



Dorset Council

Date: Thursday, 22 October 2026
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

All members of Dorset Council are requested to attend this meeting of the Full Council.

Chief Executive: Catherine Howe, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic & Governance Services
Meeting Contact susan.dallison@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

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1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

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To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2026.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) To receive a short presentation from the Youth Council.
- (b) To receive any announcements from the Chair of Council.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTIONS

A period of 30 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to questions and statements on the business of the Council in the following order:

- (a) Questions and statements from Town and Parish Councils;
- (b) Questions and statements from those living or working in the Dorset Council area;

A person or organisation can submit either 1 question or 1 statement at each meeting.

You are welcome to attend the meeting in person or via MS Teams to read out your question and to receive the response. If you submit a statement for Full Council this will be circulated to all members of the council in advance of the meeting as a supplement to the agenda and appended to the minutes of the meeting for the formal record, but it will not be read out at the meeting. The first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received by Democratic Services will be accepted on a first come first served basis in accordance with the deadline below:

The full text of the question or statement must be received by 8.30am on 19 October 2026. All submissions must be emailed to susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

When submitting your question or statement please note that:

- You can submit 1 question or 1 statement for each meeting;
- A question may include a pre-amble to set the context, each question, including the pre-amble can consist of up to **450 words** and you will be given up to **3 minutes** to read out your question;
- Sub-divided questions will not be accepted;
- When submitting a question please indicate who the question is for, i.e. the name of the Cabinet member;
- You will need to include your full name, address and contact details;
- All questions and statements will be published with the minutes of the meeting as a matter of public record.

Before submitting your question or statement please read the Council's Procedure Rules paragraphs 9.1 – 9.12 to ensure that your question/statement is compliant.

[Part 2 Rules of Procedure - Council and Committee Procedure Rules.pdf](#)

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

A period of 15 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to petitions in accordance with the council's petitions scheme.

A period of 15 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to

deputations in accordance with the council's constitution.

The petitions scheme and procedures relating to deputations can be viewed at:

[Council Procedure Rules](#)

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS FROM THE LEADER OF COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS

To receive any announcements and reports from the Leader of Council and members of the Cabinet.

8. NEW WARDING PROPOSALS FOR DORSET COUNCIL - RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND 33 - 48

To consider a report by the Service Manager for Democratic & Electoral Services.

9. DORSET COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2026/27 49 - 64

To consider a recommendation from Cabinet.

10. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2026-2027 65 - 138

To consider a recommendation from Cabinet.

11. THE DORSET COUNCIL (PURBECK) MOTORISED WATERCRAFT BYELAWS 2027 139 - 146

To consider a report by the Environment, Policy and Partnership Team Manager.

12. APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL LICENSING/GAMBLING COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIR

Following the resignation of Cllr J Jeanes as a member of the General Licensing Committee and Gambling Committee to appoint a new Vice-chair.

The nomination from the Liberal Democrat Group is Cllr J Andrews.

13. HARBOURS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTEE

In accordance with the terms of reference of the Harbours Advisory Committee to seek Full Council approval to appoint Mr Mark Saxby as a co-optee on the Harbours Advisory Committee for a further three year term. October 2026 – October 2029.

14. MOTION ON NOTICE - VIABILITY AS A MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATION 147 - 148

To consider a motion on notice, to be proposed by Cllr S Flower and seconded by Cllr B Quayle.

15. MOTION ON NOTICE - MOTION FOR THE OCEAN 149 - 152

To consider a motion on notice, to be proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr B Bawden.

16. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To receive questions submitted by councillors. The deadline for receipt of questions is 8.30am on 19 October 2026.

17. 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.

18. 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 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 is no exempt business scheduled for the meeting.



DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JULY 2026

Present: Cllrs Stella Jones (Chair), Les Fry (Vice-Chair), Jon Andrews, Mike Baker, Shane Bartlett, Belinda Bawden, Laura Beddow, Matt Bell, Richard Biggs, Bridget Bolwell, Louise Bown, Alex Brenton, Piers Brown, Ray Bryan, Andy Canning, Will Chakawhata, Simon Christopher, Simon Clifford, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Richard Crabb, Peter Dickenson, Neil Eysenck, Beryl Ezzard, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Alex Fuhrmann, Simon Gibson, Margaret Goringe, Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Sally Holland, Ryan Holloway, Ryan Hope, Nick Ireland, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Paul Kimber, Chris Kippax, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Robin Legg, Cathy Lugg, Craig Monks, Paddy Mooney, David Morgan, Steve Murcer, David Northam, Louie O'Leary, Emma Parker, Mike Parkes, Andrew Parry, Byron Quayle, Belinda Ridout, Julie Robinson, Steve Robinson, Pete Roper, Andy Skeats, Duncan Sowry-House, Andrew Starr, Gary Suttle, Clare Sutton, Roland Tarr, David Taylor, Andy Todd, Chris Tomes, David Tooke, James Vitali, Kate Wheller, Sarah Williams, Ben Wilson and Carl Woode

Present remotely: Cllrs Jindy Atwal, Jane Somper and Claudia Webb

Apologies: Cllrs Derek Beer, Jill Haynes, Rob Hughes, Jack Jeanes, Rory Major, Jon Orrell, Val Potheary, David Shortell and Gill Taylor

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

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Jan Britton (Executive Director - Economy and Environment), Sam Crowe (Executive Director - Housing, Prevention and Communities), Susan Dallison (Democratic & Governance Services Team Leader), George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director - Children's Services), Lee House (Service Manager for Finance), Catherine Howe (Chief Executive), Julia Ingram (Director - Adult Social Care), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Jonathan Mair (Director - Assurance (Monitoring Officer)), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer) and Jack Wiltshire (Corporate Director for Highways and Engineering)

WELCOME TO NEW COUNCILLORS

The Chair of Council welcomed Councillor P Mooney and Councillor M Goringe to their first Full Council meeting following their election to Dorset Council.

17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

19. **Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed the Youth Voice Officer and a representative of the Youth Council, who provided a short presentation on the Youth Council's plan for the year. A copy of the presentation would be sent to all councillors, and councillors were encouraged to contact the Youth Voice Team if they wanted to get involved.

The Chair reported that as part of a recent Volunteer Week, she had visited Ferndown Community Support who had received the King's Award for Voluntary Service, which recognised the dedication and commitment of the 70 volunteers at the centre. In particular, the Chair thanked Councillor Hannah Hobbs-Chell who had co-founded the organisation.

20. **Public Participation - questions**

There were three questions received from members of the public and responses were provided by the relevant Cabinet members. The questions and responses are attached at appendix 1 to these minutes.

21. **Public participation - petitions and deputations**

There were no petitions or deputations for consideration at the meeting.

Councillor M Parkes handed in a petition on behalf of Leanne Gilchrist, regarding the school crossing patrol at Church Road, Ferndown and which had been signed by 1148 residents of Ferndown. They looked forward to receiving a formal written response in line with the council's Petitions scheme. The Chair noted that the matter would not be discussed by Full Council as it had not met the required number of signatures required to trigger a Full Council debate.

22. **Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members**

The Leader of Council reported that Councillor J Andrews would be stepping down from Cabinet and thanked him for his contribution and commitment to Cabinet over the past two years. A number of councillors also added their thanks to Councillor Andrews for his work as a Cabinet member. The Leader reported that Councillor J Jeanes would be joining the Cabinet with effect from 1 September 2026. There was recognition of the large scope of the Place Services portfolio area and the Leader noted that consideration was being given to how Cabinet members could best be supported.

The Leader provided updates on significant work that was being undertaken including continuing discussions on devolution and local government reform across the Wessex area. In addition, he reported that the Dorset Council and Energy Saving Trust Homewise campaign had been nominated and shortlisted for

the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Award. Although the campaign did not win, the recognition received was positive and the Energy Saving Trust would be developing a case study of Dorset Council to assist other councils in this area.

23. Capital Programme Review

The Cabinet Member for Resources and Finance presented a recommendation from Cabinet with regard to a review of the Dorset Council Capital Programme. It was noted that Appendix D to the report to Cabinet on 23 June 2026, did not form part of the recommendation as it was dealt with as 'for information' only.

It was proposed by Councillor S Clifford seconded by Councillor D Northam.

Decision

That Full Council:

1. Approve the new structured approval framework for capital projects, as outlined in Appendix A of the report to Cabinet of 23 June 2026
2. Endorse a fundamental reset of the capital programme, including removal of legacy, stalled, and inactive schemes
3. Approve the "Standing items" to be included in the capital programme, as shown in Appendix B of the report
4. Approve the revised "Approved capital schemes" to be included in the capital programme, as shown in Appendix C of the report
5. Approve the increase to the Capital Contingency budget from £2m to £10m, funded from the removal of stalled, low-value and legacy schemes with no recent activity.

24. Joint Local Transport Plan

The Cabinet Member for Place Services presented a recommendation from Cabinet with regard to the adoption of the Local Transport Plan 2026 – 2041.

It was proposed by Councillor J Andrews seconded by Councillor S Clifford.

A number of comments were made emphasising the importance of the plan and the need to progress the areas that it covered, and assurances were sought that councillors would have input into the detail of the plan and the ability to advocate for their wards in terms of future plans. The value of taking the plan through the Place and Resources Overview Committee on a number of occasions was also recognised.

It was highlighted that the Local Transport Plan was a joint plan with BCP Council and also required their approval. Any issues with the approval would need to be discussed with the Department for Transport.

The Cabinet Member for Place Services thanked those officers at Dorset Council and BCP Council that had been involved in the development of the plan over the last 3 years.

Decision

1. That the Local Transport Plan 2026 – 2041 be adopted
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Regeneration, Infrastructure and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services, to approve any necessary minor non-material and non-policy altering changes that such do not materially alter the substance, objectives or strategic direction of the plan before it is published, subject to the equivalent approval by BCP Council.
3. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Regeneration, Infrastructure and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Place Services, to approve timely updates to the Implementation Plan, where the need arises, to take account of changes of national policy, local priorities or funding.

25. Motion on Notice - submitted by Cllr Holloway

Full Council received the following Motion on Notice proposed by Councillor R Holloway seconded by Councillor D Sowry-House and supported by Councillors K Wheller, B Ezzard, R Legg, B Bolwell, B Bawden, J Jeanes, A Fuhrmann, R Major, S Florek, A Todd, S Williams, R Hope, J Andrews, J Atwal, D Morgan, G Taylor, S Bartlett, C Kippax, L Fry, H Hobbs-Chell and S Clifford.

Motion Narrative and Action Required

Our beloved Ginger tabby “Pumpkin” was killed earlier this year by a motorist in the early hours who failed to stop and drove off, it was only another passing motorist who found him in the road and took him to the emergency vets where he was found to have suffered a head trauma. My wife and I were unaware that this had happened until mid-morning when the vet contacted us, and we were both devastated that this had happened knowing that someone just left him for dead. Unfortunately, this has happened to many cat owners across the country and leaves many owners devastated.

Currently Section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 only applies to Dogs, Horses, Cattle, Pigs, Sheep & Goats but NOT cats, Since June 2024 all cats in England over 20 weeks old must be legally microchipped as is the same for Dogs. Recently the Government introduced the new Animal Welfare Act 2025 to crack down on pet smuggling, which of course I fully support. But I find it incredible that the Government is not even considering updating the Road Traffic Act. And yet despite multiple petitions and charities saying this must change, currently the Government says and I quote “difficult to enforce” I find that response incredibly hollow.

As the animal loving nation we are I think it's time that the law should be updated to protect cats and to give cat owners reassurance that motorists should legally stop if they collide with cat.

I ask members across the chamber to please support the following motion to put pressure on Government to change the law by writing to the Secretary of State for Transport.

Motion: -

That this council writes to the Secretary of State for Transport RH Heidi Alexander MP calling for the law to be changed so that cats are protected under section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. Whereby motorists will be legally required to stop if they collide with a cat. And to ask the government to set a timetable for this to be discussed in the current parliamentary term.

Decision

That this council writes to the Secretary of State for Transport RH Heidi Alexander MP calling for the law to be changed so that cats are protected under section 170 of the Road Traffic Act 1988. Whereby motorists will be legally required to stop if they collide with a cat. And to ask the government to set a timetable for this to be discussed in the current parliamentary term.

26. Motion on Notice submitted by Cllr J Vitali

Full Council received the following Motion on Notice proposed by Councillor J Vitali seconded by Councillor L O'Leary and supported by Councillors A Parry, C Tomes, R Bryan, M Parkes, S Jespersen, C Monks, G Suttle, V Potheary, C Jones, C Lugg, L Beddow, N Lacey-Clarke, S Flower, T Coombs, S Gibson, R Crabb and S Murcer.

Motion:

That the proposed Open Spaces and Common Areas Management Governance Policy be adopted, subject to Overview Committee oversight.

In presenting the Motion on Notice, Councillor J Vitali reported that following discussion and advice received from the Monitoring Officer, the motion would not be debated by Full Council at this meeting, to allow proper consideration by the relevant Executive Advisory Panel, before a report back to Full Council from the Cabinet Member.

It was proposed by Councillor J Vitali seconded by Councillor L O'Leary that the Motion on Notice be referred to the Local Plan Executive Advisory Panel.

The Appendix – draft Open Spaces and Common Areas Management Governance Policy is attached at appendix 2 to these minutes.

SHORT MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 19.39 for a short comfort break.

The meeting reconvened at 19.51.

27. Questions from Councillors

There were 16 questions received from councillors. The questions and responses provided by Cabinet Members are attached at appendix 3 to these minutes.

Supplementary questions were received as follows:

Question 1 – Councillor D Sowry-House

Councillor Sowry-House raised a question with regard to whether there were any cumulative budget overspends during the previous council term and the impacts of this. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Finance noted that based on decisions at the time, the combined overspend was in the region of £25m which would be funded from reserves and was in part related to setting up the new unitary council.

Question 2 – Councillor S Flower

Councillor Flower noted the experience in Verwood relating to missed collections, issues with grass verge cutting and reports of highways works requested that had not been resolved. Concern was expressed about the level of service being provided. In response, the Cabinet Member for Place Services requested the details of the issues so that he could investigate.

Question 3 – Councillor A Brenton

Councillor Brenton asked about claims made that council officers were acting politically in some specific circumstances. The Cabinet Member for Resources and Finance flagged that officers should not be criticised in public where there was no opportunity for them to respond. Any concerns should be discussed with the relevant senior officer.

A point of order was raised by Councillor L O’Leary with regard to the number of questions submitted by the councillor. The Chair of Council reminded all councillors that they should only include one question within each submission.

Question 4 – Councillor M Parkes

Councillor Parkes questioned whether the council had failed to comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, in not providing requested information on assessments undertaken, which it had been stated were in place. The Cabinet Member for Place Services noted that he would need to provide a written response.

Question 5 – Councillor M Parkes

Councillor Parkes indicated that he would like to see the evidence as part of the Freedom of Information request.

Question 7 – Councillor C Lugg

Councillor Lugg requested that Church Road Ferndown be considered for an ANPR enforcement system, once a trial had been undertaken at Upton Junior School. The Cabinet Member for Place Services confirmed this could be looked into.

Question 8 – Councillor J Vitali

Councillor Vitali asked if the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education would visit the school to see if the issue could be expedited. The Cabinet Member indicated that she would visit but was unable to offer any commitment until the proposals had been looked at and required surveys undertaken.

Question 12 – Councillor P Brown

Councillor Brown expressed concern with the response and noted that the question was about data led decision making and how the methodology was being implemented by the traffic safety team. He questioned the actions that were looked at and whether it was the methodology that was not right or that the council did not have the right funding in place. The Cabinet Member for Place Services indicated that he would ask for an officer response.

Question 13 – Councillor R Legg

Councillor Legg asked that the response from the Leader be copied to all Members of Parliament in Dorset.

Question 16 – Councillor B Bawden

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader confirmed that councillors could contact either him, the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Prevention and Communities or the council's Climate Resilience Officer regarding community resilience planning issues and the identification of vulnerable communities.

28. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

29. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

APPENDIX 1 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Question for Full Council – 16 July 2026

Public Questions

1. Question from Cllr Leach – Ferndown Town Council

What was the total cost of operating the school crossing patrol in Church Road, Ferndown during the last financial year, and has Dorset Council undertaken a formal cost-benefit analysis before deciding to withdraw a post considered to be vital by our community?

Response by Cllr J Andrews

The cost of operating the School Crossing Patrol on Church Road, Ferndown, during the last financial year was £8,100. This decision is not about saving money. The new investment of over £300,000 supports a range of school safety measures including improved crossings, junction changes to slow speeds, new connecting paths and parking restrictions. This will make the area more accessible and provide a safe crossing point at all times of the day.

2. Question from Geoff Middleton

You will be aware that the people are absolutely shocked and disappointed by the decision to remove the school crossing patrol in Church Road, Ferndown.

The argument that there is confusion caused by having a school crossing patrol on a zebra crossing does not sit comfortably with residents and believe this is a financially driven rather than evidence based decision.

With hundreds of young people using this crossing to access three schools in the road, will the Cabinet Member that made this decision using Executive Powers reverse his decision or would he rather see a child serious injured or killed in Church Road?

Response from Cllr J Andrews

Thank you Mr Middleton for taking the time to raise this question and for attending Full Council, I really value hearing views directly from members of the public on issues like this. The decision here is not about saving money. It is instead about investing money into a safe crossing point that is available at all times of the day and at all times of the year. The new crossing ensures that children and people of all ages will be able to cross safely.

3. Question from Caroline Stamp

As a Grandparent of a child in Ferndown Middle School, who uses the crossing on Church Road manned by Sarah the crossing patrol lady.

My Grandson, his parents and myself along with other families who I have spoken with, have great concerns using this crossing in September with no patrol in place. We've witnessed vehicles and some bikes, failing to stop and even driving through when someone is on the crossing and the congestion at school crossing times leads to poor visibility when trying to cross. Sarah has been key to managing the flow of traffic and pedestrians, many a time I've seen her stop a child from running onto the crossing when it's unsafe to do so.

I've worked for 17 years in a school with children across the same age range using the crossing and regularly had road safety teams in for practical and theory sessions. At the end of the day these are children not always visible due to size and not always focused, quite often distracted by conversations with friends etc. The zebra crossing gives them hierarchy, a right of way across the road, but they don't remember to stop look and listen, because their focus is on something else. The age range across these three schools makes them vulnerable road users as stated in government papers and the Highway Code. Statistics show that a high percentage of drivers speed up before reaching a zebra crossing to pass through before the person steps out.

This particular zebra crossing is in a hazardous location, due to limited vision, multiple junctions, brow of a hill and heavy road use by work traffic and parents during school hours.

Several other counties/ areas have done a u turn on zebra crossings that are deemed hazardous during school hours. To prevent danger to life a crossing patrol person has been kept to man the zebra crossing as and where that extra safety measure is needed.

Question

Is the Council willing to change its policy on this particular zebra crossing to prevent unnecessary casualties or fatalities?

Response by Cllr J Andrews

Thank you for raising these important points. This particular zebra crossing has been recently designed to current standards and has taken into account the road layout of the area as well as the traffic flows. Road safety professionals have assessed it as a safe and appropriate way to cross without a School Crossing Patrol.

Open Spaces and Common Areas: Management Governance Policy

1. CONTEXT

Across England, a growing proportion of new homes are built on estates where shared open spaces – green areas, play areas, roads, and drainage infrastructure – are not adopted by a public authority but instead remain under private ownership and management. Residents are bound by their title deeds to pay charges to these companies, with little transparency, limited accountability, and no meaningful say over costs or the appointment of managers. The Competition and Markets Authority’s 2024 housebuilding review found that approximately 80% of new homes sold by major housebuilders were subject to such charges, and identified this as a significant source of consumer detriment.

The Law Commission is considering reform in this area but has not yet reported. The Government has indicated that the most effective remedy is to prevent new private management arrangements from arising in the first place, and that local planning authorities have a critical role to play – but primary legislation enabling mandatory reform has not been enacted.

Dorset Council faces a substantially increased housing delivery requirement under the new Standard Method. With major new residential development anticipated across the county through the emerging Local Plan, there is a clear and immediate need for a policy position on the governance of common spaces – one that protects future residents without waiting for legislation that may be years away.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to encourage a greater degree of accountability and resident control over the management of open and shared spaces on new housing estates in Dorset.

3. POLICY

3.1 Preference for Council adoption

Dorset Council establishes as planning policy that the long-term management and governance of shared open spaces on new residential developments is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The Council's strong and explicit preference is that open space on new development is adopted and managed by Dorset Council – or by the relevant Town or Parish Council – rather than by a private management company. Applicants are expected to demonstrate that public adoption has been actively sought. Where it has not been pursued, or has been declined without evidenced justification, the application will be viewed less favourably.

Where adoption is offered, it will be considered subject to: the land meeting the Council's design, safety and accessibility standards; clear legal title free from encumbrances; and a commuted sum calculated on the basis of annual maintenance cost × 15 years (plus an RPI inflation adjustment from the date of planning permission to the date of adoption), held in a ring-fenced reserve.

3.2 Where private management is unavoidable

Where a public adoption is unachievable, the Council will require, as a condition secured by Section 106 obligation, that residents have meaningful and formalised representation on the financial decisions relating to management of the estate.

For the purposes of this policy, 'financial decisions' means decisions on:

- i) the setting of annual service charges;
- ii) the approval of annual maintenance budgets;
- iii) capital expenditure on shared assets; and
- iv) the appointment, renewal or removal of any managing agent.

The minimum requirement is that a residents' association with at least two elected resident representatives is established by the time 25% of units are occupied, and that this committee is formally consulted before any financial decision is taken. For developments of 50 or more dwellings, residents must constitute at least 50% of any management body with financial authority. These arrangements shall be secured in the Section 106 agreement.

4. RELATIONSHIP TO THE EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

This policy operates immediately as a material consideration in planning decisions. The Council's intention is to embed the requirements in Sections 2.1–2.2 as explicit Local Plan policies, or as part of any complementary Section 106 or developer contribution policy. In the interim, this policy – once formally adopted by Full Council – carries material weight in the determination of planning applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The policy will be reviewed promptly following enactment of any primary legislation arising from the Law Commission's review or the Government's response to the CMA, at which point its requirements will be updated to reflect any new statutory framework.

APPENDIX 3 - QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Full Council – 16 July 2026

Questions submitted by Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr D Sowry-House

At a recent "Meet Your Councillors" surgery, a resident drew my attention to a social media post discussing Dorset Council's reported year-end underspend.

The post claimed that the underspend was achieved primarily through the use of reserves and by postponing or reducing services, particularly within the Place Directorate.

As elected members will know, residents are increasingly exposed to commentary and assertions on social media, often presented with varying degrees of evidence and context. Many residents understandably find it difficult to distinguish between opinion, interpretation and established fact.

Could the Cabinet Member therefore clarify:

How the reported year-end underspend was actually achieved, what role, if any, the use of reserves played in achieving the final outturn position, whether any material underspends arose from the reduction or delay of front-line services, such as pothole repairs for example, within the Place Directorate and what assurance can be given to residents that the Council's financial reporting provides a complete and transparent picture of its performance?

Finally, in an age where so much local political discussion takes place on social media, does the Cabinet Member agree that residents should reasonably expect claims concerning the Council's finances to be supported by original source information and verifiable evidence, rather than being asked to rely solely upon opinion occupying what might be described as the wasteland between knowledge and ignorance?

I would be grateful for any clarification that can help residents better understand the facts behind the Council's published financial position.

Response by Cllr S Clifford

Thanks for the question and the short answer is yes, it is important that the public receive accurate information about how their council tax is spent.

I've not seen the social media post you refer to but it certainly sounds misleading at best and you can use your own description at worst...

So it important to rebut inaccuracies and I will do that point by point. There are a number of similar questions so my apologies that there will be some inevitable overlap.

First, we publish all the end of financial year results and take relevant reports to Cabinet and scrutiny committees such as Audit and Governance which took place recently. That report shows very clearly that we did NOT use reserves to deliver the very small underspend of £169,000. In fact the complete opposite – we have INCREASED reserves at the same time as delivering the first underspend in the history of Dorset Council.

This strengthens our ongoing financial position.

The second inaccuracy highlighted in your question is that we did NOT achieve this underspend through cutting frontline services.

You ask how we did achieve this milestone and the answer is through tight financial controls, careful budget monitoring, delivering and savings and efficiencies. Previous holders of this finance cabinet post will recognise the frustration that comes from spending all year worrying about the forecasts of overspending only to find significant movements materialising late in the financial year – that happened here with a £4.6m improvement compared to quarter 3 forecast. That certainly helped and I'd like to thank my cabinet colleagues and senior leaders in the council for their tight financial grip.

You mention the directorate responsible for some key frontline services such as highways and waste. I'm grateful to the Cabinet member and director for Place for delivering significant efficiencies in areas such as school transport, lower energy bills for street lighting and higher income than expected as well as careful budget management.

That series of efficiencies helps deliver ADDITIONAL spending on drainage, flooding issues and emergency resurfacing road following storm damage. Had the teams not delivered better than expected energy bills we would have OVERSPENT on our road and highways. To suggest that we cut back in this area is clearly nonsense.

I have been very clear publicly that Dorset Council remains underfunded by government and although the underspend is welcome we are under huge financial pressure. Challenges remain and a tight grip on finances across all directorates is essential.

Finally your point about social media accuracy is well made. It is completely fair to hold the Administration and this Council to account for decisions we make. I would hope that where social media posts are pushed by political parties they would be based on facts rather than pure politics. Facts matter and residents deserve evidence not just speculation. That's why councils have an obligation to be transparent and to publish reports that are there for everyone to read and judge for themselves.

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr S Flower

Sustainability of Place Services following top slicing of the 2026/27 budget
Ward Members in the eastern side of the Dorset Council Area are increasingly receiving complaints about how front-line services have deteriorated since May 2024. The very outdated approach of top slicing budgets, which seems to have been adopted by the administration, will only make matters far worse.

Can the Cabinet Member for Place explain how it will be possible to sustain vital front-line services to our communities to an acceptable standard following the significant reduction in annual in Place Directorate funding.

Thank you, madam Chairman

Response by Cllr S Clifford

There is some overlap with the previous question so I'll try to not repeat myself too much!

I'm sure the councillor was robust in his pushback to residents claiming frontline services has deteriorated in the east of the County...I know he is a stickler for discussions and decisions to be led by data not gossip and speculation.

There are a couple of accidentally misleading comments contained within the question.

I'm sure all members are aware that frontline services do not get more personal than our social care services, our housing teams, benefits or other services and I know all in this chamber would thank our staff for carrying out their hugely important roles.

I'm delighted that these staff get the recognition they deserve and pay tribute to our children's services – rated as outstanding; our top rated SEND teams and our adults social care recently rated as good. Its what we are here for and these achievements are to be celebrated.

Cllr Flower refers a “significant reduction in Place Directorate funding”. This is NOT the case. The budget approved by Council in February differs by just 0.5% on the previous year. We are able to do this because the directorate has proven to be efficient and have a tight financial grip – as mentioned in the previous response, it has delivered significant efficiencies in school transport, reduced energy bills for street lighting and so on.

Although not specific, I suspect Cllr Flower was referring to roads and bin collections when talking about resident complaints.

Roads – Including the local top up of £8m agree at last month's cabinet meeting, adding in the Department for Transport's four year allocation of £125m and including our own spending plans of £32m – plus the extra £5m I announced for flood resilience on our roads that comes to a total of £162m to be spent on Dorset highways over the coming four years. Certainly the biggest ever spend on general

highways maintenance and flood resilience. A record amount. And no cuts to frontline services.

And bins – I can give up the latest performance figures, between April 2025 and March 2026, Dorset Council completed 22,970,086 domestic collection jobs, with 18,881 reported missed collections. This equates to a successful collection rate of 99.92%, with only 0.08% of collections reported as missed.

The number of reported missed collections has remained broadly steady. However, the number of service disruptions (where collections do not take place on the scheduled day and are instead completed the following day or within five working days) has increased slightly. This MAY be what Cllr Flower is hearing on the doorstep and hope this gives him the facts he needs to deal with future comments.

As the councillor knows well as it started on his watch, the Council remains one of the highest performing unitary councils when it comes to recycling. My thanks to him and his own party for getting us to that important mark.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr A Brenton

Many residents welcomed the report from Dorset Council's independent, non-political finance director confirming that the Liberal Democrat administration has delivered the first underspend in the history of Dorset Council.

It is therefore disappointing that some Conservatives appear unhappy with this outcome, particularly given that, under their administration, the council budget overspent year after year.

Claims About Council Spending

The Conservatives have publicly claimed that spending at Dorset Council is out of control, that services are being disrupted in order to balance the books, and that the council is running a deficit of millions of pounds.

Can the Cabinet Member for Finance confirm that these claims are false, and reassure the opposition that Dorset Council's budget remains in safe hands under the leadership of the finance director?

Follow-up Question

The Conservatives have also claimed in their public communications that council officers, specifically the Communications team, are acting politically. Can the Cabinet Member comment on this allegation?

Response by Cllr Clifford

I've answered large elements of her question in my previous responses but will reinforce a couple of areas.

It is disappointing that claims are made that spending at Dorset Council is “out of control”. I don’t know where the evidence of this comes from but it is clearly highly inaccurate and misleading to our council tax and business rate payers. Just plain wrong. And the easiest way to point to this is if spending is out of control, how to we deliver a balanced budget and an underspend? It just doesn’t stand up to any scrutiny.

The same for the claim that we are running a huge budget deficit.

So to be clear. Claims that services are being disrupted to deliver an underspend are false. Claims that spending is out of control are false. Claims that the Council is running a deficit are false.

I have given examples of the high quality services we deliver, and examples of the record investments being made. Together with the improved end of financial year quarter 4 figures, this is the reason the Section 151 officer – the top finance officer at the council – was able to lower his financial risk rating for the council has a whole and give a cautiously optimistic view of the future.

He would though tell me off if I didn’t add that financial sustainability is fragile with local government awaiting the new Prime Minister’s input into funding decisions. These are choppy waters and I’m delighted we steered a successful course last year, the challenges though remain for all of us for the future.

View to criticizing officers. I think this is unfortunate and would urge all cllrs to remember that our staff work hard on our behalf and remain non political. They cannot answer back and I believe it is unfair to criticise them in public without at the very least first discussing any perceived bias or favour with relevant senior officers.

Question 4 – Submitted by Cllr M Parkes

In a previous question to full council regarding the withdrawal of the school crossing patrol on Church Road, Ferndown we were advised that motorists get ‘confused’ where there the is a school crossing patrol on a zebra crossing.

Exploring this matter further I have been in contact with both Dorset Council officers and Dorset Police who are both unable to substantiate this rationale as there is no national or local data or guidance to base this decision on.

Dorset Police have confirmed in writing that they had nothing to do with the decision making and this was purely a Dorset Council decision.

It has been confirmed by both Dorset Council and Dorset Police that no risk assessment has been completed for the removal of the School Crossing Patrol which seems incredulous!

Based on the lack of data and guidance and more importantly no risk assessment, how can removal of the school crossing patrol putting young peoples safety at risk be justified?

Response by Cllr J Andrews

Combined in response to question below from Cllr Parkes

Question 5 submitted by Cllr M Parkes

Based on the lack of road safety data and evidence it would be fair to make the presumption that the withdrawal of the school crossing patrol in Church Road, Ferndown is purely a financial based decision made solely by the Cabinet holder using executive powers.

Based on the fact that the cabinet are grandstanding on the £169k saving made by the council, would the cabinet member consider using some of this funding to keep the young people of Ferndown safe?

Response by Cllr J Andrews (Incorporating response to Q4)

I understand and respect the strength of feeling in the Ferndown community about the School Crossing Patrol on Church Road. I recognise the important role the current patrol officer has played in supporting children and families, and I want to place on record my appreciation for the contribution of School Crossing Patrol Officers across Dorset.

This decision is not about reducing safety or withdrawing investment. Dorset Council continues to employ 28 School Crossing Patrol Officers across the county and will continue to fund patrols where they are needed.

In Ferndown, two zebra crossings have recently been installed following long-standing requests from the local community, as part of significant investment to improve safety on a busy route used by more than 1,500 pupils and around 8,000 vehicles each day. These crossings provide a permanent, clearly marked and legally enforceable place to cross, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Where a formal crossing is installed, this becomes the way for people to cross safely. This ensures drivers receive one clear and consistent instruction about when to stop, which is essential for road safety. Operating both together at the same point can introduce conflicting signals about priority and driver responsibility, which is why our approach is to provide a single, clear crossing arrangement. This reflects the council's professional judgement and a consistent approach across Dorset, supported by Dorset Police.

I fully recognise the concerns raised locally, particularly regarding driver behaviour, and safety remains our highest priority. Our Road Safety Team, including dedicated School Safety Officers, will continue to monitor the operation of the crossings and work closely with the school, Dorset Police and the local community to promote their safe use and encourage driver compliance. In highway design, we use Road Safety Audits (which are effectively a higher level of risk assessment) to determine the safety impact of new highway infrastructure. I can confirm that the new zebra crossings were subject to a formal Road Safety Audit.

Our investment in the new zebra crossings helps people to cross the road safely at all times of day, during term time and school holidays.

Question 6 submitted by Cllr C Lugg

The responsible cabinet member made an executive decision to amend the policy for the third party funding of school crossing patrols which removed the ability for external funding,

As local ward councillors we reached out asking for this to be reconsidered particularly as a similar arrangement is already in place in Lytchett Minster with whereby the parish council are providing funding.

In the interests ensuring parity across the Dorset Council will the cabinet member revert back to the original policy to enable third parties to fund the crossing if Dorset Council feels unable to find the funding itself?

Response by Cllr J Andrews

The situation in Ferndown is different from the one in Lytchett Matravers.

In Lytchett Matravers, when the zebra crossing was installed, the School Crossing Patrol at that point was due to stop. However, the parish council and local ward members asked for additional support for children crossing further along the road, away from the zebra crossing. As there was no formal crossing at that location, they chose to fund a patrol there.

In Ferndown, two zebra crossings have now been installed at the main points where pupils cross Church Road. These provide clear, permanent crossing points with a legal requirement for drivers to stop.

Question 7 submitted by Cllr C Lugg

If the council continues with the withdrawal of the School Crossing Patrol in Church Road, Ferndown would the cabinet member commit to the immediate implementation of measures to reduce the risks to the young people caused by poor parking and driver behaviour at the start and end of the school day?

Specifically, the installation of ANPR cameras in both Mountbatten Drive and Peter Grant Way. Appreciating there would be a time delay in getting this installed, the immediate implementation of daily patrols by the traffic enforcement team.

Response by Cllr J Andrews

The council takes concerns about parking and driver behaviour near schools very seriously and works closely with schools, communities and partners to address these issues.

I would encourage Cllr Lugg to continue to engage with the Road Safety Team, who can assess the concerns raised in detail and advise on the most appropriate measures. This can include targeted interventions such as additional signage, site-specific improvements and education work with schools.

The council is also preparing to introduce new traffic enforcement powers, which will allow us to take action at locations like schools where restrictions are not being followed. This requires the introduction of a new enforcement system using ANPR cameras, which is expected to be in place early next year. These cameras can be used to record any moving traffic that is breaching traffic regulations. A trial is planned at Upton Junior School, with any wider rollout informed by the results from that trial.

These powers will also support enforcement where School Keep Clear markings are not being observed. In some cases, these need to be supported by formal Traffic Regulation Orders before camera enforcement can be used, and this forms part of the wider programme of work.

In the meantime, while it is not possible to commit to daily enforcement patrols given demand across the county, I have asked officers to review the concerns at Mountbatten Drive and Peter Grant Way and consider what proportionate action can be taken.

Question 8 – submitted by Cllr J Vitali

Stalbridge Primary School is going from strength to strength, with excellent staff, full year groups and a highly supportive community.

At present, however, many of its children and teachers are having to contend with mobile classrooms that are no longer fit for purpose. These portacabins have an advised lifetime of 10 years. Those being used at Stalbridge Primary School are now 30 years old and rotting. They are cold in the winter and sweltering in these summer months. When temperatures reached 34 degrees recently, the smell from the built-in toilets disrupted lessons. I've visited these mobile classrooms, so has a Dorset Council Health and Safety Consultant. It is to no one's surprise that she recommended they are replaced; they pose a serious risk to school children.

The school itself has been saving hard and can put up over half the cost of replacing the most dilapidated portacabin. Would Dorset Council urgently consider supporting the school with the additional £80k it needs to address this health and safety risk before the new academic year?

Response by Cllr C Sutton

Thank you for the question. We recognise the excellent work being undertaken by Stalbridge Primary School and understand the concerns that have been raised regarding the condition of the school's modular classroom accommodation. The concerns of both the school and the Council's Health and Safety Consultant following a recent site visit are being taken seriously.

Council officers are already in discussion with the school regarding its proposal to replace the existing accommodation. Further work is required to assess the suitability of the proposal, the procurement requirements that would need to be followed, and any associated building regulation, planning and delivery considerations.

The Council will also arrange for the existing buildings to be surveyed as soon as possible to provide a formal assessment of their condition and help inform options for refurbishment or replacement.

The Council is willing to continue discussions with the school regarding its proposal and any potential funding implications. However, it would be premature to commit to a specific financial contribution until this assessment work has been completed. While we will work with the school to explore solutions as quickly as possible, it is unlikely that replacement accommodation could be delivered before the start of the next academic year given the planning, procurement and construction activities involved.

Question 9 – submitted by Cllr J Robinson

Can the Portfolio Holder or relevant Cabinet Member explain why so many grass verges across Ferndown have been left uncut for extended periods this year; what is the agreed verge cutting schedule for Ferndown, why that schedule has not been met in many locations, what action is being taken to ensure all outstanding verge cutting is completed promptly and what measures will be put in place to prevent the same problems reoccurring?

Residents have raised repeated concerns that overgrown verges are creating safety issues by restricting visibility at junctions, making pavements more difficult to use, and giving the area uncared for appearance.

Despite these concerns being raised, many verges are still in an unacceptable condition.

Could the Council confirm:

Does the Council accept that the current standard of verge maintenance in Ferndown has fallen below residents' reasonable expectations, and if not, why not?

Residents deserve reassurance that this basic service will be delivered consistently and to an acceptable standard.

Response by Cllr J Andrews

As part of Dorset response to the nature and climate emergency - most urban verges are now cut and collected, usually twice a year.

