

Dorset Local Area Partnership

Self-Evaluation

May 2024

This is a live document, a version of which was provided to inspectors as part of the Local Area SEND Inspection 2024.

Confidential case studies have been removed from this public version to comply with data protection requirements.



Dorset



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Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Children, young people and their families participate in decision making about their individual plans and support

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including alternative provision

Leaders evaluate services and make improvements

Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

How we help and protect children and young people so that they are kept safe

Dorset Local Area Partnership Self-Evaluation

Section One – Introduction and Context



What did our last Inspection find?

Our local area SEND & AP Inspection took place between 26th February and 15th March 2024.

Over the course of the three-week inspection, inspectors explored 16 children in detail, selected by them from a much larger cohort of children, to understand their lived experiences and that of their families. Surveys were issued to children and young people, practitioners across agencies, parents, and carers. We had an impressive response to these. 325 documents were shared with inspectors. The information from the surveys and the documents, as well as our Self Evaluation enabled the inspection team to develop key lines of enquiry and to test these through on-site activity.

Inspectors commended the partnership for placing children, young people, and their families at the centre of decision-making, leading to **“typically positive experiences and outcomes.”**

The Inspection highlighted the collaborative efforts of strategic partners, including Dorset Council, NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board, and the Dorset Parent Carer Council, to support children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

Our most recent Inspection report can be accessed [here](#).



What action are we taking?

Actions and Recommendations:

The local area partnership was advised to continue its improvement efforts and update its strategic plan based on the two recommendations provided. These are:

- Leaders across education, health and social care should strengthen their use of the robust qualitative and quantitative information they hold. This will enable them to continually analyse and evaluate the impact of their, often innovative, work to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Leaders across the partnership should ensure that their quality assurance and annual review processes, particularly in relation to preparation for adulthood, are as robust, precise and of the same high-quality as seen in the more recent education, health and care plans.

Our [SEND Inspection Delivery Plan](#) details how we will approach these recommendations and also includes the other areas highlighted within the inspection report, for continuous improvement.



The development of our SEF

Leaders are strongly committed to visible, strategic leadership, mutual accountability and to continuous improvement, working closely in partnership with young people and parent carers to achieve positive outcomes.

This document provides a Self-Evaluation (SEF) of our Local Area Partnership's work on this agenda, identifying impact and strengths and areas that require further development.

Our SEF is co-produced by our Local Area Partnership (LAP) with oversight of our LAP Governance. To develop our SEF, we have undertaken a range of activities including, but not limited to:

- Questionnaires, including the 2023 Parent/Carer survey, completed by 399 respondents
- Workshops and 'drop in' sessions, including 6 in-person events across Dorset and one virtual session in May 2023
- Further Let's Talk Events in 2024
- Focus Groups, including 7 sessions focussing on key areas for development (such as neurodiversity)
- Presentations, including workshop sessions and networks involving Headteacher and SENCO colleagues
- Our Local Area SEND Inspection March 2024

Our SEF is a live document, representative of the Local Area Partnership and owned by all.

Our aspirations for our children with SEND and their families

Our vision for Dorset:

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

Our Strategic Alliance has been working together since 2020. We have made real progress in many areas, despite facing a truly challenging few years. We are all too aware that the pandemic has disproportionately affected our children and young people who missed out on a lot to protect the health of the nation.

As a partnership, we are committed to building on what we have already achieved to create a bright and ambitious future for our children and young people. We have committed to working together and with our children, families and communities to ensure that Dorset is a place where all children thrive.

We passionately believe that strengthening families and communities - 'working with' not 'doing to' - is the key to unlocking potential and aspiration and this plan sets out how we will do that together.

Children and young people have generously given their feedback, shared their ideas and told us what it important to them. Their voices have shaped this plan, and we will work hard over the next 10 years to deliver their vision for Dorset."

Our Children, Young People and Families Plan can be accessed here:

[Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023 to 2033 - Dorset Council](#)



Our aspirations for the services we deliver for children and young people with SEND

Our aim for our services is that they will enable all children and young people (CYP) with SEND and those using Alternative Provision (AP) in Dorset to be:

- Healthy, happy, safe and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life;
- As independent as possible;
- Supported to learn, thrive and achieve by their families, services and local communities;
- Able to access the same opportunities in life as other children and young people.

We are committed to achieve this vision working with children and young people, their families, and partners across the county. We want families to receive intervention at the earliest opportunity, at the right time and in the right place so our CYP with SEND can become independent adults. Our SEND strategy can be accessed here: [SEND Strategy - Dorset Council](#)

Our SEND Strategy Strands					
We identify need early and put in plans to support	Our children and young people feel like they belong at home, at school and in their community	Everyone understands what services are available and how to access them	We have access to enough resources to meet need	Young people move into adulthood successfully with the right support	We spend our money sensibly to meet need
Early Identification	Inclusion	SEND Pathway	Sufficiency and Provision	Transitions and preparation for adulthood	Managing Money and Resources

Our Priorities

We believe it has never been more important to focus on ensuring equity of outcomes for all children and young people. The pandemic disproportionately affected children and young people, widening the gap in outcomes. Our collective hope and determination can be found in our ambitious plans.

We want all our children and young people to:

- have the best start in life
- be safe from harm and have the help they need when they need it
- have healthy and active lives
- be prepared for adult life
- feel they can have their say, are listened to and are able to make a difference
- enjoy growing up in Dorset
- have a settled and happy education that enables them to achieve their full potential



- Best Start in Life
- Young and Thriving
- Good Care Provision
- Best Education for All
- Best Place to Live
- Local Family Help
- Safe at Home and in the Community

The Dorset Local Area Partnership Context

We have co-produced and agreed a [framework](#) across the Dorset Council area for all key strategic partners to collaboratively work to achieve the best outcomes for Children and Young People.

Our partnership ensures that children, young people and their families have ongoing opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decisions that affect them.

Our partnership works together to understand the needs of local children, young people and their families, so that we can commission and provide services that are inclusive and supportive, always keeping children and young people at the heart of all we do.

Our strategic partners are Dorset Council, NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board and the Dorset Parent Carer Council. Collectively, we are ambitious for our children and young people with SEND and increased vulnerabilities and are committed to providing a great education and supporting strong life outcomes.



Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND

Here in Dorset, we believe that every child should experience inclusive services and practice and feel that they belong

- We know that the support to children with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability are currently supported well through our Locality model, but we can go further. Support to them and their families is a fundamental part of our Family Help offer.
- Our involvement in the FFCP allows to invest in and enhance our work with children with SEND, supported by central government grant funding. The enhancements we are making to our delivery model through the FFCP will not only allow us to continue to respond to the many children with SEND who access Social Care and Early Help, between the ages of 0-25 years, but allow us to go further in the offer of support across home, school and community.

Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND

Our services will support children with SEND and their families in the following ways:

- An integrated front door that will include SEND expertise and operate DEAL (Dorset Education Advice Line) and be formed of: Children's Advice and Duty Teams, Educational Psychologists, Youth workers, Education colleagues, Children Who are Disabled Teams, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Teams. Ultimately, whoever contacts the Front Door should be able to speak with a member of staff who will have the relevant skills and knowledge to support the conversation.
- Additional investment in Provision Leads and Caseworkers in the SEND teams to enable us to respond to need.
- Additional investment in Youth Work to enable more connection between home, school and community.

Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND (2)

Our services will support children with SEND and their families in the following ways:

- Investment in leadership in Learning and Belonging - Our matrix management structure and approach provides specialist practice leadership in SEND in each locality area but also allows us to:
 - Flatten the structure
 - Share specialist knowledge, expertise, knowledge
 - Improve horizontal communication
 - Cross functional integration, coordination, standardisation
 - Cross functional learning
 - Flexibility – responsiveness to change
 - Allows us to be good at different things
 - Focuses us on all our children and all their needs rather than working in silos

Stable Homes Built on Love: Families First for Children Pathfinder (FFCP) through the lens of children with SEND (3)

- Our locality structure is comprised of 4 locality teams that work across Permanence, Child Protection, Family Help (which brings together Child in Need and Targeted Early Help), Learning and Belonging and Education Psychology.
- Our learning and belonging structures include dedicated SEND teams in each locality with specific responsibilities including assessment and planning for EHCP's and delivery of SEND support and EHC plans.
- Our children tell us clearly what it is to belong from 'feeling safe', 'being part of a jigsaw', 'finding your people', 'being included' and 'being understood' as well as the physical places they belong like in their room, at the stables, at their dance class, at school and at home.
- Investing in our Learning and Belonging aspect of locality delivery through the additional investment the Pathfinder programme has brought will allow us alongside and with families and our partners create spaces and places where we all feel we belong and for us to deliver on our Belonging Strategy.
- Recruitment is underway for the additional resource to support the enhanced locality model. Reshaping of existing teams is underway and will be aiming for all new ways of working to be in place in July 2024.

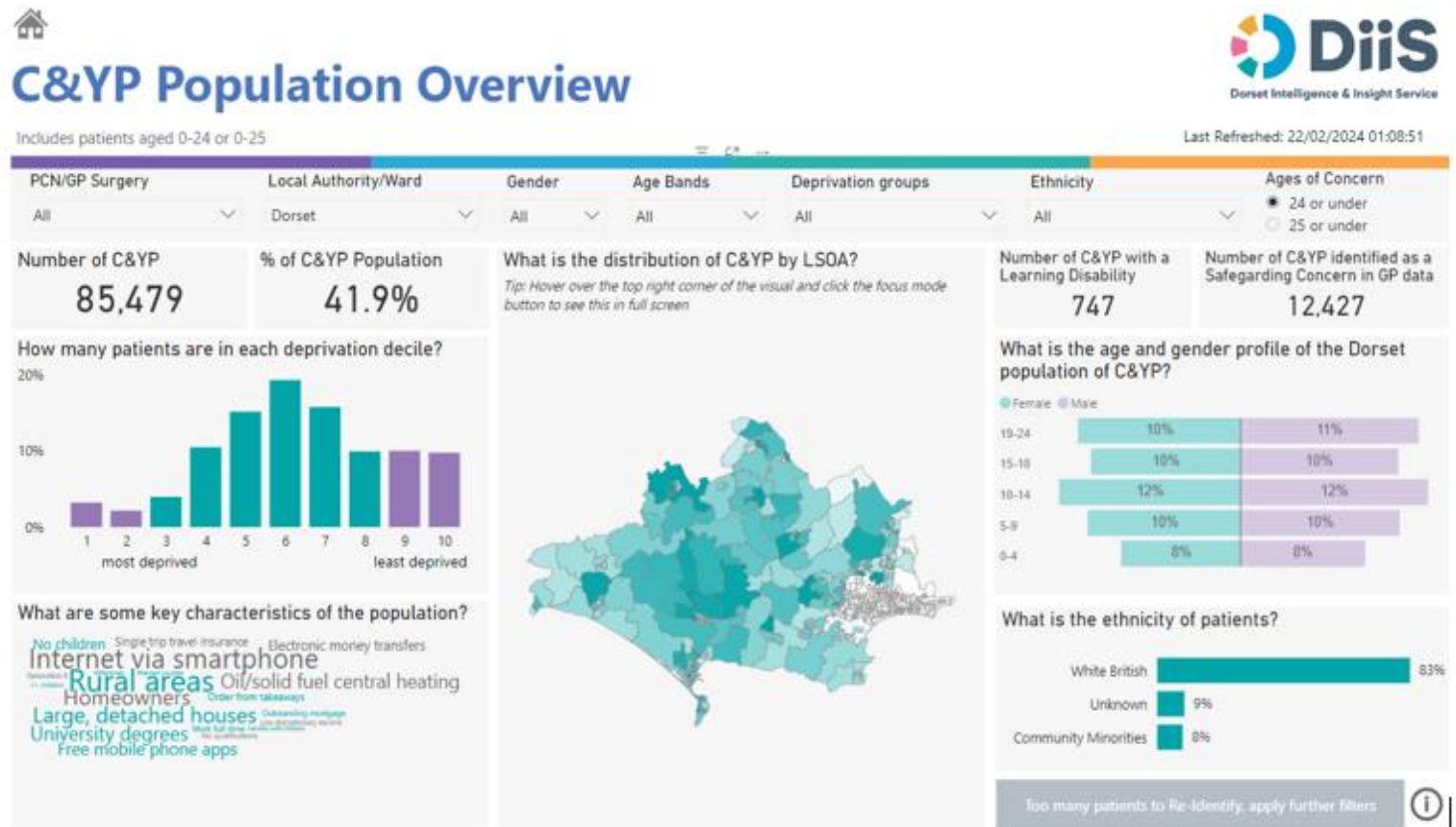
Our Population

Dorset Council area has a population of 380,000 residents. Of those residents, around 88,000 are aged 0-25 ([2021 Census](#)). There are significant areas of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland) and in Bridport and the east of Dorset in Ferndown, Wimborne and Verwood. For more information on our local context: [Understanding Dorset - Dorset Council](#)

The Dorset Intelligence Insight Service (DIIS) helps us understand clinical and non-clinical factors to support improved care and services for our children and young people.

We know that in December 2023, 1,531 CYP aged 0-25 had a Learning Disability. The Autism dashboard enables reporting of CYP with a diagnosis of Autism, those who are on the LD register and those who have a diagnosis of ADHD. However, we recognise that the true prevalence is likely higher, so we have designed and commissioned our provision to address this.

For further information on potential prevalence please see the [Pan Dorset ADHD and Autism Needs Assessment: All-Age-ADHD-and-Autism-Needs-Assessment-July-2022-3.pdf](#) (nhsdorset.nhs.uk)



Growing need for our services

We firmly believe every teacher is a teacher of special needs. Therefore, we have put improving the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities at the centre of our efforts to manage the emerging needs of children and young people.

In March 2024, 3,975 children and young people had an EHC Plan in Dorset. This compares to 2,534 in 2019 and represents an overall increase of 56.9% over that time period, with the national increase during that period being 32.5%.

