

NEWS RELEASE

5 August 2025

Bringing to life the new 10-Year Health Plan – your chance to shape how Somerset NHS shifts care to neighbourhoods for better health outcomes and less pressure on main hospitals

Health and care partners are inviting local people to influence how the NHS in Somerset puts into practice one of the key shifts at the heart of the Government's new [10-Year Health Plan](#) by reshaping the way care is provided in local communities.

Moving care from hospitals to communities is among the three key shifts at the centre of the 10-Year Health Plan, which was published earlier this month, after the biggest national and local conversation about the future of the NHS over the winter.

Nationally, [270,000 people took part](#) and among the outcomes was clear support for treating people closer to – and in – their own homes whenever possible, something that people in Somerset have also told the NHS they support.

Now NHS Somerset, which is responsible for planning, paying for and monitoring NHS health services, are asking local people how best to deliver more care closer to home and in their local neighbourhood.

Underpinning the work are six core principles:

- Studies show that people often recover faster in their familiarity of their own home
- Recent data shows that less than one in three community hospital beds is occupied by someone from the local area* and clinicians believe more local people can be supported in their homes, or closer to home, by changing the way we offer care.
- Being in a hospital bed creates risks for patients – it is widely acknowledged** that 'deconditioning syndrome' can lead to reduced muscle strength and circulation, and increased dependence, confusion and demotivation, as well a risk of picking up a hospital-acquired infection (like MRSA)
- Modern ways of providing reablement care allow the same number of NHS staff to look after more people in the community – normally a care home bed, or the patient's own bed – meaning fewer people are stuck in an acute hospital bed when they are medically fit to leave.
- It is nearly seven times more expensive to provide reablement care in a hospital bed compared to reablement care in the patient's own home. People staying in a community hospital bed for reablement care stay on average 37.2 days (meaning that bed can only be used by about nine people in a whole year) at an average cost of more than £9,500 per patient. People who get reablement care at home receive it for an average of 17 days at a cost of about £1,400 per person.
- Local and national public engagement schemes – including Somerset's Fit For My Future programme and the 10-Year Health Plan engagement – show clear support for delivering care closer to home.

Today (5 August), NHS Somerset, is formally launching a public engagement programme to help shape the development of its overarching Community Services Strategy.

Community services include:

- Outpatient clinics – where patients receive medical consultations, assessments, treatments, or follow-up care without being admitted to hospital overnight, typically run by consultants, nurses, or other healthcare professionals
- Inpatient care – where patients receive care that requires them to be admitted to a hospital bed
- Therapy services – covering mental and physical health, from talking therapies to physiotherapy and reablement
- Dementia services
- Children's services

Dr Tom MacConnell, a consultant cardiologist and Deputy Chief Medical Officer at NHS Somerset, said: "Since I arrived in Somerset over 30 years ago I have undertaken community outpatient clinics or supported primary care colleagues in online clinical meetings. The publication of the 10-Year Health Plan is a great opportunity to rethink and develop a broader approach to community services.

"We want to retain the essence of community hospitals and to care for people locally, but modernise the way we do this, that's fit for purpose, more than 75 years since the NHS was first created.

"This is about using community resources, including community hospitals, in a way to allow the best possible local delivery of care. This could include local access to chemotherapy, or more x-rays or more outpatient clinics in community settings. We want to get better outcomes with the resources, that are available to our community. Many Somerset residents are clear that when they are ill, they would prefer to be at home, or as close to it as possible, provided the care which gives them the best and safe outcome is available. We're really looking forward to working with local communities to explore what that could look like for them."

The strategy, which is due to be published later this year, will enshrine the high-level principles of how the local NHS will deliver community services across the county as a whole. Detailed engagement work will also be taking place in neighbourhood areas about how best to deliver the strategy and the 10 Year Health Plan at a local level, in keeping with the 10-Year Health Plan. If you'd like to be part of NHS Somerset's engagement work, email somicb.engagement@nhs.net.

Local people can have their say in the following ways:

- Attend one of the [Somerset's Big Conversation events](#) taking place across the county this summer
- Take part in our interactive activities on spending choices and community care. If you can't make it to an event, you can take part in the activities online here:
 - <https://bit.ly/community-services-somerset-2025>
 - <https://bit.ly/somerset-pound-nhs>

- Complete the [online survey](#)
- Share your views directly with us by
 - Writing to us at NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board, Wynford House, Lufton Way, Yeovil, BA22 8HR, Freepost RRKL-XKSC-ACSG
 - Emailing us at somicb.engagement@nhs.net

A stakeholder reference group is also being set up as a forum to represent the Somerset community where ideas can be tested and feedback shared – email somicb.engagement@nhs.net to express an interest in being part of the group.

The strategy will also consider government policy, Somerset's Health and Care Strategy and Joint Forward Plan, data on local populations and their needs, outcomes from previous engagement programmes such as Fit For My Future, Somerset's Big Conversation 2024 and the 10-Year Health Plan, along with clinical evidence from best practice methods, current practice and 'test and learn' projects.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

* Data analysis by Somerset NHS Foundation Trust has found that, overall, 29% of people being admitted to community hospital beds in the 12 months to 31 January 2025 are from the same Primary Care Network area as that community hospital. There are 13 Primary Care Networks (PCN) in Somerset. Each one is a group of general practices working together with other local health and care providers – like community services, pharmacies, mental health teams, and social care – to deliver more coordinated and personalised healthcare to people in their area. Each PCN typically serves a community of around 30,000 to 50,000 people.

** [NHS England » Recondition the nation](#)

Note to editors

NHS Somerset is the local headquarters for the NHS, responsible for planning and overseeing health services for our 600,000 residents. We work with over 400 different organisations including Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Somerset Council, our hospices and other voluntary sector partners who support local people to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Our total budget is £3.1 billion and this delivers services in Somerset and a range of shared services for the South West. Our 300 staff include over 100 clinicians, 70 of whom are nurses, delivering care for people with long-term disability, vaccine programmes, and infection prevention and control. We make sure the voice of Somerset – including local communities, patient groups, MPs, councillors and the voluntary sector – is heard when it comes to planning and delivering health services for the future.

Further information: Please contact NHS Somerset Communications team on somicb.communications@nhs.net