

PEOPLE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 JULY 2025

Present: Cllrs Toni Coombs (Chair), Bridget Bolwell, Sally Holland, Carole Jones and Andy Todd

Present remotely: Cllrs Jane Somper (Vice-Chair) and Chris Kippax

Apologies: Cllrs Barry Goringe and Carl Woode

Also present: Cllr Clare Sutton and Cecilia Bufton (Independent Chair, Birth to Settled Adulthood Delivery Board)

Also present remotely: Cllr Steve Robinson and Lesley Mellor (Chair, Dorset Parent Carer Council)

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

Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), George Dare (Senior Democratic and Governance Officer), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Paula Golding (Corporate Director for Care and Protection), Sarah Howard (Deputy Director of Modernisation and Place), Julia Ingram (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care Operations), Beth Whittaker (Interim Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Liz Crocker (Head of Strategy) and Chris Heighway (Performance and Analytics Team Manager)

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

Simon Fraiz-Brown (Head of Commissioning, Family Help, and Young and Thriving)

13. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barry Gorringer and Carl Woode.

14. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2025 were confirmed and signed.

16. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

17. Councillor Questions

One question was submitted by Cllr Orrell, with a response given by the Chairman of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee. The question and response are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

18. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items.

19. Birth to Settled Adulthood Service - Independent Delivery Board Chair's Annual Report

The Independent Chair of the Birth to Settled Adulthood (B2SA) Delivery Board introduced the report. The Independent Chair highlighted the programmes focus on early planning and preparation for adulthood, to avoid the 'cliff edge' at 18-years-old. She outlined three key risks to the programme which were: NHS structural changes and their potential impact on funding and commitment, however there was not currently any lack of commitment; Increasing complexity of young people's needs, which was a national trend; and data integration challenges.

Committee members made comments and asked questions of the Independent Chair. The following points were raised:

- Embedding the services would make a positive difference to young people's lives, whilst it would save time and money for the council in supporting the transition between children's and adult services.
- Communications was an area which needed to be improved to show what the B2SA service had been achieving, its aims for the future, and managing expectations.
- There were concerns about the work options available for young adults being supported by the B2SA service, as connecting to work was fundamental and it gives fulfilment. The Careers Hub worked with employers to become disability confident employers, however more of this was needed.
- In looking for work and careers, it was essential that employers looked at what people can do rather than what they cannot do. It was suggested that the Independent Chair links with local business networks to talk to employers about this subject and B2SA.
- Over 200 young people aged 16–18 were being supported in workplace placements, but it was unclear how many will transition into work.
- A member suggested proactive engagement with Chambers of Commerce and asked what information could be provided to them. The Independent Chair advised there was information about the programmes, however not about individuals and their preferences, it was recognised this needed to be done to get more work experience for young people.
- In relation to progress towards an integrated database between Adults, Children's Services, and Health, the Independent Chair acknowledged this

was a long-term goal, however there were difficulties in children's services and adults' data working together, and there were multiple incompatible health systems. Options were being explored to share information appropriately.

- Asked whether an earlier diagnosis would be better in the long term for cost and planning, the Independent Chair felt that normal child development issues were being overmedicalized, however early identification of disabilities could be used to give young people the best start in life.
- There was a growing number of young people with complex needs, early support needed to be promoted to families, such as using family hubs. There was work with IMPOWER which was focussed on early intervention and meeting needs in a mainstream setting.
- Small employers could be a better option for young people. The Independent Chair advised there was some work with small employers, but not enough. The Careers team could be contacted to discuss something for a local area.
- Barriers for young people achieving steps towards settled adulthood often included self-belief and the opportunities available. There was a need to look at what individuals can do and creating an individual plan for them.
- Mainstream schools were receiving funding to support children with additional needs. Pupils would have the opportunities to follow a mainstream pathway, rather than a SEND specific pathway, with some schools having a satellite special school providing a mixed timetable in a mainstream school.
- A member asked how there would be feedback on B2SA. There would be a survey conducted by Oxford Brooks university to receive feedback, including from young people, however it was important to be in the right language to enable them to give true and honest feedback.
- The Chair of the Dorset Parent Carer Council had been receiving good feedback from parents and thought services were more seamless with integration of health services. She emphasised that parents and young people's voices needed to be included in data and feedback.

