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Improving Lives

**every mind
matters**

Get support with mental health, see page 6



Reduce your fire risk at home, see page 8



Fostering in Somerset - help change a child's story, see page 13

Top job Somerset!



Somerset was the **FIRST** county in the country to hit the government target for vaccinating our most vulnerable people - now we want to be the first to have **ZERO** cases!

It's a big ask and we all have a key part to play – but let's be ambitious for our county. Can you honestly say that you're obeying the lockdown restrictions and doing all that you can to keep safe and free from coronavirus?

As we look to the future and beyond lockdown, and as some restrictions start to ease, we know that it will increase the risk of coronavirus cases going up. So let's all really stick to the rules and make Somerset the safest place there is.

Our vaccination programme has already proved a game changer, and this edition of *Your Somerset* highlights some of the brilliant work that has been carried out by our colleagues in the health service, helped by Somerset County Council's own amazing staff, alongside volunteers and partners.

Somerset has shown the very best of its qualities throughout this crisis. We have pulled together to work as one united Somerset for the good of our residents. We are showing the very best of our county.

Let's go one step further and show all other counties that Somerset will continue to be the top performer, and we will stay at the top of the table and all do our bit.

Mum's the word...

Here's Kathy Lucas doing her bit to keep Somerset safe. Kathy is the mum of Trudi Grant – Somerset's Director of Public Health – who was filmed having her jab to encourage others to come forward for their vaccination.



Contact US
Visit www.somerset.gov.uk

If you can't find what you need on our website:

Phone 0300 123 2224

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 5.30pm.

Write to us at

Somerset County Council,
County Hall, Taunton,
Somerset, TA1 1DY

For all coronavirus - related support, phone 0300 790 6275, seven days a week, 8am until 6pm.

Please phone the numbers below for the following services:

Fostering enquiries
0800 587 9900

Adopt South West
0345 155 1076

South West Heritage Trust
(01823) 278805

Somerset Road Safety
(01823) 423430

Somerset Waste Partnership
(01823) 625700

Other useful numbers
Citizens Advice Consumer Service Helpline
03454 04 05 06

Street Lighting Faults
0845 601 0939

(office hours) and
0845 795 9639
(for out of hours emergencies)

Student Finance Direct
(Higher Education Students only) 0845 607 7577

Wellington Community Office
(01823) 663379

District Councils
Mendip District Council
0300 303 8588

Sedgemoor District Council
0300 303 7800

South Somerset District Council
(01935) 462462

Somerset West and Taunton Council
0300 304 8000



Patrick Flaherty, Chief Executive of Somerset County Council

IN MY OPINION

It's been truly humbling to see the fantastic work across Somerset to combat coronavirus and its impacts.

We need to say thanks!

☆ To the NHS, GPs and pharmacies who are working so hard to vaccinate, first our vulnerable people, and then our wider population.

☆ To our amazing volunteers and communities who are doing so much to help keep residents safe and well.

☆ To the staff at Somerset County Council and our partners and colleagues across the public sector who have downed tools to do whatever is needed to keep Somerset safe.

thank you



I thank you one and all. Somerset has come together – as one – like never before in this crisis and acted for the good of our residents. Saving lives: Looking out for each other. Showing courage, compassion and caring at all times.

CONSULTATION NOW OPEN

On Monday 22 February the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, launched a consultation on proposals for the reorganisation of local government in Somerset. There are two proposals in the consultation process in Somerset.

The consultation document is available online at consult.communities.gov.uk, by email to unitaryconsultation@communities.gov.uk or in writing to Governance Reform and Democracy, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF. The consultation will run for eight weeks to **Monday 19 April 2021**.

A message of thanks from the Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset

The coronavirus pandemic has affected each and everyone of us across our county. We remain uncertain about the future, however, the remarkable people of Somerset have risen to the challenge with heart-warming demonstrations of perceptive kindness and compassion and revealed their true worth.



There is nothing new about generosity of spirit in Somerset. On the West Front of Wells Cathedral, you will find a stone carved in memory of John of Pitney. He was a chantry priest from Crewkerne who came to Wells to minister to the sick and dying during the plague of 1348. By December of that year he had died of the Black Death too. Sadly, the mason carving this memorial stone must have also died because the inscription is incomplete. Nevertheless, their work has left a legacy of human kindness, which has lasted for 500 years.

I would like to thank everyone who has worked tirelessly in the response to this pandemic. In the same way your kindness, compassion and generosity of spirit will leave a lasting legacy and will never be forgotten - you are the best of our generation, just as John of Pitney was of his.

My message is also written on behalf of Her Majesty and of her family, who I represent in our county.

Thank you from each and every one of us.

May elections

Due to the launch of the Government's public consultation into changing the way local councils work in Somerset, the Somerset County Council elections planned for May have been deferred. While the County Council elections will not take place on Thursday 6 May as planned, the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections and some by-elections will. If you would prefer to vote by post, then it's never too early to apply. Visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-ama/voter/voting-person-post-or-proxy/voting-post Or contact your local district council (see the contact us section for contact details).

EDITOR'S INFO

To get in contact with *Your Somerset* or to advertise in this publication, contact the **Communications Team** on (01823) 355020, or email yoursomerset@somerset.gov.uk

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Pssst... *Your Somerset* costs 6p per copy to produce.



CORONAVIRUS VACCINATIONS CONTINUE AT PACE



The race is on to get Somerset protected as thousands of people in Somerset received their vaccine against the deadly coronavirus disease.

Vaccinations are available from a number of locations across Somerset, including large county sites (Taunton Racecourse and Bath & West Showground), community and hospital hubs, some GP surgeries, pharmacies and using teams of mobile vaccinators for people who cannot leave home. You can find a full list of locations, including vaccination frequently asked questions, on the NHS website at www.somersetccg.nhs.uk

Is the vaccine safe?

All the approved vaccines being rolled out in the UK have met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness as set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and have been through all the clinical trials and safety checks that all other licensed medicines go through.

Avoid the scams

Sadly, there are a number of scams around the vaccination programme circulating. Please remain vigilant. The vaccine is free to those eligible and you will never be asked for payment or for your card details.

When will I get the vaccine?

