

Health and wellbeing in Sevenoaks District

Amended June 2022

This local information pack covers:

- information and advice about health and wellbeing
- **a list of support organisations for different conditions and illnesses**
- finding and using health services
- healthy eating and losing weight
- keeping fit
- looking after your mind and body
- families, relationships and peace-of-mind

Details are subject to change, please check with the organisation concerned. Amendments and additions are also welcome. If you cannot find what you are looking for:

- please ask Age UK if we can help further
- or search the Health Help Now website with details of local services for common conditions. www.healthhelpnow-nhs.net
- or contact Healthwatch Tel: 0808 801 0102 Email: info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

We publish other local information packs covering:

- Care agencies
- Care homes
- Help at home
- 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
Tel: 01732 454108. Web: www.ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk

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Information and advice

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

Free information and advice

- Old Meeting House, 5 St John's Rd, Sevenoaks TN13 3LR
- Tel: 01732 454108 (open Mon-Fri 9am-4pm) Fax: 01732 450791
- Email: office@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
- Web: www.ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
- Age UK produce publications on help with bladder & bowel problems, continence, healthy living, keeping warm in winter and staying cool in a heatwave
- Ask Age UK if there is a support organisation for your condition or illness

Independent Age

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

Email: advice@independentage.org Web: www.independentage.org

- Free telephone and email service offering advice on benefits, care and social activities
- Free handbooks and advice guides: Your Health & the NHS explains what your rights are and where to go to get your health needs met

Livability

Christian disability charity (formerly John Grooms & Shaftesbury Society) offering a range of services

50 Scrutton St, London EC2A 4XQ Tel: 020 7452 2000 Fax: 020 7452 2001

Email: info@livability.org.uk Web: www.livability.org.uk

NHS Choices

National NHS website. Web: www.nhs.uk

Police

Non-emergency advice Tel: 101. Emergency Tel: 999. Web: www.kent.police.uk

Silver Line

A free, confidential helpline offering information, friendship and advice to older people 24 hours a day, every day. Tel: 0800 470 8090 Web: www.thesilverline.org.uk

Social Services

Free assessments for those who have care and support needs. The assessment is a discussion between the client (or the person you look after) and a trained person either from the council or another organisation that the council works with. They talk about the situation and what changes could be made to find out how needs could be met. Tel: 03000 416161 Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk

If you are looking after someone it may be quicker to get a free carer's assessment from INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk Web: www.involvekent.org.uk

If you live in Swanley contact IMAGO Tel: 0300 011 1965 Email: hello@imago.community Web: www.imago.community

Benefits and help with health costs

Attendance Allowance and Personal Independence Payment

Health benefits are not means-tested. In other words they do not depend on your savings or income. Instead they depend on whether you are having any difficulties or struggling

with anything because of your health. For example, does anything give you pain or make you breathless or take longer than it used to? Or do you need reminding or prompting to do anything? It could be because of eyesight, hearing or memory problems; not just physical or mental health problems. The main health benefits are:

- Attendance Allowance if you start having difficulties after they turn 65
- Personal Independence Payment if you start having difficulties under 65

There are different rates depending on the level of difficulties, for example whether you are having difficulties at night as well as during the day. For further information and help filling in forms:

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

Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment

- If you started having difficulties before 8 April 2013 you may be on a previous benefit called Disability Living Allowance.
- If you were 65 before 8 April 2013 you will continue on DLA.
 - If your care needs change it may be worth asking for an increase. You will need to fill in further DLA forms and it will be reviewed but you will not have to attend an assessment.
 - However if your mobility needs change, it can only be increased if your mobility deteriorated before you were 65.
- If you were under 65 before 8 April 2013, DLA is being phased out and you will be asked at some point to re-apply for Personal Independence Payment instead (either randomly if your DLA was awarded indefinitely or when your DLA runs out if it was only awarded temporarily).
 - If your needs have changed you could ask for an increase. However this is risky as PIP rules are stricter than DLA rules and you will be immediately re-assessed.
- If you are under 65 and never received DLA you will need to apply for PIP.
 - However if you are turned down you can apply for Attendance Allowance after you turn 65.
- If you are over 65 but applied for PIP before you turned 65 and your needs change after you are 65:
 - You can apply for an increase in the daily living component if you already get it
 - However you cannot apply for an increase in the mobility component if you already get it.
 - If you only receive the mobility component and develop care needs, you can apply for the daily living component.
 - However if you only receive the daily living component and develop mobility needs, you cannot apply for the mobility component.

Help with health costs

Are you entitled?

- Prescriptions and NHS sight tests are free if you are over 60 (or in certain other circumstances)
- You may be able to get free dental treatment if you get Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (or subsidised dental treatment in certain other circumstances)

- You may be able to get help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses if you get Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (or in certain other circumstances)
- You may be able to get help with travel costs if you get Pension Credit Guarantee Credit (or in certain other circumstances)

Do you automatically qualify?

If you are getting Pension Credit Guarantee Credit to top up your pension then you may automatically qualify for help with health costs. Just show the letter confirming that you receive Pension Credit Guarantee Credit. You should not need to fill in any further forms. For example, opticians should offer you a free NHS eye test and a voucher for glasses; in some cases this may cover the whole cost of glasses but in other cases you may have to pay something towards them.

Can you still apply even if you don't automatically qualify?

Attendance Allowance, Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance do not count but you may still get some help through the NHS Low Income Scheme. This scheme provides help for people on low incomes but who are above Universal Credit (Income Support) level. Anyone may make a claim.

How they work it out

Your entitlement to help through the Low Income Scheme is worked out by comparing your income with your needs. Your needs include a personal allowance for day-to-day living expenses, premiums for special circumstances, housing costs (for example, rent or mortgage payments, including capital repayments – the repayment which covers the main amount borrowed not the interest) and council tax. If you have a partner, their income, savings, property, and needs, are counted with yours. A partner is a person you live with as part of a couple of the same or opposite sex, whether or not you are married or have a civil partnership. If you have capital (savings, or the value of a property you don't live in) which is more than £16,000, or £23,250 for people who live permanently in a care home, you cannot get any help through the NHS Low Income Scheme.

Getting hold of the form

You need to ask for an HC1 claim form which you can get from a Jobcentre Plus office or NHS hospital. Your GP, dentist or optician may have copies as well. Or, you can phone 0300 123 0849 and ask for HC1 help with health costs form. Or you can ask for a form by sending an email to: nhsforms@spsl.uk.com

Help filling in the form

Fill in the HC1 and send it off in the envelope that comes with it. The claim form may ask you to send in evidence of your income. If you need any help filling in the form:

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

How it works

If you qualify for help, you will be sent a Health Costs certificate (HC2) for full help or an NHS certificate (HC3) for partial help. The certificate will tell you who it covers, what help it provides and how long it lasts. If your circumstances change for the better, you do not need to report it, or return your certificate. If your circumstances change for the worse, you should make another claim.

When you go for treatment, tell the hospital (or place where you are being treated) that you are eligible for help with health costs. If your place of treatment issues payments, you will be able to claim your money back during your visit. They will ask you to show proof of your entitlement, such as your Pension Credit letter or your Health Costs certificate. You will need to keep any tickets or receipts you have as proof of the cost. If your place of treatment does not issue payments (for example, a GP practice or dental surgery where you have been referred for specialist treatment), you will need to claim back your expenses using claim form HC5(T). You can print a copy of the form from www.nhs.uk/healthcosts or order one by phoning 0300 123 0849.

Further information

If you are not sure what health costs you can get help with, ask the hospital, your local NHS Clinical Commissioning Group or the person who refers you. Do this before you pay for things. For more information, go to www.dh.gov.uk and use the search facility to look up help with health costs.

Paying VAT for people with disabilities

Disabled people do not have to pay VAT when purchasing or hiring 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

Conditions and illnesses

See our Help at Home information sheet for getting back on your feet after illness and medical condition alerts

See our Memory Loss information pack for Dementia and Memory loss

Alcohol misuse

Alcoholics Anonymous

Meet Thursdays 8pm at Bridges Centre, 40 High St, Edenbridge TN8 5AJ. Web: www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

CGL (West Kent Drug & Alcohol Wellbeing Service)

Charity that offers a pathway to recovery for adults challenged by the use of drugs or alcohol. Provide a range of intensive support, treatment and rehab services. Also support family and friends. Tel: 0844 225 0652 Web: www.westkentrecovery.org.uk

One You

Tel: 0300 123 1220 Email: oneyou.kent@nhs.net

Web: www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk

Lifestyle advisers can support you with alcohol misuse. They can offer you 6 free confidential sessions where you can discuss the changes you want to make and they can support you to set achievable goals on how to reach them.

Kent County Council Alcohol & Drug Support

Provide effective and accessible preventative information, treatment, support and recovery services. Web: www.kent.gov.uk

Kenward Trust

Provides personalised therapeutic intervention and one-to-one support for drug and alcohol dependence. Tel: 01622 814187 Email: enquiry@kenwardtrust.org.uk Web: www.kenwardtrust.org.uk

Rehab 4 Alcoholism

Helpline aiming to stop addiction before it becomes too late. Tel: 0800 111 4108 Web: www.rehab4alcoholism.com

West Kent Recovery Service

Mill House, Mill St, Maidstone ME15 6XH Tel: 01622 690944

Allergies

See also our Help at Home information sheet for other medical condition alerts.

MedicAlert

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

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

Can sniff and tell you if there are airborne allergens in your environment. Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 0NP Tel: 01296 655888 Email: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk
Web: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Arthritis including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis

There are 200 types of arthritis which is a musculo-skeletal condition. The 2 main types are osteoarthritis ("wear & tear") and rheumatoid arthritis (inflammatory)

Arthritis Action

56 Buckingham Gate, London SW1E 6AE Tel: 020 3781 7120 Email: info@arthritisation.org.uk Web: www.arthritisation.org.uk

Hands-on help to combat arthritis pain through self-management and lifestyle reducing the need for medical intervention. For a membership fee of £15-20 per year (£100 for life) you get:

- one-to-one nutritional consultations with their registered dietitian covering healthy eating and weight management
- two annual subsidised clinical support sessions with access to osteopathy, physiotherapy and acupuncture
- self-management events to help you take control of your arthritis
- local arthritis groups to reduce isolation, share experiences and tips on reducing pain and managing arthritis

Arthritis Care

Free information and support. Also offers free advice on managing symptoms, events about living with arthritis and local groups Tel: 0808 800 4050 Email: services@arthritiscare.org.uk

Arthritis Research Campaign

Campaign to prevent onset, develop a cure and transform lives of those with arthritis. Contact Mrs M Roffey, Hernewood Cottage, Gracious Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 1TJ Tel: 01732 454862

Autism

Kent Autistic Trust Tel: 01634 405168 Web: www.kentautistic.com
Support groups, care homes, supported living, day centres, respite care, family support.

Bladder and bowel problems

- You can get an information guide on bladder and bowel problems by ringing Age UK on 0800 169 6565
- Support is available from the Bladder & Bowel Foundation Tel: 0845 345 0165 Web: www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org
- The National Key Scheme (NKS) offers disabled people independent access to locked public toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with National Key Scheme (NKS) locks can now be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafés, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in most parts of the country. You can order a key from Disability Rights UK (formerly RADAR - the Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation) Tel: 020 7250 8191 Web: www.disabilityrightsuk.org
You can also order it through other suppliers such as online through Amazon or you may be able to get it from Peabody Home Improvement Agency Tel: 0800 028 3172. However if you order it from Disability Rights UK, you can also get a list of where the toilets are in your area.
- Kent Continence Service can provide treatment Tel: 0300 790 0310

Things that might help:

- commodes including adjustable ones (see below)
- toilet frames including adjustable ones (see below)
- 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
- pads and protection for chairs and beds
- bottom wipers
- bidet bowls
- bed pans
- disposable gloves, aprons and commode liners

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost.
 - Phone Social Services on 03000 416161 and ask for an Occupational Therapist to visit you.
 - It may be quicker to contact the Your Home co-ordinator. They may be able to help you get raised toilet seats, toilet frames, commodes and other toilet aids. Contact James Keast. Tel: 07864 959141 Email: jameskeast@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
 - You may also be able to get a commode through your GP or District Nurse
 - You can also ask if Community Navigators can help you get toilet rails. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk If you live in the Swanley area contact IMAGO Tel: 0300 011 1965 Email: navigation@imago.community
- You can also buy them if you prefer. The Disabled Living Foundation can give you more information on choosing products for older and disabled people. Tel: 0300 999 0004. You can also get a factsheet on disability equipment by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565. It may be worth shopping around. There are many organisations which offer continence pads and other products including Kent Mobility Ltd. 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998. Also offer hire, repairs and servicing
- If your disability is temporary you can borrow commodes from the British Red Cross. They charge £7 per week for a commode. The nearest are:
 - **Maidstone.** Tel: 01622 758643 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays
 - **Bromley.** Tel: 0300 456 1914 to arrange delivery on Thursdays
 - **Purley.** Tel: 0300 456 1914 to arrange collection or delivery on Thursdays
 - **Crawley.** Tel: 01293 649079 to arrange collection or delivery on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays
- You may also be able to get continence pads from Kent Continence Product Delivery Service Tel: 0300 123 1955
- If you need to go to the toilet more often or can't wait due to cancer treatment you can get a Toilet Card which you can show staff in shops, offices, cafes, pubs etc to allow you to use their toilets without them asking awkward questions. You can get it from Macmillan Cancer Support Tel: 0808 808 0000 Web: www.macmillan.org.uk

Breathing problems including chest infections

Air Alert

Free service which sends a message by phone, text or email to people with respiratory problems warning that high air pollution is forecast for the next day. Tel: 01732 227000 Web: www.airalert.info/kent

Asbestos Justice

Oliver & Co Solicitors Ltd, Douglas House, 117 Foregate St, Chester CH1 1HE
Tel: 0800 038 6767 Email: helena.cameron@oliverandco.co.uk
Web: www.asbestosjustice.co.uk

Legal advice, benefits guidance and practical support for anyone with a persistent cough, breathing difficulties, tiredness or unexplained weight loss who may have been exposed to asbestos. For example former tradespeople such as electricians, joiners, carpenters, plumbers and heating engineers.

Breathe Easy local support groups

- Maidstone Group Tel: 01622 664943
- Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks & Tonbridge Group Tel: 01892 823736

British Lung Foundation

Support and advice for anyone living with a lung condition Tel: 03000 030555

Chemists

Your local chemist (for example, Boots) may be able to provide support for people with asthma etc. Ask your chemist what services they offer.

