

NHS Somerset

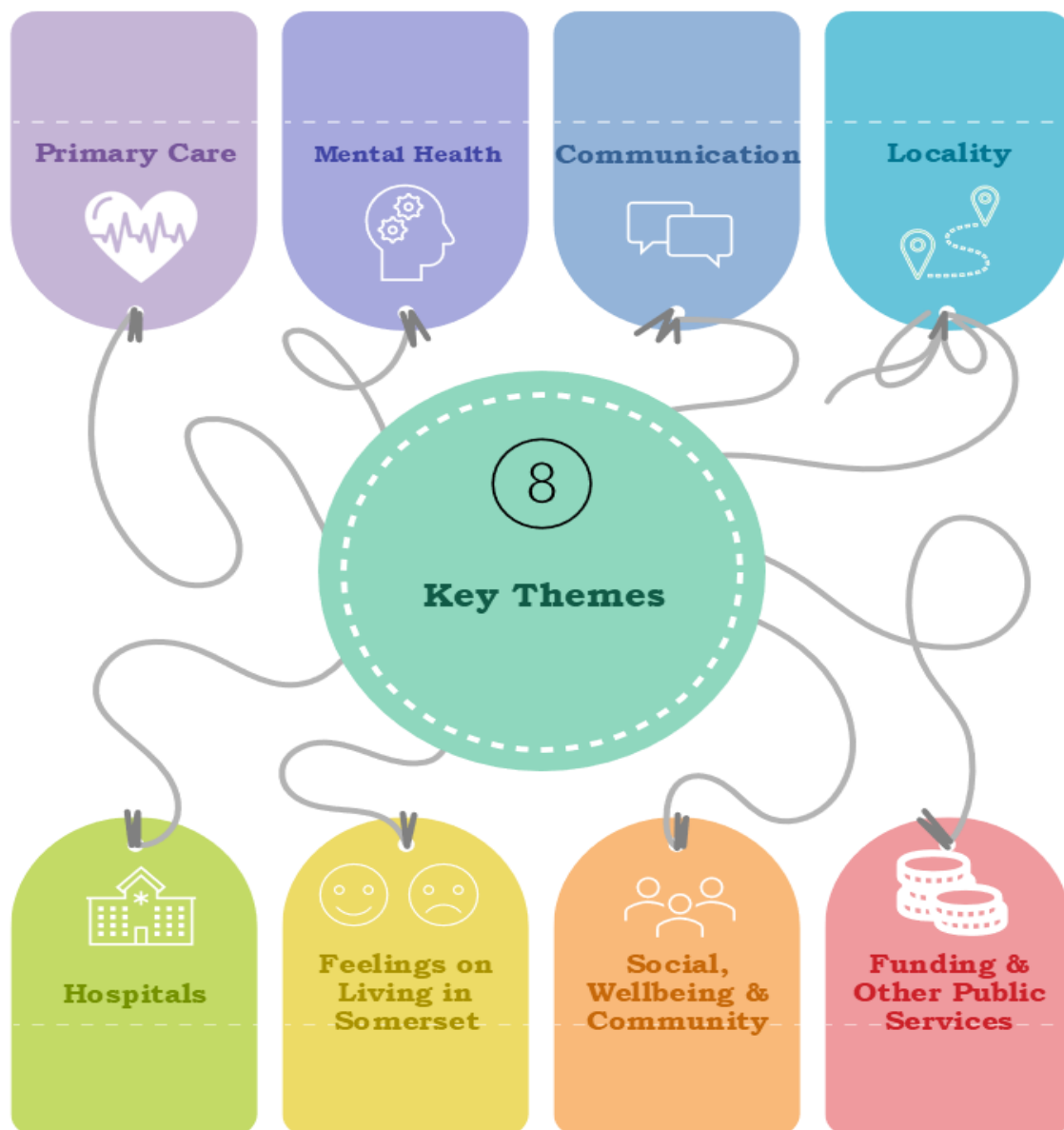
Somerset's Big Conversation



INTRODUCTION

NHS Somerset launched the 'Somerset's Big Conversation' with an ambition to have conversations with as many Somerset residents as possible to help guide future planning. Whilst there is a lot which is positive about living in Somerset and utilising the services it offers, there is always room for improvement - the Somerset Big Conversation enabled NHS Somerset to communicate with Somerset residents through in person conversations, an online survey and social media to delve into residents' views on living in Somerset.

