Dorset Council

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present the **Corporate Parenting Board** with a comprehensive overview of performance metrics. The indicators are organised by relevant categories to facilitate analysis and understanding. We will continue collaborating with managers to establish clear targets for improvement and accountability.

Overview of Performance

The report presents key indicators and evaluates performance against these metrics over the past six months. It assesses the available data as of the end of the last month, utilising snapshots for analysis. Where applicable, specific targets have been established to promote high performance and drive improvement, accompanied by a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating for each indicator. These targets are aligned with national benchmarks and the averages of statistical neighbours, and relevant information is included in the report where available, in collaboration with Service Managers.

RAG Rating

Where a target has been set, indicators are RAG rated in the 'Status' field using the criteria below:

Green : Performance is good and in line with or exceeding target: consistent with the National/Statistical Neighbour average.

Amber : Performance is below target; inconsistent with National/Statistical Neighbour average; action is in place with likelihood of improvement.

Red : Performance is poor; well below expected levels nationally; improvement is required.

Performance Direction

The latest performance is compared to the previous month, with icons indicating the direction of performance, based solely on whether the figures have increased or decreased. It is important to note that the '**Direction of Performance**' field is not related to the established targets; rather, it serves to highlight changes in performance trends. To assess the overall status of each measure, please refer to the RAG ratings in the '**Status**' field, which indicate how the latest month's performance aligns with the set targets.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Key Messages

Summary

What is Going Well

1. **Care Leaver outcomes remain strong,** with high levels of suitable accommodation, engagement with services and positive participation in education, employment and training.
2. **Education performance is strengthening,** with attendance improving and reductions in suspensions for children in care.
3. **Stability of homes for children is improving,** with most children remaining in long-term stable homes and relatively low levels of multiple moves.
4. **Adoption performance remains effective,** with continued focus on reducing delays and securing permanent families for children

Areas of Focus

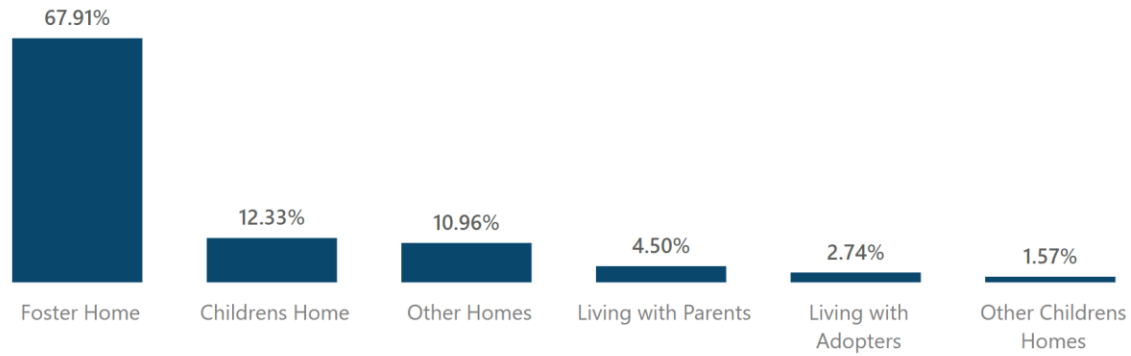
1. **The number of Children in Care** is 511 (rate of 76.10 per 10,000) which is above Good+ Statistical Neighbours (66.00) and National Average (67.00)
2. **Achieving permanence through adoption and special guardianship** is starting to increase but not at the pace our children need.
3. **Health performance** remains an area of focus especially around timeliness of initial health assessments which are impacted by delayed consent, children living outside of Dorset and capacity of our health partners to meet increasing need and numbers across both Dorset and BCP areas.
4. **Maintaining and increasing local homes for our children & young people** continues to be an area of focus. The need to increase the number of local foster families for children and young people.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

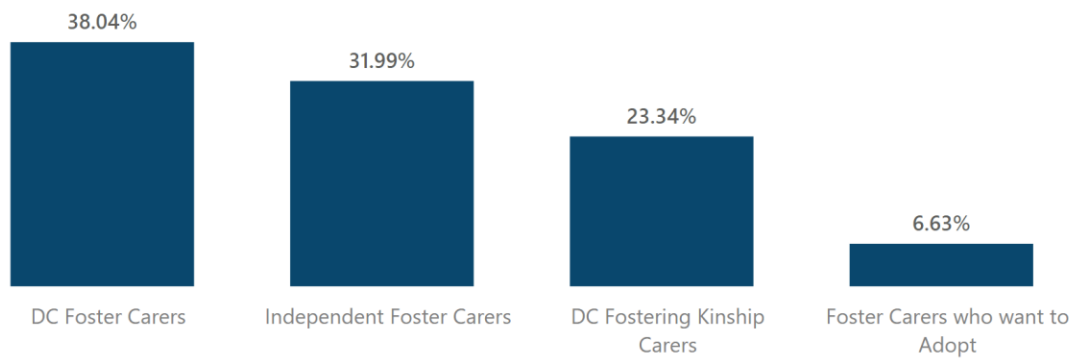
September 2026

Summary

Where Children Live



Types of Foster Homes



Summary

Children's living arrangements - September 2026

As of September 2026, almost seven in ten children lived in foster homes.

Of these, the largest proportion lived with DC foster carers, while almost a third lived with independent foster carers and around a quarter with DC kinship carers.

Children’s homes accounted for 12.33 % of all living arrangements, with the remaining children living across other homes, with parents, or with adopters.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

> Children in our Care

We have 511 children in care (rate of 76 per 10,000), 57 of which are unaccompanied children.

Last month we had 494 , (74) and 53 respectively.

> Adoption and Special Guardianship

In the last 6 months 3 % of children moved to live with adopters and 9 % became settled through Special Guardianship Orders (SGO).

Last month this was 5 % and 9 % respectively.

> Distance from Family Home

38 % of our children in care live over 20 miles away from home (excluding our unaccompanied children).

Last month it was 41 %.

> Safe and Stable Home

Of our children in care who have been in care for 2.5 years (aged 16 or under) 68 % have been in their home for 2 years or more.

Last month it was 71 %.

We have 13 % of our children in care who have had 3 or more homes in the previous 12 months.

Last month it was 13 %.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

> Health

Of our children who have been in care for at least 12 months (aged 4-16), 48 % have had a strengths & difficulties questionnaire completed. Last month this was 50 %.

Of our new children in care, 0 % had their initial health assessment within 20 days. In the month prior to this it was 1 %.

> Education

The average attendance for this academic year for our children in care is 91 %, (87 % up to July 2026). 94 % (up to July 2026) of our children in care have had their termly personal education plan completed on time.

> Adoption

11 children were adopted in the last 12 months, compared to 14 children in the previous 12 months. The average number of days from the date of the 'Placement Order' to the date the child was matched to prospective adopters was 167 (159 last month).

The average number of days between entering care and moving in with adopted family (adjusted for foster carer adoptions) was 374 (316 last month).

> Care Leavers

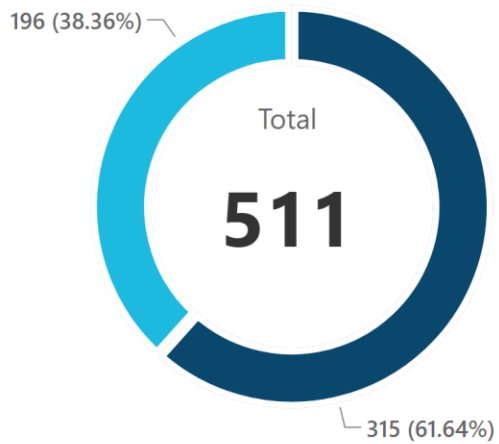
We had 2 care leaver(s) (active, aged 16-25 yrs) in B&B accommodation. In the previous month we had 2 . 98 % of our care leavers are living in safe, secure & affordable accommodation (active, 19-21 yrs). Last month this was 98 %. 68 % of our care leavers are in employment, education or training (active, 19-21 yrs). Last month this was 68 %.
89 % of our care leavers with an up to date Pathway Plan at end of month (active, 17-25 yrs). Last month this was 89 %. 95 % of our care leavers are in touch with us (active, 19-21 yrs). Last month this was at 93 %.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

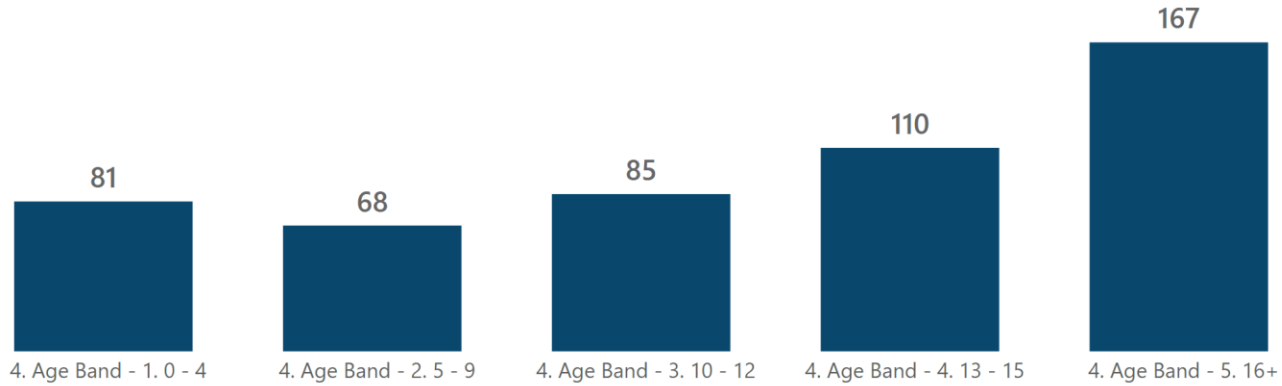
September 2026

Profile

Children in Care



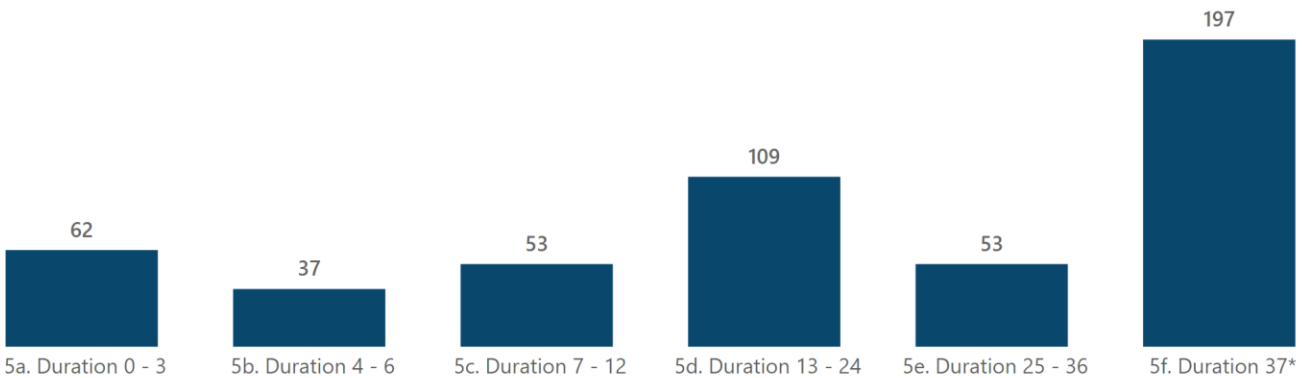
Children in Care (Age)



