



People and Communities: annual engagement report 2022-2023



Introduction

Public involvement is an essential part of making sure that effective and efficient health and care services are delivered with people and communities at the centre.

By reaching, listening to, involving and empowering our people and communities, we can ensure that local people are at the heart of decision making and that we put our population's needs at the core of all we do.

On the 1 July 2022, the new Health and Care Bill created statutory Integrated Care Systems (ICS). ICSs bring fresh opportunities to strengthen our work with people and communities, building on existing relationships, networks and activities.

By working together people can help us improve all aspects of health care, giving people the power to live healthier lives. The insights and diverse thinking of people and communities are essential to enabling us to deliver our priorities, and to tackle health inequalities.

We want the people of Somerset to help us develop their local health care services and have meaningful involvement in decision making, where people have a genuine opportunity to influence. As our work develops we will refresh our engagement strategy, taking into account new developments, ways of working and our new ICS strategy and joint forward plan.



How we have engaged with local people



18

Surveys completed



68

Events and drop ins held



801,820

People reached across our social media channels



426

Citizens' Panel members



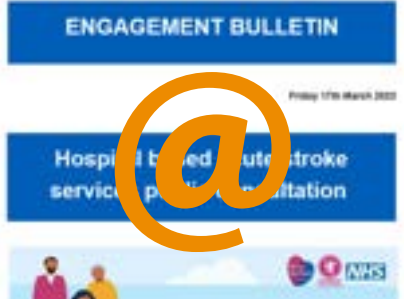
2279

Pieces of feedback received



389

PALS enquiries



484

Engagement Bulletin subscribers



Our Working with People and Communities strategy

NHS Somerset would like to do things differently, we have started to outline how we will approach this in our people and communities engagement strategy.

This is only the start though; our engagement strategy will adapt and respond to our changing environment as we work as an ICS, and as we work with more people and communities to develop our plans together.

Our engagement strategy was produced through a series of conversations and workshops with our partners and key stakeholders across Somerset ICS. It sets out what we hope to achieve, how we will do this and how we will know if we have reached our aims. We believe that by working together we can make a real difference for the people of Somerset.

Read our engagement strategy - www.nhssomerset.nhs.uk/get-involved



Our 10 principles for working with people and communities

In Somerset we have adopted the national 10 principles of working with people and communities to help ensure we meet our public duties in a meaningful way. These have been adapted through co-design for Somerset:

- Put the voices of people and communities at the centre of decision making and governance.
- Understand our community's needs, experience and aspirations for health and care, with a strong focus on underrepresented communities.
- Involve people at the start in developing plans and feed back how their engagement has influenced decision making and ongoing service improvement, including when changes cannot be made.
- Ensure that insight from groups and communities who experience health inequalities is sought effectively and used to make changes in order to reduce inequality in, and barriers to, care.
- Build relationships with underrepresented groups, especially those affected by inequalities, ensuring their voices are heard to help address health inequalities.
- Work with Healthwatch and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector as key partners.
- Through partnership working, co-production, insight and public engagement, address system priorities in collaboration with people and communities, demonstrating accountable health and care.
- Use community development approaches that empower people and communities, building community capacity.
- Provide clear and accessible public information about vision, plans and progress, to build understanding and trust.
- Learn from what works and build on the assets of all ICS partners – networks, relationships and activity in local places - to maximise the impact of involvement.





Involving people in our governance

Involving people and communities in governance is about more than membership of different committees. It concerns how decision making in NHS Somerset takes account of people's experience and aspirations.

It means being transparent in decision making, involving people and communities in governance, meetings held in public, published minutes and regular updates on progress. These actions are vital to accountability and demonstrate responsiveness to communities.

Our NHS Somerset constitution provides details of how we involve the public in our governance and outlines our arrangements for how we work with people and communities.

The NHS Somerset Board includes representatives from the VCFSE sector and Healthwatch Somerset.

