

Help at home in Tonbridge & Malling Borough

Amended June 2022

This local information pack covers:

- **a list of support organisations which can make life a little bit easier**
- adapting your home
- aids and equipment - finding out what you need
- aids and equipment - where to buy, sell or donate
- aids and equipment - mobility aids; bath & shower aids; toilet aids; bed, chair & sofa aids; dressing & comfort aids; health & leisure aids; household aids; kitchen & dining aids
- alarms
- care at home and support for carers
- home safety and security

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

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

We publish other local information packs covering:

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

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

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General help - making life a little bit easier

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

Advocacy

Citizens' Advice

Help filling in forms and representing your views. Free phone advice Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Some office appointments may be possible in Tonbridge, Aylesford, Larkfield and Snodland. Tel: 0808 278 7810.

INVOLVE

Advocacy and help representing your views. Tel: 03000 810005

The Advocacy People (formerly SEAP)

Advocacy and help representing your views. PO Box 375, Hastings TN34 9HU Tel: 0330 440 9000 Email: info@theadvocacypeople.co.uk Web: www.theadvocacypeople.co.uk
May be able to do home visits.

Audiologists and hearing loss

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

HI-Kent (Hearing Impaired Kent)

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

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

Hearing tests at home

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

Baths and showers

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for looking after your mind and body.

- Tonbridge Castle Gateway has a walk-in shower with an electric hoist and full wheelchair access. Anyone can use it. There are no staff to assist you but you can take in your own carers. Tel: 01732 770929, 844522
- If you are housebound and live in Tonbridge, West Malling, Snodland or Aylesford ask Kathy in Independent Living Support at Age UK Tel: 01732 454108 to put you in touch with people who can do home bathing. If you live in Tonbridge, you may also be able to get home bathing from Age UK Tunbridge Wells Tel: 01892 522591.
- If you need to change your bathroom to have a walk-in bath or easy access shower, please see the section on Adapting Your Home.
- If you need a bath or shower seat please see the section on Aids and Equipment.

Befrienders see also Companionship

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for talking things through and bereavement.

Age UK

We offer a community befriending service. Tel: 01732 366100

- Free weekly visits from a volunteer
- This service is mainly for housebound people over 65 who live alone and have very few or no visitors
- We cover the immediate area of Tonbridge, Hildenborough or Hadlow

Age UK also offers a telephone befriending service for people over 60.

- Free weekly calls from a volunteer for up to 30 minutes
- You can make a new friend to share experiences with
- We match older people with a friendly volunteer who shares similar interests and hobbies. While we're waiting to find a suitable volunteer, we will ring you regularly to make sure you are OK
- We protect everyone's safety by automatically connecting older people with their telephone friend which means no personal telephone numbers need to be exchanged
- If you are interested ring Age UK in Sevenoaks on 01732 454108 and ask us to make a referral to the Telephone Friendship Service for you.

Independent Age

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

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

Befrienders for people who are lonely, isolated or living alone.

Kent Association for the Blind

Tel: 01622 691357 Email: jo.wilkinson@kab.org.uk

Larkfield Community Group Buddy Scheme

Tel: 07563 196479 Email: jackiehirsch56@yahoo.co.uk Web:

www.larkfieldcommunitygroup.wordpress.com

Macmillan Cancer Support

Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Watlingbury ME18 5NS

Tel: 0345 095 6701 Email: enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

RAF Association

Tel: 0800 018 2361 Email: volunteers@rafa.org.uk Web: www.rafa.org.uk

Volunteer befrienders to visit RAF veterans and their families

Silver Line

Free confidential helpline providing information and advice to older people and telephone befriending. Tel: 0800 470 8090 Web: www.thesilverline.org.uk

West Kent MIND

Tel: 01732 744950. Email: hello@westkentmind.org.uk Web: www.westkentmind.org.uk

Befriending for people with mental health problems who struggle to go out alone. You can meet your befriender each week at a venue in the community such as a coffee shop or gym. Or go for a walk and chat together or join an adult education class together.

Bills, correspondence and paperwork

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

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

Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include helping you organise bills, correspondence and paperwork. They cannot give financial advice or make financial decisions for you. It currently costs £18.50 per hour. We cover some areas of Tonbridge & Malling Borough

LRB Organise

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

Chiropodists, podiatrists and toenail cutting

- Chiropodists and podiatrists
 - Here are a few examples but you should shop around:
 - Age UK Tonbridge office Tel: 01732 366100
 - Derwent Day Centre, Tonbridge Baptist Church Tel: 01732 352824
 - Head to Toe Health, Tonbridge Tel: 07549 559056
 - Ms A Neale, Hildenborough Tel: 01732 832524
 - You can find others by searching for “podiatrist” on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk
 - Home visits may be offered by some chiropodists 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 also run a fee-paying NHS service at local clinics. To book an appointment Tel: 0300 123 1554. There may be a waiting list.
- 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

Companionship see also Befrienders

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for talking things through and bereavement.

A number of organisations provide companionship but they will charge. This can however be a way to get somebody to do food preparation or medication supervision who does not need other personal care. Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to help with food preparation for example supervising using a microwave (Tel: 01732 454108). If you need somebody to actually prepare your food or cook a meal or to supervise medication then one of the care agencies listed below may be able to help.

Agencies that provide companions who can visit

Caremore Companions Ltd

Tudor Dean, Homedean Rd, Chipstead, Sevenoaks TN13 2QN

Tel: 01732 453070

E-mail: info@caremorecompanions.co.uk

Web: www.caremorecompanions.co.uk

Contact: Alexandra Ward

- Cover Tonbridge
- Family-owned company offering general companionship
- Provide a friendly but not over-familiar team of trained companions who are fully vetted, insured and all based locally. Offer written and/or telephone references if required
- They match the companions most suitable to the client's requirement and always maintain the same person and/or team (no more than 2 people) thus offering continuity of care. They aim to use their initiative but not take over, remaining sensitive to the needs of clients at all times
- There is a minimum one-hour visit as they do not believe anything worthwhile can be achieved in shorter time periods

Cherished Family Services

Tel: 07877 116466 Web: www.cherishedfamilyservices.co.uk

Contact Abigail Langridge

- Cover Tonbridge
- She offers companionship, lifestyle management, day-to-day support with business affairs and support for family members

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with escorting to social activities and medical appointments, 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

Agencies that can provide companions who live-in

Bespoke Care Company Ltd

1st floor, Marne House, 24 Mount Ephraim Rd, Tunbridge Wells

Tel: 01892 518400

E-mail: enquiries@bespokecarecompany.co.uk

Web: www.bespokecarecompany.co.uk

Contact: Kirstin Glover

- Cover Tonbridge
- They provide live-in assistance and support including companionship
- Costs start from £650 per week, depending on care needs

Domus

Domus Live-in Care, 4 Linden Close, Tunbridge Wells TN4 8HH Tel: 01892 512961

Email: info@domus-live-in.co.uk Web: www.domus-live-in.co.uk

Contact: Anita or Bridget

- Cover Tonbridge
- Provide a live-in care service including companionship
- Average weekly charge is £935

Home Help Companions

Tel: 01403 711 639

Email: julia.arnold@homehelpcompanions.co.uk

Web: <http://www.homehelpcompanions.co.uk>

Contact: Julia Arnold

- Cover Tonbridge
- Live-in care and companionship for elderly people who need help in and around their home. A long-term companion lives in the elderly person's home enabling them to enjoy the independence of being able to live in their own homes for longer and the freedom of going out for more months or years than they may otherwise be able to
- Companions are generally ex-nurses and professional carers. Many specialise and have qualifications in various conditions
- Companions can work in and around the house from 5-12 hours per day depending on requirements
- Companions live-in your home and are employed directly by you. Companions usually charge £90 - £650 per week depending on hours, skills, duties, qualification requirements, experience etc. This is paid directly to the companion + tax where relevant. This costs about 50% of agency staff as there is no agency commission to pay. However Home Help Companions charges a one-off fee of £575 (for part-time companions) or 4 x the weekly salary (for full-time companions)

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with escorting to social activities and medical appointments, 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

Other organisations offering companionship

Close to Hand

This is an online brokerage service that can put you in touch with someone local to pop in for a chat and to help with everyday tasks, such as shopping, making a sandwich, collecting a prescription and helping with housework. It is important to note that home helpers listed on the website are self-employed and have not been vetted by Close to Hand. Web: www.closetohand.co.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Computer problems

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

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

Our volunteers may be able to do home visits to help set up computers or broadband or troubleshoot if there are problems. We cover the immediate area of Tonbridge, Hildenborough or Hadlow

Counselling

Please see Talking things through section in Health & Wellbeing information pack

De-cluttering see also Hoarding and House clearance

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

- Declutter Divas. Specialise in working with people who are older or have had a family bereavement as well as clients who have medical disabilities, hoarding disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders or other special needs. Ability to work with people in a non-judgemental way. Prices start from £50 + travelling expenses. Contact Allyson Pritchard or Zoe Steel. 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

Dentists

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

- Mobile Dentist Company Tel: 0844 809 2660
Email: enquiries@themobiledentistcompany.com
Web: www.themobiledentistcompany.com

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

Filling in forms

Age UK

- If you need help at home because of your health then you are eligible to apply for health benefits regardless of your income or savings. You can get more information about these benefits by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565.
- You can get 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 in Tonbridge, Aylesford, Larkfield and Snodland Tel: 0808 278 7810

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Fingernail cutting and manicures

Mobile beauticians can visit you at home to cut fingernails or give you a manicure

- Sophie Tel: 07527 401877, 01892 540849
- Kelly Tel: 07850 713270

Some podiatrists (chiropodists) may also be able to do it.

Gardening

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

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

Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include looking after your garden. This is garden maintenance rather than horticulture so for example it includes mowing the lawn and trimming low hedges but not planting or treework. It currently costs £19.50 per hour.

Independent Age

Extra Help at Home explains how to get help with your garden. You can get it from

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

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

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 gardener. 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

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Peabody Home Improvement Agency

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

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

Seniors Helping Seniors

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

enquiries@seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk Web: www.seniorshelpingseniors.co.uk

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

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

Age UK

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

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

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

Social Services

Tel: 03000 416161. Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk

Web: www.kent.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

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

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. The West Kent Hospital Discharge Scheme covers Tonbridge

Hairdressers

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for looking after your mind and body.

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

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

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

Health appointments

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for hospitals.

Age UK

Our Independent Living Support service can make medical appointments and take you to them as part of our regular service. We can provide most domestic support within reason but do not provide personal care. You get the same support worker at the same time each week so you can get to know them and it is a flexible service so if, for example, your support worker normally does housework, you can say that you want them to take you to a medical appointment if you prefer. The time is yours and we charge £18.50 per hour for a minimum of one hour per week. Tel: 01732 454108.

