



Kingston Carers'
Network

A Network Partner of
**CARERS
TRUST**

KINGSTON CARERS' NETWORK
Improving the lives of carers in Kingston

Supporting carers of all ages across the borough



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Kingston Carers' Network

Providing independent information, advice and support for carers of all ages in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

Who is a Carer?

A carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. This could be caring for a relative, partner or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems. A carer may also be juggling paid work with unpaid caring responsibilities at home.

Anyone can be a carer; carers come from all walks of life, all cultures and can be any age, including children. Many feel they are doing what anyone else would in the same situation – looking after a mother, son, or best friend and just getting on with it.

There are over 13,000 carers in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. Often those with caring responsibilities do not recognise themselves as carers, so do not seek help or support.

Who are we?

Kingston Carers' Network (KCN) is a local registered charity, providing independent information, advice, advocacy and support to people who care for someone living in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. We support carers of all ages, including young carers aged 5 to 18.

We are also committed to ensuring that carers have a stronger voice. We offer a range of opportunities for carers to have a say in how health, social care and carers' services are run in the borough. We represent our carers' views across the borough to ensure that local decision-makers fully consider the needs of carers.

Our funders have included; the Kingston Clinical Commissioning Group, the Royal Borough of Kingston Council, National Lottery Community Fund, Children in Need, Achieving for Children and City Bridge amongst many other charitable trusts and donors.

How do we help carers?

KCN aims to ensure that carers:

- Enjoy good physical and emotional health and wellbeing.
- Are recognised and respected as expert care partners. (This means that it was recognised that carers often know the person they care for best and are experts when it comes to their care.)
- Are given information about services and support available to carers.
- Are listened to and supported by providing a *'listening ear'*.
- Have a life outside of caring through engaging in activities, outings and social events.
- Are well-informed and know about their rights, benefits and allowances.
- Have support to access benefits and allowances.
- Can access training and information to meet their caring needs.
- Receive regular support through groups and drop-ins.
- Get equal access to services.
- Are encouraged to recognise their own needs and to get their status acknowledged.
- Are kept informed of national and local policies that affect carers.
- Are consulted and have input to service planning and delivery.



Contacting KCN for support and advice

Getting support, information or advice from KCN couldn't be easier. You can email or telephone to arrange for a call or to visit us at our office. When you first register with us, we will take a few details from you and then

arrange a discussion to see what services we could offer you. The quickest way to register with us is via our website, www.kingstoncarers.org.uk.

Our advice services are **free** and the only charges made are for our social and wellbeing activities and complementary therapies.

What to expect from KCN

We offer all carers the opportunity for an individual meeting. We can advise over the phone, face to face or by email or video call. At the meeting we can discuss a wide range of issues to ensure that you are well informed of what support is available to you and the person you care for.

Our range of services include:

- Information, advice and support on a range of subjects including carers' rights, welfare benefits and other entitlements, Lasting Powers of Attorney, health and social care services and more.
- Information sessions on carer-related issues.
- Group/peer support for carers.
- Male Carers Co-ordinator offering tailored peer support
- A Wellbeing Coordinator to support carers to have a life outside of caring.
- Volunteering opportunities through a dedicated volunteer support service.
- Six-monthly newsletters and regular email bulletins to keep carers informed about our services.
- Consultation with carers and representation of their views to ensure carers have a voice in how services are planned and delivered.
- Free counselling service
- Regular outings and social events
- Discounted complementary therapies for carers.

- A dedicated Young Carers' Service for carers aged 5-19 (see Young Carers' Project).

Advice and Advocacy

The Adult Carers' Support Team offers a comprehensive advice and advocacy service. This covers a wide range of issues including; welfare benefits, community care, charges for care services, NHS continuing care, charitable applications, powers of attorney and deputyship. Members of the team are highly experienced and have legal and advice backgrounds.

Detailed advice is provided and 'backed up' with full support and advocacy to ensure that the carer obtains the services and help they require.

For example, with welfare benefits, we provide assistance at each stage in the claims process, carrying out benefit checks, completing claim forms and providing advocacy at appeal hearings.

