

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

This Directory provides details of services available to Disabled Children and their families and is funded through the Aiming High Short Breaks Transformation Programme. It is also available electronically through: [www.bower-grove.kent.sch.uk](http://www.bower-grove.kent.sch.uk) and please select **(Parent Support)**

It is one of five covering the county of Kent and has been developed from a publication originally produced by SNAAP (Special Needs Advisory and Activities Project) based at Windchimes Resource Centre in Herne Bay.

These directories have been produced using SNAAP's original format. Thanks and acknowledgement is therefore conveyed to SNAAP for permitting their original format to be used in publication, as well as for their support in collation.

Every attempt has been made to ensure that the information in this directory is as comprehensive as possible but accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

### **Aiming High Short Breaks Programme**

In 2008, Kent County Council was successful in its bid to become one of 21 Pathfinder local authorities across the country to be part of the ***Short Breaks Transformation Programme***.

Short Breaks have been defined as:

- A wide range of short breaks, tailored to families' needs
- Available in the evenings, at weekends, and school holidays
- Culturally appropriate, sympathetic to race, culture, religion.
- Age appropriate
- Including sufficient provision to meet the needs of severely disabled children, including complex health needs.

This status brought with it a significant level of funding to invest in the development of short break services.

The funding is to provide new and expanded services to meet the needs of children aged 0-18 and their families. Kent is required to significantly increase the range of short breaks for children with the following impairments:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Technology dependent
- Challenging behaviour
- Moving and handling needs
- Palliative care

The short breaks programme also includes breaks for disabled children who have not previously been eligible to receive a service from Kent County Council Disabled Children's Social Services.

Part of the Core Offer within the overarching "Aiming High" initiative is to make sure that sufficient information is available to families about local services to enable them to make informed choices. A directory is therefore being produced for each of the five Disabled Children Resource Centres across the county to ensure that families receive that information as part of the **Aiming High Core Offer**.

## **Disabled Children's Resource Centres**

Kent County Council has reconfigured family support services for disabled children and their families over the past five years, so that they are co-ordinated and provided from five multi agency Resource Centres across the county.

A Resource Centre comprises two elements: an overnight short breaks unit and an additional community unit for daytime, evening and weekend activities which are also termed short breaks. These may be on the same site or on two sites, as part of a campus.

# INTRODUCTION

The Resource Centres are:

Resource Centre	Overnight Breaks Unit	Geographical Coverage
1) Parents Consortium	Rainbow Lodge  Allsworth Court will become an overnight breaks unit following completion of building works in February 2010.	Dartford/ Gravesham/ Swanley
2) Windchimes	The Beach Hut	Canterbury/Swale/ Dover/Thanet
3) Sunrise	The Den	Tunbridge Wells/ Tonbridge
4) Maidstone Multi-agency Specialist Hub	Still to be identified	Maidstone
5) Ashford/Shepway Multi-agency Specialist Hub, Wyvern School	Fairlawn	Ashford/Shepway

Short break activities are being developed along the lines of a “hub-and-spoke” model from these Resource Centres. Comparable services are being developed in the “spokes” or outlying areas. There is a vision for parents to eventually manage the short breaks activities delivered by each Resource Centres.

## CONTENTS

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	1
List of Resource Centres in Kent	3
Children's Social Services	5
Health Services	10
Special Educational Needs	18
Transition	31
Holidays	43
Short Breaks	53
Leisure - Under 5s	57
Leisure - School Age, Young Peoples' Activities & Holiday Play Schemes	61
Leisure - Social Clubs and Activities	63
Leisure - Sporting opportunities	72
Rights and Benefits	79
Transport	87
Aids and Equipment	93
Local Organisations and Support Groups	104
National Organisations	116
Useful Websites	126

# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES

## Children's Social Services

### Introduction

Kent County Council Children's Social Services provides support for children in need. A child is defined by the 1989 Children Act as 'in need' if:

- He/she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority;
- His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services; or
- He/she is a Disabled Child.

Any support provided is determined by an assessment of a child's needs. Children's Social Services work in conjunction with colleagues from other agencies such as the NHS to support children to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

These are known as the five 'outcomes' for children

### How to contact them

A referral can be made to Children's Social Services by telephoning Kent Contact & Assessment Service on **08458 247 247**

# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES

## Disabled Children's Service (DCS)

Some disabled children in Kent may be eligible to receive a service from the specialist Disabled Children's Service. These are children who have a disability that is permanent or long term, and that can be defined as:

- Severe or profound learning or physical disability, or
- Severe or profound social communication disorder, or
- Life threatening illness, or
- Complex medical need

Some children may have a combination of two or more of the above.

Following acceptance of a referral, an initial assessment of a child's needs will be carried out. The assessment will look at:

- The child's developmental needs
- The parenting capacity of the child's parents and carers to respond to these needs
- Relevant wider family and environmental factors.

If necessary, a further ('core') assessment of all the circumstances relating to the child or young person will then be carried out. This will involve a visit to the child's home. The assessment will include talking with the parent/s, the child, and anyone else who provides a significant amount of care for him/her. This includes talking with other professionals caring for the child. A care plan will then be written that sets out how the child's needs will be met. The parents' or carers' needs may also be assessed separately.

The transition period from child to adulthood is often a worrying time for young people and their parents. The Disabled Children's Service can help with this transition by linking young people with Kent Adults Social Services. For very young children, DCS can link parents with early support services

# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES

## Children's Occupational Therapy Service

This is part of the KCC Disabled Children's Service.

Occupational Therapists aim to enable children who are permanently and substantially disabled to make the most of their abilities, be as independent as possible, and gain control over the practical aspects of their daily life.

Following an assessment of a child, equipment may be offered. Advice can also be offered about other sources of help. Adaptations to the family home may also be recommended, which could be minor e.g. fitting a rail or ramp, or entail more major work (see the section entitled 'Adaptations to the Home' in the Rights and Benefits section on page 84).

A referral can be made to the Children's Occupational Therapy Service by telephoning Kent Contact and Assessment Service on **08458 247 247**.

## Short Break Services

Depending on the level and types of need determined by the assessment, the Disabled Children's Service (DCS) might be able to offer a range of services.

These services may be provided directly by DCS. Or they may be provided through the method of a direct payment. A direct payment enables a parent/carer to make their own care arrangements. This might mean employing a personal assistant, or it might mean paying a service provider directly, e.g. for a summer play scheme or a befriender. Help with setting up a direct payment is available from the Children and families Direct Payment Support Service (see Short Breaks section). Young people over the age of 16 yrs. may be entitled to a direct payment in their own right.

# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES

A pilot of a short breaks voucher scheme is taking place. If the pilot is successful, it will be extended. The vouchers can be exchanged for a service from a set list of services. To be eligible, a child must either be in receipt of at least one higher rate component of Disability Living Allowance, or be assessed for the scheme by a key professional involved in his/her care.

## Emergencies

If you have an emergency occurring outside of office hours, you can contact the emergency out of hours social work team on **0845 762 6777**.

## Kent Carer's Emergency Card:

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

Carers are issued with a card which can be used as an instant source of identification in case of accident or sudden illness. In an emergency situation, anyone can telephone the number on the card and quote the number printed. The contact centre uses this number to access the carer's pre-arranged emergency plan and puts it into action. The service is free.

### **For Maidstone area:**

Maidstone Carers

**01622 685276**

## Deaf Children & Families Team

The Deaf Children & Families Team provides support and information for children and their families where there are issues related to deafness. This service is available to deaf and deaf/blind children up to the age 18 years and also hearing children of Deaf parents.

To make a referral to this team please contact County Duty Service on 08458 247100 or text phone 08458 247905 or you e-mail the team at [deafserviceschildrenfamilies@kent.gov.uk](mailto:deafserviceschildrenfamilies@kent.gov.uk)

# CHILDREN'S SOCIAL SERVICES

## Children's Disability Register

[www.kent.gov.uk/cdr](http://www.kent.gov.uk/cdr)

The Children's Disability Register is a confidential computerised database containing details of children from birth to 18 years who have a disability. It is voluntary: you have the choice whether or not to register your child, and names can be removed at any time. We would encourage you to register your child, as the Register gives you the opportunity to let us know what kinds of services you would like to see provided. From this information we are able to highlight gaps in services and develop ways of filling those gaps.

You can register your child by completing a register application form. This is available online or from the Disabled Children's Service Register Co-ordinator on **08458 247 247**.

Once you have registered your child, you will receive a regular update about services in your area, and other information that may be of interest to you.

## Health Services

### Introduction

There are many Health Services which you and your child may need. In this section we show who can help, depending on the age of your child, the various professionals available to help you, and the way in which you can access their services. If you have any concerns about your child's health or development, you can either contact your own GP, your health visitor if your child is under 5, or your school nurse.

### Getting Help with your Pre-school child

Often, developmental issues only become apparent once a child is in a more social setting, such as a playgroup or nursery, at which point the playgroup leader may raise these issues with you. You may choose to discuss your concerns either with your own GP or health visitor or playgroup workers assigned to the playgroup/nursery.

### Early Support Programme

[www.earlysupport.org.uk/](http://www.earlysupport.org.uk/)  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/)

Early Support is the Government programme to achieve better co-ordinated, family focused services for young disabled children and their families. It's a national programme that is being introduced and used in local authorities, hospitals and community-based health services across England. The programme:

- brings together the different services available to you and your child
- focuses on children under three years old but some councils use it for children up to five years old
- is accessed through social services and managed by your council

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# HEALTH SERVICES

## Early Support Leaflets and Information

Early Support has developed a range of disability-specific leaflets containing information about disabilities. These are intended as a 'first step' in informing parents about the disability and pass on information and advice from other parents. There are specific disability booklets including:

- sensory impairments
- autism
- rare conditions
- speech and language difficulties

There is a booklet covering the situation where no diagnosis has yet been made. This can be necessary because a child often needs support services before a diagnosis is made.

There is also an Early Support Family Pack, which informs parents about services to support them and to help families to know what to expect by way of good service provision and what to ask for. The pack contains a background information folder containing booklets explaining health and social services and what they should provide for you as well as childcare, financial help (for example Disability Living Allowance), information on education and more. For more information about what is available please see Early Support website on the previous page.

## Specialists who can help

### General Practitioners (GP's)

Your family GP practice is staffed by qualified doctors. At any stage, you are free to request that your child sees a doctor who has had paediatric training. The role of the GP is to promote health, to prevent illness and to pick up and treat the signs of illness and other longer term conditions.

## **Health Visitors**

Health visitors are involved with promotion of health and the prevention of illness. They have responsibilities for ensuring child health reviews are offered to all children under 5 at specific times and they have skills in detecting those children who will require extra help from health services and other agencies. In families where there is a child or young adult with special needs, the health visitor will provide extra support in partnership with parents/carers and in conjunction with other agencies.

## **School Nurse**

01622 226061

Each school has a nurse who is available for health advice and discussion with parents and can help and support parents and teachers. They cover care plans, hearing tests, sexual health, referrals, immunisations, bedwetting, health promotion and growth monitoring, safe guarding children and behaviour support. They also liaise closely with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) in schools and all other members of the statutory agencies as well as your health visitor. If you have any concerns about your child's health, development or wellbeing you should discuss these with your school nurse.

## **Community Paediatric Team** Preston Hall Hospital, Maidstone

01622 226075

Community Paediatricians provide general assessment and diagnostic clinics for children aged 0 to 16 or until they leave school. These include Neuro-developmental assessments including specialist ADHD clinics jointly with Specialist ADHD Nurses, assessment of children with social communication difficulties (Autistic Spectrum disorder and Aspergers syndrome), medical reports for children with learning difficulties or for statement of their Educational Needs

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# HEALTH SERVICES

(Named Doctor for Education), examination and follow-up of children on the Looked After Children's Register (Named Doctor for LAC services), assessment of children who have been physically, emotionally or sexually abused (Named Doctor for Safeguarding). They work closely with Hospital Paediatricians, Education and Social Work colleagues as well as Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Police and Youth Offending Teams in co-ordinating ongoing care for these children and their families. Referrals are received from GPs, Health Visitors, other Health professionals, as well as other agencies including Social Work, Education and Police Departments.

## **Specialist Health Visitor (Maidstone)**

01622 225870

This Specialist Health Visitor provides ongoing support to families of disabled children aged 0-5 years; working in partnership with families providing a clear point of reference for individual families to co-ordinate services and signpost to appropriate organisations. The key tasks will be:-

- To provide regular long-term contact and continuity of support for individual families.
- To be a single point of contact for each family.
- To provide up to date information utilising evidenced based information.
- To help families access and receive relevant services to liaise and co-ordinate services as required.
- To assist families in looking forward to their child's next stage of development and anticipate their service needs.
- To assist families to identify their and their child's needs.
- To promote and utilise the Early Support programme.
- Facilitate Tuesday Support Group and Child and Parent Support Group for families referred to the centre.

## **Maidstone Child Development and Therapy Centre**

01622 225870

Many services for children (0-5years) run from the Child Development and Therapy Centre including: Group therapy sessions based around therapy programmes and activities. Paediatric physiotherapists, speech and language, occupational therapists, specialist health visitor, community nurse and nursery nurse. A weekly orthoptic clinic is held to monitor children's vision and a fortnightly orthoptic clinic is held with a visiting orthoptist. There are physiotherapy and occupational therapy outpatient clinics. Access to a hydrotherapy pool held at another location. The centre has close links with social workers. A regular parent/carer support group (0-5 years) runs on a Tuesday morning for families referred to the centre. An evening support group for parents/carers is held once a month. This is a social event and regular speakers are invited; parents suggest topics of interest.

## **Speech & Language Therapist (S&LT)**

01622 225870 (0-5years) 01622 226075 (5-19years)

Based at the Maidstone Child Development and Therapy Centre and Foster Street clinic, Children are seen by this service when they have difficulties with interaction, understanding and use of spoken language. S&LT also help with eating, drinking and swallowing problems. Therapy is set up to suit the child's individual needs and delivered individually, in a group or through a programme. Anyone involved in the care of your child can refer to the Speech Therapist.

# HEALTH SERVICES

## **Paediatric Physiotherapists**

01622 225870 (0-5 years) 01622 226075 (5-16years)

Paediatric Physiotherapists work with children from 0-16 years (or up to age 19 if in full time education) and their families. Children are seen in various settings including home, clinics, at the Child Development Centres, in nursery or at school. Paediatric Physiotherapists assess and treat children with varying conditions. They work with the child's parents, teachers and agencies in a way that will empower the parents to become significant partners in the child's development and/or rehabilitation to meet their physical needs. Wherever possible, physiotherapists work through play and activities of daily living. A child will need to be referred by the GP, Health Visitor, School Nurse or Paediatrician to the single point of access or Early Support referral meeting.

## **Paediatric Occupational Therapists (OT)**

01622 225870 (0-5years) 01622 226075 (5-19years)

OT's who specialise in working with children, aged 0-19, have a wide range of knowledge in children's development, illnesses and conditions/disorders. The main aims they focus on are:-

- To assess and provide suitable special equipment where needed or refer on to appropriate services.
- To assess for sensory and motor difficulties and disorders and how these impact on hand functions and activities of daily living.
- To assess for perceptual difficulties after using standardised tests and observation programmes and give advice to the children, carers and educational staff when appropriate.
- Assess sensory processing difficulties and give advice, plus sensory programmes to support the parents understanding of the child's difficulties and how this impacts upon the child's behaviour and development.

## **The Community Children's Nursing Team**

01622 225656

The team is based at Maidstone Hospital and covers West Kent. Primarily they are involved with children who have life threatening or life limiting illnesses but will be involved when a child is discharged from hospital and still requires nursing care. A referral is made via a GP or Consultant.

## **Other specialists and services that can help**

### **Continence Advisory Service** 01622 795716/795731

This number is for the Adult Continence Advisor. They will assist with the provision of nappies to children over the age of 4 years due to an underlying condition. However, the first port of call should be through your school nurse or health visitor.

### **Dental Care Clinics**

01622 717769

Dental Care can be provided for children with special needs at clinics. If you have a dentist who cannot treat your child, the dentist can refer you to the Community Dental Service. If you do not have a dentist, your GP, the school nurse or other healthcare worker can refer.

### **Dietician**

Advice and support on food and nutritional issues may be obtained from the paediatric community dietician. When working with children with complex eating and nutritional problems, the paediatric community dietician may work with a team of people such as doctors, psychiatrists, speech & language therapists and OT's. Referrals are taken from Consultants only.

### **Audiology & Vision**

Your health professional may refer your child for further hearing and vision testing if your child has more specific difficulties. If you have any concerns about your child's hearing or sight contact your GP or the Paediatrician involved in the care of your child.

# HEALTH SERVICES

## Queries, Concerns and Complaints

### **PALS Maidstone Hospital (The Patient Advice and Liaison Service)**

01622 224960

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

If you have a health related query or problem and you don't know where to turn to for help contact PALS. This service is provided by the NHS to help patients and their carers find their way through the local health service. PALS can help you find local support groups, chase hospital appointments, find you an NHS dentist and so on. The number above is also the number to ring if you want to see someone face-to-face. PALS promise a prompt and friendly response.

For difficulties with health services PALS offer help and advice  
Maidstone Hospital Services: 01622 224960 (type talk callers are welcome) Fax: 01622 224843  
SMS: 07747 782 317 E-mail: [mtw-tr.palsmaid@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsmaid@nhs.net)

If you wish to make a formal written complaint letters should be addressed to:

The Chief Executive, Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS  
Trust Service Centre, Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane  
Maidstone, Kent ME16 9QQ Email: [Complaints@mtw-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:Complaints@mtw-tr.nhs.uk)

### **For other health services, you can contact:**

Mental Health & Learning Disability Services: 0800 587 6757  
Ambulance Services: 01622 740348  
Community Services: 0800 085 0850

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## Special Educational Needs

### Introduction

Up to 20% of all children, at some time, experience a special educational need. Children with special educational needs have a right to a place in a mainstream school if it is their parents' wish and provided it does not compromise the education of other children in the school. All schools are expected to provide for their needs and make reasonable adjustments to ensure their inclusion. Schools can call on the support and advice of a range of professionals and specialists who work in the locality, including Specialist Teaching Service, Educational Psychology Service, lead school and special school outreach and speech and language therapy services. For some children where mainstream schools can not meet their needs, a special school place may be needed. Some special schools have links with mainstream schools to enable the children to learn and play together.

### Some frequently used initials

CAF	Common Assessment Framework
LCSP	Local Children's Services Partnership
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools, and Families
LA	Local Authority
AEN	Additional Educational Needs
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	SEN Coordinator (school)
TA	Teaching Assistant
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
SENDIST	SEN and Disability Tribunal
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
I EP	Individual Education Plan
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
BESD	Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties
PSC	Profound, Severe and Complex
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
HI	Hearing Impairment
VI	Visual Impairment
DAMP	Deficits in Attention, Motor control & Perception
FE	Further Education (at a College)
HE	Higher Education (at University)

## Definitions

**Special Educational Needs:** A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or a disability which calls for special educational provision to be made (provision which is additional to, or different from, the educational provision made for children of their age)

**SEN Code of Practice:** Provides advice to schools, settings and LAs on carrying out their duties to identify, assess and make provision for children with special educational needs.

**Statutory Assessment:** An assessment of a child's needs. It involves information being gathered by the LA from educational, medical, psychological and social services plus any other agencies that you wish to consult. The reports from these professionals help the LA decide if a statement is needed. If so, a proposed statement is written first on which parents are consulted.

**Educational Psychologists:** promote child development and learning mainly with children and young people aged 0-19 years, through the application of psychology. Work is carried out in partnership with individuals and groups of children, teachers and other adults. This can be at an individual, systemic or organisation level. Educational Psychologists also work with

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

parents, carers and families, Local Authority Officers, Health, Social Services and other agencies. Educational Psychologists aim to help children and young people through the application of Psychology.

**Teaching Assistant:** This is someone who works alongside a teacher in the classroom to support those children and young people who need extra help. Sometimes they work with children and young people who need some withdrawal time from the class.

