

SOMERSET COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER 2024

New Therapeutic Education Service for SEND children to open in Somerset.

An innovative new Therapeutic Education provision will be opening in Somerset in September, offering places for children and young people with additional and SEND needs.

The Education service in Misterton, owned by the Diocese of Bath and Wells, will be run by Horizon's Therapeutic Education Trust. Somerset Council jointly funded the service with Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, and delivered the refurbishment works through Futures for Somerset and Qube.

This initiative is part of a Strategic Partnership between Somerset Council, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and Shaw Trust. The partnership won the Innovation in Partnerships' category at Municipal Journal Award (MJ) Award in 2023 for its work. The MJ awards is the biggest National annual awards ceremony for local government.

The service will support children in care and children whose health impacts their ability to succeed in mainstream schooling. It is led by multidisciplinary team of specialist teaching staff and NHS professionals.

The service aims to help students transition back to local schools with specialist support. The service will provide therapeutic and education services to 10-15 children, with plans for a second site next year. These efforts are part of broader support for young people with additional and SEND needs, including a £500k investment to remodel the former infant school building.

Additionally, Homes2Inspire, part of Shaw Trust, is managing eight new homes in Somerset. Five homes are operational, two will open in September, and the eighth in early 2025. A higher needs fostering service is also being developed.

Somerset Council, with over 600 children in care, is recruiting foster carers. For more information, visit [Fostering in Somerset – Change a Child's Story](#).

Funding and provision for Children with Special Needs

Somerset Council is launching a consultation asking for the public's views on proposals which aim to ensure provision for children with additional needs can secure better outcomes and experiences for children, families and schools fairly and efficiently.

The current system for supporting children with SEND is under pressure both nationally and in Somerset, with rising costs and situations arising where children's needs are not being met as quickly as anyone would want, and where arrangements are not having the impact that they should.

Somerset Council is seeking views on seven proposals which aim to make improvements in key areas including funding and support, inclusive education, and annual planning.

No decisions will be made until the consultation has closed and the responses have been reviewed. This will then inform a full business case, which will go through democratic decision making later this year. The consultation runs until Friday 18th October and the results will be published as part of the papers ahead of Scrutiny Children & Families and Executive in November 2024.

A link to the consultation and opportunities to talk can be found here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/the-local-offer/funding-and-provision-for-additional-needs/>

A paper copy of the consultation can be viewed, or printed on request, at Bridgwater, Taunton, Shepton Mallet and Yeovil Libraries

Take part in the 2024 Somerset Resident Survey

Somerset Council has launched a new consultation to ask local people for their views on where they live and the services the council provides. The 2024 Resident Survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and the results will be used to measure progress against Somerset's priorities and shape future services. You can take part in the resident survey online at <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/resident-survey-2024/> . Paper copies can also be printed on request at Somerset libraries. The survey closes on **Monday 21 October**.

Somerset Libraries relaunch winter coat exchange scheme

Somerset Council's Libraries service is relaunching its Winter Coat Exchange scheme, designed to support the community by providing access to warm coats for everyone in need.

As children settle in to the new school year, a 'Back to School' appeal has been launched for children's/teen coats that may have been outgrown, but the scheme welcomes donations of coats for all ages. Last winter's donations of 1,022 coats and the uptake of 904, were so successful that the exchange is being repeated. The scheme is simple:

You can take a coat without making a donation.

You can donate a coat without taking one.

All donations must be of good quality and in a clean condition.

Coats of any shape or size, for adults or children are accepted.

Donors are asked to hand items directly to a member of staff at one of the participating libraries: Taunton, Priorswood (Taunton), Bridgwater, Yeovil, Glastonbury, Chard, and Dulverton. For more information or to participate in the Coat Exchange scheme, please visit your nearest participating library, on Facebook [@somersetlibrariesuk](https://www.facebook.com/somersetlibrariesuk) or contact librariesmail@somerset.gov.uk

Taunton Hurdle Way scheme will be a boost for walking, cycling and bus travel

Somerset Council is replacing ageing traffic signals and upgrading crossings on Taunton's busy Hurdle Way which will also improve access for cyclists, pedestrians and buses. Both sets of traffic lights on the Hurdle Way/Mansfield Road and Hurdle Way/ Silver Street junctions need renewing as they are more than 20 years old and near the end of their working life. The new lights will give more priority to buses and the Council will be improving pedestrian and cycling crossing facilities at the same time. An on-road cycle lane will be introduced on Mansfield Road at its junction with Hurdle Way. The new lights will be accompanied by 'advanced stop boxes' on the road. Commonly known as 'bike boxes' these give cyclists a safe place to

stop ahead of other vehicles. The road will also be resurfaced. Work is expected to start in early November and run into the New Year, with a pause for the Christmas period. Detailed dates and timings will be shared when they have been confirmed. Temporary traffic lights and pedestrian crossings will be needed during the work, along with a one-way system to reduce congestion. Towards the end of the works, evening or overnight road closures will be needed and these will be advertised well in advance. Somerset Council will be organising a drop-in for the public and businesses where you can find out more about the scheme. More details will follow on the date, time and venue of this event. Funding is coming from a ring-fenced Government BSIP grant to carry out these works. The improvements to Hurdle Way are in line with Taunton's Garden Town Vision, aiming to improve transport links in the town, making it easier and more attractive to use public transport and/or walking and cycling.

Council's team concludes summer road maintenance programme

The biggest resurfacing programme in at least four years comes to a close this month with a final specialist treatment on roads across Somerset. Somerset Council's contractor Kiely Bros has carried out 1,000,000 sqm of road surface dressing in the county, equivalent to 141 football pitches. The treatment is a greener and more cost-effective form of maintenance, helping to improve the road network whilst emitting significantly less carbon compared to alternative solutions. Now a secondary treatment 'Kiely Lock' is being applied to further lock in loose chippings on the road surface and give the dressing the best possible life span. The works are likely to only take a few hours and the roads will be not closed or be under traffic management for the whole period stated. Surface Dressing is very weather dependent and so time needs to be built in as a precaution. Surface dressing is a nationally recognised maintenance technique for sealing a road, improving skid resistance, and preventing water getting under the surface. This is crucial to help stop potholes forming.