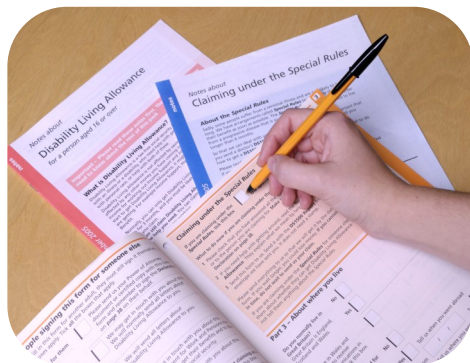
Appeals are submitted on a wide range of issues including complex calculations and disputes around disability and caring.

We assist the carer by gathering evidence, preparing written representations and attending and representing carers at tribunal hearings.

The Adult Carers' Support Team achieves substantial financial gains for carers from claims and appeals, each year. In each of the last two years, carers in Kingston have been over £1 million better off after accessing advice and advocacy services from KCN. We also attend hearings and meetings on other diverse matters including care needs.

The Adult Carers' Support Team also advises working carers, including during flexible evening telephone appointments, on employment matters such as; flexible working, disability/carers discrimination and 'better off' working benefit calculations.

The Adult Carers' Support Team influences changes in laws and policies affecting carers. For example, members of the team attended consultation meetings on the government implementation of the Care Bill and meetings



at the local Job Centre concerning benefit changes and the support for carers. The team has also provided briefing sessions on changes impacting carers, such as changes to benefits.

The Adult Carers' Support Team facilitates and develops support groups for carers, holding regular meetings, including for carers of adults with high functioning autism/Asperger's syndrome, a mental health condition, dementia and parents of children with ADHD, autism or additional needs.

We have also developed outreach services at local hospitals.

The Adult Carers' Support Team is committed to providing full support to carers through in-depth advice and advocacy on all matters of relevance to carers and endeavouring to minimise the financial disadvantages of caring.

Mental health and substance misuse carers' support

Support Groups – a monthly support group is held on the second Tuesday of each month usually at Hillcroft Campus, Surbiton, from 6.00pm to 7.15pm.

Carers' Assessments

A carer is entitled to an assessment of their own needs if it appears that they need support. The assessment establishes whether the carer is willing and able to continue providing care to the person they are caring for, and what impact this has on the carer's livelihood and wellbeing. Their needs will be taken into account and used to shape their support plan. The carer is entitled to their own assessment even if the person who is cared for chooses not to have an assessment themselves.

As a result of a Carer's Assessment, we can commission council services for you such as relief care hours or a flexible break payment.

Kingston Carers' Network undertake Carers' Assessment on behalf of the Council for carers aged 18 and over providing care and support to adults



living in the borough. Parallel to this, the council continues to undertake combined (user and carer joint) assessments involving all carers. Parent carers and young carers can access an assessment via Achieving for Children.

Carers of People with Dementia

We run a monthly lunch club for carers of people with dementia. The lunch is held on once a month from 12.00pm to 2pm, usually in Kingston. Spaces must be booked in advance. Please contact the office on supportgroups@kingstoncarers.org.uk or **020 3031 2757** for more information or to book a space.

Monthly support groups for carers

Carers of Adults who are Neurodivergent

For carers of adults with autism, ADHD, a learning disability, or another neurodivergent condition

Last Monday of each month (exc. Bank holidays), 10.00am to 12.00pm, Kingston

Carers of People with a Mental Health Condition

2nd Tuesday of each month, 6.00pm to 7.15pm, Surbiton

Young Adult Carers Peer Support

For 18 to 25 year olds. First and third Friday of each month, 6.00pm to 8.00pm, New Malden Community Hub and Café, New Malden, KT3 4BY



For more information on any of the support groups, please contact the office on **020 3031 2757** or supportgroups@kingstoncarers.org.uk

Carers' Wellbeing

A carer's role is demanding and full of responsibility, but it is important for carers to take care of their own health and wellbeing and to find ways of coping with their role. Finding time to have a break from caring can be difficult for many carers but one of the best ways to look after their mental and physical health is to find time to do things that they enjoy, that are engaging and rewarding, and perhaps at the same time learn something new or pick up new skills.

Having a break - social activities

Our Wellbeing Co-ordinator organises trips and social events for carers. Typical activities include theatre trips, pub lunches, walks and music gigs. Carers tell us that it is good to meet other carers and share their experiences. Many new friendships have developed through our social activities.



Physical, mental and emotional wellbeing

Various classes are available which support the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of carers. This has included mindfulness, yoga, belly dancing, relaxation and meditation and Zumba for beginners.

We also run weekly exercise classes. Please confirm the class is running before attending on wellbeing@kingstoncarers.org.uk or 020 3031 2757.

