



February 2024 External Newsletter

Welcome to the accessible version of our Young Citizens Advice newsletter. If you have any suggestions of how we can improve the document's accessibility, please feel free to [email us](#).

To get to any section in the table of contents just press CTRL and click on the heading, or on mobile click on the subject in the table of contents.

If you are reading a printed version, please be aware that it may not be the original, latest text. [Visit our website](#) to ensure you are using our latest version. Always check with a CA adviser if you want to be sure of our latest advice.

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Goodbye from Young Citizens Advice

We wanted to use this newsletter as a chance to thank everyone who has supported and worked with this research and engagement project over the last few years. We have met so many professionals across Somerset working hard to ensure young people get the best possible service in all aspects of their lives. We have also met lots of amazing young people who are passionate about improving life around them. We are grateful to you all for your contributions.

We've been able to tell lots of services about what Citizens Advice Somerset can do for young people and anyone in their lives that needs support. We've created resources aimed at young people and have worked with our staff internally to provide updates on what support is out there for those aged 16-25.

At the end of March, the project comes to an end but that does not mean that Citizens Advice Somerset will stop focusing on young people. Part of our strategy is about ensuring that underserved communities, such as young people, are provided with a specialised service that understands their needs and what works for them.

Our digital offer is expanding and with that, we hope more young people will be able to access advice in a format that works for them.

You can still follow the work of Citizens Advice Somerset by following us on social media and staying in touch with us through our many partnerships.

Thank you to Somerset Council for funding the project and for your support throughout the work.

A recap on Citizens Advice

Getting Advice in Somerset

Our advisers will be able to provide the same level of service no matter how you receive advice whether that be over the phone, face to face or by email.

For telephone advice or to ask about face to face services, you can call Somerset Adviceline on 0808 27 87842. Monday & Friday 10am – 4pm. We are currently also running longer hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays until 8pm

Clients who are deaf or hard of hearing can call the Relay UK Text service using prefix 18001 and then dialling 0808 27 87842.

For email advice, you can use our [**online advice form**](#) to email us details of the issues you would like advice on. Please include as much detail as you can about the problem and any relevant personal circumstances. This will enable us to provide you with information and advice that is relevant to you.

We aim to respond to email inquiries within three working days. If you have an emergency, require advice more quickly, or should you wish to remain anonymous, we would invite you to call Adviceline on 0808 278 7842.

Understanding the National Picture

If you are interested in understanding more about the national picture and our work across the country, you can find a wealth of information on the National Citizens Advice website [here](#).

You can find information about our national campaigns as well as what our research is telling us about the latest advice trends.

You can also attend the National CA online data insight briefings where the Citizens Advice policy team and guest speakers reflect of the impact of the cost of living. You can sign up for the next event [here](#).

Resources

Our Citizens Advice National website has lots of advice resources to help on a number of different topic areas. You can click [here](#) to visit the website.

We also wanted to share a resource that we have created for Young Carers in Somerset available on the next page. This will also be available on our website shortly.

Young Carers

There is lots of information out there for Young Carers but sometimes it can be hard to find it all in one place, hopefully this resource can help guide you to the right place.

Citizens Advice Somerset can advise young carers and anyone in Somerset on a wide range of issues such as benefits, housing, debt and much more. For specific advice, please get in touch [here](#).

The national **Citizens Advice** website has a wealth of information about [help and support for carers](#).

There are also lots of other organisations that can provide advice and support for carers, we have listed some below:

The **NHS** has some helpful links to information for young carers, about the [help for young carers](#) and your [rights as a young carer](#)

Action for Children Sidekick is an anonymous and confidential text service for young carers aged 13-18 in the UK. Young people can message any time, about anything that's bothering them. Their friendly team will find the answer and reply within 24 hours.

Visit [Carers.org](https://www.carers.org) for lots more information all in one place along with a search function to find services for young carers in your local area.

In Somerset, **Somerset Council** provides support, advice and respite breaks for children and young people under 18 who have substantial caring responsibilities at home. You can find out about Young Carers Groups [here](#).

There is also **Friends of Somerset Young Carers** who you can find out about [here](#).

Volunteering with Citizens Advice Somerset

Do you know someone interested in volunteering?

Citizens Advice exists to help people resolve their problems and find a way forward, but we can't do it without our incredible volunteers. Families across Somerset are struggling with a range of financial, relationship, employment, welfare benefit, housing issues and more.

We desperately need people to join our team of volunteers delivering vital advice to local people over the phone, via email and in person.

Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and are at the heart of what we do. Some are gaining knowledge and skills to support them in their future career. Some are retired but want to use their experience to help others and 'give something back' and some are students who want to use their 'year off' to gain valuable skills to enhance their CV.

