



Briefing and key messages in respect of CCS's Agent Services 2024/25 (October 2024)

What is changing, and when?

Village agents (Connect Somerset service)

The Community Agent service is evolving. Most agents engaged in that service will be delivering the new Connect Somerset service (which has a broader remit).

The new Connect Somerset service has been commissioned as part of the Connect Somerset programme, which is intended to improve early help in the community.

As the new service gets going – and opens to community and self-referrals – agents will attend (community hospital) discharge meetings¹, peer forums and other MDTs² less frequently. This will enable agents to focus on early help, reducing need for social care.

Agents will still be able to respond to referrals and requests for information/advice through normal referrals routes via phone and electronic referrals.

- For referrals online please visit: <https://somersetagents.org/agent-call-back/>.
- For information about individual agents in your area please visit: <https://somersetagents.org/find-an-agent-new/>.

We will provide a rota of the meetings we will attend and your named link, and we will involve you in our planning and implementation of any changes as well as seek engagements on recommendations and plans over the coming months.

Migration to these arrangements will be phased in across the intermediate care pathways. We hope that these plans will enable us to migrate to new models in a smooth and transparent way, with minimal disruption for ASC colleagues or our clients.

Village agents (Somerset Carers)

Somerset Carers has been recommissioned. We have changed the delivery model so that we now have a separate team of agents providing support for carers. This will enable

¹ We will no longer have as many agents embedded in our Home First team at Community Hospitals.

² Community Agents received all their referrals via these routes – in future attendance will primarily be for the purposes of building relationships and developing links with local services.





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agents to develop specialist skills, and ensure the recommissioned service evolves.

As the recommissioned service evolves, we will extend the support available to include contingency and escalation planning (for carers at risk of breakdown). We will also develop a more comprehensive digital offer for those who can access digital support.

What is not changing?

Social Prescribing

Our agents are still providing Social Prescribing as part of a countywide network of providers. We have social prescribing agents across most, but not all, of Somerset.

Our social prescribing agents help with issues like loneliness, debt, or stress due to poor housing. They support people to resolve or improve social, emotional and practical issues affecting their health, wellbeing and independence. They give people time – focusing on ‘what matters to me?’ – to coproduce a simple personalised care and support plan, and support them to take control of their health and wellbeing:

- connecting them with support, resources and opportunities in the community;
- coaching to give them confidence to take actions for their health and wellbeing;
- or, just sharing some useful information.

Home First (community SPOC)

For now, support in the two Somerset acute hospitals is not changing. We are continuing to review the service structure and will ensure full engagement with partners in the developing model of Intermediate Care and hospital discharge. We will continue to provide details of Home First agents and their presence in acutes and Transfer of Care Hubs. There may be changes in the staffing structures that support this service (details to follow).

Our holistic ‘no wrong door’ approach

We have staff available to complete an initial conversation with a triage system to direct





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clients promptly to the support they need. This includes – where appropriate – rapid onward referral to for example, green social prescribers, and health coaches.

We take a “think family” approach to our work and consider the wider needs of who may be involved. For example, where we encounter Young Carers we ensure those who are eligible are supported to access Somerset Council's Young Carers' Support Service.

How do people access Agent Services?

Who can access Social Prescribing?

Social Prescribing is an all-age, whole population approach that works particularly well for people who: have one or more long term conditions; need support with low level mental health issues; are lonely or isolated; or have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing. Social Prescribing can also help support carers' health and wellbeing.

In the first instance a social prescribing agent will help people access local, non-clinical services that support their health and wellbeing. They can also help to identify if additional support is needed, for example from the Connect Somerset service or Somerset Carers.

How can someone access Social Prescribing (where it is provided by CCS)?

CCS's social prescribing agents can be accessed at <https://somersetagents.org/>. The services are open-access and self-referrals are welcome.

Similar support is available across all parts of Somerset³.

How can someone access the Connect Somerset service or Somerset Carers?

Both services can be accessed at <https://somersetagents.org/agent-call-back/>. The services are open-access and self-referrals are welcome.

All services can be accessed at Talking Cafes <https://somersetagents.org/talking-cafes/>.

³ In Mendip and rural south Somerset we can refer people to their local social prescribing providers.

