

Hello and welcome to our March edition of our Carer Support Newsletter

I'm so pleased to welcome you to this edition of our Newsletter. Over the last weeks we had some events and it was so nice to meet you there. Hearing your experiences, sharing conversations and receive your feedback continue to guide our work here at Cygnet Maidstone.

This years *Carers week* is coming up. Please do get involved in some events or come and join us at our "Carers Brunch" on the 14th of June here at Maidstone.

We are so grateful for your support and being part of our "caring community". As always—we are here for you! If you need support or guidance in your Carer role, please reach out. And if you'd like to get involved whether by volunteering, sharing your story or become a Cygnet Carer Ambassador—we would love to hear from you.

Jutta and our Cygnet Hospital Maidstone Carer Support Team

Carers Week 8th of June—14th of June is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring, highlight the challenges unpaid carers face, recognise the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. Carers Week also helps people who don't think of themselves as having caring responsibilities to identify as carers and access much-needed support. This Carers Week the focus is on :



Building Carer Friendly Communities



Get Involved in Health Research

Be Part of Research is a UK-wide registry of all health and social care research which helps match people to research that is relevant to them. You can get updates on research that is relevant to them. You can get updates on research that is local to you and can browse to find studies that you might be interested in.

You can sign up via the link below to find out about local research opportunities near you.



Have Your Say - Five-Year Strategy

NHS Kent and Medway want to hear from people and communities about what matters most to you about local NHS services.

They are developing a new five-year strategy to create fairer, sustainable, future-ready healthcare for residents, and your voice is essential.

The NHS in Kent and Medway faces rising demand for health and care services - it faces significant financial pressures, fragmented ways of delivering services and persistent health inequalities that must be reduced.

The changes they are proposing will affect how people access care, where care is delivered, and how services work together across health, social care, and communities.

Help shape how the five-year strategy can be turned into real change for you and your family.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/5yearstrategy/>



Join our Co-Creation Community

In our Co-Creation Community, every voice matters. It's a space where patients, carers, families, staff and anyone who cares about mental health can come together to share ideas and shape the way we work.

We listen with respect and make sure everyone feels included. By working side by side, we can turn ideas into real changes that improve care and make a positive difference to people's lives.

Benefits of joining the Co-Creation Community

- V** **Voice your thoughts**
Share your ideas and perspectives to help shape the future of mental health and dementia services.
- O** **Open up**
Be part of a welcoming, diverse community where your contributions truly matter.
- I** **Invest in yourself**
Build skills, confidence, and opportunities through training and workshops.
- C** **Collaborate in research**
Support innovation by contributing to projects that shape the future of care.
- E** **Effect change**
Turn feedback into meaningful improvements for patients, families, and communities.



Voices for change

Join our Co-Creation Community

We're creating a community to help improve mental health care in Kent and Medway. We would love you to be a part of it. By working together, we can make services better for everyone. Your voice matters.

