



Care Dorset
Your Life, Your Way

Impact Report 2025/26



I and my family are truly happy with the care given to Rob. The staff also care for the welfare of Rob's family.

Family member

I could not fault the care. They go above and beyond.

Family member

It feels like being at home. There's nothing I would change.

Family member

I feel like I've known the staff here for years. The atmosphere is friendly and there's a lot of laughter.

Ruth

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Year in Review

It's extraordinary to think it's been a whole year since we last shared stories of the impact Care Dorset has made to the lives and families of the people we support, to Dorset Council and to the communities of Dorset.

We're now in the second year of a five-year strategic period.

This is a time of sleeves-up renewal – modernising our business and bringing the 23 services, plus outreach, together into one efficient organisation delivering our vision: 'A world where people can thrive.'

We need this because exceptional service starts with enabling our colleagues to succeed.

By making sure the right people are in the right place at the right

time and giving them the tools, support, and environment they need to thrive, we empower them to deliver the best possible experience for the people we support.

So perhaps you can imagine how much harder that was without the ability to see in one place what shifts are booked, how much absence we're dealing with and who's on annual leave.

Our Chief Finance Officer, Lisa Evans, has been leading a major project to bring in a system which can do just that (page 4).



Good' across the board

Talking of unity, I'm hugely pleased to report all of our regulated and inspected services are now rated 'Good' in all domains by the Care Quality Commission.

Anyone who has undergone a CQC inspection will know what a moment that is for colleagues, and – prepare as you might – there's no way to make it anything other than stressful.

Chief Operating Officer Ally Prince describes what was done to ensure one service went from 'Requires Improvement' back to 'Good' at the first opportunity (Page 6).

And this has all been done while we welcome our newest service, Littlemoor Road in Weymouth. A product of the success of our first Transition service, and an opportunity for growth, new experiences and (I hope) fun for three



young people

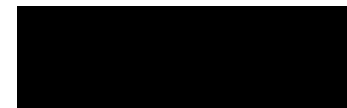
Insight

Adult social care (ASC) has been headline news recently in a way it hasn't been for years. While we're all focussed on the day job, it's important to look up and see how our experience tracks against national trends.

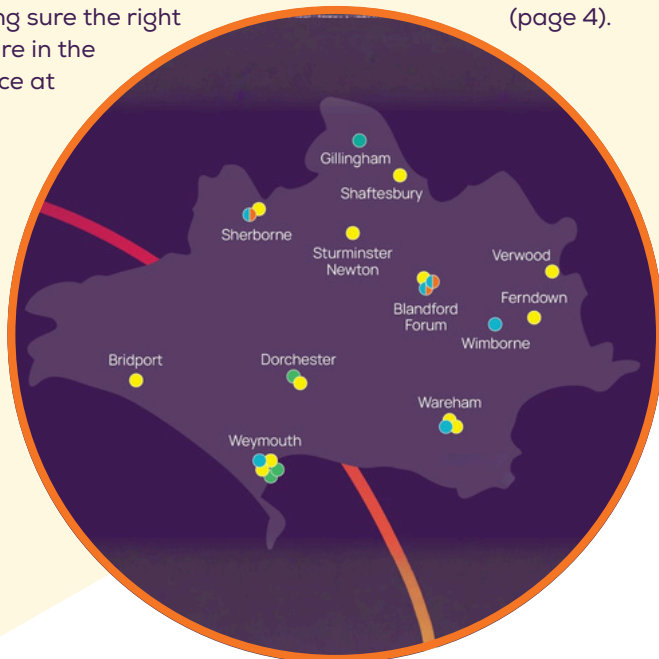
We're proud members of the National Care Forum which represents not-for-profits and LATCos in the ASC industry and I am grateful to its CEO, Vic Rayner OBE, for sharing insights into this sector, its drivers and many challenges.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Impact Report. If you would like to discuss any part of it do please simply contact me.

Sincerely,



Chris Best
Chief Executive Officer





Financial narrative

By Lisa Evans, Chief Financial Officer

Towards stable growth

Care Dorset has returned £500,000 in savings to Dorset Council over 12 months, whilst driving for growth. But high-quality care for the people we support must always be put first.

"Net profits have continued to grow year-on-year, from a loss in 2023 to £10k the following year and £40k in this.