> **571** Number of Care Leavers

> **318** are Receiving a Service

Children in Care (in Months)



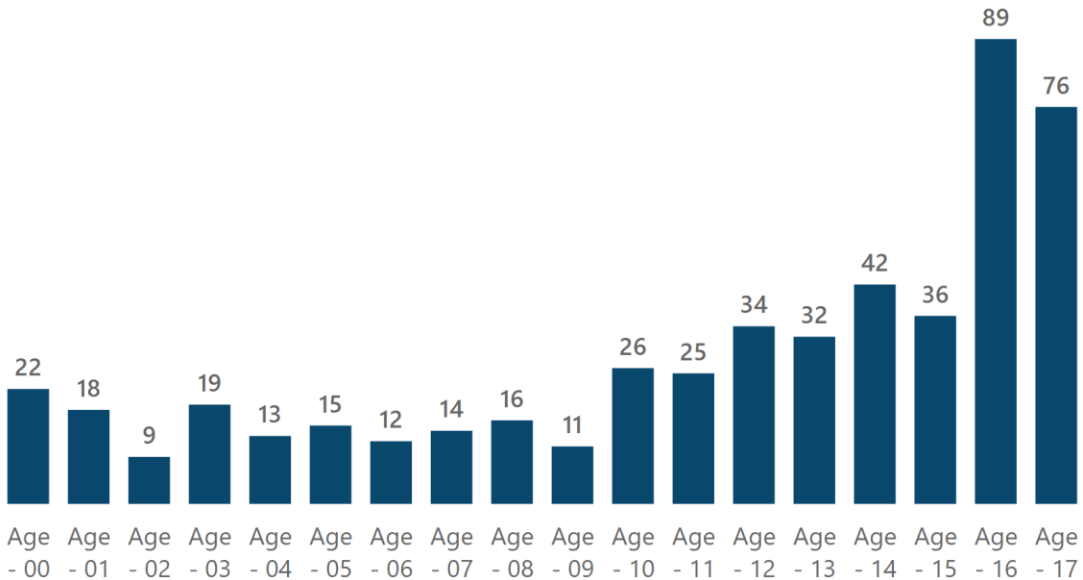
Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

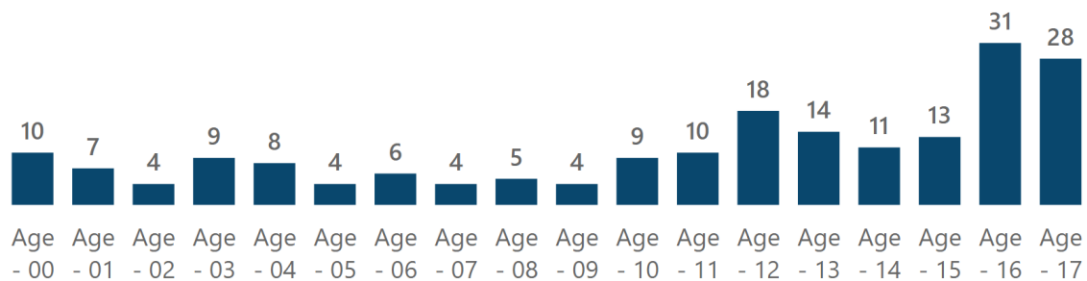
Profile

C1 Interim Care Order	C2 Full Care Order	V2 Single Period of Accomodation Under S20	E1 Placement Order Granted
53	310	116	32

Children in Care by Gender & Age (Male)



Children in Care by Gender & Age (Female)

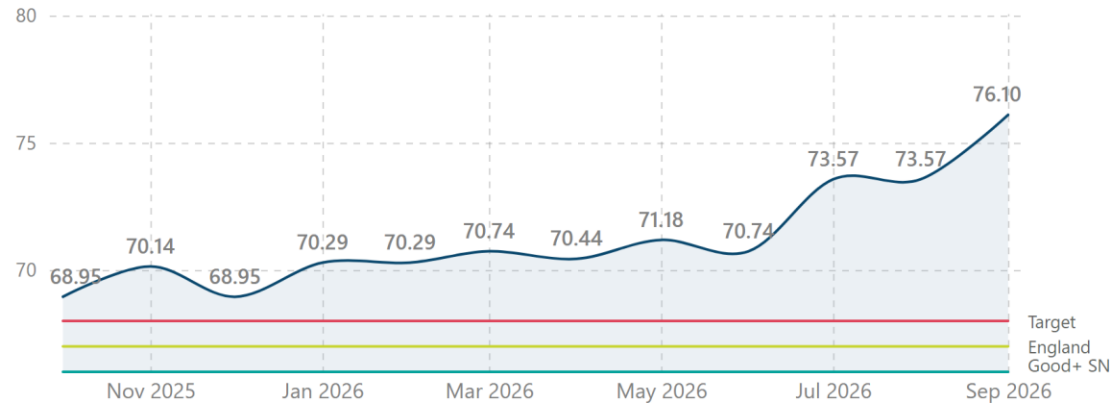


Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

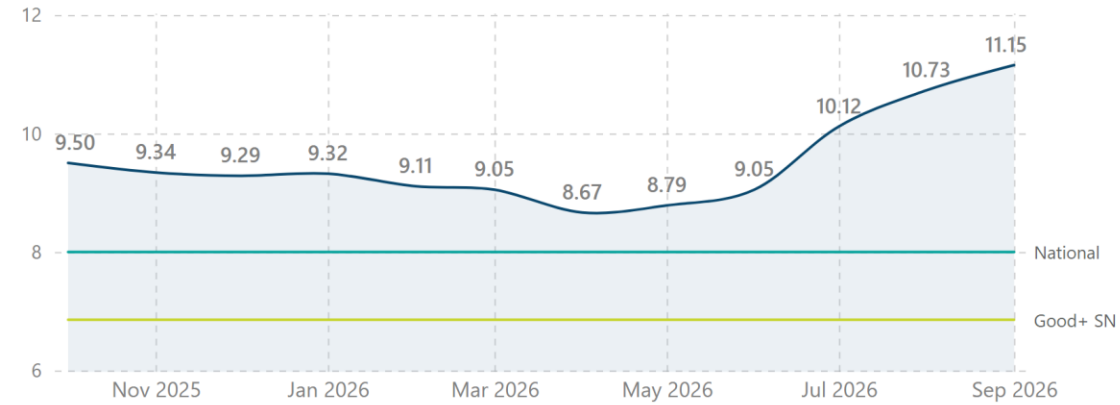
Children and Young People

September 2026

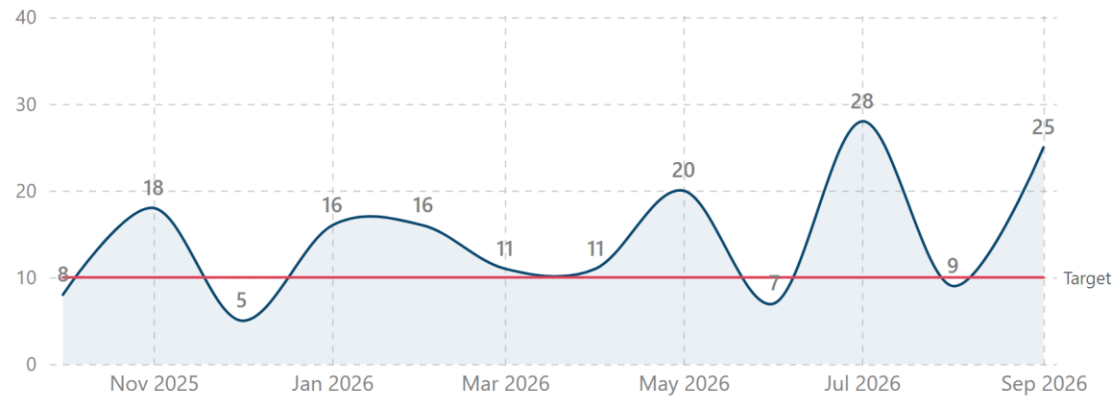
Rate of Children in Care at Month-End



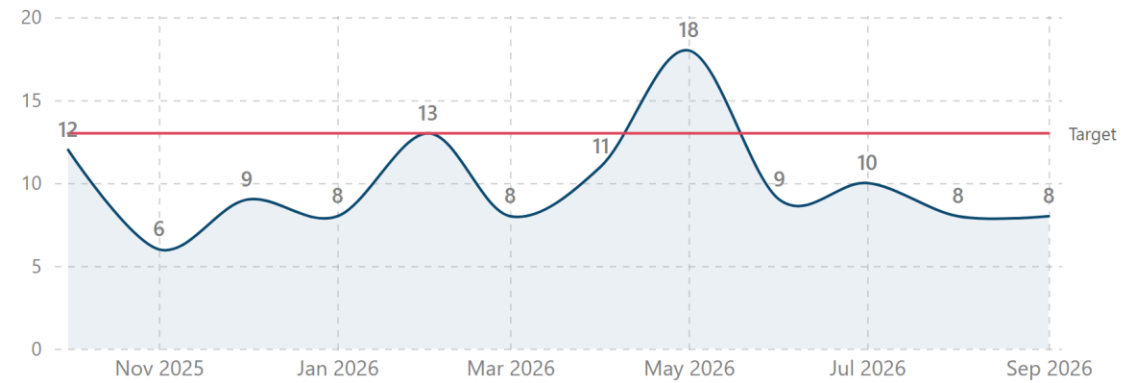
Percentage of Children in Care who are Unaccompanied Children



Number of Children who became Children in Care



Number of Children who ceased to be Children in Care



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

Children and Young People

September 2026

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Became CiC (Excl. UC)	Low			10.00	21.00	9.00	19.00	Worsening
Became CiC (Month)	Low			10.00	28.00	9.00	25.00	Worsening
Ceased to be CiC (Month)	High			13.00	10.00	8.00	8.00	Same
CiC at Month End	Low			420.00	494.00	494.00	511.00	Worsening
CiC Rate at Month End	Low	66.00	67.00	68.00	73.57	73.57	76.10	Worsening
CiC Rate at Month End (Excl. UC)	Low	61.14	61.76		66.12	65.67	67.61	Worsening
UC at Month End	-			65.00	50.00	53.00	57.00	
UC Share of CiC	-	6.86	8.00		10.12	10.73	11.15	

