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# Information for people caring for a relative or friend who is ...

UNDER 65 AND HAS AN  
ILLNESS, DISABILITY OR  
SENSORY LOSS

Maidstone  
& Malling

**Maidstone**  
**Carers**  
**Project**

Tel: 01622 685276

## INTRODUCTION

If you are caring for a relative or friend it is important to know what help is available. It is not always easy to know where to go to find this information and as a carer, you will probably have little time and energy to seek it out.

The aim of this guide is to provide information which will act as a signpost to support and services in the Maidstone and Malling area for people under 65 who have an illness, physical disability or sensory loss and their carers.

It has been compiled by Maidstone Carers Project with the valuable help of local carers who volunteered their time and experience.

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## 1. HELP IN YOUR HOME

The following community services may be able to support you and provide help at home to the person you care for.

**The District Nurse** – can be contacted via your GP surgery. They can give you advice, information and practical support to help with caring. They can refer you to the Rapid Response Team.

**The Rapid Response Team** – provides the following services:

Visits between 6pm - 6am for people who need a nursing service during these hours. They can sometimes offer a night sitting service. Help at home to prevent admission to hospital for people who have an acute illness, also support on discharge from hospital. The service provides personal care and intensive therapy for a short period of time. To contact any of the above health/nursing services at weekends, Bank Holidays and out of hours

**Tel: 01622 224117 / 24 hour line 07979 756600**

**Care Agencies** – range of services including:-

shopping, cleaning, meals, help with getting up, washing, dressing and toilet needs. These services can form part of a care package arranged by Social Services, or can be purchased direct from the agency. Maidstone Carers Project will send you a list **Tel: 01622 685276** or download at [www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp](http://www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp)

Please see (see Direct Payments in 2. HAVING NEEDS ASSESSED BY SOCIAL SERVICES.

**Crossroads** – enables you to have a short break from your caring role by providing a trained carers support worker in the home. This is a free service to carers. Crossroads also accept Direct Payments [see Direct Payments in 2. HAVING NEEDS ASSESSED BY SOCIAL SERVICES] **Tel: 01622 817114**

**V Team** – practical, DIY and one-off gardening services for elderly, disabled and ill people on low income **Tel: 01622 677337**

**Three Suttons Helpline** – a voluntary good neighbour scheme in Sutton Valence - help with transport, shopping, odd jobs, gardening and form filling. **Tel: 01622 843235/01622 842530/ 01622 842346**

**Lifeline** – provides a portable alarm which can be worn and is linked to a 24 hr telephone control centre. If help is needed eg in the event of a fall or illness the Control Centre is alerted and they can contact services or a relative. Maidstone **Tel: 01622 212742** or Tonbridge & Malling **Tel: 01732 781966**

**Handyperson Service** – provides a low cost, quality minor repairs service to home owners over 55 years or those who are disabled or vulnerable.  
**Tel: 01732 525520**

**Maidstone Borough Council** – can arrange for your refuse bin/boxes to be collected from where they are kept if you have difficulty getting them on to the street because of illness or disability. To register **Tel: 01622 602162** or **Tonbridge & Malling Council Tel: 01732 876147**

**Maidstone Trusted Trades Register** – a register of local trades people who provide home maintenance services. Compiled from the recommendations of people who have used their services and supplied by voluntary and community groups, Parish Councils, Churches and Voluntary Action Maidstone volunteers. Contact Maidstone Carers Project for a copy **Tel: 01622 685276** or download [www.vam-online.org.uk](http://www.vam-online.org.uk)

## **2. HAVING NEEDS ASSESSED BY SOCIAL SERVICES**

Social Services have a responsibility under the NHS and Community Care Act to assess the needs of anyone who may be entitled to receive services in order to support them living in the community. The **Kent Contact and Assessment Service [KCAS]** is the main access point for people wanting to contact Kent Adult Social Services about themselves or someone they care about.

**KCAS can provide free**

- Information, advice and guidance about services
- An assessment to find out if the person you care for is eligible for support from Social Services
- Equipment and minor adaptations such as raised toilet seats, grab rails and stair rails
- An Enablement Service. This is intensive short term support for up to 6 weeks. This may be to help regain confidence and skills following a fall or change in circumstances.

**If only simple services** are needed such as shopping or cleaning then KCAS will be able to provide information about how to contact appropriate providers. If following an **assessment** more **complex needs** are identified then a range of services may be offered which could include some or all of the following; help in the home, day care and short breaks [respite care]. Contact with other sources of help can be made and any entitlement to benefits checked and applied for.

**A financial assessment** of the person receiving services will be requested in order to work out how much, if anything, they will be asked to contribute towards the cost of the services.

If you are caring on a regular basis it is important to know that you can also **ask for your own assessment under the Carers Act and the Carers and Disabled Children Act**. You can ask for this even if your relative or friend does not want their needs to be assessed. Social Services will then take into account **your needs** when deciding what help to offer the person you care for, or they may offer services directly to you. Carers are not charged for the services they need to support them in their caring role and a 'one off carers' payment' may be given.

People assessed as needing services or support [including carers] can choose to be given money to arrange this for themselves instead of receiving services arranged by their care manager. This is called a **Direct Payment**. To find out more contact the **Direct Payment Support Scheme Tel: 0845 365 0210** **Self Directed Support** is the name given to the way social care is being redesigned so that people who get services can take greater control over them. Changes to the system will be explained by Social Services.

