



Home Care & Specialist Services Newsletter




Summer 2026



The
Somerset
Care Group

Welcome to our Summer newsletter, filled with updates, celebrations and a few treats along the way. In this edition, you'll find:

- Information about gifts and bequests
 - A celebration of our Care Awards, including how to watch the ceremony via live stream
 - Highlights from our latest customer survey, and the actions we're taking in response
 - Fun updates from each of our services, sharing what everyone's been up to
 - A bit of crossword fun to enjoy
 - And a delicious sticky sultana pudding recipe to try at home.
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We hope you enjoy reading!

Scan this QR code to view this newsletter in video format

Or visit

www.somersetcare.co.uk/news/home-care-specialist-services-spring-newsletter-2026



Gifts and bequests

We understand that at times, you may wish to provide gifts to staff - whether this is at a time of year like Christmas, or other occasions/ events or even to show 'gratitude'.



Under the Somerset Care Group Policy, staff must NOT receive gifts from a customer or family member. This includes accepting any reward or fee.

All staff will need to notify their line manager immediately if a gift is given to them, and politely decline the gift.

All staff sign an agreement acknowledging the Company's policy with regard to the acceptance of gifts/ bequests from customers or their relatives. This agreement also includes the understanding that an employee must not advise upon the preparation of Wills or be named as a beneficiary in any Will or accept gifts from customers or their relatives.



All employees must not ask people (or their relatives) who use our service to lend them money, nor must they lend money to them.

All employees must not use the property of people who use our service for personal use, they must not sell or dispose of goods belonging to people who use our service for their personal gain.

Whilst we understand that you may wish at times to provide a gift, all gifts will be politely refused and reported to the manager of the service.

This policy is for all periods of the year, including public holidays, birthdays and Christmas. This is in place to protect our customers and staff.

If you have any questions, please do speak to your local office base.

Celebrating our stars

Thank you to everyone who submitted a People's Choice nomination this year. We were delighted to receive so many inspiring stories, and we're proud to share the colleagues who have been shortlisted across a range of award categories.



