



Somerset 
Community
Foundation

AGEING WELL IN SOMERSET





This research report was commissioned by Somerset Community Foundation. It aims to bring together data and local insights to help us decide how best to use some of our funding.

Specifically, this report tells us how our funding could support older people across Somerset. Our aim when we commissioned this research was to build our understanding of what works well, what needs attention, and how positive changes can be sustained within communities.

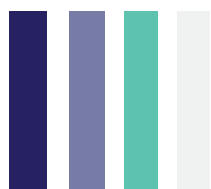
This report is copyright free and we hope it will also serve as a valuable resource for others.

2024

Ageing Well in Somerset

Research Report for Somerset Community Foundation

Delivered by



CCS

people • place • enterprise

Funded by

Somerset 
**Community
Foundation**



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Foreward

The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) was delighted to be commissioned with Clarity CIC to deliver this piece of research. This opportunity has allowed us the time to identify the key challenges of meeting the needs of older people in different kinds of communities in Somerset. It has highlighted the necessity of providing active, flexible and informed support to organisations providing services to these members of our community. The research hasn't entirely followed the plan we set out at the beginning, as conversations and information led us to focus increasingly on accessibility and inclusivity and the importance of providing choice and a range of opportunities for older people where feasible. What is very clear is that older people cannot be put into a single group, their interests, passions, skills, experience and challenges make each person unique.

As an organisation, it has broadened our knowledge, it will help to inform our service delivery. We are also really aware of the value of this research to others in Somerset, whether they are commissioners of services, funders or community organisations. We would like to ask Somerset Community Foundation to make this report freely available to all that can utilise it for community good.



1 Purpose and Focus

1.1 This report summarises the findings of research commissioned by Somerset Community Foundation to understand the changing needs of older people in Somerset, the extent to which these needs are being met by the voluntary sector and how this pattern of provision varies across the county. The research also gained insight into the challenges facing voluntary organisations in maintaining and developing its provision for older people. For the purposes of this report, 'older people' refers to those over the age of 60.

1.2 It is intended that the research will inform Somerset Community Foundation's own approach to funding programmes, and projects and organisations working with older people. It is also hoped that the research will provide insights and knowledge of value to other funders, statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community-based groups seeking to respond to the needs of an increasingly elderly population.

1.3 The Community Council for Somerset engaged Clarity CIC to assist with undertaking the research, including data collection and analysis. The research fieldwork was undertaken in Autumn and Winter 2023.

1.4 The research process included collecting data from organisations working across Somerset, or substantial parts of the county, to provide an overview of need and provision as well as feedback from small locality-based grassroots groups – including a specific focus on six case study areas^[1], listed below. Profiles of these areas are in Appendix C.

1.5 These areas were selected to provide a deeper understanding of the support provided for older people in different types of community – reflecting different geographical and demographic characteristics and different levels of voluntary sector capacity and capability.

The case study areas were:

- Shepton Mallet
- Three villages close to Shepton Mallet – Coleford, Evercreech and Holcombe
- Priorswood
- Watchet

1.6 This research included an initial review of the literature, including research and policy material relevant to ageing and provision for older people in a Somerset context. Published in October 2023, this review provides a clear overview of the demographic, geographical and policy trends and context within which provision for older people needs to be considered. The review was used as a basis for this consultation. It would be valuable to consider the Literature Review in parallel with this report.

[1] The three towns were selected by Somerset Community Foundation. The three villages were selected by the Community Council for Somerset, as examples of different villages near to Shepton Mallet.

Executive Summary

The report identifies the changing needs of older people in Somerset and the extent to which these needs are being met by the voluntary and community sector. It also assesses the challenges facing voluntary organisations in maintaining and developing their provision for older people.

The key findings of the research are summarised below.

- There is a substantial number of groups, activities, and services supporting older people across Somerset, many of which serve a particular local geographic community.
- A large part of the provision is through very small micro organisations – many running on very low or negligible income. Many of these groups are relatively informal and unincorporated. There is also support from larger organisations delivering across a wider geographical area.
- Older people are not a homogenous group, and a range of support and activities is needed.
- There is often a lack of choice for older people seeking social activities, classes and other forms of support within their local area.
- Older people from diverse communities are not generally well served by “mainstream” organisations or support that is particularly geared to their needs, although there are examples of good and creative practices.
- Lack of affordable and accessible transport is the single biggest barrier to older people accessing services and support across Somerset.
- Social isolation and loneliness are a relatively common experience for older people across Somerset and is a need that many organisations are tackling.
- There are particular experiences and needs for older people in diverse communities, including:
 - a lack of support geared to their needs that is accessible, including culturally appropriate services and safe spaces;
 - generalist support not being perceived as genuinely accessible – organisations needing advice and guidance to be fully inclusive; and
 - a particular need for bereavement support designed appropriately for different diverse communities.

The report sets out 24 conclusions and recommendations structured under the following headings.

- Improving services and support for older people
- Improving the accessibility of services for older people
- Improving the inclusiveness of services for older people
- Strengthening organisations working with older people
- Funding and support with funding

1.7 Key elements of the research methodology were:

- Mapping of organisations in the case study areas and larger organisations supporting older people.
- An online survey of voluntary sector providers which generated 99 valid responses.
- Interviews and discussion group with Village Agents.
- Interviews with grassroots organisations supporting older people.
- Interviews with organisations working with diverse communities and supporting older people.
- Interviews with larger voluntary and community sector organisations including generalist infrastructure and specific older people-focussed organisations.



1.8 Grateful thanks are due to all the organisations and individuals who contributed to this research. Their time answering survey questions, participating in interviews and providing background information is very much appreciated and has been central to building what is hoped is a useful picture of the needs and provision for older people across Somerset. For the Clarity and CCS team involved it has been a very enlightening and insightful experience.

1.9 The remainder of this report is structured as follows.

Section 2 provides a brief overview of the needs of, and issues facing older people in Somerset and draws on the Literature Review undertaken as a precursor to this research.

Section 3 describes the characteristics of voluntary and community organisations providing support, services and activities for older in Somerset. It is complemented by detailed profiles of provision and need in the six geographical areas in Appendix C.

Section 4 provides an overview of the range of provision for older people in Somerset, including observations on the factors that appear to have some influence on the nature of local provision. Additional insight is provided by detailed descriptions of eight case study voluntary and community sector providers.

Section 5 examines the extent to which support for older people in Somerset is accessible and inclusive and engages people from diverse and equalities communities.

Section 6 draws on the previous sections and assesses the key needs amongst Somerset's older people and identifies the priorities for improving provision.

Section 7 sets out overall conclusions from the research and puts forward recommendations for how provision can be improved and organisations providing services can be supported to sustain and develop their work.

2 Older People's Needs - an overview

2.1 The Literature Review, undertaken as the first stage of this research[2], highlights five key themes around older people's experiences and the policy and public service context to meet their needs.

These are:

- An ageing population generally but an especially high and increasing proportion of older people in rural areas, such as Somerset.
- High levels of isolation and loneliness.
- Relatively high levels of poverty, exacerbated by very significant increases in the cost of living in the past two years.
- The particular impacts of rurality on older people relating especially to difficult access to key services.
- Challenges relating to the affordability of and access to home and community-based social care conflicting with the policy ambition of reducing residential care and minimising people's time in hospital.

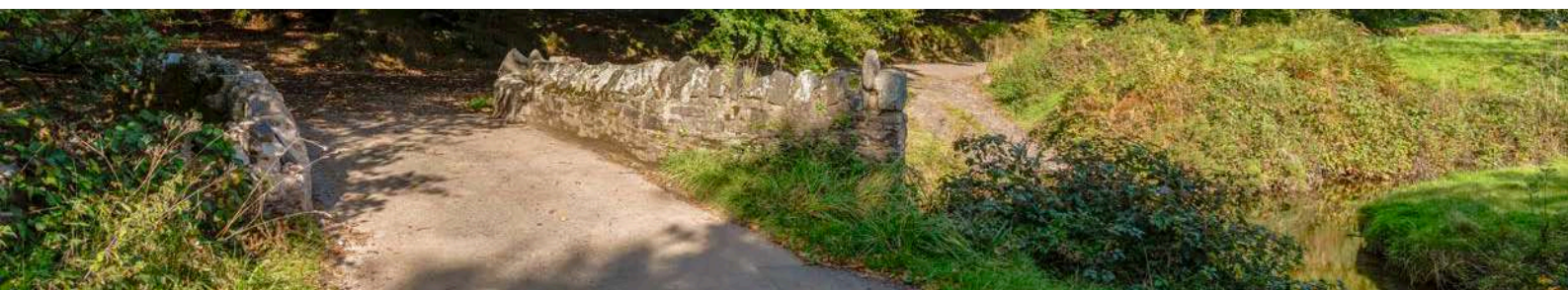
2.2 A fundamental backdrop to this research is reflected in the following statement in Somerset's Adult Social Care Strategy:

Over the next 25 years while the overall population will rise by 15%, we expect those over the age of 75 to double, resulting in a further significant rise in demand for health and care services.

2.3 The Literature Review, referred to earlier, and background research indicate that the following factors may be especially significant in determining the extent to which older people need support and also whether they are receiving support:

- Having a long-term disability or ill health.
- Living in poverty, currently or in earlier life.
- Having a caring role.
- Belonging to a black or minoritised ethnic community.
- Being a member of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Gender.
- Living in a rural area.
- Social class.

2.4 This research has had a particular focus on inequity, diversity and inclusion. This is important as there can be a tendency to treat older people as a homogenous group with similar needs and requiring similar types of support. Such thinking fails to recognise that older people reflect the same diversity of experience and need as the population as a whole. And in a rural area like Somerset with a dispersed population, relatively remote communities and poor transport links it can be especially difficult for older people (often with limited mobility) to connect with others with similar lived experiences and needs. It can be equally difficult for agencies and organisations to provide or enable appropriate direct or mutual support in a largely rural area with a dispersed and scattered population.



[2] The literature review report was provided to Somerset Community Foundation (October 2023).

3 Voluntary Sector Providers for Older People

3.1 Data on voluntary sector provision for this research was obtained mainly through an online survey sent directly to relevant organisations including community-based groups operating in the six case study areas. The survey was also promoted through social media, through posters in the case study areas and through existing networks.

3.2 In the initial scoping phase of this research 174 different activities or services were identified as being delivered in the six case study areas. Whilst these case study areas may not be representative of Somerset as a whole, it is reasonable to assume that across the county there is a substantial number and considerable range of groups, activities and services, often serving the immediate local community, supporting older people.

Geography

3.3 In terms of geographical scale and reach there are broadly two types of voluntary organisations supporting older people in Somerset. These are locally-based groups serving a specific community and larger organisations working across a wider area – such as GP Practice catchment, Primary Care Network, former district council area, or even the county as a whole. Some larger voluntary sector providers may be part of or affiliated with a national organisation, such as Age UK.

3.4 A breakdown of respondents to the survey of VCSE organisations supporting older people in Somerset is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Survey Respondents: Geographical Reach

Category	Definition	No. responses	% all responses
A1	A community group/organisation offering activities or support for older people in our case study communities[3]	30	30%
A2	A community group/organisation offering activities or support for older people in non-case study communities.	48	48%
B	A larger organisation offering support to older people across a wider geographic area	21	21%
	All	99	

[3] The case study communities were:

- Shepton Mallet
- Three villages close to Shepton Mallet – Coleford, Evercreech and Holcombe
- Priorswood
- Watchet

3.5 Local organisations serving non case study communities (category A2) operated within one or more villages or parish (19 groups) or within a town (22 groups). The distribution of these organisations across the former district council areas is shown in Table 2 below

Table 2 Survey Respondents: Local organisations by former district

Area	No.orgs
Mendip	10
Sedgemoor	7
Somerset West & Taunton	13
South Somerset	16

3.6 Fifteen of the category B (wider area) organisations deliver across the whole of Somerset with four having a narrower focus (mostly an former district council area) and one working across the whole of the South West.

Organisation type

3.7 It should be noted that some of the data in the following sections refers only to local groups, rather than wider organisations (groups A1 and A2 in Table 1). This is stated where relevant.

3.8 As summarised in Table 3 below, half of the organisations responding to the question (only asked of groups A1 and A2 in Table 1) described themselves as a community group, with a further 3 organisations reporting they were an unincorporated group (2 had said both). Eleven organisations (20%) reported as being a registered charity, with 4 (7%) being registered as Community Interest Companies. We did not check whether organisations had a constitution and bank account.

3.9 This lack of more formal governance, could be a potential barrier to development. For example, it might hinder them in obtaining public sector contracts, entering into formal collaborations and partnerships with other organisations or accessing funding from some Trusts and Foundations.

3.10 It is important to note that provision for older people is not all through formally structured voluntary or community organisations. There are many informal groups of (older) people getting together, for example for a regular lunch or a book group. There are also peer support groups set up and facilitated by private individuals and activities (such as yoga, tai chi) run by self-employed practitioners and instructors. There are also examples of the initiative being taken by a private business, for example a cafe in Shepton Mallet, providing space and support of an older persons group.

