

Home Care & Specialist Services Newsletter

WINTER 2025


The
Somerset
Care Group

Relax with a hot drink and enjoy our Winter newsletter.

We have lots of heartwarming news, guidance and success stories, with an update from each of our home care and specialist services. From celebrating our Long Service Awards, community collaboration and a mouth-watering recipe to try this winter.

- Thrive Somerset - a brilliant charity that can help you and those around you
- How to stay safe online
- Respite and Day Care services available to you
- Updates from our Somerset and Wiltshire Home Care teams, as well as Way Ahead Care and Realise
- Festive Crossword - and a chance to win a hamper!
- Warming vegetarian curry recipe

Scan this QR code to view this newsletter in video format

Or visit

<https://www.somersetcare.co.uk/news/winter-newsletter-2025>



Village Agents Charity: Thrive

Thrive are a charity now operating under their new name of 'Thrive'. Their individual mission is to **'enable a change by listening, responding to need and building connections between people and communities'**.

They believe that everyone in Somerset should have access to the support they need to meet their basic needs in food, fuel, transport and health.

Thrive can offer support to individuals and families through



their village agent system or Somerset Carers services. They also offer training opportunities to support volunteers who run local community buildings/ spaces.

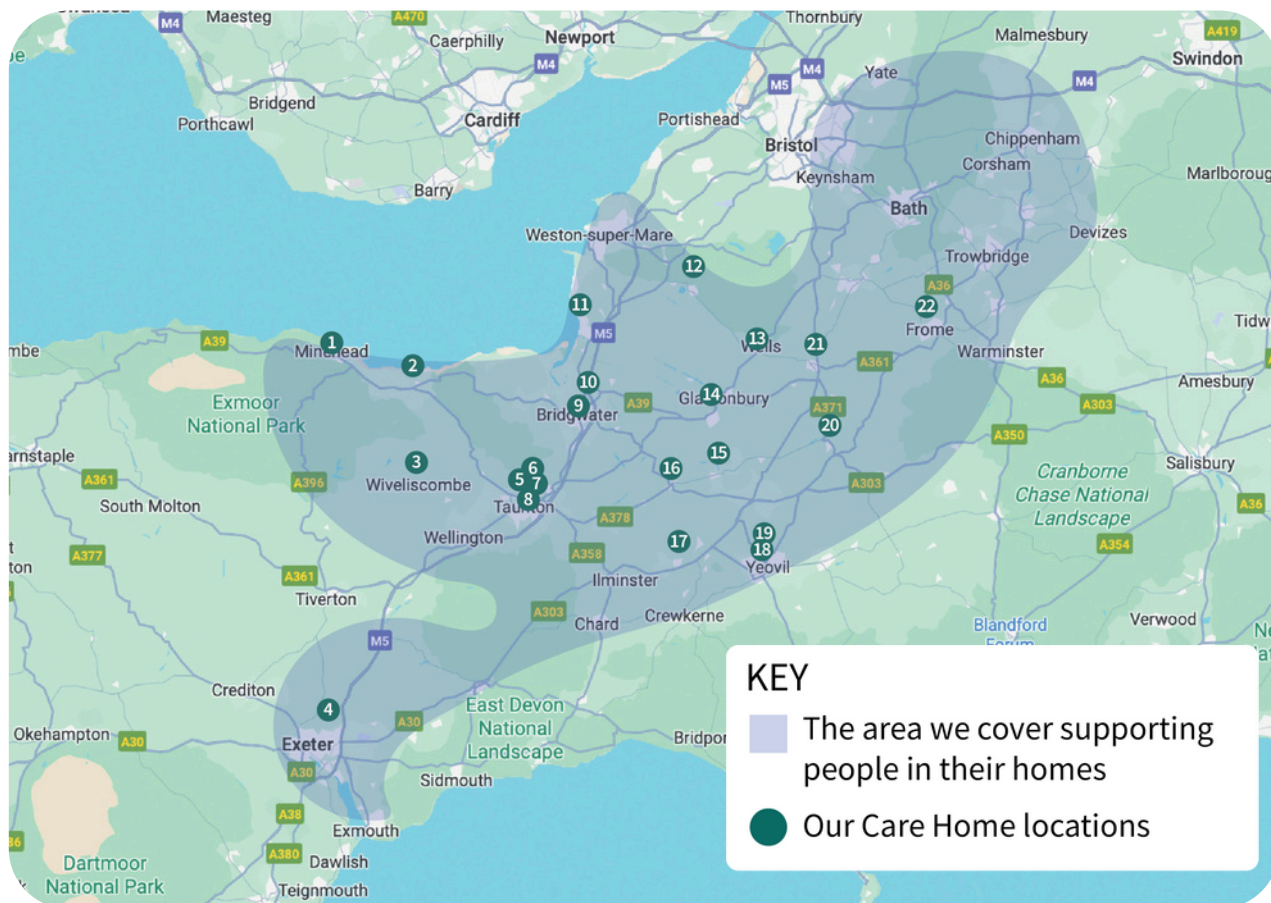
The village agent service is an invaluable resource supporting anyone living in Somerset who is facing a worrying or tough time. This may be for a number of reasons – health, finances, housing (including warm/ cold weather support), feelings of loneliness or isolation.