The NHS will contact you to let you know what you need to do when it's your turn. People are being called forward in priority order, set nationally by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. And when you do get the call, please book and attend your appointment.

For more information, visit www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus. To view the latest vaccination statistics, visit www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/covid-19-vaccinations/

Volunteers step up to help with vaccine roll out

Thank you to all the fantastic volunteers supporting Somerset's coronavirus vaccination programme.

More than 1,000 amazing people answered the call and are now supporting the 20 vaccination sites across the county. They're helping with key roles such as stewarding and marshalling, meeting and greeting people as they arrive, and directing them to park safely. If you've already had your job, I'm sure you'll agree – they're all doing a marvellous job.

The vaccination programme is led by the NHS with support from Somerset County Council, district councils and partners, including Spark Somerset who were tasked with recruiting these fabulous volunteers.



A little note from, Sarah, one of the volunteers:

Sarah said: "I chose to sign up as a vaccine marshal volunteer because I really wanted to do my bit. Although I work full-time during the week, I did have time most weekends where I felt I could help. During my shifts at the vaccination centre I truly felt useful. There is a united feeling across all levels of contribution, that we are in this together and all making a difference. Everyone who visits is genuinely so grateful for our help, even if that's simply opening a door for them."



To find out more about volunteering in Somerset, visit www.sparkachange.org.uk or email volunteering@sparksomerset.org.uk



Remember that the vaccine is designed to prevent serious illness or death and it takes several weeks to build up your immunity. Even when vaccinated, you can still catch coronavirus and may pass it onto others. It's vital everyone continues to follow the government guidelines and the 'hands, face, space' guidance.



Somerset's Local Authorities
Coronavirus support helpline
0300 790 6275

Available 8am to 6pm, seven days a week

Help continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs support.

The five councils in Somerset have been working together with partner organisations since April to provide a single phone number for anyone who needs coronavirus - related support.

So far more than **12,500 calls** have been answered and a range of help provided.

Remember, if you need support or are concerned about relatives, or neighbours, please phone **0300 790 6275**. Phone lines are open seven days a week between 8am and 6pm to offer support with:



Personal care and support



Support for the homeless



Emotional support



Transport to medical appointments



Waste collection and disposal



Financial support and employment, skills and business advice.

Coronavirus- a year on...

Who would have thought lockdowns, social distancing and Zoom calls would have replaced foreign travel, birthday parties and nights out with our friends and family?

Although this is an anniversary that no one feels like celebrating, let's not forget all the great things that have been achieved by working together. The NHS, County, districts, parish, town and city councils have all come together to deliver remarkable things and help those that have needed it most. As staff across the public sector have taken on new temporary roles as vaccinators, marshalls, vaccination support staff, contact tracers, food parcel delivery people (the list goes on...) we know that this has had an impact on some of the services we deliver to you, so we'd like to also thank you for all your support and patience. And none of this would have been possible without the hard work and generosity from the army of volunteers, community groups and individuals, who have shown extraordinary kindness to others over the last 12-months.



Together we can achieve great things

Rolled out the **largest vaccination programme of a lifetime and created additional coronavirus testing capacity** across Somerset.



Targeted support made available for the tourism sector, especially hard hit by coronavirus.



Over **700** micro-providers are supporting over **5,000** people with **care and support each week**.



Created a single Coronavirus Helpline, which has helped over **12,500**



people access the help or services they need.

An online employment and skills hub was set up to support both individuals and businesses.



Over **900** laptops and tablets were distributed to young people so that they could access virtual learning.



More than **40,000** people have received support from Mindline.



Over **7,500** welfare calls were made, and **120,000** letters and **10,000** emails were sent to check vulnerable people were ok during the lockdowns.



Over **270,000** items of food have been delivered by **Village Agents and community groups** to people of all ages.



Over **11,000** children and their families received **food support over the Christmas** holidays and funding for school meal clubs over the winter.



Our contact centres have made over **20,000** calls on behalf of GP surgeries across Somerset to book people in for their vaccinations.



Over **11 million pieces** of PPE were sourced and delivered to keep the care sector safe during a time of national shortage.



Leaving the 'day job' behind...



While we lend our support to our NHS partners during this emergency, some council services have been scaled back or projects slowed down to allow hundreds of council staff to temporarily leave their day jobs behind to help out. They have been working tirelessly alongside NHS colleagues and within communities to help support the fight back against coronavirus. **Here are just a few of their stories:**

Gary Frecknall, Highways and Transportation Manager turned Vaccination site manager

Gary, who usually works in the Council's Highways Team, has spent the last three months helping to set up the GP vaccination hubs in Somerset. Working with the NHS Clinical Director, he was responsible for making sure clinical equipment and suitable PPE were on site. He also sourced digital and ICT equipment and coordinated staff to make sure clinical, administration, reception and marshals are there and ready to go. He has now returned to catch up with his 'day job', but said:

“**Getting everything ready at the vaccination centres was an enormous task. It was a very challenging environment, but also extremely rewarding. I'm very proud of Somerset County Council's workforce, who have mobilised to help with this huge logistical operation. We're working closely with our NHS colleagues and together as a team I feel that we're making a real difference.**”

Jo Smith, Head of Service for the Public Health Operational Teams turned vaccinator

Jo Smith, who manages the public health nursing team, was our first fully trained Somerset County Council vaccinator. Jo is a qualified nurse, but still had to undergo intensive training for her role as a vaccinator. Jo already has a pretty full-on role at the Council so she's combining her new role with her day job by working shifts at evenings and

weekends. Jo said: “**It's great to be to use my skills and able to do something to reduce the risks of coronavirus. I'm looking forward to the contribution I will be able to play in the vaccination programme.**”

Sarah Broomfield, Volunteer Co-ordinator turned Contact Tracing Support Team Advisor

Sarah Broomfield usually works in the Central Volunteer Team but is now working part-time in the Council's Contact Tracing Support Team. Contact tracing involves identifying and tracing people who have had a positive coronavirus test, as well as identifying the close contacts they may have had while they were infectious.

