

# Staying connected

*Information and support for older people in Medway*



[www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

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This booklet has been produced by Medway Council Public Health and partners on behalf of the local Health and Wellbeing Board to provide information to older people about the support that is available and events that are happening in the community in Medway.

We know that losing touch with social opportunities can happen sometimes and this booklet has been designed to help people stay connected to what is available for the over 55s in Medway.

As we get older, keeping active or connected to others within the local community can help maintain or improve our physical and mental health. This means we can enjoy our old age and get the most out of our senior years. We hope this booklet will be useful by letting you know what is happening in your local area and how you can join in. The Medway Citizens Portal [www.mymedway.org](http://www.mymedway.org) additionally provides some information about activities available in Medway for older people. It is also the key website in Medway if you are looking for information about care services such as residential homes, medical equipment or personal homecare.

The booklet has been separated into specific headings so you can find the kind of thing you are interested in more easily. There is so much happening in Medway for older people that its impossible to capture everything in just a few pages, but the contact details provided will be able to link you up to exactly what you need, whether that's a dance group, a lunch club, general advice about anything or perhaps someone to help you with transport to somewhere you already go to.

## How do I start finding out what is in my area?

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There are lots of places provided especially to make life easier for the older residents of Medway. Below is a list of signposting agencies that provide free help, information and activities for older people in Medway. If you, a family member or someone already supporting you, can give them a call, they will be able to tell you exactly what is close to where you live and how you can benefit from what they offer.

- **Age UK Medway Gillingham** and surrounding areas, for people aged 50+ **01634 380195**  
[www.ageuk.org.uk/medway](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/medway)
- **Age UK Medway Strood** and surrounding areas  
**01634 724745**
- **Royal Voluntary Service RVS Medway** **01634 817645**  
[www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)
- **British Red Cross** Medway Area Support  
**0800 0280831**
- **All Saints Community Project Trust** All Saints, Luton  
**01634 845419** [www.allsaintscommunityproject.org.uk](http://www.allsaintscommunityproject.org.uk)
- **Strood Community Project** Strood and Hoo Peninsula Outreach **01634 298740**  
[www.stroodcommunityproject.org.uk](http://www.stroodcommunityproject.org.uk)
- **Carers First** **0300 3031555** [www.carersfirst.org.uk](http://www.carersfirst.org.uk)
- **Medway Pensioners Forum** **01634 812850**, please leave your details and someone will reply. Hold monthly meetings and post out a bi-monthly newsletter.

- **Kent Fire & Rescue Service Home Safety Team** info on all Medway areas **01622 692121**
- **Medway Voluntary Action (MVA)** **01634 812850**
- **Churches and other places of worship and faith** see Section 4 for more details
- **Sunlight Trust (Gillingham)** **01634 338600**  
[www.sunlighttrust.org.uk](http://www.sunlighttrust.org.uk)
- **Medway Libraries** **01634 337799** [www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk)
- **Health and Social Care Navigators (IMAGO)** **03000 111965**  
a service to help you find out everything you need to know about what help is available in Medway. Phone them direct or ask your GP or health professional to make an appointment for you.
- **Walderslade Together CIC (WALT)** is an organisation which aims to improve the lives of people of all ages by linking them to community support.  
[info@waldersladetogether.co.uk](mailto:info@waldersladetogether.co.uk)
- **Hoo Peninsula Carers (wHoo Carers)** is an organisation which aims to improve the lives of people of all ages by linking them to community support.  
[www.whoocares.org.uk](http://www.whoocares.org.uk) [enquiries@whoocares.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@whoocares.org.uk)



## **Community transport - help with getting out and about**

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Most places in Medway can be conveniently reached using the local bus service with your bus pass entitlement, but for some of us getting a bus or driving ourselves around can become more difficult with older age. The good news is there are local agencies providing help with getting around, such as lifts to appointments, shopping or community minibus services to events. If you are of pension age or registered disabled then bus passes can be obtained by visiting your local community hub for council services or library. The agencies listed below all offer help with transport and can match you up to the right kind of help.

- **Hands Rochester Volunteer Centre Kingsley house, 37-39 Balmoral Road, Gillingham, ME74PF. 01634 380030 enquiries@handsrochestervolunteercentre.org**

Hands Rochester provide a transport scheme for anyone aged 75+ unable to use public transport. Also for those under 75 who are registered disabled or have a problem with mobility.