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

Children and Young People

September 2026

Commentary

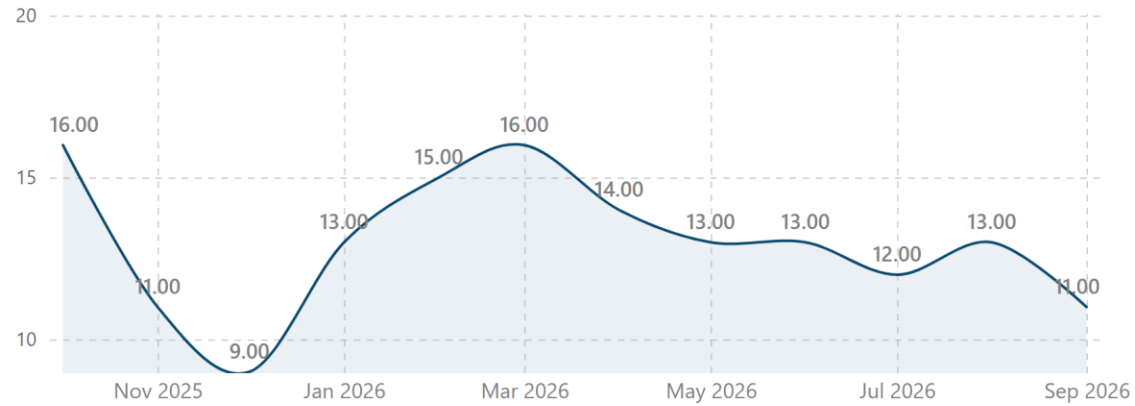
Dorset continues to maintain a strong focus on improving outcomes for children and young people in care through permanence planning, relationship-based practice and improved participation in decision-making. During Q2, the number of children in care remained high. 62 children in total came into care (over 3 months) of whom 24 were adolescents & 6 by police powers. Overall, 8% of new children into care, had previously been in our care. At the end of Q2 we had an increase of 17 children in our care (compared to Q1) placing continued pressure on services and placement sufficiency. Through the national transfer scheme, we have supported 7 unaccompanied children coming into our care and are working closely with Authorities in Kent to plan to reach our target of 65. Our unaccompanied children account for 11% of our overall children in care population. Despite the increase in overall numbers, we have remained focused on ensuring children experience stability, maintain important relationships and achieve positive outcomes. 14 children remain in care but are living at home with their parents- supporting our focus on reunification. Priority during the next quarter will continue to focus on ensuring children experience stable homes, timely permanence planning and access to opportunities that support their wellbeing and future success.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

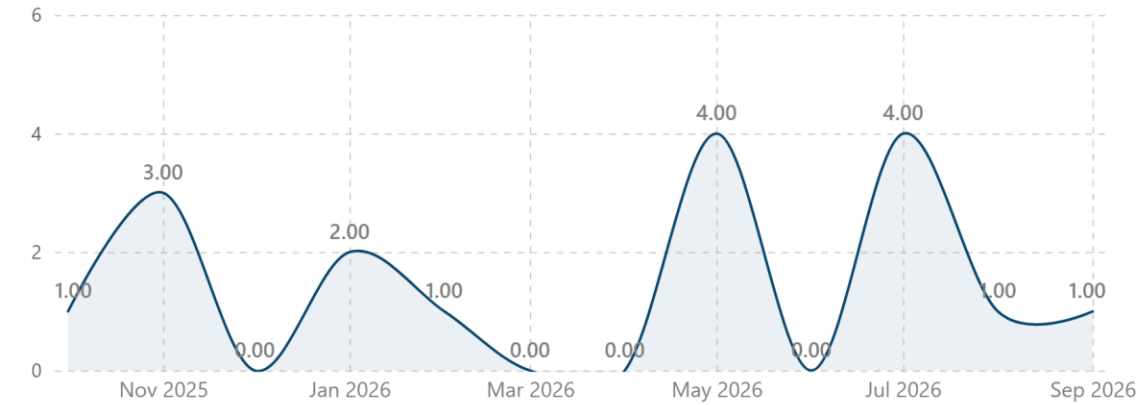
September 2026

Adoption

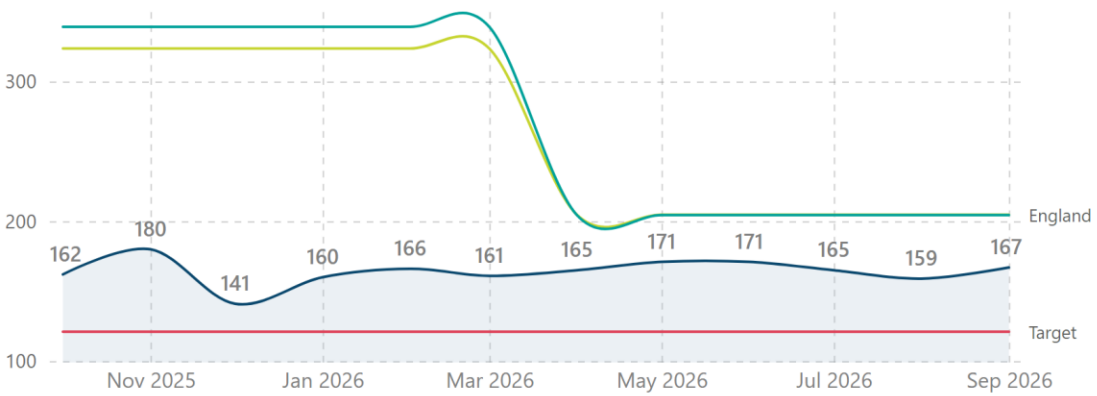
Children adopted in last 12 months



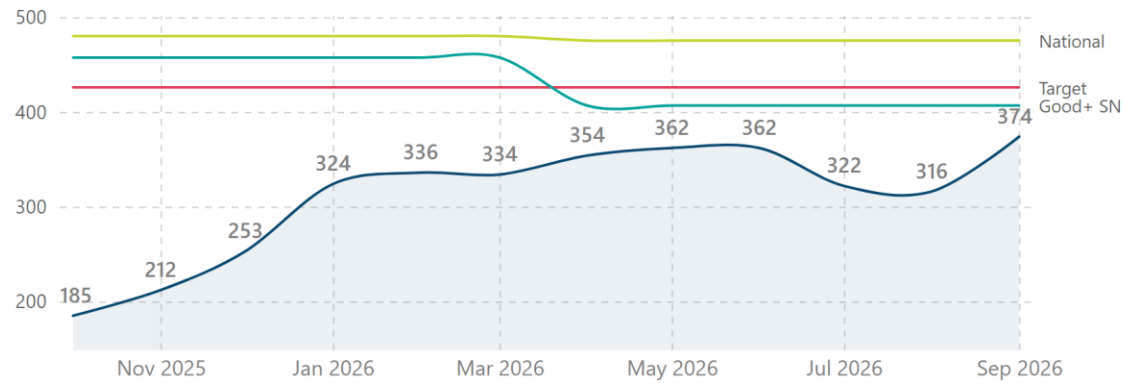
Number of adoptive families approved (ADM)



Average Days to match from placement order



Average days to move in with adoptive family



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Adoption

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Adopted (Last 12m)	High				12.00	13.00	11.00	Worsening
Adoptive Families Approved (ADM)	High				4.00	1.00	1.00	Same
Adoptive Families in Assessment	High				15.00	18.00	18.00	Same
Days: Enter Care → Move-In (Adjusted) (Avg)	Low	406.85	475.48	426.00	322.00	316.00	374.00	Worsening
Days: Placement Order → Match (Avg)	Low	204.46	204.68	121.00	165.00	159.00	167.00	Worsening
Placement Order Revocations (Last 12m) - Number	Low				4.00	4.00	4.00	Same

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Adoption

Commentary

Adoption performance is tracked through Aspire adoption 6 weekly operational and quarterly strategic boards, as well as tracking permanency within localities. Children waiting meetings are held regularly in Aspire to consider the needs of children who are waiting for the right adoptive family with prospective adopters in assessment. Aspire Performance Board also scrutinises quarterly data. Over the last 12 months (rolling), 11 Dorset children have been adopted (compared to 14 at the same point in 2025), 27 Dorset children are waiting to be adopted, and 17 are living with prospective adopters of which 7 adoption order applications have been made and are waiting court dates. Aspire are actively family finding for 10 children who are waiting with a placement order for the right adoptive family. 7 of these children are sibling groups (1 x 3 children and 2 x 2 children) Of the 66 children who ceased to be in care over the last 6 months, 3% were due to adoption orders being made. Q2 has seen an increase each month in the time for children between entering care and being placed with an adoptive family- 322 days in July, 316 days in August, 374 days in September. Although an increase for Dorset, we remain lower than the national average and lower than other good+ authorities which remains a positive position. In the last 12 months 9% (4/43 children) have had a change in best interest decision- where the child should no longer be placed for adoption. The adopter recruitment pipeline remains positive with 30 prospective adopters currently in assessment (stages 1 and 2 combined) a significant increase from 16, in the same reporting period in 2025. Q2 has seen 9 approvals and to date this will be 19 in total. Last year there was 23 approvals and currently the target of 36 is on track. 8 ROIs (register of Interest) were received in Q2 and 6 since April 2026. Despite an increase in recruitment and approvals, this is not increasing at the same rate as children where adoption is determined as the best permanence option. This is leading to some of our children being matched with families outside of Aspire. The key priorities are to improve timeliness for children; ensure children achieve permanence without unnecessary delay and to review the family finding capacity within Aspire. Dorset continues to promote permanence planning at the earliest opportunity for children who are unable to return to the care of their birth families. Alongside adoption, the service continues to recognise the increasing importance of kinship care, connected persons care and special guardianship arrangements in securing permanence for children within their wider family networks.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

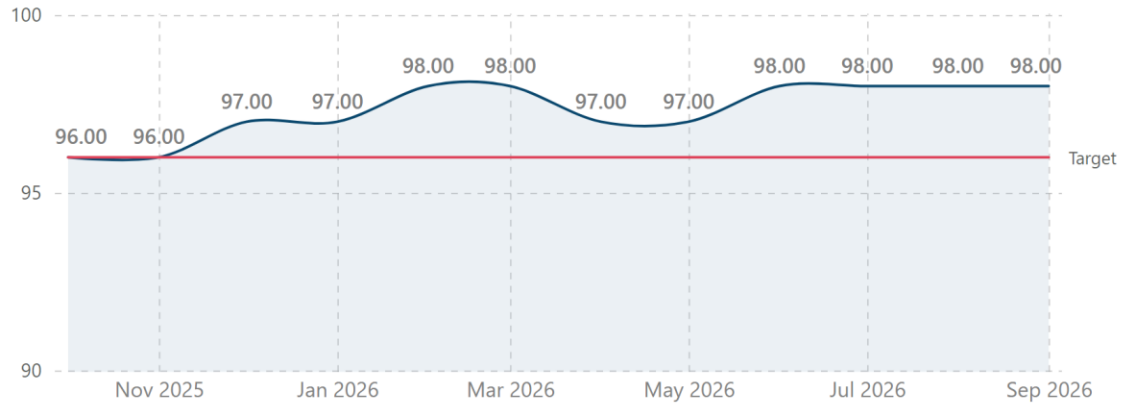
September 2026

Care Leavers

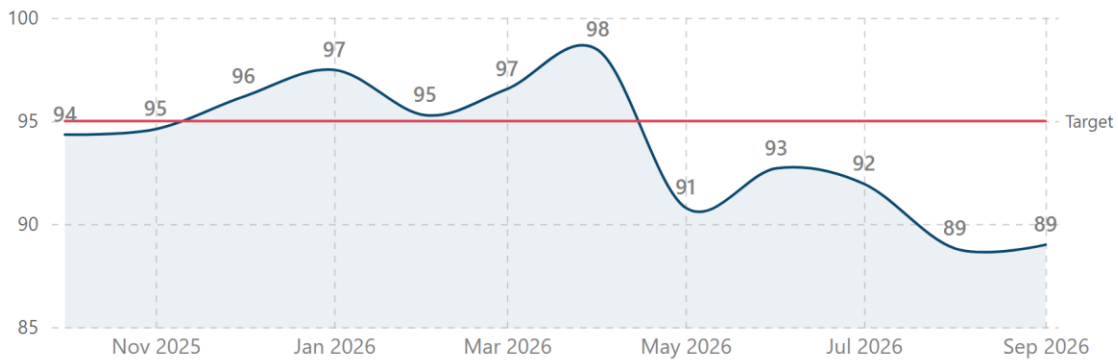
Percentage of Care Leavers in touch with Dorset Council (Active aged 19-21)



