



SOMERSET
County Council

Somerset's Public Health Update

Friday 29 April 2022

Welcome to the latest edition of the monthly Somerset Public Health update for key stakeholders and subscribers. This update is produced on behalf of the Somerset County Council Public Health Team and has replaced the previous weekly Covid-19 update.

What's been happening across Somerset?

Covid-19 Updates

The last ONS data from early April showed that 1 in 10 people in the South West of England were infected with covid19 at that time. The virus is still very much with us though, and we still encourage everyone to stay at home if they experience symptoms to avoid the spread. Some settings, like hospitals and care homes, continue to have measures in place to protect people from Covid-19. This includes wearing face coverings, alongside other measures to reduce the virus spreading. We ask everyone to follow any requests from these settings and act in ways which will help protect our more vulnerable residents.

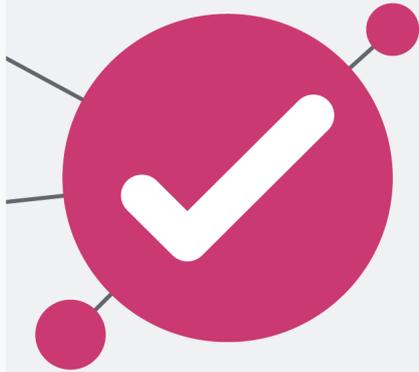
Vaccinations

The Covid-19 vaccination remains our first line of defence against coronavirus and the very best way to keep communities safe. With legally mandated restrictions no longer in place,

vaccines remain our primary mitigating measure against severe disease and illness from Covid-19.

Please check our local NHS website [Covid-19 vaccinations in Somerset - Somerset CCG](#) to find clinics in your area or use the national portal to find a walk-in site: www.nhs.uk/grab-a-jab.

The NHS 'Tower Street' site in Taunton is now fully open.

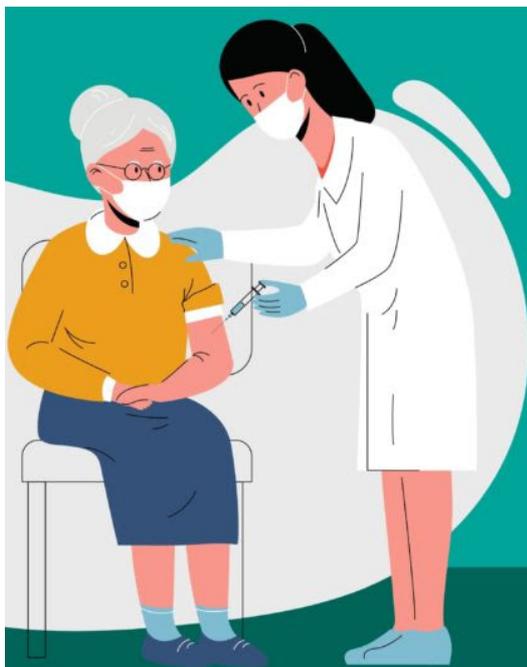


Spring Booster Vaccination

People aged 75 and over and those who are immunosuppressed are now being invited to book their Spring Booster vaccination.

The UK Health Security Agency published guidance on the spring Covid-19 booster offer for those aged 75 years and older, residents in care homes and those aged 12 years and over with a weakened immune system. Further info can be found [here](#).

Appointments are now available through the [National Vaccination Booking Service](#). **Please encourage those eligible to [go online and book their jab](#), or call 119 for an appointment. You are also able to visit a [walk-in vaccination](#) site for your Spring Booster.**

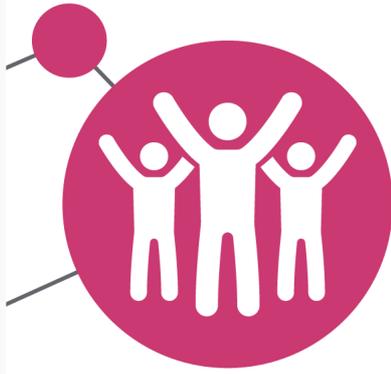


**People aged 75 & over
are now eligible for their
Spring Covid-19 Booster**

**Book online, call 119
or visit a walk-in centre**

Search 'Grab a Jab' 



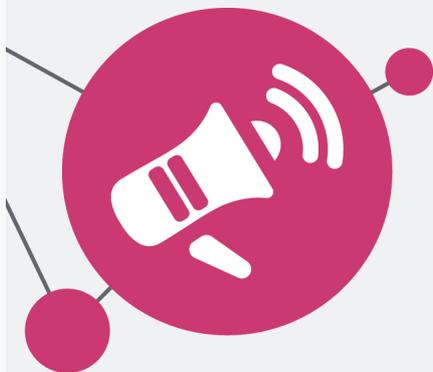


12-15 Vaccine

Although the in-school Covid-19 vaccination programme for 12 to 15 year olds has ended, young people are still able to access the vaccine outside of school, at a vaccination centre, pharmacy or [walk-in centre](#).