If the person you care for has already had an assessment but the situation has since changed and you need more help in order to cope, **ask for a reassessment**. Maidstone **Tel: 01622 691640** or Malling **Tel: 01732 525419** Even if you are unsure about whether or not Social Services will be able to help, please ask. **To contact KCAS Tel: 08458 247 100**

### **3. TAKING A BREAK**

**[sometimes called respite care]**

Sometimes you will need to take a break from your caring role, whether it is to go on holiday, catch up with friends and family or simply to have a rest! Having a change of scene and making contact with other people can be enjoyable for the person you care for too. Respite services may be provided in your home or elsewhere and can help you take a break ranging from a few hours to several weeks.

#### **RESIDENTIAL BREAKS**

The person you care for could have a short stay in a residential home or nursing home.

- **Social Services** can help arrange this type of care see 2. **HAVING NEEDS ASSESSED BY SOCIAL SERVICES**. Following a financial assessment a contribution towards the cost of this service will be expected.

- It is possible to **make your own arrangements** directly with a residential or nursing home. You may choose to do this because you do not wish to involve Social Services or because Social Services have said the person you care for is not entitled to their help. To obtain the Kent Care Directory of Homes **Tel: 0845 824 7100** view online at [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk) or [www.cqc.org.uk/registered-services-directory](http://www.cqc.org.uk/registered-services-directory) (Maidstone Carers Project can access the Kent Care Services Directory on-line for you).
- People with cancer and other progressive life limiting illnesses may be able to receive respite care at the **Heart of Kent Hospice** **Tel: 01622 792200** [you will need GP's agreement to use this service].

## RESPITE SERVICES IN YOUR HOME

**Crossroads** – see page 1 **Tel: 01622 817114**

**Crossroads Palliative Care Service** – provides additional support for carers of people who have a diagnosis of cancer or other life limiting illness, including the possibility of an overnight service. This is a flexible free service.

**Tel: 01622 817114**

If the person you care for receives services in the home arranged by **Social Services** it may be possible to increase their care package to help them remain at home while you are away for a short while. Discuss this with their care manager.

## 4. HOLIDAYS

**Tourism for all** – information about holidays and travel for people with special needs and or disabilities **Tel: 0845 124 9971** [www.tourismforall.co.uk](http://www.tourismforall.co.uk)

**Vitalise** – holidays for disabled people, also holidays for disabled people and their carers together with volunteers who enable carers to rest **Tel: 0845 345 1970** [www.vitalize.or.uk](http://www.vitalize.or.uk)

**Kent Association for the Disabled** – holidays with care arranged, care provided by volunteers, also short break respite holidays **Tel: 01622 756444**

**Enable Holidays** – provide package holidays for disabled people, their families and friends **Tel: 0871 222 4939** [www.enableholidays.com](http://www.enableholidays.com)

## 5. ACTIVITIES/CLUBS AND LEISURE

**Therapeutic Day Centre** – This is one of a range of services provided by the Community Neuro Rehab Team [CNRT] see 10. HEALTHCARE SERVICES

**Heart of Kent Hospice** – operate a Day Therapy Centre for people with cancer and other progressive, life limiting illness. **Tel: 01622 792200**

**Kent Association for the Blind** – hold monthly coffee mornings for anyone with sight problems. Weekly day club on Thursdays in Maidstone [transport available] **Tel: 01622 691357 [www.kab.org.uk](http://www.kab.org.uk)**

**Stroke Association Communication Support** – A weekly group to improve communication skills of people who have had a stroke and for social activities. **Tel: 01622 351963**

**Stroke Group Meetings** – monthly in Maidstone for support and socialising. **Tel: 01622 716028**

**Rough Guide to Accessible Britain** – ideas on days out across the UK, featuring 100 accessible locations. The guide is £6.99 [inc. p & p] or free to Blue Badge Holders [£1.99 p & p] **Tel: 0800 953 7070**

**Free cinema tickets for carers** – people in receipt of Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance or who are registered blind can apply for a Cinema Exhibitors Card [for a small processing fee] valid for 3 years which entitles a carer to accompany them free of charge to films **Tel: 0845 123 1292**

**Tonbridge & Malling Special Needs Club** – a disability multi-sports club meets twice monthly at Larkfield Leisure Centre on Saturday evenings from 5-7pm. Entry for carer attending is free **Tel: 01622 719345**

**Weald Club for the Disabled** – social club for physically disabled people living in the Weald area. Meets in Staplehurst Fridays 9.30-2pm **Tel: 01580 891870**

**Kent Sports Development Unit** – website has information about a wide range of disability sports [www.kentsport.org/disability](http://www.kentsport.org/disability). Maidstone Carers Project can help if you do not have internet access.

**Maidstone Swimming Club for the Disabled** – weekly sessions of hydrophobic exercises and swimming **Tel: 01622 747819**

**Leybourne Grange Riding Centre** – riding for disabled people. **Tel: 01732 872844**

**Maidstone Leisure Centre** – Mote Park Maidstone. Free swimming for people registered disabled and their carers **Tel: 0845 1552277**

**Housebound Library Service** – home delivery service for people unable to visit a library due to ill health or disability, or because they are a carer.  
**Tel: 01622 752344.**

**Maidstone Reference Library** – can tell you more about other clubs and special interest groups **Tel: 01622 752344**

## **6. TRAINING/PAID WORK/VOLUNTARY WORK**

**SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities** – provides information and advice on all aspects of further and higher education for students with disabilities **Tel: 0800 328 5050**

**Disability Employment Advisor** – training, help with access to work, including equipment, support workers and fares to work **Tel: 0845 604 3719**

**Kent Supported Employment** – free supported employment service specialising in assisting people with disabilities to find and be successful in employment **Tel: 01622 691640**

