

Here for you

A guide to support that might be able to help you

We know it is a difficult time for everyone with the rise in the cost of living. In this leaflet you can find useful websites, organisations, and advice to help you with rising costs. There is support available both locally and nationally for a wide range of issues.

Help for Families

Kent County Council (KCC) is working with schools to make sure that families who are eligible for benefits related free school meals will receive vouchers to feed their children during school holidays. You will get a £10 voucher per eligible child, which can be spent in supermarkets and local shops.

If your child gets free school meals because they are in year 2 or below, you will still need to apply for benefits related free school meals to get vouchers during the holidays. Contact your child's school if you are unsure what arrangements are being put in place for your family.

Childcare

All Parents of children aged 3 to 4 years old can access 15 hours of free childcare. It does not matter how much you earn or how many hours you work. Some parents of children under the age of 3 may be entitled for free childcare. Currently, parents of 2 year olds can access 15 hours a week of free childcare if they are in receipt of income support benefits, such as Universal Credit, and earn less than £15,400 a year.

- 30 hours of free childcare will be expanded to eligible parents of children over the age of 9 months and will start from April 2024.
- From April 2024 working parents of 2 year olds will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare.
- From September 2024, 15 hours of free childcare will be extended to all children from the age of 9 months.
- From September 2025, working parents of children under the age of 5 will be entitled to 30 hours of free childcare a week.
- To work out what you are entitled to please visit <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>.

Families can receive up to £2,000 a year per child or £4,000 if their child is disabled to put towards the cost of childcare. Money can help towards the cost of holiday clubs, before and after school clubs, childminders and nurseries, and other approved childcare schemes.

You can get Tax Free Childcare at the same time as the 30 hours free childcare if you are eligible for both. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>.

School Transport

Kent County Council offer assistance with school transport for children travelling to school:

- **KCC Travel Saver:** Children in school years 7 to 11 who live in Kent can apply for a KCC Travel Saver that can save up to 50% on the cost of travel to and from school.

- **KCC 16+ Travel Saver:** Bus travel for over 16s that can save up to 50% on the cost of bus travel to and from school and college.
- **Free School Transport:** For children attending their nearest school and travelling over 3 miles (2 miles if aged under 8), SEND children or for some low income families.
- **School Transport for SEND:** Transport options if your child or young person (0 to 25) has special educational needs or disabilities.
- **Vacant Seats Payment Scheme:** If your child is not eligible for free school transport, you may be able to get transport through our Vacant Seat Payment Scheme.
- **16 and 17 Train Saver Card:** Buy a National Rail 16 and 17 Train Saver card to get up to 50% off your travel.

Please visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-transport> for further information on the schemes.

Kids eat for Free

- **Asda Café:** Children can eat a meal for £1 every day from 25th July until 4th September in England and Wales as long as the café is open and dependent on the store, a hot meal or cold meal, or both will be on offer. No minimum spend required. Asda provides FREE Ella's baby food pouches for children under 18 months old with any purchase.
- **TGI Fridays:** Kids Eat Free all day every day When 'Stripes Rewards Members' purchase a full priced adult's main meal. If you're not a Rewards Member, just book your table and then simply download the app before your visit.
- **Sainsbury's Café:** Sainsbury's Cafes offer 1 child hot meal or lunch bag for free with any adult main meal purchased over £5.50 in all Sainsbury's cafes during the summer holidays. The offer is valid from 15th July until 3rd September.
- **Beefeater and Brewers Fayre:** Up to 2 children under 16 can eat a 'free' breakfast when an adult buys an unlimited cooked breakfast. Valid daily during breakfast hours.
- **Morrisons:** Children under 16 can eat for free at any Morrisons café when an adult spend £5.00 or more on a meal.
- **Tesco:** 'Kids eat free' meal deal (sandwich, fruit, 2 snacks, and drink) with every adult purchase in the café.
- **Bella Italia:** Kids age 2 to 11 can receive a three-course meal for just £1 with every adult main meal brought at Bella Italia. This runs from Monday to Thursday from 4pm to 6pm.
- **Ikea:** Kids can enjoy Mac and Cheese, a soft drink, and a piece of fruit for 95p or any other Kids Meal for £1.50. Available from 11am (excluding Fridays).
- **Premier Inn:** Up to two under 16's get a free breakfast with one adult's full Premier Inn Breakfast or a Meal Deal.

