

LIVE WELL IN **SOMERSET**

Keep
me
handy



Featuring:

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS SOMERSET

If you do one thing to improve your health this year, get your blood pressure checked. See pages 26-29.

- Keep active - page 5
- Sloppy Slippers - page 16
- Help with long term conditions - page 24



“Taking my

blood pressure

on a machine at work has been

a lifesaver- literally”



Ed Drew, service user for blood pressure machine loan.

I was shocked into seeking medical advice after a reading of 195 over 121. But thanks to the Blood Pressure Machine, I have been able to do something about it before it's too late and have since been prescribed medication.

In truth, I would never have guessed my blood pressure was so dangerously high, considering I regularly play rugby, I'm walking the Southwest Coast Path and enjoy a healthy diet.

In short, having a Blood Pressure Machine at work is a godsend //

You can borrow a free blood pressure monitor from any Somerset Library

Visit: bit.ly/blood-pressure-somerset

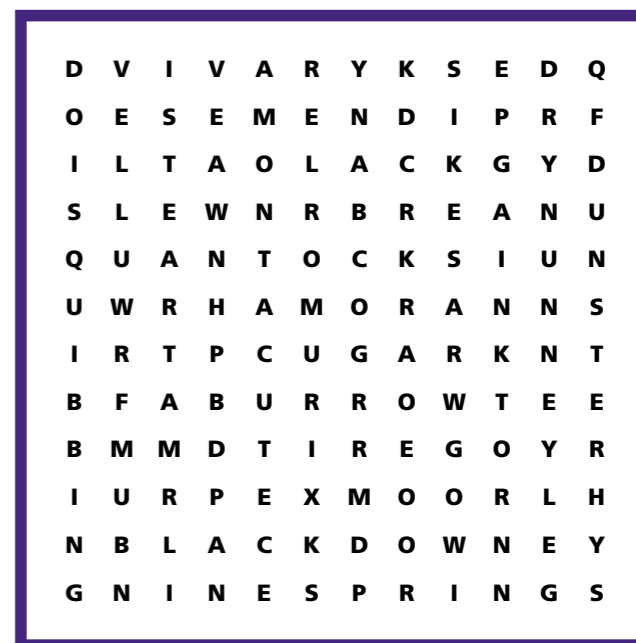
KNOW YOUR NUMBERS
SOMERSET

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Somerset WORD SEARCH



- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| BLACKDOWN | HAM | QUANTOCKS |
| BREAN | MENDIP | SQUIBBING |
| BURROW | MONTACUTE | STEART |
| DUNSTER | NINESPRINGS | TOR |
| EXMOOR | NUNNEY | VIVARY |



Professor Trudi Grant,
Executive Director
of Public and
Population Health

For those of you who don't know me, I am Professor Trudi Grant, Executive Director of Public and Population Health, my role is a joint appointment between Somerset Council and NHS Somerset.

Many people in Somerset live with long term conditions that affect the way we live our lives.

However, many of these conditions are preventable. We know that looking after our health can help prevent us from developing longer-term conditions such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes as well as significantly reducing the risks of suffering a stroke or heart disease.

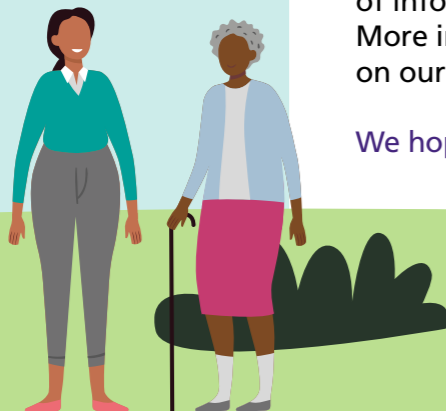
The good news is, there are lots of things you can do yourself to live a healthier lifestyle and reduce your risk of these conditions. We all know that stopping smoking, eating a healthier diet, taking regular activity and drinking alcohol in moderation improves our health - but there are smaller steps you could take to start your journey to a healthier lifestyle. It's never too late to start.

Making a couple of healthier food choices each day and moving more can make all the difference. There's lots of information and apps available to support you in making these small lifestyle changes that can make a big difference to your health and your quality of life.

Taking up the offer of regular health checks through your GP, pharmacy or the NHS Health Checks Programme is also a great step to reviewing your health and identifying any problems early. In between these checks, doing your own measurements of body weight and blood pressure are helpful for you to monitor your health.

Our mental health can also affect many aspects of our life, so we have included information and support that's available in Somerset to help you if you are struggling with depression, anxiety or more complex mental health issues. Our Live Well guide is packed full of information on how to look after your own health. More information on staying well can also be found on our new website www.healthysomerset.co.uk

We hope you find this handy reference guide useful.



Keeping active



“ I’m 66 years old and the older I get the more I feel the need to keep active. Let me say straight away I don’t like exercise. I don’t think I ever have! But I do understand the benefits of it, especially as we get older ”

Clinton

Even small amounts of activity to reduce time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving make a big difference.

Not only can this reduce the risk of developing certain health conditions, but it can also improve our wellbeing. Find out more about what the guidelines are for physical activity for older adults.

Benefits

- ✓ Improve quality of life
- ✓ Improve mental health
- ✓ Improve fitness and maintain healthy weight
- ✓ Strengthen muscles and bones
- ✓ Benefit overall health
- ✓ Build confidence
- ✓ New opportunities and increase independence

Recommendations

-  150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week (swim, walk, cycle)
-  Strength building twice a week (gym, yoga, carrying heavy bags)
-  Improve balance twice a week (dance, bowls, tai chi)
-  Avoid long periods of inactivity

The Somerset picture

We know that some people in our communities have found it more difficult to get back to physical activity since the pandemic, in particular, young people aged 16-34, lower socio-economic groups and those with a disability or long-term health condition. In fact, around 23.5% (England 25.8%) of Somerset adults are inactive (doing less than 30 minutes of exercise a week).



Credit: DaffodilPR

Keeping active

For more activities or ideas, tips and advice on local opportunities as well as activities you can do at home visit:

www.ageuk.org.uk/somerset/activities-and-events/exercise-sessions

Somerset Council's Healthy Somerset website at www.healthysomerset.co.uk/older-people/active

www.somerset.gov.uk/health-safety-and-wellbeing/walking-for-health-and-fitness-2

Somerset Council's Healthy Somerset website at www.healthysomerset.co.uk/older-people/active

www.somerset.gov.uk/health-safety-and-wellbeing/walking-for-health-and-fitness-2

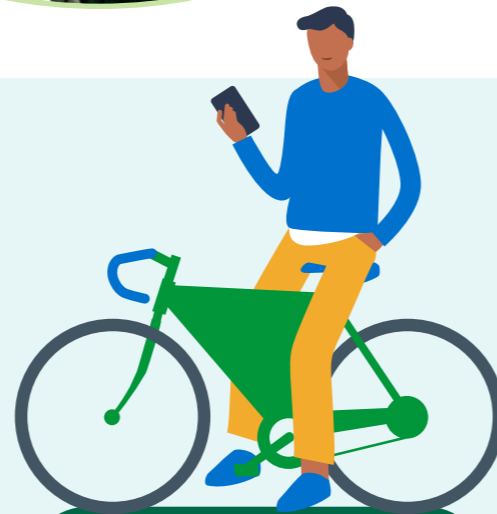
www.getoutsideinsomerset.co.uk/activities

<https://somersetmoves.activityfinder.net>



Live an active life in Somerset

A healthy lifestyle is one which includes regular physical activity. Physical activity can also improve your mental wellbeing. Keeping active and moving more can take different forms. It can involve walking more, household activities, gardening, chair-based activities, dancing, swimming, football, martial arts, getting outside more as well as joining classes.



Where to start?



Make the most of the good days



Make a plan






Start slowly and build up



Do it with a friend or family member

Here are some tips:

-  **Some is good, more is better**
 Especially for those new to physical activity, the health benefits are much greater.
-  **Make a start today**
 It's never too late, regardless of age or ability, there's always time to try some form of physical activity!
-  **Every minute counts**
 Each and every minute has a benefit and can be added together to create a greater effect. Everyday movement like taking the stairs, walking the extra bus stop, housework and gardening all count!

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership, are a charity based in Somerset. They work across the county to promote good health and happiness through supporting people to move more in ways that work for them. SASP run programmes for all ages and work with many partners across Somerset to inspire and enable positive life choices through sport and physical activity.

Contact us on healthenquiries@sasp.co.uk or call 01823 653990.