**The Blackthorn Trust Garden** – offers individual rehabilitation which may include work in the café, kitchen, craft workshop, greenhouse or the garden for a small remuneration **Tel: 01622 725585**

**Volunteer Centre Maidstone** – will be happy to discuss the range of opportunities available to volunteers **Tel: 01622 677337**

**Volunteer Centre Malling** – **Tel: 01732 843346**

## **7. HOUSING**

**Golding Homes Support Services** [formally Maidstone Housing Trust] – provides the following range of services (not restricted to tenants of Golding Homes); these services may be offered following an assessment of needs;

**Sheltered Housing** – offers housing related support and promotes independent living with the security of knowing help is at hand.  
**Tel: 01622 212737**

**Intensive Floating Support for People over 50** – free housing related support to empower a person to live independently and to maintain their home environment **Tel: 01622 212738**

**Maidstone Lifeline** – provides a portable alarm which can be worn and is linked to a 24 hour telephone control centre. If help is needed e.g. in the event of a fall or illness, the control centre is alerted and they can contact services or a relative **Tel: 01622 212742**

**Tonbridge & Malling Lifeline** – **Tel: 01732 781966**

**Invicta Telecare** - for housing support and Telecare lifeline services in the Tonbridge & Malling area **Tel: 01732 781966**

**In Touch Home Improvement Agency** – advice and financial assistance to help older, disabled or vulnerable people through all procedures involved in having renovation works or adaptations to their home, either through a grant or privately. [Owner occupiers and private tenants only].

Also a **Handyperson Service** for owner occupiers or private tenants who are over 55 or who are disabled or vulnerable. Minor repairs [except electrics, gas and jobs above gutter-height] and the fitting of key safes for anyone who needs one [there is a charge for this service] **Tel: 01732 525520**

## **8. EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING AND CARING**

If the person you care for finds some everyday activities difficult because of an illness or disability there is a wide range of equipment that may help you both.

**Occupational Therapists [OT's]** – make an assessment of the difficulties and can advise you on the most appropriate equipment to help and how to use it. There are two different occupational therapy services [see below], ask your GP or district nurse which one you should contact.

**Occupational Therapy Department, Maidstone Hospital [Healthcare]** – usually loan small personal pieces of equipment, help on discharge from hospital and with short term needs. This is a free service **Tel: 01622 729000 Ext 24301**

**Social Services Occupational Therapy Service** – help with long term needs and make a full assessment including need for major alterations to the home, eg lifts, special showers etc. They can advise on applications for major works [grants are means tested]. For Maidstone area **Tel: 01622 691640** or Tonbridge & Malling area **Tel: 01732 525000**

**Telecare** – is a remote monitoring service linked to a lifeline unit which improves safety in the home. A range of sensors can be used according to individual need eg a fall detector temperature extremes sensor etc which detects problems and ensures prompt help is at hand. There are 3 ways to access Telecare:

- via an assessment by Kent Adult Social Services for those meeting the eligibility criteria **Tel: 01622 691640**
- via a Direct Payment [see Direct Payments on page 3]
- purchased privately – contact Invicta Telecare **Tel: 0845 601 8523**

**The Wheelchair Service** Preston Hall Hospital **Tel: 01622 713018** – provides suitable wheelchairs and maintenance or replacement of equipment as required. People who need a wheelchair long term [more than 6 months] or who are terminally ill are entitled to use this service. To get the service ask a professional such as a doctor, district nurse or therapist to make a referral.

**British Red Cross** – provides short term loan of wheelchairs and commodes **Tel: 01622 758643**

**Age Concern Maidstone** – provides short term loan of wheelchairs. **Tel: 01622 753618**

**Wheelchair Users' Group** – provides useful information about all aspects of wheelchair use, also newsletter and fact sheets **Tel: 01303 226500**

**Home Equipment Loans [Helpstores]** – provides equipment to people being nursed at home following discharge from hospital or being seen by a district nurse, GP or therapist. A wide range of equipment is available including beds, hoists, commodes, bedpans, sheepskins etc. There is no charge for this service. Referrals are made through a health professional.

**REMAP [Technical Equipment for Disabled People]** – is a charity which provides custom designed aids for disabled people often helping with difficulties which cannot be solved by standard commercial equipment. This is a free service **Tel: 0845 130 0456**

**BT Age & Disability Action Team** – advisors can help with telephones and adaptations for people who find it difficult to use an ordinary phone **Tel: 0800 919591**

**VAT Exemption** – gadgets and equipment designed solely for disabled people are zero-rated from VAT. Free booklet 701/7 available. The supplier should have details but if not **Tel: 0845 302 0203**

The following are stockists of aids and equipment. However, before making a purchase it is advisable to have an Occupational Therapy Assessment.

**4 Mobility** – Medway Street Maidstone. Range of mobility and home health products [free parking on site] **Tel: 01622 754800**

**Charterwood Mobility** – Notcutts Garden Centre Maidstone. Wide range of mobility products **Tel: 01622 730519**

**Euro Mobility** – Mid-Kent Shopping Centre Castle Road Allington, have equipment/aids to view **Tel: 01622 755744**

**County Lifestyles Mobility** – 1 Harrow Cottage, Horseshoes Lane, Langley. Mobility vehicles and equipment. Home visits and advice to help save you money on equipment **Tel: 01622 863300**

## 9. COMPUTERS/TECHNOLOGY

**Ability Net** – is a national charity offering professional expertise in the use of computers for people with all kinds of disability **Tel: Freephone 0800 269545**  
[www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)

**COMPAID Trust** – offers a range of services including assessment, advice and teaching. Also communication aid assessments for speech impaired adults.  
**Tel: 0845 241 2134**

