



Somerset
Council

Adult Social Care

Annual Report (2022/23)

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In Somerset, we want people to live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities, with timely and easy access to high quality and efficient support when they need it.

Introduction

What is Adult Social Care and who provides it?

The scale of adult social care and support is vast, affecting the lives of over 10 million adults of all ages in England. People of all ages and with a diverse range of needs draw on care and support in different ways and at different stages of their life; some people will require support throughout their life whilst for others care needs will develop suddenly or gradually. Some people may only use social care for a short period (for example after a hospital stay). Care and support can cover a range of activities to promote people's wellbeing and support them to live independently, staying well and safe. It can include 'personal care' as well as wider personalised support to enable people to stay engaged in their communities and live their lives in the way they want.

Local authorities are responsible for assessing people's needs and, if individuals are eligible, funding their care. Our service in Somerset Council is made up of two functions: an operational service (made up of frontline social care teams) and an adult social care commissioning and quality service working to help shape our care market and provision that meets the needs of our local communities.

Most social care services are, however, delivered directly by independent care sector providers, which are mainly for-profit companies but also include some voluntary sector organisations. Many people will also have this care organised and purchased by their local authority, though many people with disabilities directly employ individuals ('personal assistants') to provide their care and support.

Key Adult Social Care Statutory Duties under The Care Act 2014 include:

- Provision of social care: including the assessment of individuals' and carers' needs, the provision of detailed care and support plans; a duty to meet the needs of someone assessed as eligible for care and support; financial assessments.
- Provision of preventative services and information/advice: reducing, preventing, delaying the need for care and support.
- Promotion of individual wellbeing.
- Promotion of integration between health and social care services including integrated commissioning.
- Safeguarding adults at risk and Safeguarding Adults Boards.
- Market shaping: quality, choice, sufficiency of provision; provider failure contingencies.

The current context

Social care is an essential part of the fabric of our society. At its best, it enables and transforms lives. It supports people to live the lives they want to lead, where they want to live them. There is enormous potential for social care to help people stay healthy, happy and independent through scaling up our preventative, person-centred, strengths-based approaches. This is what we hope to harness and achieve through our Adult Social Care activity and strategy, and the wider support of and contributions from Somerset Council services and our local Integrated Care System.

However, we recognise it remains a challenging time for local government. Years of austerity and growing demand has reduced the spending power and financial flexibility of all councils. The national cost-of-living crisis is hitting the council and partner organisations just as it is our residents. The cost of delivering services has dramatically increased due to rising energy costs, rising interest rates and increasing numbers of people who need our support.

Our council is legally required to balance the budget: there is no overdraft facility that we can use. In recent years Somerset's councils have built up financial reserves but we cannot spend these monies all at once and risk leaving the savings account empty when there will undoubtedly be new challenges ahead. This means that we are going to have to be incredibly careful with taxpayers' money. We will have less to spend as our challenges grow and at the same time the challenges our residents face daily also grow. This will require us to be more creative about the way we support people. We need to work with partners in a wide range of organisations with similar goals to look broadly at the ways we currently use our expertise and money to see if, in collaboration with our communities, we can do something better. We will challenge the ways that we have historically delivered services and listen carefully in order to understand what works for those who use our services and what doesn't.

The state of care nationally

The independent regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), produces an annual assessment of health care and adult social care. The latest national report¹, published in November 2022, highlighted the following trends:

- The health and social care system is gridlocked - this is clearly having a huge negative impact on people's experiences of care.
- People are struggling to access care - many people are still waiting for the health and social care support and treatment they need, and many are waiting too long.
- Inequalities pervade and persist across large parts of health and social care. It is vital that everyone, inclusively, has good quality care, and equal access, experience and outcomes from health and social care services.
- Depleted workforce - across all health and social care services, providers are struggling desperately to recruit and retain staff with the right skills and in the right numbers to meet the increasing needs of people in their care. Despite their efforts, in many cases providers are losing this battle, as staff are drawn to industries with higher pay and less stressful conditions.

¹ [State of Care - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications)

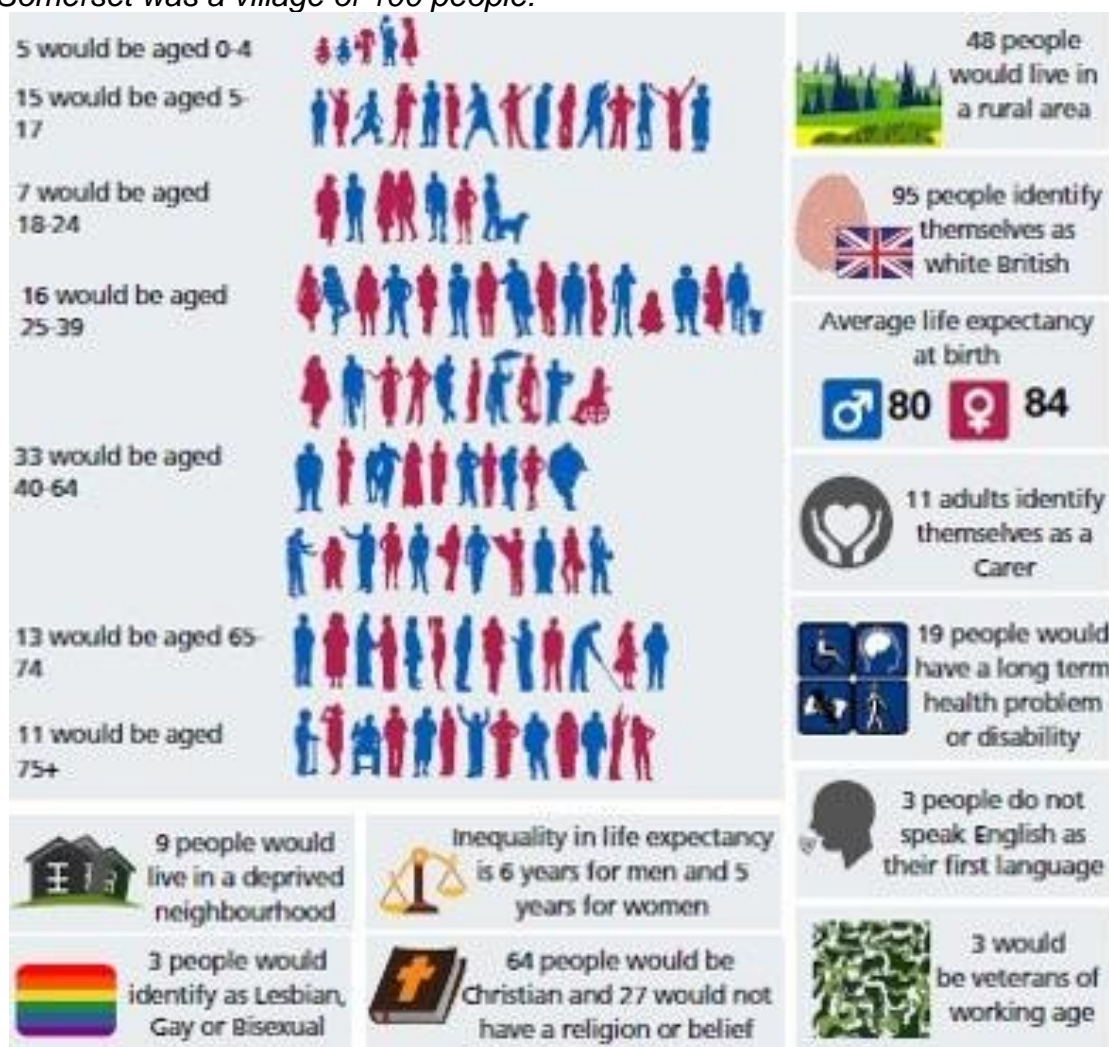
- Challenges and opportunities in local systems - understanding the health and care needs of local people is paramount for integrated care systems, as is the need to maintain and develop the required workforce.

Somerset - our place

Somerset has a resident population of 571,600. Our population is older than the national average. Over the next 25 years while the overall population will rise by 15%, we expect those over the age of 75 to double, resulting in a further significant rise in demand for health and care services. As our population changes, the support people need from our local services is also changing.

People are living longer, and more people are living with long-term conditions. As a result, the Local Authority and our partners need to work differently, providing more care in people's homes and local communities, and working more effectively in partnership.

If Somerset was a village of 100 people:



As a county, we benefit from:

- A new unitary authority (Somerset Council) *from April 2023*
- An Integrated Care Board (ICB), into which the functions of the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were transferred from July 2022
- A Health & Wellbeing Board (Somerset Board) which closely aligns with the Integrated Care Partnership
- A single NHS Foundation Trust providing integrated Community Health, Mental Health and Acute Hospital services at Musgrove Park in Taunton and Yeovil Hospital *from April 2023*
- 13 Primary Care Networks (PCNs) working over 12 neighbourhoods
- Strong relationships with good-quality local independent care providers and voluntary and community sector partners, and a thriving micro-provider market.