Staff from NHS Somerset embarked on a roadshow from May until September 2024 visiting 26 events and venues across Somerset and having 2,021 conversations with residents from all walks of life. The conversations had and the handwritten feedback provided from residents identified a number of strong themes that are of importance to Somerset residents. The responses have been thematically categorised to make them easier to interpret and the main themes identified are:



This Summary Report summarises the responses provided by way of the handwritten feedback against the eight key themes identified.

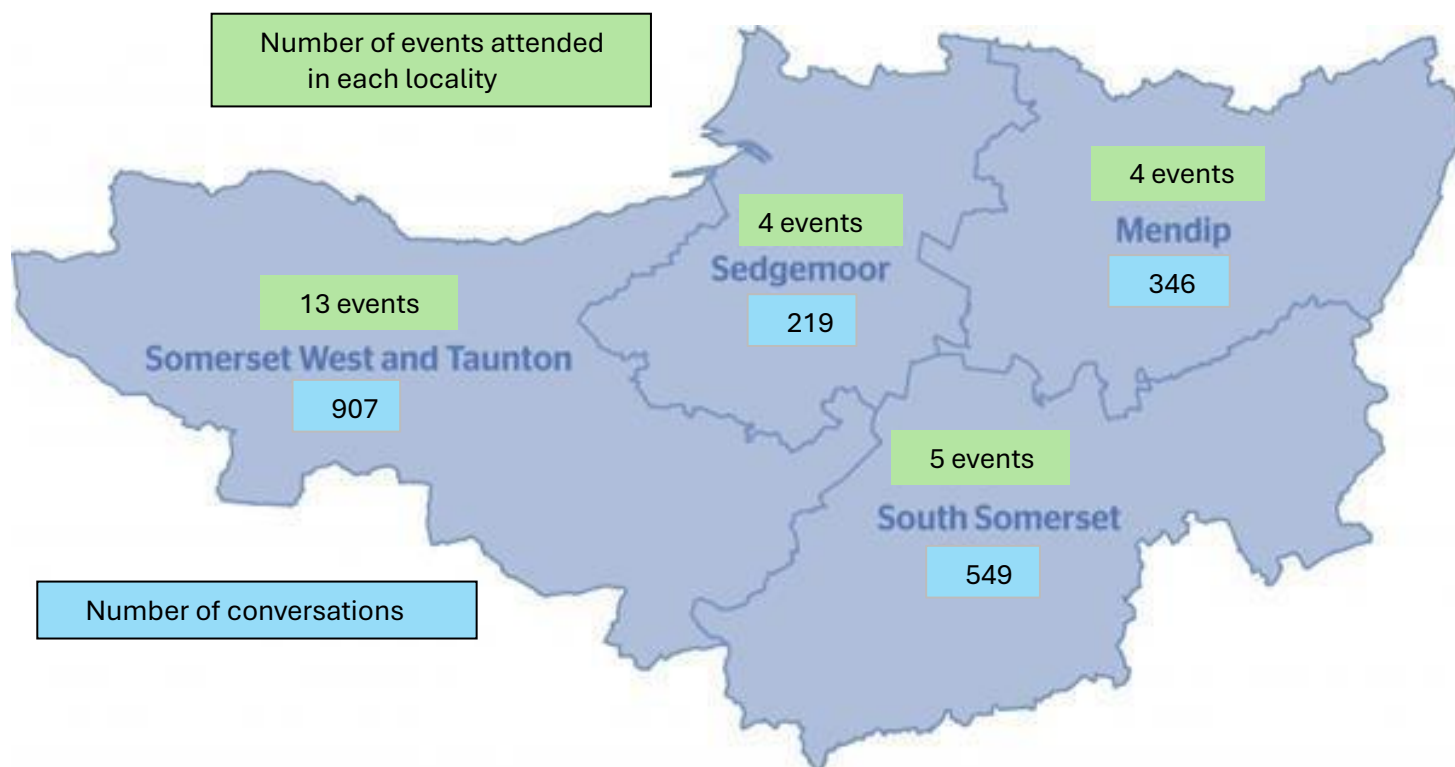
SOMERSET'S BIG CONVERSATION

What we asked:
"What makes you feel happy and healthy
living in Somerset?"