Table 3 Survey Respondents: Organisational Structure and Status (community-based groups – A1 and A2 in Table 1)

Community Group	27	50%
Registered charity	11	20%
Unincorporated group	5	9%
Community Interest Company (CIC)	4	7%
Faith group	2	4%
Community Benefit Society (CBS)	1	2%
Parish or Town Council	1	2%

Table 4 Survey: Total income needs

Total Income	Number of organisations
None	8
Under £1,000	7
£1,000 to £5,000	8
£5,001 to £25,000	9
£25,001 to £50,000	2
Over £50,000	6
	40

Income/Turnover

3.11 The average income of the forty organisations providing this information through our survey (note this was only asked of the community-based groups - A1 and A2 in Table 1) was £17,000 per annum, with 23 (58%) having an income of £5,000 per annum or less. Of these, 15 (38%) having an income of £1,000 per annum or less including 8 respondents (20%) reporting having no income. It is clear that voluntary sector provision for older people in Somerset includes very small micro organisations.

Workforce

3.12 Voluntary sector providers responding to the survey (note this was only asked of the community-based groups - A1 and A2 in Table 1), were heavily dependent on volunteers, as might be expected given their limited financial resources, as Table 5 below shows. The average number of volunteers for the organisations responding to this question was 13, with 73% having more than 5 volunteers. Of the 45 organisations with volunteers (just 3 had no volunteers), only 3 also had paid staff.

Table 5 Survey Respondents: Volunteer Workforce

Volunteers	Number of organisations	% of organisations
None*	3	6%
1 to 5	10	21%
6 to 10	20	42%
11 to 20	6	13%
21 to 50	7	15%
More than 50	2	4%

Funding

3.13 As Table 6 below shows, the majority of survey respondents (note this was only asked of the community-based groups - A1 and A2 in Table 1) reported that most of their income (in the past two years) was generated by fees from members [4] , grants, fundraising activities and/or donations. Only 6 organisations out of 54 (11%) reported that the majority of their income had come from statutory bodies. (Note respondents could tick multiple responses.)

Table 6 Survey Respondents: Majority of Income Source in last two years

	No.orgs	Proportion of total
Members	32	59%
Grants	29	54%
Fundraising activities	20	37%
Donations	19	35%
Funding from statutory bodies	6	11%
Loans	0	0%
Other	14	26%
All organisations	54	

[4] We assume this refers mainly to fees paid by service users

Support for Voluntary Organisations

3.14 Survey respondents were asked if they received any practical help or support from other agencies. Their responses are summarised in Table 7 below.

3.15 The data shows that Parish and Town Councils, Spark Somerset and the Community Council for Somerset are the most active in supporting voluntary organisations working with older people. National bodies and Somerset Council appear to be significant providers of support for wider area organisations while none of the local organisations reported Somerset Council as providing support [5].

3.16 Of the 15 organisations not currently accessing support, one third reported that they do need support – with most of these who provided more information referring to the need for funding and help with securing funding.

Table 7 Survey Respondents: Sources of Practical Help and Support

Respondents	Local Orgs	% local orgs	Wider orgs	% Wider orgs	Total orgs	% Total
Local Parish Council / Town Council	15	33%	4	21%	19	29%
SPARK Somerset	14	30%	5	26%	19	29%
Community Council for Somerset (Village Agents)	12	26%	6	32%	18	28%
Other local VCS organisation(s)	13	28%	2	11%	15	23%
A national body	8	17%	6	32%	14	22%
Somerset Council	n/a	n/a	8	42%	8	12%
Other	4	9%	2	11%	6	9%
No support	6	13%	n/a	n/a	6	9%
Other statutory organisation	n/a	n/a	3	16%	3	5%
Total responding organisations	46		19		65	

[5] Note though that Somerset Council could be reasonably regarded as providing support to the sector via its resourcing of and contract with Spark and CCS

The Future

3.17 Of the local organisations responding to the survey, the vast majority seemed fairly confident of their survival in the short term, as Table 8 below shows. Almost two thirds stated they will “definitely” be running in a year’s time, and no respondents felt it was “likely” that they will not be running in 12 months’ time.

Table 8 Survey Respondents: Likelihood of running in 12 months’ time

	Local orgs	% orgs
Not at all likely	0	0%
Unlikely	0	0%
Possibly	2	4%
Probably	18	33%
Definitely	34	63%
Responding organisations	54	

3.18 As Table 9 below shows, the vast majority (86%) of organisations working over a wider area expected to be providing either an increased offer or the same offer as currently, with just 2 organisations (10%) expecting to reduce their offer over the coming year.

Table 9 Survey Respondents: Change in offer in 12 months’ time

	Wider orgs	% Wider orgs
Our offer is likely to increase	5	24%
Our offer is likely to be the same	13	62%
Our offer is likely to be reduced	2	10%
Don’t know	1	5%
Responding organisations	21	

4 Support Services and Activities – An Overview

4.1 It is not possible, based on the research, to draw broad conclusions as to whether specific parts of Somerset, such as Local Community Network or Primary Care Network areas have better or poorer voluntary sector provision for older people than others.

4.2 However, it is clear from the research in the case study areas that the range of support and activities available for older people does vary from area to area, as do needs within specific communities. These differences are reflected in the individual geographical case study area reports in Appendix C.

4.3 The level of provision for older people in a specific locality is not just down to the size of that community but is also linked to a number of factors.

4.4 The research identified several factors as being significant in determining local provision for older people. These include:

- Availability of suitable spaces (community or privately owned) for older people's groups and activities.
- Active individuals who take responsibility for organising activities and groups.
- A local culture of 'joining in' and attending activities, and a local culture of community action and volunteering.
- Parish and Town Councils, individual councillors and faith/church groups being proactive in identifying and seeking to meet the needs of older people in their communities.
- GP practices, individual doctors and health and social care practitioners working with local organisations to promote provision and make appropriate referrals

4.5 Table 10 below summarises the feedback from the survey of voluntary organisations on the types of activities and support provided. It shows that overall, the provision of social activities (such as coffee mornings and games sessions) is the most commonly provided service (by 51 organisations), followed by creative activities such as art, drama and music (41), health and wellbeing activities (39) and physical activities such as exercise classes (33).

4.6 The less commonly provided services related to IT support (6 organisations); transport (10) and specialist support, for example relating to dementia (15). This is significant as these areas of support have been highlighted during the research as especially important and where there is increasing need.

Table 10 Survey Respondents: Activities and Support Offered

	Local orgs	% Local orgs	Wider orgs	% Wider orgs	Total	% Total
Social groups: coffee mornings, games etc.	43	55.8%	8	40.0%	51	52.6%
Creative activities: art, craft, drama, music etc.	36	46.8%	5	25.0%	41	42.3%
Health and wellbeing	29	37.7%	10	50.0%	39	40.2%
Physical activity: exercise, dance, indoor bowls etc.	24	31.2%	9	45.0%	33	34.0%
Advice and information	19	24.7%	8	40.0%	27	27.8%
Befriending	22	28.6%	2	10.0%	24	24.7%
Food, drink, cooking	20	26.0%	2	10.0%	22	22.7%
Outdoor pursuits – gardening, walking etc.	13	16.9%	7	35.0%	20	20.6%
Specialist: Dementia support etc	12	15.6%	3	15.0%	15	15.5%
Transport	10	13.0%	0	0.0%	10	10.3%
Computers and IT	3	3.9%	3	15.0%	6	6.2%
Total organisations responding	77		20		97	

4.7 The data indicates that organisations serving a wider geographical area tend to focus on a narrower range of services (social activity, health and wellbeing, physical and outdoors activity and advice and information) whereas local groups collectively, cover a broader range of support and activities.

4.8 Responding organisations were asked what their own challenges were, and what would enable them to continue and to develop/grow their service. The most common responses were funding (64% of responding organisations) followed by volunteers (31%). It should be noted that this was frequently a need for volunteers able to lead on activities or for trustees – ie volunteers willing to take responsibility. For smaller, local organisations, transport was the next most frequently mentioned (25% of local organisations), followed by promotion/comms (22%) and then issues around their venue (19%). For organisations working across a wider geographical area, PR/comms was the third most commonly mentioned (23%). Feedback also showed that some organisations are over-subscribed whilst others are under-utilised.

4.9 It should be noted that local organisations gave the need for funding towards core costs (as opposed to specific activities) and long-term funding as a relatively high priority. It may be that a greater sense of security over future funding, and more confidence that core overheads and running costs can be met, would encourage groups to be more proactive in developing new services and activities for older people.

4.10 Some respondents specifically mentioned the type of funding that would most benefit them – including core costs and long-term funding.

Table 11: Funding types

Grant priorities	Local orgs	Wider orgs	Total
Core costs	6	1	7
Long term funding	3	0	3

4.11 The research has identified a very wide range of provision across Somerset. Support for older people includes well-established, quite traditional [6] community-based activities (such as lunch clubs and coffee mornings) as well as newer, sometimes innovative, services (for example a mobile electric vehicle pantry, Men’s Sheds) serving a wider area and diverse communities.

Here, from pages 15 to 22, are examples of organisations supporting older people, reflecting the range of provisions that have emerged from this research and highlighting their needs, as well as those of their local area.

[6] There is no judgement intended here – “traditional” activities are much needed and are a crucial part of the overall provision for older people.

Rethink

Rethink is a provider of mental health support across Somerset. One of its services is supporting people over 65 with memory loss or dementia and younger people who have been diagnosed with dementia.



Rethink provides 1:1 support generally lasting up to 2 years, although on occasions this may be extended. This is provided through (normally) weekly visits from a Rethink worker who supports and assists the client with paperwork, benefits, post, and other issues. The worker may also signpost or arrange help from other service providers, for example around social activities, transport, aids and adaptations and fire safety checks. However, personal care and transport are not provided. Most of Rethink's referrals come through Village Agents, Adult Social Care, Health Connectors and Social Prescribers.

Rethink's dementia support service has been running for many years and is funded by Somerset Council, although the contract is about to be re-tendered. The service is run by a small team of paid staff. There is currently a waiting list. Mary Brown, who coordinates the service, feels that they help their clients to feel less isolated, more independent, safer, happier and in a better financial position.

Mary feels that there are many challenges facing older people generally in Somerset. She highlights especially:

- **Isolation** – even those people with carers coming in feel lonely. They need people for a proper conversation, with time. Often the only person our clients see in a week is the Rethink worker.
- **Transport** – people can't easily get to appointments or to social activities. Distance to the key hospitals is a particular issue
- **Services are patchy** – one place may have great services and loads of activities whereas another doesn't.
- Many of the residential homes that used to offer **day care** haven't started to do this again since the pandemic
- **Micro providers** are available, but are expensive – older people don't want to pay for services
- **Attendance Allowance** is now much harder to access – criteria are much tighter – and many older people aren't aware that they are eligible for benefits.
- Many older people **think they need to save** – they don't spend the money they do have, and for instance will turn off heating or not pay for transport or services.



Root Connections CIC



Roots Connections, based in Stratton on the Fosse, was set up alongside a hostel for rural homeless people, to work adjoining land providing a market garden and the base for a range of other community activities.

The market garden offers opportunities for those living in the hostel but is also open twice a week for local people to join in 'volunteer land days'. They provide local veg boxes to local people, (often for those who can't get to shops), delivered by volunteers. The volunteers in the garden also bring in cake and provide a listening ear for those living in the hostel. Non-threatening adults provide time to talk and listen whilst the younger male residents feel like they are looking after the older people coming along. They support each other. Roots have DBS checks in place, strong safeguarding and volunteer inductions in place to enable this to work well. Roots offers a City and Guilds Level 1 qualification in horticulture for hostel residents and would like to widen the learning opportunities they provide.

Roots also run events from the hostel such as a Christmas market and a cookery club, which tends to involve older local women – some are carers or living alone. Roots finds that a lot of their volunteers are women, though they have some male drivers.

Roots involve around 60 volunteers in total and feels their work provides a structure to their week for the older volunteers. Volunteers learn new skills and feel part of something; they are contributing and have a valuable social opportunity.

Their very exposed site with no warm space and lack of local transport are the key challenges faced by Roots. They are exploring funding to address these problems, including to establish a warm hub and are keen to collaborate with other organisations.

Roots feels there are a range of support needs for older people generally that are not being met, as summarised below.

- It's more difficult for men – women are more receptive to conversations and chatting. When their partner dies, some men can really struggle. How do you reach the men? They are often hidden and isolated.
- Farmers also particularly struggle – very isolated, and if widowed even more so. They are then very dependent on their children, who may or may not have time to support.
- Need (more) outreach workers – though social prescribing is really useful, and Village Agents and Health Connectors are good. Need someone talking to men who they can relate to men. They are often proud and need to keep their dignity when accessing activities/services.
- Work with older people needs promotion through leaflets (physical hard copy) – many people aren't online. Also putting things in local papers – they are more likely to see it there.
- There are also people who are financially struggling due to increased costs. This leads to them being more isolated – they don't go out for a coffee and end up at home more.
- A lot of our volunteers are 'self-starters' but people who have low motivation, mental health issues, low confidence or physical health issues find it much harder to find out about things and to go along.
- Tech and IT support is needed – older people often work on hard copy.
- Some people are still less confident about going out – they don't want to catch bugs (since the pandemic) – and are taking fewer risks.
- In terms of existing provision, there is loads going on in Frome, but not so much in other places. There are village halls, but not sure if they are being utilized as much as they could be? In Radstock, there's now a focus on young people (following a stabbing) – but perhaps the older people are being over-looked?

Geranium Trust



Geranium Trust, based at a property near Yeovil, provides support and friendship to anyone and from all walks of life, but mostly older people who come to their monthly tea parties and weekly Tuesday gardening groups and lunches. The Trust also works with Able2Achieve who bring in younger people who have learning differences and the Trust has a particular focus on the LGBTQ+ community.

