



Access
Wellbeing

Access Wellbeing Universal Services Impact Report 2025-26

Supporting your mental health | April 2025-March 2026

Welcome

Welcome to the Access Wellbeing Universal Impact Report for 2025-26 – our second full year of operation. Over the past year, thousands of people across Dorset have walked through the doors of an Access Wellbeing space looking for support. Some were struggling with their mental health, others were simply feeling lonely, worried or overwhelmed. Whatever brought them to us, they were met with a warm welcome, a listening ear and a team ready to help.

It has been an exciting and rewarding year for our Universal services. By March 2026, we had expanded into more than 30 open-access mental health spaces across Dorset. Our hubs and drop-ins saw over 16,500 visits during the year – more than three times the number in 2024-25. And behind every one of those visits is a story. A person looking for understanding and support to find a way forward. As one client explained: “I was lost and isolated but I now have input from services who support me – I can look to the future again.”

None of this would be possible without the commitment of our incredible teams and partners. Together, we have created spaces where people feel heard, valued and supported, and I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has contributed to that. I am particularly grateful for our Universal partnership, which brings together Help & Care, The Lantern Trust, Harmony, Dorset Mind and BCHA, and continues to demonstrate the power of collaboration in improving mental health and wellbeing across Dorset.

Whilst we are rightly proud of what has been achieved, we know there is still more to do. Over the coming year, we will continue to strengthen our services, tackle health inequalities, and ensure support reaches those who really need it most. Throughout this report, you will read stories of resilience, recovery and hope. For me, they are the most important measure of our success and a reminder of why our work matters.



Amy Maloney

Head of Access Wellbeing, BCHA



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**Together, we have
created spaces where
people feel heard,
valued and supported.**

Amy Maloney
Head of Access Wellbeing

What is Access Wellbeing?

Access Wellbeing is Dorset's community mental health system, bringing together services across the NHS and voluntary sector to create one joined-up model of support. Developed through an innovative transformation programme, Access Wellbeing is building a more connected way for people to access help across Universal, Focused and Specialist services (see right). As the programme continues to evolve, new ways of working are being introduced across the model, making it easier for people to find the right support, at the right time, in the right way.

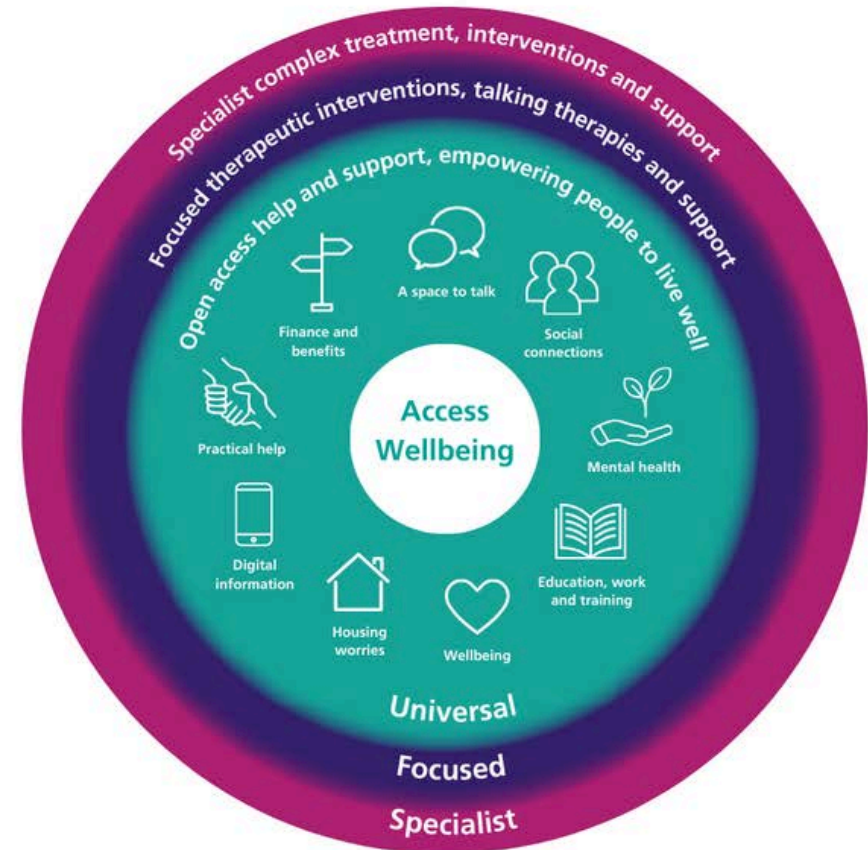
About Access Wellbeing Universal services

Access Wellbeing Universal services provide easy access to mental health and wellbeing support for anyone aged 18 and over, with no appointment or referral needed. There are now three hubs and over 30 drop-in spaces across Dorset, each offering a welcoming space for people to talk and find support.