Sarah said: “**I feel this is such a valuable role, helping prevent the spread of the virus and also helping those who may need support while they are self-isolating. It gives me a sense of achievement and purpose and I feel I am doing my bit to help out in the pandemic. Due to a health condition, I wasn't able to volunteer at the vaccinations or test centres sites, but this has allowed me to help out while still being at home.**”



Superhero shout outs

Over the last year we're so grateful to everyone who has got in touch and nominated individuals, organisations and groups for a 'superhero shoutout' on our social media pages. The hard work continues and so does our gratitude. Here are a few from the last few months...

Let's give a big Somerset Superhero Shout Out for:

- * The wonderful **@IKB School in Wellington**.
- * All the **Adult Social Care staff** working hard in Somerset's hospitals.
- * A massive shout out to **teachers and school staff** across the county who have been working so hard to deliver virtual lessons and help students adapt to new ways of working.
- * To all the amazing **healthcare workers** across the county.
- * **Supermarket staff** have continued to work throughout the pandemic - and they've done an amazing job.
- * **The Wivey Food Project**, a team of over 50 volunteers who are busy preparing fresh, healthy meals to deliver to people in need.
- * **Village Agent**, Kirsten Rushby.
- * **Kingfisher Primary School** in Yeovil - our school community are rocking the world of remote learning.
- * Reception year in **Holy Trinity** would like to say a massive thank you to the amazing teachers and TA's who are doing an incredible job at teaching in and out of school, while also looking after the parent's wellbeing.
- * Residents of **Middlezoy**, who have come together even more so. From helping out with our village community shop, prescription, newspaper and food deliveries, to donating books, audio CDs, and creating an online platform for the village shop.
- * And a special shout out to all the **nurseries, playgroups, pre-schools and childminders** across the county who have kept their doors open during the recent lockdown - **thank you all.**



* These people and organisations were all nominated through our Somerset Superheroes social media shout outs. We know that there were many more of you too, so we are really sorry if you've helped out and we've missed you out. If you want to show your appreciation for someone who has gone out of their way to help others, then message us on twitter or Facebook, or email **YourSomerset@somerset.gov.uk** and will give them a **#SomersetShoutOut** on social our media.



GROWING OLD WITH DOMESTIC ABUSE



- it's never too late to get help

Ten per cent of older people will experience some form of domestic abuse, and in Somerset the number of people over 65 reporting abuse is on the increase.

Older people are particularly vulnerable to domestic abuse, often unaware that help is available. 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.

Abuse can take many forms, including neglect or physical, physiological, emotional, financial, online or sexual abuse. It is also believed that abuse of older people is still significantly under reported, despite the recent rise. Tragically, many will suffer in silence, behind closed doors, in shame or embarrassment.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, worried about someone you know, or are concerned about the impact of your behaviour towards others, then help is available. Visit www.somersetssurvivors.org.uk or phone 0800 69 49 999.



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.



When things aren't so good out there, make inside feel better. Many of us are struggling to maintain our mental wellbeing right now, but it's important to remember, this situation is unusual - and it won't last forever.

There are lots of things you can do to support your mental health and wellbeing. If you feel like you could do with a little extra support, check out the Every Mind Matters website at www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters

It provides practical steps you can take to help manage some of the feelings you might be struggling with. It includes tips

and support on how to deal with change, cope with money worries, job uncertainty, and how to look after your mental wellbeing while staying at home.



You'll also find a number of videos from experts offering some really helpful advice, on how to deal with stress and anxiety, boost low mood and way to get a better night sleep. There is also information about what you can do to help others – including advice for parents and for children and young people.

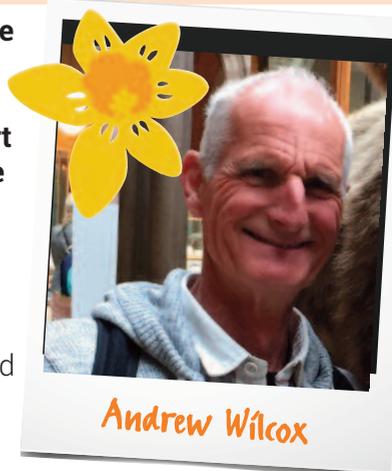
If you've been struggling with your mood, stress, anxiety or sleep take the #EveryMindMatters mind plan quiz to get your personalised mental wellbeing action plan. Visit www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters



If you need to talk to someone, please phone Mindline on 01823 276 892. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will welcome your call.

Five things I've learnt about bereavement support

Throughout the pandemic, Marie Curie Companions have been supporting bereaved people in Somerset, as part of the Somerset Bereavement Support Service. Andrew Wilcox, a Marie Curie Companion volunteer shares some reflections and lessons he's learnt along the way.



Andrew Wilcox

1 Grieving - Grieving is a natural process that can lead towards healing. People usually have good and bad days, sometimes triggered by little reminders. But most people find the good days gradually outnumber the bad days, aided sometimes with a little help on the way.

2 Silence is golden - You don't have to keep talking and maybe struggling for things to say. Silence really is golden and gives us a chance to really hear what is being said and particularly the way that it is said.

3 Listening - Really listening allows a 'coming together' even on the phone. The mind can move away from brain thinking and into another dimension altogether where true empathy comes into its own and where the magic of healing can happen.

4 Your presence is a gift - Don't pretend you are a doctor and can give advice to make any physical problems disappear. The person doesn't expect this and any healing that is needed can take place by virtue of your very 'presence'.

5 Plan for the end - During our lives we all share two common events, our birth and our death. Births are planned for and celebrated - deaths should be no different.

The Somerset Bereavement Support Service can offer a variety of support to adults and children over 12 in Somerset. If you or someone you know, is affected by grief or bereavement, and would like to talk to someone, please phone the Somerset Bereavement Support Service on 0800 3047 412, Monday to Saturday, between 9am and 5pm.



