

People and Health Scrutiny Committee

8 April 2025

Birth to Settled Adulthood Service (B2SA) Progress Report

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member and Portfolio:

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

Local Councillor(s):

All

Executive Director:

P Dempsey, Executive Director of People - Children

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

Brief Summary:

The Birth to Settled Adulthood Service (B2SA) is an integrated model of service delivery between Children and Adult Social Care for children and young people with complex health needs, disability, and Special Educational Needs (SEN). The working model has been created under a Partnership Agreement between Dorset Council, NHS Dorset ICB and Dorset Parent Carer Council. Phase One Implementation began in April 2024. The work continues to ensure full implementation is completed. Phase 2 has already started in understanding the role of NHS and Health related partners with opportunities for integrated working.

The initial impact is that a more coordinated and joined up service is being provided. At this juncture we are not able to fully evidence the impact in all the areas that need to be improved. However, we are confident that it will enable improved outcomes and better value for money in the longer term.

Recommendation:

To review the progress on implementing the Birth to Settled Adulthood service and provide any feedback and comments.

Reason for Recommendation:

Birth to Settled Adulthood is a major transformation programme for Dorset Council and the Committee has a key role to play to ensure that it has the desired impact.

1. Report

- 1.1 The Birth to Settled Adulthood (B2SA) successfully launched phase one in April 2024 within the agreed timescales. Phase one includes integration of Best Start in Life Advisors who provide education and development support to families with children aged 0 – 5 years who have complex health needs, social care support for disabled children including short breaks, provision of a specialist Occupational Therapy service, Young Carers Team, Preparing for Adulthood Team and Adult Social Care provision as the young person moves into adulthood. The intention is to focus on children and young adults right from birth to settled adulthood. A key driver for the service creation was to improve our understanding of the needs of our disabled children and young people as they develop through to adulthood, and to build opportunities for independence. The Best Start in Life Advisors enable the service to ensure support at the earliest opportunity and strategically plan for future needs of children and young people. Young carers are well held in the service, ensuring that they are not taking caring responsibilities that are inappropriate, and they have opportunities to develop their own wellbeing.
- 1.2 The partnership objective was to deliver an integrated birth to settled adulthood service for children and young people with complex health needs and SEN with a focus on ensuring sustainable improved outcomes for children and young people from birth until they move on to settled adulthood. The service will ensure that there is support in place for children's parents and carers, young carers, and young adult (18 to 25 years) carers. We will also ensure planning for the child's needs into settled adulthood takes place at an earlier stage, and have introduced in phase one earlier planning, commencing at 14 years of age. This will enable us to better support children and their families to achieve sustainable improved outcomes. A successful transitional move into settled adulthood will embed principles of independence, strong links with communities and an ambition that young people are supported to thrive.

- 1.3 An Area SEND Inspection was undertaken in March 2024. This inspection found that the local area partnership's arrangements for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes. It was noted that the local area partnership was taking appropriate action where required. The Birth to Settled Adulthood Service was designed to further improve children and young people's experiences and to provide greater integration.
- 1.4 Staff are positive in both services about the model and working more effectively together. Staff highlight that they need access to a functional system to allow them to undertake the training and new aspects of the work. There are positive examples of Children's and Adult social workers working alongside each other with the child and their family to identify solutions to complex situations.
- 1.5 The feedback from Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) has been positive about the implementation although there is more to do to achieve full implementation. To quote DPCC ***"we are delighted to see the new service go live: We have been working with parent/carers from the outset and are delighted to see the feedback they have provided threading through the design and implementation. Having worked in partnership to implement phase one, we look forward to continuing this in supporting the delivery and being part of the process to co-produce and implement phase two. We look forward to seeing the improvements and hearing the success stories we are confident this new service will bring."***
- 1.6 Dorset Parent Carer Council were also involved in helping to establish the outcomes framework which is enabling building independence at each stage of the child and young person's life.
- 1.7 Children and young people have also been involved in the design of the outcome framework through the Youth Voice Service. Oxford Brooks, as a partner in the evaluation of Families First Pathfinder, are assisting us to develop a survey for children, young people and families that can be used to seek feedback regarding their experience in the future.
- 1.8 The partnership is working towards an effective joint Commissioning Strategy that enables a focus on the Dorset area and supporting children and young people in their localities. A prominent feature of the service design is locality-based support which is strong in both Children and Adult Services. Our ethos is that children and young adults should be supported to live safely, where possible, in their own communities. We want to ensure

that children and young people are supported to live with their families where possible and that carers feel they have the right level of support. We also need to ensure we understand and plan for those who are 16-25 when they need to move.