## 10. HEALTHCARE SERVICES

**Carers Direct** – NHS choices website [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect) provide information, advice and support for carers or call free from 8am-9pm Mon-Fri or 11am-4pm weekends **Tel: 0808 802 0202**

**West Kent Care Call** – free telephone support service for people with long term conditions run by experienced registered nurses called Health Coaches  
**Tel: 0800 169 1824**

**Patient Advice & Liaison Services [PALS]** – provides information on health matters, treatments, support groups and services. PALS also help if you are having difficulties with health services **Tel: 01622 224960** for Hospital Services  
**Tel: 0800 085 0850** for Community Services **Tel: 0800 587 6757** for Mental Health & Learning Disability Services

**Continence Advisory Service** – Anyone who would like to talk to a nurse about any type of urinary or bowel problems can contact this service. Clients

can be seen in hospital, the continence clinic, their own home or in residential and nursing homes. There is no charge for this service **Tel: 01622 795716**

**Community Dietetic Service** – Dieticians can help carers by giving general advice, advising on special diets [eg diabetes] and by supporting people who are being artificially fed. A GP referral will be required. There is no charge for this service.

**Community Neuro Rehabilitation Team [Maidstone]** – This service [including a Therapeutic Day Centre] is provided by physiotherapists, a neuro-psychologist, nurses, an occupational therapist, a speech and language therapist and trained therapy assistants. The service is for people with a chronic disability such as, Multiple Sclerosis, Head Injury, Stroke, Motor Neurone Disease and other neurological conditions. A GP, district nurse or member of hospital staff needs to ask for this service before a visit can be made **Tel: 01622 795723**

**Department of Foot Health** – this service provides professional chiropody services for people with complex foot health needs. Service takes place in the Health Trust's Community Clinics. People who are unable to leave their home receive home visits. A health or social service professional would need to ask for this service.

#### **Other Health Care Services:-**

- District Nursing – see under  
1. HELP IN YOUR HOME
- Occupational Therapy Services – see under  
8. EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING AND CARING
- Wheelchair Service – see under  
8. EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING AND CARING
- Home Equipment Loan - see under  
8. EQUIPMENT FOR LIVING AND CARING
- Carers Moving & Handling Service - see under  
19. SUPPORT FOR CARERS

## **11. EYESIGHT, HEARING AND TEETH**

**Kent Association for the Blind** – offers a wide range of services for people who are visually impaired. Provides help and advice in all aspects of

independent living including adaptations, aids, tapes, benefits, undertakes home assessments, low vision advice and mobility training. Weekly day club in Maidstone on Thursdays [transport available] **Tel: 01622 691357**  
[www.kab.org.uk](http://www.kab.org.uk)

**Hi Kent** – provides practical support and information for people who are deaf or partially hearing. Their Resource Centre in Brewer Street has a working display of helpful equipment. Volunteers can assist with cleaning and re-tubing of hearing aids **Tel: 01622 691151** [www.hikent.org.uk](http://www.hikent.org.uk)

**Opticians**– details of opticians who will undertake home visits are available from Kent Primary Care Agency. **Tel: 01622 655058**

**Dentists** – for details of dentists who will undertake home visits and those who provide a specialist service for people with special needs call NHS West Kent **Tel: 01622 717776** or **0800 085 0850**

**Deaf Services Social Services** – have specialist social work staff who can provide assessment, advice, information and support in relation to needs arising from deafness. Also assessment for, and provision of, equipment. **Tel: 01732 525393** Textphone **01732 525394** Fax: **01732 525395**

**Free Telephone Directory Service** – for people with sight and other difficulties **Dial: 195**

## 12. GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

**Free travel passes** - for people reaching the current women's pension age [60+ increasing to 65] and some disabled people on all local buses throughout England between 9am-11pm weekdays [all day weekends]. People with the following conditions would be eligible: blind or partially sighted • profoundly or severely deaf • without speech • disability that has substantial and long term adverse effect on walking ability • no arms or loss of use of arms • learning disability • would be refused a driving licence under Part 3 of the Road Traffic Act Contact Maidstone Borough Council **Tel: 01622 602334**  
[www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk) or Tonbridge & Malling Council **Tel: 01732 876322**  
[www.tmbc.gov.uk](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk)

**Travel Voucher Scheme** – Age Concern Maidstone provide vouchers for people who would qualify for the free bus pass but are unable to use buses due to a severe mobility impairment. A limited amount of vouchers is allocated and exchanged as payment for taxi and community transport. **It is not possible** to have both a bus pass and travel vouchers **Tel: 01622 753618**

**Disabled Persons Railcard** – this is a national railcard that entitles a disabled person to travel at a reduced rate **Tel: 0845 6050 525**

**South Eastern Trains** – assisted travel arrangements for disabled people  
**Tel: 0800 783 4524** or **01732 770099**

**Blue Badge Scheme** – if the person you care for has serious mobility problems or is registered blind and has regular use of a car, they may be able to get a special permit for easier public parking [£2 charge] **Tel: 01622 605020**  
[www.bluebadge.direct.gov.uk](http://www.bluebadge.direct.gov.uk)

**National Key Scheme** – for toilets for disabled people enables key holders to unlock all disabled toilets in the scheme. Keys cost £3.50 contact **RADAR**  
**Tel: 0207 250 3222** Also available from Age Concern Maidstone.