Coronavirus – help reduce household spread

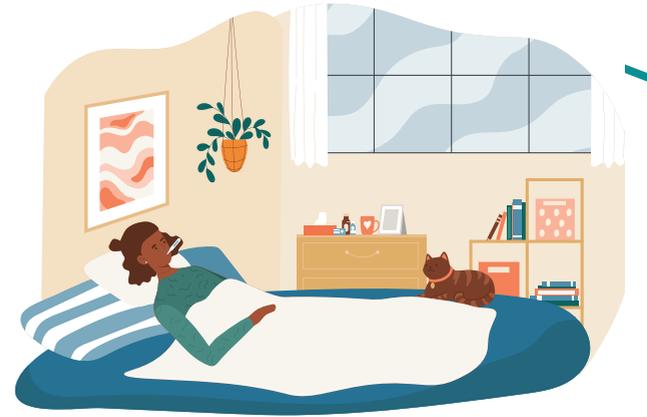
Although many of us have spent the last few months being cooped up indoors, coronavirus is still circulating in our communities.

If you or someone in your household starts to show symptoms (high temperature, a new or continuous cough, loss of taste or smell) there are things you can do to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in your home. And remember, while one person could have a mild illness and recover quickly, someone you live with might become extremely ill.



If you have symptoms or test positive for coronavirus you should:

- ✓ First and foremost, if you have symptoms - get tested!
- ✓ Spend as little time as possible in shared spaces, like the kitchen, bathroom or lounge and wear a face covering or mask if and when you do.
- ✓ Try and separate yourself from the rest of your household, use a separate bathroom if you have one and don't share towels – even hand towels!



Around the house

- ✓ Cleaning is key... but make sure you put any cleaning cloths or disposable face covering belonging to the person with coronavirus in disposable bin bags, double bag them and put them aside (preferably outside or in the garage) for 72 hours before putting them in the outside bin.
- ✓ If you have one, use your dishwasher to clean and dry your crockery and cutlery. If you don't then wash the items used by the person who has coronavirus separately and dry them thoroughly using a separate tea towel.
- ✓ You can wash your laundry in the same load as the rest of your household, just don't shake dirty laundry – this will reduce any possible spread through the air. If you don't have a washing machine, wait for 72 hours after your self-isolation has ended before taking it to a public launderette (or your mum's house!).



The rest of the household

- ✓ Must stay two metres away from the person with symptoms (unless you're caring for a child or vulnerable adult)
- ✓ Give them as much space as possible, but look after them from a distance as they might be feeling rough. For example, place their meals outside their door for them.

And finally....

Let the fresh air in and the virus out

Let as much fresh air into your house as you can. If it's cold and you don't want to leave windows open for too long, open them a few times a day, just to let a bit of air in. And if you have vents on your windows, leave them open.



Five surprising things that could increase the risk of fire at home

Firefighters in Devon and Somerset attend on average 973 house fires a year.

Here's the lowdown on the surprising fire risks in your home, and what you can do to reduce those risks.

1. Your smoke alarm

Your smoke alarm is only any good to you if it works. Pledge to keep yourself and your family safe by testing it once a week.

You should have a **working** smoke alarm on at least every level of your home. A smoke alarm is the easiest way to alert you to the first signs of a fire, giving you precious time to escape.

Two thirds of fire deaths in the south west happened where there was not a working smoke alarm*.

2. Cooking when you're not watching

The majority of fires in the home start in the kitchen, and are caused by cooking. More than half of the house fires we attend start in the kitchen.

Kitchen fires most often happen when:

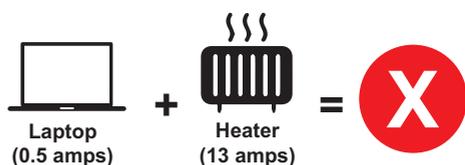
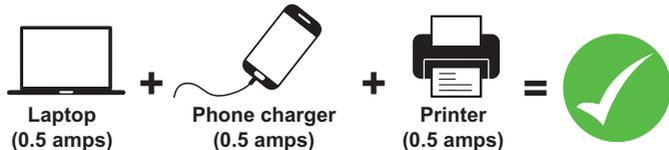
- You're distracted. Whether it is by pets, children, or tv, if you're not watching your cooking on the hob or under the grill, it could catch fire before you have had the chance to notice.
- Deep fat frying – hot oil can easily catch fire. If possible, only use a thermostat controlled deep fat fryer as they cannot overheat.
- Alcohol or drugs are involved – you won't be as careful when under the influence.

3. Extension leads

You may not realise but making a poor choice with extension leads can increase your risk of fire.

- Extension leads generate heat so should be used carefully – if you're using a wind-up type they should always be fully extended.
- If you need to use multi-socket adapters, never use these with high powered items such as kettles, heaters or hair straighteners.

Most extension leads have a 13 amp fuse which should not be exceeded. Four spaces doesn't mean four plugs!



* Please note that this is a guide and you should always check the individual amp rating of each appliance.



4. Charging electricals

In Devon and Somerset, 60 fires each year start from an electrical issue:

- Always use the charger that came with your device and don't buy a fake replacement.
- Charge your device (including laptops) on a hard, safe surface, and never on a carpet or bed. This also applies when using a laptop - always use it on a hard surface.
- Never leave a device charging unattended.

5. Faulty household appliances

Which household appliance is most likely to catch fire?

The most common household appliances to catch fire are tumble dryers and washing machines which cause around 60 fires each year in Devon and Somerset.

We attend around 12 fires each year caused by dishwashers, and 10 each year caused by fridges or freezers.

- Never leave appliances running when you are out, or asleep. This includes washing machines, tumble dryers or dishwashers.
- For appliances that are designed to remain on, such as fridges and freezers, please ensure they are in good working order and if you have any doubt or they are quite old, consider replacing.
- Use one socket per appliance. All of these appliances are powerful and use a lot of electricity, so should never be used with extension leads or multi-plug sockets. This will overload the socket and could cause a fire.
- Clear out lint from your tumble dryer after every use. Follow manufacturers' guidelines for cleaning and maintenance advice.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service offers a free home fire safety visit, or advice over the phone, to residents across Devon and Somerset.

To find out more and to book, call 0800 0502 999 visit www.dsfire.gov.uk/homesafety or text 07800 002476.



DEVON & SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

*stats from 2013-2017

Reduce, reuse, recycle for South Somerset - SPRING 2021

Recycle More heads south for summer



A new era in recycling will start in South Somerset this summer.

Somerset Waste Partnership's Recycle More service will be launched for all homes across the district in late June/early July.

