



Issue 49 Autumn 2017

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To cut costs for our charity, please let us know if you would be happy to have your future Newsletters by Email instead. Email your name to carers@involvekent.org.uk with 'Newsletter' in the subject line.

Dear Carer

Welcome to your Autumn and Winter 2017 Newsletter. We all hope that you will find something to interest you in this edition. I am delighted to have been appointed Involve Carers' Manager, following my time as interim Manager since March 2017. I have worked here for 7 years, 4 of those as Deputy to the previous Manager Barbara.

You will note in the newsletter that we have started some new drop ins for Carers and also now have a social group for Former Carers (see page 4). We are holding an Involve Carers' Forum at Ditton Community Centre too. This Forum is a chance to come along and find out about Involve Carers and the wider Involve Kent, meet other Carers and hear information from other speakers who may support you in your caring role. If you have not been to a Forum before or not been for a long time, please consider calling us to register for a place at this event. You must book onto the event with us as refreshments are provided (see page 11 for details).

We would really like Carers who may feel isolated in their caring role to contact us. If you do not think that any of our activities are suitable for you, then we can potentially look at setting up some Carer social/support groups to keep Carers connected in the communities in which they live, benefitting from peer support as well as that from us at Involve Carers. Please do take a look at our activities and contact us if you are interested.

As the nights draw in and winter approaches please all remember that as a Carer you are entitled to a flu jab irrespective of your age and health conditions. Please also inform your GP surgery that you are a Carer and ask to be placed on their Carer's register or ask us to do so on your behalf.

Very best wishes Jane Thomas and the team: Jen, Katy, Debbie, Katie, Donna, Eleanor, Maisie, Maureen, Marilyn, Natalie, Lin, Rhian and Gaynor.

If you are no longer in a caring role, please inform us.

Our thanks to those that have supported us. If you wish to make a donation, please send a cheque to us to our address below. Donations will be used exclusively to fund Carers' Activities. Cheques need to be made payable to our umbrella charity 'Involve Kent' (Registered Charity No.1066911). Please specify for "Carers". Or online at <http://www.involvekent.org.uk/support-us>



Involve Carers
39 - 48 Marsham Street
Maidstone ME14 1HH Tel: 01622 685276
Email: carers@involvekent.org.uk



Involve Carers - how we can help you

- * Information and Advice * Carers' Assessments * Kent Carers' Emergency Card *
- * Carers' entitlements, rights and benefits * Planning for the future *
- * Signposting to local services *
- * Help to access non-means tested Disability and Carer benefits *
- * Contact with other Carers via our Support Groups and Activities *
- * Carers' Hospital Discharge Service *
- * Possible Alternative Care and/or transport to attend our Events *
- * Working in partnership with Health professionals to improve support for Carers *
- * Carers' Newsletter * Keeping in Touch Service *
- * Caring with Confidence training *
- * Talks to community groups about Carers' issues * Carers' Forum twice a year *

Call us: 01622 685276

Did you know we have a member of the team based at Maidstone Hospital?



My name is Natalie Emerick and I am the Involve Carers Hospital Discharge Co-ordinator, based at Maidstone Hospital, Monday to Friday. My job is to identify relatives or friends who may be providing unpaid care and or support to someone on discharge from hospital, to ensure they are supported in their caring role. Many people will not identify that they are a Carer even though they are providing a large amount of support to someone.

It can be a stressful and daunting time for those caring for somebody who is admitted to hospital, especially if this is the first time they may be taking on a caring role. I work with Hospital and Social Care staff to ensure and promote a smooth discharge home for the person you care for. Involve can also arrange practical support to support a Carer in their caring role on hospital discharge. This is a **free service** for **up to two weeks** from discharge.

I can meet with you at the hospital when you are visiting to discuss this further and identify what you may need in your caring role to support you e.g. sitting services, night sits, cleaning and domestic support etc.

If you as a Carer are admitted to hospital, I can visit you on the ward and work with you to ensure that you receive support needed to enable you to return safely to your caring role when you are discharged.

After discharge the Involve Community team will keep in touch with you, and ensure that you are supported in your caring role on-going. To contact me please call Involve Carers on 01622 685276.

Having a Carer's Assessment from Involve Carers

A Carer's Assessment is an opportunity for you to tell someone what **impact** caring has on your life.

The Care Act 2014 states that if you appear to have any level of need for support, then you have a legal right to an assessment of your own needs.

You can have a Carer's Assessment even if the person you care for, does not want to have a needs assessment to look at what help they need.

