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Information for people caring for a relative or friend who has...

A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

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. 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 with a mental health problem 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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West Kent

HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

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HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

1. WEST KENT NHS & SOCIAL CARE TRUST

The first person to ask for help is the person's GP. The GP may refer the person you care for to the **Intake Team which is based at Priority House, Maidstone Hospital**. This team is made up of both health and social work professionals who specialize in assessing the needs of people experiencing mental health problems and providing them with appropriate support. At this stage the Home Treatment Team may offer support to enable the person you care for to stay at home. In extreme circumstances admittance to Priority House may be necessary. If support is needed following discharge the Home Treatment Team may be available. This service is accessed only via the Care Manager, in office hours, or the responsible medical officer, e.g. GP or Psychiatrist out of hours.

The majority of care provided by the Mental Health Teams places an emphasis on care in the community thereby allowing the cared for person to stay within a familiar environment, which is felt to be more therapeutic.

To contact Priority House please **Tel: 01622 725000**

If the person you care for is already receiving a service from the local mental health teams and a Care Manager has been allocated you can contact this person on the contact number below.

This service is normally available between 9.00 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday only.

Kingswood Mental Health Centre [south Maidstone] **Tel: 01622 766900**

Pagoda Mental Health Centre [north Maidstone] **Tel: 01622 724200**

Between the hours of 5pm-9am Mon-Fri and 24 hours at weekends & bank holidays, you can contact **MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS Tel: 0800 107 0160**. The Helpline has a team of highly trained and experienced support workers who use counselling skills to provide emotional support, guidance and information. It is not an emergency helpline, although they may be able to offer help if you are feeling in distress, low, anxious or stressed. All calls are confidential and this policy would only be broken if helpline staff considered there was a risk to yourself or others.

Carers Direct – NHS choices website 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**

Please see section 9. HELP IN A CRISIS for other agencies to contact for help in a crisis

If the person you care for is between 14 and 35 years of age, and they are experiencing their first episode of a mental health problem referral may be made to the early intervention team. This team can offer support and practical advice to the client and their carer in those early days which can be very distressing. In the first instance please contact the responsible medical officer, eg GP or psychiatrist, to request referral for the person you are caring for. As a carer you may be able to access support for yourself.

Tel: 01634 854547 for more details.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services –

out-patient services are provided by a team of health professionals who specialise in assessing the mental health needs of children and young people. A referral from a health or social service professional is required to access this service, eg GP, school nurse or social worker [GP referral preferred]. If you need more information **Tel: 01622 723600**

Please note that a referral to the mental health team may not always be necessary. Treatment will be offered at what is referred to as Primary Care Level. As before all referrals will be made via the GP.

Therapies which may be offered could include more psychological therapies, ie ‘talking therapies’ on a short term basis; self help groups for support and to share information and other community based services.

2. PAID WORK AND VOLUNTARY WORK

If the person with a mental health problem feels able to look for paid employment she/he can contact the local **Employment Services Disability Employment Advisers Tel: 0845 604 3719**

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

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

The One Stop Shop - is a multi-agency partnership between Kent County Council - Adult Social Services and organizations that currently include MCCH,

The Blackthorn Trust, The Winfield Trust and Kent and Medway NHS Social Care Partnership Trust. The One Stop Shop has been created in order to provide an effective and flexible route to employment for people with severe and enduring mental health issues. All referrals come from Vocational Advisors within the NHS & Social Care Trust. They are based at the Pagoda **Tel: 01622 724200** or Kingswood Mental Health Teams
Tel: 01622 766900

MCCH and vocational service Compass - provides support for people with mental health problems to access education and employment. Referral is through the Vocational Advisor from the Health Trust. [See above for contact numbers] www.mcch.co.uk

Shaw Trust – is a charity enabling disabled and disadvantaged people to find routes to work **Tel: 0800 085 1001**

Royal British Legion Industries – is a free service focused exclusively on the delivery of a variety of back-to-work programmes to help people with a disability, long term health condition, or receiving certain benefits to find, or remain in, meaningful employment **Tel: 0800 783 1144**

