



Dorset children, young people and families' plan

2023-2033

Working together



Lots of organisations work together to support Dorset's young people and their families.



Because we work together, we wrote this plan together too.



We listened to children, young people and their families.



They helped us to learn about:

- what life is like for children and young people in Dorset
- their ideas for the future

Challenges



Homes

It is expensive to buy or rent a home in Dorset. Many people cannot afford the housing they need.



Transport

Dorset is mostly countryside. It can be hard to travel between towns and villages without a car.



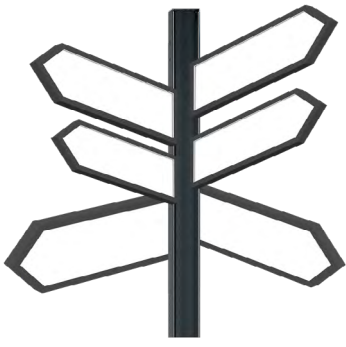
Crime

There has been an increase in crimes against girls and women.



Unaccompanied children

Children are arriving in Dorset from other countries, with no parents to look after them.



Values

Our values guide us in everything we do.



Equality: every child and every family is important. Everyone has the same rights.



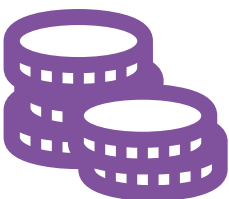
Prevention: we want to offer help as soon as possible.



Support: we work together to support families and children.



Belonging: we want everyone to feel included in their community.



Value: we spend our money well, so people get the help they need.

Our plans

The rest of this booklet is about our plans for the next 10 years:



- Best start in life

- Young and thriving



- Good care

- Education for all



- Best place to live

- Local family help



- Being safe

Best start in life

Our aim

Babies, young children, parents and carers get the support they want and need.



The first 3 years

Good health and relationships when you are young help you to have a good life.

Parents and carers

The bond between a baby and its parents or carers is very important.



Help and support

Midwives, health visitors, preschools and other services help parents and children to thrive.

Our plans: best start in life



We will:

- give parents, carers and young children the help they need, when they need it



- improve care for pregnant women and babies



- improve support for dads and male carers
- provide more child-friendly places and activities, and good childcare for babies and young children



- make sure that families get accessible information and advice

Young and thriving

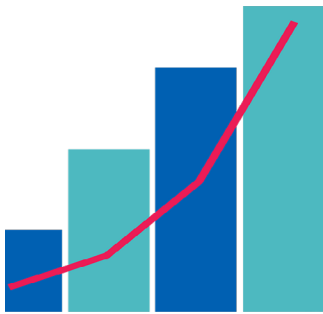
Our aim

Young people are ready for adult life.



Work and education

Young people want to be ready for adult life. Careers advice and work experience are important.



Mental Health

More young people have eating disorders, anxiety, and other mental health needs.



Crime

It is very important to stop young people becoming involved in crime.

Our plans: young and thriving

We will:



- involve young people in decisions that affect them



- support young people who are not in education, work or training



- improve mental health services

- help young people to learn how to work and live independently

- employ more youth workers

- support young people who are carers



Good care

Our aim

Families are supported to stay together. When children cannot stay with their family, they get good care.



Staying close to home

When children are fostered or adopted, we try to find a home close to the area they know well.



Family and friends

We work with family and friends of children who need care. They are often the best people to help.



Short breaks

Parents and their children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - **SEND** - sometimes need a break.

Our plans: good care

We will:



- help more young people and families at The Harbour in Weymouth, and open another Harbour service in east Dorset



- support families to make their own decisions



- find and support more foster carers, especially for teenagers and children with SEND



- give more short breaks to children with SEND and their families
- make sure that all young people have a home to live in

Education for all

Our aim

Children feel welcome and safe in schools, colleges and other places where they learn. They get the best education possible.



Schools

Most schools in Dorset are “good” or “outstanding”.



Special educational needs (SEN)

There are not enough school places for children with SEN.



Alternative Provision

These are places where young people who are not in school can learn in other ways.

For example: farms, forest schools and places to learn practical skills.