2,021 conversations had with residents across 26 events

19 of the events incorporated the taking of blood pressures as part of the NHS' national campaign. 982 residents took part and had their blood pressure taken.

Where we
went ...



PRIMARY CARE

Residents shared how they felt about using and accessing Primary Care Services in Somerset

Positive experiences and responses...

- GPs and GP Surgeries / Staff – specifically mentioned are Queen Camel Surgery, Crewkerne Surgery and Ilminster GP Surgery
- GP appointments being available on the day
- Feeling well supported in older ages
- Good health coaches
- Vaccinations
- Preventative care

Responses received:
Positive – 25
Needs Improvement – 27

"Health coaches are really good"

"Our local GP practice is always able to see us quickly and staff are always able to advise us well and are very friendly"

Where there is room for improvement...

- More GP appointments needed
- Improve seating in waiting rooms at GP surgeries
- Need more veteran friendly accredited GP surgeries

Waiting times between ordering and being able to collect a dispensed prescription are too long

For long term prescriptions - the amount provided at any one time varies between GP practices

- Need more dentists
- Quality of GPs and dentists

Primary Care



MENTAL HEALTH

Residents shared how they felt about mental health services in Somerset and accessing these services

Positive feedback on specific mental health services:

- The Beacon Centre
- Open Mental Health Somerset
- Young Somerset Mental Health
- Summerlands Mental Health Hospital

Responses received:
Positive – 5
Needs improvement – 15

Where there is room for improvement...

- Lack of mental health facilities including, but not limited to, facilities for children and children with eating disorders
- Need more mental health services and greater funding
- Improvements to signposting to any services that are available
- Service provided by CAMHS
- Long waiting lists for support and for assessment for ADHD and autism
- Lack of support for children on medication

"Big supporter of NHS Beacon Centre. Were amazing with my Mum. Mental health services are very stretched though and not meeting people's needs"

"NHS Summerlands in Yeovil changed my life and I am grateful"

"I use Open Door: I have mental health issues and the nurses and doctors have really helped me"

Mental Health



COMMUNICATION

Residents shared how they felt about information sharing between patients/service users and service providers

Positive experiences and responses...

- Good communication between residents and service providers
- Supportive of the digitalisation of appointments and communications with GPs

Responses received:
Positive – 3
Needs Improvement – 15

"Difficult to get appointment, no phone just online. 72-year-old not good at that, older people not confident"

"Having a text to book appointments for important things makes it easier and more likely to book"

"Digital systems not good for predominantly elderly population"

Where there is room for improvement...

- Need alignment between services so that information can be shared
- The use of digitalised appointment systems is not always suitable for older persons and people are struggling to get GP appointments on the day they require (Amina was specifically mentioned)
- General lack of communication particularly on service changes and more transparency would improve residents' trust in these services
- There should be one single patient record across all services which can be easily accessible

