Care Dorset Shareholder Committee

23 March 2026

CARE DORSET UPDATE

For information and assurance

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Brief summary:

Care Dorset is reporting continued positive operational performance with occupancy levels being consistently at or above the expected target levels. Workforce turnover continues to be below sector averages; sickness levels remain stable and training is close to the expected target.

Strategically, Care Dorset is progressing a clear transformation agenda focused on modernising day opportunities, embedding a unified operating model, expanding support models, and investing in workforce development through the Care Dorset Academy. Governance remains robust, with the Board approving the 2026/27 Annual Business Plan and budget, and partnership with Dorset Council strengthened through the Care Dorset Summit and joint work on major developments such as Sidney Gale House in Bridport.

Recommendation:

The Shareholder Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

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 the block-funded residential beds for the three months to end of February 2026 was 91%. Two of the five care homes have average occupancy of 100%, and two at 96%.

1.1.2. Average occupancy for the three months ending February 2026 was 86%, representing an increase of nearly 9% from the previous reported position. February 2026 itself saw occupancy at 93%.

1.2. Day opportunities

1.2.1. For the three months to the end of February 2026, colleagues across our day opportunities teams delivered 30,649 hours of care and support which equates to 104% of the block-funded hours.

1.2.2. 364 people supported in the same period.

1.2.3. Care Dorset remains in close partnership with Dorset Council as we progress the agreed outcomes from the day opportunities consultation. Guided by what people told us, we have established a structured transformation programme aimed at modernising and reshaping day opportunities provision county-wide. This includes the establishment of an advisory panel consisting of Dorset Council colleagues.

1.3. Community reablement

1.3.1. In the three months to February 2026, the community reablement team delivered an average of 4,160.67 hours of support per month.

1.3.2. During the same period, 92% of individuals ended their reablement period with no increase to their package of care.

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. Following the award of a second transition service, colleagues across Care Dorset have been mobilised and are working closely with Dorset Council to prepare for the commencement of the new service, expected in Spring 2026.

1.5. Extra Care (St Martins)

1.5.1. Occupancy levels continue to increase with occupancy now over 70%.

2. Workforce performance

2.1. Turnover

2.1.1. For the twelve months to February 2026, voluntary turnover stands at 14.56%, representing a 0.5-point reduction from the position reported at the end of November 2025, though still above the organisational target of 12%.

2.1.2. Total colleague turnover, incorporating both voluntary and involuntary leavers, is 19% for the same period. This reflects a slight increase on the previously reported figure but remains significantly below typical sector levels

2.2. Sickness

2.2.1. Sickness levels for the 12 months to February 2026 remained at an average of 10.3 days per colleague (based on a rolling 12-month calculation). This is consistent with the position reported over the previous five months

2.3. Training and development

2.3.1. In the three months to end of February 2026, 3,469 of training hours were delivered across both online and face-to-face formats. Training compliance is at 86% against a target of 90%.

3. Financial performance

3.1. Revenue for the month of January 2026 was £26k better than forecast which came mainly from private day centre support.

3.2. Residential private occupancy is marginally below the forecasted position but overall, the target set for self-funder revenue will be exceeded by year end.

3.3. Agency usage had a slight increase in January, but early examination of February’s results suggests agency usage has fallen back to expected levels.

3.4. The financial outturn for the year ending 31 March 2026 is cautiously anticipated to be breakeven. However, achieving this will require continued tight financial control throughout the remainder of the year.

ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE

4. The Annual Business Plan 2025-26 identifies six core priorities for delivery:

4.1. Transitioning to a hub and spoke model for day opportunities, enhancing accessibility and efficiency.

4.2. Establishing and embedding a unified operating model to drive consistency across all services.

4.3. Expanding and refining models of support to remain responsive to evolving needs.

4.4. Launching the Care Dorset Academy to invest in workforce development and build future capability.

4.5. Publishing enabling strategies that reinforce governance, assurance, and long-term sustainability.

4.6. Applying the reablement model as a preventative approach, reducing dependency and promoting independence.

5. An update on quarter 3 performance was given at the Shareholder meeting in January. A report on the overall delivery for 2025/26 will be given at the June Shareholder Committee.

6. The 2026/27 Annual Business Plan is included as a separate agenda item at this meeting for approval.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

7. The Board of Directors met on 9 February 2026. At this meeting, the Board endorsed the proposed Annual Business Plan and agreed to submit it to the Shareholder for approval. The Board also approved the 2026/27 budget, which includes a realistic yet stretching target to grow self-funder revenue. In addition, the Board received updates from the four executive committees covering people and resources, property and assets, clinical governance, and business development.

OTHER MATTERS TO NOTE

8. The Care Dorset Summit was held on 4 February 2026, bringing together representatives of the Care Dorset Board of Directors and Dorset Council Officers, including Catherine Howe, Jonathan Price and Sam Poole, alongside Cllr Robinson. The Summit provided a structured forum to review Care Dorset's progress since its establishment in 2022, consider the strategic opportunities ahead, and reaffirm the collective commitment to the organisation's long-term success. A programme of follow-up actions is now being jointly advanced by Dorset Council and Care Dorset colleagues to ensure momentum is maintained.

9. Engagement between Care Dorset and Dorset Council remains strong in relation to the redevelopment of Sidney Gale House in Bridport. Work is now advancing on the definition of the operating model and the associated contractual framework, ensuring the project is positioned on a clear and robust footing for the next phase.

APPENDICES

10. There are no appendices to this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

11. There are no background papers.