

Somerset Micro-Provider Guide 2025/2026

Overview

Somerset Council is committed to supporting the development of small, independent help and care services (we call these Micro-Providers).

Since 2014 Somerset Council has operated a support programme to help people set up services and create conditions for Micro-Providers to thrive and offer high quality support to people in Somerset.

This guide sets out the key information for new, existing, and developing Micro-Providers in Somerset and aims to answer some of the frequently asked questions you may have.

How do I become a Micro-Provider?

Step 1. Complete the [Become a Micro-provider Enquiry Form](#), where you will be sent a start-up guide, details of start-up surgeries and further information about the support on offer.

Step 2. Once you are confident that your service meets the [Somerset Quality Standard](#) and you understand the boundaries of running a small service, complete the [Micro-provider Registration Form](#) to become a registered Micro-provider in Somerset. There is no charge, but we have high expectations of service quality for all Micro-providers in Somerset.

Step 3. On successful registration you will be emailed with a certificate of registration and a list of local work sharing groups. By showing your registration to the network administrator, you can enter your local peer network and work sharing groups.

Step 4. You will be held to account against these standards via the [Somerset Council Quality Assurance Process](#)

How do I renew my Micro-Provider registration with Somerset Council?

We ask that Micro-Providers re-commit to the standards in the Somerset Council Quality Assurance Process linked above and evidence their awareness of their legal boundaries annually.

Providers that have registered/renewed annually will be included in:

1. The new [“Find a Micro-provider”](#) tool – which is used over 1,000 times a year number of subscribers a local lists of Micro-Providers.
2. [The Brokerage Tool](#) – which connects people looking for Micro-Providers with Micro-Providers with availability instantly and is used over 3,000 times a year.

3. Micro-Provider 'Peer Information and Work Sharing Networks', which require an annual renewal as part of their local network rules.

Providers whose registration has elapsed will no longer be included on brokerage and support finding tools.

To renew your registration please use this link: [Renew your micro-provider registration](#).

How and where can I get work?

Marketing your service is your responsibility.

Somerset Council endorse local Micro-Provider work-sharing networks that have all signed up to the [Somerset Quality Standard](#).

In addition to joining your local networks we recommend that you...

1. Meet up and connect with your local Micro-Providers
2. Network with local referrers, such as [Village Agents | Somerset Village and Community Agents](#).
3. Get known to local GP, surgeries, Parish or Town Councils and community groups.

How do the Micro-Provider networks work, and how can I join them?

The networks are community owned, run and led.

In some areas this will be a WhatsApp group, whereas in other areas they have organised and connected with wider community organisations such as:

- [Wivey Cares](#)
- [Wincanton Cares](#)
- [Taunton Trusted Providers](#)

Somerset Council offers support and endorsement if groups are healthy, well led and purposeful and they offer a supportive, respectful environment for information and care exchange. All providers part of registered networks have signed up to [Somerset's Micro-provider Quality Standard](#) and are accountable by [Somerset's Quality Assurance Process](#).

This endorsement means that professional referrers such as social workers, village agents and hospital discharge workers will join the groups knowing that all people have **committed to one standard in Somerset**.

To join your local networks, you need a copy of your Micro-Provider registration confirmation that you will have received when you registered or renewed your service.

For more information about the peer networks see: [Micro-provider Peer Network Code of Conduct.docx](#)

To join your networks please use this link: [Peer Network Join Links .docx](#)

How can I change my listing on [Connect Somerset](#)?

Email communityenterprise@somerset.gov.uk and we will schedule this change within 14 working days.

What are the standards that Micro-Providers must adhere to?

The [Somerset Quality Standards](#) have been co-produced with Micro-Providers and people who use the services of Micro-Providers in Somerset.

It details:

- Your professional boundaries
- Your legal and regulatory boundaries
- What fair pricing looks like
- What is and is not a Micro-Provider

We strongly recommend that you print a copy and include this in your service portfolio.

Are any checks done on Micro-Providers in Somerset?

Somerset Council provide **no** physical checks on Micro-Providers portfolios (DBS, Insurance, etc).

In 2022 Somerset Council made the decision to remove physical documentation checks from the support offer.

In a survey we found that 70% of people using Micro-Providers services and 50% of referral professionals wrongly assumed Somerset Council regulated Micro-Providers.

This assumption meant that:

1. Vulnerable people who were unable to self-direct their care were signposted to Micro-Providers on false assurance they are regulated.
2. People using Micro-Providers did not understand the risks or their responsibilities using unregulated care and support, falsely assuming all checks had been done by Somerset Council.

The legal responsibility for using unregulated care services always lies with the person using the service or their legal representative. For more details, see [Personal care: ongoing role, introductory agencies and individual care workers - Care Quality Commission](#).

Somerset Council have replaced checks with an annual 'understanding your boundaries' assessment that forms part of the [registration](#) and [renewal process](#).

I have information about a Micro-Provider who is not delivering services within the agreed standards, what should I do?

Has potentially criminal activity taken place? If yes, concerns should be reported to the police via 101 for further advice and action. In an emergency call 999.

Has potential abuse or neglect occurred? If yes, concerns should be reported to Somerset Direct, stating the concern relates to a Micro-Provider, on adults@somerset.gov.uk or 0300 123 2224.

Has the provider potentially broken the quality standards or are there wider concerns about the quality and safety of the Micro-Provider? If yes, the [CMEP Service Quality Feedback \(SQF\) form](#) should be completed. This form goes to Somerset Council's Quality Assurance team for action. In the event someone needs support to complete the form, contact ASContractsandqualitymonitoring@somerset.gov.uk or telephone 01823 355157 for further guidance.

I have an idea or a question, where can I go?

The Enterprise Development Team host weekly and monthly meetings.

[Meeting Registration - Zoom](#) Weekly start up information meetings, every Monday 12pm to 1.15pm (except Bank Holidays)

[Meeting Registration – Monthly Network Meeting](#) – Held on the 2nd Wednesday of every month 2pm to 3pm

Key Documents and Links

- [Becoming a Micro-Provider - Enquiry Form](#)
- [Support Near You – Find a Micro-Provider \(Brokerage Tool\)](#)
- [Somerset's Quality Standards](#)
- [Choosing a Micro-Provider - Guide](#)
- [Micro-Provider Home Page - Public](#)
- [Training Resource \(somersetprovidernetwork.org.uk\)](http://somersetprovidernetwork.org.uk)
- [Homepage - Social Care TV \(social-care.tv\)](http://social-care.tv)
- [Micro-provider Registration Form \(office.com\)](#)
- [Micro-Provider List and Directory of Micro-providers](#)

For further information, please email: communityenterprise@somerset.gov.uk.