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Seniors Helping Seniors

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

Heating breakdown

- If your heating breaks down you should contact your energy supplier
- If you are on their Priority Services Register you should tell them so they know you are a priority
- If you have difficulty contacting them you should contact their complaints department or Citizens' Advice Consumer Service Tel: 0808 223 1133
- If you need to borrow heaters temporarily you may be able to borrow them from Age UK. You can arrange to collect a heater from our Sevenoaks office by phoning us

on 01732 454108. If you are a social housing tenant you should approach your landlord first

Heating costs and repairs

Please see our Housing or Money Matters information packs

Hoarding see also Decluttering and House clearance

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

Declutter Divas

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

Home library

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

Kent Libraries & Archives

Tonbridge Library, 1 Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge TN9 1TG Tel: 03000 413131 Email: tonbridgelibrary@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk/libs

- Home Library Service visiting disabled people and their carers who may be housebound, visually-impaired or hearing-impaired
- Can bring books or audio items to you every fortnight
- You can receive this for just a few weeks or indefinitely
- Large Print books for people with sight problems
- Audiobooks on CD or cassette for blind & partially-sighted people (also known as Talking Books or Spoken Word). Free

Lions Clubs

Talking Newspaper for Blind People. Contact Tonbridge Lions Club Tel: 01732 358218, 0845 833 9819 Email: info@tonbridgelions.co.uk Web: www.tonbridgelions.co.uk

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

Talking Book Service for people with sight problems.

House clearance see also Decluttering and Hoarding

Bulk waste collections

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

Charity furniture shops

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

- **Tonbridge - Hospice in the Weald Tonbridge Furniture Shop.** 111 High St, Tonbridge TN9 1DL Tel: 01732 360566 Email: enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Tonbridge - YMCA Furniture Warehouse.** Run by YMCA charity. Tower House, Vale Rise, Tonbridge TN9 1TB Tel: 01732 361108 Email: warehouses@westkentymca.org.uk Web: www.westkentymca.org.uk
- **High Brooms - Hospice in the Weald Tunbridge Wells Furniture Shop.** 6 Tunbridge Wells Trade Park, Longfield Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QF Tel: 01892 536442 Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
- **Tunbridge Wells – British Heart Foundation Furniture & Electrical Store.** 39-45 Grosvenor Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2AW Tel: 01892 628600 Web: www.bhf.org.uk
- **West Malling – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 50 High St, West Malling ME19 6QR Tel: 01732 870962 Web: www.hokh.org
- **Aylesford – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 109 Hall Rd, Aylesford ME20 7RE Tel: 01622 715097 Web: www.hokh.org
- **Maidstone – Demelza Hospice Care.** 98 Sandling Rd, Maidstone ME14 2RJ Tel: 01622 427885 Web: www.demelza.org.uk

Clearance Grafters

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

David & Paul

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

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

Housework and laundry

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include light housework and laundry. It currently costs £18.50 per hour. Tel: 01732 454108 to see if they can help you at home. We cover some areas of Tonbridge & Malling Borough

Bizzy Lizzy's

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

Laundry services

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

- Butterfly, Leigh Tel: 01732 441005
- Iron Maids, Tunbridge Wells Tel: 01892 575222
- Sealclean, Tonbridge Tel: 01732 370990
- Tonbridge Dry Cleaners, Tonbridge Tel: 01732 359039

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 cleaner or home help. 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

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Seniors Helping Seniors

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

Information and advice

Age UK

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

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

Massage

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for massage at day centres, GP surgeries, hospices and hospitals.

Meals

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

Ready meals

You must be able to heat food up. They are usually frozen meals delivered weekly or fortnightly. The drivers (who are police-checked) may be able to help you put meals into your freezer. Here are some examples:

- Wiltshire Farm Foods (deliver across UK) Tel: 0800 773773, 0800 077 3100 Web: www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com
- Oakhouse Foods Tel: 0333 370 6700 Web: www.oakhousefoods.co.uk
- Parsley Box offer non-frozen meals. Tel: 0800 612 7225 Web: www.parsleybox.com
- Chef on Board. Tel: 01981 250494 Web: www.chefonboard.com
- Cook Tel: 01732 759020 Web: www.cookfood.net
- Monmouthshire Vegetarian Food Company (will deliver further afield on request) Tel: 07968 617634 Web: www.veggiefoodco.com
- Goodness Direct Tel: 0871 871 6611 Web: www.goodnessdirect.co.uk
- Vegan Dishes (not frozen) Web: www.vegandishes.co.uk
- RealFoods Tel: 0131 556 1772 Web: www.realfoods.co.uk

You may also be able to order food to be delivered by supermarkets. Amazon Pantry, Asda, Iceland, Morrisons, Ocado, Tesco and Waitrose all deliver fresh food and ready meals ordered online. Sainsbury's also accept phone orders on 0800 328

Help preparing or cooking meals

- Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to assist with things such as making a sandwich, opening cans, microwaving food, dishing it up, cutting it up, reminding, prompting or encouraging to eat or drink. £18.50 per hour. Tel: 01732 454108.
- However if you need someone to actually prepare your food or cook meals for you then you need a companionship agency or care agency. Companionship agencies are listed above under Companionship and a list of care agencies is available from Age UK Tel: 01732 454108.

Meals on wheels (hot meals)

- If you live in some areas you may be able to get them privately from a company called Apetito Tel: 01225 560419. Social Services may be able to subsidise the cost for people on a low income with low savings Tel: 03000 416161
- We do not know of any other companies that deliver hot meals apart from things like Deliveroo. However Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to help heat food up in a microwave.

Assistance with eating and drinking

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

Medical condition alerts

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for specific medical conditions, families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

Can sniff and tell you if you have diabetes and need to have an injection or eat sugary food, if you have an allergy and there are airborne allergens in your environment or if you have Postural Tachycardia Syndrome (a heart condition) and are about to have a blackout.

Medical Detection Dogs, 3 Millfield, Greenway Business Park, Winslow Rd, Great Horwood, Milton Keynes MK17 0NP Tel:01296 655888 Email: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk Web: www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

MedicAlert

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

MedicAlert ID bracelets, necklaces and watches help make sure that you receive fast, relevant treatment in an emergency. Worn on your pulse point, they carry the international medical symbol and are an effective way to communicate vital details of medical conditions, allergies and your next of kin. Useful if you are unconscious or unable to speak. There is a charge for these bracelets.

Message in a Bottle

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

Medication

Dosset boxes and other help from chemists

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

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

More information is available at: www.boots.com/en/Medisure-Taking-medicines-correctly_1282213

Picking up prescriptions

- Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to pick up prescriptions on a regular basis. £18.50 per hour. Tel: 01732 454108.
- Macmillan Cancer Support volunteers can pick up prescriptions free-of-charge for people with cancer. Contact Jen Lane or Philip Moore, 170 Tonbridge Rd, Watlington ME18 5NS Tel: 0345 095 6701 Email: enquiries.macmillan@crossroadskent.org

Medication reminders and supervision

- Age UK's Independent Living Support service may be able to remind, prompt or encourage you to take medication. £18.50 per hour. Tel: 01732 454108.
- However if you need someone to actually supervise or physically help you to take medication then you need a companionship agency or care agency. Companionship agencies are listed above under Companionship and a list of care agencies is available from Age UK Tel: 01732 454108.
- Medication reminders can be combined with a basic personal alarm. They send you a visual and audible alert when medication needs to be taken. If time slots are missed, an alert is sent to the monitoring centre who will contact you. These are available from Welbeing Tel: 01323 644422 Web: www.welbeing.org.uk

- There are many companies which specialise in products for memory loss. One example is Unforgettable. Tel: 020 3322 9070/9388 Email: info@unforgettable.org Web: www.unforgettable.org Here are a couple of things that might help:
 - Automated medication dispensers open and dispense medication at particular times but you need to remember to take it immediately and be able to use the equipment.
 - Memrabel is a clock and calendar which can be programmed with family photos and voices to give visual and verbal reminders to take medication.

Moving furniture

David & Paul

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

Peabody Home Improvement Agency

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

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

West Kent Hospital Discharge Scheme (Handy Heroes)

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

Moving home

If you are on means-tested benefits you may be able to get a Budgeting Loan from the DWP Social Fund to help with removal costs

Britannia Bearsbys

Based in Tonbridge and Aylesford. Tel: 01732 358900, 01622 611861 Email: info@bearsbys.com Web: www.bearsbys.com

Chatfields Home Removals

Waterloo Rd, Tonbridge TN9 2SN Tel: 01732 651163 Email: info@chatfieldsremovals.co.uk Web: www.chatfieldsremovals.co.uk

Coppards Removals

Based in Bromley but cover Tonbridge Tel: 01892 320400 and Kings Hill Tel: 01732 757797.

Crutch Brothers

22 Morleys Rd, Tonbridge TN9 1RA Tel: 01732 359043 Email: enquiries@crutchbros.com Web: www.crutchbros.co.uk

Goodfellows Removals & Storage

Based in West Malling. Tel: 01732 841841, 0800 634 6794. Web:
www.goodfellowsremovals.co.uk

GP Removals

Hermitage Lane, Aylesford ME20 7PX Tel: 01732 871503, 0800 644 0182 Email:
info@gpremovals.co.uk Web: www.gpremovals.co.uk

Senior Services

Relocation service specialising in helping older people to move home. Tel: 07939 042805.
Email: info@seniorservicesmanagement.co.uk
Web: www.seniorservicesmanagement.co.uk

Opticians and sight loss

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

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

Pest Control

- Homeowners and tenants normally have to pay though tenants should check with their landlord if they will pay; it will depend on their tenancy agreement
- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. Their Pest Control section can give you advice. Tel: 01732 876299 Email: pest.control@tmbc.gov.uk
Web: www.tmbc.gov.uk They use a contractor called Monitor Pest Control Ltd who will remove rats, mice, bedbugs and cockroaches free of charge for people on council tax benefits. Everyone else has to pay. They will also remove other pests but you will have to pay. Tel: 01474 358855 Email: info@monitorpestcontrol.co.uk
Web: www.monitorpestcontrol.co.uk

Pets

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Cinnamon Trust

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

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with pet care. £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

Shopping

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge

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

Our Independent Living Support service provides support to remain independent in your own home which may include taking you shopping or doing your shopping for you. It currently costs £18.50 per hour. We cover some areas of Tonbridge & Malling Borough

Grocery Shopping Assistance Service

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

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Seniors Helping Seniors

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

Adapting your home

Getting information

Age UK

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

Independent Age

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

Organising and paying for adaptations

The following may be able to help you organise and pay for adaptations:

- INVOLVE Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
- If you have an urgent medical condition your District Nurse may also be able to help. Your GP can refer you to them.
- Occupational Therapists work for Social Services and can carry out a full assessment but there is usually quite a long waiting list. Tel: 03000 416161.

The following may be able to help you organise adaptations but you will have to pay:

- Private occupational therapists. You can get a private occupational therapist to come and see you. This is much quicker but costs about £100. One example is Safe & Well Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent
- Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent
- Sevenoaks Mobility Centre. This is a company that can visit you at home, assess your requirements and provide a selection of solutions (with no obligation to purchase). They only offer mobility aids, not other equipment. Contact Paul Davis Tel: 01732 448144 Email: info@sevenoaksmobility.co.uk Web: www.sevenoaksmobility.co.uk

What sort of things can you get a grant for?

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

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

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

You can apply for a **Hospital Discharge Grant** if you are in hospital waiting to go home. The work must cost less than £3000. These grants are for people who are owner-occupiers or private tenants; they are not means-tested but are discretionary. They may be able to arrange a “deep clean”. Alternatively you can contact an agency that does “deep cleans”. You could try Sally Tel: 07809 702704 but you should shop around. Ask any cleaning agency if they will do a “deep clean”.