As a charity, Thrive rely on donations, and through the generosity of local community and individuals, they are able to support a number of people with their services.

If you would like support in any of the above, you can ask your carer to contact their local office base, and we can assist you with a referral. If this is something you wish to do yourself, you can contact them via **01823 331222** or **info@thrivesomerset.org.uk**.

You can find more information on the services/ support they offer on their website: **www.thrivesomerset.org.uk**.

Where the Somerset Care Group operates across the South West



- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Wyndham House, Minehead | 12 Greenhill House, Cheddar |
| 2 Croft House, Williton | 13 Fletcher House, Wells |
| 3 Pulsford Lodge, Wiveliscombe | 14 Southlawns, Street |
| 4 Green Tree Court, Exeter | 15 Wessex House, Somerton |
| 5 Lavender Court, Taunton | 16 Portcullis House, Langport |
| 6 Halcon Centre, Taunton | 17 Burnworthy House, South Petherton |
| 7 Moorhaven, Taunton | 18 Cooksons Court, Yeovil |
| 8 Calway House, Taunton | 19 Grovelands, Yeovil |
| 9 Stockmoor Lodge, Bridgwater | 20 Cary Brook Castle Cary |
| 10 Sydenham House, Bridgwater | 21 Field House, Shepton Mallet |
| 11 Frith House, Burnham-on-Sea | 22 Rowden House, Frome |

Day care & short stay breaks near you

Try a free taster day!

Somerset Care's day care and respite breaks offer existing home care customers a warm, friendly extension of the support they already trust. Available within our 22 care homes across Somerset and Devon, these services provide peace of mind for individuals and their loved ones, with safe, well-trained teams.

Our day care centres offer a welcoming space to enjoy social engagement, take part in meaningful activities, and make new friends.

Guests can also benefit from our bathing facilities and relax over delicious home-cooked meals, all within



a dementia-friendly environment designed to support confidence and independence.

For those who need some time away, or for families who could use an extra helping hand, our respite service offers flexible, pre-bookable stays. With the option to “*book now and stay later,*” it's easy to plan ahead and know that support will be ready exactly when it's needed.

For information and advice, please contact our friendly and helpful enquiries team on 0800 8174 990.



Be a part of our community this Christmas.



This December, we're putting a festive spin on our day care and respite services in our care homes.

- ✓ Company and companionship
- ✓ Seasonal activities
- ✓ Tailored care
- ✓ Home-cooked meals

Whether you're with us for a day, a week or more, you'll be part of our home.



[somersetcare.co.uk](https://www.somersetcare.co.uk)
0800 817 4925



Not for profit,
all for you.

Staying safe online

SPARK iT partners with community spaces to run free Digital Cafés helping people access the internet safely and stay connected.

The charity promotes digital inclusion and helps Somerset residents access skills, support, and learning online.

The following information has been provided to help us stay safe online.



NEVER BE RUSHED INTO ANYTHING

Avoiding scams or phishing emails

Here are some clues that could alert you to a scam email:

- Alarming news about an account you have
- Attachments that look odd
- Failure to address you by name
- Grammar or spelling mistakes
- Request to take urgent action by clicking on a link
- Offers to free things
- Possibly an email address you don't recognise



If in doubt, don't open these emails.

If you see a suspicious email, don't reply with your details or open any links or documents. Delete the email.

NEVER BE RUSHED INTO ANYTHING

Recognising scams - checking websites

If you need to check whether a website is a scam before visiting it, you can use the following service safely: **Get Safe Online - Check a website** <https://www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite/>

Common scams

Offers of Amazing Free Prizes! Burn fat while you sleep! Make big money from home! This free seminar can change your life! Pension or investment schemes.