Mesothelioma & Asbestosis support group. Community Centre, Cramptons Rd, Bat & Ball. Monthly meetings

West Kent Pulmonary Fibrosis Support Group

Meets Tuesday 2-4pm every 2 months at Elim Christian Centre, Cherry Avenue, Swanley BR8 7DX. Contact Dee Tel: 07775 616769 Email: deebryan@me.com or Roger Tel: 07470 201703 Email: roger.bryan@me.com

Cancer

Bowel Cancer UK

Tel: 0800 840 3540 Web: www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk

Brain Tumour Charity

Support for carers and patients. Contact Olwen O'Dowd Tel: 01634 263622 Email: mum144@outlook.com Web: www.thebraintumourcharity.org

Brains Trust (brain cancer)

4 Yvery Court, Castle Rd, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 7QG
Email: hello@brainstrust.org.uk Web: www.brainstrust.org.uk

Breast Cancer Care

National helpline: 0808 800 6000

Local support group meets Tuesdays 10.30am-12.30pm at House in the Basement café behind Stag Theatre, London Rd, Sevenoaks

Cancer Research UK

Working to help prevent cancer, diagnose it earlier, develop new treatments and make current treatments more effective. Helpline Tel: 0808 800 4040. Information Line Tel: 0300 123 1865. Also local group based in Sevenoaks.

Chemists

Your local chemist (for example, Boots) may be able to provide support for people with cancer. Ask your chemist what services they offer.

Crossroads Care Kent

170 Tonbridge Rd, Waterringbury ME18 5NS
Tel: 0345 095 6701, 01622 817114 Email: enquiries@crossroadskent.org Web:
www.carerskm.org

The Carers Health Appointment Service will look after the person being cared for during the day while you have treatment such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy. No waiting list. Available whenever you need it

Leukaemia Research Fund (Sevenoaks Branch)

Publishes booklets on leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and other blood cancers. Contact Mrs Maureen Wilson-Wright, 7 Middlings Rise, Sevenoaks TN13 2NS Tel: 01732 457594

Macmillan Cancer Support

89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ Helpline: 0808 808 0000 Web:
www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support can help in various ways. Macmillan Nurses are well-known for providing nursing support. You can also contact them for other practical support. One example is a Toilet Card if you need to go to the toilet more often or can't wait due to cancer treatment; you can show it to staff in shops, offices, cafes, pubs etc to allow you to use their toilets without them asking awkward questions.

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). Trained volunteers can offer:

- Support getting to and from hospital
- Someone to accompany people to medical appointments
- Someone to talk to about cancer
- Counselling for carers of people with cancer
- Information & guidance on cancer
- Practical help around the home or garden including light housework
- Help with form-filling
- Help collecting prescriptions or picking up shopping or taking out shopping
- Playing board games & companionship
- Respite breaks for family carers

Run by Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers in partnership with Crossroads. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Waterringbury ME18 5NS
Tel: 0345 095 6701 Email: enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Myeloma UK

22 Logie Mill, Beaverbank Business Park, Edinburgh EH7 4HG Tel: 0131 557 3332
Email: myelomauk@myeloma.org.uk Web: www.myeloma.org.uk

Research

Research is ongoing into whether Bio Detection Dogs can detect early signs of breast and prostate cancer. More information from Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 0NP Tel:01296 655888 Email: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk Web:
www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Cerebral palsy

Cerebralpalsy.org.uk

Email: info@cerebralpalsy.org.uk Web: www.cerebralpalsy.org.uk

Neuro Rehab Kent Ltd

Contact Elissa Tel: 01732 357943 or Jane Tel: 01732 451352 Email:

info@neurorehabkent.com Web: www.neurorehabkent.co.uk

Private physiotherapists who specialise in neurological conditions. Also run small group sessions for people living with MS, Parkinson's and other neurological conditions. Can provide physiotherapy in your own home, at Springbank Clinic in Sevenoaks or at Tonbridge Clinic or at your local gym. Can show your family or carers how to help you with exercises. You can find other private physiotherapists who specialise in MS by contacting the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk

Scope DIAL UK

- 6 Market Rd, London N7 9PW Tel: 0808 800 3333 (open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
- Email: dialuk@scope.org.uk Web: www.scope.org.uk
- For people with cerebral palsy

Diabetes

See Sight Loss (below) for Diabetic Retinopathy

Chemists

Your local chemist (for example, Boots) may be able to provide support for people with diabetes. Ask your chemist what services they offer.

Chiropodists and podiatrists

If you are diabetic, your feet are at risk. Neuropathy (nerve damage) means that you are less likely to feel injury or pain, circulation is impaired and any wounds can heal poorly leading to infection. Your GP may be able to refer you to a free NHS service. There is a weekly foot clinic for diabetics at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

Diabetes UK Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Sevenoaks Group

Help and support primarily through group meetings to provide a safe and social forum to discuss managing diabetes. 12 Chaffinch Way, Paddock Wood TN12 6XL Email:

diabetesuktunbridgewellsarea@gmail.com

Web: www.tunbridge-wells-area.diabetesukgroup.org

Contact Judith Strutt Tel: 01732 720148, 01732 447055

National helpline Tel: 0345 123 2399, 0845 120 2960 Email: careline@diabetes.org.uk

Web: www.diabetes.org.uk

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

Can sniff and tell you if you need to have an injection or eat sugary food. Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 0NP Tel: 01296 655888 Email: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk Web: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Drug misuse

CGL (West Kent Drug & Alcohol Wellbeing Service)

Charity that offers a pathway to recovery for adults challenged by the use of drugs or alcohol. Provide a range of intensive support, treatment and rehab services. Also support family and friends. Tel: 0844 225 0652 Web: www.westkentrecovery.org.uk

Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT)

Provides information and advice about mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services Tel: 0300 222 0123. Web: www.kmpt.nhs.uk

Kent County Council Alcohol & Drug Support

Provide effective and accessible preventative information, treatment, support and recovery services. Web: www.kent.gov.uk

Kenward Trust

Provides personalised therapeutic intervention and one-to-one support for drug and alcohol dependence. Tel: 01622 814187 Email: enquiry@kenwardtrust.org.uk Web: www.kenwardtrust.org.uk

One You

Tel: 0300 123 1220 Email: oneyou.kent@nhs.net
Web: www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk

One You lifestyle advisers can support you with drug misuse. They can offer you 6 free confidential sessions where you can discuss the changes you want to make and they can support you to set achievable goals on how to reach them.

West Kent Recovery Service

Mill House, Mill St, Maidstone ME15 6XH Tel: 01622 690944

Dyslexia

West Kent Dyslexia Association

Contact Sally Candlin (Helpline) Tel: 01732 832203 Web: www.kentwestdyslexia.org.uk

Epilepsy

Epilepsy Action (previously British Epilepsy Association)

New Anstey House, Gateway Drive, Yeadon, Leeds LS19 7XY
Helpline: 0808 800 5050 Textphone: 07537 410044 Email: helpline@epilepsy.org.uk

Easylink

There are many companies which use assistive technology to aid independent living such as epilepsy alarms etc. One example is Easylink, 3 Melbourne House, Corby Gate Business Park, Priors Haw Rd, Corby NN17 5JG Tel: 01536 264869 Email: sales@easylinkuk.co.uk Web: www.easylinkuk.co.uk

Welbeing

You may be able to get epilepsy sensors from Welbeing Tel: 01323 644422 Web: www.welbeing.org.uk

Flu

Your local chemist (for example, Boots) can provide flu jabs.

Hearing loss including deafness

See also our Help at Home information pack for fire prevention, home-visiting audiologists, home assessments and equipment, home library services, home safety visits etc. You can get an information guide to NHS hearing services by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565

Wax removal and other private services

A few GPs may still offer wax removal through the NHS but there is likely to be a long waiting list (3 months or more). Most will suggest you get it done privately. Sevenoaks Hearing (01732 741486), Sevenoaks Medical Centre (0800 028 6179), Springbank Clinic in Sevenoaks (01732 453956) and Spire in Fordcombe (01892 621828) offer it. Specsavers in Sevenoaks (01732 459588) and Swanley (01322 616465), Leslie Warren (01732 452135), Wilkinsons (01732 806157) and other opticians may also offer it. You should shop around as prices may vary widely.

Do you need a hearing test?

If you think you may have a hearing problem (or are over 65 and have not had a hearing test for 2 years) you should see an audiologist for a hearing test.

How to get a hearing test and hearing aids

There are many ways to get a hearing test and hearing aids

- RNID (formerly Royal National Institute for the Deaf/Action on Hearing Loss)
 - Free phone-based or online hearing check
 - Freephone 0808 808 0123 Email: information@rnid.org.uk Web: www.rnid.org.uk
- Your GP
 - Free short hearing test
 - Your GP will refer you to a hospital or optician that has a contract with the NHS eg Boots, Specsavers etc
 - Appointments tend to last 45 minutes including both the hearing test and fitting hearing aids
 - NHS hearing aids depend on funding so you may be prescribed one aid rather than two aids.
- Other organisations
 - Other organisations also offer hearing aids so it may be worth shopping around
 - Many opticians can also arrange hearing tests privately in their shop or at home eg Specsavers
 - Some organisations offer more in-depth hearing tests which may be more suitable for people with memory loss or dementia as hearing loss can also affect understanding
- The British Legion may be able to pay for private hearing aids or any other equipment/help if you have been in the armed forces for 7 days or more or have completed National Service. This also applies to reservists including the Territorial Army and Merchant Navy.

Common problems with hearing aids

- It can be difficult to suddenly adjust to a hearing aid if you have had several years of hearing loss so you should bear this in mind
- If you have hearing aids but are having difficulties with them you should consider a more in-depth assessment to see if there are other hearing aids that might be better for you
- If you have hearing issues in both ears you should consider two hearing aids to help your balance
- If your batteries frequently run out you could consider a bedside recharging station so you don't have to change them
- If your hearing aids whistle they may be blocked by wax or poorly fitted. Hearing aid aftercare clinics (see below) can help sort this out

Using the phone

- If you can't hear well, try moving the phone to different positions on your ear, adjusting your hearing aid settings and using any loudspeaker settings on your phone
- You can get a more suitable phone. If you have a landline, some phones come with volume adjustment, tone control, amplifiers or headsets. Makes to look out for are Doro, Amplicomms, Geemarc and BT. Some private hearing aid manufacturers even make phones that work with their hearing aids. If you have a mobile, a company called "Audacious" make a SIM card that works with your hearing aid. You can also stream sound direct into a few private hearing aids using Bluetooth.
- Another solution is to use a service that translates voice into text. "Relay UK" is free and uses a person to relay your conversation. You don't need a special textphone and can use a computer, laptop or smartphone. There are also more technical solutions for video calls such as "electronic notetakers", "speech to text reporters" and some mobile apps which do a live transcript in real time but these are not free.
- More information available from Ideas for Ears Email: info@ideasforears.org.uk
Web: www.ideasforears.org.uk

Looking after hearing aids

Hearing aid aftercare clinics are offered by HI-Kent (Hearing Impaired Kent). These are free and take place regularly. They can clean hearing aids and also replace batteries free of charge. Clinics are held at the following locations; you can get details by phoning or texting HI-Kent at 18 Brewer St, Maidstone ME14 1RU Tel: 01622 691151 Text: 07795 951466 Email: enquiries@hikent.org.uk

- Sevenoaks – Hollybush Court Day Centre, Hollybush Close. You can also get batteries from Sevenoaks Hospital Minor Injuries Unit
- Kemsing – St Edith Hall
- Westerham – Town Council offices
- Hildenborough – Medical Centre
- Edenbridge – Eden Centre and Bridges Centre

Other equipment that might help

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. This might include 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. You can get details by phoning or texting HI-Kent at 18 Brewer St, Maidstone ME14 1RU Tel: 01622 691151 Text: 07795 951466 Email: enquiries@hikent.org.uk

If you are unable to call emergency services you can text them at 60066 stating which service you require, what and where the problem is. You can also email the fire service at rescue@kent.fire-uk.org and the police at enquiries@kent.pnn.police.uk

Lipreading classes and Sign Language courses

Some are free. You can get details by phoning or texting HI-Kent at 18 Brewer St, Maidstone ME14 1RU Tel: 01622 691151 Text: 07795 951466 Email: enquiries@hikent.org.uk

Assistance Cards

Assistance Cards can be shown to bus drivers if you need help. The cards are discreet, easy for you to use and easy for others to understand especially if your disability is hidden. Just show the card to the driver as well as your travel ticket when boarding the bus. You can get them from Arriva Tel: 0344 800 4411 Email:

customerservice@arriva.co.uk or download them from their website at www.arrivabus.co.uk

The cards are:

- Please speak slowly; I am hard of hearing
- Please speak slowly and face me to help me hear better
- Please be patient; I am deaf

HI-Kent Social Group for Hard of Hearing People

Christchurch United Reformed Church, High St, Tonbridge TN9 1SG. Tel: 01622 691151

Email: v.kirk@hikent.org.uk

Kent Association for the Blind

Joynes House, New Rd, Gravesend DA11 0AT Tel: 01622 691357, 358995

Email: enquiry@kab.org.uk Web: www.kab.org.uk

Produces publications on deafblindness (dual sensory loss) and sensory awareness training (understanding hearing impairment or deafblindness)

LRB Organise

Leanne Bradshaw can help with phone calls if you find it difficult to hear. Tel: 07854 693711. Web: www.lrb-organise.co.uk

Power cuts, gas and water interruptions

You can ask utilities to add you to their Priority Services Register if you are a pensioner, disabled, hearing-impaired, visually-impaired, have a chronic illness or a long-term medical condition. This may give you:

- advance notice if your supply is going to be interrupted
- priority reconnection if the supply is interrupted
- alternative facilities for cooking and heating during an interruption of supply
- help during emergencies

It may also give you other benefits:

- extra help to use your meter or appliances
- annual gas safety checks
- free advice on being more energy efficient
- protection from cold callers
- moving your meter somewhere easier to read
- regular meter readings if you can't read it
- bills sent to a relative, carer or friend to help you check them
- bills and meter readings in large print, braille, audio tape, textphone or typetalk if you're visually or hearing impaired

Royal British Legion Veterans Hearing Fund

Can help fund private hearing aids if your hearing loss was acquired on armed service. Tel: 0808 802 8080

SignHealth Domestic Abuse Service

Domestic abuse service offering practical and emotional support in British Sign Language for deaf women who are experiencing or have survived domestic abuse. Tel: 07970 350366 Email: da@signhealth.org.uk Web: www.signhealth.org.uk

Tinnitus Support Group

The nearest may be in Orpington. You can find out if there is one nearer by phoning or texting HI-Kent at 18 Brewer St, Maidstone ME14 1RU Tel: 01622 691151 Text: 07795 951466 Email: enquiries@hikent.org.uk

Heart problems

Health walks (listed elsewhere in this information pack) can help to reduce your risk of heart disease, improve cholesterol and lower blood pressure

British Heart Foundation

Helpline Tel: 0300 330 3311

Cardiomyopathy UK

Often misdiagnosed as asthma, unexplained breathlessness or tiredness. Helpline 0800 018 1024 Web: www.cardiomyopathy.org for details of Kent Cardiomyopathy Support Group

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

Can sniff and alert you to an impending blackout if you have Postural Tachycardia Syndrome. Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 0NP Tel:01296 655888 Email: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk Web: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Huntington's Disease

Mortimer Society

Birling House, 89 High St, Snodland ME6 5AN Tel: 01634 244689

Email: birling.house@mortimersociety.org.uk Web: www.mortimersociety.org.uk

Provide residential and nursing care for people with Huntington's Disease if and when they need it.

