

Our Older People strategy

How we will plan our services in future

Why these strategies are important?

The social care system is changing. A national programme of reform will change how people pay for their social care, and how the Council supports them. We have been seeing increasing pressure on our local social care system. These strategies are our view on the challenges and opportunities in social care in the coming five to ten years, and some of the ways that we want to improve things.

Our vision

With a higher over 65 population than anywhere else in the country, it is especially important Dorset provides the opportunity for a great quality of life for older people. We want to work with residents, communities, and local service providers to continue to strengthen the supportive community networks of Dorset, to develop housing and other infrastructure that supports people to make the best of their strengths and age well, and to ensure the best quality information, support, and services are in place as people's health and care needs increase.

Outcomes that we think matter to people

1. Dorset is a great place to grow older, with a range of vibrant community activity, giving people better days whether they have support needs or not, and keeping them well connected to the people around them and where they live.
2. People have access to the information and advice they need to make good decisions for them, at crucial times in their ageing journey.
3. People have access to excellent care and support in their home, both responsive shortterm reablement and longer-term care, which always puts independence at its heart and helps people to continue to live independently for as long as possible, utilising equipment and assistive technology where appropriate.
4. A good range and choice of residential care is available, in high quality, modern homes, to meet the increasingly complex needs of the local older population.

What we are planning to do

Ageing well in supportive communities

The Covid-19 pandemic taught us just how important supportive communities are and showed us how strong the communities of Dorset are when it comes to helping each other out. We want to build on this strength and strengthen all of our local communities to be sources of support for those developing frailty in older age. We want vibrant community activities and venues accessible to those with additional needs due to their age. We want high streets and businesses to be dementia friendly, and ageing positive, confident to help when someone is in difficulty, so that people feel safe to be out and about and stay connected with their friends, families, and communities.

Our older people are our strength

We want to change the narrative. Having one of the largest older populations in the country undoubtedly does bring challenges for us in meeting their care needs. More importantly, it is a source of huge strength; so much wisdom and experience, so much time and energy for volunteering and building local communities. We want to strengthen and amplify that. Let us celebrate our older communities.

Day opportunities not day services

When people develop greater need for support, and cannot engage so easily in everyday activity, one option is attending a day service. We want to expand the range of options available, so people have more choice and flexibility, which is what people have told us they want. This builds on our ambition for communities that are confident in supporting older people with support needs, to access facilities. It will mean less people go to a traditional day service, and more people have support to access community activities. We absolutely want high quality day services that can work with those with complex needs and more advanced dementia, and need that level of additional support.

Care and support at home

We have many challenges providing everyone with the care and support that they need in their home. Providing home care in a large county like Dorset has a particular set of challenges. We have undertaken an exercise to understand the 'fair cost of care' and are changing the rates we pay so we can improve the wages of care staff. We want to retain more people in the care sector, doing the caring jobs they love, and not leave for jobs in retail and other sectors because the pay and conditions are better. We have parts of the county where there are not enough people of working age to fill the vacancies and meet the needs of local

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older people. We want to work with providers of homecare to develop plans for retaining and growing the workforce. We are also going to create different zones so that providers can contract with us for local work, be more confident that they can deliver on the contracts, and their staff spend less time on the road between visits.

We also want to expand the number of people who have a direct payment and can employ a personal assistant, who may live more locally to them and be able to provide the kind of flexible support that people need.

We also want to improve our reablement services. These are short term services that get people back on their feet after a crisis. We need to be clearer on what our offer is and have the right contracts in place to meet people's needs more flexibly. We want reablement to be something that everyone gets when they leave hospital to make sure that everyone can feel the benefit of it. We also want it to be available to people who have a crisis in the community, not just when they leave hospital after a stay.

Residential and nursing care

There are a lot of care homes and care home beds in Dorset. The council is not the majority purchaser of those beds, as is the case in some places in the country. The main purchaser is individuals, with their own funds to buy residential care. It is of course good that people are making their own choices about how and where they live, but we think many of those people could have been helped to stay in their own home for a bit longer with the right support, and they are going into residential care too soon.

There is a lot of change coming to the way residential care is arranged, with people being able to ask the council to arrange it for them. This means assessing people's needs becomes even more important, and for some of those people the council may not agree residential care is the right option for them. It will be really important good information and advice, including financial advice, is available to people making their choices about residential care.

These issues also mean that we have a lot of residential care in Dorset serving lower levels of need. When the council makes placements, it often needs to meet more complex needs, and we find that this is difficult to find. In the strategy we say we want more complex provision (more acute), and we want to be clearer about what is provided at each level of acuity. We also observe that Dorset has very many smaller homes, and we know from national information that smaller homes are less efficient and can cost more to contract. We want to encourage more homes of 60 to 80 beds, where it is easier to provide people with a high-quality experience.

How can you be involved?

The strategy documents for Adult Social Care have come a long way, with many authors and many hours of deliberation but we have not finished yet.

We want our strategies to represent you, your thoughts, and observations of how it is to access care and support in Dorset.

You can help ensure our strategies are fit for the future and represent your views, by sending us your ideas and comments.



To share your comments, you can visit our website by using this QR code or type this link into your browser. www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/a-better-life/have-your-say

You can also email us at abetterlife@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk or, you can also write to us: **A Better Life Strategy**, c/o Joseph Morrell, Dorset Council, County Hall, Colliton Park, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XJ

Next Steps

Over the next few months, we will be talking to people about the strategies and our plans for adult social care and support in the future. We will be creating many opportunities for you to join in on the conversation through the autumn 2022. You will be able to find out about these meetings via our web pages www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/a-better-life.

Once we have revised the A Better Life strategy documents to include your ideas and comments, we will publish a second draft and they will be sent to the council leadership for adoption. It is important to know that we plan to keep the strategies open, so as we learn new information, we can continue to adapt the documents in the future.

In 2023, we plan to embark on the more complex work of implementing some of the ideas detailed in the strategies. We will need your support again when this work starts as we will want to include you in the design and development of the future of services.

If you would like to be involved in this work, please express your interest by email.

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