Stretch and Tone, Mondays, 9.30am to 10.15am, via Zoom

During your stretch class Kat is focuses on improving your balance and joint mobility through the full range of motion and reducing the risk of injuries. This is done using a chair and a floor mat.



Total Body & Abs workout, Wednesdays, 9.45am to 10.30am, via Zoom

During this class use small weights are used. Kat focuses on strengthening your muscles, improving your posture which leads to more confidence and being injury free. Don't worry if you don't have any dumbbells, Kat will advise you on what you can use instead or what dumbbells to buy.

Resistance and Core, Fridays, 11.00am to 11.45am, in person and via Zoom

During this class Kat focuses on strengthening and toning your muscles while using differing strength of resistance bands. This class is usually followed by a social coffee.

All classes are suitable for all fitness levels. Kat is very particular about getting the technique perfect so her clients benefit as much as possible.

Male Carers

Many of our male carers have said that they felt they would benefit from access to an all-male support group. So we have KCN Male Carers: a group for male carers to get together to enjoy and share hobbies and other activities.

We are surveying our male carers to find out what sort of activities and hobbies they would like to participate in. Some suggestions are things like snooker, table tennis, tennis, bowling, 5-a-side football, board games, chess, quizzes, cooking. Maybe watching a football match or visiting a brewery or visiting a historic place, or walking in nature. Possibly also informative information/advice sessions, talks on nutrition, health or cooking, or on computers/IT.



Counselling

KCN can offer free counselling which is provided by trainee counsellors, independently supervised. Counselling is offered to carers face to face.

Counselling is sometimes called a 'talking therapy'. A counsellor aims to provide you with a safe, independent and confidential space in which you can talk about your concerns, feel listened to, respected, understood and not feel judged. People of all ages seek counselling and find it can help them to cope or deal with difficult emotions or situations.



Carers may have particular concerns or difficulties associated with their caring role, which can be very challenging. Such issues might include:

- stress, anxiety or depression
- loneliness or bereavement
- feelings of isolation, loss, exhaustion, guilt or resentment
- conflicting demands and emotions
- changing relationships or roles.

Our counselling team is skilled in working with carers to maintain their health and wellbeing while addressing these difficulties.



Telephone Befriending Service

Caring for a loved one can, at times, be an isolating experience. Often, something as simple as a friendly chat can make all the difference. We have partnered with The Bridge to offer a free telephone befriending service so you can enjoy chatting with someone over the phone from the comfort of your own home.

You will be matched with a friendly volunteer based on your shared interests. They will call you once a week at a day and time that is

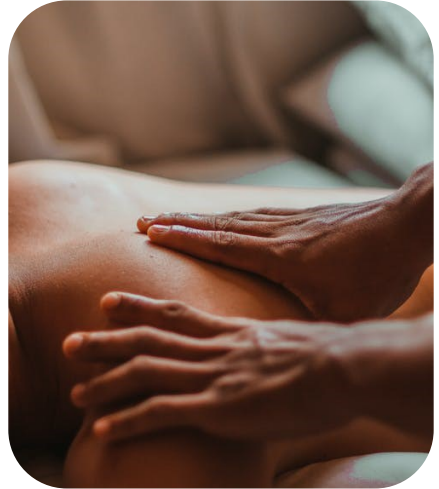
convenient for you. Calls usually last for around one hour and the match is initially for six weeks although this can be extended.

Complementary therapies

KCN can offer a variety of different complementary therapies in our office at very affordable prices. Carers may also be eligible for a flexible breaks payment if they are on a low income. This is usually accessed via a Carer's Assessment and can be carried out by an Adult Carers' Support Worker (see page 9). Email admin@kingstoncarers.org.uk or call 020 3031 2757 for more information and to book. A treatment.

Cosmic Therapies with Meera

Our wonderful Meera offers a range of therapies including reflexology, massage therapy and facials using Neal's Yard products. Prices vary depending on the treatment up to £25 (cash only).





**KINGSTON CARERS'
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Improving the lives of carers in Kingston



**Young
Carers'
Project**

Young Carers' Project

The Young Carers' Project supports carers aged 5 to 18 through a wide range of services by providing:

- Information, advice and advocacy.
- Peer support holiday activity programme.
- Weekly youth group
- Weekly primary age drop ins
- Mentoring project
- Curiosity project, a club for young carers aged 9-14
- School lunch clubs
- Targeted whole family support
- Advocacy and representation at multi-agency meetings and across other services.
- Liaison with educational staff who will help identify where young carers need extra support or interventions within school.
- Regular consultation with young carers.
- Young Carers' focus groups
- Quarterly newsletter
- Young Adult Carer support - regular peer support group and targeted support



Who is a Young Carer?