Universal spaces are staffed by friendly wellbeing coordinators who can take the time to listen, then help people to explore further options for support, whether they are struggling with their mental health and emotional wellbeing or facing practical worries such as work, money or housing.

Access Wellbeing Universal services are delivered through an innovative partnership between the NHS and voluntary sector, with five key charity partners – BCHA, Help & Care, The Lantern Trust, Harmony and Dorset Mind. Each partner delivers services in one area of Dorset.

Read more about Focused and Specialist services on pages 23-24.



It really does do what it says on the tin – it gives you easy access to face-to-face support. The help I received was so flexible, so understanding, and completely built around me.

Dave, Access Wellbeing West Dorset client



Expanding our services across Dorset

During 2025-26, Access Wellbeing Universal expanded across Dorset, bringing much-needed support closer to people's homes and communities. Using a data-informed approach, we worked with our partners to establish provision in the areas of greatest need. A flexible delivery model enabled us to respond to local demand, using a maturity matrix to review and adapt services where needed.

Over the year we launched new services in North Dorset and West Dorset, opened two new drop-ins in Purbeck, introduced monthly drop-ins at GP surgeries in Mid Dorset, and strengthened support in urban areas with higher deprivation. By expanding into new areas and increasing our visibility, we were able to support more people than ever before during 2025-26:

- From April 2025 to March 2026, our hubs and drop-in spaces received **16,743 visits**, including appointments and shorter walk-in visits. This compares to 5,487 visits in 2024-25* – an increase of over 200%.
- Our **three main hubs saw the highest footfall**, with 6,800 appointments and 3,908 walk-in visits over the year. Our community drop-in spaces also saw increasing numbers as our services expanded, with 3,960 appointments and 2,075 walk-in visits over the year.
- A further **2,511 people attended groups** in our hubs, either run by Access Wellbeing Universal partners or other charities and community groups. This figure includes repeat visits.

Reaching into communities

In addition to our own hubs and drop-in services, our teams also proactively engage with communities through outreach and engagement activities. These include regular support sessions at local foodbanks, community cafes, job centres and many more locations. Teams have also attended a wide range of community events such as Bournemouth Pride, ElderFest and Dorset's rural shows. You can read more about these in our partner updates on pages 10-18.

*Total visits from April 2024-March 2025

16,743
visits for support



10,760
one-to-one
appointments



2,511
attendances at groups

Our hubs and drop-in spaces

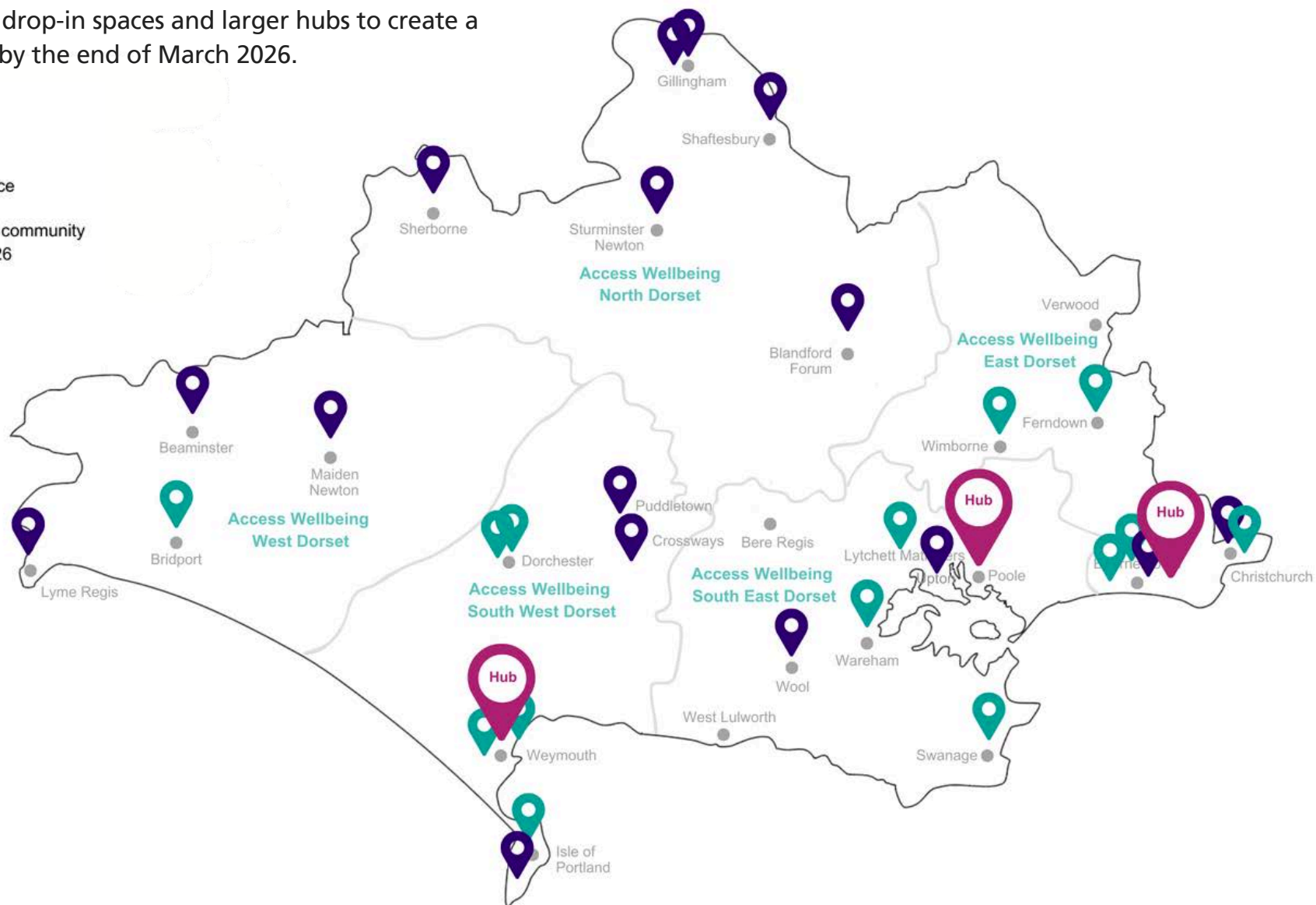
Access Wellbeing Universal services expanded to include **15 new venues** during 2025-26, shown in purple on the map below. These added to our existing drop-in spaces and larger hubs to create a network of 33 spaces by the end of March 2026.