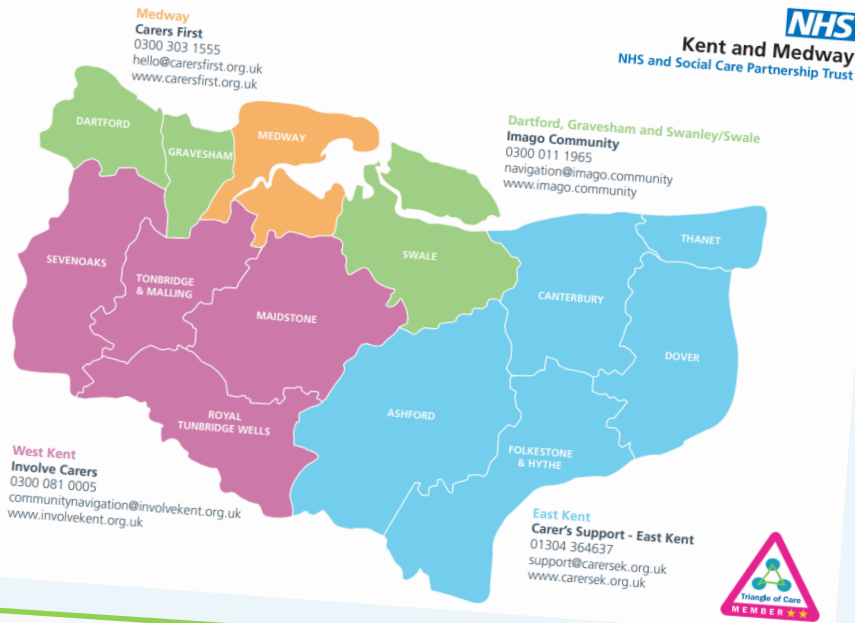
KMMHCCS

Scan to join



Carer Support in the community

Carers agencies map



The **BBC** has shone a spotlight on Carers and social care across TV, radio, and online as part of Caring Matters Week last week in May. Carers Trust have been working behind the scenes to help the BBC highlight the real experiences, challenges, and voices of Carers.

Listen on demand
www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002x730?page=2



Carers Counselling

Offering 12 weeks of free therapeutic counselling to unpaid carers and an invaluable place to be heard and supported.

<https://www.crossroadskent.org/service/carers-counselling>



A new workshop for carers registered with Involve Kent. Meet with other carers and enjoy time to park the "to do" list and unwind using creativity to find a sense of calm.



Draw Together

Hosted by Involve volunteer Cas Holmes at the Maidstone Borough Council Creative Arts Community Hub.

The sessions are free, and open to people of all abilities who would like to learn how being creative can help us maintain a good sense of wellbeing.

14:00 to 16:00
On the second Tuesday of the month.

If you would like to register for this workshops please contact Involve at:
03000 810005 or email us at hello@involvekent.org.uk.

Please note that numbers are strictly limited so please book early to avoid disappointment.



Carer Assessment

Better Care Support

If you're providing unpaid care and support, you can also access Kent County Council's carer's self-assessment and online advice, resources and support to help with your caring role.

<https://support.kent.bettercare.org.uk/>

Please reach out to our Carer Support team for support!
We can refer you!



You cannot pour from an empty cup.
Give yourself grace to rest.



Carers' Forum

Our Carers' Forum is an opportunity for those caring unpaid for an adult family member, partner, or friend, to meet, gain information about services in the community, and have their voices heard. You will benefit from meeting other carers, sharing ideas, and find support.

When: Tuesday 16th June, 12:30 - 16:00
Where: Maidstone

Lunch will be provided.

To find out more information, or to book your space, call 03000 810005 or email hello@involvekent.org.uk

POPS UK

Do you have a loved one with psychosis?

You are not alone

You'll be welcomed with open arms into our safe, friendly online support group

Supporting someone with psychosis can be a challenging journey, so come and join us. Just search for **POPS UK** on Facebook and have a look at our website www.popsuk.org.uk

POPS UK

Parents/carers Of people with Psychosis/Schizophrenia

Queen Mary University of London

Connecting Carers: Share, Learn, Support

Join us for a **FREE** event where caregivers from ethnically diverse communities in London can connect, share experiences, and learn from each other

Who is this event for?
If you are from an ethnically diverse background and support someone who needs your help, this event is for you!

Come along to...

- Meet other caregivers
- Chat, share experiences, and swap ideas
- Discover useful services, tools, and support
- Speak with local organisations

FREE event
Limited spaces
Registration essential

Monday 15th June 2026
12pm to 3pm

Brady Arts & Community Centre,
192-196 Hanbury Street, London, E1 5HU

For questions or to register without the QR code, contact Abi: 07950979546
abigail.woodward@qmul.ac.uk

Lunch will be provided on arrival
If you have any language needs, please get in touch — we will do our best to support you.