Free School Meals

If your child is below 19 years old, in full time education, and you receive benefits you may be able to get free school meals for them. Speak to your child's school or apply online at www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent/. If your child is in Reception, year 1, year 2 they are entitled to universal free school meals, all children in these year groups can get a free school meal at school each day.

If your child gets free school meals because they are in year 2 or below, you will still need to apply for benefits related free school meals to get vouchers during the holidays. Please visit www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/kent/ for further information.

Specified Adult Childcare Credits

If you are a grandparent who provides childcare for your grandchildren, you may be eligible for Specified Adult Childcare credits, which can be claimed by family members who care for a child under 12, usually whilst their parent is working. Please visit www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-specified-adult-

[childcare-credits.](#)

Back to School Support

Could you add in some info about back to school help before August - some info on...

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/deals/school-uniform-moneysaving-tips/>

Know what you earn, what you spend and what you owe

Budget Planning

If you want to know exactly where your money is being spent, how much you have got coming in and where every pound is being spent, a budget planner can help get you started. Please visit

<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting/budget-planner> for more information.

Help with your Income

If you are on a low income, you may be entitled to Universal Credit, Tax Credits, and other benefits.

There are many different forms of support available depending on your individual and household circumstances.

It is worth checking online at www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators to see if you are entitled to additional help. Make sure you have details of your household savings, income (including pension and benefit payments), outgoings (such as rent, mortgage and childcare payments) and your Council Tax bill to hand.

The Money Advice Service

Easy to use, free and impartial money advice. Top pick for tools and calculators and budgeting help. Please visit www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk.

Debt

If you are struggling to pay your bills, seek help right away. The quicker you act, the more can be done to help you. The Government's Money Helper service offers practical advice and money management tools. Please visit www.moneyhelper.org.uk or call 0800 138 7777. The National Debt line provides free help. Please visit www.nationaldebtline.org or call 0808 808 4000.

Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice in North and West Kent (CANWK) is the local Citizens Advice in Sevenoaks and Swanley. The charity provides free, confidential, independent, and impartial advice on a range of everyday issues to help you find a way forward through the rising costs of living. They can help you with a wide range of issues including:

- debt and money advice – specialist debt advisers can support you to understand your money issues and tackle your debts, including supporting you to deal with creditors and explore the debt solutions that could be right for you.
- benefits advice – from first applications through to appealing decisions, we can help you to claim the welfare benefits you are entitled to.
- energy advice – we can help you save money by reducing your energy costs and improving your energy efficiency, access helpful grants and receive a free carbon monoxide detector. If you are having trouble understanding your bills or dealing with your energy supplier, we can help with this too.
- Housing, immigration, consumer, employment, family, and relationship issues... and more!

For advice, call their freephone Adviceline on 0808 278 7810 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For further information about their services, office opening times and more, please visit www.citizensadvicenwk.org.uk.

Money Advice Hub

The Kent Money Advice Hub is a free, confidential, independent, and impartial money advice service. It is led by Citizens Advice in North and West Kent (CANWK) in partnership with local Citizens Advice offices in Kent.

The service is aimed at helping people in Kent who are struggling financially. We can advise and support with a range of money issues, such as:

- budgeting
- money saving tips
- how to check and claim for benefits
- dealing with any debts

For free and confidential advice, visit www.kentmoneyadvice.com where you can make a video call to one of their trained Advisers, from the comfort of your home. The service operates Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Family Action Welfare Grants

Family Action Welfare provides grants for essential personal, and household needs to assist families and individuals with low incomes, particularly those living on benefits. Please visit <https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/grants/welfare-grants/>.

Budgeting Loans

You may be eligible for a Budgeting Loan if you have been on certain benefits for 6 months. This can be used for household items, rent in advance, and travelling costs. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/budgeting-help-benefits/eligibility>.

Turn2Us

A charitable service which helps people access the money available to them through welfare benefits, grants etc. Please visit <https://www.turn2us.org.uk> or contact their helpline on 0808 802 2000.

Christians against Poverty

A national charity, working across the UK to lift people out of poverty and debt by providing advice and practical support and help. Please visit www.capuk.org.

