

Help at home

Amended June 2023

This local information pack covers:

- **a list of support organisations which can make life a little bit easier**
- adapting your home
- mobility aids; bath & shower aids; toilet aids; bed, chair & sofa aids; dressing & comfort aids; health & leisure aids; household aids; kitchen & dining aids
- alarms

Details are subject to change, please check with the organisation concerned.

If you cannot find what you are looking for please contact us as we may be able to help further. Amendments and additions are also welcome.

We publish other local information packs covering:

- Care agencies and support for carers
- Care homes
- Health and wellbeing
- Housing
- Legal advice and power of attorney
- Memory loss and dementia
- Money matters
- Social activities
- Transport, travel and leisure

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge is a registered charity no. 1088213
01732 454108 www.ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk

Contents

Contents	2
General help - making life a little bit easier	5
Advocacy.....	5
Audiologists and hearing loss	5
Baths and showers	5
Befrienders	5
Bills, correspondence and paperwork.....	5
Companionship.....	6
Computer problems	6
Counselling	6
De-cluttering see also Hoarding and House clearance.....	6
Dentists.....	6
Filling in forms	6
Fingernail cutting and manicures	7
Footcare (chiropractors, podiatrists and toenail cutting)	7
Gardening	8
Getting back on your feet after illness or a stay in hospital.....	9
Hairdressers.....	10
Health appointments.....	10
Heating breakdown	11
Heating costs and repairs	11
Hoarding see also Decluttering and House clearance	11
Home library	11
House clearance see also Decluttering and Hoarding.....	12
Housework and laundry	13
Hypnotherapy.....	13
Information and advice	13
Massage.....	14
Meals	14
Medical condition alerts.....	15
Medication.....	16
Moving furniture	16
Moving home.....	17
Opticians and sight loss	17
Pest Control	17

Pets	17
Reflexology	17
Shopping	17
Adaptations, aids and equipment.....	18
Getting information and advice	18
Getting assessed.....	19
Getting things free or at reduced cost	20
Getting grants to help pay for things	21
Hiring or renting aids and equipment	22
Buying aids and equipment	23
Paying VAT for people with disabilities	24
Repairing and servicing aids and equipment.....	25
Designing and adapting aids and equipment	25
Donating aids and equipment	25
Selling aids and equipment	26
Mobility aids	26
Things that might help.....	26
Walking sticks, walkers, zimmer frames and rollators	27
Wheelchairs.....	27
Mobility scooters.....	28
Stairlifts.....	28
Bath and shower aids	29
Things that might help.....	29
Walk-in baths and easy-access showers.....	29
Assisted baths and showers	30
Toilet aids including commodes	30
Things that might help:.....	30
Commodes.....	30
Bed, chair and sofa aids	30
Things that might help.....	30
Riser-recliner chairs	31
Adjustable beds (also called electric beds or profiling beds)	31
Dressing and comfort aids	31
Things that might help.....	31
Health and leisure aids	31
Things that might help.....	32
Household aids	32

Things that might help.....	32
Kitchen and dining aids.....	33
Things that might help.....	33
Handyperson services and tradespeople.....	33
Handyperson services.....	33
Tradespeople.....	34
Simple mobile phones.....	34
Alarms.....	34
Getting more information.....	34
How alarms work.....	34
Keysafes and keyholders.....	35
Getting an alarm free or at reduced cost.....	35
Buying an alarm.....	35
Installation.....	35
Ongoing monitoring.....	35
Traditional alarms.....	36
GPS-enabled alarms.....	36
Sensors and detectors.....	36
Other home monitoring systems.....	37
Other ways of making sure people are OK.....	37
Index.....	40

General help - making life a little bit easier

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for help outside home

Age UK produce publications on finding help at home 0800 169 6565

Advocacy

The Advocacy People (formerly SEAP)

Advocacy and help representing your views. PO Box 375, Hastings TN34 9HU 0330 440 9000 info@theadvocacypeople.co.uk www.theadvocacypeople.co.uk Based in Hastings but occasionally may be able to do home visits.

Audiologists and hearing loss

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for hearing aid clinics

HI-Kent (Hearing Impaired Kent)

18 Brewer St, Maidstone ME14 1RU 01622 691151 Textphone: 07795 951466

- Assessment and equipment for people with hearing issues. If you're over 65, you are entitled to a free assessment by HI-Kent, probably in your own home, which will look at what equipment might help you in your daily life.
- Also TV headsets or hearing loops, doorbells that flash or page you, visual smoke alarms, conversation aids, amplified phones and mobiles, alarm clocks that flash or vibrate etc.

Hearing tests at home

Many opticians can arrange hearing tests at home. They may be able to carry out a free basic screening and then refer you if required to the NHS for free hearing aids or arrange a free hearing test for private hearing aids. For example Community Care Opticians 01732 458424, Eye Concern 01892 517312/458997, Specsavers 0800 198 1136, Lloyds Pharmacies 0800 60504, Homesight 0800 080 6095, Outside Clinic 0800 954 9090 etc.

Baths and showers

- In Aylesford, Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Snodland, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham areas, ask Kathy in Independent Living Support at Age UK 01732 454108 if she can put you in touch with anyone who does home bathing
- In Swanley area, Fawkham Day Centre has a wet room which you can hire. Transport available. Run by The Cottage Community (formerly Age Concern Darent Valley) 01322 668106 mandy@thecottagecommunity.org.uk www.racdv.org.uk
- Tonbridge Castle Gateway has a walk-in shower with an electric hoist and full wheelchair access. Anyone can use it. There are no staff to assist you but you can take in your own carers 01732 770929, 844522
- If you need a bath or shower seat or to change your bathroom to have a walk-in bath or easy access shower, please see the section on Adaptations, Aids and Equipment

Befrienders

See our Social Activities information pack for befriending schemes

Bills, correspondence and paperwork

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

- Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham areas 01732 454108
- Swanley area. Try Age UK North West Kent 01474 564898

Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include helping you organise bills, correspondence and paperwork. They cannot give financial advice or make financial decisions for you. It currently costs £19.50 per hour.

LRB Organise

Leanne Bradshaw can help with keeping on top of paperwork and post 07854 693711 www.lrb-organise.co.uk

Companionship

See also our Care Agencies information pack for Companions who can help you at home.

Computer problems

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

01732 454108 office@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
www.ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk

Our volunteers may be able to do home visits in some areas to help set up computers or broadband or troubleshoot if there are problems.

Counselling

See our Health & Wellbeing information pack for talking things through

De-cluttering see also Hoarding and House clearance

De-cluttering specialists can help you – for a fee - to sort out your home, your paperwork or your wardrobe. They can organise space, rearrange furniture, help you to decide what to keep and what to dispose of, and much more. Initial consultations and advice are usually free. Some local de-cluttering consultants are:

- Declutter Divas. Specialise in working with people who are older or have had a family bereavement as well as clients who have medical disabilities, hoarding disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders or other special needs. Ability to work with people in a non-judgemental way. Prices start from £50 + travelling expenses. Contact Allyson Pritchard or Zoe Steel 07763 876049, 07525 439692 info@declutterdivas.co.uk www.declutterdivas.co.uk
- LRB Organise. Specialise in de-cluttering for moving home. Prices vary. Contact Leanne Bradshaw 07854 693711 leanne@lrborganise.co.uk www.lrb-organise.co.uk
- All Organised. Specialise in de-cluttering for downsizing. Prices start from £135. Contact Nicki Munns or Heidi Vorster 01732 779611 info@all-organised.co.uk www.all-organised.co.uk

Dentists

There are mobile dentists who can visit you at home. An example is:

- Mobile Dentist Company 0844 809 2660 enquiries@themobiledentistcompany.com www.themobiledentistcompany.com

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for other help with dentists.

Filling in forms

Age UK

- If you need help at home because of your health then you are eligible to apply for health benefits regardless of your income or savings. You can get more information about these benefits by ringing Age UK 0800 169 6565.
- You can get help filling in forms:

- Age UK. We can help you at our office or we may be able to visit you or arrange for DWP to visit you 01732 454108
- Citizens' Advice can also help you. Free phone advice Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Some office appointments may be possible.
 - Aylesford, Larkfield, New Ash Green, Otford, Sevenoaks, Snodland, Swanley and Tonbridge 0808 278 7810
 - Edenbridge and Westerham 0808 278 7962

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan are best known for their Macmillan Nurses but they also run the Macmillan Crossroads Volunteer Service to give emotional and practical support to people living in Kent with cancer (or their carers). This includes form filling. Run by Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers in partnership with Crossroads. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Wateringbury ME18 5NS 0345 095 6701

enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Fingernail cutting and manicures

Mobile beauticians can visit you at home to cut fingernails or give you a manicure. One example is Kelly 07850 713270 but you should shop around. Some footcare services may also be able to do it.

Footcare (chiropodists, podiatrists and toenail cutting)

- If you are diabetic, your GP may be able to refer you to a free NHS service.
- Foot healthcare practitioners are qualified to carry out routine foot care treatments – toenail clipping, corn and callous removal, dealing with cracked heels and general diabetic foot maintenance. Private home visits may also be available.
 - Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust run a fee-paying NHS service at local clinics. Toenail cutting costs £18. To book an appointment 0300 123 1554. There may be a waiting list.
 - It may be quicker to go directly to a private foot healthcare practitioner. You should shop around but here are some examples:
 - Aylesford area
 - Emma Apps emmasmobilefootcare@gmail.com
 - Sevenoaks area
 - Age UK, Hollybush Court Day Centre 01732 741558
 - Joanne Rennie joanne.rennie@gmail.com
 - Snodland area
 - Eileen Knapp eileen.knapp25@yahoo.com
 - Tonbridge area
 - Karla Andrews 01732 358403, 07867 573021
 - Paul Rogers 07985 607569
 - Westerham area
 - Melissa Barford melissabarford@btconnect.com
 - You can also try Gail 07709 213060 or Sophie 07527 401877, 01892 540849
 - Private beauticians may also offer toenail cutting as part of a simple pedicure.
- Chiropodists (also known as podiatrists) are specialists who are also qualified to carry out assessment, diagnosis and treatment of foot and lower limb disorders. They may charge more than foot healthcare practitioners. Home visits may be available.

- Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust run a podiatry service at local clinics. This is a free service but you need to speak to your GP for a referral. There will be a waiting list.
- It may be quicker to go directly to a private chiropodist or podiatrist. You can find them by searching for “podiatrist” on www.nhs.uk You should shop around but here are some examples:
 - Crockenhill area
 - Crockenhill Foot Clinic 07982 835251
 - Edenbridge area
 - Kate De Angeli 07807 299114
 - Hildenborough area
 - Alice Neale 01732 832524
 - Paddock Wood area
 - Deborah Hanger 01892 837277
 - Pembury area
 - Kevin Norman 01892 822855
 - Sevenoaks area
 - Andrew Brunger, St John’s Hill 01732 451945, 07969 877419
 - Chris Williams, Manor Clinic 01732 464400
 - Emma Peacock, South Park Surgery 01732 742529
 - Swanley area
 - Age UK North West Kent 01474 564898
 - Ms S Turner 07492 728782
 - Tonbridge area
 - Age UK Town Lock day centre 01732 454108
 - Fit Feet Podiatry 07549 559056
 - Head to Toe Health 07549 559056
 - Mind Body Clinic 01732 441008
 - Tonbridge Chiropody & Podiatry 01732 357563
 - Tonbridge Clinic 01732 350255

Gardening

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

- Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham areas 01732 454108
- Swanley area. Try Age UK North West Kent 01474 564898

Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include looking after your garden. This is garden maintenance rather than horticulture so for example it includes mowing the lawn and trimming low hedges but not planting or treework. It currently costs £20.50 per hour.

Independent Age

Extra Help at Home explains how to get help with your garden. You can get it from Independent Age, 6 Avonmore Rd, London W14 8RL 0800 319 6789, 020 7605 4200 advice@independentage.org www.independentage.org

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan are best known for their Macmillan Nurses but they also run the Macmillan Crossroads Volunteer Service to give emotional and practical support to people living in Kent with cancer (or their carers). This includes gardening. Run by Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers in partnership with Crossroads. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170

Tonbridge Rd, Wateringbury ME18 5NS 0345 095 6701
enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Town & Country Home Improvement Agency

0845 605 7017 infohia@tch.org.uk www.tch.org.uk

Help to find reliable gardeners and may offer grass-cutting service in the summer.

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with gardening. £24.60 per hour. Do not provide personal care (help with washing, dressing, medication etc) 01732 495665

enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Getting back on your feet after illness or a stay in hospital

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for hospitals, conditions and illnesses.

Age UK

You can get publications about hospital discharge arrangements, intermediate care and re-ablement by ringing Age UK 0800 169 6565.

INVOLVE

May be able to provide practical support for up to 14 days including sorting out help and adaptations 0300 081 0005 communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
www.involvekent.org.uk If you are staying in Tunbridge Wells or Maidstone Hospitals, they have staff based there who can help with hospital discharge

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can collect you from hospital and help you settle in a safe routine at home. Can help with food preparation/cooking, shopping, light housework/laundry, gardening, transport to social activities and medical appointments, pet care, companionship etc. £24.60 per hour. Do not provide personal care (help with washing, dressing, medication etc) 01732 495665

enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Social Services

03000 416161 social.services@kent.gov.uk www.kent.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

- Social Services provide many forms of support and you can ask for a free assessment of what support you might need and whether you need to contribute towards the cost of support. They may be able to provide a range of services including enablement services (for recovery after a stay in hospital). They can also arrange home care services and support packages. On their website you can search for care services and find more information.
- Their Enablement Team may also be able to help you get back on their feet if you are unable to cope at home after an illness or stay in hospital. Typically this would revolve around needing personal care or mobility issues. Their carers (or care agencies working on their behalf) will help look after you for a period of 3-6 weeks. If you only need help for 5-7 days then it may be easier to ask for help from the Rapid Response Team at Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust 0300 123 1807, 01732 376858.
- If you are looking after someone it may be quicker to get a free carer's assessment from INVOLVE 0300 081 0005 communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
www.involvekent.org.uk If you live in Swanley contact IMAGO 0300 011 1965
hello@imago.community www.imago.community

Town & Country Home Improvement Agency

0845 605 7017 infohia@tch.org.uk www.tch.org.uk This is a free service which may be able to help you get discharged quicker and prevent you being re-admitted by offering practical solutions to problems around the home. They may be able to visit you at home and arrange:

- to move beds downstairs
- to supply and fit banisters and grab rails
- to supply and fit key safes
- to make simple changes to prevent slips, trips and falls

You must be vulnerable, chronically sick or disabled

West Kent Hospital Discharge Scheme (Handy Heroes)

Based in Tunbridge Wells Hospital and Darent Valley Hospital. Work with patients to help ensure their home is suitable for them to leave hospital. The service provides a detailed home assessment, advice on home adaptation funding and financial assistance along with access to the Handy Hero team who can react quickly to requests for small home repairs, moving furniture or work to prevent further accidents, reducing the risk of a hospital re-admission. They can move large items of furniture such as beds, wardrobes and chests of drawers including moving beds downstairs if you can no longer manage stairs 01732 227000 and ask for Handy Heroes.

Hairdressers

Here are some examples of hairdressers who may be able to visit you at home:

- Amber 07908 609239
- Lauren 07852 468942
- Katie 07508 376120
- Sharon 01732 773043
- Nicole Tel 07713 480064
- Kelly 07850 713270
- Jo 07901 953596

If they can't help, you can ask any hairdresser if they have any staff who do home visits.

Health appointments

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for hospitals.

Age UK

Our Independent Living Support service can make medical appointments and take you to them as part of our regular service. We can provide most domestic support within reason but do not provide personal care. You get the same support worker at the same time each week so you can get to know them and it is a flexible service so if, for example, your support worker normally does housework, you can say that you want them to take you to a medical appointment if you prefer. The time is yours and we charge £19.50 per hour for a minimum of one hour per week 01732 454108, 01732 366100.

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan are best known for their Macmillan Nurses but they also run the Macmillan Crossroads Volunteer Service to give emotional and practical support to people living in Kent with cancer (or their carers). This includes someone to accompany you to health appointments. Run by Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers in partnership with Crossroads. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Wateringbury ME18 5NS 0345 095 6701 enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can escort you to medical appointments. £24.60 per hour. Do not provide personal care (help with washing, dressing, medication etc) 01732 495665
enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Heating breakdown

- If your heating breaks down you should contact your energy supplier
- If you are on their Priority Services Register you should tell them so they know you are a priority
- If you have difficulty contacting them you should contact their complaints department or Citizens' Advice Consumer Service 0808 223 1133
- If you are a social housing tenant you should approach your landlord first

Heating costs and repairs

See our Housing information pack

Hoarding see also Decluttering and House clearance

Hoarding is where clutter has become a problem in your everyday life so that you can no longer use your facilities. For example you may be having to sleep in your chair, can't cook anymore or lose your access to hot water and your toilet

Declutter Divas

- Specialise in working with people who are older or have had a family bereavement as well as clients who have medical disabilities, hoarding disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders or other special needs. Ability to work with people in a non-judgemental way.
- Prices start from £50 + travelling expenses. Initial consultations and advice are usually free.
- Contact Allyson Pritchard or Zoe Steel 07763 876049, 07525 439692
info@declutterdivas.co.uk www.declutterdivas.co.uk

Town & Country Home Straight

- In Sevenoaks District, Home Straight Co-ordinators support people to sort, organise and remove clutter and material from their homes without judgement. There is no charge for visits but there may be a charge for contractors to collect and dispose of unwanted items if required. 07771 337679 infohia@tch.org.uk www.tch.org.uk

Home library

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for hearing loss and sight loss.

Kent Libraries & Archives

03000 413131 www.kent.gov.uk/lib

- Sevenoaks Library, Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 1LQ
sevenoakslibrary@kent.gov.uk
- Tonbridge Library, 1 Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge TN9 1TG
tonbridgelibrary@kent.gov.uk
- Home Library Service visiting disabled people and their carers who may be housebound, visually-impaired or hearing-impaired
- Can bring books or audio items to you every fortnight
- You can receive this for just a few weeks or indefinitely
- Large Print books for people with sight problems
- Audiobooks on CD or cassette for blind & partially-sighted people (also known as Talking Books or Spoken Word). Free

Lions Clubs

Talking Newspaper for Blind People

- Sevenoaks Lions Club sevenoakslions@yahoo.com
- Tonbridge Lions Club 01732 358218, 0845 833 9819 info@tonbridgelions.co.uk
www.tonbridgelions.co.uk

RNIB (formerly Royal National Institute for the Blind)

105 Judd St, London WC1H 9NE 020 7388 1266 Helpline 0303 123 9999
helpline@rnib.org.uk Talking Book Service for people with sight problems.

House clearance see also Decluttering and Hoarding

Bulk waste collections

You can dispose of large household items by contacting your local council. Charges usually depend on the number of items and may also depend on the type of items

Charity furniture shops

Charity furniture shops may be able to collect items of furniture or organise a house clearance if it is within their area. There may be a charge

- **Aylesford – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 109 Hall Rd, Aylesford ME20 7RE 01622 715097 www.hokh.org
- **Bat & Ball – Abacus Furniture Project.** Greatness Lane, Bat & Ball TN14 5BQ 01732 743365 abacus@wkha.org.uk www.westkent.org
- **Bessels Green – Hospice in the Weald.** Main Rd TN14 6ED (behind Sevenoaks Garden Centre opposite Dunbrik Recycling Centre just after M25) 01959 562384 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **High Brooms - Hospice in the Weald.** 6 Tunbridge Wells Trade Park, Longfield Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QF 01892 536442 www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Maidstone – Demelza Hospice.** 98 Sandling Rd, Maidstone ME14 2RJ 01622 427885 www.demelza.org.uk
- **Otford – Hospices of Hope.** 11 High St, Otford TN14 5PG 01959 524322 www.hospicesofhope.co.uk
- **Sevenoaks – Hospice in the Weald.** 96 High St TN13 1LP 01732 740300 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Swanley – YMCA.** Nightingale House, Swanley BR8 7AB 01322 662971 www.ymca.org.uk
- **Tonbridge - Hospice in the Weald.** 111 High St, Tonbridge TN9 1DL 01732 360566 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Tonbridge - YMCA.** Tower House, Vale Rise, Tonbridge TN9 1TB 01732 361108 warehouses@westkentymca.org.uk www.westkentymca.org.uk
- **Tunbridge Wells – British Heart Foundation.** 39-45 Grosvenor Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2AW 01892 628600 www.bhf.org.uk
- **West Malling – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 50 High St, West Malling ME19 6QR 01732 870962 www.hokh.org

Clearance Grafters

Family firm which makes a point of trying to recycle as much as possible. Anything recyclable will be sold through their shop or taken to car boot sales. The remainder will be taken to landfill. They will do partial or full house clearances. Based in Sutton but will cover our entire area 020 8058 3113, 07557 957610 luke@clearancegrafters.com
www.clearancegrafters.com

David & Paul

David & Paul can help get rid of clean rubbish. You can reach them on 07979 872724.