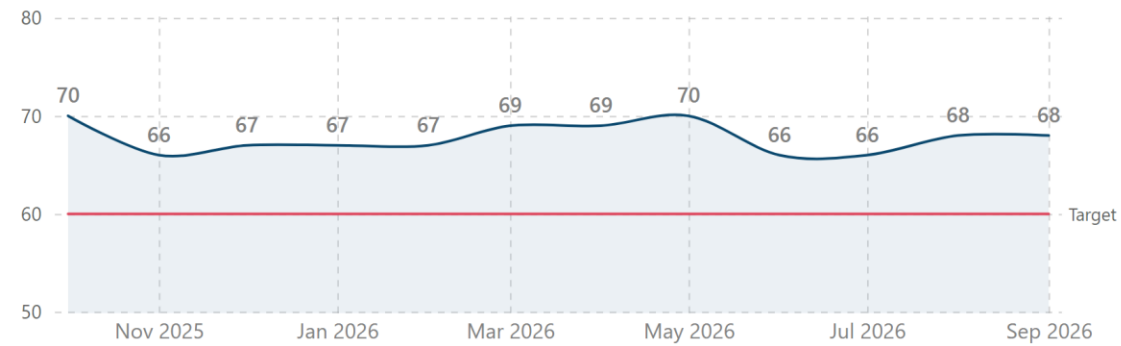
Percentage of Care Leavers who are living in suitable accommodation (Active aged 19-21)



Percentage of Care Leavers with an up-to-date pathway plan at month-end (Active aged 17-25)



Percentage of Care Leavers who in education, employment or training (Active aged 19-21)



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Care Leavers

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Bed & Breakfast – Number (Active 17–25)	Low			0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	Same
EET – Percentage (Active 19–21)	High			60.00	66.00	68.00	68.00	Same
EET – Percentage (Active 17–18)	High			60.00	66.00	71.00	74.00	Improving
EET (19–21) – Percentage (OC3)	High	54.00	54.00				56.73	Worsening
Health Passports Completed – Number (2m Arrears)	-							
Health Passports Due – Number (2m Arrears)	-				5.00			
In Touch – Active (19–21)	High			93.00	94.00	93.00	95.00	Improving
Pathway Plan Up-to-Date – (Active 17–25)	High			95.00	91.95	88.82	88.99	Improving
Suitable Accommodation – (19–21)	High			96.00	98.00	98.00	98.00	Same
Unsuitable Accommodation – Number (Active 17–25)	Low			11.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	Improving

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Care Leavers

Commentary

Performance for Dorset care leavers remains a significant strength during Q2, with strong outcomes across engagement, accommodation, education, employment and training. The service continues to provide effective support to young people as they transition into adulthood, whilst maintaining a focus on independence, stable relationships and positive future opportunities.

At the end of Q2, there were 571 care leavers aged 18-25 eligible for support from the service. Of these, 318 young people were receiving active support from a Personal Adviser, representing 56% of all care leavers aged 18-25. This reflects a stable level of engagement across the quarter. It is important to note that care leavers aged 21 and over can choose whether to remain actively involved with the service and can re-engage at any time through the duty offer should they require advice, guidance or support.

The service continues to perform exceptionally well in maintaining contact with care leavers, with 99% of young people recorded as being "in touch" at the end of Q2. Practitioners maintain contact at least every eight weeks, with frequency increasing where young people have additional needs.

Accommodation performance remains strong despite continued pressures within the housing market and increasing challenges in securing affordable housing for young people. Overall, 98.43% of care leavers aged 18-25 were living in suitable accommodation during Q2, significantly better than the local target and demonstrating effective accommodation planning and oversight. Performance remained well within target throughout the quarter, averaging 1.57% of care leavers living in unsuitable accommodation.

There were two care leavers living in Bed and Breakfast accommodation during Q2, both residing within Dorset. Enhanced oversight is in place, and officers are working closely with housing partners to secure suitable move-on accommodation. There was also one care leaver recorded as homeless, living outside Dorset after leaving previous accommodation for personal reasons and currently staying with friends. In addition, two care leavers remain in custody serving long-term sentences.

A particular strength is the outcome achieved for care leavers who were previously unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, with 100% living in suitable accommodation, exceeding the already strong performance of the wider care leaver population.

Participation in education, employment and training continues to be a positive area of performance, reflecting the impact of targeted support from Personal Advisers, effective pathway planning and strong partnership working. Performance remained consistently above the 60% target throughout Q2.

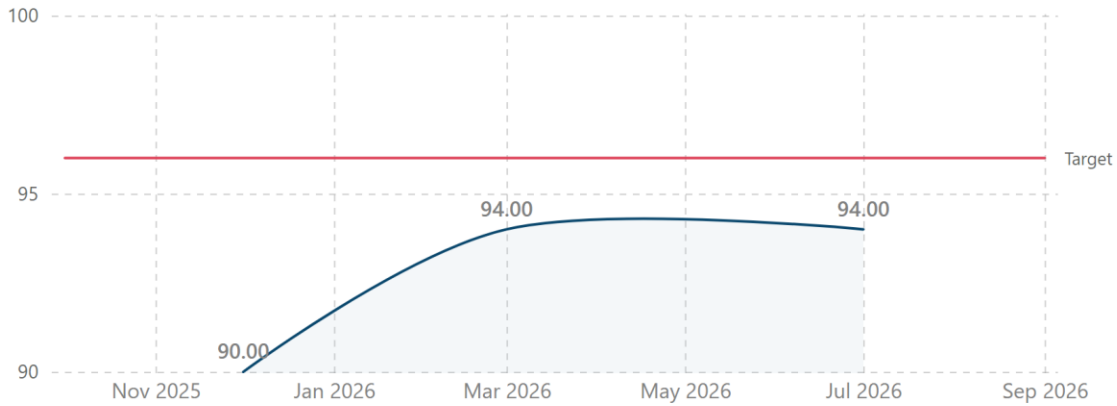
These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of support available through education pathways, employment opportunities, apprenticeships and tailored support for young people to achieve their aspirations and successfully transition into adulthood.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

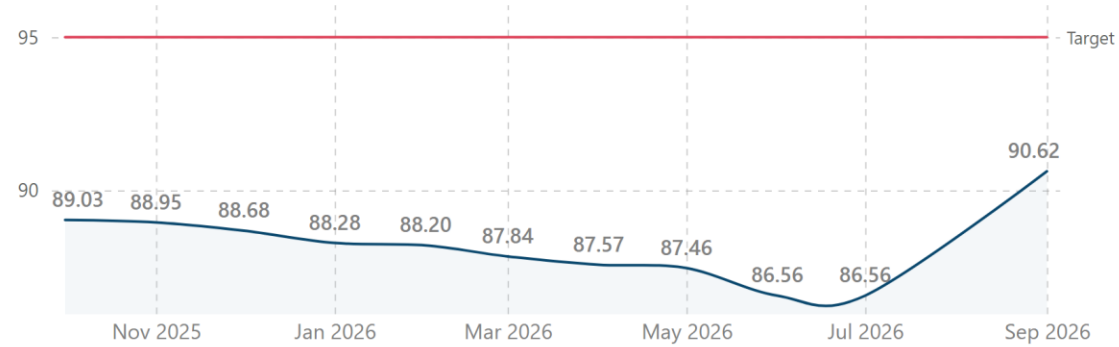
September 2026

Education

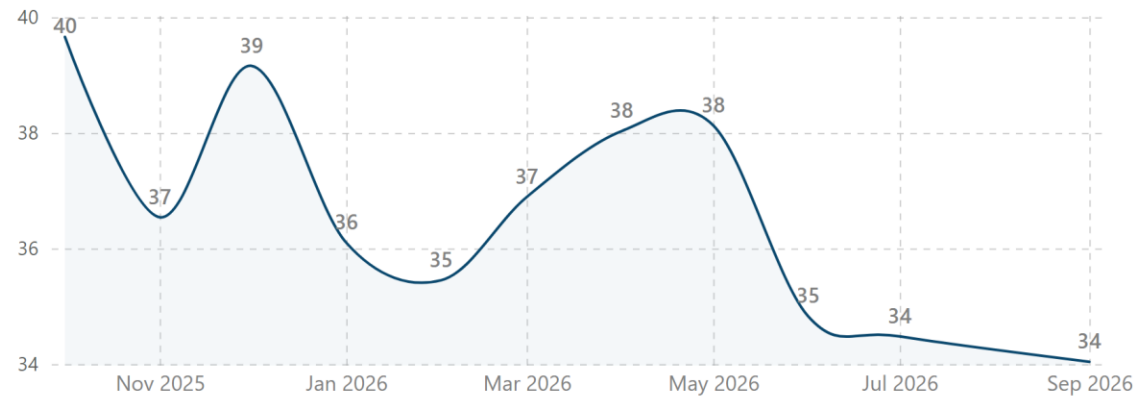
Percentage of Children in Care with a termly PEP completed on time



Average percentage attendance for school-aged Children in Care (Academic year-to-date)



Percentage of Children in Care with Education, Health, and Care Plan



Percentage of school-aged Children in Care who have had at least one suspension in the academic year



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Education

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26		D.O.T
Average Attendance – AYTD – % (School-Aged CiC)	High			95.00	86.56		90.62	✓	Improving
CiC with EHCP – %	-				34.48		34.04		
EET – % (CiC & Care Leavers, 16–18; Y12–Y13)	High			72.00	76.23		78.19	✓	Improving
NEET – % (CiC & Care Leavers, 16–18; Y12–Y13)	Low			28.00	23.77		21.81	✓	Improving
PEP Within 20 Days of Entering Care – %	High			100.00	100.00				
Suspended ≥1 (AYTD) – % (School-Aged CiC)	Low				11.67		1.19	✓	Improving
Termly PEP Completed on Time – %	High			96.00	94.00				

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Education

Commentary

August and September provides the Virtual School with an opportunity to reflect on the previous academic year to help us plan for the future for our children. It also enables us to celebrate the achievements of our children in an assessment year and in receipt of formal results as well as all our children and the progress they have made in their learning.

2025/26 has been a year of reflection and transformation within the team to embed the work of the extended role alongside our work with our Children in Care and Care Leavers and has given the opportunity to build relationships with our partners to ensure that our children and young people have the opportunity to achieve and be successful.