Housing Costs

Whether you are a tenant in the social or private rented sector or you have a mortgage, it is important that you talk to your landlord or lender at the earliest opportunity if you think you will have difficulty paying your rent and bills, as they may be able to help you. You could also be entitled to the following to help with your housing costs:

Sevenoaks District Council Housing and Community Hub

The Housing and Community Hub provides a one stop shop for residents to discuss any issues and concerns they have with our staff partners in person. Areas of support include, but is not limited to:

- Cost of living
- Saving money on fuel bills
- Housing Advice
- Welfare Benefits
- Substance Misuse Support (Drugs/Alcohol)

No need to book, you can drop into our hub, which is held every month at our Argyle Road office. Our next Housing and Community Hubs are being held on:

- Thursday 29 August 2024 10:00 to 12:00 pm
- Friday 27 September 2024 10.00 to 12.00 pm

Downsizing

If you are a social housing tenant in a property with more bedrooms than you need, or you are struggling to heat and maintain your home, it could be beneficial to downsize. With the Changing Spaces scheme, you can get a payment of between £1,500 - £2,000 depending on the size of your property, please email changing.spaces@sevenoaks.gov.uk for more details.

Discretionary Housing Payment

Discretionary Housing Payments (this applies to both social and private rented sector tenants) can provide extra money if your local Council decides that you need extra help to meet your housing costs on top of what benefit support you already receive through the Department of Work and Pensions.

To get a Discretionary Housing Payment, you will need to either already be receiving Housing Benefit or the housing contribution element through Universal Credit. To apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment, please visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk for further details.

Council Tax Reduction

Council Tax Reduction may be available if your household is on a low income. You could receive support towards some or all of your Council Tax bill. To find out more, please visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk for further information.

Employment support

Get help looking for Jobs

You can search and apply for jobs across a range of industries across the UK through the government's find a job website. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job>.

The **National Careers Service** offer free telephone and face to face consultations supporting people who are either looking for work (unemployed) or employed but looking to change career and/or upskill by providing careers advice, building CVs, preparation for interview, referring to training and finding jobs. They work with range of people including health professionals, employment specialists and local community organisations to create a support package to help people find the right job, at the right time.

Jobcentre Plus provides resources to enable job searchers to find work. Jobcentre Plus offers information about training opportunities for the chronically unemployed. They administer claims for benefits such as Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Universal Credit. Please visit Jobcentre Plus (GOV.UK).

Household bills

Help with your Utility Bills

Most utility companies offer help if you are struggling with your bills, including payment plans. Most water companies offer discounts for households on low incomes. Speak with your suppliers or if you live in Kent, visit www.kent.gov.uk and search for energy financial support for advice about your energy bill.

For some great tips on quick and easy ways to save energy, visit the Energy Saving Trust website at

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/hub/quick-tips-to-save-energy/>.

How much energy am I using

Some electrical household appliances use a lot of electricity. The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) has published a helpful guide on where you can make big savings in your home. Please visit <https://www.cse.org.uk/advice/advice-and-support/how-much-electricity-am-i-using> for more information.

Help to insulate your Home

As part of the Government's Great British Insulation Scheme, families in lower Council Tax bands with less energy efficient homes will be offered vital upgrades such as roof, loft or cavity wall insulation which could cut their annual energy bill by an average of between £300 to £400.

The scheme will boost help for those on the lowest incomes as well as extend support to a wider range of households compared to other existing government funded schemes. Those eligible for support under the Great British Insulation Scheme include families in Council Tax bands A to D in England, A to E in Scotland and Wales, with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below. Visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/families-to-save-hundreds-through-1-billion-insulation-scheme>.

British Gas Energy Trust

British Gas Energy Trust may be able to provide a grant to those who are experiencing financial difficulties. Always speak to your own energy provider first. British Gas Energy Trust is an independent charitable body set up to support those who are struggling to pay their bills, regardless of energy provider. Please visit <https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/>.

Citizens Advice in North and West Kent

Citizens Advice in North and West Kent (CANWK) is the local Citizens Advice in Sevenoaks and Swanley. Their specialist Energy Advice team provide free, confidential, independent, and impartial energy advice and support. They can help you with a range of energy matters including:

- Advice on how to reduce your energy costs and save money through energy efficiency,
- Help you to understand your energy statements and to challenge any mistakes.
- Check for any financial support that you might be eligible for, example many households may be eligible for a voucher worth up to £49 if you use a prepayment meter.
- Identify and explain various energy grants and support schemes that you might be eligible for.
- Help with dealing with any energy debts.