Communication

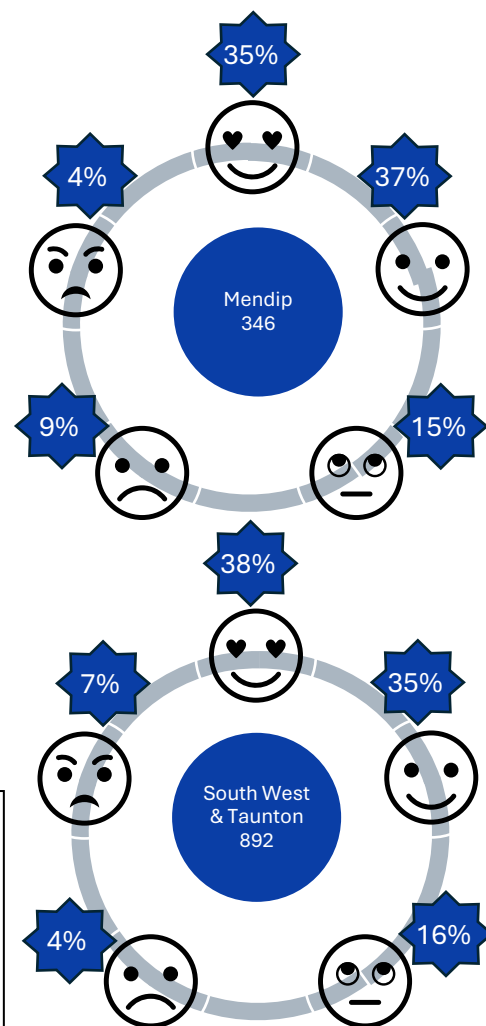
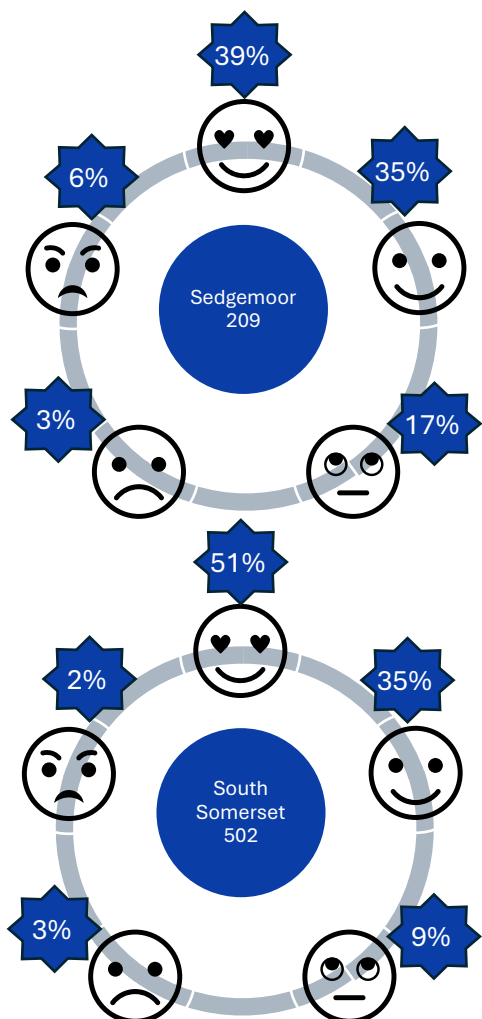


LOCALITY

Residents shared their feelings on living in specific localities within Somerset

At each event we asked residents of Somerset to participate in a quick poll by putting pompoms into a jar to let us know how happy and healthy they feel living in Somerset

Overall we had 1,949 participants. 76% of residents indicated they were happy living in Somerset compared to 10% who indicated they were not.



Positively mentioned localities were:

- Taunton
- Wellington
- Dulverton
- Bridgwater
- Exmoor

Responses received:
Positive – 65
Less Positive – 1

Locality



HOSPITALS

Residents shared how they felt about their experiences and access to local hospitals

Positive experiences and responses...

- Musgrove Park Hospital including the cardiac department, the stroke services and the prostate cancer services
- Yeovil District Hospital including the audiology department and stroke services
- The Bridgwater end-of-life team
- Care at Wincanton
- Minehead Hospital
- Nurses and Health Care Assistants
- Maternity services, deaf services, cancer services and emergency departments
- Excellent hospital services
- NHS staff deserve a pay rise
- The Rapid Response Team for Somerset, which is improving the overall patient experience

Where there is room for improvement...