Insomnia

Sleepstation

Online help with insomnia and sleep apnoea Web: www.nhs.sleepstation.org.uk

Kidney disease

National Kidney Foundation

Run by kidney patients for kidney patients Tel: 0845 601 0209 Web: www.kidney.org.uk

Learning disabilities including mental handicap

Avenues Group

Supports people who have learning disability, autism, acquired brain injury and challenging behaviour. Typically support people with multiple or complex needs. Supported living and housing, outreach and support at home services. Tel: 0300 323 0405 Email:

info@avenuesgroup.org.uk Web: www.avenuesgroup.org.uk

Beechmont Saturday Club

For adults with learning disabilities. Meets at Mencap Hall, Hitchen Hatch Lane, Sevenoaks on 1st Saturday of month 10am to 4pm. Contact Margaret Digweed Tel: 01732 453848

Bridges Pop-in Centre. 40 High St, Edenbridge TN8 5AJ Tel: 01732 868186 Email:

thebridgescentre@btconnect.com Web: www.bridges.edenkent.org

HFT (formerly Self Unlimited)

Support for people with learning disabilities and also run Oak Tree Bistro. Phillippines Close, Hever Rd, Edenbridge TN8 5GN Tel: 01732 782700 Email: hftkentnorth@hft.org.uk Web: www.hft.org.uk www.selfunlimited.co.uk

Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT)

Provides information and advice about mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services Tel: 0300 222 0123. Web: www.kmpt.nhs.uk

Kent Friendz

Help and support for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. Provide clubs, home support, leisure activities and trips out. In Edenbridge contact Pauline Collins Tel: 01732 864291. For other areas contact Chris Burton Tel: 01732 838183 Email: chris.burton@kentfriendz.org.uk Web: www.kentfriendz.org.uk

Kent Pathways Service

Free support from Social Services for up to 12 weeks for adults with a learning disability to become more independent by developing life skills. Tel: 03000 416161 Email: kentpathwayservice@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk

Lookahead

Offer support for people with multiple and complex needs (mental health, learning disability and/or autism). Services include supported housing and lifelong learning. Tel: 020 7368 4600 Email: getintouch@lookahead.org.uk Web: www.lookahead.org.uk

MacIntyre (Learning Disability Supported Housing)

Provide supported living services to promote independence for adults who have a learning disability and/or autism. Tel: 01908 230100 Email: hello@macintyrecharity.org Web: www.macintyrecharity.org

Mencap

Provide round-the-clock care, help joining in local leisure activities, provide information and advice on education and employment. Tel: 0808 808 111 Email: helpline@mencap.org.uk Web: www.mencap.org.uk Sevenoaks group contact Mrs A Fenn Email: athenefenn@hotmail.com. Also run Friday Club contact Tony Phillips Tel: 07747 036573

Social Services

Free assessments for those who have care and support needs. The assessment is a discussion between the client (or the person you look after) and a trained person either from the council or another organisation that the council works with. They talk about the situation and what changes could be made to find out how needs could be met. Tel: 03000 416161 Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk

If you are looking after someone it may be quicker to get a free carer's assessment from INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk Web: www.involvekent.org.uk If you live in Swanley contact IMAGO Tel: 0300 011 1965 Email: hello@imago.community Web: www.imago.community

Swanley Community Day Service

Tel: 03000 421252. Choice of activities for people of all abilities

Multiple Sclerosis

Kent MS Therapy Centre

Tel: 01227 470876 Email: info@kentmstc.org Web: www.kent.mstc.org.uk

Multiple Sclerosis Society

372 Edgware Rd, London NW2 6ND Helpline: 0808 800 8000 Email: helpline@mssociety.org.uk Web: www.mssociety.org.uk

Neuro Rehab Kent Ltd

Contact Elissa Tel: 01732 357943 or Jane Tel: 01732 451352 Email: info@neurorehabkent.com Web: www.neurorehabkent.co.uk

Private physiotherapists who specialise in neurological conditions. Also run small group sessions for people living with MS, Parkinson's and other neurological conditions. Can provide physiotherapy in your own home, at Springbank Clinic in Sevenoaks or at Tonbridge Clinic or at your local gym. Can show your family or carers how to help you with exercises. You can find other private physiotherapists who specialise in MS by contacting the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk

Swanley Therapy Centre (SUMS)

Unit 8, Park Rd Industrial Estate, Swanley BR8 8AH Tel: 01322 663042 Web: www.swanleytherapycentre.org

Neurological conditions (brain injuries, head injuries and nerve damage)

- Brain cancer see also section on Cancer above
- Cerebral palsy see also section on Cerebral Palsy above
- Delirium and dementia see separate information pack on Memory Loss & Dementia
- Epilepsy see also section on Epilepsy above
- Incontinence see also section on Bladder and bowel problems above
- Multiple Sclerosis see also section on Multiple Sclerosis above
- Parkinson's see also section on Parkinson's below
- Spinal injuries see also section on Pain below

Avenues Group

Supports people who have learning disability, autism, acquired brain injury and challenging behaviour. Typically support people with multiple or complex needs. Supported living and housing, outreach and support at home services. Tel: 0300 323 0405 Email: info@avenuesgroup.org.uk Web: www.avenuesgroup.org.uk

Brain Tumour Charity

Support for carers and patients. Contact Olwen O'Dowd Tel: 01634 263622 Email: mum144@outlook.com Web: www.thebraintumourcharity.org

Brains Matter (formerly Headway)

Support and information for individuals, carers and loved ones living with a traumatic or acquired brain injury.

- Local support group meets in cafe at Stag Community Arts Centre, London Rd, Sevenoaks on 1st Wed of each month 1.30-3pm
- Regular activities and drop-in at Tunbridge Wells, a drop-in centre at Maidstone and one-to-one support. Tel: 01892 619001 Email: info@brainsmatter.org.uk Web: www.brainsmatter.org.uk

Brains Trust (brain cancer)

4 Yvery Court, Castle Rd, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 7QG
Email: hello@brainstrust.org.uk Web: www.brainstrust.org.uk

Chiropodists and podiatrists

If you are diabetic, your feet are at risk. Neuropathy (nerve damage) means that you are less likely to feel injury or pain, circulation is impaired and any wounds can heal poorly leading to infection. Your GP may be able to refer you to a free NHS service. There is a weekly foot clinic for diabetics at Tunbridge Wells Hospital.

Guillain-Barre & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies (GAIN)

Glennys Sanders House, Pride Parkway, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 8GL Tel: 01529 469910 Email: office@gaincharity.org.uk Web: www.gaincharity.org.uk

Hothfield Brain Injury Rehabilitation & Neurological Care Centre

Bethersden Rd, Hothfield TN26 1EL Tel: 01233 643 272 Email: hothfield@huntercombe.com Web: www.huntercombe.com

Motor Neurone Disease Association

Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA), David Niven House, 10-15 Notre Dame Mews, Northampton NN1 2BG Tel: 0808 802 6262
Email: mndconnect@mndassociation.org Website: www.mndassociation.org

Multiple System Atrophy Trust

51 St Olav's Court, City Business Centre, Lower Rd, London SE16 2XB Tel: 0333 323 4591 Email: support@msatrust.org.uk Web: www.msatrust.org.uk

National Schizophrenia Fellowship (Sevenoaks)

Contact Carole Wright Tel: 01732 452143

Neuro Rehab Kent Ltd

Contact Elissa Tel: 01732 357943 or Jane Tel: 01732 451352 Email: info@neurorehabkent.com Web: www.neurorehabkent.co.uk

Private physiotherapists who specialise in neurological conditions. Also run small group sessions for people living with MS, Parkinson's and other neurological conditions. Can provide physiotherapy in your own home, at Springbank Clinic in Sevenoaks or at Tonbridge Clinic or at your local gym. Can show your family or carers how to help you with exercises. You can find other private physiotherapists who specialise in MS by contacting the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk

Raphael Medical Centre (neurorehabilitation)

Hollanden Park, Coldharbour Lane, Hildenborough TN11 9LE Tel: 01732 833924
Email: info@raphaelmedicalcentre.co.uk Web: www.raphaelmedicalcentre.co.uk

Transverse Myelitis Society (TMS)

35 Avenue Rd, Brentford TW8 9NS Email: info@myelitis.org.uk Web: www.myelitis.org.uk

Osteoporosis

National Osteoporosis Society

National helpline Tel: 0845 450 0230. West Kent groups in Tunbridge Wells
Tel: 01892 823219 and Maidstone Tel: 01622 744704

Pain including back pain

BackCare

Monkey Puzzle House, 69-71 Windmill Rd, Sunbury-on-Thames TW16 7DT Tel: 020 8977 5474 Email: info@backcare.org.uk Web: www.backcare.org.uk
Charity for healthier backs.

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

Can sniff and tell you if you are about to have a pain seizure. Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 ONP Tel:01296 655888 Email: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk Web: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Physiotherapy

You can find private physiotherapists who specialise in musculo-skeletal injuries by contacting the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk

Parkinson's

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk

They can help you find a physiotherapist who specialises in Parkinson's. Initial gait analysis costs about £95 for an hour. Follow-up sessions cost about £80 an hour. This cost can be reduced by having half-hour sessions or using therapy assistants rather than fully-qualified physiotherapists. They can show your family or carers how to help you with exercises so that they can then take over. Some care agencies such as All About Homecare include this in their cost. They can also put you in touch with occupational therapists or speech therapists if appropriate

Council Tax

People with Parkinson's may be eligible to apply for a reduction in Council Tax if the condition is affecting their mental health or social functioning

Neuro Rehab Kent Ltd

Contact Elissa Tel: 01732 357943 or Jane Tel: 01732 451352 Email:

info@neurorehabkent.com Web: www.neurorehabkent.co.uk

Private physiotherapists who specialise in neurological conditions. Also run small group sessions for people living with MS, Parkinson's and other neurological conditions. Can provide physiotherapy in your own home, at Springbank Clinic in Sevenoaks or at Tonbridge Clinic or at your local gym. Can show your family or carers how to help you with exercises. You can find other private physiotherapists who specialise in MS by contacting the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk

Parkinson's UK (formerly Parkinson's Disease Society)

National helpline Tel: 0808 800 0303. Check local activities with Jackie Hart Tel: 01732 360512 Email: jacquelinehart217@gmail.com

- Otford. Exercise classes in Methodist Church Hall every Thursday 1.45-3.45pm
- Riverhead. Coffee mornings at Bullfinch pub, London Rd on 1st Tuesday of every month 10.30am-12pm
- Sevenoaks. Indoor Bowls Centre, Hollybush Lane.
 - Exercise class. Meet Thursdays 10.30am-12pm
 - Indoor bowls. Meet 1st & 3rd Wed of month 9.45am-12pm
 - Support group. Meet 2nd Wed of month 2-4pm

Research

Research is ongoing into whether Bio Detection Dogs can detect early signs of Parkinson's. More information from Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Millton Keynes MK17 0NP Tel:01296 655888 Email: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk Web: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Polymyalgia

Polymyalgia Rheumatica & Giant Cell Arteritis UK

Helpline Tel: 0300 111 5090. Web: www.pmrqca.co.uk

Rheumatic conditions which cause severe pain and discomfort; giant cell arteritis can also lead to sight loss. Free information packs

Orpington Polymyalgia Rheumatica and Giant Cell Arteritis support group. Meets 2nd Tuesday of every month 10am to 12pm in St Paul's Church, Crofton Rd, Orpington, Kent BR6 8JE. Contact Penny Tel: 0300 999 5090 Email: pmrqca.orpington@gmail.com

Sight loss including blindness

See also our Help at Home information pack for fire prevention, home library services, home opticians and home safety visits. See Diabetes (above) for other effects of sight loss

Sight tests

- You can get a list of opticians who can visit you at home by ringing Age UK on 01732 454108 and asking for our "Help at Home" information pack.
- Specsavers opticians in Sevenoaks have staff trained to help people with dementia have eye checks. 93 High St, Sevenoaks. Tel: 01732 459588.
- Further advice is available from RNIB Tel: 0303 123 9999 Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk Web: www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health-looking-after-your-eyes-eye-examinations/having-eye-examination-home

Blind Veterans UK (formerly St Dunstan's)

12-14 Harcourt St, London W1H 4HD Tel: 0800 389 7979

Email: information@blindveterans.org.uk noonealone@blindveterans.org.uk

Web: www.noonealone.org.uk www.blindveterans.org.uk

Can help anyone who is blind or severely visually-impaired (in both eyes) who has been in the Armed Forces, Territorial Army, Merchant Navy or has simply done National Service. The visual impairment does not have to be due to this service. They offer emotional support, skills development, confidence building and independent living support.

British Wireless for the Blind Fund

Easy-to-use radios and CD players for visually-impaired people. May be free-of-charge.

