

Home Care & Specialist Services Newsletter

SUMMER 2026


The
Somerset
Care Group

Welcome to our Summer/Autumn newsletter, packed with helpful advice, service updates and ideas for enjoying the season. In this edition, you'll find:

- Tips on staying hydrated and well during warmer weather
- Information about our hospital-to-home service
- Updates from our Home Care, Wiltshire Home Care, Realise and Way Ahead Care teams
- Local events, accessible attractions and days out across Somerset
- A summer pasta salad recipe to try at home
- Fun activities, including a spot-the-difference puzzle

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-summer-autumn-newsletter



Hydration

Why is staying hydrated important?

Water is essential for nearly every bodily function. It makes up about 60% of our body weight and is involved in processes such as digestion, circulation, absorption of nutrients, and temperature regulation. Without adequate hydration, these processes can be impaired, leading to various health issues.

Feeling thirsty is usually a good indication that you have become dehydrated. If you struggle to recognise when you should have a drink, other signs of dehydration include:

- Strong-smelling urine (pee)
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Feeling tired
- Dry mouth, lips or eyes
- Bad breath
- Increased risk of urinary tract infections
- Headaches
- Constipation
- Nausea
- Urinating less than usual

During a heat wave or hot weather, dehydration can also lead to heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

How much should we drink?

Aim to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid each day (a minimum 1.5 litres). All non-alcoholic fluid counts, you can also choose other drinks you enjoy. These can include:

- Tea
- Coffee
- Milky drinks
- Fruit juice
- Squash
- Smoothies
- Fruit tea



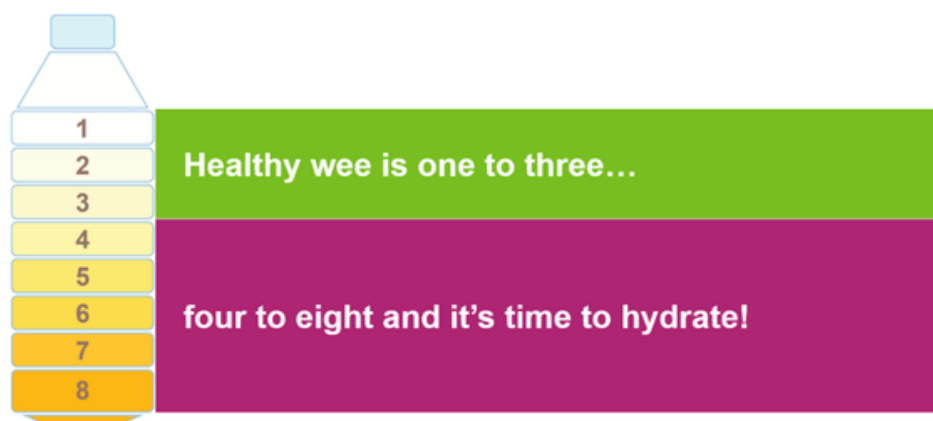
Try to have a drink at regular intervals throughout the day. If you cannot manage large amounts, try to have small sips throughout the day instead. Keep a jug of fluid close by to remind yourself to drink regularly and to keep track on how much fluid you are managing.

Fluids found within foods can also help keep you hydrated, such as ice lollies, jellies, yoghurts, milky puddings, soups, stews. Some fruits and vegetables, such as melon, tomatoes and cucumber, are also good sources of fluid.



Don't rely solely on thirst as a sign you need to drink. By the time you are thirsty you may already be dehydrated; be aware that the thirst mechanism is reduced in older age.

The simplest way to know if you are drinking enough is to check the colour of your urine. If it is dark yellow you probably need to drink more but pale and straw coloured suggests you are drinking enough. If you are in doubt, check it compared to the guide below.



When should you get help?