This method was introduced to Ferndown / West Parley for the first time this year. There were public comms and a Cllr verge webinar explaining this change;

however, I appreciate the change may not have been expected by all residents, and this method does mean that verges are taller between cuts. Following the introduction of this change, verges are generally tallest in the 1st year before the removal of organic material results in lower growth rates.

The cutting of verges across Dorset is on schedule. The 2nd cut in Ferndown was started earlier this week, and the team are making good progress, all of Ferndown and West Parley will be cut and collected within the next two weeks. The verges will look neat as all clippings will be removed.

Cutting and collecting verges twice does mean verges will be slightly taller between cuts, but this method delivers a neat finish once cut and an effective balance of nature and climate objectives while ensuring highway safety.

Question 10 – submitted by Cllr L Beddow

Farm Lane in West Lulworth is a small road off the main road into West Lulworth, leading to Shepherds Way, The Triangle and School Lane.

You wouldn't know it was there for the last 18 months because, despite regular reporting by me and by local residents, the sign still hasn't been replaced.

When you drive past discarded road signs warning of ice, in July, it's hard not to feel that the important basics of organising and maintaining our street signage aren't being maintained.

May I ask for a detailed update on our maintenance in this area, not least so that people seeking Farm Lane can actually find it?

Response by Cllr J Andrews

Thank you, Cllr Beddow,

I recognise the importance of clear, well-maintained signage in helping residents, visitors and emergency services to identify street names. I am also grateful for the assistance provided by local residents and Members in bringing issues such as these to our attention.

The missing sign is the programme for our sign team to replace, and I will ask our local community highway officer to update you with the exact timings for the replacement and to discuss any other concerns about abandoned signs. We have seen more signs being left by utility companies and other contractors recently. Our community highway officers are looking out for these during their inspections, but if anyone spots one they think is abandoned, please report it on our website and we'll collect it.

Question 11 – submitted by Cllr L Beddow

This administration has cut the funding for the Arts Development Company, who provided support to and generated events with the cultural sector across Dorset. Cultural development has now been brought in-house to Dorset Council. But why does the Culture portfolio now sit with the Corporate Director for Weymouth And Portland (for whom I have huge respect)?

Response by Cllr R Biggs

Following the Chief Executive's review of the senior leadership team, a further review of management roles across the council is now underway. This will see the role of Corporate Director for Weymouth broadened into a wider role for inclusive economic growth for the whole of the county. This new structure will include arts, leisure and culture alongside tourism to reflect the importance of the visitor economy in Dorset.

Question 12 – submitted by Cllr P Brown

The Thickthorn Cross junction on the A354 remains one of Dorset's most dangerous accident blackspots. When can residents expect to see data-led action taken to improve safety, particularly through the installation of a roundabout, which remains the community's preferred solution?

Response by Cllr J Andrews

The Thickthorn Cross junction is one of our identified collision cluster sites, and we are committed to improving safety through an evidence-led approach.

Improvements so far have included maintaining good visibility, road markings and signage. In the last two years we have added two "High-Risk Collision Site" signs, giving motorists clearer and earlier warning of the junction ahead.

While these improvements have strengthened safety at the site, reducing speeds is likely to have a positive road safety benefit. We are therefore preparing to launch a public consultation in August on proposals to reduce the speed limit on the approaches to the junction from 60mph to 40mph. Installing a roundabout here would be comparatively expensive, and roundabouts are often areas where we see increased numbers of collisions. Looking to slow cars down here is the next step we need take.

I am grateful to Cllr Brown for raising this suggestion and helping to highlight the importance of improving safety at this location.

Question 13 – submitted by Cllr R Legg

In just a few days from now Andy Burnham will become the country's next Prime Minister. He has already indicated that he is open to changing how property and land is taxed. Some commentators believe that Stamp Duty and Council Tax are in his sights. If that change is signalled, will the Leader extend an invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Dorset so that we can impress upon him how unfair the

present Council Tax system is for our residents where three quarters of all our funding comes from that source?

Response by Cllr N Ireland

Thank you for the question Cllr Legg

If, as widely expected, Andy Burnham becomes Prime Minister in the coming days, I would be delighted to invite him to Dorset. Indeed, I suspect he would find no shortage of people willing to explain why the current system of local government finance no longer works for many rural areas.

Mr Burnham has recently spoken about the need to reform property taxation, describing Council Tax as a regressive system based on property valuations that are now more than three decades out of date. He has also indicated that he is open to wider reforms involving Stamp Duty and the taxation of land and property. While we await the detail of any proposals, I would welcome a serious national conversation about how local government is funded and whether the current arrangements remain fair for residents and councils alike.

For Dorset, the issue is particularly acute. Over three quarters of our core funding comes from Council Tax, leaving local residents shouldering a far greater share of the burden than is the case in many other parts of the country. Dorset's residents pay for services across a large rural geography, with an older population, dispersed communities and higher service delivery costs, yet we continue to receive less government support per head than many urban authorities.

However, Council Tax is only one part of the picture. Mr Burnham has been a strong advocate for devolving power away from Whitehall and giving local areas greater control over investment, skills, transport, housing and economic development. On that principle, I believe there is considerable common ground between his approach and what Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole councils have been arguing through the Wessex Partnership.

We have made the case that rural and coastal areas deserve the same opportunities as the major city regions. Yet Wessex remains one of the largest areas of England without the devolved powers and investment that many other parts of the country now enjoy. The consequence is that residents and businesses here continue to miss out on significant streams of funding that are increasingly reserved for devolved areas.

So if the new Prime Minister is serious about rebalancing the economy, tackling regional inequalities and empowering local communities, I would encourage him to look beyond the major metropolitan areas and visit Dorset. He would see first-hand both the challenges and opportunities of rural England: world-leading businesses, nationally important defence and clean energy sectors, thriving market towns, outstanding natural landscapes and communities that contribute enormously to the national economy.

My message to him would be straightforward. Reforming Council Tax would be welcome if it results in a fairer system for residents. But alongside that, we need fairer rural funding, genuine devolution for Wessex, and the powers and long-term investment needed to allow our communities to fulfil their potential.

Dorset is ready. Wessex is ready. We simply need a government willing to give rural England the same tools that it has already provided elsewhere.

Question 14 – submitted by Cllr R Legg

How many Freedom of Information requests have been received by Dorset Council since the formation of the authority in 2019 and of those how many have been referred to the Information Commissioner's Office for determination with what result?

Response by Cllr N Ireland

Since formation of Dorset Council in April 2019, we have received 10,387 Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests. We don't formally record the number of requests appealed to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), however since 1 April 2019 the indicative number is 38. These are generally resolved informally before the ICO completes their investigations, though any decision notices for requests resolved formally by the ICO can be found on their website. This site indicates that seven Dorset Council cases received an ICO judgment, of which two were partially upheld.

Question 15 – submitted by Cllr C Monks

Beaminster has experienced an increasing number of power cuts over the last two years, causing significant disruption to residents, businesses and particularly vulnerable members of our community.

Whilst I recognise that Dorset Council does not have direct responsibility for the electricity network, will the Council support local efforts to lobby National Grid and network operators to identify and upgrade failing infrastructure, and what steps will it take to strengthen consideration of power resilience within its planning policies and emergency planning arrangements, both of which fall within the Council's control?

Response by Cllr S Bartlett

Thank you for your question, which raises an important issue facing Dorset. We recognise the frustrations this causes, and we remind residents that they can call 105 in the event of an incident – as well as viewing maps of outages and planned maintenance online. We also encourage any vulnerable individuals or their carers to register for the Priority Services Register for extra support in the event of disruption.

As we know, power cuts are already happening due to events such as extreme weather, and these risks will increase with climate change. Meeting this requires better infrastructure; better inspections & maintenance; and emergency preparedness and response. Partly in recognition of this, I previously set up a cross-party task and finish group to consider the grid. I'm pleased to say there has been good progress since then – from new Ofgem requirements and a performance standard to ground compensation for power cuts; a new network operator that's set new standards on outages in force from December; and a forthcoming government Energy Resilience Strategy.

These will enable us to do more locally in three ways. First, we can work with network operators on our new plans and strategies – in particular the new Local Plan, the Wessex Spatial Development Strategy, and a Dorset Climate Adaptation Strategy. Second, the forthcoming new regional energy boards will provide a stronger means for us to engage strategically with them on network resilience. And third, network operators are already Category 2 Responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2003 – meaning they engage with us on multiagency emergency planning and response through our Local Resilience Forum. We will continue to engage network operators through the Local Resilience Forum on this.

Question 16 – submitted by Cllr B Bawden

The 'Today' programme reported 2,700 excess deaths in the first two heatwaves in the UK, mostly people over 65 years old with underlying health conditions.

The Committee on Climate Change has been forecasting for years that heatwaves will be the 'silent killer'.

As the county with the oldest population, with some of the highest temperatures and hours of sunshine in the UK, we have a duty of care to our residents, workers and visitors to adapt to our changing climate and protect ourselves from extreme heat.

Could Dorset Council offer more guidance to schools, care homes and public and community buildings about mitigating the impact of high temperatures and humidity?

Is there any scope to introduce a byelaw to set a maximum working temperature?

Specifically, we need to support and enable the fast roll out of air conditioning for schools, care homes and hospitals alongside other measures including natural and installed shading.

Did the decarbonisation of the DC schools' estate and our community and business buildings under the Low Carbon Dorset EU funding programme include heat pumps with air conditioning?

What else could and should Dorset Council be doing more to protect ourselves from the impacts of extreme heat and humidity in our rapidly changing climate?

Response by Cllr N Ireland

Extreme heat is becoming one of the most significant climate-related risks facing Dorset. As a county with an older-than-average population, we know that prolonged periods of high temperatures and humidity can have serious consequences for people's health and wellbeing, particularly for older residents and those with underlying health conditions. Preparing Dorset for a changing climate is therefore a key priority for the council and is reflected in both our Council Plan and our Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy.

When it comes to preparing for and responding to heatwaves, we work closely with partners through the Dorset Local Resilience Forum. During the recent hot weather, we established an Incident Management Team to coordinate our response and share advice with staff, schools, care providers and local communities. Our adult social care teams also worked with providers to support vulnerable residents most at risk from extreme heat, while working with NHS colleagues to help maintain the flow of people being discharged from hospital.

I agree that guidance and awareness are an important part of building resilience. Extensive national guidance already exists for schools, care providers, employers and public buildings, but we recognise the value of ensuring that this information is more widely understood and accessible locally. As part of our wider adaptation work, we will continue to consider how best to support organisations and communities across Dorset in preparing for hotter summers.

More broadly, we are assessing the potential impacts of climate change on the council's services, assets, workforce and communities, while working with partners to develop a countywide Climate Adaptation Strategy. This will help identify the actions needed to make Dorset more resilient to the effects of climate change, including extreme heat.

In relation to our buildings, previous decarbonisation programmes have primarily focused on reducing carbon emissions rather than addressing overheating. The funding criteria available at the time did not provide for air-conditioning installations. While many heat pumps are technically capable of providing cooling as well as heating, the schemes were funded and delivered primarily as decarbonisation measures rather than as cooling solutions. Looking ahead, new funding frameworks provide greater scope to consider cooling and air-conditioning alongside carbon reduction where this can be justified as part of improving a building's resilience to extreme heat.

It is increasingly clear that climate adaptation must sit alongside decarbonisation. Through our Strategic Asset Management Programme we will continue to consider opportunities to improve the resilience of council buildings through measures such as shading, tree planting, green infrastructure, improved ventilation and, where appropriate, active cooling.

On the specific issue of air conditioning, there is unlikely to be a single solution suitable for every building. Our approach should be to prioritise passive measures that reduce overheating in the first instance, while recognising that some settings,

particularly those supporting vulnerable people, may require active cooling solutions as temperatures continue to rise.

With regard to workplace temperatures, there is currently no maximum legal working temperature in the UK and local authorities do not have powers to introduce a byelaw to set one. Employers do, however, have a legal duty to assess and manage risks to their workforce, including those arising from excessive heat, and national guidance in this area is currently under review.

Alongside our work on heat resilience, we are also investing in flood preparedness and embedding climate risks within our planning, transport, nature recovery and asset management strategies. Taken together, these measures will help ensure that Dorset's communities, services and infrastructure are better prepared for the changing climate that we know lies ahead.

Members who would like further information on this work are welcome to contact the Climate Team.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 8.51 pm

Chair

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Full Council

22 October 2026

New Warding Proposals for Dorset Council – response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England For Decision

Cabinet Member:

Cllr N Ireland, Leader, Climate, Performance, Communications and Safeguarding

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Senior Leadership Team:

J Mair - Director, Assurance and Governance

Report author and job title:

Jacqui Andrews

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Email: jacqui.andrews@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority:

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

Report status: Public

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament that undertakes electoral reviews of local authorities with the aim of delivering electoral equality for voters, establishing electoral areas for local authorities that reflect, as far as possible, community identities in that area and promoting effective and convenient government.
- 1.2 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority including the total number of councillors to be elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward.
- 1.3 Following the submission of a proposed warding pattern agreed by Full Council on 14 May 2026, LGBCE have now published their draft recommendations for consultation. This report seeks a recommendation in respect of the response proposed by the cross-party task and finish group,

established to consider the electoral review, to the draft recommendations from the Commission.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Full Council is asked to agree the response to the LGBCE draft recommendations in respect of a warding pattern and ward names as set out in Appendix A.

3. Reason for the recommendation

- 3.1 To ensure that the warding pattern and ward names adopted by the LGBCE achieve electoral equality and recognise the distinct communities in the Dorset Council area.

4. Background

- 4.1 Following agreement to the council's submission on council size agreed at Full Council on 10 February 2026, the LGBCE published its minded-to proposal for council size (82 councillors) and opened its public consultation on warding arrangements which ran from 24 March 2026 to 1 June 2026. On 14 May 2026, Full Council agreed and submitted a warding pattern for the Dorset Council area with a council size of 84 members.
- 4.2 On 1 September 2026, the LGBCE published its draft recommendations for a warding pattern and ward names for consultation. The proposals include a revised council size of 84 councillors as proposed by Dorset Council, and broadly supported many of warding arrangements proposed by the council. However, there were a number of changes that the council are asked to consider.

5. Task and Finish Group recommendations

- 5.1 The cross-party task and finish group established by Full Council met on 3 September and 23 September to consider a response to the draft recommendations. All councillors were invited to comment on the task and finish group's initial views, and all responses received from councillors were considered by the group before they reached their final proposed response that Full Council is being asked to consider.
- 5.2 In developing its recommended response, the task and finish group had regard to the following principles:
- The new ward arrangements should, in so far as is possible, result in electoral equality based on the projected electorate for 2032. This is a mandatory requirement of the Commission.
 - Wards should, as far as possible, reflect established community interests and identities, and have clearly identifiable boundaries.
 - Warding arrangements should facilitate effective and convenient local government.

- 'Natural' barriers, such as rivers and railway lines, should be taken into account when developing warding proposals.
- Wards must be contiguous ie sharing a common border – 'island' and 'donut' wards are not permitted.

5.3 There were areas where the task and finish group did not believe that LGBCE had applied its reasoning for warding proposals across the entire area, and the group felt it was important that arguments for warding were applied consistently. There were also proposals for ward name changes that the group did not feel accurately reflected the local communities/areas.

5.4 Appendix A sets out the detail of the response proposed by the task and finish group for submission to the LGBCE.

6. **Alternative options considered**

6.1 The task and finish group considered alternative proposals put forward by councillors, taking into account the representation levels for each ward and considering how local communities were best represented.

6.2 The council could choose not to respond during the consultation period on draft recommendations from the LGBCE, but this would deprive the council of the important opportunity to make a submission and to influence the electoral arrangements which will apply from 2029.

7. **Legal considerations**

7.1 The electoral review is conducted by LGBCE. They will follow a timetable that is compliant with legislation and Dorset Council have provided data and information in accordance with requests made by them.

8. **Financial implications**

8.1 The council has agreed a scheme of allowance under which each councillor is entitled to receive a basic allowance, currently £16,528 per annum. If the draft recommendation for a council size of 84 councillors is confirmed, this will increase the budget by £33,056 in 2029 when the changes will take effect. This figure may be slightly different if allowances increase/decrease before 2029.

9. **Natural environment, climate & ecology implications**

9.1 There are no natural environment, climate or ecology implications associated with this report.

10. **Well-being and health implications**

10.1 There are no well-being and health implications associated with this report.

11. Other implications

- 11.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

12. Risk implications

- 12.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

13. Equalities

- 13.1 The request for an electoral review by the council was to ensure that, in so far as is possible, electoral equality is achieved. The review is being carried out by the LGBCE who will be responsible for conducting an appropriate equalities impact assessment.

14. Appendices

- 14.1 Appendix A – proposed response to the draft recommendations published by LGBCE.

15. Background papers

- 15.1 [Draft recommendations publish by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England](#)

16. Report sign-off

- 16.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Assurance & Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Director for Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member.

Dorset Council's response to the Local Government Commission for England's draft recommendations for ward boundaries for the Dorset Council area

Council size: 84 Councillors

Warding arrangements: 58 wards

38 x single member wards

14 x two member wards

6 x three member wards

Map ref. on DC proposals	Ward	Summary of change from Dorset Council proposals	Working Party Comments
2	Beaminster	Include Mapperton parish	Accept
8	Broadwindsor	Include Evershot parish Remove Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmond, Melbury Samford and Stockwood parishes	Accept
6	Bridport	Include new residential development to the west of the town (currently partly in parish of Symondsburys)	Accept
12	Chesil	Remove parishes of Askerswell and Loders	Accept
27	Lyme & Charmouth	No change to Council's proposal	
30	Marshwood Vale	Only the village of Symondsburys included and the Foundry Lea development to form part of Bridport (reference above).	Accept

7	Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale	Include Bincombe parish	Object - The reason for the inclusion of Bincombe (which on reflection would fit better in the Littlemoor and Preston Ward) is due to the development in the village area and is the same reasoning as the Commission have used for the creation of the warding in Symondsbury for Foundry Lea. The Council ask that the Commission reconsider this proposal with the Bincombe area being included in the Littlemoor and Preston ward.
9	Chalk Valleys	Include parishes of Mappowder and Stoke Wake (currently in Blackmore Vale ward) and retain Buckland Newton and Minterne Magna parishes Remove Dewlish (to be included in Milborne & The Winterbornes), Hazlebury Bryan and Woolland (to be included in Blackmore Vale ward)	Accept
11	Charminster St Marys	No change to Council's proposal	
19	Dorchester East	No change to Council's proposal	
20	Dorchester Poundbury	No change to Council's proposal	
21	Dorchester West	No change to Council's proposal	
32	Milborne & The Winterbornes	Include Turnworth and Dewlish parishes	Accept

49	Upper Frome & Asker	Include Askerswell and Loders parishes	Accept
38	Sherborne East	No change to Council's proposal	
39	Sherborne Rural	Include Bishop's Caundle and Purse Caundle and parishes in Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council into the existing Sherborne Rural Ward	Accept
40	Sherborne West	No change to Council's proposal	
59	Yetminster & Yeo Valley	Reconfigure the existing ward by including Bradford Abbas, Clifton Maybank and Thornhackett Grouped Parish Council and transferring Cam Vale Grouped Parish Council to Sherborne Rural ward and Corscombe, Halstock & District Grouped Parish Council to a new Broadwindsor ward. Also include Melbury Bubb, Melbury Osmond, Melbury Sampford and Stockwood parishes.	Accept
1	Beacon	Excluding the area to the south of the A30	The Council ask that the Commission reconsiders the original submission to include the dwellings south of the A30 as this provides a clear and natural boundary providing greater clarity and avoiding confusion for residents.
3	Blackmore Vale	Remove Lydlinch parish (to be included in Stalbridge) and Hammoon and Manston (to be included in Sturminster Newton) and	Accept

		Turnworth (to be included in Milborne & The Winterbornes) Include Hazelbury Bryan and Woolland parishes.	
24	Gillingham	No change to Council's proposal	
29	Marnhull	No change to Council's proposal	
37	Shaftesbury	Retaining the existing town ward	Object - The reason to move part of the current ward into the proposed Beacon ward is due to the development in the village area and is the same reasoning as the Commission have used for the creation of the warding in Symondsbury for Foundry Lea. The Council therefore ask that the Commission reinstate this as in original submission.
43	Stalbridge	To include Lydlinch parish (Bishop's Caundle and Purse Caundle removed as referenced above).	Accept
45	Sturminster Newton	Include Hammoon and Manston parishes	Accept. The Council did consider whether Hinton St Mary should be included in this ward but this would adversely impact on electoral equality.

4	Blandford	Three member Blandford ward comprising Blandford Forum, Blandford St Mary, Bryanston and Charlton Marshall.	The Council considers that this proposal works well for neighbourhood planning. However, the Council ask that the Commission consider the inclusion of Spetisbury (507 electors). Although this will bring the electoral variance to +10.7% (with 4246 electors per councillor) this would support community identity, and cohesion would be far better. Spetisbury looks to Blandford for education, health, shopping etc and has closer community links with the town and generally has much closer everyday cohesion with Blandford and its community.
16	Cranborne & Alderholt	Remove Wimborne St Giles and Woodlands parishes (transfer to Cranborne Chase with other parish in the Knowlton Grouped Parish Council)	Accept
17	Cranborne Chase	Include Wimborne St Giles, Woodlands and Hinton parishes. Remove Tarrants Crawford, Keyneston, Rawston and Rushton parishes (into Pimperne & The Tarrants)	The Council believes that Hinton should be moved to the current Stour and Allen Vale ward but the parish of Chettle should be included. This will result in electoral equality of -4% (3689 electors)
47 & 17	Pimperne & The Tarrants	Include parishes of Tarrants Crawford, Keyneston, Rawston and Rushton.	The Council submit that the parish of Chettle (74 residents) should be moved to the Cranborne Chase

			ward. They have a strong connection to the parish of Farnham and this would be a better fit. This would not adversely affect electoral equality with a variation of +6% (4050 electors)
44	Stour & Holt	Proposed change of name from Stour & Allen Vale ward. Include Spetisbury and Hinton parishes. The area of Furzehill will also move into Stour & Holt so it is included with the rest of the Holt parish.	The Council does not agree that Spetisbury has close links with the other parishes in this ward and better aligns to the Blandford ward as referenced above. It is also considered more appropriate to include Hinton into this ward (359 electors) resulting in electoral equality of -2% (3764 electors). The Council also submits that the current name of Stour and Allen Vale should be retained as it better reflects the landscape and community's identity.
14	Colehill & Wimborne Minster East	No change to Council's proposal	
22	Ferndown North	No change to Council's proposal	
23	Ferndown South	No change to Council's proposal	
42	St Leonards & St Ives	No change to Council's proposal	

50	Verwood	No change to Council's proposal	
52	West Moors & Three Legged Cross	No change to Council's proposal	
53	West Parley	No change to Council's proposal	
56	Wimborne Minster	No change to Council's proposal	
15	Corfe Mullen	No change to Council's proposal	
18	Crossways & Lower Frome	As proposed. Evidence invited in respect of a suggestion from a local resident that a name of Mid Frome would better reflect the geography of the area.	The Council does not agree with the suggestion of a ward name of Mid Frome. However, the Council would like to submit an alternative name of Crossways and Mid Frome.
28	Lytchett Matravers & Upton	Largely as proposed but the ward boundary to follow parish boundary and not extend to the A350 (although the Commission recognised the logic of this proposal from the Council).	The Council objects to the draft recommendation in respect of this ward as it will be undertaking a Community Governance Review following the electoral review and this could then be brought into alignment for 2029 elections. The Council therefore asks for the original submission to be reconsidered.
33	Piddle & Bere Valley	Remove parishes of East Stoke and East Holme (to be placed in Wool & Bovington ward)	Accept
48	Purbeck	Include Coombe Keynes parish.	Accept

46	Swanage	No change to Council's proposal	
51	Wareham	No change to Council's proposal	
57	Wool & Bovington	Include East Stoke and East Holme parishes	Accept
10	Charlestown & Lanehouse	Single cllr ward including Charlestown, Littlesea and Lanehouse areas (which currently straddles the Chickerell and Weymouth parish boundary) and the Camp Road area (rather than transferring it to a Wyke Regis Ward)	Object – Camp Road area is only accessible from the Wyke Regis ward and the only access to the area from Chickerell is by either swimming or crossing fields.
13	Chickerell	Proposed ward does not follow the edge of the Chickerell Urban Extension.	Accept
25	Littlemoor & Preston	No change to Council's proposal	The Council, having reviewed these draft recommendations, would like to see the area of Bincombe included within this ward which the Commission had proposed to include in the Broadmayne & Winterborne Vale ward as referenced above.
26	Lodmoor	Largely as proposed with some modification to better reflect ground detail and ensure ward boundaries follow clearer and more identifiable features	Accept
31	Melcombe Regis	No change to Council's proposal	On a further review of the Council's original submission, small minor changes are proposed to the ward boundaries to better reflect ground

			features (see map attached). This doesn't not include any residential properties and the proposal doesn't impact on electoral equality but provides a clearer boundary.
34	Portland	No change to Council's proposal	
35	Radipole & Southill	Largely as proposed with some modification to better reflect ground detail and ensure ward boundaries follow clearer and more identifiable features including ensuring the lake is within the ward and that the railway line forms the boundary between this ward and Lodmoor.	Accept
41	South Harbourside	As proposed but view sought on possibly calling it Harbourside	Object - The area is known locally as South Harbourside and this is what is shown on local highway signs so should remain as South Harbourside.
36	Sandsfoot	As proposed but change of name from Rodwell & Wyke	Object – Sandsfoot is not accepted. The Council propose that the ward is named "Rodwell" as this is the traditional name of the heart of this ward and is used for a Rodwell trail, a popular walk along the former railway line, there is the Rodwell WI and the former station is the centre of the ward was Rodwell Station.
55	Upwey & Broadway	As proposed with the exception of Bincombe which has been placed in the Broadmayne &	Object – see comments above re the inclusion of Bincombe into the

		Winterborne Vale ward referenced above and retaining the ward name (Council's proposed name was Weymouth North).	Littlemoor and Preston ward. Accept the Commission's proposed ward name Upwey & Broadway.
54	Westham	No change to Council's proposal	
58	Wyke Regis	No change to Council's proposal	

Melcombe Regis

Ward:

undefined

County division:

undefined

Parliamentary boundary:

undefined

Unitary boundary:

undefined

Parish:

undefined

Property count: 3633

Electorate count: 3915

Polling stations:

- The Park Community
Centre - Station 1,
Chelmsford Street, DT4
7HP

- Baptist Church Hall, 18
The Esplanade, DT4 8DT

- The Park Community
Centre - Station 2,
Chelmsford Street, DT4
7HP



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Recommendation to Council

22 October 2026

From Cabinet held on 6 October 2026

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr M Bell, Public Health, Prevention & Communities

Local Councillor(s):

All

Executive Director:

S Crowe - Executive Director, Housing, Prevention and Communities

Report author and job title: Service Manager for Community Safety

Email: customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Community Safety Plan 2026 – 2029 be adopted.

Appendices

Report to the People and Health Overview Committee on 21 September 2026, which included the following appendix:

Appendix 1 – Community Safety Plan 2026 – 2027

Background papers

[Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 6th October, 2026, 6.30 pm - Dorset Council](#)

[Agenda and Draft Minutes for People and Health Overview Committee on Monday, 21st September, 2026, 6.30 pm - Dorset Council](#)

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People & Health Overview Committee

21 September 2026

Dorset Community Safety Plan 2026-29

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Cabinet Member:

Cllr M Bell, Public Health, Prevention & Communities

Local Councillor(s): All

Senior Leadership Team:

S Crowe - Executive Director, Housing, Prevention and Communities

Report author and job title: Service Manager for Community Safety

Email: customerservices@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Crime and Disorder Act 1998

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

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 Dorset Council is under a legal duty to work with specific partners through the Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to identify and tackle community safety issues in its area.
- 1.2 CSPs are required to produce three-year community safety plans that are refreshed annually. It is a legal requirement for the plans to be formally adopted by the local authority for the area.
- 1.3 This report presents the latest Community Safety Plan covering the period 2026-2029 for adoption by Dorset Council.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the People & Health Overview Committee recommend to Cabinet that the Community Safety Plan 2026-2029 be recommended to Dorset Council for adoption.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To ensure Dorset Council meets its statutory duties as set out in relevant legislation.

4. Community Safety Plan 2026-2029

4.1 Dorset Council is under a legal duty to work with the following partners (responsible authorities) to identify and tackle community safety issues in its area:

- Dorset Police
- NHS Dorset
- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
- Probation Service

4.2 It does this through the Dorset CSP, a statutory partnership under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

4.3 CSPs are required to produce three-year community safety plans that are refreshed annually. Community safety plans should be formally adopted by the local authority for the area. Adoption must be by Full Council.

4.4 The Dorset CSP and its community safety plan are co-terminous with the Dorset Council area (there is a separate CSP and plan for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authority area).

4.5 The Partnership's latest community safety plan is appended. It was agreed by partners at their CSP meeting on 18th June 2026.

4.6 The Plan sets out partners' priorities and how they will be tackled in broad terms based on an assessment of community safety issues in the area. The priorities included in the plan are:

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

4.7 They are complemented by the following cross cutting issues:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Complex cases / multiple need
- Violence against women and girls
- Hate related crime

- 4.8 Including hate related crime as a cross cutting issue in the latest plan ensures partners respond to the prevalence and impact of issues and link with related areas of work including community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism.
- 4.9 The broad range of activity to address priorities set out in the Plan is complemented by more detailed delivery plans.
- 4.10 The CSP and Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) are legally required to have regard to each other's priorities when setting their plans. The PCC's current Police & Crime Plan has been considered when writing the latest community safety plan.
- 4.11 The CSP is responsible for developing and delivering the community safety plan. The CSP is held to account for delivery of its statutory duties by Dorset Council's formal Crime & Disorder Committee (People & Health Scrutiny Committee).

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 Not applicable. It is a legal requirement for the statutory three year community safety plan to be formally adopted by the local authority.

6. Legal considerations

- 6.1 It is a legal requirement for CSPs to have three year community safety plans and for them to be formally adopted by the local authority.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The Dorset CSP does not receive funding directly, however partners' plans and strategies clarify where they will focus their time and effort and their broad activity to meet priorities.
- 7.2 Central government funding has been made available to partners to help deliver their duties relating to serious violence, which links to the Community Safety Plan.
- 7.3 Funding has also been made available to local authorities to deliver their duties relating to domestic abuse, which links to the Community Safety Plan.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 8.1 None.

9. Well-being and health implications

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

10. Other implications

- 10.1 Community safety as set out in the report.

11. Risk implications

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

12. Equalities

- 12.1 An EqIA has been completed in relation to the new Community Safety Plan. The EqIA helped identify several positive impacts on those with protected characteristics.

13. Appendices

- 13.1 Dorset Community Safety Plan 2026-2029

14. Background papers

- 14.1 None.

15. Report sign-off

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

Community Safety Plan 2026-2029

Dorset Community Safety Partnership



Introduction

The Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP) aims to:

- Reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- Address risk, threat and harm to victims and local communities; and
- Facilitate the strengthening of Dorset's communities in the delivery of local initiatives.

It also acts as Dorset's Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board required under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and leads partners' response to meeting their duties relating to serious violence under the Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act 2022.

Find out more about the CSP here: [Dorset Community Safety Partnership](#)

CSPs are required to have three-year Community Safety Plans that are refreshed annually. This latest Plan for 2026-2029 sets out partners' priorities based on the most recent assessment of community safety issues. The Plan is complemented by the [Domestic Abuse Strategy 2025 to 2028](#) and [Dorset Serious Violence Strategy](#).

The Plan sets out activity to address priorities in broad terms. Further details regarding delivery and performance are contained in partners' various work plans which are developed, assessed and revised over the course of each year.

Crime in the Dorset Community Safety Partnership Area

Since 2018 the volume of crime reported in the Dorset CSP area has tended to decrease annually. The number of crimes recorded during 2025 was 12.8% lower than the equivalent figure for 2018. Crime volumes were artificially depressed during the two years affected by Covid and its associated lockdowns (2020 and 2021) and, consequently, a rise in the annual count was seen in the year that followed.

Crime volumes in Dorset follow an annual cycle, which peaks each year in July/August and reaches its lowest in January/February.

When compared to the equivalent figures for England and Wales, Dorset is seen to be a relatively low crime area. During the six years from 2018, the crime rate for Dorset, when expressed as the number of crimes per 1,000 population, was a little over half that seen nationally.

Consultation and Engagement

Partners use the findings of consultation and engagement exercises to help inform their understanding and work to tackle community safety issues.

A public consultation was undertaken with residents specifically for the CSP in 2023. This included members of the Council's People Panel (a group of residents who volunteered to give responses on a range of questions relating to living in Dorset) who were asked a series of questions on what they thought about crime in their local community.

Respondents were asked whether they thought that crime and antisocial behaviour were issues where they lived. In addition, they were asked to state whether, in the past twelve months, they had been victims of either. These questions had been asked regularly in previous years, enabling any changes in public perception and experience to be identified.

Most respondents (79%) believed that crime had little or no impact on their daily lives. However, the proportion of residents who felt that crime was a problem in their neighbourhood had increased, having doubled in the four years since 2020. This was reflected by a comparable increase in the number of respondents stating that they had been victims of crime in the past year.

Consultees were asked which crime categories they thought were a problem where they live. The four categories that registered the highest concern were:

1. **Anti-social Behaviour** (46% of respondents)
2. **Rural Crime** (39% of respondents)
3. **Vehicle Crime** (38% of respondents)
4. **Drug Dealing** (37% of respondents)

The 3 categories of least concern were Slavery/Human Trafficking, Hate Crime and Knife Crime.

Dorset Council's most recent Residents Survey was undertaken in 2024. As in previous editions of the survey, respondents were asked how safe they felt in their local area, both during daylight hours and after dark.

A clear majority of survey respondents reported feeling safe where they lived during the daytime. The proportion who felt safe has remained consistent over recent surveys. However, there was a noticeable increase, although still a minority, of respondents who felt unsafe locally after dark.

Another survey conducted by Dorset's Police and Crime Commissioner in October 2025 asked residents how safe they believed Dorset to be compared to other English and Welsh counties. Their replies, with corresponding results from 2024, are summarised below:

<i>Compared to the rest of England and Wales, Dorset is...</i>	2024	2025	% Point Change
<i>...The safest county</i>	1.9%	0.6%	-1.3%
<i>...One of the safest counties</i>	54.2%	49.0%	-5.2%
<i>...Neither one of the safest or less safe counties</i>	36.2%	43.0%	+6.8%
<i>...One of the less safe counties</i>	6.8%	6.7%	-0.1%
<i>...The least safe county</i>	0.9%	0.8%	-0.1%

Almost half of the respondents believed that Dorset was among one of the safest counties in England and Wales, although this proportion had fallen 5.2 percentage points during the previous year.

The survey also asked residents to state which of a list of crimes they felt affected them in their local areas. Their responses, again with comparative data from 2024, are shown on the table below.

Crime	2024	2025	Diff
Antisocial behaviour	63.2%	69.8%	6.6%
Dangerous driving	52.5%	54.7%	2.2%
Burglary and theft	53.9%	50.2%	-3.7%
Drug crimes	42.8%	49.2%	6.4%
Fly tipping	45.3%	47.6%	2.3%
Shoplifting	41.0%	39.9%	-1.1%
Criminal damage	34.9%	38.2%	3.3%
Vehicle theft	31.2%	29.0%	-2.2%
Illegal E-scooter use	25.7%	29.0%	3.3%
Cyber crime	31.3%	26.3%	-5.0%
Machine theft	26.7%	22.7%	-4.0%
Poaching, etc	18.7%	19.8%	1.1%
Unauthorised encampments	14.4%	18.4%	4.0%
Domestic abuse	17.3%	16.8%	-0.5%

Violence and assault	15.4%	16.3%	0.9%
Knife crime	11.3%	11.4%	0.1%
Robbery	10.2%	10.1%	-0.1%
Pet theft	13.0%	9.2%	-3.8%
Sexual offences	8.8%	7.6%	-1.2%
Hate crime	6.5%	7.6%	1.1%
Drink spiking	5.7%	4.3%	-1.4%
Stalking	6.0%	4.1%	-1.9%
Murder	3.4%	2.8%	-0.6%

Antisocial behaviour was, again, highlighted as the issue which caused the greatest concern to residents, with over two-thirds of respondents regarding it as a problem locally. This figure showed the greatest increase (+6.6% points) of all crimes compared to the results gathered in 2024.

The crimes where greatest increase in the amount of concern expressed was seen when compared to 2024 were antisocial behaviour, drug crimes and unauthorised encampments. There was a drop in the level of concern in relation to cyber crimes.

In 2025, a Young People's Safety Survey was conducted by the Pineapple Project based in Dorset. Findings from the survey included:

- 68% of respondents (where sex was female) reported feeling safe or very safe in their communities in the summer months.
- 6% of respondents (where sex was female) reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe in their communities in the summer months.
- In the past year, 68% of girls and young women aged 11-21 had changed their everyday behaviour to avoid sexual harassment.
- 1 in 10 girls aged 11-16 had missed school to avoid sexual harassment.
- More than half of girls and young women aged 11-21 didn't feel safe on public transport on their own.
- 48% said they avoid going out when it's dark to keep themselves safe.

CSP partners also work with the victims of crime and people who use services to help inform and develop their response to issues. A report into domestic abuse services across the pan-Dorset area by the organisation SafeLives conducted in 2024:

- Estimated that 45% of victims in Dorset did not tell anyone about their abuse.
- The principal barrier to seeking help was the fear of provoking an unwelcome response from the perpetrator of their abuse.
- Other barriers included concerns about the financial problems victims might face by reporting their situation and uncertainty about what processes would result from seeking advice.
- Rurality and disability were both identified as barriers to accessing domestic abuse services.
- Victims felt local services could be improved by increasing awareness of domestic abuse and its related issues.

CSP partners intend to further develop their approach to engaging communities to help understand community safety issues and what they should prioritise. This will include building on individual partners' consultation and engagement mechanisms, conducting surveys and working with the users of services.

Partners will look to hold at least one public meeting each year and engage with a wide range of people, including those who are likely to be particularly affected by the Community Safety Plan.