The Blackthorn Trust Garden – offers individual rehabilitation which may include work in the café or the garden for a small remuneration. Referral by G.P., Psychiatrist or Care Manager **Tel: 01622 725585** www.blackthorn.org.uk

Blackthorn Trust Garden Project– a job-finding and supported employment project, providing specialised key-worker support into education, voluntary work or employment **Tel: 01622 725585** www.blackthorn.org.uk

Voluntary Services –The NHS & Social Care Trust -

Offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities both hospital and community based. The Trust encourages people with mental health problems to become volunteers in a supportive and understanding environment. For an informal

chat please ring Janet Lingwood - Voluntary Services Manager **Tel: 01622 725000 ext. 277/278/202**

Gateway Volunteers – support and training to enable people to become volunteers at Maidstone Gateway to welcome the public and giving basic information. Contact Antony Wallis **Tel: 01622 677337**

V Team – an opportunity for people who would like to volunteer and would like a high level of support to do so. The team provides practical DIY and gardening services for elderly, disabled and ill people on low income. Contact Jackie **Tel: 01622 667337** www.vam-online.org.uk

If the person with the mental health problem wants to try out some work on an unpaid voluntary basis contact

Volunteer Centre- who will be happy to discuss the range of opportunities
Tel: 01622 677337 www.vam-online.org.uk

3. DAY ACTIVITIES

Maidstone MIND – open access centre [no referral needed], offers support and information for people with emotional and mental health difficulties. There are also various self help/support groups including anxiety management and the OCD Action Group [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder] amongst others. MIND is an independent and discreet organisation, very welcoming and with added assistance from support workers. Low cost meals and refreshments available. Resource centre with leaflets, books and computer access. Also social activities, e.g. outings, photography, DIY, arts, crafts, creative writing, to name a few. For more details **Tel: 01622 692383** www.mind.org.uk

MCCH Compass House – provide activities on their premises as well as employment placements in community settings. The person has to be referred by the Health Service or a Social Worker, telephone before visiting
Tel: 01622 688003 www.mcch.co.uk

The Blackthorn Trust – active rehabilitation for people with enduring mental health problems. Contact to discuss. **Tel: 01622 726128** www.blackthorn.org.uk

4. HOUSING

Homelessness –if the person with a mental health problem is homeless or threatened with homelessness, they should contact the Maidstone Borough Council Housing Needs Section. **Tel: 01622 602440** [24 hours]

Maidstone Day Centre, Lily Smith House, 15 Knightrider Street, Maidstone – a Day Centre for people without permanent housing and vulnerable people – breakfast, home-cooked midday meal, hot drinks, shower and laundry. It runs a 'Food for Thought' project providing an emergency food parcel to families in need following referral from a social worker or other organisations. It also offers help with form filling. Open 8–1.30pm Mon-Thu. 8-12noon Fri and 9-11am Sat **Tel: 01622 674064**

MCCH Society Limited – have several homes in Maidstone providing residential care for people with enduring mental health problems. People usually have to be referred by a health or social care professional, but for

further information contact the Senior Manager for Mental Health.

Tel: 01622 722400 www.mcch.co.uk

Stonham Housing Association – has one house in Maidstone for people with an enduring mental health problem. A mental health social worker would need to arrange this. **Tel: 01622 678756**

There are also a number of privately run residencies for people with a mental health problem. Details of these can be found in the Kent Care Services Directory which can be obtained from the Social Services. **Tel: 0845 824 7100**

The Beacon Centre – provides help in the Shepway, Mangravet, Parkwood and Senacre areas of Maidstone. Services include; advice centre, computer skills centre & household store, also providing bedding and soft furnishings, which are normally free to families in need **Tel: 01622 661560**
www.thebeaconchurch.org

5. INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Signpost – an easy-to-use website that provides information about: Local mental health services, social activities and community groups, sources of emotional support and books that can help. In addition, the website's life planner tool is being developed to help you think about what you feel is important and plan things so that you can live your life in the way that you wish
www.signpostuk.org

Live it well – a Kent-based website that can also offer advice on ways to improve physical and mental well being, visit www.liveitwell.org.uk

Ask the experts [the pharmacist, psychiatrist or psychologist] – this website contains information for family members and friends of people who have psychosis. The site has been developed by The Institute of Psychiatry, South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Rethink & the Wellcome Trust
www.mentalhealthcare.org.uk

Rethink Advocacy Service – a free service, independent of health and social services which provides an advocacy service which supports the person with a mental health problem to assert their interests, rights and concerns on a variety of issues **Tel: 01622 678674 or 0845 456 0455** www.rethink.org

MDF The Bi Polar Organisation – is a self help group for sufferers and relatives. Regular monthly meetings with occasional speakers.
Tel: 01270 230260 for more details www.mdf.org.uk

Maidstone MIND – [see Page 4 for more details].

Samaritans – confidential befriending/listening to those who are despairing, desperate or suicidal. **Tel: 01622 674444 or (local call) 08457 909090**

Mental Health Matters – [see Page 1] confidential emotional support for either the person who has a mental health problem or their carer **Tel: 0800 107 0160**

Rethink – Asian language helpline Monday and Wednesday 4pm - 7pm and Tuesday and Thursday 12 noon -3pm **Tel: 080 8800 2073**

Platform – is for users of mental health services in the Maidstone area, to make sure users' views are made known to providers of mental health services. Also supports several self-help groups including one for women only.
Tel: 01622 677337

Eating Disorders – local support group meets fortnightly, contact Kathy Maclean **Tel: 01634 270522**

Cruse Bereavement Care – bereavement counselling service
Tel: 01622 671011

Maidstone Depression Support Group – self help group for people coping with mild to moderate depression. **Tel: MIND 01622 692383**

Depression Self-help Group for Women – meets in Medway but Maidstone women welcomed **Tel: 01634 718471**

Anxiety Group – self help support group **Tel: MIND 01622 692383**

OCD (Obsessive compulsive disorder) - Maidstone OCD Support Group meets at Maidstone MIND. Contact Maidstone MIND. **Tel: 01622 692383** or for help or more information on OCD contact the OCD Action line direct.
Tel: 0845 390 6232.

Younger People with Dementia – help and information for younger sufferers of dementia and their carers (under 65 when dementia started). Therapy Unit next to Priority House in Maidstone. **Tel: 01622 726899**

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

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.

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

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

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

TOGETHER: Working for Wellbeing – supports people with mental health needs to get what they want from life and to feel happier. **Tel: 02077 807300**

No Panic – for people who experience panic attacks, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorders or other anxiety disorders. Information, helpline, telephone counselling and telephone befriending **Tel: 0808 808 0545**

First Steps to Freedom – support for people with stress and anxiety related disorders. Also help for people with borderline personality disorders and their carers. Includes helpline, telephone counselling, pen-pal list and telephone self-help groups **Tel: 0845 120 2916**

Eating Disorders Association – helpline for people affected by eating disorders, including anorexia and bulimia **Adult and parent line Tel: 0845 634 1414 Youthline [18 years and under] Tel: 0845 634 7650**
www.b-eat.co.uk

Saneline – helpline for people with depression and other mental health difficulties and their carers 6pm to 11.00pm every day of the year
Tel: 0845 767 8000 www.sane.org.uk

MDF—The Bi Polar Organisation – information and publications to help people with bi polar disorder and those concerned about them
Tel: 0207 793 2600 www.mdf.org.uk

Chinese Mental Health Association – offers support to people of Chinese origin suffering from mental distress **Tel: 0207 613 1008**

6. DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

KCA UK – information and advice on addiction. **Tel: 01227 454740**

Turning Point – information and advice on substance misuse
Tel: 01622 690944 [based in Maidstone]