Here are some activities to get started:

Somerset Health Walks are walks done on a regular basis, ranging from gentle, moderate to advanced. Walks are free and for all abilities and ages and located across the county.

Love to Pedal is chair cycling using a lightweight, portable pedal and videos of bike rides of Somerset, available on the internet or in DVD format to bring it to life.

Why not also try **Walk your Way**, an adaptable walking opportunity encouraging walking movements at home or back outside when the time is right.

Move More Together is a programme designed to encourage inactive adults over 50 to get moving again through the support of a volunteer who can motivate, guide and of course, provide some friendly conversation!

Find out more at www.sasp.co.uk/things-to-do



Find out more at

www.sasp.co.uk/things-to-do or find out what's going on near you: From walks to classes and community clubs.

**Website:**

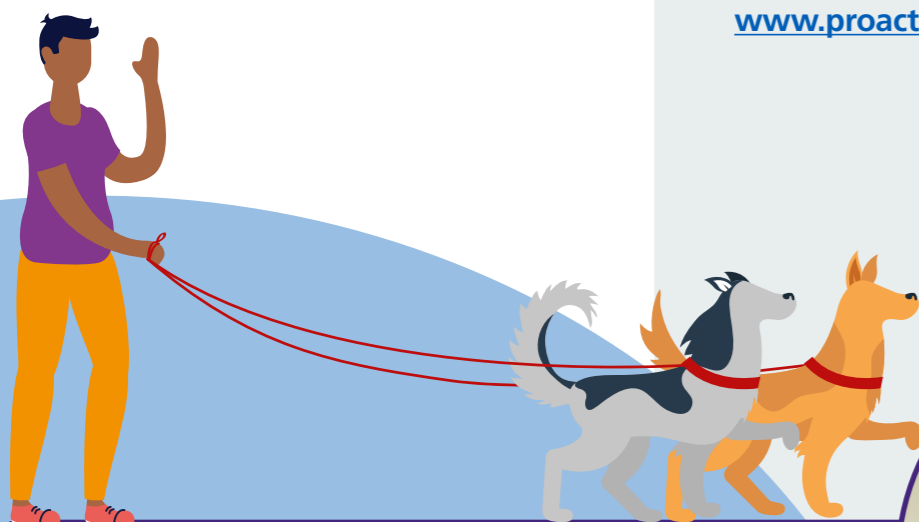
<https://somersemmoves.activityfinder.net>

Email: healthenquiries@sasp.co.uk

Telephone: 01823 653990

Stronger 4 Longer is a campaign for people aged 50 to 65 to build strength through everyday movement, helping you stay well, feel younger and protect your future health.

Visit www.sasp.co.uk/stronger4longer for advice and guidance.



“After being referred by my GP to The Beach Wellness for primarily knee osteoarthritis, my fitness, mobility and muscle strength has improved. I would recommend the ProActive scheme because it has been so beneficial.”

Christine, Minehead

Proactive Scheme – becoming more active to help manage your long-term conditions

ProActive (Physical Activity on Referral) is a scheme which helps people living with health conditions in Somerset to become more active in a safe and structured environment.

It uses targeted exercises developed by highly qualified ‘Exercise on Referral’ fitness professionals to help you safely increase your physical activity.

To get involved, you can either speak to your GP, or they will invite you to join the scheme. You can then attend 12 weeks of physical activity (with a review at 6 weeks) with a chosen leisure provider, such as a gym or leisure centre.

The scheme is not a free service. The cost to join is set by individual leisure providers. However, prices are usually cheaper than a standard membership.

To find out more, go to:
www.proactivesomerset.co.uk

Healthier eating

We know that with our busy lives and when you're on a budget it's sometimes difficult to make healthy choices around food. Here are some resources to help:

Managing your weight

Gaining weight is often a gradual process for many of us as the many causes of weight gain, such as moving less, ill health, inadequate sleep and imbalanced food intake, can build up over time.

It can be tempting in the new year to be really restrictive and go onto a strict diet but this is often short term and can lead to low mood and for many regaining the weight lost.

Common positive approaches for longer term weight management include:

- Finding an activity you enjoy to help you move more
- Making healthier food and drink swaps to help reduce sugar intake and increase your fruit, vegetable and fibre intake
- Reducing any portion sizes that have increased recently
- Planning meals for you and the family and trying new recipes

For more information on tips to manage your weight and local support please visit www.healthysomerset.co.uk/healthy-body-and-mind/healthy-weight

NHS healthy family recipes

From what to put in your kids' lunch box to what to have for dinner, you'll find lots of delicious low cost healthy recipes.

www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes

NHS Food Scanner app

With a speedy scan of your family's favourite foods on the NHS Food Scanner app, you can find healthier swaps for next time you shop.

www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/food-facts/nhs-food-scanner-app

Useful links:

For help and support on everything from finding cookery courses to accessing low cost and free food.

Local pantry network:
www.somerset.gov.uk/LocalPantry

Food banks:
www.somerset.gov.uk/health-safety-and-wellbeing/food-banks

Citizens Advice Somerset:
www.citizensadvice-somerset.org.uk

Somerset Councils Healthy Somerset
www.healthysomerset.co.uk

Somerset Skills and Learning:
www.sslcourses.co.uk

Village Agents:
www.somersetagents.org/find-an-agent-new/agent



Somerset Community Food

Somerset Community Food is a charity which aims to help you grow, buy, prepare and eat local food. Below is a link to a map showing local food growing projects.



www.somersetcommunityfood.org.uk/projects/map

Here are some tips on helping your food budget go further:

- Find courses on the Somerset Skills and Learning website, or you may be able to join a community cooking group.
- See if there is a community fridge or larder nearby where you can access free foods. This is usually donated by local stores and may go very quickly.
- Some towns provide community pantries. These are membership schemes where, for a small fee, you can receive a mix of fresh, chilled and dry foods.
- Some areas of Somerset also offer low cost or free community meals.
- If you find you cannot afford food and need more immediate help and advice, you can contact a Village Agent or Citizens Advice and ask for a referral to a foodbank.



Carrot muffins

Servings: 12
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cooking time: 18 minutes

Ingredients

- 200g fresh carrot, grated
- 135g caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 100g rapeseed oil
- 180g self raising wholemeal flour
- Optional:
- 50g chopped mixed nuts OR
- 50g chocolate chips
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice and/or cinnamon

Storage Instructions

- Suitable for home freezing for up to 3 months.
- Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Nutritional Analysis

The recipe	Per 100g	Per serving
Fat	16g	9.6g
of which saturates	1.4g	0.9g
Carbohydrates	37g	22g
of which sugars	20g	12g
Fibre	3g	1.8g
Protein	4.9g	3g
Salt	0.33g	0.2g

How to make it

1. Add the grated carrot and the oil to a food processor and blitz to obtain a smooth mixture. Set aside.
2. Using a whisk, mix the sugar and the eggs until well combined. Stir in the carrot mixture.
3. Add the flour, a little at a time, and the optional nuts or chocolate, if using.
4. Divide the mixture between 12 muffin cases. If using silicone cases, there is no need for greasing, the muffins will come out easily once cooked.
5. Cook the muffins in the oven at 180°C for approximately 18 minutes.

Safety First

- When using the food processor, handle the blade with caution.

Allergy Aware

- Eggs - can use egg substitutes.
- Gluten (flour) - can use gluten-free alternative.



Help with your Mental Health



If you're worried about your mental health and wellbeing and are finding it difficult to cope, you're not alone.

One in four people will experience a mental illness each year and everybody will experience periods of feeling stressed, worried, or low. If you feel your life is at risk due to suicidal thoughts or you have seriously harmed yourself, you need to get urgent medical help. Please call 999 for an ambulance or go to A&E. If you can't do this by yourself, ask someone to help you.

Below are some organisations that can help if you, or someone you know, is struggling with their mental health.



Open Mental Health

is here for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, so you can access the right support at the right time.

They can support you with your mental health and also offer help with managing money, housing and accessing benefits.

www.openmentalhealth.org.uk



24 hour telephone helpline

You can access our services directly by calling our friendly team at Mindline Somerset any time, day or night:

www.openmentalhealth.org.uk/mindline-somerset

Local: 01823 276 892 or Freephone: 0800 138 1692.

Our expert staff will then work with you to tailor support to your needs.



