



Somerset Liberal Democrats Chard South January 2025

Do you know someone who would make a great foster carer?

Do you know someone who would make a great foster carer? Or are you interested in fostering now or in the future? **Come along to one of our upcoming information sessions in January.**



These informal sessions are a great opportunity to learn more about foster care in a relaxed, friendly setting. No PowerPoint presentations and absolutely no pressure to take your interest any further – just a chance to find out more over a hot drink and a slice of cake (provided free of charge by us). The Fostering in Somerset team will be there to answer all your questions and tell you everything you need to know about becoming a full or part-time foster carer – from basic requirements and payments, to training and application. You'll also have the chance to meet and chat to some of our foster carers, to help you gain a realistic insight into the challenges and rewards of fostering.

Join us at any one of the following sessions and to help us manage numbers and cater appropriately, please book your place:

- **Tuesday 28 January** from 6-8pm at **Chard CommuniTEA Waffle**, Holyrood St, TA20 2AH
- **Wednesday 29 January** from 6-8pm at **The Brewhouse Theatre**, Taunton, TA1 1JL
- **Thursday 30 January** from 6-8pm at **Parish Rooms**, Market Place, Somerton, TA11 7NB

You don't need to be there for the start time or for the whole session, but we'd recommend arriving by 7.15pm at the latest to allow adequate time. If you'd like to know more about fostering but are unable to attend this event, call 0800 587 9900 or visit www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk to find out how you could change a child's story as a Somerset foster carer.

Dry January

Each year, thousands of people across the UK go alcohol free for Dry January, a national campaign to improve drinking habits across Britain.

The benefits of going dry for 31 days include better sleep, increased energy levels, improved mental health and concentration, a better bank balance and an amazing sense of achievement.

Additional, support and resources are available through Alcohol Change UK's

'Try Dry' app www.alcoholchange.org.uk/help-and-support/managing-your-drinking/dry-january

If you drink heavily regularly, check with your GP or our local alcohol service before making any changes.



Council welcomes social care review

Somerset Council has welcomed plans to reform social care, but urged the Government to act faster.

It was announced today (3 January 2025) that the Government has commissioned an independent review which promises to identify critical issues facing adult social care, set to be published in 2028.



The first phase of the review will be published in mid-2026 and is said to identify critical issues facing adult social care and will make recommendations for medium term reforms before the final report is published.

Today's announcement comes more than 4 years after Somerset played a crucial role in shining a light on the pressures facing social care by opening its doors to the BBC's Panorama team. The resulting 2-hour long 'Crisis in Care' films helped put the need for social care reform on the national agenda and highlighted the need for a national plan for a sustainable social care system.

The Panorama team spent 10 months following Somerset County Council staff, showcasing Somerset's inspiring social workers, family carers, care providers, health colleagues and voluntary and community organisations helping support thousands of people in the county. For more background on Panorama's Crisis in Care programmes visit the BBC's [The crisis in care](#) news page.

Spark Somerset

Spark Somerset has recently unveiled the [2024 State of the Sector report](#). Commissioned by Spark Somerset and independently conducted by Quay Research, the report provides an up-to-date overview of the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Somerset. It provides vital insights into the size and shape of the sector and the challenges it faces. Alongside the full report, they've also published a summary and national picture, as well as an opinion piece, which tackles a key question: **Collaboration between the VCFSE and public sector in Somerset: challenge or opportunity?**



If you work with, or have an interest in the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector in Somerset you can join them at their upcoming **Lunch & Learn session on Wednesday 22 January at 1pm**, where the researchers will present the key findings from the report.

This event offers an opportunity to reflect on the insights and participate in discussions about next steps. It's an online session that will be open to all, so please book a place if you're interested at <https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/event/lunch-learn-state-of-the-sector/>

Keeping in Contact

**COME AND TALK WITH US
AT A LIB DEM SURGERY**

**FIRST SATURDAY IN THE MONTH
With your Town and Unitary Councillors**

AT THE GUILDHALL, CHARD



10am to 12pm

You can meet with me to discuss any concerns or for help by dropping into our monthly surgery or I can arrange an appointment on a day and time that suits you or feel free to give me a call on 07736 310805 or email Jason.baker@somerset.gov.uk