- **Hands Gillingham Volunteer Centre 62 Watling Street, Gillingham, ME7 2YN. 01634 577984 or 575036 enquiries@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com**

Hands Gillingham provide low cost transport scheme for older people and others with severe difficulties getting around. Community drivers provide lifts to appointments, visiting relatives, clubs, groups etc.

- **The Villager Minibus 01634 336336**

**rural.projects@medway.gov.uk**

The Villager is a community transport scheme for residents living in rural areas of Medway. It operates on a not-for-profit basis to provide a range of transport services for Medway's villages.

- **Royal Voluntary Service Medway Information Centre, 95-97 High Street, Chatham ME44DL. 01634 817645**  
**medwaygns@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk**

Low cost transport for over 55s. Also help with shopping either assisted or shop and drop service.

- **British Red Cross Client Support Centre 25 College Road, Maidstone, ME15 6SX. 0800 0280831** Low cost transport to appointments, shopping, essential visits for those who have mobility problems or unable to use public transport. Wheelchair accessible vehicle available.



## **Befriending and home visiting schemes**

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If you find going out or attending groups too difficult at the moment and would prefer to have someone visit you at home for company, there are agencies that offer 'befriending' schemes. Some befriending schemes visit you in person and others will phone you up each week to have a chat and provide company over the phone.

- **Royal Voluntary Service Medway Information Centre**, 95-97 High Street, Chatham ME44DL. 01634 817645  
medwaygns@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk  
A volunteer will visit people in their own home for a friendly chat over a cuppa, usually once a week for a couple of hours.
- **Age UK Medway 01634 722203**. Offers a one to one befriending service from volunteers who can visit you at home and a phone friend service on 0844 2250320.
- **Hands Gillingham Volunteer Centre 62 Watling Street, Gillingham, ME7 2YN. 01634 577984 or 575036 enquiries@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com**  
Community friendship scheme offering befrienders who can visit at home for a game of cards, chat or help getting in touch with other people.
- **Hands Rochester Volunteer Centre Kingsley house, 37-39 Balmoral road, Gillingham, ME74PF. 01634 380030 enquiries@handsrochestervolunteercentre.org**  
Volunteers will visit an elderly person at home once or twice a week to provide companionship and a listening ear.
- **British Red Cross Support at Home Service Client Support Centre 25 College Road, Maidstone, Kent ME156SX. 0800 0280831**. Supports people at home over six visits to help rebuild confidence and connect with people in their local community. Also offer a phone befriending service.
- **Medway Home Library Service. 01634 337799**. Books, audio materials and other resources delivered to home of Medway resident. Available to all ages, if access to community library is restricted due to health or caring responsibilities.



- **Silverline 0800 4708090 [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk)**

A national helpline number for older people. It is a free, confidential support line providing advice, information and friendship to older people 24 hours a day every day of the year.



## **Opportunities for learning, being healthy and meeting other people**

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Keeping as healthy and active as possible is important in older age. If we feel well and active then we are more likely to want to get involved with things that are happening around us. This will mean a happy and fulfilling social life which will keep us physically and mentally healthy for longer. Keeping our brains active as we get older is equally as important as keeping our bodies active. There are lots of ways to stay mentally healthy in Medway through either starting a new hobby or maybe picking up an old interest again, if you find you have extra time on your hands.

There is so much going on in Medway for older people and just a few are listed below. More information about groups and clubs for older people could be obtained from organisations listed in some of the previous sections too.

- **Medway Adult Community Learning 01634 338400**  
[www.medway.gov.uk/macls](http://www.medway.gov.uk/macls)  
Huge choice of courses held on daytimes, evenings and weekends covering just about any subject. Many courses are free or low cost to eligible older people.
- **Medway Sports Centres 01634 336655**  
[www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk)  
A wide range of low cost and free activities for older people such as bowls, badminton, tea dances and free swimming for over 60s. Please phone to find out what is in your local centre.
- **Public Health activities and groups 0800 2346805**  
[www.abettermedway.gov.uk](http://www.abettermedway.gov.uk)  
Free walking groups for all levels of ability. Cycling groups, 1:1 stop smoking support, weight management support and much more. Phone for more details.
- **Medway Men in Sheds 01634 338600** Provides locations across Medway where men who are retired can spend time with other retired men working on projects of their choosing or to just meet each other for a cup of tea and chat.
- **Medway University of the Third Age [www.u3asites.org.uk](http://www.u3asites.org.uk)** groups across Medway which hold talks on different subjects of interest and arrange outings. The agencies listed in section one will be able to obtain contact details for your nearest group.
- **All Saints Community Project Trust 01634 845419**  
Magpie Community Café, coffee mornings, walking group, craft session.