Mindline Live Web Chat

Available every day from 8pm-11pm:

www.openmentalhealth.org.uk

or you can email: support@openmentalhealth.org.uk

Call locally on **01823 276892**
or freephone **0800 138 1692**



Crisis Safe Space

If you're facing a mental health crisis, don't suffer in silence — Crisis Safe Space is an out-of-hours service for anyone struggling with their mental health.

Instead of going to A&E, you can arrange a session with a Crisis Safe Space team member who will listen and help. Call the number below or visit www.openmentalhealth.org.uk/crisis-safe-space



Lifehacks

A quick reference guide developed by young people in Somerset.

Including information on how to help manage your own mental health and how to help friends when they're struggling too.

www.cypsomersethealth.org - search for Lifehacks

Little Book of Mental Health

A practical guide for everyday emotional wellbeing, including a list of national and local organisations.

www.healthysomerset.co.uk/resources/product-category/mental-health



Orange Button

Community Suicide Awareness Scheme

People who are having suicidal thoughts, or who are worried about someone they know, can now speak to anyone wearing a distinctive orange badge, and ask them for information and support.

The Orange Button badge is worn by people in Somerset who have undergone suicide prevention training. Whilst they are not able to counsel people, they can listen and help people to find support services locally.

The Orange Button signifies that the person displaying it is:

- OK to say/hear the word suicide
- Can listen without judgement
- Can support people with signposting

There are over 1000 people in Somerset who have completed training and signed up to wear the Orange Button. If you would like to complete the free training and sign up to the scheme you can find more information online at:

www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/training/orange-button

Push
the
button



Support for caregivers

Being a carer can sometimes feel like a lot to handle.

You may be a bit overwhelmed or lonely, so if you're caring for someone with severe mental illness (SMI), let's talk about how we can help. Check out www.openmentalhealth.org.uk/support-for-carers

or call us so we can support you.

Talking therapies

Somerset Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Service is a free-to-access service for anyone over the age of 18, who is registered with a GP in Somerset.

The service, run by Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, offers many different short term, time-limited treatments for anxiety and depression. It can also support you to cope better if you have experienced a traumatic event, or if you are struggling to live with a long-term physical health condition such as diabetes, heart failure, or breathing difficulties. You can refer yourself to Somerset's Talking Therapies by visiting www.somersetft.nhs.uk/somerset-talking-therapies

Help at home

People are living longer, meaning that more people are living with long-term conditions. To help you live more safely and independently at home, Somerset Council and its partners can provide you with advice, adaptations to your home and/or equipment to make daily living easier.

Here are some services that can help you live safely and independently at home.

Community Equipment and Wheelchair Service

There is a range of equipment available to help you live independently, whether it's equipment for your home or things to help you while out and about. Somerset residents can borrow equipment from this service for as long as you need it. The offer includes delivery and fitting, servicing, collection and recycling, in short, all you need to get set up with the service.

Website: www.somerset-cews.co.uk
Phone: 01823 211699
Email: somerset@medequip-uk.com

Please note that in most instances, to access equipment or wheelchairs you will need to be assessed by a health or social care professional. You can contact us to ask about or request an Occupational Therapy assessment by phoning 0300 123 2224 or by emailing adults@somerset.gov.uk.

Living Made Easy

Find advice about equipment to help make daily living easier on this easy-to-use website. Just choose a topic, answer some questions, and you'll get free advice and equipment recommendations.

Visit: www.medequip-somerset.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

"As an Occupational Therapist I love working with people to help them achieve the things that are important to them"

Andrea, Independent Living Centre, Shepton Mallet



Somerset Lifeline

Lifelines, or community alarm services, are low-cost pendant alarm services for anyone who needs support at home or may be at risk of falling.

The lifeline is an emergency alarm comprising a button worn on the wrist or around the neck, and a small alarm unit that plugs into your electricity socket and phone line. At the touch of a button, help is on hand from our Somerset-based response team 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You can also try some of the Lifeline equipment at Independent Living Centres. (see opposite).

Website: www.somersetlifeline.co.uk
Phone: 0300 123 2224
Email: lifeline@somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Independence Plus (SIP)

Somerset Independence Plus is part of Somerset Council and provides a range of services to make your home safe, secure, warm and easier to manage. They provide:

- Living made easy
- Somerset Independent Living Centres
- Somerset Lifeline
- Community Equipment and Wheelchair Services
- Somerset Independence Plus

Website: www.somersetindependenceplus.co.uk
Phone: 0300 123 2224
Email: somindplus@somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Independent Living Centres (SILC)

Somerset has three Independent Living Centres based in Shepton Mallet, Wellington and Yeovil.

They are open for appointment-only bookings where you can talk to the Social Care Occupational Therapy-led team to get advice and support to live independently at home. You can also try equipment and technology to make daily life easier.

All Independent Living Centres are fully accessible and have free parking.

Book a free appointment on the website, via email or by telephone.

Book: www.somerset.gov.uk/equipment

Phone: 0300 123 2224 – and ask for 'Independent Living Centre' when prompted

Email: adults@somerset.gov.uk

Website: www.somerset.gov.uk/equipment



Avoiding trips & Falls



We know that the risk of having a fall is a concern for many, especially as we age. Every day in Somerset, around 8 people are admitted to hospital because of a fall.

As you get older, you may find that muscle strength is reduced, and you are less steady on your feet. Some movements, such as leaning sideways or turning quickly, can cause a loss of balance. This can begin earlier than you may expect, from your early fifties onwards.

Falls are the most common cause of accidents for adults and can cause serious injury at any time of life. The risk increases with age and, each year in the UK, about one-third of people over 65 will fall.



Preventing falls

There are many things we can do to reduce our risk of falling, some of these include:

- ✓ Wearing appropriate, well-fitting footwear.
- ✓ Being regularly active and doing strength and balance exercises.
- ✓ Identifying trip hazards such as wires and rugs.
- ✓ Removing excess clutter.
- ✓ Knowing where your pets are when moving.
- ✓ Looking after your eyes and ears and making an appointment to have a sight or hearing test if you're concerned.
- ✓ Staying hydrated: try to drink at least six to eight cups of fluid every day, including water.
- ✓ Making sure you follow a healthy, balanced diet and maintain a healthy weight. This can reduce the risk of falling and of suffering more serious injuries.

Sloppy Slippers

According to the University Hospitals of Leicester, 24,000 over-65s in the UK fall over at home every year because of poorly fitting footwear.

Most of these falls are caused by wearing 'sloppy slippers': poorly structured and ill-fitting slippers.

Loose, worn, or backless slippers can increase the risk of slips, trips and falls in adults. This type of footwear can cause poor balance and gait or make it difficult for people to stay steady on their feet.

However, help is at hand. This year, Our Somerset is running our Sloppy Slippers campaign to provide over 18s with properly fitting footwear.

As part of the campaign anyone over 18 can attend roadshows which are running from January – March 2024 across the county, to collect a new pair of slippers to help keep you warm and, importantly, steady on your feet.

We'll also be able to provide you with advice on how to minimise the risk of falling, including exercises and how to improve your diet.

bit.ly/sloppy-slippers

"Over the last year I have noticed that my balance isn't what it was, so I've been attending strength and balance classes which have really helped my confidence"

Peter, aged 83 from Wiveliscombe

Maintaining physical activity with regular strength and balance exercises can improve your stability and reduce your risk of falling. **This can include:**



Walking



Dancing



Participating in specialist training programmes



Somerset Urgent Community Response

If there is a crisis in your health, for example if you, or someone you care for, has a fall or there is a sudden deterioration in your health, we can help.


The NHS team at Somerset Urgent Community Response brings together a wide range of skills including **advance clinical practitioners, district nurses and physiotherapists** who can assess and treat your urgent healthcare needs, and **pharmacy technicians** who can review and help you understand your medication.


Our teams have lifting equipment, so we can help to get you back on your feet if you have fallen.

Most importantly, we don't just treat the symptoms. We will also carry out an assessment to understand why you have become unwell. Where necessary, we can refer you on to other health and social care services for help, to try and prevent a crisis in your healthcare happening again.

Visit our web page for more information about how the service works www.nhssomerset.nhs.uk/my-health/somerset-urgent-community-response/

▶ Watch our video here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBpeHxCvWqE

 We will come out within two hours of receiving a referral from your GP, 111, 999, your care home or your pendant alarm response service.

 We are here for anyone over 18 and are open 365 days a year from 8am to 8pm.

Age UK Somerset works to make later life better across Somerset and North Somerset. We have a well-established range of services that includes information and advice, help with benefits and Ageing Well and Falls Prevention exercise groups.

