



Coronavirus update from Somerset County Council 9.7.2020

All our help and information is now **available in a single place** on the SCC website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-latest-advice/>

This page is refreshed through the day so please check in regularly to keep across developments and news.



Team effort to support vulnerable families in summer holidays

Somerset is once again pulling together to ensure food is delivered to the most vulnerable families in the county during the summer holidays.

Free school meals vouchers will be available for eligible children during the break following a recent Government announcement, and Somerset County Council is working with partner agencies and volunteers to support families who live too far from anywhere that will take the vouchers.

Families of children who are eligible for free school meals are entitled to the vouchers under the scheme, which was designed in response to the COVID-19 crisis. The vouchers ensure those children continue to get a healthy lunch even if they can't attend school. They are distributed by schools and can be spent in local supermarkets. The scheme has been extended to cover the summer holidays.

Most families can reach the supermarkets that are part the scheme but in some remote areas of Somerset it might not be possible due to distance and lack of transport.

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Government measures to support the economy

The Government has announced a series of measures to support the economy in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Headlines include

- a one-off payment of £1,000 to UK employers for every furloughed employee who remains continuously employed through to the end of January 2021. Headline measures include
- a new Kickstart Scheme - a £2 billion fund to create 6-month work placements aimed at those aged 16-24 who are on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment.

- an additional £111 million this year for traineeships in England, to fund work placements and training for 16-24 year olds.
- a new payment of £2,000 to employers in England for each new apprentice they hire aged under 25, and a £1,500 payment for each new apprentice they hire aged 25+ from 1 August 2020 to 31 January 2021
- a reduced (5%) rate of VAT will apply to supplies of food and non-alcoholic drinks from restaurants, pubs, bars, cafés etc
- Stamp duty reduced to zero on properties from £125,000-£500,000

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County Ticket suspended due to coronavirus

Somerset's County Ticket student travel scheme has been suspended for the next academic year due to the continuing impact of coronavirus.

Until the pandemic, students over the age of 16 could buy an annual County Ticket to use on public transport.

But, as social distancing measures are likely to continue on public transport, and with a potential reduction in the level of college attendance required from September 2020, students would be unlikely

to get the best value travel from the annual pre-paid County Ticket.

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‘Chat health’ online with Public Health Nursing

Young people, parents and carers can now ‘chat health’ with school nurses or health visitors thanks to a simple new text messaging service.

Somerset’s Public Health Nursing service has boosted its health and wellbeing advice with the launch of ‘ChatHealth’, an award-winning digital NHS approved platform.

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Send to a friend

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visit www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus.

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