

Somerset County Council
NHS Somerset

News release

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Minister commends trail-blazing independence scheme

A pioneering Somerset scheme to help people regain their independence after illness has been praised by the Minister of State for Care Services.

Paul Burstow MP visited the St James Medical Practice in Taunton today (4 Jan) to see the pilot 'Reablement' Service first-hand and speak to people who have benefitted from it.

The new service brings together staff from Somerset County Council, the NHS, family doctors and independent care providers. Working alongside GP surgeries and Acute and Community Hospitals, it provides personalised, expert support at home through a single health and social care team to help people regain their independence as soon as possible after a health crisis.

During the two-hour visit the Minister met health and social care professionals and spoke to patients about how the service has helped them remain in their homes or return to live independently following time in hospital.

The Minister said: "People in Taunton are receiving great support to help them regain their independence. Health and social care services are working together to provide care that really focuses on the individual needs of each person.

"People want help to get back on their feet as quickly as possible when their health has suffered, irrespective of whether they need a physiotherapist, a care worker or a GP."

Rita Wogens, of Bishops Lydeard, has been helped by the Reablement Service and spoke to the Minister during his visit.

"I had several small falls indoors and then I fell outside in the road," she said. "This was very distressing and after that I couldn't go out at all.

"The Reablement team have taken me over to the village choir I belong to and down to the shops. They also brought me a four-wheeled walker because it is safer than the one I had.

"If I hadn't had their support I think I would still be sitting indoors. So it has made a tremendous difference to me."

Councillor Christine Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Community, said: "The Reablement Service brings together the skills and knowledge of local GP's, social workers, care workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and community pharmacists, which makes the whole experience much more joined up.

"People get a single support plan centred around their own individual goals and circumstances which is much better for them and we are delighted with how the new service is developing."

Dr Rosie Benneyworth, from the St James Medical Centre, said: "Somerset has always enjoyed close collaboration between local authority social care and family doctors, but the challenge has always been how to deliver services in a seamless way, which fulfils the personal needs and wishes of the people themselves. We know that most patients want to live in their own homes and the Reablement service is making that possible for a growing number of people."

The Reablement Service is currently being piloted in the Taunton Deane area and its impact will be evaluated in the coming months to see if it should continue and be replicated across the County.