Most people in Somerset are recycling and Recycle More makes it far easier to recycle far more each week, helping protect your environment and tackle climate change. In Mendip well over 50,000 households of all kinds have already helped Recycle More deliver hundreds of tonnes of extra recycling, with big increases in plastic and a significant drop in what is left to go in rubbish bins. Their experiences

(see page 2) show just how well the new system works.

You will need to sort recycling into different containers, including a new **Bright Blue Bag** delivered just before the new service starts.

As well as everything already collected, Recycle More takes:

- ✓ Plastic pots, tubs and trays
- ✓ Tetra Paks and other cartons
- ✓ Small household batteries
- ✓ Small electrical items (kettle, laptop, phone etc)

Recycling much more every week means far less rubbish, so this will be collected every three weeks.

Two Recycle More leaflets will land on your doormat - in May and then June - with

step-by-step details and a clear what-goes-where guide.

An individual calendar will show exactly what will change when, and all the dates to put out your recycling, rubbish and - if you have a subscription - your garden waste.

Remember, nothing changes until your Bright Blue Bag arrives so carry on recycling exactly as now until Recycle More starts.

Guidance and support are available for anyone who thinks they may have difficulties. Find out more online at somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more or follow us at facebook.com/somersetwaste

B-b-b-Bright Blue Bag!

The 60-litre bags are for plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, food and drink cans, foil and aerosols.

They are tough and hard-wearing, base-weighted so they will not blow away, Velcro-fastened so recycling will not blow away, and fold flat when not in use.



Do it online

Recycle More works best when you make full use of the weekly recycling collections so make sure you have the right containers.

Everyone can have green boxes, black boxes and a food waste bin. Order **FREE** online using My Waste Services feature on the SWP homepage somersetwaste.gov.uk



Recycle More: What difference does it make?

Since the end of October, **Recycle More** has seen hundreds of tonnes of extra recycling collected from homes across Mendip. So, how are you finding it?

Debbie from Glastonbury

Q. What difference has Recycle More made?

A. "Because most of our waste is now recyclable and general waste is collected less frequently, we're mindful to put as much as possible into recycling so it's not hanging around."

Even with the extra week to wait, our wheelie bin is barely three quarters full and we are a family of four! (It doesn't smell either, because everything that could fester is now recyclable except for pet food pouches.

A quick rinse before binning solves that problem).

With the old service it was pushed down, FULL and ready for collection after two weeks. So, we did have concerns before Recycle More started."

Q. How have you found using the blue bag?

A. "Living on top a very windy hill, I had my reservations. I didn't think they would survive and the contents would

be blown everywhere. However, they are strong, well made, weighted with an attached Velcro lid. They hold a surprising amount of recyclables too!"

Q. What about plastics?

A. "PLASTIC WASTE!! So much plastic waste. It's only when you see it separated do you realise just how much room it was taking up in general waste. Shocking! I'm glad it's now recyclable. So much more is now collected at the kerbside. Recycling made easy."



Paul and Annie from Shepton Mallet

Q. What were your initial thoughts about Recycle More?

A. "When we first heard of the proposed change to wheelie bin collections to every third week we were worried about how this would work as our wheelie bin was always full to the brim on collection day. We were still not convinced when we saw the extra items being taken for

recycling - we didn't feel it would make a significant difference to the amount of waste in our wheelie bin."

Q. What do you think now?

A. "How wrong we were! In the first three weeks our wheelie bin was only two thirds full on the first collection day, it has stayed at this level to date. The blue bag is

a good bit of kit, weighted at base to make it stable in windy weather, with a Velcro sealable top flap to keep the elements out. Top marks to Somerset Waste Partnership for bringing in these changes that help us all do our bit for the environment and to help save the world's precious resources."



"I can't believe how much more I'm recycling and my rubbish bin isn't even full after three weeks. Really enjoying doing my bit for the planet."

"My blue bag is the fullest of all our recycling containers... I can't believe how little we are throwing away now!"



Love your baby and love the environment?

Keen to try reusable natural nappies but unsure where to start and concerned about cost?

We have the easy and affordable solution with Somerset Waste Partnership's backing for three local cloth nappy support groups helping people all over the county to switch to reusable nappies: Carry Me Kate Parenting Services CIC, South Somerset Cloth Nappy Library, and Frome Cloth Nappy Library (which, post-lockdown, will be working with Share - a library of things). For about £15, you can borrow one of the 30 new low-cost reusable nappy packs, each with a bumper selection of styles and brands to suit all budgets, so you can find

exactly what will work for your baby and your lifestyle, plus have the invaluable expertise and advice of the nappy support groups.

Each pack is designed to have almost everything you need to try reusable nappies for a month or more: a range of nappies of different designs and sizes, waterproof wraps, reusable wipes, reusable fleece liners, boosters for extra absorbency, a roll of disposable liners, and much more. **Go on - give it a go!**

For all the details, go to: somersetwaste.gov.uk/reusable-nappies or contact your district council customer services.



Recycling update... what can be collected from the kerb



For information on everything you can recycle kerbside, visit: somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycling-collections

Keep a lid on it

We are always looking to help you recycle more (if you cannot reduce or reuse it).

So now all metal and plastic lids and tops can be left on all glass bottles and jars put out for recycling, after they have been rinsed.

And after rinsing and squashing household plastic bottles, the tops can be put back on them, too.

That's except for hand soap or sanitiser pumps, or trigger sprays from cleaners and the like; please put those in your rubbish and rinse, squash and recycle the plastic bottles.

If you have a Recycle More kerbside collection (only Mendip now, South Somerset this summer, and the rest of the county later), it gets even better, as the Tetra Paks and other cartons taken kerbside in Mendip can be rinsed, squashed and the tops put back on.



In the bag! Wearable clothes and shoes



Kerbside collections can take all clothes and shoes that are good enough to be worn again.

Just put them in a tied bag - carrier, compostable etc but not a black sack - to keep them completely dry, and add them on top or beside your recycling.

However, we are no longer taking textiles - sheets, blankets, curtains, throws, towels etc - at the kerbside.

When open, you may prefer to drop off clothes, shoes and textiles at charity shops and charity banks. Or sell them, swap them, or give them away.

Many happy returns for Schools Against Waste!

