



# Your Future Hospital Strategy 2025



## Foreword

At Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (DCHFT) we aspire to provide **outstanding care for people in ways which matter to them.**

In developing our strategy we have sought the views of the people who work at DCHFT, who are central to delivering this, and we also held engagement sessions with patient representative groups from our local communities. This has allowed us to discover what our people, and the communities we serve, feel are important and how we might achieve our future hospital.

Our strategy will focus on three strategic goals: **People, Place, and Partnership.**

It signals our intention to truly value our staff. Our people are our most important asset, and we want them to feel valued, welcomed, respected, that they belong and they matter. We recognise the link between high levels of staff satisfaction and improving patient experience and outcomes.

Our vision is to **work with our health and social care partners, being at the heart of improving the wellbeing of our communities**, demonstrating our continued commitment to collaboration and partnership which will be key to the development of the Dorset Integrated Care System. We recognise for the NHS to deliver the ambitions identified for Integrated Care Systems it will need to reimagine the way in which it operates and develops services. We aim to move away from services wrapped around institutions to those that are human centred, co-designed with our communities with citizenship at their heart.

Aligned to our Social Value Pledge, we will work hard to deliver on our responsibilities to be a model employer, contributing to the local economy through our income and purchasing power and improving our environmental sustainability plan to meet the NHS net zero targets: becoming the world's first net zero national health service.

Committing to reducing our impact on the environment signals recognition of our contribution to better health and wellbeing of our local communities. We have a key role to play in reducing unfair and avoidable health inequalities and our commitment will continue both through the way we deliver services in the future and our partnerships across Dorset.



**Chairman**  
**Mark Addison**



**Chief Executive**  
**Patricia Miller**



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# 1. Introduction

## Who are we?

At Dorset County Hospital, it is our staff who make our Trust - we are 3,500 individuals from over 80 different countries, working together for one common purpose; to provide outstanding, compassionate care for our local population.

We are a relatively small hospital with under 400 beds, but our significance to the local community is great. We are the main provider of high quality acute and specialist services for approximately 250,000 people residing towards the west of Dorset. We provide a range of district general services including urgent and emergency care, planned and specialist care, maternity and paediatric services, care for long-term conditions, frailty and end of life care.

In the pages that follow, this strategy explains that the context we are working within is changing and therefore we must change too. NHS England have set out their long term vision for tackling the top health challenges within the country and encourages local systems and organisations to now come up with their own strategies to outline what this means locally. We know things must change in Dorset - currently demand is outweighing capacity and this is felt by our staff, patients and local population. Now is the right time to refresh our strategic focus to guide our priorities and decisions over the next five years.

There are three strategic themes described within: **People**, **Place** and **Partnership**.

Firstly, the **People** theme is dedicated to our staff. We know that we can do more to make DCH a great place to work and ensuring that this is a key strategic theme will help us to achieve this.

We also know that providing healthcare to our local population is so much broader than the care received within hospital. The **Place** theme recognises this and shifts our focus towards a holistic approach, focusing on population health management, tackling health inequalities and working on preventative measures.

Finally, we cannot achieve this alone. The **Partnership** theme outlines the importance of integration with our primary, community and local authority colleagues to provide the best care for our population.

## How have we engaged?

Refreshing the strategy brought forward an opportunity to gain the views from people stretching across the organisation to find out what is important, what our Trust should look like in future and how we might achieve this. The goal was to develop an ambitious but realistic strategy that is meaningful and sets the course for the improvement of health services for our local population.

The engagement approach consisted of three key stages:

### 1. Discover

The purpose of this stage was information gathering to ask as many people as possible what the future of DCH should look like.

## **2. Design**

This stage allowed us to review the findings from the Discover phase and ask the question, how can we make this happen?

## **3. Develop**

Following the first two stages it was then important to test and refine the emerging strategy to see if there were opportunities for further improvement.