During the most recent Academic Year (2022/23), we received 869 requests for EHCPs (designated EHC Needs Assessments – EHCNAs – in Dorset). Of these EHCNAs, 646 were progressed (74.3%). In line with national trends, we have seen a year-on-year increase in EHCNAs and EHCPs.

In 2022/23 Academic Year, of the EHC Needs Assessment requests, 90% were made within the 6-week statutory timeline and 64.7% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks compared with 49.2% nationally.



Belonging Conferences 2023

[Two days of conferences, both with the theme of 'Belonging', were held in June 2023 for those working in education, health, the emergency services and the community and voluntary sector to look at improving the lives of young people in Dorset through the work they do.](#)

"The Board has been listening to young people in Dorset as we develop our work, and the importance of "belonging" has been a clear and consistent theme throughout. We are determined to ensure both high education standards and inclusion for all, including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities."

Stephen Twigg, Independent Chair of the Dorset Education Board

Meeting the needs of our children

We are working to provide more specialist education to meet the needs of our children with and EHCP

[The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Capital Strategy 2020-24](#) aims to create approximately 500 places across Dorset, including 280 places at the Coombe House School. The number of places has grown rapidly since inception. 281 places have been delivered to date. Of the 779 places in train, 200 are being delivered by the DfE and 579 are being delivered by Dorset Council.

Two Free School (Special School) projects underway with the Department for Education (DfE) will expand specialist provision for Dorset.

1. The Harbour School is growing to 130 places for children and young people aged 9 – 19 years old. This is for children and young people with Autism and additional needs in relation to their neurodiversity and children and young people with complex Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. As of January 2024, 84 of these places have been delivered.
2. A planned 75 place free school which was granted a capital allocation in 2019. The DfE are creating this Special Free School in Osprey Quay which will support children and young people with SEND in the 14-19 age range. This is expected in Autumn 2025.

Additional places in resourced provision (Inclusion Hubs) are also being created, with 56 places delivered to date. Discussions are also underway about the potential for special school and learning centre “satellites” and outreach provision.

Meeting the needs of our children

	EHCP Requests (EHCNAs)	Requests Agreed
2018	625	87%
2019	688	94%
2020	598	87%
2021	688	77%
2022	769	82%
2023	869	74%

In 2023, 646 new EHC Plans were issued to children and young people residing in the local area, a total of 3,896 plans. By December 2023, 3703 children and young people were supported by CAMHS as open referrals.

Our neurodevelopmental waiting times are between 18 months and 2 years. However, we know that our families perceive significantly longer wait times from the point of seeking specialist professional support. To meet growing need, the Dorset All Age Neurodevelopmental Review has focused on our assessment offer and pathways to include support pre- and post-assessment support, alongside a waiting list recovery workstream. Our SEND Partnership Board has supported the implementation of a “Waiting Well” approach.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities in Dorset schools and settings

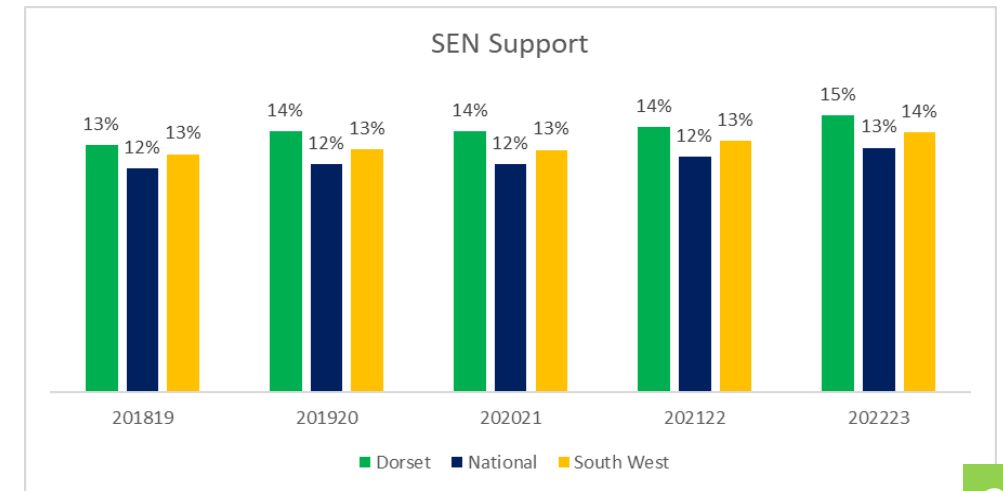
The percentage of children and young people receiving SEN Support without an EHC Plan has been consistently higher in Dorset when compared to national levels for many years. This gap has remained steady, evidencing the impact of continued investment in services that can be accessed without an EHC Plan (Graduated Approach).

EHC Plans (%)							
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Dorset	2.6	2.8	3.4	3.7	4.1	4.4	4.8
England	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.3	3.7	4.0	4.3
<i>Difference</i>	-0.2	-0.1	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5

SEN support/SEN without an EHC plan (%)							
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Dorset	13.7	13.9	13.2	14.6	14.6	15.1	15.5
England	11.6	11.7	11.9	12.1	12.2	12.6	13.0
<i>Difference</i>	2.1	2.2	1.3	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5

Since 2018, the percentage of children and young people receiving SEN support through an EHC Plan has been higher in Dorset than nationally. Over the period, the percentage of CYP identified as needing SEND Support has been above national levels.

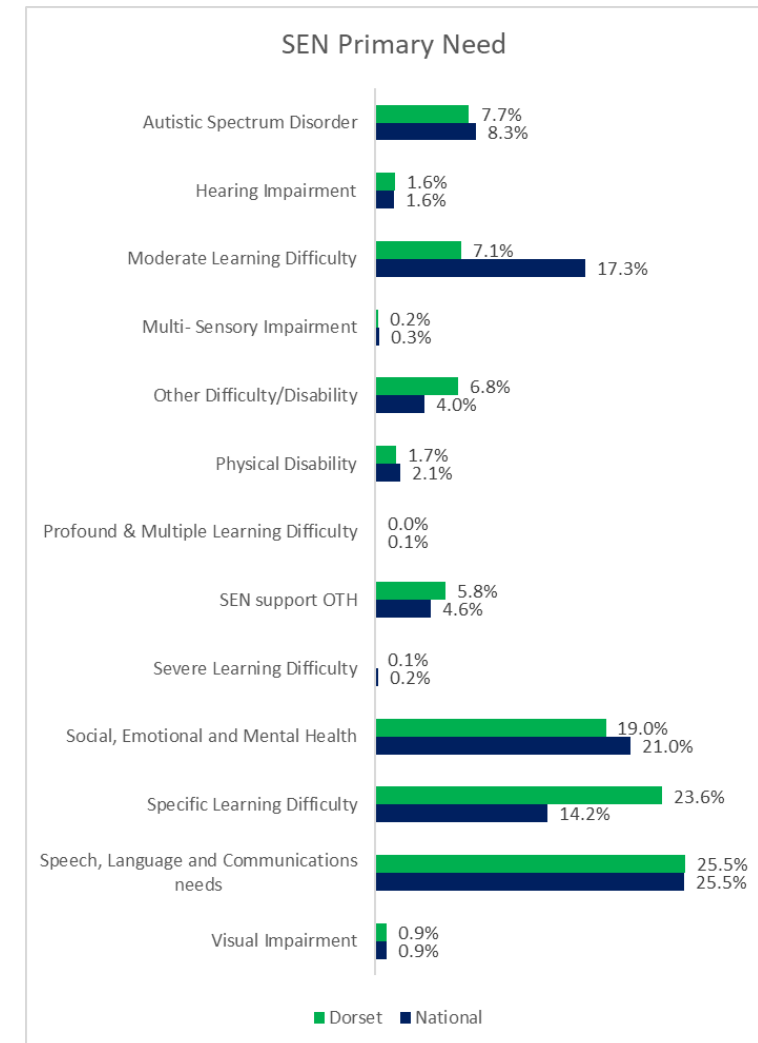
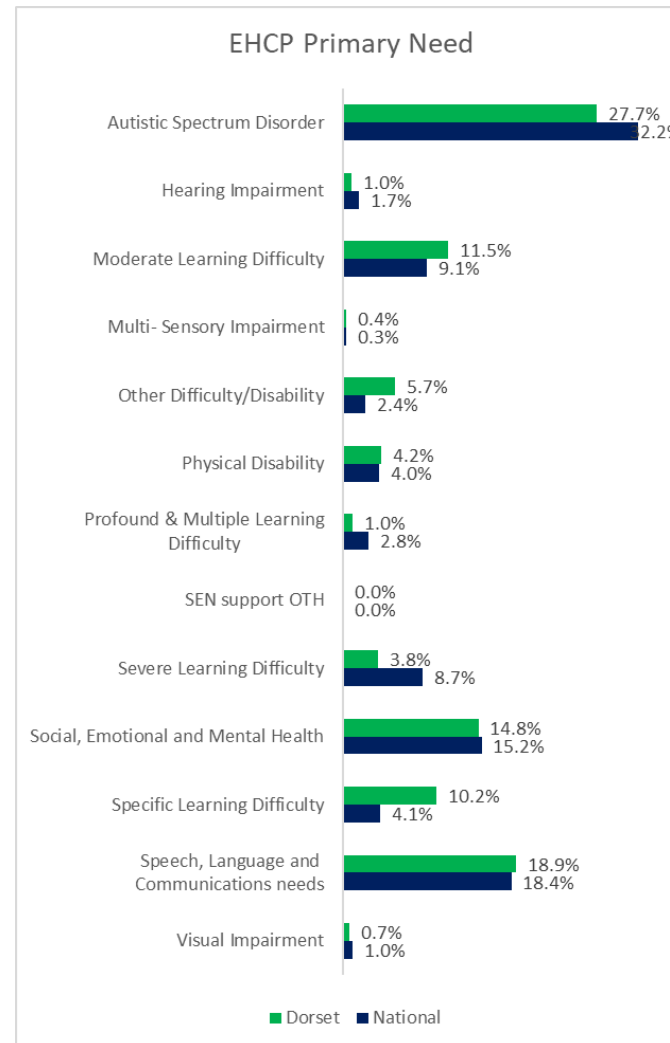
	National	Dorset
2018	319,819	2,392
2019	353,995	2,534
2020	390,109	2,957
2021	430,697	3,233
2022	473,255	3,653
2023	517,049	3,896
Increase between 2018 and 2023	61.7%	62.9%



Children with special educational needs and disabilities in Dorset schools and settings

The percentage of children and young people in Dorset with Autistic Spectrum Disorder is lower than the national average whilst those with Speech, Language and Communication Needs is slightly higher than national.

We have higher levels of CYP with an EHCP experiencing Specific Learning Difficulties and Moderate Learning Difficulties than national but significantly fewer CYP experiencing MLD without an EHCP when compared to national figures.



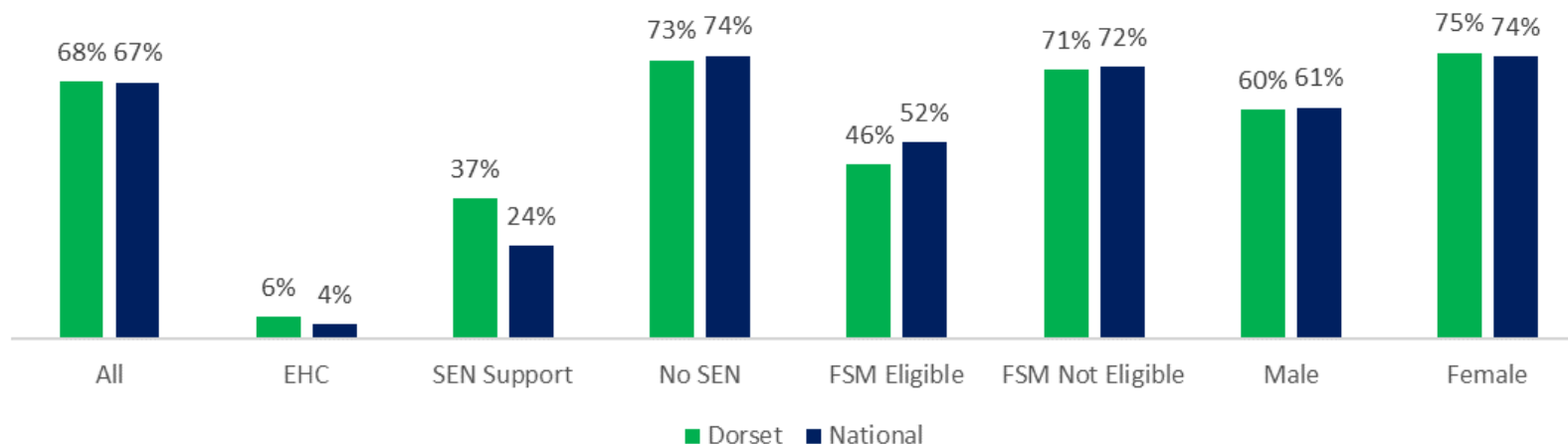
Academic outcomes for our children

We are committed to enabling our children and young people to achieve the best outcomes through application of our Graduated Approach. 0-25s represent 20% of the total population (around 90,000 individuals). We support 159 schools and academies in Dorset, including one all-through school, 36 First Schools, 2 Infant Schools, 2 Junior Schools, 10 Middle Schools, 80 Primary Schools, 4 Pupil Referral Units (Learning Centres), 15 Secondary Schools, 6 Special and 3 Upper Schools.

Phase	Pupils	Schools
Primary	21,808	119
PRU	133	4
Secondary	25,657	29
Special	848	6
Total:	48,446	158

Early Years Foundation Stage Outcomes

Dorset remains 1% above national for the percentage of children achieving a good level, of development. This rose 2% for both Dorset and National from 2021/22. Outcomes for children with an EHC Plan have improved and are now 2% above National, whilst outcomes for SEN Support children also remain above national levels.



