum.
- 2.12 The Public Health and Prevention Team for Dorset Council are now working through the next stage of the disaggregation process, including which programmes will continue to be delivered collaboratively across the wider Dorset system and which programmes will be led and delivered more effectively at a Dorset Council and neighbourhood level. There is a clear opportunity to work more closely as an integrated function within Dorset Council to support the delivery of Dorset Council plan priorities and support the health and wellbeing of residents and communities within the Dorset area.

3. Regional Assurance Visit

- 3.1 There has been significant local oversight through an Executive Director lead strategic steering group and cabinet to ensure the continued good performance and mitigate any potential impact on the delivery of public health services and functions throughout this transition of arrangements. In addition, the Regional Director of Public Health has been kept informed of the approach to disaggregation and the plans in each council.
- 3.2 The formal annual Public Health assurance visits to Dorset Council and NHS Dorset were undertaken by the Regional Director of Public Health, Dr Justin Varney-Bennett on the 30th June 2025. This year's visit was the pilot of a new more detailed and robust national model of assurance process being tested in the South West to ensure appropriate and sustainable use of the public health grant in Local Authorities. It was noted that this was particularly complex to prepare for in the context of disaggregation of a shared service so it was agreed to prepare for the visits together with colleagues in BCP Public Health and Communities team.
- 3.3 The quality of the supporting documentation which was prepared for the assurance process and the discussion and presentations which took place

during the assurance visit received very positive feedback from the Regional Director of Public Health and his team.

- 3.4 The Acting Director of Public Health and the Chief Executives of Dorset Council and NHS Dorset received formal confirmation from the Regional Director of Public Health following his visit that he was assured that Dorset Council was using the Public Health ring-fenced grant in line with national guidelines and requirements. A similar assurance letter was also shared with BCP Council.
- 3.5 The Regional Director of Public Health recognised the significant work and compassion that has gone into the disaggregation of the public health functions previously shared between Dorset and BCP Councils and the collaborative approach between the two Directors of Public Health and the administrations in doing this in a thoughtful and structured way.
- 3.6 The assurance process feedback recognised the clear visibility of the Directors of Public Health within current ICB governance and the thinking that is currently taking in place across Wessex on how Directors of Public Health and their teams can best respond to and support the development of new ICB clusters.
- 3.7 The RDPH recognised and highlighted the examples of excellent work by the Public Health team and services for the residents of Dorset. He also recognised the strong links with Dorset ICB and the close working with public health and primary care around health inequalities, which will provide strong foundations for neighbourhood health systems and services in the future. This work can form a clear link to the Dorset Council Plan priorities, including working closer with communities and the focus on partnerships and prevention.

4. **Conclusion**

- 4.1 Two Public Health Teams have been established within BCP and Dorset Councils, each led by a Director of Public Health. The Directorate of Public Health and Prevention for Dorset council has been warmly welcomed as a new addition to Dorset Council and working enthusiastically to embed within Dorset council and support the delivery of Dorset Council priorities.
- 4.2 All the key commissioned mandated Public Health services providing services to the residents of Dorset remain in place and continue to operate in accordance with existing arrangements and performance oversight to ensure the ongoing provision of good quality services for residents in Dorset.
- 4.3 The focus remains on ensuring the good practice and strong performance of Public Health services and activities in Dorset for the benefit of the health and wellbeing of residents and communities. There is the opportunity to further develop and build on the work to support the Dorset Council plan priorities,

particularly around working in partnership, with a focus on prevention, through communities for all.

- 4.4 There is an opportunity to build on the established links between the DPH and wider Public Health team with colleagues in NHS to further develop the model of place based working within Dorset Council area, especially through the national Neighbourhood Health Implementation programme linked to the Fit for the Future 10 Year Health Plan.
- 4.5 Dorset Council received positive feedback and formal assurance from the Regional Director of Public Health about the effectiveness of the use of the Public Health Ring Fence Grant to provide good quality Public Health services and functions to support the wellbeing of the residents of Dorset. There is an opportunity to build on and develop this good performance to further improve the wellbeing of residents in Dorset, and in particular reducing inequalities in health outcomes.
- 4.6 It is proposed that the oversight and scrutiny of Public Health services provided through the new Directorate of Public Health and Prevention will be through the established Dorset Council governance routes, primarily using the People and Health Overview and Scrutiny committees and regular strategic performance monitoring. This will further embed and provide visibility and scrutiny of the public health function and activities within Dorset Council.

5. Legal considerations

- 5.1 Local Authorities must deliver a range of public health functions as set out in the [Health and Social Care Act 2012](#), with five statutory responsibilities defined in law:
 - Help protect people from the dangers of communicable diseases and environmental threats.
 - Organise and pay for sexual health services.
 - Organise and pay for height and weight checks for primary school children.
 - Organise and pay for NHS Health Checks for eligible local people.
 - Provide public health advice to the NHS.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The Department of Health and Social Care allocates each council a ring-fenced public health grant.
- 6.2 The financial approach to disaggregation of the shared Public Health service is based on an agreed ratio that reflects the respective contributions to the shared service budget of the two councils. BCP Council contributed around 55% of the total cost of the shared service, and Dorset Council 45%. This ratio is being used to determine contributions from each council to maintain

existing contracts, until they are due for review. This ratio also determines the notional budget for staffing.

- 6.3 All shared contracts have remained in place since 1st April and have seen no change. This pragmatic and straightforward approach enables a stable platform from which to consider future design and integration of the public health function and services within Dorset Council within the available budget.
- 6.4 There has been strong financial oversight throughout the disaggregation process of Public Health Dorset, and the final position at the end of financial year 2024/25 was delivered within the Public Health Ring fence grant.

7. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 7.1 The wellbeing of the natural environment in Dorset is an important component that supports the health and wellbeing of the residents of Dorset. The Public Health and Prevention Directorate work closely with colleagues and partners in Dorset to support natural, environment, climate and ecology through the work on Healthy places.

8. Well-being and health implications

- 8.1 Public Health is a key function for Local Authorities to be able to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of residents. A high performing Public Health and Prevention Directorate embedded within Dorset Council will help to provide key skills and experience to support the health and wellbeing of residents, including through the effective commissioning and delivery of key services and functions.

9. Risk implications

- 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

- 10.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out as part of the employee consultation process during disaggregation. Further EIAs will be undertaken as part of developing and delivering new arrangements.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix A – Regional Director of Public Health Assurance feedback letter

12. **Background papers**

- 12.1 Dorset Council Cabinet Paper 23rd February 2025 [25 01 03 Public health disaggregation including appendix.pdf](#)

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)

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Office for Health
Improvement
& Disparities



Justin Varney-Bennett
Regional Director of Public Health

South West OHID DHSC and NHSE
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10 July 2025

Sent via email:

- Cllr Gill Taylor, Cabinet Member
- Sam Crowe, Interim CEX
- Rachel Partridge, Acting Director of Public Health and Prevention
- Aidan Dunn, S151 Officer

Dear Cllr Taylor, Sam, Rachel and Colleagues,

Thank you for your time last week for the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant Assurance Visit, I appreciate the effort and resource that has gone into preparing for

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the visit and it was a good reflection of the commitment of the Council to its public health responsibilities.

It was great to spend time discussing with you the 23/24 RO return, budget forecasting, governance and the deep dives into the advice to the NHS and miscellaneous spend categories. I am happy to say that following these discussions I am assured of the use of the Public Health ring-fenced grant in line with the national guidelines and requirements.

Throughout our discussions it was good to see the strategic understanding of Public Health within the local authority at a senior level and feel the commitment to addressing health inequalities and improving healthy life span in partnership at the multiple layers of communities of identity, experience and geography, especially in a time of significant organisational churn in many parts of civic society and reflects well on the Council and its leadership.

The ambition for a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable Dorset comes through strongly in your narrative and the importance of the partnership relationships across the County that underpin this ambition for the people of Dorset. With a growing elderly population, a diverse mix of rural and villages and towns spread across rural and coastal geographies and a varied economic footprint including tourism, clean energy, agri- and aqua- tech and defence research there is a lot to consider for the future. The growth of some of the new industries will bring new population demographics to Dorset with new challenges whilst at the same time you work to bring forward the skills for these industries in the local population, and at the same time the ageing profile of the population creates opportunities to really explore and maximise the concept of the Third Age of life as a productive period in which citizens play a more active part to civic life. You raised the increasing demand at both ends of the age spectrum and I encourage you to explore the potential to help citizens to 'Wait Well', especially in the early years space where this narrative is perhaps underdeveloped and could help defer some of the need as well as improve citizen's lives and increase their sense of control. I hope that the regional work on Tomorrow's Region and the Healthy Ageing Framework will help support your work in these spaces.

I recognise the significant work and compassion that has gone into the demerger of the public health functions previously shared between Dorset and BCP Councils and the collaborative approach between the two DPHs and the administrations in doing this in a thoughtful and structured way. This year will be a year of transition on many fronts and I hope this collaborative and compassionate approach continues as you navigate together some of the major procurements ahead of you and with that in mind I support the proposal to stagger the major public health re-procurements to allow sufficient time for engagement, redesign and collaboration.

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We discussed the 23/24 RO out turn and the provisional data for 24/25 and some of the variations in planned and actual activity and how this reflected both some of the additional income received and utilisation of the grant reserves which was jointly agreed between both Councils. Through the disaggregation there has been significant work to review some of the historic coding practices and this alongside the assurance visit preparation has been useful reflection and we discussed the potential opportunities I am exploring with national colleagues to develop SW RO Public Health guidelines. In discussion of the 5yr budget forecast we highlighted the risks around the major re-procurements of both the Health Child Programme and Sexual and Reproductive Health services and I support your proposals to stagger these and delay them slightly to allow for the separation of the public health function to settle. I would encourage you to hold some additional reserve above the 5% minimum to support procurement and transition for these contracts as there are some risks linked to inflation, market forces and agenda for change that mean an additional reserve buffer may be prudent. It may also be helpful to reach out to BANES to learn from their experience of PSR procurement and to also review the BNSSG Sexual Health matrix contract model as you start your journey on these major contract reprocurements.

Recent announcements over the clustering of Dorset ICB with neighbouring Somerset and BSW ICBs will result in six local authorities sharing one ICB cluster. Plans were already underway to ensure proactive communication and planning between the DsPH affected, to best respond to the upcoming support required by the ICB cluster, and to address challenges presented by changes in ICB leadership roles, and potential imbalances or duplication in NHS advice provision between each local authority team. It was good to hear the strong level of engagement and understanding of the risks and opportunities of the changing NHS landscape. It was interesting to understand some of the historic issues with Primary Care Networks not having place based geographies and as the cluster arrangements evolve this may be an area to explore alongside the layering of Cluster, Place, Locality and

Neighbourhood system governance and accountability, and as this develops it may be wise to monitor and reflect on the coding of resource and cost in the Advice to the NHS category.

