



**somerset village &
community agents**
part of CCS

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**somerset
carers**
part of CCS

For Immediate Release – 30th September 2020

More support for Carers in Somerset!

Caring for others is very rewarding, but can be challenging, overwhelming and lonely at times. Caring for another person could range from providing a lift to the hospital, cooking hot dinners or giving a helping hand round the house on a regular basis, to the more complex of being that person's sole means of physical support moving around the home, aiding a person to be fed, bathed and administering medication – as well many levels in between. Many people might not recognise that they are a Carer to another person, as they provide care out of kindness or love. In Somerset alone it is estimated there are over 60,000 unpaid Carers

Somerset Carers (provided by the Community Council for Somerset - CCS) is a free service with a dedicated team of seven Carers Agents, designed to support those people caring for their partners, children, parents, family or friends. The Carers Agents remit is to support the unpaid Carer with anything from emotional care, to finding the right support group or financial benefits and much more.

As well as Carers Agents, CCS has a team of 57 Village Agents. CCS Village Agents have been working in communities across Somerset since 2012. They help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely individuals and statutory and/or voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs, helping often where others won't, don't or can't.

Many times a Village or Carers Agent has been asked to help with one issue, such as not being able to afford transport to a Doctors appointment, but recognised there was a deeper need for support in other areas, and would refer the family to another Agent team member for their specialism.

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown resulted in Agents changing their approach to be 'whole population' focused, this was important for families as if now meant there was one point of contact within the CCS team and no need to repeat themselves to explain their situation.

The model worked brilliantly, and as a result CCS Agents have supported over 7,000 Carers since the end of March 2020, clearly demonstrating that the One Family - One Agent approach was working to reach more unpaid Carers than ever.

CCS is delighted to announce that from September, all Carers Agents will become Village Agents and all existing Village and Community Agents are ready to support unpaid Carers in Somerset.

Keeley Rudd, CEO of CCS said "We are very excited that we have simplified our offer for Somerset residents. By ensuring that all Agents are available to support families including Carers we know that many more people will be able to be helped and supported in their vital role as a Carer. This will also benefit the wider family with all their needs – from fuel and food poverty, to finding solutions to reducing loneliness and isolation, reduce referral times between team members, providing solutions much more quickly for the whole family if needed."



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Raj Singh, deputy CEO continued “Somerset Carers is still very much here dedicated to Carers with the Carers freephone advice line 0800 31 68 600, Carers website, live chat and newsletters and booklets specific to Carers in Somerset. This change simply means we have increased our capacity to care for the Carers.”

People can contact their local CCS Village Agent by calling 0800 31 68 600 / 01823 331222 or visiting <https://somersetagents.org/find-an-agent/>

- END -

Contact the CCS Communications Team:

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Editors Notes

CCS Village Agents are in your communities across Somerset. They help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely individuals and statutory and/or voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs. They can offer advice and support to find local groups and activities available in your community and help you with any queries you may have or situations that you need advice and support with. Please visit www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk and www.somersestcarers.org or call me to find out who can advise you