Somerset Waste Partnership's Schools Against Waste (SAW) programme is celebrating its third birthday - having introduced more than 35,000 youngsters to the ideas of waste reduction and recycling.

The initiative sees the Carymoor Environmental Trust run free assemblies and workshops for primary schools across the county on behalf of SWP. The popular sessions take the 3 Rs - reduce, reuse and recycle - into the classroom, giving youngsters the grounding in how to responsibly deal with the waste we create, and reduce it where possible.



The South Somerset-based trust has carried out more than 200 visits since the start of the initiative, with its range of different activities and materials.

Working closely with SWP, the sessions are regularly updated to support our initiatives, whether it's the Slim My Waste food waste campaign or more recently introducing the introduction of the Recycle More service.

In response to the pandemic, Carymoor has taken the sessions online, giving schools the chance to host fully interactive virtual visits using Zoom, video content and materials in the classroom.



Based just outside Castle Cary - on a 100-acre nature reserve, created on top of capped landfill - Carymoor is an environmental education and nature conservation charity providing inspirational outdoor learning for schools and community groups.

For more information visit www.carymoor.org.uk



What the teachers say...

"... the children are still talking about it a week later and discussing how they can put in to practice some of the things suggested."



"... the children engaged and enjoyed the lesson, activities and videos as if you were in the room with us. They learnt a lot. Thank you!"

Here comes the summer... site hours changing



April marks the switch from winter to summer hours for Somerset recycling sites.

Sites are open the same days as in winter, including all 16 open every Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 4pm year-round.

But instead of winter's 9am-5pm on weekdays, summer hours - when a site is open - are 9am to 6pm from Thursday 1 April to Thursday 30 September.

For all details of every site, visit: [somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycling/centres](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycling/centres).

Importantly, do check the latest coronavirus rules about travelling to any recycling site, and the safety measures that must be observed.



COVID. Stay safe, keep others safe



(Correct at time of going to press. For the latest information, check <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus>.)

Advice on coronavirus waste safety is clear for household collections and recycling sites.

While travel to sites is permitted, we are asking people to only come if that journey is essential. That could be because waste that cannot be taken in kerbside collections poses a health or fire risk if stored at home.

Site visitors **MUST** observe all safety measures:

- do not visit if you have COVID symptoms or have been asked to shield
- stay at least two metres from all staff and other users
- wash or sanitise hands before and after the visit
- wear gloves and consider wearing a mask
- maximum of two people in vehicle from the same household

We monitor site numbers and control vehicle flow if it is necessary to ensure social distancing. Sites may temporarily close to reduce numbers and keep everyone safe.

The vehicle and trailer permit system remains in place for all recycling sites.

What to do with personal waste

In households with people who are infected or have COVID symptoms, their personal waste should be stored securely in disposable rubbish bags.

These should then be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within the home for at least 72 hours (three days) before being put in the usual rubbish outside the house for the usual collections.

If you live in a household without a confirmed infection or symptoms, disposable masks and wipes should be put straight into your rubbish bin, NOT into recycling.

You should wash or sanitise hands before and after handling waste containers, disinfect container handles, and maintain social distance from all waste staff.

COVID and waste latest: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus>.



72 hours

Garden waste: *renew now*

If you have a garden, it is time to renew or start a subscription to our fortnightly garden waste collection.

Existing subscribers should watch out for the renewal letters arriving about now. Sorting out an existing or new collection can be done online from [somersetwaste.gov.uk/garden-waste-collections](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/garden-waste-collections) get ahead, do it now!



All change for Easter



'Easter Friday this year falls on Friday 2 April so that day's kerbside collections will be on Saturday 3 April from 7am.'

The Easter Monday Bank Holiday on 5 April means that all collections that week are one day later, including the Friday pick-ups that will take place on Saturday 10 April.'

All recycling sites remain on their usual schedules (the

network only closes 25-26 December and 1 January) so as usual, 10 will be open Easter Friday, all 16 over Easter weekend, and 12 on Easter Monday. The next bank holiday Mondays will be on 3 and 31 May, with again the week's collections moving back one day, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday, but no changes to recycling sites.

YOU could help change a child's story

Theo is nine. He has light blonde hair, blue eyes and a great sense of humour. He enjoys playing Minecraft, fishing, spending time outside and reading.

His favourite food is spaghetti bolognese, and he has a teenage older sister, who is 15. Sometimes Theo finds it hard to manage his emotions.... but then life hasn't always been easy for him or his sister.



fostering
in somerset

With over 500 children in care, and around 200 in-house foster carers, Somerset just doesn't have enough foster carers to meet demand.

Could you help change a child's story by providing a stable home and family for a vulnerable young person as a Somerset County Council foster carer?

We particularly need homes for older children and teenagers, just like Theo and his sister. We're also keen to find more foster homes for siblings, and children coming out of residential care who would benefit from a family environment.

Fostering can be challenging – but it's also hugely rewarding, and you're supported every step of the way. In return, we provide ongoing support and training, a dedicated supervising social worker, and clear progression pathways for carers who feel they'd like to progress through the levels.

Our foster carers also receive a weekly fee, starting from **£77 a week**, as well as a weekly

allowance for each child in their care. Allowances start from **£146.30 a week** but vary depending on the age of the child.

Age range	Weekly allowance
0-4	£146.30
5-10	£166.65
11-15	£207.56
16+	£252.38

As an example:

Mr Smith fosters Theo, who is nine and his sister, who is 15. He receives **£374.21 a week** in allowances and **£180 a week** in fees. He also receives additional payments for holidays, birthdays, Christmas and mileage.

Anyone can be a foster carer - we need carers as diverse as the children in our care. It doesn't matter where you're from, who you love, or whether you have children of your own – what matters is that you want to make a difference. You just need to be over 21 (there's no upper age limit) with a spare room in your home.

You're not committing to anything by finding out more, and due to the ongoing pandemic, we're mostly using online platforms and video calls to deliver training and chat to any potential new foster carers.

To find out more, or to register your interest, contact Fostering In Somerset on **0800 587 9900** or visit **www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk**

SECURELY SHARING YOUR HEALTH

Making the right information available to the right people at the right time

A new service called SIDeR (Somerset Integrated Digital electronic Record) has now been launched across Somerset, which allows GP practices, acute and community hospitals, community health services, mental health, social care teams and St Margaret's Hospice to securely view your health and care information electronically.