**Proposed Statement:** This is a draft of the Statement of Special Educational Needs which is sent to parents for their comments, before the final Statement is issued. Parents have a right to meet LA officers before the proposed statement is made final.

**Statement of Special Educational Needs:** is a legal document, issued by the LA that sets out a child's special educational needs, the provision to meet those needs and the school that the child will attend.

**Tribunal:** The SEND Tribunal is an independent body that hears appeals made by parents against decisions made by the LA on Refusal to assess/reassess, refusal to issue a statement, content of Part 3 of the statement, Name of the school in Part 4, ceasing a statement, disability discrimination (these can be against the school also)

## **Special Needs Education and Disability Act (2001)**

This act places a duty on all education providers to ensure that they have made reasonable adjustments to include a child with a disability or special educational need within an educational setting. This means that the focus is on schools to include disabled children in all aspects of school life. Schools have to provide justification for not including disabled children on school trips, holidays and when accessing leisure opportunities.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## **Common Assessment Framework (CAF)** [www.kenttrustweb.org.uk](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk)

'The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Lead Professional functions are new processes all local authorities are required to implement with Children's Trust partners to strengthen integrated service delivery for children and young people. Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a key component in the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme. The aim is to identify, at the earliest opportunity, a child's or young person's additional needs which are not being met by the universal services they are receiving, and provide timely and co-ordinated support to meet those needs. The CAF is based on solution-focused practice principles and enables practitioners and families to work in partnership to start to bring around change at the first sign of difficulty. The focus is on prevention and early intervention and providing better support to parents and families. These are Lead Professional, Information Sharing and ContactPoint'

## **Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Processes**

The CAF is a separate process although it shares some common principles with School Action and Early Years Action; (see **School Action on page 24**) in particular those of early recognition of needs and early assessment to inform appropriate interventions. Depending upon the concerns about a child, a child might be on School Action and Early Years Action or School Action and Early Years Action Plus and not have a CAF and vice versa.

## **Further Information - Leaflets** [www.dcsf.gov.uk/](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/)

Further information about (CAF) the role of the Lead Professional and ContactPoint can be found on the Department for Children Schools and Families website and leaflets for children, parents and professionals are available.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## Pre-School - Getting Help before starting school

### Specialist Teaching Service

If you have any concerns about your child's development before they start school you should talk to your GP, Paediatrician, Health Visitor, Pre-School Leader or any other professional who is supporting your child. The Specialist Teaching Service works alongside other professionals to provide the most appropriate support & advice for babies and very young children with special educational needs or disabilities.

Referrals can be made from Health professionals, Social Services or from the pre-school setting, if your child attends. Some children with complex needs may be referred to Early Support in order to plan the provision of coordinated, high quality child and family centred services. The Specialist Teaching Service continues to support children when they go to school.

### Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) Drop-In (Maidstone District)

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator Drop-In meetings are held on selected days every other month at local Sure Start Children Centres and Pennies Day Nursery. Open to parents of pre-school children. Parents are welcome to come on their own, with a friend/family member or their child's Key Worker at Nursery. For information about SEN Drop-ins, please telephone the Early Years Team as follows:

#### Early Years SENCOs:

Denise Doms	07786 191413
Alison Goodsell	07798 675348
Zenia Ford (SEN Teacher)	07740 183853
Jane Crisp (SEN Teacher)	07826 868006

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## **Maidstone Child Development and Therapy Centre**

01622 225870

Many services for children (0-5years) referred to the centre run from the Maidstone Child Development and Therapy Centre. The Unit works within a multi-agency framework with group therapy sessions based around therapy programmes and activities. For more information please see Health section.

## **Kent Portage Service**

01892 633252

Portage is a pre school home visiting educational service for children who have additional support needs. Referrals from any parent or professional are taken through Early Support, the intake meetings are held every two weeks. Portage Home visitors work alongside parents developing individual educational activities for the family to carry out with their child. Portage also offers a weekly support group for families.

## **Parent and toddler groups**

For children from birth upwards parents stay with their children and these groups are not registered with Ofsted.

For information about Sure Start Children Centre activities in Maidstone for pre-school children, see Leisure Section.

## **Pre-school playgroups**

For more information on pre-school playgroups, nursery schools, breakfast and after school clubs contact:

**Kent Children and Families Information Service:**

08000 32 32 30

[www.kent.gov.uk/cfis](http://www.kent.gov.uk/cfis)

Playgroups offer children a mixture of play, socialisation and early education. The Early Years' branch of Ofsted now inspects playgroups and their guidelines state that registered playgroups must be aware that some children have special needs and take steps to promote their welfare and development in partnership with parents, carers and other relevant people.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## **Funding by Kent County Council**

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to free nursery education. Children are eligible for up to 2 years following their third birthday. The money is paid directly to the nursery education provider by KCC.

## **School years 5-19**

If you have any concerns about your child's education the first thing to do is to talk to your child's class teacher. If you need more information, find out who the school's SENCO is and discuss your worries with them. You may also wish to talk to the head of year, head teacher, governor with responsibility for SEN or the chair of the governing body. The Partnership with Parents Service (PwP) can support you with information or offer someone to go with you to meetings; (**see Partnership with Parents information on page 27**).

## **School Action and Early Years Action**

To meet your child's special educational needs in school/setting, it may be possible to support your child at School/Early Years Action. This means the school/setting should provide interventions from within its allocated resources that are additional to, or different from, what other children need. The SENCO and class teacher will put together a special plan and targets for your child called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). You should be shown this so you can also help your child. Your child's progress will be reviewed to check targets are being met.

## **School Action and Early Years Action Plus**

Where despite sustained intervention at School/Early Years Action level a child is still failing to make appropriate progress, the school/setting may seek more help from external specialists. Your child will have an IEP with targets and reviews and experts from outside the school will advise or help. This is called School/Early Years Action Plus.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## Statutory Assessments

If your child still has difficulties, or they get worse, you may contact the LA and ask in writing for a statutory assessment.

Address your letter to: Mid Kent Area Office, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent TN24 8XU

The LA will consider the need for a statutory assessment and if they think it appropriate, they will seek parental, educational, psychological, medical and social services advice. The LA will also seek advice from any professionals identified by you. The LA will send you a comprehensive information pack to help you understand and participate in the process.

You will be asked for written permission in advance of any assessments of your child and you have a right to attend all assessments and interviews that form part of the Statutory Assessment Procedure.

As soon as the LA begins to consider making an assessment they must:

- Tell you what they plan to do, including what happens in a statutory assessment and the time limits they work to.
- Give you the name of one of their staff who can give you more information (Named Officer).
- Tell you about the steps they will take if they decide to make an assessment.
- Give you at least 29 days to say whether you agree that they should assess your child.
- Give you details of the Partnership with Parents service who can offer you advice and support.
- Encourage you to give your views on your child's needs.
- Consider the opinions of your child where this is possible.

**The whole process should be completed within 26 weeks, as follows:**

6 weeks to decide whether or not to make an assessment.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

10 weeks to make the assessment.

2 weeks for drafting and issuing the Proposed Statement.

8 weeks for finalising the Statement, giving details of provision including the school your child will go to.

## **If the LA decides not to make a Statement**

They must notify parents giving their reasons. You have a right to appeal if you disagree.

## **Checking the Proposed Statement**

Make sure it:

- lists all your child's needs and difficulties
- lists all the provision needed by your child
- specifies the number of hours of extra help
- gives details of any equipment your child needs
- is clear and understandable. Don't accept the Proposed Statement if you are unhappy with any part of it.

## **What to do if you are happy with the Statement**

Write to the LA and inform them of your preferred choice of school for your child.

## **What to do if you are not happy with decisions or provision**

Contact the LA at Kroner House, (Contact Point: 01622 696717) and speak to your named officer (AEN Assessment Officer). They can arrange a meeting to discuss issues and resolve differences or mediation involving an impartial third party who will not take sides.

## **What happens after a child has a Statement?**

There will be an annual review of the Statement.

## **Complaints and appeals**

If you cannot resolve problems through discussion with the school SENCO, or LA Mediation you can appeal to a Special Educational Needs Disability Tribunal (SEND Tribunal). Appeals should be made within 2 months of being notified of the decision.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

**Partnership with Parents** [www.kent.gov.uk/partnershipwithparents](http://www.kent.gov.uk/partnershipwithparents)

01622 755515

[partnershipwithparents@kent.gov.uk](mailto:partnershipwithparents@kent.gov.uk)

Funded by the DCSF & KCC it works with parents, schools and the LA and can offer advice and support in finding information, dealing with paperwork and meetings, and in overcoming differences where there is disagreement.

**Schools** [www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-learning)

The Kent School Database provides an online directory of Kent LA (Local Authority) schools. They can also be found on the KCC main website under Education and Learning.

**Children not at School** [www.kenttrustweb.org.uk](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk)

A child may not be in school for a number of reasons. You may choose to educate the child at home, or the school may have excluded them. The LA still has a duty to provide education and this may take the form of home tuition provided by a visiting tutor. In some cases the LA may offer a place in a Pupil Referral Unit. Many pupils in PRUs will have special educational needs and a significant number will have statements, usually for emotional and behavioural difficulties. If a mainstream setting is best, a short-term placement within a PRU to tackle immediate problems may aid smooth reintegration into another mainstream school. For pupils at stages 1-3 of the SEN Code, a period in a PRU might enable that assessment to continue.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## Financial Assistance

### Transport

LA's must provide free transport if it is necessary to enable the child to get to the nearest suitable school and it is over the statutory distance between the home address and school. The statutory distance is up to 2 miles for pupils under 8 years and up to 3 miles for pupils from 8 to 16 years. Where the journey is within these distances, the expectation is that a child or young person walks to school, accompanied where necessary by a responsible adult. For pupils who live less than the statutory distance, where as a result of their special educational needs or disability (even accompanied by a responsible adult), their welfare or safety, or the welfare or safety of others, can not be guaranteed, free transport to school is provided. The LA may provide a free bus pass or a minibus or a taxi. If the parent agrees to take their child to school, the LA may give an allowance towards the cost of fuel.

### Meals

Free school meals are available to pupils at a maintained or grant maintained school if they or their parents receive Income Support, Income-based Job-seeker's Allowance, support under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, child Tax Credit (providing you are not receiving Working Tax Credit and your annual income for the household is below £16,040) or the guaranteed element of pension credit. Contact the Awards Team on 01303 224325/224337

## Useful addresses and websites

### Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

0808 800 5793

[www.ace-ed.org.uk/index.html](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk/index.html)

Offer information and advice about state education for parents of school-age children. Issues can include exclusion from school, bullying, special educational needs and school admission appeals.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## **Independent Panel for Special Education Advice**

0800 018 4016

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

Offer independent advice to parents who are uncertain or disagree with the LA's interpretation of their child's special educational needs. Can also help with appealing to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal, including representation when needed and free second professional opinions.

## **Kent County Council's website**

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

Provides information about Local Authority and Special Educational Needs.

## **Network 81**

08450774055

[www.network81.org/](http://www.network81.org/)

A national network of parents working towards properly resourced inclusive education for children with special needs.

## **Parents Centre**

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

Information and support for parents on how to help with your child's learning, including advice on choosing a school and finding childcare.

## **Pre-school Learning Alliance**

020 76972599

[www.pre-school.org.uk](http://www.pre-school.org.uk)

Specialists providing practical support to early years settings. Services include publications, information, advice & training.

## **TeacherNet**

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

Provide a wide range of special education needs and disability advice and materials for teachers, parents and others working with children with SEN.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

## Further Information Section

### **Kent Children's Trust**

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

Children's trusts are central to Government policy for improving children's services. They develop the local strategy for improving children's lives by delivering better services, including their health and wellbeing. Different Trusts work in different ways, depending on local circumstances. They focus on particular issues, like reducing under-achievement in early years or improving access to services for disabled children, and on new ways of working, like co-location of services and multi-agency "teams around the child".

### **Extended Schools**

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

Provide a range of services outside of school hours for school-age children, their families and the local community including childcare, activities and support for learning. Extended school services enable the wider community to make use of the school's facilities. Some schools may also offer services, such as information about healthy eating and nutrition or advice on managing finances - including debt counseling and availability of welfare and benefits. By 2010, all schools will provide or be able to signpost parents to a full range of services - some will be free, but others, like childcare, will be charged for.

### **Local Children's Services Partnerships**

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

There are 23 Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs) in Kent who play a central role in improving outcomes for local children, young people and families through integrated commissioning and front line delivery. Each LCSP has its own Local Children and Young People's Plan; they have also established their own LCSP Boards. These local partnerships are developing a local plan for children's services and a multi-agency team to provide the early intervention and preventative support services required, many of which are likely to be accessed through schools, nurseries or children's Centres.

## Transition

All young people must start to consider their future education and career at around 14. For young people with special needs this is a crucial time as they need to consider what extra support they may need in their learning. All young people, and especially those with special needs, are entitled to further help.

### **Transition Plan**

If your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, at the age of 14 they will be invited to attend their annual review. This review must include the drawing up of a transition plan which will include information from all professionals involved in supporting them, and with input from their parents/carers, to plan for their transition to adult life. The plan not only covers post-school provision but includes on-going school provision. Transition planning must also include, in conjunction with Health and Social Services:

- What the young person needs to become more independent
- What practical help or adaptations may be needed at home
- What special health needs require on-going support
- What the young person and family want.

The Connexions Service is responsible for overseeing the delivery of this plan.

If your child has special educational needs but doesn't have a statement, they may still need additional support to plan their transition to adulthood. The Connexions Service have a responsibility to make sure all young people who have difficulty transferring to further education or training, have a needs and provision assessment in their final year of school.

If your child doesn't have a statement and isn't in contact with Connexions, you may want to arrange a meeting with them to discuss your child's options after 16.

## **Assessment of Needs**

The Learning and Skills Act Section 140 assessment duty is a process to assess the needs, and the provision required to meet those needs, for people in their last compulsory school year if they have a Statement and if they are likely to leave school to pursue further training or Higher Education. An assessment may also take place for someone who has a learning difficulty, but not a Statement. This duty is also led by the Connexions service and strengthens the legal rights of young people during transition planning.

## **Connexions**

01622 753360

[www.connexionskentandmedway.co.uk](http://www.connexionskentandmedway.co.uk)

Provide information and independent advice to young people on school and college courses, different careers and the training that may be necessary. There is a Specialist Personal Adviser for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities that help young people find information and make informed choices; they can also attend review meetings.

## **Connexions Access Points (CAP)**

**Maidstone, 35 Earl Street, Maidstone**

01622 753360

Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm (Wed opens at 10am- 6pm)

## **Kent Transition Protocols**

KCC have developed a new set of protocols, or ways to work, called Kent Transition Protocols. These will help young people and their families have a better experience of the move to being supported by Adult Social Services.

The protocols have three main aims:

- to make sure young people with complex needs who are moving from adolescence to adulthood get the integrated, continuous support they need

# TRANSITION

- to make sure young people are involved in decision-making and get the outcomes they are looking for through planning and services designed for the individual
- to establish when and how information should be shared between agencies and to help with strategic planning and commissioning services for the future.

## **Transition to Adulthood**

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

Website has information about Transition in Kent including the Transition Strategy document, Handbooks for Parents and one for Professionals and The move to Adulthood - Planning for the Future (easy read version).

## **Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)**

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

EMA is there to help with your child's costs if they stay in full time education after 16. If your household income is less than £30,810 then your child can get help with up to £30 a week towards the cost of books, travel or equipment. It is paid straight into your child's bank account.

## **Further Education (FE)**

### **Grange Park at Holmesdale, Snodland, Kent**

01634 249431

[www.grangepark.kent.sch.uk](http://www.grangepark.kent.sch.uk)

Grange Park Post 16 is based inside Holmesdale School.

- Specialist in teaching students on the autistic spectrum.
- Curriculum is based on being active, practical and life skills based.
- Leisure and sporting activities
- Cooking and shopping.
- Vocational training.
- Work experience a main focus in a range of organisations
- Courses offered include ASDAN Cope and Employability, enabling students to achieve an Entry Level 1 or 2 accreditation.

**Mid Kent College Oakwood Park Centre**  
**Tonbridge Road, Maidstone,**  
**Kent, ME16 8AQ**

01622 625816 (Course Information)

[www.midkent.ac.uk/](http://www.midkent.ac.uk/)

01622 69155 (Oakwood Park Centre)

The College offer a specialist service available to all students with any kind of learning difficulty or disability. Mid Kent College has a range of pre-entry and entry level programmes for students 16+ who have additional learning needs. Each student's learning needs are identified in an individual learning plan, with courses designed to suit different levels of ability and areas of interest.

Support includes:

- Dyslexia/Language Difficulties
- Hearing/Visual Difficulties
- Emotional/Behavioral Difficulties
- Physical/Medical Difficulties
- one-to-one facilitator support
- in-class facilitator support
- one-to-one tutorials
- social & communication skills sessions
- modification of resources e.g. using symbols, CDs etc
- specialist software and assistive technology
- exam concessions (e.g. extra time/separate room)
- communicators for non-verbal students
- help with day-to-day organisation
- help with coping strategies
- assistance with personal care and supervision at break times

## **Five Acre Wood Post 16**

Five Acre Wood Post 16 Unit is based at Aylesford School Sports College, Teapot Lane Maidstone. ME20 7JU ☎ 01622 717341 extension \*320 [www.five-acre.kent.sch.uk](http://www.five-acre.kent.sch.uk)

Five Acre Wood's Post 16 Unit has a purpose-built suite within Aylesford School Sports College. Although students have their own dedicated area they have access to the facilities within the main school. Inclusion with mainstream students, at a level appropriate for the young person, is an important part of the programme.

- We meet the needs of students who have profound, severe or complex difficulties.
- Students follow a three year course with a curriculum which focuses on preparing students for life beyond school and developing independence. Students with profound difficulties follow an amended curriculum.
- Student's individual needs are addressed through Individual Education Plans and targets are set and reviewed three times per academic year in consultation with parents and the students themselves.
- Augmentative communication is used to aid speech and language – this includes signing, use of symbols, communication aids.
- Courses offered include ASDAN modules – which promote independence. AQA Literacy & Numeracy Entry Level Awards; IT Entry level Award; Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- Students have access to a range of leisure and sporting activities including after-school clubs.
- Students have the opportunity to go on residential visits e.g. Bewl Water.
- The development of appropriate Social Skills is promoted throughout the curriculum.

**Hadlow College, Hadlow, Tonbridge, Kent TN11 0AL**

0500 551 434

Hadlow College offer a wide range of courses suited to students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The hands on practical nature of courses give the perfect introduction to the Land-Based industries. All prospective students who have been identified with a learning difficulty and/or disability will be individually assessed by the Additional Learning Support team to identify support needs.

- Fun, informative practical courses
- Multi-agency approach working with family and carers or advocates ensuring success
- Builds social and life skills
- NEW courses: NPTC Certificate in Skills for Working Life (Animal Care and Horticulture)
- Small group classes and tutorial support
- Additional Learning Support
- Opportunity to progress to higher level courses
- Support with finding employment with Kent Supported Employment
- Job coaches to work alongside students to develop work related skills

**Kent Adult Education**

0845 606 5606

[www.kentadulteducation.co.uk](http://www.kentadulteducation.co.uk)

Offer courses that can help improve reading, maths, computing and communication skills including Managing Money, Healthy Lifestyles, Community Living & Work Skills.

**Main Centre:** Maidstone      0845 606 5606  
St Faiths Street, Maidstone

## **Skills Plus Centres**

0845 606 5606

Help to develop English and Maths skills by undertaking a nationally recognised qualification, level 1 or 2, in literacy or numeracy which can help improve your employment prospects & further learning.

**Maidstone:** St Faiths Street, Maidstone

## **Funding for Disability Support**

The LA (and not the DfES as is the case for HE) provides funding for Students in FE, if you require money for books/equipment/field trips etc. then you must apply direct to the college where you intend to study and ask them what funding you could receive from their college Learner Support Funds.