Additionally, they are raising awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and can issue people with free detectors.

For energy advice or a free carbon monoxide detector, call their freephone Adviceline on 0808 278 7810 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email the Energy Advice team at energy@nwkent.cab.org.uk.

Food Banks

Charities that provide food to people on low incomes. If you live in Kent, you can find your local food bank at www.kent.gov.uk and search for **Find a food bank**.

Reducing Food Costs

The BBC website has some great tips on how to reduce your food costs, visit:

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44597169>
- <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/12-ways-cut-your-food-costs>

- https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/money_saving_tips

Let's Cook

Let's Cook Together a free 5 week face to face cooking course at West Kingsdown Village Hall from Thursday 12 September to Thursday 10 October 2024, 11am to 1pm, will help you prepare cost effective, nutritious and delicious meals, whilst learning how to budget and reduce food waste. You will gain confidence through hands on cooking experience, creating dishes from stir fries to pasta and soups to curries. All equipment and ingredients will be provided and everyone who completes the course will receive a FREE recipe book and apron.

Free online cooking course from Tuesday 1 October to Tuesday 29 October 2024, 10am to 11am – Let's Cook will help you prepare cost effective, nutritious and delicious meals using a slow cooker, whilst learning how to reduce food waste and more! Everyone who completes the course will receive a FREE slow cooker worth £45 – Terms and Conditions apply.

Everyone is welcome to book on to Let's Cook Together and Let's Cook, although priority will be given to participants living and/or working in the following areas: Swanley, New Ash Green, West Kingsdown, Fawkham, Hextable, Eynsford, Farningham, Crockenhill and Hartley.

To book your place, please call 01732 227000 or email communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk.

Broadband Discounts

Not all of us regularly switch supplier, but it is worth comparing as you could save hundreds of pounds over the year. Anyone concerned about falling behind on payments should contact their Broadband supplier to see what support is available.

Social Tariffs

If you are in receipt of benefits, then special discounted home broadband packages are available. These packages, known as Social Tariffs, are offered by broadband providers and can be vital for families struggling with bills, keeping them connected even in tough times. Subject to eligibility, customers on social tariffs could in some cases save over a hundred pounds a year. For further details on Social Tariffs, please visit <https://www.digitalkent.uk/information/projects/scp/socialtariffs>

Cheaper Car and Home Insurance.

There has been a large increase in the costs of home and car insurance. Tips for cheaper home and car insurance can be found on money saving expert. Please visit <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2023/11/martin-lewis-halve-car-insurance/>.

Warm Spaces

Warm Spaces are safe and friendly public places where people of all ages can go to comfortably spend time reading, studying, chatting with others, and meeting new people in their community. To find a local space near you please visit our website at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk and search for 'Warm Spaces.'

Health and Wellbeing

Healthcare Travel Costs

If you are receiving Universal Credit or on a low income, you may be able to claim travel costs refund for hospital appointments. Please visit NHS Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme for more information.

Prescription Payment Certificate

The current prescription charge is £9.90 per item. You can save money on prescription costs, by buying an NHS prescription prepayment Certificate. There are 2 options to choose from:

- A 3 month prepayment certification costs £32.05. It will save you money if you need more than 3 prescribed items in 3 months
- A 12 month prepayment certification costs £114.50. It will save you money if you need more than 11 prescribed items in a year

Please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/save-money-with-a-prescription-prepayment-certificate-ppc/> for more information.

Exemption from costs of Prescription Medication

You could get free prescription medication if you are receipt of benefits, on low income or those with certain medical conditions. Please visit NHS Exemption from Prescription Medication.

Ask if your Prescription Medication can be brought over the counter. You can buy some prescription medications for minor health issues over the counter at a pharmacy or supermarket. Your local pharmacist can tell you if the medication is available or cheaper to buy over the counter.