Engagement opportunities included multiple open staff sessions and presentations to key groups for discussion and feedback, including our Patient and Public Engagement Group, Senior Medics, the Council of Governors, the Senior Management Team, Finance Teams, the Board of Directors and consultation with representatives from wider groups such as Age UK.

### **What will the strategy do?**

The refreshed strategy will provide the people of Dorset County Hospital with a framework to build on over the coming years to help us achieve the ambitions set out within this document. It is purposefully flexible and not a detailed plan to provide the answers, but a guide to capture and set out the future strategic direction. Teams and individuals are invited to use this strategy as a basis for their own departmental strategies and planning so that together, we can become a hospital fit for the future.



## 2. Context and Challenges

Whilst most people in the west of Dorset report having good or very good health, the number of residents aged 65 or over is above the national average. Across Dorset this number is expected to grow by 50% in the next 25 years<sup>1</sup>, meaning pressure on services will increase.

Having a higher proportion of elderly residents often means that the acuity of illness can be higher; in turn this can lead to increased lengths of stay in hospital. Demand for beds already outweighs capacity and over the last five years we have seen an average increase of 2-3% in activity per annum.

This demand can be intensified in the summer months as we experience an increase in visitors enjoying the 88 miles of coastline, stretching from Lyme Regis in the west to Highcliffe in the east.

The cost of living in the west of Dorset is generally higher than average, including house prices. This means it can be difficult to attract and house key workers in the area and recruitment and retention of staff can be a challenge. At the time of writing this document, there were 77 unfilled nursing vacancies across the Trust. In contrast, there are also pockets of deprivation which have an influence on wellbeing. In terms of life expectancy there is an average difference of 6.3 years for men and 5.3 years for women<sup>2</sup> between the least and most deprived areas.

Many of the complexities outlined above have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with services reconfigured and long waiting lists for patients.

Finally, the NHS in Dorset is facing a significant financial deficit.

### **Wider Strategic Context**

The Dorset system is not unique in the challenges it faces. In 2019 the NHS published its Long Term Plan to address some of the greatest health challenges that are being faced nationally and set out its ambitions for improving care for patients. If these ambitions are successfully adopted within local systems, over the next 10 years the NHS will:

- Boost 'out of hospital' care, dissolving the divide between primary and community health services
- Reduce pressure on emergency hospital services
- Provide more personalised care whilst supporting people to take control over their own health
- Support digitally-enabled primary and outpatient care to go mainstream across the NHS
- Increase the focus on population health via Integrated Care Systems

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<sup>1</sup> Dorset Council <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/your-community/statistics-and-census-information/statistics-and-census.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> Dorset Insight <https://apps.geowessex.com/insights/Topics/Topic/Deprivation>

## **Our Dorset Integrated Care System**

Locally, our Integrated Care System named 'Our Dorset' represents a partnership of health and care providers including two councils, NHS services, the community and the voluntary sector, all working together to address local health, wellbeing, quality and financial challenges. Dorset was initially selected as one of 14 early implementer systems, building on the work of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

Further proposals from NHS England and NHS Improvement to put Integrated Care Systems on a statutory footing have been put forward following publication of the next steps for building strong and effective integrated care systems across England. This would see statutory Integrated Care Systems replace Clinical Commissioning Groups by April 2022. Whilst Our Dorset ICS has made much progress, there is recognition that there is still more to do. An ICS Transformation Next Steps Programme is now in development to support the evolution of the ICS in line with the proposed legislative changes.

The overarching objective of the programme is to ensure that collectively, partners create the right environment for transformation of care and services to deliver maximum benefits for patients and the population.

This will lead to achievement of the four key aims:

- Improving population health and healthcare
- Tackling unequal outcomes and access
- Enhancing productivity and value for money
- Helping the NHS to support broader social and economic development.

This strategy is aligned to both the NHS Long Term Plan and the next steps for our ICS, whilst acknowledging that it must also be unique to the needs and requirements of our patients and population.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

Engagement was initiated in November 2020, using the three-stage model: Discover, Design and Develop.