The Trust has 26 acres of gardens and a wildlife haven which are very popular with many older members of the community who use it every day for walking and wildlife studies. They also have a Memory Garden which people can visit whenever they like.

The Trust's space and activities are open to all, but Geranium Trust does provide some opportunities and support specifically for members of the LGBTQ+ community.

This includes two monthly events for members of the LGBTQ+ community - a Sunday Roast dinner (around 15 - 20 attend this) and a Drop In Coffee Morning (around 15 regulars come to this). Most of the guests to these are past retirement age and all are well over 50.

The Trust has for some time been keeping in touch via the telephone with several older gay men who are no longer able to attend events due to ill health and old age. As from the start of 2024, the Trust plans to start a new 'Geranium Trust LGBT+ Friends Line' together with 'Geranium Trust Friends Line' for older people who are living with loneliness and feeling isolated. Both of these will be run by the founder, with the help of other volunteers.

Paul (the founder) feels that Geranium Trust helps to reduce people's isolation, helping them have a sense of purpose and have a safe space to open up. Paul's perspectives on the needs of older people in Somerset are summarised below.

There are **lots of older people needing support** – especially those who are housebound.

LGBTQ+ older people will use local activities, but many of the men aren't 'out'. They may have been married or in a relationship which wasn't discussed. They come from a generation where you kept quiet about your sexuality – they don't know how to talk to people about being gay. Some are now just admitting it for the first time.

Bereavement support – particularly for the gay community – is needed. People may not want to access more traditional support or to admit to their friends or their local community the importance of the relationship to them. They may not be able to grieve in public for fear of what people will say.

Men take it harder when they lose a partner – they are often completely lost. The wife cooked the dinner and looked after the house, and they don't know how to cope without them.

Most LGBTQ+ support organisations are aimed more at younger people. There's not much for older gay people.

Huge need for connection – isolation is really high in the LGBTQ+ community. A lot of people come from quite a distance for the dinners – it can be harder to access a local service where people might 'know who you are'. Still a lot of fear for older gay men around being visible.



Community Men in Sheds Taunton (CMIST)



Community Men in Sheds Taunton (CMIST) is part of the national men's shed movement and one of 460 similar projects in the UK. In spite of the name the project and facility are open to women – in fact about one third of CMIST's members are women.

CMIST offers workshop space for craft activity and working with historic furniture, glass, metal work and pottery. It attracts members from a wide area across Taunton and West Somerset, and a broad mix of backgrounds, skills and income. One day a week is for men, one for women and one for both and all are “drop in” sessions. Members come in and do their own projects, but also help with community projects, such as repairing a church bell. Patients from a local mental health hospital come in for sessions on a Monday.

John Thwaites, CMIST's Chairman, thinks the project helps members feel less isolated – “they have a laugh and a chat, have something to do to fill their time and are using their skills or learning new ones”. He notes that some members now meet for a Sunday lunch (outside of the organisation) – so it is building relationships and networks of support. John highlights that the men attending are of the generation who were brought up not to cry – to hide their emotions. Because of this, they need a different approach, and working together in the workshops provides this.

John says that the challenges CMIST faces include getting their name out there so people know about them and making their space warmer which might widen the people who would come in. They have plans to develop the outside space and are getting help from the Ambassadors within the national network and from Spark Somerset.

His views on the support needs of older people generally are summarised below.

It's easier for men to talk 'shoulder to shoulder', rather than face-to-face and while doing something else. CMIST's activities take people's minds off their problems – it's a form of meditation.

People come because its mainly men. Men also engage with things like model trains, repair shops. **Older men are often more comfortable with other men.** They can behave differently with women around; they aren't so worried about upsetting anyone if it's just men.

Lots of the men attending CMIST come from industry and can find it hard to motivate themselves – they are used to being told what to do at work, and just doing it. So **having to make decisions and fill their own time is difficult.**

As the retirement age goes, up there are fewer volunteers. Only the older ones have the time. People are less able by the time they retire and need services, rather than volunteering.



Coleford Knit and Natter

Coleford Knit and Natter is a very informal knitting-based group operating, in Coleford in the Mendips. Coleford Knit & Natter is an informal Knitting & Crochet group in Coleford in the Mendips.

The group meet weekly in the Community Room of Douglas Yates Court, which is a Housing 21 Independent Living Retirement Complex, where the organiser, Geraldine, (aged 80) lives with her husband. The venue is "nice and warm" and is donated to them. Geraldine says, *"if we were paying for a place to meet, we couldn't do it"*. The group has 10 regular members, with an age range of 50s to 85 plus - 8 women and 2 men. Most of the members live in Coleford as transport from other places is poor. The group always welcomes new members, including people who wish to learn how to knit or crochet.

Members work on their own pieces, but as a group they will take on collective projects - for example producing warm hats & scarves for Julian House, a local Homeless Charity, and blankets and warm items to send to Ukraine for the elderly, disabled and orphans still living there. The group also involve people who are housebound and cannot attend their sessions - involving them in their charity projects and sharing wool and so on.

Geraldine says Coleford is ***"a really friendly place, and the people have good hearts. A good community once you break through and are accepted"***. She notes, ***"there are people who are my age who were born here and haven't lived anywhere else"***.



The geography of the village - comprising two parts, separated by a steep and dangerous hill which in parts has no pavements. It illustrates the impact the particular terrain and topography of a place can have on the physical accessibility of services.

Geraldine's perspective on support needs of older people in the area highlights the importance of transport and IT capability.

She says, ***"There are quite a few worthwhile groups in our village, but everything goes back to lack of transport to get to groups and getting to Frome & Midsomer Norton which are our nearest towns"***.

Computer literacy is important - I am computer literate, but I am amazed that some people in the village say they don't need or want a mobile or a smart phone.

"Quite a few things are going on here, but everything goes back to lack of transport to get to groups and getting to Frome. Holcombe doesn't even have shop. Computer literacy is important - I am computer literate, but I am amazed some people in the village don't want a mobile or smart phone."



Priorswood Community Centre



Priorswood Community Centre is based in the north of Taunton and provides a wide range of services and activities for the local community as listed below.

- Bereavement Support Group
- Circuits Class - fun, fitness, friendship
- Citizens Advice
- Computer Support
- Cooking Group
- Craft Group
- Creative Writers Group
- Digital Support
- Dominoes and Games afternoon
- Family History Course (11 weeks)
- Free Walking Group
- History Group
- Knit and Natter
- Lunch Club
- Menopause Support Group
- Monthly Cooking Club
- Scrabble and Games afternoon
- Tai Chi Exercise class

Most of these activities are run by the Centre itself although they do have other users of their space including Citizens Advice and youth workers.

Around 80% of Priorswood's clients are over 60, although they do run activities for children and young people in the school holidays. Most of the people they support are lonely, many have limited mobility and lots of them live alone. Many have lived in Priorswood area all their lives. It is an area of relative deprivation, so quite a few local people don't have a lot of money.



The challenges Priorswood Community Centre faces as an organisation are summarised as follows.

- Funding – ***“We have had a 3-year grant for core costs, but this will be ending soon, and we will need something similar - but covering the core staff and office costs is hard”.***
- Getting people to activities is difficult. ***“There is a reasonable bus service, but it doesn't always take people where they want to go”.***
- The Centre is restricted by the space they have – they currently have to hire rooms in other venues to run activities (which then costs them more). They don't have any more space to use or space to extend.
- How to reach people? Because of GDPR Priorswood don't have contact details for the people who just drop in for a coffee etc. So they can't contact them directly, or if they stop coming. They have tried to contact people through mailouts through the GP (which brought in a few people). But how to reach the people who aren't engaging with other services or going out is a challenge.

Lesley (the manager at the centre) was also concerned that the changes to Somerset Council (as a result of the reorganisation to a unitary Council and financial pressures) may impact on them too. Already she's finding that the contacts she had have moved jobs or been made redundant – the connections aren't there anymore. It is ***“hard to find the right people to talk to”.***

Lesley feels that the key issues and gaps in provision for older people are as follows:

- **Isolation is the main issue.** There are lots of people who started using more online services during the pandemic and they continue to do this. They don't come out much – and then they don't see what else is on, or bump into people. So people are more isolated.
- **Older people are often quite proud,** and don't like to ask for help – they often only come out if there's a crisis or something happens that they can't cope with. Would be much better to reach them earlier.
- It would be good to be able to work together more collaboratively with social housing providers, Somerset Council and health services, to make sure people know about them and what they offer.
- **Transport** to get people to activities.
- **Befriending** – for those who can't get out – is needed. Perhaps via phone? Particularly for the older or less mobile older people. Something that isn't intrusive but is a point of connection.
- **Bereavement support** – this is a point where lots of people withdraw and need support to get out and about again.
- **Cost of living** rise is impacting on people now, for example in relation to the cost of food and energy.

Evercreech Friendship Club



Evercreech Friendship Club serves this rural community just south of Shepton Mallet. The club's been going since 1975. It was started by the WRVS (Women's Royal Voluntary Service) but is now autonomous. The club currently has 33 members of which about a quarter are men. Most are relatively elderly – the youngest being over 65. The group meets monthly for two hours in the village hall and members pay a fee (£1.50) for each meeting and an annual membership fee (£8).

The club puts on a range of activities and events – including presentations (e.g. from Police, GP Practice), film shows, talks, and have a go sessions on topics such as pottery and painting.

Edward Porter, the club's Chair, says: ***"We've got a professional trapeze artist living in the village, he's quite famous, he came and rigged up a rope in the village hall and showed us trapeze. We've had talks from the Post Office, a talk about UFOs and crop circles, even a local MP who came to talk about his life before becoming an MP and how he got there"***

Edward says that the biggest challenge facing the club is providing and paying for transport: the club pays £40 per month to Mendip Community Transport to pick up members from the surrounding area. He also says it can be difficult to get new people involved.

"I've been down (to a retirement housing complex) and knocked on doors and said to people it's free transport outside your door... Come along, meet some new friends. But the new people moving in seem to just want to close their doors and stay inside. It might be linked to Covid, but this hasn't stopped any of our other members from coming back"

Edward felt that, from personal experience, one of the main areas of need for older people related to finding carers and meeting their costs. He felt that in Evercreech older people were quite well served by the range of organisations, activities and businesses.

Wheels - Watchet Community Transport

Wheels is a community transport service for the Watchet area. The service is based on volunteers, of which they have around 25, using their own cars, to take people to medical and other appointments and social activities. Any adult can use the service.

The service was started years ago by the local vicar who recognised that local people (particularly older people) needed transport. The service is paid for by users at a mileage rate and subsidised by a discretionary grant through Somerset Council. This grant funding is crucial to their existence.

The Wheels Coordinator, Judy Robinson, says they are ***"really worried about what is going to happen when things are decided on in February 2024 and whether the Council goes into administration. It would be absolutely diabolical to lose this service. It would essentially mean people's hospital transport will be a lot more expensive."***

Wheels can pick up and drop door to door which is what makes it so useful for people who don't have access to their own transport - or family and friends who can help. A high proportion of users are older or have a disability or dementia – the door to door pick up and drop off aspect of the service is seen as especially important in enabling people to access it. Wheels provides around 40 to 50 trips a week.



Judy says that their main challenge is recruiting volunteer drivers: ***"some drivers come from as far afield as Minehead, Sampford Brett and Bicknoller to help"***. And maintaining core funding - currently through the grant from Somerset Council.



Diversity and Inclusion

5.1 The extent to which support for older people is accessible and engages people in diverse communities was highlighted in the Literature Review. As a result, diversity and inclusion further explored in this research, with insights gained from interviews with key organisations working around equalities issues in Somerset.

5.2 The research reveals organisations and individuals providing support to equalities communities, in some cases specifically older people, across Somerset. These include, for example The Geranium Trust supporting the LGBTQ+ community (profiled in Section 4), Diversity Voice working with Ukrainian Refugees and the Community Council for Somerset's Diverse Communities Team. There is also a range of generally local and sometimes informal groups, providing opportunities for people with particular faith and/or cultural backgrounds to meet and support each other and celebrate their common heritage and experiences.

5.3 Feedback to the survey, shows that both community and larger organisations are supporting carers and those living with disability or higher care needs. However, far fewer identified having members of ethnic minorities or the LGBTQ+ community. And where they do, it was smaller numbers of people. The tables below provide further information.

Table 11 - How many of your clients / members over 60 are from the following groups
(community organisations – A1 and A2 in Table 1):

Local organisations	Number of clients supported with these needs	Number of organisations supporting people with these needs	% of organisations supporting people with these needs
Living with a disability / have higher care needs	365	32	80%
Carers	312	28	70%
Living with Dementia	245	27	68%
From ethnically diverse backgrounds	34	7	18%
LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer+)	28	6	15%

Table 12 - What proportion of your clients over 60 are from the following groups (Wider organisations – B in Table 1):

Wider organisations – proportion of clients	Up to 10%	11%-25%	26%-50%	51%-75%	76-100%	Over 50% of clients (% responding orgs)
Carers	1	0	1	4	3	78%
Living with a disability / have higher care needs	1	1	3	3	2	50%
Living with Dementia	3	4	2	1	1	18%
From ethnically diverse backgrounds	8	1	0	0	0	0%
LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer+)	5	1	0	0	0	0%

NB most respondents said 'unknown'

5.4 Gender is another area which was highlighted in the literature as affecting take up of support, with men being less likely to take up support. Overall, the community-based organisations (groups A1 and A2 in Table 1), were more likely to be supporting women – 66% of their clients/members were women. 8 (of the 49 organisations giving feedback) only have female clients, with 1 organisation supporting men. Only 1 organisation said they had any clients of 'other' genders. Learning from the literature review as well as local organisations highlighted the challenges of accessing support for those who are transgender.

