

March
2018

State of Dorset Children



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 increase slightly but the number of 5-15 year olds will increase from about 49,000 in 2017 to 51,600 in 2027 (0.5% pa).¹

Big Numbers Box

67,400² total children

primary school children with a Special Educational Needs plan

1.5%

444

children and young people in care in Dorset

96%

children leaving care go into suitable accommodation

134

child protection enquiries per 10,000 children

63

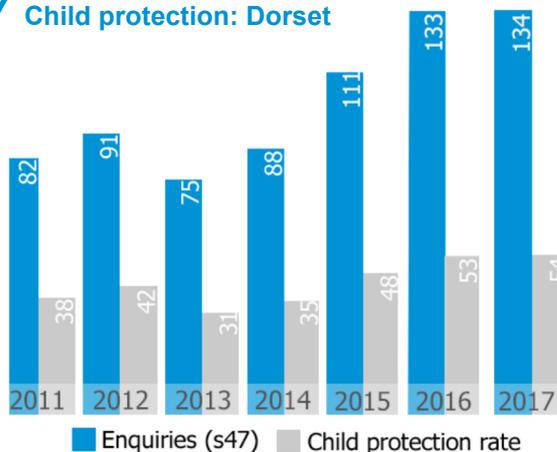
looked after children in every 10,000 in Dorset

54

child protection rate per 10,000 children

Box 1: Vulnerable children

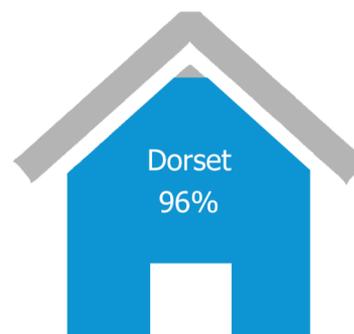
Child protection: Dorset



- Vulnerable groups include:
 - those from deprived socio-economic backgrounds;
 - those with special educational needs;
 - children from particular ethnic groups.
- As of 2017, 695 pupils are designated with a Special Educational Need defined as Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).⁵
- In December 2017, there were 444 children and young people in care in Dorset.³

% of children leaving care going into suitable accommodation

- The child protection rate in 2017 was 54 per 10,000 children compared with 43 in England.⁴
- The rate of looked after children rose from 62 per 10,000 children in 2016 to 63 in 2017.⁴
- 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 2016-based trend population projections, Dorset County Council

2 2016 Mid-year estimates, ONS, Revised 22/03/18. For more info visit <https://apps.geowessex.com/stats/>

3 Dorset County Council, Children's Services

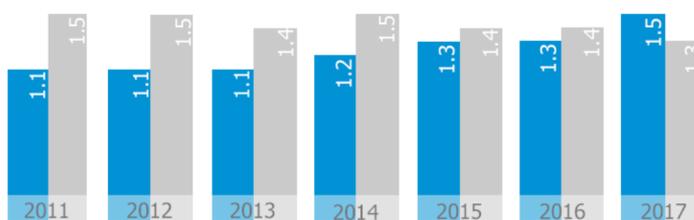
4 Local Area Interactive Tool (LAIT): Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>, data as at March 2017 [accessed 05 December 2017]

5 Pupil Census 2017, DCC

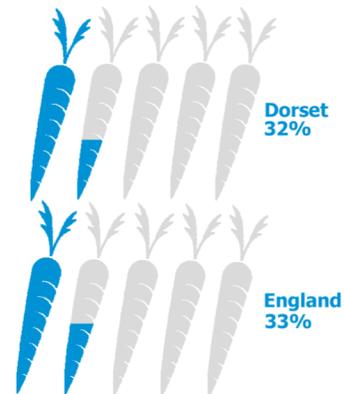
Box 2: Education

- In 2017, 69% of children achieved a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Profile, a fall of 1.3 percentage points on 2016.⁴
- 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 -0.15 in 2017, down from 2016 but broadly in line with other South West local authorities.⁶
- 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 2015.⁴
- 13% of primary pupils claim Free School Meals, compared to 14% nationally.⁴

SEN statements ■ Primary ■ Secondary



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



- In 2017, 1.5% of primary school pupils had a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or education, health and care plan, as did 1.3% 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.⁷

By creating Family Partnership Zones, the county 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 county 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 county 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

6 Dorset Achievement Update Summary, February 2018, Dorset County Council

7 C4E0 Grasping the Nettle: early intervention for children, families and communities