

Somerset NHS asks people to use the right health service for their needs



The NHS in Somerset is currently experiencing a high demand across all healthcare services including GPs, hospitals, A&E, community health services, mental health services, social care, and ambulance services. In response, Somerset's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has launched the [Choose Well](#) campaign. They are asking people to use the right service for their needs, including local pharmacies and Minor Injury Units, to allow other busy services, such as A&E, to concentrate on helping those most in need.

If you have been affected by the high demand for services in Somerset, [get in touch](#) and tell us about your experience.

Working together to support unpaid carers in Somerset

It was wonderful to be part of the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Community Connect event in Bridgwater this month. The focus on unpaid carers created some strong connections between organisations working to provide support.



There were presentations from Somerset County Council and CCS Carers Service, among others, and everyone was advocating being Carer Aware. After over a year of digital meetings it was fantastic to see everyone in person and talk to people who are passionate about supporting unpaid carers.

If you are an unpaid carer, or you know someone who is, we would love to hear your story and your feedback about the health and care services you use: [Your views and experiences - Healthwatch Somerset](#)

Volunteer: Somerset NHS research to help predict liver disease

A new NHS funded research project is being designed and delivered in Somerset to investigate how to identify patients at risk of liver disease by analysing the results from their previous blood tests. The project, which has been awarded £1.4m by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), is being delivered by a new partnership which includes Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and local liver specialist Dr Tim Jobson. It is anticipated that the project has the potential to prevent thousands of premature deaths and reduce what the NHS spends on treating liver disease (£6bn annually). [Find out more.](#)



If you would like to volunteer to help design public communications for the project, and you are not currently an active patient, email mark@markwall.co.uk to find out about a workshop taking place on **4 November** in Taunton.

Consultation: NICE guidelines on health and care for people experiencing homelessness

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is consulting on draft guidelines around providing integrated health and care for people who are experiencing homelessness. The key areas covered are access and engagement, joining up health and social care, and views and experiences. [Find out more and have your say](#) by **Monday 2 November**.





Feedback about the South Western Ambulance Service

A new NHS patient participation panel is seeking public feedback about the South Western Ambulance Service. The first event will take place virtually on **12 November 2021**, 10am – 11am. If you would like to attend [find out more and register your attendance](#).

Somerset Village and Community Agents want your feedback

The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) is seeking feedback from people who have been supported by their Village and Community Agents, to see if there is anything they can do to improve the service they provide. Complete or share their online survey: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CCSClients. Find out more about [Somerset Village and Community Agents](#).



Thanks for sharing your experiences of using NHS 111



Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their views on the NHS 111 service in Somerset and Devon. We are analysing the findings which we will report to NHS 111 and the Care Quality Commission to help make sure the service provides people with safe, effective, compassionate, and high-quality care. We will also present our findings to Devon Doctors who are the lead provider for urgent care in the region, including NHS 111.

We will publish the report in the new year and let you know about the changes that come from the feedback you shared. [Find out our projects.](#)

NHS England plan to improve GP access informed by national Healthwatch insight

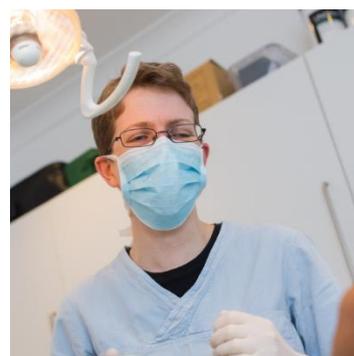


NHS England has published a plan for [improving access to GP appointments](#) for patients alongside supporting GPs and their teams. The NHS has acknowledged that the insight provided by Healthwatch helped them to recognise there was a problem around GP access. Thank you to everyone who shared feedback with us which we shared with Healthwatch England to inform their report on [GP access](#) earlier in the year.

We will conducting further engagement work around access to Primary Care in 2022. [Find out more and read our previous reports on access to GP care.](#)

Healthwatch calls for NHS dentistry recovery plan

Healthwatch England has joined the British Dental Association in calling for a recovery plan for NHS dentistry. In an open letter to the Chancellor, they have called for investment to underpin the recovery and the promised reform of NHS dentistry, highlighting the impact on patient care of a decade of cuts and over 30 million lost appointments since the first lockdown. [Read more from Healthwatch England.](#)



Over the course of the pandemic, Healthwatch Somerset and Healthwatch from across England heard from patients unable to find dental care, and we have shared this feedback locally and nationally. [Get in touch and share your feedback](#) about dental care in Somerset.



Share your feedback

[Get in touch](#) to share your feedback and help make health and social care better for you and your community.



Share our news

If you know someone who would be interested in keeping up to date with our news or getting involved with our work, please share this bulletin and [sign-up link](#).

Speak up and help make health and social care better for you and your community

Healthwatch Somerset is the county's health and social care champion. We are an independent statutory body with the power to make sure NHS leaders and other health and social care decision makers listen to public feedback and use this to improve standards of care. Healthwatch Somerset covers the geographical area of Somerset County Council, which includes the districts of Mendip, Sedgemoor, South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton.



The **Healthwatch Somerset** service is run by Evolving Communities CIC, a community interest company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales with company number 08464602. The registered office is at Unit 2 Hampton Park West, Melksham, SN12 6LH.



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