Table 13 - Gender of clients / members (over 60)

	Local orgs	% Clients
Male	768	34%
Female	1519	66%
Other	5	0%
Total	2292	

5.5 Insight into the needs of older people from diverse communities in Somerset has largely come from interviews with the organisations supporting them. There was very little commentary in this area from respondents to the Somerset-wide online survey of organisations working with older people. This is of significance as it suggests that organisations working with older people do not see access to or engagement with diverse communities, as a priority issue or challenge.

5.6 Key conclusions from the data and feedback around diversity and equality are set out below.

- A sense of social isolation is a common characteristic of diverse communities generally and points to the need for opportunities, activities and events enabling people to come together with others of a similar background.
- People in diverse communities are dispersed across the county, often comprising relatively small numbers in individual towns and villages, which makes transport to activities and support which may be only viable to provide in urban centres, critical.
- Diverse communities can be quite 'hidden' – there may not necessarily be organised and easily visible groups. Mutual support may be very informal and perhaps involving friends and a few individuals.
- People in diverse communities need to be able to access and engage in mainstream provision but also will frequently require their own culturally appropriate and 'safe space' and support. It should not be a case of one or the other.
- There is a need to help support existing groups to be more genuinely inclusive, particularly around social opportunities which will help reduce isolation.
- Mainstream organisations need advice, guidance, training, and awareness raising to help them better engage with diverse communities and provide appropriate activities and support.
- Mainstream groups need to publicly demonstrate and evidence they are genuinely inclusive – relying on simply stating "everyone welcome" is not sufficient. (This may be done through, for example, the use of appropriate images and language, specific reference to particular groups (e.g. LGBTQ+), provision of culturally appropriate food and recognising the need for prayer opportunities.)
- Provision for people in ethnically diverse communities needs genuine and very nuanced understanding of their cultural and faith backgrounds and requirements.
- The multi-layered, multi-faceted features of diversity need to be recognised by providers of support; people and groups should not be defined by a single characteristic.
- Bereavement support is regarded as an especially key service for older people generally, but our consultation highlighted that this needs to be designed appropriately for different communities, for example for gay men who have lost a partner and for ethnic minority groups with particular faith and cultural traditions and attitudes to death.

Needs and Priorities

Unmet Needs

6.1 Feedback from survey respondents identifies (lack of) transport and isolation as the most significant area of unmet need facing older people – by some margin from other issues as the data summarised in Table 14 below indicates. These two areas of unmet need were highlighted by over one third of all survey respondents. It is notable that access to health services and IT/technology were the third and fourth most commonly reported areas of need.

6.2 The data clearly shows that being able to access services and activities, whether through the provision of transport, use of technology or by services being made available very locally or in the home, is the dominant issue facing older people identified by voluntary sector providers.

Table 14 Survey Respondents: Perceived unmet need in their local area (tagging of open responses)

Unmet needs	Local orgs [56]	Wider orgs [13]	Total [69]
Transport	17	8	25
Isolation	19	5	24
Access to health services	9	1	10
IT / Technology	9	1	10
Information	4	2	6
Financial / poverty	4	1	5
Carer support	4	0	4
Exercise classes	3	1	4
Home help / carers	3	1	4

Other options included: banking (3); food (3); housing (3); bereavement support (1) and sense of purpose (1)

6.3 Narrative comments from respondents highlight the importance of providing transport which is genuinely accessible to older people who may well have limited mobility. A village or town, for example, may have a bus service but unless the bus stops are within easy walking distance it will be of no value to many older people. Equally, there was a call for more local community-based services, activities and centres.

"More in-home one-to-one support or transport to get people to the groups"

"Transport is not reliable or regular for many"

"Without doubt it's TRANSPORT. We can provide the service as long as they can get to us."

6.4 Several respondents commented that even where services and activities are available older people may lack the confidence to participate and will need active support to enable them to do so.

"Safe and friendly activities within walking distance that they are not intimidated to attend."

"Many older people spend many hours by themselves. Some lack the confidence to join us, because of the fear their disabilities will make it difficult for example sight loss, hearing loss, early dementia."

"There are insufficient centres that offer a warm space, companionship, along with rewarding activities... a sense of purpose and achievement. The lack of places to go, particularly in the evening and weekends certainly can cause depression and an awful sense of isolation."

6.5 The challenges facing older people in accessing services online or even just getting through by phone and an increasingly self-service culture was noted by some respondents.

"Just this week... difficulty in getting prescriptions, difficulty in getting through to the doctors on the phone."

"Access to medical and social care provision depends largely on having someone to actively champion your situation (and not to take 'no' for an answer). Increasingly also access is limited for those who do not have access to or skills in the use of computers/mobile phones in an area with often poor connectivity."

"Lack of one-to-one support, too much reliance on people being able to self-serve."

6.6 Respondents also reported that some older people are effectively in a state of crisis struggling to cope with complex personal issues or those of a partner and a complex and under-resourced health and care system while also experiencing cost of living pressures.

"If he goes into a home that gives dementia care the wife will have to sell the house, they live in. Half of the value of house will have to be kept in a pot for his care, and then she's scuttled. Where would he get the care if he didn't sell the house. No-one can give her an answer. She's running herself into the ground. The carer is the one who collapses in the end. The system waits until they are literally on their knees mentally and physically. They are wracked with guilt, lack sleep and worry about their much beloved partner who is closing down. These people are in grief."

"Loneliness. Being stuck at home. Having no confidence to go out. Feeling miserable. Fear of falling. Poor nutrition. Lack of stimulation. Lack of safe exercise. Early death..."

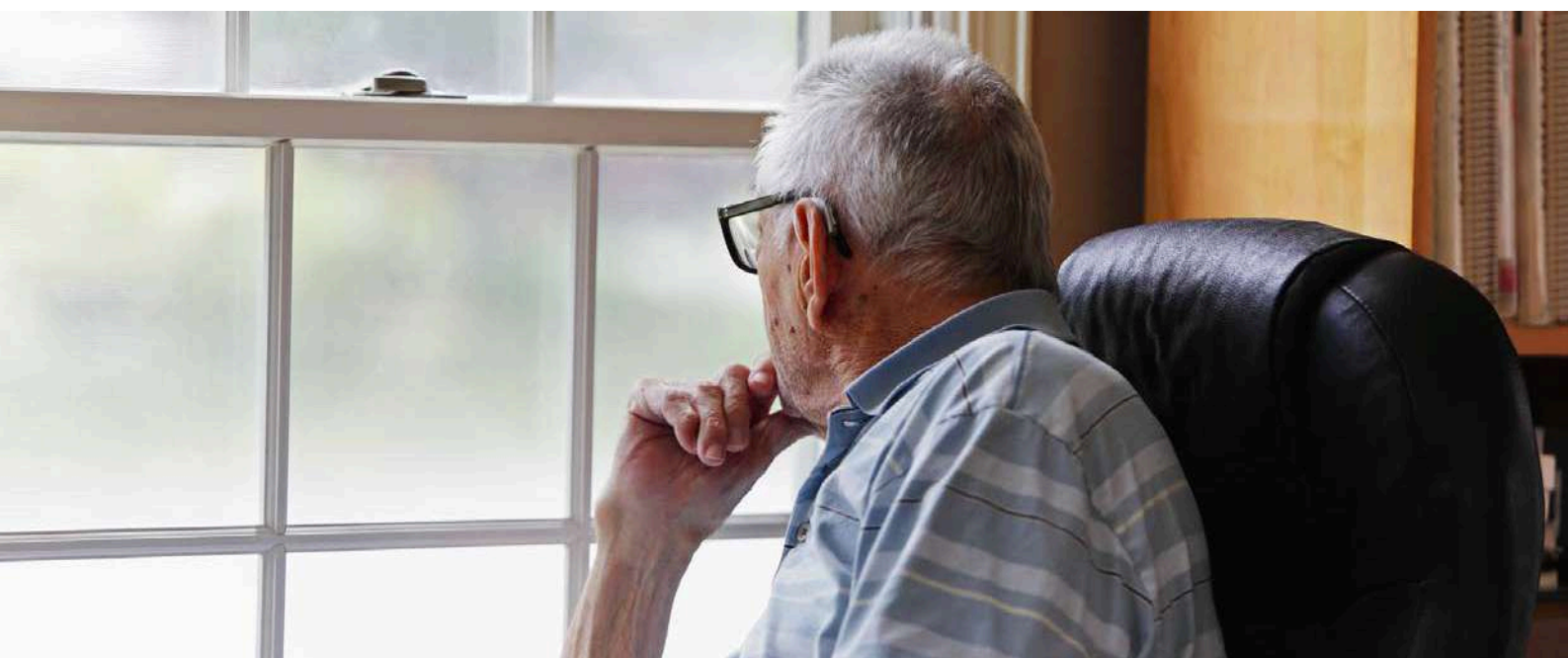
"Uncertainty brought about by cost-of-living crisis and having to make choices between heating their homes and eating."

"Problems with accessing affordable care (not £33 an hour from a Care agency). Unpaid carers who are desperate for a break."

6.7 Discussions and interviews with local village and community agents highlighted access to food as a key area of concern. This was not mentioned so much by survey respondents.

"There is a need for food delivery for those who can't get out (eg electric food pantry in Watchet). People can't always manage preparation / cooking of food and so just eat toast or something cold. Even a couple of hot meals a week make a difference."

"Cost of living issues are biting now. People are choosing between heating and eating."



6.8 A further indication of what voluntary organisations feel are the areas of support most needed is provided by survey respondents answers to the question: If you were running a grant scheme aimed at organisations supporting people over 60, what would you prioritise? Their responses were tagged for trends and are summarised in Table 15 below.

6.9 The data shows that overall, social activities and transport are regarded as the highest priority although this is especially the case for local organisations. Organisations covering a wider area did not, collectively, highlight one particular area of support above others.

Table 15 Survey Respondents: Priorities for grant funding (tagging of open responses)

Grant priorities	Local orgs	Wider orgs	Total
Social activity	23	2	25
Transport	16	1	17
Exercise / physical activity	8	3	11
1:1 befriending/company	6	0	6
Food	5	1	6
Local	3	3	6
Carer support	4	0	4
All organisations	61	18	

Other responses include: creative (3); dementia (3); access to health services (2); bereaved (2); IT (2); infrastructure / networking (2); intergenerational (1); trips out (1); advice & information (1); home help/carers (1); education / learning (1).

Priority Groups

6.10 Survey respondents were asked to identify those particular groups in the older population they felt were most in need of support. Their responses were tagged for trends and are summarised in Table 16 (see below).

6.11 The data shows that people living alone were seen as the highest priority for support. However, organisations working across wider areas did not highlight those living alone as in any greater need than most other groups of older people.

6.12 The data indicates that organisations identify a wide range of support needs across the older population. The feedback received suggests it is frequently a combination of factors, conditions or experiences that contribute to the challenges and difficulties older people face and so their need for support. For example, living alone, with a physical disability and being on a low income. Or being housebound, recently bereaved and living in a remote rural community. It also appears that organisations (and thus the staff and volunteers who work there) may not be identifying some diverse communities because, as stated earlier, they may be 'hidden'. This point was specifically referred to in section 5 – Diversity and Inclusion.

Table 16 Survey Respondents: Groups of older people most needing support (tagging of open responses)

Groups most needing support	Local orgs [53]	Wider orgs [13]	Total [66]
Living alone (e.g. widowed)	20	2	22
Dementia	8	2	10
Carers	7	2	9
Physical disability	6	3	9
Low income	7	1	8
Mental health issues	6	1	7
Bereaved	6	0	6
Learning disabled / less educated	4	2	6
Rural	2	2	4

Other responses include: men (3); housebound (2); recently retired (2); living in a care home (1).

6.13 The following narrative comments from survey respondents provide greater insight into where the greatest need for support lies within the older population.

"Those who are recently bereaved, carers, recently retired and adjusting to a new identity and rhythm to the week, retired professionals who still have a lot to give, people recovering from an illness or hospital stay and needing to re-connect & build confidence. Those who are struggling financially, but too proud to ask for help. Those who are caring for a family member, whether one with dementia or with additional or other physical, medical or social conditions. A second group, which certainly overlaps at least in part with the first, is those who have no capability with computers or mobile phones. A third group is those older people who have no surviving family or whose family do not live locally."

"Those isolated and off the radar from the usual support networks. "

"Those who feel too shy to join a group, possibly because they feel intellectually inferior."

"I think those on low income and living on their own with no family/close family suffer the most."

"Carers and anyone living with an illness. Those who have retired and beginning to lose contact with the modern world. Older frail people living alone."

"People with additional needs, including those with Dementia, those with physical impairments, those experiencing acute isolation."

6.14 The research analysis and findings relating to the diversity and inclusion aspects of older people's needs and provision as set out in Section 5 also informs discussion around priority groups.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 This research has identified a wide range of needs and issues facing older people in Somerset and the organisations that are providing support and activities for this substantial and growing cohort of people. While needs and the ability to respond to these needs will always vary from place to place there are some key overarching themes that have emerged from the research that are relevant across Somerset. These should inform the funding, policies and forward plans of public and voluntary agencies.

