



**SOMERSET**  
County Council



**Somerset**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

# Community adult mental health briefing paper for the Somerset Health and Well Being Board



The Balsam Centre 



Chard WATCH CIC  
Working All Together In Chard

**SECOND  
STEP**  
PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH FIRST



**SPARK  
SOMERSET**  
INSPIRING COMMUNITIES



**NHS**  
Somerset  
NHS Foundation Trust

 outstanding care  
listening and leading  
working together

**sasp**  
Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership

**September 2021**

## Introduction

This paper provides an update on the mental health support for adults provided in Somerset and how they have been transformed over the past two years – especially the adult community provision.

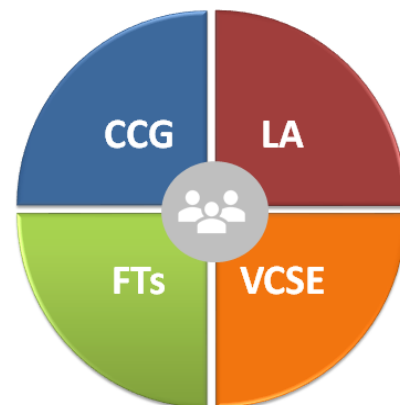
Although this document provides an overview of the key elements of this transformation, the actual presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board, on the 27<sup>th</sup> September, will take a different format as we seek to model our new ways of working. As a mental health system we wish to move away from transactional ways of working and place those who access support at the centre of all we do – hence we will co-produce the presentation in the same way we have co-produced our mental health services over the past two years.

As statutory bodies, (i.e., the NHS and the Local Authority), we seek to present the nationally recognised transformation in the support that we now deliver by giving our non-statutory partners (i.e., Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) providers) and those with lived experiences the recognition that they deserve too.

## Somerset's Mental Health Governance Structure

Early in 2020, partly due to the securing of NHS England and NHS Improvement's (NHSE/I) transformation funding and partly due to the pandemic, the governance arrangements for Somerset's mental health system were reviewed and redesigned. Consistent with the commitment to collaboration and co-production the *Mental Health, Autism and Learning Disabilities Strategic Cell* was established with membership drawn from key leaders across the system. The Strategic Cell meets weekly and is composed of:

- Somerset CCG – The Mental Health, Autism, and Learning Disabilities Commissioning Team, (Andrew Keefe)
- Somerset County Council – adult social care (Tim Baverstock)
- Somerset County Council – Public Health (Matthew Hibbert)
- Somerset NHS Foundation Trust (SFT) – Mental Health and Learning Disabilities (Jane Yeandle)
- Spark Somerset – VCSE infrastructure support (Katherine Nolan)
- Open Mental Health – VCSE Mental Health Alliance (Beccy Wardle)



The whole approach, as represented in the graphic above, places people and those close to them at the centre of all we do. The ethos of the Strategic Cells is one of being agile and responsive, 'doing' not 'meeting', and based on strong, trusting relationships.

The four quadrants represent 'the DNA' of how we aim to work together, namely that no decisions are made unilaterally by any single agency – it functions as a whole. Commissioning plans and the prioritisation of investments, etc., are all shared and developed together whilst recognising the various statutory duties and corporate objectives that each agency must fulfil. VCSE partners are valued as much as statutory ones. This

DNA is then replicated throughout the system in terms of delivery at every level in a coproduced manner, and has formed the basis of the development of Open Mental Health.

## Context

During the summer of 2019 the Somerset mental health system bid for and was successful in securing additional NHSE/I investment (+£14m over three years) for the transformation of adult community mental health services. Somerset therefore became one of 12 'Trailblazer' sites across the nation to develop and test new models of support prior to the national roll out of transformation of mental health support aligned to the NHS Long Term Plan.

As a system we were already collaborating on a new model and this additional funding accelerated both our thinking and plans.

The original requirement of the funding was to develop a new way of providing support that was more accessible and effective. Essentially the ask was to deliver support as we would envision it to be in 10 years' time, but do it now, and to break down the barriers between:

- Primary case vs secondary care
- Mental health vs physical health
- Health care vs social care
- Statutory vs non-statutory
- Clinical vs non-clinical
- Commissioning vs provision

Somerset's approach was to collaborate in a manner never done before. Rather than a traditional route of contracting with providers based on a prescriptive service specification we used an Innovation Partnership contracting route, i.e., we invited partners to join with us in co-designing what future services would be like. Ultimately the result was the creation of Open Mental Health, an alliance of VCSE partners, detail below, working in partnership with Somerset Foundation Trust, Somerset County Council, and Somerset CCG. Indeed, coproduction is a core value, and we have continued to use this approach when developing our vision, subsequent model and new services.