In addition, partners will continue to promote ways in which members of the public can help reduce crime and disorder including through specific initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch, Farm Watch and Dorset Alert.

Community Safety Priorities

Partners carry out an annual Partnership Strategic Assessment (PSA) using information and data from a variety of sources to assess crime and disorder issues in the area. The assessment is used to set and review partners' priorities. When setting and reviewing priorities consideration is also given to the local Policing objectives in the area. Priorities are reviewed regularly.

Partners' priorities for 2026-2029 are:

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

They are complemented by the following cross cutting issues:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Complex cases / multiple need
- Violence against women and girls
- Hate related crime

A hate crime is when a criminal offence, for example, an assault or harassment, is perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice. Although reports of hate crime in the Dorset CSP area are low, they have a devastating impact on victims and communities.

Partners undertake work to address hate related crime including raising awareness and signposting victims to support services. Including hate related crime as a cross cutting issue for the CSP ensures partners respond to the prevalence and impact of issues and link with related areas of work including community cohesion and Preventing Violent Extremism.

There is a strong correlation between the CSP's priorities and those set out in the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Police and Crime Plan 2021/29 which commits to tackling, amongst other issues, rural crime, violent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Reducing re-offending remains a cross cutting area of work for partners. Details are set out in the [Pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2024 to 2027](#).

In accordance with recent legislation, there are separate partnership arrangements, plans and strategies for dealing with substance misuse through the pan-Dorset Combating Drugs Partnership.

Although CSPs are legally required to undertake annual needs assessments to set their priorities, in recent years legislation has been placed on specific partners directing them to tackle domestic abuse and serious violence. In Dorset, partners have chosen to use the CSP as their partnership mechanism to meet these duties and ensured their [Domestic Abuse](#) and [Serious Violence](#) Strategies complement this Plan.

Partnership work to tackle community safety issues takes many forms. Some partnership activities and service arrangements have been in place for years and have become business as usual. Well established multi-agency partnership arrangements are in place to tackle shorter term, area specific issues.

The CSP also works closely with other partnerships on shared issues including the Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board and Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Board.

Below is a description of broad partnership activity against priorities. This is supported by partners' various work plans which are developed, assessed and revised over the course of each year.

Domestic Abuse and Stalking	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Implement the Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy (2025–2028) recommendations. • Enhance the whole-systems approach to ensure services work effectively together and are accessible to all communities. • Develop prevention-focused initiatives, including early help and education for children and young people (e.g. healthy relationships). • Introduce and strengthen perpetrator interventions to reduce offending and prevent further harm. • Regularly assess and enhance the High Risk Domestic Abuse (HRDA) process to maintain effectiveness and fitness for purpose. • Strengthen responses to stalking, improving protection for those affected, and multi-agency arrangements. • Conduct targeted research into underreporting of domestic abuse in rural areas, wealthier communities, and among young people, older people and men. • Deliver communication campaigns to raise awareness of issues and available support. • Embed learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews to inform continuous improvement.	• A reduction in the annual proportion of all domestic abuse victims which are identifiable 'repeat' victims. • A reduction in the number of domestic abuse related stalking crimes reported annually. • A reduction in the annual percentage of domestic abuse perpetrators identified as 'repeat' perpetrators.

Sexual Offences	
Activities	Performance Measure
• Strengthen the response to sexual abuse against children and young people. • Deliver targeted interventions focused on male perpetrators of sexual abuse, reducing offending and challenging harmful behaviours. • Ensure information and advice for children and young people is accessible, relevant, and meets their needs. • Support initiatives that address sexual offences linked to the night-time economy, enhancing safety and prevention. • Run regular, targeted communications campaigns to increase awareness of available support, including within schools and other educational settings.	• An annual reduction in the number of sexual offence crimes recorded by the Police.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Provide a high visibility presence using Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) in priority locations to deter ASB and disorder. • Develop effective working arrangements with housing associations to help understand and tackle ASB issues. • Work closely and share data / information with youth outreach services to help direct provision. • Work with local businesses to address shoplifting that impacts directly on ASB including 'designing out crime'. • Work with Trading Standards to help direct test purchasing work in areas where ASB is an issue. • Develop close working relationships with partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector including youth centres, to develop joint approaches to tackle ASB. • Work with young people's forums and groups to better understand issues and inform effective interventions, including the Dorset Youth Association and 0-19 Youth Forum. • Support the work of the Dorset Combating Drugs Partnership's Prevention sub-group including around education in schools.	• An annual reduction in the number of antisocial behaviour crimes recorded by the police, countywide. • An annual reduction in the number of antisocial behaviour crimes recorded by the police in hotspot areas.

Rural Crime	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Take a strong collaborative partnership approach to promote opportunities for effective crime prevention initiatives. • Develop different ways of engaging and reporting issues including online platforms. • Maximise the use of social media platforms to provide crime prevention advice and ensure the community is kept informed of emerging issues. • Support the Country Watch initiative focused on increasing connectivity with our rural community. • Work in partnership with neighbouring police forces to target cross border criminality and organised crime. • Continue to develop an effective regional response to information sharing and joint working to tackle cross border rural organised criminality.	• A reduction each year in the total number of rural crimes, as defined by Dorset's Rural Crime Unit. • An annual reduction in the volume of reported incidents of fly tipping.

• Protect our environment, wildlife and heritage from organised crime and reckless or criminal individuals. • Help educate communities on the importance of addressing wildlife and heritage crime.	
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Serious Violence	
Activities	Performance Measures
• Develop and deliver interventions that meet the requirements of the Serious Violence Duty. • Establish interventions in response to locally identified need, reviewing annually. • Deliver programmes that enable young people to safely challenge and change inappropriate and harmful behaviours in themselves and others. • Deliver programmes that target those most vulnerable to becoming involved in serious violent crime, both as perpetrators and victims. • Establish interventions that respond to young people carrying and using knives and other sharp implements. • Support education and awareness raising activity addressing issues of serious violence • Undertake work to further develop our understanding of serious violence.	• An annual reduction in recorded violent crimes throughout the Dorset Council area. • An annual reduction in recorded violence in hot spot areas. • A reduction in the proportion of victims of serious violence that are identified as 'repeat' victims. • A reduction in the proportion of perpetrators of serious violence that are identified as 'repeat' offenders. • Number of recorded knife crimes* • Number of homicides* *Home Office requirement

Performance Management

Partners use performance information and data coupled with an assessment of progress against their agreed actions at each meeting, to determine whether they are delivering against their priorities. Current performance measures are listed in the above tables.

Partners intend to gather a wide range of information and data to complement Police statistics and develop a comprehensive understanding of community safety issues.

Governance

The Dorset CSP is the statutory Community Safety Partnership for the local area. In addition, the CSP fulfils the functions of the Local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board as required under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and coordinates partners' response to meeting their statutory duties relating to serious violence under the Police, Crime, Courts and Sentencing Act 2022. It brings together senior officers and elected members from:

- Dorset Police
- Dorset Council
- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
- Probation Service (Dorset)
- NHS Dorset

Many other partners such as the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, the Dorset Domestic Abuse Forum and the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service are also members of the CSP.

There is a multi-agency Strategic Delivery Group that reports to the CSP and co-ordinates partners' work to tackle strategic issues and priorities.

Locality based Multi-Agency Problem Solving (MAPS) groups report into a Partnership Co-ordinating Group (PCG) which reports to the CSP. The MAPs and PCG are responsible for identifying solutions to locality based issues.

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Recommendation to Dorset Council

22 October 2026

From Cabinet on 28 July 2026

Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

Cllr. C Sutton, Children, Families & Education

Local Councillor(s):

All

Executive Director:

P Dempsey - Executive Director, Children's Services

Report Author: David Webb

Job Title: Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service

Email: david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027 be approved.

Appendices

Report to the People and Health Overview Committee on 6 July 2026, which included the following appendix:

Appendix 1 – Youth Justice Plan 2026/27

Background papers

[Agenda and minutes of the People and Health Overview Committee – 6 July 2026.](#)

[Agenda and minutes for Cabinet on Tuesday, 28th July, 2026](#)

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People and Health Overview Committee

6 July 2026

Youth Justice Plan 2026/2027

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Cabinet Member:

Cllr C Sutton, Children, Families and Education

Local Councillor(s):

Senior Leadership Team:

P Dempsey, Executive Director – Children’s Services

Report author and job title: David Webb, Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service

Email: david.webb@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority:

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

1. Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)

- 1.1 The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) places a statutory requirement on local authority youth offending teams to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2026/27, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.
- 1.2 The Youth Justice Plan shows strong performance in Dorset. Achievements include diverting children from the justice system, avoiding the use of custody for children, and the quality of work to reduce the likelihood of reoffending and to repair the harm caused to victims.
- 1.3 Priorities for the year ahead are to respond to national and local reform programmes, enhancing ‘Child First’ practice, developing work with victims, reducing the over-representation of some groups of children in the justice system, and making best use of available resources.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 For the People and Health Overview Committee to endorse the Youth Justice Plan so that Cabinet can recommend its approval to Full Council.

3 Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 Youth Justice Services are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the Local Authority for that Youth Justice Service. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works across both Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Approval is therefore sought from both Dorset Council and from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

4. The report

- 4.1 The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires Youth Offending Teams (now more widely known as Youth Justice Services) to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Board provides detailed and prescriptive guidance about what must be included in the Plan. The draft Youth Justice Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is attached at Appendix One. A brief summary of the Youth Justice Plan is provided in this report.
- 4.2 The Youth Justice Plan provides information on the resourcing, structure, governance, partnership arrangements and performance of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service. The Plan also describes the national and local youth justice context for 2026/27 and sets out our priorities for this year.
- 4.3 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was rated 'Good' in its most recent inspection report, which was published in January 2023. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) was also inspected, in February 2025, as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. The report from this inspection was published in October 2025. The inspection report refers to good practice in Dorset in the partnership work between DCYJS and Dorset Police, in the work to engage victims and to provide restorative justice, and in YJS Speech and Language work.
- 4.4 The Youth Justice Board continues to publish data for three 'key performance indicators' for youth justice. National performance data is published as a combined figure for the two local authorities within the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership.
- 4.5 The first indicator relates to the rate of young people entering the justice system for the first time. Overall local performance in this area, across both local authorities, has improved significantly in recent years. In the year before the pandemic, 2019/20, 78 Dorset Council children entered the justice system. In the past year, 2025/26, 48 Dorset Council children entered the

justice system. Pages 11-18 of the Youth Justice Plan provide more data and analysis about the children entering the justice system and about local work to divert children from the justice system.

- 4.6 The second indicator relates to the rate and frequency of reoffending. The national reoffending rate fluctuates, partly because of the counting rules for this measure. Analysis of local data, summarised on pp18-21 of the Youth Justice Plan, provides more insight into how many children are reoffending and the characteristics of those who reoffend.
- 4.7 The third national performance indicator looks at the number and rate of children receiving a custodial sentence. There continue to be very low numbers of Dorset Council children who receive a custodial sentence. Analysis on pp 21-22 of the Youth Justice Plan shows some of the common characteristics of children who are sentenced to custody. It is notable that these children have difficulties across the range of social care, education and health issues.
- 4.8 The Youth Justice Board promotes a good practice approach to youth justice work, known as 'Child First'. The Youth Justice Plan shows how the principles of Child First practice are applied in the work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service.
- 4.9 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service continues to face resourcing pressures. Section 5.2 of the Youth Justice Plan explains the funding outlook for DCYJS. Making best use of available resources is a service priority for the year ahead.
- 4.10 The government published new Knife Crime Guidance in February 2026, for implementation from April 2026. Section 5.6 of the Plan shows how DCYJS and Dorset Police will ensure compliance with the new guidance.
- 4.11 It is recognised nationally that some groups of children are over-represented in the youth justice system. Children from minority ethnicities are not over-represented in the Dorset Council are. Children in Care and children with an EHCP continue to be over-represented. There is also evidence to show that almost all children in contact with the youth justice system have speech, language and communication needs, which are almost always identified for the first time when an assessment is completed by a YJS Speech and Language Therapist. The Youth Justice Plan provides more information about which groups of children are over-represented in the justice system and about actions being taken in response.
- 4.12 YJS work with victims, and work with children to help them to repair the harm from their offences, is described in 6.6 of the Plan. This work will be one of the service priorities in the year ahead.

4.13 In addition to the Knife Crime Guidance mentioned in paragraph 4.10, the government is also initiating other youth justice reforms during 2026. Responding to these reforms, and to other reform programmes in children's services and health services, forms another priority for the YJS in the year ahead.

4.14 The DCYJS Strategic Partnership Priorities for 2026/27 are:

- Respond to national and local reforms in youth justice and children's services
- Enhance Child First Practice
- Develop YJS and Partnership work with victims
- Reduce the Over-Representation of some groups of children in the justice system
- Make best use of available resources

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 It is a statutory requirement to publish a Youth Justice Plan, and the Youth Justice Plan must adhere to the Youth Justice Board's Guidance document. Locally, the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board oversees the contents of the Youth Justice Plan and the selection of service priorities. The Executive Director of People – Children chairs the YJS Partnership Board. The draft Youth Justice Plan was approved by the YJS Partnership Board on 16 April 2026.

6. Legal considerations

6.1 The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) sets out legal requirements for a multi-agency 'Youth Offending Team' in each local authority area and for the publication of an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Plan for 2026/27 shows how Dorset Council fulfils the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act.

7. Financial implications

7.1 Section 5.2, and Appendix Two, of the Youth Justice Plan shows the resourcing of the Youth Justice Service. Local authority funding contributions remain frozen at 2022/23 levels. The Ministry of Justice announced in February 2026 that the national Youth Justice Grant will be frozen at 2025/26 levels until at least 2029. The Youth Justice Service achieves a balanced budget through a combination of staffing reductions and additional fixed-term funding streams.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

8.1 No adverse environmental impact has been identified. The Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent reduction of office space, led to an increase in

YJS staff members working from home, with a consequent reduction in staff travel. YJS work with children includes some activities in the natural environment, such as the 'Discover You' project at Upton Country Park, which is described on pp 44-46 of the Youth Justice Plan.

9. Well-being and health implications

- 9.1 Young people in contact with youth justice services are known to be more likely than other young people to have unmet or unidentified health needs. The Youth Justice Service includes seconded health workers who work directly with young people and who facilitate their engagement with community health services. The Youth Justice Plan includes an update on health provision for children in the justice system (see pages 46-50).

10. Other implications

- 10.1 No other implications have been identified.

11. Risk implications

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

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

12. Equalities

- 12.1 The Youth Justice Plan does not relate to a new strategy, policy or function so an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. Some information about equalities issues is included in the report. No adverse equalities impacts have been identified.
- 12.2 Paragraph 4.11 of this report addresses the concern that some groups of children are over-represented in the youth justice system.

13. Appendices

- 13.1 Appendix One – Youth Justice Plan 2026-27

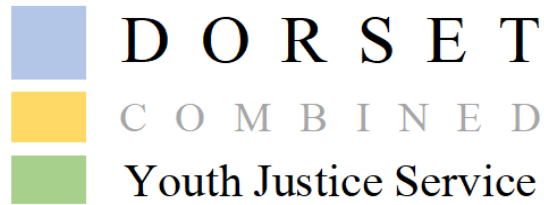
14. Background papers

- 14.1 None

15. Report sign-off

- 15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director, Assurance and Governance (Monitoring

Officer), the Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member(s).



**DORSET
POLICE**



YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2026/27

Service	Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Head of Service	David Webb
Chair of YJS Board	Paul Dempsey

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Youth Justice Plan 2026/27

1 Executive Summary

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) works across the Dorset Council and BCP Council areas in a multi-agency partnership between the local authorities, Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and the Probation Service.

DCYJS helps children to make positive changes, keeping them safe, keeping other people safe, and repairing the harm caused to victims. When possible, we do this work outside the formal justice system, to avoid criminalising the child.

During the past year, DCYJS has made progress on the priorities set out in last year's Plan:

Continue to divert children from the formal justice system: the number of children across Dorset and BCP who received a first caution or court order dropped to 104 in 2025/26. This is the 6th consecutive year which has seen a significant reduction on the previous year.

Reducing over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system: there was a small reduction in the proportion of children in care on the YJS caseload by March 2026. No children with Black, Asian or Mixed Heritage ethnicity were sentenced to custody in 2025/26.

Improve education outcomes for children in the justice system: DCYJS expanded its Discover You project at Upton Country Park, supporting young people to become ready for college or employment. Outcomes from this project are listed in section 6.4 of this document.

Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion: 152 children have now been referred to the Re-Engage project from 26 schools across both local authorities. From 90 completed assessments, 78% of children have been found to have communication needs.

Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence: the YJS 'repairing the harm' team now works with an increased number of community projects. Over £2,000 was raised from the sale of items made by children as part of their work to repair the harm from their offence. This money is donated to charities and local community organisations.

The DCYJS Partnership Strategic Priorities for 2026/27 are:

- Respond to national and local reforms in youth justice and children's services
- Enhance Child First Practice
- Develop YJS and Partnership work with victims
- Reduce the Over-Representation of some groups of children in the justice system
- Make best use of available resources.

These priorities sit alongside ongoing commitments to help children in the youth justice system to achieve positive outcomes and to repair the harm caused to victims.

2 Introduction, vision, strategy, and local context

2.1 Foreword

This document is the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) for 2026/27. It sets out the key priorities and targets for the service for the next 12 months as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. This Plan adheres to the Youth Justice Board's document 'Youth Justice Plans: Guidance for Youth Justice Services'.

This Plan has been developed under the direction and oversight of the DCYJS Partnership Board, alongside consultation with DCYJS staff and feedback from children, parents and victims working with DCYJS.

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan:

- summarises the DCYJS structure, governance and partnership arrangements.
- outlines the resources available to the DCYJS.
- reviews achievements and developments during 2025/26.
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities.
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

*Paul Dempsey, Executive Director People – Children, Dorset Council
Chair, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Partnership Board.*

2.2 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Statement of Purpose

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works with children in the local youth justice system. Our purpose is to help those children to make positive changes, to keep them safe, to keep other people safe, and to repair the harm caused to victims.

We support the national Youth Justice Board Vision for a 'child first' youth justice system:

A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

2.3 Who We Are and What We Do

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a statutory partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, The Probation Service (Dorset) and NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board.

We are a multi-disciplinary team which includes youth justice officers, restorative justice specialists, parenting workers, education and employment workers, police officers, a probation officer, mental health nurses, a psychologist, speech and language therapists and a volunteers and activities coordinator.

More information about the Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership and the members of the YJS team is provided later in this document.

The team works with children who have committed criminal offences to help them make positive changes and to keep them safe and to keep other people safe. We also work with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

We contact all victims of crimes committed by the children we work with. We offer those victims the chance to take part in restorative justice processes so we can help to repair the harm they have experienced. We also seek other ways to provide support to victims, particularly victims who are children.

The organisations in the YJS partnership also work together to prevent children entering the youth justice system, to improve the quality of our local youth justice system and to ensure that young people who work with the YJS can access the specialist support they need for their care, health and education.

The combination of direct work with children, parents and victims, and work to improve our local youth justice and children's services systems, enables us to meet our strategic objectives to:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system.
- Improve the safety and well-being of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce and repair the harm caused to victims and the community.
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

2.4 Local Context

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a partnership working across two local authorities: Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

Dorset Council covers a large geographical, predominantly rural area with market towns and a larger urban area in Weymouth and Portland. Dorset Council has a population of about 389,947 (ONS 2024 mid-year estimates).

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of 408,967 (ONS 2024 mid-year estimates).

Other members of the DCYJS Partnership, such as Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Dorset, Dorset HealthCare Trust and the Probation Service (Dorset) also work across both local authorities.

The following table provides comparative demographic information about young people in both local authorities at the start of 2026. Fuller versions of this data, including data source information, can be found in [Appendix 3](#):

Population Age 10-17	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Dorset
Number of Children ¹	35,978	34,575
Male ¹	51.3%	51.0%
Female ¹	48.7%	49.0%
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals ²	21.6%	22.3%
Pupils with SEN Support ²	15.9%	14.7%
Pupils with an EHC Plan ²	5.7%	7.1%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups ³	17.8%	6.3%
Children living in Poverty after housing costs	27%	25.70%

Safeguarding Age 10-17		
Number of Children in Need ⁵	385	582
Male ⁵	53.2%	53%
Female ⁵	46.8%	47%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan ⁷	179	132
Number of Children in Care ⁶	388	341
Male ⁶	54.9%	60%
Female ⁶	44.8%	40%
Indeterminate ⁶	0.3%	
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation		
High Risk/Significant	43 ⁸	19 ⁷
Medium Risk/Moderate	54 ⁸	46 ⁷
Low Risk/Emerging or Reducing	118 ⁸	43 ⁷

Although the two local authorities differ in geographical size and demography, they have similar population sizes for 10-17 year-olds. Dorset Council has slightly higher rates of children eligible for free school meals and slightly lower rates of children living in poverty after housing costs.

The proportion of 10-17 year-olds identifying as being from non-white ethnicities is higher in BCP Council (17.8%) than in Dorset Council (6.3%).

3 Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

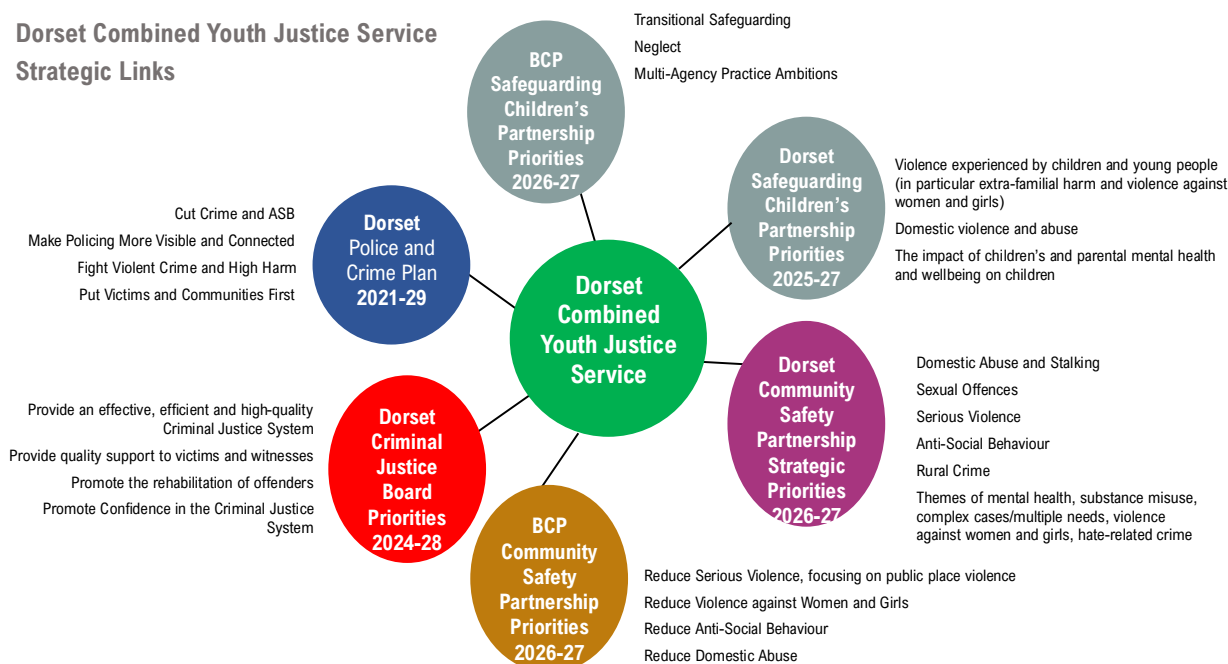
The work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is managed strategically by a Partnership Board. The Partnership Board consists of senior representatives of the statutory partner organisations, together with other relevant local partners.

Membership:

- Dorset Council (chair)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (vice-chair)
- Dorset Police
- The Probation Service (Dorset)
- NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust
- Dorset Magistrates' Youth Panel
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Partnership Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan. Board members and the DCYJS Head of Service sit on other strategic partnerships, helping to ensure that the Youth Justice Plan and other local strategic plans and priorities are integrated and that other plans consider the needs of children and victims in the local youth justice system. The links between DCYJS and local strategic groups, and their overlapping strategic priorities, are illustrated below:

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Strategic Links



Representation by senior leaders from the key partners enables the DCYJS Head of Service to resolve any difficulties in multi-agency working at a senior level and supports effective links at managerial and practitioner levels.

The DCYJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns. The DCYJS Partnership Data Sharing Agreement underpins local multi-agency work to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending.

The DCYJS Partnership Board oversees activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key youth justice outcomes, particularly in respect of the prevention of offending.

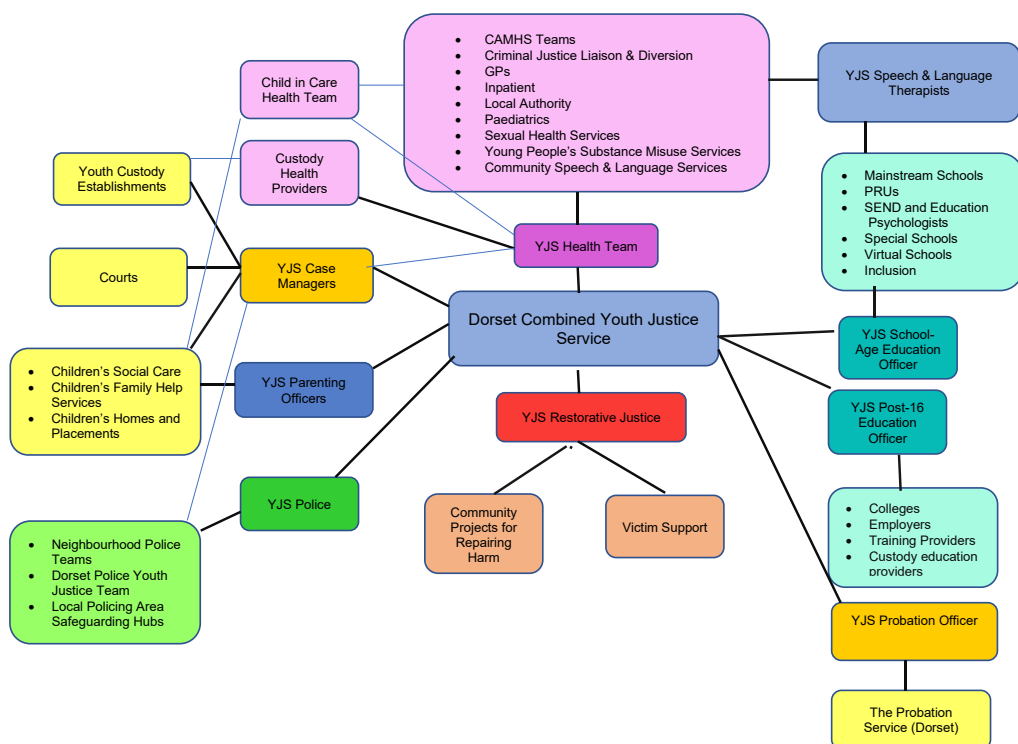
The Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of children in police custody. The DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The Head of Service is a Tier 3 Manager, reporting to the Director of Children's Social Care. The Head of Service also reports to the Corporate Director for Care and Protection in Dorset Council.

[Appendix 1](#) includes the structure chart for DCYJS and structure charts showing where the YJS sits in each local authority.

DCYJS meets the statutory staffing requirements for youth justice services, set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Specialist staff members are seconded into the service by Dorset Police, the Probation Service and Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust. These workers have line managers in both the YJS and their employing organisation. They have direct access to their own organisation's case management systems, to enable the prompt and proportionate sharing of information. More details about the staffing and financial contributions from YJS partners are provided in [Appendix 2](#).

The YJS multi-disciplinary team also includes education specialists, parenting workers and restorative justice practitioners. The team works closely with other local services, as illustrated below:



4 Update on the previous year

4.1 Progress on priorities in last year's plan

The following section gives a brief summary of progress made against our strategic priorities for 2025-26:

Continue to divert children from the formal justice system:

- The rate of first-time entrants in 2025 was 7.6% lower than in 2024, and 58% lower than the rate in 2018, showing the progress that has been made in the past year and over a longer period.
- The Ministry of Justice Turnaround programme grant was used to fund an additional YJS worker, a Restorative Justice Practitioner and a Speech and Language Therapist to strengthen the offer to children on the cusp of the justice system.
- The Turnaround programme has enabled local implementation and consolidation of the police crime disposal option 'Outcome 22' for children with low level offences, as an alternative to a formal justice outcome.
- The YJS Speech and Language team's 'Re-Engage' programme provided speech and language assessments and support for children at risk of school exclusion. Funding was extended for a third year, to July 2027.
- Plans to establish local diversion options for children with motoring offences have not yet been finalised. 12% of First-Time Entrants in 2025/26 had motoring offences only.

Reducing over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system:

- YJS performance data reporting is broken down by disadvantaged groups to check for any over-representation.
- Children in Care continue to be over-represented in our local youth justice system, in both local authorities. The proportion of Children in Care on the YJS caseload in March 2026 was 18.5% (compared to 22% in September 2025). Good practice in multi-agency work with Children in Care in the justice system has been identified and is being shared to ensure that it is applied consistently.

- Children from minority ethnicities are under-represented in the youth justice system in the Dorset Council area.
- In the second half of the past year, the percentage of children from minority ethnicities in the youth justice system in the BCP Council area has exceeded the percentage in the population (based on 2026 school census data). This data is being analysed and monitored to understand if this is a temporary issue and to look for possible reasons.
- Children from minority ethnicities are no longer over-represented among local children receiving custodial sentences.
- Amongst children remanded in custody, 1 out of 5 had mixed ethnicity and another had White European ethnicity.
- The DCYJS Head of Service represents DCYJS and other local YJS Managers in the Local Criminal Justice Boards' 'Wessex Disproportionality Group'.
- Dorset Police report annually to the YJS Partnership Board on the local use of stop and search and of strip search for children.
- Analysis of YJS Speech and Language assessments, explained later in this document, has improved understanding and responses to children's specific communication needs.
- Although girls are not over-represented in the justice system, they have specific needs which require tailored support. The YJS successfully ran its first 'Girls Group' in 2025, with more groups planned for 2026.

Improve education outcomes for children in the youth justice system:

- During the past year we have expanded the Discover You project at Upton Country Park. The project supports children and young people who are not in employment, education or training. Young people have worked on Maths and English qualifications, prepared for their CSCS card assessments, gained AQA awards, developed an allotment area, and worked on conservation.
- The use of AQA awards to certificate learning by young people during YJS activities has continued to develop, with the award moderation process now established.
- YJS Education Officers, and their line manager, now meet regularly with the allocated worker for all YJS children to review the child's education, training or employment and to take actions as required.
- The weekly ETE Allocations meeting enables a swift response to emerging issues, such as the risk of exclusion.

Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion:

- The 'Re-Engage' project offers speech and language assessments, alongside an offer of coaching and training for school staff, for children at risk of school exclusion, before they are known to the YJS.
- 152 children have been referred to the project, from 26 schools across both local authorities, by the end of March 2026.
- 90 assessments had been completed by March 2026. 78% of the children assessed were identified as having communication needs. These needs had not previously been identified.
- 29% were identified as having significant communication needs, such as Developmental Language Disorder.
- Support and training had been provided to 24 schools.
- 48 children had received additional coaching, delivered jointly with a member of the school's teaching staff.

Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence

- The YJS Community Resources team have increased the number of local community projects and settings where children undertake activities to repair the harm from their offence
- We now work with 12 community organisations across the BCP Council and Dorset Council areas
- Over £2,000 was raised from the sales of items made by children as part of their repairing the harm work in 2025. Donations will be made to charities and organisations to benefit our communities, directed when possible by the victims of the children's offences.
- Community projects and children have given positive feedback about their experience with our repairing the harm activities.

4.2 Performance

DCYJS was inspected in late 2022 under the HMI Probation 'Full Joint Inspection' framework. The inspection report was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspection report can be found at this link: [A joint inspection of youth offending services in Dorset \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/a-joint-inspection-of-youth-offending-services-in-dorset/).

DCYJS was also inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. The inspection report, published in October 2025, highlighted good practice in Dorset in respect of partnership work between Dorset Police and DCYJS, local evaluation of Out of Court Disposal, work to engage victims, and support for children's speech, language and communication needs.

The three primary key performance indicators for youth justice partnerships are:

- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system.
- The rate and frequency of reoffending by children in the criminal justice system.
- The use of custodial sentences.

The YJB publish quarterly performance data for youth justice services, compiled nationally, in relation to these three indicators. The information reported below is drawn from the data published in March 2026 for the period ending December 2025.

First Time Entrants

A 'First-Time Entrant' is a child receiving a formal criminal justice outcome for the first time. A Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome all count as a formal criminal justice outcome.

Dorset Police and DCYJS look for opportunities to divert children from the justice system, by using informal justice outcomes, which do not make the child a First-Time Entrant. It is recognised that receiving a formal justice outcome is in itself detrimental for children.

Dorset Police, DCYJS and other children's services work closely together to decide the appropriate outcome for a child who has committed a criminal offence. Whenever possible we seek to use an informal option which does not criminalise the child.

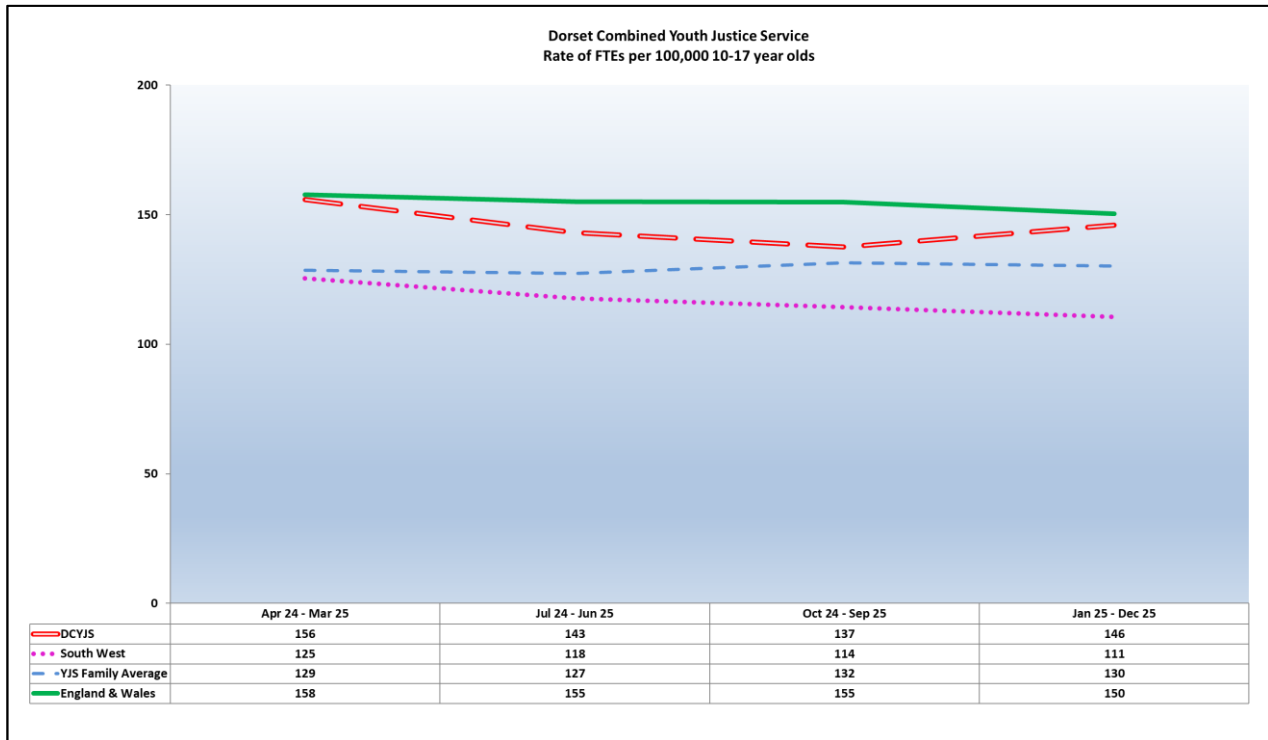
HMI Probation published an Effective Practice Guide in October 2025, as part of their thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. The Effective Practice Guide identified our local joint-decision making arrangements as an example of good practice. The Guide stated that the Dorset decision-making model "*provided a consistent, auditable, and child-centred approach to OoCDs, balancing the needs of the child, the victim, and public safety*".

National Performance Data

National performance data for First-Time Entrants is drawn from the YJB's uploads of information from YJS case management systems.

In the past, DCYJS had a noticeably higher rate of First-Time Entrants than the national and regional averages. In recent years there has been a consistent and sustained reduction in local First Time Entrants, with DCYJS now having a lower rate than the national average.

The following chart shows the last four quarters of national First-Time Entrants data, with a consistent rate of around 145 First-Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds. This compares to a rate of 234 First-Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds in the year to December 2022.



Local Performance Data

DCYJS tracks data on its own case management system to monitor the number and characteristics of children entering the justice system. Local data shows a significant reduction in the number of children entering the justice system compared to the year before the pandemic:

Year	BCP First Time Entrants	Dorset First Time Entrants	Total DCYJS First Time Entrants	% Difference from previous year
2019-20	104	78	182	
2020-21	78	48	126	-30.8%
2021-22	77	47	124	-1.6%
2022-23	79	39	118	-4.8%
2023-24	52	56	108	-8.5%
2024-25	58	49	107	-0.9%
2025-26	56	48	104	-2.8%

The overall trend of reducing numbers of First-Time Entrants continued in 2025/26, though there may be limited scope for further reductions.

There was a notable reduction in First-Time Entrants in BCP in 2023-24, which has been sustained since then.