- **Nucleus Arts** 272 High Street Chatham, ME44BP. 01634 812108 [www.nucleusarts.com](http://www.nucleusarts.com)  
Young at Art. Free creative arts workshops for over 55s. Last Weds of month 10am to 12noon
- **Contact the Elderly** 0800 716543 free small monthly social group in local area and tea parties with transport provided.
- **Medway Libraries** 01634 337349 host informal learning sessions such as University of the Third Age, knit and natter groups, reading groups and art/craft activities.
- **Kent Active Retirement Association** 01732 844195 [kentara.weebly.com](http://kentara.weebly.com)  
There are several different associations in Medway eg Walderslade, St Marys Island and Hoo. Providing lively and interesting social activities for older people.



## Stay Connected through Volunteering

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One of the most rewarding ways to Stay Connected is to volunteer your time for just a few hours a week.

Volunteering is a great way to meet people, learn new skills, keep active and provides a regular reason to get out of the house and into the local community. Nearly all of the organisations featured in this booklet depend on volunteers to help run their projects and would welcome offers of support. Perhaps you have a skill or interest you would like

to share with others too or offer your support as a volunteer? If you are able to offer just a few hours a week then please contact the organisations below or get in touch with any of the agencies listed on page 4 of this booklet.

- **Volunteering** 01634 265869  
[www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk)
- **Hands Gillingham Volunteer Centre** 62 Watling Street, Gillingham, ME7 2YN. 01634 577984 or 575036  
[enquiries@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com](mailto:enquiries@gillinghamvolunteercentre.com)
- **Hands Rochester Volunteer Centre** Kingsley house, 37-39 Balmoral road, Gillingham, ME74PF. 01634 380030  
[enquiries@handsrochestervolunteercentre.org](mailto:enquiries@handsrochestervolunteercentre.org)
- **Contact the Elderly**  
020 78812361 [www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk](http://www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk) volunteers needed to arrange or provide transport to monthly tea parties for older people in your local area.



## Churches and faith groups

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Most of the churches and other faith groups in Medway offer a range of social activities and clubs for older people. It is likely that there is a church, community centre or faith group near where you live and often you don't need to already belong to the church or faith group to join a particular activity. Below is just a small example of the kind of things happening in local churches or faith group. Churches Together is a group of over 130+ churches in Medway providing activity in Medway. More details on where your local church is available from the internet at <http://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/medway/docstore/18.pdf> If you aren't sure where your local church or place of worship is, then one of the organisations listed on page 4 should be able to help you find out what is in your area.

- **Coffee mornings** Walderslade Baptist church, All Saints Chatham, St Marks Gillingham , St Mary Magdalene Gillingham Green, Parkwood Christian Fellowship and many others.
- **Lunch clubs** Gillingham Baptist Church, All Saints Chatham, Holy Trinity Church Hall Twydall and others.
- **Glad to be Grey Club for over 55s** Walderslade churches together.
- **Knit and Natter Groups**
- **Drop in Centres** Walderslade churches together, Kings Church Medway, Gillingham Baptist Church and others.
- **Horizons over 60s** Chatham Evangelical Church.

- **Craft Groups** Salvation Army Chatham, St Matthews Borstal, All Saints Chatham.
- **Womens Fellowship** Twydall Evangelical Church.
- **Singing Groups** All Saints, Chatham.
- **CAMEO Club** Salvation Army, Gillingham.
- **Medway Hindu Centre Senior Citizens Group** 01634 400174 or 304695. Weekly activity group, lunches and community information.
- **Kent Ramgarhia Darbar Community** 01634 681278 social support for older adults within Sikh community in Medway.
- **Medway Inter Faith Group** 01634 864179  
[www.medwayinterfaith.org.uk](http://www.medwayinterfaith.org.uk)
- **Bereavement Friendship Group** St Phillip and St James, Walderslade.



## Support for carers

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A carer is someone who looks after a husband, wife, relative, friend or just about anyone without being paid for the support they provide. This support could mean helping them dress, wash, eat, get out and about or giving them emotional support. Sometimes a carer helps someone who has drug or alcohol problems too. If you are a carer then at times you may feel worn out, lonely or overwhelmed by the amount you have to do. There are organisations in Medway that provide support to carers and who recognise, that to be able to carry on doing your caring, it's important to make sure you are looked after and supported too. The Citizens Portal [www.mymedway.org](http://www.mymedway.org) is another place to find out lots more about caring for someone in Medway.