## Open Mental Health

Open Mental Health is network of local VCSE organisations and the NHS mental health provider based in Somerset. It is a collaborative partnership to ensure that residents of Somerset get the mental health and emotional wellbeing support they need, when they need it.

Open Mental Health's shared ambition is to ensure that people living with mental health needs get the right support at the right time. Working together, Open Mental Health supports people to live full lives, by enabling access to specialist mental health services, housing support, debt and employment advice, volunteering opportunities, community activities and physical exercise, to help support and improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

Open Mental Health VCSE alliance are a group of 11 VCSE organisations, who are collectively working in partnership with Somerset NHS Foundation Trust. The VCSE partners have roles as follows:

- Age UK (associate member – older people's specialism)

- The Balsam Centre (core member – South Somerset locality lead)
- Chard Watch (core member – peer support specialism)
- Citizens Advice (core member – wider determinants specialism)
- Mind in Somerset (core member – West Somerset and Taunton locality lead and activity and group work specialism)
- Rethink Mental Illness (core member - Accountable Lead Organisation)
- Second Step (core member – Sedgemoor locality lead and trauma informed specialism)
- Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) (network member – physical activity specialism)
- Somerset and Wessex Eating Disorders Association (SWEDA) (core member – Mendip locality lead and eating disorder specialism)
- Spark (core member – alliance chair and volunteering specialism)
- Young Somerset (associate member – young people’s specialism)

## The Open Mental Health model

The key principles of the model are as follows:

- **Preventative engagement**, meeting people’s needs before they grow
- **Open access**, no wrong door, no shut door, or no door at all
- **Co-produced** including VCSE partners, statutory agencies, and Experts by Experience
- **Inclusive**, no one is left out because of, or in the absence of, a diagnosis, or presenting severity. No-one should ever hear “we can’t help you because you don’t meet the criteria”
- **Warm introductions** in, across and between services, not ‘referrals’, ‘transfers’ or ‘hand offs’
- **Trauma informed** approach across all partners
- **Flexible and responsive** to the needs of the individual, with an outcome focussed approach, moving away from transactional interactions
- **Whole system** approach and working. The NHS and VCSE are equal partners where elements of the services are combined as one team, not separate, with strong links with social care
- **Building on community assets**, to support people connect to their community and build resilience across the County
- **Meeting the needs of previously underserved communities:** creating an ecosystem to support communities of identity and/or communities that have previously been underserved, with the innovation pot central to this approach.

Open Mental Health has removed the barriers to getting mental health treatment and support. Anyone can contact the Open Mental Health hub for an assessment of what could help and what the person needs. Whether it is for themselves, for a loved one or if the request comes from a GP, pharmacist, social worker, police officer or concerned friend.



People can access Open Mental Health via a range of means but the most effective ways are via:

- Via 24/7 Mindline Helpline - 01823 276892 / 0800 138 1692
- Via [support@openmentalhealth.org.uk](mailto:support@openmentalhealth.org.uk)
- Via a GP transfer (could be GP directly or MH liaison nurse)
- Via any team member at a locality hub
- Via any network partner.

Everyone who contacts Open Mental Health will be contacted within 4 working days – often sooner.

### Wider Open Mental Health initiatives

In addition to the formal Open Mental Health Alliance and the NHS Transformation funding, there have been significant other initiatives in relation to the provision of mental health support in Somerset. As part of our commitment to continuous service improvement initiatives we have established the following:

- Crisis Safe Spaces: four across the county delivered by Mind or Second Step for individuals who need immediate and short term crisis prevention and do not require more intensive care from either an emergency or inpatient service
- Men's Mental Health Project [Stepladder](#): provided by Second Step and part of the NHSE Suicide Prevention Transformation Funding in conjunction with Somerset Public Health
- New and innovative peer support project focussing on suicide prevention: involving the development of a comprehensive peer support worker training programme aligned with Health Education England core competencies for peer support workers

- Family Safeguarding model: integrating Open Mental Health with children's social work teams across the county.
- Next Steps service: a new VCSE-led service for people leaving hospital, delivered in partnership between Mind in Somerset, Second Step and Citizens Advice.
- [The Somerset Recovery College](#): a learning community of courses / activities (both face to face and on line); which any adult in Somerset can access and enrol on
- VCSE peer mentoring project developed: working alongside Somerset Foundation Trust assistant practitioners to increase uptake of physical health checks for people with serious mental illness
- Open Mental Health Clic: peer to peer online platform (<https://opensomerset.clic-uk.org/forums/>).

