

Social Value Activity Report

2024-2025

We are very pleased to publish our latest edition of the Dorset County Hospital Social Value Activity Report.

Dorset County Hospital is committed to maximising the positive social value impact we have on our local communities, contributing to improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the local population.

The report highlights a few of the wide-ranging initiatives as part of the hospital's ongoing social value programme.

The Trust's Social Value Pledge is available on our website at www.dchft.nhs.uk/about-us/social-value

For more information about DCH's social value commitments and how you can contribute and make a difference, please contact Simon Pearson, Head of Charity and Social Value, at simon.pearson@dchft.nhs.uk

Volunteer Activities

Our Volunteer Activity team provide opportunities for patients to engage in activities which can lead to improvements in their own wellbeing and potentially help them to leave hospital sooner.

Activities include bingo, cooking, a game of cards or a friendly chat and we are lucky enough to have five Pets as Therapy dogs visiting patients.



The team launched a book trolley service and our volunteers have also been supporting the Arts in Hospital team to expand their creative health programme which uses art to improve patients' wellbeing.

Our Young Volunteer Programme is open to students over the age of 16 and is a fantastic way to support gain valuable experience. Many of our young volunteers go on to pursue a career in healthcare.



Improving Tumbledown Farm

Members of our Strategic Estates team joined staff from our building contractors Tilbury Douglas and Blanchard Wells Ltd to volunteer at Tumbledown Farm in Weymouth. The team helped to improve their raised bed area and make it more accessible for people with mobility issues.



Sustainability

Our Sustainability Team worked with local students and organisations to transform a neglected courtyard into a sensory garden so our patients, staff and visitors can take a moment away from the busy hospital environment. The £50K project was funded through the NHS Charities Together Greener Communities Fund.

Kingston Maurward College students designed the garden as part of their course - a great opportunity to put their learning into practice.



Plants were provided by the local Dobbies Garden Centre and LST Projects, who have refurbished our Ridgeway and Fortuneswell units. Their involvement was voluntary and was provided as a result of Social Value commitments made within our Trust Procurement process. It is a nice example of the circular nature of social value and the direct benefits it can bring to the Trust, its staff and wider users of the space.



The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare (CSH) has chosen us to be part of the national Healthy by Nature project. Funded by the National Lottery Community fund, a Nature Recovery Ranger will be based at DCH to help improve our spaces and deliver activities with local community groups for hospital patients and visitors who might otherwise have limited access to nature. Our programme of activities start in summer 2025.

The Trust achieved the NHS Clinical Waste Strategy targets of '60:20:20' for the first time, thanks largely to engagement by the Waste Co-ordinator and effective understanding and use of the correct waste streams across all areas by staff. This is anticipated to contribute to a 15% reduction of clinical waste by 2030 to the NHS overall, and significantly reduces carbon emissions from waste at DCH.



DCH Charity hits Emergency and Critical Care Appeal milestone

In May 2025, the Dorset County Hospital Charity announced it had raised £1.1M for its Emergency and Critical Care Appeal. Donations will fund equipment and facilities for the new Emergency Department and Critical Care Unit at DCH, which is currently under construction.

The total target for the appeal is £2.5M which will provide fund elements such as a new child and adolescent mental health suite, dedicated relatives' rooms, paediatric critical care bed space and equipment. Many local organisations, businesses and people are supporters of the appeal, helping to raise money.



Supporting carers



The Patient Experience team have been engaging with local people at various Primary Care Networks drop in and wellbeing events. They have been promoting the Carer's Passport for unpaid carers when their cared for person becomes an inpatient to ensure carers are identified and their rights observed and supported.

Widening participation and employability programmes

The Widening Participation team finished its fifth healthcare support worker scholarship in July 2024. The two-week programme includes an introduction to the care certificate, ward visits, clinical skills and values and employability sessions. They have supported 41 individuals into employment.



In the Spotlight: Supporting future talent

Jiya Nixon, a dedicated A-Level student from Thomas Hardy School, has long aspired to become a nurse, inspired by her mother's career in healthcare. Jiya participated in the Introduction to Nursing programme in February 2025, a decision that proved pivotal in shaping her future. Jiya has now secured a place on the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship - a significant milestone in her journey toward becoming a nurse. Her journey illustrates the impact that structured work experience and employability programmes can have on young people.



Supported Internships

The Trust supported two cohorts of internship students in partnership with Weymouth College. 66% gained employment following their placement at DCH. We are also offering placements to a second education provider in the area, the Southwest Regional Assessment Centre, to help young people with a special educational need or disability gain valuable experience in a workplace.

Apprentice Awards

Over 200 staff are undertaking apprenticeships across a wide range of roles and levels at local and regional colleges and universities. The Apprenticeship Team held a special awards ceremony in February 2025. The awards recognised individuals hard work and commitment, and helps promote apprenticeship opportunities at DCH.



English and Maths

Our functional skills offering has now evolved to include virtual learning so we can support even more staff at DCH. The first staff members are now starting to undertake and pass their exams. We are also working together with Dorset HealthCare to provide places for their staff in our classes at DCH with individuals signed up to both courses.

T Levels

We commenced our first Health T Level industry placement with Weymouth College. Students spend time on the wards as part of their course.

Arts in Hospital

Arts in Hospital is continuing to contribute to and promote civic partnerships between DCH and our community, implementing local activities which promote the reduction of inequalities, increasing opportunities and improving health and wellbeing for all.



Our Art collection is a valued cultural resource, used by local schools and colleges. The team has also offered work experience opportunities and welcomed a degree student as 'Artist in Residence'. These opportunities give real life work experience for students, equipping them with skills for employment.

As part of our temporary exhibition programme, Biophilia is a collaboration between Dorset Visual Arts and the Arborealists. We are promoting and sharing their work, which is displayed for sale, benefitting the local economy.



The team has partnered with Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO). We are working with them on a long-term plan to deliver activity across patient pathways and to focus on prevention within the wider community.

A Creative Health Specialist has been working with patients with dementia and their families, reducing strain on staff, carers and increasing wellbeing. This includes recruiting and training volunteer Creative Health Ambassadors, providing skills training and wellbeing benefits for members of the wider community.