## **Higher Education (HE) - University places**

Universities will make arrangements for students with disabilities to be able to attend lectures and classes, and have suitable accommodation for themselves and any carers they need to support them. Contact individual Universities for more details.

## **Funding for Higher Education**

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

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

DSAs are grants to help meet the extra course costs students can face as a direct result of a disability or specific learning difficulty. The amount you get doesn't depend on your household income, are paid on top of the standard student finance package, and don't have to be paid back. They can help pay for:

- specialist equipment you need for studying – i.e. computer software
- a non-medical helper, such as a note-taker or reader
- extra travel costs you have to pay because of your disability
- other costs - for example, tapes or Braille paper

## **Independent Specialist Colleges**

There are a range of specialist colleges throughout the country which have experience of teaching students with special needs and are often residential. The Learning and Skills Council has a duty to fund a specialist place for a student under the age of 19 whose needs cannot be met in local colleges, and has the power to fund a specialist place for a student between the age of 19 and 25 if evidence is provided that their needs cannot be met locally.

## **The Association of National Specialist Colleges**

0121 428 5050

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

Provide details of a wide choice of education and training to meet the needs of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Online search facility.

## **Learning and Skills Council (LSC)**

0870 900 6800

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

Responsible for funding education and training for young people over 16, including Further Education, work based training, sixth form and adult & community learning but not Higher Education.

## **After Transition**

To help in discussions with Connexions and Social Services it may be useful to know about some of the places providing employment for adults with special needs. All placements require the support of a social service care manager.

## **Adult Day Opportunities Centres**

Referral for a placement is by a social services care manager. Day centres offer training in independent living and work skills.

# TRANSITION

## **Job Centre Plus**

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

08456 060 234 – Job search Helpline

A Disability Employment Adviser can advise on employment/training options and benefits available for young disabled people.

## **Maidstone Job Centre Plus**

Sandling Road, Maidstone

**01622 702700**

## **Kent Supported Employment**

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

Works with local employers to ensure disabled people are proportionately represented in the workforce. Provide ongoing support to ensure people succeed. For more info contact:

**Maidstone:** Bishops Terrace, Maidstone      01622 691640

## **Support and Advice**

### **Contact a Family**

0808 808 3555

[www.cafamily.org](http://www.cafamily.org)

Provide fact sheet, information and advice on Transition, offer support and advice and can put you in touch with similar families.

## **EGAS (Education Grants Advisory Service)**

0207 241 7459

[www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)

Run by Family Action, offers guidance and advice on funding for those studying in post-16 education. Provide online guide for sources of funding including loans, grants and benefits.

## **The Shaw Trust**

01225 716 300

[www.shaw-trust.org.uk](http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk)

A national charity which support disabled people to prepare for work, find jobs and live more independently.

## **SKILL**

0800 328 5050

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

National charity that provide information about education, training and work for disabled people.

## Housing

If it is appropriate for a young person to live away from home, then it is very important that this has been included in the Transition Plan. There are several options that can be considered, such as a placement in a residential home or an independent living scheme. Such provision is available through statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

Your first point of contact should be your social worker although you can also look at different voluntary and private organisations. Your local authority housing department should also have details of specialist housing schemes and housing associations with accommodation in your area.

## Direct Payments

Local Authorities can give payments, instead of services, to allow disabled people and carers to buy in the services they have been assessed as needing. For further information please see Short Breaks section.

## Housing Options

0845 4561497

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

Provide advice and information for people with learning difficulties on accessing different types of housing.

## Independent Living Fund (ILF)

0845 601 8815

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

Can help severely disabled people to live independently at home, rather than in residential care by making payments so that they can employ personal assistants or agency workers to provide the support that they need to remain at home.

Work in partnership with Local Authority Social Services and only make payments to people who get Social Services support to the value of at least £16,640 per year (£320 per week). This support from Social Services can take the form of direct services, for example a day centre placement, or money from a Direct Payment Scheme.

# TRANSITION

## Health

GP's should remain the first point of contact for any health related issues. However many paediatricians will continue to see their patients into adulthood particularly if there is a growth or development delay or rare disorder. It is important that a health professional is involved in the drawing up of the Transition Plan.

## Disabled Living Foundation

0845 130 9177

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

Provide free, impartial advice about all types of daily living equipment for disabled people including baths, toys and children's equipment, wheelchairs, hoists and beds.

## FPA (Family Planning Association)

0845 122 8690

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

The UK's leading sexual health charity whose purpose is to enable people to make informed choices about sex and to enjoy sexual health. Produce 'Talking together about Growing Up' an illustrated workbook for parents of children with learning difficulties. Also produce 'Talking Together... About Sex and relationships' a follow up pack aimed at young people with learning difficulties aged 13+.

## Disabled Parents Network

0300 3300 639

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

A national organisation for disabled people who are parents, or who hope to become parents, and their friends and family.

## Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

020 7803 1101

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

Produce publications and booklets for people with learning disabilities including 'All about feeling down' and 'Meeting the emotional needs of young people with learning disabilities'

## **How It Is**

0207 825 7422

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

Visual symbols for use by children to express feelings, includes symbols useful around personal safety and sexuality.

## **Useful Websites**

### **Brook Advisory Centre**

0808 802 1234

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

Provide free and confidential advice on sex, relationships, contraception and pregnancy to young people under 25.

### **In Control**

[www.in-control.org.uk](http://www.in-control.org.uk)

Run by disabled people this website has useful fact sheets, information about personal budgets and support planning.

### **Get Paid**

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

Produces useful Transition fact sheet 'everything you needed to know but were afraid to ask'.

### **Hands Off My Plan**

[www.handsoffmyplan.co.uk](http://www.handsoffmyplan.co.uk)

Website that is run by people with learning disabilities, and gives good advice about person centred planning.

### **Like it is**

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

Sexual Health (years 9, 10 and 11 good but a lot on each page)

### **Mind, Body & Soul**

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

Good for quick information gathering

### **Moving on Up**

[www.movingonup.info](http://www.movingonup.info)

Includes advice around learning and working; free-time, health and wellbeing, as well as money, housing, culture and news and events.

### **Trans-active**

[www.trans-active.org.uk](http://www.trans-active.org.uk)

Information about transition for young people with learning difficulties. Has useful downloadable checklist for planning.

### **Transition Information Network**

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

Provide information on all aspects of transition.

# HOLIDAYS

## Holidays

### Information

#### Accessible Travel

01452 729 739

[www.accessibletravel.co.uk](http://www.accessibletravel.co.uk)

Take care of all your holiday needs for those less mobile including accessible holidays, equipment hire and transport.

#### Disabled Holiday Directory

01348 875592

[www.disabledholidaydirectory.co.uk](http://www.disabledholidaydirectory.co.uk)

Provide information on suitable holiday destinations including extra help and equipment needed.

#### Disabled United Travel

[www.disabledunited.com](http://www.disabledunited.com)

Arrange accessible holidays in the UK and abroad for disabled children, their carers, friends and families, with a variety of accommodation to suit individual needs.

#### Disability Information Services in Kent (DISK)

01303 226464

[www.thisisfolkestone.co.uk/disk.htm](http://www.thisisfolkestone.co.uk/disk.htm)

Provide information to carers, family and service providers.

#### Enable Holidays

0871 222 4939

[www.enableholidays.com](http://www.enableholidays.com)

Offer carefully selected overseas holidays for disabled people, their families and friends.

#### Holiday Care - Tourism for All

0845 124 9971

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

For information on all types of holidays for people with special needs.

#### Holiday Cottages at Special School sites

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

Holiday accommodation on special school sites is currently being piloted in Kent and may be available more widely in the future. Families are able to customise a package to suit their needs. Information will appear on the 'Aiming High' website.

## **RADAR**

020 7250 3222

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

The Royal Association for Disability & Rehabilitation compiles regularly updated fact sheets and holiday guides.

## **Places and Organisations**

### **Beamsley Project**

01756 710255

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

The Beamsley Project is an independent charity that provides holiday accommodation in the Yorkshire Dales for people with disabilities and their carers. The centre sleeps 24 people and the cottage six.

### **Bendrigg Trust, Cumbria**

01539 723766

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

Residential activity centre offering disabled people tailor made holidays. Activities include a specially designed climbing and abseiling tower, challenge & adventure course and a range of orienteering courses.

### **BREAK, Norfolk**

01263 822161

[www.break-charity.org](http://www.break-charity.org)

Provide special care services for children, adults and families with special needs – including holidays and respite care, children's homes, adult day care and residential assessments for families in crisis.

### **British Polio Fellowship**

0800 018 0586

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

The fellowship offer fully accessible holiday accommodation in Somerset to people with any kind of disability at very reasonable prices.

# HOLIDAYS

## **Calvert Trust**

[www.calvert-trust.org.uk](http://www.calvert-trust.org.uk)

Have 3 centres that offer disabled activity holidays for all ages.

- Exmoor – Barnstaple, Devon EX31 4SJ  
01598 763221
- Keswick, Cumbria CA12 4QD  
01768 772255
- Kielder, Hexham, Northumberland NE48 1BS  
01434 250232

## **Camp Mohawk, Berkshire**

0118 940 4045

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

A summer daytime centre focusing on outdoor activities with sensory rooms, swimming pool & organised activities. Primarily for children with Autism it is ideally suited for young people age 8-18 years old.

## **The Daisy Chain Project, Blackpool**

01253 761444

[www.kensingtonfoundation.com](http://www.kensingtonfoundation.com)

Provide free accommodation in a purpose built block of 10, 2 bedroom apartments each with own facilities for families caring for a sick or disabled child, coping with limited means in difficult circumstances or rebuilding their lives after the loss of a child.

## **Dukes Barn, Derbyshire**

01629 733039

[www.dukesbarn.org](http://www.dukesbarn.org)

Adventure opportunities for all, regardless of age or ability with specialist provision for deaf and disabled people.

## **East Dene Centre, Isle of Wight**

01983 852374

[www.allnatt.co.uk](http://www.allnatt.co.uk)

Mansion house set overlooking the sea. Designed to offer families living with autism and associated behaviours the opportunity to holiday together with support and without judgement. A flexible programme allows parents to network whilst their children are safely engaged in activities including trampoline, swimming, zip wire and arts & crafts.

## **Livability (formerly Grooms Holidays)**

020 7452 2000

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

Offer affordable wheelchair accessible holidays in different locations across the country.

## **The Harriet Davis Seaside Holiday Trust**

01834 814645

[www.harriet-davis-trust.org.uk](http://www.harriet-davis-trust.org.uk)

Have 3 self catering holiday houses in Tenby which are fully equipped for families with disabled children. A fourth house has been specially adapted and equipped to cater for families with children with autism and other learning difficulties. The house sleeps 6 and is in Narberth.

## **The Lyneal Trust, Shrewsbury**

01743 252728

[www.lyneal-trust.org.uk](http://www.lyneal-trust.org.uk)

Holidays & Canal boats for people with disabilities. They have two boats & four cottages, specially designed & built for people with disabilities.

## **Kick Asthma Adventure Holidays**

020 7786 5000

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

Organise week-long adventure holidays for children and young people with asthma (and other related conditions)

# HOLIDAYS

## **National Autistic Society**

**Radlett Lodge School, Radlett, Hertfordshire**

01923 854922

Provide a respite service at weekends and during school holidays for families across the London Borough and surrounding counties.

## **Peter Le Marchant Trust, Loughborough**

01509 265590

[www.peterlemarchanttrust.co.uk](http://www.peterlemarchanttrust.co.uk)

Have two boats which are used for providing very low cost day outings and holidays on waterways to disabled people of all ages

## **Petty Pool Outdoor Centre, Cheshire**

01606 889097

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

An outdoor centre dedicated to providing holidays of a lifetime to young people with disabilities. Activities include canoeing, abseiling, orienteering and horse riding.

## **Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Activities Centre, Hampshire**

023 8040 4844.

[www.qe2activitycentre.co.uk](http://www.qe2activitycentre.co.uk)

Provide self catering accommodation for up to 8 people in cabins. Can book as use as a base for exploring local attractions or as an activity holiday. Families or groups welcome.

## **Red Ridge Centre, Wales**

01938 810821

[www.redridgecentre.co.uk](http://www.redridgecentre.co.uk)

Situated near the English/Welsh border, the centre offers residential courses with a wide range of activities to groups and individuals, regardless of ability.

## **Sense**

0845 127 0060

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

Sense organise holidays for children who have at least one sensory disability and possibly other disabilities. Activities range from abseiling to white water rafting. There is no charge to the families and applications can be downloaded from website.

## **Scout Holiday Homes Trust**

020 8433 7290

[www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/holhomes/](http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/hq/holhomes/)

Inexpensive self-catering holidays for families with special needs, in chalets and caravans on existing holiday sites around the country. No Scout connection necessary

## **Ty Glyn Davis Trust, Wales**

01545 580708

[www.tyglyndavistrust.co.uk](http://www.tyglyndavistrust.co.uk)

A purpose built holiday centre for children and young people with disabilities.

## **Vitalise (formerly Winged Fellowship Trust)**

0845 330 0149

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

Provides respite breaks for disabled adults, children and their carers at five accessible centres in Cornwall, Nottingham, Southport, Essex and Southampton.

## **Holidays Abroad**

### **Access Travel**

01942 888844

[www.access-travel.co.uk](http://www.access-travel.co.uk)

Arrange holidays for disabled people including accessible accommodation, special aids and adapted vehicles, insurance and nursing/care services.

### **HCPT - The Pilgrimage Trust**

01788 564646

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

Each year they take thousands of children aged 7-18 with disabilities or special needs on a pilgrimage holiday to Lourdes in France. They also own a specially equipped holiday home, Hosanna House, in Lourdes for families.

# HOLIDAYS

## **I need a holiday too!**

0800 949 6801

[www.ineedaholidaytoo.com](http://www.ineedaholidaytoo.com)

Provide a place for wheelchair accessible and supported holidays in Brittany, France. Services include a choice of completely accessible accommodation options, accessible transport for airport/ferry transfers and a door to door service for days out.

## **Supported-Holidays**

0114 249 9988

[www.supported-holidays.co.uk/](http://www.supported-holidays.co.uk/)

Supported-Holidays enable you to have your holiday of choice by supporting your planned tailored individual or group needs? Before you travel they will arrange for you to meet with one of their dedicated staff team who will be supporting you and any other companions. Their policy is to promote dignity, choice, rights and respect.

## **Organisations for Carers**

### **The Kiloran Trust**

020 7602 7404

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

Provide carers with a break in their West London house which is informal, friendly & relaxed. You can do sightseeing, shopping, visit friends; go to a West End show or just rest.

### **Margaret Champney Rest and Holiday Fund**

01394 388746

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

Offer grants to adults in need of a recuperative holiday. Application must come via a social worker or professional agency.

## **Financial Help & Wish Granting**

### **The AdCare Holiday Fund**

020 7454 0454

e-mail [holidayfund@mencap.org.uk](mailto:holidayfund@mencap.org.uk)

Part of Mencap they give grants to individuals with a learning disability to go on holiday or help pay for a carer to go with you. Anyone with a learning disability can apply, but under 16s must apply to the Family Fund Trust first.

## **Dave Lee's Happy Holidays**

01227 728240

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

Provide holidays, short breaks and outings for disabled, sick and underprivileged children of Kent.

## **Dial a Dream**

020 8530 5589

[www.dial-a-dream.co.uk](http://www.dial-a-dream.co.uk)

Grants wishes to children aged 3-18 with life threatening and life limiting illnesses.

## **Dreamflight**

01494 722733

[www.dreamflight.org](http://www.dreamflight.org)

Organise trips to Disneyworld, Florida for 8-14 year olds who are physically disabled or have been seriously ill.

## **Dreams Come True**

01730 815000

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

Charity that fulfils the dreams of children aged 2-21 who are suffering from a serious, degenerative or terminal illness.

## **The Family Fund**

0845 130 4542

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

Purpose is to ease the stress on families in the UK who care for severely disabled children under 16, by providing grants for holidays or short breaks.

## **The Family Holiday Association**

020 7436 3304

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

Provide grants for low income families for holidays. Applications must come from social workers or similar professionals.

## **3H Holiday Fund**

01892 860207

[www.3hfund.org.uk](http://www.3hfund.org.uk)

Organise subsidised group holidays for physically disabled children and adults with the support of volunteer helpers. Also provide grants to families on low income with a physically or mentally disabled dependant to have a modest UK holiday.

# HOLIDAYS

## **Happy Days**

0870 770 0324

[www.happydayscharity.org](http://www.happydayscharity.org)

Happy Days is a charity that provides special holidays for children who suffer from severe illnesses and disabilities.

## **Holiday Endeavour for Lone Parents (HELP)**

01427 668717

[www.helphols.co.uk](http://www.helphols.co.uk)

HELP is a national charity offering low cost and subsidised holidays throughout the UK for lone parents and their children.

## **Make A wish Foundation**

01276 405060

[www.make-a-wish.org.uk](http://www.make-a-wish.org.uk)

Grants the wishes of children aged 3-17 suffering from life-threatening illnesses

## **Merlin's Magic Wand Children's Charity**

[http://www.merlinsmagicwand.org/about\\_our\\_charity/our\\_aims.asp](http://www.merlinsmagicwand.org/about_our_charity/our_aims.asp)

Merlin's Magic Wand charity has been established to provide experiences for disadvantaged children. Applications for awards can come from individuals or from groups working with seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged children. Please see Website for further information.

## **Pearsons Holiday Fund**

020 8657 3053

[www.pearsonsholidayfund.org](http://www.pearsonsholidayfund.org)

Provide financial grants to assist disadvantaged children aged 4-16 to have holidays or take part in similar activities. Families have to be on benefit level income. Applications must be submitted by third parties i.e. social worker, health visitor or professional agency.

## **When you Wish Upon A Star**

0115 979 1720

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

Realises dreams for sick children up to the age of 16, also organise trips to Lapland.

## **Travel Insurance**

### **All Clear Travel**

0845 250 5250

[www.allcleartravel.co.uk](http://www.allcleartravel.co.uk)

Provide medical travel insurance for all who have pre-existing medical conditions, a disability or special need, whilst also offering standard insurance to cover family and friends.

### **Free Spirit Solutions**

0845 230 5000

[www.free-spirit.com](http://www.free-spirit.com)

Offer a range of tailor made holiday insurance including cover for pre-existing medical conditions.

### **Terra Blu**

01892 529429

[www.terrablue.com](http://www.terrablue.com)

Provide travel insurance for people with disabilities and pre-existing medical conditions.

### **Venture Sure**

0845 230 3521

[www.venturesure.co.uk](http://www.venturesure.co.uk)

Provide travel insurance for people with pre-existing medical conditions. Claim to have no exclusions or extra premiums for special needs.

# SHORT BREAKS

## What is a Short Break?

Short-term care breaks provide an opportunity for parents/carers to have a break from caring and also give the child or young person opportunities to do new things, make new friends and to become more independent.

They can include daytime, evening and overnight activities and can take place in the child's own home, a family based setting, or a residential or educational or community setting.

They are specialist additional services to support disabled children and their families, over and above the universal services available to all families. There are several types available including family based, residential, or services arranged and purchased by families themselves via direct payments. For short breaks provided by Children's Social Services telephone **08458 247 247**

## Short Breaks Transformation Programme

Kent has been chosen as one of twenty one local authority areas to lead the way in transforming short break services for disabled children, as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme.

The aim is to increase the quality, quantity and range of provision of short term breaks for disabled children in Kent through:

- services in family's own home - including both overnight, day care, and sitting services
- day, evening, weekend and holiday activities
- foster care provision for short breaks - both overnight and day care
- provision of overnight residential care for children with complex needs
- services for children requiring palliative care
- fuller use of school facilities
- enhancement of transport provision
- provision for 14+ age group

## **Direct Payments**

Following an assessment from Social Services for assistance or support, Direct Payments offers you a cash alternative enabling you to purchase your own care package. This option enables you to have more control and flexibility over the type of assistance, when it is provided, how and by whom.