You can find out more www.ageuk.org.uk/somerset/our-services or by calling us on **01823 345610**



Somerset Dementia Wellbeing Service



SOMERSET DEMENTIA
Wellbeing Service

Is a partnership that aims to improve diagnosis, enhance support in the community and provide excellent, consistent services for people with dementia and their carers.

The service has been developed by those living with dementia along with their carers, the voluntary sector, NHS Somerset, Somerset Council and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust.

Our Somerset Dementia Connect phoneline provides quick, convenient access to Dementia Support Workers (provided by the Alzheimer's Society).

You can call them on **01458 251541**

The Dementia Support Workers team can offer information and practical guidance to help you understand the condition, cope with day-to-day challenges and prepare for the future.

The Somerset Dementia Service website has more information about the support on offer:

www.somersetdementia.org



Caring for your family



Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) in Somerset offer mental health assessments and support for children and young people up to 18 years old.

Every referral for CAMHS goes through to the Single Point of Access team. This team of clinicians triages all patient referrals, deciding what the best type of support would be. Each young person is then supported into the service best suited to help them.

CAMHS won't be the right choice for everyone. For young people who don't get referred into CAMHS, a specialist team is on hand to provide advice on where to turn to next. We can offer information and advice about other, more suitable, services, and the reassurance to young people and their families that they are still being supported.

www.somersetft.nhs.uk/camhs



HANDi Paediatric App

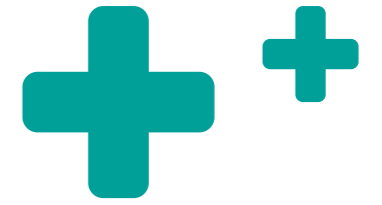
The **FREE HANDi App** provides advice and support to parents and carers when your child is unwell, and includes advice on common conditions such as:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- High temperature
- 'Chesty baby' illnesses, such as bronchiolitis, asthma and croup
- 'Chesty child' illnesses such as wheezing and asthma
- Abdominal pain
- Common newborn problems



The app takes you through a series of questions about the symptoms your child is experiencing and will then advise on the best course of action.

Download the app: from **Google Play** for Android devices, or the **App Store** or **iTunes** for your iPhone or iPad. Search for 'HANDi App'



Help from your community pharmacy



Your local pharmacy can provide convenient, same-day expert advice, reassurance and help if your child is unwell with a range of minor conditions from eye and ear infections to rashes, coughs and colds, sore throats, teething, tummy troubles, and aches and pains.

Many pharmacies have confidential consultation rooms. (See Community Pharmacy section P 31)

The **Somerset Local Offer website** is packed full of information for children and families, from pages on education and finance to events. Visit www.somerset.gov.uk/the-local-offer or www.facebook.com/LocalOfferSomerset to stay up to date.

#LearnForLove

New online learning for all Somerset residents – **worth £100**

In Somerset, the rising cost of living, fuel and food is affecting children, young people and their families, often resulting in increased stress levels at home. Discover the secrets to healthy family relationships and wellbeing.

#LearnForLove includes courses for:



Expectant parents

Manage your emotional and physical health and build strong bonds with your baby.



Teenagers

Learn about your wonderfully complex mind and emotions.



Parents, grandparents and caregivers

Learn more about your amazing child and what makes them tick.



Understanding your trauma

Reflect on your mental wellbeing to recognise, understand and process trauma with resilience.

Plus many more online.

To start your learning journey now, simply:

1. Visit: bit.ly/LearnForLove or scan the QR code

2. Enter code 'dragon'

Choose your topics for learning – as many as you like!





Support for children with disabilities



Did you know Somerset Council has a Children with Disabilities Service. They will offer you and your child an assessment of need and provide support where appropriate.

The Children with Disabilities Early Support team meet with families to better understand your child's needs, put together a plan, and get you the right ongoing support.

The Children with Disabilities Social Workers support children with complex or multiple needs that impact their daily life.

The Somerset Supporter team support children in accessing social activities when they have been assessed as needing a trusted adult to help them.

The Community Inclusion and Activity team hold frequent inclusive activities across Somerset. Family clubs and fun days out should keep everyone busy!

Want to know more?

For more information visit www.somerset.gov.uk/children-with-disabilities-service or www.somerset.gov.uk/the-local-offer

Families can self-refer for services through Somerset Direct on **0300 123 2224**



Strep A

Group A streptococcus (GAS), more commonly referred to as Strep A, is a common type of bacteria. It can cause a number of infections, some mild and some more serious.

Milder infections caused by Strep A include scarlet fever, impetigo and 'strep throat'. If your child has a mild infection, they can usually recover at home in a few days. Most Strep A infections can be easily treated with antibiotics.

Common symptoms of Strep A include:

- Flu-like symptoms, such as a high temperature, swollen glands or an aching body
- Sore throat (strep throat or tonsillitis)
- A rash that feels rough, like sandpaper (scarlet fever)
- Scabs and sores (impetigo)
- Pain and swelling (cellulitis)
- Severe muscle aches
- Nausea and vomiting

Strep A infections are more common in children, but adults can also sometimes get them.

For more information visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/strep-a
Check symptoms on 111 online: www.111.nhs.uk/triage/check-your-symptoms or call 111 (for children under 5).

Norovirus

Norovirus is a stomach bug that causes sickness and diarrhoea. It is commonly known as the winter vomiting bug, although it can strike at any time of year.

The virus can spread from person to person through hand to mouth contact and can be picked up from contaminated surfaces. It can also spread through the air by sneezing and coughing, although this is less common.

Outbreaks are common in settings where individuals have close contact, such as hospitals, care homes, schools and nurseries.

Most people make a full recovery within two to three days without needing medicine. Some groups, including young children, the elderly or those with weakened immunity, are at risk of suffering more serious and prolonged illness, which may require medical treatment.

Common symptoms include sudden onset of nausea, projectile vomiting and diarrhoea, but can also include a high temperature, abdominal pain and aching limbs.

The incubation period of norovirus is 12 to 48 hours. This is the time between catching the virus and developing symptoms. Individuals are most infectious when symptomatic, but it is possible to pass on norovirus or shed the virus (contaminating surfaces, objects or even food) before developing symptoms and after symptoms have stopped.

Good hand hygiene is important to stop norovirus spreading. To avoid catching norovirus or passing it on to others wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water.

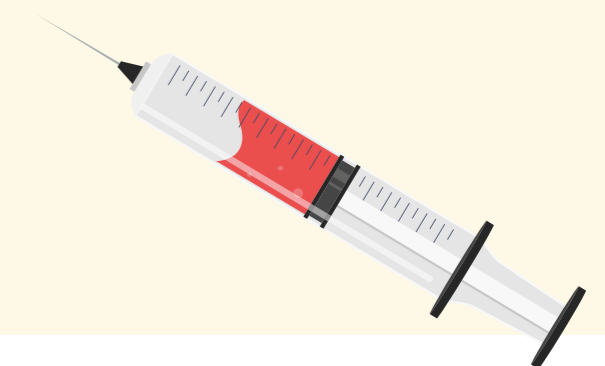
Alcohol-based hand sanitisers are not effective against norovirus.



For more information visit: www.nhs.uk/conditions/norovirus
Check symptoms on 111 online: www.111.nhs.uk/triage/check-your-symptoms or call 111.

Vaccinations

You can help prevent children from getting ill by making sure they are up to date with their vaccinations, including their winter flu vaccination (see Vaccinations P36)



Managing diabetes

Diabetes is a condition that causes your blood sugar level to become too high.

It's estimated there are 30,000 people in Somerset living with the condition. The good news is that 90% of those with diabetes will have type 2 diabetes, which can be controlled with lifestyle changes.

You may have no obvious signs that you have the condition. Our public health experts estimate there could be as many as 10,000 people in Somerset who are undiagnosed and even more people at risk of developing diabetes in the future.



Getting diagnosed

Your GP will be able to run blood or urine tests to help you understand if you might have diabetes. If you do, there's lots of support out there to help you.

The 'Healthier You' NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme

Somerset is part of the national 'Healthier You' Diabetes Prevention Programme, which you can enrol in face-to-face or online. The nine-month programme offers personalised help including:

-  Education on lifestyle choices and healthy habits
-  Advice on how to reduce weight through healthier eating
-  Bespoke physical activity programmes

The NHS Type 2 Pathway to Remission Programme

In Somerset we offer a free NHS programme to support residents with type 2 diabetes to lose weight and potentially achieve remission.