NHS yearly HRT Certificate

If you pay for NHS prescribed HRT medicine 3 or more times in 12 months, an HRT Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC) could save you money. Each item on an NHS prescription usually costs £9.90. You can buy an HRT PPC for a one off payment of £19.80. The HRT PPC covers an unlimited number of certain HRT medicines for 12 months. The HRT PPC does not cover all HRT medicines. Click on the link for more information and to check if it covers your HRT medicine. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/get-a-ppc/hrt-ppc>.

Dental Care

You do not have to pay for NHS dental services if you are:

- under 18, or under 19 and in full time education
- pregnant or have had a baby in the last 12 months
- being treated in an NHS hospital and your treatment is carried out by the hospital dentist (but you may have to pay for any dentures or bridges)
- receiving low income benefits, or you are under 20 and a dependent of someone receiving low income benefits

Please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/who-is-entitled-to-free-nhs-dental-treatment-in-england/>.

Staying Healthy and Well

If you are a Sevenoaks District resident aged 18+ and would like some help and motivation to eat more healthily, lose weight, get more exercise, and improve you overall wellbeing, why not contact Sevenoaks District Council's One You service. Our One You Advisors will work with you for up to one year, at no cost, to help make meaningful changes to your lifestyle. Please visit https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069138/health/516/one_you_lifestyle_improvement_service.

If you would like to access the service, please contact us by calling 01732 227 000 or emailing at healthy.living@sevenoaks.gov.uk. More information can be found on our website: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/one-you-kent>.

Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre

We are delivering the One You Kent service at Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre at Four Elms Road, Edenbridge, TN8 6FY. Advisors are available to see clients face to face on Monday to Wednesdays and are delivering weigh management programs on site on Tuesday evenings. Interested parties can access the service by completing a referral form by visiting: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and->

[health/health/one-you-kent/healthy-weight](https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/one-you-kent/healthy-weight).

One You Kent can help boost your motivation or kick start some lifestyle changes if you would like to improve your physical or mental health, lose weight, get more active or reduce your alcohol intake. One You Kent offers professional and friendly support to help achieve weight loss goals with our free 12 week programme. Weekly support will be offered to learn how to manage your lifestyle and health through healthy eating, physical activity, and behaviour change. If you would like to access the service, please contact us by calling 01732 227 000 or emailing at healthy.living@sevenoaks.gov.uk. More information can be found on our website: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/one-you-kent>.

Health Walks

You can find details of our walks on the Council website at <https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/walking>. Health walks available:

- Otford Walking Group - Join us on the first and third Monday of the month at 10am for a beautiful 3.6 mile walk starting at the Otford High Street car park. The walk follows the River Darent and comes back through the beautiful village of Otford, which has plenty of tea rooms to visit after.
- Shoreham Walking Group - Join us on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month for a stunning walk around Shoreham village taking in the local landmarks, rivers, vineyards and rolling hills. The circular walk begins at 10am from Station Road beside the Vicarage and last about 90 minutes.
- Knole Park Walking Group - Join us on the second and fourth Thursday of every month for a one-hour circular walk around Knole Park. Take in the beautiful views, woodlands, and the occasional deer! We set off from Hollybush Cafe at 10am.

All our walks are regularly promoted and updated on the website: https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/info/20069138/health/5/walking_and_running_groups.

You are welcome to join the low intensity walks delivered by Every Step Counts, please see our website for details of the walks.

Leisure Centre Concessionary Membership

Everyone Active operate our leisure centers providing exciting health and fitness activities and offer concessionary memberships.

- **Edenbridge Leisure Centre**, Stangrove Park, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 5LU, Telephone 01732 442364 Concessionary Membership £29.99 per month, membership includes access to Gym, Swimming, Group Exercise Classes, and Saunas PLUS 7-day advance priority booking on all activities included in membership.
- **Sevenoaks Leisure Centre**, Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN13 1LW, Telephone 01732 442365 Concessionary Membership £34.99 per month, membership includes access to Gym, Swimming, Group Exercise Classes, and Saunas PLUS 7-day advance priority booking on all activities included in membership.
- **White Oak Leisure Centre**, Hilda May Avenue, Swanley, BR8 7BT, Telephone 01322 662188 Concessionary membership £34.99 per month, membership includes access to Gym, Swimming, Group Exercise Classes, and Saunas PLUS 7-day advance priority booking on all activities included in membership.