Our plans: education for all

We will:



- make sure that more children go to school regularly
- make sure that every child has a good experience of learning



- tell parents about how to get free school meals



- improve education for young people with SEN



- make sure there are enough practical courses for young people who are aged 16+

Best place to live

Our aim

Dorset is the best place to grow up, live and work.



Communities

Young people have told us they want to feel safe and welcome in their local communities.



Being heard

Children have the right to be involved in decisions that affect them.



The environment

We must all protect the environment and prevent climate change.

Our plans: best place to live



We will:

- make sure young people have places to go. For example, playgrounds, sports clubs and youth clubs



- make sure that activities and opportunities are welcoming and accessible



- listen to what children and young people think about growing up in Dorset



- use renewable energy, recycle more, and use less petrol and diesel.

Local family help

Our aim

Families get the support they need, when they need it. Children thrive in their families.



Support for families

Some families need extra help to care for their children.



Working together

Lots of different organisations in Dorset help parents and families.



Family Hubs

Local hubs are a way to organise help for families. We will offer support as soon as possible, to stop problems getting worse.

Our plans: local family help

We will:

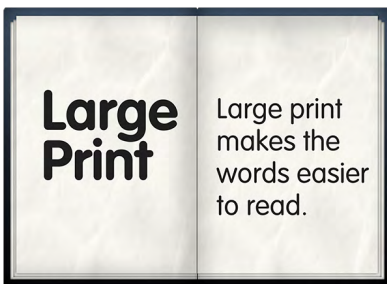


- ask families about the help they need

- make sure that all services work together to support families



- give professionals training about how to work with families and young people



- make sure there is accessible information, advice and guidance



- help families to stop young people being involved with illegal drugs

Being safe

Our aim

All young people are safe in their homes and in the community.



Young people' views

Some young people have told us they do not feel safe in their homes or communities.



Exploitation

School exclusions and being targeted by gangs can lead to young people being harmed.

Working together

We need to work with young people and families to prevent crime and keep people safe.

Our plans: being safe

We will:



- support families to keep their children and young people safe
- work together to protect children from being hurt, neglected and exploited



- make it easy to get help if you are worried about a child
- work with schools to stop bullying



- help the police to stop crime in our local communities

What next?



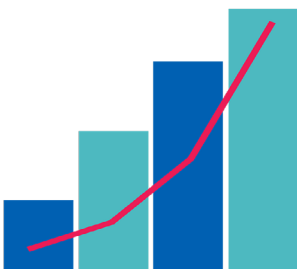
It is important to find out whether this plan is working.

We will write reports about things like:



- 16 and 17-year-olds who are not in education, work or training

- how many children are being excluded from school

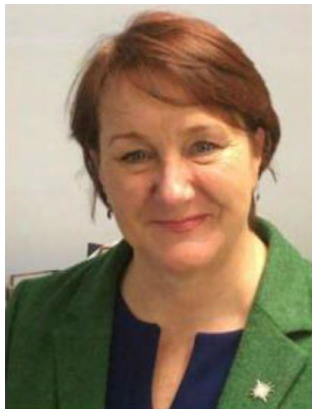


- how many children in care live more than 20 miles from home



The **Strategic Alliance Board** will read the reports. They will take action if they need to.

Final words



I'm delighted to share this plan with you. We want to create a bright future for Dorset's children and young people.

Thank you to the children and young people who helped us to write the plan.

Theresa Leavy

Executive Director People - Children



It is an honour for me to lead the Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People.

We are working together to make sure that Dorset's children get the best start in life.

Councillor Byron Quayle

Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

Useful links

Dorset Strategic Alliance for Children and Young People

Read the full version of this plan:



www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/-/children-young-people-and-families-plan-2023-to-33

Dorset Council Plan

Download an Easy Read version of the Dorset Council plan:



www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-council/about-your-council/dorset-council-plan/dorset-council-plan

Useful links



Police

If someone is in danger: 999

If it is not an emergency: 101



Safeguarding

Phone: 01305 228866



Mental health support

Phone Dorset Connection:

0800 652 0190



SEND Local Offer

[www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
children-families/sen-and-
disability-local-offer/dorsets-
local-offer](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/children-families/sen-and-disability-local-offer/dorsets-local-offer)

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Easy Read by: Clare Tarling