In our discussions of the Miscellaneous spend category there were no areas of concern and we discussed some of the approaches taken in coding. As part of these discussions I highlighted my desire to refresh the regional conversation about fluoridation to position for the national work on consultation and I will ask the regional dental public health team to follow up with the DPHs on this separately.

In terms of the future approach to the grant, you may wish to consider how to manage the risks around the 5yr projections especially the impact of potential future retendering of major contracts where inflation may have been flatlined for a long

Appendix A – Regional Director of Public Health Assurance feedback letter

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period within the contract and market forces have shifted considerable. You may also wish to explore diverse partnership arrangements as the NHS Cluster strengthens your opportunities for closer working with a larger number of authorities. There is clear consideration of the future financial context of the Public Health grant and the pressures on it and the wider Council and keeping the core focus on delivering services and strategies that impact on people's lives and I commend this.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the significant work in preparing the packs for me ahead of the visit and in the presentations, these were really insightful and strengthened my sense of assurance in the Council's approach and Rachel and Sam's leadership.

I look forward to returning to visit you in the autumn for an informal visit to see more of the brilliant work in your authority, and in our next annual assurance meeting.

Yours sincerely



Dr Justin Varney-Bennett (He/Him/His)

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People and Health Scrutiny Committee

22 September 2025

**Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership (DSCP) Annual Report
April 2024 – March 2025**

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr C Sutton, Children's Services, Education & Skills

Local Councillor(s):

Executive Director:

P Dempsey, Executive Director of People - Children

Report author and job title: Megan Cameron-Brown, Head of Quality Assurance & Partnerships

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Statutory Authority:

Report status: Public Choose an item.

1. Executive summary

The 2024–2025 reporting year marks a significant milestone for the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP), following its formal separation from the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership in August 2024. This transition has enabled Dorset to tailor its safeguarding arrangements to better reflect local needs and align with national reforms, particularly those outlined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)* and the *Stable Homes Built on Love* review.

1.1 Strategic Leadership and Governance

DSCP has established robust governance structures, including the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Board and a Pan-Dorset Lead Safeguarding Partner meeting. These forums ensure strategic oversight, accountability, and alignment across agencies. Education has been successfully embedded as a statutory partner, enhancing multi-agency collaboration and ensuring the voice of education is central to safeguarding leadership.

Since becoming a sovereign partnership, the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for each board and subgroup. This work has significantly strengthened the partnership's governance framework and clarified the distinct roles and responsibilities across its structures. The DSCP Board now meets quarterly to scrutinise the work of partner agencies, with a particular emphasis on the partnership's agreed priority areas. Oversight of subgroup functions is led by the Multi-Agency Quality Practice and Action Group, which drives continuous learning and improvement through rapid reviews, multi-agency audits, and learning reviews.

The DSCP is widely recognised as an effective and collaborative partnership, where agencies are confident in providing both robust support and constructive challenge to ensure the safeguarding of children in Dorset. Recent multi-agency scrutiny has focused on intra-familial child sexual abuse, with two further scrutiny activities scheduled for September and October 2025. These will examine safeguarding practices for children under two and the implementation of the extra-familial risk and harm strategy. In addition, bi-monthly multi-agency audits are being embedded to support ongoing quality assurance. To further enhance its effectiveness, the partnership is currently in the process of appointing an Independent Scrutineer. This role will provide objective oversight and assurance regarding the impact and effectiveness of the DSCP's work.

1.2 Key Achievements

Key achievements were the integration of education as a statutory partner through the formation of the Education Safeguarding Board. The Families First Partnership Board played a key role in integrating education into Dorset's safeguarding arrangements. This board includes representation from Ofsted and the Department for Education (DfE), ensuring national oversight and alignment with statutory expectations. The Education Safeguarding Board is now a well-established component of the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP), with average attendance of 30-40 members. Meeting quarterly, it reports directly to the DSCP Board and contributes to strategic safeguarding discussions. To ensure education's perspective is embedded throughout the partnership, representatives from the Education Safeguarding Board actively participate in each of the DSCP subgroups. Education continues to be a core part of children services MA line-of-sight meetings, where professionals collaboratively review the progress of children and families and contribute to informed decision-making.

The Partnership completed targeted multi-agency audits on intra-familial child sexual abuse and neglect, resulting in informed action plans to improve practice. Training and development efforts were robust, with 126 practitioners responding to post-training surveys—84% reported high confidence and 95% demonstrated strong knowledge application. The voice of children and families was amplified through co-production initiatives, feedback mechanisms, and tools such as Mind of My Own, enhancing engagement and service responsiveness. Additionally, the inaugural DSCP conference, “Finding Our Girls,” focused on violence against girls and received overwhelmingly positive feedback, further reinforcing the Partnership’s commitment to addressing priority safeguarding issues.

Youth Voice recently engaged 254 young people across Dorset over a two-month period to explore the question: “Should mobile phones be allowed in schools?” This consultation was conducted through workshops and assemblies, capturing a broad range of perspectives.

Key themes emerging from the discussions included the impact of mobile phone use on:

- Safety
- Wellbeing
- Social interaction
- Education and learning

When asked to vote, 72% of participating students supported allowing mobile phones in schools, while 28% opposed the idea. Schools in Dorset currently make their own decisions regarding mobile phones, with some schools for example, having implemented a smart phone ban and other schools having a policy of onsite out of sight. The findings from this engagement are now being considered by the Dorset Education Board, which will determine the appropriate next steps.

1.3 Future Planning

In July 2025, the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) agreed our priorities for 2025-2027:

Priority 1: Violence experienced by children and young people

Priority 2: Domestic Abuse

Priority 3: The impact of children’s and parental mental health and wellbeing on children

We will move forward with several key initiatives to strengthen safeguarding practices across the county. These include conducting bi-monthly multi-

agency audits to assess and improve service delivery, launching a revised neglect strategy and toolkit to support practitioners, and hosting a conference centred on the impact of mental health on children. The Partnership will also continue to embed learning from previous quality assurance activities and enhance independent scrutiny and practitioner guidance to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

1.4 Conclusion

The DSCP has demonstrated resilience, innovation, and commitment in its first year as a standalone partnership. Through strategic leadership, collaborative practice, and a relentless focus on the voice of children and families, the Partnership has laid a strong foundation for continued improvement and impact. The dedication of all partners has been instrumental in driving forward safeguarding excellence across Dorset.

2. The report

2.1 Please see appendix 1

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 Not applicable.

4. Legal considerations

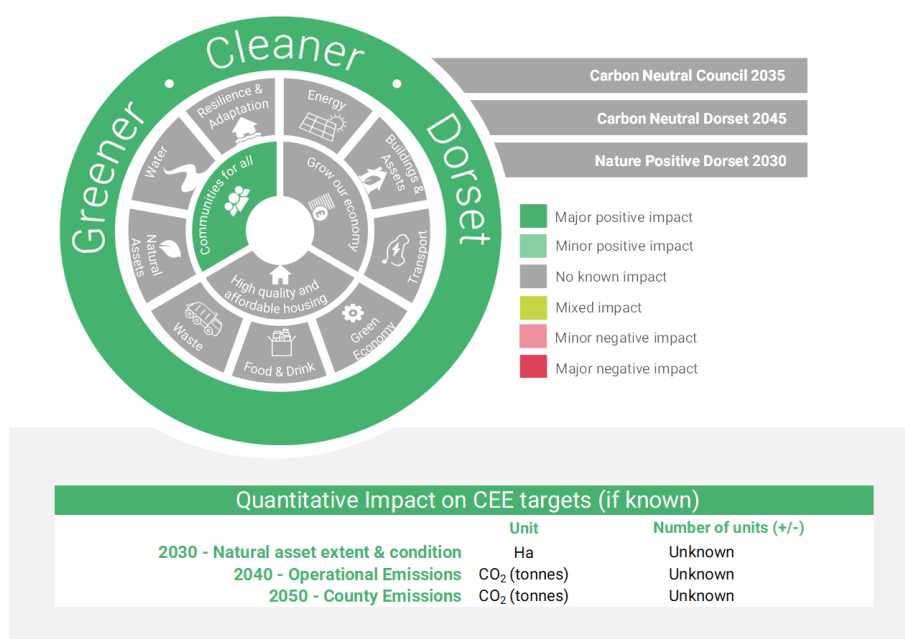
4.1 Not applicable. Statutory Report.

5. Financial implications

5.1 A strong safeguarding children's partnership has important financial implications. By promoting early intervention and coordinated multi-agency responses, it helps prevent escalation of harm, reducing the long-term costs associated with crisis services, health care, social care, and the criminal justice system. Effective safeguarding also improves service efficiency by streamlining processes, reducing duplication, and ensuring resources are targeted where they are most needed. Additionally, robust governance and accountability mechanisms support transparent budget planning and equitable funding contributions from statutory partners, as demonstrated by DSCP's shared funding model and investment in training, independent scrutiny, and statutory functions.

6. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

6.1



7. Well-being and health implications

- 7.1 A strong safeguarding children's partnership has profound well-being and health implications for children, families, and communities. It ensures that children are protected from harm, abuse, and neglect through coordinated multi-agency responses, which in turn promotes their emotional security, mental health, and overall development. By embedding trauma-informed practices and amplifying the voice of children and families, such partnerships foster trust, resilience, and early intervention—reducing long-term health inequalities and improving life outcomes.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 None

9. Risk implications

- 9.1 There is no decision needing to be made, this report is for information only. No risk.

10. Equalities

- 10.1 A strong safeguarding children's partnership actively promotes equality by ensuring that all children and families, regardless of background, identity, or circumstance, are protected and supported equitably. It helps to identify and address disparities in access to services, outcomes, and experiences—

particularly for children and families from minority ethnic groups, those with disabilities, or those facing socio-economic disadvantage. Through inclusive practices, diverse representation, and culturally competent approaches, the partnership fosters a system where the rights of every child and family are upheld, and their unique needs are recognised and met.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Dorset Safeguarding Childrens Partnership Annual Report 2024-2025.

12. Background papers

- 12.1 None.

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)

Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Annual Report 2024/2025



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Section 6 : Conclusion

Appendix 1: Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership structure chart

Section 1

Outlining the requirements set out in statutory guidance

The Safeguarding Children Partnership has a statutory responsibility, as set out in the [Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance \(2023\)](#), for leadership and multi-agency co-ordination of “arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.” In other words, the Partnership is a strategic arrangement between the statutory safeguarding partners (Dorset Council Children’s Services, Dorset Police, NHS Dorset, and Education has been more recently recognised as a statutory partner in the local –but not yet national - safeguarding children partnership arrangement) to ensure that there are effective child safeguarding arrangements in place in the local area.