Map guide

 Access Wellbeing community drop-in space

 New Access Wellbeing community drop-in space in 2025-26

 Access Wellbeing hub



Who we support

At Access Wellbeing, we're committed to providing inclusive and accessible support, and work hard with our partners to understand local needs and reduce inequalities for people accessing services. Data for 2025-26 indicates that we successfully expanded our reach to meet more needs, but addressing health inequalities further remains a key focus for us in 2026-27.

- The highest proportion of our clients in 2025-26 were aged 35-64 years old (65%). We saw a slightly older age profile than in 2024-25, with 22% of clients aged 55-64 (up from 16%) and 13% aged 65 and over (up from 11%).
- We were pleased to see a relatively even gender split amongst clients over the year – 52% female and 46% male.
- 81% of our clients were white. By comparison, 97.1% of Dorset's population identifies as white, suggesting that we are successfully engaging people from a broad range of ethnic backgrounds.
- Almost one in three of our clients (31%) reported having a disability, with disability-related support a common reason for visiting Access Wellbeing.
- Other reasons that people visited varied over the year, but common topics included mental health support for people experiencing anxiety or depression, and practical support linked to employment, housing, relationships and stress.



Who we work with

Access Wellbeing Universal teams work closely with public services, charities and community groups to help people find the support they need more easily.

We regularly signpost clients to over 80 different support services, and connect with hundreds more when needed.

We also host a range of organisations within our own spaces including:

- Community mental health services and other NHS mental health services such as Steps2Wellbeing
- Physical health clinics such as blood pressure checks and vaccine clinics
- Mental health charities such as Dorset Mental Health Forum and Dorset Mind
- Advice organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau
- Specialist support charities such as Shelter, We Are With You, Reach and Home-Start Wessex
- Local authority teams, including professionals working in social care, and work and benefits
- Social prescribers

Our teams link in with colleagues in specialist mental health services and primary care to create smoother pathways for clients. This helps people to move more easily between services and reduces pressure on clinical teams.

Debbie is a mental health practitioner based at our Weymouth & Portland hub, and explains more:

"I work really closely with the Access Wellbeing team, we have a very collaborative and productive way of working together. My referrals are always taken seriously."

Some people I 'hand over' to the team whilst with others, we work together, as this is more appropriate if someone is particularly complex or needs more intensive mental health support.

Likewise, the team are able to discuss cases with me if they have concerns and then refer to me. I can't imagine how we managed before the Access Wellbeing service was developed."



We regularly signpost to over

80

local organisations



Feedback
gathered in
2025 to 2026

96% of Gather
feedback was
positive

612
people

635 people
completed the
Gather
questionnaire

4%
negative

23
people

Client experience and satisfaction

We gather feedback in a range of different ways to understand people's experiences and improve support where needed.

This includes Gather questionnaires, testimonials and client case studies, all of which help us to evaluate and develop our services. During 2025-26, 635 people completed Gather questionnaires, either on-site at the end of their visit or at a later date. The results are shown on the right.

Over the coming months, we are taking steps to improve the number of Gather questionnaires completed, including simplified questions and email promotion.

Upholding the Access Wellbeing principles

The Access Wellbeing principles underpin everything we do across Dorset's community mental health services. They were co-designed with stakeholders to ensure support meets the needs of local people and communities.

Feedback from our clients and partners indicates that we are delivering these principles in Access Wellbeing Universal, and we will continue to keep our focus on them as our services evolve.