This small surplus is very welcome as we, like all publicly owned adult social care bodies, must operate within a tight financial envelope.

Messaging the importance of value-for-money and discipline is ongoing, and is bearing fruit.

But I'm proud that rather than passively managing each efficiency issue piecemeal, Care Dorset has instead done the hard thing and faced the structural causes.

Programmes to unify staff rota, holiday and absence management (see right) and agency costs (page 5) are both steps towards the 'Care Dorset Way' which will generate economies for years to come."

Sales up 2%

Gross profit 15%

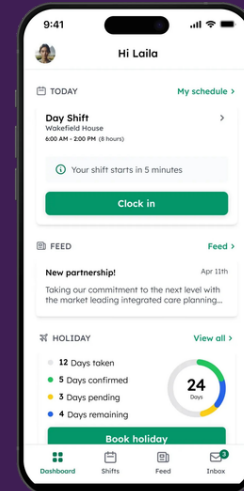
£500k returned to Dorset Council

Financial KPIs	Unit	2025/26*	2024	2023
Revenue	£'000	48,600	31,919	29,583
Operating profit/loss	£'000	40	10	(394)

*The financial results cover an 18-month reporting period. Equivalent 12 months sales are 2% higher than the previous final year, with growth from private funders and growth in Extra Care.

Making sense of rotas

Until 2026 there was no single way to see your shifts, book leave or record sickness. Each service did it their way.



In April, Care Dorset implemented a new digital rostering system, Sona.

For most colleagues Sona is a mobile app where they can book holiday, see their rota and access additional shifts.

For the organisation, it has strengthened oversight of workforce deployment, enabled deeper insight into working patterns and productivity, and enhanced monitoring of delivery and resource use.

As a result, the system is supporting more effective workforce planning while helping to ensure resources are aligned to demand.



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Zoning in on agency costs

When you need a care and support colleague and there's no one to call, you call agency. But that comes at a cost. It can become a habit. And it quickly adds up to a sizeable bill. How to address it?

Care agencies exist to fill gaps. Without them it would be very difficult to keep services at safe staffing levels. The industry needs agency.

But for Care Dorset what was meant to be an 'in need' additional service had become a 'baked in' financial burden. Agency use was consistently over expectations and some suppliers were charging premiums it was hard to justify.

Service colleagues who booked agency were working with systems, habits and relationships which had built up over years – and each did it differently.

Simply saying it was a problem wasn't going to solve the problem.

In late 2024 Care Dorset approached Neuen, seeking a refresh of our relationship with agency. We said we believed we were using it too much, we appeared to be using the most expensive agencies most often and there wasn't enough visibility.

The programme to tackle that ran throughout spring of 2025.

Neuen renegotiated agency fees. Most agencies engaged, but those who chose not to join the roster at the new rates were released.

There were communications, face-to-face meetings and a little training to update managers and senior staff. It wasn't about taking operational decisions away, just standardising the process to be more visible.

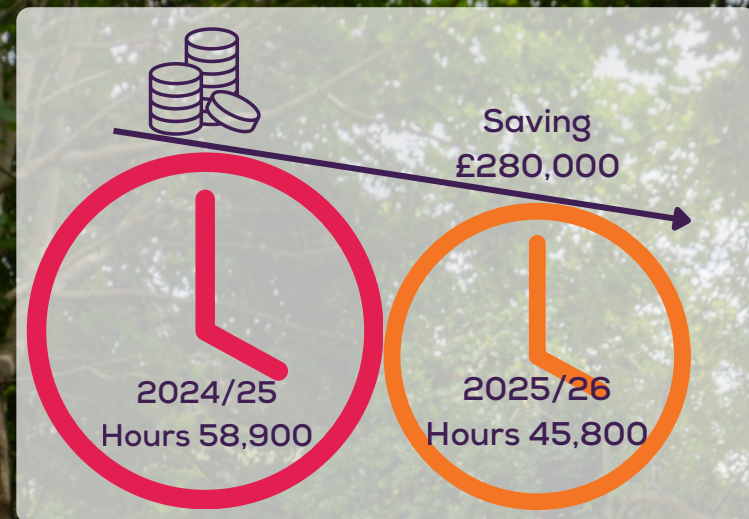
System goes live

Under the new system there would only be one way to book agency – through an online portal. That went live in May 2025.