REGISTER

Carer Allowance is 50 years old

<https://wecarecampaign.org.uk/>

Carer's Allowance turned 50 in April. But here's the truth: it was never built for carers' real lives. When it launched in 1976 as Invalid Care Allowance, only single people of working age, caring for a relative could claim. It was described as "pin money." A married woman caring full-time? Well she got nothing! Not because she wasn't caring enough. Because the system said she didn't count. It took one woman—Jacqueline Drake—to challenge that. She gave up work to care for her mum with dementia. She was refused support because she was married. The assumption being she was already supported by her husband. So she took the government to court. In 1986, the European Court ruled. Excluding married women was unlawful. And suddenly? Claims jumped from 20,000 to 110,000. Carers didn't appear overnight. They were finally recognised. Today, 73% of Carer's Allowance claimants are women. We were always at the heart of this. But the system we rely on? Still shaped by outdated fifty year old assumptions. That carers don't juggle. That carers don't work. That carers can survive on very little. Carers have always juggled everything. Work. Children. Appointments. Exhaustion. Fifty years on, carers are still: struggling financially penalised for earning expected to do more with less You can change the name. But if the system doesn't change, carers still lose. Carers don't fit into neat boxes. It's time the system stopped expecting us to.



Article from Katy "We care campaign"

Rates for Carers Allowance have gone up so it's now **£86.45 per week** from April 2026/ 27. And the earnings threshold has gone up to £204 per week (from 6 April 2026)



Petitions

UK Parliament and UK Government

Amend the 28-day rule for the Carer's Allowance for carers giving hospital care

Amend the Carer's Allowance rules so unpaid carers continue to be paid their allowance after 28 days if they are still providing essential care in the hospital and require NHS trusts to confirm in writing when they cannot meet a patient's needs and when an unpaid carer must stay and provide care. The 28-day rule assumes that the hospital takes over all aspects of care. For many disabled or medically complex people, hospitals may be unable to safely meet their needs without the unpaid carer being present. Many unpaid carers remain in hospital 24/7 providing essential care, including communication support, feeding, dysphagia and safety monitoring, medication oversight, and personal care.

The Government assumes NHS hospitals take over care but for thousands of families, but this is not always true.

Sign the petition

[https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/752201?](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/752201?link_id=25&can_id=b2aaf787e4f4610197057030056ec9ae&source=email-the-easter-edit-2&email_referrer=email_3177499&email_subject=the-carers-allowance-is-50-years-old-edit)

[link_id=25&can_id=b2aaf787e4f4610197057030056ec9ae&source=email-the-easter-edit-2&email_referrer=email_3177499&email_subject=the-carers-allowance-is-50-years-old-edit](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/752201?link_id=25&can_id=b2aaf787e4f4610197057030056ec9ae&source=email-the-easter-edit-2&email_referrer=email_3177499&email_subject=the-carers-allowance-is-50-years-old-edit)

Mental Health Act 2025 — Changes

The Mental Health Act 2025 is the biggest update to mental health legislation in England and Wales since 1983.

It aims to give patients more choice, stricter detention thresholds, and better protections. The 2025 act does not come into force immediately. The government has said it will be implemented in phases when “system capacity and funding allow” and it may take up to 10 years to fully come into force.

In a nutshell:

Stricter Detention Rules: The aims are to provide greater clarity as to the level of risk that a person must present in order to be detained and limit the detention of patients with a learning disability and autistic people.

Places of safety and police powers The 2025 MHA act removes police cells from the definition of “places of safety” for the purposes of sections 135 and 136.

Replacing the nearest relative with the nominated person The “Nearest Relative” role is replaced by a chosen “Nominated Person,” giving patients more autonomy to choose who is involved in their care and discharge decisions.

Regulating compulsory medical treatment The 2025 MHA act makes several reforms to part 4 of the MHA, which regulates when treatment can be imposed on detained patients. The amendments seek to promote patient choice and autonomy.

Reforming community treatment orders (CTOs) The 2025 MHA act revises the criteria for the use of CTOs in line with changes to the detention criteria

The 2025 MHA act introduces statutory care and treatment plans for detained patients except those under short-term detention powers.

Mandatory Advocacy: Access to independent mental health advocates (IMHAs) The 2025 MHA act extends the right to an IMHA to informal patients

Access to mental health tribunals The 2025 MHA act provides that patients have greater access to the tribunal.

Discharge process safeguards The 2025 MHA act provides that before a patient is discharged from detention, the responsible clinician must consult someone professionally concerned with the patient's treatment.