Person-centred support

"I felt heard, listened to and understood, without ever having to over-explain myself" – East Dorset client



Easy access to help

"It's amazing to have somewhere to go for support, whatever it's for" – West Dorset client



Support to build the life you want to live

"The Access Wellbeing team were so helpful and understanding, and recommended useful and practical ways of managing my anxiety and depression.

I now feel more in control and am taking steps to engage in a more fulfilled life."

North Dorset client



Every voice matters

"The team is working collaboratively to build and sustain communities, often including those with the most unheard voice" – Dan Hallett, Lead for Open Dialogue, DHC



Connected services

"There's so much information and knowledge in my wellbeing coordinator, she has connected me to specialist counselling and shown me how to look at things differently" – SE Dorset client

Access Wellbeing East Dorset

Access Wellbeing East Dorset is managed by BCHA and covers areas including Bournemouth, Ferndown and Wimborne. BCHA is also the lead Universal partner for the Access Wellbeing contract.

During 2025-26, the East Dorset service expanded into eight community drop-in locations, including our most recent drop-in at Moordown, increasing vital access to support across local communities.

The East Dorset drop-in sites saw 760 visits in 2025-26. The service also manages a busy hub located in the heart of Boscombe, which saw 4,716 visits during the year.

Partnership working has been central to the development of the East Dorset service. Six organisations now co-locate at the Boscombe Hub, including specialist housing, advice and education teams. We also continue to work closely with wider partners through regular 'Build Your Life' meetings with CMHTs, local authority teams, peer specialists and other professionals.

Collaborative learning and professional development have been a key focus over the past year. We are proud to have supported mental health nurses, support

workers, social prescribers and therapists to shadow the team at the hub, whilst our own colleagues have completed shadow shifts with CMHTs and Psychiatric Liaison teams, to strengthen understanding and support our own development.

The East Dorset team supports densely populated communities, with some areas of significant deprivation and highly complex needs. Close collaboration with partner organisations has been essential in helping ensure people receive the right support. Demand for the service continues to grow, particularly in Boscombe, and the team has continued to adapt to meet increasing local need.



Access Wellbeing
East Dorset

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“Your genuine help and support were so valuable for me. I felt empowered and alive again, I can't thank you enough. Your presence gave me the strength and power to carry on, and start seeing the positive side of the world.”

Extract from a joint letter to
Access Wellbeing and Citizens'
Advice Bureau

Outreach and engagement

Over the past year, the East Dorset team has delivered and attended more than 50 community engagement events, workshops and networking sessions. This included wellbeing workshops delivered alongside BCHA Learn, partnership work with organisations including Chill Dorset and Home-Start Wessex, and attendance at local events such as ElderFest, Pride, Thrive and Family Hub wellbeing sessions. The team also strengthened outreach work through regular visits to community spaces including foodbanks, the Retreat and Access Dorset, helping to raise awareness of Access Wellbeing and connect with local communities.

Learning together

The Access Wellbeing Boscombe team works closely with BCHA Learn, who provide free courses to help local people learn a variety of skills. The two teams co-locate in the Boscombe hub, which allows them to provide joined-up support for clients, alongside shared educational sessions on wellbeing.

Jamie Clarke, BCHA Learn Manager, explains how beneficial this collaborative approach has been:

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“BCHA Learn and Access Wellbeing have developed a strong and mutually beneficial partnership that enhances outcomes for both services and the people we support.

“Cross-referrals between teams are highly effective, leading to increased engagement and improved access to learning and wellbeing support. Being co-located at the Boscombe Hub helps reduce anxiety for customers, as they can access learning opportunities within the same familiar and supportive environment as their wellbeing sessions. Both teams share a person-centred approach, with wellbeing at the heart of all delivery. There is a clear sense of working as one integrated team rather than separate services.”



From top left-right: MP Tom Hayes visits the Boscombe Hub for Mental Health Awareness Week 2025; With colleagues from Steps2Wellbeing at ElderFest; Engaging with the community (and a few reptilian friends!) at a BCP wellbeing event; Partnering with LiveWell Dorset; A well-earned team trip to the beach; Attending Bournemouth Pride with colleagues from Access Wellbeing South East Dorset

Access Wellbeing South West Dorset

Access Wellbeing South West Dorset is managed by The Lantern Trust and covers Weymouth, Portland, Dorchester and surrounding areas.

During 2025-26, the South West Dorset service expanded to eight community drop-in spaces. These include the main drop-in at the Lantern Community Hub in central Weymouth, where the team co-locate with Lantern Trust housing colleagues and peer support from Dorset Mental Health Forum, plus new spaces in Portland and Dorchester.

To reach more isolated communities, we also launched monthly drop-ins at GP surgeries in Crossways and Puddletown, alongside a monthly session at the Veterans Hub in Wyke.

Our South West Dorset drop-ins welcomed 1,959 visits during the year. The Weymouth & Portland hub at Hope House provides support via referral and welcomed clients to 984 appointments during 2025-26.

