

Notice of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date: Tuesday, 16 June 2026 at 6.00 pm

Venue: HMS Phoebe, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth BH2 6DY

Membership:

Chair:

To be elected

Vice Chair:

To be elected

Cllr O Brown

Cllr S Bull

Cllr S Carr-Brown

Cllr P Cooper

Cllr D Farr

Cllr E Pankhurst

Cllr B Hitchcock

Cllr S Mackrow

Cllr D Martin

Cllr T Slade

Cllr O Walter

Parent Governor Co-opted Representatives

Matt Tuddenham and Jeremy Payne

Diocesan Co-Opted Representatives

Mark Saxby

Youth Parliament Representatives

Ryan Cornish and Elliot Prentice

All Members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee are summoned to attend this meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to view the live stream of this meeting at the following link:

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Mid=6545>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Democratic Services on 01202 096660 or email democratic.services@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office by email at press.office@bcpcouncil.gov.uk or tel: 01202 118686

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

AIDAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

8 June 2026

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**



Available online and
on the Mod.gov app

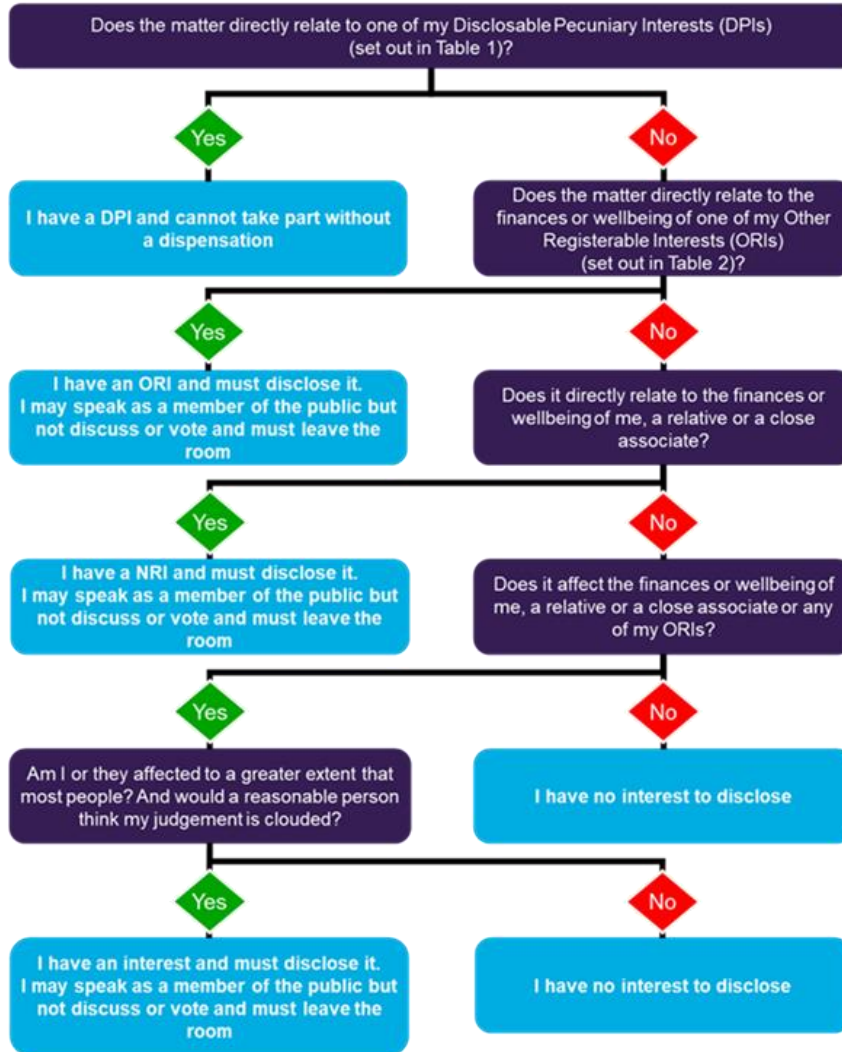


Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

Declaring interests at meetings

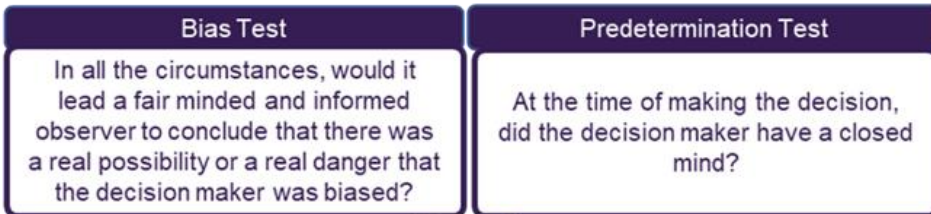
Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.



If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer

Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence from Councillors.

2. Substitute Members

To receive information on any changes in the membership of the Committee.

Note – When a member of a Committee is unable to attend a meeting of a Committee or Sub-Committee, the relevant Political Group Leader (or their nominated representative) may, by notice to the Monitoring Officer (or their nominated representative) prior to the meeting, appoint a substitute member from within the same Political Group. The contact details on the front of this agenda should be used for notifications.

3. Election of Chair

To elect a Chair for the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

4. Election of Vice Chair

To elect a Vice Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

5. Declarations of Interests

Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance.

Declarations received will be reported at the meeting.

6. Minutes

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2026.

7 - 16

7. Public Issues

To receive any public questions, statements or petitions submitted in accordance with the Constitution. Further information on the requirements for submitting these is available to view at the following link:-

<https://democracy.bcpccouncil.gov.uk/documents/s2305/Public%20Items%20-%20Meeting%20Procedure%20Rules.pdf>

The deadline for the submission of public questions is midday on Wednesday 10 June (3 clear working days before the meeting).

The deadline for the submission of a statement is midday on Monday 15 June (the working day before the meeting).

The deadline for the submission of a petition is Monday 1 June (10 working days before the meeting).

8. Members of Youth Parliament Update

To receive a verbal update from the Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs).

9. Recommendation Tracker

17 - 56

To note the latest updates to the recommendation tracker, including consideration of recommendations made by the Committee.

10. Work Plan

57 - 72

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.

ITEMS CIRCULATED BETWEEN MEETINGS

11. Children's Services O&S Data Toolkit

73 - 88

12. Risk Management – Corporate Risk Register Update

89 - 176

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

13. Recruitment of a Co-opted Academy Parent Governor Representative

177 - 180

The Committee is asked to consider whether it wants to appoint a Co-opted Academy Parent Governor to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the process for the recruitment if agreed.

14. BCP Council's alignment with the National Youth Strategy

181 - 200

This report provides an overview of the current alignment of BCP Council against 'Youth Matters: The National Strategy'.

15. Youth Justice Plan 2026-2027

201 - 272

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) places a statutory requirement on local authority youth offending teams to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2026/27, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.

The Youth Justice Plan shows strong performance by the service. Achievements include diverting children from the justice system, avoiding the use of custody for children, and the quality of work to reduce the likelihood of reoffending and to repair the harm caused to victims.

Priorities for the year ahead are to respond to national and local reform programmes, enhancing 'Child First' practice, developing work with victims,

reducing the over-representation of some groups of children in the justice system, and making best use of available resources.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| <p>16. Children's Services Self-Assessment 2026</p> <p>The Children's Services Self-Assessment 2026 provides an evidence-based summary of progress since the 'Good' Ofsted ILACS judgement in December 2024. Local authorities produce self-assessments to evaluate service effectiveness, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and support transparent assurance, scrutiny and continuous improvement for children and families. It shows a service with stronger leadership, more embedded quality assurance and effective partnership working, resulting in more consistent practice and better oversight of performance, risk and impact.</p> <p>The report highlights improved timeliness, permanence planning, placement stability, educational outcomes for children in care and progress in SEND.</p> <p>It also identifies key pressures, including rising demand and complexity, high numbers of children in care and child protection plans, and ongoing sufficiency challenges.</p> <p>Priorities for 2026/27 are to deliver Families First and One Team One Approach, strengthen early help and local sufficiency, improve permanence and safety planning, and maintain a strong focus on children at risk of exploitation and older care leavers.</p> | <p>273 - 322</p> |
| <p>17. Best Start in Life Local Plan</p> <p>This report updates Cabinet on the development of BCP's Best Start in Life Local Plan, which delivers the Government's strategy for improving outcomes from pregnancy to age five and meets the requirement to publish a local plan by 31 March 2026. Key issues include achieving the Government-set Good Level of Development (GLD) targets (79.9% of children overall; 60.1% of children receiving Free School Meals) through whole system collaboration and establishing Best Start Family Hubs to provide integrated health, education and family support in areas of highest deprivation. Programme governance, project management, stakeholder engagement and a readiness survey are in place.</p> | <p>323 - 336</p> |
| <p>18. Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy Update (September 2024 – March 2026)</p> <p>This report provides an update on progress delivering BCP Council's Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People covering September 2024 to March 2026.</p> <p>Progress has been made in strengthening local provision, improving provider relationships and embedding governance arrangements. Notable</p> | <p>337 - 410</p> |

improvements include significant growth in supported accommodation and residential capacity, increased numbers of children living locally, and stronger housing pathways for care experienced young people.

However, demand continues to exceed local capacity in key areas. Challenges remain in increasing foster care households, reducing reliance on residential care, and ensuring more children live closer to home.

The strategy remains on track overall, with a positive direction of travel. The next phase will focus on accelerating delivery, particularly in family-based care, residential demand reduction, and embedding quality assurance learning into service improvement.

19. Portfolio Holder Update

To receive a verbal update from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills.

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2026 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Carr-Brown – Chair

Cllr S Bull – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr M Tarling (In place of Cllr O Brown), Cllr P Canavan (In place of Cllr P Cooper), Cllr E Pankhurst, Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr D Martin, Cllr T Slade, and Cllr O Walters.

Co-Opted Members: Jeremy Payne, Matt Tuddenham and Mark Saxby.

Also in attendance: Ryan Cornish, Elliot Prentice and Lilee Bedwell.

62. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Olivia Brown and Cllr Peter Cooper.

63. Substitute Members

Cllr Michael Tarling attended as substitute for Cllr Olivia Brown, and Cllr Patrick Canavan attended as substitute for Cllr Peter Cooper.

64. Declarations of Interests

No declarations of interest were received.

65. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

66. Recommendation Tracker

The Committee noted the Recommendation Tracker. The Chair advised that responses from Cabinet were expected shortly in relation to items 55 and 56, as the two-month response period was approaching. The Committee was further advised that Recommendation 12 had been captured as an action for inclusion on the Committee's Forward Plan.

The Chair provided an update on outstanding actions, and the Committee noted the actions that could be closed. Members also agreed that the Tracker would be reviewed in greater depth around June 2026.

67. Public Issues

The Committee received two public questions from Adam Sofianos, who was unable to attend the meeting and had asked Democratic Services to read them on his behalf.

Q1 – Agenda item 9, SEND improvement

Recently the Government published its plans for education reform. The SEND proposals have caused alarm among educators, charities, campaign groups and families.

These proposals have also provoked a formal judicial review challenge. Families are particularly fearful of the threat to slash the number of children receiving statutory protection, the possible removal of appeal rights, and the move to give schools liability for both the delivery and costs of most support, which may incentivise the restriction of services.

While these plans offer financial breathing-space for councils, the effect on support for disadvantaged children nationally could be a problem, making an under-performing service even worse.

The Government consultation runs until 18th May. How does Council intend to respond, and how will it engage with families and local groups, and councillors, to ensure its response is reflective of the many concerns being raised?

Cllr Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, provided an answer as follows:

Thank you Chair and thank you, Adam, as always, for the question. The Council is taking the Government's consultation on SEND reforms very seriously, and we are ensuring that our response is informed by the voices and experience of our local area.

To support this, we have issued a survey to all schools across the BCP area, as well as to our Local Area System Leadership Group, which includes key partners such as the Parent Carer Forum and Parent Carer Together.

In addition, our Parent Carer Forum has circulated targeted questions to parents and carers to make sure families are able to share their views directly.

We will now bring this feedback together to help shape a comprehensive Council response to the consultation. This will reflect a range of concerns and perspectives raised locally.

I also want to emphasise that it will be important for all partners, including parents and carers, to respond individually to the national consultation so that their voices are heard as part of the wider national picture.

Through this approach, we aim to ensure that the BCP submission is fully informed, balanced, and reflective of those who will be most affected by the proposed reforms.

Q2 – Agenda item 13, SEND inspection report

Ofsted is not the only party with an interest in SEND performance. During 2024, the Council was repeatedly asked at this Committee to publish regular updated performance statistics. Eventually a dataset began to be published on the Local Offer microsite. However, at the time of submitting this question, the most recent data available was for July 2025. There are 7 months outstanding. How will Council make this missing data available? And will it keep its previous promise, and continue to publish SEND performance data in the future?

Cllr Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, provided an answer as follows:

Thank you again, Adam, for your question.

You are absolutely right to highlight the importance of transparency around SEND performance data, and I do want to acknowledge that the Council has not kept this data set as up to date as it should have been. This is a miss on our part, and we are committed to putting this right.

We recognise that regular publication of performance information is essential, not just for this Committee but for families, partners and the wider community who rely on this data to understand how well the system is working.

We are now taking steps to bring the data set fully up to date on the Local Offer website. We are also in the process of co-producing a fully refreshed Local Offer, and this will be an opportunity for us to consider what data we publish and how we best go about presenting it.

Importantly, we will also put in place a clear and reliable process for ongoing updates, to ensure that SEND performance data continues to be published regularly, as previously committed. This will support better oversight, greater transparency and stronger accountability across the local area partnership.

Thank you again for raising this. It's an important reminder of the standards we must meet.

68. Members of Youth Parliament Update

The Committee received a presentation from the Members of Youth Parliament, including a Deputy Member, providing an update on their activity during their term of office and the campaigns they had undertaken.

The Members of Youth Parliament reported on work across several campaign areas, including mental health, knife crime, youth homelessness and student finance. It was noted that a mental health training video for teachers had been developed using feedback from young people and that a recent webinar to launch the resource had received positive engagement from schools and NHS mental health teams.

An update was also provided on local and national engagement, including a knife crime awareness event delivered in partnership with the police, participation in sittings at the House of Commons, and involvement in the Youth Select Committee, with a report due to be published later in March.

In response to a query raised regarding whether further improvements could be made, the Committee was advised that wider promotion of the Youth Parliament process would help increase awareness and participation, including stronger engagement across the Council and with elected Members.

Members thanked the Members of Youth Parliament for their presentation and commended them for their confidence, commitment and the positive contribution of youth voice to the work of the Committee.

69. Corporate Performance Report - Q3

The Committee received the Corporate Performance Report for Quarter 3.

The Chair highlighted the indicator relating to school exclusions and advised that the role of the Committee was to seek assurance regarding performance. The Committee was advised that exclusion data was improving, notwithstanding the red RAG rating shown in the report.

The Committee was also advised that discussions had taken place with the Audit and Governance Committee regarding the management of risk, and that the Corporate Risk Register would be included within the Committee's papers for future meetings to support ongoing scrutiny.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

70. Verbal update from John Coughlan on SEND improvement Journey

John Coughlan, Department for Education Adviser, on the SEND improvement journey, presented a verbal report to the Committee.

The Committee discussed the update, including:

- In response to a query raised regarding the recent SEND inspection, the Committee was advised that the inspection confirmed the local area partnership had moved out of statutory intervention, with inspectors recognising improved leadership, strengthened partnership working and tangible progress since the previous inspection.

- In response to a query raised regarding the areas where further improvement was still required, the Committee was advised that work remained ongoing, particularly in relation to support for children with social, emotional and mental health needs, development and promotion of the Local Offer, and improving support for children awaiting neurodiversity assessments.
- In response to a query raised regarding long waiting times for neurodiversity assessments, the Committee was advised that a needs-led approach was being progressed, with earlier intervention, graduated support and partnership working aimed at supporting children while they awaited formal diagnosis.
- In response to a query raised regarding practical support for children during long neurodiversity waiting times, the Committee was advised that partners were developing needs-led approaches and piloting earlier intervention models, including targeted support for those waiting the longest, to ensure children received help without delay.
- The Committee expressed concerns about how schools were supported to sustain inclusive practice. In response, it was noted that engagement with schools had improved, alongside work underway to develop inclusion bases, outreach support, and professional development to strengthen system-wide capacity.
- The Committee was advised that variation in inclusive practice between schools was being addressed through stronger collaboration, peer challenge, and shared system expectations, which were supporting greater consistency across the school system.
- In response to a query raised regarding workforce capacity and staff morale, the Committee was advised that leadership stability had improved and that continued support for staff would be critical to sustaining progress.
- The Committee was advised that, although forthcoming national SEND reforms would present challenges, the local system was in a stronger position to respond due to the improvement work already undertaken.

Members welcomed the update and thanked Mr Coughlan for his contribution to the improvement journey.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

71. Families First Partnership Programme

The Director of Children's Social Care presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

This report provided an overview of the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme, the Government's national reform programme for children's social care, and set out the proposed approach to local implementation.

FFP underpinned delivery of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Government's Plan for Change and aligned with the NHS 10-Year reform agenda, providing a single delivery framework at place level. The programme aimed to reduce crisis-driven statutory intervention through earlier preventative measures, safely reduce the number of children entering care, and improve outcomes for children and families through family-centred practice and stronger partnership working.

The report outlined the local governance and programme management arrangements, including the establishment of a Strategic FFP Board and a multi-disciplinary transformation team, alongside arrangements for partner engagement, workforce development, and learning from national pathfinders. It set out the Council's priority delivery workstreams, including early help pathway development, front door reform, a Family Help pilot, planning for multi-agency child protection arrangements, and options appraisal for Family Group Decision Making.

The Committee discussed the update, including:

- In response to a query raised regarding alternatively qualified practitioners, the Committee was advised that this referred to practitioners with relevant professional qualifications or experience other than social work, who would work alongside qualified social workers within early help and family help pathways. It was clarified that the title "social worker" remained a legally protected term.
- The Committee was advised that success and impact would be measured through the Early Help Strategic Partnership, using a combination of existing data, new measures, and outcomes linked to the Best Start in Life programme and Family Hubs.
- In response to a query raised regarding public health involvement, the Committee was advised that public health was already a key partner in early help and prevention, with grant funding supporting this work, and that outcome measures would continue to be developed jointly.
- In response to a query raised regarding how the move away from criteria-based thresholds would operate in practice, the Committee was advised that a shared threshold would remain, but that the emphasis would shift towards needs-led conversations rather than families being redirected between services because they did not meet specific criteria.
- The Committee was advised that, to achieve greater consistency across the system, work was underway to update the existing PAN Dorset threshold model to reflect a BCP-wide approach.
- In response to a query raised regarding how data sharing would operate across partners, the Committee was advised that statutory data-sharing arrangements were already in place, but further work was required to strengthen shared data and performance measures as more partners were brought into the front-door arrangements.
- In response to a query raised regarding timescales, the Committee was advised that 2025/26 focused on implementation planning, with delivery expected to commence from April 2026.

RESOLVED that the update be noted, and that an update on the Families First Partnership Programme and the development of multi-agency child protection teams be brought back to the Committee in November 2026, or by January 2027 at the latest.

72. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.

73. Children in Care - Baseline of Need, Spend and Overspend with Mitigation Proposals

The Committee received a report on the Children in Care baseline position, including demand, spend, forecast overspend and proposed mitigation measures.

The Committee discussed the report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a further update on the Children in Care position be brought back to the Committee at a future meeting.

The remainder of the meeting was held in public.

74. Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection Report

The report was circulated for information only with no discussion in Committee.

75. Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2025-26

The report was circulated for information only with no discussion in Committee.

76. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder provided an update on recent activity across Children's Services:

- The Portfolio Holder advised that a number of matters had already been covered during earlier discussion at the meeting.
- The Committee was advised that an all-councillor Children's Services briefing had taken place on 11 February, hosted by the

Chair, with a presentation from the Director of Education and Skills. Fourteen councillors attended, with positive discussion and engagement. The briefing was also available on catch-up, and Members were encouraged to promote wider viewing.

- The Portfolio Holder advised that the Ofsted/CQC SEND inspection report demonstrated a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the local SEND system and set out a clear direction of travel. It was noted that, while progress had been made, the judgment of “inconsistent” meant further work was required, and it would not be appropriate to be celebratory while families continued to experience challenges.
- The Committee was advised of the Youth Parliament hustings and celebration event, with election results due to be announced on 21 March at The Life Centre, Winton. It was noted that this event coincided with the Mayor of Bournemouth’s Civic Service.
- Attended the Headteachers’ Forum, where discussions focused on inclusion and shared data. Members were encouraged to seek feedback from schools in their wards on engagement with these forums.
- The Committee was advised that the Schools White Paper had now been published alongside supporting documentation. Work on the Council’s response had commenced, including engagement at the SEND Summit and completion of a draft maturity matrix. It was highlighted that a significant programme of work was required ahead of June, and that meeting national deadlines was critical to securing the 90% High Needs Block deficit payment, with delays posing a significant financial risk.
- The Portfolio Holder advised that the service was required to design a new system aligned with long-term reforms while continuing to operate the existing system, placing additional pressure on the workforce in the coming months.
- The Portfolio Holder reported on recent school visits, including Corfe Hills School and St Aldhelm’s School.

77. Work Plan

The Committee noted the Work Plan update.

The Committee was advised that a work-planning workshop had taken place since the previous meeting, during which priorities for the year ahead were identified. Officers were now reviewing those priorities to determine an appropriate timetable, and a finalised Work Plan would be shared with Members and published with the agenda for the next meeting.

The Committee was further advised that a refreshed scrutiny lens for the Committee, focusing on nurturing children, young people and families, had been proposed at the workshop. As not all Members had attended the workshop, the proposed refreshed scrutiny lens was presented to the Committee and formally agreed.

The Committee also agreed that actions which had been completed could be removed from the actions list.

The meeting ended at 9.05 pm

CHAIR

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS TRACKER – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY FUNCTION

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

UPDATED: 17.04.2026

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made <small>*items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.</small>	Recommended to <small>*name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received</small>	Outcome <small>*accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.</small>	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Board meeting – 13 May 2024					
9.	A shared vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28 Strategy and Delivery Plan	<p>RESOLVED that the Board support the recommendations to Cabinet, subject to the suggested amendments from the Board:</p> <p>(a) The delivery plan be approved (b) The measures for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability for delivery be agreed.</p> <p>Note – minor amendments to the measures contained in the report were suggested by the O&S Board and captured in the full minutes of the meeting.</p>	Cabinet, 22 May 2024	Accepted	The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the amendments suggested at O&S Board had been incorporated into the revised version of the Strategy and Delivery Plan supplied for decision by Cabinet.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 16 July 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 27 August 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 23 September 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 1 October 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 21 October 2024					

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Agenda Item 9

60.	Blue Badge Service Update Report	<p>The Board resolved that:</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder/Leader and the Chief Executive be asked to write to the Department for Transport to raise the concerns outlined by the O&S Board and that the Portfolio Holder take the issue forward with local MPs and the Local Government Association to encourage local authorities to raise these issues with the Department for Transport and request that central government gives local authorities the freedom to set fees which cover the cost of administering the system and that the system should be simplified in terms of renewal processes.</p>	Portfolio Holder/ Leader/ Chief Executive	Partially accepted by the Portfolio Holder	<p>The Portfolio Holder confirmed that they had written to the Department for Transport and provided the response received to the O&S Board at its meeting on 12 May.</p> <p>It was unknown if this had been raised directly with the LGA and at the O&S Board meeting on 12 May the Portfolio Holder undertook to follow up on this.</p>
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Recommendations from Board meeting – [18 November 2024](#)

69.	O&S Budget Working Groups – findings and recommendations	<p>Recommended to Cabinet</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the principle of an inflationary increase across all parking charges be endorsed for the 2025/26 budget. 2. That it requests Officers to take into account the suggestion that an assessment be made on using a proportion of surplus income to accelerate the parking charging machine replacement programme prioritising the best value machines in order to reduce future costs (subject to the necessary procurement processes). 3. That Officers be requested to explore options to reduce costs for the Council and make the process easier for the public to pay for car parking, in particular an option to be able to pay in advance/on Council website. 	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Partially accepted	<p>Responses provided to the Cabinet meeting on 5 February</p> <p>://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55921/Appendix%203a%20-%20Portfolio%20Holder%20Responses%20to%20Budget%20Scrutiny.pdf</p>
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That it requests that Officers evaluate the retention and recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officers to ensure a robust and resilient workforce to provide an appropriate level of resource and promote safe and appropriate parking. 2. That Officers be requested to ensure adequate resourcing of parking enforcement to reduce inappropriate parking around schools. 	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Accepted	<p>Response from Portfolio Holder received at the O&S Board meeting on 3 February 2025 :</p> <p>http://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55808/responses%20from%20Cabinet.pdf</p>

		<p>The O&S Board recommend to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That any Resident Card offering is made fully accessible to all those who are not digitally enabled. 2. That there should be an application process for the card with a small financial contribution for the cost of processing and that the card should be a valuable offer that residents are willing to pay a small cost for, so that it can be sustainable in terms of administrative costs. 3. That any charge levied for the card should be the same regardless of the format and that consideration should be given to concessions for disadvantaged groups. 	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Partially accepted	<p>Responses provided to the Cabinet meeting on 5 February</p> <p>://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55921/Appendix%20a%20-%20Portfolio%20Holder%20Responses%20to%20Budget%20Scrutiny.pdf</p> <p>Response from Portfolio Hodler received at the O&S Board meeting on 3 February 2025 :</p> <p>http://ced-pri-cms-02.ced.local/documents/s55808/responses%20from%20Cabinet.pdf</p> <p>Note: the residents card offer did not progress as part of the budget</p>
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Recommendations from Board meeting – [9 December 2024](#)

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78	Pay and Reward Progress Update	RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to approve option 2 of the proposed process flowchart (Appendix 1 of the report) and the commencement of collective consultation under s188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 ('TULRCA'), which is a statutory obligation where an employer is proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees.	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Accepted	Negotiations with the pay and reward progress have continued and a new offer had been made to the unions. A ballot was now taking place with the recognised trade unions and an outcome was expected by the end of June 2025. This report was brought to O&S Board and Cabinet
79	Housing Delivery Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy (CNHAS) update and Harbour Sail acquisition	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that Cabinet support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report: Housing Delivery Council Newbuild Housing and Acquisition Strategy CNHAS update and Harbour Sail a.pdf	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Accepted	The recommendation from Cabinet has not been put before Council because the purchase of Harbour Sail has not proceeded. This was due to timing of the purchase which affected the ability to use the grant for the purchase (which without this grant the scheme was no longer financially viable) and that title restrictions could not be altered to allow flexibility of tenure that was required. The grant has been reallocated to other property acquisitions.

81	BCP Council Libraries – Update on Library Strategy Development	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that Cabinet support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report: BCP Council Libraries Update on Library Strategy Development.pdf	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Accepted	The Library strategy is expected to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Cabinet in August and September 2025
Recommendations from Board meeting – 6 January 2025					
90	Devolution	Recommended to the Leader that: a: The Leader arranges an emergency Full Council Meeting at the earliest opportunity to enable a vote of ALL of the available options b: An evidence-based piece of work be undertaken on the pros and cons of a devolution arrangement with both the Solent deal AND Wessex deal, including exploring a public referendum for BCP residents.	Leader of the Council	Partially accepted	Full Council meeting was arranged for 15 January 2025. The Council meeting considered the options of both the Solent deal and the Wessex deal, further information was brought to the Council meeting and Council voted to participate in the priority programme and to move forward with the Wessex proposal.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 13 January 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 3 February 2025					
106.	Council Budget Monitoring 2024/25 at Quarter 3	RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to the Audit and Governance Committee that it instigate an investigation on the Carters Quay development.	Audit and Governance Committee 27 February 2025	Accepted	Update provided to the A&G Committee at its meeting on 29 May. Chief Executive agreed that a report of the governance and process could be produced for the 24 July. It was also agreed to circulate by email the updated provided by the Director, Investment and Development together with the advice previously provided by the Monitoring Officer. Carters Quay - Update.pdf A further report will be taken to Cabinet
Recommendations from Board meeting – 4 March 2025					

115.	Community Governance Review – Draft Recommendations	RESOLVED: that the O&S Board Recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to proposals for Burton and Winkton (A), Hum (B), Highcliffe & Walkford (C) and Christchurch Town (D) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.	Cabinet date, 5 March 2025	Accepted	Consultation progressed with these proposals. The Consultation closed 22 June 2025. The Working group are processing the outcome of the consultation and a report will be brought back to the October Cabinet meeting.
		RESOLVED: That the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Broadstone (F) and Poole Town (J) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the Board recommend to Cabinet that that the recommendation for Bournemouth (K) not be forwarded to Council.		Rejected	Cabinet felt that it was important to consult on all areas including (k) Bournemouth Town and therefore supported the recommendations as set out by the task and finish group and did not support recommendation 3 as submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
		RESOLVED that the Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Southbourne (I)) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Boscombe and Pokesdown (H) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	

		RESOVLED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Throop and Holdenhurst (E) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment.		Accepted	
		RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that the draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group relating to Redhill and Northbourne (G) be recommended to Council, for approval for publication and consultation, without amendment		Accepted	
116.	Bournemouth Development Company LLP Business Plan	RESOLVED that the O&S Board recommend to Cabinet that a decision to extend the Winter Gardens site 'Option Execution Date' is deferred by Cabinet until the new BDC Partnerships Business Plan has been approved by Cabinet.	Cabinet, 5 March 2025	Rejected	The Cabinet did amend a recommendation as follows: Agrees the principle of an extension of the Winter Gardens site "Option Execution Date", with details to be agreed to be delegated to the Chief Operations Officer acting in consultation with the Leader of the Council, or until Cabinet have had the opportunity to review a revised partnership business plan including the site development plan for the revised Winter Gardens scheme." It was not able to agree a deferment of this decision as this would stop progress on the Winter Gardens development.
117.	Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	RESOLVED That the Board recommended to Cabinet: 1. That the spending priorities for Strategic CIL as set out in Option 2 of the paper over the period 2024/25 to 2029/30 be agreed provided CIL income is as forecast; and 2. That the report be updated annually for Cabinet and Council.	Cabinet, 5 March 2025	Accepted	Accepted by Cabinet and spending priorities agreed for 2024/25 to 2029/30 for CIL.

11.	Blue Badge Update	The Chair requested that the matter also be raised with the Local Government Association particularly regarding the cost of administering the Blue Badge scheme and the limitations of the current data system	Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer, Communication and Culture	Unknown	Update on this issue awaited – no deadline date
12.	Arts and Culture Funding	Recommended to Cabinet: 1. That the O&S Board recognise the value of the NPOs funded by BCP to Health and well-being youth and the local economy and urge Cabinet to protect the funding BCP currently provides. 2. That Cabinet endorse the work that's been done with schools by the NPOs and recommends that Cabinet take action to encourage all schools to take part. 3. To explore whether it would be a benefit for a Councillor to be appointed as a member of the Board on any or all of the NPO organisations, and 4. That it ensures that the arts by sea festival goes ahead next year.	Cabinet, 13 May 2025	Accepted	1: The cultural funding remains in the MTFP so there is no change in that position as of the moment. 2: The Portfolio Holder is working with the Cultural Hub to encourage this. 3: The Portfolio Holder has spoken to the NPO and they respectfully suggested that this would not be helpful. The Portfolio Holder agreed with this especially as they would likely be a PH and the Portfolio Holder already had very close links with all of them. 4: We are planning for ABTS next year and awaiting funding news from ACE.

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Recommendations from Board meeting – [9 June 2025](#)

22.	Bournemouth Air Festival	The Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed with the recommendation that Cabinet agrees to Option 4 as set out in the report, which acknowledges the ongoing process for new events to come forward and stops any further work on an Air Festival for 2026 onwards.	Cabinet, 18 June 2025	Accepted	Recommendation accepted and confirmed that further work on the Air Festival for 2026 had been discontinued.
23.	Bournemouth Development Company - Winter Gardens Project	1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board supported the following recommendations to Cabinet: (c) Cabinet approves the BDC Partnership Business Plan for 2025 – 2030. (c) Cabinet confirms the extension of the Site Option Execution Date to September 2028, allowing Muse as the Private Sector Partner in the BDC to fund the first stage of work on the new Winter Gardens scheme, resulting in a new Site Development Plan. (c) Cabinet approves proceeding on the understanding that public parking will not be included in a new scheme design.	Cabinet, 18 June 2025	Accepted	The development plans are due to come forward for consideration in December 2025 and it was proposed by the Leader that these would go to full Council.

		<p>2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board welcomed the development of the Town Centre Vision for Bournemouth and requested to scrutinise the regeneration visions for the 3 Towns in the BCP Area as these are redeveloped.</p>			
		<p>3. The Overview and Scrutiny Board welcomed the development of the Town Centre Vision for Bournemouth and requested to scrutinise the regeneration visions for the 3 Towns in the BCP Area as these are redeveloped.</p>		<p>Accepted – update provided</p>	<p>We are developing the narrative across the three towns identifying key strengths and uniqueness to build upon the vision set out in the Corporate Strategy : vibrant places, where healthy people and nature flourish, with a thriving economy in a healthy natural environment. To support this we've made good progress by the establishment of a Citizen's Panel and the Growth Board. The Citizen's Panel comprises of residents with a focus on the town centre which is helping to provide insight into how residents feel and engage within the space. The Growth Board is a newly established steering group which is comprised of representatives from key sectors within the BCP conurbation including Business Improvement District, education, manufacturing, Starts up and the volunteering sector. These perspectives are helping to shape our vision for BCP as a place which can thrive, for residents to feel civic pride and a destination for visitors to enjoy. The conversation at the O&S focussed on how Winter Gardens fits into the wider context of the Town Centre and committee members asked for that to form part of any proposals from BDC. There is an existing Town Centre Vision which forms part of the Local Plan, and the intention is for BDC to review this to support a future planning application, ensuring it reflects the nature of the development proposals in</p>

					the absence of a formal planning policy framework.
24.	Leisure Services Presentation and Discussion	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommended that Cabinet be urged to put in place an "Access to Leisure" scheme across the whole BCP area as soon as possible, recognising that people in Poole have lost this facility and with particular emphasis on ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities	Cabinet, 18 June 2025	Accepted – update from Portfolio Holder Provided	The Portfolio holder has asked that officers explore options around a renewed access to leisure facility and bring forward options, including but not limited to; how that would be managed, financial implications, and meeting the recommendation as requested by the Overview and scrutiny board.

Recommendations from Board meeting – 15 July 2025

31.	Enhancement to Pay and Reward Offer	The Overview and Scrutiny Board supported the following recommendations to Council within the Cabinet report: a) Agree the additional costs associated with enhancing the proposed Pay and Reward offer. b) Agree the additional savings proposals outlined in Appendix 1 to ensure the cost implications of the proposal remain consistent with the February 2025 endorsed Medium Term Financial Plan. c) Agrees the details of the enhanced offer shown in Appendix 4 and 5 that will form the basis of the signed collective agreement with our recognised trade unions. d) Approves the recommended implementation date of 1 December 2025.	Cabinet, 16 July 2025	Accepted	Agreed by Council on 22 July 2025. Work underway to achieve implementation for December 2025.
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32.	Scrutiny of Budget Related Cabinet reports – MTFP update report	The Overview and Scrutiny Board endorsed the work of Members and Officers around SEND as set out in recommendation C of the report as follows: In respect of the SEND deficit, note the update and acknowledges the action taken by the Leader and the Director of Finance	Cabinet, 16 July 2025	Accepted	
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Recommendations from Board meeting - 22 September 2025

39.	Residents Card	RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board do not support the recommendation as outlined in the report as the Board did not feel that the Cabinet report included sufficient financial details and details of the scheme offers to enable it to make an informed decision. The Board recommend to Cabinet that the report is deferred to allow details of	Cabinet, 1 October 2025	Rejected	Updates were made to the report and the recommendation prior to consideration by Cabinet.
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		the financial modelling that has been done to be added, including a cost/benefit analysis and a sensitivity analysis. Once this additional information is included in the report, it should then be brought back to the O&S Board before being taken to Cabinet for decision.			
Recommendations from Board meeting – 30 September 2025					
47.	Community Governance Review – Final Recommendations	All Recommendations as set out within the Cabinet report were supported by the Board: (a) the Task and Finish Group community governance review final recommendations, as set out in paragraphs 49, 62, 74, 92, 104, 117, 128, 140, 152, 166 and 181 of this report be approved; (b) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make all necessary reorganisation of community governance orders to implement the changes agreed by Council; (c) the Task and Finish Group continue to consider the transfer of civic and ceremonial assets, statutory services and precept requirements for year 1, for each new parish, on the basis of minimal transfer and precept, and a report be presented to full Council in due course.	Cabinet, 1 October 2025	Accepted	The recommendations of Cabinet were referred to Council on 14 October. The Recommendations of Cabinet were agreed by full Council
Recommendations from Board meeting - 20 October 2025					
56.	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Budget setting process. consideration be given to utilising receipts from the existing surplus asset disposal programme for 2026/27 to address some of the repairs and maintenance of publicly facing assets.	Cabinet, 29 October 2025	Partially Accepted but final determination was to reject	The Portfolio Holder advised that this was considered as part of the budget setting process but due to the significant pressures on the delivery of statutory services it was not agreed to include this within the proposed budget – 9 February 2026
57.	BCP Council Libraries Draft Library Strategy	1. The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that as part of the Library Strategy it looks to maintain staffed hours in libraries, especially in the afternoon period, as open access is rolled out further in the future. 2. The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that the Library Service put together a list of smaller neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Bids to put to Councillors and Neighbourhood Forums immediately upon the opening of future CIL rounds.	Cabinet, 29 October 2025	Accepted	The Portfolio Holder reported that the staff hours in Libraries would be maintained and that a list of potential CIL bids had been created and these were outlined to the Board – 9 February 2026

		3. That the O&S Board support the recommendations as set out in the Cabinet report.			
Recommendations from Board meeting – 17 November 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting					
Recommendations from Board meeting – 8 December 2025					
79.	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update	RESOLVED that the O&S Board advise Cabinet of its support for all recommendations as outlined in the Cabinet report.	Cabinet, 17 December 2025	Accepted	Cabinet noted the support for the recommendations within the report.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 5 January 2026					
87.	Regeneration Progress Report	That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that, to enable effective lobbying of Government in the future, the draft of the BCP Growth Plan be shared with O&S Board Members when available and that Overview and Scrutiny be embedded in the plan's development and approval process.	Cabinet, 14 January 2026	Accepted	Extract from Cabinet minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Salmon and the Board for bringing their recommendation to Cabinet and advised that she was minded to accept the recommendation and that a formal response would be provided to the Board.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 9 February 2026					
95.	Budget 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Plan	The Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that the questions asked in the budget consultation be reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to the choices which need to be made in the 2027/28 budget setting.	Cabinet, 11 February 2026	Accepted	Extract from Cabinet minutes: Cabinet acknowledged the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Board and in relation to this the Leader confirmed that the Cabinet accepted the recommendation and advised that they would collaborate with the Chair and the Board to explore ways in which the questions could be improved for the following year.
Recommendations from Board meeting – 23 February 2026					
103.	Consultation Framework Working Group Report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that it adopts the Code of Good Practice – see the following link to the draft document: Code of Good Practice 2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that all members should be notified of consultations at least 1 week in advance of going live, providing summary detail of the topic for consultation. 3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board endorse the ongoing work to produce an internal 	Cabinet, 4 March 2026	TBC	Extract from Cabinet minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Salmon and the committee for all their work and for bringing their recommendations to Cabinet and further to this advised that a response would be provided directly to the Board once Cabinet had had the opportunity to consider the recommendations in detail.

		<p>consultation toolkit, which should provide clear guidance on confidentiality.</p> <p>4. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that it endorses an approach to every consultation which clearly outlines that it is not a referendum.</p> <p>5. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to Cabinet that funding for the establishment of a citizens panel is built into future budgets for Consultations.</p>			
103.	Consultation Framework Working Group Report	<p>1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that the Chief Executive bring the Consultation Forward Plan to Group Leaders Meetings on a quarterly basis in order to raise awareness with members. As well as informing of forthcoming consultations the update should provide guidance on confidentiality and expectations for member engagement.</p> <p>2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend to officers that greater clarity be provided around why particular consultation methods were chosen and also clarity on the reason why a consultation is taking place and how the results of the consultation will be used.</p> <p>3. That the Overview and Scrutiny Board recommend that officers give consideration to the most robust consultation process available, recognising that sample surveys tend to be more robust and consider the additional costs involved with this</p>	Officers	TBC	
Recommendations from Board meeting – 23 March 2026					
113.	Parking Around Schools	<p>1. That the parking enforcement team be asked to circulate information to all educational settings and councillors with general guidance around the limitations and responsibilities of parking enforcement officers and the police including suitable contact details.</p> <p>2. That a Communications campaign be organised through the 'safer routes to schools' team regarding an emphasis on enforcement going forwards and that consideration be given</p>	Cabinet, 26 March 2026	TBC	Extract from minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Salmon for their discussion and debate on this item and for bringing the recommendations to Cabinet. In relation to this the Leader advised that a formal response would be provided directly to the Committee by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley once the Cabinet had had the opportunity to

		<p>to using specific information related to educational settings, e.g. levels of fines within a specific area in order to encourage a decrease in the instances of parking infringements to reduce the overall amount of fines.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. That the relevant Portfolio Holder write to the DfT emphasising the need to increase fines to help with dangerous parking outside schools. 3. That the 'safer routes to schools' team be asked to review if any free resources are available for educational settings, to share with parents to help create a shift in parent driving behaviour including exploring whether Op Relentless Community Funding from Dorset Police could be used for this. 4. That it notes the Board's support for the good work already underway from the Parking Team to look at funding options for camera parking enforcement on school zigzags and the Board's support for the Parking Team's work to increase availability of enforcement officers at key times for school parking issues. 5. That it supports the current review by the Transport Team of road markings at educational settings to ensure that the most appropriate markings are in place. 7. That it agrees that when planning applications are submitted for schools the 'safer routes to schools' team be informed. 			consider the recommendations in detail.
114.	Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) relating to parking pressure in high season	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That, in the development of the Local Plan and/or parking strategy, consideration is given to the provision of parking spaces for people to park overnight and sleep, including travellers, van lifers and holiday makers, ensuring that the communities affected are appropriately consulted. 2. That, in the development of the local plan consideration is given to the provision of camp sites within BCP. 	Cabinet, 26 March 2026	TBC	Extract from minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Salmon for their discussion and debate on this item and for bringing the recommendations to Cabinet. In relation to this the Leader advised that a formal response would be provided directly to the Committee by the Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy, Councillor Andy Hadley once the Cabinet had had the opportunity to consider the recommendations in detail.

		3. That within the Local Transport Plan the provision of park and ride options are given full consideration.			

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
Actions from Board meeting – 12 May 2025				
10.	BCP Complaints Policy	RESOLVED that the Board further examine the role of councillors in the complaints process, particularly in relation to ward issues and casework.	To ensure the effectiveness of both the Councils complaints process and work of Ward Councillors	Work underway - Cllr S Aitkenhead as rapporteur
Actions from Board meeting – 22 September 2025				
38.	Commercial Operations	Portfolio Holder to provide an update on the current situation in 6 months-time with a view to scheduling further scrutiny when appropriate.	To monitor and receive updates on this area of the Council	Update due to the Board in March.
Actions from Board meeting – 20 October 2025				
57.	BCP Council Library – Draft Library Strategy	A potential item be included on the O&S work programme on a review of income generation opportunities within the library service, including commercialisation options and partnership models.	TBC	
Actions from Board meeting – 5 January 2026				
87.	Regeneration Progress Report	That a small group be convened including Cllrs J Beesley, P Canavan and K Salmon to scope draft Key Lines of Enquiry on a number of the issues raised for future scrutiny in preparation of the O&S Work Programming process.	To ensure that the issues raised are given due consideration and ensure that the work planning process can continue.	
Actions from Board meeting – 23 February 2026				
103.	Consultation Framework Working Group Report	The Board also asked officers to review whether the framework (Code of Good Practice) should more explicitly reference the need for meaningful, decision- relevant consultation questions. Officers agreed to thoroughly check through the Code and make adjustments if required.	To ensure that this is taken into consideration when the Code of Good Practice is adopted.	

ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

UPDATED: 17.03.26

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made *items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.	Recommended to *name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received	Outcome *accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Committee – 15 May 2024					
8	Improvement of the environment in Poole Park through a trial closure of a park entrance to motor traffic	Cabinet refer the matter to Full Council for decision.	Cabinet, 22 May 2024	Rejected	<p>Extract from Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>'Cabinet members questioned the benefit of taking the report to full council for further debate and felt that the decision should be made.'</p> <p>Decision made: RESOLVED that Cabinet: - (a) Agrees that the current trial closure, of the Whitecliff entrance and exit point to motor vehicles, is made permanent in Poole Park. (b) Agrees that current arrangements are retained, and motor vehicles can still access Poole Park and its facilities.'</p>
Recommendations from Committee – 11 September 2024					
15	Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: discussion paper	RESOLVED that a. the Environment & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the information presented in the discussion paper and gave their views on possible approaches Cabinet may wish to take in relation to the promotion of plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets. These proposals will then be subject to further evidence-gathering and consultation. b. To support the treaty and do more work outside the committee on the position statement. c. The draft position statement be brought back to the Committee for further consideration with information	Portfolio Holder and Officers	Accepted	A revised position statement with measurable objectives was returned to the committee for further scrutiny in October 2025.

		about how it can be measured against SMART objectives in order for the Council to be more ambitious and positive on this issue			
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Recommendations from Committee – 20 November 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – [26 February 2025](#)

38	Climate Action Annual Report 2023/24	RESOLVED that a) The Committee propose to the Portfolio Holder that on the front page of the BCP Greenhouse Gas Emissions Dashboard an additional box is added to highlight the context of any carbon reduction relevant to the annual carbon reduction target b) Embedded carbon cost to be included in the calculation and displayed on the dashboard where available.	Portfolio Holder	Unknown - seek update	
39	Housing Strategy Review	RESOLVED that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that that the Housing Strategy Steering Group be comprised of one member from each political group and one unaligned member.	Cabinet, 2 April 2025	Accepted	<p>Extract from Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>‘The Portfolio Holder thanked the Environment and Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their thorough debate at the Committee and expressed support for their recommendation.’</p> <p>Decision made: RESOLVED that Cabinet: - (a) Approved the Revised Housing Strategy Delivery Plan at appendix B; (b) Approved the extension of the current Housing Strategy Period to 2027; (c) Approved the governance structure as set out in paragraphs 7-11 of the report; and (d) Approved that the steering group being formed be made up of 1 member of each Political group and 1 unaligned member.</p>

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Recommendations from Committee – [2 April 2025](#)

49	Recommendations from the Safer	Recommendations to Cabinet	Cabinet date, 26 November 25	Agreed	1. The proposed Safe Accommodation Strategy delivery plan includes a number of actions around communication, training and specialist
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<p>Accommodati on Strategy Working Group</p>	<p>1. That as part of the Safe Accommodation Strategy development, officers consider an awareness campaign and/or guidance materials on the different types of financial support that are available to support those fleeing domestic abuse, in particular in relation to different types of housing tenure (e.g. shared tenancies, joint mortgages), in order to break down a significant barrier to survivors accessing support to end their abuse.</p> <p>2. That the engagement plan for the Safe Accommodation Strategy should ensure that the voices of those with lived experience are heard and reflected within the Strategy.</p> <p>3. That an all councillor briefing session be added to the Safe Accommodation Strategy engagement plan, to ensure members are adequately informed about the strategy and able to contribute views, and to enable them to fulfil their role within the community by communicating the benefits of the Safe Accommodation Strategy to residents.</p> <p>4. a) that the provision of safe accommodation and associated commissioning process be reviewed, b) that scrutiny members be invited to review and input into this review, prior to the commencement of commissioning, through an additional meeting of this working group.</p> <p>5. That the use of temporary accommodation be continuously reviewed and specific KPIs be established for monitoring the success of the new safe accommodation model, including occupancy rates, length of stay, outcomes for survivors (e.g., successful move-on to permanent housing), and survivor satisfaction. These KPIs should be reviewed regularly by the relevant scrutiny committee to ensure accountability and transparency.</p> <p>6. That Cabinet, with the support of the council's Corporate Management Board, be requested to take a</p>			<p>advice that will ensure any household receives correct and clear information. Please see attached strategy delivery plan.</p> <p>2. Public consultation on the three domestic abuse strategies (Prevention of Domestic Abuse, Safe Accommodation and Perpetrator Strategies) has been completed, alongside several sessions on the Safe Accommodation Strategy with our established experts by experience group, including a dedicated session on the delivery plan. We will continue working with this group to monitor implementation, which includes actions to train and support experts by experience so they can actively participate in the commissioning and procurement of domestic abuse services.</p> <p>3. An all councillor briefing will be arranged in due course.</p> <p>4. The Safe Accommodation Strategy will be submitted with a commissioning plan for scrutiny and review.</p> <p>5. The proposed Safe Accommodation Strategy delivery plan sets out several actions that will contribute to this recommendation including the following:</p> <p>2.1.3 We will minimise the use of temporary accommodation and where this is provided, as a last resort, specialist Domestic Abuse support will be offered until the household can move into safe accommodation.</p> <p>5.1.1 Set up a task and finish group under the governance of the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group to agree future data monitoring across commissioned services, BCP Homes, BCP Council Housing, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care.</p> <p>6. The Safe Accommodation Strategy will be submitted with a commissioning plan which will set out the procurement intentions for the next 3 years.</p>
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		view on forthcoming decisions that may be of significant or contentious public impact, regardless of decision-making thresholds, and an all councillor briefing be held before any such decisions are made, to enable all councillors, and particularly ward councillors, to be properly informed.			
Recommendations from Committee – 14 May 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Committee – 9 July 2025					
17	Local Area Energy Plan	It is RECOMMENDED that: 1) The recommendation as outlined in the report be approved by Cabinet. 2) Cabinet add as an external stakeholder, the community to be represented in all stakeholder engagement, including any panels, meetings or focus groups.	Cabinet	Partially accepted	Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report and so accepted recommendation 1 from O&S. Cabinet were silent on recommendation 2 from O&S – seek an update.
18	Email and Document Storage Retention – Impact Analysis on Costs and Environmental Factors & Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED to cabinet that: as per Option (B), the Committee supports the continuation of activity already underway, as part of the Councils Data and Innovation Programme, to re-assess and profile Microsoft 365 end-user licensing requirements, moving colleagues to lower-costs licenses where appropriate.	Cabinet	Unknown	Cabinet did not address this recommendation at the meeting The committee may wish to seek an update on this recommendation response, although the recommendation itself shows support for continued work within the council and so would require noting by Cabinet and not consideration.
Recommendations from Committee – 8 October 2025					
26	Plant-based and reduced meat and dairy diets: draft position statement and action plan	RESOLVED that: a) All mentions of the word vegan be replaced with Plant-Based throughout the paper. b) Switching the target from 20% for plant-based concessions to 25%. c) That Council adopt the position statements and strategy for plant based diets in BCP Council with the amendments above.	Received by Cabinet, 29 October 2025. Then deferred by Cabinet for consideration at 26 November 2025 meeting	Unknown	Awaiting response from Portfolio Holder

Recommendations from Committee – 19 November 2025					
	Waste Strategy for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council 2026-2036	<p>RESOLVED that the committee supported the recommendations as set out in the report to Cabinet including Option 1 regarding the removal of current separate kerbside battery collections but requested an additional point be included in respect of this option to read:</p> <p>(ii) and to develop a convenient battery recycling scheme with local businesses to create more easily accessible drop off points</p> <p>and in addition, requested the strategy at appendix 1 be amended to include the following: -</p> <p>(a) Paragraph 5.1 of Appendix 1 'A Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-2028' be amended to include '<i>and incineration</i>' so that the paragraph reads '<i>5.1 Tendering waste disposal contracts that embed the waste hierarchy and minimise the use of landfill and incineration</i>'; and</p> <p>(b) Paragraph 5.3 of Appendix 1 'A Waste Strategy for BCP Council 2026-2028' be amended to include '<i>whilst also considering the carbon footprint of the type of disposal</i>' so that the paragraph reads '<i>5.3 Prioritising waste site proximity where possible, so waste travels only as far as it needs to and reduces the significant carbon impact of transporting waste whilst also considering the carbon footprint of the type of disposal</i>'.</p>	Cabinet, 17 December 2025	Partially accepted	<p>Extract from Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder thanked the Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their consideration of the report and their recommendations. In relation to this the Portfolio Holder advised that he felt the additional recommendation of (ii) was not necessary as people would be signposted to available organisations, and that this would include those who offered a postal collection of batteries which would assist those unable to access those in shops. In addition, the Portfolio Holder advised that any shops selling batteries were required to provide a collection of used batteries.</p> <p>Further to this the Portfolio Holder advised that the recommendations raised in relation to paragraph 5.1 and 5.3 would be included within the tendering priorities and that he was happy to accept both of those recommendations.</p> <p>The seconder advised that they were also content with these.</p>
Recommendations from Committee – 25 February 2026					
9	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026-2031 Update	<p>i) The committee endorse the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2026–2031 and consider any further improvements ahead of consideration at Cabinet in May 2026</p> <p>ii) supports the co-production of the Delivery Plan with people who have lived experience and through a working group of Homelessness Delivery Board members.</p>	Cabinet, 4 March 2026	TBC	<p>Extract from Cabinet minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Rigby and the committee for all their work and for bringing their recommendations to Cabinet. In relation to this the Leader thanked the Committee for their endorsement of the strategy and advised that a response would be provided directly to the Committee once Cabinet had had the opportunity to consider the recommendations in detail.</p>

Recommendations from Committee – 20 May 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 15 July 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 9 September 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 18 November 2026					
Recommendations from Committee –					

37

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
No current agreed actions				

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

UPDATED: 18.03.26

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made <small>*items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.</small>	Recommended to <small>*name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received</small>	Outcome <small>*accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.</small>	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Committee – 24 July 2024					
38	Child Exploitation Working Group Findings Report	<p>RESOLVED that the Committee RECOMMEND to Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That partnership working be promoted to ensure increased communication around the issues highlighted with parents, schools, children and youth services. • That earlier age-appropriate education be implemented within schools across BCP regarding the risks associated with exploitation, drugs and the dangers of carrying weapons. 	Cabinet, 2 October 2024	Partially accepted	<p>Extract from 2.10.24 Cabinet minutes:</p> <p>'The Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills spoke in support of the recommendations whilst highlighting with regards to recommendation 2 as set out above that BCP couldn't dictate the curriculum but can certainly look at ways to support it.</p> <p>The Leader advised that the Cabinet would take the matter away and go back to the Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.'</p> <p>Update given by Portfolio Holder to O&S Committee at 26.11.24 meeting. Extract minute:</p> <p>'The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People provided a verbal update which included:</p> <p>An update on the outstanding Cabinet recommendation from previous meetings related to knife crime and drug/alcohol use in schools. The Education Improvement Service collaborated with police and community groups to gather data on school programs addressing these issues, but challenges remained in obtaining detailed information.</p>

					<p>OFSTED had recommended that schools incorporate local safeguarding issues, such as knife crime, into their curriculum. There are current resources available for Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education, with additional materials being sourced from providers attending conferences. The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People highlighted that he also found free resources online through organisations like the DfE.</p> <p>In response to the Cabinet recommendations around earlier age-appropriate education. There was a need to assess existing educational initiatives related to this at both primary and secondary levels regarding knife crime awareness.</p> <p>Advised of upcoming events including webinars and community events focused on knife crime and related issues.'</p>
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39 **Recommendations from Committee – 19 September 2024** – No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – [26 November 2024](#)

36	Linwood Special School SEND Post 16 Provision at Ted Webster	<p>It was RESOLVED that Cabinet be recommended to approve (a) in the report: Cabinet approves the scheme to develop a satellite of Linwood School hosted at the former Ted Webster Children’s Centre providing a total of 60 Post 16 places including the associated capital investment necessary to develop the scheme as contained in Appendix 1 (Exempt). The scheme is fully funded from the council’s grant allocation of High Needs Provision Capital and will progress in line with the project programme set out at paragraph 12</p>	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Accepted	Cabinet agreed to the recommendations in the report, as endorsed by O&S.
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Recommendations from Committee –28 January 2025 – No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – [11 March 2025](#)

69	SEND Improvement Update	It was Proposed, Seconded and RECOMMENDED to better assess the impact on children, young people and families of any potential budget overspend in the SEND service budget, the Committee recommends that Cabinet requests a report be provided to Cabinet by June 2025 which outlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the likely overspend in the budget which areas have been identified to overspend the options to ensure the budget limit is met an appraisal of the impact on children and families of these factors 	Cabinet, 2 April 2025	Accepted	Cabinet requested a report on 'SEND Budget Pressures' as recommended by the O&S committee. The report was considered by Cabinet at the 16 July 2025 meeting. Cabinet noted the report.
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Recommendations from Committee – [10 June 2025](#)

11	Youth Justice Service Plan 2025-26	RESOLVED that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the Youth Justice Plan so that Cabinet can recommend its approval to the Full Council.	Cabinet, 26 November 2025	Accepted	Youth Justice Plan approved by Cabinet for recommendation to Council. Youth Justice Plan approved by Council.
12	Housing for Care Experienced Young People	It was Proposed, Seconded and RECOMMENDED that the Committee seeks assurance that the new Joint Housing protocol has been successfully agreed and is working effectively to ensure our Care Experienced Young People are seeing an improved service and are in receipt of timely advice and safe housing that suits their individual needs and hopes for the future.	Officers	Unknown, but Officers were in support of the recommendation in the meeting.	Seek update

Recommendations from Committee – [15 September 2025](#) - No recommendations made at this meeting.

Recommendations from Committee – [25 November 2025](#)

9	Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions	Comment to Cabinet: The committee agreed to make Cabinet aware that the Committee appreciates the detrimental impact of school exclusions, which were highlighted in the report, and recognises the work that is underway to address this. The committee agreed that through this work the council's primary focus is improved outcomes for the children of BCP but that this work will also likely bring budgetary savings such as:	Cabinet, 26 November 2025	Not applicable	The Cabinet thanked the committee for its work on this. Note: the constitution requires no response from Cabinet to comments from O&S.
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in exclusions and associated costs (e.g. transport, AP placements, tribunal processes) • Improved outcomes for vulnerable pupils, reducing future demand on social care, youth justice, and post-16 support service • A reduction in the need for unregistered and costly AP as more needs are met by schools 			
10	Home to School Transport	The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to endorse the recommendation within the report to Cabinet, this being that Cabinet: 'Agree to tender an external provider to deliver a transformation project over three years with a total cost of £1.5 million funded by the flexible use of capital receipts to deliver service improvements and by the end of the project on-going savings in SEND school transport projected at £3 million (net of additional resource requirement)'	Cabinet, 26 November 2025	Accepted	Report recommendations agreed by Cabinet for recommendation to Council. Report recommendations agreed by Council.

Recommendations from Committee – 27 January 2026

4 55	Invest to Save Budgets in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	RESOLVED that the Committee agreed the following recommendations and that they be passed to Cabinet: a.) Note the current High Needs Block (HNB) position and the impact and cost avoidance of the initiatives implemented to date including the increased supply of specialist places, the early years inclusion model (Dingley's Promise) and the positive impact of the Portage Service. b.) Endorse the invest-to-save programme and the establishment of the High Needs Block Deficit Recovery Plan Board, including its role in approving a benefits-measurement framework to evidence cost avoidance and prevent double-counting across initiatives. c.) Support the progression of the following priority initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitalisation of High Needs funding processes (integrated with the SCM upgrade) • Synergy Case Management (SCM) upgrade to go-live (target May–June 2026) • Pre-EHCP targeted funding model (subject to affordability and governance) 	Cabinet, 4 February 2026	TBC	Extract from Cabinet minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Carr-Brown and the Committee for bringing their recommendations to Cabinet and further to this the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Richard Burton advised that he would attend a future meeting of the Committee to formally respond to the recommendations.
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56	Family Hubs Working Group Final Report	The Committee agreed the Working Group's recommendations to Officers: 1. Continue to build on the strong foundations of community engagement, with a focus on inclusivity and responsiveness. 2. Explore ways to support staff wellbeing that are informed by staff experiences and feedback. 3. Develop clear measures of effectiveness relating to Family Hubs, with key performance indicators focused on reach, inclusivity and responsiveness to evolving community needs, supported by improved data collection and feedback.	Officers		
56	Family Hubs Working Group Final Report	The Committee agreed to make Cabinet aware that the Working Group recommended Cabinet: 1. Notes the scrutiny that has been undertaken on Family Hubs and the Working Group's finding of the strong staff commitment to community engagement. 2. Endorses continued support for Family Hubs, with future priorities to include investment in staff capacity, professional development and enhanced tools to evidence impact.	Cabinet, 4 February 2026	TBC	Extract from Cabinet minutes: The Leader thanked Councillor Carr-Brown and the Committee for bringing their recommendations to Cabinet and further to this the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, Councillor Richard Burton advised that he would attend a future meeting of the Committee to formally respond to the recommendations.

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Recommendations from Committee – 10 March 2026 - No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Committee – 16 June 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 14 September 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 24 November 2026					
Recommendations from Committee – 26 January 2027					

Recommendations from Committee – 9 March 2027

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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
11 March 2025				
69	<p>SEND Improvement Update</p> <p>SEND Improvement Update.pdf</p>	<p>Decision made: The officers agreed to share the full review of the DSG finances as well as the SEND improvement board's response to the review.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p> <p>The Committee requested an update on the ongoing work regarding education outside of school and home education and asked that it be shared with the Committee.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		
15 September 2025				
25	<p><u>Alternative Provision Improvement Plan</u></p> <p>Alternative Provision Improvement Plan Final.pdf</p>	<p>Decision Made: The Committee discussed the routes into AP, including exclusions and EHCPs, and officers agreed to provide further data on this breakdown.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		To be incorporated into new SEND/AP Strategy
27 January 2026				
51	<p><u>Recommendation Tracker</u></p>	<p>Members agreed to review the tracker in more depth around June 2026.</p> <p>Action – Committee aware</p>		
53	<p><u>Members of Youth Parliament Update</u></p>	<p>The mental health training video would be shared with Members when available, and officers would confirm whether it would be appropriate to present the video at a future Committee meeting or to circulate it outside the meeting.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
54	<u>Housing for Care Experienced Young People</u>	The Committee was advised that Youth Homelessness Board data is reported regularly, and it was agreed that officers would provide the Committee with a summary of these metrics, including information on repeat homelessness and outcomes for care experienced young people. Action – Officers aware		
55	<u>Invest to Save Budgets in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)</u>	Officers agreed to circulate information on the Portage service to Members and, if helpful, arrange a short briefing session on the service. Action – Officers aware		

HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

UPDATED: 18.03.26

Minute number	Item	Recommendation made *items remain for monitoring until implementation is complete or committee agree to remove.	Recommended to *name of receiving body/ Officer, and date received	Outcome *accepted/ partially accepted/ rejected/ unknown.	Implementation updates
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 20 May 2024					
11	Data Working Group Final Report	The Committee recommend to the O&S Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that a similar [data] toolkit be developed for all O&S committees to reflect the relevant data and policy landscape within the remit of these committees. This to be added to the O&S Action Plan. that the Data Use Toolkit be highlighted within the O&S annual report to Council. 	Overview and Scrutiny Board (16 July 2024).	Recommendations accepted.	Toolkit development for all O&S committees has been added to the O&S Action Plan. Toolkit for the Children’s O&S Committee is near completion. All others are yet to start and will be developed when resources allow. The Data Use Toolkit was highlighted within the 2023/24 O&S annual report to Council. (Update by O&S Specialist, 24/4/25)
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 15 July 2024					
21	Adult Social Care Business Transformation Case	The Committee recommend that Cabinet recommends that Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approves the business case for a new adult social care transformation delivery model to improve outcomes for residents and to achieve financial efficiencies and savings enabled by investment. b) Agrees to the establishment of a formal transformation programme; ‘Fulfilled Lives’. c) Agrees to the proposed investment of £2.9M, with Corporate Management Board being provided 6-monthly stage reviews on the progress of the transformation programme. 	Cabinet (17 July 24) and Council (23 July 24)	Recommendations partially accepted at both Cabinet and Council	The final decision of Council was different from the committee recommendation as follows: Resolved that Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Approves in principle the business case for a new adult social care transformation delivery model to improve outcomes for residents and to achieve financial efficiencies and savings enabled by investment of up to 2.9M; (b) Agrees to the establishment of a formal transformation programme; ‘Fulfilled Lives’; (c) Agrees to an initial 12-month investment of 1.79M, with an interim report to Cabinet on progress of the design phase in January 2025 and a full report by July 2025, with recommendations for further investment; and

		d) Invites the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide regular scrutiny of progress towards benefits and sustainable change. In particular, the Committee be invited to review the progress against the four priority areas of the Fulfilled Lives programme and the risks and opportunities of data with ASC transformation			(d) Invites the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide regular scrutiny of progress towards benefits and sustainable change. In particular the Committee be invited to review the progress against the four priority areas of the Fulfilled Lives programme and the risks and opportunities of data with ASC transformation. Implementation update required on a)-c) above. Implementation update on d) above: The Health & ASC O&S Committee now receives regular reports on the Fulfilled Lives programme to provide opportunity for ongoing scrutiny of the transformation delivery. (Update by O&S Specialist, 24/4/25)
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 24 September 2024 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 2 December 2024					
46	Health and Social Care for the Homeless	The Committee recommend that Cabinet: Discuss the issues caused by a lack of funding for rough sleepers with no local connection and those without an identified priority need with a view to developing solutions in partnership with other local authorities and key stakeholders such as the Integrated Care Board and relevant ministers to create a robust system that does not fail our most vulnerable or unfairly place the responsibility for caring for these people on local particular local authorities, with a view to getting something in place before the new strategy.	Cabinet, 10 December 2024	Acceptance unknown – recommendation received by Cabinet with advice that it would be considered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.	Cllr Kieron Wilson is responding by email to this recommendation.

47	Transforming Urgent and Emergency Care Services	<p>The Committee recommend that Cabinet recommends to Council:</p> <p>a) Notes the summary of the diagnostic review, including improved outcomes for residents and financial benefits for the Council.</p> <p>b) Notes that under the draft Partnership Agreement with Dorset health and care partners, anticipated benefits are significantly in excess of costs to the Council.</p> <p>c) Delegates to the Corporate Director for Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Finance, authority to enter into the Partnership Agreement to undertake the proposed transformation programme.</p>	Cabinet (10 December 2024) and Council (10 December 2024)	Recommendations accepted at both Cabinet and Council	
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 3 March 2025					
61	Adult Social Care Strategy 2025-28	<p>The Committee recommend to Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the inclusion of some clear targets ideally linked to the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) within the Adult Social Care Strategy; and the inclusion of an overview of how to better integrate performance and activity data with finance data in the Adult Social Care Strategy. 	Cabinet (2 April 2025)	Response unknown – recommendations 'welcomed' by Cabinet but no clear response given.	<p>The final decision of Cabinet did not reflect the recommendations made by the committee, and was as follows:</p> <p>'Resolved that the new ASC Strategy 2025-28 is linked to the Corporate Vision and supports corporate priorities under 'Our People and Communities.'</p> <p>Update required. Committee may wish to seek a response from relevant Portfolio Holder back into committee.</p>
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 19 May 2025 No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 14 July 2025					
20	Adult Social Care Fulfilled Lives	<p>The HASC O&S Committee:</p> <p>1. Supports the recommendation to Cabinet that Council approves the request</p>	Cabinet 26 July 2025	Accepted	Cabinet and Council approved the release of the remaining £1.1m as outlined at part 1 of the recommendation.

	Transformation Programme	for the release of the remaining £1.11m funding that was previously agreed to allow the Fulfilled Lives Programme to reach completion and realisation of the benefits; and 2. Continues to monitor this four-year programme in particular around self-directed support and support at home that will enable people to stay independent.			
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 23 September 2025					
30	Get Dorset & BCP Working Plan - GD&BCPWP	The Committee RECOMMENDS that: 1) The recommendations as outlined in the report be approved by Cabinet. 2) That Cabinet agree for the Get Dorset & BCP Working Plan to return to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee at an appropriate stage for further scrutiny, to enable Members to review its delivery, assess its impact in supporting individuals to return to work, and consider whether intended outcomes are being achieved.	Cabinet 1 October 2025	Accepted	Report recommendations agreed by Council.
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 1 December 2025					
44	FutureCare Programme – Mid Programme Review	RESOLVED that the Committee requests the programme return to its next meeting on 2 March 2026 with detailed financial and impact data to scrutinise.	Officers	Accepted	Coming back to Committee on 2 March with further information requested.
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 2 March 2026 – No recommendations made at this meeting.					
Recommendations from Committee meeting – 19 May 2026					

Recommendations from Committee meeting – 20 July 2026

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Recommendations from Committee meeting – 22 September 2026

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Recommendations from Committee meeting – 30 November 2026

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Recommendations from Committee meeting – 1 March 2027

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OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

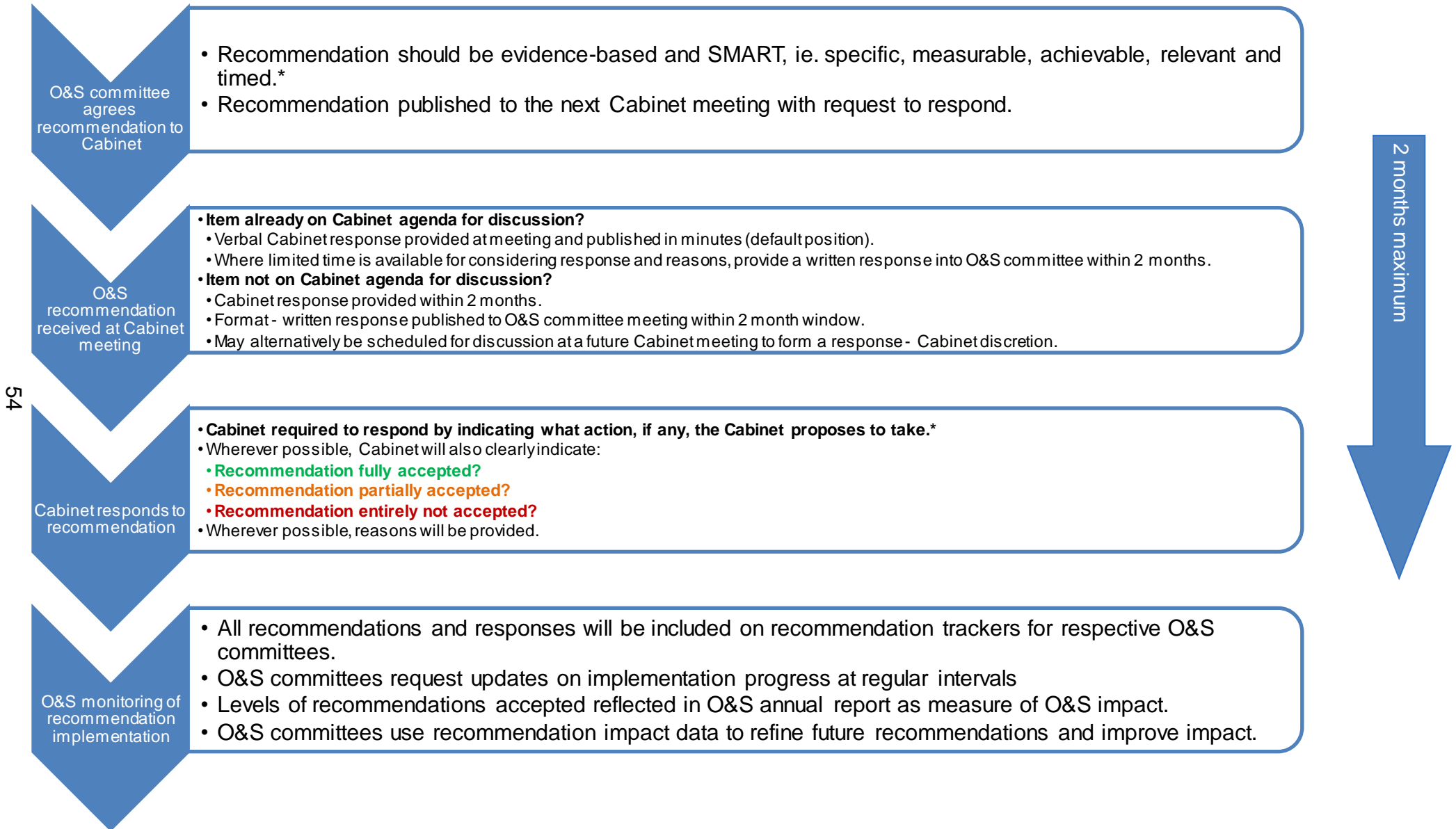
Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 25 September 2023				
20	National Suicide Prevention Strategy	Decision Made: The Board was advised that Public Health was unsure of the amount which would be allocated to the BCP area, as the closing dates for bids had not yet happened, however bids were being worked on and once any funding was known, the Committee could be informed. Action – Public Health aware		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 15 July 24				
51	Adult Social Care Transformation Business Case	Decision Made: That key risks and Key Performance Indicators be included in future reports regarding the Transformation Programme Action – Officers aware	To enable the Committee to have this information when scrutinising	
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 24 September 24				
34.	Adult Social Care Budget Presentation	Decision made: In response to a query regarding the activities and outcomes of the Live Well Dorset programme, the Committee was advised that it had managed to reach those living in the most deprived areas of BCP and that access could potentially be provided to the dashboard for the Committee to see the output. Action: to be considered further		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 3 March 25				

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
59.	The Transformation of UHD Hospitals	Decision Made: That the Director of Adult Social Care be the contact for any Cllrs wishing to visit the new facilities ACTION – Director and Cllrs aware.		
64.	Work Plan	Decision Made: As requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Committee will monitor the proposed increase of block booked beds for long-term care and that an update on progress against this be provided at an appropriate time. ACTION – added to the work plan with no date yet identified.		An update requested under budget presentation in September 2025
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 19 May 25				
11	FutureCare Programme Update	Decision Made: That the Committee receive data regarding bed capacity and workforce numbers at an appropriate time. Action – Officers aware Decision Made: That the Committee receive data around benefits tracking and monitoring to be reported to a meeting at a future date. Action – Officers aware and added to the work plan Decision Made: That the Committee receive further information regarding capacity within secondary care to fulfil the future need. Action – Officers aware		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 14 July 25				
20.	Adult Social Care Fulfilled Lives Transformation Programme	Decision Made: That the Committee receive quantitative data about the impact in future reports.		

Minute number	Item	Action* *Items remain until action completed.	Benefit	Updates
		Action – Officers aware		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 23 September 25				
31.	Tricuro: Business Plan Review and Objectives 2025-26	<p>Decision Made: The Committee requested data on service capacity, particularly at the Moordown centre. Officers confirmed that capacity data is available via dashboards and would be circulated to the Committee.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p> <p>Decision made: The Committee was advised of the officer's commitment to ongoing engagement and agreed that progress updates should be provided between formal planning cycles to support continued collaboration and oversight</p> <p>Action – Officers aware</p>		
Actions arising from Committee meeting – 1 December 2025				
44.	FutureCare Programme – Mid Programme Review	<p>Decision Made: The importance of tracking savings through to tangible outcomes, such as reduced home care hours and improved reablement was highlighted, and the Chair requested detailed data analysis at a future meeting.</p> <p>Action – added to work plan for 2 March 2026</p>	To enable the Committee to fully scrutinise the impact of the programme in terms of tangible outcomes and savings	Coming back to Committee on 2 March 2026.
45.	Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs) Update	<p>Decision Made: The Committee requested the programme Diis dashboard be shared with them to consider further.</p> <p>Action – Officers aware.</p>		

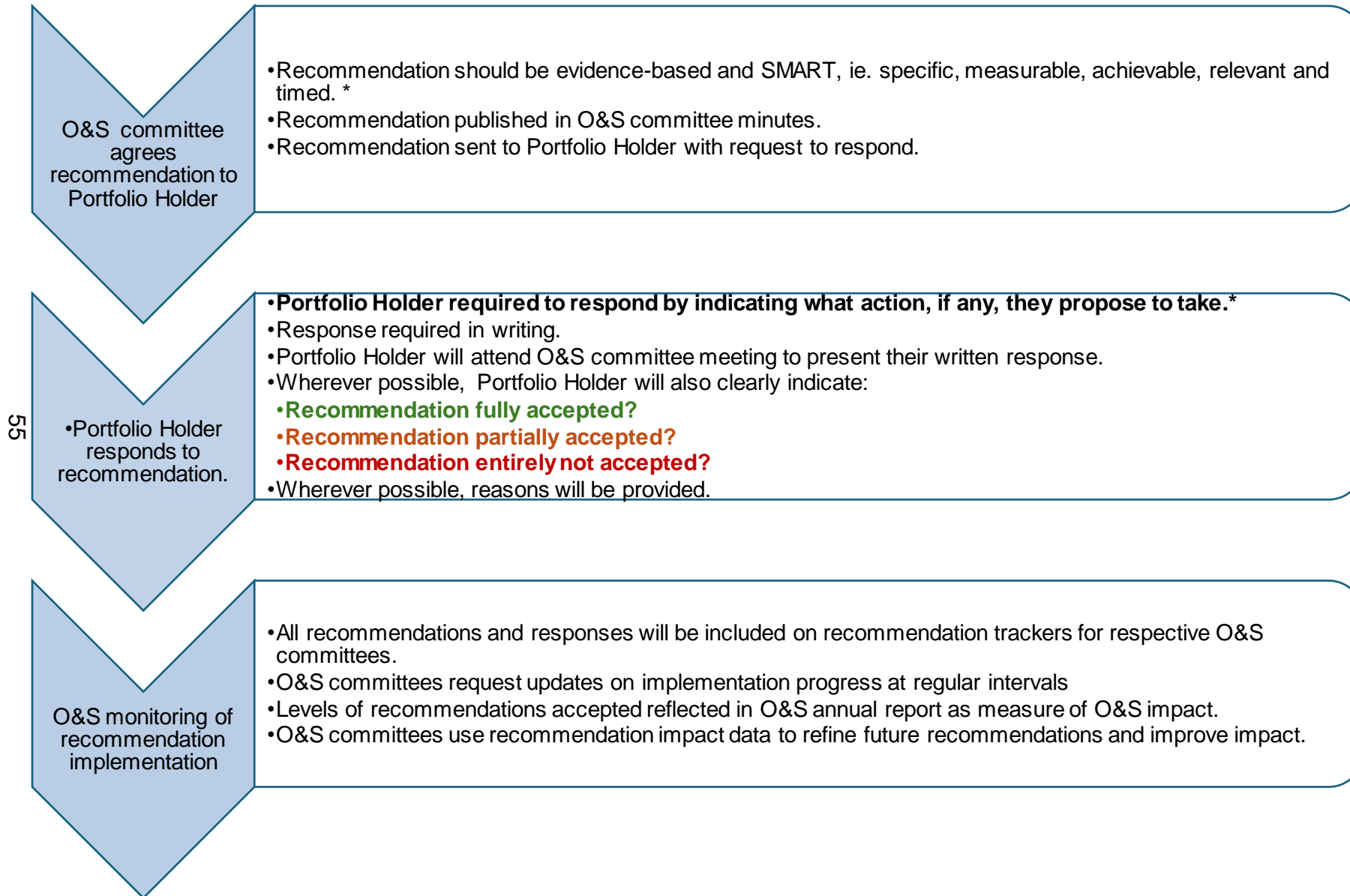
O&S Recommendations / Executive response process

Cabinet process:



* [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK](#)

Portfolio Holder process



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CHILDREN’S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Work Plan
Meeting date	16 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee is asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Work Plan.
Recommendations	<p>That the Children’s Services O&S Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and confirm the refreshed Work Plan priorities set out within the revised work plan at Appendix A 2. Confirm the scrutiny lens of “Nurturing Children, Young People and Families”
Reason for recommendations	<p>The Council’s Constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda.</p> <p>An agreed scrutiny lens is good practice and assists O&S councillors in selecting work plan items and channelling scrutiny enquiries against an agreed key focus.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	N/A – Overview and Scrutiny is a non-executive function
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Lindsay Marshall, Overview and Scrutiny Specialist
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Work Plan updates

1. This report provides the latest version of the Committee’s Work Plan at Appendix A and guidance on how to populate and review the Work Plan in line with the Council’s Constitution. For the purposes of this report, all references to Overview and Scrutiny Committees shall also apply to the Overview and Scrutiny Board unless otherwise stated.

2. Items added to the Work Plan since the last publication are highlighted as **'NEW'**. Councillors are asked to consider and confirm the latest Work Plan, subject to any updates agreed at the meeting.
3. The most recent [Cabinet Forward Plan](#) can be viewed on the council's website. This link is included in each O&S Work Plan report for councillors to view and refer to when considering whether any items of pre-decision scrutiny will join the O&S Committee Work Plan.

Resources to support O&S Work

4. The Constitution requires that O&S Committees take account of the resources available to support proposals for O&S work. Advice on maximising the resource available to O&S Committees is set out in the O&S Work Planning Guidance document referenced below. Resources available for 2026/27 scrutiny are set out in detail at paragraph 14 below.

Work programming guidance and tools

5. The [Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference](#) document provides detail on the principles of scrutiny at BCP Council, the membership, functions and remit of each O&S committee and the variety of working methods available.
6. [The O&S Work Planning Guidance](#) document provides detail on all aspects of work planning including how to determine requests for scrutiny in line with the Council's constitution.
7. The [O&S Framework for scrutiny topic selection](#) was drawn up by O&S councillors in conjunction with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. The framework provides detail on the criteria for proactive, reactive and pre-decision scrutiny topics, and guidance on how these can be selected to contribute to value-added scrutiny outcomes.
8. The '[Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny](#)' form is an example form to be used by councillors and residents when making a new suggestion for a scrutiny topic. Word copies of the form are available from Democratic Services upon request by using the contact details on this agenda.
9. Performance information: progress against the council's Corporate Strategy can be viewed on the council's [Performance Dashboard](#). The dashboard includes ratings to show where the council is on target, areas for monitoring or where action is required, and explanations. The dashboard includes measures relevant to all O&S Committees and is provided to assist Committees in their horizon scanning and work selection process.
10. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has utilised a structured [Decision Matrix](#) as part of the process for prioritising work plan items, evaluating suggested topics against the following measures: resident impact, urgency, influence and the value scrutiny could add.

Work Programming 2026-27

Methodology

11. In early 2026, potential topics for the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee were sourced from a range of stakeholders in a desktop exercise. Topics were received from councillors, officers, Cabinet Members and partners of the Council. Children's Services O&S councillors were supported to review these topics in a workshop on 17 February 2026, with a view to determining their priorities for the next municipal year using an evidence-led approach. Councillors evaluated the list of potential topics using a structured matrix assessing resident impact, urgency, influence, and the value scrutiny could add.

12. At its workshop, the Committee agreed to operate using a lens of “**Nurturing Children, Young People and Families**”. This use of a lens helps O&S councillors to filter scrutiny requests and channel lines of scrutiny enquiry against an agreed key focus, and is good practice adopted across all BCP O&S Committees. **The Committee is now asked to formally agree this lens to assist its ongoing work.**
13. Following the workshop, the refreshed Work Plan has been drafted through collaborative work with Officers and Councillors and reflects agreed priorities and available scrutiny capacity. **The draft Work Plan is attached at Appendix A and the Committee is now asked to approve this Plan.** The Work Plan also includes reserve items for inclusion if capacity allows, as well as an outline of items not included in the Work Plan, with rationale.

Scrutiny resources available in 2026/27

14. When considering topic priorities, Children’s Services O&S Members assessed these against a good practice approach of allocating approximately 1 hour of scrutiny per topic for sufficient depth and effectiveness of inquiry, and 2–3 hours of scrutiny per committee meeting. On this basis, the illustrative resource capacity for the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2026/27 is as follows:
 - 5 hours - pre-decision (scrutiny of Cabinet reports)
 - 10 hours – proactive scrutiny (topics requested by O&S)
 - 2 hours – reactive scrutiny topics (those that are unplanned and urgent)
 - 4 hours – briefings (information giving sessions between meetings)

PLUS

 - Approximately 1 working group (priority order of all working groups to be determined by O&S Chairs / Vice Chairs group)
 - Unlimited rapporteurs (member-led independent work)
 - Unlimited info only reports

Next Steps and In Year Scrutiny Requests

15. Whilst the refreshed Plan concludes the Committee’s annual work planning activity, updates and refinements may be needed throughout the year to ensure that scrutiny is timely and impactful. It is good practice for the Committee to keep the work plan under review at each meeting and make changes as appropriate to promote impactful scrutiny.
16. Pre-decision topics can be identified and confirmed by the Committee on a regular basis when the Cabinet Forward Plan is refreshed, with Children’s Services-related items added as appropriate.
17. The Committee identified one Working Group suggestion through its work planning activity: ‘Children’s Wellbeing’. Working Groups are in depth and resource intensive and fall under the category of ‘commissioned’ scrutiny work, as outlined by the BCP Constitution. All commissioned topics across O&S Committees have been passed to the O&S Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group for consideration. The Group is responsible for agreeing the order of progression for commissioned work, in line with Constitution requirements, which allow for only one commissioned topic to be progressed at any one time across the whole O&S function. At a meeting in April 2026, the Group agreed the following order of progression for O&S commissioned work:

Priority 1 – Van Life (Environment & Place O&S Committee topic)

Priority 2 – Children’s Wellbeing (Joint Children’s Services O&S and Health & Adult Social Care O&S Committee topic)

Priority 3 – Budget Scrutiny (All O&S Committees joint topic)

Priority 4 – Resident’s Parking (O&S Board topic)

This will be kept under review and any changes reported to O&S committees as arising.

18. Key Lines of Enquiry documents will be prepared for individual scrutiny topics where required. Advice on scoping will be sought from officers to strengthen inquiries (in line with usual practice) and from the O&S Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (to provide additional test and challenge in line with updated Constitutional requirements).
19. In-year topic requests: notwithstanding the Committee’s planning of its annual programme of work, councillors retain the right to suggest scrutiny topics throughout the year. Requests for scrutiny work may also be made by residents and other council bodies, such as Full Council, at any time. For arising “in-year” requests, the Committee is recommended to make use of the matrix tool to assess topics in an evidence-led way. Where scrutiny capacity is reached, the Committee can weigh up the value of swapping topics by referring to the evidence generated through the annual work-planning workshop.

Options Appraisal

20. The Committee is asked to consider and confirm, or amend, the scrutiny priorities as outlined in the work plan attached at Appendix A, and provide any further guidance on approach to scrutiny that it sees fit at this time.
21. To ensure that work can be accommodated within available resources, the total number of scrutiny slots available should not be exceeded. If priorities as outlined are not agreed by the Committee, topics should be swapped to remain within capacity.
22. Updating the Work Plan at this time will ensure clear direction for progression of reports in a timely way. If updates are not confirmed there may be an impact on report timings and other scrutiny activity.

Summary of financial implications

23. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Summary of legal implications

24. There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Council’s Constitution requires that all O&S bodies set out proposed work in a Work Plan which will be published with each agenda. The recommendation proposed in this report will fulfil this requirement.

Summary of human resources implications

25. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

26. There are no sustainability resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

27. There are no public health implications arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

28. There are no equality implications arising from this report. Any councillor and any member of the public may make suggestions for overview and scrutiny work. Further detail on this process is included within O&S Procedure Rules at Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

Summary of risk assessment

29. There is a risk of challenge to the Council if the Constitutional requirement to establish and publish a Work Plan is not met.

Background papers

- [Overview and Scrutiny Committees Terms of Reference](#)
- [O&S Work Planning Guidance document](#)
- [O&S Framework for scrutiny topic selection](#)
- [‘Request for consideration of an issue by Overview and Scrutiny’](#)
- [Performance Dashboard.](#)
- [Decision Matrix](#)

Further detail on these background papers is contained within the body of this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Refreshed Children's Services O&S Work Plan

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BCP Council Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Plan. Updated post work planning

Guidance notes:

- 2/3 items per committee meeting is the recommended maximum for effective scrutiny.
- The Children’s Services O&S Committee will approach work through a lens of **Nurturing Children, Young People and Families.**
- Items requiring further scoping are identified and should be scoped using the Key Lines of Enquiry tool.