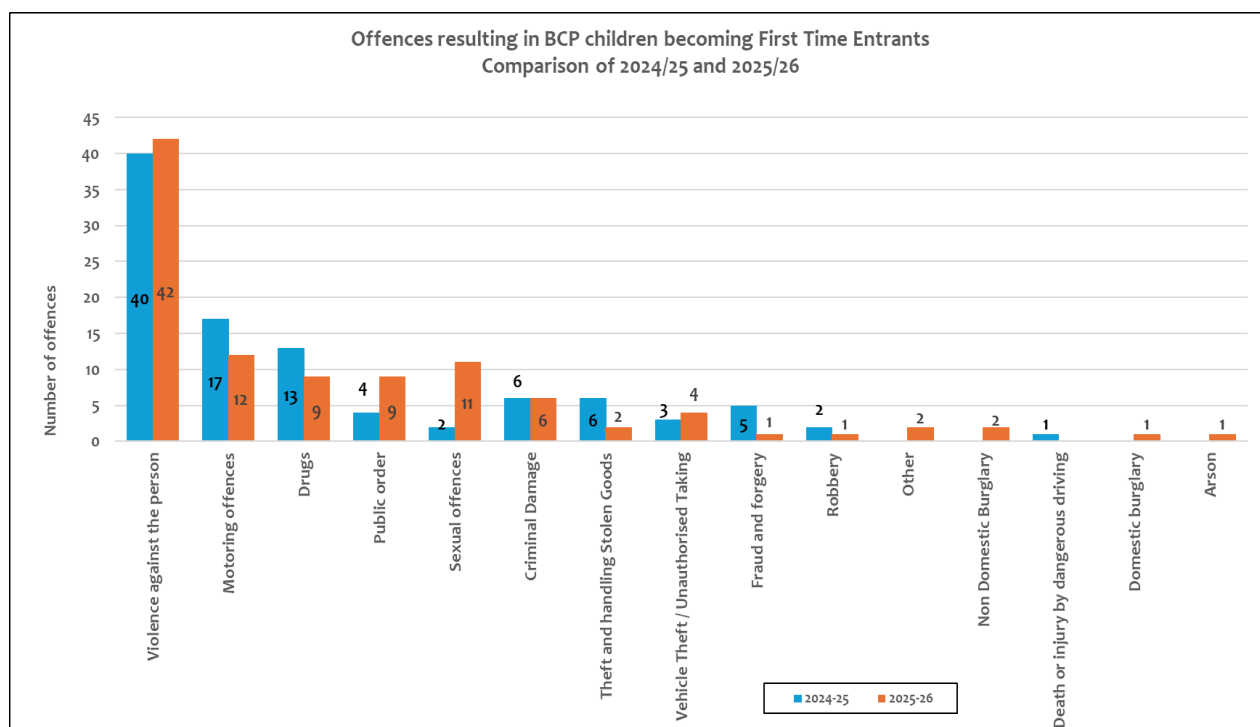
The increase in Dorset First-Time Entrants in 2023-24 reflected delays in the previous year in dealing with some older offences. Numbers of First-Time Entrants have been stable in Dorset since a significant reduction in 2020/21.

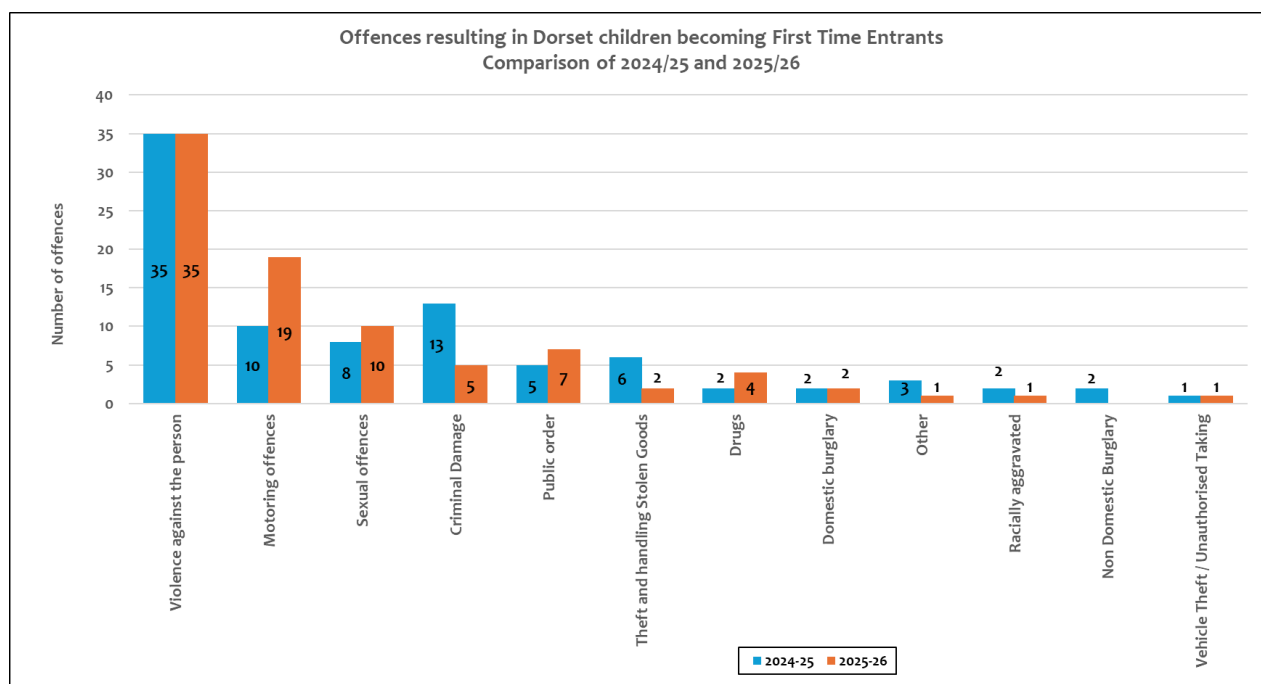
Offences Leading to Children Entering the Justice System

Decisions about whether to offer a diversion option, instead of a caution or court appearance, depend to some extent on the type of offence committed by the child.

If a child is found in possession of a weapon they will receive a formal outcome in almost every instance, unless significantly exceptional circumstances apply. The new Knife Crime Guidance which applies from April 2026 requires almost all children with a knife possession offence to receive either a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome. In practice this does not represent a significant change of policy in Dorset, whereas some other areas have been using diversion options for knife offences. Those areas are likely to see an increase in their First-Time Entrants rate from April 2026.

The following charts shows the offences which led to children in each local authority becoming First-Time Entrants during the past year. The number of offences exceeds the number of children because some children committed multiple offences.





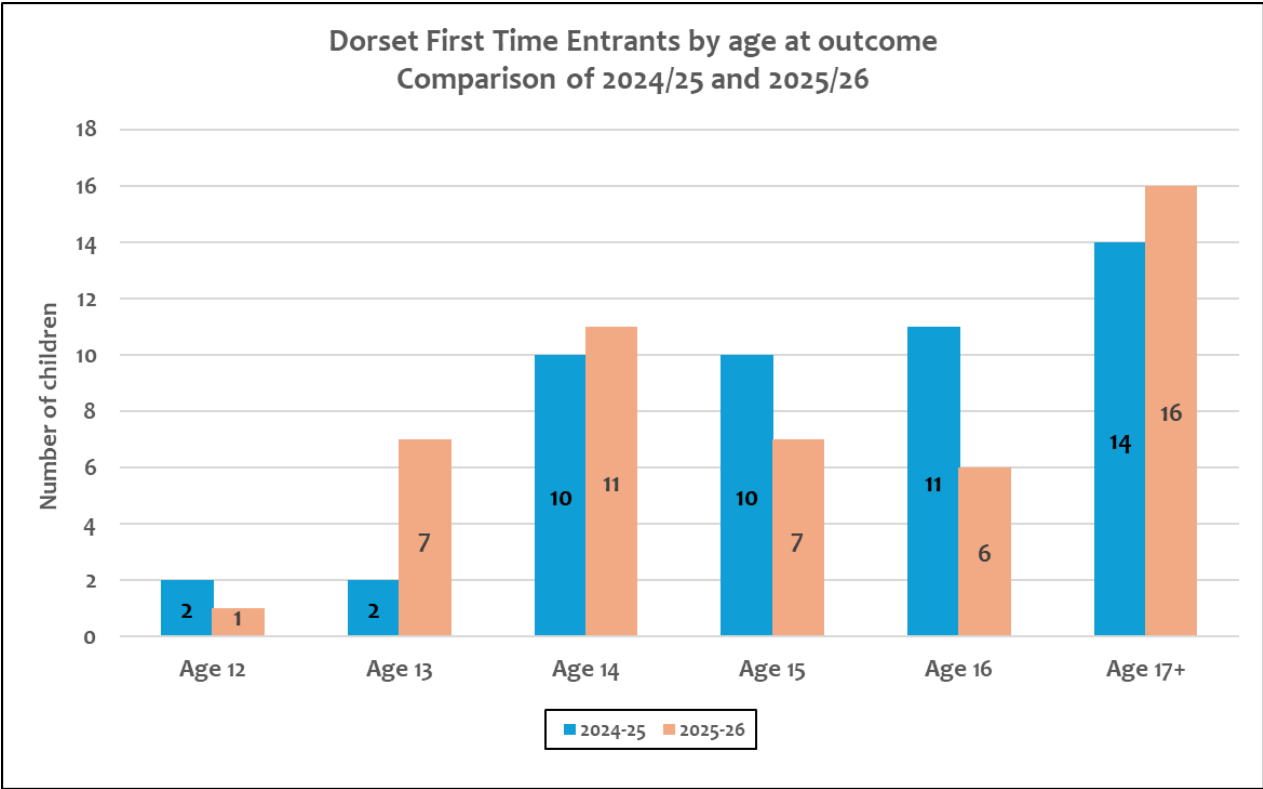
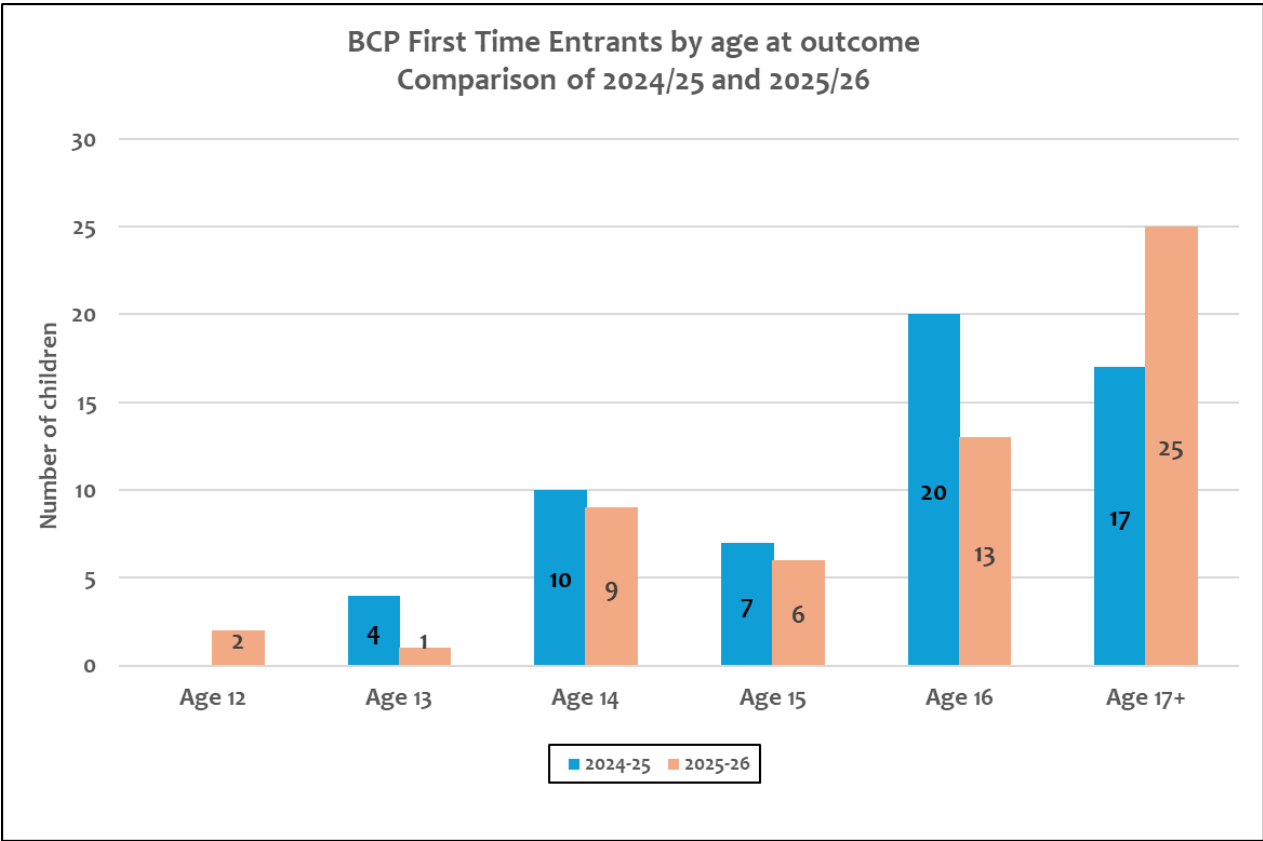
Offences involving possession or use of a weapon, or assaults on emergency workers, are included in the 'Violence against the Person' category and in almost all cases result in a caution or court disposal. Diversion options for these offence types are only considered in exceptional circumstances. The numbers of Violence against the Person offences leading to children becoming First-Time Entrants has remained stable in both local authorities over the past two years, after a notable reduction compared to 2023/24.

There was an increase in sexual offences in 2025/26. 6 children committed a total of 21 offences across both local authorities. 3 of the children committed contact sexual offences, the other 3 committed offences involving indecent images.

Some children are counted as entering the justice system for motoring offences which result in a court appearance for points to be added to the young person's driver's licence. DCYJS and Dorset Police are working locally and regionally, with support from the Youth Justice Board, to agree diversion options for young people with motoring offences.

Age of Children Entering the Justice System

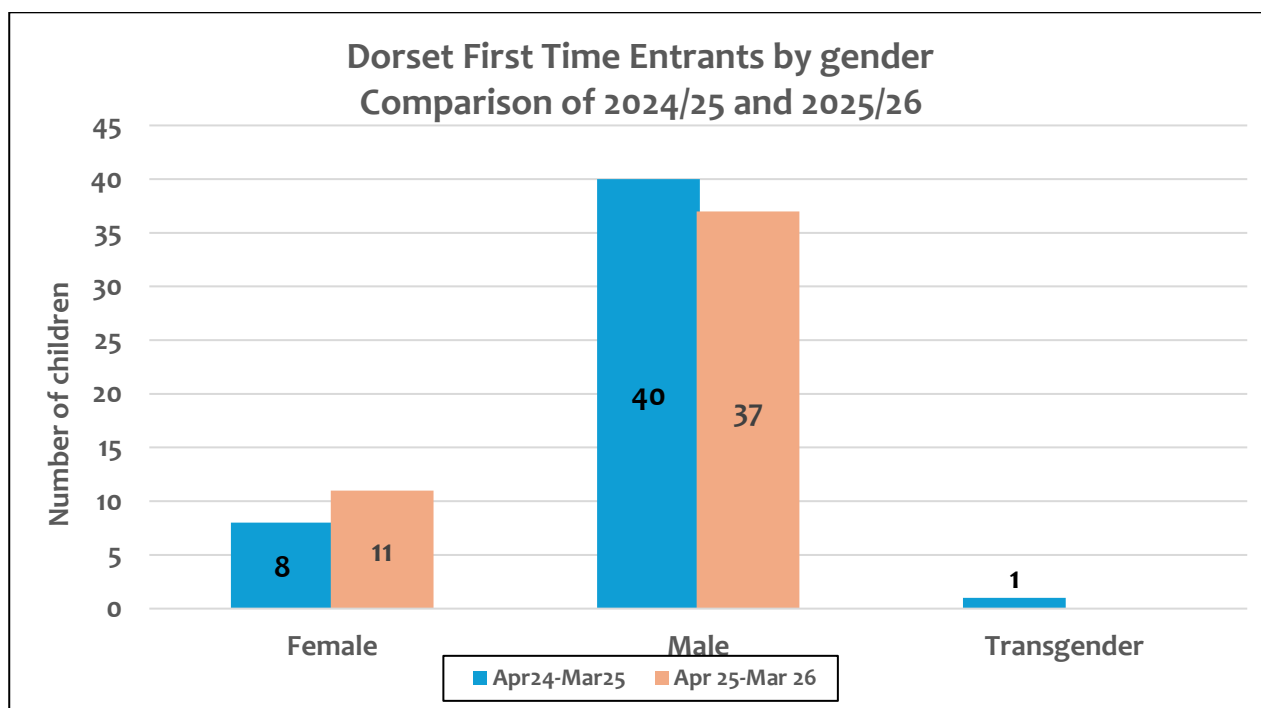
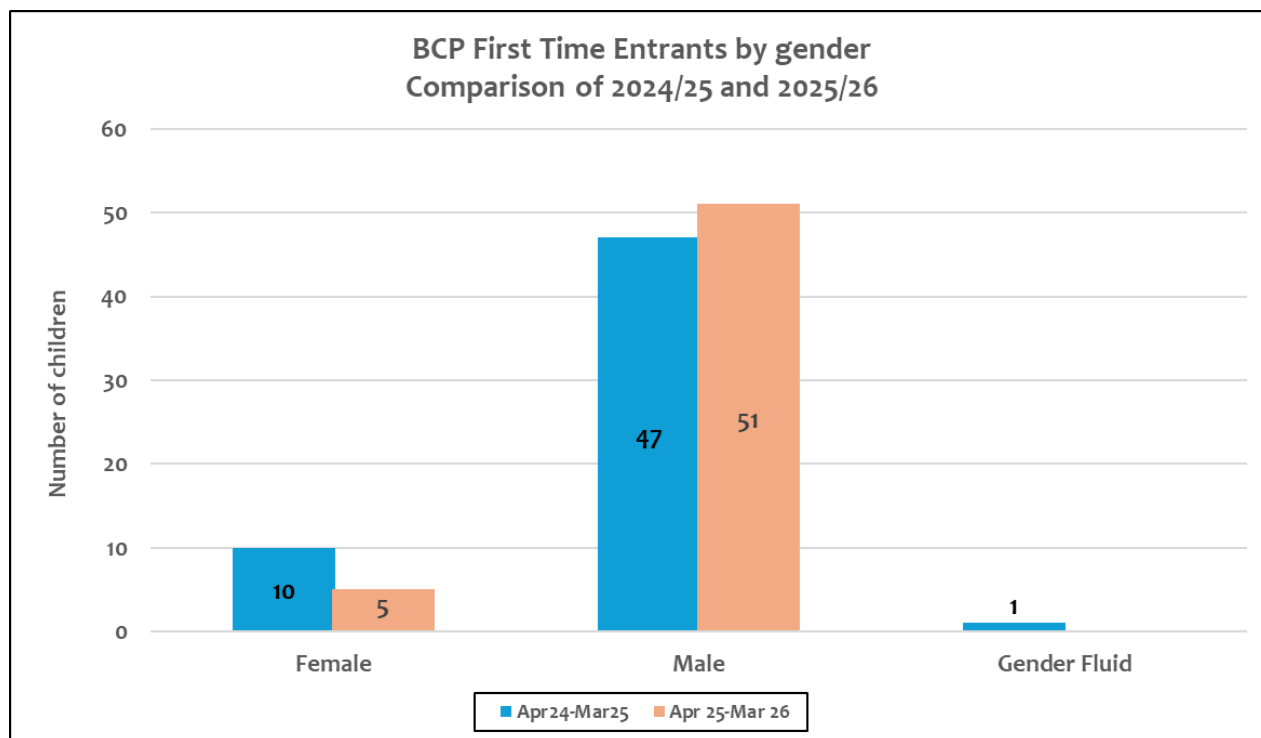
The following charts show the ages of First-Time Entrants in each local authority in the past two years. There has been a shift in recent years in that the age of First-Time Entrants in the BCP Council area has been rising, so that 68% of BCP First-Time Entrants are now aged 16 or 17. Conversely, the age for First-Time Entrants in Dorset has been falling, so that 46% are aged 16 or 17, and 40% are aged 14 or under.



Previous analysis has shown that children who enter the justice system before the age of 14 are likely to have complex needs and may go on to commit further, more serious offences. During 2024-25, a total of 8 children under the age of 14 entered the justice system across our two local authorities. This year, 2025-26, saw a total of 11 children under the age of 14 who entered the justice system, with a notable increase in young First-Time Entrants in the Dorset Council area.

Gender of Children Entering the Justice System

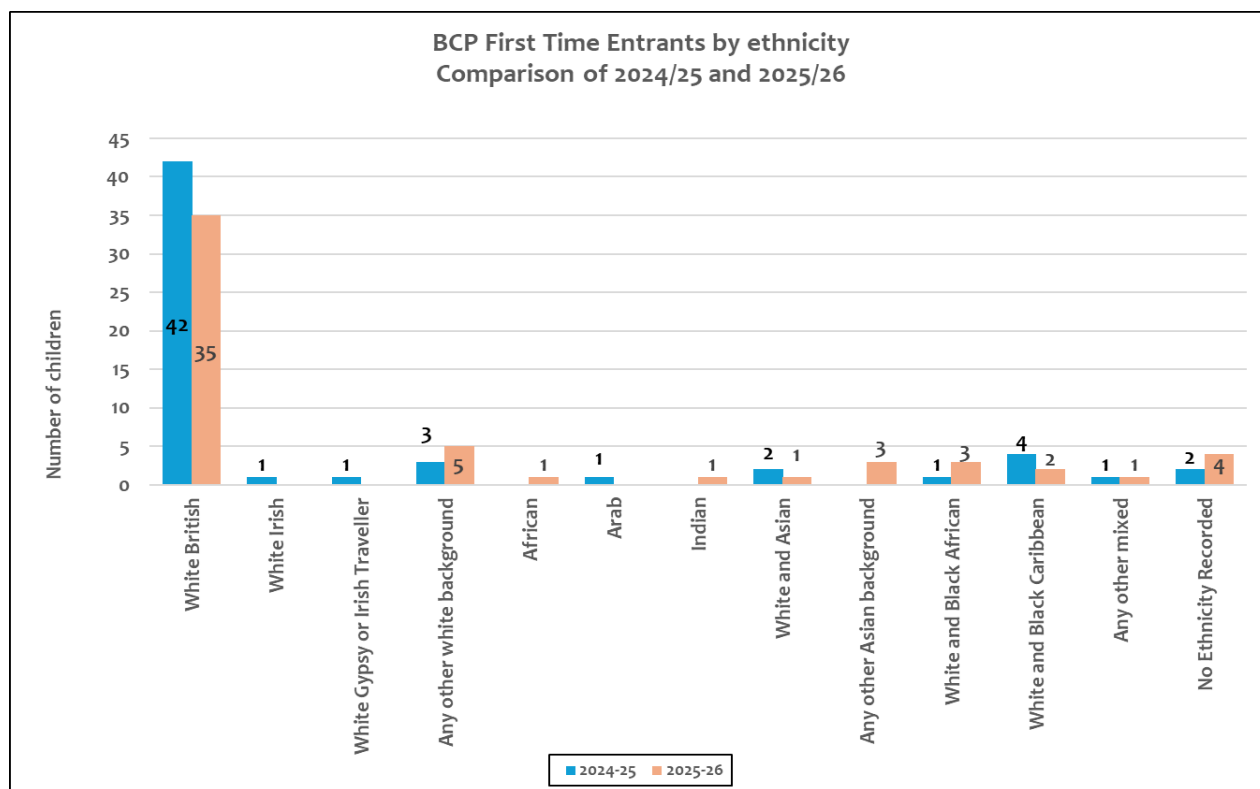
The following charts show the gender of First-Time Entrants in each local authority over the past two years.



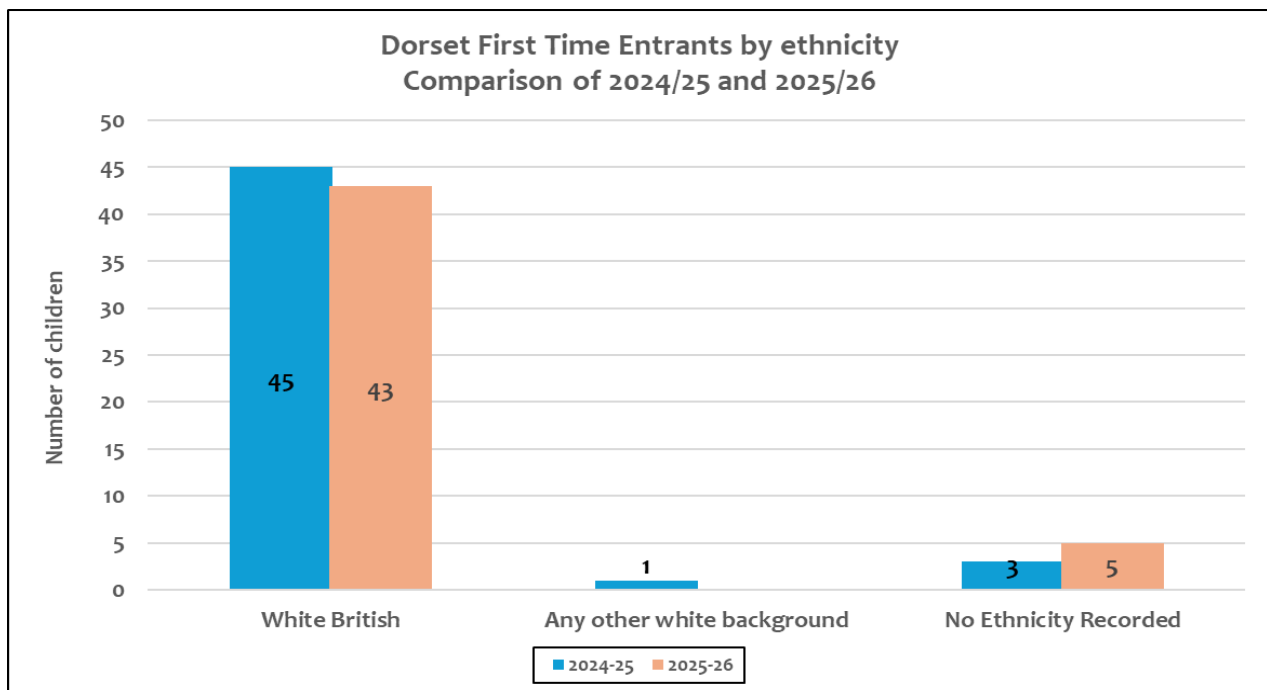
The proportion of girls on the YJS caseload is usually around 18-20%. The low numbers of First-Time Entrants mean that small shifts in numbers can disproportionately affect the percentage figures. The charts show that there has been a drop in the numbers and proportion of girls among BCP Council First-Time Entrants, making up 9% of the total in the past year. There has been an increase in the numbers and proportion of girls among Dorset Council First-Time Entrants, making up 23% of the total in the past year.

Ethnicity of Children Entering the Justice System

The following charts show the recorded ethnicity of children entering the justice system. Ethnicity recording is taken from the child's self-definition. In some instances the YJS has no contact with the child, such as when a child is taken to court for a motoring offence and receives a fine or a discharge. In this situation, ethnicity is based either on information from the Police or is described as No Ethnicity Recorded.



The proportion of First-Time Entrants with Black, Asian or mixed ethnicity has risen in the BCP Council area from 16% in 2024/25 to 21% in 2025/26, an increase from 8 to 11 children. Data from the January 2026 school census shows that 17.8% of BCP children are from 'non-white backgrounds'. There is therefore now a slight over-representation of these children amongst those entering the justice system. Section 6.1 of this document provides more analysis of the ethnicity of children on the YJS caseload.



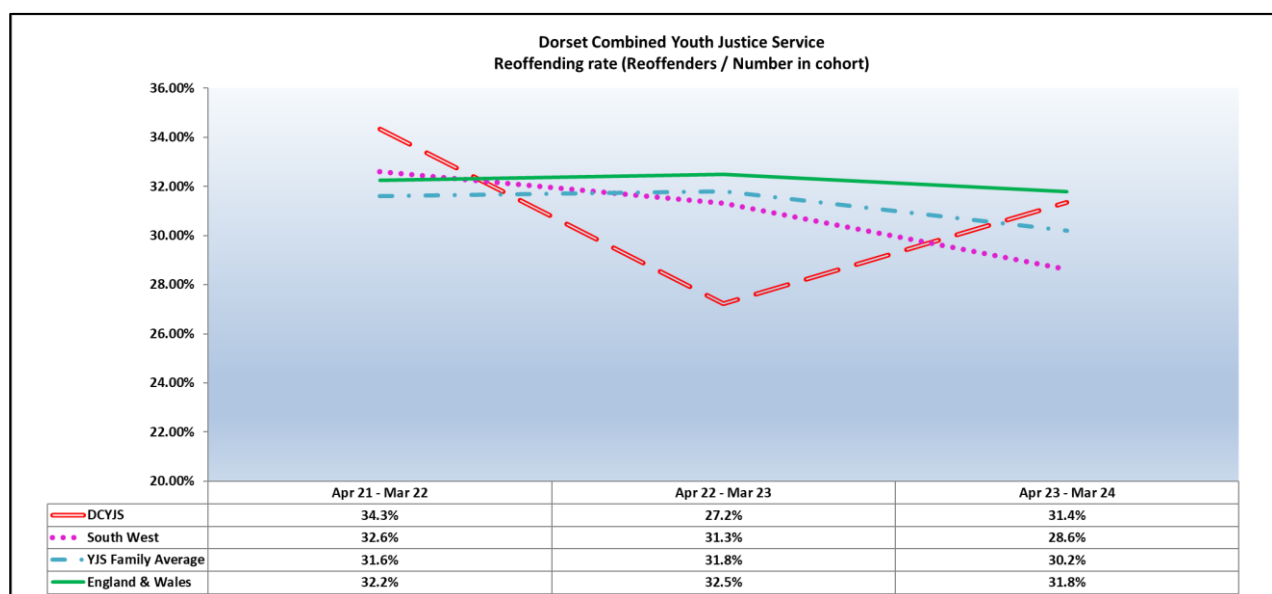
In the Dorset Council area, the January 2026 school census shows that 6.3% of children are from 'non-white backgrounds'. This compares to 100% of Dorset First-Time Entrants either identifying as White British or having No Ethnicity Recorded.

[Rate of Proven Reoffending](#)

National re-offending data is published in two formats: the 'binary' rate shows the proportion of children in the cohort who go on to be convicted for subsequent offences in the 12 months after their previous justice outcome; the 'frequency' rate shows the average number of offences per reoffender.

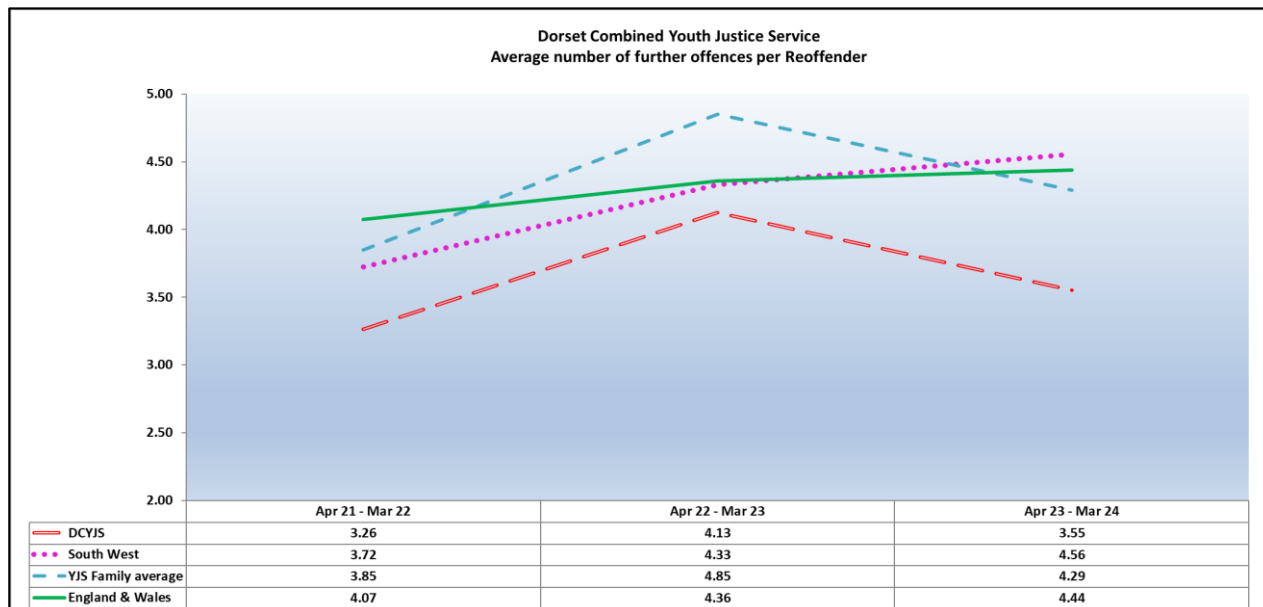
Reoffending data is necessarily delayed in order to allow time to see if the child is reconvicted and for that later outcome to be recorded. The following data therefore relates to children with whom the service worked up to March 2024.

Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)

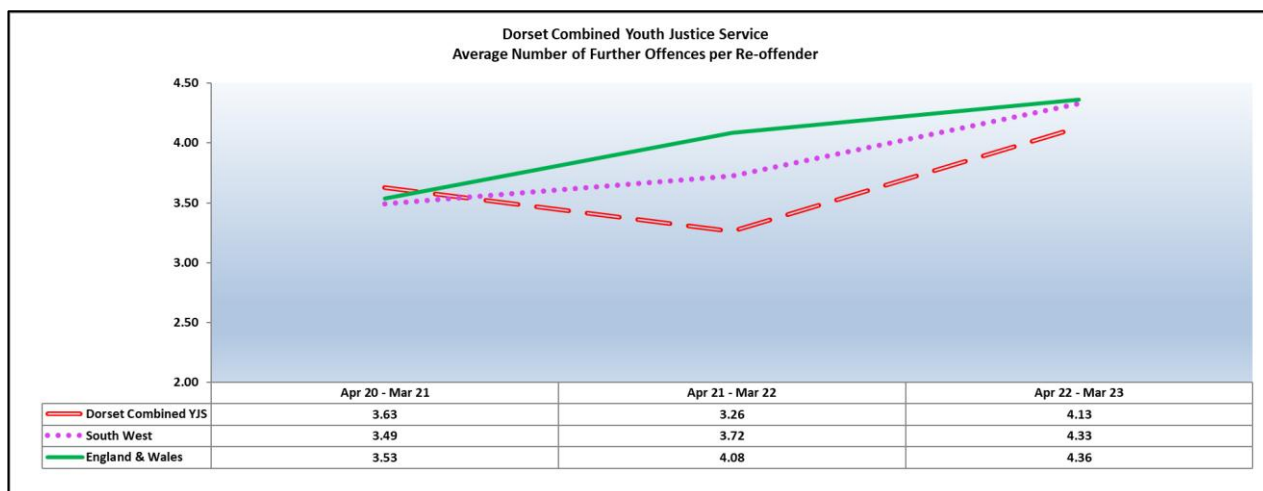


The binary reoffending rate for the most recent year, to March 2024, shows an increase on the previous year, reflecting the fluctuations in this data measure. DCYJS performance sits between the regional, national and 'YJS Family' averages.

