

September
2018

State of Dorset Children



Dorset County Council
for the Dorset Council area

In this bulletin Dorset refers to the Dorset Council area coming into effect 1st April 2019 unless stated otherwise

Experiences in a child's early years lay a foundation for health and wellbeing and our services for children and families have an important role in building future resilience.

By identifying those most at risk of poorer outcomes later on, our resources can be targeted where they are needed most so that we can respond to risk and vulnerability.

The number of 0-4 year olds is expected to decrease slightly but the number of 5-15 year olds will increase from about 42,600 in 2016 to 44,500 in 2026 (0.5% pa).¹

Big Numbers Box

59,800² total children

primary school children with a Special Educational Needs plan

1.5%

449 children and young people in care in Dorset

96%

children leaving care go into suitable accommodation

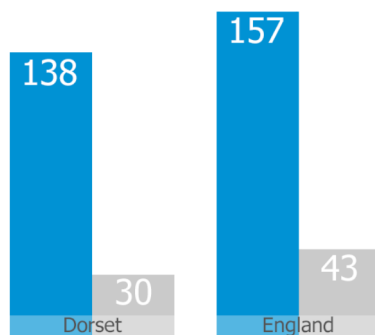
138 child protection enquiries per 10,000 children

58 looked after children in every 10,000 in Dorset

30 child protection rate per 10,000 children

Box 1: Vulnerable children

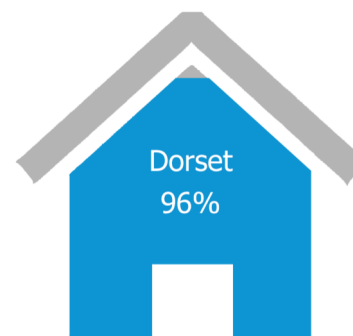
Child protection: Dorset



■ Enquiries (s47) ■ Child protection rate

- Vulnerable groups include:
 - those from deprived socio-economic backgrounds;
 - those with special educational needs;
 - children from particular ethnic groups.
- As of January 2018, 640 pupils are designated with a Special Educational Need defined as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).⁵
- In December 2017, there were 449 children and young people in care in Dorset.³

% of children leaving care going into suitable accommodation



- The child protection rate in 2018 was 30 per 10,000 children compared with 43 in England (2017).³
- The rate of looked after children was 58 per 10,000 children in 2017.³
- Suitable accommodation is not always available for children leaving care. In Q1 & Q2 2017/18, 96% of Dorset children leaving care went into suitable accommodation.³

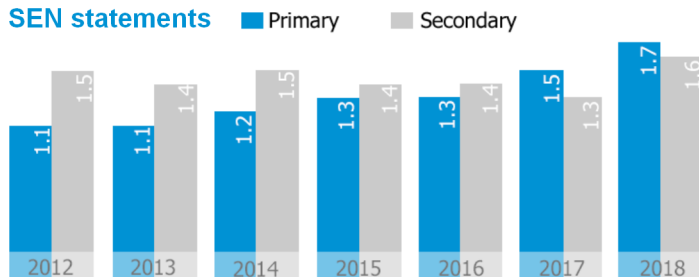
Sources

- 1 Revised 2016-based trend population projections, ONS
- 2 2017 Mid-year estimates, ONS
- 3 Dorset County Council, Children's Services
- 4 Pupil Census January 2018, DCC

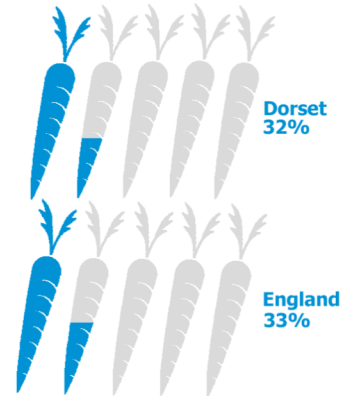
Box 2: Education

- In 2017, 69% of children achieved a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a fall of 1.3 percentage points on 2016.³
- Schools are now scored on pupil progress between KS2 and KS4 (Progress 8). A score below zero shows that pupils made less progress than the national average (England=0). Dorset scored -0.12 in 2017, down from 2016 but broadly in line with other South West local authorities.⁵
- 32% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in Dorset achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths compared with 33% nationally in 2015.³
- 14% of primary pupils claim Free School Meals, marginally below the national average.⁴

SEN statements



Pupils eligible for FSM achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs



- In 2017, 1.7% of primary school pupils had a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or education, health and care plan, as did 1.6% of secondary school pupils.⁴

What are we doing about it?

There is evidence to show that what a child experiences in early years, starting in the womb, affects health and wellbeing in later life. Early intervention is therefore key and cutbacks in spending on this for short term financial gain can lead to greater long term costs, both financial and social.⁶

By creating Family Partnership Zones, the council is working with partners and communities to ensure children get the right help, at the right time and in the right place, to prevent difficulties for families from becoming bigger problems. The idea is that organisations work together to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people and support them all the way from birth to getting a job.

Through working with our partners to ensure that we all take a 'whole family approach', the council uses early intervention programmes, such as the Troubled Families programme, which aims to reduce demand and dependency on costly reactive public services by families experiencing complex issues, and deliver better value for the taxpayer.

The council works with partners to support parents and children in the early years through a range of Early Childhood Services. This includes information and advice; parenting support; group work activities; support to access childcare; help with preparing for school; and education and training opportunities.

Evidence suggests that smarter working with the whole family leads to improved outcomes and better value for money and, as some will need ongoing support, there needs to be a continuum of services to support vulnerable people over time.

Sources

- 5 Dorset Achievement Update Summary, February 2018, Dorset County Council
6 C4E0 Grasping the Nettle: early intervention for children, families and communities