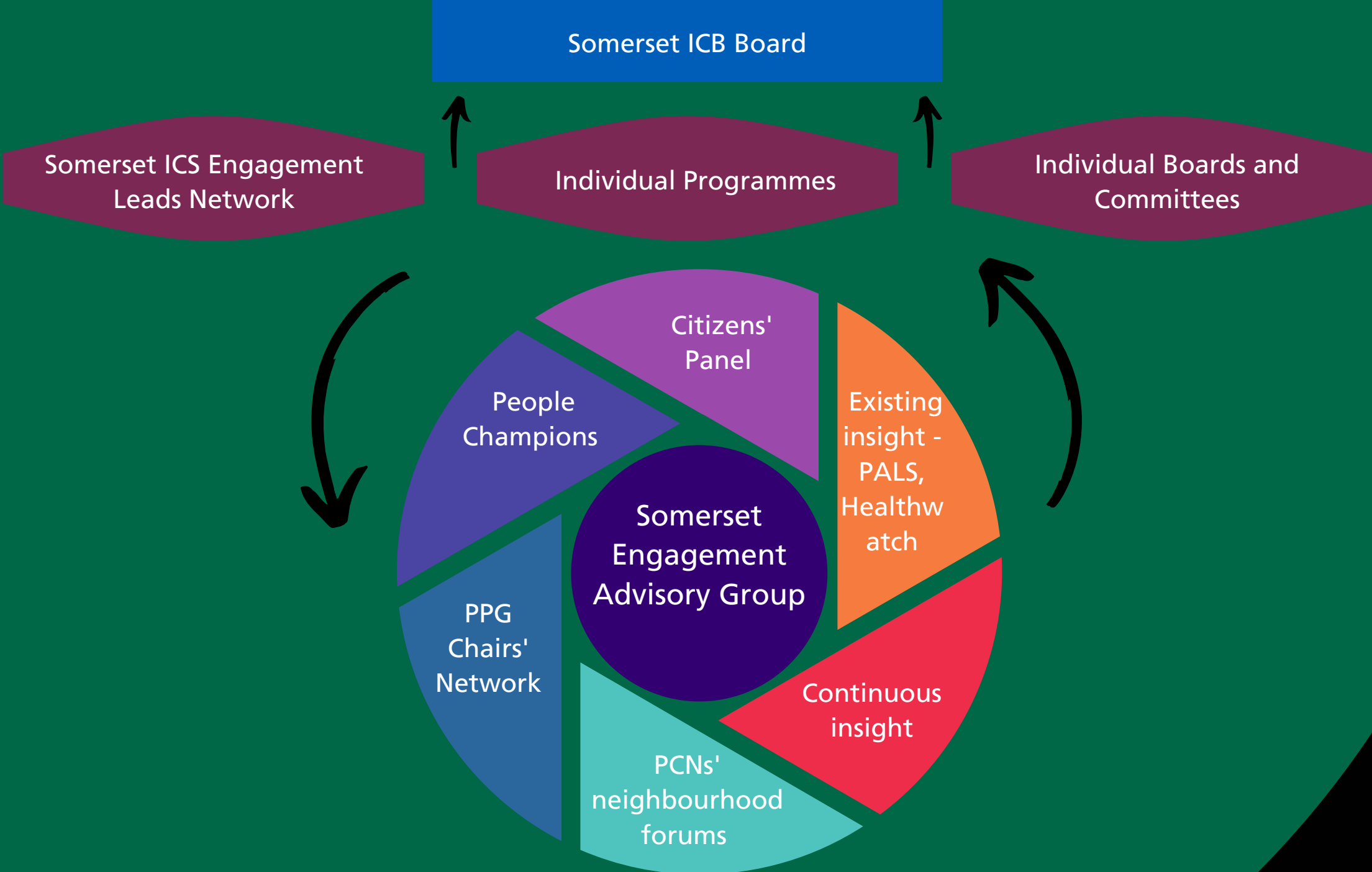
The NHS Somerset Board meetings are open for the public to attend. Members of the public are able to raise public questions prior to the meeting. Papers are published on the NHS Somerset website.

We will continue to work with our ICS partners to develop arrangements to ensure committees and boards include representation from local people and communities via relevant processes and forums.

Our Engagement networks and mechanisms

Alongside engagement on our transformation programmes, we also have mechanisms in place to ensure we continuously engage with our population.