The following symptoms are possible signs of serious infection and should be assessed urgently:

- Kidney pain in your back just under the ribs
- Not peeing all day
- Trouble breathing
- Visible blood in your pee
- Temperature above 38°C or less than 36°C.
- Shivering, chills and muscle pain or very cold skin
- Feeling very confused, drowsy, or slurred speech
- Symptoms are getting a lot worse, or not starting to improve within 48 hours of taking antibiotics

What to do and where to go if you think you have a UTI?

Contact your GP, pharmacist or NHS 111.

Supporting a safe return home after hospital

Our South Somerset Pathway 1 service helps people return home safely and sooner after a stay in hospital. As part of the NHS's Discharge to Assess programme (also known as D2A), we provide short-term, personalised support to help individuals regain confidence, rebuild their independence, and continue their recovery in the comfort of their own home.

Working together for better outcomes

We work closely with a range of health and care professionals to ensure each person receives the right support for their individual needs.



- Close collaboration with therapists, healthcare professionals and wider support teams
- Working alongside families, friends and support networks to help achieve personal goals
- Flexible support that adapts as recovery progresses

This joined-up approach helps ensure people receive the right support, at the right time, to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Local community coverage

The South Somerset Pathway 1 service supports people across a wide geographical area, including Chard, Crewkerne, Ilminster and South Petherton, Yeovil, Wincanton, Somerton, Castle Cary and surrounding communities.

Our local presence means we can respond quickly when people are ready to return home from hospital and need support to continue their recovery.

A dedicated workforce

The service is delivered by a caring and committed team of Reablement Workers, supported by experienced operational and administrative colleagues.

- An established team providing support throughout the local area
- Ongoing recruitment to meet growing demand for the service
- Flexible working arrangements that allow us to provide responsive, short-term support when it is needed most

As demand grows, we continue to strengthen our team so that more people can access the support they need.

Making a real difference

At its heart, Pathway 1 is about helping people live safely and independently in their own homes.

- Helping to avoid unnecessary time in hospital
- Supporting recovery in the comfort of home
- Building confidence and independence
- Helping people remain as self-reliant as possible for the future

Every visit is focused on helping people achieve their personal goals, making a meaningful difference to individuals, families and the wider community.

Looking ahead

As demand for the service continues to grow, the South Somerset Pathway 1 team will continue to:

- Expand and strengthen our workforce
- Build strong partnerships across health and care services
- Deliver high-quality, person-centred support
- Help more people return home safely and confidently



We remain committed to supporting people to recover, regain independence and live well at home.

Mileage rate update

We would like to inform our valued customers that where carers use their own vehicles to carry out tasks on your behalf (such as shopping or collecting prescriptions), mileage is charged and invoiced accordingly.

45p
per mile



55p
per mile

Following a recent government update to the approved mileage rate, this has increased from 45p per mile to 55p per mile. This change reflects rising fuel prices and the ongoing costs of maintaining vehicles, particularly within the current economic climate.

We remain committed to ensuring transparency in all aspects of our service and appreciate your understanding. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your local office.



Can you spot the 10 differences?



Upcoming events in Somerset

Mid Somerset Show

Shepton Mallet

16 August

A family-friendly agricultural show with livestock, local produce and craft displays.

Dunster Country Fair

Dunster Castle

21 August

A traditional country fair with dog shows, equestrian events and countryside activities.

Taunton Together Festival

Taunton Town Centre

26 September

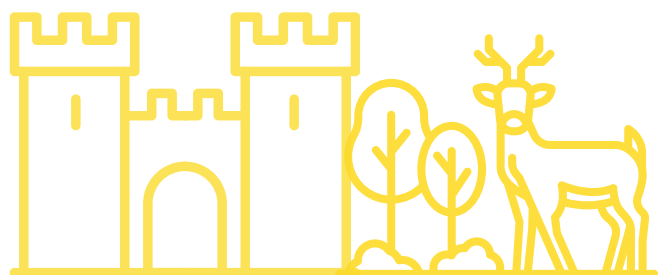
A community celebration featuring live performances, food, activities and local stalls.