As referenced, in the [final Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(PDSCP\) Annual Report 2023-2024](#), the previous PDSCP (including BCP Council) formally separated on the 1 August 2024 into two distinct Safeguarding Children Partnerships for each Local Authority area; the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) and the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership (BCP SCP). The structure of the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership is set out in its [multi-agency safeguarding arrangements document](#).

The rationale for the separation was underpinned by strategic changes, brought forward by the [Stables Homes Built on Love review](#) led by the Department for Education, which Dorset Council has been a wave one Pathfinder Local Authority for. This has brought with it a different operating model for Dorset Council Children’s Services, in comparison to BCP Council Children’s Services. In addition, the changes outlined in the Working Together Guidance 2023 posed an additional challenge for the Pan-Dorset arrangement. With the removal of the Independent Chair role, implementing the necessary changes becomes considerably more complex under a Pan-Dorset arrangement. By transitioning to a Dorset Safeguarding Partnership and a separate BCP Safeguarding Partnership, both areas have successfully adapted their structures and procedures seamlessly to align with the revised guidelines. There is a dedicated business team for each Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Whilst the Partnerships are now separate, there are some functions that have been agreed to be delivered jointly and these include:

- The safeguarding children training & development offer
- The child death overview panel arrangements (which is also joint with Somerset)

The [Safeguarding Children Partnership website](#) is also currently a joint website between the DSCP and the BCP SCP, which has been clearly structured into sections for each Safeguarding Children Partnership, as well as including a Pan-Dorset section which includes the above functions. There is a plan for the BCP SCP to establish their own website in due course.

Over the preceding 12 months, the DSCP recognised that to achieve the best possible outcomes:

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

The Statutory Safeguarding Partners

Working Together 2023 defined the head of each statutory safeguarding partner agency (Dorset Council, NHS Dorset and Dorset Police) as the Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP) who are as follows for the Dorset area:

- Catherine Howe, Chief Executive Officer, Dorset Council (for reporting period 24-25 this was Matt Prosser)
- Amanda Pearson, Chief Constable, Dorset Police
- Patricia Miller, Chief Executive Officer, NHS Dorset

As set out in Working Together 2023, the delivery of the multi-agency safeguarding functions and processes should be delegated to the Delegated Safeguarding Partners (DSPs) to allow the LSPs to focus on their joint functions and maintain strategic oversight.

In the Dorset area, the LSPs have identified the following senior officers in their respective agencies who have responsibility and authority for ensuring full participation with these arrangements:

- Paul Dempsey, Executive Director for People – Children, Dorset Council
- Mark Callaghan, Assistant Chief Constable, Dorset Police
- Pam O'Shea, Chief Nursing Officer, NHS Dorset

These representatives or delegates:

- Speak with authority for the safeguarding partner they represent.
- Take decisions on behalf of their organisation or agency and commit them on policy, resourcing, and practice matters.
- Hold their own organisation or agency to account on how effectively they participate and implement the local arrangements.



Pan-Dorset Lead Safeguarding Partner Meeting

In the new structures for each Safeguarding Children Partnership, there is a Pan-Dorset Lead Safeguarding Partner meeting which sits across both. This group meets, up to three times a year, to ensure the Lead Safeguarding Partners have strategic oversight of the multi-agency safeguarding functions. This meeting is structured into three sections: a Pan-Dorset section, a Dorset SCP section and a BCP SCP section. Some of the key Safeguarding Children Partnership items are presented to these meetings, including reviewing progress against the strategic priorities and agreeing the budget for each financial year. The Pan-Dorset section of the meeting allows for discussion and highlighting of any joint strategic issues across both Local Authority areas.

Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Board

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board (previously called the Strengthening Services Board up to the 1 April 2025) is where the Delegated Safeguarding Partners deliver their joint functions, as set out in Working Together (2023). This is chaired by the Chief Executive of Dorset Council with representatives at executive level across the Partnership. The Board has been meeting 6-weekly; however, it was agreed at the last board on the 8th of May 2025, that the board would now meet quarterly. The first quarterly meeting has been scheduled for September 2025. Highlights from the Board are shared with the Lead Safeguarding Partner meeting.

Sitting underneath the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Board are several partnership groups and sub-groups (see Appendix 1 for structure). Each of these groups and sub-groups have a focus on delivering on a certain area of the multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements. For example, the Education Safeguarding Board has been established following the work Dorset Council have been completing as a Pathfinder for the Stable Homes Built on Love Review. This board specifically considers how education is driving forward the partnership priorities and has its own delivery plan against the priority areas.



Partnership Training and Development

The Safeguarding Children training offer continues to be offered as a Pan-Dorset function. This includes a core safeguarding training provision with this being open to attendance from a wide range of agencies, to ensure that there is a multi-agency attendance at the courses.

The administration and co-ordination of the training is paid by income generation.

The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Training is a trusted and dependable provider, ensuring that organisations meet their safeguarding training requirements. Courses are commissioned through the Learning and Development Framework and meet the specific quality control and contract compliance measures.

The offer is regularly updated with both local and national changes in policy and procedure, as well as in relation to any specific learning that emerges from the completion of local rapid reviews, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs) and any other quality assurance or scrutiny activity delivered by both the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Child Death Overview Panel

Statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 defines child death review partners as “local authorities and any Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) for the local area as set out in the Children Act 2004 (the Act), and as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017”.

When a child dies, in any circumstances, it is important for parents and families to understand what has happened and whether there are any lessons to be learned. The responsibility for ensuring child death reviews are carried out is held by ‘child death review partners,’ as defined within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023, and set out in current legislation. Child death review partners must make arrangements to review all deaths of children normally resident in the local area and, if they consider it appropriate, for any non-resident child who has died in their area.

Child death review partners, for two or more local authority areas, may combine and agree that their areas be treated as a single area for the purpose of undertaking child death reviews. Child death review partners in Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, Dorset, and Somerset have agreed to treat Pan Dorset and Somerset as a single area, resulting in a joint Pan Dorset and Somerset Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) undertaking child death reviews for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole, Dorset, and Somerset children.

The CDOP panel met 7 times in 2024/25 and reviewed 59 deaths that have occurred prior to this annual reporting period of April 2024-March 2025: 31 Pan-Dorset deaths (16 Dorset and 15 BCP) and 28 Somerset deaths. There is a delay in child deaths being reviewed at a full CDOP, due to the information gathering process that needs to take place with involved agencies, including the deaths first being reviewed at local child death review meetings, before a review takes place at CDOP.

In addition, CDOP has been notified of a total of 25 deaths of Pan Dorset residents and 27 deaths of Somerset residents which have occurred during this annual reporting period of April 2024-March 2025. These deaths will be reviewed by CDOP within the next annual reporting period. In addition, there were 5 notifications of Out of County children, resident elsewhere who died within our areas (3 Dorset Out of County / 2 Somerset Out of County) – these deaths will be reviewed and recorded by their home Local Authority. The annual CDOP report April 2024-March 2025 is due to be published in November 2025.



Section 2

Dorset Area Profile

The population of the Dorset Council area is 384,809, a rise of 1.3% since the 2021 census. There are 73,056 children and young people aged 0-19 representing 19% of the total population, an increase of 0.5% since the 2021 census. 30% of the population are aged 65 and older (nationally 19%) and the working age population aged 16 to 64 represents 54% of the population.

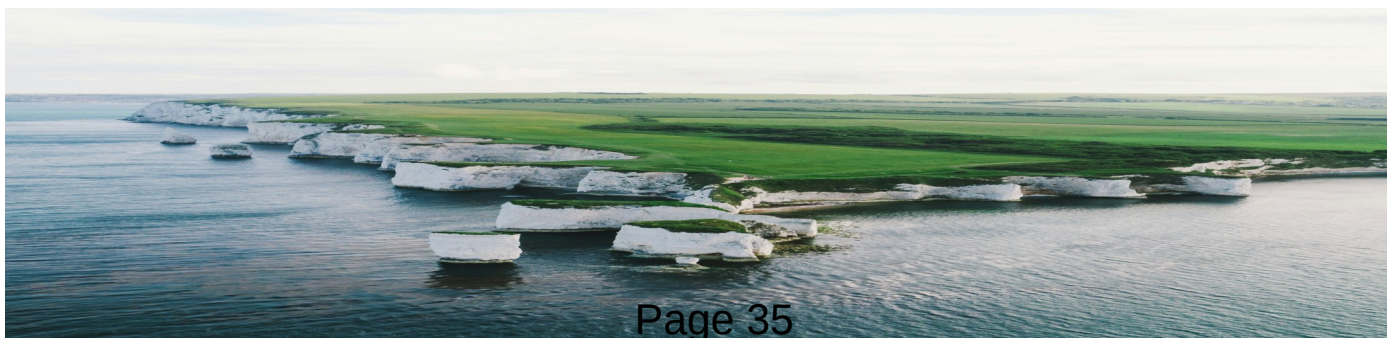
English is the main language in Dorset with 98.2% of the population in 2021. There are though over 80 languages spoken across Dorset, however residents for whom non-English is a main language make up a very small proportion of the population. The top 5 languages spoken in Dorset are English with Polish, Romanian, Nepalese and Bulgarian spoken by 0.7% of the population. According to the 2021 Census 93.9% of the population are white British, a decrease of 1.7% from the 2011 Census with the remaining 6.1% of residents from Black and Minority Ethnic groups (national 25.6%), this rises to 7.8% for children and young people (aged 24 years and under). Just over half of our residents, who are from an ethnic minority, report as being 'White Other.' This is mainly made up of White European residents.

The beautiful landscapes and towns and villages of Dorset can conceal hidden challenges: there are significant areas of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland). Eleven areas in Dorset are within the top 20% nationally for high levels of multiple deprivation, ten of these within Weymouth and Portland (data from 2019). In 2018, South Dorset was ranked at 533 among 533 parliamentary constituencies in England for social mobility with some 70% of the population of the constituency living in Weymouth & Portland. There is rural deprivation linked to isolation and difficulty accessing housing, transport, and essential services. The Children's Society estimates that approximately 23% of Dorset Children are living in poverty, with up to 45% in some wards (2021).

There are 46,415 children from Reception to Year 14 in Dorset (January 2025 school census). Dorset has 158 Schools Academies, Maintained and Free. Overall, for the quality of education rated good or better by Ofsted, Dorset has 77% of all its education establishments rated as good or better and this is in comparison to the national picture of 84%. Overall, for the effectiveness of leadership and management rated good or better by Ofsted, Dorset has 86% of all its education establishments rated as good or better and this is in comparison to the national picture of 93%.

Attainment at the expected standard at Key Stage 2 for the combined Reading/Writing and Mathematics was at 55%, 5% below national and in the bottom 20% of all local authorities. At Key Stage 4, 42% of pupils achieved Basics (GCSE English & Maths) at grade 4 or higher, compared to 46% nationally. 63% achieved grade 5 or higher, compared to 65% nationally. Both indicators remain a challenge for Dorset. The gap between disadvantaged young people and their peers is still not where we need it to be and faced further challenge due to the pandemic and the impact on school attendance.