Care Dorset has made a saving of £280,000 compared to hourly coverage in the previous year.

Chief Operating Officer Ally Prince said: "We like and need our agency colleagues. This is about management.

"It's reminded anyone booking agency to think twice – is this really necessary? Are there other options? I believe that's made a big difference."



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Operational update

By Allyson Prince, Chief Operating Officer

You're in a Good place

In March 2025, The Lawns in Weymouth was rated 'Requires Improvement' by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Skip forward a year and it's back to 'Good' again. What was the difference?

"It's such a pleasure to say all of Care Dorset's CQC-inspected services have achieved a 'Good' rating.

We've had two inspections in 2026. Anglebury Court, our Residential service in Wareham, was inspected in February and rated 'Good' in May.

And in August another Residential service, The Lawns in Weymouth, regained its 'Good' title.

Both were wonderful achievements by service colleagues and great for the people we support and their families.

But I must admit getting back

our 'Good' at The Lawns was very special.

Safe	Good	✓
Effective	Good	✓
Caring	Good	✓
Responsive	Good	✓
Well led	Good	✓

The new Manager, Michelle Harwood, has created a great 'can do' culture, and her enthusiasm was noticed.

One relative told the CQC: 'The new management have turned the place around.'

There were lots of reasons The Lawns earned its rating – all of them hard won – but having that leadership in place is a huge benefit."

Second service

In May 2024 Care Dorset opened its first 'Transition service,' essentially a Supported Living home for people aged 18-25 as they develop independence skills.

That was Dorchester Road in Weymouth, and its leadership have since been nominated in two separate national awards.

So it was fantastic to see that success turn into a second Transition service, Littlemoor Road, again in Weymouth, which opened in July.



Here to THRIVE

Many care services have their own model of care provision. Care Dorset has developed its own – called THRIVE – and it will become a cornerstone of our service.

THRIVE is a combination of three care disciplines:

1. Active Support

Helps people with disabilities take part by shifting support from "doing for" to "doing with" – promoting independence, skills, and meaningful engagement.

2. Positive Behaviour Support

Improves quality of life and reduces challenging behaviour by understanding why behaviours occur.

3. Person-centred care

Centring an individual's values, preferences, and circumstances. Treating the person rather than the diagnosis.

We're at an early stage in the rollout, but excited to develop a branded THRIVE model serving all the people we support.



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Quality as a culture (part 1)

Quality in care requires a culture which is open to development, and programmes which provide it. Care Dorset has both - but neither happen by themselves.

In September last year, all Care Dorset learning & development activity was brought together under the CarePath Academy brand.

CarePath Academy is a keystone in the 'Care Dorset Way' across the 23 services and outreach. That includes compliance level training and career development.

Its two tiers of Leadership training - partly based on the NHS 'QI' model - is developing the next generation of Care Dorset leaders.

The CarePath Academy remains a Care Dorset programme, but with a medium-term ambition to become an awarding body, offering recognised care qualifications.

Milestones

Milestones passed, and coming up...



150



Colleagues completed a PBS Practitioner course.

30



Colleagues progressed to PBS Coach status.

50



More PBS Coaches will be trained in the next two years.

75



Active Support Practitioners in the next two years.

4



Level 5 BTEC Diplomas in PBS Practice Leadership.



CarePath Academy
Care Dorset

Positive Behaviour Support

Last year, Care Dorset began a three-year partnership with the disability charity network Bild to strengthen our Positive

Behavioural Support (PBS) practice.

PBS is one pillar of THRIVE (page 6), Care Dorset's new care model.



Quality as a culture (part 2)

With 23 services plus outreach "What's it like to be at Care Dorset?" was not always a question with an answer. The Customer Experience Team was created to provide one.

Care Dorset needed a 'golden thread,' bringing Quality and safeguarding, its Values and its ambitions to life for all stakeholders.

In November last year the Customer Experience Team was launched. The 'experience' is that of the people we support, but also of families, colleagues and others.

The team's Customer Voice programme now drives almost all stakeholder engagement, including surveys - bringing them together in one place for analysis.

It also leads integration with third-party agencies whose role it is to assess Care Dorset's provision, ensuring it meets the standards expected by regulators and others.