5-11 Vaccine

Healthy 5 to 11 year olds are now also being offered the Covid-19 vaccine. Vaccinations will take place outside of school, in vaccination centres, pharmacies and GP surgeries. Parents of 5 to 11 year olds will receive a letter from the NHS with further information on the vaccine. Further information is available in the [guide for parents of children aged 5 to 11 years](#) published by UKHSA along with some [frequently asked questions](#) on the vaccination programme including information on eligibility, accessibility and advice for parents of children at high risk from Covid-19.



Covid Helpline

Coronavirus Helpline

The coronavirus helpline has now been stood down, but if you require support, please contact your district council. Their contact details are as follows:

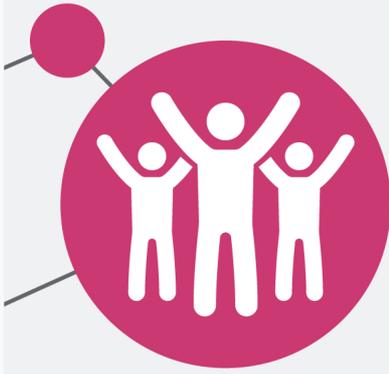
Mendip District Council: 0300 303 8588

Sedgemoor District Council: 0300 303 7800

South Somerset District Council: 01935 462462

Somerset West and Taunton Council: 0300 304 8000

Other areas of Public Health



Age 40-74? Get your free NHS Health Check

Somerset Public Health is urging everyone who is eligible to get a free [NHS Health Check](#) to lower their risk of developing serious health conditions.

The [NHS Health Check](#) is available every five years, for anyone between the age of 40 and 74 years, who does not have a pre-existing long-term condition.

The [NHS Health Check](#) is an important step for many people towards improving their health and becoming more aware of what they can do to lead a healthier life. It can help lower people's risk of developing heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes and some types of dementia.

Attending a free NHS Health Check helps people be better prepared for their future. It identifies risks early on, giving people the opportunity to take steps to reduce those risks, and improving their chance of staying healthy as they age. NHS Health Checks are available at your GP surgery, at participating pharmacies or at a number of specialist clinics at libraries and other community spaces – for a full list go to: <https://bit.ly/freehcheck>.

For further information or to book a test visit: <https://somersethealthchecks.co.uk/>



New ICON Training will save babies lives

Somerset Public Health has joined other organisations from across the county to promote life-saving training which will save babies lives.

'Babies cry, you can cope' is a key message being delivered in new '[ICON](#)' training which helps families create a nurturing environment and learn supporting comfort methods which can help soothe crying babies.

Working with the NHS, healthcare organisations, social care, early years and community and voluntary partners, Somerset County Council's Public Health team have launched a

prevention programme which includes [specialised training for practitioners](#) as well as wider family and community support.

The new training is part of the [National ICON programme](#) which aims to raise awareness of coping with crying, and strategies to support parents and carers to prevent serious injury, illness and even death of young babies as a result of shaking incidents.

If you think you need help and are struggling to cope, don't continue to struggle. Help is available from your midwife, health visitor, GP or [go online](#).

In his latest film, Clinton draws attention to the ICON campaign, and offers simple advice on how to cope with a crying baby.



National Healthy Start Scheme

Healthy Start is an NHS scheme that helps women who are pregnant or have young children and are receiving benefits, buy foods such as milk or fruit.

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, the Healthy Start scheme can help you:

- buy healthy foods like milk or fruit
- get free vitamins

The NHS have launched a digital scheme, which offers a prepaid card to those applying for [Healthy Start](#). This replaces the previous, paper vouchers. This card will be automatically topped up every 4 weeks. The animation below explains how to apply online:

Are you under 18
and pregnant or have a
child under the age of 4?



Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week

Multiple Sclerosis is unpredictable and different for everybody. It is a condition that affects your brain and spinal cord. More than 130,000 people in the UK have MS. In the UK people are most likely to find out they have MS beyond 30 years old. But the first signs of MS often start years earlier.