The hub also hosts a range of wellbeing groups, with 2,149 attendances across six weekly groups (art, yoga, chair yoga and writing) and 16 other groups using the space.

Partnership working remains at the heart of our service. We regularly attend Citizens Advice, Steps 2 Wellbeing and CMHT meetings, alongside one-off events including the Dorset-wide Psychological Professionals Conference, GP learning sessions, a VCSE partnership event and a Citizen Symposium, where our Hub Manager presented on peer open dialogue.

We were also proud to host the Lantern Mid Dorset Networking event in November, bringing professionals and community organisations together to strengthen relationships, share learning and improve local support pathways.



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“I have been treated with compassion and honesty. The service has enabled me to talk openly and candidly – there has been no judgment. Access Wellbeing and my wellbeing coordinator have been my refuge and my safe space while I could not figure out my own mind.”

Access Wellbeing Weymouth client

Outreach and engagement

The South West team continued to take support into the heart of local communities through a range of outreach activities. These included monthly attendance at the multi-agency PAVE sessions at Weymouth Job Centre, as well as regular outreach at The Bus Shelter, Dorset Mental Health Forum groups, Weymouth and Portland Foodbanks, and the Lantern Coffee Bar. By bringing Access Wellbeing into trusted community spaces, we are reaching more people and making support easier to access.

Supporting men's mental health

In November 2025, the Access Wellbeing South West Dorset team held a special men-only drop-in event to mark International Men's Day, creating a welcoming space for men to connect and access support.

The event brought together local organisations including Andy's Man Club, The Veterans Hub, Dorset Mental Health Forum, Fight Back Mental Health, NHS START and Weymouth Dry Dock. Awareness events also took place across other Access Wellbeing spaces, including a men's health information event at the Poole Hub and a men's lunch in North Dorset.

These events highlighted the importance of creating spaces where men feel comfortable talking openly about mental health. Research indicates that suicide is the leading cause of death in men under 50, yet men are still less likely to seek support.

During November 2025, in the same month as our International Men's Day activities, we saw higher male engagement than usual across our Access Wellbeing spaces, with men accounting for just over 50% of attendances, compared with an annual average of 46%.



From top, left-right: The team at the Mid Dorset Networking event; Our new Veterans Hub drop-in opens; MP Lloyd Hatton visits the Weymouth hub; Weymouth hub re-opens after a full refurbishment; Welcoming people to our new Dorset County Hospital drop-in at The Hive

Access Wellbeing South East Dorset

Access Wellbeing South East Dorset is managed by Help & Care and covers Poole, Purbeck and surrounding areas.

The South East Dorset service continued to expand support across the locality during 2025-26. In addition to our busy Poole hub, we now have five community drop-in spaces, including two new spaces in Upton and Wool offering easier access to support for Purbeck residents.

Our South East community drop-in spaces saw a total of 1,388 visits over the year, whilst the Poole hub in the Dolphin Centre saw 5,008 visits.

The South East team has worked hard to strengthen integrated working across Poole and Purbeck, recognising the differing geography, system maturity and community needs in the area. Collaboration with Integrated Neighbourhood Teams, particularly in Purbeck, has focused on supporting frail and isolated residents, including the exploration of a digital offer for people aged 65 and over experiencing anxiety.

Our teams now co-locate with employment and housing services in Purbeck, while the Poole hub has continued to strengthen its

partnership offer. Colleagues from BCP Housing, Citizens Advice, Shelter, LiveWell, Dorset Mental Health Forum, Recovery Education Centre and Steps 2 Wellbeing regularly work alongside our team, making it easier for people to access joined-up support in one place. Collaboration with LiveWell has also enabled free health checks and smoking cessation support, particularly for people living with severe mental illness. The hub also hosts vaccination clinics, veterans' services and an eating disorder drop-in.



Vikki Slade, MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole, visited the Poole hub in January 2026 to meet the team



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“It’s wonderful to see the impact the Poole hub has had on our community since it opened its doors. By offering free mental health and wellbeing support in a welcoming and accessible space the team are making a real difference to people’s lives.”

**Vikki Slade,
MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole**

Outreach and engagement

Outreach work has continued to grow, with ongoing funded provision for wellbeing breakfasts in Bourne Estate and Turlin Moor, held in partnership with Poole Communities Trust.

Further activities have included a presence in foodbanks, community centres, Slimming World groups, parish meetings, cancer survivor groups, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. We are proud to be reaching more people across Purbeck and Poole than ever before.

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John's Story

John first visited the Access Wellbeing Poole Hub in 2025, when he was feeling overwhelmed by challenges linked to a long-term disability and a recent diagnosis of dementia. He was supported by Senior Wellbeing Coordinator Renee.

“I was at my rock bottom when I came to Access Wellbeing. Renee heard everything I was going through, and step by step we found ways of getting me through it.

“It felt like building a staircase – one step at a time. She helped me stop focusing on what I couldn't do and start thinking about what I could do. And that gave me my purpose back.”