When we transitioned from a CCG to ICB, we already had a number of mechanisms for involving people and communities in place. We continued these networks, but we are in the process of reviewing and realigning our networks at an ICS level.



ICS Engagement leads network

As part of Somerset ICS we work closely with our partners across the ICS to co-ordinate our engagement activity to ensure our activity is joined up, timely and appropriate. To support this, we have established a Somerset ICS engagement leads network, membership includes Healthwatch and representatives from VCFSE partners.

The purpose of the network is to:

- Provide a forum for collaboration between Engagement Leads working across the ICS in Somerset.
- Share learning, resources and approaches to improve regulatory compliance and quality of outcomes for patients and the public.
- Develop opportunities to work together to reduce duplication and co-ordinate public engagement.
- Be visible to, and accessible by, the wider system as a bridge to improving engagement in every part of health and social care.
- Contribute to building a culture of engagement across the Somerset health and care network.
- Feed into system-wide quality improvement by bringing the patient and public voice to the heart of decision making.

We work closely with all our partners, patients, public, carers, staff, and stakeholders to continue to build on our existing relationships across Somerset. We are committed to making sure that our focus is to involve and engage people in a variety of different ways and are committed to transparency and meaningful engagement.



Somerset Engagement Advisory Group (SEAG)

SEAG provides assurance on the public engagement work we do. SEAG has membership from many different community groups, voluntary organisations, charities, local community and voluntary services and others. Members are often 'experts by experience' and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the group.

The Group champions appropriate, effective and meaningful participation, including identifying opportunities for improvement. The Group acts as a critical friend, providing constructive challenge and feedback on our work and the engagement approaches used to inform them.

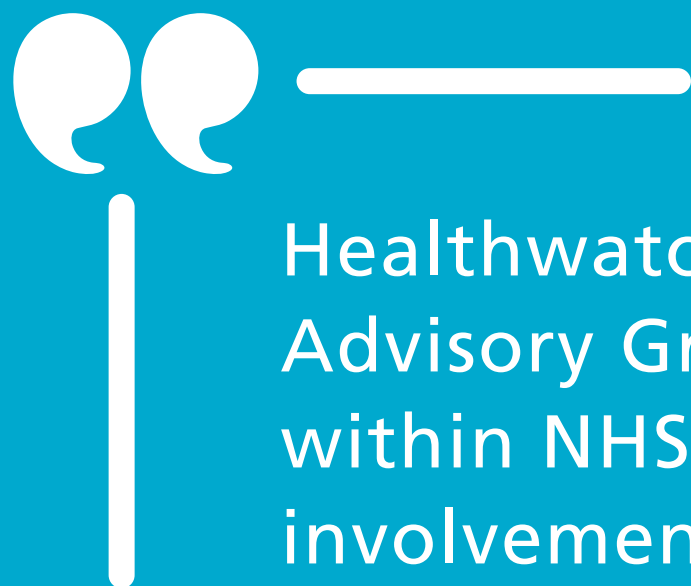
SEAG is independently chaired by Gillian Keniston-Goble, Manager at Healthwatch Somerset.

Over the past year, SEAG continued to meet to check and challenge our commissioning decisions, plans and engagement. However, the meetings have not been as frequent as they should have been and this will be addressed in the refreshed SEAG meetings. Members have been asked for their views on a number of programmes of work including:

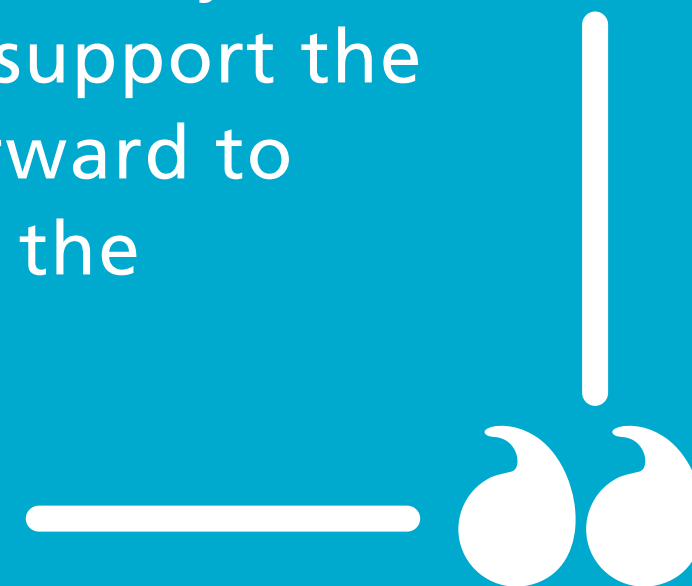
- Somerset County Council community care programme.
- Our ICS health and care strategy.
- Acute hospital-based stroke services public consultation.

