

## **Citizens' Panel**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q: What is a Citizens' Panel?**

A: A Citizens' Panel is a cross section of people who agree to take part in research and consultation with the Council on a regular basis. The North Somerset Citizens' Panel will be a group of around 1,500 people from across the area who can regularly share their views on a wide range of issues.

Members of the Panel will be invited to participate in online surveys and also take part in optional focus groups and workshops throughout the year.

Panel surveys will ask members for their views on a variety of issues such as satisfaction with Council services. The topics will vary but will generally focus on local issues.

#### **Q: What's the benefit of having a Citizens' Panel?**

A: The Citizens' Panel enables the Council to regularly consult with local people and to use their feedback to improve and develop services. Engaging and consulting with residents is a key part of the [North Somerset Corporate Plan](#), with the aim of being an open and enabling organisation.

#### **Q: How does a Citizens' Panel work?**

A: Panel members give their views through a number of online surveys. Panel members may also choose to get involved in other types of consultation activity such as focus groups or workshops.

#### **Q: How can I take part in the Citizens' Panel?**

A: By completing [an online registration form](#). The form will ask a number of questions about you. This allows us to ensure we have a good sample of Panel members from across the area. All answers are kept confidential and reported in an anonymised format. Your name, email, and address will never be shared outside of those administering the Panel.

#### **Q: Who can be involved?**

A: Anyone aged over 18 who lives, works, or studies in North Somerset.

**Q: What will I be expected to do?**

A: All we ask is that you take part in easy to complete online surveys with questions relating to the area. We may ask you about your satisfaction with services and ask your thoughts and ideas on new proposals for North Somerset.

**Q: How will I know that a survey is taking place?**

A: We will send you an email each time there is a new opportunity to take part in a survey.

**Q: How will my answers be used?**

A: The results of these surveys will be used by the Council to inform council-wide decision making. Depending on the questions asked, the results may help improve the services you receive or help identify priorities to improve the local quality of life. Data gathered from the Panel may also be used to inform funding opportunities and bids.

You will be able to find the results of the surveys on our website after the survey has closed and been analysed. As a Panel member you will also receive an email telling you when results have been uploaded.

**Q: What if I decide that I do not want to be on the Panel anymore?**

A: We are initially asking Panel members to remain on the Panel for a two-year period, however if after that time you decide that you no longer wish to be contacted you can simply let us know and we will no longer contact you.

**Q: How do you choose which people can join the Citizens' Panel?**

A: Anyone can join the Citizens' Panel if they live, work or study in North Somerset. We are encouraging a wide cross section of people to join the Panel in order to ensure we reflect the diversity of the area.

**Q: Is the Panel the only way the Council considers the views of people living and working in North Somerset ?**

A: No. There are many ways that the Council considers the views of local people. The Panel is just one way for the council to engage with our communities outside of formal consultations.

Contributing to council meetings, getting involved with Healthwatch North Somerset or Healthier Together, the planning process and connecting with elected Councillors

and town and parish councils are just some of the other ways local people can have their views heard.

**Q: Will my responses to surveys and other activities be kept confidential?**

A: Yes. We will treat all your information confidentially in line with the General Data Protection Regulations. When results are shared publicly, or with other organisations, your individual responses will be kept anonymous so that they cannot be linked to you.

**Q: Will you give me feedback?**

A: It is not possible to reply to individual comments however, we will regularly publish the results of different surveys on the Council's website.