Tel: 01622 760709/754757, 07540 724063 Web: www.blind.org.uk

Kent Association for the Blind

Joyes House, New Rd, Gravesend DA11 0AT Tel: 01622 691357, 358995

Email: enquiry@kab.org.uk Web: www.kab.org.uk

Practical and emotional support for people with sight impairment. Equipment includes mobile phones that can read and hand-held GPS systems to tell you precisely where you are. Publications include:

- Cataracts
- Charles Bonnet Syndrome (visual hallucinations)
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma

- Guide Communicator Service (one-to-one support for people with dual sensory loss or deafblindness)
- Help & Support Services for people with a visual impairment
- Intervenor Service (one-to-one support for people with dual sensory loss or deafblindness as well as additional disabilities)
- Macular Degeneration
- Retinitis Pigmentosa (light sensitivity)
- Sensory Awareness Training (understanding visual impairment, deafblindness, hearing impairment and assistive technology)
- Sight Support Service (one-to-one support)

Kent Association for the Blind also offer befriending and run the following clubs:

- **Sevenoaks Blind Social Club.** Contact Jo Wilkinson Tel: 01622 691357, 07469 154570 Email: jo.wilkinson@kab.org.uk Web: www.kab.org.uk
- **Sevenoaks Craft Club for people with sight impairments.** Meet Thursdays fortnightly at Village Hall, London Rd, Dunton Green. Contact Jo Wilkinson Tel: 01622 691357, 07469 154570 Email: jo.wilkinson@kab.org.uk Web: www.kab.org.uk

Macular Society

- Advice & information. Tel: 0300 303 0111 Email: help@macularsociety.org Web: www.macularsociety.org
- Local support group. 4th Thu of the month 10.30am-12pm. Stag Theatre cafe, Sevenoaks. Contact Stella Black Tel: 07494 467980 Email: stella.black@macularsociety.org

Magnification aids

This includes magnifying glasses, lighting, electronic magnifiers, eyeshields, big button phones, easy-to-read watches/clocks. Talk to Kent Association for the Blind or RNIB who have a good shop. Alternatively, many companies supply them eg SW Retail Ltd. Tel: 01226 762513 Email: swretailtd@gmail.com Web: www.icswretail.co.uk

Margaret Club

Coffee club for blind and partially-sighted people. Meet in Tonbridge. Contact Meg Munday Email: meg.other@sylvameg.co.uk

Power cuts, gas and water interruptions

You can ask utilities to add you to their Priority Services Register if you are a pensioner, disabled, hearing-impaired, visually-impaired, have a chronic illness or a long-term medical condition. This may give you:

- advance notice if your supply is going to be interrupted
- priority reconnection if the supply is interrupted
- alternative facilities for cooking and heating during an interruption of supply
- help during emergencies

It may also give you other benefits:

- extra help to use your meter or appliances
- annual gas safety checks
- free advice on being more energy efficient
- protection from cold callers
- moving your meter somewhere easier to read
- regular meter readings if you can't read it
- bills sent to a relative, carer or friend to help you check them
- bills and meter readings in large print, braille, audio tape, textphone or typetalk if you're visually or hearing impaired

RNIB (formerly Royal National Institute for the Blind)

105 Judd St, London WC1H 9NE Tel: 020 7388 1266 Helpline: 0303 123 9999

Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk

General advice and many other support services for people with sight problems

Rosemary Club

Lunch club for blind and partially-sighted people. Meets every 2-3 months on the 4th Thursday of the month at cafes and other venues in Tonbridge chosen after each lunch by those present. Contact Meg Munday Email: meg.other@sylvameg.co.uk

TV licences

Blind and severely sight-impaired people are entitled to 50% off a TV licence. This applies to the whole household if someone is eligible. It does not apply to people who are just partially sighted. More info at www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/blindseverely-sight-impaired-aud5 or call 0300 790 6112

Westerham Macular Disease Support Group

Help and support for people with macular degeneration. Tel: 01959 563110

Stroke

Preventing it

The main risk is untreated hypertension (high blood pressure); this is easy to control but hard to spot. If you want to monitor it you can buy a blood pressure machine from Boots or other chemists. The second biggest is arrhythmia (an irregular heartbeat) such as atrial fibrillation. Other risk factors include high cholesterol, obesity, smoking, drinking, family history, ageing, inactivity, a history of mini-strokes etc

How to tell if someone is having a stroke

Any one of the following symptoms may indicate a stroke:

- **Face** - droops on one side
- **Arms** - can't raise both arms and keep them up
- **Speech** - slurred; may also be visual impairment
- **Time** - is of the essence so call an ambulance if any of the above symptoms

Other signs are sudden numbness, blurred vision, headaches, dizziness or confusion. A "funny turn" may be a TIA (Transient Ischaemic Attack) which is a mini-stroke

Treatment

There is only a 4-hour window for an MRI scan to determine whether you have had a clot or a bleed (where a blood vessel bursts). The MRI scan will determine treatment such as clotbusting drugs or a thrombectomy (a procedure to remove a clot in the brain) but these must be done within a few hours to work well. Some ambulances are equipped with scanners. You will probably be taken to a hyperacute stroke unit at Tunbridge Wells, Darent Valley or Ashford hospitals as these are the local centres of excellence

Stroke Association

National helpline Tel: 0303 303 3100. Web: www.stroke.org.uk Publications include:

- What is a stroke? How it affects you
- How to prevent a stroke
- When a stroke happens. What to expect in the first hours, days and weeks
- Life after stroke. Help and support for you and your family including grants
- The road to recovery

- Helping someone with communication problems

Stroke clubs

- These can help you to regain any remaining abilities to communicate such as speech, drawing or gestures. The hope is that the brain can re-learn how to do these things or different parts of the brain can learn. They do this through social activities and exercise.
- The Stroke Association runs friendly local groups and offers one-to-one sessions. Contact Communication Support Service, 29 Hollingworth Court, Turkey Mill, Ashford Rd, Maidstone ME14 5PP Tel: 01622 351963.
- The nearest stroke club is Sevenoaks Stroke Club. This meets 2nd Friday of each month 10am-12pm at Miller & Carter steakhouse pub, Amherst Hill, Riverhead. Contact Andy Tel: 07342 049976 Email: andy.sayers@stroke.org.uk

Stroke Recovery Service

This is for people who've had a stroke, their families and carers. They will visit you in hospital or at home to identify what help you need then give you advice and support so that you can recover as well as possible and regularly contact you to see how you are doing. You can refer yourself or other people can refer you. Sevenoaks Support Co-ordinator Andy Sayers. Tel: 07342 049976 Email: andy.sayers@stroke.org.uk

Neuro Rehab Kent Ltd

Contact Elissa Tel: 01732 357943 or Jane Tel: 01732 451352 Email:

info@neurorehabkent.com Web: www.neurorehabkent.co.uk

Private physiotherapists who specialise in neurological conditions. Also run small group sessions for people living with MS, Parkinson's and other neurological conditions. Can provide physiotherapy in your own home, at Springbank Clinic in Sevenoaks or at Tonbridge Clinic or at your local gym. Can show your family or carers how to help you with exercises. You can find other private physiotherapists who specialise in MS by contacting the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk

Turkey Mill Singers

Singing group to help stroke survivors recover (based in Maidstone). May be especially helpful for people with aphasia (speech difficulties). Contact Tim Stillwell Tel: 07745 103811 Email: mrtimstillwell@outlook.com

Kent Association for the Blind

Joynes House, New Rd, Gravesend DA11 0AT Tel: 01622 691357, 358995

Email: enquiry@kab.org.uk Web: www.kab.org.uk

Produces a publication on sight loss after a stroke

Finding and using health services

See our Help at Home information pack for adapting your home, aids and equipment, Attendance Allowance, collecting and delivering prescriptions, commodes, crutches, Disability Living Allowance, Dosette boxes for medication, Enablement from Social Services, filling in forms, getting back on your feet after a stay in hospital, help with follow-up appointments and medication, mobility aids, NHS Rapid Response, Personal Independence Payment, rehabilitation, scooters, Social Services and wheelchairs.

See our local information pack on Transport, Travel & Leisure for getting to health appointments.

Ambulances

Emergencies

Dial 999

Hospital transport

See our Transport information pack

How to make a complaint about an ambulance service

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your ambulance service first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the ambulance service if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group Tel: 03000 424244

Email: kmcs.complaints@nhs.net

If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614

Zot private ambulance company

- If you need to pay for a private ambulance
- Tel: 020 3092 9118

Chemists

See also our Help at Home information sheet for services offered by chemists.

NHS prescriptions are free for all over-60s

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your chemist first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the chemist if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the NHS Tel: 0300 311 2233 Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614.

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 chemist. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK Tel: 0345 685 1061 Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Chiropodists including foot healthcare

- If you are diabetic, your GP may be able to refer you to a free NHS service
- Toenail cutting
 - Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust run a fee-paying NHS service at local clinics. Toenail cutting costs £18. To book an appointment Tel: 0300 123 1554. There may be a waiting list.
 - If you just need your toenails cut, private beauticians may also do this as part of a simple pedicure and may be a bit cheaper than chiropodists and podiatrists but you should shop around. A few examples are:
 - Gail Tel: 07709 213060
 - Kelly Tel: 07850 713270
 - Sophie Tel: 07527 401877, 01892 540849

- Chiropractors and podiatrists
 - Home visits may be offered by some chiropractors and podiatrists. Here are a few examples but you should shop around:
 - Paul Rogers (registered foot healthcare practitioner) Tel: 07985 607569
 - Deborah Hanger Tel: 07736 692577
 - Excellent Care 1st Podiatry Tel: 07404 238459
 - Sevenoaks Mobile Foot Clinic Tel: 07584 209350
 - Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust run a fee-paying NHS service at local clinics. To book an appointment Tel: 0300 123 1554. There may be a waiting list.
 - It may be quicker to go directly to a private chiropractor or podiatrist. You can find them by searching for “podiatrist” on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk Here are a few examples but you should shop around:
 - Edenbridge, Sevenoaks and Westerham areas:
 - Age UK no longer offers a chiropody service
 - Mrs H Watkinson, Manor Clinic, Sevenoaks Tel: 07510 911212
 - Emma Peacock, South Park Surgery, Sevenoaks Tel: 01732 742529
 - Kate De Angeli, Edenbridge Tel: 07807 299114
 - Swanley area
 - Age UK North West Kent Tel: 01474 564898
 - Crockenhill Foot Clinic Tel: 07982 835251
 - Ms S Turner, Swanley Tel: 07492 728782

Complaints, problems and improving health services

Age UK

We produce publications on resolving problems, making complaints about NHS care and the law on age discrimination Tel: 0800 169 6565

Citizens' Advice

Free, impartial and confidential advice on problems with health services. Free phone advice Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Some office appointments may be possible.

- Sevenoaks, Swanley, New Ash Green and Otford Tel: 0808 278 7810
- Edenbridge and Westerham Tel: 0808 278 7962

Healthwatch

Information on local health and social care services in Kent. They want to hear about your experiences to help them improve services Tel: 0808 801 0102

Email: info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

How to make a complaint

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to the organisation first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to them if raising concerns doesn't work.

- For problems with your GP practice, pharmacy, dentist or optician contact the NHS Tel: 0300 311 2233 Email: england.contactus@nhs.net
- For problems with hospitals, out-of-hours doctors, ambulances or mental health contact the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group Tel: 03000 424244 Email: kmcs.complaints@nhs.net If you are in hospital, ask at Reception for the PALS office (Patient Advice & Liaison Service); they can help sort out problems and cut through red tape
- For problems with Social Services contact Kent County Council Tel: 03000 414141 Email: county.hall@kent.gov.uk

If you are still unsure where to complain then call Healthwatch Kent on Tel: 0808 801 0102 and they can make sure your complaint is directed to the right place. If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614.

Dentists including teeth problems

Dental care and costs

Age UK produces publications on dental care and help with health costs
Tel: 0800 169 6565

Emergencies

For a dental emergency, ring your own dentist first. If the practice is closed and you can't wait till it re-opens, ring DentaLine on 01634 890300

Finding NHS dentists

The best way to find dentists is to phone NHS Customer Services on 0300 123 4412 or visit the 'NHS Choices' website (www.nhs.uk) where there should be an up-to-date list. You can also look in Yellow Pages or similar commercial directories. It is easier to find NHS dentists in the Tonbridge area than Sevenoaks. The following were taking NHS patients in 2016:

- Aycliffe Dentists, Quarry Hill Rd, Tonbridge Tel: 0844 375 6363. Waiting list
- Aycliffe Dentists, Paddock Wood Tel: 0844 375 6868
- Southborough Dental Practice Tel: 01892 528048
- High Brooms Dental Practice Tel: 01892 540990
- The Surgery, Hadlow Tel: 01732 850188

If you cannot find what you want:

- search the Health Help Now website with details of local services for common conditions www.healthhelpnow-nhs.net
- or contact Healthwatch Tel: 0808 801 0102 Email: info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

Getting to the dentist

There are several 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 Transport information pack.

Home visiting dentists

There are also mobile dentists who can visit you at home. See our Help at Home information sheet

Paying for NHS dental treatment

NHS dental treatment is free for those on Pension Credit Guarantee Credit. If you have too much money to get Pension Credit Guarantee Credit but are still on a relatively low income you may also qualify for help. You have to fill in a form called HC1 (Help with Health Costs). If you are eligible you will either get an HC2 Certificate (full help with the cost) or an HC3 Certificate (partial help towards the cost). If you need help filling in the form:

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

How to make a complaint

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your dentist first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the dentist if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the NHS Tel: 0300 311 2233 Email: england.contactus@nhs.net
If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614

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 dentist. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK Tel: 0345 685 1061 Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Doctors

Finding a doctor

Kent Community Health NHS Trust may be able to help with registering with GPs. Tel: 0300 123 1807 Email: kcht.cct@nhs.net Web: www.kentcht.nhs.uk

Kent Supporting People can also help you to find a doctor. Room 402, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XQ Tel: 08458 247100
Email: floatingsupport@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk/supportingpeople

If you cannot find what you want:

- search the Health Help Now website with details of local services for common conditions www.healthhelpnow-nhs.net
- or contact Healthwatch Tel: 0808 801 0102 Email: info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

Getting to the doctor

There are several 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 Transport information pack.

How to make a complaint about your doctor

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your practice manager first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the practice manager if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the NHS Tel: 0300 311 2233 Email: england.contactus@nhs.net
If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614

How to make a complaint about an out-of-hours doctor

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your out-of-hours doctor first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the out-of-hours doctor if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group Tel: 03000 424244
Email: kmcs.complaints@nhs.net
If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614

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 doctor. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK Tel: 0345 685 1061 Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Hospitals

Accident & Emergency

In an emergency dial 999. The nearest A&E departments are at Tunbridge Wells Hospital in Pembury and Princess Royal University Hospital in Farnborough Common. Other big hospitals include Maidstone Hospital and Darent Valley Hospital.

Community hospitals

Kent Community Health NHS Trust is responsible for community hospitals in Sevenoaks, and Edenbridge Tel: 0300 123 1807 Email: kcht.cct@nhs.net Web: www.kentcht.nhs.uk
If you cannot find what you want:

- search the Health Help Now website with details of local services for common conditions www.healthhelpnow-nhs.net
- or contact Healthwatch Tel: 0808 801 0102 Email: info@healthwatchkent.co.uk

Friends of Sevenoaks Hospital. Contact Chrissie Phillip (Secretary) Tel: 01959 524712

Going into hospital and being discharged from hospital

Age UK produces publications on going into hospital and hospital discharge arrangements Tel: 0800 169 6565.