	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
<i>28 April 2026 Informal Briefing – Data Toolkit and performance briefing for CS O&S Committee members only</i>				
16 June 2026				
1	Youth Justice Plan 2026/27	Committee Report		
2	Youth Service Motion Report	Committee Report		
3	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
4	CiC and CEYP Sufficiency Report Update – (to be confirmed)	Information-only report		
5	Best Start in Life	Information-only report		

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
6	CS Self Evaluation Report (Annual)	Information-only report		
<i>24 June 2026 Informal Briefing – SEND Reform Plan, to inform the SEND Reform Plan scrutiny topic. (To inform item 22)</i>				
14 September 2026				
7	SEND and AP Improvement Plan & monitoring review outcomes	Committee Report		Schedule 6 monthly next one April 2027 onwards.
8	Invest to Save Budgets in the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant Update –	Committee Report		<p>Following scrutiny on same topic in January 2026, it was that a further report be following national reforms and associated partnership assessment work.</p> <p>This will now be incorporated into item 23, SEND Reform Plan. Included for audit trail to committee and then remove</p>
9	School Exclusions	Committee report		
10	Shorts breaks	Committee report – early discussion item format.		Scrutiny required early but depends on commissioning diagnostics progress.
11	BCP Safeguarding Annual Report	Information-only report		
<i>27 October 2026 Informal Briefing – Children’s Mental Health Transformation (Item 24)</i>				
24 November 2026				

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
12	SEND Reform Plan - Pre-Cabinet Decision Scrutiny			
13	CS Budget – HOLD	Committee Report		
14	Children in Care Strategy Development	Committee Report		
15	School Attainment	Information-only report		Receive when report is available. Either November 2026 or January 2027.
<i>1 December 2026 Informal Briefing – Topic TBC</i>				
26 January 2027				
16	SEND Finance update 'NEW' - HOLD	Committee Report		S
17	Best Start – Early Years Update	Committee Report		Was agreed to come as Committee report in January 2026 meeting. Officer later advised June info only report and potential for a November committee report.
18	SEND Reforms Plan deep dive topic 1	Committee Report		To support the implementation of SEND reform plans by undertaking deep dive scrutiny into a selected topic area. Slot 1 of 3 (Item 22)
	Recommendation tracking – Hold			
	Housing for Care Experienced Young People	Information-only report		

Key:  Pre-Decision Scrutiny  Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
<i>2 February 2027 Informal Briefing – Topic TBC</i>				
9 March 2027				
19	Reserved for pre-decision or reactive scrutiny decision or reactive scrutiny consult Cabinet Forward Plan			
20	SEND Reforms Plan deep dive topic 2	Committee Report		To support the implementation of SEND reform plans by undertaking deep dive scrutiny into a selected topic area. Slot 2 of 3 (Item 22) (Schedule Topic 3 for June 2027)
21	Neurodiversity – Future Model of Care	Committee Report		
Priority Items for scrutiny agreed at workshop				
22	SEND Reforms Plan	Committee Report (3 x sessions likely required, plus a pre-decision slot. Briefing date in June also planned, date tbc) All dates scheduled,		Identified as top priority for the committee. To enable the Committee to maintain oversight of this issue and target scrutiny as required. Timing depends on maturity matrix outcomes, DfE timelines, and officer readiness. Likely required resource: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> June briefing

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
		pending confirmation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sep or Nov cttee slot for pre-decision scrutiny following DfE feedback and prior to a Cabinet decision. • 3x slots to focus on implementation deep dives Above dates and focus to be scoped further in June briefing to identify how O&S can add value.
23	SEND improvement and monitoring review outcomes	Every 6 months Date scheduled.	TBC	Monitoring feedback – for scrutiny to monitor outcomes from inspections. Rachel advised monitoring scheduled for July, so committee slot in Sep.
24	CAMHS & Children’s Mental Health Transformation	Briefing. Date scheduled, pending confirmation.	Health Partners	Workshop agreements: A priority, but date not set. Awaiting timings from Health partners. Aim to hear this early and prior to progression of the Wellbeing working group. Format/focus – committee report from health partners. The focus of this scrutiny would be assurance/ update on implementation. Create a brief KLOE with possible q’s - are waiting times going down following transformation? What is the progress against implementation? Success/ challenges of the transformation? Following workshop, Rachel suggested as this is info giving it would be better as a briefing, October slot held for this, pending confirmation.
25	Neurodiversity – Future Model of Care	Committee Report	Health Partners	

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
		Date scheduled, pending confirmation.		
26	Short Breaks	Committee Report Date scheduled.	TBC	Early Discussion Item format.
27	SEND Sufficiency Strategy – Progress Update	Pre- Decision Report Date to be confirmed	TBC	Previously agreed as an info only item at workshop, officers since advised this is a pre-decision item.
Reserve Items for scrutiny (Meeting dates and/or methods to be determined)				
30	Youth Strategy– follow on work	No date scheduled. Move other items if capacity is needed for this.	TBC	Included as reserve item in case committee want follow on work after the June 2026 report.
31	Post 16 Provision	Briefing session No date scheduled	TBC	Briefing is needed first before so the Committee can review if further scrutiny could add value. Assess against other briefing topics to decide if this is a priority.
32	Increased use of TAs in schools to support SEND/inclusion	No date scheduled.		Likely to be covered by other SEND/AP work. Retain on list to revisit as standalone topic if needed.
Working Groups/ Rapporteurs/ Briefings/ Info only reports				

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
33	Children's Wellbeing	Working Group. No date scheduled		Agreed priority for working group. Agreed scope needs to be refined and timetabled by Chairs/Vice-Chairs Group. Links to CAMHS, exclusions, transitions, multi-agency working. Links to CAMHS item requested from Health partners – aim to schedule this report first prior to progressing working group.
34	Corporate Parenting Board link	Updates via Portfolio Holder reports to committee	TBC	As Chair of Corporate Parenting Board, committee could ask for regular updates on key themes explored by the Board to maintain a link. No formal reporting required – can be incorporated into PH updates.
35	Family Hubs	Rapporteur (to be confirmed)		Previous family hubs work recommended a rapporteur be established to maintain links. For info, Jan 2026 resolution: 'The Committee agreed to establish regular, informal dialogue between the Committee and Family Hub teams to maintain transparency and shared understanding. This to be undertaken annually by named rapporteurs and included on the Committee's work programme. Agreed rapporteurs to maintain links to Family Hubs through independent visits and highlight any significant progress or red flags to the Committee as they arise, to assist Members in identifying where further scrutiny may be valuable.'

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

	Subject and background	How will the scrutiny be done?	Lead Officer/Portfolio Holder	Report information/ updates
37	Care Leavers' Outcomes & Support Services	Briefing / Information-only No date scheduled		To assure scrutiny that Ofsted improvement recommendations have been addressed. Short briefing could be combined with another topic.
38	Response to Child Exploitation, including knife crime following previous O&S working group.	Briefing No date scheduled		Officers advised low impact topic for scrutiny but possibility of an inspection on this so purpose would be to make cttee aware. Briefing on knife crime element will fulfil committee's recommendation tracking role related to the previous working group on this topic.
<p>Notes:</p> <p>Briefings – more than the slots available, plus a need to keep open for arising issues. Ask committee to agree plotting topics ad hoc.</p> <p>Reactive scrutiny / recommendation tracking slots - no capacity for these. If items arise through the year reconsider and move items already plotted.</p>				

Items Removed from the Work Plan

The Committee agreed that the following topics should not progress to scrutiny, as scrutiny would add limited value or the issue is already addressed by other topics or in other committees:

- **Transition of Mental Health Services from Children to Adults (covered by working group on Children's Wellbeing)**
- **Parent / Carer Forums and wider family engagement channels (parent carer rep now included in committee membership)**
- **Review of the quality of food served in schools (limited ability to add value)**

Key: Pre-Decision Scrutiny Pro-active Scrutiny

- **Speech and Language Therapy update (Ofsted inspection outcome indicates no scrutiny required at current time)**
- **Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report (Corporate Parenting Board duplication)**
- **Aspire Adoption Annual Report (Corporate Parenting Board duplication)**
- **Virtual School Head Annual Report (Corporate Parenting Board duplication)**
- **Early Years and Mainstream Funding Formula (Schools Forum/ Cabinet duplication)**

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Foreword - Achieving Data Driven Scrutiny



Councillor Sharon Carr-Brown

Chair, Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Children's Services O&S Committee plays a crucial role in enhancing the decisions made on behalf of BCP residents through scrutinising policy and decisions and making recommendations for change.

Children's Services O&S councillors are mindful that there is a wealth of data available to support us in our role as effective scrutineers. This data tells a story of the needs and experiences of residents using our services as well as the performance of services, the costs associated, and the judgements formed by the council and other responsible bodies on service direction.

Following the creation of a similar toolkit by the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee, it became clear that a toolkit would also strengthen scrutiny for Children's Services. This toolkit will help councillors to better understand the various data sources and how these can provide a wider evidence base for the work of scrutiny.

As our data and analytical tools become more advanced, the potential for the council and its partners to leverage this information to shape and target services and interventions is immense. As our data tools continue to evolve, this toolkit will be updated and reviewed annually.

Above all else, it is acknowledged that scrutiny councillors are not expected to be data analysts or experts in the field. The strength of scrutiny lies in the ability of councillors to listen to residents and shine a light on issues of public importance, to ask the right questions of those designing and delivering services, and to draw upon the relevant evidence in response to those questions. The toolkit has been developed with this in mind and with the aim of being a resource for current and new councillors in their understanding of the data landscape.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide councillors with:

- an understanding of the purpose and benefits of data use by Children's Services (CS) O&S Committee
- access to a range of data tools that will support a proactive approach to incorporating data into scrutiny work

2. How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is focused on the data sources that will support work within the remit of the CS O&S Committee. Other O&S committees will find alternative data sets more relevant to their work.

Sections 3– 7 provide guidance on the definitions of data, the value of data for scrutiny work, and guidance on how to request and use data.

Table 1 provides detail of the various data sources.

Data, research, reports and analysis sources have been provided in this toolkit. All may serve a purpose for scrutiny for different reasons. Sources include a brief description, advisory notes on how to use them and have been categorised in the following ways:

- **Accessibility**
- **Local/national relevance**
- **The type of scrutiny work that the source will support (deep dive/horizon scanning)**

Many data sources are public, with links provided for easy access. Some tools provide data with a supporting narrative, whilst others may require an account to access, or present raw data in a way that will benefit from the assistance of officers to interpret. Taking account of this, sources are categorised as 'self-serve' or 'supported access'.

Councillors can also use the sources' available information through this toolkit to support their own **background research** for O&S work and develop a wider understanding of children's services' issues to better inform their scrutiny enquiries and work programming judgements.

3. What is data?

Data or intelligence is the quantitative and qualitative information we gather from systems and people. It is used by the council and other service providers to understand outcomes for people and ensure the services delivered are the right ones.

Quantitative data is data represented numerically, including anything that can be counted, measured, or given a numerical value.

Qualitative data is data that cannot be represented numerically and is instead based on an observation of described lived experiences and patterns of behaviours.

Quantitative data may be more **structured** (e.g. numbers of children and young people in our care system) whereas qualitative data is **unstructured** (e.g. feedback on a service gathered through a focus group). Both types of data represent a person using the services provided by the council and its partners and are of equal importance.

To be meaningful, the use of data and intelligence needs to be **timely and measurable**. Some data is available in **real time**. Other data has been gathered, cleansed and included within overarching reports, such as quarterly or annual reports. There will be a **lag in the data** provided in these types of reports. Both forms of data will be useful to O&S, but judgements should be made regarding the timeliness of data that is required to inform O&S work.

4. Why is data important for overview and scrutiny?

The role of O&S is to **test and challenge** the assumptions and decisions of the council and its health partners, to strengthen the decisions that are made. It provides this test and challenge on behalf of the public and has a wide range of powers to scrutinise anything that affects the local area or its residents. This is a significant responsibility and the work undertaken by O&S should be **based on evidence**.

O&S work is selected by councillors and supported by officers and partners of the council (e.g. NHS) who are experts in their field. Reports to scrutiny are provided by officers and partners who can provide information and narrative on issues selected for scrutiny. By incorporating data and additional insight into their work (e.g. evidence sessions with relevant stakeholders, site visits, surveys), O&S councillors can form a broader understanding of an issue and **triangulate** information to test that what is being provided to them in reports is supported by relevant data. Through this, O&S findings become **evidence based** and scrutiny can better support the governance of the council and its partners as an effective '**critical friend**'.

There is no one person who holds all the data and answers about the performance of services in the local area. A unique **power of scrutiny** is the ability to **bring together** a range of **partners and information** to gain a picture of how well services are meeting the needs of residents, and to help find solutions where improvements are needed. Data is part of the clue package that can be drawn upon to build this picture.

Lessons can be learned from other areas of the country where data has not been used effectively by scrutiny, or councillors have not heeded the stories being told by the data provided. Where scrutiny has not been evidence led, it has been found to be a contributing factor to major service failure that has had a significant impact on the lives of residents.

5. Deep dive and Horizon scanning

Scrutiny work can be broadly divided into two categories of 'deep dive' and 'horizon scanning'. These are defined as:

Deep dive

- Detailed work focused on policy development and exploring options for the future.
- Often in the form of a working group or a series of committee-based evidence sessions.
- Framed as a series of questions or key lines of enquiry (KLOE) to which O&S seeks answers through detailed enquiry. Answers are found through the gathering of evidence, with a view to informing future policy.
- Specific and potentially more granular-level data may form part of the evidence base in answer to KLOE.
- O&S may also gather insight by talking directly to partners, officers and residents, to build a fuller picture around the data gathered.

Horizon scanning

- Regular monitoring of a range of higher-level data, outside of a committee setting.
- Data selected should assist in giving the committee high-level narratives that tell the story of need or set the context for strategies.
- Using this data the committee can build an understanding of context and trends around performance and resident experience and identify any emerging 'red flags'.
- Red flags may be elevated to committee for a report or a working group deep dive, following background enquiries.
- Horizon scanning data sources should be reviewed collectively on an annual basis to inform onward work planning.

An example of the types of data sources that support deep dive and horizon scanning work is set out in **Figure 1** below.

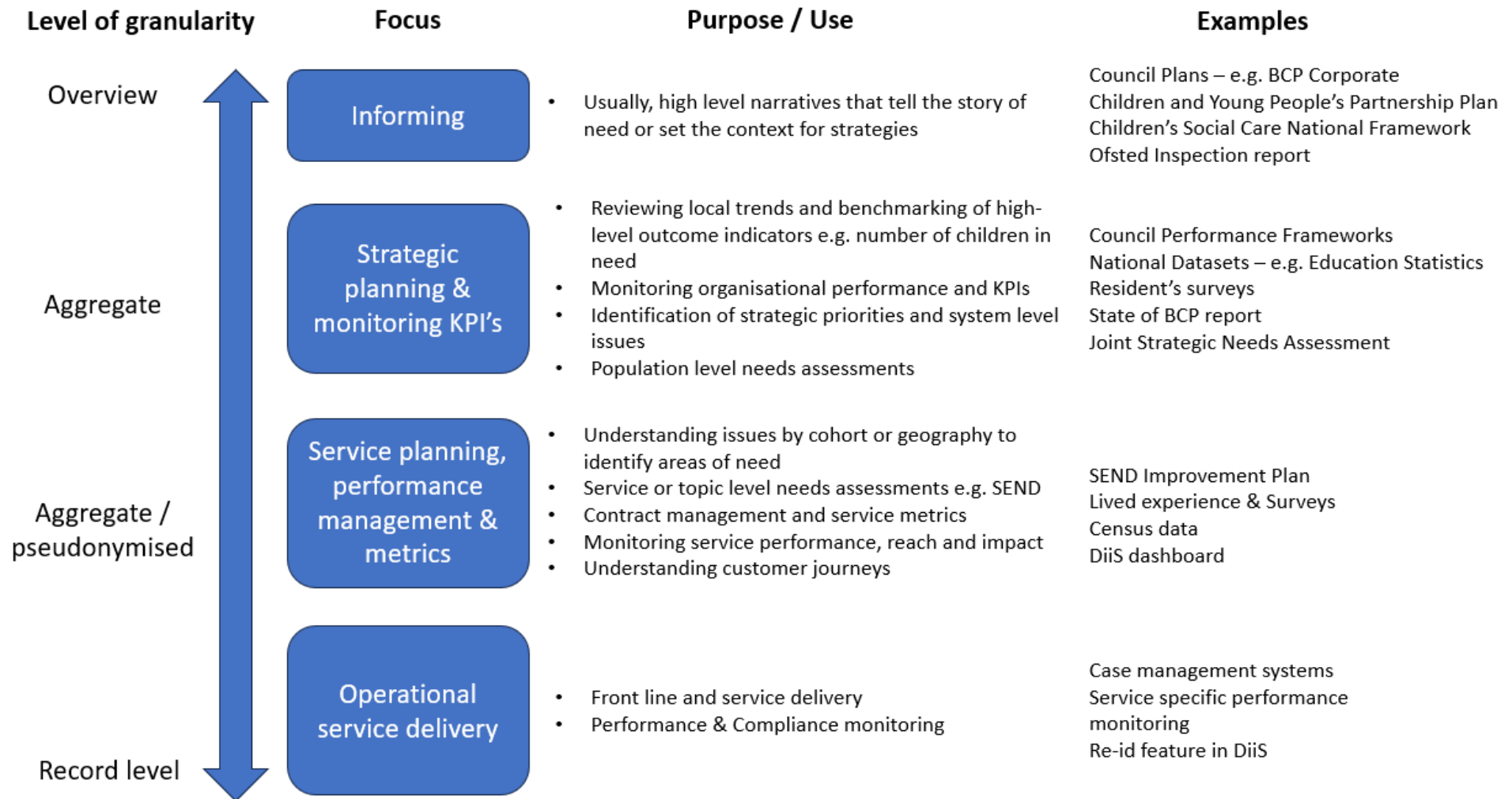


Figure 1 – Examples of data sources to support deep dive and horizon scanning (from the Adult’s O&S tool kit originally provided by Public Health). Please note all data sources mentioned in the image are in the Table 1 below.

6. Accessing data – a methodology for O&S councillors

Rights to information

Councillors, and scrutiny councillors in particular, have elevated rights of access to information held by the council and its partners. O&S committees have **statutory powers to request information** but with this right is a responsibility to **clearly set out what these requests are**, and to do so **in a reasonable timeframe** for requests to be provided. This will help to ensure that requests by O&S can be met effectively, and that relationships with officers and partners are built on mutual trust with a shared common aim of improving services and outcomes through scrutiny.

Using the following guidelines for data and information requests will assist with this. These should be followed in conjunction with the requirements of procedure rules within the BCP Council Constitution.

Key Lines of Enquiry

O&S outcomes are often most effective when work is targeted, rather than taking a broad ‘oversight’ approach. A good practice to achieving targeted scrutiny is the establishment of a set of key lines of enquiry (KLOE). This applies to one-off committee reports as well as more in-depth, deep dive reviews. By seeking answers to these KLOE, findings and recommendations will be evidence based and are more likely to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound), with a tangible benefit to residents.

Committees are encouraged to outline a set of KLOE for all items on their work programme, **at least one meeting cycle (2/3 months) in advance, and ideally on an annual basis when the following year’s work programme is set**. This will allow opportunity for respondents to gather and provide the requested information and to meet the council’s consultation and sign off requirements for public reports. KLOE should include any specific data requests to support the subject matter under scrutiny. Committees can collaborate on KLOE informally and formalise these requests at committee.

A link to a standard proforma for Key Lines of Enquiry can be found [here](#).

Standard data inclusions for Children's Overview and Scrutiny reports -

The O&S tool kit outlines a **standard set of data inclusions** that, where available, should accompany all reports to committee to enhance the evidence base provided to scrutiny. These are as follows:

- ✓ Historical trends
- ✓ Regional and national comparisons
- ✓ Demographic comparisons
- ✓ Costings and budget
- ✓ An outline of any limitations in the data that should be taken into account by the committee

Officers will be able to provide tailored advice and support in analysing the data as appropriate for individual reports.

Additional requests for data and information

Reports to committee are published five clear working days in advance of committee meetings. After reading reports, committee members may have additional questions, over and above KLOE and standard data inclusions, that require technical detail to respond. Wherever possible, councillors should provide these questions in advance of the committee meeting to report authors, to give opportunity for supply of information into committee.

Where additional details, or further analysis of data is requested, it may be necessary to provide that information post-meeting or at the next committee. Committees are therefore encouraged to invest time in scoping scrutiny items to ensure that data requests can be identified at an early stage.

Horizon scanning and work planning

There are a variety of data sources that will support the horizon scanning role of the Children's Services O&S Committee. These are identified in the table below, with many identified as **'self-serve'** resources that councillors can easily access and research independently.

O&S is one of many bodies that maintain a close oversight of data. Some of the resources provided are in the form of strategies produced by other bodies (such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) where data has already been assessed to give a picture of the needs and service

aspirations for the area. **Sources from the policy and strategy landscape will provide a shortcut to the committee** in terms of understanding where their work programme may be most valuably directed.

Of the resources considered, a set of **primary sources** have been identified as most useful for the group in its work. Primary sources have been identified within Table 1 and are also set out below.

Sources for O&S horizon scanning

- ✓ A Shared Vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28
- ✓ Corporate Performance Information
- ✓ BCP Budget and Annual Accounts
- ✓ Our People, Our Place - key facts, figures and insights
- ✓ How we are improving SEND services
- ✓ BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Priorities
- ✓ State of BCP Report (2023)
- ✓ BCP Children and Young People's Joint Needs Assessment (2025)
- ✓ Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2025-30
- ✓ BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report 2024-25
- ✓ Children's Services Compliments Complaints Annual Report 2024-25

Primary sources for deep dive O&S work

- ✓ Children's Social Care Dashboard
- ✓ Explore education statistics - GOV.UK
- ✓ BCP hosted statistics, data and census
- ✓ BCP hosted statistics, data and census
- ✓ LG Inform - Themed Reports - Children and Young People
- ✓ Dorset Intelligence and Insight Service
- ✓ Fingertips Public Health Data Collection

These sources listed in Table 1 below and will be kept under review and updated as appropriate.

O&S committees and councillors have limited resources to undertake their work. Independent, regular review of horizon scanning resources by councillors will ensure that committee time is reserved for value added scrutiny. To share the load, the committee may wish to agree **rapporteurs** who will take responsibility for monitoring and researching specific agreed areas and reporting back to the wider committee. This may be achieved by undertaking a skills and interests audit of committee members to match areas of interests with appropriate members.

O&S work planning will be strengthened by a collective annual review of horizon scanning resources. With support from senior officers to

provide further background information on services and any areas of strategic change, this will provide an evidence base for work programme decisions for the year ahead. Planning an annual programme of scrutiny work will provide sufficient notice for report authors to meet the data requests identified for each scrutiny item.

7. How to be an intelligent user of data tools

Where data is used to make judgements, it is essential that this is approached with some caution. Wherever possible, data should be **triangulated** across a range of sources, and **red flags in data should always be followed up with further enquiries** to understand a fuller picture - one that may not be evident from the data alone. For example, data changes may be a result of service change or a difference in the way that data is collected.

The following **'top tips'** may be useful for councillors when approaching data independently:

- Always treat high level data with some caution – consider who has produced the data or look for official statistics-type markings.
- Look at historical information and trends as well as the current data point.
- Consider the size of the data set – changes in smaller data sets will appear more significant than in larger data sets.
- Look at the description of how data has been calculated. Differences in collection and calculation of data in different councils will affect how the data compares.
- Data doesn't explain the context. Ask questions around service change or how data has been calculated to understand further what the data may mean.
- Be aware of the timeliness of data. Consider when real time data is required compared to quarterly/ annual reports, which will reflect a data lag.
- Data quality can vary, and the output is only as good as the input. Care may need to be taken if the data beneath is of poor quality. Ask questions around data cleansing to understand the quality of the data provided.
- Seek assistance from council performance and intelligence teams where a more analytical approach is required.

The council and its partners (e.g. Charities, Police, Fire and Rescue, Education, Public Health, NHS) have experts who regularly work with the data sources outlined in **Table 1**. Accessing the support of data analysts for deep dive scrutiny work will assist councillors and strengthen scrutiny outcomes. Support required can be identified at the scoping stage of a piece of scrutiny work.

Table 1 – Data Sources for use by the Children’s Services O&S Committee

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General Strategies & Reports (not Children Services specific)					
Accessibility	Data Source	Description	Remit	Application	Notes
1 Self-serve	<i>Primary Source</i> A Shared Vision for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole 2024-28 Corporate Performance information : Scroll down to bottom of page, click view dashboard	The Council’s vision for 2024-28, setting out key priorities and ambitions for the BCP area as well as a high-level delivery plan. Click here for a high level summary . Corporate performance is updated quarterly and shows how BCP Council is working towards achieving the objectives in the Corporate Strategy. Includes updates on actions and key performance indicators	Local	Horizon scanning	Overarching Council Strategy and performance information, which includes people, health and care aims. These three sources accessed together will give a full picture of council aims and performance on working towards these. Corporate performance information is updated quarterly.
2 Self-serve	BCP Budget and Annual Accounts	Overarching BCP Council finance information	Local	Horizon scanning	See also medium-term Financial Plan reports, published throughout the year to Cabinet.
4 Self-serve	<i>Primary Source</i> Our People, Our Place - key facts, figures and insights	‘Key facts’ document providing information on the BCP area and resident characteristics. Updated annually.	Local	Horizon scanning	Includes a range of information on wellbeing indicators (e.g. obesity, mental health, injury) as well as linked indicators such as deprivation, housing and economic factors.
Children Services specific Strategies & Reports					
Accessibility	Data Source	Description	Remit	Application	Notes
5 Self-serve	<i>Primary Source</i> BCP Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (CYP JSNA) BCP SEND Joint Strategic Needs	The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a report provided by Public Health and is an assessment of current and future health and wellbeing issues for the local population. In January 2025 a Children and Young	Local	Horizon scanning	Report production is based on an assessment of raw data sources also listed in this document, along with liaison with local stakeholders on issues for the area. This is used to present an assessment of current needs of the BCP

	Assessment (JSNA)	People specific deep dive was published which provides an evidence base, pulling from both qualitative and quantitative data, of health and wellbeing needs of Children and Young People to support planning and commissioning and preparation of bids and business cases.			area. The JSNA therefore provides a shortcut to committee in terms of horizon scanning vs. accessing the data independently.
6 Self-serve	Primary Source Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2025-30	The Children and Young People's Partnership Plan is a high-level strategy that outlines how services will work together to help and support children and young people to improve outcomes across BCP.	Local	Horizon Scanning	This plan highlights the priorities and focus across the BCP area covering Children's Service and any other organisations supporting our Children and Young People.
7 Self-serve	How we are improving SEND services	<p>These plans are part of the improvement journey of BCP's SEND provision.</p> <p>It highlights areas of improvement including partnership additions, action updates and progress made across eight key themes which focus our work.</p> <p>Progress is monitored via the SEND Improvement board scorecard.</p>	Local – SEND focus	Horizon Scanning	<p>The Improvement Plans are updated regularly in advance of the SEND and AP System Leadership Group held bi-monthly..</p> <p>At a future date, the plan will be published on the SEND Local Offer for ease of accessing.</p>
8 Self-serve	BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership 2024-25 BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements and Priorities Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements	<p>Statutory annual report informing readers about how the Safeguarding partnership has carried out its responsibilities to prevent abuse, harm and neglect of children and young people with care and support needs during the reporting period.</p> <p>Previously the report was completed by 'Pan-Dorset', however the partnerships are now separated.</p>	Local	Horizon scanning	It is a statutory requirement for the Safeguarding Children Partnership to publish an Annual Report each year and to present that report to the Council's Health & Wellbeing Board. Many Councils also request that the report is presented to Scrutiny as the report enables a discussion on the work of the Safeguarding Children Partnership.
9 Self-serve	Childrens Services Compliments	The Children's Services Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2024-25 provides an overview of the feedback	Local – Children's services focus	Horizon scanning	Annual review of the report by the committee will assist the committee to identify any areas of concern that would

	Complaints Annual Report 2024-25	received by BCP Council regarding Children's Services. It details the types and numbers of complaints and compliments, the handling processes, and outcomes. The report also highlights service improvements made based on the feedback, ensuring transparency and continuous improvement in service delivery.			benefit from scrutiny.
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Data Portals

Accessibility	Data Source	Description	Remit	Application	Notes
10 Self-serve	<i>Primary Source</i> Children's Social Care Dashboard	<p>This is a tool that will bring together various indicators and data points to track progress towards the outcomes outlined in the National Framework.</p> <p>The initial indicators will be developed from existing data, and the dashboard will evolve over time to address data gaps and improve understanding of outcomes.</p>	<p>National (but can be filtered to region and LA)</p> <p>Children's Social Care Focus</p>	Deep dive	<p>To inform the framework's principles, enablers, and outcomes, ensuring that the guidance is based on current and comprehensive data.</p> <p>Supports a deep dive review of performance in various aspects of children's social care.</p>
11 Self-serve	<i>Primary Source</i> Find statistics and data - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK	<p>Explore Education Statistics website allows users to search and browse a wide range of statistical summaries and associated data related to education in England including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and Pupil Characteristics including age, gender, free school meals eligibility • Local Authority and School Expenditure. • Pupil Attendance • GCSE and A-Level Results • Teacher Training and Workforce: Statistics on new entrants to Initial Teacher Training and characteristics of the school workforce. • SEND: data on children and young people with an education, health and care (EHC) plan in England 	National	National	Search within Themes to aid scrutiny

		and, historically, for those with a statement of special educational needs (SEN).			
12 Self-serve	Statistics: looked-after children - GOV.UK	Provides comprehensive data on children under local authority care in England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This includes information on the number, placement, and legal status of looked-after children, as well as outcomes for looked after children, such as educational attainment and health 	Horizon Scanning	National	National picture on Looked after children. Access to annual statistical releases, guidance documents, and historical data, helping users understand trends and patterns in the care and outcomes of looked-after children.
13 Supported Access	Primary Source BCP hosted statistics, data and census	Portal to a range of public data hosted by BCP Council.	General local data portal, surveys and key facts	Both	For deep dive - Information contained on the portal may give further background to an issue under review – e.g. deprivation and poverty indices in BCP.
14 Self-serve	LG inform - Themed Reports - Children and Young People	Series of ready-made reports on a range of topics to provide an easy way to access a deeper level of information and intelligence about the local area or community.	Local	Deep dive	Automated reports which pull together data sets to give a picture of the key headlines for the local area, including some benchmarking. Councillors may welcome this resource for their own background research prior to scrutiny in committee, to provide some wider context to the data provided by officers within reports.
15 Requires officer/ DiiS support as use of DiiS is restricted to account holders. Technical support from specialised	Dorset Intelligence & Insight Service (DiiS)	DiiS links data from health and social care across Dorset. Highly granular anonymised data about those using services in the Dorset area. Valuable local tool as data is supplied by a wide range of clinicians and analysts including BCP Children's social care.	Local	Deep dive - reviewing selected data in response to key lines of enquiry	Wide range of health-related information including Children's social care and SEND data that can be sliced in different ways according to specific enquiries. Potential to get lost in the vast range of data available – therefore best suited as a response to clear and specific query from committee. Value of the data is only as good as the initial data that has been provided into the system. Note of caution in

officers essential to also understand any limitations in the data.					approaching the data, and a reason to be guided by an analyst in use of this data. Currently not possible to benchmark BCP against other local authority areas through DiiS.
16 Publicly available, best accessed via officers/ public health officers supporting the committee to help navigate the breadth of information available.	Fingertips Public Health Data from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) Within the profiles available, Public health outcomes framework and local authority health profiles recommended by Public Health officers as particularly useful datasets for scrutiny	National profiles on a wide range of public health data e.g. Dental services, inequality tools, physical activity Provides a wider overview to operational performance in the BCP area. – e.g. by providing national context, benchmarking against other LA areas, monitoring trends over time for key performance indicators (KPIs)	National – health focus	Supports horizon scanning with ability to review BCP performance against other areas across a range of indicators. Red flags may give clues about areas that could benefit from deeper scrutiny investigation.	Provides a wider overview to operational performance in the BCP area. – e.g. by providing national context, benchmarking against other LA areas, monitoring trends over time for key performance indicators (KPIs). Some data may breakdown to lower levels, by ward or geographical hospital trust areas. Complements the granular local data available through DiiS to provide an evidence base for deep dive scrutiny.
17 Available to relevant senior officers	BCP Internal Officer Data (quantitative data)	A core data set relating to Children's Social Care provides senior managers with visibility of activity, performance and risk. Provided through an interactive Power Bi Dashboard. Monitored and reported by exception into the Executive Board.	Local – children's social care focus	Deep dive	Relevant data will be incorporated into reports to O&S committee according to the subject matter (e.g. workforce recruitment and retention data). O&S committee may request specific data from officers to support deep dive investigations. This is best established through a clear set of key lines of enquiry, agreed in advance by the committee.
18 Available to relevant senior officers	BCP Internal Officer Data (qualitative data)	Data gathered and held by senior officers from a range of mechanisms such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from all stakeholders and staff through a number of different Quality Assurance mechanisms • Audits and Practice Learning reviews • Compliments, Stories of Difference and Our Journeys 	Local – Children's social care focus	Deep dive	Relevant data will be incorporated into reports to O&S committee according to the subject matter. O&S committee may request specific data from officers to support deep dive investigations. This is best established through a clear set of key lines of enquiry, agreed in advance by the committee.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bespoke team level surveys • Safeguarding and serious incident reviews • 			
19 Available to relevant senior officers	BCP Finance Data (held on Finance and Operations 'F&O' software)	Children's Social Care finance data gathered and held by senior officers	Local – children's social care focus	Both	<p>For horizon scanning - finance related data, when paired with performance data, will provide a fuller picture around the performance of services and the impact of potential savings/ investment proposals. The committee may wish to request a regular update on an agreed set of key finance and performance measures within the adult social care area for horizon scanning purposes and consult annually when work planning.</p> <p>For deep dive – relevant finance data will be incorporated into reports to O&S committee according to the subject matter.</p>

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AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



Report subject	Risk Management - Corporate Risk Register Update
Meeting date	19 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report updates councillors on the position of the council's Corporate Risk Register. The main updates are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR08 – We may fail to run a fair and open election/referendum. This risk has been added during this quarter. • No risks have been removed or de-escalated during the quarter. • Material updates for this quarter are outlined in section 13.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Members of the Audit and Governance Committee note the update provided in this report relating to corporate risks.</p>
Reason for recommendations	To provide assurance that corporate risks are being managed effectively and continue the development of the council's arrangements for risk management and enhance its governance framework.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Mike Cox, Portfolio Holder for Finance
Corporate Director	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive
Report Authors	Fiona Manton Risk & Insurance Manager ☎01202 127055 fiona.manton@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Update and Information

Background

1. Risk can be broadly defined as the possibility that an action, issue or activity (including inaction) will lead to a loss or an undesirable outcome. It follows that risk management is about the identification, assessment and prioritisation of risks followed by co-ordinated control of the probability and impact of that risk.
2. In accordance with the Financial Regulations and the Risk Management Policy, the Audit and Governance Committee are specifically responsible for ensuring appropriate and effective risk management processes. In practice, this means that the committee members must assure themselves that the council's risk management framework is appropriate and operating effectively. The council's Corporate Risk Register is an important element of this framework and is reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis.
3. BCP Council has in place a new Risk Management Policy. It includes a new level of risk which will sit at the top of the risk framework and all lower level risks will be aligned to one or more of these Enterprise Risks.
4. As this is a new approach it will take some time to fully implement and it is recognised that the policy, the Enterprise Risks, the risk appetite and other areas may need adjustment or refinement over the next 12 months. Corporate Management Board (CMB) will approve any adjustments and these will be brought to the attention of this committee as part of the usual regular risk reporting process.
5. In view of the timing of this update, there has been no change in the way the Corporate Risk Register is being reported.
6. In addition to the quarterly reviews, in immediate practical terms, the Corporate Management Board continues to monitor risks and ensure appropriate and proportionate mitigating actions continue and evolve as risks change.

Corporate Risk Review

7. Members will recall from the previous updates that the Corporate Risk Register was established at the commencement of BCP Council. It has been routinely reviewed on a quarterly basis.

8. In order to provide the committee with insight in terms of the approach to risk management, a summary of the process followed is shown at Appendix 1.
9. To assist in the understanding of prioritisation of risk, the council's risk matrix and definitions is shown at Appendix 2.
10. At Appendix 3 a dashboard is included with summarised information.
11. To assist the committee with the context of the corporate risks, at Appendix 5 is a diagram which outlines the risk hierarchy in place in the organisation. This illustration includes the new Enterprise Risk level that will be referenced in future reports to this committee.
12. Each risk is given a unique identifying number so where risks have been removed from the register the numbers will no longer run sequentially. To assist the committee a table of the full risks is shown at the beginning of Appendix 4. This is ranked according to the net risk score from the highest to the lowest.

Changes in Risk During Quarter 4 – 2025/2026

13. During the quarter, the risks have been reviewed and in addition to the updates to each risk, the material updates to the register are as follows:
 - a) CR08 – We may fail to run a fair and open election/referendum. This risk is added for the quarter to reflect the ongoing preparations for the Town Council elections taking place in May 2026.
 - b) Risk CR20 – Potential of climate change to outstrip our capability to adapt. In addition to the usual quarterly update the Director of Marketing, Comms and Policy has also provided a response to the question previously posed by this committee. In relation to how this risk is communicated to the public, the Director of Marketing, Comms and Policy advises as follows:

BCP Council communicates the specific risks around flooding events in line with its warn and inform duties, working with the Environment Agency and other partners to warn residents and businesses of potential flooding and provide information and instruction on what to do to prepare for and respond if flooding occurs. We also promote the work done by our Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) team, most recently their joint strategy with New Forest District Council.

In terms of communicating the broader risk presented by climate change, we promote the work we are doing to reach our net zero targets, such as launching the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) or our active travel projects. We also have a live, public Climate Dashboard and publish our Annual Climate Report (the current 2024/25 report is going through the scrutiny process at the moment).
 - c) CR24 – We may fail to adequately address concerns around community safety. This risk is currently lead jointly by the Director of Housing & Public Protection and the Director of Public Health and Communities. Discussions are ongoing to determine a single lead for this risk going forward. An update will be provided to the next meeting of this committee.
 - d) CR27 – We may fail to adequately address concerns around environmental impacts – cliff management/instability. The Director of Commercial Operations has provided the following further update:

The cliff asset database which indicates risk levels for each section of cliff has been developed, this is a live document which is updated regularly in line with inspections. The Cliff Management Strategy is in its final stages of development and is due to be finalised by April 2026. These items and the other approaches to monitoring and mitigations have provided an overall updated target score of 12 against the current net score of 16.

14. Whilst it may be noted that many of the risk scores have not changed, this is not reflective of management action or inaction. Risks will continue to be influenced by a number of factors including national impacts and operational environment changes. During each quarter risk owners routinely review the allocated scores along with further discussion by CMB.
15. During this quarter in addition to the review of individual risks, the connectivity of risks continues to be considered in relation to the Corporate Risk Register. CMB will continue to be mindful of the accumulation of risk. New risk causes may impact across several risks and in turn compound the overall risk position for the council in a negative way.
16. Full details of the updates for this quarter can be found in Appendix 4.

Director Level Risk Review

17. As part of this quarter's considerations, Corporate Directors reviewed the risk registers within their directorates to identify whether any risks currently considered at Director level should be escalated to the corporate risk level. The position was then discussed by CMB as a group to confirm the decisions.
18. As a result of these discussions the following was noted and agreed:
 - a) Corporate Directors will continue to review all risks rated High within their directorates. This currently equates to 39% of the total Director level risks.
 - b) An exercise will be undertaken to ensure all Director level risks have been reviewed within the required timeframes.

Key Assurance Risk Review

19. As part of the overall risk framework and to ensure risks are considered at all levels, CMB also considered those risks identified as part of the key assurance risk framework. This included the following risk registers:
 - Health and Safety and Fire Safety Board
 - Resilience Governance Board
20. At the time of the CMB review the Information Governance Board Risk Register was not updated. It is being updated now ready for the next review cycle.
21. CMB reviewed these risks and considered whether either individual risks or a board level risk needed to be included on the Corporate Risk Register. No risks were escalated from these registers during the quarter.

Dynamic Risk Review Process

22. Recognising the rapidly changing environment and the increasingly complex interaction between some of the corporate risks, a standard agenda item has been added to CMB to add a further layer to the risk review process.

23. This process allows for more dynamic consideration of the immediate responses required to some of the corporate risks, which will help the Corporate Risk Register to be considered, managed and communicated through the organisation.
24. The consideration of the risks in this way will also inform the regular quarterly reviews that continue to take place in a more timely manner, by flagging changes in risk profile ahead of the regular reviews with risk owners, which will continue to take place.
25. In support of the continuing development of the risk framework, the Corporate Strategy Delivery Board continues to complete reviews of risks as part of the standard agenda.

Risk Management Process and Development

26. As set out in paragraph 3., BCP Council has in place a new Risk Management Policy. It includes a new level of risk which will sit at the top of the risk framework and all lower level risks will be aligned to one or more of these Enterprise Risks.
27. As this is a new approach it will take some time to fully implement and it is recognised that the policy, the Enterprise Risks, the risk appetite and other areas may need adjustment or refinement over the next 12 months. CMB will approve any adjustments and these will be brought to the attention of this committee as part of the usual regular risk reporting process.
28. An initial limited workshop was held on 25 February 2026 to begin the refinement of the Enterprise Risks. A further workshop will now be held with CMB to agree the final position on Enterprise Risks. Following this, the work to align all lower level risks will begin.
29. Progress on this exercise will be reported to the next meeting of this committee.

Service Development

30. In addition to the reviews of corporate risks, the Risk Management team continues to be engaged in the refresh of director level risk registers. This includes engaging with services to understand their current risk arrangements, how these can be improved to deliver a proactive and dynamic risk management environment and how the Risk Management team can support them in this to deliver a consistent and embedded approach to risk management throughout the council.
31. As part of the role of the team, continuous “horizon scanning” is undertaken to identify issues that may give rise to risk for the council. When matters are identified, these are raised with the relevant Corporate Director/Director for review and consideration of any necessary action. Examples during this quarter include:
 - Routinely reviewing the outcomes of partial assurance internal audit reports to raise risk issues with the relevant service risk champion to ensure, if appropriate, they are suitably reflected and captured in the directorate risk register.
 - Circulating information from a risk management perspective on various topics.
 - Sharing training opportunities on areas of risk.

32. The new Risk App is now in use with Director Level Risk Registers being updated directly on the system.
33. The suite of dashboards and reports have been identified and will now be considered by ICT in terms of the further development phase which is now underway.
34. Further work on the Risk App will be identified in order to support the implementation of the enterprise level risks.

Summary of financial implications

35. Financial implications relevant to risks are detailed within the relevant risk registers.

Summary of legal implications

36. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

Summary of human resources implications

37. There are no direct human resources implications from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

38. There are no direct sustainability implications from this report.

Summary of public health implications

39. There are no direct Public Health implications from this report.

Summary of equality implications

40. There are no direct equality implications from this report.

Summary of risk assessment

41. The risk management implications are set out within the content of this report.

Background papers

Risk Management – Corporate Risk Register Update Report to the Audit and Governance Committee on 15 January 2026.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Summary of Risk Management Process
- Appendix 2 - BCP Council's Risk Matrix and Definitions
- Appendix 3 - Risk Dashboard
- Appendix 4 - Full Risk Details Including Summary
- Appendix 5 - Risk Hierarchy

BCP Council - Risk Management

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Identify Risks	Evaluate Risks	Treat Risks	Review Risks																																						
<p>Process to be integrated into council business as usual and considered by all business areas</p> <p>RISK is the effect of uncertainty on objectives. Risk is usually expressed in terms of causes, potential events, and their consequences.</p> <p>Risk management is the planned approach and should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those which threaten the achievement of our objectives • Those which go against our values • Those relating to the legal and regulatory frameworks we work within • Those relating to our own policy and internal control framework <p>Consider what could go wrong or what more could we achieve?</p>	<p>Combination of the impact and likelihood of an event and its consequences (Gross or Inherent risk)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th colspan="4">THREATS</th> </tr> <tr> <th rowspan="5">Likelihood</th> <th>Almost Certain (4) >90%</th> <td>4</td> <td>8</td> <td>12</td> <td>16</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Likely (3) 60-90%</th> <td>3</td> <td>6</td> <td>9</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Could Happen (2) 20-60%</th> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>6</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <th>Unlikely /Rarely (1) 0-20%</th> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>Low (1)</th> <th>Medium (2)</th> <th>High (3)</th> <th>Extreme (4)</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="2"></th> <th colspan="4">Impacts</th> </tr> </thead> </table> <p>Red – High Risks, immediate action</p> <p>Amber – Medium priority, review current controls</p> <p>Green – Low priority, limited action, continue to review</p>			THREATS				Likelihood	Almost Certain (4) >90%	4	8	12	16	Likely (3) 60-90%	3	6	9	12	Could Happen (2) 20-60%	2	4	6	8	Unlikely /Rarely (1) 0-20%	1	2	3	4		Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Extreme (4)			Impacts				<p>Consider each risk and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we reduce the likelihood? • Can we reduce the impact? <p>Risk Responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminate (stop the activity or remove a risk cause) • Transfer (pass specific loss risk ownership to another party) • Treat (contain the risk at an acceptable level by the application of controls) • Tolerate (accept the risk) <p>Consider the risk score after the risk responses have been considered.</p> <p>The revised combination of impact and likelihood and its consequences post current mitigations (Net or Residual risk)</p> <p>Devise contingencies and action plans to reduce the mitigated risks to an acceptable level.</p>	<p>Risk Registers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record all identified risks, risk owners, risk evaluation, risk treatment and risk action plans • Regular monitoring as part of business as usual <p>Council risk monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk registers reviewed in Directorates quarterly • Challenge process via Risk Team • Regular reporting to CMB <p>Council's Corporate Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular review by CMB • Quarterly review by Risk leads • Quarterly monitoring by Audit and Governance Committee
		THREATS																																							
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Risk Scoring Matrix and Impact and Likelihood Scoring Definitions

THREATS					
Likelihood	Almost Certain (4) >90%	4	8	12	16
	Likely (3) 60 - 90%	3	6	9	12
	Could Happen (2) 20 - 60%	2	4	6	8
	Unlikely/ Rarely (1) 0 - 20%	1	2	3	4
		Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)	Extreme (4)
	Impacts				

Please see below for an explanation of impact and likelihood scoring definitions.

Impact of Risk

Impact Scoring Guidance

Threat (Negative) Impacts Scores		
1	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Potential financial loss of less than £200k b) Minor injury c) Minor legal/regulatory consequence d) Minor impact outside single objective/local system e) Internal adverse publicity, minor reputational damage/ adverse publicity f) Minor service disruption g) Minimal service user complaints
2	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Potential financial loss of between £200k and £999,999 b) More serious injury c) Significant legal/ regulatory consequence d) Significant impact on objective/s, processes or systems e) Significant localised reputational damage f) Significant service disruption g) Multiple service user complaints
3	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Potential financial loss of between £1m and £1,999,999 b) Major disabling injury c) Substantial legal/ regulatory consequence d) Substantial impact on objective/s, processes or systems e) Prolonged adverse local and national media coverage f) Substantial service disruption g) A substantial number of service user complaints
4	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Potential financial loss of over £2m b) Fatality and/or multiple injuries c) Major legal/regulatory consequence d) Major impact on corporate level objective/s e) Major/severe reputational damage/ national adverse publicity f) Central government interest/ administration g) Loss of all critical services for a significant period of time

Likelihood of Risk

Likelihood Scoring Guidance

Threat (Negative) Likelihood Score		
1	Unlikely/ Rare	a) 0 - 20% chance of occurrence b) 1 in 20 year event c) May occur only in exceptional circumstances d) Has never or very rarely happened before
2	Could Happen	a) 20 - 60% chance of occurrence b) 1 in 10 year event c) Is unlikely to occur but could occur at some time/in some circumstances
3	Likely to Happen	a) 60 - 90% chance of occurrence b) 1 in 5 year event c) Will probably occur at some time/in most circumstances
4	Almost Certain	a) Over 90% chance of occurrence b) Occurs on an annual basis c) Is expected to occur in most circumstances

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Risk Ref	Risk Title	Risk Lead	Cabinet Member	Residual or Net Risk Scores				Direction of travel during Year
				Q01: 2025-	Q02: 2025-	Q03: 2025-	Q04: 2025-	
CR23	Risk CR23 - Potential implications of the Dedicated Schools Grant financial deficit	Chief Executive	Councillor Mike Cox	16	16	16	16	↔
CR27	Risk CR27 - We may fail to adequately address concerns around environmental impacts - cliff management/instability	Chief Operations Officer	Councillor Richard Herrett Councillor Andy Hadley	16	16	16	16	↔
CR04	Risk CR04 - We may suffer a loss or disruption to IT Systems and Networks from cyber attack	Director of IT and Programmes	Councillor Jeff Hanna	12	12	12	12	↔
CR09	Risk CR09 - We may fail to maintain a safe and balanced budget for the delivery of services, and managing the MTFP	Director of Finance	Councillor Mike Cox	12	12	12	12	↔
CR15	Risk CR15 - We may fail to have in place suitable talent attraction, retention and succession planning, staff wellbeing and support	Director of People and Culture	Councillor Jeff Hanna	12	12	12	12	↔
CR20	Risk CR20 - Potential of climate change to outstrip our capability to adapt	Director of Marketing, Comms & Policy	Councillor Andy Hadley	12	12	12	12	↔
CR18	Risk CR18 - We may fail to provide adequate customer interfaces	Director of Customer & Property Operations	Councillor Andy Martin	9	9	9	9	↔
CR26	Risk CR26 - Risks Associated with the availability of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)	Director of IT and Programmes	Councillor Jeff Hanna	9	9	9	9	↔
CR02	Risk CR02 - We may fail to achieve appropriate outcomes and quality of service for children and young people including potential inadequate safeguarding	Corporate Director for Children's Services	Councillor Richard Burton	12	8	8	8	↓
CR08	Risk CR08 - We may fail to run a fair and open election/referendum	Chief Executive	Councillor Jeff Hanna	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	New
CR21	Risk CR21 - Impact of global events causing pressure on BCP Council & increase in service requirements	Director of Housing & Public Protection	Councillor Kieron Wilson	6	6	6	6	↔
CR28	Risk CR28 - We may fail to adopt a Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Plan	Chief Operations Officer	Councillor Millie Earl	N/A	6	6	6	↔
CR16	Risk CR16 - Partnerships may not support delivery of the corporate strategy, objectives or priorities	Director of Marketing, Comms and Policy	Councillor Millie Earl	4	4	4	4	↔
CR25	Risk CR25 - We may be unable to effectively transform services to achieve efficiencies and improve service standards	Corporate Management Board Collective	Councillor Jeff Hanna	4	4	4	4	↔
CR24	Risk CR24 - We may fail to adequately address concerns around community safety	Director of Housing & Public Protection/Director of Health & Communities	Councillor Kieron Wilson Councillor Andy Hadley	2	2	2	2	↔

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Audit and Governance Committee – March 2026

Corporate Risk Register – Risk Table

Risk Ref	Risk Title	Net Risk Score	Target Risk Score	Risk Owner	Risk Status
CR27	We may fail to adequately address concerns around environmental impacts - cliff management/instability	16	12	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer	Corporate Risk
CR23	Potential implications of the Dedicated Schools Grant financial deficit	16	8	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive (Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Children's Services and Adam Richens, Director of Finance)	Corporate Risk
CR09	We may fail to maintain a safe and balanced budget for the delivery of services, and managing the MTFP	12	12	Adam Richens, Director of Finance	Corporate Risk
CR15	We may fail to have in place suitable talent attraction, retention and succession planning, staff wellbeing and support	12	12	Sarah Deane, Director of People and Culture	Corporate Risk
CR04	We may suffer a loss or disruption to IT Systems and Networks from cyber attack	12	9	Sarah Chamberlain, Director of IT and Programmes	Corporate Risk
CR20	Potential of climate change to outstrip our capability to adapt	12	8	Isla Reynolds, Director of Marketing, Comms and Policy	Corporate Risk
CR26	Risks associated with the availability of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)	9	6	Sarah Chamberlain, Director of IT and Programmes	Corporate Risk
CR18	We may fail to provide adequate customer interfaces	9	2	Matti Raudsepp, Director of Customer and Property Operations	Corporate Risk
CR02	We may fail to achieve appropriate outcomes and quality of service for children and young people including potential inadequate safeguarding	8	8	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Children's Services	Corporate Risk
CR08	We may fail to run a fair and open election/referendum	8	4	Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive	Corporate Risk
CR21	Impact of global events causing pressure on BCP Council & increase in service requirements	6	6	Kelly Deane, Director of Housing & Public Protection	Corporate Risk

Risk Ref	Risk Title	Net Risk Score	Target Risk Score	Risk Owner	Risk Status
CR28	We may fail to adopt a Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Plan	6	6	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer	Corporate Risk
CR25	We may be unable to effectively transform services to achieve efficiencies and improve service standards	4	4	Corporate Management Board Collective	Corporate Risk
CR16	Partnerships may not support delivery of the corporate strategy, objectives or priorities	4	2	Isla Reynolds, Director of Marketing, Comms and Policy	Corporate Risk
CR24	We may fail to adequately address concerns around community safety	2	2	Kelly Deane, Director of Housing & Public Protection/Rob Carroll, Director of Public Health & Communities	Corporate Risk
CR01	Failure to respond to the needs arising from a changing demography.	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q4 2022
CR03	Failure to ensure adequate Information Governance – now Key Assurance – Information governance Board Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q2 2020
CR05	Failure to plan effectively for EU Transition	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk Removed Q2 2020
CR06	Failure to adequately respond to an incident involving the activation of the emergency plan– now Key Assurance – Resilience Governance Board Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk Removed Q2 2020
CR07	Failure to provide adequate services as a result of an incident requiring a business continuity response– now Key Assurance – Resilience Governance Board	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk Removed Q2 2020
CR10	Failure to deliver effective health and safety to protect staff, councillors including the public	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q3 2020
CR11	Ability of the council to function and operate efficiently in the delivery of single services across the area of BCP	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q1 2023

Risk Ref	Risk Title	Net Risk Score	Target Risk Score	Risk Owner	Risk Status
CR12	Failure to achieve appropriate outcomes and quality of service for young people	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q4 2023
CR13	Failure to deliver the transformation programme	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q4 2023
CR14	Continuity of Public Health arrangements for health protection	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q3 2023
CR17	Risk to Reputation of Place & Council if summer arrangements are not managed	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk Removed Q3 2022
CR19	We may fail to determine planning applications within statutory timescales, or within agreed extensions of time (EOT)	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk Removed Q1 2025
CR22	Failure of local care market to meet increasing demand	N/A	N/A	N/A	Risk removed Q4 2023




AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

March 2026

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER UPDATE Q4 – 2025/26

1.1 Mitigation actions and significant changes this quarter are detailed below.

1.2 The table below is a key to arrow directions in relation to individual risk scoring.

RISK DIRECTION OF TRAVEL STATUS	
	Risk impact or likelihood has <u>increased</u> since last review.
	Risk impact or likelihood has <u>decreased</u> since last review.
	There is <u>no change</u> to the risk impact or likelihood

Risk CR27 – We may fail to adequately address concerns around environmental impacts – cliff management/instability

Risk Owner – Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Richard Herrett, Cabinet Member for Destination, Leisure and Commercial Operations, Councillor Andy Hadley, Cabinet Member for Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

- Our communities have pride in our streets, neighbourhoods and public spaces
- Climate change is tackled through sustainable policies and practice
- Using data, insights and feedback to shape services and solutions

Risk Information

This risk has been created to capture emerging risks in relation to environmental impacts. The first risk to be included under this group is that of cliff instability and the risk will primarily reflect this initially. The risk will continue to develop to include further areas over the next several months.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

In respect of cliff stability, the cause is linked to natural elements of cliff movement as well as groundwater penetrating the cliff face. Increased risk is through lack of maintenance of existing specialist drainage infrastructure over the last couple of decades; no base budgeted funding to look after existing cliff drainage infrastructure and undertake the remedial works required.

Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):



Failure of Seafront assets such as retaining walls and access pathways.
 Risk of damage to property and inability to operate services – both have an asset and financial risk.
 Potential for larger failures such as the East Cliff Lift slip in 2016, also posing risk to life.

Financial impact linked to cost of work associated with works to stabilise the cliffs and respond to slips as well as lost income from the inability to operate commercial services when impacted directly by slips or within a compound exclusion area.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Environmental, Physical, Economic, Political, Social, Technological, Legislative, Customer, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



A Cliff Management Strategy (CMS) is being developed by the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Team (FCERM) to inform engineering investment needs. A Specialist Geotechnical Engineer has been employed to lead on strategy delivery and provide future technical advice. The Cliff Management Working Group has been set up to table and discuss ongoing risks and actions.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	4	16		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		April 2026
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Cliff asset database developed indicating risk levels for each section of cliff. This is a dynamic document and to be updated regularly in line with inspections.	Completed
Action 2:	CMS to demonstrate funding needs for immediate priority issues and future likely needs.	Completed - Priority funding requirements identified for both maintenance and capital works over the next 20 years
Action 3:	Maintenance regime to be identified - Maintenance regime identified as part of the CMS. Maintenance requirements identified by ongoing inspections are discussed each quarter at the Cliff Management Working Group and are agreed in line with what funding is available.	Complete
Action 4:	Long term maintenance regime to be funded - Current funding is tackling the very top priorities of a long list. Further funding needs to be secured to address ongoing needs identified in Action 2.	Ongoing
Action 5:	Monitoring of cliffs via visual inspection as well as GPS and drone technology, in line with CMS recommendations.	Ongoing
Action 6:	Delivery of the CMS.	April 2026

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	4	3	12		




Quarter Update

Cabinet and Council approved the allocation of £1.446m towards cliff stability works, a review of the required areas of spend of this funding across the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years has been agreed and work is moving forward to deliver this. Elements of the spend are to undertake assessments and develop future mitigations strategies to assist in cliff stabilization. This will require additional funding.

CMS is due for completion 31 March 2026. It will contain live documents including: a new cliff asset management database that incorporates a dynamic risk register, a new cliff management manual that sets out how every aspect of cliff management is delivered across all BCP Council services as an internal operational guide, and new public facing guide for residents, home-owners and other public stakeholders with an interest in how the cliffs are managed.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		
Net Score		
Target Score		Once works have been carried out to investigate and complete maintenance on sand drains, the likelihood of impacts should be slightly reduced although it should be noted that due to the nature of the cliffs and the natural environment a risk remains of slips

Risk CR23 – Potential implications of the Dedicated Schools Grant financial deficit

Risk Owner – Aidian Dunn, Chief Executive (Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Children's Services and Adam Richens, Director of Finance)

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Mike Cox, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Finance

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Using our resources sustainably to support our ambitions

Risk Information

In respect of 2024/25 the July 2025 Financial Outturn report to Cabinet set out that the council spent £111.8m on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) revenue expenditure, which was **£49.8m** more than the £62m Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) grant allocation and £5.2m more than the quarter three forecast.

In respect of 2025/26 the February 2025 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update report set out that the council was originally forecasting revenue spending of £123.2m on SEND services. This was **£57.5m** more than the £65.7m revenue grant provided by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of the DSG, High Needs Block allocation.

The 2025/26 quarter three budget monitoring report presented to Cabinet on 4 February 2026 set out that the deficit in 2025/26 is now **£70.3m** once funding adjustments and prior year adjustments are considered.

This means the accumulating DSG deficit which was **£113.3m** on the 31 March 2025 is now forecast to be **£183.6m** on the 31 March 2026.

Government have put in place a Statutory Instrument (SI) which states the council **cannot** contribute to the deficit, **cannot** hold a reserve to act as a counterweight and has been required to move the deficit to an **unusable reserve** where it will **sit as though it did not exist** within the council's accounts or balance sheet. In June 2025 the government set out plans, as part of a consultation of the Fair Funding Formula, to extend the period covered by this SI to 31 March 2028.

2025/26 was a watershed moment, it is the first time the council started a financial year with an accumulated deficit on its DSG in excess of the total amount of its reserves and balances. In other words, it was the first time the council started a financial year in a technically insolvent position. The total reserves and balances of the council were **£83m** as of 31 March 2025.

In setting the budget for 2025/26 the council also had to address the fact that it had run out of headroom to be able to cashflow the accumulating DSG deficit. Options explored included the possibility of the council entering the government Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) programme and seeking a capitalization direction which would be formal permission to borrow to fund the £57.5m original deficit for 2025/26. This approach could have led to government intervention, for example a further Best Value Notice. Eventually, the government recommended that we temporarily borrow the £57.5m as part of our Treasury Management activity. This is on the basis that councils can exceed their agreed borrowing limits provided it is seen as just being temporary and is associated with the ebb and flow of Treasury Management activity. The government advocated this approach on the basis that they committed to putting forward in 2025 a plan to return the national SEND system to financial sustainability.

The risks posed by this annual imbalance between revenue expenditure and government funding for the SEND service, presents an existential threat to the financial viability and sustainability of the council and one which government promised to address in 2025.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

Insufficient grant funding is provided to the council by the government with insufficient recognition of growing demand and high costs of provision.



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

Financial sustainability of the council, including insufficient cash flow to meet normal service expenditure with further risk of illegality from the need to borrow to meet revenue expenditure to maintain appropriate levels of statutory services.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

- **Economic** – inability to meet financial commitments
- **Legal** - breach of regulations that prohibit borrowing for revenue expenditure
- **Resources** – impact on other areas of the council (capital and revenue) as expenditure is limited to preserve cashflow.
- **Reputation** – lack of confidence in the ability of the council to manage its financial affairs as indicated by the issue of a S114 notice (effective bankruptcy).

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions

Cabinet Report: December 2024: Assessing the serious cashflow issue caused by ever-increasing demand and cost outstripping High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant government funding. Set out not just the background and context to the issue but all the activity including that of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Leader and Local MPs in trying to draw attention to and resolve the issue.

Council Report: February 2025: Set out the conclusion and approach to be taken in drawing the 2025/26 Budget. This included the acknowledgement of both the External Auditor and CIPFA that temporary borrowing via Treasury Management powers was a pragmatic but not sustainable outcome.

14 February 2025: CIPFA published paper: Reforming SEND finance: meeting need in a sustainable system.

Cabinet Report: May 2025: MTFP Update report. Reminded members of the risk and included a brief update on messaging from government.

Cabinet Report: July 2025: MTFP Update. Included letters from the Leader to the Secretary of State and Director of Finance to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) setting out the ongoing concerns about the SEND deficit.

Cabinet Report: October 2025: MTFP Update. Provided details of a conversation with representatives of MHCLG further to the letter included in the July report.

Cabinet Report: December 2025: DSG High Needs Expenditure Forecast 2025/26. Seeking Council approval for a £14.3m in-year increase in the originally approved overspend and

requests the Corporate Director of Children's Services implement deficit management measures.

Cabinet Report: December 2025: MTFP Update. Provided an update based on:

- a) 20 November 2025 Local Government Policy Statement. This included the statement that Government recognises local authorities are continuing to face significant pressure from the impact of DSG deficits on their accounts and that these authorities will need continued support during the transition to a reformed SEND system. This will include working with local authorities to manage their SEND system and deficits. The statement referenced that the government would set out further details on its plans to support local authorities with historic and accruing deficits in the provisional 2026/27 local government finance settlement.
- b) 26 November 2025: National Autumn Budget. This sets out that the government are proposing that they will take over the responsibility for day-to-day funding of SEND from 1 April 2028 onwards, which is when the current statutory override ends. The current accumulated deficit and any further increase in the deficit between now and the 31 March 2028 will be retained by BCP Council with any support for these elements announced as part of the December 2025 provisional local government finance settlement for 2026/27.

Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27: Conditions for accessing any support with historic and accruing deficits would be provided later in the settlement process with any such support linked to the submission and quality of a Local SEND Reform Plan to be completed within the two months after the release of the school's white paper early in 2026 and based on five principles:



- **Early.** Children should receive the support they need as soon as possible. Intervening upstream, including earlier in children's lives when this can have most impact, will start to break the cycle of needs going unmet and getting worse.
- **Local.** Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a school or college close to their home, alongside their peers, rather than travelling long distances from their family and community. Special schools should continue to play a vital role supporting those with the most complex needs.
- **Fair.** Every school education setting should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs, including as they change over time, without parents having to fight to get support for their children. Where specialist provision is needed for children and young people in mainstream, special or alternative provision, we will ensure it is there, with clear legal requirements and safeguards for children and parents.
- **Effective.** Reforms should be grounded in evidence, ensuring all education settings know where to go to find effective practice that has excellent long-term outcomes for children and young people.
- **Shared.** Education, health and care services should work in partnership with local government, families, teachers, experts and representative bodies to deliver better experiences and outcomes for all our children and young people.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
<p>Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking, but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.</p>	<p>Not possible to eliminate the funding gap through reduced expenditure as there are statutory requirements. Strategy is to secure additional DSG grant.</p>
<p>Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.</p>	<p>Not possible - the solution must be additional funding or a completely redesigned system.</p>
<p>Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.</p>	<p>The service are implementing a management plan to build and address sufficiency as appropriate.</p>
<p>Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases, the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.</p>	<p>No – it cannot be tolerated, and government have to deliver a solution.</p>

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	4	16		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Continue to reflect on good practice examples of how any annual deficit can be kept to a minimum.	Ongoing
Action 2:	Monitor activity and statements delivered by the government	Ongoing
Action 3:	Local SEND Reform Plan	May 2026
Action 4:		

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	4	2	8		

Quarter Update

On the 9 February 2026 government announced the final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 which was the latest date the settlement has been received since 2017/18. This included the following:

Support for the council’s historic and accruing DSG deficits in waves. The first phase of which has been designed to address historic deficits and will take the form of a new High Needs Stability Grant to cover 90% of the deficit as of the 31 March 2026. This grant is not guaranteed and will be subject to BCP Council submitting and securing the DfE approval of a Local SEND Reform Plan. If agreement is reached the grant will be paid during the autumn of 2026 and will need to be held as a grant received in advance within reserves and applied to the residual balance on the 31 March 2028.

Government also acknowledged that the SEND reform plans will take time to fully embed and local authorities will need further support. For deficits that arise in 2026/27 and 2027/28, it was highlighted that local authorities can expect that government will continue to take a similarly appropriate and proportionate approach to such support, although it was recognised that this support would not be **unlimited**.

In respect of the statutory override, which allows the council to ignore the DSG deficit, within its statutory accounts, it was confirmed that this will cease on the 31 March 2028. **The advice to local authorities from government is that they need to plan to be able to meet the cost of**

the residual deficit from their own resources in 2028/29 including setting aside appropriate reserves in the preceding years. If the council also receives 90% of its forecast accruing DSG deficits in 2026/27 and 2027/28 then the council will need reserve funding of £37.9m in 2028/29 to specifically cover the residual deficit.

The impact of the potential support for historic accumulated deficit as of 31 March 2026 is assumed to be a contribution of **£165.24m** (£183.6m * 90%) and impacts of the previously assumed deficits as follows:




	Previous Estimate	Latest Estimate
31 March 2025	£113.3m (Actual)	£113.3m (Actual)
31 March 2026	£183.6m	£183.6m
31 March 2027	£279.3m	£114.1m
31 March 2028	£379.3m	£214.1m

Although this contribution is welcome and positive the council will still be technically insolvent as these net deficits will still be greater than the council's forecast reserves. Based on the sentiment in the final 2026/27 local government finance settlement the council would anticipate receiving a further £176.13m contribution in 2028/29 towards the deficits of £95.7m in 2026/27 and £100m in 2027/28. It is assumed that ultimately the council will be required to manage from its own funds £37.93m which is 10% of the previously assumed 31 March 2028 deficit. Council is continuing with the strategy of delivering a pipeline of capital receipts from the disposals of surplus council assets as a means of mitigating, insofar as is possible, the likely minimum of £38m now needed from local funds by 2028/29.

An additional consequence of the payment is it reduces the amount of borrowing and subsequent interest that the council will need to incur to finance the DSG deficit. As a matter of prudence, it has been assumed that this payment will be made towards the end of the 2026/27 financial year and therefore the impact, estimated at £6.6m per annum, will not materially impact before the 2027/28 financial year. From a risk perspective it should be emphasised that the £165.24m High Needs Stability Grant is not guaranteed and is subject to the agreement of a Local SEND reform Plan with DfE.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		
Net Score		
Target Score		

Risk CR09 – We may fail to maintain a safe and balanced budget for the delivery of services, and managing the MTFP

Risk Owner – Adam Richens, Director of Finance

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Mike Cox, Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice-Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Finance

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Using our resources sustainably to support our ambitions

Risk Information

The council has a legal responsibility to ensure it can balance its budget. As part of this framework, it is not permitted to have negative reserves.

Council approved its **2024/25** Budget at Council on 20 February 2024, based on the following main aspects:

- 4.99% Council Tax increase (2.99% basic and 2% Social Care Precept) in line with the maximum threshold for upper tier authorities
- £38m of savings, efficiencies, increases to fees and charges, and service reductions of which £13.5m is in relation to transformation
- Provision of £7.5m in extra resources to cover demand and inflationary pressures, including any pay changes, in the council's highest priority area, Children's Services
- Provision of £15.2m in extra resources to cover demand and inflationary pressures, including any pay changes, to the most vulnerable members of our community via investment in Wellbeing Services be that adult social care or housing services
- Elimination of the £30m structural deficit/funding gap created by using £30m of reserves to balance the 2023/24 budget.

The Financial Outturn position as set out in a July 2025 Cabinet report provides the evidence that the council delivered services in 2024/25 within the parameters of the approved General Fund Budget.

Council approved its **2025/26** Budget at Council on 11 February 2025, based on the following main aspects:

- 4.99% Council Tax increase (2.99% basic and 2% Social Care Precept) in line with the maximum threshold for upper tier authorities
- £7.8m of savings, efficiencies, increases to fees and charges, and service reductions of which £1.7m is in relation to transformation
- Provision of £6.5m in extra resources to cover demand and inflationary pressures in the council's highest priority area, Children's Services
- Provision of £14.4m in extra resources to cover demand and inflationary pressures in the most vulnerable members of our community via investment in Wellbeing Services be that adult social care or housing services
- Temporary borrowing of £57.5m to finance the difference in 2025/26 between the £122m revenue expenditure on Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services and the £64.5m Department for Education (DfE) grant allocation as part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block allocation.

Council on the 11 February 2025 were presented with a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period 2026/27 and 2027/28. Notably there is a £4.9m funding gap in **2026/27** which is then recovered in 2027/28.

Cabinet on the 13 May 2025, 16 July 2025, 29 October 2025, and the 17 December 2025 were provided with updates on the MTFP which tends to ebb and flow through to formal Budget Council in February each year. This included updates on the impact of the government's new funding formula, the November 2025 provisional local government policy statement and the Chancellor's Autumn Budget. As per the December 2025 MTFP Update report, the funding gap for **2026/27** had increased to £8.9m.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

- Expenditure of the authority is higher than all available sources of income.



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

- S151 Officer would be required to issue a formal s114 report.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

- Customer/Citizen, Economic, Political, Reputational

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



- Microsoft Dynamics Enterprise Resources System implemented in April 2023 to improve the provision of financial management information underpinned by the principle of self-service. Therefore, real time budget monitoring information made available to budget holders.
- Regular meetings between portfolio holders and senior officers in respect of the financial strategy and the budget position.
- Regular MTFP update reports to Cabinet.
- Quarterly budget monitoring reports to Cabinet including progress against budget savings.
- Bi-weekly Corporate Management Board/Cabinet meetings.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the ‘whole’ risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	3	12		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Cabinet report: 2025/26 Financial Outturn	July 2026

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	4	3	12		

Quarter update

Council approved its legally balanced **2026/27** Budget at Council on 24 February 2026, based on the following main aspects.

6.74% Council Tax increase (4.74% basic and 2% Social Care Precept). This included an additional 1.75% flexibility given to BCP Council following a requested to be allowed, in support of the challenges caused by the historic and accruing DSG deficits, to increase the amount to cover the amount a previous Administration did not charge over the two-year period 2021/22 and 2022/23.

£14m of savings, efficiencies, service reductions, and additional fees and charges across services including £4.4m which has been established as transformation and invest-to-save related.




£22m planned increase in council spending across all service areas excluding pay-related costs, this includes:

- £11.5m (6.5% increase) to cover demand and inflationary cost pressures in wellbeing services including adult social care and homelessness services.
- £9.2m (8.2% increase) to cover demand and inflationary cost pressures in children’s services.
- 2.8% assumed pay award for 2026/27.
- Continuation of the utilisation of the one-off business rates collection fund surplus as per the 2024/25 approved budget. In 2025/26 these resources are being used to continue to facilitate the delivery of council regeneration activity and the externalisation of the Russell Cotes Museum ambitions, as well as assisting with the one-off costs associated with Pay and Reward and to fund the in-year 2025/26 quarter three forecast £4.573m overspend. Additional £6.829m of resources are also being applied to support the 2026/27 budget.

- Temporary borrowing of £95.7m to finance the 2026/27 excess SEND High Needs DSG revenue expenditure above the government grant being made available. This is also based on previous assurance from government that the council can exceed its borrowing thresholds temporarily based on their commitment to return the SEND system to financial sustainability.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		
Net Score		
Target Score		

Risk CR15 – We may fail to have in place suitable talent attraction, retention and succession planning, staff wellbeing and support

Risk Owner – Sarah Deane, Director of People and Culture

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Jeff Hanna, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Resources and Governance

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Developing a passionate, proud, valued and diverse workforce

Risk Information

The People Strategy was launched in December 2023 covering the period from 2024 to 2027. The People Strategy is closely aligned to the corporate vision and ambitions, and the previous transformation agenda. There are twelve key workstreams in the People Strategy together with a three-year detailed implementation plan. BCP Council needs to have the right staff, at the right time, in the right roles to deliver front line and corporate services effectively and efficiently.

Key outcomes:

- single pay structure and terms and conditions to ensure fair and equal pay
- high performance culture
- improved workforce planning
- improved talent attraction and retention
- improved wellbeing and absence rates
- improved leadership development
- full automation of HR systems to support efficiencies and new ways of working.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

Pay and Reward has created significant risks to the delivery of the overall objectives within our People Strategy but following Council approval on 22 July 2025 and the introduction of Pay and Reward on 1 December 2025, the threat of industrial action has been removed and the potential for significant numbers of equal pay claims has now greatly reduced. There do remain some risks to the organisation, however, as follows:

Potential for claims to arise

It is still the case, and has been the experience of others, that the introduction of a new job evaluation scheme and pay structure could bring the potential for a range of employment claims and challenges to grading and role assessment. We have built appropriate appeals mechanisms, involving trades union colleagues, into the agreement.

Risk of increased levels of turnover

The implementation of Pay and Reward now gives clarity to our colleagues on pay and terms and conditions. It is acknowledged, however, that there are colleagues who still remain dissatisfied with the outcome and these changes will present challenges and anxiety. Support will be provided to those who wish to access it, but others may choose to seek alternative employment, and it is possible that our turnover levels may be slightly higher than normal as we move beyond implementation and into the period of pay protection for those colleagues seeing a reduction in pay.

Financial risk - Incremental drift

The Medium Term Financial Plan and corporate resources provided for the cost of Pay and Reward, but do not include additional exposure by the authority to annual incremental drift. Services have been required to manage this cost historically within their base budget allocation and will continue to do so.

However, it should be highlighted that this cost is estimated to have increased significantly due to the additional head room in the final enhanced offer. For 1 April 2026, this cost is estimated to now amount to circa £4.0m for 2026/27 and can be compared to an annual cost of around £1.5m under the current arrangements. This cost will be mitigated by various issues including turnover, take-up of colleague benefits (eg salary sacrifice schemes) and performance. There will then be further similar exposure in future years which the enhanced offer has increased due to the additional headroom on grades.

Risk to viability of services

The increases in base salary costs, including the additional incremental drift and changes to terms and conditions, may challenge the viability of numerous services including those that are expected to achieve full cost recovery and those covered by fees and charges where the fee is based on the level acceptable to the market. It will also reduce the amount of grant funding available for non-salary cost expenditure.

Appeals

The numbers of colleagues wishing to appeal their role profile mapping is now known. Successful appeal outcomes will mean greater financial impacts on services and could ultimately impact further on the viability of services and balancing the budget.

Attracting new talent

Recruitment literature and job information will provide certainty to prospective colleagues, and it is hoped that our improved offer and new colleague benefits will significantly support our employer value proposition, encouraging a wider range of applications for our vacancies and reducing our need to appoint agency cover for vacant posts.

National skills shortage

As well as the Pay and Reward impact, there remains a national shortage of skills which means that there are still significant recruitment difficulties in some areas of the council. The council relies heavily on agency workers to fill hard-to-recruit business critical roles, particularly in frontline services, which affects our ability to serve residents effectively. Agreement of the new Pay and Reward offer will help this situation but will probably not solve it completely.

Other People Strategy delivery

The People and Culture team have prioritized the delivery and implementation of the Pay and Reward programme which is running concurrently with the implementation of a new payroll solution. This work has been huge and has meant other work in progressing deliverables aligned to our People and Culture Strategy have fallen behind schedule.



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

The developments in Pay and Reward have created more certainty for our colleagues and for the majority will be seen as a positive step forward but it is acknowledged that the situation will also bring concern and anxiety for some who will see a reduction in their pay. It is anticipated that the ongoing process of implementation leading on to appeals will continue to destabilise the workforce for a period of time. During this time there will be an increased risk of grievances, and higher turnover with resultant increase in recruitment costs, low morale and employee engagement in specific areas, together with a negative impact on employees' wellbeing and financial situations. This could mean that some service delivery may be affected.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Resource, Legal, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



- The threat of immediate industrial action has been removed since achieving a vote to accept the offer from both recognised trade unions
- Support for colleagues impacted negatively by Pay and Reward is in place
- Services have been working through the financial impact that Pay and Reward will have on their budgets to better understand mitigation strategies
- Potential sources of mitigation for budgetary pressures include national insurance savings delivered from new benefits such as the salary sacrifice additional pension fund voluntary contributions and other salary sacrifice schemes and reduced costs from any current market supplements not required or required at a lower level.
- Services continue to work with People and Culture to undertake risk assessment of retention issues in relation to Pay and Reward and look to put mitigation options in place.
- Change and wellbeing training sessions have been delivered together with signposting to relevant toolkits and means of support.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	✓
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	✓

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	3	12		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Implementation of Pay and Reward	Complete 1 Dec 2025
Action 2:	Completion of role profile appeals	30 Apr 2026
Action 3:	People Strategy Implementation Plan	2027
Action 4:		
Action 5:		
Action 6:		

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	4	3	12		

Quarter Update

Pay and Reward was implemented on 1 December 2025. Nearly 1000 questions were managed by the People and Culture team and the first payroll went smoothly. The appeals window has now closed. 188 appeals have been received and panels will commence from 17 February 2026 onwards. This is expected to take several months to conclude, and once final pay outcomes are settled and advised, the potential for claims could increase.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score	↔	We have only recently implemented Pay and Reward and appeals have not yet been heard. It is expected that any claims coming forward might do so after the appeals process has completed
Net Score	↔	We have only recently implemented Pay and Reward, and appeals have not yet been heard. It is expected that any claims coming forward might do so after the appeals process has completed
Target Score	↔	We have only recently implemented Pay and Reward and appeals have not yet been heard. It is expected that any claims coming forward might do so after the appeals process has completed.

Risk CR04 – We may suffer a loss or disruption to IT Systems and Networks from cyber attack

Risk Owner – Sarah Chamberlain, Director of IT and Programmes

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Jeff Hanna, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Resources and Governance

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Working together everyone feels safe and secure

Risk Information

BCP Council relies heavily on digital technology and online capability, including in the delivery of essential and public-facing services.

Disruption can come in many forms (some described below), both deliberate through acts of cyber-crime, or accidental through loss of hardware or infrastructure. Both can cause immense disruption to the council by denying staff and public access to key services. Even traditional face-to-face services can be impacted by a loss of IT systems as many back-office functions rely entirely on the availability of computers and data.

Nationally, the threat of cyber-attack continues to remain high on the UK.GOV National Risk Register, featuring prominently across the register with the potential for disruption to national infrastructure, finance, telecommunications, transport and social care systems. Cyber is ranked the number one surveyed risk by the Business Continuity Institute in 2025.

There continues to be huge opportunities and benefits for the council by continuing to actively leverage technology in support of continuous improvement and driving service efficiencies. However, our vulnerabilities have become greater as we increasingly rely on cyberspace to deliver council services.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

Some of the highest risk causes include:

Phishing attacks: These attacks use social engineering tactics to trick individuals into revealing sensitive information, clicking on malicious links or trying to defraud the council of money. These often lead to further breaches by allowing the attacker to gain access to the council's systems and data.

Ransomware attacks: These attacks involve encrypting the council's data and demanding payment in exchange for the decryption key.

Insider threats: These threats can come from employees, contractors, or other individuals with access to the council's systems and data.

Supply chain attacks: These attack target third-party vendors or suppliers to gain access to the council's systems and data.

Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

A loss or disruption to IT systems, specifically those caused by cyber-attacks, can incapacitate essential networks, for example, by encrypting or destroying data on which vital services depend. Such attacks could cause a variety of real-world harm if services such as Social Care, Housing or Place (Highways etc) are impacted.



Financial loss is the most common impact through direct loss of funds, recovery costs and Information Commissioner's Office fines. There are also reputational impacts.

Public confidence may be affected if the council is not able to adequately protect its IT systems and networks against loss or disruption, whether caused accidentally or intentionally.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Technological, Customer/Citizen, Economic, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions

IT and Programmes have in place robust mitigations to assist in the management of this risk, however this is still considered a “when, not if” event and the risk will never be totally mitigated. Continued focus on end-user training as it is ALL staff and councillors who provide the best and last line of defence against cyber-attacks. IT Security Course Completion Rates continue to show an upward trend in most areas of the council.



IT Security Course completion is now actively tracked by managers as part of annual performance reviews under our new framework, and as such we are expecting to see this upward trend continue.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	No
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the ‘whole’ risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	Partial – via contractual arrangements
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	Yes – a significant number of controls are in place to mitigate the risk.
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	Given the persistent and evolving nature of cyber threats and BCP Council’s increasing reliance on digital systems, it is both pragmatic and necessary to accept a level of residual risk.

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	3	12		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		Ongoing
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Training and increase user awareness of risks: ITSEC teams continue to deploy monthly cyber awareness training to all staff digitally.	Ongoing
Action 2:	Increased cyber detection and response tooling: Annually, IT and Programmes undertake an exercise to bid for capital or additional revenue funding to improve or maintain its IT infrastructure and cyber security posture.	Ongoing

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	3	3	9		

Quarter Update

During this quarter the council delivered a planned corporate cyber preparation exercise, facilitated by the IT and Emergency Planning teams and supported by Southwest Regional Cyber Crime Unit.

The exercise brought together representatives from multiple services to practice the council's response to a simulated cyber incident and to strengthen organisational readiness.




The session focused on improving coordination, communication and decision-making during a major disruption and allowed teams to test existing continuity plans in a safe, controlled environment.

A follow-up debrief session has been scheduled by Emergency Planning colleagues, with feedback collated from participants to help refine incident response arrangements and ensure that learning from the exercise is captured and acted upon. This work will support the ongoing improvement of the council's resilience measures and reinforce our ability to respond effectively to cyber-related emergencies.

IT teams continue to monitor national threat intelligence closely and adjust our controls, training and resilience measures in line with emerging risks to ensure we remain protected against the evolving threat environment.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		Cyber threat levels have not diminished or increased substantially
Net Score		Cyber threat levels have not diminished or increased substantially
Target Score		Cyber threat levels have not diminished or increased substantially

Risk CR20 – Potential of climate change to outstrip our capability to adapt

Risk Owner – Isla Reynolds, Director of Marketing, Comms and Policy

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Andy Hadley, Cabinet Member for Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

- Climate change is tackled through sustainable policies and practice
- Using data, insights and feedback to shape services and solutions

Risk Information

The International Panel on Climate Change's 5th report has robustly concluded that climate change is unequivocally real and caused by human activity such as the burning of fossil fuels and destruction of habitats releasing greenhouse gases at unprecedented levels and limiting the earth's ability to reabsorb them.

The UK Government has committed to achieving 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and a challenge of this scale will require transformative change to the UK economy. BCP Council has declared a climate and ecological emergency committing the council and region to decarbonising the economy and society by 2030 and 2045 respectively (the latter having been agreed by Cabinet on 6 March 2024).

There are a number of departments across BCP Council that are central to the response to climate change. However, the all-encompassing nature of achieving net zero means that all council departments and arms-length bodies, have a role to play. To be more resilient to the threat posed by climate change, in addition to meeting the challenges of achieving net zero, it is vital that all of BCP Council and its organisations effectively manage climate change risks.

Climate change risks should not be considered in isolation and should be clearly integrated into the strategy of an organisation. It is vital for organisations to recognise that the potential impacts of climate change are not only to do with the physical effects on people and the environment, but also to do with the effects of the transition to a changing climate and the adaptation and mitigation work involved. Similarly, the impacts of climate change should not only be considered as long-term risks.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

Floods, sea level rise and coastal change, changes in temperature and rainfall.



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

Floods will have a significant impact on infrastructure causing damage to buildings and wide-scale disruption to service delivery; sea level rise and coastal change will pose risks to certain communities and organisations; and changes in temperature and rainfall will place additional pressures on infrastructure. Physical risks can also lead to indirect economic and social impacts through supply chain disruptions, subsequent impacts from infrastructure damage (for example, lack of transport, communication, manufacturing) or market shifts (such as increases in insurance premiums, changes in the need for government support, consumer attitudinal and expectation changes).

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Citizen, Social, Environmental, Economic, Physical, Resource, Political, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions

Physical risk mitigations in place:

The most immediate risk to the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area comes from flooding and coastal erosion. As a result, most of the council’s adaptation resources have been dedicated to addressing these.

The Flooding and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) team have been involved in joint authoring of draft policies relating to flood risk, coastal change risk and Sustainable Urban Drainage to support Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole’s development agenda for the next 15 years. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) is also in preparation, which includes a new assessment for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole’s open coast to establish the risk from wave action. A new Christchurch Bay and Harbour FCERM Strategy is in preparation for managing flood and coastal erosion risks for the next 100 years in a sustainable way from Hengistbury Head to Hurst Spit, as is a new integrated cliff management strategy for all the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area sea cliffs and chines. The team is also preparing a new beach management plan that will draw together historic information on how beaches between Sandbanks and Hengistbury Head have been managed, to create a single reference for how the beach is managed to ensure it provides its vital coast protection function.

Meanwhile, work is continuing to tackle the causes of climate change, including decarbonising both the Council’s estate (by 2030) and working with partners to reach net zero by 2045. This includes energy efficiency and sustainable generation as well as encouraging active travel and supporting our greenspaces. Full details of the targets and progress against them can be found on the Climate dashboard and in the Annual Climate Reports. The Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) launched in October 2025 also sets out the activity needed to reach these targets. The challenge will be the resource needed to deliver these changes at the pace required.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the ‘whole’ risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place and flooding and coastal erosion management measures in place as described above.

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	3	12		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score expected completion date and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and when they are each individually due to be completed.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Sustainability Officer to prepare climate change vulnerability data to aid adaptation planning/awareness. The vulnerability tool was created in October.	October 2025 Complete
Action 2:	Poole Bridge to Hunger Hill is the last remaining undefended waterfront in the town centre, with a high risk of tidal flooding, increasing significantly over the next century due to climate change and sea level rise. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to contribute to a permanent flood defence along 1.5 km of the eastern side of Holes Bay is to be considered by Cabinet in June 2025.	June 2025 Complete - £7.3m CIL allocated to the scheme

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place




Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	4	2	8		

Quarter Update

The Local Area Energy Plan (launched in October 2025) sets out the activity needed to reach these targets. The Annual Climate Report (draft published ahead of Environment and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 February 2026) charts the progress made against net zero targets in 2024/5.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		This is a long-term risk with few short-term solutions or mitigations. Adaptations take time and efforts to reach net-zero are also long-term actions. Recent flooding in Christchurch and across Dorset, alongside the wildfires in Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset last year demonstrate that this is a real and active risk.
Net Score		Mitigations remain the same.
Target Score		The LAEP sets out what can be done to reduce the causes of climate change in our area. Our FCERM team continue to monitor and address flooding issues where possible.

Risk CR26 – Risks associated with the availability of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Risk Owner – Sarah Chamberlain, Director of IT and Programmes

Cabinet Member – Councillor Jeff Hanna, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Resources and Governance

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

- Using data, insights and feedback to shape services and solutions
- Intervening as early as possible to improve outcomes
- Working closely with partners, removing barriers and empowering others
- Creating an environment for innovation, learning and leadership

Risk Information

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a way of using computers to replicate human intelligence - Generative AI (GenAI) is one of many forms of AI.

GenAI produces texts, images and other content from people telling the model what to do (sometimes referred to as 'prompting'). GenAI models have learnt from a huge amount of information, often taken from the internet, to produce this content.

GenAI can already be accessed by staff and councillors through:

- Websites (e.g. ChatGPT, Bing or Dal-E)
- Individual apps for personal computers or phones (e.g. Google Assistant lets you ask when your first meeting is)
- Plug-ins for websites (e.g. Expedia allows people to use GenAI to ask for travel plans and flight details)
- New features within computer software (e.g. Microsoft CoPilot and CoPilot365)

Currently, GenAI is most used to support individual tasks and act as a personal assistant, for example:

GenAI can help you be more creative:

- Create images and videos from scratch by simply telling a tool what you want to see
- Come up with lots of new ideas in seconds - for example, coming up with icebreakers for meetings

It can help you be more productive:

- Create first drafts of an email or document for you to finish writing, and then find ways to improve the quality of your writing once you have done so
- Quickly find sources of information and break down complex topics into easy-to-understand information
- Summarise meeting notes and documents

However, improvements and the widespread availability of GenAI tools mean it can also be used for many other tasks, changing how we work, how residents engage with us and how the council runs and makes decisions.

The Local Government Association has identified several key risks the use of GenAI places on councils ([external link to LGA website](#)).

The risks identified include insufficient data foundations, a lack of capacity or knowledge within information governance and data protection teams, the perpetuation of digital exclusion and wider forms of exclusion, insufficient knowledge across different business areas in the council, a lack of transparency, job losses, and the impact on resident trust if not implemented transparently and appropriately.

To achieve a balance between innovation and regulation, this high-level risk will attempt to lay out some of the early identified risks, and potential mitigation, that BCP Council will consider as it embraces the use of GenAI within the organisation.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

Trust and Transparency: There are risks about the potential for GenAI to generate misleading or false information, also known as “hallucinations”. This could lead to the spread of misinformation or disinformation or even lead to incorrect advice being provided to residents if unchecked which could lead to undesirable outcomes.

Ethics and Bias: GenAI models can inadvertently perpetuate or amplify existing biases present in the data they were trained on. This could lead to unfair or discriminatory outcomes.

Data Privacy: GenAI often requires access to large amounts of data for training and operation. Ensuring the privacy and security of this data is a significant concern. Without sufficient technical controls or user-training in place it is likely that potentially sensitive data may be exposed.

Data Retention and Compliance: GenAI models often retain training data, which may conflict with Subject Access Request requirements to delete or anonymise personal data upon request and affect the ability to comply fully with Freedom of Information Act requests.

Misuse of Technology: GenAI could be used for political propaganda, compromising local/national security, leaking confidential data, vexatiously increasing council officer workloads, and disseminating inaccurate information.

Cybersecurity Risks: As with any digital technology, GenAI systems can be vulnerable to cyber-attacks or can be leveraged to initiate more complex or sophisticated attacks (such as spear-phishing).

Erosion of Public Trust: If not properly managed, the issues above could lead to a loss of public trust in the council’s use of GenAI and data in general.

Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):



As described above, the impacts are largely financial or reputational:

- Financial impacts through fines if data breaches occur without appropriate technical, procedural or policy controls being in place
- Reputational impacts with residents and erosion of trust in council use of data
- Increasing cyber security risks (CR04)
- Progressing with our Data and Innovation Programme with corporate buy-in is imperative to ensure we optimise the output of our Transformation Programme. We need to continue to innovate and drive continual improvement, to meet our vision to deliver seamless, accessible, and personalised digital experiences that empower our customers, simplify interactions and ensure every service is intuitive, efficient and designed around customers’ needs.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Technological, Customer/Citizen, Economic, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



- Microsoft CoPilot365 GenAI tool is currently only in a Project Managed proof of concept stage amongst 300 colleagues from all areas of the council.
- Microsoft CoPilot Chat has been successfully launched and made available to all staff with access to a device and a computer account.
- BCP Council's existing [Information Security Policy](#) already describes expected staff and councillor behaviours in respect of responsible use of IT in general, but also AI specifically.
- IT Security Training published to all staff and councillors is available through the MetaCompliance Training portal.
- Rules regarding ethical and responsible use of AI published to [Our Intranet](#).
- Our Digital Strategy reflective of our Digital vision for BCP Council has been shared with our Directors Strategy Group, Corporate Strategy Board and with our portfolio holder. Our Data and Innovation Programme will drive the delivery of this and the initial 'discovery phase' of this programme has been signed off by our Corporate Strategy Board and is underway.
- AI briefing and overview has been delivered to Cabinet and Corporate Management Board
- The Data Loss Prevention (DLP) initiative is progressing. Led by Information Governance to put in place an information classification scheme to be applied to all council documents.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	No
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	No
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	Yes
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	Yes

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	3	3	9		



All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	<p>Implement Microsoft Data Loss Prevention (DLP).</p> <p>CoPilot and CoPilot365 has access to whatever data the user has access to. It is therefore imperative that additional technology is implemented to help mitigate the risks of staff or councillors “sharing” content that could make it visible to a wider set of users than intended.</p> <p>DLP is a security solution, already available under existing licencing (but not enabled), that identifies and helps prevent the unsafe or inappropriate sharing, transfer or use of sensitive data contained in the M365 eco-system (Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint).</p> <p>A project has been agreed and is currently being scoped to deliver DLP and timelines for deployment will be published in due course.</p> <p>UPDATE: We are still working with our Information Governance team to achieve Corporate Management Board sign off of this project and drive delivery collaboratively and at pace.</p>	In progress
Action 2:	<p>Consider any upskilling/resourcing of the council’s Information Governance Teams to be able to provide effective professional advice to support established AI Governance bodies (CMB) and wider colleagues. Our Continuous Improvement and Innovation Programme (CIIP) aims to deliver a key workstream focusing on how our organisation is set up operationally to support our Digital Strategy and requirement for strong governance in support of this.</p> <p>UPDATE: Ongoing as we work with our Information Governance colleagues to establish the most effective structure and approach for the organisation.</p>	Ongoing
Action 3:	<p>Develop IT and Programmes expertise on the topic of GenAI through formal training. Several staff in IT and Programmes are just starting a 13-month programme called “AI for Business Value”. Topics covered include AI ethics, Identifying Opportunities for AI, Managing AI change in your organisation and Measuring AI ROI (return on investment) and Business Impact.</p> <p>UPDATE: We continue to build internal capability to support the safe and effective use of Artificial Intelligence across the organisation.</p> <p>Three members of staff have now completed formal AI Governance training, strengthening our ability to assess, oversee</p>	In progress

	<p>and guide the responsible adoption of AI solutions across the council.</p> <p>These trained colleagues will continue to contribute to the organisation by helping to identify and deliver value from AI as part of our Continuous Improvement and Innovation Programme (CIIP).</p> <p>In addition to this, ongoing professional development is taking place across the wider IT and Programmes service, with several technical staff engaging in side-of-desk learning to expand their AI knowledge. As a result, a small but growing community of proactive, self-taught AI practitioners is emerging across different areas of the department. This community is already helping us build organisational understanding, share good practice and support early AI use-case exploration in a safe and well-governed manner.</p>		
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Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	3	2	6		

Quarter Update

During this quarter, the council has continued to strengthen its approach to the safe, ethical and well-governed use of AI. Building on the success of the Data & Innovation Programme, we have expanded internal skills, broadened awareness and continued to embed structured governance processes to support responsible AI adoption across services.

