Information

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Sheet Number

2017-21/33

for County Councillors

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| Date: | 12 December 2017 |

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| To: | All County Councillors |

**Providing advice, support care for vulnerable people during the winter: a short note to help you point people in the right direction**

This short briefing will help you support members of the public who contact you regarding care and support needs over the course of the winter. The cold weather and higher levels of sickness this time of year mean it is important for vulnerable and elderly residents to get advice and support as quickly and easily as possible.

**Self-help**

Residents can support themselves by looking online at [www.somersetchoices.org.uk](http://www.somersetchoices.org.uk). This website has lots of information about services, equipment and care providers in Somerset and is a good place to start finding out about what help is available that people can arrange themselves. For example:

* Personal care;
* Staying independent;
* Keeping safe;
* Staying physically and mentally well; and
* Maintaining relationships that are important to people.

People and organisations in the community who can also help – such as Age Concern and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau – are also available on the website, at [www.somerset.gov.uk/communitysupport](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/communitysupport).

**Community Connect drop-ins**

Drop-ins / Talking Cafes are now taking place across the county. People can visit the drop-ins to have a conversation with someone and get quick and useful advice.

At the drop-ins people can speak to Community Agents and Village Agents (employed by the Community Council for Somerset), health professionals, Adult Social Care workers and community organisations, such as the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, housing, equipment and volunteers.

A member of the team will ask people a few questions to find out what they are worried about, or what they would like to achieve or change in their life. They will then be able to give people advice about where to find the right support or activity, or offer a solution that really suits the person.

Dates and venues of all drop-ins can be found at: [www.somerset.gov.uk/dropin](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/dropin)

**Support from Somerset County Council**

People can also call Somerset Direct **0300 123 2224** for information and advice on services for elderly and vulnerable residents, their families and others who provide care and support. For example:

* Safeguarding concerns for adults and children;
* Helping people get advice and support locally that may help them; and
* Requests for assessment and support, including urgent needs or issues with existing care packages.

**NHS 111 and 999 emergency services**

The NHS 111 service can be used if someone needs advice or medical treatment quickly but cannot wait for an appointment to see their doctor: **dial** **111**.

If someone may have a life-threatening condition or is in immediate risk of injury or harm, the emergency services should be called: **dial** **999**.

**Flu and vaccination**

The flu vaccine is offered free on the NHS annually to:

* Adults over the age of 18 at risk of flu (including **everyone** aged 65 and over);
* Pregnant women; and
* Children aged six months to two years at risk of flu.

The vaccine is available at

* GP surgeries;
* Any local pharmacy offering the service; and
* The midwifery service if they offer it for pregnant women.

More information is available on: [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/flu-influenza-vaccine.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/vaccinations/Pages/flu-influenza-vaccine.aspx).

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