### Impact of the pandemic on Mental Health services

We are proud that all our mental health services continued to operate throughout the pandemic, both those provided by Somerset Foundation Trust and those provided by our VCSE partners. However, we did see some changes in need and service access in Somerset as a consequence of COVID:

- Increased psychological distress, anxiety and depressive symptoms
- A decrease in people accessing some services, for example a reduction in self-referrals psychological therapies
- An increase in complexity/acuity for those patients accessing services
- An increase in demand for eating disorder services and crisis services.

With the Open Mental Health transformation programme recently launched, Somerset was well placed to respond to the pandemic in terms of the increased overall capacity as well as the wide array of services available. However, we also responded directly to the changing needs arising from the pandemic: we changed our delivery methods to keep service users and staff safe; we expanded some existing services; and we established some new services. These changes include:

- Roll out of Attend Anywhere: a digital platform to enable online appointments in a safe, effective and efficient manner – whilst enhancing social distancing.
- Extension of the operational hours of the [Somerset Mindline](#) so it operates 24/7 and can respond to callers of all ages
- Introduction of the Spring Beds: 11 step up/step down beds in the County ( in Wells, 7 in Yeovil) to avoid admissions and or accelerate discharges from acute mental health wards
- Development and launch of a suite of resources for health and care staff across the county ([Somerset Emotional Wellbeing – Somerset Emotional Wellbeing Staff Hub](#)).

We also worked with our partners in Public Health to establish a programme of work to mitigate the negative mental health effects of the pandemic on the population as a whole. We particularly focused on those groups worst affected either by the virus itself, their experience of lockdown or the related economic impact. Initiatives included:


- Commissioning additional Bereavement Support Services and resources

- Increased investment in Citizen Advice Somerset online services, including Young CA service
- Provision of a series of emotional health and wellbeing resources for the public, distributed widely through statutory and voluntary organisations
- Development of wellbeing resources for Step Up Somerset aimed at employers, employees and people made redundant
- Establishment of the COVID champion and buddy service
- Delivery of mental health online training e.g. Connect 5
- BBC Somerset Wellbeing Wednesday slot for 18 months
- Developed series of campaigns to promote emotional health and wellbeing such as Every Mind Matters, Men's Health Week, World Mental Health Day, Nature and Wellbeing.

## Timeline of investments

Approx Date	Activity	Comment	Investment
Sep 19	NHSE/I Trailblazer status given to Somerset	The only locality in the Southwest to attract Transformation funding from NHSE/I - two years ahead of the rest of the Country	£4m per year (£1m into VCSE)
Oct 19- Jan 20	Procurement for the Transformation bid commenced		
Dec/Jan 19/20	Open Mental Health Alliance awarded the VCSE contract		
Jan 20	1st Covid case in UK	Preparations for responding to COVID commenced	
Jan 20	Public Consultation on Community MH Provision and relocation of St Andrew's (Jan-Apr)	The relocation of some inpatient beds is entirely consistent with our expanded community MH model	
Mar 20	1st UK lock down	No mental health services stood down	
Apr 20	Additional investment confirmed from NHS England and Improvement	Including growth in crisis services, community mental health services and perinatal	£6m
Apr 20	Mindline 24/7	All age service, established in 8 days	£1m per annum
May 20	Somerset Emotional Wellbeing Podcasts launched	<a href="https://www.castos.com/">The Somerset Emotional Wellbeing Podcast (castos.com)</a> ; 10k listens to date	£8k
Jun 20	Spring Beds (step up/down)	11 step up/step down beds in the County ( in Wells, 7 in Yeovil) to avoid admissions and or accelerate discharges from acute mental health wards	£762k
Jul 20	IAPT moves to 'see and treat model'	Significantly and sustainably reducing waiting times	
Aug 20	Family Safeguarding introduced	Bringing the Open Mental Health model in to children's social work teams, providing mental health support to the parents of children classed as 'at risk' or 'in need'	£493k per annum
Sep 20	Crisis safe space	Funding from NHSE/I, with two sites provided by Mind and two sites provided by Second Step for "core hours"	£165k
Oct 20	Grant fund launched	Managed by Open MH - small grant to support micro providers. So far, a total of £188k has been distributed to 40 small VCSE providers	
Nov 20	Somerset Recovery College Launched	<a href="#">About the Somerset Recovery College</a>	
Dec 20	Winter pressures and discharge support	Spent on crisis safe space expansion, the development of a	£590k