This new technology links up all the main health and care IT systems that the above organisations use to record and securely store your information, so that medical and care staff can view your recent information to help them deliver better and safer care for you. For example, they will be able to see what medications you are taking, what allergies you have and what appointments you have had recently. If you have an end of life care plan in place, they will also be able to see this to understand what your exact needs are. Without SIDeR, this information is often unavailable or unknown to care professionals working in different parts of the local NHS, health and care community.



SIDeR contains information like...



Your questions answered

Dr Justin Harrington, General Practitioner (GP)
Associate Clinical Director and Chief Clinical Information Officer for NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group.



Justin has worked in Somerset for 30 years as a GP. He has also works for the NHS Somerset CCG and is the Clinical Lead for the SIDeR Programme.



Why do you want to share my health and care records?



By bringing digital information together in one place, we can improve the quality of care for everyone in Somerset. Care professionals will have information they need, easily available, so they can make the right decision more quickly, and won't need to worry you at a potentially stressful time to give them details of your care history.



Doesn't everyone involved in my health and care already have access to my information?



You may be surprised, but the answer is no. Individual organisations only keep a record about the care they have provided you. For example, everyone who is registered at a GP surgery will have a record kept at that practice. **If you attend a hospital, they will create their own record about you and the same will happen for adults and children's services within local authorities, as well as in St Margaret's Hospice.** SIDeR connects all these electronic records together, on demand, to provide a fuller picture of your health and care history.

AND CARE INFORMATION



How has having access to SIDeR helped you as a GP?



Social care is just as important as our health services to keep people with long-term conditions living at home. As a GP, SIDeR means that I will be able to see the person's social care record, including any packages of care being provided. **Also, I will be able to see who else is involved in their care and how to contact them which, until now, has not easily been available.**



How does SIDeR work?



It brings your information together when it is needed from Somerset hospitals, your GP practice, mental health and community services, social services and hospices.



How do I know my record is secure?



By law, everyone working in, or for, the NHS, hospices and adult and children's social care must respect your privacy and keep your information safe. **SIDeR is very secure and data protection is taken very seriously.** We will make sure that your record is only viewed by staff that need to see it to support your direct care.



CONTACT

 @SomersetCCGIMT

Keep up to date with SIDeR by Somerset CCG Digital Team on social media.

SIDeR

SIDeR soft launched in November 2020 and further improvements and updates will continue to be added in 2021. If you have any questions about SIDeR, please email the Digital Team at somccg.digitalteam@nhs.net or phone the NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **0800 085 1067**.



Do you need my consent to share my record for SIDeR?



No, we don't. GDPR and data protection legislation means that we do not need to ask your consent. However, if you do not want your health and care information to be shared (for the reasons we have outlined) you can discuss opting out by contacting each organisation individually.



I live in Somerset but am registered with a GP outside the county, am I included?



Unfortunately not. If you're registered with a GP outside of Somerset, SIDeR will not include this information. If you have used other health and / or social care services in Somerset this information will be visible on SIDeR.



What happens if I live in Somerset but receive treatment at hospitals in Dorchester, Bath or Weston?



We are working with the **hospitals outside of Somerset** to find a way for them to see and share information into SIDeR in the future.



Is my data stored by SIDeR?



No it isn't – once viewed, **this virtual record disappears** and only an audit trail showing who accessed your health and care records remains in SIDeR.



The developments discussed here are part of Fit for my Future, Somerset's integrated health and care strategy. Improving the digital maturity in Somerset has always been a key part of that strategy and your recent feedback has shown that you also consider this a priority. We will continue to keep you updated with our progress.

Discovering Somerset

Lockdown hasn't quite managed to shut everything down, thankfully Somerset's public Rights of Way network has remained open for everyone to enjoy.

Now, more than ever, it's really important that we all get a regular dose of nature, while staying, of course, within government guidelines. Getting outdoors and getting a bit of exposure to the natural world provides a wide range of health benefits, including improved physical fitness, feelings of wellbeing and reduced levels of stress.

Did you know our beautiful county has over **9,000** Rights of Way, totalling **3,842 miles (6,184km)**?

This varied extensive path network offers a number of long-distance routes, such as the South West Coast Path and the River Parrett Trail, as well as a large number of promoted circular routes and local country paths.

So how do find out more about route near you?

Check out this website at roam.somerset.gov.uk/roam/map where you can view the entire public Rights of Way network in Somerset. You might be surprised to discover new routes you never knew were there, right on your doorstep.

Following the Countryside Code

Of course, while out and about, it's important to remember to follow not only the social distancing guidelines, but the Countryside Code as well. So please

- ✓ Keep to the paths – with more people using the network, combined with the wet weather some paths are a bit muddier than they might normally be, so please wear the right footwear and keep to the line of the path so you can avoid the farmers' precious crops.
- ✓ Keep your distance from landowners and their livestock (no matter how much you'd like to pet the animals!)
- ✓ Keep your dogs on a lead - if you have a dog with you, please keep it under close control (on a short lead or at heel) – we don't want to spook the sheep in the lambing season.

Volunteering

Why not improve your wellbeing and make a difference to local communities by volunteering with our Rights of Way Team? It's a great way to be active, connect with other people (while following strict social distancing), learn new skills and gain all the benefits of immersing yourself in our glorious Somerset landscapes. To find out more visit volunteering.somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Libraries: "THE FIFTH EMERGENCY SERVICE"

This is how one grateful customer described one of Somerset's libraries after being able to collect a selection of books using the Library Choice service.



Throughout the pandemic, our library service has kept limited services running from all the larger libraries. From Monday 12 April almost all Somerset libraries should be open again where customers can browse the shelves and use the People's Network computers. Covid safety procedures will remain in place for the safety of staff and customers.