Kent Re-Users

Based in Sittingbourne but may cover our area 01795 424008, 07816 364444
info@kentreusers.co.uk www.kentreusers.co.uk

- Collects and finds new homes for all usable furniture
- Will help with home clearance after bereavement

Housework and laundry

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

- Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include light housework and laundry. It currently costs £19.50 per hour
 - Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham areas. 01732 454108
 - Swanley area. Try Age UK North West Kent 01474 564898
- Hollybush Day Centre in Sevenoaks may also be able to do an occasional bag of laundry for you such as washing a duvet or if your washing machine breaks down. 01732 741558 to check

Bizzy Lizzy's

3 The Granary, Goblands Farm Business Centre, Cemetery Lane, Hadlow TN11 0LT
01732 354777 enquiries@bizzylizzys.co.uk www.bizzylizzys.co.uk Contact Hannah Smith.
Private agency offering domestic cleaning. There are many others so it is worth shopping around.

Laundry services

Several laundries offer free collection and delivery. Here are some examples:

- Belmont, Sevenoaks 01732 452916
- Butterfly, Leigh 01732 441005
- Hollybush Launderette, Sevenoaks 01732 740869
- Iron Maids, Tunbridge Wells Tel: 01892 575222
- Sealclean, Tonbridge Tel: 01732 370990
- Tonbridge Dry Cleaners, Tonbridge Tel: 01732 359039

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan are best known for their Macmillan Nurses but they also run the Macmillan Crossroads Volunteer Service to give emotional and practical support to people living in Kent with cancer (or their carers). This includes light housework. Run by Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers in partnership with Crossroads. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Wateringbury ME18 5NS 0345 095 6701
enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with light housework/laundry. £24.60 per hour. Do not provide personal care (help with washing, dressing, medication etc) 01732 495665
enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Hypnotherapy

One example is Denise Bland 07716 915254 but you should shop around

Information and advice

Age UK

- You can get publications about finding help at home by ringing Age UK 0800 169 6565
- You can get information and advice about local services by ringing Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge 01732 454108

Independent Age

6 Avonmore Rd, London W14 8RL 0800 319 6789, 020 7605 4200

advice@independentage.org www.independentage.org

- Free telephone and email service offering advice on benefits, care and social activities. (A similar service is also offered by Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge).
- Free handbook and advice guide on Extra Help at Home explains ways of "staying put" longer and living independently in your own home.

Massage

One example is Denise Bland 07716 915254 but you should shop around.

Meals

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for healthy eating and weight management.

Ready meals

You must be able to heat food up. Some companies will deliver fresh meals which you just need to heat up in a microwave. They may be able to deliver every day.

- Cookmere Meals 01323 884274 www.getpresto.co.uk
- Parsley Box 0800 612 7225 www.parsleybox.com
- Vegan Dishes (not frozen) www.vegandishes.co.uk
- You may also be able to order food to be delivered by supermarkets. Amazon Pantry, Asda, Iceland, Morrisons, Ocado, Tesco and Waitrose all deliver fresh food and ready meals ordered online. Sainsbury's also accept phone orders on 0800 328 1700.

Other companies can deliver frozen meals weekly or fortnightly. The drivers (who are police-checked) may be able to help you put meals into your freezer. Here are some examples:

- Wiltshire Farm Foods (deliver across UK) 0800 773773, 0800 077 3100 www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com
- Oakhouse Foods 0333 370 6700 www.oakhousefoods.co.uk
- Chef on Board 01981 250494 www.chefonboard.com
- Cook 01732 759020 www.cookfood.net
- Monmouthshire Vegetarian Food Company (will deliver further afield on request) 07968 617634 www.veggiefoodco.com
- Goodness Direct 0871 871 6611 www.goodnessdirect.co.uk
- RealFoods 0131 556 1772 www.realfoods.co.uk

Meals on wheels

These are hot meals delivered to your home so you don't have to heat the food up.

- Age UK produce publications on meals on wheels 0800 169 6565
- If you live in the Swanley area, Age UK North West Kent may be able to help 01474 564898. Also worth trying The Cottage Community 01322 668106.

- If you live elsewhere phone Social Services on 03000 416161 and ask them if they know of any meals on wheels services
- We do not know of any companies that deliver hot meals apart from things like Deliveroo.

Places to go for regular hot meals

- Age UK 01732 454108.
 - Lunch clubs provide hot meals. You must be able to get there.
 - There are weekly lunch clubs in Bessels Green, Kemsing, Otford and Riverhead.
 - There are fortnightly lunch clubs in Westerham.
 - There are monthly lunch clubs in Dunton Green, Fordcombe and Hartley
 - Age UK's Day Centre in Sevenoaks also provides hot meals on a regular basis. Transport may be available
- The Derwent Day Centre in North Tonbridge also provides hot meals on a regular basis. You must be able to get there 01732 352824
- People with dementia may also be able to get a hot meal at the Heart of Kent Hospice in Aylesford 01622 792200

Help with preparing food or cooking

- Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to visit you and help you to heat food up in a microwave or prepare a sandwich. We can also assist with things such as making a sandwich, opening cans, microwaving food, dishing it up, cutting it up, reminding, prompting or encouraging to eat or drink. We charge £19.50 per hour. We cover Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham areas 01732 454108
- If you need someone to actually prepare your food or cook meals for you then you need a companionship agency or care agency. These are listed in our Care Agencies information pack

Assistance with eating and drinking

If you need physical assistance eating and drinking then a private care agency may be able to help. These are listed in our Care Agencies information pack. Social Services may be able to subsidise the cost depending on your savings.

Medical condition alerts

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for specific medical conditions.

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

Can sniff and tell you if you have diabetes and need to have an injection or eat sugary food, if you have an allergy and there are airborne allergens in your environment or if you have Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (a heart condition) and are about to have a blackout. Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 0NP 01296 655888
operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

MedicAlert

MedicAlert House, 327-329 Witan Court, Upper Fourth St, Milton Keynes MK9 1EH 01908 951045 info@medicalert.org.uk www.medicalert.org.uk

MedicAlert ID bracelets, necklaces and watches help make sure that you receive fast, relevant treatment in an emergency. Worn on your pulse point, they carry the international medical symbol and are an effective way to communicate vital details of medical

conditions, allergies and your next of kin. Useful if you are unconscious or unable to speak. There is a charge for these bracelets.

Message in a Bottle

Lions Clubs offer a free Message in a Bottle scheme. Medical and personal details are kept in a bottle in the fridge; a sticker is placed on the door and the fridge so they can be found in a crisis by relatives, paramedics, police, firefighters, social workers etc. Contact Sevenoaks Lions Club or Tonbridge Lions Club

Medication

Dosset boxes and other help from chemists

When there are lots of tablets to take, it can be easy to lose track of when they were last taken. Your local chemist (for example, Boots) may be able to help. Ask your chemist what services they offer. For example:

- giving you a Dosset Box so your tablets are organised in day and time slots
- delivering medication at the same time each week/month
- getting prescriptions straight from GPs
- reminders about medication reviews with GPs

Picking up prescriptions

- Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to pick up prescriptions on a regular basis. £19.50 per hour 01732 454108
- Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers can pick up prescriptions free-of-charge for people with cancer. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Watlington ME18 5NS 0345 095 6701
enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Medication reminders and supervision

- Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to remind, prompt or encourage you to take medication. £19.50 per hour 01732 454108
- However if you need someone to actually supervise or physically help you to take medication then you need a companionship agency or care agency. Companionship agencies are listed above under Companionship and a list of care agencies is available from Age UK 01732 454108
- Medication reminders can be combined with a basic personal alarm. They send you a visual and audible alert when medication needs to be taken. If time slots are missed, an alert is sent to the monitoring centre who will contact you. These are available from Welbeing 01323 644422 www.welbeing.org.uk
- There are many companies which specialise in products for memory loss. One example is Unforgettable 020 3322 9070/9388 info@unforgettable.org www.unforgettable.org Here are a couple of things that might help:
 - Automated medication dispensers open and dispense medication at particular times but you need to remember to take it immediately and be able to use the equipment.
 - Memrabel is a clock and calendar which can be programmed with family photos and voices to give visual and verbal reminders to take medication.

Moving furniture

David & Paul

David & Paul can help you move furniture in your home (such as moving a bed downstairs). You can reach them on 07979 872724. There may be other light removal firms who can offer similar services.

Town & Country Home Improvement Agency

0845 605 7017 infohia@tch.org.uk www.tch.org.uk

Health & Housing Co-ordinators may be able to provide assistance with moving beds or removing hoarded materials

West Kent Hospital Discharge Scheme (Handy Heroes)

Based in Tunbridge Wells Hospital and Darent Valley Hospital. Work with patients to help ensure their home is suitable for them to leave hospital. The service provides a detailed home assessment, advice on home adaptation funding and financial assistance alongwith access to the Handy Hero team who can react quickly to requests for small home repairs, moving furniture or work to prevent further accidents, reducing the risk of a hospital re-admission. They can move large items of furniture such as beds, wardrobes and chests of drawers including moving beds downstairs if you can no longer manage stairs 01732 227000 and ask for Handy Heroes.

Moving home

See our Housing information pack

Opticians and sight loss

Many opticians can visit you at home. NHS sight tests at home are free for most older people or people with disabilities. Some examples of opticians who can visit you at home are Community Care Opticians 01732 458424, Eye Concern 01892 517312/458997, Specsavers 0800 198 1136, Homesight 0800 080 6095 and The Outside Clinic 0800 605040 but there are many others. If you can't find one, ring NHS England on 0300 311223 and they can send you a list of local opticians who can visit you at home.

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for other help with opticians and sight loss.

Pest Control

See our Housing information pack

Pets

Cinnamon Trust

The Cinnamon Trust is a charity whose volunteers will do things such as walk dogs, fetch cat food or foster pets when their owners are in hospital. They may also be able to help if you can no longer look after your pet 01736 757900 www.cinnamon.org.uk The PDSA or RSPCA may also be able to help

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with pet care. £24.60 per hour. Do not provide personal care (help with washing, dressing, medication etc) 01732 495665 enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Reflexology

One example is Denise Bland 07716 915254 but you should shop around

Shopping

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

- Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham areas 01732 454108
- Swanley area. Try Age UK North West Kent 01474 564898

Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include taking you shopping or doing your shopping for you. It currently costs £19.50 per hour.