We have focused on highlighting and celebrating belonging and inclusion within our work and practice, embedding proactive training opportunities for our settings and reflecting on how we capture and use our children's' voices to improve our practice.

We need to continue to focus on:

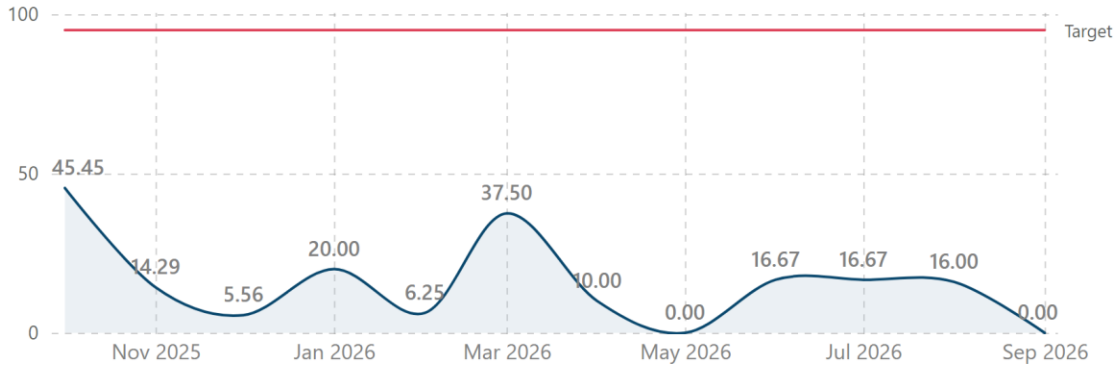
- Improving attendance for those children with persistent and severe absence
- Reduce suspensions for children on Child Protection plans
- Embedding our children's voice within our work
- Working with locality practitioners and partners to develop good practice to reduce suspensions, particularly for children with Special Educational Needs
- Develop a robust monitoring report for children with a Social Worker who are Electively Home Educated in preparation for Children's Wellbeing Act.
- Develop bespoke training for Virtual School on Post 16/18 offer
- Consider impact of tutoring funding on Pupil Premium+
- Monitoring of attainment outcomes for Children on Child in Need and Child protection plans

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

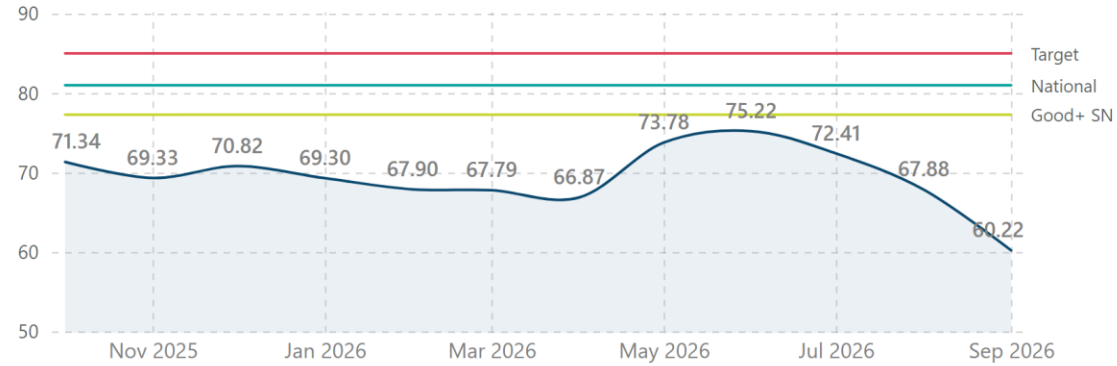
September 2026

Health and Emotional Wellbeing

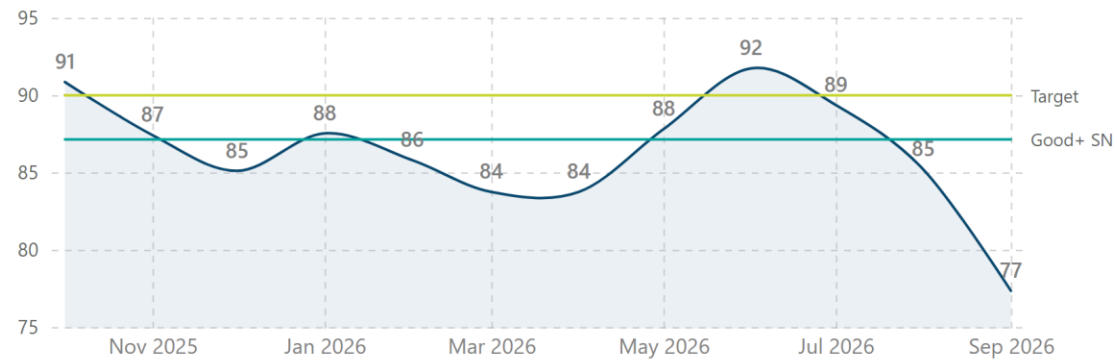
Percentage of new Children in Care (in the previous month) who received their initial health assessment within twenty days



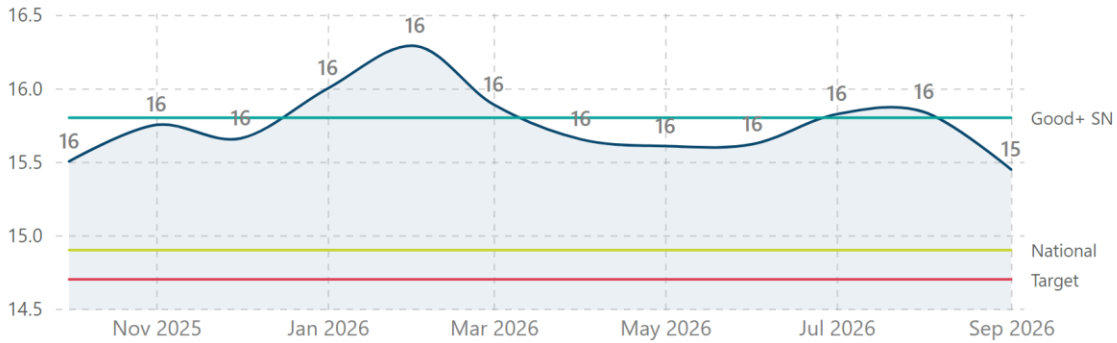
Percentage of Children in Care for twelve months or more who have had a dental check within in the last twelve months



Percentage of Children in Care for twelve months or more with an annual health assessment completed on time



Average Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) score for Children in Care for more than twelve months (Aged 4-16 years)



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Health and Social Wellbeing

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
CiC 12m+ Average SDQ Score (Age 4–16)	Low	15.80	14.90	14.70	15.82	15.84	15.45	Improving
CiC 12m+ SDQ Completed (Age 4–16)	High	80.14	78.00	75.00	50.33	49.52	48.13	Worsening
CiC 12m+ with Annual Health Assessment On Time	High	87.14	90.00	90.00	89.37	85.20	77.35	Worsening
CiC 12m+ with Dental Check ≤12 Months	High	77.29	81.00	85.00	72.41	67.88	60.22	Worsening
CiC 12m+ with Up-to-Date Immunisations	High	87.14	84.00	90.00	89.66	85.75	79.56	Worsening
New CiC IHA ≤20 Days (Prev. Month)	High			95.00	16.67	16.00	0.00	Worsening
RHAs Completed in the Month Due – ICB	High			90.00	83.30			

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Health and Social Wellbeing

Commentary

Promoting and maintaining the health and wellbeing of our children in care remains a key priority. There are ongoing challenges with the timeliness of initial health assessments for children coming into care. A combination of factors are at play which include the timely provision of consent and capacity on health partners due to the increased numbers of initial health requests across Dorset and BCP areas. We are starting to track early the children new into our care, to ensure that consent is obtained and information provided to our health partners within 5 working days.

We have seen a drop in our overall health performance during Q2. This is an area of both concern and focus:

- the number of children in care with an up-to-date immunisation reduced from 82.79% to 72.99%
- CiC 12 months+ with dental check in the last 12 months declined- 72.41% to 60.22%
- Annual health assessments completed on time has reduced from 89% to 77%

Our monthly meetings with health enable us to identify the children who are missing health appointments so we can put into place support to enable children and young people to attend. This continues to be a focus area of our work and corporate parenting responsibilities.

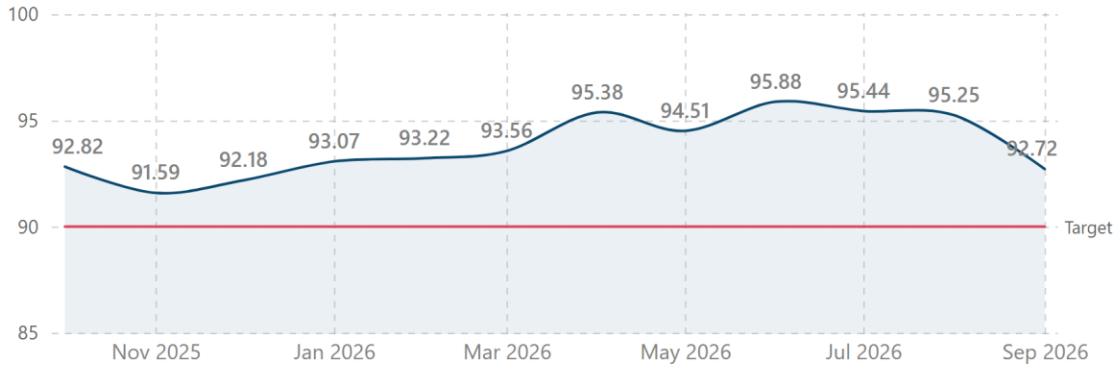
Work to strengthen the emotional health and wellbeing of children in care continues as we develop a comprehensive mental health strategy, ensuring that the needs of children in care are clearly recognised and prioritised within a coordinated multi-agency approach. We continue to support the workforce to be trauma informed and to deliver therapeutic life story work for children in kinship arrangements and those in longer term care. Through continued partnership working and a strong focus on children's physical and emotional wellbeing, we will ensure that children in care receive the support they need to thrive. Increasing complexity of need continues to be evident across the care population, particularly amongst adolescents and those requiring specialist support. Services continue to work closely with health partners to ensure children receive timely access to timely health assessments, emotional wellbeing support and targeted interventions. The next quarter will focus on strengthening access to mental health support, trauma-informed approaches and targeted interventions for children whose emotional wellbeing impacts placement stability and educational participation.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