Internal capability continues to grow, with three members of staff having now completed formal AI Governance training, equipping them to provide informed advice and oversight as the organisation explores new AI opportunities. Their expertise will support wider service areas to identify and safely progress AI use cases as part of our Continuous Improvement & Innovation Programme (CIIP).

Alongside this, ongoing side-of-desk learning is taking place across IT and Programmes, and a small community of proactive, self-taught technical practitioners is beginning to emerge across different teams. This community is playing an increasingly valuable role in sharing knowledge, supporting colleagues, and contributing to early-stage AI exploration.

The council's AI governance framework has also continued to develop, including the use of structured assessment processes that ensure that new AI ideas are reviewed consistently and transparently. This approach has recently been applied in meetings exploring potential AI use cases in operational services, helping colleagues understand the steps required to ensure ethical, transparent and accountable deployment of AI tools.

To encourage innovation in a controlled environment, staff in several areas have also taken part in AI-focused collaborative sessions, including internal workshops and "agentathon"-style activity exploring how AI-powered agents and automation could support service improvement. These sessions remain




early-stage and exploratory, but they are helping to build organisational understanding of how AI may support efficiency, self-service and improved customer experience in the future.

The council continues to participate in wider local government networks, supporting sector-wide collaboration and ensuring alignment with national best practice. Invitations to practitioner groups and AI knowledge-sharing networks further support our capability-building and ensure IT and Programmes remains connected to the latest thinking across the public sector.

Overall, the council continues to take a measured, responsible approach to AI adoption, balancing innovation with strong governance, supporting staff development and ensuring that all exploration of new AI tools remains safe, transparent and in line with public expectations.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		No meaningful change in risk levels.
Net Score		No meaningful change in risk levels.
Target Score		No meaningful change in risk levels.

Risk CR18 – We may fail to provide adequate customer interfaces

Risk Owner – Matti Raudsepp, Director of Customer & Property Operations

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Andy Martin, Cabinet Member for Customer, Communications and Culture

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Providing accessible and inclusive services, showing care in our approach

Risk Information

The Transformation Programme for the council closed in March 2025 and as part of the ongoing commitment to service improvement it was agreed that remaining workstreams would move into business-as-usual activity or into dedicated programmes.

Whilst this programme of work is established, and then delivered, there is a risk that our current customer service capabilities, capacity, systems and processes fail to provide the level of responsiveness that our communities and residents expect.

The Transformation Programme upgraded the council's legacy telephony system and introduced an updated version of the council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system onto which existing processes have been migrated. A single improved web platform was also introduced.

The remaining requirement is initially to improve the performance of the corporate customer contact centre, easing the journey for our residents and creating business efficiency for improved service delivery. A second stage will be required to fulfil the requirements of the Customer Strategy creating a single front door and consistency across the council. This means identifying customer activity sitting across service areas which need to be brought into management via the CRM with performance monitored and reported under a single customer umbrella.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

- The end-to-end customer journey is affected by a range of factors, both within the contact centre and within services. Delays in redesigning any aspect of the journeys can impact the customer experience.
- The availability of new digital functionality has not been introduced to the service environment which has restricted our ambitions.
- There are varying degrees of sign-up to the Customer Target Operating model which was formally agreed within the Transformation Programme.



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

- Call answering performance that does not meet customer expectations. Customer contact is subject to ongoing handoffs to services, which may complicate and extend the process and increases the risk of failure and customer dissatisfaction.
- Phone contact is heavily relied on in the absence of other effective options and staff numbers cannot cope.
- Frustrating customer journeys which are not efficient for either the business or customer.
- Problems arising from ineffective processes create issues for customers which impact their lives.
- Inefficiency in the cost of delivering effective customer response.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

- Customer/Citizen
- Technological
- Political

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	3	12		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



- Call handling performance data is used to monitor performance.
- Staff have been trained on a wider range of skills to support areas where staff numbers have been lost to support the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- New contact centre telephony system successfully implemented in December 2023 with pilots completed to understand potential additional functionality.
- New CRM system now in place with legacy processes moved across.
- New CRM has some improved functionality and has repeatable service patterns to support end to end process reviews.
- Customer Strategy is being refreshed for adoption in early 2026.
- Programme Board has been set up to progress a range of actions to bring efficiency to the service and improve the customer offer.
- Resourcing needs being considered to ensure delivery.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking, but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the ‘whole’ risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of acting may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases, the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	3	3	9		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Agree refreshed Customer Strategy	March 2026
Action 2:	Implement end to end process reviews across the functions currently delivered through the existing corporate customer contact centre to drive efficiency, deploy new functionality and improve service for Customer	April 2026 - March 2027
Action 3:	Develop and implement a programme to reduce reliance on the telephone as a contact method, increasing digital service uptake	March 2027
Action 4:	Create and continuously update the list of technical enhancements required to improve service delivery connected with the Dynamics 365 System	March 2027
Action 5:	Continue to innovate and learn new technologies to support efficiency to support the Customer Strategy	March 2027

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	2	1	2		

Quarter Update

- Refreshed Customer Strategy has been subjected to Directors Strategy Group consideration and input
- Agreement secured to recruit Business Analyst capacity, which is essential in order to fully map and evaluate current processes and to design how new customer journeys will operate
- Work on stabilising the blue badge processing backlog continues with response times now well within the Department for Transport guideline of 12 weeks and being maintained within that level. Meanwhile, the design of an improved approach to the management of the blue badge process is ongoing.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score	↔	
Net Score	↔	
Target Score	↔	

Risk CR02 - We may fail to achieve appropriate outcomes and quality of service for children and young people including potential inadequate safeguarding

Risk Owner – Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Children’s Services

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Richard Burton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Skills

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

- High quality of life for all, where people can be active, healthy and independent
- Working together, everyone feels safe and secure
- Those who need support receive it when and where they need it
- Skills are continually developed, and people can access lifelong learning
- Intervening as early as possible to improve outcomes
- Working closely with partners, removing barriers and empowering others
- Providing accessible and inclusive services, showing care in our approach

Risk Information

Corporate Context

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all councillors and corporate officers, and this is reflected in the Corporate Safeguarding Strategy which was agreed by Cabinet in September 2019.

BCP Council had a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection in June 2021 which identified significant gaps in services which are being addressed through a SEND Improvement Plan and a Department for Education (DfE) Statutory Notice. A review by the DfE and NHS England (NHSE) in July 2023 concluded that not enough progress was being made and a Statutory Direction from the Secretary of State has been issued to BCP Council.

BCP Council Children’s Services had an ILACS inspection (an Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services) in December 2024 and achieved a Good rating from Ofsted. This acknowledges that children’s services provide

Quality of education and care:

Children’s services rated as "good" provide a good standard of education, care, and support for children.

Effective safeguarding:

Safeguarding practices are deemed to be effective, meaning children are protected from harm and their welfare is prioritized.

Positive impact on children and families:

The services have a positive impact on the lives of children, young people, and their families, with evidence of sustained improvement.

Partnerships

BCP Council must ensure that it is working with all partners in the most effective way to identify, assess and respond to safeguarding issues, and those which cut across Children’s, Adults’ and Community Safety. BCP Council does this through various boards: the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Partnership, BCP Children’s Safeguarding Board and Community Safety Partnership being examples.

Communities

Key consideration for the Communities directorate in discharging the range of duties provided across a range of services, community safety and domestic abuse.

Children’s Services

There is an increase in demand for services and in the complexity of need in children and young people presenting to Children’s Services across Children’s Social Care and Education and Skills. This is placing demand on resources and budgets. For example, there is an increase in the number of children with complex needs placed in residential care which creates additional pressure on the Children’s Service’s

budget; providers also increase their costs and there is an increase in Education, Health and Care Assessments.

There is a shortage of Children's Services social workers nationally, which means that there is a reliance on agency staff which puts pressure on budgets and can affect the continuity and consistency of service to our children and young people. Whilst there has been significant progress in stabilising the workforce the Pay and Reward programme may have an impact on this going forward.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

- Lack of collaboration with partners
- Shortage of staff and staff capacity
- Insufficient specialist local and national placements from both in-house and external provision which also drives up the cost of placements
- Failure to deliver safe service to children and families as per the findings of the Ofsted ILAC inspection December 2021 and the Care Quality Commission/Ofsted SEND Inspection July 2021
- Poor identification and management of risk across the service and partnership.



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

- Victims, death or serious injury
- Children and Young People being placed further away from networks
- Delays in finding suitable homes
- Poor performance assessment
- Poor staff morale and further retention issues
- Litigation costs and failure to meet legislative requirements
- Council-wide economic impact with more children being placed out of borough and additional budget pressure
- Adverse media coverage - damaged reputation/public image.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Customer, physical, legislative, resource, social, contractual, political, reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions

Children's Directorate

- Focus on the SEND improvement journey to ensure core services are safe for vulnerable children and young people.
- Since the Good Ofsted rating and removal of Children's Social Care Statutory Intervention the governance for Children's Social Care has been reviewed and new accountability structures put in place, a new development plan has been put in place to drive forward the service in place of an Improvement Plan.
- The strongest mitigation is to have the capacity and resources to meet the rising demand of need across the services and to have the assurance of the quality of practice through quality assurance frameworks and governance processes.
- Robust governance is in place to ensure that improvement continues at pace in SEND.



- Partners have launched the Children and Young People’s Partnership plan which clearly identifies the shared priorities for delivering improved services for our children, young people and families. There is a SEND Improvement Board which is chaired by a DfE Advisor and the Board holds service, council and partners accountable for the delivery of improvements identified in the improvement plan.
- DfE Advisor and Improvement Officers have been assigned by the DfE to oversee and support the improvement of services as identified in the Statutory Notices to Improve from the Secretary of State for SEND.
- Education Services are subject to termly Ofsted Monitoring meetings which oversee improvement and hold the service accountable for meeting statutory standards.
- A Quality Assurance Framework has been embedded into Children’s Social Care practice giving the assurance that practice standards are maintained or improving. Governance processes introduced in 2022 continue to review practice and give increasing assurance that children are safeguarded. Ofsted in their ILACs Inspection 2024 confirmed that Children in BCP are safeguarded.
- Scheme of Delegation reviewed and updated for Children’s Services.
- Monthly budget management meetings between Finance and budget holders.
- Financial accountability is held at Senior Leadership Team and Children’s Strategic Transformation Board through reporting by the Finance Manager.
- Ensure the BCP Council model of corporate support services and systems is fully conducive to the children’s improvement journey.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking, but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the ‘whole’ risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	2	8		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Deliver on the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan	2026
Action 2:	Deliver on the Education Improvement plan	June 2026
Action 3:	Sufficient suitable accommodation available for our care-experienced young people and placement choice of good quality locally for children in care	June 2026
Action 4:	Deliver on the new Children's Social Care Development Plan	April 2027

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place




Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	4	2	8		

Quarter Update

The SEND Care Quality Commission (CQC)/Ofsted Partnership inspection was carried out in December 2025. The outcome of this inspection was published February 2026. The report evidences significant improvements whilst acknowledging inconsistent delivery of services to children and their families. The result of this inspection means that the statutory notice from the Secretary of State will be removed, and we will not be considered by the DfE to be in intervention. Further improvements required will be considered as part of the management of the Alternative Provision and SEND improvement plan under business-as-usual governance.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		Improvements verified through Ofsted and CQC inspection of both Children's Social Care and also SEND
Net Score		As above
Target Score		As above

Risk CR08 – We may fail to run a fair and open election/referendum

Risk Owner – Aidan Dunn, Chief Executive

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Jeff Hanna, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Resources and Governance

Links to Corporate Objective(s): Connected Communities, Brighter Futures & Modern, Accessible and Accountable Council

Risk Information

The Council has a statutory duty to administer elections and referendums in accordance with electoral law, including the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Electoral Administration Act 2006, and subsequent amendments.

The Chief Executive is appointed as the Returning Officer (RO) and is personally legally responsible for the proper conduct of elections. Certain obligations fall personally on the RO and cannot be delegated or influenced by the Council.

Election timetables are fixed in law and cannot be altered by the Council, meaning planning and resourcing must be in place ahead of time regardless of any operational pressures.


Nature of the Risk

If sufficient staffing, resources, skills, or facilities are not available at the required time, the Council/RO may be unable to deliver an election that meets legal requirements for fairness, accuracy, transparency and accessibility.

Failure could lead to legal challenge, reputational damage or loss of public confidence.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	4	4	16		New

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions

- **Strategic oversight:** Monthly election planning and progress reviews with the Chief Executive and key senior officers.
- **One-Council delivery approach:** Cross-departmental support from ICT, HR, Communications, Facilities, Finance and others to ensure sufficient resources.
- **Structured project planning:** Comprehensive election project plan with workstream leads and sub-groups monitoring progress against statutory deadlines.
- **Staffing and training arrangements:** Early recruitment, training, and contingency staffing across the council to ensure sufficient skilled polling and count staff.
- **Venue readiness:** Polling and count venues secured early and assessed for accessibility, suitability, and contingency availability.


- **Communications planning:** Clear communications plans for both the public and candidates including statutory notices, public messaging, and voter information such as Voter ID requirements.
- **External liaison:** Ongoing engagement with the Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators, partners, suppliers, police and regional networks for updates, advice and assurance.
- **ICT & systems readiness:** Pre-election testing of election management systems, equipment and data security with contingency plans for system failures.
- **Financial monitoring:** Regular review and tracking of election budgets, cost pressures and funding requirements.
- **Post-election learning:** Formal lessons-learned review after each poll with actions tracked to improve future delivery

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place


Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	4	2	8		New

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		07/05/2026
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Secure and confirm all polling stations and count venues	06/03/2026
Action 2:	Complete recruitment and training of polling, postal vote and count staff	16/04/2026
Action 3:	Publish statutory notices and manage nominations process	29/04/2026
Action 4:	Ensure ICT and elections systems readiness (including voter ID checks, count system)	29/04/2026
Action 5:	Finalise logistics: equipment preparation, delivery plans, and ballot box dispatch	05/05/2026
Action 6:	Deliver polling, postal vote issue, verification, count and declaration of result	07/05/2026

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	4	1	4		New

Quarter Update




Good progress has been made this quarter across all key election activities. All core election staff have now been appointed, the count venue is fully booked, and the majority of polling stations are confirmed with only a small number awaiting final agreement.

Procurement for the print contractor has been completed and timelines have been secured. Sub-groups are meeting regularly and progressing workstreams to schedule, with strong engagement from internal services and external stakeholders.

Public engagement communications have commenced, including voter awareness activity, and we have begun delivering candidate awareness sessions to support prospective candidates.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		The inherent (unmitigated) risk remains unchanged, as the statutory complexity and consequences of failing to deliver a lawful election remain constant.
Net Score		Progress this quarter has reduced the likelihood of the risk materialising. The quarterly update includes key activity completed to reduce the potential risk.
Target Score		The target score remains appropriate. Current progress indicates that the planned mitigations are on track to bring the risk to the desired level in the required timeframe.

Risk CR21 – Impact of global events causing pressure on BCP Council & increase in service requirements

Risk Owner – Kelly Deane, Director of Housing & Public Protection

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Kieron Wilson, Cabinet Member for Housing and Regulatory Services

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Working together everyone feels safe and secure

Risk Information

Several global conflicts have required a humanitarian response/offer of refuge to those fleeing and in each case the UK government has set out its policy for accommodating and resettling refugees in every local authority area. The schemes in operation are:

- UK Refugee Resettlement (UKRS - previously known as the Gateway Scheme/Syrian Resettlement scheme)
- Afghan Resettlement Programme
- Homes for Ukraine(HfU)/ Ukraine Permanent Extension Scheme
- Communities for Afghans Scheme

In addition to these schemes the Home Office also accommodates all who arrive and apply for asylum in the UK and, if granted refugee status, these households require access to accommodation and support with community integration. Due to the exponential increase in the volume of asylum seekers arriving in the UK, the government has become reliant on contingency accommodation (nightly let hotels). Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole currently have hotels who are contracted by the Home Office to provide this accommodation while those housed await their asylum decision. There is also a growing portfolio of private rented properties in use as asylum accommodation in the conurbation.

Risks related to asylum and refugee resettlement include:

- Potential homeless presentations from Ukrainian refugees should the HfU scheme support from government (financial incentives to sponsors) be discontinued
- Potential homeless presentations from Afghan families given notice to leave their 9-month limited Ministry of Defence (MOD) accommodation
- Lack of required support for those seeking asylum and those who are already refugees
- Safeguarding risks to asylum seekers/refugees as well as to staff or the public not being mitigated
- Pressure on the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole housing market which is already inhospitable and unable to meet the demand of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole families
- Pressure on Primary, Secondary and Community NHS services from these cohorts of new patients
- Pressure on social care services (notably Children's Services as a result of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children)
- Pressure on Homelessness services as asylum seekers receive positive decisions on their applications and are given notice to vacate their Home Office funded hotel accommodation
- Repeat homelessness where single people subsequently apply for family reunion visas
- Pressure on schools to provide education and related support to refugee children
- A detrimental impact on the tourism economy in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole as hotels in use are a significant portion of the available rooms (impact anticipated more in summer months)
- Concerns around community cohesion and tensions in relation to asylum and refugee resettlement
- Concerns around Community Safety from Bournemouth & Poole College
- Potential increase in activity of extremist groups

Gaza and Israeli conflict

In addition to the information provided above we are also monitoring any localised tensions relating to the conflict in Israel and Gaza and receive regular updates regionally and nationally regarding the complex situation.

Protests

The Public Protection team is working closely with Dorset Police around an increase in planned and unplanned protests both in relation to the Gaza and Israel conflict and around immigration. The protests have continued weekly but have remained peaceful, with minimal arrests or dispersals. There has been a national rise in protests, with some areas of the country experiencing violence and rioting, however, this has not transpired locally. Dorset Police hold the lead, however a separate command structure has been set up within BCP Council to support. Teams such as Facilities Management, CSAS (Community Safety Patrol Officers) and highways have been engaged to provide security to the Civic site, manage traffic flow on the network and engage with protest groups. Risks from protests include:

- Damage to the Civic Centre or cenotaph
- Disruption at council meetings affecting the civic process
- Disruption to communities
- Disruption to businesses
- Disruption to the transport network

Extensive planning between BCP Council and Dorset Police is undertaken for each protest to mitigate these risks.

Home Office Engagement

The Home Office have recently engaged with the Chief Executive and relevant Directors to advise that they are moving towards increased engagement to ensure there is a triangulated approach between the government, councils and police with regard to community safety and cohesion.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

- Conflict in Israel and Gaza and increasingly in the surrounding territories
- Home Office policy and related notices to vacate hotels
- 9-month limited transitional MOD accommodation offer for Afghan Resettlement Programme households
- National and local tensions around the asylum and immigration process and trend of increased protests
- Confirmation of Thank You Payments to hosts being discontinued once a Ukrainian guest has exhausted HfU visa and first Ukraine Permission Extension scheme period
- Mis- and dis-information circulating on social media unchallenged



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

- Heightened community tensions and inter-faith relationships
- Crime and disorder risks
- Number of homeless applications increased
- Number of former asylum seekers found to be street homeless increased
- Disruption to the transport network, business operations and community

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Economic, Social, Environmental, Citizen, Resource, Physical, Political, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	3	3	9		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



- Multi-agency partnership working and governance framework in place, communication channels in place e.g. briefings, webpages, dedicated staff team established, links with government agencies
- Strategic leadership from BCP Council in relation to asylum accommodation and refugee resettlement, identifying need for collaboration with all stakeholders and progressing with impact assessment for the council and its partners of asylum and refugee resettlement
- Additional grant funded resource recruited to manage this new programme and case manage households now resident in the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area and enable proactive preventative support
- Engagement with the Home Office and their contracted providers to discuss and deliver dispersed asylum accommodation in the community
- Work with the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to address gaps in support required across all schemes
- Appropriate use of tariff incomes to incentivize hosting sustainment and access to move-on accommodation for Ukrainian refugees
- Intensive prevention/welfare case support to Ukrainian scheme guests and hosts to discuss options and planned exit from the scheme if funding does end
- Lobbying of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office re pressures and required resources to address family reunion homelessness
- Participation in Local Authority Housing Fund programme (government grant funded) to mitigate the risk of homelessness for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees while adding to housing portfolio of BCP Council longer term
- Lobbying on the pressures being experienced by local authorities to Ministers and the Home Office
- Regular updates from the Home Office on the situation in Gaza and Israel, both abroad and in the UK
- BCP Council command structure working with Dorset Police to manage protest intelligence and responses.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
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Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	3	2	6		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Continue to monitor community tensions relating to the conflict in Gaza and Israel and work with partners to address as needed	ongoing
Action 2:	Continue to work with Dorset Police regarding regular planned protests	ongoing
Action 3:	Continue to monitor community tensions relating to protests and work with partners to address as needed	ongoing
Action 4:	Recruitment of a Community Cohesion Officer (2-year fixed term)	Q4 2025/6
Action 5:		
Action 6:		

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place




Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	3	2	6		

Quarter Update

During this quarter, pressures linked to national and global events have continued to impact Housing and related services. The volume and complexity of refugee, asylum and resettlement- related work remains high, with increased demand across asylum dispersal, refugee resettlement, Homes for Ukraine facilitation, and the monitoring of community tensions.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		Underlying global pressures have not materially changed
Net Score		Although controls and mitigations continue, they have not reduced the actual level of pressure being experienced
Target Score		Conditions required to safely lower the target have not yet materialised

Risk CR28 – We may fail to adopt a Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Plan

Risk Owner – Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Millie Earl, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

- High quality of life for all, where people can be active, healthy and independent
- Good quality homes are accessible, sustainable and affordable for all
- Employment is available for everyone and helps create value in our communities
- People and places are connected by sustainable and modern infrastructure
- Revitalised high streets and regenerated key sites create new opportunities
- Our green spaces flourish and support the wellbeing of both people and nature
- Climate change is tackled through sustainable policies and practice

Risk Information

The council has a statutory duty to prepare and maintain a Local Plan. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that the planning system should be genuinely plan-led with succinct and up-to-date plans. Currently BCP Council is operating using the Local Plans of the predecessor authorities that include over 300 policies, a significant proportion of which are out of date.

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Plan will provide one plan that sets out the vision and planning framework for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area for the next 15 years. It will provide the land use policies that help us to implement our commitment to address the climate and ecological emergency. It will confirm our strategic approach to the delivery of a range of development, including market and affordable housing, employment, tourism, community facilities and supporting infrastructure. The Local Plan has to balance these development requirements against the need to protect and enhance the built and natural environment. Once adopted, all planning applications will be determined against the Local Plan, making it the most important place-shaping document for the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area.

A Local Development Scheme was agreed by the Council in June 2025 which sets out the timeline to prepare the Local Plan by 2028 under the government’s new planning system which requires plans to be prepared in 30 months. This includes a period of time for the soundness of the plan to be examined by the Secretary of State before it is adopted by the council.

There is a risk that the Local Plan will not be adopted by the end of 2028 as set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

- Failure of the council to agree a spatial strategy to meet the development needs of the area, particularly in the context of the high housing target for the area (set by national policy), changes to national Green Belt policy and the possible options for development
- That the Plan is not supported by the Secretary of State at examination, which could be due to issues with the quality and extent of evidence required to support the plan, that the duty to cooperate has not been met or the spatial strategy is not robust to meet development needs
- Changing national policies and requirements in relation to Plan Making



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

Failure to adopt a new Local Plan will result in the policies from the predecessor local plans becoming increasingly out of date for decision making. Without a Local Plan to allocate new sites and demonstrate a five-year supply of land for housing there is 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' in favour of granting residential planning applications and resulting in less control over the location, scale, quality and design of development and any supporting infrastructure. There is also a result of a higher number of appeals to planning decisions and refused applications being approved on appeal.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

- Environmental: Failure to have up to date policies to protect the environment, habitat sites, flood risk, climate change
- Social – Failure to deliver the homes needed to meet the needs of our communities
- Legal – Failure in statutory duty to prepare a Local Plan potentially leading to government intervention. Legal challenges in relation to applications determined in the absence of an up-to-date plan
- Political: Failure to deliver government policy
- Reputational: Reputational damage over the ability of the council to effectively plan for the area and determine applications.

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	3	3	9		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions

- Report to Cabinet in May 2026 to set out proposed timetable and process
- Monitoring and management of the Local Plan by the Director of Planning and Transport
- Assigning resources and project management support to enable Local Plan delivery
- Providing regular progress updates to senior management and councillors
- Review of the existing evidence base and the early procurement of up-to-date evidence
- Working closely with relevant external organisations and delivery partners to obtain information as efficiently as possible
- Development of early engagement and communications strategy, including workshops with councillors, and wide public communications and consultation
- Completing the proposed Gateway stages under the new planning system which enables early engagement with the Planning Inspectorate on examination soundness issues
- Regular (monthly) Duty to Co-operate meetings with Dorset Council planning officers as a key neighbouring authority. Includes having a standing agenda and keeping meeting notes.



Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
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risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	3	2	6		



All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Procure evidence base	May 2026
Action 2:	Formally update Cabinet on timetable changes and agree governance arrangements	May 2026
Action 3:	Complete early engagement activity	Aug 2026
Action 4:	Complete Gateway 1	Aug 2026
Action 5:		
Action 6:		

Additional information released by government requires additional stages in the plan making process. Further guidance has also been released in relation to initiating the local plan process. The earliest these changes and the implications can be reported to Cabinet is May 2026. This has a knock-on effect on the completion dates for early engagement and the completion of Gateway 1.

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place




Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	3	2	6		

Quarter Update

At the end of November 2025 the government released further guidance relating to the new planning system, although the accompanying regulations have yet to be published. This guidance clarified the various stages in plan making under the new system and specified a range of requirements on sequencing of activities. While we will still be able to adopt a Local Plan given the new information, it cannot be completed by the end of 2028 and the timetable needs to be updated to reflect additional activities that are included in the guidance. This will be reported to Cabinet in May 2026. It is therefore anticipated that adoption will now take place in early 2029.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		The new information released setting out the process provides more certainty to plan makers. While there are additional activities required over those originally anticipated, including a scoping consultation stage, we can still adopt a Local Plan but the timetable needs to be updated and adoption will not be until early 2029.
Net Score		See above
Target Score		An updated timetable and Project Initiation Document will be taken to Cabinet in May 2026. This will allow us to make progress with plan making activity.

Risk CR25 – We may be unable to effectively transform services to achieve efficiencies and improve service standards

Risk Owner – Corporate Management Board Collective

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Jeff Hanna – Cabinet Member for Transformation, Resources and Governance

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

- Creating an environment for innovation, learning and leadership
- Using our resources sustainably to support our ambitions
- Using data, insights and feedback to shape services and solutions

Risk Information

With the closure of the BCP Transformation Programme in March 2025, it is essential we maintain our focus on achieving the efficiencies targeted as outputs of the programme and that we have a sustained focus on improving service standards.

Efficiencies and improved service standards are predicated on having the resource (financial and people) to identify and implement the changes necessary to achieve the council's operating model. An environment of increasing financial challenges or other demands on council resource could slow the rate of tangible benefits associated with transformation or require the council to reassess its initial ambitions based on what is achievable.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

- Reduction in financial and human resources available to deliver, support and drive a culture of change, innovation and focus on efficient approach to service delivery and practice
- Increase in demand on services to deliver business as usual and lack of workforce engagement with innovation and development of digital skills and mindset
- Conflicting corporate and service led priorities
- Further requests for service transformation funding
- Lack of funds to build growth, capacity and capability in established Centres of Expertise i.e. Data and Analytics, Procurement, Projects and Programmes (PPM)
- Transformation Programme closing without a sustained plan of approach for continuous improvement and strategic intent, to build on the outputs of transformation, to drive efficiencies and realise ongoing associated benefits.

Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

- Slower pace of change
- Unable to achieve Operational Model and foundations to enable ongoing efficiencies across our organisation
- Negative view of the Transformation Programme and what it promised, both internally within our organisation and outwardly by our residents. Detrimental to our reputation and great success with the Transformation Programme and its outputs.
- Poor return on the investment we have made on our technology stack and the opportunities we have to link this with strategic systems and innovation/efficiencies
- Inability to meet our vision to deliver seamless, accessible, and personalised digital experiences that empower our customers, simplify interactions and ensure every service is intuitive, efficient and designed around their needs
- Longer term associations to our ability to recruit if we are unable to offer modernised, efficient approaches to our work, service delivery and processes through technology.



Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

The following risk categories apply:

Corporate Risk Categories: Technological, Customer/ Citizen, Economic, Political

Service Risk Categories: Resource, Technological

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	3	3	9		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions

Following the closure of the Transformation Programme we maintain the following mitigations:



- BCP Corporate Strategy Delivery Board established to ensure maintained focus on continuous improvement and strategic delivery to meet Corporate Strategy objectives.
- Our Digital Strategy has been written and published, with the Data and Innovation Programme established in April 2025, signed off by the BCP Council Strategy Delivery Board to ensure robust governance.
- Phase 1 is now complete, having assessed our corporate capability to deliver our digital vision. Phase 1 delivered governance, data quality improvements, AI readiness, digital adoption and capability building. These are foundational enablers but are not yet embedded across the council. This has set the stage but does not complete the journey.
- Phase 2 builds on what we have learnt. Led by IT and Programmes and currently in scoping stage it focuses on continued embedding of the fundamentals - AI governance, data quality, digital adoption and capability—more broadly across the organisation, while continuing to provide insight, standards and governance.
- Additionally, Phase 1 highlighted the need for an organisational, not departmental, approach to improvement - a corporate programme to embed better ways of working, prioritise invest-to-save opportunities and scale innovation across services. We proposed the Continuous Improvement & Innovation Programme (CIIP) and this was agreed in October 2025 by our Corporate Strategy Board. This is now in scoping stage and slightly delayed as we look to resource Business Analysis capacity to support the initial discovery and feasibility of invest to save opportunities.
- It should also be noted that all programme activity has been and continues to be carried out ‘side of desk’ by resource within IT and Programmes, evidencing the commitment and passion the teams maintain to deliver innovation and our Digital Strategy. This is not sustainable and we will remain focused on how we address this.
- Resourcing/capacity (both within the core programme team and service areas) is on the programme risk register, and we actively review our corporate priorities with our Corporate Management Board (CMB) and councillors to ensure we are focused on delivering agreed priorities.
- Additionally, we will ensure we consider what the longer-term operating model for IT should be to ensure a sustained focus on continuous improvement for the organisation, to drive the continued aims of our Digital Strategy – ‘digital by design, driven by data and focused on people’.
- We have an established Members Digital Working Group which provides monthly updates to our members on outputs and the delivery of our Digital Strategy as well as associated programmes. Our aim is to continue to share insight and the progress of our digital strategy to meet the objectives of the BCP Council Corporate Strategy.
- Established our BCP Systems Ownership Framework to ensure ownership, both strategic and operational, of our corporate systems established during and since the Transformation Programme. CIIP will include a focus on a strategic roadmap for these systems and their outputs from a data and innovation perspective.

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	2	2	4		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Continue Children's Transformation Programme – programme extended UNDERWAY	April 2026
Action 2:	Continue Adults' Transformation Programme UNDERWAY	April 2027
Action 3:	Develop and establish a new Data and Innovation Programme Phase 1 complete Phase 2 in scoping stage	Phase 1 complete Phase 2 being developed
Action 4:	Continue Strategic Corporate Management Board and Cabinet Members Digital Working Group (ensuring robust knowledge exchange)	Ongoing
Action 5:	Establish Corporate Continuous Improvement & Innovation Programme (CIIP)	April 2026

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	2	2	4		

Quarter Update

During Q3 we continued to strengthen our organisational resilience by progressing the core programmes that underpin our digital, data and continuous improvement agenda. Our work this quarter has focused on building capability, embedding governance, and maturing the controls.

We have continued to move into Phase 2 of the [Data and Innovation overview](#) programme, building on the strong foundations established in Phase 1. This has included progressing governance, data quality, digital adoption and AI readiness, all of which directly mitigate risks associated with data quality, cyber compliance and the safe use of emerging technology.

Following Corporate Strategy Board endorsement, the [BCP Continuous Improvement & Innovation Programme \(CIIP\)](#) has continued through scoping, with emphasis on developing sustainable programme capacity and identifying invest-to-save opportunities. This quarter we have focused on aligning directorates, capturing improvement areas, and establishing governance for tracking benefits and operational risks. This work directly addresses this corporate risk. We are standing up additional Business Analysis resource and an outline of the programme. The IT and Programmes Director is carrying out 1-1 conversations with all Directors to support engagement and the drive for the CIIP to be a shared corporate programme. We continue to strengthen governance and assurance with our Systems Ownership Framework.

We continued to embed digital skills and adoption activity through targeted capability building, Digital Champions support and organisation-wide engagement activities. During the quarter, efforts have focused on improving digital confidence, addressing known gaps in adoption of corporate tools, and preparing directorates for the next phase of digital maturity assessments.

Across Q3, these collective efforts demonstrated sustained progress in reducing operational, technological, and transformation-related risks, particularly through:

- stronger governance and consistent organisational standards
- clearer accountability for systems and data
- improved readiness for responsible AI and digital use
- early identification of efficiency opportunities through CIIP
- increased staff capability and confidence in using digital tools

Our direction of travel remains positive, though capacity constraints and the rate of organisational adoption remain areas to monitor and manage.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score	↔	
Net Score	↔	
Target Score	↔	

Risk CR16 – Partnerships may not support delivery of the corporate strategy, objectives or priorities

Risk Owner – Isla Reynolds, Director of Marketing, Comms and Policy

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Millie Earl, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Working closely with partners, removing barriers and empowering others

Risk Information

The 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 Annual Governance Statements included partnership governance as a significant governance weakness. In 2021/22, the identified actions were:

“BCP Council Partnership governance will be strengthened through the development of the following:

- a. Agreement of a partnership definition
- b. Production and maintenance of a Corporate Partnership Register
- c. Establishment of corporate oversight of partnerships
- d. Production of corporate partnership guidance to supplement Financial Regulations, which can also be used for compliance purposes.”

This has also previously been raised by external audit. The issue was removed from the Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23 as partnership guidance has been produced and compilation of the Corporate Partnership Register was in process.

In relation to the action points above, the audit confirmed that:

1. Partnership definition had been agreed and included in the partnership guidance.
2. Corporate partnership guidance was available on the intranet.
3. A partnership register template has been produced, which includes a method of determining ‘significant’ partnerships. Of the 12 service areas who had existing partnership registers, 6 have now completed in the new format and saved in the designated corporate area. A standalone corporate partnership register has not been produced but it is, in effect, the aggregation of the individual service partnership registers.
4. Corporate oversight of partnerships has yet to be established.

In March 2025 Internal Audit liaised with the then recently appointed Head of Policy, Partnerships and Strategy, to ascertain the status of corporate partnership arrangements and the implementation of recommendations raised in the 2023/24 audit of this area. The Head of Service confirmed that a review of corporate partnership arrangements would be undertaken during 2025/26, with a view to ensuring full compliance with the recommendations, including a framework enabling corporate oversight.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):



- Lack of resources to maintain a council partnership register, develop and gain approval for a partnership governance framework
- Lack of resources to ensure guidance is shared, promoted and championed

Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

- Poor knowledge of its partnerships, the way they are governed and the value derived from them puts the council at risk in terms of resources, reputation, legal and financial impacts.
- Council is not compliant with its own policy and/or recommended guidance from Government/other organisations.

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:
Economic, Social, Environmental, Citizen, Resource, Physical, Political, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	3	3	9		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



- Staff resource is now in place to drive this work forward
- Requests have been made to Directors to update their registers
- A report proposing corporate oversight via a framework will be presented to Corporate Management Board

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
Treat: By far the greatest number of threat risks will be treated in this way. The purpose of risk treatment or mitigation is to contain the risk at an acceptable level.	✓
Tolerate/accept: There may be limited ability to do anything about some risks, or for a limited number of minor threats the cost of taking action may be disproportionate to the potential benefit gained. In these cases the most appropriate response may be to tolerate or accept the risk.	

Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	2	2	4		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score expected completion date and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and when they are each individually due to be completed.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Review and update the Partnership Register	April 2025 Completed
Action 2:	Templates to be circulated to Directors for review and update of the partnership register	Sept 2025 Completed
Action 3:	Corporate Management Board (CMB) to determine what level of corporate oversight is required for partnerships. Head of Service to bring a report to CMB outlining actions taken and to enable CMB to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider whether all existing partnerships are still required and fit for purpose to deliver corporate priorities efficiently and effectively, and thereafter to: provide assurance (such as via a best practice checklist) over the governance arrangements in place for key partnerships agree and co-ordinate production of relevant performance information to facilitate corporate oversight 	April 2026
Action 4:	Ensure framework is operational/provide relevant performance information facilitating corporate oversight	April 2026

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place




Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	2	1	2		

Quarter Update

Actions 1 and 2 have been completed. An update was taken to Corporate Strategy Delivery Board to ask for further information from services about partnerships, and it was agreed that, once this was gathered, an oversight of the data would be brought back to the Board. The Board will then decide whether this is a single overall risk about the framework or would be more suitable as a service-level risk about specific partnerships.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		
Net Score		
Target Score		

Risk CR24 – We may fail to adequately address concerns around community safety

Risk Owner – Kelly Deane, Director of Housing & Public Protection/Rob Carroll, Director of Public Health & Communities

Cabinet Member ([BCP Council – Democracy](#)) – Councillor Kieron Wilson, Cabinet Member for Housing and Regulatory Services, Councillor Andy Hadley, Cabinet Member for Climate Response, Environment and Energy

Links to Corporate Objective(s):

Working together everyone feels safe and secure

Risk Information

Emerging public concerns around areas including, but not limited to, Bournemouth Town Centre show public concern for residents and visitor safety.

A number of initiatives are in place to mitigate the risks including:

- Police Operation Clear, Hold, Build that tackles organised crime which is significantly linked to serious violence
- A new Serious Violence Strategy that works with partners to address the root cause of serious violence
- Policing operations increasing visibility such as Operation Nightjar and Operation Track
- Town Centre Action Partnership Group and tactical groups that have a multi-agency response to tackle issues in Bournemouth Town Centre
- Evidence-led approaches to the deployment of resources
- Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in place to tackle the most prevalent issues in relation to community safety
- Initiatives delivered based on CSP priorities around serious violence, violence against women and girls, exploitation and anti-social behaviour
- Pan-Dorset Prevent Partnership and Channel Panel.

In the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole area, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the four key priorities for the Safer BCP Community Safety Partnership. Tackling issues relating to VAWG and all gender based violence is also a key priority for the [Safer BCP Serious Violence Strategy](#), following the detailed analysis undertaken through our [Serious Violence Needs Assessment](#). To this effect we have a [BCP Adults Safeguarding Board](#), and [Pan-Dorset Children's Safeguarding Board](#) alongside other groups including a Domestic Abuse Strategic Group, Serious Violence Delivery Group (Sexual Offences), Sex Workers Risk Assessment Conference, MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference - high risk domestic abuse) and other task and finish groups as identified through the monthly data analysis.

The Local Authority also has duties under the national CONTEST Strategy (Counter Terrorism) and uses evidence from Counter Terrorism Policing South West and national data to inform the work of the Pan-Dorset Prevent Partnership.

Risk Causes (definite situational facts affecting our objective) (please list):

- Reduction in resources to address community safety concerns
- Public perception of issues and local media reporting
- Changes to partner objectives, funding or behaviour
- Policy changes and funding opportunities following the 2024 change in government
- Global and political decisions, including asylum policies and conflict in the Middle East
- Growth of social media platforms and the online space as an avenue for exploitation



Risk Impacts (contingent effect on objective) (please list):

- Reduction in public perception and public confidence
- Failure to deliver on statutory duties
- Fear of crime increases
- Potential risk to exploitation from extreme ideology

Risk Categories (for impacts) – please [see pages 2-5 of this guidance](#) – choose all that apply in either Service or Corporate Categories whichever fits best:

Citizen, Social, Physical, Resource, Economic, Environmental, Political, Reputation

Gross Risk Score – this is the rating of a risk as if there were no mitigations in place:

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Gross Score	3	2	6		

Mitigations in Place & Completed Actions



- Supporting Dorset Police in Clear, Hold, Build initiative, hotspot policing and key operations to enhance visible presence across the conurbation
- Serious Violence Strategy and Serious Violence Delivery groups to identify and tackle serious violence issues in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, monitored through the statutory BCP Community Safety Partnership
- Safer Streets 5 funding - completed
- Ongoing grant funding from Department for Transport (DfT) for an anti-social behaviour (ASB) Community Safety Accreditation Scheme managing anti-social behaviour on the public transport network - completed
- Successful grant funding under the Bus Service Improvement Programme to install 250 CCTV cameras at the most used bus stops
- Pan-Dorset Prevent Partnership working to raise awareness of Prevent and Contest with partners across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
- Channel Panel for individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- Pan-Dorset Prevent Partnership to raise awareness of Prevent, the signs and symbols to look for and how to refer someone if appropriate
- Prevent Week of Action in October 2025 providing a range of webinars, information events and training for professionals, parents and carers, governors etc
- Independent Advisory Group with Dorset Police to gather information, concerns and monitor any community tensions
- Monthly and quarterly data reviews relating to crime and disorder and crime hotspots alongside an annual strategic assessment which sets the priorities for the work of the Community Safety Partnership

Risk Response Strategies

Please indicate all strategies which are being utilized in the management of this risk:

	Chosen strategy/ies:
Termination: It is impossible to remove or eliminate all risk from an undertaking but it is possible to avoid a particular identified cause.	
Transfer: Transfer does not change the risk directly but involves others in its management. The risk transfer strategy aims to pass ownership and/or liability for a particular threat to another party nearly always for payment of a risk premium. This strategy rarely transfers the 'whole' risk. Risk transfer falls into two groups: financial instruments and contractual arrangements.	
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Net risk Score – this is the rating of a risk with current mitigations in place



Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Net Score	2	1	2		

All Significant Actions to Achieve Proposed Target Risk Score:

Please confirm the overall target score **expected completion date** and list all the significant actions required to achieve this score and **when they are each individually due to be completed**.

		Due Date/s:
Overall Target Score Expected Completion Date:		April 2025
List All Significant Actions Below:		
Action 1:	Continue Partnership Action Group and associated tactical delivery	Complete
Action 2:	Community Safety Partnership Executive Board to review Community Safety concerns	October 2025
Action 3:	Agree new Key Performance Indicators for the Community Safety Partnership	Completed January 2026
Action 4:	Pan-Dorset Prevent Partnership to revise its delivery plan for 2026	Q4 2025/6
Action 5:		
Action 6:		

Target Risk Score – this is projecting forward to what the scoring of a risk will be when further actions or mitigations have been completed and are in place

Assessment Level	Impact (I)	Likelihood (L)	Risk Score (IxL)	Risk Matrix	Movement during Quarter
Target Score	2	1	2		

Quarter Update




The Pan-Dorset Prevent Partnership met in November 2025 and January 2026 to review the evaluation of the Prevent Week of Action 2025 which was delivered by BCP Council for the South West region with extremely positive feedback. The partnership has also reviewed the latest data and information from local and national counter-terrorism police to inform the delivery plan for 2026.

The Community Safety Partnership and associated delivery groups continue to meet and review data and intelligence to ensure that we are taking an evidence-based approach to addressing crime and disorder in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

The Ten Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence took place in November/December 2025 with over 40 events, drop-ins, seminars and workshops offered to professionals and the general public.

Direction of Travel

Please provide a commentary on the direction of travel of the risk. It is appreciated risks may not change enough in a quarter to warrant a change to the scoring but please provide a direction of travel for the risk and provide an explanation against each assessment level.

Assessment Level	Direction of Travel during Quarter (please indicate: the same, increased, decreased)	Explanation
Gross Score		Crime and disorder fluctuates on a seasonal basis with increases in the summer months and decreases in the winter. Monitoring data on a rolling basis shows decreases in some crime types but not at a scale to remove the risk from the register.
Net Score		As above
Target Score		As above



Risk Hierarchy



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CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Recruitment of a Co-opted Academy Parent Governor Representative
Meeting date	16 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The Committee is asked to consider whether it wants to appoint a Co-opted Academy Parent Governor to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the process for the recruitment if agreed.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee agree to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the recruitment of Co-opted Academy Parent Governor Representative from a secondary phase setting; and • delegate any decision making to the Chair and Vice Chair as detailed in Paragraph 9 of this report.
Reason for recommendations	<p>To ensure that the Committee is constituted in accordance with the local choice membership options as set out in the Constitution, which allows for an Academy Trust representative to join the Committee, but does not require it.</p> <p>Recruitment of a representative from a secondary phase setting will provide a balance to the insight provided to the Committee through Parent Governor representatives, of which primary phase and special schools are already represented.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	N/A – Overview and Scrutiny is a non-executive function
Corporate Director	Robin Watson, Interim Monitoring Officer
Report Authors	<p>Louise Smith, Senior Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Lindsay Marshall, Scrutiny Specialist</p>
Wards	Not applicable
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. As the functions and duties of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee include making decisions in relation to the Council's education responsibilities, the BCP Council constitution makes provision for the inclusion of two church and two Parent Governor Representatives (PGRs) as voting members in addition to the Councillor Membership. The Constitution also allows for the Committee to co-opt representative from the Academy Trusts within the local authority area, to attend meetings and provide guidance and perspective on items relating to education. Academy representation is optional and not required by legislation. The right to appoint non-voting co-opted members to local government committees is set out in the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government Act 2000.
2. Following the successful appointment of two PGRs from maintained schools across BCP, the Committee is being asked to consider whether it wishes to appoint an Academy PGR.
3. The two PGRs from maintained schools represent the primary phase and special school settings and commenced their four year terms in January 2026.
4. The Committee previously had two Academy PRGs who shared the role and the allowance it attracted. They have both resigned from their positions leaving the position vacant.
5. Church representatives are chosen by the Church of England and Roman Catholic Dioceses and Democratic Services are in the process of contacting them to confirm their chosen nominations.
6. As the majority of schools across the BCP conurbation are Academies and not maintained schools, the Committee can benefit from, and bring equality to, its Parent Governor insight by inclusion of a representative from this category of schools. Further, it is suggested that applications are invited from PGRs from the **secondary phase** of education to enable insight to be brought from this category of schools, balancing the existing insight from primary and special school settings. **The Committee is therefore asked to consider whether it wishes to commence a recruitment process for an Academy PGR from secondary phase schools.**
7. In accordance with the constitution and relevant legislation, an Academy PGR would not be permitted to vote on any matters during Committee but would be able to contribute to discussions and support the Committee's overview and scrutiny function.
8. There is no term prescribed for Academy representatives by the Constitution, and it is therefore suggested that a representative be recruited for whichever is the shortest of:
 - The duration of their time as a Parent Governor for a secondary Academy, or
 - A maximum four year term

This is in keeping with the prescribed arrangements for maintained school PGRs.

Process and timescale for recruitment if agreed.

9. As this appointment is a local choice, there is no requirement to hold a resource intensive election should there be more than one applicant for the position (as is the case for maintained school PGRs). The Committee is instead asked to delegate authority to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee, supported by Democratic Services, to consider applications and appoint the most suitable candidate to the role.
10. If agreed, this process would commence immediately, and it is hoped that the successful candidate would commence their position from the start of the 2026/27 academic year.

Options Appraisal

11. The options available are to:
 - a. recruit to this role from secondary schools settings only,
 - b. recruit to the role from all Academies, not limited to secondary schools,
 - c. continue with the two maintained school PRGs and church representatives and no Academy representation.
12. Option A is recommended for the reasons set out in the body of this report.

Summary of financial implications

13. The PGR will receive remuneration in accordance with the relevant section of the agreed Members Allowance Scheme. The current remuneration for Co-opted Members of BCP Committees is £1,239 per annum.

Summary of legal implications

14. There are no legal implications arising from this report. The options set out within this report all ensure compliance with the BCP Constitution and the Local Government Acts of 1972 and 2000.

Summary of human resources implications

15. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

16. There will be no sustainability impact.

Summary of public health implications

17. There are no public health implications.

Summary of equality implications

18. This report continues arrangements in terms of co-opted membership on Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and seeks to confirm new representatives for these roles in line with the BCP Constitution. As there is no service change an equality impact assessment has not been undertaken.

19. Option A of the report is recommended because it will provide greater balance to the insight provided to the committee through parents with children in the BCP education system.

Summary of risk assessment

20. There are no risks arising from this report

Background papers

None.

Appendices

None.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	BCP Council's alignment with the National Youth Strategy
Meeting date	16 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report provides an overview of the current alignment of BCP Council against 'Youth Matters: The National Strategy'.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members note the publication and key priorities of the National Youth Strategy 2. Acknowledge the strong alignment between national, local, and corporate strategies. 3. Endorse the continued delivery of the Children and Young People's Partnership Plan as the primary vehicle for local implementation based on local priorities. 4. Support further development in key areas, including workforce capacity, funding clarity, infrastructure, and performance frameworks once further detail is made available.
Reason for recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For information and awareness. 2. To acknowledge the good work already taking place to support children and young people in BCP. 3. To recognise that the Children and Young People's Plan for BCP is already adopted and closely aligned to the National Strategy. 4. To recognise that further information is required on funding

	and resources in relation to any additional expectations contained within the National Strategy.
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Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Richard Burton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Skills
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director for Childrens Services
Report Authors	Cat McMillan, Head of Communities, Partnerships and Community Safety
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Government's "*Youth Matters National Youth Strategy (2025)*", outline its implications for BCP Council, and demonstrate the alignment with both the BCP Children and Young People's Partnership Plan (2025–2030) and the BCP Corporate Strategy (2024–2028).
2. In December 2025, the Government published *Youth Matters*, the first National Youth Strategy in over 20 years. Developed with input from over 14,000 young people, it sets out a 10-year vision to improve outcomes for young people aged 10–21 (up to 25 for those with SEND). It represents a significant reset in youth policy, with a focus on rebuilding services, strengthening partnerships, and embedding youth voice in decision-making.
3. The strategy responds to significant national challenges, including:
 - High levels of loneliness despite being highly connected online.
 - Less access to safe spaces and youth services after a decade of cuts.
 - Worries about education, jobs, and safety (especially among girls and vulnerable teens).
 - Falling mental health, worsened by the pandemic.
 - Large inequalities based on background, disability, and geography.

Key Features of the National Youth Strategy

Vision

4. The strategy sets out that by 2035, all young people should have:
 - Someone who cares (a trusted adult)
 - Somewhere safe to go
 - Something positive to do
 - A community where they belong
 - Opportunities to thrive through education, work, creativity, and health services

System-Level Changes

5. The strategy is built around three big system changes:
 - From National to Local – More decisions and funding power moved to local areas.
 - From Fragmented to Collaborative – Public services and organisations working together more effectively.
 - From Excluded to Empowered – Young people directly involved in creating and shaping policy.

Priority Themes

6. The strategy identifies ten priority actions which sit under the focus of ‘people who care’, ‘places to go and things to do’ and ‘seen and heard’. Further details of the activity detailed under the ten priorities is included in Appendix A.

Role of Local Authorities

7. The strategy contains a number of actions and priorities for a wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies, such as the police, education providers and the community and voluntary sector. This report focusses on the expectations of local authorities, who are expected to:
 - lead place-based planning and delivery
 - coordinate multi-agency partnerships
 - rebuild youth service capacity
 - ensure access to safe spaces and trusted adults
 - embed youth voice and co-production

Alignment with BCP Children and Young People’s Partnership Plan

8. The following section focusses on BCP Council’s alignment with the National strategy through our Children’s and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and Corporate Strategy. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all activity currently taking place but is intended to give a highly level overview and provide Members with assurance that we are already working towards the ambitions of the National Strategy to ensure best outcomes for children and young people.
9. A council-wide audit was undertaken in Spring 2026 to understand how we are currently meeting the government’s priorities under the National Strategy, or where future work is planned. Many of the priorities are intended to be delivered by partner organisations such as Dorset Police, community and voluntary sector, schools and further education providers. In addition, there are a number of trial projects which are included within the National Strategy which don’t immediately cover the BCP area. Details of how our current activity is mapped against the National Strategy is contained within Appendix B.
10. The CYPP is a new five-year initiative that reflects on our past achievements and outlines our goals until 2030. With our recent good Ofsted rating for children’s social care, we have seen the positive impact of putting children and young people at the heart of our efforts. The CYPP is strongly aligned with the National Youth Strategy and provides a robust local delivery framework and has a vision to ensure “*all*

children and young people have the best possible opportunities to flourish and succeed’.

Local Priorities (informed by young people)

11. The CYPP focuses on five key areas identified by children and young people:

- Feeling happy
- Being safe
- Feeling supported
- Being included
- Feeling fulfilled

Alignment with the BCP Corporate Strategy (2024–2028)

12. The Corporate Strategy provides the wider strategic context and reinforces youth-focused priorities across the council. Key overlap between the National Strategy and the CYPP are;

- Healthy communities – shared focus on wellbeing and reducing inequalities
- Safe communities – alignment on tackling crime, exploitation, and anti-social behaviour
- Opportunity and growth – focus on skills, employment, and inclusion
- Place and environment – access to safe, vibrant community spaces
- Prevention and early intervention – reducing demand through proactive support
- Partnership working – integrated, whole-system approaches

13. There is strong alignment between both the National Strategy, the CYPP and the Corporate Strategy which provides a foundation for further development once additional details are provided by the Government.

Key Issues and Opportunities

14. While alignment between our current activity and the National Strategy is strong, there are opportunities to strengthen delivery through the commitments made by central government. Most notably these are around:

- Workforce capacity and workforce planning for those working with children and young people- particularly the community and voluntary sector
- Potential funding and resources- the strategy suggest heavy reinvestment into youth services and youth workers but without any specific information
- The development of infrastructure and youth spaces that meet the current and future needs of children and young people
- Employment and skills opportunities
- Development of a national performance and outcome framework for consistency across areas
- Opportunity to strengthen the focus on digital resilience and safety and reduce the risk to exploitation through online activity

Next Steps

15. BCP will continue its current progress against the CYPP and associated workstreams. Once further information is received from the government regarding the wider expectations and associated funding we will be able to consider future options for additional work aligned to the Youth Strategy.

Summary of financial implications

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report and much of the detail within the National Strategy regarding investment into service for children and young people has either not been provided at this stage or duplicates with funding which has already been announced under a different scheme, such as the Pride in Place and Families First Programmes.
17. However, the National Youth Strategy suggest that there will be future place-based funding opportunities which we can review as they become available in order to align existing resources, identify external/match funding and support decision making.

Summary of legal implications

18. None directly arising from this report. Delivery will continue within existing statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding, education, and youth services.

Summary of human resources implications

19. None directly arising from this report. Delivery will continue within existing statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding, education, and youth services.

Summary of sustainability impact

20. None directly arising from this report.

Summary of public health implications

21. The National Strategy is focussed on the improvement of the health and wellbeing of children and young people. There are no implications directly arising from this report.

Summary of equality implications

22. The strategy and local plan place strong emphasis on reducing inequalities, supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and improving access to opportunities. This alignment supports the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty. This report is for information only at this stage and therefore an EQIA has not been undertaken at present.

Summary of risk assessment

23. The key risks in relation to the implementation of the national strategy include workforce capacity constraints, funding uncertainty at national level and reliance on external delivery partners.

Background papers

[Youth Matters; National Youth Strategy](#)

Appendices

Appendix A- full list of outcomes under the National Youth Strategy

Appendix B- mapping of current alignment to the National Youth Strategy

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10 Priority Action Areas

People who Care.

All young people deserve a trusted adult. However, as many as 1-in-5 don't have one outside of their home. This chapter focuses on better supporting the adults young people rely on and creating more chances for young people to build safe, trusting relationships. We want, by 2035, for half a million more young people to have access to a trusted adult outside of their home.

1. Trusted Adults

- Aim: 500,000 more young people with a trusted adult by 2035.
- More youth workers in communities, sports programmes, and mentoring schemes.
- Youth workers based in new Young Futures Hubs.

2. Strengthening the Youth Workforce

- £15m investment in training youth workers and volunteers.
- Improved qualifications and apprenticeships.
- Rebuilding local authority capacity and leadership.
- Up to 50 Young Futures Hubs by 2029.

3. Friends & Relationships

- Implement the Online Safety Act and boost media literacy.
- Tackle online harms, misogyny, and polarisation.
- Support girls' safety and men's mental health.
- New school belonging framework and expansion of Schools Linking.
- Delivering the VAWG Strategy around respectful relationships

Places to go and things to do

Young people have fewer places to go and less enriching things to do. This chapter focuses on investing in youth clubs and providing richer lives inside and outside of school. By 2035, we want to have halved the participation gap in enriching activities between disadvantaged young people and their peers.

4. Richer Lives: Activities & Enrichment

- £60m Richer Young Lives Fund for accessible youth activities.
- £600m for Holiday Activities & Food programme.
- Major investment in arts, sport, culture, Cadets, and enrichment in schools.

5. Good Work

- Major curriculum refresh for 2028.

- Two weeks of work experience for every student.
- Simplified post 16 pathways.
- £820m to expand the Youth Guarantee: learning, jobs, apprenticeships, and guaranteed paid work for long-term unemployed 18–21s.

6. Safety

- Goal: Halve knife crime within a decade.
- 3,000 more neighbourhood police officers.
- Anti-social behaviour leads in every police force.
- Mandatory training for bus staff.
- Every knife possession case referred to Youth Offending Teams.

7. Places to Go

- £350m for up to 250 youth facilities.
- £400m for community sport spaces.
- Better use of libraries, schools, faith buildings.
- Improvements to local transport and maintaining the £3 bus fare cap.

8. Health & Wellbeing

- Full rollout of Mental Health Support Teams in schools/colleges by 2029.
- Better access to early help through Young Futures Hubs.
- Actions on smoking, vaping, junk food and high-caffeine energy drinks.
- SEND support improvements.

Seen and heard

Young people should be much more involved in decisions that affect them. This chapter focuses on putting young people in the driving seat of their own lives and allowing them to hold the government to account for delivering on our promises.

9. Delivering With Young People

- Voting age lowered to 16.
- Citizenship education strengthened.
- Youth Councils in all areas.
- More youth-led decision making and social action.

10. Accountability

- Shared outcomes framework across government.
- Annual youth-led national hearing.
- Interim progress report in 2027.

- Public website for tracking progress.

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Securing the foundations

Before anything else, young people need stable and loving homes, food on the table, welcoming and safe communities, world-class healthcare, and high-quality formal education.

Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Tackling the underlying causes of child poverty, including through expanding free school meals eligibility, introducing free breakfast clubs in every primary school in England, and setting up the world's largest social outcomes fund to support those affected by or at risk of child poverty, including improving outcomes for youth homelessness. We are taking action to cut the cost of living and have taken the historic decision to remove the two-child limit in full from April 2026 which will lift 150,000 children out of poverty	Administration of the Crisis and Resilience Fund through existing Partnership Working	development on an anti-poverty strategy as part of the multi-agency approach through the Together We Can Partnership and administration of the Crisis and Resilience Fund and associated funding.

Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Delivering on a long-term housing strategy to support the delivery of 1.5 million homes within this Parliament as well as a homelessness strategy to prevent young people from entering the homelessness system	<p>Homeworks Programme focuses on Youth Homelessness – Youth Homelessness Board refreshed and renewed (only one in UK) – includes education, early intervention, prevention</p> <p>Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (MHCLG funded) focuses on accommodation for young people</p> <p>Protocol between housing and childrens on youth homelessness</p> <p>Housing Strategy includes priority for new affordable homes, active programme in place</p> <p>Just in process of refreshing our own council newbuild programme which will deliver 980 homes over 10 years</p> <p>Specialist Accommodation Strategy coming to Cabinet in March – sets commissioning requirements for specialist schemes including young people</p>	<p>Expand provision specific to young people</p> <p>Expand collaborative working</p> <p>Need to consider revenue funding for appropriate support awaiting further details from Government</p>

Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
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Giving children the Best Start in Life with better access to early education, parenting support, and improved community services as well as rebalancing the Children's Social Care system toward earlier intervention. Best Start in Life Plan developed and agreed by Cabinet March 26

Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Delivering on our 10 Year Health Plan and improving young people's access to healthcare services	Best Start in Life Plan developed and agreed by Cabinet March 26 SEND Improvement Plan Family Hubs 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service Young People's substance misuse and sexual health services	

Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Ensuring every child can achieve and thrive at school, enjoying an education that is academically challenging and rich in opportunity		awaiting further details from Government

Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Introducing the first multi-year local government funding settlement in over a decade and delivering up to £5 billion of funding and support to the most in-need neighbourhoods through the Pride in Place programme	Supporting the Pride in Place Programme areas- Boscombe West, West Howe and Hamworthy	community led priorities and actions

Chapter 1: People Who Care

All young people deserve a trusted adult. However, as many as 1-in-5 don't have one outside of their home. This chapter focuses on better supporting the adults young people rely on and creating more chances for young people to build safe, trusting relationships. We want, by 2035, for half a million more young people to have access to a trusted adult outside of their home.

	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Action 1: Trusted adults	Helping adults spot early signs of loneliness and intervene using evidence and best practice	New activity under the National Strategy	To contribute to this work, the ASC Commissioning Prevention and Wellbeing Team could support with links to local VCSE sector organisations such as Dorset Mind, YMCA Bournemouth and SWAD
Supporting more trusted adults to engage with and guide young people when and where they need it most	Expanding training in mental health, safeguarding, communication, and online wellbeing for adults who support young people	Joint Commissioning plan BCP Safeguarding Partnership Priorities	Link to the Children's Joint Commissioning Partnership Align Youth Strategy Priorities with the BCP Childrens Safeguarding Partnership priority risks , establishing mechanisms to feed into the BCP Safeguarding Partnership To contribute to this work, the ASC Commissioning Prevention and Wellbeing Team could support with links to local VCSE sector organisations such as Dorset Mind, YMCA Bournemouth and SWAD
	Creating and expanding programmes with the sports sector to boost wellbeing, tackle loneliness, and build positive relationships	New activity under the National Strategy	To contribute to this work, there is potential to support the development of intergenerational exercise / physical activity groups, classes and activity to boost wellbeing, tackle loneliness and build positive relationships for both young people and older adults. Currently as part of the ASC Prevention Strategy, the ASC Commissioning Prevention and Wellbeing Team is working with Public Health and the Communities teams to explore physical health and falls prevention. This could link with the work we are doing here. awaiting further details from Government
	Placing youth workers and professionals providing targeted support in Young Futures Hubs so that young people have the advice and support they need on their doorstep	Children and Young Peoples Plan Youth café established in Muscliff and in development at Number 18. Mobile café working across the BCP area offering volunteering opportunities and alternative qualifications	
	Partnering with the private sector to increase mentors for disadvantaged young people and improve their engagement with their education and community	New activity under the National Strategy	Links to Childrens Rights and Engagements Service /MYPs and mentoring service
	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Action 2: Strengthening the workforce.	Investing £15 million over 3 years in youth workers, volunteers, and trusted adults, including helping organisations to recruit, train, and keep more fantastic people to support young people	Children and Young Peoples Plan Youth café established in Muscliff and in development at Number 18. Mobile café working across the BCP area offering volunteering opportunities and alternative qualifications Development of Youth Advice, Support and Employment Hub with Department of Work and Pensions	Deliver shared safeguarding and youth practice training offer across stat services and CVS
Developing and growing a skilled and sustainable paid and volunteer youth sector workforce, with the highest standards to meet young people's needs.	Ensuring the youth sector workforce has access to high-quality training and resources to engage safely with young people	New activity under the National Strategy	Ensure Commissioned providers have access to high quality training , professional supervision and reflective practice not just supervision Ensure commissioned providers have workforce expectations within contracts /grant agreements etc ,incl Safeguarding competency and ongoing development requirements
	Improving youth work qualifications and access to youth work apprenticeships	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government

Spending nearly £70 million over the next 3 years to help local areas better support young people and develop a network of up to 50 Young Futures Hubs by March 2029	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
Working with infrastructure bodies, youth organisations, and young people, as well as statutory bodies and funders, to co-design our approach to sector funding	CYPP	Ensure all activity links in through Governance to the Children and Young People Partnership linking milestones with the CYPP plan
Running a Local Covenant Partnerships programme to support civil society to work with local authorities and providers to better deliver for young people	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
Unlocking match-funding and encouraging place-based philanthropy to support more sustainable funding for youth services	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government

	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Action 3: Friends and relationships.	Embedding and delivering the Online Safety Act to keep young people safe online	Safer BCP work each Safer Internet Day (February each year) to promote online safety and also online safety covered in the Prevent Week of Action every October. Also a bid for Preventing radicalisation funding was successful and work is currently going on through Bournemouth & Poole College and 2 SEN schools in BCP around the vulnerabilities of SEN pupils to being drawn into online issues including radicalisation. Also as part of this work there will be webinars for professionals and parents again highlighting risk of online safety and keeping young people safe online	
Helping young people to develop positive social connections in schools and colleges, in their communities, and online.	Providing young people with digital and media literacy skills to better prepare them for life and work in a more digital world	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
	Supporting schools to better understand pupils' experiences and address behaviour and bullying	Delivery plan for Belonging Strategy underway.	awaiting further details from Government
	Continue to support the work of the Schools Linking programme to help young people build long-lasting friendships	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
	Supporting young men to access support for their mental health and funding innovative pathfinder programmes to help boys and young men build connections and supportive networks	Positive masculinity sessions being run in schools by Safer BCP particularly during Sexual Violence Awareness Week and also 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence in Nov and Dec each year.	awaiting further details from Government
	Delivering the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy to educate young people about respectful relationships and consent and shape healthy attitudes and behaviours	VAWG is one of the three priorities for Safer BCP, the Community Safety Partnership for BCP. A comprehensive action tracker and KPIs sit behind the local action which is predominantly funded via the Serious Violence Funding from the Home Office. Campaigns such as #justdon't and the Harmful Sexual Behaviours framework	awaiting further details from Government

Chapter 2: Places to go and things to do

Young people have fewer places to go and less enriching things to do. This chapter focuses on investing in youth clubs and providing richer lives inside and outside of school. By 2035, we want to have halved the participation gap in enriching activities between disadvantaged young people and their peers.

	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Action 4: Richer Lives Providing enriching and meaningful activities for young people in and outside of education	Providing more than £60 million over the next 3 years for a new Richer Young Lives Fund, creating more high-quality fun activities and youth work opportunities in areas that need it most	Youth Access Points x2 (East and West) delivering support/groups/training and programmes for YP	awaiting further details from Government
	Investing £22.5 million over 3 years to create a better enrichment offer in up to 400 schools	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
	Delivering £132.5 million of funding as part of our Every Child Can programme, to ensure that children and young people have access to a wide range of enriching activities inside and outside of school Supporting access to activities during school holidays, by investing £600 million over the next 3 years in the Holiday Activities and Food programme Ensuring that young people can participate fully in high-quality sport and physical activity, supported by new School Sport Partnerships and £250 million of funding over 5 years from Sport England into local sport and physical activity	UPinBCP website and Social Media channels for YP HAF currently delivered across BCP Healthy Movers Programme (Public Health)	awaiting further details from Government
Action 5: Good Work Providing better education, guidance, training, and support for young people to get a great job	Delivering a broad, ambitious, and inclusive curriculum so every young person can develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes needed to thrive throughout life	Children and Young Peoples Plan Youth café established in Muscliff and in development at Number 18. Mobile café working across the BCP area offering volunteering opportunities and alternative qualifications Development of Youth Advice, Support and Employment Hub with Department of Work and Pensions	Development of Education Effectiveness Framework with clear offer of support and network opportunities. Development of BCP's Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) and Graduated Approach. Development of a BCP three-tier AP model.
	Investing £15 million to expand our attendance mentoring programme	Work of attendance team Part of DfE Severe Absence Pilot	Children and Young Peoples Partnership Action Plan being developed awaiting further details from Government
	Raising the bar on careers education and introducing two weeks of work experience for every young person across the course of their secondary education	Events undertaken with schools raising awareness of work experience requirements. Pilot Key Stage Three work experience project with seven schools.	awaiting further details from Government
	Simplifying and enhancing the post-16 qualification landscape in England so that it is easier for young people to find the right training and opportunities	New activity under the National Strategy	Development of Education, Employment & Training Strategy
	Investing £820 million over the next 3 years to deliver an expanded Youth Guarantee across Great Britain, supporting every 16 to 24 year-old into learning, jobs, or apprenticeships with tailored help, expanded opportunities, over 360 employment Youth Hubs, and guaranteed paid work for 18 to 21 year-olds on Universal Credit and looking for work for 18 months	New activity under the National Strategy	Pan Dorset Get Britain Working Strategy and Education, Employment & Training Strategy
	Spending £187 million over 4 years to prepare people for careers across the digital and tech sectors, bringing digital skills and AI learning into classrooms and communities through the TechFirst programme	New activity under the National Strategy	Develop Education, Employment & Training Strategy
	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required

Action 6: Keeping young people safe	Increasing the safety of our streets by restoring neighbourhood policing	Promotions/Campaigns already underway through the Community Safety Team/Safer BCP for projects such as #Just Dont - reducing street based sexual harassment and Unity Promise - project with venues throughout BCP which helps them to make their venues a safer place for women and girls Also working with People First Forum and Safer BCP to widen the project for Safe Spaces so that anyone, including young people, can go into over 170 venues /businesses across BCP who display the Safe Space sticker if they feel threatened, unsafe or need help	
Intervening earlier to increase young people's safety in communities	Putting a dedicated lead officer for anti-social behaviour in every force, working with communities to develop a local anti-social behaviour action plan	Creation of an ASB Strategy that is joint between Police and BCP. BCP Public Health already commission BCP Public Protection Team to provide a Youth ASB officer. Youth ASB officer in Public Protection – funded by Public Health Community Safety Partnership has a priority on ASB – Strategy being developed.	ASB Strategy needs to align to Youth Strategy
	Piloting Young Futures Panels in local areas to identify young people vulnerable to being drawn into crime and providing them support at the right time	Housing Protocol needs to consider this	Review protocols in line with new strategy
	Introducing mandatory training for bus staff to recognise and respond to criminal and anti-social behaviour to help young people feel safer on the bus	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
Action 7: Providing more places to go to	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Creating a new generation of welcoming youth spaces	Spending nearly £350 million over the next 4 years on existing and new youth facilities with the expansion of our Better Youth Spaces programme and working with communities and partners to make better use of underused spaces	Homewards Programme focuses on Youth Homelessness – Youth Homelessness Board refreshed and renewed (only one in UK) – includes education, early intervention, prevention	To contribute to this work there could be potential for collaboration with Tricuro Centres for intergenerational activities. Currently, in ASC Commissioning, the Prevention and Wellbeing and Personalisation Commissioning Teams are working with the Communities Team, Livewell Dorset and Tricuro to explore how we can make use of the Tricuro sites across BCP as they are currently being under-utilised. Livewell Dorset will be trialling some health check clinics to see how flexible the use of the space is.
	Spending over £400 million on new and upgraded grassroots community sport facilities which promote health and wellbeing	providing advice and guidance to community groups alongside a dedicated funding officer, funding search engine and regular funding newsletters.	awaiting further details from Government
	Increasing access to outdoor spaces and publishing an Access to Nature Green Paper to set out our plans	Plan for Play; Green Infrastructure Strategy; Partnership work with the Parks Foundation	awaiting further details from Government
	Improving local transport networks with over £18 billion of investment for Local Transport Authorities and the new Bus Services Act 2025 to improve bus services	Local Transport Plan	awaiting further details from Government
Action 8: Health and wellbeing	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Supporting young people's physical and mental health to allow all young people to take up opportunities and live richer lives.	Exploring options to improve access to accurate health information, co-locate health and youth services and prioritise young people in research	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
	Rolling out mental health support teams in schools and colleges to reach full national coverage by 2029 -embedding wellbeing support within Young Futures Hubs with 'no wrong front door' approach, supporting access to National Health Service (NHS) mental health services for young people who need more specialist support	CAMHS EMHWP Transformation programme (Health) Targeted Intervention Service(TIS) providing 1:1 support to YP and their families on a range of needs and barriers Collaborative MH and wellbeing work with in Youth Advise Points (YAP's pending full CYP MH transformation) Neurodiversity Transformation (Health)	

Ensuring mainstream schools and colleges are better equipped to support young people with SEN/D and complex health needs, with a stronger focus on early intervention

Local Area SEND and AP Improvement Plan underway

Local Area SEND and AP Strategy to be developed following publication of White Paper.

Encourage young people to make healthy choices by passing the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and restricting junk food advertising

Public Health funding a Trading Standards Officer post to tackle under-age sales of tobacco and vapes

Public Health keen to develop a council policy to restrict junk food advertising near schools and/or on council premises

Chapter 3: Seen and heard

Young people should be much more involved in decisions that affect them. This chapter focuses on putting young people in the driving seat of their own lives and allowing them to hold the government to account for delivering on our promises.

	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Action 9: Delivering with young people	Lowering the voting age to 16 for all elections	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
Putting young people in the driving seat of their own lives.	Investing in tools, resources, and innovative approaches to ensure young people have the opportunity and power to share their views at a national and local level	Members of Youth Parliament; BCP Youth Forum; UNITE and INSIGHT (Children in care and care experienced voice); being created - BCP SEND YPS voice group; National opportunities are accessed by BCP yps on a voluntary level - currently BCP Homewards and CORAM VOICE national projects have BCP yps lived experience reps; MYPs opted onto CS O+S; YPPs reps at Corporate Parenting Board; currently exploring yps link to Children and Young People's Partnership Board	awaiting further details from Government
	Creating ways for young people to be involved in national and local funding decisions regarding services for young people	BCP Youth Fund - annual £25K funding project led by yps (subject to 26/27 budget);	awaiting further details from Government
	Objectives	Local Action Underway	Future Local Action Required
Action 10: Holding us to account	Developing a range of methods, including digital, for young people to access updates on progress made against our 10 action areas	Members of Youth Parliament; BCP Youth Forum; UNITE and I	Link to CYPP Board IT to support if required
Meeting our promise to young people.	Inviting young people to run an annual national hearing on our delivery	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
	Publishing an interim delivery report in 2027 outlining progress on our delivery and impact	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government
	Evaluating the overall impact of the strategy on young people and those supporting them to understand the change created and improve our approach in the future	New activity under the National Strategy	awaiting further details from Government

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Youth Justice Plan 2026-2027
Meeting date	16 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) places a statutory requirement on local authority youth offending teams to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services. This report summarises the Youth Justice Plan for 2026/27, with a copy of the Plan appended. The Youth Justice Plan needs to be approved by the full Council.</p> <p>The Youth Justice Plan shows strong performance by the service. Achievements include diverting children from the justice system, avoiding the use of custody for children, and the quality of work to reduce the likelihood of reoffending and to repair the harm caused to victims.</p> <p>Priorities for the year ahead are to respond to national and local reform programmes, enhancing 'Child First' practice, developing work with victims, reducing the over-representation of some groups of children in the justice system, and making best use of available resources.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Committee to endorse the Youth Justice Plan so that Cabinet can recommend its approval to Full Council.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>Youth Justice Services are required to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which should be approved by the Local Authority for that Youth Justice Service. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works across both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and Dorset Council. Approval is therefore sought from both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council and from Dorset Council.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People, Education and Skills
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director, Children's Services
Report Authors	David Webb, Head of Service, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) requires Youth Offending Teams (now known as Youth Justice Services) to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Board sets out detailed and prescriptive guidance about what must be included in the Plan, making it a lengthy document. The draft Youth Justice Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is attached at Appendix One. A brief summary of the Youth Justice Plan is provided in this report.

Summary of the Youth Justice Plan 2026-27

2. The Youth Justice Plan provides information on the resourcing, structure, governance, partnership arrangements and performance of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service. The Plan also describes the national and local youth justice context for 2026/27 and sets out our priorities for this year.
3. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was rated 'Good' in its most recent inspection report, which was published in January 2023. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) was also inspected, in February 2025, as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. The report from this inspection was published in October 2025. The inspection report refers to good practice in Dorset in the partnership work between DCYJS and Dorset Police, in the work to engage victims and to provide restorative justice, and in YJS Speech and Language work.
4. The Youth Justice Board continues to publish data for three 'key performance indicators' for youth justice. National performance data is published as a combined figure for the two local authorities within the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service partnership.
5. The first indicator relates to the rate of young people entering the justice system for the first time. Overall local performance in this area, across both local authorities, has improved significantly in recent years. In the year before the pandemic, 2019/20, 104 BCP Council children entered the justice system. In the past year, 2025/26, 56 BCP Council children entered the justice system. Pages 11-18 of the Youth Justice Plan provide more data and analysis about the children entering the justice system and about local work to divert children from the justice system.

6. The second indicator relates to the rate and frequency of reoffending. The national reoffending rate fluctuates, partly because of the counting rules for this measure. Analysis of local data, summarised on pp18-21 of the Youth Justice Plan, provides more insight into how many children are reoffending and the characteristics of those who reoffend.
7. The third national performance indicator looks at the number and rate of children receiving a custodial sentence. There continue to be low numbers of BCP Council children who receive a custodial sentence. Analysis on pp 21-22 of the Youth Justice Plan shows some of the common characteristics of children who are sentenced to custody. It is notable that these children have difficulties across the range of social care, education and health issues.
8. The Youth Justice Board promotes a good practice approach to youth justice work, known as 'Child First'. The Youth Justice Plan shows how the principles of Child First practice are applied in the work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service.
9. Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service continues to face resourcing pressures. Section 5.2 of the Youth Justice Plan explains the funding outlook for DCYJS. Making best use of available resources is a service priority for the year ahead.
10. The government published new Knife Crime Guidance in February 2026, for implementation from April 2026. Section 5.6 of the Plan shows how DCYJS and Dorset Police will ensure compliance with the new guidance.
11. It is recognised nationally that some groups of children are over-represented in the youth justice system. Children from minority ethnicities have not been over-represented in the BCP Council area, but data in the second half of 2025-26 shows that the numbers have now exceeded the proportion in the population. A small change in numbers would bring the proportions back in line with the local population; the YJS will continue to monitor this data in 2026/27 to identify if remedial actions are required. Children in Care and children with an EHCP continue to be over-represented. There is also evidence to show that almost all children in contact with the youth justice system have speech, language and communication needs, which are almost always identified for the first time when an assessment is completed by a YJS Speech and Language Therapist. The Youth Justice Plan provides more information about which groups of children are over-represented in the justice system and about actions being taken in response.
12. YJS work with victims, and work with children to help them to repair the harm from their offences, is described in 6.6 of the Plan. This work will be one of the service priorities in the year ahead.
13. In addition to the Knife Crime Guidance mentioned in paragraph 4.10, the government is also initiating other youth justice reforms during 2026. Responding to these reforms, and to other reform programmes in children's services and health services, forms another priority for the YJS in the year ahead.
14. The DCYJS Strategic Partnership Priorities for 2026/27 are:
 - Respond to national and local reforms in youth justice and children's services
 - Enhance Child First Practice
 - Develop YJS and Partnership work with victims
 - Reduce the Over-Representation of some groups of children in the justice system

- Make best use of available resources.

Options Appraisal

15. It is a statutory requirement to publish a Youth Justice Plan, and the Youth Justice Plan must adhere to the Youth Justice Board's Guidance document. Locally, the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board oversees the contents of the Youth Justice Plan and the selection of service priorities. The draft Youth Justice Plan was approved by the YJS Partnership Board on 16 April 2026.

Summary of financial implications

16. Section 5.2, and Appendix Two, of the Youth Justice Plan shows the resourcing of the Youth Justice Service. Local authority funding contributions remain frozen at 2022/23 levels. The Ministry of Justice announced in February 2026 that the national Youth Justice Grant will be frozen at 2025/26 levels until at least 2029. The Youth Justice Service achieves a balanced budget through a combination of staffing reductions and additional fixed-term funding streams.

Summary of legal implications

17. The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) sets out legal requirements for a multi-agency 'Youth Offending Team' in each local authority area and for the publication of an annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Plan for 2026/27 shows how Dorset Council fulfils the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act.

Summary of human resources implications

18. No Human Resources implications have been identified. Local Authority YJS staff members are employees of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council, including those team members who work in the Dorset Council area. The YJS also includes employees of the partner agencies who have been seconded to work in the team and who remain employed by the partner agency. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 contains statutory requirements for the staffing composition of youth offending services. The Youth Justice Plan shows how Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service meets these requirements.

Summary of sustainability impact

19. No adverse environmental impact has been identified. The Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequent reduction of office space, led to an increase in YJS staff members working from home, with a consequent reduction in staff travel. YJS work with children includes some activities in the natural environment, such as the 'Discover You' project at Upton Country Park, which is described on pp 44-46 of the Youth Justice Plan.

Summary of public health implications

20. Young people in contact with youth justice services are known to be more likely than other young people to have unmet or unidentified health needs. The Youth Justice Service includes seconded health workers who work directly with young people and who facilitate their engagement with community health services. The Youth Justice

Plan includes an update on health provision for children in the justice system (see pages 46-50).

Summary of equality implications

21. The Youth Justice Plan does not relate to a new strategy, policy or function so an Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. Some information about equalities issues is included in the report. No adverse equalities impacts have been identified.
22. It is recognised nationally that young people with diverse heritage, and young people in the care of the local authority, are over-represented in the youth justice system and particularly in the youth custodial population. It is also recognised that young people known to the YJS may experience learning difficulties or disabilities, including in respect of speech, language and communication needs. Information from Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service records, summarised in the Youth Justice Plan, shows that some of these issues of over-representation also apply in our area. Actions have been identified in the Youth Justice Plan to address these issues.

Summary of risk assessment

23. The Youth Justice Plan sets out local priorities and actions to prevent and reduce offending by young people. These priorities and actions have been developed in response to identified risks and concerns. The recommendation for councillors to endorse the Youth Justice Plan is intended to support the Youth Justice Service to reduce the risks associated with youth offending. No specific risks have been identified as arising from this recommendation.




Background papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Youth Justice Plan 2026/27.

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 D O R S E T
 C O M B I N E D
 Youth Justice Service



YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2026/27

Service	Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service
Head of Service	David Webb
Chair of YJS Board	Paul Dempsey

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Youth Justice Plan 2026/27

1 Executive Summary

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) works across the Dorset Council and BCP Council areas in a multi-agency partnership between the local authorities, Dorset Police, NHS Dorset and the Probation Service.

DCYJS helps children to make positive changes, keeping them safe, keeping other people safe, and repairing the harm caused to victims. When possible, we do this work outside the formal justice system, to avoid criminalising the child.

During the past year, DCYJS has made progress on the priorities set out in last year's Plan:

Continue to divert children from the formal justice system: the number of children across Dorset and BCP who received a first caution or court order dropped to 104 in 2025/26. This is the 6th consecutive year which has seen a significant reduction on the previous year.

Reducing over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system: there was a small reduction in the proportion of children in care on the YJS caseload by March 2026. No children with Black, Asian or Mixed Heritage ethnicity were sentenced to custody in 2025/26.

Improve education outcomes for children in the justice system: DCYJS expanded its Discover You project at Upton Country Park, supporting young people to become ready for college or employment. Outcomes from this project are listed in section 6.4 of this document.

Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion: 152 children have now been referred to the Re-Engage project from 26 schools across both local authorities. From 90 completed assessments, 78% of children have been found to have communication needs.

Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence: the YJS 'repairing the harm' team now works with an increased number of community projects. Over £2,000 was raised from the sale of items made by children as part of their work to repair the harm from their offence. This money is donated to charities and local community organisations.

The DCYJS Partnership Strategic Priorities for 2026/27 are:

- Respond to national and local reforms in youth justice and children's services
- Enhance Child First Practice
- Develop YJS and Partnership work with victims
- Reduce the Over-Representation of some groups of children in the justice system
- Make best use of available resources.

These priorities sit alongside ongoing commitments to help children in the youth justice system to achieve positive outcomes and to repair the harm caused to victims.

2 Introduction, vision, strategy, and local context

2.1 Foreword

This document is the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) for 2026/27. It sets out the key priorities and targets for the service for the next 12 months as required by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. This Plan adheres to the Youth Justice Board's document 'Youth Justice Plans: Guidance for Youth Justice Services'.

This Plan has been developed under the direction and oversight of the DCYJS Partnership Board, alongside consultation with DCYJS staff and feedback from children, parents and victims working with DCYJS.

The Youth Justice Strategic Plan:

- summarises the DCYJS structure, governance and partnership arrangements.
- outlines the resources available to the DCYJS.
- reviews achievements and developments during 2025/26.
- identifies emerging issues and describes the partnership's priorities.
- sets out our priorities and actions for improving youth justice outcomes this year.

*Paul Dempsey, Executive Director People – Children, Dorset Council
Chair, Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Partnership Board.*

2.2 Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Statement of Purpose

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service works with children in the local youth justice system. Our purpose is to help those children to make positive changes, to keep them safe, to keep other people safe, and to repair the harm caused to victims.

We support the national Youth Justice Board Vision for a 'child first' youth justice system:

A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This will prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims.

2.3 Who We Are and What We Do

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a statutory partnership between Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council, Dorset Council, Dorset Police, The Probation Service (Dorset) and NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board.

We are a multi-disciplinary team which includes youth justice officers, restorative justice specialists, parenting workers, education and employment workers, police officers, a probation officer, mental health nurses, a psychologist, speech and language therapists and a volunteers and activities coordinator.

More information about the Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership and the members of the YJS team is provided later in this document.

The team works with children who have committed criminal offences to help them make positive changes and to keep them safe and to keep other people safe. We also work with parents and carers to help them support their children to make changes.

We contact all victims of crimes committed by the children we work with. We offer those victims the chance to take part in restorative justice processes so we can help to repair the harm they have experienced. We also seek other ways to provide support to victims, particularly victims who are children.

The organisations in the YJS partnership also work together to prevent children entering the youth justice system, to improve the quality of our local youth justice system and to ensure that young people who work with the YJS can access the specialist support they need for their care, health and education.

The combination of direct work with children, parents and victims, and work to improve our local youth justice and children’s services systems, enables us to meet our strategic objectives to:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system.
- Improve the safety and well-being of children in the youth justice system.
- Reduce and repair the harm caused to victims and the community.
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

2.4 Local Context

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service (DCYJS) is a partnership working across two local authorities: Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council.

Dorset Council covers a large geographical, predominantly rural area with market towns and a larger urban area in Weymouth and Portland. Dorset Council has a population of about 389,947 (ONS 2024 mid-year estimates).

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form a conurbation with a population of 408,967 (ONS 2024 mid-year estimates).

Other members of the DCYJS Partnership, such as Dorset Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS Dorset, Dorset HealthCare Trust and the Probation Service (Dorset) also work across both local authorities.

The following table provides comparative demographic information about young people in both local authorities at the start of 2026. Fuller versions of this data, including data source information, can be found in [Appendix 3](#):

Population Age 10-17	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Dorset
Number of Children ¹	35,978	34,575
Male ¹	51.3%	51.0%
Female ¹	48.7%	49.0%
Pupils eligible for Free School Meals ²	21.6%	22.3%
Pupils with SEN Support ²	15.9%	14.7%
Pupils with an EHC Plan ²	5.7%	7.1%
Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups ³	17.8%	6.3%
Children living in Poverty after housing costs	27%	25.70%

Safeguarding Age 10-17		
Number of Children in Need ⁵	385	582
Male ⁵	53.2%	53%
Female ⁵	46.8%	47%
Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan ⁷	179	132
Number of Children in Care ⁶	388	341
Male ⁶	54.9%	60%
Female ⁶	44.8%	40%
Indeterminate ⁶	0.3%	
Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation		
High Risk/Significant	43 ⁸	19 ⁷
Medium Risk/Moderate	54 ⁸	46 ⁷
Low Risk/Emerging or Reducing	118 ⁸	43 ⁷

Although the two local authorities differ in geographical size and demography, they have similar population sizes for 10-17 year-olds. Dorset Council has slightly higher rates of children eligible for free school meals and slightly lower rates of children living in poverty after housing costs.

The proportion of 10-17 year-olds identifying as being from non-white ethnicities is higher in BCP Council (17.8%) than in Dorset Council (6.3%).

