



2023-  
2028

# Adult Social Care in Dorset

Dorset Story



Dorset is a county known for its natural beauty, strong communities and increasingly, its commitment to helping people live well as they age. With one of the oldest populations in the country, Dorset Council will embrace this challenge with ambition, compassion and innovation.

## Our vision

Our vision is of a county where no one is unfairly excluded or disadvantaged due to disability, age or frailty and where everyone can enjoy life as they age.

## Our mission

We want adults in Dorset to have the right help, in the right place, at the right time, enabling individuals to live the lives they choose, in the places they call home.

## Our approach

Guided by *Social Care Futures*, our approach is focused on prevention, personalisation and partnership. We promote independence, encourage early intervention and ensure Adult Social Care is recognised as a proactive and empowering part of local life, there for those who need it most, while placing prevention at the heart of what we do.

*This is our story: what we are doing, how we are doing it and how we know it's making a difference.*

## Understanding Dorset

Our Adult Social Care system operates within a unique and evolving landscape, shaped by a range of demographic, market and community factors:

- A growing older population
- Increasing diversity and complexity of need
- A dynamic care market, requiring innovative commissioning and strong provider relationships
- A thriving voluntary and community sector, key to community resilience and preventative support
- A rural geography that requires us to focus on how our services are accessed, delivered and connected across communities

Dorset Council delivers a wide range of initiatives that support people to **live independently, stay connected and have choice and control over their lives.**

## Our Commitment to Dorset Residents

Our principles and behaviours shape how we support people, how we collaborate and how we make decisions. They reflect our commitment to putting people first, working together and continuously improving.

We are guided by **Dignity & Respect**, listening carefully to what people tell us and adapting our services to meet their needs.



Our approach is **Listening & Responsive**, adapting to individual needs rather than expecting people to fit into systems. We strive to be **Inclusive and Accessible**, tailoring our services so everyone can be heard and engage meaningfully.

We believe in a **Team Around the Person**, where support is not defined by organisational boundaries but by what matters to the individual. We work in a **Strengths-Based** way, focusing on people's abilities, networks and aspirations.

We live by the principle of **"Nothing about me without me"**, "working with", not "delivering to", people. We promote **Empowerment**, recognising people want to be in control of their lives and we remain aware of **unintended consequences**, always reflecting on our impact.

We **"think community"**, recognising the importance of wider networks and relationships working in **partnership** to deliver joined-up care that makes sense to the person receiving it.

We are **legally literate**, confident in applying the law to uphold people's rights and ensure safe, ethical practice.

We recognise individuals need opportunities to make **healthy life choices** and we aim to **reduce, delay or prevent** the need for formal care, by supporting people early and promoting wellbeing.

We believe **safeguarding is everyone's business**, and we act with **professional curiosity**, asking the right questions and having honest, care-frontational conversations when needed.

We value **openness**, welcoming new ideas and being honest about what's working and what needs to change.

**Accountability and integrity** are central to our work. We own our decisions and actions, and we track outcomes to manage resources effectively.

Finally, we recognise the importance of **learning**, where continuous development and reflection is supported and encouraged. Our leaders are expected to **walk the talk**, modelling the behaviours we value and inspiring others to do the same.

Together, these principles create a culture of care that is compassionate, inclusive, and focused on helping people in Dorset live the lives they choose.

## **Priorities (2023–2028)**

We have made great progress in transforming Adult Social Care by working differently with communities, improving frontline practice and commissioning in more creative ways. These strategic achievements are not just milestones; they are changing lives:

- Adult Social Care contributes across all four priorities of the **Dorset Council Plan 2024–2029**. Through *Communities for All*, we support the development of an Age Friendly County; we help *Grow Our Economy* by creating jobs, investing in workforce development and stimulating local care markets; our work with *Housing* ensures people have access to affordable, supported accommodation that promotes independence; and by embedding sustainability into commissioning and service design, we support the priority to *Respond to the Climate and Nature Crisis*.



- **The ‘Waiting Safe and Well’ programme** is embedded into practice to manage risks for individuals awaiting an assessment, using risk rating tools, regular check-ins, information advice and guidance. This ensures people are supported and safe while waiting, enables prioritisation based on risk and supports informed, person-centred decision-making.
- **The expansion of Direct Payments and Individual Service Funds** has given hundreds of people greater choice and control over their care.
- **Strengthening the front door to Adult Social Care** to improve early intervention and prevention pathways, to make it easier for residents to access support, preventing crisis. This enables access to the right information, advice and guidance, preventative equipment, adaptation solutions and reablement at the first points of contact.
- **Improving Mental Health pathways** by enhancing information, advice and guidance and commissioning new services, including forensic pathways, alongside supported living through engagement with providers, partners and people with lived experience. People are gaining safer housing options, more tailored support and a clearer pathway to recovery and independence.
- **Delivering new Extra Care Housing schemes.** New developments in Bridport, Wareham, Dorchester, Weymouth and Ferndown will provide over 250 homes by 2029, offering 24/7 support, enabling older residents to live independently with dignity and safety and delaying moving into residential care.
- **Enhancing Reablement Services** to help people recover faster after illness or hospital stays through short-term, therapy-led support to regain independence. The new reablement centre in Bridport, opening in 2028, will be a cornerstone of this approach, building on existing therapy-led reablement beds at Castleman Plus in Blandford, operated by Care Dorset.
- **Increasing the use of technology and data**, from motion sensors to virtual care calls to support independence and wellbeing, especially in rural areas. TEC lounges and staff drop-in sessions to help people to feel confident utilising technology enabled care solutions. At a system level, our Dorset Insights and Intelligence System (Diis) enables data-driven decisions by identifying population needs, targeting interventions, and improving health outcomes.
- **Supporting care providers to adopt digital social care records** and acoustic monitoring technologies to improve safety and efficiency. Early trials show better data sharing and reduced night-time disruptions. People feel more secure and supported, with care that’s more responsive to their needs.
- **Creation of digital platforms such as Bridgit**, co-designed with carers, to offer 24/7 access to advice, guidance and tools and helping carers connect with local events, feeling less isolated and more informed.

**Our A Better Life Strategies can be found here:**

[A Better Life for Adults in Dorset 2023 to 2028 - Dorset Council](#)

[A Better Life for Carers in Dorset 2023 to 2028 - Dorset Council](#)

[Principles of How We Commission in Dorset 2023 to 2028 - Dorset Council](#)