Different approaches to engagement were used to try and reach as many people as possible - these included formal facilitated sessions with a presentation and breakout groups, and more informal open sessions.

Right at the core of our future direction sits the Trust's mission and vision statements.

Support was found for the continuation of both statements, with feedback suggesting that we are still on the journey to completing our mission and realising our vision.



There was widespread support for the Trust to continue to fulfil the recommendations following the Clinical Services Review<sup>3</sup> and continue to be a 24/7 emergency and planned hospital with consultant led maternity and paediatric services for the west of Dorset. There was also support for the Long Term Plan and for the Trust to continue to work with our ICS in fulfilling the aspirations of increased out of hospital care, reduced pressure on emergency services, more personalised care, digitally-enabled primary and outpatient care and a focus on population health.

## Emerging Themes

Through capturing and analysing feedback from engagement, several key themes were identified.

In summary it was felt that what makes Dorset County Hospital indispensable is our provision of acute emergency care for our local communities. It was felt that it is important to recognise the role of population health and the opportunities to drive this agenda from within the Trust. Further key themes included a need to focus on long term care and health inequalities and the role that personalised care can have. Many people discussed the need to work more closely with our colleagues in primary and community care to help place us at the heart of our local communities. It was also felt that we should maximise our virtual offer to spread across more services, with an agreed operating model that allows staff to do their job well. Furthermore, we should train and support our staff to help fill workforce gaps.



Alongside these themes, several challenges were also raised, including a lack of workforce availability and staff burnout, the increase in elderly, unhealthy and acutely unwell patients and growing waiting lists. The increasing pressure on patient discharge and flow,

growing waiting lists, demand outside of our control and stretched social care capacity were also raised, as well as public behaviour and expectations, our role within the ICS and limited finances.

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<sup>3</sup> Clinical Services Review <https://www.dorsetsvision.nhs.uk/about/csr/>



### 3. Guiding Principles

A number of key principles have been identified which underpin the strategic themes and should help guide decision making when embedding the strategy.

Dorset County Hospital and the way we work will not be the same in the future. Our people are our greatest asset and we want to do more to ensure that they remain at the heart of what we do - our staff must feel valued and best able to support our patients and populations now and in the future.

We need to be here for our communities and place more focus on population health to prevent illness and support people in managing their own health, closer to home where possible and using digital technology to support where we can.

Our decisions must also represent our commitment to reducing health inequalities and ensuring equal access to all, but we cannot do this alone. The choices we make must support the Integrated Care System and our role in making it successful. To achieve the above, we should be prepared to organise ourselves differently, be more outward facing and work with our communities to co-design the services which will be of most benefit to them.

#### Guiding Principles:

<b>1</b> <b>DCH People are our greatest strength</b>  We will look after our people and make DCH a great place to work. In turn, our workforce will be in the best possible place to offer the highest standards of care to our patients.	<b>2</b> <b>We will always be here for our local communities</b>  Our local communities need us. We need to use the information we have and adopt better use of digital data to ensure that we can meet the needs of our population now and in the future.	<b>3</b> <b>We continuously strive to achieve outstanding clinical excellence</b>  We aspire to deliver outstanding care, every time. We will get the basics right and encourage innovation in our ambition to achieve and recognise excellence.	<b>4</b> <b>We support people to be healthier</b>  We will support people to live healthier lives and take control of their own health, preventing illness and reducing the need for secondary care.
<b>5</b> <b>We recognise people's differing needs</b>  We know that avoidable health inequalities exist within our communities. With our system partners, we must put measures in place to reduce health inequalities and address unwanted variation in care.	<b>6</b> <b>We will work towards creating an effective ICS</b>  We are committed to our role within the Dorset Integrated Care System and will support its ongoing development to improve the health outcomes for our people.	<b>7</b> <b>We will have to change as an organisation</b>  In recognising that the way we deliver care has to change, we must also be prepared to organise ourselves differently and work in new ways to ensure we meet the needs of our patients and partners.	<b>8</b> <b>We will work with others to meet these principles</b>  We will work with anyone who can help us achieve our strategy; from working better across organisations, to listening more to our staff and ensuring the patient voice is heard.