3 Governance, leadership, and partnership arrangements

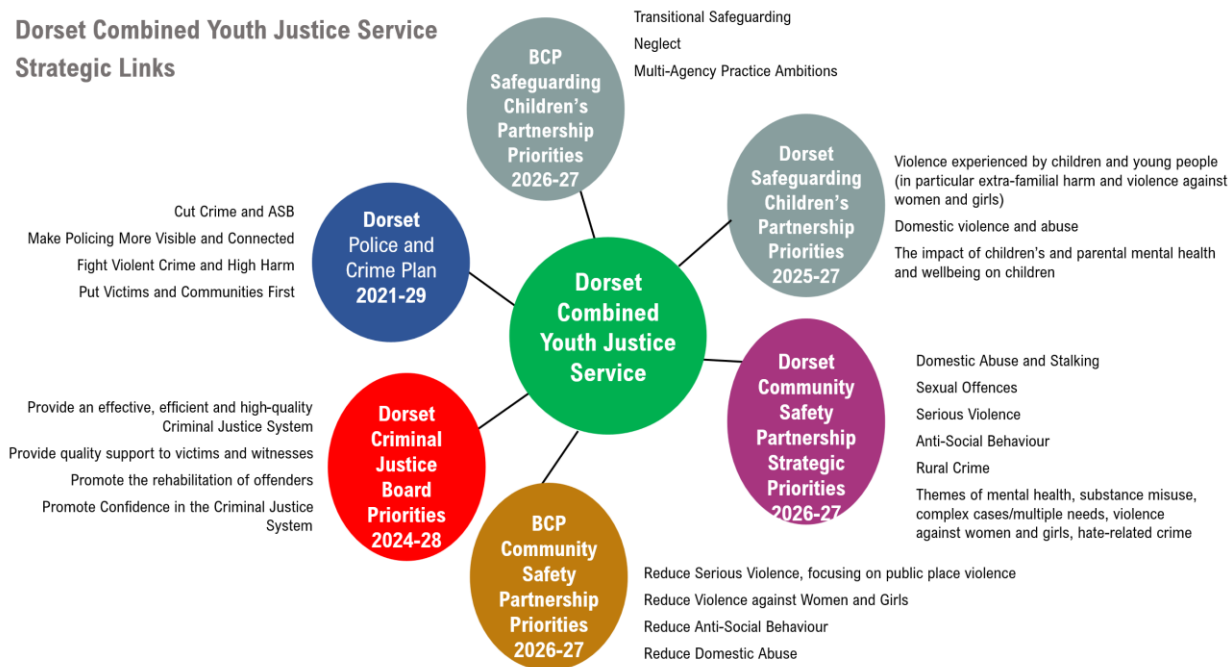
The work of the Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service is managed strategically by a Partnership Board. The Partnership Board consists of senior representatives of the statutory partner organisations, together with other relevant local partners.

Membership:

- Dorset Council (chair)
- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (vice-chair)
- Dorset Police
- The Probation Service (Dorset)
- NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board
- Public Health Dorset
- Dorset Healthcare University Foundation Trust
- Dorset Magistrates' Youth Panel
- Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Partnership Board oversees the development of the Youth Justice Plan. Board members and the DCYJS Head of Service sit on other strategic partnerships, helping to ensure that the Youth Justice Plan and other local strategic plans and priorities are integrated and that other plans consider the needs of children and victims in the local youth justice system. The links between DCYJS and local strategic groups, and their overlapping strategic priorities, are illustrated below:

Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service Strategic Links



Representation by senior leaders from the key partners enables the DCYJS Head of Service to resolve any difficulties in multi-agency working at a senior level and supports effective links at managerial and practitioner levels.

The DCYJS participates in local multi-agency agreements for information sharing, for safeguarding and for the escalation of concerns. The DCYJS Partnership Data Sharing Agreement underpins local multi-agency work to prevent offending and to reduce reoffending.

The DCYJS Partnership Board oversees activities by partner agencies which contribute to the key youth justice outcomes, particularly in respect of the prevention of offending.

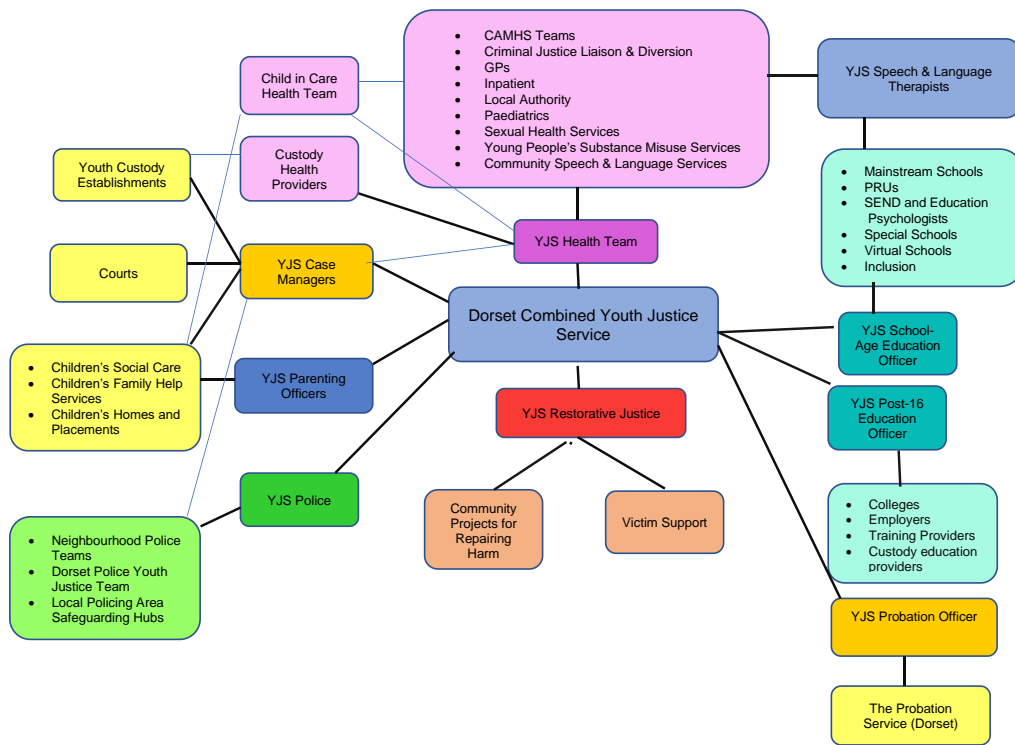
The Partnership Board also provides oversight and governance for local multi-agency protocols in respect of the criminalisation of children in care and the detention of children in police custody. The DCYJS Manager chairs multi-agency operational groups for each protocol and reports on progress to the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS is hosted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. The Head of Service is a Tier 3 Manager, reporting to the Director of Children’s Social Care. The Head of Service also reports to the Corporate Director for Care and Protection in Dorset Council.

[Appendix 1](#) includes the structure chart for DCYJS and structure charts showing where the YJS sits in each local authority.

DCYJS meets the statutory staffing requirements for youth justice services, set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Specialist staff members are seconded into the service by Dorset Police, the Probation Service and Dorset HealthCare University Foundation Trust. These workers have line managers in both the YJS and their employing organisation. They have direct access to their own organisation’s case management systems, to enable the prompt and proportionate sharing of information. More details about the staffing and financial contributions from YJS partners are provided in [Appendix 2](#).

The YJS multi-disciplinary team also includes education specialists, parenting workers and restorative justice practitioners. The team works closely with other local services, as illustrated below:



4 Update on the previous year

4.1 Progress on priorities in last year's plan

The following section gives a brief summary of progress made against our strategic priorities for 2025-26:

Continue to divert children from the formal justice system:

- The rate of first-time entrants in 2025 was 7.6% lower than in 2024, and 58% lower than the rate in 2018, showing the progress that has been made in the past year and over a longer period.
- The Ministry of Justice Turnaround programme grant was used to fund an additional YJS worker, a Restorative Justice Practitioner and a Speech and Language Therapist to strengthen the offer to children on the cusp of the justice system.
- The Turnaround programme has enabled local implementation and consolidation of the police crime disposal option 'Outcome 22' for children with low level offences, as an alternative to a formal justice outcome.
- The YJS Speech and Language team's 'Re-Engage' programme provided speech and language assessments and support for children at risk of school exclusion. Funding was extended for a third year, to July 2027.
- Plans to establish local diversion options for children with motoring offences have not yet been finalised. 12% of First-Time Entrants in 2025/26 had motoring offences only.

Reducing over-representation of minority groups in the youth justice system:

- YJS performance data reporting is broken down by disadvantaged groups to check for any over-representation.
- Children in Care continue to be over-represented in our local youth justice system, in both local authorities. The proportion of Children in Care on the YJS caseload in March 2026 was 18.5% (compared to 22% in September 2025). Good practice in multi-agency work with Children in Care in the justice system has been identified and is being shared to ensure that it is applied consistently.

- Children from minority ethnicities are under-represented in the youth justice system in the Dorset Council area.
- In the second half of the past year, the percentage of children from minority ethnicities in the youth justice system in the BCP Council area has exceeded the percentage in the population (based on 2026 school census data). This data is being analysed and monitored to understand if this is a temporary issue and to look for possible reasons.
- Children from minority ethnicities are no longer over-represented among local children receiving custodial sentences.
- Amongst children remanded in custody, 1 out of 5 had mixed ethnicity and another had White European ethnicity.
- The DCYJS Head of Service represents DCYJS and other local YJS Managers in the Local Criminal Justice Boards' 'Wessex Disproportionality Group'.
- Dorset Police report annually to the YJS Partnership Board on the local use of stop and search and of strip search for children.
- Analysis of YJS Speech and Language assessments, explained later in this document, has improved understanding and responses to children's specific communication needs.
- Although girls are not over-represented in the justice system, they have specific needs which require tailored support. The YJS successfully ran its first 'Girls Group' in 2025, with more groups planned for 2026.

Improve education outcomes for children in the youth justice system:

- During the past year we have expanded the Discover You project at Upton Country Park. The project supports children and young people who are not in employment, education or training. Young people have worked on Maths and English qualifications, prepared for their CSCS card assessments, gained AQA awards, developed an allotment area, and worked on conservation.
- The use of AQA awards to certificate learning by young people during YJS activities has continued to develop, with the award moderation process now established.
- YJS Education Officers, and their line manager, now meet regularly with the allocated worker for all YJS children to review the child's education, training or employment and to take actions as required.
- The weekly ETE Allocations meeting enables a swift response to emerging issues, such as the risk of exclusion.

Earlier identification of speech, language and communication needs for children at risk of school exclusion:

- The 'Re-Engage' project offers speech and language assessments, alongside an offer of coaching and training for school staff, for children at risk of school exclusion, before they are known to the YJS.
- 152 children have been referred to the project, from 26 schools across both local authorities, by the end of March 2026.
- 90 assessments had been completed by March 2026. 78% of the children assessed were identified as having communication needs. These needs had not previously been identified.
- 29% were identified as having significant communication needs, such as Developmental Language Disorder.
- Support and training had been provided to 24 schools.
- 48 children had received additional coaching, delivered jointly with a member of the school's teaching staff.

Increasing public awareness and confidence in work undertaken by children to repair the harm from their offence

- The YJS Community Resources team have increased the number of local community projects and settings where children undertake activities to repair the harm from their offence
- We now work with 12 community organisations across the BCP Council and Dorset Council areas
- Over £2,000 was raised from the sales of items made by children as part of their repairing the harm work in 2025. Donations will be made to charities and organisations to benefit our communities, directed when possible by the victims of the children's offences.
- Community projects and children have given positive feedback about their experience with our repairing the harm activities.

4.2 Performance

DCYJS was inspected in late 2022 under the HMI Probation 'Full Joint Inspection' framework. The inspection report was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspection report can be found at this link: [A joint inspection of youth offending services in Dorset \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk).

DCYJS was also inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on 'Out of Court Disposals'. The inspection report, published in October 2025, highlighted good practice in Dorset in respect of partnership work between Dorset Police and DCYJS, local evaluation of Out of Court Disposal, work to engage victims, and support for children's speech, language and communication needs.

The three primary key performance indicators for youth justice partnerships are:

- The rate of first time entrants to the criminal justice system.
- The rate and frequency of reoffending by children in the criminal justice system.
- The use of custodial sentences.

The YJB publish quarterly performance data for youth justice services, compiled nationally, in relation to these three indicators. The information reported below is drawn from the data published in March 2026 for the period ending December 2025.

First Time Entrants

A 'First-Time Entrant' is a child receiving a formal criminal justice outcome for the first time. A Youth Caution, a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome all count as a formal criminal justice outcome.

Dorset Police and DCYJS look for opportunities to divert children from the justice system, by using informal justice outcomes, which do not make the child a First-Time Entrant. It is recognised that receiving a formal justice outcome is in itself detrimental for children.

Dorset Police, DCYJS and other children's services work closely together to decide the appropriate outcome for a child who has committed a criminal offence. Whenever possible we seek to use an informal option which does not criminalise the child.

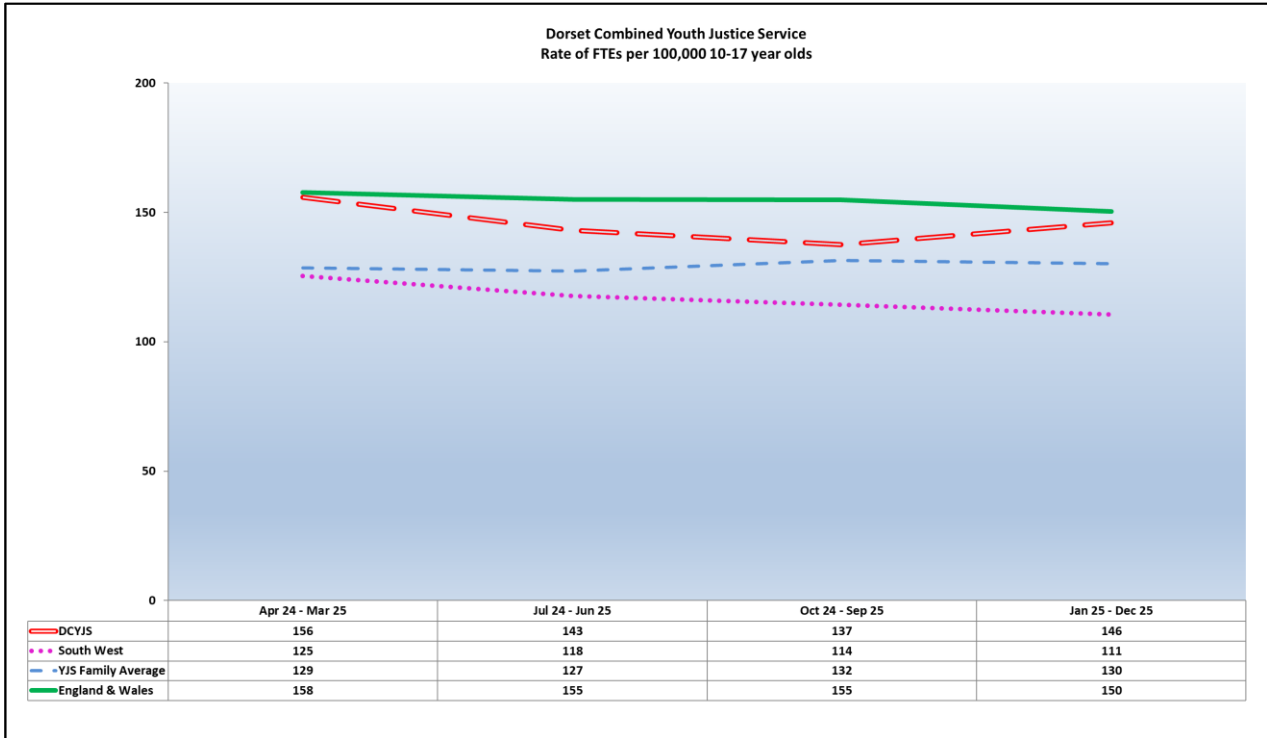
HMI Probation published an Effective Practice Guide in October 2025, as part of their thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. The Effective Practice Guide identified our local joint-decision making arrangements as an example of good practice. The Guide stated that the Dorset decision-making model "*provided a consistent, auditable, and child-centred approach to OoCDs, balancing the needs of the child, the victim, and public safety*".

National Performance Data

National performance data for First-Time Entrants is drawn from the YJB's uploads of information from YJS case management systems.

In the past, DCYJS had a noticeably higher rate of First-Time Entrants than the national and regional averages. In recent years there has been a consistent and sustained reduction in local First Time Entrants, with DCYJS now having a lower rate than the national average.

The following chart shows the last four quarters of national First-Time Entrants data, with a consistent rate of around 145 First-Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds. This compares to a rate of 234 First-Time Entrants per 100,000 10-17 year-olds in the year to December 2022.



Local Performance Data

DCYJS tracks data on its own case management system to monitor the number and characteristics of children entering the justice system. Local data shows a significant reduction in the number of children entering the justice system compared to the year before the pandemic:

Year	BCP First Time Entrants	Dorset First Time Entrants	Total DCYJS First Time Entrants	% Difference from previous year
2019-20	104	78	182	
2020-21	78	48	126	-30.8%
2021-22	77	47	124	-1.6%
2022-23	79	39	118	-4.8%
2023-24	52	56	108	-8.5%
2024-25	58	49	107	-0.9%
2025-26	56	48	104	-2.8%

The overall trend of reducing numbers of First-Time Entrants continued in 2025/26, though there may be limited scope for further reductions.

There was a notable reduction in First-Time Entrants in BCP in 2023-24, which has been sustained since then.

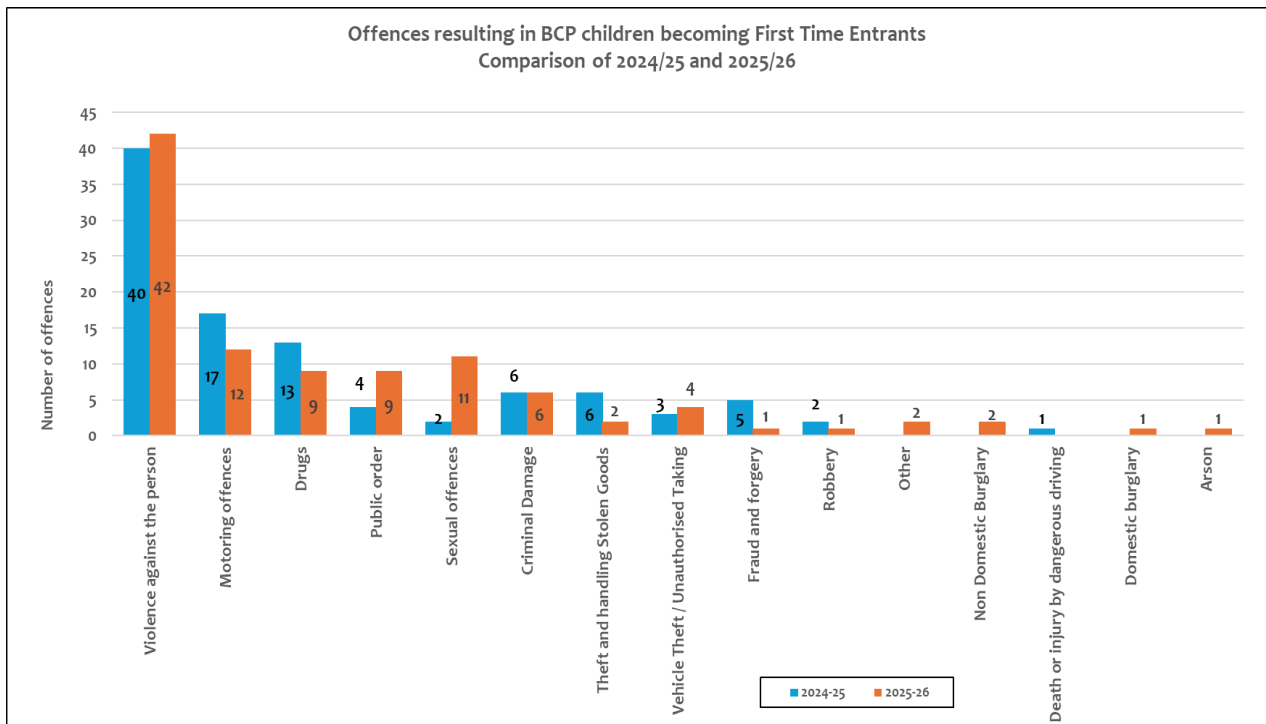
The increase in Dorset First-Time Entrants in 2023-24 reflected delays in the previous year in dealing with some older offences. Numbers of First-Time Entrants have been stable in Dorset since a significant reduction in 2020/21.

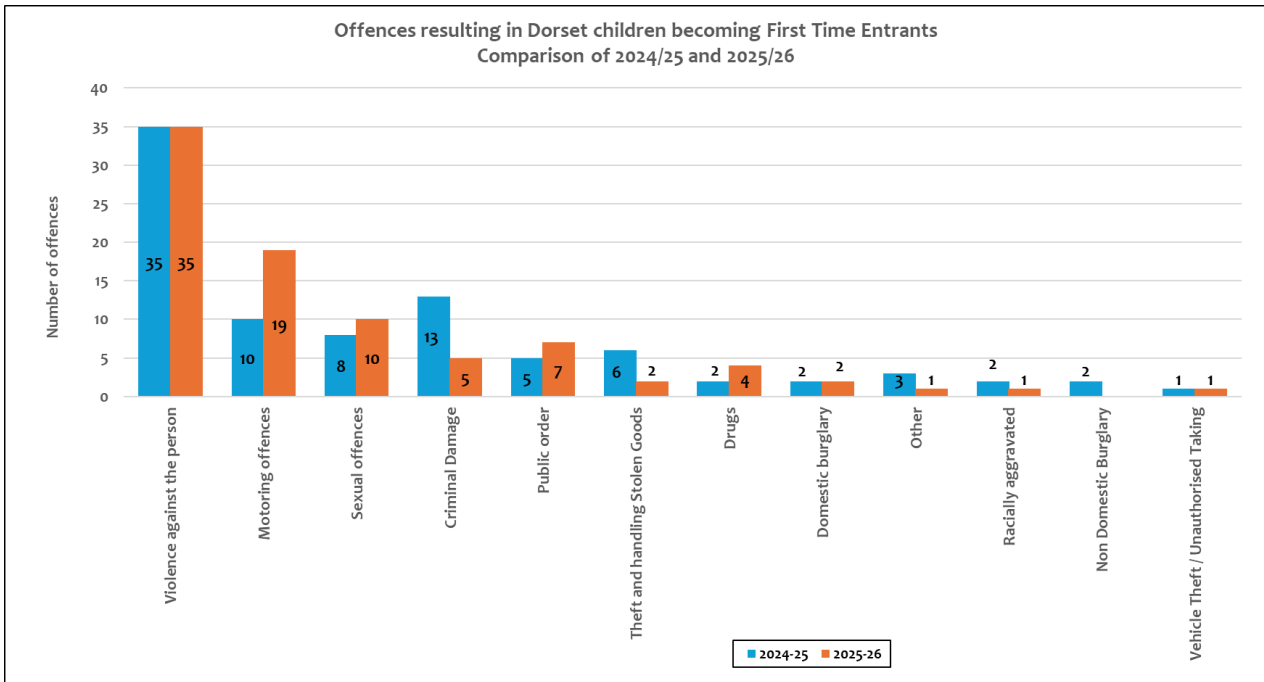
Offences Leading to Children Entering the Justice System

Decisions about whether to offer a diversion option, instead of a caution or court appearance, depend to some extent on the type of offence committed by the child.

If a child is found in possession of a weapon they will receive a formal outcome in almost every instance, unless significantly exceptional circumstances apply. The new Knife Crime Guidance which applies from April 2026 requires almost all children with a knife possession offence to receive either a Youth Conditional Caution or a court outcome. In practice this does not represent a significant change of policy in Dorset, whereas some other areas have been using diversion options for knife offences. Those areas are likely to see an increase in their First-Time Entrants rate from April 2026.

The following charts shows the offences which led to children in each local authority becoming First-Time Entrants during the past year. The number of offences exceeds the number of children because some children committed multiple offences.





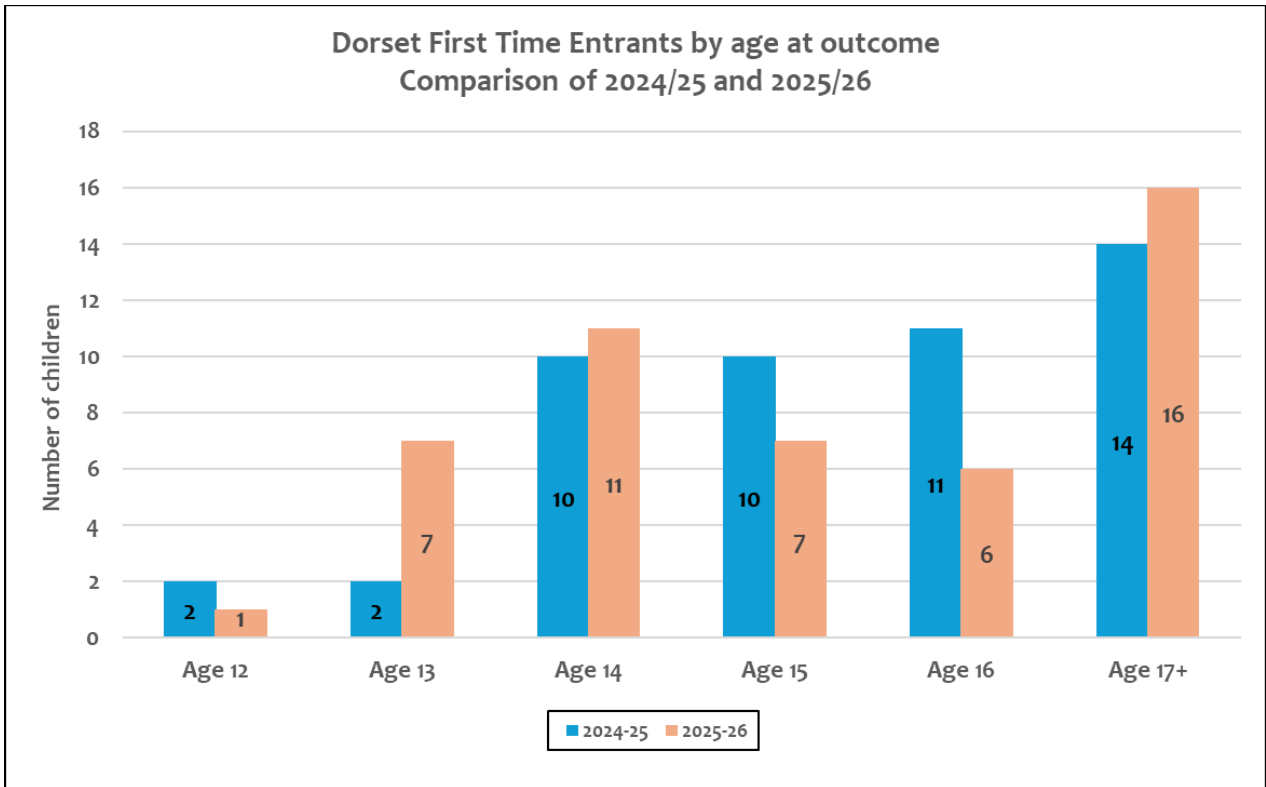
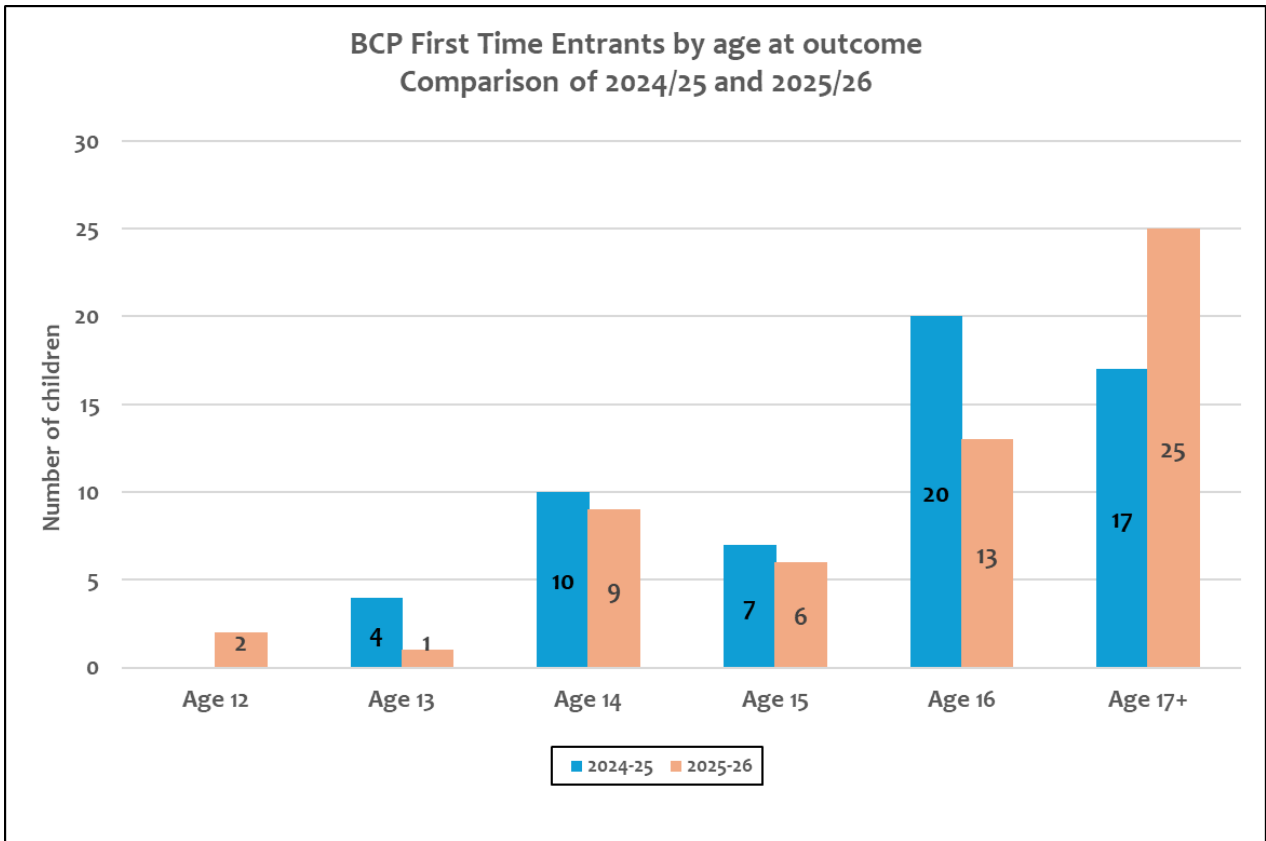
Offences involving possession or use of a weapon, or assaults on emergency workers, are included in the 'Violence against the Person' category and in almost all cases result in a caution or court disposal. Diversion options for these offence types are only considered in exceptional circumstances. The numbers of Violence against the Person offences leading to children becoming First-Time Entrants has remained stable in both local authorities over the past two years, after a notable reduction compared to 2023/24.

There was an increase in sexual offences in 2025/26. 6 children committed a total of 21 offences across both local authorities. 3 of the children committed contact sexual offences, the other 3 committed offences involving indecent images.

Some children are counted as entering the justice system for motoring offences which result in a court appearance for points to be added to the young person's driver's licence. DCYJS and Dorset Police are working locally and regionally, with support from the Youth Justice Board, to agree diversion options for young people with motoring offences.

Age of Children Entering the Justice System

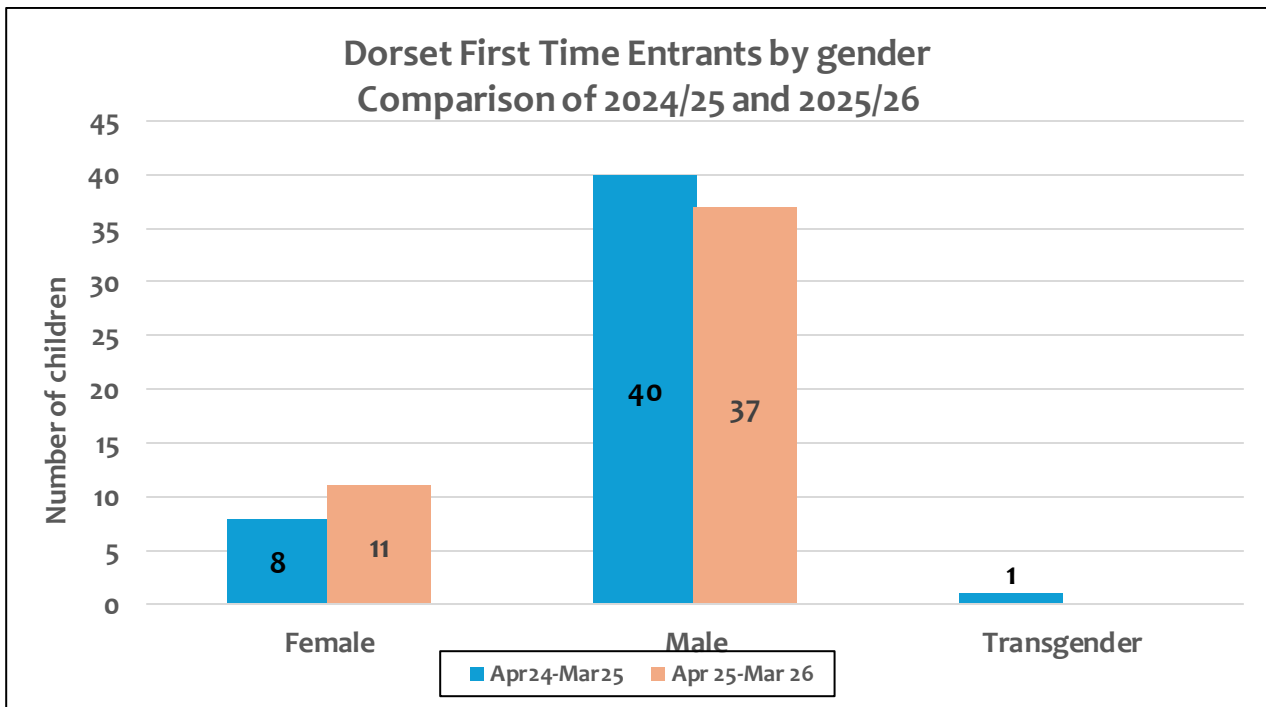
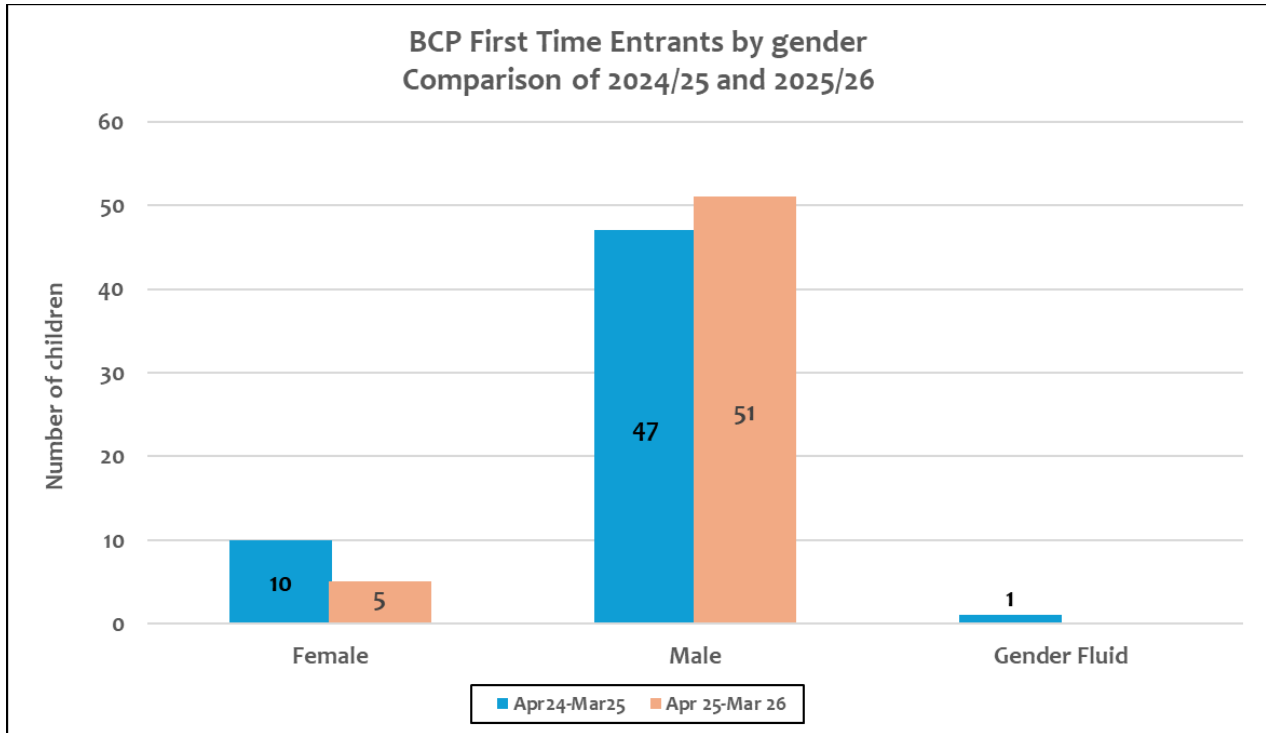
The following charts show the ages of First-Time Entrants in each local authority in the past two years. There has been a shift in recent years in that the age of First-Time Entrants in the BCP Council area has been rising, so that 68% of BCP First-Time Entrants are now aged 16 or 17. Conversely, the age for First-Time Entrants in Dorset has been falling, so that 46% are aged 16 or 17, and 40% are aged 14 or under.



Previous analysis has shown that children who enter the justice system before the age of 14 are likely to have complex needs and may go on to commit further, more serious offences. During 2024-25, a total of 8 children under the age of 14 entered the justice system across our two local authorities. This year, 2025-26, saw a total of 11 children under the age of 14 who entered the justice system, with a notable increase in young First-Time Entrants in the Dorset Council area.

Gender of Children Entering the Justice System

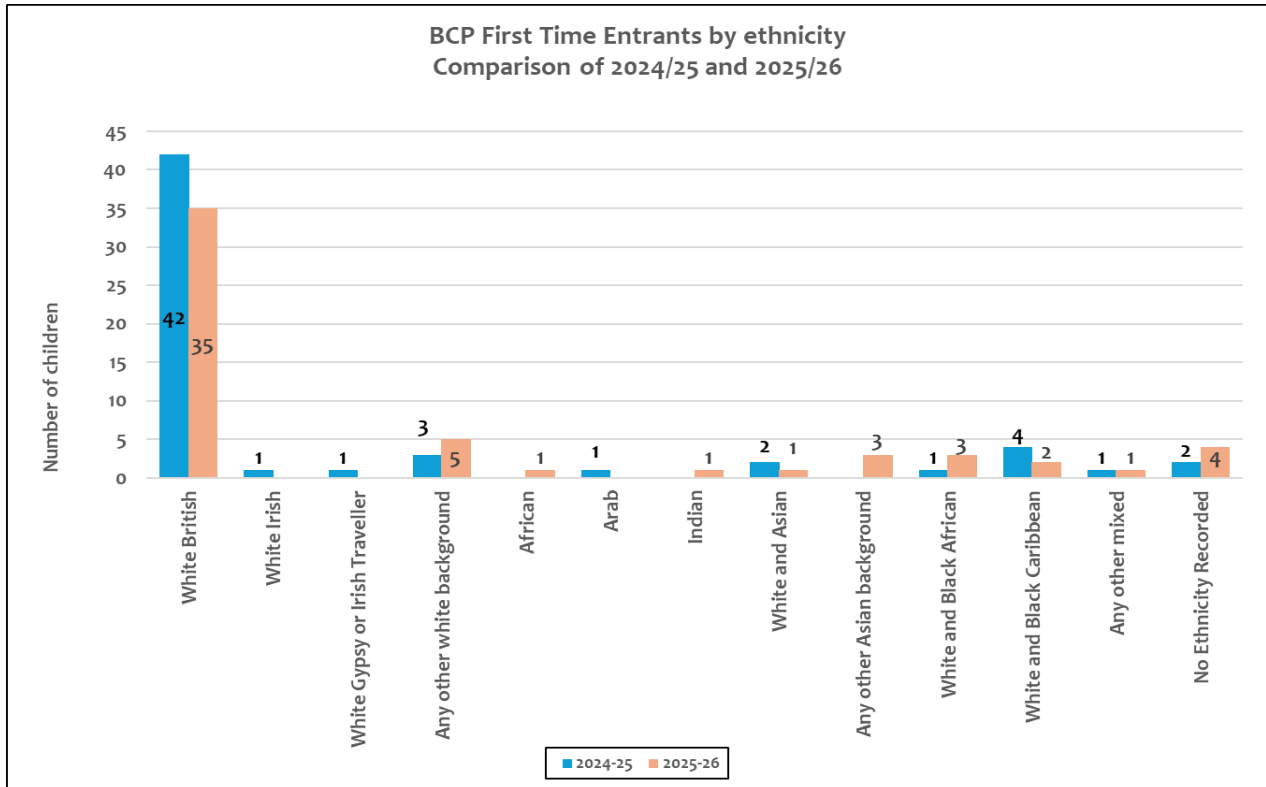
The following charts show the gender of First-Time Entrants in each local authority over the past two years.



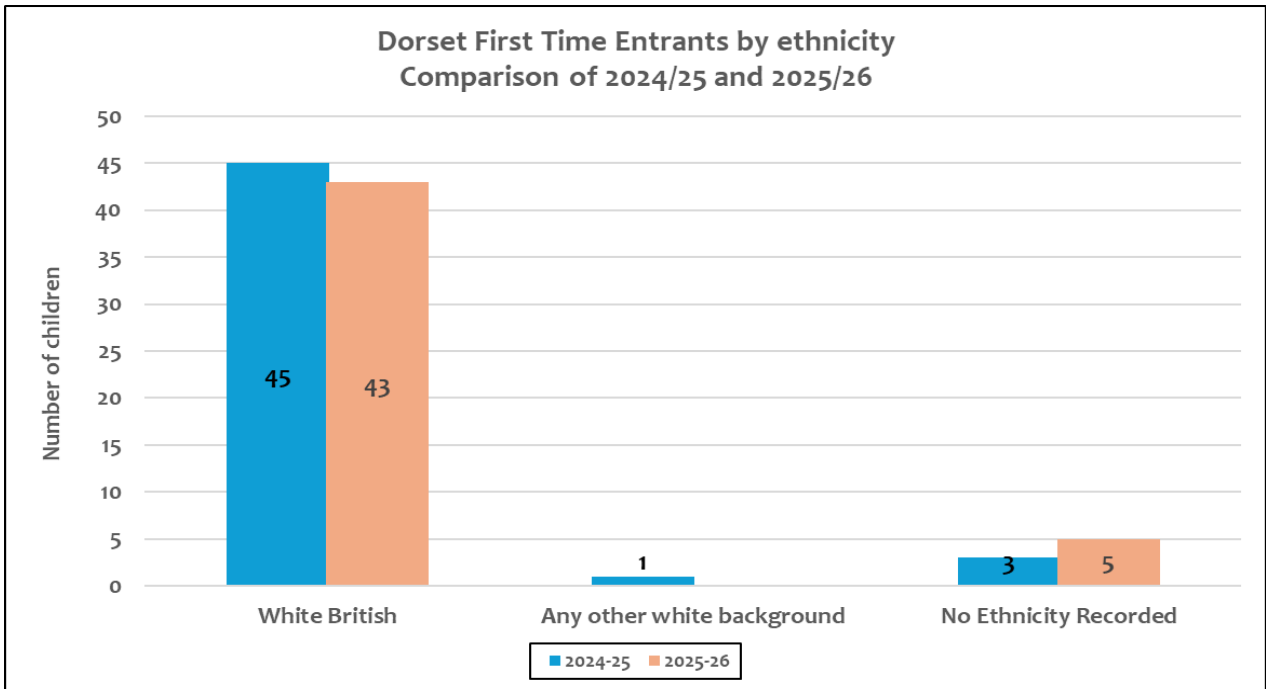
The proportion of girls on the YJS caseload is usually around 18-20%. The low numbers of First-Time Entrants mean that small shifts in numbers can disproportionately affect the percentage figures. The charts show that there has been a drop in the numbers and proportion of girls among BCP Council First-Time Entrants, making up 9% of the total in the past year. There has been an increase in the numbers and proportion of girls among Dorset Council First-Time Entrants, making up 23% of the total in the past year.

Ethnicity of Children Entering the Justice System

The following charts show the recorded ethnicity of children entering the justice system. Ethnicity recording is taken from the child’s self-definition. In some instances the YJS has no contact with the child, such as when a child is taken to court for a motoring offence and receives a fine or a discharge. In this situation, ethnicity is based either on information from the Police or is described as No Ethnicity Recorded.



The proportion of First-Time Entrants with Black, Asian or mixed ethnicity has risen in the BCP Council area from 16% in 2024/25 to 21% in 2025/26, an increase from 8 to 11 children. Data from the January 2026 school census shows that 17.8% of BCP children are from ‘non-white backgrounds’. There is therefore now a slight over-representation of these children amongst those entering the justice system. Section 6.1 of this document provides more analysis of the ethnicity of children on the YJS caseload.



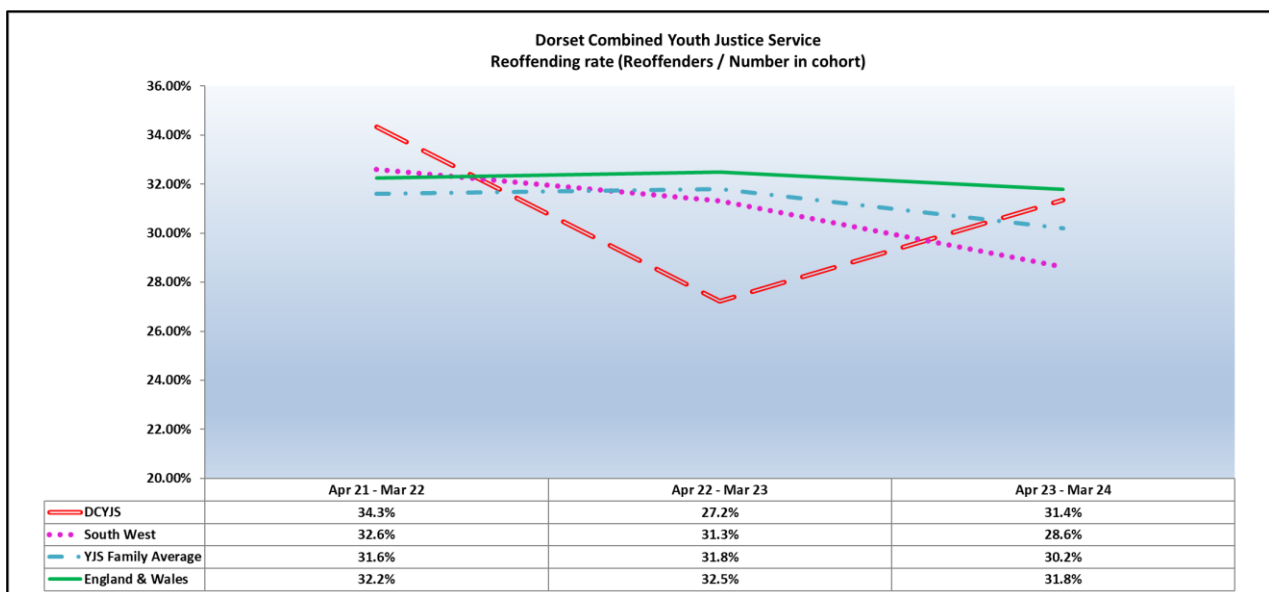
In the Dorset Council area, the January 2026 school census shows that 6.3% of children are from 'non-white backgrounds'. This compares to 100% of Dorset First-Time Entrants either identifying as White British or having No Ethnicity Recorded.

Rate of Proven Reoffending

National re-offending data is published in two formats: the 'binary' rate shows the proportion of children in the cohort who go on to be convicted for subsequent offences in the 12 months after their previous justice outcome; the 'frequency' rate shows the average number of offences per reoffender.

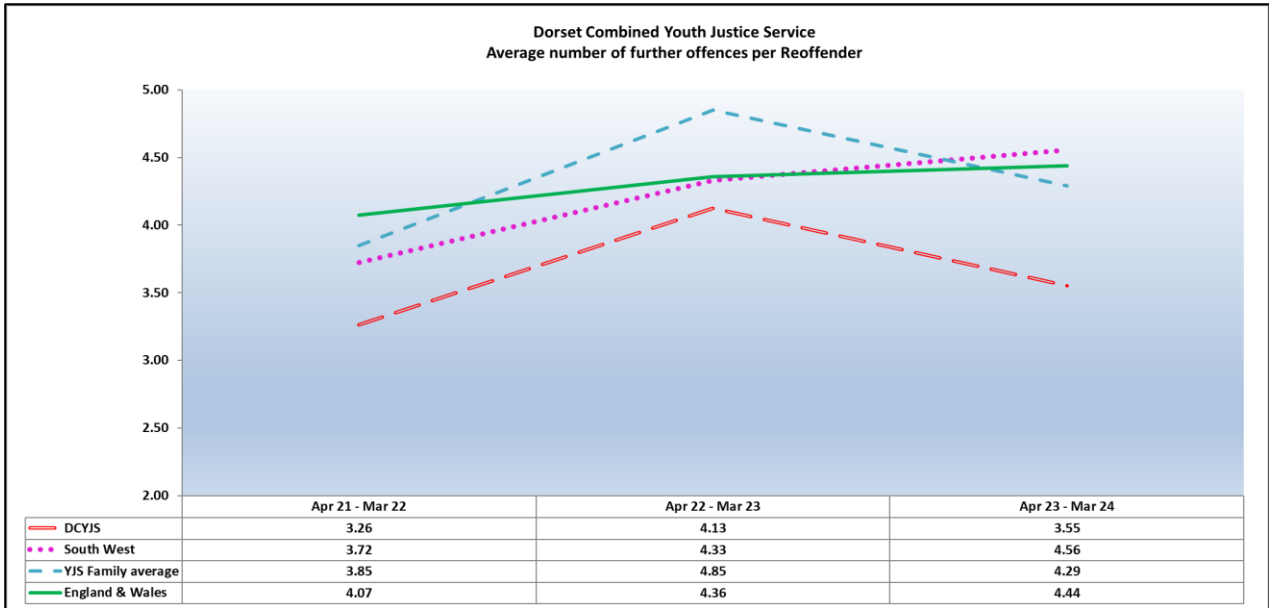
Reoffending data is necessarily delayed in order to allow time to see if the child is reconvicted and for that later outcome to be recorded. The following data therefore relates to children with whom the service worked up to March 2024.

Reoffending rate (Reoffenders/Number in cohort)

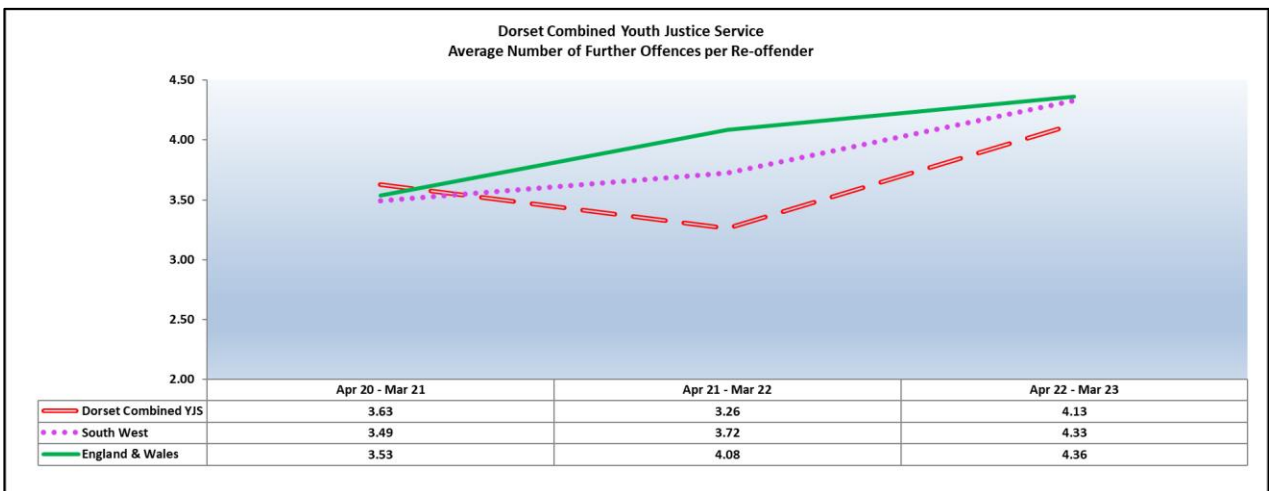


The binary reoffending rate for the most recent year, to March 2024, shows an increase on the previous year, reflecting the fluctuations in this data measure. DCYJS performance sits between the regional, national and 'YJS Family' averages.

Reoffences/Reoffenders

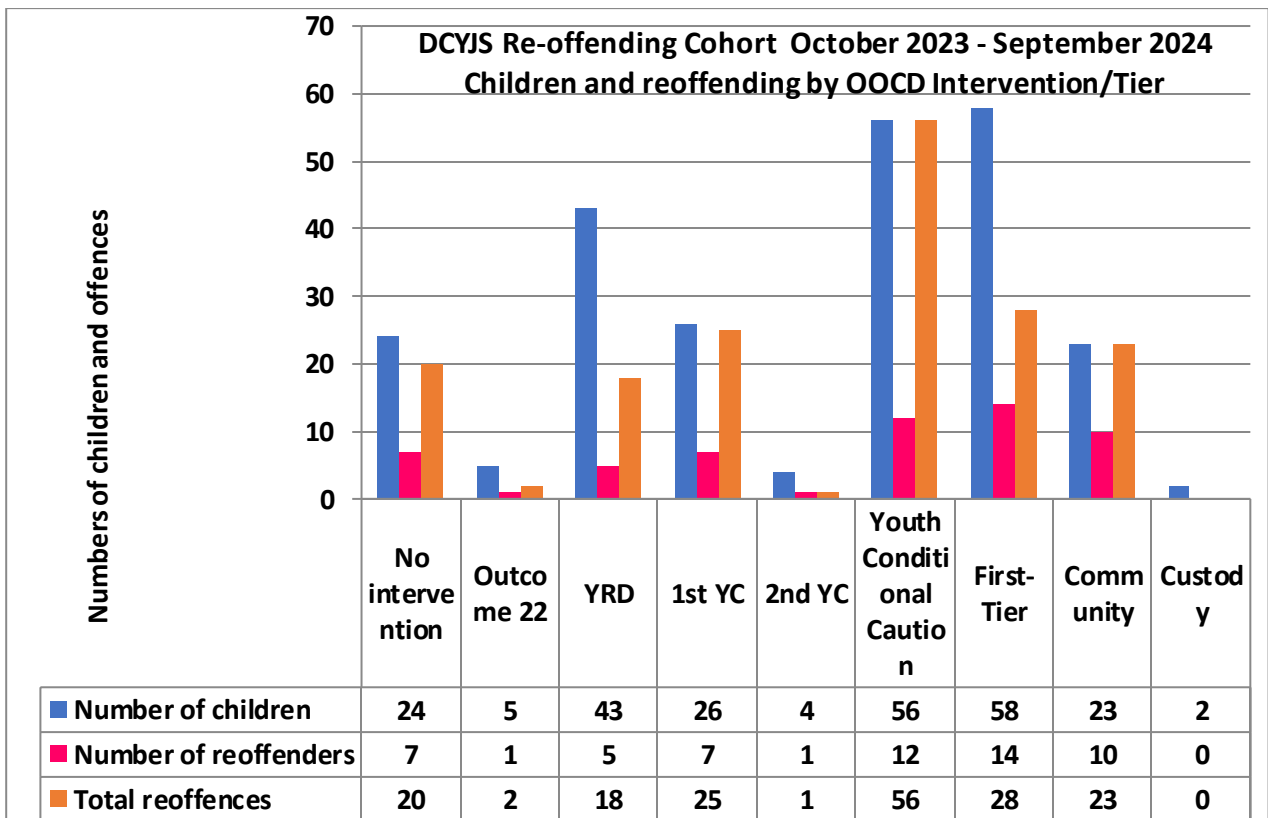
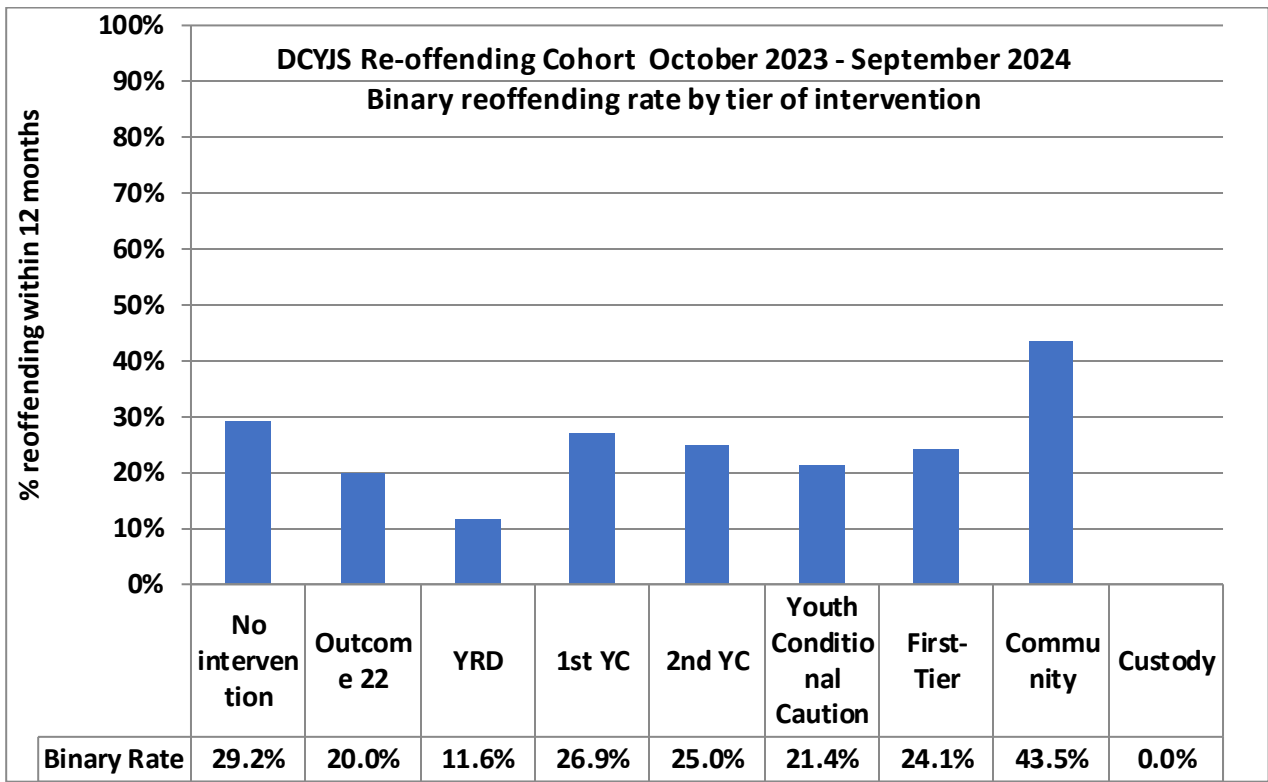


There has been a reduction in the average number of offences per reoffender. DCYJS has remains below the regional, national and YJS Family averages for this measure.



Local data, stored on the DCYJS case management system, can also be scrutinised to show information about reoffending. Our latest analysis, in March 2026, looked at children on the DCYJS caseload between October 2023 and September 2024, giving us a more detailed understanding of reoffending by local children and showing outcomes for children who have had more recent contact with the justice system.

Analysis of reoffending by disposal type, on the following charts, shows that informal, diversion options have the lowest rate of reoffending (nb 'Outcome 22' is a police recording code, showing that no further action was taken but the child received an intervention to prevent future offending; 'YRD' refers to a Youth Restorative Disposal, the local name for a Community Resolution, which is also known as Outcome 8). It should be noted, however, that diversion options may be more likely for children with a lower risk of reoffending.



Local reoffending data in March 2026 also shows that:

- 10-14 year-olds are more likely to reoffend than other age groups. The rate of reoffending drops each year as children get older.
- Boys are more likely to reoffend than girls (26.9% of boys reoffended, compared to 7.5% of girls).

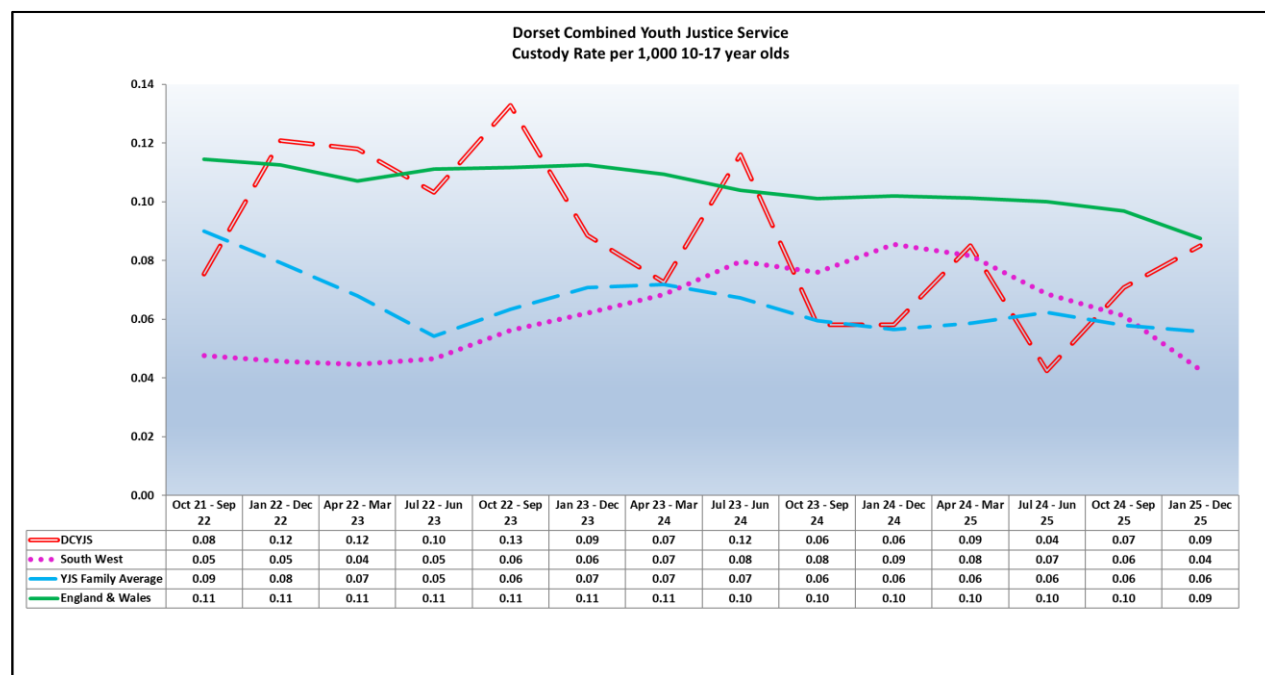
- Although fewer girls reoffend, the average number of further offences per reoffender is higher for girls (5.67 further offences) than for boys (2.89 further offences)
- Black and mixed heritage children show a lower reoffending rate and frequency than white children, but the numbers of black and mixed heritage children are low, meaning each child has a greater impact on the percentage rates.
- Children in the Dorset Council area had a higher reoffending rate and frequency than children in the BCP Council area.
- Children who were currently or previously in care were more likely to reoffend (44%) than children who had never been in care (19%).
- Children who committed criminal damage, non-dwelling burglary, robbery, or theft offences had higher rates of reoffending than children who committed other types of offence.
- Children who committed violence against the person offences had the lowest rates of reoffending amongst offence types that saw further offending
- 39% of reoffenders committed less serious further offences, 28% committed offences of the same seriousness and 33% committed more serious offences.

Analysis of local reoffending data helps the YJS to focus its work and to identify groups who may need additional attention.

Use of Custodial Sentences

DCYJS continues to see low numbers of children sentenced to custody.

The latest national data is copied below. The context of this data is a large reduction over recent years in the number of children in custody in England and Wales. This means that small changes in numbers can have a noticeable effect on the local and national rates.



The above chart shows the latest available national data. Our own YJS data shows that a total of 7 children and young people received custodial sentences during 2025/26 (5 from BCP Council, 2 from Dorset Council).

The trauma-informed approach to youth justice work encourages us to ask “what happened to you?” rather than “what’s wrong with you?”. In this context, it is interesting to look at some of the common experiences of these 7 children and young people, illustrated in the following table.

Characteristics of children sentenced to custody during 2025/26

Gender	Ethnicity	Age at sentence	Remand in custody pre-sentence	Age at 1 st justice disposal	Number of past justice disposals	Social care status pre-sentence	CE status	SLCN	SEND status	Perm Exclusion	CAMHS contact pre-sentence	Substance use	Local authority
M	White British	18	Y	15	5	CiC	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	Dorset
M	White British	17	N	14	8	CiC	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	Dorset
M	White British	17	Y	14	6	CP	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP
M	White British	17	N	13	5	CiC	Sig	Y	SEN support	Y	N	Y	BCP
M	White British	15	N	11	10	CP	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP
M	White British	18	Y	12	5	CiC	Sig	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP
M	White Other	18	Y	14	1	CiC	Mod	Y	EHCP	Y	Y	Y	BCP

CE = Child Exploitation

SLCN = Speech, Language and Communication Needs

SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

CAMHS = Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

CiC – Child in Care

CP = Child Protection

EHCP = Education, Health and Care Plan

This table shows clearly that children receiving custodial sentences are boys who have experienced harm in their earlier lives, who have special educational needs and communication needs, leading to permanent exclusion from school, mental health difficulties, substance use, experiencing harm outside the home and recurring youth justice involvement from a young age. The combination of multiple disadvantages, alongside the absence of protective factors, increases the chances of children experiencing negative outcomes such as spending time in custody. This information also helps the YJS and its partners to direct their work and resources for children at earlier stages of YJS involvement, and perhaps before YJS involvement.

[Section 6.1](#) of this document provides further analysis of the over-representation of some groups of children in the local youth justice system, and actions being taken.

New Youth Justice Key Performance Indicators

The Youth Justice Board introduced a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be collected from April 2023. The following measures are reported:

- Accommodation – the percentage of children in suitable accommodation.
- Education, training and employment (ETE) – the percentage of children attending a suitable ETE arrangement.
- SEND – the percentage of children with SEND who are in suitable ETE with a current, formal learning plan in place.
- Mental healthcare and emotional wellbeing – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to improve their mental health or emotional wellbeing and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Substance Use – the percentage of children identified as needing an intervention to address substance misuse and the percentage being offered and attending interventions.
- Out of Court Disposals – the percentage of out of court disposals that are completed or not completed.
- Management Board attendance – the attendance of senior representatives from partner agencies and if partners contribute data from their services to identify ethnic and racial disproportionality.

- Wider services – the percentage of YJS children who are currently on an Early Help plan, on a Child Protection Plan, classified as a Child in Need or a Child in Care.
- Serious Violence – the rates of children convicted for a serious violence offence on the YJS caseload.
- Victims – the percentage of victims who consent to be contacted by the YJS; of those, the percentage who are engaged with about restorative justice opportunities, asked their views prior to out of court disposal decision-making and planning for statutory court orders, provided with information about the progress of the child’s case (when requested) and provided with information on appropriate support services (when requested).

The new KPIs have required significant additional work to adapt recording systems and to adjust recording practices. The consistency, accuracy and usefulness of this data remains a work in progress. The YJB stated in March 2025 that the data collected nationally in 2023/24 and 2024/25 is ‘low quality and cannot be used for analysis, reporting, and decision-making’. The data from 2025/26 remains problematic in respect of accuracy, consistency and usefulness. It is hoped that usable data will eventually become available.

4.3 Risks and issues

Like other youth justice services, DCYJS operates in a context of system challenges and resource pressures.

Current issues and future risks being faced by DCYJS include the following:

Issue/risk facing DCYJS	Actions being taken in response
Resource pressures – YJ Grant frozen for 4 years to 2029, local authority contributions frozen, costs rising.	Seek staffing reductions when posts become vacant. Look for savings on non-staffing budgets. Seek additional income sources.
Adverse changes to YJB data recording requirements and removal of YJB ‘YDS’ data reports. Case management system changes which lead to reduced system agility and increased cost.	Use links with the YJB to promote better decision-making on data recording and reporting. Review system procurement. Implement local mitigations to protect against deficits caused by YJB and supplier decisions.
Flawed YJB instructions regarding the use of national assessment tools, conflicting guidance on risk and safety between the two tools, no ability to pull assessments through from one assessment tool to the other.	Decide local approach to selection of which assessment tool to use. Implement local guidance for consistency and defensibility of risk and safety assessments. Stick with same assessment tool for the child rather than swapping when justice disposal changes.
Children on bail/RUI during lengthy police investigations for complex offences, such as weapon offences and sexual offences.	Use Serious Violence Duty funding to add resources, to enable work with children during the investigation phase for weapon, violent or sexual offences. Use Bridges project to complete speech and language assessments alongside this work.
White Paper on Youth Justice Reforms leads to setbacks on the progress made in youth justice in recent years.	Support and contribute to advice to ministers from the Association of YOT Managers. Make early plans for implementation of reforms, working with local partners in criminal justice and children’s services.

5 Plans for the year ahead

5.1 'Child First' practice

DCYJS applies 'Child First' practice principles to underpin its work. The Child First approach is embedded in the YJB national guidance documents 'Standards for Children in the Youth Justice System' and 'Case Management Guidance'. These documents direct the work of youth justice services.

The Child First approach is built on evidence demonstrating its effectiveness to prevent offending by children who are at risk of entering the justice system and to reduce offending by the small number of children who do enter the youth justice system. The research evidence is summarised in this document: <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/subjects/social-policy-studies/research/child-first-justice/>.

DCYJS supports these principles and promotes them in its own work and in its interactions with local partners in children's services and the youth justice system.

The Child First approach has four tenets, listed below.

The ABCD of Child First practice	Examples of how DCYJS implements this in our work
As children: recognise how children are developmentally different from adults and require different support.	<i>DCYJS interactions with children are adapted to each child, based on the child's developmental stage and communication needs, using trauma formulations and Speech and Language assessments.</i>
Building pro-social identity: promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop a pro-social identity, focusing on positive child outcomes rather than just trying to manage offending.	<i>During the past year, the DCYJS Activities Coordinator has helped the service to expand the range of positive activities available for children in the YJS and to build links with community organisations. DCYJS provides the 'Discover You' project at Upton Country Park, aimed at building children's skills, confidence and employability. The DCYJS 'Repairing the Harm' team has increased the number of community projects, such as the Big Yellow Bus Garden Project in Shillingstone, for children to feel valued for making a positive contribution to their community. One child said "It was fun to build something I thought I wouldn't be able to build".</i>
Collaborating with children: involve children meaningfully to encourage their investment, engagement and social inclusion.	<i>During the past year, the team has been working on how to involve the child meaningfully in shaping the plan for our work with them. A new Girls Group was started in 2025, designed with the girls who attended the group. Children identified that the YJS rooms at the East Howe Community Centre needed an overhaul. YJS workers and children jointly designed and decorated the rooms to create a child-friendly space.</i>
Diverting from stigma: promote supportive diversion from the criminal justice system where possible, or minimising stigma within	<i>The 'Turnaround' programme has helped us to embed the use of Outcome 22 to divert children from formal justice outcomes.</i>

it, as we know that stigma causes further offending

*YJS Speech and Language assessments are written on Dorset HealthCare documentation, without reference to the YJS, to avoid stigmatising the child.
YJS AQA awards for children are registered under 'Dorset Understand Achieve Succeed'.*

The YJS is holding whole service workshops in April 2026 to review our progress in implementing Child First practice and to agree our next steps.

Appraisals objectives for YJS practitioners and managers for 2026/27 will be structured around the four tenets of Child First practice, to help to further embed these principles in our day-to-day work.

One of this Plan's strategic priorities for 2026/27 is to enhance Child First practice in our YJS partnership.

Voice of the child

DCYJS works collaboratively with children to hear their voice during their contact with our service. Case records are addressed to the child and quote their words, to ensure the child's voice is prominent.

The team's Speech and Language Therapists offer assessments of each child's communication needs, to help YJS workers to the child's voice and to adapt their work. The Speech and Language Therapists also advise colleagues in the YJS about how to work with each child.

'Talking Mats' are one of the resources which the Speech and Language team provides for YJS colleagues. Below is an example of a Talking Mat for good sleep habits:



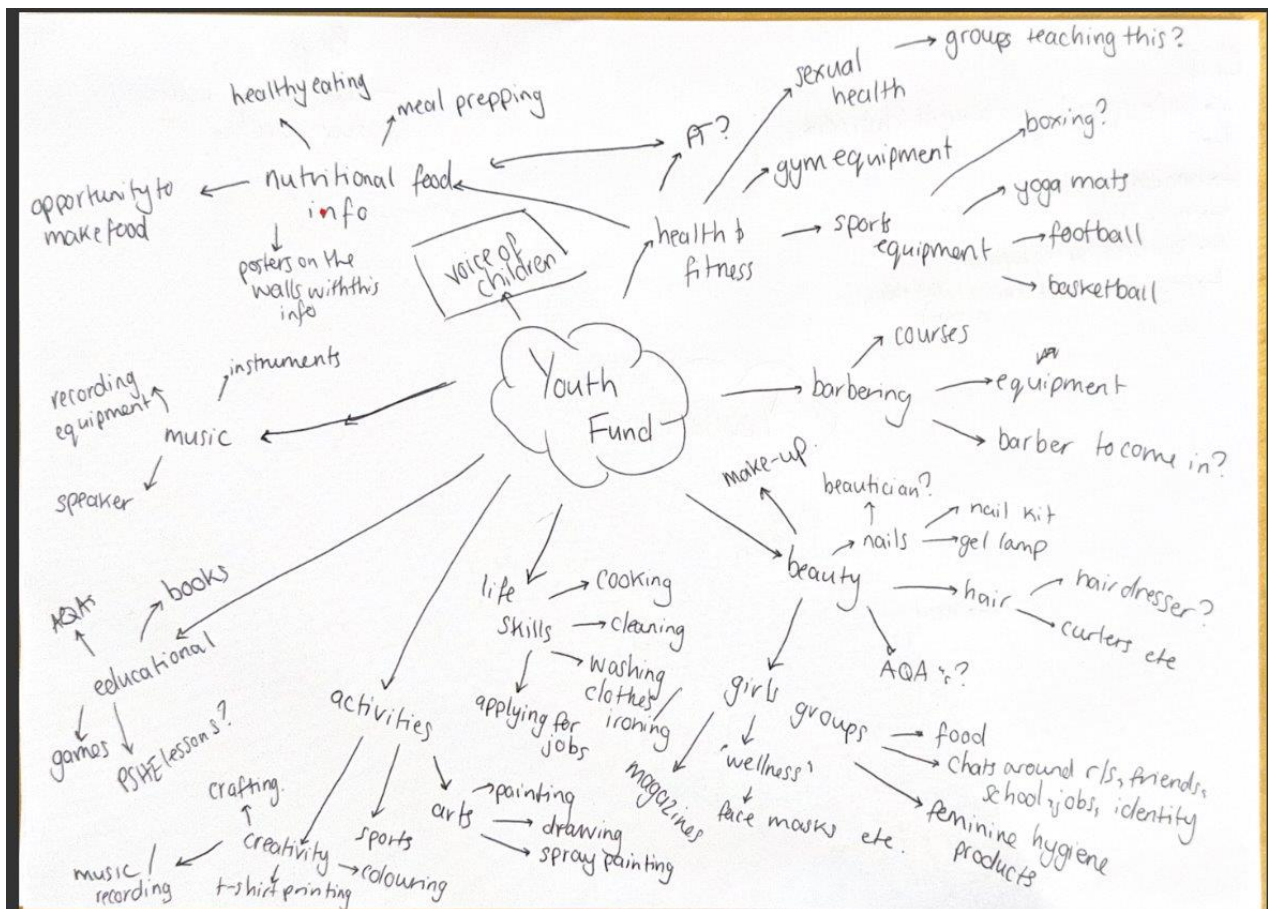
The following extracts from case records show how the use of Talking Mats can help to elicit information and reflections from children:

We discussed your sleep – you reported that you always have problems sleeping and often wake up before your alarm. You completed a good sleeping habits talking mat – sorting the options between ‘I do this’, ‘I don’t do this’, ‘sometimes/not sure’ and ‘I can try’. A photo of this completed talking mat is saved in your file. You were quite willing to put a few things in the I can try section – such as physical activity and avoiding blue light in the evening. It seemed that you would be happy to give these things a try to help your sleep. We gave you a sleep hygiene tips handout which you took home with you.

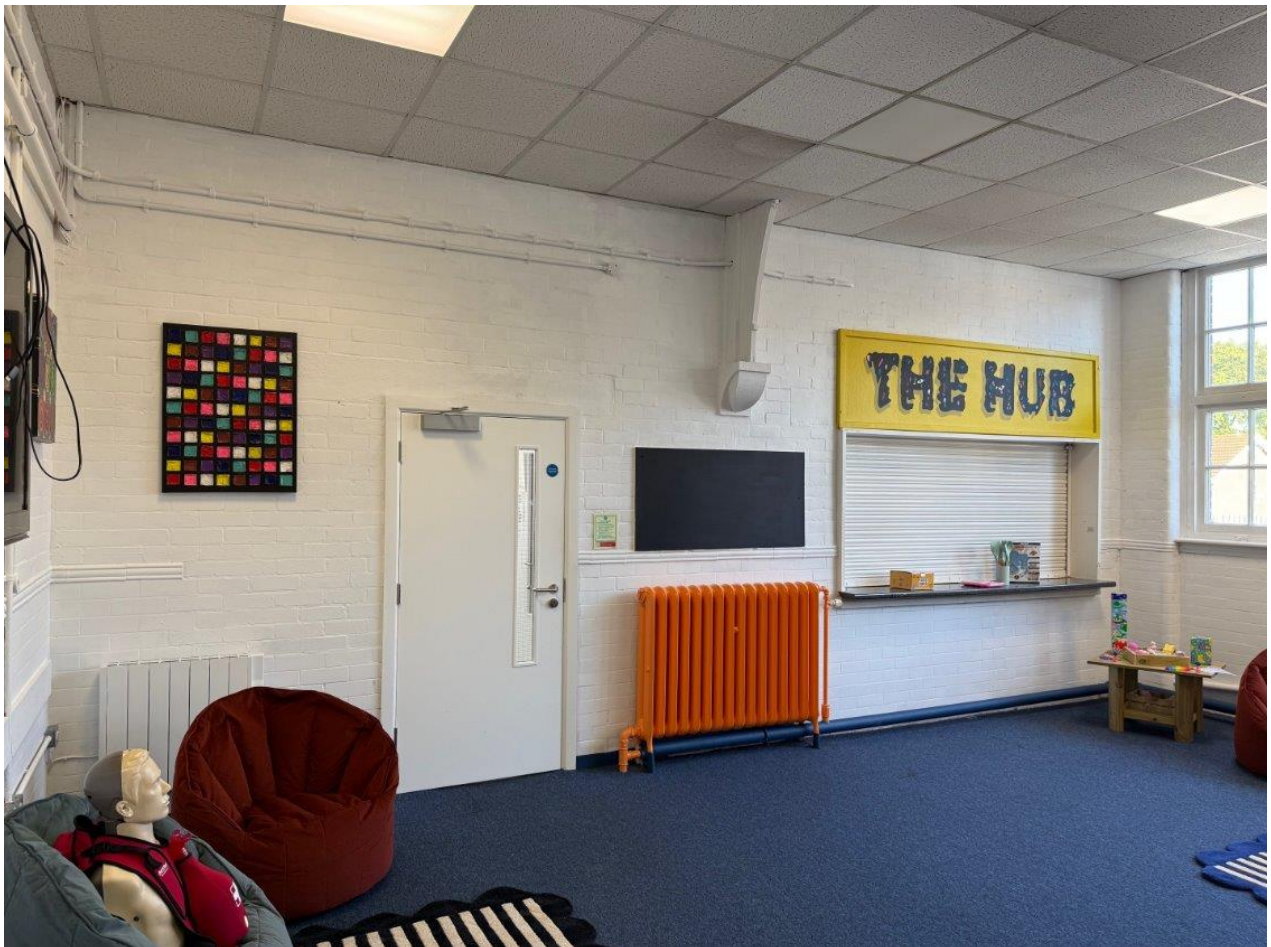
I'd brought out a Talking Mat about communication, and I showed you the different cards and asked if you would give it a go. You didn't want to hold the cards yourself and said for me to read them out which I did. Many of the cards you said you found easy i.e. Talking to family, Remembering things and Talking to a teacher. You said you were able to ask questions at Innovate if you didn't understand something. The things you said were more difficult were: Telling someone how I feel, understanding how other people are feeling, and paying attention for longer periods of time.

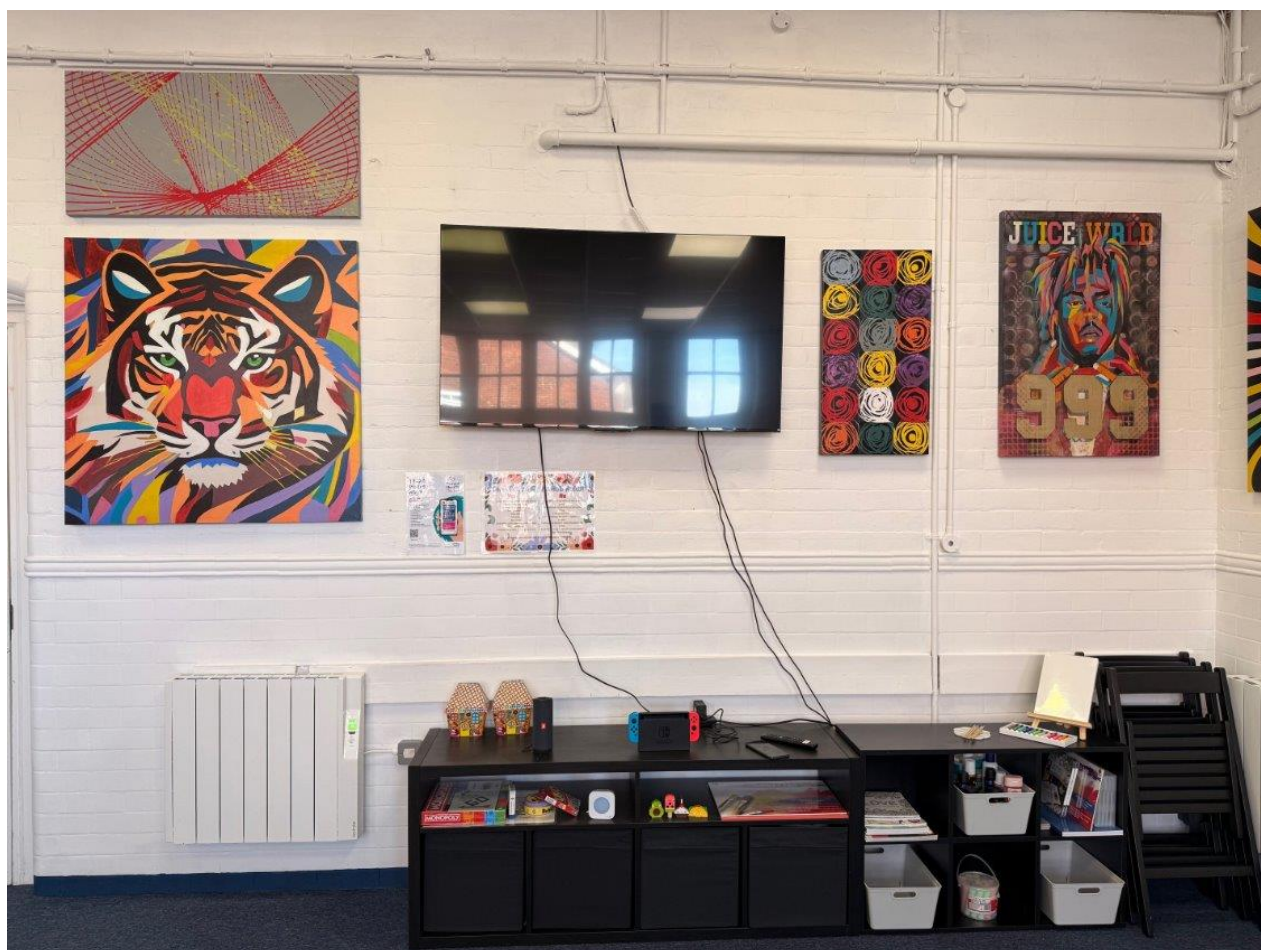
Over the past year, the YJS has also been developing its collaboration with children to design our projects and spaces. These developments will be continued in 2026/27.

Two team members set up a new Girls Group, starting with a joint session with the girls to plan the group. This image captures the ideas generated by the girls, which formed the basis of the group’s sessions:



Children working with the YJS also helped us to transform one of our bases into a welcoming space for children, illustrated in these ‘before and after’ pictures:





As well as hearing the child's voice in the team's day to day practice, YJS workers also gather the views of children and other service users about their experience of the service's work.

Spontaneous comments from service users about their experience of our service are recorded and analysed, using a data report from our case management system.

Examples of recent comments from service users include:

YJ involvement is obviously not something we envisaged. When X was first arrested and referred to his worker, L, we were in a very bad place. He was out all the time, using Ketamine regularly, and it was all getting rapidly worse. He was becoming very unwell. To start with, the benefits of L's involvement were probably limited because of X's addiction: it was stronger than anything else. However, despite this L quickly built a very good rapport with X from her very first visit. She is approachable, easy to understand, and is excellent at presenting information in a way that is simplified but not at all patronising. X knew he had to see her, and he understood the process well thanks to her explanations. Things ramped up when our house was raided by police at 5am one day and X was taken into custody. L was at the end of the phone at 7:30am to explain things to me and calm me down! This was the day X stopped taking drugs - the day in custody was much-needed and perhaps even life-saving, such was his Ketamine use. So L's involvement was thankfully extended. She was there for X, but her involvement benefited me too. I think her major strength is communication, being approachable (informal clothes, demeanour and language) but with a steely focus on the facts and the legal process. A fine balance! She is compassionate, kind, fair, straight-talking and genuinely wants the best for the kids she works with. Ongoing, if we enter hard times again, L is the first person I would call for some advice. I hope I won't need to.

Today I made a second planter. I enjoyed making things with wood again and completed it thoroughly and with care. I enjoyed talking with A about things and working physically with my hands.

Another YJS have thanked us for a plan that was "out of the box" and gave something different for them to focus on. They liked how it clearly matched with the child's strengths and likes, and the plan had been tailored to using these strengths for things like reparation but also building on positive activities.

Built a flower box for the school. I learned how to use a drill and had a lot of fun. Making me change my mind and I want do woodwork for the future.

Each year the YJS undertakes a case audit on a priority area of YJS work. In 2025 the audit focused on our work with children in care. As part of the audit, we talked with some of the children in the audit sample.

When asked about joint work by YJS workers and social workers, one child commented that:

They work together and try to help me as best they can...I feel like they are good people, most of them, who care and want to help. Good people in a bad system".

A YJS nurse spoke with another child to gain his views. She recorded their conversation as follows:
I didn't ask you for a rating, but you decided to give one. You rated 3/5 but you weren't sure why. I asked what people supporting you should do differently to make this a 4 or a 5 to which you said, "don't push your luck, that's a good score".

5.2 Resources and Services

The funding contributions to the DCYJS partnership budget in 2026/27 are listed in Appendix Two. Local authority contributions remain frozen at the 2022/23 levels. The Ministry of Justice announced in February 2026 that Youth Justice Grant allocation and the Turnaround Grant allocation for DCYJS for the following 3 years, to March 2029, will remain frozen at the allocations for 2025/26.

93% of the DCYJS budget is allocated to staffing costs. Annual cost of living pay awards add to the staffing costs each year, without a corresponding increase in partner contributions.

All local authority staff in DCYJS are employed by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. Other DCYJS staff are employed by Dorset Police, the Probation Service (Dorset) and Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. A DCYJS Structure Chart is included in Appendix

One, showing the posts provided through our partnership resources. DCYJS has a strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary identity, meeting the staffing requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998).

Like all public services, DCYJS operates in a context of reducing resources. Ensuring value for money and making best use of resources is a high priority for the service. The combined service, working across Dorset's local authorities since 2015, has enabled the YJS to maintain high practice standards while managing real terms budget reductions over that period.

One of this Plan's strategic priorities for 2026/27 is to make best use of the resources available to our YJS partnership.

The Youth Justice Board Grant is paid subject to terms and conditions relating to its use. The Grant supports the front-line delivery of essential youth justice services for children. The Grant may only be used towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

- Reduce the number of children in the youth justice system;
- Reduce reoffending by children in the youth justice system;
- Improve the safety and wellbeing of children in the youth justice system; and
- Improve outcomes for children in the youth justice system.

The conditions of the Grant also refer to the services that must be provided and the duty to comply with data reporting requirements.

The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the Partnership's resources for employing practitioners who work with children to prevent and reduce offending and to keep children and other members of the community safe from harm. Resources from the Youth Justice Grant are also used to provide restorative justice and reparative activities, to promote pro-social activities for children building on their strengths and to improve the education, training and employment opportunities of young people in the local youth justice system. The Youth Justice Grant contributes to the performance achievements described in section 4.2, reducing the number of children entering the justice system, reducing reoffending by those who do enter the justice system, and maintaining low numbers of children being sentenced to custody.

In addition to the service outcomes listed above, the Youth Justice Grant and other Partnership resources are used to achieve the strategic priorities set out later in this Plan. Progress against those priorities is reported to the DCYJS Partnership Board, with oversight also provided by the relevant scrutiny committees of the two local authorities.

5.3 YJS Partnership Board Development

HMI Probation's Joint Inspection of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service was published in January 2023. The inspection included scrutiny of the Board's work. The inspection report rated the service's Governance and Leadership as 'Good'.

HMI Probation also met with members of the DCYJS Partnership Board in February 2025 as part of their thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. Inspectors identified a strategic commitment to diverting children from the justice system wherever possible.

The YJS Partnership Board has an established cycle of performance review, strategic oversight and forward planning. During the past year, the Board has scrutinised topics including:

- Learning and actions from the thematic inspection of work with children on out of court resolutions
- Delays to investigations – impact on children and victims, support options for children on bail or released under investigation

- Developing YJS work with victims, including the wider partnership response to the needs of victims
- Integration of the Dorset Integrated Non-Custodial Service with the YJS health offer and other local health provision for children in contact with the justice system
- Child in Care over-representation and actions to address this
- New Focused Deterrence programme, with OPCC funding, to reduce the risk of weapon offences
- Education, Training and Employment offers and outcomes for YJS children.

The YJS Partnership Board's plans for 2026-27 include further oversight of the local offer for victims, and alignment of YJS service developments with reform programmes such as Families First Partnerships, SEND reforms, the national Youth Strategy, and local plans for CAMHS Transformation. The YJS Board will consider whether more work is needed to coordinate the different sub-groups and activities which support and oversee the operational work of the YJS Partnership. The YJS Board will also ensure its alignment with the new inspection criteria for Leadership and Governance in youth justice services.

5.4 Workforce Development

The YJS is committed to good practice, using staff supervision, peer support, team workshops and external training courses to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of our workers.

Informal feedback from HMI Probation, after their 2025 inspection of our work with children on Out of Court Disposals, noted that *“YJS staff are skilled, knowledgeable, and feel well supported. There is a strong capacity for reflection at all levels of the service.”*

The DCYJS Workforce Development Policy identifies core training for different roles in the team. As well as refresher training in child safeguarding, extra-familial harm and information governance, team members are also trained in Motivational Interviewing, AIM3 Harmful Sexual Behaviour assessments, and Restorative Justice with complex and sensitive cases.

Team members will continue to attend training and development activities in these approaches in 2026/27.

A Motivational Interviewing Development Group was established in 2024, facilitated by an expert external trainer. This will continue in 2026/27.

The team's work with children showing Harmful Sexual Behaviour is supported by a quarterly YJS HSB Practitioner's Group, which sometimes includes contributions from external speakers.