Involve Carers have been contracted by KCC to provide the Carers' Assessment and Support Service for the Maidstone and Malling areas. Carers' Assessments in this contract are for adult carers, caring for another adult.

One of our Assessment and Support Co-ordinators will meet with you, so that together you can talk about your situation, the impact on your life, and what might support you and make your role easier.

Your Carer's Assessment should cover the following:

- *Your caring role*
- *Your own health*
- *Your feelings and choices about caring, work, study, leisure and housing*
- *What you would most like to achieve*

Following the Assessment a Support Plan will be agreed with you. This will outline what can be done to assist you and may include some of the following options:

- *Information, advice and guidance*
- *Having a regular or occasional break from your caring role*
- *How to stay safe and well (including emergencies)*
- *Options for emotional support, including connecting with other Carers*
- *If eligible a personal budget to meet identified need*
- *Access to alternative care if your health is at risk due to your caring role*



If you would like to find out more, or wish to request a Carer's Assessment, please contact us at

Involve Carers on 01622 685276 or email carers@involvekent.org.uk

ACTIVITIES FOR CARERS

All at Marsham Street, Maidstone (unless otherwise stated)

Carers' Drop In and Coffee and Chat

Drop in for Carers for information and advice from our Carers' Engagement Co-ordinator, or for a coffee and chat with other Carers.

Mondays between 10.30am - 12.00pm

Just turn up, or call 01622 685276 for more information



Former Carers' Social Group

Peer led social group for former Carers at the Hear of Flavour Café, King Street, Maidstone.

Mondays between 11.00am - 12.00pm . Just turn up, or call 01622 685276 for more information.

****NEW** Information and Advice Drop Ins for Carers:**

Information and advice drop in every Wednesday in the Morrisons' Café, Sutton Road, Maidstone from 10.00am —11.30am

Information and advice drop in every Wednesday in Oasis Café (The Vine Church) Northumberland Road, Maidstone ME15 7LN from 12.00—13.30

Come and meet our Carer Engagement Coordinator, Lin Perkins



Crafting Carers' Art Group

Join other Carers for craft activities.

Art /Craft supplies are provided.

1st Monday of the month 1.30pm - 3.30pm

Book Group

Do you enjoy reading? Would you like to read more? Why not join our Carers' Book Group? We meet in the library each month to enjoy a warm and friendly discussion after reading a book recommended by the Library. Make new friends and share the enjoyment of reading.

2nd Tuesday of the month, 10.00am - 11.00am in a private room at the Kent History and Library

If you are interested in any activities contact us on 01622 685276 or Carers@involvekent.org.uk to book

ACTIVITIES FOR CARERS

All at Marsham Street, Maidstone (unless otherwise stated)

Bowls and Table Tennis

For both you the Carer, and the person you care for.

Alternate weeks.

Mondays 10.30am - 11.30am



Zumba for Carers

A fusion of Latin American dance and exercise,
held at Mu Mu Nightclub in Maidstone
Weekly on Thursdays 3.00pm - 4.00pm. *Special
thanks to Mu Mu nightclub*



Walking Group for Carers

Led by a Carer, the Group meets at various locations throughout Maidstone and Malling for a pre-planned steady, enjoyable walk on the first Wednesday of the month.
Must be physically fit to walk.

Carers Meditation

Fortnightly on Fridays, 11.00am - 12.30pm. Take time out to relax and learn how to de-stress.

Swimming Group

Join other Carers for a refreshing swim at a local leisure centre on Tuesdays 10.00am - 11.30am for £2 per session. Carers only. Must be physically fit to swim.

Carer Support Group

Mental Health Carers Support Group - Meet other Carers who care for someone with Mental Health problems. Last Tuesday of the month (except December) 11.00am - 12.30pm.

**If you are interested in any activities contact us on 01622 685276 or
Carers@involvekent.org.uk to book**

REFLEXOLOGY FOR CARERS

We are pleased to offer Carers a free Reflexology Taster Session

So what is Reflexology?

Reflexology is a non-intrusive complementary therapy, based on the theory that different points on the feet correspond with different areas of the body.

Reflexologists take into account both physical and non-physical factors that might be affecting your wellbeing.

The theory is that reflexology helps the body to restore its balance naturally.

Usually, after a treatment your tension may be reduced and you might feel relaxed.

You might also notice yourself sleeping better and find your mood and sense of wellbeing improving.

Dates when the Reflexologist visits us vary, so contact Gaynor to put your name down for the next session by calling 01622 685276.