How to make a complaint

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to the hospital first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the hospital if raising concerns doesn't work. Every hospital should have a PALS service (Patient Advice and Liaison service) who can help you with this process. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group Tel: 03000 424244 Email: kmcs.complaints@nhs.net

If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614

INVOLVE

May be able to provide practical support for up to 14 days including sorting out help and adaptations. Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk Web: 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.

League of Friends of Edenbridge Hospital. Contact Jo Naismith Tel: 01732 860148 Email: info@ehlof.org.uk Web: www.ehlof.org.uk

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 hospital. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK Tel: 0345 685 1061 Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Peabody Home Improvement Agency

Tel: 0800 028 3172 Email: infohia@peabody.org.uk Web: www.peabody.org.uk/care-support

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

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). Tel: 01732 495665 Email: enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk Web: www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum

Campaigns to improve transport to local hospitals. Web: www.sdsaf.org

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. Tel: 01732 227000 and ask for Handy Heroes.

See our Help at Home information pack for help with appointments

Minor illnesses and minor injuries

Cuts, sprains, minor burns and some fractures are best treated at a local minor injuries unit. These walk-in clinics are at the community hospitals in Edenbridge and Sevenoaks. They can also treat minor illnesses such as coughs, colds, flu symptoms and earache. Tel: 111 to find your local minor injuries unit. Kent Community Health NHS Trust is responsible minor injury units Tel: 0300 123 1807 Email: kcht.cct@nhs.net Web: www.kentcht.nhs.uk

Opticians

Eye tests

Eye tests are sometimes available at day centres. You do not have to use the day centre to use this service

- Sevenoaks area. Hollybush Day Centre Tel: 01732 741558
- Swanley area. Try the Cottage Community Tel: 01474 879473 or Age UK North West Kent Tel: 01474 564898

Finding an optician

The best way to find opticians is to visit the 'NHS Choices' website (www.nhs.uk) where there should be an up-to-date list or look in Yellow Pages.

Getting to the optician

There are several 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 Transport information pack.

Home visiting opticians

There are also mobile opticians who can visit you at home. See our Help at Home information sheet.

Opticians for people with dementia

Specsavers opticians in Sevenoaks have staff trained to help people with dementia have eye checks. 93 High St, Sevenoaks Tel: 01732 459588

Paying for sight tests

NHS sight tests are free for all over-60s

Paying for glasses or contact lenses

NHS glasses/contact lenses are free for those on Pension Credit Guarantee Credit. For example, opticians should offer you a voucher for glasses; in some cases this may cover the whole cost of glasses but in other cases you may have to pay something towards them. If you have too much money to get Pension Credit Guarantee Credit but are still on a relatively low income you may also qualify for help. You have to fill in a form called HC1 (Help with Health Costs). If you are eligible you will either get an HC2 Certificate (full help with the cost) or an HC3 Certificate (partial help towards the cost). If you need help filling in the form:

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

How to make a complaint

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your optician first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the optician if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the NHS Tel: 0300 311 2233 Email: england.contactus@nhs.net

If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614

Lifebook

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important documents. The life contacts section deals with recording details of your optician. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK Tel: 0345 685 1061 Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Healthy eating & losing weight

See also our Help at Home information pack for meals on wheels and ready meals.

Age UK

We produce publications on healthy eating Tel: 0800 169 6565

Kent Community Health NHS Trust

Tel: 0300 123 1220 Email: oneyou.kent@nhs.net

Web: www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk

One You lifestyle advisers can support you with healthy eating. They can offer you 6 free confidential sessions where you can discuss the changes you want to make and they can support you to set achievable goals on how to reach them.

Weight management courses

Sevenoaks District Council Healthy Living Team Tel: 01732 227000 Email:

healthyliving@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Weightwatchers (Sevenoaks)

Meet at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre, Suffolk Way, Sevenoaks TN13 1LW on Wednesdays at 6.30pm. Web: www.weightwatchers.com

See their website for other local groups

Keeping fit

See our Help at Home information pack for alarms

- Age UK produce publications on staying steady, strength and balance exercises for healthy ageing Tel: 0800 169 6565.
- Some activities may also be suitable for people with mild or early dementia. Please contact the organiser to discuss
- Leisure centres and swimming pools in Sevenoaks, Swanley and Edenbridge offer a range of sporting activities for anyone aged 50+ such as exercise, swimming, tennis, badminton, bowls, gym, table tennis and yoga sessions

Badminton

Dementia-friendly sessions in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Basketball

Dementia-friendly sessions with a foam ball in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Boccia

Dementia-friendly sessions in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Cycling

Dementia-friendly sessions on a static bike in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Dance

- Brasted. **Dancing for over-55s**. Village Hall, High St. Mondays 1-2pm. £24 for 12 weeks. Contact Sevenoaks District Council Tel: 01732 227000 Email: communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk
- Seal. **50+ Dance for Fun Classes**. Meet Seal Village Hall Tuesday 10.30-11.30am. Contact Luci Napleton Tel: 07748 008431 Email: lucinapleton@gmail.com
- Shoreham. **Dancing for over-55s**. Village Hall, High St. Thursdays 2-3pm. £24 for 12 weeks. Contact Sevenoaks District Council Tel: 01732 227000 Email: communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Darts

Dementia-friendly soft darts sessions in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Exercise at home

- **Chartered Society of Physiotherapy**. 14 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4ED Tel: 020 7306 6666 Web: www.csp.org.uk
 - Publish "Get Up & Go" - a guide to staying steady which shows you how to do exercises for strength and balance
 - Can also help you find a private physiotherapist
- **Later Life Training**. Their website has exercises you can download. Web: www.laterlifetraining.co.uk/llt-home-exercise-booklets
- **Vita Motion Robo-Platform**. This is an exercise machine for people with dementia which someone can sit, lie or stand on. You have a choice of sports, nature or music programmes to keep exercise interesting. It is produced by FIND Memory Care Tel: 0113 230 2046 Web: www.findsignage.co.uk

Exercise & fitness classes & groups

- Chiddingstone Causeway. **Mobility, strength & balance class**. Causeway Hall. Fortnightly Mondays 10.45am-12.15pm. From £3.50. Contact Sue Larken Mob: 07867 648667 Email: suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
- Chipstead. **Paracise**. Gentle standing exercise class to improve mobility, flexibility and balance. Chevening Parish Hall, Homedean Rd, Chipstead TN13 2RU. Tuesdays 11-11.45am. £5. Contact Sharon Tel: 07736 641033 Email: sharon@paracise.com Web: www.paracise.com
- Cowden. **Mobility, strength & balance class**. Village hall. Fortnightly Thursdays 10am-12pm. From £3.50. Contact Sue Larken Mob: 07867 648667 Email: suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
- Edenbridge
 - **Seated exercise class**. Bridges Centre. Last Fri of month 2-3pm. Contact Sue Larken Mob: 07867 648667 Email: suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
 - **Mobility, strength & balance class**. Eden Centre Fortnightly Thursdays 10.30am-12pm. £3.50. Contact Sue Larken Mob: 07867 648667 Email: suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
- Hever. **Paracise**. Gentle standing exercise class to improve mobility, flexibility and balance. Hever Castle Golf Club Mondays 9.30am. £5. Contact Sharon Tel: 07736 641033 Email: sharon@paracise.com Web: www.paracise.com

- Hextable. **Chair-based exercise class.** Cottage Community Tel: 01474 879473
Email: info@thecottagecommunity.org.uk
- Kemsing. **Over-50s keep fit class.** Wed mornings. Meet at Sir Mark Collet Pavilion, Kemsing. Contact Vicky Bishop Tel: 01732 762865
- Otford. **Serendipity gentle exercise class.** Meet Thursdays 9.30 to 10.30am at Methodist Church Hall, High St. £3. Contact Cass Osborne Tel: 01959 522727
Email: thefitnessworkshop@hotmail.com
- Sevenoaks
 - **Mobility, strength & balance class.** Dunton Green Pavilion, London Rd. 2nd Wednesday of the month 1.30-3.30pm. From £3.50. Contact Sue Larken
Mob: 07867 648667 Email:
suelarken@ageuksevenoaksandtonbridge.org.uk
 - **Gentle exercise for over-65s.** Vine Baptist Church. Park Lane, Sevenoaks.
Thursdays 2pm. £5 per class. Contact Teresa Tel: 07506 801151 Email:
exercise65@yahoo.com
 - **Sevenoaks Ladies Joggers.** Balance & strength classes for men and women over 65. £24 for first 8 weeks then £80 for 8 weeks. Tel: 07799 476647 Web: www.sevenoaksladiesjoggers.co.uk/platinumfitness
- Westerham. **Classes for over-50s.** Tuesdays 11am. Westerham Hall, Quebec Avenue, Westerham. Contact Valerie Tel: 01959 562790

Falls prevention classes

These are free classes for over-65s who have fallen or have a fear of falling. Unlike other exercise classes they begin mainly in a chair and gradually progress to standing activities. They aim to improve strength and balance reducing falls and maintaining independence.

- **Edenbridge.** Mondays 11am-12m at Self Unlimited, Philippines Close off Hever Rd. For more details contact Sevenoaks District Council Tel: 01732 227000
Email: healthyliving@sevenoaks.gov.uk
- **Sevenoaks.** Wednesdays 3-4pm at Age UK Hollybush Day Centre, Hollybush Close off Hollybush Lane. For more details contact Sevenoaks District Council Tel: 01732 227000 Email: healthyliving@sevenoaks.gov.uk
- There may also be other classes. Try INVOLVE. Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk Web: www.involvekent.org.uk If you live in Swanley contact IMAGO Tel: 0300 011 1965 Email: hello@imago.community Web: www.imago.community

Fishing

Kent Disabled Angling Association. Contact Denise or Richard Tel: 07979 574192, 07810 621223

Football

Walking Football for over-50s. Sevenoaks Town Football Club, Greatness Recreation Ground, Seal Rd, Bat & Ball. Mondays 1.30pm. Royal Voluntary Service Tel: 07918 367198, 0300 012 0261 Web: www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk

Golf

Tonbridge. **Dementia-friendly golf mornings.** 2nd Tuesday of the month at 11am. Open session for experienced and new golfers with early stages of dementia or who need a bit of support. Enjoy a round on the 9-hole course with support from a buddy, tuition on the driving range followed by coffee in the bar. First round £6; carers can play for free. Poult Wood Golf Course, Higham Lane, Tonbridge TN11 9QR Tel: 01732 364039 Web: www.poultwood.co.uk Contact: David Copsey - Head Golf Pro

Golf putting

Dementia-friendly sessions in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Hand weights

Dementia-friendly sessions in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Health walks

Take a step towards a healthier life, take in some fresh air and meet up with a group of people. It's sociable and you get fit in the process. Free health walks take place in several villages and towns across the area. They are led by trained volunteers and go at your own pace.

Every Step Counts run gentle walks of less than a mile lasting about half an hour. Tel: 07899 985196. Email: everystepcounts17@gmail.com

- **Bat & Ball.** Meet Greatness Recreation Ground (Thursdays 2pm)
- **Chevening & Chipstead.** Meet Bricklayers Arms pub (Thursdays 10am)
- **Chiddingstone.** Meet Castle Inn pub (Tuesdays 11am)
- **Dunton Green.** Meet Pavilion (Tuesdays 10am)
- **Eynsford.** Meet Riverside Tea Room (Mondays 11am)
- **Kemsing.** Meet Village Hall car park (Fridays 10.30am)
- **Otford.** Meet Village Memorial Hall (Wednesdays 10am)
- **Riverhead.** Meet Tesco entrance (Tuesdays 10am)
- **Swanley.** Meet Swanley Park café (Thursdays 10am)
- **West Kingsdown.** Meet Pavilion Library car park (Wednesdays 10.30am)

LiveWell Kent and West Kent MIND run slow noticing nature walks. Tel: 01732 744950

- **Sevenoaks.** Hollybush Recreation Ground. Mondays
- **Edenbridge.** Stangrove Park. Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Kent Wildlife Trust run health walks and also slower noticing nature walks lasting about 2 hours. Tel: 01622 662012. Email: kirsty.lee@kentwildlife.org.uk or vicky.aitkenhead@kentwildlife.org.uk

- **Riverhead/Bat & Ball.** Meet Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Bradbourne Vale Rd (every other month on Wednesdays 10am)

Sevenoaks District Council Healthy Living Team also run 1-2 mile walks lasting about an hour across the area. Contact Sevenoaks District Council Healthy Living Team Tel: 0300 020 0636 Email: healthyliving@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Jogging & fitness walks

- **Sevenoaks Ladies Joggers.** Also offer fitness walks for men and women over 65. Mondays 11am. £24 for first 8 weeks then £80 for 8 weeks. Tel: 07799 476647 Web: www.sevenoaksladiesjoggers.co.uk/platinumfitness
- **Up & Running.** Jogging group for women who have mild to moderate depression, low self-esteem, anxiety or depression. The group is ideal for non-runners and starts with walking and gentler jogging, building up over 10 weeks. Small charge. The group meets at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre (Wednesdays 1pm) and runs in Knole Park. Phone Shona on 07710 279497 or Harriet on 07855 893863

Netball

- **Easy netball.** Coach-led sessions for complete beginners, those who haven't played for a while or anyone wanting to play with friends or family. Wed 7-8pm Recreation Ground, Dunton Green. £2 per session. Contact Sevenoaks District Council Tel: 01732 227000 Email: communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk
- **Walking netball.** Thursdays termtime 10-11am. Angel Centre, Tonbridge. £4. Tel: 01732 359966 Email: natalie.williams@tmactive.co.uk

Personal trainers

- **JA Fitness.** Personal training for over-50s in your own home. Contact Jane Ardley Tel: 01732 885933 Web: www.jafitness.co.uk
- **One You.** Lifestyle advisers can support people who need a little extra help to make the first steps towards a healthier lifestyle. Up to 6 free confidential sessions to discuss health changes and set achievable goals. Support with healthy eating, exercise, quitting smoking, sexual health, stress, emotional wellbeing, alcohol or drug issues. Tel: 0300 123 1220 Email: oneyou.kent@nhs.net Web: www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk
- **Run 4 Fit.** Personal trainer who will do private sessions for people to improve balance and fitness (not necessarily running). Charges £30 per hour.