Stairlifts, walk-in showers, ramps etc

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

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

Repairing leaky roofs, dangerous electrics, inadequate heating/hot water etc

If you are an owner-occupier or landlord you can apply for a **Housing Assistance Grant**. These grants are for urgent repairs such as leaking roofs or buying a new boiler. They are means-tested so you must be on a low income, for example, claiming Pension Credit or Council Tax Support. The work must cost less than £10,000

New boilers

You may be able to get a **Discretionary Grant** up to £7500. This is effectively a loan. The council would give you the money but it has to be repaid either by you if you move or by your beneficiary if you die and your home is sold

Who else can organise or pay for adaptations?

Occupational Therapists/Social Services

Occupational Therapists can also assess your needs directly but you may have to wait. Contact Kent County Council's Social Services Team on 03000 416161 and ask for an Occupational Therapist assessment of your needs.

Community Navigators

Free information and advice on maintaining and adapting your home to your needs. Care Navigators may be able to visit you in your own home to offer advice on what help may be available. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk

Local councils and home improvement agencies

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

- **Peabody Home Improvement Agency.** Tel: 0800 028 3172 Email: infohia@peabody.org.uk Web: www.peabody.org.uk/care-support
- **Tonbridge & Malling Private Housing Team,** Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4LZ Tel: 01732 876395 Email: privatesectorhousing@tmbc.gov.uk housing.services@tmbc.gov.uk Web: www.tmbc.gov.uk

Social housing providers

Clarion Housing Group, 32 Tower View, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4UY Tel: 0800 197 2880 or (from a mobile) 0300 500 4444. They can advise both their own tenants and others. Advice can be provided on:

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

Handyperson services

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge does not provide a handyperson service. However you could consider asking the following for quotes:

Blue

Tel: 0800 255 0255. Email: helpdesk@trustinblue.com Web: www.trustinblue.com

This is a handyperson service provided by retired police officers.

Peabody Home Improvement Agency

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

- Their handyperson can do small or basic odd jobs around the home that you can't manage (for example putting up shelves, changing washers on taps, mowing the lawn, changing locks and general DIY).
- They do not do any gas or electrical work though they will change a lightbulb for you.
- They may also be able to do basic painting and decoration of walls and woodwork.

- They charge £15 per hour plus materials. A subsidised rate may apply in some areas if you are on a low income. If you have a few small jobs it may be worth waiting to get them all done at once and get your money's worth.
- There may be a waiting list depending on availability of handypersons.

Royal British Legion

Tel: 0808 802 8080 Web: www.britishlegion.org.uk www.rbl.org.uk

Support for veterans, reservists and their families. The Legion have a handyperson team trained to carry out small home repairs such as fitting smoke alarms or fixing grab rails to help you get around in your home safely.

Social Services

Tel: 03000 416161. Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk

Web: www.kent.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Social Services may be able to directly provide small home adaptations (such as a raised toilet seat or grab rails). They will arrange for things they provide to be fitted.

Repair Café

- Monthly Saturdays 10am-1pm St Stephen's Church, Waterloo Rd, Tonbridge
- Volunteers will repair items such as toasters, lamps, hairdryers, clothes, bikes, toys and crockery but you have to take them there
- Web: www.tonbridgerepaircafe.uk

Finding tradespeople

Age UK

Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge do not keep a list of tradespeople. However some Age UK's do have details of local tradespeople but bear in mind that their tradespeople may charge for travelling:

- Age UK London business directory. They charge companies £470 per year to be listed. The companies have to provide references and be members of a trade organisation for any complaints. Customers are asked for feedback. Tel: 0800 334 5056.
Web: www.aubdlondon.co.uk/
- Age UK Maidstone trusted traders list. Tel: 01622 753618.
Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/maidstone/our-services/traders-list

Trading Standards Checked

Tel: 03000 414141.

Web: <http://tschecked.kent.gov.uk> www.kent.gov.uk/business/trading-standards

This is Kent County Councils' fair trader scheme that helps people find reliable, honest and trusted tradespeople. Rigorous background checks are carried out by Trading Standards. These include:

- consumer complaints and non-compliance with legislation.
- a review of confidential and restricted information supplied by external organisations, other public authorities and the police, in addition to checking information that is freely available to the public.
- Public Liability Insurance check.
- Identification checks.
- Credit Checks (including Insolvency, Bankruptcy and County Court Judgements).
- Mandatory Accreditation and Qualification checks.
- Verification of trading address / registered address.
- Checks into company trading history.

Tradespeople have to agree to follow a Code of Conduct. You should note that it does not prevent things from going wrong or guarantee the quality of workmanship. However it does mean that should any problems occur, they should be dealt with in a reasonable manner. This should ensure that they are not “cowboys” or “rogue traders”. You should also note that tradespeople have to pay to be in the scheme.

Other schemes which may not carry out as many checks include:

- Checkatrade Tel: 0845 408 4866 Web: www.checkatrade.com/kent
- Trustmark Tel: 0333 555 1234, 01344 630804 Web: www.trustmark.org.uk

Peabody Home Improvement Agency

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

- If you need a tradesperson (for example you need a plumber, electrician or decorator) they can't make particular recommendations but they can give you a few names of tradespeople they use on a regular basis who they think are reliable and trustworthy so you can ring round to get quotes.
- If you wish to make bigger changes to your home they can draw up detailed specifications for any building work and commission it to make the changes you want.
- They may be able to investigate grants, loans or charitable help to pay for any large work.
- They may be able to help you to stay warmer by arranging for thermostats to be fitted on radiators, free servicing of gas fires and boilers and getting financial help if you need a new boiler.

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 tradespeople. 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

Problems with traders

Citizens' Advice Consumer Service

For anyone experiencing problems with tradespeople. Tel: 0808 223 1133.

Aids and equipment

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for finding and using health services, families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Finding out what you need and getting assessed

You will need to ask for a visit at home to assess you. There are various people who can do assessments and it is free. They will also be able to sort out whether you are eligible for free equipment or financial help and arrange it. However you will usually have to wait for an assessment.

Community Navigators

They may also be able to help you. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk

District Nurses

If you have an urgent medical condition your District Nurse may also be able to help. Your GP can refer you to them.

Occupational Therapists

They work for Social Services and can carry out a full assessment but there is usually quite a long waiting list. Tel: 03000 416161.

Private occupational therapists

You can get a private occupational therapist to come and see you. This is much quicker but costs about £100. One example is Safe & Well Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent
They also have an online questionnaire to find out what daily living aids could help you.

Safe & Well Demonstration Centre

You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent

Sevenoaks Mobility Centre

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

Getting further information and advice

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

Age UK

You can get a factsheet on disability equipment Tel: 0800 169 6565.

Disabled Living Foundation

Charity that can give information and advice on choosing equipment and aids for people with disabilities. Ground Floor, Landmark House, Hammersmith Bridge Rd, London W6 9EJ Tel: 0300 999 0004 Email: info@dlf.org.uk

Living made Easy

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

Hiring aids and equipment

Age UK

Our offices have a limited number of wheelchairs for hire. £50 returnable deposit plus £10 per week suggested donation. Tel: 01732 366100 (Tonbridge) or 01732 454108 (Sevenoaks).

British Red Cross

If your disability is temporary you can borrow wheelchairs and commodes from the British Red Cross. They charge £17.50 per week for a wheelchair and £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

Kent Mobility Ltd

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

Motability

If you get the higher rate of mobility component for Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment then you may be able to lease a specially-adapted new car, scooter or powered wheelchair through Motability. If you are over 65 and receiving Attendance Allowance then you are not eligible. Tel: 0845 456 4566. Web:

www.motability.co.uk

Paying VAT for people with disabilities

Disabled people do not have to pay VAT when 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

Buying aids and equipment

You may be able to get some things free-of-charge or at a reduced cost. The best way to do this is to get yourself assessed (see Finding Out What You Need above). However you

may have to wait for an assessment so if it is urgent and you can afford it you may prefer to buy things yourself. It may be worth shopping around. Some shops may also sell second-hand aids and equipment.

Age UK

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

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

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

Charity furniture stores

- you may be able to buy good-quality second-hand furniture, electrical and household items
- you may also be able to buy second-hand wheelchairs and scooters
- they may be able to deliver free-of-charge if it is nearby
 - **Tonbridge - Hospice in the Weald Tonbridge Furniture Shop.** 111 High St, Tonbridge TN9 1DL Tel: 01732 360566 Email: enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
 - **Tonbridge - YMCA Furniture Warehouse.** Run by YMCA charity. Tower House, Vale Rise, Tonbridge TN9 1TB Tel: 01732 361108 Email: warehouses@westkentymca.org.uk Web: www.westkentymca.org.uk
 - **High Brooms - Hospice in the Weald Tunbridge Wells Furniture Shop.** 6 Tunbridge Wells Trade Park, Longfield Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QF Tel: 01892 536442 Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
 - **Tunbridge Wells – British Heart Foundation Furniture & Electrical Store.** 39-45 Grosvenor Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2AW Tel: 01892 628600 Web: www.bhf.org.uk
 - **West Malling – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 50 High St, West Malling ME19 6QR Tel: 01732 870962 Web: www.hokh.org
 - **Aylesford – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 109 Hall Rd, Aylesford ME20 7RE Tel: 01622 715097 Web: www.hokh.org
 - **Maidstone – Demelza Hospice Care.** 98 Sandling Rd, Maidstone ME14 2RJ Tel: 01622 427885 Web: www.demelza.org.uk

Disability Equipment Service

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

Kent Mobility Ltd

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

Sevenoaks Mobility Centre

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

Ordinary furniture shops

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

NRS Healthcare

This is a company offering disability equipment. You should shop around. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Other online shopping and mail order

There are many other options such as British Red Cross. You can order their Disabled Living Equipment catalogue by phoning 0300 999 0004

Paying for aids and equipment and VAT for people with disabilities

You may be able to get some things free-of-charge or at a reduced cost. The best way to do this is to get yourself assessed (see Finding Out What You Need above).

Royal British Legion

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

Paying VAT for people with disabilities

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

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

To qualify for this exemption the equipment must be intended for use by disabled people and must relate to their disability.

In addition, there is no VAT payable on the costs of servicing or maintaining disability equipment. Ask whether you can receive this VAT exemption before buying or ordering equipment.

The supplier needs to be registered for VAT and they should ask you to sign a form or written statement declaring that you have a chronic illness or disability. You may be able to get it refunded afterwards but it is easier to tell them in advance so that you don't pay it!