## 4. What We Will Look Like in the Future

Dorset County Hospital is the 24/7 Major Planned and Emergency Hospital serving Mid and West Dorset. On site we have 360 beds and an Emergency Department, but the way we work and organise ourselves is different.

We have strived to ensure our hospital is a great place to work, staff are recognised for their individual contributions and are encouraged to learn and use quality improvement approaches to make a difference within their teams; they feel invested in and that their voice matters. Staff from all professional disciplines, including our Allied Health Professionals and Support Services, are considered equally and included within decision making.

The Integrated Care System is thriving - we work far more closely with our system partners, for example with our local social care, primary care and community care partners and with acute partners to deliver safe and effective services. We encourage our community partners to work with us on site via our Integrated Service Hub. Our Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit have also been refurbished and designed with staff to provide for patients in need of the most urgent care.



We focus on the overall health of our population and patients within our hospital. Through working with the community, patients are now taking more responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. Furthermore, we actively engage with our population and design services with them.

More people are receiving care closer to home, this is especially important for

our elderly and vulnerable population. Where it is appropriate, we are also using more digital technology to avoid the need for our patients to travel. As a result, we are starting to see a positive impact in demand for our services.

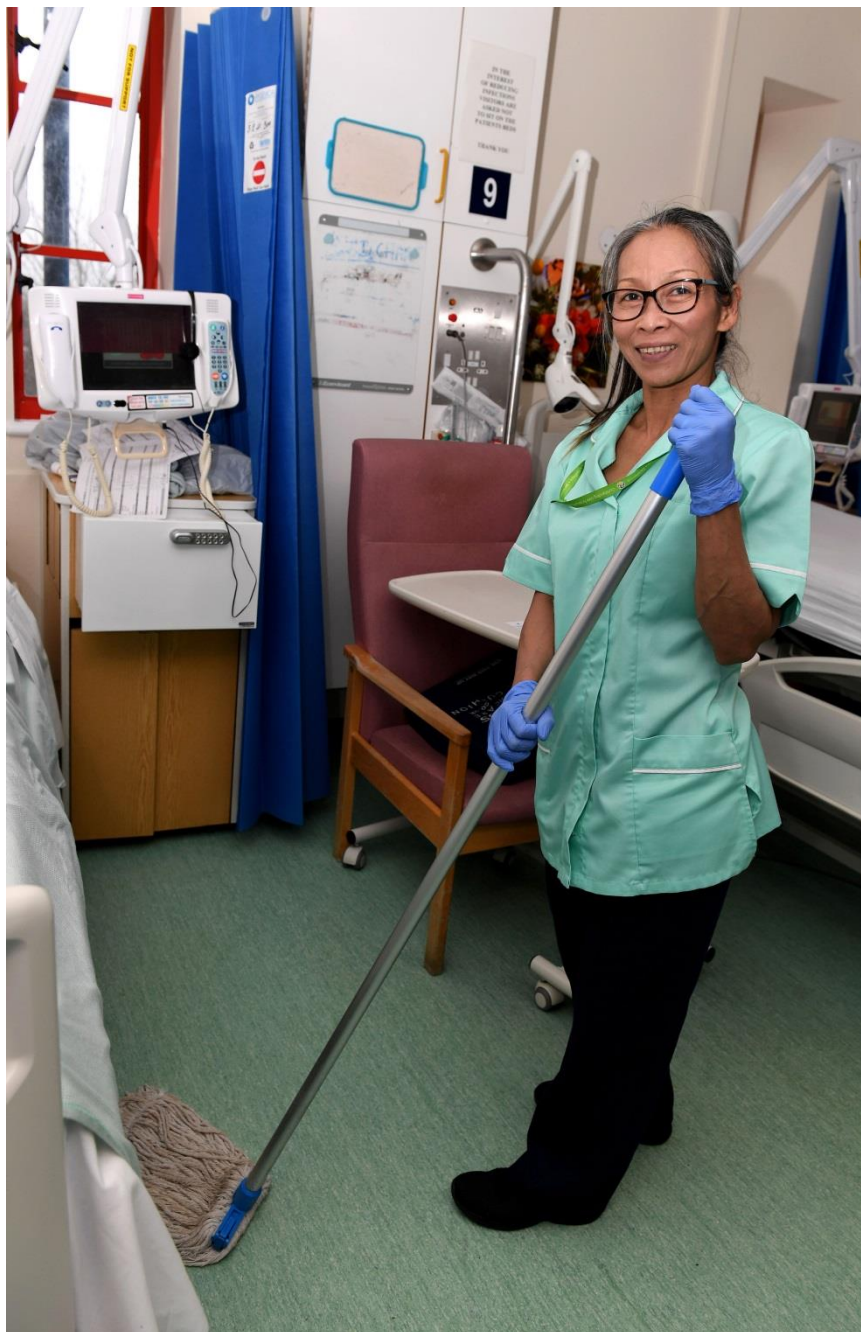
To bring our future hospital to life, part of the delivery plan will include working with our patient community to develop some case studies to help showcase the difference that these changes could make.