- 1.9 We appointed our B2SA Head of Service who commenced her role in April 2024. We have also appointed two Service Managers who are both in post. One has a focus on Children's Social Care responsibilities and one with a focus on preparing for Adulthood.
- 1.10 All the B2SA operational staff have completed a programme of induction and training to support the new model of working.
- 1.11 Dorset Council Children's Services, as a Pathfinder LA for the DfE Families First Pathfinder Programme, implemented a new model of work across children's services in June 2024. B2SA is fully aligned to this new operational way of working and will be working in a more integrated way in the child protection space. Lead child protection social work roles have been created in B2SA and work with the Locality Child Protection Teams.
- 1.12 The Young Carers Service now sits within B2SA to ensure additional focus on the young carers needs. There are currently 88 young carers being supported by the service and there is improved joint working with the Adult Carer Service.
- 1.13 Adult Services have identified the staffing resource required to work with the young adults aged 18-25 who are not yet settled in adulthood. This will help with planning to understand the age groups and the numbers of young people aged 14-17 that are requiring planning and assessment for adulthood. This resource will reach down to start working with young people before the age of 18 enabling Care Act assessments to take place at an earlier more appropriate time. Through earlier planning we are more likely to prevent needs escalating and have an adequate amount of time to ensure appropriate resources are in place. Reaching down will be more effective at 16 in reality.
- 1.14 Within the new service there will be greater opportunity to use assistive technology as a way of addressing children and young people's needs and managing any risks. This can enable young people to have greater independence, and it is more cost effective. An example of this is a parent carer being referred to the technology lounge to explore a range of care technology that is available to monitor their disabled child's safety without them needing to be present in the room. It was felt this would make a significant impact to reduce the pressure on that parent.

1.15 In total across the 0 – 25 age range B2SA, at the end of November 2024, was supporting 912 children, young people, and young adults.

At the end of November 2024, B2SA was supporting in the 0-18 area, 652 children and young people:

- 344 of these children and young people and their families receive support from the family support and short breaks team.
- 171 children need a higher level of support (CIN) from family help and are visited more regularly.
- 11 children are subject of a Child Protection Plan
- 34 children are in our care.
- 92 children receive a specialist Occupational Therapy provision.

With those being supported who are 18-25 who are already allocated to adult's teams, this makes a total of 912 in total.

There are 101 young people from the cohorts above aged between 14 and 17 years that we are working with to prepare them for adulthood.

1.16 The B2SA Preparing for Adulthood Team will support, where appropriate, other teams across children's services with transitional planning for children and young people.

1.17 A Transitions Steering Group is in place that looks at all the children and young people we are working with in their transitional planning to settled adulthood to 'oversee' that young people's transitional health and care needs are being met.

1.18 An outcomes framework has been developed which encompasses the age and stages of the child or young person's development, this covers the nine outcomes that were co-produced with our children and young people.

1.19 A Partnership Integrated Commissioning Strategy is in development with a focus on services for the 16-25 age range.

1.20 In our development of the partnership joint commissioning strategy, we have held workshops to understand how services will work and what is required. We are ensuring that we have a joined-up high quality services and that contracts meet both the ICB and Dorset Council's requirements.

1.21 We have appointed an Independent Chair of the B2SA Delivery Board, and the inaugural meeting was held in October 2024. The board meets quarterly. The Board provides the governance and oversight on implementation and progress of phase 2.