Performance and demand: Adult Social Care in numbers during 2022/23

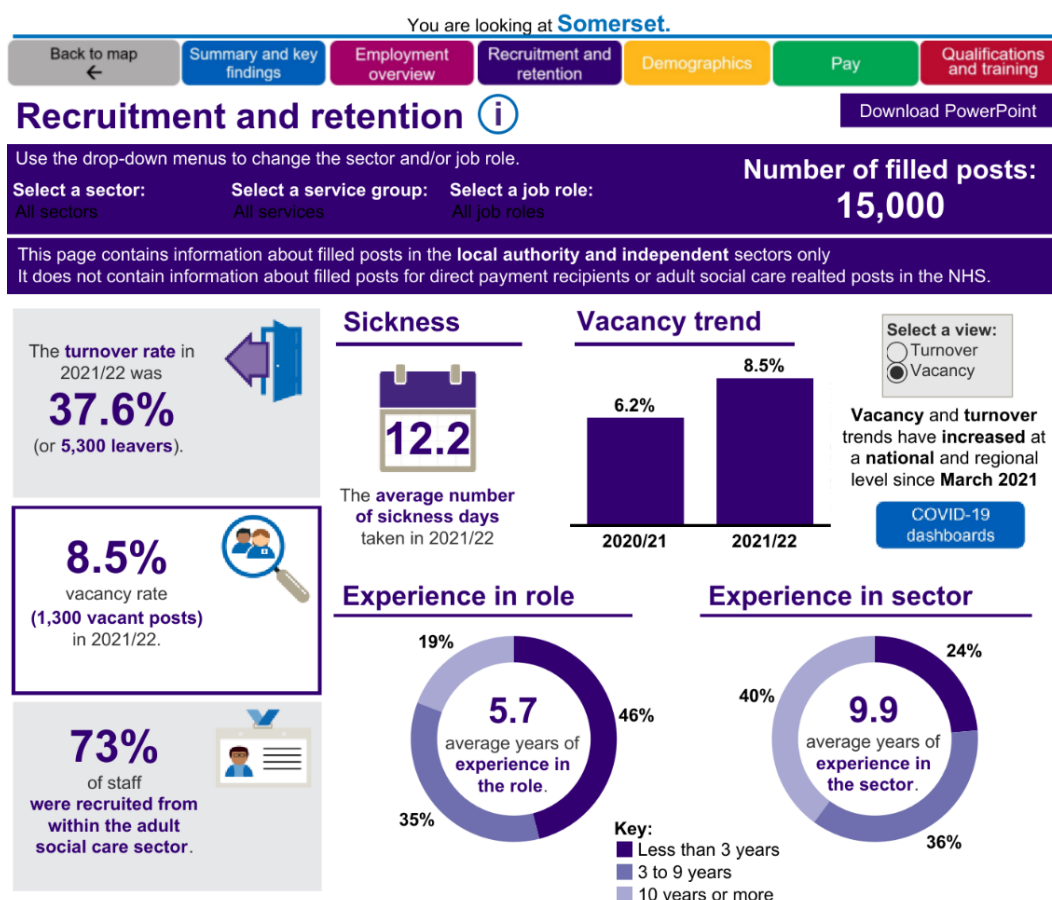
- We received an average 5,830 contacts per month via our call centre (Somerset Direct) for care and support related advice or activity. The overall resolution rate at first point of contact was 63.7%.
- We had over 6,897 open clients in receipt of a Local Authority Adult Social Care service.
- Our social care teams completed over 8,000 assessments and 6,250 reviews of individuals care and support needs.
- We undertook 738 Safeguarding Enquiries, reducing or removing the identified risk in 92% of cases.
- We supported over 92.7% of individuals aged 65 and over to be discharged back home from hospital each month - over 68,000 people.
- We sourced 21,511 hours' worth of home care provision for people assessed as requiring care and support at home.
- We received 216 independent submissions of stakeholder feedback, of which 179 (83%) rated the service received by our staff as 'Good' or 'Excellent'.
- 83.9% of Somerset's active (independent) residential care settings and 86.7% of active community-based adult social care settings were rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission as of end of March 2023.

Workforce and workforce planning

Achieving our vision is reliant on us having a supported, skilled, flexible *and* sustainable workforce. Nationally, the state of the adult social care workforce is a recognised challenge. As outlined in the Government's Policy Paper, 'People at the Heart of Care'², with over 1.65m jobs, the adult social care workforce is larger than the NHS, construction, transport, or food and drink service industries, with the number of jobs in the sector forecast to grow by almost one-third by 2035. As the population grows, and the way care is delivered evolves and diversifies, the workforce will need to grow and develop with it.

In October 2022, the independent regulator (the Care Quality Commission (CQC), published its annual assessment of the state of health care and adult social care³, highlighting the depleted workforce as a key concern. Across all health and social care providers, providers were found to be struggling to recruit and retain staff with the right skills and in the right numbers to meet the increasing needs of people within their care and respond to demographic changes and growing demand post-pandemic. Despite best efforts, the CQC found that many providers of adult social care were losing the battle as staff were being drawn to industries with higher pay and less stressful conditions.

Latest available Skills for Care data (2021/22)⁴ relating to Somerset reveals some of the scale of the challenge facing the sector locally:



² [People at the Heart of Care: adult social care reform - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/policy-papers/people-at-the-heart-of-care-adult-social-care-reform)

³ [State of Care 2021/22 - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](https://www.cqc.org.uk/public/state-of-care)

⁴ [My local area \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk)

Our own staff are hugely driven to make a difference and have a positive impact on people's lives. We launched our new 2022-24 ASC Workforce Strategy in July 2022 as a means of more formally setting out our ongoing activity commitments to support our internal workforce at a time of heightened demand and specific challenges relating primarily to the recruitment and retention of qualified social workers and occupational therapists. Our Workforce Strategy set out clearly our ambitions for the workforce over that two-year period, acknowledging and seeking to address the identified risks and key pressures facing us as well as identifying how we intend to recruit, retain, support, and develop our staff across both our operational and commissioning team functions.

Our Workforce Board convenes monthly and is attended by Service Directors, Strategic Managers and HR engagement partner colleagues. The Board routinely reviews progress against actions relating to each of the 10 themes/priorities within the Strategy (each one of which is owned by a senior lead); it also monitors workforce data, equality and diversity impacts, staff feedback and surveys, and practice audits. We have made some significant strides over the last 12 months, including progressing our international recruitment of social workers, assessing psychological safety across our functions, improving our supervision and appraisal offer, attracting more young people into our workforce via the Council's graduate scheme, and developing competency frameworks to support continuous professional development.

The Board will be undertaking an annual refresh of its Strategy in June 2023, assessing its achievements to date, and ensuring priorities for the next 12 months remain accurate and impactful based on current context and social care landscape. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of this annual review. The review work will be informed by recommendations arising from an independent audit of our Workforce Planning activity published in March 2023, which offered a 'reasonable' assurance rating and concluded that *"there is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place"*.

One of the key pieces of work currently being overseen by the Board is a re-structuring of our ASC operational teams. The restructure, founded on a detailed business case, is vital in helping us deliver our vision in partnership with local people and system partners, ensuring we deliver the right kind of strengths-based, person-centred care for our local communities, and the best possible outcomes within the resources available to us.

We need to ensure our operational (frontline) workforce is fit for the future to respond to our current and future service demands, enabling us to safely deliver our statutory duties in a timely and effective way. We want our workforce to be able to champion strengths-based practice and the continue benefits of community-led, asset-based

approaches so that people are supported to achieve the outcomes that matter to them. Our focus has been on implementing a structure that builds capacity in the right areas, ensures high standards of practice, and provides our staff with clearer opportunities for career progression and professional development. By doing this, we believe we will make Somerset Council an attractive place to work and develop a career in social care.

Our new Adult Social Care Strategy (2023-26) places a clear emphasis on the need to prioritise and invest our efforts in enabling a supported, skilled and flexible workforce. In addition to delivering our Workforce Strategy and underpinning action plan, we are committed to creating the right environment and conditions for robust and effective practice, supporting effective performance management, and re-structuring our operational teams as part of our ongoing integrated working with health partners at neighbourhood levels.

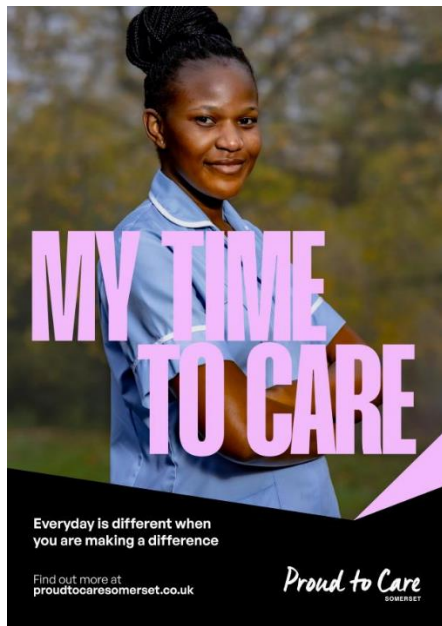
The Local Authority equally recognises the tremendous importance and value of our **independent care workforce**, which the wider health and care sector relies heavily upon. We are proud of our care sector here in Somerset with high levels of good or outstanding CQC-rated provision but recognise the considerable and growing pressures they are facing in recruitment, retention and sustaining their businesses financially. Workforce for the care home sector is a challenge with most struggling with recruitment and in extreme cases this has led to homes having to close whole wings of their property. This reduces the amount of capacity available in Somerset to support hospital discharge flow and people who need to move into a permanent placement. Providers can lose long term employees to acute hospitals due to the NHS ability to give higher salary uplifts, or offer better terms and conditions. The end of freedom of movement within the EU following Brexit has meant providers are now having to recruit internationally via Home Office sponsorships.

Our ICB People Board is committed to supporting the wider health and care workforce and is progressing plans for a Somerset Training Academy for Health and Social Care to help establish occupational parity of esteem. Additionally, our Proud to Care Somerset⁵ team works hard to support the wider workforce by raising the profile of the care sector and address recruitment challenges.

In January 2023, Somerset launched its bold new recruitment campaign, 'My Time to Care', which was shot entirely in the county and starred real local carers in six new, impactful videos⁶. The campaign emphasised how careers in care present an opportunity to 'break free from behind a desk' and embark in roles filled with meaningful human interaction and job satisfaction. Each video was specifically tailored to target different age groups that may be interested in a care career.

⁵ [Home | Proud to Care Somerset](#)

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbpaA5vdlqbUzDbelwkiNNeTteiqzyIYi>



We also report routinely on market sustainability and workforce pressures to the Government as part of wider national monitoring and response activity.

Adult Social Care Fees and Charges for 2023/24 were recently approved and published⁷, adjusted to take account of cost of living, market factors, national guidance and more. The fee settlement for care providers over the coming year represented a further significant investment into the sector by the Council, representing a permanent increase of between 8.8% and 12.8% for the financial year, and representing a total investment of £24.9m into the social care sector.

As our workforce evolves, so too will our collective support for it need to grow and adapt, including ensuring we have sufficient housing provision to meet changing needs and demographics.

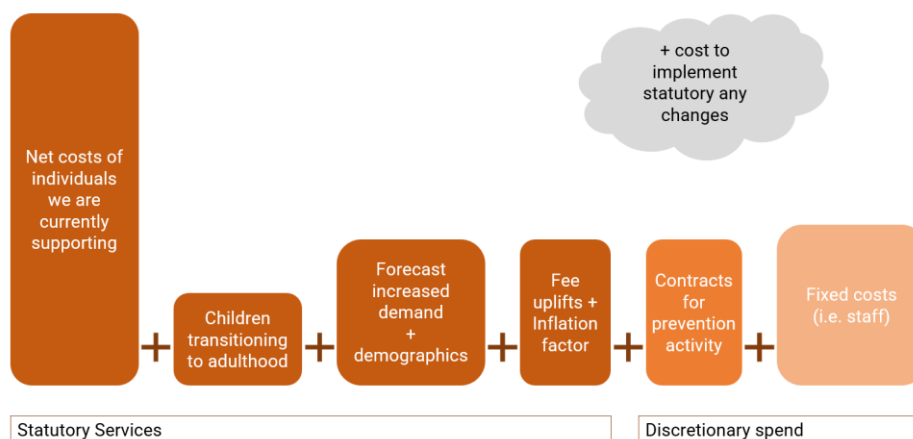
Social care is a keystone of communities, employing over 1.5m people in England and contributing £51.5 billion to the economy in 2020/21⁸. Recognising and investing in our workforce as our most important asset remains vital.