MEDITATION FOR CARERS

An insight into the Meditation group, written by an Involve Carer:

Involve ran its first eight week Mindfulness course in 2015, encouraging Carers who took part to find time for themselves in an often seemingly endless round of caring for others.

Following its success Mindfulness Meditation was included in the list of regular activities run by Involve, providing a brief respite for Carers to relax and form new friendships.

So, what do we do in Meditation Practice?

We gather in one of the Meeting Rooms every other Friday. For an hour and a half under the guidance of our coach - a practitioner and teacher of Meditation for many years, we find a quiet peacefulness sitting with eyes closed, concentrating on letting go of our problems by being aware of the present moment, the here and now.

Through our posture, awareness of the body and concentration on breathing - the vital part of life - we do indeed find peace in the stillness.

Sometimes our coach gives us guidance and food for thought which leads to a discussion, followed by a cup of tea, before we disperse.

Call Gaynor Negus 01622 685276 to join.



Involve Mental Health Carers Support Group

Are you caring for somebody with a mental health condition?

Would you like to speak to other Carers in a similar situation?

You will be welcomed by other Carers (and Maureen and Marilyn from Involve Carers) at the Mental Health Support Group, which is held on the last Tuesday of every month (please note there is no Group in December due to the Christmas break) between 11.00 and 12.30.

It is always at the Maidstone Support Centre 39-48 Marsham Street Maidstone ME14 1HH.

The Group is informal and relaxed.

It is a 'safe space' to share what you are thinking/feeling and an opportunity to make new friends. Occasionally a Speaker is invited to come along to talk to the Carers about other services being offered to assist in your role of Carer. These Speakers are specially selected and invited only after the Carers have nominated and agreed on their attendance.

At the Group, Maureen and Marilyn will keep you up to date with information about benefits, services and other local support.

This is an 'open' group – you can attend for some of the time if you can't manage to stay for the full hour and a half, and it is your decision if you want to come to one group a year, or all 11 of them!

Marilyn, Maureen and the Carers look forward to meeting you soon.
If you would like more details, call the office on 01622 685276.



**Accessible wherever, whenever, however.
It's available at a time and place that suits you.
Help is always nearby**

We can help if you're feeling stressed, anxious, panicky, low or sad.

Thinkaction now provides FREE, NHS-funded treatment online, which you can use without visiting a service.

Visit [www.thinkaction.org.uk/online therapy](http://www.thinkaction.org.uk/online%20therapy)
or Text "TALK" to 82085

Do you have your free of charge Emergency Card?

If you as the Carer, have an accident and are unable to undertake your caring role as you are in hospital, the Kent Carers' Emergency Card can give you peace of mind that the person you care for is being looked after.



The scheme is administered here at Involve Carers. Ask us for an application form.

Important information to existing Emergency Card Holders:

Please ensure that you inform us of any changes as and when they occur e.g. change of telephone number for your emergency contact, or change of vehicle registration. Remember....if needed, the card will only work if information is correct

Do you need mental health advice and support?

Mental Health Matters are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to offer confidential, emotional support and guidance.

Call free on **0800 107 0160**

Freephone number for mobiles **0300 330 5486**

Or contact Kent & Medway Partnership Trust Single Point of Access Number
Also available any time of day or night, 365 days a year
0300 222 0123



FREE SAFE & WELL HOME VISITS FROM KENT FIRE & RESCUE

If you are over 70 or have mobility problems it could mean you're at greater risk if a fire breaks out in your home. If you don't need this service yourself, you can refer a relative, friend or client to us, too.

Call our friendly home safety team on 0800 923 7000 or emailed preferred contact details to home@kent.fire-uk.org and one of our friendly team will be in touch to let you know if a safe and well visit can help.



Helping You Home is a partnership approach by Maidstone Hospital and Maidstone Borough Council to ensure you can be discharged home safely.

We can help with:

- Moving furniture
- Home repairs
- Making the home safe
- Making the home secure

Your nurse or occupational therapist will advise us what is required at home. They will discuss this with you before making a referral.

You will be contacted by a member of our Housing and Health Team or our handyman to explain how we can help and arrange access to your property.

This service is provided free of charge.