EYFS Good Level of Development outcomes for groups, 2022/23

Academic outcomes for our children

We have identified themes in our data to support our development work and have co-produced through the Dorset Education Board a new [Dorset Education Strategy Education Strategy 2024 to 2027 - Dorset Council](#). This will be launched Officially at our Summer Education Conference

Specialist Teachers, Educational Psychologists and Education Challenge Leads (School Improvement Partners) work closely with our schools to identify and support good performance, including where related to children and young people with SEND.

Overview - In the EYFS and KS1, performance is strong (3% above national in EYFS and in-line at Key Stage 1). We know that Dorset is in the lowest 20% of local authorities for Maths attainment at Key Stage 2. By Key Stage 2, achievement is 5% below for boys and girls combined (7% below for girls only). At Key Stage 4, Dorset is 4% below national for those achieving grade 5 or higher. 44% of Dorset girls achieve Maths at grade 5 or higher (6% below national). Similarly, Dorset is in the lowest 20% of local authorities for Writing attainment at Key Stage 2. Writing at the expected standard was 4% below national, 5% below for boys, 3% for girls.

Academic outcomes for our children

We have initiated a range of projects to address these issues - These include specific measures to support children and young people with SEND. For example, the Chesil Literacy Project – grew out of a reading project that gained national recognition for its impact on school and locality outcomes. It has now been expanded across Dorset. Following the success of the Chesil Reading Challenge, The Chesil Challenge has launched an exciting new project with a specific focus on practitioners making a difference. In this way, we are supporting our schools to develop their staff to have the most impact in the classroom. Transition projects focused on KS2 writing are being piloted in Dorchester with a view to rolling out county wide. A targeted programme of support for schools to address writing outcomes will be delivered from September 2024. The delivery of the Primary Elklan training to schools and the Specialist Reading Practitioner Course , will support in improving outcomes in English for children with SEND. In addition, the Dorset Girls Maths Project has focused on a range of activities to support our children.

In summary, we know that academic outcomes for children and young people with SEND, whether or not they are supported by an EHCP, are generally positive in the EYFS, KS1 and KS4, with work to be done to improve standards at KS2.

Academic outcomes for our children

Achievement Rankings – EHCPs

Academic outcomes for children and young people with SEND supported by an EHCP are generally positive.

In the EYFS, Dorset is 28th out of all LAs for Good Level of Development, evidencing high quality support for our Early Years Foundation Stage and our commitment to giving children the Best Start in Life.

In KS1 and KS2, outcomes for CYP with SEND are continuing to improve and sit generally above average levels when compared to national data.

We know that we need to improve outcomes in Writing and Maths at KS2 for CYP with SEND and peers without SEND.

Dorset Ranking against other LAs (EHCP)		Q5 ←-- Lowest	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1 Highest -->	Dorset 2023	Trend	Nat 2023	Nat Trend
EYFS (2023)	Good level of development					28	6%	↑	4%	↓
Key Stage 1 (2023)	Phonics			60			21%	↓	20%	↑
	Reading				36		15%	↓	12%	↔
	Writing			89			6%	↓	8%	↑
	Mathematics					27	19%	↔	15%	↑
Key Stage 2 Expected Standard (2023)	Reading				33		22%	↑	18%	↑
	Writing		97				10%	↑	12%	↑
	Mathematics				56		18%	↑	16%	↑
	GPS			66			17%	↑	16%	↑
	RWM		91				7%	↑	8%	↑
Key Stage 2 Progress (2023)	Reading		102				-4.7	↑	-4.40	↑
	Writing	147					-6.5	↓	-4.40	↑
	Mathematics	124					-5.0	↑	-4.10	↑
Key Stage 4 (2023)	Basics 9-5		116				4%	↓	7%	↑
	Basics 9-4			86			12%	↓	13%	↓
	Attainment 8		105				12.3	↓	14	↓
KS4 Progress (2023)	Progress 8		118				-1.28	↓	-1.12	↑
Key Stage 4	Destinations (2021/22)					25	94%	↑	90%	↓
Key Stage 5 (2023)	% achieving AAB+			89			0%	↓	18%	↓
	APS per entry			86			30.8	↓	32.3	↓
	At least 2 substantial level 3				55		86%	↑	80%	↓

Academic outcomes for our children

Achievement Rankings – SEN Support

Academic outcomes for children and young people working at SEND Support are generally positive, though we recognise that not enough of our CYP reach the expected standard across Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2 because they have not made enough progress during this key stage. We have designed and delivered projects to address these issues, including an innovative Maths Project for Girls.

The Dorset Education Board has commissioned specific work to address these inequalities.

Dorset Ranking against other LAs (SEN Support)		Q5 ←-- Lowest	Q4	Q3	Q2	Q1 Highest -->	Dorset 2023	Trend	Nat 2023	Nat Trend
EYFS (2023)	Good level of development					4	37%	↑	24%	↑
Key Stage 1 (2023)	Phonics			75			48%	↓	48%	↑
	Reading				59		33%	↔	32%	↑
	Writing				47		23%	↓	22%	↑
	Mathematics				39		39%	↑	37%	↑
Key Stage 2 Expected Standard (2023)	Reading			72			45%	↑	45%	↑
	Writing			78			33%	↑	34%	↑
	Mathematics						38%	↑	42%	↑
	GPS		99				35%	↑	38%	↑
	RWM	125					19%	↑	24%	↑
Key Stage 2 Progress (2023)	Reading		105				-0.9	↑	-0.60	↑
	Writing	135					-2.5	↑	-1.50	↓
	Mathematics	134					-1.7	↓	-0.80	↑
Key Stage 4 (2023)	Basics 9-5		113				16%	↓	21%	↓
	Basics 9-4			77			35%	↓	37%	↓
	Attainment 8		91				31.9	↓	33.2	↓
KS4 Progress (2023)	Progress 8		97				-0.53	↑	-0.45	↑
Key Stage 4	Destinations (2021/22)			81			89%	↓	89%	↓
Key Stage 5 (2023)	% achieving AAB+				56		19%	↑	18%	↓
	APS per entry		91				30.4	↓	32.0	↓
	At least 2 substantial level 3				45		90%	↓	86%	↓

Attendance Rates

We place great emphasis on the importance of school attendance and work with partners to support our children and young people to attend. To assist families facing challenges getting their children to school, we have recently launched a new school attendance campaign, focused on our needs in Dorset and complementary to the DfE national campaign, providing support and guidance to those needing help. Our partnership understands these challenges and has launched the campaign to tackle the issue head-on, offering advice and support to families and encouraging settings to listen and support.

The overall absence rate in Dorset remains in line with our statistical neighbours and the South-West, sitting above the national average. Our overall absence rate remains higher than pre-pandemic levels, though absence in Dorset primary schools reduced from 2021/22 to 2022/23 and is now in line with averages nationally, against our statistical neighbours and within the South-West.

Through our new support model in the early years, we will be monitoring the attendance of children in their early years provision and supporting settings to encourage families to access their non-statutory, but beneficial, early education places.

In 2022/23, overall absence in Dorset special schools was 11.7% which was below national (13.0%) and Southwest (13.6%). Persistent absentee rates in Dorset special schools were 33.5% which was below national (38.3%) and Southwest (39.2%). Severe absence in Dorset special schools was 5.1% which was below national (6.2%) and Southwest (7.4%).



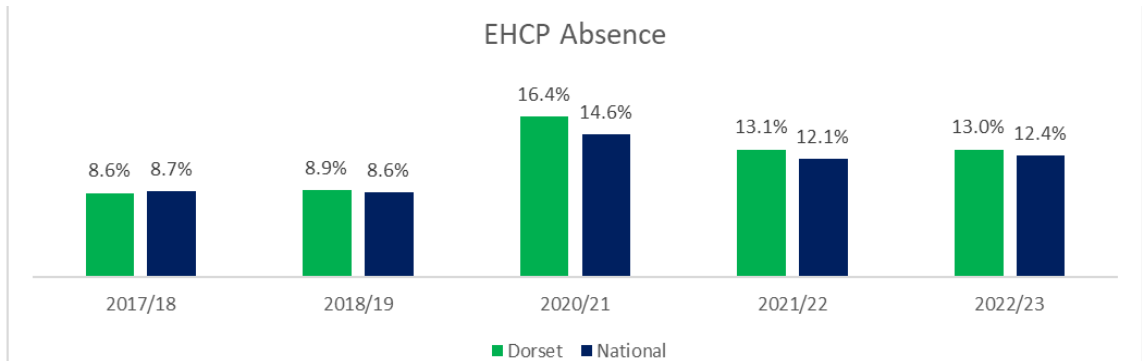
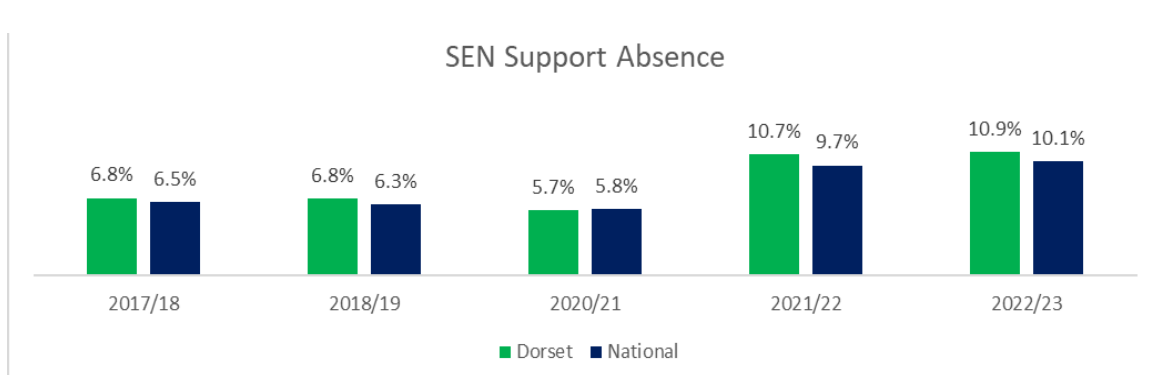
"We know some families have experienced all sorts of challenges and that each child has a unique set of circumstances that might get in the way of regular attendance in education. It's important to know you're not alone. We have support systems in place, and there are charities and community groups ready to help too."

Amanda Davis, Director of Education and Learning

Attendance Rates

Primary attendance for both children with SEN support and those with an EHCP is in line with the national average. Primary attendance for children with an EHCP is better than the South-West and statistical neighbour averages.

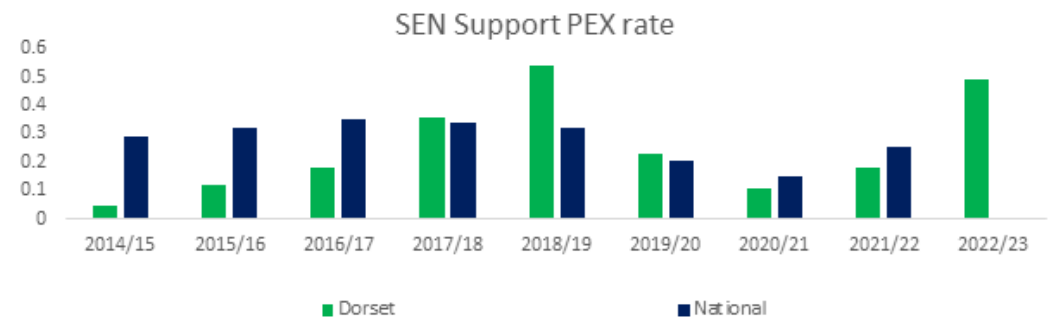
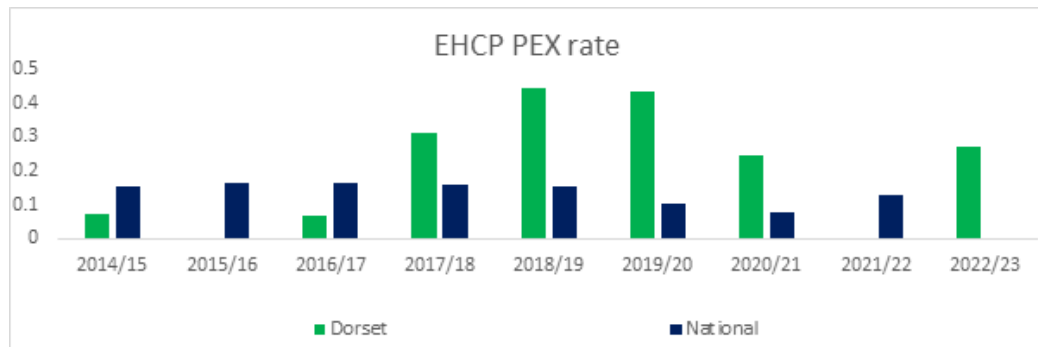
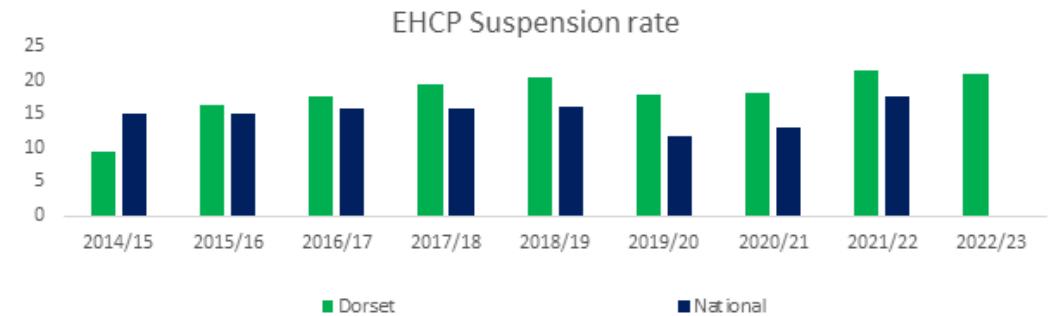
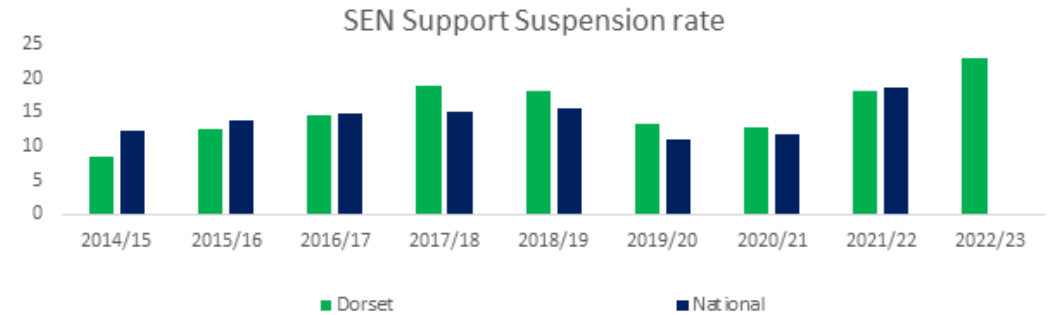
Secondary absence rates have also reduced from 2012/22 to 2022/23, are in line with our statistical neighbours but below the national average. Secondary attendance for children with SEND support is in line with the South-West and statistical neighbour averages but below national. Secondary attendance for children with an EHCP is better than the South-West average and in line with statistical neighbours, however it is below the national average. Secondary unauthorised absence for children with EHCP is higher in Dorset than national but in line with the South-West. Authorised is just above national and just below the South-West.