Grocery Shopping Assistance Service

They may be able to help you if you are having difficulty obtaining grocery deliveries from the major supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Asda, Ocado, Iceland, Waitrose). You can call them directly on freephone 0330 088 5896 to place grocery orders as frequently or infrequently as you like. They will then arrange an online delivery on your behalf at a time which is suitable for you. They charge £4-6 on top of your shopping and the supermarket's delivery charge www.shopforyou.co.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

Macmillan are best known for their Macmillan Nurses but they also run the Macmillan Crossroads Volunteer Service to give emotional and practical support to people living in Kent with cancer (or their carers). This includes picking up shopping or taking you shopping. Run by Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers in partnership with Crossroads. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Watlingbury ME18 5NS 0345 095 6701 enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with shopping. £24.60 per hour. Do not provide personal care (help with washing, dressing, medication etc) 01732 495665
enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Supportmatch Homeshare Service

01604 905517, 07742 807677, 07847 072490, 020 3633 6066 info@supportmatch.co.uk
www.supportmatch.co.uk This is a service where a householder who has a spare room offers it to a homesharer in exchange for 10 hours per week of companionship, overnight security and some practical help around your home. This could include domestic help such as cooking or shopping but does not include any personal care. Supportmatch charge the older person £99 per month and the homesharer £159 per month rent.

Adaptations, aids and equipment

Getting information and advice

Talk to one of the following organisations. Alternatively ring up a mobility shop and ask them for a catalogue.

Age UK

You can get publications about adapting your home and funding for improvements and adaptations by ringing Age UK 0800 169 6565.

Disabled Living Foundation

Charity that can give information and advice on choosing equipment and aids for people with disabilities and where to buy them. 0300 999 0004 info@dlf.org.uk

Independent Age

"Extra Help at Home" is a booklet which explains where to apply for a grant to adapt your home. You can get it from Independent Age, 6 Avonmore Rd, London W14 8RL 0800 319 6789, 020 7605 4200 advice@independentage.org www.independentage.org

Living made Easy

Charity offering clear practical advice on equipment to help with daily living.
www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

Getting assessed

If you are not sure what you need you can ask for a visit at home to assess you. There are various people who can do assessments and it is free. You may also be able to get things free or at reduced cost if you have an assessment

Occupational Therapists/Social Services

Occupational Therapists can also assess your needs directly but there may be a long waiting list. Contact Kent County Council's Social Services Team on 03000 416161 and ask for an Occupational Therapist assessment of your needs.

Community Navigators

Alternatively community navigators may be able to visit you in your own home to offer advice on what help may be available. Contact INVOLVE 0300 081 0005 communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk If you live in the Swanley area contact IMAGO 0300 011 1965 navigation@imago.community

- banister rails, grab rails, steps, threshold ramps and edging strips
- grab rails, shower seats, shower and bath steps
- toilet rails
- chair, sofa and bed raising equipment
- dressing aids
- electric socket raisers

District Nurse

If you have an urgent medical condition your GP can refer you to a District Nurse who may be able to help with some things:

- walking frames (walkers and zimmer frames)
- commodes

Your Home co-ordinator. This may be the quickest way in Sevenoaks District. This is a joint project between Age UK and Sevenoaks District Council. We can help with things to do with improving health through housing such as getting adaptations, aids or equipment. Our co-ordinator will carry out an "Environmental Home Assessment". This is similar to the sort of assessment that might be carried out by an Occupational Therapist from Social Services. If anything needs installing, we will work closely with Social Services Occupational Therapists and the council's Housing Department (where appropriate) to carry out the adaptations. You may have to wait for things to be installed. Contact James Keast 07864 959141 jameskeast@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk

- grab rails, moving beds and de-cluttering where it might prevent you being admitted to hospital or make it easier for you to be discharged from hospital
- steps, trolleys, cushions, leg lifters, replacement carpets, rollators (wheeled walkers), Buckingham Caddies (trays), crutches (for people with permanent disabilities) and mobility scooters (if you have complex health needs)
- bath steps, bath seats, bath boards, shower boards and shower stools
- raised toilet seats, toilet frames and commodes

- adjustable beds, divan beds if you have medical needs, bed levers and bed sticks
- cushions and leg lifters
- computers (in certain circumstances)
- keysafes and aids to help those with memory problems
- perching stools and trolleys
- help applying for Disabled Facilities Grants for outdoor ramps, lifts, widening doorways and house extensions if you are on a low income

Local councils and home improvement agencies

Home owners and private tenants can also get advice on whether you are eligible for grants and help applying from:

- **Town & Country Home Improvement Agency** 0845 605 7017
infohia@tch.org.uk www.tch.org.uk
- **Sevenoaks District Housing Advice & Standards Team**, Council Offices, Argyle Rd, Sevenoaks TN13 1HG 01732 227000 psh@sevenoaks.gov.uk
information@sevenoaks.gov.uk www.sevenoak.gov.uk
- **Tonbridge & Malling Private Housing Team**, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4LZ 01732 876395 privatesectorhousing@tmbc.gov.uk housing.services@tmbc.gov.uk
www.tmbc.gov.uk

Social housing providers

Social housing providers can advise both their own tenants and others. Advice can be provided on:

- Energy-saving tips and gadgets (radiator reflectors, seals for gaps, slow-cookers)
- Adaptations and aids in your home
- Downsizing where you live (bedroom release schemes)

Local contacts:

- Moat Housing, Mariner House, Galleon Boulevard, Crossways, Dartford DA2 6QE 0300 323 0011 customer@moat.co.uk www.moat.co.uk
- West Kent Housing Association, 101 London Rd, Sevenoaks TN13 1AX 01732 749400 enquiries@wkha.org.uk www.westkent.org
- Clarion Housing Group, 32 Tower View, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4UY 0800 197 2880 or (from a mobile) 0300 500 4444

Royal British Legion

Help buying mobility aids is available for veterans, reservists and their families 0808 802 8080 www.rbl.org.uk

Getting things free or at reduced cost

If you get assessed first by one of the organisations above you may be able to get things free or at reduced cost. For example your council may provide equipment or aids costing less than £1000 free of charge such as a bath seat, handrails, bed-raising blocks or a perching stool. They may also help you to apply for any grants which are available for home adaptations costing more than £1000 such as widening a doorway for a wheelchair or converting a bathroom to a wet room. However you will have to wait for an assessment and also for things to be installed. If you prefer you can pay to get assessed privately. You won't have to wait as long but you will then need to pay for things.

- **Private occupational therapists.** You can get a private occupational therapist to come and see you. This is much quicker but costs about £165. One example is Safe & Well 01622 235315 kent@safeandwell.co.uk www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent

- **Safe & Well Demonstration Centre.** You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Link 20, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP 01622 235315 kent@safeandwell.co.uk www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent
- **Sevenoaks Mobility Centre.** This is a company that can visit you at home, assess your requirements and provide a selection of solutions (with no obligation to purchase). They only offer mobility aids, not other equipment. Contact Paul Davis 01732 448144 info@sevenoaksmobility.co.uk www.sevenoaksmobility.co.uk
- **Dial UK** may be able to help people under 60 get equipment

Getting grants to help pay for things

Checking if you are eligible and getting help applying

- In Sevenoaks District, contact James Keast 07864 959141 jameskeast@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
- Occupational Therapists 03000 416161. There may be a waiting list
- Community navigators at INVOLVE 0300 081 0005 communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk If you live in the Swanley area contact IMAGO 0300 011 1965 navigation@imago.community
- Town & Country Home Improvement Agency 0845 605 7017 infohia@tch.org.uk www.tch.org.uk
- Tonbridge & Malling Private Housing Team, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4LZ 01732 876395 privatesectorhousing@tmbc.gov.uk housing.services@tmbc.gov.uk www.tmbc.gov.uk

Minor repairs to stairs, floors and steps, key safes etc. Also safety & security repairs

You can apply for a **Safe & Secure Grant** if you live with a health condition at home (including dementia) or are over 60. Grants can be obtained for grab rails, chair raisers, bath seats, raised toilet seats, ramps and stair rails. You can also apply for additional things to keep you safe such as mortice locks, door chains, window locks and even new front doors. There are also aids to help those with memory problems who might, for example, leave the bath running or forget to close the front door. The work must cost less than £1000 and you can only apply once every 3 years although you can apply for two at once. These grants are discretionary but are not means-tested. These grants are only available to owner-occupiers, private tenants or shared ownership schemes. Social tenants should approach their housing association.

Decluttering, boiler repairs/replacement, minor repairs/adaptations, moving furniture etc

- You can apply for a **Hospital Discharge Grant** if you are in hospital waiting to go home. The work must cost less than £3000. These grants are for people who are owner-occupiers or private tenants; they are not means-tested but are discretionary. They may be able to arrange a “deep clean”.
- Alternatively you can contact an agency that does “deep cleans”. Many cleaning agencies will offer a “deep clean” or an “end-of-tenancy clean”. A couple of examples are Sally 07809 702704 or Glean & Steam on 01892 523036, 07729 456773 but you should shop around.
- Vulnerable residents may be able to get a **Safe & Secure Grant** from your local council to cover boiler installation.

Stairlifts, walk-in showers, ramps etc

People who are disabled and owner-occupiers or private tenants may be able to get a **Disabled Facilities Grant**. These could, for example, pay for a wet room or a straight stairlift.

- The grant is effectively an interest-free loan and has to be repaid if you move or die and someone then sells your home.
- The work must cost less than £30,000.
- It is means-tested so you have to be on a low income and not have much savings. If your savings are above £6,000 you may still get something but you may be asked to contribute. If you have moved in with a relative, you may still be able to apply but their circumstances will also be taken into account.

Repairing leaky roofs, dangerous electrics, inadequate heating/hot water etc
Bookmark not defined.

- If you are an owner-occupier or landlord you can apply for a **Housing Assistance Grant**. These grants are for urgent repairs such as leaking roofs or buying a new boiler. They are means-tested so you must be on a low income, for example, claiming Pension Credit or Council Tax Support. The work must cost less than £10,000
- Vulnerable residents may also be able to get a **Safe & Secure Grant** from your local council to cover boiler installation.

New boilers

- You may be able to get a **Discretionary Grant** up to £7500. This is effectively a loan. The council would give you the money but it has to be repaid either by you if you move or by your beneficiary if you die and your home is sold
- Vulnerable residents may also be able to get a **Safe & Secure Grant** from your local council to cover boiler installation.

Independence at Home. Help people with physical disabilities or mental health conditions and their families or carers with essential equipment, breaks, home repairs etc
www.independenceathome.org.uk

Hiring or renting aids and equipment

British Red Cross

If your disability is temporary you can borrow wheelchairs and commodes from the British Red Cross. The nearest are:

- **Maidstone** 01622 758643 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays
- **Bromley** 0300 456 1914 to arrange delivery on Thursdays
- **Purley** 0300 456 1914 to arrange collection or delivery on Thursdays
- **Crawley** 01293 649079 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

Kent Mobility Ltd

6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN9 1QG 01732 770998. They are a mobility shop you can go in. They hire a wide range of equipment (not just mobility aids).