We are in the process of reviewing SEAG to increase it's focus and ensure it provides ongoing insight to the NHS Somerset Board. Plans will be developed with our ICS partners to improve the functioning of the group.





Healthwatch Somerset are proud to chair the Somerset Engagement and Advisory Group on behalf of the communications and engagement team within NHS Somerset. The group's purpose is to facilitate the effective involvement of community stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sectors, patients, carers and the public, within the work of NHS Somerset ICB. As an independent organisation Healthwatch is ideally placed to act as the voice of the local community and thereby support the ICB in this important area of community relations. We look forward to continuing our work with the group and our relationship with the communications and engagement team.



Somerset Engagement Advisory Group Chair

Gillian Keniston-Goble, Manager at Healthwatch Somerset

Working with VCFSE organisations

We continued to work closely with a number of local organisations. They play a significant role in helping us to reach out to our local communities and groups - sharing insights, providing information and opportunities to be involved.

The community and voluntary sector plays an important role in enabling meaningful public engagement to help shape services and improve health outcomes for the population of Somerset.

We maintained funded agreements with Spark Somerset and Diversity Voices to support our engagement work. Close working with these organisations enabled us to actively promote opportunities for involvement to their members, supporting us to reach communities we do not engage with enough.



Voluntary sector assembly

A new forum for all voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) groups in Somerset led by Spark Somerset has been established. The assembly is open to all VCFSE organisations in Somerset. The Assembly provides a vital connection and insights to Our Somerset ICS.

A secretariat function led by Spark Somerset, ensures the effective running of the VCFSE Assembly. The Assembly secretariat ensures there is inclusive geographic coverage within the Assembly.



The engagement team have been great at helping us spread the word about the Somerset VCFSE Assembly, reaching organisations that we may not have been linked with before.

We've also worked with the team to ensure engagement is coordinated and people of Somerset, whether a resident or a community organisation, know how they can have their voice heard.



Hannah Snowdon, VCFSE/Public Sector Partnerships and Engagement Coordinator, Spark Somerset



Healthwatch

NHS Somerset continued to work with Healthwatch Somerset to discuss and inform our engagement work. Their established links with local communities and their local networks mean they're well placed to engage with communities who we may not always hear from enough. We have partnered with Healthwatch Somerset on several projects this year including our Same Day Urgent Care engagement, and Health and Care strategy.

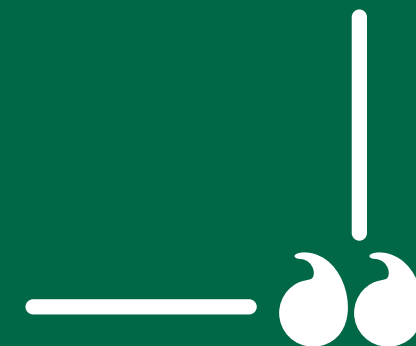
Healthwatch Somerset also share their reports with us which helps us better understand our local population and provides insights regarding health and care services in Somerset. We share these reports with relevant teams and committees who use the feedback to inform their work.



Judith Goodchild, Healthwatch Somerset, Chair



"Healthwatch Somerset has established a good working partnership with the Engagement team of the Integrated Care Board. Together we are able to represent the voices of a wide range of people who in the past may not have been heard. Their voices are important in influencing future commissioning decisions for health and care services."



PPG Chairs' Network

Following over two years of virtual meetings the Somerset Patient Participation Groups (PPG) Chairs Network members were finally able to meet in person again in April when meetings reverted back to the pre-covid routine of quarterly meetings with a mix of virtual and in person meetings scheduled for the future.