You can get further advice by visiting www.gov.uk or ringing HMRC on 0300 123 1073

Repairing and servicing aids and equipment

Kent Mobility Ltd

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

Designing and adapting aids and equipment

Remap

Charity that can adapt furniture or equipment for disabled people. Can also design and build appropriate equipment where there is nothing suitable on the market (cooking aids, needlework aids, newspaper page turner, pill taking device, caravan steps etc). For example, if you needed a stairlift but your hands were too weak to press the buttons they may be able to create a simple box with levers to make it easier. Office D9, Chaucer Business Park, Kemsing TN15 6YU Tel: 01732 760209/866105, 01474 704727 Fax: 0845 130 0789 Email: data@remap.org.uk Web: www.remap.org.uk

Designability

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

Donating aids and equipment

Charity furniture stores

- you may be able to donate good-quality second-hand furniture, electrical and household items
- you may also be able to donate wheelchairs and scooters if they have storage space and sufficient demand to stock them
- they may be able to collect free-of-charge if it is nearby
- they may also do house clearances for a charge
 - **Tonbridge - Hospice in the Weald Tonbridge Furniture Shop.** 111 High St, Tonbridge TN9 1DL Tel: 01732 360566 Email: enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
 - **Tonbridge - YMCA Furniture Warehouse.** Run by YMCA charity. Tower House, Vale Rise, Tonbridge TN9 1TB Tel: 01732 361108 Email: warehouses@westkentymca.org.uk Web: www.westkentymca.org.uk
 - **High Brooms - Hospice in the Weald Tunbridge Wells Furniture Shop.** 6 Tunbridge Wells Trade Park, Longfield Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3QF Tel: 01892 536442 Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk
 - **Tunbridge Wells – British Heart Foundation Furniture & Electrical Store.** 39-45 Grosvenor Rd, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2AW Tel: 01892 628600 Web: www.bhf.org.uk
 - **West Malling – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 50 High St, West Malling ME19 6QR Tel: 01732 870962 Web: www.hokh.org
 - **Aylesford – Heart of Kent Hospice.** 109 Hall Rd, Aylesford ME20 7RE Tel: 01622 715097 Web: www.hokh.org
 - **Maidstone – Demelza Hospice Care.** 98 Sandling Rd, Maidstone ME14 2RJ Tel: 01622 427885 Web: www.demelza.org.uk

Disability Equipment Service

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

Selling aids and equipment

Disability Equipment Service

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

Mobility aids

Things that might help:

- walking sticks including folding ones and adjustable ones (see below)
- walking frames including walkers, zimmers and rollators (see below)
- crutches (see below)
- wheelchairs (see below)
- stairlifts and stair steady aids (see below)
- clothing for wheelchairs and scooters including ponchos, foldable travelling wheelchairs
- extra stair rails and banisters
- external steps
- plastic half-steps
- folding threshold ramps, doorframe ramps, roll-up ramps and channel ramps
- collapsible ramps
- edging strips
- portable seats, stick seats and swivel seats
- light wheelchairs, transit chairs and transport chairs
- pressure care cushions and comfort cushions
- leg lifters
- shopping trolleys with seats and trolleys which help climb steps
- Blue Badge wallets and disabled toilet keys
- replacement carpets (if they are trip hazards and you are on a low income)

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- 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
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - Sevenoaks Mobility Centre is a company that can visit you at home, assess your requirements and provide a selection of solutions (with no obligation to purchase). They only offer mobility aids, not other equipment. Contact Paul

Davis Tel: 01732 448144 Email: info@sevenoaksmobility.co.uk Web: www.sevenoaksmobility.co.uk

- You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
- You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Walking sticks, walkers, zimmer frames and rollators

- Walking sticks should be the right size for your height and they should be used on your good side to support your bad side. The ferrule (rubber bit on the end of the stick) should be repaired or replaced if it wears out
- Walking frames (also known as walkers or zimmer frames) are suitable for indoors. They are fairly rigid and either have no wheels or only have wheels attached to the front 2 legs. You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost. Ask your GP to refer you to a District Nurse for a walking frame.
- Rollators (also known as wheeled walkers) are suitable for outdoors. They have a frame with large wheels, handlebars and a built-in seat so you can sit on them whenever you want a rest. They also often have space for shopping. They fold up and are light-weight yet sturdier than conventional walkers. 4-wheeled ones are more stable than 3-wheeled ones. They are often better outdoors than conventional rigid walking frames with wheels as they can be adjusted to be higher which is better for your posture. They also turn better and the handlebars are equipped with hand brakes that can be lifted or pushed downward to instantly stop the rollator. Good ones cost about £150. You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost.
 - Community Navigators may be able to help you. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - If you have an urgent medical condition your District Nurse may also be able to help. Your GP can refer you to them.
 - Occupational Therapists work for Social Services and can carry out a full assessment but there is usually quite a long waiting list. Tel: 03000 416161.
- Buckingham Caddies. These are trays to carry plates and mugs which can be attached to your walking frame or rollator. You will need to have a risk assessment.
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around
 - 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
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- You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
- You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Crutches

- If you have a permanent disability you may be able to get them free or at reduced cost.
 - Community Navigators may be able to help you. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - If you have an urgent medical condition your District Nurse may also be able to help. Your GP can refer you to them.
 - Occupational Therapists work for Social Services and can carry out a full assessment but there is usually quite a long waiting list. Tel: 03000 416161.
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around
 - 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
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
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 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Wheelchairs

- If your disability is temporary our offices have a limited number of wheelchairs for hire. £50 returnable deposit plus £10 per week suggested donation. Tel: 01732 366100 (Tonbridge) or 01732 454108 (Sevenoaks).
- You can also borrow wheelchairs from the British Red Cross. They charge £17.50 per week for a wheelchair. 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
- If you need a wheelchair most of the time you may be able to get it free or at reduced cost. Ask your GP or another health professional (such as a district nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist) to refer you to the Kent & Medway Wheelchair Service. This is run by Millbrook Healthcare. They may decide to supply

a wheelchair directly or they may want to do a face-to-face assessment of your needs at home or in a day centre or clinic. For more info on what to expect, look at: <http://disabilityhorizons.com/2015/03/disability-and-independence-nhs-wheelchair-services/>

You will usually have to wait 3-6 months; however they will prioritise you if:

- you have a rapidly deteriorating condition (e.g. Motor Neurone Disease)
- you have received an end-of-life prognosis, i.e. less than 6 months
- you are being discharged from hospital to your own home and provision of a manual wheelchair will enable you to be independently mobile (i.e. self-propel) and reduce or eliminate the need for a care package

You can also contact Millbrook Healthcare directly Tel: 0330 124 4485 Email:

kentcontactus@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk

kentandmedwaywcs@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk Web: [www.millbrook-](http://www.millbrook-healthcare.co.uk/kent-and-medway-wheelchair-service)

[healthcare.co.uk/kent-and-medway-wheelchair-service](http://www.millbrook-healthcare.co.uk/kent-and-medway-wheelchair-service)

- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around
 - 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
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - Sevenoaks Mobility Centre is a company that can visit you at home, assess your requirements and provide a selection of solutions (with no obligation to purchase). They only offer mobility aids, not other equipment. Contact Paul Davis Tel: 01732 448144 Email: info@sevenoaksmobility.co.uk Web: www.sevenoaksmobility.co.uk
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk
- If you have a wheelchair but it needs repairs contact the Kent & Medway Wheelchair Service. They are based in Gillingham and Ashford or may be able to carry out repairs in your home. If your wheelchair came from them you will be a priority if:
 - you have pressure ulcers of grade 2 and above (i.e. broken skin)
 - you are falling from it or have breathing difficulties when in itTel: 0330 124 4485 Email: kentcontactus@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk
kentandmedwaywcs@millbrookhealthcare.co.uk Web: www.millbrook-healthcare.co.uk/kent-and-medway-wheelchair-service
- You may be able to donate second-hand wheelchairs (in good condition) to the British Red Cross. Try ringing round their Mobility Aids Centres at:
 - **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 be able to sell second-hand wheelchairs back to the mobility shop you originally bought them from
- 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 Tel: 01732 366100 and asking for our local information pack on Transport, Travel & Leisure.
- It is possible to buy an exercise machine to keep fit as a wheelchair user. Contact Invictus Tel: 0800 832 1916 Email: info@invictusactive.com

Mobility scooters

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost if you have complex health needs.
 - Community Navigators may be able to help you. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - If you have an urgent medical condition your District Nurse may also be able to help. Your GP can refer you to them.
 - Occupational Therapists work for Social Services and can carry out a full assessment but there is usually quite a long waiting list. Tel: 03000 416161.
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around
 - 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
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - Sevenoaks Mobility Centre is a company that can visit you at home, assess your requirements and provide a selection of solutions (with no obligation to purchase). They only offer mobility aids, not other equipment. Contact Paul Davis Tel: 01732 448144 Email: info@sevenoaksmobility.co.uk Web: www.sevenoaksmobility.co.uk
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk
- Another company you could try is Quingo Scooters on 0800 023 2577. Some mobility shops may sell second-hand scooters. They may also buy back ones that have been bought originally from them.
- Mobility shops may also be able to repair or service scooters.

Stairlifts

- 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. You may be able to get a Disabled Facilities Grant if you are on a low income.
 - The grant is effectively an interest-free loan and has to be repaid if you move or die and someone then sells your home.
 - The work must cost less than £30,000.

- It is means-tested so you have to be on a low income and not have much savings. If your savings are above £6,000 you may still get something but you may be asked to contribute. If you have moved in with a relative, you may still be able to apply but their circumstances will also be taken into account.
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around
 - 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
 - Age UK works with a company called Handicare which can install, recondition and remove stairlifts. They will supply made-to-measure seats and can design for most staircase configurations. Their surveyors will measure the stairs and assess your mobility and health. Stairlifts can also be operated by your carer if it is unsafe for you to do so. They will carry out an initial survey and give you a written quotation. They also offer a 14-day money back guarantee, a 24-hour support line, 2-year warranty with free service and repairs within 24 hours. Prices start from about £2000. To find out more:
 - Ring our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085
 - If they are not available ring Age UK Enterprises on 0800 085 3741
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - Sevenoaks Mobility Centre is a company that can visit you at home, assess your requirements and provide a selection of solutions (with no obligation to purchase). They only offer mobility aids, not other equipment. Contact Paul Davis Tel: 01732 448144 Email: info@sevenoaksmobility.co.uk Web: www.sevenoaksmobility.co.uk
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk
- A cheaper option may be Stairsteady. This is a fixed handrail and a sliding supporting handle that moves freely when pushed but locks in place when weight is applied. It acts as firm support for either climbing or coming down the stairs. The handle is sturdy and secure and lets you have both hands in front of you as you climb or descend the stairs at your own pace. Once you reach the top or bottom the handle folds neatly away. Tel: 0845 652 8804. Web: www.stairsteady.net
- If you need to repair a stairlift, you should if possible go back to the company you bought it from and who installed it. If this is not possible, here are a couple of companies that may be able to help but you should shop around:
 - Associated Stairlifts – 0800 015 0249
 - Kudos – 0800 152 2400, 0203 326 5841
 - Stairlift Maintenance Services – 07725 021335
- If your hands are too weak to press the buttons, Remap may be able to create a simple box with levers to make it easier. Office D9, Chaucer Business Park, Kemsing TN15 6YU Tel: 01732 760209/866105, 01474 704727 Fax: 0845 130 0789 Email: data@remap.org.uk Web: www.remap.org.uk

Bath and shower aids

Things that might help:

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

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005
Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around.
 - 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
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315
Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Walk-in baths and easy-access showers

- If you wish to adapt your bathroom for a walk-in bath or easy access shower get an assessment from Occupational Therapists Tel: 03000 416161. They will sort out whether you are eligible for financial help and arrange installation but there may be a waiting list. You may be able to get a Disabled Facilities Grant if you are on a low income.
 - The grant is effectively an interest-free loan and has to be repaid if you move or die and someone then sells your home.
 - The work must cost less than £30,000.
 - It is means-tested so you have to be on a low income and not have much savings. If your savings are above £6,000 you may still get something but you may be asked to contribute. If you have moved in with a relative, you

may still be able to apply but their circumstances will also be taken into account.

- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around
 - 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
 - Age UK works with a company called Handicare which sells walk-in baths and easy-access showers. Prices for new bathrooms including a walk-in shower average £4000-8000. You should shop around. To find out more:
 - Ring our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085
 - If they are not available ring Age UK Enterprises on 0800 085 3741
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Assisted baths and showers

- Tonbridge Castle Gateway has a walk-in shower with an electric hoist and full wheelchair access. Anyone can use it. There are no staff to assist you but you can take in your own carers. Tel: 01732 770929, 844522
- If you are housebound and live in Tonbridge, West Malling, Snodland or Aylesford ask Kathy in Independent Living Support at Age UK Tel: 01732 454108 to put you in touch with people who can do home bathing. If you live in Tonbridge, you may also be able to get home bathing from Age UK Tunbridge Wells Tel: 01892 522591.
- If you need to change your bathroom to have a walk-in bath or easy access shower, please see the section on Adapting Your Home.
- If you need a bath or shower seat please see the section on Aids and Equipment.

Toilet aids including commodes

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
- disabled toilet keys

- disposable gloves, aprons and commode liners

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005
Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around.
 - 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
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315
Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk
- 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
- Many companies sell continence pads and you should shop around

Bed, chair and sofa aids

Things that might help:

- riser recliner chairs (to help you get in and out of chairs)
- chair raisers or sofa raisers
- orthopaedic chairs and massage chairs
- foot rests and leg rests
- bed supports
- bed levers
- bed sticks to hold onto getting in and out of bed or changing your position in bed
- mattress elevators and orthopaedic mattresses
- overbed tables
- adjustable beds and hospital beds
- single divan beds
- support pillows and massage pillows including fleece neck supports and neck massagers
- rests for backs, legs and feet including ones that adjust or fold
- heat pads, heated footplates, hot water bottle covers, overblankets and underblankets
- talking alarms and under pillow alarms
- easy rise cushions

- foam cushions
- lifting seats
- tables that go over chairs or beds including ones that adjust or tilt

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around.
 - 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
 - Age UK works with a company called Theraposture Ltd which sells adjustable beds. They cost about £1000-1900. You should shop around. To find out more:
 - Ring our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085
 - If they are not available ring Theraposture Ltd on 0800 032 3482
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Dressing and comfort aids

Things that might help:

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

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around.
 - 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

- Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
- You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
- You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Health and leisure aids

Things that might help:

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

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around.
 - 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
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 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Household aids

Things that might help:

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

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost.
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around.
 - 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
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 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

- Hand grippers to help keep strength in your hands may also be available from TK Maxx and other shops

Kitchen and dining aids

Things that might help:

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

How to get them:

- You may be able to get them free or at reduced cost
 - Contact INVOLVE and ask for Community Navigators Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
 - Contact Social Services and ask for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161. There may be a long waiting list
- You can also buy them if you prefer. It may be worth shopping around.
 - 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
 - Safe & Well Demonstration Centre. You can try out a range of daily living aids by making an appointment to visit the Safe & Well Demonstration Centre, Unit 4, Bellingham Way, Aylesford ME20 6SP. Tel: 01622 235315 Email: kent@safeandwell.co.uk Web: www.safeandwell.co.uk/kent They also have private occupational therapists who can come and see you to advise you on what might help. This is quick but costs about £100.
 - You may be able to get them from Kent Mobility Ltd, 6 Sanderson Way, Orchard Business Centre, Tonbridge TN6 1QG Tel: 01732 770998
 - You may be able to get them from NRS Healthcare or other companies offering disability equipment. Tel: 0345 121 8111 Email: customerservice@nrshealthcare.co.uk

Simple mobile phones

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for falls prevention, families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

- You can get a factsheet on telephones by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565
- Some people keep a mobile just for emergency use (sometimes known as "Granny in a Glovebox")
- Some organisations offer easy-to-use mobiles. The simplest mobiles have no screen or keypad. They have simple push buttons (between 2 and 12 buttons for known people and emergency contacts). The buttons can be personalised with photos and calls can be made by pressing on the name or photo. These phones are

especially suitable for people with memory problems. One example is OwnFone on 0330 041 7263

- If you want something more complex you could look at Doro easy phones. They offer loud and clear sound, with Hearing Aid Compatibility, for calls you can hear wherever you are, large, separated keys and adjustable font sizes for easy dialling and texting, and a large easy to see display. They can be personalised with photos of family members and a GPS locator can be used if you get lost. You can use the direct dials to programme your favourite contacts and call them at the push of a button, or write and send SMS' and take photos using the direct buttons on the keypad. Some also enable you to access emails, internet browser and Facebook from your phone all in an easy to use manner. These are less suitable for some people with memory problems. Doro have a website at: www.doro.co.uk
- However you should shop around. The Disabled Living Foundation can give you more information on choosing products for older and disabled people. Tel: 0300 999 0004

Alarms

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for falls prevention, families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Getting more information

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

- Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565.
- The Disabled Living Foundation Tel: 0845 130 9177.

How alarms work

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

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

- Traditional alarms
- GPS-enabled alarms

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

Keysafes and keyholders

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

Getting an alarm free or at reduced cost

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

- ask INVOLVE for a Community Navigator Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk

- or ask your GP to refer you to a Health & Social Care Co-ordinator.
- or ask Social Services for an Occupational Therapist Tel: 03000 416161.

Buying an alarm

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

- Taking Care Tel: 01634 578085 (if they are not available ring 0800 707 6369). This is a company which works with Age UK but they are not necessarily the best or cheapest; you should shop around. You can contact them via our Chatham callcentre on 01634 578085. If they are not available ring the company directly on 0800 707 6369
- Welbeing Tel: 01323 644422 Web: www.welbeing.org.uk
- Kent Telecare Tel: 0800 799 9581 Web: www.kenttelecare.co.uk

Installation

It may be possible to arrange a free demonstration with no obligation. Alarm companies may be able to send an engineer to install it (and fit a key safe at the same time) or if you prefer they may be able to send you instructions on how to install it yourself (which is cheaper).

Ongoing monitoring

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

Traditional alarms

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

GPS-enabled alarms

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

- If you need help away from your home. You do not need to be within range of a base unit
- If you are unaware that you need help or do not understand how to raise the alarm. The alarm can be raised in other ways as explained below
- If you need to be located by GPS. Your location can be sent directly to your family's mobile etc
- If you prefer to talk to your family rather than a monitoring centre (the monitoring centre can put you directly through to your family)
- If you get lost somewhere familiar and just want to be reassured
- If you wander out of pre-agreed "safe zones" such as not taking your usual route to the shops. Sends an alert
- If you go out in the middle of the night unexpectedly. Sends an alert if pre-programmed to do so

- Can be secured to your wrist if you are likely to take it off without realising

Sensors and detectors

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

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

- **Fall detectors.** Worn on the wrist or neck and can detect a fall. Ideal if you are frail or black out. Also if you would be unaware you needed to press a button or needed help. Can also detect slips and trips
- **Bed and chair sensors.** Sends an alert if you don't go to bed or get up by a certain time or if you've got up and not returned to a bed or chair possibly due to a fall or forgetting. Pressure mats can detect if you are by the front door or have become inactive for some reason
- **Property exit sensors.** Helpful if you get confused and go out unexpectedly, especially at night. Sends an alert if you open a door at an unspecified time or forget to lock the front door. Monitors if you are moving around normally, whether your carer has visited and how long they stayed. They will make sure you're OK and if concerned, they will notify a family member or carer.
- **Temperature extreme sensors.** Detects extreme rise or fall in temperature such as a forgotten boiling saucepan, if you have left your door open and whether your home is too hot or too cold. The monitoring centre will advise you on a suitable course of action
- **Smoke detectors.** Sounds an alarm and calls the monitoring centre automatically. They will check with you whether they need to contact the Fire Service for you. Heat detectors can be used in kitchens and bathrooms
- **Flood detectors.** Gives early warning of potential floods near sinks, baths and toilets by sounding an alarm and calling the monitoring centre. There are also magi-plugs which release water when it gets to a certain level and change colour if too hot or cold
- **Carbon monoxide detectors.** Sounds an alarm and calls the monitoring centre automatically. They will speak with you and advise you to leave or not enter the property. They will also contact Transco (gas company) for you. Gas detectors will send an alert if cookers and fires have been left on but not ignited
- **Movement sensors.** Can turn lamps on if you get up or detect if you have gone to hazardous areas or have become inactive for some reason
- **Medication dispensers.** Sends you a visual and audible alert when medication needs to be taken. If time slots are missed, an alert is sent to the monitoring centre who will contact you
- **Bogus caller alarms.** Usually wall mounted by your front door so you can send a discreet and silent alert to the monitoring centre if you feel threatened or uneasy with a visitor
- **Door contacts.** Can be attached to cupboards or domestic appliances to monitor activity, such as whether you're eating or following hygiene routines on a regular basis
- **Epilepsy sensors.** Bed sensors which monitor heart rate and breathing patterns to detect epileptic seizures

Other home monitoring systems

- Another company which offers a home monitoring system using sensors is Textcare Tel: 01245 324968 Tel: enquiries@textcare.co.uk Web: www.textcare.co.uk

- Apple Home allows Apple devices to control home settings remotely including thermostats, radiators, motion detectors, lights, doors, windows, cameras etc. Web: www.apple.com
- Philips and Samsung have similar equipment to use with smartphones.
- British Gas offer The Hive which allows family members to switch on heating remotely if it suddenly gets cold or someone switches it off.
- Proximity Care offer Proximity Buttons. These are small, light sensor buttons that you wear. It sends a text alert to your carer's smartphone if you wander. It costs about £40 so is cheaper than the tracking devices above but is not as sophisticated. Email: natalie@proximitycare.co.uk Web: www.proximitycare.co.uk
- Just Checking Ltd offer wireless sensors placed around the home. They will send text or email alerts to families if there are no signs of activity in the morning, a carer hasn't arrived, a door has been left open, you have gone out at night or someone has visited at an unusual time. Can be useful to identify what the issues are. Tel: 01564 785100. Web: www.justchecking.co.uk
- The Stay Safe app uses GPS technology to give a live update of your location on a visual map on a mobile phone screen. This only works if both parties have it switched on. Can be downloaded free of charge from the App Store or Google Play. See Family Matters for more information. Web: www.fmstaysafe.co.uk
- Pathway for Care offer doorbell facial recognition devices, digital memory aids and GPS trackers. Pathway for Care Ltd Tel: 01737 904204 Web: www.pathwayforcare.com

Other ways of making sure people are OK

Kent Carers' Emergency Card

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

communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk

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

Search & Rescue

You are advised to take a clear passport-style photo of anyone you care for. That way, in the event that they should wander off, a recent photo will make it easier to find them and get them home safe and sound. You can also get an "At risk of going missing" form to record information that could help Police and Search & Rescue teams determine where and how to look. This can contribute enormously to the success of any search. For further advice contact Kent Search & Rescue Tel: 01622 843005 Web: www.ksar.co.uk