Kent and Medway Alcohol Service - a self referral NHS unit offering help with alcohol misuse **Tel: 01227 761310**

Kenward Trust – Christian charity for people of all faiths [and none], provides residential communities, day care recovery programme and counselling services for those with alcohol and/or drug problems
Tel: 01622 814187 www.kenwardtrust.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous – support and information on local AA meetings.
Tel: 01622 751842 or **0845 769 7555**

Al-anon family groups – helpline, support and information to family and friends of problem drinkers. **Tel: 0207 403 0888**

Al-anon – support for partners, family and friends of people with drink problems. Weekly meetings at Priority House, contact Jackie
Tel: 01622 743820

Families and Carers Substance Misuse Support Service – this service is geared towards carers looking after adolescents and young adults.
Tel: 01622 817777

National Drugs Helpline [24 hour] – confidential advice, information and support for anyone concerned about drug use, be it their own or someone else's **Tel: 0800 776600**

Narcotics Anonymous [NA] – is a completely voluntary organisation. Membership is open to anyone with a drug problem seeking help, regardless of what drug or combination of drugs have been used, and irrespective of age, sex, religion, race, creed or class. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using drugs. UK Helpline **Tel: 0300 999 1212** www.ukna.org

Cocaine Anonymous UK – is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem, and help others to recover from their addiction.
Tel: 0800 612 0225 from UK Mobile Phones **800 612 0225** or visit www.cauk.org.uk

7. MONEY

Welfare Benefits – for people on a low income there may be a range of benefits to help. These are called **means-tested** benefits.

There are also some **non-means-tested** benefits available for some people because of their disability or care needs. For means-tested benefits contact Job Centre Plus **Tel: 0800 055 6688**

Benefit Enquiry Line – for people with disabilities or their carers - for information and claim forms **Tel: 0800 882200**

MIND – has useful information about the range of benefits which may be helpful. **MIND Information Line Tel: 0845 766 0163**

Royal British Legion – offers advice and financial help to any member of the ex service or serving community of the armed forces [this includes dependents]. **Tel: 01622 791269**

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 202995

Kent Benefits Partnership – will advise if you are eligible for assistance with rent and council tax. They can also help you to complete paperwork.
Tel: 0845 345 0310

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.

8. 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**

Patient Advice & Liaison Service [PALS] – can advise, support and help you sort out any concerns or problems with health services. For services provided by **West Kent NHS & Social Care Trust Tel: 0800 587 6757**

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**

Equality & Human Rights – 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 6046 610

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

If you want more information or assistance to make a complaint the following local organisations can also help:-

Maidstone Citizen's Advice Bureau – Mon-Fri 10am-4pm

Tel: 01622 752420/757882 www.adviceguide.org.uk

Maidstone Carers Project – Tel: 01622 685276

Rethink Maidstone Advocacy Project – provides one-to-one advocacy partnership for people with a mental health problem **Tel: 01622 678674**

HELP FOR PEOPLE WHO SUPPORT/CARE FOR A PERSON WITH A MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM

People who care for someone who has a mental health problem can sometimes feel alone. Although caring for someone brings rewards it can also be difficult. You need to get all the support and help you can.

Samaritans - [see Page 6] for details

Mental Health Matters - [see Page 1]

Saneline - [see Page 7]

Rethink - produce a guide for people new to caring for someone with a mental health problem '***Caring and Coping***' cost £9.99 **Tel 0845 456 0455**

Sometimes the person you support/care for may not want to admit that they are ill and need help. This may be difficult for you and if this happens the information in the following sections will help you to find support for yourself.

9. HELP IN A CRISIS

If you are really worried about the person you support and you know there is already a helping professional involved, eg Community Psychiatric Nurse or Social Worker, contact them to discuss your concerns.

You can also inform the GP of your concerns, either in writing or by speaking to the surgery direct, (out of hours number is normally on an answering machine message at the GP surgery).

