

Care Dorset Shareholder Committee

7 October 2024

Report from the Chair of the Board of Directors

For information and assurance

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Date:	25 September 2024

Report status: **PUBLIC**

Brief summary:

This paper provides an update for shareholder members on matters relating to Care Dorset following the last meeting. This report covers the period from late June to September 2024.

Recommendation:

A. For the Shareholder Committee to note the report and the updates contained therein.

Reason for recommendation:

Care Dorset is a key delivery partner to Dorset Council for adult social care and support. There remains significant work in driving forward improvements in Care Dorset's operation and also to grow the organisation both in volume and revenue.

INTRODUCTION

1. Care Dorset is pleased to submit this comprehensive report to the Shareholder by way of an update on relevant matters.
2. Care Dorset has been successful in being shortlisted for Care Team of the Year at the National Care Awards. The Reablement team is up against nine other finalists. The winner will be announced at the event in London on 29 November 2024.
3. Care Dorset is in the final phase of organising its second birthday celebrations. In place of a single awards evening, local teams have been encouraged to organise an event to include the people we support and colleagues. Confirmation of dates for these events is pending but will be in the weeks commencing 30 September and 7 October 2024.
4. Contract renegotiation
 - 4.1. Care Dorset continues to have productive discussions with its Dorset Council commissioners on the block contract arrangements. Significant work has been undertaken from both parties to revise and update the service specifications. The final phase of the discussions is to agree the volume and contract value. These discussions are planned for the end of September 2024.
5. Achievements in the last 12 months
 - 5.1. As Care Dorset reaches the end of its second year of operation, it is important to reflect on the last 12 months and the achievements the organisation has made:
 - 5.1.1. Sustained improvements in the level of occupancy across its residential beds.
 - 5.1.2. Reduced colleague vacancy levels.
 - 5.1.3. Introduction of the people with lived experience complaints scrutiny panel as part of the approach to instil a learning culture across the organisation.
 - 5.1.4. Reduction in the use of agency colleagues resulting in improved financial performance in the second half of the year.
 - 5.1.5. Introduction of the community development fund (see paragraph 23 onwards for more details).
 - 5.1.6. Opened the Dorchester Road location in Weymouth (a service for younger adults with learning disabilities) with positive outcomes already being achieved.
 - 5.1.7. Successfully recruited a full colleague team for St Martin's extra care housing scheme in Gillingham.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

6. The financial year end is 30 September 2024. It is unlikely that Care Dorset will make a profit this year and at best will be at a break-even position. This is dependent on successfully recovering the additional costs incurred on behalf of Dorset Council Property. A schedule of costs has been shared with Dorset Council Property and we have invoiced £811k.
7. Revenue is behind budget by £0.9m which is explained by the delay with the St Martin's extra care housing scheme in Gillingham.
8. Care Dorset monitors its cash flow carefully and remains solvent although there is no room for complacency, and the situation is kept under continuous review and scrutiny.
9. Negotiations on the block contract value and volumes with Dorset Council commissioners continue to be progressed. This has been a significant amount of work but there is much greater clarity on the cost base associated with operating Care Dorset's inherited services.

OPERATIONAL DELIVERY

10. In August we had an unannounced CQC inspection at the Lawns. The inspectors were in attendance over three days. We await the draft report.
11. Sidney Gale House ceased to operate on 16 August 2024. Colleagues from Dorset Council and Care Dorset worked closely to ensure a smooth transition for the people supported at Sidney Gale House. A small number of colleagues have been redeployed to other services within the Care Dorset operation. Colleagues praised the approach taken by Care Dorset in handling the redundancy situation.
12. St Martin's is due to start operating in mid-October and Care Dorset has been inducting and orientating the workforce in readiness.
13. We have received confirmation that consultation with Shared Lives colleagues has now concluded and will transfer to Care Dorset, this is likely to happen in the next three months or so.
14. The 30 reablement beds (funded by the Better Care Fund) had an average occupancy level of 84% in the three months to August 2024. The average length of stay remains just over six weeks.