⁷ [Adult Social Care Fees and Charges](#)

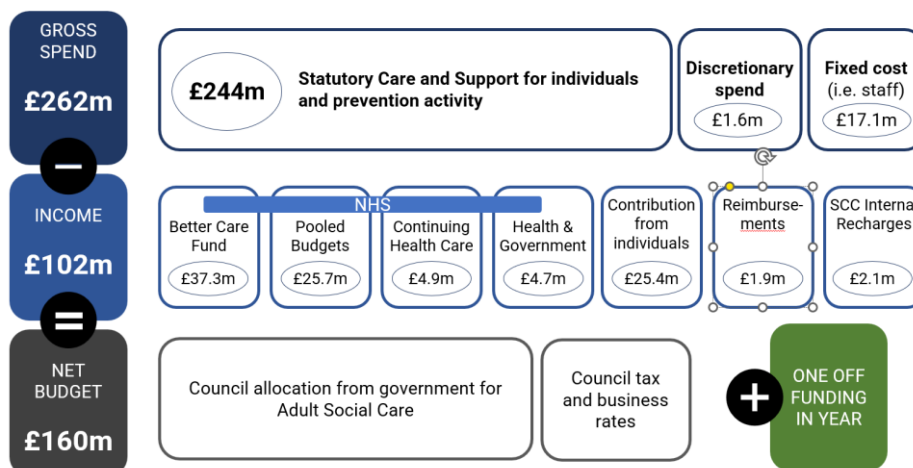
⁸ [The value of adult social care in England \(skillsforcare.org.uk\)](https://skillsforcare.org.uk)

Our budget and financial position

How do we set the budget each year?



The Adults Budget explained



Outturn 2022/23

Net budget of £160.1m
Overspend of £15.4m (9.6%)

- ASC:
 - Residential/Nursing – Demand for beds higher than budgeted.
 - Staffing Vacancies
 - Care Home Closures
- Mental Health:
 - High-cost placements
- Learning Disabilities:
 - Supported Living – market sustainability
 - Day Care – increased need to allow carer's break/respite

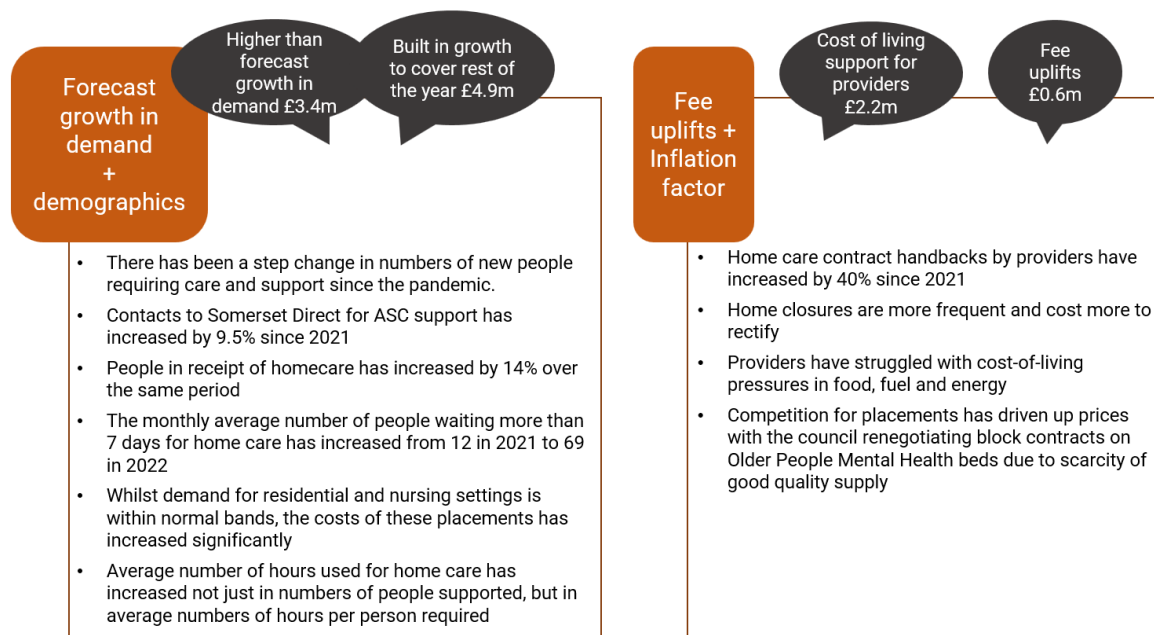
Further ongoing risks:

- Increase in demand
- Market Sustainability

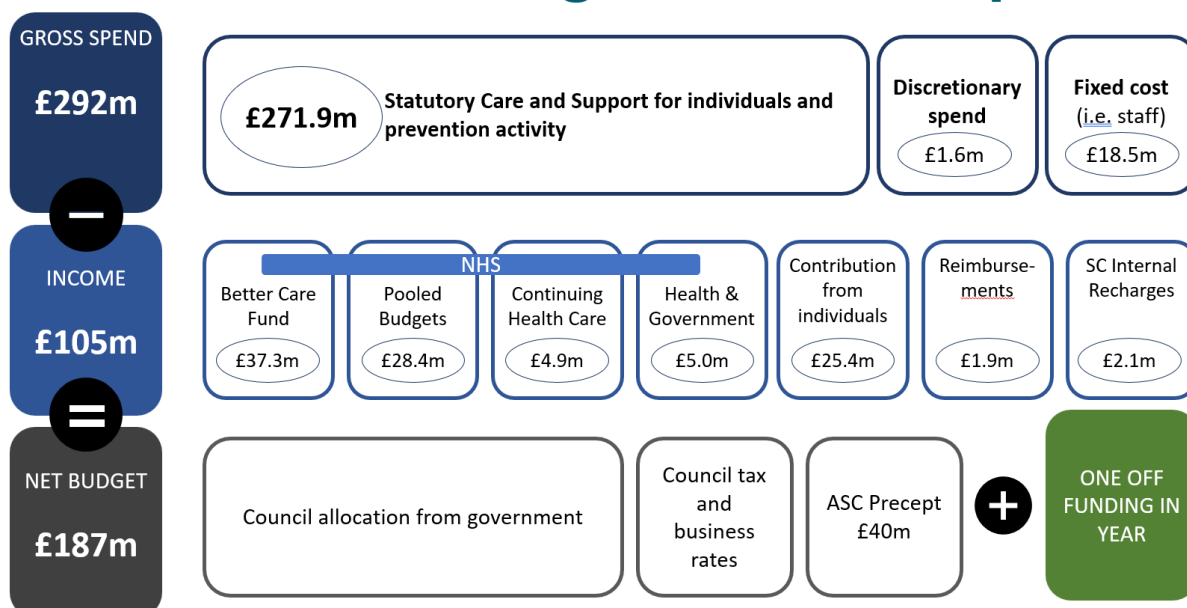
2022/23 Adult Services as at the end of March 2023 (Month 12)

Service Area	Current Budget	Full Year Projection	Month 12 Variance	A/(F)	Movement From Month 10	Direction From Month 10
Adult Social Care - Physical Disability/Sensory Loss/65 Plus						
Residential & Nursing	40.2	46.7	6.5	A	(0.2)	↓
Home Care	24.8	24.5	(0.3)	(F)	0.1	↓
Direct Payments	10.7	12.1	1.4	A	0.1	↓
Staffing Costs	10.2	10.4	0.2	A	2.0	↓
Transport, Daycare & Other	3.0	3.6	0.6	A	0.6	↓
sub total	88.9	97.3	8.4	A	2.6	↓
Mental Health						
Residential & Nursing	11.0	13.4	2.4	A	0.4	↓
Home Care/Supported Living	4.5	5.4	0.9	A	0.1	↓
Staffing/Deprivation of Liberty	4.5	4.1	(0.4)	(F)	(0.4)	↑
Safeguards	1.0	1.4	0.4	A	0.0	↓
Direct Payments, Day Care & Other	1.0	1.4	0.4	A	0.0	↓
sub total	21.0	24.3	3.3	A	0.1	↓
Learning Disabilities						
Residential & Nursing	20.6	22.6	2.0	A	0.4	↓
Supported Living/Home Care	25.1	27.3	2.2	A	0.3	↓
Direct Payments/In Control	9.1	9.5	0.4	A	(0.3)	↑
Day Care	3.5	5.1	1.6	A	0.1	↓
Discovery	29.8	27.8	(2.0)	(F)	(0.1)	↑
Transport, Shared Lives & Other	8.2	8.8	0.6	A	0.1	↓
sub total	96.3	101.1	4.8	A	0.5	↓
Commissioning						
Commissioning	13.0	15.7	2.7	A	3.1	↓
Better Care Fund	(34.7)	(37.4)	(2.7)	(F)	(2.7)	↓
LD Pooled Budget Income	(24.4)	(25.5)	(1.1)	(F)	(0.1)	↓
sub total	(46.1)	(47.2)	(1.1)	(F)	0.3	↓
Adult Services Total	160.1	175.5	15.4	A	3.5	↓

Explanations for the key areas of overspend



Adults Budget 2023/24 Explained



Statutory Services



- ✓ If the individual is assessed as requiring care and support under the **Care Act** or **Mental Health Act**,
- ✓ And, as part of the care act, the individual falls **under the financial threshold** for receiving funded or part-funded support.
- ✓ Then the council is responsible **by law to meet their ongoing care needs** and pay for all or part of this.

Care and support for individuals
£159m*

Older people

£82m

Mental Health inc. dementia

£16m

Learning Disabilities and Autism inc. crisis support

£61m

**amounts are net spend on care and support only*

c. 8000 people in Somerset

This care or support is provided either...

in a residential setting...



in supported housing...

Or at home.



Other Statutory Services



- ✓ We also have a duty to **prevent, reduce or delay the need** for more formal care and support
- ✓ Investing money in this means that we can better manage the demand for our statutory services and **save the council money in the long term**
- ✓ These services are good for individuals as they **help people to live independent lives** for longer

Investing in prevention activities
£8.7m

Hospital discharge (intermediate care)

Equipment and wheelchair contract

Some Voluntary and Community Sector

Support for carers

These are contracts awarded to community organisations or providers for services that...

Maintain or improve a persons independence



Reset people back to normal after a crisis

Prevent people getting to crisis point



Discretionary Services



- ✓ We have some small areas of discretionary spend
- ✓ This includes funding community agents to help people connect and navigate local support
- ✓ We also offer support to help people with learning disabilities enter employment

Investing in prevention activities
£1.6m

Community Agents

Employment support

Other voluntary and community sector activity

Helping people to lead their best life



Connecting communities

Our Self-assessment (2022/23)

1. How we work with people

What does good look like (Assessing Needs)

People with care and support needs, including unpaid carers, those who fund or arrange their own care and communities have the best possible wellbeing outcomes.