- Services and staff knowledge is lacking and the hospital food is not of a good standard
- Concerns around staff capacity and patients being able to be seen
- Poor care provided both in hospital and the after care
- Hospital waiting lists are too long
- Neurology services need improvement
- Need more nurses and hospital staff
- Private patients being prioritised and 'queue jumping' and hospitals contracting out bedspaces to private hospitals
- Have to travel out of county to see some specialists
- Lack of hospital parking, public transport and hospital transport to and from appointments / operations
- Need more community hospitals

"Love working in maternity. We are blessed to have the NHS"

Responses received:
Positive – 46
Needs Improvement – 29



Hospitals

FEELINGS ON LIVING IN SOMERSET

Residents shared their feelings on living in Somerset

Positive Feelings:

- Happy and relaxing
- Ok, good and great
- Love
- Brilliant, extremely and amazing
- Alive and fulfilled
- Appreciate how people are treated
- Belief in self, self-care and wellbeing
- Being positive
- Beautiful
- Kind
- Grateful
- Healthy
- Connected
- Safe and familiar

Less Positive Feelings:

- Angry and sad
- Unhappy
- Need more love
- Tired
- Deaf people are ignored
- Hurt

"I feel good. People are friendly and the surroundings are beautiful. What an amazing place to live"

Responses received:
Positive – 201
Less positive – 10



SOCIAL, WELLBEING & COMMUNITY

Residents shared how they felt on certain areas and features within Somerset

Positive experiences and responses...

- Friends and family
- The air quality, environment, atmosphere and weather (notably less traffic)
- Countryside, parks, nature, animals and beaches (notably Ninesprings)
- Food and drink
- Sports and bikes
- Faultless and quiet
- Local holidays
- Being at home (notably reading books) and gardening
- Fun things to do including shops, seeing art, RAF Training Cadets and festivals (notably Pride)
- For children: face painting, balloons, Peppa Pig, unicorns, rainbow and the colour pink
- Communities and a sense of inclusivity (notably Furies and the veterans community)

Less positive experiences and responses...

- Anti-social behaviour with a specific mention to Taunton not being safe to walk or cycle in
- Lack of adequate housing in Taunton for young families
- Lack of activities for young children and teenagers (including no swimming pool)
- Need to advertise the local areas better
- Housing and land are expensive
- Deterioration of Yeovil town centre
- Too much building work
- Too much litter, generating odours
- Lack of community
- The weather, lack of animals and a large proportion of holiday makers
- Inequalities exist

Responses received:
Positive – 391
Needs Improvement – 27



Social,
Wellbeing &
Community

FUNDING AND OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

Residents shared their views on other public services and funding

Positive experiences and responses...

- The NHS and the appreciation of it being a state funded service
- Schools in Somerset

Responses received:
Positive – 92
Needs Improvement – 24

"Since moving to Somerset 10 years ago my health has improved. I used to be in hospital a lot with asthma. Now I'm not even on inhalers"

"The NHS Service is good, plus ambulance crew, fire crew and the police are amazing"

"NHS was fantastic when I broke my arm – no long wait in A&E and appointment after that did not take long. Very pleased with the service. NHS are worth their weight in gold"

"A fabulous service and I just really hope the funding becomes available to help this wonderful institution"

Where there is room for improvement...

- Need more services and therapies (notably services on Women's Health)
- People are suffering
- Long waiting times for hearing aids
- Need better maternity / antenatal & wrap around care
- Concern over privatisation of NHS
- All services need more funding
- Raising taxes to pay off state debt
- NHS needs more recognition
- Not happy with NHS / NHS needs to listen
- More support needed for SEND
- Queries over where education sits within the ICS

