

# HELP SOMERSET REDUCE WASTE

The Healthcare Community in Somerset is working with to try and reduce the waste of medicines. We would like everyone in the community to help play their part, as every pound spent on medicines which are not taken, is a pound less which is available to provide NHS treatment for you, your family and friends.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Somerset has a budget of £73 million per year for medicines.

It is estimated at least 5% of that is wasted, which means over £3,500,000 is spent on medicines that are dispensed but never or rarely taken.

Once collected from the pharmacy, medicines cannot be recycled.

Many medicines are given to prevent problems in the future e.g. medicines to lower cholesterol and medicines to control blood pressure help reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes. By not taking these, patients are more likely to suffer in the long term.

Doctors don't mind if you decide, for whatever reason, you don't want to take a medicine; they would far rather know and not issue unwanted medication, than end up with it wasted.

Medicines should be returned to a pharmacy for safe destruction if no longer needed.

This destruction involves incineration and the NHS also has to pay for this so adding to the bill for waste. Annual cost £60,000 on incineration.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- ✓ Tell your doctor if you do not want to take a medicine any longer.
- ✓ Don't hoard or order more medicine than you need.
- ✓ Don't share your medicines with anyone else.
- ✓ Ask your pharmacist for advice. This may be your local community pharmacist who can provide a "medicines usage review" or a pharmacist from the local Somerset Primary Care Trust who works in your surgery. By spending a few minutes with your pharmacist they may be able to answer questions about your medicines and help you understand how to get the best from them.
- ✓ Take any unwanted medicines back to the pharmacy for disposal.

Hopefully by working together, we can [Help Somerset Reduce Waste](#) and help make sure that more of the NHS's money is spent to improve healthcare in Somerset.