

Shareholder Committee for Care Dorset Holdings Ltd

28 September 2026

Commissioners' Update For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr S Robinson, Adult Social Care & Health

Local Councillor(s):

All

Senior Leadership Team:

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Report author and job title:

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Statutory Authority: Dorset Council

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

- 1. Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)**
 - 1.1 This report provides an update on developments led by the Council that are relevant to Care Dorset, summarising key progress made since the last Shareholder Committee meeting in June 2026.
- 2. Recommendation(s)**
 - 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the progress outlined.
- 3. Reason for the recommendation(s)**
 - 3.1 Care Dorset plays a key role in delivering the Council's 'Commissioning for a Better Life' strategies and in improving the quality and long-term sustainability of care and support for adults in Dorset.
- 4. The report**
 - 4.1 This report provides an update on key areas of work affecting Care Dorset. It reflects progress since June across day services, supported living,

reablement, care homes, and system transformation, alongside key financial and delivery considerations.

- 4.2 This work is aligned with Dorset Council's priorities, particularly supporting "Communities for All" by promoting independence, strengthening community-based provision, and ensuring people can access the right care and support at the right time. Care Dorset continues to play a key role within the Council's wider transformation of community health and care services, supporting more integrated and sustainable models of delivery.
- 4.3 During the reporting period, significant progress has been made in refreshing the core contract governing the services Care Dorset delivers under the Local Authority Trading Company arrangement. This includes Day Services, Supported Living, Care Home, and Reablement Services. Once finalised, the revised contract will strengthen governance arrangements and provide a more streamlined, flexible contractual framework, supporting the effective delivery of existing services while enabling the efficient commissioning and implementation of future service developments.

Day Services

- 4.4 Following Cabinet approval in March 2026 of the Council's new model for day opportunities, work has progressed into the implementation phase. The agreed approach establishes a more flexible and sustainable model of delivery, with a stronger emphasis on promoting independence, maximising the use of community assets, and ensuring long-term financial viability. In doing so, it supports the Council's ambition to build stronger, more inclusive communities developing local resources.
- 4.5 Work is underway to rebase the Care Dorset Day Services contract across the 13 centres, reflecting the transition to deliver the agreed future model for day opportunities. This includes reviewing catering options to ensure every adult who needs a hot meal has access as well as extending options to the wider community.
- 4.6 Progress to date includes the development of a new service specification and detailed analysis of the cost base for each centre to ensure alignment with the revised model and overall affordability. Further work is progressing to determine the appropriate balance between block and spot purchasing arrangements.
- 4.7 A review of lease and occupancy arrangements across the estate is ongoing to ensure assets are used effectively and support the delivery model. There is also a continued focus on linking day services more strongly with community-based provision and prevention initiatives including the Club Hub initiative.

Supported Living

- 4.8 A second transitions property in Weymouth has now opened. This will provide a shared three-bedroom supported living property, with a focus on skill development and move on. As our numbers of young people reaching adulthood continues to increase officers are actively working with our strategic housing partner to identify further transition properties in Dorset.

Reablement Centre

- 4.9 Detailed design work is complete, and the preferred construction partner has submitted their cost plan and construction activity schedule, in accordance with the two-stage tender process, which has been independently validated and evaluated. The next step is for Cabinet to consider approving the award of the construction contract to the preferred provider.
- 4.10 In parallel, work is continuing with Care Dorset to develop the operational model for the future service, including ongoing discussions regarding the proposed operating arrangements, lease structure and occupancy model. This will ensure that the future service is both operationally effective and financially sustainable once delivered.

Community Reablement and System Transformation

- 4.11 Community Reablement Services continue to perform strongly. Performance against weekly service starts and average length of stay is, at times, impacted by wider system pressures, including changes in referral patterns and increasing complexity of need, which can result in longer reablement periods for some individuals. These challenges are being actively managed across the system, with Reablement Leads working collaboratively to identify and implement solutions where possible.
- 4.12 Work to improve effectiveness, particularly in reducing ongoing care needs following reablement, is demonstrating positive impact. Performance has consistently achieved target levels since the end of July, with some weeks exceeding target by a strong margin. The current focus is on embedding these approaches to ensure consistent and sustainable performance.

Care Homes

- 4.13 Work continues in partnership to explore opportunities for service development. This includes consideration of how care home provision could expand to support individuals with higher acuity needs, including those with complex mental health and dementia diagnoses who are ready for discharge from acute settings, informed by demand data being provided by commissioners.
- 4.14 Work to align operational processes more closely has continued to deliver positive benefits, strengthening oversight of referral activity and supporting

more effective demand management across the system. The approach is also improving communication and joint working, particularly between Brokerage and Referral Coordinator's, enabling issues to be identified and addressed more proactively and contributing to a more coordinated and efficient service response.

5. Legal considerations

- 5.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising directly from this report. However, any future decisions relating to service transformation, contractual changes, or commissioning arrangements will need to comply with relevant statutory duties, including those under the Care Act 2014, public procurement regulations, and employment law.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 This report does not seek any formal decisions at this stage and does not introduce new financial commitments. However, the Council continues to face sustained pressures within the adult social care budget. In this context, Care Dorset has an important role in supporting the Council to manage these financial challenges by delivering efficient, high-quality services and contributing to value for money. Robust commissioning decisions in relation to Care Dorset will therefore be essential to ensure financial sustainability.

7. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 7.1 While this report does not raise any direct environmental implications, ongoing work on the transformation of day services and the redevelopment of Sidney Gale House presents opportunities to improve the environmental performance of Care Dorset's estate. These projects offer potential to enhance energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and make better use of existing buildings in line with the Council's wider sustainability goals

8. Well-being and health implications

- 8.1 The services described, and their journey of continuous improvement, are key contributors to maintaining and improving the health and wellbeing of people who draw on support, supporting independence, reducing risk, and contributing to better long-term outcomes.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 No other implications identified.
- 10.1 No decision is required; no risk assessment therefore needed.

11. Equalities

- 11.1 No decision is required. Equalities impacts are assessed in connection with decision made on specific service developments.

Appendices

- 12.1 None

13. Background Papers

- 13.1 None