A quarterly YJS Weapons Offences Practitioner's Group is now well-established, enabling team members to hear about and share evidence-based interventions to reduce weapon-based offending.

In recent years the YJS has been embedding and developing its application of the Child First approach to youth justice work. Whole service workshops are scheduled in April 2026 to review our progress with Child First practice, and to agree our next steps.

Volunteers play an important role in the work of the YJS, especially as Referral Order community panel members. We appreciate their engagement during 2025/26 in training sessions and whole service meetings. Our volunteers are included in the YJS whole service Child First workshops.

DCYJS also supports individual career progression plans for team members, service resilience and succession planning. Plans for 2026/27 include:

- a Youth Justice Worker completing his social work qualification through the Social Work Apprenticeship with BCP Council and Solent University.
- A Practice Manager studying for the ILM Level 5 Certificate in Leadership and Management through the Association of YOT Managers
- A Youth Justice Worker studying for the Level 5 Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship.
- A Business Support Manager starting a Level 3 apprenticeship in Data and Insights for Business Decisions
- A Youth Justice Officer working towards her Practice Educator qualification
- Two Youth Justice Officers working towards the Placement Supervisor qualification.

DCYJS also hosts student placements for students studying for social work qualifications and for trainee Speech and Language Therapists.

5.5 Knife Possession Guidance

The government published new guidance on Child Knife Possession Offences in February 2026, for implementation from April 2026 ([child knife possession offences](#)). The new guidance brings in some changes for responding to children who are found in possession of a knife, including:

- In almost every case, the child must either receive a Youth Conditional Caution or be taken to court
- In very exceptional cases, which the National Police Chiefs Council will only apply for 10-15 year-olds, a Deferred Prosecution can be applied
- Police must notify the YJS within 1 working day of a child being found with a knife
- When the police investigation is complete, with evidence to support prosecution, the YJS must assess the child and set out an intervention plan within 4 weeks
- Interventions with children for knife crime offences must fit with the evidence base compiled by the Youth Endowment Fund
- A new multi-agency scrutiny panel should oversee the local application of the guidance for Child Knife Possession Offences.

Dorset Police and DCYJS worked together during March 2026 to agree an implementation plan for the new guidance. The implementation plan sets out: how Police will introduce the option of Deferred Prosecution in Dorset; how Deferred Prosecutions will be managed between Dorset Police and DCYJS; a process for Dorset Police to notify DCYJS of children being found in possession of a knife, using the seconded YJS police officers; the decision-making process to select the appropriate disposal for a child found in possession of a knife; the selection of appropriate interventions; arrangements for scrutiny and oversight, including the creation of a new knife crime scrutiny panel and its links to the YJS Partnership Board. The scrutiny panel will oversee adherence to the knife crime guidance, including any instances when the guidance has not been followed

DCYJS submitted successful bids for Serious Violence Duty funding in the BCP Council and Dorset Council areas. These bids will enable DCYJS to make immediate contact with a child after they have been found in possession of a knife, without waiting for completion of the police investigation. The focus of YJS work during the investigation phase will be to complete an assessment of the child's strengths and needs, to develop a plan with the child to engage them in positive activities, to complete a speech and language assessment with the child, and to use YJS multi-disciplinary workers to help the child to access appropriate education and health provision.

DCYJS developed a structured response to knife crime in 2025/26, forming the basis for its work under the new knife crime guidance. Our response to knife crime includes:

- Guidance for YJS workers on assessing and managing knife crime risks
- DCYJS weapon-offences group for practitioners to find out about and share evidence of effective practice
- Focused Deterrence work with children assessed as posing the highest risk of harm to others through weapon offences (more information in section 6.7)

- First Aid sessions with YJS nurses
- Restorative Justice activities including the option of a meeting with a representative of the local knife crime charity, Changes Are Made
- Repairing the harm activities at local hospitals.

5.6 Evidence-based practice, innovation and evaluation

Evidence shows that the best predictor for positive change is a pro-social relationship with a trusted adult. The primary focus for effective practice in DCYJS is therefore the quality of workers' relationships with children, alongside positive relationships within the team and with other professionals. The emphasis on relational practice also reflects feedback from children on the DCYJS caseload about what is most important to them in their experience of the service.

YJS practice developments during the past year include establishing a Girls Group, expanding the range and accessibility of positive activities for children, and offering First Aid sessions run by YJS nurses for children who have committed weapon offences. More information about these initiatives is provided in section 6.

The YJS now provides two innovative Speech and Language projects.

Early identification of speech and language needs for children at risk of school exclusion

Around 90% of children in the youth justice system have speech, language and communication needs. Most of these children have experienced permanent or fixed-term exclusions from school. The communication needs of these children have only been identified when they have contact with the YJS and they receive a structured speech and language assessment.

The DCYJS Partnership Board allocated funding for a three-year project, known as 'Re-Engage', to identify and support the speech, language and communication needs of children at risk of school exclusion.

The Re-Engage project works with schools to focus on children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion and whose behaviour indicates a risk of future offending. The aim is to identify the child's communication needs at an earlier stage, to prevent school exclusion and future offending.

The project is staffed by a Speech and Language Therapist and a Speech and Language Associate Practitioner. Their roles are to assess the communication needs of children who are at risk of school exclusion and to support schools to respond to the child's specific needs. Training sessions are also offered to schools as part of their staff development.

The Re-Engage project was cited by HMI Probation as an example of good practice in the Effective Practice Guide which was published as part of the thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals: "*This proactive, school-based model aimed to prevent children from entering the YJS altogether*".

By the start of April 2026, the project had received 152 referrals from 27 schools across BCP and Dorset. Speech and Language assessments had been completed for 90 children, uncovering significant levels of previously unidentified communication needs.

Language Profiles of 90 children with completed reports:

Developmental Language Disorder & Language disorder – 26

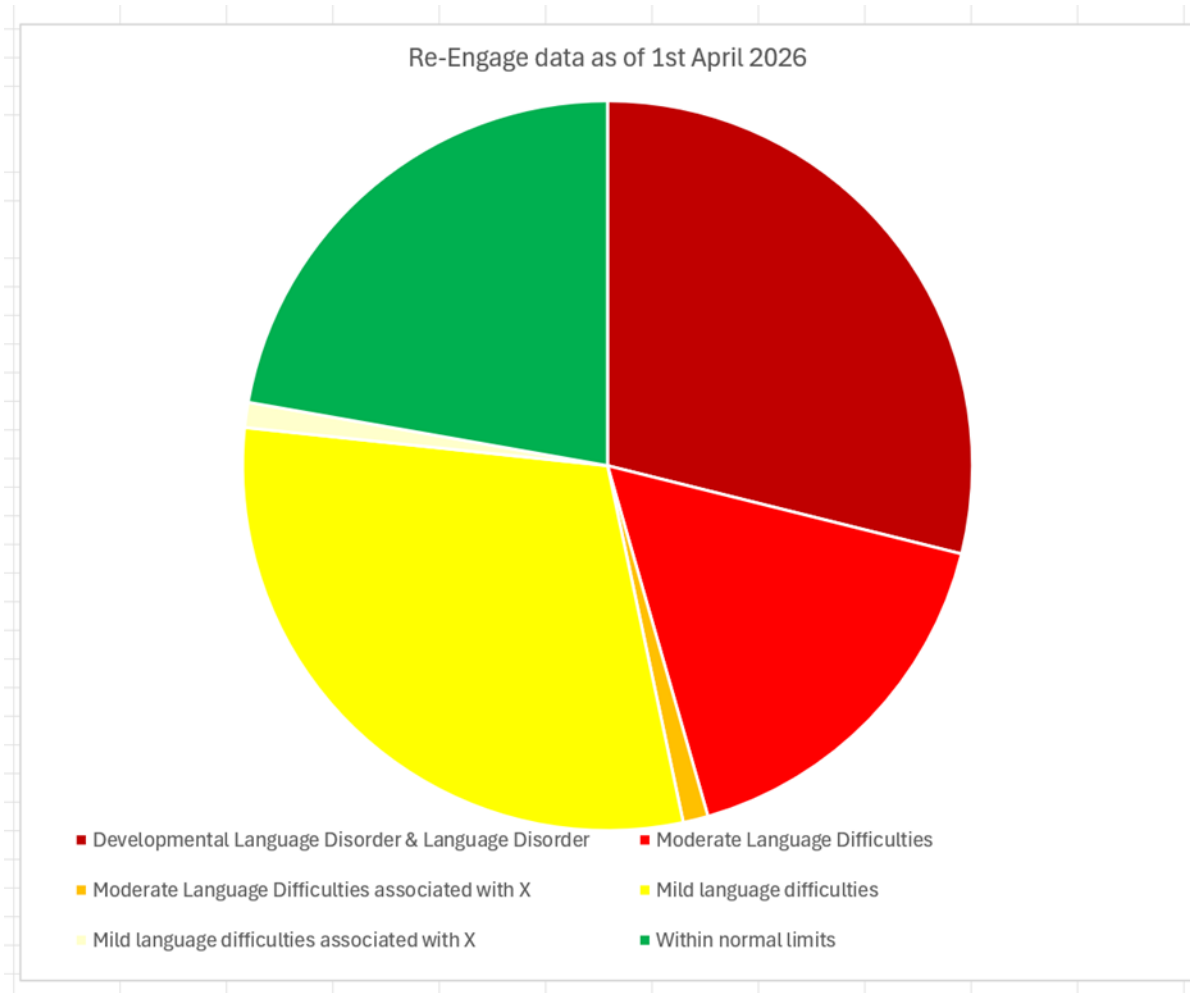
Moderate Language difficulties – 15

Moderate Language difficulties associated with another diagnosis - 1

Mild language difficulties – 27

Mild language difficulties associated with another diagnosis - 1

Within normal limits – 20.



The Re-Engage team also provide training and coaching to schools and to other services, such as the Child in Care health team, to raise awareness and confidence in responding to children’s communication needs.

Expanding speech and language support in the justice system

NHS England has partnered with DCYJS for a ‘Proof of Concept’ project to spread speech and language expertise beyond the Youth Justice Service. The ‘Bridges’ project commenced in late 2025, with the flow of work developing from March 2026. The Bridges team consists of two part-time Speech and Language Therapists and a Speech and Language Associate Practitioner

The project will provide speech and language assessments for children who are under investigation for serious offences, before they reach the YJS. The project will also work with children who have been referred to the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team by local schools, and with children who have been identified as being at risk of ‘extra-familial harm’ and possible offending. A support offer is also being developed for children who are victims of offences committed by the children who are working with the YJS.

The Bridges project is also working with the Probation Service in Dorset to support their work with young adults aged 18-25. As well as the offer of speech and language assessments for individual young adults, the Bridges team can assist in making the service more communication-friendly. Examples of this work would include the creation of Easy Read versions of post-custody licence conditions, to help young adults to understand what they can and cannot do while subject to post-custody supervision.

Evaluation of this project is an integral part of the project design with NHS England.

5.7 Standards for work with children in the youth justice system

All Youth Justice Services are required to comply with the Youth Justice Board's 'Standards for work with children in the youth justice system' (2019). The Youth Justice Board has previously overseen a programme of self-assessments to monitor compliance. Responsibility for oversight of YJS compliance may transfer to the Ministry of Justice during 2026/27, as part of the overhaul of the role of the YJB.

The last YJB self-assessment exercise took place in 2023, when all services were directed to audit their work under 'Standard 2: Work in Court'. The YJB provided an audit tool, comprising 22 questions. The DCYJS self-assessment rated our work in court as Good, with most of the audit questions being rated Good or Outstanding. The quality of YJS court work reflects the strong partnership between DCYJS and our local youth courts. The chair of the Dorset Magistrates Youth Panel sits on the DCYJS Partnership Board, enabling other partners to hear the views of magistrates.

The YJB did not require Youth Justice Services to complete a National Standards audit in 2024/25 or 2025/26. The YJB has indicated that there will also be no requirement for a National Standards audit in 2026/27.

5.8 Response to inspections, reviews and audits.

Inspection reports, learning reviews and case audits all contribute to our service planning.

The most recent full inspection of our service was published in January 2023, rating the service as 'Good'. The inspectors made 6 recommendations, which were followed up through an action plan, overseen by the YJS Partnership Board. Actions have been completed for all of the recommendations.

Dorset Police and DCYJS were jointly inspected in February 2025 as part of a national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. This thematic inspection was conducted by HMI Probation and HMI Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services. The report was published in October 2025, alongside an Effective Practice Guide.

The two inspectorates identified examples of good practice by Dorset Police and by DCYJS, including the strength of the partnership between our two services. The inspection report noted that our joint decision-making model "*provided a more consistent, fair, and effective approach to decision-making*" than the examples which they saw in other Police forces.

The Effective Practice Guide for the OOC inspection also cited good practice in our Speech and Language work and in our Restorative Justice activities and our engagement with victims.

The thematic inspection report made 18 recommendations, for the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Youth Justice Board, the National Police Chief's Council, Chief Constables, Youth Justice Partnership Boards and Youth Justice Services. The DCYJS Head of Service is a member of the national steering group which oversees the implementation of these recommendations.

There were no new Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in the past year involving DCYJS.

The YJS initiated two local learning reviews during 2025 in respect of young adults who entered custody shortly after turning 18. Actions taken from these reviews included the provision of guidance notes to colleagues in Children's Social Care about the care status and entitlements of children who are remanded to secure accommodation, and the YJS health team has strengthened its links with custody healthcare providers.

YJS learning from local CSPRs and multi-agency learning reviews is included in the team's development plans, and is reported annually to the YJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS undertakes thematic case audits, linked to the service's priorities. The focus in 2025 was on our local multi-agency work with Children in Care. National and local evidence shows that Children in Care are over-represented in the justice system and are likely to progress further into the justice system.

DCYJS coordinated a multi-agency audit of work with 16 Children in Care (8 from each local authority) who started youth justice interventions between September 2024 and March 2025. One of the themes emerging from the audits was that there were notable examples of good practice and good joint working between YJS workers and social workers, as well as health and education professionals, but this good practice was not embedded consistently across the whole audit. An action plan has been devised which includes steps to make good multi-agency working more consistent and less dependent on individual practitioners and managers.

Audit plans for 2026/27 include a case audit to apply the new casework inspection criteria, an updated review of work with Children in Care, and completion of the 'Section 11' audits for the Safeguarding Children Partnerships in each local authority.

6 Local and National Priorities for 2026/27

This section of the Plan reviews issues of local and national priority for youth justice which contribute to our service priorities for 2026/27.

6.1 Over-representation

National data shows that some groups of children, such as those with diverse ethnic heritage, children in care and children with Special Educational Needs are over-represented in the youth justice system. DCYJS monitors caseload information for children from minority and disadvantaged groups to identify over-representation and actions that may be needed. It is also recognised that some children experience multiple disadvantages, exemplified by the common characteristics of boys receiving a custodial sentence, as shown in section 4.2.

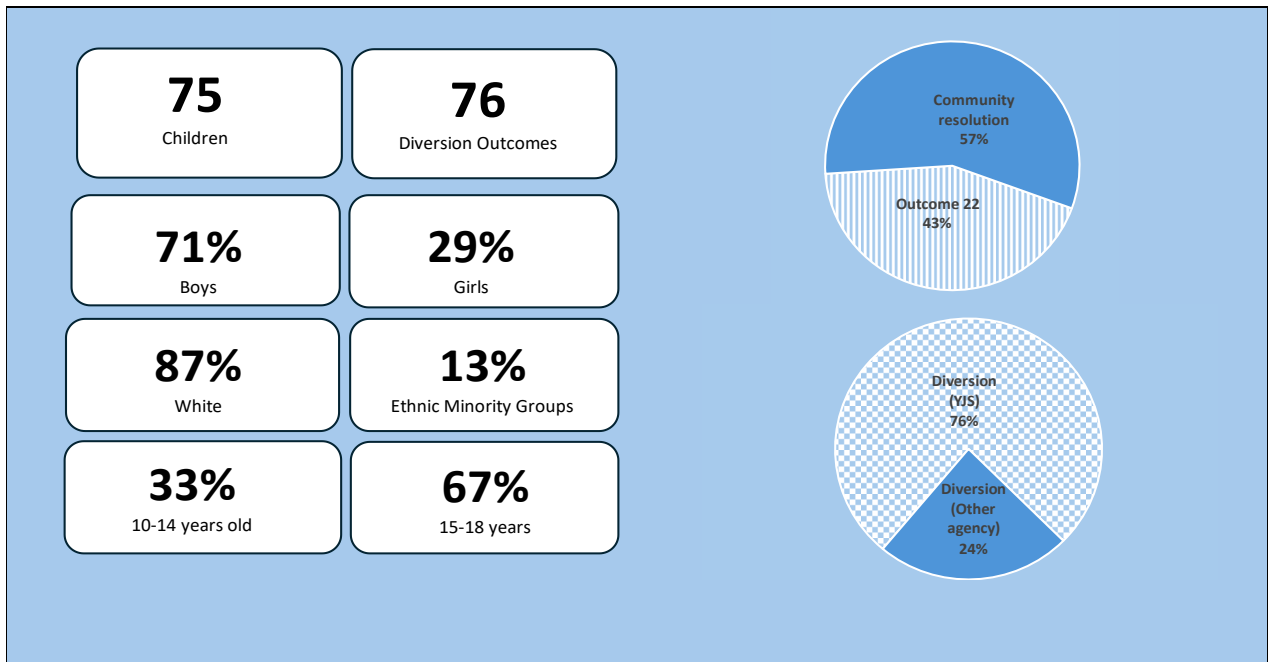
Ethnic Disparity

Data from the January 2026 School Census shows that 17.8% of 10-17 year-olds at schools in the BCP Council area identify as not having a white ethnicity. The equivalent figure for schools in the Dorset Council area is 6.3%. This data helps us compare the rate of children on our caseload from different ethnicities with proportions in the local population.

The following charts provide information about the children in the youth justice system in each local authority, separating them by children who were diverted and children who were cautioned or sentenced.

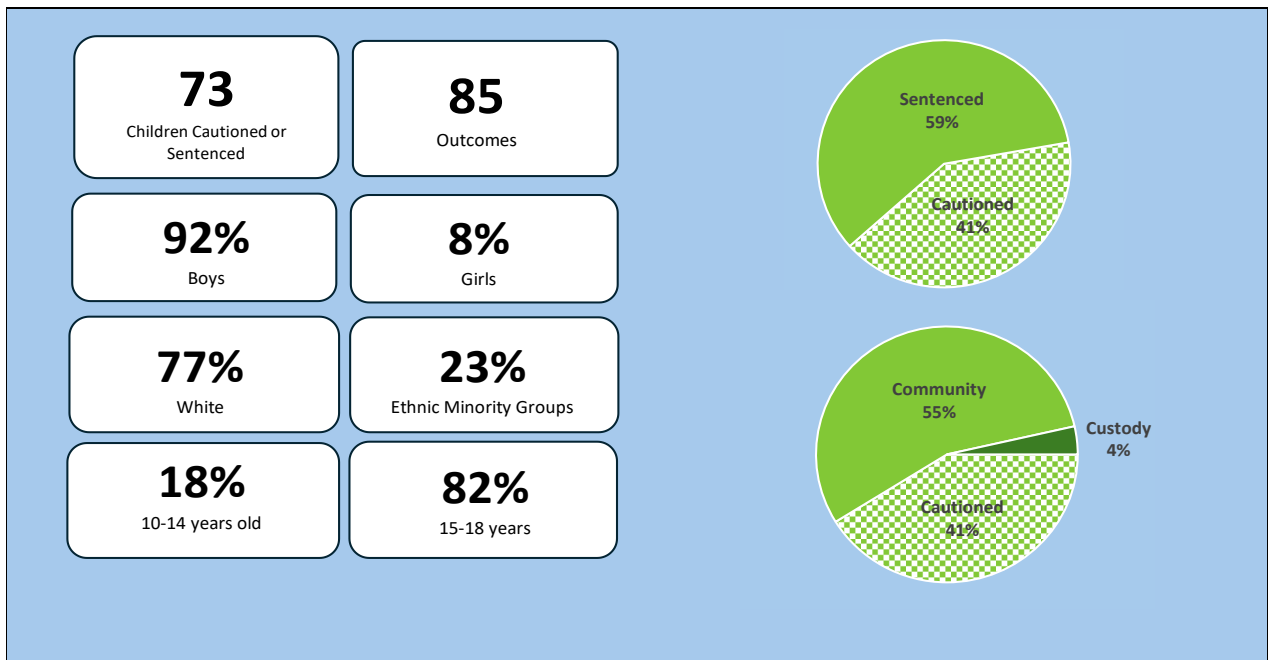
BCP Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2025/26

BCP Outcomes (Diversion) from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026

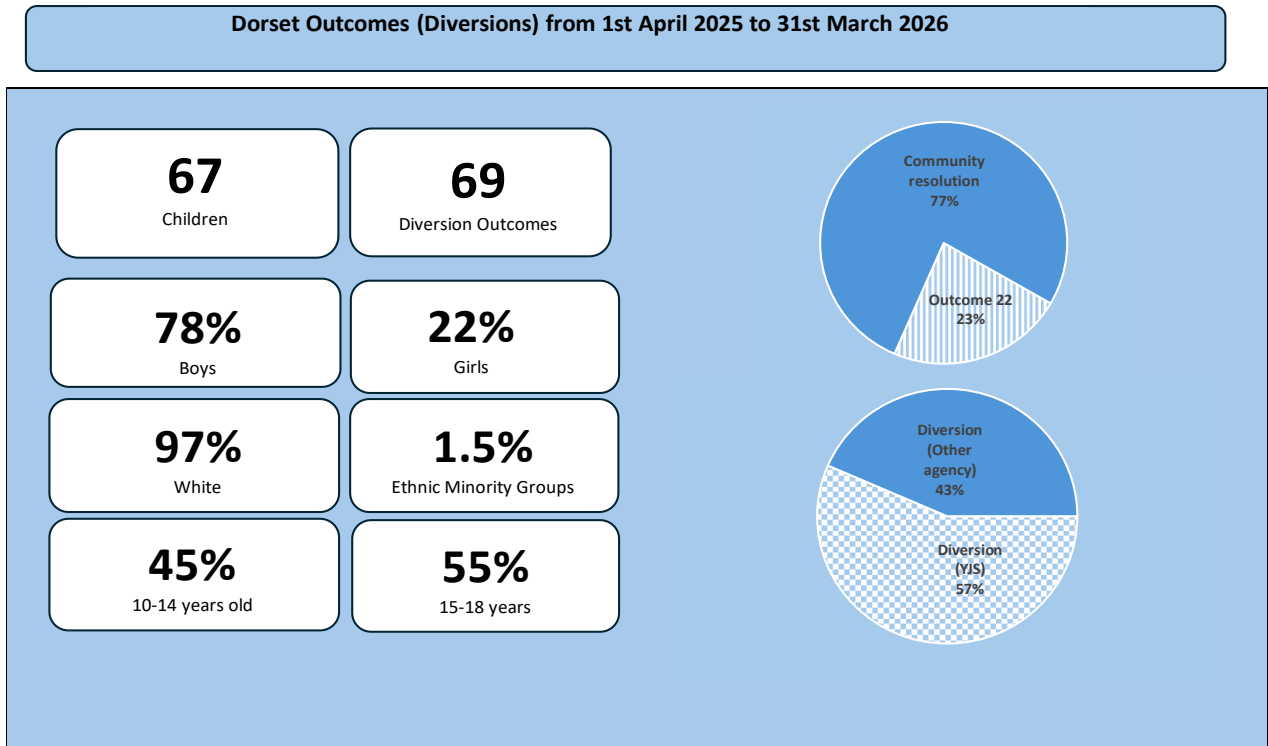


BCP Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2025/26

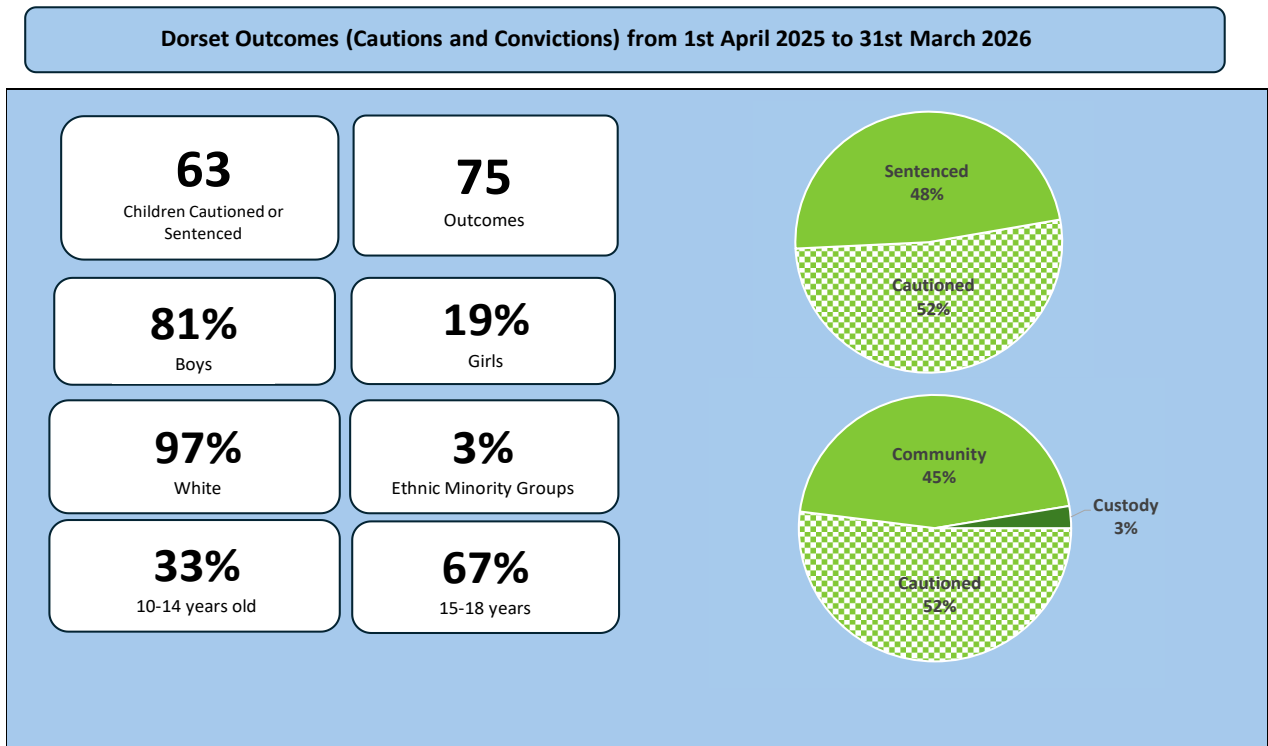
BCP Outcomes (Cautions and Convictions) from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026



Dorset Council children who were diverted from the justice system in 2025/26



Dorset Council children who were cautioned or sentenced in 2025/26



Comparison of these charts shows that:

- There is a notably higher proportion of girls among the children diverted from the justice system compared to the proportion of girls in the groups who were cautioned or sentenced.
- The proportion of children with non-white ethnicity is lower among the children who were diverted than among the children who were cautioned or sentenced, with a more significant difference in the BCP Council area.

- Children who do not identify as white are not over-represented in Dorset, or among children in BCP who are diverted, but they are over-represented among children sentenced or cautioned in BCP.
- In both local authorities, there is a higher proportion of younger children among those who were diverted.
- There is a higher proportion of younger children in contact with the YJS in Dorset than in BCP.

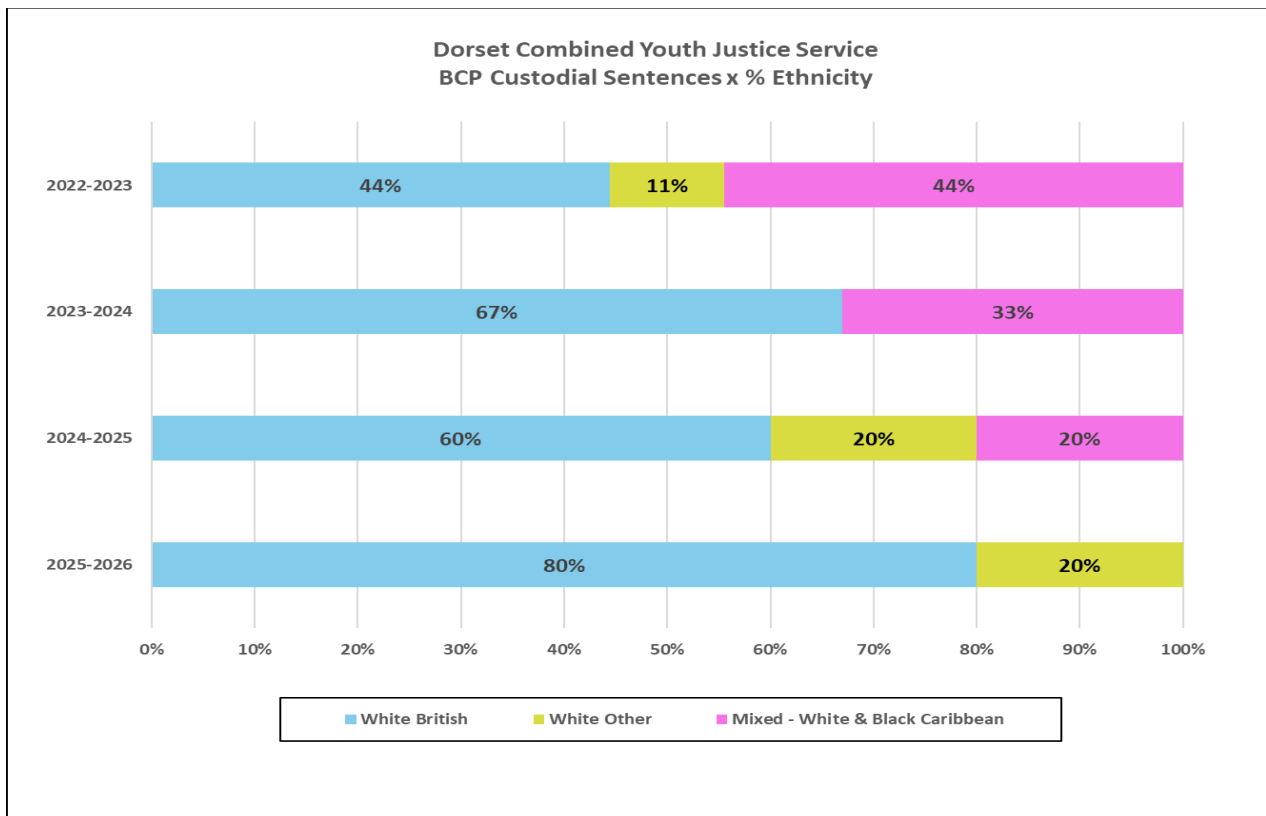
Information about the ethnicity, gender and age of First-Time Entrants is presented and analysed earlier in this document, in section 4.2.

As well as monitoring possible over-representation among First-Time Entrants, we also track how far children ‘progress’ into the youth justice system.

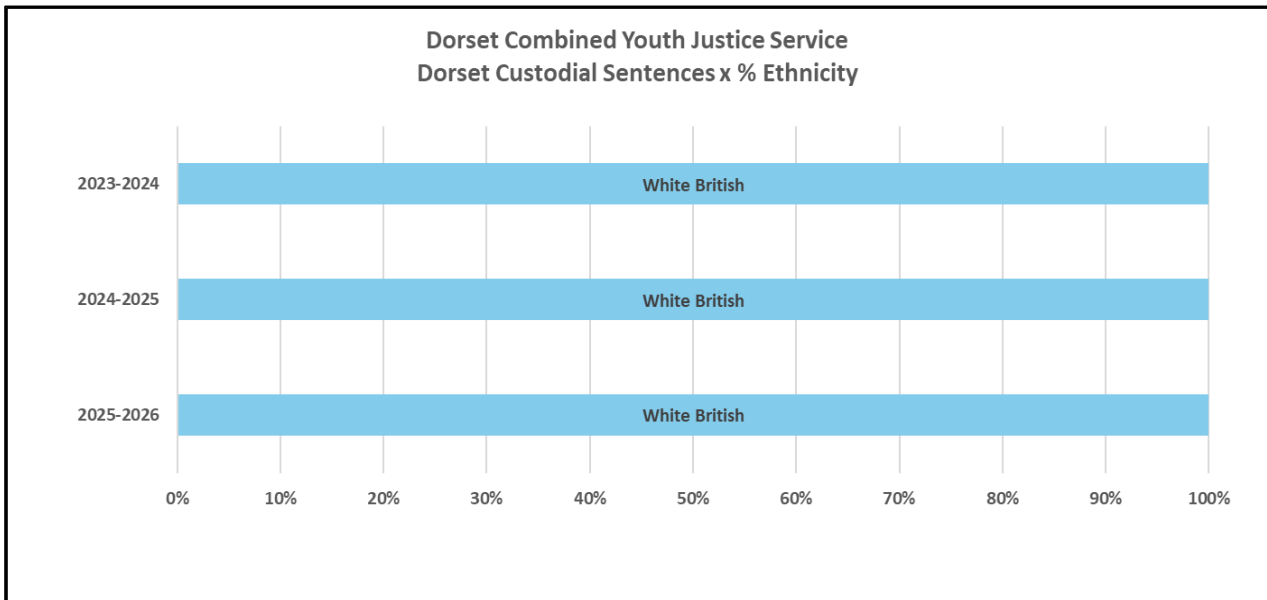
The charts showing the numbers of children cautioned or sentenced in 2025/26 indicate that children from ethnic minority groups in the BCP Council area are over-represented amongst those receiving a caution or court order. The reasons for this over-representation, and the response to it, are likely to spread beyond the justice system, noting that DCYJS and Dorset Police also work with Dorset Council children, where children from ethnic minority groups are not over-represented.

Ethnicity of children sentenced to custody

At a national level there are enduring concerns about the over-representation of Black and mixed heritage boys amongst children in custody. Low numbers of local children being sentenced to custody make it hard to analyse data based on percentages. The following charts show custodial sentences by ethnicity in each local authority in recent years.



There has been a welcome reduction in recent years in the over-representation of black and mixed heritage children in BCP receiving custodial sentences. No children from these ethnic groups in BCP received custodial sentences in 2025/26.



In the past three years, a total of 6 Dorset children have been sentenced to custody (8 custodial sentences). All of them define their ethnicity as White British.

In summary, there is a nuanced and varied picture locally for over-representation by ethnicity. Overall, looking at the service as a whole, local children from global majority ethnicities are not more likely to be criminalised and are not over-represented. There are some subtleties to the data though, such as how children from different groups progress through the justice system, and differences between BCP Council and Dorset Council, which require further attention.

Gender

We also monitor the gender breakdown of our caseload and the distribution by gender at different stages of the youth justice system. There is a higher proportion of girls among children who are diverted from a formal outcome, with lower proportions of girls amongst those who receive a community or custodial sentence.

At a national and local level there is evidence that boys are significantly over-represented among children in custody. This is also the case locally, where no girls have been remanded or sentenced to custody in the past 9 years.

The proportion of girls on the DCYJS caseload fluctuates but usually stays within a range of about 15%-20% of the total caseload, consistent with national rates. Girls accounted for 15% of our First Time Entrants in 2025/26, down from 17% in both 2024/25 and 2023/24.

It is recognised that girls can have different needs and experiences from boys, requiring differentiated responses from YJS workers. Worker allocation decisions are taken carefully to be sensitive to each girl's needs.

YJS workers set up a new Girls Group in 2025. The aim was to create a safe space for girls, to support them to build confidence, positive self-identity and behaviours. The group also enabled them to think about what they look for in healthy relationships, in the context of concerns about Violence Against Women and Girls.

One of the girls who attended the Girls Group provided this feedback:

- *It was fun*
- *You get to build bonds with people*
- *You get to enjoy yourself*
- *You feel free*

- *You don't have to go there glammed up – no one will judge you*
- *We get to make meals.*

Children in Care

Local data shows that Children in Care are over-represented in our youth justice system. Numbers fluctuated a little during 2025/26, but the proportion of Children in Care on the YJS caseload was usually around 20%.

Analysis commissioned by the YJS Partnership Board for its meeting in October 2024 identified some common features of Children in Care in the youth justice system, leading to a multi-agency audit in 2025 of joint work with 16 Children in Care who started youth justice interventions between September 2024 and March 2025.

The multi-agency audit identified examples of good practice involving YJS workers, social workers, Virtual School staff, YJS nurses and Speech and Language Therapists, and the Child in Care health team. This good practice was not consistent in the work with all the children in the audit sample. Actions have been agreed to make the quality of work more consistent, including:

- Complete a written agreement between the YJS worker and the social worker for joint working arrangements at the start of YJS work with a Child in Care
- YJS and social work plans for each child to specify the work being done by other professionals
- Review joint working between the YJS and the Virtual Schools
- Maintain close links between YJS nurses and Child in Care nurses
- Include the Virtual School in consent process for sharing YJS speech and language assessments
- YJS transitions work to adult services to include the social worker/PA for care experienced young people
- Complete a follow-up review in autumn 2026 to check on progress.

SEND

DCYJS caseload information shows that children in the local youth justice system are likely to have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In March 2026, 22.5% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 19.7% had the status of 'SEN Support'. This means that 42.2% of school-age children were identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, compared to about 21.6% in the local populations for their age group (see section 2, 'Local Context' data).

It should be noted that the YJS was still collecting SEND information for some of these children, and there are others who are likely to have unidentified needs, meaning that the figure of 42% is probably an under-estimate of the level of SEND. These concerns fit with evidence collected by the DCYJS Speech and Language Therapists, showing high levels of communication needs amongst children in our local youth justice system and indicating the need for YJS workers to adapt their work to the needs of each child.

The YJS has worked with our two local authorities to establish a reliable process for each child's EHCP to be shared with the YJS, to enable the YJS to apply the advice in the EHCP when working with the child.

6.2 Prevention

The rate of children entering the justice system is influenced by the effectiveness of local prevention and diversion activities. 'Prevention' refers to work with children who have been identified as being at risk of going on to commit offences in future if they do not receive additional

help. 'Diversion' describes the response to children who have committed an offence but who can be diverted from the justice system.

DCYJS does not directly undertake prevention work, focusing its activities on children who have committed a criminal offence. As described in section 5.5, however, the YJS is currently providing a three-year prevention project, known as Re-Engage, to identify the speech, language and communication needs of children in Key Stage 3 who are at risk of permanent exclusion from mainstream school.

Each of our local authorities provides early help services, working with other local organisations like schools, the Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team and the voluntary sector.

In the Dorset Council area oversight of prevention activities sits with the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People, supported by more detailed work at locality level. The DCYJS Head of Service is a member of the Strategic Alliance and team members participate in locality meetings to identify and respond to children at risk. 'The Harbour' is a Dorset Council multi-disciplinary service which works with children who need additional support to prevent negative outcomes such as being taken into care or entering the justice system. DCYJS and The Harbour have close links, including joint work with children who have entered the justice system.

In the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council area, preventative work occurs within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Early Help. Both services use local data to determine the needs in the area and to then provide preventative services to meet those needs. Governance for the Community Safety work sits with the Community Safety Partnership Executive Board. The Board's role includes scrutiny of the work undertaken. It can also agree to commission further services. The YJS Head of Service sits on the CSP Executive board. Targeted early help services are overseen by the Early Help Partnership Board (a multi-agency partnership which also incorporates Family Hubs). The Board agrees what services may be needed and which to provide/commission. Services are provided based on the *Continuum of need*, with clear pathways in relation to how to access the support and services. Performance monitoring for the Early Help Partnership Board includes data on the rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system.

6.3 Diversion

As mentioned above, DCYJS and Dorset Police were inspected in February 2025 as part of the joint national thematic inspection of work with children on Out of Court Disposals. The inspectors noted, in their informal inspection feedback, that *"There is a clear focus and shared commitment across the partnership both strategically and operationally to divert children from the criminal justice system wherever this is possible."*

Diversion work is undertaken locally on a partnership basis. Dorset Police, DCYJS and local authority Early Help services meet weekly as an Out of Court Disposal Panel to decide the appropriate youth justice outcome for children who have committed criminal offences. The panel looks for opportunities to divert children from a formal justice outcome when possible. This fits with the local priority to reduce First Time Entrants, described above in section 4.2.

Diversion activities usually involve additional support for the child and, when appropriate, some form of restorative response in respect of the criminal offence. The Dorset Police Safer Schools and Communities Team, DCYJS, Early Help Services, and Children's Social Care Services each provide support at the diversion stage. The appropriate service for each child is decided on the basis of the child's needs, risks and existing relationships with professionals.

During 2025/26 a total of 142 children received diversion options for a criminal offence, rather than a formal justice outcome. 95 of them received interventions from the Youth Justice Service. 48 received interventions from other services, principally the police Safer Schools and Communities Team.

Since 2022/23 the Ministry of Justice has funded the 'Turnaround' programme, aimed at 'children on the cusp of the youth justice system'. Locally we used this programme to divert children from the justice system and to reduce our rate of First Time Entrants. With the benefit of Turnaround funding, our partnership has established the use of 'Outcome 22', a Police recording code which indicates no further police action, provided that the YJS offers support to the child.

Turnaround funding is now used to employ an additional Youth Justice Worker, an additional Restorative Justice Practitioner and a half-time Speech and Language Therapist. Each child on the Turnaround programme is allocated to a Youth Justice Worker who works with the child and their family to agree a support plan to help them avoid further offending. The Restorative Justice Practitioner contacts the victim to identify their needs and to promote Restorative Justice options. The Turnaround Speech and Language Therapist assesses the child's communication needs and provides advice for the child, their family and professionals about the child's individual needs and how best to respond to them.

The local Turnaround programme is overseen by the Youth Justice Service Partnership Board. The Ministry of Justice sets targets for the number of children successfully completing Turnaround interventions each year. DCYJS exceeded its completions target in 2025/26.

Funding for the Turnaround programme has now been confirmed until 2028/29, albeit frozen at a reduced level compared to the original allocation.

6.4 Education, Training and Employment

Children in the youth justice system are less likely to stay in mainstream schools, to achieve good educational outcomes and to access education, employment or training after Year 11.

In March 2026, 22.5% of school-age children on the caseload had an Education, Health and Care Plan and a further 19.7% had the status of 'SEN Support'. There are also likely to be other children whose additional needs have not been identified or who would have been categorised as needing SEN Support if they were on roll at a mainstream school.

Most children in contact with the justice system have communication needs which have not previously been identified (see sections 5.5 and 6.4 for more details on YJS Speech and Language work). The YJS shares information about a child's Speech and Language needs with schools, PRUs, mentors, tutors and other education professionals. This helps to ensure that the child's individual needs are understood and met, supporting their engagement in education.

In recent years DCYJS has worked with local authority colleagues to improve the accuracy of the recording and reporting of school exclusions experienced by children on the caseload. In March 2026, 13 out of 71 school-age children on the caseload had been permanently excluded from school in the past 2.5 academic years, and 31 of the 71 children had experienced at least one fixed-term exclusion during that period.

Improving education provision and outcomes for children in the youth justice system is a service priority.

Each local authority's Director of Education is a member of the DCYJS Partnership Board. The headteachers of the BCP Council Virtual School and College and the Dorset Council Virtual School are also members of the DCYJS Partnership Board.

DCYJS employs two Education Officers, one focusing on school-age children and one supporting the post-16 age group. They provide advice to DCYJS case managers and work directly with young people to understand their needs and to support their attendance and engagement. They also work with schools and local authorities to increase the suitability of provision, maintaining strong links with colleagues in the local authority Virtual Schools, the SEND teams and Inclusion services.

When a child is remanded or sentenced to custody, the appropriate YJS Education Officer is allocated to ensure that the child's education needs are understood and met during and after the period in custody. It is a requirement of the SEND Code of Practice, for children in custody with an EHCP, that an up to date EHCP is shared with the custody education provider to enable the child's specific educational needs to be met. The YJS Education Officers liaise with custody education providers and local authority colleagues to ensure that all relevant information is shared.

Each local authority has a multi-agency group which monitors and acts on inclusion in education for the school-age children causing most concern in respect of their access to education. The DCYJS Education Officer attends these groups and represents the needs of children who are open to the YJS.

DCYJS occasionally works with children who are receiving Elective Home Education. The YJS Education Officer follows up each case where a child receives Elective Home Education to review the adequacy and safety of the arrangement and to offer more support if needed.

In March 2026, 34.5% of YJS children in the post-16 age group were recorded as being not in employment, education or training (NEET). This reflects the limited opportunities for YJS young people, who can lack the necessary attainment levels to access the available provision.

The YJS runs the Discover You project at Upton Country Park to improve young people's self-esteem, practical skills and employability, to increase their chances of accessing employment and training.

31 young people attended the project between September 2025 and March 2026. Some of the positive outcomes for these young people included:

- Support towards Maths and English Functional Skills – one young person has completed his English Level 2 qualification. A number of other young people will be sitting their exams before the end of the academic year
- Other Support towards qualifications - CSCS Practice and completing exams – 7 young people have completed their Level 1 Health and Safety in the Construction Environment Award. They are now preparing for the second stage – the CITB Health, Safety and Environment Test, which they will complete in the coming weeks. Upon passing both, they will be eligible to obtain the Labourers Green Card, opening the door to employment and apprenticeship opportunities within the construction sector.
- AQA Certificated Learning –most young people complete around 5-10 awards, depending on how long they attend and what they engage in. Awards include Team Building, Employment and Training, Practical Tasks, Communication Skills, Health and Safety and Gardening.
- ETE and Careers – Careers Information Advice and Guidance – Career Action Planning, CV work, Applications for College and Jobs, Interview Skills.
- Work Experience options around Upton Country Park within the Welcome Centre and Café, opportunities also available for young people to help at open events.
- Conservation Volunteering Activities – Working with the Ranger Team onsite to complete practical activities around the site like planting trees, taking out hedgerows, coppicing, painting, creating woodwork items, filling potholes, putting up a stag beetle loggery (different things available at different times of the year).
- Team Building – different opportunities like den building and orienteering available.
- Life skills – budgeting/managing money, dealing with bills, communication skills.
- Raising money for local charities by making items to sell at Upton Country Park, e.g. Halloween items, Christmas items, nature-themed items and outdoor objects such as planters, bird boxes, bug hotels, bird feeders.
- Developing an Allotment Area – young people have helped to create an allotment space, designing and constructing a wooden greenhouse and raised bedding/planters to support growth of plants, fruit and vegetables. Young people are enjoying being able to learn and develop further through tasks like planting a variety of seeds and building knowledge around looking after them and seeing them grow. Some vegetables that were grown last summer were donated to a project that supports families in need.

- Development into mentoring opportunities for young people who continue to volunteer at Upton Country Park after attending the Discover You project. One young person is now part of the Upton Country Park Volunteer Team.
- Practical tasks for Upton Country Park – Since January 2026 the project has been tasked with working on a refurbishment of a dedicated picnic area at Upton Country Park, creating an improved, welcoming space for families and visitors to enjoy. This is planned to be completed ahead of the summer season. Young people are enjoying the process of starting the task from planning stages, to working out a schedule, through to looking at materials needed and costings, to then actually building, creating and finishing items.
- Support has also been given to a small number of young people that were school age for a period of time, to help engage them in learning and practical tasks whilst more permanent education was being arranged. This helped build structure and routine and get them ready for their new education provision.

The Discover You Project successfully applied for funding from the BCP Youth Fund in summer 2025 to help meet the cost of exams/qualification, new tools and equipment and gardening materials.

Young people who attended Discover You in 2025/26 shared these views on the project:

Being able to use the project has allowed me to gain qualifications to help me progress.

Everyone sees the mistakes, but here they see the potential.

Out here no one is judging you, it is just you, the work and what you create and build.

Before this I had never built anything, now I know I can and I am proud of that achievement.

The project gives me structure and is helping me to build/develop and that is what I need.

Getting my CSCS card means I have options.

6.5 Health and Communication Needs of Children in the youth justice system

Evidence shows that children who have contact with the justice system are likely to have significant health needs, including difficulties with mental health, physical health and substance use. DCYJS has a strong health team, reflecting the commitment of NHS Dorset and Dorset HealthCare to meeting the health needs of children in the youth justice system. The DCYJS health team comprises 2.8 full-time equivalent CAMHS nurses, a 0.8 Clinical Psychologist and 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists.

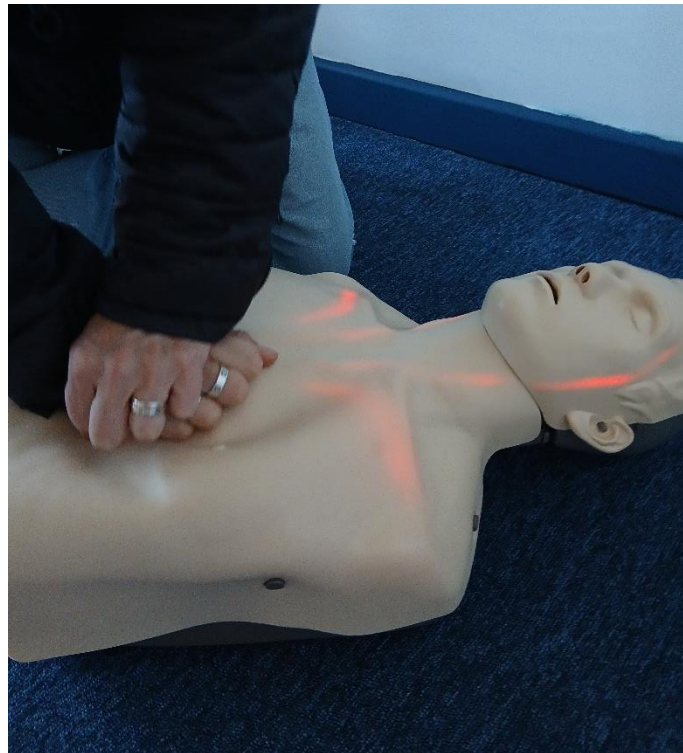
Health professionals in the YJS work directly with children and provide consultation and advice to YJS colleagues and other professionals. The YJS nurses meet regularly with colleagues in the Child in Care health team and the Dorset Integrated Non-Custodial Service (previously called the Criminal Justice Liaison and Diversion Service) to ensure the integration of healthcare support for children in the youth justice system.

The specialist skills and knowledge of the YJS nurses and psychologist underpin the DCYJS commitment to trauma-informed practice through the Trauma Recovery Model. Children who will be under YJS supervision for more than 6 months are considered for the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) multi-agency formulation model, led by the YJS Psychologist.

During 2025/26, the YJS nurses launched First Aid sessions for children who have committed weapon offences, as part of the YJS response to knife crime. The sessions focus on urgent action which the child can take in the event of witnessing a weapon injury or other health emergency. As well as providing important information to children, these sessions also enable reflection about the

impact of weapon injuries. The child's contact with the nurse can also give them confidence to meet again with the nurse for support with their own emotional or physical health needs.

The First Aid sessions include an activity on resuscitation, using a model which lights up when enough pressure is applied, as illustrated in this picture:



A YJS nurse is allocated to all children who are remanded or sentenced to custody. The aim is to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of health care for the child as they move into custody, during the custodial period and as part of their post-release planning. The YJS nurses liaise with the healthcare provider in the custodial establishment to resolve issues such as continuity of access to prescribed medication for children in custody. The YJS health team has strengthened links with custody healthcare providers in Feltham, Oakhill and Parc over the past year.

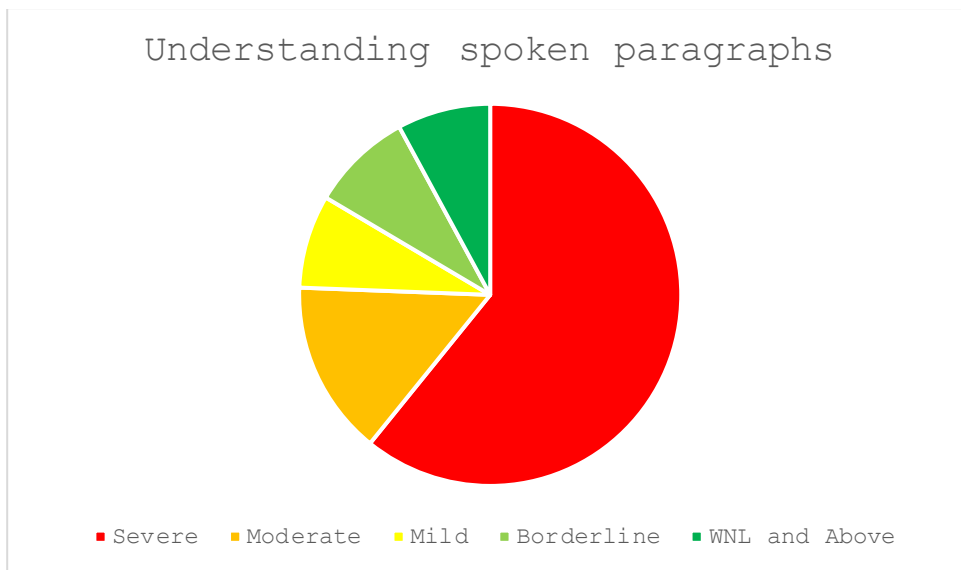
Speech and Language Therapists have been based in the YJS since 2018. Data has been reported in previous Youth Justice Plans to show that around 90% of children in contact with the justice system locally have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

YJS Speech and Language Therapists contributed to an MSc Dissertation in 2025 by a Masters student at Health Sciences University on 'Missed diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder in youth offenders'. One of the comments in the dissertation noted that "*The children we work with...are really accurately able to tell us exactly what they find hard with communication but nobody's asked them that question before in a way that they can access*".

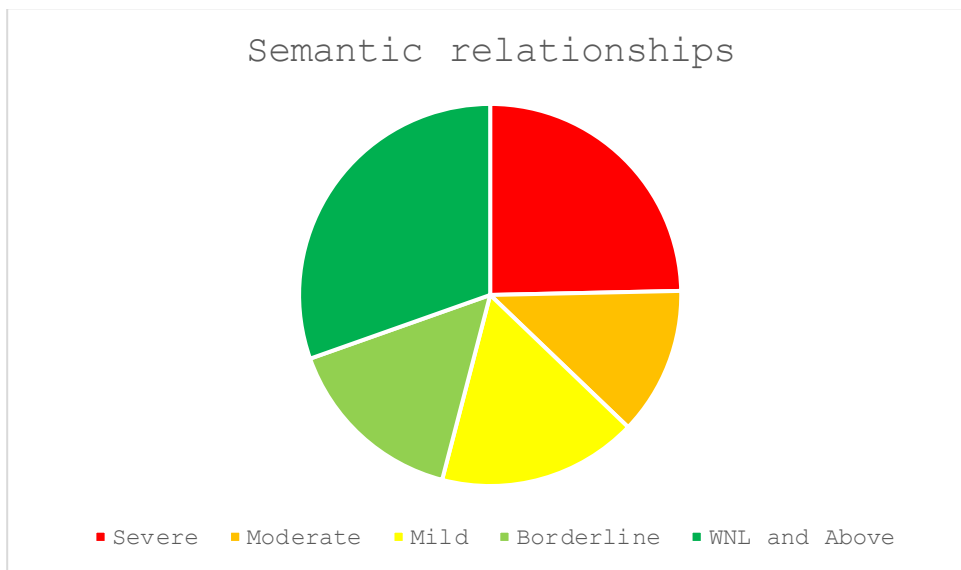
The YJS Speech and Language Therapists use the formal language assessment 'Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals – v5' (CELF) as part of their assessments, alongside assessment of Language for Behaviour and Emotions. Each assessment involves several sub-tests, to investigate different aspects of communication.

The YJS Speech and Language team collates and analyses the results of all assessments of children known to the YJS in recent years. This data shows specific patterns of need among children in the youth justice system. Almost all the children struggle to understand spoken language. This has important implications for the way that professionals should interact with these children, moving away from talking-based contacts to using visual resources such as Talking Mats.

A total of 296 assessments had been completed by the end of March 2026, providing a robust sample size. The following charts show the aggregated results for each sub-test in the CELF assessment (NB 'WNL' = Within Normal Limits).

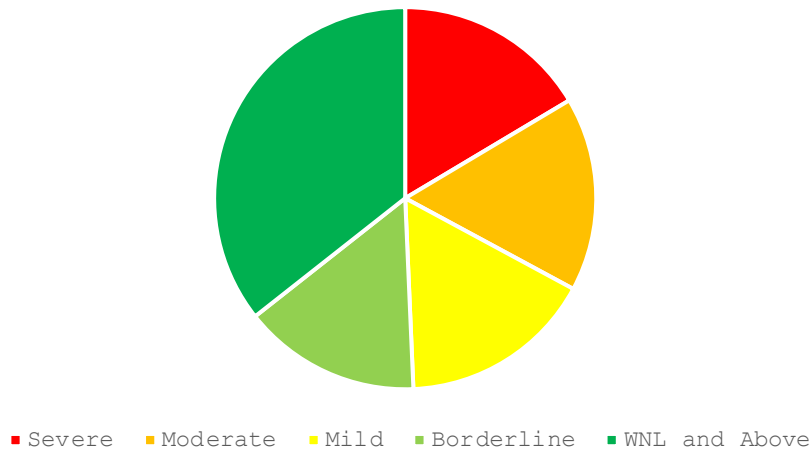


Only 8% of children were rated within normal limits for this test. 61% of children were rated to have severe needs in this area. Children with low scores are likely to have difficulty understanding inputs in lessons or meetings with professionals, understanding and remembering longer explanations/instructions, following stories in conversation, understanding when there is a lot of information, such as in court or in Referral Order panel meetings.



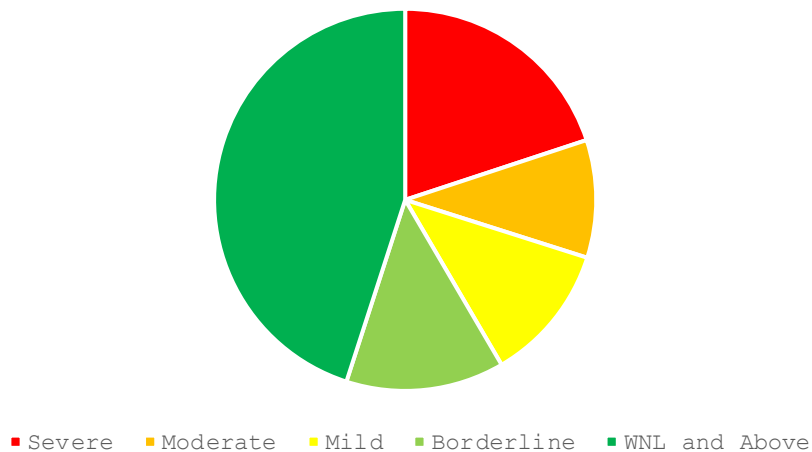
70% of children have some level of difficulty understanding sentences that express a relationship. Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with understanding information about where, when and what order things are in (all of which can be needed when being interviewed about a suspected offence). Children will also find it hard to understand passive sentences ('the bag was found by the police' instead of 'the police found the bag').

Recalling sentences



64% of the children had some level of difficulty in recalling sentences. Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with sentence structure; vocabulary; recalling spoken information accurately.

Formulated Sentences



55% of children were not rated within normal limits for this sub-test. Children with low scores in this subtest are likely to have difficulty with communicating thoughts and opinions clearly; explaining more complicated things; keeping up in conversation/ responding quickly.

It is worth noting that these tests are carried out in a safe environment by a skilled practitioner. A child's communication abilities will deteriorate in more stressful situations such as police interviews or court hearings.

The receptive language skills of children in the justice system tend not to be as strong as their expressive language skills. This may partly explain why these children's communication needs are not identified until they enter the justice system and they receive a structured assessment from a YJS Speech and Language Therapist.

After completing a Speech and Language assessment for a child in the YJS, the Speech and Language Therapist writes up a one-page 'Communications Passport' for the child, along with a full written assessment report. The Communications Passport is shared with Dorset Police, to help them communicate effectively with the child in the event that they have further contact with the

child. The child is asked to consent for their full assessment report to be shared with other professionals such as social workers and education providers.

6.6 Restorative Justice and Victims

Alongside the 'Child First' approach, Restorative Justice is a core principle underpinning the work of DCYJS.

Whenever DCYJS works with a child whose offence harmed a victim, the DCYJS Restorative Justice Practitioners contact the victim to find out about the impact of the offence, to explain the opportunities for Restorative Justice activities, and to ask about any vulnerabilities for which the victim might need support. This work helps us to meet our obligations under the Victims Code.

Delays in the youth justice system, which are more common in cases that go to court, make it harder to engage victims in activity to repair the harm they have experienced. Contacting the victim many months after the offence requires tact and sensitivity, emphasising the victim's choice in whether or how much they engage with our service.

HMI Probation cited DCYJS work with victims in the Effective Practice Guide which they published in October 2025 alongside their thematic inspection report on work with children who received OoCDs. The inspectors commented that '*In DCYJS, a structured and victim-centred approach to restorative justice was embedded within the delivery of OoCDs*'.

Restorative Justice can take different forms, and it is not always possible to bring the child and their victim together for a restorative meeting. When such meetings do take place, they can be beneficial for both the victim and the child. The following example from 2025 illustrates the benefits of Restorative Justice meetings and the flexibility that can be required to achieve a successful meeting:

We completed an RJ Conference with one of the Heathland Mitigation Rangers for BCP with a young person who had committed Arson, albeit it seemed accidental.

We held a session with a presentation delivered by the Ranger, where we looked at the effects of fire on the heathland and the future impact it can have on the whole ecosystem of that area. This was held in a classroom environment, and we then followed it up with a visit to the scene of the incident. Whilst walking around Talbot Heath we held an RJ conference between them.

The young person said that he found the session informative, and he had learnt more about the heathlands near him. The Ranger felt that everything went well and he would like the opportunity to work with us again in the future.

During the past year, YJS work with victims has expanded to identify and respond to the victim's needs. Examples include support to take part in positive activities and the provision of speech and language assessments for child victims. One of our Restorative Justice Practitioners provided this example of support for a child who has been the victim of an offence:

I worked with a young victim who had been assaulted, which knocked her self-confidence and affected her wellbeing. Through our conversations I discovered she loved horses and had attended a Horse Therapy session in the past which she found beneficial for her mental health, which she had struggled with. I spoke with the YJS Activities Coordinator and we were able to source and fund 3 Horse Therapy sessions which gave her the boost she needed. Her parents, having seen the difference in her, have agreed to continue the sessions privately. Her mum was very grateful for all that we had done for her and her daughter.

YJS victim work in 2026/27 will continue to strengthen our offer to child victims and will develop our use of data to provide insights and direction for our victim work.

Another aspect of the team's Restorative Justice work is undertaking 'repairing the harm' activities with children, to help them make amends for their offence.

The YJS has now established regular 'repairing the harm' catch-up meetings which were recognised by HMI Probation in their OOCOD inspection Effective Practice Guide:

"A key strength of the DCYJS model was the 'repairing harm meeting', held in every case. This brought together the case manager (who gave the child's views), the reparation coordinator; and the restorative justice practitioner (who gave the victim's views), to co-design meaningful interventions linked to the harm caused by the offence. Activities were risk-assessed and tailored; for example, knife-related offences may involve hospital-based sessions. Where direct reparation was not requested, community impact work was undertaken, such as fundraising for emergency services charities."

YJS priorities for the past year included a focus on strengthening links between our communities and children working with the YJS. There are currently 12 community projects where we undertake repairing the harm activities. This feedback from a community centre in BCP shows the mutual benefits of these projects:

"Angie brings a young person to the Centre every so often to help with litter / leaf clearing in the garden and car park at the Community Centre. They sometimes also do some gardening, weeding, & have helped clear the patio of weeds. This partnership works well for us, they always do a fantastic job for which we are very grateful, and we often get to have a little chat and catch up with Angie & the young person, allowing us to thank them for their hard work and show our appreciation."

The wooden planters, decorations, boxes etc that the young people make are sold at our annual craft fair & follow on orders have been made. We were very grateful to receive a donation to the Community Centre following the sale."

These sessions also benefit the children, as shown in this comment:

"I've worked with drills and screws to make something that may benefit the Community. I enjoyed the sessions as I've learnt some new skills."

From January to December 2025 the YJS reparation team successfully held stalls in the community, to sell items made by children, raising a total of over £2,000. The money is donated to charities and community organisations, chosen by victims, as a further way to repair the harm caused by children's offences, and to raise the profile of the good work being completed by children working with the YJS. Donations this year include £300 to the Blue Light Foundation, for offences of Assault Emergency Worker, and £250 to a local charity tackling knife crime, Changes Are Made.



Stall at County Hall in Dorchester

6.7 Serious Violence and Extra-Familial Harm

Tackling extra-familial harm and reducing serious violence are priorities for strategic partnerships in both our local authority areas (as described in section 2 of this Plan).

DCYJS uses the 'Trauma Recovery Model' in its work. One of the benefits of this approach is to understand and respond to the issues which may underlie a child's exploitation or their use of violent behaviour. As described in section 6.5, the YJS Psychologist leads multi-agency formulations under the 'Enhanced Case Management' approach for children showing the highest levels of trauma and concerns for the safety of them and others.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021 introduced a Serious Violence Duty for specified authorities, including youth justice services, to work together to share data and knowledge, allowing them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence. The specified authorities in Dorset and BCP agreed to use our two Community Safety Partnerships to lead this work. DCYJS contributes to the Serious Violence Needs Assessment in each local authority, and to the subsequent action planning.

The Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner's 'Head of Violence Reduction and Prevention' is a member of the YJS Partnership Board and works actively with YJS managers and practitioners to ensure that the YJS is integrated into local initiatives to reduce and prevent violence.

In August 2025 the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) started funding 'Focused Deterrence' work in the YJS. This approach is summarised by the Youth Endowment Fund as being 'a strategy that combines communicating the consequences of violence with support for developing positive routes away from it'. The Youth Endowment Fund rates Focused Deterrence as having High impact for preventing violence: [Focused deterrence | YEF Toolkit](#).

The additional funding from the OPCC has been used to enhance the YJS response to children with weapon offences who are assessed as posing a high risk of serious harm to others. Work with these children now includes engagement in positive activities on additional YJS sessions, Restorative Justice inputs and First Aid sessions on the consequences of weapon injuries. This approach is provided in partnership with Dorset Police, who provide pro-active policing to these children.

Serious Violence Duty funding has been secured for 2026/27 to enable the YJS to work pro-actively with children who have been found in possession of a knife, while the investigation is ongoing, rather than waiting for the investigation to be completed before commencing YJS involvement. The Police will notify the YJS within one day of the child being found with a knife and the YJS will make immediate contact with the child.

Extra-familial harm occurs across the pan-Dorset area, with DCYJS seeing instances of exploitation and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referrals for children in both local authorities. DCYJS plays an active role in the partnership arrangements in both local authority areas to address child exploitation, participating in strategic and tactical groups as well as other multi-agency initiatives such as the 'Missing, Exploited, Trafficked' (MET) Panel in BCP Council and the Dorset Council Extra-Familial Risk of Harm (EFRH) panels.

Although it is rare for children to become radicalised or involved in violent extremism, the harms from such behaviours are significant for individuals and for the community. The YJS Head of Service is a standing member of the 'Channel Panel' in each local authority. The YJS also engages actively as a member of the local Prevent Partnership. The new YJS Speech and Language project, 'Bridges', is working with the National Security Division of the Probation Service to identify and meet the communication needs of young adults with Terrorism Act offences.

6.8 Policing and Detention of children in police custody

DCYJS and Dorset Police work together closely on issues affecting children in the justice system. As well as the seconded police officers in the YJS, there is active police representation on the DCYJS Partnership Board. At an operational level there is daily contact between YJS Team Managers and the Sergeant in the police Youth Justice team.

Dorset Police has developed a Child Centred Policing Delivery Plan, adhering to the 9 areas of focus in the 2024 national Children and Young People's Strategy. Dorset Police hold a monthly internal meeting, chaired by a Superintendent, to focus on their work with children and young people. A benchmarking exercise against the 9 areas of focus will take place in 2026.

A 'Voice of the Child Scrutiny Panel' oversees the operational implementation of the strategy. The YJS Head of Service is a member of this panel, along with police leads from across the force.

Dorset Police is committed to reducing the numbers of children who are detained in police custody, as part of its Child-Centred Policing Strategy. A multi-agency 'Child Custody Detentions' group, led by the DCYJS Head of Service, monitors and addresses the use of police custody for children. The aim of the group is to reduce the number of children being arrested and, when an arrest is appropriate, to reduce the time the child stays in custody.

Data on child arrests is also reported to the YJS Partnership Board. The following table shows the child arrests in Bournemouth, Weymouth and Poole during 2025/26, with the corresponding information below for 2024/25.

2025/26	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	42	38	34	39	21	21	14	26	24	31	26	37
Det Not Auth	5	3	3	3	9	2	1	1	1	2	2	1
10-13 Y/O	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	0	2	2	2	0
Overnight	20	14	21	14	7	5	2	4	11	15	15	19
Strip searches/ Clothing Changes	4/3	1/0	3/0	3/3	0/1	0/3	0/0	0/5	0/4	3/1	5/1	3/1
Remand/warrant	2/1	2/0	5/0	1/2	0/0	0/1	0/0	1/0	0/0	0/1	1/1	1
C114 requested	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1

2024/25	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Auth Detention	21	27	19	29	35	25	39	24	17	13	29	28
Det Not Auth	4	2	1	1	6	2	4	2	1	3	4	1
10-13 Y/O	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	2	0	0	2	1
Overnight	9	8	6	10	11	7	22	11	7	5	15	17
Strip searches / Clothing Changes	3/0	1/0	3/1	4/5	4/3	2/3	2/0	3/3	1/2	0/1	5/0	2/1
Remand/warrant	0/4	0/0	0/0	0/0	2/2	1/4	0/1	0/2	0/0	0/0	5/0	0/1
C114 requested	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	5	0

The number of child arrests in Dorset has declined in the past 4 years, from a total of 501 arrests in 2021/22 to a total of 329 arrests in 2025/26.

These figures show the success of Dorset Police's active work to reduce the numbers of children being arrested locally. Custody managers have strengthened the challenge on whether the detention is justified, evidenced by the monthly figures showing the number of 'Detentions not Authorised'. This means a child has been brought to the custody suite but the custody sergeant has refused to authorise the detention.

Dorset Police have changed their approach to custody arrivals during the evening to reduce the numbers that are detained overnight. The numbers of children detained overnight has dropped from 242 in 201/22 to 147 in 2025/26.

The Child Custody Detentions group previously identified a number of factors which can prolong a child's detention in police custody, including the availability of Appropriate Adults (AAs) and the

time of day when the child arrives in the custody suite. The timeliness of Appropriate Adult attendance has improved overall since 2021, when the service was commissioned externally from 'The Appropriate Adult Service' (TAAS). In recent months there have been some delays in the provision of Appropriate Adults by TAAS, linked to staffing shortages and absences. Contract monitoring processes have been used to address these issues, with assurance from TAAS that additional recruitment and reduced staff absences have addressed this issue.

When the police remand a child, ie charge them with an offence and refuse to grant the child bail, there is a legal requirement (under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984) to transfer the child to local authority accommodation until their appearance at the next available court. A child arrested on a warrant or for breaching bail must remain in police custody.

The Child Custody Detentions group reviews every instance of a child being remanded, to check that the procedures and decision-making were correctly applied. The table above shows that there were only 13 instances of a child being remanded in 2025/26 across all local custody suites. There were 8 instances of a child being remanded in 2024/25.

6.9 Transitions to Probation

The seconded Probation Officer post in DCYJS was vacant from September 2024 until September 2025. The Probation Officer plays an important role in supporting transitions for young people who are moving from the YJS to Probation. Improvements to local transition arrangements in recent years include:

- New process for Probation to request YJS information for young adults committing new offences who were previously known to the YJS.
- Extending the transition process for young people transferring from YJS to Probation, with additional joint meetings.
- Training sessions delivered by YJS Speech and Language Therapists to Probation staff to help them respond to the communication needs of young adults.
- YJS attendance at MAPPA Level 2 or 3 meetings for new cases aged 18-21 when the YJS previously supervised the young person.

The remit of the new 'Bridges' Speech and Language project includes support for the Probation Service's work with young adults on Probation. The Bridges team provided training to the Dorset Probation Service in March 2026. Plans for 2026/27 include the offer of speech and language assessments for 18-25 year-olds on Probation and support for Probation colleagues to develop communication-friendly practice. This is likely to include producing Easy Read versions of documents such as post-release licence conditions.

6.10 Remands

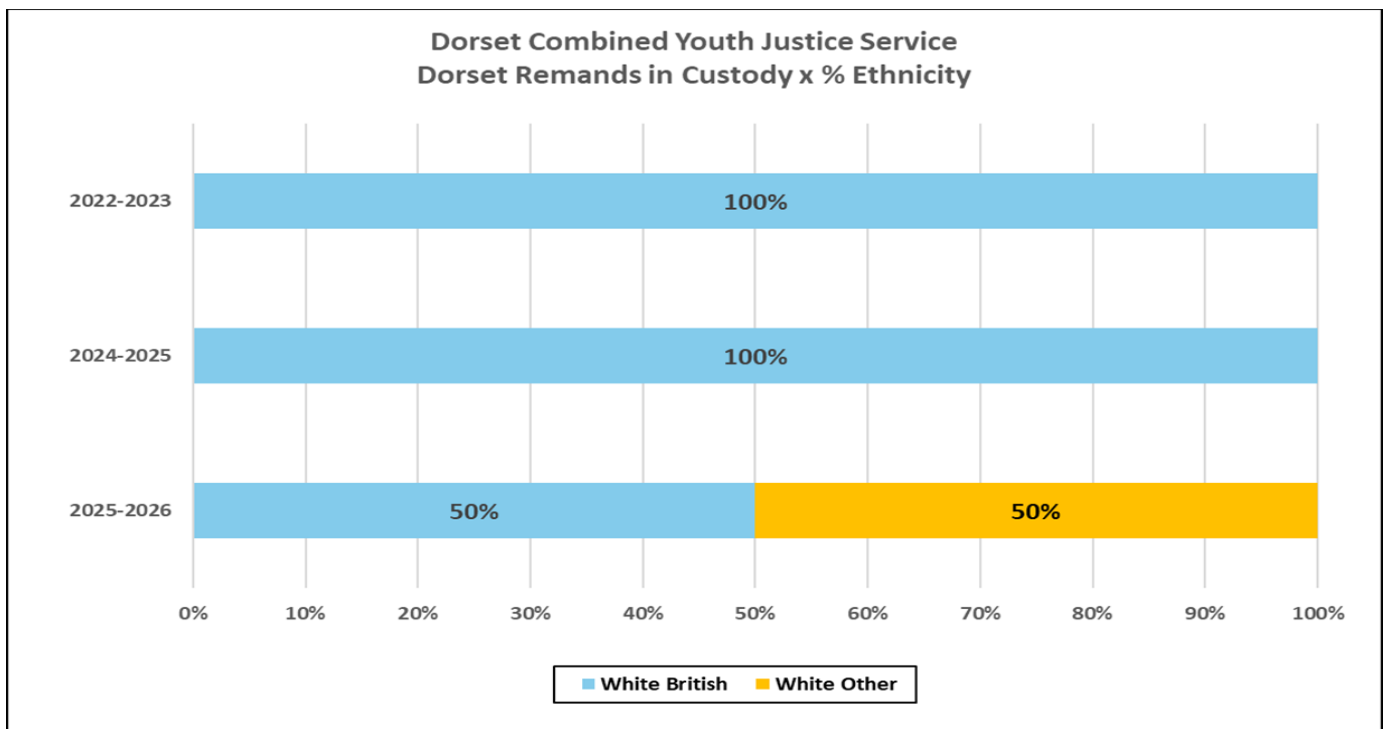
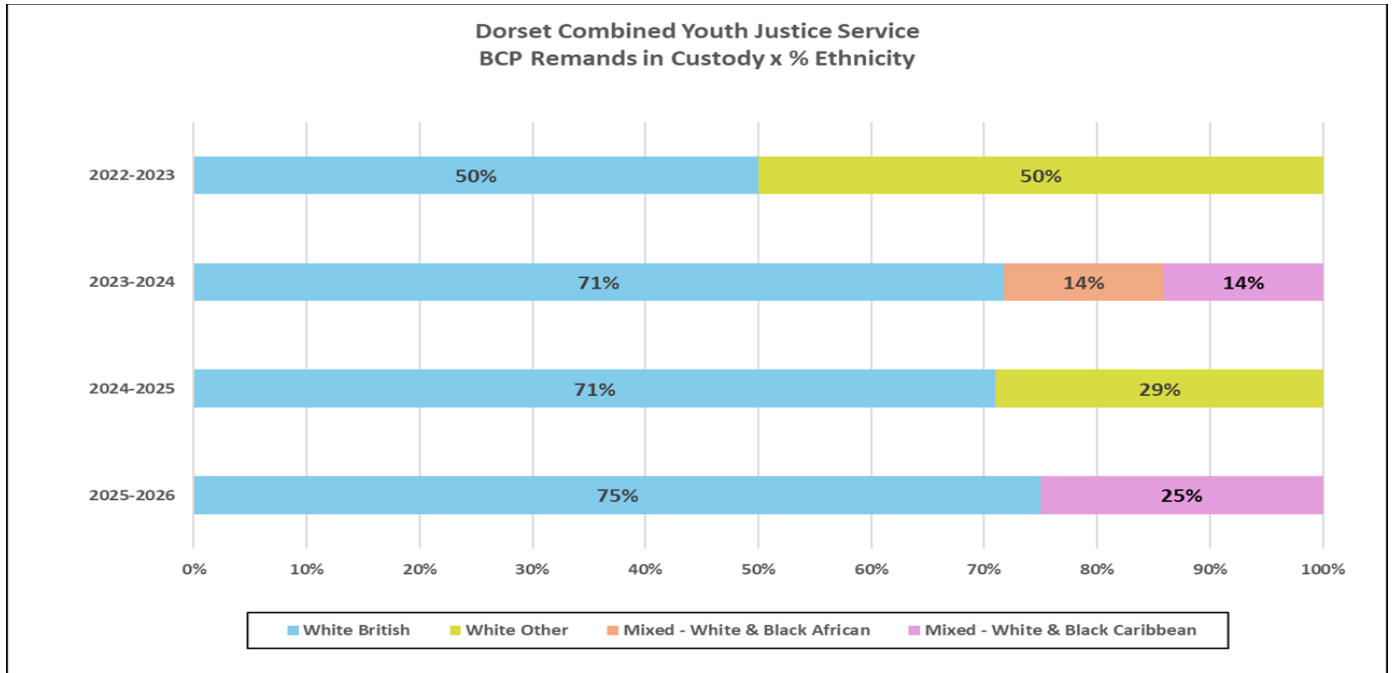
Six children were remanded in custody during 2025/26, compared to seven children in each of the two previous years. Four of the six children were from BCP Council, two were from Dorset Council.

All six children were male.

Children who are remanded in custody gain 'child in care' status if they are not already a child in care. Two of the six children were already a child in care before being remanded into custody.

One of the children was aged 15 when he was remanded into custody; the other five were all aged 17.

Four of the children defined their ethnicity as White British, one defined his ethnicity as White Other and one defined his ethnicity as Mixed – White and Black Caribbean. The following charts show the ethnicity of children remanded in custody in recent years.



Low numbers of children remanded into custody means that each child has a significant impact on the percentage figures.

One of the children was remanded in custody in 2025 after a successful appeal against his previous conviction and custodial sentence, pending a re-trial. After nearly 6 months on remand, and a few days before the scheduled re-trial, the CPS decided to offer no evidence and the child was acquitted.

Two of the children who were remanded in custody did not go on to receive a custodial sentence, including the child mentioned in the previous paragraph whose re-trial did not go ahead.

Each remand in custody is reviewed in team meetings to consider if alternative options could have been taken. In most cases the remand decision reflects the seriousness of the alleged offence, and may also reflect patterns of offending and previous non-compliance with court orders and bail conditions.

The Ministry of Justice invited bids in March 2026 for regional remand partnerships. Local authorities in the south-west region decided not to submit a bid. There is still scope, though, to strengthen local partnerships across criminal justice agencies and childrens services to ensure that remands to custody are avoided whenever possible.

6.11 Custodial Sentences and Resettlement

Seven local children received custodial sentences during 2025/26 (compared to six in each of the two previous years). Information about custodial sentences and analysis of the young people is included in section 4.2 of this document. Information about the support for the health needs and education needs of children in custody is included in sections 6.4 and 6.5.

In recent years very few children have been released from custody before their 18th birthday. Of the seven children sentenced to custody in 2025/26, five of them will turn 18 before being released. The Probation Service takes over case responsibility if a young person turns 18 while serving a custodial sentence.

Finding suitable accommodation for children leaving custody can be challenging. DCYJS contributes to local authority care planning processes, promoting the early identification of the child's release address. The DCYJS Manager reports to the DCYJS Partnership Board on the timeliness of accommodation being confirmed for children being released from custodial sentences. This measure is also included in the new youth justice Key Performance Indicators. The release address for children leaving custody is sometimes not confirmed until the last few days before release. The final release address may be in another local authority area. As well as causing the child a lot of anxiety and distress, late confirmation of release address and local authority area makes it difficult to plan the child's resettlement, affecting access to education, health care and constructive activities.

With low numbers going into custody, and most of them becoming adults before they are released, the approach to resettlement for each child is planned individually.

6.12 Working with Families

DCYJS parenting staff provide support to the parents and carers of children on the YJS caseload. Support can be provided under a Parenting Order but in practice it is always achievable on a voluntary basis. Most contact is provided on a one to one basis, focusing on communications, relationships, setting boundaries and applying consequences. The workers remain alert to risk and safeguarding issues, attending multi-agency meetings, and supporting parents in their interactions with other services.

When appropriate, separate parenting workers can be allocated to a child's father and mother, in order to enable engagement with both parents.

Plans for 2026/27 include re-launching the YJS Living With Parents workshops to strengthen relationships and to reduce conflict between the parent and child; developing other ways to facilitate joint work with children and parents, with support from other YJS workers; and establishing an internal process to review all new child allocations for possible parenting referrals.

6.13 National Youth Justice Reforms 2026

The Ministry of Justice is engaged in an active programme of youth justice reform during 2026. Announcements have been made, or are expected, for the following areas:

- Knife Crime Guidance
- A Modern Youth Justice System
- Regional Remand Partnerships
- Preventing the drivers of youth custody
- Youth Justice White Paper (expected in May 2026).

National and local reform programmes in the wider YJS partnership include:

- Families First Partnerships
- SEND reforms
- Youth Strategy
- Violence Against Women and Girls strategy
- CAMHS Transformation (local reform programme).

DCYJS planning for 2026/27 will include taking action to align and develop our work in line with these diverse reform programmes.

6.14 DCYJS Priorities and Plans for 2026/27

This document shows the range and scope of YJS activities. The YJS will continue to seek improvements in all areas of its work. During 2026/27 the following strategic priorities will receive additional focus:

- Respond to national and local reforms in youth justice and children's services
- Enhance Child First Practice
- Develop YJS and Partnership work with victims
- Reduce the Over-Representation of some groups of children in the justice system
- Make best use of available resources.

The following table shows the priorities and plans for DCYJS in 2026/27. This is a dynamic plan which will continue to be updated, recognising that other priorities will arise during the year.

DCYJS Partnership Priority or Risk	Area for Development	Partners and Staff Providing Support	Benefits
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Implement Knife Crime Guidance from April 2026	Dorset Police DCYJS managers and practitioners Local authority children's services	Reduction in knife crime
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Start working with children while they are under investigation for weapon offences	DCYJS managers and practitioners Dorset Police	Earlier intervention leads to reduced weapon offending and other offending
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Advise on, seek to influence and prepare for national Youth Justice reforms	DCYJS Head of Service DCYJS Board	Workable and beneficial reforms are put in place
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Align YJS, and needs of YJS children/victims, with local implementation of Families First	DCYJS Head of Service BCP Council and Dorset Council	Effective joint work to meet the care and education needs of children in the YJS

	Partnerships and SEND reforms	Children's Services senior leaders	
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Ensure YJS mental health team is well-located to work effectively after local CAMHS Transformation	DCYJS Head of Service Dorset HealthCare Trust	Effective joint work to meet the health needs of children in the YJS
Respond to national and local reform programmes	Explore options for partnership work locally to reduce remands to custody	YJS Head of Service Dorset Police CPS HM Courts BCP and Dorset Children's Services	Fewer children are remanded into custody
Enhance Child First Practice	Whole YJS workshops to review Child First practice and agree further improvements	DCYJS managers, staff and volunteers	Enhancement of Child First practice to achieve better outcomes for children
Enhance Child First Practice (Diverting from stigma)	Continue to work with Dorset Police to develop alternative non-court options for motoring offences	Dorset Police DCYJS HoS, DCYJS Team Managers	Avoid first-time entrants for motoring offences such as speeding
Enhance Child First Practice (Diverting from stigma)	Monitor the lower age of First-Time Entrants in the Dorset Council area and identify remedial actions	DCYJS managers Dorset Police Dorset Council	Preventing or delaying entry to the justice system
Enhance Child First Practice (Building pro-social identity)	Continue to expand range and access to positive activities for children, including nature-based projects	DCYJS Activities Coordinator	Children build pro-social identity and build links with their community
Enhance Child First Practice (Collaborating with Children)	Develop new ways to engage children in contributing to service design	DCYJS managers DCYJS Activities Coordinator	Build children's positive identity, improve YJS service delivery
Child First Practice (Building pro-social identity)	Build team members' knowledge and confidence to work with children on the impact of their online experiences and identity	DCYJS practitioners and managers	Children's online activity supports positive identity and reduces harm arising from online activity.
Reducing over-representation	Investigate and agree actions in response to black or mixed heritage children being over-represented in the BCP Council area	DCYJS practitioners and managers BCP Children's Services	Reduce the over-representation of black or mixed heritage children from BCP in the justice system
Reducing over-representation	Further analysis of children receiving custodial sentences, to enhance YJS and partner offer to children entering the justice system under age 15 with multiple needs	DCYJS managers Local authority Children's Social Care and Education Services	Fewer of these children progress through the justice system and reach custody

Reducing over-representation	Complete the actions arising from the audit of work with Children in Care and review progress	DCYJS managers and practitioners Local authority children's services and Virtual Schools Child in Care health team	Reduction in the numbers of children in care entering the justice system or reoffending
Develop YJS and partnership work with victims	Continue work to identify and respond to victim vulnerabilities, especially child victims	DCYJS managers and RJ practitioners YJS partnership services	Children who have been the victims of crime receive support to address their vulnerabilities
Develop YJS and partnership work with victims	Improve YJS victim data recording and reporting to support service improvement	DCYJS Managers, Performance and Information Manager, RJ practitioners	More accurate and comprehensive data for YJS victim work helps to identify areas needing more resource or improvement
Make best use of available resources	Agree plans to balance budget through increase income and/or reduced costs	DCYJS Head of Service DCYJS Board BCP Children's Services Management Accountant	YJS delivers high-quality work while coping with budget reductions
Make best use of available resources	Streamline data recording processes to reduce duplication. Improve data reporting to show areas for targeting limited resources, such as children with multiple forms of disadvantage/need.	DCYJS managers DCYJS Business Support Officers and practitioners	YJS gathers and uses accurate data to help direct the use of limited service resources

7 Sign off, submission and approval

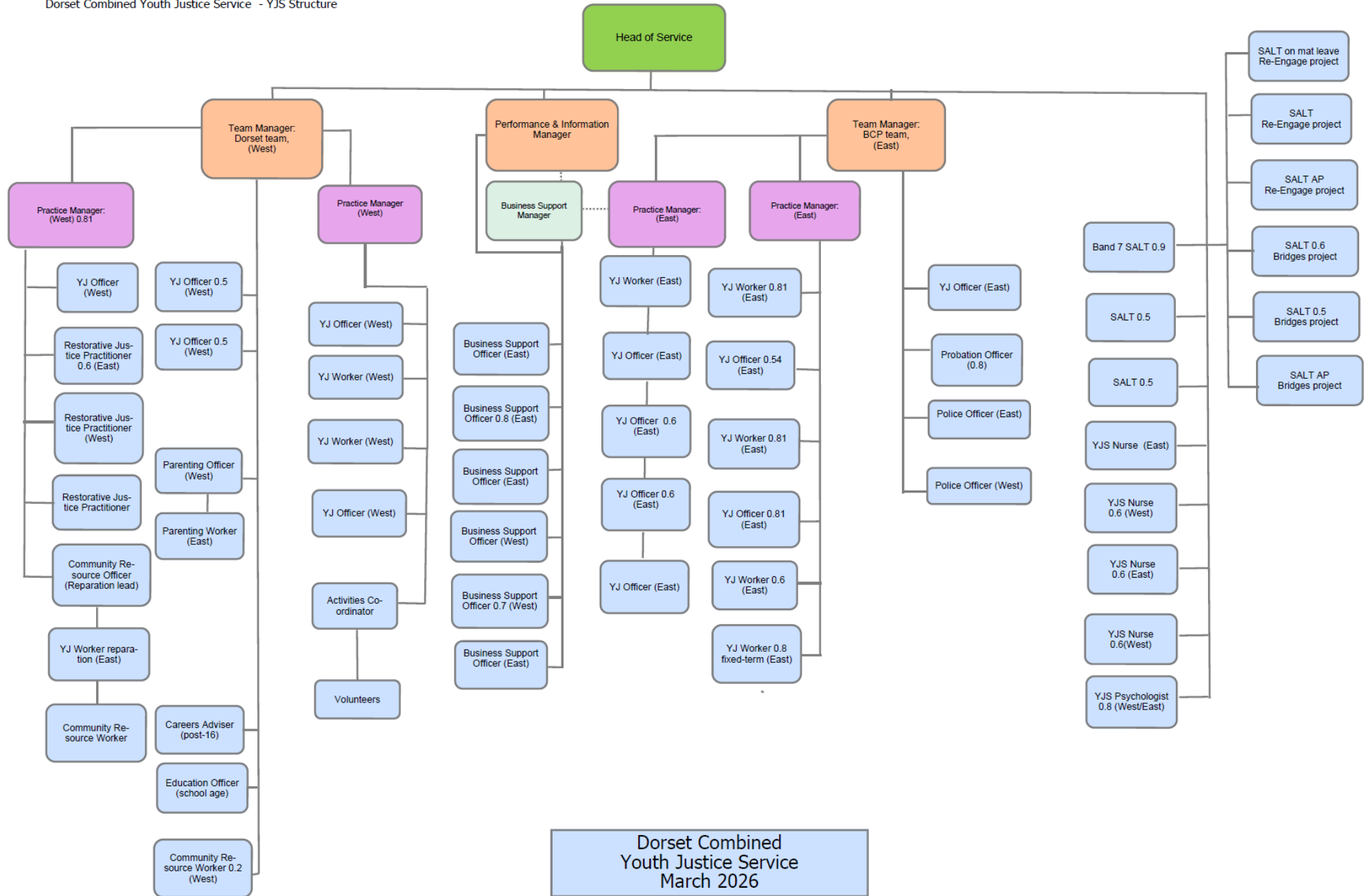
This Youth Justice Plan has been approved by the YJS Partnership Board in April 2026.

In accordance with 'Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000', Youth Justice Plans must be approved by the full council of the local authority. This Youth Justice Plan is subject to the scrutiny and approval processes of our two local authorities. It will be considered for approval by the full council of Dorset Council in July 2026 and by the full council of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council in July 2026.