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From top, left-right: Macmillan Coffee Morning; Our new Lytchett Minster & Upton drop-in; Men's health information event; Tank Museum wellbeing event; Partnering with Dorset Mind colleagues

Access Wellbeing North Dorset

Access Wellbeing North Dorset is managed by Dorset Mind and covers towns including Shaftesbury, Sturminster Newton, Sherborne, Gillingham and Blandford, plus surrounding areas.

The first North Dorset drop-in service officially opened its doors in May 2025 in Sturminster Newton. Since then, the service has rapidly grown to strengthen its local presence, expanding support to provide seven drop-in spaces across five North Dorset towns.

This community support has been particularly important in a largely rural area, where travel, transport, and access to services can present additional challenges for people seeking support.

Following the launch of the first North Dorset drop-in space, our expanding service has seen 863 visits over the year.

To support our work, the team has built strong relationships with local churches, community groups and clinical partners across North Dorset, helping to raise awareness of the service and improve access to support.

Close links have also been maintained with Citizens Advice, local community organisations and primary care colleagues across the area.

The North Dorset team has become increasingly integrated with CMHTs, regularly attending multidisciplinary meetings to discuss client support and strengthen joined-up working.

Outreach and engagement

Alongside expanding local provision, the team has worked hard to raise awareness of Access Wellbeing across North Dorset through community engagement and local media, including interviews on community radio stations.

Outreach at venues including Nourish Community Larder and Foodbank in Blandford, Blandford Leisure Centre, and libraries in Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Blandford and Sturminster Newton has helped connect with people who may not otherwise seek support, making Access Wellbeing an increasingly visible and trusted part of the local mental health support network.



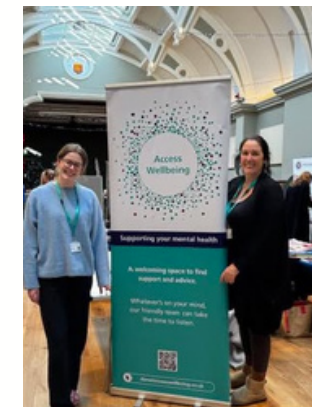
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“It's been amazing to be able to just come and talk about all things I've been going through. To just have someone to listen to me and let me cry. I don't think I would have got through without this service.”

Access Wellbeing North Dorset
client

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I found the Access Wellbeing team to be very caring, sympathetic and practical



From top, left-right: Attending the two-day Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show; Opening our new Gillingham drop-in at RiversMeet Leisure Centre; Attending the Blandford Wellbeing Fair; Senior Wellbeing Coordinator David takes part in an Access Wellbeing Away Day

Access Wellbeing West Dorset

Access Wellbeing West Dorset is managed by Harmony and covers the far west of the county, including the towns of Bridport, Beaminster, Lyme Regis and Maiden Newton, plus surrounding areas.

Since opening the first West Dorset drop-in service in Bridport in April 2025, the service has rapidly established itself as a valued part of the local mental health support network, expanding access to support across a large and geographically dispersed rural area. The service now offers five drop-in sessions across four towns, including new sites in Lyme Regis and Maiden Newton, which provide improved accessibility and additional private spaces.

Our growing West Dorset service saw 754 visits during 2025-26.

Partnership working has been at the heart of the development of the West Dorset service since launch. The team runs a monthly virtual multidisciplinary meeting, bringing together colleagues from across mental health services, and strong relationships have also been developed with organisations including Citizens Advice, Home-Start, REACH, housing teams and Dorset Mental Health Forum.

The service has also worked closely with other Access Wellbeing localities throughout the year. Clients have benefited from warm handovers between West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland teams, and collaboration across the wider partnership has also enabled shared training opportunities, workforce development and mutual support.



The Access Wellbeing West Dorset service is run by Harmony, who are based at the busy Harmony Centre in Bridport



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“My wellbeing coordinator gave me the space to talk about things that were going on in my life, and that was such a welcome space to have. Each time we met, we had a theme that I would be able to take away with me and try out.”

Access Wellbeing West Dorset client

Outreach and engagement

The team has built a strong presence within local communities through outreach work, awareness events and partnership activities. During the year, colleagues attended and supported events including Bridport Charter Fair, Melplash Show, Bridport Christmas Cheer, school wellbeing events, social prescribing events and South Western Ambulance Service blood donation sessions. Regular outreach has also taken place through foodbanks, social groups, Citizens Advice, Harmony's community drop-in and Home-Start services.

A social prescriber's perspective

Kate is a social prescriber working with three GP practices in West Dorset. She explains more about how she has worked with Access Wellbeing, and partners Harmony, over the last year:

"We frequently have patients referred into our service who are struggling with their mental health in many different ways and The Harmony Centre and Access Wellbeing have become extremely valuable healthcare partners for us.

"We know that the staff there are highly skilled at supporting these patients. They are compassionate in their practice, and able to help with the practical matters of daily life that so many of our patients find hard to manage. The staff communicate really effectively with all agencies that may be able to help, to provide a cohesive and comprehensive support service.