Suspension and Exclusion Rates

In 2021/22, SEN support suspension rates were just below national. Provisional data for 2022/23 suggests a rise of around 25% on the previous year. The rise for non-SEN was 36%. Suspension rates for pupils with an EHCP have been above national. However, there has been a small decrease in the EHCP suspension rate in 2022/23.

Permanent exclusion rates reduced between 2020/21 and 2021/22. However, provisional 2022/23 data suggests that permanent exclusions more than doubled. The SEN support permanent exclusion rate was below national in 2020/21 and 2021/22. The trend of permanent exclusion rates for children with an EHCP reduced from 2019/20 to 2021/22 but rose – in line with other groups – in 2022/23.



Our strengths

Relationships are at the heart of our work in Dorset – this a key strength. We have strong working relationships at all levels with our stakeholder partners, families and communities who work together to ensure that Dorset is a place where all children can thrive. These relationships are grounded in an ethos of ‘working with’ not ‘doing to’ and can be seen in everything we do. Our strategic partnerships – Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, Strengthening Services Board, Dorset Education Board and underpinning SEND Partnership Board, provide the system leadership for our work.

As well as ensuring the ICB meets its statutory duties for CYP with SEND, the **Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) and Associate DCO** support and strengthen partnership working with Dorset and BCP Council as well as co production between NHS, providers, families and CYP with SEND.

Joint commissioning processes ensure that families and children support us to decide what and how we commission. We have services that are truly inclusive and designed around users rather than service needs, providing support "at the right time, in the right place and in the right way". Joint commissioning projects reduce health inequalities, barriers and advance equity of opportunity for all CYP with SEND to achieve their full potential.

We champion the voices of our young people through various means. Recent **co-production of a Student Pledge** devised with students from Dorchester Learning Centre, Budmouth Academy and Mountjoy Special School is a good example of our ongoing work to give agency to our children and young people.

We have strong relationships across the Local Area Partnership with **models of integrated posts**, bought in services and joint CPD, including SEND Tier 2 training and SEND training for Practitioners on contributing to the EHCNA process. Our partnership working is strengthened by current transformation programmes, including the **Speech, Language and Communication Needs service, the CYP Mental Health Transformation project and the All-Age Neurodevelopmental Review.**

Our strengths (continued)

We have a **well-resourced and well-used [Family Information Service](#)** that provides guidance and support for families of children with SEND, signposting them to funding and practical advice.



Children's views are central to everything we do. We work closely with the community and voluntary sector, and Dorset Youth Association, (who have over 80 members to enable representatives to be conduits to young people, e.g. [Dorset Youth](#)) and work together to ensure that CYP are kept at the heart of decision making and get involved in opportunities to shape the services they use. School networks are also strong with a vibrant locality SENCO network to enable timely information sharing and good practice as well as each locality having a Local Alliance Group made up of strategic partners in the locality.

In addition to the FIS, we have established **[Family Hubs](#)** as 'one-stop shops' that can connect families – including those with children experiencing SEND – to the information and help they need as early and easily as possible. **[Family Hubs](#)** bring together staff and volunteers working across a range of different services to provide a joined-up service delivery network which ensures that families feel welcomed and are connected to the information and help they need.

We **work collaboratively to sustain and improve timeliness** of EHCNAs, Annual Reviews and quality of multi-agency advice that informs the assessments and reviews.

Our plan to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Central to our plan to improve the experiences and outcomes of CYP with SEND is our [Best Start in Life initiative](#). Best Start in Life champions evidence-based approaches to improving outcomes from pre-birth to five years, recognising specifically the first 1001 days. For more information on our plan, click here: [Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023 to 2033 - Dorset Council](#)

We have re-shaped our approach to supporting our youngest children, their families and early years settings. The ambitions for these children are high and we are continuing to work with families and partners to strengthen the offer in children's homes, communities and early years settings supporting each child to achieve their full potential. We are defining the impact measurements for this area of work alongside our families and partners.

In addition, we will continue to develop and embed the SEND Partnership Board with appropriate Local Area Partnership representation as well as agreed routes for interface with co-dependent and developing boards as our Place Based ways of working continue to develop as part of the Integrated Care Partnership and System. We have committed to a complete redesign of our local pathway for CYP mental health services that includes core NHS CYP Mental health service, developing the local crisis offer and embedding a No Wrong Door approach, in line with the THRIVE model.

We have co-produced a new proposed model of care for neurodevelopmental disorders (all age) to meet jointly agreed critical success factors as per All Age Neurodevelopmental Review recommendations. We will continue to improve access to sustainable universal, targeted and specialist support for CYP with a SLC need, jointly commissioning, designing and adopting the Balanced System[®] for a SCLN pathway that meets the needs of CYP.

Running alongside these and other plans is a robust SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement Framework, this forms an important part of our plan to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

Our plan to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND

We want our children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect the same opportunities in life as other children and young people. This is our 12-month 'plan on a page' summary.

Our SEND Strategy Strands					
We identify need early and put in plans to support	Our children and young people feel like they belong at home, at school and in their community	Everyone understands what services are available and how to access them	We have access to enough resources to meet need	Young people move into adulthood successfully with the right support	We spend our money sensibly to meet need
Early Identification	Inclusion	SEND Pathway	Sufficiency and Provision	Transitions and preparation for adulthood	Managing Money and Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the effectiveness of the Graduated Approach within Dorset settings To ensure CYP with SEND receive help earlier To ensure that SEND is everybody's business to enable Dorset's children and young people with SEND to thrive Completion of the All-Age Neurodevelopmental Review to achieve sustainable improvements around information, support, assessment and training for autism and neurodevelopmental conditions. System wide mental health transformation plan to improve and strengthen pathway for emotional health and wellbeing. The System Level Speech and Language Implementation Plan 23-25 for the new SLCN Graduated Response will be delivered as a whole system approach to supporting children and young people's speech, language and communication. New SEND Case Management system from Sept 23 with implementation roadmap Review and Develop S23 notification process Partners work together to proactively plan EHCPs and Annual Reviews throughout the year, and advice is received in a timely way Increase the offer of consultation from EPs and direct work with CYP The Key worker project will develop a key working model to enable any CYP 0-25 who has LD and/or Autism to have a key worker. The referral route is via the Dynamic Support Register. NHS Dorset Dynamic support register project will implement a new DSR system in 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain focus on high priority CYP (e.g. CiC, CP, EHE, NEET, phase transfers) To ensure that our most vulnerable cohorts receive an education that is suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and feel they belong at home, in education and in their community Develop and launch Dorset's Belonging Strategy and implementation plan by Oct 2023 JSNA will be updated Ensure robust processes are in place for section 23 notifications to be made by health to the SEND team Health data to inform our strategic planning as agreed and identified. CYP with an EHCP achieve in line with mainstream peers Further development of the Local Offer – completed by Summer 2024 Inclusion meetings with schools are high-quality, impactful and consistent Strengthen partnership working by having a signed and agreed SLA and Learning Centre Agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure families do not experience drift and delay To ensure staff feel valued and are enabled to deliver great services Children and young people can access the right services at the right time in the right place Annual Reviews will include health and social care with proactive planning between agencies The Dorset neurodiversity website will be launched enabling a trusted source of information and advice that will align with our SEND Local Offer A working group led by NHS Dorset will identify key gaps in data which inhibit effective planning for young people with an EHCP and will develop an action plan to improve recording practice All Dorset schools have a trained Senior Mental Health Lead Dorset Key Worker Initiative is live from Sept 2023 Family Action will seek funding opportunities to develop their young person's offer Review and refine decision making processes by Dec 2023 System-wide mental health transformation plan will improve and strengthen pathway for emotional health and wellbeing The new SEND Strategy is co-produced with parents, young people and practitioners across the partnership area to define key priorities for 2024 and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that our children and young people can achieve their full potential A multi-agency QA partnership led by Dorset Council will collate insights from Ofsted, CQC and other regulators Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy to be completed by January 2024 Family Hubs rollout complete by April 2024 Develop and support a stable, well-trained workforce Develop Inclusion Hubs and other initiatives with mainstream schools – assets and property plan based on CYP needs analysis Health data to inform partner strategic planning is identified and agreed Joint commissioning Discovery report completed by Dorset Council and NHS Dorset by Apr 2024 AP review will be completed by Dec 2023 Sufficiency and Commissioning Review will set out a three-year strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our children and young people with SEND achieve positive educational outcomes. A higher proportion of our young people remain in education, training and employment and a higher proportion to go on to achieve paid employment A higher proportion of young people with a Learning Disability are accessing their annual health checks from 14 years of age We will routinely seek feedback from CYP and families at different stages of our work with them An integrated delivery timeline is in place by Sept 23 to show the 3-year roadmap for service improvement that will be delivered by B2SA, AANR, CAMHS Service redesign and the AMH Review Post-16 Strategy drafted by Apr 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that we can continue to meet need in the future Dorset SEND Capital Strategy will be delivered by 2026 New brokerage process and e-system will go online from Nov 2023 The DiIS development plan will deliver a suite of SEND dashboards by April 2023, depending on the integration of date from Synergy to the new CMS

Dorset Local Area Partnership Self-Evaluation

Section Two – The Impact of Our Arrangements



Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

What do we know about the impact of our arrangements?

- We have seen a decrease in the number of complaints over the year about timeliness of EHC needs assessments.
- Our partnership has produced and published the [Dorset SEND Strategy Impact Report 2022-23](#) highlighting progress and challenges that we continue to address. Our 2023-24 impact report will be published in Autumn 2024.



Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Headlines and Highlights

- **We continue to perform better than our statistical neighbours and nationally when it comes to issuing EHC plans**
- The Dorset Development and Behaviour Pathway identifies the right support at the right time when someone is worried about a child or young person. The pathway was co-produced between parent carers, health, social care and education and is regularly updated so we know it is what is needed and wanted
- Children and young people with SEND who enter the care system and the youth justice system routinely have their needs checked. Agencies such as the multi-agency safeguarding hub, the police and health services are all involved in identifying children and young people's needs. Speech and Language Therapists within the service are placed within the Dorset Youth Justice Service and The Harbour Project, working collaboratively with a wide range of professionals. The CYP Speech and Language Therapy Service provides a skilled workforce able to support and meet the speech, language and communication needs of children and young people accessing their service
- The Children in Care Health Team review and ensure health assessments are adjusted according to specific needs as part of their holistic assessment
- The link Educational Psychologist (EP) and Specialist Teacher (ST) participate in joint planning consultation meetings termly with schools and FE providers implementing Dorset's Graduated Approach. Schools appreciate this universal offer

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements?

We closely monitor our performance through our **embedded Performance Management Framework** which includes operational **Service Dashboards** which are utilised on daily basis by practitioners to manage our work, and strategic oversight support and challenge through our **Performance Board**. Our **SEND Partnership Board** maintains 6 weekly oversight of performance at their meetings.

We assure ourselves of quality of practice through our **Multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework**. EHCPs are monitored on a monthly basis, in addition managers undertake dip samples and the partnership undertakes Learning Circles to reflect upon and learn from practice.

Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Our Local Offer provides high quality information, guidance and support for families and practitioners to access. Our local service referral pathways are comprehensive and easy to access and follow. We have clear referral routes including – for example –for hearing and visual impairment, whilst our Pan-Dorset Development and Behaviour Pathway can be followed when someone is worried about a child or young person.

Parents and carers understand and can access [the graduated approach](#) to support them to identify the right support at the right time. Like our other pathways, this was co-produced with parent carers, health, social care and education partners. Each pathway is overseen by a strategic group that meets regularly to review the pathway and make recommendations/escalate issues as they arise. Parents understand the system better and how to access support as evidenced by responses to the Parent Carer survey.

Inclusion and Belonging are the golden threads that run through our work, our training offer and our communications, leading to an increased awareness of the importance of accurate and timely assessment by school partners and internal colleagues (including Early Help, Intervention and Inclusion teams across Dorset).

Children, young people and their families can access immediate advice and support including via [DEAL](#). The Dorset Education Advice Line (DEAL) was introduced with the aim to help meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, as early as possible. The phone line is available for parents, carers and professionals who support children who may have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This advice line is part of our Local Offer and will continue to be offered and improved as part of our [Pathfinder](#) work.