This is because:

- their care and support needs are assessed in a timely and consistent way
- assessments and care and support plans are co-produced, up-to-date and regularly reviewed
- support is co-ordinated across different agencies and services
- decisions and outcomes are transparent.

People's care and support reflects their right to choice, builds on their strengths and assets, and reflects what they want to achieve and how they wish to live their lives.

Our key strengths

- Somerset is very proud of its collaborative prevention-focused work and investment in supporting individuals in accessing care and support services within their local area and via the support of voluntary and community services.
- A range of work has been progressed with carers kept at the heart of the design process to ensure unpaid carers benefit from access to information, training, support and equipment to help them undertake their role. This includes our Somerset Carers Service, Board, and dedicated website, carers champions linked to GP Surgeries, and our work supporting carers in hospitals.

Case Study

Community Connect is about **promoting independence and improving people's lives by working with our communities** - harnessing the skills and expertise of a huge range of organisations and volunteers.

This response is built on a robust infrastructure established and developed in Somerset over many years alongside carers and includes:

- **Strengths-base conversations at Somerset Direct** (our contact centre), providing advice, information and connections to support in local communities;
- Community Connectors (**Community & Village Agents**) commissioned countywide and linked into ASC Peer Forums, Hospital Discharge, Primary Care, and neighbourhood teams;

- **Talking Cafes** serving as important hubs in our communities for people to access information, advice and support;
- **Carers Groups** enabling people to share interests, experiences and provide informal support to each other;



somerset village & community agents
part of CCS



somerset carers
part of CCS

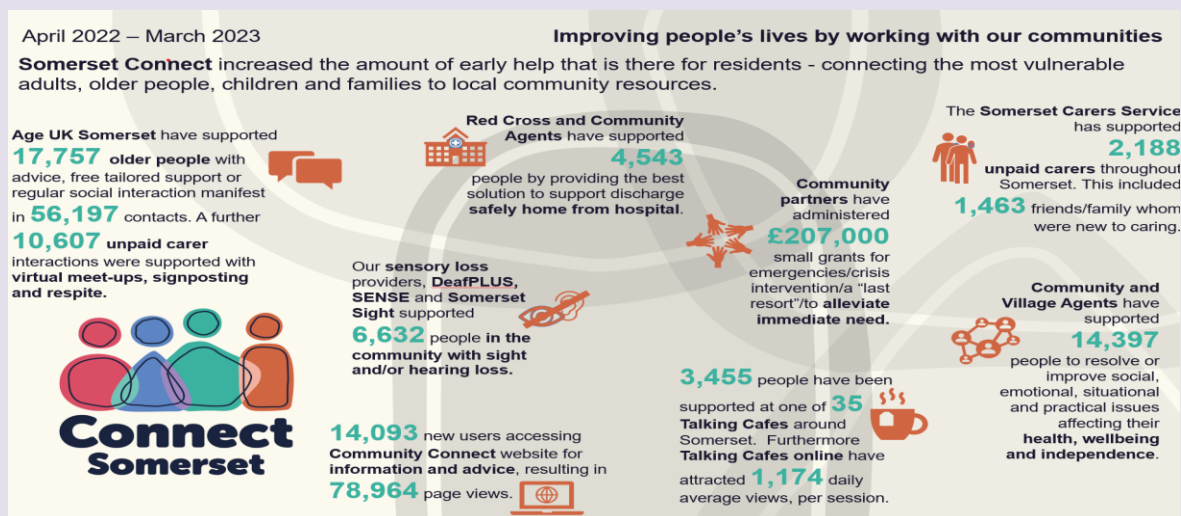
One Family: One Agent

We have **EXPANDED** the Village Agent service to include support for Carers!



- ☒ **Freephone number for Carers 0800 31 68 600**
- ☒ **Dedicated Carers website www.somsetcarers.org**
- ☒ **Live Chat on website or Text Carer to 78070**
- ☒ **MORE agents so we can support MORE Carers!**
- ☒ **Sign up for our Carers Newsletter!**
- ☒ **ANY adult who cares for a family member, friend or neighbour can request support for ANY issue around caring for another.**

- **Micro-provider networks** [Micro-Providers - Somerset Carers](#)



Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- In common with Local Authorities throughout the country, Somerset has seen growing waitlists for care assessments and reviews due to rising demand for care and support, coupled with workforce capacity challenges. We are working hard to address this, ensuring our practice - and the arrangements in place to identify and respond to risk while people are waiting for care - is consistent across our frontline operational teams.

- We are committed to increasing the number of carers assessments undertaken by our operational teams and improve areas of concern emerging from the annual Carers Survey to ensure that unpaid carers have the best possible wellbeing outcomes and support.
- We are progressing our continued focus on workforce and practice development, led through the work of our Principal Practice Leads. In the year ahead, we will be implementing a refreshed Practice Quality Framework outlining practice standards, as well as promoting competency frameworks to support the continued professional development of our staff. Work is also underway to refresh our Supervision and Appraisal approach in response to staff feedback (including the 2022 Health Check) and auditing activity evidencing opportunities for further improvement.

What does good look like (Supporting people to live healthier lives)

The local authority works with people, partners and the local community to promote independence and support people to prevent, delay or reduce their needs for care and support. It does this by providing a range of services and facilities.

People in the area have access to the advocacy, information and advice they need to make informed decisions about how to meet their care and or support needs.

Key strengths

- We are very proud of the way we work to support people to manage their health and wellbeing so they can maximise their independence, choice and control, live healthier lives and (where possible) reduce future needs for care support.
- Focusing on prevention and early help remains a core priority for our Adult Social Care service and we are committed to building on and enhancing our local investment and offer which includes our independent living centres, our technology enabled care offer, our community equipment services amongst others.

Case Study

Somerset's Independent Living Centres (SILCs)

Somerset Adult Social Care have two Independent Living Centres (SILCs) to help people find equipment and solutions to stay active, independent and to make life easier.

We offer free, impartial information and advice and encourage people in Somerset to attend who may need advice about living independently – this could include

equipment in the bathroom, kitchen or moving around. We are also able to demonstrate technology to help support people with their caring role and to aid daily living.

The centres in Wellington and Shepton Mallet are open for appointment bookings where people can talk to our Social Care Occupational Therapy led team. They are a valuable resource for people who support and care for others, whether that is families and carers, professional care providers, GPs, health workers, or organisations in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector who support people in their own home.

[Equipment to help you \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/equipment-to-help-you)

Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- We are keen to enhance our ability to better monitor, evaluate and evidence the impact of our various prevention strategies and will be developing datasets and assurance activity to support this.

What does good look like (Equity in experiences and outcomes)

- Understanding and addressing barriers to care and support
- Understanding and addressing inequalities in experience and outcomes
- Ensuring care and support meets the diverse needs of communities
- Ensuring people are encouraged to give feedback, which is acted on and used to drive improvements

Key strengths

- We undertake a range of activity that seeks to understand and address barriers people may experience; this includes our Covid response activity, our Connect Somerset investment, our work developing our Open Mental Health Alliance and support for individuals with Learning Disabilities, refugee support, and understanding the needs of gypsy and traveller communities.

Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- We are keen to enhance opportunities for meaningful co-production, ensuring we actively seek out, listen and respond to information about people most likely to experience inequality in experience or outcomes, and tailoring our care and support offer in response to this learning.

2. How we provide support

What does good look like (Care provision, integration and continuity)

- The local authority understands the care and support needs of people and communities. There is a good variety of care providers, provision is resilient and there is sufficient capacity to meet demand now and in future.
- Local people have access to a diverse range of safe, effective, high-quality support options to meet their care and support needs. This includes unpaid carers and those who fund or arrange their own care. Services are sustainable, affordable and provide continuity for people.

Key strengths

- Somerset has many examples of how we work collaboratively in partnership to commission effective models of care and support that meets the needs of our population. This includes Connect Somerset, our Intermediate Care offer, our Open Mental Health Alliance, and our community equipment and wheelchair service.
- Robust approaches exist that help us monitor and support the quality and sustainability of local services, or support care continuity, including our investment in PAMMS and our multi-agency Commissioning and Quality Board.
- There is a strong appreciation of, and commitment to, addressing the current and future care workforce needs as a wider health and care system, evidenced by the work of the Somerset People Board, our investment in the care market, and our commitment to Proud to Care Somerset campaigns and activity to support recruitment and retention in care.

Case Study

Somerset's Open Mental Health Alliance

Open Mental Health is an alliance of local voluntary organisations, the NHS and social care, Somerset County Council, and individuals with lived experience of mental health. We are working together to improve the way people in Somerset receive support with their mental health by providing access to a number of specialist services including NHS support, housing advice, debt and employment advice, volunteering opportunities, community activities, peer support and local exercise. In May 2022, the alliance won a major national award from NHS Improvement recognising the collective achievement in developing and delivering new ways to enhance care within Somerset's mental health system: <https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/open-mental-health-awarded-nhs-improvement-award-for-collaboration/>

The collaboration has already helped to remove many of the barriers to support and thresholds for treatment, reducing waiting times and giving early access to primary care assessments and interventions.



- We have significantly improved our performance in relation to the number of people waiting for a homecare package to be sourced. Homecare pods funded by system have supported stimulation of the market, and overseas recruitment and focussed Proud to Care marketing has stimulated recruits coming into homecare market.

Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- Demand challenges and backlogs across the health and care system means we are not always able to ensure everyone can access the care and support they need when they need it. There remain some areas of the county where care remains hard to secure and challenges with care providers being able or willing to accept our fee rates. We will be publishing a refreshed Market Position Statement in 2023/24.
- Ensuring unpaid carers have timely access to high quality replacement care for respite, short breaks, or unplanned situations, and benefit from direct payments.
- Ensuring we are better able to demonstrate and evidence how we are addressing the needs of people in Somerset in ways that support equalities, diversity and inclusion.

What does good look like (Partnerships and communities)

- The local authority works actively towards integrating care and support services with services provided by partner agencies. This achieves better outcomes for people who need care and support and unpaid carers and helps to reduce inequalities.

- Partnership working helps to ensure that care and support meets the diverse needs of individual people and communities. People experience a seamless care and support journey, and their support is co-ordinated across different agencies and services.

Key strengths

- We have clear evidence of how we prioritise, invest and support integration of services such as reablement, intermediate care and end of life services through our discharge to assess work, our dementia service and pathway, and end of life pathway.
- We recognise the unique contribution of our community and voluntary sector in the provision of care and support, and actively promote their involvement as evidenced through our work with the Community Council for Somerset, the engagement of village and community agents in our own peer forums, our commitment to supporting micro-providers as a key component of our care market offer, and the involvement of charities in our intermediate care delivery response.
- We work closely with our system partners, and align our ambitions and priorities across key strategies and aspirational intentions.

Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- We will be progressing work to enhance and re-establish some elements of the Better Care Fund, Continuing Health Care and Transforming Care activity ensuring clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities exist with partner agencies for delivering our shared priorities.
- We will seize enhanced opportunities that arise from becoming a unitary council, and through the work of the Integrated Care Board, to develop our work to integrate care and support services with those provided by the NHS and other partners, including housing, employment, transport and leisure.
- We are focused on reviewing and enhancing our existing reablement response in order to deliver high quality, responsive intermediate care provision that enables people to return to their optimal independence.

3. How we ensure safety within the system

What does good look like (Safe systems, pathways and transitions)

- Safety is a priority for everyone, and leaders embed a culture of openness and collaboration.
- Care and support is planned and organised with people, partners, and communities in ways that improve their safety across their care journeys and ensures continuity in care, particularly when people move between different services.

Key strengths

- We have strong evidence of our ability to effectively respond to unplanned events or emergencies to minimise potential risks to people's safety or wellbeing. This includes very effective multi-agency working aligned to our robust and well-tested business failure/closure policy led by our Quality Assurance and Contracts team.
- We work hard to ensure funding decisions / disputes do not lead to delays in the provision of care and support through our peer forum arrangements.
- We benefit from an intermediate care model that encompasses all services providing either support on discharge or on preventing admission, based strongly on 'discharge to assess' principles.

Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- Preparing for adulthood: There are opportunities for us to improve transitional periods for people, ensuring robust and efficient processes exist between children's and adult services to allow early intervention and planning for young people requiring support into adulthood, and enabling us to ensure (as commissioners) that the right services are available that are appropriately independence-focused as well as cost-effective.
- Opportunities exist to improve safety and continuity in care when people move between different services or agencies, including within mental health social care and in our links with housing. We look forward to enhancing our links with, and influence on, housing as one of the many benefits of coming together as a new unitary Council from April 2023.

What does good look like (Safeguarding)

- Section 42 safeguarding enquiries are carried out sensitively and without delay, keeping the wishes and best interests of the person concerned at the centre. People can participate in the safeguarding process as much as they want to. People are supported to make choices that balance risks with positive choice and control in their lives.
- There is a clear understanding of the key safeguarding risks and issues in the area and a clear, resourced strategic plan to address them.
- Lessons are learned when people have experienced serious abuse or neglect and action is taken to remove future risks and drive best practice.

Key strengths

- Our multi-agency [Safeguarding Adults Board \(SAB\)](#) has a clear understanding of the key safeguarding risks and issues in the area and is well informed by detailed performance analysis and self-assessment. We have recently appointed a nationally renowned and experienced independent chair who is helping us to 're-set' our ambitions in response to local need and hold all members to account as part of a revised [SAB strategic plan](#).
- Our data on safeguarding outcomes demonstrate a strong commitment to 'making safeguarding personal'. Local services benefit from detailed guidance and risk decision making tools that help professionals differentiate between safeguarding concerns and concerns arising from the quality of services. Our Safeguarding team works collaboratively with colleagues from quality assurance and contracts, as well as with our system partners and the regulator, in sharing intelligence and improving standards across the care system.
- In November 2022, our Safeguarding Adults Service Manager was named the overall winner in the Accountability Champion category of the national Safeguarding Adult Board 'We See You – We Hear You' Excellence Awards. Nominations were invited for professionals and teams who had demonstrated an outstanding commitment to safeguarding adults and their families. Louise's success came on the back of her nomination in the national Social Worker of the Year Awards where she was a finalist in the Team Leader of the Year category.



Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- There have been a growing number of Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SAR) referrals during and since the pandemic in line with national trends. Resourcing and responding to these in a timely way remains a challenge, alongside ensuring impactful responses to recommendations emerging from these across system partners.
- There remains a clear need to enhance the Board's ability to hear from the lived experience of those supported through a Safeguarding Adults process. Although we have existing and well-promoted feedback forms and surveys (co-designed with Somerset Healthwatch), and hear from some individuals via Board meetings, engagement through these routes is limited and insufficient to offer meaningful assurance or information to the Board. The Board is exploring alternative routes and means to meaningfully engage with and hear from those supported through adult safeguarding and is planning to launch a repeat public-facing awareness campaign later in 2023.

4. Leadership

What does good look like (Governance, management, and sustainability)

- There are effective governance and performance management arrangements at all levels. These provide visibility and assurance on:
 - *delivery of Care Act duties and risks to delivery*
 - *quality and sustainability*
 - *people's care and support experiences and outcomes*
- The local authority uses information about risks, performance, inequalities and outcomes to:
 - *inform strategy*
 - *allocate resources*
 - *deliver the actions needed to improve care and support outcomes for people and local communities.*

Key strengths / areas of confidence

- The service has clear governance and performance management arrangements in place, with mechanisms that support the visibility and assurance of performance, risk, finance, quality and sustainability. We have also introduced

monthly Highlight Reports to support communication and transparency with staff and elected members.

- Our understanding of our performance and key risks helps to drive and inform our strategic plans and response activity. This can be evidenced through the operational restructuring activity we are progressing, our transformation programme of work, and our commissioning focus, amongst other examples.
- Our adult social care service has benefitted from strong and well-engaged political leadership, with Councillors well-informed about potential risks facing adult social care and engaged in service improvement activity.
- There is effective budget oversight, accountability and governance, evidenced through regular financial challenge sessions, our work with Newton Europe, monthly monitoring and promotion of our budget, and the focus of our Enhanced Peer Forums.

Key areas requiring our continued attention and improvement

- We recognise there is further work to be done in stabilising our leadership and structure, ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities both as a Council as we become a new Unitary Authority and within the service itself as we progress with re-structuring in response to local need. We have continued to rely on large numbers of locums or agency staff due to the challenges nationally in recruiting social workers and occupational therapists – something our Workforce Board is working hard to address.
- Whilst a robust service-level risk register is in place and closely monitored, we face broader operating environment risks and impacts associated with establishing a new Unitary Council requiring the re-design of processes and approaches and further change, and must continue to assess and mitigate these wherever possible.
- There are further opportunities for us to ensure that equality and diversity principles are firmly embedded in our values, culture and leadership behaviour as we progress our new unitary council.

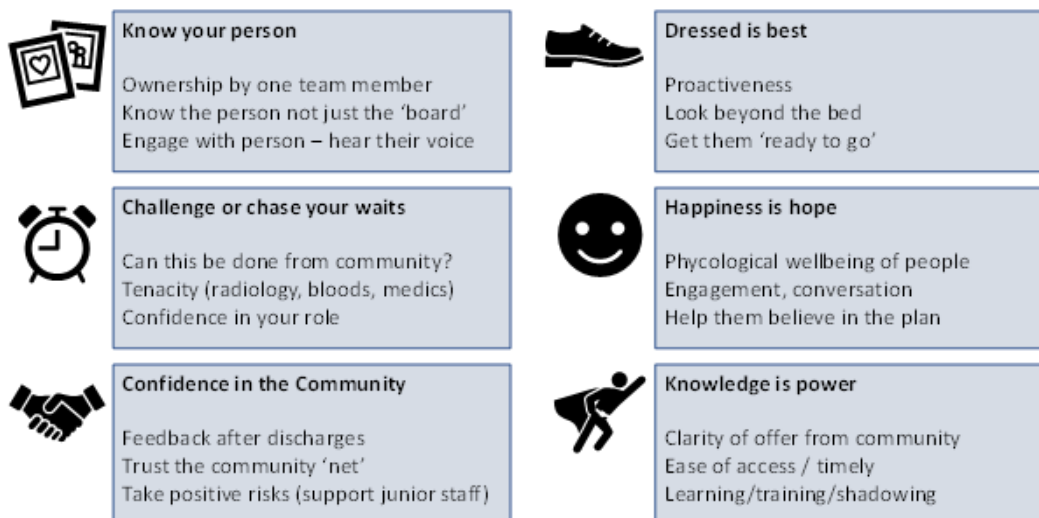
What does good look like (Learning, improvement and innovation)

- Learning from people's feedback about their experiences of care and support, and feedback from staff and partners is embedded throughout the local authority's work and it informs strategy, improvement activity and decision making at all levels. Coproduction is embedded throughout the local authority's work.

- There is an inclusive and positive culture of continuous learning and improvement and this is shared by all leaders and staff across the organisation and with their partners

Key strengths / areas of confidence

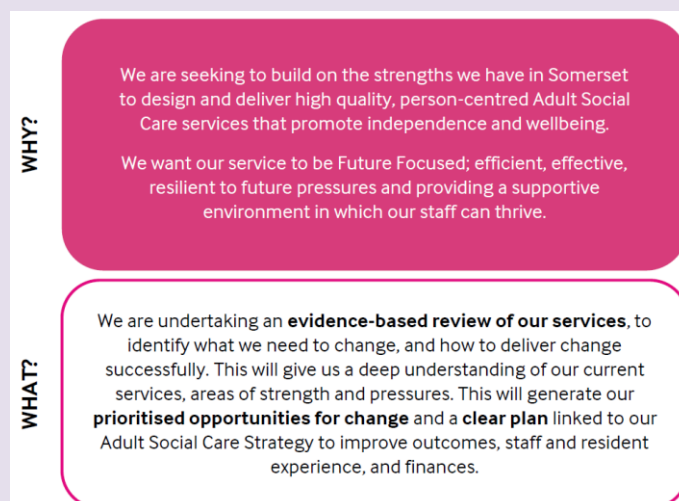
- Somerset has continued to be an active participant in sector-led improvement activity across the region. Our Director chairs the South West Association of Directors of Social Services (SW ADASS), with senior managers chairing or contributing to SW ADASS subgroups (including performance, commissioning, assurance, and workforce). Our Principal Social Worker is also the Co-Chair of the South West Principal Social Worker network.
- We are active in seeking and securing external guidance, expertise or support as part of our efforts to continually drive forward local improvement and challenge our own performance and approaches. This can be evidenced in multiple ways (including external audits, the commissioning of additional resources to address performance, peer reviews, and our extensive work during 2022/23 with an external improvement partner, Newton Europe).
- We can evidence a clear commitment to sharing learning, best practice and innovation with peers and system partners, through conferences, events and regional implementation of initiatives, including a new approach to care provider assessment and market management. Another example includes the 'Community Pull events' in our Acute Hospitals in January 2023, where over 30 senior managers from adult social care, community health, intermediate care and the integrated care board spent 3 days at each site working on wards to support discharges and observe working practices. Key learning from the events included:



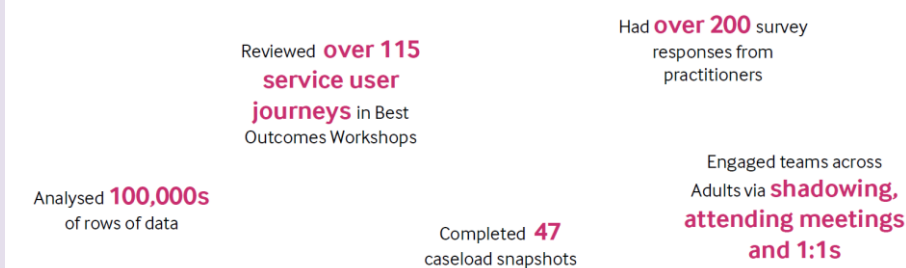
Case Study

Newton Europe – Future Focused Diagnostic

Newton was procured in November 2022 to undertake a detailed diagnostic across Adults Services to help us identify the best opportunities for controlling future spend through optimizing productivity, managing demand into the service and ensure that people drawing on services and their carers are at the heart of designing support and future service models.