Accessible trails & countryside routes to enjoy some summer weather

- Strawberry Line (mostly flat cycle path)
- Chew Valley Lake trail (hard-surfaced loop)
- Dunster “Tall Trees” trail (short accessible woodland walk)
- Hestercombe Gardens (all ability access route)
- Yeovil Country Park and Ham Hill Country Park. These are well-signed, wheelchair friendly and have both flat and gently sloped areas with viewpoints, benches and public toilets.
- Somerset Boat Centre offers wheelchair-accessible canal boat trips complete with ramps and wide decks.

Animal attractions Realise service users have been to visit recently where they have a nice day out

- Noah’s Ark Zoo Farm
- Bristol Zoo Project
- Bristol Aquarium
- Doniford Farm
- Puxton park
- Ferne Animal Sanctuary



Celebrating our stars



Our Somerset Care Awards took place on the 13th May at the Haynes Motor Museum, celebrating the incredible dedication and achievements of our colleagues.

We hope you were able to join us via the live stream and share in the celebrations from home. Congratulations to all our winners and runners-up - a fantastic achievement and thoroughly deserved recognition for the amazing difference they make every day.

Winners:

Hidden Heroes Award

Primrose Wood
Realise

Managers Choice Award

Kieron Robinson
Way Ahead Care

Newcomer of the Year Award

Liliana Inman
Realise

Connecting with People Award

Jackie Byrne
Somerset Home Care

Doing the Right Thing Award

Sophia Ndlovu
Somerset Home Care



Runners up:

Team of the Year Award

Amy Farmer and Rahab Kariuki
Realise

Doing the Right Thing Award

Maria Chappell Williams
Somerset Home Care

Connecting with People Award

Jackie Byrne
Somerset Home Care



Embracing Change Award

Megan Short
Way Ahead Care
Colm Campbell
Way Ahead Care

Thank you, once again, to all 70 of our home care and specialist services customers who nominated our colleagues for the People's Choice Award.



Carer mobile phone use

Within Community Care and Extra Care Housing (ECH), staff use work mobile phones to access rotas, view visit information, and record care notes, helping ensure customers receive the right support at the right time. Without these devices, important updates could be missed, leading to delays or missed care tasks.



In ECH, staff also carry a core handset to respond to emergency pendant alarms, which are monitored 24/7. We hope this reassures you why staff may need to carry or check their devices during visits.

Somerset Home Care Update

Supporting people when they need us most

Over the past few months, we've welcomed many new customers, including people returning home from hospital who need extra support. Thanks to the dedication of our teams, we've continued to help people stay safe, independent and comfortable in their own homes across Somerset and Devon.

Growing our team

We've welcomed new carers and support staff to help us continue providing reliable, high-quality support to the people who rely on our services.

Listening and improving

Customer feedback plays an important role in helping us improve our services and ensure we continue meeting the needs of those we support.

Thank you

Thank you to our customers, families, colleagues and local partners for your continued trust and support. We're proud to help people live independently and well at home.



Wiltshire Home Care Update

We're delighted to have welcomed several new team members to our Wiltshire office over the past few months. To help you put faces to names, we've included our organisational chart and photos of the team members you may meet or speak with.

Business Manager

Kelly Vines

Administrator

Sharon Fraser

QAO

Emma Clark

Planners

Sandra Pepler

Lauren Clarke

Specialist Care & Support Workers



Sandra Mugura

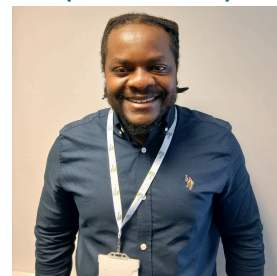


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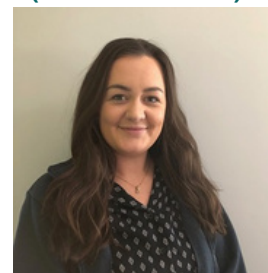
Team Managers



Tania Farnham
(B&NES)



Humbulani Chitiva
(Wiltshire)



Jessica Tomes (Relief)

UPDATE

Realise

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

Our customers have been enjoying lots of fun activities and creating wonderful memories over the last few months.