- **Carers First 0300 3031555.** Support for unpaid carers, offering information, advice and guidance. Also offers carers social groups, so carers can meet other people in similar situations.
- **Medway Libraries Home Library Service 01634 337799**  
Books, audio materials and other resources delivered to home of Medway resident. Available to all ages, if access to community library is restricted due to health or caring responsibilities.
- **Mental Health Matters 0800 1070160.** A 24 hour helpline number providing emotional support and someone to talk to if you are finding it hard to cope or feeling lonely.

## Dementia Support

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Dementia is a disease which is most common in people over the age of 65. The illness is likely to affect memory, communication, thinking and mood, but some of these symptoms can be treated if they are picked up early on. If you are worried about your own, or someone else's memory, then contact the GP to discuss your concerns. In Medway there are different agencies providing support to people and their loved ones, with a diagnosis of dementia. The following agencies can offer advice and information about what will help in your particular situation.

- **St Nicholas Day Care Centre** Strood and Hoo Peninsula **01634 726545** Provides transport to the centre, meals and activities for people with dementia.
- **The Capstone Centre, Age UK** Chatham and surrounding area **01634 406058**. Specialist dementia day centre with transport, meals and activities. For people with memory concerns or recent diagnosis of dementia.
- **The Mackenney Centre, Age UK** Gillingham and surrounding area **01634 380195**. Specialist dementia day centre with transport, meals and activities. For people with memory concerns or recent diagnosis of dementia.
- **Dementia Flexible Outreach, Age UK Medway** **01634 401099**. Two hour weekly support for someone at home or accompanied in the community with early dementia or memory concerns.



- **Carers First 0300 3031555.** Support for unpaid carers, offering information, advice and guidance. Also offers carers social groups, so carers can meet other people in similar situations.
- **Medway Alzheimer's and Dementia Family Support 01634 338600.** Weekly and monthly event, groups, carers support and home visits.
- **Medway Libraries Books on Prescription Scheme 01634 337799.** A special collection of books about understanding and living with dementia. Deposit collections of books also available for residential nursing homes, extra care housing, day centres and hospitals.



## **Coping with stress and looking after your mental health**

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Sometimes life can seem like a constant struggle especially if we are facing personal difficulties, poor health or worrying about things more than usual. If we feel like this for too long then it can affect our health and cause illnesses such as anxiety or depression. Remember, it's just as important to talk to your GP or health professional about your thoughts and feelings as well as your aches, pains or other illnesses. It's so important to remember to look after your mental health and the agencies listed below can provide extra emotional support when needed.

- **Insight 0300 555555** [Kent@insighthealthcare.org](mailto:Kent@insighthealthcare.org)  
Free NHS talking therapies and counselling for issues such as bereavement, loss, stress, worries and anger.
- **Thinkaction Medway 01634 298598** [kca.medway@nhs.net](mailto:kca.medway@nhs.net)  
Free NHS counselling and therapy for low mood, depression, debt and other forms of stress.
- **KMPT 0800 2799500** [www.kmpt.nhs.uk/pcpts](http://www.kmpt.nhs.uk/pcpts)  
Free NHS psychological therapies for anxiety, depression and causes of stress.
- **Mental Health Matters 0800 1070160** A 24 hour helpline number providing emotional support and someone to talk to if you are finding it hard to cope or feeling lonely.
- **Samaritans 01634 730981** [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
Always there to listen, day or night if you need someone to talk to. A safe and confidential place to talk.
- **CRUSE 01622 671011** [Maidstone@cruse.org.uk](mailto:Maidstone@cruse.org.uk)  
Bereavement care, support and counselling.
- **MEGAN CIC MVA** Under1Roof New Road, Chatham  
**01634 402077** [www.megancic.org.uk](http://www.megancic.org.uk) opportunities for people with mental health issues to meet and share their views of services. Groups include forums, coffee and chat, peer support groups and social groups.
- **MIND 25c Victoria St, Rochester, ME1 1XJ. 01622 692383**  
support and information about mental health and wellbeing.
- **Books on Prescription 01634 337349** a bibliotherapy scheme available from the libraries which provide books on a range of subjects eg. managing stress, anger, bereavement.

## Support for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities or English not first language

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If you are a Medway resident who is part of a BAME community or does not have English as your first language then you may be interested in the information listed here. If you know someone who might benefit from being connected to these community projects then please share this information with them.