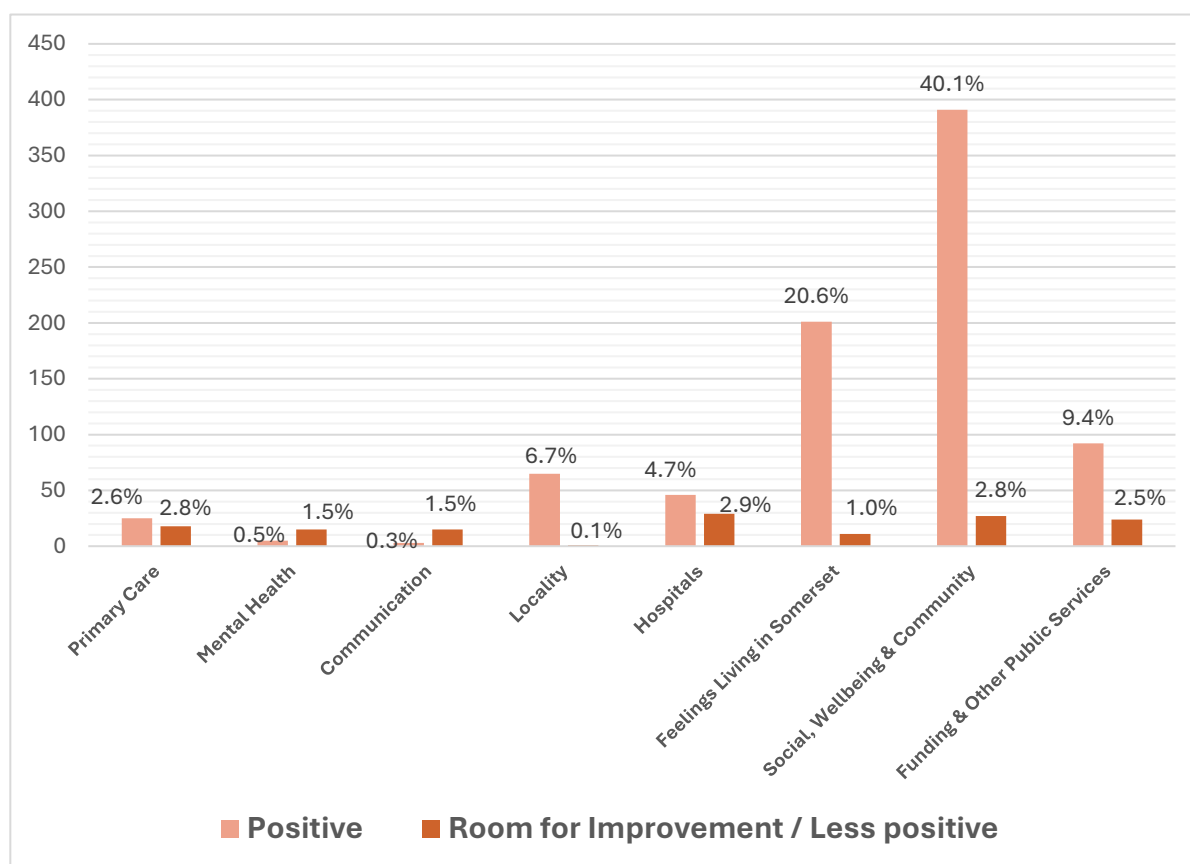


**Funding &
Other Public
Services**

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The handwritten feedback received from residents as part of the Somerset's Big Conversation enabled the responses to be categorised into eight key themes; primary care, mental health, communication, locality, hospitals, feelings on living in Somerset, social, wellbeing and community and funding and other public services.

Of these eight key themes, we were able to identify those responses which can be viewed as positive, and those which can be viewed as less positive or where improvement is needed. The chart below identifies, of the 976 handwritten responses obtained, the percentage of responses received for each key theme and whether those responses have been categorised as positive or less positive / identifying where improvement is needed.



As shown above, the theme which attracted the most feedback (42.9% of the total), was social, wellbeing and community. The fewest responses were obtained in relation to mental health and communications and of those responses received, most were categorised as 'room for improvement / less positive'.

Of the 976 handwritten responses received, 28% related to health and care services (including primary care, mental health, communication, hospitals and funding and other public services) and 72% related to themes outside of health and care services (including feelings on where people lived, living in Somerset and social, wellbeing and community).

This is most likely because of the question posed and the inability to assist residents on how to interpret the question due to the Somerset's Big Conversation running during the Government's pre-election period.

Data collected will be compared against data collected in future iterations of Somerset's Big Conversation to determine whether the views of residents have changed and whether identified improvements have been made.