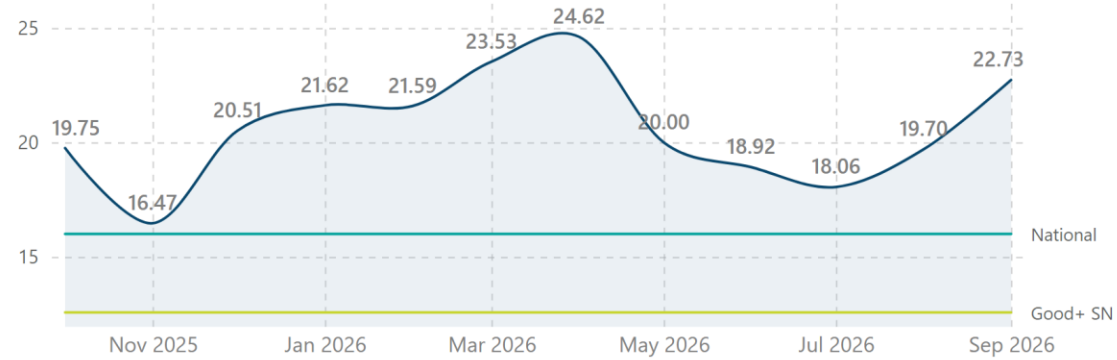
September 2026

Settled at Home

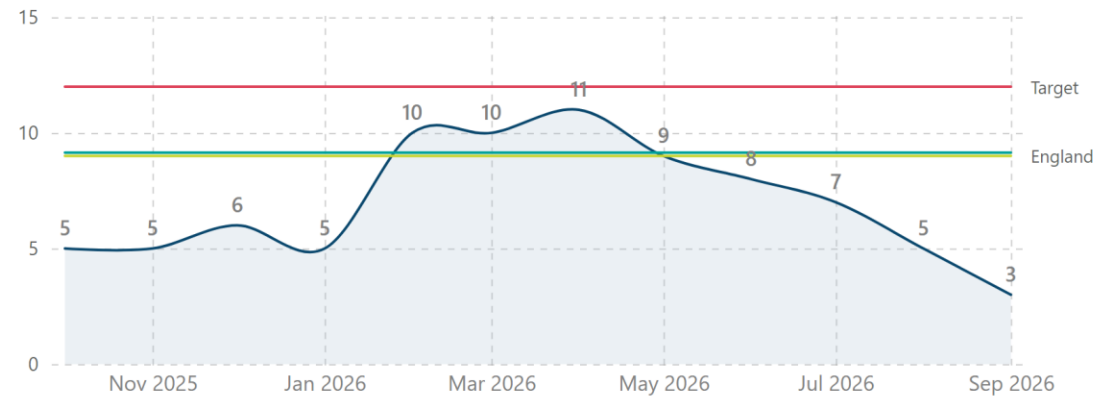
Percentage of Children in Care for four months or more with a completed permanence plan



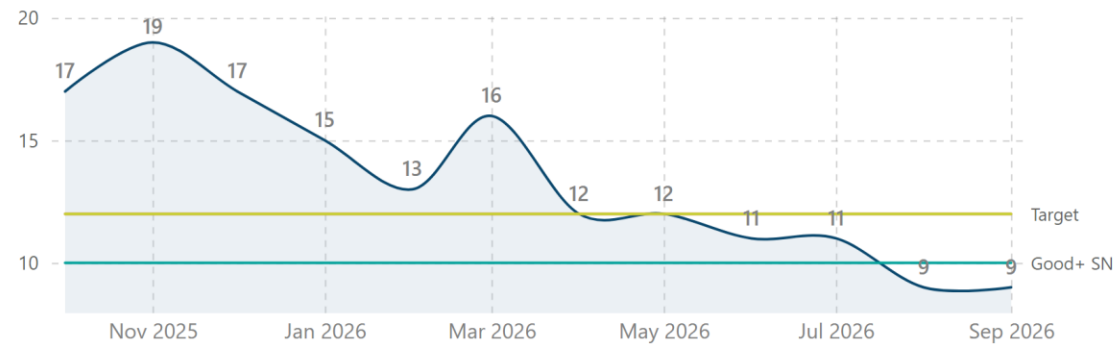
Percentage of children who achieved permanence by returning home to live with parents or relatives (with parental responsibility) (rolling six months)



Percentage of children achieved permanence adoption (rolling six months)



Percentage of children achieved permanence special guardianship order (Rolling six months)



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Settled at Home

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Achieved Permanence – Adoption (Rolling 6m)	High	9.14	9.00	12.00	7.00	5.00	3.00	Worsening
Achieved Permanence – SGO (Rolling 6m)	High	10.00	12.00	12.00	11.00	9.00	9.00	Same
Achieved Permanence by Return Home (Rolling 6m)	High	12.57	16.00		18.06	19.70	22.73	Improving
CiC 4+ Months with Permanence Plan Completed	High			90.00	95.44	95.25	92.72	Worsening
LT Fostering Plan & Permanence Achieved (Excl. UC)	High				58.97	58.05	58.72	Improving
LT Fostering Plan & Permanence Achieved (Month End)	High				54.41	53.99	55.17	Improving

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Settled at Home

Commentary

Supporting children to experience permanence, stability and a strong sense of belonging remains a key priority for Dorset. Children continue to benefit from a sustained focus on maintaining family relationships and promoting permanence through family-based care arrangements wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so. The increased use of connected persons and kinship arrangements has enabled more children to remain within their wider family networks, preserving important relationships and supporting positive identity and emotional wellbeing outcomes.

The service is currently supporting 179 families caring for 233 children through Special Guardianship arrangements, demonstrating the significant contribution that permanence outside of care makes in securing stable family homes for children and young people. Practitioners continue to work proactively with carers and families to maintain stable homes, providing support at the earliest opportunity to help sustain placements during periods of challenge.

92.72% of children in care for 4 months+ have a completed permanence plan, although there has been a small decrease in performance over the last few months, we remain above the target of ensuring that at least 90% of children in care have a permanence plan. The IRO and our quality assurance framework will be continuing to monitor and support improvements in this area of work.

There has been a small improvement in the number of children living more than 20 miles from home, reducing from 40% to 38% during Q2. This suggests some progress in securing homes closer to children's communities and support networks. However, sufficiency continues to present challenges. Overall, 35% of children in care live outside Dorset and, excluding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, 24% are both living more than 20 miles from home and outside of the county.

While local and national placement sufficiency pressures remain significant, there continues to be a strong commitment to ensuring children experience stable and nurturing homes that support positive outcomes across education, health and emotional wellbeing. During Q3, the service will maintain a focus on identifying placements at risk of disruption at the earliest stage, strengthening support available to carers, and increasing placement stability across the fostering system. Alongside ongoing development of kinship and connected carer arrangements, this work will support more children to remain settled, maintain important relationships, and achieve permanence within family-based care wherever possible.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Homes for Children

Percentage of Children in Care for two and half years or more, aged under sixteen, who have been in the same home for two or more years



Percentage of Children in Care at month-end with three or more placement moves in the previous twelve months



Percentage of Children in Care placed more than twenty miles from home



Percentage of Children in Care living outside Dorset



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Homes for Children

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
3+ Moves in Last 12 Months (Month-End)	Low	12.14	10.00	10.00	12.96	12.55	12.72	Worsening
In Foster Home – Percentage	High	55.71	67.00	71.00	69.23	67.61	67.91	Improving
In Private Provision – Percentage	Low	33.43	40.00		42.11	42.51	40.31	Improving
In Private Provision – Percentage (Excl. UC)	Low				36.26	36.28	33.92	Improving
Living Outside Dorset – Percentage	Low	29.71	44.00	40.00	40.49	40.89	39.53	Improving
Living Outside Dorset – Percentage (Excl. UC)	Low			30.00	36.71	36.96	35.24	Improving
Over 20 Miles from Home (Excl. UC)	Low			35.00	40.09	40.82	38.11	Improving
Placed with Parents	-				19.00	20.00	23.00	
Under 16, 2.5 Years in Care, Same Home ≥2 Years	High	67.29	69.00	70.00	69.12	71.43	68.09	Worsening
Unregulated Placements (P2/R1/H5 pre-Nov-2023)	Low			10.00				
Unregulated Placements (P2/R1/H5 pre-Nov-2023, Excl. UC)	Low				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Homes for Children

Commentary

Ensuring that children in care have access to safe, stable and appropriate homes remains a key corporate parenting priority. A continuing focus is on the need to increase the number of homes we can provide for our increasing numbers of children coming into care. As a large rural county, Dorset faces challenges in balancing sufficiency with the ambition to keep children close to the people, communities and networks that are important to them.

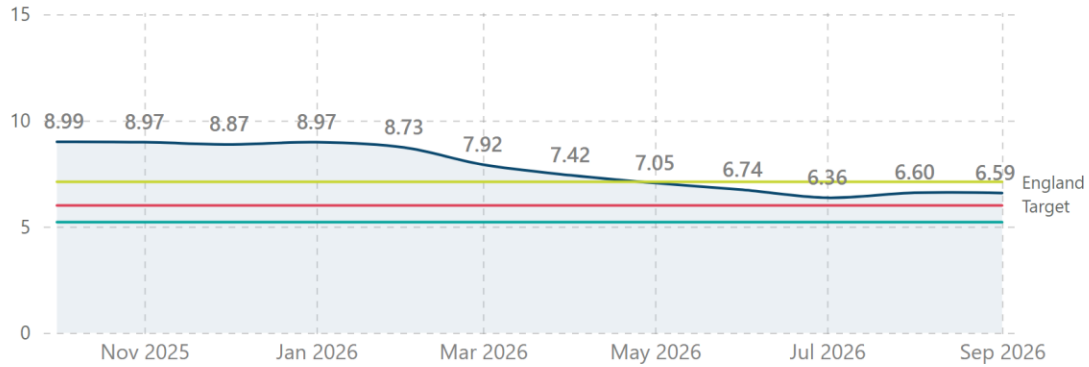
During Q2, around 40% of children in care lived more than 20 miles from their home address, a position that remains consistent with the same period last year. Whilst many of these children continue to reside within Dorset, geographical distance can still impact their connection to family, friendships, education and local support networks. In addition, 26% of children in care (excluding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) were living both over 20 miles from home and outside Dorset. This figure has remained relatively static over recent months and represents a slight improvement compared to the 27% reported in August 2025. Family-based care continues to be the preferred option wherever possible, with 68% of children in care living with Dorset foster carers, including those placed within kinship fostering arrangements. However, the proportion of children living in foster homes remained below the corporate target of 71% throughout Q2, recording 69.2% in July, 67.6% in August and 67.9% in September. Whilst there was a small improvement in September, performance reflects the continuing impact of rising care numbers and national foster care sufficiency challenges, which are increasing demand for family-based placements. Placement stability remains a strength for most children, with the majority experiencing stable and enduring homes that support positive emotional wellbeing, a sense of belonging and improved life outcomes. However, 12% of children experienced three or more placement moves during the last 12 months. The service maintains oversight of these children and understands the individual circumstances contributing to instability. Work continues to strengthen placement stability through enhanced support to carers, the development of connected carer arrangements, and exploration of a hub of short-term foster carers designed to reduce unplanned moves and improve permanence planning. Recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a key strategic focus, alongside expanding kinship care capacity and developing local options. These initiatives are critical to improving sufficiency, increasing opportunities for children to remain within family settings, and reducing the need for children to live at a distance from their home communities. While challenges remain significant, the service continues to prioritise safe, nurturing and stable homes that enable children and young people to thrive.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