Motability

If you get the higher rate of mobility component for Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment then you may be able to lease a specially-adapted new car,

scooter or powered wheelchair through Motability. If you are over 65 and receiving Attendance Allowance then you are not eligible 0845 456 4566 www.motability.co.uk

Buying aids and equipment

You may be able to get some things free-of-charge or at a reduced cost. The best way to do this is to get yourself assessed (see section above). However you may have to wait for an assessment so if it is urgent and you can afford it you may prefer to buy things yourself. You will usually need to buy very small aids or equipment yourself such as kettle tippers, tap turners or dressing aids. These aids are fairly cheap but can make a big difference when carrying out tasks that seem difficult without help. It may be worth shopping around. It may be worth finding out if the price includes maintenance and aftercare. Some shops may also sell second-hand aids and equipment.

Age UK

You can buy some aids and equipment through Age UK Products:

- stairlifts
- walk-in baths and easy-access showers
- personal alarms
- adjustable beds

You can get more information about Age UK products by ringing our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085.

Charity furniture stores

You may be able to buy good-quality second-hand furniture, electrical and household items and sometimes second-hand wheelchairs and scooters. They may be able to deliver free-of-charge if it is nearby. You can get a factsheet on where to find second-hand equipment from the Disabled Living Foundation 0300 999 0004 www.dlf.org.uk

- **Aylesford – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 109 Hall Rd, Aylesford ME20 7RE 01622 715097 www.hokh.org
- **Bat & Ball – Abacus Furniture Project.** Greatness Lane, Bat & Ball TN14 5BQ 01732 743365 abacus@wkha.org.uk www.westkent.org
- **Bessels Green – Hospice in the Weald.** Main Rd TN14 6ED (behind Sevenoaks Garden Centre opposite Dunbrik Recycling Centre just after M25) 01959 562384 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **High Brooms - Hospice in the Weald.** 6 Tunbridge Wells Trade Park, Longfield Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QF 01892 536442 www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Maidstone – Demelza Hospice.** 98 Sandling Rd, Maidstone ME14 2RJ 01622 427885 www.demelza.org.uk
- **Otford – Hospices of Hope.** 11 High St, Otford TN14 5PG 01959 524322 www.hospicesofhope.co.uk
- **Sevenoaks – Hospice in the Weald.** 96 High St TN13 1LP 01732 740300 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Swanley – YMCA.** Nightingale House, Swanley BR8 7AB 01322 662971 www.ymca.org.uk
- **Tonbridge - Hospice in the Weald.** 111 High St, Tonbridge TN9 1DL 01732 360566 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Tonbridge - YMCA.** Tower House, Vale Rise, Tonbridge TN9 1TB 01732 361108 warehouses@westkentymca.org.uk www.westkentymca.org.uk
- **Tunbridge Wells – British Heart Foundation.** 39-45 Grosvenor Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2AW 01892 628600 www.bhf.org.uk
- **West Malling – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 50 High St, West Malling ME19 6QR 01732 870962 www.hokh.org

Disability Equipment Service

- this is a national website where you can buy equipment
- it is free and you don't have to register to use them
- 07845 041678. www.disabilityequipmentservice.co.uk

Disabled Living Centres

Try before you buy, compare prices and read reviews. Disabled Living Foundation 0300 999 0004 www.dlf.org.uk www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

Kent Mobility Ltd

6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN9 1QG 01732 770998 They are a mobility shop you can go in. They offer a wide range of equipment (not just mobility aids).

NRS Healthcare

This is one company offering daily living aids but you should shop around. NRS have a catalogue and you can order by phone, post or online. 0345 121 8111, 0345 606 0911 customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk www.nrshealthcare.co.uk

RICA (Research Institute for Consumer Affairs)

Can help you to compare prices and read reviews. 020 7427 2460 www.rica.org.uk

Sevenoaks Mobility Centre

This is not a shop but a company that can visit you at home, assess your requirements and provide a selection of solutions (with no obligation to purchase). They only offer mobility aids, not other equipment. Contact Paul Davis 01732 448144 info@sevenoaksmobility.co.uk www.sevenoaksmobility.co.uk

Ordinary furniture shops

In some circumstances ordinary furniture shops may also sell equipment such as riser recliner chairs. Argos also sell a lot of equipment

Other online shopping and mail order

There are many other options such as British Red Cross. You can order their Disabled Living Equipment catalogue by phoning 0300 999 0004. Online options include Granny Gets A Grip www.grannygetsagrip.com but you should shop around, won't be able to try it and may have to assemble it.

Paying VAT for people with disabilities

Disabled people do not have to pay VAT when hiring or purchasing equipment designed or adapted to help with daily living. This includes:

- medical and surgical appliances such as TENS machines or oxygen concentrators (but not bandages, plasters or wound dressings)
- leg braces, neck collars, specialist clothing/footwear or wigs
- adjustable beds (but not orthopaedic beds)
- lifting equipment such as stairlifts, hoists or riser-recliner chairs (but not chairs that simply recline)
- commodes, incontinence products or toilet frames
- wheelchairs and some mobility scooters (but not golf buggies)
- tinnitus maskers, induction loops or TV hearing devices (but not hearing aids)
- white canes or magnifiers (but not glasses or contact lenses)
- voice-recognition computers or assistive technology (but not ordinary computers)
- emergency alarm call systems (but not burglar alarms, CCTV or phones)

To qualify for this exemption the equipment must be intended for use by disabled people and must relate to their disability. In addition, there is no VAT payable on the costs of servicing or maintaining disability equipment. Ask whether you can receive this VAT exemption before buying or ordering equipment. The supplier needs to be registered for VAT and they should ask you to sign a form or written statement declaring that you have a chronic illness or disability. You may be able to get it refunded afterwards but it is easier to tell them in advance so that you don't pay it! You can get further advice by visiting www.gov.uk or ringing HMRC on 0300 123 1073. Age UK also produce publications on VAT exemption 0800 169 6565

Repairing and servicing aids and equipment

Kent Mobility Ltd

6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN9 1QG 01732 770998 They are a mobility shop you can go in. They repair and service a wide range of equipment (not just mobility aids).

Designing and adapting aids and equipment

Remap

Charity that can adapt furniture or equipment for disabled people. Can also design and build appropriate equipment where there is nothing suitable on the market (cooking aids, needlework aids, newspaper page turner, pill taking device, caravan steps etc). For example, if you needed a stairlift but your hands were too weak to press the buttons they may be able to create a simple box with levers to make it easier. Office D9, Chaucer Business Park, Kemsing TN15 6YU 01732 760209/866105, 01474 704727
data@remap.org.uk www.remap.org.uk

Designability

This is another possibility for designing aids and equipment 01225 824103
info@designability.org.uk www.designability.org.uk

Donating aids and equipment

Age UK

You may be able to donate some aids and equipment through Age UK's Your Home co-ordinator. Contact James Keast. 07864 959141
jameskeast@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk

Charity furniture stores

You may be able to donate good-quality second-hand furniture, electrical and household items and sometimes wheelchairs and scooters if they have storage space and sufficient demand to stock them. They may be able to collect free-of-charge if it is nearby. They may also do house clearances for a charge

- **Aylesford – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 109 Hall Rd, Aylesford ME20 7RE 01622 715097 www.hokh.org
- **Bat & Ball – Abacus Furniture Project.** Greatness Lane, Bat & Ball TN14 5BQ 01732 743365 abacus@wkha.org.uk www.westkent.org
- **Bessels Green – Hospice in the Weald.** Main Rd TN14 6ED (behind Sevenoaks Garden Centre opposite Dunbrik Recycling Centre just after M25) 01959 562384 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **High Brooms - Hospice in the Weald.** 6 Tunbridge Wells Trade Park, Longfield Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QF 01892 536442 www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk

- **Maidstone – Demelza Hospice.** 98 Sandling Rd, Maidstone ME14 2RJ 01622 427885 www.demelza.org.uk
- **Otford – Hospices of Hope.** 11 High St, Otford TN14 5PG 01959 524322 www.hospicesofhope.co.uk
- **Sevenoaks – Hospice in the Weald.** 96 High St TN13 1LP 01732 740300 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Swanley – YMCA.** Nightingale House, Swanley BR8 7AB 01322 662971 www.ymca.org.uk
- **Tonbridge - Hospice in the Weald.** 111 High St, Tonbridge TN9 1DL 01732 360566 enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Tonbridge - YMCA.** Tower House, Vale Rise, Tonbridge TN9 1TB 01732 361108 warehouses@westkentymca.org.uk www.westkentymca.org.uk
- **Tunbridge Wells – British Heart Foundation.** 39-45 Grosvenor Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2AW 01892 628600 www.bhf.org.uk
- **West Malling – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 50 High St, West Malling ME19 6QR 01732 870962 www.hokh.org

Disability Equipment Service

- this is a national website where you can donate equipment
- if donating, they may be able to collect the item
- it is free and you don't have to register to use them
- 07845 041678 www.disabilityequipmentservice.co.uk

Selling aids and equipment

Disability Equipment Service

- this is a national website
- if selling, you can either post an advert directly on their website or phone them and they will take the details for you
- it is free and you don't have to register to use them
- 07845 041678 www.disabilityequipmentservice.co.uk
- You could also try www.disabledgear.com

Mobility aids

RICA (Research Institute for Consumer Affairs)

Produce a guide called Stepping Out including a checklist of questions to ask before choosing mobility aids such as scooters, walking frames and wheelchairs. 020 7427 2460 www.rica.org.uk

Things that might help

- walking sticks including folding ones and adjustable ones (see below)
- walking frames including walkers, zimmers and rollators (see below)
- wheelchairs (see below)
- mobility scooters (see below)
- stairlifts and stair steady aids (see below)
- crutches
- clothing for wheelchairs and scooters including ponchos, foldable travelling wheelchairs
- extra stair rails and banisters
- external steps
- plastic half-steps

- folding threshold ramps, doorframe ramps, roll-up ramps and channel ramps
- collapsible ramps
- edging strips
- portable seats, stick seats and swivel seats
- light wheelchairs, transit chairs and transport chairs
- pressure care cushions and comfort cushions
- leg lifters
- shopping trolleys with seats and trolleys which help climb steps
- Blue Badge wallets and disabled toilet keys
- replacement carpets (if they are trip hazards and you are on a low income)

Walking sticks, walkers, zimmer frames and rollators

- Walking sticks should be the right size for your height and they should be used on your good side to support your bad side. The ferrule (rubber bit on the end of the stick) should be repaired or replaced if it wears out
- Walking frames (also known as walkers or zimmer frames) are suitable for indoors. They are fairly rigid and either have no wheels or only have wheels attached to the front 2 legs
- Rollators (also known as wheeled walkers) are suitable for outdoors. They have a frame with large wheels, handlebars and a built-in seat so you can sit on them whenever you want a rest. They also often have space for shopping. They fold up and are light-weight yet sturdier than conventional walkers. 4-wheeled ones are more stable than 3-wheeled ones. They are often better outdoors than conventional rigid walking frames with wheels as they can be adjusted to be higher which is better for your posture. They also turn better and the handlebars are equipped with hand brakes that can be lifted or pushed downward to instantly stop the rollator. Good ones cost about £150
- Buckingham Caddies. These are trays to carry plates and mugs which can be attached to your walking frame or rollator. You will need to have a risk assessment.