The 12-month programme offers support from trained coaches and aims to help you lose a significant amount of weight, reducing both your risk of diabetes complications and the need for medication.

The programme can also help put your type 2 diabetes into remission, meaning you have a normal blood glucose level and no longer need medication to control your diabetes.

To find out more about diabetes support in Somerset visit: bit.ly/diabetes-somerset

Somerset Post-COVID Assessment Service

For some people, the impact of COVID-19 lasts longer than just a few days and can include a wide range of ongoing health problems. Post-COVID syndrome can also sometimes be called 'long COVID'.

Somerset's Post-COVID-19 Assessment Service provides a specialist assessment, diagnosis, and rehabilitation service for anyone over 18.

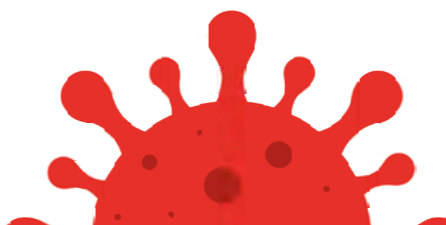
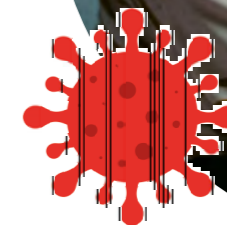
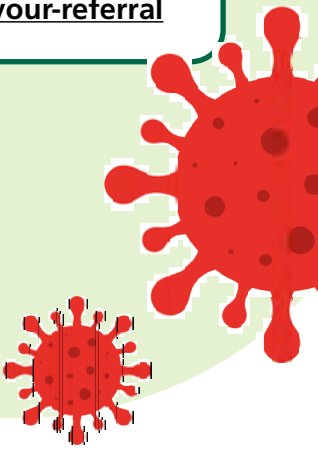
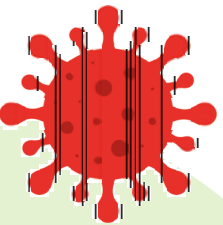
It's for those experiencing signs and symptoms that developed during or following a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection, which continue for more than 12 weeks after you've been diagnosed.

The most common symptoms of long COVID are:

- Extreme tiredness (fatigue)
- Feeling short of breath
- Difficulty concentrating (brain fog)
- Muscle aches

If you feel you have any of these symptoms please contact your GP, who will refer you into the service if appropriate.

For more information visit: www.somersetft.nhs.uk/somersetlongcovid/somerset-post-covid-assessment-service/your-referral



Know your numbers



“I’m a business owner with a hectic working day, so I get my blood pressure checked regularly to ensure I can maintain a healthy lifestyle and continue to do the things I enjoy”

Ben, aged 42, Taunton



What is blood pressure?

In your body, it’s the force with which blood flows through your arteries, the blood vessels that carry blood from your heart to the rest of your body.

It’s helpful to think of blood pressure like the force of water flowing through a hose. Blood pressure is measured using two numbers:

- Systolic pressure: this is the higher of the two numbers. It’s the pressure against your arteries when your heart is pumping blood around your body.
- Diastolic pressure: this is the lower of the two numbers. It shows how much pressure is in your arteries when your heart relaxes between beats.

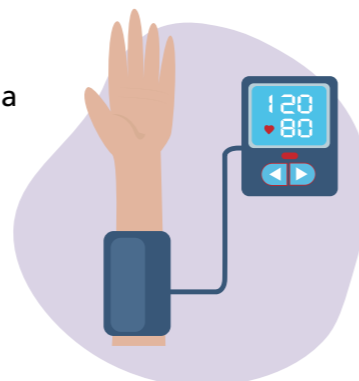
They’re both measured in millimetres of mercury (mmHg).

The risks of having high blood pressure

If your blood pressure is too high, it puts extra strain on your blood vessels, heart and other organs, such as the brain, kidneys and eyes.

Persistent high blood pressure can increase your risk of a number of serious and potentially life-threatening health conditions, such as:

- Heart disease
- Strokes
- Heart attacks
- Vascular dementia
- And more

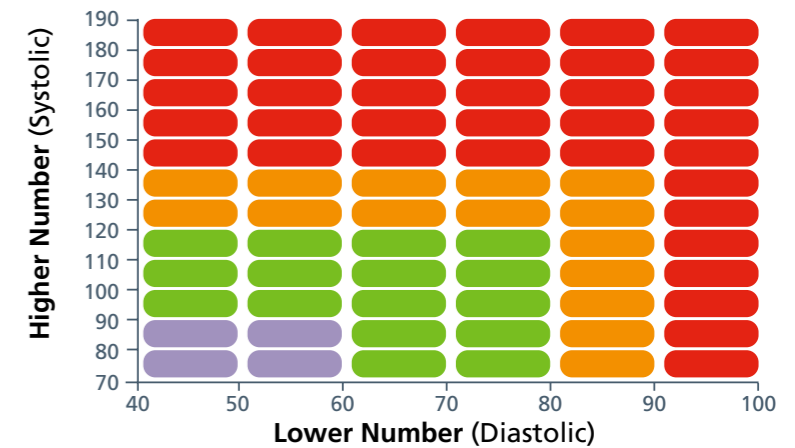


Understanding your numbers

Once you know your numbers, you can use the blood pressure chart opposite to see what they mean and if your blood pressure is in the healthy range. The chart is suitable for adults of any age, as the cut-off point for diagnosing high blood pressure doesn’t change with age.

Simply find your top number (systolic) on the left side of the chart and your bottom number (diastolic) on the bottom. Where the two lines meet is your blood pressure.

- High blood pressure (Red)
- Pre-high blood pressure (Orange)
- Ideal blood pressure (Green)
- Low blood pressure (Purple)



Getting your blood pressure checked

It is estimated that around 3 in 10 adults in Somerset have high blood pressure, and 1 in 10 do not know they have it.

Getting your blood pressure checked is easy and could save your life. You can get your blood pressure tested at a number of places, including:

- At your GP surgery
- At some pharmacies
- As part of your NHS Health Check
- In some workplaces

If you’re a healthy adult aged 40 to 74, and live in England or Wales, you’ll be invited to a free NHS Health Check every 5 years, which will include a blood pressure check.

You can also check your blood pressure yourself with a home blood pressure monitor, and these are available for free in libraries across Somerset.

What to do if you have high blood pressure:

Ideal blood pressure is considered to be 90/60 - 120/80. High blood pressure is considered to be 140/90 or higher. If you have high blood pressure (red on the chart) please contact your GP or 111.

What increases my risk of high blood pressure?

It’s not always clear what causes high blood pressure, but there are things that can increase your risk. You might be more at risk if you:

- Are overweight
- Eat too much salt and do not eat enough fruit and vegetables
- Do not do enough exercise
- Drink too much alcohol or coffee (or other caffeine-based drinks)
- Smoke
- Have a lot of stress
- Are over 65 years old
- Have a relative with high blood pressure
- Are of Black African or Black Caribbean descent
- Live in a deprived area

Making healthy lifestyle changes can sometimes help reduce your chances of getting high blood pressure and help lower your blood pressure if it’s already high.



How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Your blood pressure will usually need to be checked more than once to confirm a diagnosis of high blood pressure.

This is because blood pressure can go up and down a lot during the day. When people have their blood pressure checked in a clinic, or medical setting, it can be higher than expected, especially if they feel nervous or anxious.

If you're monitoring your blood pressure yourself using a home monitor then you should check your blood pressure over several days. This can include taking a series of recordings (at least two), twice a day, in the morning and evening.

By looking at all your blood pressure readings over a few days, a healthcare professional can work out what your 'average' blood pressure is.

Preventing high blood pressure

In the UK, all adults over 40 years old are advised to have their blood pressure checked at least every 5 years.

Getting your blood pressure checked is very easy and could potentially save your life.

If you are found to have high blood pressure, it can be lowered through simple lifestyle changes, such as eating healthily, maintaining a healthy weight, taking regular exercise, lowering your alcohol intake, and not smoking. However, some people may need to take medicine as well.



To find out more visit:
bit.ly/blood-pressure-somerset

What are the symptoms of high blood pressure?

Most people don't know they have high blood pressure because there aren't obvious symptoms.

In rare cases, it can cause symptoms like blurred vision, headaches and nosebleeds. However, it is estimated that there are 40,000 people in Somerset with high blood pressure who do not know they have it.

That's why it's so important to get your blood pressure checked regularly.

Your GP can advise you about changes you can make to your lifestyle and discuss whether they think you'd benefit from medicine.