Identity Cards

It may be a good idea for you to carry an identity card explaining that you are vulnerable. This can help if you have an accident, or are unsure of where you are as the card can provide details of emergency contacts. This information could be sewn into a jacket or

handbag so that it's not easily removed. Available from Admiral Nursing Direct Tel: 0800 888 6678

Medical Alert Assistance Dogs

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

MedicAlert

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

Contact 4 Me

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

Keep in Touch (KIT) wristbands

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

Good Day Calls

- You will receive a morning call of about 15 minutes at a regular time. We will make sure you are well and have a friendly chat to start the day
- It costs £50 for 4-7 calls per week or £35 for 1-3 calls per week
- If we are unable to get through after 2 further attempts we will phone a named contact to check everything is OK. If we are still unable to make contact we will call other services as appropriate.
- We are there to provide reassurance for you and to stop families worrying
- If you are interested ring Age UK Medway on 01634 578085 and ask for Good Day Calls

Lifebook

This enables you to record all sorts of useful details which will not only help you to be more organised but could also be invaluable to a family member or a friend if they need to locate important information about you in an emergency. You simply follow the step-by-step instructions to fill in the various sections with your details, contacts and locations of important documents. The life contacts section deals with recording details of your insurance policies, banks, credit cards and other financial arrangements. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK Tel: 0345 685 1061 Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Care at home and support for carers

Getting information and advice

Age UK

- You can also get a list of local private care agencies by ringing Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge on 01732 366100. This includes organisations that can support family carers.
- You can get publications on care at home, paying for care and support at home, advice for carers and arranging for someone to make decisions about your finances or welfare by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565.

Community Navigators

Free information and advice on planning the support you need. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk

Carers Direct

PO Box 27079, Glasgow, G3 9EJ Tel: 0300 123 1053 Web: www.nhs.uk/carersdirect
NHS helpline for carers. Confidential information and support.

Carers Trust

32-36 Loman St, London SE1 0EHTel: 0844 800 4361Fax: 0844 800 4362

Email: info@carers.org Web: www.carers.org

- Provide information, advice and guidance to carers but not practical support
- Formed by a merger of Crossroads Care and Princess Royal Trust for Carers

Carers UK

20 Great Dover St, London SE1 4LXTel: 020 7378 4999Helpline: 0808 808 7777

Email: info@carersuk.orgadvice@carersuk.org Web: www.carersuk.org

Campaign on behalf of carers.

Social Services complaints

If you are not happy with the service you have received, speak to your social worker first. It is always best to try and resolve things at an early stage. You can complain formally to the care manager if raising concerns doesn't work. If making a formal complaint still doesn't work contact the complaints unit at the Social Services department Tel: 03000 414141

Email: county.hall@kent.gov.uk

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

Assessing and paying for your care needs

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Age UK

You can get publications on local authority assessment for community care services, direct payments and personal budgets in social care by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565.

Kent Carers' Emergency Card

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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

Social Services

Tel: 03000 416161. Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk

Web: www.kent.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Social Services provide many forms of support and you can ask for a free assessment of what support you might need and whether you need to contribute towards the cost of support. This includes support for any family or friends caring for you. Carers from their Enablement Team may be able to help you get back on their feet if you are unable to cope at home after an illness or stay in hospital. Typically this would revolve around needing personal care or mobility issues. Their carers (or care agencies working on their behalf) will help look after you at home for a period of 3-6 weeks. If you only need help for 5-7 days then it may be easier to ask for help from the Rapid Response Team at Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust Tel: 0300 123 1807, 01732 376858. Social Services can also arrange long-term home care services. This is usually through private care agencies working on their behalf. On their website you can search for care services and find more information. 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

Emergencies

Crossroads Care Kent

170 Tonbridge Rd, Watlingbury ME18 5NS

Tel: 0345 095 6701, 01622 817114, 0845 900 3735 Email:

enquiries@crossroadskent.org Web: www.carerskm.org

- **Step-Up Step-Down support**
 - Will provide extra help for a few days if you need it eg if you or the person you care for are ill
 - You must register for this service
- **Carer Crisis (Urgent Response Service)**
 - If you are in a crisis and cannot look after someone the Urgent Care Team will provide round-the-clock cover in conjunction with any family that you have. Examples might be if you're unwell or away, struggling to cope or the person you care for is deteriorating
 - This is in addition to any help you already have from Social Services or private care agencies as the aim is to help you as the family carer
 - You must be referred by your GP or another health professional such as a paramedic
 - You may also be able to get help from INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk Web: www.involvekent.org.uk

Kent Carers' Emergency Card

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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
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End-of-life care

Hospice at home services

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. Some services can be provided at your own home but 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
- Hospice in the Weald. Pembury near Tunbridge Wells. Tel: 01892 820500
Email: enquiries@hospiceintheweald.org.uk Web: www.hospiceintheweald.org.uk

Respite care (short breaks for family carers)

Avante Community Support

Tel: 01622 351166

Charity based in Maidstone but cover Kent. Home visits, short-term respite care and long-term live-in care. Member of Kent Community Care Association

Community Link Edenbridge

Tel: 01732 867775 (open Tue & Fri 10am-12pm)

Honorary Secretary John Scholey. Offers support to carers, sit-in services and outings.

Crossroads Care Kent

170 Tonbridge Rd, Watlingbury ME18 5NS

Tel: 0345 095 6701, 01622 817114, 0845 900 3735 Email:

enquiries@crossroadskent.org Web: www.carerskm.org

Charity allowing you to have a break while trained carers look after the person you care for. Most services are free and flexible (including nights). You can usually refer yourself.

The charity is part of Carers Trust

- Can give you a break eg to rest, sleep, meet friends, go shopping, collect prescriptions, attend classes or social activities
- One visit a week for 2 ½ to 4 hours (either on the same day or can be split between different days)
- The same person at the same time to ensure continuity of care
- The carers can do personal care eg bathing, dressing/undressing, management of incontinence, preparation of meals and assistance with eating
- They can also take out the person being cared for including to appointments or social activities
- You can refer yourself

- Waiting list (currently a few months)
- One visit a week is free. However you may be able to purchase additional visits and get help with paying for them from Social Services
- Reassessed every 6 months

Kent Association for Disabled People

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

Web: www.kadp.org.uk

- Outings (from Maidstone)
- Respite holidays with care

Macmillan Cancer Support

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

Seniors Helping Seniors

Can help with sitting service. £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

Social Services

Tel: 03000 416161 Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk

Web: www.kent.gov.uk/adultsocialcare

Social Services provide many forms of support and you can ask for a free assessment of what support you might need and whether you need to contribute towards the cost of support. They may be able to provide a range of services including enablement services (for recovery after a stay in hospital). They can also arrange home care services and support packages. On their website you can search for care services and find more information.

Their Enablement Team may also be able to help you get back on their feet if you are unable to cope at home after an illness or stay in hospital. Typically this would revolve around needing personal care or mobility issues. Their carers (or care agencies working on their behalf) will help look after you for a period of 3-6 weeks. If you only need help for 5-7 days then it may be easier to ask for help from the Rapid Response Team at Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust Tel: 0300 123 1807, 01732 376858

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

Support for family carers

See also the befriending section in this information pack. See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for other support for families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Carers Direct

PO Box 27079, Glasgow, G3 9EJ Tel: 0808 802 0202, 0300 123 1053 Web:

www.nhs.uk/carersdirect

NHS helpline for carers. Free, confidential information and support for carers who need help because of their own illness, frailty or disability

GPs

If you don't look after yourself your own health may suffer too affecting your ability to care. Ask your GP to add you to their list of carers that they are required to keep. They may be able to help you by giving you health checks, flu jabs and priority appointments.

Kent Carers' Emergency Card

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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

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Kent Libraries & Archives

Home Library Service visiting housebound people and their carers. Contact Tonbridge Library, 1 Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge TN9 1TG Tel: 03000 413131 Email: tonbridgelibrary@kent.gov.uk Web: www.kent.gov.uk/lib

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 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

Terra Blu Homecare Ltd

9 Calverley Park Crescent, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2NB

Tel: 01892 529429, 07872 119416

Web: www.terrablu.co.uk

Terra Blu is a private care agency based in Tunbridge Wells which sometimes runs training courses on First Aid and lifting techniques for families and carers. Other private care agencies may offer similar support.

Home safety and security

Anti-social behaviour

Age UK

You can get publications on anti-social behaviour in housing by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565.

Bad weather & heavy snow

Age UK

You can get publications on keeping warm in winter by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565.

Community Safety

If you need help in heavy snow and have no one else to turn to try contacting Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Unit Tel: 01732 876395 Email: customerservices@tmbs.gov.uk

Independent Age

You can also get Being Winter Wise which 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

Fire safety

See also our Health & Wellbeing information pack for hearing loss or sight loss, families, relationships and peace-of-mind.

Kent Fire & Rescue Service Safe & Well Team

Kent Fire & Rescue Service Safe and Well Team carry out home safety visits to provide advice for people who may be at risk in their homes; this can be due to memory issues, disabilities or smoking. Following an assessment of your home, they can provide fire prevention devices such as fire retardant bedding and blankets, smoke alarms for people including those with hearing & visual problems, cooker switches, letterbox sealing and safety ashtrays. They will also replace battery-operated smoke alarms over 10 years old. They can also fit lockable covers for electric sockets and arrange lockable gas valves to shut off gas cookers for people with dementia. Tel: 0800 923 7000, 01622 692121. Email: home@kent.fire-uk.org Web: www.kent.fire-uk.org

Peabody Home Improvement Agency

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

Peabody can give advice on fire safety including providing carbon monoxide sensors (£15. Price subject to change). Free carbon monoxide detectors are also available from Citizens' Advice Email: energy@nwkent.cab.org.uk

Home safety

Age UK

Things that might help:

- night lights with motion sensors
- safety beams
- magnetic door & window alarms
- wireless doorbells

- digital monitors
- key safes
- door entry systems

How to get them:

- You can get an information guide to adapting your home and a factsheet on disability equipment by ringing Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565
- Get an assessment from Occupational Therapists or Care Navigators (see Aids & Equipment section above) to see if you can get them free or at reduced cost
- You can buy them from mobility shops (listed in Aids & Equipment section above). The Disabled Living Foundation can give you more information on choosing products for older and disabled people. Tel: 0300 999 0004

Care Navigators

Free information and advice on staying safe in your own home. Contact INVOLVE Tel: 0300 081 0005 Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk

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

You can apply for a **Safe & Secure Grant** if you live with a health condition at home (including dementia) or are over 60. Grants can be obtained for grab rails, chair raisers, bath seats, raised toilet seats, ramps and stair rails. You can also apply for additional things to keep you safe such as mortice locks, door chains, window locks and even new front doors. There are also aids to help those with memory problems who might, for example, leave the bath running or forget to close the front door or need colour and contrast to aid orientation in their home. The work must cost less than £1000. These grants are discretionary but are not means-tested. Disabled Facilities Grants are available for major adaptations such as flush-floor showers. Contact your local council and ask for One You or Private Sector Housing

Peabody Home Improvement Agency

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

- Free advice to talk through what help you might need. They can visit you at home if you want
- Key safes can be installed. From £55 (price subject to change)
- Grab rails can be installed to make it easier to get in and around your home. The charge depends on the work you need

Independent Age

Advice for Later Life explains how to make your home safer and easier to manage. 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

Police Community Support

You can ask a Police Community Support Officer to pop round if you are vulnerable to scams. Ring West Kent Police on 101.