## **Children & Families Direct Payment Support Scheme (CFDPSS)**

This is a support service for disabled children and their families who are interested in taking up direct payments. It is managed by The Parents Consortium, a parent-led voluntary sector organisation based in Hextable, Kent. Contact details: Helpline: 01322 669 245. Email: [info@cfdp.co.uk](mailto:info@cfdp.co.uk)

## **Maidstone Weekend Fun Club**

The Maidstone Weekend Fun Club is a short break/club for young people with learning disabilities. There are two age groups 10-14 yr olds and 15-18 yr olds. Each group meets once a month and alternate their activities; one month they will be doing a day trip (usually 9am to 3pm on a Sunday), the following month is a residential (Saturday and Sunday from 9am Sat to 3pm Sun), There is a cost involved (£15 for a day trip and £20 for a residential) They are unable to take severely physically disabled young people or those with extreme challenging behaviour; referrals via social services.

## **Crossroads: Maidstone & North West Kent Crossroads**

The Lodge, Holborough Road, Snodland, Kent ME6 5PJ.

01634 249090

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

Provides paid trained carer staff to give carers home-based regular or occasional breaks for a few hours. The care is free and offered, where possible, at the time best suited to the family, this can be during the day, evenings or weekends.

Crossroads also organises a club for children and young people to enable them to take a break from their caring responsibilities.

## SHORT BREAKS

### **Demelza House Children's Hospice**

Rook Lane, Bobbing, Sittingbourne, Kent. ME9 8DZ

01795 845200

[www.demelzahouse.org](http://www.demelzahouse.org)

Hospice caring for children living in the South East providing a home from home environment that is lively, colourful & often full of laughter. It helps not only those who are terminally ill, but also whose lives will inevitably be short & often, very difficult.

### **Footprints (Kent Kids Miles of Smiles)**

Stodmarsh Road, Fordwich, Canterbury CT3 4AP

01227 780796/785067

[www.miles-of-smiles.org.uk](http://www.miles-of-smiles.org.uk)

A unique respite house for sick and/or disabled children ages 3-17 with rooms themed with fairy-tales such as Cinderella, Aladdin, Peter Pan & Sleeping Beauty. Also has sensory room, garden with playground, large woodland area & adapted minibus. Parents can self-refer. Also recently opened Redwalls - a care home next door for 18+ year olds.

### **Kent Link Scheme**

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

0845 330 2968

The Kent Link Scheme recruits volunteers who provide regular short breaks for disabled children. The breaks may be for a few hours weekly, fortnightly or monthly - dependent upon the availability of the volunteer and the needs of the individual child.

For many families caring for their disabled child can be exhausting. A link volunteer can not only provide the space and time a family may need from caring full time for their child, but also present the child with a range of new social and recreational opportunities and experiences.

### **Court Drive**

9 Court Drive, Maidstone, Kent

Court Drive is a bungalow in a quiet residential cul-de-sac in Maidstone. We provide short breaks for children with learning disabilities. Overnight, after school and day stays are all offered. Up to 4 children can stay during the day and 3 overnight. Aiming High money has been allocated to provide an improved service for children and their families in the near future. The environment and facilities will be updated and the staff team restructured to meet the children's needs more fully.

**For more information on short breaks see Holidays section.**

## Leisure

### **Kent Children and Families Information Service.**

08000 323230

[www.kent.gov.uk/cfis](http://www.kent.gov.uk/cfis)

Kent Children & Families Information Service (KCFIS) has a free-phone helpline offering free, impartial information and advice about Ofsted registered childcare, early education, toddler groups, pre-schools, holiday clubs, breakfast and after school clubs, parenting, family life and issues that affect young people up to the age of 20.

### **Early Years Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCo) Drop-In Meetings**

Please see Education section for information about Early Years (SENCo) Drop-in meetings in Maidstone Sure Start Children Centres and Nurseries.

## **Under 5s**

### **Sure Start Children Centres in Maidstone:**

#### **Greenfield Children's Centre**

Greenfield CEP School, Oxford Road, Shepway, Maidstone ME15 8DF

#### **The Meadow Children's Centre,**

Bellwood Community School, Furfield Close, Parkwood, Maidstone

01622 699900

The Meadow Children's Centre organise day opportunities for families in Parkwood. Open to children with disabilities/SEN. Services include Toddler Group 1 to 2.5 years - once a week, 50p to include a drink and snack, Under Ones - with a well baby clinic. Activities like baby massage are integrated into parent and baby groups. Sing-a-long is included for speech and language skills development. Dads and Granddads Group - once a month on a Saturday 9.30-12.00, bring your young child. Home Start Group-by invitation. Breakfast clubs.

**Sunshine Children's Centre** South Borough Primary School,  
Stagshaw Close, Postley Road, Maidstone ME15 6TL  
01622 752285

Provide services and activities for all under 5s and their families. The Centre is affiliated with Smarties Day Nursery and is open to children with disabilities/SEN. The Sunshine Centre services include Parent craft, Baby Massage, Breast feeding support, Childminding networking, Health Drop-In.

**Bubbles Swimming Club (4 - 16 year olds)**

01622 753749

Bubbles Swimming Club held at Maidstone Leisure Centre every Thursday 5.30 - 7pm. Contact Emma Clough as above.

**Jo Jingles**

01634 310676

[www.jojingles.com/maidstone](http://www.jojingles.com/maidstone)

Provide a fun and creative introduction to music for pre-school children. Jo Jingles is also pleased to welcome children with disabilities/SEN; please contact your local class teacher in advance to discuss any specific requirements. Classes are subject to availability.

**Jumpers Rebound Centre**

Mill Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1HN

01634 855507

Purpose built centre-offering facilities for trampoline, tumbling, and gymnastics. They have 15 trampolines of which 3 are at ground level specifically for disabled and younger users. Hold regular parent/toddler groups throughout the week and special disability/SEN classes on Friday evenings 6.30pm and Saturday mornings 10.30am. There is a waiting list for the special classes.

## LEISURE

### **Larkfield Leisure Centre Family Club**

New Hythe Lane

01622 719345

[www.larkfieldleisure.co.uk/](http://www.larkfieldleisure.co.uk/)

Special Needs Club twice a month: 6pm to 8pm, first and third Saturday of each month, offering a variety of activities using the pool and the Sports Hall. (The club is available to the whole family). Children need to be accompanied and each session costs £2:10.

### **Larkfield Leisure Centre Under 5's**

01622 719345

[www.larkfieldleisure.co.uk/](http://www.larkfieldleisure.co.uk/)

Larkfield Leisure Centre provides several under 5s parent based activities which are open to children with disabilities/SEN. Telephone for full details of programmes running throughout the year.

### **Library Story times & Baby Bounce & Rhyme**

Maidstone Library, St. Faith's Street, Maidstone

01622 752344

Maidstone Library hold Story times and Baby Bounce & Rhyme for children under 3. You may also like to check if similar events are held in your local library.

### **Maidstone Leisure Centre**

08451 552277

[www.maidstoneleisure.com/](http://www.maidstoneleisure.com/)

Parent based activities are open to children with disabilities/SEN. Telephone for full details of programmes running throughout the year.

Parent & Toddler - Term Time: Morning pre-school play sessions for parents/carers and children. Play with the toys and sandpit, sing and then finish the session with a visit to the soft play area. Monday – Friday 10.15am – 11.45am

**MENCAP** Cobtree Hall, Maidstone

01622 670464

Mencap hold a pre-school playgroup on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, Contact Margaret Leeds.

**Musical Bumps**[www.musicalbumps.com](http://www.musicalbumps.com)

Some of the teachers are trained to work with children and adults with special needs, learning difficulties and disabilities. They visit residential homes and schools and make home visits and include children with additional needs in normal weekly classes.

**Pegasus Gymnastics Club**

Crismill Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent ME14 4NT

01622 737170

Email: [pegasusgymclub@aol.com](mailto:pegasusgymclub@aol.com)

Provides pre-school movement and education classes. Children with disabilities are welcomed within the main stream classes. Coaches with experience and specialist awards in this field work within the club and are able to support or differentiate work as required.

**Polar Adventure Maidstone Leisure Centre**

08451 552277

[www.maidstoneleisure.com/](http://www.maidstoneleisure.com/)

Polar Adventure is a 3 level - soft play area with ice hill slides. It offers great indoor fun to children with a special under 5's area. Open to children with disabilities/SEN if accompanied by a parent/carer. Out of hours group bookings can be taken, contact the children's activity team.

**Wear 'M' Out Activity, Parkwood, Maidstone**

01622 688855

Play centre consisting of a huge area with ball pools, slides and climbing platforms at different heights as well as spaces with football and netball goals. Open to disabled/SEN children if accompanied by a parent/carer. Also hold a special evening once a month for disabled/SEN children. Age (0 - 12years)

# LEISURE

## Leisure - School Age, Young Peoples' Activities & Holiday Play Schemes

### **Maidstone Borough Council**

#### **Sports, Play and Youth Development Team**

01622 602222

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

Sports, Play and Youth Development Team, Maidstone Borough Council, aims to provide both sporting and play opportunities to the community, disabled young people and schools. They run sports events and activities during school holidays. Visit the website above or phone for information about sport and play in your area.

### **Holiday Play Schemes**

#### **Hotfoot Summer and Easter Play Schemes**

01622 602222

Hotfoot Summer and Easter Play schemes for 5-11 years offer fun activities including performing arts, sports and games, Hotfoot runs for 4 weeks over the summer holidays at various sites across the borough and for 2 weeks of the Easter holidays at 3 sites. See **Hotfoot Plus Trust** below for inclusive holiday play scheme provision

#### **Hotfoot Plus Trust (Inclusive Holiday Scheme)**

01622 602222

Organise an inclusive holiday play scheme provision – Hotfoot Plus Trust (registered charity) raise funding for one-to-one Play Leaders to enable disabled children to attend the schemes. You need to register a place for your child first with Hotfoot Play and Sport Team

#### **Beacon Club Play Scheme**

Beacon Church, Shepway, Maidstone

01622 759259

The holiday club is for children aged 13 – 18 with low dependency needs. This runs between the end of July and mid August. Contact: Sheena Nolan.

**Harlequin Out of School Clubs & Holiday Play Scheme****Coxheath, Maidstone****& St Paul's School Rustall, Tunbridge Wells**

01622 749773

Harlequin Clubs offer a wide range of specialist experiences for children. Offer one-to-one care, not all children have special needs. Great for arts, crafts, outings, visits, sports and games. Date: All school holidays and inset days (half or full day bookable plus ad hoc days). Time: 8am to 6pm. Age: 4 to 11 years. For more information, please see above.

**MENCAP**

Cobtree Hall, Maidstone

01622 670464

Mencap run a holiday play scheme for disabled children aged 5 – 18. It runs from 30<sup>th</sup> July to 17<sup>th</sup> August, daily, between 10am – 4pm.

Contact: Margaret Leeds as above.

**Social Inclusion Projects****Me2 Project**

01634 281841

[www.kentyouth.org](http://www.kentyouth.org)

A social inclusion project within mainstream leisure, for young people aged 13-19 with any disability or additional need. They recruit; train & support young people to be Inclusion Mentors who help a young disabled person set & achieve inclusion goals.

# LEISURE

## Social Clubs and Activities

### **Bower Grove Oast Youth Club,**

Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8NL  
01622 726773

Held on Monday evenings 5.45pm – 7.45pm for young people aged from 14 years upwards. Contact head teacher.

### **British Red Cross** 25 College Road Maidstone – Headquarters

01622 690011

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

Offer First-aid classes to all age groups open/inclusive and support other projects and activities.

### **Creative:space**

020 7374 8485

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

Organises unique, interactive music concerts specifically for disabled children and their families to hear live music, dance and create masks in a relaxed and friendly environment and is particularly suitable for children with communication, learning or sensory integration difficulties. Also run workshops with various organisations.

### **Crossroads**

01634 249090

Hold a youth club for young carers, arrange trips and holidays to enable young carers to have a break and befriend other young carers. Contact Jan Hall.

### **Dance Club** Flare School of Dance, Loose, Maidstone.

07731 900077

Classes are open/inclusive; please contact Lucy Barry for more details.

**DMAX Disability Sports Club****Astor Sports @ Leisure Complex, & Maidstone Leisure Centre**

01622 602222

Email: [sportsandplay@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:sportsandplay@maidstone.gov.uk)

Various sporting activities are available; open to children and young people age 8 – 19 years who have a variety of disabilities. Siblings are also very welcome to join. Price £15 for 6 weeks (concessions £7.50) or £3 per session, (concessions £1.50). Sessions are held on Monday evenings at Maidstone Leisure Centre from 5.15pm – 6.45pm and on Thursday evenings from 5.30pm – 7pm at Astor Sports and Leisure Complex.

**Five Acre Wood Special School – After-school activities**

01622 743925

Five Acre Wood School hold several activities and clubs for pupils which are open to children and young people if they meet their interests / needs appropriately. Sessions change throughout the year; there is a small charge. Parents must arrange to pick up their child at the end of the session. Contact: Michael Garcia, Assistant Head Teacher.

**Free Cinema Tickets for Carers**

0845 123 1292

[www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk)

A national card scheme which is aimed at people with a disability who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, or who are blind or hold a disabled person's rail card. People can apply for the card which entitles the holder to one free ticket for the person accompanying them to the cinema. The card is valid for 1 year and costs £5.50.

## **Friday Fun Club**

Sevenoaks Leisure Centre, Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent  
01732 747305

Friday Fun Club is for disabled/SEN young people and their siblings. Parents and carers welcome. Every Friday 6.00pm - 7.00pm. Guest coaches to come along to selected sessions. Activities to include: Boccia, New Age Kurling, Rebound Therapy, Sitting Volleyball, Football, Table Tennis/Polybat, and Dance Mats. Please contact Rebecca Bowen as above.

## **Girl Guiding**

General enquiries

020 7834 6242

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

## **Girl Guiding London and SE England**

020 8675 7572

## **Scout Association**

0845 300 1818

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

## **Air Cadets**

[www.aircadets.org](http://www.aircadets.org)

They welcome members with disabilities. The Commanding Officer at your local squadron will be happy to discuss any concerns and offer advice. For ages 13 to 19.

## **Kent Wing HQ**

01622 754188

[www.kentwing.org](http://www.kentwing.org)

## **Sea Cadets**

Main Reception 0207 654 7000

<http://seacadets.ms-sc.org>

## **Sea Cadets: Maidstone**

<http://units.ms-sc.org/Maidstone/Default>

01622 761916

Email: [tsscott229@aol.com](mailto:tsscott229@aol.com)

## **Army Cadets**

[www.armycadets.com](http://www.armycadets.com)

0845 600 7799

Follow links on the website for local detachments or call the information hotline as above.

**Infozone**, 3 Palace Avenue, Maidstone.

01622 755044

The club operates several days during the week. The group caters for young people aged between 11 and 25 with a range of disabilities. Provide help, advice and activities for young people.

**Jumpers Rebound Centre**, Mill Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 1HN

01634 855507

Purpose built centre-offering facilities for trampoline, tumbling, and gymnastics. 15 trampolines of which 3 are at ground level specifically for disabled and younger users.

**Larkfield Leisure Centre**

01622 719345

[www.larkfieldleisure.co.uk/](http://www.larkfieldleisure.co.uk/)

Offers a range of activities suited to children of all ages.  
Ask about concessions

**Larkfield Leisure Centre Family Club**, New Hythe Lane

01622 719345

Special Needs Club (open to whole family) held twice a month, 6pm to 8pm, first and third Saturday of each month, offering a variety of activities using the pool and the Sports Hall.  
Children need to be accompanied & each session costs £2.50.

**Lenham Youth Centre**, Ham Lane, Lenham

01622 859171

A full programme of events – pool, table tennis, Sky TV, basketball, arts & crafts, drama, trips out and life skills. Date and time: Tues 7pm – 9.30pm Wednesdays & Fridays 7.30pm to 10pm. Age: 13 -19 years.

# LEISURE

## **Maidstone Leisure Centre**

08451 552277

[www.maidstoneleisure.com/](http://www.maidstoneleisure.com/)

Offers a range of activities suited to children of all ages.  
Ask about concessions.

## **Maidstone Weekend Fun Club**

The Maidstone Weekend Fun Club is a short break/club for young people with learning disabilities. There are two age groups 10-14 yr olds and 15-18 yr olds. Each group meets once a month and alternate their activities; one month they will be doing a day trip (usually 9am to 3pm on a Sunday), the following month is a residential (Saturday and Sunday from 9am Sat to 3pm Sun), There is a cost involved (£15 for a day trip and £20 for a residential) They are unable to take severely physically disabled young people or those with extreme challenging behaviour; referrals via social services.

## **Maidstone Youth Forum**

01622 602795

Email: [martincaville@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:martincaville@maidstone.gov.uk)

The Youth Forum meet once a week to discuss current issues, projects and to liaise with Maidstone Borough Council. Open to children and young people (11-21) with disabilities/SEN. If you would like any details about the meetings or if you would like a buddy for your first meeting, contact as above.

## **Malling Youth Project**

07786 191674

Currently in Borough Green, Aylesford and Eccles, project uses a mobile vehicle to bring educational activities to young people aged 13-19 including the Youth Achievement Awards and Duke of Edinburgh Award

**MENCAP Maidstone** Cobtree Hall, Maidstone

01622 670464

Mencap hold a pre-school playgroup, Junior Gateway club for under 16s and a senior Gateway club for over 16s.

Mencap also run a holiday scheme. Contact Margaret Leeds.

**Polar Adventure Maidstone Leisure Centre**

08451 552277

[www.maidstoneleisure.com/](http://www.maidstoneleisure.com/)

Polar Adventure is a 3 level - soft play area with ice hill slides. Open to children with disabilities/SEN if accompanied by a parent/carer. Out of hours group bookings can be taken, contact the children's activity team.

**River Drama Group**[www.riverdrama.com](http://www.riverdrama.com)

A specialist drama group for children with Downs Syndrome. Meets on Saturdays term-time only at the Oast Theatre in Tonbridge

**Shepway Manor Youth Club**

01622 754095

Provides plenty of activities and trips. Weekly activities for young carers, dancing classes, judo and karate as well as the regular youth club using the ball court, fitness studio, indoor sport hall, computer suite, pool and table tennis areas.

Cost £1 or £10 annual subscription. Age: 13-19.

**SNAP Club Night**

08451 552277

SNAP stands for **S**ay **N**o and **P**hone. SNAP club nights are a safe environment for young people aged between 11 and 17 to enjoy live music acts and meet with friends. SNAP club nights are alternated between the Larkfield and Maidstone Leisure Centres to give young people from all over the Maidstone and Malling area a better opportunity to go to the events. Tickets

**Cont/d**

## LEISURE

for SNAP club nights in Maidstone cost £5 and can be purchased from schools or direct from Maidstone Leisure Centre.

### **Stokers, based at Sunrise Children's Centre, Southborough, Kent.**

01892 822787 (Rosemary Eve)

01892 510294 (Susan Mniszko)

A parent group run for young people with high functioning Aspergers/Autism or who have social communication difficulties. The group is supervised by parents and allows the young people to meet and chat in a friendly, non-threatening environment. Age range 12-25. Meetings alternate Fridays 7.30-9.30pm term time. Small charge.

### **Square Pegs Drama Group**

07920 100468

[nicky@squarepegsdramaclub.com](mailto:nicky@squarepegsdramaclub.com)

Square Pegs is a Maidstone based drama club for children and young people who may find it difficult to fit in other groups. Anyone can join provided they are reasonably mobile and can communicate and work with others co-operatively. The older groups (12-18) meet on Tuesdays (7.30 - 8.45) and Thursdays (7.45- 9.00) at Bower Grove School currently. The younger group (7-11) meet on Thursdays at 6.30pm. Contact as above.