7.2 These conclusions and recommendations are set out under the following headings:

- Improved services and support for older people
- Improving the accessibility of services for older people
- Improving the inclusiveness of services for older people
- Strengthening organisations working with older people
- Funding and support with funding

Improved services and support for older people

- Increasing the provision of **home visiting and befriending**, including to encourage and support people who are lonely and anxious and not confident to access existing activities.
- Exploring new opportunities for enabling older people to access affordable and **good quality food**.
- Increasing the provision of **weight-bearing physical activity** to improve balance for older people and build their confidence to leave their home and be able to access other services.
- Recognising the **impact of the loss of key commercial services** (such as banks, shops, post offices) have particularly on older people and strengthening the ability of communities to campaign actively on these issues and work with stakeholders to provide solutions that recognise the particular needs of older people.
- Developing **bereavement support** including services geared to the needs of specific groups such as the LGBTQ+ community and particular faith communities.
- Strengthening **support for carers** of older people and carers who are themselves elderly and have particular support needs.
- Support the management of **community venues** (e.g. village halls) to develop provision for older people through encouraging other groups and taking the initiative themselves.
- Supporting provision of **‘space to talk’** opportunities enabling people to share their worries, anxieties and concerns.

Improving the inclusiveness of services for older people

- Ensuring organisations, activities and support for older people are, and are perceived as, **accessible and inclusive**
- Recognising the importance of providing choice and **a range of opportunities** for older people where feasible – ‘one size does not fit all’
- Encouraging providers of social activities to **think creatively** about new or revised activities that appeal to those who tend not to engage
- Identifying and providing specific support to organisations who are **reaching older people from more diverse communities**

Strengthening organisations working with older people

- **Facilitating networking** and sharing of challenges and good practice drawing on experience of the Forums managed by Spark Somerset
- Supporting voluntary groups to **recruit more volunteers** in order to expand the reach and range of services for older people
- Helping organisations to respond to **changes in volunteering** (including as a result of later retiring)
- Helping organisations to **review their legal structure** and governance in order to maximise their opportunities for funding and long-term sustainability

Funding and funding support

- Providing an **easily accessible fund** to help resource activities and services for older people being provided within local communities
- Funding to enable existing activity to be **more inclusive** (including access to support and training), and for organisations who are supporting those older people who are not accessing existing provision (particularly in terms of diversity)
- Funding to **support specialist organisations** working with older people from diverse communities and those who are less well served by the generalist offer
- Providing **support, advice and information on funding** specifically geared to the older person’ sector

Appendix

Appendices

A. Consultation tools - Survey Questions

B. Responding Organisations

C. Case Study Area Profiles

D. Summary Data from Online Survey of Organisations

Appendix A – Consultation tools

Online survey (as example)

Please note that slightly different questions were asked of larger organisations. We have included questions to give a feel of the questions asked.

Older People Activities and Support Research

Older People Activities and Support Research

Do you offer support or activities for people over the age of 60 in Somerset? If so, we'd like to know more about what you do and what support you need.

This will help Somerset Community Foundation to have a clearer view of what's currently being offered. It will help them make decisions about future grant making to meet smaller organisations and older people's needs in the future.

To reward your participation there is a prize draw for all participants of the survey (a £100 shopping voucher to use for your group). You can also volunteer to be interviewed by one of the team on the phone or in person, if you are selected, we are also able to pay for your time to be interviewed.

The Community Council for Somerset are helping Somerset Community Foundation with this research. We are looking at groups and organisations across the whole of Somerset and in six case study areas:

Watchet, Priorswood in Taunton, Shepton Mallet and the villages of Evercreech, Coleford and Holcombe.

Older People Activities and Support Research

*** Are you:**

- ☐ A community group / organisation offering activities or support for older people in: Coleford, Evercreech, Holcombe, Shepton Mallet, Priorswood, Watchet
- ☐ A community group / organisation offering activities or support for older people in another village / town in Somerset
- ☐ A larger organisation offering support to older people across a wider geographic area

Older People Activities and Support Research

*** Which area(s) do you cover?** *(tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Coleford
- ☐ Evercreech
- ☐ Holcombe
- ☐ Shepton Mallet
- ☐ Priorswood
- ☐ Watchet
- ☐ Other (please tell us)

Older People Activities and Support Research

If you do not have answers to some of these questions, please just give approximate figures, or leave them blank and move on to another question. Any information you are able to provide would be really helpful to us.

What is the name of your group / organisation?

What activities or support do you offer for older people (60+)?

- ☐ Social groups: coffee mornings, games etc.
- ☐ Physical activity: exercise, dance, indoor bowls etc.
- ☐ Creative activities: Art, craft, Drama, Music etc.
- ☐ Food, drink, cooking
- ☐ Outdoor pursuits - gardening, walking etc.
- ☐ Computers and IT
- ☐ Befriending
- ☐ Advice and information
- ☐ Health and wellbeing
- ☐ Specialist: Dementia support etc.
- ☐ Transport

Please tell us more about what your group / organisation offers

Older People Activities and Support Research

Challenges

What challenges do you face in delivering your activity / service?

What would help your group / organisation the most to continue with what you are delivering?

What would help you to do more / give better support?

(note if you opt to take part in a telephone interview, we will explore this in detail with you)

Older People Activities and Support Research

Support needs of older people and gaps

What services / activities do you think make the most difference for older people?

What unmet support needs do you see in older people in your local area?

Are there particular groups of people over 60 who most need support?

If you were running a grant scheme aimed at organisations supporting people over 60, what would you prioritise?

Older People Activities and Support Research

People and Funding

How often does your group / activity happen?

- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Every two weeks
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Other (please tell us)

How many of your clients / members are? *(please enter a number where applicable)*

Under 50 years:

51-60 years:

61-70 years:

71-80 years:

81+ years:

How many of your clients / members (over 60) are: *(please enter a number where applicable)*

Male

Female

Other

How many people over 60 regularly attend your group / activity?

- ☐ 1-5
- ☐ 6-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21-50
- ☐ Other (please tell us)

How many of your clients / members over 60 are: *(please enter a number where applicable)*

Carers

Living with a disability / have higher care needs

Living with Dementia

From ethnically diverse backgrounds

LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer+)

Please tell us: *(please enter a number - not £ currency sign - where applicable)*

How many active volunteers you have

How many staff you have (full time equivalent)

Your approximate income / turnover last year

In the last two years, where has the majority of your income come from? *(tick all that apply)*

- ☐ Members
- ☐ Fundraising activities
- ☐ Grants
- ☐ Donations
- ☐ Funding from statutory bodies
- ☐ Loans
- ☐ Other (please tell us):

How likely do you think it is that your group / activity will be running in 12 months time?

Not at all likely

Unlikely

Possibly

Probably

Definitely

☐☐☐☐☐

What is your group / organisation's structure?

- ☐ Community Group
- ☐ Faith group
- ☐ Unincorporated group
- ☐ Registered charity
- ☐ Community Interest Company (CIC)
- ☐ Community Benefit Society (CBS)
- ☐ Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)
- ☐ Parish or Town Council
- ☐ Statutory organisation
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Other (please tell us)

Does your organisation receive any practical help or support from:

- ☐ Another local group or organisation
- ☐ Local Parish Council / Town Council
- ☐ SPARK Somerset
- ☐ Community Council for Somerset (Village Agents)
- ☐ A national body
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Other (please tell us)

Older People Activities and Support Research

An interview to discuss your views in more depth

Would you be willing to take part in an interview? There is funding available to cover your time for taking part, if selected.

- ☐ Yes (*please provide your contact details below*)
- ☐ No

CONTACT DETAILS AND PRIZE DRAW

Please tick the boxes below to be interviewed or to enter the prize draw. We will only keep your contact information if you have indicated that you would be willing to take part in an interview.

- ☐ Please contact me to arrange an interview
- ☐ Please enter my organisation for the Prize Draw

Please provide your details:

Name

Telephone

Email

Appendix B – list of responding organisations

Survey respondents

Larger organisations

Age UK Somerset (AGEING WELL DEPT)

CCS (Talking Cafes)

Everyone Active

Goldies

Home Library Service

Lendology CIC

Marie Curie

PALS - ProActive Life Style gentle aqua aerobics

Reminiscence Learning

Social Circles CIC

Somerset County Federation of Women's Institutes

Somerset Football Association

Somerset Foundation Trust

Somerset Ramblers

Spark (Carers Service)

Spark Somerset

Taunton Brewhouse Theatre

University of the Third Age

West Somerset Green Forum

West Somerset Ramblers part of The Ramblers Association

Local organisations

A 2nd Chance FC
 Activities Group and Sports Group
 Be A Good Neighbour
 Bishops Hull Hub
 Bridgwater Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club
 Bridgwater Senior Citizens Forum
 Bridgwater United Community Sports Trust
 Chatty Chums
 Coleford Knit and Natter Group
 Community Clay
 Craft and Art Watchet Club
 Curry Mallet Mini Day Centre (T/A The Round Window Club)
 Dance for Parkinson's Wells
 dancesmilerepeat.com
 Ditchat Village Lunch, Ditchat Rendezvous (coffee morning) and Ditchat Art Group.
 Dogs for Health
 Evercreech Friendship Club
 Evercreech WI
 Exmoor Patient Group @Exmoor Medical Center & Dulverton Good Neighbours
 FND Friends
 Friendship Cafe
 Glastonbury Community Development Trust
 Heads Up Somerset
 Hinton St George Active Living Group

Hinton St George Active Living Group
 Langport Area Dementia Action Alliance (LDAA)
 Merriott Social Venue
 Methodist Church
 MHA Communities Mendip
 Monday Meander
 Morland Hub Luncheon Club (Sedgemoor Community Partnership)
 Music2Connect (Inner Wheel project) and member of Shepton Dementia Action Alliance
 North Taunton Partnership, Priorswood Community Centre
 Quilting and crafts group
 Reminiscence Learning
 Root Connections CIC
 Shepton Mallet u3a
 Shepton Men's Shed
 Social Circles CIC
 St Matthews Church Hall Lunches
 St Peter's Church
 Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre
 Tai Chi Shibashi
 Taunton and District Womens Walking Football Club
 Taunton Walking Netball
 The Charltons Memorial Community Trust CIO

The Charltons Memorial Community Trust CIO
The Inner Wheel Club of Shepton Mallet and Shepton Mallet Dementia Action Alliance
The Old Stores Studio CIC
The Volunteer Network
The Wiveliscombe Area Partnership
Thursday Cafe
Watchet Coastal Communities Team
Watchet Community Art Club
Watchet Gardening Club/Watchet Craft/Crime Fiction Book Club
Wells Memory Cafe
West Buckland Friendship Club
Wheels - Watchet Community Transport
Williton Allotments Ltd
WINCANTON CARES
Yeovil Day Centre Society and Yeovil Meals Service
You are my sunshine

Interviews with organisations

Geographical locations

Organisation	Geographic Area	Specialist area
Coleford Knit & Natter	Coleford	
Evercreech Friendship Club	Evercreech	
Evercreech WI	Evercreech	
Priorswood Community Centre	Priorswood	
Root Connections	Coleford, Evercreech, Holcombe & Shepton Mallet	
Music 2 Connect	Shepton Mallet	Dementia
Shepton Mallet Men's Shed	Shepton Mallet	Men
Golden Oldies	Shepton Mallet (and wider)	
7 Starlings CIC	Shepton Mallet	
Wheels Community Transport	Watchet	

Specialist organisations

Organisation	Area
Bannah Crook (individual)	Diverse ethnicity
Somerset Diverse Communities Team	Diverse ethnicity
Diversity Voice	Diverse ethnicity (and other minorities)
Geranium Trust	LGBTQ+
Intercom Trust	LGBTQ+
Taunton Men's Shed	Men
Rethink	Dementia / mental health

Appendix C - Case Study Area Profiles

Three areas were chosen by Somerset Community Foundation to be geographical Case Studies. These were Shepton Mallet, Watchet and Priorswood (in Taunton). In addition, the Community Council for Somerset chose three villages near to Shepton Mallet, Holcombe, Coleford and Evercreech, to act as comparators of smaller, rural communities. These six areas have a combined population of 27,500, representing around 5% of all people living in Somerset.

The profiles below show the differences and similarities between these different areas. Some themes (e.g. transport) flow through all of the different areas. Other themes (e.g. access to services, the number of activities available) vary across places. The experience of getting older does vary depending on where you live – particularly in terms of isolation, community support, and access to services and activities.

Shepton Mallet

Summary Profile

Shepton Mallet is a market town with some deprivation. There is a good sense of community – but a bit of a sense that there are local people who don't join in. Some described it as quite old fashioned. There is a mixture of locals and incomers – with differing approaches and expectations. There is no longer a bank in the town (though a weekly session at the Community Centre) and the town centre is still in need of investment (see extract below). There are GP surgeries and a hospital. Housing is cheaper than other local towns in Somerset.

There is a lot going on in terms of general activities, but the loss of the leisure centre had an impact on exercise classes and there seems to be limited 1:1 support for older people and limited activity specifically aimed at older people, particularly once they get frailer. Some local groups and activities are finding it hard to get people to attend.

The following extract from the Neighbourhood Plan provides a helpful overview of the town.