Young carers are children and young people who look after someone in their family with an illness, or condition, or is affected by mental ill-health or substance misuse.

Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks undertaken can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care, and the structure of the family as a whole.

A young carer may do some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy.
- Personal care, such as dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs.
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Administering medication.
- Looking after or 'parenting' younger siblings.
- Emotional support.
- Interpreting, due to a hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family's first language.



Some young carers may undertake high levels of care, whereas for others it may be frequent low levels of care. Either can impact heavily on a child or young person.

Young carers are eligible for a Young Carers' Needs' Assessment; this is dealt with by Achieving for Children.

Mentoring Project

The Mentoring Project seeks to match trained volunteer mentors with young carers who are in need of one-to-one support.

A mentor builds a trusting and positive relationship with the young carer that they are matched with. This might involve providing emotional support and a listening ear and helping the young carer to explore their concerns and issues relating to school, friends, family and their caring situation.



The mentor-mentee relationship can help the young carer to build resilience and develop healthy coping strategies, enabling them to find their own solutions to problems such as bullying, low self-esteem and social isolation.

Volunteering

We have a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator who recruits, trains and supports over 80 volunteers within KCN. Our volunteering opportunities are varied and enable us to offer a wider range of services to carers.

Many of our volunteers are carers or former carers who enjoy being involved in KCN and supporting other carers.

Alzheimer's Society - Carers Information Support Programme (CrISP)

CrISP provides support and up-to-date, relevant information in a group environment, where carers can share experiences of caring for someone with dementia and find out about local and national services that can offer support, legal and welfare matters, planning for the future and more.

The programme is run in a series of sessions which offers carers the opportunity to share experiences in a confidential and friendly environment with others in a similar situation.

Trained staff and volunteers run the sessions to ensure carers get the most

out of the programme and can provide further information and support.

To find out more, contact Alzheimer's Society Kingston on 020 7423 5115 or Kingstonoffice@alzheimers.org.uk .

Trusted Charity

Kingston Carers' Network has once again achieved the Trusted Charity Mark Level 1 recognising the excellent work it does as a third sector organisation in England.

Diane White, CEO, said "I am absolutely delighted that Kingston Carers' Network's exceptional work to support unpaid carers has been recognised, and we are very proud to receive the Trusted Charity Quality Mark.



We are grateful we have had the opportunity to review our practices and will continue to strive to improve our service to carers."

The Trusted Charity Standard is owned by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and delivered by The Growth Company and is the only UK quality standard designed to help third sector organisations operate more effectively and efficiently. Kingston Carers' Network has been accredited with the Level 1 Trusted Charity Mark meaning they have met the minimum legal obligations and have systems and structures in place to protect the rights of users and employees. This was determined by being assessed against the 11 quality areas of The Trusted Charity Standard; governance, planning, leadership and management, user-centred service, managing people, learning & development, managing money, managing resources, external communications, working with others, and assessing outcomes and impact.

Other Services/Useful Numbers

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Social Services - Office hours | 020 8547 5005 |
| Social Services - Out of hours | 020 8770 5000 |
| Addiction Support and Care Agency (ASCA) | 020 8339 9899 |
| Staywell, Kingston | 020 8942 8256 |
| Alzheimer's Society SW London | 020 3513 514 7 |
| Carers UK Advice Line | 0808 808 7777 |
| Crossroads Care Richmond and Kingston | 020 8943 9421 |
| Kingston Bereavement Service | 020 8547 1552 |
| Kingston Centre for Independent Living | 020 8546 9603 |
| Kingston Citizens Advice Bureau | 0844 826 9701 |
| Kingston HealthWatch | 020 8974 6629 |
| Kingston MENCAP | 020 8546 2837 |
| Kingston Mental Health Carers' Forum | 07983 063 578 |
| Mind in Kingston | 020 8255 3939 |
| Parkinsons UK (Kingston) | 0844 225 3772 |
| Relate Kingston | 0333 0320 2206 |
| Richmond and Kingston M S Society | 07985 160 759 |

**Kingston Carers' Network is a company limited by guarantee.
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Supported by...