### **Wear 'M' Out Activity,**

Parkwood, Maidstone

01622 688855

Play centre consisting of huge area with ball pools, slides and climbing platforms at different heights as well as spaces with football and netball goals. Open to disabled /SEN children. Age (0 - 12 years)

**Youth Work out in the Community**

01622 754095

A number of trained youth workers work alongside young people who choose not to go to youth clubs. They offer sports, training, education, job seeking and trips. Meetings are held at several locations in Maidstone. Open to young people with disabilities/SEN.

**Kent Youth Service****Kent Youth Service**

01622 221678

[www.kent.gov.uk/youthservice](http://www.kent.gov.uk/youthservice)

Kent Youth Service is one of the largest youth services in the country, offering a wide range of programmes and activities for young people aged 11-25, but primarily for 13-19 year olds. They aim to support and encourage young people from a wide variety of backgrounds, creating a safe place for them to get the opportunity to gain confidence and face the challenges of life. Open to children with disabilities/SEN. If there are any support/needs then they attempt to meet these after discussion with individuals and/or parents.

(Please also see **Me2 Project in Leisure section. Me2 is a social inclusion project** which enables young disabled people to access clubs and activities) [www.kentyouth.org/](http://www.kentyouth.org/) Tel: 01634 281841

Visit the 'Togogo' website: [www.togogo.info/](http://www.togogo.info/) for information about activities, clubs and sporting opportunities.

**Kent Youth Voluntary and Statutory Projects****InFo-ZoNe**, 3 Palace Avenue, Maidstone ME15 6NF**01622 755044****Lenham Youth Centre**

Ham Lane, Lenham, Maidstone ME17 2QL

**01622 859171**

# LEISURE

## **Maidstone Rural Detached Project**

C/o Lenham Youth Centre, Ham Lane, Lenham, Maidstone  
**01622 858171**

## **Maidstone YMCA Detached & Outreach Project**

Barfreston Close, Tovil ME16 6FG  
**01622 669455**

## **Malling Det Youth Project**

C/o SAMAYS, Malling Road, Snodland ME6 5HS  
**01634 240638**

## **Opportunities Through Leisure**

77 Priory Road, Ditton ME20 6BB  
**01622 718514**

## **SAMAYS**

Malling Road, Snodland ME6 5HS  
**01634 240638**

## **Shepway Youth Centre** Cumberland Avenue, Maidstone ME15 7JN

**01622 754095**

## **Voluntary Service Unit - Maidstone**

c/o Howard de Walden Youth Centre,  
Bluett Street, Maidstone ME14  
**01622 762510**

## Sporting Opportunities

**Kent Sports Leisure & Olympics** Email: [mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk)  
01732 525389 [www.kentsport.org/disability](http://www.kentsport.org/disability)

Help disabled people break down the barriers which can stop them enjoying various outdoor sport and leisure activities and aims to increase opportunities in outdoor and rural sport for disabled people in Kent. Contact Mike Bishop, Kent Sports Development Manager for Disabled People

### **Kent Outdoor Pursuits Disability Project Coordinator**

Contact: Paul Panton on 01732 525433 / 07717 507157  
or Email: [paul.panton@kent.gov.uk](mailto:paul.panton@kent.gov.uk)

## Sports Facilities for the district

**Astor of Hever Sports & Leisure Complex:** 01622 752490  
**Larkfield Leisure Centre:** 01622 719345  
**Maidstone Leisure Centre:** 08451 552277

### **English Federation of Disability Sport**

The following centres have been accredited under the English Federation of Disability Sport. Inclusive Fitness initiative and a range of disability user-friendly equipment:

- **Julie Rose Stadium - Ashford**
- **Strood Sports Centre - Medway**
- **Zeroth Active Zone - Maidstone**
- **Larkfield Leisure Centre - Aylesford, near Maidstone**
- **The Stour Centre - Ashford**
- **The Pent Valley Sports Centre-Folkestone**

# LEISURE

## Athletics

### Ashford Alligators

Julie Rose Stadium, Ashford  
07838 122 568

[info@ontrackathletics.co.uk](mailto:info@ontrackathletics.co.uk)  
[www.ontrackathletics.co.uk](http://www.ontrackathletics.co.uk)

A twice weekly disability athletics/multi-sport club for young people aged 9 – 17 yrs. The club will involve a basic fun introduction to sport with a focus on athletics; will include other sports and is open to all young people with a disability. Contact Peter Le Rossignol

## Archery

### CEDAK

[myweb.tiscali.co.uk/cedak](http://myweb.tiscali.co.uk/cedak)

Based at Valance School, near Westerham, this club is run by a team of coaches and leaders with extensive experience of working with juniors with a wide range of disabilities.

## Boccia

### Kent Boccia Centre of Excellence

01732 525389

[mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk)

The Kent Boccia Centre of Excellence is held once a month, at Valance School Sports College near Westerham. The Centre of Excellence is open to individual players and is aimed at those who can already play Boccia at a basic level but who wish to go on to competition at regional's, nationals or beyond.

## Climbing

### Soft Rock Climbing

01892 863659

[www.softrockclimbing.co.uk](http://www.softrockclimbing.co.uk)

Indoor and outdoor climbing experiences. Can cater for all disabilities minimum age of 6 years.

## Cycling

### Bedgebury Pinetum Nr Goudhurst [www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury)

An ideal place to cycle with a 9km circular all ability route, 12km of single track and a cycle skills area. There is something for all abilities. A range of adapted cycles can be hired at the venue.

**Hythe Ability Cycling Club**

01732 525433 or 07717 507157

Club is open to all abilities which offer a variety of adapted and non adapted cycles for use alongside the canal or Hythe's seafront. Contact: Paul Panton.

**Fitness****Maidstone Zeroth Active Zone Boughton Lane, Maidstone**

01622 749564

The Zeroth Active Zone has been accredited under the English Federation of Disability Sport. Inclusive Fitness initiative and a range of disability user-friendly equipment for children and young people up to 18 years

**Football****Football/Basketball Clubs Bower Grove School, Maidstone**

01622 726773

Email: [headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk)

Clubs takes place on Thursday evenings 3.15pm – 4.30pm  
Contact as above.

**Larkfield Disability Football Club**

07711 024202

Email: [cabshimran@aol.com](mailto:cabshimran@aol.com)

Contact Colin Barden

**Maidstone Raiders Disability Football Club** – Oakwood Park, soon to be re-located back to Bower Grove School. Maidstone

07538580816 / 01622 765755 Email: [johnharvey@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:johnharvey@blueyonder.co.uk)

Saturdays 10am – 12pm. Contact - John Harvey

**Gymnastics****Gym and Dance Club Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone**

**01622 726773** (Contact: Donna Shalders)

Takes place on Monday's 3.15pm – 4.15pm (Activities vary throughout the year to reflect different interests/needs)

# LEISURE

## **Pegasus Gymnastics Club**

Crismill Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone

01622 737170

Email: [pegasusgymclub@aol.com](mailto:pegasusgymclub@aol.com)

Coaches with experience of disabilities work within the club.

Age (0 -16years) Contact above number for information.

## **Martial Arts**

### **Kingsnorth Recreational Centre, Ashford**

01227 370055

Karate specifically for children with autism.

### **ShoShin Budo**

07851 760390 Contact Keith Mewes

### **Martial Arts / Self Defence** Weaving, Maidstone, Kent

01622 736990

Email: [sensei@shingitakarate.com](mailto:sensei@shingitakarate.com)

## **Riding**

### **Leystone Grange, Near Maidstone Riding Centre for the Disabled**

01732 872844

Lessons are available for any one 4+ yrs with a disability.

### **Chalk Down Group Staplehurst - Riding for the Disabled**

01622 850310

### **Riding for the Disabled, Bradbourne**

Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks

07914 273 610

[www.bradbourne-rda.org.uk](http://www.bradbourne-rda.org.uk)

During term-time only. Sessions are free but donations made.

### **Riding for the Disabled**

0845 658 1082

[www.riding-for-disabled.org.uk](http://www.riding-for-disabled.org.uk)

RDA offer riding and carriage driving as a form of therapy for disabled people. RDA also organise holidays for members.

## Sailing

### Mariners of Bewl

[www.mariners-of-bewl.org.uk](http://www.mariners-of-bewl.org.uk)

Supports and encourages the integration of disabled and able-bodied people through sailing. Children are welcome but they must be accompanied.

### Westbere Sailing Opportunities

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

01227 710410 Contact Richard Gaskell

A sailing club on Westbere lakes, near Sturry, for people with disabilities: they have experience of working with a range of conditions and welcome families with children.

## Skiing

### Bowles Outdoor Centre, Tunbridge Wells

01304 241373

email: [spikemalc7@hotmail.com](mailto:spikemalc7@hotmail.com)

Disability Snowsport UK ski once a month on a Saturday between 7 and 9pm. Telephone first for more information.

Bowles Outdoor Centre also offer a range of activities open to disabled/SEN children and young people.

### Chatham Dry Ski Slope

01634 827979

[www.chathamskislope.co.uk/](http://www.chathamskislope.co.uk/)

Cater for all abilities but please ring to discuss in detail

### Folkestone Ski Centre Radnor Park Avenue, Folkestone

01303 850333

Suitable for all abilities including physically disabled. Open ski sessions or private lesson their aim is to get everyone skiing regardless of their disability!

### British Ski Club for Disabled

01303 249182

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

## Swimming

### Bubbles Swimming Club (4 - 16 year olds)

01622 753749

Maidstone Leisure Centre every Thursday 5.30 - 7pm.  
Contact: Emma Clough.

# LEISURE

## **Kent Disability Swimming Squad**

01732 525389

[mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk)

Open to anyone over 9 years who can swim for 15 to 20 mins and wishes to receive additional coaching and training. Contact Mike Bishop at KCC Sports, Leisure and Olympics

## **Maidstone Leisure Centre**

0845 1552277

[www.maidstoneleisure.com/](http://www.maidstoneleisure.com/)

Offers a range of activities suited to children of all ages. Swimming free for disabled child and carer, concessions for other facilities. Open to children with disabilities/SEN

## **Walking**

### **Kent Rural Disability Sportslink Project**

01732 525433

E-mail: [paul.panton@kent.gov.uk](mailto:paul.panton@kent.gov.uk)

The Project has produced a pack of leaflets about walks between 0.5 and 5 miles in length: 'Walks for All in Kent and Medway'. These are intended for wheelchair users.

## **Wheelchair Basketball**

Maidstone Rebels Wheelchair Basketball Club, Aylesford School

01732 525389

Email: [mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk](mailto:mike.bishop@kent.gov.uk)

Based at Aylesford School & Sports College Sports Centre. For more information contact Mike Bishop.

## **Wheelchair Fencing**

01797 344 243

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

For details please see website. Contact Shuna Body, Chairman of BDFa (British Disabled Fencing Association) Hope Farm, Snargate, Romney Marsh, Kent TN29 9UQ.

## Your child's rights

You may find it helpful to know the rights of disabled children and young people to play and leisure are enshrined in law.

### **The Children Act (1989)**

Recognises that "children's need for good quality play opportunities change as they grow up but they need such opportunities throughout childhood to reach and maintain their optimum development and well being." The Act says that Local Authorities shall provide services to minimise the effect of disabilities on the lives of disabled children and give them opportunities to lead as normal a life as possible. Local authorities must treat disabled children as children first and promote access for all children to the same range of services.

### **The Disability Discrimination Act (1995)**

Makes it unlawful for service providers to discriminate against disabled people by treating them less favourably than others. It also requires service providers to 'make reasonable adjustments' to policies, practices and procedures which might remove or alleviate any disadvantage a disabled person might experience when using their services. Part III of the Act has recently come into force and means many service providers should have made permanent physical changes to their premises if these put disabled people at a disadvantage - this covers indoor and outdoor adventure playgrounds, leisure centres, play areas in public parks and playgrounds.

# RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

## Rights and Benefits

### Helplines

#### Benefit Enquiry Line

0800 882200

A free helpline for people with disabilities that provides information, advice and help with form filling.

#### Contact a family:

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

0808 808 3555

UK-wide charity providing advice, information and support to the parents of all disabled children.

#### CarersLine:

0808 808 7777

Wednesday and Thursday 10am -12pm and 2pm - 4pm  
Staffed by experts and has years of experience of dealing with the problems carers face. Provides free and confidential information and advice on:

Benefits and tax credits

Carers employment rights

Carers assessments

The services available for carers, and how to complain effectively and challenge decisions

### Websites:

#### Disability Benefits:

[www.disabilitybenefits.co.uk](http://www.disabilitybenefits.co.uk)

08457 123456

Information on benefits including entitlement, claiming, how it is paid, how long for and rates.

#### Department for Work and Pensions:

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

Information on all benefits

#### Benefits and work

[www.benefitsandwork.co.uk](http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk)

Information and guides that can help completing DLA forms.

# RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

## Benefits:

### Carer's allowance

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

01253 856123

Carers Allowance is a taxable benefit to help people who look after someone who is disabled. You do not have to be related to, or live with, the person that you care for. You may be able to get Carers Allowance if you are aged 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a person who gets either:

- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance at the middle or highest rate for personal care
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the normal maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Constant Attendance Allowance at the basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension

You cannot get Carers Allowance if you are in full-time education with 21 hours or more a week of supervised study or earn more than £95 a week after certain deductions have been made - for example Income Tax. Claiming Carers Allowance may affect any other benefits, allowances, pensions and entitlements you, or the person you care for, receive.

### Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

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

08457 123 456

This is a non-means tested benefit for children with disabilities. To claim for a child, they should be one or more of the following:

- Aged 3 months or over and generally needs extra help or looking after
- Aged 3 years or over and has severe difficulty walking
- Aged 5 years or over and needs extra help getting around out of doors

# RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

There are two components to this allowance:

## **The Care Component:**

Payable at 3 rates depending on how much care is needed:

**Highest rate:** For extra help during the day and night

**Middle rate;** For extra help during the day or night

**Lowest rate:** For extra help during part of the day or part of the night.

## **The Mobility Component:**

Payable at two rates depending on how much help is needed with getting around:

**Higher rate** payable for children 3 years and over: for a child who is unable to walk or has severe difficulty in walking; children who are deaf and blind; those whose health might suffer from the exertion of walking; those claiming the highest rate care component who have severe mental impairment or severe behaviour problems.

**Lower rate** for children 5 years and over: for a child who can walk but may need someone to supervise or guide them.

## **Premiums for people on income support**

Income support is a means tested benefit to help people who either don't work or work less than 16 hours a week, and whose partner (if any) works less than 24 hours a week.

Premiums are weekly additions to the personal allowances for groups of people who have extra needs:

**Disabled Child Premium:** for each child (with less than £3,000 savings) who is getting DLA for care or mobility at any rate or who is registered blind. This premium is not always given automatically so make sure you claim it if you think you qualify.

**Enhanced Disabled Child Premium:** For a child (with less than £3,000 savings) who gets DLA care component at the highest rate.

**Carer Premium:** If you get Carer's Allowance (CA) for looking after a disabled person, you may be entitled to an extra amount included in your income support.

## **Tax Credits:**

0845 300 3900

### **Child Tax Credits:**

Can be claimed by anyone who has a dependent child. You may be entitled to the disabled child element for each child within the family on disability living allowance (DLA) or who is registered blind; or severely disabled child element for each child within the family on the highest rate care component of DLA.

### **Working Tax credit**

0845 300 3900

You qualify if you have a child (under 16, or under 19 and still in full-time education) and you (or your partner if you have one) work at least 16 hours per week. You may also be able to get help towards approved childcare costs if you are a lone parent working at least 16 hours or a couple who either both work 16 hours, or where one partner works 16 hours and the other is incapacitated (or in prison).

## **Council Tax Reductions, Maidstone Borough Council**

01622 602003

### **Reduction in Band:**

If your home has been specifically adapted to meet the needs of a disabled resident who is substantially and permanently disabled, you may be entitled to a reduction in your council tax band. Adaptations that qualify are either:

- A room (not kitchen or bathroom) mainly used by the disabled person
- An extra kitchen or bathroom to meet their needs
- Enough floor space for a wheelchair used indoors.

**Cont/d...**

# RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

## **25% Reduction:**

If you are single but receive the highest rate of the care component of DLA and have a carer with you for at least 35 hours per week, they may be classed as a 'disregarded person' and you could be entitled to a 25% reduction in council tax under the singles person allowance.

## **Blue Badge Scheme**

01622 605020

The Blue Badge scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport. The scheme operates throughout the UK and in some European countries.

## **Who can have a blue badge?**

You are automatically eligible to apply for a badge if you are over two years old and either:

- receive the higher rate of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance
- are registered blind
- receive a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement

You may also be eligible for a badge if you are over two years old and either:

- have a permanent and substantial disability which means you cannot walk, or which makes walking very difficult
- drive a motor vehicle regularly, have a severe disability in both arms, and are unable to operate all or some types of parking meter (or would find it very difficult to operate them)

## RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

If you are a parent of a child who is less than two years old, you may apply for a badge for your child if they have a specific medical condition which means that they either:

- must always be accompanied by bulky medical equipment which cannot be carried around without great difficulty
- need to be kept near a vehicle at all times, so that they can, if necessary, be treated in the vehicle, or quickly driven to a place where they can be treated, such as a hospital.

### **Adaptations to the Home:**

If you have a disabled child up to 18 years old and your home is unsuitable, one solution is to make adaptations funded by a grant. The adaptations required will depend on your child's needs. These adaptations must be to make caring for your child easier or to increase your child's level of independence at home. An assessment needs to be carried out by a Children's Social Services Occupational Therapist based within Disabled Children's teams to determine your child's functional needs and assess your home environment. They determine that the request to access the grant is necessary and appropriate. They can then support your application for a Disabled Facilities Grant. This is a local council grant to help towards the cost of adapting your home to enable you to continue to live there. A grant is paid when the council considers that changes are necessary to meet your needs, and that the work is reasonable and practical. The maximum amount payable in England is up to £30,000. The grant will only be paid on work assessed as necessary, and when the council are satisfied that the work has been carried out. Grants will usually not be provided retrospectively. Any proposed work must have planning permission and fall within building regulations.

**Cont/d...**

# RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

Acceptable types of adaptations include:

- Gain better access to your home for the disabled person i.e. widening doors and installing ramps
- Providing or improving access to rooms and facilities - for example, by installing a through floor lift or providing a downstairs bathroom/ shower/ toilet.
- Adapting heating or lighting controls for easier use

Disabled Facilities Grants are not means tested so long as the grant is provided to meet the needs of a disabled child (less than 19 years of age). Families who need to adapt their home for a person over the age of 19 will have to go through a means test/financial assessment. When aged 19 or over, the person with the disability is tested. This test (based on a person's ability to pay) is intended to target help towards the most needy, and it looks at income, savings and expenditure. The grant awarded can then vary from 0 to 100% of the cost of the work assessed as necessary. Who can apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant? You can apply if the answer to the following four statements is yes:

- You or the child living in your property is disabled.
- You, or the child on whose behalf you are applying, are the owner or tenant of the property. Note: a landlord may apply on behalf of a disabled tenant.
- You are willing to certify that you, or the child on whose behalf you are applying, intend to occupy the property as your/their main or only residence throughout the 5 year grant
- You, or the child on whose behalf you are applying, live in England.

For more information, contact the Children's Occupational Therapy service based within the Disabled Children's Teams in West & East Kent (Kent Contact and Assessment Service 08458 247 247).

Web sites: [www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk](http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk) and [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

# RIGHTS AND BENEFITS

## **National Key scheme (public toilets) Maidstone Borough Council**

01622 602000

The National Key Scheme (NKS) offers independent access to disabled people to around 7,000 locked public toilets around the country. Contact Maidstone Borough Council.

## **Relief from VAT**

0845 302 0203

Some gadgets and equipment designed solely for people with disabilities are zero rated for VAT. These include medical and surgical appliances, specialised articles such as special beds, lifts & hoists and installation costs of special equipment. Certain building work such as improving access to a building, adaptations to a bathroom and the installation of a lift are also zero rated from VAT. For more information. Contact above number

## **Vaccine Damage Payments**

01772 899944

A one-off payment for people severely disabled as a result of vaccination against certain diseases. Telephone for more details.

