

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy

➤ Impact Report 2022-23





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Introduction

We are delighted to share with you some key highlights and progress made on delivery of Dorset's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2021- 2024

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities is everybody's business and we hope that this brief report will highlight how we have all been working together to support families over the last 18 months. We know we don't always get things right, but we are working really hard to improve communication and practices in relation to working with children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families. The report sets out some of the major pieces of work that have happened and comments we have had from families.

Our Dorset Children Thrive model for delivering Children's Services in Dorset brings together many services and support for children and families into six integrated locality teams across the county – the diagram shows the professionals who work together in these teams.

The SEND Strategy will be reviewed this year and we will be working with you and the professionals who work together to understand what is working well and what we could do even better.

We are planning a programme of events for this summer 2023 where you will have the opportunity to join us and have your say.



Our Dorset Children Thrive model for delivering Children's Services in Dorset

Our Partnership

SEND Strategy 2021 - 2024.
Our vision for SEND in Dorset:



SEND is everybody's business.



Dorset Council is making a big investment in education and support for children with SEND and it's of huge importance to us.

We've developed these ambitious plans because the need for more SEND provision is growing fast and we want all our children and young people to have the best possible outcomes – to thrive!

Cllr Andrew Parry,
Dorset Council Portfolio Holder
for Children, Education
and Early Help



I am privileged to hold the role of Executive Director for Children's Services in Dorset and I passionately believe that strengthening families and communities - 'working with' not 'doing to' is the key to unlocking potential and aspiration.

Our promise is that wherever you experience a member of our team you will be responded to with respect and in a spirit of working together and generous collaboration. I look forward to working with you.

Theresa Leavy,
Executive Director, Children's Services



NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board (ICB) is committed to continuing our close partnership working with Dorset Council and Dorset Parent Carer Council to implement the Dorset SEND Strategy.

We know that investing time and effort in our children, young people and families not only improves lives today, but will improve lives for years to come.

The SEND strategy presents our partnership with opportunities to improve outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND, reduce health inequalities and hear the voices of our Children and Young People.

David Freeman,
Chief Commissioning Officer,
NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board



It has been another very busy year! The Dorset 'Partnership' continues to strengthen, with each providing high support and high challenge.

Involving the 'voice' of parent carers is now an expectation where work aims to improve services, inform policy and shape new initiatives for families of children and young people with special educational needs and disability living in Dorset.

Elaine Okopski,
DPCC Participation Co-ordinator



Our vision is clear and focused

We want our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to be healthy, happy and safe and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect the same opportunities in life as other children and young people.

Our 6 Strategic Priorities:

- 1 Our early identification and support vision**
 We will make sure we identify, assess and support children's needs both early in life and when issues arise.

- 2 Our inclusion vision**
 We will make sure there is a commitment to services and support that is inclusive of children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We are committed to inclusion in mainstream settings and firmly believe every teacher is a teacher of special needs.

- 3 Our SEND pathway vision**
 We will make sure that children and young people with SEND and their families can access the right support from services easily and quickly.

- 4 Our SEND provision and sufficiency vision**
 We will make sure we increase the education we provide for all children and young people with SEND so that our children can stay in Dorset and thrive in their local communities. They will have access to health services, early years provision, post-16 services. There will also be community resources for adults with learning disabilities.

- 5 Our transitions and preparation for adulthood vision**
 We will make sure that transitions between phases of education or changes in what we provide as support are smooth and supportive across all ages.

- 6 Our managing money and resources vision**
 We will make sure that we manage our SEN funding from the dedicated schools grant (DSG) effectively and efficiently so that we can have the best impact and outcomes for our children and young people with the resources available.