Hidden Heroes Award

Primrose Wood
Realise

Leadership of the Year Award

Emma Fox
Realise

Managers Choice Award

Kieron Robinson
Way Ahead Care

Newcomer of the Year Award

Liliana Inman
Realise

Team of the Year Award

Amy Farmer and Rahab Kariuki
Realise

Connecting with People Award

Jackie Byrne
Somerset Home Care

Doing the Right Thing Award

Sophia Ndlovu
Somerset Home Care

Maria Chappell Williams
Somerset Home Care

Embracing Change Award

Megan Short
Way Ahead Care
Colm Campbell
Way Ahead Care



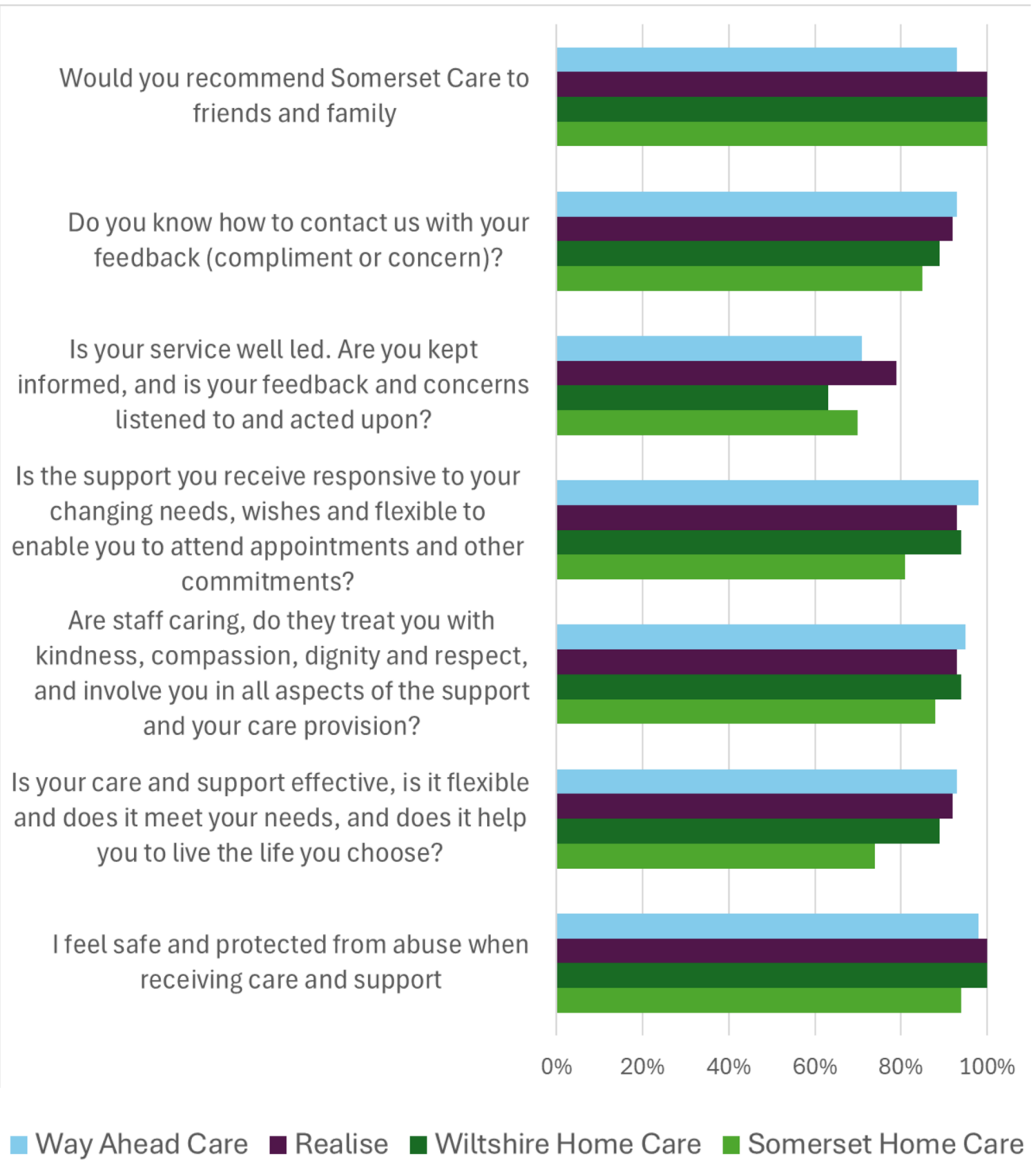
The Somerset Care Awards Ceremony takes place on **Wednesday 13 May** from **1.30–4pm**, and we'd love you to join us online to celebrate colleagues who go above and beyond.

Simply scan the QR code below to watch the live stream on the day.



Customer survey results

Thank you to those who participated in our customer survey. Your feedback plays a vital role in shaping and improving our services. Your insights help us understand what we're doing well and where we can do better, ensuring we continue to deliver high-quality, person-centred support that meets your needs.



Based on your feedback, here are the improvements we're making:

Somerset Home Care:

The survey results show strong overall satisfaction, with an average score of 8.7/10 and 88% customer satisfaction across CQC key lines of enquiry. Most respondents feel safe, well cared for and supported by kind, responsive staff, with 85% saying they would recommend Somerset Care and 100% interested in learning about other services.

Wiltshire Home Care:

The customer survey shows strong overall satisfaction, with an average score of 8.4/10 and the vast majority of customers reporting that they feel safe, well cared for and supported by kind, respectful staff. While consistency of carers and communication about visit changes were highlighted as areas for improvement, customers consistently value the service for helping them remain independent and feel secure in their own homes.

Realise:

The 2026 customer survey shows very high satisfaction, with people feeling safe, well cared for and supported by kind, friendly staff, reflected in an average score of 9/10 and strong recommendations to others. Feedback is taken seriously and acted upon, with individual concerns addressed to improve people's comfort, independence and overall experience.

Way Ahead Care:

The yearly survey for Way Ahead Care shows very high satisfaction at 95%, with the majority of people feeling safe, well supported and treated with kindness and respect, and an average satisfaction score of 8.6/10. While most customers would recommend Somerset Care, feedback highlights that communication and leadership are areas where further improvement is needed.



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.

Thank you for your feedback

We're very grateful to everyone who completed a survey. Your positive feedback about our service and staff is truly appreciated and helps us identify learning and actions to keep improving. Thank you for taking the time to share your views.