Principles to inform decisions: choice and autonomy, least restriction, therapeutic benefit, and the person as an individual.

Section 117 after-care The 2025 MHA act amends section 117 of the MHA to provide that the responsible after-care bodies must give written notice to a patient in order to discharge them from after-care services.

Advance choice documents Patients can outline their preferred treatments, medications, and hospitals, or refuse certain treatments in advance while they are well. Clinicians must consider these documents if a patient falls unwell.

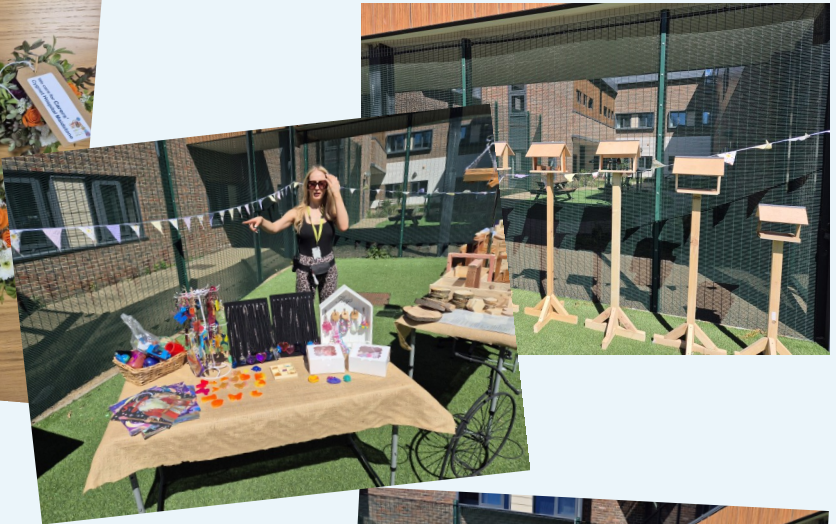
More information under: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-bill-2025-fact-sheet/mental-health-bill-2025-fact-sheet>



<https://nearestrelativeresources.bristol.ac.uk/tools/>

<https://nearestrelativeresources.bristol.ac.uk/2026/03/30/preparing-for-the-nominated>

In and around our Hospital



Craft Fair

The organisers behind the scene were delighted to welcome carers, patients and staff at this amazing event.

Handmade items -made during sessions with our Recovery College and the Psychology Department were showcased and sold.



CQC celebration

We celebrated the "Good" Rating in style!

Online Carer Support Group



Wednesday

8 July @18:00

Speaker:

Rachel Cullen, Autism Pathway
Manager

"Supporting patients
with Autism"



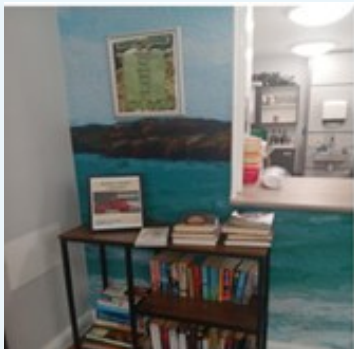
Sharing information and confidentiality

Carers and families are able to provide invaluable insight and information that may help the care team who are responsible for the person that is being cared for. Service users have the right to choose how much information we share with others and we have a duty to respect this right.

Sometimes a service user may decide to stop sharing information, we recognise that this might be difficult but we have a legal obligation to respect their wishes. However, we will provide support if this situation arises.

When carers, families and friends share information with us we respect their right to confidentiality and would only breach this, if it is in the best interests of the service user or public safety.

If you want more information please reach out to us!



We have a new "book swap place" in our reception area in front of our Munchies Coffee Shop. You are welcome to make use of it!

You're Invited!
Cygnet Maidstone's Carers Brunch
To celebrate *carers week*

Date 14th June 2026

Time 11am till 1pm

At Cygnet Hospital Maidstone
Gidds Pond Way
Weaving, Maidstone
Kent
ME14 5FT

Where LEEDS BOARDROOM

Join us for a morning of *delicious food, warm conversations and appreciation.*

RSVP To Tina Stevens
Tinastevens@cygnethealth.co.uk | 01622 580407
We look forward to celebrating with you!



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