

Our offer to community micro-enterprises in Somerset

Somerset County Council in partnership with The Community Council for Somerset and Community Catalysts CIC are here to help you and help local people to set up small enterprises and ventures (we call you Micro-providers) that offer help at home and other care and support services older and disabled people across the county. We also help enterprise leaders to work together in peer networks, supporting and learning from each other.

Our aim is to help you to set up your new enterprise or venture, to make it safe, legal and sustainable. We don't charge for the help and advice we offer but do have limited resources and high standards so are only able to offer this free help to people we believe have the motivation, potential and values to do it right.

Doing it right

Doing it right means your enterprise is a viable and sustainable one that isn't going to let (often vulnerable) people down. It also means the services you offer are safe and high quality, offering the help people need, when and how they need it in a respectful way that puts them right at the centre.

Somerset County Council, partner organisations and the peer networks in Somerset have standards which we think define 'doing it right'. We use these standards to help new enterprises understand what they need to do and to measure their progress as they take action.

We don't expect you meet all the standards at the start (in fact we would be amazed if you do) but we do expect you to accept that they are important and commit to reaching them. In return we will give you advice, information and help on your development journey and introduce you to the peer network, other people who already meet the standards and are also willing to offer you help and support.

The standards

You must:

- Live in Somerset
- Run or plan to run a small business, enterprise, venture or group

Your enterprise must:

- Be well run and sustainable (we have list of what this means in practice)
- Offer services or supports that help people improve their health or wellbeing and/or are defined as social care
- Offer services or supports to people who live in Somerset
- Have 8 or fewer full-time equivalent workers - employees or volunteers
- Be totally independent of a larger or parent organisation

The services you offer must:

- Be designed to meet people's needs and requirements
- Value the person or people you support
- Be flexible and responsive to change
- Promote people's independence and choice
- Promote diversity and equality of opportunity

You must be committed to:

- Ensuring that your enterprise and its activity is compliant with all legislative and regulatory requirements
- Continuously developing your own knowledge and skills and those of your workers (if you have any)
- Continually improving the quality of the services and supports that you offer
- Ensuring that your service is safe and follows safeguarding principles

Now what

If you decide you agree with the standards and want support and guidance from Somerset County Council and partner organisations, you need to let us know at our first conversation that you want to join our development programme. Once you are on the programme we will offer you help, advice, guidance and information including signposting you to sources of specialist advice.

When you are on the programme we will assess your progress in meeting the standards. If at any time we feel a standard or standards are totally out of your reach we will tell you and we will stop our journey together.

Once you feel you meet all the standards and no longer need our help you can let us know using the self-declaration form we will send you. Once you meet the standards we will introduce you to your local network and put details of your services on local and national directories.

If you don't agree our standards are important and/or don't feel that working towards them is for you that is fine. We can't and won't stop you take your enterprise journey, we just aren't able to actively help you on your way.

Before you start some recommended links include: -

Video: [Community Enterprise In Somerset - Rosie](#)

[Somerset Micro-providers – Key Messages](#) (regulation and approach to quality)

[Somerset Community Micro-enterprise Directory](#) (List of all providers currently supported through the programme. All providers are expected to answer the questions at the start).

[So you want to be a Micro-provider? – Guide by Somerset's award winning micro-provider Alex Roland](#)