Download the NHS App

www.youtube.com/watch?v=421wy0ND9Ls

The NHS App allows you to quickly and easily access a range of NHS services from your phone, tablet, or online. It's a simple and secure way to access the health services you need, wherever you are.

What support can you access through the NHS App?

Appointments

You can make appointments with some GPs and other health services via the app. You will also be able to cancel appointments you can't attend.

Patient records

The app securely stores your medical records, including past diagnoses, treatments, and prescriptions. This helps you to keep track of your medical history.

Conditions

You can explore information about various medical conditions, symptoms and treatments on the app. You can also find out what to do when you need help urgently, using NHS 111 online.

COVID and flu vaccinations

You can book vaccination appointments and access your vaccination status.



Prescriptions

You can order repeat prescriptions and view, set or change the pharmacy you want to collect your prescriptions from (known as your nominated pharmacy).

Test results

Accessing test results has never been easier. You can view your medical test results, such as blood tests or radiology reports, directly on the app.

Use the app for someone else As a parent, family member or carer, you may be able to access services for someone else using linked profiles. This allows you to manage appointments or prescriptions on their behalf.

Download the app: www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/

NHS Somerset Apps Library

Digital health is revolutionising health and care services via websites and apps. But, with hundreds of thousands of apps available, it can be hard to know which ones to use to help manage your health.

The NHS Somerset Apps Library lists a vast range of health and wellbeing apps to support mental health, diabetes, hypertension, fitness, family health, and much more.

The website rates every app based on usability, how well it works and how the apps look after patient data, so you can feel confident in choosing the best app for your healthcare needs.

Developed by clinicians, ORCHA's AppFinder gives you unlimited access to thousands of independent app reviews across all health conditions.

To find out more:

<https://somerset.orchacare.co.uk>



Pharmacy First

Care from your local community pharmacy



Sometimes when you or your family are unwell, you may not need to make an appointment to see your GP. Your local community pharmacist is a trained medical professional who can provide expert clinical advice on the best treatment for a wide range of minor illnesses and conditions. Many have separate consulting rooms for a completely confidential advice.

They can provide clinical advice and over-the-counter products and medicines for over 40 minor conditions from eye and ear infections, to sprains, skin conditions, and aches and pains.

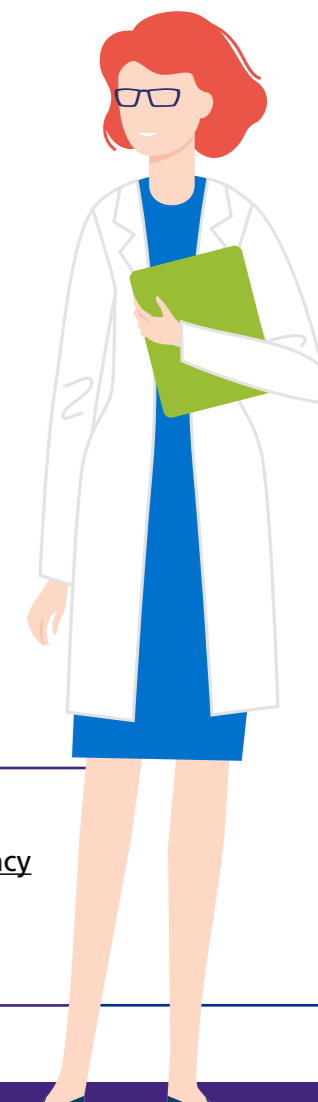
Think Pharmacy – same day appointment via your GP

Your community pharmacy also works closely with your GP practice. If you contact your GP to discuss a minor illness or injury, your GP receptionist may offer you a same-day consultation with your community pharmacist.

During your consultation, your pharmacist will take your medical history, ask about your symptoms and any current medication you might be taking.

Following the consultation, they will offer you advice and, where appropriate, offer you an over-the-counter product. Some pharmacists are also able to offer antibiotics and other prescriptions.

The consultation is added to your GP records and, if needed, your community pharmacy can help you get an appointment with your GP or other appropriate healthcare professional.



www.nhssomerset.nhs.uk/my-health/community-pharmacy

http://youtu.be/QlF4Qj_mEeA

Choose Well

As well as contacting your local community pharmacist for minor conditions or making an appointment with your GP, here are some other services you can use if you are looking for health advice.

111 Online

The NHS 111 online service can assess and direct you to the most appropriate local service, including urgent treatment centres, GP practices, minor injury units and consultations with a pharmacist. If needed, it can also arrange a call back from a nurse, doctor or paramedic.

www.111.nhs.uk

“Patients can contact 111 online or by phone to get advice on their health condition. Whether it’s a pharmacist, urgent treatment centre, an appointment with an Out of Hours GP, a callback from a clinician or even an emergency ambulance or A&E, 111 is the right place to start if you don’t know where to go”

Sian, NHS 111
Call Handler



NHS 111 online is an easy and convenient way to get urgent help for a wide range of health problems. “By going to www.111.nhs.uk, you can get assessed and directed to the right local service in as little as 90 seconds from the comfort of your own home”.

Using the NHS 111 online service could save you a trip to A&E. It is estimated that 2 in 5 A&E attendances are avoidable or could be better treated elsewhere.

Calling 111

You can call 111 to speak to someone if you need to:

- Discuss complex medical problems
- Discuss worries about a long-term condition
- Get medical advice for a child under five

You should still call 999 and go to A&E in an emergency when someone is seriously ill or injured and their life is at risk.

Minor Injury Units

If you have a non-life-threatening injury or illness and need local care, your nearest minor injury unit (MIU) can provide the help you need.

There are seven MIUs across Somerset, run by Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, located in community hospitals at Frome, Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Chard, Bridgwater, Minehead and Burnham-on-Sea.

They are all run by clinicians with specialised training and skills in emergency and urgent care and supported by staff nurses and healthcare assistants.

“MIUs provide urgent care, closer to where you live – keeping hospital emergency departments free to manage critically ill patients, and those with life-threatening major injuries”

MIUs can help with a wide range of minor illnesses and conditions including: sprains and strains, broken bones, cuts and wounds, bites, minor head injuries, chest infections, throat infections, eye infections, urinary infections emergency contraception.

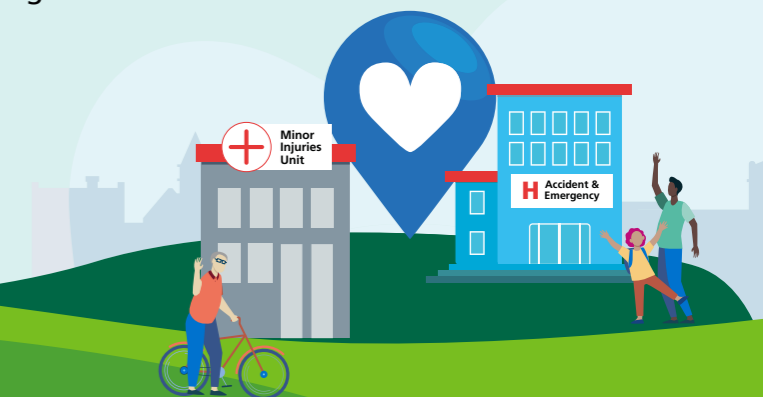
Sometimes, due to capacity or acuity (where high numbers of patients are very unwell or injured, and a greater level of care is required to treat them), MIUs may need to change their opening hours at short notice. Please check they are open by contacting 111, who will be able to assess you to make sure the MIU is the right option for you, and that the MIU you want to go to will be open.



Emergencies

Our Emergency Departments (A&E) at Musgrove Park in Taunton and Yeovil Hospital are open 24 hours a day.

For life-threatening emergencies such as heart attacks, strokes, unconsciousness and breathing problems, you should call 999.



More than a GP

“Your general practice team provides tailored care when you need it. From the expertise of GPs, nurses, paramedics, and physiotherapists to the guidance of mental health professionals, pharmacists, and health coaches, we’re here to ensure you receive the right help, from the right person, at the right time”

Jeremy Imms, GP



Getting the right help from the right person at your surgery will help ensure you are treated quickly.

Your general practice is made up of a team of health professionals including specialist nurses, physiotherapists, a mental health team and pharmacists to help you get the right care at your local GP practice when you need it, in addition to seeing your GP.

Getting the help you need

Although demand for GP appointments has increased hugely since 2019, we are committed to making it as easy as possible for you to get the care you need. We understand it can be frustrating when you can't always get through on the phone, but please continue to be patient and kind.