WORKFORCE

15. Care Dorset's recruitment efforts remain effective with the organisation currently carrying around 20 vacancies which represents a vacancy rate of circa 5%.
16. Levels of sickness have begun to rise slightly and are now at an average of 14.9 days per person, per year. The HR team are working with local leaders to ensure that colleagues are supported, and that sickness is managed effectively.
17. Overall compliance in training has improved since last reported; up to 87.8% against the target of 90%. Core training compliance is currently at 90% with

essential training currently at 83%. There are fourteen settings that have exceeded the KPI for core training.

18. A root and branch review of learning and development commissioned in late July is nearing completion. The review has been examining online and face-to-face training, Care Dorset's approach to induction for colleagues and managers, and considering the organisation's approach to personal growth and development.
19. Work is also underway on the development of the Care Dorset academy. This is a cornerstone of Care Dorset's workforce development plans.

GOVERNANCE

20. As reported at the last Shareholder meeting, and while not a reserved matter, it was agreed Care Dorset would provide an update. While there are no proposed changes to the structure of the Board or its membership, Care Dorset would like to update members on the work completed in this space. The role profile of the non-executive directors has been reviewed and onboarding and induction arrangements have been standardised. Additionally, quarterly reviews have been introduced between the Chair and Non-Executive Directors.
21. A review of Care Dorset's risk management framework is underway as part of the governance review, with support from a risk management consultancy.

PEOPLE WE SUPPORT INVOLVEMENT

22. Care Dorset formed a people with lived experience group in January 2024. The group of people have met four times and at each meeting they have been considering a couple of complaints at each meeting. The discussions and any suggestions for improvements are reported back to colleagues across the organisation.
23. The Board of Directors met with the people with lived experience group in September to discuss their feedback and explore how the organisation could further improve.

STRATEGIC RISKS

24. Care Dorset considers the following risks remain significant for the organisation.
 - 24.1. Workforce. While Care Dorset performs well in respect of recruitment, it is important that the organisation remains well placed to respond to the candidate market challenges and this includes ensuring it remains competitive with its rates of pay. Another area of focus is retention. Care Dorset invests in the training and development of its workforce ensuring that new colleagues have a positive induction experience. Further work on recognition is needed to support workforce retention and the organisation's forthcoming people strategy will set out plans to deliver

improvements in this area. The Board has endorsed the direction of travel with the people strategy, and this now needs to be finalised.

- 24.2. Quality. Care Dorset continues to make improvements in the delivery of quality services. Care Dorset remains firmly on an improvement journey.
- 24.3. Financial sustainability. Care Dorset is principally funded by a block contract with Dorset Council. This is a cost recovery arrangement which provides limited bandwidth for investment. Care Dorset is looking to explore opportunities for investment as well as growing its ability to sell to private funders.
- 24.4. Business systems. The organisation inherited numerous business systems, including some from Dorset Council. In an environment of rapidly advancing technology and evolving cyber risks, Care Dorset must have the appropriate architecture to enhance performance with improved data, better reporting, and increased integration. The scope of the review has been broadened to now encompass key processes across the organisation.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

25. The Chair's Advisory Group which considers bids for community projects have met twice since its inception. The group members include a number of people with lived experience, the Managing Director and Finance Director and two members of the Board (including the Chair).
26. The group has awarded just over £6,000 to three projects. One of which has recently been completed which is the sensory garden at Anglebury Court. This was an example of the community working together. For example, the ramp leading to the Sensory Garden was sourced, and installed, by Wareham Disabled Club and The Lions.
27. Another example is the silent disco project. This will give people the opportunity to enjoy a disco in a way that best suits them as well as having the chance to learn the skills of a being a DJ. This may also provide opportunities for employment.
28. Below are some photographs from the sensory garden opening as well as the silent disco equipment arriving.



APPENDICES

29. There are no appendices to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

30. There are no background papers.