



SOMERSET
County Council

THE CAPSULE

A healthy dose of Public Health news from Somerset



A word from Cllr Clare Paul

Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

Welcome to the very first edition of The Capsule – a snap shot of some of the important work Somerset County Council's Public Health team have been doing recently. Over the past two years, public health has become well-known for its vital role in the Covid-19 pandemic but it's role is much wider reaching and there is a great deal more to public health than you might expect. Here in Somerset, our public health team work with everything from sexual health and substance misuse to mental health and domestic abuse. We are constantly striving to find new ways to help empower our residents to enjoy healthier and happier lives, whilst also offering support and guidance too. Read on to discover some of positive initiatives taking place within Somerset's Public Health team and learn about the support available. I hope you'll be pleasantly surprised to learn just how much goes on in Somerset Public Health and feel reassured that we're working hard for you and your loved ones.

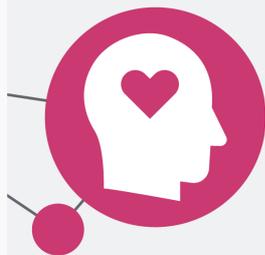
What's been happening across Somerset?



Somerset does 'Dry January'

Here in Somerset we were fully behind the national Dry January 2022 campaign, encouraging people to give up alcohol for a month. We helped promote the campaign across the county, estimating 1 in 6 adults would ditch the drink during January. Our Dry January online and social media campaigns included personal stories from local residents who shared their own experiences with alcohol. These intimate accounts were extremely powerful and they were shared thousands of times on social media, with nearly half a million impressions on Facebook and the Taboola content sharing platform. This led to over 6,500 view throughs to websites offering further support to Somerset residents.

For anyone wanting to make changes to their relationship with alcohol we recommend the free and confidential support offered by Somerset Drink and Alcohol Service (SDAS) delivered by the charity Turning Point. For support speak to your GP, call SDAS on 0300 303 8788 or visit www.turning-point.co.uk/sdas.



Children's Mental Health Week

During the pandemic, children have experienced an increase in isolation and they have missed out on important opportunities for socialisation and development. As a result, children's mental health has been affected. In February we worked with [Young Somerset](#) during Children's Mental Health week to reach out to children and young people in Somerset who are feeling uncertain or low – to hear their voice, recognise their needs, listen well and to help support them towards positive wellbeing and mental health. As part of this project Young Somerset developed useful resources for schools and people who work with children and young people, including [Growing Together for Primary](#) and [Growing Together for Teens](#). For more information and support visit the [Somerset Children and Young People Health and Wellbeing website](#).



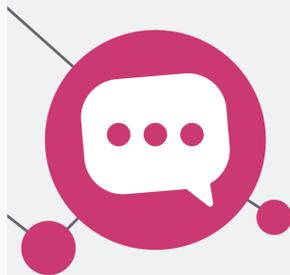


#NoClosedDoorsEver

During the pandemic, tensions within relationships increased with more people having to work from home and socialising less. Our #NoClosedDoorsEver campaign was designed to reach as many people as possible across Somerset and offer education and support regarding domestic abuse. We promoted our Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (SIDAS), which works with men, women and children affected by domestic abuse. We raised awareness about the confidential specialist services we offer including safe emergency accommodation, outreach support and a local helpline.

We can all make an impact and help ensure someone gets the help they urgently need by sharing our #NoClosedDoorsEver campaign online. Please repost or retweet our messages. It really can make a difference. If you are experiencing domestic abuse or you're worried about someone you know, help is available at sometersurvivors.org.uk or by telephoning 0800 69 49 999.

If you'd like to know more about the signs of domestic abuse and what you can do to help, you can complete this [free online training](#) from Somerset Survivors.



Smoking in Pregnancy

In a bid to help pregnant women get the support they need to quit smoking in pregnancy we launched a new poster and leaflet campaign, signposting women to the [Mums2Be Stop Smoking Service](#). Since launching we have seen an increase in client referrals for support and we're hopeful numbers will continue to rise.



Tackling violence against women & children

In Somerset the number of women reporting sexual offences to Avon and Somerset Police has increased in the past 12 months and the age of victims follows the national trend with women aged 16-24 most likely to be a victim. The proportion of younger victims (under 16) has also increased. Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council have recently joined forces in a pledge to make public spaces and streets safer for women and girls. As part of our Safer Streets project we launched a new campaign 'It can stop if we change together', in a bid to raise awareness, tackle sexual harassment and make public streets safer. The campaign was aimed at changing perpetrator behaviour and to start a conversation in society that challenges misogynistic attitudes and discourages inappropriate behaviour towards women and girls. You can find out more at saferstreetawareness.co.uk.



Fizz Free February

Did you know sugar now makes up 14.7% of the daily calorie intake of 4-10 year olds (Public Health England) while the official recommended daily limit should be no more than 5%? In a bid to help people reduce their sugar intake we promoted Fizz Free February, encouraging everyone to make the pledge to #gofizzfree for 28 days for better health. From tooth decay and weight gain there are loads of reasons to cut out the fizz. Discover lots of reasons to quit the fizz and reduce your sugar intake at [Sugar Smart UK](https://www.sugar-smart.co.uk).



Campaigns to look out for next month...

No Smoking Day

9 March is National No Smoking Day. As part of this we will be piloting an innovative Workplace Stop Smoking Service for Somerset County Council employees. If it proves successful we hope to roll it out across Somerset. Support to quit is always available at healthysomerset.co.uk/smokefree or by calling 01823 356222.

[Find out more](#)



Say hello to HaLO!

Over the past 6 months we've been working on a handy new online tool for anyone wanting to apply for an alcohol licence in Somerset. Due to be launched next month it will let you type in your postcode and receive a 'harm ranking', helping inform you of the likelihood of an alcohol licence being challenged by Public Health. Directors of Public Health are one of the Responsible Authorities for alcohol licencing decisions in England, and may object, or seek additional conditions on licences to minimise alcohol harm.

The new tool called HaLO (Health as a Licencing Objective) collates data from across Somerset on variables such as the number of licenced premises already in an area, rates of alcohol related crime and alcohol related deaths.

If you're applying for an alcohol licence in the future we encourage you to check out HaLO – it will help you be more informed when you make your application. Look out for the HaLO tool launching soon.

Economic abuse is a form of domestic abuse

Economic abuse is a legally recognised form of domestic abuse and is defined in the [Domestic Abuse Act](#). It often occurs in the context of intimate partner violence, but also happens within familial relationships too. Economic abuse involves the control of a partner, ex-partner or relative's money and finances, as well as the things money can buy. We will be running an awareness campaign across Somerset about economic abuse and sign-posting people to places they can receive help and support.

[Find out more](#)

Health checks for 40 - 74 year olds

Health checks are offered for free to all 40-74 year olds with no pre-existing health conditions. They are designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. As we get older we have a higher risk of developing one of these conditions. During the pandemic Health Checks were put on hold but they're now up and running again. Next month we will be encouraging eligible adults across Somerset to get their health check.

[Find out more](#)

Want to take control of your own health and well-being?

A good first stop when looking for support for yourself, the people you know or your community is our website www.somerset.gov.uk.

It's never too late to take control of your health and well-being through changing behaviours and seeking help and we're with you every step of the way.

Follow our Director of Public Health, Professor Trudi Grant, on [Twitter](#) and stay in the know.



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