For over 40 minor conditions we can now offer you a same-day appointment with your local community pharmacy, through the **GP Community Pharmacy Consultation Service**. This frees up GP appointments for patients who have more urgent or complex medical needs.

For urgent care we will always try and make an appointment for you as quickly as possible.

To help you get seen as quickly as possible by the right person GP receptionists will ask you some questions to identify who might best help you. You may be offered a telephone appointment or an online appointment so you can receive care more quickly. Sometimes it will be better for you to see a specialist nurse, mental health worker, health coach or physiotherapist rather than your GP as they have specialist skills and training to help with your condition.

Staff at your GP practice that can help you

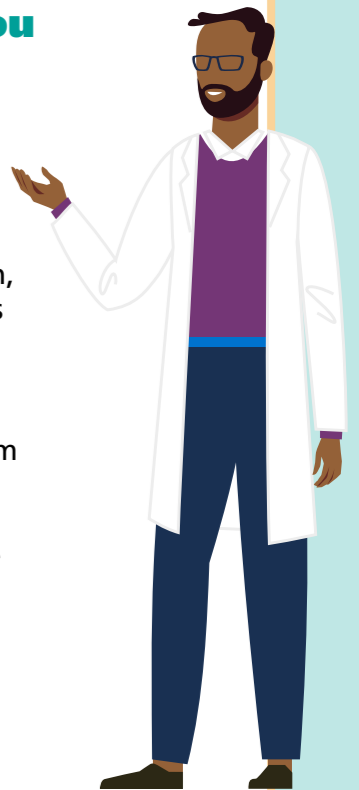
Health coaches can help with advice on how to manage your health, improve motivation levels and help you make lifestyle changes that will improve your health.

Mental health specialists will be able to offer you a consultation, treatment, peer support, medication or a referral to hospital teams where needed.

Physiotherapists treat patients with any injuries or physical conditions such as a sprained ankle, sports injury, or more long-term chronic issues, such as back pain.

Paramedics can offer home visits if you are unable to come to the practice for an appointment, perhaps because you are elderly or not very mobile.

Specialist nurses can offer specific health advice for conditions such as diabetes, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).



Somerset Acute Community Eyecare Service (ACES) is a free service available to all patients registered with a Somerset GP.

If you have a recently occurring medical eye condition, the service can help you to access treatment closer to home, through local optometrists with the specialist knowledge and skills to carry out this work at locally-approved opticians.

Appointments are available during normal working hours, and you will be seen within 24 hours. You can contact one of the participating opticians or you may be referred by your GP practice.

Here's a list of opticians that offer this service:
bit.ly/somerset-acute-eyecare

Health checks

The NHS Health Check programme helps you to stay healthy for longer. These free NHS health checks are available every five years to anyone registered with a GP who's between 40 and 74, and who doesn't have an existing heart condition.

Where you can arrange a health check

You can get a health check at your GP practice and at some community pharmacies.

Find out where you can get a free NHS Health Check by visiting www.somerset.gov.uk/health-safety-and-wellbeing/nhs-health-check

Getting vaccinated



“Vaccines are that extra layer of protection, keeping us healthy through every stage of life. From little ones getting their first jabs to staying fit and healthy as you get older, vaccines are our everyday defenders against preventable illnesses”

Shona Turnbull-Kirk,
Associate Director for
Health Inclusion, NHS
Somerset



Vaccinations

Vaccines can help protect you from preventable diseases. Here's a quick guide to the vaccines offered by the NHS so you understand how you and your family can be protected throughout your lives.

Childhood vaccines:

- **MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella):** Guards against highly contagious viral infections in early childhood.
- **Rotavirus:** Protects infants from severe diarrhoea and vomiting.
- **DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis):** Prevents three serious bacterial infections.

These vaccinations are first offered when children are under a year old with a 4 in 1 booster (diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio) before they start school.

Young adult vaccines:

- **HPV (Human Papillomavirus):** Protects against cervical cancer and other HPV-related cancers.
- **Meningitis ACWY:** Protects against bacterial meningitis, particularly important for university-bound students.

Secondary school students will also get a 3 in 1 booster for tetanus, diphtheria, and polio in Year 9.

For those who are pregnant:

- **Flu and COVID-19:** These viruses can be dangerous for both mother and baby. Offered during winter vaccinations.
- **Whooping cough:** Protects your baby from developing whooping cough in the first few weeks of their life. Offered between 16 and 32 weeks of pregnancy.

For those aged over 50:

- **Shingles:** Offered to all adults turning 65, those aged 70 to 79 and those aged 50 and over with a severely weakened immune system.

Annual vaccines:

- **Flu vaccine:** Provides protection against flu and offered in the winter months when the illness peaks. Offered to those over 65, children aged 2-3, school-aged children and those in high-risk groups.
- **COVID-19 vaccination:** Provides protection against COVID-19. Offered to those over 65 and those in high-risk groups.



More than just a hospital

Community services in Somerset

There are hundreds of community-based health services, run by Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, that cover our local communities in Somerset to help prevent people needing to go into hospital.

While it's important to go to hospital if you are very ill or need surgery, studies suggest that the best place to recover is at home. Our community services bring healthcare to your doorstep, making it that much easier to access – either closer to or directly at your home.

Somerset has teams of district nurses visiting patients across the county every day, as well as support services such as Rapid Response and Discharge to Assess. There are also prevention services such as our Homeless and Rough Sleepers Service and Rural Health Hubs, supporting those who need us.

There are 13 community hospitals in Somerset, which provide outpatient and inpatient services more locally to people in the county, as well as health hubs and our diagnostic centre, saving people from a trip to our busy acute hospitals at Musgrove Park in Taunton, and Yeovil District Hospital.



Minor Injury Units

We have minor injury units around the county where you can go for treatment and support for a wide range of injuries and illnesses – See page 33.

Hospital @Home

There's no place like home...



Somerset NHS Foundation Trust's Hospital@Home service provides acute hospital treatment at home. This allows patients to leave hospital sooner or avoid a hospital stay altogether, when recovering from an illness or operation, or when receiving treatment.

Patients are monitored by a team of experienced clinicians such as **consultants, nurses, therapists, healthcare assistants, and social workers**. This may be done via telephone, video consultations, and remote digital monitoring devices. Patients are constantly reviewed, as they would be in hospital, while receiving the highest level of care in the comfort of their own home.

www.somersetft.nhs.uk/hospitalathome/



"When I chat to our patients, you can hear they are more relaxed and comfortable. Being in your own environment really does support quicker recovery"

Claire Coleman
Hospital@Home Staff Nurse,
Somerset Primary Link



Village Agents & Talking Cafés

Village Agents, run by the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) provide confidential, practical community-based solutions, wherever you are in Somerset.

Our Village Agents host Talking Cafés at over 30 different venues throughout the county. They provide a local place for you to seek advice and support for a range of different issues that might be causing worry or distress. If our Village Agents can't help, they will know someone who can.

Our Agents can also help you access community-based solutions for your health and social care needs, through referrals from your GP or adult social care services.

We have a team of Hospital Village Agents who work closely with staff at Somerset's two acute hospitals, at Musgrove Park and Yeovil Hospital, as well as all the smaller community hospitals across Somerset to support you when you are ready to leave hospital.



Visit
www.somersetagents.org
to find out who your local Village Agent is and where your nearest Talking Café is located.

Connect Somerset



We know how important it is that you can access the help you need when you need it.

Across Somerset, lots of excellent community resources and online help is available, but not everyone knows how to access them.

Connect Somerset is a partnership between Somerset Council, the NHS in Somerset, voluntary, community, faith and social enterprises, schools, colleges and early years organisations.

We can help you access help with:



Money: Help with cost of living including benefits, managing debt, energy costs and transport



Food: Find your local foodbank or pantry and check eligibility for free children's holiday activities and food



Home: Housing support and advice, including help with a rent or mortgage



Mental health: Support near you and online



Domestic abuse: Find confidential help and support



Drugs or alcohol: Substance misuse advice and support for young people, adults, and their family



Parenting: #LearnForLove provides a range of support for parents, carers and grandparents

"Thank you so much for talking to me today. I feel a little 'on my own' sometimes with it all. Isn't it great when people work together - fantastic! Thank you so much for all your help"

Anon Service User

Visit the Connect Somerset website for more information.

If you don't have access to the internet, or struggle to access resources online, you can call us on **0300 123 2224.**

www.connectsomerset.org.uk

Drugs and alcohol

Knowing how much is 'too much' can be confusing when it comes to alcohol.