## **Water meter charges**

South East Water

08458 50 60 60

Some people who have a water meter can request a capped bill if they receive specific benefits and can't avoid using a lot of water because they have three or more dependent children under 19 (in full time education). This also applies if you have a medical condition specified by the government - contact your water company for more details.

## Transport

### Motability

0845 456 4566

[www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

The Motability Scheme allows you to use the higher rate mobility component of your child's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) towards hiring a new car or buying a new or used car or wheelchair on hire purchase (HP). You can apply after your child is 3 years old; schemes include:

- 3 year Contract Hire Scheme to lease a new car.
- 4 or 5 year HP Scheme to buy a new car.
- 2, 3, 4, or 5 year HP Scheme to buy a used car or powered wheelchair.

You may have to make an advance payment for the car or wheelchair.

### **Contract Hire**

Under the contract hire scheme you contribute the higher level mobility component of your DLA to Motability for a period of 3 years. In return, you obtain a new vehicle which is insured, maintained and serviced without further charge. The vehicles also have full RAC Breakdown Assistance. In addition, if you make no claims during the 3 years you are on the scheme and the car is returned in excellent condition you may be eligible for a £200 bonus.

### **Hire Purchase**

Motability has negotiated discounts on a variety of new cars and they can be obtained using the HP scheme. All or part of the higher level mobility component (depending on the amount borrowed) is paid over to the Motability Scheme. If you buy a used car you must go to a Motability accredited dealer. The car must be less than 3 years old and have done less than 45,000 miles. It must pass an AA inspection which the dealer will arrange on your behalf and then carry out any repairs identified before supplying the car to you.

## **Dartford Toll Crossing Concession**

01322 280200

Email: [exemptions@connectplum25.co.uk](mailto:exemptions@connectplum25.co.uk)

People who are exempt from paying vehicle tax can cross for free. Register your vehicle in the Exempt Vehicle Registration Scheme to take advantage of Automatic Number Plate Recognition technology. It is not mandatory to register in order to cross for free, but it will make the crossing quicker. Request an application form by email or telephone, or download one from the DART-Tag website.

[www.dart-tag.co.uk/nossl/index.php?page=exemptscheme](http://www.dart-tag.co.uk/nossl/index.php?page=exemptscheme)

## **Bus services**

### **Kent Karrier: Dial-A-Ride service**

**01622 605349**

Kent Karrier is a low-riser bus with facility for wheelchairs which takes you from your door to various destinations depending on where you live. You must be a member to join and membership costs £5 a year with a small fee payable for each journey. A companion can travel with you (they do not need to be members) all they pay is the journey fee.

Application Forms available from KCC.

### **Arriva Buses**

01622 690577 (Maidstone Travel shop)

[www.arrivabus.co.uk](http://www.arrivabus.co.uk)

Not all buses offer easy access so you are advised to call the local Travel shop with details of the specific bus/journey required. General Enquiry Line 0844 800 4411

### **Concessionary Bus Permits Maidstone Borough Council**

01622 602334

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

Free travel permits available to disabled people, enabling them to travel free of charge after 9.00am on weekdays. A free companion permit may also be available for people with high-rate mobility or attendance benefits.

# TRANSPORT

## Rail Travel

### Disabled Persons Railcard Office

0845 605 0525

[www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk](http://www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk)

Train operators provide a number of services for disabled passengers, for example, someone to meet the passenger from the train or a porter to carry bags. If possible, give 48 hours notice so the right help can be made available. When booking your ticket ask for the Disabled Assistance phone number for the train operator responsible for your journey. An adult travelling with a disabled child may be able to get a reduction on their fare.

## Taxi companies

### Streamline

01622 750000

Maidstone based. 2/3 carriers with a ramp, each can take one wheelchair. They have 2 converted mini buses with tower lifts, can take 2/3 wheelchairs.

### Express Cabs, Maidstone

01622 690000

Wheelchair accessible London Cabs

### Cavalier Taxis

01622 754000

4 wheelchair accessible London Cabs

Multi-seater with ramp can take 2 fold up wheelchairs and 1 electric.

## Volunteer drivers

### Voluntary Action Maidstone

01622 756662

Voluntary Action Maidstone have a transport scheme and if you are unable to use public transport will provide a volunteer driver if one is available. There is a mileage charge, please phone for the current rate.

## **Coach Travel**

### **Buzzlines**

01303 261870

[www.buzzlines.co.uk](http://www.buzzlines.co.uk)

Coaches have low entry facility from the kerb although there are steps up into the coach. Wheelchairs are stored in the luggage hold.

### **Chalkwell**

01795 423982

[www.chalkwell.co.uk](http://www.chalkwell.co.uk)

Special 12 seat minibus which can be hired at weekends with facility for removal of 2/3 seats for secured wheelchairs.

### **National Express**

08717 818 181

[www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)

### **Disabled Persons Travel Helpline**

08717 818 179

### **Wheelchair Loan**

**Red Cross** 25 College Road Maidstone

01622 690011

### **Wheelchair Service Preston Hall Hospital**

01622 713018

The Wheelchair Service provides wheelchairs and maintenance or replacement of equipment as required. Referral via professional e.g. GP, Health Visitor or therapist.

## **Funding**

**Blue Badge Scheme** - See Benefits section.

### **Exemption from Road Tax**

If your child gets the higher rate DLA mobility component, you should automatically be sent a road tax exemption form (DLA 403) from the DLA unit. It is important that you complete and return the exemption form to the address stated on the letter enclosed with the form. If you don't receive a form, contact The Disability Living Allowance Unit: 0845 712 3456

# TRANSPORT

## Fares to Hospital

If you are on Income Support, income-based Job Seekers Allowance or Pension Credit, you can claim help with travel costs to and from hospital for NHS treatment when escorting your child. You can obtain a refund of your fares directly from the hospital if you produce proof that you are in receipt of benefits. Ask for form HC5. If you are not getting these benefits but are on a low income (if your child is 16 years or over it is their income that counts, not yours) you may still be able to get help. Maidstone Hospital 01622 729000 - go to Cashiers Office

## The Family Fund Trust PO Box 50, York YO1 9ZX

0845 130 4542

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

Can help with driving lessons for a severely disabled child's main carer if there is a car available. Help with transport expenses can be given if the child does not get DLA but has difficulty getting around.

## London Congestion Charges

0845 900 1234

[www.cclondon.com](http://www.cclondon.com)

Blue Badge holders are exempt from the £8 charge in central London. You need to register with Transport of London and make a one-off payment of £10.

## Motability Finance Limited (MFL)

0845 456 4566

[www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk)

Motability provides some grants in cases of hardship. If you require a grant, it is important not to order the car or adaptations before any grant is made. Grants are given towards the least expensive suitable solution to meet your basic mobility needs and the amount will depend on individual circumstances. You will be expected to contribute a minimum of £200 towards the vehicle and/or adaptations.

## **Wheelchair Voucher Scheme**

01622 713018

The NHS trust offers a voucher scheme to help people buy a wheelchair of their choice. The wheelchair service may offer a voucher to the value of the wheelchair they would have provided. The voucher can then be used towards the cost of a more expensive wheelchair; you would have to pay the balance of the cost.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## Aids and Equipment

### Aids & Equipment

#### **Able to Wear**

0141 775 3738

[www.able2wear.co.uk](http://www.able2wear.co.uk)

Adaptive disabled clothing for disabled people and wheelchair users of all ages. Also has a wide range of disabled products.

#### **Acorn Educational**

01536 747485

[www.acorneducational.co.uk](http://www.acorneducational.co.uk)

Educational toys and games for early years children and those with special needs.

#### **Coilers /No Tie Laces**

[www.hemihelp.org.uk/support\\_us/shop](http://www.hemihelp.org.uk/support_us/shop)

Ideal for those who find it difficult to tie traditional shoe laces. Also have other useful aids such as pencil grips and pencils with triangular barrels for easy grip.

#### **Conform UK**

[www.conformuk.com/hobbies\\_play.html](http://www.conformuk.com/hobbies_play.html)

Sells play equipment and special needs games and hobbies such as easy to see playing cards and talking battleships and chess.

#### **Convoid**

0800 0483 350

[www.themobilityaidscentre.co.uk](http://www.themobilityaidscentre.co.uk)

Supplier of lightweight folding wheelchairs and buggies for children with special needs.

#### **Cotswold Cots**

01993 842885

[www.cotswoldcots.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldcots.co.uk)

Designs and makes beds, cots and playpens that restrain safely, to suit every need.

#### **Cotton Comfort**

[www.eczemaclighting.com](http://www.eczemaclighting.com)

Eczema clothing, for touch sensitive people.

#### **Crelling Harnesses for the disabled Ltd**

01253 852298

[www.crelling.com](http://www.crelling.com)

Supply a range of harnesses for travel, stair lifts, buggies and walking reins.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **Demand**

01923 681800

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

Design and manufacture specialised equipment for disabled children and adults where no off-the-shelf solution exists, free of charge to the individual.

## **DCS Joncare**

01235 523353

[www.dcsjoncare.com](http://www.dcsjoncare.com)

Manufacturer of children's equipment including trikes & power chairs, standing & walking aids, seating & car seats

## **The Disability Equipment Register**

01454 318818

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

Lists second hand equipment for sale and wanted.

## **Disability Living Foundation**

0845 130 9177

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

Provide best possible choice, for people who use equipment to live a more independent life.

## **Disabled Stickers**

01522 688388

[www.disabledstickers.co.uk](http://www.disabledstickers.co.uk)

Offer a range of stickers and signs to promote disability awareness, for example to politely remind people they have parked in a disabled parking bay.

## **Dream Racer**

[www.dream-racer.com](http://www.dream-racer.com)

Sells radio controlled model toys for children with physical disabilities. Controllers are built into a baseball cap enabling users to drive their car by head movements. Also for PlayStation games, PC access, Soundbeam music systems and switch adapted musical toys and bubble machines.

## **Dribble Bandanas**

[www.dribble-bandanas.co.uk](http://www.dribble-bandanas.co.uk)

Provide an alternative to bibs, these bandanas come in a range of sizes and colours.

## **The Elap Rotating Car Seat**

0800 0433 159

[www.elap.co.uk](http://www.elap.co.uk)

Supply rotating car seats to fit virtually all vehicles.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **Fledglings**

0845 458 1124

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

Help by searching, demonstrating and ordering resources, particularly those unusual items which may not be easily available or designed specially for children with special needs.

## **Glow Shop**

0121 423 2000

[www.glowshop.com](http://www.glowshop.com)

Supplier of a wide range of UV lighting, glow in the dark and snap 'n' glow products.

## **The Happy Puzzle Company**

0844 848 2811

[www.happypuzzle.co.uk](http://www.happypuzzle.co.uk)

Range of puzzles and games suitable for children with special needs. Useful skills developed include fine motor & social skills, visual tracking and hand/eye co-ordination.

## **Hippocampe**

01725 519405

[www.hippocampe.co.uk](http://www.hippocampe.co.uk)

A lightweight, easily assembled 3 wheeled buggy that has a neutral buoyancy design allowing it be used in or out of water - including the sea. Also easy to use on sand.

## **Hippychick**

01278 434440

[www.hippychick.com](http://www.hippychick.com)

Child hip seats with built in back supporting belt.

## **Identikids**

0845 125 9539

[www.identifyme.co.uk](http://www.identifyme.co.uk)

Produce a range of identity products for your child including cards and wristbands.

## **Jenx**

0114 285 3376

[www.jenx.com](http://www.jenx.com)

Equipment including standing frames, seats and mobility aids.

## **JCM Seating Solutions**

01775 766664

[www.jcmseating.co.uk](http://www.jcmseating.co.uk)

As well as specialist seating, they offer an adjustable high-support car seat with swivel base for ages 3-11.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **Kent Mobility**

01732 770251

[www.kentmobility.co.uk](http://www.kentmobility.co.uk)

Assessors & providers of disability & rehabilitation equipment.

## **Kid Sense**

0116 275 1895

[www.kidsense.co.uk](http://www.kidsense.co.uk)

Supplier of 3 wheel all terrain buggies and strollers suitable for children with special needs up to the age of 17.

## **Leckey**

028 9060 2277

[www.leckey.com](http://www.leckey.com)

Special needs equipment including standing frames, static chairs and bathing equipment.

## **Medicalert Foundation**

0800 581 420

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

Provide a bracelet or necklet, engraved with a personal ID number, medical condition(s) and emergency telephone number so vital medical information can be obtained quickly and easily.

## **MERU (Medical Engineering Resource Unit)**

01372 725203

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

Design and manufacture a variety of equipment and devices to meet the individual needs of children when there is no commercially available alternative.

## **McClaren Major Buggy**

01327 841300

[www.maclarenmajor.com](http://www.maclarenmajor.com)

Lightweight special needs buggy suitable for children up to 50kgs

## **The Mobility Market**

[www.themobilitymarket.co.uk](http://www.themobilitymarket.co.uk)

Buy and sell used mobility & disability aids and equipment.

## **The Novelty Warehouse**

[www.thenoveltywarehouse.com](http://www.thenoveltywarehouse.com)

Sensory Toys for children with special needs at lower prices.

## **Piedro Footcare**

0121 475 1101

[www.gilbert-mellish.co.uk](http://www.gilbert-mellish.co.uk)

Provide specialist footwear for children with special needs.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **Portaramp**

01953 714599

[www.portaramp.co.uk](http://www.portaramp.co.uk)

Portable, lightweight ramps for wheelchairs.

## **Rackety's**

01538 381430

[www.racketys.com](http://www.racketys.com)

Produce clothing for children with special needs that incorporate specially designed fastenings and modifications that make getting dressed a less stressful experience.

## **Remap**

0845 1300 456

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

Charity that has engineers who make one-off technical aids or modify commercial equipment.

## **ROMPA**

0845 230 1177

[www.rompa.com](http://www.rompa.com)

Provide specialist play, leisure, therapy and sport equipment including sensory toys and equipment.

## **Salts Healthcare**

0121 333 2000

[www.salts.co.uk](http://www.salts.co.uk)

Range of Paediatric orthotic and support shoes.

## **Second Skin**

0131 449 9497

[www.secondskin.com.au](http://www.secondskin.com.au)

Dynamic Lycra Splints designed to improve functional performance for people with neurological dysfunction.

## **Seenin**

01434 634457

[www.seenin.com](http://www.seenin.com)

Produce range of garments for children with special needs including feeding aprons, dribble bibs & neckerchiefs.

## **Sense Toys**

0845 2570 849

[www.sensetoys.com](http://www.sensetoys.com)

From educational toys for pre-school children to games for special needs children. Includes play tips and ideas for toys.

## AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

### **Sleep Safe**

[www.sleep-safe.co.uk](http://www.sleep-safe.co.uk)

Anti-suffocation pillows offer protection against suffocation during seizures or breathing difficulties while asleep.

### **TFH**

01299 827820

[www.specialneedstoys.com](http://www.specialneedstoys.com)

Products include multi-sensory rooms, soft environment equipment, toys, switches and music.

### **The Sensory Company**

0845 838 2233

[www.thesensorycompany.co.uk](http://www.thesensorycompany.co.uk)

Design and manufacture multi-sensory equipment.

### **Togs 4 Special Sprogs**

0796 3366 762

[www.togs4specialsprogs.com](http://www.togs4specialsprogs.com)

Create custom-made clothing and accessories for premature babies and children with special need aged 0-18.

### **Spacekraft**

01274 581 007

[www.spacekraft.co.uk](http://www.spacekraft.co.uk)

Supply an extensive range of multi-sensory toys and equipment.

### **Sheerlines**

01384 375600

[www.sheerlines.net](http://www.sheerlines.net)

Specialists in protection from cold, wind and rain they make garments, canopies and capes for wheelchair users.

### **Tendercare**

01903 726161

[www.tendercareltd.com](http://www.tendercareltd.com)

Supply postural supportive pushchairs & buggies for all ages.

### **Wheelchair Ramps.co.uk**

01608 685039

[www.wheelchair-ramps.co.uk](http://www.wheelchair-ramps.co.uk)

Offer a range of lightweight, folding and easy to handle ramps.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **Bikes & Trikes**

### **Bike Care**

01354 660049

[www.bikecare.co.uk](http://www.bikecare.co.uk)

Products include Tricycles, adult stabilisers, tricycle tag-alongs, back rests, self-balancing pedals and special brake levers.

### **Companion Cycling**

07961 344545

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

A charity which enables people with special needs, regardless of their age or ability, to cycle on specially adapted cycles in peaceful surroundings of Bushy Park in South West London.

### **Good Designs**

01248 713624

[www.disabledcycling.f2s.com](http://www.disabledcycling.f2s.com)

Supply robust bicycle stabilisers that can be adjusted to vary the amount of support provided so balance can be gradually gained.

### **London Recumbents**

0208 299 6636

[www.londonrecumbents.com](http://www.londonrecumbents.com)

Supplier of special needs bikes and trikes. Test-drive or hire for an hour, day or week. Centres in Dulwich & Battersea Parks, London.

### **Mission Cycles**

01622 815678

[www.missioncycles.co.uk](http://www.missioncycles.co.uk)

Range of tricycles for children with balance problems.

### **Quest 88**

01952 463050

[www.quest88.com](http://www.quest88.com)

Supply adapted bikes, trikes & Ko-Karts.

### **Tomcat Trike**

01452 616900

[www.tomcatspecialneeds.co.uk](http://www.tomcatspecialneeds.co.uk)

A custom built special needs trike with rear steering control.

### **Triad Theraplay Ltd**

0141 876 9177

[www.triad.com](http://www.triad.com)

Supplier of tricycles for children with special needs.

## **Wise Wheels**

01295 770806

[www.wisewheels.co.uk](http://www.wisewheels.co.uk)

Range of tricycles suitable for all ages including tandem bikes.

## **Car Seats**

### **The Car Safety Centre**

[www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk](http://www.incarsafetycentre.co.uk)

01908 220909

Specialise in all types of car seats, publishes a booklet entitled "Car and Bus Seating for Children with Special Needs" and has a showroom where all seats are displayed.

### **Britax Ltd**

01264 386034

[www.britax.co.uk](http://www.britax.co.uk)

Offer a larger car seat for children with special needs. The Traveller Plus is for children who need extra support & is suitable for 15kg-36kg (approx 4-11yrs) costing approx £500. You may be able to get help towards the cost.

### **Cole Enterprise - Flight Travel Chair**

01306 745333

[www.travel-chair.co.uk](http://www.travel-chair.co.uk)

Specially designed to enable disabled children, aged 3-11, to travel in the seat of a plane. British Airways, JMC, Monarch & Virgin can provide this chair free of charge to passengers. Otherwise, you can hire it from £125

### **Horacek Lars Car Seat**

0552 784814

[www.ottobock.co.uk](http://www.ottobock.co.uk)

Car seat with swivel and sliding motion and tilt in space suitable for ages 2-10 years

### **JMC Seating Solutions**

01733 405830

[www.jcmseating.co.uk](http://www.jcmseating.co.uk)

As well as specialist seating, they supply an adjustable high-support car seat with swivel base suitable for children aged 9 months to 12 years.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **R82 UK**

0121 561 2222

[www.r82.com](http://www.r82.com)

Produces the Panda car seat which provides support for disabled children with swing out frame enabling the parents to turn and slide the seat in and out of the car.

## **IT**

### **Ability Net**

0800 269 545

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

Charity which assists disabled people make the most out of using computers. Will assist at home or school & produce fact sheets.

### **The Aidis Trust**

0207 426 2130

[www.aidis.org](http://www.aidis.org)

A charity which provides specialised computer equipment to disabled people to improve independence and quality of life and provide the freedom to communicate.

### **Computers for the Disabled**

01268 284834

[www.cftd.co.uk](http://www.cftd.co.uk)

Provide new and 2<sup>nd</sup> hand computers & parts to disabled people.