**Changing Places [Maidstone Gateway]** – fully accessible toilets for disabled people with complex and challenging needs. They include a hoist, height-adjustable changing bench and peninsula toilet for maximum access. Open weekdays 8.30-5.30 [Thu to 7pm and Sat 9-1pm]. [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

**Kent Karrier** – a community bus for people within the Maidstone area who have difficulty using bus services [due to mobility problems or distance from a bus route in rural areas]. This service collects you from home for journeys to the town centre and hospital etc. It operates in different areas on different weekdays. **Dial-a-Ride** – a door to door service in specially adapted vehicles for people who use a wheelchair. For journeys only within the Maidstone area. For both of these services there is a £5 per year membership fee and a subsidised charge for each journey. Carers/companions can travel with a member and only pay journey cost. **Tel: 01622 605349**

**Compaid Trust** run a similar service for the Malling area **Tel: 0845 094 4629**

**Volunteer Transport Scheme** – if you or the person you care for is unable to manage on a bus this service can provide a volunteer car driver who will pick you up from home and take you wherever you need to go. There is a mileage charge, the scheme can tell you the current rate. **Tel: 01622 756662 between 9am-4pm**

**Volunteer Centre Malling** – operate a volunteer transport scheme for people who live in the Malling & surrounding rural areas and are unable to access public transport **Tel: 01732 843346**

**Hospital Transport** – is for people medically unfit to travel to hospital by other means. Arrangements can only be made via the Primary Care Booking Service  
**Tel: 01622 791472**

**Hospital Fares** – people on income support may get help with fares or other travel expenses and when attending hospital need to ask for a claim form at the Administration Office.

**British Red Cross Society** – transport and escort services can provide an ambulance with two trained crew members for people needing this type of transport [e.g. if needing to lie down]. Over 50 miles there is a charge of £1.60 per mile plus a call-out charge of £160 **Tel: 01233 642064**

**Shopmobility Scheme** – [The Mall Chequers Centre] hire of an electric scooter for use while shopping. £3 to hire plus one off registration fee of £5. To register **Tel: 01622 678777** Free loan of manual wheelchair whilst shopping available from The Mall Chequers Centre [pre-booking advised].  
**Tel: 01622 691130**

**South East Drivemobility** – provides advice on car adaptations and the opportunity to inspect and test-drive adapted vehicles. Re-training on adapted vehicles. Can assess drivers ability to operate a car safely and in comfort. Practical demonstration of special car seat and hoists which aid easy access to either driver or passenger seats **Tel: 01622 795719**

**Motability** – is a scheme which enables people in receipt of higher mobility component of Disability Living Allowance [see 17. HELP WITH MONEY] or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement to purchase or hire new or used cars. Carer can be driver. Can also be used to buy motorised wheelchairs or scooters.  
**Tel: 0845 456 4566**

**Mobilise** – supports disabled drivers, passengers, Blue Badge holders, families and carers. Information and advice on all aspects of disability and transportation **Tel: 01227 832058 / 07860 591887**

**DisabledGo** - provides online access information about local businesses and services at [www.disabledgo.info](http://www.disabledgo.info). For those who not have access to the internet, paper copies are available at the Maidstone Gateway or **Tel: 01622 602000**

**Exemption from Road Tax** – For cars which are for the use of disabled people who get the higher mobility component of Disability Living Allowance [not necessarily driven by them] **Tel: 08457 123456**

### **13. HELP IN AN EMERGENCY/OUT OF HOURS**

**Medical Help** – if you are worried that the person you care for is seriously ill contact your GP surgery and a message will tell you what to do.

**Call 999 for an ambulance** – for a life-threatening problem like severe chest pain, suspected heart attack or stroke, serious injury, loss of consciousness, severe breathing difficulties, heavy bleeding, suspected broken bones, poisoning or drug overdose.

**Falls** – If the person you care for falls and is unable to get up or is in pain call for an ambulance. Ambulance staff will be able to assess for injury and safely move them. Do not be tempted to move them yourself as you could both get hurt.

**District Nursing Service** – if you need help or advice from your district nurse contact your GP Surgery

**NHS Direct** – is a telephone service staffed by nurses, giving confidential healthcare advice and information 24 hours a day **Tel: 0845 4647**

**Chemists** – to find out which chemist is open out of usual hours **contact NHS Direct 0845 4647**

**Social Services** – for urgent advice that cannot wait until the next working day contact **Out of Hours Service Tel: 0845 762 6777**

**Dentaline** - If you require emergency out of hours dentistry or are not registered with a dentist **Tel: 01634 890300**

**Gas smell or suspected leaks** – **Tel: 0800 111 999**

**Kent Fire & Rescue Service** – offer home fire safety advice and, if required, installation of a free smoke alarm **Tel: 0800 923 7000**

**Samaritans** – provide a 24 hour listening service for anyone needing to talk to someone in confidence **Tel: 0845 790 9090**

**Datalink Emergency Information Scheme** – details of illnesses, allergies, medication and contact addresses are stored in a clearly labelled plastic container kept in the fridge. Identifying labels on the inside of your front door and outside of fridge alert Emergency Services that it is there. Available from Age Concern **Tel: 01622 753618**

**Carers Emergency Card Scheme** – carers can register for a free card which, in the event of an emergency [e.g. sudden illness or accident] will alert others to their caring role. The card has a 24 hour call centre number to ring and an unique identification number which will enable the call centre to activate a pre-arranged care plan. To find out more or to register contact Maidstone Carers Project **Tel: 01622 685276** [www.kentcarersemergencycard.org.uk](http://www.kentcarersemergencycard.org.uk)

**Kent Search & Rescue** – suggest when you change the clocks each year you also take a photo of the person you care for so that if they should wander off, a recent photograph makes it easier to find them and get them home safe. You can also complete a ‘Life History Questionnaire’ form to record information such as physical description, medical history and particularly information about where the person is likely to wander to, so you can provide it to the Police in the event of an emergency **Tel: 01843 832 995** [www.ksar.co.uk](http://www.ksar.co.uk)

## 14. RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOME CARE

Sometimes even with help and support it is no longer possible to continue caring for someone at home. Residential or nursing home care may be the answer but before making such a big decision it is important to have good information.