Pilates

- **Sevenoaks Ladies Joggers.** Pilates classes for men and women over 65. Mondays 10.30am or Wednesdays 2.30pm. £24 for first 8 weeks then £80 for 8 weeks. Tel: 07799 476647 Web: www.sevenoaksladiesjoggers.co.uk/platinumfitness

Riding

Bradbourne Riding for the Disabled Group provides horse riding and carriage driving opportunities. Tel: 07914 273610 Email: contact@bradbourn-rda.org.uk Web: www.bradbourne-rda.org.uk

Swimming

Dementia-friendly swimming session at Tonbridge Swimming Pool. Fridays. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Table Tennis

Dementia-friendly sessions in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Tai Chi & Qi Gong

Sevenoaks. **Over-50s class.** Meets at St. Luke's Church Hall, Eardley Rd, Sevenoaks on Fridays 12–1 pm. Contact James Drewe Tel: 020 8883 3308, 07836 710281

Tennis

Dementia-friendly short-tennis sessions in Tonbridge. Angel Centre. Usually 1st & 3rd Friday of each month. Tel: 07715 652846 Email: suzy.abbott@tmactive.co.uk

Looking after your body

See our Help at Home information pack for baths and hairdressers

Health checks

“Your Health & the NHS” explains how to get all the free checks you're entitled to. You can get it from Independent Age, 6 Avonmore Rd, London W14 8RL Tel: 0800 319 6789, 020 7605 4200 Email: advice@independentage.org Web: www.independentage.org

Aromatherapy

Age UK

Day centres sometimes offer aromatherapy. You do not have to use the day centre to use this service

- Sevenoaks area. Hollybush Day Centre Tel: 01732 741558
- Swanley area. Try the Cottage Community Tel: 01474 879473 or Age UK North West Kent Tel: 01474 564898

Homeopathy

Low-cost treatment and free natural wellbeing information. Homeopathy Community Health Clinic, Bridges Centre, High St, Edenbridge. Tel: 07496 773267 Email: info@hchclinics.org Web: www.hchclinics.org

Massage

This is a healing technique which can be reassuring if you have anxiety or depression. If you are lonely it can bring back memories of being loved and cared for. You do not necessarily have to remove clothing.

Age UK

Day centres sometimes offer head massage. You do not have to use the day centre to use this service:

- Sevenoaks area. Hollybush Day Centre Tel: 01732 741558. From £40
- Swanley area. Try the Cottage Community Tel: 01474 879473 or Age UK North West Kent Tel: 01474 564898

See our local information pack on Help at Home for massage at home

Reflexology

Age UK

Day centres sometimes offer reflexology. This is a healing technique where you can stay seated and you do not have to remove any clothing. You do not have to use the day centre to use this service:

- Sevenoaks area. Hollybush Day Centre Tel: 01732 741558. From £40
- Swanley area. Try the Cottage Community Tel: 01474 879473 or Age UK North West Kent Tel: 01474 564898

Reiki healing

Age UK

Day centres sometimes offer reiki. This is a healing technique that involves gentle touch. Like massage, it can be reassuring if you have anxiety or depression. If you are lonely it can bring back memories of being loved and cared for. You do not have to use the day centre to use this service:

- Sevenoaks area. Hollybush Day Centre Tel: 01732 741558
- Swanley area. Try the Cottage Community Tel: 01474 879473 or Age UK North West Kent Tel: 01474 564898

Sexual health

One You

Tel: 0300 123 1220 Email: oneyou.kent@nhs.net
Web: www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk

Lifestyle advisers can support you with sexual health. They can offer you 6 free confidential sessions where you can discuss the changes you want to make and they can support you to set achievable goals on how to reach them.

Relate

Counselling for relationship problems for individuals, couples and families. Also sex therapy. Tel: 01892 529927 Email: appointments@westmidkent.eclipse.co.uk Web: www.relate.org.uk

Sexual health clinics

Contraceptive services and emergency contraception. Tel: 0300 790 0245 Web: www.kentsexualhealth.nhs.uk

Slips and trips

Inside your home

- Upgrade your bathroom. Install grab rails around the bath and toilet and place a non-slip rubber mat in your shower.
- Improve your lighting. Have clear lighting at top and bottom of stairs and motion activated lighting outside. If you need to climb a ladder to change bulbs, consider asking for help as ladder falls can cause serious injury.
- Clean floors carefully. Wall-to-wall carpeting can cushion falls. When cleaning hard floors consider replacing commercial cleaner with a cup of vinegar in a bucket of warm water to clean without leaving a slippery film.
- Secure your furniture. Bookcases, furniture, TVs and appliances that tip over can cause severe injury. Consider having them anchored to floors and walls.
- Get rid of hazards. Clear clutter e.g. pet toys, shoes and electrical cords from areas you frequently use e.g. hallways, stairs and route to bathroom. Sort out uneven flooring and ditch rugs which slip.
- Stairs and steps. Consider adding a second stair rail on the opposite side and repair outdoor steps that have become cracked or wobbly. Paint edges of individual steps to help see them better.

Outside your home

Slip and trip accidents increase during the autumn and winter season for a number of reasons: there is less daylight, leaves fall onto paths and become wet and slippery, and cold weather spells cause ice and snow to build up on paths. Here are some helpful guidelines if you do have to go out, particularly in icy conditions:

- Think about the best route to your destination and plan on taking a little extra time to get there
- Avoid rushing or taking shortcuts over areas which are still covered in snow or ice
- Select appropriate footwear. Flat footwear with rubber soles provides better traction on ice and snow than leather-soled or high-heeled shoes
- Use handrails where you can
- Take small steps to keep your centre of balance
- Avoid carrying lots of heavy shopping bags, especially on steps
- Walk slowly and never run on icy ground
- Keep both hands free for balance, rather than in your pockets
- Always be aware of your surroundings – some places will remain icy for longer than others, for example places that do not get the sun

- Be particularly careful getting into and out of vehicles – and hold onto the vehicle for support
- Keep paths clear of debris, water, ice and snow
- Be sure to use floor mats when entering a building to remove moisture from the soles of your shoes – this will help protect you, as well as others who follow, from having to walk on wet or slippery surfaces

Being Winter Wise explains how to look after yourself during the coldest months. You can get it from Independent Age Tel: 0800 319 6789 Web: www.independentage.org

Assistance Cards

Assistance Cards can be shown to bus drivers if you need help. The cards are discreet, easy for you to use and easy for others to understand especially if your disability is hidden. Just show the card to the driver as well as your travel ticket when boarding the bus. You can get them from Arriva Tel: 0344 800 4411 Email: customerservice@arriva.co.uk or download them from their website at www.arrivabus.co.uk

The cards are:

- Please give me time to sit in case I fall down
- Please be patient; I have a hidden disability
- Please let me know when we get to... (space to fill in with an address)
- Please tell me when we reach my stop (space to fill in with an address)

Smoking

One You

Tel: 0300 123 1220 Email: oneyou.kent@nhs.net

Web: www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk

NHS support to help you give up smoking including Quit Clubs, drop-ins and counselling. Lifestyle advisers can also support you give up smoking. They can offer you 6 free confidential sessions where you can discuss the changes you want to make and they can support you to set achievable goals on how to reach them.

Looking after your mind

See also our Social Activities information pack for befriending schemes and our Help at Home information pack for Companions

Improving your wellbeing

INVOLVE

If you could benefit from a conversation about your wellbeing, INVOLVE's Social Prescribers can support you to access community activities and advice. This includes if you feel lonely, have low self-esteem or are struggling with bereavement, retirement, unemployment etc. Tel: 03000 810005 Email: connectwell@involvekent.org.uk Web: www.involvekent.org.uk If you live in Swanley contact IMAGO Tel: 0300 011 1965 Email: hello@imago.community Web: www.imago.community

Live Well Kent

Free service to help you improve your mental wellbeing. Can help you to improve your lifestyle by meeting people through social activities, supporting you to improve relationships and manage money. Tel: 0800 567 7699. Email: info@livewellkent.org.uk Web: www.livewellkent.org.uk

One You

Tel: 0300 123 1220 Email: oneyou.kent@nhs.net

Web: www.kenthealthandwellbeing.nhs.uk

Lifestyle advisers can support your emotional wellbeing. They can offer you 6 free confidential sessions where you can discuss the changes you want to make and they can support you to set achievable goals on how to reach them.

Samaritans

National helpline (24 hours) Tel: 116 123 (free even from mobiles out of credit) Email: jo@samaritans.org Web: www.samaritans.org

- Anyone can call, no problem is too small. You do not have to be suicidal; it is fine if you just want a shoulder to cry on or to get something off your chest
- The Samaritans are there to listen, not to give advice, though they will suggest other organisations who might help if necessary
- There is no limit to the number of times they will speak to you
- You can contact Samaritans by text, email or visiting their office as well as by phone

Local office: 7 Lime Hill Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1LJ Tel: 01892 532323 Text messages: 07725 909090

Wellbeing groups

D'Vine Singers

Singing sessions in Sevenoaks for people with mental health problems or who enjoy singing in a supportive environment. Meet weekly in term-time for community singing.

Open to all without the need to read music. Tel: 07967 442935 Email:

nicolawhydenbach@yahoo.co.uk

Eden Songsters

Community group in Edenbridge who sing for fun and wellbeing. Open to all and cater for people with physical and mental health needs and/or carers. Tel: 01732 503606. Email:

jacky.hintze@outlook.com

Health walks can help to improve your mental health and wellbeing. There is a list of them in the Health Walks section of this information pack.

Up & Running

A jogging group for women who have mild to moderate depression, low self-esteem or anxiety. The group is ideal for non-runners and starts with walking and gentler jogging, building up over 10 weeks. Small charge. Outdoor exercise can really help with low moods improving your physical and mental wellbeing. The group meets at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre (Wednesdays 1pm) and runs in Knole Park. If you are interested phone Shona on 07710 279497 or Harriet on 07855 893863.

Counselling and therapy

Age UK

We offer a free face-to-face counselling service at our Sevenoaks office. Tel: 01732 454108. It may also be possible to visit you if you live in Edenbridge, Sevenoaks or Westerham areas. If you live in Swanley try Age UK North West Kent Tel: 01474 564898.

Anxiety UK

Tel: 03444 775774. Email: support@anxietyuk.org.uk Web: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Information, support and understanding including counselling and other therapies for those living with anxiety.

Hospices

Counselling to support you and your family if you have a terminal illness or are in your last year of life:

- Heart of Kent Hospice. Aylesford near Maidstone Tel: 01622 792200
Email: enquiries@hokh.co.uk Web: www.hokh.org
- Hospice in the Weald. Pembury near Tunbridge Wells Tel: 01892 820500
Email: enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk

IESO online talking therapy

Free one-to-one NHS Cognitive Behavioural Therapy may be able to help if you are anxious, stressed or depressed and would prefer talking about things in writing. It is more structured than talking things through face-to-face. Can also help with fears, phobias, panic attacks, shyness and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. You have a typed conversation with a qualified psychotherapist in a secure online therapy room at a scheduled time that is convenient to you including evenings or weekends. Appointments are 30-60 minutes and you can do this anywhere you can connect to the internet. Quick access and you can refer yourself. Tel: 01954 230066 Web:

www.iesohealth.com/westkent

Kent and Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT)

Tel: 0300 222 0123 Web: www.kmpt.nhs.uk

- IAPT Psychological Therapies provide free help for people with low to moderate mental and emotional problems such as stress, anxiety and depression. Support is offered in a variety of different ways such as guided self-help, books, online, webchat, phone, groups, and face-to-face by qualified therapists. You can refer yourself or ask your GP to refer you. Tel: 01322 776340, 0800 279 9500 Web: www.wearewithyou.org.uk www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-psychological-therapies-service
- KMPT Primary Care Psychological Therapy Tel: 01892 524996

Mental Health Matters

24-hour free telephone counselling for people feeling low, anxious, stressed, in emotional distress or finding it hard to cope. Tel: 0800 107 0160 Web:

www.mentalhealthmatters.com

MIND

Affordable counselling but may have long waiting list.

- North Kent MIND (Swanley) Tel: 01322 291380 Email: admin@northkentmind.co.uk Web: www.northkentmind.co.uk
- West Kent MIND (Edenbridge, Sevenoaks and Westerham). Tel: 01732 744950. Email: hello@westkentmind.org.uk Web: www.westkentmind.org.uk

Relate

Counselling for relationship problems. Tel: 01892 529927.

Sevenoaks Counselling

The Bridge, Littlecourt Rd, Sevenoaks TN13 2JG Tel: 01732 450118 Email:

info@sevenoakscounselling.org.uk Web: www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk

- There are no area restrictions but the counselling will be held in Sevenoaks, so you must be able to travel to their offices. They are behind the United Reformed Church on the corner of London Rd and Kippington Rd near the train station
- There is no limit on the number of sessions
- A donation is required for each session (though it is only what the client can afford)
- You do not have to be Christian to receive assistance. It is financially supported by local churches but the counselling isn't spiritual or evangelical. Different types of counselling are available from different counsellors

ThinkAction West Kent

Free confidential psychological therapies can help you deal with life's challenges and improve your overall wellbeing. You can refer yourself. Based in Maidstone.

Tel: 0300 012 0012 Web: www.thinkaction.org.uk

Tonbridge Counselling Service

Face-to-face counselling. Sliding scale of charges. Tel: 01732 605046

Counselling Directory

You can find other private counsellors at www.counselling-directory.org.uk

Mental health ongoing support

Aspirations

Free mental health service for people who are worried about the future or experiencing anxiety about finding a job or unemployed. Tel: 0333 880 2730 Web:

www.porchlight.org.uk/aspirations

Hub of Hope

You can search for local mental health services on this website www.hubofhope.co.uk

Kent and Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT)

Tel: 0300 222 0123 Web: www.kmpt.nhs.uk

Provides information and advice about mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services

Lookahead

Offer support for people with multiple and complex needs (mental health, learning disability and/or autism). Services include supported housing and lifelong learning. Tel: 020 7368

4600 Email: getintouch@lookahead.org.uk Web: www.lookahead.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation

General support. Web: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

MIND

- National helpline Tel: 0300 123 3393, 0300 790 0532
- North Kent MIND (Swanley) Tel: 01322 291380 Email: admin@northkentmind.co.uk Web: www.northkentmind.co.uk
- West Kent MIND, Wellbeing Centre, 34 St John's Rd, Sevenoaks. Tel: 01732 744950. Email: hello@westkentmind.org.uk Web: www.westkentmind.org.uk

Practical support with mental health and wellbeing includes:

- Community activities and groups, drop-in centres, supported housing and information for anyone with mental health issues
- Free 6-week courses on managing depression, stress and anxiety in Edenbridge and Sevenoaks
- Free 90-minute workshops on dealing with feelings of grief after losing someone or something of value eg losing a loved one, your pet, your job, your home, your mobility etc.

NHS Choices

If you need help now phone 999. For general support including psychological therapies.