Over the course of the diagnostic we have..



Their work highlighted a number of improvement opportunities in how we deliver Adult Services, which have informed our ASC Strategy for 2023-26. The Council will take a decision in the summer of 2023 as to how to proceed and deliver these opportunities to realise the projected cost controls.

Key areas requiring our continued focus and improvement

- Adult Social Care, and the Council as a whole, is committed to improving opportunities for effective and meaningful co-production, taking every opportunity to include people with lived experience and community organisations in the development of new and existing services.

- Alongside this, we want to ensure that the feedback and experience of people using services and our key partners informs strategy, improvement activity and decision making at all levels more consistently.
- In the coming year, we will be working hard on enhancing our ability to review, disseminate and implement learning outcomes from all reviews (statutory and non-statutory) and incidents, supported by the establishment of a Practice Quality Board.

Understanding people's experience of social care

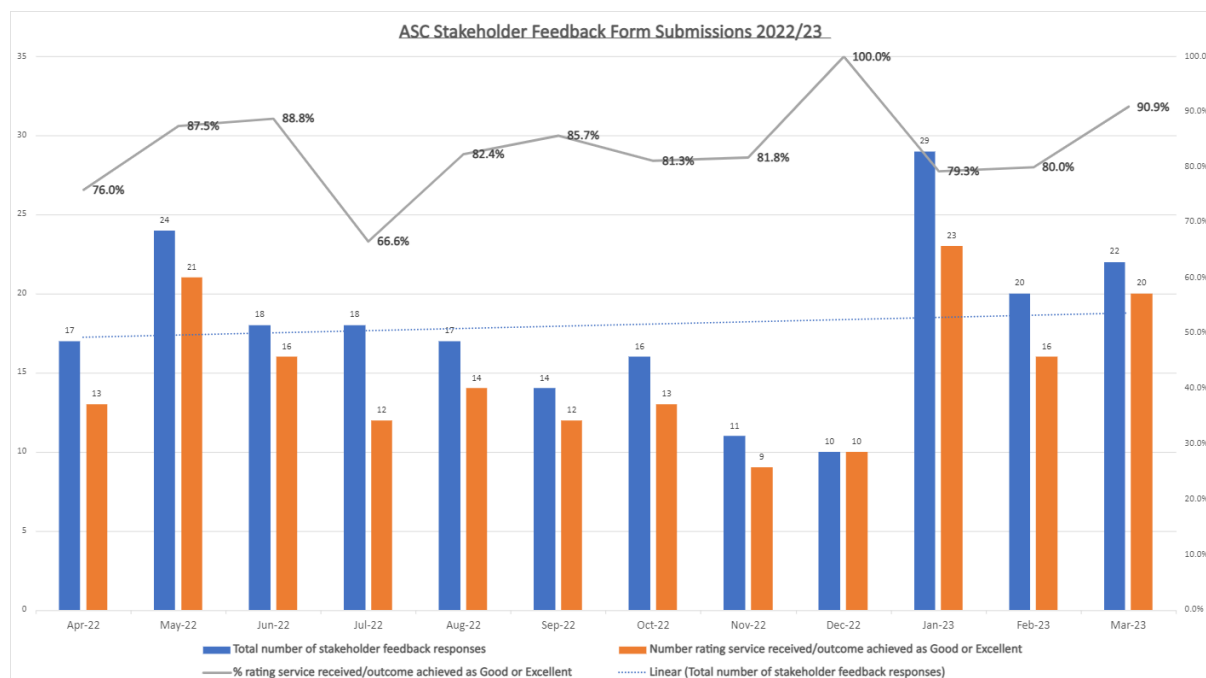
We actively encourage people who use services, and organisations who represent them or act on their behalf, to share their experiences and enable us to learn from and respond to their feedback.

Adult Social Care Stakeholder Feedback Form (2022/23)

In January 2022, the Adult Social Care service launched a new stakeholder feedback form approach to gathering more frequent opportunities to log and learn from feedback for our social care teams, separate to the more formal compliments/complaints approach in place corporately. We have been delighted to see this approach embed and increasingly add value since its implementation, with staff actively promoting the link within email signatures, in documents and through discussion.

During 2022/23, a total of 216 responses were submitted from a wide range of those we support (predominantly individuals in receipt of care/support or their relatives/carers, but also from care provider organisations, NHS or Local Authority colleagues, and more).

Of these 216 responses, 179 (83%) rated the overall service received from our staff as either Good or Excellent during the financial year. This is a pleasing outcome given the challenged period of demand on our service and the wider health and care sector, and is testament to the hard work and commitment of our staff teams.



	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
Total number of stakeholder feedback responses	17	24	18	18	17	14	16	11	10	29	20	22
Number rating service received/outcome achieved as Good or Excellent	13	21	16	12	14	12	13	9	10	23	16	20
% rating service received/outcome achieved as Good or Excellent	76.0%	87.5%	88.8%	66.6%	82.4%	85.7%	81.3%	81.8%	100.0%	79.3%	80.0%	90.9%

The feedback has offered us valuable insight into the experience of service users and carers, our partner colleagues and other key stakeholders, providing opportunities for learning or improvement, reducing risks of complaints escalating, and enabling monthly 'staff shout outs' and greater recognition based on independent feedback.

What the analysis shows is that the single biggest element and influencer of both positive *and* negative feedback is communication – how clear, responsive, professional and compassionate we are in our respective job roles makes a fundamental difference to the experience of those we engage with and support. Keeping in touch with people goes a long way, even if to only explain a situation or delay, and is proving to help prevent more time-intensive activity further down the line. We also found that some of our teams were consistently securing very positive feedback from those they work with and support (sourcing care team, FAB and client finance team, contracts and quality team).

Responsiveness is a key area for the service to continue to monitor and address; this is likely reflective of recognised assessment and review backlogs and workforce capacity challenges faced by LAs across the country.

The following are just a small selection of some comments received from stakeholders during 2022/23:

- “Sian and team have provided an incredible service to all residents at XXX Care Home. We were placed in a difficult position with the care home going into administration. Sian and team faced all residents, family and staff to reassure them that a robust process was in place and that the home would not close until all residents were found a placement. Sian and her team showed empathy and caring and made sure that all questions were answered, her caring also extended to staff. They went out of their way to lessen the shock. Mum and I were very grateful for the support and wish to thank the LA for picking up the running of the home and making sure that it carried on as normal, whilst prioritising placements in local homes. Sian and team have worked long hours to make sure that all residents were assessed and placed in other good/outstanding homes. Thank you for your professionalism, your empathy and your unstinting hard work to make sure that all we're cared for. We can't thank you enough”.
(From a relative of a person receiving care and support)
- “Now we are starting to settle down a bit after losing mum, we wanted to write and say a big Thank You for all that you did for her in the last few months of her long life. You were a credit to your profession, advocating for mum and her wish to remain at home for as long as possible. When that was no longer an option

your support to sort out her respite care was much appreciated. We particularly valued your clear communication. When you said you were going to act you always followed through, kept us up to date if there were any delays that were outside your control and let us know the outcome in a timely way...We do appreciate everything that you did for mum and will not forget your professionalism, good humour and kindness". *(From a relative of a person receiving care and support)*

- "Simon completed annual reviews with 5 people I support. All of the people I support were very happy after meeting with Simon. I was very impressed with Simon's person-centred approach during the reviews and I felt he really listened to the needs and wishes of the people I support. One gentleman I support has wanted to move house for many years; this is now becoming a reality for him due to the review Simon completed. Thank you Simon for all your help and support" *(From a care provider)*
- "I was feeling very down before I arrived at the centre as I wasn't sure what to expect and felt awkward and a bit tearful as this is the first time I've had to acknowledge after many months of struggling that I need anything like this. I need not have had any concerns at all. I was met with warmth and kindness and a genuinely caring response to my various difficulties and needs. Sophie showed and suggested things to me, never pushing, just explaining, and allowing me to make my own decisions. As a result I have been supplied with a number of different, very helpful items which have made so much difference to my quality of life at home... Can't thank Sophie enough for making the whole experience so positive in such a friendly and professional manner. It's a big deal when you have to admit to yourself that you aren't coping so well at home anymore and that help is needed. Having someone like Sophie at your first encounter with the Adult Service provision makes all the difference in the world. Thank you" *(From a person in receipt of care and support)*

Customer Experience – Complaints and Compliments

Across the Council as a whole during 2022/23, there were a total of 1,726 pieces of feedback recorded (all types) compared with 1,599 in the previous year (a 7.9% increase).

The number of complaints, compliments and comments received are broadly similar to the previous year and within the council's 'normal range'. However, Elected Member enquiries have increased as the central complaints team now log and support councillors with their casework, whereas previously, the 'member enquiry' system function was largely only used for direct contact from a local MP.