"Feedback to me from patients who have used Access Wellbeing has been extremely positive, with great appreciation of the kindness and determination of the staff to improve lives."



From top, left-right: Dorset High Sheriff Callum Bremner JP signs a community quilt at the Bridport drop-in; Attending the Melplash Show; Outreach work with the local Blood Bank; Festive fun at the Bridport Christmas Cheer event; Psychological Professionals conference with South West colleagues

Reaching rural communities

Rural communities face distinct pressures when it comes to mental health. Research indicates that those living in rural areas can face barriers including social isolation, limited public transport, longer travel distances and reduced access to local services. These challenges can be particularly acute for some groups, including the farming community, with national statistics reporting higher-than-average rates of depression and suicide among agricultural workers.*

With almost half of Dorset's residents living in rural communities, we have expanded our services to embed Access Wellbeing support in the heart of rural towns and villages, and now have a network of spaces across areas including North Dorset, West Dorset and Purbeck.

During 2025-26, we also sought further opportunities to engage with local farming communities by attending some of Dorset's biggest summer agricultural shows. In North Dorset, our team hosted a stall at the two-day Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show, whilst in West Dorset, the team attended the popular Melpash Show in Bridport. Both events offered an important opportunity to engage with people working in different areas of agriculture and raise awareness of the support available through Access Wellbeing and our partners.

*Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (2023), Rural Mental Health; Mental Health Matters (2024), Insight into the Mental Health of Rural Communities



Our new North Dorset service includes a weekly drop-in in Shaftesbury



Supporting communities online

We continued to expand our digital presence during 2025/26, helping more people to discover Access Wellbeing and access information about support.

For many, our website is their first introduction to Access Wellbeing, so we were pleased to see a 24% increase in visitors over the year, with 49,808 views and 12,224 unique visitors.

We also strengthened our social media presence, to help us raise awareness of services and connect with communities. By March 2026, our Facebook following had grown to over 1,100 people and our content had been viewed more than 455,000 times – a 200% increase on last year.

June 2025 also saw the launch of an Access Wellbeing LinkedIn channel, which has allowed us to engage more effectively with professionals and partner organisations online. Our LinkedIn content was viewed more than 7,300 times during its first year.

Expanding peer open dialogue

Peer Open Dialogue Dorset (PODD) is an innovative approach to mental health support that brings people and services together.

The approach has expanded across Access Wellbeing over the last year, strengthening connections and putting individuals at the heart of their care.

PODD aims to create a network of support around each person. Professionals are trained in how to identify, build and adapt that network to meet individual needs. The network might include friends, carers, family members or other professionals, and is facilitated through meetings that create a safe space for everyone to have a voice and share responsibility for plans and actions.

During 2025-26, PODD expanded significantly. **Over 100 colleagues** have now undertaken PODD training in Dorset, spanning both the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and NHS, and a Train the Trainers programme was also implemented.

Across Access Wellbeing Universal, there are now:

- 18 trained PODD practitioners
- A further 5 in training
- 3 qualified Train the Trainers
- Over 50 clients have been supported through PODD network meetings.

Louise Welsh, Team Leader for the Purbeck CMHT, explains the difference PODD has made to her team and their clients:

“Working closely with our Access Wellbeing colleagues, PODD has created a network of support for all people in our community to benefit from in regards to their health and wellbeing.”

“I would recommend doing a PODD meeting to anyone who is considering one. It has provided our family with the insights and tools we needed in a time of crisis.”

Access Wellbeing East Dorset client



Next steps for Universal Services

Whilst we are rightly proud of all that has been achieved in 2025-26, we know there is more to do. We will continue to work with our partners to ensure people across Dorset can access the support they need.

During the coming year we will:

- Continue to work to address health inequalities by introducing Health Inequality Champions in each area, to extend the reach of services to those who may otherwise struggle to access support
- Work closely with partners to identify and prioritise communities experiencing poorer outcomes, including LGBTQ+ communities, older adults, rural communities and agricultural workers
- Continue the expansion of PODD, including the Train the Trainer programme
- Launch a new 0800 number to support easier access for clients and colleagues, offering one single contact number for all Universal services
- Expand the use of telephone and video appointments to support clients who may not be able to attend face-to-face appointments, or who may prefer to receive support outside a physical space
- Launch a new digital service finder on the Access Wellbeing website, giving people easy access to information on support from across the local community
- Continue to build stronger operational links with statutory and VCSE partners to help manage increasing demand and support people with complex needs more effectively
- Work with colleagues in the wider system to support the development of the Single Point of Access (SPoA), to create a simpler route into mental health support in Dorset





Developments in the wider Access Wellbeing programme

Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust oversees all NHS mental health services across Dorset and is leading the delivery of the Access Wellbeing transformation programme.

The Trust commissions and monitors Access Wellbeing Universal services, working in partnership with the voluntary sector to ensure high-quality, safe and effective support. It also leads the continued development of the wider Access Wellbeing model, with clinical teams working alongside Universal colleagues to integrate care and develop new services and ways of working across Focused and Specialist services.