Tel: 111 Web: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression

Reachout

Mental Health Resource provides a free outreach community service called Reachout. The nearest group is in Edenbridge. They offer confidential self-help support in a caring, non-judgmental environment with an experienced and trained group facilitator. They are completely free to access and hot drinks and refreshments provided. These self-help groups help anyone with mental health issues and offer on-going support. For more information, contact Jill Tel: 07989 219185 Email: jillg@mentalhealthresource.org.uk Web: www.mentalhealthresource.org.uk www.twmhr.org.uk

Rethink (National Schizophrenia Fellowship)

Help for people with bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia and other mental health issues. Vine Court Housing Project in Sevenoaks for people enduring mental health problems. Tel: 0300 500 0927, 01732 742351, 01215 227007 Email: info@rethink.org Web: www.rethink.org. Sevenoaks group contact Carole Wright Tel: 01732 452143

Royal College of Psychiatry

General support. Web: www.rcpsych.ac.uk

ThinkAction West Kent

Provides help and support for people who are suffering with mild to moderate/severe mental health problems. Based in Maidstone. Tel: 0300 012 0012 Web: www.thinkaction.org.uk

Support for veterans (people who have been in the armed forces and their families)

Big White Wall

Free online support for all military personnel, veterans and their families. Email: theteam@bigwhitewall.com Web: www.bigwhitewall.com

Combat Stress

UK Veterans mental health charity that helps ex-service personnel suffering from psychological injuries and mental health problems. Helpline Tel: 0800 138 1619 Web: www.combatstress.org.uk

Ripple Pond

Self-help support network for adult family members of physically or emotionally injured Service Personnel and Veterans. Tel: 0333 900 1028 Email: help@theripplepond.org Web: www.theripplepond.org

Royal British Legion

Someone to talk to for veterans, reservists and their families. Tel: 0808 802 8080 Web: www.rbl.org.uk

SSAFA Forces Helpline

Free and confidential helpline for veterans, reservists and their families. Tel: 0800 731 4880 Web: www.ssafa.org.uk/forcesline

Veterans' Mental Health Transition, Intervention & Liaison Service

NHS service offering mental health assessments and treatment to anyone who has served in the armed forces and their families or carers. Tel: 020 3317 6818 Web: www.veteransservice.nhs.uk

Mental health crisis

Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Team

Tel: 0300 222 0123 (24 hours). Web: www.kmpt.nhs.uk NHS mental health crisis help.

Saneline

If you are in emotional distress and need urgent support Tel: 0300 304 7000, 020 3805 1790 Email: info@sane.org.uk Web: www.sane.org.uk

Solace Café (for people who feel they are at risk of a crisis and need support or social contact). You can just walk in. Open Thursdays & Saturdays 5-9pm. 3 St Mary's Rd, Tonbridge. Tel: 01732 356630, 07436 102171 Email: solacecafe@westkentmind.org.uk

Swanley Mental Health Crisis

Drop-in service. Saturdays 7-9pm. Citizen's Advice office, 38 Swanley Centre, London Rd BR8 7TQ Tel: 07396 200237 Email: swanleycrisiservice@northkentmind.co.uk

Feeling suicidal

CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably)

Charity dedicated to preventing male suicide. Tel: 0800 585858 (5pm-midnight). Web: www.thecalmzone.net

Release the Pressure

Tel: 0800 107 0160 (24 hours). Confidential support, particularly for suicidal men.

Samaritans

National helpline (24 hours) Tel: 116 123 (free even from mobiles out of credit) Email: jo@samaritans.org Web: www.samaritans.org

- Anyone can call, no problem is too small. You do not have to be suicidal; it is fine if you just want a shoulder to cry on or to get something off your chest
- The Samaritans are there to listen, not to give advice, though they will suggest other organisations who might help if necessary
- There is no limit to the number of times they will speak to you
- You can contact Samaritans by text, email or visiting their office as well as by phone

Local office: 7 Lime Hill Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 1LJ Tel: 01892 532323 Text messages: 07725 909090

Stamp Out Suicide

Free ongoing over-the-phone counselling service for people living with suicidal thoughts. Tel: 07766 808222 (free 10am-2am daily). Web: www.stampoutsuicide.co.uk

Bereavement by suicide

Help is at Hand

If you have been bereaved by someone committing suicide. Web: www.nspa.org.uk/resources/help-hand-4/

SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide)

Helpline: 0844 561 6855 (9am-6pm)

How to make a complaint about an NHS mental health service

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your mental health service first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the mental health service if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group Tel: 03000 424244 Email: kmcs.complaints@nhs.net

If you are still unhappy with the treatment you have received, you can contact the Ombudsman Tel: 03000 610614

Hoarding

- If you have become isolated as a result of hoarding and you live in Sevenoaks District you can have 12 weeks of help. A “declutter buddy” volunteer will meet you (this can initially be away from your home) and then help you to reorganise your home. They will only touch your belongings with your permission and they will work with you at the rate you are willing to discard things.
- You will also need to attend six weeks of support sessions based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; these will be on a one-to-one basis with the option of going to others in a small group with up to 7 other people. The project can still help you even if you have difficulty engaging with other people because of anxiety. These support sessions will explore keeping possessions, keeping on top of paperwork, paying bills and getting into debt.
- If you feel isolated or lonely they will also try to find you suitable social activities, a befriender or counselling to talk things through.
- If your home needs a "deep clean" first before decluttering then they can arrange a free "deep clean" with Sevenoaks District Council. You could try Sally Tel: 07809 702704 but you should shop around. Ask any cleaning agency if they will do a “deep clean”.
- After 12 weeks you can continue to have occasional follow-ups for up to 6 months and you can go back for further help after that if you need it.
- You can refer yourself or can be referred by agencies such as Age UK, West Kent Housing, Kent Fire & Rescue, Citizens’ Advice etc. Tel: 01732 744950 Email: referrals@westkentmind.org.uk

Families, relationships and peace-of-mind

See our Help at Home information pack for aids and equipment, assessing and paying for care, carbon monoxide detectors, cooker switches, family carers, fire prevention, gas detectors, help with housework and laundry, Intermediate Care housing, letterbox sealing, looking after pets, Message in a Bottle and other medical condition alerts, mobility aids, next-of-kin, personal care, shopping, smoke alarms, socket covers, support for family carers, telecare monitoring and personal alarms

See our Care Agencies information pack for private care agencies

See our Care Homes information pack for residential and nursing homes

Bereavement and practical help after a death

See also our Social Activities information pack for befriending schemes

Age UK

- We produce publications on preparing your will, what to do when someone dies, planning a funeral and bereavement Tel: 0800 169 6565
- Our Information & Advice service also offers free counselling in some areas Tel: 01732 454108

Bereavement Advice Centre

Free helpline with practical information and advice on issues and procedures facing us after death. Tel: 0800 634 9494 Web: www.bereavementadvice.org

Bereavement Cuppa

Swanley Link, London Rd BR8 7AE. Monthly Saturdays 11am-1pm. Run by Ellenor Hospices

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

- **Bat & Ball - Abacus Furniture Project.** This is a West Kent Extra social enterprise which is part of West Kent Housing Association. Abacus House, Greatness Lane, Sevenoaks TN14 5BQ Tel: 01732 743365 Email: abacus@wkha.org.uk
Web: www.westkent.org
- **Bessels Green - Hospice in the Weald Sevenoaks Furniture Shop.** Main Rd, Sundridge TN14 6ED (behind Sevenoaks Garden Centre opposite Dunbrik Recycling Centre just after M25) Tel: 01959 562384 Email: enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Farnborough - Debra Furniture & Electrical Charity Superstore.** Proceeds go to a charity supporting people with the Epidermolysis Bullosa skin condition. 363 Crofton Rd, Locks Bottom near Orpington BR6 8NR Tel: 01689 860504 Email: orpington@debra.org.uk Web: www.debra.org.uk

Compassionate Friends Bereaved Parents' Support Group (Sevenoaks Area)

Local group Tel: 01959 523819 National helpline, 53 North St, Bristol Tel: 0117 953 9639

Creative Minds crafts & art therapy. Bridges Centre, High St, Edenbridge. 2nd Wednesday of the month 2-4pm. £5 for materials & refreshments

Cruse Bereavement Care West Kent

Emotional and practical support after the death of someone in the family, or a friend. Helpline: 01732 353575 (open Mon-Fri 9.30am-12pm). At other times ring 0844 477 9400 and please leave a message on the answerphone

Email: wkcruse@gmail.com (local support), helpline@cruse.org.uk (general support)

Web: www.cruse.org.uk www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

There is also a website for bereaved children and young people www.hopeagain.org.uk

De-cluttering

De-cluttering specialists can help you – for a fee - to sort out homes and paperwork. 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. Tel: 07763 876049 Mob: 07525 439692 Web: www.declutterdivas.co.uk Email: info@declutterdivas.co.uk
- LRB Organise. Specialise in de-cluttering for moving home. Prices vary. Contact Leanne Bradshaw. Mob: 07854 693711 Web: www.lrb-organise.co.uk Email: leanne@lrborganise.co.uk
- All Organised. Specialise in de-cluttering for downsizing. Prices start from £135. Contact Nicki Munns or Heidi Vorster Tel: 01732 779611 Web: www.all-organised.co.uk Email: info@all-organised.co.uk

Friends Together bereavement support network

Support network for people who are bereaved, lonely or have loved ones in long-term care. Coffee mornings and lunch clubs across the Tonbridge area. Free; do not provide counselling. Contact Lindsay Kennedy Tel: 01732 360328 Email: info@friendstogetherbs.org Web: www.friendstogetherbs.org

- Tuesdays 11am-12pm at Rose & Crown Hotel, High St, Tonbridge

- 3rd Tuesday of each month 7-9pm at Rose & Crown Hotel, High St, Tonbridge
- 3rd Friday of each month 12.30-2pm at Methodist Church, Higham Lane, Tonbridge.
Contact Ann Tel: 01732 353013
- 2nd Monday of each month 11am-1pm at Old School Hall, School Lane, Hadlow.

Funerals

Thanks to Citizens' Advice for this information

Who arranges a funeral?

- Most funerals are arranged by the nearest relatives and, if not, by a close friend. If there is no-one to do this, the local authority will arrange a simple funeral (see section at end).
- The person may have left instructions about the type of funeral and burial they wanted. There is no legal obligation for these instructions to be followed, but they usually are.

How funerals are arranged

- Most funerals are arranged through a funeral director. Find one who belongs to one of the professional associations, such as the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) or the Society of Allied & Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF). These associations have codes of practice and complaints procedures.
- Some local authorities also run their own funeral services by arrangement with a local firm of funeral directors.

Arranging a funeral without a funeral director

- You can arrange a funeral without a funeral director.
- If you want to do this, the Natural Death Centre or Cemeteries & Crematorium Department of your local authority can offer help and guidance.

Dealing with funeral costs

- If you arrange the funeral with a funeral director, you're responsible for the costs. You should ask to see a price list before choosing a funeral, or explain how much you have to spend and see what services are possible.
- In occasional circumstances you might be able to get help paying for the funeral if you're on benefits.
- Once you've chosen the funeral, you should be given a written estimate giving a breakdown of all of the costs involved. Ask for one if it's not provided.
- If you want to compare costs, you can contact other funeral directors, or ask someone else to help you with this.
- You may need to sign a contract with the funeral director. Make sure you read it carefully and ask the funeral director about anything you don't understand.

Services provided by funeral directors. A basic funeral is likely to include:

- a plain, lined coffin
- transport of the body of the person who has died to the funeral director's premises, usually up to ten miles from wherever the death occurred
- the care of the person who has died until the funeral. This will include washing and dressing the person who has died and laying the body out, but will not include embalming
- providing a hearse to take the body to the nearest crematorium or burial ground
- providing the necessary people to carry the coffin
- making all other necessary arrangements, for example, getting the required forms

Additional services funeral directors could provide, or which you may want to sort out elsewhere

- flowers
- a more expensive coffin and fittings
- press notices
- a medical certificate required for cremation, and any doctor's fees for signing this
- an organist
- fees for religious services
- a burial or crematorium fee. The burial fee will usually include the costs of preparing the grave
- extra cars
- embalming
- use of the Chapel of Rest
- transport from the mortuary
- special viewing arrangements
- the cost of journeys more than ten miles to the funeral director's premises
- a memorial
- catering arrangements
- special stationery

Paying for the funeral

- Some funeral directors might ask for a deposit before making the funeral arrangements
- You may be offered a discount to pay for the funeral before or soon after it takes place. If you know the money will be released at a later date to cover the cost, you might want to consider a bank loan or overdraft to pay early.
- Money may be released later, if the person who died made arrangements to pay for their funeral through an insurance or other policy, or if money is released after their estate has been dealt with.
- If there is a legal claim for negligence against someone for the death, the cost of the funeral can be claimed as compensation.
- Otherwise, you may agree payment by instalment, or pay after the legal process of dealing with the person's estate has been settled.

If you have no savings (or there is no family)

- If the deceased person or their family have no savings (or there is no family) then councils will provide a basic funeral.
- You must tell the hospital (or wherever the deceased died) that you have no money to pay for it and must not sign anything accepting responsibility for paying for it.
- You must ring the council covering the area where the deceased died.
- You need to ask for the Environmental Health department and then request a "public health funeral". Sometimes it may be known as a "welfare funeral" or a "contract funeral".
- You should be given a choice of burial or cremation and receive a dignified but basic funeral including a funeral service in a cemetery or crematorium chapel (church services would cost extra).
- The council may also take on responsibility for registering the death.

- It is worth checking what the deceased did if he or she worked in case a benevolent fund may be able to pay for funeral expenses; also whether they had any insurance policies or pensions that may cover the cost.