### **Find a Voice**

01233 640443

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

Offer advice and help about communication aids. Provide training and has a resource library with switch toys, simple aids, training videos and useful books. Outreach service now available at locations throughout Kent.

### **Inclusive Technology**

01457 819790

[www.inclusive.co.uk](http://www.inclusive.co.uk)

Supply special needs software and accessories.

### **QED (Quality Enabling Devices)**

0239 258 0600

[www.QEDLtd.co.uk](http://www.QEDLtd.co.uk)

Supply Special Needs communication aids, software and accessories.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **The Sequal Trust**

01691 624 222

[www.the-sequal-trust.org.uk](http://www.the-sequal-trust.org.uk)

Provides communication aids for severely disabled people with speech/movement difficulties.

## **Widgit Software Ltd**

01926 333680

[www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)

Provide everything needed for working with symbols. Has large range of software for children with special needs.

## **Insurance of equipment**

### **Fish Insurance**

0500 432 141

[www.fishinsurance.co.uk](http://www.fishinsurance.co.uk)

Provide range of insurance cover including manual and electric wheelchairs.

## **Help with Funding**

### **Action for Kids Charitable Trust**

0845 300 0237

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

Provides grants for equipment and mobility aids for children and young people with physical and mental disabilities.

### **The Buttle Trust**

0207 828 7311

[www.buttletrust.org](http://www.buttletrust.org)

Grants provided include essential items of furniture and equipment and, on occasion, fund short-term therapy costs.

### **Cerebra**

01267 244216

[www.cerebra.org.uk/grants](http://www.cerebra.org.uk/grants)

Offer grants to help disabled children who have a brain related condition or injury, either of physical nature, a learning disability or both. Helps buy equipment such as specialist car seats, power wheelchairs, sensory toys /trikes.

### **Children Today Charitable Trust**

01244 335622

[www.children-today.org.uk](http://www.children-today.org.uk)

Makes grants towards equipment including electric wheelchairs, walking aids, educational toys, communication aids, trikes and adapted car seats.

# AIDS AND EQUIPMENT

## **The Child Care Action Trust**

0845 2300 195

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

Provides equipment not available from the NHS, social services or affordable by their families, such as walking frames, special needs car seats, communication aids and 2<sup>nd</sup> skin suits.

## **Get Kids Going!**

020 7481 8110

[www.getkidsgoing.com](http://www.getkidsgoing.com)

Give disabled children/adults up to the age of 26 the opportunity of participating in sports such as tennis, athletics, skiing etc, by providing them with specially built sports wheelchairs.

## **Newlife Charity**

01543 462 777

[www.newlifecharity.co.uk](http://www.newlifecharity.co.uk)

Offers equipment grants to seriously disabled and terminally ill children. Grants can vary from a wheelchair or a bed to a communication aid and therapy equipment shed.

## **React Charity**

020 8940 2575

[www.reactcharity.org](http://www.reactcharity.org)

Help improve the quality of life for financially disadvantaged children with life-limiting illnesses.

## **Variety Club**

020 7428 8100

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

Help towards wheelchairs, trikes and buggies for children up to the age of 19.

## **Whizz Kidz**

020 7233 6600

[www.whizz-kidz.org.uk](http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk)

Give disabled children and young people independent mobility by providing customised wheelchairs, tricycles and other specialised mobility equipment.

**Value Added Tax (VAT)** Certain aids and equipment for disabled people are not subject to VAT if they are designed solely for use by a disabled person.

We cannot endorse any of these companies or their products.

# LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

## Local Organisations

### Information and support

#### Citizens Advice Bureaux

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

No: 2 Bower Terrace. Tonbridge Road, Maidstone Kent ME16 8RY

Enquiry Line 01622 757882 or 01622 752420

Welfare Benefits Advice: 01622 688133

By Appointment only: Money Advice: 01622 751788

Housing Advice: 01622 674032

#### Dial-Kent (Disabled Information Advice Line)

01227 771155

[www.dialuk.info](http://www.dialuk.info)

Offer information and advice on all aspects of disability.

#### Disability Information Services in Kent (DISK)

01303 226464

[www.thisisfolkestone.co.uk/disk.htm](http://www.thisisfolkestone.co.uk/disk.htm)

Provide information to carers, family and service providers on a range of services and information including holidays.

#### Gateway in Kent

Gateway is the new way for citizens to access public and voluntary services with the added convenience of being in a town centre or high street location across Kent. Comfortable, modern places make it easier to reach specialist, voluntary and charitable agencies. Services include:

- information and self help, including free internet, service directory, payment kiosk
- routine advice and transactions, including bus passes, refuse, parking, licensing
- surgeries by agencies such as Hi Kent, Connexions, NHS and registrars for births and deaths
- cross agency services, including council tax, benefits, planning, housing, library, adult education and occupational therapy

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Information on Gateway locations and the roll-out programme can be found at: [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)

Or you can watch the Gateway DVD by clicking [www.kenttv.com/gatewayexperience](http://www.kenttv.com/gatewayexperience)

### **Maidstone Gateway**

Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, ME15 6JQ  
The Maidstone Gateway is a one stop shop for services, including information and advice surgeries on selected days.

## Support Groups and Local Organisations

### **Afasic West Kent**

[www.west-kent-afasic.fsnet.co.uk](http://www.west-kent-afasic.fsnet.co.uk)

Afasic is a charity which supports children and young people with speech, language and communication impairments and their parents and carers. Hold regular support group meetings.

### **Avenues Trust**

01732 835722

[www.theavenustrust.co.uk](http://www.theavenustrust.co.uk)

[adam.taylor@theavenustrust.co.uk](mailto:adam.taylor@theavenustrust.co.uk)

The Avenues Trust support young people aged 12 upwards with learning disabilities, autistic spectrum disorder, complex needs and challenging behaviour etc. The Trust also has an Adult service. Young people are encouraged to develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem and are supported through transition to a more independent lifestyle. Services can be purchased through Direct Payments (see **Short Breaks section**)

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### **Bower Grove Parent Support,**

Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone ME16 8NL

01622 726773 Email: [psg.bowergrove@btinternet.com](mailto:psg.bowergrove@btinternet.com)

[www.bower-grove.kent.sch.uk](http://www.bower-grove.kent.sch.uk) (select parent support)

Meetings are open to all parents/carers of children with special or additional needs, an autistic spectrum condition or any disability including those in mainstream schools. Friends, family and professionals are welcome to join us too. Regular workshops/presentations are held on key subjects such as Behavioural Strategies, Speech and Language, Health, Benefits etc. and a host of agencies and speakers are invited. Regular newsletters are provided along with a website for information. Parent consultations on key issues are facilitated There are occasional social events for parents and regular coffee mornings. Contact Josephine Cousins

### **Beacon Centre**

**01622 661560**

Support for families living in the Shepway, Mangravel, Parkwood and Senacre areas. Provides several services, including an advice centre, computer skills centre, household store and recycled furniture and community workers support for families. They also run a holiday play scheme, please see Leisure section.

### **British Red Cross** 25 College Road Headquarters

01622 690011

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

As well as teaching First-aid to all age groups in Kent, the BRC gives skilled care to people in crisis in the UK and abroad.

### **Challenging Behaviour Foundation**

0845 602 7885

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

Provide information and support to parents and professionals caring for individuals with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour.

# LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

## **Connexions**

01622 753360

[www.connexionskentandmedway.co.uk](http://www.connexionskentandmedway.co.uk)

Provide information and independent advice to young people on school and college courses, different careers and the training that may be necessary. There is a Specialist Personal Adviser for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities that help young people find information and make informed choices; they can also attend review meetings.

## **Contact a Family**

0808 8083 555

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

Offer telephone support for parents of disabled children and provide information fact sheets. For further information see website above.

## **Cruse Bereavement**

01622 671011

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

Helps bereaved people to understand their grief and cope with their loss. Provides support information and advice.

## **Dandelion Time, West Farleigh**

Email: [info@dandeliontime.org.uk](mailto:info@dandeliontime.org.uk)

01622 814001

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

Dandelion Time is a charity for children aged 7 years plus, struggling with complex emotional or behavioural difficulties. These children may be socially isolated and many have been excluded or withdrawn from school. Based in West Farleigh, near Maidstone, Dandelion works with the whole family in a therapeutic programme of activities around the farm. Children discover their abilities in a practical, stimulating way, building confidence and self esteem realising they are capable of achievement. This provides a valuable opportunity for parents and their children to see each other in a different and more positive light. Referrals are made through GPs, Social Services and Education.

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### **Domestic Violence Information Handbook (Maidstone)**

01622 608173

Free publication for anyone experiencing domestic abuse.

### **Downs Syndrome - Kent Wide Group**, PO Box 534, Chatham,

07787 947142

[www.kentds.org/](http://www.kentds.org/)

Fundraising, social events, training and specific projects that benefit children and young adults with Downs Syndrome.

### **Dyslexia Association West Kent**

01732 832203

[www.kwda-dyslexia.org.uk/](http://www.kwda-dyslexia.org.uk/)

A voluntary organisation affiliated to the British Dyslexia Association. Regular meetings for parents and a children's group. Meetings are free to members £5 for non members.

### **Dyspraxia Support Group**

01622 209530

[joff.atkinson@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:joff.atkinson@blueyonder.co.uk)

For information about meetings and social events in the Maidstone area contact Joff Atkinson as above.

### **Epilepsy Action**

01892 533305

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

Main Enquiry Line 0808 800 5050

Tunbridge Wells support group that meets once a month.

### **Fathers' Club**

Bower Grove School, Fant Lane, Maidstone ME16 8NL

01622 726773 or contact Jo Blamires on 01634 405168

The Fathers' Club provides support and guidance to fathers and grandfathers of children with an autistic spectrum condition.

Monthly evening meetings across Kent and an informal atmosphere provide the core of support and give members the opportunity to share information and their experiences.

Membership is free, a library of relevant publications is available and a regular newsletter that goes to all members.

Contact John Franklin as above.

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### **Find a Voice**

49 Beaver Lane, Ashford TN23 5NU

01233 640443

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

Offer advice and help finding suitable communication aids, also have a resource library with switch toys, training videos and useful books.

### **Hi Kent**

01622 691151

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

Aims to enable hearing impaired people overcome the socially isolating aspects of being or becoming deaf, by provision of information, environmental equipment, deaf awareness training for relatives, carers and professionals and sign language courses. Hi Kent is available to individuals, family members, carers and professionals

**Home-Start Maidstone**, Marsham Street, Maidstone

01622 675879

[www.home-startmaidstone.org/](http://www.home-startmaidstone.org/)

Trained volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to families experiencing stress or difficulties with at least one child less than 5 years of age. In addition to the home visiting service, Home-Start also provides group support to families.

**KASBAH (Kent Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus)**

01474 536501

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

Provides support services for people, carers and families affected by Spina Bifida and/or Hydrocephalus throughout Kent.

**Kent Association for the Blind (KAB)**

01622 691357

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

Provide a service sensitive to the needs of those who are visually impaired by helping them to attain the highest level of independence. They offer counselling, information and advice on all matters concerning sight loss.

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### **Kent Autistic Trust**

01634 405168

[www.kentautistic.com](http://www.kentautistic.com)

Specialise in services for people with autism and offers information, advice and support to families and carers. The Trust can provide individuals with an "Autism Alert Card" This card been designed to alert the police and other emergency services to the fact the holder has an Autism Spectrum Condition. They run support groups throughout Kent. Maidstone group meet regularly at the Salvation Army Hall, 74-80 Union Street, Maidstone. Contact Jo Blamires as above.

### **Maidstone Carers Project**

01622 685276

[www.van-online.org.uk](http://www.van-online.org.uk)

The Carers Project supports people caring for a family member or friend. Information is available on local services, benefits, entitlements and rights. Practical help with forms, claiming benefits and making complaints is offered. An information booklet signposting support and services for parent carers is produced. The project also facilitates a range of social activity groups for carers. Emotional support by telephone, face-to-face and within carer support groups is available. MCP also facilitates a regular carers' forum and consultation with carers on specific issues.

### **Maidstone Child Development and Therapy Centre**

01622 225870

This centre offers a morning and evening support group for parents/carers of children less than 5 years who have been referred to the centre. **(See health section)**

### **Kent Deaf Children's Society, 11 Beatty Avenue, Gillingham ME7 2BZ**

07982 682772

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

Self funded, self help group run by parents in partnership with professionals and other organizations. They work with various statutory bodies across Kent and Medway as a consultative group to promote the issues of deaf children and the impact this has upon family life.

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### **Kent Children and Families Information Service (KCFIS)**

08000 323230

[www.kent.gov.uk/cfis](http://www.kent.gov.uk/cfis)

(KCFIS) has a free-phone helpline offering free, impartial information and advice about Ofsted registered childcare, early education, toddler groups, pre-schools, holiday clubs, breakfast and after school clubs, parenting, family life and issues that affect young people up to the age of 20.

**The Kent LINK** Unit 24, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Folkestone.

01303 297050

E-mail: [info@kmn-ltd.co.uk](mailto:info@kmn-ltd.co.uk)

The Link (Local Involvement Network) is an independent network of local people and community groups working together to influence and improve Kent's health and social care services.

### **Maidstone Mediation Scheme**

01622 692843

[www.j.langrish.btinternet.co.uk/mm/contact.html](http://www.j.langrish.btinternet.co.uk/mm/contact.html)

The Scheme is a registered charity offering a free confidential service to people in interpersonal conflict or dispute. Offer training to schools to enable them to set up and maintain their own mediation services. Cover disputes between parents & children, neighbors, bullying at school.

### **Maidstone Mencap Charitable Trust**

01622 670464

Maidstone Mencap provides support to families of children and adults with learning difficulties in the Maidstone area. They also provide holiday play schemes and clubs, see Leisure Section. Contact: Margaret Leeds.

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### **Maidstone Parent Forums - Parents' Voice**

01622 350640

Email: [mpv@live.co.uk](mailto:mpv@live.co.uk)

Parent Forums are held regularly to discuss the development of services for children and young people in the Maidstone area. They work closely with the Maidstone Local Children's Services Partnership Boards to engage parents in consultation and regularly meet with agencies to keep up to date with developments that affect their children. Contact Partnership with Parents on the above number.

### **Netmums Parent Supporters**

[www.netmums.com/support](http://www.netmums.com/support)

Netmums has a range of Parent Supporters who can offer on-line support and advice to mums with every problem ranging from domestic violence to Post Natal Depression, special needs to relationship issues.

### **Partnership with Parents**

01622 755515

[www.kent.gov.uk/partnershipwithparents](http://www.kent.gov.uk/partnershipwithparents)

Partnership with Parents (PwP) is a statutory arm's length service. It provides independent and impartial advice and support. PwP aims to empower parents and schools to work together effectively. PwP is committed to parental involvement. It offers a range of activities to support all those involved in the development of communication skills and increased parental confidence.

### **Refuge, PO Box 554, Kent ME14 1JW**

01622 762428.

National Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Mid Kent Refuge provides safe and secure supported housing for women and children fleeing domestic abuse. Women can access this service by self referral to the above telephone number or with the assistance of any external agencies. All services are offered with a maximum of confidentiality. Women are given emotional support, and advocacy in relation to domestic abuse, safety, housing, finance and health concerns. Contact Carol Webster.

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### **SCOPE Response**

0808 800 3333

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

Email: [response@scope.org.uk](mailto:response@scope.org.uk)

Scope Response is an information, advice and support service. Open 9 am – 5 pm weekdays, closed weekends and Bank Holidays. For information on cerebral palsy, disability issues and all their services, Scope Response is the first point of contact - Nigel Marsh, Senior Regional Response Worker.

### **Sense Kent Branch**

01622 831345

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

Sense Kent Branch offer a Support group for parents and those caring for people who are deaf/blind living in Kent. Provides a link with services offered by Sense nationally which includes information, training and holidays for children/people who have a sensory impairment.

### **SlideAway**

07794486816

Email: [slideawayone@aol.com](mailto:slideawayone@aol.com)

[www.slideaway.org/](http://www.slideaway.org/)

SlideAway is a Charity that helps young people who have had a bereavement in their family. SlideAway is also operating in the Tonbridge & Malling area, as well as Maidstone.

### **Sure Start Children Centres**

[www.clusterweb.org.uk/chc/chc\\_home.cfm](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/chc/chc_home.cfm)

'Children's centres are places that provide information and services for families with young children. On average, a children's centre will serve a community with about 800 children under five years old.'

**Please see [Leisure section](#) for information about Sure Start Children's Centres in Maidstone.**

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### Services you might find in Kent Sure Start Children's Centres:

- High quality early education and childcare for children aged 0 to 5, available in hours to suit working parents
- Drop-in sessions for parents and children
- Ante-natal classes and baby clinics
- Information and advice about breastfeeding, parenting and speech & language
- Services for children with special needs and disabilities
- Links to local schools and holiday play schemes
- Encouragement and support for parents thinking about training or finding a new job
- Links to a childminder network
- Support from **Kent Children and Families Information Service** to provide a range of information about childcare and related issues for families' (See page 111)

### TLC for Carers - Moving and Handling Advice Project

01622 749885

The service is available to carers of patients living in the Maidstone/Weald area. It offers advice to carers about how to help the person they care for to move around safely. Carers may contact the team directly or ask someone else to refer them.

### Voluntary Action Maidstone (VAM) Marsham Street, Maidstone

01622 677337

[www.vam-online.org.uk/](http://www.vam-online.org.uk/)

Voluntary Action Maidstone started in 1975 as Maidstone Volunteer Bureau. VAM is still a local charity serving people in the Borough of Maidstone and has grown to become a Council for Voluntary Service and offer a range of services to organisations and to individual people. The Volunteer Centre

Cont/d

## LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

provides an enormous choice of exciting opportunities for people to volunteer. The infrastructure support role for voluntary and community groups means they are able to help local services flourish. Frontline services offer assistance to older people, people with disabilities, people with mental health problems and carers. Whether you want to be a volunteer, need help with writing a business plan for your group or want a driver to take you to hospital, you are most welcome to contact them.

VAM also facilitates an umbrella group which brings together local voluntary and community groups that work with children and young people. It aims to improve outcomes for children and young people by strengthening and supporting those groups that work with them. VAM also have an on-line directory listing other voluntary organisations and groups in and around Maidstone.

**Wheelchair Users** 119 Enbrooke Valley, Folkestone CT20 3NE

01303 226500

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

Amongst other things they run a support help-line and provide a comprehensive information service covering all aspects of wheelchair use throughout Kent.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## National Organisations

### **Action for Sick Children**

0800 0744 519

[www.actionforsickchildren.org](http://www.actionforsickchildren.org)

Aims to ensure that sick children always receive the highest possible standard of care by offering advice on GP's, Out Patient appointments, going into hospital and helping children deal with pain.

### **ADDISS** (Attention Deficit Disorder Information & Support Service)

020 8952 2800

[www.addiss.co.uk](http://www.addiss.co.uk)

Provide information & support to anyone who needs assistance and has books covering all aspects of ADHD & related disorders.

### **AFASIC** (Association for Speech Impaired Children)

0845 3 55 55 77

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

Help children & young people with communication impairments by providing information, training and publications.

### **Allergy UK**

01322 619898

[www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org)

Provide information on all aspects of allergy & food intolerance. Helpline provides practical advice & support to manage symptoms. Website has useful fact sheets.

### **BIBIC**

01278 684060

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

Offer practical help to families caring for children with conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, developmental delay, traumatic & acquired brain injury & specific learning difficulties such as ADHD, dyslexia & dyspraxia.

### **The Bladder and Bowel Foundation**

0845 345 0165 (nurse helpline) [www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org)

Provide information and support for people with bladder and bowel disorders, their carers, families & healthcare professionals.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **The British Dyslexia Association**

0845 251 9002

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

Provides information & training on Dyslexia and has online shop with useful resources such as books, writing and IT equipment.

## **BLISS**

0500 618 140

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

Supports parents of premature babies by offering guidance and information at a critical time in families' lives.

## **Brittle Bone Society**

08000 282 459

[www.brittlebone.org](http://www.brittlebone.org)

Offers help, advice and information to people affected by Osteogenesis Imperfecta.