Building a Single Point of Access

As part of the wider Access Wellbeing transformation programme, NHS and voluntary sector partners worked together during 2025-26 to lay the foundations for a new Single Point of Access (SPoA) for adult community mental health referrals from primary care.

The SPoA is designed to provide a simpler, more joined-up route into support through a single referral and triage process. Bringing together NHS mental health practitioners, administrative teams and Access Wellbeing wellbeing coordinators, it will help ensure referrals are reviewed consistently and people are connected with the most appropriate support.

Developing the SPoA required close collaboration to design shared pathways, agree referral processes and prepare teams for a phased rollout.

By creating a single route into Universal, Focused and Specialist services, the new approach aims to reduce duplicate or declined referrals, minimise delays and help people access support more quickly.

Together with Access Wellbeing's open-access hubs and drop-in spaces, the SPoA will help create a more connected and coordinated community mental health system, making it easier for people to find the right support at the right time.

Developing trauma-informed support

During 2025/26, work continued to develop Thriving Together, a trauma-informed support offer that expands on existing services and pathways, helping to strengthen the whole system.

Designed through close partnership working and co-production, Thriving Together aims to improve support for people experiencing complex trauma, dissociation and complex emotional and relational needs.

The Thriving Together offer spans the Universal, Focused and Specialist areas of Access Wellbeing. Built around the principles of 'no wrong door', person-centred care, and joined-up working, it aims to bridge gaps in support, avoid repeated assessments, and reduce the fragmented experiences that many people with complex needs have faced in the past.

Thriving Together brings together a wide range of support, including peer support, occupational therapy, psychologically informed interventions and specialist trauma therapies.

Alongside direct support for individuals, it also strengthens the wider system through training, shared learning and

multidisciplinary working, helping more services to embed trauma-informed approaches in everyday practice.

Thriving Together Advisory Group

A key element of the offer is the Thriving Together Advisory Group (TTAG), which brings together clinicians, practitioners and peer specialists to share expertise, support complex care planning and improve access to appropriate interventions across Dorset.

Following the appointment of a new Service Manager in October 2025, the Thriving Together programme has continued to bring partners together to develop shared pathways, strengthen trauma-informed practice, and build a more coordinated approach to supporting people with complex trauma across Dorset.

This work has laid strong foundations for the continued development of the service in the future.

“I had a very positive experience at the TTAG meeting. I felt genuinely listened to throughout, and the panel created space for thoughtful, insightful, and detailed discussion. There was clear respect for the care and treatment that had already been tried and tested, which made the conversation feel balanced and collaborative rather than dismissive. The panel offered helpful, practical recommendations and provided supportive guidance on how to implement them, which I found both reassuring and constructive.”

Mental health practitioner,
Dorset HealthCare

Our Universal partnership



What an incredible year it has been, working with so many wonderful clients who have come into one of the hubs or one of the drop-ins. The service continues to go from strength to strength, and is continually learning and evolving, responding to feedback from customers, the Access Wellbeing team and our many partner agencies. A great example of embedded partnership working.

Lorraine Mealings, CEO, BCHA
Access Wellbeing East Dorset



I have been so impressed by the quality of work and dedication of the staff working in Access Wellbeing since joining Help & Care. It's clear that the partnerships in this programme are strong, supportive and impact driven. I am a huge advocate for early intervention and person-centred support, and believe this can create meaningful and long-term change both for individuals and wider communities. Access Wellbeing epitomises these concepts.

Katie Holland, CEO, Help & Care
Access Wellbeing South East Dorset



"The first year of Access Wellbeing in West Dorset has been a huge success, not just in our attendance figures and outcomes, but also in working collaboratively with our partners. This has proven to be transformative for our visitors, supporting with preventative pathways before they reach crisis with their mental health. By embedding ourselves into local communities with other services, we are providing a long-standing, strong and resilient way forward."

Ragn Banton, Chair, Harmony
Access Wellbeing West Dorset



"I've had the privilege of seeing the continued rollout of Access Wellbeing over the last year and this work has been truly transformative. The feedback from our teams, partners, and most importantly our community has been overwhelmingly positive. People are accessing support earlier and more easily. As the system continues to evolve, one thing remains clear: collaboration is the most powerful tool we have. When organisations work together, the outcomes for our community are always stronger."

Mike Graham, CEO, The Lantern Trust
Access Wellbeing South West Dorset



"Across Dorset, many people living in rural communities face challenges such as isolation, transport barriers, and limited local services. The Access Wellbeing team in North Dorset are helping to bridge these gaps by bringing together partners to create more connected, accessible, and person-centred support pathways that reach people where they are. Together, we are breaking down barriers, reducing inequalities, and building stronger, healthier, and more resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive."

Linda O'Sullivan, CEO, Dorset Mind
Access Wellbeing North Dorset

Find out more:

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