Caring With Confidence Course

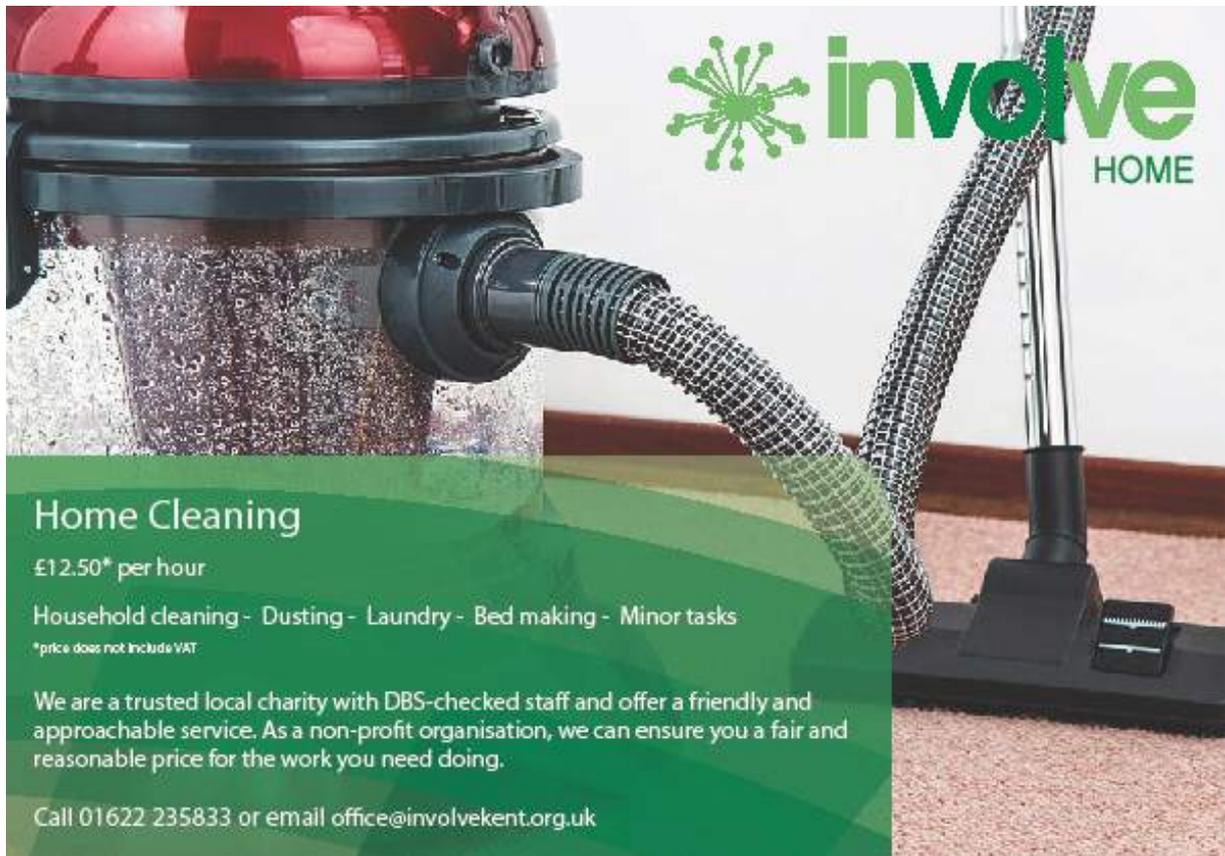
Our next Caring with Confidence Course starts Friday 9 February 2018, 7 weeks of 3 hour sessions held at a venue tbc. The course covers the following topics:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 9 February 2018: | Finding your Way |
| 16 February 2018: | Caring Day to Day |
| 23 February 2018: | Caring and Communicating |
| 2 March 2018: | Caring and Resources |
| 9 March 2018: | Caring and Coping |
| 16 March 2018: | Caring and Me |
| 23 March 2018: | Caring and Life |

The course is facilitated by our trainer Rachel Smith. Rachel has been running the courses since 2009 and has a good understanding of Caring through her personal experience of being a Carer. You will be in good hands for the course in a highly supportive environment. Light refreshments are provided and we can offer alternative care for the person you support if you are unable to leave them to attend.

After the course, we offer you the opportunity to continue to meet with members of the course and previous courses monthly for ongoing peer support.

Please contact Gaynor on 01622 685276 to secure a place.



Home Cleaning
£12.50* per hour
Household cleaning - Dusting - Laundry - Bed making - Minor tasks
*price does not include VAT

We are a trusted local charity with DBS-checked staff and offer a friendly and approachable service. As a non-profit organisation, we can ensure you a fair and reasonable price for the work you need doing.