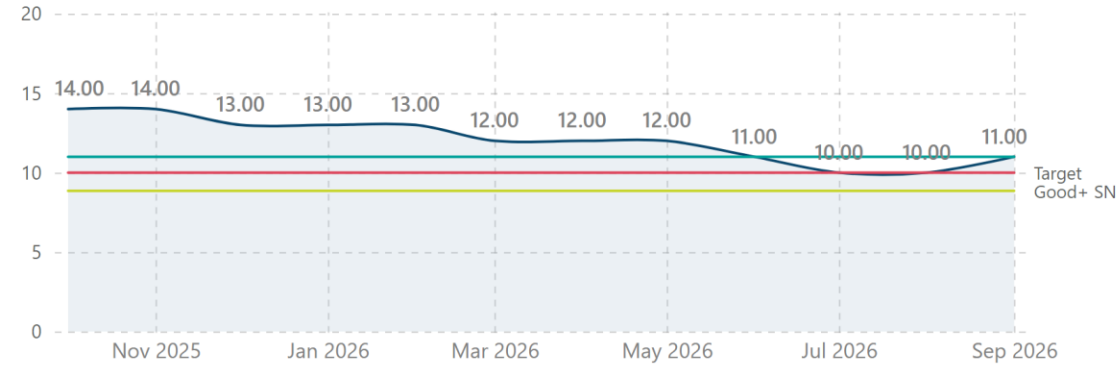
September 2026

Safety

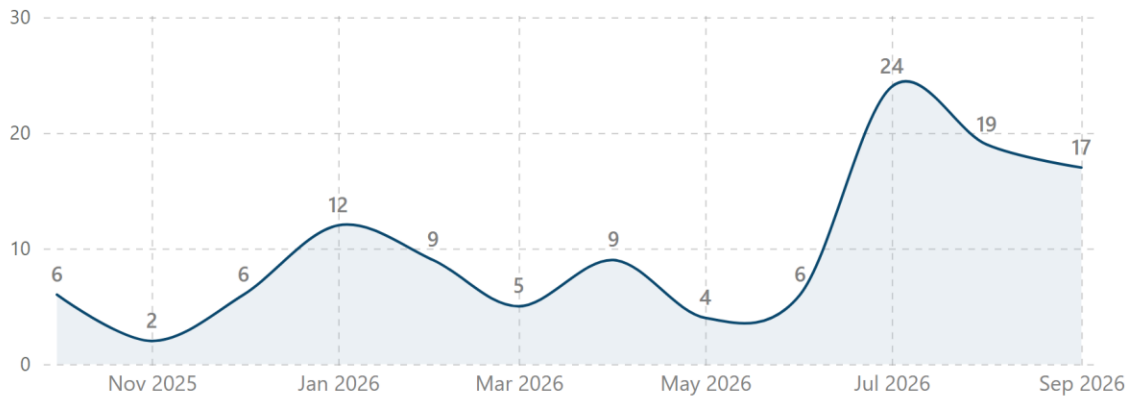
Percentage of Children in Care (at any point in the last 6 months) who have had more than one episode of missing (Annex A)



Percentage of Children in Care (at any point in the last six months) with a least one missing episode in the last 12 months (Annex A)



Number of formal independent reviewing officer (IRO) esculations



Total number of allegations made against Dorset Foster Carers in the last twelve months



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Safety

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
CiC with >1 Missing Episode (Any point last 6m) – (Annex A)	Low	5.22	7.11	6.00	6.36	6.60	6.59	Improving
CiC with ≥1 Missing Episode in last 12m – (Annex A)	Low	8.86	11.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	11.00	Worsening
IRO Escalations – Closed – Number	-				24.00	24.00	41.00	
IRO Escalations – Formal – Number	High				24.00	19.00	17.00	Worsening
IRO Escalations – Informal – Number	High				8.00	11.00	14.00	Improving

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Safety

Commentary

The safeguarding of children and young people remains central to Dorset's corporate parenting responsibilities. Multi-agency arrangements continue to support children who are at risk of exploitation, missing episodes, placement instability or other vulnerabilities.

Where children present with complex behaviours or heightened risks, robust multi-agency oversight and planning arrangements remain in place. Regular monitoring and review processes ensure that risks are understood and managed appropriately, whilst maintaining a focus on the child's strengths, relationships and future outcomes.

August saw a “spike” in children reported missing (18) which has reduced towards the end of Q2 (13). Q2 has seen a consistent pattern of over 88% of children in care missing offered a return home interview- increasing to 93% at the end of Q2. There is notable disparity between RHIs being offered and those being accepted. This is usually due to those children being reported missing having multiple incidents but are having at least one RHI during a period multiple reported missing. Benchmarking data indicates that Dorset is below England average and above good+ authorities for the % of all CiC with a missing incident. (Dorset 10%, good+ 8% and England- 11%)

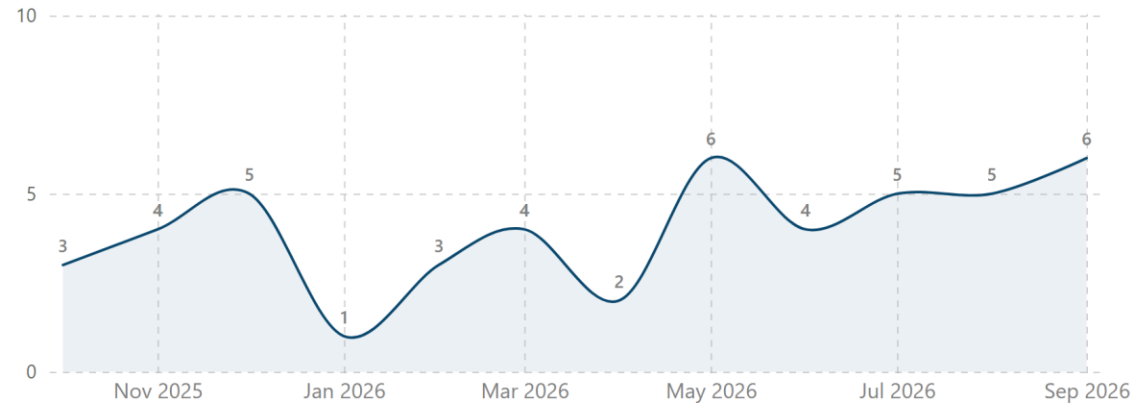
The average number of incidents per CiC who were absent in August 2026 was 2.8 for Dorset, compared to 0.8 for good+ authorities and 4.5 for the England average. The Board can be assured that safeguarding remains a strong area of focus, with partnership working supporting timely responses to emerging concerns.

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

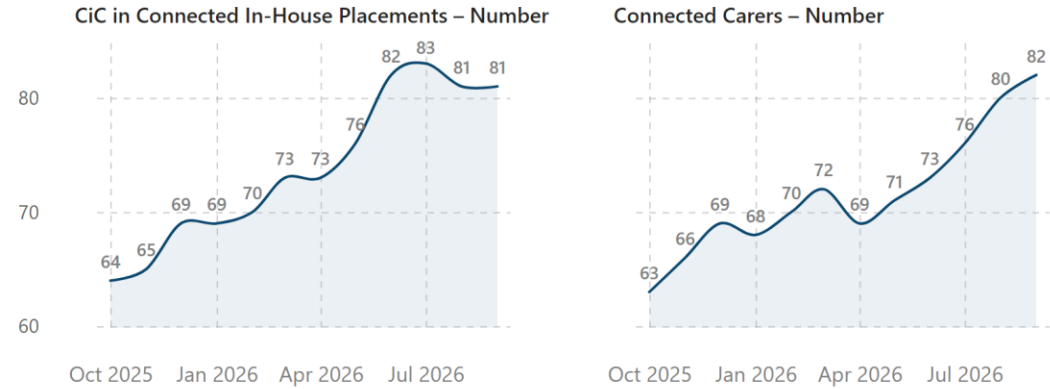
September 2026

Sufficiency

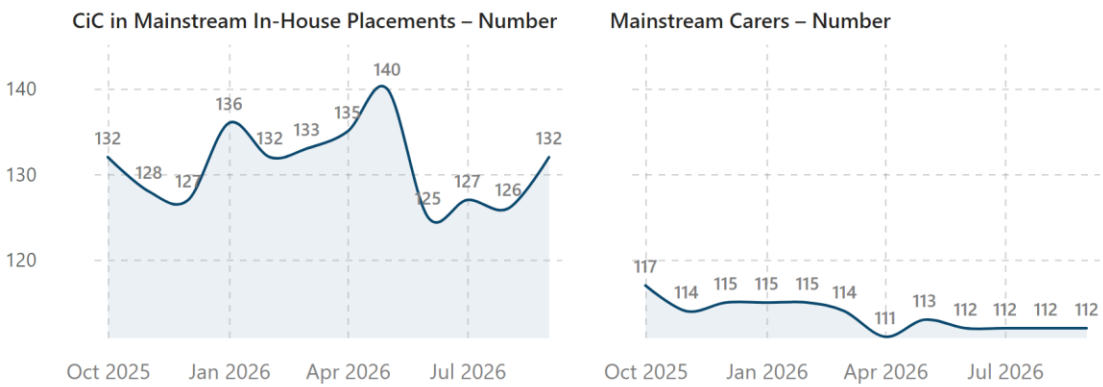
Total number of new households recruited



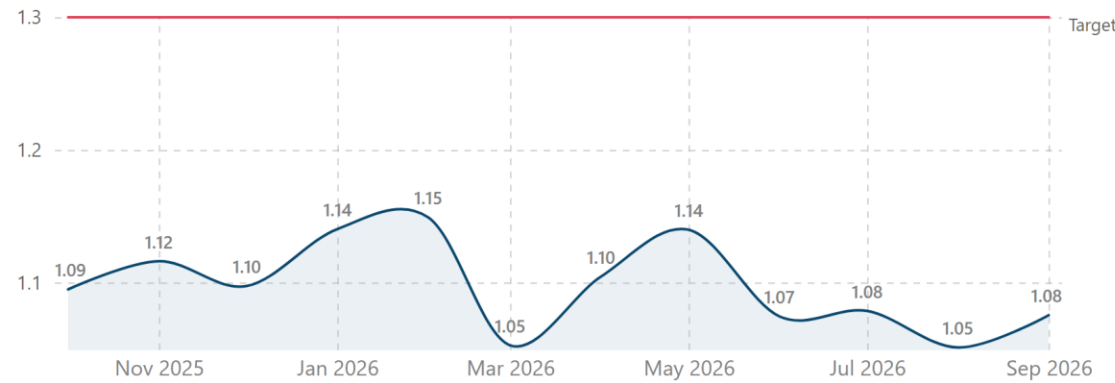
In house connected carers



In house mainstream foster carers



Mainstream fostering utilisation rate



Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Sufficiency

Performance Measures & Metrics

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Applicants in Assessment – Connected Person	High							
Applicants in Assessment – Mainstream	High							
CiC in Connected In-House Placements – Number	-				83.00	81.00	81.00	
CiC in Mainstream In-House Placements – Number	High				127.00	126.00	132.00	Improving
Connected Carers – Number	High				76.00	80.00	82.00	Improving
Foster Carer Visits Up to Date (Excl. FTA) – %	High			85.00	84.13	78.87	87.18	Improving
Foster Carers – Month End	High			200.00	191.00	196.00	199.00	Improving
Fostering Utilisation – Mainstream	High			1.30	1.08	1.05	1.08	Improving
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Connected Carers	Low				2.00	1.00	2.00	Worsening
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Foster to Adopt	Low				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Mainstream	Low			1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	Worsening
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Temporary	Low				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
Mainstream Carers – Number	High			138.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	Same
New Households Recruited – Connected Person	High				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
New Households Recruited – Foster to Adopt	High				1.00	0.00	1.00	Improving
New Households Recruited – Mainstream	High			2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	Improving
New Households Recruited – Temporary	High				4.00	5.00	4.00	Worsening

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Sufficiency

Sufficiency

Placement sufficiency continues to be the most significant strategic challenge for Dorset during Q2. Increasing numbers of children in care, alongside growing levels of complexity and need, continue to place pressure on fostering, residential and specialist provision.