Chair of YJS Board - name	Paul Dempsey
Signature	
Date	

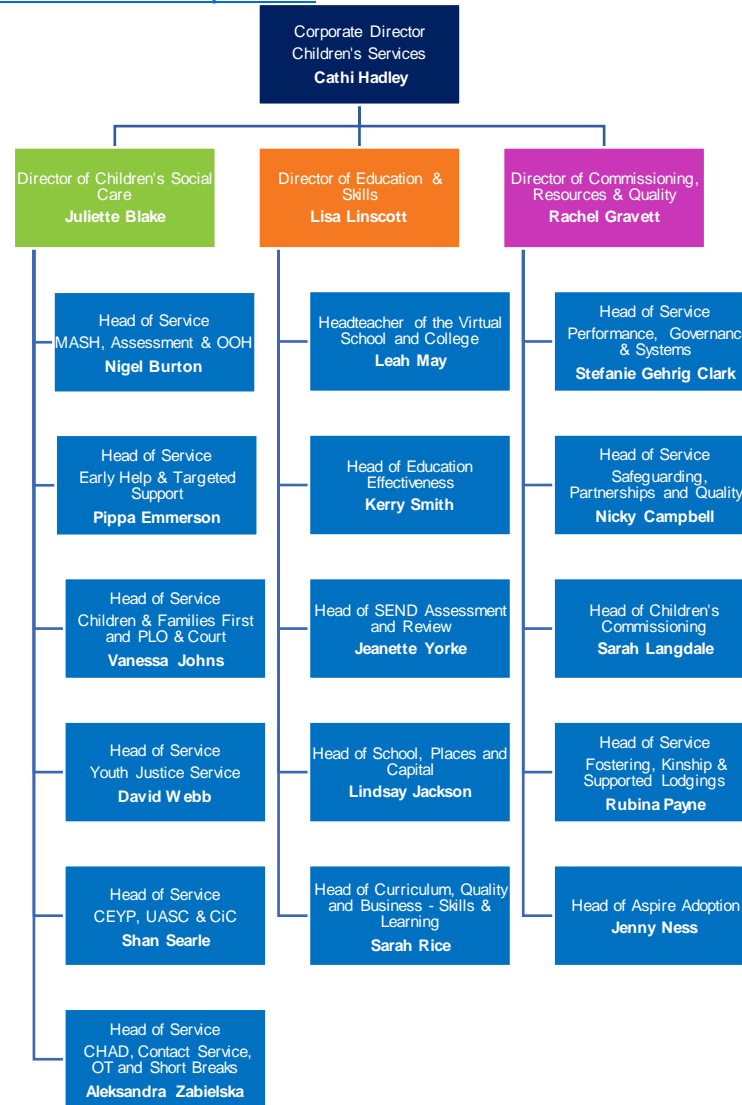
8 Appendix 1 – Service Structure Chart

The following structure charts show the staffing structure of Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service and where the service sits in the two local authorities.



Dorset Combined Youth Justice Service March 2026

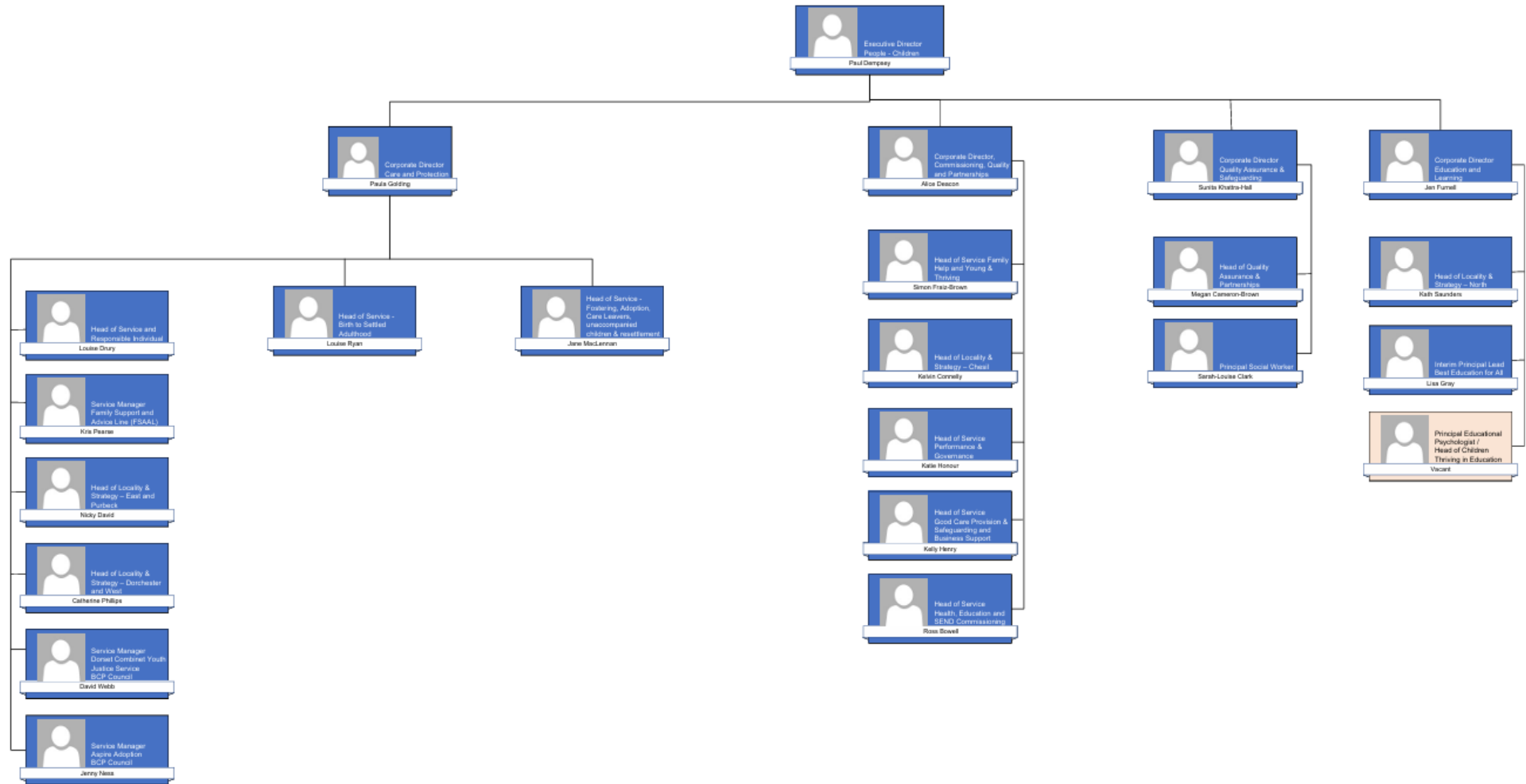
BCP Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



Dorset Council Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



Children's Services Extended Leadership Team



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DCYJS Staff and Volunteers:

The following table shows the gender, ethnicity and disability status of DCYJS staff members and volunteers:

DCYJS Staff 25 March 2026			
Ethnicity	F	M	Grand Total
White	47	9	56
White Irish		1	1
White Other	1		1
Mixed	2		2
Prefer not to say	2	1	3
Grand Total	52	11	63

Five staff members in DCYJS are recorded as having a disability.

Insert volunteers info

9 Appendix 2 – Budget Contributions 2026/27

Partner Agency	25/26 Revenue (excluding recharges)	Staff
Dorset Council	£536,164	
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£628,622	
Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner	£84,794	2.0 Police Officers
The Probation Service (Dorset)	£5,000	0.8 Probation Officer 0.3 Probation Service Officer
NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group	£22,487	2.8 FTE Nurses, 0.8 Psychologist, 1.4 Speech and Language Therapists
Youth Justice Grant	£767,922	
Turnaround Grant	£123,184	
Total	£2,179,302	

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole



Population¹: Age 10-17

Number of Children ¹	35,978
Male ¹	51.3%
Female ¹	48.7%

Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals ²	21.6%
Pupils with SEN Support ²	15.9%
Pupils with an EHC Plan ²	5.7%

Pupils from Non-white Minority Ethnic groups³ 17.8%

27% children living in poverty after housing costs⁴

Safeguarding Age 10-17

Number of Children in Need ⁵	385
Male ⁵	53.2%
Female ⁵	46.8%

Number of Children with a Child Protection Plan⁷ 179

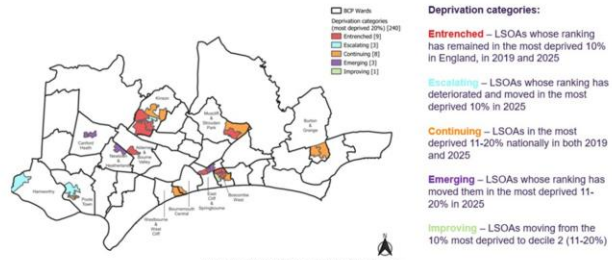
Number of Children in Care ⁶	388
Male ⁶	54.9%
Female ⁶	44.8%
Indeterminate ⁶	0.3%

Number of children and young people at risk of exploitation⁸

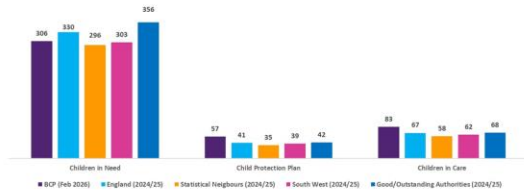
High Risk ⁸	43
Medium Risk ⁸	54
Low Risk ⁸	118

1. Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole population estimates (published July 2023)
 2. January 2025 School Census (includes all pupils at a BCP School aged 10-17; ages as at 31st August 2025)
 3. January 2025 School Census (all non-white pupils at a BCP School, excluding 'Refused' and 'Information not yet obtained')
 4. Local child poverty indicators 2022/23. From DWP "Children in low income families: local area statistics" (March 2024).
 5. From MDSAC, as at 28 February 2025. Excluding CP, C/P, C/P, P, Open to Assessment. Gender figures exclude Unknown.
 6. From MDSAC, as at 28 February 2025. Gender figures exclude Unknown.
 7. From MDSAC, as at 28 February 2025.
 8. From MDSAC, as at 28 February 2025.

Which BCP areas are most deprived – IMD 2025



Need comparison (rate per 10,000 0-17 year olds)



11 Common youth justice terms – national glossary

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long-lasting impact on the child's health and life outcomes
AIM 3	Assessment, Intervention and Moving on; an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is coerced, through threats of violence, or induced to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system.
Child in Care	Child in Care; where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social after release from custody
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	An informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education Health and Care plan; a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment
EHE	Electively home educated; children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school; children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting

FTE	First-Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPA	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCR	Out-of-court resolution. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Children's Services Self-Assessment 2026
Meeting date	16 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The Children's Services Self-Assessment 2026 provides an evidence-based summary of progress since the 'Good' Ofsted ILACS judgement in December 2024. Local authorities produce self-assessments to evaluate service effectiveness, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and support transparent assurance, scrutiny and continuous improvement for children and families. It shows a service with stronger leadership, more embedded quality assurance and effective partnership working, resulting in more consistent practice and better oversight of performance, risk and impact.</p> <p>The report highlights improved timeliness, permanence planning, placement stability, educational outcomes for children in care and progress in SEND.</p> <p>It also identifies key pressures, including rising demand and complexity, high numbers of children in care and child protection plans, and ongoing sufficiency challenges.</p> <p>Priorities for 2026/27 are to deliver Families First and One Team One Approach, strengthen early help and local sufficiency, improve permanence and safety planning, and maintain a strong focus on children at risk of exploitation and older care leavers.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The committee notes the content of the report.</p>
Reason for recommendations	The report is for information only.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children & Young People and Education & Skills
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director Children's Services
Report Authors	Rachel Gravett, Director of Commissioning, Resources and Quality
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For information only.

Background

1. The BCP Children's Services Self-Assessment (May 2026) provides a comprehensive and evidence-based overview of service performance, impact and improvement following the 'Good' Ofsted ILACS inspection in December 2024. The report outlines the local context, key challenges and areas of strength across the system, supported by performance data, quality assurance evidence and feedback from children, families and partners. It demonstrates a service that is continuing to transform, with strong leadership, governance and partnership arrangements underpinning a more coordinated, place-based approach to delivering children's services.
2. The report is structured across the full Children's Services system (note SEND and AP have their own detailed SEF), including early help, safeguarding, children in care, care leavers and leadership oversight, and sets out both the impact of current practice and the priorities for further improvement. It highlights progress in areas such as permanence planning, education and safeguarding, while also identifying ongoing challenges including rising demand, increased complexity of need and pressures on sufficiency and resources.
3. The self-assessment is intended to support scrutiny, challenge and shared ownership across partners, and to provide a clear line of sight between strategic priorities, service delivery and outcomes for children and young people.

Summary of financial implications

4. N/A

Summary of legal implications

5. N/A

Summary of human resources implications

6. N/A

Summary of sustainability impact

7. N/A

Summary of public health implications

8. N/A

Summary of equality implications

9. N/A

Summary of risk assessment

10. N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Children’s Services Self- Assessment 2026

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Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP)

Children's Services Self-Assessment

May 2026

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1. Introduction

We present this 2026 self-assessment for Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Children's Services, building on the 'Good' judgement from the Ofsted ILACS inspection (December 2024). It reflects the continued commitment of our workforce, partners and corporate leadership to improving outcomes for children, young people and families across BCP.

Children's Services continues a significant transformation. Practice is increasingly stable and consistent, with more children benefiting from lasting relationships with social workers who know them well. Stronger standards, embedded quality assurance and effective oversight support a culture of high support and high challenge, driving continuous improvement across the system.

We remain ambitious for our children and young people. The ILACS inspection identified 3 development areas that shape our 2026 priorities:

- consistent responses for children at risk of exploitation;
- stronger support for older care leavers; and
- improved safety planning where safeguarding concerns are present.

These priorities, alongside wider learning from this self-assessment, underpin our ongoing development plans.

Following the SEND CQC/Ofsted inspection (November 2025), Children's Services has received the Secretary of State's decision to lift the statutory direction for SEND, reflecting improvements made since February 2024. We are improving at pace; while further work is needed, there is clear momentum, shared partnership ownership and strong corporate engagement to sustain progress. Our SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan will continue to be delivered, and impact monitored by the DfE.

In May 2025 we launched our Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2025–2030, co-produced with children, young people and partners. In 2026 we are turning it into delivery through refreshed governance and a

clearer line of sight from priorities to service development and measurable impact.

Children and young people told us what matters most. Our vision is that:

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are great places to live, where all children and young people have the best possible opportunities in life and are supported by the community to flourish and grow in order to succeed.

The five shared priorities are:



Building on this progress, we are implementing a refreshed service delivery model (One Team One Approach) and the Families First programme to strengthen early help, community-based support and whole-system working.

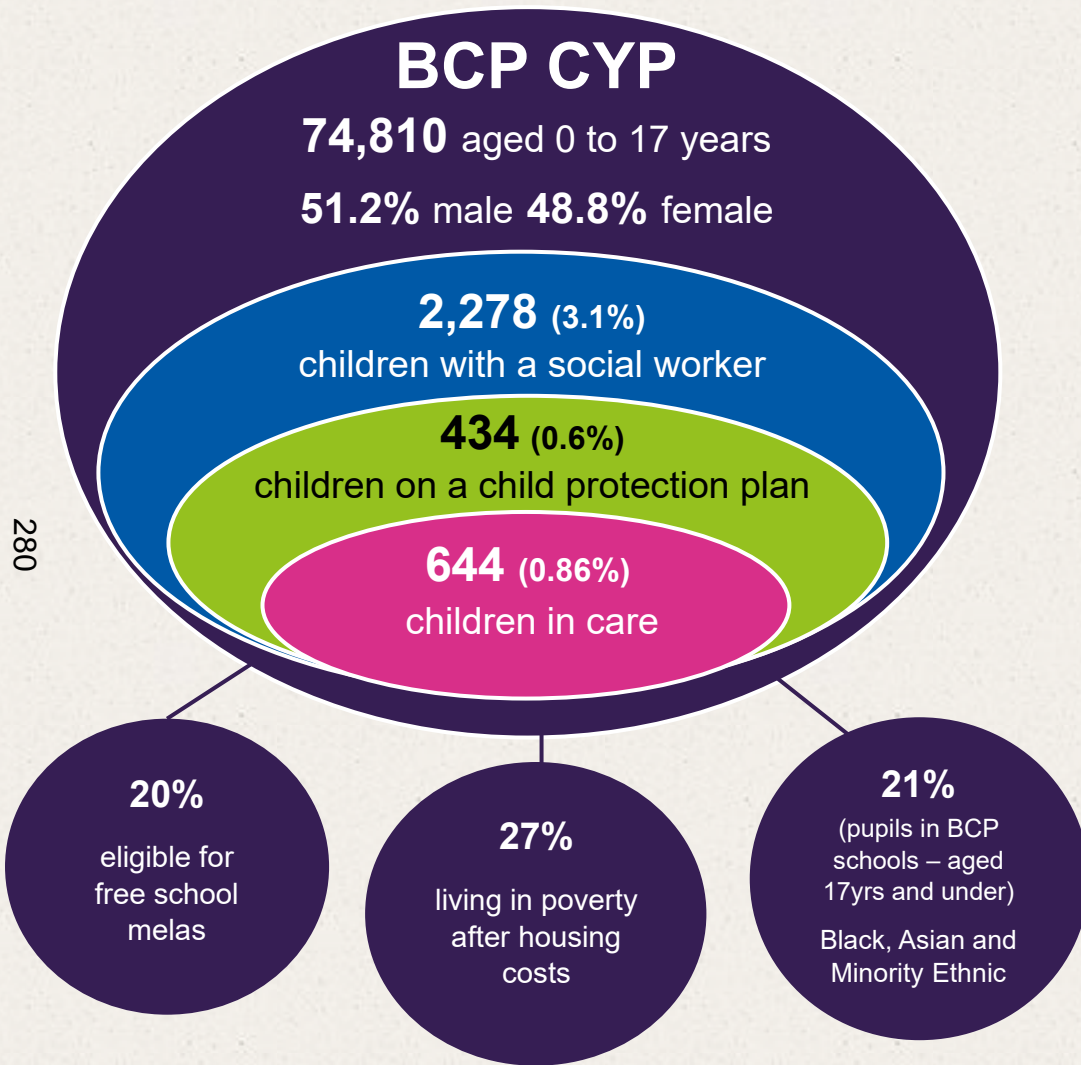
This self-assessment highlights progress gives an honest view of what must improve and sets out our shared ambition so every child in BCP can thrive.

This self-assessment sets out:

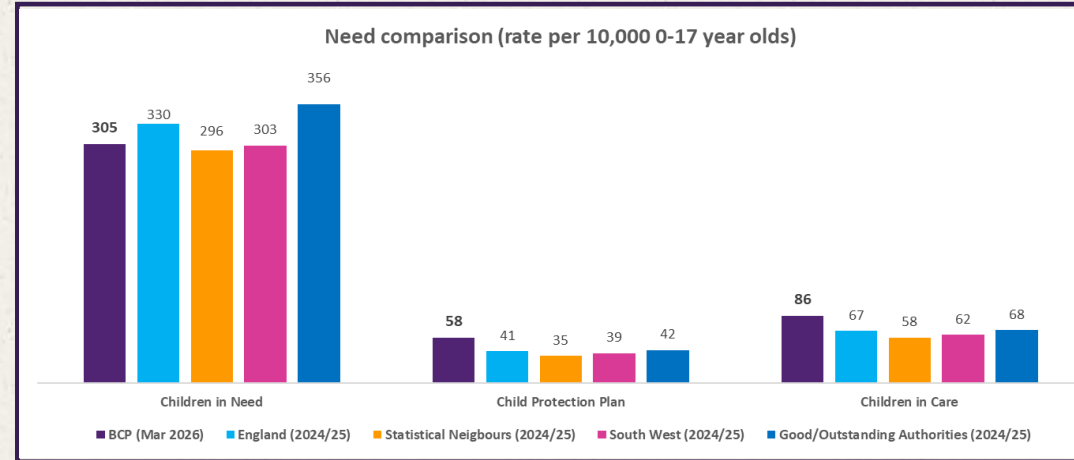
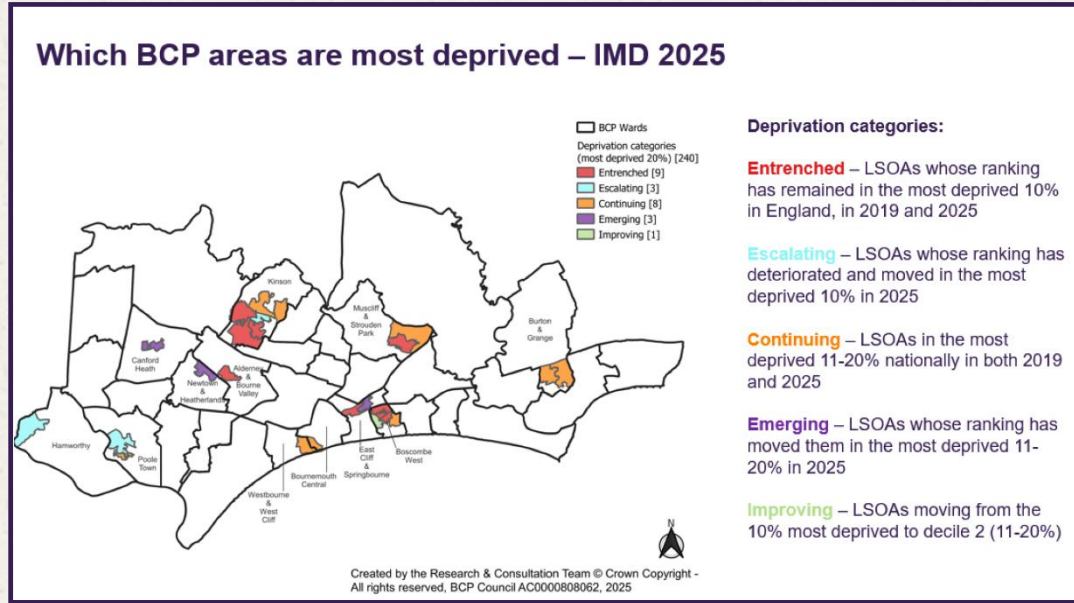
- what we know about practice quality and impact
- how we know it
- our priorities for the next 12 months.

It supports constructive challenge and shared partnership ownership and demonstrates our commitment to helping every child in BCP thrive.

2. Context - Population and Safeguarding Statistics



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3. Our Challenges over the last 12 months

Over the past year, we have responded proactively to a diverse array of challenges, each of which has provided opportunities to strengthen and enhance the quality of our services for children and young people.

- We have adapted to rising demand and increasingly complex needs, ensuring our support remains accessible and effective for all.
- Our workforce has demonstrated resilience and commitment, navigating recruitment and pay challenges while maintaining a high standard of care.
- We have managed financial constraints with resourcefulness, ensuring children and young people receive the support they need.
- Through innovative approaches, we continue to address sufficiency challenges, especially in fostering, residential care, expanding options for families and through reunification.
- We have responded to increased SEND demand and inclusion needs with targeted strategies to promote equitable access and support.
- Children's Social Care and SEND reforms, along with evolving government expectations, have prompted us to review and improve our practices for the benefit of all.
- We have strengthened multi-agency partnerships, fostering collaboration across health, education, and policing to provide holistic support for children and families.
- We have embraced ICB structural changes, ensuring that service delivery remains responsive amid transitions.
- Our balanced approach to performance, assurance, and improvement has strengthened our culture of accountability and ongoing progress.
- We remain committed to sustaining high-quality, child-centered practice, even under financial and system pressures, ensuring the needs of children and young people are always at the heart of what we do.

4. 4. What we are proud of

We are proud of the progress we have made in strengthening the quality, consistency and impact of our work with children and families, despite the challenges faced. This includes stronger partnership ownership of shared priorities, a more stable and confident workforce supported by effective oversight, and tangible improvement in our approach to early help, safeguarding and permanence. The strengths set out below reflect what we see in practice, what our performance and quality assurance tell us, and what children, young people and families have shared with us about their experiences.

- **Clear strategic leadership** - launch of the Children and Young People's Plan and successful removal of the Statutory Direction for Children's Social Care and SEND, demonstrating strengthened governance and system confidence with a genuine shared commitment to improved outcomes for children and young people.
- **Stronger partnership working** - re-established local safeguarding arrangements through the BCP Children's Services Safeguarding Board and sustained partnerships through significant system and ICB change.
- **Service and practice redesign** – we are currently working on the implementation of One Team, One Approach and development of Families First / Best Start in Life to improve outcomes and service delivery.
- **Improved permanence and stability** - strengthened fostering through Mockingbird and It Takes a Family, alongside the work of our reunification team and improvements in commissioning.
- **Reviewed governance, and strong quality and learning culture** - clearer accountability, further improved quality assurance and a confident learning culture focused on impact and continuous improvement.
- **Children being safe and needs being met** - Practice Standards have imbedded consistent practice, and our performance has gone from strength to strength with timely, quality assessments, resulting in timely services meeting children's needs earlier.

- **Invested in sustainable transformation** - £4 m Children's Services Transformation Programme, strengthening prevention, leadership and long-term sustainability. Specifically: Early Help /Best Start in Life /Families First Programme / One Team One Approach –New Service Delivery Model, Commissioning, Fostering –Mockingbird/It Takes a Family and Reunification.

5. The impact on our Children and Young People

Our 2026 self-assessment shows that improvement activity is translating into a more coordinated system and better day-to-day experiences for children, young people and families. Children are increasingly supported by a stable workforce and a shared practice approach, underpinned by stronger partnership governance, clearer accountability and better use of performance, quality assurance and lived-experience insight. The impact statements below summarise the difference this is making, while recognising that we must continue to strengthen consistency and reduce inequality of experience across the BCP area.

- **Children, young people and families in BCP experience a coordinated, place-based system**, with early help, social care, youth justice, health, education, housing and community safety partners aligned through the Children and Young People's Partnership and safeguarding arrangements
- **Strategic decisions are informed by robust performance, quality assurance and lived-experience insight**, enabling senior leaders and members to understand impact, risk and improvement at pace
- **Children are safer and experience greater stability**, with improved permanence planning, fewer unplanned placement moves and reduced reliance on out-of-area provision
- **Children in care and care-experienced young people are supported to thrive**, through a stronger sufficiency offer, better joint working with housing and education, and a more responsive local market

- **Families receive timely, proportionate help**, reducing repeat referrals and enabling more children to remain safely within their family and community networks
- **Children and young people's voices influence strategy, commissioning and service design**, to ensure services can reflect what matters most to them and addressing inequalities across the conurbation
- **BCP has a confident, skilled and stable workforce**, supported by clear practice standards, strong supervision and leadership that prioritises professional judgement and reflective practice
- **Practice quality is consistently strong across Children's Social Care**, with a shared practice framework and effective escalation and assurance arrangements. Writing to the child /Language That Cares
- **Leadership at all levels use learning from audits, inspections and lived experiences to drive improvement**, embedding a culture of continuous learning rather than compliance
- **The local children's care market is becoming more resilient and diverse**, offering high-quality, local provision that better meets children's needs and reduces dependency on high-cost external placements. There is closer alignment with health through renewed Joint Commissioning Partnership.
- **Safeguarding** continues to evidence timeliness, clear robust processes, protocols and practice that help ensure our children and young people remain safe.
- **BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership** is a more effective, mature partnership and there is collective ownership of safeguarding, including any learning that arises.
- **Corporate Parenting** is further developing; we continue to seek the views of our young people to help shape our service and have strengthened the Corporate Parenting Board enabling tangible improvements for our children and young people.



Chapter 6

**The experiences and
progress of children
who need help and
protection**

6.1 Early Help & Targeted Intervention Service

Service delivery and impact - Strong delivery against preventative and early intervention objectives, with demonstrable impact on demand avoidance

- Early Help & Targeted Intervention Service operates a well-resourced, tiered early help offer supporting children and families from pre-birth to 19 (and up to 25 for SEND), with timely and proportionate responses across levels of need
- Locality-based multi-disciplinary teams now work across Levels 2–4 (including family help pilot) enabling earlier engagement and clearer ownership of intervention.
- High volumes of families access Early Help supported annually, with strong step-down and prevention outcomes, preventing escalation of need
- We are very proud of our reunification work which is fully imbedded and has demonstrated positive family outcomes, with children remaining safely at home following structured intervention, supporting both the child and their family to build their own resilience and gain their right to a private family life

Partnership contribution - Effective system enablers with clear strategic and operational impact.

- The Partnership Team delivery plan provides stronger system leadership, coordination and infrastructure for Early Help delivery across BCP, including pathways, data oversight and partner engagement.
- Development of single shared approaches to assessment, planning and step-up/step-down has reduced duplication and improved family experience, and will be further reviewed as part of the FFP Children's Services transformation
- Community grant schemes have enabled local voluntary and community sector capacity-building, supporting sustainable, community-led early help provision

- Successful Family Hub transformation works to align partners to national expectations and local need.

Locality teams and frontline practice - Consistent, responsive locality delivery with growing strengths in early engagement.

- Locality teams deliver relationship-based, trauma-informed interventions close to communities, improving engagement and sustainability of outcomes
- Clear role clarity between locality and partnership functions supports efficient triage, intervention and step-down.
- Children's voices are increasingly embedded early in assessment and intervention through structured timescales and practice expectations.
- Families benefit from place-based access to services through Family Hubs, outreach and virtual delivery models

Quality assurance, performance and learning - Clear progress in performance maturity, with further opportunity for system-wide quality benchmarking.

- Performance information demonstrates strong prevention outcomes and low escalation rates from Targeted Intervention to statutory services
- A developing joint outcomes framework supports shared accountability across the Early Help system.
- Governance structures increasingly focus on learning, quality and system improvement rather than compliance.
- Digital systems (e.g. virtual hubs, booking systems) support accessibility, data capture and performance oversight.

Workforce stability, retention and development - Stable and developing workforce with improving resilience through change.

- Workforce development plans underpin the Early Help Partnership Strategy, supporting recruitment, retention and skills sustainability across agencies.
- Peer-to-peer support, leadership visibility and shared training offers strengthen staff morale and resilience within a complex practice context.
- Clear service identity and role clarity support professional confidence and retention through transformation.

Diversification of services and innovation - Innovative, mixed-model delivery responsive to community need.

- Expansion of virtual services, outreach and community led provision has improved equity of access, particularly for seldom heard families.
- Investment in evidence-based programmes (e.g. parenting, infant feeding, early relational health) diversifies the offer beyond statutory intervention.
- Digital and place-based innovation through Family Hubs enhances accessibility and self-directed support.

Delivery against grants, transformation and associated priorities - Strong delivery against grant expectations with a clear line of sight to outcomes.

- Family Hub Transformation funding has been effectively utilised to expand provision, integrate services and pilot new partnership models.
- Delivery aligns strongly with Best Start in Life and wider public health priorities, including perinatal mental health, infant feeding, oral health and early communication.
- Transformation programmes demonstrate clear benefit realisation, including improved outcomes, system efficiency and sustainability.

- Multi agency workforce development activity continues to strengthen shared practice standards and model confidence in holding complexity and risk within Early Help contexts.

Next steps:

- Ensuring EH+TIS is embedded as a system-wide responsibility, not a single service, with shared ownership across health, education, social care and the voluntary and community sector.
- Continued blending of the targeted intervention work with the family help pilot, so as to create a seamless service that follows the child
- The Early Help Partnership Strategy and Pathway to provide a shared framework for thresholds, decision-making and collaboration in line with the Family First Partnership (FFP) approach
- The Early Help Partnership to agree the data which they will scrutinise and use to ensure services are needs-led at an early help level, and all partners own their role in delivering services within our communities
- Partnership forums, including the Early Help Partnership Board, to provide governance, challenge and shared oversight of outcomes, quality and transformation delivery.

6.2 MASH and OOHS

The quality and impact of social work practice in BCP Council

The local authority has a safe, effective and proportionate front door, with social work practice demonstrating strong safeguarding performance, timely responses, and confident threshold decision-making. Performance data over the last 12 months remains consistently within tolerance or on target across key indicators, providing assurance that children are protected from harm and families receive the right level of support at the right time.

Calls to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) are answered promptly, ensuring referrers and families do not experience avoidable delay at the first point of contact. This timeliness supports effective information-sharing, early risk identification and responsive decision-making.

Early Help performance has strengthened year-on-year, with re-referral rates remaining stable and low and partner-generated demand patterns consistent. This demonstrates effective early identification of need and the positive impact of timely, proportionate support preventing escalation.

The MASH conversion data provides strong evidence of high-quality professional judgement. Consistently low conversion to statutory social work indicates confident and informed threshold decisions, ensuring children and families only enter statutory services where this is deemed necessary. At the same time, strong conversion to Early Help reflects effective triage, purposeful information-sharing with partners and a clear focus on early intervention and prevention.

Re-referral rates and referral volumes per 10,000 children remain broadly in line with local and national benchmarks, providing further assurance that decisions to step down or close cases are appropriate. Although No Further Action (NFA) rates occasionally exceed benchmark, these remain within local tolerance and are understood in the context of low statutory conversion rates.

Audit activity shows an overall upward trajectory in practice quality, particularly in the quality of contacts, analysis and decision-making at the front door. Where variation in performance exists, it is clearly linked to known internal operational factors, rather than demand pressure or threshold instability.

The local authority provides a child-focused, risk-aware and outcomes-driven front door, with strong impact on safeguarding children and supporting families effectively. Where it is necessary to implement safety planning this is now shared with parents in writing so that they understand expectations and what the contingencies are.

How do we know this?

The authority has a robust and triangulated quality assurance framework that provides both quantitative and qualitative assurance on front door social work practice. This includes:

- **Performance and Assurance Group (PAG) data**, reviewed routinely to monitor safeguarding performance, timeliness and demand patterns.
- **Power BI dashboards and the MASH Board**, enabling real-time oversight of contacts, decision-making, conversion rates, re-referrals and timeliness.
- **MASH conversion data**, used as a key indicator of threshold appropriateness and the impact of professional judgement.
- **Regular thematic and dip-sample audits**, which evaluate the quality of contacts, analysis, management oversight, decision-making, safety planning thereby identifying strengths and areas for learning.
- **Practice Learning Reviews**, which provide in-depth reflection on practice and system learning to continuously improve safeguarding responses.

- **Feedback from children, families, partner agencies and internal colleagues**, offering qualitative insight into the experience and effectiveness of front door services.

This triangulation ensures a clear, evidence-based understanding of practice quality and impact, and supports a culture of transparency, learning and continuous improvement.

Plans for the next 12 months to maintain and improve practice

Over the next 12 months there is a need to develop the front door to deliver the Families First Partnership Programme, building on the strong front door, but widening the remit to be more multi-agency.

- **Keep contacts, referrals, re-referrals and decision making under review.** This will be particularly important as the function, structure and delivery at the front door alters. We have a robust data and audit system that will help us do this.
- **Further strengthen decision-making quality** whilst ensuring consistency in the larger, multi-agency front door through audits, Practice Learning Reviews and reflective supervision.
- **Review the threshold application** as part of the growing multi-agency front door to ensure a collaborative approach and consistency in application.
- **Enhancing the knowledge and expertise at the front door**, through the multi-agency approach and sharing learning across colleagues



6.3 Children in Need

Children subject to Child in Need plans receive consistent, strength-based social work that identifies risk and supports sustained change.

Performance data evidences over 12 months compliance for CIN visits and CIN meetings, demonstrating children are regularly seen and that support is coordinated with partner agencies.

Management oversight and supervision have consistently been achieved, in line with expectations in our Practice Standards and practice framework and are very much a strength. Management oversight supports timely progress of plans, appropriate step-downs and escalations, and clear rationale when statutory intervention is no longer required. Team Managers and ATMs demonstrate an excellent understanding and awareness of data management tools within their day-to-day work which has positively impacted performance across the service and supported the team to review themes and trends regarding areas of improvement for the service. PLRs (audits) are consistently completed across the service and demonstrate good standards of provision for children and young people under child in need.

The stability of the Team Managers and Assistant Team Manager group remains a strength and there have been continued efforts on a targeted recruitment campaign for experienced social workers. The service has continued to invest in AYSEs and there is high retention from this programme.

In addition to the AYSE cohort, in line with the new proposed Family Help model and FFP, we have appointed a cohort of Alternatively Qualified Family Help Practitioners. They have had a robust induction and where appropriate, have started to case hold some child in need families. Whilst this remains in its early stages, this has allowed for a more intensive service to be provided with capacity being increased. It is expected that this will improve relationships with children and families and prevent potential escalation to Child Protection Plans.

Writing to the child and family is fully embedded within the service and continues to have a positive impact upon quality of recording, as indicated within our performance data.

Relationships with partners is strong and there is good attendance at multi agency Child in Need meetings. Reflective supervision enables practice to continue to develop and evolve as the needs of our children and families evolve.

Next steps

- Implementing Families First programme and the restructure
- Implementing a single assessment and plan as part of Families First programme
- Amalgamating our level 3 and 4 work, to create a blended and more seamless delivery for early help/ children in need
- Imbedding family decision making within practice

Timeliness of
CIN Reviews

91%

March 2026

Timeliness of
CIN Visits

86%

March 2026

6.4 Child Protection

Key Performance Indicators

	BCP 2025/26	National 2024/25	Statistical Neighbours 2024/25	Good+ LAs 2024/25
CPP Rate (Mar 26)	58	41	35	42
Repeat CPPs (2025/26)	30%	25%	23%	23%
Timeliness of CPP reviews (2025/26)	95%	91%	92%	92%

As with Children in Need, we are confident that our practice for children subject to Child Protection plans is strong, however recognised that we are an outlier in child protection plans. A thematic audit has been undertaken jointly with the Independent Reviewing Service in response to our numbers of child protection plans compared to the national average. The review identified no concerns regarding thresholds of Section 47s and ICPC decision making, however, it identified further work is required with IROs to improve confidence in ending child protection planning when thresholds are no longer met and risks are manageable under child in need plans. Further work is also required in terms of imbedding Families First, and with additional capacity it is hoped that more intensive work earlier will help prevent escalation.

Children are seen regularly and plans are regularly reviewed, with consistent compliance for our CP visits and core groups meetings for over 12 months.

As with Children in Need, supervision and management oversight remains strong and learning is undertaken via PLRs (audits) to support continuous development within the teams.

Safety planning and working agreements with families have been reviewed within the service and a new standardised form is being launched, along with practice guidance to ensure consistency in recording, clearer agreements and contingency planning.

Next steps

- Embedding the Family help model and restructure
- Ongoing work with partner agencies regarding ending child protection
- Standardised safety plan launch

Timeliness of
CP Visits

84%

March 2026

Timeliness of
CP Reviews

95%

March 2026

Timeliness of
Core Groups

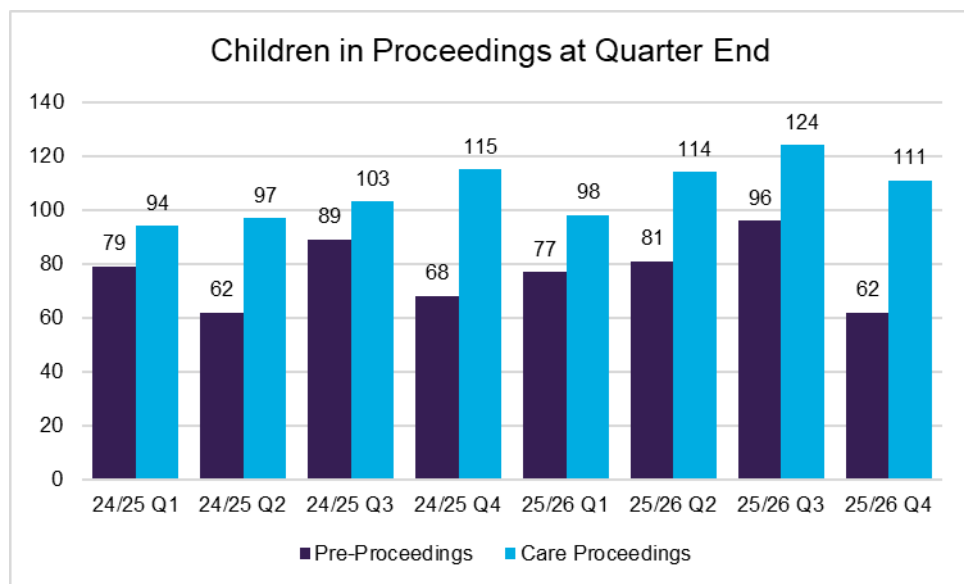
91%

March 2026

6.5 PLO and Care Proceedings

No. of Care Proceedings open	
111	115
March 2026	March 2025

No. of New Care Applications	
24	64
Q4 25/26	Q4 24/25



The ILACS found children are escalated to pre-proceedings Public Law Outline quickly and successful diversion is used. Most PLO letters are *clear and sufficiently detailed about social workers' concerns*. Our parenting assessments were found to *enable parents to demonstrate their abilities to care for their children, while receiving multifaceted support in parallel*.

Despite an increase in numbers of PLO and court applications, compliance with court timescales remains strong, with ongoing work with the judiciary and CAFCASS, focusing on positive working relationships and improving culture with the courts.

Our new PLO/Proceedings dataset has improved our oversight of cases within PLO and proceedings, and work is being undertaken to use this as an active management tool for Team Managers.

As part of the new Family Help model, families entering PLO / court will remain with the allocated Family Help Practitioner with the aim of reducing transfer points and preventing re-assessment. In preparation for this change, work is being undertaken to increase the workforce's skill base and confidence in working with families under PLO and proceedings.

A new operational Service Manager (SM) post will lead Court and PLO and will be integral to the development and oversight of the training and development of the workforce. The SM will also take lead in tracking and quality assuring PLO/court work to ensure that compliance and quality is maintained, reducing impact on families as service delivery and structures change.

It has been identified that capacity to change assessments are an area that would be beneficial in our work and to ensure cumulative harm is identified- we are working on how to embed this into practice.

Next steps

- Creation and use of capacity to change within parenting assessments to support in identifying and address cumulative harm, particularly neglect.
- Workforce training as part of families first changes to ensure the workforce is confident in its deliver of PLO / court proceedings
- The new Service Manager with the lead for PLO/ proceedings to ensure successful management this work

6.6 Children at Risk of Exploitation

A BCP Extra Familial Harm (EFH) Strategy was launched in 2024, which brought together 3 main strands - Missing, Exploited, Trafficked (MET), Most Serious Violence and Prevent. Work has been undertaken alongside Police and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to ensure this work is measurable and effective and working towards the best outcomes for children and using data to inform our approach.

A monthly multi-agency MET panel has been in place since February 2024, allowing for identification of children assessed as high risk of harm of exploitation, sharing of intelligence, identifying themes and trends such as 'hotspot' areas, as well as reviewing disruption and diversionary activities.

A MET awareness month was undertaken in March 2025 and March 2026 providing training to hundreds of attendees on Child Exploitation, intelligence sharing, STRO's, Philomena Protocol, mapping of children at risk of exploitation and supporting completion of the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF). This work resulted in better knowledge across all services and enabled questions to be asked, and information to be delivered.

CERAF triage meetings continue to be held by CSC and Police, reviewing all regular missing persons, medium- and high-graded CERAFs, which in turn allows for intelligence and trend information to be gathered and triangulated, alongside ensuring joint allocation of all high-risk young people within the police safeguarding hub.

For children assessed as high risk, High Risk of Harm (HROH) meetings are held 6-weekly, chaired by the Head of Service, to manage the level of risk, ensure diversionary activities are in place for the victim, ensure intelligence sharing and gathering, and agree disruption plans for identified perpetrators.

A total of 504 HROH meetings were delivered across 2024–2026, which averages 19 HROH a month. This reflects embedded practice and operational oversight to assess and review children in relation to high risk of exploitation. We know our children well and we know

who is at risk as a result, enabling us to plan effectively and to manage the risk collectively, as well as to act where risks are not reducing. Since implementing our EFH strategy, we have had not LSCPRs relating to exploitation which is a marked improvement on the previous practice.

Targeted work has been undertaken on identified hotspot areas along with a specific working group to identify and address gang-related activities in the BCP area. The police have embedded a routine intelligence bulletin which we share with Children's Social Care staff and key partners to share themes, trends and key perpetrators.

A new Family Support Group for parents/ carers of exploited young people was launched in October 2025 by Escapeline and an adult transitional safeguarding Social Worker in response to identified need for education and support for parents / carers of children at risk of MET. There has been positive engagement, an increase in referrals, and a confidential helpline has been developed.

Transitional safeguarding processes have been improved, including new guidance for care-experienced young people. Adult social care attend all HROH for young people aged 17.5yr olds to offer advice re transitional support. Post-18 CERAFs continue to be embedded, and cross-agency escalation on health-flagging for vulnerable over-18s is being worked on.

Partners in Health have updated the short CERAF for first responders to complete, e.g. A&E, Ambulance, GP.

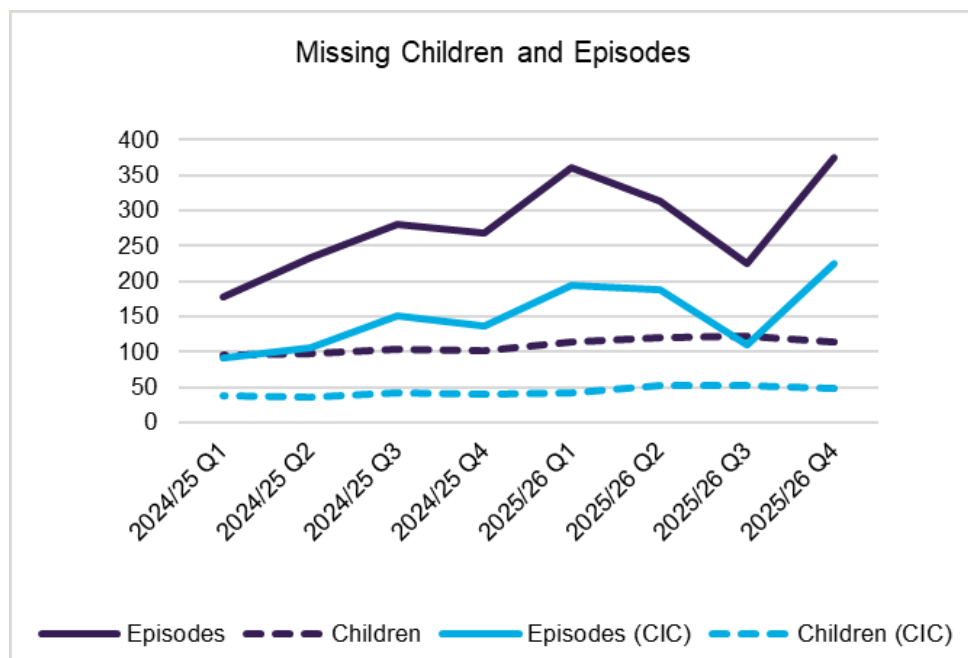
An independent review commissioned by the LSCB is currently occurring in April 2026 to review the effectiveness of the MET panel and multi-agency partnership working which will inform our next steps.

Next steps

- CEYP exploitation tool to be added to Mosaic enabling data to evidence compliance and improve identification of post-18 at risk of exploitation.
- Continuing to strengthen multi agency response to Extra Familial Harm and embed the use of the CERAF with partners.

6.7 Children who go Missing

Children who go missing are managed through our Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) arrangements. In partnership with Dorset Police, we have strengthened coordination and support for missing children in BCP. We have continued to build workforce understanding of the links between missing episodes and vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking, supported through management oversight to ensure Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (CERAF) activity is completed for children who go missing regularly.



The daily missing meeting has been redesigned and has new terms of reference. The revised process ensures that the allocated CSC team attends the daily meeting with the police missing persons team, enabling timely sharing of critical information. This supports police risk assessment and grading, informs active enquiries to locate children quickly, and strengthens joint disruption activity of suspected perpetrators.

The daily meeting prioritises children who go missing repeatedly, identifying emerging themes and trends and refocusing activity on active safeguarding throughout the missing episode.

Engagement with British Transport Police has improved through escalation and national liaison, resulting in clearer pathways for sharing images and intelligence for children assessed as high risk.

Return Home Interview (RHI) documentation has been reviewed, updated and re-launched March 25, improving identification and sharing of intelligence around children's missing episodes, hotspot areas they attend and their associates, which further feed into the management of the missing episodes via the daily missing meeting and HROH's.

Work with Dorset Police has strengthened arrangements for children who are repeat and/or high-risk missing, including requesting allocation within the Dorset Safeguarding Hub (Police) where active police intervention is required. This aligns the response to missing children with our approach for children assessed as at high risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE), including the use of HROH meetings, strengthening senior management oversight of high-risk missing children, improving diversionary planning and enabling enhanced engagement with care providers.

As part of the MET panel action plan, our work with local residential providers and post-16 care providers has strengthened their management of missing incidents, improved reporting quality and embedded the Philomena protocol.

The Philomena protocol is embedded across the service and is used for children at home and in care where there is a risk that a child has gone missing or is likely to go missing.

Next steps

- Continued disruption of local hotspots
- Continued engagement with local care providers regarding their responses to children going missing and their reporting procedure
- Use of the planned review of exploitation by the LSCP to strengthen multi-agency responses

6.8 Children with Disabilities

Child Health and Disabilities Service (CHAD)

Children and families accessing the child health and disabilities team often benefit from long-standing relationships with skilled and knowledgeable social workers and other practitioners such as occupational therapists. Children's needs are well understood.

Area SEND inspection report: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Partnership 17 to 21 November 2025

Current position

The Child Health and Disabilities (CHAD) teams continues to work collaboratively with children, young people, and their families, alongside partners across health, education, and social care, to respond to safeguarding concerns and promote positive outcomes. Practice remains rooted in a holistic, strengths-based approach that considers the child within their family, community, and wider support network.

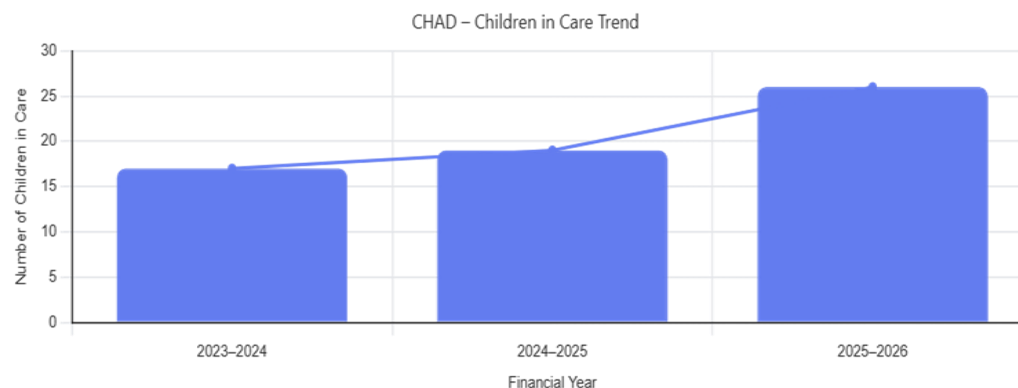
In recent months, CHAD has experienced some workforce turnover, including one Team Manager being seconded into the Principal Social Worker role. In line with changes under Families First, a decision was made to convert two Social Worker posts into Alternatively Qualified Practitioner roles. Early implementation of AQP roles within CHAD has been positive, with practitioners well supported by the team and contributing to continuity for children and families, while learning continues to refine role clarity and induction arrangements.

Strong and longstanding multi-agency relationships are in place with ID CAMHS, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), SEND services, education providers, and commissioned support services. During 2025/26, joint working with Adult Social Care - particularly the Preparing for Adulthood Team - was further strengthened. This collaboration was recognised internally following participation in the CQC inspection.

CHAD performance remains strong, as evidenced within our audits which show consistently high-quality practice and reflective learning.

The SEND inspection in 2025 recognised the commitment of practitioners to personalised, child-centred practice and the strength of partnership working across agencies. It also highlighted the importance of improving consistency, clarity of pathways, and the timeliness of support for children with disabilities and their families. These findings align with CHAD's own self-evaluation and improvement priorities.

The service continues to experience increasing complexity and demand and despite the creative and supportive approach to help families remain together, the complexities do correlate to a rise in the number of children with disabilities entering care.



Short Breaks and Early Support

Work identified through the review of Short Breaks provision is now underway, with procurement activity scheduled for the spring term of 2025/26. This responds to increased demand, changing needs, and feedback from families and practitioners. The review confirmed that Short Breaks continue to be highly valued by children and families, providing essential respite and helping to sustain caring arrangements.

Next steps (2026 onwards)

- Implementing Families First/ family Help model.
- Short Breaks transformation
- Embed locality-based structure



Chapter 7
**The experiences and
progress of children
in care including
permanence**

7.1 Children in Care

BCP Council currently has 644 children in care, marking a 15% increase compared to 2023 and making us a national outlier. Despite this growth, we have maintained consistent care and statutory duties are met. Our processes ensure we deliver safe and stable support. Timely reviews of care plans—completed for 99% of children in care—play a crucial role in meeting children's needs as they progress through their care journey and adapt to changes as they develop their sense of self and independence.

Achieving permanence

By their second looked after review, 99% have a clear permanency plan. Care plans are approved at Legal Gateway Meetings, where Heads of Service provide thorough scrutiny. Timely Children in Care reviews help ensure that both children and carers receive the support needed to make placements successful and maintain stability. As a result, only 8% of children experience three or more home changes over a 12-month period. While we aim to reduce this further, it is encouraging that this figure is lower than both our statistical neighbours and the national average.

We are currently enhancing our reporting processes to better track progress towards achieving permanence. This includes preparing for a system modification that will facilitate monitoring of early parallel planning and the duration of plans where permanence has not yet been attained. Rather than measuring percentage permanence achieved, we aim to introduce new indicators such as the proportion of parallel planning and potential drift in permanence plans, for example in cases involving adoption.

“Thank you for Jane making everything make sense and calming my mind when it gets overwhelming” ~ Alanna

Key Performance Indicators

	BCP Q4	National 2024/25	Stat N'ours 2024/25	Good+ LAs 2024/25
Rate of CIC (Mar 26) (number per 10,000)	86 per 10,000	67 per 10,000	58 per 10,000	68 per 10,000
% in care for 12+ months with 3+ placements (Mar 26)	8	10	12	11
% CIC visits within timescale (Mar 26)	92	n/a	n/a	n/a
% CIC reviews completed within timescales (Jan – Mar 26)	99	n/a	n/a	n/a
% of CIC that are UASC (Mar 26)	6	8	10	9

7.2 UASCs

6% of children in our care are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. At BCP, we recognise the unique needs of these young people and ensure they receive tailored support, such as access to legal advice regarding asylum claims. Our services are aware of the specific risks faced by asylum-seeking youth, including issues related to modern day slavery and trafficking. We use the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and Trafficking Risk Assessment tools to identify victims and provide them with appropriate assistance. Staff maintain close collaboration with the International Care Network (ICN), a local charity that supports refugees and migrants in the UK.

Currently, 16 young people are awaiting Age Assessments and Social Workers and Personal Advisors continue to have access to training to provide relevant support and assessments. The introduction of a new process and improved tracking has reduced delays in completing age assessments. The current wait time is 6 months. Our aim is to ensure that no young person waits longer than 10 weeks for an age assessment after being accommodated by the local authority.

7.3 Health of CIC

Initial and Review Health Assessments

We hold monthly meetings between Children’s Social Care, University Hospital Dorset, and NHS Dorset to coordinate health assessments for children entering care. Performance regarding Initial Health Assessments (IHAs) has improved, particularly in timely requests from CSC. Most IHAs or Review Health Assessments (RHAs) delayed beyond timescale result from children being placed out of area or declining a health assessment. Although our health partners collaborate with other NHS trusts, substantial delays persist in certain regions. Q4 data shows that 60% of children now receive their IHA on time; whilst this is still a priority, we are currently unable to compare this rate with statistical neighbours. Significantly our health colleagues continue to offer appointments to children who are placed within 60 miles of our area reducing some of the challenges.

We have achieved a strong performance in Review Health Assessments, with 92% completed within the expected timeframe. Collaboration with health colleagues has been crucial for this success and a proactive approach to advocating on behalf of the child. Our monthly meetings with health partners allow us to report exceptions and to find solutions to address any issues.

Dental

In December 2025, NHS Dorset introduced a new dental scheme for children in care and young people with care experience. This initiative provides access to dental services for those without an existing dentist or whose foster carers are currently funding private dental appointments. As a result, the proportion of children receiving up-to-date dental checks has increased to 80% in Q3. Data from March indicates that 76% of checks have been completed within the required timeframe; however, this figure is expected to rise as records are updated throughout the month.

Key Performance Indicators

	BCP 2025/26	National 2024/25	Statistical Neighbours 2024/25	Good+ LAs 2024/25
% IHAs within 20 days (Mar 26)	56	n/a	n/a	n/a
% review health assessment within timescale	92	90	92	92
% dental check within timescale	76	81	80	82

7.4 Education of CIC (Virtual School)

Over the last five years, attendance for our children in care has maintained a consistent upward trajectory, rising from 88.7% in 2021/22 to 92% in 2025/26. This places BCP above the national average of 91.2% for children in care for 12 months or more. Attendance at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 has remained consistently high at 93%, reflecting sustained engagement in learning, while Key Stage 4 attendance has improved markedly, increasing from 78.1% in 2023/24 to 80.8% this academic year. Persistent absence (attendance below 90%) has reduced significantly from 27.9% to 21.5% over the past two years, and severe absence (attendance below 50%) has fallen from 7.9% to 5.2%, now sitting below the national rate of 5.7%. Together, these improvements demonstrate the impact of strengthened multi-agency approaches, tighter monitoring, and consistent relational practice supporting school attendance.

A key area of focus remains our work to reduce suspensions, ensuring children experience minimal lost learning and feel a strong sense of belonging in their school communities. Over the past year we have achieved a reduction in repeat suspensions from 5% to 3%, and overall suspensions have fallen from 18.45% to 12.92%, bringing BCP below the latest national figure of 13.72%. This progress reflects our clear emphasis on restorative practice, timely and proactive planning, attendance at all reintegration meetings, redesigning behaviour policies with schools and providing training in therapeutic crisis intervention, de-escalation, trauma-informed practice and the use of language that cares.

Mentoring for Designated Teachers and the allocation of inclusion grants have further contributed to whole-school consistency and the development of environments that support regulation and engagement. Working with schools to maintain belonging, including increased use of alternative provision 'inside and alongside' school settings, ensures pupils remain connected to their communities while their needs are being met.

Engagement in Education, Employment and Training (EET) continues to strengthen, supported by a more coordinated approach across Children's Services, the Virtual School, and post-16 providers. A full programme of

direct work, including a strengthened 'Risk of NEET' programme, targeted mentoring, and structured re-engagement plans, ensures that young people receive timely and purposeful support.

EET levels continue to improve across key age groups. For 16–17-year-olds, EET has improved significantly from 74.5% to 86% over the last year. For Years 12 and 13, the proportion has improved from 73% to 80%. We have increased the number of young people in Year 12 and 13 supported into EET from 38 in last academic year to 56 in this academic year with a further 4 months left in the period, demonstrating the impact of more targeted transition planning, direct coaching, and partnership work. EET for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) remains strong, with 87% engaged, consistent with last year, and with all UASC of school age attending a registered provision compared to 7 not on roll at schools in April last year.

There has been a continued improvement in attainment, with the proportion of children achieving Grade 4+ in English and Maths rising to 32%, compared with 29% last year, reflecting strengthened academic support, targeted interventions, and improved attendance and engagement across Key Stage 4. More of our children are attending mainstream schools and this is supporting access to formal outcomes and progression to Post 16 education with 98% maintaining engagement with their courses past Day 43 indicating that the advice and guidance and Risk of NEET programmes that is provided as additional offers support our young people to transition to appropriate courses.

7.5 Children's Commissioning

- ✓ New Parent and Child Residential Assessment Centre (3 beds)
- ✓ Residential children's home beds increased by 47% (11 beds)
- ✓ Supported Accommodation Provision beds increased by 52% (32 beds)
- ✓ Tender and Implementation of Alternative Education Provision (AP) Framework
- ✓ Tender and Implementation of Supported Accommodation Provision Framework
- ✓ Establishment of Provider Forums across all commissioned service provision

Over the last 12 months, Children's Commissioning has successfully completed its transformation phase and is now operating as a mature, embedded business-as-usual function with strengthened governance, clearer accountability and demonstrable impact. A robust Commissioning Service Plan (2025–27) and CiC / CEYP Sufficiency Strategy (2024 – 2028) are fully in place, with commissioning governance embedded within established Children's Quality, Performance and Improvement Boards, replacing standalone improvement arrangements and reflecting increased organisational confidence and service maturity. Commissioning, Performance and Corporate Finance reporting are now integrated and routinely used together to inform budget management, forecasting and sufficiency planning, supported by the 'Working Smarter' programme which has delivered savings, cost avoidance and improved financial grip.

Significant progress has been made in quality assurance and provider oversight, with consistent monitoring arrangements embedded across Children's Social Care, SEND/INMSS and Alternative Provision. This includes regular in-person visits, strengthened contract monitoring, clear escalation routes and reinforced oversight of unregistered provision, alongside embedded links with LADO and Safeguarding in Education to provide stronger assurance of safety and compliance.

Sufficiency and market development activity has delivered measurable improvement, increasing local supported accommodation, registered

residential provision and post-18 accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking care-experienced young people with further growth in provision scheduled. This has strengthened market resilience and improved local choice.

BCP Council does not operate any regulated children's homes or supported accommodation; all provision is commissioned externally, with oversight through commissioning governance, contract management and quality assurance to ensure it is safe, effective and meets assessed need.

Partnership working has also deepened, with joint commissioning arrangements agreed with Health, the establishment of a Joint Commissioning Partnership and improved collaboration with Education & Skills. Provider engagement has been refreshed through strengthened Provider Forums and events, supporting co-production, transparency and market stability. Underpinning this, data, intelligence and digital foundations are now materially stronger, with embedded Power BI reporting, automated scorecards and real-time operational data supporting both strategic oversight and frontline decision-making. This aligned commissioning activity demonstrates a clear shift from activity-based commissioning to intelligence-led, outcomes-focused practice.

Children placed in unregistered children's homes and safeguarding arrangements.

BCP Council reported that eight children in care are living in unregistered children's homes, mainly due to the inability of Ofsted-registered providers to meet their complex needs. While registered children's home capacity grew nationally, the Southwest remains underserved. Robust internal governance and strategic oversight, including regular reporting, monitoring, and engagement, ensure compliance and support for these children. The Council has increased local registered children's home and supported accommodation beds, enabling some children to return locally, and is working with providers to achieve Ofsted registration. The focus for 2026/2027 will be developing specialist provision for children with complex needs and expanding local registered residential options in line with sufficiency priorities

Next Steps

- Consolidate and embed outcomes-based commissioning by further aligning commissioning activity, contract management and performance reporting, strengthening the focus on impact for children.
- Deliver the next phase of Sufficiency Strategy priorities linked to market development, prioritising local residential provision for children with complex needs and including Parent & Child provision due to increasing demand. The aim being to reduce reliance on high-cost out of area provision by continuing to improve local choice and stability.
- Further strengthen quality assurance and contract management maturity, embedding consistent application and reporting, including deeper use of provider performance intelligence, strengthened escalation and continuous learning from monitoring, audit and complaints.
- Strengthen and embed the use of existing performance, demand and finance intelligence within commissioning decision-making, working closely with Performance & Intelligence to ensure data is consistently applied to sufficiency planning, forecasting and strategic commissioning priorities

Trauma-informed approaches, including PACE-focused training and Mockingbird constellations, continue to strengthen carers' confidence and ability to sustain placements during periods of challenge. This practice is shaped by feedback from carers and children, who consistently highlight the importance of relational support, practical advice and timely access to professional help.

The service places strong emphasis on listening to foster carers and children and young people and using their feedback to improve practice and the support offer. Foster carer feedback is gathered formally through annual reviews, which explore experiences of supervision, training, communication and support alongside outcomes for children. Learning from these reviews informs service-level improvements, including changes to training, supervision expectations and more tailored support packages.

Feedback is also gathered routinely through strong supervisory relationships, peer support, training events, and regular coffee and support groups. A six-weekly foster carer forum with the Head of Service provides a clear route for carers to raise systemic issues and influence service development, supporting carer retention and placement stability.

The developing offer for older young people, including Supported Lodgings and Staying Put, continues to strengthen pathways into independence. *It Takes a Family* supports safe and timely step-down from residential care into family settings where appropriate, with learning from young people's experiences informing improved transition planning and clearer expectations for carers.

Supported Lodgings is now Ofsted registered for 16–18-year-olds and will be inspected annually in its own right, providing independent assurance regarding the quality, safety and effectiveness of provision for young people preparing for adulthood.

As the service works towards the proposed expansion of the Southwest Fostering Hub, there is a clear recognition that mainstream fostering recruitment has been particularly challenging, with outcomes since joining regional arrangements not meeting expectations. While these challenges have limited growth in general fostering capacity, the service remains actively involved in co-design activity, ensuring BCP's local sufficiency

7.6 Fostering, Supported Lodgings and Kinship

Delivering against a nationally challenging backdrop for fostering recruitment and retention, the fostering service continues to provide a broad, flexible and diverse offer that responds to children and young people at different stages of their journeys. This includes Parent and Child arrangements, Shared Care, Supported Lodgings, Staying Put, Private Fostering and, from April 2025, the inclusion of Special Guardianship Order assessment and support within the service.

Permanence and stability remain strong. 60% of children are now long-term matched, while kinship care continues to grow, with 103 approved households. The proportion of children placed within their wider family network has increased from 31.9% to 35.2%, and placement stability remains high, with very low levels of disruption. This reflects effective matching, strong ongoing support for carers and a responsive approach to emerging placement pressures.

needs are clearly reflected as the model develops in line with government direction.

The service has developed a strong partnership with BCP Communications, which has had a positive and growing impact on recruitment. This collaboration has strengthened the promotion of all fostering schemes through targeted, co-ordinated campaigns across digital and social media platforms, improving consistency of messaging, raising the local profile of fostering and supporting a more strategic and sustained recruitment approach aligned with sufficiency priorities.

A Quality Assurance Framework for Fostering has been launched and is being embedded through a programme of Practice Learning Reviews. The framework focuses on improving the quality and consistency of practice, supported by agreed monthly learning themes, including kinship care, adolescence in fostering and standards of care such as allegations management. While still at an early stage, staff engagement is strong and early learning, informed by feedback from carers and young people, indicates a positive trajectory for sustained improvement in practice and outcomes.

300

- ✓ 66% of children placed with inhouse carers
- ✓ 35% increase in children placed with kinship carers
- ✓ 87% utilisation rate of available foster beds
- ✓ Supported Lodgings now Ofsted Registered

222
Fostering
households

68%
CIC in foster
care

57%
matched to
long-term

Next Steps

- Increasing the number of in-house foster carers.
- Delivery of the new Kinship Care Strategy.
- Strengthening support to kinship carers, building on stability and permanence achieved this year.
- Continuing to improve SGO pathways and support, increasing the number of children achieving long term permanence within their families.
- Expanding and strengthening It Takes a Family, supporting more children to step down from residential care.
- Increase sufficiency for 16+
- Participation in the co-design of the proposed expanded Southwest Fostering Hub to ensure local sufficiency needs are reflected.
- Develop further innovative practice, including access to additional bedroom grants.

Support from the Supervising Social Worker

“Our supervising social worker has always advocated for our family where necessary and goes above and beyond to ensure both the child in our care and our needs as carers are met. We have worked with our supervising social worker for a long time and greatly value the consistency and stability this brings. She is fair, honest and transparent, and always highlights what we are doing well whilst providing constructive feedback when required. We could not ask for more from a supervising social worker.”

Support from the Fostering Service

“We receive consistently good support from the fostering service. We are confident that there is always someone available during our supervising social worker’s absence. Management within the fostering team have also supported our supervising social worker in supporting us.”

Support from the Supervising Social Worker

“Our supervising social worker is incredibly caring, sensitive and reliable. She consistently validates the challenges we face as carers and reassures us about the quality of care we provide. She is an invaluable asset to us, often being our first point of contact when we experience administrative difficulties, and she provides clear guidance and support at these times.”

Feedback from a Young Person in Care (about Foster Carers)

“They don’t get enough credit for how well they’ve done. I’m not the easiest case, and they’ve helped me through some of the roughest times of my life, and they still try to do this for me today. I thank my lucky stars every day for them, because had I gone elsewhere, I wouldn’t be the young lady I am today. They’ve always been there for me, not just as carers, but as parents — not just people doing their job. If you want the definition of the best carers, look no further.”

Multi-Agency Support

“We found the stability meeting particularly helpful, as it brought everyone together and allowed us to have a shared understanding and joined-up approach. It was beneficial for us to see how the Virtual School, Educational Psychology and other professionals work together. Everyone involved was brilliant, and it genuinely felt like all professionals were proactive and committed to doing their job well in the best interests of the children.”

7.7 Private Fostering and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)

Work in relation to Special Guardianship has strengthened significantly, with SGO outcomes now aligned to the national rate, accounting for 11.9% of children leaving care. The integration of the SGO Assessment Team into the fostering service has improved conversion rates and pathways, supported by a more robust and accessible SGO support offer.

The introduction of a dedicated SGO Support Team has led to a sustained increase in special guardians accessing support, significantly improving the service’s understanding of demand and need. A clearer, structured post-order offer – including coffee mornings, peer support, targeted advice and practical help – has replaced previously ad hoc arrangements and improved engagement. Between April 2025 and March 2026, a high volume of enquiries were received, with the majority progressing to advice, intervention or targeted support. This reflects increased confidence among special guardians to seek help earlier and is contributing to improved placement stability, family resilience and outcomes for children. Impact will continue to be monitored during 2026–27 to inform further development.

The service continues to hold the Private Fostering contract on behalf of Dorset Council, providing assurance and continuity across the area. Private Fostering demonstrates strong regional practice leadership, coordinating Southwest networks and supporting partner authorities to strengthen assessment, oversight and safeguarding. While numbers have not yet returned to pre-Covid levels, activity continues to increase steadily, supported by proactive promotion of private fostering across partner agencies and communities.

- ✓ SGO performance now in line with the national average
- ✓ Private Fostering assessment completion rate within statutory timescales across all private fostering activity is approximately 89.9%.
- ✓ Establishment of a dedicated SGO support offer

Next Steps: 2026–27

The service will focus on:

- Delivering the new Kinship Care Strategy
- Strengthening support to kinship carers, building on current stability and permanence
- Improving SGO pathways and post-order support to increase long-term family permanence

Feedback from SGO Carers:

Feedback from carers and professionals demonstrates growing confidence in the support offer:

“Thank you for a great coffee morning today, I believe it feels like the first time that I’m going to get the support that I’ve been asking for. Very impressed with today’s meeting very helpful.”

“A massive thanks for such a lovely morning, My bag of gifts is amazing, I shall think of you all when I drink. Eat and use all the smellies take care guys your all doing a very special job supporting all our diverse problems”

“I have to say I have been really moved by some of the positive stories that have gone out this week under Kinship Care Week and it shows the positive difference BCP Council is making to people’s lives. Great work! Your team are doing a fantastic job and rightly so you should be proud.”

7.8 Adoption

Aspire Adoption Panels scrutinise reports for matching of children with a plan of adoption from the local authority social workers. The ADM decision pre-dates this for application of Placement Orders put before the court. Agency Advisors from Aspire will quality assure local authority Child Permanence Reports and support children’s Social Workers where necessary to ensure all information is contained in the new Coram CPR. Agency Advisors also attend BCP Legal Gatekeeping during the care planning stage for every possible child where adoption may be considered and will track all children through their early entry into care. Further to this Annexe As are completed by the Family Finding Team for timely submission for Adoption Order applications.

Aspire’s post-adoption support team works collaboratively across multiple agencies and actively attends BCP team meetings to share our core offer and remit within Aspire’s post-adoption support services. Aspire works jointly with Early Help, Child in Need, and the Birth to Settled Adulthood teams, developing shared plans to support families. The interventions complement safeguarding plans by offering access to specialist therapeutic services that Early Help cannot provide—such as Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP), Theraplay, and long-term play therapy.

Aspire Adoption Support also works closely with Core CAMHS to provide joint therapeutic support, ensuring that the needs of adopted children in BCP are met and raise awareness of the scope of post-adoption support and the challenges posed by the reduction in the Adoption Support Fund’s fair access limit. Aspire maintains strong relationships with the Virtual School and SEND services, complementing each other’s work. Aspire Post Adoption supports parents in understanding their child’s EHCP and in challenging it when it does not meet their child’s needs

In 2026, we plan to extend this further by providing child-led support within these schools. This initiative will help adopted children feel less isolated and foster friendships and identity through specialist after-school activities.

Aspire commissions therapists across BCP and Dorset and is exploring a partnership with a provider in Dorset to support adopted fathers. This

initiative aims to create a safe emotional space and highlight the different aspects of fatherhood and the importance of their role within families.

Aspire Adoption Family Finding Team case holds all children at the point of Placement Order therefor all statutory children in care responsibilities are held by the Aspire Social Worker. The Family Finding Team Manager also ensure attendance at Case Transfer Meetings from the BCP LA Social Work Team to ensure all task are completed before accepting transfer including arrangements for Keeping in Touch.

The cases held within the Aspire Family Finding Team are part of the BCP PLR Audit process with 2 cases per month being chosen at random. Timeliness for children is also reviewed via monthly performance data is reviewed monthly via Aspire attending BCP Data Performance Meetings and have also implemented an Aspire Quarterly Data and Performance Board in advance of submission to ASGLB national reporting of data for adopted children.

Next steps:

In January 2026 Aspire Adoption Quality Assurance Framework which has been agreed by Aspire Governance Boards and be implemented in 26/27.

Review and monitoring Adoption support demand, assessment timeliness, interventions, and outcomes will also be incorporated into the audit framework along with practice quality indicators

A Keeping in Touch Review is also being finalised to ensure adopted children and families are supporting and service needs are adequately resourced.

7.9 Advocacy

Coram Voice continues to be supported to strengthen the promotion and visibility of the service across relevant BCP Council service areas. Take-up of advocacy and Independent Visitor services for children in care and those subject to a child protection plan remains comparatively low, and the referral rate remains proportionately higher for children subject to child protection plans. The referral rate for our care experienced young people remains significantly low despite this being highlighted within child in care meetings and attendance by Coram Voice at 333 Care Leavers Hub.

Available data indicates that the low take-up of advocacy has not adversely affected the extent to which children’s voices are central to planning and review processes. Participation and inclusion of children and young people across child protection and looked after children arrangements continue to improve.

In addition, the IRO/Child Protection Chair visit template includes a mandatory question requiring confirmation that the child or young person is aware of, and understands, the Coram Voice advocacy and Independent Visitor service and whether they would like the IRO or Chair to make a referral on their behalf.

Next steps

Continued quarterly meetings with Coram Voice to monitor service delivery and demand as well as consideration of a new tender to ensure the service offer remains responsive, accessible and delivers value for children and young people.

24 children and young people in BCP received support from the IV Service in 2024/25



Chapter 8

**The experiences
and progress of
Care Experienced
Young People
(care leavers)**

8.1 Care Experienced Young People

At BCP, we are dedicated to staying connected with our young people, and current data shows strong performance in this area. Last year, we faced difficulties establishing a reliable process for evaluating housing needs and ensuring young people received appropriate support when seeking accommodation. We are pleased to share that the local policy and process have now been updated to prioritise the journey and experience of our young people, foster collaboration between agencies, and uphold our responsibilities as corporate parents. This is already having a positive impact, as most young people are now in suitable accommodation, and those waiting have safe places to stay. Additionally, the creation of a Youth Homelessness Prevention Board is providing strategic oversight and greater focus on prevention.

Following feedback from Ofsted, we reviewed our case closure process for those transitioning to extended support after age 21, making sure we offer the right level of assistance at the right time. As a result, there has been a 30% increase in the number of young people aged 21 and over receiving services, which reassures us that ongoing support is being provided where it is needed.

Next steps

We have worked hard to ensure that our local offer was reviewed and meaningful for our young people, but also that it is accessible and the reality of their experience; it will enhance access to practical resources and services. Adjustments to the allocation of financial resources will increase flexibility and eliminate obstacles to obtaining support and assistance through our new Aspirations Fund.

Key Performance Indicators				
%	BCP 2025/26	National 2024/25	Statistical Neighbours 2024/25	Good+ LAs 2024/25
In touch 17-18s	98	93	96	95
In touch 19-21s	98	93	93	93
EET 17-18s	69	64	64	66
EET 19-21s	51	54	54	55
Suitable accommodation 17-18s	92	91	93	92
Suitable accommodation 19-21s	93	89	88	90

8.2 Employment, education and training

Summary of our EET support offer for care leavers

Our care leaver EET offer is delivered through the Personal Adviser (PA) service, working closely with the Virtual School and Further/ Higher Education providers and employers. We maintain close oversight of participation, attendance and progress for our care experienced young people and use timely tracking and information-sharing to identify early signs of disengagement and respond quickly where risks of NEET emerge.

Support is coordinated through an agreed action plan and includes direct work to build aspiration, confidence and employability, alongside practical help to remove barriers to participation and sustain placements in education, training, apprenticeships, internships or employment. Where young people remain in education or training, planning and review are strengthened through routine and maintained Personal Education Plan programme (a minimum of 3 meetings across Years 12 and 13, and 2/3 meetings in Year 14 as appropriate), ensuring plans remain purposeful, responsive and focused on impact and inform the Pathway Plans.

Building on this offer, EET participation of our care experienced young people is improving. For those in Year 13 (age 18), engagement in Education, Employment and Training (EET) increased from 59% in September 2025 to 72% in March 2026. For Year 14, EET increased from 61% to 68%, reflecting ongoing efforts to sustain engagement in the later phases of transition planning and collaboration with colleges and employers to create bespoke opportunities and maintain participation. For 17-18 year old care experienced young people, the engagement with EET is 69% which is above both national and statistical neighbour outcomes.

Collaboration with our local college is focused on implementing a bespoke transition and engagement course from May 2026, aimed at sustaining Year 13 (age 17-18) participation in education for those who find mainstream pathways difficult and supporting a smoother journey into adulthood (Year 14) as young people become 'care leavers'. This programme will provide a vital bridge into Further/ Higher Education and

employment, improving retention and building resilience for young people who face barriers such as mental health needs or insecure housing.

Steps to Employment

Feedback from the Bright Spots survey showed young people want more chances to build confidence and explore career paths. In response, a new Corporate Parenting pledge prioritises work experience, supported by our HR department, including:

- Priority access to placements in every council department, plus opportunities to shadow senior leaders.
- Tailored career experiences, such as "day in the life" sessions and personalised shadowing.
- Each placement includes a supervisor and informal mentor.
- Inclusive recruitment with updated forms for care-experienced applicants.
- Ongoing feedback to improve the offer.
- Long-term coaching and mentoring.

We are combining this new offer with Virtual School resources and bespoke programmes, the 'Connect to Work' Programme through the Skills and Learning Service and wider network and community opportunities for greater flexibility. HR is also updating our careers site to feature roles and pathways for care-experienced young people (CEYP), making opportunities clearer and easier to access. Over the next three months, we'll refine the offer and train staff to ensure support for young people.

Next steps include supporting the launch of the site and training our staff so that feel supported and equipped to assist our young people.

8.3 Support into adulthood

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) arrangements across BCP are increasingly well-established and reflect a shared multi-agency commitment to early identification, coordinated planning, and improved outcomes for young people with SEND as they move into adulthood. The 2025 SEND inspection recognised the strength of partnership working across Children's and Adult Services and the growing focus on pathways that support education, employment, independent living, health, and community inclusion.

Early preparation for adulthood begins from Year 9 and Year 10 through EHCP review processes, enabling timely conversations about aspirations and potential adult social care needs. The PfA team within Adult Social Care works closely with the Children's Health and Disability (CHAD) Service as well as our Children in Care Teams, SEND colleagues, education settings, and health partners to ensure that preparation is not delayed until a young person approaches age 18, but is embedded within ongoing planning. Closer working relationship has been established between Children's in Care/Care Experience Young People Service and Preparing for Adulthood Team. A significant strength within the local system is the Transition Planning Group (TPG), a multi-agency forum co-chaired by Adult Social Care and Children's Services. The TPG provides oversight and coordination for young people with complex needs and transition risks beyond SEND, enabling holistic discussion and shared decision-making. Importantly, the SEND inspection highlighted the value of forums that support joint problem-solving and clarity of pathways, and the TPG directly contributes to this system maturity.

The TPG considers a wider cohort of young people than those who meet eligibility for the PfA team, including young people who may not be Care Act eligible, but who require coordinated transition planning, such as:


- young people subject to Section 117 aftercare
- young people with complex health or mental health needs
- young people requiring structured planning despite not meeting adult social care thresholds

This inclusive approach ensures that young people and families do not experience gaps in planning solely due to eligibility criteria and that agencies remain accountable for transition outcomes. During 2025–26, a growing number of young people were referred to the TPG for discussion and pathway planning, including those who did not ultimately transfer to the PfA team, demonstrating the group's safeguarding and system-coordination role rather than a sole gatekeeping function.

Performance information shows positive outcomes for young people with SEND in relation to sustained education, employment, or training, and inspection findings acknowledged that many young people are increasingly well prepared for adulthood. However, we also recognise ongoing challenges, including rising complexity, increasing demand, and the need to further improve consistency of transition experiences across pathways and cohorts. Overall, preparing for adulthood in BCP is moving in the right direction, with clear evidence of system collaboration, inclusive planning through the TPG, and learning from SEND inspection findings informing service improvement.

Key areas for continued development include:

- further strengthening clarity and consistency of PfA pathways across education, health, and social care
- improving the use of data to track long-term transition outcomes
- ensuring timely transition planning for young people with complex needs who fall outside standard eligibility pathways.



Chapter 9
**The impact of
leaders on social
work practice with
children and
families**

9.1 Corporate leadership

BCP Council's commitment to Children's Services is stronger than ever, with the appointment of a new Chief Executive who is prioritising children at the heart of the council's agenda. Our corporate leadership recognises the scale of the continued challenge and is actively driving improvement and transformation across SEND and Children's Social Care. The political administration continues to support the service, maintaining an informal agreement with opposition parties to ensure Children's Services remains above politics and focused solely on outcomes for children and young people.

Regular 'Quartet' meetings continue to be held, attended by Chief Executive, DCS, Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder, and communications have been open, and confidentially respected. Their commitment has been demonstrated through ongoing financial support for transformation and improvements in Children's Services. There is good engagement with Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who offer high support and high challenge and there are regular briefing sessions with representatives of all political groups

Corporate Management Board (CMB) has endorsed these initiatives, and Children's Services' transformation programme is fully integrated into the Council's overall transformation agenda. The Children's Transformation and Strategic Board ensures ongoing development, accountability, and partnership working, with updated governance arrangements embedded following the December 2024 ILACS inspection. These arrangements now include the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, supporting the launch and delivery of the new Children and Young People's Plan 2025–2030.

The Corporate Pay and Reward project for the harmonization of pay, a legacy from Local Government Review concluded in December 2025 following 4 years of uncertainty for staff, and whilst Children's Services were able to secure local market supplements for Social Workers, which has been significant in the success of our recruitment campaign, the uncertainty around ending of these supplements has had an impact on retention and morale. In March 2026 a review of supplements was undertaken in line with the new corporate policy, and most were removed as pay now largely comes in line with regional and national comparators.

Corporate leads from the Directors Strategy Group are spearheading the embedding of Corporate Parenting as everyone's responsibility throughout the Council. This collaborative approach is being implemented through a dedicated Corporate Parenting project, which focuses on the delivery of three pledges agreed by Children and Young people and corporate services, they are:

- 1) **Increasing access to discounts and wellbeing support** A new benefits/discounts platform for staff is being extended to young people. They are also working on extending the Employee Assistance Programme including free counselling and advice to care experienced young people
- 2) **Improving digital inclusion for Care Experienced young people** - Work is starting on availability of laptops and phones for young people including reaching out to suppliers as part of a social contract.
- 3) **Expanding Work Experience opportunities for care experienced young people** – This includes increasing the range and number of placements across the council for work experience opportunities, training for staff in offering meaningful work experience opportunities as well as increasing mentoring opportunities for our young people.

Together, these pledges demonstrate sustained corporate commitment to improving the practical support, opportunities and life chances of our care-experienced children and young people.

9.2 Strategic leadership and partnerships

Strategic leadership in BCP Children's Services is stable and increasingly effective, providing clear direction, pace and grip across the system. Leaders set clear priorities through the Children and Young People's Plan, with a shared focus on outcomes, risk and early help/prevention. Leaders are visible and accountable, with a culture of challenge and learning.

Governance is well established and regularly reviewed to maintain clear accountability and oversight, linking strategy to delivery. Director-led quality, performance and systems boards scrutinise performance, practice quality, risk and improvement, supported by service-level groups that connect frontline practice to senior leadership and corporate governance.

Partnership working remains a strength, including through ICB change. Leaders work with statutory and community partners to deliver shared priorities and respond to safeguarding pressures. Safeguarding arrangements are well embedded through the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership, with joint accountability and shared ownership of risk and outcomes.

System leadership has strengthened through partnership boards, including the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, which provides shared oversight and ambition. These forums support coordinated decision-making, escalation and collective responses to emerging challenges.

Leaders show strong political and corporate awareness, positioning Children's Services priorities within wider council strategies and financial planning. Regular reporting, scrutiny and engagement support transparency and informed decisions. Leaders are realistic about financial and workforce pressures, using evidence to prioritise resources, manage risk and protect frontline services.

The service has a confident, developing leadership culture. SLT and the wider leadership group take collective responsibility for improvement and model openness, collaboration and focus on impact. Staff engagement is prioritised through whole-service events, leadership forums and regular dialogue, supporting trust and shared purpose.

Leaders are self-aware and respond quickly when improvement is needed, with clear ownership, realistic plans and evidence of progress.

Priorities include deepening partnership maturity and strengthening consistency, so children and families receive timely, coordinated support.

Next Steps

Strategic leaders recognise that continued development requires a sustained focus on deepening system leadership and partnership maturity, particularly in the context of ongoing national reform, financial pressure and increasing complexity of need.

Over the next 12 months, leaders will:

- Embed the Children and Young People's Partnership Board as the main forum for shared strategic ownership and alignment of priorities, improvement and outcomes.
- Strengthen joint accountability across safeguarding, SEND, health and early help through sharper shared measures and use of QA and lived experience to inform redesign.
- Increase consistency and pace by streamlining governance and development so strategy translates into timely frontline practice.
- Strengthen corporate and political engagement so priorities, risks and progress are understood, and members can provide effective challenge and advocacy.
- Provide leadership through ICB change so children remain a priority and partnership decisions protect and improve outcomes.
- Build leadership capacity and succession (especially middle leaders) to sustain improvement and deliver Families First for Children and SEND transformation.

These actions will keep strategic leadership collaborative, sustainable and focused on improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people.

9.3 BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership

In 2025–26, the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership (BCP SCP) strengthened oversight of multi-agency safeguarding practice and improved the quality of evidence and assurance. Leadership is stable through the Delegated Safeguarding Partners, with effective oversight via the BCP SCP Board and its subgroups. Governance was reviewed and refreshed, with updated group functions and published multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Joint working has increased with key partnerships, particularly the Safeguarding Adults Board and Community Safety Partnership, including work on transitional safeguarding and domestic abuse. The partnership has also developed a Harmful Sexual Behaviour framework and training.

Assurance has been strengthened through a partnership Quality Assurance Framework. The Quality Assurance Group has improved insight into practice through digitising Section 11 audits of organisational safeguarding standards, a review of the multi-agency dataset, and a policy audit informing an agreed core policy framework (to be published).

The partnership has commissioned an independent thematic scrutiny into Extra Familial Harm to strengthen responses to exploitation, missing children and trafficking.

A new Learning and Engagement Group supports translation of learning into improved practice. This will strengthen governance of learning and development through composite learning plans, providing a focus on delivering on the findings from multi-agency audit and safeguarding practice reviews with targeted learning resources and events going forward.

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR) Group has strengthened local review processes, including robust pre-SIN discussions to support consistent thresholds and effective rapid reviews. In 2025–26 the partnership completed four rapid reviews and one local learning review, and commissioned a thematic review on neglect, parental substance misuse and domestic abuse. Recurring themes include neglect, domestic

abuse, parental substance misuse, cumulative harm and gaps in transitional safeguarding.

This learning has informed refreshed partnership priorities: transitional safeguarding, neglect and the development of a multi-agency practice framework.

Engagement with education has strengthened through the Education Sub-Group, including increased Designated Safeguarding Lead forum engagement, review of the local Operation Encompass protocol, and development of welfare check guidance informed by national and local learning.

Next, the partnership will embed learning and improvements by:

- strengthening learning from reviews.
- completing multi-agency audits.
- preparing for Joint Targeted Area Inspections.
- responding to Section 11 findings.
- improving access to multi-agency policies and procedures; and
- reviewing escalation arrangements to support timely challenge and resolution.

9.4 Quality Assurance

Following integration of the Quality Assurance Framework across children's social care, compliance continues to improve, averaging 90.6% over the past year. Managers complete monthly collaborative Practice Learning Reviews (PLRs), supported by a moderation group and benchmarking led by Quality Assurance. We aim to moderate 30% of PLRs to ensure consistent grading and maximise learning.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, 75% of PLRs were graded good or outstanding. Moderation/benchmarking shows consistent use of grading, with 78% retaining the original grade across 2025/26.

The framework has been updated to strengthen focus on impact and outcomes, improve insight into experiences of minority groups, and sharpen capture and tracking of actions from PLRs.

Fostering PLRs are now embedded, with managers completing monthly collaborative reviews. Early evidence is positive, with 92% graded good or above.

Practice weeks will run three times a year and are moving from service-based to thematic focus (first theme: neglect). They provide protected space for observation, reflective discussion, collaborative PLRs and feedback from children and families, alongside learning sessions open to colleagues across the service.

Next steps

- Add Fostering PLRs to the PLR portal (June 2026) and develop a live Power BI dashboard.
- Deliver thematic practice weeks.
- Increase multi-agency audit activity and learning events with the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership to strengthen assurance and shared learning.

9.5 Complaints and Compliments

During 2025/2026, 170 compliments and 461 Stage One complaints (both statutory and corporate) across Children's Services were received. This is a 35% decrease in compliments and a 26% increase in complaints from the previous year. 40% of Stage One complaints were related to Children's Social Care, and 52% to Education and Skills (not including cross service complaints.)

The vast majority of complaints are resolved at Stage 1, however, there has been an increase of 36% in Stage 2 escalations and 25% in Stage 3 escalations from the previous year. 37% of Stage 2 complaints were related to Children's Social Care, and 60% to Education and Skills. Ombudsman enquiries saw a decrease of 36% from the previous year. 81% of complaints were made by parents (with 61% coming from mothers), and key themes across social care remain as the previous year - communication and delay, or lack of agreed action.