Library Choice

Although browsing hasn't been possible, you can still request up to ten books, DVDs or audiobooks hand-picked by a member of staff based on your favourite genres or authors. All you need to do is fill out a request form online, or in person at the library, and our team will be in touch. Or, if you wish to borrow a particular title, you can use the reservation system at librarieswest.org.uk



Check out our online services

You can still join and use all the Library's online services, where you'll have access to a huge range of online content, 1,000's of downloadable books, audiobooks, magazines, newspapers and comics – all free of charge! You can also get access to regular online events, activities and updates on our website at www.somersetlibraries.co.uk or through our social media pages.



Job hunting?

Borrow one of our iPads

If you searching for a new job or looking to develop new skills for employment you can borrow an internet-ready tablet from Bridgwater, Taunton, Minehead or Shepton Mallet libraries, free of charge for up to six weeks – the iPads are pre-loaded with links, information, how-to videos and other support. Just visit www.glassboxtaunton.co.uk/ipad for more information.



Facebook: [Somerset Libraries UK](https://www.facebook.com/SomersetLibrariesUK)



twitter: [@SomersetLib](https://twitter.com/SomersetLib)



Instagram: [Somerset Libraries](https://www.instagram.com/SomersetLibraries)

www.somersetlibraries.co.uk

Look out in the next edition for some ideas for walks to get you exploring Somerset.

Job opportunities in the NHS and social care

This year has been a truly devastating year for so many, especially with the risk of redundancy and job losses. Equally, the impact on our hospitals, care homes and for those needing care in the community has been enormous.

We urgently need to recruit more people – could this be you?

A time to adapt

More and more people are taking up jobs in health and social care. These roles are not only rewarding, they offer good job security in a time of economic uncertainty, where you can truly make a difference in people's lives.

Career progression

In Somerset, the average salary in health and care is around £9.43 an hour. When you get into more responsible roles, your salary can range from on average £20,000 to £28,000 per year. You could go further still if you wanted to, moving into either social work (£30,451 - £34,728), a care home registered manager (average salary £30,406) or nursing (£24,907 - £37,890). There are excellent training packages available and many ways to progress in your career.

What could you bring?

You probably already have some transferable skills - you might be great at communicating, have excellent listening skills or have a creative side. You might be good at managing budgets, have IT or customer service skills – all things you can bring to the role. But having empathy and compassion and being able to work with others to support patients and residents are the most important qualities you need - not necessarily qualifications or work experience.

How to get started

Prepare to Care with Bridgwater & Taunton College gives you the opportunity to learn about health and care before applying, where you can achieve a qualification to prepare you in the best possible way. The course comes with no cost to you, and no risk if you discover this isn't quite the role for you.

To find out more about job opportunities in Somerset, visit Proudtocaresomerset.org.uk and Jobs.nhs.uk

Support for carers

Did you know we have around 50,000 unpaid carers in Somerset?

Being a carer is very rewarding, but can be challenging and tough at the best of times, made far more difficult by the coronavirus pandemic. Lots of carers have been cut off from their usual social networks and activities, and as a result, some may be feeling very isolated and lonely. Now, more than ever before, it's so important that carers get the help they need.

But who cares for the carers? We do!

Do you need support?

If you're over 18 and look after someone in an unpaid caring capacity, you can receive free support from Somerset Carers. You could be looking after a loved one, friend, partner, parent or child (it doesn't matter if they are under or over 18) on a regular or irregular basis. Somerset Carers service offers free support and information for carers just like you.

Visit somersetcarers.org

Phone **0800 3168600**

Or text 'Carer' to **87070**

The course comes with no cost to you



Proud to Care
SOMERSET



Step Up Somerset for employment support

Get support online at www.stepupsomerset.org.uk

We understand that this is a worrying time for everyone, with an unstable job market and uncertainty around the future. But it's more important than ever to make sure you get the right advice.

Step Up Somerset is a one stop shop for people looking for support and information about job hunting, new work skills, retraining and apprenticeships in Somerset.

Whether you are looking for work, worried about money or thinking about changing career and need advice, let us signpost you to all the help available locally and nationally.

Redundancy and Employment Support

Are you facing redundancy, or been recently been made redundant, and not sure what to do next? Being made redundant can be very stressful, but it can also offer new opportunities, like the chance to retrain or work for yourself. If you need help navigating your way through the redundancy process, there is lots of free advice



and guidance available on our website at www.stepupsomerset.org.uk or by phoning **0300 790 6275**.

Develop your skills

Whether you're looking to learn new skills to increase your employment opportunities or need to develop or update skills in your existing role, it's all on the website too.

Visit www.stepupsomerset.org.uk today to find your next opportunity in Somerset. If you don't have access to the internet, face-to-face help will be available in your local area soon. In hubs around the county.



HK



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Concessionary bus passes – apply online



Good news! You can now apply or renew your age or disability bus pass online. All you need to do is visit www.somerset.gov.uk/concessionary-bus-passes to sign up for an account and follow the instructions. If you need to renew your existing pass, just select the renewal code look up option on the website, where you will also find your renewal code.

Due coronavirus restrictions, all supporting evidence can be easily uploaded electronically to our online system, which means quicker turnaround times and no need to post us your documents.

If you need any more information, please visit www.somerset.gov.uk/concessionary-bus-passes or phone 0300 123 224.

School Term Dates

2020/21

Term 4:	22 February - 1 April 2021
Term 5:	19 April - 28 May 2021
Term 6:	7 June - 23 July 2021

2021/22

Term 1:	6 September to 22 October 2021
Term 2:	1 November to 17 December 2021
Term 3:	4 January to 18 February 2022
Term 4:	28 February to 8 April 2022
Term 5:	25 April to 27 May 2022
Term 6:	6 June to 26 July 2022

For all the latest school term dates and holidays, visit www.somerset.gov.uk/schooltermdates

Please note: These are the term dates and holidays for community and voluntary controlled schools. Academies, free schools, foundation schools and voluntary-aided schools have the freedom to set their own term dates.



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01749 880948



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We carefully balance our residents' well-being with their safety. Our team of well-trained staff will provide expert care with rigorous infection control and award-winning health and safety standards.

We're here to help you or your loved one, call to book an appointment to visit our Marketing Suite:

Call: 01749 302 056

In-person visits may be permitted in line with government and public health guidance and all infection control protocols must be followed

Crandon Springs Care Home, Glastonbury Road, Wells, BA5 1WE

www.barchester.com/CrandonSprings



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