The countywide Somerset PPG Chairs Network has operated and met continuously since 2012, with all Somerset General Practices with volunteer PPG Chairs eligible to join.

The Network is Chaired by a member PPG Chair who is voted in by the PPG Chairs, with attendees able to take part in networking sessions which give the opportunity to share and exchange thoughts and activities.

Other regular agenda items include updates from the ICB Communications and Engagement team, ICB Digital team and an ICB Board spokesperson to inform and listen to members; giving members the opportunity to raise questions. Additionally, leaders from various sectors of NHS Somerset and other health and care organisations come and present work projects and new initiatives to members for their input, involvement, support and feedback. The Chair also invites speakers as a result of members expressing interests on current NHS news and activities.



Citizens' Panel refresh

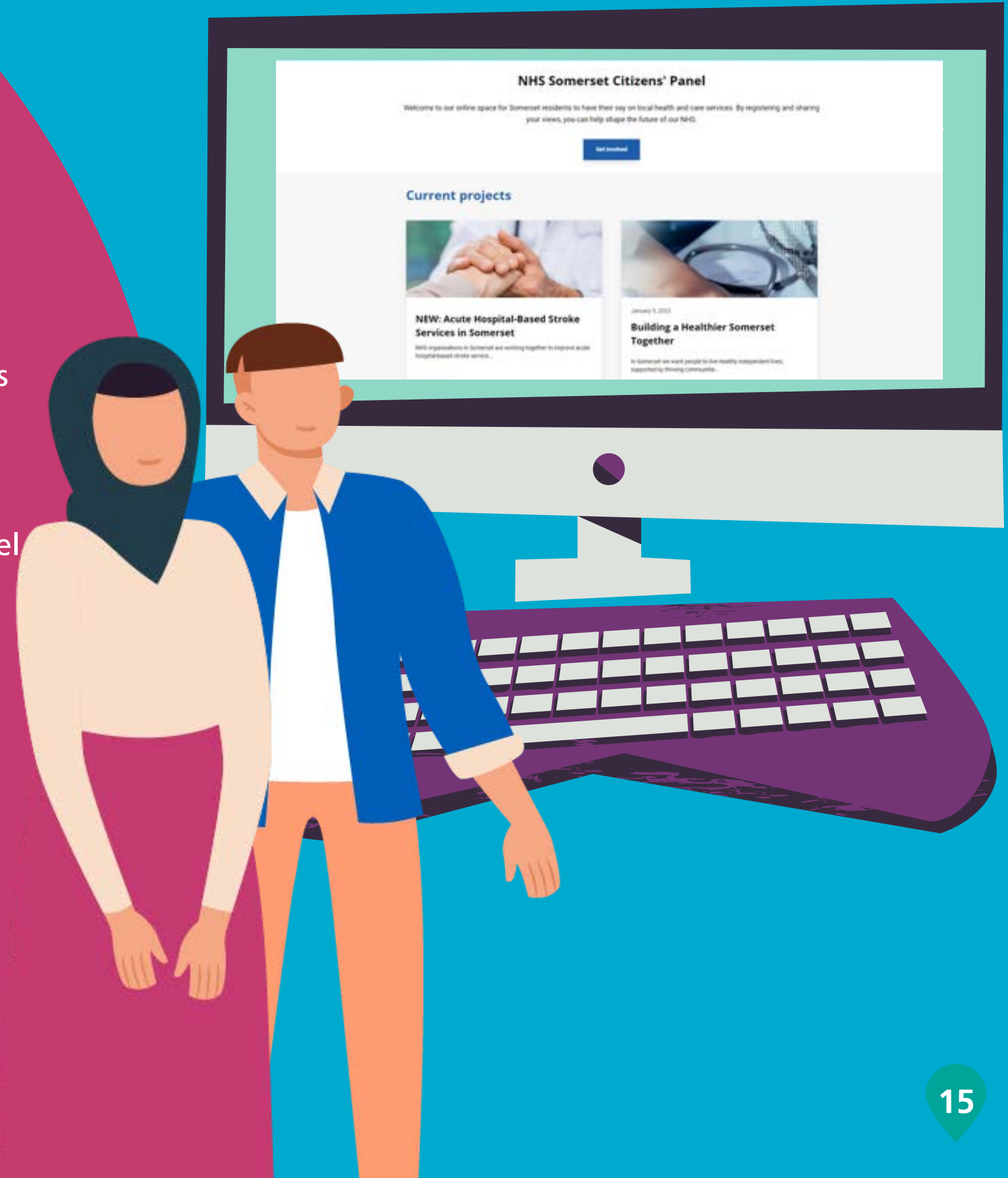
Our Citizens' Panel offers an opportunity for people across the county to get involved in our engagement work and have their say. The panel helps to ensure that the voice of our local people and communities is heard and influences developments. Some of the activities a member may be involved in include; filling in a survey, attending a focus group, or giving feedback on proposed changes to health and care. By sharing their views, members help us to provide better quality care in a way that matters the most to local people.