Volumes and comparisons

Total feedback received across all council services for the last 3 years:

Feedback Type	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021	1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022	1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023
Children's Social Care Complaints	152	218	180
Other Children's Services Complaints	160	198	268
Adult Services Complaints	122	164	193
Public Health Complaints	11	4	7
ECI Complaints	268	378	339
Corporate Complaints	80	113	88
Total Complaints	793	1075	1075
Children's Social Care Compliments	76	32	9
Other Children's Services Compliments	54	174	198
Adult Services Compliments	88	79	88
Public Health Compliments	43	32	30
ECI Compliments	87	59	49
Corporate Compliments	14	17	9
Total Compliments	362	393	383
Children's Social Care Comments	0	2	2
Other Children's Services Comments	2	1	0
Adult Services Comments	4	3	4
Public Health Comments	1	0	0
ECI Comments	29	36	26
Corporate Comments	11	12	12
Total Comments	47	54	44
Children's Social Care Member Enquiries	14	6	9
Other Children's Services Member Enquiries	34	51	87
Adult Services Member Enquiries	11	19	26
Public Health Member Enquiries	0	0	3
ECI Member Enquiries	20	1	79
Corporate Member Enquiries	0	0	20
Total Member Enquiries	79	77	224
Total Feedback	1281	1599	1726

Feedback Type	1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021	1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022	1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023
Adults Complaints	122	164	193
Adults Compliments	88	79	88
Adults Comments	4	3	4
Adults Member Enquiries	11	19	26
Total Adults Feedback	225	265	311

Complaints and Member Enquiries have risen steadily over the last three years across Adult Social Care. The table below shows percentage increase/decrease by service area for all feedback types, and highlights a 17.68% rise in the number complaints received over the last twelve months, and an 11.39% rise in the number of compliments:

Service Area	Feedback Type	↕
Children's Social Care	Complaint	▼17.43%
	Compliment	▼71.87%
Other Children's Services	Complaint	▲35.35%
	Compliment	▲13.79%
Adult's Social Care	Complaint	▲17.68%
	Compliment	▲11.39%
Public Health*	Complaint	▲75.00%
	Compliment	▼6.25%
Economic & Community Infrastructure	Complaint	▼10.32%
	Compliment	▼16.95%
Corporate Feedback*	Complaint	▼22.12%
	Compliment	▼47.05%

*Whilst percentages are high, these are based on small numbers – see detailed table above for context

Resolutions and outcomes

193 Adult Social Care complaints were received during 2022/23. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of these complaints, revealing that the majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at Stage 1 of the complaints process.

Resolution	Number	%
Stage 1 – resolved in year	149	77%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	30	15%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	7	4%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	4	2%
LGO – resolved in year	1	1%
LGO – Still open at end of year	2	1%
	193	

We have seen the average resolution time for adult services Stage 1 complaints grow over recent years, currently reported at 37 working days. The Council's complaint procedure for 2022/23 set a Stage 1 target resolution timescale of 20 working days. Adult Social Care is currently taking the longest time to resolve Stage 1 of all Council service areas.

1 st April 2020 – 31 st March 2021	1 st April 2021 – 31 st March 2022	1 st April 2022– 31 st March 2023
25 working days	35 working days	37 working days

Service Area	1 st April 2021 – 31 st March 2022	1 st April 2022 – 31 st March 2023
Children's Social Care	38 working days	35 working days
Other Children's Services	27 working days	30 working days
Adult's Social Care	35 working days	37 working days
Public Health	37 working days	35 working days
Economic & Community Infrastructure	20 working days	22 working days
Corporate Feedback	8 working days	12 working days

For the 30 Stage 1 complaints received by adult social care in 2022/23 but not closed in-year, the average number of working days open (as of 31st March 2023) is 45. This is broken down as follows:

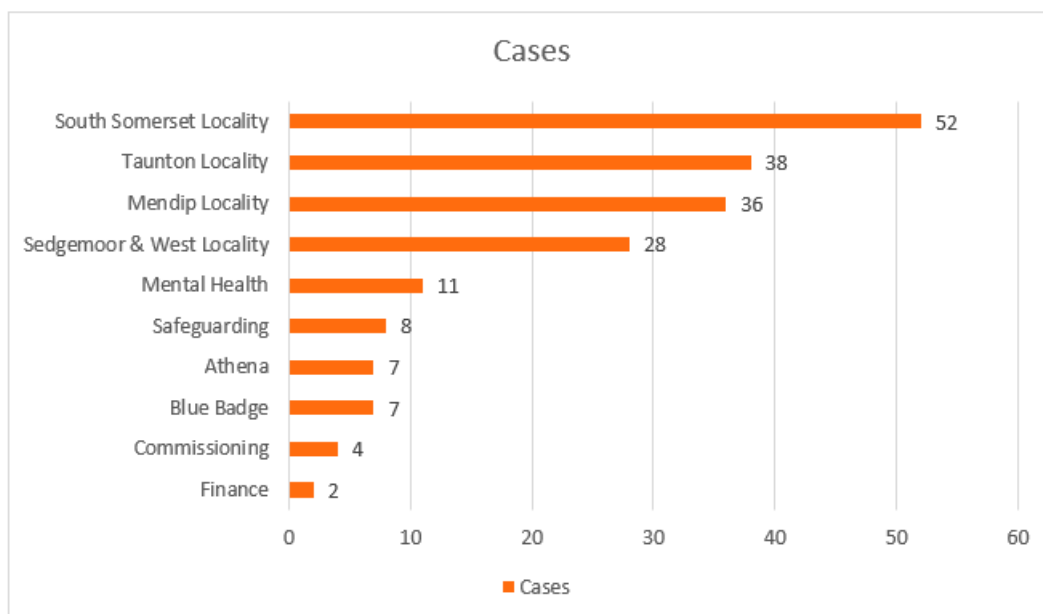
Working days open	Cases
< 10	7
10 – 20	7
21 – 30	2
31 – 40	5
41 – 50	0
51 – 60	3
61 – 70	0
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	0
91 – 100	0
100+	6
	30

The following table shows the outcomes for the 149 Stage 1 adult social care complaints resolved in year alongside previous year comparisons. It evidences increases in the proportion of cases upheld or partly upheld:

Outcomes	1 st April 2020 – 31 st March 2021	1 st April 2021 – 31 st March 2022	1 st April 2020 – 31 st March 2021		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	11%	16%	32	21%	+5%
Not Upheld	30%	37%	40	27%	-10%
Partly Upheld	35%	22%	38	26%	+4%
Resolved Upon Receipt	5%	13%	16	11%	-2%
Withdrawn/Rejected	19%	12%	23	15%	+3%
	100%	100%	149	100%	

Complaints by service area

The majority of complaints received relate to frontline operational social care activity, with our 4 x Locality Teams receiving 79.79% of all adult service complaints during 2022/23. South Somerset has been especially affected over the last 12 months.



Reasons for complaints

It is helpful to also explore the primary cause for resolved adult social care complaints, where these have been recorded; this shows that a third of all 2022/23 resolved complaints were initially attributed to concerns relating to service provision, with a further 25% relating to service quality.

Primary Cause	%
Service Provision	33%
Service Quality	25%
Communication	19%
Information	10%
Staff Conduct	6%
Finance	4%
Policy & Procedures	3%
	100%

Initial classifications are recorded for 134 of the complaints; these are ranked as follows:

Assessment	61 / 46%
Reviews	22 / 16%
Residential	13 / 10%
Domiciliary Care	9 / 7%
Equipment	8 / 6%
Blue badge	6 / 4%
Information/advice	3 / 2%
Athena	3 / 2%
Safeguarding	2 / 1%

Prevention	2 / 1%
Funding Panel	2 / 1%
Finance	1 / 1%
Direct Payment	1 / 1%
Other	1 / 1%

Escalated complaints

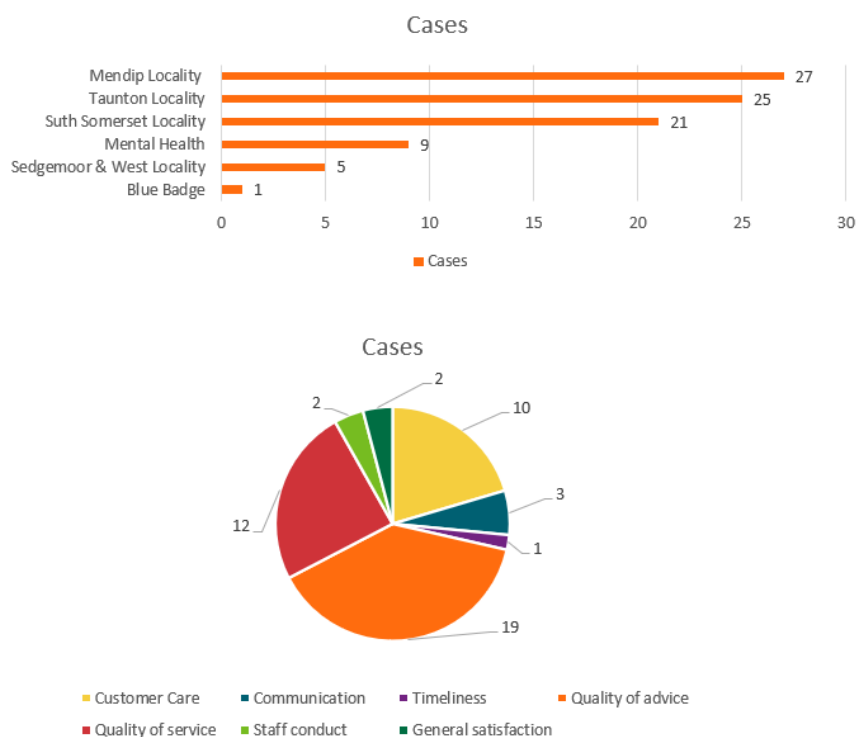
Of the 193 complaints received in 2022/23, 14 (7.25%) have escalated beyond Stage 1 of the complaints process (11 to Stage 2, and 3 to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman). Of the 11 escalating to Stage 2:

- 7 were resolved in year (3 upheld; 1 partly upheld; 3 not upheld)
- 4 remain open at 31st March 2023

For cases escalated to the Ombudsman, 1 was resolved in year with the Ombudsman upholding the complaint. The case upheld by the Ombudsman (9607717) related to the standard of care provided by a care home to an elderly man prior to his death. It was found the provider had failed to properly record information relating to medication, nutrition and wound interventions. In response, the Council paid a £500 time and trouble payment to the complainant and agreed to work with the provider to ensure procedural change and delivery of staff training.

Compliments

88 compliments were recorded for adult services in 2022/23 via iCasework:





Adult Social Care Survey (2022/23)

The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures how well care and support services achieve the outcomes that matter most to people. The ASCOF is used both locally and nationally to set priorities for care and support, measure progress and strengthen transparency and accountability. Somerset's 2022/23 data indicates reduced levels of satisfaction this year, with two areas of concern standing out:

- **Social Contact:** The proportion of people using services who report having had as much social contact as they would like continues to show a steady decline over recent years (down from 48% in 2018/19 to 41.3% in 2022/23). A similar trend has been seen nationally to date.
- **Information:** The proportion of people using services who find it easy to find information about services has seen a 12.2% decrease since 2018/19 and is a theme we have also seen within the annual Carers Survey.