## 5. Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision is that *Dorset County Hospital, working with our health and social care partners, will be at the heart of improving the wellbeing of our communities.*

Our mission is to provide *outstanding care for people in ways which matter to them.*

Underpinning everything we do are our values:





## 6. Strategic Themes

To achieve the mission and realise our vision, we will focus on three strategic themes: **People, Place and Partnership**.

These themes have been created out of the learning from engagement and acknowledgement of local challenges and we believe they capture the ambitions that we want to achieve as a Trust. They are guided by the national context and ambitions of the Long Term Plan whilst ultimately providing the blueprint for our Trust for the future.

### Themes:



#### **People**

Putting our people first to make DCH a great place to work and receive care.

#### **Place**

Building a better and healthier place for our patients and population.

#### **Partnership**

Working together to ensure outstanding services, accessible to our patients and population.

The following sections will outline each theme in more detail.

## 7. People

The first strategic theme focuses on our people. We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated, professional and caring workforce. Our staff must not be taken for granted, our goals here are clear:

- We will look after and invest in our staff, developing our workforce to support outstanding care and equity of access and outcomes
- We will create an environment where everyone feels they belong, they matter and their voice is heard
- We will improve safety and quality of care by creating a culture of openness, innovation and learning
- We continue to create collaborative and multidisciplinary professional teams, working to maximise skills, knowledge and respect

There are some key actions that must happen to achieve the above, therefore we will:

- Develop the DCH People Strategy, establishing new clinical roles, creating career development pathways and partnerships to attract and retain staff
- Recognise the equal importance of all professional disciplines and ensure meaningful representation of Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) and clinical Support Services within decision-making processes
- Develop recruitment and retention approaches to ensure we are a local employer of choice, attract out of area and overseas staff and build a staff experience that supports people to stay
- Build on and sustain our staff wellbeing offer and put wellbeing and development conversations at the heart of the appraisal
- Through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, develop managers to build team effectiveness by supporting racial equality, inclusion and a culture where people feel free to express their knowledge, skills, perspectives, needs and potential
- Review HR policies and procedures to align with a learning culture and ensure 'human' is at the heart of HR
- Through the Quality Improvement Strategy, Research Strategy and Innovation Hub support people to research, innovate and improve the quality of their services
- Increase psychological safety by developing managers' ability to listen to and respond effectively to concerns

## 8. Place

Here, 'place' refers to the local community and our role in understanding and responding to local need, population health management and improving health inequalities. Our estate must also improve to better serve this purpose. Our goals are as follows:

- We will deliver safe, effective and high-quality care for every patient
- We will listen to our communities, recognise their different needs and help create opportunities for people to improve their own health and wellbeing
- We will further utilise digital technology as it enables us to better integrate with our partners and meet the needs of patients
- We will ensure a personalised approach to care, focussing on what matters to the individual
- We will build sustainable infrastructure to meet the changing needs of the population
- We will contribute to the social and economic health of our local communities, increasing local employment and working towards net carbon zero
- We will provide a seamless urgent and emergency care pathway for our patients

We will achieve this by:

- Revising our Quality Strategy
- Utilising our Digital Strategy to meet basic delivery needs, develop decision-making tools, increasing remote monitoring and aiding us to work with our partners
- Developing a Population Health Management Programme to create integrated long-term condition pathways and embed population health management into clinical delivery
- Delivering our Outpatient Transformation Programme to increase productivity and remote delivery
- Developing a Centres of Excellence Programme to invest in and sustain our key anchor services.
- Developing a Health Inequalities Programme, including our Social Value Pledge, to improve outcomes and improve health and wellbeing
- Continuing our Strategic Estates Development Programme to ensure the right capacity is available in the right place with the right partners and to deliver the new Emergency Department, Integrated Care Unit and Integrated Services Hub



- Creating an integrated and dynamic urgent and emergency care pathway as part of the work to improve our Emergency Department.



## 9. Partnership

In order to become an organisation that is sustainable and able to deliver outstanding care now and in the future, we know we need to build on existing partnerships and work more closely with our ICS and local people. In order to do this, our goals are as follows:

- We will work in collaboration with our patients and population to co-design services that meet their needs
- We will work more closely with the Local Authority, community and primary care teams
- We will work together to reduce clinical variation across Dorset
- We will increase the capacity and resilience of our services by working with our provider collaboratives and networks
- We will contribute to a strong, effective Integrated Care System, focussed on meeting the needs of the Dorset population
- We will ensure best value for the population in all that we do
- We will create partnerships with commercial, voluntary and social enterprise organisations to address key challenges in innovative and cost-effective ways

We will achieve this by:

- Expanding the Patient Voice Group and embedding co-design principles in all we do through our Quality Improvement Strategy
- Developing a Clinical Strategy which sets a broad direction for each of our services and which seeks to develop our services around places, communities and Primary Care Networks
- Expanding provider collaboratives to maintain access to quality services for our population
- Actively supporting the Integrated Care System Development Programme to launch a statutory ICS by April 2022
- Expanding day surgery and maximising theatre capacity to optimise efficiency through our Theatre Efficiency Programme
- Through our Better Value Better Care Board continue to deliver stretching Cost Improvements and develop and embed new value-based measurements and outcomes
- Developing a Commercial Partnering Strategy and Plan

## 10. How Will We Measure Success?

Following approval of the strategy, work will commence to gain the detailed metrics that will form a balanced scorecard which will be used to monitor progress against the strategy.

We will work with key people to gain the correct metrics, ensuring an iterative process, allowing the opportunity to review and amend our metrics as delivery of the strategy progresses. This process will ensure an active review of staff wellbeing throughout implementation of the strategy.

It is likely that the balanced scorecard will include a blend of:

- Staff wellbeing data
- Outcome driven metrics
- Quality metrics
- Wider social value data
- Patient experience data





## 11. Governance and Monitoring

The following Governance and Oversight Framework has been developed. A Strategy and Transformation Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting will be organised as the key group for monitoring and driving implementation. A dynamic review process will be put in place, including six monthly reporting to the Trust Board to review the strategic measures via the strategy dashboard. In addition, the Strategy and Transformation SMT will monitor and manage strategic risks via the Board Assurance Framework, which will be redeveloped in line with the updated strategic objectives. An annual review process will also be initiated, with updated annual and three-year delivery plans.





**Further information is available on our website at [dchft.nhs.uk/about-us/trust-strategy/](https://dchft.nhs.uk/about-us/trust-strategy/)**

**If you would like this document in another format or in another language please call 01305 253394 or email [communications@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:communications@dchft.nhs.uk)**