

Care Dorset Shareholder Committee

19 January 2026

CARE DORSET UPDATE

For information and assurance

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Brief summary:

Care Dorset reports strong operational performance: residential occupancy averaged 93%, day opportunities exceeded contract hours at 102%, and community reablement delivered over 12,000 hours, reducing long-term care needs. Workforce turnover remains below sector averages, sickness levels are stable, and training engagement is high with the CarePath academy launched. Financially, agency spend is reducing, revenues are on track, and year-end is projected breakeven with a modest surplus.

Strategic priorities are progressing, including hub-and-spoke day opportunities, a unified operating model, and expanded reablement. Planning is underway to transition Streets Meadow into a nursing home, while self-funder activity grows through Castleman Plus and enhanced therapy. Governance focus included legal updates, risk management, and customer engagement, with the 2026/27 plan in development. Upcoming highlights include the February 2026 Summit with Dorset Council and recognition through colleague awards and national nominations.

Recommendation:

The Shareholder Committee is asked to note the report and the updates contained therein.

Reason for recommendation:

Care Dorset plays a crucial role as a delivery partner to Dorset Council, providing essential adult social care and support. Significant efforts remain to strengthen operations and drive strategic growth, both in scale and revenue.

COMPANY UPDATE

1. Operational performance

1.1. Occupancy levels

- 1.1.1. Average occupancy across block-funded residential beds was 93% over the three months to November 2025, representing a 2% increase compared with the previously reported position.
- 1.1.2. Average occupancy across reablement beds for the same period was 77%, a slight reduction from the prior reporting cycle. This decrease reflects the temporary closure of one of the two sites to referrals due to a respiratory infection during the period.

1.2. Day opportunities

- 1.2.1. For the three months ending November 2025, Care Dorset delivered 30,092 hours of support which equates to 102% of the block contract.
- 1.2.2. 372 people were supported in this period.
- 1.2.3. Care Dorset continues to work in close partnership with Dorset Council on progressing the outcomes of the day opportunities consultation. In response to what people told us, we have developed a structured transformation programme to reshape and modernise day opportunities provision across the county.

1.3. Community reablement

- 1.3.1. In the three months to November 2025, the community reablement team delivered 12,383 hours of support, ensuring timely and responsive care across the community.
- 1.3.2. During the same period, 51% of individuals were fully reabled, no longer requiring ongoing support. A further 20% continued with their original package of care, typically following significant hospital stays, highlighting the service's role in stabilising recovery.
- 1.3.3. The team's interventions generated substantial efficiencies, saving an estimated 1,637 hours of support per week compared with the packages initially assessed at hospital discharge. This demonstrates the tangible impact of reablement in reducing long-term care needs.

1.4. Supported living

- 1.4.1. The supported living team continues to deliver the contracted hours across the three supported living settings.
- 1.4.2. We are delighted to be working with colleagues within the Council to set up a second transition service for younger adults

following the success of the Dorchester Road service. It is expected that this new service will be operational in Spring 2026.

1.5. St Martins

- 1.5.1. Occupancy levels have been steadily increasing at St Martin's and the change in planning determination will support achieving full occupancy in the coming few months.

2. Workforce performance

2.1. Turnover

- 2.1.1. For the 12 months ending November 2025, voluntary turnover stood at 15%, compared with the organisation's target of 12%. Importantly, this level remains 10% below the sector average, reflecting stronger workforce stability than peers.
- 2.1.2. Total turnover (including both voluntary and involuntary leavers) for the same period was 18%, exactly in line with the organisation's target of 18%, demonstrating effective management of workforce dynamics.

2.2. Sickness

- 2.2.1. On a rolling 12-month basis to the end of November 2025, average sickness levels per colleague were 10.3 days, which is broadly in line with the company's target of 10 days. This demonstrates that absence levels remain stable and well-managed, with only a marginal variance from target.

2.3. Training and development

- 2.3.1. In the three months to November 2025, Care Dorset delivered 5,132 hours of training across both online and face-to-face formats. Training compliance reached 85%, which is close to the organisational target of 90%, reflecting strong engagement and a clear trajectory towards full compliance.
- 2.3.2. The organisation continues to invest significantly in colleague development, with 42 colleagues currently supported through apprenticeship programmes, strengthening skills and building long-term workforce capability.
- 2.3.3. Care Dorset's dedicated academy, CarePath, has been successfully soft-launched across the organisation, with further expansion and activity planned for 2026 to embed a culture of continuous learning.

3. Financial performance

- 3.1. Agency spend is tracking in line with the forecasted reduction, which is encouraging given short-term increases in sickness. Overall pay costs

remain aligned with forecast expectations, reflecting effective cost management.