	Numerator	Denominator	2022/23	Change	2021/22	England 21/22	2019/20	England 19/20	2018/19	England 18/19
(1A) Social care-related quality of life	133685.3	7098.0	18.8	-0.2	19.0	18.9	18.9	19.1	19.3	19.1
(1B) The proportion of people who use services who have control over their daily life	5475.3	7098.0	77.1%	1.1%	76.0%	76.9%	78.4%	77.3%	80.2%	77.6%
(11I) The proportion of people who use services who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like	2929.1	7098.0	41.3%	-0.6%	41.9%	40.6%	44.7%	45.9%	48.0%	45.9%
(1J) Adjusted Social care-related quality of life – impact of Adult Social Care services			0.414	-0.017	0.431		0.405		0.410	
(3A) Overall satisfaction of people who use service with their care and support	4556.5	7098.0	64.2%	-3.2%	67.3%	63.9%	63.9%	64.2%	60.6%	64.3%
(3D1) The proportion of people who use services who find it easy to find information about services	4261.3	7098.0	60.0%	-2.9%	62.9%	64.6%	66.9%	68.4%	72.2%	69.7%
(4A) The proportion of people who use services who feel safe	4655.9	7098.0	65.6%	-2.1%	67.7%	69.2%	65.8%	70.2%	66.5%	70.0%
(4B) The proportion of people who use services who say that those services have made them feel safe and secure	6230.5	7098.0	87.8%	-1.9%	89.7%	85.6%	84.9%	86.8%	90.5%	86.9%

Carers Survey (2021/22)

In 2014/15 and 2016/17 Somerset scored comparatively very well nationally and within the region but performance in survey measures have declined over the last few years. Please note: There wasn't a carer's survey in 2020/21 due to the pandemic. The next carers survey will be conducted in 2023/24.

	Numerator	Denominator	2021/22. (National rank)	Change	2018/19	2016/17	2014/15
1D Carer reported quality of life.	2673	376	7.1 (78 th)	-0.1	7.2	8.2	8.3
1I2 Proportion of carers who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like	115	416	27.6% (66 th)	2.5	25.1%	45.4%	42.9%
3B Overall satisfaction of carers with social services.	89	311	28.6% (136 th)	-2.5	31.1%	40.4%	47.5%
3C The proportion of carers who report that they have been included or consulted in discussions about the person they care for.	161	253	63.6% (79 th)	0.1	63.5%	74.3%	73.1%
3D2 The proportion of carers who find it easy to find information about services.	128	278	46% (135 th)	-7.5%	53.5%	60.2%	59.2%

Local Government Association Employer Standards Health Check, 2022

The Employer Standards Health Check survey is designed to better understand the experience of social care professionals. In 2022, 140 organisations participated, including Somerset County Council. The health check was extended beyond social workers to also include the voices of occupational therapists and non-registered social care professionals. The purpose of the survey is to better understand a number of critical questions about their experiences, including:

- How well do employers deliver the employer standards⁹?
- How do employees perceive their working environment?
- What factors influence them to remain engaged with their work and minded to stay with their organisations?

⁹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/social-workers/standards-employers-social-workers-england-2020>

The employer standards

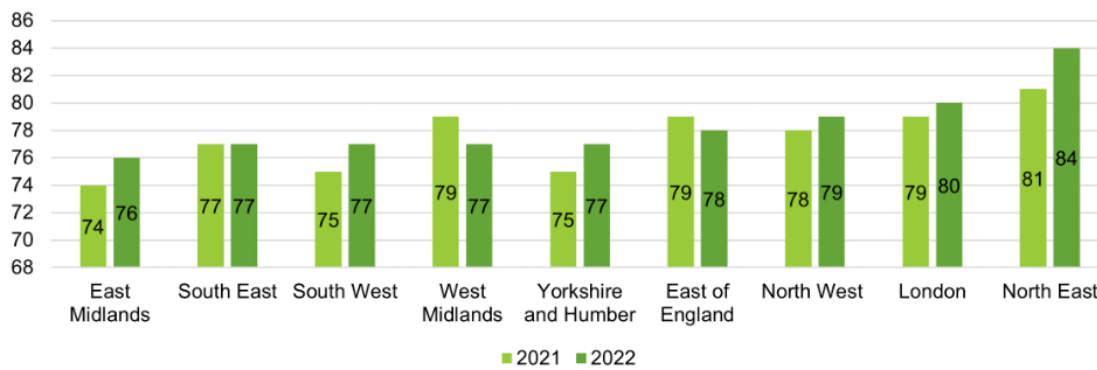
- **Standard 1 – Strong and clear social work framework:** Promoting a clear statement about the principles that constitute good social work practice.
- **Standard 2 – Effective workforce planning systems:** Using effective workforce planning systems to make sure that the right resources are available to meet current and future service demands.
- **Standard 3 – Safe workloads and case allocation:** Ensuring employees do not experience excessive workloads, resulting in unallocated cases and long waiting times for individuals.
- **Standard 4 – Wellbeing:** Promoting a positive culture for employee wellbeing and supporting social workers to practice effectively and safely.
- **Standard 5 – Supervision:** Making sure students and qualified practitioners can reflect critically on their practice through integrated high quality, regular supervision.
- **Standard 6 – Continuing professional development (CPD):** Providing the time and opportunity for social workers to learn, keep up to date and critically reflect on the impact this has on their practice.
- **Standard 7 – Professional registration:** This standard is about supporting social workers to maintain their professional registration with the regulator.
- **Standard 8 – Strategic partnerships:** Creating strong partnerships and good collaboration between employers, higher education institutions and other training providers.

Somerset's Adult Social Care service launched the survey to run during our annual 'Carnival of Practice' in November 2022. A total of 175 staff responded, a significant improvement on previous years' engagement levels.

The data, both nationally¹⁰ and locally, shows that standards relating to supervision and continuing professional development remain important ongoing areas of focus for further improvement and attention if we are to ensure our social care workforce is well-supported and able to work safely and effectively.

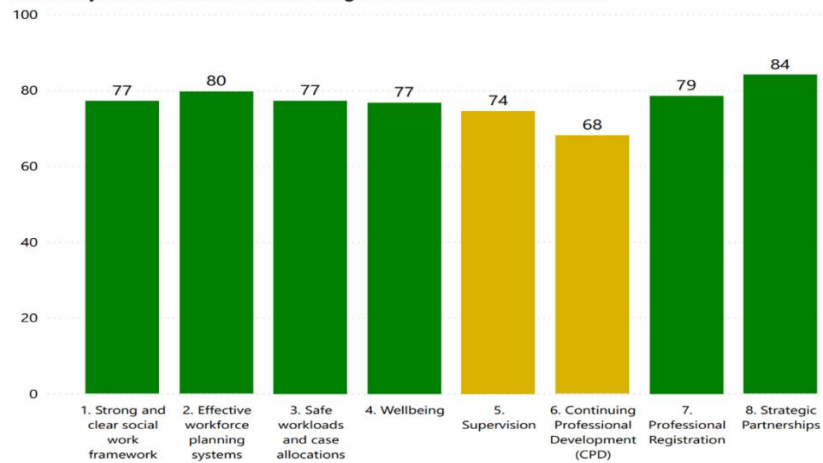
¹⁰ [National summary report of the employer standards survey for registered social workers 2022/23 | Local Government Association](#)

Comparison of average mean scores by region for 2021 and 2022



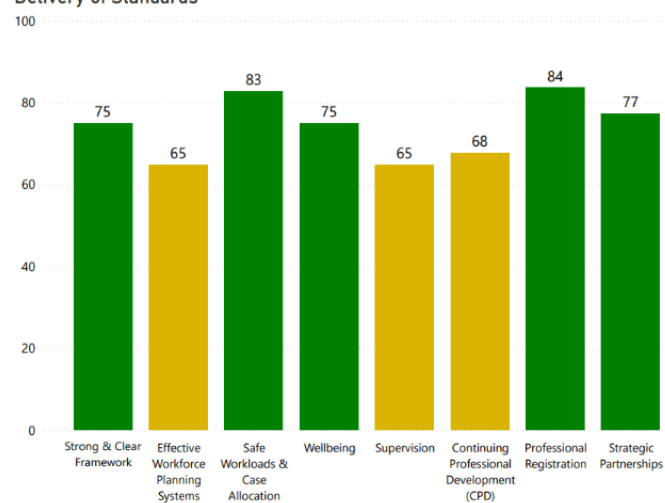
2022 Results (Social Workers)

Delivery of Standards (Adult Registered Social Workers)



2022 Results (Occupational Therapists)

Delivery of Standards



2022 Results (Adult Social Care Practitioners)



Looking ahead to 2023/24

The financial year ahead brings a number of changes and opportunities for Adult Social Care in Somerset:

- **Local Government Reorganisation** Somerset Council will replace the four district councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset) and Somerset County Council from April 2023, bringing services, staff and elected members under one umbrella. It will become one of the largest unitary councils in England, will help free up resources, and its scale will enable innovative approaches to tackling the big challenges faced today. We will have greater opportunity to work alongside our colleagues in housing and planning to support the needs of our communities, and contributing collectively to the new County Plan for 2023-27: [Somerset Council Plan 2023 – 2027](#)
- **CQC Assessment of Adult Social Care** Independent assessments of care at a Local Authority level commence nationally from April 2023, with the Care Quality Commission given new powers to support greater understanding of the quality of care in a local area/system and provide assurance to the public. Assessments will focus on how Local Authorities discharge their duties under Part 1 of the Care Act (2014)¹¹ and will focus on 4 overarching themes:
 1. How local authorities work with people;
 2. How local authorities provide support;
 3. How local authorities ensure safety within the system; and
 4. Leadership.

Self-assessment activity is underway to prepare for this new layer of scrutiny, supporting the development of associated improvement plans. The Theme 3 ('Ensuring Safety') element aligns closely to the work and effectiveness of our Safeguarding Adults Board; we will ensure the Independent Chair and all Board members are kept well informed of, and engaged with, related progress and activity. We will commission a Local Government Peer Review in 2023/24 to support our assurance preparedness.

- **Adult Social Care restructuring** Our operational adult social care service is currently undergoing a restructuring exercise, designed to ensure the service is fit for the future to meet and respond to current and future service demand.
- **A refreshed Adult Social Care Strategy (2023-26)** Social care is an essential part of the fabric of our society. At its best, it enables and transforms lives. It supports people to live the lives they want to lead, where they want to live them. There is enormous potential for social care to help people stay healthy, happy and independent through scaling up our preventative, person-centred, strengths-based approaches and working collaboratively to do so. This is what we hope to harness and achieve through our refreshed strategy and underpinning delivery plan, which has been informed by the public/staff feedback and aligned to wider Council and Integrated Health and Care Systems plans and priorities. Our Strategy is publicly available here: [Adult Social Care Strategy 2023-26](#)

¹¹ [Assessment framework for local authority assurance - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](#)



**Somerset
Council**



To live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing what matters to us.

In Somerset, we want people to live healthy and independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities, with timely and easy access to high quality and efficient support when they need it.

Our strategy sets out how we will work to deliver our vision in partnership to ensure we deliver the right kind of care and support for our communities and the best possible outcomes within the resources available to us.

Our priorities:

