

# Care Dorset Shareholder Committee

2 December 2024

Annual performance report for the period September 2023 to October 2024

## For information and assurance

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Report status: **PUBLIC**

### Brief summary:

This paper provides a comprehensive review of the second year of Care Dorset's operation, covering the period 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2024.

### Recommendation:

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

### Reason for recommendation:

Care Dorset is a major delivery partner to the Dorset Council for adult social care and support.

Much remains to be done to drive improvements to Care Dorset's operation and to grow the organisation, both in volume and revenue.

This paper describes work completed over the last 12 months to achieve Care Dorset and Dorset Council's shared ambitions. It will then chart work planned for the coming year.

## LETTER TO SHAREHOLDER

Dear Members,

I am pleased to present to you our Annual Performance Report.

This report encapsulates a year of growth, innovation, and resilience. It is our privilege to update you on our performance, achievements, and vision for the year ahead.

### Reflecting on Our Year

The second year has been no less busy than the first.

The development of our vision – “A world where people can thrive” – has provided renewed focus.

The appointment in April of Chris Best as permanent Managing Director ushered in a new approach modelled on Servant Leadership, along with greater openness and transparency.

The arrival, early in the year, of our young adult service in Weymouth was a source of great pride. We’re delighted the people we support there are already thriving – developing new skills, job opportunities and friendships.

While slightly outside this reporting period, it would be remiss of me not to mention the opening of St Martin’s House in Gillingham. People want to stay independent, and we want to help them to do that. We’re proud to have recruited and trained a strong, experienced Extra Care team.

### Looking Forward

Our strategic priorities put the people we support at the centre of their own care and support. We will grow market share, become a provider and employer of choice, and ensure value for money.

These objectives are part of a comprehensive strategy – named Your Life, Your Way – to generate sustainable value for all stakeholders.

In closing, I would like to thank each of you, our valued shareholder, for your trust and continued support. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to the coming year.

Warm regards,

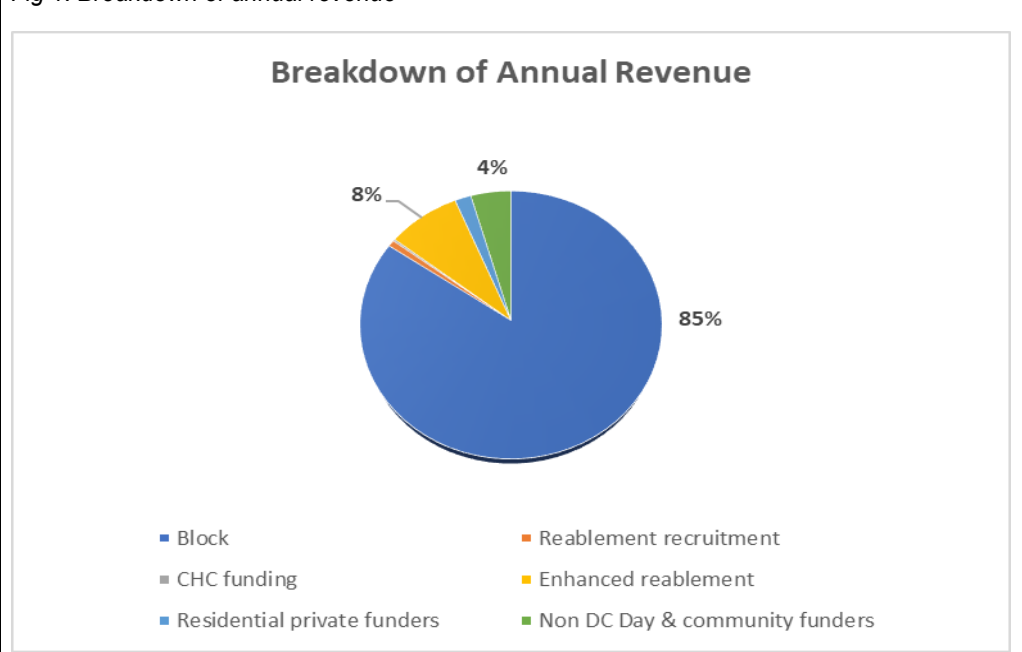
Caroline Tapster CBE

Board of Directors Chair

## COMPANY OVERVIEW

1. Our strategic vision is “*A world in which people can thrive.*” This is our ‘north star’.
2. We remain proud of our organisational values of *We are People-focused, We have Integrity, We are Genuine, We will Develop* and *We are a Team.*
3. Care Dorset operates five Residential care homes, three Supported Living locations, bedded Reablement, community Reablement, 13 Day Services and, most recently, Extra Care from St Martin’s in Gillingham.
4. Care Dorset supports around 900 people, employing around 1,000 colleagues.
5. Our primary source of funding is the block contract with Dorset Council. This accounts for just over 85% of all our revenue.
6. Care Dorset purchases a series of services from Dorset Council including payroll, ICT, accounts payable, occupational health and employee counselling.
7. Dorset Council is Care Dorset’s landlord for five Residential care homes and 13 Day Services – the majority of the buildings we occupy. Care Dorset pays rent for these buildings at a total cost of £1.57m per annum.
8. As set out in figure 1, the majority of Care Dorset funding (85%) is from the block contract with the Dorset Council, 8% comes from the bedded reablement contract, 5% is from private funders and around 2% is from Continuing Health Care funding. Care Dorset’s total revenue is £30.7m per annum.

Fig 1: Breakdown of annual revenue



## HIGHLIGHTS

### 9. A few highlights from Care Dorset's on-site activities



9.1. In September Ridgeway, a day service in Weymouth, held their own annual festival – “Ridgestock.”

Local musicians and colleagues played live sets to the crowd, and a neighbouring service came along to join in.



9.2. The people we support, their families and our colleagues held a very unofficial Olympic Games in the summer at The Hayes in Sherborne.

Indoor events were held in the morning and outdoor events – heavy on water pistols – in the afternoon.



9.3. Castleman House in Blandford Forum were joined by two alpacas for the day earlier in the year.

Our activities coordinator at Castleman House said: “The people we support always mention how they enjoy animal visits.”

People we support in nearby Blandford Connect also came along.



9.4. After requests for adventure, 35 people we support at The Hayes went on a series of walks adding up to 53.52 miles over the course of April and May.

They raised over £200 for the Alzheimer's Society in the process.



9.5. In June, colleagues at Ridgeway in Weymouth took a group of 12 people they support on holiday to Cornwall.

Some were able to see Tom Jones, Gabrielle and Sophie Ellis-Bextor in an open-air concert.

Manager Toby Alltoft said: “Many of the people we support don't get to experience holidays at all or, if they do, have never been away without their families.

“A holiday seemed like a great way to have fun and provide a memorable experience.”

## 10. Listening to the people we support

- 10.1. Recent months have been dedicated to involving the people we support, ensuring their voices directly influence our services and practices.
- 10.2. Three groups meet regularly, fostering a space for ongoing feedback and collaboration. Together, we have reviewed complaints, refined templates, and ensured our accessible information does its job.
- 10.3. An important outcome has been the co-production of a Quality-of-Life Assessment; to be rolled out during 2025. Lived experience groups offer invaluable feedback, which has influenced the assessment's design and content.
- 10.4. A stakeholder survey has been co-produced, exploring the Care Dorset Quality Standards. It was shared with people we support, ensuring it is both accessible and meaningful. The survey, scheduled for launch in December, will capture feedback from the people we support, their families and friends.



## 11. The Community Development Fund

- 11.1. Care Dorset inherited a series of amenity fund arrangements from the previous provider and, after commissioning an independent review, took the decision to close these accounts and develop the Community Development Fund (CDF).
- 11.2. The CDF supports projects which have a benefit to the people we support and have a community element to them.
- 11.3. Bids are considered by the Chair's Advisory Group whose members include people we support, the executive team and the non-executives.
- 11.4. Projects supported already include a sensory garden, DJ equipment and DJ workshops. Improvements to the garden at Purbeck Connect feature an accessible polytunnel – enabling fruits and vegetables to be grown and sold at local food markets.
- 11.5. The DJ equipment and workshops have been a great success, so much so that the people we support are holding a disco in late November. A person we support, Eric, said *“I have always dreamed of being a DJ.”* Another, Jamie, said: *“I’ve learnt to make a good rhythm, tone and bass. I’m excited to show off my skills, like Scott Mills on the radio.”*



## 12. Business development/growth

- 12.1. We are delighted St Martin's has now opened and the people we support have started to move in. The recruitment and mobilisation of a new team of support workers has been on its own a significant achievement.
- 12.2. Our new transition service for younger adults with learning disabilities opened in May 2024. The people who live at Dorchester Road have achieved life goals, such as work experience, developing independent living skills and building friendships.

## 13. Colleagues / Human Resources

- 13.1. Dorchester Road and St Martin's has led to significant recruitment and on-boarding activity. St Martin's alone required building a team of around 25 people.
- 13.2. The ending of care and support at Sidney Gale House in Bridport affected 81 colleagues. Some 10 were successfully redeployed, with the remaining leaving Care Dorset. A lack of reasonable alternatives close to the area, and the lack of transport options were, for many, decisive factors.
- 13.3. Care Dorset recruited 125 contracted operational colleagues throughout 2024 across all settings, with 144 leaving. The organisation has always sought to emphasise that a career in care is not for everyone, and this has been our ongoing recruitment campaign. Care Dorset invests significantly in recruitment advertising, including the Indeed job board and also adopts CV searching and headhunting methods to attract candidates with the right values and skills. Care Dorset typically receives over 100 applications per month. Care Dorset does not actively recruit candidates from overseas but does have a registration with the Border Agency to enable the organisation to recruit colleagues who require sponsorship.
- 13.4. All colleague turnover is currently 25%. This is consistent with the sector average of 24.8%, and better than the Southwest and Dorset County averages of 26.1% and 36.5% respectively for 2023/2024. Voluntary colleague turnover for the previous rolling 12 months is at 17%.
- 13.5. Tackling absence remains both a priority and challenge. The average absence is approximately 14 days per full time equivalent; a statistic which remained static across the year.
- 13.6. In 2024 to date, 30 colleagues who have been absent due to long-term health conditions have been successfully supported back to work with a further 10 unfortunately having employment terminated due to there being no obvious avenue for return or redeployment.

13.7. Care Dorset has invested heavily in learning for colleagues and since April 2023 to September 2024 has spent over £430k on a range of training to ensure our colleagues are skilled and confident. A recent review of the learning function has resulted in some changes in the structure for the learning team with also the introduction of internal trainers aimed at improving efficiency and enhancing effectiveness of training interventions.

13.8. Care Dorset has a positive relationship with its three recognised trade unions with regular interaction and discussions.

## 14. Service contract performance

14.1. Levels of occupancy within the residential beds have averaged 89% over the last year (excluding Sidney Gale House). This represents a rise of 12.3% from the date of transfer to Care Dorset. Castleman House and Streets Meadow continue to support a higher proportion of people with needs that are considered high; Streets Meadow's focus is on supporting people with advanced dementia.

14.2. Bedded Reablement occupancy has averaged 83%, with the average length of stay being just over six weeks. Some 263 people have been supported, with the majority returning home.

14.3. In the period January to October 2024, Care Dorset estimates it has saved the local authority over £600k based on the difference between the package of care identified for the person on discharge from hospital and what was required at the end of the reablement period. This equates to a weekly saving of upwards of £12k.

14.4. Over the last 12 months, we have continued to over deliver in Day Services against the specified capacity in the service contract by 50%. In six Day Services, the level of over delivery is in excess of 100% more than the contract.

14.5. Care Dorset delivers 1,346 hours of support across the three Supported Living settings, and this remains in line with the contract.

14.6. Care Dorset is delivering an average of 3,200 hours of community support per month, and this translates into around 2,500 direct hours of Reablement when travel time is removed from the figures along with senior officer time to support with quality assurance and initial assessment. There is work to do to improve overall usage.

14.7. On average, Care Dorset converts a community reablement referral into a package of support within two days.

14.8. People who receive community reablement support typically stay with the service for around 26 days. Of the leavers from the service who were

successfully re-abled, they had a decrease in the level of home care that was required for them upon discharge.

## 15. Communication / Public Relations



15.1. Care Dorset's Reablement team has been nominated for Care Team of the Year in the National Care Awards.

15.2. The set-piece external event of the last 12 months has been the closure of Sidney Gale House in Bridport for operational and safety reasons. The media focused instead on the plans for the replacement build, rather than the closure itself.

15.3. There has also been media coverage of:

- Chris Best's appointment to Managing Director.
- A sensory/nostalgia event run by a museum at one of our sites (BBC Radio and TV).
- The positive effect of Reablement on the regional NHS.
- An op-ed by Chris Best in regional and trade media, reflecting his desire for a better financial settlement for the adult social care sector and higher wages for frontline colleagues.



## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

16. Care Dorset's second financial year ended on 30 September 2024. The year-end process has therefore only just commenced. The accounts will be presented to Shareholder in Spring 2025.

17. The provisional year-end result reports we remain behind budget, with a small operating profit of £79k against a budget of £735k, making pre-tax profits £656k worse than budget. The year-end result has been impacted by the delay in opening the St Martin's Extra Care service, whilst costs are lower for the same reason, they have not been totally offset due to challenging agency, service, and property costs.



18. The result reflects a property recharge to Dorset Council and a reduction on the block revenue to reflect the property rent reduction. If the property recharge costs are not agreed in full, then this will significantly impact on the year-end position.
19. Contract negotiations have progressed well, with volumes of support agreed for each service type and recognition that the inflationary pressures over the last two years will be addressed in the Year 3 contract price. The government's National Insurance increase announcement has meant that there is some financial remodelling required.

## OUTLOOK AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

### 20. Growth

- 20.1. Care Dorset's Strategy (pending approval from the Shareholder) sets out ambitious plans to grow the organisation and support more people.

### 21. Risk management

- 21.1. The adult social care sector in the UK faces risks which have the potential to impact quality of care, financial stability, and regulatory compliance. Care Dorset is no different in this respect.
- 21.2. The most significant risks for our organisation include:

#### A. Regulatory compliance

- Cause: Complex and frequently changing regulations.  
Effect: Fines, legal action, and damage to reputation if compliance is not maintained.  
Mitigation: Training and support for registered managers, and regular dialogue with the regulator

#### B. Quality of care

- Cause: Inadequate training, insufficient staffing, and lack of resources.  
Effect: Poor outcomes for people we support, negative inspections, and loss of trust.  
Mitigation: Investment in learning team and training, regular review of dependency requirements of people we support, continual focus and investment in recruitment.

#### C. Data protection and cybersecurity

- Cause: Inadequate IT infrastructure, lack of staff training, and increasing cyber threats.  
Effect: Data breaches, loss of sensitive information, and regulatory fines under GDPR.

Mitigation: Support for ICT purchased from Dorset Council, regular review of training and training compliance, and strong GDPR controls.

## **D. Health and safety**

Cause: Inadequate safety protocols, lack of training, and poor maintenance of facilities.

Effect: Increased risk of accidents, injuries, and potential legal liabilities.

Mitigation: Strong health and safety training, regular health and safety auditing and monitoring of action planning, regular and focused discussions with landlords and development of annual schedule of maintenance.

## **E. Technological adoption**

Cause: Resistance to change, lack of funding, and insufficient training.

Effect: Inefficiencies, inability to leverage new technologies for better care, and falling behind competitors.

Mitigation: Significant feature in strategy for next five years. Development of target operating model (TOM) will also support the mitigation of this risk.

## **F. Workforce shortages**

Cause: High turnover rates, low wages, and challenging working conditions.

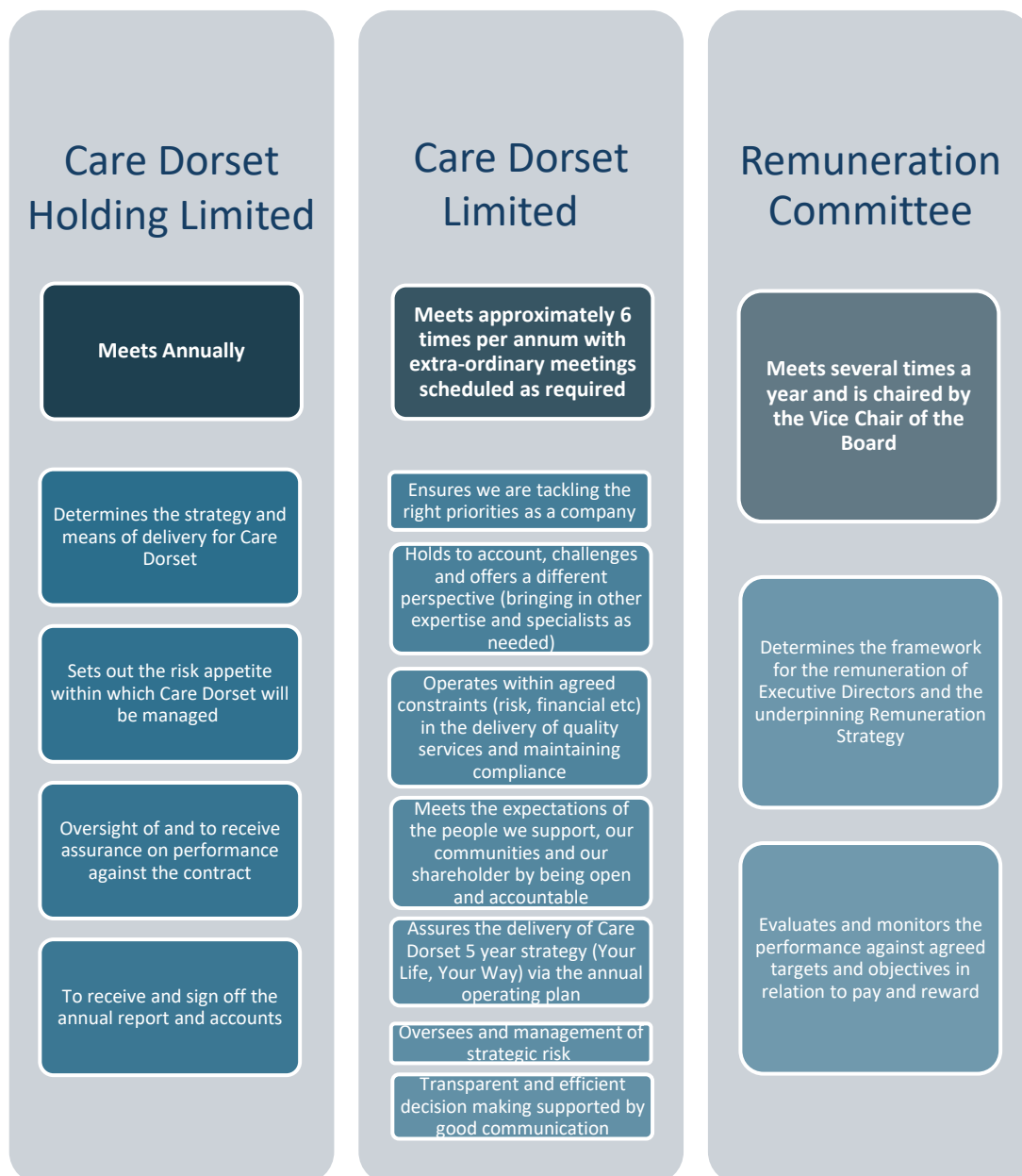
Effect: Reduced quality of care, increased workload for existing colleagues, and potential regulatory non-compliance.

Mitigation: Regular pay benchmarking, regular engagement with workforce, development of clear people strategy.

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

22. Care Dorset has a Board of Directors which consists of four non-executive directors and two executive directors. The non-executive directors are Caroline Tapster CBE (Chair), Nicola Rowland (Vice Chair and Senior Independent Director), Chris Brophy and Andrew Billany.
23. The two executive directors are Chris Best (Managing Director) and Paul Oliver (Finance Director).

24. The Board has been conducting a governance review to ensure the function operates effectively and executes its obligations under the Companies Act. Resulting actions have included improvements to the role profile for the non-executive position, a review of Care Dorset’s strategic risk framework (facilitated with support from Gallagher Bassett) and a learning event facilitated by Care Dorset’s lawyers to refresh knowledge of director requirements under the Companies Act.
25. The diagram below sets out a governance structure and the responsibilities.



## APPENDICES

26. Appendix 1: Year two in pictures

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

27. There are no background papers.