We offer a consistent range of services and interventions for emotional health and wellbeing, applying the [iThrive Framework](#). We have co-produced a [Dorset Belonging Strategy](#) and Plan with our schools and other partners. It is an overarching strategy that sets priorities for all partners across Dorset in addressing key issues, such as attendance, suspensions and exclusions, through an increased sense of Belonging. For many children and young people in Dorset, Belonging is their everyday, positive reality. Our aim with this Belonging Strategy and Plan is to make sure that this is the lived experience for all our children and young people.

Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

We will seek ways to better include the CIC and Personal Health Commissioning teams in SEND assessments and annual reviews to ensure we are commissioning the right provision. We are aiming to reduce waiting times for our neurodevelopmental pathways and to improve support. The All-age neurodevelopmental review has looked at access to support and diagnostic services across the whole of Dorset and recommendations are being shaped into a business case.

We are listening to families and practitioners who tell us that immediate change is needed. The Pan-Dorset ADHD and Autism Needs Assessment of June 2022 told us that diagnosis has been on the increase in Dorset. We have a new Autism and ADHD dashboard that is updated weekly and reports on the number of people with a diagnosis. Waiting times for assessment are averaging at 18 months and therefore, this continues to be a primary areas of focus. We have been able to draw on some external funding to outsource some assessments to reduce waiting times.

We know that the multi agency assessment pathways can be long and drawn out leading to challenges with clinical decision making, stress for families and dissatisfaction for the professionals participating in the assessment so we are addressing this through a transformation process that is also informing the Dorset Development and Behaviour Pathway. As part of this, a system wide co-produced CYP Mental Health Transformation Plan is in progress that aims to improve and strengthen the pathway for emotional health and wellbeing, ensuring a consistent offer and range of services and interventions using the Thrive Framework. Likewise, the speech and language service is working with Dorset Council, NHS Dorset, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council to co-produce a new Dorset pathway for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

We are currently reviewing the Section 23 health notification process to enable services to plan for the needs of children.

Children, young people and their families participate in decision making about their individual plans and support



Children, young people and their families participate in decision making about their individual plans and support

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We work in partnership with DPCC, SENDIASS, Chatterbox, Healthwatch and others to support children, young people and their carers to participate actively in their individual plans and support. Our SEND [Local Offer](#) has been redesigned to better support children and young people and their families. It provides engaging content for children and young people to support them to make informed decisions and be well prepared for their next steps and [was well-received by partners and the community](#).

Our families report that access and criteria to services in social care and strengthening families is better understood, largely because all new and existing social workers receive specific SEND training to improve their understanding of SEND issues and better identify, assess and meet children and young people's needs.

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

We are working with DPCC and SENDIASS to ensure families participate fully in decision making and do not feel the need to appeal through the SEND tribunal process. We are working to ensure Health notifications inform more intelligent commissioning and sufficiency planning. We are embedding co-production of re-integration plans for children and young people with our Learning Centres (registered AP) and externally commissioned AP.

- **Impact rather than input** – 58 responses via the Prove It Tool questionnaires to date. The first 6 weeks follow up responses are now being received and, although numbers so far are low, the positive impact of attending RSC is clearly indicated:

What changed following the drop-in session?

What positive changes have you seen in your child's communication skills?

Table data

Option	Responses	Proportion
My child has made progress with their talking or understanding	3	100%
My child is able to communicate more with me and/or other people	2	66.7%
My child's attention and listening have improved	1	33.3%

What changed following the drop-in session?

What has changed for you?

Table data

Option	Responses	Proportion
I use strategies that help my child's communication	4	100%
I know what to do and where to go for more help	3	75%
I now have information to help me with my child's communication	2	50%
Other family members are also using strategies that help my child's communication	2	50%

What changed following the drop-in session?

Tell us anything that has changed about your child's communication

He is now using lot of sentences and words are more clear now.

-

He now has a few more words which are getting clearer

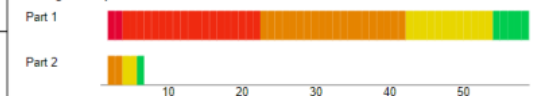
-

Some of his words are sounding clearer and easier for others to understand

How do you feel now, following the drop-in session?



Change in responses



Our Local Area Emergency Protocol Meetings (LEAPs) and Care (Education) and Treatment Reviews (CETRs) have reduced local hospital admissions and out of area placements. Additionally, the new SLCN pathway empowers parents and carers through access to information, tools and support.

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

What do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We know that decisions about EHC needs assessments are made in a timely manner, 90% are made within 6 weeks enabling us to progress to the assessment process. 64.7% EHCPs are completed within 20 weeks leading to children and young people receiving provision to meet their special educational needs.

We know that 50% of the requests for Outreach from one of Dorset's special schools are met within 6 weeks and feedback shows that this has helped to meet the child's needs

"The child is in class full time"

"The Outreach is an integral part of our inclusive approach, and we would not be able to provide the level of support we do without it. X (and colleagues!) is an enormous asset to our school."

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

Headlines and Highlights

- Every early years setting has a SENCO who accesses regular training and support. From 1 June 2024, we implemented service changes introducing a new role 'Best Start in Life Advisor' (BSILA) replacing the roles of Portage Consultant and Early Years Support and Advice Officer. Our design approach was based on what is valued and makes a difference for children, families and settings. We are increasing the number of people who are confident in the 'Portage principles' to provide more support to more families. We feel this will really help our children have the best start in life that will help them in the long term and upskill 'front line' staff with skills that can help families without delay.
- Specialist Teachers deliver training on SEND, to ensure that SEND needs are identified early. Working with Ophthalmology and Audiology, the Hearing and Vision Support Services (HVSS) work to enable learning environments so children and young people have equitable access to the curriculum. Specific outcomes are achieved by teaching independence skills such as using assistive technology, mobility, developing language and communication skills, sign language and braille. By supporting inclusion and social and emotional health through training we build capacity in schools so children and young people can stay in their local mainstream school
- Best Start in Life meetings between locality practitioners and health colleagues are held at least fortnightly where the most vulnerable children are discussed, and plans agreed for support. The Children and Young People's Public Health team complete a trigger tool when developmental milestones have not been met to identify any children who may have SEND and/or will need ongoing monitoring /assessments
- Children and young people with SEND are identified at the point of pre-assessment by Children and Young People's Continuing Care (CYPCC) based on information provided by the referrer whilst Core-CAMHS support families to initiate the EHC needs assessment process if identified as a potential need
- The Physical & Medical Needs Service work with Health colleagues (such as specialist and community nurses and Children's Therapy practitioners) and the Assets & Property Team to ensure that individual children and young people have the appropriate plans to support them in school, and that any specialist equipment or environmental adaptations are provided either before they start school, or within a reasonable timeframe following diagnosis.

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Using Balanced System® Framework, families and professionals can find information, advice and contact details for local and UK resources which are suitable for all ages, to create a pathway of support. The online resource assists users in building a programme of support to help children and young people develop their speech, language and communication.

We take a whole system approach, which includes a strong focus on the universal offer across settings and services, and empowering families, to strengthen timely and accurate identification and assessment of SLC needs.

For our youngest children, the introduction of the easy access pathway for SLCN has supported the reduction in waiting times for support. We have listened to our families who tell us access to speech and language support make a difference to their child's development. We are therefore introducing Stay, Play and Chat sessions in Autumn 2024 facilitated by a Portage trained Best Start in Life Advisor and a SALT in local communities. We will be monitoring the impact of attendance at these sessions on children and families.

We are enabling better relationships between young people with learning disabilities aged 14 – 25 and their primary care provider (GP). We are working with secondary care, schools, parents/carers, primary care, and young people to co-produce resources and information to enable all partners to deliver consistent credible messaging. Our intent is to enable every service working with young people to understand the importance of a learning disability health check and to support young people as they take ownership of their own health.

We are using a key worker project to focus on young people with learning disabilities, autistic young people, and their families. Where crises happen and help is not available locally, children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both may end up in tier 4 mental health settings that are not always well placed to meet their needs. Our approach makes sure the young person and their family get the right support at the right time and makes sure that local systems are responsive to meeting their needs in a holistic and joined up way.

We have decreased waiting times for access to specialist services such as CAMHS, pediatricians and therapy (SALT, OT and Physiotherapy), reducing anxiety and supporting faster access to services.

Children and young people receive the right help at the right time

Headlines and Highlights

- We have agreed pathways in place to enable multi-agency advice to be requested to inform EHCNAs
- We hold regular multi-disciplinary locality and multi-agency resource panels to ensure effective, timely and responsive decision-making
- We have recently refreshed our standard templates between services and parent carers (including ECHNA, EHCP and Request for Advice)
- Our schools can access outreach from the Teaching Alliance of Dorset Special Schools (TADSS) and most can access Mental Health Support Teams
- A campaign to promote the benefits of annual health checks for young people with a learning disability led to increased uptake of these checks and conversations about needs
- Pathways to access support are largely clear, well-publicised and understood by partners and stakeholders
- Our Graduated Approach is regularly promoted through our SENCO networks
- SENDIASS has commissioned and employs a young person to help other young people to engage and share views relating to their education, health and care provisions
- Leaders take effective action to improve the quality of the EHC plan process. This includes continuously refining a fair and robust decision-making system to decide on a child or young person's education, health and care needs or plan, issuing plans in a timely way and checking the quality of EHC plans
- We are digitalising the process to receive Section 23 Notification from health partners enabling us to act more quickly to meet the needs of children and families.

Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes



Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

Headlines and Highlights

- The Children in Care Team (NHS Dorset) aims to help children and young people with their physical and emotional health needs and promote healthy lifestyle choices. Care experienced young people up to the age of 21 and 25 with an EHCP have access to support from a Care Leaver transition nurse. The Health Passport for Care Leavers is a recent collaborative piece of work with young people that was designed to meet all needs and be inclusive of care leavers
- DCH aim to support young people and their families as they transition from Paediatric to adult services through holistic annual transition reviews, by providing information, managing expectations and supporting them initially in adult services – electronic flags on notes to alert us to admissions. This involves working closely with Primary care, tertiary care, social care, education, and the voluntary sector to provide a more seamless service. DCH have a specialist transitions nurse in post. The Ready Steady Go toolkit is being used to support transitions from 13/14 years of age
- Our hospitals have specialty-specific transition pathways for children with SEND and ongoing medical needs, with dedicated clinics attended by a paediatrician and adult colleagues. For children with multisystem conditions, there is a regular transition meeting led by Will Dunford, and supported by a paediatrician and adult consultant with expertise in neurodisability. Where suitable, some patients have their ongoing care delivered by GP. There is an opportunity to discontinue medications, such as melatonin during the transition process. Families are supported by the Ready Steady Go programme, and information given over multiple appointments as appropriate.

Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements?

We have completed the review of the internal transition pathway in Personal Health Commissioning, which has improved patient/carer experience of transitions. Our ID CAMHS teams work closely with the adult learning disability teams to ensure that transitions are smooth, particularly when discharging to community mental health teams or back to the GP, when no ongoing work is indicated, and medication is prescribed.

Case Study – The Role of our SEND Provision Leads in supporting Next Steps and Securing Strong Outcomes

CASE STUDY REDACTED FOR DATA PROTECTION PURPOSES

Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities



Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Headlines and Highlights

- The role of a social prescriber is to facilitate ‘What Matters to You’ conversations, to listen and support that person to make changes in their lives and connections in the area, such as new activities, that might boost their wellbeing. One example is at the Jurassic coast primary care network. The SELF Service (Support, Empowerment, Links and Future), is helping young people by providing them with advice, guidance and links with other local youth groups and opportunities. They are working with young people’s support charities, such as Stormbreak, as well as voluntary organisations and statutory services to make it as far reaching and successful as possible within the area. Since September 2022 the team have also had drop-in sessions at local schools. So far, over 70 young people have been able to seek support from the SELF team: Social prescribing saves lives – NHS Dorset
- There is a strong focus in our education and post 16 provision on children and young people being part of their local community, whether that is through community-based activities or through local employment pathways

Strengthening Services for Disabled Children and Young People

Our [Strengthening Services for children who are disabled programme](#), approved by Cabinet on 5 April 2022, has and is continuing to reshape provision for children who are disabled within Dorset. The programme encompasses a range of different homes and settings, providing flexible, wraparound services delivering intensive support to meet children and family needs. This approach is strengthening our wider offer to enable children to continue living at home, alongside a short break offer which reduces the need for children to have to live away from home permanently. The Harbour, our service for children on the edge of care, in care and leaving care, has had a positive impact, and this evidence suggests that a similar approach, incorporating a single multi-agency team, residential and fostering provision, community-based support and in reach provision, will improve outcomes for children who are disabled. See also pages 59-60 (Birth to Settled Adulthood).

Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

Case Study – Beaucroft Special School, The College

The College at Beaucroft Special School opened in June 2023. It is located one mile from the school site in Wimborne. The college provides a rich learning experience for their Post 16 young adults.

A huge part of their learning experience is taking part in the management of enterprises. This gives them experience of work-related learning environments and develops their life skills, independence, interpersonal skills, communication skills and team-work skills and helps prepare them for adulthood. It also supports them to play a meaningful part in their local community.

The young adults support in the 1HQ Café on a half termly basis. They serve customers, prepare food and take payments. To support this the menus are visual, and they have a specially adapted visual till. The café is self-supporting and able to employ staff to work alongside the students and volunteers. Arts and crafts produced by the students are available to purchase at the café. Future plans are to expand and relocate in the very near future and to incorporate bicycle repairs.