Approx Date	Activity	Comment	Investment
	funding made available from NHS England and NHS Improvement	person centred needs fund and dedicated housing support as part of an enhanced discharge support offer ("Next Steps")	
Jan 21	Open Mental Health Clic – peer to peer online platform goes live	<a href="https://opensomerset.clic-uk.org/forums/">https://opensomerset.clic-uk.org/forums/</a>	
Feb 21	All four crisis safe spaces opened with extended hours	Two thirds of attendees would have gone to A&E if this service had not been available	£197k
Apr 21	Mental Health investment for 2021/22 agreed	Includes a share of the non-recurrent funding for COVID recovery	£11m (including £2,660k from the COVID recovery pot)
Apr 21	Peer support worker programme for physical health checks launched	To provide complementary peer support to increase the uptake of physical health checks for people with serious mental illness	£39k
May 21	Resilience Hub Launched	Emotional Wellbeing and Mental health support for the whole health and social care workforce (including VCSE & volunteers) including a staff helpline and a suite of resources: <a href="#">Somerset Emotional Wellbeing – Somerset Emotional Wellbeing Staff Hub</a>	£160k
Jun 21- Apr 22	Wellbeing Service	Transition of SCC Wellbeing service to integrate with Open Mental Health	£400k
Jul 21	Stepladder - Men's Suicide Prevention support launched	Provided by Second Step, with dedicated men's worker working with communities, groups and individuals	£60k
July 21	Open Mental Health phase 1 evaluation complete	 cycle 1 presentation to share with EbE.ppt	£100k

Approx Date	Activity	Comment	Investment
Aug 21	Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) awarded to Open Mental health	Public Health COMF funding to bolster and invest in a population based emotional health and wellbeing programme to promote mental health and build back emotional resilience, together with additional support for the Post COVID Recovery Service The programme will be particularly aimed at groups worst affected by COVID through the virus itself, experience of lockdown or the impact of recession.	£550k
Sep 21	Presentation to the Health and Well Being Board		

## Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Somerset FT remain the clinical lead for all secondary care mental health provision in the County – all the work the Trust have done with their Open Mental Health partners is *in addition* to their core duties and functions. Nevertheless, the significant shift in emphasis to prevention, earlier intervention, collaboration, adoption of co-production and peer support workers, have all had a profound impact on the delivery of the Trust's services.

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust has now been shortlisted for the second year in the Mental Health Trust of the year category for the Health Service Journal Awards.

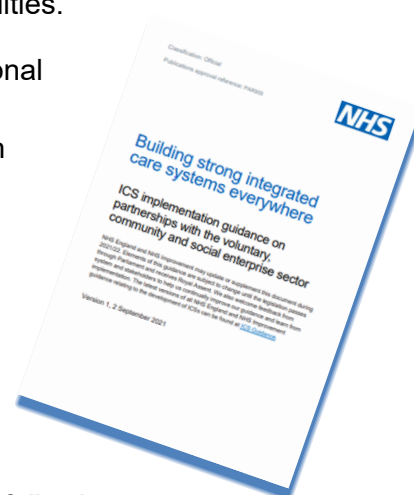
## Achievements, the current position

Today in Somerset there are:

- More people accessing support than previously:
  - 3,800 contacts on average per month seen by Open Mental Health (June 2021, the latest data, is 4,925 contacts)
  - 550 calls to Mindline per week on average
  - 350 appointments available per month at our crisis safe spaces
  - Capacity for 41 patients to be supported by our Next Steps service
  - 185 people being supported by our mental health employment support service
- Low waiting times for IAPT (psychological therapies) appointments and a recovery rate significantly higher than the national average
- No patients placed out of area, and SFT continues to be a national leader for its low levels of patients placed out of area
- 10 peer support workers within Open MH, with a further 5 in training and 4 recruited
- 4 Physical Health Support Workers working with people with mental illness to improve their physical wellbeing, supported by trained peer support workers
- No waiting time for care co-ordinators in the majority of localities.

Open Mental Health has also been nominated for a number of national awards (e.g., Health Service Journal) and has received significant national attention for its innovation and transformation of services in the County.

Somerset's Open Mental Health model has been cited in in the NHS's national guidance in the [Building strong Integrated Care Systems everywhere](#) document as an exemplar (see page 8).



## Next Steps

Our areas of focus and priorities for the next 12 months include the following:

- Bringing on board new partners to the alliance
- Specific work on improving access for underserved communities, starting with a focus on deep, broad community engagement led by people with lived experience of mental ill health

- Integration of service user records across the system via BlackPear
- Cycle 2 of the evaluation run by University of Plymouth, and will inform the national evaluation and subsequent roll out of the mental health transformation programme nationally
- Continued focus on suicide prevention across the county
- Rolling out training delivered by Experts by Experience on how best to engage with people with mental health need
- Development of an Open Mental Health website and associated communications campaign
- Safe transition of the Somerset County Council Wellbeing Service into Open Mental Health to further expand the reach and join up for people supported across health and care
- Development of the Public Health Wellbeing investment to further integrate the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental illness into the Open mental health offer.

### **September 2021**