Neighbourhood Plan extract

There is a recognised need for improvement. The Mendip Local Plan Part I: Strategy and Policies 2006-2029 says the following: "Shepton Mallet, located in the heart of Mendip, is the second smallest town in the district. Despite its heritage and attractive appearance, the town's image remains poor with a number of prominent areas in need of significant investment. Shepton Mallet's town centre is the smallest in the district, and it has been in decline for many years. The relocation of the town's main food store from a peripheral location on Fosse Lane to the Townsend Retail Park in 2007 was seen as a means to deliver regeneration to a derelict employment site and help to boost trade in the centre. The Retail Park has delivered large format retailing, which was absent in the town, as well as a large Tesco store offering a range of non-food goods. This development has improved the retention of spending in the town as a whole, but according to an assessment in 2010, the benefits of higher footfall are not being translated into gains on the high street. Whilst there has been investment in a number of high street properties, shop vacancy rates remain stubbornly high especially around the Market Place.

Demographic Overview

7.6 Key demographic features of Shepton Mallet areas follows.

- Population – 10,600 (4,377 dwellings)
- 30% of households are single occupant
- 96.7% of population are white British
- 4.1% of population have bad or very bad health; 16.2% are disabled
- 8% of the population provide unpaid care
- 14.4% of households have no car/van; 41% have 1 car/van
- 14% of households are in social rented housing
- 50% of households are not deprived in any dimension. Shepton Mallet is one of two towns in Mendip which has an issue with deprivation. Shepton North is the most deprived LSOA (Lower Layer Super Output Area) (Indices of Multiple Deprivation decile 3) with two areas at a 5, two at a 7 and one at a 9th decile (1st is most deprived). Shepton East Ward is the most deprived ward of the district, lying just outside the 10% most deprived wards in the country.
- Shepton Mallet has a population with lower proportions who are degree level educated and higher levels of people with no formal qualifications compared to the district figures and England figures.
- Fairly regular buses to a range of destinations. Limited evening services.

Older people in Shepton Mallet

Key characteristics of older people in the town are as follows

- 2617 individuals aged over 60 (25% of population); 504 people are over 85 (5%)
- 786 people over 60 are disabled (30% of over 60s); 9.2% of residents over 60 have bad or very bad health
- 12% of over 60s are providing unpaid care
- Age UK Loneliness risk – ‘very high risk’ in Shepton South; ‘high risk’ in Central Shepton and ‘medium’ risk in Central West Shepton and Shepton East.
- in 4th decile for deprivation for older people in Shepton North and Shepton South West. All other areas are 7th or 8th decile (1st is most deprived)

Provision of activities and services

Key venues for community activity are:

- Paul Street Community Centre – variety of activities including exercise and dance classes
- Art Bank – run a café and bar, and offer lots of arts and crafts type activities as well as events
- Churches (though they vary in what they offer).
- Library
- Bowls and Tennis club (including revamped clubhouse which is available for hire)
- Lido – open air pool in the summer (including evening adult only sessions)
- Men’s Shed
- The Brasserie – local café providing space for groups to meet
- The Hive – craft shop and café who run e.g. knit and natter
- Number 8 – disused shop in the town centre, that’s currently offering art workshops

The local leisure centre closed when the school stopped access to it, and this has left a gap in provision. There is no bank in Shepton Mallet – the Post Office can provide some banking functions, but this is not sufficient for everyone. Older people can struggle with online / app based banking and tend not to like it. There is a mobile bank, visiting weekly at the Community Centre.

Feedback – provision and needs

In 2021/22, records show that village agents dealt with 167 cases in Shepton Mallet, 40% with older people. Common issues were hospital discharge referrals, care, micro providers[1], community activities, isolation, benefits, housing and transport, including to hospitals in and outside of Somerset such as Bath.

"People feel vulnerable, very isolated, they don't like to ask the neighbours for help – a lot of people are proud, and they don't like to ask for or accept help. People are also still scared about coming out (post the pandemic) and mixing with other people. They feel vulnerable when being out in crowded places, and they have got used to being indoors." [Village agent]

"There are lots of activities for older people in Shepton Mallet – though not necessarily specifically for older people, which is who attends. The local cafes are also used by lots of people to meet up. The market on a Friday still brings in a lot of local farmers (and locals) who you don't see on other days." [Interview]

Transport

There are bus services available to larger towns, and Mendip Community Transport provide community transport for Shepton Mallet, including the 'Slinky' service and patient transport for Shepton Mallet Treatment centre.

"Use of public transport provides access to larger towns and cities such Bath, Bristol and Weston-Super-Mare. Some routes are indirect and require changes to a second service along the route." [Shepton Mallet Neighbourhood Plan Transport Issues Report]

"There are some public buses, but less than there were, and routes are running less frequently. The Bristol route is no longer running. It's difficult to get to RUH – it involves several buses. Some of the estates don't have transport into town. A local shuttle bus would be good. Rotary (or someone) used to run a community bus, but I've not seen it for a while and I'm unsure as to whether it still runs. I don't know about any community car schemes etc. I think people generally get lifts from neighbours/friends." [Interview]

[1] Generally self-employed individuals or very small providers of services

Growing older in Shepton Mallet

Feedback highlights that Shepton Mallet is a friendly community, with opportunities to meet others. It also suggests that there is a local tendency to not join in.

"It's a good size of community – lots going on, but not too big. It's quite easy to build a network. If you attend one thing, you'll bump into someone elsewhere too. In the last 10 years, there's been more community activity, but there is still a set of people who think there is nothing going on in Shepton. It's a bit 'old fashioned' – people take part in e.g. the Patient Participation group at their GP or the Friends of the Hospital group – but may not do other things." [Interview]

"In Shepton Mallet they're not good joiners". [Interview] To clarify they mean people are reluctant to join in community groups or activities.

"I don't know what it's like to grow older – I'm over 60 but I'm still working as a consultant. Shepton a friendly place. Loads of cafes to meet people and clubs. It depends on what you want and where your interests lie. There's the library, market and the shopping centre." [Interview]

"Generally, Shepton Mallet is a friendly place – lots of support from neighbours etc and people will stop and chat." [Interview]

Issues for local groups

Specific issues in Shepton Mallet included getting people to attend activities.

"Getting and maintaining numbers is an issue! We've lost a lot of the St Cecilia care home residents. Things have changed, maybe it's the cost-of-living crisis, but families aren't sending so many people to the home early. Now the residents that go there are really far developed with Dementia and beyond what the group can help with – it's more end of life care there now. Overall the number of people living with Dementia has dropped – this might have been due to Covid. Although recently, the local Health Connections team have improved our numbers over the past few months." [Interview]

"Money isn't the issue it's trying to get people to come along. The girl who was organising the Love to Move group at Art Bank started with 8-9 people, but numbers dropped, and she's gone to Evercreech now where the groups are really well attended. They've got a great community over there." [Interview]

Holcombe

Summary profile

Holcombe is a small, rural village 8 miles from Shepton Mallet, and 8 miles from Frome. It has a playing field and village hall but few other services. It is not particularly deprived and is 'low risk' for loneliness in Age UK's loneliness register. There are a lot of older people (proportionately) in the village. For active older people who have access to a car, Holcombe is a good place to live. However, the lack of services creates issues for those with no transport. Most social activities are centred on the village hall – with some associated limitation on what is available.

Demographic Overview

Key demographic features of Holcombe are as follows.

- Population – 960 (400+ households)
- 22% of households are single occupant
- 97.6% of population are white British
- 5.7% of population have bad or very bad health; 17.7% are disabled
- 9% of the population provide unpaid care
- 5.5% of households have no car/van; 29% have 1 car/van
- 8.7% of households are in social rented housing
- 53% of households are not deprived in any dimension; 6th decile for deprivation (1st is most deprived)
- Fairly regular (2 hourly) buses to Frome. No evening service.

Older people

Key characteristics of older people in Holcombe are as follows.

- 387 individuals aged over 60 (40% of population); 76 people are over 85 (20%)
- 128 people over 60 are disabled (33% of over 60s); figures are unavailable for health.
- 46 people over 60 are providing unpaid care (24%)
- Age UK Loneliness risk – ‘very low’
- In 8th decile for deprivation for older people (1st is most deprived)

Provision and need for older people

Holcombe has a church and pubs but no GP surgery, pharmacy or shop. There is a farm shop 10 minutes’ walk from the village centre. The nearest centre for services (e.g. Council, CAB) is Frome or Shepton Mallet.

Holcombe has a playing field and recreation area and a village hall, with associated activities including sport/physical activity (e.g. tai chi, boules, skittles, yoga, hockey and croquet), arts and crafts group and classes and a friendship cafe.

The most common issues on the Village Agents’ database are: housing, benefits, isolation, community activities and micro providers (17 cases in 2021/22).

Those giving feedback during the research highlighted transport, isolation and a lack of financial means (for some) as the main issues for older people locally.

“There is still a lot of loneliness for some individuals who are unable to leave their homes for whatever reason.” [Local organisation]

“The cost of my classes are low (£5), but I know some of them would really benefit from classes like Pilates. These are often oversubscribed and cost at least twice the cost of my class. Some are living on just their state pension and really need access to these classes.” [Local activity provider]

Coleford

Summary profile

Coleford is a village with a lot of activities and a reasonable level of services. It has some deprivation (though not so much for older people), and some assisted living accommodation. There is a range of activities available in the village including several community spaces. However, the geographic aspects of the village (a steep hill between two parts of the village) make it tricky for people with limited mobility or no car to access activities even within the village. Coleford scores as 'very high risk' on Age UK's risk map for loneliness in older people. Although not deprived overall, there are local people who are struggling financially.

Demographic Overview

Key demographic features of Coleford are as follows.

- Population – 2,400
- 27% of households are single occupant
- 98.4% of population are white British
- 5.1% of population have bad or very bad health; 18.4% are disabled
- 9% of the population provide unpaid care
- 11% of households have no car/van; 37% have 1 car/van
- 17.7% of households are in social rented housing
- 46% of households are not deprived in any dimension; 4th decile for deprivation in Coleford; and 7th decile for Coleford Outer (1st is most deprived)
- Fairly regular (2 hourly) buses to Frome. No evening service. The service is more limited now at the weekends than in the past.

Older people in Coleford

Key characteristics of older people in Coleford are as follows[2]

- 391 individuals aged over 60 (28% of this LSOA); 79 people are over 85 (6%)
- 128 people over 60 are disabled (33% of over 60s); 13.5% of residents over 60 have bad or very bad health
- 12% of over 60s are providing unpaid care
- Age UK Loneliness risk – 'very high risk'
- In 5th decile for deprivation for older people in Coleford; and 7th decile for Coleford Outer (1st is most deprived)

Needs of and provision for older people

In terms of local services Coleford has three churches, the British Legion Club a pub, a GP surgery and a shop (with cashpoint).

Coleford has a playing field (including hard courts) and allotments and a number of community spaces including the British Legion, Gospel Hall, community room at supported living accommodation (Douglas Yeates Court) and the 'Hub'. These offer a range of activities including sport/physical activity, theatre group, carnival groups, environmental groups and social groups such as knit and natter and a Tuesday afternoon club. The Hub opens up as a warm space, has a pop-up café at least twice a week, a post office weekly with a talking café, and foodbank.

[2]This data was only available for the centre of the village (one LSOA) - 1,374 people.

The village has two parts, separated by a steep hill.

Village agents (2021/22 data) showed 61 cases in Coleford - 31% were with older people. Common issues were benefits, housing, care/carers support, isolation, fuel.

"Coleford is a big village with a lot of need. It's a very detached village, it's very hilly. There's the British Legion in the centre of the village, but it's quite expensive to hire. A lot goes on in the churches, and in the community room at the Supported Living Accommodation, but access is not easy, so anyone who struggles with mobility issues or who has no transport finds it really difficult to get there. For social activity there is quite a lot happening e.g. Knit and Natter group, an older person's walking group, Tuesday afternoon club etc". [Village Agent]

The community plan highlighted a need for more exercise / outdoor activities. It suggested that there were more activities locally for older people than for some other age groups.

Feedback

Other feedback highlights that Coleford is a friendly community with a lot of activities, but that transport is a major issue.

"We moved to Coleford 19 years ago. I can honestly say we haven't looked back since moving here. It's a really friendly place, a good community once you break through and are accepted." [Survey respondent]

"Transport is an issue for some. There's lower Coleford and upper Coleford and it's split by a very steep hill. Douglas Yeates Court is halfway up this. There are a couple of people in their 80s who walk up it to get here, but generally it's a very steep hill and dangerous to walk on. Transport within the village is an issue, and also transport to nearby towns. i.e. Radstock and Shepton Mallet." [Interviewee]

"There are quite a few things going on, but everything goes back to lack of transport to get to groups and to get to Frome. There are also lots of people who don't want a mobile or smart phone – they aren't online, and so can't access services that way." [Interviewee]

"For a local grant scheme, I would prioritise: a place not organised by the church or another prominent group i.e. common to the community – perhaps a coffee shop, where people can pop in and can meet informally – inter-generational. I'd also prioritise a decent bus service and a small Coleford community bus – it's a very steep hill from the old village with cars parked on one side, and no pavement." [Interviewee]

Evercreech

Summary profile

Evercreech is 3 miles southeast of Shepton Mallet, and 5 miles northeast of Castle Cary. It is a larger village, with a population of 2,700 and lots of local facilities and services. There are a number of activities available for older people, but transport is an issue to access them for those who no longer drive or don't have access to a car. There is a good sense of community and a feeling that it's a supportive place to live. However, overall deprivation levels hide issues for individuals – and particularly those living in social housing.