Call 01622 235833 or email office@involvekent.org.uk

INVOLVE OLDER PEOPLE

Please note that if you are an older Carer you may also be interested in the activities and trips that Involve Older People provides, please note charges are made for activities, some examples are:

- ◆ Free Seniors swimming at Mote Park (charges will be made after a limited time)
- ◆ Trips
- ◆ Devon turkey and tinsel weekend break
- ◆ Friendship circle with lunch provided
- ◆ Singing etc

Please contact them on:
01622 235833

Thursday 9th November
Carers Forum at Ditton Community Centre. Pre-booked places only.

10.00am - 10.30am
Coffee and Registration
10.30am - 13.30pm
Forum and lunch



Do you want to find out more about support for you as a Carer? Do you want to meet other Carers?

Come and meet Involve Carers at our free Carers' Forum. Please call 01622 685276 to book and reserve a place.

Information, advice, speakers and a chance to meet other Carers.
Free parking at the venue. Carers only please.

Please call Maisie or Jen on 01622 685276 if you need transport or alternative care to attend (subject to availability).
Please let us know 2 weeks before the Forum at least.

Booking is essential as refreshments and lunch are provided.

The Involve Carers Forum is an opportunity to:

- ◆ Meet other Carers
- ◆ Exchange helpful information
- ◆ Share views and ask questions.

Free event.
Donations
accepted
towards lunch.

CARERS ONLY TO ATTEND PLEASE

Boughton Monchelsea - Helping Hands
Building Unity in our Community

Do you know someone from any age group who would like to join us for a hot supper, tea and cake!

OUR FIRST EVENT IS AT
The Curious Eatery

Thursday 5th October at 6pm
then the first Thursday of each month

Come along and see a friendly face, have a chat, share a meal and enjoy some company.

We may be able to arrange local volunteer transport for you.

The nominal cost approx. £6
Booking is essential!

Please ring Karen or Katy for further details.

Katy 741285 or Karen 744292

We look forward to seeing you!

Katy, one of our Carers' Assessment and Support Co-ordinators, will be at the Helping Hands events, and will be happy to provide information, advice and guidance to any Carers attending.

Unless stated otherwise, all our Groups are at Maidstone Community Support Centre, 39-48 Marsham Street, Maidstone ME14 1HH. Call us 01622 685276 for more information or to register an interest.

Mondays

Crafting Carers - 1st Monday of each month, 13.30 - 15.30 for art and craft activities.

Carers Coffee & Chat - Carers' Drop-in every Monday between 10.30 to 12.00. Carers only please, no need to book just drop by for information and advice from our Carers' Engagement Co-ordination, or to have a coffee with other Carers.

Former Carers Social Group - Peer led social group for former Carers who wish to keep in touch, every Monday between 11.00—12.30 at the Heart of Flavour Café, King Street, Maidstone

Bowls and Table Tennis For both you the Carer, and the person you care for. This is a weekly session with the activities alternating for added variety. Mondays 10.30 - 11.30.

Tuesdays

Swimming Group for Carers- Weekly, 10.00 to 11.30 for Carers at the Maidstone Leisure Centre, £2 per session.

Carers Book Group - 2nd Tuesday of each month, 10.00 - 11.00 at the Kent History and Library Centre.

Mental Health Carers Support Group - Last Tuesday of the month (with the exception of December), 11.00 -12.30

Wednesdays

Carers Walking Group - 1st Wednesday of each month, meeting at 11.30 at various locations. (transport from Maidstone may be available).

Information and advice drop ins every Wednesday in the Morrisons' Café, Sutton Road, Maidstone from 10.00—11.30 and every Wednesday in The Vine, Northumberland Road, Maidstone ME15 7LN from 12.00—13.30

Thursdays

Zumba for Carers - (a fusion of Latin American dance and exercise) Weekly, 15.00 - 16.00 at Mu Mu lounge bar and nightclub in Maidstone

Fridays

Carers' Friday Group (CwC keeping in touch group) 2nd Friday of month 11.00 - 12.30

Carers' Meditation Group - Every fortnight 11.00 - 12.30.

Other information

Caring with Confidence - 7 week course for Carers, 10.00 to 13.00, call to register

Reflexology Taster for Carers - Dates vary, contact us to book

Carers' Forum - Thursday 9th November from at Ditton Community Centre Free parking on-site. Carers only. Booking essential.

Involve Carers have included information in the Newsletter in good faith, and every effort has been made to make information accurate, but we accept no responsibility for errors. The opinions and content included are not necessarily those of Involve Carers.