There has been an 82% increase in enquiries from MPs/councillors from the previous year. Learning from complaints and ensuring they are dealt with efficiently and effectively will be a regular focus at the Quality, Performance and Systems Board. Some examples of learning arising from complaints include: a review of housing policies to improve provision for Care Experienced Young People; an evaluation of methods used by social workers to improve accuracy in ascertaining a child's feelings; embedding more streamlined processes to enable EHCCO's to have greater time to focus on communication response times; to ensure that explicit questions are asked around PR as early on in the consent and assessment stages as possible in light of changing circumstances and training provided to social workers in relation to Section 117 processes.

On 1 April 2025, the Compliments and Complaints service transitioned to the management of the corporate centre, to align with other council compliments and complaints services. A robust service charter is in place to support and oversee this arrangement to ensure continued accountability and communication with children's services.

9.6 Independent Review Service and Child protection Chairs

- ✓ 644 children in care
- ✓ 99% ICPCs quorate
- ✓ 87% ICPCs on time
- ✓ 95% RCPCs on time
- ✓ 66% of CYP attended their meeting
- ✓ 98% of children and young people participated in their meetings

Child Protection Chairs

Overall child protection numbers remain higher than national averages. The number of children on a plan for longer than 12 months has reduced and continued oversight of these children is in place.

Timeliness for child protection conferences remains strong. A small number of Initial Child Protection Conferences have been subject to short, agreed delays to support professional judgement and ensure they are meaningful for children and families. Following learning from recent reviews, practice has been updated so that repeat conferences are chaired by the same Child Protection Chair wherever possible. This strengthens continuity, relationships, and understanding of family history, supporting more robust risk oversight with minimal impact on overall timeliness.

Repeat child protection plans remain higher than national and regional averages. Where an ICPC is requested for a child previously subject to a plan, a review meeting involving the IRS Head of Service, Service Manager and Child Protection Chair is held to consider family history, previous intervention and current risk, supporting robust decision-making. A bi-monthly report will be introduced once sufficient data is available to identify themes, learning and share this with social work teams.

There is a continued focus on children subject of the PLO process to ensure their progress is effectively tracked within child protection

planning, reducing the risk of drift and delay and supporting timely, purposeful linked decision-making.

The team are preparing for the introduction of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams and are working with social work colleagues to shape this.

Work is planned to continue to review and understand the higher numbers of CP plans in this authority compared to the national average. Work is also being undertaken to consider the impact and outcomes of children subject to risk outside the home who are subject of a child protection plan.

Next steps

- Further develop work tracking and oversight of children on a CP plan for over 15 months continuing the focus on those children who are also subject of a Supervision Order.
- Targeted scrutiny of repeat plans providing a bi-monthly report which identifies themes and learning.
- Monitor the use of escalations within the child protection process to ensure drift is being highlighted at an earlier stage.
- Work with children's services to coordinate both a strategy that is aimed at supporting the reduction of CP plans where appropriate, to be in line with regional neighbours.
- Work continues to ensure that our service is inclusive, accessible and meets the individual needs of children, young people and their families.
- Review of how CP chairs approach the child protection planning process for children subject of a plan under
- Preparing for the introduction of the Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams.

Independent Reviewing Officers

- ✓ 99% of meetings were held within timescale
- ✓ 66% of children and young people attended their meeting

The number of children in care has continued to rise and is now at an all-time high. Despite this increasing demand, Independent Reviewing Officers have consistently maintained effective service delivery and a strong standard of practice. Timeliness of meetings continues to be good with over 95% of meetings taking place within timescale over the last financial year. Participation of children and young people in the care planning process is also good, although attendance at meetings being a continued area for development. Learning sessions from reviews have been held with IROs and CP chairs and we have noted that this has had an impact upon practice.

IROs have strong, effective working relationships with social work teams and mid-point reviews are embedded and consistently noted in practice with evidence of impact. IROs routinely contribute to legal gateway meetings, and their views are consistently sought by social workers within care proceedings. A key area for development remains ensuring IROs receive specialist assessments and relevant documentation in sufficient time to fully inform their views on proposed care plans.

The use and impact of DRP is an ongoing focus that needs to be strengthened, used more and be timelier.

Next steps

- Work with colleagues in children's services to help and support a CIC strategy aimed at identifying and supporting children who could return home and where a care order Can be discharged.
- Develop a process in which Independent Reviewing Officers will be included appropriately within the ADM process.
- Continue to ensure midways and oversight is in place to support children's plans and interventions be timely without drift or unnecessary delay
- Increase child attendance at meetings by being more creative in how we facilitate meetings; for example encouraging children and young people to lead their own meetings with support from their IRO as well as offering flexible ways to attend the meeting.
- Continue to embed learning from rapid reviews and serious incidents to ensure children and families continue to have independent scrutiny that considers if they are safe.

9.7 LADO

Despite rising demand, the LADO service has maintained a safe, high-quality offer. Referrals rose from 655 (2024/25) to 795 (2025/26): +21% overall, with consultations up 14% and threshold-met cases up 25%. Staffing changes have been managed through robust arrangements, with no impact on timeliness, quality or safety.

LADOs delivered five multi-agency Managing Allegations sessions and two bespoke sessions for an Academy Trust and Early Years providers. Ongoing promotion of the LADO role across partner and external organisations has increased awareness and demand.

LADOs maintain strong working relationships with partner agencies. Education settings remain the largest referrer, reflecting the area's high proportion of children and young people in education.

The service has strengthened partnership working with Education Safeguarding Advisors and the Early Years Safeguarding Service, improving joined-up working and information sharing. Joint work has also reinforced appropriate, proportionate referrals and that LADO should not be used as a default route.

Referrals from parents increased, but many related to complaints about safeguarding arrangements rather than concerns meeting the LADO threshold. LADOs have therefore developed a standard signposting response for cases where LADO has no role.

Next steps

- Deliver additional bespoke training for sports providers, BCP HR and Children's Social Care, alongside the multi-agency offer.
- Develop and launch the Safe After School initiative to promote safer out-of-school activities for parents and professionals.
- Improve data collection and analysis to inform service development.
- Reintroduce monthly peer audits, with quarterly moderation by the Head of Service, to identify themes and learning.

9.8 Principal Social Worker

Our Principal Social Worker role provides a focus on practice improvement and looking at the impact of practice change on our children and families. They work alongside our Talent Acquisition team, HR Business Partners, and Pay and Reward team around workforce strategy, recruitment and retention.

The role provides guidance on the development of the practice curriculum and development of training resources and leading on practice initiatives such as the Creative Life Story platform.

The PSW role was critical in embedding Our Practice Framework which is evidenced based in restorative and trauma informed approaches. Going forward the PSW role will focus on continued practice innovation and moving Our Practice Framework to business as usual. Our annual practice framework all-service conference developed and hosted by the PSW in March 2026 featured a keynote speaker expert by experience Mary-ann Hodd, on the theme of coproduction and was supported by our Children's Rights and Engagement Team.

The PSW moderates ASYE and Grade Progression portfolios to provide consistent quality assurance to ensure that our social workers can demonstrate the skills and experience needed to support and safeguard BCP's children and families. Additionally, the PSW has worked to align the Quality Assurance Framework with Education to provide consistent approach across services for children and is Vice Chair for Mosaic System Change Triage Group.



9.9 Financial Position

The general fund forecast outturn for 2025/26 as at end of Q3 was £105.2m, reflecting a projected overspend of £5.1m (5.1% above budget). This variance is primarily driven by an increase in both the number and complexity of children in care. It is anticipated that the final outturn will exceed the current forecast of £5.1m, due to additional care-related activity in the final quarter. The service has engaged the service of Impower to help with the identification and delivery of sustainable reductions in Children in Care numbers and costs, while ensuring value for money and positive outcomes for children. The contract requires an upfront investment of £0.561m in 2026/27. Savings have been estimated at £1m for 2026/27 with a further £1m in 2027/28. This investment will be funded by the expected in-year budget savings for 2026/27.

9.10 Children's Transformation Programme

In April 2025 the Children's Transformation and Strategy Programme was launched to build on ongoing transformation activity whilst expanding to include the new Families First programme and fully incorporating Education and Skills. The programme provides a holistic overview and a cohesive approach across the key areas of transformation and improvement within Children's Services, all supported by the BCP Council Projects and Programmes team. Key workstreams within the programme during 2025/26 have included:

- Ongoing work to establish and implement a new locality-based service delivery model, Strengthening Families, Supporting Communities.
- Continuing work to transform Children's Commissioning, delivering more effective processes, improved governance and financial management arrangements and enhanced reporting and assurance mechanisms.
- Defining Proof of Concepts for our Mockingbird, It Takes a Family and Reunification models.

- Support to scope and deliver the new Families First programme, in line with the Children's Wellbeing and Education Bill.
- Delivery of an Education and Skills project package which has supported systems improvement, placement sufficiency, stronger internal processes and greater efficiency.
- Supporting ongoing service improvement focussed on positive outcomes, sustainable services and promoting effective ways of working.

In 2026/27 the Children's Transformation and Strategy Programme will maintain and progress many of its key themes including supporting the service to work efficiently and effectively, promoting a 'One Team, One Approach' culture, championing intelligent and proactive use of our systems and data and delivering better outcomes for children. However, it will also evolve to ensure it continues to reflect legislation and guidance, the needs of our children and young people and the wider service and corporate strategy. Underpinned by an improved position for both Children's Social Care and SEND, it will support the service to transition from system wide transformation to more targeted transformation activity. This will include:

- Working collaboratively to deliver SEND Reform in line with national strategy.
- Evolving our Family Hubs to support the new Best Start in Life Strategy and increase school readiness for our 0-5 year age group.
- Continue to deliver our Families First programme, in line with the Children's Wellbeing and Education Bill.
- Embedding a 'One Team, One Approach' culture to underpin the new locality-based service delivery model.
- Delivering a new targeted Children in Care programme, promoting the best outcomes for our children and young people.
- Support ongoing service improvement across a complex and cross functional landscape.

9.11 Achievements and progress in implementing the Families First for Children Social Care Reforms.

Families First Transformation Programme – Annual Self-Evaluation Summary

BCP Council commenced implementation of its Families First Transformation Programme in 2026. During the first year, the focus has been on building strong foundations for sustainable system change. This has included the establishment of robust partnership governance arrangements to align a wide range of national reforms, extensive staff engagement and co-design activity, recruitment of a multi-disciplinary transformation team, and the development of a clear, phased implementation plan.

The programme is structured around five key strands, with significant progress achieved across each area to date:

1. Early Help Single Assessment and Partnership Pathways

An online, multi-agency Early Help assessment portal has been developed, enabling partners to complete a single, shared assessment for children and families who require early, coordinated support. This approach will reduce duplication currently created by multiple single-agency referral and assessment pathways and improve the quality and consistency of information shared across the partnership.

2. Review of Front Door Arrangements

A detailed analysis of referrals that result in No Further Action has been undertaken to improve understanding of system demand and thresholds. Building on this insight, a Strategic Partnership Group is developing a new Front Door operating model. The model will strengthen multi-agency representation and information sharing, with a particular focus on mental health services, and will move away from a process- and criteria-driven approach towards a conversation-based, strengths- and needs-led model.

3. Family Help Pilot

A six-month Family Help pilot has been launched to test new ways of working across Early Help, Targeted Support and Children in Need. The pilot includes:

- A single assessment framework across intervention levels
- Reduced transfers between lead practitioners
- Enhanced multi-agency working, including the integration of alternatively qualified practitioners within social work teams
- New induction, workforce development and practitioner support arrangements

The pilot operates on a 'test and learn' basis, with learning informing the wider system. Subject to evaluation, full implementation across Children's Services is planned by the end of 2026.

4. Multi-Agency Child Protection Team

A strategic model has been developed to strengthen the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This includes increased partner involvement and the introduction of Lead Child Protection Practitioners to improve decision-making, quality assurance and coherence of multi-agency child protection responses. Further co-design work with partners is currently underway.

5. Family Group Decision Making

Existing Family Group Decision Making practice and workforce capacity have been mapped to identify strengths and gaps. Work is progressing to develop a sustainable implementation model, with plans to test and embed this approach across the system by the end of 2026

These workstreams are being supported by ongoing review and development of our **case management and performance management systems**, across the wider partnership to enable us to adapt, improve delivery and report on ongoing national requirements.

9.12 Children's Rights and Influence

Building Relationships, Supporting Inclusion, and Celebrating Achievements

The development of relationships across organisational directorates has enabled young people's voice to influence strategies and services for young people across BCP.

Children in Care and Care Experienced young people continue to share their views and lived experience through **UNITE and INSIGHT** participation groups. Opportunities have expanded using the 333 Hub, providing another space to hear the voice of those that may not wish to join group experiences. Online options have been used with the aim of increasing the reach of consultation topics. Delivery of activities in holidays has provided a route to build relationships with young people to encourage longer term youth voice engagement and can also stand in isolation as a piece of work that support our BRIGHT SPOTS learning.

Our **Corporate Parenting Board** has developed, with three new young people who were selected to act as representatives for their care experienced peers. Each meeting they choose a subject and run an activity with the board that aims to educate and challenge, based on lived experience. The topics chosen relate to the identified areas for development from the BRIGHT SPOTS survey (24/25), focussing on planning for the future, finance, health and well-being and relationships.

The **Directors Strategy Group** discussed what Corporate Parenting means and what BCP council can do as a corporate parent. Using the learning from BRIGHT SPOTS, a non-Children's Service director leads a working group to support and develop our approach, with the emphasis on what we can do as collective 'parents'. This has been an exciting shift in approach, with three strands of work currently being developed: access to IT; a BCP work experience offer for children in care and care experienced and providing access to discounts through the council's online benefit package. The latter also provides information and tools for money management and health and wellbeing support.

2025/26 saw the introduction of the **Language That Cares** Project. 6 care experienced young people worked with officers to create a masterclass. 4

masterclasses were attended to 107 officers from across Children's Services. The response from colleagues was overwhelmingly positive, with the power of young people's voice and lived experience at the centre of the learning. Young people have also presented on the subject to the Corporate Parenting Board and councillors. The Directors Strategy group have supported the agenda, and work continues to embed this as part of the culture in BCP council. This work continues into 2026/27.

In partnership with GOAL17, care experienced 16–25-year-olds accessed mentoring, with 25 referrals per year over three years, supporting national research for future delivery. Some local care experienced young adults have applied to be mentors, pending checks and training, which will inform future projects. Funding confirmation for 2026/27 is pending.

This year saw the third year of the **BCP Youth Fund**, a project to allocate funds to support opportunities shaped by young people across our community. Supported by our commissioning colleagues a group of youth volunteers learned the process of identifying projects, allocating funds and evaluating outcomes, gaining valuable skills while supporting community development.

We continue to develop our work to strengthen the breadth of the **voice of young people** we hear. We continue to strengthen young people's voices. Working with school colleagues, two SEND schools joined BCP Council to debate the term SEND in 2026. Nineteen young people participated, with most voting that the language is not inclusive and should be reconsidered. This feedback will inform national SEND reforms and local developments.

Next Steps

- Review of Directors Corporate Parenting workgroup – impact and next steps
- Language That Cares – training for foster carers and our fostering panel and the production of a digital induction option for use across workforce development
- Work with colleagues and young people to regularly review the Local Offer
- Mentoring project (subject to confirmation from DfE) and consideration of next steps based on funding confirmation.

- A regular opportunity for young people in the SEND cohort to inform and influence BCP strategy, systems and provision.
- Support the development of our Families First model with young people's consultation and engagement
- Ensure Children and Young People have their voices heard in our new family Group Decision Making practice.

9.13 Celebrating Our Young People

Each year we hold a celebration event (STAR Awards) for our children in care (0-15 years) and our care experienced young people (16-25 years). These highlight their strengths, with nominations welcomed from anyone in their network. Every young person nominated is invited to join us to celebrate, with the emphasis on fun and inclusion alongside individual and collective value. This year we received over 650 nominations, with around 140 young people bringing guests to celebrate. Those who can't join us always receive a certificate to recognise their achievement.

In addition, our annual Youth Voice event provides another opportunity for our young people to celebrate their influence on local young matters and includes all young people in BCP who get involved, such as joining the Youth Fund panel, becoming a young interviewer or being part of the range of projects that develop each year, led by young people's voice. Children in care and care experienced young people are celebrated within this as young people who influence systems while also developing their own skills.

We also recognise and celebrate that our young people are supporting BCP and getting involved in national agendas. TL is a young person's representative from BCP on the Homewards Project (supported by the Royal Foundation). RD is care experienced and representing the southwest as a national ambassador with CORAM VOICE. These young people are helping to make a difference using their lived experience and the skills and confidence they have developed from their youth voice journey at a national level.

9.14 Performance & Data intelligence

Performance and data intelligence within BCP Children's Services is widely used as a core enabler of effective leadership, governance and frontline practice. We are further strengthening the way data is brought together across services so that it provides a clear, timely and shared understanding of demand, performance, quality and outcomes for children and families.

The performance framework is well embedded into Children's Social Care. Data driven monthly Performance Action Group meetings ensure scrutiny of priority areas and regular attention to what is going well and what needs focus. Data scorecards are agile, with indicators and associated targets reviewed annually to align with service priorities. Many operational reports are automated within Power BI and accessible through a central portal, allowing drill down to child level data.

Data is well understood and widely used at strategic and operational levels, including front line workers who use an operational tracker. This has been one of the top three most used Power BI reports across the council since its launch in summer 2023.

Last year the team was successful in a bid to participation in the DfE Children's Social Care Private Dashboard Early Adopters Scheme, working with the DfE to test automated data feeds, improve data quality and validation, and shape the future national approach to more timely, less burdensome statutory data collection.

Next steps

- Developing more accessible performance products such as infographics and high-level summaries for staff, leaders and Members.
- Develop a more integrated performance framework that brings together children's social care, education, SEND and early help intelligence to support a whole-system view.
- Support national, regional and local transformation projects in terms of data collection, returns and success monitoring.

9.15 Workforce Development

Workforce Development for Children's Services is delivered through the People and Culture Centre of Expertise, with a dedicated Children's Services Workforce Development Manager and strong links with Children's Services leadership. This provides corporate consistency while ensuring workforce development remains aligned to Children's Services priorities, practice risks and improvement activity.

Learning priorities are jointly shaped by Workforce Development, the Principal Social Worker, Quality Assurance and service leaders, informed by audit findings, Practice Learning Reviews, inspection learning, service transformation and themes emerging from children, families and carers' lived experience. This ensures development activity is targeted, responsive and focused on improving practice quality and outcomes for children.

The service benefits from strong early-career pathways, including ASYE, Step Up to Social Work, student placements and degree apprenticeships. During 2025–26, 10 practitioners successfully completed their ASYE and 2 social work apprentices qualified and registered with Social Work England; all have secured permanent roles within Children's Services. Workforce stability continues to improve, with the proportion of permanent staff rising from 63% to 78% over the last 12 months, supported by targeted recruitment activity and the conversion of agency staff to permanent posts. This has strengthened continuity of relationships for children and families.

A refreshed Children's Services curriculum was embedded during 2025–26, aligned to the Practice Framework and focused on strengthening analysis, reflective decision-making, child-centred practice and the consistent application of evidenced based trauma-informed and restorative approaches. This supports national reform, including the Families First Programme and the One Team, One Approach service model. Evaluation feedback and quality assurance findings indicate increased practitioner confidence, improved consistency in assessments and planning, and stronger alignment between learning, supervision and day-to-day practice.

Practitioners consistently report that learning opportunities support reflection, peer learning and the application of learning into practice, including more confident child-focused analysis and adaptation of practice informed by lived experience.

Leaders recognise ongoing challenges, including capacity pressures affecting attendance and the need to further strengthen how the impact of learning on practice is evidenced. While feedback from learning and development activity is consistently positive, improving learning transfer, evaluation completion and clarity of impact remain a key priority.

Next Steps

Over the next year, Workforce Development will focus on strengthening impact through:

- Supporting managers to embed learning through supervision, using reflective prompts linked to the Practice Framework and drawing on audit and Practice Learning Review themes.
- Supporting delivery of the refreshed Social Care Workforce Strategy once approved, aligning workforce priorities with Families First and the One Team, One Approach service model.
- Improving evidence of impact through refreshed evaluation tools, increased completion rates and stronger quality assurance links.
- Sustaining the refreshed curriculum and protecting priority learning linked to known practice risks and cultural change.
- Strengthening workforce sustainability and readiness for reform, including preparation for the Early Career Framework and future capacity requirements.

9.16 Our focus moving forward

Children's Services in 2026/27 want to secure and maintain transformation efforts so children and families receive help earlier and in a more coordinated way. This includes better safeguarding, increased stability and permanence, improved outcomes for care leavers, all supported by a reliable workforce, strong quality assurance, and effective use of data.

Key priorities for 2026/27 are:

- Effective management of Children in Care numbers
- Deliver the Families First programme (including the Family Help model) to boost early intervention, reduce transitions between services, and improve assessment and planning consistency.
- Implement the new locality-based service model ("One Team, One Approach" / place-based working).
- Keep a strong focus on ILACS improvement goals, including:
 - Consistent responses to children at risk of exploitation
 - Better support for older care leavers
 - Enhanced safety planning where there are safeguarding concerns
- Strengthen approaches to Extra Familial Harm, exploitation, and missing children, with improved multi-agency working and tracking.
- Improve permanence, sufficiency, and stability by expanding local resources (such as foster care capacity, kinship support, step-down from residential placements, and SGO pathway improvements).
- Accelerate SEND improvements, particularly those required by statutory guidelines.
- Continue building quality practice and leadership through strengthened quality assurance, performance and data intelligence, and workforce development, which includes supervision, training, retention, and stability.
- Active and meaningful involvement of partners to further develop sustained partnerships particularly through ICB changes

Top three priorities for strengthening:

Priority 1: Effective management of Children in Care numbers

- Innovative strategies to help children remain at home
- New ways to manage risk

Priority 2: Increase sufficiency, ensuring more children have access to local homes

Priority 3: Active and meaningful involvement of partners to further develop our Local Area Partnership arrangements and system approach for delivery of improved outcomes for our children and young people.

Top three risks for the future:

Risk 1: Demand, complexity, and capacity: Rising demand and increasingly complex needs place extra pressure on both statutory services and early help.

Risk 2: Workforce stability: Challenges in recruitment, retention, pay and overall workforce stability can lead to inconsistent practices; partner organisations may also face instability and reorganisation.

Risk 3: System financial sustainability and sufficiency: Financial constraints may limit flexibility, innovation, creativity, and long-term approaches.

BCP Children's Services continues to demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to achieving outstanding practice in a challenging landscape. Our drive for transformation, early intervention, and partnership working is underpinned by skilled practitioners and a culture of reflective learning. By harnessing the strengths of our workforce, embracing innovation, and prioritising the wellbeing and safety of children and families, we are well positioned to build on our achievements and face future challenges with confidence. Together, we remain committed to deliver positive outcomes, ensuring every child benefits from the support and opportunities they deserve.



CABINET



Report subject	Best Start in Life Local Plan
Meeting date	4 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report updates Cabinet on the development of BCP’s Best Start in Life Local Plan, which delivers the Government’s strategy for improving outcomes from pregnancy to age five and meets the requirement to publish a local plan by 31 March 2026. Key issues include achieving the Government-set Good Level of Development (GLD) targets (79.9% of children overall; 60.1% of children receiving Free School Meals) through whole system collaboration and establishing Best Start Family Hubs to provide integrated health, education and family support in areas of highest deprivation. Programme governance, project management, stakeholder engagement and a readiness survey are in place.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Note the continued development and publication of BCP Council’s <i>Best Start in Life Local Plan</i> to meet the statutory requirement for all local authorities to publish a plan by 31 March 2026. (b) Note the use of the <i>Best Start Family Hub delivery grant</i> and associated external funding streams to build workforce capacity, strengthen evidence-based interventions and enable consistent delivery of the expanded Best Start offer. (c) Note the establishment and phased implementation of <i>Best Start Family Hubs</i>, beginning with Boscombe as the first site and a second site in the west locality (d) Note the continued partnership governance arrangements, including oversight by the Early Help Partnership Board, to ensure coordinated delivery across Children’s Services, Health, Early Years, Public Health and wider partners.
Reason for recommendations	<p>1. To meet statutory duties and national policy requirements. All local authorities must publish a Best Start in Life Local Plan by 31 March 2026, setting out their approach to improving outcomes from pregnancy to age five. The plan also supports multiple statutory responsibilities, including duties under the Childcare Act 2006, Children and Families Act 2014, and safeguarding</p>

	<p>frameworks.</p> <p>2. To deliver improved child development outcomes and meet Government-set GLD targets. The Government has set ambitious targets for GLD achievement, and BCP Council must demonstrate a whole-system approach to reaching them. The Local Plan sets out how Health, Early Years, Education and Family Support Services will contribute collectively.</p> <p>3. To maximise use of available funding and ensure financial sustainability. The Best Start Family Hub delivery grant and aligned funding streams (e.g., Public Health, Children’s Services early intervention grant) provide a time-limited opportunity to build capacity, develop workforce skills, and embed a sustainable delivery model.</p> <p>4. To ensure effective oversight, risk management and timely delivery. Clear governance structures, including oversight by the Early Help Partnership Board, are essential to meet tight Government timelines, deliver transformation at scale and ensure risks are monitored and mitigated appropriately.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Education and Skills
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director, Children’s Services
Report Authors	Heather Carling, Interim Early Years Operational Manager, Education Effectiveness Pippa Emmerson, Head of Service, Early Help and Targeted Prevention
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

Background

- 1.1 The Government published its “Best Start in Life” strategy in July 2025, which set out the UK Government’s long-term vision to improve child development outcomes from pregnancy through age five, outlining a whole-system approach to:
- Better Support for Families
 - More Accessible Early Education and Childcare
 - Improving Quality in Early Years (including Reception)
- 1.2 As part of the Best Start in Life strategy, BCP Council has been set the following target by government to improve children’s learning and development – by the end of the 2027/28 academic year, **at least 79.9%** children will be achieving a Good Level of

Development (GLD) and **at least 60.1%** of those eligible for Free School Meals will be achieving a GLD.

- 1.3 Every local authority must publish a local plan by **31 March 2026** – in this plan, each local authority must set out how they will work towards Government-set GLD target, fulfilling the Government Strategy to improve outcomes from pregnancy to age five through stronger family support, accessible early education and childcare, and improved early health intervention. Achievement of GLD is the responsibility of all services that support children and their families pre-birth to age 5, through collaborative working. Project managers have been appointed, key stakeholders engaged, and a readiness survey submitted to Government in January 2026. The plan follows a clear roadmap through early 2026, leading to publication by the statutory deadline and ongoing monitoring thereafter.
- 1.4 A key component is the development of Best Start Family Hubs, located mainly in areas of highest deprivation and providing integrated health, education, childcare and family support, including evidence based parenting programmes, perinatal mental health support, infant feeding support and early SEND help. These will expand on existing family hub provision already established within BCP. BCP Council has identified Boscombe as the first hub site, with a second west locality site to follow. The intention is for all six existing Family Hubs to adopt the Best Start Family Hub principles, with expansion phased over agreed timeframes and aligned to available resources, ensuring delivery remains both equitable and financially sustainable.
- 1.5 Implementation of the Best Start in life Local Plan will be overseen by the Early Help Partnership Board.

Options Appraisal

2.1 N/A

Summary of financial implications

- a. Delivery of the Best Start in Life Local plan will be met through:
 - Existing resources across Children’s Services, Health Visiting, Family Hubs, Early Years, SEND, and partner agencies.
 - Best Start Family Hub delivery grants
 - Other external funding streams – such as the Wraparound programme and Public Health grant, Children’s Social Care Prevention grant (former Supporting Families grant)– will support implementation where applicable
- b. Best Start Family Hub delivery grant will be used to:
 - Build on existing Family Hubs offer to deliver Best Start Family Hubs services
 - Provide evidence-based parenting and home learning environment services
 - Develop and implement Best Start local plans including workforce development plans
 - Aligning Family Hub and Best Start branding and publicity

Summary of legal implications

- 4.1 The Council has clear legal duties in relation to early years and family support, including:
 - The **Childcare Act 2006**, which places duties on the local authority to secure sufficient childcare, improve outcomes for young children, and establish and maintain a Family Information Service (FIS).

- The **Children and Families Act 2014**, which sets out duties relating to the identification, assessment and support of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- The **Health and Social Care Act 2012**, which supports joint working to improve health and reduce inequalities.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)**, which outlines statutory expectations for safeguarding partnerships.

BCP Council's Best Start Local Plan is being aligned with and supports the delivery of these statutory responsibilities.

4.2 BCP Council's Best Start Local Plan is being aligned with:

- Children and Young People Plan (2025–2030)
- SEND Improvement Plan
- Early Help Partnership Strategy
- Dorset Integrated Care Board's plan (2023-2028)
- Public Health Children and Young People's Programme
- Infant Feeding and Child Nutrition Strategy

This alignment work is ongoing and will continue through the next phase.

Summary of Human Resources implications

c. To deliver the Best Start Family Hubs, including delivery of targeted programmes, and increase in workforce capacity will be required to ensure the enhanced offer can be delivered consistently across localities, with a focus on 0-5. This additional capacity is anticipated and will be met through the Best Start Family Hubs grant, which is specifically designed to support the scaling up of early years and family support services.

5.1 No redundancies or restructures are anticipated. No changes are expected to payroll, pensions or personal data processes beyond standard operational requirements.

Summary of sustainability impact

6.1 Implementation of the Plan is expected to have a positive sustainability impact, primarily through:

- d. Improved use of existing community assets such as Family Hubs, Early Years settings and library spaces, reducing the need for additional estate and supporting low carbon, place-based delivery.
- Increasing digital access to information and support, including the online Family Hub, which reduces unnecessary travel for families and limits the environmental footprint of information-sharing.
- e. Mobilising partnership to deliver and promote accessible local services, helping families receive help within their own communities and reducing reliance on longer distance travel for early help, childcare, or specialist support.
- Supporting workforce efficiencies, including multi-agency joint working that reduces duplication, streamlines delivery and enables fewer separate visits or appointments.

6.2 No significant negative sustainability impacts have been identified at this stage.

Summary of Public Health implications

7.1 BCP Council's Best Start in Life Local Plan is designed to improve developmental, emotional and physical outcomes for children aged 0–5 and reduce health inequalities across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

7.2 The Local plan will deliver against Public Health prescribed and non-prescribed functions for example:

- Local authority role in health protection
 - National Child Measurement programme
 - Prescribed children's 0 to 5 services
 - Obesity – adults and children
 - Physical activity – adults and children
 - Preventing and reducing harm from drug and alcohol misuse in adults
 - Public mental health
 - Nutrition initiatives
 - Community safety, violence prevention and social exclusion
- f. Dental Public Health
- g. Implementation of the Plan is expected to have significant positive Public Health impact, including:
- Earlier identification of health needs, ensuring babies and young children receive timely support for speech, language, communication, emotional wellbeing, development and physical health.
- h. Strengthened universal and targeted support through Health Visiting, Family Hubs and Early Years settings, improving access to parenting support, infant feeding guidance, oral health initiatives and home learning programmes.
- i. Reducing health inequalities, particularly for families in priority localities, by improving access to integrated early help, SEND pathways and community-based services.
- Enhanced parental wellbeing, including improved access to mental health support, peer networks and community groups within Family Hubs.
 - Promotion of healthy behaviours, such as active play, outdoor learning, nutrition guidance and safe home environments as part of the Family Hubs offer.
- j. Increased reach of evidence-based public health programmes, delivered consistently across partners and early years services.

7.3 No negative public health impacts are anticipated.

Summary of equality implications

- k. BCP Council's Best Start in Life Local Plan places a strong emphasis on reducing inequalities in early childhood outcomes, particularly for families in our most disadvantaged communities. Ensuring equitable access to services, support and opportunities is a core principle of the Plan, and equality considerations will continue to be embedded throughout all subsequent stages of design, decision making and delivery – starting with one site in an area that already has provisions we can build on, extended to another in second locality, with a view to scaling to all six sites to ensure the offer is consistently accessible, inclusive and responsive to the needs of every community across BCP.

8.1 Implementation of BCP Council's Best Start Local Plan is expected to have significant impact on reducing inequalities including:

- Targeting enhanced early years, health and family support into communities with the highest levels of deprivation, improving access where need is greatest.
- Strengthening early identification and consistent pathways so children with emerging needs receive help earlier, narrowing developmental gaps.
- Expanding access to integrated Family Hub services and evidence-based parenting and home learning programmes, improving outcomes for families who face the greatest barriers.

Summary of risk assessment

9.1 DfE have set very specific expectations and timelines for implementation of Best Start in Life – the need for a supportive decision from Cabinet is both time sensitive and critical for the success in delivery of this plan and programme (the Local Plan has to be published online by 31st March 2026).

9.2 Several strategic risks may arise through the future implementation of the Best Start in Life Local Plan. These include:

- Workforce capacity pressures across early years, Family Hubs and partner agencies, which may impact delivery of the expanded Best Start offer.
Mitigation: Capacity building supported through the Best Start Family Hubs grant, strengthened workforce development programmes, and ongoing monitoring of sufficiency.
- Data sharing and information governance risks linked to more integrated pathways and multi-agency working.
Mitigation: Adherence to existing information governance frameworks and assurance through partnership governance boards.
- Financial sustainability risks if future funding streams are reduced.
Mitigation: Use of current Best Start Family Hubs grant to build foundation capacity, alongside ongoing review of commissioning approaches to maximise efficiency and partnership contributions.

9.3 None of these risks prevent the continued development or future implementation of the Local Plan. They will be monitored through the Best Start governance structure, with escalation routes in place as required.

Background papers

[Best Start Family Hubs and Healthy Babies: guidance for local authorities](#)

[Giving every child the best start in life](#)

[Access to SEND support through Best Start Family Hubs](#)

[Early years funding rates for 2026-2027](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Best Start in Life Overview

Appendix 2 – Best Start in Life Funding Allocation

Best Start in Life

Best Start in Life strategy published July 2025 set out the UK Government's long-term vision to improve child development outcomes from pregnancy through age five, outlining a whole-system approach to:

- Better Support for Families
- More Accessible Early Education and Childcare
- Improving Quality in Early Years (including Reception)
- Strengthen Early Health Interventions

Every local authority must publish a Best Start local plan by 31.03.2026.



Measurables outcomes

- **Target set for BCP Council:** At the end of the 2027/28 academic year, **at least 79.9%** achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) and **at least 60.1%** of those eligible for Free School Meals achieving a GLD
- Other outcomes will be outlined in **Best Start in Life local plan** as markers of progress towards GLD outcome, as well as other indicators for success
- Achievement of GLD is the responsibility of all services that support children and their families pre-birth to age 5, through **collaborative working**

Governance

- Best Start in Life Partnership
- Stakeholder Engagement: Dorset HealthCare Trust, BCP Public Health, Parent/Carers, Voluntary Sector, Early Years Sector, Perinatal Mental Health, MHST team, Speech & Language Team, Early Help Leads, Data Teams, Schools and Education providers

Best Start Family Hubs will:

- Be based in most deprived areas (70% of hubs located in the most deprived 30% areas)
- Enhance and build on well-targeted existing provision
- Have trained staff to connect families to range of 0-5 universal health and family services (collocated where possible)
- Onsite professional support for parent/carers of children with additional need (SEND professional)
- Deliver outreach services linked to hub site
- Parents, carers and VCFS organisations involved in shaping offer
- Deliver core services – HLE programmes, Parenting programmes, Perinatal mental health support, Parent-infant relationship support, Infant-feeding support, Support for children with additional needs

Funding grants are to be used to:

- Establish and deliver Best Start Family Hubs including using branding
- Provide evidence-based parenting and home learning environment services
- Develop and implement Best Start local plans including workforce development plans

Strand	% ¹	2026-27 Allocation ²	2027-28 Allocation	2028-29 Allocation
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - programme	46%	£442,200	£361,600	£371,300
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - capital	11%	£88,400	£90,200	£92,000
Parenting support	18%	£147,700	£149,600	£156,100
Home learning environment support	26%	£212,700	£215,300	£224,800
Total		£891,000	£816,600	£844,100

Bringing together a wide range of statutory and non-statutory services for 0-5s spanning education, childcare, health and social care



Update on progress

- One Best Start Family Hub site identified (Boscombe Family Hub) with additional site (West locality) to be identified by April 2026
- Project managers in place to support preparation and delivery
- Best Start in Life Workgroup established with key stakeholders
- Mapping work underway to identify established work already aligned to Best Start in Life priorities to build on this
- Readiness survey submitted to government on 9th January
- Guidance being published across January to March from government – responsive
- Links with LGA and other local authorities have been made to inform local plan utilising best practice

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Roadmap

- **December 2025** – Initial working group convened, scoping activity started
- **January 2026** – Project managers allocated, scoping work continues, plans for funding usage being mapped
 - 12th January - Readiness check
 - 20th January – Children’s SLT
 - 29th January – CMB Deadline (Modern.gov submission)
- **February 2026** -
 - 9th February – Informal Cabinet (Cabinet/CMB Briefing)
- **March 2026** –
 - 4th March – Cabinet
 - 31st March – Local Plan to be published online
- **April 2026 onwards** - Monitoring & evaluation - track progress, review data, and ensure continuous improvement

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Appendix 2 - Best Start in Life Funding allocation

BCP Councils provisional allocation for financial years 2026-29 of the programme is **£2,551,700**

BCP Council are expected to use this spending to be broadly in line with the distribution in Table 1 (which is specific to BCP Council) over the life of the programme. The only exception to this flexibility is for capital spend, which should only be used on capital activities.

Table 1: Distribution of your funding allocation across the relevant programme strands for financial years 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29.

Strand	%	2026-27 Allocation	2027-28 Allocation	2028-29 Allocation
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - programme	46%	£442,200	£361,600	£371,300
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - capital	11%	£88,400	£90,200	£92,000
Parenting support	18%	£147,700	£149,600	£156,100
Home learning environment support	26%	£212,700	£215,300	£224,800
Total		£891,000	£816,600	£844,100

Please note: The distribution of funding has been rounded to one decimal place. The sum of percentages across strands may not total 100% due to this rounding. The allocation for 2026-27, 2027-28, 2028-29 has been rounded to the nearest 100 pounds. The sum of the allocations across strands may not total the maximum funding allocation due to this rounding.

The government expects overall local authority spending on evidence-based interventions (EBIs), service delivery and universal family support to increase over the funding period, to reflect that this investment is additional to existing expenditure. This funding should not substitute or displace existing resource for family services and should be used to expand and deepen existing offers where they are already in place.

Funding beyond the 2026–29 period will be subject to future government spending review processes, but local authorities should consider long-term sustainability, including join up with statutory services, as they develop a local offer.

Payment of BCP Council's funding allocations is subject to meeting the expectations of the programme. The government reserves the right to withhold or reduce 2026-29 funding if local authorities do not meet these expectations.

Potential Risks associated with the grants

Delivery of the Best Start in Life Local Plan is dependent on the effective use of Best Start Family Hub grant funding. There are several financial risks that could impact successful implementation and the achievement of intended outcomes for children aged 0–5.

Risk of underspend and clawback

The Best Start Family Hub grant must be fully utilised within the defined national timeframes. There is a risk that delays in recruitment, programme mobilisation, or commissioning may result in unspent funds.

Mitigation: Robust financial monitoring will be in place, including monthly budget reviews, forward planning of expenditure, and strong project management oversight by Early Help Partnership board.

Risk of misaligned spending leading to limited impact

Funding that is not tightly aligned to evidence-based priorities risks being allocated to activities that do not contribute to the programme's core outcome of improving children's early development, including Good Level of Development (GLD). This may lead to ineffective use of public funds and reputational risk if investment does not demonstrably improve outcomes.

Mitigation: All investment decisions are being made through a multi-agency governance structure, ensuring spend aligns with national Best Start in Life priorities, local needs assessments, and targeted early years outcome measures. Evaluation requirements are built into all funded activity.

Commissioning risks and long-term sustainability

Where funding is used to commission external providers, there is a risk that services established through short-term grant funding may not be financially sustainable beyond the life of the grant.

Mitigation: Commissioning decisions will include sustainability assessments, clear exit strategies, and alignment with existing service pathways to maximise integration. There will be a mix of commissioned and internally provided services to ensure longevity of programme impact.

Risk associated with Family Hub transformation funding deadlines

The national Family Hub transformation programme has strict spending timelines. If this funding is not fully utilised by the 31st of March 2026, it may be withdrawn. There is therefore a risk that any unspent Family Hub transformation costs would need to be considered for coverage through the Best Start in Life grant.

Mitigation: Close integration between the Best Start In Life programme and Family Hub transformation project teams ensures clear oversight of planned and actual expenditure.

Best Start Family Hubs funding expectations

The Government set out their expectations for local authorities – Best Start in Life (July 2025), Best Start Family Hubs Delivery guidance (December 2025) and various letters, including funding allocation letter (November 2025).

	Government expectations for funding strand
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local Best Start Family Hub teams working with families directly and local authority teams to deliver and embed the programme • strategic oversight of wider system transformation and the implementation of Best Start local plans • outreach and engagement activities • multi-agency workforce development and training • evaluation and continuous improvement activity • digital and data systems to support the hub and collect service user data • integration of a range of statutory and non-statutory 0–5 health and family services, either delivered face-to-face in the BSFH or delivered elsewhere within the system • practitioner within the hubs to support families with children with Special Education Needs and/or Disability
Best Start Family Hubs delivery grant - capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding allocated to each Local Authority’s capital strand should only be spent on capital activity. • Capital includes adapting existing buildings improving accessibility and enabling multi-agency working (which could include: IT upgrades, signage, improving building space, new furniture to ensure suitability for older children, and new equipment to support the co-location of the start for life workforce, such as desks, phone systems and sinks or specialist flooring for clinical use by midwives or health visitors).
Parenting support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity should be strategically focused at delivering Evidence Based Interventions for the 3–4 age group • Local authorities should be able to demonstrate how their investment builds delivery capacity and contributes meaningfully to improved outcomes for this age group. • Any spend outside of Evidence Based Interventions should be clearly justified by its contribution to the Good Level of Development ambition or strengthening and expanding parenting services within Best Start Family Hubs for the long term. • Local Authorities can continue to fund existing parenting services for 0-2s but from March 2026 should prioritise spend on Evidence Based Interventions suitable for 3 & 4-year-olds.
Home learning environment support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity should be strategically focused at delivering evidence-based interventions for the 3–4 age group, as this cohort is central to achieving progress towards the 2028 Good Level of Development target. • Local authorities should be able to demonstrate how their investment builds delivery capacity and contributes meaningfully to improved outcomes for this age group. • Any spend outside of evidence-based interventions should be clearly justified in terms of its contribution to the Good Level of Development ambition or strengthening and expanding home learning environment services within Best Start Family Hubs for the long term. • To support a coherent and integrated home learning environment local service offer across the early years, outreach and peer support should be targeted at families with children aged 0–5.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy Update (September 2024 – March 2026)
Meeting date	16 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides an update on progress delivering BCP Council's Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People covering September 2024 to March 2026.</p> <p>Progress has been made in strengthening local provision, improving provider relationships and embedding governance arrangements. Notable improvements include significant growth in supported accommodation and residential capacity, increased numbers of children living locally, and stronger housing pathways for care experienced young people.</p> <p>However, demand continues to exceed local capacity in key areas. Challenges remain in increasing foster care households, reducing reliance on residential care, and ensuring more children live closer to home.</p> <p>The strategy remains on track overall, with a positive direction of travel. The next phase will focus on accelerating delivery, particularly in family-based care, residential demand reduction, and embedding quality assurance learning into service improvement.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>The Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Notes the progress made in delivering the Sufficiency Strategy to date; iii) Supports the strategic priorities for 2026/27 to accelerate delivery in areas of greatest pressure

<p>Reason for recommendations</p>	<p>To provide assurance to Members on the effectiveness of sufficiency planning and delivery, highlight areas requiring further focus, and ensure continued oversight of risks impacting outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people.</p> <p>This report is for information</p>
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Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder Children's Services
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director Children's Services
Report Authors	Rachel Gravett, Director Commissioning, Resources and Quality Sarah Langdale, Head of Children's Commissioning
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

Background

This report summarises progress against the Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy 2024–2028, focusing on strengthening local provision, improving placement stability and ensuring children and young people can live in suitable accommodation close to home.

As of March 2026, BCP supports 642 children in care and 361 care experienced young people, with improvements in placement stability and local provision, particularly in supported accommodation.

Summary of financial implications

1. Growth in local provision has supported cost avoidance and improved value for money, including reduced reliance on out-of-area placements and controlled provider fee increases below inflation in some areas.

Ongoing sufficiency pressures, particularly in fostering and residential care, continue to present financial risk if demand exceeds local capacity.

Summary of legal implications

2. The Council has statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 to secure sufficient accommodation for children in care. This report demonstrates how the Council is meeting these duties through strategic planning, commissioning, and market development approaches.

Summary of human resources implications

3. Delivery of the strategy requires continued workforce development, particularly in fostering recruitment, commissioning capability and quality assurance functions. No immediate workforce reductions are identified.

Summary of sustainability impact

4. Increasing local provision reduces travel distances for placements, supporting environmental sustainability and enabling children to remain connected to their communities.

Summary of public health implications

5. Improved placement stability and access to suitable accommodation supports better emotional wellbeing, stability and long-term outcomes for children and young people.

Summary of equality implications

6. The strategy supports vulnerable groups, including children in care, care experienced young people and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, by improving access to suitable accommodation and reducing inequalities in outcomes.

Summary of risk assessment

7. Key risks include:
 - Ongoing insufficiency in fostering households and residential provision
 - Continued reliance on out-of-area placements
 - Market instability and national decline in fostering capacity
 - Inconsistent embedding of quality assurance learning

Mitigations include strengthened commissioning oversight, provider engagement, expanded local provision and enhanced governance.

8. Background papers

N/A

Appendices

Appendix 1 – CiC and CEYP Sufficiency Update Summary Sept 2024 – March 2026

Appendix 2 - BCP Children in Care and Care Experience Young People

Sufficiency Strategy 2024 – 2028 (full strategy)

**CHILDREN IN CARE (CiC) AND
CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE (CEYP)
SUFFICIENCY UPDATE SUMMARY
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1. Introduction and purpose of the annual report

This sufficiency update sets out the progress made in delivering Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council's Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People from September 2024 to March 2026. It draws on evidence from the Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Strategy Action Plan (Version 5, October 2025) and the Children's Services Commissioning Scorecard. Overall, the report shows that BCP has made substantive progress in strengthening local sufficiency, provider relationships and governance, while also identifying the areas where further action is needed during 2026/27.

2. Current Sufficiency Picture

- a) BCP's current sufficiency picture remains one of sustained demand, improving local provision and stronger commissioning oversight, but with continued pressure in key parts of the market.
- b) As of March 2026, BCP had 642 children in care, a rate of 85 per 10,000 children aged 0–17, alongside 361 care experienced young people open to the service and 38 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, representing 4.2% of the children in care population.
- c) Around 67% of children in care live in foster care, 10% in registered children's homes and 8% in supported accommodation or other registered provision, but distance from home remains a challenge, with 27% placed more than 20 miles from their parental home.
- d) Placement stability is comparatively strong, with only 6% of children who had been in care for more than 12 months experiencing three or more moves in the year, and monthly placement moves reduced to 26 in March 2026, the lowest point in the previous 12 months.
- e) Local sufficiency has strengthened during 2025/26:
 - a. the local residential market increased by 47% (11 beds), including
 - i. a new 3-bed parent and child home;
 - b. the supported accommodation market increased by 52% (37 beds); and
 - c. local supported accommodation usage rose by 30%.
- f) This has all resulted in more children living locally, increasing from 51% in April 2025 to 64% in March 2026.
- g) BCP has also developed 24 additional local registered beds for UASC, with sufficiency for that cohort now met, and has created 31 beds through wider housing pathways for care experienced young people. For care leavers, 93% were living in suitable accommodation as of March 2026.
- h) These improvements sit alongside stronger governance, with a commissioning scorecard now in place, regular provider forums embedded, and oversight of 80 commissioned providers across 133 homes.
- i) Overall, BCP's sufficiency position is improving, particularly in supported accommodation and local market development, but pressures remain in family-based care, residential demand and the number of children living further from home than BCP would want as a corporate parent.

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3. Progress against each priority

This section provides a high-level summary of progress against each priority in the Sufficiency Strategy, showing the current position against each success measure up to March 2026. It uses a RAG-rated summary table to highlight whether measures are completed, on track or require further attention. Full narrative and detailed evidence for each priority and success measure are provided in Appendix 1.

Priority	Measure of success	Status
Priority 1 – Ensure there is sufficient local family-based care available in the BCP area	a) The number of children in care living locally in family-based care increases b) The number of foster care households within BCP increases	Requires further attention Requires further attention
Priority 2 – Ensure there is sufficient locally based residential provision within the BCP area	a) The number of children in care placed in residential children’s homes will decrease b) There are sufficient homes locally to meet the needs of children in care	Requires further attention On Track
Priority 3 – Increase supported accommodation provision and develop a range of support models	a) Young people moving into supported accommodation can live in an area of their choice within BCP b) Increase in supported accommodation with lower-level support helping young people to transition more effectively to independence	Completed On Track
Priority 4 – Re-establish positive partnership and collaboration between Housing, Children’s Social Care and Commissioning	a) Increase the number of good quality housing provisions available in a timely way for care experienced young people b) There will be no care experienced young people placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation or experiencing homelessness	Completed On Track
Priority 5 – Improve relationships with providers through open and transparent engagement	a) Provider engagement events are embedded and providers feel valued b) More children and young people successfully return to their family with a positive, wraparound package where appropriate c) BCP Council develops trusted relationships with providers who work with the local authority to manage sufficiency within the local and regional markets	Completed Completed On Track

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<p>Priority 6 – Embed governance and quality assurance frameworks</p>	<p>a) Targeted and reactive quality assurance visits completed each month by the Commissioning and Contracts Service</p> <p>b) All managers, staff and partners visiting children and young people within a placement understand their quality assurance role and report concerns through to the Commissioning Team</p>	<p>On Track</p> <p>On Track</p>
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4. Overall Assessment and key achievements and challenges

- a) Overall, this annual update shows that BCP has made tangible progress in strengthening sufficiency for children in care and care experienced young people, particularly through the growth of local supported accommodation, improved provider relationships, stronger governance and better joint working with Housing.
- b) The council has increased local residential and supported accommodation capacity, improved access to local provision, embedded quarterly provider forums, strengthened commissioning intelligence through the scorecard, and developed more coordinated pathways for care experienced young people and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. These are significant achievements which provide a stronger foundation for local sufficiency and better corporate parenting.
- c) Sufficiency pressures remain, demand continues to exceed the level of local family-based and residential provision BCP would want, the number of children in residential care has not reduced, and too many children still live further from home than is right for them. As a result, some success measures are therefore fully met, but others remain only partially achieved because the market is still developing, household growth in fostering is not yet fully achieved, and quality assurance and governance arrangements still need to mature further and embed.
- d) Overall, the direction of travel is positive. This is a four-year strategy running from October 2024 to 2028, and it is recognised that not all priorities are quick wins and will take time, alongside a changing landscape for fostering and residential provision and a more regional approach, which has impacted BCP fostering numbers. However, continued focus in 2026/27 to convert the improved infrastructure and partnerships into consistently sufficient local provision across all parts of the system is well underway.

Key achievements

- Significant growth in local supported accommodation and residential capacity, including new provision for UASC and a parent and child home.
- More children and young people are living locally, with stronger pathways into suitable accommodation and improved housing coordination.
- Provider relationships, market engagement and strategic commissioning intelligence are stronger and more embedded than at the start of the strategy period.
- Governance has improved through the commissioning scorecard, quality assurance activity and clearer contract and procurement oversight.

Key challenges

- Demand for family-based and residential care continues to outstrip the level of local sufficiency BCP needs.

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• The

number of children in residential care has increased rather than reduced, and this remains an area of strategic concern.

- Too many children are still placed at distance from home, despite some improvement in the proportion living locally.
- Further work is needed to evidence growth in fostering households and to strengthen how learning from quality assurance is fed back into service improvement.

5. Priorities for the next 12 months and updates to the strategy

- a) The priorities for the next 12 months remain consistent with the 2024–2028 Sufficiency Strategy, but the emphasis for 2026/27 will now shift from establishing the foundations for improvement to accelerating delivery in those areas where sufficiency is still under pressure.
- b) There will be a focus on converting stronger partnerships, better intelligence and expanded local provision into more consistent local outcomes for children in care and care experienced young people, while refining the strategy to reflect areas that are now business as usual and those where additional action is required.

Priorities for 2026/27

1. Increase local family-based sufficiency by strengthening foster carer recruitment, retention and supported lodgings, with a clearer focus on evidencing growth in households and reducing reliance on residential care for children with a fostering plan.
2. Reduce the number of children living in residential care and at distance from home by continuing to grow local provision, improving commissioning responses to cohort need and using sufficiency data to target the highest-pressure areas.
3. Strengthen supported accommodation pathways so that young people can move more effectively from higher-support provision to independence, including reviewing the AQA scheme, support models and expectations around preparation for adulthood.
4. Embed the Joint Housing Protocol, Specialist Housing Group and wider housing pathway changes so that care experienced young people continue to access suitable accommodation in a timely way and the risk of homelessness or Bed and Breakfast use is further reduced.
5. Maintain and deepen provider engagement so that market development remains responsive to BCP need, with continued focus on local growth, provider confidence, Ofsted readiness and regional collaboration where this adds value.
6. Further strengthen governance and quality assurance by improving how learning from provider visits, panels and monitoring activity is fed back into commissioning and operational improvement, and by refreshing sub-actions within the strategy to reflect progress made to date.

In practical terms, this means the overarching priorities do not need to change, but a number of sub-actions are now being updated to reflect the current position.

Actions that are now established as business as usual are retired or monitored through routine governance, while new or revised sub-actions have been added to the action plan. Where progress is only partially achieved, particularly in relation to fostering growth, reducing residential use, improving independence pathways and strengthening the impact of quality assurance, these continue to be developed and monitored through the action plan.

Appendix 1

Detailed action tracker

Appendix 1 provides the detailed action tracker that supports this annual update, showing progress against each priority, the actions taken to date and the impact achieved.

The RAG ratings in Section 3 and Appendix 1 serve different purposes. The Section 3 RAG provides a strategic assessment of progress against each success measure, showing whether the intended outcome has been achieved, is on track, or requires further attention. The Appendix 1 RAG reflects progress against the individual actions in the delivery plan, showing whether those actions have been completed, are on track, or require intervention. As a result, an action may be complete in Appendix 1 while the related success measure in Section 3 remains on track or requires further attention, where the intended impact has not yet been fully realised.

Action RAG – Appendix 1 action tracker

RAG	Description	Number of actions
Completed	Action completed and now monitored through business as usual arrangements where appropriate	29
On Track	Action is progressing as planned and remains on course	19
Requires further attention	Action is off track or requires intervention to achieve the intended progress	0

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Priority 1 - Ensure there is sufficient local family-based care available in the BCP area, so more children can live within a family home.

Measure of Success

a. The number of Children in Care living locally in family-based care increases – Requires Further attention

The proportion of children placed with in-house foster carers has reduced from 53.8% pre-South West Hub to 46.9%, BCP remains above the national average (43%), Good local authorities (42.5%) and statistical neighbours (38.8%). Bed utilisation of in-house foster carers remains strong at 82.5%, above the South West average of 76%, demonstrating effective use of in-house capacity. Kinship care continues to strengthen sufficiency, with a 71% increase in viability assessments, 26% growth in children placed and kinship households now accounting for 48% of all fostering households.

Strengthened local family-based sufficiency through a refreshed foster carer recruitment and retention strategy, continued investment in high-quality foster carer training and support, and the launch of new approaches such as the Mockingbird fostering model. The internal fostering service has also contributed to reducing reliance on residential care, with 5 young people stepping down from residential care to in-house foster care in the last 12 months. In addition, the Special Guardianship Service has returned in-house, increasing the number of SGO families accessing support. Partnerships with local independent fostering agencies have also been re-established, with quarterly meetings now in place and increased provider engagement generating more placement offers.

b. The number of foster care households within BCP increases – Requires Further attention

Nationally and locally foster carer sufficiency remains under significant pressure. BCP mainstream in-house foster carer recruitment at its lowest level in five years and only a small proportion of approvals achieved through the Southwest Fostering Hub. The service is now forecasting a net loss of 10 mainstream households, marking a significant shift from previous performance and indicating a growing sufficiency risk. While this has been partially offset by a 36% increase in approved kinship carers, alongside a 41.7% rise in children exiting care via Special Guardianship Orders, this does not mitigate the underlying decline in mainstream fostering capacity or the longer-term sustainability challenges for in-house provision.

Strengthening the infrastructure needed to grow household numbers, including the refreshed recruitment and retention strategy, regional collaboration on fostering recruitment, the review of the retained carers scheme, and the development and Ofsted registration of the Supported Lodgings Scheme, with recruitment activity now underway. The benefits of supported lodgings are now being actively championed, and the recruitment strategy for carers has been developed and launched.

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Independent Fostering provision is commissioned via a South-

Central Framework arrangement, annual sufficiency data evidences a significant reduction of 17% (129 beds) in fostering households regionally. The total number of beds has also decreased by 16% (268 beds). This is in line with national fostering sufficiency trends, which show continuing decline in mainstream fostering households.

The latest England data shows mainstream fostering households have continued to decline over the last four years, with approved mainstream foster carers falling to 56,345 by March 2025, while Local Authority mainstream households have reduced overall even though new approvals have increased slightly and independent fostering agency capacity has grown modestly. This means many Councils continue to face challenges in securing the right family-based placements in the right place, contributing to greater reliance on independent agencies, increasing placement distance and ongoing instability in local sufficiency arrangements.

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Ref	What we said we will do	Completed / On Track / Requires further attention	What we have done to date	Impact
1.1 348	Review the in-house foster care recruitment and retention strategy in order to ensure an increase in local family-based provision (foster care). This shall include the launch the Mockingbird fostering model	On Track	<p>Formulated a strong partnership with Corporate Communications which is strengthening BCP Fostering’s market presence and reach. BCP Fostering now has a clear and recognisable identity within the Council’s wider brand architecture, improving public visibility and consistency of messaging.</p> <p>Monitored enquiries which have increased over the past year but have not translated into a net gain in approved foster carers, highlighting a gap between interest and conversion that continues to impact sufficiency.</p>	<p>The new recruitment strategy has maintained fostering sufficiency over the last 12 months.</p> <p>Foster for BCP now has a consistent social media presence, strengthening brand visibility and supporting local recruitment.</p>
1.2	Work collaboratively with regional colleagues, to develop the Southwest regional fostering recruitment hub with the aim of increasing sufficiency of in-house provision	On Track	<p>Collaborative working continues, referral rates remain static. National guidance is being considered.</p> <p>Funding South West Fostering Hub enabled the development of a professionally produced marketing video focused on the importance of recruiting local carers for local children. This has become one of BCP Council’s most viewed videos. No net growth reported to date.</p>	Strengthened the recruitment infrastructure and local market presence, resulting in increased the visibility of BCP’s in-house fostering offer and generated greater public awareness and enquiry activity.
1.3	Continue to provide high quality training and support with the aim of retaining foster carers.	Completed	Carers continue to engage positively with training and development, helping to maintain a skilled and confident carer workforce able to meet children’s needs effectively and support positive placement outcomes.	BCP’s retention rate of approximately 97% is significantly higher than the national position of around 65%, demonstrating a stable, high-performing in-house fostering service, sustaining placement stability and protecting sufficiency within the in-house offer. Consistently strong engagement in

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				training and support groups has strengthened carer capability and resilience, while workforce stability has ensured continuity in support, minimising disruption to carers and contributing to placement stability for children.
1.4 349	Review the internal 'retained carers' scheme, accessible for children requiring emergency care.	Completed	<p>Review completed, the Retained Scheme remains a key strength of BCP's fostering offer, with regional recognition and demand from other local authorities for guidance. It provides consistent, responsive capacity for emergency and out-of-hours homes, with availability on all but fewer than five days this year.</p> <p>High reliance on the scheme and reduction of newly approved carers underlines its importance to sufficiency but requires ongoing monitoring to ensure the scheme is sustainable.</p>	The Retained Care Scheme provides reliable emergency fostering capacity, strengthening local sufficiency and reducing escalation to residential care or children being placed at a distance.
1.5	Evaluate the internal fostering service to ensure provision is created with an aim of reducing the numbers of children going into residential care who have a Care Plan of fostering.	Completed	Evaluation completed with a focus on the It Takes A Family Programme and the model's ability to step children down from residential care.	<p>In the last year, the ITAF scheme has supported 6 children to step down from residential care. In addition, 4 children stepped down from IFA provision.</p> <p>At 46.9%, BCP remains above the national average (43%), Good local authorities (42.5%), and statistical neighbours (38.8%) for children placed with in house carers.</p> <p>Bed utilisation remains strong at 82.5%, above the South West average of 76%, demonstrating effective use of in-house capacity.</p>

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1.6	Ensure internal Supported Lodgings provision is seen as a viable option for Care Experienced Young People by raising awareness of its benefits and positive outcomes.	On Track	<p>The benefits of the Supported Lodgings Scheme is championed at Creative Care Panel and considered as move on provision post 18yrs.</p> <p>The Supported Lodgings scheme achieved Ofsted registration at the end of the financial year , marking a key milestone in strengthening local sufficiency.</p> <p>A targeted recruitment campaign has increased awareness, with learning identified around the need to better articulate the role and attract interest. A refreshed campaign developed with Communications will launch in July to drive improved engagement and conversion.</p>	Too early to report impact
350 1.7	Work collaboratively to register our internal Supported Lodgings Scheme in line with Ofsted guidance. Once registered, work with Commissioning colleagues to ensure this option is explored for children in Care aged 16 years plus.	On Track	<p>Supported Lodgings Scheme is now registered with Ofsted (March 2026).</p> <p>Ofsted registration (March 2026) has established Supported Lodgings as a credible in-house option for 16+ young people. A Registered Manager is now in post and recruitment is underway; however, there is not yet a measurable impact on sufficiency due to current vacancies and limited placement availability. Impact is expected to increase as recruitment is completed and placement capacity grows.</p>	Too early to report impact
1.8	Develop a recruitment strategy for the Supported Lodgings Scheme once it is registered	On Track	<p>Recruitment Strategy has been developed, advertising for carers has commenced.</p> <p>A targeted recruitment campaign has increased awareness, with early learning identifying the need to better articulate the Supported Lodgings role and strengthen enquiry pathways. Initial enquiries were routed via the Hub rather than directly into the service; this has now been</p>	Too early to report impact

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			addressed, with improved processes to manage enquiries more efficiently and at pace. While this has not yet translated into a net increase in approved carers, a refreshed campaign with Communications launching in July 2026, alongside greater confidence in progressing enquiries through to assessment, is expected to improve conversion.	
3.5.1	Bring the Special Guardianship Service back in-house from Aspire Adoption.	Completed	Service has transferred, increasing number of SGO families accessing support	Bringing SGO into the fostering service has delivered a measurable increase in SGOs granted, bringing BCP in line with the national rate (11.9%). This structural shift, alongside strengthened support to SGO families, has increased professional and family confidence in SGO as a viable permanence option. As a result, more children are achieving timely, family-based permanence, with higher conversion rates and reduced reliance on alternative permanence routes, including final kinship approvals.
1.10	Ensure BCP works strategically with the South-Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework to increase the sufficiency of local provision.	On Track	The collaboration continues and the regional frameworks are being utilised which provides access to compliant provision. Nationally fostering sufficiency trends show continuing decline in mainstream fostering households. Sufficiency of IFA provision continues to be a challenge, it is reported that nationally that mainstream fostering households have continued to decline for four consecutive years, with Ofsted reporting that mainstream households were still falling as of March 2025.	Annual sufficiency data for 2025 evidences a significant reduction of 17% (129 beds) in fostering households regionally. The total number of beds has also decreased by 16% (268 beds).
1.11	Re-build partnerships with local on and off framework Independent	On Track	Partnerships have been re-established with providers, quarterly meetings in place. Enhanced	Too early to report impact

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Fostering Agency providers, noting the number of local foster care beds which are filled by other local authority children.		engagement is yielding increased offers. IFA providers are approaching BCP to work in collaboration for available carers.	
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Priority 2 - When children need to live in a residential home, ensure there is sufficient locally based residential provision within the BCP area to meet the needs of those children and young people who cannot, or chose not to, live in a family setting.

Measure of Success

a. The number of Children in Care placed in residential children’s homes will decrease – On Track

In April 2024, there were 52 children placed in standard residential care, which equated to 9.2% of the overall child in care population. As of April 2025, there were 55 children, 9.8%. This increase is in line with the rising number of children in care, which has risen by 97% (14 children). The number of children living in all residential provision has increased, BCP is an outlier and there is a strategy in place to address this.

b. There is sufficient homes locally to meet the needs of children in Care – On Track

c. Local sufficiency has increased but is not yet at sufficient capacity to meet demand in residential and family-based care. We continue to work with the local market, and the South West Alliance to strengthen regional market capacity, in line with future reforms for regional care collaboratives to support future growth.

Sufficiency impact

- Local residential market has increased by 47% (from 23 – 34 beds)
- A new residential Family Assessment Centre (parent and child home) offers new capacity of 3 beds. No provision previously in BCP.
- Increase of 16% (circa 12 – 14 beds) in usage of local provision
- Local void rates of provision has increased by 17%, linked to expansion of local capacity with controlled growth, vacancies reflect planning commissioning.

Ref	What we said we will do	Completed / On Track / Requires further attention	What we have done to date	Impact
2.1	Improve data reporting, analyse all cohort needs across the service, benchmark and understand trends to meet and predict demand for children	On Track	Developed the Commissioning Scorecard, which is reported via governance by monthly, informs local market development	Stronger strategic oversight of demand, improved forecasting, planning and market development. Increasing number of local residential beds enabling more children to live in the BCP area.

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	requiring residential care or access to respite provision		Sufficiency data and cohort needs are regularly shared through provider forums in order that the market is developed to meet need.	
2.2	Map all local residential provision, understand usage by other local authorities and impact on local sufficiency and determine need for BCP council.	Completed	All local provision is known and mapped; quarterly void data informs reporting on other LA usage.	Worked with providers to prioritise BCP children for homes used by other LA's. Local void rates of provision has increased by 17%, linked to expansion of local capacity with controlled growth, vacancies reflect planning commissioning.
2.3	Work strategically with the South-Central Residential Framework to increase sufficiency of local provision based on analysis of need.	Completed	Due to the South-Central framework moving to the South East region, we have worked with local BCP providers to meet need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local residential market has increased by 47% (from 23 – 34 beds) A new residential Family Assessment Centre (parent and child home) offers new capacity of 3 beds. No provision previously in BCP. Increase of 16% (circa 12 – 14 beds) in usage of local provision
2.4	Consider all regional framework arrangements based on national findings and provider feedback, linked to the benefits of local authority partnership working.	On Track	Regional collaboration with South West is resulting in new framework arrangements for 2027/2028 which is anticipated to result in market growth.	Too early to report impact
2.5	Hold providers accountable for their charges and understand the level of profit to ensure value for money and delivery of outcomes.	Completed	Annual Fee Uplift process is robust, and increases are on average lower than inflation. Local providers are transparent in costs and usage rates required in order to make profit.	Annual fee increase was 3.2% with cost avoidance of circa £700k for 2025/2026 fee uplift requests, which was below the CPI reported figure of 4%.
2.6	Produce a Short Breaks Position Statement, review needs and eligibility criteria, ensure local service can meet all needs. Co-produce the offer with all partners.	On Track	New Position Statement written, Needs Analysis complete, tender for new services based on identified need will go live 2026/2027	BCP now has a clearer understanding of short breaks needs, providing a stronger foundation for a more transparent and targeted offer. Revised eligibility criteria and co-production are helping to align services more closely with local need with

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				a focused needs led service specification ready to tender
2.7	Work with regional colleagues and with local NHS partners to consider the development of a residential provision for children with complex needs.	On Track	A provider has been identified, planning permission for site granted. Service design planning now underway	Too early to report impact
2.8	Explore regional secure provision through the Southwest Sufficiency group.	Completed	Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Regional Remand Partnerships proposal bid considered, and decision made not to submit. This is based on the Southwest generally experiencing low remand volumes and placement sufficiency (availability and appropriateness)	Current regional secure sufficiency is adequate, enabling BCP to prioritise commissioning effort and resources on higher-pressure areas of need.

354 **Priority 3 - Increase supported accommodation provision and further develop a sufficiency model which offers a range of provision models (high to low support) so children and young people have a choice to move through a pathway of services, offering a range of homes across the BCP area which shall prepare them for independence.**

Measure of Success

a. Young people moving into supported accommodation can live in an area of their choice within BCP - Completed

All local supported accommodation is now mapped, and improved relationships with providers, supported by regular provider forums, have increased BCP's ability to access local beds ahead of other authorities where providers can meet need. This is contributing to more children being able to remain connected to their local communities, with the proportion of children in care living locally increasing from 51% in April 2025 to 64% in March 2026, the evidence shows tangible progress in increasing local choice and access within the BCP area.

- Increase of local provision by 52% (30 beds), 103 in total
- Use of local sufficiency has increased by 83% (39 to 66 beds)
- Local voids rates of supported accommodation have increased by 27%.
- Joint working with Housing and a local established provider has created a sustainable accommodation pathway for UAS Care Experienced young people.

b. Increase in supported accommodation with lower-level support helping young people to transition more effectively to independence – On Track

Through a targeted review of supported accommodation, we have identified that low level support does not enable our young people to live independently prior to move on at 18yrs. As a result, we are now working with our providers to review independence planning which includes a review of the existing AQA

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Scheme and learning from the Ofsted inspection framework to

consider how young people can transfer appropriately from residential care to supported accommodation and then independent living

Local lower-support capacity has increased materially through the development of registered supported accommodation, particularly for UASC, and through wider sufficiency planning informed by cohort data, Housing Strategy development, and the establishment of a Specialist Housing Group. These actions show that BCP is building a broader range of provision models from higher to lower support, helping young people transition more effectively toward independence.

Ref	What we said we will do	Completed / On Track / Requires further attention	What we have done to date	Impact
3.1	Understand the sufficiency and quality of local provision, though effective process and activity, for example through monitoring Ofsted registration and mapping of providers.	Completed	Quality of provision, number of local beds, voids and BCP usage is now reported through the newly developed commissioning scorecard, this is monitored on a quarterly basis and informed sufficiency planning.	Local provision within BCP is now available to our children in care when supported accommodation is requested. Increased number of children in care living in local supported accommodation, connected to local community
3.2	Implement greater oversight of young people who have high support packages, implementing regular meetings with providers and all partners.	On Track	Provider accreditation and regular quality assurance have strengthened oversight of high-cost supported accommodation packages and assurance that provision is safe and meeting need.	Improved oversight and quality assurance are strengthening the safety, suitability and consistency of high-support provision.
3.3	Ensure preparation for independence is planned. Work with providers and all partners to consider preparation for independence in a timely manner and ensure support hours / packages are reasonable, in line with independence planning.	On Track	We are not yet assured that the current AQA scheme is effectively supporting our young people to achieve the outcomes we expect. As a result, the scheme is being reviewed and adapted to ensure it better contributes to preparing children for independence. This work will also strengthen how we assess individual needs and ensure that the voices, preferences and aspirations of young people are	No reportable impact to date

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			actively informing their pathways and future planning	
3.4	Seek to utilise local provision for BCP children rather than them residing out of area	On Track	<p>All local supported accommodation is mapped; available beds, voids and usage is collated quarterly to better inform sufficiency planning.</p> <p>Improved relationships with providers and regular provider forums is ensuring the BCP now has access to local beds before other LA's where the provider can meet need.</p>	<p>We are currently above national figures of 22% for those children placed greater than 20 miles from BCP = 31% (March 2026). Noting the rise in cohort numbers.</p> <p>This continues to be an area of priority 2026/2027</p> <p>We have seen some improvement in the number of CiC living locally by 13% April 2025 = 51% March 2026 = 64%.</p>
3.5	Develop registered supported accommodation provision locally for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care aged under 18 years.	Completed	<p>In the last 12 months an additional 24 local beds specifically for UASC have been registered with Ofsted in BCP.</p> <p>Sufficiency need is now met, and provision is being monitored as business as usual.</p>	Where appropriate all UASC for whom BCP have responsibility are now living in the BCP area in suitable accommodation.
3.6	Review commissioning intentions for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced young people, ensuring accommodation is suitable.	Completed	Joint working with Housing and a local provider has created a new sustainable accommodation pathway with sufficient provision available to meet cohort need.	All accommodation for UAS CEYP is suitable and within BCP
3.7	Work collaboratively with our external market, in-house supported lodgings scheme and housing to meet the accommodation needs of all Care Experienced young people.	On Track	Joint Housing Protocol co-produced. Housing Strategy 2026 – 2030 now published. Review of CSC CEYP provision underway. Cohort data informs sufficiency planning. Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy Group established.	A Joint Housing Protocol has been established and embedded, clearly defining roles and responsibilities for housing provision for individuals aged 18 and over, and ensuring they are offered suitable accommodation in a timely manner.

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Priority 4 - Re-establish positive partnership and collaboration between Housing, Children’s Social Care and Commissioning, focusing on the Joint Housing priorities for Care Experienced young people.

Measure of Success

a. Increase the number of good quality housing provisions available in a timely way for Care Experienced young people - Completed

Partnership working between Housing, Children’s Social Care and Commissioning has improved the housing pathway and strengthened timely access to suitable accommodation. A Joint Housing Protocol for Young People has been co-produced, helping to embed a more consistent corporate parenting response to accommodation needs. The review and mapping of supported and independent accommodation across BCP means that all housing-related supported accommodation provision is now known, improving sufficiency planning and oversight. Use of housing-related supported accommodation by care experienced young people is over 50%, indicating that existing provision is being actively accessed.

The system for identifying, planning and accessing good quality housing provision is now more coordinated, better informed and more responsive, increasing the council’s ability to secure suitable accommodation in a timelier way.

b. There will be no Care Experienced young people placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation or experiencing homelessness – On Track

Data evidences that the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation has remained static over the last 18mths with an average of one care experienced young person living in bed and breakfast accommodation at any one time.

The proportion of care experienced young people living in suitable accommodation is now consistently above 90%, with a reported figure of 92% as of April 2025. This evidences that the majority of young people are now being supported into more appropriate housing arrangements, with clear evidence of better prevention of homelessness and earlier housing planning.

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Ref	What we said we will do	Completed / On Track / Requires further attention	What we have done to date	Impact
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4.1	Work together across all Directorates to embed a corporate parenting response to the accommodation needs of Care Experienced young people.	Completed	Joint Housing Protocol for Young People co-produced between Housing and CSC. Following significant changes to the policy and procures cohorts of young people who require accommodation are known.	93% of our young people are now living in suitable accommodation, which has been consistent over the last 12 months
4.2	Review and map the sufficiency of supported and independent accommodation provision available across BCP council for Care Experienced young people.	Completed	All housing related support accommodation provision across BCP is known, informing sufficiency planning. Usage of Supported Accommodation provision by CEYP is over 50%	There is sufficient supported and independent accommodation for BCP children and young people with current occupancy of all provision is 48% (April 2026)
4.3 358	Review and relaunch the Youth Homelessness Board.	On Track	The Youth Homelessness Board has had a successful relaunch supported by The Royal Foundation Homewards Project and the organisation EveryYouth. The Board will provide strategic oversight and shared leadership across BCP Council and partners.	The Board will report to the Homelessness Delivery Board however it is too early to report on impact at this stage.
4.4	Review the housing pathway and options for Care Experienced young people.	On Track	BCP Council Supported and Specialist Housing Strategy and Needs Assessment have now been completed and published following Cabinet approval in March 2026. This sets out a 10-year commitment to deliver supported accommodation that meets the needs of young people in the BCP area.	The governance for this work is in the process of being agreed. Too early to report impact
4.5	Consider a collaborative review of the Accommodation Planning Panel, linked to the implementation of social care 'gateways'.	Completed	Following an initial review and a further review in May 2026, a single panel is now in place to oversee the Accommodation Planning Panel. This supports a smoother pathway into housing. The panel provides a focus on more vulnerable cohorts, including UAS CEYP and those who are being released from custody.	This has enabled more timely accommodation planning for care experienced young people, reducing delay and improving pathway coordination.

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4.6	Inform the design of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Provision with accommodation identified specifically for Care Experienced Young People	Completed	Active involvement in the Single Homelessness Accommodation Provision (SHAP) tender.	Between April 2025 and April 2026 31 beds have become available for CEYP
4.7	Embed training and share knowledge of the Joint Housing Protocols. Ensure knowledge of, and contribution to, the Homewards partnership work in the BCP area to work towards eradicating any risk of homelessness for our Care Experienced young people.	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint training was delivered across children's services and housing in early 2024 following the launch of the policy Further review of the policy to be completed by September 2025 with a view to relaunch by October 2025 - this will include a renewed programme of training Accommodation Panel providing quality assurance to JHAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Children in Care being referred for Joint Housing Assessment (JHA) at age 17, reducing delay in planning for their independence. Care Experienced YP living in suitable accommodation, 93% as of March 2026
4.8	Support the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy.	Completed	Co-produced Housing Strategy 2026 – 2030 now published, strategic priorities for CEYP to be implemented	Too early to report impact (Define measures within the strategy)

Priority 5 - Improve relationships with providers through open and transparent engagement in order to further develop services to meet the needs of BCP council's children and young people.

Measure of Success

a. Provider Engagement Events are embedded, attendance and engagement by the external market creates established partnerships which improves local sufficiency. Providers feel valued - Completed

BCP has made strong progress in embedding provider engagement through a structured framework of quarterly provider forums across all care sectors, including residential care, support accommodation, independent fostering agencies, short breaks and independent non-maintained special schools. These forums have strengthened relationships with both on and off framework providers, improved communication in respect of sufficiency need, and created regular opportunities for providers to contribute to market development. Positive feedback from providers indicates that they now feel more informed, engaged and valued as partners. This has had a clear impact on local sufficiency by supporting a more collaborative approach to shaping services and encouraging providers to work with BCP to meet the needs of children and young people locally.

- During 2025/2026
- Local residential market has increased by 47% (11 beds), Q3 usage is 44%
- A new residential parent and child home offers new capacity of 3 beds. No provision previously in BCP. Q3 usage 66%
- Local supported accommodation market has increased by 52% (37 beds), Q3 usage 64%

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b. More children and young people successfully return to their family with a positive, wrap around package where appropriate – Completed

Progress has been made through the creation and embedding of a dedicated Reunification Team for children in care, with cohorts proactively identified and reviewed through regular data monitoring. This has established a more coordinated and intentional approach to reunification across Children’s Social Care, ensuring that children are supported to return home where this is safe and appropriate, with the right wraparound support in place. The impact of this work is evidenced by 28 children having been successfully reunified to date, alongside a rate of children leaving care in 2025/26 that is slightly above comparator authorities. This demonstrates that BCP is strengthening family-based solutions and reducing reliance on care where positive outcomes can be achieved within families.

For 2025/26, the rate of children leaving care was 31.6 children per 10,000 (a total of 235 children), slightly above comparators with Good+ LAs at 30, Statistical Neighbours at 29, England at 28 and the South West lower at 24. (DfE published rates for 2024/25).

c. BCP Council develops trusted relationships with providers who work with the local authority to manage the sufficiency within the local and regional markets – Completed

BCP has strengthened provider relationships through consistent engagement, shared planning and regional collaboration. The Commissioning Scorecard has improved visibility of need and supports more strategic market development. Through the South West Alliance, BCP is also strengthening regional market intelligence and readiness for Regional Care Cooperative reform.

Consideration is also being given to a Regional Care Cooperative, which has a vision of bringing together Local Authorities, health services, and youth justice partners to collaboratively plan, commission, and deliver care for looked-after children.

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Ref	What we said we will do	Completed / On Track / Requires further attention	What we have done to date	Impact
5.1	Re-build the relationships with BCP local area providers and review the commissioning arrangements with on and off framework providers.	Completed	Implemented a structured provider engagement framework, meeting with providers on a quarterly basis in order to inform them of our sufficiency needs and develop the market, build relationships	Provider Engagement Events are embedded, attendance and engagement by the external market creates established partnerships which improves local sufficiency. Providers feel valued.
5.2	Establish quarterly provider engagement events for each care sector, seek to understand barriers, develop the market to meet all children	Completed	Quarterly Provider Forums are now established. Positive Feedback from Providers who now feel informed	Provider engagement events are now established and embedded across all care sectors, including residential care,

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	and young people's care / support needs including those with a disability.		and engaged in sufficiency planning for BCP	independent fostering agencies, short breaks and independent non-maintained special schools. This supports a joint approach between the Local Authority and providers to shape and develop the market.
5.3	Actively engage with providers who wish to be inventive within the market.	Completed	Embedded Provider engagement events now in place	BCP now attracts and retains local providers who share BCP's values and can evidence safe, high-quality service delivery through the Ofsted ratings achieved.
5.4 361	Create a market development plan of provision.	Completed	Market Development has been replaced by a comprehensive Commissioning Scorecard, which provides data and insight into emerging needs. Data is shared with providers to inform and support market development.	This has improved strategic market planning by giving BCP and providers better visibility of emerging need, enabling more informed service development and supporting local sufficiency over time.
5.5	Participate in regional collaborations to enhance learning, practice and aid the shaping of the market.	Completed	Head of Commissioning is an established member of the South West Alliance a regional collaboration. The purpose of the collaboration of 14 LA's to enhance and share learning, practice and proactively informing regional market shaping.	This has strengthened BCP's regional influence and market intelligence, supporting shared learning, more coordinated market shaping and improved readiness for regional care collaborative reforms as these arrangements are prepared for.
5.6	Develop reunification and our family support offer, consider returning children to their families where appropriate.	On Track	Created and embedded a Reunification Team for children in care, cohorts are proactively identified and monthly data evidences impact.	BCP now has a more coordinated and proactive approach to reunification across Children's Social Care, with 28 children to date successfully reunified. For 2025/26, the rate of children leaving care was 31.6 children per 10,000 (a total of 235 children), slightly above comparators with Good+ LAs at 30, Statistical Neighbours at

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				29, England at 28 and the South West lower at 24. (DfE published rates for 2024/25)
5.7	Consider the need for a Supported Accommodation framework, seek views from the market and local authorities with established framework arrangements.	Completed	Needs analysis completed which informed a co-produced service specification. Tender advertised and supported accommodation framework went live in April 2026.	26 Local Supported accommodation providers within BCP area offering suitable registered accommodation. Supported accommodation sufficiency now met
5.8	Continue to work in partnership with our providers in preparation for Ofsted inspections between 2024 - 2028.	Completed	Through Provider Forums and monitoring visits the Commissioning Team work with providers to assess their ofsted readiness for their inspection framework as well as the LA inspections	All local providers are inspection ready with improved quality, compliance and stability, strengthening trusted relationships.

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Priority 6 - Embed governance and quality assurance frameworks to ensure compliance and support strategic decision making in the future

Measure of Success

a. Targeted and reactive quality assurance visits completed each month by the Commissioning and Contracts service – On Track

BCP has embedded a targeted and reactive programme of monthly quality assurance visits through the Commissioning and Contracts Service, strengthening oversight of provider performance, compliance and children’s safety. This provides a more robust system for identifying concerns early, holding providers to account, and ensuring services continue to meet BCP’s expected standards of quality and care. In turn, this strengthens assurance for operational leaders and supports more informed commissioning decisions about sufficiency, risk and service improvement.

BCP currently commissions 80 providers for fostering, supported accommodation, residential and residential education provision.

There are 133 homes, 33 are located within Dorset (24%)

- 20 homes are rated Outstanding, 3 are located within Dorset
- 65 homes are rated good, 13 are in Dorset
- 20 homes are rated requires improvement, 8 are located within Dorset
- 4 homes are rated inadequate, 2 are located within Dorset
- 19 homes are awaiting an inspection
- 7 homes are unregistered so do not receive an Ofsted inspection.

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b. All managers, staff and partners when they visit children and young people within a placement have a clear understanding of their role in quality assuring and report any concerns through to the Commissioning team, addressing them also within the provision - On Track

Within BCP, managers, staff and partners visiting children and young people in placement now have clearer expectations about their role in quality assurance. Concerns and findings are identified and escalated more consistently to BCP's Commissioning Team, addressed directly with the provider, and reported back through the Creative Care Panel into Children's Social Care. This has strengthened shared accountability for quality and safety across BCP placements, improved oversight, and supported earlier action where issues arise. Further work is still required to ensure that learning is consistently fed back into the service and used to drive continuous improvement.

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Ref	What we said we will do	Completed / On Track / Requires further attention	What we have done to date	Impact
6.1	Develop and embed a robust commissioning governance and commissioning quality assurance framework to understand the quality of provision and hold providers accountable.	On Track	Quality Assurance principles are in place and embedded. Further work required on governance and feeding back the learning into the service (commissioning and CSC)	This has strengthened BCP's oversight of provider quality and compliance by embedding consistent quality assurance principles across commissioning activity. It provides a stronger basis for holding providers to account, identifying risks earlier, and supporting safer, more informed decisions about placement quality and service improvement. Further work is still required to strengthen governance arrangements and ensure learning is consistently fed back into both Commissioning and Children's Social Care.

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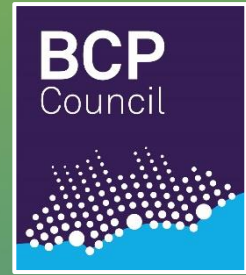
6.2	Update the existing contracts register for children’s services, thus informing the strategic commissioning plan and assurance in respect of procurement compliance. (noting the implementation of the new procurement regulations).	Completed	Commissioning Contracts Pipeline to inform the Corporate Contracts Register now full imbedded and compliant with corporate procurement standards	This has strengthened BCP’s contract management and procurement assurance by improving visibility of commissioned services, supporting forward planning, and ensuring children’s services commissioning is aligned with corporate procurement standards and new regulatory requirements. This reduces compliance risk and provides a stronger foundation for strategic commissioning decisions.
3093 6.3	Ensure and aim for there to be sufficient provision within BCP available to only place children in provision that is judged ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted.	Completed	The Ofsted ratings of all BCP providers are known, logged and monitored 11 residential providers are located within BCP with 19 homes. 3 homes are rated ‘good’, 5 homes has not yet been inspected, and 4 homes are rated RI. 2 homes are rated Inadequate. Robust monitoring underway as the new Ofsted inspection framework is rolled out.	Residential Homes located in BCP – 77% are rated ‘good’, 7 of the 9 homes. 2 are yet to be inspected.
6.4	Improve data collection using current digital systems to inform sufficiency planning.	Completed	Commissioning Data Scorecard developed, providing clear oversight of cohort data, linked to referral and sufficiency data.	This has strengthened BCP’s sufficiency planning by providing more timely and reliable data on cohort need, referrals and provision. As a result, commissioning decisions are better informed, trends can be identified earlier, and strategic planning is more responsive to emerging demand.
6.6	Work in partnership with providers to regularly monitor all provision rated ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children to allow them to remain in their home.	Completed	Procedure in place and adhered to for monitoring of RI or inadequate provision, robust action plans in place which are monitored monthly by the social worker and	Risks are clearly identified and actively managed, helping to safeguard children and ensure they can remain in their home where this continues to be safe and in their best interests.

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			commissioning team to ensure the placement remains safe for the child.	
6.7	Be actively engaged in the procurement compliance planning ensuring that commissioning of provision meets the required quality assurance and contract monitoring compliance standards.	Completed	Head of Commissioning is a member of the Corporate Procurement Board to ensure that Children's Services remains compliant with BCP Corporate procurement regs	Procurement regulations are met by Children's Services.

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BCP Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care & Care Experienced Young People

2024/2028

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1. Introduction

The Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole (BCP) Council Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 – 2028 sets out the Council's approach to meeting its responsibilities to provide secure, safe and appropriate accommodation. It also sets out how the strategic priorities will be realised and the actions that will be taken to ensure the best possible outcomes for all children and young people are achieved. Whilst 'placements' are referred to it is recognised that for our children and young people this is where they live, this is about their home while they are in our care and ensuring it is right for each and every one of our children and young people, as they are a priority for us.

Sufficiency of provision will ensure that children and young people can access the right placements, which will support them to achieve positive outcomes and prepare them for adulthood.

BCP Children's Services is committed to providing the right service at the right time for children, young people and their families, recognising that at times additional support may be required to help them stay together. Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs the local authority does. If it is not safe for children to stay at home then services will intervene and strive to ensure they are given the care, support, and stability that they deserve.

This strategy is informed by what our children and young people tell us individually and collectively through Unite and Ignite, our Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People forums, our promises as corporate parents, our statutory duties and what is known from our data including the analysis of our Children in Care population.

Children and young people have told us they want to feel safe in their placements and able to talk to their carers. They have worked with us on developing their vision and identified their priorities.

Children and young people's vision:

BCP is a great place to live, where all children and young people have the best possible opportunities in life and are supported by the community to flourish and grow in order to succeed.

Children and Young Person's priorities are:

- *Safe and protected*
- *Resilient*
- *Offered opportunities*
- *Happy and healthy*
- *Supported to achieve*
- *Heard and recognised.*

With these priorities identified, our ambition is to ensure that wherever possible children and young people are able to remain safely within their own families. As such, all the partnerships serving BCP children and young people are working together to provide a range of coherent preventative and early help services to address issues quickly and effectively.

When children do need to come into Care, BCP Children's Services is committed to ensuring they are placed in family settings within the BCP area wherever possible. Carers and externally commissioned providers are supported to provide the care and support that BCP Council as Corporate Parents strive to achieve for our children and young people.

BCP strives to improve the quality of care for our most vulnerable children and young people, and is committed to ensuring everyone leads a fulfilled life, maximising opportunity for all as set out in BCP Council Corporate Strategy 2024 – 2028.

The data provided in this report is as of 2023 and annual updates will be published.

For clarity, Adoption and Special Guardianship is not covered within this document. A separate report with their strategic intentions is available from the Aspire Adoption Agency.

2. The Sufficiency Duty

This document fulfils BCP Council's Sufficiency Duty in respect of Section 22G of the Children Act 1989. The Act places a duty on Local Authorities to take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient accommodation for children in Care within their local area. Each Local authority has a duty, under section 10 of the Children Act ('the 2004 Act') to make arrangements to promote co-operation with its relevant partners with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area. This Duty was further outlined in statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2010 which made explicit the requirement for local authorities to act strategically to address gaps in provision by ensuring that plans to meet this duty were included in relevant commissioning strategies.

This guidance is issued as part of a suite of statutory guidance documents which, together with the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations'), set out how local authorities should carry out the full range of responsibilities in relation to care planning, placement and review for Looked After children.

The guidance also highlights the importance of partnership working between local authorities and partners. This Sufficiency Strategy should therefore be seen as closely linked to other local planning documents, the BCP Children's Services Self-Assessment, the Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2024, Early Help Partnership Approach and Strategy 2024 – 2026 and Corporate Parenting Strategy Brighter Future for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 –2026.