## **Calibre Audio Library**

01296 432339

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

Provide the pleasure of reading to people with sight problems, dyslexia or physical disabilities. Free nationwide postal service of recorded books on MP3 format, CDs, or ordinary cassettes.

## **Carer's UK**

0808 808 7777

[www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Provides carers with information and advice and offers a wide range of free booklets on all aspects of caring.

## **Cerebra**

Parent Support: 0800 32 81 159

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

Counselling: 0800 04 39 385

Supports families caring for a child with a brain related condition. Services include; information and advice, a sleep advice service, Speech Therapy, help to set up wills and trusts, grants for equipment, a free holiday home.

## **Cerebral Palsy Care**

01634 220540

[www.cerebralpalsycare.co.uk](http://www.cerebralpalsycare.co.uk)

Offer Conductive Education for children under five who have Cerebral Palsy or similar motor disorders, helping them to learn to do things that most babies and children do naturally.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **Changing Faces**

0845 4500 275

[www.changingfaces.co.uk](http://www.changingfaces.co.uk)

Supports and represents people who have disfigurements to the face, hand or body from any cause by providing personal support for children, young people, adults and families.

## **Child Brain Injury Trust**

0845 601 4939

[www.cbិតuk.org](http://www.cbិតuk.org)

Provide information and advice for anyone affected by childhood acquired brain injury as well as offer small grants to enable them to take part in social activities.

## **Child Death Helpline**

0800 282 986

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

For anyone affected by the death of a child of any age, pre-birth to adult, under any circumstances, however recently or long ago. Open from Mon to Fri 10am to 1pm, & 7pm to 10pm.

## **Childline**

0800 1111

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

A free 24hr helpline for children and young people providing a counselling service for any child with any problem whether they're feeling scared or out of control, lonely, worried, having problems at school or just want to talk to someone.

## **Children's Heart Federation**

0808 808 5000

[www.childrens-heart-fed.org.uk](http://www.childrens-heart-fed.org.uk)

Provide information and support for parents whose child has a heart disorder.

## **Climb (Children with Inherited Metabolic Diseases)**

0800 652 3181

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

Provide information, advice and support on all metabolic diseases to children, adults, families & professionals.

## **The Compassionate Friends**

0845 123 2304

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

Helps bereaved parents & their families offering understanding, support & encouragement to others after the death of a child.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **Contact a Family**

0808 808 3555

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

Provide information & fact sheets to families of children with any kind of disability, special need or long term health need..

## **Cry-sis**

08451 228 669

[www.cry-sis.org.uk](http://www.cry-sis.org.uk)

Provide self-help and support for families with excessively crying, sleepless & demanding babies. (7 days a week 9am-10pm)

## **Cystic Fibrosis Trust**

0845 859 1000

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

Provide information, advice & support to people with cystic fibrosis and their families. Produce publications & offer grants.

## **Depression Alliance**

0845 123 23 20

[www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)

Produce publications covering various aspects of depression offer the information and guidance and have local self-help support groups which meets monthly in Gillingham.

## **Downs Heart Group**

0844 288 4800

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

Offers support and information relating to heart conditions associated with Down's Syndrome.

## **The Downs Syndrome Association**

0845 230 0372

[www.downs-syndrome.org.uk](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk)

Supports people with Downs Syndrome, their families and carers as well as for those with a professional interest.

## **The Dyslexia Institute**

01732 352762

[www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk](http://www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk)

Provide support and services for people with dyslexia and literacy difficulties. Centre in Tonbridge provide Assessments & training.

## **Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM)**

<http://www.edcm.org.uk>

Every Disabled Child Matters is the campaign to get rights and justice for every disabled child.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **Epilepsy Action**

0808 800 5050

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

Provide a wide range of information and advice about epilepsy.

## **Equality & Human Rights Commission**

0845 604 6610

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Supports disabled people by providing them with information and advice about their rights under the DDA.

## **ERIC (Enuresis Resource & Information Centre)**

0845 370 8008

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

Provide information and support on childhood bedwetting, daytime wetting, constipation and soiling.

## **The Family Fund**

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

The Family Fund gives grants to low-income families to meet the additional needs of caring for a severely disabled child such as specialist toys, holidays, driving lessons & washing machines.

## **Family Fund Extra**

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

Become a member of Family Fund extra and you will receive discounts on products and services from leading high street retailers and organisations, such as 10% discount from Comet and 5% from Argos. Also free energy saving light bulbs.

## **Family Rights Group**

0800 731 1696

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

Offer advice and support for families whose children are involved with social services.

## **Fragile X Society**

01371 875100

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

Provide support and information for families whose children and relatives have Fragile X

## **HemiHelp**

0845 123 2372

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

A membership organisation supporting children and young people with hemiplegia, and their families

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **Hyperactive Children's Support Group**

01243 539966

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

Provide support, information and a range of literature to help ADHD/Hyperactive children.

## **Lets Face It**

01843 833724

[www.lets-face-it.org.uk](http://www.lets-face-it.org.uk)

Offer friendship, link families and build courage to face life regardless of how or why a face is disfigured.

## **Listening Books**

020 7407 9417

[www.listening-books.org.uk](http://www.listening-books.org.uk)

Provide selection of audio books, on MP3, CD or via internet, to people who find it difficult or impossible to read due to illness or disability.

## **Mencap**

0808 808 1111

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

Provide information & advice for people with learning disabilities.

## **Muscular Dystrophy Campaign**

0800 652 6352

[www.muscular-dystrophy.org](http://www.muscular-dystrophy.org)

Provide people with neuromuscular conditions and their families' information and advice about their conditions.

## **The National Autistic Society**

0845 070 4004

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

Offer practical help and advice for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders, their families and carers. An Autism Alert Card can be obtained from The National Autistic Society. They can be carried by a person to help identify their needs in situations where communication may be difficult. (£2.50 excl. Vat)

## **National Blind Children's Society**

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

Provide information and advice for children with visual impairments as well as offer grants for communication equipment. Also have 'Direction Point', a Guide to Services.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy**

01342 831342

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

Provide information and support for children and young people with epilepsy and other neurological conditions.

## **National Deaf Children's Society**

0808 800 8880

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

Helpline provides clear, balanced information and support for families of deaf children, deaf young people and professionals working with families. Also provide grants and loan equipment.

## **The National Literacy Trust**

020 7587 1842

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

Provide support & information to help improve reading/ writing

## **Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children**

0800 902 0095

[www.newlifecharity.co.uk](http://www.newlifecharity.co.uk)

Provides support for parents of disabled children aged up to 18. Helpline provides qualified Nurses who offer comfort, support and guidance as well as offer grants for equipment.

## **The Nystagmus Network**

0845 634 2630

[www.nystagmusnet.org](http://www.nystagmusnet.org)

Self-help group providing support for people with nystagmus, an eye condition characterised by rapid, jerky eye movements.

## **One Parent Families**

0800 018 5026

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

Specialist advice service for lone parents caring for a child with a disability or long-term health problem.

## **Parentline Plus**

0808 800 2222

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

Offer free, 24 hour confidential helpline to anyone parenting a child on any issue that is affecting them.

## **Respond**

0808 808 0700

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

Helpline for people with learning disabilities, their families, carers and professionals affected by trauma and abuse

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **Rethink**

0845 456 0455

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

A leading national mental health membership charity, working to help everyone affected by severe mental illness recover a better quality of life.

## **Rett Syndrome Association UK**

01582 798910

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

07970 546653 - Out of hours family helpline

Offer information, practical help, friendship and support to people with Rett Syndrome, their families and carers.

## **Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)**

0303 123 9999

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

Confidential helpline offers information, support & advice. Website has information about specific conditions & useful advice.

## **Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID)**

0808 808 0123

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

Offer information, training, fact sheets, leaflets, publications and information about equipment and products.

## **Samaritans**

08457 90 90 90

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

24hr confidential & emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair. Can also e-mail anonymously.

## **Scope**

0808 800 3333

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

Offer support, information, campaigning & news for people with Cerebral Palsy & related disabilities.

## **Sibs**

01535 645453

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

Provide support & information for people who grow up with a brother or sister with disability or chronic illness.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## **STEPS**

0871 717 0044

[www.steps-charity.org.uk](http://www.steps-charity.org.uk)

Provide support & advice to families of children with lower limb abnormalities including club feet, hip problems, amputations and orthotic support.

## **TAG (The Arthrogyrosis Group)**

01737 813527

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

A national support group for people, or families with children, who have the condition Arthrogyrosis (stiff joints).

## **Unique**

01883 330766

[www.rarechromo.org](http://www.rarechromo.org)

A source of information, mutual support and self-help to families of children with any rare chromosome disorders.

## **Vision Aid**

01204 64265

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

Offers practical help & advice to families of children with sight difficulties.

## **Winston's Wish**

08452 03 04 05

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

Offer practical support and guidance to bereaved children, young people and their families.

## **Working Families 'Waving not Drowning'**

0800 013 0313

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

For parents who work, or want to work, and who have children with disabilities by providing a network of help and information including details of flexible working rights.

## **Young Minds**

0808 802 5544

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

Emotional well being and mental health of children and young people. Helpline number for children and parents above.

# NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

## Legal Advice

### **AVMA (Action for Victims of Medical Accidents)**

0845 123 2352

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

Provide support, legal advice, referral to specialist solicitors and help through the NHS complaints procedure.

### **The Community Legal Service**

0845 345 4 345

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

A Government initiative designed to ensure that everyone has access to good quality legal advice and information.

### **The Disability Law Service**

020 7791 9800

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

Provide free legal advice and representation for disabled people, their carers and families.

## Useful Websites

### **Able (formerly Disability View)**

[www.ablemagazine.co.uk](http://www.ablemagazine.co.uk)

Information on issues such as disability, holidays, sports and benefits. Produce regular magazine.

### **AiA Allergy induced Autism**

[www.autismmedical.com](http://www.autismmedical.com)

Information about diet & parent forum

### **After 16**

[www.after16.org.uk](http://www.after16.org.uk)

Provides information for people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities including; details of where to live, further learning, finance and advocacy.

### **Asthma UK**

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

Provides information and advice on all aspects of asthma.

### **AuKids**

[www.aukids.co.uk](http://www.aukids.co.uk)

A quarterly magazine produced by a parent and a speech therapist. Contains ideas and inspiration for parents of children under 10 with an autism spectrum disorder.

### **Autism-Aspergers**

[www.groups.yahoo.com/group/autism-aspergers](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/autism-aspergers)

Support groups for parents of kids with Autism and Aspergers

### **Autism Independent UK**

[www.autismuk.com](http://www.autismuk.com)

A wide range of information and links.

### **Autism Information Sheets**

[www.autism.org.uk/infosheets](http://www.autism.org.uk/infosheets)

Information sheets on a wide selection of topics available from the National Autistic helpline

### **Autism Resources**

[www.autism-resources.com](http://www.autism-resources.com)

Information and links regarding Developmental Disabilities, Autism and Asperger Syndrome

### **Autism: Treating Autism**

[www.treatingautism.co.uk](http://www.treatingautism.co.uk)

### **Being a Stepparent**

[www.beingastepparent.co.uk](http://www.beingastepparent.co.uk)

Website that focuses on extensive advice for step parents and their families, includes section on being a step parent of a child with special needs

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **Benefits Advisor**

[www.benefits-adviser.direct.gov.uk](http://www.benefits-adviser.direct.gov.uk)

Online calculator that enables you to work out what benefits and tax credits you are entitled to.

### **Benefits and Work**

[www.benefitsandwork.co.uk](http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk)

Downloadable step-by-step guide that can help with completing DLA forms.

### **British Allergy Foundation**

[www.allergyfoundation.com](http://www.allergyfoundation.com)

Provides up to date information, advice and support to help people with allergies

### **Caring with Confidence**

[www.caringwithconfidence.net](http://www.caringwithconfidence.net)

Aims to help carers make a positive difference to their life and that of the person they care for. Work through online sessions that will help you assess your caring role.

### **Changing Places**

[www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

Provides information for those who cannot use accessible toilets and need changing facilities. Lists all current facilities in the UK and also those planned

### **Charity Commission**

[www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)

Searches for all charities, ideal for fundraising searches.

### **Children's Disabilities Information**

[www.childrensdisabilities.info](http://www.childrensdisabilities.info)

Information for children's disabilities and special needs.

### **Coping with Stress**

Coping with the stress of having a child with a disability can be tough at times and you or your child may suffer from anxieties, phobias or depression. The following websites can offer specific advice on these subjects:

#### **No Panic**

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

#### **No more panic**

[www.nomorepanic.co.uk](http://www.nomorepanic.co.uk)

#### **Anxiety Care**

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

#### **Anxiety Alliance**

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

### **The Couple Connection**

[www.thecoupleconnection.net](http://www.thecoupleconnection.net)

Relationship strengthening tool for couples includes a section on issues that can crop up when there is a child with additional needs.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **Direct Enquiries:**

#### **(The Nationwide Access Register)**

[www.directenquiries.com](http://www.directenquiries.com)

Search for accessible facilities and venues anywhere in the UK.

#### **Direct Gov**

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

The latest and widest range of public service information.

#### **Disability Now**

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

Has a large database of information about disability issues and campaigns. Also produce national disability newspaper.

#### **Do to Learn**

[www.dotolearn.com](http://www.dotolearn.com)

Printable activities which promote independence to individuals with special needs.

#### **The Downs Syndrome Educational Trust**

[www.downsed.org](http://www.downsed.org)

UK based charity that works to advance the development and education of individuals with Downs Syndrome.

#### **Disability Benefits**

[www.benefitshelpline.com/disability](http://www.benefitshelpline.com/disability)

Information on benefits including entitlement, claiming, how it is paid, how long for and rates.

#### **Disability Equipment Register**

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

Lists second hand equipment for sale and wanted.

#### **Dyspraxia Foundation**

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

Helps people understand and cope with Dyspraxia

#### **The Dystonia Society**

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

Provide support for people with Dystonia.

#### **Easyhealth**

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

A website aimed at people with learning difficulties that pulls together accessible health information and makes it easier for people to use with clear & simple language and illustrations.

#### **Ehlers Danlos Syndrome**

[www.ehlers-danlos.org](http://www.ehlers-danlos.org)

Ehlers Danlos Support Group

#### **Equip for Life**

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

Buy and sell used disabled equipment.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **Food Matters**

[www.foodmatters.com](http://www.foodmatters.com)

A useful website for anyone with a food allergy, food intolerance, food sensitivity or on a restricted diet.

### **Formative Fun**

[www.wiseowltoys.co.uk](http://www.wiseowltoys.co.uk)

Products are appealing to all children but are particularly useful where a child has a specific learning difficulty.

### **HE Special**

[www.he-special.org.uk](http://www.he-special.org.uk)

Group of families who home educate children with SEN. Website provides information and discussion mailing list.

### **Home Education Advisory Services**

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

Provide telephone advice line and other resources for parents who choose to teach their children at home.

### **(In)visible Disabilities in the UK**

[www.geocities.com/dolfrog/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/dolfrog/index.html)

Provides information, support & help links for all families who cope with disabilities

### **Kent Resource Directory**

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

This on-line directory brings together information about services, activities, support and guidance for children and young people, aged 0 -19 years, parents and practitioners across Kent.

### **Kent Trust Web**

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

The Extranet for Kent's Children Families and Schools

### **Learning 4 R Kids**

[www.groups.yahoo.com/group/learning4rkids](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/learning4rkids)

UK support group for parents/carers of kids with learning difficulties

### **Living with ADHD**

[www.livingwithadhd.co.uk](http://www.livingwithadhd.co.uk)

Information and support on ADHD

### **Mental Health Foundation**

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

Provide information for anyone affected by mental health problems

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **Mobility Information Service**

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

Offer advice about buying a car, wheelchair or scooter, information about adaptations, tax and parking badges.

### **Multikulti**

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

Provide accurate and culturally appropriate translations of information, advice, guidance and learning materials.

### **National Children's Bureau**

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

Services and support for children and young people with disabilities and special educational needs

### **National Debtline**

[www.nationaldebtline.co.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk)

Free, confidential & independent helpline 0808 808 4000

### **National Health Service Website**

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

Official site of the NHS. Get expert information on conditions, treatments and local service.

### **Need a Loo**

[www.needaloo.org](http://www.needaloo.org)

Listing public accessible disabled toilet facilities with maps showing locations.

### **Net Doctor**

[www.netdoctor.co.uk](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk)

The UK's leading independent health website

### **Netmums Parent Supporters**

[www.netmums.com/support](http://www.netmums.com/support)

Netmums has a range of Parent Supporters who can offer on-line support and advice to mums with every problem ranging from domestic violence to PND, and special needs to relationships issues.

### **NHS Direct**

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

Find out about illnesses, tests and treatments plus lots more.

### **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder**

[www.ocdyouth.info](http://www.ocdyouth.info)

Information for young people with OCD

### **Paltalk**

[www.paltalk.com](http://www.paltalk.com)

Allows you to talk to friends and family over the internet. Ideal for those who can't type.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **The Parent Centre**

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

Information and support for parents on how to help with your child's learning, including advice on choosing a school and finding childcare. Includes special needs section.

### **Patient UK**

[www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)

Offers a range of services including leaflets on health and disease, self/help/patient support groups, a directory of UK websites on diseases and relevant health issues.

### **Peach**

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

Parent-led charity promoting early behavioural intervention for young children with autism.

### **The Personal Assistants Network**

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

An information site provides information and guidance for Personal Assistants (P.A.s), people who employ them or would like to. Help with information on Direct Payments and budgets.

### **Peta UK Ltd**

[www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com)

Design & manufacture a range of special needs scissors, garden & kitchen tools.

### **Pharmacy & Drugs**

[www.rxlist.com](http://www.rxlist.com)

Internet medicine index, providing information on Prescription medicine, herbal and homeopathics.

### **Play Helps**

[www.roma.testbench.co.uk](http://www.roma.testbench.co.uk)

Roma Lear provides instructions on how to make toys for children with special needs.

### **RADAR**

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

Represents opinions and concerns to policy-makers and legislators and campaigns to promote equality for all disabled people.

### **Reverb-UK**

[www.groups.yahoo.com/groups/reverb-uk](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/groups/reverb-uk)

Online support group for parents of deaf children.

### **The Sibling Support Project**

[www.siblingsupport.org](http://www.siblingsupport.org)

Online support group for brothers and sisters of people with disabilities.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

- Special Abilities** [www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk)  
Advice, information and support for parents of children with disabilities.
- Special Friends Online** [www.specialfriendsonline.com](http://www.specialfriendsonline.com)  
Online community for people with learning difficulties, their parents, carers and volunteers.
- Special Kids in the UK** [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/specialkidsintheuk](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/specialkidsintheuk)  
Support & information group for parents with special kids of all disabilities
- Speech Teach UK** [www.speechteach.co.uk](http://www.speechteach.co.uk)  
Downloadable resources include educational, speech related therapy activities, parents information, clip art and animations
- Talking Point** [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk)  
Information about speech, language and communication difficulties in children.
- The Henry Spink Foundation** [www.henryspink.org](http://www.henryspink.org)  
An independent charity providing accessible, useful and unbiased data on treatment and therapies for severely disabled children.
- The Princess Royal Trust for Carers** [www.carers.org](http://www.carers.org)  
Provides information, support and practical help to carers
- ToGoGo** [www.togogo.info](http://www.togogo.info)  
Has information about local leisure for all ages and abilities across Kent.
- Toy Directory** [www.toydirectory.com/specialneeds.htm](http://www.toydirectory.com/specialneeds.htm)  
U.S site with ideas about toys & activities for children with special needs.
- Uhadtogether** [www.uhad2bthere.co.uk](http://www.uhad2bthere.co.uk)  
A searchable database of Charities, Organisations, Companies and Service Providers from all around the UK, to help disabled people and their families, find the right information.
- YC Net for Young Carers** [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)  
Website for young carers to get advice, support and meet other young carers in an online forum.