**Social Services** will help fund the placement of anyone they assess as needing permanent residential or nursing home care if they have less than £23,000 assets. People who have more than £23,000 will be expected to fund themselves. Even so, it is still worth asking for an assessment as Social Services can advise what sort of care is the best option. If they decide long term care is needed they will help with funding when savings drop to £23,000. Social Services also provide information about registered homes in the area. [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

**NHS – funded nursing care and NHS Continuing Care** – if someone is assessed as needing care in a nursing home, the NHS will contribute towards the cost, up to a certain amount, depending on how much nursing care they need. People whose primary needs are assessed as being healthcare should be eligible for **NHS Continuing Care** – this means the NHS will fund their care costs. For a public information booklet **Tel: 0300 123 1002**

**‘The Complete Care Home Guide’** – is a free useful booklet available from Counsel and Care Tel: 0207 241 8555 or can be downloaded from [www.housingcare.org](http://www.housingcare.org)

**NHFA** – free advice and information about how to manage your finances to meet care costs in the long term **Tel: 0800 998833**

**The Relatives & Residents Association** – charity providing information and advice to residents in homes and their relatives. Have a regular newsletter and advice line **Tel: 0207 359 8136**

**Care Aware** – offer free advice and guidance on all aspects of funding care for people over 60. For a useful ‘self funder’ information pack **Tel: 0161 707 1107**

**The Cinnamon Trust** – can send you a copy of their pet friendly care homes register which lists homes in Kent, happy to accept pets **Tel: 01736 757900**

**The Care Quality Commission [CQC]** – is responsible for the registration and inspection of residential care and nursing homes. Inspection reports are public documents and homes should be happy to show them to you. They can also be found at libraries and the CQC. The CQC will also investigate complaints and concerns about services from a care agency coming into your home.  
**Tel: 03000 616161 [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)**

## **15. IF THINGS GO WRONG**

If you have any problems with a service you receive, or disagree with a decision that has been made by a professional, there are formal ways for you to try and get things changed.

**Social Services** – ask for an information leaflet about their complaints procedure contact Customer Care **Tel: 01732 525187**

**The Patient Advice & Liaison Service [PALS]** – will assist you if you are having difficulties with health services:

- Maidstone Hospital Services **Tel: 01622 224960**
- Community Services **Tel: 0800 085 0850**
- Mental Health & Learning Disability Services **Tel: 0800 587 6757**
- Ambulance Services **Tel: 01622 740348**

**ICAS [Independent Complaints Advocacy Service]** – provides support to people if they have a complaint regarding their National Health Service Treatment **Tel 0845 600 8616 [www.seap.org.uk/icas](http://www.seap.org.uk/icas)**

**Equality & Human Rights Commission** – provides information about the right to equal treatment and what to do about discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation or race. Helpline **Tel: 0845 604 6610**

**Kent Health Watch** - will help you find the right place to make comments or raise concerns about health and social care. It is run by KCC in partnership with the NHS and provides another route by which people can make their voice heard. The service operates 24hrs a day, seven days a week.  
**Tel: 08458 247103**

**The Care Quality Commission [CQC]**– if you have a complaint or concern about care standards in a residential/nursing home or from a care agency

coming into your home [see page 16] **Tel: 03000 616161** [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)  
If you want more information or help to make a complaint about the above or other services the following local organisations can help:-

**Citizen's Advice Maidstone – 01622 752420/757882**  
**Citizen's Advice Malling – 01732 440488**  
**Maidstone Carers Project – 01622 685276**

## 16. HELP AFTER A DEATH

**'What to do after a death: a guide to what you must do and the help you can get'** – is a free booklet which explains all the practical and legal matters you will have to deal with. Available from your local Job Centre Plus office [and sometimes the Post Office & Library] **Tel: 0845 604 3719** and the Kent County Council Registration Service **0845 824 7400**

**'Tell Us Once' Service** – when registering the death an appointment can be made where all information can be recorded to be passed on to all relevant departments and services on your behalf **Tel: 08458 247 400**

**Carers UK** – free booklets called **'When a person dies'** and **'Life After Caring'** contains helpful advice and information **Tel: 0808 808 7777**

**Maidstone CRUSE** – offers a volunteer bereavement counselling service [available to anyone]. Supportive literature is also available.  
**Tel: 01622 671011**

It may be distressing to continue receiving correspondence addressed to the person who has died. To prevent this **Tel: 0870 600 7222**

## 17. HELP WITH MONEY & LEGAL MATTERS

**The Welfare Benefits System** – if you or the person you care for is on a low income there may be a range of benefits to help. These are called **means-tested** benefits. There are also **non-means tested** benefits available for some people because of their care needs and for some carers.