Demographic Overview

Key demographic features of Evercreech are as follows.

- Population – 2,700
- 30% of households are single occupant
- 98% of population are white British
- 5.1% of population have bad or very bad health; 18.6% are disabled
- 8.5% of the population provide unpaid care
- 9% of households have no car/van; 38% have 1 car/van
- 11% of households are in social rented housing
- 46% of households are not deprived in any dimension; 7th decile for deprivation in both North and South Evercreech (1st is most deprived)
- Fairly regular (2 hourly) buses to Shepton Mallet, Yeovil and other destinations. No evening service.

Older people

Key characteristics of older people in Evercreech are as follows.

- 887 individuals aged over 60 (33% of population); 213 people are over 85 (8%)
- 264 people over 60 are disabled (30% of over 60s); 9.7% of residents over 60 have bad or very bad health
- 0% of over 60s are providing unpaid care
- Age UK Loneliness risk – 'high risk'
- In 5th decile for deprivation for older people in Evercreech South; and 7th decile for Evercreech North (1st is most deprived)

Needs of Provision for older people

Evercreech has a church, a GP surgery, a shop and two pubs. It also has a village hall with two main spaces, sports field and hall, millennium garden, play areas, allotments, and a playing field. The village hall offers a wide range of activities including WI, bowls, coffee morning, drama group, exercise classes. The Old Stores Studio CIC offer craft-based activities, workshops and drop-in sessions. There is a food saving project and a Community Larder and a community book swap in the telephone box. There is supported housing in the village, and a care home.

"The Village Hall is excellent. It's all kitted out with the latest equipment, solar panels. They've got the latest surround sound, 3D system – it's great for films." [Interview]

"There is honestly a lot of choice [of activity] and neighbourliness here." [Interview]

Village Agent data for Evercreech (2021/22) shows 53 cases in Evercreech, with 53% of these being for older people. Common issues were hospital discharge referrals, benefits, isolation / befriending, micro providers, care.

Village Agent overview:

"Evercreech is rural, and quite a large village, with the one co-op shop right in the middle. Evercreech is quite well supported, there are lots of groups, they do loads of things. Generally self-supporting as a community, but there are two ends of the spectrum - there's some very wealthy properties around in the area and there is the social housing, and they are the ones who are struggling."

Transport is way and above the biggest issue. Evercreech is so spread out, and the majority of elderly who are living there are in one area, which used to be local authority warden-controlled housing, but they have removed all the wardens so you have a lot of elderly people who are living in one bedroom bungalows on one estate with no great link to anything. Most services are provided in Shepton Mallett, which is only 10-minute drive away, but they are in positions now when they just can't access. They either can't afford to run a car, or they are beyond physically being able to do it. And it's quite a trek from where the properties are spread out to get to the shop in the middle of the village."

A lot of the activities are centred on the village hall and when people get past driving - its ½ mile from the estate and they just can't get there. They would like to participate a bit more; you almost need a small minibus to pick them up and bring them into the centre of the village and then drop them back."

Because the social housing was warden controlled, there's a community room, there were coffee mornings etc. and people used to be wheeled from the bungalows to the common room. There was always someone at hand who can help. That just doesn't happen now. And because it was warden controlled perhaps there are more dependent people there - people with mobility issues, disabled and now some younger people with issues."

The Agent continued to say that despite there being affluent parts of the village, there are less affluent areas with people asking for referrals to the foodbank at Shepton Mallett. The Agent feels that local people may not always be aware of the more local provision and grants available – or may be too proud to ask locally.

Other feedback highlights the range of support that is available and highlights the sense of community as well as the range of people living locally. It also highlights issues with transport.

"If members are struggling, they don't say it. I have to say that I think they're all nice and warm. I'd notice if someone came and looked a bit dishevelled. I'm a Trustee of a Village Fund - which is there to help anybody in need - we keep telling people that the fund is there, but we very rarely get contacted for support. I don't think food is an issue either with the foodbank and free food (Co-op and Church) one is very tinned/use by dates food and often notices go up on Facebook about what's there that needs collecting. The other is fresher produce-based/vegetables" (the Church). [Interview]

"Evercreech is a brilliant place to get older – I moved out of Bath 11 yrs. ago, it's lonely in a big city. My Mum has also now moved here. She attends monthly over 50s friendship group, and weekly exercise classes. Little groups sprung up out of lockdown, including looking in on neighbours, and still continue. Superb and cohesive community." [Interview]

"Transport is not reliable or regular for many of our older learners who cannot drive. We see people struggling with NHS waiting lists and they are often struggling on low incomes and have poor mental and physical health, all of which they say are eased by being able to meet up locally with others to share experiences and make connections." [Survey response]

"We don't have a recognised volunteer transport scheme – it would be useful. The older people supported community in Garston Mead - they arrange local minibus for the residents if they need to get to medical appointments. Buses are not that regular. The GP in the village is struggling to man the surgery since lockdown - it's not open every day and varies – you never know when it's open. There's usually a nurse but rarely a doctor, so you need to get to Shepton to see a doctor. Buses are every 2hrs generally – a few more in the mornings around rush hours. Hospitals: YDH nearest 45 minutes, Taunton 1hr. Most would choose RUH 1hr away, as we can opt to go outside Somerset... I don't know of any specific hospital transport - it's a long journey whichever way you look at it and very difficult if you don't have access to your own or volunteer transport." [Interview]

"We're very lucky with supportive community here. There's supported housing for elderly and a nursing home in the village who do their own thing. I imagine there are people out there who do need support, who may be isolated but there is honestly a lot of choice and neighbourliness here." [Interview]

Watchet

Summary profile

Watchet is a small coastal town, with higher levels of deprivation than much of Somerset and at a distance from larger centres of population and associated services. There are high levels of disabled adults, people with poor health and subsequently carers. It has been successful in bringing in external funding to improve the town, and there is a lot of community-based regeneration happening. There is a real issue with lack of health services and access to banking. Affordability is highlighted as a barrier to attending activities.

Demographic Overview

Key demographic characteristics of Watchet are as follows.

- Population – 3,900
- 36% of households are single occupant
- 98.5% of population are white British
- 7.2% of population have bad or very bad health; 24.3% are disabled (higher than in other areas)
- 11% of the population provide unpaid care
- 20% of households have no car/van; 46% have 1 car/van
- 18.8% of households are in social rented housing
- Both of Watchet's two LSOAs are ranked in the 3rd decile for deprivation (1st is most deprived). 42% of households are not deprived in any dimension.
- Wages are lower in Watchet than England and Somerset averages. West Somerset has higher levels of people with no qualifications than other areas of Somerset.
- Regular buses (half hourly) to Taunton (taking around 40 minutes), including an evening services. Watchet station is on the West Somerset Railway, with (mainly steam) trains to Minehead. This is a seasonal service and when in service does not operate every day. Tickets are expensive.

Older people

Key characteristics of older people in Watchet are as follows:

- 1138 individuals aged over 60 (29% of population); 226 people are over 85 (5.7%)
- 425 people over 60 are disabled (37% of over 60s); 14.1% of residents over 60 have bad or very bad health
- 13% of over 60s are providing unpaid care
- Age UK Loneliness risk – ‘very high risk’ for all areas of Watchet.
- Watchet’s Index of deprivation figures for older people, show 4th decile for Watchet South and 5th decile for Watchet North.

Watchet has a GP Surgery, and 2 pharmacies. There are independent shops, and café’s and a Co-op (with cashpoint). There is no post office and no bank. There are 4 churches, 4 pubs, a playing field with outdoor gym equipment. There are also regeneration projects (Watchet Coastal Community Team and the Onion Collective) who support overall community (and economic) activity – and bring funding into the town. Watchet has a reasonable bus service to Taunton, and local community transport schemes.

Watchet has a number of local venues delivering community based support for older people – and a lot of community activity available. Below, are the key venues and some examples of the many activities and supporting organisations in Watchet.

- Watchet Phoenix Centre – offering a range of activities including U3A, and a daily lunch Club (originally the Red Cross Centre, and led care for older people in the town)
- Watchet Library – book clubs etc
- The Sanctuary (Watchet Baptist Church) – church activity, dementia café, writing group, courses eg in money management, responding to anxiety, meals and drop in sessions
- Royal British Legion – activities include backgammon & board games, Bingo
- Watchet Community Centre (owned by the Town Council) – activities include Age UK Table Tennis sessions, and a community choir
- Watchet Methodist Church – activities include church based worship & activity, a Choral group, Brass Band and coffee mornings
- Salvation Army – church based activity and weekly coffee mornings
- East Quay (Onion Collective) – arts courses, workshops, and talks. Dementia friendly craft sessions, board game nights, free art & craft activities.
- Watchet Memorial Ground – including tennis courts and over 40s football sessions
- Harbour Community bookshop (second hand books) – range of groups and courses (including BSL, functional skills and creative writing); bookshop run by volunteers & raises money for local groups & charities
- Watchet Bowling Club – bowling club, with gym and bar/lounge. Also used by eg Tai Chi tutor for other activities

Provision and Need

Village Agent data for Watchet showed 304 cases in 2021/22. 40% of these were with older people. The most common issues were hospital discharge referrals; care; micro providers/de-cluttering; isolation/befriending; community activities; transport; housing.

Other feedback highlights that there are a lot of activities in Watchet, and also shows that access to services is a key issue, including health services, banking etc.

"We need a post office or bank in our town in order that those who are not internet savvy can service their own financial needs." [Survey response]

"There are a lot of community events and groups in Watchet. I counted 125 organisations in Watchet including the children's clubs. There's a very strong branch of the Salvation Army, they've got a very nice hall and do a lot of things in town. The Phoenix Hall as well do really good things. I do know that the Phoenix Luncheon Club for elderly people helps reduce isolation – they do a weekly very delicious meal. It's run by a proper Watchet lady. U3A are very strong with different groups – there's a Members on Their Own group that meets (bereaved/never married). But Watchet is a very cliquey place. As an outsider looking in, you might think gosh they have a good social life... but there do seem to be factions. I've lived here for the past 8 years. I think it's a lot easier to get into group when you are younger." [Survey response]

Gaps in provision and concerns about the future are illustrated in the following comments.

"Free gentle or chair exercise or yoga would be really helpful. Even Age UK charges are too much for people on low or limited income." [Survey response]

"Many of us (I am 60) do not feel old and do not wish to be treated as old! We want to have fun, to relive our youth! Enable us to do that with support." [Survey response]

"We [Community transport provider] are really worried what is going to happen when things are decided on in February (2024) and whether the Council goes into administration. It would be absolutely diabolical to lose this service. It would essentially mean people's hospital transport is gone." [Interview]

"Lack of people who are well enough to do as much as we'd like." [Survey response]

Transport is one very specific access issue, as the comments below illustrate.

"Through our Drives project we offer transport to vulnerable members of our community in our electric vehicle. There is a second vehicle that can take a wheelchair user that we use. It is owned by Bickwatch, which is a partnership between, Watchet Town Council, Bicknoller Parish and Sampford Brett Parish. Our drivers are all volunteers. This could be transport to and from a lunchtime club held in the Phoenix Centre, Watchet or taking people to doctors, hospital appointments or shopping. Watchet Drives runs on a voluntary donation basis. Bickwatch charges a small fee. It is a key service for those who do not have transport themselves, and supports vulnerable people in their health, and social and emotional wellbeing. For some attending a lunchtime group is the only opportunity to socialise outside their own homes." [Survey response]

"One issue is a lack of regular local transport to various locations" [Survey response]

"Bus services are not bad, we get every hour and it's a £2 fare at the moment, although I really don't think people know about this. However, it's not easy for the disabled and older people to get to the bus stop, and if they're going to the hospital - getting there at the other end. [Interview] There are only 2 taxis in Watchet, and they stop at 6pm – so transport to the door from the bus stop doesn't work. This is why Wheels works so well, Watchet is so hilly and harder for older people". [Interview]

Priorswood

Summary profile

Priorswood is an area of Taunton with some deprivation. It is ranked by Age UK as 'high risk' for loneliness in their loneliness risk register. Priorswood has local services such as shops, and a GP. Most local activity/groups take place in the local community centre, and local churches. Other services can be accessed in the city centre. Despite being within Taunton, transport is still an issue for older people. The area has a good sense of community and many older people have lived there for a long time – but there is still a lot of isolation, particularly since the pandemic.

Demographic overview

Demographic characteristics of Priorswood are as follows[3]. NB most of this data relates to the MSOA level.

- Population – 6,904
- 40% of households are single occupant
- 9.9% of the population provide unpaid care
- 24% of households have no car/van
- 40% of households are in social rented housing
- 39% of households are not deprived in any dimension
- Priorswood LSOA is ranked 10,565 out of 32,844 LSOAs, and is amongst the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, with areas of Priorswood within the 20% most deprived
- 95.9% of local population are white
- Regular buses (hourly) into Taunton city centre, up to early evening services.

Older people

The key characteristics for older people in Priorswood are as follows.