Whatever the reason, our volunteers have one thing in common, they want to make a difference.

To find out more about the role of volunteer adviser and all the benefits and support we offer our volunteers click here: [Volunteer Adviser Role Description](#).

Visit our [volunteer web page](#) to learn more about the role and for details of our information sessions, or to apply.

LGBT+ History Month

February marks LGBT+ History Month - this year's theme is Medicine #UnderTheScope, celebrating the achievements of LGBT+ people in the medical field.

The 2024 theme celebrates LGBT+ peoples' contribution to the field of Medicine and Healthcare both historically and today.

It is a chance to showcase the amazing work of LGBT+ staff across the NHS and in other healthcare settings, in providing healthcare, especially during the pandemic. Whilst still shining a light on the history of the LGBT+ community's experience of receiving healthcare which has been extremely complicated leaving LGBT+ people still facing health inequalities today.

At a time when the LGBT+ community is experiencing a rise in hate crime and hate instances we also encourage you to look 'Under the Scope' and listen to LGBT+ peoples' lived experiences from LGBT+ people.

Have you heard of Sophia Jex-Blake or Cecil Belfield Clarke? They were trailblazing LGBT+ people in the medical field and you can listen to their different stories [here](#) as well as other LGBT+ heroes in the medical field.

This information is from the LGBT+ History month [website](#) to find resources that can be used all year round to celebrate the LGBT+ community within your own organisation.

There are also many local events that you can attend in your area.

Whilst we have been celebrating the achievements of LGBT+ people in the medical field, it is also important to recognise the discrimination that LGBT+ people can face when seeking healthcare.

The following statistics are taken from [LGBT in Britain: Health](#) (2018) and [TransActual Trans Lives Survey](#) (2021).

- One in eight LGBT people (13%) have experienced some form of unequal treatment from healthcare staff because they're LGBT.
- Almost one in four LGBT people (23%) have witnessed discriminatory or negative remarks against LGBT people by healthcare staff.
- One in seven LGBT people (14%) have avoided treatment for fear of discrimination because they're LGBT.
- Seven in ten trans people (70%) report being impacted by transphobia when accessing general health services.
- Nearly half of trans people (45%) said that their GP did not have a good understanding of their needs as a trans person, rising to over half of non-binary people (55%).
- 90% of trans people reported experiencing delays when seeking transition-related healthcare.

- Trans people of colour also experienced transphobia from trans-specific healthcare providers at more than double the rate of white respondents (13% compared to 6%)

How can Citizens Advice help?

Citizens Advice can provide advice on a wide range of issues including discrimination.

We have information available on our public website that gives advice on what to do if you are discriminated against in a health care setting, you can find this [here](#).

We can also provide non-judgmental and specific advice. For telephone advice or to ask about face to face services, you can call Somerset Adviceline on 0808 27 87842. Monday & Friday 10am – 4pm. We are currently running longer hours on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays until 8pm

Clients who are D/deaf or hard of hearing can call the Relay UK Text service using prefix 18001 and then dialling 0808 27 87842.

Bitesize update: Discrimination because of sexual orientation

People can face discrimination because of sexual orientation in many different contexts as we've looked at earlier in this newsletter. If we just look at the situation in work, the following statistics demonstrate the lived experience of the LGBT+ community in the workplace:

More than a third of LGBT staff (35%) have hidden that they are LGBT at work for fear of discrimination.

Almost two in five bi people (38%) aren't out to anyone at work about their sexual orientation, compared to seven per cent of gay men and four per cent of lesbians.

One in four trans people (26%) aren't open with anyone at work about being trans. This number increases to about two in five non-binary people (37%) who aren't out at work.

Almost one in five LGBT staff (18%) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues because they're LGBT.

Almost one in five LGBT people (18%) who were looking for work said they were discriminated against because of their identity while trying to get a job.

If sexual orientation discrimination takes place in any of the following situations it is illegal and you may be able to [take action about it](#).

- [employment and training](#)
- [education](#)
- when providing [goods and services](#), for example, banking, entertainment and transport
- [housing](#)
- any of the activities carried out by [public authorities](#), such as the NHS, government departments, local authorities, the police and prisons.

Discrimination because of sexual orientation can be [direct](#) or [indirect](#). It can also take the form of [victimisation](#) or harassment.

It's also illegal to discriminate against you because:

- of the sexual orientation of someone you know, such as family or friends, rather than because of your own sexual orientation. This is known as discrimination by association
- you are believed to be of a particular sexual orientation, even, when you are not
- of gender reassignment.

For more information about discrimination because of gender reassignment, see [Gender reassignment discrimination](#).

What can you do about sexual orientation discrimination

If someone has suffered discrimination because of their sexual orientation, there are a number of things they may be able to do.