- 3.2. Revenues are broadly in line with forecast, with self-funder income from residential beds only marginally below expectations. Average occupancy was 23.25 beds, compared with a forecast of 24 beds. However, overall, the organisation is on track to achieve the target it set itself for 2025/26.
- 3.3. In November, the organisation expanded capacity at Castleman Plus with the addition of four new beds dedicated to self-funded respite care. Early interest has been encouraging, and the service is well-positioned to achieve strong occupancy levels through 2026.
- 3.4. The financial outturn for the year ending 31 March 2026 is projected to be at least breakeven, with the potential for a modest surplus of approximately £20k. Considering the financial challenges navigated during the year and the savings delivered to Dorset Council, this represents a positive and resilient position.

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

- 4. On 14 April 2025, the Shareholder formally endorsed Care Dorset's Annual Business Plan for 2025/26. This marks the first plan to be fully aligned with our five year strategy, Your Life, Your Way, which received Shareholder approval in December 2024. The Annual Plan demonstrates the progression from strategic intent to operational execution, ensuring a consistent vision and delivery across the organisation.
- 5. The Plan identifies six core priorities for delivery:
 - 5.1. Transitioning to a hub and spoke model for day opportunities, enhancing accessibility and efficiency.
 - 5.2. Establishing and embedding a unified operating model to drive consistency across all services.
 - 5.3. Expanding and refining models of support to remain responsive to evolving needs.
 - 5.4. Launching the Care Dorset Academy to invest in workforce development and build future capability.
 - 5.5. Publishing enabling strategies that reinforce governance, assurance, and long-term sustainability.
 - 5.6. Applying the reablement model as a preventative approach, reducing dependency and promoting independence.
- 6. Progress continues to be made across the priority areas. The day opportunities activity continues to be progressed with strong engagement with day opportunity colleagues with plans being drawn up in discussions with Commissioners.
- 7. Following discussions with Commissioners about the transition of Streets Meadow into a nursing home, planning is now underway with the registration changes proposed to take place by the end of the financial year.

8. Care Dorset remains on track to deliver its target of £1.4m from self-funders in residential care and significant activity is ongoing to improve the sales and marketing approach to bolster its pipeline. Additionally, four new beds have been brought on steam at Castleman Plus offering self-funder respite. Interest for this offer has been positive.
9. 12 beds have been retained at Castleman Plus into the next financial year following the FutureCare review. Care Dorset has bolstered its therapy offer with the appointment of its own Occupational Therapist and investment in the creation of a therapy suite.
10. Planning is underway for the development of the 2026/27 business plan which will be shared with this Committee for approval in March 2026.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

11. Following Andrew Billany's announcement that he will be leaving Dorset Council, and in light of his new role which prevents him from continuing as a Non-Executive Director with Care Dorset, the Board has resolved not to initiate recruitment for a replacement Non-Executive Director at this stage. The position will be reconsidered in approximately six months.
12. The Board held a learning day in November at which members received a legal update from Anthony Collins on company law as well as forthcoming legal changes. Members also discussed how to improve the involvement and engagement of the people we support and their families with Care Dorset's newly appointed Head of Customer Experience. Discussions also took place on risk management including cyber security. Finally, the Board held a planning session exploring the possible of areas of focus within the 2026/27 business plan. The final version of which will be submitted for Board approval in March 2026.

OTHER MATTERS TO NOTE

13. Care Dorset, in partnership with Dorset Council, is preparing for the Care Dorset Summit scheduled for February 2026. The Summit will provide a key forum to establish a refreshed and collective direction for the organisation, framed within the ambitions of the five-year strategy.
14. Following the departure of the Chief Commercial Officer, Care Dorset has reinforced its focus on managing commercial and business development opportunities with strong discipline and clear oversight. Responsibility for this work is now shared across the Chief Officers, ensuring robust governance, continuity, and collective accountability.
15. Care Dorset held its Colleague Awards evening on 11 October 2025 at Kingston Maurward College near Dorchester. There were winners across 11 categories who were nominated by colleagues and decided by a panel of colleagues and people we support.
16. Care Dorset was delighted to be nominated for a series of awards at both the British Care Awards and the Andor Awards, reflecting the organisation's growing reputation and the dedication of its teams.

17. Care Dorset continues to work in close partnership with Dorset Council on the redevelopment of Sidney Gale House in Bridport into a dedicated reablement centre. Our teams have contributed expertise across the building design, proposed staffing model, and the development of the fire safety strategy.

APPENDICES

18. There are no appendices to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

19. There are no background papers.