

Why Dorset

Practice | Progression | Place



Leading national reform

Dorset was selected as a national Pathfinder for the Families First for Children reforms. We have helped design and embed the Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection model now being implemented nationally.

For social workers, this means clearer pathways for families, fewer hand-offs, and stronger multi-agency safeguarding.

Family Help and Child Protection work closely together, enabling continuity for children while maintaining robust specialist oversight of risk.

Outstanding and ambitious

Dorset Council is rated **Outstanding** by Ofsted for our children's services.

Inspectors recognised strong and stable leadership, a confident and well-supported workforce, and children receiving timely help that makes a meaningful difference.

They noted that practitioners feel valued, supervision is reflective, and leaders understand practice.

We are proud of this judgement and determined to keep improving.





Practice that puts children first

Our approach is restorative, strengths-based and trauma-informed. We focus on getting it right first time and meeting need early rather than managing thresholds.

Children's voices are central to assessment and planning. Family-led decision making is embedded across our services. Our Safeguarding Families Together teams bring domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse and perpetrator specialists alongside social workers in every locality, ensuring a genuinely multi-disciplinary response.

We measure success by how life improves for children and young people.

A culture that supports you

We invest in professional growth at every stage of your career. Newly qualified social workers benefit from a structured ASYE programme. Experienced practitioners have clear progression routes through Level 2 and Level 3, with opportunities to move into Advanced Practice or management.

Supervision is regular and reflective. Professional judgement is respected. Training includes motivational interviewing, restorative practice and specialist assessment development.

Wellbeing matters. Flexible working is considered wherever service needs allow, and colleagues have access to wellbeing support and mental health resources.





Our localities

Our Children's Services operate across four localities, each with strong team identity and close multi-agency working.

Chesil, covering Weymouth and Portland, offers a seafront base within walking distance of the coast and a team known for innovation and collaboration.

East Dorset and **Purbeck** includes offices in Ferndown and Wareham, serving vibrant towns, rural communities and coastal villages. This area led the development of Dorset's first Family Hubs.

Dorchester and **West Dorset** is based at County Hall, with access to historic town amenities and outreach locations across Bridport, Beaminster and Lyme Regis.

North Dorset covers Blandford, Sherborne, Shaftesbury and Sturminster Newton, offering a strong community feel and accessible town-centre offices within a rural landscape.

Across all localities, you will be part of integrated teams working alongside early help, SEND, education, youth and inclusion colleagues.

A place to build your life

Dorset combines coastline, countryside and market towns with a strong sense of community. It is a place where you can build a career in high-quality practice while enjoying balance outside of work.

If you want to practise social work in an Outstanding authority that values relationships, professional judgement and national leadership in reform, Dorset offers the environment to do your best work.