If it sounds too good to be true, it's because it is. Don't do what they ask of you.



Banking scams

"We've detected fraudulent activity on your account, you need to take action now."

Banks will not email you about this. If you read an email or get a call from someone claiming to be from your bank, delete the email or hang up and then call your bank's fraud team by looking up their correct number online or from your bank statements.

Relationship scams

Scammers use social media networks, like Facebook or dating sites. Once they have gained your trust they may start asking for money, often telling you an emotional story about their lives.

Never send them money or send them your details.

Fake Government websites

Some scammers set up fake sites that look almost like the real thing. Before you use a site that holds important information like your bank or your tax returns, or anything else official, check first.

Check first by using Get Safe Online's website checker:

<https://www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite/>

Setting safe passwords

Password top tips:

- Make sure you log out when using public computers.
- Create safe passwords that you can remember (three random words that you can remember is one idea, but never use personal details like dates of birth).
- Save your passwords securely and never give them to anyone.

Dealing with scams



If you have been scammed, report it.



If you have had money stolen, call your bank.

In an emergency call 999 or 101 to speak to the police if it's not an emergency.

For more information on **SPARK IT**, please visit their website, where you can find dates and locations of their weekly and monthly Digital Cafe's all over Somerset.

<https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/spark-it/>



Way Ahead Care is a part of the not-for-profit Somerset Care Group, and has been trusted to provide quality, person-centred home care for over 30 years.

Local community supports our Extra Care Housing scheme



One of the ECH schemes we support recently held an event, where the residents invited the local community in to the scheme, raising funds for future events and excursions. The residents of this scheme put so much effort in to this, with a bake sale, live music, raffle and other stalls. It was a huge success with a great turn out from the local community.

Verified reviews



We have received some excellent reviews on [homecare.co.uk](https://www.homecare.co.uk), thank you for those who have sent a review back. We love reading these, and hope to see more in the future.

Celebrating staff achievements

We recently celebrated our Long Service Awards to honour staff members with 5 to 25 years of dedicated service to the company. It's always a pleasure to recognise our colleagues compassion for the work we do.



Specialist Adults Support in Somerset Framework

We are proud to be a part of the Specialist Adults Support in Somerset Framework, where we can support individuals in their own home with personal care and provide access to the community. This is a specialist service, supporting those with learning disabilities and/ or autism spectrum conditions, acquired brain injuries and other needs, where care at home from Adult Social Care differs slightly to this support.

Somerset Home Care Update

Latest review results:

There has been a significant improvement in our latest readiness review, with our score rising from 61% to 76%. This now rates us as 'good' with our Quality Team.



Collaborative working across the Somerset Care Group

We're thrilled to partner with Somerset Care's residential care homes to create a unique service across Somerset and beyond. This collaboration fosters innovation, shares best practices, and leads to positive outcomes for both staff and customers.

We also work closely with our care homes to arrange day care visits or use their adapted facilities for bathing support.

If you'd like to learn more about how our at-home care team can assist with these options, please reach out or ask your carer during their next visit.

Long Service Awards – 8th October 2025

We proudly celebrated the incredible dedication of 30 members of our Somerset Care Group family at our Long Service Awards, honoring a combined 445 years of service. This event highlighted the profound impact of loyalty, compassion, and commitment on our community and those we serve.



The 445 years represent more than just numbers - they are a tapestry of kindness, wisdom, and selfless service. Our award recipients exemplify the values that define Somerset Care Group, setting a shining example for all.

Wiltshire Home Care Update

Congratulations to our new Business Manager



Hello, I am Kelly Vines, the new Business Manager here at our Wiltshire base. I am responsible for ensuring a smooth, safe and high-quality service. I have been a part of Somerset Care for 13 years and I'm excited for this next step in my career.

When I am not at work, I enjoy spending time with my family and going off on our Caravan adventures.

Exciting changes within the team

We have a newly appointed Team Manager for the Wiltshire area, and Tania Farnham is now the Team Manager for the B&NES team.

Wiltshire County Council Quality Assurance Review

We're excited to share that the council's feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The auditor was particularly impressed by how effectively we gather feedback from our customers and the care we take when completing our satisfaction calls. Thanks to this thorough review, we were delighted to receive no required actions - an exceptional outcome. We're proud to say we achieved an overall score of 0, the highest score possible.