One year of supporting Extra Care Housing

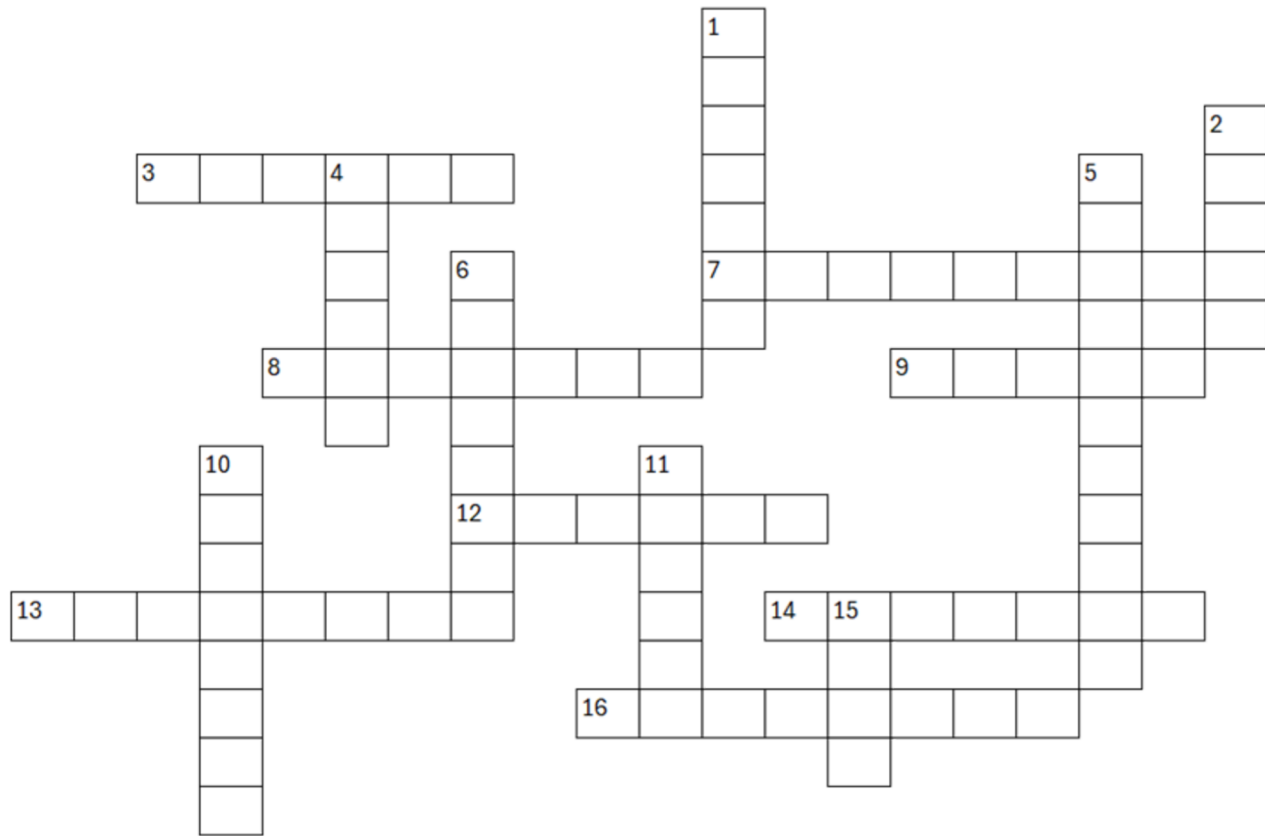
We're proud to be marking one year of supporting Extra Care Housing (ECH). Our schemes have been thriving, with lots of activities, events and social opportunities creating welcoming, community-focused environments. The wrap-around service has been a real success, embraced by our staff and enjoyed by people living in our schemes.

Easter raffle celebrations

This year's Easter Raffle was a great success, with five customers and three staff members winning a delightful afternoon tea set. Congratulations to all our winners - we hope you enjoy your treats!



Crossword

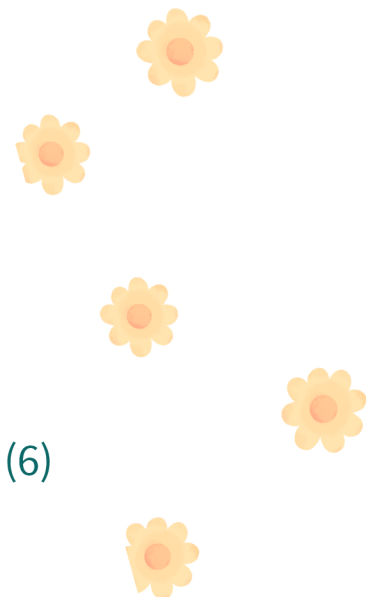


ACROSS

3. Meteorological term for spring temp. (6)
7. WEATHER, Weather pattern common in March and April (9)
8. A garden insect beneficial to plants (7)
9. Month associated with longer daylight (5)
12. Sweet British woodland plant (6)
13. Sudden heavy spring rainfall (8)
14. A migratory bird returning in spring (7)
16. Young plant just emerging from soil (8)

DOWN

1. Period of rapid plant growth in spring (7)
2. Tool used to turn soil before planting (5)
4. Traditional spring celebration with dancing (6)
5. Process by which flowers are fertilised (11)
6. Seasonal allergy common in spring (8)
10. Springtime agricultural activity (8)
11. Protective covering on early plants (6)
15. Building part for creepers to cling to (4)



Somerset Home Care Update

Service delivery and capacity

During the quarter, Somerset Care Home Care continued to deliver high-volume domiciliary and Discharge to Assess (D2A) care across Somerset and neighbouring areas, including Taunton, South Somerset, Mendip, Sedgemoor, Bridgwater, Exeter and Honiton. Activity remained high, with frequent new starts, assessments and short-term intensive support.