Hoarding

- If you have started hoarding as a result of being bereaved and you live in Sevenoaks District you can have 12 weeks of help. A “declutter buddy” volunteer will meet you (this can initially be away from your home) and then help you to reorganise your home. They will only touch your belongings with your permission and they will work with you at the rate you are willing to discard things.
- You will also need to attend six weeks of support sessions based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy; these will be on a one-to-one basis with the option of going to others in a small group with up to 7 other people. The project can still help you even if you have difficulty engaging with other people because of anxiety. These support sessions will explore keeping possessions, keeping on top of paperwork, paying bills and getting into debt.
- If you feel isolated or lonely they will also try to find you suitable social activities, a befriender or counselling to talk things through.
- If your home needs a "deep clean" first before decluttering then they can arrange a free "deep clean" with Sevenoaks District Council. They may be able to arrange a "deep clean" first before decluttering. You could try Sally Tel: 07809 702704 but you should shop around. Ask any cleaning agency if they will do a “deep clean”.
- After 12 weeks you can continue to have occasional follow-ups for up to 6 months and you can go back for further help after that if you need it.
- You can refer yourself or can be referred by agencies such as Age UK, West Kent Housing, Kent Fire & Rescue, Citizens’ Advice etc. Tel: 01732 744950 Email: referrals@westkentmind.org.uk

Holding On, Letting Go

Help children after the death of a grandparent. Tel: 0344 561 1511 Email: info@holg.org.uk

Kent Re-Users

Unit B6, Staplehurst Lodge Industrial Estate, Staplehurst Rd, Sittingbourne ME10 1XP
Tel: 01795 424008, 07816 364444 Email: info@kentreusers.co.uk
Web: www.kentreusers.co.uk

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

Saint Stephen’s Church, Tonbridge

37 Waterloo Rd, Tonbridge TN9 2SW Tel: 01732 771977
Email: office@ststephenstonbridge.org Web: www.ststephenstonbridge.org
Bereavement support regardless of faith

Samaritans

If you feel extreme depression or suicidal seek help from your GP or call the Samaritans helpline free on 116123

Sevenoaks Christian Counselling Service

The Bridge, Littlecourt Rd, Sevenoaks TN13 2JG Tel: 01732 450118
Web: www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk

- You do not have to be Christian to receive assistance. It is financially supported by local churches but the counselling isn't spiritual or evangelical. Different types of counselling are available from different counsellors
- There are no area restrictions but the counselling will be held in Sevenoaks, so you must be able to travel to their offices. They are behind the United Reformed Church on the corner of London Rd and Kippington Rd near the train station
- There is no limit on the number of sessions
- A donation is required for each session (though it is only what the client can afford)(anything from £1 to £50)

Veterans UK Helpline

Government helpline for veterans (and their families) who have served in the armed forces. Administers compensation payments for those injured or bereaved through service. Tel: 0808 191 4218 Web: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/veterans-uk

See our Help at Home information pack for Befrienders and Companionship

Care arrangements

Age UK

- We produce publications on NHS continuing healthcare and NHS-funded nursing care Tel: 0800 169 6565
- Also lists of local care homes including residential care and nursing homes and private care agencies Tel: 01732 454108

Community Link Support for Carers. 102 High St, Edenbridge TN8 5AY Tel: 07999 487699

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 Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email:

communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk If you live in the Swanley area you can get it from IMAGO Tel: 0300 011 1965 Email: 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 Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk Web: www.involvekent.org.uk If you live in the Swanley area you can get it from IMAGO Tel: 0300 011 1965 Email: navigation@imago.community

Seniors Helping Seniors

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). Tel: 01732 495665 Email: enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk Web: www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Family issues including childlessness

Age UK

- We produce publications on Power of Attorney (arranging for someone to make decisions about your finances or welfare), advice for carers, lesbians/gay men/bisexuality/transgender issues, safeguarding older people from abuse and protecting yourself Tel: 0800 169 6565.

Ageing without Children (AWOC)

Ageing without children refers to:

- people who have never had children either by choice or by circumstance
- people whose children have predeceased them
- people who are estranged from their children
- people whose children may live very far away from them

They are involved in:

- Local groups – AWOC sets up local groups where people ageing without children can meet together for emotional support
- Research – AWOC engages with people ageing without children to find out their thoughts and views on ageing
- Services and solutions – AWOC works in partnership with organisations to ensure that the needs of people ageing without children are taken into account
- Campaigning – AWOC campaigns to ensure that the needs of those ageing without children are not overlooked

You can find out more on their website at: www.awoc.org

Crossroads Care Kent

170 Tonbridge Rd, Watlingbury ME18 5NS

Tel: 0345 095 6701, 01622 817114 Email: enquiries@crossroadskent.org Web:

www.carerskm.org

This is a charity providing support for carers including respite care (breaks for family carers).

Community Safety

Sevenoaks District Council Community Safety Unit Tel: 01732 227000

Email: community.safety@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Can advise on domestic abuse:

- Physical, sexual or psychological abuse eg slapping, verbal abuse
- Financial or emotional deprivation eg withholding money
- Use or threat of legal sanctions eg threats about children
- Denial of rights eg denial of medical care or physical freedom

Grandparents Plus

1 Addington Square, London SE5 0HF Web: www.grandparentsplus.org.uk

Family & Friends Advice Line Tel: 0300 123 7015 Email:

info.gpa@grandparentsplus.org.uk

Grandparents Plus can support grandparents and other relatives raising children who aren't able to live with their parents. They can also provide advice, information and support for you if you're looking after a relative's or friend's child part of the time or on a full-time basis or are interested in their educational or welfare needs,. They have a range of services including:

- A general helpline
- Welfare benefits advice

- Support groups
- Factsheets

If you have lost or are losing contact with your grandchildren because of divorce, family arguments or other problems, they have a Grandparent Contact Helpline Tel: 0300 033 7015 Email: info.gpa@grandparentsplus.org.uk

Kent Family Mediation

Family Mediation is an affordable way of resolving issues and reaching agreements over property, finances and family divorce or separation cases involving children. This includes blocking contact with grandchildren after a divorce. They have a family mediation centre in Bat & Ball, Sevenoaks and can be contacted at 1 London Rd, Sittingbourne ME10 1NQ Tel: 01795 410457 Email: contact@kentfms.co.uk Web: www.kentfms.co.uk

Relate

Counselling for relationship problems for individuals, couples and families. Also sex therapy. Tel: 01892 529927 Email: appointments@westmidkent.eclipse.co.uk Web: www.relate.org.uk

West Kent Mediation

Free, confidential and impartial mediation to support individuals in resolving conflict and relationship breakdowns. Tel: 01732 469696 Email: theoffice@wkm.org.uk Web: www.wkm.org.uk

Getting about

There are several schemes which can take you to shopping centres, social activities, day centres, care homes and medical appointments even at hospitals in London. You can get a complete list by ringing Age UK on 01732 454108 and asking for our Transport information pack. In addition, Age UK North West Kent can escort you to hospital appointments if you live in the Swanley area Tel: 01474 564898

Blue Badges

Parking permits for disabled drivers or cars carrying people with severe mobility problems. The quickest way is to apply online. Alternatively you can request a paper form. Contact Kent County Council, Invicta House, Maidstone ME14 1XX Tel: 03000 416262 Textphone: 08458 247905 Email: county.hall@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk/bluebadge

You can get help filling in the Blue Badge form:

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

Bus Passes

- Concessionary bus passes are available for older and disabled people. Older people are eligible once they reach the state pension age for women regardless of whether they are men or women. Carers or companions may sometimes be entitled as well if you need someone to support you to use public transport
- Kent County Council, Invicta House, Maidstone ME14 1XX Tel: 03000 416262 Textphone: 08458 247905 Email: county.hall@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk/buspass

Kent Association for Disabled People

Tel: 01622 756444 (open Tuesdays or leave message), 07849 664643

Web: www.kadp.org.uk

- Outings for disabled people (from Maidstone)
- Respite holidays for disabled people with care

Motability

Tel: 0845 456 4566 Web: www.motability.co.uk

Adapting your car. 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.

National Key Scheme

The National Key Scheme (NKS) offers disabled people independent access to locked public toilets around the country. Toilets fitted with National Key Scheme (NKS) locks can now be found in shopping centres, pubs, cafés, department stores, bus and train stations and many other locations in most parts of the country. You can order a key from Disability Rights UK (formerly RADAR - the Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation)

Tel: 020 7250 8191 Web: www.disabilityrightsuk.org

You can also order it through other suppliers such as online through Amazon or you may be able to get it from Peabody Home Improvement Agency Tel: 0800 028 3172. However if you order it from Disability Rights UK, you can also get a list of where the toilets are in your area.

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with transport to social activities and medical appointments. £24.60 per hour. Do not provide personal care (help with washing, dressing, medication etc). Tel: 01732 495665 Email: enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk Web:

www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

Terminal illness

Hospices

Range of services to support you and your family if you have a terminal illness or are in your last year of life. The services help address physical, psychological, social, cultural and religious/spiritual needs. They include therapies, counselling and welfare advice as well as palliative care and end-of-life care. A referral from your GP is usually required.

- Heart of Kent Hospice. Aylesford near Maidstone Tel: 01622 792200
Email: enquiries@hokh.co.uk Web: www.hokh.org
- Ellenor near Dartford. Accepts self-referrals. Tel: 01474 320007 Email: info@ellenor.org Web: www.ellenor.org
- Hospice in the Weald, Pembury near Tunbridge Wells Tel: 01892 820500
Email: enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk

Your rights on abuse

Types of abuse

- **Physical abuse** eg hitting, slapping, pushing, restraining without justifiable reasons, deprivation of food, clothing, heating and health care.

- **Domestic abuse** eg violence between partners, former partners or by a family member. It can include rape, “honour” based violence, forced marriages and female genital mutilation.
- **Sexual abuse** eg any sexual activity which a vulnerable adult has not consented to, cannot consent to or has been pressured into as well as sexual comments, sexual innuendo, inappropriate touching or pornography.
- **Psychological abuse** eg verbal abuse, controlling or coercion, humiliation or ridicule, threats about family, pets or anything else, isolation or withdrawal, deliberate denial of religious or cultural needs, carers patronising older people.
- **Modern slavery** eg human trafficking, forced labour or domestic servitude.
- **Financial or material abuse** eg theft, fraud, exploitation, control of money or withholding it, goods or services bought without consent, misuse of loyalty cards by carers.
- **Neglect or acts of omission** eg hot meals delivered very late or at irregular times, unacceptably late or early bedtimes, inadequate help with eating and drinking, neglect of vital tasks such as washing or dressing because of lack of time, misuse of medication, carers talking over older people.
- **Discriminatory abuse** eg discrimination on grounds of sex, race, colour, language, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, disability or age.
- **Self-neglect** eg behaviour such as not eating, dirty clothes, lack of personal hygiene, hoarding.
- **Organisational abuse** eg one-off incidents or ongoing ill-treatment or neglect. All of the above can happen in an organisational setting.

What can you do to protect yourself and/or others from abuse?

- With each kind of abuse, neglect, undue pressure or assault, there is often someone who knows it is happening or suspects that something is wrong.
- Please contact one of the following to report abuse or seek advice if you feel you are being abused, or think somebody is at risk of harm or abuse. You can ask someone you trust to help you.
- If possible, let the person who is being abused know help is available and include them in the decision to seek help.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS).

PO Box 530, Tunbridge Wells TN2 9TB Tel: 01892 570538 (Helpline open Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm; can leave a message at other times) Email: office@davss.org.uk
Web: www.davss.org.uk

This is the local helpline for men and women who are experiencing physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse from current or former partners or other family members.

Other local advice

- **Choices.** Tel: 0800 917 9948. Email: info@choicesdaservice.org.uk Web: www.choicesdaservice.org.uk For men, women and children experiencing domestic abuse.
- **Domestic Abuse Support Services in Kent & Medway.** Tel: 0808 168 9276. Web: www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk Safe refuge accommodation, therapy programmes, adaptations to make your home safer, support with court proceedings and emergency welfare assistance
- **Dove Project.** Tel: 01702 300006. Refuge spaces in the South East
- **Family Matters.** Tel: 01474 537392 Email: admin@familymattersuk.org Web: www.familymattersuk.org For survivors of sexual violence and rape.
- **Samaritans.** Tel: 01892 532323 (24 hours)

- **Social Services.** In an emergency call 03000 416161 and ask for the Safeguarding Unit. Outside office hours call 03000 419191
- **West Kent Police.** Tel: 101 but in an emergency always dial 999

National advice

- **Action on Elder Abuse.** Tel: 0808 808 8141 Web: www.elderabuse.org.uk
Confidential advice on reporting abuse
- **Age UK.** Tel: 0800 169 6565. We produce publications on safeguarding older people from abuse, deprivation of liberty safeguards, age discrimination, resolving problems and making complaints about NHS care.
- **Broken Rainbow.** Tel: 0300 999 5428 Web: www.brokenrainbow.org.uk
Information and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender victims of domestic abuse.
- **BT Advice Line.** Tel: 0800 661441. For advice on malicious calls.
- **Childline.** Tel: 0800 1111. For anything to do with children.
- **DeafHope.** Tel: 07970 350366. Email: info@signhealth.org.uk Web: www.signhealth.org.uk For deaf women.
- **Domestic Violence Intervention Project.** Tel: 020 7928 4620. Email: info@dvip.org Web: www.dvip.org
- **Elder Abuse Response Helpline.** Tel: 0808 808 8141 Email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk Web: www.elderabuse.org.uk If you are concerned about the abuse of an older person.
- **Independent Age.** Tel: 0800 319 6789 Email: advice@independentage.org
"Staying in control when you're older" explains how to avoid being mistreated and what to do if it happens.
- **LGBT Anti-Violence Helpline.** Tel: 020 7704 2040 Web: www.galop.org.uk For LGBT+ people.
- **Men's Advice Line.** Tel: 0808 801 0327 Web: www.mensadvice.org.uk
Advice and support for men experiencing domestic abuse.
- **National Centre for Domestic Violence.** Tel: 0844 804 4999. For help getting an injunction.
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline.** Tel: 0808 200 0247 (24 hours) Web: www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk For women and people calling on their behalf.
- **National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline.** Tel: 0800 999 5428, 0300 999 5428 Email: help@galop.org.uk Web: www.galop.org.uk For LGBT+ people.
- **Protection Against Stalking.** Email: support@protectionagainststalking.org Web: www.protectionagainststalking.org
- **Rape Crisis.** Tel: 0808 802 9999 Email: hrcwinfo@rapecrisis.org.uk Web: www.rapecrisis.org.uk For women who have experienced any form of sexual violence.
- **RARA (Residents' and Relatives' Association)** Helpline: 020 7359 8136 Email: info@relres.org Web: www.relres.org Advice if you have concerns about care in a care home
- **Refuge.** Tel: 0808 200 0247 Web: www.refuge.org.uk Safe houses for women.
- **Respect.** Male victims helpline Tel: 0808 801 0327. Male perpetrators helpline Tel: 0808 802 4040 Web: www.respect.uk.net Work with male perpetrators and victims.
- **Shelter.** Tel: 0808 800 4444 Web: www.shelter.org.uk Can help if you are fleeing from violence or harassment.
- **Victim Support.** Tel: 01273 480130, 0845 303 0900 Web: www.victimsupport.org.uk Help for victims of crime or anyone else affected.

- **Women's Aid.** Tel: 0808 200 0247 Email: helpline@womensaid.org.uk Web: www.womensaid.org.uk For women experiencing domestic abuse.

What happens if you report abuse to Social Services?

- Every report of abuse is taken seriously.
- You will be listened to and asked to provide information about the situation.
- You will be encouraged to give your name to enable your concerns to be followed up.
- Professionals from the Safeguarding Team will make enquiries about the concerns. The person at risk will be contacted to involve them in the safeguarding process wherever possible, unless to do so may place them at further risk initially.

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