Our Key Pledges:

- ✓ We know what we need to improve and are acting to improve it as quickly as possible
- ✓ We are working together to develop a single strategy and system to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families
- ✓ We will be accountable for doing what we say we will and for letting people know how well we are doing
- ✓ We will support families to provide help early
- ✓ We will complete assessments and plans on time
- ✓ We will involve and listen to children and young people with SEND and their families
- ✓ We will make it clear to families what information, advice and support is available, how to find it and how to give feedback
- ✓ We will improve families' experience of getting support with SEND from birth to adulthood
- ✓ We want to give children and young people with SEND in Dorset the best chance to succeed in life
- ✓ We want children and young people with SEND to enjoy family life and to go to school as near to their home as possible
- ✓ We will work together across children's and adult's services to support children and young people with SEND to prepare well for adulthood, to participate in their community and to live as independently as possible

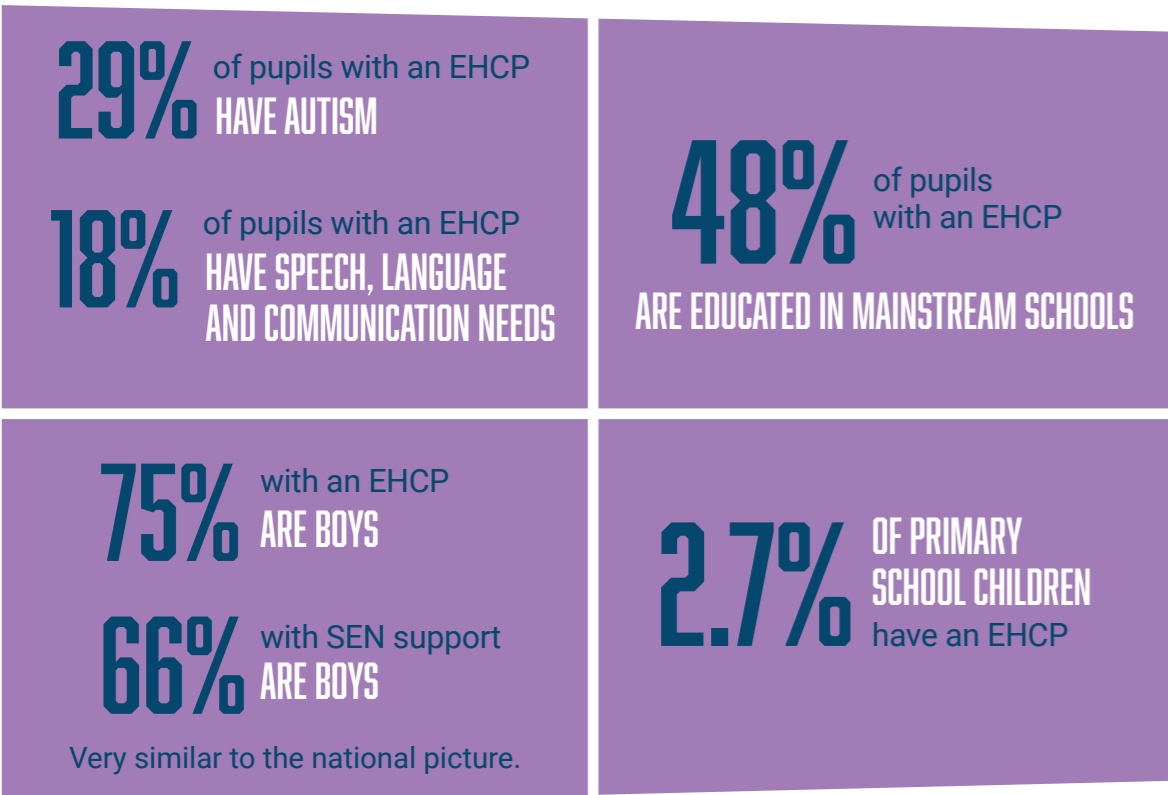


Headline Figures

Here are some facts and information about the current situation in Dorset

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The percentage of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) has increased in Dorset each year since 2016. The percentage with either a statement or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) has increased every year since 2016. There were **1515 children** with either a statement or EHCP in 2016, today there are **3555 children**, a **134% increase** over a 6 year period.



Mental Health

- The number of children accessing mental health services has increased nationally, with more than 1 million children under 18 having first-time contact with mental health professionals.
- However, this number had fallen slightly across Dorset on the previous year, from 3925 to 3450.
- Increased referrals nationally may reflect that more young people are comfortable talking about their mental health and know where to get help.
- However, the pandemic led to more people needing help with their mental health and in 2020, more than 10,000 children and young people were waiting for support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
- Early Support Hubs and the CAMHS Gateway are being expanded to meet service demand and mental health support in schools is being made more readily available.
- National funding is being used for Family Hubs, perinatal mental health support and Supporting Families programme.