The Committee Chairman summed up the discussion. It was a complex area to bring services together, and it created a blueprint to move services forward by looking at the 'whole person'. Whilst the committee has previously been critical of the programme, it was good to see the service progressing, however it needed to become outstanding. She emphasised the need to upskill the knowledge of local businesses.

20. Ofsted Inspection Report and Action Plan

The Corporate Director for Care and Protection introduced the Ofsted Inspection report and Action Plan. The inspection identified one area for improvement, which was the clarity and detail of the care leaver offer, including for care leavers who

are parents. A part of the action plan would ensure financial support to care leavers in relation to council tax was equitable for care leavers living inside and outside of Dorset.

In response to a question about the number of care leavers that do not participate in the care leaver offer, the Corporate Director advised that a very high percentage of 18–21-year-olds participated. The majority of care leavers that did not participate were aged 22-25, however they had access to an app so they could access the offer should they choose to.

There were no care leavers in B&B accommodation, and 98% of care leavers were in suitable housing. A small number of care leavers were in custody.

There were minor concerns in the Ofsted report about a lack of police attendance. This was in relation to LADO investigations, where there was some lack of police attendance. Officers were working with the police to ensure attendance going forward.

The Chairman highlighted the positive outcome of the Ofsted inspection, with Children's Services being rated as Outstanding; and stressed the need to continue to drive services forward for the benefit of our children and young people.

21. **2024/25 Quarter 4 Performance Report**

Following a review of the council's performance indicators, the committee identified three performance indicators of concern. The committee received an update on each of these performance indicators and were given to ask questions and raise comments and concerns on the indicators.

Percentage of 16- and 17-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The Head of Service for Family Help explained the current performance indicator. The target rate for NEET was under 3.5%, however the rate was currently 4.1%. This rate could have been caused by an increase in the cohort size for this age group and the long-term impact of Covid-19 causing this cohort of students to miss school in Year 7. There had been some success in bring young people back into education, employment in training. There would also be support available for students on results day, to discuss their future options.

A lack of public transport was a cause of young people becoming NEET. Yeovil and Weymouth colleges provided subsidised transport to access further education. Vocational courses being provided by sixth forms were being looked at, to provide more options across the county for young people that do not want to do an academic subject. Supported internships were also available to people with an EHCP.

Asked whether there was a correlation between low school attendance and becoming NEET, officers explained there were projects which helped pupils struggling with attendance and funding was being sought to extend the Marvels

project for a further 3 years, to assist with school attendance. There was a tool which gave a good identification of pupils in Year 7 & 8 who were likely to struggle in Year 12.

A discussion would be had about mapping educational support and transport, through the revised SEND Sufficiency Strategy, to identify where gaps in support were.

Percentage of children achieving basics (9-5 in English and Maths) at Key Stage 4

The Corporate Director for Education and Learning outlined work that was being done with Key Stage 4 to improve outcomes. The council was working in collaboration with ImpactEd and secondary schools to identify correlations between teacher and pupil engagement and how this affects outcomes. It was not known what the Key Stage 4 outcomes would be for this year, however Key Stage 2 outcomes had improved.

A member asked whether there was a difference in outcomes between maintained schools and Multi Academy Trusts. It was confirmed that maintained secondary schools often had better outcomes compared to Multi Academy Trusts.

Rate of permanent exclusions from all schools

The Corporate Director for Education and Learning outlined the performance indicator, which appeared to be improving. The way learning centres operate has been reviewed because it has been contributing to the rate of permanent exclusions. Learning centres were now used as a 12-week placement, which was an intervention, so there was a better chance of pupils integrating back into mainstream schools with less risk of a permanent exclusion.

There were no questions or comments from members on this performance indicator.

The Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the report.

Decision:

That:

1. The Quarter 4 (January–March 2025) performance exceptions report and actions undertaken, be noted.
2. The performance reporting schedule for 2025/26 within the context of the strategic performance reporting framework, be agreed.

22. Committee's Work Programme and Executive Forward Plans

The Committee noted its work programme and the executive forward plans.

Options for what could be included in a report on Integrated Neighbourhood Teams would be explored, to see if it would be an appropriate topic for scrutiny.

There were also ongoing discussions about Continuing Healthcare (CHC), and when this would be appropriate for the committee to consider.

23. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.02 pm

Chairman

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