- **Medway Libraries Books** available in different languages eg Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Polish, Urdu, Punjabi, Russian and many others.
- **Medway Ethnic Minority Forum 01634 333107**  
[office@memf.co.uk](mailto:office@memf.co.uk) information giving and signposting. Locating interpreters. Befriending and community support.
- **Medway Hindu Centre Senior Citizens Group**  
**01634 400174** or **304695** Weekly activity group, lunches and community information.
- **Ying Tao Chinese Association 07525 156235**  
Weekly tai chi class
- **Kent Ramgarhia Darbar Community 01634 681278** yoga, diet advice, walking groups and social opportunities
- **Medway Adult Community Learning 01634 338400**  
[www.medway.gov.uk/macls](http://www.medway.gov.uk/macls) Provide English for Speakers of Other Languages courses from beginners to advanced.
- **The SunlightTrust 01634 338600** [www.sunlighttrust.org.uk](http://www.sunlighttrust.org.uk)  
A meeting place for many BME groups including Chinese Seniors, Medway African Caribbean Association

- **Conversation Cafés** held in libraries are a social occasion where adults can practice their spoken English skills in a social environment with similar individuals.



## **Support with sensory impairment**

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People sometimes think their impairment will mean their lives will diminish and they will no longer be able to do the things they once did. This is not true, with support and guidance people living with impairments can continue to live fulfilled and independent lives. If the kind of information you need is not listed here then try ringing one of the agencies listed on page 4.

- **Kent Fire and Rescue Service Home Safety Referrals**  
**0800 923700** [home@kent.fire-uk.org](mailto:home@kent.fire-uk.org)  
Free home safety services for people with disabilities such as vibrating alarms, fire proof bedding and carpet spray.
- **Medway Libraries 01634 337799.** Postal service for blind and visually impaired. Audio books in CD format. Also available in Chatham or Rochester are reading groups for hard of hearing or visually impaired readers. Participants meet up to review and discuss books.

- **Computer class for the visually impaired 01634 845419**  
Held at All Saints Community project every Wednesday morning.
- **Kent Association for the Blind 01634 332929**  
[rehab.medway@kab.org.uk](mailto:rehab.medway@kab.org.uk) Provide a range of services to help thousands of visually impaired people of all ages to be independent, safe and mobile. Support includes mobility training, help to learn new skills for daily living, specialist equipment, advice and much more.
- **Hi Kent 01622 691151.** Provide support to the deaf and hard of hearing. Lip reading classes and maintenance of hearing aids.
- **Deaf Services Team 01634 331727** (voice and text)  
[deafservices@medway.gov.uk](mailto:deafservices@medway.gov.uk) Provide services to people who are deaf, hard of hearing or who are deafblind, to enable them to resolve issues in connection with their deafness.



## Support with finances and benefits

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There are a number of agencies in Medway that can give free advice on money management, bills, debts, pension and benefit issues. Sometimes as we get older we may find ourselves having to manage on one household income instead of two, or worrying about keeping up with bill payments. It's really important to talk to someone about this as money worries can also affect our health.

- **Medway Citizens Advice Bureau** 01634 383760 [www.medwayadvice.org.uk](http://www.medwayadvice.org.uk)
- **Positive Futures** 01634 380045 9.30 to 5pm Monday to Friday. Help with welfare benefits, debt, employment and housing issues.
- **CAP Christians Against Poverty** 0800 3280006 [www.capdebthelp.org](http://www.capdebthelp.org) Free debt advice and home visits.
- **StepChange** 0800 1381111 [www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org) Free debt counselling and other advice.
- **Medway Credit Union** 01634 403335 First floor, Pentagon Centre, Wednesday to Saturday 10.30 am to 3pm. Affordable loans and savings options.
- **Age UK Medway** 01634 4572616. Information and advice on benefits and pensions for 50+.
- **All Saints Community Project Trust** 01634 845419 [www.allsaintscommunityproject.org.uk](http://www.allsaintscommunityproject.org.uk) Offers help with completing welfare benefit forms and advice on benefit issues.
- **Medway Foodbank** 01634 757057. Emergency support with food donations for people in crisis.

## **Additional copies and information**

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If you are in contact with older people in Medway through your work, family or neighbourhood then please share this booklet and help them stay connected.

Additional copies of this booklet are available to download and print from the healthy mind pages of [www.abettermedway.co.uk](http://www.abettermedway.co.uk) Alternatively one of the agencies on page 4 may be able to help you obtain a paper copy.

If you represent a group that provides free or low cost activities for people over 55 and would like your information added to the booklet or to let us know how useful this booklet has been then please email:

**[healthimprovement@medway.gov.uk](mailto:healthimprovement@medway.gov.uk)**





[www.medway.gov.uk](http://www.medway.gov.uk)