£40M SEND CAPITAL INVESTMENT OVER 5 YEARS
 [Dorset Council capital investment of £40m (2020-25) creating at least **500** new specialist places. **2** new schools opened.]

NEW AREA PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
 [Dorset Council's strategic partners working even more collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for children & young people]

OUR RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS SEND Dorset local offer

NEW SEND CUSTOMER CHARTER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DPCC
 [Launched SEND customer charter (May 2022)]

LAUNCHED DORSET EDUCATION ADVICE LINE
 [209 contacts | 143 calls by SEN workers. Launched October 2021.]

LAUNCHED GRADUATED APPROACH TO ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
 [All Dorset Council SENCOs are trained in giving additional support. Launched October 2021.]

Partnership

New Partnership Agreement

OUR IMPACT:

Key partners are working even more collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people



We have a new Partnership Agreement (Feb 2022) which sets out how as key strategic partners we will work together to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. As a partnership, our mission is:

- To deliver the best education for all our children and young people,
- To prepare our young people for independence and adulthood, and
- For our children and young people to experience the best possible health and wellbeing.

What working together means

We will deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people. We will do this by sharing ideas and delivering change together, whilst also challenging each other on the journey towards a strong partnership that will be evidenced through action. As equal partners we share a mutual understanding of the complex and multi-layered challenges that each of our children, young people and their families may experience, and reflect this in the way that we work together to share the expertise that each partner brings and together unlock creative and innovative ways of undertaking these challenges as a system. Co-production is a practice that we want to become part of our way of working together in planning and implementing our services and the Local Offer. We will celebrate our successes whilst also tackling our challenges together. As partners we each bring different and complimentary expertise. We strive to communicate with our families together in such a way that children, young people and their families can make use of our information and ensure that their voices are heard. Every family has a different journey and experience, and we will reflect that both in the way we listen, but also through our actions. Our partnership vision will also reach professionals representing each of our organisations and together we will strive to ensure this is embodied across our partnership.

Improved SEND Local Offers & Events

OUR IMPACT:

We have improved Dorset's SEND Local Offer to help families find trusted information, support and advice



The 'local offer' website gives children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families information to help them find the right help and support in their area. We have been updating and refreshing our website pages informed by the views of children and families. We have exciting plans and are creating a new digital family offer to provide a digital space for children and families where they can easily find help and advice when they need it.

We are designing online services that will provide a personalised experience. For example, having the option to open an individual account where you can access services 24-7 from your mobile device, such as plan progress or notifications about key dates and be able to book directly online onto activities.

The pages of the SEND Local Offer are an excellent way to tell us about services, and the Parent Carer Council have a dedicated facebook page to provide feedback on the service.



OUR IMPACT:

We have improved Dorset's SEND Local Offer to help families find trusted information, support and advice



Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) Information Event

On 4 October 2022 parent-carers across Dorset had a chance to come together at Kingston Maurward College. The event was an opportunity to meet and talk to organisations, hear their news, and ask questions. There were over 200 parents and carers who attended and offered their feedback which will inform future support events.

We are committed as a partnership to continually improve communication so we will be holding more events like this. We also welcome suggestions for how we can improve communication in other ways. Thank you to all of you who attended (it was great to see you) and a huge thank you to all of you who make up Dorset's Parent Carers community!



We loved it and were very moved by people's kindness.



Everything in one place and so much information that I knew nothing about.

A Partnership with Family Action to deliver Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

OUR IMPACT:

We have worked closely with expert charity partner Family Action to successfully deliver SENDIASS services



From February 2022, Dorset Council's Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) has been run by Family Action, a long-established charity that supports all families.

SENDIASS aims are to:

- provide a high quality, impartial, accurate and confidential service
- empower children, young people and their parents/carers to play an informed and active part in decision-making and supporting them to make the best decisions
- contribute to partnership working with providers of education, alternative provision, training, supported employment, health and social care
- ensure service user views are heard, understood and utilised to continuously improve the service
- make sure service users understand their rights, roles and responsibilities



We are delighted that Dorset Council has entrusted Family Action with the delivery of the Dorset SENDIAS service. We will bring expertise from our six existing SENDIAS services to offer a free, high quality, impartial and confidential service.