Alternatively if you are the nearest relative you can make a request under Section 13(4) for the person you care for to be assessed under the Mental Health Act. This request can be made by the nearest relative regardless of whether the cared for person is already receiving a service from the mental health teams, or not.

This request would go via the Community Mental Health Teams to the Approved Social Worker (ASW) who is on duty. The ASW has a duty to take the cared for person's case into consideration with a view to making an application for an assessment with may lead to the person being 'sectioned' under the Mental Health Act, i.e. compulsorily admitted to hospital.

If an application is not made for admission the ASW must inform the nearest relative, in writing, of how the decision of non admittance was reached.

Community Mental Health Teams

[North Maidstone] **Tel: 01622 724200**

[South Maidstone] **Tel: 01622 766900**

For out of hours emergencies which can't wait until next working day.

Tel: 0845 762 6777 / 08458 247 247

NHS DIRECT may be able to help **Tel: 0845 4647** or

Mental Health Matters [See page 1]

Or, in extreme circumstances only, telephone emergency services [**999**] for help and advice.

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

Kent 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

10. TAKING A BREAK

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.

If it is not possible to do this without arranging support for your friend or relative the services listed below may be able to help.

A change of scenery and making contact with other people can be enjoyable for the person you care about too.

Funding to provide carers with a break may be available. Opportunities ranging from a chance to try new activities, a day out, to a weekend break or holiday are possible.

To find out if you are eligible please telephone Maidstone Carers Project
Tel: 01622 685276

Or the Care Manager Assistant for Carers **Tel: 01622 724200** or **01622 766900**

Care at home – 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. Discuss this with their Care Manager.

Crossroads – If you are unable to take a break at all because your friend or relative always needs someone with them to provide support, Crossroads may be able to provide you with a regular weekly break of 2-3 hours. They provide a trained carer's support worker in your home. This is a free service.
Tel: 01622 817114

Private Agencies – if Social Services are unable to help or if you prefer to make your own arrangements you can make direct contact with agencies which provide care in the home. Maidstone Carers Project can provide you with a list of home care agencies **Tel: 01622 685276** or download at www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp

The Kiloran Trust - a registered charity which offers a complete change of scene. Kiloran in London is waiting to welcome you, as a carer, for a week's

break in their West London House **Tel: 0207 602 7404** for further details or speak to Maidstone Carers Project **Tel: 01622 685276** www.kilorantrust.org.uk

Day activities away from home – the person you care for may be able to use the Day Activities already listed **see 3. DAY ACTIVITIES (Page 4)**

RESIDENTIAL BREAKS

The Community Mental Health Team – may be able to help arrange somewhere for the person you care for to stay while you take a break. Speak first to their care manager if they have one.

[North Maidstone] **Tel. 01622 724200**

[South Maidstone] **Tel. 01622 766900**

11. SOCIAL SERVICES

Carer's assessment – is an assessment of your own needs as the carer of a person with a mental health problem. Under the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 health and social services have a duty to offer an assessment to the carer. How an assessment can help you – the assessment is a chance for you to express your needs, and what would make life easier for you, e.g. a few hours break occasionally, more information, or to be in touch with other carers. 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. If you would like more information please contact the **Care Manager Assistant (Carers) Tel. 01622 724200** or **01622 766900**

Rethink – has a free leaflet explaining carers assessments '**A Commitment to Carers**'. **Tel. 0845 456 0455**

12. TALKING IT OVER

LOCAL HELP AND SUPPORT

Maidstone Carers Project – information and support for anyone caring for a relative or friend who has a mental health problem. Information about benefits and help to fill out forms. Carers groups offer mutual support and friendship. 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

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**

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

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

Mental Health Matters (see Page 1)

Saneline (see Page 7) www.sane.org.uk

Asian language helpline open Monday and Wednesday 4pm–7pm and Tuesday and Thursday 12–3pm **Tel. 0808 800 2073**

Drop-in service for relatives and friends of people with mental health problems – available fortnightly 2pm-7pm at Priority House [your friend or relative should be a patient of the NHS & Social Care Trust]. For details of next session **Tel: 01622 725000**