There have, been several positive developments during the quarter. The number of approved foster carers increased from 188 at the end of Q1 to 199 at the end of Q2, demonstrating encouraging progress in recruitment and retention activity. Dorset carers are now supporting 213 children in care, including 132 children living with in-house mainstream foster carers, an increase from 125 in Q1, and 81 children living within kinship fostering arrangements.

Recruitment and retention activity remains a key area of focus. The service has continued to strengthen fostering recruitment through local events, social media campaigns and the Dorset "Can You See Yourself Fostering?" campaign, whilst ensuring prompt contact with prospective carers who express an interest. Work is also progressing to address delays in DBS and medical assessments to minimise barriers for both mainstream and connected carers entering the fostering community.

Retention remains positive, with only one mainstream foster carer resignation during the quarter, (a planned retirement linked to family circumstances). Dorset Carers Voice continues to provide a valuable mechanism for carers to influence service development, helping foster carers feel listened to and supported. Alongside improvements to allowances and benefits, this is contributing to the stability of the fostering workforce.

Further positive progress has been made through increased connected carer assessments, the development of emergency fostering and short-break fostering arrangements.

The service continues to track and understand the reasons why kinship foster carers cease fostering and is actively exploring opportunities for those carers to transition into mainstream fostering where appropriate, building on their existing skills and experience.

Quality assurance indicators also show improvement, with fostering visits completed on time increasing from 83% in Q1 to 87.2% in Q2, demonstrating stronger oversight and support for foster carers and the children they care for.

Looking ahead, the priority remains to increase the availability of family-based care, accelerate foster carer recruitment, strengthen the kinship local offer and promote Special Guardianship as an alternative permanence option where appropriate. Alongside this, work will continue to support children to step down from higher-cost residential arrangements wherever this is safe and in their best interests, helping to ensure more children can grow up within stable family-based care environments closer to their communities.

Dorset Council

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

Appendix

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Appendix A

This appendix summarises six months of Corporate Parenting KPIs, including targets, 'Good+' benchmarks and England averages to enable robust comparison. It also captures each indicator's latest direction of travel and provides totals for trend categories and RAG ratings to give a concise performance overview.

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Achieved Permanence by Return Home (Rolling 6m)	High	12.57	16.00		18.06	19.70	22.73	Improving
Allocated Children (Open >4 Weeks) with Supervision in 8 Weeks	High			90.00	81.92	80.54	73.24	Worsening
Became CiC (Excl. UC)	Low			10.00	21.00	9.00	19.00	Worsening
Became CiC (Month)	Low			10.00	28.00	9.00	25.00	Worsening
Ceased to be CiC (Month)	High			13.00	10.00	8.00	8.00	Same
Children & Young People Supported by Advocate (CP)	-				35.00	27.00	24.00	
CiC 4+ Months with Permanence Plan Completed	High			90.00	95.44	95.25	92.72	Worsening
CiC at Month End	Low			420.00	494.00	494.00	511.00	Worsening
CiC Rate at Month End	Low	66.00	67.00	68.00	73.57	73.57	76.10	Worsening
LT Fostering Plan & Permanence Achieved (Excl. UC)	High				58.97	58.05	58.72	Improving
LT Fostering Plan & Permanence Achieved (Month End)	High				54.41	53.99	55.17	Improving
Placed with Parents	-				19.00	20.00	23.00	
UC at Month End	-			65.00	50.00	53.00	57.00	
UC Share of CiC	-	6.86	8.00		10.12	10.73	11.15	

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Appendix B

This appendix summarises six months of Corporate Parenting KPIs, including targets, 'Good+' benchmarks and England averages to enable robust comparison. It also captures each indicator's latest direction of travel and provides totals for trend categories and RAG ratings to give a concise performance overview.

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
3+ Moves in Last 12 Months (Month-End)	Low	12.14	10.00	10.00	12.96	12.55	12.72	Worsening
CiC (40 WD in Care) with Valid Passport at Last Review	High				41.97	45.43	42.86	
CiC 12m+ Average SDQ Score (Age 4–16)	Low	15.80	14.90	14.70	15.82	15.84	15.45	Improving
CiC 12m+ SDQ Completed (Age 4–16)	High	80.14	78.00	75.00	50.33	49.52	48.13	Worsening
CiC 12m+ with Up-to-Date Immunisations	High	87.14	84.00	90.00	89.66	85.75	79.56	Worsening
EET – % (CiC & Care Leavers, 16–18; Y12–Y13)	High			72.00	76.23		78.19	Improving
In Foster Home – Percentage	High	55.71	67.00	71.00	69.23	67.61	67.91	Improving
In Private Provision – Percentage	Low	33.43	40.00		42.11	42.51	40.31	Improving
In Private Provision – Percentage (Excl. UC)	Low				36.26	36.28	33.92	Improving
New CiC IHA ≤20 Days (Prev. Month)	High			95.00	16.67	16.00	0.00	Worsening
Over 20 Miles from Home (Excl. UC)	Low			35.00	40.09	40.82	38.11	Improving
Valid Passport at Last Review (Excl. UASC)	High				46.54	50.94	48.67	

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Appendix C

This appendix summarises six months of Corporate Parenting KPIs, including targets, 'Good+' benchmarks and England averages to enable robust comparison. It also captures each indicator's latest direction of travel and provides totals for trend categories and RAG ratings to give a concise performance overview.

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Bed & Breakfast – Number (Active 17–25)	Low			0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	Same
CiC 12m+ with Annual Health Assessment On Time	High	87.14	90.00	90.00	89.37	85.20	77.35	Worsening
CiC 12m+ with Dental Check ≤12 Months	High	77.29	81.00	85.00	72.41	67.88	60.22	Worsening
CiC with >1 Missing Episode (Any point last 6m) – (Annex A)	Low	5.22	7.11	6.00	6.36	6.60	6.59	Improving
Days: Enter Care → Move-In (Adjusted) (Avg)	Low	406.85	475.48	426.00	322.00	316.00	374.00	Worsening
Days: Placement Order → Match (Avg)	Low	204.46	204.68	121.00	165.00	159.00	167.00	Worsening
EET (19–21) – Percentage (OC3)	High	54.00	54.00				56.73	Worsening
Foster Carers – Month End	High			200.00	191.00	196.00	199.00	Improving
Health Passports Completed – Number (2m Arrears)	-							
Health Passports Due – Number (2m Arrears)	-				5.00			
Living Outside Dorset – Percentage	Low	29.71	44.00	40.00	40.49	40.89	39.53	Improving
Living Outside Dorset – Percentage (Excl. UC)	Low			30.00	36.71	36.96	35.24	Improving
Unregulated Placements (P2/R1/H5 pre-Nov-2023)	Low			10.00				
Unregulated Placements (P2/R1/H5 pre-Nov-2023, Excl. UC)	Low				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
Unsuitable Accommodation – Number (Active 17–25)	Low			11.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	Improving

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Appendix D

This appendix summarises six months of Corporate Parenting KPIs, including targets, 'Good+' benchmarks and England averages to enable robust comparison. It also captures each indicator's latest direction of travel and provides totals for trend categories and RAG ratings to give a concise performance overview.

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Achieved Permanence – Adoption (Rolling 6m)	High	9.14	9.00	12.00	7.00	5.00	3.00	Worsening
Achieved Permanence – SGO (Rolling 6m)	High	10.00	12.00	12.00	11.00	9.00	9.00	Same
Adopted (Last 12m)	High				12.00	13.00	11.00	Worsening
Adoptive Families Approved (ADM)	High				4.00	1.00	1.00	Same
Adoptive Families in Assessment	High				15.00	18.00	18.00	Same
CiC in Mainstream In-House Placements – Number	High				127.00	126.00	132.00	Improving
CiC with ≥1 Missing Episode in last 12m – (Annex A)	Low	8.86	11.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	11.00	Worsening
Connected Carers – Number	High				76.00	80.00	82.00	Improving
EET – Percentage (Active 19–21)	High			60.00	66.00	68.00	68.00	Same
Foster Carer Visits Up to Date (Excl. FTA) – %	High			85.00	84.13	78.87	87.18	Improving
In Touch – Active (19–21)	High			93.00	94.00	93.00	95.00	Improving
Mainstream Carers – Number	High			138.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	Same
NEET – % (CiC & Care Leavers, 16–18; Y12–Y13)	Low			28.00	23.77		21.81	Improving
Pathway Plan Up-to-Date – (Active 17–25)	High			95.00	91.95	88.82	88.99	Improving
PEP Within 20 Days of Entering Care – %	High			100.00	100.00			
Placement Order Revocations (Last 12m) - Number	Low				4.00	4.00	4.00	Same
Suitable Accommodation – (19–21)	High			96.00	98.00	98.00	98.00	Same
Termly PEP Completed on Time – %	High			96.00	94.00			

Corporate Parenting Board Performance Report

September 2026

Appendix E

This appendix summarises six months of Corporate Parenting KPIs, including targets, 'Good+' benchmarks and England averages to enable robust comparison. It also captures each indicator's latest direction of travel and provides totals for trend categories and RAG ratings to give a concise performance overview.

Indicator	Good Is	Good + SN	Eng. Avg	Target	Jul 26	Aug 26	Sep 26	D.O.T
Applicants in Assessment – Connected Person	High							
Applicants in Assessment – Mainstream	High							
Average Attendance – AYTD – % (School-Aged CiC)	High			95.00	86.56		90.62	Improving
CiC in Connected In-House Placements – Number	-				83.00	81.00	81.00	
CiC with EHCP – %	-				34.48		34.04	
Fostering Utilisation – Mainstream	High			1.30	1.08	1.05	1.08	Improving
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Connected Carers	Low				2.00	1.00	2.00	Worsening
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Foster to Adopt	Low				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Mainstream	Low			1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	Worsening
Households Deregistered/Resigned – Temporary	Low				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
IRO Escalations – Closed – Number	-				24.00	24.00	41.00	
IRO Escalations – Formal – Number	High				24.00	19.00	17.00	Worsening
IRO Escalations – Informal – Number	High				8.00	11.00	14.00	Improving
New Households Recruited – Connected Person	High				0.00	0.00	0.00	Same
New Households Recruited – Foster to Adopt	High				1.00	0.00	1.00	Improving
New Households Recruited – Mainstream	High			2.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	Improving
New Households Recruited – Temporary	High				4.00	5.00	4.00	Worsening
Suspended ≥1 (AYTD) – % (School-Aged CiC)	Low				11.67		1.19	Improving