- 1.22 In January 2025, NHS Dorset presented a proposal for Phase 2 to the Board to clarify how they plan to integrate with the B2SA programme. A Senior Responsible Officer has yet to be appointed by NHS Dorset to lead phase 2. However, there was senior representation (NHS Dorset) at the B2SA delivery Board held on 22/1/2025.

2. Areas for development and enablers

- 2.1 Budget – managing budgetary pressures remains the priority for both Children Services and Adult Social Care. The needs of our children and young people we work with in the B2SA service are increasingly more complex and there are challenges in securing high quality packages of support and care that represent value for money for these young people both locally and nationally. This is also a challenge area for those children and families supported through direct payments as the supports and services needed are not available to purchase resulting in higher costs to Dorset Council. The savings agreed for B2SA in 25/26 is £1m and the detail of the action plan is currently being developed.
- 2.2 Information Technology requirements are an essential enabler for the successful full implementation of the new B2SA service. Enabling more staff to be able to be trained to complete care act assessments for young people before they reach 18. There are delays in being able to adapt our child record and management systems for the new working model in B2SA. This is due to the capacity of the system support services to accommodate changes needed within both the B2SA children's and adults' systems as well as changes needed within children's services from the Families First pathfinder new model of working. We have a plan in place to address this that is regularly monitored to ensure changes are made as needed at the earliest opportunity.

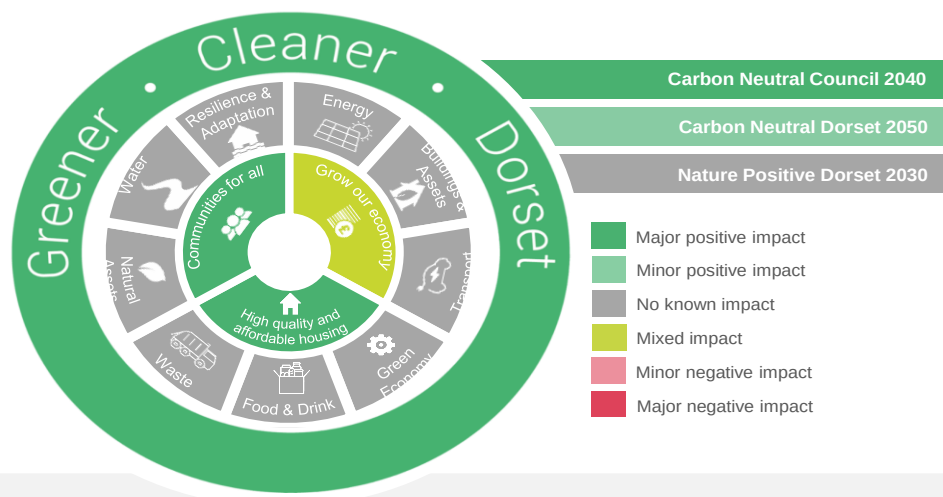
3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There has been significant investment in the Birth to Settled Adulthood Programme from Children and Adults Services. Introduction of the B2SA service will enable sustainable improved outcomes for children and young people, provide improved Value for Money (VFM) and better use of our resources. There has also been investment in our short breaks provision which aims to ensure that parent-carers are well supported and that children can remain living within their families.

4. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

- 4.1 The Birth to Settled Adulthood programme does not have any additional implications.

Birth to Settle



Quantitative Impact on CEE targets (if known)

	Unit	Number of units (+/-)
2030 - Natural asset extent & condition	Ha	0
2040 - Operational Emissions	CO ₂ (tonnes)	0

5. Well-being and Health Implications

- 5.1 The aim of the Birth to Settled Adulthood Programme is to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people with complex health needs, disability, and SEN, and reduce the impact of disadvantages and inequality. The service also aims to ensure that parent-carers, young carers, and adult carers are well supported.

6. Other Implications

- 6.1 None

7. Risk Assessment.

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

Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The internal Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix A. An external Equality Impact Assessment is currently being reviewed and updated.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix A: EQIA dated February 2023.

10. Background Papers

None

11. Report Sign Off

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