Wheelchairs

- If your disability is temporary, you can borrow wheelchairs from the British Red Cross. They charge £17.50 per week. The nearest Mobility Aids Centres are:
 - **Maidstone** 01622 758643 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays
 - **Bromley** 0300 456 1914 to arrange delivery on Thursdays
 - **Purley** 0300 456 1914 to arrange collection or delivery on Thursdays
 - **Crawley** 01293 649079 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays
 You may also be able to donate second-hand ones if they are in good condition.
 - If you need a wheelchair most of the time you may be able to get it free or at reduced cost. Ask your GP or another health professional (such as a district nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist) to refer you to the Kent & Medway Wheelchair Service. This is run by Millbrook Healthcare. They may decide to supply a wheelchair directly or they may want to do a face-to-face assessment of your needs at home or in a day centre or clinic. For more info on what to expect, look at: <http://disabilityhorizons.com/2015/03/disability-and-independence-nhs-wheelchair-services/>
- You will usually have to wait 3-6 months; however they will prioritise you if:
- you have a rapidly deteriorating condition (e.g. Motor Neurone Disease)
 - you have received an end-of-life prognosis, i.e. less than 6 months

- you are being discharged from hospital to your own home and provision of a manual wheelchair will enable you to be independently mobile (i.e. self-propel) and reduce or eliminate the need for a care package
- You can also contact Millbrook Healthcare directly 0330 124 4485
kentcontactus@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk
kentandmedwaywcs@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk www.millbrook-healthcare.co.uk/kent-and-medway-wheelchair-service
- If you have a wheelchair but it needs repairs contact the Kent & Medway Wheelchair Service. They are based in Gillingham and Ashford or may be able to carry out repairs in your home. If your wheelchair came from them you will be a priority if:
 - you have pressure ulcers of grade 2 and above (i.e. broken skin)
 - you are falling from it or have breathing difficulties when in it
 0330 124 4485 kentcontactus@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk
kentandmedwaywcs@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk www.millbrook-healthcare.co.uk/kent-and-medway-wheelchair-service
 - You may be able to sell second-hand wheelchairs back to the mobility shop you originally bought them from or donate them to the Red Cross (see above)
 - There are several door-to-door transport schemes which can take you to medical appointments, even at hospitals in London. You can get a complete list by ringing Age UK on 01732 454108 and asking for our local information pack on Transport, Travel & Leisure.
 - It is possible to buy an exercise machine to keep fit as a wheelchair user. Contact Invictus 0800 832 1916 info@invictusactive.com
 - If you get the higher rate of mobility component for Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment then you may be able to lease a powered wheelchair through Motability. If you are over 65 and receiving Attendance Allowance then you are not eligible 0845 456 4566 www.motability.co.uk
 - You can get factsheets on getting a wheelchair into a car and powered wheelchairs from RICA 020 7427 2460 www.rica.org.uk

Mobility scooters

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost if you have complex needs
- Otherwise you will need to buy. One company you could try is Quingo Scooters on 0800 023 2577 but you should shop around
- Some mobility shops may sell second-hand scooters. They may also buy back ones that have been bought originally from them.
- Mobility shops may also be able to repair or service scooters.
- Mobility Trust may be able to provide a grant www.mobilitytrust.org.uk
- If you get the higher rate of mobility component for Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment then you may be able to lease a scooter through Motability. If you are over 65 and receiving Attendance Allowance then you are not eligible 0845 456 4566 www.motability.co.uk
- Contact Disabled Living Foundation 0300 999 0004 www.dlf.org.uk
www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk for details of insurance companies
- Age UK produce publications on mobility scooters 0800 169 6565

Stairlifts

- If you are on a low income you should check to see if you can get a Disabled Facilities Grant.

- Otherwise you need to buy it and you should shop around. One option is that Age UK works with a company called Handicare which can install, recondition and remove stairlifts. They will supply made-to-measure seats and can design for most staircase configurations. Their surveyors will measure the stairs and assess your mobility and health. Stairlifts can also be operated by your carer if it is unsafe for you to do so. They will carry out an initial survey and give you a written quotation. They also offer a 14-day money back guarantee, a 24-hour support line, 2-year warranty with free service and repairs within 24 hours. Prices start from about £2000. To find out more:
 - Ring our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085
 - If they are not available ring Age UK Enterprises on 0800 085 3741
- A cheaper option may be Stairsteady. This is a fixed handrail and a sliding supporting handle that moves freely when pushed but locks in place when weight is applied. It acts as firm support for either climbing or coming down the stairs. The handle is sturdy and secure and lets you have both hands in front of you as you climb or descend the stairs at your own pace. Once you reach the top or bottom the handle folds neatly away 0845 652 8804 www.stairsteady.net
- If you need to repair a stairlift, you should if possible go back to the company you bought it from and who installed it. If this is not possible, here are a couple of companies that may be able to help but you should shop around:
 - Associated Stairlifts – 0800 015 0249
 - Kudos – 0800 152 2400, 0203 326 5841
 - Stairlift Maintenance Services – 07725 021335
- If your hands are too weak to press the buttons, Remap may be able to create a simple box with levers to make it easier. Office D9, Chaucer Business Park, Kemsing TN15 6YU 01732 760209/866105, 01474 704727 data@remap.org.uk www.remap.org.uk

Bath and shower aids

Age UK produce publications on bathing aids 0800 169 6565

Things that might help

- walk-in baths and easy access showers (see below)
- assisted baths and showers (see below)
- steps to get in or out of baths or showers including adjustable ones
- portable shower screens
- slatted bath seats or boards to sit on in baths and showers including ones with handles
- shower stools including ones with handles or adjustable height
- perching stools including ones with arms and backs
- bath seats that swivel
- safety rails and grab rails to grip in baths and bathrooms
- bathlifts including ones with fixed or reclining backrests and covers
- brushes
- long-handled sponges and toe washers
- plugs that prevent flooding and scalding. Safe & Secure Grants may be available
- bathing cushions
- footspas to massage feet
- long-reach or mounted nail clippers

Walk-in baths and easy-access showers

- If you are on a low income you should check to see if you can get a Disabled Facilities Grant.

- Otherwise you need to buy it and you should shop around. One option is that Age UK works with a company called Handicare which sells walk-in baths and easy-access showers. Prices for new bathrooms including a walk-in shower average £4000-8000. To find out more:
 - Ring our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085
 - If they are not available ring Age UK Enterprises on 0800 085 3741

Assisted baths and showers

- In Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, West Malling and Westerham areas, ask Kathy in Independent Living Support at Age UK 01732 454108 if she can put you in touch with anyone who does home bathing
- In Swanley area, Fawkham Day Centre has a wet room which you can hire. Transport available. Run by The Cottage Community (formerly Age Concern Darent Valley) 01322 668106 mandy@thecottagecommunity.org.uk www.racdv.org.uk
- Tonbridge Castle Gateway has a walk-in shower with an electric hoist and full wheelchair access. Anyone can use it. There are no staff to assist you but you can take in your own carers 01732 770929, 844522

Toilet aids including commodes

Things that might help:

- commodes including adjustable ones (see below)
- toilet frames including adjustable ones
- raised toilet seats
- toilet risers
- safety rails which drop down or give support and toilet frames including adjustable ones and ones with seats
- bottles/urinals
- pelvic health aids
- continence pads (many companies sell these and you should shop around)
- pads and protection for chairs and beds
- bottom wipers
- bidet bowls
- bed pans
- disabled toilet keys
- disposable gloves, aprons and commode liners

Commodes

- If your disability is temporary, you can borrow commodes from the British Red Cross. They charge £7 per week. The nearest Mobility Aids Centres are:
 - **Maidstone** 01622 758643 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays
 - **Bromley** 0300 456 1914 to arrange delivery on Thursdays
 - **Purley** 0300 456 1914 to arrange collection or delivery on Thursdays
 - **Crawley** 01293 649079 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

You may also be able to donate second-hand ones if they are in good condition.

Bed, chair and sofa aids

Things that might help

- riser recliner chairs (to help you get in and out of chairs)

- chair raisers or sofa raisers or chairs with high seats
- chairs with arms to help you push up or lower yourself
- orthopaedic chairs (such as chairs with high backs or contoured backs) and massage chairs
- foot rests and leg rests
- bed raisers or supports to help you get in and out of bed
- bed levers
- bed sticks or grab handles or lifting poles to hold onto getting in and out of bed or changing your position in bed
- mattress elevators and orthopaedic mattresses that can raise your upper body or legs while you rest
- turning mattresses to help you turn over
- overbed tables
- adjustable beds and hospital beds
- single divan beds
- support pillows and massage pillows including fleece neck supports and neck massagers
- rests for backs, legs and feet including ones that adjust or fold
- heat pads, heated footplates, hot water bottle covers, overblankets and underblankets
- talking alarms and under pillow alarms
- easy rise cushions
- foam cushions
- lifting seats
- tables that go over chairs or beds including ones that adjust or tilt

Riser-recliner chairs

You can get a guide on choosing chairs and riser-recliners from RICA 020 7427 2460
www.rica.org.uk

Adjustable beds (also called electric beds or profiling beds)

- If you are on a low income you should check to see if you can get a Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Otherwise you need to buy it and you should shop around. One option is that Age UK works with a company called Theraposture Ltd which sells adjustable beds. They cost about £1000-1900. To find out more:
 - Ring our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085
 - If they are not available ring Theraposture Ltd on 0800 032 3482

Dressing and comfort aids

Things that might help

- cushions for back or neck
- foot comfort
- shoe horns, sock or stocking aids and leg lifters to help put things on and take things off
- personal grooming aids
- aids to keep warm
- dressing sticks
- inflatable shampoo basins
- long-handled brushes and combs

- elastic shoe laces to convert lace-up shoes into slip-ons for people who struggle to tie up their shoes