Crossroads Young Carers Project – provides an evening break in a local youth club, for young carers so that they can relax and have fun with others in similar situations – **Tel: 01622 817114**

Al-anon – support for partners, family and friends of people with drink problems. Weekly meetings at Priority House, contact Jackie **Tel: 01622 743820**

Samaritans – completely confidential listening/befriending to people with a mental health problem and their carers. **Tel: 01622 674444** or **Tel: 08457 909090**

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

NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Carers UK – raises awareness of carers needs at all levels of government and society. They provide a range of free information booklets including benefits, entitlements and carers rights and operate a carers helpline **Tel: 0808 808 7777** www.carersuk.org

Carers Direct – NHS choices website 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**

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

Alateen – telephone support for young people 12-20 years affected by someone else's drinking **Tel: 0207 403 0888**

Al-anon family groups – helpline, support and information to family and friends of problem drinkers **Tel: 0207 403 0888**

Please also see 5. INFORMATION AND SUPPORT page 5 [for people with a mental health problem] already mentioned, as many of the organisations also provide help and information for carers as well.

13. MONEY FOR YOU

Carers Allowance [CA] – is the benefit some carers are entitled to because of their caring role (the person you care for must be entitled to Disability Living Allowance – middle or higher rate care component). Leaflet “**Caring for someone**” may be available at your local post office, Maidstone Job Centre Plus or contact the Disability Benefits Enquiry Line **Tel: 0800 882200**

Booklets “**Benefits – What's available and how to get them**” and “**Carers Allowance**” are free from **Carers UK Tel: 0808 808 7777**

If you are worried about what will happen to the financial situation of the person you are caring for after you have died, get the useful MIND leaflet “**Making Provision, Guide to setting up a Trust**” **Tel: 0845 766 0163**

Carer Premium – if you are eligible for Carers Allowance but already receive Income Support, the amount of Income Support you get will be reduced by the amount of Carers Allowance you receive.

However, it is still worth applying for as you will then be entitled to an additional amount of Income Support called a **Carer Premium**. The Carer Premium can also be paid if you receive Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Job Seekers Allowance. For further information see telephone numbers above.

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/CONCESSIONS YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO

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

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

Free cinema tickets for carers – people in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance 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** or alternatively get an application form from your local cinema.
www.ceacard.org.uk

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

14. 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 3302 900** www.publicguardian.gov.uk

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 two types, one for Property and 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

15. 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.

NHS – funded nursing care and NHS continuing care – if someone is assessed as needing care in a nursing home, the NHS contribute towards the cost, up to a certain amount, depending on how much nursing care they need. People whose primary care 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: 08701 555455**

IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER INFORMATION, THE FOLLOWING ORGANISATIONS WILL TRY TO FIND IT FOR YOU:

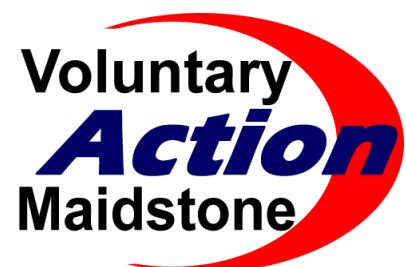
Maidstone Carers Project – Tel. 01622 685276
www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject

Maidstone Citizens Advice Bureau – Tel. 01622 752420/757882 10am – 4pm
Monday – Friday www.adviceguide.org.uk

Other leaflets in this series:

- Information for people caring for a friend or relative who is **over 65**
- Information for people caring for a friend or relative who is **under 65 and has an illness, physical disabilities or a sensory impairment**
- Information for people caring for a friend or relative who has **learning disabilities**
- Information for parent-carers of **disabled children or children with special needs.**

Maidstone Carers Project
Maidstone Community Support Centre
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Maidstone Kent ME14 1HH
Tel: 01622 685276
e-mail: carers@vam-online.org.uk
www.vam-online.org.uk/carersproject.asp



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