Look after your Mental Health

Worries over money, housing, heating, and food can affect our mental wellbeing, causing stress, anxiety, and depression. There are lots of places to get help and support.

The Release the Pressure campaign offers a text service to people who are struggling to cope and need immediate help. Text the word "Kent" to 85258, to start a conversation with trained and experienced volunteers who can give help at any time, wherever you are. Visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health/release-the-pressure> for further details.

Kooth

If you are aged between 10 and 25 years old, Kooth offers an online mental health community giving free and confidential advice. You can chat with a team member about anything that is on your mind. Visit <https://www.kooth.com/>.

Better u

Better u provides a supportive platform to help users manage their wellbeing, focus on a positive outlook, reflect upon their resilience, and most importantly, access various types of support, enabling the user to find something that works for them. As an app created by young people, it focuses on providing features and tools that young people actually want to engage with, that will have a lasting, beneficial impact on their wellbeing. Please visit <https://www.elliesangels.org/better-u>.

Solace Café

West Kent Mind run a Solace Café at their Wellbeing Centre, 34A St Johns Road, Sevenoaks on Mondays, and Tuesdays 3.30 pm to 7.30 pm. The café provides a supportive environment for people who are at risk of developing an emotional crisis. There you will find support and guidance. You can drop in or contact West Kent Mind on 01732 744950 or visit www.westkentmind.org.uk.

Community support

Help for the Armed Forces

The Royal British Legion (RBL) has launched its Everyday Needs Grants program, designed to assist those who need help in a quick and easy way with essentials such as kitchen appliances, clothes, and energy costs. Grants are available of up to £2,400 over 12 months. Applicable recipients include serving and ex serving personnel, and the wider Armed Forces community, including families, dependents, and carers. Any member of the Armed Forces community wanting to access the grants can find out more and apply visit <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-support/financial-and-employment-support/finance/grants> or by calling 0808 802 8080.

Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge

If you are 50+ as a local charity, our aim is to make our communities a better place for people to grow older, by delivering a range of local services aimed at promoting independence and enabling people to make the most of later life. For more information, please contact our office on 01732 454108 www.ageuk.org.uk/maidstone-sevenoaks-tonbridge/.

Silver Line

The Silver Line is a free, confidential helpline for older people providing information, friendship, and advice. It is open 24 hours a day and you can call on 0800 470 80 90. Please visit [The Silver Line Helpline](#).

Sevenoaks U3A

If you are no longer in full time employment and live in Sevenoaks or the surrounding area, Sevenoaks U3A can offer you the opportunity to participate in a wide range of enjoyable social, mental, and physical activities. Please visit www.sevenoaksu3a.org.uk for more information.

Silver Sunday

To celebrate Silver Sunday, we will be hosting a Silver Sunday Fair inviting pensioners, their families, friends and carers to find out about the services, support, activities and hobbies available locally. This will

take place on Friday 4 October 2024 from 10am to 1pm at The Stag Plaza.

To celebrate Silver Sunday, we will be hosting Tea Dances across the District inviting residents to put on their dancing shoes and enjoy an afternoon of socialising and music, as well as a delicious afternoon tea. These will take place from 1:30pm to 3:30pm on the following dates; Wednesday 16 October 2024 at West Kingsdown Village Hall, Thursday 7 November 2024 at Hextable Village Hall and Thursday 5 December 2024 at Hartley Village Hall.

Help for Carers

If you are a carer and would like more information on support, advice, and training available across Kent, please visit www.kent.gov.uk and search help for carers for more information. You could get £81.90 a week if you care for someone for at least 35 hours a week and they get certain benefits. You do not have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for [Check if you are eligible for the Carer's Allowance](#).

Upcycling

Repair Cafés are free meeting places, and they are all about repairing things. Take along your broken items toasters, lamps, hair dryers, clothes, bikes, toys, crockery anything broken is welcome.

- **Sevenoaks Repair Café:** runs on the second Saturday of the month at St Luke's Church, Eardley Road, from 10 am to 1 pm. Email: sevenoaksrepaircafe@gmail.com for more information.
- **Edenbridge Repair Café:** runs on fourth Saturday of the month at the Eden Centre, from 10 am to 1 pm. Email: edenbridgerepaircafe@gmail.com for more information.