Throughout 22/23, we continued to develop and recruit to our Somerset Citizens' Panel. We have also developed the functionality of our Citizens' Panel website. We utilised feedback from previous engagement with our Citizens' Panel to develop the site, with the aim of improving accessibility, appeal and use as a key engagement tool.

Our Citizens' Panel have told us their thoughts on:

- Somerset's health and care strategy.
- Acute hospital-based stroke services.
- Diagnostic services in Somerset.

The Citizens' Panel now has 426 members. We will continue to grow the membership to make sure we have representation from across the demographics of Somerset.



Carers Strategic Partnership Board and the Carers' Engagement Service

In partnership with Somerset Council, Healthwatch Somerset, and voluntary and community sector organisations, we support a carers' multiagency partnership. The partnership brings together key agencies that commission and deliver services supporting unpaid carers in Somerset.

Healthwatch Somerset is pleased to facilitate and chair the Somerset Carers Strategic Partnership Board (SCSPB) which was set up to ensure that carers can access appropriate support and services in Somerset when they need it. The principle aim of the Board is to ensure that the work of our statutory and voluntary community services is integrated and focussed on ensuring that our carers maintain good levels of health and wellbeing while being properly supported in carrying out their caring roles. It is also important that we work towards carers being able to have lives of their own beyond the constraints of their caring roles. Healthwatch, as an independent organisation, works across health and social care services including the voluntary sector and is thus in an ideal position to make representation on behalf of the many unpaid carers across the system. We look forward to continuing in this role.



Engagement highlights 2022-2023: acute hospital-based stroke services consultation

We launched our public consultation on hyper acute and acute stroke services. Our public stroke stakeholder group provided ongoing insights from people with lived experience, informing the development of the proposals which were taken to public consultation in January 2023.

Following guidance from our stakeholder group, we developed a range of materials including easy read and aphasia friendly documents. We shared materials with our stakeholder group and Healthwatch Somerset's readers panel; adapting materials based on feedback received.

We utilised a wide range of consultation methods to reach different key audiences with a strong focus on reaching seldom heard communities.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation.

All consultation feedback will be collated, analysed and reported by an independent organisation to ensure transparency and objectivity. We will carefully consider the feedback, alongside other evidence and information gathered. The final Decision Making Business Case will demonstrate how the feedback has been taken into account when it puts forward the final clinical model to the NHS Somerset Board.



Engagement highlights 2022-2023: same day urgent care

We commissioned Healthwatch Somerset to carry out engagement with people in West Somerset to gather feedback and better understand the local populations needs in relation to same day urgent care services. This included a public survey, focus groups and individual conversations with local people.

Healthwatch Somerset continue to support our engagement around same day urgent care services in other areas of Somerset. Feedback is being utilised to inform the development of a strategy for the future of Somerset urgent care services.





Engagement highlights 2022-2023: neuro rehabilitation

We are in the early stages of a review of our neuro rehabilitation services.

To support the development of our case for change we have been building relationships with key stakeholders including voluntary and community support groups, and people with lived experience.

We have begun gathering initial insights from people with lived experience and will continue to build on this as the programme progresses.

We will establish a patient and public stakeholder group to inform the development of our case for change and next stages of the review. The voice of our local people and communities will form an integral part of this review.