Workforce, recruitment and staffing

Recruitment remained our key focus, with ongoing face-to-face interviews across multiple localities and continued “Refer a Friend” campaigns to support recruitment and retention.

Managers continued to balance active recruitment alongside operational, audit and governance demands.



Quality, governance and risk

Strong oversight continued through regular audits, medication reviews and learning actions, supported by the introduction of a new medication stock monitoring approach and ongoing compliance awareness.

Communication and engagement

Regular handovers, newsletters and engagement activities supported continuity of care, staff wellbeing and service resilience, alongside clear operational communications during peak periods.

Quarter summary

We continue to operate under sustained demand while maintaining strong governance, proactive recruitment and positive customer outcomes. Work is also underway to implement a newly commissioned D2A service in South Somerset, with recruitment and training progressing ahead of a June 2026 start.



Wiltshire Home Care Update

Staff survey outcomes

At the start of the year our staff were invited to complete our annual survey; as part of this process we held meetings in February with colleagues to provide feedback. We found the meetings to be incredibly positive and successful in helping us shape our business over the next 12 months. It was also very reassuring to know that 100% of the staff who completed the survey understood how their work contributed to the success of our service. We also received the results of our annual customer survey, which went out in February. Thank you to everyone that completed this; we are very grateful for all feedback that we received as it helps us to learn, and to understand what is working well and where improvements can be made.



Welcome to the team

We are delighted to have welcomed Team Manager Jess Tomes back from maternity leave. Jess is currently overseeing the Wiltshire area until our new Team Manager starts. Jess will then be supporting the new Team Manager in their role while they receive training. Following that, Jess will be supporting both Team Managers wherever needed.

We are also pleased to welcome Sandra Magura to the Team. Sandra is a Specialist Care and Support Worker in Wiltshire and B&NES. We have also appointed another Specialist Care and Support Worker who is due to start in the coming weeks. We will share more information when they join.



UPDATE



Realise

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

Over the past few months, people supported by Realise have been enjoying a wide range of activities while working towards personal goals and developing greater independence. From everyday life skills to memorable days out, it's been a time full of achievement, confidence-building and positive progress. Here's some of our highlights from January through to March.

JANUARY

January was full of variety, with bowling trips, walks, cooking sessions, aquarium visits and shopping trips. Highlights included Sophie enjoying home baking, Simon's trip to the aquarium and Tash keeping active with gym workouts.



FEBRUARY

February focused on promoting independence through everyday skills such as cooking, cleaning and decorating, alongside plenty of fun. Activities included pottery painting, zoo visits, bingo, pub trips, garden centre outings, rickshaw rides and lots of pancake-making.

UPDATE

Service Users achieved some brilliant milestones, including Michael decorating, Carol washing up, Donna cooking and Andrew preparing his own breakfast.



MARCH

March brought more fantastic experiences, from trips to Puxton Park and the beach, gardening ready for spring, birthdays and discos, to film-making and Mother's Day shopping.

We also celebrated two wonderful achievements; Rowena collected her first car, giving her greater freedom and independence, and another individual we support moved into her very own flat. With support from her team, she has settled in brilliantly and is already enjoying housework and visiting new places as she begins this exciting new chapter.



Sticky Sultana Pudding

- Serves 4 - 6 (or left overs for 2!)
- Prep time 5 mins
- Cooking time 5 mins (microwave)



Ingredients

- 100g butter
- Plus extra for the basin
- 200g plain flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 85g light muscovado sugar
- 100g sultanas
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 tbsp milk
- Golden syrup
- Custard, to serve

Method

1. Butter a small microwave-proof pudding basin. In a separate bowl, rub the butter into the flour and baking powder, then stir in the sugar and sultanas. Gradually add the eggs and milk to make a wet cake mixture.
2. Spoon into the basin and make a deep hollow in the centre with the back of the spoon. Cover the basin with cling film, pierce with the tip of a knife and microwave on high for 4½-5 mins until well risen and firm to the touch.
3. Carefully turn the pudding out onto a plate and spoon over a generous amount of syrup. Slice and serve with custard.

And enjoy!

Thank you for reading our newsletter.

Best wishes, from all at the Somerset Care Group.