Reoffences/Reoffenders

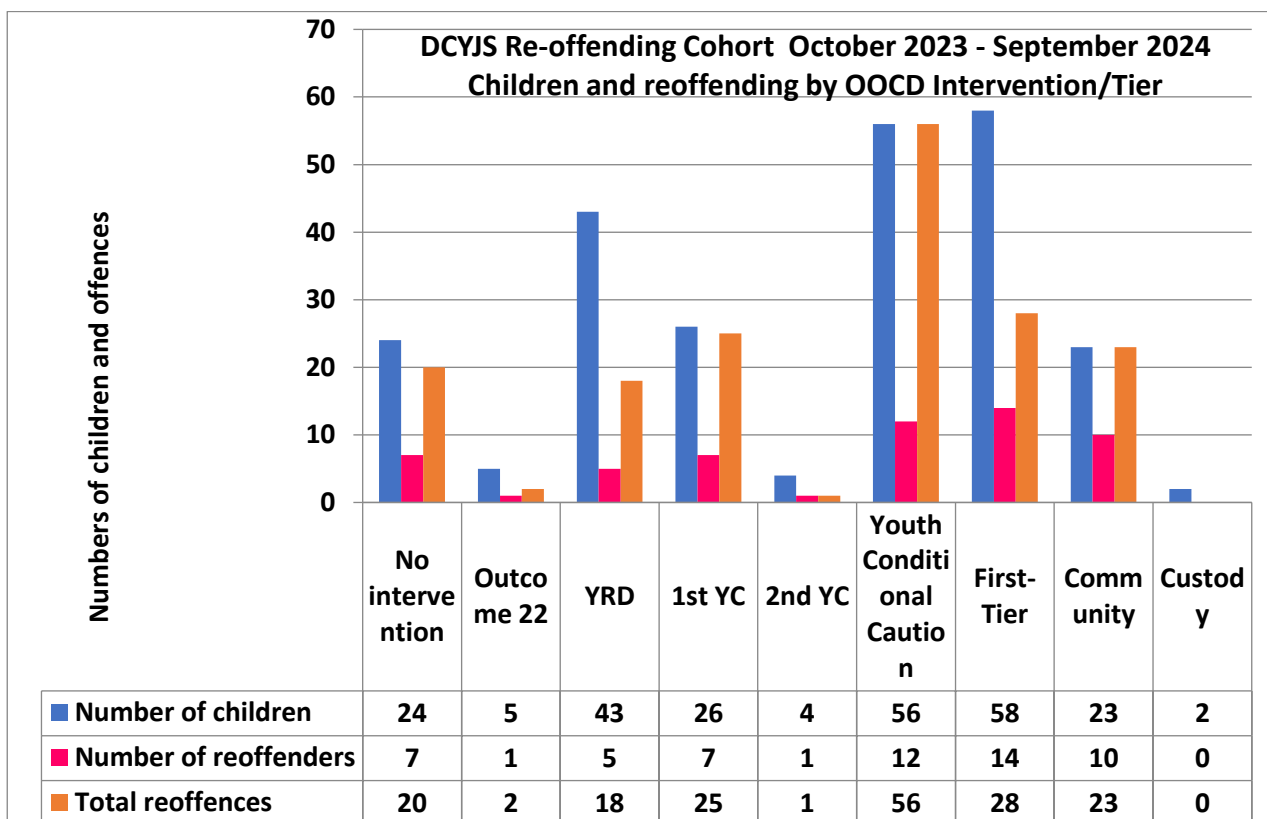
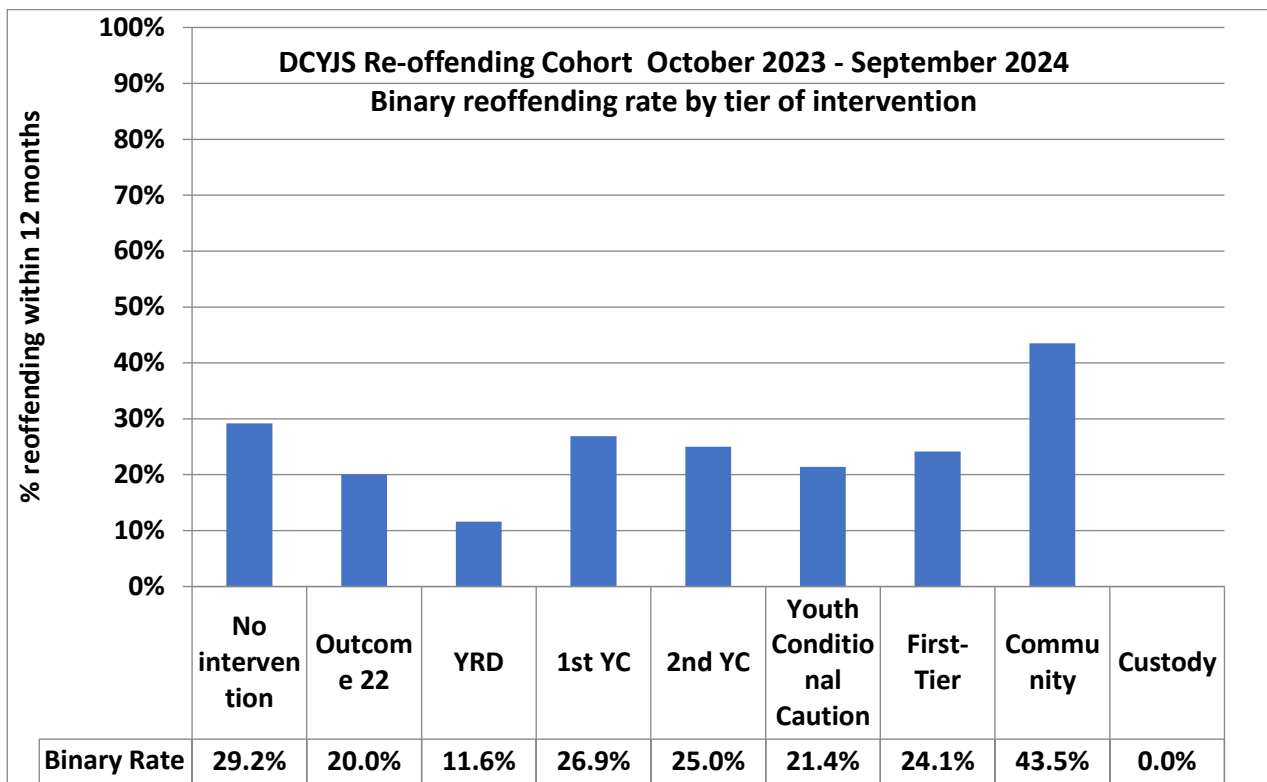


There has been a reduction in the average number of offences per reoffender. DCYJS has remains below the regional, national and YJS Family averages for this measure.



Local data, stored on the DCYJS case management system, can also be scrutinised to show information about reoffending. Our latest analysis, in March 2026, looked at children on the DCYJS caseload between October 2023 and September 2024, giving us a more detailed understanding of reoffending by local children and showing outcomes for children who have had more recent contact with the justice system.

Analysis of reoffending by disposal type, on the following charts, shows that informal, diversion options have the lowest rate of reoffending (nb 'Outcome 22' is a police recording code, showing that no further action was taken but the child received an intervention to prevent future offending; 'YRD' refers to a Youth Restorative Disposal, the local name for a Community Resolution, which is also known as Outcome 8). It should be noted, however, that diversion options may be more likely for children with a lower risk of reoffending.



Local reoffending data in March 2026 also shows that:

- 10-14 year-olds are more likely to reoffend than other age groups. The rate of reoffending drops each year as children get older.
- Boys are more likely to reoffend than girls (26.9% of boys reoffended, compared to 7.5% of girls).

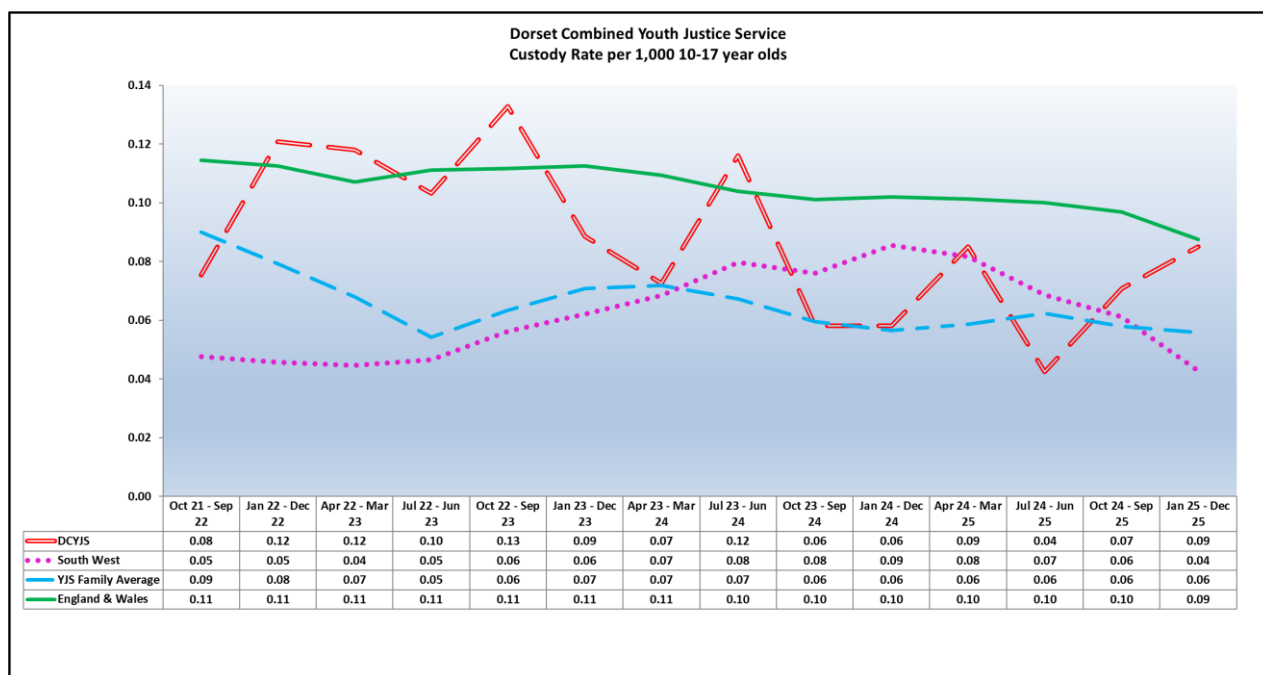
- Although fewer girls reoffend, the average number of further offences per reoffender is higher for girls (5.67 further offences) than for boys (2.89 further offences)
- Black and mixed heritage children show a lower reoffending rate and frequency than white children, but the numbers of black and mixed heritage children are low, meaning each child has a greater impact on the percentage rates.
- Children in the Dorset Council area had a higher reoffending rate and frequency than children in the BCP Council area.
- Children who were currently or previously in care were more likely to reoffend (44%) than children who had never been in care (19%).
- Children who committed criminal damage, non-dwelling burglary, robbery, or theft offences had higher rates of reoffending than children who committed other types of offence.
- Children who committed violence against the person offences had the lowest rates of reoffending amongst offence types that saw further offending
- 39% of reoffenders committed less serious further offences, 28% committed offences of the same seriousness and 33% committed more serious offences.

Analysis of local reoffending data helps the YJS to focus its work and to identify groups who may need additional attention.

Use of Custodial Sentences

DCYJS continues to see low numbers of children sentenced to custody.

The latest national data is copied below. The context of this data is a large reduction over recent years in the number of children in custody in England and Wales. This means that small changes in numbers can have a noticeable effect on the local and national rates.



The above chart shows the latest available national data. Our own YJS data shows that a total of 7 children and young people received custodial sentences during 2025/26 (5 from BCP Council, 2 from Dorset Council).

The trauma-informed approach to youth justice work encourages us to ask “what happened to you?” rather than “what’s wrong with you?”. In this context, it is interesting to look at some of the common experiences of these 7 children and young people, illustrated in the following table.

Characteristics of children sentenced to custody during 2025/26

Gender	Ethnicity	Age at sentence	Remand in custody pre-sentence	Age at 1 st justice disposal	Number of past justice disposals	Social care status pre-sentence	CE status	SLCN	SEND status	Perm Exclusion	CAMHS contact pre-sentence	Substance use	Local authority
M	White British	18	Y	15	5	CiC	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	Dorset
M	White British	17	N	14	8	CiC	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	Dorset
M	White British	17	Y	14	6	CP	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP
M	White British	17	N	13	5	CiC	Sig	Y	SEN support	Y	N	Y	BCP
M	White British	15	N	11	10	CP	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP
M	White British	18	Y	12	5	CiC	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP
M	White Other	18	Y	14	1	CiC	Mod	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP

CE = Child Exploitation

SLCN = Speech, Language and Communication Needs

SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

CAMHS = Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

CiC – Child in Care

CP = Child Protection

EHCP = Education, Health and Care Plan

This table shows clearly that children receiving custodial sentences are boys who have experienced harm in their earlier lives, who have special educational needs and communication needs, leading to permanent exclusion from school, mental health difficulties, substance use, experiencing harm outside the home and recurring youth justice involvement from a young age. The combination of multiple disadvantages, alongside the absence of protective factors, increases the chances of children experiencing negative outcomes such as spending time in custody. This information also helps the YJS and its partners to direct their work and resources for children at earlier stages of YJS involvement, and perhaps before YJS involvement.

[Section 6.1](#) of this document provides further analysis of the over-representation of some groups of children in the local youth justice system, and actions being taken.

New Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators

The Youth Justice Board introduced a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be collected from April 2023. The following measures are reported:

- Accommodation – the percentage of children in suitable accommodation.
- Education, training and employment (ETE) – the percentage of children attending a suitable ETE arrangement.
- SEND – the percentage of children with SEND who are in suitable ETE with a current, formal learning plan in place.
- Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to improve their mental health or emotional wellbeing and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Substance Use – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to address substance misuse and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Out of Court Disposals – the percentage of out of court disposals that are completed or not completed.
- Management Board attendance – the attendance of senior representatives from partner agencies and if partners contribute data from their services to identify ethnic and racial disproportionality.

- Wider services – the percentage of YJS children who are currently on an Early Help plan, on a Child Protection Plan, classified as a Child in Need or a Child in Care.
- Serious Violence – the rates of children convicted for a serious violence offence on the YJS caseload.
- Victims – the percentage of victims who consent to be contacted by the YJS; of those, the percentage who are engaged with about restorative justice opportunities, asked their views prior to out of court disposal decision-making and planning for statutory court orders, provided with information about the progress of the child's case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate support services (when requested).

The new KPIs have required significant additional work to adapt recording systems and to adjust recording practices. The consistency, accuracy and usefulness of this data remains a work in progress. The YJB stated in March 2025 that the data collected nationally in 2023/24 and 2024/25 is 'low quality and cannot be used for analysis, reporting, and decision-making'. The data from 2025/26 remains problematic in respect of accuracy, consistency and usefulness. It is hoped that usable data will eventually become available.

4.3 Risks and issues

Like other youth justice services, DCYJS operates in a context of system challenges and resource pressures.

Current issues and future risks being faced by DCYJS include the following:

Issue/risk facing DCYJS	Actions being taken in response
Resource pressures – YJ Grant frozen for 4 years to 2029, local authority contributions frozen, costs rising.	Seek staffing reductions when posts become vacant. Look for savings on non-staffing budgets. Seek additional income sources.
Adverse changes to YJB data recording requirements and removal of YJB 'YDS' data reports. Case management system changes which lead to reduced system agility and increased cost.	Use links with the YJB to promote better decision-making on data recording and reporting. Review system procurement. Implement local mitigations to protect against deficits caused by YJB and supplier decisions.
Flawed YJB instructions regarding the use of national assessment tools, conflicting guidance on risk and safety between the two tools, no ability to pull assessments through from one assessment tool to the other.	Decide local approach to selection of which assessment tool to use. Implement local guidance for consistency and defensibility of risk and safety assessments. Stick with same assessment tool for the child rather than swapping when justice disposal changes.
Children on bail/RUI during lengthy police investigations for complex offences, such as weapon offences and sexual offences.	Use Serious Violence Duty funding to add resources, to enable work with children during the investigation phase for weapon, violent or sexual offences. Use Bridges project to complete speech and language assessments alongside this work.
White Paper on Youth Justice Reforms leads to setbacks on the progress made in youth justice in recent years.	Support and contribute to advice to ministers from the Association of YOT Managers. Make early plans for implementation of reforms, working with local partners in criminal justice and children's services.

5 Plans for the year ahead

5.1 'Child First' practice

DCYJS applies 'Child First' practice principles to underpin its work. The Child First approach is embedded in the YJB national guidance documents 'Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System' and 'Case Management Guidance'. These documents direct the work of youth justice services.

The Child First approach is built on evidence demonstrating its effectiveness to prevent offending by children who are at risk of entering the justice system and to reduce offending by the small number of children who do enter the youth justice system. The research evidence is summarised in this document: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/research/child-first-justice/>.

DCYJS supports these principles and promotes them in its own work and in its interactions with local partners in children's services and the youth justice system.

The Child First approach has four tenets, listed below.

The ABCD of Child First practice	Examples of how DCYJS implements this in our work
As children: recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support.	<i>DCYJS interactions with children are adapted to each child, based on the child's developmental stage and communication needs, using trauma formulations and Speech and Language assessments.</i>
Building pro-social identity: promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop a pro-social identity, focusing on positive child outcomes rather than just trying to manage offending.	<i>During the past year, the DCYJS Activities Coordinator has helped the service to expand the range of positive activities available for children in the YJS and to build links with community organisations. DCYJS provides the 'Discover You' project at Upton Country Park, aimed at building children's skills, confidence and employability. The DCYJS 'Repairing the Harm' team has increased the number of community projects, such as the Big Yellow Bus Garden Project in Shillingstone, for children to feel valued for making a positive contribution to their community. One child said "It was fun to build something I thought I wouldn't be able to build".</i>
Collaborating with children: involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement and social inclusion.	<i>During the past year, the team has been working on how to involve the child meaningfully in shaping the plan for our work with them. A new Girls Group was started in 2025, designed with the girls who attended the group. Children identified that the YJS rooms at the East Howe Community Centre needed an overhaul. YJS workers and children jointly designed and decorated the rooms to create a child-friendly space.</i>
Diverting from stigma: promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within	<i>The 'Turnaround' programme has helped us to embed the use of Outcome 22 to divert children from formal justice outcomes.</i>

it, as we know that stigma causes further offending	<i>YJS Speech and Language assessments are written on Dorset HealthCare documentation, without reference to the YJS, to avoid stigmatising the child.</i> <i>YJS AQA awards for children are registered under 'Dorset Understand Achieve Succeed'.</i>
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The YJS is holding whole service workshops in April 2026 to review our progress in implementing Child First practice and to agree our next steps.

Appraisals objectives for YJS practitioners and managers for 2026/27 will be structured around the four tenets of Child First practice, to help to further embed these principles in our day-to-day work.

One of this Plan's strategic priorities for 2026/27 is to enhance Child First practice in our YJS partnership.

Voice of the child

DCYJS works collaboratively with children to hear their voice during their contact with our service. Case records are addressed to the child and quote their words, to ensure the child's voice is prominent.

The team's Speech and Language Therapists offer assessments of each child's communication needs, to help YJS workers to the child's voice and to adapt their work. The Speech and Language Therapists also advise colleagues in the YJS about how to work with each child.

'Talking Mats' are one of the resources which the Speech and Language team provides for YJS colleagues. Below is an example of a Talking Mat for good sleep habits:



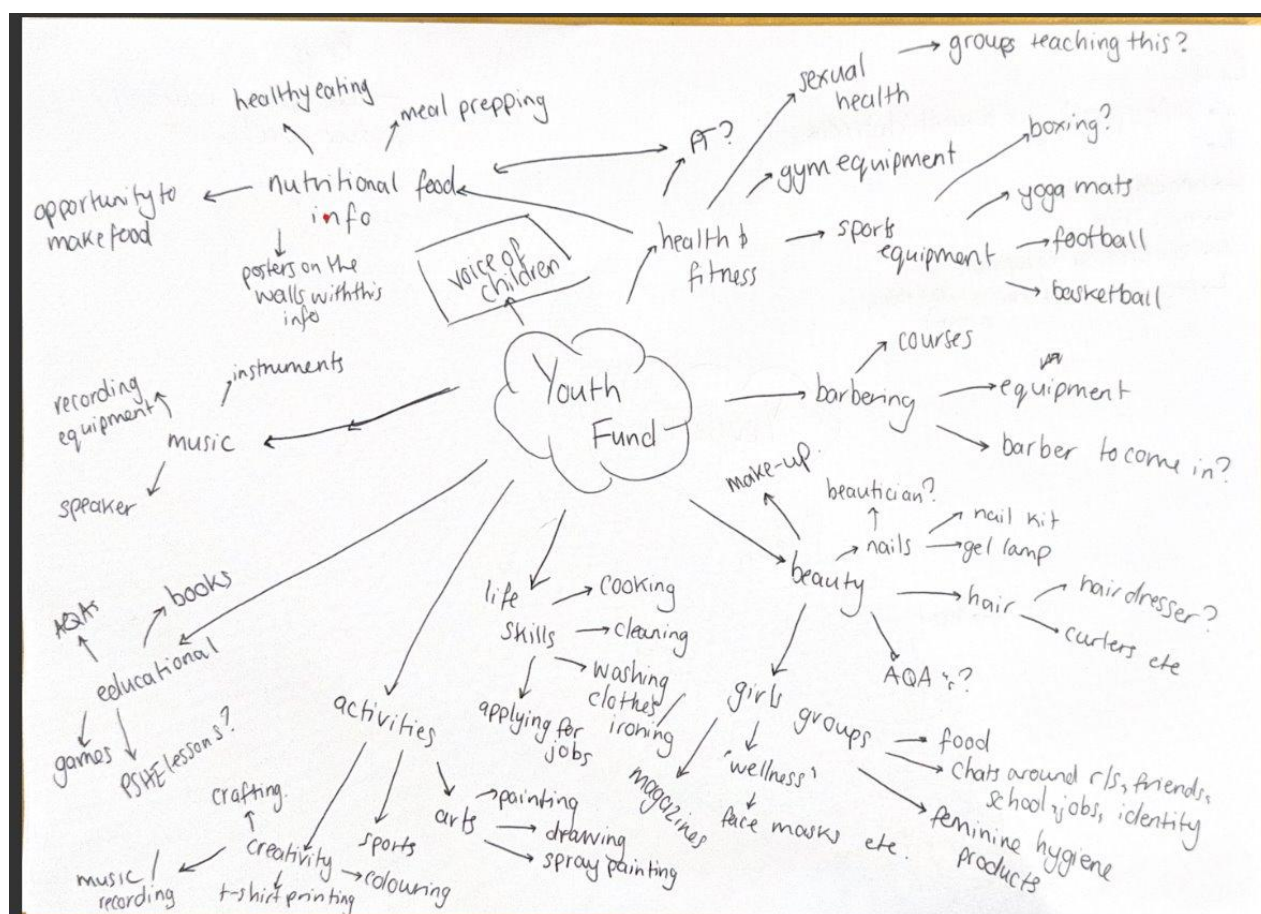
The following extracts from case records show how the use of Talking Mats can help to elicit information and reflections from children:

We discussed your sleep – you reported that you always have problems sleeping and often wake up before your alarm. You completed a good sleeping habits talking mat – sorting the options between 'I do this', 'I don't do this', 'sometimes/not sure' and 'I can try'. A photo of this completed talking mat is saved in your file. You were quite willing to put a few things in the I can try section – such as physical activity and avoiding blue light in the evening. It seemed that you would be happy to give these things a try to help your sleep. We gave you a sleep hygiene tips handout which you took home with you.

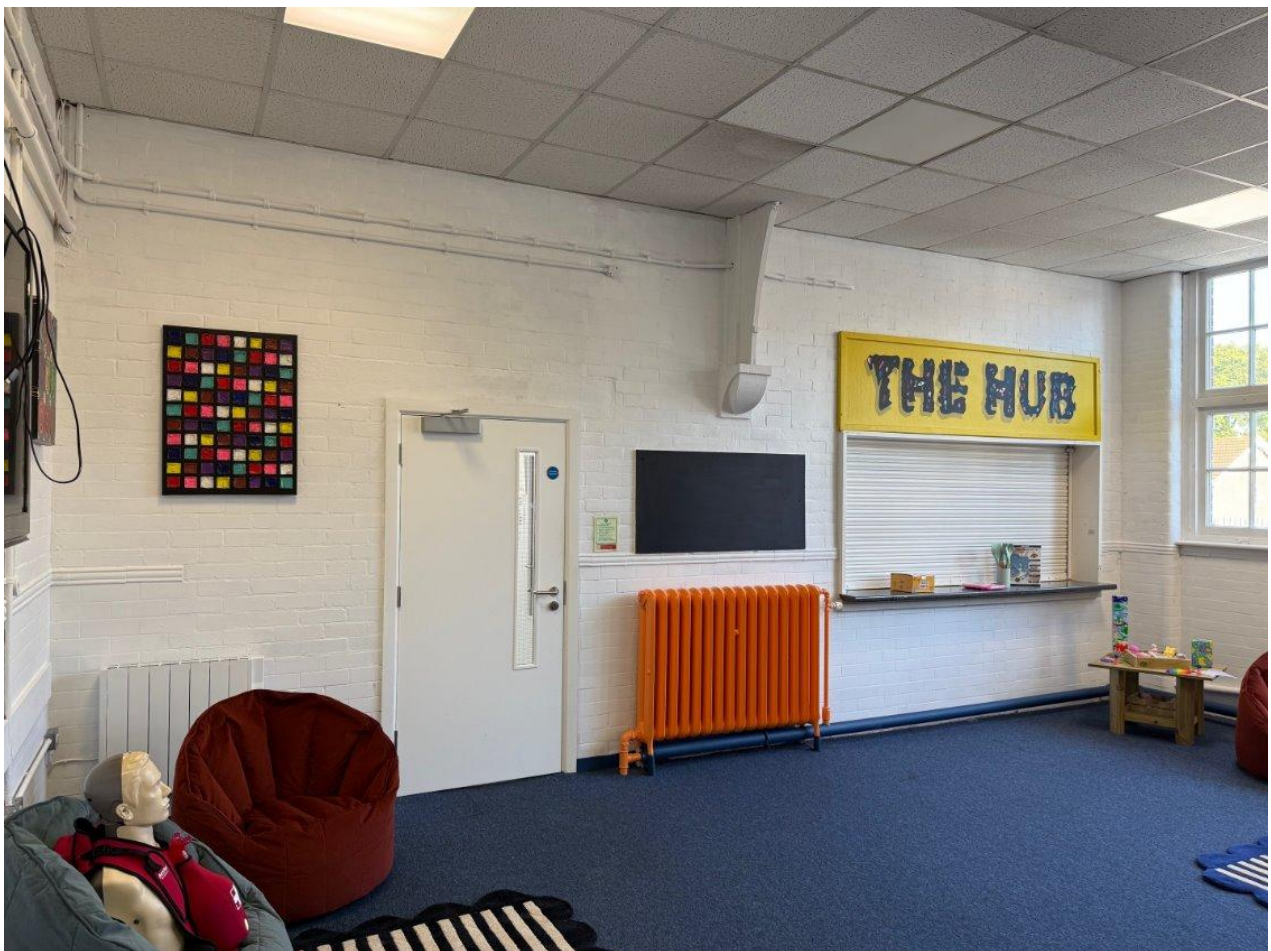
I'd brought out a Talking Mat about communication, and I showed you the different cards and asked if you would give it a go. You didn't want to hold the cards yourself and said for me to read them out which I did. Many of the cards you said you found easy i.e. Talking to family, Remembering things and Talking to a teacher. You said you were able to ask questions at Innovate if you didn't understand something. The things you said were more difficult were: Telling someone how I feel, understanding how other people are feeling, and paying attention for longer periods of time.

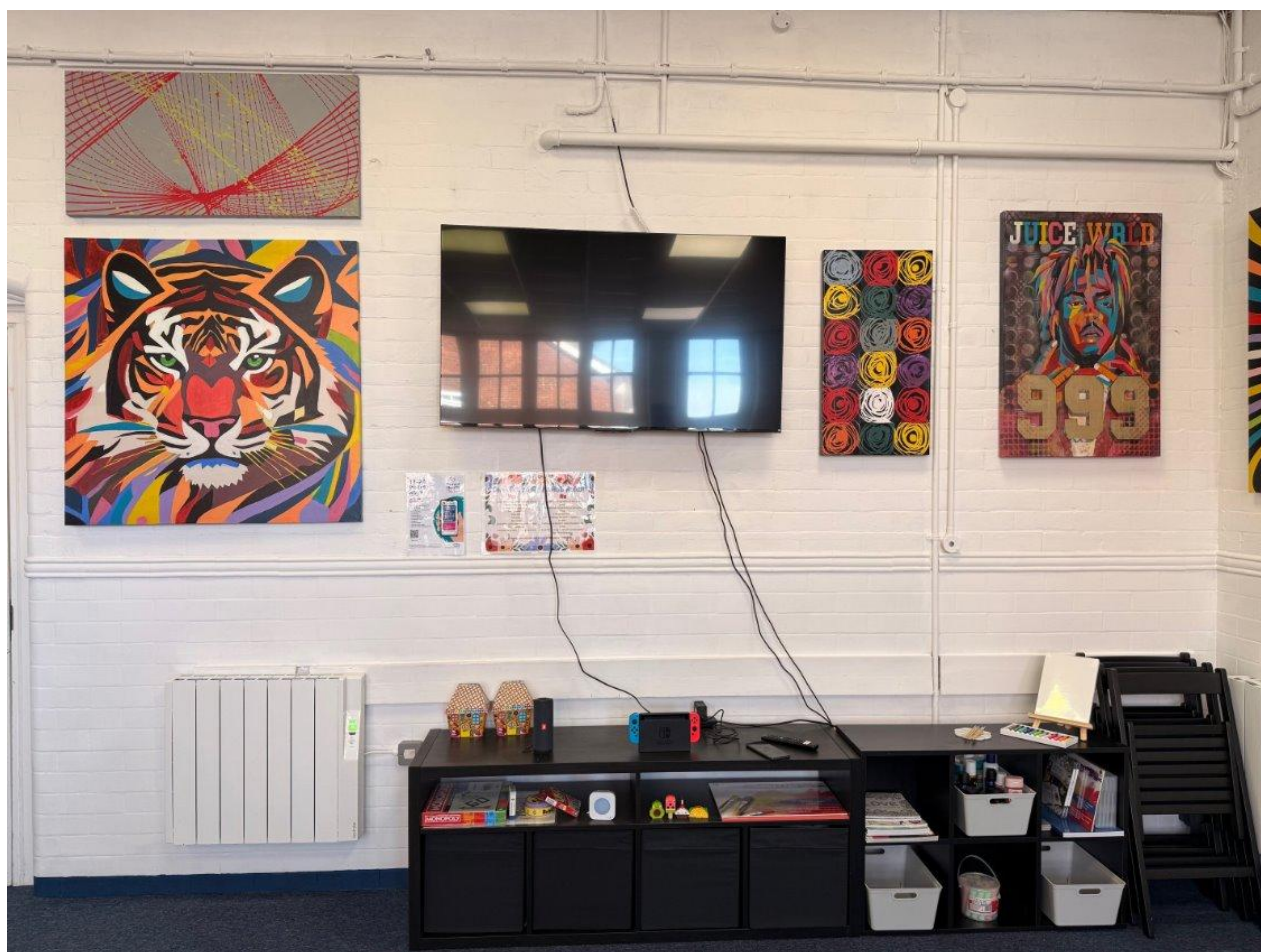
Over the past year, the YJS has also been developing its collaboration with children to design our projects and spaces. These developments will be continued in 2026/27.

Two team members set up a new Girls Group, starting with a joint session with the girls to plan the group. This image captures the ideas generated by the girls, which formed the basis of the group's sessions:



Children working with the YJS also helped us to transform one of our bases into a welcoming space for children, illustrated in these 'before and after' pictures:





As well as hearing the child's voice in the team's day to day practice, YJS workers also gather the views of children and other service users about their experience of the service's work.

Spontaneous comments from service users about their experience of our service are recorded and analysed, using a data report from our case management system.

Examples of recent comments from service users include:

YJ involvement is obviously not something we envisaged. When X was first arrested and referred to his worker, L, we were in a very bad place. He was out all the time, using Ketamine regularly, and it was all getting rapidly worse. He was becoming very unwell. To start with, the benefits of L's involvement were probably limited because of X's addiction: it was stronger than anything else. However, despite this L quickly built a very good rapport with X from her very first visit. She is approachable, easy to understand, and is excellent at presenting information in a way that is simplified but not at all patronising. X knew he had to see her, and he understood the process well thanks to her explanations. Things ramped up when our house was raided by police at 5am one day and X was taken into custody. L was at the end of the phone at 7:30am to explain things to me and calm me down! This was the day X stopped taking drugs - the day in custody was much-needed and perhaps even life-saving, such was his Ketamine use. So L's involvement was thankfully extended. She was there for X, but her involvement benefited me too. I think her major strength is communication, being approachable (informal clothes, demeanour and language) but with a steely focus on the facts and the legal process. A fine balance! She is compassionate, kind, fair, straight-talking and genuinely wants the best for the kids she works with. Ongoing, if we enter hard times again, L is the first person I would call for some advice. I hope I won't need to.

Today I made a second planter. I enjoyed making things with wood again and completed it thoroughly and with care. I enjoyed talking with A about things and working physically with my hands.

Another YJS have thanked us for a plan that was "out of the box" and gave something different for them to focus on. They liked how it clearly matched with the child's strengths and likes, and the plan had been tailored to using these strengths for things like reparation but also building on positive activities.

Built a flower box for the school. I learned how to use a drill and had a lot of fun. Making me change my mind and I want do woodwork for the future.

Each year the YJS undertakes a case audit on a priority area of YJS work. In 2025 the audit focused on our work with children in care. As part of the audit, we talked with some of the children in the audit sample.

When asked about joint work by YJS workers and social workers, one child commented that:

They work together and try to help me as best they can...I feel like they are good people, most of them, who care and want to help. Good people in a bad system".

A YJS nurse spoke with another child to gain his views. She recorded their conversation as follows:
I didn't ask you for a rating, but you decided to give one. You rated 3/5 but you weren't sure why. I asked what people supporting you should do differently to make this a 4 or a 5 to which you said, "don't push your luck, that's a good score".

5.2 Resources and Services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget in 2026/27 are listed in Appendix Two. Local authority contributions remain frozen at the 2022/23 levels. The Ministry of Justice announced in February 2026 that Youth Justice Grant allocation and the Turnaround Grant allocation for DCYJS for the following 3 years, to March 2029, will remain frozen at the allocations for 2025/26.

93% of the DCYJS budget is allocated to staffing costs. Annual cost of living pay awards add to the staffing costs each year, without a corresponding increase in partner contributions.

All local authority staff in DCYJS are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other DCYJS staff are employed by Dorset Police, the Probation Service (Dorset) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. A DCYJS Structure Chart is included in Appendix

One, showing the posts provided through our partnership resources. DCYJS has a strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary identity, meeting the staffing requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998).

Like all public services, DCYJS operates in a context of reducing resources. Ensuring value for money and making best use of resources is a high priority for the service. The combined service, working across Dorset's local authorities since 2015, has enabled the YJS to maintain high practice standards while managing real terms budget reductions over that period.

One of this Plan's strategic priorities for 2026/27 is to make best use of the resources available to our YJS partnership.

The Youth Justice Board Grant is paid subject to terms and conditions relating to its use. The Grant supports the front-line delivery of essential youth justice services for children. The Grant may only be used towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system;
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system;
- Improve the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system; and
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

The conditions of the Grant also refer to the services that must be provided and the duty to comply with data reporting requirements.

The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the Partnership's resources for employing practitioners who work with children to prevent and reduce offending and to keep children and other members of the community safe from harm. Resources from the Youth Justice Grant are also used to provide restorative justice and reparative activities, to promote pro-social activities for children building on their strengths and to improve the education, training and employment opportunities of young people in the local youth justice system. The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the performance achievements described in section 4.2, reducing the number of children entering the justice system, reducing reoffending by those who do enter the justice system, and maintaining low numbers of children being sentenced to custody.

In addition to the service outcomes listed above, the Youth Justice Grant and other Partnership resources are used to achieve the strategic priorities set out later in this Plan. Progress against those priorities is reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board, with oversight also provided by the relevant scrutiny committees of the two local authorities.

5.3 YJS Partnership Board Development

HMI Probation's Joint Inspection of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was published in January 2023. The inspection included scrutiny of the Board's work. The inspection report rated the service's Governance and Leadership as 'Good'.

HMI Probation also met with members of the DCYJS Partnership Board in February 2025 as part of their thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Inspectors identified a strategic commitment to diverting children from the justice system wherever possible.

The YJS Partnership Board has an established cycle of performance review, strategic oversight and forward planning. During the past year, the Board has scrutinised topics including:

- Learning and actions from the thematic inspection of work with children on out of court resolutions
- Delays to investigations – impact on children and victims, support options for children on bail or released under investigation

- Developing YJS work with victims, including the wider partnership response to the needs of victims
- Integration of the Dorset Integrated Non-Custodial Service with the YJS health offer and other local health provision for children in contact with the justice system
- Child in Care over-representation and actions to address this
- New Focused Deterrence programme, with OPCC funding, to reduce the risk of weapon offences
- Education, Training and Employment offers and outcomes for YJS children.

The YJS Partnership Board's plans for 2026-27 include further oversight of the local offer for victims, and alignment of YJS service developments with reform programmes such as Families First Partnerships, SEND reforms, the national Youth Strategy, and local plans for CAMHS Transformation. The YJS Board will consider whether more work is needed to coordinate the different sub-groups and activities which support and oversee the operational work of the YJS Partnership. The YJS Board will also ensure its alignment with the new inspection criteria for Leadership and Governance in youth justice services.

5.4 Workforce Development

The YJS is committed to good practice, using staff supervision, peer support, team workshops and external training courses to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of our workers.

Informal feedback from HMI Probation, after their 2025 inspection of our work with children on Out of Court Disposals, noted that *"YJS staff are skilled, knowledgeable, and feel well supported. There is a strong capacity for reflection at all levels of the service."*

The DCYJS Workforce Development Policy identifies core training for different roles in the team. As well as refresher training in child safeguarding, extra-familial harm and information governance, team members are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, AIM3 Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments, and Restorative Justice with complex and sensitive cases.

Team members will continue to attend training and development activities in these approaches in 2026/27.

A Motivational Interviewing Development Group was established in 2024, facilitated by an expert external trainer. This will continue in 2026/27.

The team's work with children showing Harmful Sexual Behaviour is supported by a quarterly YJS HSB Practitioner's Group, which sometimes includes contributions from external speakers.

A quarterly YJS Weapons Offences Practitioner's Group is now well-established, enabling team members to hear about and share evidence-based interventions to reduce weapon-based offending.

In recent years the YJS has been embedding and developing its application of the Child First approach to youth justice work. Whole service workshops are scheduled in April 2026 to review our progress with Child First practice, and to agree our next steps.

Volunteers play an important role in the work of the YJS, especially as Referral Order community panel members. We appreciate their engagement during 2025/26 in training sessions and whole service meetings. Our volunteers are included in the YJS whole service Child First workshops.

DCYJS also supports individual career progression plans for team members, service resilience and succession planning. Plans for 2026/27 include:

- a Youth Justice Worker completing his social work qualification through the Social Work Apprenticeship with BCP Council and Solent University.
- A Practice Manager studying for the ILM Level 5 Certificate in Leadership and Management through the Association of YOT Managers
- A Youth Justice Worker studying for the Level 5 Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship.
- A Business Support Manager starting a Level 3 apprenticeship in Data and Insights for Business Decisions
- A Youth Justice Officer working towards her Practice Educator qualification
- Two Youth Justice Officers working towards the Placement Supervisor qualification.

DCYJS also hosts student placements for students studying for social work qualifications and for trainee Speech and Language Therapists.

5.5 Knife Possession Guidance

The government published new guidance on Child Knife Possession Offences in February 2026, for implementation from April 2026 ([child knife possession offences](#)). The new guidance brings in some changes for responding to children who are found in possession of a knife, including:

- In almost every case, the child must either receive a Youth Conditional Caution or be taken to court
- In very exceptional cases, which the National Police Chiefs Council will only apply for 10-15 year-olds, a Deferred Prosecution can be applied
- Police must notify the YJS within 1 working day of a child being found with a knife
- When the police investigation is complete, with evidence to support prosecution, the YJS must assess the child and set out an intervention plan within 4 weeks
- Interventions with children for knife crime offences must fit with the evidence base compiled by the Youth Endowment Fund
- A new multi-agency scrutiny panel should oversee the local application of the guidance for Child Knife Possession Offences.

Dorset Police and DCYJS worked together during March 2026 to agree an implementation plan for the new guidance. The implementation plan sets out: how Police will introduce the option of Deferred Prosecution in Dorset; how Deferred Prosecutions will be managed between Dorset Police and DCYJS; a process for Dorset Police to notify DCYJS of children being found in possession of a knife, using the seconded YJS police officers; the decision-making process to select the appropriate disposal for a child found in possession of a knife; the selection of appropriate interventions; arrangements for scrutiny and oversight, including the creation of a new knife crime scrutiny panel and its links to the YJS Partnership Board. The scrutiny panel will oversee adherence to the knife crime guidance, including any instances when the guidance has not been followed

DCYJS submitted successful bids for Serious Violence Duty funding in the BCP Council and Dorset Council areas. These bids will enable DCYJS to make immediate contact with a child after they have been found in possession of a knife, without waiting for completion of the police investigation. The focus of YJS work during the investigation phase will be to complete an assessment of the child's strengths and needs, to develop a plan with the child to engage them in positive activities, to complete a speech and language assessment with the child, and to use YJS multi-disciplinary workers to help the child to access appropriate education and health provision.