Celebrating 80 years of Service

In September, we celebrated the dedication and loyalty of our colleagues at the Long Service Awards, marking an incredible 80 years of combined compassionate care at Somerset Care. This reflects their hard work and the trust we share with those we support.





Realise is committed to transforming care and support for people with a learning disability or Autism, empowering people and their families.

Alfred Court Halloween Party

Alfred Court held a Halloween party, open to all service users - some attended from as far as Yeovil and Chard. They played Halloween-themed bingo and art, sensory activities, danced, sang karaoke and enjoyed hot dogs. Everyone had a blast!



Macmillan Coffee Morning

Alfred Court held a successful coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Support, raising £98 in cash donations, with more online contributions. Special thanks to Kerry Webber for the idea and everyone who attended, as well as those who donated cakes.

Holidays

Service users have been supported to go on holiday. Leslie went to Torquay, Steve went to Cornwall, Natasha went to Centre Parcs and Robin also went on holiday to Torquay.

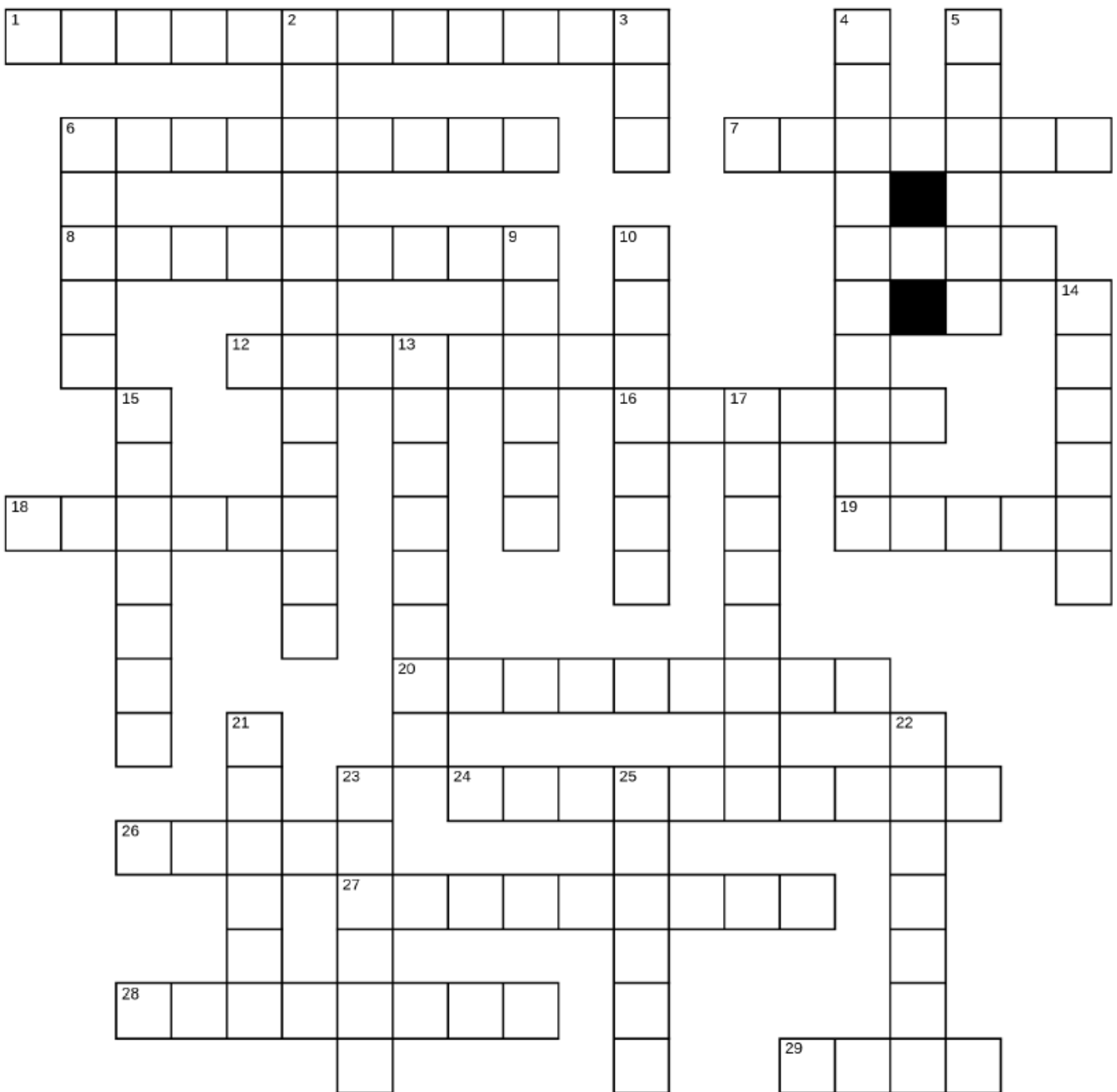


Zoe's new car

Zoe has been supported to get her first Motability car, which had to be in her favourite colour, yellow.