Amy Brooke, Family Action's Deputy Director for Services and Innovation, South

SENDIASS – impact facts and figures

- ✓ Launched Feb 2022
- ✓ 609 parents supported by October 2022
- ✓ 36% enquiries for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), 26% for education
- ✓ 85% enquiries successfully solved without escalation
- ✓ 70% of cases related to autism



Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all this AMAZING advice. You are like a guiding light! I have actioned all the points you have suggested and I can't thank you enough for all of them. I had no idea where to start to try and help my daughter and you have made everything so clear! So, thank you!

Parent /Carer feedback

New SEND Customer Charter Launched

OUR IMPACT:

We launched a new SEND customer charter in partnership with Dorset Parent Carer Council



At the heart of our SEND children and families customer charter is our commitment to improving the quality of life of our SEND children, young people and families. We strive to get it right first time, every time. We believe that our children and families have the right to know what level of service they can expect from us all the time - even when we fall short of the very high standards, we have set ourselves. We are committed to improving how quickly we respond to enquiries and ensure that when we do respond it is helpful and consistent wherever you live in Dorset.

We want to use feedback that people give us to get things right more often. Our staff are here to help and we know that sometimes it can be a difficult and anxious time for families. We want to ensure we can provide the right support at the right time. After the introduction of the Customer Charter in May 2022, the early indication is that we have halved the number of complaints received month on month.



Education

OUR IMPACT:

We've improved the education experience for people with special educational needs and disabilities



For SEND education this year we have raised operational standards, run a successful advice hotline, and continued with our £40m capital programme which is providing hundreds more specialist places. Throughout the year we continued the roll-out of the standardised 'graduated' additional support approach across schools to ensure the right level of help is provided for children. We have also been developing much needed provision of parent-carer advice and have seen increasing use of the Dorset Education Advice Line (DEAL) phone service.

Our achievements

£40m SEND capital investment which in turn reduces costs

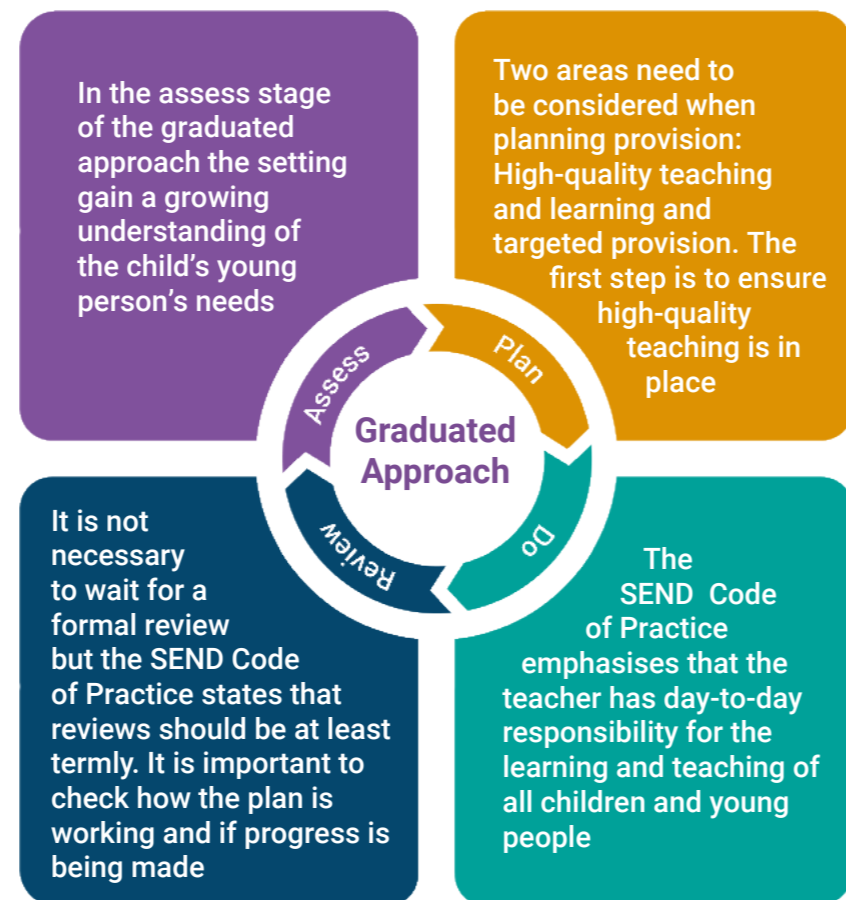
As part of the SEND 2020-25 strategy this will create 500 specialist places over 5 years. The strategy aims to increase local provision at our own specialist schools and reduce the much more costly use of independent providers. In 2022 we have created approximately 170 new places by increasing staff and the opening of Coombe House and The Harbour schools and an Inclusion Hub in Bridport.