**Benefit Enquiry Line** – information about & application forms for Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance & Carers Allowance for people with disabilities and their carers **Tel: 0800 882200**

**Carers Credit** – if you are of working age you can apply for a weekly Carer's Credit to protect your State Pension. You only need to be caring for 20 hours

per week or more [including combined hours if you care for more than one person] **Tel: 0845 608 4321**

Other benefits for people of working age **Tel: 0800 055 6688**

**Kent Benefits Partnership** – will check your entitlement for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and will assist with claims **Tel: 0845 345 0310**

**Help with Health Costs** – people in receipt of certain benefits may be exempt from health charges. People not on these benefits but on a low income may also get help. For a leaflet **Tel: 0845 850 1166**

**Some Carers & Disabled People** – are entitled to a non-means tested reduction to their Council Tax – ring Maidstone Carers Project for more details **Tel: 01622 685276**

**Carers UK** – provide information about all the main benefits for carers and the people they look after and also have a helpline **Tel: 0808 808 7777**  
[www.carersuk.org.uk](http://www.carersuk.org.uk)

**Maidstone Gateway** - a one stop shop (next to The Mall Chequers Centre) for Maidstone Borough Council services as well as information and advice about housing, benefits, Kent Adult Social Services, blue badge and travel voucher applications, internet access etc. Open from 9-5 Mon-Fri.

**Veterans Agency** – advice about entitlement to war pensions.  
**Tel: 0800 1692 277**

If you are unsure whether to apply for any of these benefits or would like help to complete the forms you can get help from:-

**Maidstone Carers Project** – 01622 685276  
**Citizen's Advice Malling** – 01732 440488  
**Citizen's Advice Maidstone** – 01622 752420/757882  
[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

**Royal British Legion** – offers advice and financial help to any member of the ex-service community who is in need [this includes dependants].  
**Tel: 01622 790566**

**Soldiers' Sailors' Airmen and Families Association – Forces Help** – helps on a confidential and practical basis, Service and Ex-Service men and women and their dependants to confront problems and cope with hardship.  
**Tel: 01622 792929**

**Warm Front Grant** – provides grants to make homes warmer, healthier to live in and more energy efficient. For householders on benefits because of disability or low income. **Tel: 0800 316 2814** [www.warmfront.co.uk](http://www.warmfront.co.uk)

**Dealing with Someone Else's Money** – if the person you care for is finding it difficult to look after their own finances there are several ways you may be able to help. 'Appointeeship' would enable you to manage their income from benefits.

**The Mental Capacity Act** – protects the best interests of anyone lacking the mental capacity to make decisions. Useful information for carers about the Act is available **Tel: 0845 330 2900**

It is possible to plan in advance and '**Lasting Power of Attorney**' would enable you to act on behalf of the person you care for. There are 2 types, one for **Property & Affairs** for decisions about finance and one for **Personal Welfare** for decisions about health, treatment and care. It is also possible to make **Advance Decisions** sometimes called **Living Wills**. Age Concern & Help the Aged Information Service produce a helpful factsheet '**Arranging for others to make decisions about your finances and welfare**'.  
**Tel: 0800 009 966**

**British Bankers Association** – provide a leaflet explaining how you can open a bank account and manage money on behalf of someone who lacks capacity to make decisions **Tel: 0207 216 8800**

**Community Legal Advice** – gives details of local solicitors, advice agencies and information providers committed to providing a high standard of service  
**Tel: 0845 345 4345**

## 18. SUPPORT NOT ALREADY MENTIONED

**The Beacon Centre** – provides help in the Shepway, Mangravet, Parkwood and Senacre areas of Maidstone. Services include; advice centre, computer skills centre & household store for people in need **Tel: 01622 661560**

**Diabetes UK** – Maidstone District Voluntary Group Provide support for diabetics, their families and carers **Tel: 01372 720148** [South East Regional Office for local contact] [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

**Sugar Free Zone** – self help diabetic club meets monthly at Parkwood Healthy Living Centre **Tel: 01622 691177**

**Disabled Persons Liaison Committee** – a pressure group campaigning for improved access and mobility for all disabled people in the Maidstone area.  
**Tel: 01622 675244/661720**

**Lenham & Harrietsham Area Disability Group** – meets monthly to provide information and support. Aims to promote equality and better access for all.  
**Tel: 01622 859412**

**Maidstone Area Back Society** – group for back-pain sufferers with therapeutic exercises in hydrotherapy pool **Tel: 01622 725597**

**Motor Neurone Disease Association** – Help and support for people with Motor Neurone Disease and their carers. Association visitors and telephone advice. Regular group meetings **Tel: 01634 846330** [www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)

**Multiple Sclerosis Society** [Maidstone Branch] – help, support and monthly meetings **Tel: 01622 675556** [www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)

**National Osteoporosis Society** [Maidstone Branch] – help, support and advice for sufferers. 6 meetings a year **Tel: 01622 744704**

**Parkinson's Disease Society** [Maidstone Branch] – monthly meetings for people coping with Parkinson's Disease and their carers **Tel: 01622 859608**  
[www.parkinsons.org.uk](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk)

**Scope** – support and information for people with Cerebral Palsy.  
**Tel: 0808 800 3333** [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

**Sense** [National Deaf/Blind and Rubella Association] – support group for carers  
**Tel: 01622 831345** [www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk)

**Huntington's Disease Support Group** – supports people affected by HD, families and carers **Tel: 01233 811681** [www.hda.org.uk](http://www.hda.org.uk)

**Macmillan Cancerline** – information and support **Tel: 0808 808 2020**

**Incontact** – confidential helpline for people with bladder or bowel problems  
Mon-Fri 9.30am-1pm **Tel: 0845 345 0165**

**Myasthenia Gravis** – telephone contact and support **Val Kilbey**  
**Tel: 01233 641180**

**Dial Kent** – advice and information for disabled people and carers.  
**Tel: 01227 771155**

**Fibromyalgia Support Group** invite speakers to their bi-monthly meetings to provide information for people coping with Fibromyalgia and their carers.  
**Tel: 01580 715503**