DCYJS developed a structured response to knife crime in 2025/26, forming the basis for its work under the new knife crime guidance. Our response to knife crime includes:

- Guidance for YJS workers on assessing and managing knife crime risks
- DCYJS weapon-offences group for practitioners to find out about and share evidence of effective practice
- Focused Deterrence work with children assessed as posing the highest risk of harm to others through weapon offences (more information in section 6.7)

- First Aid sessions with YJS nurses
- Restorative Justice activities including the option of a meeting with a representative of the local knife crime charity, Changes Are Made
- Repairing the harm activities at local hospitals.

5.6 Evidence-based practice, innovation and evaluation

Evidence shows that the best predictor for positive change is a pro-social relationship with a trusted adult. The primary focus for effective practice in DCYJS is therefore the quality of workers' relationships with children, alongside positive relationships within the team and with other professionals. The emphasis on relational practice also reflects feedback from children on the DCYJS caseload about what is most important to them in their experience of the service.

YJS practice developments during the past year include establishing a Girls Group, expanding the range and accessibility of positive activities for children, and offering First Aid sessions run by YJS nurses for children who have committed weapon offences. More information about these initiatives is provided in section 6.

The YJS now provides two innovative Speech and Language projects.

Early identification of speech and language needs for children at risk of school exclusion

Around 90% of children in the youth justice system have speech, language and communication needs. Most of these children have experienced permanent or fixed-term exclusions from school. The communication needs of these children have only been identified when they have contact with the YJS and they receive a structured speech and language assessment.

The DCYJS Partnership Board allocated funding for a three-year project, known as 'Re-Engage', to identify and support the speech, language and communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion.

The Re-Engage project works with schools to focus on children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion and whose behaviour indicates a risk of future offending. The aim is to identify the child's communication needs at an earlier stage, to prevent school exclusion and future offending.

The project is staffed by a Speech and Language Therapist and a Speech and Language Associate Practitioner. Their roles are to assess the communication needs of children who are at risk of school exclusion and to support schools to respond to the child's specific needs. Training sessions are also offered to schools as part of their staff development.

The Re-Engage project was cited by HMI Probation as an example of good practice in the Effective Practice Guide which was published as part of the thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals: *"This proactive, school-based model aimed to prevent children from entering the YJS altogether"*.

By the start of April 2026, the project had received 152 referrals from 27 schools across BCP and Dorset. Speech and Language assessments had been completed for 90 children, uncovering significant levels of previously unidentified communication needs.

Language Profiles of 90 children with completed reports:

Developmental Language Disorder & Language disorder – 26

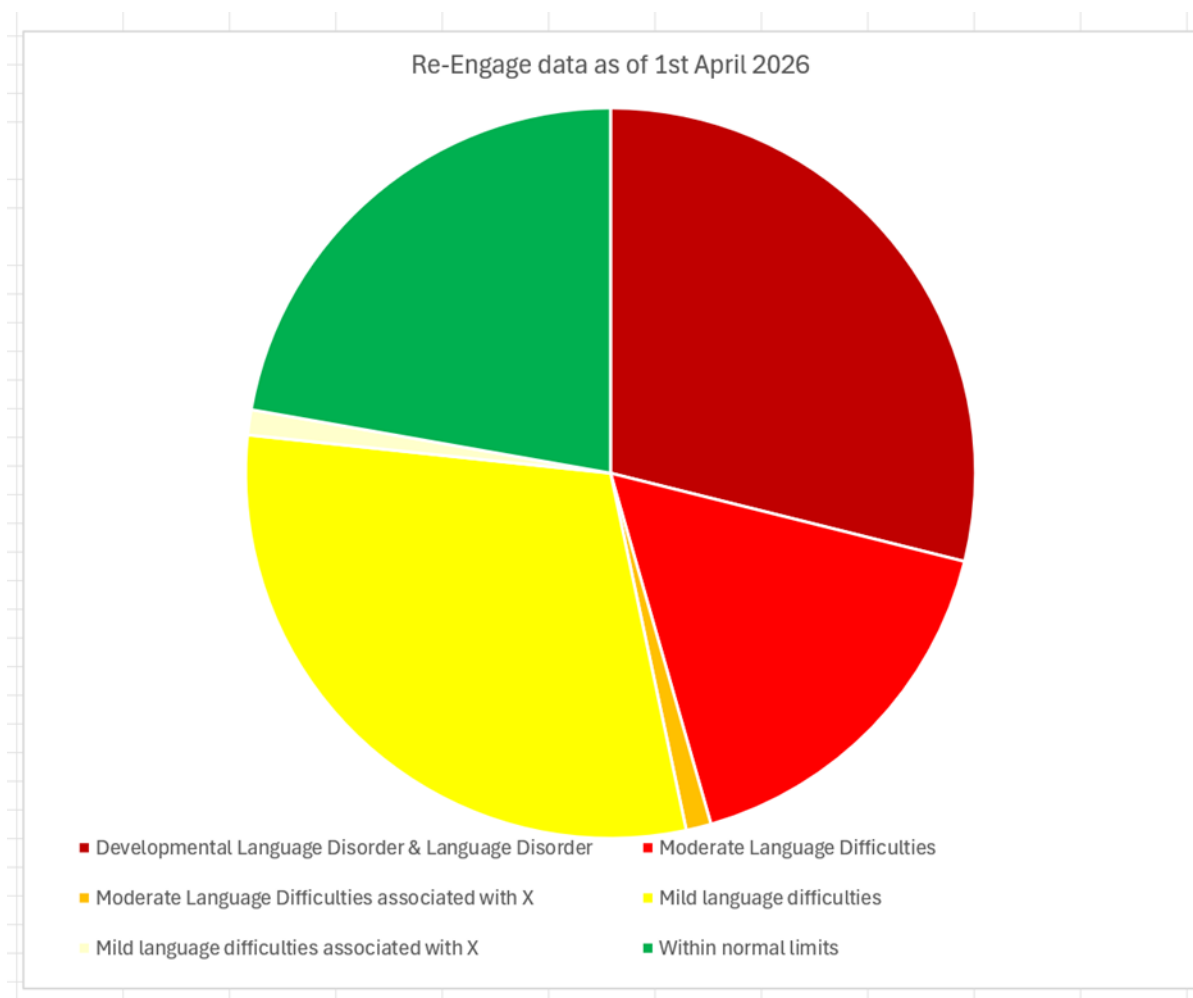
Moderate Language difficulties – 15

Moderate Language difficulties associated with another diagnosis - 1

Mild language difficulties – 27

Mild language difficulties associated with another diagnosis - 1

Within normal limits – 20.



The Re-Engage team also provide training and coaching to schools and to other services, such as the Child in Care health team, to raise awareness and confidence in responding to children's communication needs.

Expanding speech and language support in the justice system

NHS England has partnered with DCYJS for a 'Proof of Concept' project to spread speech and language expertise beyond the Youth Justice Service. The 'Bridges' project commenced in late 2025, with the flow of work developing from March 2026. The Bridges team consists of two part-time Speech and Language Therapists and a Speech and Language Associate Practitioner

The project will provide speech and language assessments for children who are under investigation for serious offences, before they reach the YJS. The project will also work with children who have been referred to the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team by local schools, and with children who have been identified as being at risk of 'extra-familial harm' and possible offending. A support offer is also being developed for children who are victims of offences committed by the children who are working with the YJS.

The Bridges project is also working with the Probation Service in Dorset to support their work with young adults aged 18-25. As well as the offer of speech and language assessments for individual young adults, the Bridges team can assist in making the service more communication-friendly. Examples of this work would include the creation of Easy Read versions of post-custody licence conditions, to help young adults to understand what they can and cannot do while subject to post-custody supervision.

Evaluation of this project is an integral part of the project design with NHS England.

5.7 Standards for work with children in the youth justice system

All Youth Justice Services are required to comply with the Youth Justice Board's 'Standards for work with children in the youth justice system' (2019). The Youth Justice Board has previously overseen a programme of self-assessments to monitor compliance. Responsibility for oversight of YJS compliance may transfer to the Ministry of Justice during 2026/27, as part of the overhaul of the role of the YJB.

The last YJB self-assessment exercise took place in 2023, when all services were directed to audit their work under 'Standard 2: Work in Court'. The YJB provided an audit tool, comprising 22 questions. The DCYJS self-assessment rated our work in court as Good, with most of the audit questions being rated Good or Outstanding. The quality of YJS court work reflects the strong partnership between DCYJS and our local youth courts. The chair of the Dorset Magistrates Youth Panel sits on the DCYJS Partnership Board, enabling other partners to hear the views of magistrates.

The YJB did not require Youth Justice Services to complete a National Standards audit in 2024/25 or 2025/26. The YJB has indicated that there will also be no requirement for a National Standards audit in 2026/27.

5.8 Response to inspections, reviews and audits.

Inspection reports, learning reviews and case audits all contribute to our service planning.

The most recent full inspection of our service was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspectors made 6 recommendations, which were followed up through an action plan, overseen by the YJS Partnership Board. Actions have been completed for all of the recommendations.

Dorset Police and DCYJS were jointly inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. This thematic inspection was conducted by HMI Probation and HMI Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services. The report was published in October 2025, alongside an Effective Practice Guide.

The two inspectorates identified examples of good practice by Dorset Police and by DCYJS, including the strength of the partnership between our two services. The inspection report noted that our joint decision-making model "*provided a more consistent, fair, and effective approach to decision-making*" than the examples which they saw in other Police forces.

The Effective Practice Guide for the OOCID inspection also cited good practice in our Speech and Language work and in our Restorative Justice activities and our engagement with victims.

The thematic inspection report made 18 recommendations, for the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Youth Justice Board, the National Police Chief's Council, Chief Constables, Youth Justice Partnership Boards and Youth Justice Services. The DCYJS Head of Service is a member of the national steering group which oversees the implementation of these recommendations.

There were no new Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in the past year involving DCYJS.

The YJS initiated two local learning reviews during 2025 in respect of young adults who entered custody shortly after turning 18. Actions taken from these reviews included the provision of guidance notes to colleagues in Children's Social Care about the care status and entitlements of children who are remanded to secure accommodation, and the YJS health team has strengthened its links with custody healthcare providers.

YJS learning from local CSPRs and multi-agency learning reviews is included in the team's development plans, and is reported annually to the YJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS undertakes thematic case audits, linked to the service's priorities. The focus in 2025 was on our local multi-agency work with Children in Care. National and local evidence shows that Children in Care are over-represented in the justice system and are likely to progress further into the justice system.

DCYJS coordinated a multi-agency audit of work with 16 Children in Care (8 from each local authority) who started youth justice interventions between September 2024 and March 2025. One of the themes emerging from the audits was that there were notable examples of good practice and good joint working between YJS workers and social workers, as well as health and education professionals, but this good practice was not embedded consistently across the whole audit. An action plan has been devised which includes steps to make good multi-agency working more consistent and less dependent on individual practitioners and managers.

Audit plans for 2026/27 include a case audit to apply the new casework inspection criteria, an updated review of work with Children in Care, and completion of the 'Section 11' audits for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in each local authority.

6 Local and National Priorities for 2026/27

This section of the Plan reviews issues of local and national priority for youth justice which contribute to our service priorities for 2026/27.

6.1 Over-representation

National data shows that some groups of children, such as those with diverse ethnic heritage, children in care and children with Special Educational Needs are over-represented in the youth justice system. DCYJS monitors caseload information for children from minority and disadvantaged groups to identify over-representation and actions that may be needed. It is also recognised that some children experience multiple disadvantages, exemplified by the common characteristics of boys receiving a custodial sentence, as shown in section 4.2.

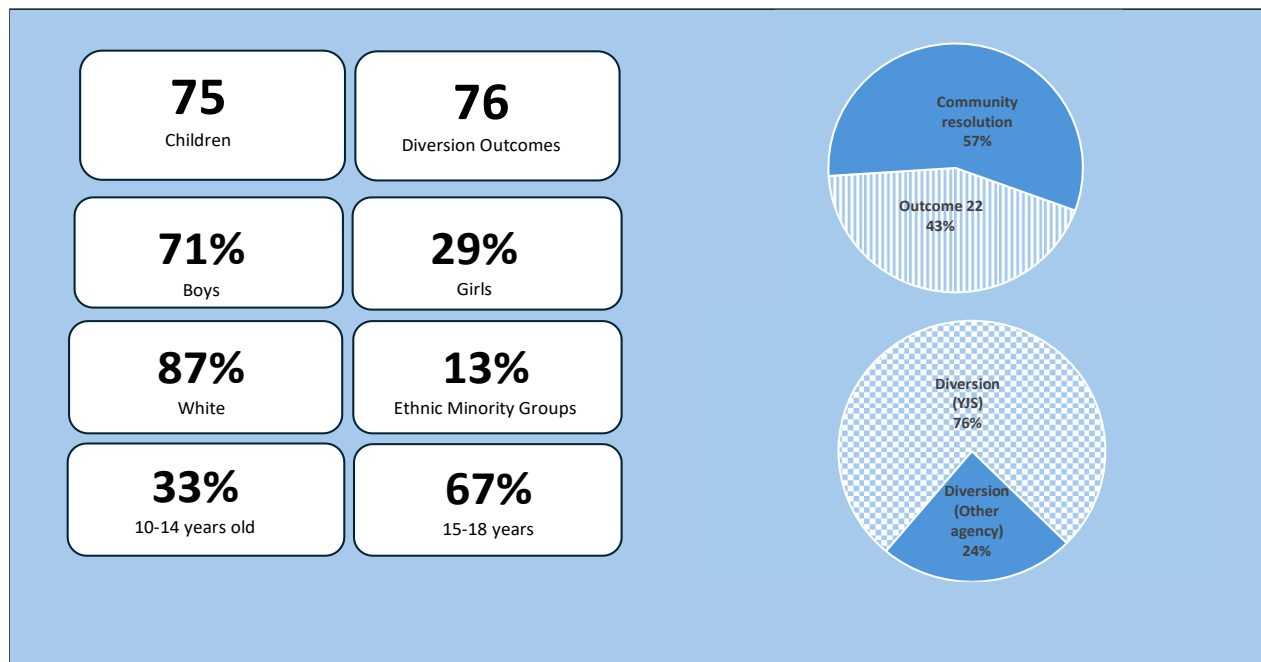
Ethnic Disparity

Data from the January 2026 School Census shows that 17.8% of 10-17 year-olds at schools in the BCP Council area identify as not having a white ethnicity. The equivalent figure for schools in the Dorset Council area is 6.3%. This data helps us compare the rate of children on our caseload from different ethnicities with proportions in the local population.

The following charts provide information about the children in the youth justice system in each local authority, separating them by children who were diverted and children who were cautioned or sentenced.

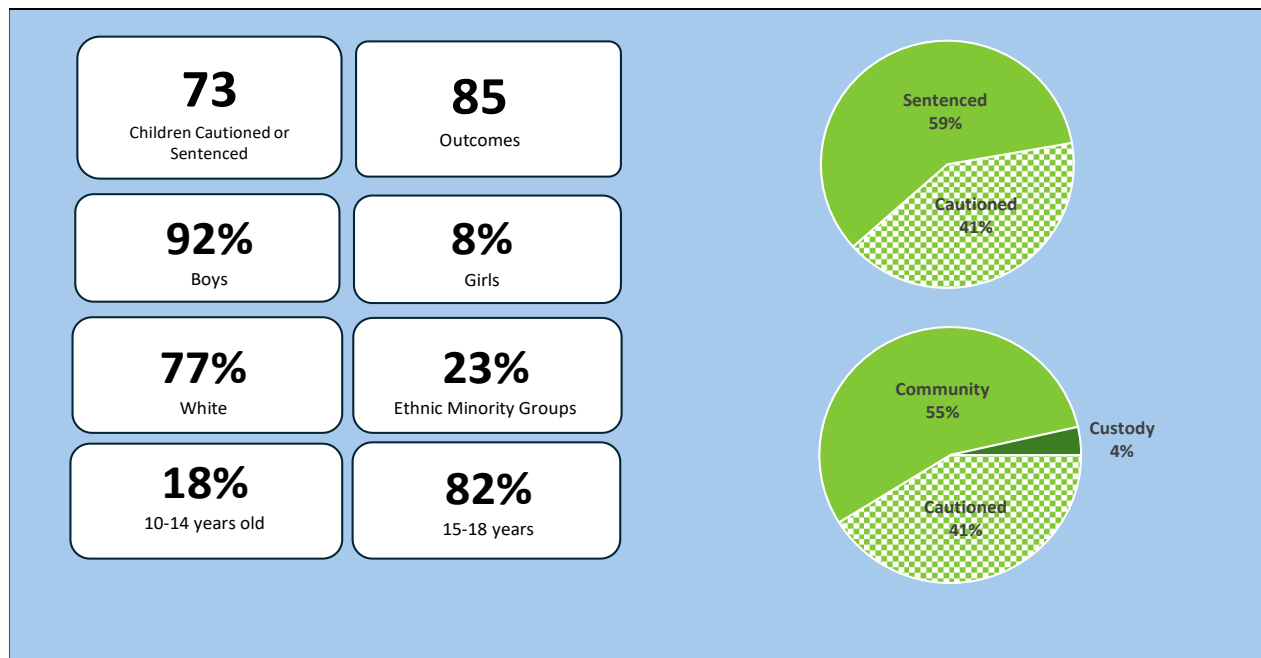
BCP Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2025/26

BCP Outcomes (Diversion) from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026



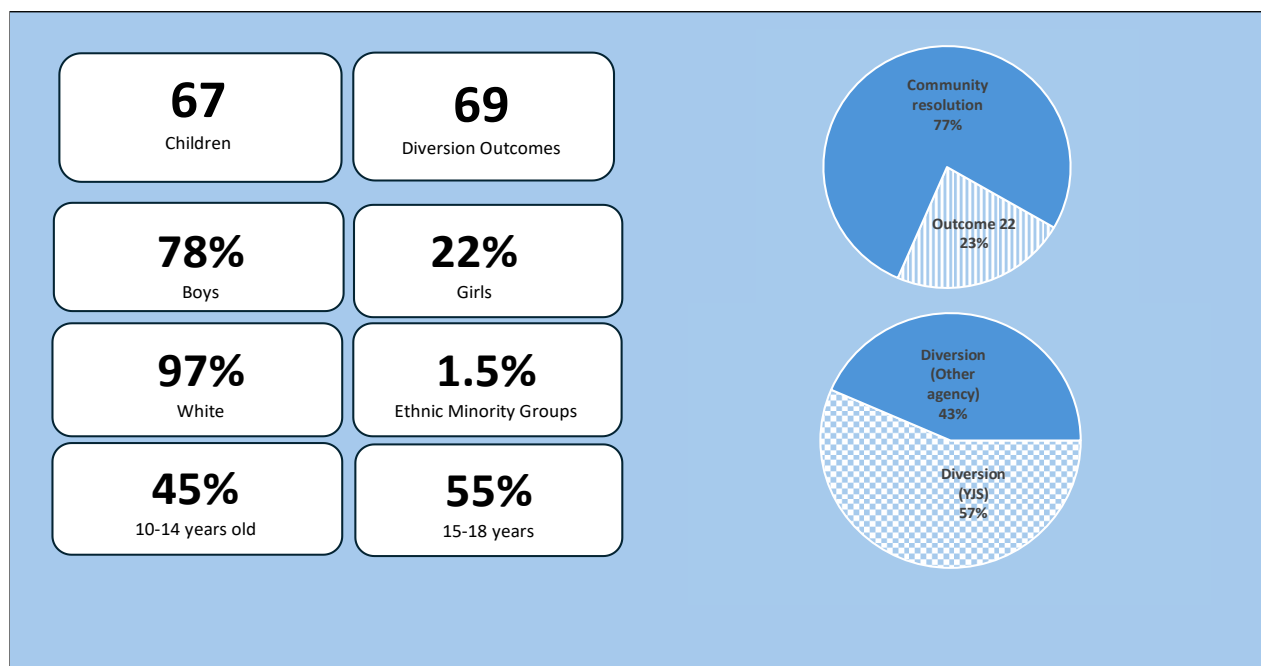
BCP Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2025/26

BCP Outcomes (Cautions and Convictions) from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026



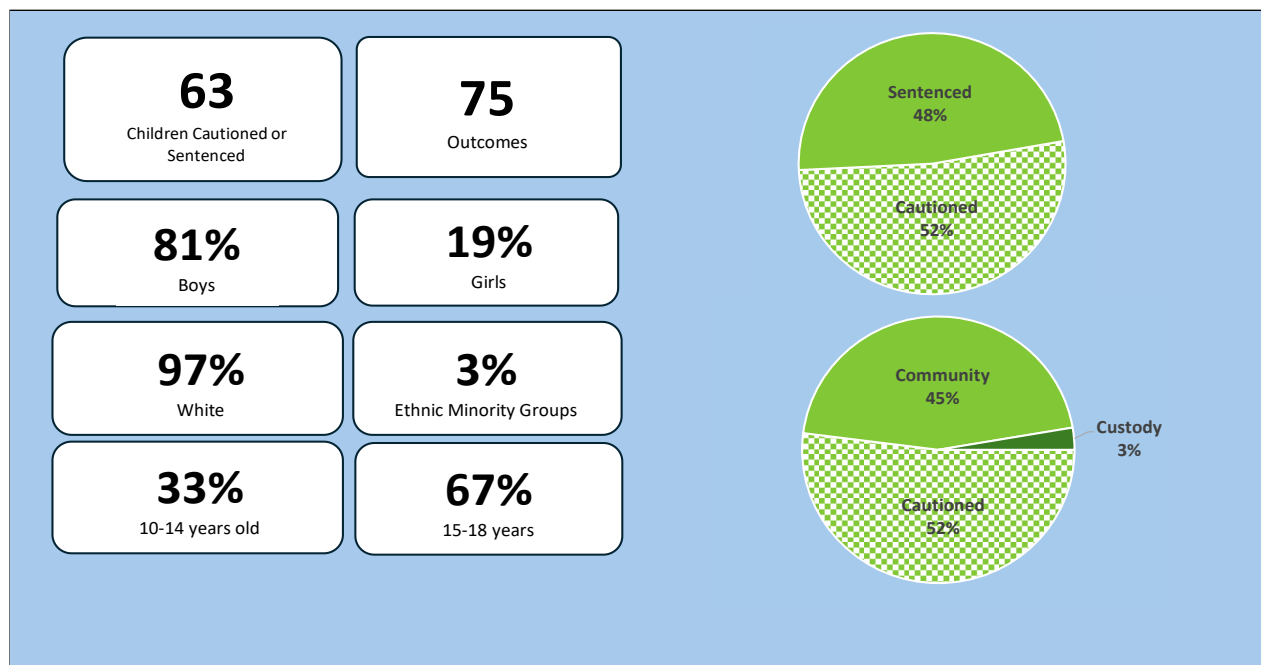
Dorset Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2025/26

Dorset Outcomes (Diversion) from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026



Dorset Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2025/26

Dorset Outcomes (Cautions and Convictions) from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026



Comparison of these charts shows that:

- There is a notably higher proportion of girls among the children diverted from the justice system compared to the proportion of girls in the groups who were cautioned or sentenced.
- The proportion of children with non-white ethnicity is lower among the children who were diverted than among the children who were cautioned or sentenced, with a more significant difference in the BCP Council area.

- Children who do not identify as white are not over-represented in Dorset, or among children in BCP who are diverted, but they are over-represented among children sentenced or cautioned in BCP.
- In both local authorities, there is a higher proportion of younger children among those who were diverted.
- There is a higher proportion of younger children in contact with the YJS in Dorset than in BCP.

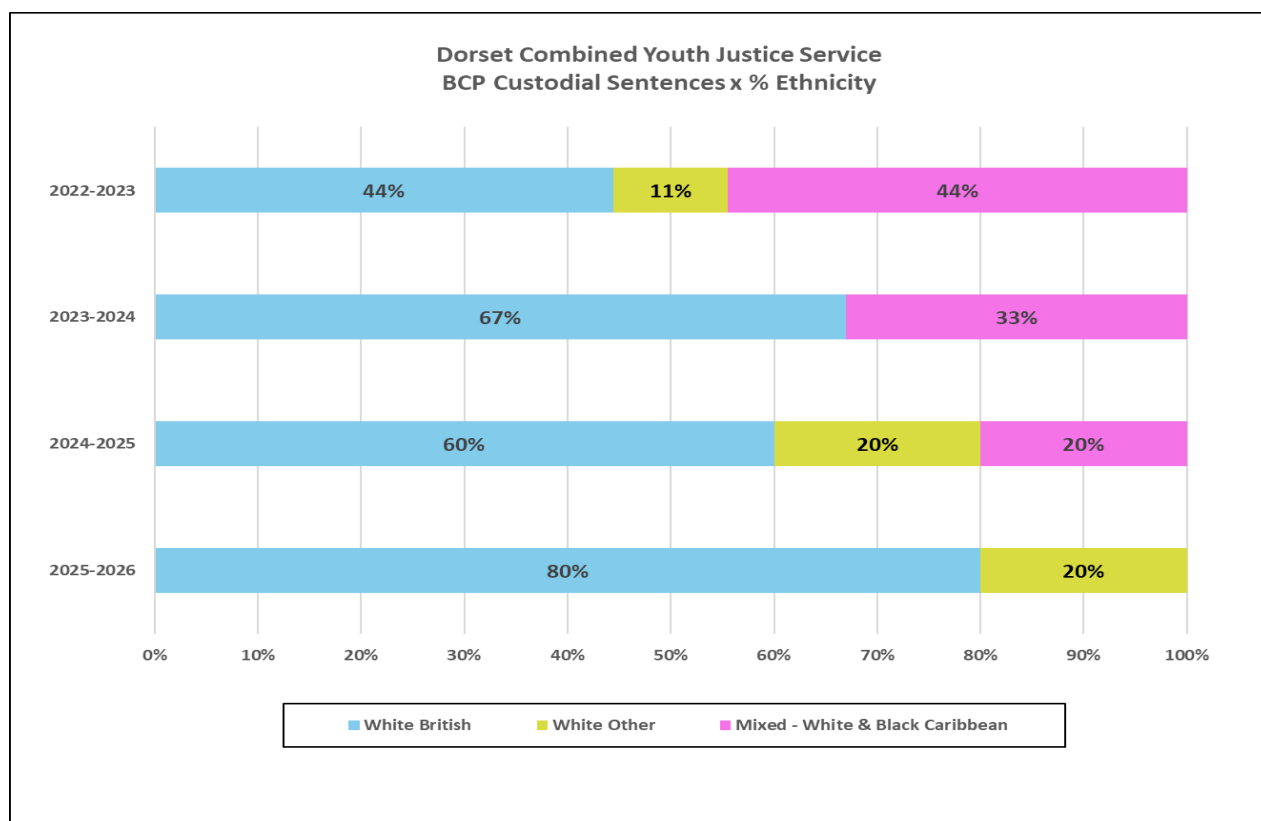
Information about the ethnicity, gender and age of First-Time Entrants is presented and analysed earlier in this document, in section 4.2.

As well as monitoring possible over-representation among First-Time Entrants, we also track how far children 'progress' into the youth justice system.

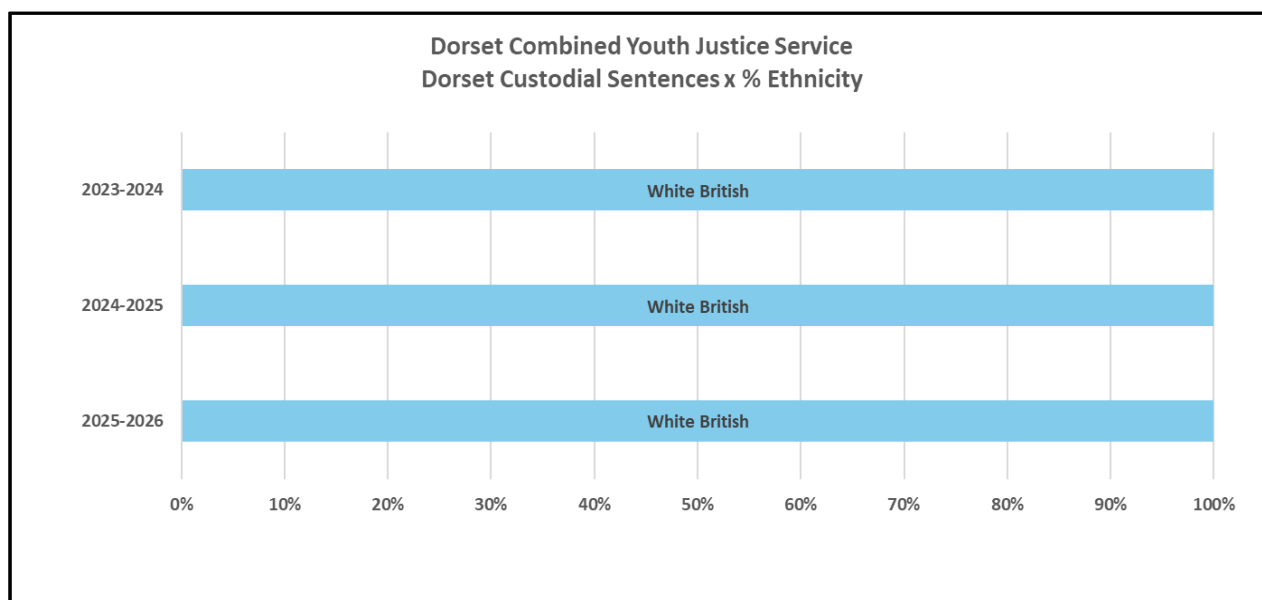
The charts showing the numbers of children cautioned or sentenced in 2025/26 indicate that children from ethnic minority groups in the BCP Council area are over-represented amongst those receiving a caution or court order. The reasons for this over-representation, and the response to it, are likely to spread beyond the justice system, noting that DCYJS and Dorset Police also work with Dorset Council children, where children from ethnic minority groups are not over-represented.

Ethnicity of children sentenced to custody

At a national level there are enduring concerns about the over-representation of Black and mixed heritage boys amongst children in custody. Low numbers of local children being sentenced to custody make it hard to analyse data based on percentages. The following charts show custodial sentences by ethnicity in each local authority in recent years.



There has been a welcome reduction in recent years in the over-representation of black and mixed heritage children in BCP receiving custodial sentences. No children from these ethnic groups in BCP received custodial sentences in 2025/26.



In the past three years, a total of 6 Dorset children have been sentenced to custody (8 custodial sentences). All of them define their ethnicity as White British.

In summary, there is a nuanced and varied picture locally for over-representation by ethnicity. Overall, looking at the service as a whole, local children from global majority ethnicities are not more likely to be criminalised and are not over-represented. There are some subtleties to the data though, such as how children from different groups progress through the justice system, and differences between BCP Council and Dorset Council, which require further attention.

Gender

We also monitor the gender breakdown of our caseload and the distribution by gender at different stages of the youth justice system. There is a higher proportion of girls among children who are diverted from a formal outcome, with lower proportions of girls amongst those who receive a community or custodial sentence.

At a national and local level there is evidence that boys are significantly over-represented among children in custody. This is also the case locally, where no girls have been remanded or sentenced to custody in the past 9 years.

The proportion of girls on the DCYJS caseload fluctuates but usually stays within a range of about 15%-20% of the total caseload, consistent with national rates. Girls accounted for 15% of our First Time Entrants in 2025/26, down from 17% in both 2024/25 and 2023/24.

It is recognised that girls can have different needs and experiences from boys, requiring differentiated responses from YJS workers. Worker allocation decisions are taken carefully to be sensitive to each girl's needs.

YJS workers set up a new Girls Group in 2025. The aim was to create a safe space for girls, to support them to build confidence, positive self-identity and behaviours. The group also enabled them to think about what they look for in healthy relationships, in the context of concerns about Violence Against Women and Girls.

One of the girls who attended the Girls Group provided this feedback:

- *It was fun*
- *You get to build bonds with people*
- *You get to enjoy yourself*
- *You feel free*

- *You don't have to go there glammed up – no one will judge you*
- *We get to make meals.*

Children in Care

Local data shows that Children in Care are over-represented in our youth justice system. Numbers fluctuated a little during 2025/26, but the proportion of Children in Care on the YJS caseload was usually around 20%.

Analysis commissioned by the YJS Partnership Board for its meeting in October 2024 identified some common features of Children in Care in the youth justice system, leading to a multi-agency audit in 2025 of joint work with 16 Children in Care who started youth justice interventions between September 2024 and March 2025.

The multi-agency audit identified examples of good practice involving YJS workers, social workers, Virtual School staff, YJS nurses and Speech and Language Therapists, and the Child in Care health team. This good practice was not consistent in the work with all the children in the audit sample. Actions have been agreed to make the quality of work more consistent, including:

- Complete a written agreement between the YJS worker and the social worker for joint working arrangements at the start of YJS work with a Child in Care
- YJS and social work plans for each child to specify the work being done by other professionals
- Review joint working between the YJS and the Virtual Schools
- Maintain close links between YJS nurses and Child in Care nurses
- Include the Virtual School in consent process for sharing YJS speech and language assessments
- YJS transitions work to adult services to include the social worker/PA for care experienced young people
- Complete a follow-up review in autumn 2026 to check on progress.

SEND

DCYJS caseload information shows that children in the local youth justice system are likely to have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In March 2026, 22.5% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 19.7% had the status of 'SEN Support'. This means that 42.2% of school-age children were identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, compared to about 21.6% in the local populations for their age group (see section 2, 'Local Context' data).

It should be noted that the YJS was still collecting SEND information for some of these children, and there are others who are likely to have unidentified needs, meaning that the figure of 42% is probably an under-estimate of the level of SEND. These concerns fit with evidence collected by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists, showing high levels of communication needs amongst children in our local youth justice system and indicating the need for YJS workers to adapt their work to the needs of each child.

The YJS has worked with our two local authorities to establish a reliable process for each child's EHCP to be shared with the YJS, to enable the YJS to apply the advice in the EHCP when working with the child.

6.2 Prevention

The rate of children entering the justice system is influenced by the effectiveness of local prevention and diversion activities. 'Prevention' refers to work with children who have been identified as being at risk of going on to commit offences in future if they do not receive additional

help. 'Diversion' describes the response to children who have committed an offence but who can be diverted from the justice system.

DCYJS does not directly undertake prevention work, focusing its activities on children who have committed a criminal offence. As described in section 5.5, however, the YJS is currently providing a three-year prevention project, known as Re-Engage, to identify the speech, language and communication needs of children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school.

Each of our local authorities provides early help services, working with other local organisations like schools, the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team and the voluntary sector.

In the Dorset Council area oversight of prevention activities sits with the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, supported by more detailed work at locality level. The DCYJS Head of Service is a member of the Strategic Alliance and team members participate in locality meetings to identify and respond to children at risk. 'The Harbour' is a Dorset Council multi-disciplinary service which works with children who need additional support to prevent negative outcomes such as being taken into care or entering the justice system. DCYJS and The Harbour have close links, including joint work with children who have entered the justice system.

In the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area, preventative work occurs within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Early Help. Both services use local data to determine the needs in the area and to then provide preventative services to meet those needs. Governance for the Community Safety work sits with the Community Safety Partnership Executive Board. The Board's role includes scrutiny of the work undertaken. It can also agree to commission further services. The YJS Head of Service sits on the CSP Executive board. Targeted early help services are overseen by the Early Help Partnership Board (a multi-agency partnership which also incorporates Family Hubs). The Board agrees what services may be needed and which to provide/ commission. Services are provided based on the *Continuum of need*, with clear pathways in relation to how to access the support and services. Performance monitoring for the Early Help Partnership Board includes data on the rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

6.3 Diversion

As mentioned above, DCYJS and Dorset Police were inspected in February 2025 as part of the joint national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. The inspectors noted, in their informal inspection feedback, that *"There is a clear focus and shared commitment across the partnership both strategically and operationally to divert children from the criminal justice system wherever this is possible."*

Diversion work is undertaken locally on a partnership basis. Dorset Police, DCYJS and local authority Early Help services meet weekly as an Out of Court Disposal Panel to decide the appropriate youth justice outcome for children who have committed criminal offences. The panel looks for opportunities to divert children from a formal justice outcome when possible. This fits with the local priority to reduce First Time Entrants, described above in section 4.2.

Diversion activities usually involve additional support for the child and, when appropriate, some form of restorative response in respect of the criminal offence. The Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team, DCYJS, Early Help Services, and Children's Social Care Services each provide support at the diversion stage. The appropriate service for each child is decided on the basis of the child's needs, risks and existing relationships with professionals.

During 2025/26 a total of 142 children received diversion options for a criminal offence, rather than a formal justice outcome. 95 of them received interventions from the Youth Justice Service. 48 received interventions from other services, principally the police Safer Schools and Communities Team.

Since 2022/23 the Ministry of Justice has funded the 'Turnaround' programme, aimed at 'children on the cusp of the youth justice system'. Locally we used this programme to divert children from the justice system and to reduce our rate of First Time Entrants. With the benefit of Turnaround funding, our partnership has established the use of 'Outcome 22', a Police recording code which indicates no further police action, provided that the YJS offers support to the child.

Turnaround funding is now used to employ an additional Youth Justice Worker, an additional Restorative Justice Practitioner and a half-time Speech and Language Therapist. Each child on the Turnaround programme is allocated to a Youth Justice Worker who works with the child and their family to agree a support plan to help them avoid further offending. The Restorative Justice Practitioner contacts the victim to identify their needs and to promote Restorative Justice options. The Turnaround Speech and Language Therapist assesses the child's communication needs and provides advice for the child, their family and professionals about the child's individual needs and how best to respond to them.

The local Turnaround programme is overseen by the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board. The Ministry of Justice sets targets for the number of children successfully completing Turnaround interventions each year. DCYJS exceeded its completions target in 2025/26.