Graduated Approach standard in all Dorset schools

Most Dorset Council schools are now using this industry standard system of identifying and applying the appropriate level of SEND additional support which is suitable for the setting.

More advice support available to parent-carers

In October 2021 we launched the Dorset Education Advice Line (DEAL) – an advice line for parents and carers who are worried their child might not be making the progress they should be, or who may believe their child might have emerging special educational needs. To date, we've spoken with over 200 Dorset families, talking to them about their worries and concerns, and making sure they get the right help, at the right time.



I felt listened to and supported. I'm so glad that there is now a plan in place for my daughter.

Dorset Education Advice Line user, April 2022

DEAL have been an absolute lifeline to me and I'm honestly not sure where we'd be now without the help they've given us. It's a fantastic service and I recommend it to so many people.

Parent, May 2022

I phoned DEAL and arranged a call and they advised the best way to approach school and Senco with my thoughts.

Since this interaction school have improved their communication and my son has sensory breaks, access to learning tools; my son's meltdowns reduce and sleep improves when school are being consistent with his sensory support and giving me notice when they can about changes to the school day. I would not hesitate to ring DEAL for advice and support in the future if needed as it was very helpful.

Parent, Dec 2022

OUR IMPACT:

We've updated our Accessibility Strategy to cover 2022 – 2025



It sets out our vision for children and young people with disabilities and focuses on how we will make our schools and educational settings more accessible for them by:

- increasing access to the curriculum
- improving the physical environment
- providing information in a range of different ways

We also looked at how we can improve accessibility within the community.

[Accessibility strategy 2022 to 2025 - Dorset Council](#)

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs): impact facts and figures

- ✓ **By end 2022: total of 3555 plans (+20% since 2020)**
- ✓ **523 final EHCPs issued in 2022 (+13% since 2019)**
- ✓ **82% continue/reject assessment decisions made within 6 week limit**
- ✓ **2022 had 763 assessment requests (+25% since 2019)**
- ✓ **70% of cases related to autism**

Health/Our Dorset

OUR IMPACT:

We've improved the guidance on speech, language and communication support, and reviewed neurodevelopment services



Most families will be able to access the NHS services they require through Universal Services. These are services anybody can access, at any time, without requiring a referral, such as GPs, health visitors, dentists, school nurses and walk-in centres.

Some families will require additional, more specialist help from the NHS. These are called Targeted Services, including CAMHS, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy, and a referral is usually

required to access them. The referral will usually come from another professional such as your GP or school. Children and young people with the highest levels of physical or emotional health needs may be entitled for support through Children and Young People's Continuing Health Care or Continuing Health Care.

Further information can be found at [Continuing care – NHS Dorset](#)

OUR IMPACT:

We launched a new online speech, language and communication resource



Speech, language, and communication are critical areas of development for children. They play a vital role throughout our lives, helping us to understand what is going on around us, communicate our basic needs and feelings, hold conversations, think and learn, develop relationships, solve problems, and more. They also support many other aspects of development, including cognitive, social, and learning development. Our Dorset (the new NHS Dorset Integrated Care System) has introduced a new online speech, language and communication need (SLCN) resource called 'The Balanced System@' which is designed to be used by families and practitioners across the Dorset and BCP areas.

The resource is structured to assist the user in building a programme of local and UK support to help children and young people develop their speech, language and communication.

[The Balanced System@ speech, language and communication pathway](#)



OUR IMPACT:

We've reviewed All Age Neurodevelopment services to make improvements



The Review has looked at access to support and diagnostic services across the whole of Dorset and across all ages, to understand what works, what could be better, and make recommendations for future improvements. This project is about service improvement and is following a cycle of assessing local needs, gathering insights, view seeking, identifying service gaps, understanding what works, and what could be improved, to then design a new and improved pathway of care.

To help give the project the best chance of success, engagement has taken place with stakeholders across the Dorset Integrated Care System.