Christmas Crossword



Please submit your completed crossword to your carer to be in with a chance of winning a hamper!

Simply cut this page out and submit by **Friday 9th January 2026.**

WIN!

Name: _____

Contact number: _____



ACROSS

- 1) Night preceding the joyous holiday
- 6) Decorative item featuring a miniature scene encased in glass
- 7) Vertical structure associated with Santa's entry to homes
- 8) Traditional holiday snack, often roasted over an open fire
- 11) Fun vehicle for sliding down snowy hills
- 12) Creatures that fly to deliver presents with their master
- 16) Luminescent adornments illuminating the festive season
- 18) Baked delight often left out as a treat for Santa
- 19) Heavenly being often depicted in Christmas stories
- 20) Customs or practices carried on through generations
- 24) Unique frozen crystals, often a symbol of water
- 26) Jolly figure known for his red suit and white beard
- 27) Symbol of affection hung in doorways
- 28) Group activity of singing festive songs door-to-door
- 29) Term representing the joyful celebration of Christ's birth

DOWN

- 2) Unity and bonding during the family gatherings of the season
- 3) Legendary being assisting in toy production
- 4) Bright red flower commonly used for decoration
- 5) Shimmery decor that enhances holiday ambiance
- 6) Casual footwear often filled with holiday goodies
- 9) Mode of transport for Christmas deliveries through the snow
- 10) Decorative loop of flowers or leaves
- 13) Depiction of the birth of Jesus with Mary and Joseph
- 14) Source of light, often used during Christmas celebrations
- 15) Frosty creation often donned with a carrot and scarf
- 17) Kindness and generosity characteristic of the holiday spirit
- 21) Feeding trough where Jesus was laid at birth
- 22) To express joy or happiness, especially during the holidays
- 23) Group likely to gather for festive meal and celebrations
- 25) Circular arrangement with foliage, a symbol of welcome

Sweet potato, chickpea and spinach curry

A warming and filling vegetable curry suitable for two people, topped with a drizzle of cream and served with warm naan breads. It is easy to make and there is little washing up.



Ingredients

- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1 inch chunks
- 1 small red pepper, cut into roughly 1 inch chunks
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated or crushed
- 12g/½ oz fresh root ginger, peeled and grated (small bit)
- 1 tbsp medium curry powder
- A small tin (200g) chopped tomatoes
- A small tin (200g or a couple of spoons) chickpeas, drained
- ½ a bag baby spinach
- 2 naan breads, cut in half
- 2 tbsp double cream (optional)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- fresh coriander leaves, chutney, pickles and lemon wedges for squeezing, to serve (optional)

Method

1. Put the sweet potato, red pepper and oil in a large, wide-based microwaveable dish or casserole and toss well. (The dish will need to hold at least 1 litre/1.5 pints of curry). Cover with a microwaveable lid or dinner plate and cook on HIGH for 3 minutes.
2. Stir in the garlic, ginger and curry powder. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and cook on HIGH for 2 minutes stirring after 1 minute.
3. Stir in the chopped tomatoes and chickpeas. Cover and cook on HIGH for 3 minutes. Stir well then place the spinach leaves on top. Cover and cook on HIGH for 3 minutes, or until the sweet potato is tender and the curry is piping hot, stirring halfway. Take care removing the dish from the microwave as it will be very hot. Leave to stand for 2 minutes.
4. Place the naan bread, two pieces at a time, on a microwaveable plate. Microwave, uncovered, for 30–40 seconds on HIGH, or until soft and warm. Do not allow to overcook.
5. Optional - Drizzle the cream over the curry. Serve with coriander leaves to garnish, chutney, pickles and lemon wedges, if using, and the warm naan bread for scooping up the sauce.

And enjoy!



Thank you for reading our newsletter. You can also access an audio or video version using the QR code on the cover.

Wishing you and your loved ones a merry Christmas and a happy new year, from all at the Somerset Care Group.