The goal is always safer, higher-quality and more meaningful outcomes for everyone.



Dorset's Reablement rates beat all the averages

DAILY ECHO

Care Dorset reablement service amongst best in England

DorsetECHO

Dorset care company 'among most successful in England'

Reablement success

In April, Care Dorset announced its Reablement care could be listed amongst the best in England.

Some 92% of those who used it, ended needing no increase in care.

That's 15% better than the national average and outranks the South West - itself the top-performing region at 86%.

In the three months to February, the Care Dorset team delivered over 12,000 hours of support.

During the same period, 92% of users ended their Reablement with no increase to their package of care.



Making dreams come true

No one stops enjoying the things they've always enjoyed just because they've moved into a care setting. Creating a perfect day can mean extra effort – but it's what Care Dorset does.

When Gerald White turned 100, he could not have known he was about to have an 80-year-old wish fulfilled.

Gerald lives in The Hayes, a Care Dorset Residential home in Sherborne.

The father of two said: "In my 20s my friend Eddie had a motorbike and sidecar, but he would never let me ride in it."

Activities Officers decided they wanted to do something about that.

The problem was they didn't know anyone who owned a sidecar.

So an appeal went up on Facebook groups: "Do you have a sidecar? We'd like to make someone's day."

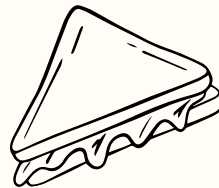
That caught the attention of local bikers.

Then it was spotted by someone with an award-winning, homemade sidecar.

Fast forward to June this year.

Gerald is being helped into the sidecar, along with 20 bikers who will be his guard of honour (in return for bacon sandwiches from the kitchen team).

Watch the video...



Adventures so far...

Football-mad Ron gets star treatment at Weymouth FC

Brief Encounter star Margaret turns 100, gets message from the King delivered by the mayor

Gerald's sidecar ride out

Former landlord Shirley pulls pints again



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The future is LATCo shaped

As a publicly owned Local Authority Trading Company, Care Dorset occupies a unique place in the adult social care market, says National Care Forum CEO Vic Rayner OBE.

There is a growing group of NCF's not-for-profit members who operate as Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCos), meaning they grew out from local authorities and so possess strong local knowledge and established trust amongst the people and communities they support.

LATCos are delivering measurable improvements in adult social care and support across the UK.

By their nature align with the current Labour government's priorities of ethical public service delivery, fair employment and community wealth-building while also offering appeal through their efficiency, innovation and financial sustainability.

LATCos, charities, community interest companies, housing providers, local authority direct provision and social enterprises operate services throughout England.

Between them they provide 20% of the social care provision delivered every day.

We believe this needs to increase.

Other services that are provided to older and disabled adults is done so on a 'for profit' basis.

In many cases those profits are redirected away, or 'extracted', from social care provision each year, whereas not-for-profit care and support organisations reinvest their surplus, offering more transparency and clearer accountability for the use of taxpayers' and self-payers' money.

Adult social care reform

This idea of 'extractive profit' or 'profiteering' has been highlighted recently by both Prime Minister Andy Burnham and Baroness Louise Casey.

The Casey Commission's 'Big Conversation on Care' has asked the public to submit proposals to tackle the question: 'When we are old or disabled, or have a serious illness, who should support us and how?' and at the time of writing 55 of the suggestions posted feature not-for-profit care in some way.



We are hopeful that by the time this public consultation has concluded these proposals will have received sufficient support to ensure the future role of not-for-profit care and support is included in the Commission's recommendations for the reform of adult social care.

We want to both support our members to grow and see the proportion of not-for-profit provision in adult social care increase and we would welcome working with the government to achieve this.

In collaboration with our members we have made a series of recommendations to government in order to transform the adult social care sector. [You can read these here.](#)

At a time when the social care system continues to experience challenges around funding, commissioning and workforce, we are keen to see how the new government may respond to hearing more about the purpose of our not-for-profit members and the innovation taking place within their organisations.

We hope to see the recognition, strengthening and growth of not-for-profit care and support provision become central to the development of a National Care Service.

Furthermore, we will continue to support Care Dorset and all our members by ensuring their voices are heard at the highest level of government.



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Contact

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