The new pathway of care is being developed through a co-design approach producing a series of solutions, initiatives, and options. We are currently working to bring these to life through our workstream focus areas.

[All Age Neurodevelopment Review – NHS Dorset](#)

What is the timescale?

We are aiming to create a proposal by the end of March 2023. This is ambitious, but something which is a priority and we are working hard to achieve this.



You have listened, acknowledged the importance of supporting sensory needs and preventing crisis, working together as health and local authorities to ensure consistency, and joined up thinking. You have recognised the importance of needs-based support without a diagnosis and are being proactive. I am genuinely excited by the progress with this project and can see how passionate everybody is about getting this right.

Stacey, member of the Project Group with lived experience of neurodiversity

OUR IMPACT:

We've delivered key workers to help prevent mental health crisis for children and young people with a learning disability and / or autism



Keyworkers will work alongside young people and their families who are heading towards a mental health crisis. Dorset has a Dynamic Support Register (learning disability and / or autism) to enable earlier identification of those people at risk of admission to hospital

OUR IMPACT:

We've improved health and well-being through the 14-25s Learning Disability Health Checks Project



The Learning Disability Annual Health Check aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people with learning disabilities, as they often have difficulty in recognising illness, communicating their needs and using health services. We have been implementing the 14-25s Learning Disability Health Checks Project which focuses on improving awareness and uptake of these preventative health appointments.



Birth to Settled Adulthood

OUR IMPACT: We are working to improve transitions and preparing for adulthood



The Dorset Local Area has an ambitious change programme to improve the quality of support provided to children and young people who have special educational needs or disability as they prepare for adult life.

To support this, the following joint declaration outlines and confirms the commitment made by Dorset Council's Children's and Adult Social Care, Dorset Council elected members, NHS Dorset, and the Dorset Parent Carer Council to work in partnership towards delivering our plans and associated improved outcomes. To achieve these, the partnership is committed to ensuring the following principles are applied as a minimum when considering the improvements to our service offer:

- The partnership shares the vision for children and young people as stated in Dorset Council's SEND Strategy.



We want our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to be healthy, happy, safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect the same opportunities in life as other children and young people.

- Our offer will comply with the requirements outlined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Equality Act 2010, Care Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2014, Children and Families Act 2014, Mental Health Act 1983 (2007) and the Health and Care Act 2022.
- The partnership is underpinned by an effective and equitable Joint Commissioning Strategy that enables us to come together in a place-based service.
- Our service offer will ensure that assessments and provision are agreed together.
- We will use inspection reports, user feedback and the 'As Is' analysis of the current pathway to resolve issues and concerns.
- Our service offer will ensure a seamless experience for Children, Young People until they reach a settled adulthood.
- Our service offer is led by our shared ambition for young people to achieve their outcomes, to have access to better life opportunities and to be the best they can be.
- Our service offer will ensure that information, advice, and guidance is accessible and available at the right time to everyone.
- Our service design will ensure that young people and parent carers know who to contact, to ensure early conversations happen in the key areas of Education & Employment, Independent Living, Health & Wellbeing and Community Inclusion.
- We will create our service offer by involving all stakeholders and partners.
- All safeguarding requirements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are fully understood and complied with.



Useful contacts and further help

Chesil Locality

✉ chesillocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk ☎ 01305 762400

Dorchester Locality

✉ dorchesterlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk ☎ 01305 224220

East

✉ eastlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk ☎ 01202 868224

North Locality

✉ northlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk ☎ 01258 474036

Purbeck

✉ purbecklocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk ☎ 01929 557000

West:

✉ westlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk ☎ 01308 425241

Dorset Education Advice Line (DEAL) - Dorset Council

🌐 dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/dorset-education-advice-line-deal ☎ 0800 14 040 41

Dorset Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

✉ dorset.sendiass@family-action.org.uk 🌐 dorsetsendiass.co.uk ☎ 01305 595477

Dorset Parent-Carer Council (DPCC)

✉ dpcc@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk ☎ 07827 793244

For further support for families, children and young people and for the full SEND strategy visit Dorset's SEND Local Offer

🌐 dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/local-offer

Parent-to-parent advice:

Find a support group run by other parent carers who have children with similar difficulties

🌐 dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/fis-search