Symptoms can come and go and change over time, and it's difficult to know how your condition might progress. That is why this #MSAwarenessWeek (from 25 April – 1 May) Multiple Sclerosis Society (MS Society UK) is shining a light on the uncertainty of life with MS.

You can join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)

Campaigns to look out for next month...

Let's move and improve together!

With Spring in full swing and summer just around the corner, now is the perfect time to start thinking about becoming more active. This can be something as simple as going for a walk in our local neighbourhood with a friend or joining an exercise group.

There are so many options and something for everyone regardless of your current fitness levels. Our May edition of the newsletter will have lots more information but in the meantime, check out [Age UK Somerset | Ageing Well Activities and Exercise classes](#) for more details of classes near you. What are you waiting for?



Somerset SME Wellbeing

Small businesses in Somerset are being encouraged to make a pledge to improve workplace wellbeing as part of a new initiative being launched by Somerset County Council.

The innovative Somerset SME Wellbeing project, funded by Somerset County Council's Public Health team, includes training opportunities and is being delivered by New Leaf Life Design to help sole traders and SMEs in Somerset.

The project launches against the backdrop of national figures which show one in five small businesses have seen a 70 per cent decrease in their income amongst other challenges. The focus is on supporting those who have been impacted by Covid-19 - through the virus itself, experience of lockdown or the economic impact of the pandemic. It is particularly aimed at the construction, health and social care, arts and entertainment, visitor economy, and farming and agriculture industries.

The project is looking for 100 SMEs and sole traders to help make Somerset the centre of wellbeing to live, work and stay in. All that is asked of businesses is to sign up to the following five pledges:

- To encourage conversations about wellbeing
- To know where to signpost for help and support
- To encourage training of all staff in wellbeing and mental health
- To take steps to look after your own wellbeing
- To encourage and organise green wellbeing pause points

The business will then be added to a Wellbeing Map of Somerset.

You can make the sign-up pledge by clicking the button below:

[Find out more](#)



Mental Health Awareness Week

The theme of this year's Mental Health Awareness Week (9-15 May) is loneliness. More and more people, from all walks of life, are becoming affected by loneliness and it is having an impact on people's physical and mental health. We know that loneliness can be both the driver for, and a product of poor mental health.

The pandemic has given rise to a sense of loneliness and isolation undermining confidence in daily routines. In recent times, Covid-19 lockdowns and restrictions have meant many people have seen friends and loved ones less often. Many more activities now take place online such as appointments with healthcare professionals and home and hybrid working has become commonplace. All of these changes in our society have contributed to the growing feeling of isolation and loneliness.

During Mental Health Awareness Week, we will be escalating our promotion of emotional health and wellbeing by sharing a range of top tips, toolkits, resources and signposting across social media and other internal and external channels.

[Find out more](#)



Mental Health Awareness Week

9 - 15 May 2022

#IveBeenThere



Heatwave Planning

The [Heatwave Plan for England 2022](#) was launched on 28th April ahead of the start of the Met Office led heat-health alerting system which runs from 1 June to 15 September each year.

High temperatures can cause dehydration, sunburn, heat stress and heat stroke. For vulnerable people, in particular older adults, this can put a strain on the heart and lungs that increases the risk of events like heart attacks and strokes. The Heatwave Plan for England is a guide to protect the population from heat-related harm to health. The aims of the plan are to prepare, alert and prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of severe heat in England. It recommends a series of steps to reduce the risks to health from prolonged exposure to severe heat for:

- the NHS, local authorities, social care, and other public agencies
- professionals working with people at risk
- individuals, local communities and voluntary groups

This year the Met Office predict that there is a 50% chance of an average summer in England, and a 40% chance of a hotter than average summer. We encourage the organisations listed to make themselves familiar with the actions recommended in the Heatwave Plan early in the season and to [register for heat-health alerts](#), so that together we can minimise the impacts of high summer temperatures on health and the impacts on health services.

Yeovil FC Memorial Event

Twelve months ago, Yeovil Football Club's Captain, Lee Collins, tragically took his own life. In celebration of his life and to raise money for local mental health charities, the club is holding an event on Saturday 7 May.

As part of our community partnership with the club, representatives from Somerset's Public Health team and partner organisations will be attending the event to promote local support for mental health, male domestic abuse, perpetrator programme and ICON.

The event will bring to a close a week of fundraising, which will have seen members of the club take part in a charity cycle ride, visiting all of the grounds of the football teams that Lee played for throughout his career.

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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