Crime is generally low with Dorset being within the top ten safest places to live in the UK. First Time Entrants of young people to the Criminal Justice System are relatively low in a national context.



Section 3

Progress against statutory guidance

A) Activities Achieved and B) Impact

We have been implementing Education as a key safeguarding partner within our new safeguarding activity, in relation to Education being included as a statutory partner in the safeguarding children's partnership. This has involved the establishment of a dedicated Education Safeguarding Board, co-chaired by the Corporate Director for Education & Learning, Dorset Council, and a local head teacher, the board is made up of senior leaders from early years to post 16 education providers across Dorset. In addition, representatives from this Board attend the other Partnerships' sub-groups which allows for education's input in all areas of work across the child safeguarding partnership. The impact of this, is we now have education embedded in our safeguarding children's partnership as an equal statutory partner, which means that the voice of education is now evident across the partnership.

The neglect action plan that was formulated following the independent scrutiny work of neglect in 2023/2024. We have updated our neglect strategy. The impact of this is having a clear strategy on how we address neglect across our multi-agency partners in Dorset.

A multi-agency quality assurance activity has taken place in relation to intra-familial child sexual abuse, which is one of the Partnership's current priority areas. This has resulted in a report outlining the findings and recommendations. The partnership will now take this forward to develop actions to take forward to improve the confidence of front line practitioners in the partnership to work with children who have been sexually abused.



The first conference of the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership took place in collaboration with [Dorset Council's Pineapple Project](#) on the 25 November 2024. The Conference was titled: 'Finding our Girls'. The Conference was linked to our priority area number 1 - Violence experienced by children and young people - by specifically looking at violence against girls.

The conference had two keynote speakers, one of these being Laura Bates who is the founder of the Everyday Sexism Project. Laura talked about issues around global gender inequality and some of her campaign work around tackling this inequality. The conference also heard from Kendra Houseman, who is the founder of Out of the Shadows, which is a training and consultancy service which delivers safeguarding training informed by the experiences of survivors of abuse. In addition, we also heard from local agencies such as Paragon Dorset, which provides services to victims of domestic abuse, as well as an overview of the Chesil Hidden Girls initiative, which promotes safety of girls and women in the Weymouth & Portland area.

The conference was attended by 264 practitioners across the Dorset and BCP areas. We received a great response rate from attendees of 72% to polls and Q&A sections during the event.

We also received great feedback from attendees following the event including:

- 85% rated their experience at the conference as excellent
- 100% agreed that the conference had achieved its aims as set out at the beginning of the day
- 100% agreed that the conference has helped them think about what their organisation can do to support the violence against women and girl's agenda

The Partnership's conference followed a conference held by the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) earlier in the year, on the 16 July 2024, in relation to violence against women and girls. Partnership work in relation to violence against women and girls continues across the partnership.

In 2024-2025, a diverse range of training courses, including mandatory and priority sessions, such as:

- Safeguarding L2 Foundation
- Working Together (WT) Initial and Update
- Neglect
- Safer Recruitment and its Update
- Managing Allegations
- Online Safety
- Missing Exploited Trafficked Children (MET)
- Child Exploitation Basic Awareness
- Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) Introduction
- Domestic Abuse (DA)
- 7-point briefing aimed at practitioners, in relation to the local protocol on bruises or injuries to non-mobile babies and children, was shared following the review of the local protocol.
- Annual review of Pan-Dorset policies and procedures

Engagement and Impact of Training Attendance

The training co-ordinator is responsible for issuing a survey, to all attendees of the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children training offer, three months post their attendance at the course, to be able to assess the impact of the training in relation to their professional practice. The survey also includes a question around the practitioners' use of multi-agency toolkits, developed by each of the Safeguarding Children Partnerships, to support their practice in certain areas (e.g. working with parents/carers who are or have experienced domestic abuse.)

Our training programs have seen significant engagement with the completion of this survey, with a total of 126 responses received from staff across the Dorset Council area. Key highlights from these surveys include:

- **High Confidence Levels:** 84% of delegates reported feeling confident or very confident in applying their learning.
- **Knowledge Application:** 95% of delegates rated their knowledge as good or extensive.
- **Practical Changes:** 64 delegates reported implementing changes in their practice, positively impacting children, young people, and families.



(c) Evidence of the impact – including contributions of each safeguarding partner

Dorset Council Children's Services

In the last 12 months, Dorset Children's Services have been embedding and adapting the Families First for Children Pathfinder model. The aim of the programme was to test-and-learn approaches to increasing effective, preventative multi-agency support and protection services, in response to the Government's strategy 'Stable Homes, Built on Love', published in February 2023.

Pathfinder areas have designed, and are now delivering, services across four key policy pillars:

- 1) Family Help,
- 2) Child Protection,
- 3) Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements
- 4) Family Networks.

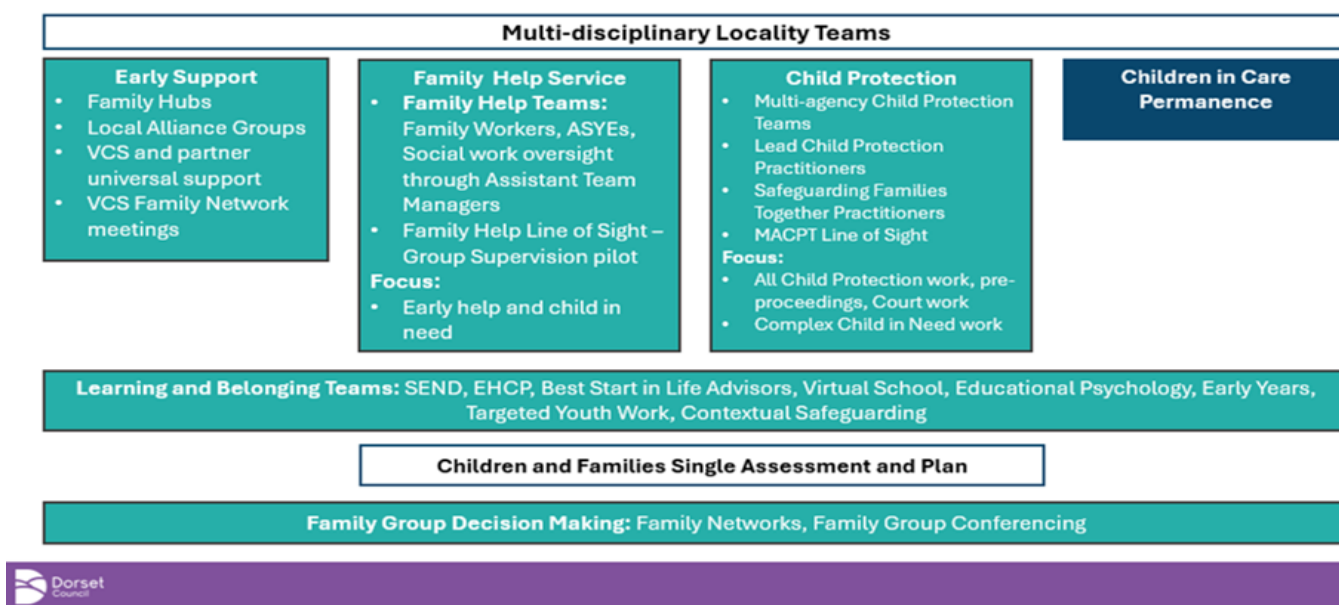
The Families First for Children (FFC) Pathfinder programme concluded on 31 March 2025, having successfully demonstrated the feasibility of its delivery model and significantly influenced national policy. As the programme transitions into a business-as-usual phase, service delivery and transformation will continue in accordance with the locally agreed and costed plans. This marks a pivotal step in embedding the Pathfinder model into routine practice.

On 20 March 2025, the national guidance for the Families First Partnership Programme was published, introducing several key changes from the earlier Wave 1 and Wave 2 Design Specifications. Notably, the new guidance provides greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams and the Lead Child Protection Practitioner. It also omits specific requirements for Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, as these are now addressed in the updated *Working Together to Safeguard Children* framework. Furthermore, Family Network Support Packages will not be implemented, and Family Group Decision Making will be mandated only at the pre-proceedings stage, although its use is encouraged earlier in the process.

In response to the updated national guidance, work is actively underway to adapt the local model (as outlined in the diagram below) to ensure full alignment with the new design specifications by March 2026. This adaptation process is critical to maintaining consistency with national expectations, whilst preserving the strengths of the local implementation.

In March 2025, Dorset welcomed Ofsted inspectors for the ILACS inspection, which resulted in an 'outstanding' rating for Children's Services. The final report highlighted the positive impact of the Families First Pathfinder model on both practice and outcomes. Inspectors noted that effective social care practice was evident across all pillars, with statutory duties being met. The 'Family First' approach was praised for empowering families and fostering ownership of their improvement plans. Additionally, secure multi-agency decision-making, through effective line of sight meetings, was recognized as a key strength. The introduction of single-family help assessments, by skilled practitioners, was also commended. The report acknowledged the significant governance and oversight provided by the Pathfinder partnership, as well as the local authority's strong learning culture and openness to external scrutiny. Multi-agency collaboration was further emphasized, with partners from health, education, and police sectors contributing to a deep, shared understanding of children's experiences at both strategic and operational levels.

Implementation: overview of our model



Birth to Settled Adulthood/Transitions

The Birth to Settled Adulthood program, in Dorset, is designed to provide dedicated support services for children and young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) as they prepare for adulthood. This service launched in April 2024 and aims to support individuals from birth to 25 years of age.

The Birth to Settled Adulthood (B2SA) programme has made significant progress in the last year, with key developments across service delivery, integration, and strategic planning. Phase 1 implementation focused on expanding Mosaic system access, piloting Care Act assessments, and launching a new outcomes framework. The Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) pathway was further developed, alongside the establishment of a Keyworker Service and a commissioning strategy. Data and performance monitoring remain a priority, with a Power BI dashboard in development. A partnership with Oxford Brookes University is supporting evaluation through a survey rollout planned for late 2025.

Phase 2 has refocused priorities on integration, communication, and targeted support, including the Best Start in Life and All Age Continuing Care initiatives. The Dorset Keyworker Service, a critical NHS priority, is progressing toward full implementation, aiming to reduce inpatient admissions for young people with complex needs. In parallel, the housing strategy has advanced with innovative models to increase supply, improve standards, and meet complex accommodation needs. This includes leasing temporary and settled accommodation, piloting bespoke housing solutions, and reviewing allocation policies. Despite challenges such as limited resources and high demand, the programme continues to drive forward with a strong cross-directorate approach, ensuring young people are supported to live safe, independent, and fulfilling lives.

Dorset Children Services Ofsted Outcome

During March 2025 we went through an Ofsted ILACS inspection of our Children's Services. The report was published on the 9th May 2025. The grading achieved is in the table below.

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of children in care	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding

Ofsted quoted in the report that:

"Thinking 'Family First' has empowered families and enabled them to have ownership of their plans to support improvement in their lives. Effective line of sight meetings brings about secure multi-agency decision-making and have become an integral part of practice. Of particular note is the careful introduction of single-family help assessments implemented by skilled practitioners"

Dorset Council Education & Learning

The 2023 update to Working Together to Safeguard Children acknowledges the key role of education in safeguarding and sets out the requirements for local areas to create an environment which enables education settings to be fully engaged, involved and included in local safeguarding arrangements. The Families First for Children Pathfinder required Pathfinder areas to implement a range of activities to test and learn 1) how these arrangements might be put into practice and 2) the impact of such arrangements.

In Dorset, we have worked together to create a system that builds on the work already undertaken by settings to safeguard children, optimising the input of the education sector leaders. Ultimately putting the voice, wisdom and expertise of education at the heart of safeguarding leadership. The Dorset Education Safeguarding Board has been established as part of the Families First for Children reforms and aims to strengthen the voice of education within safeguarding.

The work of the Education Safeguarding Board and Members is to:

- To identify and discuss topics of interest, issues and risks raised by educational providers and, where required, to highlight these to the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) and make recommendations.
- To evaluate the nature and quality of safeguarding within educational settings through a range of quality assurance activity, including audits, analysis of data, feedback from practitioners, children and carers and section 175/157 audits.
- To support educational providers with awareness of and compliance with national legislation, policies, guidance, best practice and findings from national case reviews related to safeguarding including highlighting changes.
- To liaise with educational providers to provide awareness and understanding of any key local developments in relation to safeguarding including guidance, findings from inspection, audits and case reviews.
- To feedback to the DSCP on the implication of decisions and policy changes relating to safeguarding in education settings.
- To support/develop training and learning opportunities with the safeguarding partnership training team in respect of safeguarding and education.
- To provide an opportunity for educational providers to identify and share best safeguarding practice and consider themes from Ofsted / Independent Schools Inspectorate reports / inspections.
- To support education settings to be inclusive and respond effectively to issues of diversity including supporting the sector to respond to the changing and complex needs of children with SEND both within mainstream, specialist and alternative provisions.
- To enable representatives from educational settings to link with the work of the DSCP, attend sub-groups as appropriate and provide feedback to the Education Safeguarding Board.

- To develop a work plan to carry out such work as agreed with the DSCP in line with the partnership and the group's priorities.
- To have oversight and ensure completion of actions that arise from Rapid Review and Child Safeguarding Practice Review.
- To report annually on the work plan and contribute to the production of the DSCP's annual report.
- Education Safeguarding Board members will seek the views of their respective setting/organisation/sector groups and bring forward key areas for discussion at in turn Board members will cascade key messages to their settings and sector groups.

The Board consists of representatives from key educational bodies and others, including Early Years, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, Special Schools, Post 16 provision, Alternative Providers, Learning Centres, Independent Schools, Virtual School and Dorset Council Children's Services.

The safeguarding Board meets four times within an academic year. The first year has run between September 2024 – September 2025. During this first year the board has identified a number of key workstreams that are currently in train and led on by different members of the board.

Dorset Police

Over the last 12 months, the Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) resources have been aligned along local authority boundaries to allow for more effective partnership working. The structure that has been aligned to the Families First for Children Pathfinder has now been introduced, with regular monitoring in place. Dorset Police attend national Pathfinder meetings, which illustrate the progress Dorset has been able to make in comparison to some other areas. The CAIT team has continued to see high levels of demand and is therefore investing in additional staff (4 officers/staff).

Dorset Police have identified a need to increase the omni-competence in the MASH staff to be able to respond to high demand within the different demand areas, such as Public Protection Notifications (PPN's), attending and contributing to strategy discussions and child protection case conferences. On average, the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) process 1200 Child Public Protection Notices a month. On average, the MASH is collating 110 strategy discussions a month. In 2024, 142 requests were made under Sarah's Law legislation. The Police have provided reports for all initial child protection conferences in the last 12 months.

A new PPN form contains a mandatory voice of the child section, which ensures officers/staff completing the form obtain this. Our Investigative Standards Team have been commissioned to complete audited reviews of crimes, stop search forms, PPN's and other material generated in working with young people. The reviews include whether the voice of the child has been captured. The Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) review all referrals regarding online abuse to ensure safeguarding advice is required and the appropriate action taken.

The Right Care Right Person (RCRP) principles ensure that individuals, requiring a public service, are dealt with by the right public service. Dorset Police, together with partner agencies, have now successfully implemented RCRP.

For example, partners from health and social care will conduct their own welfare checks before contact with the police, this means the correct professional is engaged who is best placed to deal with the individuals needs, rather than historically the police being asked to take responsibility.

Dorset Police recognise that care is required when assessing risks to children who are often needing extra support with the challenges they face. Care must be exercised to ensure that the child's voice is heard, whilst ensuring their best interests are protected and responded to. Control Room staff and officers have received training in this area and are supported through IPD decision making tools. Where an immediate threat to life

or risk of serious harm exists, Police Officers will always respond.

Dorset Police are currently involved in exploring and implementing a pathway of sexual harm behaviour work to divert juveniles to an education pathway, where the offending does not warrant a criminal justice approach.

Dorset Police are anticipating a National Child Protection Inspection (NCPI) over the next 12 months. This will be carried out by HMICFRS. To prepare, the Force has established an internal board that will be driving quality assurance work and taking note of the findings of other Forces' NCPI reviews.

NHS Dorset (Integrated Care Board)

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) is a statutory partner for both BCP and Dorset safeguarding children partnership's. NHS Dorset continues to collaborate closely and actively participates with statutory duties. NHS Dorset has continued to follow local multi agency partnership procedures for safeguarding children in the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. NHS Dorset internal safeguarding assurance group (SAG) has monitored safeguarding governance quarterly, throughout the year. Highlights from this group are shared with the Chief Nursing Officer. NHS Dorset oversees the governance arrangements for the NHS providers in the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

NHS Dorset chairs the Dorset CSPR sub-group and, as part of that, has chaired several Rapid Reviews and Local Child Safeguarding Practice reviews, (LCSPRs), ensuring any identified learning, recommendations and actions are shared within the NHS.

NHS Dorset has led on implementing [ICON](#) across the NHS and this has been introduced to Children's Social Care, and other agencies, to ensure that parents and carers receive consistent messages regarding responding to crying babies.

NHS Dorset had led on revising the bruising and other injuries to non-mobile babies and children protocol and is currently leading the review of the local unborn baby protocol.

Aggregated Scrutiny

Whilst the Partnership, under the PDSCP arrangement, had recruited independent scrutineers with subject matter expertise for each specific area of scrutiny required. Going forward, the DSCP have agreed to recruit to an independent scrutineer role who will provide scrutiny on our strategic priorities and the functioning of the partnership.

During 2024-2025, the partnership completed two multi-agency assurance activities; a multi-agency learning circle and the intra-familial child sexual abuse quality assurance work.

The learning circle enabled the partnership to bring together frontline practitioners from across agencies to reflect on the child's journey through services and understand any learnings to improve multi-agency working to improve outcomes for this child. To prepare for the learning circle each agencies completed a chronology, this was then combined into one complete chronology that was shared with partners prior to the learning circle. This exercise alone demonstrated the missed opportunities that happens because of not having a multi-agency chronology for children where multiple partners are working to address the needs of the child and family. The partnership is hoping to test the development of a multi-agency chronology in 2025-2026 through the multi-agency child protection team and the changes that will be made to Dorset's model to align with the national families first guidance.

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership undertook a multi-agency quality assurance activity, in respect of assessing the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to intra-familial child sexual abuse (IFCSA) of children under 18 years of age in the local area. As per previous Partnership quality assurance activities, this

involved the triangulation of findings from a few quality assurance activities including audits on a selection of children, young people and families' case records, obtaining the views of parents and the voice of multi-agency practitioners and managers.

The quality assurance process identified several strengths in this area of practice including:

- Strong multi-agency collaboration was evident for the majority of the families audited, where effective information sharing between key agencies such as the school, children's social care and health services supported a co-ordinated response
- Child-centred practice was consistently demonstrated, with children's voices being actively included in planning processes.
- Timely interventions were noted across the majority of families audited with recognition particularly for the Police in implementing preventative strategies, such as the use of Sarah's Law.

The quality assurance activity also identified a number of areas for development including:

- Risk assessments completed were sometimes outdated or insufficient
- There was a lack of professional curiosity in relation to the protective capacity of non-offending parents
- Supervision and management oversight were inconsistent, with limited evidence of contingency planning or reflective supervision
- Delays in police investigations negatively impacted children's emotional wellbeing and planning
- Professionals working with the families demonstrated over-optimism, underestimating risks and prematurely closing or stepping down families without fully resolving the concerns

Broadly, the quality assurance activity identified the following themes for development by the Partnership going forwards:

- The need for increased professional confidence and training in working with children and young people experiencing sexual abuse
- There is further work to be done to highlight the importance of understanding the emotional complexity of family dynamics, particularly when children do not disclose their abuse due to loyalty or affection for the abuser, or even fear or what would happen if they told.
- The quality assurance work highlighted a lack of specialist tools and professionals with the right level of expertise to interpret the voices of non-verbal or neurodiverse children.

These areas of development have formed the basis of an action plan that is being overseen by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure that the learning is embedded in practice. The action plan will be drive forward by the task and action subgroup which meets 6 weekly. The progress of this action plan will be overseen by the multi-agency quality practice action group and is due to be reviewed at the September 2025 meeting.

Voice of children and families

The voice of our children and families has continued to be a priority for the partnership in 2024-2025. This has been demonstrated in the following activities:

- Feedback, engagement, and co-production are all part of the work we do. A Family Engagement officer has been supporting with work aligned to both Pathfinder and Safeguarding Partnership priorities. Undertaking some co-production of the Section 47 advice and support, now offered by Quality Assurance Reviewing Officers, was developed first with parents who had already been subject to Child Protection processes, to understand how we could strengthen our practice. We are also seeking feedback in relation to our Family Group Conferences and Family Network Meetings to support, enhance, and strengthen our offer.

- The families also volunteered to help shape leaflets and guidance to inform families of our new offer.
- We are further developing our family engagement and involvement and have been working with the Family Rights Group to develop the Dorset Participation Forum (Family Advisory Boards). This is building on the Safeguarding Families Together evaluation and feedback from families to help provide scrutiny, challenge and guidance on our safeguarding partnership arrangements.
- We have worked directly with children and young people in the co-design of the Gender Identity Toolkit for Practitioners. This has now been quality assured by the legal team and will progress through Children's services and then Dorset Council Senior Leadership sign off, followed by partnership governance to be signed off at the Dorset Safeguarding Children board.
- We ensure that our practice across the multiagency partners is trauma informed and all direct work with children is age appropriate, empathetic and relational.
- When we undertake multiagency audit work, we aim to gather feedback from both parents and children regarding the services they have received.
- At key decision-making points we ensure that we speak to children, whether that be for their Child in Care review and Child protection conferences.
- To further support our work with children we have committed to using Mind of My Own with children and young people. We are rolling this out gradually to support and embed this practice across services,

Young People's Voice: Insights from the Pineapple Project Survey

The 2025 Pineapple Project survey, building on its 2022 origins in Chesil Locality, has significantly expanded its reach to include all locality areas and genders across the county. With 1,548 responses, the survey offers a powerful and diverse representation of young people's experiences, perceptions, and needs regarding safety in their communities. The findings reveal both commonalities and disparities across age groups, genders, and localities, providing a rich foundation for targeted action and systemic change.

Young people articulated a clear understanding of what contributes to their sense of safety. The presence of friends and family, good lighting, visible police presence, and access to safe community spaces such as youth clubs and gyms were among the most frequently cited factors. Notably, over 800 respondents highlighted the importance of having designated safe places with trusted adults, reinforcing the value of community-based guardianship. However, a concerning number—over 480—also reported feeling safer when carrying items for self-protection, including personal alarms and, alarmingly, weapons. This underscores a pressing need to address both perceived and real threats in their environments.

Experiences of harm were widespread and deeply troubling. A significant number of young people reported being followed (421), sexually assaulted (262), approached by people in cars (232), and subjected to street harassment (352). These experiences were disproportionately reported by young women, highlighting the gendered nature of safety concerns. The data also revealed that harm is not limited to physical violence but includes a spectrum of violations such as being filmed without consent and exposure to gang-related crime. These findings demand a holistic safeguarding response that recognizes the full continuum of harm.

When it comes to disclosure, young people primarily turn to parents (1175), friends (937), and other family members (504). However, a substantial number also reported not telling anyone (142), citing barriers such as fear of not being believed (958), fear of punishment (805), and not wanting parents to find out (922). These contradictions—where 75% say they would tell a parent, yet 64% don't want parents to know—highlight the complexity of trust, fear, and autonomy in young people's lives. The data calls for a nuanced approach to safeguarding that includes empowering peer support, building trust in professionals, and engaging parents as informed partners.

The survey also revealed that 43% of respondents felt there was “no point” in disclosing harm, and 61% feared they wouldn’t be believed. These figures are a stark reminder of the systemic barriers that silence young people and the urgent need to create environments where their voices are heard, validated, and acted upon. The Pineapple Project’s emphasis on community guardianship, peer support, and contextual safeguarding is a direct response to these needs, aiming to build a culture where safety is not only prioritized but co-created with young people.

Funding

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to the principles of equitable and proportionate funding with shared and equal responsibilities as set out in Working Together (2023). There is a dedicated Business Team to support the work of the partnership across the Dorset area. The budget will also fund the Partnership’s statutory functions, such as completion of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Independent Scrutiny activity.

The PDSCP separated on 1 August 2024 and the balance of partnership funding of £76,390 was transferred to the new partnership arrangements. Each partnership received £38,195, a 50% share of the available balance.

From 1 August 2024 a dedicated team supported the DSCP work, funded by contributions from Dorset Council, NHS Dorset ICB and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset. As at the 31 March 2025 the DSCP funding balance was £60,716.

The DSCP contributions for 2025/26 are expected to total £151,570. This funding plus the carry forward balance will be used to fund the work of the DSCP.

(c) Future Plans

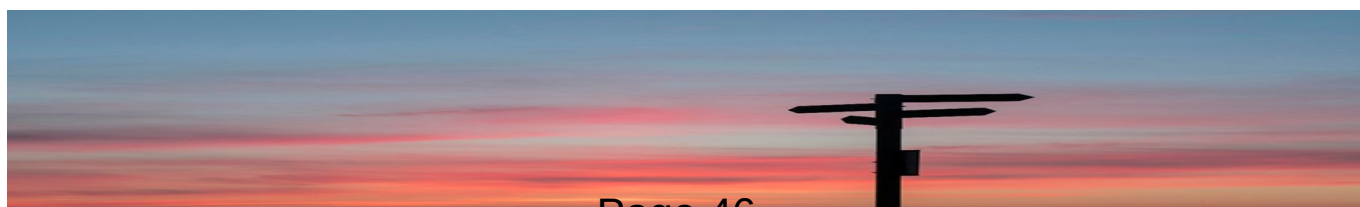
Going forward in 2025/2026 the partnership will be completing multiagency audits bi-monthly against the priority areas, auditing the journey of 5 children and families across the partnership. This will begin in quarter 3.

In quarter 3 of 2025/2026 we also have planned a multi-agency assurance activity which will be scrutinised by an independent scrutineer is planned to take place in quarter 3 this year in relation to pre-birth to 2-year-olds. This is following 4 rapid reviews that took place across quarter 4 2024/2025 and quarter 1 2025/2026 in relation to non-accidental injuries to non-mobile babies and neglect.

The training team plan to relaunch the Neglect offer for free, aligning with the launch of a new strategy and toolkit. A proposal approved by the Dorset SCP MAQPAG recommends a 5% uplift on course fees, linked to the cost-of-living rise. Cancellation fees for free courses have increased from £25 to £30.

£10,000 from the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Training Team budget will be used by DSCP (MAQPAG) for free training offers linked to LCSPRs or annual conference costs, as each partnership will have its own conference.

The DSCP’s next annual conference, due to be held in December 2025, will have a focus on Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing.



Section 4

Additional Information

Priority areas

The previous Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership agreed three priority areas for their work from 2023/2024, and these continued for 2024/2025 (as set out below). These priority areas are currently being reviewed, now that the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership has been formed as a separate partnership, and the updated priorities will be published on the DSCP website shortly.

Priority One: Violence experienced by children and young people including.

- Sexual violence and abuse
- Domestic violence and abuse
- Physical violence and knife crime

A) Sexual violence and abuse

Data, included in the Partnership's Performance Report for Quarter 3 (2024/2025), shows that the overall number of children at risk of sexual exploitation has been increasing over the last three quarters.

Dorset Multi-Agency Child Sexual Abuse toolkit

As previously reported, in the Partnership's annual report 2023/2024, a [Dorset multi-agency child sexual abuse toolkit](#) had been devised and published, on the DSCP website, aimed at multi-agency practitioners to provide them with additional guidance and support in this area of practice. The impact of this toolkit on practitioners' practice is continually being assessed by the Partnership, through multiagency audits and independent scrutiny activity. In addition, the partnership completes a 3-month impact survey, which is distributed to those who have attended the Safeguarding Children Partnership training offer, in relation to practitioners' use of the toolkit. What we have currently found is that there is limited evidence that practitioners or managers are using the toolkits to support the work they are doing with children and families. Individual agencies and partners are developing strategies to socialise the toolkits with practitioners and set reminders for them to be used in our work with children and families. The bi-monthly audit exercise will enable us to regularly review the use of toolkits and track improvement overtime.

Dorset Extra-Familial Risk and Harm

During 2023/2024, the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership renewed [their strategic approach to working with Extra-Familial Harm](#). Extra-familial harm is defined as safeguarding risks to children and young people that present outside of the home environment, for example through drugs, gangs, youth violence or sexual and criminal exploitation. During 2024/2025, the Partnership continued to develop their strategic response to extra-familial harm and have published an [extra-familial harm toolkit](#), on the DSCP website, for use by multi-agency practitioners. This includes key documents, such as the terms of reference for the governance structure in the Partnership in relation to extra-familial harm, including for the tactical and strategic groups.

An Extra Familial Risk and Harm Panel has been in place since September 2023. This is a multi-agency panel, held on a weekly basis. There continues to be good partnership engagement with these Panels.

The work of the Pineapple Project, part of the wider Chesil Hidden Girls concept, continues to develop in its mission to safeguard the young women of Dorset, when they are outside of their family homes and in the local community. The work of Chesil Hidden Girls was highlighted at the Violence Against Women and Girls conference, led jointly by the Pineapple Project & the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership in November 2024. The Pineapple Project are continuing to develop their number of community guardians across the Weymouth, Portland Dorchester and Swanage areas.

In 2025/2026, the Partnership have scheduled multi-agency audits to take place to test that the Extra-Familial Harm strategy has been embedded and to take forward any identified learning and recommendations as required.

B) Domestic violence and abuse

CSPs (Community Safety Partnership) in Dorset lead on the multi-agency response to Domestic abuse across the partnership and the updated strategy for 2025-2029 is currently being agreed and will be published shortly on this page [Dorset community safety partnership - Dorset Council](#)

Domestic Abuse training to all frontline police staff has included the importance of capturing the voice of the child and their wider safeguarding needs. Domestic Abuse Scrutiny Panels review Dorset Police's response to Domestic Abuse and the Force is also a member of the Wessex Domestic Abuse Joint Interoperability Group with the Crown Prosecution Service to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

Domestic abuse quality assurance work – implementation of the action plan

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership undertook a multi-agency quality assurance exercise, in respect of partnership work with families where there was domestic abuse and a specific focus in audit activity on under 5s during 2023/2024, as reported in last year's annual report.

During 2024/2025, the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership implemented the learning identified in the action plan.

Action taken by the Partnership: The existing multi-agency policies, procedures and toolkits in relation to domestic abuse were reviewed to ensure that they had specific guidance in relation to undertaking assessments where there is domestic abuse including child to parent abuse and coercive controlling relationships between young people. This included reviewing the [High-Risk Domestic Abuse \(HRDA\) procedure](#) that also sits within the [multi-agency domestic abuse toolkit](#).

In addition, the Partnership sought assurance from Dorset Police, Dorset Healthcare, NHS Dorset on behalf of primary care and Children's Social Care in relation to the assessment tools they use for working with domestic abuse and that they have appropriately considered this learning point. All of these partner agencies provided assurance in relation to the assessment tools that they utilise and the further development work that is happening within each agency in relation to ensuring the voice of the child, young person and parents/carers are effectively captured and responded to.

Action taken by the Partnership: The timely issuing of reports for child protection conferences has been taken forward by the Families First for Children Pathfinder, as part of the test and learn phase of this programme. This is being tracked through the multi-agency child protection action group.

Action taken by the Partnership: The multi-agency safeguarding children training offer in domestic abuse was reviewed to ensure that the learning identified through the quality assurance activity was included, and this is now part of the training programme for multi-agency practitioners for 2025/2026.

In addition, 7 pilot sessions have taken place across a selection of Dorset schools in relation to training on coercive control which has been delivered by You Trust. These have been received well by the schools, strengthening the schools understanding of spotting the signs of coercive control in relationships. These sessions are currently being fully evaluated, led by the Safeguarding Schools team in Dorset Council, to see if these could be rolled out wider across all Dorset schools.

Action taken by the Partnership: Dorset Council colleagues in the Community Safety Partnership have established a business case for a digital actions management system that would allow for better tracking of actions from HRDA. This was endorsed by the (HRDA) Quality Assurance Group and is currently being progressed, with completion of this scheduled for 2025/2026.



C) Physical Violence and Knife crime

Work in relation to knife awareness and knife crime sits within the Community Safety partnership (CSP), recognising the collective need to support and address this within the community.

Dorset Police continue to support Operation Sceptre (a national initiative in relation to knife crime) across Dorset and this includes diversions, targeted intervention for those most at risk of being involved in knife crime, and educational work for schools across the County with the firearms and knife education work (FAKE). F.A.K.E. is also supported by the safer school's network and our education colleagues, reaching between 2500 and 3000 young people twice a year. Work continues, throughout the Dorset local authority area, around the serious violence duty with working groups targeting knife crime intervention and education for young people, along with funding opportunities to support this work. The Dorset Police Safeguarding Hubs incorporate knife crime and physical violence when considering exploited children. Those identified as being high-risk will be 'managed' in conjunction with both Dorset Council and BCP Council.

The Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership recognises that limited multi-agency quality assurance activity has yet been completed in relation to physical violence and knife crime. The Partnership are proposing for the strategic priority areas 2025-2027, that this priority area is renamed to extra-familial harm which will include physical violence, knife crime, sexual violence and abuse, including online abuse. Although the data shows that public place violent crimes and knife crimes shows stability in this area, with numbers broadly similar to the same quarter last year, this does remain an area of concern and thus has been proposed to be retained as a priority area going forwards.

Priority Two: Children's mental health and emotional well-being

Children's mental health and emotional well-being continues to be a priority area for the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. However, in recognition that there are several elements to this area which are not all overseen by the DSCP, the Partnership have proposed to narrow the focus of this priority area, going forwards for 2025-2027, to the impact of children's and parental mental health and well-being on children.

Dorset Police will seek to minimise the occasions young people are arrested and taken to a custody environment and will use voluntary attendance where possible. If they are arrested, there is an increased focus to ensure they are dealt with quickly and effectively and will be screened for achieving a 'reachable moment' to connect with the young person. The Force has become more effective at using and enforcing bail conditions, civil orders and Domestic Violence Protection Notice's to lessen the emotional impact of domestic abuse on children within the household.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Transformation

CAMHS is undergoing a transformation currently, and this will include having a presence at the Family Support and Advice Line (the 'front door' to Dorset Children's Services), as well as offering support in schools. This is due to be implemented in 2025/2026.

Priority Three: Neglect

During the past year, Dorset Police took part in the Neglect Scrutiny Panel and is now implementing the learning identified which included greater professional curiosity. Training has been provided to officers and staff to inform them of what they should be looking for when in a house or engaging with young people. Allocation of children and young people where neglect is a feature will be discussed at the Force Tasking meeting to ensure appropriate ownership.

Independent Scrutiny Project – Implementation of the action plan

During 2023/2024, an independent scrutiny project was commissioned by the Partnership focusing on neglect.

During 2024/2025, an action plan has been implemented and progressed to address the learning and recommendations from the scrutiny activity. This is still being finalised and due to be completed in 2025/2026.

Some of the actions completed to date are the following:

- The Partnership's neglect strategy has been revised and updated, and is due to be published alongside the updated neglect toolkit – once finalised – in 2025/2026
- Dorset Police have completed an audit on their neglect figures as the number of cruelty and neglect crimes declined between Quarter 2 2022/2023 and Quarter 2 2023/2024, which is in contrast to the national picture of a 106% increase in child cruelty and neglect offences in England in the past 5 years (NSPCC 2023, [106% increase in child cruelty and neglect offences in England in the past 5 years | NSPCC](#)). Furthermore, the Partnership's dataset had identified a corresponding reduction in the number of children starting child protection plans under the category of neglect. The findings from the audit showed that there does not appear to be a significant change or discrepancies in the category of the reasons why the offence of cruelty or neglect has been recorded. The findings do not suggest that there have been any errors in recording cruelty or neglect offences based on category. Based on the information known at this time, there does not appear to be an obvious causation for the reduction in cruelty or neglect offences recorded by Dorset Police other than a genuine reduction in the number of offences being reported to Dorset Police or to Dorset Children's Social Care.
- A review of the neglect multi-agency child safeguarding training offer is underway and will be completed once the neglect toolkit has been revised so that the training offer can promote the use of these tools amongst the multi-agency practitioner attendees.

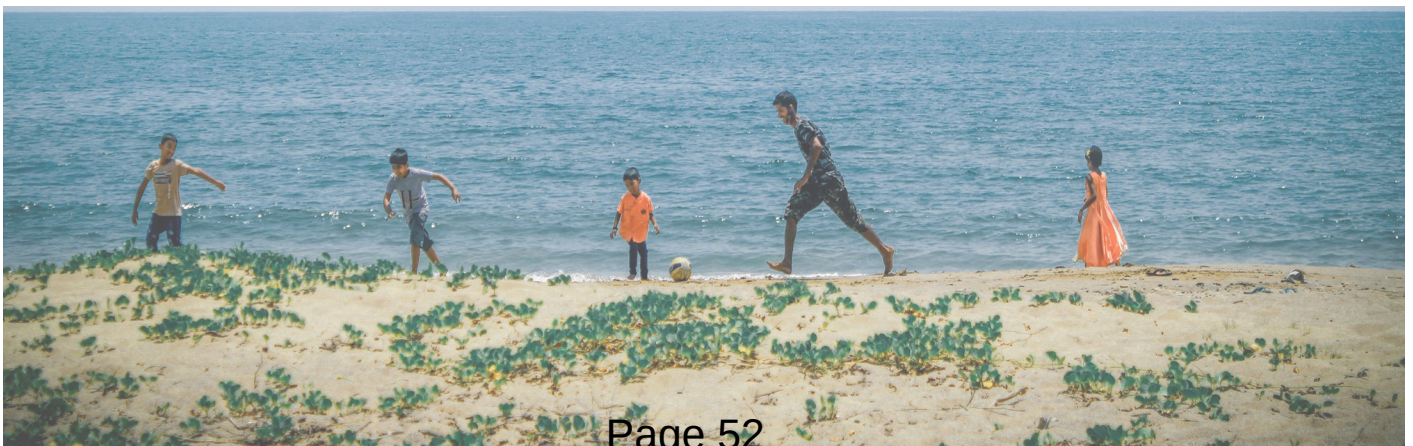


Section 5

Future Planning - Next steps

There are several key areas currently under development in the partnership including:

- Completion of independent scrutiny of our multi-agency audit in relation to pre-birth to 2-year-olds and implementation of the actions agreed following the learnings and recommendations identified.
- Appointment of a scrutineer
- Implementation of the actions from the intra-familial child sexual abuse quality assurance work through an action plan
- Development of further guidance for practitioners in relation to learning reviews, including Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs), where they are involved in these which can be linked to our local guidance document on the serious incident notification, rapid review & LCSPR process.
- Review of the Partnership dataset to align with the revised and updated strategic priorities
- Review of Partnership arrangements around harmful sexual behaviour in children and young people, including development of a framework/local pathway for agency response to this.
- To continue to ensure the voice of practitioners and children, young people and families is central to the work of the Partnership
- To increase the oversight of the Multi-agency Quality Practice and Action Group, all subgroups including the Multi-Agency Child Protection Board will be required to complete quarterly reports. Non-statutory agencies, such as the Youth Justice Service, strategic alliance etc will also be invited to report key highlights quarterly.
- In the development of the Partnership's strategic priorities in the future, the independent scrutineer will develop and run a workshop to support LSP to identify and confirm the priorities, using both data and feedback from partners. This will include having already had discussions with partners in MAQPAG and the Partnership board prior to the workshop. This will continue to ensure priorities are selected using both data and senior operational partner's feedback.



Section 6

Conclusion

As we conclude the DSCP's first Annual Report for the year 2024-2025, we take a moment to appreciate the continued drive for innovation and development in child safeguarding in the local area. This has been particularly notable in the work of partner agencies, as part of the Families First for Children Pathfinder. Dorset continue to act as a blueprint for strengthened safeguarding arrangements, particularly in relation to the involvement of Education within the Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The establishment of separate Safeguarding Children Partnerships has been delivered successfully and without any impact to the business-as-usual arrangements of the Partnership.

Our continued efforts in quality assurance, data analysis, scrutiny activity and service improvement has enhanced the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The voice of the child and young person continues to be a cornerstone of our work, and significant developments have been made in this area because of the Families First for Children Pathfinder programme, as well as other innovative safeguarding work.

As we look to the future, we are emboldened by our current and previous successes and strides taken in further developing our multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements. We continue to strive for better and take forward any learning identified, both from a local and national perspective.

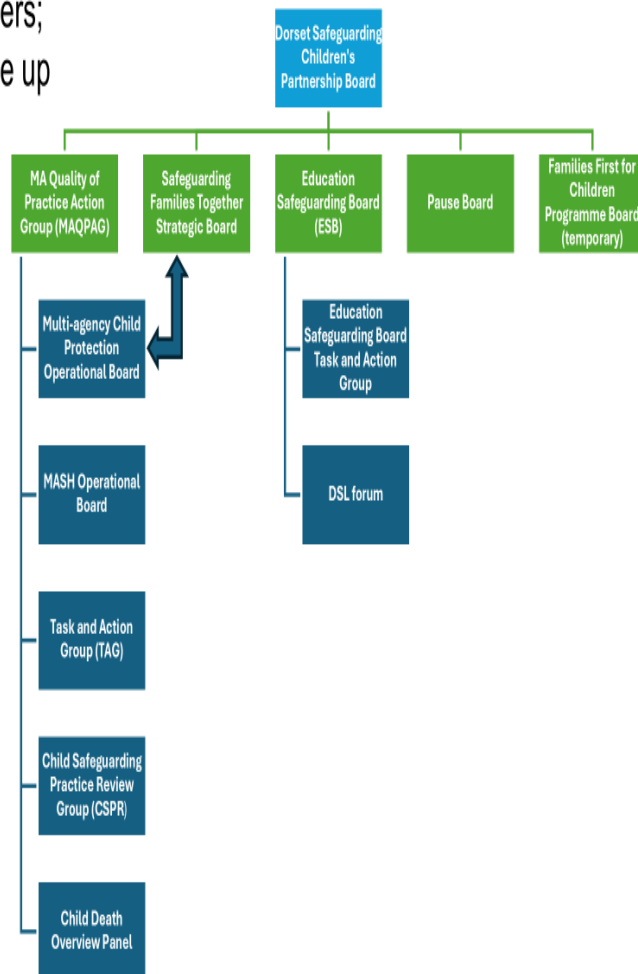
We extend our heartfelt thanks to every individual and organisation that has contributed to our mission. Your support has been invaluable, and it is through our continued partnership that we will forge a path towards a safer, more nurturing environment for all children and young people in the Dorset area.