Funding for the Turnaround programme has now been confirmed until 2028/29, albeit frozen at a reduced level compared to the original allocation.

6.4 Education, Training and Employment

Children in the youth justice system are less likely to stay in mainstream schools, to achieve good educational outcomes and to access education, employment or training after Year 11.

In March 2026, 22.5% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 19.7% had the status of 'SEN Support'. There are also likely to be other children whose additional needs have not been identified or who would have been categorised as needing SEN Support if they were on roll at a mainstream school.

Most children in contact with the justice system have communication needs which have not previously been identified (see sections 5.5 and 6.4 for more details on YJS Speech and Language work). The YJS shares information about a child's Speech and Language needs with schools, PRUs, mentors, tutors and other education professionals. This helps to ensure that the child's individual needs are understood and met, supporting their engagement in education.

In recent years DCYJS has worked with local authority colleagues to improve the accuracy of the recording and reporting of school exclusions experienced by children on the caseload. In March 2026, 13 out of 71 school-age children on the caseload had been permanently excluded from school in the past 2.5 academic years, and 31 of the 71 children had experienced at least one fixed-term exclusion during that period.

Improving education provision and outcomes for children in the youth justice system is a service priority.

Each local authority's Director of Education is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board. The headteachers of the BCP Council Virtual School and College and the Dorset Council Virtual School are also members of the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS employs two Education Officers, one focusing on school-age children and one supporting the post-16 age group. They provide advice to DCYJS case managers and work directly with young people to understand their needs and to support their attendance and engagement. They also work with schools and local authorities to increase the suitability of provision, maintaining strong links with colleagues in the local authority Virtual Schools, the SEND teams and Inclusion services.

When a child is remanded or sentenced to custody, the appropriate YJS Education Officer is allocated to ensure that the child's education needs are understood and met during and after the period in custody. It is a requirement of the SEND Code of Practice, for children in custody with an EHCP, that an up to date EHCP is shared with the custody education provider to enable the child's specific educational needs to be met. The YJS Education Officers liaise with custody education providers and local authority colleagues to ensure that all relevant information is shared.

Each local authority has a multi-agency group which monitors and acts on inclusion in education for the school-age children causing most concern in respect of their access to education. The DCYJS Education Officer attends these groups and represents the needs of children who are open to the YJS.

DCYJS occasionally works with children who are receiving Elective Home Education. The YJS Education Officer follows up each case where a child receives Elective Home Education to review the adequacy and safety of the arrangement and to offer more support if needed.

In March 2026, 34.5% of YJS children in the post-16 age group were recorded as being not in employment, education or training (NEET). This reflects the limited opportunities for YJS young people, who can lack the necessary attainment levels to access the available provision.

The YJS runs the Discover You project at Upton Country Park to improve young people's self-esteem, practical skills and employability, to increase their chances of accessing employment and training.

31 young people attended the project between September 2025 and March 2026. Some of the positive outcomes for these young people included:

- Support towards Maths and English Functional Skills – one young person has completed his English Level 2 qualification. A number of other young people will be sitting their exams before the end of the academic year
- Other Support towards qualifications - CSCS Practice and completing exams – 7 young people have completed their Level 1 Health and Safety in the Construction Environment Award. They are now preparing for the second stage – the CITB Health, Safety and Environment Test, which they will complete in the coming weeks. Upon passing both, they will be eligible to obtain the Labourers Green Card, opening the door to employment and apprenticeship opportunities within the construction sector.
- AQA Certificated Learning –most young people complete around 5-10 awards, depending on how long they attend and what they engage in. Awards include Team Building, Employment and Training, Practical Tasks, Communication Skills, Health and Safety and Gardening.
- ETE and Careers – Careers Information Advice and Guidance – Career Action Planning, CV work, Applications for College and Jobs, Interview Skills.
- Work Experience options around Upton Country Park within the Welcome Centre and Café, opportunities also available for young people to help at open events.
- Conservation Volunteering Activities – Working with the Ranger Team onsite to complete practical activities around the site like planting trees, taking out hedgerows, coppicing, painting, creating woodwork items, filling potholes, putting up a stag beetle loggery (different things available at different times of the year).
- Team Building – different opportunities like den building and orienteering available.
- Life skills – budgeting/managing money, dealing with bills, communication skills.
- Raising money for local charities by making items to sell at Upton Country Park, e.g. Halloween items, Christmas items, nature-themed items and outdoor objects such as planters, bird boxes, bug hotels, bird feeders.
- Developing an Allotment Area – young people have helped to create an allotment space, designing and constructing a wooden greenhouse and raised bedding/planters to support growth of plants, fruit and vegetables. Young people are enjoying being able to learn and develop further through tasks like planting a variety of seeds and building knowledge around looking after them and seeing them grow. Some vegetables that were grown last summer were donated to a project that supports families in need.

- Development into mentoring opportunities for young people who continue to volunteer at Upton Country Park after attending the Discover You project. One young person is now part of the Upton Country Park Volunteer Team.
- Practical tasks for Upton Country Park – Since January 2026 the project has been tasked with working on a refurbishment of a dedicated picnic area at Upton Country Park, creating an improved, welcoming space for families and visitors to enjoy. This is planned to be completed ahead of the summer season. Young people are enjoying the process of starting the task from planning stages, to working out a schedule, through to looking at materials needed and costings, to then actually building, creating and finishing items.
- Support has also been given to a small number of young people that were school age for a period of time, to help engage them in learning and practical tasks whilst more permanent education was being arranged. This helped build structure and routine and get them ready for their new education provision.

The Discover You Project successfully applied for funding from the BCP Youth Fund in summer 2025 to help meet the cost of exams/qualification, new tools and equipment and gardening materials.

Young people who attended Discover You in 2025/26 shared these views on the project:

Being able to use the project has allowed me to gain qualifications to help me progress.

Everyone sees the mistakes, but here they see the potential.

Out here no one is judging you, it is just you, the work and what you create and build.

Before this I had never built anything, now I know I can and I am proud of that achievement.

The project gives me structure and is helping me to build/develop and that is what I need.

Getting my CSCS card means I have options.

6.5 Health and Communication Needs of Children in the youth justice system

Evidence shows that children who have contact with the justice system are likely to have significant health needs, including difficulties with mental health, physical health and substance use. DCYJS has a strong health team, reflecting the commitment of NHS Dorset and Dorset HealthCare to meeting the health needs of children in the youth justice system. The DCYJS health team comprises 2.8 full-time equivalent CAMHS nurses, a 0.8 Clinical Psychologist and 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists.

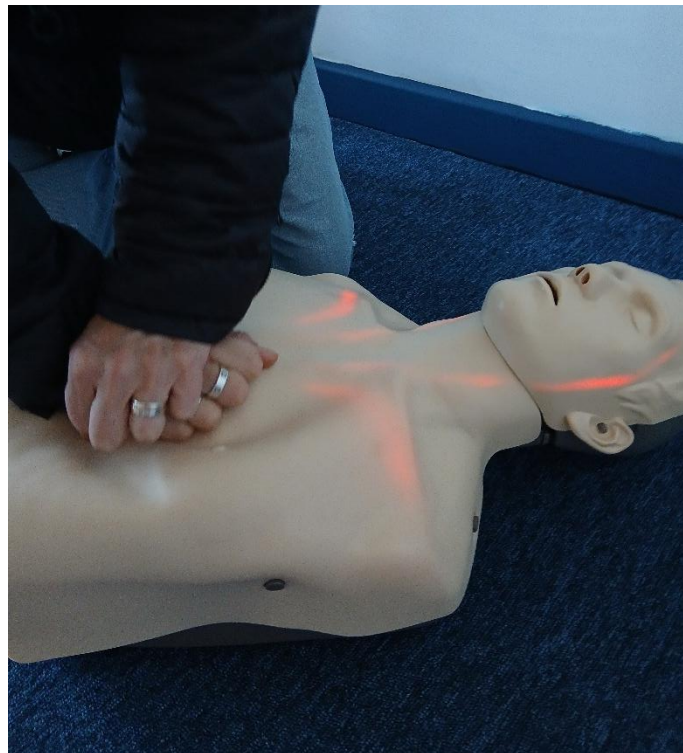
Health professionals in the YJS work directly with children and provide consultation and advice to YJS colleagues and other professionals. The YJS nurses meet regularly with colleagues in the Child in Care health team and the Dorset Integrated Non-Custodial Service (previously called the Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service) to ensure the integration of healthcare support for children in the youth justice system.

The specialist skills and knowledge of the YJS nurses and psychologist underpin the DCYJS commitment to trauma-informed practice through the Trauma Recovery Model. Children who will be under YJS supervision for more than 6 months are considered for the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) multi-agency formulation model, led by the YJS Psychologist.

During 2025/26, the YJS nurses launched First Aid sessions for children who have committed weapon offences, as part of the YJS response to knife crime. The sessions focus on urgent action which the child can take in the event of witnessing a weapon injury or other health emergency. As well as providing important information to children, these sessions also enable reflection about the

impact of weapon injuries. The child's contact with the nurse can also give them confidence to meet again with the nurse for support with their own emotional or physical health needs.

The First Aid sessions include an activity on resuscitation, using a model which lights up when enough pressure is applied, as illustrated in this picture:



A YJS nurse is allocated to all children who are remanded or sentenced to custody. The aim is to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of health care for the child as they move into custody, during the custodial period and as part of their post-release planning. The YJS nurses liaise with the healthcare provider in the custodial establishment to resolve issues such as continuity of access to prescribed medication for children in custody. The YJS health team has strengthened links with custody healthcare providers in Feltham, Oakhill and Parc over the past year.

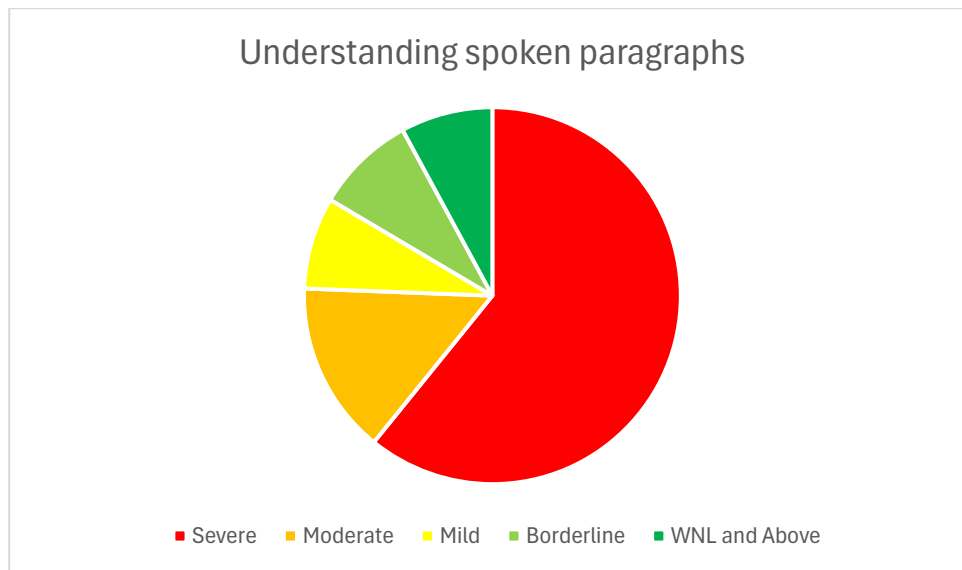
Speech and Language Therapists have been based in the YJS since 2018. Data has been reported in previous Youth Justice Plans to show that around 90% of children in contact with the justice system locally have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

YJS Speech and Language Therapists contributed to an MSc Dissertation in 2025 by a Masters student at Health Sciences University on 'Missed diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder in youth offenders'. One of the comments in the dissertation noted that *"The children we work with...are really accurately able to tell us exactly what they find hard with communication but nobody's asked them that question before in a way that they can access"*.

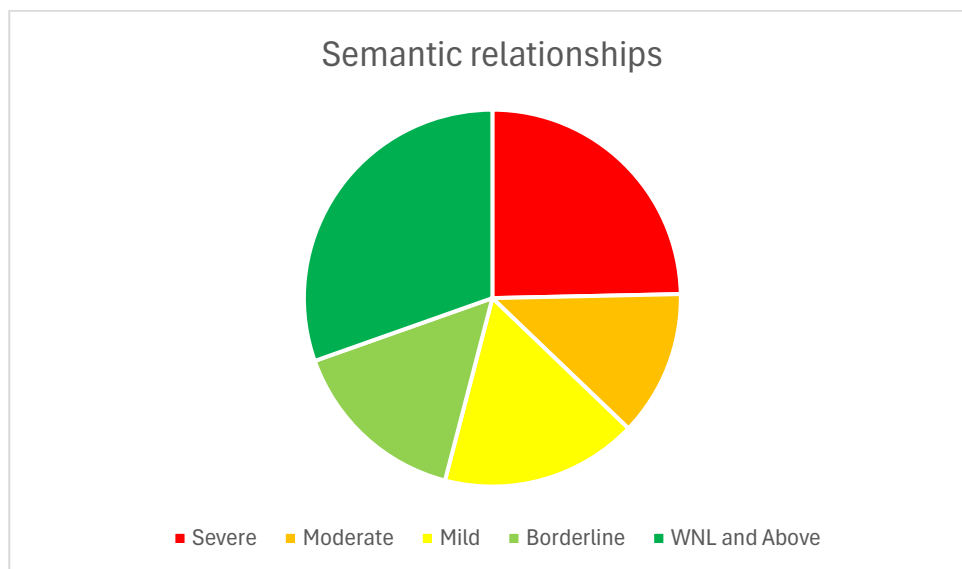
The YJS Speech and Language Therapists use the formal language assessment 'Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – v5' (CELF) as part of their assessments, alongside assessment of Language for Behaviour and Emotions. Each assessment involves several sub-tests, to investigate different aspects of communication.

The YJS Speech and Language team collates and analyses the results of all assessments of children known to the YJS in recent years. This data shows specific patterns of need among children in the youth justice system. Almost all the children struggle to understand spoken language. This has important implications for the way that professionals should interact with these children, moving away from talking-based contacts to using visual resources such as Talking Mats.

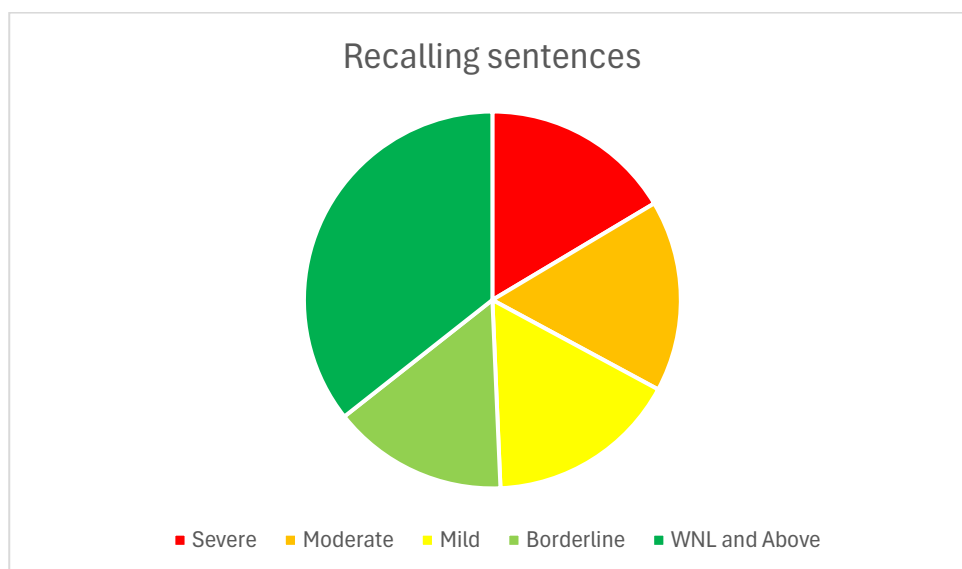
A total of 296 assessments had been completed by the end of March 2026, providing a robust sample size. The following charts show the aggregated results for each sub-test in the CELF assessment (NB 'WNL' = Within Normal Limits).



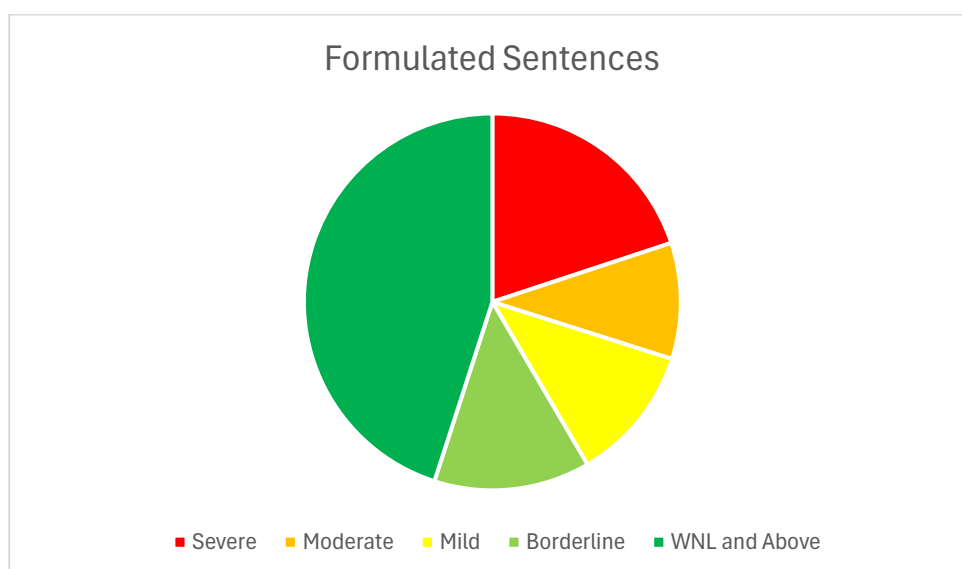
Only 8% of children were rated within normal limits for this test. 61% of children were rated to have severe needs in this area. Children with low scores are likely to have difficulty understanding inputs in lessons or meetings with professionals, understanding and remembering longer explanations/instructions, following stories in conversation, understanding when there is a lot of information, such as in court or in Referral Order panel meetings.



70% of children have some level of difficulty understanding sentences that express a relationship. Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with understanding information about where, when and what order things are in (all of which can be needed when being interviewed about a suspected offence). Children will also find it hard to understand passive sentences ('the bag was found by the police' instead of 'the police found the bag').



64% of the children had some level of difficulty in recalling sentences. Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with sentence structure; vocabulary; recalling spoken information accurately.



55% of children were not rated within normal limits for this sub-test. Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with communicating thoughts and opinions clearly; explaining more complicated things; keeping up in conversation/ responding quickly.

It is worth noting that these tests are carried out in a safe environment by a skilled practitioner. A child's communication abilities will deteriorate in more stressful situations such as police interviews or court hearings.

The receptive language skills of children in the justice system tend not to be as strong as their expressive language skills. This may partly explain why these children's communication needs are not identified until they enter the justice system and they receive a structured assessment from a YJS Speech and Language Therapist.

After completing a Speech and Language assessment for a child in the YJS, the Speech and Language Therapist writes up a one-page 'Communications Passport' for the child, along with a full written assessment report. The Communications Passport is shared with Dorset Police, to help them communicate effectively with the child in the event that they have further contact with the

child. The child is asked to consent for their full assessment report to be shared with other professionals such as social workers and education providers.

6.6 Restorative Justice and Victims

Alongside the 'Child First' approach, Restorative Justice is a core principle underpinning the work of DCYJS.

Whenever DCYJS works with a child whose offence harmed a victim, the DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact the victim to find out about the impact of the offence, to explain the opportunities for Restorative Justice activities, and to ask about any vulnerabilities for which the victim might need support. This work helps us to meet our obligations under the Victims Code.

Delays in the youth justice system, which are more common in cases that go to court, make it harder to engage victims in activity to repair the harm they have experienced. Contacting the victim many months after the offence requires tact and sensitivity, emphasising the victim's choice in whether or how much they engage with our service.

HMI Probation cited DCYJS work with victims in the Effective Practice Guide which they published in October 2025 alongside their thematic inspection report on work with children who received OoCDs. The inspectors commented that '*In DCYJS, a structured and victim-centred approach to restorative justice was embedded within the delivery of OoCDs*'.

Restorative Justice can take different forms, and it is not always possible to bring the child and their victim together for a restorative meeting. When such meetings do take place, they can be beneficial for both the victim and the child. The following example from 2025 illustrates the benefits of Restorative Justice meetings and the flexibility that can be required to achieve a successful meeting:

We completed an RJ Conference with one of the Heathland Mitigation Rangers for BCP with a young person who had committed Arson, albeit it seemed accidental.

We held a session with a presentation delivered by the Ranger, where we looked at the effects of fire on the heathland and the future impact it can have on the whole ecosystem of that area. This was held in a classroom environment, and we then followed it up with a visit to the scene of the incident. Whilst walking around Talbot Heath we held an RJ conference between them.

The young person said that he found the session informative, and he had learnt more about the heathlands near him. The Ranger felt that everything went well and he would like the opportunity to work with us again in the future.

During the past year, YJS work with victims has expanded to identify and respond to the victim's needs. Examples include support to take part in positive activities and the provision of speech and language assessments for child victims. One of our Restorative Justice Practitioners provided this example of support for a child who has been the victim of an offence:

I worked with a young victim who had been assaulted, which knocked her self-confidence and affected her wellbeing. Through our conversations I discovered she loved horses and had attended a Horse Therapy session in the past which she found beneficial for her mental health, which she had struggled with. I spoke with the YJS Activities Coordinator and we were able to source and fund 3 Horse Therapy sessions which gave her the boost she needed. Her parents, having seen the difference in her, have agreed to continue the sessions privately. Her mum was very grateful for all that we had done for her and her daughter.

YJS victim work in 2026/27 will continue to strengthen our offer to child victims and will develop our use of data to provide insights and direction for our victim work.

Another aspect of the team's Restorative Justice work is undertaking 'repairing the harm' activities with children, to help them make amends for their offence.

The YJS has now established regular 'repairing the harm' catch-up meetings which were recognised by HMI Probation in their OOCOD inspection Effective Practice Guide:

"A key strength of the DCYJS model was the 'repairing harm meeting', held in every case. This brought together the case manager (who gave the child's views), the reparation coordinator; and the restorative justice practitioner (who gave the victim's views), to co-design meaningful interventions linked to the harm caused by the offence. Activities were risk-assessed and tailored; for example, knife-related offences may involve hospital-based sessions. Where direct reparation was not requested, community impact work was undertaken, such as fundraising for emergency services charities."

YJS priorities for the past year included a focus on strengthening links between our communities and children working with the YJS. There are currently 12 community projects where we undertake repairing the harm activities. This feedback from a community centre in BCP shows the mutual benefits of these projects:

"Angie brings a young person to the Centre every so often to help with litter / leaf clearing in the garden and car park at the Community Centre. They sometimes also do some gardening, weeding, & have helped clear the patio of weeds. This partnership works well for us, they always do a fantastic job for which we are very grateful, and we often get to have a little chat and catch up with Angie & the young person, allowing us to thank them for their hard work and show our appreciation."

The wooden planters, decorations, boxes etc that the young people make are sold at our annual craft fair & follow on orders have been made. We were very grateful to receive a donation to the Community Centre following the sale."

These sessions also benefit the children, as shown in this comment:

"I've worked with drills and screws to make something that may benefit the Community. I enjoyed the sessions as I've learnt some new skills."

From January to December 2025 the YJS reparation team successfully held stalls in the community, to sell items made by children, raising a total of over £2,000. The money is donated to charities and community organisations, chosen by victims, as a further way to repair the harm caused by children's offences, and to raise the profile of the good work being completed by children working with the YJS. Donations this year include £300 to the Blue Light Foundation, for offences of Assault Emergency Worker, and £250 to a local charity tackling knife crime, Changes Are Made.



Stall at County Hall in Dorchester

6.7 Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm

Tackling extra-familial harm and reducing serious violence are priorities for strategic partnerships in both our local authority areas (as described in section 2 of this Plan).

DCYJS uses the 'Trauma Recovery Model' in its work. One of the benefits of this approach is to understand and respond to the issues which may underlie a child's exploitation or their use of violent behaviour. As described in section 6.5, the YJS Psychologist leads multi-agency formulations under the 'Enhanced Case Management' approach for children showing the highest levels of trauma and concerns for the safety of them and others.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduced a Serious Violence Duty for specified authorities, including youth justice services, to work together to share data and knowledge, allowing them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence. The specified authorities in Dorset and BCP agreed to use our two Community Safety Partnerships to lead this work. DCYJS contributes to the Serious Violence Needs Assessment in each local authority, and to the subsequent action planning.

The Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner's 'Head of Violence Reduction and Prevention' is a member of the YJS Partnership Board and works actively with YJS managers and practitioners to ensure that the YJS is integrated into local initiatives to reduce and prevent violence.

In August 2025 the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) started funding 'Focused Deterrence' work in the YJS. This approach is summarised by the Youth Endowment Fund as being 'a strategy that combines communicating the consequences of violence with support for developing positive routes away from it'. The Youth Endowment Fund rates Focused Deterrence as having High impact for preventing violence: [Focused deterrence | YEF Toolkit](#).

The additional funding from the OPCC has been used to enhance the YJS response to children with weapon offences who are assessed as posing a high risk of serious harm to others. Work with these children now includes engagement in positive activities on additional YJS sessions, Restorative Justice inputs and First Aid sessions on the consequences of weapon injuries. This approach is provided in partnership with Dorset Police, who provide pro-active policing to these children.

Serious Violence Duty funding has been secured for 2026/27 to enable the YJS to work pro-actively with children who have been found in possession of a knife, while the investigation is ongoing, rather than waiting for the investigation to be completed before commencing YJS involvement. The Police will notify the YJS within one day of the child being found with a knife and the YJS will make immediate contact with the child.

Extra-familial harm occurs across the pan-Dorset area, with DCYJS seeing instances of exploitation and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals for children in both local authorities. DCYJS plays an active role in the partnership arrangements in both local authority areas to address child exploitation, participating in strategic and tactical groups as well as other multi-agency initiatives such as the 'Missing, Exploited, Trafficked' (MET) Panel in BCP Council and the Dorset Council Extra-Familial Risk of Harm (EFRH) panels.

Although it is rare for children to become radicalised or involved in violent extremism, the harms from such behaviours are significant for individuals and for the community. The YJS Head of Service is a standing member of the 'Channel Panel' in each local authority. The YJS also engages actively as a member of the local Prevent Partnership. The new YJS Speech and Language project, 'Bridges', is working with the National Security Division of the Probation Service to identify and meet the communication needs of young adults with Terrorism Act offences.

6.8 Policing and Detention of children in police custody

DCYJS and Dorset Police work together closely on issues affecting children in the justice system. As well as the seconded police officers in the YJS, there is active police representation on the DCYJS Partnership Board. At an operational level there is daily contact between YJS Team Managers and the Sergeant in the police Youth Justice team.

Dorset Police has developed a Child Centred Policing Delivery Plan, adhering to the 9 areas of focus in the 2024 national Children and Young People's Strategy. Dorset Police hold a monthly internal meeting, chaired by a Superintendent, to focus on their work with children and young people. A benchmarking exercise against the 9 areas of focus will take place in 2026.

A 'Voice of the Child Scrutiny Panel' oversees the operational implementation of the strategy. The YJS Head of Service is a member of this panel, along with police leads from across the force.

Dorset Police is committed to reducing the numbers of children who are detained in police custody, as part of its Child-Centred Policing Strategy. A multi-agency 'Child Custody Detentions' group, led by the DCYJS Head of Service, monitors and addresses the use of police custody for children. The aim of the group is to reduce the number of children being arrested and, when an arrest is appropriate, to reduce the time the child stays in custody.

Data on child arrests is also reported to the YJS Partnership Board. The following table shows the child arrests in Bournemouth, Weymouth and Poole during 2025/26, with the corresponding information below for 2024/25.

2025/26	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	42	38	34	39	21	21	14	26	24	31	26	37
Det Not Auth	5	3	3	3	9	2	1	1	1	2	2	1
10-13 Y/O	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	0	2	2	2	0
Overnight	20	14	21	14	7	5	2	4	11	15	15	19
Strip searches / Clothing Changes	4 / 3	1 / 0	3 / 0	3 / 3	0 / 1	0 / 3	0 / 0	0 / 5	0 / 4	3 / 1	5 / 1	3 / 1
Remand/warrant	2 / 1	2 / 0	5 / 0	1 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 1	0 / 0	1 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 1	1 / 1	1
C114 requested	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1

2024/25	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	21	27	19	29	35	25	39	24	17	13	29	28
Det Not Auth	4	2	1	1	6	2	4	2	1	3	4	1
10-13 Y/O	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	2	0	0	2	1
Overnight	9	8	6	10	11	7	22	11	7	5	15	17
Strip searches / Clothing Changes	3 / 0	1 / 0	3 / 1	4 / 5	4 / 3	2 / 3	2 / 0	3 / 3	1 / 2	0 / 1	5 / 0	2 / 1
Remand/warrant	0 / 4	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0	2 / 2	1 / 4	0 / 1	0 / 2	0 / 0	0 / 0	5 / 0	0 / 1
C114 requested	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	5	0

The number of child arrests in Dorset has declined in the past 4 years, from a total of 501 arrests in 2021/22 to a total of 329 arrests in 2025/26.

These figures show the success of Dorset Police's active work to reduce the numbers of children being arrested locally. Custody managers have strengthened the challenge on whether the detention is justified, evidenced by the monthly figures showing the number of 'Detentions not Authorised'. This means a child has been brought to the custody suite but the custody sergeant has refused to authorise the detention.

Dorset Police have changed their approach to custody arrivals during the evening to reduce the numbers that are detained overnight. The numbers of children detained overnight has dropped from 242 in 201/22 to 147 in 2025/26.

The Child Custody Detentions group previously identified a number of factors which can prolong a child's detention in police custody, including the availability of Appropriate Adults (AAs) and the

time of day when the child arrives in the custody suite. The timeliness of Appropriate Adult attendance has improved overall since 2021, when the service was commissioned externally from 'The Appropriate Adult Service' (TAAS). In recent months there have been some delays in the provision of Appropriate Adults by TAAS, linked to staffing shortages and absences. Contract monitoring processes have been used to address these issues, with assurance from TAAS that additional recruitment and reduced staff absences have addressed this issue.

When the police remand a child, ie charge them with an offence and refuse to grant the child bail, there is a legal requirement (under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) to transfer the child to local authority accommodation until their appearance at the next available court. A child arrested on a warrant or for breaching bail must remain in police custody.

The Child Custody Detentions group reviews every instance of a child being remanded, to check that the procedures and decision-making were correctly applied. The table above shows that there were only 13 instances of a child being remanded in 2025/26 across all local custody suites. There were 8 instances of a child being remanded in 2024/25.

6.9 Transitions to Probation

The seconded Probation Officer post in DCYJS was vacant from September 2024 until September 2025. The Probation Officer plays an important role in supporting transitions for young people who are moving from the YJS to Probation. Improvements to local transition arrangements in recent years include:

- New process for Probation to request YJS information for young adults committing new offences who were previously known to the YJS.
- Extending the transition process for young people transferring from YJS to Probation, with additional joint meetings.
- Training sessions delivered by YJS Speech and Language Therapists to Probation staff to help them respond to the communication needs of young adults.
- YJS attendance at MAPPA Level 2 or 3 meetings for new cases aged 18-21 when the YJS previously supervised the young person.

The remit of the new 'Bridges' Speech and Language project includes support for the Probation Service's work with young adults on Probation. The Bridges team provided training to the Dorset Probation Service in March 2026. Plans for 2026/27 include the offer of speech and language assessments for 18-25 year-olds on Probation and support for Probation colleagues to develop communication-friendly practice. This is likely to include producing Easy Read versions of documents such as post-release licence conditions.

6.10 Remands

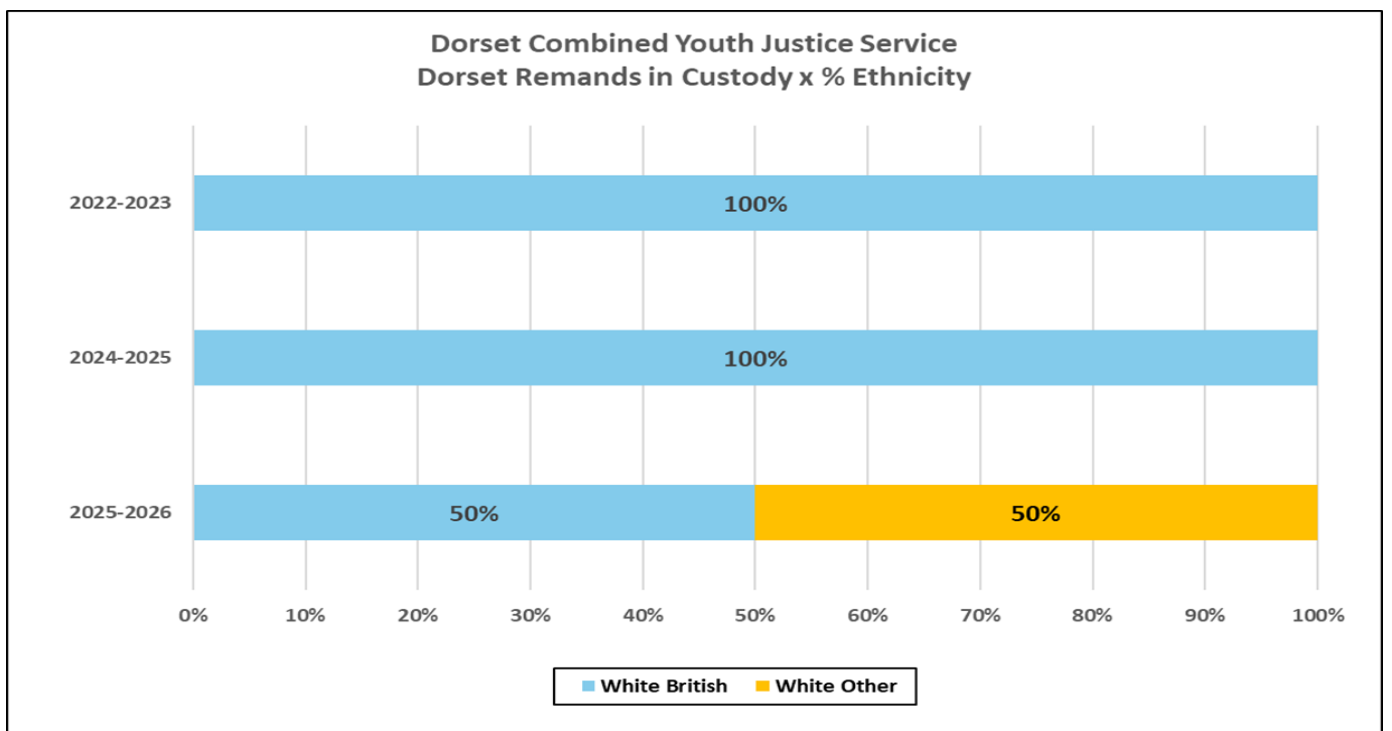
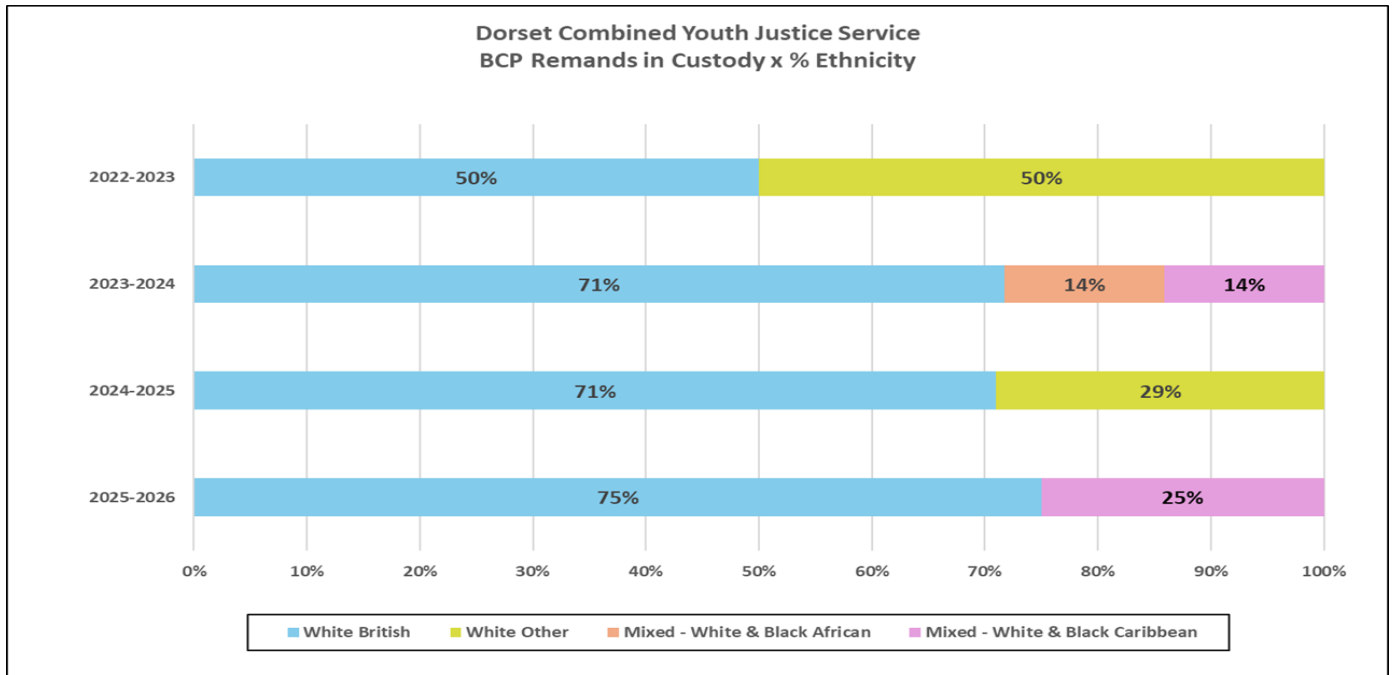
Six children were remanded in custody during 2025/26, compared to seven children in each of the two previous years. Four of the six children were from BCP Council, two were from Dorset Council.