Health and leisure aids

Things that might help

- exercise equipment and pedal exercisers including fitbits to monitor activity, armchair gyms, pedometers, pulse rate monitors
- pain therapy including TENS machines and muscle stimulators
- protection and support aids
- activity aids
- tablet holders and pill boxes
- pill reminders, timers and dispensers
- low blood sugar alarms and blood pressure monitors
- thermal arthritic gloves
- therapeutic putty
- resistive bands
- target games
- large print scrabble
- Android tablet computers for people who are socially isolated including voice-activated ones for people with a visual impairment

Household aids

Things that might help

- tap turners and key turners
- garden tools that are easy to grip, garden stools on wheels, grabbers, kneelers, grab rails, lightweight hoses
- holders
- easy reaching tools and window pulls
- steps
- trolleys, trays and stools
- electric socket raisers
- aprons
- disposable gloves
- ramps
- rails
- handles
- lighting and other sensory aids including magnifying lamps for craftwork or puzzles
- magnifiers including ones which are hands-free, fold, light up or are easy to grip
- easy-to-see wall clocks
- memory loss aids including memory pendants, memo minders
- safety and alarms including mortice locks, door chains, window locks, possibly new front doors
- phones which are easy to use, have big buttons or amplifiers and can block nuisance or cold calls
- pet food bowls which don't involve bending
- tugs to pull plugs out of sockets
- easy TV remote controls, TV sound boosters and preset radios
- book stands, adjustable easels, ergonomic mouse mats and writing aids
- lightweight knitting machines and easy-to-use sewing machines

- aids to help those with memory problems who might forget to close the front door. Safe & Secure Grants may be available
- key safes
- hand grippers to help keep strength in your hands may also be available from TK Maxx and other shops

Kitchen and dining aids

Things that might help

- turners to help you use taps, turn keys or undo jars, automatic can or tin openers, lid openers for bottles and jars
- kettle tippers or lightweight kettles including cordless ones to help you fill or pour and hot cup dispensers
- adapted cutlery, kitchen knives, slicing helpers and ultralight handles if you have a weak grip or limited hand movement
- spreading boards and other food preparation aids
- perching stools including ones with arms and backs
- trolleys
- cooking baskets
- non-slip mats and trays including adjustable bed ones
- clothing protectors
- plate surrounds, sloping plates, dishes and bowls including ones to keep food warm
- feeding beakers with lids, drink covers, one-way straws, regulated flow spouts, cups and mugs including ones with wide bases, insulation, lids or two handles or which are easy to drink

Handyperson services and tradespeople

Handyperson services

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge does not provide a handyperson service. If you live in the Swanley area, try Age UK North West Kent 01474 564898. Otherwise you could consider asking the following for quotes:

Blue

0800 255 0255 helpdesk@trustinblue.com www.trustinblue.com This is a handyperson service provided by retired police officers.

Town & Country Home Improvement Agency

0845 605 7017 infohia@tch.org.uk www.tch.org.uk

- Their handyperson can do small or basic odd jobs around the home that you can't manage (for example putting up shelves, changing washers on taps, mowing the lawn, changing locks and general DIY).
- They do not do any gas or electrical work though they will change a lightbulb for you.
- They may also be able to do basic painting and decoration of walls and woodwork.
- They charge £15 per hour plus materials. A subsidised rate may apply in some areas if you are on a low income. If you have a few small jobs it may be worth waiting to get them all done at once and get your money's worth.
- There may be a waiting list depending on availability of handypersons.

Royal British Legion

0808 802 8080 www.britishlegion.org.uk www.rbl.org.uk Support for veterans, reservists and their families. The Legion have a handyperson team trained to carry out small home

repairs such as fitting smoke alarms or fixing grab rails to help you get around in your home safely.

Social Services

03000 416161 social.services@kent.gov.uk www.kent.gov.uk/adultsocialcare Social Services may be able to directly provide small home adaptations (such as a raised toilet seat or grab rails). They will arrange for things they provide to be fitted.

Repair Café

Volunteers will repair items such as toasters, lamps, hairdryers, clothes, bikes, toys and crockery but you have to take them there

- Monthly Saturdays 10am-1pm St Luke's Church, Eardley Rd, Sevenoaks 07980 168572 sevenoaksrepaircafe@gmail.com
- Monthly Saturdays 10am-1pm St Stephen's Church, Waterloo Rd, Tonbridge www.tonbridgerepaircafe.uk

Tradespeople

See our Housing information pack for finding tradespeople and our Money Matters information pack for problems with traders.

Simple mobile phones

- You can get a factsheet on telephones by ringing Age UK 0800 169 6565
- Some people keep a mobile just for emergency use (sometimes known as "Granny in a Glovebox")
- Some organisations offer easy-to-use mobiles. The simplest mobiles have no screen or keypad. They have simple push buttons (between 2 and 12 buttons for known people and emergency contacts). The buttons can be personalised with photos and calls can be made by pressing on the name or photo. These phones are especially suitable for people with memory problems. One example is OwnFone on 0330 041 7263
- If you want something more complex you could look at Doro easy phones. They offer loud and clear sound, with Hearing Aid Compatibility, for calls you can hear wherever you are, large, separated keys and adjustable font sizes for easy dialling and texting, and a large easy to see display. They can be personalised with photos of family members and a GPS locator can be used if you get lost. You can use the direct dials to programme your favourite contacts and call them at the push of a button, or write and send SMS' and take photos using the direct buttons on the keypad. Some also enable you to access emails, internet browser and Facebook from your phone all in an easy to use manner. These are less suitable for some people with memory problems www.doro.co.uk
- Another company offering a range of phones is Emporia www.emporia.eu
- However you should shop around. The Disabled Living Foundation can give you more information on choosing products for older and disabled people 0300 999 0004

Alarms

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for falls prevention

Getting more information

Personal alarms are sometimes called Lifelines or other things but they all work in a similar way. You can find out more by contacting

- Age UK 0800 169 6565.
- Disabled Living Foundation 0300 999 0004

- Social Services 03000 416161

How alarms work

You wear a showerproof pendant round your neck or on your wrist. If you press the button on your pendant or wristband it triggers an alarm in a 24-hour monitoring centre. An operator will take your call within seconds; no need to dial a number. They will check if you have had a fall, need reassurance or have pressed it by mistake and send help if required. If they can't hear you or if you need help they hold details of emergency contacts such as relatives whom they can contact first if you wish or else they can contact emergency services directly.

There are two different types of alarm and these are explained in more detail below:

- Traditional alarms
- GPS-enabled alarms

Alarms can also be combined with a range of sensors and detectors explained below.

Keysafes and keyholders

Alarm companies may advise you to have a key safe fitted next to the front door so people can get in if there's an emergency. It is best to have a key safe that is approved by police so it is covered by your home insurance. Some companies require you to have a local keyholder but other companies do not.

Getting an alarm free or at reduced cost

Some alarms may be available free or at reduced cost if you have a medical need or are on a low income. If you are not sure, it may be worth finding out first before you buy an alarm so you can explore your options. You will need to ask for a visit at home to assess you and sort out whether you are eligible for financial help. This assessment is free but there may be a long waiting list. You can:

- if you live in Sevenoaks District ask Age UK. If you are on means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit or Housing Benefit then Sevenoaks District Council may pay for installation and the first year of monitoring. Contact James Keast 07864 959141 jameskeast@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
- or ask INVOLVE for a Community Navigator 0300 081 0005 communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk If you live in the Swanley area contact IMAGO 0300 011 1965 navigation@imago.community
- or ask your GP to refer you to a Health & Social Care Co-ordinator.
- or ask Social Services for an Occupational Therapist 03000 416161.

Buying an alarm

Alternatively you can buy an alarm. You will need to pay for both installation and monitoring; these are explained below. Here are some examples of companies offering alarms:

- Taking Care 01634 578085 (if they are not available ring 0800 707 6369). This is a company which works with Age UK but they are not necessarily the best or cheapest; you should shop around
- Welbeing 01323 644422 www.welbeing.org.uk
- Kent Telecare 0800 799 9581 www.kenttelecare.co.uk
- Telecare Choice 0800 635 7000 www.telecarechoice.co.uk
- Helping Hand 020 3868 5575 www.personalalarmwatch.com

Installation

It may be possible to arrange a free demonstration with no obligation. Alarm companies may be able to send an engineer to install it (and fit a key safe at the same time) or if you

prefer they may be able to send you instructions on how to install it yourself (which is cheaper).

Ongoing monitoring

You will need to pay a one-off installation cost and an ongoing monthly cost which covers monitoring and maintenance. There are a range of payment options. Some involve paying more upfront and then less on an ongoing basis. Others involve paying less upfront and then more on an ongoing basis. You may also be eligible for VAT relief if you have a long-term health condition or disability; you should ask the company before buying your alarm.

Traditional alarms

With most of these, a base unit plugs into a phone socket and mains socket. You need a landline though more expensive mobile sim units are possible. You can move freely about your home or potter in your garden provided it is within 150-200 feet of the base unit.

GPS-enabled alarms

These are the next step up from traditional alarms. They are suitable if you go out but are worried about having accidents or have dementia. They can work in the street as well as in the home or garden. They can be worn as a wristwatch or in other ways such as a pendant round the neck, on a bunch of keys, placed in a pocket or bag. Remember to weigh up peace of mind for you or your family against any loss of privacy. They can be helpful if you are in any of the following situations:

- If you need help away from your home. You do not need to be within range of a base unit
- If you are unaware that you need help or do not understand how to raise the alarm. The alarm can be raised in other ways as explained below
- If you need to be located by GPS. Your location can be sent directly to your family's mobile etc
- If you prefer to talk to your family rather than a monitoring centre (the monitoring centre can put you directly through to your family)
- If you get lost somewhere familiar and just want to be reassured
- If you wander out of pre-agreed "safe zones" such as not taking your usual route to the shops. Sends an alert
- If you go out in the middle of the night unexpectedly. Sends an alert if pre-programmed to do so
- Can be secured to your wrist if you are likely to take it off without realising

Sensors and detectors

There are a range of sensors and detectors including medication reminders which can be combined with alarms. For example, checking whether someone has gone to bed or if the bathroom has been used. Pagers can alert other family carers (rather than the monitoring centre) if the main family carer is asleep or in the garden when someone needs help.

There are also recorded messages which will work for people who just need prompting. You can get sensors and detectors from the companies mentioned above.

- **Fall detectors.** Worn on the wrist or neck and can detect a fall. Ideal if you are frail or black out. Also if you would be unaware you needed to press a button or needed help. Can also detect slips and trips
- **Bed and chair sensors.** Sends an alert if you don't go to bed or get up by a certain time or if you've got up and not returned to a bed or chair possibly due to a fall or forgetting. Pressure mats can detect if you are by the front door or have become inactive for some reason
- **Property exit sensors.** Helpful if you get confused and go out unexpectedly, especially at night. Sends an alert if you open a door at an unspecified time or

forget to lock the front door. Monitors if you are moving around normally, whether your carer has visited and how long they stayed. They will make sure you're OK and if concerned, they will notify a family member or carer.