Appendix one

Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership: Education as an equal Safeguarding Partner

There are senior operational staff from the four partners; health, local authority, police and education that make up the core membership of the subgroups.



People and Health Scrutiny Committee

Work Programme

Meeting Date: 22 September 2025

Report Title	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
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	Chris Heighway – Performance and Analytics Team Manager	

	to the committee work programme for further analysis.	Cllr Nick Ireland – Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	
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	
Future Care Programme	To receive an update on a system-wide transformation programme to transform and improve urgent and emergency care services in Dorset. To review the emerging benefits and progress of the programme after its implementation.	Dylan Champion – Programme Manager Cllr Steve Robinson – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	

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
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	

Meeting Date: 1 April 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	

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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	

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Informal Work of the Committee:

Date	Topic	Format	Members	Lead Officers / Members	Other Information
May 2026	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, Todd 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.
TBC	Briefing by NHS Trusts for a subsidiary company.	Briefing	People & Health Scrutiny Committee		

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The Cabinet Forward Plan October 2025 to January 2026 (Publication date – 10 SEPTEMBER 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."

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

Cabinet 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
October 2025					

Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025-2028 Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Dorset Council has a legal requirement to create a Domestic Abuse Strategy as set out in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. This was the second Strategy the Council had written such legislation came into place. The Strategy requires sign-off from the Council.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025	People and Health Overview Committee 15 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Andy Frost, Service Manager for Community Safety</i> <i>andy.frost@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Ian Grant, Programme Coordinator</i> <i>ian.grant@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Age Friendly Communities Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To provide an update on the Age Friendly Communities Programme.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025	Health and Wellbeing Board 24 Sep 2025 People and Health Overview Committee 15 Sep 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Sam Poole, Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning & Improvement</i> <i>samuel.poole@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>
Empty Homes Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open This report will introduce a strategy which sets out how the Council intends to bring long term empty properties back into use.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025	People and Health Overview Committee 15 Sep 2025 Cabinet 9 Oct 2025	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Steven March, Service Manager for Housing Standards</i> <i>steven.march@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dorset Council - Farms Estates Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Draft strategy for Cabinet consideration and approval following development and appraisal by the Farm Advisory Panel.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth	David Haynes, Senior Rural Estates Surveyor david.haynes@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Jessica Maskrey, Head of Service – Assets & Property jessica.maskrey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)
Developer contribution funding for community facilities at Mampitts Green, Shaftesbury Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To provide Cabinet members with an update on progress with the award of s106 developer contribution monies for the Mampitts Green project, Shaftesbury. To secure agreement of funding milestone variations, and provisions to enable early funding drawdown to support progression of the project	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning	Hilary Jordan, Service Manager for Spatial Planning hilary.jordan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Andrew Galpin, Infrastructure & Delivery Planning Manager andrew.galpin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
New Forest Mitigation Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To seek agreement to adopt the New Forest Mitigation Strategy and apply a tariff to qualifying development to help fund the Strategic Access, Management and Monitoring projects identified in the strategy, thereby allowing the Council to give planning permission in the east of the council area.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Place Services	<i>Hilary Jordan, Service Manager for Spatial Planning hilary.jordan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Transformation Investment and Our Future Council Delivery update Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To seek Cabinet agreement to adopt the refreshed Transformation Strategy and OFC Delivery Model, which builds on existing progress under the Our Future Council programme. It strengthens our approach to organisational sustainability, targeted investment and service redesign with continued focus on enabling technologies and digital delivery to support budget balancing.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation	<i>Lisa Cotton, Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Services lisa.cotton@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Chief Executive</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Get Dorset and BCP Working Plan Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To gain Cabinet approval for Dorset and BCP's Get Britain Working Plan and the related connect to work plan, and delegate authority for subsequent changes and allocation of further funding.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth	<i>Jon Bird, Service Manager for Economic Development and Skills jon.bird@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Nick Webster, Head of Growth and Regeneration nicholas.webster@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Aspire Adoption Annual Report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider the Aspire Adoption Annual Report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Jane MacLennan jane.maclennan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
Council Tax for Care Leavers Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Jane MacLennan jane.maclennan@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Paula Golding, Corporate Director for Care and Protection paula.golding@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk 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
Children's Services - Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services progress update Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open An update to Cabinet on Children's Services progress and impact against the post inspection action plan from the May 2025 inspection of Children's Services. This includes an updated "Self-Evaluation" from Dorset to be presented.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Richard Belcher, Service Manager - Strategic Partnerships</i> richard.belcher@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk <i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>
Children's Services Capital Programme Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt Update on various elements of the Children's Services Capital programme, including the SEND programme, with a view to clarifying or seeking delegations to allow the programmes to progress.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy	<i>Paul Scothern, Service Manager Capital Commissioning</i> paul.scothern@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk <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
Modification of Public Health Contracts over £500k: 0-19 Public Health Nursing and Sexual Health Services Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Fully exempt Both 0-19 Children and Young People Public Health Nursing Service and the Integrated Sexual Health Service contracts are currently due to end on 30 September 2026. Due to delays in procurement planning arising from the disaggregation of Public Health functions, approval is sought to extend the Integrated Sexual Health Service contract by 6 months and the 0-19 public Health Nursing Service contract by 12 months. This will enable appropriate staging and completion of procurement activity.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Oct 2025		Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Jane Horne, Consultant in Public Health</i> <i>jane.horne@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Director of Public Health and Prevention (Sam Crowe)</i>
November					

Council Plan Progress Report Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open A bi-annual report to Cabinet on Council Plan delivery.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 11 Nov 2025		Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Liz Crocker, Head of Strategy</i> <i>liz.crocker@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Chief Executive</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
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> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</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> <i>sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Heather Lappin, Head of Strategic Finance</i> <i>heather.lappin@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>
Dorset Care Record Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open Approval for Dorset Council's continued participation in the Dorset Care Record (DCR).	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 11 Nov 2025		Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Sam Poole, Interim Corporate Director for Commissioning & Improvement</i> <i>samuel.poole@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Jen Cook, Lawyer - Contracts and Commercial</i> <i>jennifer.h.cook@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i> <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Report on Pipeline of Asset Disposals Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Part exempt To consider a report on the Pipeline of Asset Disposals.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 11 Nov 2025		Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property & Assets and Economic Growth	<i>Carly Galloway, Service Manager Business Operations carly.galloway@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Jessica Maskrey, Head of Service – Assets & Property jessica.maskrey@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
December					
Dorset Tenancy Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open A tenancy strategy to set out the kinds and circumstances for different types of tenancies that should be provided to social rented housing tenants, including arrangements for fixed term tenancies, for registered providers which hold stock in the Dorset local authority area, to pay attention to when formulating their tenancy policies.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025	People and Health Overview Committee 3 Nov 2025	Cabinet Member for Health and Housing	<i>Sharon Attwater, Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Performance sharon.attwater@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Andrew Billany, Corporate Director for Housing andrew.billany@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Towards a new model of day opportunities transformation Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider the results of the consultation on the future of day services in Dorset and use this information to shape a way forward for these services. The consultation was launched on a set of proposals across Dorset arising from Cabinet's agreement in principle to the new model for these services at its meeting on 10 September 2024.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025	People and Health Overview Committee 3 Nov 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Sarah Perrett, Commissioning Manager - Micro Provider & Voluntary Sector Development sarah.perrett@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Karen Stephens, Interim Head of Service - Market Relationships, Major Contracts, and Over 65's karen.stephens@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)
Partnership Principles and Statement of Reasonable Expectations Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To approve a set of Partnership Principles with Community Partners and To approve a Statement of Reasonable Expectations with Town Councils	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025	People and Health Overview Committee TBC Place and Resources Overview Committee TBC	Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	Steven Ford, Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Sustainability steven.ford@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, Jennifer Lewis, Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement jennifer.lewis@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Chief Executive

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Other Committee(s) consulted and Date of meeting(s)	Portfolio Holder	Officer Contact
Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To seek Cabinet's approval for the final Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy, prepared in accordance with the Environment Act 2021 and associated regulations. The strategy sets out a spatial framework and priorities for nature recovery across Dorset, developed through extensive stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering. Approval will enable formal publication and implementation, supporting biodiversity enhancement, climate resilience and alignment with national and local environmental objectives	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Executive Director, Place (Jan Britton)</i>
Dorset National Landscape Management Key Decision - Yes Public Access – Open To adopt the Management Plan 2025-30, which sets out a strategic framework for conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, biodiversity, and culture heritage of the Dorset national Landscape, in alignment with national guidance and local priorities	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 9 Dec 2025		Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate, Performance and Safeguarding	<i>Bridget Betts, Environmental Advice Manager bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk 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
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2026					
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February					
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Quarter 3 financial management report Key Decision - No Public Access - Open Quarter 3 financial management report.	Decision Maker Cabinet	Decision Date 27 Jan 2026		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
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 10 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> sarah.how@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk <i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

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 10 Feb 2026	Cabinet 27 Jan 2026 Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee 22 Jan 2026 People and Health Scrutiny Committee 23 Jan 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>
May					
Financial Provision for the Voluntary Community Sector 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	People and Health Overview Committee 15 Sep 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</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 - October 2025 to January 2026
(Publication date – 4 SEPTEMBER 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
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>
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>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>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
December 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 8 Dec 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 8 Dec 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>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 8 Dec 2025	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	<i>Executive Director, People - Adults (Jonathan Price)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Annual Reports				
Care Dorset Annual Business Plan (March) 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>
Review of Terms of Reference (June) 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 grace.evans@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</i>
Care Dorset Annual Performance Report (June) Key Decision - Yes Public Access - Open To consider the Care Dorset Annual Performance 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>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Annual report and Year end accounts (June) 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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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.



The Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE) Forward Plan September 2025 to January 2026 (Publication date – 14 AUGUST 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 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 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
September 2025				

Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (if required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker 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>
Dorset Council Commissioner's Report Key Decision - No 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 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 ross.bowell@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk 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 - No 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 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</i> <i>(Paul Dempsey)</i>
December 2025				

Dorset Council Delegated Decisions (if required) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note any decisions taken under delegation.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 1 Dec 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Executive Director, People - Children</i> <i>(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 - No 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 Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 1 Dec 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 - No 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 Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date 1 Dec 2025	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>

Subject / Decision	Decision Maker	Date the Decision is Due	Cabinet Member	Officer Contact
Annual Reports				
Review of Terms of Reference (June) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To note the shareholder committee terms of reference.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date	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>
Annual Performance Report (December) Key Decision - No Public Access - Open To consider the Coombe House Annual Performance Report.	Decision Maker Shareholder Committee for the Dorset Centre of Excellence (DCOE)	Decision Date	Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills	<i>Executive Director, People - Children (Paul Dempsey)</i>

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