All six children were male.

Children who are remanded in custody gain 'child in care' status if they are not already a child in care. Two of the six children were already a child in care before being remanded into custody.

One of the children was aged 15 when he was remanded into custody; the other five were all aged 17.

Four of the children defined their ethnicity as White British, one defined his ethnicity as White Other and one defined his ethnicity as Mixed – White and Black Caribbean. The following charts show the ethnicity of children remanded in custody in recent years.



Low numbers of children remanded into custody means that each child has a significant impact on the percentage figures.

One of the children was remanded in custody in 2025 after a successful appeal against his previous conviction and custodial sentence, pending a re-trial. After nearly 6 months on remand, and a few days before the scheduled re-trial, the CPS decided to offer no evidence and the child was acquitted.

Two of the children who were remanded in custody did not go on to receive a custodial sentence, including the child mentioned in the previous paragraph whose re-trial did not go ahead.

Each remand in custody is reviewed in team meetings to consider if alternative options could have been taken. In most cases the remand decision reflects the seriousness of the alleged offence, and may also reflect patterns of offending and previous non-compliance with court orders and bail conditions.

The Ministry of Justice invited bids in March 2026 for regional remand partnerships. Local authorities in the south-west region decided not to submit a bid. There is still scope, though, to strengthen local partnerships across criminal justice agencies and childrens services to ensure that remands to custody are avoided whenever possible.

6.11 Custodial Sentences and Resettlement

Seven local children received custodial sentences during 2025/26 (compared to six in each of the two previous years). Information about custodial sentences and analysis of the young people is included in section 4.2 of this document. Information about the support for the health needs and education needs of children in custody is included in sections 6.4 and 6.5.

In recent years very few children have been released from custody before their 18th birthday. Of the seven children sentenced to custody in 2025/26, five of them will turn 18 before being released. The Probation Service takes over case responsibility if a young person turns 18 while serving a custodial sentence.

Finding suitable accommodation for children leaving custody can be challenging. DCYJS contributes to local authority care planning processes, promoting the early identification of the child's release address. The DCYJS Manager reports to the DCYJS Partnership Board on the timeliness of accommodation being confirmed for children being released from custodial sentences. This measure is also included in the new youth justice Key Performance Indicators. The release address for children leaving custody is sometimes not confirmed until the last few days before release. The final release address may be in another local authority area. As well as causing the child a lot of anxiety and distress, late confirmation of release address and local authority area makes it difficult to plan the child's resettlement, affecting access to education, health care and constructive activities.

With low numbers going into custody, and most of them becoming adults before they are released, the approach to resettlement for each child is planned individually.

6.12 Working with Families

DCYJS parenting staff provide support to the parents and carers of children on the YJS caseload. Support can be provided under a Parenting Order but in practice it is always achievable on a voluntary basis. Most contact is provided on a one to one basis, focusing on communications, relationships, setting boundaries and applying consequences. The workers remain alert to risk and safeguarding issues, attending multi-agency meetings, and supporting parents in their interactions with other services.

When appropriate, separate parenting workers can be allocated to a child's father and mother, in order to enable engagement with both parents.

Plans for 2026/27 include re-launching the YJS Living With Parents workshops to strengthen relationships and to reduce conflict between the parent and child; developing other ways to facilitate joint work with children and parents, with support from other YJS workers; and establishing an internal process to review all new child allocations for possible parenting referrals.

6.13 National Youth Justice Reforms 2026

The Ministry of Justice is engaged in an active programme of youth justice reform during 2026. Announcements have been made, or are expected, for the following areas:

- Knife Crime Guidance
- A Modern Youth Justice System
- Regional Remand Partnerships
- Preventing the drivers of youth custody
- Youth Justice White Paper (expected in May 2026).

National and local reform programmes in the wider YJS partnership include:

- Families First Partnerships
- SEND reforms
- Youth Strategy
- Violence Against Women and Girls strategy
- CAMHS Transformation (local reform programme).

DCYJS planning for 2026/27 will include taking action to align and develop our work in line with these diverse reform programmes.

6.14 DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2026/27

This document shows the range and scope of YJS activities. The YJS will continue to seek improvements in all areas of its work. During 2026/27 the following strategic priorities will receive additional focus:

- Respond to national and local reforms in youth justice and children's services
- Enhance Child First Practice
- Develop YJS and Partnership work with victims
- Reduce the Over-Representation of some groups of children in the justice system
- Make best use of available resources.

The following table shows the priorities and plans for DCYJS in 2026/27. This is a dynamic plan which will continue to be updated, recognising that other priorities will arise during the year.

DCYJS Partnership Priority or Risk	Area for Development	Partners and Staff Providing Support	Benefits
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Implement Knife Crime Guidance from April 2026	Dorset Police DCYJS managers and practitioners Local authority children's services	Reduction in knife crime
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Start working with children while they are under investigation for weapon offences	DCYJS managers and practitioners Dorset Police	Earlier intervention leads to reduced weapon offending and other offending
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Advise on, seek to influence and prepare for national Youth Justice reforms	DCYJS Head of Service DCYJS Board	Workable and beneficial reforms are put in place
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Align YJS, and needs of YJS children/victims, with local implementation of Families First	DCYJS Head of Service BCP Council and Dorset Council	Effective joint work to meet the care and education needs of children in the YJS

	Partnerships and SEND reforms	Children's Services senior leaders	
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Ensure YJS mental health team is well-located to work effectively after local CAMHS Transformation	DCYJS Head of Service Dorset HealthCare Trust	Effective joint work to meet the health needs of children in the YJS
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Explore options for partnership work locally to reduce remands to custody	YJS Head of Service Dorset Police CPS HM Courts BCP and Dorset Children's Services	Fewer children are remanded into custody
Enhance Child First Practice	Whole YJS workshops to review Child First practice and agree further improvements	DCYJS managers, staff and volunteers	Enhancement of Child First practice to achieve better outcomes for children
Enhance Child First Practice (Diverting from stigma)	Continue to work with Dorset Police to develop alternative non-court options for motoring offences	Dorset Police DCYJS HoS, DCYJS Team Managers	Avoid first-time entrants for motoring offences such as speeding
Enhance Child First Practice (Diverting from stigma)	Monitor the lower age of First-Time Entrants in the Dorset Council area and identify remedial actions	DCYJS managers Dorset Police Dorset Council	Preventing or delaying entry to the justice system
Enhance Child First Practice (Building pro-social identity)	Continue to expand range and access to positive activities for children, including nature-based projects	DCYJS Activities Coordinator	Children build pro-social identity and build links with their community
Enhance Child First Practice (Collaborating with Children)	Develop new ways to engage children in contributing to service design	DCYJS managers DCYJS Activities Coordinator	Build children's positive identity, improve YJS service delivery
Child First Practice (Building pro-social identity)	Build team members' knowledge and confidence to work with children on the impact of their online experiences and identity	DCYJS practitioners and managers	Children's online activity supports positive identity and reduces harm arising from online activity.
Reducing over-representation	Investigate and agree actions in response to black or mixed heritage children being over-represented in the BCP Council area	DCYJS practitioners and managers BCP Children's Services	Reduce the over-representation of black or mixed heritage children from BCP in the justice system
Reducing over-representation	Further analysis of children receiving custodial sentences, to enhance YJS and partner offer to children entering the justice system under age 15 with multiple needs	DCYJS managers Local authority Children's Social Care and Education Services	Fewer of these children progress through the justice system and reach custody

Reducing over-representation	Complete the actions arising from the audit of work with Children in Care and review progress	DCYJS managers and practitioners Local authority children's services and Virtual Schools Child in Care health team	Reduction in the numbers of children in care entering the justice system or reoffending
Develop YJS and partnership work with victims	Continue work to identify and respond to victim vulnerabilities, especially child victims	DCYJS managers and RJ practitioners YJS partnership services	Children who have been the victims of crime receive support to address their vulnerabilities
Develop YJS and partnership work with victims	Improve YJS victim data recording and reporting to support service improvement	DCYJS Managers, Performance and Information Manager, RJ practitioners	More accurate and comprehensive data for YJS victim work helps to identify areas needing more resource or improvement
Make best use of available resources	Agree plans to balance budget through increase income and/or reduced costs	DCYJS Head of Service DCYJS Board BCP Children's Services Management Accountant	YJS delivers high-quality work while coping with budget reductions
Make best use of available resources	Streamline data recording processes to reduce duplication. Improve data reporting to show areas for targeting limited resources, such as children with multiple forms of disadvantage/need.	DCYJS managers DCYJS Business Support Officers and practitioners	YJS gathers and uses accurate data to help direct the use of limited service resources

7 Sign off, submission and approval

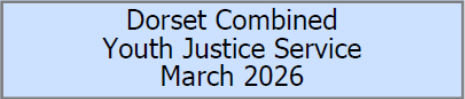
This Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the YJS Partnership Board in April 2026.

In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of our two local authorities. It will be considered for approval by the full council of Dorset Council in July 2026 and by the full council of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council in July 2026.

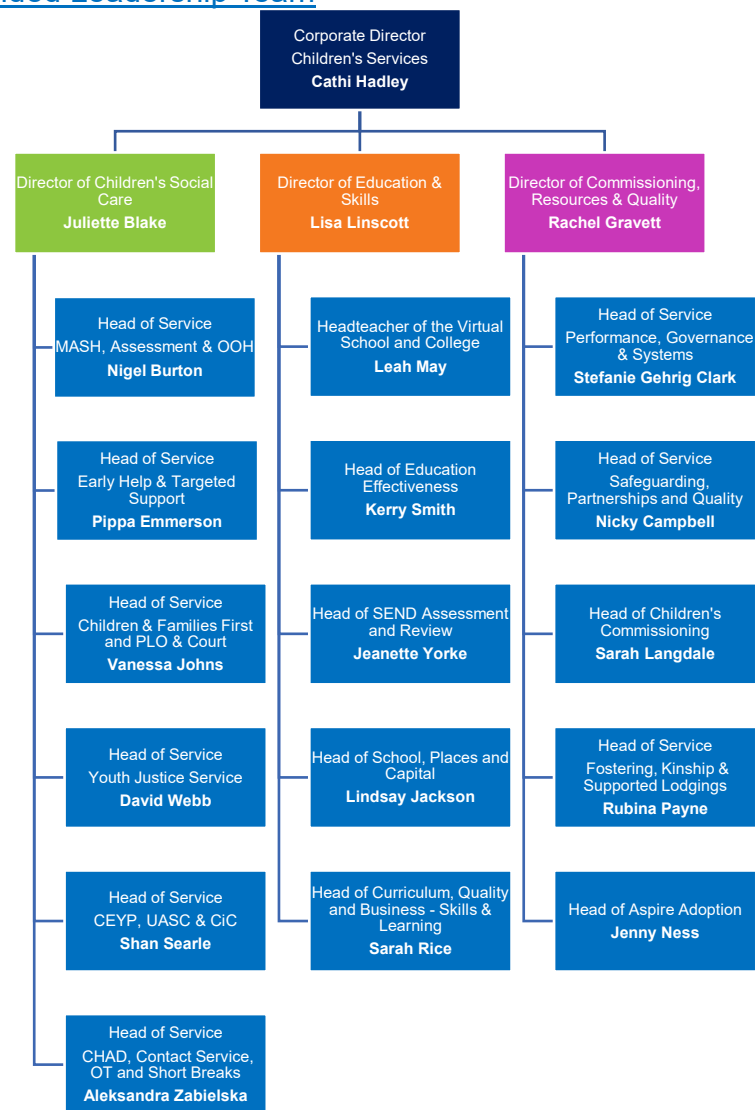
Chair of YJS Board - name	Paul Dempsey
Signature	
Date	

8 Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.

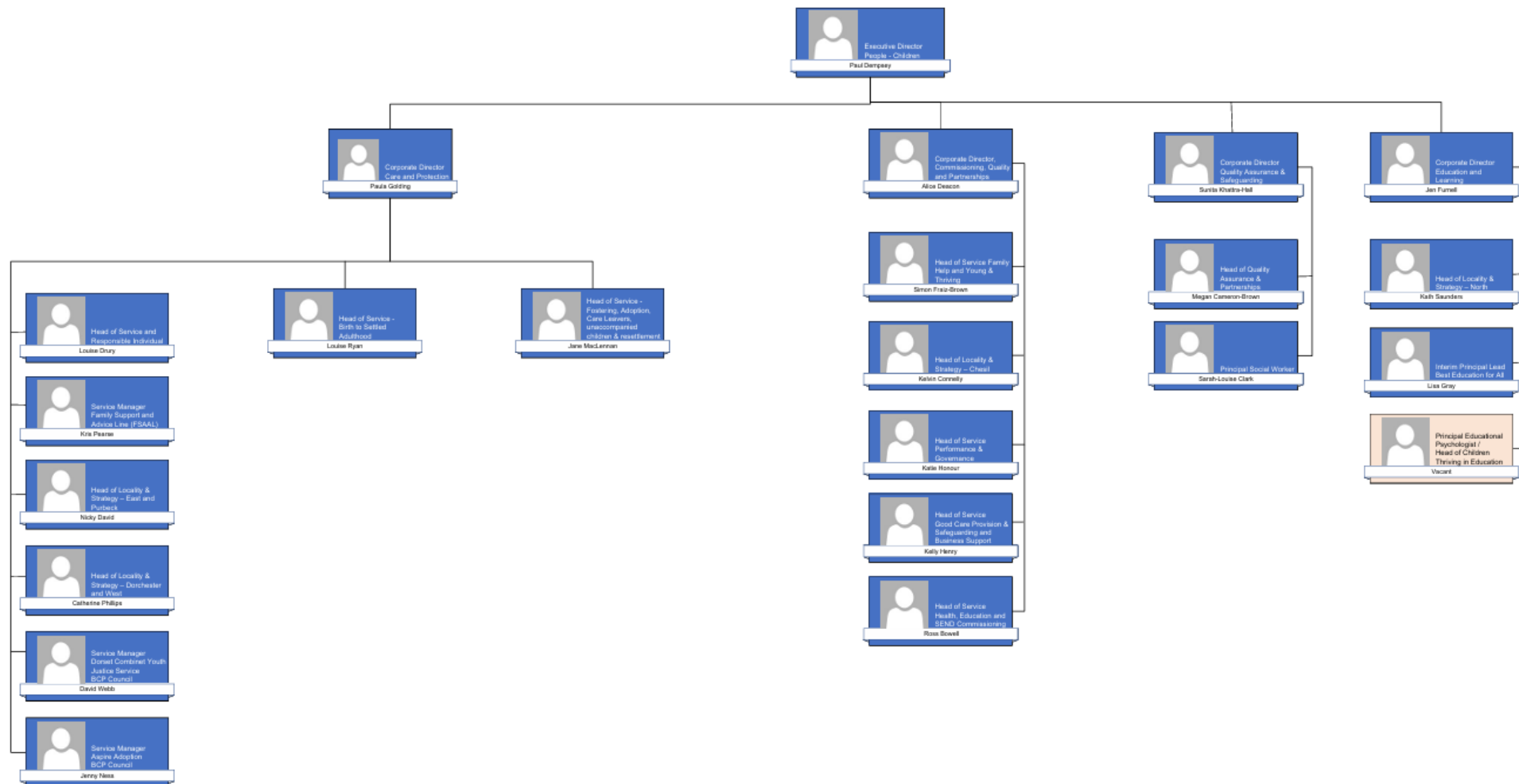


BCP Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



Dorset Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team

Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



DCYJS Staff and Volunteers:

The following table shows the gender, ethnicity and disability status of DCYJS staff members and volunteers:

DCYJS Staff 25 March 2026			
Ethnicity	F	M	Grand Total
White	47	9	56
White Irish		1	1
White Other	1		1
Mixed	2		2
Prefer not to say	2	1	3
Grand Total	52	11	63

Five staff members in DCYJS are recorded as having a disability.

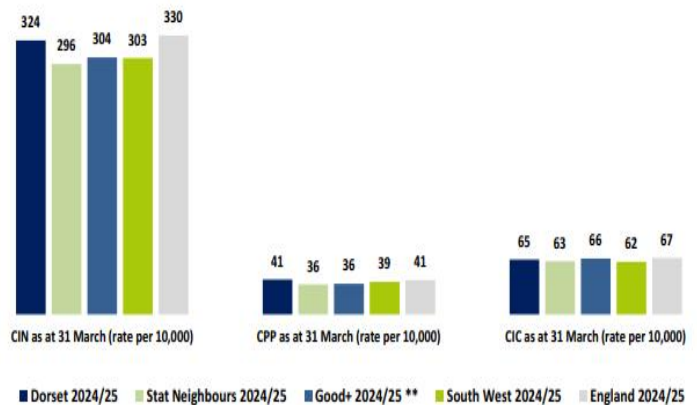
Insert volunteers info

9 Appendix 2 – Budget Contributions 2026/27

Partner Agency	25/26 Revenue (excluding recharges)	Staff
Dorset Council	£536,164	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£628,622	
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner	£84,794	2.0 Police Officers
The Probation Service (Dorset)	£5,000	0.8 Probation Officer 0.3 Probation Service Officer
NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group	£22,487	2.8 FTE Nurses, 0.8 Psychologist, 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists
Youth Justice Grant	£767,922	
Turnaround Grant	£123,184	
Total	£2,179,302	



Safeguarding	Age 10-17
Number of Children in Need ⁵	582
Male ⁵	53%
Female ⁵	47%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan ⁷	286
Number of Children in Care ⁶	341
Male ⁶	60%
Female ⁶	40%
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation ⁷	
Significant	19
Moderate	46
Emerging/Reducing	43



** Good+ Local Authorities are: Derbyshire, Essex, Kent, North Yorkshire, Shropshire, Somerset and Worcestershire

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole



Population¹: Age 10-17

Number of Children ¹	35,978
Male ¹	51.3%
Female ¹	48.7%
Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals ²	21.6%
Pupils with SEN Support ²	15.9%
Pupils with an EHC Plan ²	5.7%

Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups³ 17.8%

27% children living in poverty after housing costs⁴

Safeguarding Age 10-17

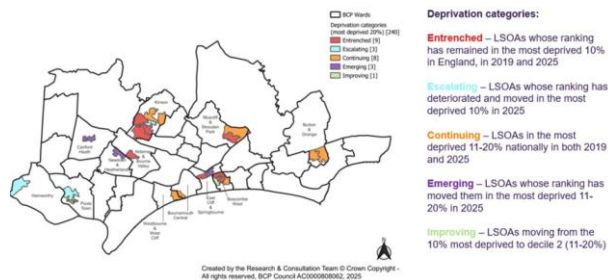
Number of Children in Need ⁵	385
Male ⁵	53.2%
Female ⁵	46.8%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan ⁷	179
Number of Children in Care ⁶	388
Male ⁶	54.9%
Female ⁶	44.8%
Indeterminate ⁶	0.3%

Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation⁸

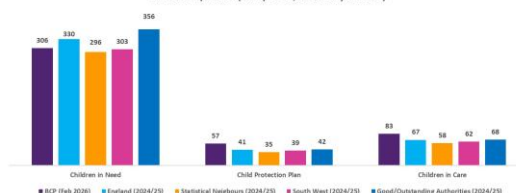
High Risk ⁸	43
Medium Risk ⁸	54
Low Risk ⁸	118

1. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole population estimates (published July 2025)
2. January 2025 School Census (includes all pupils at a BCP School aged 10-17 years as at 31st August 2025)
3. January 2025 School Census (all non-white pupils at a BCP School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')
4. Local child poverty indicators 2022/23. From DWP 'Children in low income families: local area statistics' (March 2024).
5. From MOSAC, as at 28 February 2025. Excluding CP, CIP, PFI, Open to Assessment. Gender figures exclude Unknown.
6. From MOSAC, as at 28 February 2025. Gender figures exclude Unknown.
7. From MOSAC, as at 28 February 2025.
8. From MOSAC, as at 28 February 2025.

Which BCP areas are most deprived – IMD 2025



Need comparison (rate per 10,000 0-17 year olds)



11 Common youth justice terms – national glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long-lasting impact on the child's health and life outcomes
AIM 3	Assessment, Intervention and Moving on; an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is coerced, through threats of violence, or induced to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system.
Child in Care	Child in Care; where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social after release from custody
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	An informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education Health and Care plan; a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated; children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school; children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting

FTE	First-Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCR	Out-of-court resolution. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

Full Council report

22 October 2026

The Dorset Council (Purbeck) Motorised Watercraft Byelaws 2027

For Decision

Cabinet Member and Portfolio: Cllr J Jeanes, Place Services

Local Councillor(s): Cllr C Tomes, Cllr Gary Suttle, Cllr Mike Baker, Cllr Laura Beddow, Cllr Ben Wilson

Executive Director:

Jan Britton, Executive Lead for Place

Report Author: Bridget Betts

Job Title: Environment, Policy and Partnership Team Manager

Tel: 01305 224760

Email: bridget.betts@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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

Brief Summary:

Dorset Council is responsible for the Seaside Pleasure Boat Byelaws 2013 (appendix 2) that covers Swanage, Studland, Kimmeridge and Lulworth.

This Byelaw was transferred to Dorset Council as part of Local Government Reorganisation from Purbeck District Council. The Byelaw requires Dorset Council to have responsibility for reducing speed within this area and put out 5 knot speed marker buoys at locations along the bays. The byelaw details the coordinates these buoys are placed around the bays at Swanage, Studland and Kimmeridge.

Due to ongoing concerns around water safety Dorset Council set up the Studland and Swanage water safety multiagency partnership to address the water conflicts between different user groups, in particular motorboats/jet skis and other users (swimmers, paddle boarders). In the past three years incidents in the water, particularly from jet ski users has reduced due to this partnership and a range of measure that have been put in place.

The Seaside Pleasure Boat Byelaws 2013 byelaw that is currently in place now requires amendment due to:

- i. Dorset Council having had a formal request from the Studland Marine Bay Partnerships to amend the byelaw as the 5 knot speed marker buoys currently goes through the established voluntary marine no anchor zone where there are now over 75 eco moorings situated during the summer. This has led to confusion from boat users and conflict within a boat mooring area.
- ii. There is increased recreational use within the Swanage and Studland area e.g. more sea swimmers and paddleboarders all year round.
- iii. It has been suggested that the language used in the byelaw is confusing and there is no reference to jet skis therefore often those riding them do not think the byelaw is applicable to them.

Approval was given by cabinet to proceed with a public consultation. This has now taken place and the results from this are now reflected in the amended Seaside Pleasure Boat Byelaws 2013 – now renamed as the Dorset Council (Purbeck) Motorised Watercraft Byelaws 2027 (appendix 1). This has been sent to the Department of transport to ensure it is legally compliant and their comments received have been incorporated into the final amended byelaw presented to Full Council. Final confirmation of an amendment to the byelaw will need to be passed to the Secretary of State after it has received approval from Full Council.

Recommendation:

To approve the newly amended Dorset Council (Purbeck) Motorised Watercraft Byelaws 2027

Reason for Recommendation:

To protect people's safety at Swanage and Studland in line with our byelaw and to help protect the seagrass beds within the voluntary marine no anchor zone at Studland.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dorset Council is responsible for the Seaside Pleasure Boat byelaws 2013 that covers Swanage, Studland, Kimmeridge and Lulworth. This byelaw was transferred to Dorset Council as part of LGR from Purbeck District Council.
- 1.2 The byelaw requires Dorset Council to have responsibility for reducing speed within the Swanage, Studland and Kimmeridge area and put out 5 knot speed marker buoys at locations along the bays to show where speed restrictions are in place. The byelaw details the coordinates these

buoys are placed around the bays at Swanage, Studland and Kimmeridge. They also state the time of year they can be placed and removed from the sea.

- 1.3 The 5 knot speed marker buoys are licenced by the Marine management organisation (marine licence - L/2023/00110/1). They are placed at approximately between 100 - 130m intervals by a specialist contractor with an agreed method statement.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared in response to a formal notice to Dorset Council from Studland Marine Bay Partnership to request that for the 2025 season the position of the 5 knot speed markers in Studland Bay are moved to coincide with the outer limit of the Voluntary No Anchor Zone (VNAZ).
- 1.5 The Studland Marine Bay Partnership has been working for the past three years to ensure compliance with the Marine Conservation Zone, and in particular with the Studland Voluntary No Anchor Zone (VNAZ) introduced by the MMO in 2022. See appendix ii for the map of the area. Facilitated by the Dorset Coast Forum and supported by Dorset Council, over £400,000 has been secured to install 87 Eco moorings in the bay, which enables recreational boating to continue without damaging the seagrass habitat in the southern part of the bay.
- 1.6 Marker buoys delimit the VNAZ and cover a large area around the eco moorings. The 5 knot speed marker buoys currently run parallel to the shore, and in the southern part of the bay this means they cut through the middle of the VNAZ and through the middle of the Eco moorings. During the 2024 season this created a number of issues, all of which would be resolved if in future the speed restricted zone were extended in the southern part of the bay to encompass the whole of the VNAZ. These can be summarised as follows:
 - i. feedback from numerous boaters that the number of different marker buoys is now quite confusing and makes the bay look very busy.
 - ii. Some of the speed markers are on top of the locations where we have a licence to install new Eco moorings – we have not been able to install them as a result.
 - iii. the prospect of vessels moving at speed through part of this area raises serious health and safety concerns: from a public safety

perspective it would make sense that the speed restrictions apply throughout the area where boats can moor rather than just half the area.

- 1.7 By amending the byelaw and therefore changing the location of the 5-knot speed marker buoys the messaging would be clearer as the speed restriction in the whole VNAZ area would mean that on entering the VNAZ, craft must move slowly and not anchor. Currently it gives the impression that outside the 5-knot zone the area is less sensitive, but this is not the case.
- 1.8 A public consultation ran from 18/02/26 to 15/04/26 to look at a range of initial draft amendments. It was available through an online survey and a paper version of the survey. 437 responses were received. Key consultation findings and resolutions to those findings were:
 - i. There was strong opposition to include non-motorised watercraft in the byelaw **therefore this has been removed, and the new amended byelaw will continue to only relate to motorised watercraft. Non-motorised users such as sailing boats and rowers are not directly affected by any amendments to the byelaw.**
 - ii. Support for extended timing: A clear majority (over 60%) supported extending the period by one month during which speed restrictions apply **therefore the amended bylaw will be from 15 March until 30 October (inclusive).**
 - iii. Strong opposition to buoy changes (moving from 300m to 200m) - In Swanage Bay, 86% opposed the proposed repositioning of speed marker buoys and in Studland Bay, 73% opposed the proposed repositioning of speed marker buoys. There was no opposition for the buoys in Studland following the line of the voluntary no anchor zone (only support for this). **Therefore:**
 - a. **The buoys at Swanage will remain where they are (at 300m) although there will be a small adjustment to bring the line consistently along the shoreline to 300 m, as previously some of the buoys were as far out as 400m - this approach was agreed at the key stakeholder consultation event held in Swanage).**

b. The buoys will remain at 300 m at Studland; however, where the speed marker buoys meet the voluntary no-anchor zone (indicated by a white line of buoys), they will follow the alignment of that zone rather than continue at a fixed 300 m.

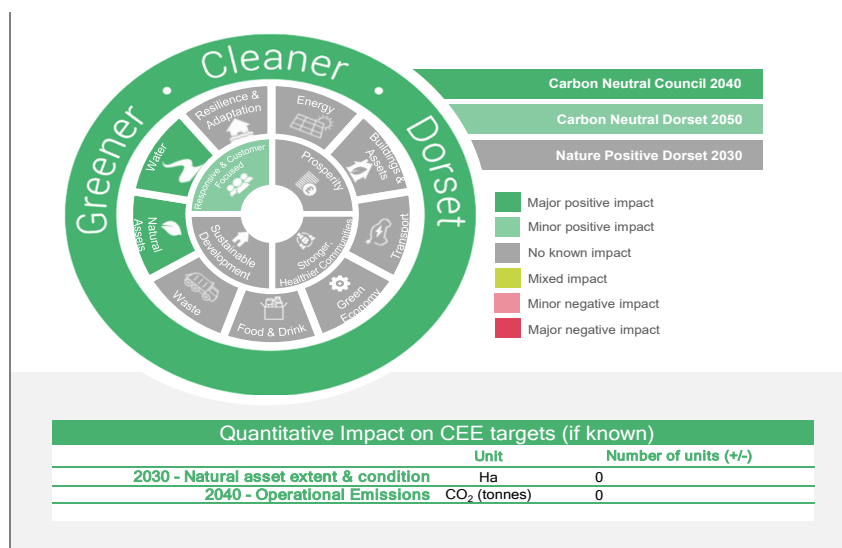
iv. Overall, while parts of the proposals, such as the deployment period, attracted majority support, the location specific changes to speed marker buoys emerged as the most contentious element of the consultation overall. Therefore, the amendment reflected the consultation and took on the majority views coming from this process.

2. **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications from this initial work except for staff resource. There are not anticipated to be any financial implications from a new amended byelaw as there is a budget of £18,000 pa for the putting out and bringing in of the speed marker buoys, repairs and storage. Any change in position of the buoys will require a new marine licence or amendment to the existing licence which could require a small cost.

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

The relocation of the 5 knot speed marker buoys at Studland around the VNAZ area will help protect the seagrass beds.



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

The mix of motorised and non-motorised users at both Swanage and Studland need to be more seriously considered within the byelaw so that everyone can use the areas for their own interests.

5. **Other Implications**

None

6. **Risk Assessment**

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

The risk of not amending the byelaw is:

Current Risk: Medium – reputational risk and health and safety risk

Residual Risk: Low

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

A full Equality Impact Assessment is not considered necessary for the proposed amendment to the byelaw because the changes are primarily technical and operational in nature and do not introduce new policies, restrictions or service changes that would have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics. The amended byelaw continues to regulate the use of motorised watercraft within the same geographic area and for the same purpose of promoting public safety. The key changes relate to clarifying the wording of the byelaw, updating its application to motorised watercraft, extending the seasonal period of speed restrictions, and making minor adjustments to the alignment of speed marker buoys in response to stakeholder feedback and consultation findings.

The amendments apply equally to all users of motorised watercraft and do not prevent or restrict access to the coastline, beaches, or waters for any group sharing a protected characteristic. In fact, the changes are intended to improve safety for all users of the marine environment, including swimmers, paddleboarders, sailors and other recreational users. The public consultation did not identify any adverse impacts on protected groups, and no evidence has been presented to suggest that the proposals

would result in differential outcomes for individuals representing national and local protected characteristics.

As the amendments are intended to improve clarity, safety and enforcement while maintaining existing access arrangements, it is considered that there are no significant equality implications and therefore a full EQIA is not required. Any unforeseen equality issues arising from implementation can be monitored through the ongoing work of the Swanage and Studland Water Safety Partnership and Dorset Council's normal review processes.

This has been signed off by the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

8. **Appendices**

- i. The Dorset Council (Purbeck) Motorised Watercraft Byelaws 2027
- ii. [The current Purbeck Seaside Pleasure boat byelaw 2013](#)
- iii. Public Consultation report -
[dorsetcouncilpurbeckwatercraftbyelaw2027report.pdf](#)
- iv. Accessible Impact Assessment & Table of Recommendations

9. **Background Papers**

None

10. **Report Sign Off**

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

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FULL COUNCIL

MOTION ON NOTICE

Date of Council Meeting: - 22 October 2026

Title of Motion: - Viability as a material planning consideration

Proposer: - Cllr S Flower

Seconder: - Cllr B Quayle

Supported by: - Cllrs A Parry, T Coombs, S Gibson, V Potheary, C Monks, J Haynes, C Lugg, M Goringe, G Suttle, C Tomes, J Robinson, R Bryan, S Jespersen, C Jones, S Murcer and A Skeats

Motion Narrative and Action Required

Dorset Council has ambitions for the delivery of Affordable Housing for local people for rent or shared equity. However, this desired outcome is considerably constrained whilst viability remains as a material planning consideration.

The Dorset Plan 2024-2029 sets out Dorset Council's vision to create a fairer, more prosperous, and sustainable Dorset for current and future generations includes the provision of affordable and high-quality housing – addressing the chronic shortage of affordable homes for local people, improving housing standards, and supporting vulnerable residents. Targets include delivering 500 new affordable homes, increasing annually; reducing temporary accommodation, eliminating family use of bed and breakfast by 2028 and importantly getting local people off the housing waiting list.

Dorset Local Plan which is scheduled for adoption in 2029 has housing targets for the Dorset Council area of 3,246 homes per annum, totalling in the order of 50,000 new homes during the lifetime of the plan. Site allocations for affordable housing @ circa 30% would provide 15,000 dwellings, which will be at huge risk whilst viability remains a material planning consideration in its current form.

Viability, as set out in national planning policy, is a significant barrier to Dorset Council's ability to secure affordable homes as part of open market housing developments. Social housing is vital in helping local people remain in the area, work locally and raise a family.

Too often developers gain planning permission for a scheme, including an allocation of affordable housing, only to revert to the planning authority months later with a spread sheet to support a claim that the scheme is no longer viable. This situation is

both unfair and unsustainable, circumventing the policy of providing social housing for rent or shared equity and in doing so undermining the status of our emerging local plan.

There is no doubt that the ongoing requirement of considering scheme viability as a material planning consideration, is and will continue to have, a huge negative impact on the council's ability to facilitate the building of affordable housing for rent or shared equity through local plan policy. Without radical reform of national policy, developers will continue to circumvent Local Plan Policy, to the detriment of local people.

Therefore, I propose the following motion:

THAT the administration will commit to lobbying Government for changes to the viability provisions set out in national policy so that this council is able to comply with its own policies as set out the Dorset Plan and the emerging Dorset Local Plan.

THAT the Leader of Council will write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out these concerns, seeking changes to national guidance on the matter of viability. Furthermore, in doing so he will seek cross-party support from other Group Leaders to be co-signatories to the letter.

This approach should enable Strategic Planning Authorities to support the Central Government policy to provide social housing for rent or shared equity for local people.

FULL COUNCIL

MOTION ON NOTICE

Date of Council Meeting: - 22 October 2026

Title of Motion: - Motion for the Ocean

Proposer: - Cllr N Ireland

Seconder:- Cllr B Bawden

Supported by: - Cllrs D Tooke, S Williams, K Wheller, A Brenton, W Chakawhata, G Taylor, C Sutton, R Crabb, L Fry, D Taylor, B Ezzard, M Bell, S Holland, J Orrell, S Bartlett, R Hughes, D Sowry-House, C Webb, P Mooney

Motion Narrative and Action Required

Motion for the Ocean is a UK-wide local government initiative, developed by Dr Pamela Buchan, Emily Cunningham MBE and Nicola Bridge through the Local Government Ocean Recovery Declaration. Launched in 2021, it encourages councils to embed consideration of ocean health within decision-making and to support actions that contribute to marine recovery, climate resilience, biodiversity enhancement and sustainable coastal communities.

Dorset Council Motion for the Ocean

This motion sets out a shared commitment to treat ocean recovery as a practical local priority: protecting the marine environment, improving water quality from source to sea, strengthening coastal resilience, and supporting sustainable prosperity for communities whose lives and livelihoods are connected to the coast.

Dorset Council has worked with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to draw up a Motion for the Ocean and recognises that the marine and coastal environment is fundamental to the economy, identity, health, wellbeing and resilience of Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The councils also recognise that the health of our seas is intrinsically linked to the condition of our rivers, groundwater, landscapes and communities through a connected catchment-to-coast system. We acknowledge the vital role the ocean plays in climate regulation, carbon storage, biodiversity recovery, food security, transport, recreation and tourism, and the importance of these benefits to current and future generations.

They further recognise that coastal and marine ecosystems face increasing pressures from climate change, pollution, habitat loss, flooding, unsustainable

resource use and a declining public connection with the marine environment. As custodians of an internationally important coastline, diverse coastal communities, working harbours and valuable marine habitats, the councils acknowledge their responsibility to protect and enhance the marine environment while supporting sustainable economic prosperity and resilient coastal communities.

MOTION

Therefore, Dorset Council commits to:

1. Working collaboratively with partners, businesses, harbour authorities, educational institutions and communities to support a sustainable blue economy that strengthens Dorset's marine and coastal sectors, promotes innovation and clean marine technologies, and delivers long-term prosperity alongside ocean recovery.
2. Improving ocean literacy and community engagement by supporting schools, colleges, universities and community groups to increase understanding of the marine environment through education programmes, outdoor learning, citizen science, volunteering, communications and awareness-raising activities.
3. Ensuring that relevant council strategies, plans and projects have regard to the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy and contribute, where appropriate, to the recovery of marine, coastal and water-dependent habitats.
4. Supporting the development and implementation of a Marine Nature Recovery Strategy for Dorset and advocating for the introduction of Marine Nature Recovery Strategies in England, working with partners to align marine recovery with local nature recovery priorities.
5. Working with water companies, regulators, government and other partners to improve water quality across Dorset's rivers, estuaries, harbours and coastal waters, and seeking clear plans, targets and transparency for reducing sewage pollution and other sources of contamination.
6. Considering ocean recovery, marine health and the catchment-to-coast environment in strategic decision-making, plans, policies, budgets and investment programmes, ensuring alignment with the councils' climate and nature ambitions.
7. Reducing plastic pollution at source through council policies, procurement practices, communications and community engagement, while continuing to promote behaviour change that reduces litter and waste entering rivers and the marine environment.
8. Promoting nature-based solutions for flood risk management and water quality by supporting sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), natural flood management, permeable surfaces, swales, rain gardens, habitat restoration and marine enhancement measures within relevant infrastructure projects.
9. Encouraging water conservation and climate resilience through rainwater harvesting, sustainable water management and measures that reduce pressure on

drainage networks, improve water quality and enhance resilience to drought and flooding.

10. Working with farmers, land managers, catchment partnerships and environmental organisations to improve water quality, support sustainable land management and strengthen the connection between healthy landscapes, healthy rivers and healthy seas.

11. Using procurement, social value, planning and investment opportunities to demonstrate leadership in supporting marine recovery, nature-based solutions and sustainable coastal development.

12. Reporting on progress through appropriate governance arrangements and working jointly to develop action plans that translate this declaration into practical local delivery.

By adopting this Motion for the Ocean, Dorset Council commits to working with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, and with partners and communities, to protect, restore and enhance our ocean, coastlines, rivers and estuaries for the benefit of nature, climate, local prosperity and future generations.

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