Better Together Hub

A community mobilisation programme has been set up to encourage more volunteers to develop and deliver projects within their communities by providing practical support, developing skills, networking, and capacity building to individuals in new and existing community groups to enable new initiatives and groups. Projects include gardening and food growing, community cooking and food sharing events, training courses for mums and setting up their businesses, and peer support. The Better Together Hub provides a directory of information for groups and support networks which can be accessed across the district. Please visit <https://www.bettertogethercommunity.org.uk/> for more information.

HERO Service

Sevenoaks District Council's HERO Service assists residents in the districts who are owner occupiers or in privately rented sector accommodation. We can provide advice and support in the following areas:

- mortgage/rent arrears
- debt issues
- energy and broadband costs
- welfare benefit applications
- general housing advice
- retraining
- voluntary work
- general cost of living advice

For help and more information, please contact hero@sevenoaks.gov.uk or contact the Council on 01732 227000 and ask to be transferred through to the HERO Service.

If you are a West Kent Housing Association tenant and would like to know if you are eligible for your inhouse support service, please email mytenancy@wkha.org.uk.

Help with pets

If you are struggling with vet bills you may be eligible for support from the PDSA. Please visit [PDSA - Eligibility checker](#).

Pets Charities Financial Assistance

- RSPCA - Pet health care costs
- Cats Protection - Neutering financial assistance

Rehoming

If you are struggling to afford to look after your pet, you might need to consider rehoming. If you do not have a friend or family member who can help, there are charities that can help rehome pets for those that see this as an option:

- RSPCA - Giving up a pet you are unable to care for
- Dogs Trust - Giving up your dog
- Cats Protection - Thinking about giving up your cat

Support with travel costs

Railcard

There are a number of railcard discounts available for families, young people, seniors, veterans, and disabled persons. Up to a third can be saved on rail fares by applying for a railcard. Please visit www.railcard.co.uk/ for more information.

JobCentre plus Travel Discount card

Provided to those unemployed claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit for 3 to 9 months (18 to 24 year olds) or 3 to 12 months (over 25's) can apply through their Work Coach and local JobCentre Plus. Other benefit recipients may receive a JobCentre Plus Travel Discount Card from 3 months of their claim and if they are actively engaged with a JobCentre Plus adviser. Cardholders are entitled to a 50% discount on selected rail tickets. Contact your nearest JobCentre for more information at <https://find-your-nearest-jobcentre.dwp.gov.uk/>.

Kent Karrier Dial a Ride Service

This is a flexible dial a ride service that takes members from their door to anywhere in the Sevenoaks District. All services have a wheelchair accessible vehicle. To be eligible for the service you must be over 85 or live in a rural area more than 500 meters from a bus stop or train station, or you have a mobility impairment.

Call Compaid on 01892 832447 to apply. A small membership fee applies but you can make savings on your travel costs.

Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service

[Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Service](http://www.evts.org.uk) is a volunteer car service based near the day centre at Edenbridge hospital. Volunteer drivers use their own cars to take people in the area unable to use public transport, to and from medical appointments at hospitals, clinics, surgeries, opticians, dentists etc. All drivers are DBS checked. For more information please telephone 01732 865353 www.evts.org.uk.

IMAGO Dial-2-Drive

Dial 2 Drive (D2D) is a community transport scheme for people unable to access public transport due to older age, illness or disability living in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding areas.

Volunteer drivers use their own cars to take clients to medical and social appointments. This includes appointments at local surgeries, hospitals, day centres, hairdressers, opticians, lunch clubs and shopping www.imago.community/Community-Services/Dial-2-Drive.

Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group

The [Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group](https://sevenoaksvolunteertransport.com/) provides a coordinated low-cost local transport scheme catering for elderly, infirm and disabled residents needing assistance with transport to attend medical appointments at clinics and hospitals and activities such as clubs for the disabled. Volunteers provide the transport, using their private cars <https://sevenoaksvolunteertransport.com/>.

SMILES Volunteer Transport Service

The SMILES Volunteer Transport Service is available to anyone in the Sevenoaks district. Volunteer drivers use their own cars to take members to medical appointments (for example clinic, hospital, doctor, or optician appointments) in the area. They will also drive members to see family and friends if possible. Membership is £18 per year. For more information, please call 01322 294600