There are a range of legal duties associated with an overall 'Sufficiency Duty' on local authorities as part of the Children Act, 1989, to secure accommodation for children in their care within the local authority area:

- Section 17(1) sets out the general duty of a local authority to provide a range and level of services to children in need and their families in a local area that are appropriate to their needs
- Section 20 requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need within the area if they appear to require accommodation
- Section 21 requires a local authority to accommodate certain children who are remanded or who are subject to a criminal court order

- When deciding on the most appropriate placement, Section 22 requires a local authority to give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a local authority foster parent
- Section 22C sets out additional factors which must be taken into consideration when deciding the most appropriate placement:
 - allowing child to live near their home
 - not disrupting child's education/training
 - enabling the child and other sibling to live together
 - meeting the needs of disabled children
 - providing accommodation in the local authority area unless that is not reasonably practicable
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017 extends the duties on all local authorities to have regard to a set of Corporate Parenting Principles when exercising their functions in relation to children in Care and Care Experienced young people up to the age of 25.

3. National and Local Strategies

3.1 National Strategy:

Stable Homes Built on Love - following an Independent Review of Children's Social Care, the government published a new strategy 'Stable Homes Built on Love' (February 2023) which outlined six pillars to transform Children's Social Care:

- Pillar 1: Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families
- Pillar 2: A decisive multi-agency child protection system
- Pillar 3: Unlocking the potential of family networks
- Pillar 4: Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care
- Pillar 5: A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one
- Pillar 6: A system that continuously learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data.

3.2 Local Strategies:

3.2.1 Corporate Parenting Strategy Brighter Future for Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People 2024 -2026, outlines eight key priorities:

1. Trusted and Safe Relationships – children and young people feel valued, connected and safe and that they belong.
2. Education, Employment and Training – BCP Council holds high aspirations for its children and young people and offer children in Care and Care Experienced young people the same opportunities to achieve at school, college and university as their peers wherever possible.
3. Opportunities Growing Up – BCP Council will have high aspirations for all children in Care and Care Experienced young people; they will encourage children and young people to think big, and champion potential and celebrate successes.
4. Identify - Ensure all children in Care and Care Experienced young people have a strong sense of identity and an understanding of their Care story.
5. Co-Production - Life experiences are at the heart of how services are designed.
6. Home and Housing - children in Care and Care Experienced young people will live somewhere they feel safe and loved.

7. Health and Support - Improve health and well-being by making sure health services and health information provided are high quality.
8. Caring for those who care - children in Care and Care Experienced young people have the opportunity to thrive through the support carers and social workers give. BCP council will aim to ensure that those who support children in Care and Care Experienced young people have all the resources they need to care to the best of their ability, they will know that they are appreciated and feel supported by BCP Council.

Corporate Parenting Strategy Mission – *“to be the best corporate parents and grandparents so that our children in care and care experienced young people have bright futures; we care about you, we have high aspirations for you, we never give up and are determined to achieve the best for you”.*

3.2.2 Early Help Partnership Approach and Strategy 2024 – 2026

The partnership is committed to delivering effective services that ensure pregnant parents, babies, children, young people and their families feel happy, healthy, safe and secure within stable family and community networks. There are five key objectives to the strategy:

1. Provide access and pathways to the right people, for the right conversations at the right time, so families get the help they need when they need it most
2. Build a strong multi-agency skilled partnership that works together to support local families
3. Build resilience in families and communities, equipping them with what they need to wrap support around unborns, babies, children and young people
4. Reduce risks for our unborns, babies, children and young people who are identified as being at significant risk of harm
5. Evidence the impact the partnership is having on the work it is doing and use family voice to shape future service design.

3.2.3 Children’s Services Self-Assessment April 2024 / Childrens Social Care and Early Help Improvement Plan and SEND Improvement plan

Alongside the Children’s Services Improvement Plan 2024 and the SEND Improvement Plan 2024, the Self-Assessment informs service development over the next 12 months (2024/2025). Children’s Services is working hard to ensure that core values are embedded and services ‘start with the child and stay with the child’, whether Children’s Services involvement is brief or lengthy.

3.2.4 Children and Young People plan 2021 – 2024

The BCP Children and Young People’s Partnership is an alliance of leaders from organisations across the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) area, that support children and young people to stay safe and achieve the best possible outcomes.

- Children and young people have the opportunities and are supported to achieve their full potential in education, learning and future employment
- Children and young people can enjoy healthy lifestyles and make positive choices.
- Children and young people are accepted a valued members of society enabling them to achieve within, and contribute to, the wider community
- Children and young people are supported to be resilient in the face of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A **new five-year Children and Young People's Partnership Plan** will be launched in 2025 and is an important statement of BCP's commitment to children and young people. It will provide clarity in respect of new priorities and how they will be delivered and achieved.

**Key sufficiency pressures
in BCP
and strategic commissioning
priorities 2024 – 2028**

4. Key sufficiency pressures in BCP, strategic commissioning priorities and high-level success measures 2024 – 2028

This strategy seeks to address the sufficiency, quality and sustainability of appropriate placement provision, which will support the best possible outcomes for our children and young people by ensuring there is a range of provision that supports cultural diversity and meets the individual needs of each child or young person, as well as seeking value for money within the available resources.

The reduction in local authority funding means that even greater focus needs to be given to delivering value for money in the commissioning of provision for children in Care and Care Experienced young people. The challenge for BCP Council, as with all other local authorities, is to continue to improve and sustain high quality provision and services whilst also delivering efficiencies. Financial pressures at a national level will result in continued financial pressure at a local level and will mean that BCP council needs to carry on achieving value for money through commissioning.

This section of the strategy sets out how BCP Council plans to meet these challenges and pressures over the coming three years (i.e. 2024 - 2028).

4.1 Key sufficiency pressures summary

The following key sufficiency pressures have been identified.

Children In Care	Care Experienced Young People	Children's Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing number of children in Care, rate higher than national average • Higher proportion of children placed in residential settings • Too many children placed out of area because of insufficient suitable placements within the BCP area • Limited choice of local or national placements for children with complex needs • Understanding the quality of provision through robust monitoring and contract management practice • Too many other local authorities placing young people in supported accommodation which impacts future housing sufficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint planning between Children's Services and Housing preparing young people for independence • Lack of affordable move on accommodation due to economic position of BCP Council; for example, rental market is competitive with student accommodation and lack of social housing • Suitable accommodation for young people being released from custody • Young people's ability to live independently and maintain tenancies e.g. financial pressures • No high support accommodation post 18 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial pressure due to the rising costs of placements • Insufficient Short Break provision to meet need • Lack of consistent engagement with providers which impacts on market sufficiency within the BCP area • Placement of UASC by the Home Office

4.2 Key Priorities

As a result, the following 6 key priorities with actions and high-level success measures have been agreed to ensure BCP council has sufficiency of placements in the future;

Priority 1 - Ensure there is sufficient local family-based care available in the BCP area, so more children can live within a family home.

What will be done

- 1.1 Review the in-house foster care recruitment and retention strategy in order to ensure an increase in local family based provision (foster care).
- 1.2 Launch the Mockingbird fostering model through our Fostering Service.
- 1.3 Work collaboratively with regional colleagues to develop the Southwest regional Fostering Recruitment Hub with the aim of increasing sufficiency of in-house provision.
- 1.4 Continue to provide high quality training and support with the aim of retaining foster carers.
- 1.5 Review the internal 'retained carers' scheme, accessible for children in Care requiring emergency care.
- 1.6 Evaluate the internal fostering service to ensure provision is created with an aim of reducing the numbers of children going into residential care who have a Care Plan of fostering.
- 1.7 Ensure internal Supported Lodgings provision is seen as a viable option for Care Experienced young people by raising awareness of its benefits and positive outcomes.
- 1.8 Work collaboratively to register our internal Supported Lodgings Scheme in line with Ofsted guidance.
- 1.9 Once the internal Supported Lodgings Scheme is registered with Ofsted, work with Commissioning colleagues to ensure this option is explored for children in Care aged 16 years plus.
- 1.10 Develop a recruitment strategy for the Supported Lodgings Scheme.
- 1.11 Bring the Special Guardianship Service back in-house from Aspire Adoption.
- 1.12 Work strategically with the South-Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework to increase sufficiency of local provision.
- 1.13 Re-build partnerships with local on and off framework Independent Fostering Agency providers, noting the number of local foster care beds which are filled by other local authority children.

Measure of Success

Success measure – the number of Children in Care living locally in family-based care increases.

Success measure – the number of foster care households within BCP increases.

Priority 2 - When children need to live in a residential home, ensure there is sufficient locally based residential provision within the BCP area to meet the needs of those children and young people who cannot, or chose not to, live in a family setting.

What will be done

- 2.1 Improve data reporting, analyse all cohort needs across the service, benchmark and understand trends to meet and predict demand for children requiring residential care or access to respite provision
- 2.2 Map all local residential provision, understand usage by other local authorities and impact on local sufficiency and determine need for BCP council.
- 2.3 Work strategically with the South-Central Residential Framework to increase sufficiency of local provision based on analysis of need.
- 2.4 Consider all regional framework arrangements based on national findings and provider feedback, linked to the benefits of local authority partnership working.
- 2.5 Hold providers accountable for their charges and understand the level of profit to ensure value for money and delivery of outcomes.
- 2.6 Produce a Short Breaks Position Statement, review needs and eligibility criteria, ensure local service can meet all needs. Co-produce the offer with all partners.
- 2.7 Work with regional colleagues and with local NHS partners to consider the development of a residential provision for children with complex needs.
- 2.8 Explore regional secure provision through the Southwest Sufficiency group.

Measure of Success

Success measure - the number of Children in Care placed in residential children's homes will decrease.

Success measure - there is sufficient homes locally to meet the needs of children in Care.

Priority 3 - Increase supported accommodation provision and further develop a sufficiency model which offers a range of provision models (high to low support) so children and young people have a choice to move through a pathway of services, offering a range of homes across the BCP area which shall prepare them for independence.

What will be done

- 3.1 Understand the sufficiency and quality of local provision, through effective process and monitoring activity, for example Ofsted registration ratings and mapping of providers.
- 3.2 Implement greater oversight of young people who have high support packages, implementing regular meetings with providers and all partners.
- 3.3 Work with providers and all partners to consider preparation for independence in a timely manner and ensure support hours / packages are reasonable, in line with independence planning.
- 3.4 Seek to utilise local provision for BCP children rather than them residing out of area.
- 3.5 Develop registered supported accommodation provision locally for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care aged under 18 years.
- 3.6 Review commissioning intentions for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Care Experienced young people, ensuring accommodation is suitable.
- 3.7 Work collaboratively with our external market, in-house supported lodgings scheme and housing to meet the accommodation needs of all Care Experienced young people.

Measure of Success

Success measure – young people moving into supported accommodation can live in an area of their choice within BCP.

Success measure – increase in supported accommodation with lower-level support helping young people to transition more effectively to independence.

Priority 4 - Re-establish positive partnership and collaboration between Housing, Children's Social Care and Commissioning, focusing on the Joint Housing priorities for Care Experienced young people.

What will be done

- 4.1 Work together across all Directorates to embed a corporate parenting response to the accommodation needs of Care Experienced young people.
- 4.2 Review and map the sufficiency of supported and independent accommodation provision available across BCP council for Care Experienced young people.
- 4.3 Review and re-launch the Youth Homelessness Board.
- 4.4 Review the housing pathway and options for Care Experienced young people.
- 4.5 Consider a collaborative review of the Accommodation Planning Panel, linked to the implementation of Children's Services 'gateways'.
- 4.6 Inform the design of the Single Homelessness Accommodation Provision with provision identified specifically for Care Experienced young people.
- 4.7 Ensure knowledge of, and contribution to, the Homewards partnership work in the BCP area to work towards eradicating any risk of homelessness for our Care Experienced young people.
- 4.8 Embed training and share knowledge of the Joint Housing Protocols.
- 4.9 Support the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy.

Measure of Success

Success measure – increase the number of good quality housing provisions available in a timely way for Care Experienced young people.

Success measure – There will be no Care Experienced young people placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation or experiencing homelessness.

Priority 5 - Improve relationships with providers through open and transparent engagement in order to further develop services to meet the needs of BCP council's children and young people.

What will be done

- 5.1 Re-build the relationships with BCP local area providers and review the commissioning arrangements with on and off framework providers.
- 5.2 Establish quarterly provider engagement events for each care sector, seek to understand barriers, develop the market to meet all children and young people's care / support needs including those with a disability.
- 5.3 Actively engage with providers who wish to be inventive within the market.
- 5.4 Create a market development plan of provision.

- 5.5 Participate in regional collaborations to enhance learning, practice and aid the shaping of the market.
- 5.6 Develop reunification and our family support offer, consider returning children to their families where appropriate.
- 5.7 Consider the need for a Supported Accommodation framework, seek views from the market and local authorities with established framework arrangements.
- 5.8 Continue to work in partnership with our providers in preparation for Ofsted inspections between 2024 - 2028.

Measure of Success

Success measure – Provider Engagement Events are embedded, attendance and engagement by the external market creates established partnerships which improves local sufficiency. Providers feel valued.

Success measure - More children and young people successfully return to their family with a positive, wrap around package where appropriate.

Success measure – BCP Council develops trusted relationships with providers who work with the local authority to manage the sufficiency within the local and regional markets.

Priority 6 - Embed governance and quality assurance frameworks to ensure compliance and support strategic decision making in the future.

What will be done

- 6.1 Develop and embed a robust commissioning governance and commissioning quality assurance framework to understand the quality of provision and hold providers accountable.
- 6.2 Understand the trends of children in Care through the Gateway panels to ensure the right children are in our Care, e.g. legal status.
- 6.3 Update the existing contracts register for children’s services, thus informing the strategic commissioning plan and assurance in respect of procurement compliance (noting the implementation of the new procurement regulations).
- 6.4 Aim to only place children in provision that is judged ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted.
- 6.5 Improve data collection using current digital systems to inform sufficiency planning.
- 6.6 Work in partnership with providers to regularly monitor all provision rated ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children to allow them to remain in their home.
- 6.7 Be actively engaged in the procurement compliance planning, ensuring that commissioning of provision meets the required quality assurance and contract monitoring compliance standards.

Measure of Success

Success measure - Targeted and reactive quality assurance visits completed each month by the Commissioning and Contracts service.

Success measure - All managers, staff and partners when they visit children and young people within a placement have a clear understanding of their role in quality assuring and report any concerns through to the Commissioning team, addressing them also within the provision.

5. Evidencing delivery of the strategy and future reviews

Governance is through the overarching Children's Services governance arrangements and the Children's Services Improvement Board. Recognising the improvement work required in Commissioning, a Commissioning Improvement Board which is to be chaired by the Director of Children's Services, will oversee the delivery of this Strategy and Action Plan.

This Commissioning Improvement Board will report on progress every quarter to the Children's Services Improvement Board. This will be done through:

- Children's Commissioning highlight reports.
- Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People Sufficiency Action Plan summaries.
- Children's Social Care and Early Help Scorecard.

Action Plan

The Commissioning Service have an action plan developed as a result of this strategy. The action plan is to be updated monthly on progress, report into the Improvement Board quarterly and be updated and reviewed annually to ensure that it responds to emerging needs, trends, and legislation.

Measuring Success

Whilst there are high level success measures detailed in this strategy, the Children's Social Care and Early Help Scorecard has more detailed measures of success to understand the impact of the delivery of the strategy, alongside an emerging dedicated commissioning scorecard to be overseen by the Commissioning Improvement Board.

Partnership Engagement

Partnership engagement with current and prospective providers of care and support for children in Care and Care Experienced young people will be essential to the delivery of this strategy.

Acting on what our children and young people tell us

The views, desires and aspirations of our children in Care and Care Experienced young people will be sought through Unite and Ignite, specific events and engagement opportunities to ensure they have been listened to, heard, understood and delivered to meet their needs.

Local Context and Data

Summary of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People in BCP and where they live

6. Local Context and data

6.1 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

BCP Council formed in April 2019. It is a local authority area that is home to over 400,000 residents and has the 8th highest population of all unitary authorities in England. The area's population is predicted to grow by 2% until 2028, this growth will be driven entirely by net migration.

There are 73,855 children aged 0-17 years living in the BCP area. 51.3% are male and 48.7% are female.

There are 555 children currently subject of a Child Protection Plan (0.8%), 19.3% of children are eligible for a free school meal, with 24.8% of families living in poverty after housing costs.

There are 98 state-funded schools, comprised of 66 primaries, 21 secondary schools, 4 all-through schools and 7 special schools. 88.7% of schools are rated Good or Outstanding for overall effectiveness. Educational attainment for all key stages is above the national average.

BCP is an area of significant disparity with areas considered to be amongst the most and least deprived in the country. Understanding where these areas are, and the types of deprivation that affects them most, is important for service planning and delivery by BCP Children's Services and its partners.

According to data from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) 8,614 children are from absolute low-income families in the BCP area (less than 60% of median income). This is 10% of those aged 0-19 and 13% of those aged under 16 – 17 years.

7. Summary of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People in BCP and where they live

7.1 Children in Care

- In 2019/20 following Local Government Reform (LGR) children entering care numbers peaked at 526, followed by a steady reduction until the end of March 2023 when it reduced slightly to 520.
- During 2022 / 2023 the children in Care figure increased by 4.6%, this is higher than the national average of 2%.
- This is equivalent to a rate of 71 children in Care per 10,000 children under 18 years, which is higher when compared to the England rate of 70 and statistical neighbours which is reported as 69.6.
- The majority (202/ 39%) of BCP Council's children in Care are aged between 10 and 15 years old, followed by children aged 16 – 18 years (156/ 30%). 296 (57%) are male and 395 (76%) are white.
- There has been a decrease of 8 (2%) Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. This cohort now represents 9.4% of BCP Council's children in Care population.
- 7% of children in Care left Care through Special Guardianship which is in-line with statistical neighbours (9%) but lower than national averages (12%).
- 11% of children in Care were adopted, which is higher than the previous year at 9%, and higher than statistical neighbour and England averages (10% and 9% respectively).

- 73% are living in foster families compared to Statistical Neighbours (67%) and England (68%) averages.

7.2 Care Experienced Young People

- As of 31 March 2023, the overall Care Experienced young people population was 433, with 297 (68.5%) young people in touch with the service. There are 374 (86.3%) Care Experienced young people who are in receipt of an active service.
- Of the Care Experienced young people in receipt of a service, there are 116 (31%) who are female, 254 (67.9%) are male and 4 (1%) are intersex.
- 274 (78.9%) of the 347 Care Experienced Young People who are in receipt of a service are deemed to be living in suitable accommodation.
- 83 (88.7%) Care Experienced Young People are aged 17 – 18years and 191 (89.2%) aged 19 – 21 years are living in suitable accommodation.
- 225 (60.2%) of BCP Council's Care Experienced young people are white or white British.
- There are 343 (79.2%) Care Experienced young people in Employment, Education and Training.

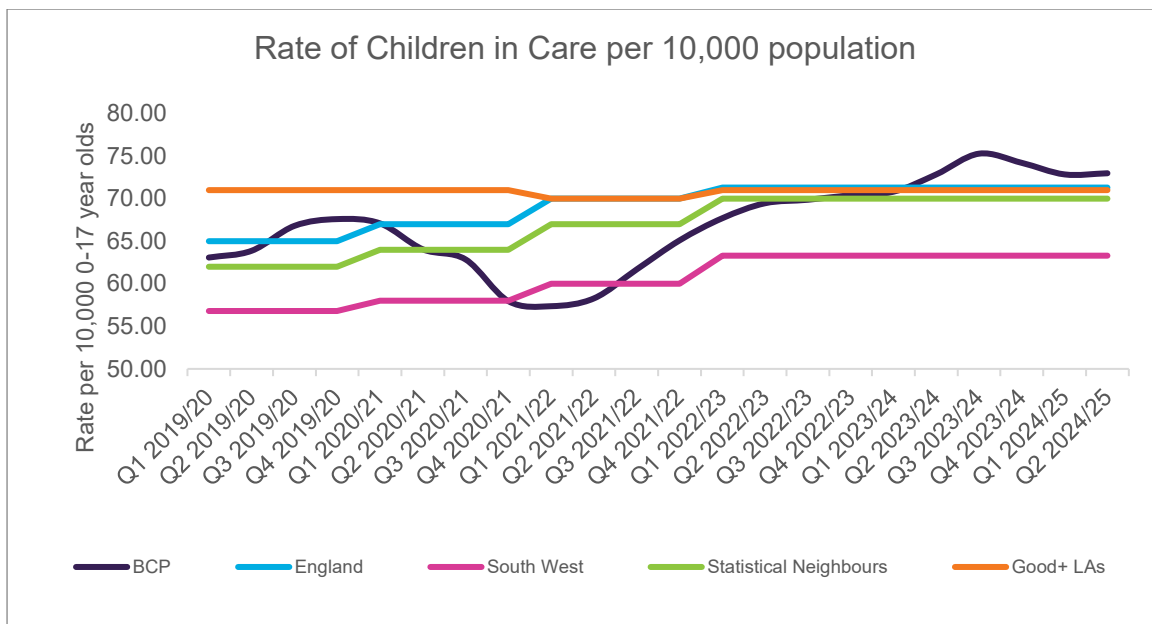
7.3 Placement Information

- The majority of our children in Care are in a placement provided by the Local Authority (235/45.19%).
- 401 (77%) are living in family settings.
- 312 (60%) of children in Care are matched to long-term foster carers.
- 384 (73.8%) of children now live within 20 miles of their parental home.
- 411 (79%) of children in Care have been in the same placement for at least 2 years.

8. Analysis of Children in Care

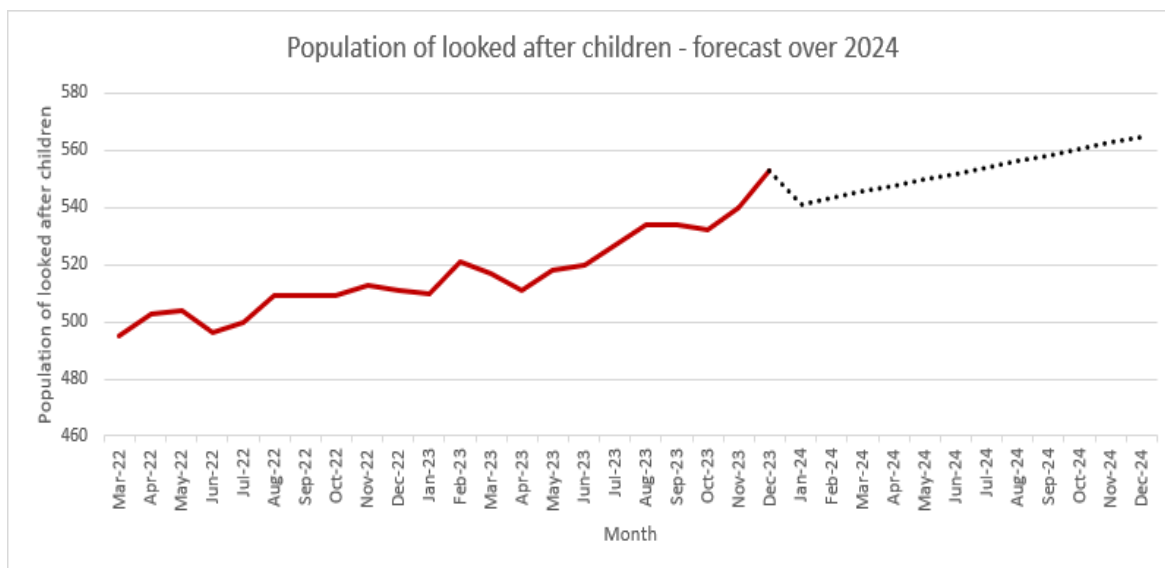
8.1 Children In Care – Population

In 2019/20 following Local Government Reform (LGR) our Children in Care numbers peaked at 526, followed by a steady reduction until the end of March 2023 when the figure reached 520. This is equivalent to a rate of 71 children in care per 10,000 children under 18years, compared to the England rate of 70 and BCP statistical neighbours which is reported as 69.6.



8.2 Population of Children in Care forecast 2022 to 2024

The below graph is a linear regression model and is only based on volume over time, commencing in 2022 which is the point where Children in Care numbers started to increase continuously.



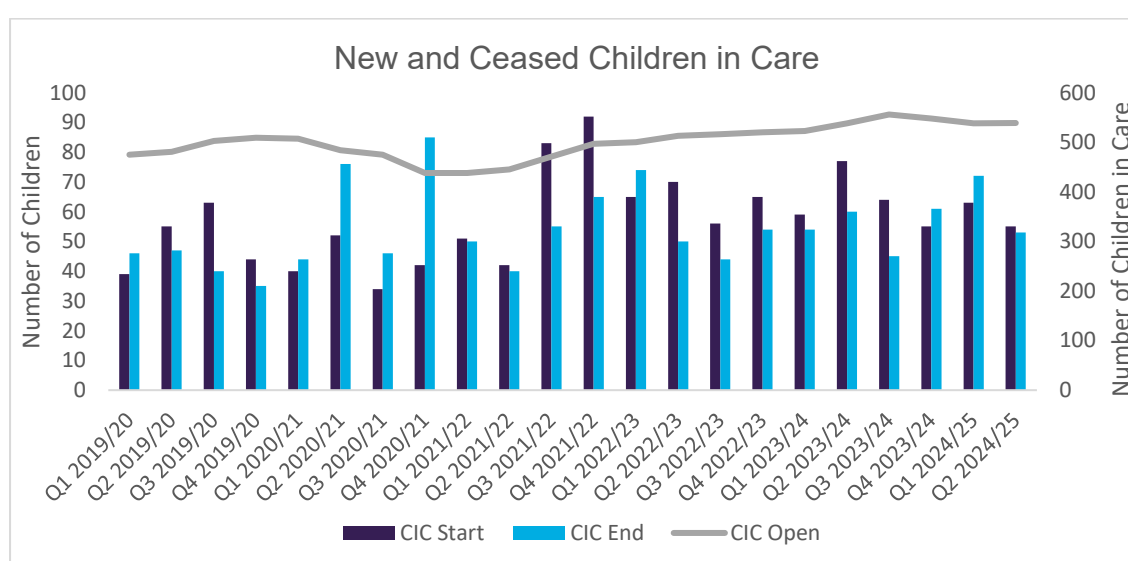
8.3 2019/2020 to 2022/2023 new and ceased Children in Care data

In quarter 4 of 2022/2023, 65 children came into Care, and 54 left Care which is an annual figure of 256 children coming into Care and 222 leaving Care. Of those who left Care, 102 children aged out of Care and 73 children were reunified.

These figures translate to a rate of 34.9 children coming into Care per 10,000 which is above the 2021/22 comparator rates of 26.0 for England, 23.0 Southwest and 28.4 statistical neighbours.

The rate for those leaving Care is 30.3%, also above the 2021/22 comparator figures of 26.0% for England, 21.0% South West and 25.6% statistical neighbours.

Numbers of Children in Care between 2019/2020 – 2022/23				
Financial Year	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
Number of Children in Care	509	438	497	520
Percentage		-13%	+13%	+4.6%
Children who came into care	201	168	268	256
Children who ceased to be in care	168	251	210	222

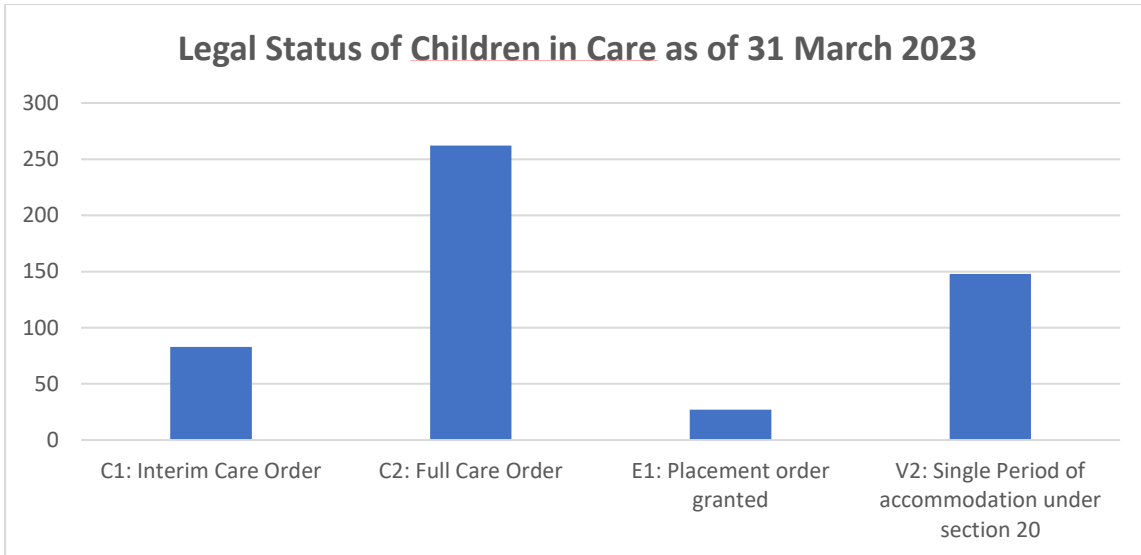


8.4 Legal Status of Children in Care

BCP Council has a high percentage of children in Care with section 20 consent and are consistently above all comparator’s averages with 28% at the end of 2022/23 compared to the published national average at 17% for this period.

There are currently 107 children accommodated with this legal status for 3 months or longer (with the longest having been for over 5 years). This percentage has steadily been increasing quarter on quarter over the year.

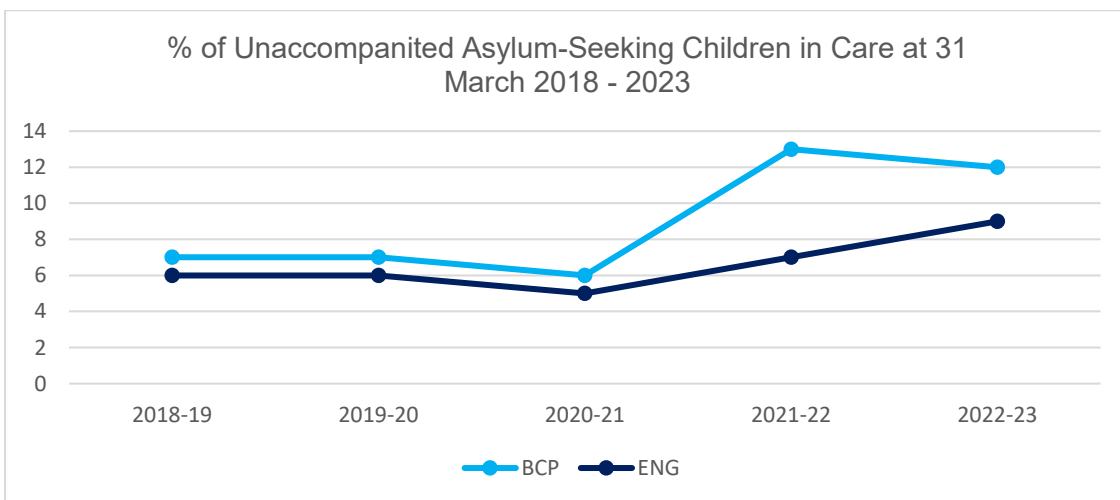
262 (50.4%) of all children in Care as of 31 March 2023 were subject of a Care Order, which is below all the comparator figures of England 58.0%, statistical neighbours 53.4%, Southwest 55.0% and Good+ local authorities 54.0%. There are currently 27 children in Care with a Placement Order, of which 9 were issued over 9 months ago.



8.5 Population of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care forecast 2018 – 2023

At the end of quarter 4 2022/2023, 49 children in Care are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (9.4% of the population of children in Care). This figure is lower than previous years; as of 31 March 2022 the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care cohort was 11.47% of the overall children in Care population.

There are difficulties in forecasting sufficiency accommodation needed for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children due to the unpredictable way they come into Care, for example in November 2021 BCP council had 40 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children enter Care due to the home office “setting up” hotels within the BCP area. At the height there were 5 hotels which formed part of The Home Office dispersal. Further benchmarking is required linked to the requirements of the National Transfer Scheme.

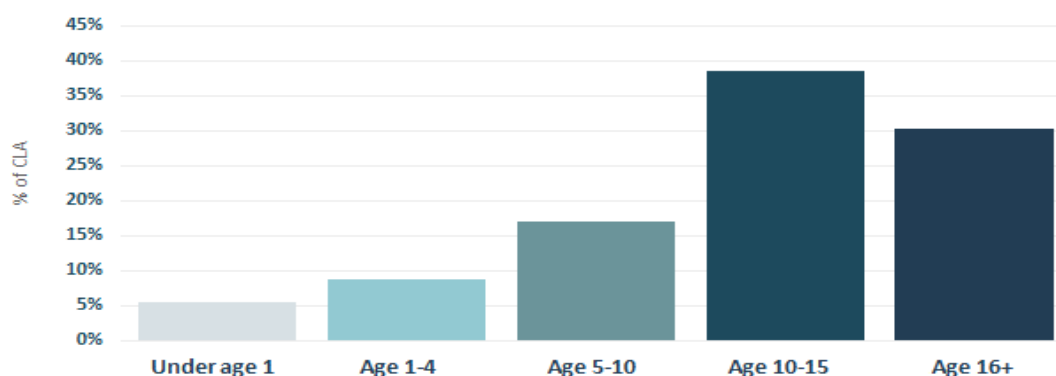


Numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care between 2019/2020 – 2022/23				
Financial Year	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
Number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children in Care	32	23	57	49
Percentage of Children in Care Population	6.29%	5.25%	11.47%	9.42%
South West	4%	3%	6%	9%
England	6%	4%	7%	9%
Stat Neighbours	8%	6%	9%	11%

8.6 Children in Care by Age

The majority (202/ 39%) of BCP Council's children in Care are aged between 10 and 15 years old, which is slightly higher than the national average of 28.7%, followed by children aged 16 – 18 years (156/ 30%). This collective data (69%) means there is a disproportionately high number of older children in Care. This has been the case in BCP Council for the last three years. In March 2020 this cohort was 66% as a comparator.

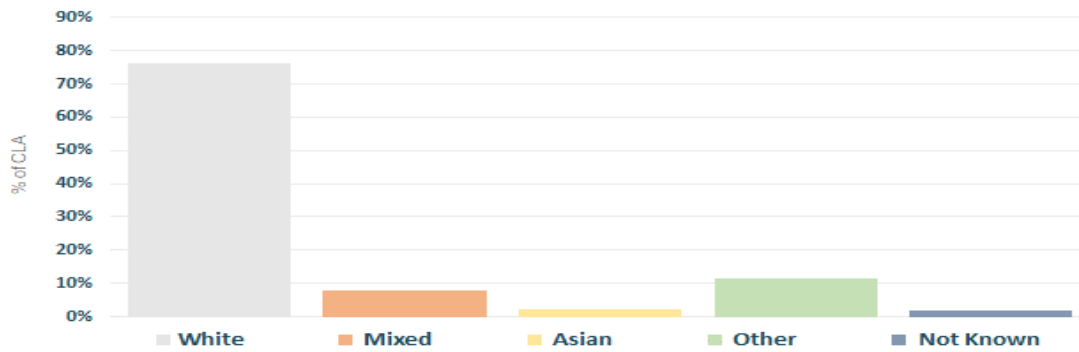
There are slight variations in each of the age brackets compared to 2020 (a slight decrease in the 0-5 (previously 35%), and an increase in the 10-15 (previously 35%).



8.7 Children in Care by Ethnicity

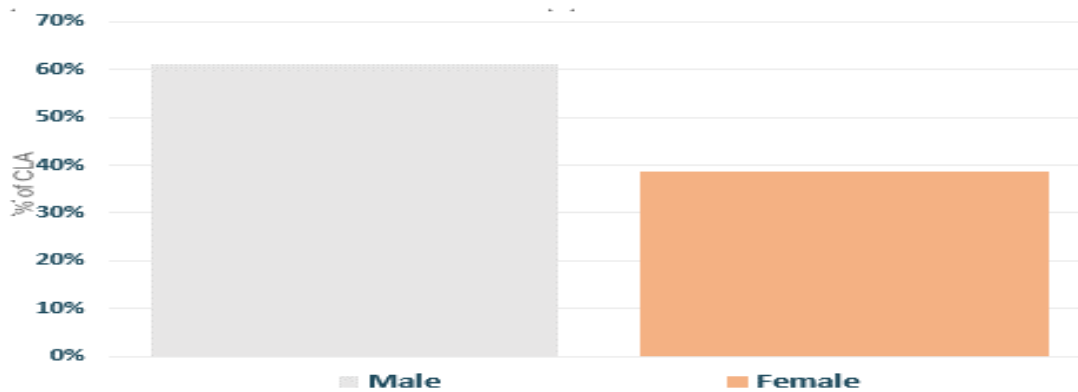
The majority of BCP Council's children in Care population are from white backgrounds (395/ 76%) followed by children from mixed heritage (47/ 9%) and other backgrounds (78/ 15%).

Comparing this to BCP Council child population data for the 0-17 population the % for those ethnicities is much lower; 14 (2.8%) mixed and 7 (1.5%) for other backgrounds.

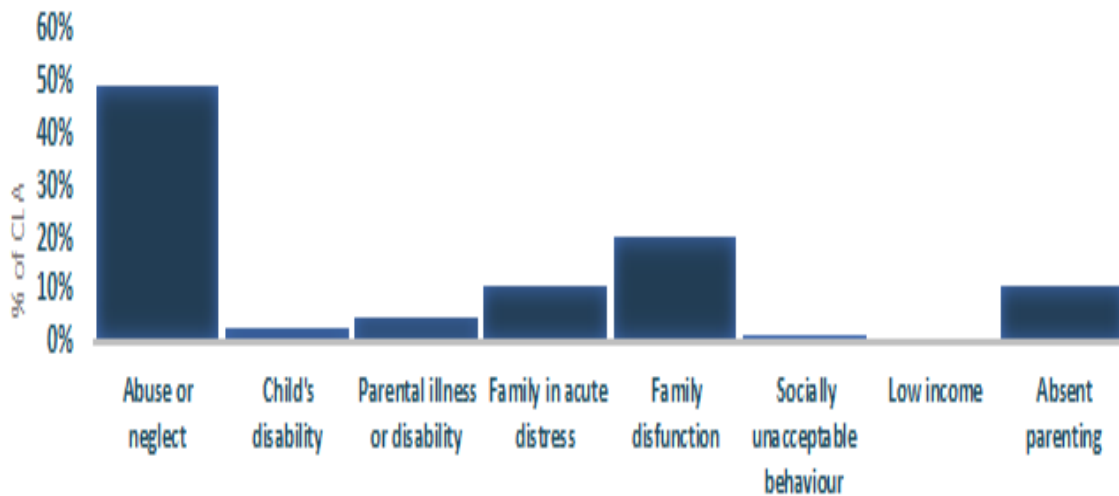


8.8 Children in Children by Gender

The gender split of children in Care tends to be more even than the national and regional picture, with 61% being male, 38% female, 1% indeterminate, compared to BCP Council's cohort of 296 (57% male and 224 (43%) female).



8.9 Children in Care by Primary Need Category



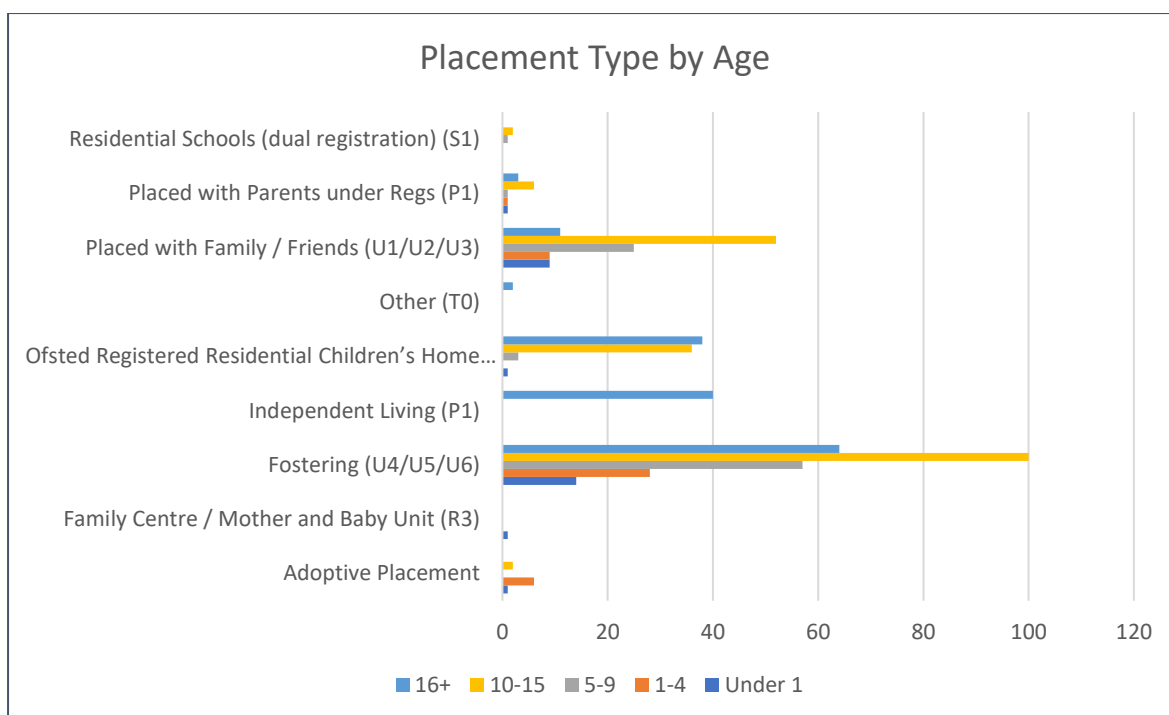
50% of children entering BCP Council's Care have experienced abuse or neglect, with family dysfunction being the second primary need. BCP council data mirrors the findings of the National Census of 2021 which reported the most common reasons (known as category of need) for children coming into Care as abuse or neglect (43%). Around one in five (21%) of children enter Care because of family dysfunction (where parenting capacity is chronically inadequate).

8.10 Children in Care by Placement Type

The table below shows the majority (390/ 75.7%) of BCP Council's Children in Care population are placed in family settings (Adoption / U1 / U2 / U3 / U4 / U5 / U6).

There are many children in Care (78/ 15%) living in residential care. National data reflects 19% with statistical neighbours at 22% (Good plus local authorities 20%).

BCP Council has 7 unregistered children's home placements as of March 2023. These are recorded in the data figures presented as living in residential placements. Of the 7 children placed there are 3 females, two aged 15yrs and one aged 13yrs. 4 males, three aged 15yrs and one aged 14yrs. All children were placed outside the BCP area.



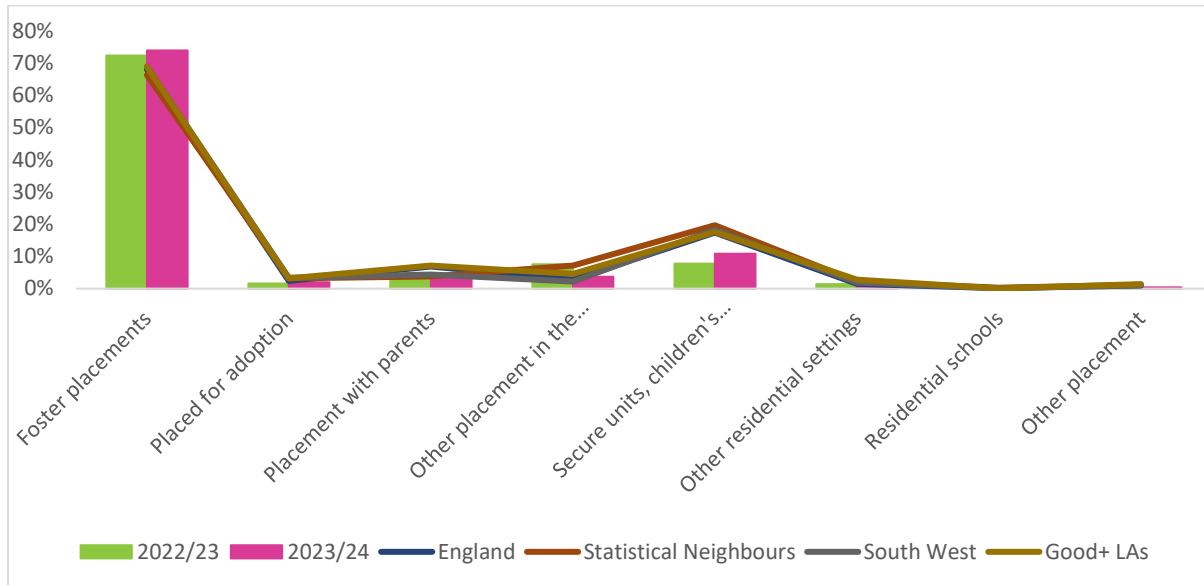
The table below shows the number of BCP Council's Children in Care population living within each placement type and overall percentage.

Placement Type	Under 1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+
Adoptive Placement	1 (3.6%)	6 (12.8%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.0%)	0 (0%)
Family Centre / Mother and Baby Unit (R3)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Fostering (U4/U5/U6)	14 (50%)	28 (59.6%)	57 (65.5%)	102 (51.3%)	63 (39.6%)
Independent Living (P1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	40 (20.1%)
Ofsted Registered Residential Children's Home (R1/R2/H5/K2)	1 (3.6%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.4%)	35 (17.6%)	37 (23.3%)
Other (T0)	2 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.5%)	2 (1.3%)
Placed with Family / Friends (U1/U2/U3)	8 (28.6%)	10 (21.3%)	25 (28.7%)	50 (25.1%)	13 (8.2%)
Placed with Parents under Regs (P1)	1 (3.6%)	3 (6.4%)	1 (1.1%)	7 (3.5%)	3 (1.9%)
Residential Schools (dual registration) (S1)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.1%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%)
Total	28	47	87	199	159

8.11 Placement Type

The graph below highlights the changes in the usage of the most common placement types as of 31 March 2023.

The majority of children in Care are in a home provided by the local authority Fostering Service 235 (45.2%). 203 (39.0%) are in private provision (Independent Fostering Agency). The number of children in Care placed in foster care provision is 438 (84.2%) which is higher than the national average at 68.0% and statistical neighbours at 66.3%. 60% of our children in Care are long-term matched to foster carers.



8.12 Location of Placement

National Context

Under the Children Act 1989, accommodation provided by local authorities for children in Care must be “within the local authority's area” unless this is “not reasonably practicable.” There is, however, no provision in legislation that prohibits a local authority from placing a child out of its area (an “out of area” placement) and guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) states that an out of area placement may sometimes be most appropriate for the child.

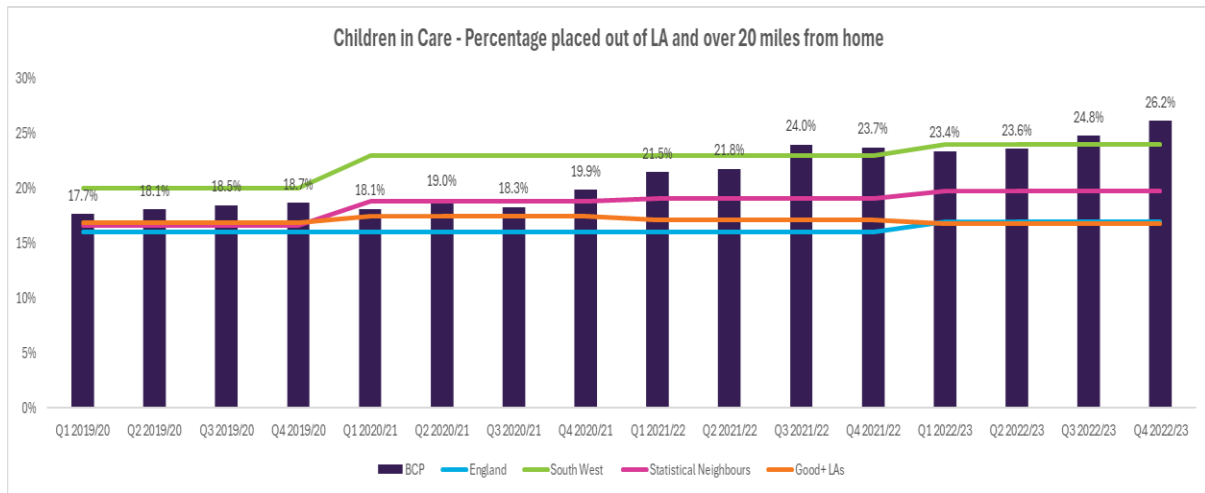
The number of children in Care placed outside their home local authority increased by around 28% between 2010 and 2020, rising from 37.0% of all placements to 41.0% over the period.

For clarity, BCP Council's children in Care data is reported by the distance between the accommodation provision in which children or young people are currently residing and their parental home postcode; Ofsted indicator of more than 20 miles is used.

384 (73.8%) of our children in Care population reside within 20 miles of parental home postcode.

163 (31.3%) of our children in Care population live more than 20 miles from parental home address; this is higher than the national average of 17%, Southwest at 24% and statistical neighbours 19.8%. This is an increase of 2.8% since the beginning of 2022/2023.

Of the 163 placements recorded as being over 20 miles from parent’s home postcode, 75 (45.7%) children in Care had been in placement for more 2 years, and 49 (29.9%) have been in placement for between 12 – 23 months. The remaining cohort had been in placement for less than 12 months. Many of these children were living with Connected carers from within their family network.



8.13 Placement Stability

Of the children in Care at the end of 2022/2023, 63 (12.1%) had been in Care for under 3 months, and 210 (40.5%) had been in Care for over 2 years. 410 (79%) of children in Care aged under 16 who have been in Care for 2.5 years or more have been in the same placement for at least 2 years. This is above all comparators.

Of the 316 (60.7%) children who had been in Care for over 12 months, 6 (1.9%) have had 3 or more placements in the last year. This is well below the England 2021/22 average of 10.0% and the Good+ local authorities average of 9.8% and a 0.3% increase on the figure at the end of the previous quarter.

In fostering the long-term matching has increased compared to the previous year. 22 children were long-term matched in 2022/23. 312 (60%) of our cohort are long-term matched.



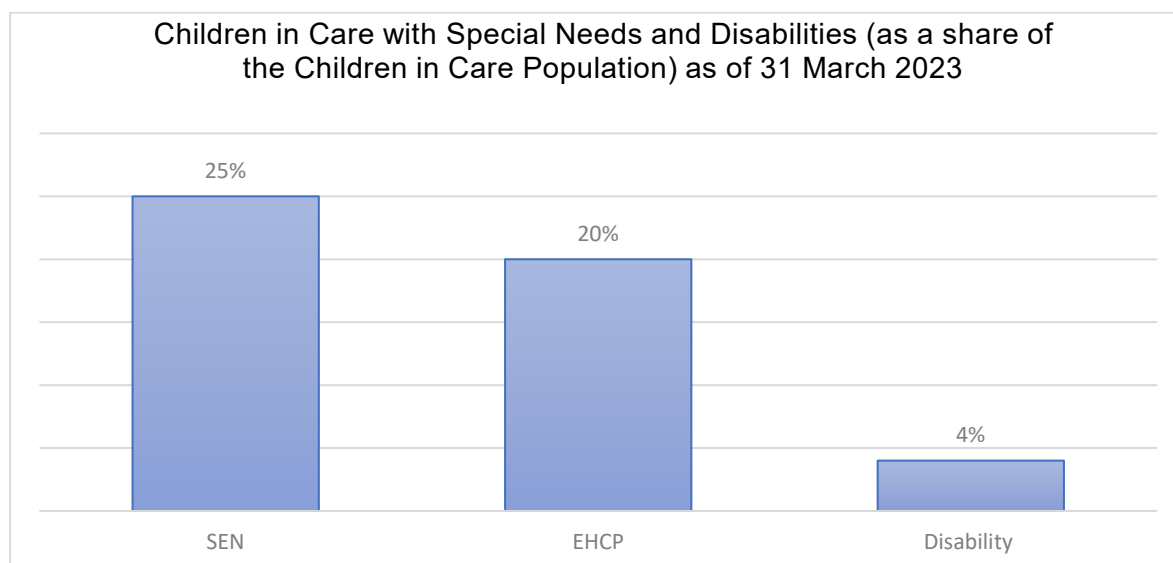
BCP Stability of placements for Children in Care	2023
% Children in Care for over 12 months	316 (60.7%)
% of Children in Care for over 12mths with three or more placements during the year	3 (1.9%)
% of children in Care continuously for at least 2.5 years aged under 16 who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years	410 (79%)

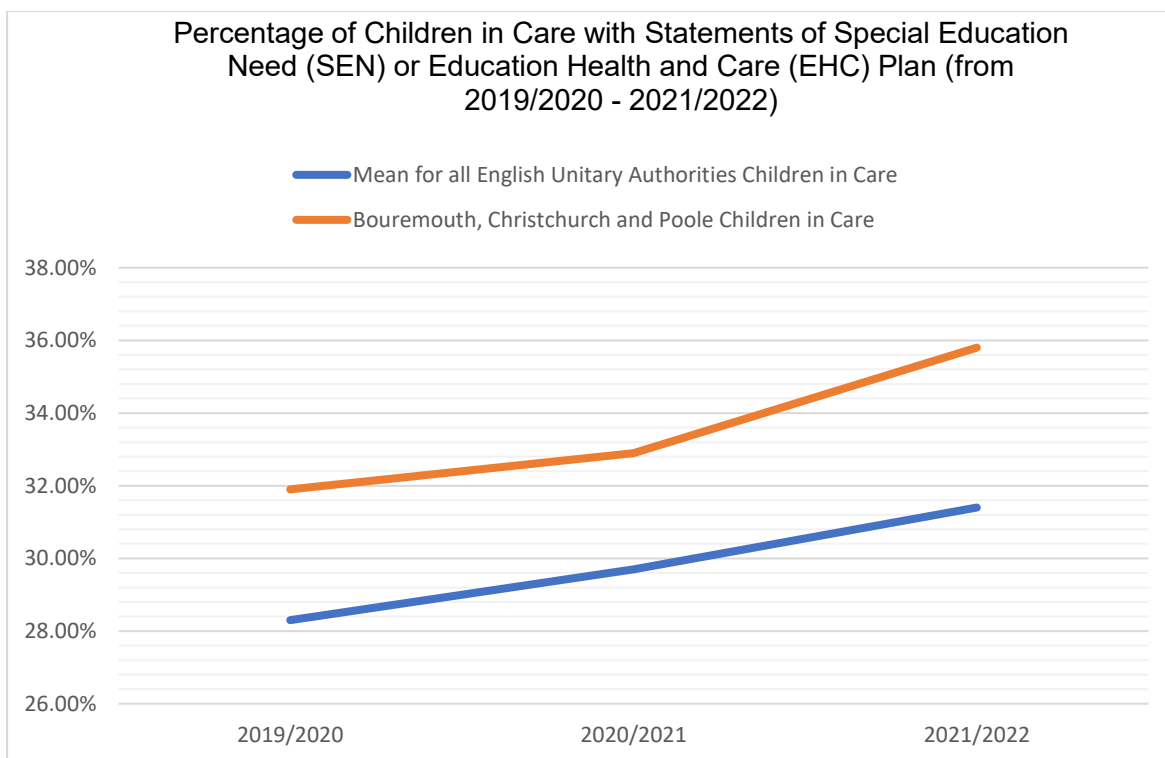
8.14 Children in Care with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

No historic comparable data is available for previous years. 2022/2023 is used as a benchmark to monitor the number of children in Care who have a Special Educational and/or Disability need.

The number of all statutory school aged with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) who have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has steadily increased since 2019/2020, by 4.1%.

The number of statutory school aged children in Care aged 2 – 17 years with statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) who have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased slightly (3.9%) since 2019/2020.





9. Analysis of Care Experienced Young People

9.1 Care Experienced Young People - DfE Guidance on Reporting

For young people who turned 17 or 18 during the latest year, Care Experienced young people information is required if they left Care before or on their birthday, (for example, if a young person turned 17 or 18 in the latest year and left Care before their 17th or 18th birthday then information is required; or if a young person left Care on their 17th or 18th birthday in the latest year, then information also is required).

However, if the young person is still in Care on their 17th or 18th birthday, then Care Experienced information is not required. For example, if a young person turned 17 or 18 in the year, and was in Care on their 17th or 18th birthday but left Care the day after, then Care Experienced information is not required for this young person.

9.2 Care Experienced Young People - In Touch with the service

Care Experienced young people who are in touch with the service are aged 17 – 21 years. As of 31 March 2023, the overall Care Experienced young people population was 433, with 297 (68.5%) young people being in touch with the service. This represents an increase of 45 (17.8%) Care Experienced young people compared to 2019/20 population which reported that 252 young people were In-Touch.

	BCP March 2023	National 2022/23	Statistical Neighbours 2022/2023	Good+ LA's 2022/2023
In touch 17-18years	95%	93%	92%	94%
In touch 19-21years	91%	92%	92%	93%
EET 17 – 18years	69%	66%	66%	68%
EET 19 – 21years	49%	56%	57%	58%
Suitable Accommodation 17 – 18years	89%	91%	89%	91%
Suitable Accommodation 19 – 21years	87%	88%	87%	89%

9.3 Age of Care Experienced Young People - In Receipt of a Service

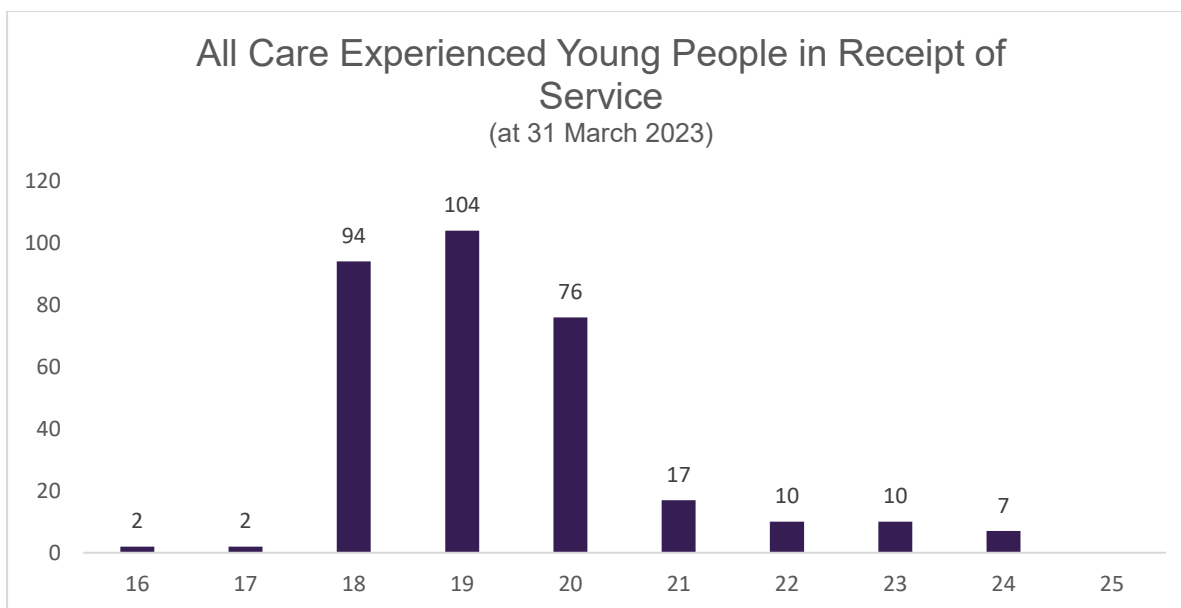
Care Experienced young people who are in receipt with the service are aged 17 – 24 years, so therefore the figures stated below will differ from those who are In-Touch with the service.

There are 374 (86.3%) Care Experienced young people in receipt of a service.

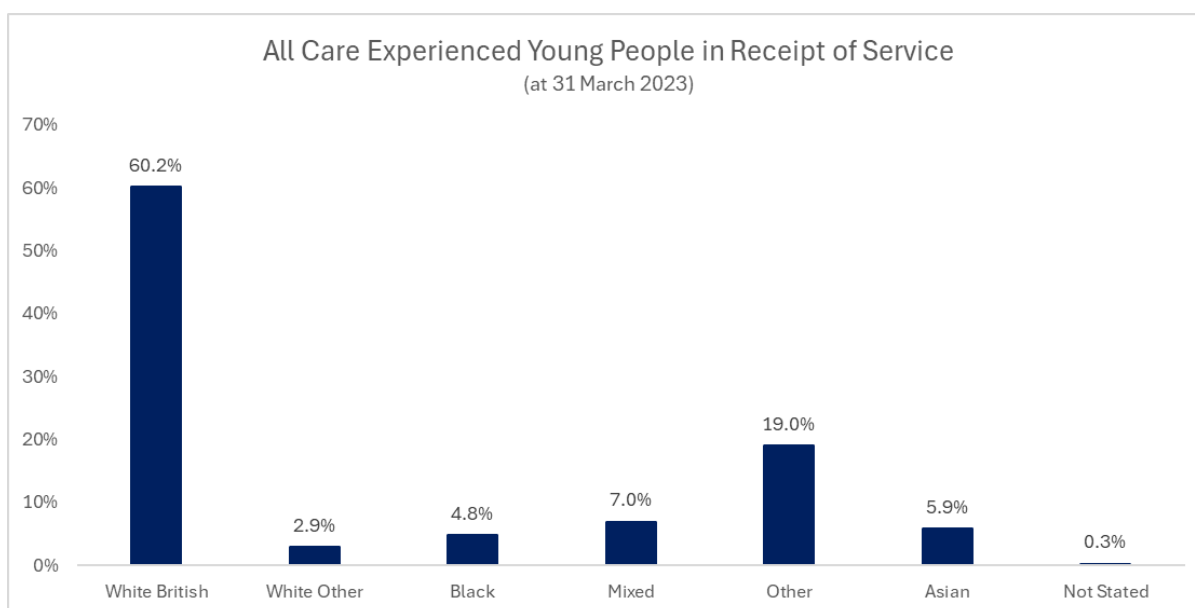
The largest cohort (27.8%/ 104) are aged 19 years, followed by 25% (94) aged 19 years, with 20% (76) aged 20 years.

The majority (274/ 73%) of Care Experienced young people are aged between 18 and 20 years old, followed by Care Experienced young people aged 21 years 4.5%. This fits with the national expectation that young people are supported by a named worker as a Duty up until they turn 21, and thereafter as an optional request from the young person.

The collective data 224 (59.8%) means there is a high number of older Care Experienced young people 19 – 24 years.



9.4 Care Experienced Young People by Ethnicity – In Receipt of a Service



Of those Care Experience young people who are receiving a service, 225 (60.2%) are White British. There are 71 (19%) who have been recorded as 'other ethnicity'.

9.5 Care Experienced Young People Living in Suitable Accommodation

The cohort is aged between 17 – 21 years, they are a proportion of those who are In-Touch with the service.

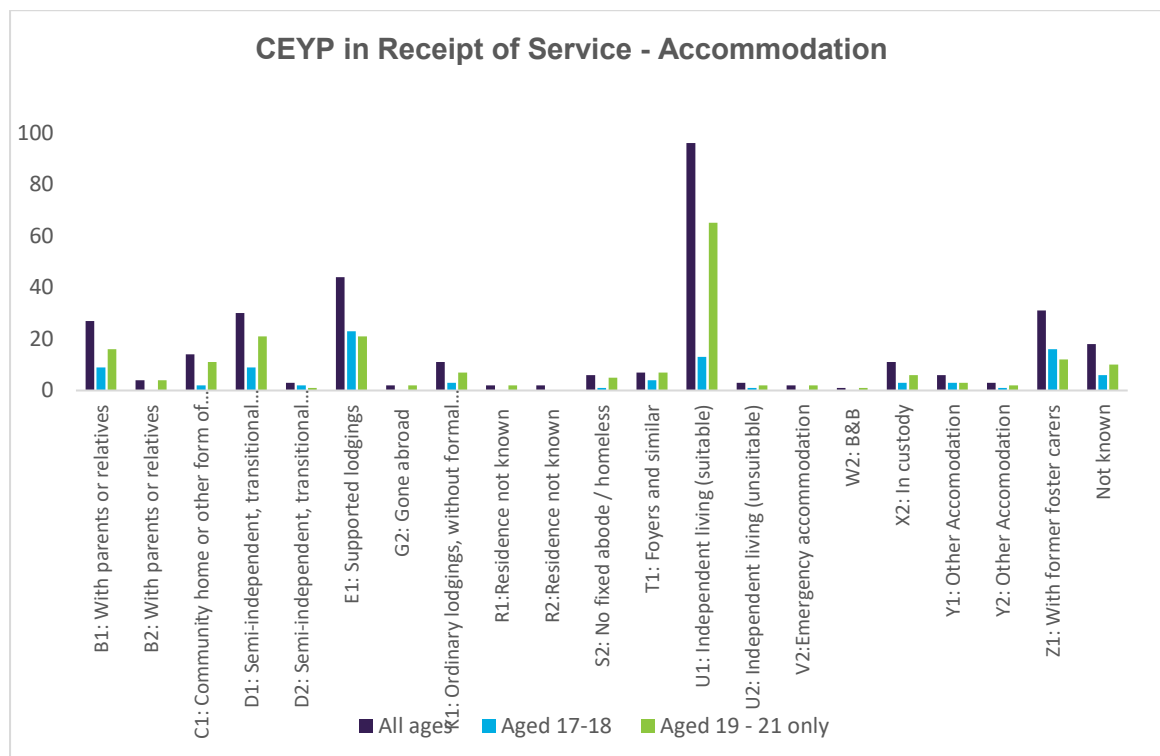
274 (97.2%) of all Care Experienced young people were living in suitable accommodation; performance is above the England rate of 88.0% of 19–21-year-old Care Experienced young

people in suitable accommodation, 89.0% in the Southwest, and 89.0% amongst Good+ local authorities in 2021/22.

The graph below shows the type of accommodation Care Experienced young people are residing in as of 31 March 2023.

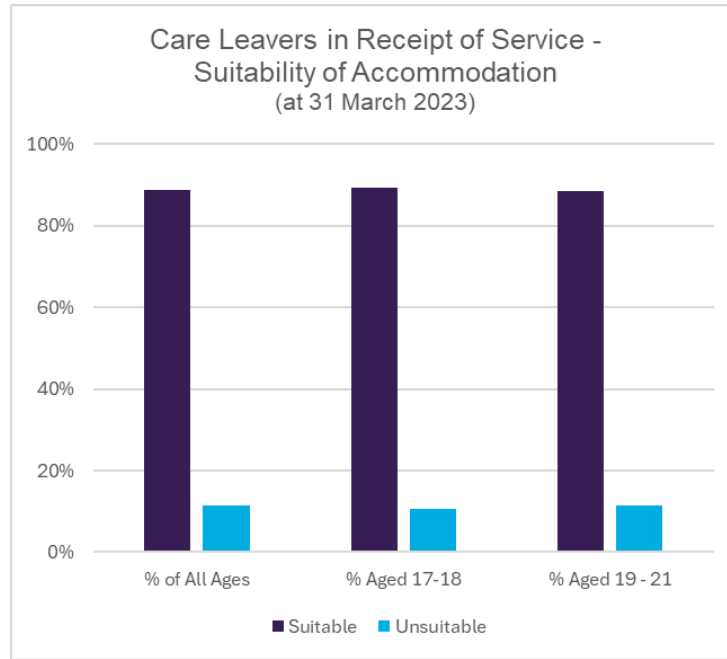
126 (45.9%) of Care Experienced young people are living in semi-independent or independent accommodation, 44 (16%) are residing in supported lodgings family-based care. There are currently 31 (11.3%) Care Experienced young people who have remained with their foster carers in a Staying-Put Arrangement.

1 (0.3%) of BCP Council’s Care Experienced young people population is residing in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.



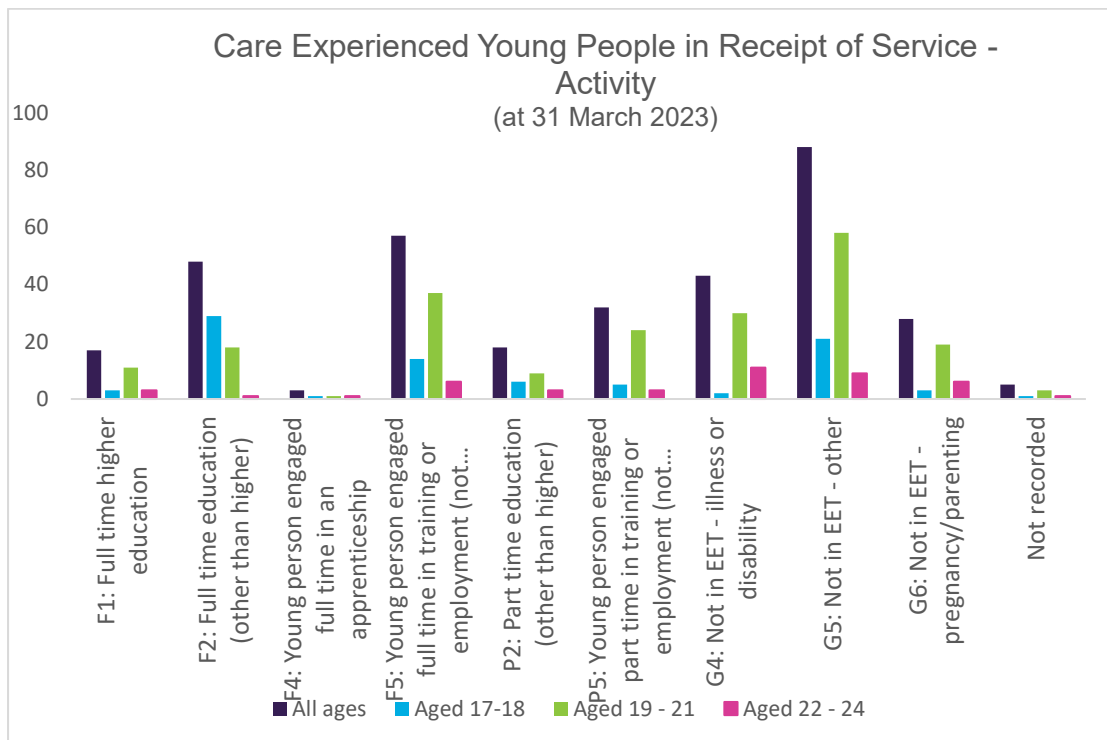
9.6 Care Experienced Young People - Accommodation Suitability by Age

Of the total Care Experienced young people cohort (274) who are deemed to be living in suitable accommodation, there are 83 (88.7%) aged 17 – 18 years and 191 (89.2%) aged 19 – 21 years living in suitable accommodation (equates to 89.0% in the Southwest, and 89.0% amongst Good+ local authorities in 2021/2022).



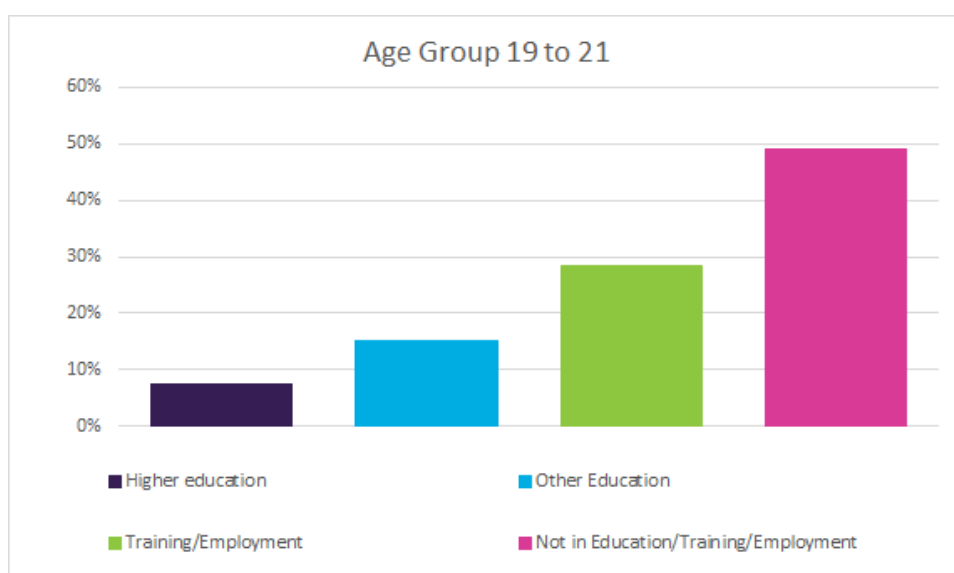
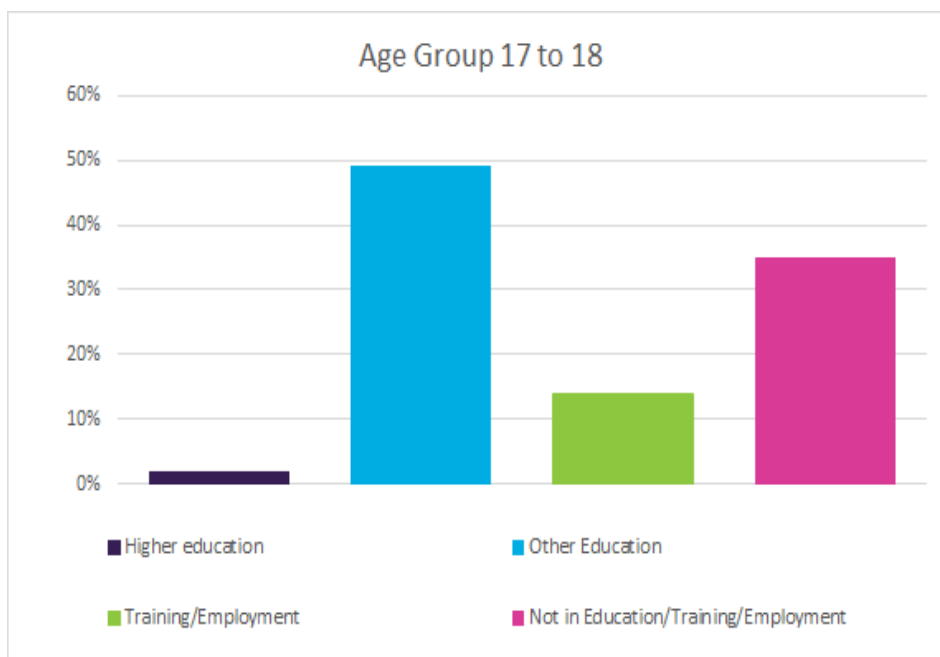
9.7 Care Experienced Young People who are in Employment, Education and Training by Education Type

Employment, Education and Training data is based on an overall cohort of 343 Care Experienced young people. Of this cohort there are 84 (53.6%) in education, employment, or training. 125 (17.2%) are in full time education, employment, or training, 59 (32%) are in part time education, employment or training. 159 (46.3%) were not in employment, education or training.



9.8 Care Experienced Young People who are in Employment, Education and Training by Age

As of the 31 March there are 184 Care Experienced young people in Employment, Education and Training; of this 61 (33.1%) are aged 17 – 18 years, 105 (57%) are aged 19 – 21 years and 18 (9.7%) are aged 22 – 24 years. This compares to an England average of 55.0%, a regional average of 56.0% and 57.7% amongst Good+ local authorities in 2021/22 for 19 – 21 year old Care Experienced young people.



10. Supply of Accommodation Provision

10.1 A National Picture

It is evident across England, Wales, and Scotland that there are concerns around how the children's social care market is currently operating, specifically the issue of how sufficiency continues to be a major challenge for every local authority.

On 31 March 2023: 83,840 children were in the care of local authorities, up 2% on 31 March 2022. This is contrast to the BCP Council figure which increased by 4.6%.

10.2 Registered Residential Children's Homes

As of 31 March 2023 there was a 9% increase in the number of children's homes (to 2,880) and a 7% increase in the number of places (to 10,818) compared with 31 March 2022. Of these, 81% were run for profit.

As of 31 March 2023 private companies ran 85% of children's homes (2,450), providing 81% of places (8,791). Local authorities ran 12% (333) of children's homes, providing 14% of places (1,529).

Although all regions had an increase in the number of children's homes during 2022/2023, homes are still not evenly distributed across England. Similar to 2021/2022, the Northwest accounts for a quarter of all children's homes and almost a quarter of all places.

BCP Council's sufficiency of registered residential children's home provision has increased by 2 homes in the last 12 months, existing providers offering additional capacity of 4 beds (26%).

Unregistered provision is only used by BCP in an emergency, where no suitable registered alternative provision can be found. It is recognised that often our most complex young people are the ones who are moved to these provisions. The placement search for a registered placements continues alongside weekly visits, professional's meetings and senior leadership oversight that ensures any child living in an unregistered accommodation is well supported. Any such providers are also encouraged and supported by BCP Children's Commissioning to register with OFSTED to regulate their provision.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, Ofsted carried out 2,741 full inspections of children's homes. This figure captures multiple inspections of some settings, while others were not inspected at during this period. In terms of outcomes, 73% were judged outstanding or good (8% outstanding and 65% good), with the remainder being judged requires improvement to be good (19%) or inadequate (9%).

Within BCP 2 homes were inspected during 2022/2023, both are owned by the same independent provider, 1 home saw an improvement from requires improvement to good and 1 home saw a decline in rating from good to requires improvement.

Independent providers receive many "request for placements" from local authorities across the UK and therefore have considerable options when matching against their homes' Statement of Purpose and children and young people already living within the home.

10.3 Residential Special Schools

As of 31 March 2023, there were 56 residential special schools registered as children's homes nationally, offering 1,457 places. This is a 10% decrease in the number of providers and a 7% decrease in the number of places since March 2022, when these totals were 62 and 1,573, respectively.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, nationally no residential special schools registered as children's homes opened.

There has been no growth in BCP local area residential special school provision for over three years.

10.4 Residential Family Centres

Nationally Residential Family Centres represent a small proportion of social care providers and placements overall, but saw a substantial increase compared with 2021/2022, with a 15% increase in settings (from 68 to 78) and a 20% increase in potential capacity (from 371 to 444).

There are no Residential Family Centre's located within the BCP area.

10.5 Fostering Households

At the end of March 2023, there were around 43,400 fostering households in England. This total has remained stable over the last 5 years, but the make-up has altered.

Nationally since 2019, the number of mainstream local authority households has fallen by 2,560 (11.4%), and the number of family and friend's households has increased by 1,470 (21%). The largest subset of fostering households continues to be mainstream local authority households, which currently account for 34% of the total.

As of March 2023, the Independent Fostering Agency sector reported 15,170 (34%) mainstream fostering households, although there has been a reported increase nationally of 45 households the overall percentage of the fostering market remains at 34%.

At the end of March 2023, family and friend's households (sometimes known as kinship foster care) accounted for 8,400 (19%) of all active fostering households, an increase of 1,470 (21%) households since 2019.

Overall, the local authority Fostering Service had a net gain of 14 households (28%) from 2021/2022.

10.6 Independent Fostering Agencies

The Independent Fostering Agency sector now accounts for 15,170 (34%) mainstream fostering households nationally, the percentage of the market has remained the same compared to 2019. There were also 319 independent fostering agencies operating in England on 31 March 2023; of these, 85% were run for profit.

BCP Council's local sufficiency within the Independent Fostering Agency market has seen a decline of 8 Independent Fostering Agency households (8%) during the last 12mths.

Providers now have more power in the market and can choose which children they take. This means it takes much longer to find suitable homes for children. It also means that providers are less willing to enter block contracts.

10.7 Average Cost of Care - Nationally

The Local Government Association, following a survey of all local authorities in October and November 2023, has reported that the number of children’s social care placements costing £10,000 or more per week has risen in five years.

Based on the responses to this survey, local authorities across England spent approximately £4.7 billion on Children’s Social Care placements in 2022/23, compared to a budgeted figure of £4.1 billion – an overspend of almost £670 million (16%).

There were 120 such placements in 2018/19, rising to 1,510 in 2022/23. For most local authorities the highest cost fell between £9,600 and £32,500 a week. Nearly every local authority (98 per cent) said a lack of choice in placements was driving the high prices.

9 out of 10 (93%) Local Authorities also highlighted children needing help with increasingly complex needs, including mental health needs or exhibiting challenging behaviours, as a factor.

The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care found that investment of £2.6 billion over four years was needed to reform the children’s social care system and rebalancing spending towards earlier help. To date, the Government has committed £200 million over two years.

It has been reported that now more than 80% of residential children’s homes in England are run to make a profit, with large, debt-laden chains owned by private equity investors increasingly taking over smaller companies.

10.8 Overview of Local Provision

The table below includes local Children’s Social Care internal provision and externally commissioned provision specifically for Children in Care (under 18 years), 163 providers who offer a total of 505 beds. Please note, some providers are commissioned for more than one provision type.

Overall, 63.8% (332) of the overall children in Care population is placed in foster care (in-house and IFA) provision.

Placement Type	Description	Number of Providers in BCP	Maximum Capacity within BCP
In-House Foster Care	Foster carers commissioned by the Local Authority. (123 mainstream / 3 Parent and Child / 6 foster to adopt carers / 4 shared carers) Excludes family and friend carers.	136 (83.4%)	235 (46.5%)
Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA)	Foster carers commissioned from the independent and voluntary sector.	15 (9.2%)	209 (41.3%)

Residential Children's Homes	Ofsted registered children's home run by the voluntary and independent sectors	5 (3%)	17 (3.3%)
Supported Accommodation Provision	Excludes hostel and foyer accommodation provision	6 (3.6%)	42 (8.3%)
Training Flats	Local authority owned flats, funded by Children's Social Care used by 17+ Child in Care or Care Experienced Young People preparing for Independence	1 (0.6%)	2 (0.4%)
TOTAL		163	505

10.9 Capacity within the Local Care Market for Care Experienced Young People

The table includes the number of Children's Social Care commissioned provision specifically for Care Experienced young people (over 18 years), a total of 176 beds.

This is in addition to Housing Related Support Accommodation provision which is commissioned by BCP Council's Housing Service.

Please note, some providers are commissioned for more than one property type.

Placement Type	Description	Number of Providers	Maximum Capacity within BCP
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Accommodation	Accommodation provision funded by Children's Social Care for young people who do not have leave to remain. (Housing of Multiple Occupancy)	3	30 (17%)
Independent Living Properties	Self-contained independent living accommodation for 18 years plus Care Experience Young People which is funded by Children's Social Care (Wallisdown Road, Platform House)	3	33 (18.7%)
External Supported Lodgings	Supported Lodgings Carers specifically for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	1	2 (1.1%)
In-House Supported Lodgings	Supported Lodging Carers employed by the local authority to offer accommodation and support to Care Experience Young People	29	34 (19.3%)

In-House and IFA Staying Put Arrangements	Extension of the initial fostering arrangements for Children in Care post 18 years (37 in-house / 11 Independent Fostering Agencies)	48	53 (30.1%)
Housing Related Supported Accommodation	Accommodation is available to all eligible young people residing in BCP aged 18 years plus, not just Care Experience Young People	1	30 (17%)
Independent Non-Maintained Residential Special School (INMSS)	Cambian provision for post 18years with an Education Health and Care Plans	1	28 (15.9%)
TOTAL		86	176

10.10 In-House Foster Care

In accordance with the [Children Act 1989](#) section [22C\(7\)](#), in determining which is the most appropriate placement the local authority must 'give preference to' a placement with a connected person i.e. a relative, friend or other person connected with the child, reflecting the principle that children should, wherever possible be brought up in their families and communities, if they cannot remain with their parents

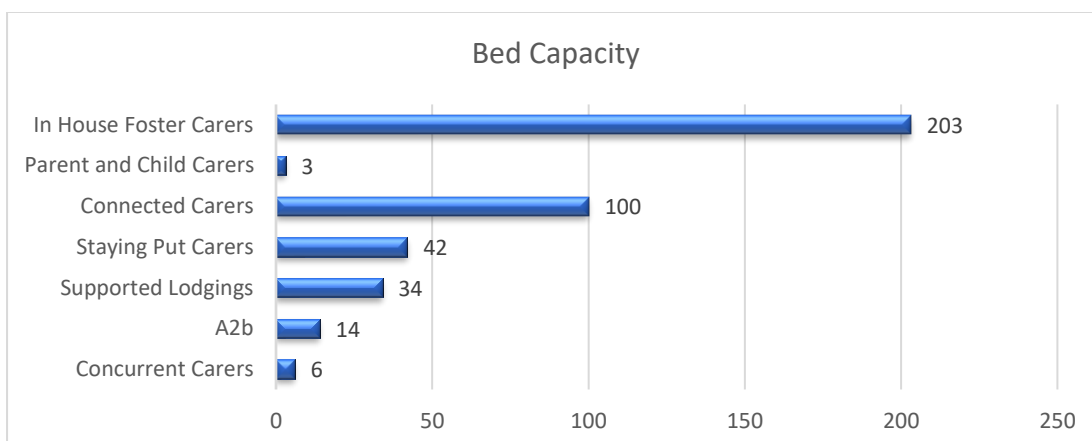
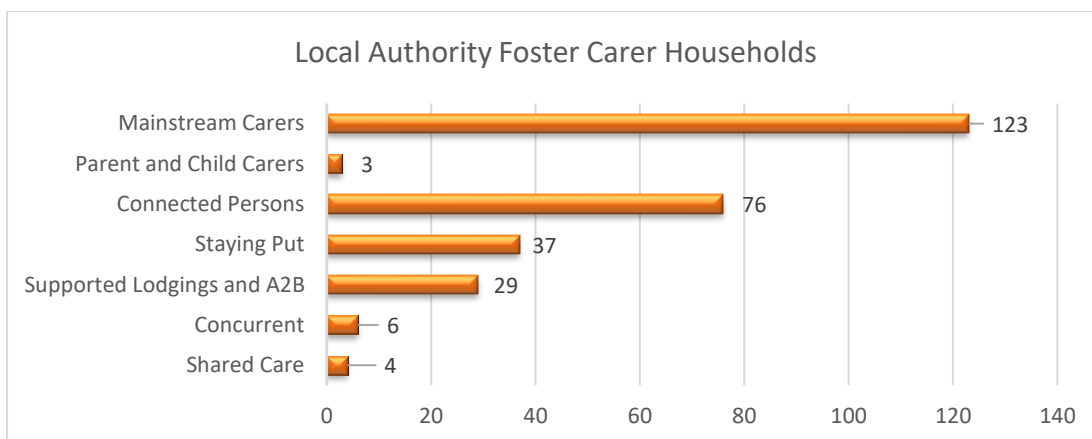
As of the 31 March 2023, there were 258 children placed with in-house foster carers, this equates to 49.6% of the overall children in Care population.

The In-House Fostering Service supported 278 fostering households, providing bed capacity for 402 children and young people. This marks an increase from last year's 369 (8%).

In the last 12 months the Fostering Service had 63 new fostering households approved (mainstream and connected carers). This is a net gain of 14 households (28%) from 2021/2022 (49).

46 fostering households resigned. 15 foster carers were mainstream, 24 were kinship carers, 1 shared carer and 6 supported lodgings carers. Reasons for resignations were not recorded.

During 2022/2023, the number of children and young people (0 – 18 years+), including Staying Put and Supported Lodgings provision has ranged from 332 to 360, which is the highest number of reported children and young people placed with in-house foster carers. This does not include the children that were placed with carers through the out-of-hours retained scheme. As of the 31 March there were 42 different Care Experienced young people in Staying Put arrangements with 37 different foster carers.



10.11 Supply of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) Placements

BCP Council works with 18 local authorities in a consortia arrangement across the South-Central region for the commissioning of Independent Fostering Agency provision. The strategic contract management function and the production of both regional and local annual sufficiency strategy provides an important insight into sufficiency planning with the external markets.

As of the 31 March 2023, there were 74 children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies, this equates to 14.2% of the overall children in Care population.

The Framework offers the following LOTs:

- Lot 1: Standard Fostering Placements (0 years +)
- Lot 2: Placements for Children with Disabilities
- Lot 3: Parent and Child Placements
- Lot 4: Enhanced Fostering Placements.

Independent Fostering Agency Framework data is taken from the South-Central Consortia Framework Sufficiency Analysis. No 2022/2023 household or bed data is available for Off Framework placement providers.

Overall, there has been a framework household reduction of 8% which equates to 10 beds.

There has also been a large reduction in the number of framework carer capacity, those who are registered for children aged 5 – 10 years (26 beds / -28%) and 11years (30 beds / -34%).

Further analysis is required to understand the falling framework availability and if this is linked to Independent Fostering Agencies moving off the framework.

Of the number of Framework foster placements made with providers, 27 (36%) of them are within BCP, however there are 47 (64%) placed out of area.

There are 209 available placements within area the BCP area, of which only 27 (12%) are being utilised.

Summary of current IFA placements				
Within BCP		Outside of BCP		Total
27	36%	47	64%	74

Year	Households	Max Placements	Vacancies	Vacancy %
2020	88	195	23	12%
2021	98	217	37	17%
2022	101	219	24	11%
2023	93	209	32	15%
Difference	-8	-10	+8	-4%

10.12 Registered Residential Children's Homes

BCP Council works with 21 Local Authorities in a consortia arrangement across the South-Central region for the commissioning of registered residential provision.

Collaboration with the Southwest Sufficiency Project supports and facilitates regional data sharing arrangements and the potential to develop a regional commissioning network and purchasing arrangements, with a shared objective of local homes for local children.

Framework Providers

As of the 31 March 2023, there were 11 framework providers within 20 miles of BCP offering a total number of 30 homes with 119 beds. In total BCP Council has 12 children placed with 5 framework providers

2 providers are located within the BCP area.

BCP Council has 5 children placed within 20 miles and a further 7 children placed with 4 framework providers located more than 20 miles from the BCP area.

Non-Framework Providers

Within BCP there are a further 3 providers who are not registered with the framework, they offer a further 5 beds.

Summary of current Framework placements				
Within BCP		Outside of BCP		Total
5	41%	7	58%	12

Sufficiency of Provision

The number of Framework registered residential provision has decreased by 4 homes in the last 12 months, this has resulted in a loss of 20 beds located within 20 miles of the BCP area.

The number of vacancies available has decreased significantly by 6.6%.

No growth in the market was reported by non-framework providers during 2022/2023.

There are 10 framework beds available within the BCP area, of which only 50% (5) are being utilised. Overall, there are 5 providers offering 17 beds.

Summary of Framework Sufficiency within 20 miles				
Year	Registered Framework Homes	Available beds	Vacancies	Vacancy %
2020	31	138	21	15.2%
2021	29	124	28	22.6%
2022	34	139	36	25.9%
2023	30	119	23	19.3%
Difference	-11.7%	-14.4%	36%	-6.6%

Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools

BCP Council also forms part of the Southwest regional flexible framework partnership for the commissioning of Independent Non-Maintained Specialist School (INMSS) and Special Post-16

Institutions (SPI) provision for children, young people and young adults aged up to 25 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (ECHP).

Important to note that one provider has a 28-bed registered Independent Non-Maintained Specialist School (INMSS) within BCP which inflates the number of beds available. BCP Council historically has not used these beds as pupils generally attend as day pupils.

10.13 Supply of Supported Accommodation

All Supported Accommodation provision within the BCP area is privately owned.

BCP Council does not own or run any Supported Accommodation provision for children in Care. All provision is spot purchased, historically there was a consortia framework arrangement in place with 6 other Local Authorities, however this ceased in January 2023.

Supported accommodation provides accommodation with support for 16- and 17- year-old children in Care, to enable them to live semi-independently. From October 2023 all supported accommodation provision needed to be registered with Ofsted.

As of 31 March 2023, BCP Council had 6 Providers offering 37 beds, in addition to this Housing Services commission a 14-bed unit specifically for children aged 16-17 years who require accommodation under Southwark (a total of 51 beds).