Engagement highlights 2022-2023: community diagnostic centres

To support the development of a business case around community diagnostic centres, we launched a survey to hear from local people. This followed on from an earlier piece of engagement around community diagnostic centres and gave people an opportunity to provide further detail and insight on their experiences.

The insights shared were fed back to the programme team and used to help inform the development of their programme of work.



Engagement highlights 2022-2023: Integrated Care Partnership Strategy and Joint Forward Plan

The Integrated Health and Care Strategy for Somerset sets out how commissioners in the NHS and local authorities, working with providers and other partners, will together deliver more joined-up, preventative, and person-centred care for their whole population, across the course of their life. Working alongside Healthwatch Somerset, we asked local people to give their views on what matters most to them, to help them shape the strategy and plans.

An online survey was developed and promoted to patients and the wider public. Survey questions were aimed at enabling the public to comment on the five key themes that are part of the Somerset Integrated Health and Care Strategy aims. In addition, Healthwatch Somerset volunteers spent time at different sites across the county reaching out to members of the public to speak to them about their views.

All of the feedback gathered was analysed by an independent research organisation. They produced a themed report which will be shared publicly. The insights will inform the ongoing development of our strategy and joint forward plan.



511

Surveys completed



58,237

People reached across
our social media
channels



175

People engaged at
events



Engagement highlights 2022-2023:

We also conducted a number of surveys to gather feedback from local people. These included:

- Language and Translation Service – we asked people for feedback on our current language and translation service. This feedback was shared with the programme team to help ensure our service meets the needs of people who need to use it.
- C the Signs digital tool - C the Signs launched to all GP Practices across Somerset. It is a digital platform that helps clinicians to detect cancer at an earlier, and more curable, stage. Feedback provided will help to ensure that the tool is as user-friendly and effective as possible. Insights will also help support a future business case to secure continued investment in C the Signs.
- Parents and Carers for under 5s in Chard - local health, council, and voluntary sector colleagues, are undertaking a 'test and learn' project with the aim to improve the way services for children aged under 5, including maternity services, are delivered in Chard. Their aim is to focus on service integration – providing opportunities for different teams to work together more closely. We asked local people in Chard for their insights. The feedback gathered will be used to inform the development of services in the area and will help to ensure changes meet the needs of the local community.

Feedback received from public engagement and consultation is reported and heard at multiple levels of the ICB's governance structure from sub-committees up to the Board. This helps to promote discussions, ensuring patient and public voices influence decisions about the development of services.



Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Our PALS offers advice and support to patients, their families and carers. We listen and respond to concerns, suggestions or queries.

We continued to listen and respond to feedback about the COVID-19 vaccination programme. We used this feedback to develop our communications.

In 22/23 our PALS supported 389 people to find the information they needed about NHS services. Our PALS officer works closely with our patient safety and primary care colleagues to ensure PALS reports are shared.

The main themes arising from the enquiries were:

- Access to services
- Waiting times and appointments
- COVID-19 vaccination programme
- Procedures not normally funded
- Patient transport.

Learning from PALS is used to inform our wider engagement, commissioning decisions and improve the patient experience.