- 2,893 individuals aged over 50 (42% of population); with 20% of the population being over 60 (1933 individuals). 435 people are over 80 (6.3%) with an increase in the over 65 population in the last 10 years
- Age UK Loneliness risk – 'very high risk'
- 28% of residents are aged over 60 years, and of these 4.9% have bad or very bad health. 10.4% of over 60s are disabled
- 12% of over 60s provide care - 8% providing over 20 hours a week; and 6% over 50 hours per week.
- 98.6% of population over 60 are white

Provision and Needs

There were 445 cases logged with village agents in 2021/22, 62% for older people. The most common issues were physical health/care, micro providers, benefits, housing, hospital discharge, isolation, transport, food/medication, community activities, carer support.

"It's quite a good community. Lots of local facilities, shops etc. There are takeaways, grocery shops, churches, leisure centre etc. A good sense of community. Lots of people have lived here a long time and know each other. The Churches put on quite a lot of activities, and the Community Centre."
[Interview]

It should be noted that those living in Priorswood can take advantage of a wide range of activities available across Taunton – but this access assumes good mobility, transport being available and resources to afford it, plus the confidence to travel across the town.

Within Priorswood, there are shops (including a Co-op), takeaways, a GP, a pharmacy, 3 churches, a library, and a post office, but no bank or cashpoint. Just outside the area are other facilities including a leisure centre and other churches and community spaces.

In terms of access to activities, most provision is through the Community Centre. See the Priorswood Community Centre case study in Section 4 for more information on the Centre's provision for older people.

Wellspring Community Church also offer activities including a drop in community café and activities (3 mornings p/w).

An interview with the manager at the Community Centre in Priorswood which is summarised in Section 4 highlights a range of issues, including the need to address isolation, poor transport, improved befriending and strengthen collaboration amongst organisations.

Two survey responses to the question “What would you prioritise?” highlight the need to improve transport for the people of Priorswood.

“A pick up and travel service to take people to places they want to, when they want to.” [Survey response]

“Providing local transport to bring people to a community hub until they feel comfortable coming on public transport or are able to walk. Bringing them out of isolation and loneliness.” [Survey response]

Appendix D – Summary data from online survey

Older People Activities and Support Research – Results Tables

Q1. Are you:

Answer Choices	Responses	
A community group / organisation offering activities or support for older people in: Coleford, Evercreech, Holcombe, Shepton Mallet, Priorswood, Watchet	30.3%	30
A community group / organisation offering activities or support for older people in another village / town in Somerset	48.5%	48
A larger organisation offering support to older people across a wider geographic area	21.2%	21

Answered 99 Skipped 0

Q2. Which area(s) do you cover? (tick all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Coleford	16.7%	5
Evercreech	20.0%	6
Holcombe	20.0%	6
Shepton Mallet	26.7%	8
Priorswood	13.3%	4
Watchet	33.3%	10
Other (please tell us)	26.7%	8

Answered 30 Skipped 69**Q3. Which area(s) do you cover? (tick all that apply)**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Village(s) or parish	39.6%	19
Town(s)	45.8%	22
Mendip	20.8%	10
Sedgemoor	14.6%	7
Somerset West and Taunton	27.1%	13
South Somerset	33.3%	16
Please tell us the main area you cover		44

Answered 48 Skipped 51**Q4. What is the name of your group/organisation?****Answered 72 Skipped 27**

Q45. What activities or support do you offer older people (60+)?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Social groups: coffee mornings, games etc.	55.8%	43
Physical activity: exercise, dance, indoor bowls etc.	31.2%	24
Creative activities: Art, craft, Drama, Music etc.	46.8%	36
Food, drink, cooking	26.0%	20
Outdoor pursuits – gardening, walking etc.	16.9%	13
Computers and IT	3.9%	3
Befriending	28.6%	22
Advice and information	24.7%	19
Health and wellbeing	37.7%	29
Specialist: Dementia support etc.	15.6%	12
Transport	13.0%	10
Please tell us more about what your group / organisation offers		76

Answered 77 Skipped 22

Q6. What challenges do you face in delivering your activity/service?

Answered 73 Skipped 26

Q7. What would help your group/organisation the most to continue with what you are delivering?

Answered 69 Skipped 30

Q8. What would help you to do more/give better support? (note if you opt to take part in a telephone interview, we will explore this in detail with you)

Answered 60 Skipped 39

Q9. What services/activities do you think make the most difference for older people?

Answered 66 Skipped 33

Q10. What unmet support needs do you see in older people in your local area?

Answered 59 Skipped 40

Q11. Are there particular groups of people over 60 who most need support?

Answered 57 Skipped 42

Q12. If you were running a grant scheme aimed at organisations supporting people over 60, what would you prioritise?

Answered 61 Skipped 38

Q13. How often does your group/activity happen?

Answer Choices	Responses	
More than once a week	30.9%	17
Weekly	29.1%	16
Every two weeks	9.1%	5
Monthly	21.8%	12
Other (please tell us)	32.7%	18

Answered 55 Skipped 44

Q14. How many of your clients/members are? (please enter a number where applicable)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 50 years:	51.0%	25
51-60 years:	59.2%	29
61-70 years:	91.8%	45
71-80 years:	89.8%	44
81+ years:	77.6%	38

Answered 49 Skipped 50

Q15. How many of your clients / members (over 60) are: (please enter a number where applicable).

Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	85.71%	42
Female	97.96%	48
Other	14.29%	7

Answered 49 Skipped 50

Q16. How many people over 60 regularly attend your group/activity?

Answer Choices	Responses	
1- 5	2.0%	1
6 - 10	13.7%	7
11 - 20	31.4%	16
21 - 50	33.3%	17
Other (please tell us)	19.6%	10

Answered 51 Skipped 48**Q17. How many of your clients / members over 60 are: (please enter a number where applicable)**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Carers	82.5%	33
Living with a disability / have higher care needs	85.0%	34
Living with Dementia	82.5%	33
From ethnically diverse backgrounds	42.5%	17
LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer+)	37.5%	15

Answered 40 Skipped 59**Q18. Please tell us: (please enter a number not £ currency sign - where applicable)**

Answer Choices	Responses	
How many active volunteers you have	98.0%	48
How many staff you have (full time equivalent)	89.8%	44
Your approximate income / turnover last year	81.6%	40

Answered 49 Skipped 50

Q19. In the last two years, where has the majority of your income come from? (tick all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Members	59.3%	32
Fundraising activities	37.0%	20
Grants	53.7%	29
Donations	35.2%	19
Funding from statutory bodies	11.1%	6
Loans	0.0%	0
Other (please tell us):	25.9%	14

Answered 54 Skipped 45

Q20. How likely do you think it is that your group/activity will be running in 12 months time?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Not at all likely	0.0%	0
Unlikely	0.0%	0
Possibly	3.7%	2
Probably	33.3%	18
Definitely	63.0%	34

Answered 54 Skipped 45

Q21. What is your group / organisation's structure?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Community Group	50.0%	27
Faith group	3.7%	2
Unincorporated group	9.3%	5
Registered charity	20.4%	11
Community Interest Company (CIC)	7.4%	4
Community Benefit Society (CBS)	1.9%	1
Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG)	0.0%	0
Parish or Town Council	1.9%	1
Statutory organisation	0.0%	0
Don't know	5.6%	3
Other (please tell us)	13.0%	7

Answered 54 Skipped 45

Q22. Does your organisation receive any practical help or support from:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Another local group or organisation	25.5%	12
Local Parish Council / Town Council	34.0%	16
SPARK Somerset	29.8%	14
Community Council for Somerset (Village Agents)	27.7%	13
A national body	17.0%	8
Don't know	2.1%	1
Other (please tell us)	48.9%	23

Answered 47 Skipped 52

Q23. What is the name of your group / organisation?

Answered 17 Skipped 82

Q24. What activities or support do you offer for older people (60+)?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Social groups: coffee mornings, games etc.	40.0%	8
Physical activity: exercise, dance, indoor bowls etc.	45.0%	9
Creative activities: Art, craft, Drama, Music etc.	25.0%	5
Food, drink, cooking	10.0%	2
Outdoor pursuits – gardening, walking etc.	35.0%	7
Computers and IT	15.0%	3
Befriending	10.0%	2
Advice and information	40.0%	8
Health and wellbeing	50.0%	10
Specialist: Dementia support etc.	15.0%	3
Transport	0.0%	0
Please tell us more about what your group / organisation offers		19

Answered 20 Skipped 79

Q25. Is this offer Couty-wide?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	71.4%	15
No - in specific places (please tell us where)	28.6%	6

Answered 21 Skipped 78**Q26. Please tell us the about the age of the people your organisation supports:**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 50 years:	90.0%	18
51-60 years:	100.0%	20
61-70 years:	100.0%	20
71-80 years:	95.0%	19
81+ years:	100.0%	20

Answered 20 Skipped 79**Q27. What proportion of your clients are over 60 are:**

Carers	Responses	
Up to 10%	5.9%	1
11%-25%	0.0%	0
26%-50%	5.9%	1
51%-75%	23.5%	4
76%-100%	17.7%	3
Unknown	47.1%	8
	Total	17

Living with a disability / have higher care needs

Living with a disability / have higher care needs	Responses	
Up to 10%	5.6%	1
11%-25%	5.6%	1
26%-50%	16.7%	3
51%-75%	16.7%	3
76%-100%	11.1%	2
Unknown	44.4%	8
	Total	18

Living with Dementia	Responses	
Up to 10%	15.8%	3
11%-25%	21.1%	4
26%-50%	10.5%	2
51%-75%	5.3%	1
76%-100%	5.3%	1
Unknown	42.1%	8
	Total	19

From ethnically diverse backgrounds	Responses	
Up to 10%	44.4%	8
11%-25%	5.6%	1
26%-50%	0.0%	0
51%-75%	0.0%	0
76%-100%	0.0%	0
Unknown	50.0%	9
	Total	18

LGBTQ+	Responses	
Up to 10%	27.8%	5
11%-25%	5.6%	1
26%-50%	0.0%	0
51%-75%	0.0%	0
76%-100%	0.0%	0
Unknown	66.7%	12
	Total	18

Answered 19 Skipped 80

Q28. How many people over 60 years do you normally support in a week? (please enter a number)

Answered 20 Skipped 79

Q29. Does your organisation receive any practical help or support from:

Answer Choices	Responses	
A national body	31.6%	6
Somerset Council	42.1%	8
Other statutory organisations	5.3%	1
Local Parish Council / Town Council	21.1%	4
SPARK Somerset	26.3%	5
Community Council for Somerset (Village Agents)	26.3%	5
Don't know	5.3%	1
Other (please tell us)	42.1%	8

Answered 19 Skipped 80

Q29. Does your organisation receive any practical help or support from:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	33.3%	5
No	46.7%	7
Don't know	20.0%	3
If yes, please tell us more about this		6

Answered 15 Skipped 84

Q31. What challenges do you face in delivering your activity / service?

Answered 19 Skipped 80

Q32. What would help your organisation the most to continue with what you are delivering?

Answered 19 Skipped 80

Q33. What would help you to do more / extend your offer? (note if you opt to take part in a telephone interview, we will explore this in detail with you)

Answered 15 Skipped 84

Q34. How likely do you think it is that you will be offering a similar service in 12 months time?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Our offer is likely to be the same	61.9%	13
Our offer is likely to be reduced	9.5%	2
Our offer is likely to increase	23.8%	5
Don't know	4.8%	2
Please tell us more		12

Answered 21 Skipped 78

Q35. What services / activities do you think make the most difference for older people?

Answered 19 Skipped 80

Q36. What unmet support needs do you see in older people in the area?

Answered 17 Skipped 82

Q37. Do you think there particular groups of people over 60 who most need support?

Answered 16 Skipped 83

Q38. If you were running a grant scheme aimed at organisations supporting people over 60, what would you prioritise?

Answered 18 Skipped 81

Q39. Would you be willing to take part in an interview? There is funding available to cover your time for taking part, if selected.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes (please provide your contact details below)	66.7%	12
No	33.3%	6

Answered 18 Skipped 81

Q40. Please tick the boxes below to be interviewed or to enter the prize draw. We will only keep your contact information if you have indicated that you would be willing to take part in an interview.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Please contact me to arrange an interview	68.8%	11
Please enter my organisation for the Prize Draw	93.8%	15

Answered 16 Skipped 83

Q41. Please provide your details:

Answered 15 Skipped 84

Q42. Would you be willing to take part in an interview? There is funding available to cover your time for taking part, if selected.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes (please provide your contact details below)	80.8%	42
No	19.2%	10

Answered 52 Skipped 47

Q43. Please tick the boxes below to be interviewed or to enter the prize draw. We will only keep your contact information if you have indicated that you would be willing to take part in an interview.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Please contact me to arrange an interview	80.0%	40
Please enter my organisation for the Prize Draw	90.0%	45

Answered 50 Skipped 49

Q43. Please provide your details:

Answered 51 Skipped 48

CCS have collected the data for this report in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation Act 2018. All personal and sensitive data is stored securely and all data is anonymised for the purpose of this report. Data is captured for legitimate purposes. We securely hold data and hard copies of consultation surveys are kept for the duration of the consultation period and destroyed after the final report is signed off by the commissioner of the survey. Digital copies are retained for 12 months and deleted after this period. We respect respondents trust and protect their privacy, and therefore never sell or share this data with any third parties. If you would like to find out more about how we use data, please contact info@somersetccc.org.uk or call 01823 331222. Protecting Personal Data is important. For copies of our Data Protection & Privacy Policies visit: www.ccslovesomerset.org/ccs-policies/



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