Most of us know when we've 'overdone it' in an individual drinking session. However, sometimes drinking can creep up on us and, over time, people can find that they're drinking more than they would like.

You are safest not to drink regularly more than 14 units per week to keep health risks from drinking alcohol to a low level. This is roughly six pints of lager or one and a half bottles of wine and the advice applies to both men and women.

Reducing your consumption

You don't have to be an alcoholic to risk damaging your health, regularly drinking above recommended levels can be harmful. Binge drinking is drinking over double the recommended daily guidelines on any single occasion. Binge drinking carries particular risks to both your health and your personal safety, increasing your risk of being involved in an accident.

Somerset Drugs and Alcohol Service

We have a range of support options, whether you would benefit from some brief advice to help you reduce the risks, or you require treatment to meet your goal of cutting down or becoming abstinent.

Online support for family and friends

If someone close to you is struggling with alcohol or other drugs, you can become a more effective part of their recovery journey by completing our online self-guided programme in your own time. If you feel you would benefit from further help, please contact us to get support.



"Turning Point's SDAS has saved my life. I thought it would be a cliché saying that, but SDAS saved my life. Without them, I wouldn't be here today... I'm now 115 days in recovery... I was given a week to live and if I didn't stop in that week then they said I would die"

Sally, 51 – Service user

If you are concerned about yourself or the drug or alcohol consumption of someone you know, speak to Somerset Drugs and Alcohol Service online or telephone 0300 303 8788.

Visit www.turning-point.co.uk/services/somerset

Somerset Council has a free online tool to help you evaluate your alcohol intake and identify if you are drinking too much.

www.service.somerset.gov.uk/think-about-your-drink



Stop smoking



Smoking is the leading cause of ill health and disease. Yet 60,000 people in Somerset are still smoking.

We know quitting smoking can be hard, tobacco is addictive, and it can take people many attempts to quit smoking for good.

It doesn't matter if you have tried to quit before, the Smokefree team are available to help you make 2024 the year you quit for good and improve your health for you and your family.



There is lots of support available to help you quit or reduce smoking, including services in the community and hospital. The benefits of quitting smoking are immediate with improved health, such as better blood pressure and energy levels, improved mood and saving money!

Smokefree Somerset provide free support across Somerset to anyone who wants to reduce or quit smoking. This includes:

- ✔ Telephone and face-to-face support from friendly and non-judgemental stop smoking practitioners
- ✔ Licensed stop smoking medicines and vapes
- ✔ For pregnant women and their families, all of the above including voucher incentives of up to £120 to help you quit

It is easy to access the service.

Phone: 01823 356222 or visit www.healthysomerset.co.uk/smokefree/contact to book your appointment.

You can also contact your GP who can refer you into stop smoking services.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is often thought of as physical violence, but abuse can take many forms, such as controlling someone's money, what they wear, who they see or what they do.

Everyone should have the opportunity to lead a happy, healthy and safe life free from abuse. If you or someone you know is experiencing these types of behaviour from a family member, partner or ex-partner, please seek help – **you will be believed.**

You do not have to be living with the person who is being abusive to you. They could, for example, be a carer, family member or a partner.

In an emergency you should always dial 999. If you are worried that an abuser may overhear your call you can remain silent, tap the phone and **dial 55 when prompted** by the operator who will send help.



Somerset Council has commissioned 12 short films to shine the spotlight on non-physical types of domestic abuse. **View here: bit.ly/12DACE**

If you are experiencing any form of domestic abuse, are worried about someone you know, or are concerned about the impact of your behaviour towards others, then help is available:

www.somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk

or by calling **0800 69 49 999**

– between 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week.

Abuse and isolation – over 65s



It is never too late to get help if you're suffering from domestic abuse. Abuse can include abuse from informal carers such as a friend or relative or from a paid carer.

Domestic abuse is wrong, regardless of your age or how long you may have been experiencing it. 10% of older people will experience some form of domestic abuse. This could be from partners, carers or relatives.

Social isolation has been identified as one of the leading contributors of domestic abuse. Fear and long-term health conditions can be major barriers to seeking and getting help, and sometimes spotting and challenging abuse in the elderly can be difficult.

Domestic abuse can affect anyone. You are not alone and you are not to blame. You do not have to suffer in silence.

Help is available to report domestic abuse. Phone **0800 69 49 999** or visit Somerset Survivors. [www.sometsurvivors.org.uk](http://www.somerset survivors.org.uk)

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, please always call the Police on 999.

If you are worried that an abuser may overhear your call you can remain silent, tap the phone and dial 55 when prompted by the operator who will send help.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired you can register with emergencySMS.net. Once registered you will be able to send a text to 999 if you require help in an emergency.



Somerset libraries welcomes You

There are 32 libraries across Somerset (plus a mobile library), which are warm and welcoming spaces for anyone. There is also a huge range of free online resources and activities you can access, simply by having a membership – it's free and easy to join.

Here are just some of the resources and activities you can access at your local library (as well as books):

- Home Library Service
- Free computers/wi-fi
- iPad loaning scheme
- Regular free activities, for babies and young children
- Blood pressure monitors to loan
- Customer access points
- Interactive projectors for people living with dementia or autism
- Loanable activity tracker watches (selected libraries)
- Online language learning

Blood pressure monitors

You can borrow a blood pressure monitor from your local library.

- Loanable thermal imaging cameras
- Positive About Breastfeeding
- Menopause collection
- Stand-on health monitors
- Specialist health related books

Visit: www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries



Financial support

at Citizens Advice Somerset

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. Citizens Advice Somerset believe no one should have to face these problems without **good quality, independent advice.**

Citizens Advice Somerset provide

→ free, impartial, independent and confidential advice ←

to give you the knowledge and confidence you need to find your way forward - whoever you are, and whatever your problem.

Visit: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

The telephone advice line is available on Monday and Friday 10am to 5pm and Tuesday to Thursday 10am to 8pm on **0808 278 7842**



Get involved

ways to volunteer in Somerset

Volunteering is great for improving your physical or mental health, supporting your local community, learning new skills, and supporting others

Somerset Council has a wide selection of volunteer opportunities across the county that could be just what you are looking for, such as:



“ Being part of the team here has allowed me to learn, form deep friendships, make a small difference towards making life a little bit better, and do some collective good! ”

Karuna – Trustee for Climate Action Taunton



Volunteer drivers

Support people to get to and from things like non-emergency medical appointments and school. Ideal for anybody over 18 with a full UK driving licence and four-door car.



Route1 advocacy

Give a helping hand to children and young people who may need a bit of extra support.



Libraries

There are lots of ways to get involved with your local library, such as helping with the Home Library Service, helping people improve their digital skills and much more.



Rights of Way

Help keep your favourite local walk clear from vegetation as an Adopt-a-Path volunteer or join the Local Access Forum to comment on consultations and draft policy documents.

Find out more on the Council's dedicated volunteering website:

www.volunteering.somerset.gov.uk

To keep up to date with latest news around volunteering with Somerset Council, please like and follow us here: www.facebook.com/volunteeringatsomersetcouncil

healthwatch

Somerset

Healthwatch Somerset is your local health and care champion. Whether you've had a good or bad experience, we will use your feedback to inform NHS and care leaders how to improve services for everyone.

We are independent and impartial and anything you say is confidential. We can also help you find reliable and trustworthy information and advice about local services.

www.healthwatchsomerset.co.uk

You could change a child's story as a paid foster carer ... just like Willow



Fostering and adoption

Find out more:

0800 587 9900



Recruiting now

0800 587 9900

Full training and support provided

fosteringinsomerset.org.uk

www.oursomerset.org.uk 49



Find your Spark

Volunteering is something everyone can do, whatever their age or location, be it in person or virtual, regular or occasional, indoors or outdoors.

Spark a Change is Somerset's digital platform where you can explore and apply for exciting volunteer roles and make a difference in your community.

By volunteering you can:

- ✓ Meet new people
- ✓ Connect to your local community
- ✓ Gain new skills and enhance your CV
- ✓ Boost your confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing
- ✓ Give something back



Whatever inspires you, Spark a Change is a great way to discover exciting volunteer roles and make a difference to your community.

<https://www.sparkachange.org.uk>



Partners





**More than half of all
strokes and heart
attacks are the result
of high blood pressure.**

**Get yours checked
and get peace of mind.**



Scan for more
information

bit.ly/blood-pressure-somerset

**KNOW YOUR
NUMBERS**
SOMERSET