[Post-16 Enterprises – Beaucroft Foundation School](#)



Children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

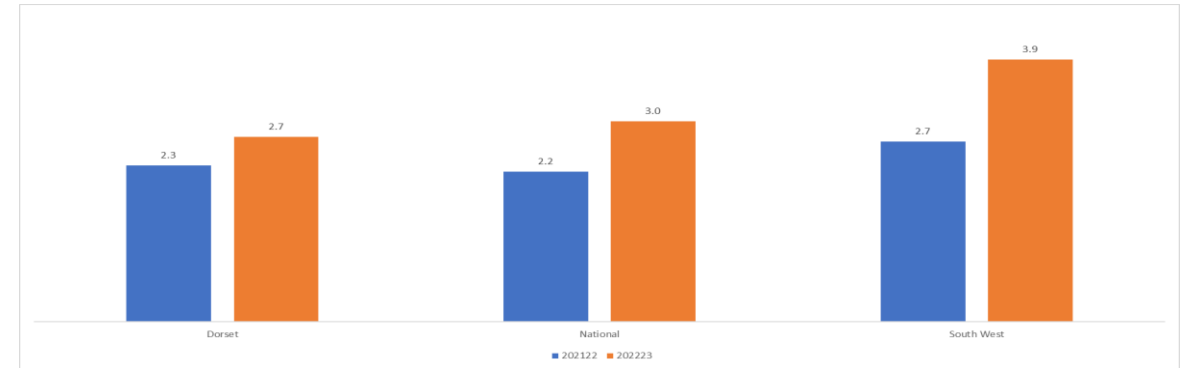
The latest nationally released suspensions data shows the level of suspensions in Dorset is below level at both national level and in the Southwest for 2022/23. Nationally there was a significant rise from 2021/22 to 2022/23 of 34%. In the equivalent period, the rise in Dorset was 18% and in the Southwest 46%.

Headlines and Highlights

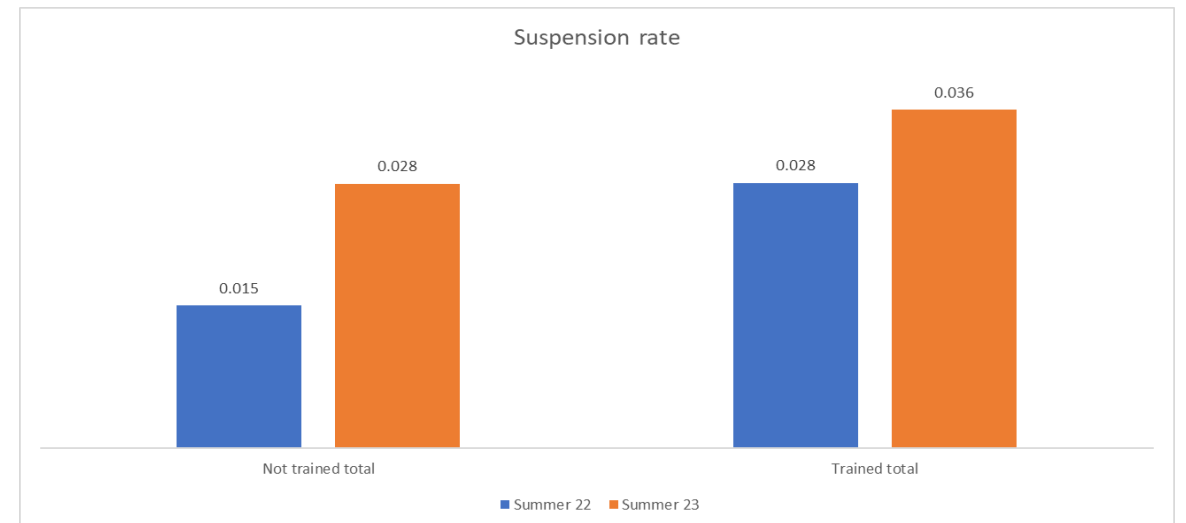
We want our schools and settings to be inclusive for all our children and young people through thinking therapeutically. Therapeutic thinking alongside relational trauma informed practice is the preferred approach to managing relationships when emotional well-being is preventing a child/ young person from accessing education. It involves using a variety of person-centred tools to explore, consider and understand emotionally distressed behaviour.

We are in the process of introducing therapeutic thinking training to early years settings.

94 Dorset schools have already accessed the training. We compared suspensions rates from summer 2022 and summer 2023. Analysis shows that in a national context of rising suspensions, the increase in those trained schools was much lower than the increase in those not trained (see table opposite).



Suspension rate increase from 2021/22 to 2022/23, showing slower increase in Dorset



Suspension rate comparison showing impact of Therapeutic Thinking training. Where schools have engaged with the training and approach, suspensions are now lower.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND



Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Headlines and Highlights

- The SEND agenda aligns with our Integrated Care Partnership Strategy 22/23 that focuses on prevention and early help, thriving communities and working better together. Our vision and principles have been agreed by system leaders, 100 Voices (providing community insights) and case studies including CYP mental health that highlights the opportunity to work differently improve population health and use of resources. Partnership working at place can enable partners to have a **shared understanding** of local need and to coordinate **multi-agency action** to support residents. It can support **integration** of services in the areas where most people's interactions with them happen - the place in which they live or work.
- At Dorset Healthcare NHS Foundation trust, Senior Leaders are committed to continually reviewing the Dorset Healthcare offer and attend the SEND Improvement Board to have strategic oversight of the SEND system to enable Provider services to support the Local Offer.
- SEND is an integral part of all children's services provided and there is a dedicated SEND Champion within the Universal 0-19 service. Their role is to ensure that targeted services are accessed in a timely manner and to maintain a focus on SEND needs across the 0-19 services. Targeted services provided would include Speech & Language Therapy and CAMHS who offer either assessment or referral into other specialist services such as Paediatrics.
- Dorset Healthcare sit within the wider SEND system which incorporates both Local Authorities, the Acute Trusts, Primary Care, Education and Third Sector providers. There is a network of professionals who support the SEND Offer and work collaboratively to ensure services can be accessed as required.
- Dorset Healthcare are ambitious to continue to provide SEND services through Universal and Targeted services and strive to continually improve the offer.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

Through a Locality Structure, leaders are well-placed to improve children and young people's outcomes. This is nowhere more visible than through the Partnership Agreement. Leaders' action plans are firmly focused on the needs and ambitions of children and young people. Locality leaders have the expertise and commitment to improve health, education and care outcomes for all children and young people with SEND. The Education Strategy 2024-27 outlines our vision, commitments and intended impact on outcomes for all Dorset children. [Education Strategy 2024 to 2027 - Dorset Council](#).

A detailed SEND Delivery Plan captures the actions that are being undertaken to improve outcomes for our SEND children and young people and those attending AP. Each Priority Action area is broken down into separate actions each with a named professional responsible for their oversight and delivery. Those Accountable, Consulted and Informed are also detailed in the Action Plan as are SMART targets and KPIs to help monitor realisation.

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

Dorset Healthcare will create a senior role to support the Trust SEND agenda. This role will provide a dedicated focus on SEND across all services with an active role in improving the Provider Offer through quality assurance and practice improvement activity, review and raising awareness across the system.

The Trust will focus on adult services as well as children's services as the SEND Offer incorporates young people up to the age of 25. This will be a new way of working for adult services and will require an in-depth analysis of what services currently offer to then plan how to improve the SEND Offer across all Trust services provided.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Case Study – Improving Inclusion at Wey Valley: Taking a Unique Approach

We have partnered with Wey Valley Academy, an 11-16 high school in Weymouth, to develop a programme to support young people with some of the lowest attendance in Dorset (less than 15%). We identified that most of these young people had an ASC diagnosis and high anxiety. Collectively, we felt that we could support this group to access their education with individual timetables, specialist teacher support, one tutor and one space in school. The project is at an early stage, but we have worked with the school to remove barriers and create individual solutions, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. Centrally employed specialist teachers have captured the voices of these young people and the school is listening and putting in place as many of the adjustments as possible with the building and staffing that they have. Each young person is taking their own path to returning to school, some in smaller steps than others, but all are wanting to return to education, a big step for these learners.

The school have reported that Year 7 attendance is 1.4% higher than Year 7 attendance in 2023, demonstrating the positive impact of the enhanced transition and peer mentoring projects. The number of students in Year 11 not sitting exams is 3% lower than in 2023, and 5% lower than in 2022. They have also noted a declining trend in suspensions between terms 1 and 2 this academic year.

Wey Valley Principal Tom Neill said:

"This project has had a significant positive impact on some of our most vulnerable young people and supported them back into school. Work completed as part of the programme has given these young people the tools to better understand and regulate their emotions and to navigate the challenges they face. Our year 11 students in particular have benefited from this work and we have seen a drop in persistent absence in the cohort alongside a significant increase in Level 2 and Level 3 college and 6th form applications. We are committed to ensuring that every young person gets the best possible start in life and this programme has helped us to deliver on that commitment."



Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Through our ten-year plan for **Children, Young People and Families**, Education Strategy Education Strategy 2024 to 2027 - Dorset Council and a tightly-focused SEND Strategy and SEND delivery plan, we have clearly defined the shared outcomes we are working towards to support all children and young people with SEND. Through regular contact with partners (including SENCO Networks, Headteacher touchdowns and dozens of other touchpoints), we are embedding an aspirational culture of high expectations and quality across services and provision.

Through the SEND Board, Dorset Education Board, Quality of Practice and Action Group (QPAG) and a range of other structured meetings, leaders understand their responsibilities and accountabilities, including their statutory duties and their individual responsibilities in the wider area strategy. Responsibilities are delegated in line with leaders' legal duties, as captured in our Scheme of Delegation, which is reviewed at least annually. There is strong oversight for SEND decision-making (for example at panel-level) whilst dividing responsibility for thematic areas to designated leads – including our Principal Educational Psychologist who holds the role of Head of Children Thriving in Education – maintains our ambitious and clear focus on children and young people with SEND.

Our SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Practice Standards and Scheme of Delegation (and its regular review) ensures processes for making decisions are structured so that the leaders responsible can swiftly agree to the changes that are required to improve services. Through our boards, we ensure that leaders challenge themselves and each other to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

Case Study - Our ambition for young people to experience the workplace, inform decisions and have their voices heard: The Takeover Challenge July 2023

To improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, we hold a range of professional meetings. Health colleagues engage with clinical governance and CHUMS meetings each month to audit patient experience and clinical audits. Education colleagues meet to evaluate whether services and provision are improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND through our SEND Board and Dorset Education Board, chaired by former MP Stephen Twigg.

We have embraced the annual Takeover Challenge – [held most recently in July 2023](#) – putting our children and young people into real-life decision-making positions, giving them a valuable insight and experience of our organisation. We, in turn, have benefitted from a fresh perspective.

Cllr Byron Quayle - Dorset's Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help – summed up the value brought by involving our young people. *“We’ve been inspired and humbled at their bravery. They were brilliant at challenging us and sharing their thoughts on how we can do things differently. By sharing their voices and experiences with us, they will directly help to inform and shape our services to better meet the needs of young people and families.”*

Feedback from Schools: *“Just wanted to thank you for making our Mountjoy class visit feel so welcome and heard. Thank you for the hard work to make us and other young people in Dorset feel like we have a voice. The students thoroughly enjoyed being a part of what you are doing and I will encourage them to become involved in Youth Voice.”*

Our plans to improve experiences and outcomes

We are changing what we commission to support more children and young people to remain in their local school and community. This is grounded in our [Attendance Strategy](#) and also our Belonging Strategy that – amongst other things – is advocating and supporting a broad and aspirational curriculum offer, including vocational pathways, that foster a sense of achievement, independence and lead to meaningful qualifications.

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND:

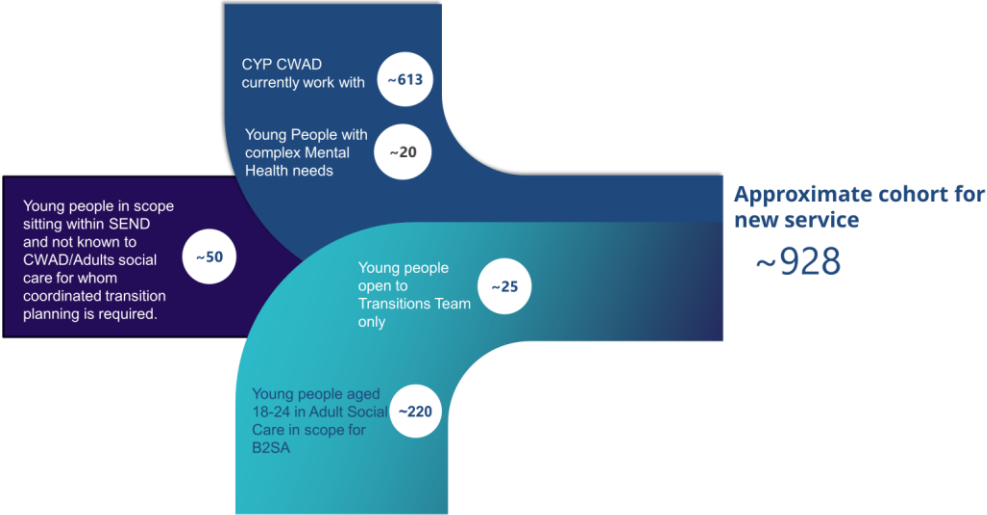
Developing our services to meet the needs of our children

Leaders continue to be ambitious for our children in Dorset, we are currently:

- Developing the Birth to Settled Adulthood partnership service extended to age 25
- Enhancing our multi-disciplinary family help and learning and belonging service as part of Pathfinder
- Opening new children's homes and a short break home for children with disabilities to enhance our offer to children and families

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Birth to Settled Adulthood

Needs analysis



As at 10 October 2023

Our ambition

- To offer children and young people the best start in life and support them and their families to build skills and strengths as they move towards adulthood.
- To achieve integration across the Integrated Care System
- We recognise that this needs to be a phased approach, creating opportunities to develop closer integration.
- Phase 1 focusses on integration across Dorset Council Adult and Children’s services.
- This approach was discussed and supported at the Health and Wellbeing Board on 20/09/2023.

Background context

- Feedback highlighted a need to improve the experience for young people who are disabled or who have mental health issues and their families as they transition from childhood to adulthood
- The Birth to Settled Adulthood Programme was officially launched in Summer 2022,
- It has signed commitment form Dorset Parent Carer Council, NHS Dorset and Dorset Council to work together to make the necessary improvements.
- The programme includes how we commission care and support, provide information, advice and guidance, measuring success and service design.