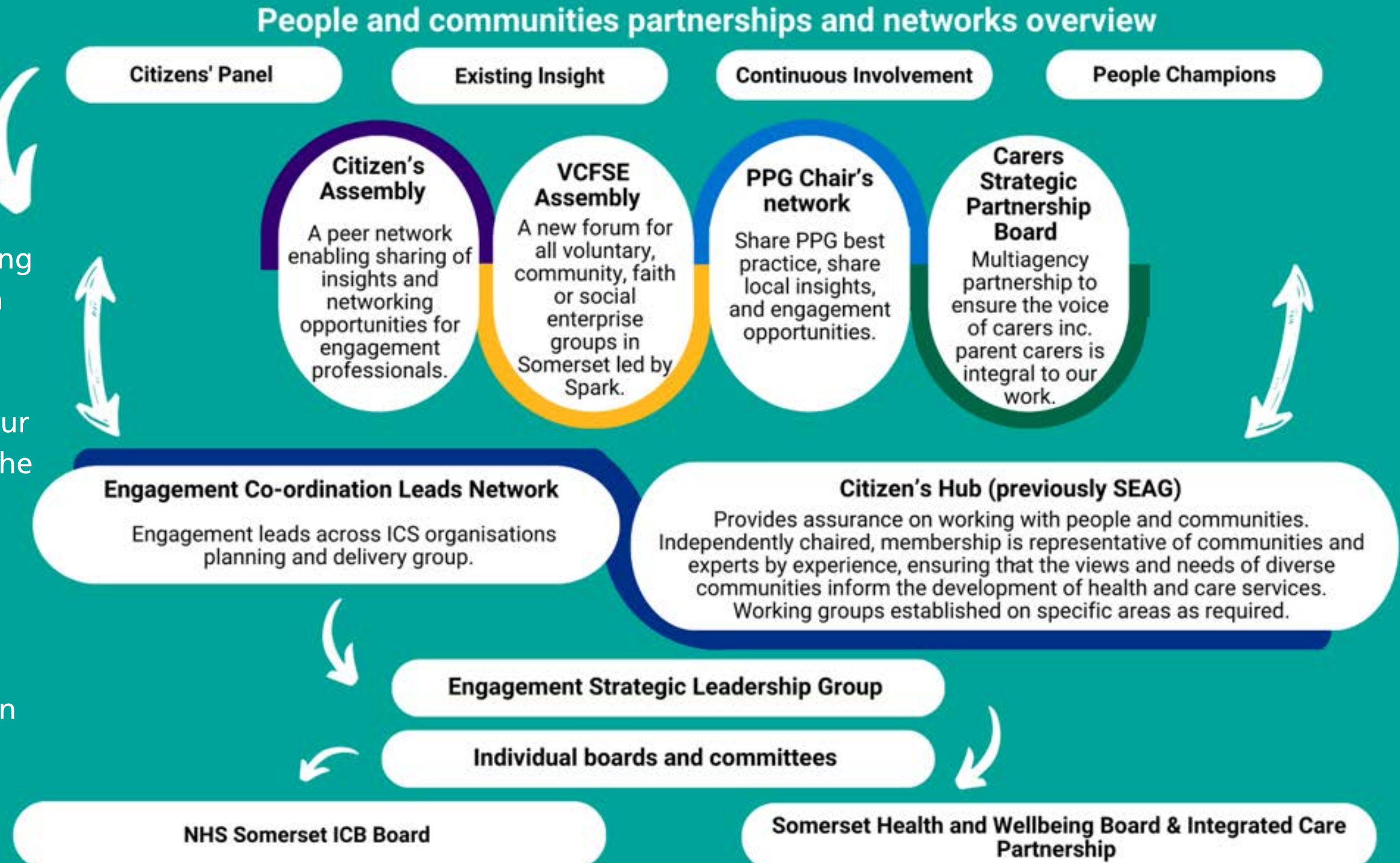


Future plans for our people and communities networks

As we grow and develop as an ICS, we will continue to work with our partners to ensure we have clear routes for people to get involved.

Working with Engagement Leads from across the ICS, we have reviewed our existing engagement network structures. We are in the process of redesigning and reinvigorating our networks and will continue this work this year, relaunching our Somerset Engagement Advisory Group as the Citizen's Hub.

We want to ensure we engage and strengthen existing networks. We will continue to work closely with local organisations. They play a significant role in helping us to reach out to our local communities and groups, enabling meaningful public engagement to help shape services and improve health outcomes for the population of Somerset.





Future plans

We want to make sure we maximise opportunities for connecting with and involving communities by listening to, informing and engaging with local people and communities at a community level.

Working closely with voluntary and community organisations, we will continue to work at a local level and tailor our engagement according to individual community and group needs.

A key focus will be to develop our relationships to ensure we effectively work with and hear the voices of young people. Having identified children and young people as an underrepresented group with a considerable stake in health and social care across Somerset, we will continue to focus on strategic relationships that bring the voice of young people through our public engagement channels.

We will continue to assess our approach, so it is adaptive and flexible to the particular needs of our local communities by applying continuous learning.

Find out more about our work and how you can get involved:
www.nhssomerset.nhs.uk/get-involved



www.nhssomerset.nhs.uk



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