These include:

- getting advice from Citizens Advice, a [law centre](#) or [gay rights organisation](#)
- talking to the person or organisation that discriminated against them
- making a written complaint to the company or organisation involved
- following the company's written complaints procedure
- complaining to the relevant Ombudsman. All public bodies such as local authorities, government departments, health authorities and social landlords have an Ombudsman, as well as financial institutions such as banks and building societies
- using a grievance procedure or making a claim to an employment tribunal if it is an [employment problem](#)
- publicising their case through the media
- taking legal action through the courts

- giving details of the problem to an advice agency who may be able to refer it to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) if you believe the problem is widespread

Taking legal action about sexual orientation discrimination

If you want to make a claim in the county court (or sheriff court in Scotland), there is a time limit of six months from the date that the discrimination took place.

There is also a formal procedure for gathering evidence. You need to send a standard form, containing questions you want to ask, to the company, organisation or person you are complaining about. The court can award compensation, but if you lose you can be ordered to pay the other side's legal costs, so make sure you understand all the procedures and the risks involved.

Taking legal action about discrimination is likely to be complicated. If someone is thinking about taking court action, they should get advice from an experienced adviser, for example, at Citizens Advice Somerset.

Support for LGBT+ Young People in Somerset

2BU

2BU-Somerset provides a specialist support service serving the needs of young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ+) people aged 11-25 across Somerset.

Their central aim is to help build resilience and confidence and support each young LGBTQ+ person to a place of healthy self-acceptance.

Support on offer

For 11-18's

- In-person groups in Taunton and Yeovil (13+)
- Online 'Drop-In' group
- 2BU T-Time 11-18s Taunton (transgender/non-binary young people and their parents/carers)
- 1:1 Support in-person or online

For 18-25's

- In-person groups in Taunton
- Online 'Drop-In' group
- 1:1 Support in-person or online

To get in touch with 2BU, you can visit their website [here](#) or call [07799 136552](tel:07799136552).

Free Continuing Professional Development & Training Opportunities

Child Exploitation Training - Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

A 2-hour online course taking place on Friday 12th April 2024 from 12pm-2pm for practitioners working with children and young people in Somerset to raise awareness of child exploitation. Please visit the Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership [here](#) for full details and to sign up.

MHFA - Become Youth Mental Health aware or a Youth Mental Health first aider

The introductory three hour session raises awareness of young people's mental health. It covers:

- Some of the common mental health issues affecting young people, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders and psychosis
- Skills to work more effectively with young people living with mental health issues

- Ways to support young people with a mental health issue and relate to their experiences

Online

6th March 2024 - mhfaengland.org/course-booking-form

1st May 2024 - mhfaengland.org/course-booking-form

The two day course trains you as a Youth Mental Health First Aider (MHFAider®), giving you:

- An in-depth understanding of young people's mental health and factors that affect wellbeing
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- Confidence to reassure and support a young person in distress
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening
- Knowledge to help a young person recover their health by guiding them to further support – whether that's through self-help sites, their place of learning, the NHS, or a mix – engaging with parents, carers and external agencies where appropriate
- Ability to support a young person with a long term mental health issue or disability to thrive
- Tools to look after your own mental wellbeing

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Produced by the Young Citizens Advice Somerset project in 2023.

Yeovil

25th and 26th March 2024 - mhfaengland.org/course-booking-form

6th and 7th June 2024 - mhfaengland.org/course-booking-form

Community Updates

Healthwatch Somerset

We're a bit late but if you haven't already seen it, we wanted to draw attention to the Healthwatch Somerset report on young people's mental health published in October 2023.

Their report, which is informed by feedback from 85 young people and their parents/carers, highlights the challenges young people face as they try to understand and get support for their mental health.

The key findings include:

- 80% of young people felt the need for emotional support in the past year.
- 47% of those who needed support did not look or ask for help.
- 11% were unaware of any of the Somerset services offering direct support (via talking to young people).
- Young Somerset emerged as the most frequently contacted service.
- Schools proved to be pivotal in providing information and signposting for young people and adults.

The report identifies key recommendations aimed at streamlining access to services, improving communication and bolstering support networks for young people.

You can view the [full report here](#).

Participation Workers Network: Youth Voice Groups

We wanted to share a resource from the Somerset Council website that summarises all opportunities available for young people to take part in different participation groups across the county, you can access the mapping tool [here](#).

You can find out more information about how the voice of young people is represented in Somerset [here](#).

Contact and thanks

You can reach Catherine G, our project worker, at ycasomerset@casomerset.org.uk until 26th March 2024.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed throughout the project, and to Somerset Council both for their invaluable input and funding.