Health & Wellbeing Board

18 November 2026

Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People – Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023-33 – Annual Report 2026

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:
Cllr C Sutton, Children, Families & Education

Local Councillor(s): **All**

Senior Leadership Team:
P Dempsey - Executive Director, Children's Services

Report author and job title: Sunita Khattra-Hall, Corporate Director Quality Assurance and Safeguarding
Email: sunita.khattra-hall@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Statutory Authority: Health and Social Care Act 2012, Part 5, Chapter 2 (Health and Wellbeing Boards).

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

1. Executive summary

1.1 The Strategic Alliance for Babies, Children and Young People is a multi-agency partnership bringing together organisations from across health, education, social care, policing, early years, the voluntary and community sector and wider public services to improve outcomes for children, young people and families across Dorset.

The Partnership's Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023-33 sets out a shared vision:

"We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive, and families are supported to be the best they can be."

This report presents the Strategic Alliance Annual Report 2026 and highlights progress delivered during 2025/26 across the Plan's seven strategic priorities:

- Best Start in Life

- Young and Thriving
- Good Care Provision
- Best Education for All
- Best Place to Live
- Local Family Help
- Safe at Home and in the Community.

The report demonstrates the impact of partnership working across Dorset, including achievement of an Outstanding Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services outcome, continued national leadership through the Families First Partnership Programme, expansion of Family Hubs, improved educational outcomes, increased support for care-experienced young people, strengthened safeguarding arrangements and greater participation of children and young people in decision making.

The report also identifies emerging priorities and next steps for delivery during 2026/27 as partners continue working together to improve outcomes for babies, children, young people and families.

2. Recommendation

2.1 To note the progress made in delivering the Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023-33 (formerly the Children and Young People's Plan 2023-33) and the achievements highlighted within the Strategic Alliance for Babies, Children and Young People Annual Report 2026.

3. Reason for the recommendation

3.1 To provide oversight of the progress and impact of the Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan and demonstrate how collaborative partnership working contributes to delivery of Dorset Council priorities and improved outcomes for babies, children, young people and families.

4. The report

4.1 The Strategic Alliance for Babies, Children and Young People is Dorset's partnership for improving outcomes for babies, children, young people and families. It brings together senior leaders from Dorset Council, health partners, education providers, Dorset Police, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, the voluntary and community sector, Dorset Parent Carer Council and other key agencies.

The partnership works collectively to deliver the Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023-33 through seven strategic priorities which focus on improving outcomes throughout childhood and into adulthood.

4.2 The 2026 Annual Report demonstrates significant progress across all priority areas during 2025/26, including:

- Dorset becoming a Children's Rights Respecting Authority and recognising care experience as a local protected characteristic.
- Achievement of an Outstanding Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services outcome.
- Continued development of Dorset's Families First Partnership Programme as one of the first national Pathfinder authorities.
- Publication of Dorset's Best Start Local Plan and expansion of Family Hub provision.
- Improved educational outcomes including progress in phonics, Key Stage 2 attainment and Good Level of Development.
- More than 17,000 hours of Short Breaks delivered for children and young people with SEND and disabilities.
- Increased support enabling children to remain safely within their family networks and communities.
- Strengthened multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and continued reductions in youth justice and knife crime indicators.

4.3 The report evidences the positive impact of partnership working across Dorset and demonstrates how agencies are working together to improve life chances, deliver earlier intervention and keep children safe. **The Strategic Alliance Annual Report 2026 is attached as Appendix 1.**

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 No alternative options have been considered. The Strategic Alliance Annual Report provides an opportunity for the Health and Wellbeing Board to maintain oversight of progress against the Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023-33 and the collective impact of partnership working across Dorset**.**

6. Legal considerations

6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The Strategic Alliance supports partners in fulfilling their respective statutory duties relating to children, young people and families, including safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

7. Financial implications

7.1 Delivery of the Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan continues to be achieved through the collective commitment and resources of partner organisations.

7.2 The partnership is focused on delivering earlier intervention, prevention and integrated support through initiatives such as the Families First Partnership, Family Hubs and Local Alliance Groups. These approaches aim to improve outcomes for children and families while ensuring resources are used effectively across the wider system.

8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

8.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. The partnership continues to support Dorset Council's environmental ambitions through activity within the Best Place to Live priority, including increasing opportunities for young people to participate in climate and environmental action and supporting sustainable communities where children and young people can thrive.

9. Well-being and health implications

9.1 The Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan is designed to positively influence the health and wellbeing of babies, children, young people and families through collaborative working across health, education, social care, community safety and voluntary sector organisations.

9.2 Examples highlighted within the Annual Report include the Best Start Local Plan, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services transformation, Family Hubs, emotional wellbeing support, healthy activities through the Holiday Activities and Food programme, and targeted support for vulnerable children and families.

10. Other Implications

10.1 None identified.

11. Risk Implications

11.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

11.2 The Strategic Alliance governance arrangements support the identification, management and mitigation of risks affecting babies, children, young people and families through regular multi-agency oversight and performance monitoring.

12. Equalities

The Strategic Alliance is committed to improving outcomes for all babies, children, young people and families and reducing inequalities across Dorset.

12.1 The Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan promotes inclusion, participation and equitable access to services. During 2025/26 the partnership strengthened this commitment by becoming a Children's Rights Respecting Authority, supporting Rights Respecting Schools, increasing opportunities for young people's participation in decision making and recognising care experience as a local protected characteristic.

12.2 Equality Impact Assessments continue to be undertaken where appropriate by individual partner organisations when developing or changing services.

13. Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1: Strategic Alliance for Babies, Children and Young People Annual Report 2026.

14. Background Papers

14.1 Babies, Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023-33.

14.2 Health and Wellbeing Board Report: Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People Annual Report 2025. **Item 12 pages 37-82.**

15. Report sign-off

15.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Assurance & Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Director for Resources (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Cabinet Member(s)