Warm and Healthy Homes visits

Tonbridge & Malling Private Sector Housing Team, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill ME19 4LZ Tel: 01732 876395 Email: privatesectorhousing@tmhc.gov.uk

- free visits to residents who own or privately rent their homes
- they will identify health & safety hazards in your home such as it being cold, steep uneven steps without handrails or dangerous electrics

- they will give you advice on any funding available to help improve poor housing conditions
- where necessary they will put you in touch with appropriate organisations such as the Home Improvement Agency or Kent Fire & Rescue Service

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 and a priority phone number for regular updates
- alternative facilities for cooking and heating during an interruption of supply
- help during emergencies such as home visits or contacting your family to ring you and reassure you if you are prone to panic or have memory loss

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

To get this help you have to contact utilities and register. If you need help applying:

- 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 366100.
- Citizens' Advice can also help you. Free phone advice Monday-Friday 9am-5pm. Some office appointments may be possible in Tonbridge, Aylesford, Larkfield and Snodland Tel: 0808 278 7810

Scams

Avoiding scams

If someone you don't know offers help, you don't have to accept it if you think it might not be genuine. Many of these scams claim to be from organisations you know and trust. If someone claims to be from a recognised organisation, don't be afraid to ask for proof and never hand over money to someone you don't know.

- If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is a scam.
- Don't feel pressurised to make a decision. Take your time and seek advice.
- Keep your personal details safe. Always make sure the person you are talking to is genuine and from a legitimate company.
- Talk to someone you trust if you're suspicious.

Spotting scams

Scams could reach you by post, phone, email, text, when you are using the internet or on social media. They will look and sound genuine and usually claim to be from a reputable company, service provider, bank, the police or a government service such as HMRC. They could even be someone asking for help. They will ask you to click a link, call a high-rate telephone number or encourage you to hand over personal information, bank details, bank cards or even cash. Don't do it.

- Pressure to respond quickly (eg “Limited Offer. Respond Now. Don’t Delay”).
- You may be encouraged to keep communication secret from family and friends.
- You may be told to send money abroad or move your money into someone else’s bank account.

Use the **ABC** of scam awareness:

- A-** Never **assume** a caller, email or text is genuine
- B-** Never **believe** a caller, email or text is genuine.
- C-** Always **confirm** by contacting a trusted number, family member, friend, your bank’s fraud department or the police to check if it’s genuine.

Stop – Take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information.

Challenge – Could it be fake? It’s ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

Protect – Contact your bank immediately if you think you’ve fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

- Be cautious and listen to your instincts. Don’t be afraid to hang up, bin it, delete it or shut the door.
- Take your time; don’t be rushed.
- Say no to ALL doorstep sales and requests for money, even if they claim to be from a charity. If possible, stay safe and don’t even open your door. You do not have to open your door to anyone you don’t know and aren’t expecting.
- If you are online, be aware of fake news and use trusted sources such as gov.uk or NHS.uk websites. Make sure you type the addresses in and don’t click on links in emails
- Only purchase goods from legitimate retailers and take a moment to think before parting with money or personal information. Only use reputable websites that you know and trust, make sure you see a padlock symbol when making a purchase, and where possible use a credit card which has insurance for online payments.
- Know who you’re dealing with - if you need help, talk to someone you know.
- Protect your financial information, especially from people you don’t know. Never give your bank card or PIN to anyone. No one from the police or your bank will contact you and ask you to provide your PIN and bank card – or ask you to withdraw and hand over cash.
- Never respond to unexpected emails or text messages, click on links or attachments, or provide bank details or personal information – no matter how tempting or convincing the message may seem.
- Always install the latest software and app updates to protect your device.

Raising your awareness of scams

- You can ask for booklets to read from Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565 and Action Fraud Tel: 0300 123 2040 Web: www.actionfraud.police.uk
- You can download a booklet to read from the Police at: www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/central/advice/fraud/met/the-little-book-of-big-scams.pdf
- You can look at this website which was created by the family of a scam victim: www.thinkjessica.com
- You can also look at these websites:
 - Take Five: www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/advice/general-advice
 - CIFAS: www.cifas.org.uk
- You can watch a video on how to spot scams at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/elearning

What to do if you have been scammed

- If you are in immediate danger or you ask them to leave and they don't, contact the police on 999.
- Anyone can be a scam victim. If you've been scammed, always report it.
- If you have given bank details or someone has used your card then inform your bank immediately, preferably by going into a branch or phoning 159. If phoning, be careful that you are ringing a legitimate number and if you have been scammed by phone wait at least 5 minutes to be sure that the scammers are not still on the phonenumber. Ask for a statement of recent activity on your account. Ask for monthly statements in future so you can keep an eye on your account.
- Usually the bank will have a team of investigators who look into it for you. They will check your account for suspicious activity and take whatever action is required. They will stop any unauthorised withdrawals and may be able to refund any that have already been made
- If you claim the use of your debit/credit card was not authorised by you, it is for your bank to prove otherwise. If the card provider will not give you your money back, report them to the Citizens' Advice Consumer Service. Tel: 0808 223 1133.
- You should inform the police on non-emergency number 101 or by going into a police office. Ask them for a crime reference number. You can ask them to send a Police Community Support Officer to visit you to try to help you avoid being scammed in future
- You should report it to Action Fraud who offer advice, guidance and support. You should keep a copy of any scam letters as they may also be able to prevent other people being scammed Tel: 0300 123 2040 Web: www.actionfraud.org.uk
- You can also report fraudsters to CrimeStoppers on 0800 555111 www.crimestoppers-uk
- If your National Insurance number has been used fraudulently then you should report it to HMRC on 0300 200 3500. They will decide whether they need to issue you with a new number
- You can get additional peace of mind by phoning the CIFAS Fraud Prevention service on 0330 100 0180. They will help you to protect your identity for 2 years but will charge £20 for this service
- If you know the phone number of the scammer ask your phone provider to block their number so they can't ring you again
- If you're not sure whether a scheme or offer is legal or legitimate contact the Citizens' Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.
- You may also find useful information on this website which was created by the family of a scam victim: www.thinkjessica.com

Telephone scams

- Common phone scams include investment, pension or computer support scams.
- The person calling is often extremely professional and may pretend to be from a trusted organisation such as your bank, the police or another company you recognise.
- The caller may have some of your information to make them seem genuine.
- Phone calls may come from unknown or foreign phone numbers.

What should you do if you get a nuisance or scam call?

- **Stop.** Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe
- **Challenge.** Could it be fake? It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you

- **Protect.** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040

What are nuisance calls?

- Nuisance or "cold calls" or unsolicited sales calls are phone calls from companies trying to sell you something, even though they have had no business with you previously. These calls aren't usually illegal and don't necessarily count as a scam although they can be annoying, frustrating and even frightening
- Common nuisance calls ask about a car accident you've supposedly had claiming you may be entitled to compensation, while others may involve trying to sell you a warranty for home appliances or your boiler. However these calls can cover a wide range of things
- For more information see advice from Ofcom on nuisance calls:
<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/problems/tackling-nuisance-calls-and-messages>

Reducing nuisance calls

- Register free with the Telephone Preference Service, 70 Margaret St, London W1W 8SS Tel: 0845 070 0707 Web: www.tpsonline.org.uk It should reduce the number of nuisance calls you receive but may not stop them completely or block scammers. It is a legal requirement that organisations such as charities or political parties do not phone people registered with the TPS unless they have your consent. To register your mobile phone, text "TPS" and your email address to 85095. Beware of scams trying to charge you to register with the TPS
- You can also update your phone to have a Caller ID function so your handset can display the number of anyone contacting you. This works on both mobiles and landlines. If you have a mobile, you can use the settings on the phone to block unwanted numbers
- Talk to your home phone provider to see what other privacy services and call-blocking services are available (see below)
- There are call-blocking products you can buy which will help reduce the number of unwanted calls (see below).

What are scam calls?

- All scams are fraud. Phone scams are a way for criminals to con people out of money. The most common ones involve unpaid bills, investments, computer viruses, banks, lotteries and competitions
- **Bank scam calls** often claim to be from your bank telling you there's a problem with your card or account and asking you to transfer money to a "safe account". **Your bank would never ask you to do this**
- **Courier fraud.** This is where fraudsters may phone you, pretending to be a police officer or bank official, and try to persuade you to hand over money to a "courier" on the pretext of assisting an investigation into corruption. However, police and banks will never ask for money to be handed or transferred to them nor will they ask for passwords and pin numbers
- **Computer scam calls** often claim to be from a well-known IT firm, such as Microsoft. They'll tell you that your computer has a virus and will say you have to pay to have it "fixed" or ask you to download software that actually contains a virus. **Legitimate IT companies don't contact customers this way**
- Criminals have the technology to mimic an official telephone number, so it comes up on your Caller ID display (if you have one on your phone). This can trick you into thinking the caller is really from a legitimate organisation, such as a bank or utility company. If you're in any doubt, just hang up. Do not agree to hand over any

money. It is better not to say anything but if you feel that you have to say something, say that you need to seek advice from your family or friends. Hang up and wait at least 5 minutes to be sure that the scammers are not still on the phoneline. Then phone somebody you trust. You can also phone your bank directly to see if it was genuine using the number on your bank card (not a number you are given in case it is fraudulent).

- You can get a leaflet called "Keep Calm and Hang Up" on how to recognise scam phone calls from TrueCall Tel: 0800 033 6339. You can avoid these scams by stopping scam calls.

Reducing scam calls

The majority of landline providers offer free services to help reduce unwanted calls. Talk to your phone company to see what help you can get. Here are some schemes that we know of:

- **BT Call Protect.** If you have a landline with BT you can set this up **free-of-charge**. It works in three simple ways:
 - BT Blacklist automatically diverts known nuisance callers to junk voicemail
 - Personal blacklist lets you choose specific numbers to divert
 - You can also block numbers by category – like international, withheld or unrecognised.Once it's set up, you can add numbers to your blacklist by calling 1572 from your home phone immediately after you have hung up from a nuisance call. To set it up phone BT on 0800 100400
- **Sky Talk Shield.** Call screening service for your home phone. You can choose to answer the calls you want and block the ones you don't. It is **free** for Sky Broadband and Sky Talk customers
- **Virgin Media** offer **free** services such as caller display, the option to withhold your number when making a call and anonymous caller rejection.
- **TalkTalk CallSafe** allows you to approve, block or screen calls before you answer. The service is **free** and can be activated by dialling 1472 from your TalkTalk landline

Stopping scam calls

There are other schemes that can stop more scam calls but you have to pay for the peace-of-mind. A call blocker is a small device that plugs into your phone and allows you to block calls from unwanted numbers. You can find out more about call blockers by emailing friendsagainstscams@surreycc.gov.uk or contacting the Trading Standards Team at Kent County Council.