**Disabled Parents** – for information, support and contact with other parents:

**National Centre for Disabled Parents Tel: 0800 018 4730**

**Disabled Parent Network Tel: 0870 241 0450**  
[www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk](http://www.disabledparentsnetwork.org.uk)

**Disability Pregnancy & Parenthood International Tel: 0800 018 4730**  
[www.dppi.org.uk](http://www.dppi.org.uk)

**Stroke Association** – advice and information for all aspects of stroke.  
**Tel: 01622 351960** For local support and social activities **Tel: 01622 351963**

**Centre for Independent Living Kent [CILK]** – is a pan-disability charity run and managed by disabled people. They provide information on independent living and Direct Payments, support, advice and advocacy **Tel: 01622 355777**

**Find a Voice** – supports people with severe communication difficulties and their carers. Information and advice about communication aids. Free resource library  
[www.findavoice.org.uk](http://www.findavoice.org.uk)

**Kent Local Involvement Network [LINK]** – independent network of individuals & community groups working together to influence and improve local health & social services **Tel: 07976 596709**

**NB:** Most conditions will have a national organisation which can provide useful information. If one is not mentioned in this booklet you may easily find out by searching on the internet. **Maidstone Carers Project** can do this for you  
**Tel: 01622 685276**

## **19. SUPPORT FOR CARERS**

**Maidstone Carers Project** – provides information about local services and support for anyone caring for a family member or friend in the Maidstone & Malling area. Information about benefits and help to fill out forms. Carers groups offer mutual support and friendship. A regular Carers Forum enables carers to talk directly to service providers and planners. A free confidential listening ear. Free Carers Emergency Card. Free Caring with Confidence Courses for carers **Tel: 01622 685276** [www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp](http://www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp)

**NHS West Kent** – in partnership with **Maidstone Carers Project** is running a Pilot Project for 'Better Support for Carers in the NHS' [until March 2011]. Carer Support Workers will be working with the College Practice and Hospital sites. If you are a patient at College Practice or you or the person you care for is going into hospital **Tel: 01622 230729**

**Work focused support for carers** – a Jobcentre Plus voluntary scheme providing advice & support for carers preparing to work **Tel: 0845 604 3719**

**Crossroads Care West Kent**– enables you to have a short break from your caring role by providing a trained carers support worker in the home. This is a free service to carers **Tel: 01622 817114**

**Crossroads Young Carers Project** – provides support, advice, befriending for young carers. Also an evening break in a youth club, trips and holidays so that young carers can relax and have fun with others in similar situations.

**Tel: 01622 817114**

**Carers Christian Fellowship** – offers regular newsletters and links to other carers, occasional fellowship days arranged **Tel: 01793 887068**

**The Kiloran Trust** – is a registered charity providing residential supportive 5 night breaks for carers in their West London House. For those on means-tested benefits Kiloran will try to get the cost of stay covered.

**Tel: 0207 602 7404** [www.kilorantrust.org.uk](http://www.kilorantrust.org.uk)

**Carers Moving & Handling Advice Service** – give advice about how to move someone safely without hurting yourself or the person you are caring for

**Tel: 01622 749885**

**The Admiral Nursing Service** – offers long-term practical and emotional support for carers of people with dementia. Admiral nurses have specialist knowledge of dementia. **Tel: 01622 725356**

**Carers UK** – raises awareness of carers needs at all levels of government and society. They provide a range of free information booklets and operate a carers helpline. Carersline **Tel: 0808 808 7777** [www.carersuk.org.uk](http://www.carersuk.org.uk)

**Carers Direct – NHS choices website** [www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect) provide information, advice and support for carers or call free from 8am-9pm Mon-Fri or 11am-4pm weekends **Tel: 0808 802 0202**

**IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

**Maidstone Carers Project – Tel: 01622 685276**

## 20. USEFUL WEBSITES

[www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)

[www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople](http://www.direct.gov.uk/DisabledPeople)

[www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk) (Maidstone Borough Council)

[www.tmbc.gov.uk](http://www.tmbc.gov.uk) (Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council)

[www.carersuk.org.uk](http://www.carersuk.org.uk) (carers rights & information)

[www.arthritiscare.org.uk](http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk) (Arthritis Care)

[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk) (British Heart Foundation)

[www.cancerhelp.org.uk](http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk)

[www.parkinsons.org.uk](http://www.parkinsons.org.uk) (Parkinson's Disease Society)

[www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk) (Stroke Association)

[www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk) (Multiple Sclerosis Society)

[www.sense.org.uk](http://www.sense.org.uk) (Deaf/blindness)

[www.vitalise.org.uk](http://www.vitalise.org.uk) (holidays with care)

[www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org) (bladder & bowel problems)

[www.kentcarersemergencycard.org.uk](http://www.kentcarersemergencycard.org.uk)

[www.goldinghomes.org.uk](http://www.goldinghomes.org.uk) (formally Maidstone Housing Trust)

[www.seap.org.uk/icas](http://www.seap.org.uk/icas) (Independent Complaints Advocacy Service)

[www.vam-online.org.uk/caresproject.asp](http://www.vam-online.org.uk/caresproject.asp) (Maidstone Carers Project)

## Other leaflets in this series:

- Information for people caring for a friend or relative who is **over 65**
- Information for parent-carers of **disabled children or children with special needs**
- Information for people caring for a friend or relative who has **learning disabilities**
- Information for people caring for a friend or relative who **has a mental health problem**

Maidstone Carers Project  
Maidstone Community Support Centre  
39-48 Marsham Street  
Maidstone Kent ME14 1HH  
Tel: 01622 685276  
e-mail: [carers@vam-online.org.uk](mailto:carers@vam-online.org.uk)  
[www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp](http://www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp)



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