APRIL

Alfred Court hosted a fantastic Easter party with bingo, karaoke, an Easter egg hunt and birthday celebrations for Rowena. Hugh rediscovered his love of interbiking with support from Tash, while Natasha enjoyed a day out at Bristol Zoo.



MAY

Customers got creative at a pottery painting session at Huish House, Rowena enjoyed a fantastic holiday at Devon Cliffs, and Les had a wonderful day feeding the animals at Puxton Park.



JUNE

Steve made the most of the sunshine with visits to Doniford Farm and Wimbleball Lake. At Eastfields, Sophie enjoyed sitting on a horse, while Simon and Andrew spent time with the animals and enjoyed the outdoor and sensory activities.




Realise

It's been wonderful to see so many customers trying new experiences, building confidence and enjoying time with friends.



wayaheadcare
Individual care for individual people



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.

Changes to our team

In August, we'll be saying goodbye to our Team Manager, Rachael. We'd like to thank her for everything she has done and wish her every success in her new role.

We're also delighted to welcome our new Team Manager, who is also called Rachel. Rachel looks forward to meeting customers and colleagues over the coming weeks.

Helping us keep visits running smoothly

If you have an appointment or are planning to be away when your care visit is due, please let the office know in advance. This helps us update your schedule and ensures we don't disturb you unnecessarily.

Thank you for your feedback

We've recently received wonderful reviews from customers and their families, and we're incredibly grateful for the kind words. If you'd like to leave a review, you can visit homecare.co.uk or ask the office for a review card.



Life in Our Communities

Our Extra Care Housing schemes have enjoyed a variety of activities and events over recent months, bringing people together and creating opportunities for fun and friendship. If you're happy for photos to be taken at these events and for us to share these images online, please let a member of the team know we have your consent - we'd love to share these moments.



Delicious Pasta Salad

This salad can accompany grilled or poached salmon, chicken or eaten as a meal on its own. Delicious for a summer meal.



Ingredients

Dressing:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup red or white wine vinegar
- 1 oz Parmesan cheese, finely grated
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano or Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Salad:

- 4 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese - chopped
- 4 ounces grape or cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered if large (1 cup)
- 1/2 medium English cucumber, quartered lengthwise, then thinly sliced
- 1/2 medium bell pepper (any colour), thinly sliced, then cut into 1-inch pieces (about 1/2 cup)
- 1/4 small red onion, thinly sliced (1/4 cup)
- 8oz dried short pasta, such as fusilli, rotini, or farfalle pasta (salt to season)
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced or roughly torn

Method

1. Whisk the olive oil, red/white wine vinegar, grated Parmesan cheese, salt, Dijon mustard, garlic, dried oregano, and black pepper together in a large bowl.
2. Add the fresh mozzarella cheese, halved tomatoes, thinly sliced cucumber, chopped pepper, and thinly sliced small red onion. Toss to combine. Let sit at room temperature, stirring occasionally, so the flavours combine while you cook the pasta.
3. Cook the pasta until it is tender throughout. Either in a pan on the hob, cover the pasta with salted boiling water or in the microwave, cover with water, season and cook on high, covered in cling film and pierce the lid. Check at intervals with a fork that the pasta is soft. Drain off the water and rinse the pasta to cool with cold water.
4. Transfer to the bowl with the salad vegetables and toss to evenly coat the pasta. Let sit at room temperature for least 30 minutes or refrigerate up to overnight to let the flavours meld. Stir in the fresh basil leaves before serving.

Note: *The dressing can be made up to 1 day in advance and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Let come to room temperature and re-whisk before using. The pasta salad can be made up to 1 day in advance without the basil, covered, and refrigerated. If refrigerated overnight, let sit at room temperature for 20 minutes before serving. Stir in the basil just before serving.*

Storage: Leftovers can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 3 days. Most importantly, enjoy!



Thank you for reading our newsletter.

Best wishes, from all at the Somerset Care Group.