What people have told us ...



Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Birth to Settled Adulthood

Phase 1 launched on 30 April 2024

- Creation of a flexible 0-25 service model for Dorset Council
- Right workers supporting the child, young person and family at the right time
- Early planning to support transitions
- Improved support for parent carers to build resilience, knowledge and confidence in caring for their child or young person
- Practical support to build skills for independence
- Support to navigate the Local Offer, information advice and guidance
- Education Health and Care Plans play a key role in joint working and have a stronger focus on Preparation for Adulthood outcomes
- Maintains and enhances statutory Safeguarding and Short Breaks functions.

Internal changes

- Management of the service hosted in Children's Services
- Shared responsibility for Key Performance Indicators
- Embedded specialisms within the service including early years Best Start in Life Advisors
- Ability to draw in expertise from other teams
- Appointment of a dedicated Head of Service for Birth to Settled Adulthood who will also hold the DSCO role.
- Align funding decisions



Outcomes Framework

We have co-produced 'I Statements' with children, young people and parents and are developing 'We Statements' as the basis of our outcomes framework.

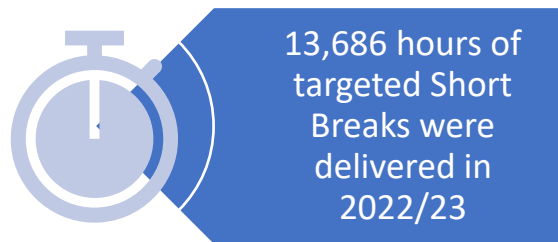
Links

Joint Declaration video [Birth to Settled Adulthood declaration \(youtube.com\)](#)
Birth to Settled Adulthood webpage [Birth to Settled Adulthood - Dorset Council](#)
Committee Report [Birth to Settled Adulthood report September 2021 V2 Final.pdf \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Short Breaks

Providers collect feedback from young people and their families to tell us about the impact of Short Breaks, here is some of what they tell us:

We commission targeted group based Short Breaks, as well as specialist and overnight Short Breaks.



'I made friends with new people'

'This group has allowed our son to take part in a group setting with children that allows him to feel like he fits in. A safe and welcoming environment with good activities. Thank you!'

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Supporting our most vulnerable young people



We are developing our in-house residential and outreach services – a multi-agency approach to support our most vulnerable young people...

Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: In-house residential and outreach services

College house: multi-agency trauma informed services: Residential and outreach for children and young people on the edge of care. Supporting young people to stay in their family settings and local to their communities and people that matter to them.

College House
(3)
Registered Nov
2022

Harbour
outreach

Outreach: As at the end of September 2023 a total of 166 young people have been supported by the Harbour. 50% of children were supported either through SEN support or EHCP. 108 children were on the edge of care and 94% were supported to remain cared for by their family.

Cherries: Close down plan underway. Children being supported with their move on plans

The Cherries
(2)
(LD)

Residential
and
outreach
services

Hayeswood (3)
Short breaks
Registered
Oct 2023

Hayeswood: Short break home for children.

Solo homes: planning for the future and developing forever a forever home for children, to reduce the need to move on.

Brackenbury
(1)
(LD)
In
development

Lighthouse
outreach

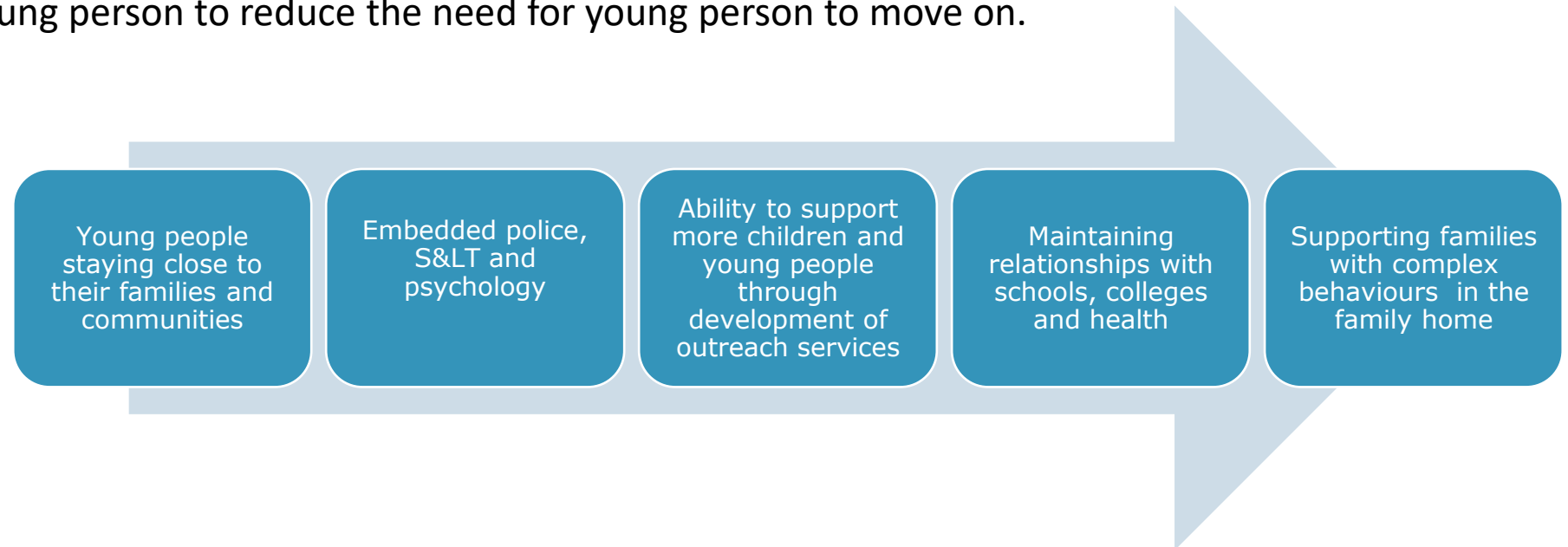
Outreach: Support is provided for children and young people with disabilities. The aim is to support families and young people within their family home.

Chestnut House: Medium to long term Residential home supporting children to develop independent skills for adulthood

Chestnut
House (LD) (3)
(registered Dec
2023)

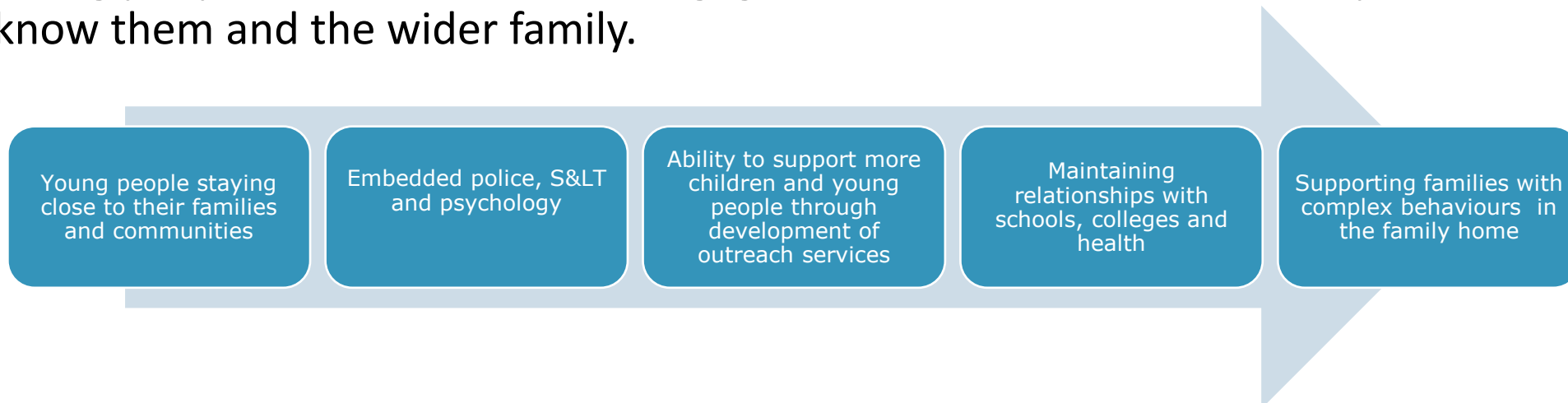
Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Impact for young people

- Young person E was able to tell us important things happening in his life by trusted adults working with speech and language to devise a comic strip discussion.
- Young person D was able to stay close locally to mum by a robust transition to her new home. This meant relationships were not disrupted by D living away from the local area. This also meant she was able to continue attending the same school.
- Young person P has been provided with 1:1 outreach support at his family home so that mum can have some time to herself, therefore decreasing the likelihood of P coming into care.
- Young person S had very complex behaviour needs, with the intensive support from CAMHS ID we were able to support the young person to self-regulate, resulting in him staying close to his family and community.
- Forever home for young person to reduce the need for young person to move on.



Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND: Wider Impact

- The development of the short breaks service (Hayeswood) has also supported families with outreach, so parents can have a break, helping families stay together. The first overnight commences 08/03/24.
- Using our specialist S< and embedded police we have been able to develop information that helps our young people understand what happens when they go missing and how this is reported. This has resulted in a decrease of missing episodes.
- Supporting our police colleagues to obtain more knowledge of working with SEND children and embedded police forming better relationship with our young people.
- Young people have better health engagement from local services and professionals who know them and the wider family.



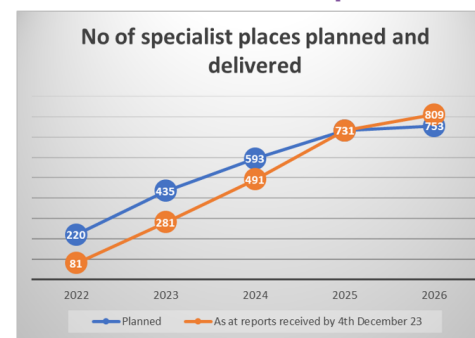
Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve experiences and outcomes

We are holding [100 Conversations](#) with our stakeholders to hear about their experiences and improve their outcomes. So far, we have learned that CYP and/or parent carer representation as part of recruitment panels for staff working with SEND is important so we have routinely put that in place. We have completed an annual health check of resources co-produced and developed with lived experience and each of our current system wide transformation programmes are coproduced and rooted in lived experience.

The [Family Information Service](#) has improved the ways that families, carers, and young people can access information about the services and support available through Dorset Council. We have already reviewed over 800 of our webpages to simplify the language and make things easier to understand, for example, by using plain English. We are going to continue to ensure that information is up-to-date, complete, and that links to other webpages and sites are current and that related information is grouped logically. We will do more of the things that we have been told work well, such as greater personalisation, using more pictures and videos, joining up with other organisations so everything is in one place and, where possible, supporting the booking of appointments, meetings, and other activities.

281 new SEND places delivered



We made a bid to the DfE for additional funding of £13.6M for a further 116 places on 5th Jan 24. If successful, this would mean a total 925 new places in train for Dorset children with SEND

Projects have been completed at:

- Beacroft
- Yewstock
- Westfield
- Harbour School
- Coombe House
- St Mary's, Bridport
- Bincombe Valley
- Gillingham

Of the 809 places in train, 230 places are being delivered by the DfE & 579 places are being delivered by Dorset

Projects are in train at:

- Ferndown
- Coombe House
- Osprey Quay
- Forum centre
- Sir John Colfox
- Wey Valley
- Westfield – South Annex

Jo Twine
Interim Capital
Programme Manager



We are delivering on an ambitious plan to increase the number of special school and specialist places available to Dorset children and young people. This plan involves the creation of over 800 new places in settings across Dorset. We have delivered almost 300 of these new places to date and expect to have around 500 in place for the start of the 2024/25 academic year.

Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and their families

Case Study – Impact of Local Alliance Groups

Our Local Alliance Groups (LAG) are strategic groups for each locality that include key partners from the local area. Each LAG sets priorities for focus for their children, young people and families and is allocated £100K annually to support projects driven by the local community and partner organisations. The aim is to find creative solutions to inclusion challenges within settings, communities and families, to do with and not to.

Some of the funding is accessed by schools directly. Approved projects range from creating dedicated sensory spaces to running additional Forest School sessions and allowing for the introduction of bespoke summer school provision targeting children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) who might struggle with transition. One recent project in a Dorset first school focused on children from disadvantaged backgrounds who were invited to attend a healthy cooking club. The funding provided by LAG enabled the project to expand so that their siblings, parents and carers could also attend, cooking healthy family recipes and then taking the meals home to eat. In December, children attending the club cooked a three-course Christmas meal, designed and created by them, and served this to their invited family members. This is just one example of how this funding has been used to support projects bringing communities together. Elsewhere, a group of 25 children at St Mary's Middle School in Dorchester received a much-needed confidence boost, thanks to funding allocated by the Local Alliance Group

[Summer school programme builds self-confidence and engagement with school – St. Mary's Middle School.](#)



Youth Voice

A Youth Voice Officer was employed in Nov'23 to lead on hearing the voices of children and young people with SEND and those with more complex needs. They joined us from working in one of our children's homes for those with complex needs.

Given the nature of this work, there has been a significant effort made in getting to know and build relationships with these children and young people, their parents/carers and practitioners.

The team are trained in using Easy Read with Photo Symbols licenses and also use Widgets to produce resources.

We have been engaging with children and young people regarding the development of the Birth to Settled Adulthood Service, here's a summary the activity so far...

- We have delivered a workshop at Mountjoy School to 12 students in addition, 5 young people have been seen at Purbeck SEN Youth Club and 3 young people have been seen at the Horse Course
'I often worry if we have enough money for things we buy and need'
- 3 young people have been seen at A Stars autism youth club and 3 visits were undertaken to EMA (Employ My Ability) and the YV Officer took part in their PSHE lesson and is attending their School Council Mtg with week.
- Visit to Wyvern School – joining their school council every half term
- Westfield School – working on B2SA with their students and teachers will gather the feedback.