- **Temperature extreme sensors.** Detects extreme rise or fall in temperature such as a forgotten boiling saucepan, if you have left your door open and whether your home is too hot or too cold. The monitoring centre will advise you on a suitable course of action
- **Smoke detectors.** Sounds an alarm and calls the monitoring centre automatically. They will check with you whether they need to contact the Fire Service for you. Heat detectors can be used in kitchens and bathrooms
- **Flood detectors.** Gives early warning of potential floods near sinks, baths and toilets by sounding an alarm and calling the monitoring centre. There are also magi-plugs which release water when it gets to a certain level and change colour if too hot or cold
- **Carbon monoxide detectors.** Sounds an alarm and calls the monitoring centre automatically. They will speak with you and advise you to leave or not enter the property. They will also contact Transco (gas company) for you. Gas detectors will send an alert if cookers and fires have been left on but not ignited
- **Movement sensors.** Can turn lamps on if you get up or detect if you have gone to hazardous areas or have become inactive for some reason
- **Medication dispensers.** Sends you a visual and audible alert when medication needs to be taken. If time slots are missed, an alert is sent to the monitoring centre who will contact you
- **Bogus caller alarms.** Usually wall mounted by your front door so you can send a discreet and silent alert to the monitoring centre if you feel threatened or uneasy with a visitor
- **Door contacts.** Can be attached to cupboards or domestic appliances to monitor activity, such as whether you're eating or following hygiene routines on a regular basis
- **Epilepsy sensors.** Bed sensors which monitor heart rate and breathing patterns to detect epileptic seizures

Other home monitoring systems

- Another company which offers a home monitoring system using sensors is Textcare 01245 324968 enquiries@textcare.co.uk www.textcare.co.uk
- Apple Home allows Apple devices to control home settings remotely including thermostats, radiators, motion detectors, lights, doors, windows, cameras etc. www.apple.com
- Philips and Samsung have similar equipment to use with smartphones.
- British Gas offer The Hive which allows family members to switch on heating remotely if it suddenly gets cold or someone switches it off.

Other ways of making sure people are OK

Kent Carers' Emergency Card

This is a card which carers can carry so if you have an accident or become ill, people can contact Kent County Council on a 24-hour emergency contact number to activate a pre-arranged emergency plan to ensure the person you are caring for continues to be looked after. You can get it from INVOLVE 0300 081 0005

communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk If you live in the Swanley area you can get it from IMAGO 0300 011 1965 navigation@imago.community These charities may also be able to provide other support for carers

- **Information, advice and guidance** for carers

- **Support groups** for carers. Include older carers, young carers, mental health, eating disorders, Multiple Sclerosis and learning disabilities. They may be able to accompany carers to support groups
- **Carers' assessments** to see what help might be available. If you are looking after someone it may be quicker to get a free carer's assessment from INVOLVE 0300 081 0005 communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk www.involvekent.org.uk If you live in Swanley contact IMAGO 0300 011 1965 hello@imago.community www.imago.community

Shop Safe, Stay Safe

Sevenoaks District residents can register with the scheme to provide details of a family member, friend or carer to contact in an emergency. You are given a keyring with a code. If you need help, shops who have signed up to the scheme can ring Sevenoaks District Council with the code and they will ring the emergency contacts. It is free. To sign up contact Sevenoaks District Council 01732 227000 community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Identity Cards

It may be a good idea for you to carry an identity card explaining that you are vulnerable. This can help if you have an accident, or are unsure of where you are as the card can provide details of emergency contacts. This information could be sewn into a jacket or handbag so that it's not easily removed. Available from Admiral Nursing Direct 0800 888 6678

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

Can sniff and tell you if you have diabetes and need to have an injection or eat sugary food, if you have an allergy and there are airborne allergens in your environment or if you have Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (a heart condition) and are about to have a blackout. Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 0NP 01296 655888 operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

MedicAlert

Provide identification bracelets engraved with details of your condition, an ID number and a 24-hour emergency phone number 01908 951045 www.medicalert.org.uk

Contact 4 Me

This is another system with an ID card or bracelet. This enables the police and other concerned people to find out key contact numbers including family, friends and GP 0870 389 2299 www.contact4me.com

Keep in Touch (KIT) wristbands

These are mobile phones that look like wristwatches. They have GPS positioning and tracking and an emergency button that if pressed will call a nominated carer. info@kmscaretech.com www.kitwristband.com

Good Day Calls

- You will receive a morning call of about 15 minutes at a regular time. We will make sure you are well and have a friendly chat to start the day
- It costs £50 for 4-7 calls per week or £35 for 1-3 calls per week
- If we are unable to get through after 2 further attempts we will phone a named contact to check everything is OK. If we are still unable to make contact we will call other services as appropriate.
- We are there to provide reassurance for you and to stop families worrying

- If you are interested ring Age UK Medway on 01634 578085 and ask for Good Day Calls

Lifebook

This enables you to record all sorts of useful details which will not only help you to be more organised but could also be invaluable to a family member or a friend if they need to locate important information about you in an emergency. You simply follow the step-by-step instructions to fill in the various sections with your details, contacts and locations of important documents. The life contacts section deals with recording details of your insurance policies, banks, credit cards and other financial arrangements. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK 0800 678 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Care at home and support for carers

See our Care Agencies information pack for:

- Assessing and paying for your care needs
- Emergencies
- End-of-life care
- Respite care (short breaks for family carers)
- Support for family carers

Home safety and security

See our Housing information pack for

- Anti-social behaviour
- Bad weather and heavy snow
- Fire safety
- Home safety
- Power cuts, gas and water interruptions

Scams

See our Money Matters information pack for information on scams

Index

- Adapting your home, 18, 25
- Advice, 13, 18
- Advocacy, 5
- Aids, 18
- Alarms, 34
- Anti-social behaviour, 39
- Appointments, 10
- Assessments, 19
- Assisted baths and showers, 30
- Audiologists, 5
- Bad weather, 39
- Baths, 5, 29
- Bedroom release schemes, 20
- Beds, 9, 30, 36
- Befrienders, 5
- Bills, 5
- Bogus caller alarms, 37
- Boilers, 11, 21, 22
- Bulk waste collections, 12
- Buying aids and equipment, 23
- Carbon monoxide detectors, 37
- Care at home, 39
- Care needs assessments, 39
- Carers' support, 39
- Chair & sofa aids, 30
- Charity shops, 12, 23, 25
- Chemists, 16
- Chiropodists, 7
- Comfort aids, 31
- Commodors, 30
- Companionship, 6
- Computer problems, 6
- Cooking, 14
- Correspondence, 5
- Counselling, 6
- De-cluttering, 6, 21
- Deep cleans, 21
- Dentists, 6
- Designing aids and equipment, 25
- Dining aids, 33
- Disabled Facilities Grants, 21
- Discretionary Grants, 22
- Donating aids and equipment, 25
- Door contacts, 37
- Door-to-door transport, 27
- Dosset boxes, 16
- Downsizing, 20
- Dressing aids, 31
- Eating and drinking, 14
- Eating and drinking assistance, 15
- Electrical dangers, 22
- Emergencies, 37
- Emergency care, 39
- End-of-life care, 39
- Energy saving, 20
- Environmental Home Assessments, 19
- Epilepsy sensors, 37
- Equipment, 18
- Falls, 34, 36
- Family carers, 39
- Fingernail cutting, 7
- Fire safety, 39
- Flood detectors, 37
- Floor repairs, 21
- Food preparation, 14
- Forms, 6
- Furniture stores, 12, 23, 24, 25
- Gardening, 8
- Gas interruptions, 39
- GPS alarms, 36
- Grants, 21
- Hairdressers, 10
- Handyperson services, 9, 33
- Health aids, 31
- Health conditions, 9
- Healthy eating, 14
- Hearing loss, 5, 11
- Heating, 11, 22
- Heavy snow, 39
- Help outside home, 5
- Hiring aids and equipment, 22
- Hoarding, 11
- Home Improvement Grants, 20
- Home library, 11
- Home safety, 37, 39
- Home security, 39
- Homesharing, 18
- Hospitals, 9, 10, 17, 21
- Hot water, 22
- House clearance, 12
- Household aids, 32
- Housework, 13
- Housing, 20, 22
- Hypnotherapy, 13
- Identity cards, 38
- Illness, 9
- Information, 13, 18
- Installing alarms, 35
- Keyholders, 35
- Keysafes, 21, 35
- Kitchen aids, 33
- Laundry, 13

Leisure aids, 31
 Library services, 11
 Mail order, 24
 Manicures, 7
 Massage, 14
 Meals, 14
 Medical condition alerts, 15
 Medication, 16, 37, 38
 Mobile phones, 34
 Mobility, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28
 Monitoring alarms, 35
 Movement sensors, 37
 Moving furniture, 10, 16, 17, 21
 Moving home, 17
 Occupational therapy, 19
 Online shopping, 24
 Opticians, 17
 Paperwork, 5
 Paying for aids and equipment, 24
 Paying for care, 39
 Pest control, 17
 Pets, 17
 Phones, 34
 Podiatrists, 7
 Power cuts, 39
 Prescriptions, 16
 Property exit sensors, 36
 Radiator reflectors, 20
 Ramps, 21
 Ready meals, 14
 Reflexology, 17
 Removals, 17
 Repairs, 10, 17, 21, 25, 34
 Respite care, 39
 Riser-recliner chairs, 31
 Rollators, 27
 Roof leaks, 22
 Rubbish removal, 12
 Safe & Secure Grants, 21
 Safety, 21, 39
 Scams, 39
 Scooters, 28
 Security, 21, 39
 Selling aids and equipment, 26
 Sensors, 36
 Servicing aids and equipment, 25
 Shopping, 17, 38
 Short breaks for carers, 39
 Showers, 5, 21, 29
 Sight loss, 11, 17
 Slow cookers, 20
 Smoke alarms, 37
 Snow, 39
 Social housing, 20
 Stair repairs, 21
 Stairlifts, 21, 28
 Step repairs, 21
 Talking things through, 6
 Temperature extreme sensors, 37
 Toenail cutting, 7
 Toilet aids, 30
 Tradespeople, 34
 VAT, 24
 Walkers, 27
 Walk-in/easy access baths/showers, 29
 Walking sticks, 27
 Waste collections, 12
 Water interruptions, 39
 Weight management, 14
 Wheelchairs, 27
 Zimmer frames, 27

This list is for information purposes only and Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge can accept no responsibility for any problems that may occur with any of these service providers