- If you have a landline, there are various call blockers which might help. One scheme is **TrueCall**:
 - It promises to screen out 95% of nuisance calls. When someone calls it checks their number. If it is a trusted caller such as friends, family or invited callers then the phone rings as normal. However it intercepts all other callers and plays them a message. This either asks them to hang up if they are a cold caller (you can listen to this by ringing 0333 011 5567) or can block unrecognised callers completely asking them to phone a family member or carer if it is important (you can listen to this by ringing 0333 011 5870).
 - You can buy it from TrueCall. It costs £120 with no monthly fee after that or you can rent it. Tel: 0800 033 6330 Email: info@truecall.co.uk Web: www.truecall.co.uk
 - They will send it directly to you or may be able to install it for you. You plug it into your landline. Just like TV sets it is straightforward to install but needs a little set-up. Full instructions are provided and you can call TrueCall on 0800 033 6339 for assistance if you need it.

- If you have a mobile, there are other call blockers which might help. For example, **Fuss Free Phones** work on the O2 network. With this scheme, old-style operators screen calls. You (or your family) give the operator a list of numbers of friends, relatives and organisations that are likely to call you. The operator only puts calls through if the caller is on this "trusted callers list". If the operator is unsure they will check with your family or friends. If you want to make a call, you simply pick up the receiver, press a button and ask the operator to put them through. It costs £80 for a special handset which looks like an ordinary phone but has large keys then it costs £20 per month.

Fraudulent text messages

Look carefully at any text messages. If it says something that makes you panic (eg "this request was created from an unrecognised device") then it may be a scam. If it goes on to suggest a way to solve the problem (eg "cancel this request by") then it may take you to a website that looks convincing but is fake. Do not enter your details. You can report suspected scam text messages to your mobile network provider by forwarding them to 7726. If you think you have been scammed, contact your bank immediately.

Stopping yourself from making premium rate phone calls

It can be distressing and expensive for a person if they make repeated phone calls to certain numbers, especially premium rate ones. BT can set up Network Controlled Calling which allows dialling only 10 numbers such as friends, family, GP etc but blocks others.

Tel: 0800 919591 Web:

www.bt.com/includingyou/redesign2012/assets/downloads/NetworkControlledCalling.pdf

Simple mobile phones

- You can reduce making and receiving calls by switching to a simple mobile phone
- Some organisations offer easy-to-use mobiles. These mobiles have simple push buttons (between 2 and 12 buttons for known people and emergency contacts only). The buttons can be personalised with photos and calls can be made by pressing on the name or photo. One example is OwnFone on 0330 041 7263
- However you should shop around. The Disability Living Foundation can give you more information on choosing products for older and disabled people. Tel: 0300 999 0004.
- You can get a factsheet on telephones by ringing Age UK on 0800 169 6565.

Postal scams

- Common types of postal scams include fake lotteries and prize draws, offers of investments, inheritance windfalls, health cures and clairvoyant letters.
- Too good to be true offers such as guaranteed lottery winnings.
- You may be asked for money to claim a prize or access your own winnings.

Reducing junk mail

Junk mail is untargeted advertising material usually addressed to The Home Owner or The Occupier instead of to an individual. To reduce unsolicited mail such as free newspapers and magazines, catalogues, advertising brochures, money-off coupons and product samples:

- **letterbox stickers.** Put a sign on your door to say "no junk mail", "no commercial leaflets" and/or "no free newspapers" or get a sticker from this website: www.stopjunkmail.org.uk
- **contact Royal Mail.** They will stop any unaddressed junk mail, leaflets and brochures that they deliver within about 6 weeks. Freepost Royal Mail Customer

Services Tel: 0345 266 0858, 0345 774 0740 Email: optout@royalmail.com Web: www.royalmail.com

- **register free with the Direct Marketing Association.** This will reduce any unaddressed junk mail delivered by other people within about 3 months. 70 Margaret St, London W1W 8SS Tel: 020 7291 3300 Email: yourchoice@dma.org.uk Web: www.dma.org.uk
- **register free with the Mailing Preference Service.** This will stop advertising material addressed to you personally within about 4 months by removing your details from lists used by the advertising industry. Contact them at 70 Margaret St, London W1W 8SS Tel: 020 7291 3310 Email: mps@dma.org.uk Web: www.mpsonline.org.uk
- **register free with the Fundraising Preference Service.** This will stop marketing mail from any registered charity that you request within about a month. Tel: 0300 303 3517 Web: www.fundraisingpreference.org.uk
- **contact your Electoral Registration Office.** You can ask your local council to take your details off the "open register" if they are on there; it is a list of people and addresses that can be bought and used for sending junk mail. Web: www.gov.uk/get-on-electoral-register
- **contact the sender directly.** If you want to stop getting mail from a particular sender tell them to "please stop processing my personal data for direct marketing purposes in accordance with Article 21 of the General Data Protection Regulations". Include your full name, address and the date and give them a reasonable date to stop sending you mail eg a month
- **return to sender.** If the junk mail has a return address on the envelope, write "unsolicited mail, return to sender" and post it back free-of-charge to let them know
- **avoid junk mail in future.** Look out for tick boxes on forms you fill in which give permission to organisations or third parties to contact you. If you give your contact details over the phone make sure you tell them not to send you marketing mail or give your details to anyone else.

Reducing scam mail

Scam mail may be targeted and addressed to you. One way to reduce scam mail is to register as a Scam Marshal.

- You will be sent a Freepost Mailbag every month to send any scam post that you have received to National Trading Standards who will use it to investigate scams. In return you will be sent a monthly newsletter about scams and how to protect yourself.
- Scammers are less likely to continue sending you scam post if you don't respond to them but send it to Trading Standards instead.
- It may help you to take back control and make you less likely to fall victim as you will be more aware of whether something is a scam.
- There is also an opportunity to become a "pen pal" if you are feeling lonely.
- You can register at: www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk
- Alternatively you can just send unwanted mail to National Trading Standards Scams Team, Freepost Mail Marshals.

Fake parcel delivery cards

If you receive a card posted through your door suggesting that someone was unable to deliver a parcel to you and you think it is fake then phone Royal Mail Fraud on 020 7239 6655.

Internet scams

- An email may be designed to appear to be from your bank or other company in order to trick you into revealing personal details.
- You may be asked to click on a link which takes you to a fake website where you will be prompted to enter your details.
- Be online savvy. If you're unsure, don't open links or attachments in emails.

Staying safe online

Independent Age produce Scamwise which gives tips on staying safe online. You can get it from 6 Avonmore Rd, London W14 8RL Tel: 0800 319 6789, 020 7605 4200
Email: advice@independentage.org Web: www.independentage.org

Stopping compulsive shopping

Some people are prone to buying items online at night or at times when feeling low or lonely. They may not really want it but often struggle to send it back causing financial difficulties. Money & Mental Health is a charity which has developed a digital tool called "Shopper Stopper". It is free to download and allows users (or their families) to "close" online shops during the periods of time they find hard to resist buying things. More info at: www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/the-shopper-stopper

Doorstep scams

- Criminals pose as legitimate business people selling goods or services that are faulty, unnecessary, overpriced, poor quality or non-existent.
- Say "No" to unwanted, uninvited callers.

Cowboy traders

Citizens' Advice Consumer Service can support vulnerable people who are losing money to cowboy traders or other scams Tel: 0808 223 1133.

Checking ID of doorstep callers

Cold calling doorstep traders may offer services like roofing, block paving, guttering, paving and gardening. It is never a good idea to use a trader who just cold calls. If you're not sure, don't open the door. To protect yourself:

- never disclose security details
- don't assume everyone is genuine
- don't be rushed
- listen to your instincts
- stay in control

A genuine caller will be happy for you to check they are genuine. Check callers' authenticity, especially if:

- You are not expecting the caller.
- The visit was arranged on the back of a cold telephone call or a leaflet through the front door etc.

If they claim to be from a well-known company, call that company using a number you know to be correct to confirm that person's credentials. Even when you have made an appointment for a tradesperson, make sure you don't let anyone else in who turns up on the same day.

- If you are being threatened or feel intimidated, phone the Police on 999
- If you are worried that a doorstep crime is in progress, phone the Police on 101
- If you have been a victim, phone Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133

Have something planned to say to turn cold callers away

It's OK to say no. Politely ask the trader to leave and state that you don't deal with cold callers. Even if you choose not to answer the door or phone to a stranger, you may

sometimes break your own rules. For example, you could be expecting a visitor or you could have just woken up from a snooze and been a bit disorientated or you could be outside gardening or you could be bringing in shopping. Then before you know it, the cold caller has started a pleasant conversation with you making it hard for you to turn them away. If you are outside your home, the best thing is to simply say “I never buy from cold callers” as then hopefully the cold caller will not return. It’s also a good idea to have something planned to say to turn callers away. For example: “I rent from my son; he looks after everything”.

No Cold Caller signs and No Doorstep Callers stickers

These stickers help but are not foolproof. You can download and print these out from the internet (including religious groups and charities if you wish) or from the Money Saving Expert website. Web: www.moneysavingexpert.com/phones/no-more-junk#freesign

You can also get them from Friends Against Scams Email: friendsagainstscams@surreycc.gov.uk Or you may be able to get them from your local police station, Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk, Citizens’ Advice on 0808 223 1133 www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Video doorbells

Consider installing a video doorbell. These can start at around £50 and will put doorstep callers off ringing your doorbell.

Bogus Caller Alarms

These are available from Welbeing Tel: 01323 644422 Web: www.welbeing.org.uk

Home security

Cold callers can sometimes be considering a distraction burglary. So if you do answer your front door, you need to remember to keep other doors and windows locked. You can also ask a Police Community Support Officer to pop round to advise you on home security if you are vulnerable to scams. Ring West Kent Police on 101.

Pension scams

Scam tactics include:

- Being contacted out of the blue
- Promises of high or guaranteed returns
- Offers of free pension reviews
- Access to your pension before age 55
- Pressure to act quickly

If someone claims to be a pensions adviser check who you are dealing with. Legitimate free advice on pensions is available from the Money & Pensions Service on 0800 011 3797. If you’re in the middle of a pension transfer and start to suspect a scam, contact your pension provider immediately. Also report it to the Financial Conduct Authority on 0800 111 6768.

Lifebook

This enables you to record all sorts of useful details which could be invaluable to a family member or a friend if they need to locate important information about you in an emergency. You simply follow the step-by-step instructions to fill in the various sections with your details, contacts and locations of important documents. The life contacts section deals with recording details of your insurance policies, banks, credit cards and other financial arrangements. The LifeBook is available in both a booklet and computer versions. More information from Age UK Tel: 0345 685 1061 Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/lifebook

Vulnerability Registration Service

The Vulnerability Registration Service allows vulnerable people a single place to register your status, helping you avoid repeating the same difficult conversations every time you engage with organisations. You can register yourself or ask an organisation to register for you. It covers financial services, local authorities, housing associations, insurance, banking, credit, energy, telecoms and retail. When most organisations see that you are registered, they take you out of any automated processes – giving more care and consideration to your needs. All they need is your name, address and date of birth. If circumstances change, it's easy to come off the register. Email: info@vregservice.co.uk.

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