Teacher feedback: *'More personalised language needed and different versions of the booklet'*

Student Feedback: *'I don't understand what you mean community, equipment etc'*

Young people told us that we need to think carefully about the language we are using, for example 'I Statements', which were triggering for some SEMH students e.g. regarding bullying and being treated unfairly.

Autism in Schools Project: Home visit to an autistic young person who is no longer in school. They have given feedback on the documents for the project and how to make them more young person friendly. Next step is to see if they would like to design some of the documents.

Education Board: Those with less complex needs who are members of the Dorset Youth Council have given feedback about the language in the Pledge for Students and have asked to include a section on individuality – ‘see me’

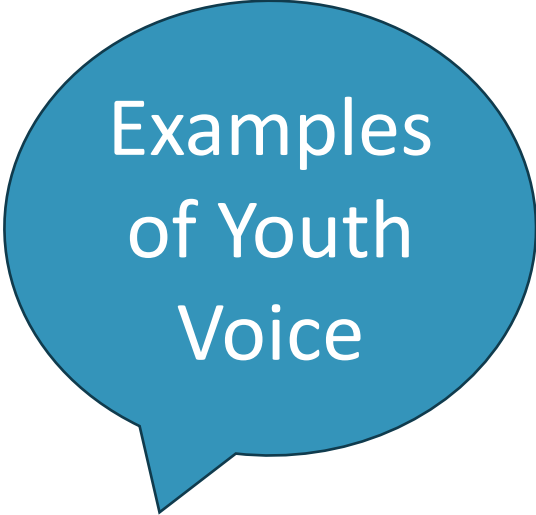
Youth Council: The Youth Council is a group for all young people including our young people with SEN.

Youth Elections: Some of our Special Schools are taking part with adapted ballot papers and Mountjoy took part in an activity about the Play Strategy, to practice voting but also telling us what play means to them.

Takeover Challenge 2023: 32 young people took part in total, 16 of those who took part were from 2 of our special schools, Mountjoy and Westfield . They took part as small groups and were supported to join us in the workplace at county hall, by their teachers and TA’s. They contributed to our **Belonging Strategy**.

Feedback from young people: “I learned how much thought went into making sure that children in care with a disability would feel safe and welcome”

Young Commissioners: Our young commissioner group includes children with additional needs



Examples
of Youth
Voice

Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

Headlines and Highlights

- Our Dorset Intelligence Insight Service (DiiS) links data from across health and social care throughout Dorset to give an accurate and shared understanding of needs. Various dashboards give us the information we need to understand the wider determinants of education, health and social factors to support improved care and services for CYP and predict future needs.
- NHS Dorset holds a monthly virtual panel where health funding requests and exceptional commissioning arrangements are considered. Alongside this, multi-agency SEND panels meet throughout each week to consider requests for support, providing professionals with a clear and immediate picture of needs on the ground.
- Complaints and compliments are closely monitored, with Service Manager and Director oversight, a log of learning and follow-up on agreed actions a matter of established practice
- Strong governance arrangements are in place including multi agency panels and forums including the SEND health Forum.
- We know that we need to improve monitoring of concerns around mental health and wellbeing – particularly amongst Health colleagues – to enable a better understanding of needs and to address the increase in need as the population changes.

Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

We gather accurate, timely information about our children and young people with SEND through our EHC Needs Assessment process. We are consistently providing decisions within timescale (87% over the past two years, to date) and we use this information, reports from our quarterly Quality of Practice and Action Group (QPAG) sessions, Annual Review dip samples (conducted monthly) and Specialist Teacher/Education Psychologist-led SEND planning meetings in EVERY school to monitor the changing needs of the population, including using the perspectives of children, young people and families. Through our SEND Survey, Local Offer Community Events and engagement with our young people via community events, we understand the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND in our area. Our robust approach to monitoring, exemplified through our multi-agency “QPAG” sessions, but built into the DNA of our Locality model enables leaders to share information across education, care and health services so we can learn from different perspectives and approaches.



Case Study – Gaining an Understanding: Chesil Youth Pride

Teams from Dorset Council’s Children’s Services – including our SEND team – and youth workers from partner organisations, attended an inaugural [Youth Pride event in Weymouth](#) to listen to the needs of a vulnerable group in our community and offer advice and support to the LGBTQI+ young people and to signpost them to available services. As well as being a wonderful and joyous event, it gave leaders an opportunity to add to their understanding of the needs of children and young people in the local area.

Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including Alternative Provision

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Many children and young people are supported back into mainstream education or onto a positive next step because of commissioned services such as outreach or Alternative Provision. Our aim is that more children benefit from support early enough. We demand high standards of provision and work with providers to deliver better for our children.

Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of CYP with SEND

Key to improving the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND is supporting them to attend their local school or setting, whenever appropriate. We have worked with partners to develop a county-wide school attendance campaign, which is all about providing practical and supportive advice to families, through understanding lived experiences and responding as an education community.

As a local education system, we are changing what we commissioning to support more children and young people in their local school and community. This is ambitious work, some elements are emerging, and we plan to have further provision starting to come online for September 2024 onwards. For example, our two FE colleges, local schools and Dorset Council are co-creating an enhanced and aspirational vocational offer.

Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including Alternative Provision

Case Study – Working with [Weymouth College](#) to Commission Provision

CASE STUDY REDACTED FOR DATA PROTECTION PURPOSES

Leaders evaluate services and make improvements

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We have a robust Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement process that enables education, health and social care colleagues to work alongside our children, young people and their families to ensure we deliver high quality and timely services that have a positive impact.

Through our Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement Framework, we ensure the quality, effectiveness and timeliness of:

- Educational settings' graduated approach to supporting children and young people who have SEND
- Capturing and considering the child/young person's views, wishes and aspirations, and those of their family
- Education Health and Care needs assessments, plans and reviews

We undertake a robust cycle of Multi-Agency quality assurance and data analysis which includes:

- Data analysis to identify themes and trends
- Auditing, practice improvement and learning activity
- Feedback from children, young people and their families
- Regular reviews of practice and performance to ensure continuous improvement



Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

- We have strengthened quality assurance and practice improvement activities, arrangements around external progress and inclusion (AP) providers. As the Belonging Strategy is embedded, we will reduce reliance on the use of AP and provide further improvements through our own local specialist provision, with more enhanced facilities in mainstream schools to ensure that young people with SEND have the best environment and resources to meet their needs, close to home within their local community. We will clearly communicate to providers and parents/carers the provision that is available in the local area, including within mainstream, specialist and through Alternative Provision. We will strengthen our business intelligence around Alternative Provision specifically to ensure we are tracking outcomes.
- Our new case management system will improve the efficiency of delivery and bring on board professional and schools to genuinely co-produce EHCPs. We are continuing to develop our digital Local Offer to provide clear, easy to use information, advice and assistance as part of a Digital Family Offer (ODFO) across education, health and care.

Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

How do we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people?

We have clear processes and systems to support practitioners to work together and share appropriate information in a timely manner, including extensive use of One Page Profiles to form views, fully-inclusive Annual Review processes held in conjunction with PEPs for Children in Care (where appropriate) to promote multi-agency working. Leaders encourage practitioners working together in these situations to focus on the child or young person, identifying alternative solutions when existing options do not meet needs and aspirations effectively.

Through [TADSS](#) and SENCO networks, leaders ensure that expertise is shared and practice upskilled and through the promotion and use of Learning Circles, we learn from mistakes and strengthen practice. We have put in place strong systems for identifying and responding to risks to children and young people with SEND, such as transitions stakeholders group sessions, prioritizing audits for children and young people in specialist placements (including ISPs) and Alternative Provision, and joint workforce planning and development for our [B2SA vision](#).

Leaders ensure that practitioners are clear on their individual roles and how they can best work together to improve outcomes for children and young people *and* that practitioners have the appropriate skills to understand children and young people's needs and aspirations through robust supervision and performance management. In addition, we use the Dorset Education Board, SEND Board, Schools Forum, DSL termly meetings and a range of other touchpoints to ensure that practitioners working with children and young people with SEND have the right knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of harm.

"After a further meeting with representatives from Dorset today, I just wanted to email to formally thank you all for your understanding, flexibility and support with the complex case we've been collaborating on. It's been so refreshing to work with such an open and solution-focused team and for our suggestions to not only be listened to but given real consideration in the best interests of the child."

Director of SEND (Local MAT)

Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

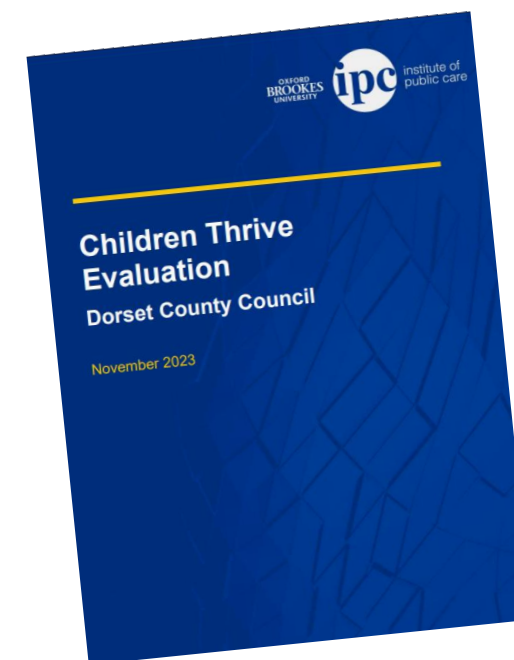
Our plans for the next 12 months to improve experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

- We are strengthening our contract management arrangements to ensure oversight of externally commissioned school and college places. At the same time, we will use our Business Intelligence resources to ensure we are tracking outcomes more effectively. We will undertake further joint commissioning work to target earlier intervention, including the use of pooled budgets and a new approach and pathway for SLCN partners.
- Every SENCO will be offered the opportunity for restorative and relational practice training during the academic year 2023-24. Schools that have already completed the 3-day 'Therapeutic Thinking' training but who have disproportionately high numbers of children and young people with EHCPs and suspensions will receive additional support to embed, implement and tailor the approach.
- We will continue to roll out our Inclusion Hub model to schools, keeping children within their school and local communities. We will review with multi-agency partners how we support children in the Early Years.

Case Study – Dorset Children Thrive – Independent Report

Dorset Council Children's Services received a judgment of 'Good' when last inspected in October 2021. We introduced a new locality practice model, Children Thrive, in September 2020, integrating Education and Early Help services and linking them much more closely with social care practice in localities. We commissioned the Institute of Public Care at Oxford Brookes University to help us understand the effectiveness of our approach and the Children Thrive model and where there might be opportunities to develop practice as we pilot a new Families First for Children model as one of three pathfinders. The Children Thrive model, whilst being introduced in a time of unprecedented challenge, has not been static and has developed over the last three years, to pilot initiatives such as Safeguarding Families Together.

A key principle of the Children Thrive model is getting the right help at the right time. From data and cases analysed, triangulated with staff feedback, this external audit of our approach found was frequently found to be the case.



Leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

Examples of impact and next steps:

- our SEND Partnership Board understands performance across the partnership and supports ongoing improvement in multi-agency work, such as seeking an alternative approach to supporting families awaiting diagnosis
- SENCOs are involved in a trial of an audit tool to understand setting readiness and needs of children and families in West and East localities and this has led to feedback on feeling more confident in their leadership and practice
- practitioners draw on expertise within their multi-disciplinary teams, to ensure the best outcomes for children as evidenced in the Oxford Brookes evaluation of our locality model
- our workforce development offer has strong uptake from across the partnership (for example, 94 settings have completed the 3-day Therapeutic Thinking Tutor Training)
- schools adopting the Therapeutic Thinking approaches have a lower rate of suspensions – particularly in secondary
- the quality of our EHCPs has improved with more being graded Good or better through audit
- practitioners benefit from group supervision as part of Safeguarding Families Together and we are expanding this offer to education partners to further strengthen practice
- The Dorset Education Board has commissioned a workforce pledge task group, including representatives from across the partnership to continuously strengthen and support our workforce

How we help and protect children and young people so that they are kept safe

We are committed to delivering services which ensure that children and young people in Dorset will be happy and safe and have opportunities to reach their goals as responsible members of their community. To make Dorset the best place for all children and young people, we ensure they are at the heart of all we do.

Underpinning features

- child protection practice (including information-sharing) and workforce development
- recruitment and selection practice
- induction, training and supervision
- code of conduct
- whistle blowing
- complaints and representations
- equal opportunities/diversity
- disciplinary and capability issues
- the management of allegations against people who work with children

Our Dorset Council Policy
Statement on Safeguarding
Children and Young People

To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Dorset we:

- listen to children, young people and their families and involve them in decisions that affect them, make sure our staff and anyone who works on our behalf, are aware of and committed to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- develop practice across Directorates which aims to achieve compliance with the Standards set by Dorset Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding Standards
- work constantly with individuals or organisations working with children on a paid or voluntary basis to ensure that there are robust measures in place to keep children safe and to respond to any concerns or allegations that are raised

How we help and protect children and young people so that they are kept safe

We have strengthened our Safeguarding practice by employing a dedicated Service Manager for Safeguarding in Education. This postholder manages the Local Area Designated Officer and sits within our Quality Assurance team. The postholder oversees support and challenge within our education community to ensure safeguarding standards are maintained. This will be strengthened even further through Education being the fourth statutory partner within the pathfinder programme.

As a result of the work:

- Our settings utilise a robust safeguarding audit tool to enable excellent understanding of their practice and where to take action to improve
- School inspections % of good or better outcomes are improving
- We are assured of the safety of our children through oversights and visits by managers and senior officers
- We follow up swiftly on Ofsted complaints and support best practice in settings
- There is purposeful, multi-disciplinary activity with educational settings with higher rates of suspension and exclusion
- We spoke at a national conference on Online Safety in March 2024 as we are recognised as leading practice in this area, alongside our Community Safety colleagues in the police.